

Representations of the Virgin Mary on Irish High Crosses: Icons, Narratives and
Symbols of Power

Hayley Humphrey

Supervised by Professor Dáibhí Ó Cróinín

College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies

School of Humanities

Department of History

National University of Ireland, Galway

September 2011

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	i
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Static Statements: Iconic depictions of the Virgin and Child	21
Chapter Two: John the Forerunner: Infancy narratives before Christ	41
Chapter Three: The Birth of Christ: Identifying the Infancy of Christ Cycle	63
Chapter Four: Dynamic Commentary: Typological shifts in the midst of iconoclasm	
The First Period of Iconoclasm (AD 726-87)	83
The Second Period of Iconoclasm (AD 815-42)	98
Chapter Five: Irish Infancy Narratives: Power, Primacy and the Patricians	
Ireland during the First Period of Iconoclasm (AD 726-87)	117
Ireland during the Second Period of Iconoclasm (AD 815-42)	123
Conclusion	142
Illustrations	156
Bibliography	193

Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my advisor, Professor Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, for his enthusiastic guidance, which made this research so enjoyable. This dissertation would not have been possible without his support.

I am also very grateful to the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences for funding my studies by means of an NUI Galway Doctoral Research Fellowship.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Royal Irish Academy, and particularly to Anthony Harvey and Franz Fischer, for the opportunity to work on the Saint Patrick's *Confessio* project during the first year of my research.

Many thanks to my mentors, who have inspired me so much over the course of my studies, and who have taken the time to discuss my research with me, especially: Peter Harbison, Dan McCarthy, Hilary Richardson, and Heather King.

Finally, endless thanks go to my parents, James and Cynthia, and to my sisters and best friends, Heather and Honor, for all of their support over the years.

List of Abbreviations

AI	Annals of Inisfallen
ATig	Annals of Tigernach
AU	Annals of Ulster
AFM	Annals of the Four Masters
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
JRSAI	Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland
PRIA	Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy

List of Illustrations

Figure

1. Saint Martin's cross, Iona.
Photo reproduced from Jane Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins: iconic images of the Virgin and Child in insular sculpture'. In *Studies in the cult of Saint Columba*, ed. by Cormac Bourke. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997
2. Saint Oran's cross, Iona.
Photo reproduced from Jane Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins: iconic images of the Virgin and Child in insular sculpture'. In *Studies in the cult of Saint Columba*, ed. by Cormac Bourke. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997
3. High cross, Kildalton, Islay.
Photo reproduced from Jane Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins: iconic images of the Virgin and Child in insular sculpture'. In *Studies in the cult of Saint Columba*, ed. by Cormac Bourke. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997
4. Book of Kells, fol. 7v.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 811.
5. Cuthbert's Coffin, Virgin and Child.
Drawing reproduced from Ernst Kitzinger, *Studies in late antique Byzantine and medieval western art*, Vol. 2. London: The Pindar Press, 2003.
6. Drumcliff, Co. Sligo. South arm.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 810.
7. Carndonagh pillar, Co. Donegal.
Drawing reproduced from Dorothy Kelly, 'The Virgin and Child in Irish sculpture'. In *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain. Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Insular Art held in the Ulster Museum, Belfast, 7-11 April 1994*, ed. by Cormac Bourke, 197-204. Belfast: HMSO, 1995.
8. Durrow, Co. Offaly. North side.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 784.
9. Saint Gall Gospels, Last Judgment page. Stiftsbibliothek, MS. 51.
Photo reproduced from Françoise Henry, *Irish art in the early Christian period (to 800 AD)*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965. Pl. M.
10. Tall or West cross. Monasterboice, Co. Louth. South side.

Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 785.

11. Drumcliff, Co. Sligo. West face.

Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 817.

12. Drumcliff, Co. Sligo. West face.

Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 783.

13. Boho, Co. Fermanagh. West face.

Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 782.

14. Durrow, Co. Offaly. North side.

Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 784.

15. Ivory book-cover, Genoels-Elderen.

Photo reproduced from Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian art*, 1. London: Lund Humphries Publishers Limited, 1971. Fig. 75.

16. Ivory relief, Milan or Reichenau.

Photo reproduced from Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian art*, 1. London: Lund Humphries Publishers Limited, 1971. Fig. 130.

17. Market Cross. Kells, Co. Meath. East side.

Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 864.

18. Killamery, Co. Kilkenny. North arm.

Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 789.

19. Kilree, Co. Kilkenny. South arm.

Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 790.

20. Cross of the Scriptures. Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly. South face.

Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 862.

21. Ardane, Co. Tipperary. West face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 2, fig. 44.
22. Graiguenemanagh, Co. Kilkenny. West face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 780.
23. Graiguenamanagh, Co. Kilkenny. West face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 779.
24. South cross. Castledermot, Co. Kildare. Shaft, North side.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 2, fig. 106.
25. Arboe, Co. Tyrone. North side.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 2, fig. 40.
26. North cross. Castledermot, Co. Kildare. West side.
Photo credit: H. Humphrey.
27. Market Cross. Kells, Co. Meath. West side.
Photo credit: H. Humphrey.
28. Tall or West cross. Monasterboice, Co. Louth. North arm.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 956.
29. Donaghmore, Co. Tyrone. East face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 2, 192.
30. Killary, Co. Meath. West face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 2, fig. 415.

31. Armagh, Co. Armagh. West face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 2, fig. 47.
32. Market Cross. Kells, Co. Meath. North face.
Photo credit: H. Humphrey.
33. Ivory book-cover, Lorsch. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 802.
34. Muiredach's cross. Monasterboice, Co. Louth. East face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 805.
35. Killary, Co. Meath. West face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 803.
36. Kilree, Co. Kilkenny. West face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 809.
37. Broken Cross. Kells, Co. Meath. East face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 823.
38. Clones, Co. Monaghan. North-west face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 2, fig. 128.
39. East cross. Galloon, Co. Fermanagh. West face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 2, fig. 291.
40. Camus, Co. Derry. East face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 2, fig. 83.

41. Arboe, Co. Tyrone. West face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 2, fig. 37
42. Clones, Co. Monaghan. North-west face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 2, fig. 128.
43. Arboe, Co. Tyrone. West face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 828.
44. Clones, Co. Monaghan. North-west face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 128.
45. Market Cross. Kells, Co. Meath.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 2, fig. 344.
46. Market Cross. Kells, Co. Meath.
Photo credit: H. Humphrey.
47. Market Cross. Kells, Co. Meath.
Photo credit: H. Humphrey.
48. North Cross. Castlerdermot, Co. Kildare. South Side.
Photo credit: H. Humphrey.
49. Moone, Co. Kildare. South side.
Photo credit: H. Humphrey.
50. Clonca, Co. Donegal. East face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 3, fig. 839.
51. Triumphal arch. Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome.
Photo reproduced from Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian art*, 1. London: Lund Humphries Publishers Limited, 1971. Fig. 66.
52. Ivory relief. Ravenna or Constantinople. Throne of Archbishop Maximian.
Image reproduced from Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian art*, 1. London: Lund Humphries Publishers Limited, 1971. Fig. 71.

53. Marble relief. Eastern Roman Empire or Ravenna. Pignatta Sarcophagus. Right side.
Image reproduced from Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian art*, 1. London: Lund Humphries Publishers Limited, 1971. Fig. 68.
54. Moone, Co. Kildare. South side, base.
Photo credit: H. Humphrey.
55. North cross. Duleek, Co. Meath. West face.
Photo reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992. Vol. 2, fig. 243.
56. Copy of original apse mosaic. SS. Nereo ed Achilleo, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.
Photo reproduced from Erik Thunø, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome*. Rome: l'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002. Pl. VIII.
57. Apse mosaic. SS. Nereo ed Achilleo, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.
Photo reproduced from Erik Thunø, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome*. Rome: l'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002. Fig. 17.
58. Vicopisano reliquary cross. Pieve di S. Maria e S. Giovanni, Pisa.
Photo reproduced from Erik Thunø, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome*. Rome: l'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002. Fig. 5.
59. Pliska reliquary cross. Aracheological Museum, Sofia.
Photo reproduced from Erik Thunø, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome*. Rome: l'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002. Pl. VI.
60. Apse mosaic. S. Maria in Domnica, Rome.
Photo reproduced from Erik Thunø, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome*. Rome: l'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002. Pl. VII.
61. Madonna della Clemenza. S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome.
Photo reproduced from Erik Thunø, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome*. Rome: l'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002. Fig. 19.
62. Enamelled reliquary cross. Musei Vaticani.
Photo reproduced from Erik Thunø, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome*. Rome: l'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002. Pl. I.
63. Rectangular casket. Side view.
Photo reproduced from Erik Thunø, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome*. Rome: l'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002. Fig. 37.
64. Rectangular casket. Side view.
Photo reproduced from Erik Thunø, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome*. Rome: l'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002. Fig. 38.
65. Rectangular casket. Back view.
Photo reproduced from Erik Thunø, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome*. Rome: l'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002. Fig. 39.

66. Cruciform casket. Musei Vaticani.
Photo reproduced from Erik Thunø , *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome*. Rome: l'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002. Pl. III.

Introduction

The high crosses of Ireland remain among the most mysterious and enigmatic monuments that exist from the early medieval period. No contemporary evidence exists to explain their function,¹ their artistic programs, the names of their creators,² or precisely when they were constructed.³ Scholars have generally focused their efforts on analyzing the iconographic schemes of the high crosses, in an attempt to identify

¹ Françoise Henry argued that the crosses did not have a funerary function, while Kathleen Hughes has discussed the use of crosses to mark the *termon* of a monastery. See Henry, *Irish art in the early Christian period (to 800 AD)* (Ithaca, 1965), p. 135; Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in early Irish society*, (Ithaca, 1966), p. 149.

² Although there are remains of some inscriptions on several high crosses, these are a source of ongoing scholarly debate, as not only are they often fragmentary, leading to a variety of interpretations regarding what was written, but the names are generally common ones, which means it is not necessarily clear to whom they were referring. Most of the extant inscriptions are written in Old Irish, and follow the formula: ‘Pray for X who caused this cross to be erected’. This formula can be found, for example, on Muiredach’s cross at Monasterboice, which reads: ‘*OR DO MUIREDACH LASNDERN.....RO* (Pray for Muiredach who had the cross erected)’. However, the inscription on the Cross of Patrick and Columba at Kells is written in Latin, and is dedicated to the two saints, rather than to the person who commissioned the cross (‘*PATRICII ET COLUMBAE CRUX*’). For more information on the extant inscriptions and the difficulties in interpreting them, see Peter Harbison, ‘The inscriptions on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise, County Offaly’, *PRIA*, 79C, pp. 178-85; Françoise Henry, ‘Around an inscription: the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise’, *JRSAI* 110 (1980), pp. 36-46. John Higgitt, ‘The stone-cutter and the scriptorium: early medieval inscriptions in Britain and Ireland’, in *Epigraphik*, ed. Walter Koch (Vienna, 1990), pp. 149-162; R.A.S. Macalister, ‘The ancient inscriptions of Kells’, *JRSAI* 64 (1934), pp. 16-21.

³ To date, there is no concrete evidence that details when the high crosses were constructed. The annalistic references are sparse and unclear, and the first specific mention of a high cross does not occur until AD 957. This entry is found in the Annals of the Four Masters, and it reads: ‘The Termon of Ciarain was burned this year, from the High Cross (*ó chrois áird*) to the Sinainn, both corn and mills’. This is the first time that the term ‘high cross’ is specifically used in the contemporary sources, but unfortunately, as the cross is not the focus of the entry, this brief mention raises more questions than it answers. Along with this brief annal entry, there are two earlier references to crosses, although it is not clear whether these were also considered ‘high crosses’. According to Françoise Henry, the Tract on the Monastery of Tallaght refers to ‘a slab at a cross in front of the enclosure’, and the Annals of the Four Masters entry for AD 848 refers to a cross ‘on the green’ of the monastery of Slane. Although Henry notes that the Slane cross was alleged to have ‘exploded’, in such a way that fragments of the original were found in three different locations (which Henry suggests may possibly be a description of Viking plunder), it does not minimize the importance of this reference as evidence that the ‘green’ of the monastery was the normal location for a cross. In addition to these references, the colophon drawing of a monastery plan which appears in the Book of Mulling gives some indication of how the crosses were distributed within the monastic enclosures. The drawing features two circles with twelve crosses indicated—four within the circles and eight outside of the circles. The crosses are named by their inscriptions, which dedicate them to Christ and various saints. See Henry, *Irish art (to 800 AD)*, p. 136 for both quotes, as well as further information about the ‘exploding’ cross. See also Lawrence Nees, ‘The colophon drawing in the Book of Mulling: a supposed Irish monastery plan and the tradition of terminal illustration in early medieval manuscripts’, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 5 (1983), pp. 73-76.

possible models or influences, and suggestions have ranged from Carolingian ivories,⁴ to Roman sarcophagi,⁵ and possibly even Egyptian artefacts.⁶ Although the art historical approach has been somewhat effective in dating the high crosses, based primarily on stylistic and iconographic comparisons with objects of a known or presumed date, it has not been a conclusive approach, as scholars have interpreted the same evidence in a variety of ways. Because of the inherent biases of scholars, and the difficulty of trying to place uniquely Irish artefacts into the stylistic developments of other locations, the crosses have been variously dated from the eighth to the tenth century. Roger Stalley has cautioned against the strictly stylistic approach, and has stressed the importance of analyzing the historical context in which the art was created. He argues that ‘interest in Continental art has all too often been reduced to a rather crude search for “sources”, irrespective of context, without any desire to understand European art as a whole’.⁷ The artistic cross-pollination of the crosses complicates dating the monuments solely on a stylistic basis, but by analyzing the historical context, this study attempts to use the historical and political events of the late eighth and early ninth century as a catalyst for the selection of scenes which were depicted on the high crosses, thereby making the art reflective of the history, rather than just concurrent to the history. This study is not an

⁴ See particularly Françoise Henry, *Irish high crosses* (Dublin, 1964); Henry, *Irish art (to 800 AD)*, p. 140; Henry, *Irish Art During the Viking Invasions (800-1020 AD)* (London, 1967). See also Peter Harbison, ‘Earlier Carolingian narrative iconography—ivories, manuscripts, frescoes and Irish high crosses’, *Jahrbuch des romisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz*, 31 (1984), pp. 455-71; Harbison, ‘The Carolingian contribution to Irish sculpture’, in *Ireland and insular art AD 500-1200*, ed. Michael Ryan (Dublin, 1987), pp. 105-10.

⁵ See particularly Dorothy Hoogland Verkerk, ‘Pilgrimage *ad limina apostolorum* in Rome: Irish crosses and early Christian sarcophagi’, in *From Ireland coming: Irish art from the early Christian to the late Gothic period and its European context*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton, 2001), pp. 9-26; Colum Hourihane, ‘*De camino ignis*: The iconography of the Three Children in the Fiery Furnace in ninth-century Ireland’, in *From Ireland coming*, pp. 61-82. Kees Veelenturf, ‘Irish high crosses and continental art: shades of iconographical ambiguity,’ in *From Ireland coming*, pp. 83-101.

⁶ See Arthur Kingsley Porter, ‘An Egyptian legend in Ireland’, *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 5 (1929), pp. 25-38. Porter argues that the iconography of several panels on the high crosses, particularly those relating to the hagiographical accounts of Saints Paul and Anthony, may have ultimately derived from an Egyptian source. Porter also suggests that the high crosses may have been representing scenes from Irish mythology. However, Porter’s theories did not find favour among modern historians. For a discussion of the possible links between the high cross panels and Irish mythology, see Porter, *The crosses and culture of Ireland* (New Haven, 1931).

⁷ Roger A. Stalley, ‘European art and the Irish high crosses’, *PRIA* 90C (1990), p. 137.

attempt to determine direct iconographic influences, but is rather an attempt to identify political and ideological influences, which were subsequently made manifest in a uniquely Irish composition. This approach synthesizes the visual evidence and the historical evidence to provide a unique analysis of the motivations behind the use of Marian imagery. While previous studies have focused solely on answering the question of ‘how’ images of the Virgin were portrayed on the high crosses, this study seeks to answer the question of ‘why’ these panels were chosen, by placing them into their historical context and considering the potential historical and political motivations at play, not only within Ireland, but also abroad.

The question of why certain panels were chosen to appear on the high crosses is difficult to answer, but it is this essential question that largely fuels cross scholars. If the figural panels had been chosen merely as illustrations of biblical narratives, then the scenes should adhere to a biblical chronology, but this does not appear to be the case—instead, the iconographic schemes appear to have been manipulable, allowing monasteries to convey different messages depending on the selection and order of the narratives. The historical approach to answering the essential question of why narratives were chosen has been largely overlooked, and the possibility that certain subjects were chosen as a reflection of political events has not been fully exploited, as interpretations have primarily focused on theological motivations. This is especially true of panels that feature the Virgin Mary, which have never received a comprehensive analysis to determine whether the presence or absence of Marian panels is indicative of an expression of monastic ideology. To date, analysis of the Marian panels has focused primarily on the task of identification, rather than interpretation. However, understanding the full implications of the Marian panels requires not simply identification of the scene, but a complete historical analysis to determine whether the panels are reflective of contemporary political events or ideologies. This study seeks to provide a critical analysis of the meaning behind the Infancy scenes featuring the Virgin Mary, in order to determine whether the Infancy cycles are representative of the political agendas that were promoted by the monasteries where the cycles appear. The present work seeks to contribute to the current state of cross scholarship by providing new identifications of Infancy panels that feature the Virgin, by placing the genesis of the

artistic programs in the context of contemporary political events, both in Ireland and abroad, and by providing original evidence for the motivations behind the selection and promotion of Marian scenes.

The genesis of this study was sparked from a seemingly innocuous statement made by the renowned scholar of medieval Irish art, Françoise Henry. In her groundbreaking study of the Irish high crosses, Henry stated that the iconic Virgin and Child surrounded by angels panel does not appear on any of the extant Irish high crosses.⁸ Although the Irish crosses have frequently been compared to similar monuments found on the island of Iona and on Kildalton on Islay,⁹ which prominently display the Virgin and Child icons, Henry identified the lack of this scene on the Irish crosses as a ‘capital difference’ between these monuments.¹⁰ In addition to the Iona group crosses, the iconic Virgin and Child with angels scene also appears in the Book of Kells, folio 7v,¹¹ and on a cross slab at Brechin, Angus.¹² The tradition of portraying iconic portraits of the Virgin and Child was also widely known in Anglo-Saxon England, and in addition to appearing on Cuthbert’s wooden coffin from Lindisfarne,¹³ Jane Hawkes has argued that the icon appears on four ninth-century Anglo-Saxon sculptures, two tenth/eleventh-century sculptures, and four sculptures from the eleventh century.¹⁴ Based on this evidence,

⁸ Henry, *Irish high crosses*, p. 41; Henry, *Irish art (to AD 800)*, p. 146. Henry states, ‘The Virgin and Child between angels, a subject never treated by Irish sculptors...’

⁹ The Iona crosses that display the iconic Virgin and Child include Saint Martin’s cross and Saint Oran’s cross. These two monuments, along with the Kildalton cross and the Book of Kells Virgin and Child portrait page (fol. 7v), will be known as the ‘Iona group’ for the purposes of this study.

¹⁰ Henry, *Irish high crosses*, p. 41.

¹¹ The Book of Kells has been dated to c. AD 800, and most scholars agree that the manuscript was probably made on Iona before being brought to Ireland. See Bernard Meehan, *The Book of Kells: an illustrated introduction to the manuscript in Trinity College, Dublin* (London, 1994; repr. 1995), p. 91.

¹² Jane Hawkes, ‘Columban Virgins: iconic images of the Virgin and Child in insular sculpture’, in *Studies in the cult of Saint Columba*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Dublin, 1997), pp. 107-08.

¹³ Cuthbert’s coffin is generally dated to the late seventh century. See Hawkes, ‘Columban Virgins’, p. 127; Ernst Kitzinger, *Studies in late antique Byzantine and medieval western art*, 2 (London, 2003), p. 673.

¹⁴ Hawkes identifies iconic Virgin and Child scenes on the ninth-century fragment from Dewsbury, Yorkshire, a cross-shaft at Eyam, Derbyshire, and two examples from Sandbach, Cheshire. For the tenth/eleventh-century images, Hawkes cites examples from Derby and at Deerhurst, Gloucestershire. The

Hawkes has concluded that the iconic portrait of the Virgin and Child was fairly widespread in the insular world,¹⁵ and therefore the apparent lack of Virgin and Child scenes in Ireland is puzzling—clearly there was no lack of insular prototypes, and if the creators of the Irish crosses found it appropriate to include zoomorphic creatures, demons and grotesques,¹⁶ and semi-iconic images of Saints Patrick and Columba,¹⁷ surely the Virgin and Child would have been a more relevant iconographic choice.

While Henry was technically correct in her assessment that the Virgin and Child with angels has not been identified on any of the extant Irish crosses, a related iconic Virgin and Child image *without* angels has been identified on the cross at Drumcliff, County Sligo. The panel was initially identified by Margaret Stokes in 1901,¹⁸ and this identification was later confirmed by Peter Harbison.¹⁹ Although the identification of this icon demonstrates that the Virgin and Child scene was not completely absent in Ireland, the fact that it appears only once, on over 200 crosses and related monuments analyzed by Harbison in his corpus of Irish crosses, is puzzling. Dorothy Kelly also accepts Stokes and Harbison's identification of the Virgin and Child icon on the

eleventh-century examples include extant sculptures from Nunburnholme and Sutton-upon-Derwent, Yorkshire, at Shelford, Nottinghamshire, and at Inglesham, Wiltshire. See Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', pp. 108-09.

¹⁵ Hawkes argues that the iconic Virgin and Child scheme 'enjoyed some considerable popularity in the insular world in the pre-Norman period'. See Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', p. 109.

¹⁶ For example, on the base of the North side of the North cross at Castledermot, there is an unidentified figure that crouches down and appears to wrap his arms around his bent knees. There are wings visible extending from his back. Although Harbison simply labels the figure as 'unidentified', suggestions have ranged from the devil to an angel; Porter identifies the figure as a grotesque, and Roe suggests that it was a person with a bird-like head. There is also a six-legged monster on the base of the Moone cross, which has two large animal heads on either end of the body, and has four additional heads extending out from the body. Harbison has suggested that the scene may be apocalyptic in nature, but regardless of the intended meaning, it serves to show how varied the iconographical schemes of the crosses were. See Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien 17, 1 (Bonn, 1992), pp. 38, 155.

¹⁷ For example, the two saints have been tentatively identified on the head of the North side of the Cross of Patrick and Columba at Kells, based on the inscription. See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 111.

¹⁸ Margaret Stokes, 'Notes on the high crosses of Moone, Drumcliff, Termonfechin, and Killamery', *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* 31 (1901), p. 556.

¹⁹ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, pp. 72, 246.

Drumcliff cross; but perhaps most significantly, Kelly also suggests that, in addition to the Drumcliff panel, a second Irish depiction of the Virgin and Child may be found on the south face of a pillar accompanying the cross at Carndonagh, County Donegal.²⁰ However, the identification of this scene as a Virgin and Child icon remains controversial, as several scholars have offered differing interpretations.²¹ Therefore, Chapter One of this study will describe the iconographic features of the Virgin and Child icons from their earliest forms, and analyze the various icon-types to determine whether the compositional scheme of the insular icons can be used as a diagnostic tool for their typology. Harbison and Kelly's identifications of the two possible Irish icons will be considered, and their relationship to the Iona group icons will be discussed.

While the iconic Virgin and Child scene is rare in the Irish context, Françoise Henry and Dorothy Kelly have demonstrated that depictions of the Virgin and Child are not completely absent from the Irish crosses, but are simply relegated to narrative scenes. Henry and Kelly have argued that the Virgin and Child narrative that features most prominently on the Irish crosses is the Adoration of the Magi, which Kelly identified as appearing on eight different crosses.²² Kelly believes that, with the exception of the two possible iconic depictions, the Adoration of the Magi scene provides the greatest evidence for the ways in which the Virgin Mary was depicted,²³ and points to the 'marginalisation' of representations of the Virgin on the Irish high crosses.²⁴ However,

²⁰ Dorothy Kelly, 'The Virgin and Child in Irish sculpture', in *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Belfast, 1995), pp. 199-201 for a discussion of the iconography of the Carndonagh pillar.

²¹ For example, Henry has identified the figure on the Carndonagh pillar as 'suggestive of the cross-legged horned figures of Gaulish carvings', whereas Harbison believes that it depicts the New Testament scene of the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. Although Hawkes references Kelly's argument, she does not indicate whether she fully accepts Kelly's interpretation of the scene. See Henry, *Irish Art (to 800 AD)*, p. 130; Harbison, 'A group of early Christian carved stone monuments in County Donegal', in *Early medieval sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, ed. John Higgitt. BAR British Series 152 (Oxford, 1985), p. 57; Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', p. 108.

²² Kelly, 'The Virgin and Child', p. 197.

²³ Kelly does make reference to other narrative scenes which feature the Virgin, such as the Flight into Egypt panel on the Moone cross, but neither she nor Henry attempted to identify complete Infancy cycles, which is a primary goal of this study.

²⁴ Kelly, 'The Virgin and Child', p. 197.

much of Kelly's conclusions are derived from acceptance of Peter Harbison's proposed identifications of the scenes, which deserve further analysis, and the proposed identification of new Marian panels challenges Kelly's assertion that the Marian scenes were becoming marginalised.

The vast majority of the panels on the high crosses are monoscenic and show one scene in isolation per divided panel. While there are some examples of crosses showing multiple scenes on one panel,²⁵ this is the exception rather than the rule, and the crosses that display narrative Virgin and Child panels are generally monoscenic. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word *icon* as: 'a devotional painting of Christ or another holy figure, typically on wood, venerated in the Byzantine and other Eastern Churches. Or: a person regarded with particular admiration or as a representative symbol'. If this literal definition is applied in the Irish context then perhaps the entire cross could be seen as an icon; but for the purposes of this study, iconic images will refer to those scenes that advance the person (rather than the story) and are static, whereas narrative images advance the story in a continuous manner and contribute to a didactic form of narration. The narrative Virgin and Child scenes generally have a basis in the biblical and apocryphal texts, and are therefore largely illustrative and text-based, rather than symbolic. According to Cynthia Hahn, in her study entitled *Icon and narrative in the Berlin Life of Saint. Lucy*, 'A picture, whether narrative or iconic can work by guiding the soul in the proper use of the senses—that is, in their purification and in their movement heavenward. If the senses are made to function as a gateway to the divine, any look can satisfy the Christian need. But here the images are carefully structured and 'scripted' in order to help the eyes understand the true message'.²⁶ The same thing can be said of the panels on the Irish crosses, and while the act of viewing a narrative or iconic image may provide the same religious fulfilment in the viewer, it is the 'scripted' nature that serves as the key point to differentiate between iconic and narrative.

²⁵ For example, the Cross of Patrick and Columba at Kells does not have clearly defined panels on the shaft, and therefore it can appear that scenes have been combined, and are therefore not monoscenic panels. For example, the lowest figural panel on this cross shows both an Adam and Eve scene and a Cain and Abel scene on the same panel.

²⁶ Cynthia Hahn, 'Icon and narrative in the Berlin Life of Saint Lucy' in *The Sacred Image East and West*, ed. Robert Ousterhout and Leslie Brubaker (Urbana-Champaign, 1995), p. 79.

Correct identification of the scenes portrayed on the high crosses is crucial in understanding the comprehensive iconographic program, but identification can be hindered by the current state of the crosses. One of the key challenges facing scholars is the issue of weathering, primarily from wind and rain. To date, the majority of the extant high crosses remain outside, unprotected and exposed to the elements; this remains an issue for debate amongst scholars.²⁷ Erosion of the figural panels is a serious concern, as the effects of weather damage have made positive identification of the scenes extremely difficult, if not impossible in some cases. Due to the deterioration of some of the crosses, iconographical analysis can vary greatly amongst scholars, and a given panel may have a variety of identifications. Because scene identification can vary greatly amongst scholars, it is essential to present an iconographic analysis of the panels included in this study.

The iconographic analysis of the panels presented here is based primarily on in-person examination of the crosses in situ and personal photographs taken of the panels during the course of this research, as well as photographic evidence that has been published by previous scholars, such as Peter Harbison. Admittedly, there are a number of difficulties with first-hand examination of the crosses which can affect the identification of panels, including personal biases, the angle of the sun, cloud cover, lichen and other natural elements obscuring or highlighting parts of the panels, and as mentioned above, the general deterioration of many of the crosses. Despite these difficulties, examining the crosses in situ is important because it allows the viewer to see the cross holistically, rather than as a collection of individual panels. This holistic view highlights the relationship between the panels, and often allows the researcher to discern the comprehensive theme(s) of the cross. Similarly, the ability to physically touch the panels, make rubbings or sketches, and trace the lines of the panels is also an important step in the identification process, and one which can only be completed in person. Analyzing photographs can also cause difficulties with identification, as a photo can only capture a single moment's view of the panel, and does not allow the viewer to

²⁷ For a further discussion of the possibility of relocating the high crosses indoors, see Cormac Bourke and Malcolm Fry, 'Outdoors or in? The future of Ireland's stone crosses', *Archaeology Ireland* 3 (1989), pp. 68-71.

move around the cross to examine it under different lighting conditions and angles. This study has also benefitted from the ability to examine six plaster-cast replicas of high crosses at the National Museum of Ireland.²⁸ These plaster-casts were an invaluable resource, as they were made over a century ago and thus preserve many of the original features of the crosses which are now difficult to discern due to weathering. Because of these inherent difficulties in studying the Irish high crosses, this study has sought to incorporate in-person examination, analysis of personal and published photographs, and assessment of replicas in order to provide the most comprehensive identifications possible.

By means of visual analysis of the extant crosses and iconographic comparisons with other roughly contemporary works of art from both within Ireland and abroad,²⁹ new identifications of panels which may relate to the Infancy of Christ cycle have been analyzed, suggesting that rather than being ‘marginalised’, as Kelly suggested, the Virgin and Child images enjoyed a renewed popularity, albeit in a new, narrative form. Peter Harbison’s previous identifications of scenes from John the Baptist’s Infancy Cycle are analyzed in detail in Chapter Two, and the possibility that this cycle may have been employed as an alternative to Christ’s Infancy Cycle is discussed. In addition, Chapter Two proposes a new identification of the Visitation panel as forming part of the Baptist’s Infancy cycle. Chapter Three provides an iconographic analysis of the Adoration of the Magi scene as it appears on the extant crosses, and also provides new evidence to suggest that additional narrative Marian scenes may be present, including the Circumcision of Christ and the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, which have

²⁸ Six plaster-of-Paris casts were on display at the National Museum of Ireland in Collins Barracks (Dublin) as part of the *Irish high crosses* temporary exhibition in 2010. The replicas that were on display included the North and South crosses from Ahenny, the Tall or West cross and Muiredach’s cross from Monasterboice, the Drumcliff cross, and a cross from Dysert O’Dea.

²⁹ The primary source used for the iconographic comparisons is Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian art*, vol. 1 (London, 1971). Schiller’s work is organized thematically by New Testament subject, and includes descriptions and illustrations of objects displaying New Testament scenes; these scenes are depicted in a variety of media and originate from different time periods. The works that serve as a comparison for the high crosses are being compared on the basis of iconography and subject matter only; artistic style does not feature in this discussion. By analyzing the iconography of a given Infancy scene on previously identified objects, the goal is to determine whether similar iconographic elements also appear on the Irish high crosses, and thus aid in the identification of potential Infancy panels.

never been previously identified. These original identifications demonstrate that the appearance of the Virgin was not limited to the Adoration of the Magi panel, but may actually form complete narrative Infancy cycles consisting of several related panels. The reasons behind the inclusion of the Infancy panels and their possible meanings are discussed.

In terms of written evidence for Marian images in the insular world during this period, the earliest reference to a depiction of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England comes from Bede's description of panel paintings which were brought from Rome by Benedict Biscop between AD 675 and AD 686.³⁰ Bede's reference does not indicate any of the iconographic elements present in the panel paintings, and although he states that they included an 'image of the blessed mother of God and ever virgin Mary, and also of the twelve apostles',³¹ it is unclear whether this would have been an icon, or a narrative scene.³² A protégé of Aldhelm, Æthilwald, also made explicit mention of Roman images of the Virgin in a poem written sometime before AD 705, where he specifies that the images were being brought back to Britain as gifts to a church.³³ Françoise Henry argues that these types of images were not a novelty in England, as, according to Bede, a

³⁰ Mary Clayton, *The cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 146; Stalley, 'European art', p. 155. The panel paintings were intended to be hung from the walls in the church of Saint Peter's, Wearmouth.

³¹ '*Imaginem...beatae Dei genetricis semperque uirginis Mariae, simul et duodecim apostolorum*'. For the text see Bede's *Historia Abbatum (History of the Abbots)*, ed. Charles Plummer (Oxford, 1896), pp. 369-70; Clayton, *The cult*, p. 146; Kitzinger, *Studies*, p. 805.

³² Unfortunately, no evidence of the pictorial program of Saint Peter's church at Wearmouth has survived, but it is likely that the image of the Virgin referred to by Bede would have been iconic. Narrative cycles were employed at this time, as Bede states that the churches of Wearmouth and Jarrow had scenes from the gospels and 'paintings of the history of the Lord' (*dominicae historiae picturas*). According to Kitzinger, Benedict Biscop 'set up a contrast between "iconic" imagery near the altar and narrative scenes on the side walls'. Clayton suggests that the narrative panels may have included Infancy cycles; if so, she suggests that the church dedicated to the Virgin at Wearmouth may have been the most likely location. See Plummer, *Historia Abbatum*, pp. 368-70, especially p. 373; Kitzinger, *Studies*, p. 805; Clayton, *The cult*, pp. 146-47; Paul Meyvaert, 'Bede and the church paintings at Wearmouth and Jarrow', *Anglo-Saxon England* 8 (1979), pp. 63-77; Lawrence Nees, 'The iconographic program of decorated chancel barriers in the pre-iconoclastic period', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 46 (1983), pp. 15-26.

³³ Clayton, *The cult*, p. 147. The poem by Æthilwald was written sometime before AD 705, and the images of the Virgin are described as 'having heads which shone golden in the light'. It is unclear exactly what this means; however, Clayton has suggested that it could mean that they were bust-pictures or gilded-glass pictures, or, alternatively, could simply refer to golden haloes shown above the heads of the figures.

church at Canterbury possessed a panel painting of Christ which Saint Augustine had allegedly brought with him when he met the King of Kent in AD 597.³⁴ Mary Clayton believes that, in England, the cult of the Virgin was primarily imported from Rome. She argues that ‘the early dedications to Mary are in imitation of Roman dedications, the feasts came from there, Mediterranean images provided models for English ones, and liturgical texts were imported into England from Italy’.³⁵

The Irish sources reveal a similar decorative scheme to the one detailed by Bede in the church of Wearmouth. In Cogitosus’ *Life of Saint Brigid*, he describes how the church of Kildare was decorated with pictures (*decorata pictis tabulis*) and states that it had ornamented doors and windows.³⁶ Cogitosus also describes a wooden partition in the church which was covered with a linen cloth; the cloth was decorated with holy images, much like the chancel screen in Wearmouth.³⁷ Cogitosus does not state whether these images included iconic or narrative Infancy scenes, nor does he state where the decorated artefacts came from. But in light of the Roman origins of the Anglo-Saxon images described by Bede and Æthilwald, a similar Mediterranean origin seems probable for the Irish objects.³⁸

In his *De Locis Sanctis (On the holy places)*, Adomnán (d. AD 704) also makes reference to holy images, but rather than recording an image which he had seen with his

³⁴ Henry, *Irish art (to 800 AD)*, p. 90. It is impossible to determine exactly what this icon would have looked like, although Françoise Henry and Thomas Noble both argue for a Roman origin. While recounting the meeting between Augustine and King Æthelberht of Kent, Bede states that Augustine and his companions were ‘bearing as their standard a silver cross and an image of our Lord and Saviour painted on a panel. They chanted litanies and uttered prayers to the Lord for their own eternal salvation and the salvation of those for whom and to whom they had come’. See B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, eds and trans. *Bede’s ‘Ecclesiastical History of the English People’* (Oxford, 1969) I.25, p. 75 for the quotation from Bede; Thomas F.X. Noble, *Images, iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009), p. 114; Peter Brown, *Society and the holy in late antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982; repr. 1989), p. 277.

³⁵ Clayton, *The cult*, p. 269.

³⁶ Henry, *Irish art (to 800 AD)*, pp. 89-90.

³⁷ Henry cites the text from Cogitosus as follows: ‘*paries decorates et imaginibus depictus, ac linteaminibus tectus*’. Henry also believes that the decorative scheme in Saint Peter’s, Wearmouth, was ‘the exact equivalent of that at Kildare’. See Henry, *Irish art (to 800 AD)*, p. 90.

³⁸ Henry also argues for a similar origin for the Irish panels, suggesting that they were ‘either definitely brought from Rome, or in some cases from the East’. See Henry, *Irish art (to 800 AD)*, p. 90.

own eyes, he functions merely as a conduit for the record of another's experiences. Upon returning from pilgrimage to Rome, Constantinople and the Holy Land, the Gallic bishop Arculf related the details of his journey to Adomnán. Arculf spoke of visiting a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary in Josaphat, where she had allegedly died and was buried.³⁹ He also described a cloth he had seen in Jerusalem that was believed to have been woven by the Virgin herself, which bore images of Christ and the apostles, and described the punishment of persons who had profaned sacred images of the Virgin and Saint George.⁴⁰ Although Adomnán does not provide any personal commentary on Arculf's tale, it nevertheless serves to demonstrate that the insular world was aware of the history associated with images and relics of the Virgin abroad.

The influence of Roman art on the Irish crosses has been a common theme amongst cross scholars. Similarities between the artistic programs of the Irish high crosses and the Roman sarcophagi have been cited with some frequency, particularly by Dorothy Hoogland Verkerk, who argues for the necessity of a 'methodological framework that links the sarcophagi and the crosses both historically and ideologically, and avoids the periphery/periphery model which has placed the crosses outside the mainstream of medieval artistic production'.⁴¹ The presence of Irish monks on the continent is well-documented, and in addition to the Irish monastic foundations that existed on the

³⁹ Clayton, *The cult*, p. 14. The text reads: 'In the eastern portion of it is an altar, and at the right-hand side of the altar is the empty stone sepulchre of the holy Mary, where she was once laid to rest. But how, or when, or by what persons her holy remains were removed from this sepulchre, no one, it is said, can know for certain' (*in cuius orientale parte altarium habetur, ad dexteram uero eius patrem Mariae saxum inest uacuum sepulchrum, in quo aliquando sepulta pausauit. Sed de eodem sepulchro quo modo uel quo tempore aut a quibus personis sanctum corpusculum eius sit sublatum uel in quo loco resurrectionem expectat nullus, ut refert, pro certo scire potest*). See Denis Meehan, ed, *Adomnán's 'De Locis Sanctis'*, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 3 (Dublin, 1958), pp. 58-59. Bede also commented on the Virgin's sepulchre, stating '*ad eius dexteram monumentum uacuum, in quo sancta Maria aliquando pausasse dicitur, sed a quo uel quando sit ablata, nescitur* (at its right an empty sepulchre in which the holy Mary was once said to have rested but it is not known by whom or when it was taken)'. See Clayton, *The cult*, p. 16 for the quote, and for further discussion of the Virgin's death and possible resting place see pp. 14-24. For a discussion of pilgrimage sites in Rome dedicated to the Virgin and their relationship to images, see Gerhard Wolf, 'Icons and sites: cult images of the Virgin in medieval Rome', in *Images of the Mother of God: perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Aldershot, 1988), pp. 23-50.

⁴⁰ Noble, *Images*, pp. 33, 115; Mary Rubin, *Mother of God: a history of the Virgin Mary* (London, 2009), p. 60; Meehan, *De Locis Sanctis*, p. 57. See also Robin Cormack, *Painting the soul: icons, death masks, and shrouds* (London, 1997).

⁴¹ Verkerk, 'Pilgrimage', p. 9.

continent, such as the church of Columbanus at Bobbio, Irish pilgrimage had been a common practice from the sixth century onwards.⁴² Colum Hourihane argues that these pilgrimage routes may have provided channels for the transmission of continental art and iconography to Ireland, a sentiment echoed by Verkerk, who argues that the Irish crosses were a direct response to the Roman pilgrimage experience.⁴³ The Irish monks who went on pilgrimage often brought back relics and other artefacts, which may have had a direct effect on the Irish artists. For example, Cumian's letter (c. AD 630) specifically refers to relics brought back from abroad and various miracles associated with them.⁴⁴ A delegation from Armagh also went on pilgrimage to Rome c. AD 640, and while the sources do not refer to any specific artefacts being brought back on this occasion, it is reasonable to assume that they would have brought back relics and other artefacts from their journey. Clearly, then, there is a precedent for Roman art directly influencing the Irish high crosses, and this was likely accomplished via pilgrimage routes. This theory is confirmed by Roger Stalley, who argues that 'if Anglo-Saxon visitors to Rome came back with relics, pictures, books and other souvenirs, it is hard to believe that the Irish visitors returned empty handed'.⁴⁵

The tendency to relate the art of the high crosses to the art of the Carolingians has been long-attested, with scholars such as Françoise Henry⁴⁶ and Peter Harbison⁴⁷

⁴² Hourihane, 'De camino ignis', p. 61. See also T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'The social background to Irish peregrinatio', *Celtica* 11 (1976), pp. 43-59.

⁴³ Hourihane, 'De camino ignis', p. 61; Verkerk, 'Pilgrimage', p. 9.

⁴⁴ See Maura Walsh and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, eds, *Cumian's letter 'De controuersia paschali' together with a related Irish computistical tract 'De ratione computandi'*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Studies and Texts 86 (Toronto, 1988); Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland, 400-1200* (London, 1995), pp. 152-154. There has been some confusion about exactly when the relics were brought back from Rome, as there appear to have been two separate missions—one in the 630s, and one in the 640s. See also Verkerk, 'Pilgrimage', p. 10; Stalley, 'European art', p. 153.

⁴⁵ Stalley, 'European art', p. 153.

⁴⁶ Henry, 'Around an inscription', p. 44. See also Stalley, 'European art', p. 141.

⁴⁷ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 311. Harbison does not believe that Carolingian ivories constitute a direct influence, but believes that frescoes, especially those from Mústair, are a more likely source. He has also suggested that Carolingian stucco workers may have come to Ireland during the reign of Louis the Pious; however, no archaeological evidence exists to support this theory. See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, pp. 328-29

arguing that Carolingian art (and more specifically ivories⁴⁸ and frescoes) was a possible source for the Irish crosses. Other scholars, such as Roger Stalley, have questioned this association, and Stalley has argued that ‘the existence of related images in both Irish and Carolingian art... does not in itself establish direct connections between them’.⁴⁹ While the subject matter of some Carolingian and Irish art is similar, the iconography is certainly not identical, and the styles show even fewer similarities. The elaborate, ornate, and life-like images coming from the Carolingian court look nothing like the more primitive, stylized Irish figures.⁵⁰ In terms of scene selection, Stalley was certainly correct in his argument, as similar subject matter should not be taken as evidence of a direct link, because, being biblical, these scenes occur in a variety of places and are not limited to Ireland and Francia. What does seem to be paralleled between the Irish and Carolingian art is the preference for narrative rather than iconic depictions; but, as narratives were also prevalent in Rome at this time, this, again, is not evidence of a direct link between the two.

Peter Harbison has recently revised his earlier argument, which placed the construction of the crosses during the reign of Louis the Pious, and now believes that a large group of the pre-twelfth century crosses should be re-dated to the last quarter of the ninth century, and that the Irish crosses may have been directly influenced by art

⁴⁸ Roger Stalley has demonstrated that there is no archaeological or historical evidence to suggest that the Irish monasteries possessed Carolingian ivory plaques or ivory book-covers. See Stalley, ‘European art’, p. 146.

⁴⁹ Stalley, ‘European art’, p. 142. Stalley has not completely discounted the possibility of Carolingian influences, but has largely argued in favour of Early Christian influences, while acknowledging that some elements found on the crosses must derive purely from local traditions; these traditions may have existed in Ireland long before the high crosses were constructed. Judith Calvert has also questioned whether ivories constituted a direct link with the Irish crosses. See also Judith Calvert, ‘The early development of high crosses and their relationship to Scottish sculpture in the ninth and tenth centuries’ (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, 1978), pp. 185-87.

⁵⁰ Stalley has argued that the figures on the Irish high crosses do not appear to demonstrate any direct influence from Carolingian figural style, citing elements such as penannular brooches and local clothing styles as evidence of their distinctly Irish character. He argues that, if the sculptors of the high crosses did have Carolingian models in their possession, then they clearly ‘remained unimpressed by their stylistic and decorative quality’. See Stalley, ‘European art’, p. 146.

commissioned by the Carolingian Emperor Charles the Bald (AD 843-877).⁵¹ Harbison has suggested that ‘the comparatively uniform standard of iconographical presentation among the North Leinster/Midland crosses would... suggest the importation of their biblical models not in stages and on a variety of media, but all together in a single campaign and format’, and that this transmission would have been via Carolingian artists relocating to Ireland shortly after the death of Charles the Bald in October AD 877.⁵² This theory is intriguing, in that it suggests a Carolingian influence that would have been transmitted not by means of a physical work of art, but via the artists themselves. Whether the artists brought with them actual works of art, or simply their ideas, is uncertain; but it sets a precedent for the theory that Carolingian court politics and secular events directly influenced the Irish high crosses. However, not only do the Marian panels fail to demonstrate a uniform iconographic scheme, but the dating of the crosses to the final decades of the ninth century also seems unlikely; the earlier dating of the first half of the ninth century, shortly after the completion of the monasteries of Kells (AD 814) and Castledermot (AD 811) and the relocation of the Columban community from Iona seems more plausible.⁵³ And while undoubtedly the death of Charles the Bald would have had far-reaching consequences, it seems more likely that another major political issue affecting the Carolingians, the Second Iconoclasm period, would have had a bigger impact, both in Francia and possibly in Ireland.⁵⁴ The date of this renewed wave of iconoclastic debates, involving Byzantium and the Carolingian

⁵¹ Peter Harbison, ‘An Irish stroke of European genius: Irish high crosses and the Emperor Charles the Bald’, in *Insular and Anglo-Saxon art and thought in the early medieval period*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Publication forthcoming, expected Autumn 2011).

⁵² Harbison, ‘Stroke of European genius’, p. 13.

⁵³ Henry believes that ‘there is a probability, but no more, that the cross of the tower at Kells belongs to a time very near the foundation of the monastery in the first decade of the ninth century. The same probability exists in the case of Castledermot, where one at least of the crosses may date to shortly after the foundation (AD 812). So that, taking all these elements into account, most of the figured crosses may date to the ninth century and first half of the tenth’. See Henry, *Irish high crosses*, p. 60.

⁵⁴ The Carolingians did not approach the image issue with as much zeal and controversy as the Byzantines—instead, they acknowledged Rome’s primacy, and were careful not to rebuke or contradict Rome’s stance on images explicitly, while maintaining their belief that images and icons should be neither be destroyed nor encouraged.

empire, occurred from AD 815-42,⁵⁵ and therefore would coincide closely with the suspected date of construction for the Irish high crosses.⁵⁶

Chapter Four therefore details the history of the iconoclastic debates, while analyzing the effect that this controversy had on the depiction of Marian images, particularly in Byzantium and Rome. As a reaction to iconoclasm, a new type of Marian image was developed by the papacy in the eighth century; depictions of the Virgin were no longer strictly devotional, but were now imbued with a complex political message that served as a direct response to iconoclasm. This new type of Marian image, known as the *Maria Regina*, is compared to the iconic Virgin and Child images found in the Iona group, and the possibility that the Ionan artists may have been promoting a similar message of Roman primacy and papal authority as the Roman Marian images is discussed. In addition to the effects that the first phase of iconoclasm (AD 726-87) had on depictions of the Virgin, Chapter Four details the effects that the second phase of iconoclasm (AD 815-42) had on Marian images, and suggests that it may have been this event which precipitated the typological shift from iconic Virgin and Child portraits to narrative Infancy scenes. At roughly the same time that the Irish high crosses were being constructed, several papal artefacts were commissioned, which not only employed Marian images to respond to the renewed outbreak of iconoclasm, but actually featured complete Infancy cycles; thus, the possibility that the artistic and political developments

⁵⁵ The first mention of the Carolingians becoming involved in the image debate occurs in the Royal Frankish Annals in AD 824, which reads: ‘among other things, finally, pertaining to their mission, they brought forth something concerning the veneration of images, on account of which they said they were going to go to Rome to consult the bishop of the apostolic see’. For a contemporary source on the Carolingian stance on images, the *Opus Caroli Regis contra synodum* (also called the *Libri Carolini*), was written in the 790s by Theodulf of Orléans at the behest of Charlemagne as a response to the Second Council of Nicaea in AD 787. This document promotes two main points: 1. Images should be neither destroyed nor worshipped, and 2. Images are acceptable for decoration (but not veneration). See Noble, *Images*, pp. 244-86 for a full discussion on the Carolingian response to the second phase of iconoclasm, and p. 255 for the reference to the Royal Frankish Annals.

⁵⁶ Henry states that ‘there would be nothing surprising in the arrival in Ireland at that time of Oriental sculptors, not only when the pressure of Arab occupation began to make itself felt too heavily in the Near East, but also at the time when the iconoclastic quarrel was turning the work of painter or sculptor in the Byzantine Empire into an uncertain, if not dangerous occupation’. However, the possibility that foreign artists were personally coming to Ireland and creating the crosses seems unlikely, as the crosses demonstrate a uniquely Irish style and iconographic program. However, the concept that external forces and ideas were directly contributing to the development of Irish imagery is intriguing, not simply on a stylistic basis, but also on an ideological basis. See Henry, *Irish Art (to 800 AD)*, p. 133.

in Rome may have similarly influenced the Irish artists is suggested. Rather than simply analyzing the iconography to determine possible models as previous scholars have done, this study attempts to go a step further and seeks to provide a historical and methodological framework to determine whether contemporary political events relating to the first and second phases of iconoclasm may have influenced the art of the high crosses, as evidenced by the Infancy panels.

While an analysis of the broader European historical context of the eighth and ninth century is essential to understanding the political function of Marian images, it is equally important to understand the Irish historical context, in order to determine whether local politics may have similarly influenced the development of the Infancy cycles. In terms of the Irish monastic situation, the basic unit of organization was divided into a confederation, or *paruchia*. Initially, the Irish churches appear to have followed the continental model of church organization, which featured churches in a clearly defined geographic area which were ruled by bishops. But from c. AD 600 onward, there was a shift in the makeup of the Irish *paruchia*. After this time, the monastic *paruchia* was no longer considered a unit based on clearly defined territorial boundaries,⁵⁷ but instead was comprised of a federation of monastic houses and their lesser daughter houses, which could be dispersed geographically. The *paruchiae* were also no longer ruled by bishops, but instead, administrative authority now belonged to the abbot of the mother church.⁵⁸ The *paruchiae* were allegedly founded by a given saint

⁵⁷ The churches comprising a *paruchia* could be distributed throughout different areas, and did not have to be geographically near to each other to belong to the same *paruchia*. This type of organization was unique, and there were no parallels on the continent. See Hughes, *The Church*, pp. 63-64, Colmán Etchingham, 'The implications of *paruchia*', *Ériu* 44 (1993), p. 149; Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland*, pp. 147-50.

⁵⁸ Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland*, p. 147. Ó Cróinín states that although their administrative jurisdiction was marginalized, bishops continued to exist in the Irish church as they were still necessary, particularly for sacramental duties. Hughes asserts that the bishops continued to fulfill their ecclesiastical function, but the abbot's authority was so unquestioned that 'a bishop might be forced into action of which he disapproved'. According to Bede, the monastery of Iona was similarly organized, as he states: 'This island always has an abbot for its ruler, who is a priest, to whose authority the whole province, including the bishops, are subject—an unusual order of things in which they follow the example of their first teacher [Columba], who was not a bishop, but a priest and monk'. See Colgrave and Mynors, *Ecclesiastical history*, pp. 222-24; Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland*, p. 147; Hughes, *The Church*, p. 63 for the quote, and pp. 57-64 for a more general discussion of the origins of the monastic *paruchiae*. For an alternative view which questions the use of the term '*paruchia*' in reference to non-territorial confederations, see Richard Sharpe, 'Some problems concerning the organization of the church in early

or one of the saint's disciples, and the founder's personal monastery traditionally functioned as the mother-house of the *paruchia*. The emergence of rival monastic *paruchiae* in the seventh century resulted in a 'propaganda war' between rival monastic foundations in the form of hagiographies, as each *paruchia* tried to advance their claims of ecclesiastical primacy through propagandistic *Lives* of their respective saints. The major contenders for primacy were the *paruchia* of Patrick (based at Armagh),⁵⁹ the *paruchia* of Brigid (based at Kildare),⁶⁰ and the *paruchia* of Columba (based at Iona).

In the course of his iconographic analysis of the iconic Virgin and Child scene on the cross at Drumcliff, Peter Harbison suggested that the similarities between this icon and the Iona group Virgins may indicate that they were derived from a similar prototype, and one which was 'well known to and presumably venerated within the family of Columban monasteries known as the *paruchia Columbae*'.⁶¹ Jane Hawkes also suggested a relationship between monasteries which were traditionally associated with the *paruchia* of Columba and the extant iconic Virgin and Child panels.⁶² She concludes that the Northumbrian sculptures were probably more directly influenced by

medieval Ireland', *Peritia* 3 (1984) [1986], pp. 230-70. For a discussion of the term '*paruchia*' and its usage in the early Hiberno-Latin materials, particularly hagiographies and canon law, see Etchingham, 'Implications of *paruchia*', pp. 139-62.

⁵⁹ However, there is no documentary evidence to prove that Patrick was ever in Armagh. Although the extant evidence regarding Patrick's life is minimal, it points to Downpatrick as the main focus of his activities, rather than Armagh. Even his biographer, Muirchú, indicates that Downpatrick was Patrick's burial place. See Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland*, p. 155.

⁶⁰ Interestingly, none of the surviving crosses which display Marian scenes were associated with the *paruchia* of Brigid, based at Kildare. This lack of Marian imagery seems particularly odd for a *paruchia* which was dedicated to a virginal female saint, especially one who later became known as 'Mary of the Gaels'. The evidence presented above demonstrates that the church of Kildare was definitely decorated with images, as detailed by Cogitosus. Whether any of these images were of the Virgin Mary or scenes from the Infancy of Christ cycle is uncertain, but it certainly suggests that monasteries belonging to the *paruchia* of Brigid, and specifically the church at Kildare, would have been an ideal place to display Marian imagery, and makes the current lack of Marian depictions there striking in their absence. It is also possible that there were originally crosses with Marian imagery located at Brigidine monasteries, but that they no longer survive.

⁶¹ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 246.

⁶² Hawkes argues that 'some of the earliest carved versions [of the Virgin and Child] lay in "Columban" contexts (at centres known to have been within, or at one time closely associated with, the Columban community). This raises a question about the possible role of these "Columban" images in the production of Virgin and Child schemes elsewhere in the insular world'. See Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', p. 109.

associations with the cult of Saint Cuthbert than the Columban *familia*, whereas elsewhere, particularly in Ireland, the image may have served to recall the memory of the Iona Virgin and Child images.⁶³ But the idea that the iconic Virgin and Child was simply a mnemonic device intended to recall the monastery of Iona seems unsatisfactory, and raises a number of questions—why would the monks of Drumcliff (and possibly, if Kelly’s identification is accepted, the monks at Carndonagh) feel the need to visually invoke the memory of Iona? If this is a symbol that is representative of the Columban monastic *familia*, why is it not found at other known Columban centres in Ireland, such as Durrow? Were the narrative Infancy panels that feature the Virgin also intended to invoke the memory of Iona? Thus, the first section of Chapter Five seeks to determine whether the presence of the iconic Virgin and Child scene is somehow an integral element of Columban belief and identity in Ireland, and considers the historical context of eighth-century Ireland to determine whether the political situation would have been favourable to the visual promotion of Columban identity. The second section of Chapter Five suggests a new theory: that, with the typological shift from iconic Marian images to narrative Infancy cycles, there was also a shift in monastic power and promotion of Marian symbolism, as the monasteries with narrative Infancy panels are largely associated with the *paruchia* of Patrick. The historical framework that facilitated the Patrician takeover of the Marian symbol is analyzed in regards to the influence of the secular rulers and the promotion of Armagh’s ecclesiastical supremacy in the early decades of the ninth century. The primary sources, including the annals and hagiographies, are used to demonstrate that the shifting political framework in Ireland in the early ninth century elicited a direct response from the monastic population, and that the Marian symbols are used as expressions of visual politicking and assertions of political power. In addition, the influence of the ascetic Céli Dé sect will be considered, in order to determine whether the renewed asceticism of the ninth century, whether real or perceived, may have affected the iconography of the Irish high crosses.

Unlocking the secrets that surround the Irish high crosses is complicated by the lack of extant contemporary sources pertaining to their function, date, and the meaning

⁶³ Hawkes, ‘Columban Virgins’, pp. 129, 133.

behind their artistic programs. The manipulability of scene selection that characterizes the narrative cycles can only mean one thing: that the scenes were chosen to create a comprehensive scheme that expressed a specific agenda. This message may have been unique to a given monastery, or could have been shared between various monasteries, particularly those belonging to the same *paruchia*. Therefore, the expression of political ideals through the seemingly theological Infancy narratives deserves further consideration as a historical source, as it illuminates the beliefs and attitudes of the monasteries that visually promote them. This unique theory, centering on the interplay between the artistic and political, the creative and the powerful, allows the crosses to be interpreted in a new way—not merely as sermons in stone, but as political signposts that proclaim the triumph of the church of Rome and declare political supremacy within Ireland. Although this study is limited to the Marian narratives, future studies could utilize the same methodological synthesis of visual and historical evidence to determine whether additional narrative cycles on the high crosses are reflective of the contemporary political situation. Although the political motivations for the narrative Infancy schemes provided here do not necessarily provide precise dating suggestions (as it is impossible to determine the time constraints of ideological transmissions), they serve to provide a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the high crosses included in this study. Leonardo Da Vinci stated that ‘Although nature commences with reason and ends in experience, it is necessary for us to do the opposite, that is, to commence with experience and from this to proceed to investigate the reason’. This study seeks to do precisely that: to begin with the experience of the extant Marian imagery on the Irish high crosses, and to investigate the reason that they were made.

Static Statements: Iconic depictions of the Virgin and Child

The iconic tradition of depicting images of the Virgin Mary has been controversial, devotional, didactic and at times questionable, but for the purposes of this chapter, it now needs to be examined historically in relation to the extant insular depictions of Virgin and Child icons, specifically those found on the Iona group artefacts¹ and the Irish high crosses. This chapter seeks to determine whether the presence of the iconic Virgin and Child scene is somehow an integral element of Columban belief and identity. The history of Marian icons is discussed, and the compositional arrangement of the insular Virgin and Child icons is described in detail to determine whether their iconographic features can be used as a diagnostic tool for their typology. Finally, the theological aspects of the lozenge shape are considered in relation to the Virgin Mary.

The word ‘icon’ simply means ‘image’, and could therefore refer to any visual image regardless of typology, but a clear distinction must be made between icons (*eikones*) and narrative images (*historiai*).² Although icons usually refer to portable images which are often painted on wooden panels and venerated for their miraculous abilities,³ for the purposes of this study, the compositional arrangement of the images is used as the defining element for their typology; concerns such as portability, materials or devotional activities associated with the veneration of the image are not diagnostically relevant in the insular context. Iconic images, then, are those that feature static, front-facing figures,

¹ As described above in the Introduction, the Iona group is comprised of Saint Martin’s and Saint Oran’s cross on Iona, the cross of Kildalton on Islay, and the Book of Kells Virgin and Child page, folio 7v.

² Thomas F.X. Noble, *Images, iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009), p. 28. However, Leslie Brubaker has argued that it is hazardous to define the two categories too strictly, and cautions that ‘modern codification of medieval images into neat categories is often misleading’. But for the purposes of this study, it is essential to clearly define the image types, as the reason behind the typological shift from iconic to narrative images on the high crosses is a crucial research question. For the quote, see Leslie Brubaker, ‘Introduction: the sacred image’, in *The sacred image East and West*, ed. Robert G. Ousterhout and Leslie Brubaker (Urbana-Champaign, 1995), p. 3.

³ See Noble, *Images*, pp. 29-31 for a further discussion of the inherent difficulties in attempting to clearly define the term ‘icon’, as well as a discussion of their perceived miraculous abilities and devotional practices relating to icons. Noble argues that an image is deemed an icon because of its devotional function and the importance that devotees place on the image. He states that an icon is ‘a devotional image that demands reverence and respect; it is holy in the sense that it shares in the sanctity of the figure whose likeness it bears’. For the quote, see Noble, *Images*, p. 21.

which are removed from any historical or biblical context, whereas narrative images are action-based and the figures advance the story.

Despite the fact that there are very few details about the life of the Virgin Mary in the canonical gospels,⁴ the use of the Virgin as a subject of devotional icons became increasingly popular after her designation as the *Theotokos* (God-bearer) at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431.⁵ By the sixth century, iconic depictions of the Virgin and Child showed Mary removed from any narrative context and elevated her to ‘the prime female figure of Christian devotion’.⁶ Theologically speaking, the emphasis of the early icons was two-fold, as it highlighted Mary’s intercessory role, while also serving as a visual representation of the mystery of the Incarnation.⁷ The emphasis on Mary as the human mother of Christ served as a reminder of the human elements of Jesus, thus highlighting the dual nature of Christ, both human and divine.⁸ The iconic images of the

⁴ Only the Gospels of Matthew and Luke describe Jesus’ infancy. The Gospels of Mark and John do not provide any information on Christ’s birth or childhood, and begin their narratives when Jesus is an adult. Much of the information written about the life and death of the Virgin comes from later patristic and apocryphal sources. See Raymond E. Brown, *The birth of the Messiah: a commentary on the Infancy narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (New York, 1993); Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: a history of the Virgin Mary* (London, 2009), pp. 4-8. For a discussion of the Virgin in patristic writings, see Luigi Gambero, *Mary and the fathers of the church: the Blessed Virgin Mary in patristic thought*, trans. Thomas Buffer (San Francisco, 1999); Mary Clayton, *The cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 3-8.

⁵ Ioli Kalavrezou, ‘Exchanging embrace: the body of salvation’, in *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Aldershot, 1988), p. 104.; Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 46. The mosaics in the Roman church of Santa Maria Maggiore may have constituted a direct visual response to the outcome of the Council of Ephesus and Mary’s designation as the *Theotokos*. Erik Thunø believes that the design of the triumphal arch ‘was certainly a statement on the dogma of the two natures, and hence, a recognition of the Virgin’s divine motherhood’. The practice of using the symbol of the Virgin to directly respond to contemporary issues of orthodoxy and church authority, particularly in Rome, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four. For the quote, see Erik Thunø, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome* (Rome, 2002), p. 173.

⁶ Kalavrezou, ‘Exchanging Embrace’, p. 104. See also Clayton, *The cult*, p. 146.

⁷ Kalavrazou, ‘Exchanging Embrace’, p. 104; Gerhard Wolf, ‘Icons and sites: cult images of the Virgin in medieval Rome’, in *Images of the Mother of God*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Aldershot, 1988), p. 23.

⁸ The concept of Christ’s dual nature was expressly defined in AD 451 at the Council of Chalcedon, and placed into the credal formulation: ‘begotten before the ages from the Father as regards his divinity, and in the last days the same for us and for our salvation from Mary, the virgin God-bearer, as regards his humanity; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, acknowledged in two-natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no separation...’. See Norman P. Tanner, ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington, DC, 1990), p. 86. See also Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 48.

Virgin and Child were not derived from any specific biblical text, but were often used as a way to illustrate abstract concepts of ‘church authority and dogma’.⁹

Although the theological message of the Marian icons was often the same, focusing on Mary’s role in the Incarnation and highlighting the dual human and divine nature of Christ, from its earliest stages of development, the Marian symbol developed a subtext of political power and imperial authority, particularly in Constantinople. After her designation as the *Theotokos* in AD 431, the figure of Mary began to attract Byzantine imperial patronage as the emperors began patronizing churches dedicated to her,¹⁰ and from the sixth century on, iconic representations of the Virgin proliferated in Byzantium, as Mary was adopted as the patron saint of the empire; this was particularly true of Constantinople, as the Virgin was considered the protectress of the city.¹¹ The symbol of the Virgin became increasingly associated with imperial power and authority, and her salvific power was not limited to the afterlife, but gradually became associated with protection and deliverance from enemies in the earthly realm. This is evidenced most clearly in the literary sources, particularly the *Akathistos* hymn, which directly relates the Virgin to the concept of imperial victory by describing her as ‘the diadem of pious kings’, ‘impregnable wall of the kingdom’, ‘immovable tower of the church’, and

⁹ Kalavrezou, ‘Exchanging Embrace’, p. 104.

¹⁰ The first church to be dedicated to the Virgin, called the *protoktistos* (or ‘first-built’) was built in the former Constantinian palace, the Daphne, and is dated to sometime before the middle of the fifth century. Additional Marian foundations included the chapel of the Blachernai, which allegedly housed relics of Mary’s robe, and the church of the *Theotokos* Chalkoprateia, which claimed to have relics of Mary’s girdle. In the sixth century, the monasteries at Pege and Hiereia were also dedicated to the Virgin. See Bissera V. Pentcheva, *Icons and power: the mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 2006) p. 12; Noble, *Images*, p. 130; Rubin, *Mother of God*, pp. 66, 71; Christine Angelidi and Titos Papamastorakis, ‘Picturing the spiritual protector: from *Blachernitissa* to *Hodegetria*’, in *Images of the Mother of God*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Aldershot, 1988), p. 210. Pentcheva argues that the rise in the imperial usage of the Virgin in the Byzantine court was caused by the fact that Mary ‘appropriated the functions of the former civic deities such as Tyche and Victoria and in doing so legitimized and protected imperial power’. For further discussion of the amalgamation of the figure of the Virgin with the former civic deities, see Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, p. 12

¹¹ Noble, *Images*, p. 32.

stating that through her, ‘trophies are raised up and enemies fall’.¹² In the seventh-century accounts of the Avar siege (AD 626), the Virgin was also described as being physically present during the battles, walking the city walls of Constantinople and engaging in hand-to-hand combat with the invaders.¹³ The source of her military prowess was believed to stem from her perpetual virginity, which remained intact before, during, and after Christ’s birth;¹⁴ the concept of her triple virginity was also expressed visually in icons, by means of the triple dot or triple star motif found in *Hodegetria* icons.

Although it would be reasonable to assume that dedication to the Virgin was reflective of female devotion and piety, this may not necessarily have been the case. Liz James has argued that there is no evidence of ‘persistent devotion’ to the Virgin demonstrated by any of the Byzantine empresses, and that the evidence from church building and relic-collection does not constitute an overwhelming display of female patronage.¹⁵ In fact, it is the emperors, rather than the empresses, who demonstrate more devotion to the Virgin;¹⁶ this may be because of the imperial and militaristic

¹² Pentcheva, *Icons and power*, pp. 12-13.

¹³ Pentcheva, *Icons and power*, p. 64. For example, the text of the seventh-century account of the Avar siege reads: ‘Upon slaughtering the enemies in the hands of the Christian soldiers, she brought down to earth the aggression of the barbarians and enfeebled their whole army. [...] [The intervention of the Virgin Mary] gave courage to our [soldiers], who knew her power through experience and believed that it was truly the Theometor who would protect her city and fight. So, from then on throughout the day, arrows and stones flew and different local close military engagements occurred along the whole wall. And the Virgin appeared everywhere, winning uncontested victory and inflicting horror and fear on the enemies.’ See Pentcheva, *Icons and power*, p. 64 for this translation. See also Averil Cameron, ‘Images of authority: elites and icons in sixth-century Byzantium’, *Past and Present* 84 (1979), pp. 5-6.

¹⁴ Pentcheva, *Icons and power*, p. 64.

¹⁵ Liz James, ‘The Empress and the Virgin in early Byzantium: piety, authority and devotion’ in *Images of the Mother of God*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Aldershot, 1988), p. 150.

¹⁶ For example, Justinian II (AD 565-78) displayed the Virgin on the imperial seals, and later ninth-century emperors also used her symbol on imperial coinage. The Constantinopolitan civic deities whom Mary came to replace, particularly Tyche and Victoria, had also been closely associated with the emperor and served as guarantors of the emperor’s imperial power and militaristic victory. See Pentcheva, *Icons and power*, pp. 16-20.

connotations associated with her.¹⁷ The Virgin is also never shown in the dress of an empress in the Byzantine iconic depictions.¹⁸ James has argued that this may have been due to the fact that depicting the Virgin as an empress could have been interpreted as overtly linking the empress with the heavenly realm,¹⁹ thus associating her with the divine and elevating her status above that of the emperor.

Several different icon-types can be used to illustrate the Virgin and Child, including the *Hodegetria*, *Nikopoia*, *Maria Angelorum*, *Eleousa*, and *Galaktotrophousa* (or *Maria Lactans*). The Greek word *Hodegetria* is translated as ‘the one who shows the way’, and refers to the Virgin Mary’s elongated fingers as she points to the Child with her right hand, as if presenting him to the viewer and directing focus to Christ.²⁰ This icon is identifiable by the Virgin’s frontal gaze and the three star shapes present, one on each of the Virgin’s shoulders and one on her forehead, representing her triple virginity. It is interesting to note that the Virgin in the Book of Kells displays a lozenge-shaped brooch on her right shoulder, much like other *Hodegetria* type icons, and it is possible that the Child’s body is obscuring a similar lozenge shape on her left shoulder. The iconographic origins of this type are based on the icon of the *Hodegetria* kept at the Hodegon monastery of Constantinople, which, according to legend, was said to have been painted by the evangelist Luke during Mary and Jesus’ lifetime, and subsequently

¹⁷ Particularly in the fifth century, a woman’s vow of perpetual virginity did not necessarily indicate direct devotion to the Virgin Mary; rather, the vow actually signified that the female devotee was a ‘bride of Christ’, thus making the dedication Christological, rather than explicitly Mariological. See James, ‘The Empress’, p. 146.

¹⁸ James, ‘The Empress’, p. 152; Pentcheva, *Icons and power*, p. 55.

¹⁹ James, ‘The Empress’, p. 152.

²⁰ Dorothy Kelly has referred specifically to the ‘attitude of presentation’ that is often discernible in *Hodegetria* icons. It is this feature, rather than the body position, which is used as a diagnostic tool for this type of icon. Kelly believes that ‘traces of this type of iconography’ are present in the insular icons. See Kelly, ‘The Virgin and Child in Irish sculpture’, in *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Belfast, 1995), p. 200.

sent to Constantinople in the fifth century as a gift to the virgin empress Pulcheria by her sister-in-law, the empress Eudokia.²¹

The *Nikopoia* means ‘bringer of victory’, and also depicts the Christ Child seated on his mother’s lap. The Virgin faces forward, and although she supports the Child, she does not point to him as directly as she does in the *Hodegetria*. According to *the International Marian Research Institute at the University of Dayton, Ohio*, ‘this solemn and majestic pose is often accompanied by two angels holding the orb and the sceptre at either side and as part of the frame’,²² and therefore it is often associated with the *Maria Angelorum* type. The addition of the flanking angels is seen in the Book of Kells, as well as on the three iconic panels from the Iona group crosses, and the framing nature of the angels’ wings joining together above the Virgin’s head is also repeated on these monuments.

The *Eleousa* is known as the ‘Virgin of kindness or tenderness’, and depicts the Virgin in a tender and more affectionate way than the previous types. The Virgin and Child are shown embracing in a less formal manner than in the *Hodegetria* and *Nikopoia* icons; their faces are usually touching, their bodies are less rigid than the previous types and they are often slightly reclined. The Child looks towards his mother, but the Virgin maintains a frontal stare. The focus of this icon type is Jesus’ human nature, and is not as focused on his divine nature as the *Hodegetria* type.

The *Galaktotrophousa* (or *Maria Lactans*), meaning ‘she who nourishes with milk’, is similar to the *Eleousa* type in that it shows a more affectionate Virgin; however, it has the added element of the Virgin being shown breast-feeding the Child. Although this

²¹ Pentcheva, *Icons and power*, p. 109. This type of image was known as the *achieropoiotos*, the ‘image not made by human hands’, and referred specifically to images that were considered to be ‘authentic’ because they were either made by holy persons during their lifetime, or their creation was directly sanctioned by God. The existence of *achieropoiotos* images was used by later iconophiles to justify the use of holy images during the eighth-century image controversy. See Noble, *Images*, p. 33; also Peter Brown, *Society and the holy in late antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982; repr. 1989), p. 262. Liz James has argued that the empress Pulcheria’s association with relics of the Virgin is complicated and is derived mainly from later sources preserved in fourteenth-century texts, meaning that any claims about Pulcheria’s devotion to the Virgin or her possession of Marian relics, particularly the original *Hodegetria* icon, is questionable. See James, ‘The Empress’, p. 148.

²² The Marian Library/International Marian Research Institute, Dayton, Ohio. Created by J.C. Tierney. Last modified Monday, 10/06/2008 15:14:27 EDT by Kelly Bodner. <<http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/questions/yq/yq162.html>>.

type of Marian icon has been a minor subject in Christian art and was not widely used until the thirteenth century,²³ it nevertheless appears on artefacts from at least the sixth century.²⁴ This icon-type was directly influenced by earlier Egyptian depictions of the goddess Isis who, by late antiquity, was the most widely venerated goddess in the Graeco-Roman world.²⁵ The visual amalgamation of Isis and the Virgin likely began through the use of similar language and practice relating to both women, and, according to Thomas F. Mathews and Norman Muller, the term *Theotokos* is first used in Egypt as ‘an Alexandrine *theologoumenon* for the mystery of the Incarnation’.²⁶ Like Mary, Isis was called the ‘great Virgin’ and was considered to be the god-bearer because of her role as mother of the divine god Horus (Harpocrates).²⁷ In terms of visual imagery, Isis is usually shown seated on a throne, facing forward, with her infant son sitting on her lap. Her eyes do not directly engage with the viewer, and she appears to gaze off into the distance, in what has been described as the ‘Isis look’.²⁸ The same detached look has been identified in several early Marian icons, including the Sinai Mother of God, where the Virgin is similarly shown in a seated and front-facing position.²⁹ In addition to being enthroned and front-facing, Isis is often shown nursing her son, Horus. Horus usually

²³ Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 42.

²⁴ The earliest group of *Galaktotrophousa* icons comes from Late Antique Egypt. See Elizabeth S. Bolman, ‘The enigmatic Coptic *Galaktotrophousa*’ in *Images of the Mother of God*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Aldershot, 1988), n. 3 for a full catalogue of the earliest known icons of this type.

²⁵ According to Rubin, the cult of Isis spread as far north as Cologne, to Alcazar and Iberia in the west, Carthage in the south, and Syria in the east; but it had a particularly large presence in Greece and Italy. See Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 40.

²⁶ Thomas F. Mathews and Norman Muller, ‘Isis and Mary in early icons’, in *Images of the Mother of God*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Aldershot, 1988), p. 4 for the quote. The term ‘*theologoumenon*’ is defined as a theological statement or opinion.

²⁷ Mathews and Muller, ‘Isis and Mary’, p. 4.

²⁸ Mathews and Muller, ‘Isis and Mary’, p. 8.

²⁹ Mathews and Muller, ‘Isis and Mary’, p. 8.

appears sitting on Isis' left thigh, and although the infant is not always shown actively nursing, Isis's bare breasts are usually visible.³⁰

In Coptic Egypt, six known Marian icons, specifically the *Galaktotrophousa* type, appear as wall-paintings in monastic cells. Elizabeth S. Bolman has presented evidence that the *Galaktotrophousa* type of Virgin and Child icon is not intended to represent Christ's human nature, as previous scholars have suggested, nor is it intended to highlight the intimate relationship between mother and child.³¹ Instead, she suggests that it actually represents the Eucharist, and discusses the possibility that the appearance of a Marian icon signified special devotion to the Virgin. While it is logical to assume that the presence of an icon is evidence of particular devotion to the saint depicted, in this case it cannot be verified with certainty, as the Coptic monasteries where the image is present are mixed in terms of devotional evidence. Three *Galaktotrophousa* paintings were found at the Monastery of Apa Jeremiah (dated to around the seventh century),³² and mention of Mary on many of the monastic tombstones here would seem to suggest devotion to the cult of the Virgin. However, Bolman asserts that the textual evidence indicates the opposite, and argues that 'if the principal textual source for the monastic life in late antique Egypt is any indication, early Coptic monks were certainly not devoted to the Virgin Mary'.³³

³⁰ For example, in reference to a fourth-century painting of Isis in a house of Karanis in the Fayyūm, Mathews and Muller have argued that although her breasts are exposed under her open cloak, she does not actually nurse Horus. She offers her left breast to Horus, but he does not accept it; instead, he places his finger to his lips, 'referring to his role in opening the mouth of the dead for the passage of the soul'. See Mathews and Muller, 'Isis and Mary', p. 8; Martin Werner, 'The Madonna and Child miniature in the Book of Kells', *The Art Bulletin* 54 (1972), p. 5.

³¹ Bolman, 'Coptic *Galaktotrophousa*', p. 16. Bolman argues that because infants were often nursed by a wet nurse, rather than their own mother, and because the average period of nursing was two to three years, the image of nursing was not representative of mother-child intimacy or infant helplessness, and therefore would not have had the same connotations of intimacy and maternal bonding for the late Antique and early Byzantine audience as it would for a modern audience. For an alternative view, see Werner, 'Madonna and Child', p. 4, who argues that this icon-type focused on maternal love and emotional sentiment, thereby creating a 'peculiarly emotional milieu' in Coptic Egypt.

³² Bolman, 'Coptic *Galaktotrophousa*', p. 16-17.

³³ Bolman, 'Coptic *Galaktotrophousa*', p. 16. According to Bolman, the alphabetical collection of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, dated between the fourth and sixth centuries, mentions the Virgin only twice, and she is not the focus of either mention. Another version of the *Apophthegmata* specifically addresses the

At first glance, depictions of the Virgin and Child on insular artefacts appear to be of only one iconographic type, featuring the pair in an arrangement known as the ‘complementary pose’.³⁴ According to Jane Hawkes, ‘iconic portrayals of the Virgin and Child surviving on insular monuments use a limited number of compositional types, which, with one or two exceptions, illustrate the Child held in such a way that his body crosses that of the Virgin’.³⁵ Although the complementary pose has been widely used to determine possible models that may have influenced the Virgin and Child images created in Ireland and Britain, Hawkes maintains that it is not as diagnostically useful as previously believed. She argues that there are actually two different ways that this pose can be portrayed, one with the Child being held across the Virgin’s body, and the second depicting Jesus as completely front-facing before her.³⁶

Hawkes argues that attempting to determine which type of icon may have influenced the insular versions of this scene ‘may be of limited use’³⁷, as the icon-types did not adhere to strict rules governing the iconographic details, and therefore the categorization of icon-types was somewhat flexible. Categorization of the icons is further complicated

Virgin, but not necessarily in a flattering light—when Satan asks a widow why she prays to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, rather than to Mary, the widow replies by asking why she should ‘forsake the Lord and worship a hand maiden?’ At this remark, Satan vanishes.

³⁴ Jane Hawkes, ‘Columban Virgins: iconic images of the Virgin and Child in insular sculpture’, in *Studies in the cult of Saint Columba*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Dublin, 1997), p. 109. The complementary pose was first identified by Ernst Kitzinger, who applied the phrase particularly to the Virgin and Child image on the wooden coffin reliquary of Saint Cuthbert (dated to AD 698) and to the Book of Kells Virgin and Child page, which he saw as related to each other. See Ernst Kitzinger, *Studies in late antique Byzantine and medieval western art*, 2 (London, 2003), pp. 731-46.

³⁵ Hawkes, ‘Columban Virgins’, p. 109.

³⁶ Hawkes, ‘Columban Virgins’ p. 109. Hawkes cites the image above the door of the church of Saint Mary at Deerhurst as a notable exception to the widespread use of the ‘complementary’ pose on insular artefacts. The carving depicts a woman who stands under an architectural structure and faces forward, holding an ‘elliptical medallion’ which, presumably, would have had an image of the Christ Child painted on it. Hawkes believes that the addition of the medallion allows for identification of the Deerhurst icons with an eastern Mediterranean prototype, such as the type found in the frescoes of Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome.

³⁷ Hawkes, ‘Columban Virgins’, p. 109.

by the fact that only a small number of pre-iconoclast examples survive, so comparisons between the insular Marian icons and those from the broader European context are limited.³⁸ Hawkes describes how ‘some of the earliest carved versions [of the Virgin and Child] lay in “Columban” contexts (at centres known to have been within, or at one time closely associated with, the Columban community). This raises a question about the possible role of these “Columban” images in the production of Virgin and Child schemes elsewhere in the insular world’.³⁹ The most obviously ‘Columban’ artefacts to display the iconic Virgin and Child scene are the crosses in the Iona group, namely Saint Martin’s cross, Saint Oran’s cross and the cross of Kildalton on Islay, generally dated to the second half of the eighth century.⁴⁰ On Saint Martin’s cross (Figure 1), the panel appears at the centre of the cross head and is encircled by its own frame, separating the scene from the other scenes on the cross. The panel shows the Virgin seated and facing forward, and the Child is placed on her lap with his legs extended to the viewer’s left. His face does not appear to be turned upwards to the Virgin, but is turned slightly inwards toward her. The placement of the two figures’ hands is unclear, but Hawkes suggests that the Virgin’s left hand could have extended around the Child’s back to support him, and believes that her right arm is placed across his body.⁴¹ On either side of the Virgin and Child, there is a pair of flanking angels. The top two angels’ wings extend above the Virgin’s head, but do not touch; however, the upward curve of the wings does imply a framing arch.

Of the remaining two crosses mentioned above, both the Saint Oran’s (Figure 2) and Kildalton crosses (Figure 3) depict the Virgin as forward-facing, with the Child facing the viewer, and not his mother. This style is much more common, and also features on the cross at Drumcliff. On Saint Oran’s cross, the Virgin is seated, and she cradles the

³⁸ Brubaker has argued that there is literary evidence for the existence of icons from as early as the fourth century, but most of the visual evidence has either disintegrated or been destroyed. Noble estimates the number of surviving pre-iconoclast images to be less than twenty. See Brubaker, ‘Introduction’, p. 3; Noble, *Images*, p. 29.

³⁹ Hawkes, ‘Columban Virgins’, p. 109.

⁴⁰ Hawkes, ‘Columban Virgins’, p. 107.

⁴¹ Hawkes, ‘Columban Virgins’, p. 116.

Child with her left arm as his body points to the viewer's left. The Virgin appears to lean slightly to the right, and is not as strictly upright as the Virgin on Saint Martin's cross. Her halo is clearly visible, and she is flanked by a single angel on either side. Their wings do not fully touch, but create a similar arc to that found on Saint Martin's cross. Similarly, the Kildalton cross shows the Virgin cradling the Child, as his body extends to the viewer's left, and his head is turned towards the viewer. She is more rigidly upright, and the Child's body is smaller than on the other two crosses and may be swaddled, suggesting that he was represented as an infant, rather than a toddler. Two angels appear, one on either side, and their wings touch above the Virgin's head, forming the appearance of an arch.

There are also Virgin and Child icons seen on Columban artefacts in other media. The iconic Virgin and Child image on Saint Cuthbert's coffin (Figure 5) is the earliest surviving insular depiction, dating to AD 698.⁴² The carved wooden coffin was made at Lindisfarne, and the Columban ties are clear as Lindisfarne was founded by Irish monks sent from Iona.⁴³ Hawkes argues that 'although direct *familia* links between the two centres were probably no longer in existence'⁴⁴ by the time the coffin was constructed, they were still relevant, as the Synod of Whitby had brought the Columban community and Iona to the forefront of ecclesiastical debate.⁴⁵ Ernst Kitzinger noted that along with possible references to the Roman mass, the coffin also makes allusions to the liturgy of the Irish Church, which means that the coffin could be representative of both Roman

⁴² Kitzinger, *Studies*, p. 673; Clayton, *The cult*, p. 147; Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', p. 107.

⁴³ Françoise Henry described Lindisfarne as a 'subordinate monastery' of Iona, and discussed how Lindisfarne continued to follow the Iona calculation of Easter during the seventh-century Easter controversy. She argues that Lindisfarne 'became as much a fragment of Ireland abroad as Iona itself'. See Henry, *Irish art in the early Christian period (to 800 AD)* (Ithaca, 1965), pp. 30, 34.

⁴⁴ Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', p. 127.

⁴⁵ The Synod of Whitby was held in AD 664 to address the Easter controversy. Colmán of Lindisfarne, a chief proponent of the 'Celtic' Easter, was defeated at the synod, and the Roman calculation prevailed. The exact relationship between Lindisfarne and Iona is unclear, and Máire Herbert has questioned the extent to which Lindisfarne was administratively linked to Iona; however, she states that due to a lack of sources, the question must remain unanswered. See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry: the history and hagiography of the monastic familia of Columba* (Oxford, 1988), p. 45; Kathleen Hughes, 'Evidence for contacts between the Churches of the Irish and English from the Synod of Whitby to the Viking Age', in *England before the Conquest*, ed. Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 49-67.

and Columban/Ionan liturgical practices.⁴⁶ Hawkes believes that while the coffin ‘cannot be considered a “Columban” artefact in the way that the crosses on Iona might be, its iconography does seem to invoke the Irish Columban inheritance of the Lindisfarne community’.⁴⁷

The image on the coffin itself depicts a seated Virgin, whose body is in three-quarter profile, but who faces forward. She holds the Child across her lap as he gazes out at the viewer, and her left hand is visibly grasping his shoulder. The Child’s hands are no longer visible, but Mary’s right hand is extended, and seems to point to her son in a pose reminiscent of the *Hodegetria* type. Both figures are haloed, and their heads are close enough that the haloes seem to intersect, which might suggest a comparison to the *Eleousa* type; however, the rest of their attributes show a very stiff representation, and thus rule out that possibility. Kitzinger has argued that the figural style was ultimately inspired by a Mediterranean source, but rendered in a uniquely insular way.⁴⁸

Another intriguing Virgin and Child image comes from perhaps the best-known Columban artifact, the Book of Kells (Figure 4). The scene is depicted on folio 7v, and shows the Virgin seated in three-quarter profile on a high-backed throne, with the Child on her lap gazing up towards her. The Child’s left hand clutches at his mother’s breast, and she cradles him with her left arm, and lays her right hand lightly across his lap. There are four winged angels present—two large ones on either side of the Virgin’s

⁴⁶ Kitzinger, *Studies*, pp. 754-59, particularly p. 758. Kitzinger argues that the sculptor of Cuthbert’s coffin arranged the apostolic figures in order based on the litany of the Roman mass, which he believes proves that the canonic order of the apostles was known in Northumbria. However, he concludes that the allusion to the Roman mass is not necessarily indicative of direct Roman influence at Lindisfarne after the Synod of Whitby, as the Roman order of apostles was also well-established in the Irish church by the seventh century. See also Hawkes, ‘Columban Virgins’, p. 127.

⁴⁷ Hawkes, ‘Columban Virgins’, p. 127.

⁴⁸ Kitzinger, *Studies*, p. 785. He argues that the figural sculpture on Cuthbert’s coffin is ‘one of the early attempts made by artists with a Celtic or Hiberno-Saxon background to emulate the lifelike religious images which men like Benedict Biscop had brought from the great Mediterranean centres of Christian art’. This implies that although a direct relationship existed between the Mediterranean models and the insular art, the models were ultimately altered to express uniquely insular ideas and styles. This theory will be discussed further in Chapters Four and Five in relation to the narrative Marian panels on the Irish high crosses.

head, and two smaller ones on either side of the throne, at the bottom of the scene. The Virgin's halo is clearly visible, and, like the Kildalton cross, the two top angels' wings touch, creating an arch just above her halo. Kelly believes that although the Virgin clearly cradles the Child, the Virgin's elongated fingers and stiff pose may be indicative of a *Hodegetria*-type composition, similar to that found on Cuthbert's coffin.⁴⁹

As previous scholars have noted, the only readily identifiable iconic image of the Virgin and Child in Irish sculpture appears on the cross at Drumcliff, County Sligo (Figure 6).⁵⁰ Drumcliff was a known Columban centre, and so it makes sense that a scene with such Columban connotations would appear here.⁵¹ The panel is located on the South side of the cross, at the end of the cross-arm, and is easily overlooked because of its location. The scene shows a seated, front-facing Virgin, who cradles the Child as he rests on her right knee. Harbison believes that the Child raises his left hand to his mother's chest;⁵² however, given the size and the location of the beginning of the arm directly below the head, it seems more reasonable to suggest that this is actually the Virgin's left arm, which she wraps around the Child's body. Unlike the icons on the Iona group crosses, no angels are present, an oddity which was identified by Françoise Henry.⁵³ Unfortunately, the details are very worn away, so it is no longer possible to determine exactly which type of Marian icon is being depicted here, but the emphasis on

⁴⁹ Kelly, 'Virgin and Child', p. 200. Werner believes that the Kells Virgin derived from a combination of the seated *Hodegetria* type and the *Eleousa* type, and believes that the complementary pose is a key differentiator between the Kells Virgin and orthodox *Hodegetria* types. He argues that the Cuthbert Virgin is more typical of the *Hodegetria* type than the Kells Virgin. See Werner, 'Madonna and Child', pp. 1-2. The link between the Kells Virgin and Child and the Virgin and Child on Cuthbert's coffin is most thoroughly discussed by Kitzinger, *Studies*, pp. 731-49.

⁵⁰ Margaret Stokes, 'Notes on the high crosses of Moone, Drumcliff, Termonfechin, and Killamery', *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* 31 (1901), p. 556; Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien 17, 1 (Bonn, 1992), pp. 72, 246; Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', p. 107; Kelly, 'Virgin and Child', pp. 197-204.

⁵¹ Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 73, 78.

⁵² Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 246.

⁵³ Henry, *Irish high crosses*, p. 41.

the Virgin's right arm and hand would suggest a *Hodegetria* type, similar to that in the Book of Kells and the image on Cuthbert's coffin.

Dorothy Kelly has suggested that, in addition to the iconic Virgin and Child on the south arm of the Drumcliff cross, there is another Irish sculptural representation of the scene on the south pillar at Carndonagh, County Donegal (Figure 7).⁵⁴ Located on the south face, the figure is facing forward, and wears an elaborate headdress with a triquetra knot above the head. The figure holds something in her (?) arms, and the left hand is placed slightly higher on this oblong object than the right hand, and the hands are placed slightly apart from one another, in a cradling gesture. Kelly has suggested that the oblong shape represents the infant Jesus, although the head of the Child seems unnaturally small, compared to the rest of the body, and the body is not clearly defined.

There is a circular object directly below the figure's right hand, and Kelly has interpreted this as a 'bolster-like cushion', similar to cushions present in two Coptic manuscripts which depict the Virgin seated on a throne,⁵⁵ and has suggested that rather than standing, the figure is actually seated on a cushioned throne, similar to the throne on which the Kells Virgin is seated.⁵⁶ However, Harbison has suggested that this scene actually shows the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes, with the circular object representing a loaf of bread, rather than a cushion, and he believes the object that the standing figure is grasping is a fish, not the Christ Child.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Kelly, 'Virgin and Child', pp. 201-204.

⁵⁵ The two manuscripts referred to by Kelly are currently held in the Pierpont Morgan Library, MSS 574 and 612.

⁵⁶ Kelly, 'Virgin and Child', p. 201. Kelly also makes a comparison with the seated Virgin in the Adoration of the Magi panel on Muiredach's cross at Monasterboice, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

⁵⁷ Harbison, 'A group of early Christian carved stone monuments in County Donegal', in *Early medieval sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, ed. John Higgit. BAR British Series 152 (Oxford, 1985), p. 57. Although Harbison has suggested a tentative identification of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes, he acknowledges that identification of this figure is extremely difficult. He believes that it is 'one of the most curious and enigmatic carvings of this whole group of Donegal monuments'. For the quote, see Harbison, 'A group', p. 56.

Kelly has also suggested that the rectangular object near the figure's throat may be a necklace or pendant. She states that, although 'completely satisfactory parallels are difficult to find... it is interesting that the Kells Virgin wears a rectangular ornament at her throat, although this is apparently not a pendant'.⁵⁸ However, the identification of this object as a necklace remains controversial; Harbison describes the rectangular object on the Carndonagh figure as 'floating', and suggests that it may represent a fish (based on his suggestion that this scene represents the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes),⁵⁹ and Henry argues that the object may represent the head of a hammer.⁶⁰ Regardless of what this object actually represents, the appearance of a similar rectangular object on the Kells Virgin, coupled with the 'cradling' position of the figure's arms, the elaborate headdress and the possible cushion (suggesting that the figure is seated), seems to support Kelly's identification of this figure as the Virgin and Child, although this identification does remain provisional.

The lozenge shape on the right shoulder of the Virgin in the Book of Kells has raised many questions as to its meaning and theological significance. In terms of possible models, Niamh Whitfield has suggested the sixth-century ivory binding of the Gospel of Lupicin from France, which features a lozenge shape on the Virgin's forehead and right shoulder (with a possible third lozenge on her left shoulder being obscured by the Child's body).⁶¹ The ivory binding was likely influenced by a Byzantine model, and it is not surprising, given the previous discussion of the *Hodegetria* icons, and the appearance of three stars (or in this case, perhaps lozenges) at three points on the Virgin to depict her triple virginity (with at least one symbol often being hidden by the body of the Child). The fact that the Kells Virgin displays the lozenge on her shoulder and that her breasts are visible under her cloak suggests that, although she is not actively nursing the Child, the image may be based on the *Galaktotrophousa*-type icon. Bolman has

⁵⁸ Kelly, 'Virgin and Child', p. 201.

⁵⁹ Harbison, 'A group of early Christian carved stone monuments in County Donegal', in *Early medieval sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, ed. John Higgit. BAR British Series 152 (Oxford, 1985), p. 57

⁶⁰ Henry, *Irish Art (to 800 AD)*, p. 130,

⁶¹ Niamh Whitfield, 'Brooch or cross?', *Archaeology Ireland* 10, no. 1 (1996), p. 22.

argued that the *Galaktotrophousa* icon does not represent Christ's humanity, but that it actually represents the *Logos* in the form of Mary's milk, and thus shows Jesus 'drinking the *Logos* provided by God'.⁶² She therefore believes that the Coptic *Galaktotrophousa* 'reads unambiguously as a metaphor for the Eucharist',⁶³ and, by extension, the Incarnation, as drinking the *Logos* from God makes it become human in Jesus. However, the Eucharistic connotations of the *Galaktotrophousa* icon seem doubtful, as Christ himself is representative of the *Logos*, and his physical presence in the icon would be a sufficient representation of the mystery of the Incarnation, and therefore alluding to it further through Mary's milk would be iconographically redundant.

The most generally accepted theological meaning of the lozenge is that it represents the Resurrection of Christ. Hilary Richardson originally suggested that the lozenge symbol represents the *Logos* Incarnate;⁶⁴ however, it seems that Richardson's later theory, that the lozenge simply represents the *Logos*⁶⁵ (and not necessarily the incarnate version of it) is most probable. Because Christ himself is depicted in representations that also feature a lozenge, i.e. as the Child in the Virgin and Child scene, it seems more plausible that the lozenge was a means of representing the abstract concept of the *Logos*.⁶⁶ The appearance of the lozenge would then seem to complete the Kells image,

⁶² Bolman, 'Coptic *Galaktotrophousa*', p. 19.

⁶³ Bolman, 'Coptic *Galaktotrophousa*', p. 19.

⁶⁴ Hilary Richardson, 'Number and symbol in early Christian Irish art', *JRSAI* 114 (1984), pp. 45-46.

⁶⁵ Hilary Richardson, 'Lozenge and *Logos*', *Archaeology Ireland* 10, no. 2 (1996), pp. 24-25.

⁶⁶ Although the lozenge symbol would seem to represent either Jesus or Mary, an alternative meaning may be suggested. According to the Irish apocryphal account of *The wonders of the night of the Nativity*, 'On the day after the birth of Christ, a four-cornered gold ingot appeared in the land of Arabia. From morning to night it continued to grow. The inhabitants of the land and of the adjoining territory were hacking and cutting at it throughout that time, but it remained entirely whole, however much was hewn from it' The lozenge depicted on Mary's shoulder on the Iona group crosses and in the iconic portrait in the Book of Kells is also four-sided, and it seems possible that this symbol could hold a similar meaning to the four-cornered ingot that appears after Christ's birth. The lozenge featured in the Virgin and Child scenes would also support this, as both the ingot and the lozenge appear on depictions of Mary occurring only after Christ's birth. See Máire Herbert and Martin McNamara, eds. *Irish biblical apocrypha: selected texts in translation* (London, 1989; repr. 2004), p. 35. For further discussion of the possible meaning of the lozenge, see also Jennifer O'Reilly, 'Patristic and insular traditions of the evangelists: exegesis and iconography' in *Le Isole Britanniche e Roma in Età Romanobarbarica*, ed. A.M. Luiselli Fadda and

as the Virgin, Christ, and the *Logos* are all depicted. Additionally, the appearance of the lozenge on two pages with ties to Saint John, on a book held by Saint John in his evangelist portrait (f. 291v) and on one of the evangelist symbol pages (f. 290v), adds further support to this theory, as it is Saint John who defines the *Logos* and identifies it with Christ.

The Lindisfarne Gospels also feature the lozenge shape in two of its decorated pages. This manuscript is dated to the late seventh or early eighth century, and the Columban/Iona ties of this community have already been discussed in reference to Cuthbert's Coffin. The cross-carpet-page preceding Saint Luke's gospel, and the decorated initial page at the start of John's gospel, both feature a large number of lozenge shapes. The association of Saint Luke with the Virgin Mary has been mentioned, as it was believed Luke painted the first icon of Mary at the Hodegon Monastery. Saint John's discussion of the *Logos* becoming incarnate (and for the purpose of this study, Mary's role as the medium through which the *Logos* was made manifest) has also been detailed. Given these two associations, then, it makes sense that the lozenges in the Lindisfarne Gospels would appear on the pages preceding the accounts of these two saints. The Book of Kells features lozenges on pages associated with Saint Luke and Saint John, so the occurrence of this element in two different manuscripts would seem to suggest that this was not merely a random design feature, but a conscious effort to associate these saints with the Virgin Mary.

To return to the insular Virgins, it is logical to assume that the presence of the icon would be indicative of a special devotion to the Virgin, and the fact that the Iona group icons and the Irish icons are located at monasteries with obvious Columban connections, would suggest that the Columban *familia* as a whole would share this Marian devotion. A key literary source for Marian devotion on Iona at this time comes from a hymn

Éamonn Ó Carragáin (Rome, 1998), pp. 49-94; O.K. Werckmeister, *Irish-northumbrische Buchmalerei des 8. Jahrhunderts und monastische Spiritualität* (Berlin, 1967).

composed by Cú Chuimne of Iona, written c. AD 700.⁶⁷ Cú Chuimne's hymn, *Cantemus in omni die*, is clear in its dedication to Mary, and from the opening verse the high position and praise afforded to the Virgin are clear.⁶⁸ The author's purpose for this hymn was that it be sung communally, and not as a solitary act of worship,⁶⁹ and therefore the entire community would have shared in this exaltation of the Virgin. The language in the hymn is intriguing, in that it highlights Mary's status as the mother of Christ, focusing on her role 'not as the co-sufferer at the crucifixion, but as the God-bearer, the

⁶⁷ A preface written in Old Irish and Latin, which was added later, states that the hymn was written 'in the time of Loingsech mac Óengusso and of Adomnán', who died in AD 703 and 704, respectively. See Thomas Owen Clancy and Gilbert Márkus, eds, *Iona: the earliest poetry of a Celtic monastery* (Edinburgh, 1995), p. 177.

⁶⁸ Clancy and Márkus, *Iona*, p. 183. The hymn reads: '*Cantemus in omni die/concinentes varie/conclamantes deo dignum/ymnum sanctae Mariae/Bid per chorum hinc et inde/collaudemus Mariam/ut vox pulset omnem aurem/per laudemvicariam/Maria de tribu Iudae/summi mater Domini/oprtunam dedit curam/egrotanti homini/Gabriel aduexit verbum/sinu prius paterno/quod conceptum et susceptum/in utero materno/Haec est summa haec est sancta/virgo venerabilis/quae ex fide non recessit/sed exstetit stabilis/Huic matri nec inventa/ante nec post similis/nec de prole fuit plane/humananae originis/Per mulierem et lignum/mundus prius periit/per mulieris virtutem/ad saltutem rediit/Maria mater miranda/patrem suum edidit/per quem aqua late lotus/totus mundus credidit/Haec concepit margaretam/non sunt vana somnia/pro quae peracta Christi morte/sorte statim steterat/Induamus arma lucis/loricam et galiam/ut simus deo perfecti/suscepti per Mariam/Amen Amen adiuramus/merita puerperae/ut non posit flamma pirae/nos dirae decepere/Christi nomen invocemus/angelis sub testibus/ut fruamus et scripamur/litteris celestibus* (Let us sing every day, harmonizing in turns, together proclaiming to God a hymn worthy of holy Mary. In two-fold chorus, from side to side, let us praise Mary, so that the voice strikes every ear with alternating praise. Mary of the Tribe of Judah, Mother of the Most High Lord gave fitting care to languishing mankind. Gabriel first brought the Word from the Father's bosom which was conceived and received in the Mother's womb. She is the most high, she the holy venerable Virgin who by faith did not draw back, but stood firmly. None has been found, before or since, like this mother—not out of all the descendants of the human race. By a woman and a tree the world first perished; by the power of a woman it has returned to salvation. Mary, amazing mother, gave birth to her Father, through whom the whole wide world, washed by water, has believed. She conceived the pearl- they are not empty dreams- for which sensible Christians have sold all they have. The mother of Christ had made a tunic of a seamless weave; Christ's death accomplished, it remained thus by casting of lots. Let us put on the armour of light, the breastplate and helmet, that we might be perfected by God, taken up by Mary. Truly, truly, we implore, by the merits of the Child-bearer, that the flame of the dread fire be not able to ensnare us. Let us call on the name of Christ, below the angel witnesses, that we may delight and be inscribed in letters in the heavens'. See Clancy and Márkus, *Iona*, pp. 182-85 for text and translation.

⁶⁹ Clancy and Márkus believe that the hymn was intended to be sung in two groups, so that the verses would 'flow back and forth, like the rise and fall of waves, from one side of the church to the other, in the long monastic hours of prayer'. See Clancy and Márkus, *Iona*, p. 179.

Theotokos, at the centre of the mystery of the Incarnation'.⁷⁰ This could have potential relevance to the Ionan icons, which clearly show the Virgin as a mother, and do not represent her in Crucifixion scenes; however, it is unclear whether the monastic communities at Drumcliff and Carndonagh would have been aware of the hymn. The hymn also describes the Virgin as the new Eve, a technique known as the Eva-Ave theme;⁷¹ however, it is impossible to know whether the Marian panels on the crosses were attempting to similarly compare the Virgin to Eve, as there is no additional iconography to support this theory. The theory that the Ionan icons may have been making a visual reference to Mary's role as the *Theotokos* is intriguing, but a direct relationship between the hymn and the icons cannot be established with any certainty.

It is clear from the iconographic analysis presented above that the Irish and Iona group icons do not conform to any of the icon-types described (*Hodegetria*, *Nikopoia*, *Eleousa*, *Galaktotrophousa/Maria Lactans*), and although the taxonomic boundaries for the icon-types were somewhat flexible, these icons do not appear to be representative of any one specific 'type'. The Ionan and Irish Virgins seem to incorporate elements from each of the different types described—they feature the flanking angels of the *Maria Angelorum* type, the closely touching heads and inclined bodies of the *Eleousa* type, and may visually refer to Mary's triple virginity, as the *Hodegetria* types do. Previous attempts at classification, particularly by Kitzinger and Hawkes, have focused primarily on the positions of the bodies of the Virgin and Child; however, this approach is ultimately flawed, in that the most distinguishing factor of the icons was not the rendering of the bodies, but the additional iconographic elements that were added to alter the intended message of the composition (for example, the flanking angels). Although the iconic structure may not be strict enough to use as a diagnostic tool in relation to the insular icons, by its very nature any icon that depicts both Mary and the infant Jesus as the two key figures are following an iconic structure, albeit a loose one.

⁷⁰ Clancy and Márkus, *Iona*, p. 187.

⁷¹ Clancy and Márkus. *Iona*, p. 188; James Good, 'The Mariology of the Blathmac poems', *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 104 (1965), p. 7. Blathmac's Old Irish poems will also be discussed in Chapter Four. For a further discussion of the concept of Mary as the new Eve, see also Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary through the centuries: her place in the history of culture* (New Haven, 1996), pp. 39-54.

If the intention of these images was to be evocative, then the small differences in iconographic structure may have been intentional. While the visual differences in structure are not drastic, the impact on the audience's perception is what is most changed, and perhaps this, and not a cohesive iconic collection, was the ultimate goal. Therefore, it is essential to not only analyze the compositional features of the icons, but to also consider the ideological and political subtext that was being conveyed through the addition of certain iconographic features. Although the insular Virgins do not appear to be classifiable into the categories of icon-types listed here, another icon-type, known as the *Maria Regina*, was developing in Rome during the seventh century; the impact that this new icon-type may have had on the insular Virgins is discussed thoroughly in Chapter Four.

But the question remains: is the presence or absence of the iconic Virgin and Child indicative of Columban beliefs and identity? Clearly the iconic Virgin and Child image was well-known within the Columban community, and was important enough to be translated into both manuscript drawings and stone sculptures, and it certainly appears to be representative of Ionan identity. So why is this scheme absent from crosses located at well-known Columban centres in Ireland, such as Moone, Durrow and Kells? Although there are currently only two iconic depictions of the Virgin in Irish sculpture, the Virgin does appear on Irish crosses, but in a new, narrative context; this typological shift occurred particularly after the relocation of some members of the Iona community to Kells in AD 807.⁷² A detailed description of the narrative Marian panels will be discussed in Chapters Two and Three, and the motivation behind the typological shift from iconic to narrative will be thoroughly analyzed in Chapters Four and Five.

⁷² The Annals of Ulster record the founding of the monastery at Kells in AD 807, and construction of the monastery was finished in AD 814. See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 68-73. The foundation of Kells and the relocation of some members of the Iona community to the new monastery will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapters Four and Five, particularly the political motivations behind the relocation and the effects that the move had on Columban-Patrician relations.

John the Forerunner: Infancy cycles before Christ

While the importance of iconic depictions of the Virgin and Child to the Columban community has been demonstrated by previous scholars, such as Hawkes and Kelly,¹ the meaning of narrative Marian scenes on the Irish high crosses has yet to be studied as a unique category. Through visual analysis and iconographic comparison, this chapter will offer new Marian interpretations of the panel previously identified as ‘the wrestlers’, consider whether panels from the Infancy of John the Baptist are depicted on the Irish high crosses, and analyze the importance of the Virgin Mary in the John the Baptist cycle. This in-depth analysis attempts to discern whether there is a systematic or specifically Irish approach to depicting the Infancy narratives, or whether the depictions of Mary are determined by the *familia* that dominates at each specific monastery where a cross exists.

The monastery of Durrow is a foundation with clear Columban connections,² and so it is no surprise that the high cross of Durrow displays a narrative mother-and-child scene, although the pair depicted is not the one traditionally expected. On the North side of the shaft, the second figural panel depicts two figures walking upright towards the left (Figure 8). The figure on the left holds a child in his or her left arm, and the position of the child makes it appear almost as though the child is being carried on the adult’s back. To the right, a seemingly thinner figure walks behind them, and reaches its left hand to cover its mouth. Harbison has identified this panel as ‘Zacharias and Elizabeth with the Infant John the Baptist’, and argues that the figure on the left is Elizabeth (due to the

¹ See Jane Hawkes, ‘Columban Virgins: iconic images of the Virgin and Child in insular sculpture’. In *Studies in the cult of Saint Columba*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Dublin, 1997), pp. 107-35. Dorothy Kelly, ‘The Virgin and Child in Irish sculpture’, in *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain. Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Insular Art held in the Ulster Museum, Belfast, 7-11 April 1994*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Belfast, 1995), pp. 197-204.

² Columba was believed to have personally founded the monastery of Durrow whilst staying in the midlands for several months. According to Máire Herbert, the *Vita Columbae* refers to a testimony by Ernéne son of Craséne, which indicates that Columba founded Durrow during the abbacy of Alither of Clonmacnoise, which occurred from AD 585-89. This account would place the foundation of the monastery ‘close to or within’ the last decade of Columba’s life. See Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry: the history and hagiography of the monastic familia of Columba* (Oxford, 1988), p. 32.

decorated head dressing).³ Harbison further concludes that the figure on the right is Zacharias, whose hand-to-mouth gesture indicates his ‘silence or dumbness which, in connection with an infant scene, can surely only relate to Zacharias, who was struck dumb by the angel, and remained so until he had written the name of his son “John” on a tablet’.⁴ He believes that the panel below this also relates to John the Baptist, which further supports the identification of this as the ‘Zacharias and Elizabeth’ panel, and rules out the possibility that it could be Joseph, Mary and the infant Jesus on their return from Egypt.

While Harbison is correct in arguing that the panel probably does not represent the holy family returning from Egypt, upon closer inspection it seems plausible that the adult figure on the right is actually Elizabeth, and not Zacharias. The figure on the left does indeed display an elaborate head dress, but it is unclear whether this is a man’s cap or a woman’s head-covering. The figure on the right does cover its mouth, but he or she also gathers the long garment they are wearing up over the knees and holds the fabric in their right hand, a gesture that is reminiscent of a woman gathering up her long skirts as she walks. No explanation for this gesture is provided by the story of Zacharias, and at the current time no parallel is found in continental depictions of Zacharias or Elizabeth. Additionally, the figure’s hair is shoulder-length and sweeps upward at the ends, and, although not an identifying feature in itself, a similar gesture is attributed to the right-hand figure on the panel directly below, which may also represent Elizabeth (and will be discussed further below). Although the right-hand figure gathers its robe above the knees, there is no evidence to suggest that this is an exclusively female gesture, and the figure’s head-covering seems equally ambiguous. In addition, the hand-to-mouth gesture is key to identifying this figure as Zacharias after he was struck mute, as Harbison suggested. However, certain identification of each adult figure is not necessarily critical

³ Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*, 3 vols, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1 (Bonn, 1992), p. 82. Other scholars (Brandt-Förster, Weir, Visser et al., Ó Sabhaíós) have suggested that the panel actually represents the Flight into Egypt. However, because the Flight into Egypt usually depicts Mary riding on a horse or donkey, this identification can be ruled out. Harbison lists all potential identifications provided by previous scholars. See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 82 (panel N3).

⁴ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 82.

to understand this panel, as the presence of the child-sized figure supports the theory that this represents an Infancy scene from the life of the Baptist.

A similar gesture to the right-hand figure's hand-to-mouth motion is found on the Last Judgment page in the Saint Gall Gospels (Figure 9).⁵ The manuscript illumination shows the twelve apostles in the bottom register, and they gaze upwards at a bust of Christ, who is flanked on either side by a separate panel showing a standing angel. The angel on the right side of the page is walking to the left of the scene (towards Christ at the centre), and he holds his left hand up to cover his mouth. His right hand emerges from the sleeve of his long robe, and although he is actually grasping the trumpet or instrument that extends from his mouth to just past his knees, this gesture could look as though he was gathering his garments just above the knee, similar to the Durrow figure. The angel's hairstyle also echoes that of the Durrow figure, as it features rounded curls on the top of his head, extending down to the shoulders and sweeping upward at the ends.

It is odd that these two figures, one supposedly depicting Zacharias and the other depicting an angel at the Last Judgment, would so closely parallel each other. The only obvious difference is that the angel has a clear halo and wings, whereas the Durrow figure does not, therefore ruling out the possibility of identifying both as angels. According to Françoise Henry, the Saint Gall gospel book was believed to have been written in Ireland sometime in the eighth century, and then brought to Saint Gall in the ninth century;⁶ so perhaps the Last Judgment angel was used as a model for the Durrow panel before being brought to the continent.

⁵ The Saint Gall Gospel book (Stiftsbibliothek, MS. 51) is generally dated to the middle of the eighth century. In terms of figural style, Henry compares the manuscript most closely with the Lichfield Gospels. For further discussion of the Saint Gall Gospels, see Françoise Henry, *Irish art in the early Christian period (to 800 AD)* (Ithaca, 1965), 196-97; J.J.G. Alexander, *Insular manuscripts, 6th to the 9th century* (London, 1978).

⁶ Henry, *Irish art (to 800 AD)*, p. 196.

A comparable panel appears on the Tall or West cross at Monasterboice (Figure 10).⁷ The third panel (from the bottom) on the South side also depicts two figures that walk to the left of the scene. The leading figure holds a child and appears to be standing frontally, while the figure behind is clearly shown in profile. The second figure appears to be reaching out towards the child, and is shorter than the leading figure. Above each of them, a ‘lizard-like animal contorts itself’,⁸ in such a way that, from a distance, it appears that these are actually halos or stars above them. The second figure does not cover its mouth, nor does he/she gather their robes above the knees. But despite these subtle differences, it seems clear that this panel is another depiction of Zacharias and Elizabeth with the infant John the Baptist, as Harbison suggests.⁹ The identification of this panel is strengthened by the figural panel above, which likely represents ‘The Naming of John the Baptist’.¹⁰

Another panel which may depict John the Baptist as an infant appears on the cross at Drumcliff (Figure 12). On the West face, the first figural panel depicts three forward-facing figures wearing long robes, and their heads and bodies are unnaturally elongated. The central figure clearly holds a baby, and the child’s head is visible, resting on the figure’s left shoulder as she (assuming this figure is a female) wraps her right arm across his body. The figure on the viewer’s left raises their right hand to his or her chest, but the hand seems obscured by their cloak. The figure on the viewer’s right does not have either arm visible, but does appear to be looking down at the child, rather than at the viewer.

Harbison has suggested that this scene depicts ‘The Naming of John: The Presentation of John the Baptist in the Temple’, while others (Stokes, Crawford, Porter

⁷ For the purposes of this study, the cross will be called the West Cross. It is the tallest surviving cross in Ireland, standing at about 6.45m. See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 146.

⁸ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 149.

⁹ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 149. Visser et al. identify the panel as the Flight into Egypt, whereas Macalister and Roe preferred to leave the panel unidentified. Brandt-Förster was similarly inconclusive, but suggests the possibility that it may represent the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. For the identifications provided by previous scholars, see Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 149 (panel S3).

¹⁰ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 149.

and Weir) believe it is actually the ‘Presentation of Jesus in the Temple’.¹¹ While the frontal stance of these figures does not suggest any movement, as the Durrow and Monasterboice John panels do, the depiction of John as a child clearly fits into the iconographic scheme. Whatever the true meaning behind this image, what is most striking is that it is given a much more prominent position than a panel that depicts the iconic Virgin and Child on the South arm.¹² Was this because the narrative nature of this panel fit more cohesively with the iconographic scheme? And if it is John the Baptist, and not Jesus, why would he be placed in a more noticeable location than the Christ Child?

A similar panel to the one on the Drumcliff cross can be found on the cross-shaft at Boho, County Fermanagh (Figure 13).¹³ On the West face, the first figural panel from the bottom shows three adult, standing, frontal figures. Like the Drumcliff panel, the figures wear long robes, and the central figure holds a child. Unfortunately, the figural panel directly above this one is damaged, and the remainder of the cross is missing, making identification based on surrounding scenes virtually impossible. Although Harbison has suggested that the damaged figural panel above may represent the ‘Baptism of Christ’, this is by no means certain.¹⁴ However, based on the iconography of the remaining panel, it seems likely that it depicts the ‘Presentation of John in the Temple’.¹⁵

In addition to the ‘Presentation of John in the Temple’, there is another panel on the Drumcliff cross which may also relate to the Baptist’s Infancy cycle (Figure 11). On the upper portion of the West side of the cross, two figures walk to the left of the scene, and the figure on the left appears to hold something in its arms, which may be the infant

¹¹ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 72. For the identifications provided by previous scholars, see Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 72 (panel W2).

¹² See Chapter One for the iconographical analysis of the iconic Drumcliff Virgin and Child panel.

¹³ Harbison believes that the Boho cross is closely related to the Drumcliff cross, both iconographically and structurally. See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 28.

¹⁴ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 29.

¹⁵ This panel has generally remained unidentified by most scholars. See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 29 (panel W3).

John the Baptist (although this is very difficult to discern due to weathering). To the extreme left, there is a boss which is level with the leading figure's head—this may represent a star, or it could be the rounded top of a staff or walking stick. The figure on the right is following behind the first figure, and directly behind the figure is another star or staff, located at the extreme right of the panel. Although it is difficult to see the figure on the right's hands, it looks as though he or she may be gathering up their garment; the pose is reminiscent of the Durrow and Monasterboice West cross panels that depict 'Zacharias and Elizabeth with the Infant John the Baptist'. Because the iconographical similarities between these three panels are so striking, it is only appropriate to provide an identification for the Drumcliff panel which is similar to the panels on the other two crosses. Therefore, the Drumcliff panel is also likely to represent 'Zacharias and Elizabeth with the Infant John'.¹⁶

The lowest panel on the North side of the Durrow cross depicts two standing figures that lean towards each other in an embrace (Figure 14). Their clothing is indistinguishable, due in large part to the fact that their arms cross at the centre of the panel, and then wrap around each other, but Harbison believes that 'both figures have bare shoulders, and may wear a camel-skin of the kind worn by Saint John the Baptist'.¹⁷ This feature led Harbison to conclude that this panel possibly depicts 'Saint John the Baptist Embracing/Recognizing Christ', whereas other scholars have speculated that it might depict 'Jacob Wrestling the Angel' (Williams, Stokes, Porter, Henry, Brandt-Forster, Visser et al, and Ó Sabhaois) or even simply, 'wrestlers' (Calvert).¹⁸ But the theory that this panel represents Jacob Wrestling the Angel seems to fall short, as the gesture of the figures is a warm embrace, and not a hostile one, and

¹⁶ Harbison believes that the scene could possibly represent 'Zacharias, Elizabeth, and John the Baptist'; however, he believes that the 'Return from Egypt' is more likely. But based on the similarities between this panel and those on the cross at Durrow and the West cross at Monasterboice, a similar identification for all three is preferable. The presence of the 'Presentation of John in the Temple' scene on the same side of the cross confirms a Johannine focus. See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 72.

¹⁷ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 82. Although Harbison focuses on the clothing of the figures, suggesting that the garments fall slightly off the shoulder, the garments are not clearly delineated, and, had the panels been painted originally, an under-layer of clothing could have been indicated.

¹⁸ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 82 (panel N1).

neither figure appears to have wings.¹⁹ Furthermore, the figures are roughly the same size, and earlier continental iconographic models usually show the angel as much taller than Jacob. The idea that these are merely wrestlers coming together to fight is possible; however, in light of the nature of the surrounding panels, a biblical parallel is preferable.

There is a close parallel between the hair/headdress of the figure on the right, and the hair of the right-hand figure in the panel above, which may depict Elizabeth in the ‘Zacharias and Elizabeth with John the Baptist’ scene. So, is it possible that the right-hand figure in both panels actually represents Elizabeth? If the skirt-gathering gesture in the upper panel can be taken as an indication that the figure is a female, then it seems logical that the similar figure in the lower panel may also represent Elizabeth, and the figure she is embracing is the Virgin Mary. Therefore, based on the contextual relationship with the panel above, it is plausible that the lower panel of the Durrow cross also represents an aspect of the life of John the Baptist (as Harbison suspected), but one that occurred before John’s birth. Thus, for the purposes of this study, the embracing panel appears to depict the Visitation, and the iconography closely parallels the continental models for this scene.

Gertrud Schiller has demonstrated that the Visitation scene can be traced back to the fifth century, although it ‘had no independent position until the Late Middle Ages’.²⁰ When the Visitation was depicted, it was almost always shown as part of the Nativity cycle, as ‘a completion of the Annunciation’.²¹ While the Durrow cross does not depict the standard Nativity scenes that one would expect, such as the Adoration of the Magi, is it still possible that this panel forms part of the Infancy of Christ cycle? Or could the Visitation without other Infancy of Christ scenes indicate that the focus of the panel was actually on Elizabeth and John the Baptist, rather than Jesus?

¹⁹ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 237. He argues that the lack of wings on either figure makes it ‘inherently unlikely’ that the panel depicts Jacob and the angel. However, he also concedes that the biblical account of the Baptist recognizing Christ (Matthew 3:13-15) does not actually refer to the two men embracing, and in fact, the iconography of this panel usually features the Baptist bowing to Christ, not embracing him. See, for example, the ivory plaque from the British Museum, dated to c. AD 900.

²⁰ Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian art*, vol. 1 (London, 1971), p. 55.

²¹ Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 55.

The account of the Visitation comes from the Gospel of Luke (1: 39-56) and details Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth, who recognizes Mary as the mother of Christ. Depictions of this scene fall into two distinct iconographic types: one in which the two women embrace, and one in which they do not.²² Assuming that the Durrow panel depicts the embracing-type Visitation, then corresponding examples of this type can also be found on a late-sixth-century ampulla from Palestine, a late-eighth-century Carolingian ivory, and an ivory plaque originating from Milan or Reichenau, dated to c. AD 962-73.²³

The silver ampulla from Palestine is one of the earliest artefacts to display the Visitation scene. Appearing in the upper right corner, the scene shows Mary and Elizabeth embracing, but Elizabeth draws back from Mary 'so far that, despite their embrace, an awestruck distance remains between them'.²⁴ Damage and age make it difficult to make any firm conclusions about this object, but there do appear to be other architectural elements present in the scene, such as a pillar on the left of the figures, and a possible arch above their heads. While the Durrow panel does not show any additional architectural elements, the stance of the embracing women is the key diagnostic feature for the Visitation scene.

On the late-eighth-century Carolingian ivory book cover from Genoels-Elderen, the additional architectural elements are much clearer, with arches and curtains clearly shown behind the women (Figure 15). The two women embrace at the centre of the scene and, while their legs do not form an 'X' like the Durrow figures' do, their hand placement is strikingly similar. The women lean their heads towards each other so that they touch cheek-to-cheek, and they both have elaborate halos and covered heads. The figural style depicts them as full and rounded, and the details of their robes are clear. In addition to the two embracing women, two figures stand to either side of the pair; these

²² Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 55. She believes that in the second type, the women are conversing, rather than embracing. The first type, then, can be seen as depicting their initial greeting, whereas the second type depicts their conversation, in which Elizabeth states that Mary is the mother of God.

²³ Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 55.

²⁴ Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 55.

figures may represent Gabriel and Zacharias.²⁵ The draped curtains behind the female figures leave no doubt that they are indoors. While the additional iconographic elements found in this panel are not paralleled on the Durrow cross, again, it is the stance of their bodies that further supports the identification of this scene.

The tenth-century ivory relief originating from Milan or Reichenau similarly depicts the women indoors, and also features elaborately draped curtains (Figure 16). This time the women are alone, and the only other iconographic details are architectural. While the late tenth-century date means that this ivory was probably created after the Durrow cross, the stance of the two figures on this object is most similar to the stance of the Durrow figures (although not exact). The lack of embellishment on the clothing, the crossing of their arms to form the 'X' at the centre of the scene, and the lack of accompanying figures suggest that the Durrow panel was following a similar model to those on the continent.

Each of these examples of Visitation scenes, although differing widely in date and location, shows the two women standing and embracing each other so that their arms and bodies cross at the centre of the scene and their heads lean in towards each other. When visually compared to the Durrow panel, the two embracing figures in these other depictions appear to be similar to the embracing figures in the Durrow scene, and therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that the Durrow panel may also depict the Visitation.

Further evidence that this panel may depict the Visitation comes directly from the Bible. Both the Visitation and the tale of Zacharias and Elizabeth (and Zacharias' inability to speak) are featured exclusively in the Gospel of Luke (1:39-56). If the sculptor of the Durrow cross was following a distinct biblical scheme, it stands to reason that he would place these two Lucan stories one after the other, in the same way that they are presented in the Bible. But it is curious that the cycle featured is the Life of

²⁵ Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 55. Alternatively, the two additional figures could represent maids, or possibly even a maid and Zacharias. The addition of maids is a common feature of Visitation scenes during the Carolingian period; however, none of the possible Visitation scenes on the extant high crosses show evidence of any additional figures.

John the Baptist, rather than the Life of Christ. The lack of any additional Infancy of Christ scenes (such as the Adoration of the Magi) makes an association between these panels and Matthew's gospel unlikely. And as Matthew's is the only canonical gospel to mention the Flight into Egypt, the connection with Luke's gospel would appear to further support the theory that the upper panel does not represent the Flight into Egypt (as Harbison suspected), but instead suggests that it represents Zacharias and Elizabeth with the infant John the Baptist.

Similarly, the Market Cross at Kells also exhibits a possible Visitation panel (Figure 17). Located on the bottom of the shaft on the East side, two figures are once again shown leaning towards each other in an embrace. As on the Durrow panel, their arms wrap around each other; however, in this panel they lean even further forward, so that their heads do not touch, but appear almost as if resting on each other's shoulders. Their legs cross and form an 'X' shape where they meet at the knee. The figures are full and rounded, but it is not possible to determine the type of clothing that each wears.²⁶ Interestingly, the hair-style of the left-hand figure on Kells looks similar to the right-hand figure on the Durrow panel, as it sits at shoulder length and flips upward at the ends. As before, Calvert suggests an identification of simply 'wrestlers', and other scholars maintain that it represents Jacob Wrestling the Angel.²⁷ Harbison, however, draws a comparison to the Durrow panel, but then quickly discounts this comparison. Instead, he compares it to a panel on the base of the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise, which he believes represents the Kiss of Judas.²⁸ In the Clonmacnoise scene, four figures (representing 'the multitude coming to arrest Christ')²⁹ approach a pair of figures on the right of the panel, which Harbison believes are embracing (Figure

²⁶ Harbison believes that the figures are dressed in 'short, trouser-like garments, and the figure on the left of this Kells panel has long hair falling down the back'. He argues that the long hair of the figure on the left indicates that it could be similar to the panel which he identified as John the Baptist recognizing Christ on the Durrow cross, but, because of the subject-matter of the surrounding panels, he ultimately favours the identification of the 'Kiss of Judas'. See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 238.

²⁷ See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 104 (panel E1) for a list of identifications provided by previous scholars.

²⁸ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 50.

²⁹ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 50.

20). Although it is difficult to determine whether the two figures are actually embracing, the addition of the four other figures, which hold staffs, is completely different from the iconography on the Kells and Durrow panels, which show the embracing pair in isolation. Because the pair is not shown in isolation, and the scene is on the base, rather than the shaft (as in the examples above), it seems likely that the Clonmacnoise panel does, in fact, show the Kiss of Judas, and not the embracing Visitation.

On the head of the Ardane cross, County Tipperary, the left arm of the West face shows another possible Visitation scene (Figure 21). As on the other potential Visitation panels, two figures lean towards each other in an embrace. The iconography of this panel is similar to the ones that have been previously discussed, although it is difficult to discern what type of robes these figures are wearing. Harbison identifies this panel as the Kiss of Judas in light of the surrounding panels, which he believes represent the First and Second Mocking of Christ.³⁰ However, the panel on the left side of the head shows a figure standing in profile, wielding a sword aimed at a smaller figure on the right. Given the size difference between these two figures, could it possibly represent the Massacre of the Innocents?³¹ While admittedly the smaller figure is not necessarily child-sized, it is definitely shorter than the sword-wielding figure. If this panel does represent the Massacre of the Innocents, then the embracing panel would appear to represent the Visitation. Unfortunately, this cross is damaged and only the head remains, and so it is not possible to determine the complete iconographic scheme intended. Therefore, the identifications provided here are somewhat tentative, and without the full contextual consideration of the iconographic program, it is unclear whether the Ardane cross was intended to represent the Baptist's Infancy scenes.

Following the comparison with the Durrow 'embracing' panel, previous scholars have maintained that the same biblical scene is represented on the North side of the Killamery cross, County Kilkenny (Figure 18). Harbison again postulates that this

³⁰ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 19.

³¹ Henry identified the panel as Cain and Abel, whereas Harbison believes it may represent the Mocking or Flagellation of Christ, as he believes that the hands of the smaller figure were bound together. See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 19 (North arm, West face).

depicts ‘John the Baptist Embracing/Recognizing Christ’, while Stokes, Henry, Roe, Brandt-Forster and Visser et al. suggest that it is ‘Jacob Wrestling the Angel’.³² While the damage and extreme weathering on this panel makes further identification difficult, it seems appropriate to follow the trend of previous scholars and suggest that this panel mirrors the identification of the Durrow panel, which, for the purposes of this study, has been identified as the Visitation.

The Killamery cross includes a possible Visitation panel as one of four evenly divided sub-panels, the remaining three of which are also probably John the Baptist scenes. On the South arm of the Kilree cross, County Kilkenny, the same four-squared division is employed (Figure 19), although this time the Visitation scene is featured on the bottom left instead of the top right, as it is at Killamery. The placement of this scene (here and on the Killamery cross) within a four-part John the Baptist cycle further supports the theory that the embracing figures are not representing the Kiss of Judas or Jacob and the Angel, as these are not part of John the Baptist’s story. Furthermore, the identification of this scene as the Baptist recognizing/embracing Christ seems unlikely, as the placement of this scene amongst other John the Baptist Infancy stories would suggest that this represents a narrative that occurred before the Baptist reached adulthood. Both the Killamery and Kilree crosses are highly degraded, and because of this, the panels featuring the four-part division are extremely difficult to discern. Therefore, certain identification of the panels as four-part Baptist scenes is not possible at this time.

On the North cross at Graiguenamanagh, County Kilkenny, is a panel that Harbison identifies as the Visitation, although it does not follow the iconographic scheme of the panels discussed above (Figure 22). Harbison describes the panel as follows: ‘A figure on the right (a servant?) looks on frontally as two figures—presumably Mary and Elizabeth—embrace one another’.³³ Unfortunately, at the present time only the figure on the left appears clearly enough to identify, while the remaining iconographic elements of

³² See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 123; Henry, *Irish art (to 800 AD)*, p. 147.

³³ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 97.

the scene are too damaged to discern. The figure on the left is shown in profile and reaches towards a (presumably) human figure at the centre of the panel. The face and limbs of the central figure can no longer be seen clearly, so it is not possible to determine whether the two figures are, in fact, embracing. The addition of the frontal figure on the right seems unusual in the Irish context; however, Schiller has noted that, in addition to Zacharias and/or Gabriel being included in this scene, Carolingian depictions often included a maid that accompanies Mary (and sometimes Elizabeth)³⁴, and so this additional figure does not completely rule out the possibility that this is the Visitation.³⁵

Despite the fact that this panel does not follow the traditional iconography of the Visitation shown on the Irish crosses, the theory that this panel does represent the Visitation is strengthened when considering the figural panel at the top of the cross head (Figure 23). Although these panels are separated by interlace which stems from the shaft up through the head, at the very top of the head there is another panel, which may be directly related to the Visitation panel below. Allen has suggested that this secondary panel be identified as ‘The Flight into Egypt’,³⁶ but Harbison has identified it as the ‘Annunciation (of Gabriel to Mary)’.³⁷ Two adult figures are clearly shown, and the figure on the viewer’s right appears to walk to the left of the scene, raising his or her right arm as if to touch the figure in front. The left-hand figure is difficult to see, but Harbison suggests that it has a bent knee, thus indicating movement towards the right-hand figure, which he believes is seated.³⁸ However, upon closer inspection it appears as

³⁴ Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 55.

³⁵ Harbison draws a parallel between the Visitation scene on the Sancta Sanctorum silver reliquary casket commissioned by Pope Paschal I (AD 817-24), which shows the two women embracing and has an accompanying servant, much like the possible Graiguenemanagh panel. The Visitation is also shown on another Sancta Sanctorum object, the enameled reliquary cross; here, the women are shown in isolation, and the attendant figure does not appear. The Sancta Sanctorum objects and their possible influence on the Irish high crosses will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Four.

³⁶ J. Romilly Allen, ‘On some points of resemblance between the art of the early sculptured stones of Scotland and of Ireland’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 31 (1896/97), p. 323.

³⁷ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 97.

³⁸ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 97.

though both figures are standing and walking to the left of the scene, in a manner that is similar to the ‘Zacharias and Elizabeth with the infant John the Baptist’ panel seen on the crosses at Durrow, Monasterboice and Drumcliff. Thus, while identification of these two panels as separate scenes proves difficult, when considered holistically, both closely follow the iconography of similar panels representing the Visitation and Zacharias and Elizabeth with the infant John, and therefore these panels may also depict two scenes from John the Baptist’s Infancy cycle.

The base of the North side of the South cross at Castledermot has only one completed panel, and, although the figures are much less full and rounded than those at Kells and Durrow, it is clear that this panel also shows two standing figures who are embracing. Again, their clothing is indistinguishable, and they are shown in profile, but their legs do not cross to form the ‘X’ shape, as the previous examples do. However, their arms do extend towards each other, and their heads seem to touch. The placing of this scene on the base is similar to the placement of the Clonmacnoise ‘Kiss of Judas’ panel that Harbison described. Harbison has further suggested that the unfinished panels on the base of the Castledermot cross may have shown the multitudes coming to arrest Christ, as seen on the base at Clonmacnoise.³⁹ While it seems equally plausible that they could have depicted additional John the Baptist Infancy panels, the similar placement of these two scenes on the base, as well as the more distant stance of the two figures, means that the ‘Kiss of Judas’ is the mostly likely identification for both panels.

Unusually, there is another ‘embracing’ panel on the same side of the South Cross at Castledermot (Figure 24). The upper-most panel on the shaft shows two figures that more closely resemble the examples at Durrow and Kells. As before, the figures’ knees cross to form the ‘X’ shape, and their arms wrap around each other. While most scholars comprehensively see this side of the cross as representing a David cycle,⁴⁰ if this panel represents the Visitation, then it allows for alternative theories about the remaining

³⁹ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 40.

⁴⁰ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 40-41, Henry, *Irish high crosses*, p. 41.

panels on this side, and the possibility that it may actually be a complete or semi-complete John the Baptist Infancy cycle.

Although the parallels with continental depictions of the Visitation are compelling, the Irish panels cannot be identified as the Visitation with absolute certainty. The configuration of two figures embracing is common in both secular and religious art, and does not exclusively occur in depictions of the Visitation. In addition, the degradation of the Irish panels means that supplementary iconographic elements which may have been visible originally, such as the figures' clothing and expressions, are no longer discernible; therefore, it is impossible to utilize these elements to determine the gender of the two figures. Furthermore, the tentative identifications of the scenes surrounding the potential Irish Visitation scenes remain open to interpretation, and should the identifications of these surrounding panels change, then the contextual relationship with the embracing figures could be altered. Therefore, while the comparative analysis has identified some similarities between the Irish panels and other known depictions of the Visitation, the identification of this scene on the Irish high crosses remains tentative.

Previous scholars, such as Henry, Hawkes and Visser et al.,⁴¹ have suggested that the remaining panels on the side of the Castledermot cross depict the Massacre of the Innocents, but, unusually, broken into several different panels (instead of the usual one-panel depiction), as if to form its own cycle. They believe that this scene begins with the panel below the possible Visitation panel, in which a figure stands frontally with a sword in his right hand and, in his left, holds a shield in front of his body. In the panel below this, a large figure stands and holds a sword in his right hand, while a much smaller figure stands to the left of the scene. In the next panel down the shaft, the large figure continues to hold the sword, but appears to be carrying the smaller figure on his back as he walks to the right of the scene. The final panel on the eastern shaft shows a frontal figure, which raises his arms above his head in an *orans* pose.

⁴¹ Henry, *Irish high crosses*, p. 41. See also Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 40-41 for alternative identifications.

It seems unlikely that the Massacre of the Innocents would be divided amongst so many panels, but the one most likely to represent the Massacre is the third panel from the bottom (with the smaller figure standing next to the larger as he holds his sword). If this is the correct identification, then the panel above (single adult standing figure) could represent Herod, and the panel below the Massacre (with the adult figure carrying the child on his back) may be a John the Baptist scene, similar to those depicting Zacharias and Elizabeth carrying the infant John. Unfortunately, the lowest panel on the shaft does not provide any immediate possibilities, and neither Matthew nor Luke's Infancy narratives shed any light on the identity of this figure, and whether or not he is part of a John the Baptist cycle.

While the Massacre of the Innocents was an important episode from the Infancy of Christ, and was also included in depictions of the Life of the Virgin, it appears only twice⁴² on the crosses: once on the Castledermot panel, discussed above, and once on the Arboe cross (Figure 25). In the case of the Castledermot example, the surrounding panels would suggest that the Massacre should be considered part of the John the Baptist Infancy narrative, rather than the Infancy of Christ cycle. The inclusion of this scene in the John the Baptist Infancy cycle may have originated from an apocryphal source, the Protoevangelium of James, which shifts the focus of the Massacre from Jesus to John, and makes John the target of Herod's actions. The text detailing the Massacre in the Protoevangelium of James reads:

“And Elizabeth, having heard that they were searching for John, took him and went up into the hill-country, and kept looking where to conceal him. And there was no place of concealment. And Elizabeth, groaning with a loud voice, says: O mountain of God, receive mother and child. And immediately the mountain was cleft, and received her. And a light shone about them, for an angel of the Lord was with them, watching over them. (22)

And Herod searched for John, and sent officers to Zacharias, saying: Where hast thou hid thy son? And he, answering, said to them: I am the servant of God in holy things, and I sit constantly in the temple of the Lord: I do not know where my son is. And the officers went

⁴² Based on the identifications provided here, only two potential Massacre panels exist. However, other scholars have suggested that additional Massacre panels may exist, and this idea will be discussed more thoroughly below.

away, and reported all these things to Herod. And Herod was enraged, and said: His son is destined to be king over Israel. And he sent to him again, saying: Tell the truth; where is thy son? For thou knowest that thy life is in my hand. And Zacharias said: I am God's martyr, if thou sheddest my blood; for the Lord will receive my spirit, because thou sheddest innocent blood at the vestibule of the temple of the Lord. And Zacharias was murdered about daybreak. And the sons of Israel did not know that he had been murdered'. (23)⁴³

While the high crosses do not appear to represent the murder of Zacharias or any of the other non-canonical aspects of this narrative,⁴⁴ the Castledermot depiction indicates an awareness of the shifting focus from Jesus to John. The Massacre is surrounded by other scenes which could be associated with John the Baptist narratives (including the Visitation and a possible Zacharias carrying the infant John panel), but what is more striking is which scenes are *not* shown: specifically, other Infancy of Christ panels. In both the apocryphal and biblical accounts, the catalyst for the Massacre is the magi meeting Herod and telling him that they were following the star to find the newborn Messiah (Matthew 2:7-9). Therefore, it would be logical to assume that, if the Massacre were part of the Infancy of Christ narrative, then a depiction of the magi would be nearby, and/or a depiction of the Flight into Egypt. But on the Castledermot cross, the Massacre is not accompanied by either of these Infancy of Christ panels, nor do they exist elsewhere on the cross. This lack of surrounding Infancy of Christ scenes, coupled with the fact that there is a literary precedent for associating this event with John the Baptist, supports the theory that the Massacre could be seen as a John the Baptist Infancy scene when it is accompanied by other Baptist narratives.

⁴³ M.R. James, *The apocryphal New Testament: translation and notes* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 38-49.

⁴⁴ If the five panels on the North side do, in fact, depict the Infancy of John the Baptist and were based on the Protevangelium of James, it is possible that one of the unidentified panels in this cycle could represent the murder of Zacharias. The most likely candidate for this identification is the lowest panel, in which a solitary figure stands in an *orans* pose. Could this represent Zacharias, particularly at the moment when he dedicates himself 'God's martyr'? See James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 38-49. However, Harbison believes that this panel may represent David, who may be 'rejoicing or praying in an *orans* attitude'. Harbison, *High crosses* 1, pp. 40-41. Schiller has demonstrated that there are three main components to the Massacre: Herod issuing the command, the soldiers slaughtering the infants or presenting them to Herod for inspection, and the mothers protecting their children (or weeping for them). Based on these essential components, the solitary standing figure wielding the sword could be interpreted as Herod giving the command, as it appears directly above the Massacre panel. See Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 115.

The North side of the cross of Arboe also depicts the Massacre of the Innocents, and the placement of the panel seems to demonstrate a similar Johannine focus. Although Harbison has identified the surrounding scenes as part of the Infancy of Christ cycle, suggesting a Christological focus, the surrounding panels could potentially be identified as parts of the Baptist's Infancy cycle (Figure 25). The lowest panel on the shaft depicts the Baptism of Christ, and although this panel was often included in Christ's Infancy narratives,⁴⁵ its placement appears to have been manipulable, as it could appear in either John or Jesus' Infancy cycles. The uppermost panel on the shaft has been previously identified as the Annunciation to the Shepherds;⁴⁶ however, the scene does not follow the established iconography for the Shepherds scene, as it appears on other crosses.⁴⁷ A large figure stands to the right of the scene, and holds a cross-staff in the crook of his left arm. His body and head are frontal, while his feet denote movement to the left. On the left there is a much smaller figure, and in addition to this figure, Harbison suggests that there is a third small figure directly above. Harbison believes that the smaller figure on the left may represent a kneeling shepherd (on the bottom) with a small angel hovering above him, while the large figure on the right represents the angel of the annunciation;⁴⁸ however, the smaller angel is no longer visible. At first glance, the lack of a flock (usually denoted by the three stacked quadrupeds) and the compacted nature of the shepherd seem unusual, especially when compared to the other Shepherds panels, which will be analyzed in the following chapter. The fact that there is only one smaller figure, and the context of the surrounding Baptist panels, suggests that this scene should be interpreted as Gabriel's Annunciation to Zacharias. Although the scene below the Massacre has been identified as Christ among the Doctors,⁴⁹ the lack of the Adoration of the Magi and Flight into Egypt panels, and the previous identification of the Massacre as

⁴⁵ The appearance of the Baptism in Christ's Infancy cycle will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

⁴⁶ Henry, Flower and Harbison all agree on the Annunciation to the Shepherds. See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 18.

⁴⁷ The iconography of the Annunciation to the Shepherds scene will be described in more detail in Chapter Three, as it relates to the Infancy of Christ cycle.

⁴⁸ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 18.

⁴⁹ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 18.

part of the Baptist's cycle, indicates that a Johannine interpretation is preferable. Therefore, rather than Christ among the Doctors, it seems more probable that the panel depicts the Presentation of John in the Temple. John appears as a child, rather than an infant, indicating that this scene occurred after John survived the Massacre; therefore, this should be interpreted as a different narrative than those illustrating Zacharias and Elizabeth fleeing from Herod (as shown on the crosses of Durrow, Drumcliff, and Monasterboice).⁵⁰

There are three other panels that previous scholars have identified as the Massacre of the Innocents; however, evidence provided here will suggest that these panels do not depict this scene, based on their iconography and the lack of surrounding John the Baptist panels. On the North Cross at Castledermot, a panel with three figures is shown, with the central figure upside-down and flanked on either side by two standing figures (Figure 26). The figures are clearly shown wearing long robes that reach to the ankles. The figure on the right is holding the upside-down figure's ankle, and the central figure's legs are fully straightened. While initially it looks like the figure on the left is also holding the central figure's ankle, upon closer inspection he actually appears to be holding a large, rounded club or sword.

The second panel occurs on the Market Cross at Kells (Figure 27).⁵¹ Here the panel is damaged and the figure on the right is only partially visible. The figures are much more rounded and their robes are not clearly shown. It has been suggested that the figures may be naked; but there are other panels on this cross where the clothing is difficult to see, so it seems like this is just a stylistic choice, and does not hold any deeper meaning. As on

⁵⁰ There is an Adoration of the Magi panel on this cross, but it appears on a different side of the cross, and does not seem to relate directly to the Massacre. For the purposes of this study, the Adoration panel is interpreted as part of the Infancy of Christ cycle, which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

⁵¹ Alberto Ferreiro does not mention the panel discussed here, but suggests that another panel on the West arm of the North face of the Market Cross, which similarly features an upside-down figure, depicts the Fall of Simon Magus. However, Harbison believes that the panel on the arm illustrates 'Saints Paul and Anthony overcoming the devil in human form' Harbison's identification seems most plausible. See Alberto Ferreiro, *Simon Magus in patristic, medieval and early modern traditions*, ed. Robert J. Bast. Studies in the History of Christian Traditions Series 125 (Leiden, 2005), pp. 212-19; Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 108.

the Castledermot cross, the central figure is upside-down, with his legs bent at the knee, and the figure on the left appears to be holding a sword across the central figure's body. The figure on the right extends his hand slightly towards the central figure, almost as if he is grabbing his hand, and he may have a weapon in the crook of his arm. While the treatment of the figures differs, the iconographical elements of these two panels are comparable.

The West Cross at Monasterboice also appears to possess a similar scene (Figure 28). The panel appears on the right arm of the East face. While at first glance it may appear that this panel is part of the central scene on the head on the cross, there is a clear line dividing the two scenes, and there are also bosses which divide the scenes. Unlike the other two crosses, on the West Cross the upside-down figure is at the far left of the panel and is not flanked by the other two figures. These two figures are standing, and the position of their legs one in front of the other suggests movement towards the upside-down figure. They both hold crosiers and are jamming them into the head of the third figure. The upside-down figure's legs are bent, and his position mimics that on the Market Cross. The placement of the upside-down person at the left of the scene, rather than in the middle, appears to be a stylistic choice, as he is positioned where the arm of the cross starts to curve and the panel narrows, which would prohibit one of the standing figures being placed in that spot. Although the figural treatment of this cross is more stylistically sophisticated than those at Castledermot and Kells, and the iconography varies slightly, it seems plausible that this panel could represent the same story as the previous two.

These three panels have received a wide range of identifications by previous scholars. Based on the position of the upside-down figure, possibilities have ranged from the Crucifixion or Martyrdom of Saint Peter (who was supposedly crucified upside-down), to the Massacre of the Innocents, or even the Judgement of Solomon.⁵² However, because the upside-down figure is shown as exactly the same size as the two standing figures, both the Massacre of the Innocents and the Judgement of Solomon can

⁵² Harbison, *High crosses* 1, pp. 38, 106, and 148.

be ruled out as possibilities, as the upside-down figure would have to be child-sized in order to accurately depict those stories. Therefore, the most plausible identification of these panels is that they represent the apocryphal Fall of Simon Magus,⁵³ with the flanking figures representing Saints Peter and Paul, an interpretation which was suggested by previous scholars such as Arthur Kingsley Porter and to some extent, Brandt-Förster.⁵⁴

In conclusion, the pattern that has emerged from these panels shows that, simply because there is a mother and child depicted in a scene, that scene can not necessarily be identified as the Virgin Mary and Jesus. Instead, it is often intended to represent Elizabeth and John the Baptist, who may also be accompanied by Zacharias. The new theory that the ‘wrestler’ panel represents the Visitation has allowed for new panels to be identified, and their relationship with the surrounding panels may indicate that presence of complete Infancy cycles. The possible Visitation panel occurs seven times (five of which are near other John the Baptist panels), supporting the theory that the Visitation should be interpreted as a John the Baptist narrative, rather than an Infancy of Christ narrative or a Mariological scene. Because the Massacre of the Innocents has been identified here as a Baptist panel, the ‘Zacharias and Elizabeth with the infant John’ panel could be interpreted as the trio fleeing from Herod. These panels, combined

⁵³ In the apocryphal source material, Simon Magus was associated with Mog Ruith, the Irish druid who allegedly beheaded John the Baptist. Mog Ruith was said to have studied wizardry (*druídecht*) from Simon Magus, and also may have been present during Simon Magus’ confrontation with Saints Peter and Paul. However, it was Mog Ruith’s role in the beheading of John the Baptist that had particular relevance for the Irish, as it was this event that ‘was predicted to have serious consequences for the Irish people, culminating in the destruction of Ireland’ and led to an apocalyptic frenzy in AD 1096. The crisis was ultimately avoided, but O’Leary believes that the crisis ‘served as the catalyst for both a widespread peace-movement and ecclesiastical reform’. While there is no evidence that Mog Ruith is depicted on the Irish high crosses, it is the association of Simon Magus’ protégé with the concepts of heresy and church reform that may provide some insight into the meaning behind the Fall of Simon Magus scene and make it particularly relevant for the Irish audience. In addition, Simon Magus’ relationship with Mog Ruith could have potential implications for the crosses that display both Simon Magus panels and scenes from the Baptist’s life. See Martin McNamara, *The Apocrypha in the Irish Church* (Dublin, 1975), pp. 54-57; Ferreiro, *Simon Magus*, pp. 34-54, 209-12; Aideen O’Leary, ‘Mog Ruith and Apocalypticism in Eleventh-Century Ireland’, *The Individual in Celtic Literatures: CSANA Yearbook 1*, ed. Joseph Falaky Nagy (Dublin, 2001), 51-60 (p. 56 for the first quote, and p. 59 for the second).

⁵⁴ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, pp. 38 and 148. Harbison cites Porter (1992 and 1931) and Brandt-Förster’s (1978) identifications in his summary of previous interpretations of this panel, however he does not believe that all of these panels represent the Fall of Simon Magus (see note 24 above).

with the Presentation of John in the Temple, appear to form a complete Baptist Infancy cycle, and they may have been intended to directly parallel the Infancy of Christ cycle; this idea will be fully considered in the following chapter.

The Birth of Christ: Identifying the Infancy of Christ Cycle

The previous chapter has suggested the existence of John the Baptist's Infancy cycle on the high crosses, which exist separately from the Infancy of Christ narratives. The presence of the Virgin Mary, as in the Visitation panel, does not necessarily indicate a Christological focus, or even a Mariological focus, as the parallel Infancy cycle appears to have shifted the focus to the Baptist. By means of iconographic analysis, this chapter will identify the panels that form the nativity of Christ as they appear on the high crosses, and will analyze Mary's role in these narratives to determine whether the focus of the cycle was Christological or Mariological.

The Annunciation to the Shepherds appears to be the first narrative in the Irish version of the Infancy cycle, as it usually appears as the lower-most panel on the shaft (implying that it should be seen first). Although this narrative does not expressly feature the Virgin, its placement amongst the other Infancy of Christ narratives indicates that it should be similarly interpreted as contributing to the cycle. Previous scholars agree that the scene is depicted on three different crosses: the cross at Donaghmore (Figure 29), and the cross shafts at Killary (Figure 30) and Armagh (Figure 31); and there are two other possible depictions on the Arboe cross, and the Market Cross at Kells.¹ The iconography of the first three examples is almost identical. On either side of the scene, a figure stands in profile and faces towards the centre, where three quadrupeds are stacked one on top of the other. The arm placement of the standing figures differs, as on Killary and Armagh their arms are outstretched, and on Donaghmore they leave their arms by their sides. While there do not appear to be any clear attributes to differentiate between

¹ All scholars agree on the identification of the panel on Donaghmore, Armagh and Killary. The identification of the Kells panel remains unresolved, and will be discussed in more detail below. See Peter Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien 17, 1 (Bonn, 1992), pp. 21, 64, 124, and 107. Harbison has also suggested that the panel appears on the North side of the Arboe cross; however, Chapter Two has identified the panel as the Annunciation to Zacharias, as it does not follow the traditional iconography utilized in the other three panels. The lack of the 'stacked' quadrupeds in the Arboe scene, and the fact that the angel is shown as much larger than the other figure, supports this identification.

the angel and the shepherd, Harbison has suggested that the figure on the left is the Angel, while the figure on the right is a shepherd.²

The lowest surviving panel on the Market Cross at Kells (Figure 32) has received several different identifications, including Harbison's suggestion that it depicts 'Suffer Little Children to Come Unto Me' and, more recently, Malgorzata D'Aughton has suggested that this panel actually depicts the Adoration of the Magi.³ The panel features three standing figures, which lean forward and crouch down slightly. Their feet and bodies denote movement to the left, but they turn their heads upwards and twist slightly to the right, in order to gaze at a much larger figure that appears at the far right of the scene. The large figure raises his left hand, and may hold something in his right hand. Immediately above the first small figure, there is a tiny angel hovering; to the extreme left, another possible angel appears. Given the similarities between the large figure on this panel with the similar large figure on the Arboe cross, it seems possible that the Kells panel may depict the Annunciation to the Shepherds; if this identification is correct, then the large figure in both scenes likely represents an angel.

The depiction of three shepherds on the Kells panel, rather than the usual one shepherd as seen on the panels at Armagh, Donaghmore and Killary, may be unusual in the Irish context, but it is certainly not unheard of on the Continent at this time. In fact, in the earlier depictions three was the standard number, as the three shepherds became a parallel for the three magi.⁴ An ivory plaque from a diptych at Lorsch, c. 810 (Figure

² Harbison, *High crosses* 1, pp. 64, 124. Harbison applies this identification to all three of the Shepherds panels. However, because the figure on the right of the Killary panel appears to raise his hand in blessing, it seems more probable that this figure represents the angel, and the left-hand figure should be interpreted as the shepherd.

³ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 107. Malgorzata D'Aughton, 'The Kells Market Cross: Epiphany sequence reconsidered', *Archaeology Ireland* 18, no. 1 (2004), p. 16. Harbison's identification is unique, as he indicates that all previous scholars (Crawford, Roe, Henry, Brandt-Förster, Weir, Visser et al. and Hamlin) believe that it depicts the Adoration of the Magi. He believes the scene depicts Christ 'seated on a chair on the left, where much of his body has been broken away. He holds one child on his lap, while two others bow before his knees, and there is a fourth child above these two'. He believes that the large standing figure on the right simply depicts an adult figure; however, because the figure is so much larger than any of the other figures (both within the panel itself, and on the rest of the cross face), it does not appear to represent a human.

⁴ Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 85. Schiller has argued that, in the earliest depictions of the scene, it was not always clear whether the angel was actively announcing the birth to the shepherds, or whether he was

33), shows the three shepherds, who cower behind their flock, as the angel (who is much larger than the shepherds), reaches towards them in a manner of speech. While the flock is not evident on the Kells panel, the comparisons with the Lorsch angel, as well as the fact that there are three smaller figures, further supports the identification of the Kells panel as the Annunciation to the Shepherds.

Perhaps the most easily identifiable narrative panel featuring the Virgin Mary appears on Muiredach's Cross at Monasterboice (Figure 34). On the East face of the cross, the top panel on the shaft depicts the Virgin Mary in a three-quarter pose and seated on a high-backed throne, with the child Jesus draped across her lap. Above the child's head, a boss, likely representing a star, can be seen. The magi⁵ approach from the right, and the leading magus has a long beard and extends his hands out to touch the child. Behind him, three other magi appear, and each holds an object in his left arm (presumably the gifts for the Christ child). The farthest figure on the right is noticeably shorter than the other three, and while Harbison argues that the shortening of this figure is due to a space issue (to ensure that he would fit within the confines of the panel),⁶ one cannot help but wonder if there is a deeper significance.⁷ The appearance of four magi, instead of the usual three, is a curious iconographic invention. Previous scholars, such as O'Neill, Stokes, Porter and Sexton, have argued that the first figure closest to the Christ child represents Joseph and not a magus, with Henry and Roe slightly less certain of this identification, but not wholly opposed to it.⁸ However, Macalister and Harbison both

guiding the shepherds to the Christ Child. This ambiguity could account for the movement indicated by the Kells panel, as the figures are clearly turning to converse with the angel, while also appearing to move to the left of the scene.

⁵ The word 'magi' comes from the Greek word 'magoi', which is generally used in the New Testament to mean 'magicians'. The term had negative connotations, particularly in reference to Simon Magus (the father of all heresy), but Matthew's Gospel does not indicate whether these men were actually magicians. See Brent Landau, *Revelation of the Magi: the lost tale of the Wise Men's journey to Bethlehem* (New York, 2010), p. 3.

⁶ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 141.

⁷ Schiller has demonstrated that, particularly in Byzantine examples, the first magus is usually bearded, and the last magus is usually the youngest, which could account for the shorter stature of the last magus in the scene on Muiredach's Cross. Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 101

⁸ For a list of possible identifications provided by previous scholars, see Harbison, *High crosses* 1, pp. 141, 243.

argue that all four figures are magi.⁹ The appearance of more than three magi is not uncommon, as the biblical accounts do not specify the number; the belief that there were three comes from later accounts, which provide the magi's names.¹⁰ In fact, in the apocryphal account provided in the Protoevangelium of James, the author states that 'seven was the number of magi'.¹¹ According to an Arian legend (AD 550-60), twelve magi and kings were mentioned, and fresco cycles from rock-churches at Göreme depict six magi.¹² In this instance, however, the appearance of four magi may originate from Psalm 72, 10, where four places of origin are given for the kings.¹³ Although it was not unheard of to depict four magi, this is the only Adoration panel on the high crosses to do so; all of the other Adoration scenes depict only three magi.¹⁴

Unusually, the first magus in the procession on Muiredach's cross does not offer a gift, but instead reaches out and takes hold of the Christ child. He has a full beard, which conforms to the Byzantine compositional types, which differentiate between the ages of the magi. According to Schiller, in the Byzantine examples 'the first Magus is bearded, indicating that he is the eldest, the last is usually the youngest'.¹⁵ While the last magus in the procession appears shorter than the other three, there is no further indication of the

⁹ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 141.

¹⁰ Their names first appear in a ninth-century translation of an earlier text, and are recorded as Melchior, Caspar and Balthasar. Schiller and Landau also believe that the belief that there were three magi originated from the fact that three gifts were described in the biblical account. See Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 96; Landau, *Revelation*, p. 3.

¹¹ Máire Herbert and Martin McNamara, *Irish biblical apocrypha: selected texts in translation* (London, 1989; repr. 2004), p. 42.

¹² Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 96.

¹³ Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 96.

¹⁴ This iconographic variation could be due to a later date of construction suspected for Muiredach's cross. The cross is generally dated to the abbacy of Muiredach, dated from AD 890-923, based on an inscription on the base which reads 'OR DO MUIREDACH LASNDERN...RO (Pray for Muiredach who had the cross erected)'. However, Stalley has argued that the cross was not originally designed for the inscription, and that it was 'clearly an afterthought', so it is possible that the cross existed before Muiredach's abbacy, and was simply re-dedicated to him at a later date. See Roger A. Stalley, 'Artistic identity and the Irish scripture crosses'. In *Making and meaning in insular art*, ed. Rachel Moss (Dublin, 2007), pp. 161-62; Françoise Henry, *Irish high crosses* (Dublin, 1964), p. 18; Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 143.

¹⁵ Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 101.

magi's ages. But the question remains: is this leading male figure really a magus? His clothing is more detailed than that of the other three figures, and his lack of a gift to present to the Christ child seems curious, given that there is no precedent for a fourth magus who appears empty-handed. The obvious identification of this figure as Joseph also seems to fall short, as he appears to be leading the magi towards the child, and there is a sense that he is arriving with the magi, and was not present for the birth (as Joseph would have been). When a fourth male figure appears in the Adoration of the Magi scene, he is usually identified as either Joseph or the prophet Balaam, and these two figures do not appear in the same scene together; it is usually one or the other. Although Balaam was no longer shown after the fifth century,¹⁶ when he or Joseph were shown they were almost always depicted as standing behind the chair on which Mary sat. So, it is extremely rare that the Muiredach panel features an unidentified male figure not just leading the magi, but also taking hold of the child Jesus.

On the West face of the cross shaft at Killary (Figure 35), the upper-most intact panel also illustrates the Adoration of the Magi, although the iconography is very different from the Adoration scene on Muiredach's cross. On the bottom left of the scene, the Virgin is seated on a throne which curls at the sides, similar to the bolster-like cushions seen on the iconic representations of the Virgin and Child, and she cradles the Christ child across her lap as she supports his head with her right arm. To the right, a large magus stands and approaches the Virgin, while holding a gift for the Child. Above the Virgin are two additional magi that are much smaller than the first magus. The magus on the extreme left holds a rounded object, likely representing a gift, which Harbison has described as having 'an oval aperture'.¹⁷ Between the two upper magi is a boss, which probably represents the star. It is unclear why the two magi above the Virgin are shown as so much smaller than the third magus, and the only obvious reason is due to spacing issues. This is the only extant Adoration scene where the throne of the Virgin is clearly seen to have curling sides, as in all other examples she is seated on a high-backed chair; however, a comparison could potentially be made with the Carndonagh pillar, as the

¹⁶ Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 101.

¹⁷ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 125.

curling sides of the Killary throne are similar to the ‘bolster-like cushion’ on which the Virgin is seated in the Carndonagh scene.¹⁸ This is also the only Adoration configuration that places the two magi above the Virgin, rather than on either side of her.

On the West face of the Kilree cross is another panel that has been identified as the Adoration or Approach of the Magi (Figure 36). However, if this identification is correct, the panel does not follow any of the iconographic attributes utilized in the other extant magi scenes. At the centre of the scene, there appears to be a frontal figure who is seated on a chair similar to the throne on which the Virgin sits in the panel discussed above, although the curling sides are not as visible. Harbison has suggested that the figure may hold a child diagonally across its body; however, this is not expressly clear, and he further suggests that there are ‘one or two figures’¹⁹ on horseback that approach the seated figure from the right. An additional figure on the left of the scene approaches the central figure astride a quadruped (which has a very elongated neck). The animal looks like a griffin, or alternatively, a camel.²⁰ While the seated figure in the middle would seem to suggest a parallel with the seated figure on the Killary cross, the appearance of the quadrupeds (which do not appear on any other Irish Adoration panels), and the fact that there are no obviously discernible magi, seems to suggest that this scene does not represent the Adoration.

Further evidence that this cross does not depict the Adoration comes from the biblical sources. The Kilree cross has traditionally been associated with the Echternach Gospels in Paris, due to the appearance of a lion, which closely resembles that on fol. 1v of the gospel-book.²¹ Because the lion is the evangelist symbol for Saint Mark, it would be logical to look to the Gospel of Mark for possible answers regarding the panels on this

¹⁸ Dorothy Kelly, ‘The Virgin and Child in Irish sculpture’, in *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Belfast, 1995), p. 201. Kelly believes the Virgin’s throne in the Book of Kells folio is of a similar type.

¹⁹ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 134.

²⁰ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 134. A camel has also been identified on the cross at Drumcliff, so the appearance of the animal on the cross at Kilree would not be unique. See also Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 72 (panel W3).

²¹ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 133.

cross. However, Mark did not write about the Nativity or refer to any Infancy of Christ narratives, and he did not discuss the magi story. Therefore, if the carvings on this cross were associated with Mark's Gospel, then it seems unlikely that the panel would depict the Adoration of the Magi, a narrative that is only found in the Gospel of Matthew.

The Ulster group crosses include six separate representations of the Adoration of the Magi, and while the iconography is almost identical in each of these six panels, it is very different from the other Magi scenes discussed above. The Virgin is shown in a seated frontal position with the Christ child held across her lap. Above her, two bosses, probably representing stars, appear. There are only three magi in each depiction, two of which stand paired in front of the Virgin, and the third standing alone behind her. The positioning of the magi changes: on the crosses at Arboe, Clones (Figure 38), and Galloon (Figure 39), the single magi is on the right of the scene, while the crosses at Armagh, Camus (Figure 40), and Donaghmore position the single magus on the far left of the panel. The Ulster crosses do not follow the 'approaching magi' layout that is featured on Muiredach's cross, nor do they have the mysterious fourth magus. Although the Virgin is seated, the throne is not clearly visible as it is on the Killary panel; however, because she is still shown as seated and front-facing, this difference is not necessarily indicative of a different iconographic type. Therefore, it would seem that, with the inclusion of the Ulster crosses, there are two types of Adoration of the Magi scenes: 1. the four approaching magi (Muiredach's cross), and 2. the enthroned, front-facing Virgin (Camus, Clones, Galloon, Armagh, Arboe, Donaghmore, and Killary).²²

Malgorzata D'Aughton, in her 2004 article entitled, 'The Kells Market Cross: the Epiphany sequence reconsidered', examined the Epiphany sequence on the Ulster crosses and determined that the Adoration of the Magi was part of this sequence. The Epiphany sequence differs from the Infancy cycle by including four main scenes: the Adoration of the Magi, the Baptism of Christ, the Marriage Feast at Cana, and the

²² However, based on the inclusion of the Kilree panel, Harbison suggests a different categorization. He believes the Adoration scenes form three distinct groups: 1. The magi stand behind or beside the Virgin (Arboe, Armagh, Camus, Clones, Donaghmore, Galloon, Killary), 2. The magi approach from the side (Muiredach's cross), and 3. The magi ride from both sides towards the Virgin (Kilree). See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, pp. 242-45.

Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes.²³ The Adoration of the Magi and the Baptism of Christ therefore double as both Epiphany and Infancy scenes. While the Baptism does accompany the Adoration scene in some cases (five out of the eight Adoration scenes also have a Baptism scene nearby), the two are not inextricably linked—on the cross at Clones and Muiredach's cross, the Adoration is present but there is no Baptism, the Broken Cross at Kells has a Baptism but no (surviving) Adoration, and on the Arboe cross, the Baptism appears on a different side than the Adoration. In addition, in each of the cases described here, the Adoration is accompanied by at least one additional scene (other than the Baptism) that could be described as an Infancy panel; and these other panels are not traditionally linked with the Epiphany (for example, the Annunciation to the Shepherds). Until now, the belief has been that the crosses which show the Adoration were accompanied by the other three Epiphany scenes, thus exemplifying a complete Epiphany cycle. But what if these other three panels were not always present when the Adoration was? If the Adoration is actually accompanied by other Infancy panels, could the Epiphany cycles be redefined as complete or semi-complete Infancy of Christ cycles?

The most iconographically manipulable narrative relating to the life of Christ is the Baptism of Christ by John the Baptist, as it appears to have been related to both the Infancy of Christ, the Infancy of the Baptist (as demonstrated in Chapter Two²⁴), and, potentially, the Epiphany cycle. While the biblical account dictates that this event happened when Jesus was already an adult, on the Irish high crosses Jesus is often depicted as smaller than the figure of John the Baptist, and its frequent proximity to Infancy panels would suggest that the goal was to show Jesus as a child, rather than just showing him as smaller in order to indicate his partial submersion in the water. On the Irish crosses, this scene is depicted at least eight times: on the crosses of Arboe, Killary, Monasterboice West, the Broken Cross at Kells (Figure 37), Camus, Galloon,

²³ D'Aughton, 'Epiphany sequence', p. 16.

²⁴ See particularly the Arboe cross for an example of the Baptism being included as a Baptist Infancy panel.

Donaghmore and Armagh.²⁵ Although this panel does not feature the Virgin, if Christ is being shown as a child, rather than as an adult, the inclusion of the Baptism could indicate that it was intended as part of the Infancy of Christ cycle.

The depiction of Jesus as a youth and accompanied by the dove of the holy spirit in the Baptism scene has its origins in early Christian representations,²⁶ such as the Milan diptych (Milan, Museo del Duomo), where Christ similarly stands in the waters of the river Jordan. Similarly, a youthful Jesus is depicted in the Baptism scene on Pope Paschal's ninth-century enameled reliquary cross (which will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Four). On this cross, the Baptism of Christ is clearly intended to function as part of the narrative Infancy cycle, and it appears to be of a similar iconographic type to the Irish Baptism panels (Figure 62).²⁷ According to Erik Thunø, the Baptism was included in the Infancy cycle because it was associated with scenes of the Nativity, and was often related to the concept of regeneration through the Virgin's womb.²⁸

Identification of the Epiphany cycle usually depends on the appearance of the Marriage Feast at Cana and the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes, two panels which are not included in the Infancy cycle. D'Aughton believes that, following what she has identified as the Epiphany cycle on the Ulster crosses, the Market Cross at Kells also shows the Adoration of the Magi and the Feast at Cana, as well as the Multiplication of

²⁵ The panel on the Armagh cross is too weathered to identify; however, Harbison and Henry have both identified the panel as the Baptism, and this identification will be accepted here. On Donaghmore, the third panel from the bottom is difficult to discern, but at the bottom left there are two circles placed one on top of the other, with a line extending out from each. This iconography closely resembles the depiction of the Jor and Dan in the Baptism scene on the West face of the cross at Killary. See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 20.

²⁶ However, the Baptism was not always included in the Infancy cycle, and Jesus was not always depicted as a youth. For example, He is shown as a bearded adult in the Baptism scenes found in John VII's oratory and the sixth-century Pontian catacomb. See Erik Thunø, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome* (Rome, 2002), pp. 47-51 for a further discussion of the Baptism scene on Pope Paschal's cross, particularly its sacramental function and its relation to the Fountain of Life.

²⁷ Thunø suggests that the Baptism scene on Paschal's cross probably did not derive from a single model, but is rather 'a synthesis of Early Christian and later, more updated, elements'. See Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 47.

²⁸ Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 50.

the Loaves and Fishes, as the culmination of an Epiphany cycle. However, based on iconographic analysis, the identification of the Epiphany cycle on four of the crosses which D'Aughton mentions (Camus, Clones, Arboe and Kells Market Cross) is questionable, as there is evidence that the panels previously identified as the Feast at Cana and the Loaves and Fishes do not actually depict these scenes.

On the Arboe (Figure 41) and Clones (Figure 42) crosses, there is a panel which has been previously identified as the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes, but it may represent a scene which has never been previously identified on any of the high crosses. At the centre of both panels, there appears to be a rounded structure with a smaller oval placed on top of it, which looks like a table or cot with an infant placed in it. There is a standing figure on either side of the table structure, as well as a third person standing just behind and above the rounded structure, whose body is not seen. This central adult figure is holding a long, pointed instrument in his hands, with the sharp end being pointed at the infant below him. Based on this sharp object, it seems possible that this panel could represent the Circumcision of Christ, with the newborn Christ wrapped and placed on top of the rounded structure (representing the manger or a cot), with the priest behind him and Mary and Joseph looking on. While the scalpel is not as immediately clear in the Clones panel, the similar placement of the cot and the three adult figures suggests that a similar identification is appropriate.

If these panels do depict the Circumcision of Christ, then they are some of the earliest artistic depictions of this scene in existence. Aside from these two possible depictions, the earliest known example of the Circumcision comes from a tenth-century Byzantine manuscript, known as the Menologion of Basil II (979-84); however, this scene did not become popular until the late medieval period. The earliest depictions illustrate 'not the operation itself but the preparations for it', with Mary and Joseph simply carrying the Christ child as the priest approaches them, holding his scalpel.²⁹ Because the Irish examples appear to show the actual operation, or at least the scalpel being held by the priest as he stands over the Child on the table, it could indicate that

²⁹ Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 89.

they wanted to make expressly clear that this panel was associated with the first spilling of Jesus' blood.³⁰ If that was the intended message, then it is highlighted by the fact that the crucifixion appears only two panels above the potential Circumcision panel on the Arboe cross, and although the Clones cross is a composite and is thus missing its original head, it is likely that the Crucifixion would have appeared on the same face as the Circumcision there as well.

On the crosses at Clones, Arboe and the Market Cross at Kells, there is a panel which has been previously identified as the Marriage Feast at Cana.³¹ The iconography of these panels is similar on the Clones and Arboe examples, although it differs slightly in the Kells example. On the Clones and Arboe crosses, there are three figures in the upper register, of which only their heads are visible. It is possible that the central figure is holding something slightly to the left, a detail which is more easily seen on Arboe (Figure 43), but it is unclear exactly what it is. Below these three figures, there are four figures that crouch down and are divided into two pairs. Between the pair on the left, the figures grasp an unknown object. The pair on the right differs slightly, and it seems as though the furthest figure on the right is possibly seated or approaching from a different direction, and the second figure from the right may be holding something and extending its arms toward the figure on the far right. Harbison has previously identified the Arboe and Clones (Figure 44) panels as The Marriage Feast of Cana and the Kells panel as the Healing of the Centurion's Servant,³² however, the top three figures look almost identical to the three standing, adult figures in the panel above, which likely represents the Circumcision.

Based on the similar appearance of these three figures on both of the crosses, and the fact that the Circumcision may be depicted directly above this panel in both cases, it seems plausible that this panel may represent the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, with the three high-priests depicted above the approaching figures of Mary (second

³⁰ Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 88.

³¹ D'Aughton, 'Epiphany sequence', p. 16.

³² Harbison, *High crosses* 1, pp. 17, 46, 107.

figure from the right) who extends the Christ child towards Simeon (figure on the far right), as Joseph and the prophetess Anna follow behind (the paired figures on the left). This composition is not unique, as a mosaic from the Oratory of John VII and a fresco in Santa Maria Antiqua, neither of which exists anymore, depicted ‘Mary carrying the Child in her hands, followed by Joseph and Anna, while Simeon approached her from the opposite side’.³³ While the visual evidence of these two objects no longer exists for direct iconographic comparison, a similar comparison can be made with the Presentation scene on Pope Paschal’s reliquary cross, which shows the Virgin holding the Christ Child out towards Simeon, who approaches from the right (Figure 62).³⁴ The figure of Joseph appears behind Mary, and the figure of Anna appears behind Simeon. This panel is iconographically similar to the Irish examples, as Simeon approaches from the far right and reaches out to take the Child from Mary. Therefore, it seems plausible that the Arboe and Clones panels represent the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and that they are of a similar iconographic-type to the Presentation on Paschal’s cross.

The Market Cross at Kells (Figure 45) displays a similar panel to those on the Arboe and Clones crosses, although it does have some slight iconographic variations in the upper register. On the North face, the second panel above the inscription shows a seated figure on the top left (Figure 46). The figure’s body is front-facing, but it is unclear whether the head is also facing forwards or slightly to the viewer’s right. The figure holds something in its arms, and extends them toward the kneeling figure on the right. Behind and slightly above the kneeling figure is a smaller figure which may represent an angel, as well as a crouched figure on the far right of the scene. Under the seated figure, there are two sets of two kneeling figures which appear to hold objects between them as they gaze upwards to the seated figure; these paired figures are almost identical to the kneeling pairs in the Clones and Arboe panels. Harbison has identified the Kells scene as the Healing of the Centurion’s servant, with the seated figure representing Jesus, the

³³ Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 91.

³⁴ Thunø, *Image and relic*, pp. 43-46. Thunø believes that the Presentation in the Temple also had Mariological implications, as it was associated with the Purification of the Virgin, and, because it foreshadowed Jesus’ sacrifice on the Cross, it also highlighted Mary’s role as ‘generator of both the historical and eucharistic sacrifice’. See Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 45 for the quote.

kneeling figure as the centurion, and the smaller figure above representing the servant.³⁵ Still others have suggested that it represents the Marriage Feast of Cana (D'Aughton, Kuhn, Roe, Brandt-Förster, Weir, Visser et al., Hamlin and Ó Sabhaois).³⁶ However, given that the panels which surround this scene have been identified as Infancy panels here, and the obvious parallels between this panel and the Presentation scene on the crosses at Arboe and Clones, it seems likely that this could represent the same narrative, with the seated figure representing Mary holding the Child Jesus, as Simeon (the kneeling figure in the upper register) reaches out toward the Child. The inversion of this panel, which resulted in Mary and Simeon being shown on top and the accompanying figures being placed on the bottom, is odd, and it makes the identification of the lower figures as high-priests seem unlikely (but not impossible). This inversion, as well as the fact that there is no Circumcision scene shown on this cross, means that the Kells cross was probably not using the same model as the Arboe and Clones cross. Could the Kells depiction have been an early prototype of the scene, which predated the Arboe and Clones versions?

On the Market Cross at Kells (Figure 47), the uppermost panel on the shaft has been previously identified as The Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes, an identification which has been supported by scholars such as Peter Harbison,³⁷ Françoise Henry,³⁸ and Malgorzata D'Aughton.³⁹ However, upon closer inspection, the iconography of this panel does not seem to support this suggestion. The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes is shown on a number of other crosses, including those at Castledermot (North and South cross), Moone, and Clonca (Figures 48-50). While the layout of these panels differs, one thing is constant throughout—the fish are very clearly defined, and the loaves are always rounded (and often five loaves are shown). In other words, there is no question

³⁵ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 107.

³⁶ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 107.

³⁷ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 108.

³⁸ Henry, *Irish high crosses*, p. 42.

³⁹ D'Aughton, 'Epiphany sequence', p. 18.

as to what is being shown, as these elements are among the most obvious and easily identifiable elements on the high crosses. In addition, Christ is always shown either solo, or accompanied by multiple people (either apostles or ‘the masses’ who witnessed the miracle), but never just one person as the Kells image shows. On the Market Cross, there is a central figure that is seated and faces forward. To the right of the scene, a standing figure approaches, his arm outstretched toward the central figure, with one leg slightly in front of the other denoting movement. To the left of the central figure is what has previously been identified as the loaves and fishes; however, the loaves are not clearly defined and the fish are not visible. There are several notches just below the supposed loaves (possibly eight), but these are much too small to represent ‘the masses’ or the apostles. The notches cannot be readily identified as fish based on stylistic comparisons of the fish on the Multiplication panels on other crosses, which show elongated bodies and triangular tail-fins, and which always appear in a pair. Because of these differences, and in light of the two possible Nativity scenes which appear below this panel (the Annunciation to the Shepherds and the Presentation), a new Marian interpretation will be suggested.

Instead of Christ, the central figure may represent the Virgin Mary, who is seated and approached by the Angel Gabriel at the time of the Annunciation. The object to the left, previously identified as the loaves, finds similarities in earlier continental (particularly Roman) depictions of the Annunciation, where Mary is shown spinning wool, which she pulls from a basket placed on the floor next to her. The textual source for this version of the Annunciation comes from apocryphal sources, and the Protoevangelium of James states that ‘having decided to put a new curtain in the Temple, the Jewish priests summoned thither eight maidens of the house of David and divided wool between them. Mary was given a purple and scarlet wool to spin, which she took home to Joseph, under whose guardianship she had been placed in her twelfth year. One day, as she was fetching water from the well, she heard the voice of an angel hailing her as one blessed among women. Without having seen the angel, she hurried home and went on spinning. There the angel appeared to her for the second time’.⁴⁰ The iconographic addition of the

⁴⁰ M.R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament: translation and notes* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 48-49.

wool which Mary spins is not unique to the Irish high crosses, and direct parallels can be found in the Catacombs of Priscilla (fourth century), a marble relief possibly from Ravenna (c. AD 400-10), the mosaic from Santa Maria Maggiore (AD 432-40), a manuscript illustration from the Rabula Gospels (AD 586), an ivory relief from Ravenna or Constantinople (AD 545-56) and a mosaic from the Byzantine Basilica of Saint Euphrasiana (c. AD 540) (see Figures 49-51).⁴¹ All of these examples clearly show the lumps of wool and the basket from which Mary pulls the material to spin, as the angel Gabriel approaches. The basket is often shown to the left of the scene, as on the Kells cross; but this varies, depending on the direction from which the angel approaches. In every case, the bottom of the basket is textured, much like the Kells image, and the wool is shown in rounded lumps near the top of the basket. The angel Gabriel raises his hand in speech towards the Virgin, a stance which is directly paralleled in the Kells panel. Therefore, based on these parallels with six earlier continental examples, it is possible that the Kells image may also be depicting the Annunciation, based on the apocryphal texts which describe her spinning wool. However, this identification is by no means certain, as the current state of this panel makes the figures difficult to discern, and the lack of parallels for the wool basket on other Irish crosses is a notable absence.

If the three panels on the shaft of the Market Cross do, in fact, comprise a nativity cycle as suggested here (Annunciation to the Shepherds, Presentation in the Temple, Annunciation to Mary), then it is plausible that the lowest panel on this side of the Market Cross would have also displayed a nativity scene. Unfortunately, this panel was replaced by a seventeenth-century inscription,⁴² and so this is impossible to confirm. If the panel did originally display a nativity scene, then the most likely suggestion would be that it originally depicted the Adoration of the Magi, or possibly the Circumcision of Christ, and not the Baptism of Christ, as D'Aughton has suggested.⁴³

⁴¹ Schiller, *Christian art*, pp. 34-36.

⁴² The inscription may have read: 'This cross (was) erected (a)t the char(g)e of Robert (Ba)lfe of Gall (mo)rstone (E)sq (Be)ing souverai(n)e of the Corp(or)ation of Kells Anno Dom 1688'. See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 107.

⁴³ D'Aughton, 'Epiphany sequence', p. 19.

Interestingly, there is only one cross that depicts the Flight into Egypt using the standard iconographic conventions that generally accompany this scene. This occurs on the cross at Moone, where the second panel from the bottom on the South side of the base depicts Mary seated side-saddle on a horse, which is led by another figure (presumably Joseph) which holds the reins and is shown in profile (Figure 54). Mary is shown facing forwards, and both her body and head are facing the viewer. The head of the Child Jesus can be seen just over her left shoulder, and, because her arms are not visible, it is unclear whether the rest of his body was painted over hers to show that she was holding him diagonally across herself. While the scene is undoubtedly narrative, it is interesting to note that the Virgin's frontal stance, even while on a horse, is reminiscent of the Marian icons previously discussed. In fact, if the Virgin and Child are isolated from the rest of the scene, their position and stance could easily be compared to the icons discussed above.⁴⁴

The figures in this panel follow the standard for the majority of the extant depictions of this scene, and similar scenes appear in a range of different media from various time periods, from a sixth/seventh-century gold pendant from Adana, to a Carolingian wall-painting dating to c. AD 800.⁴⁵ These images also feature Mary riding on a donkey, cradling the child Jesus as Joseph leads them in a procession from left to right. The Flight into Egypt was used to illustrate Jesus' triumph over the heathens, and in the biblical account of Matthew this is demonstrated by false idols falling at Jesus' feet as he enters the heathen temple in the city of Sotina (near Heliopolis). The narrative was also used as a parallel to Christ's entry into Jerusalem later in life, and highlighted that both of these events were in fulfillment of prophecy. Given the importance of this story, as it relates to the fulfillment of these prophecies, it seems unusual that this is the only depiction of the Flight into Egypt that survives on the Irish high crosses. Similarly, the Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem also does not feature prominently on the crosses, with only

⁴⁴ This appears to be the only Infancy panel on the Moone cross. Therefore, this cross is not considered part of the group of crosses that show complete or semi-complete Infancy cycles.

⁴⁵ Schiller, *Christian art*, p. 118, 120.

two possible occurrences (on the Broken Cross at Kells and the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise).

A parallel can be made between the ‘Flight into Egypt’ and the ‘Zacharias and Elizabeth with the infant John the Baptist’ panels, which were analyzed in the previous chapter. As Mary and Joseph were fleeing from Herod’s massacre, Zacharias and Elizabeth were doing the same thing to save their son John. The Protoevangelium of James, c. AD 150, does not mention the Flight into Egypt specifically, but does parallel the flight of these trios clearly by saying, ‘and when Herod knew that he had been mocked by the Magi, in a rage he sent murderers, saying to them: Slay the children from two years old and under. And Mary, having heard that the children were being killed, was afraid, and took the infant and swaddled Him, and put Him into an ox-stall. And Elizabeth, having heard that they were searching for John, took him and went up into the hill-country, and kept looking where to conceal him. And there was no place of concealment’.⁴⁶ While this narrative is not derived from a direct biblical account, Irish artists were aware of the apocryphal accounts, and often depicted them on the crosses (for example, The Fall of Simon Magus⁴⁷). Could this have been an attempt by the artists to show that there were dual cycles at play? And could the birth of John the Baptist, traditionally celebrated on 24 June (six months before the birth of Christ) have been the basis for the dual nativity cycles?

Intriguingly, on the Duleek cross, County Meath, there is a series of three panels which have been identified as a cycle depicting the infancy of the Virgin Mary herself, rather than the infancy of Christ. Harbison has suggested that the Duleek panels feature Joachim and Anne, with the lowest panel identified as the ‘Fondling of the infant Virgin’; the middle panel depicting ‘the Angel bringing bread to the Virgin in the Temple’, and the uppermost panel showing ‘Joachim and Anne greeting each other at the Golden Gate’ (Figure 55).⁴⁸ However, it appears that all three panels show an infant,

⁴⁶ James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, (Oxford, 1924), pp. 37-49.

⁴⁷ See Chapter Two and Appendix I for a further discussion of the Fall of Simon Magus panels.

⁴⁸ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 77.

and that this infant is being passed between the two adult figures. The lowest panel on the shaft shows a seated figure at the left of the scene, who holds a child on his or her lap. To the right, a standing figure faces forward, but does not reach towards the child. In the panel above, the seated figure holds the child out towards the standing figure, and it appears that both adult figures are grasping the child at the same time, at the mid-point of exchanging custody of the infant. In the uppermost panel on the shaft, the exchange is complete, and the figure on the right now holds the child. Depending on whether the panels are read from top to bottom or bottom to top, the left-hand or right-hand figures (respectively) end up holding the child, but there are no additional characteristics to determine whom each figure is meant to represent. This series is unparalleled on any of the other crosses which survive, so it is impossible to find any similarities to assist in identification. Because there are only two adult figures, the Adoration of the Magi can be ruled out; but there is a close resemblance to the Adoration of the Magi panel on Muiredach's cross. The seated Virgin and Child on the lowest panel of the Duleek cross closely resembles the seated Virgin and Child pair on the Muiredach Adoration panel, and the first approaching magus who reaches towards the child on Muiredach's cross looks strikingly similar to the figure on the right of the panel at Duleek, who also reaches out as if to grab the child. An even closer parallel can be found on the Presentation in the Temple scene on the Market Cross at Kells, where the two figures in the upper left-hand portion of the panel (who may represent Mary and Simeon) appear to be passing the child between them. Was this cycle on the Duleek cross really attempting to illustrate a narrative cycle of the Virgin Mary's infancy, or could it have been some type of extended Adoration/infancy of Christ cycle? Could this mean that the standing figure on the Duleek cross is actually Joseph, and that the first figure on Muiredach's cross is also really Joseph, and not a magus? Unfortunately, there is no way to determine any further identification at this time; regardless, these panels deserve inclusion in this study, as they clearly do show the Virgin Mary, whether as an infant or as a mother enthroned.

If two of the Duleek panels represent Joachim and Anne, then it is interesting to note that Anne is the only woman other than the Virgin to be shown seated or enthroned;

Elizabeth is never shown seated; she is always standing and/or walking.⁴⁹ In contrast, Mary is almost always shown seated, in the iconic portraits, as well as the narrative panels (with the only exception being the Visitation, where both Mary and Elizabeth stand). Could the seated position of the Duleek figure suggest that it is actually Mary, rather than Anne? Or is it simply a position of honour afforded to Anne as the mother of the Virgin?

Interestingly, there is no overlap between the Jesus and John the Baptist iconography discussed in the previous chapter, as the crosses that depict John the Baptist infancy panels do not also depict Jesus' infancy cycle. The only possible exceptions are the Market Cross at Kells and the Arboe cross, both of which appear to depict Infancy narratives on one side and Baptist Infancy panels on another side. Given the close parallels between Jesus and John's infancy stories in the biblical accounts, and the obvious interaction of their mothers whilst pregnant, it seems odd that their infancy stories would not commingle. Obviously, the artists were not averse to showing a mother- and-child on the crosses; so, it seems likely that the choice to depict either the Baptist Infancy panels or the Jesus Infancy panels stemmed from a desire to keep these narratives separate, to avoid confusion on the part of the viewer.

Thus the visual survey of the narrative Nativity panels, particularly those highlighting the Virgin Mary, is complete. While it is clear that no systematic approach was used to depict the Nativity cycle on the Irish high crosses, some patterns have emerged. The shifting focus from the Epiphany sequence to a more complete Infancy cycle has been suggested, and may be demonstrated by the new identification of the Circumcision of Christ and the Presentation in the Temple panels. Interestingly, no single cross displays a complete Infancy cycle (although the Ulster crosses do come closest to being complete), and the visual inventory presented here has illustrated that the Adoration of the Magi is the most frequently occurring Infancy scene, appearing on eight crosses. The Annunciation to the Shepherds appears four times, the Presentation in the Temple appears three, and the Circumcision appears twice. The Annunciation to

⁴⁹ See, for example, the Visitation and the Zacharias and Elizabeth with the infant John panels, where she is shown standing.

Mary (from the Angel Gabriel) and the Flight into Egypt both appear only once. Although this chapter has focused on potential iconographic comparisons and theological interpretations for the panels, the reasons behind the selection of these Infancy panels will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters, particularly as they relate to contemporary political events, both within Ireland and on the continent.

Dynamic Commentary: Typological shifts in the midst of iconoclasm

First Phase of Iconoclasm (AD 726-787)

It is clear from the evidence presented in the preceding chapters that a typological shift occurred from the iconic Marian images used in the Ionan context, which appear on the Book of Kells fol. 7v and the high crosses of Kildalton, Saint Martin's and Saint Oran's, to the narrative Marian images that appear on the Irish high crosses. What could have caused this typological shift to occur, and, despite the typological differences, can the Irish panels still be considered Columban Virgins? The theological implications of the Irish Infancy narratives have been analyzed in chapters two and three, and therefore this chapter will focus on placing the Irish panels in the broader historical context of the late eighth/early ninth century, and will consider whether the Marian panels were chosen in order to convey a subliminal political message.

When members of the Ionan community relocated to Kells in the early decades of the ninth century,¹ it would have been reasonable to assume that these relocating monks would have brought with them not only their knowledge of art and iconography, but also the actual models that their art was based on. Máire Herbert believes that, when the monastery of Kells was founded, it was intended to be 'a place of safety for personnel and precious objects from Iona, and was not designed to replace its mother-house'.² This supports the idea that the Ionans would have brought their artistic creations with them, including the models on which they had been based. These material objects would have taken the form of manuscripts and metalwork, and possibly may have even included the iconic Virgin and Child image from the Book of Kells. The availability of Ionan artefacts, as well as Ionan artists, means that the typological differences between the

¹ The Annals of Ulster record the founding of the monastery at Kells in AD 807, stating: '*Constructio noue ciuitatis Columbae Cille hi Ceninnus* (The building of the new monastery of Colum Cille in Cenannas [Kells])'. The construction of the monastery was finished in AD 814, and Máire Herbert has demonstrated that the AU entry in that year implies that the construction of Kells was initiated by Iona, as the Ionan abbot, Cellach, retired once it was completed ('*Ceallah, abbas Iae, finite constructione temple Cenindsa, reliquit principatum, Diarmitius, alumnus Daigri, pro eo ordinatus est*'). See Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry: the history and hagiography of the monastic familia of Columba* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 68-73.

² Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 68.

Ionan and Irish Virgins cannot be attributed to a lack of models or a lack of awareness of iconic Marian depictions—Irish insularity, in this case, is not an excuse.³ The typological shift also cannot be attributed to differing materials, as the Ionan crosses clearly indicate that it was possible to depict a Marian icon in stone, and some of the stone carvers may have even been amongst those who relocated. This leaves only one real possibility as to why the typological shift occurred: the two different types of Marian images were intended to express different messages to their audiences.

So, what could these different messages have been? In order to understand the different messages that the Ionan and Irish Marian images were attempting to convey, one must first consider the historical context of the time, and analyze the role of Marian images in locations outside of the Insular milieu. Ross Trench-Jellicoe has suggested that the Ionan iconic Virgins were likely produced sometime in the second-half of the eighth century, and were ‘perhaps a product of reinvigorated contact with Rome and the Mediterranean world after the resolution of the Easter controversy’.⁴ In terms of possible influences, the idea that the Ionan Marian icons were influenced by the art of Rome and the Mediterranean world is intriguing, if a bit broad. To fully analyze the influence of Roman art on the Ionan Virgins, two questions must be considered: 1. What type of art was being produced in Rome at this time? 2. Politically speaking, what motivated this art?

While the Ionan community had only recently moved past the Easter controversy, which officially ended in AD 716, Rome was now dealing with another major controversy, which originated in Byzantium—the iconoclastic controversy. The first phase of iconoclasm began under the rule of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III (AD 717-42) in AD 726, just a decade after the Easter controversy was resolved, and lasted until AD 787.⁵ During this time, the Byzantine iconoclasts opposed depictions of holy

³ Máire Herbert has echoed the observation made by Reeves, who argued that Iona’s influence on Ireland ‘was at its height in the second half of the eighth century’. See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 67.

⁴ Ross Trench-Jellicoe, ‘A missing figure on slab fragment no. 2 from Monifeith, Angus, the a’Chill cross, Canna, and some implications of the development of a variant form of the Virgin’s hairstyle and dress in early medieval Scotland’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries in Scotland*, 129 (1999), p. 621.

⁵ Thomas F.X. Noble, *Images, iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009), p. 2. The

persons, and sought to destroy existing icons,⁶ whereas Rome maintained that images were an acceptable expression of orthodoxy, and deemed iconoclasts as heretics. While it may seem odd to be discussing the development of new icons in the context of iconoclasm, the historian Thomas Noble has argued that, despite its name, the driving force behind iconoclasm was not actually the use and veneration of holy images, but instead, the controversy centered on papal authority, orthodoxy and Roman supremacy in ecclesiastical issues. For example, in AD 785, Pope Hadrian addressed the issue of Eastern iconoclasm in several letters to the Byzantine Empress Irene, but oddly, the issue of images is not stressed in these letters as much as would be expected. According to Noble, Hadrian's letters are 'full of Petrine references' and 'emphasize the authority of the bishop of Rome as Peter's successor',⁷ while the image question is relegated to a lesser position. While a full analysis of the issues surrounding Byzantine iconoclasm falls outside the scope of this study, this issue of Roman orthodoxy is crucial to understand how the art of the time may have reflected this, and the idea that religious art was no longer simply theological, but also political.

To return to the issue of the Virgin, what impact did iconoclasm have on representations of the Virgin at this time? During the eighth century, the papacy promoted 'an explosion of Marian imagery in Rome'.⁸ These Marian images were largely of one iconographic type, the *Maria Regina*,⁹ and the use of this type was so

controversy was ended temporarily in AD 787, after the Second Council of Nicaea, but a second phase of iconoclasm occurred from AD 815-42.

⁶ The number of images which were actually removed or destroyed by iconoclasts is uncertain, and prone to exaggeration. To illustrate this point, Noble has demonstrated that, from AD 725-842, only between 20 and 25 works of art were destroyed or covered over.

⁷ Noble, *Images*, p. 74.

⁸ Noble, *Images*, p. 129.

⁹ The *Maria Regina* type, although popular during the eighth century, had its origins in the sixth century, and the earliest Roman example of a *Maria Regina* comes from the palimpsest wall in Santa Maria Antiqua. There are also several examples of *Maria Reginas* that were produced before the outbreak of iconoclasm, including the icon in Santa Maria in Trastevere and the mosaic in the oratory of Saint Peter's, which likely date to the pontificate of John VII (AD 705). Therefore, while the mid/late eighth-century *Maria Regina* type was not a new invention, it is the implication that it took on a political meaning that is important. See Erik Thunø, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome* (Rome, 2002), pp. 34-35; Noble, *Images*, pp. 130-34; Marion Lawrence, 'Maria Regina'. *The Art Bulletin* 7 (1925), pp. 150-61.

widespread in Rome that it became known as the ‘Madonna of the Popes’.¹⁰ In terms of iconographic composition, the *Maria Regina* features a crowned and enthroned Mary, who usually wears jewels and elaborate dresses or robes, which often resembling the robes of Byzantine empresses.¹¹ Mary may also be flanked by soldier-like angels, an attribute which may have been borrowed from imperial art.¹² And although the *Maria Regina* is generally shown in Byzantine dress, Marion Lawrence has concluded that there are no examples of this type of crowned, imperial Madonna in the East,¹³ which suggests that although it may have invoked Byzantine tradition aesthetically, in reality it was a type indigenous to Rome.

Rome did not have a strong cult of the Virgin before the eighth century,¹⁴ which suggests that the so-called ‘explosion’ of Marian imagery at this time must have been caused by more than simply a particular devotion to her, and in fact, there is evidence that the *Maria Regina* was used as a political tool by the papacy during the iconoclastic controversy. Popes Gregory II (AD 716-31), Gregory III AD 731-41),¹⁵ Zachary (AD

¹⁰ This term was coined by Ursula Nilgen in her article, ‘*Maria Regina—Ein politischer Kultbildtypus?*’, *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 19 (1981), 3-33.

¹¹ Thunø has described the *Maria Regina* as ‘a non-narrative, autonomous depiction of the Virgin in the costume of a Byzantine empress; the gemmed crown is the most important attribute. The *Virgin regina* is always shown frontally, and when seated she is furnished with a gemmed throne’. Thunø, *Image and Relic*, p.34.

¹² Noble, *Images*, p. 129.

¹³ Lawrence, ‘*Maria Regina*’, p. 150. However, the possibility of Eastern influence is part of an ongoing debate.

¹⁴ Mary Clayton has suggested that the development of papal devotion to the Virgin during the eighth century may have been influenced by the fact that, with the exception of one, all of the popes from Sergius (AD 687-701) to Zachary (AD 741-52) were either Greek or Syrian. See Mary Clayton, *The cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 269-70.

¹⁵ Noble describes Gregory III as having ‘gone on an image campaign’ in response to iconoclasm, and many of these images featured the Virgin. For example, in AD 731, Gregory III had condemned the iconoclastic policies of the Byzantine emperor; the following year, in direct response to the image controversy, he commissioned a new oratory in Saint Peter’s in Rome, featuring a sumptuous image of the Virgin, adorned with a crown, elaborate jewelry, and framed in silver. In the oratory of Santa Maria ad Praesepe (later known as Santa Maria Maggiore), he installed a gold image of the Virgin, decorated with jewels, which weighed five pounds. He also silvered a much larger image of the Virgin, which weighed fifty pounds. In addition, Gregory commissioned an altar enclosure for Saint Peter’s, with ‘architraves (*trabes*) sheathed in silver and adorned on one side with images of Christ and apostles and on the other side with images of the Virgin and virgin saints’. See Noble, *Images*, pp. 124-27, particularly p. 126 for

741-52),¹⁶ Stephen II (AD 752-57)¹⁷ and Paschal I¹⁸ (AD 817-24) each commissioned a public image of the Maria Regina to express their belief that images were acceptable, and to simultaneously send a message that the Byzantine emperors no longer had any authority in Rome. This political use of the Maria Regina image is confirmed by Thomas Noble, who states that the papacy was ‘installing sumptuous, public images just as the Byzantines were again campaigning against them.’ The sudden widespread use of Marian imagery in Rome, which now became essentially a political tool used by the papacy in the wake of iconoclasm, must have been chosen because Mary was known as the patron saint of Constantinople.¹⁹ By adopting Constantinople’s protectress as the visual embodiment of an anti-iconoclastic stance, the Papacy was making it perfectly clear that Byzantium was the target of their visual politicking. Choosing Mary, rather than an image of Christ or another saint, was a shrewd political move that had little to do with religious beliefs, and essentially turned the Byzantine Empire’s own symbol against itself.

the first quote; Ernst Kitzinger, *Studies in late antique Byzantine and medieval western art, Vol. 2.* (London, 2003), p. 807 for the second quote.

¹⁶ Zachary commissioned a new triclinium at the Lateran, which he had decorated with mosaics and paintings. He also donated altar cloths bearing images of the Nativity to the church of Saint Peter. See Noble, *Images*, pp. 126-27.

¹⁷ The *Life* of Stephen in the *Liber Pontificalis* describes only one example of an image commissioned by the pope, installed in Santa Maria Maggiore; but significantly, it appears to have been a Maria Regina. He had it installed between two pre-existing silver images of the Virgin, both of which he had gilded. The *Life* is also the first time that a yearly procession on the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin is mentioned. During the procession, the pope carried an image of Christ on his shoulders from the church of Santa Maria Maggiore to Santa Maria for mass. See Noble, *Images*, p. 127.

¹⁸ The images relating to the Virgin which were commissioned by Pope Paschal will be discussed in more detail below.

¹⁹ Constantinople was designated as ‘*Theotokopoulis*’ in the seventh century, marking its official dedication to the Virgin. The association of Mary as Constantinople’s protectress originates from the belief that her image and/or relics delivered Constantinople from the Avar siege of AD 626, and the contemporary sources describe images of the Virgin and Child being hung from the city walls by Patriarch Sergius to serve as a symbol that the city was under her protection. Noble, *Images*, p. 130; Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: a history of the Virgin Mary* (London, 2009), pp. 66, 71; Christine Angelidi and Titos Papamastorakis, ‘Picturing the spiritual protector: from *Blachernitissa* to *Hodegetria*’, in *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Aldershot, 2005), p. 210; Peter Brown, *Society and the holy in late antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982; repr. 1989), p. 271.

The use of Marian imagery to convey an anti-iconoclast stance was not limited to Rome, but also occurred in Byzantium itself, albeit in a different (non-visual) form. In a study of the use of the verbal image of the *Theotokos* in Byzantine politics, Nike Koutrakou has demonstrated how iconophiles within the Byzantine Empire purposely employed language invoking images of the Virgin in order to express their basic argument in favour of images, as the Virgin ‘represented the embodiment of their basic argument, since depiction of the Logos found its ultimate justification in its Incarnation through the Mother of God’.²⁰ A clear example of this verbal imagery is found in letters by Theodore of Studios, in which he uses Marian terms to describe Empress Irene the Athenian, even going so far as to use phrases directly from Isaiah 44:23 relating to the Nativity.²¹ According to Koutrakou, the purpose of this type of language was to suggest ‘an indirect, quasi-identification of Irene with the Mother of God, which both flatters her and makes a political statement in its allusion to the Restoration of Icons in 787: Irene is being presented as the new Mother of God who brings about the salvation of the world from iconoclasm’.²²

The Byzantine iconophiles also used the ‘verbal image’ of the Mother of God in order to discredit their iconoclast opponents. The primary technique used by iconophiles was to accuse the iconoclasts of ‘dishonouring’ the Virgin, not simply by condemning visual representations of her, but by questioning her divinity, her triple virginity and her designation as *Theotokos*, thus contradicting her designation as such at the First Council

²⁰ Nike Koutrakou, ‘Use and abuse of the “image” of the *Theotokos* in the political life of Byzantium (with special reference to the iconoclast period’ in *Images of the Mother of God*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Aldershot, 2005), p. 83. Noble has also pointed out two other contemporary arguments in favour of images which center on the Virgin Mary—the first is the Lucan icon of Mary, and the second is a cloth, which, according to Arculf, was supposedly created by Mary and bore images of Jesus and the apostles. The argument was that if these images were created by holy people (the Evangelist and Mary) during their own lives, then they must certainly be legitimate, and would therefore serve as proof that the creation of images was an acceptable practice. See Noble, *Images*, p. 33.

²¹ From Isaiah 44:23, Theodore uses the phrase, ‘the heavens above rejoiced... [and]... the Lord had mercy on his people on your account’. Other Marian phrases included, ‘Our most virtuous lady, angels appearing for your holy palace and proclaiming to us all the songs of praise for your actions... abundant prayers circling like clouds worship God on account of your holy deeds’. See Koutrakou, ‘Use and abuse’, p. 78; Georgios Fatouros, ed., *Theodori Studitae Epistulae* (Berlin and New York, 1992), I.24.

²² Koutrakou, ‘Use and abuse’, p. 79. Rubin has also suggested that Empress Irene may have had a particular devotion to the Virgin, as she was recorded as a donor to the church of the Virgin of the Source (*Tys Pygis*). See Rubin, *Mother of God*, p. 77.

of Nicaea. Patriarch Nikephoros, in his *First Antirrhetic*, refers to the Virgin as ‘dishonoured in many ways by the iconoclasts’, although Nikephoros does not give any specific examples of exactly how she was dishonoured, referring only to the iconoclasts’ denial of Mary’s intercessional abilities.²³ He does, however, claim that Emperor Constantine V tried to employ a technique called *damnatio memoriae*, which prohibits the mention of a person (in this case, Mary) completely, and by doing so, denies her very existence.²⁴ While, admittedly, this is a rather specific example that does not focus on the visual image of the Virgin, it serves merely to illustrate that invocation of the Virgin, either through art or through language, was transcending the theological connotations, and becoming a political symbol in the midst of the iconoclastic controversy.

Thus it is clear that, throughout the eighth century, the image of the Virgin Mary was rife with political subtext, particularly as a refutation of iconoclasm, and if the Ionan artists were inspired by reinvigorated contacts with the Mediterranean world during this time, then they would have been creating their art against this backdrop. Could the Ionan Virgins have functioned as a visual refutation of heresy by emulating the politically-charged Roman *Maria Reginae*?²⁵ While there is no clear evidence to suggest that the Ionan community were involved in the iconoclastic debates in any way,²⁶ their small-

²³ Koutrakou, ‘Use and abuse’, p. 85.

²⁴ Koutrakou, ‘Use and abuse’, p. 85.

²⁵ Because the Ionans were utilizing images of holy persons, it is clear that they were not conveying a pro-iconoclast stance. Therefore, the alternative that they may have been following the trend of Rome and the literature of the Byzantine iconophiles and promoting an anti-iconoclast stance should be considered.

²⁶ As noted above, Bede makes explicit reference to the image debate, suggesting that the Ionan community was probably at least aware of the controversy. In terms of how Bede got his information about the image controversy, Noble has suggested that a letter from Gregory II may have arrived in England, as the *Liber Pontificalis* states that Gregory II ‘wrote to Christians everywhere’. Alternatively, Bede’s informant, Nothelm, may have supplied the information. However, it is important to note that Bede was writing at the beginning of the controversy, so it is conceivable that as the debate escalated (and certainly after II Nicaea), the Ionan monks could have been made aware of the outcome, either through papal correspondence or pilgrims. In addition, an entry in the *York Annals* for the year AD 792 states that the Nicene *Acta* of AD 787 (the document detailing the results of the Second Council of Nicaea) were sent to England by Charlemagne, suggesting at least an awareness of II Nicaea and its outcome. Noble argues that the motivation for Charlemagne’s dispatch of the Nicene *Acta* to England may have been the fact that his advisor, Alcuin, was in England from AD 790-93. See Noble, *Images*, p. 113 for the quote, and pp. 160-62 for a further discussion of the Nicene *Acta* in Britain.

scale ‘explosion’ of Marian imagery, which was roughly contemporary with that of Rome, deserves to be examined in more detail to determine whether there may have been indirect artistic influences from Rome.

Iconographically speaking, there are a number of similarities between the Ionan Virgins and the Roman *Maria Reginas*. On all four Ionan examples (the crosses of Kildalton, Saint Oran’s and Saint Martin’s, and the Book of Kells page), the Virgin does appear to possess the most important attribute of a *Maria Regina*—the crown or elaborate headdress. While the current condition of the Iona crosses makes it difficult to determine exactly what type of headdress she is wearing, both the Saint Martin’s and Kildalton Virgins have a rounded, almost cap-like element visible at the top of her head, suggesting that this may represent a crown (Figures 1 and 3). The cap-like element could also have been an attempt to depict the top half of the traditional headdress, the lower part of which could have been painted on or simply not seen, as it extended down her back. Above the head of the Saint Oran’s Virgin is a semi-circular design, which could represent a ‘crescentic halo’ (as Trench-Jellicoe suggests),²⁷ but, given that the Virgins on the other two crosses do not have visible haloes, it seems more likely that it represents the top of a crown or headdress, similar to that on the Book of Kells page (Figures 2 and 4). Trench-Jellicoe believes that Mary’s hair can be seen as shoulder-length, and that it is ‘gathered into curling bunches on either side of her neck’.²⁸ However, the curling edges could just as easily be taken as representing the fabric of a headdress, which would have extended to her shoulders. The Book of Kells Virgin also wears an elaborate headdress, which covers her head completely, drapes down over the shoulders, and rests near the collarbone. Marion Lawrence has argued that, in the Italian examples, the crown differs slightly in each *Maria Regina* image, but that it is generally a ‘large tiara covered with jewels, which usually continues down to the shoulder in a headdress’.²⁹ Clearly, even if the Iona artists were attempting to convey some type of headdress on the Virgin, they were not of the same type as those shown on the Roman

²⁷ Trench-Jellicoe, ‘A missing figure’, p. 605.

²⁸ Trench-Jellicoe, ‘A missing figure’, p. 605.

²⁹ Lawrence, ‘*Maria Regina*’, p. 150.

Maria Reginas. And while this means that there was probably not a direct Roman stylistic influence, it does not completely rule out the possibility of an indirect iconographic influence.

Another iconographic attribute of the Roman Maria Reginas is that they are usually seated on a jeweled throne, and they face frontally as they hold the child Jesus across their lap.³⁰ While the Virgin's seat is not visible on the Ionan sculptures, Mary does face forward, and although her lower body is slightly turned on the Kildalton panel and the Book of Kells folio, her upper body is still front-facing and she gazes directly out at the viewer. Like the Roman Maria Reginas, all four of the Ionan Virgins are flanked by the soldier-like angels that were incorporated from Roman imperial art (four angels on Saint Martin's cross and the Book of Kells page, two on Saint Oran's cross and the Kildalton cross). In addition, on each of the three carved panels, the wings of the angels on either side of the seated Virgin touch just above her head, forming an arch. While Trench-Jellicoe is correct in pointing out that the angels' wings on the sculptures differ from those on the Kells folio (which seem to disappear behind the Virgin's halo rather than touching to form an arch) his suggestion that this was caused by a spacing issue seems to fall short;³¹ if it was merely a spacing issue, then one would expect to find it on only one of the crosses, while presumably the others would have left more space to correct this mistake. But the fact that the same arch appears on all three crosses would suggest that it was intentional, and it seems plausible that, when taken in conjunction with her seated position, the arched wings behind Mary's head could have been depicting the arch of a high-backed throne. In the Book of Kells image, the throne is clearly visible and, although the lower body of the Virgin is shown in the three-quarter complementary pose, the elaborate decoration on her throne, and the angels, which carry flabella, do seem to imply an enthroned, regal Mary, much like the Roman Maria Reginas.

³⁰ Although the Maria Regina is specified as always front-facing, there is no standard position for the Christ child. In most cases, he is also front-facing; however, a three-quarter or profile pose would not exclude an image from being classified as a Maria Regina.

³¹ Trench-Jellicoe, 'A missing figure', p. 605.

In terms of her dress, only the clothing on the Book of Kells page can be analyzed with any certainty, as the garments on the carved stones are too difficult to discern. But one element which is common to all four of the Ionan Virgins is the appearance of the lozenge on her right shoulder, as mentioned in chapter one. Ross Trench-Jellicoe believes that the lozenge insignia may have derived from a Byzantine model, and observed that the lozenge was ‘a long-standing motif (c. 750 to c. 1000) in that part of the Columban *paruchia*’.³² Initially, it may seem incongruous that the Iona artists would choose any kind of Byzantine iconography during iconoclasm, especially if they were attempting to express their affinity with Rome. But upon closer inspection, this technique is exactly the same as that employed by the Roman *Maria Reginas*—they utilized an aspect of Byzantine iconography (Mary on the large scale, the Byzantine style of dress on the small scale), and used it to refute the very people who invented it, in the ultimate act of visual warfare. Is it possible that, if the Ionan Marian icons were influenced by the Roman *Maria Reginas*, then they could also have turned an element of Byzantine iconography against its very creators, in the form of the lozenge? While this would be an interesting parallel to the visual politicking happening in Rome, it seems unlikely the Ionans would be concerned with visually mocking the Byzantines, especially if there were no Byzantines present at Iona to understand the reference. But the lozenge may have still served a purpose in helping to identify the Iona icons as *Maria Reginas*.

In a study of some Marian figures that appear on several later Scottish stones, Ross Trench-Jellicoe has noted the appearance of penannular brooches worn by these figures, which are sometimes (but not always) accompanied by a lozenge insignia. He has concluded that, regardless of placement or gender of the wearer, the brooch was intended to ‘function as a marker for status’.³³ While the Ionan Virgins do not appear to wear any brooches, all four examples do possess a lozenge, which is placed on the right shoulder of her garments, similar to the placement of the penannular brooches on the later figures. Given that the brooch and lozenge were often paired, it seems likely that

³² Trench-Jellicoe, ‘A missing figure’, p. 615.

³³ Trench-Jellicoe, ‘A missing figure’, p. 610.

the lozenge may have also functioned as a status symbol in the earlier context of the Ionan Virgins.³⁴ If the lozenge was meant as a status symbol, then it would certainly imply that Mary was not only queen of heaven, but also a queen on Earth, and would therefore give the image a subtext of secular authority. By placing a secular element into a seemingly religious scene, the Ionan Virgins may have been attempting to combine the spiritual and the secular, in much the same way that the Roman Maria Reginas were.

While the theological implications of the lozenge symbol have been discussed above in Chapter Two, it is important to note that the lozenge is also used as a status marker in continental art. According to Michael King, ‘lozenges appear on the robes of the Virgins in procession on the north wall of the nave in Sant’ Apollinare Nuovo (sixth century), and on the clothing of members of the retinue of Justinian and Theodora on the north wall of the presbyterium in San Vitale’.³⁵ They also appear on the garments of the daughter of a noblewoman depicted on a glass medallion in the Museo Civico, Brescia (c. AD 400).³⁶ The fact that this symbol is so often represented on virginal females of a high secular rank adds further support to the theory that the lozenge functioned as a status symbol. In terms of the Ionan Virgins, Mary’s theological importance is shown through the appearance of the angels, and the appearance of the Christ child on her lap; but by crowning her, enthroning her, and giving her the lozenge to underscore her earthly significance, the sculptors are ensuring that her secular importance is also highlighted.

Significantly, none of the depictions of Mary on the Irish high crosses show her with a lozenge, brooch, or any other secular status marker. This absence of a secular status symbol is not limited to the narrative panels; it is also absent from the iconic depictions on the cross of Drumcliff and the slab at Carndonagh, which suggests that the absence is

³⁴ While all four of the Ionan Virgins display lozenge insignia, there is currently no evidence to suggest that any of the Virgins on the Irish high crosses possess a brooch or a lozenge. The significance of this missing element of iconography will be discussed in more detail below.

³⁵ Michael King, ‘Diamonds are forever: the Kilbroney cross, the Book of Kells and an early Christian symbol of the Resurrection’, Down County Museum <www.downcountymuseum.com/uploads/DiamondsareForever.doc>, p. 2. See also Jannic Durand, *Byzantine Art* (Paris: Terrail, 1999), pp. 30-33.

³⁶ King, ‘Diamonds’, p. 2.

not merely a symptom of a differing typology.³⁷ In a discussion of the relationship between images and holy relics, Patrick Geary has argued that, ‘in order for an object to be venerated... a new symbolic function had to be assigned—a function that had its origin in the fabric of the society in which it was to be venerated. Thus the symbolic value of a new or rediscovered relic was only a reflection of the values assigned by the society that honoured it... in its new location it became an important symbol only if that society made it one, and this symbolism was necessarily a product of that society’.³⁸ While this quote relates specifically to holy relics, perhaps the same idea can be applied to religious symbolism in general, and more specifically, to the lozenge. The prevalence of the lozenge insignia in Scotland at this time implies that there was a symbolic meaning attached to it, and one which would have had particular relevance to the society viewing it. Whether or not the lozenge was intended to imply that the Ionan Virgins were similar to the Maria Reginas of Rome is uncertain, but there is no doubt that this symbol was significant in the Iona context.

While this would seem to indicate that the Irish Virgins were not meant to be seen as queens, it could have simply related to a difference in clothing between Scotland and Ireland. Trench-Jellicoe has demonstrated that the Scottish use of the brooch differs from the Irish usage in that the five Scottish figures who wear the brooch are female, whereas in Ireland, the brooch is worn exclusively by male figures.³⁹ If only Irish males

³⁷ While this would seem to indicate that the Irish Virgins were not meant to be seen as queens, it could have simply related to a difference in clothing between Scotland and Ireland. Trench-Jellicoe has demonstrated that the Scottish use of the brooch differs from the Irish usage in that the five Scottish figures who wear the brooch are female, whereas in Ireland, the brooch is worn exclusively by male figures. If only Irish males wore a status marker, then it would make sense that the female Virgins would not be shown with a lozenge, which was also considered a status marker. Therefore, the lack of lozenge insignia was not necessarily representative of differing theological principles or indicative of a different type of Virgin, but merely a question of contemporary fashion. See Trench-Jellicoe, ‘A missing figure’, pp. 14-15. See also J. Romilly Allen, ‘The Celtic brooch and how it was worn’, *The Illustrated Archaeologist* 1 (1894), pp. 165-170; Orna Somerville, ‘Kite-shaped brooches’, *JRSAI* 123 (1993), pp. 59-101; Niamh Whitfield, ‘Brooch or Cross?’, *Archaeology Ireland* 10, no. 1 (1996), pp. 20-23; Niamh Whitfield, ‘The “Tara” Brooch: an Irish emblem of status in its European context’, in *From Ireland coming: Irish art from the early Christian to the late Gothic period and its European context*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton, 2001), pp. 211-47.

³⁸ Thunø, ‘Image and relic’, p. 15; citing Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of relics in the central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 5.

³⁹ Trench-Jellicoe, ‘A missing figure’, p. 610.

wore a status marker, then it would make sense that the female Virgins would not be shown with a lozenge, which was also considered a status marker. Therefore, the lack of lozenge insignia was not necessarily representative of differing theological principles or indicative of a different type of Virgin, but merely a question of contemporary fashion.

The iconographic similarities between the Ionan Virgins and the politically-charged Maria Reginas would therefore seem to suggest that there was some influence coming from Rome. But why would a small monastic community on the isolated island of Iona feel the need to express an affinity with Rome through their art, especially if the Roman art was focused on refuting heresy? As mentioned above, the community of Iona had only recently recovered from their own major heresy in AD 716,⁴⁰ when they agreed to change their Easter calculation to the orthodox Roman calculation, and to change their tonsures to the approved Petrine/Roman type.⁴¹ Could a desire to visually demonstrate their allegiance to Rome, and their commitment to orthodox practices in the wake of their own past heresy, have inspired the Ionans to emulate the Roman Marian symbolism?

If the Ionan Virgins can be seen as Insular versions of the Roman Maria Reginas, which were a response to Byzantine iconoclasm, then perhaps there is another visual clue relating to iconoclasm in the Book of Kells portrait of the Virgin and Child. On the right side of the page, placed about three-quarters of the way down on the frame, is a miniature of six previously unidentified men, arranged horizontally in two rows of three. The figures are shown in profile, with full beards and reddish-coloured hair, with no

⁴⁰ AU, ATig entries for AD 716 record: '*Pascha comotatur in Eoa ciuitate* (The date of Easter is changed in the monastery of Í)'. Bede (*Historia Ecclesiastica* v.22) reports, 'The monks of Iona accepted the catholic ways of life under the teaching of Egbert while Dúnchad was abbot'. See B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, eds and trans. *Bede's ecclesiastical history of the English people* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 554-55. The tonsure issue was resolved in AD 718 (ATig: '*Tonsura corona super familiam Íae datur*'), which implies that it was seen as a separate issue to that calculation of Easter. See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 58-61; and Daniel P. McCarthy, 'On the shape of the insular tonsure', *Celtica* 24 (2003), pp. 140-67.

⁴¹ According to Kathleen Hughes, despite the fact that the northern Irish churches (not including those associated with the Columban *paruchia*) were believed to have converted to the approved Roman practices at the Synod of Birr in AD 697, there is no concrete evidence to confirm this; and while the issue may have been raised there, she does not believe that it was necessarily resolved at the synod. Hughes states, 'All we *know* is that Adomnán celebrated Easter in northern Ireland in 704 according to Roman practice'. See Hughes, *The Church*, p. 109.

obvious indication of tonsures. These male figures are placed within their own frame, and they face away from the Virgin and Child, making it unclear whether they are meant to be viewed as part of the main portrait or not. Suggestions as to their identity have focused on the fact that, although they look away from the Madonna and Child, they look towards the text on the opposite page, leading to suggestions that they may represent ‘the readers of the Kells Gospels’ or ‘witnesses to the Incarnation’.⁴² However, it seems odd to place them on the Virgin’s portrait page if they were actually intended to interact solely with the text, and even if they were not intended to be part of the main portrait, depicting figures that are literally turning their backs on the infant Jesus and his mother could have been extremely controversial. If the placement of these figures was meant to show them turning away from the icon of the Virgin and Child, could it have been a visual reference to the iconoclasts, who were also turning away from images of holy persons? While admittedly there is no textual evidence for the identification of these six figures as iconoclasts, there is no textual evidence suggesting that they are simply witnesses to the Incarnation either, nor is there any parallel to these figures found in the Irish Infancy cycles or on the Iona crosses. Therefore, until a parallel to these six figures is found, their identification remains uncertain; but the possibility that they may represent iconoclasts cannot be ruled out entirely at this time.

If the suggestion presented here is correct, and the new type of enthroned Maria Regina did, in fact, develop after the Columban acceptance of Easter in AD 716, then the Virgin and Child image on Cuthbert’s coffin (described in Chapter Two) presents a curious anomaly. As stated above, the coffin was created at Lindisfarne, which was

⁴² Thomas Owen Clancy and Gilbert Márkus, *Iona: the earliest poetry of a Celtic monastery* (Edinburgh, 1995), i (inside cover). There is another set of unidentified male figures in the Book of Kells, which appear on folio 124r. This second set of figures is not the same as those in the Virgin and Child page—they appear in three groups of five outside the main frame; two groups look into the main framed area, and the third set looks away from the framed area and towards the opposite page. They have blonde hair, do not have beards, and their hairstyles may indicate tonsures. They are also shown in profile, but their eyes are much more exaggerated than the figures on folio 7v. The figures on folio 124r surround the text that reads, ‘Then they crucified Jesus’, suggesting that these figures are intended to represent the witnesses to the Crucifixion. Again, however, their exact relationship to the text and their identity cannot be ascertained with any certainty at this time. For a further discussion of the relationship between text and images in the Book of Kells, see Heather Pulliam, *Word and image in the Book of Kells* (Dublin, 2006).

founded by Columban monks from Iona, and is generally dated to AD 698,⁴³ nearly twenty years before the Columban *paruchia* officially accepted the Roman calculation of Easter. The administrative relationship between Iona and Lindisfarne during this period is unclear; although Lindisfarne was founded by Ionan monks, Máire Herbert has questioned the extent of Iona's administrative presence there.⁴⁴ Similarly, Jane Hawkes has argued that 'direct *familia* links between the two centres were probably no longer in existence' by the time the coffin was constructed.⁴⁵ Because the exact relationship between Iona and Lindisfarne is unclear, it is equally unclear whether this image should be considered as directly related to the Iona group Virgin and Child images. Could the absence of flanking angels and the lack of a clearly delineated throne in the Cuthbert image indicate that this Virgin was of a different iconographic type than those depicted on the Iona group artefacts?

Alternatively, is it possible that the Cuthbert image does actually relate to the calculation of Easter? After the Synod of Whitby ruled in favour of the Roman calculation in AD 664 and the seat of the Northumbrian church was moved from Lindisfarne to York, then-bishop Colmán and the other monks who remained faithful to the Irish calculation left Lindisfarne and returned to Iona.⁴⁶ Although Colmán was replaced by other Irish monks, such as Tuda, these successors had already accepted the Roman calculation.⁴⁷ Therefore, could the appearance of the Virgin and Child on Cuthbert's Coffin reflect Lindisfarne's earlier acceptance of the Roman calculation shortly after the Synod of Whitby in AD 664? While this theory remains purely

⁴³ Kitzinger, *Studies*, p. 673; Clayton, *The cult*, p. 147; Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', p. 107.

⁴⁴ Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 45. See also Kathleen Hughes, 'Evidence for contacts between the Churches of the Irish and English from the Synod of Whitby to the Viking Age', in *England before the Conquest*, ed. Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 49-67.

⁴⁵ Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', p. 127.

⁴⁶ Henry, *Irish Art*, p. 36. Henry states that 'some thirty English took refuge first in Iona and then in Ireland'.

⁴⁷ Henry, *Irish Art*, p. 36. Tuda died in AD 664 after serving only a few months as abbot of Lindisfarne. Alfred P. Smyth has argued that 'the complete collapse of Iona influence on Northumbrian ecclesiastical administration is clearly seen in the withdrawal of Colmán and his entire Irish contingent from Lindisfarne to Iona (and afterwards to Ireland)'. See Alfred P. Smyth, *Warlords and holy men: Scotland AD 80-1000*, The New History of Scotland I (Baltimore, 1984; repr. Edinburgh, 2005), p. 119.

speculative, it is interesting to consider whether the political climate during the time in which the coffin was constructed may have similarly influenced its use of the Virgin and Child image.

The evidence presented above would seem to support the theory that the Ionan iconic Virgin and Child panels are more than simply theological statements, as they may actually contain an element of political commentary similar to the Roman *Maria Reginae*. If this were the case, then the dual meaning assigned to the Ionan Marian icons may indicate two things: first, that they were promoting the message of Roman primacy in the wake of the image controversy and second, that the Ionans were reaffirming their own commitment to orthodoxy post-Easter controversy. The previous chapters have shown that the Irish Marian panels were of a different type than the Ionan Virgins. Were the Irish panels attempting to convey a different message? Or were they simply finding a new way to express old truths?

Second Phase of Iconoclasm (AD 815-42)

In the years following the decision of II Nicaea to officially end iconoclasm in AD 787, until the controversy was renewed in AD 815, there was relatively little mention of the image debate in the East or West. Iconoclasm had been the official policy in Byzantium for most of the eighth century, and it seems odd that virtually no evidence exists to suggest that any elements of the controversy remained. Thomas Noble summarized the situation best when he stated that the lack of sources makes it seem like iconoclasm ‘vanished like a wisp of smoke’.⁴⁸ However, there were a few minor incidents recorded that relate to prevailing aspects of the image debate.

In AD 797, the Byzantine emperor, Constantine VI, threatened patriarch Tarasius with the restoration of iconoclast policies if Tarasius refused to grant him a divorce.⁴⁹ Whether this was a credible threat or not is difficult to determine, and since Constantine died within the same year, he was never able to follow through on his threat, if that had

⁴⁸ Noble, *Images*, p. 246.

⁴⁹ Noble, *Images*, p. 246.

indeed been his intention.⁵⁰ The chronicler Theophanes reports two further iconoclastic events. The first implies that, in response to disagreements with the patriarch, an iconophile, Emperor Nicephorus (AD 802-811) had been guilty of favouring a ‘pseudo-hermit’ named Nicholas, who had an iconoclastic following based at Hexakionion.⁵¹ Although Nicholas was later forced to recant his iconoclastic views, it clearly demonstrates that some pockets of iconoclastic activists remained, even after II Nicaea. Theophanes made another brief mention of prevailing iconoclasts when he reported that, during the Battle of Versinicia in AD 813, a group of iconoclast soldiers disseminated a rumour that the late emperor Constantine V would appear on horseback to lead the Greek forces to victory. Apparently, however, Constantine V did not appear, as the Byzantines suffered a crippling defeat at the hands of the Bulgarians, and the iconoclastic soldiers were apprehended without much difficulty shortly thereafter.⁵²

In AD 815, at a synod held in the church of Hagia Sophia, the second period of Byzantine iconoclasm began under the rule of Emperor Leo V (AD 813-20). Later iconophile sources state that Leo V had begun promoting his iconoclastic beliefs shortly after becoming emperor in AD 813; he allegedly did so by hailing the achievements of earlier iconoclastic emperors like Leo III and Constantine V, and even changed his son’s name from Symbarios to Constantine.⁵³ But the context in which he assumed the emperorship was not conducive to an immediate abolition of the official iconophile policies, as both the patriarch and the prominent Studite monks were known iconophiles. So instead of a sudden, complete change in official policy, Leo V set about reinstating iconoclasm in a more subtle way. He began by creating a study commission during the

⁵⁰ Noble, *Images*, p. 246. In AD 797, Constantine VI’s mother, Empress Irene, had her son attacked and blinded. He died from his injuries shortly thereafter, and Irene assumed rule as *Basilissa* until she was deposed by Nicephorus in AD 802. See also Noble, pp. 246-47 for a discussion of a treatise by Theodore Abū Qurrah, written in Arabic, on the defense of holy images, as an example of contemporary evidence of image debates from outside the Byzantine empire.

⁵¹ Noble, *Images*, p. 246. Under Emperor Michael I, Nicholas was forced to publicly renounce his iconoclastic views, and one of his followers had his tongue cut out as punishment for damaging an image of the Virgin Mary.

⁵² Noble, *Images*, p. 246.

⁵³ Noble, *Images*, p. 247.

second year of his reign, which he charged with the task of finding evidence to prove that images were a recent innovation with no basis in church history.⁵⁴ When the commission presented their unconvincing findings to the patriarch, he responded that the passages in question prohibited the worship of pagan idols, but not the production of Christian images.⁵⁵ Not to be deterred, Leo expanded the membership of the commission, and, by the end of AD 814, the commission had presented Leo with a much more thorough collection of patristic materials which opposed images.⁵⁶ The patriarch was still unconvinced by the commission's arguments, and refused Leo V's request to institute a serious debate over the image question. By Lent in AD 815, the patriarch had abdicated under pressure from Leo and his iconoclastic cohorts, and was replaced by Constantine V's nephew, Theodotus Melissenus. Shortly after, Leo convened the council at Hagia Sophia, and after three sessions, the iconoclast arguments were approved and reinstated as the official policy in Byzantium.⁵⁷

The Carolingians became active in Second Iconoclasm in AD 824, when the Byzantine emperor Michael II sent a letter to the Frankish ruler, Louis the Pious, to explain the Byzantine situation and ask for Louis' support. In the letter, Michael informs Louis about 'illicit' practices and image worship allegedly occurring in Byzantium.⁵⁸ This letter prompted Louis to request papal permission to further investigate the status of the image controversy in his own kingdom; the following year, a group of Frankish

⁵⁴ Noble, *Images*, p. 248.

⁵⁵ Noble, *Images*, p. 248.

⁵⁶ Noble believes that the commission must have had access to additional material before compiling their second report to the patriarch. Exactly what additional material they utilized is unclear; however, Noble suggests it could have been the full *acta* of AD 754, the patristic *florilegium* prepared for Hiereia, or the *florilegium* prepared for Constantine V. See Noble, *Images*, pp. 247-49 for further discussion of the events leading to Leo's reinstatement of iconoclastic policies.

⁵⁷ Noble, *Images*, p. 249.

⁵⁸ Noble, *Images*, p. 261. These 'illicit' practices included everything from placing lamps and incense near the images, and singing psalms to them to seek their direct intercession, to shrouding the images in cloth to make them sponsors for a child's baptism, and mixing scrapings from the images into the Eucharistic wine.

bishops convened the Paris Colloquy of AD 825.⁵⁹ The result of the Paris Colloquy was a collection of documents asserting the Frankish position on images—regardless of the theological justifications presented by the iconophiles, images were to be neither encouraged nor destroyed, and they should not be worshipped.⁶⁰

At roughly the same time that the Paris Colloquy was taking place, Claudius of Turin (AD 817-27) instituted iconoclastic policies shortly after becoming bishop of the city. He opposed any form of image worship, particularly images of the Virgin Mary and the Cross, and sought to destroy any existing images in his diocese, in what Noble has described as ‘a rampage of image destruction and iconophobic propaganda’.⁶¹ Both Louis the Pious and Pope Paschal (AD 817-24) were aware of Claudius’ actions—Louis commissioned two of his theologians⁶² to respond to Claudius’ policies, and a surviving letter from Claudius to abbot Theutmir of Psalmody (Nîmes)⁶³ mentions Paschal’s negative reaction to Claudius.⁶⁴ Although this episode in the iconoclastic controversy

⁵⁹ The result of the Paris Colloquy of AD 825 was a collection of documents known as the *Libellus Synodalis*, which was a summary of the history of Frankish opposition to image worship to date. See Noble, *Images*, pp. 268-85 for a summary of the material included in the *Libellus*.

⁶⁰ Noble, *Images*, pp. 285-86.

⁶¹ Noble, *Images*, p. 3.

⁶² The theologians commissioned by Louis the Pious were Jonas of Orléans (*On the Cult of Images*) and Dúngal of Pavia (*Responses*), a native Irishman who had been working on the Continent since the time of Charlemagne. See Noble, *Images*, pp. 306-12; Thunø, *Image and relic*, pp. 132-35.

⁶³ Noble states that the document is not really a letter, but is actually a set of excerpts from a treatise written by Claudius, entitled *Apology and Response of Bishop Claudius of Turin against Abbot Theutmir*. See Noble, *Images*, pp. 287-88; Dúngal, *Responsa contra Claudium: a controversy on holy images*, ed. Paolo Zanna. Per Verba 17 (Florence, 2002).

⁶⁴ Thunø suggests that knowledge of Paschal’s negative reaction to Claudius must have been widespread, as Theutmir was aware of it in southern France. Claudius’ letter to Theutmir read: ‘*Quinta tua in me obiectio est, et displicere tibi dicis, eo quod dominus apostolicus indignatus sit mihi. Hoc dixisti de Paschale Aecclesiae Romanae episcopo, qui praesente iam caruit vita. Apostolicus autem dicitur quasi apostoli custos aut apostoli fungens officium. Certe non ille dicendus apostolicus qui in cathedra sedens apostoli, sed qui apostolicum implent officium.* (Your fifth objection against me is that the apostolic lord was displeased with me [you state that I displease you as well]. You said this of Paschal [I] the bishop of the Roman church, who has departed from the present life [in AD 824]. An apostolic man is one who is guardian of the apostle or who exercises the office of an apostle. Surely that one should not be called an apostolic man who merely sits on an apostle’s throne, but the one who fulfills apostolic function)’. Text and translation from Zanna, *Responsa*, pp. 288-289.

was essentially ended upon Claudius' death in AD 827, it serves merely to demonstrate how widespread the image debate was in the first half of the ninth century.

One of the theologians commissioned by Louis the Pious to respond to Claudius was Dúngal, who is presumed to be a native Irishman, although his biographical details remain somewhat mysterious. No information exists specifying where in Ireland he was born, where he was educated, or in what year he left Ireland.⁶⁵ His presence on the continent is documented from at least AD 804 in a letter from Alcuin, in which he describes how two Irish scholars arrive at Charlemagne's court with nothing to sell but their knowledge; it has been suggested that one of these scholars may have been Dúngal.⁶⁶ He was a monk at Saint-Denis until AD 825, when he left France to become the head of the school at Pavia, before finally retiring to the Irish monastery of Bobbio.⁶⁷ In terms of his response to Claudius' iconoclastic policies, Dúngal focuses mainly on patristic and biblical citations to refute Claudius' claims, and he explicitly allows for the veneration of images.⁶⁸ Although Dúngal makes reference to the traditional arguments invoked in favour of images,⁶⁹ he also challenges Claudius' condemnation of pilgrimage to Rome by citing the supremacy of Peter,⁷⁰ and closely associates relics with holy images.⁷¹ Dúngal does not mention any particular Irish beliefs or teachings in his

⁶⁵ John Healy has suggested Bangor as his place of education, due to the fact that he possessed the Bangor Antiphony. See John Healy, 'Irish theologians—No. VI, Dúngal', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 3, third series (1882) p. 297; Zanna, *Responsa*, xvi.

⁶⁶ Zanna, *Responsa*, xvi; Noble, *Images*, p. 306.

⁶⁷ Noble, *Images*, p. 306; Zanna, *Responsa*, xvi-xviii. He remained in Bobbio until his death in c. AD 834. Upon his death, he bequeathed a number of books to the foundation. For a discussion of the patristic books used by Dúngal and bequeathed to Bobbio, see Zanna, *Responsa*, cviii-cx.

⁶⁸ Noble, *Images*, p. 310.

⁶⁹ For example, he cites the Exodus prohibition, which was a standard defense for the use of holy images that argued that God commanded images to be made. See Zanna, *Responsa*, pp. 27-29.

⁷⁰ See particularly Zanna, *Responsa*, pp. 165-71, where Dúngal cites Augustine on the Petrine privilege.

⁷¹ The text reads: '*His ergo omnibus superius compraehensis, certissime et evidentissime patet picturas sanctas, et sanctam Domini crucem, et sacras electorum Dei reliquias et congruis honoribus a catholicis et orthodoxis in Deo et propter Deum venerari oportere, non ut sacrificando eis divines honor, et cultus soli Deo omnium creatori debitas, sit a quoquam deferentius, sed ut in eius amore, honore, laude et gloria sua sancta, insignia, et venerabilia fide et non ficta honorentur et amplectantur*' (Taking therefore into account all the above-mentioned examples, it goes without saying that sacred images and the holy cross of the Lord and the holy relics of God's elect have to be venerated with worthy and appropriate honours in

Responsa, the pilgrimage issue would have been particularly relevant to an Irish monk, particularly one who had left Ireland and was active in Italy. Because there are no details specifying where he was educated, it is unclear whether his writings can be seen as a reflection of the Irish position on holy images, or whether his arguments are a reflection of his time spent teaching and travelling on the continent and his contact with the Carolingian court. However, regardless of the origins of his doctrinal arguments, it is likely that he was actively still in contact with monastic communities in Ireland, or at the very least, Irish pilgrims (particularly later at Bobbio). Because of this, it is probable that the Irish would have been fully aware of the iconoclastic debates and the arguments being advanced on both sides, and pilgrims may have even brought images or documents from the period of Second Iconoclasm back to Ireland.

To return to the issue of the Virgin Mary, what impact did the second phase of iconoclasm have on representations of the Virgin? In much the same way that the eighth-century popes had responded to iconoclasm by commissioning large, public images of the Maria Regina in Rome, the early ninth-century popes began to do the same. In the same year that iconoclasm was resurrected in Byzantium, Pope Leo III (AD 795-816) commissioned large mosaics in the basilica of Santi Nereo ed Achilleo in Rome.⁷² The mosaics appeared in the apse and apsidal arch, and although the apse mosaic was destroyed in AD 1596, there is an extant painting which was allegedly made immediately after the mosaic was destroyed, and thus provides some insight into the mosaic's original composition (Figures 56-57.)⁷³ At the centre of the apse mosaic, a gemmed cross⁷⁴ is set in front of a red, draped curtain. Six lambs (three on either side)

God and for God by orthodox catholics. This does not imply that by religious sacrifices the honour proper to God and the worship due to God alone be transferred onto them, but it means that in his love, honour, praise and glory, his own holy, excellent and venerable vessels, each one of them as it is due, are honoured and held dear'. Zanna, *Responsa*, pp. 244-245.

⁷² Caroline J. Goodson, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I: papal power, urban renovation, church rebuilding and relic translation, 817-24* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 110, 127; Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 128. Goodson and Thunø agree that the mosaics date to the final years of Leo III's pontificate; however, Goodson allows for a broader range of possible dates, from AD 810-16, while Thunø suggests a more specific date of AD 815. Thunø's suggestion of AD 815 is accepted here.

⁷³ Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 129.

⁷⁴ The form of the gemmed cross in this mosaic is particularly intriguing. The truncated pyramidal base instantly recalls the almost identical form of the bases of the Irish high crosses, and the clearly defined

approach the cross. In the apsidal arch, there are two depictions of the Virgin—the first appears at the far left, where the Annunciation is depicted, and the second appears at the far right, where an enthroned, front-facing Virgin and Child appear. Between the two depictions of the Virgin, at the centre of the apsidal arch, is a scene showing the Transfiguration, featuring Jesus encircled in a beam of light and flanked by apostles on either side.⁷⁵

Because the Transfiguration occupies the central position in the apsidal arch, relatively little attention has been paid to the role of the Virgin in the mosaic, but it is clear that the Virgin and Child is of a similar iconographic type to the *Maria Regina* images detailed above. But significantly, this mosaic also incorporates the *Maria Regina* into a narrative Infancy scene, namely the Annunciation. Thunø argues that both depictions of the Virgin in this mosaic should be interpreted as *Maria Reginas*—the emphasis on her role as *Regina* is confirmed by the fact that, in both scenes, she is seated on a gemmed throne, is front-facing, and wears regal purple garments.⁷⁶ Incorporating the *Maria Regina* iconography into the Annunciation indicates a typological shift—the *Maria Regina* is no longer confined to the static, iconic Virgin and Child scene, but can now be included in the narrative Infancy scenes.

As there is no extant evidence detailing Pope Leo III's official response to iconoclasm, there is some debate as to whether this mosaic can be taken as a direct response to the outcome of the council of Hagia Sophia in AD 815. Erik Thunø has

panels on the shaft and arms are similar to the defined panels on the Irish crosses. Although there are no figural scenes depicted on the gemmed cross, the defined panels seem to imply that there would be a different gem used in each section, in much the same way the Irish crosses depict different scenes in each panel. The circle denoted at the central junction of the cross arms of the gemmed cross is reminiscent of the ring on the Irish crosses, but because it does not extend past the confines of the cross, it cannot be considered typologically identical to the ringed crosses in Ireland. While it is unlikely that the gemmed cross in the Santi Nereo ed Achilleo mosaic directly influenced the form of the Irish crosses, the typological and stylistic similarities are intriguing. See also Hilary Richardson, 'The jeweled cross and its canopy', in *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain: proceedings of the Third International Conference on Insular Art held in the Ulster Museum, Belfast, 7-11 April 1994*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Belfast, 1995), pp. 177-86.

⁷⁵ This is the earliest known depiction of the Transfiguration in Rome. See Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 129.

⁷⁶ Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 131.

suggested that, because Leo died the following year, ‘it may be that the diplomatic exchange between Rome and Constantinople concerning iconoclasm had not yet had time to get underway’.⁷⁷ Admittedly, the timing of the renewal of iconoclasm and Leo’s death would have been close, but the fact that he employed an iconic Maria Regina, the visual symbol of Roman orthodoxy and papal primacy throughout the eighth century, at the exact time that iconoclasm was once again a concern, seems like more than mere coincidence. In addition, although the iconographic program of Santi Nereo ed Achilleo was unique to Rome, the mosaics have been compared to two iconodule Byzantine reliquaries, the Vicopisano and the Pliska crosses (Figures 58-59).⁷⁸ If Leo was influenced by elements of prevailing iconophilia in Byzantium, and subsequently used Byzantine iconography to make a political statement through the mosaics of Santi Nereo ed Achilleo, he would have been following the example set by his predecessors, Gregory II and Gregory III, who essentially turned the Byzantine Empire’s own Marian iconography against itself in order to refute iconoclasm.

The first pope to really confront the issue of Second Iconoclasm⁷⁹ was Pope Paschal I. In terms of evidence for Paschal’s stance on the image controversy, very little exists—the author of his life in the *Liber Pontificalis* does not mention iconoclasm at all, and there currently exists no papal correspondence with Francia on the image controversy.⁸⁰ However, there is one letter from Paschal to the Byzantine emperor Leo V.⁸¹ Only

⁷⁷ Thunø, *Image and Relic*, p. 148.

⁷⁸ Thunø, *Image and Relic*, p. 130. The Pliska and Vicopisano reliquaries (Sofia, Archaeological Museum; Pisa, Pieve di Santa Maria e San Giovanni) were cruciform objects intended to hold relics of the True Cross. Like Pope Paschal’s reliquary cross, the Pliska and Vicopisano reliquaries date to the ninth century, and according to Thunø, they are ‘the only known reliquaries to display Christological cycles unfolding within a cross-shaped support’. Although the function of the Irish high crosses differs from these reliquaries, the similar scheme of Christological narratives being displayed in a cruciform shape is intriguing. See Thunø, *Image and Relic*, p. 20 for the quote.

⁷⁹ As mentioned above, Leo III was pope when the second phase of iconoclasm started, but he died the following year, so it is unclear exactly how much influence Second Iconoclasm had on the final years of his reign. Pope Stephen IV, Leo’s successor, ruled for only seven months before his death (June 816–January 817), and there is no extant evidence of his involvement with Second Iconoclasm.

⁸⁰ Noble, *Images*, p. 257. Noble argues that although the Franks had ‘continuous and intensive relations with Paschal’, the lack of surviving sources prevents an assessment of whether iconoclasm had any effect on Franko-Papal relations. See Noble, *Images*, p. 285 for the quote.

fragments of the letter survive, but in the surviving material, it is clear that Paschal was focusing on the theological rationalization of images; he denied that images were idols and claims that Christ's Incarnation justifies the production and veneration of images.⁸²

But what speaks even louder than his written words is his patronage of artistic works that visually refuted iconoclasm. Like his eighth-century papal predecessors, Paschal expressed his objection to iconoclasm by commissioning large, public images of the *Maria Regina*. At Santa Cecilia, he installed opulent mosaics in the apse. The apsidal arch mosaic displayed a central image of the enthroned Madonna and Child, who are flanked by angels on either side; ten female saints, who carry crowns and palm trees, process towards them.⁸³ In mosaics of the San Zeno Chapel in Santa Prassede, there are

⁸¹ The letter from Paschal was written in Greek. Cardinal Pitra was the first to edit the letter from a Roman manuscript which no longer exists, and a second edition was produced by Cardinal Mercati from an Ambrosiana manuscript. Thunø has suggested that the letter probably dates from late AD 818 or early AD 819, after Paschal had refused to receive envoys sent by Leo V to request papal approval of the new patriarch and the newly instituted iconoclastic policies. See Thunø, *Image and Relic*, p. 136; Noble, *Images*, p. 257.

⁸² A passage from Paschal's letter that discusses the Incarnation reads: 'It is clear that, according to the Incarnation, you will see, because after we have seen the bodiless as a body, the Logos and God as a human, the unchangeable, the simple and untouchable as one who had been touched, the one in a double nature who had appeared on earth in one hypostasis, and the one who communicated with humans, we have seen the one in the form of God (Phil. 2:6) who had taken the form of a slave and in this form drew together to the size and quantity of a bodily form, therefore we can make an image of he who had chosen to become visible and in that form we depict him and venerate his unlimited concession.' Translation from Thunø, *Image and Relic*, p. 137; original text from *Paschal I, Letter to Emperor Leo V (Note di letteratura biblica e Cristiana antica)*, ed. Giovanni Mercati, *Studi e Testi* 5 (1905), p. 234. Paschal was not the first to use the Incarnation as a justification for images—the concept of the invisible becoming visible (in Jesus through the Incarnation, and by extension, through images) had become part of papal doctrine based on a forged document attributed to Pope Gregory I (AD 540-604). The fake letter was compiled in the eighth century as a refutation of iconoclasm; it was cited in AD 769 at the Lateran council, and was cited by Pope Hadrian I in a letter to Constantine VI and Irene, as well as in his *Hadrianum*. The text of the forged letter read: 'Your request pleased us greatly, because you seek with all you heart and intentness Him, whose picture you wish to have before your eyes, so that every day, the corporeal sight renders him visible; thus when you see the picture, you are inflamed in your soul with love for him whose image you wish to see. We do not harm in wishing to show the invisible by means of the visible... We know that you do not ask for an image of our Saviour to venerate it as God, but in recalling the Son of God, to rekindle the love of Him whose image you wish to see'. The letter's argument about the 'invisible becoming visible' was applied to Pope Gregory's statement about the Incarnation, where he said: 'He was made flesh in order to make us spiritual, he bowed down with good will to raise us up, he went out to bring us in, he appeared visible to show us the invisible'. See Thunø, *Image and Relic*, pp. 140-41 for the translations of the two texts, and further discussion about the Incarnation as the embodiment of the concept of the invisible becoming visible.

⁸³ The mosaic is now covered by the nineteenth-century stucco vault. See Goodson, *Rome of Pope Paschal*, p. 152.

two images of the Virgin—the first appears in the upper register, where the Virgin and John the Baptist are portrayed as intercessors to God, and the second appears in a Virgin and Child scene in the lower register.⁸⁴ Similarly, Paschal installed another Maria Regina image in the apse of Santa Maria in Domnica (Figure 60). In this mosaic, the frontal, enthroned Virgin and Child appear at the centre of the scene, while Paschal himself is depicted with a square nimbus, kneeling at the feet of the Virgin and holding her right foot, thus demonstrating his humble servitude to her.⁸⁵ On either side of the Virgin, numerous angels are shown standing in fields of flowers.⁸⁶ The unusual kneeling pose of Paschal is unique to this mosaic, but has been compared to the Madonna della Clemenza image in John VII's oratory (Figure 61).⁸⁷ Caroline Goodson has interpreted Paschal's gesture in two ways, 'first, as a proclamation of Paschal's role as intercessor between two worlds, and secondly as an expression of his iconophilia'.⁸⁸

Clearly, Paschal was continuing the papal tradition of commissioning Maria Regina images in various churches throughout Rome as a means of refuting iconoclasm.⁸⁹ But

⁸⁴ The Virgin and Child image dates from the thirteenth century, but Thunø has supported Gillian Mackie's suggestion that it replaced an original ninth-century Virgin and Child mosaic. See Thunø, *Image and relic*, pp. 143-44; Gillian Mackie, 'The San Zeno Chapel: a prayer for salvation', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 57 (1989), p. 196.

⁸⁵ Paschal's devotion to the Virgin is further emphasized through the inscription that appears in the apse, which reads: 'This house had once fallen into ruin. Now it shines forever through the glittering of multicoloured stones, and its splendor radiates like Phoebus in the heavens who shall vanquish the dark veil of the terrible night. Virgin Mary, it is for you that the honourable ruler Paschal with pleasure has built this house, which shall stand for centuries (*ISTA DOMUS PRIDEM FUERAT CONFRACTA RUINIS/NUNC RUTILAT IUGITER VARIIS DECORATA METALLIS/ ET DECUS ECCE SUUS SPLENDET CEU PHOEBUS IN ORBE/ QUI POST FURVA FUGANS TETRAE BELAMINA NOCTIS/ VIRGO MARIA TIBI PASCHALIS PRAESUL HONESTUS/ CONDIDIT HANC AULAM LAETUS PER SAECLA MANENDAM*)'. See Erik Thunø, 'Materializing the invisible in early medieval art: the mosaic of Santa Maria in Domnica in Rome', in *Seeing the invisible in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages*, ed. Giselle de Nie, et al. (Turnhout, 2005), p. 267. See also Goodson, *Rome of Pope Paschal*, p. 153.

⁸⁶ Goodson, *Rome of Pope Paschal*, p. 153.

⁸⁷ Noble, *Images*, p. 260; John Osbourne, 'Images of the Mother of God in early medieval Rome', in *Icon and word: the power of images in Byzantium. Studies presented to Robin Cormack*, ed. Anthony Eastmond and Liz James (Aldershot, 2003), p. 137.

⁸⁸ Goodson, *Rome of Pope Paschal*, p. 153.

⁸⁹ In addition to visually refuting Byzantine iconoclasm, Noble has suggested that Paschal's artistic patronage may have also been seen as 'combating the Carolingians by reclaiming for the papacy the Roman-Christian heritage which the Carolingians had been appropriating'. If Paschal's intention was to promote Roman supremacy and papal authority during the renewed outbreak of iconoclasm, then it would

significantly, Paschal also deviates from the static, iconic Marian image that was utilized in the eighth century, and begins to imbue the same political implications of the iconic Maria Regina on narrative infancy scenes. Although Leo III may have begun this trend with the inclusion of the Annunciation scene in the mosaic of Santi Nereo ed Achilleo, Paschal takes this idea a step further, and employs complete narrative Infancy cycles to express his beliefs. He does this most clearly through a set of reliquaries, which are known as the Sancta Sanctorum objects.⁹⁰ The Sancta Sanctorum objects consist of an enameled reliquary cross (Figure 62), a rectangular casket (Figures 63-65), and a cruciform casket (Figure 66).⁹¹ All three of these objects display extensive narrative scenes, and the enameled cross and the rectangular casket both display scenes from the Infancy of Christ, which closely parallel those found on the Irish high crosses.

The rectangular silver casket is decorated on all sides, and although the lid depicts non-narrative scenes, the sides display six scenes from the Infancy of Christ cycle. The Annunciation, Visitation, and Nativity appear on the right long side (Figure 63), while on the short side of the casket is the Adoration of the Star by the Magi⁹² and a solitary

make sense to visually refute all factions involved in the heresy—not only the Byzantines, but also the Carolingians. See Noble, *Images*, p. 260 for the quote.

⁹⁰ The Sancta Sanctorum objects were originally preserved in a wooden chest commissioned by Pope Leo III, which had been kept in the oratory dedicated to Saint Lawrence until it was moved to the Sancta Sanctorum chapel in the thirteenth century. Paschal's Sancta Sanctorum objects were made public when Pope Pious X (1903-14) had the chest opened in 1905 and its contents revealed. It is unclear whether these reliquaries would have been displayed and taken on circuit, or whether they were meant for private worship. Thunø has argued that the objects were made specifically for inclusion in Leo's chest; if this were the case, then they may not have been visible to the ninth-century public. See Thunø, *Image and relic*, pp. 17-18.

⁹¹ The enameled cross was made to fit inside the rectangular casket, and the cruciform casket was intended to hold another gemmed reliquary cross, dated to sometime between the sixth and eighth centuries; it was last seen in 1945, but is now lost. According to the *Descriptio lateranensis Ecclesiae*, the lost gemmed cross allegedly contained relics of Jesus' umbilical cord and foreskin ('*umbilicus Domini, et praeputium circumcicionis ejus*'), although this is probably derived from a later medieval tradition. Thunø believes that the gemmed cross held relics of the True Cross during the ninth century, and probably had done so from the time it was made (between the sixth and eighth centuries), as prior to its disappearance in the 1940s, an examination of the interior showed a 'cruciform piece of wood' inside the central compartment. In terms of function, neither the rectangular casket nor the cruciform casket appears to have had a liturgical purpose. Although no contemporary sources exist to verify the function of the reliquary crosses themselves, Thunø argues that it was probably these, rather than the caskets, that served a liturgical purpose. See Thunø, *Image and relic*, pp. 18-23.

⁹² The narrative of the magi recognizing the star comes from Matthew 2:9, which describes their recognition of the star during their journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. The earliest depiction of this

shepherd with his flock (Figure 64).⁹³ Concluding the Infancy cycle on the opposite long side of the casket is the Adoration of the Magi and the Presentation in the Temple (Figure 65)⁹⁴ The focus of this cross is clearly the Adoration of the Star scene—not only is it larger than the other Infancy scenes, but the figures of the magi in the following Adoration of the Magi scene, and the figure of Simeon in the Presentation scene, appear to be moving towards it.⁹⁵ The narrative of the magi adoring the star does not appear on the extant Irish crosses, and it was similarly unknown in Carolingian art.⁹⁶ But interestingly, the inclusion of the shepherd and his flock does show some iconographic similarities with the Irish Annunciation to the Shepherds scene. As on the Irish panels, the shepherd stands in profile, looking to the sky and pointing upwards. Directly behind him, there are four stacked quadrupeds. On the Irish panels, there are usually three stacked quadrupeds, as well as the addition of a secondary figure, probably intended to represent the angel, but the similar ‘stacking’ of the quadrupeds is intriguing.

Paschal’s cloisonné enameled reliquary cross (Figure 62) was originally designed to hold five small relics of the True Cross, and the external façade is decorated with seven scenes from the Infancy of Christ, including the Annunciation and Visitation (in the upper register of the shaft), the Journey to Bethlehem (on the left arm), the Nativity and Washing of the Christ Child (at the centre), the Adoration of the Magi (on the right arm), and the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple and Baptism of Christ (on the lower

scene appears on a ceiling painting in the catacombs of Santi Pietro e Marcellino, dating to the fourth century. According to Thunø, the subject is unknown in Carolingian art, where, from the ninth century onwards, the magi are usually shown on horseback, as in the miniature from the Drogo Sacramentary. See Thunø, *Image and Relic*, pp. 65-68, particularly p. 66; Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian art*, 1 (London, 1971), pp. 98-99.

⁹³ Because the shepherd is not accompanied by an angel, he should be taken as part of the Adoration of the Star scene, rather than comprising an Annunciation to the Shepherds scene. The narrative of the shepherd adoring the star was also unknown in Carolingian art, and is probably based on an Early Christian model. The combination of both the magi and the shepherd adoring the star in one scene is unique to the casket, and although the extant Irish crosses do not appear to represent the Adoration of the Star scene, it is interesting to note that the Annunciation to the Shepherds usually occurs next to the Adoration of the Magi panel. See Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 66; Schiller, *Christian art*, pp. 84-87.

⁹⁴ Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 53.

⁹⁵ Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 63.

⁹⁶ Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 66.

shaft).⁹⁷ The cross also bears a Latin inscription dedicating it to the Virgin Mary, which has been reconstructed to read: ‘ACCIPE QUAESO A DOMINA MEA REGINA MUNDI HOC VEXILLUM CRUCIS QUOD TIBI PASCHALIS EPISCOPUS OPTULIT (Please accept, my sovereign, queen of the world, this *vexillum* of a Cross which Bishop Paschal offers you)’.⁹⁸ The choice of scene selection on the enameled cross is similar to the scenes displayed on the rectangular casket, but not exact—the Adoration of the Star by the magi and the shepherd has been replaced by the Baptism (which also appears on the Irish crosses) and the Journey to Bethlehem. The focus of the cross is clearly on the Nativity, which visually dominates the reliquary by appearing at the centre of the cross and extending slightly into all four cross arms, thereby forming a cross within a cross.⁹⁹

In terms of the Virgin Mary, it is clear that, although both of the Paschalian objects show the Virgin in a number of narrative scenes, rather than the traditional iconic stance used by the papacy in the eighth century, the message remains the same—the Virgin is once again depicted as an enthroned *Maria Regina*. The purpose of placing her in narrative scenes was to highlight her active role in the Incarnation, as it is through her role in the Incarnation that she receives the designation of *Regina*.¹⁰⁰ The fact that Paschal cited the Incarnation as a justification for images during the second period of iconoclasm in his written correspondence, while simultaneously commissioning images that depict the Incarnation through the role of the Virgin, cannot be a mere coincidence. Thunø argues that the iconographic scheme of the objects appealed to orthodox Christology, while simultaneously ‘recalling the universality of the Roman church and his [Paschal’s] own descendance from Saint Peter’.¹⁰¹ If this was his intention, then Paschal clearly succeeded in elevating the *Maria Regina* from simply a papal symbol of

⁹⁷ Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 25.

⁹⁸ Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 25.

⁹⁹ Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁰ This concept was expressed in the eighth century by Ambrosius Autpertus, a monk and abbot of San Vincenzo al Volturno, when he wrote: ‘To humans it should suffice only to admit that she is really the queen of heaven because she has generated the king of angels’. See Thunø, *Image and relic*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁰¹ Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 131.

primacy and Roman orthodoxy, to a symbol which also visually expressed a theological argument in support of images, and appealed to orthodox Christology.

Because the Nativity is the scene which depicts the actual moment when the Incarnation occurs, it is also the scene that most clearly expresses the Virgin's status as Regina. Thunø argues, 'On Paschal's Cross reliquary, it is clear that the denomination of the Virgin as *regina mundi* should be seen in direct connection with the Nativity scene, in which Mary's womb coincides with the center of the entire cross. In fact, the association between the Nativity and the Virgin *regina* coincides with the reliquary itself, elevating the earthly cross to a *vexillum*'.¹⁰² Therefore, if the Nativity was directly related to the concept of the Maria Regina, it seems as though the current lack of a Nativity scene on the Irish high crosses must have indicated that the Irish Virgins were not meant to be seen as Reginas.

However, this may not necessarily have been the case. At present, of the eight Irish high crosses that show more than one Infancy panel, every single one of them is either broken or damaged in some way,¹⁰³ and in each case the damage occurs just above or below the panels which comprise the Infancy cycles. Peter Harbison has convincingly argued that the crosses at Armagh,¹⁰⁴ Clones,¹⁰⁵ and Donaghmore¹⁰⁶ have presumably

¹⁰² Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 29. The term *vexillum* is a Roman military term that literally means a cavalry standard or banner. But in this context, the cross itself functions as a *vexillum* in that it is a sign of Christ's 'victory and salvation', in much the same way that a *vexillum* would have been a sign of victory in battle. Both Tertullian and Augustine used the term in relation to the cross, as did Hrabanus Maurus in his *In honorem sanctae Crucis*, composed at Fulda c. AD 810. See Thunø, *Image and relic*, pp. 26-27 for further discussion of the cross as a symbol for victory.

¹⁰³ The exception to this rule, of course, is Muiredach's cross. But, as mentioned above, this cross possesses only one Infancy scene, and was made at a later date, and so it cannot be included in the conclusions made about the Infancy cycle group as a whole. The Broken Cross at Kells is, as the name suggests, also damaged, but it does not appear to possess more than one Infancy scene.

¹⁰⁴ The head of the Armagh cross is missing, and a portion of the shaft has clearly been replaced immediately above the Baptism scene. See Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 20.

¹⁰⁵ According to Harbison, 'fragments of two separate crosses have been mounted on top of one another', Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 45. The current head of the cross is a different size than the shaft, and the break occurs just above the Circumcision panel. Half of an additional panel belonging to the original cross remains, but it is unclear what this panel is depicting, and whether or not it was intended to be another Infancy panel.

¹⁰⁶ Harbison states that the current cross is 'dominated by the head of one cross and the shaft of another'. Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 65. The original shaft was broken directly above an unidentified panel,

been re-erected to include portions of other crosses, thereby making them composite crosses, and their original iconographic program unknown. The cross at Camus is missing its head and is broken directly above the Washing of the Infant Jesus panel; the cross at Killary is similarly devoid of a head, with the break occurring above the Adoration of the Magi scene. It is unclear whether the Galloon cross would have had additional Infancy scenes, as there is a possible Paul and Anthony panel above the Baptism, rather than a continuation of the Infancy cycle; but at any rate, it too is broken and missing its head. The cross at Arboe is composed of four different blocks of stone, and the figures on the head are much larger and more elongated than the figures on the shaft.¹⁰⁷ The roll moulding on the shaft also does not line up exactly with the roll moulding on the head, so it is possible that the current head originally belonged to a different cross. The destruction of the lowest panel on the Market Cross at Kells (to include the seventeenth-century inscription) has been documented above, and while the possibility that this panel originally displayed a Magi scene was presented in Chapter Three, it seems equally possible that it could have displayed a Nativity panel.

The fact that none of these crosses currently exist in their original state means that, had the crosses remained intact, it is possible that they could have displayed a Nativity panel on the portions which are now lost. Unfortunately this remains purely speculative, as it is impossible to determine what would have been depicted on the missing portions of these crosses. The potential Nativity panels could have been located at the central junction of the cross, much like the Nativity scene on Paschal's cross and the Maria Regina at the centre of Saint Martin's cross at Iona. If the Nativity had been shown, it would strengthen the theory that the Irish crosses continued to show Maria Reginas, albeit in a narrative context, as Paschal's cross did.

While the possibility that the crosses may have included a Nativity panel is purely speculative, is there any surviving evidence to suggest that the Irish Virgins were intended to be seen as Maria Reginas? Although the Mariological implications of all of

located above the Baptism of Christ scene, which allows for the possibility that the unidentified panel could be an Infancy panel; additional Infancy panels may have also appeared on the original cross-head.

¹⁰⁷ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 15.

the Infancy panels are clear, she is most clearly depicted in the Adoration of the Magi panels, and so it is this panel which deserves further consideration to determine whether the iconographic elements present can be used as a diagnostic tool for Marian typology. Unlike the Adoration scene on Paschal's reliquary cross, the Irish Adoration panels (with the exception of Muiredach's cross) do not feature the donor magus, who kneels and offers the gift to the Christ child. The magi are also not actively approaching the Virgin and Child, but rather stand on either side of the pair, facing forward. Although it is not possible to see whether the Virgin was depicted as enthroned or wearing a crown/headdress, the fact that she and the Child are seated and rigidly facing forward, rather than in profile, and do not acknowledge the magi, further contributes to the static nature of the Irish scenes. Based on these compositional attributes, this panel could almost be seen as iconic, rather than narrative, and the flanking magi could be reasonably compared to the flanking angels in the Iona group icons. Therefore, based on these iconographic features of the Adoration of the Magi panel, it appears that the Irish artists were incorporating the iconic Maria Regina into the narrative Infancy panels, in a move that paralleled the panels on the Paschalian objects.

Further evidence that the Irish Virgins should be seen as Maria Reginas comes from a literary source. Blathmac's Old Irish poems (c. AD 750-70), refer to Mary as a queen on several occasions, which demonstrates that the concept of Mary's status as a *regina* (queen) was certainly known in Ireland during this period. For example, the text reads: '*Dot-gaur co foclaib fíraib, a Maire, a maisrígain, con roirem cobrai ma tú do airchisecht do chridi-siu* (I call you with true words, Mary, beautiful queen, that we may hold converse together to put your heart's darling)'; '*For –comnaic, a grian na mban, is fír a n-ad-coídemar: it óg iar mbreith feib as-mber, a rígain, a noíbingen* (It happened, sun of women; it is true what we have related: you are a virgin after giving birth, as is said, queen, holy maiden)'.¹⁰⁸ Blathmac uses these phrases in the course of describing several Infancy narratives; however, because the overall theme of the poems is Mary's foreknowledge of the Crucifixion and the concept that the believer will find salvation by

¹⁰⁸ See James Carney, ed. and trans. *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 47 (Dublin, 1964) pp. 49, 55.

weeping ('keening'), with the Virgin,¹⁰⁹ there does not appear to be a direct link between the Infancy narratives described by Blathmac and those appearing on the high crosses, as the crosses do not show her as present at the crucifixion. While any direct links between the literature and the artistic representations remains purely speculative, the poems nevertheless serves to demonstrate that the concept of Mary as a regina was already established in Ireland during this period.

But were the Irish artists simply emulating the *Maria Regina* type found on the Iona group icons, or were they influenced directly by the art of Rome? If the Irish sculptors had been merely emulating the Ionan icons, then it would be reasonable to expect that they would have simply continued depicting Marian icons; there would have been no need for a typological shift or incorporation of the *Regina* into a narrative. Although the Ionan icons could have provided a prototype for the static, front-facing Virgin, the surviving models would not have adequately demonstrated the ways in which the *Regina* could be incorporated into a narrative; the precedent for this had to originate elsewhere. However, although the Paschalian objects detailed above set a precedent for incorporating the *Maria Regina* into narrative schemes, they are unlikely to constitute a direct source, as the pictorial programs and iconographic details of these objects differ from those found on the Irish crosses. It has been argued above that the Iona group icons did not attempt to create exact copies of the Roman *Maria Reginas* of the eighth century, but merely incorporated the new Marian type into their own distinctive program. Similarly, the Irish crosses did not directly copy the Paschalian objects, but simply incorporated the narrative typology into a distinctly Irish pictorial cycle.

Unfortunately, there is no extant evidence relating to art commissioned by Paschal's successors that could be seen as directly responding to the issue of iconoclasm, so it is unclear whether the focus on the Infancy cycle instituted under Paschal continued throughout the period of Second Iconoclasm. The text of the life of Paschal's immediate successor, Pope Eugene II (AD 824-27), is incomplete in the *Liber Pontificalis*, and

¹⁰⁹ Clancy and Márkus, p. 187; Good. However, although the text refers to Mary's sorrow and weeping over the crucifixion, it does not actually specify her presence at the event. The text reads: 'Come to me, loving Mary, that I may keen with you your very dear one. Alas that your son should go to the cross, he who was a great diadem, a beautiful hero. See Carney, p. 3.

what little information does exist does not specifically mention any artistic patronage that involved Infancy scenes.¹¹⁰ His successor, Valentine (AD 827), ruled for only forty days,¹¹¹ so his dealings with the image controversy and any artistic patronage were probably non-existent. Pope Gregory IV (AD 827-44) was the last pope to be active during Second Iconoclasm. He commissioned an extensive amount of art, mostly in the form of decorated silks and cloths,¹¹² several of which did portray scenes of the birth of Jesus.¹¹³ However, it is unclear whether these cloths would have displayed complete Infancy cycles, and if so, whether they had been intended to comment on the political situation, as Paschal's did, or were merely intended as religious objects. But because of Gregory's involvement in the secular affairs of the Carolingians,¹¹⁴ and his overall lack of papal authority, it seems unlikely that his art was intended to send the same message that Paschal's art had communicated.

Thus it is clear that, with the renewed outbreak of the image controversy from AD 815-42, the image of the Maria Regina was once again invoked to refute iconoclasm and promote the papacy, but this time it took on a new form—the narrative Infancy cycle. The use of the Infancy cycle as a refutation of the second phase of iconoclasm may have begun during the pontificate of Leo III, but it is most evident through the art

¹¹⁰ Raymond Davis, ed. and trans., *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis)*. Translated Texts for Historians, Latin Series 5 (Liverpool, 1995), pp. 31; 39-40. Eugene did commission mosaics in the church of Santa Sabina, but none of these currently survive.

¹¹¹ Davis, *Lives*, p. 41.

¹¹² Davis, *Lives*, pp. 45-70.

¹¹³ For example, in Saint Mark the confessor and pontiff's church, Gregory presented a cloth with 'the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ in the middle; another cloth with gold-studding, with four gold-studded wheels with the birth and baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in the middle', and in Santa Maria in Trastevere, he presented a cloth 'representing the birth and resurrection of our Lord Jesus'. See Davis, *Lives*, p. 54 for the first quote, and p. 58 for the second quote.

¹¹⁴ Gregory tried to intervene during a rebellion carried out by Louis the Pious' sons in AD 833, by siding with Louis' son, Lothar. A large number of the clergy remained loyal to Louis, and they argued that Gregory should be promoting unity in a non-partisan way, and that he should be obedient to Louis. Gregory responded by saying that he need not show obedience to anyone, stating, 'for you ought to be aware that the rule of souls, which is pontifical, is greater than the imperial, which is temporal'. After Louis died, Gregory once again tried to secure peace between Lothar and his brothers; however, as Noble demonstrates, Gregory ultimately lacked the power and authority to intervene. See Noble, *Images*, p. 360 for the quote, and Davis, *Lives*, pp. 45-47 for further discussion of Gregory's involvement in the rebellion against Louis the Pious.

commissioned by Pope Paschal I, who not only visually refuted iconoclasm, but also included a visual expression of his theological justification for images by focusing on the Incarnation. Because the Irish crosses actively abandoned the iconic *Maria Regina* in favour of the narrative Infancy cycles, it seems plausible that they were emulating the art of Rome, and may have been similarly expressing their support for Roman orthodoxy in the face of renewed heresy, much as the Ionian artists had done in the eighth century. The shift from iconic to narrative in Ireland occurred at roughly the same time that Paschal was commissioning his *Sancta Sanctorum* objects, which may have set a precedent for depictions of the narrative Infancy cycle. The current lack of a Nativity panel on the high crosses does not necessarily rule out the identification of the Irish Virgins as *Reginas*, as the crosses could have depicted the Nativity in their original state.

Irish Infancy Narratives: Power, Primacy and the Patricians

Ireland during the first period of Iconoclasm (AD 726-87)

While the Columban community was flourishing at Iona, conditions were similarly favourable to the Columbans in Ireland during the second half of the eighth century. Beginning in AD 743, with the reign of Domnall Midi mac Murchado (AD 743-63), a member of the Clann Cholmáin branch of the Southern Uí Néill, there was a period of nearly fifty years during which the high kings of Tara were consistently sympathetic to the Columban cause. The Cenél Conaill dynasty, which had previously been the chief secular ally of the Columban *familia*, and was the dynasty to which the saint himself had belonged, began to lose its power among the Northern Uí Néill at this time,¹ and the Cenél nEogain now dominated the Northern Uí Néill kingship. Unlike the Cenél Conaill, the Cenél nEogain had chosen to support the cause of Armagh and the Patrician *familia*, rather than that of Columba.² The downturn of the Cenél Conaill might initially

¹ Máire Herbert and Francis Byrne both agree that the shift began with the reign of Áed Allán, a member of the Cenél nEogain, who held the kingship of Tara from AD 734-43. Prior to Áed Allán's rule, the Cenél Conaill had dominated the Northern Uí Néill kingship, but in the early decades of the eighth century, the kingship had become an issue of dispute. In AD 727, the successor of Columba from Iona, Cilléne Droictech, visited Ireland, and, according to a note that appears in a twelfth-century catalogue of relics, the purpose of Cilléne's visit was probably to promote peace between the two dynasties. However, the visit clearly did not have the desired effect, as the Cenél Conaill king of Tara, Flaithbertach, retired in AD 734, after multiple attacks from the Cenél nEogain, and Áed Allán succeeded to the kingship, ushering in a period of Cenél nEogain domination of the North. See Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry: the history and hagiography of the monastic familia of Columba* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 61-65. See also Francis J. Byrne, *Irish kings and high-kings* (London, 1973; repr. 2001), pp. 148, 208-09. For a further discussion of the politics of Armagh, see Charles Doherty, 'The cult of Saint Patrick and the politics of Armagh in the seventh century', in *Ireland and northern France AD 600-850*, ed. J.M. Picard (Dublin, 1991), pp. 53-94.

² Armagh responded to the promulgation of the Law of Adomnán by the successors of Columba by promulgating the Law of Patrick in AD 734. The following year, Patrick's relics were brought on circuit in support of the promulgation, and in AD 737, after a meeting between Áed Allán and Cathal mac Finguine, king of Munster, the Annals of Ulster note: *Lex Patricii tenuit Hiberniam* ('The Law of Patrick was in force in Ireland'). Herbert believes that Áed Allán's 'championship of the interests of Patrick's community' is particularly evident from an Annal entry (AFM s.a. AD 732, *recte* AD 737) that details an expedition undertaken by him against the Ulaid to avenge the profanation of a Patrician church. The AU entry reads: 'The battle of Fochart, in Magh Muirtheimhne was fought by Aedh Allan and the Clanna Neill of the North, against the Ulidians, where Aedh Roin, King of Ulidia, was slain; and his head was cut off on Cloch An Chommaigh, in the doorway of the church of Fochard; and Conchadh, son of Cuanach, chief of Cobha, was also slain, and many others along with him. The cause of this battle was the profanation of Cill Cunna by Ua Seghain, one of the people of Aedh Roin, of which Aedh Roin himself said: "I will not take its Conn from Tairr", for Ceall Cunna and Ceall Tairre are side by side. Congus, successor of Patrick, composed this quatrain, to incite Aedh Allan to revenge the profanation of the church, for he was the spiritual adviser of Aedh...' See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 63. See also

imply a similar decline of the Columban *familia* during this time, as their secular allies lost power and dominance of the Northern Uí Néill. However, this was clearly not the case, as the Columban cause now came to be promoted by the Southern Uí Néill.

The Clann Cholmáin branch of the Southern Uí Néill was on the rise in the second half of the eighth century after defeating their major rivals, the Síl nÁedo Sláne, and it was the Clann Cholmáin who dominated the Uí Néill overkingship during this time.³ Domnall Midi mac Murchado was a member of the Clann Cholmáin, who succeeded to the kingship of Tara after defeating his rival and predecessor, Áed Allán, in battle in AD 743. Domnall Midi was extremely religious, having retired to a monastery twice during his reign,⁴ and his particular devotion to the Columban *familia* is evident. During his reign, Domnall Midi instituted the *Lex Coluim Cille*⁵ (Law of Columba) in AD 753,⁶ a move which Máire Herbert believes demonstrated that he had an ‘active alliance with

Tomás Ó Fiaich, ‘The Church of Armagh under lay control’, *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 5, no. 1 (1969); Richard Sharpe, ‘Saint Patrick and the See of Armagh’, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 4 (1982).

³ Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 66.

⁴ Byrne, *Irish kings*, p. 156; Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 64. It is unclear exactly what Domnall Midi’s temporary retirement to the monastery entailed, as Herbert has demonstrated that although he entered ‘*in clericatum*’ in the year immediately following his succession to the kingship, later annal entries show that he continued to rule his kingdom. Mac Niocaill has suggested that he may have continued ruling as a secular king, whilst simultaneously presiding as abbot of a monastery. Although Mac Niocaill suggests that Domnall Midi may have retired to Clonard, it seems more likely that he would have chosen Durrow, given his close associations with that monastery. See Gearóid Mac Niocaill, *Ireland before the Vikings* (Dublin, 1972); pp. 124-27.

⁵ Unfortunately, exactly what the *Lex Coluim Cille* mandated is unknown. However, Herbert has argued that the proclamation of this Law (and other saints’ laws) may have coincided with times of distress, including times of famine, plague and crop failures, and could therefore have served to alleviate suffering. The Latin term *lex* is translated in Irish as *cáin*, which had the double meaning of ‘law’ and ‘tribute’, and thus it is possible that the proclamation of a saint’s *lex/cáin* could have also required some type of material tribute to the saint’s *familia*, especially since the proclamation often coincided with the saint’s relics being taken on circuit. In addition, Hughes has demonstrated that a saint’s law could be imposed over a large territorial area (all of Ireland), or a smaller area (a province), and that it concerned both the secular ruler and the ecclesiastical *coarb* (heir) of the saint whose law was being promoted. See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 64-65; Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in early Irish society*, (Ithaca, 1966), pp. 149-151 for a discussion on the saints’ laws. See Richard Sharpe, ‘Some problems concerning the organization of the Church in early medieval Ireland’, *Peritia* 3 (1984), p. 264 for a discussion of the term *coarb*. See also Pádraig Ó Riain, ‘A misunderstood annal: a hitherto unnoticed *cáin*’, *Celtica* 21 (1990), pp. 561-66.

⁶ AU, ATig both record this event as occurring in AD 753: ‘The Law of Colum Cille enforced by Domnall of Mide’.

the saint's community'.⁷ In a further demonstration of his allegiance to the Columbans, Domnall Midi patronized the Columban foundation of Durrow during his lifetime,⁸ and he was believed to have been buried there after his death in AD 763.⁹ Consequently, Durrow appears to have gained prestige during this period, as a result of its direct patronage by the secular ruler; however, the special position afforded to Durrow may have caused resentment amongst other monasteries, as in the year following Domnall Midi's death, two hundred men on the Durrow side were killed in a battle fought against the monastery of Clonmacnoise.¹⁰

According to Francis Byrne, Domnall Midi's twenty-year reign as king of Tara was 'extraordinarily peaceful',¹¹ and it is clear that the *familia* of Columba prospered at this time, both ecclesiastically, through the promulgation of the *Lex Coluim Cille*, and politically, as they became part of a new alliance with the secular rulers. Domnall Midi was succeeded by a member of the Cenél nEogain branch of the Northern Uí Néill, known as Niall Frossach mac Fergaile (AD 763-70).¹² But despite the fact that the Cenél nEogain dynasty had chosen to support the cause of Armagh and, by extension, the *familia* of Patrick,¹³ Niall Frossach's reign does not appear to have had any devastating effects on the *familia* of Columba. Like Domnall Midi, Niall Frossach was also very

⁷ Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 64.

⁸ Michelle Brown and Carol Farr have suggested that Domnall Midi's link to Durrow was so strong that Durrow may have been considered part of his royal villas/residences. See Brown and Farr, *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe* (Leicester, 2001), p. 123.

⁹ Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 64; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 156.

¹⁰ Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 66. AU, ATig both record the battle between Clonmacnoise and Durrow in AD 764: 'The battle of Argaman between the community of Cluain Moccu Nóis and the community of Dermag, in which fell Diarmait Dub son of Domnall, and Diglach son of Dub Lis, and two hundred men of the community of Dermag. Bresal, son of Murchad, emerged victor, with the community of Cluain'.

¹¹ Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 156.

¹² Niall's epithet, *frossach*, means 'the showery', and comes from a legend which says that, when he was born, a shower of honey rained down upon the Laigin, while a shower of silver and wheat fell upon his home at Fahan in Inishowen. See Byrne, 1973, pp. 156-57.

¹³ For a further discussion of the Cenél nEogain alliance with Armagh, see Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 410.

religious, and enjoyed a relatively peaceful reign, and in fact, he abdicated the kingship in AD 770 for religious reasons.¹⁴ Herbert has suggested that Niall Frossach's inactivity during his reign may have been caused by his advanced age when he succeeded as king of Tara,¹⁵ and apart from promulgating the *Lex Patricii* (Law of Patrick), Niall does not seem to have displayed any evidence of anti-Columban sentiment. In fact, after his abdication in AD 770, he retired to Iona, where he later died in AD 778.¹⁶

After Niall Frossach's abdication, Donnchad Midi mac Domnaill (AD 770-97), son of Domnall Midi, succeeded to the kingship of Tara. Like his father, Donnchad Midi was sympathetic to the Columban cause, but his reign did not benefit from the same peace that his father's reign had enjoyed. Donnchad Midi appears to have continued the close relationship with the monastery of Durrow that his father had initiated; this is especially evident during his confrontation with Munster in AD 776,¹⁷ when Durrow supplied forces for Donnchad Midi's army.¹⁸ He also maintained the alliance between the Clann Cholmáin and the abbots of Iona, and, in AD 766, abbot Suibne visited Ireland from Iona.¹⁹ Suibne's successor to the abbacy of Iona, Bresal, also visited

¹⁴ Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 156.

¹⁵ However, Brian Lacey has argued that Niall would have only been about forty-five years of age. See Brian Lacey, *The Cenél Conaill and the Donegal kingdoms AD 500-800* (Dublin, 2006), p. 299.

¹⁶ Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 156.

¹⁷ AU 776: 'A destructive battle between the Uí Néill and Mumu, in which the community of Dermag, Tobaeth's sons i.e. Duinechaid and Cathrannach, and some of Domnall's sons were engaged; and many from Munster fell, and the victors were the Uí Néill'.

¹⁸ Monasteries were obligated to provide troops for the king's hosting until an exemption was granted in AD 804 at the synod of Dún Cuair. According to Lacey, a secondary hand in the Annals of Ulster records that in 'this year, moreover, the clerics of Ireland were freed by Áed Oirníde, at the behest of Fothad of the Canon from [the obligation of attendance on] expeditions and hostings'. The Annals of the Four Masters have a more detailed account of the exemption of the clerics, which states: 'A full muster of the men of Ireland (except Leinster), both laity and clergy, was again made by him [Áed Oirníde] until he reached Dún-Cuair, on the confines of Meath and Leinster. Thither came Connmhach, successor of Patrick, having the clergy of Leath-Chuinn along with him. It was not pleasing to the clergy to go upon any expedition; they complained of their grievance to the king, and the king, i.e. Aedh, said that he would abide by the award of Fothadh na Canoine; on which occasion Fothadh passed the decision by which he exempted the clergy of Ireland forever from expeditions and hosting.' For both quotes, see Lacey, *Cenél Conaill*, pp. 312-13; see also Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 159.

¹⁹ Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 66.

Ireland in AD 778 and, in conjunction with Domnall Midi, promulgated the *Lex Coluim Cille* in that year.²⁰

Thus it is clear that, during the second half of the eighth century, the *familia* of Columba enjoyed a beneficial position due to its new alliance with the secular rulers of the Clann Cholmáin. This position does not appear to have been impaired during the reign of the Cenél nEogain king, Niall Frossach; despite his support of the *paruchia* of Patrick, his retirement to Iona upon his abdication seems to suggest that even when the Clann Cholmáin were not ruling the kingship of Tara, the influence of Iona was still omnipresent. This theory is supported by Herbert, who echoes Reeves' observation that 'Iona's influence in Ireland was at its height in the second half of the eighth century'.²¹

Based on the evidence presented above, it would seem like the second-half of the eighth century would be an ideal time for an outpouring of Columban iconography in Ireland. The influence of the Columban mother-house of Iona was at its height, the abbots of Iona were visiting Ireland regularly, bringing relics and artefacts on circuit, and the *Lex Coluim Cille* was promulgated several times. The secular situation was equally favourable to the Columban community, as secular rulers were not only directly patronizing Columban monasteries, such as Durrow, but, in the case of Domnall Midi, may have even retired to Columban houses and ruled as their abbot. So it would be reasonable to expect that there would have been a similar 'explosion' of Marian icons, as there was on Iona. However, this is clearly not the case. Only two possible Marian icons currently exist, at Drumcliff and Carndonagh, and while they do share some similarities with the Ionan icons, they do not appear to be directly related.

Iconographically speaking, of the two Irish icons, only the Carndonagh pillar could be identified as a *Maria Regina*. The bolster-like cushion on her throne, and her elaborate, cat-like headdress, seem to recall an enthroned and crowned Madonna. Dorothy Kelly has also compared the necklace (or rectangular object) appearing near the

²⁰ AU 778: 'The law of Colum Cille promulgated by Donnchad and Bresal'.

²¹ Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 67.

throat of the Carndonagh Virgin to a similar ornament found on the Book of Kells Virgin,²² which not only further supports the comparison with the Ionan Maria Reginas, but also attests to her status. Whether the necklace was intended to function in a similar manner to the lozenges found on the Iona icons, which identified the Virgin not only as queen of heaven, but also as a queen on Earth, is uncertain; but if this was the intended meaning behind the necklace, then it may give the image a subtext of secular authority. Carndonagh was a Columban foundation located in County Donegal, Columba's own homeland,²³ and it also had close ties with the Columban monastery of Derry.²⁴ Therefore, the Carndonagh icon may have been seen as promoting the *familia* of Columba, and in terms of the historical context, the late-eighth century would have provided an ideal time to visually promote the *familia* of Columba and the favourable secular position they enjoyed in Ireland.

Although the Drumcliff Virgin is seated and front-facing, she does not appear to possess the other attributes of a Maria Regina, namely a crown or headdress, a visible throne, or any secular status symbols. Hawkes has argued that a 'directly dependent' relationship between the Iona icons and the Drumcliff icon is unlikely, but that their typological and visual similarities imply that 'some memory of the Iona scheme' may have contributed to their production.²⁵ This would seem to suggest that the Drumcliff Virgin was made some time after the Ionan icons were made, and because the icon

²² Dorothy Kelly, 'The Virgin and Child in Irish sculpture', in *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Belfast, 1995), p. 201.

²³ Ross Trench-Jellicoe, 'A missing figure on slab fragment no. 2 from Monifeith, Angus, the a'Chill cross, Canna, and some implications of the development of a variant form of the Virgin's hairstyle and dress in early medieval Scotland', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries in Scotland*, 129 (1999), p. 610. The Carndonagh pillars have also been linked to the Iona crosses on the basis of a similar Davidic harp which appears on the Southern Carndonagh pillar and Saint Martin's and Saint Oran's crosses. For a further discussion of the harp varieties, see Trench-Jellicoe, 'Pictish and related harps: their form and decoration', in *The Worm, the Germ and the Thorn: Essays on Pictish and related subjects presented to Isabel Henderson*, ed. David Henry (Balgavies, Forfar, 1997), pp. 159-72. For an alternative view, see Lacey, *Cenél Conaill*, pp 286-87, where he considers the claim by Tírechán in the *Tripartite Life* that Carndonagh ('*Domnach Mór Maige Tochuir*') was founded by Patrick.

²⁴ Jane Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins: iconic images of the Virgin and Child in insular sculpture', in *Studies in the cult of Saint Columba*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Dublin, 1997), p. 128 (n. 9). See also Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 73-4, 109-23.

²⁵ Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', p. 128.

appears on a cross that also has narrative scenes from the Infancy cycle of John the Baptist, a later date during the ninth century seems most plausible.²⁶

Ireland during the period of Second Iconoclasm (AD 815-42)

Based on the evidence presented above, it is clear that the image of the *Maria Regina* was used to promote primacy—first as an icon in the eighth century, and then as part of the Infancy narratives in the ninth century. So, is it possible that the Irish Infancy panels were not simply promoting the primacy of Rome, but also the primacy of Armagh? Although the Marian icons from Iona were associated with the *paruchia* of Columba, in Ireland the overwhelming majority of Marian panels occur on crosses in the Ulster group, which were typically associated with the *paruchia* of Patrick, based at Armagh. This means that in Ireland, Mary was not an exclusively Columban symbol. It seems odd that the Patricians would choose to adopt a symbol with such strong Columban/Ionan connotations. However, after Donnchad Midi's death in AD 797, there was a shift in Irish secular politics which saw the Cenél nEogain branch of the Northern Uí Néill regain dominance of the kingship of Tara, and the privileged position that the Columbans had enjoyed for nearly fifty years ended. Because the Marian narratives primarily appear at Patrician monasteries, two possibilities seem likely: 1. The *paruchia* of Patrick adopted the Marian symbol as their own in the wake of the Iona community's relocation to Kells, and, in placing her in a narrative context, made it a Patrician symbol; or 2. Because Armagh and, by extension, other Patrician houses, were seen as the 'Rome of the Irish', perhaps they felt that they were the most appropriate medium to visually express their affinity with Rome.

An icon promoting the primacy of Rome would have been an appropriate symbol for the Patrician *paruchia*, as they not only saw themselves as the Rome of the Irish,²⁷ but

²⁶ The fact that the iconic Virgin and Child scene is relegated to the end of the cross arm and is barely visible further supports the theory that the panel was probably not intended to promote the *familia* of Columba. The John the Baptist Infancy cycle enjoys a much more prevalent position on the cross, suggesting that the Baptist's Infancy was the key focus of the iconographic scheme. If, as Hawkes suggests, the icon was merely intended to recall the memory of the Iona scheme, it is unclear why the monks of Drumcliff would have suddenly felt the need to visually recall Iona, and why, apparently, no other Columban monasteries felt the need to do the same.

were also in their own bid for ecclesiastical primacy within Ireland. But because this symbol already had Columban connotations, placing it on Patrician artefacts would have not only been confusing to the viewer, but could have been seen as an acknowledgement, or endorsement, of the Columban *familia*. It seems plausible that the Patricians may have performed an iconographic *coup d'état* on the Marian symbol, making it their own. By taking the image of the powerful, enthroned Maria Regina and placing her into a narrative context, the Patricians were removing her from the Columban *milieu*, and reclaiming the symbol of the Regina as their own, in order to underscore their political and ecclesiastical supremacy, and possibly, by extension, their closer connections with Rome.

The assertion of Armagh primacy is most noticeable during the reign of Áed Oirdnide mac Néill of the Cenél nEogain (AD 797-819). As mentioned above, the Cenél nEogain traditionally had an alliance with the *familia* of Patrick, and not only did Áed echo this loyalty throughout his reign by promoting Armagh and the *paruchia* of Patrick, but he did so at the expense of the Columbans, to whom he was extremely antagonistic. Shortly after succeeding to the kingship of Tara, in what has been described by Francis Byrne as ‘an unprecedented and drastic display of sovereignty’, Áed divided Mide between the sons of Donnchad Midi, Conchobar and Ailill.²⁸ Mide had been an important source of secular support for the Columban community, and, by

²⁷ The concept of Armagh’s claims to a Roman-type administration may have originated with the Easter controversy, when the *Romani* (who supported the Roman dating of Easter), claimed Patrick as one of their own. Cummian, writing in the 630s, also refers to Patrick as ‘*papa noster*’. Dorothy Verkerk has argued that Armagh was ultimately modeled on Rome, as evidenced by the Annals of Ulster citation (AU s.a. 444) which states that Armagh was founded 1,194 years after the building of Rome. See Hughes, *The Church*, p. 115; Dorothy Verkerk, ‘Pilgrimage *ad limina apostolorum* in Rome: Irish crosses and early Christian sarcophagi’, in *From Ireland coming: Irish art from the early Christian to the late Gothic period and its European context*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton, 2001), pp. 9-26; n. 18. For further discussion of Cummian and his writings, see Maura Walsh and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, eds, *Cummian’s letter ‘De controuersia paschali’ together with a related Irish computistical tract ‘De ratione computandi’* (Toronto, 1988).

²⁸ Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 160. Byrne argues that Áed was not necessarily successful, as Conchobar eventually killed his brother and reunited the kingdom. Although Conchobar was a member of the Clann Cholmáin dynasty, he backed Armagh and the *familia* of Patrick, rather than the *familia* of Columba. This will be discussed in more detail below.

dividing the territory, Áed dealt a devastating blow to the Columbans. In AD 806, he also promulgated the *Lex Patricii*, in a further demonstration of Patrician supremacy.²⁹

Áed also had several notable confrontations with the clergy during his reign. In AD 811, the Céli Dé community of Tallaght boycotted the king's fair at Tailtiu as a protest against Áed's violation of their *termann*,³⁰ which was so effective that 'neither horse nor chariot reached it'.³¹ While this confrontation was not directly related to the Columban *familia*, Byrne has argued that the Céli Dé and Columban monasteries, particularly Iona, maintained friendly relations with each other, so it is possible that some members of the Columban *familia* may have also participated in the boycott.³² Then, in AD 817, Áed killed the prior of the Columban monastery of Raphoe,³³ prompting the Columban community to march to Tara to curse Áed.³⁴ Clearly, in terms of relationships with secular leaders, this is a hostile time for the Columbans, and given the inclusion of the incident with the Tallaght community in the Annals, it suggests that the Céli Dé were equally at risk.

²⁹ AU 806: 'Patrick's law [was] promulgated by Áed son of Niall'. In AD 813, the AU entry also states that 'Daire's law was promulgated among the Uí Néill'; however, aside from the fact that it was promulgated in Connacht the year before, there is no specific information about this law, including what it entailed and whether it was different from the Law of Patrick. Lacey has stated that it was promulgated 'presumably with the support of the king of Tara', so it is reasonable to assume that it would not have had any negative impact on the Patrician community. See Lacey, *Cenél Conaill*, pp. 314, 316.

³⁰ Byrne defines *termann* as 'the area which enjoyed the privilege of ecclesiastical sanctuary'. Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 162.

³¹ Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 162. AU states: 'The fair of [oinigh] Tailtiu was prevented from being held on Saturday under the aegis of Áed son of Niall, neither horse nor chariot arriving there. It was the community [muinnter] of [the monastery of] Tamlacht [Tallaght, Co. Dublin] who caused the boycott after the Uí Néill had violated the sanctuary of Tamlacht of Máel Ruain'. See also Lacey, *Cenél Conaill*, p. 314.

³² Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 162. After the boycott of Tailtiu, Áed made reparations, which were apparently accepted by the Tallaght community. See AU entry for AD 811; also Lacey, *Cenél Conaill*, p. 314.

³³ AU 817: 'Máel Dúin son of Cenn Fáelad, superior (*princeps*) of Ráith Both [Raphoe], a member of Colum Cille's community was slain'. Brian Lacey has demonstrated that the AU entry for AD 817 is the first recorded mention of the foundation of Raphoe, and has argued that its associations with Columba are 'ambiguous'. The earliest narrative description relating to the alleged founding of Raphoe by Columba is derived from the Middle Irish *Life of Colum Cille*, dated between AD 1150 and 1182. Lacey has suggested that Áed may have killed Máel Dúin because he wanted Raphoe to be a Patrician foundation, but, through the actions of Máel Dúin, he believed Raphoe was being absorbed into the Columban *familia*. See Lacey, *Cenél Conaill*, p. 197; p. 247; 316-18.

³⁴ AU 817: 'Colum Cille's community (*muinnter*) went to Tara to excommunicate Áed'.

In order to further underscore Armagh's primacy through its alliance with the Cenél nEogain, Áed was ordained by the Abbot of Armagh, Condmach, at a synod held at Dún Cuair in AD 804,³⁵ thus receiving his epithet *oirdnide* ('the ordained'). Although Áed may have been the first king of Tara to be ordained, the practice was widely recorded in the Carolingian empire and in England.³⁶ The exact purpose of Áed's ordination is unknown; however, Máire Herbert has argued that the Abbot of Armagh's role in Áed's ordination 'would testify further to the aggrandizement of the position of Patrick's successor in conjunction with that of his Cenél nEogain allies'.³⁷

The need to solidify the Cenél nEogain/Armagh alliance and further promote the primacy of Armagh may have been caused by the possibility that it was at this very synod that Kells was granted to the Ionans.³⁸ Initially, the foundation of the monastery at Kells appears to show unity among the Patricians and Columbans—the fact that a Patrician king and the Abbot of Armagh must have agreed to grant land to their rivals would imply that relations between the two *paruchia*e were at least civil, if not friendly. In fact, Françoise Henry has even suggested that the Cross of Patrick and Columba at Kells was dedicated to both saints in order to commemorate the land grant from the

³⁵ AU 804: '*Congressio senatorum nepotum Neill cui dux erat Condmach abbas Airdd Machae...*' Binchy was the first to suggest that it was at this synod that Áed was ordained, a theory which was supported by Herbert and Byrne. See D.A. Binchy, 'The Fair at Tailtiu and the Feast of Tara', *Ériu* 18 (1958), p. 119; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, pp. 159-60; Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 67.

³⁶ In AD 751, Pippin was anointed by Saint Boniface, a ceremony which was repeated by the pope in AD 754. Charlemagne was similarly anointed, as were two of his sons in Rome in AD 781. In England, Offa of Mercia had his son anointed in AD 787, and Eadwulf was consecrated king of Northumbria in AD 795 at Saint Peter's in York. In AD 786, papal legates in England reported the ordination of kings to Pope Hadrian. Byrne has also suggested that the first ordination of an Irish king was actually performed by Columba in the sixth century, when he consecrated Áedán mac Gabráin as king of Dál Ríata. Adomnán also refers to two other ordinations: the first of king Diarmait mac Cerbaill, and the second of Oswald of Northumbria. However, Byrne believes that Adomnán's vague references to these events suggest that he 'was more concerned with propagating ideas of Christian kingship than with strict accuracy'. See Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 159.

³⁷ Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 67.

³⁸ AU 804: *Tabhairt Cheannansa cen chath do Choluim Chille cheolach hac anno* ('Kells was given without battle to the melodious Colum Cille in this year'). However, this line was taken from a much later source, a poem entitled *Annalad anal uile* from the eleventh century, attributed to Gilla Cómáin. The placement of this line in the AU entry for AD 804 is based on the belief that Kells was granted forty-one years after the death of Domnall Midi in AD 763, but it is unclear whether the site was actually granted at this time. See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 68-70.

Patricians to the Ionans.³⁹ But the fact that Áed Oirdnide continued to have confrontations with the Columbans, after this supposed truce was called at the synod, implies that Columban-Patrician relations were still anything but peaceful.

Although Kells was a Columban foundation in the midland group, the Infancy panels on the Market Cross are remarkably similar to two crosses which were members of the Ulster group, the crosses of Arboe and Clones; these three crosses are currently the only ones that display the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. The fact that the Market Cross displays narrative Infancy panels proves that the depiction of Marian scenes at Columban centres was not necessarily ended with the move to Kells from Iona, but that it evolved into a new structure as the relocating monks assimilated to their new environment. But was the behavioral and cultural assimilation of the Iona monks voluntary, or was it a forced assimilation? While there is no written evidence of a forced assimilation through conflict (and it is recorded in the Annals that Kells was given to the Columbans ‘without battle’),⁴⁰ the fact that Áed Oirdnide was a known Patrician sympathizer who had a ‘frosty relationship’⁴¹ with the Columbans may have left the relocated Columbans feeling pressured to not create conflict in their new location. While the foundation of the monastery at Kells externally shows unity among the Patricians and Columbans and the Kells crosses appear harmonious at a high level of abstraction, the lack of Marian icons could be evidence of a forced assimilation in favour of the Patricians’ narrative Infancy scheme. The fact that the Market Cross not only abandons the Columban icon, but also adopts scenes which are found on possible Patrician crosses, may further support this.

The need to promote Patrician primacy is also demonstrated by production of the Book of Armagh. The Book of Armagh was produced in (approximately) the same year

³⁹ Françoise Henry, *Irish art during the Viking invasions (800-1020 AD)* (London, 1967), p. 20. The cross is also sometimes called the Tower Cross, but its association with the two saints comes from the inscription on the east face of the base, which reads: ‘*Patricii et Columbae Crux* (the cross of Patrick and Columba)’. Helen Roe has suggested that the Cross of Patrick and Columba may have been the first cross to be constructed at Kells, but it does not appear to display any discernible Marian iconography. See Helen Roe, *The high crosses of Kells* (Longford, 1966), p. 8; also Harbison, *High crosses* 1, pp. 108-111.

⁴⁰ AU, 804.

⁴¹ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 153.

that construction on the new monastery at Kells was started, in AD 807,⁴² and its primary goal was to bolster Armagh's claims to ecclesiastical primacy.⁴³ The Book of Armagh can best be described as, 'a collection of biographical and related writings compiled by scholars at Armagh... as a "Patrick dossier"'.⁴⁴ The manuscript included the work of the seventh-century Patrician propagandists, Muirchú and Tírechán, the *Liber Angeli* (Book of the Angel), as well as Patrick's own writings in the form of the *Confessio* and *Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus*. However, the compilers of the Book of Armagh tampered with Patrick's original text in order to remove any trace of the saint's humility, in an attempt to elevate Patrick to near-heroic levels. This mythologizing of Patrick clearly helped feed Armagh's agenda in their quest for ecclesiastical supremacy.⁴⁵ The contemporary production of the Book of Armagh and the beginning of construction on the Columban monastery at Kells seems like more than mere coincidence, and may have been a direct reaction to the beginning of the Ionan's relocation in the same year.⁴⁶

While there are illustrations of the four evangelist symbols present in the Book, the lack of a Virgin and Child page seems odd, given that the text of the New Testament is present, and would therefore provide an opportunity to illustrate such a scene. Clearly the illuminator of the Book of Kells felt that the Virgin and Child was a pivotal scheme that deserved attention, so why would the artist responsible for the Book of Armagh neglect to include it? Although the Book of Armagh was made before Pope Paschal's

⁴² According to the Annals of Ulster, construction on the monastery was begun in AD 807, and completed in AD 814. See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 68-73.

⁴³ Ludwig Bieler, *Clavis Patricii II: Libri epistolarum Sancti Patricii episcopi* (Dublin, 1952; repr. 1993), pp. 7-31.

⁴⁴ Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland, 400-1200* (London, 1995), p. 24.

⁴⁵ See Binchy, 'Taitiu', pp. 40-42; Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland*, pp. 23-25.

⁴⁶ Hughes has also suggested that the scribe of the Book of Armagh 'copied down some rather cryptic phrases (probably dating from the period of the [Easter] controversy), which seem to urge the church of the Irish to identify herself with the church of the Romans'. Could this sentiment have inspired the church of Armagh to reassert their connections with Rome? And could this desire to realign the Irish churches with Rome have been expressed through the use of the Roman Maria Regina symbol? While it is impossible to know for certain, this nevertheless serves to demonstrate that even in the ninth century, the desire to express an affinity with Rome was current in Ireland, and more specifically, it was known amongst the church of Armagh and the *paruchia* of Patrick. See Hughes, *The Church*, p. 115.

Sancta Sanctorum objects, which may have begun the trend of depicting narrative Infancy schemes, it seems as though the lack of a Marian icon in the Book of Armagh may be further evidence that the Patrician community were opposed to iconic representations.

Interestingly, a story from Muirchú's *Vita Sancti Patricii*, which was re-issued in the Book of Armagh, is also depicted on several high crosses, and may serve as another visual clue that relates to the message of adherence to Roman orthodoxy, as well as Patrician supremacy. As discussed in Chapter Three, a panel identified as the Fall of Simon Magus appears on several of the Irish high crosses. While, on the surface, an apocryphal story about the death of Simon Magus at the hands of Saint Peter would seem to have little in common with narrative representations of the Virgin Mary, it is the hidden meaning behind them that is important. The historian Alberto Ferreiro maintains that the focus of these panels is not really Simon Magus, but is actually more about asserting the 'episcopal authority of the chief apostles' (Peter and Paul).⁴⁷ The theory that the focus is the episcopal authority of the saints is an intriguing one, which deserves further consideration, especially in light of the possibility that the Marian narratives may have been promoting a similar theme of Roman primacy in the wake of the image controversy.

Aideen O'Leary has suggested that the literary version of the Fall of Simon Magus was paralleled by Patrician biographer Muirchú in his seventh-century propaganda piece, *Vita Sancti Patricii*, in the story of Patrick battling the wizard (magus) Lochru.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Alberto Ferreiro, *Simon Magus in patristic, medieval and early modern traditions*, ed. Robert J. Bast. Studies in the History of Christian Traditions Series, 125 (Leiden, 2005), pp. 18-19. See also Mary B. Deevy, 'The three wise men and medieval Ireland', *Archaeology Ireland* 12 (1998), pp. 30-31. Wayne A. Meeks, 'Simon Magus in recent research', *Religious Studies Review* 3, no. 3 (1977), pp. 138-40.

⁴⁸ Aideen O'Leary, 'An Irish apocryphal apostle: Muirchú's portrayal of Saint Patrick', *Harvard Theological Review* 89, no. 3 (1996), pp. 293-96. This event takes place in Tara, at the court of King Loegaire, during the lighting of the Easter fires. The story that appears in David Howlett's translation of Muirchú's *Vita* reads: '*Hunc autem intuens turuo oculo talia prominentem sanctus Patricius ut quondam Petrus de Simone cum quadam potential et magno clamore confidenter ad Dominum dixit, "Domine qui omnia potes et in tua potestate consistunt quique me misisti huc hic inpius qui blasphematur nunc foras et cito moriatur". Et hiis dictis eleuatus est in aethera magus et iterum demissus desuper uerso ad lapidem cerebro conminutus et mortuus fuit coram eis et ualde timuerunt gentiles* (Gazing on this man, however, with a grim eye, bringing forth such things/holy Patrick, as formerly Peter about Simon Magus/with certain power and a great clamor/confidently said to the Lord/"[...] Let this

Although this literary version of the Patrician story was written long before the suspected date of construction for the crosses,⁴⁹ the concept of promoting Armagh's primacy, while pointing out the seemingly 'heretical' history of the Columbans by aligning them with the 'father of all heretics', must have had renewed relevance in the first decade of the ninth century, and the appearance of the Fall of Simon Magus panel may be evidence of a visual parallel to Armagh's bid for supremacy.

Ferreiro has argued that the illustration of the Fall of Simon Magus 'became more specifically a medium through which the Church censured heresy, insubordination to Church authority, and magic and witchcraft'.⁵⁰ In fact, the use of Simon Magus as a symbol of heresy had already been associated with the Ionans and the Irish who refused to change during the Easter controversy. In the *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (completed around AD 731) Bede includes a letter from Abbot Ceolfrid where Ceolfrid discusses how the Irish had continued to wear the 'heretical' tonsure of Simon Magus instead of the orthodox Petrine tonsure of Rome.⁵¹ In terms of the visual parallel, by using Peter and Paul and Patrick to symbolize orthodoxy, and Simon Magus and Lochru to signify heresy, the artists were able to create a uniquely Irish visual representation of the triumph of orthodoxy that incorporated multiple layers of Irish history.

To return to the issue of Infancy narratives, it seems possible that, if the Fall of Simon Magus panel utilized the submission of magi (Lochru and Simon Magus) to the ultimate authority of Rome (Patrick/ Peter and Paul), then a similar theme may have been intended in the Adoration of the Magi, albeit through a more strictly biblical scene.

impious man who blasphemes your name be raised up now outside/ and quickly die"/and at these words the magician was raised up into the aether/and again sent down from above with the head turned down crushed together on a stone/and died before them/and the gentiles feared greatly). David Howlett, *Muirchú moccu Machthéni's 'Vita Sancti Patricii' (Life of Saint Patrick)* (Dublin, 2006), p. 77.

⁴⁹ Although Muirchú wrote the *Vita* in the seventh century, a version also appeared in the Book of Armagh, dated to c. AD 807. This would have made the reissue of the *Vita* both contemporary with the suspected date of construction for the high crosses, as well as being contemporary with the Iona community's relocation to Kells and the construction of the monastery there in AD 807. See Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland*, pp. 24-25, 156-58; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, pp. 79-80.

⁵⁰ Ferreiro, *Simon Magus*, p. 24.

⁵¹ Ferreiro, *Simon Magus*, pp. 212-19. See also Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), pp. 533-55.

This message may have been aimed specifically at the Columban community, who were relocating from Iona, who had been associated with Simon Magus during the Easter controversy. While the Columbans may have had a somewhat heretical past (in the eyes of the Armagh community) because of their reluctance to submit to Roman primacy, now was the time to abandon their old ways, their old iconic representations, and, like Simon and the ‘wise’ magi, succumb to the orthodoxy of Peter/Rome. Because the Fall of Simon Magus panel currently appears on two crosses associated with the Columban *paruchia*, and one associated with the Céili Dé,⁵² it may have served as a confirmation that they were acknowledging Armagh’s primacy, and attempting to distance themselves from their heretical past.⁵³ If the Fall of Simon Magus functioned as a visual statement of the Columbans’ commitment to orthodoxy, then it may have functioned in much the same way that the iconic Virgins did on Iona, which reaffirmed their commitment to Rome after the Easter controversy.

The message of both panels featuring magi is clear: the only magi that should be venerated in any way are the three ‘wise men’ from the East, who first acknowledged that Jesus was the messiah. The heretical magus Simon, whom the Columbans had allegedly modeled their tonsure after, was conquered by the orthodoxy of Rome (in the form of Peter), and the same fate would befall any future heretics in Ireland. Rome reigned supreme, and by utilizing a narrative which had strong anti-heretical undertones, the Irish crosses could express their allegiance both to Rome and to Armagh. Aileen O’Leary argues that, by ‘likening the Patrick in the wizard episode to the apostle Peter, the first head of the Church of Rome, and by dwelling on his affection for Armagh, Muirchú implied that the Church of Armagh was the Rome of the Irish people, with the national apostle at its helm’.⁵⁴ If this was the goal of the literary account, then surely the same purpose existed for the panels on the high crosses. If the goal was for these images

⁵² The crosses associated with the Columban *paruchia* are those at Monasterboice (Tall/West cross) and Kells (Market Cross), whereas the cross at Castledermot (North cross) was associated with the Céili Dé.

⁵³ It could also relate to the Columban community’s special devotion to John the Baptist, as the Irish druid who supposedly beheaded the Baptist, Mog Ruith, was said to have been taught by Simon Magus. See Ferreiro, *Simon Magus*, pp. 209-12.

⁵⁴ O’Leary, ‘Irish apocryphal apostle’, p. 296.

to have a didactic purpose, then it seems the mission was accomplished, as like the Infancy images, the Simon Magus panel not only expressed theological truths, but also political commentary. Whether the Irish crosses were indirectly responding to the issue of iconoclasm, or whether their goal was to remind the Columban community of their somewhat heretical past, and reassert the primacy of Armagh, the concept of orthodoxy and Roman primacy cannot be denied.

The association of Simon Magus with the heretical, non-Petrine form of tonsure comes from three contemporary sources—a letter from Ceolfrid, abbot of Jarrow, to the king of the Picts, Nechtan (c. AD 710), the *Life* of Saint Wilfrid, written by Eddius Stephanus (c. AD 720), and Bede, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (c. AD 731). However, as Dan McCarthy has pointed out, not one of these authors is able to point to a direct biblical reference to support this theory, and ‘could only cite hearsay’.⁵⁵ As this type of tonsure was deemed heretical, it makes sense to associate it with ‘the father of all heresy’; but could the association also relate to the three magi on the Adoration panels? McCarthy has demonstrated that *Hibernensis*, Cap. 3 and 6, indicates that the tonsure was not just believed to be that of Simon Magus, but was, more generally, the tonsure of the magi.⁵⁶ While this type of tonsure was no longer worn when the crosses were constructed, if the tonsure was associated with magi, it is interesting to consider whether the three magi in the Adoration scene were not shown wearing the traditional Phrygian caps in order to allow for them to be shown with tonsures.⁵⁷ If they had been shown with the heretical tonsure of the magi, then it could have served not only to assist in their identification as magi, but may have also served a similar purpose to the Simon Magus panels—to demonstrate the triumph of orthodoxy as the heretical easterners abandon

⁵⁵ Daniel P. McCarthy, ‘On the shape of the insular tonsure’, *Celtica* 24 (2003), p. 140 for dates and information on the source material, and p. 162 for the reference.

⁵⁶ There is no further evidence detailing the appearance of this tonsure, but McCarthy believes that it was similar to the type of tonsure worn by Christians in seventh-century Ireland, and may have been triangular in appearance, extending back from the forehead to form a point at the crown of the head. See McCarthy, ‘Insular tonsure’, pp. 162-163.

⁵⁷ Peter Brown has stated that the iconoclast bishops came from Phrygia; whether the lack of Phrygian caps on the Irish magi is a direct refutation of iconoclasm is unclear, but it could provide one possible explanation of their absence. See Peter Brown, *Society and the holy in late antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1982; repr. 1989), p. 255.

their old traditions. However, if they had been shown with the orthodox Petrine tonsure, then it may have shown that Rome had already been successful in overcoming heretics, as the magi no longer wore their own type of tonsure, but now conformed to Roman practice. While the weathering of the high crosses makes identifying any potential tonsures extremely difficult, it would be an interesting parallel to the Simon Magus panel, and would certainly fit with the theme of promoting Roman primacy in the face of heresy.

This would have been particularly meaningful, as the ‘wise men’ from the East, who bow down to the supremacy of the ‘true God’ (and by extension, the true church of Rome), could have represented the relocating Ionans, who were also arriving from the East and had a heretical past, and were expected to defer to the primacy of Armagh. If the three wise men also had the tonsure of the magi, associating them even more closely with the Columbans, then this would have made the reference even more blatant. If this was the intention of the narrative Marian panels, then it would follow in a long tradition of using Marian images as a political statement against a rival, and the Patrician takeover of the Ionan Virgin would parallel Rome’s use of the *Maria Regina*s against Byzantium.

Thus, if the Patricians were aware of the political implications for the *Maria Regina* and the Infancy cycle, it seems plausible that they may have chosen the Marian symbol to represent their own homegrown bid for primacy, particularly during the reign of Áed Oirdnide. But was a similar message being promoted by the crosses which feature John the Baptist Infancy scenes? Unfortunately, at present there do not appear to be any continental examples from this period which feature exclusively John the Baptist’s Infancy panels (which are not accompanied by similar scenes from Christ’s Infancy narrative), so it is difficult to discern whether these panels were intended to be strictly theological in nature, or whether they also had relevance to secular events. What does seem to be significant is that the majority of the panels with these scenes belong to the Midland group (the exceptions being Boho and Drumcliff, which belong to the Ulster

group). The majority of these sites were also associated with the Columban *paruchia*,⁵⁸ which would suggest that, in Ireland, the Columban community may have favoured the Baptist's Infancy cycle over that of Jesus. Was this because they were aware of the political subtext that the *paruchia* of Patrick was infusing into the Christian scenes? Or was it simply an attempt to iconographically differentiate themselves from the *paruchia* of Patrick?

Rather than attempting to visually assert a bid for ecclesiastical primacy, the Columban *familia*'s decision to depict John the Baptist's Infancy cycle may be evidence of a growing asceticism in the early decades of the ninth century, as John the Baptist was considered the New Testament's first hermit and represented an ideal model for monastic life.⁵⁹ The Columbans' declining position in the secular political sphere, coupled with their relocation from Iona after the initial Viking attacks,⁶⁰ could have inspired the Columbans to become more ascetic in their practices, which may have translated to the art of the high crosses. In addition, the relocation to Kells brought the Columbans into close contact with the *Céli Dé* (culdees), or 'clients of God'.⁶¹ Although

⁵⁸ Drumcliff, Durrow, and Monasterboice certainly were Columban. Castledermot was associated with the *Céli Dé*, and Killamery, Kilree and Boho are uncertain (although Harbison has argued that the Boho cross and the Drumcliff cross were similar, and therefore may indicate that Boho was also a Columban house). Although the Ardane cross could potentially be identified as having the Baptist's Infancy panels, Chapter Two has demonstrated that this identification is by no means certain. The potential Infancy panels on the cross at Graiguenemanagh are also questionable, as they do not follow the traditional iconographic conventions of the other Baptist Infancy scenes; however, this cross is often closely associated with the crosses at Castledermot, and it is located very near to both Killamery and Kilree, which could support their identification as Baptist scenes.

⁵⁹ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 233.

⁶⁰ In AD 795, the first Viking attacks occurred on the Columban monastery at Rechra (Lambay) and Iona. In AD 802, the monastery of Iona was attacked again and burned, and in AD 806, sixty-eight members of the community were killed. It was the attack in AD 806 that presumably led to their decision to partially relocate some members of the community to Kells. See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 67-69. See also Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'The Vikings in Scotland and Ireland in the ninth century', *Peritia* 12 (1998), pp. 300-339; Alfred P. Smyth, 'The effect of Scandinavian raiders on the English and Irish churches: a preliminary reassessment', in *Britain and Ireland 900-1300: Insular responses to Medieval European Change*, ed. Brendan Smith (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 1-38.

⁶¹ Hughes, *The Church*, p. 173; Westley Follett, *Céli Dé in Ireland: monastic writing and identity in the early middle ages* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 1. There is an ongoing debate amongst historians as to whether the *Céli Dé* should be seen as 'reformers' or leaders of a religious 'revival'. Kenney, Hughes, and O'Dwyer all favour the reform theory, whereas Sharpe, Etchingham and Follett question whether the perceived laxity of the Irish church was really a new feature in the late eighth/early ninth centuries, and if it was not, then there would have been no real need for reform or ascetic revival. Regardless of the driving

no full-scale study of Céili Dé iconography exists, Chapter Three has demonstrated that the South Cross at the Céili Dé monastery of Castledermot has a possible John the Baptist Infancy cycle, similar to those found on Columban crosses, such as Durrow and Drumcliff. According to Byrne, the ninth-century Tallaght documents prove that the Columban community and the Céili Dé were on friendly terms,⁶² and the fact that elements of the Baptist's iconography are shown on both Céili Dé and Columban crosses further supports their friendly relationship. Could the close contact between the Columban and Céili Dé foundations have inspired the Columbans to become more ascetic themselves, and in doing so, choose to depict the first hermit of the New Testament instead of the politically-charged Maria Regina?⁶³

The fact that John the Baptist's Infancy narratives essentially represent a mirror-image of Christ's Infancy cycle could be another reason why the Columbans chose to depict this cycle. While the Patricians were becoming more powerful, both politically and ecclesiastically, the Columbans were experiencing a corresponding decline in both of these areas. By choosing to represent a cycle that was the converse of Jesus' cycle, perhaps the Columbans were attempting to portray themselves as the opposite of Armagh and the *paruchia* of Patrick; as the Patricians gained power and prestige, the Columbans may have responded by taking the opposite approach, becoming more humble and ascetic.

force behind their asceticism, it is their close contact with the Columban monasteries that is of primary concern here. See James F. Kenney, *The sources for the early history of Ireland: Ecclesiastical* (New York, 1929; repr. Dublin, 1993), pp. 468-70; Hughes, *The Church*, pp. 173-193; Peter O'Dwyer, *Céili Dé: spiritual reform in Ireland 750-900* (Dublin, 1977), xi; Richard Sharpe, 'Some problems concerning the organization of the church in early medieval Ireland', *Peritia* 3 (1984) [1986], pp. 265-68; Colmán Etchingham, *Church organization in Ireland AD 650 to 1000* (Kildare, 1999); Follett, *Céili Dé in Ireland*, pp. 9-23.

⁶² Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 162.

⁶³ Hawkes has argued that in the Scottish context, the Virgin and Child icon on the slab at Brechin (which was associated with the Céili Dé), may have been chosen to demonstrate the connections between the Céili Dé and the community of Iona. Because there are no extant Virgin and Child icons on crosses associated with the Céili Dé in the Irish context, it is not possible to determine whether the icon would have been representative of Céili Dé iconography. However, in the Irish context, it seems more likely that the Céili Dé were expressing their affinity with the Columban *familia* by portraying similar Infancy scenes from John the Baptist's cycle. See Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', p. 129.

After Áed Oirdnide's rule ended in AD 819, the predominance of the *paruchia* of Patrick continued in Ireland. The following two kings of Tara, Conchobar mac Donnchada (AD 819-33) and Áed Oirdnide's son, Niall Caille mac Áeda (AD 833-46), were both supporters of the Patrician *paruchia*. It is interesting to note that Conchobar was a member of the Clann Cholmáin branch of the Southern Uí Néill, which had previously been staunch supporters of the *familia* of Columba, and Conchobar's own father and grandfather had enjoyed close relations with the Columban monastery of Durrow. But Conchobar appears to have backed the cause of Armagh, and the bishop of Armagh, Artrí mac Conchobair, may have been his son.⁶⁴ In AD 823, in conjunction with the Munster king, Feidlimid mac Crimthainn, Artrí promulgated the *Lex Patricii* in Munster, and in AD 825 he proclaimed the *Lex Patricii* in Connaught.⁶⁵ This clearly demonstrates the widespread influence that the Patrician *paruchia* had, and also attests to the fact that the secular rulers acknowledged the importance of an alliance with Armagh, even when it meant going against alliances their families had traditionally held in the past.

As the Patrician community continued to gain power, the position of the Columban *familia* continued to decline in the years following Áed's reign. Máire Herbert has argued that the new monastery at Kells was never intended to function as a replacement for the mother-house of Iona—it was simply meant to function as 'as a place of safety for personnel and precious objects from Iona'.⁶⁶ But Iona was suffering a similar decline. The impact of the initial Viking invasions not only brought a major loss of life and material goods, but Viking sea power also threatened Iona's communications with Ireland.⁶⁷ The end of existing political alliances in Scotland also threatened Iona, and the Dál Riata king, Kenneth mac Alpin, joined his kingdom with the Picts and chose

⁶⁴ According to Byrne, at this time, the positions of bishop and abbot of Armagh were often separate because the abbot, considered the real successor of Patrick, was often a lay dynast. It is uncertain whether Artrí mac Conchobair was, in fact, related to the king of Tara, but if he was, it would certainly show that multiple members of the Cenél Conaill were now promoting the cause of Patrick. See Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 125 and Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 71-72.

⁶⁵ Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 220; Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 71-72.

⁶⁶ Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 68.

⁶⁷ Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 72.

Dunkeld, instead of Iona, as his chief ecclesiastical centre.⁶⁸ Because the Iona abbots maintained possession of the abbacy of Kells, it prevented Kells from possessing full power as the head of the Irish section of the Columban church until decades later, in AD 849.⁶⁹ Although the successor of Columba (*comarba Coluim Chille*)⁷⁰ was based at Kells from AD 849 onwards, John Bannerman has demonstrated that the monastery still did not possess much power or influence, and Kells was largely ignored by the annalists until the tenth century.⁷¹ Clearly, Kells did not exert the level of influence that one would expect over the other Columban houses in Ireland, and because of the weakening position of the Columban *familia* in Ireland, it thus presented an ideal opportunity for the Patrician *familia* to continue its bid for primacy.

Because there is no concrete evidence stating when the crosses were constructed, the historical discussion presented here has focused on the early to mid-ninth century because of the developments in continental Marian iconography during this period and the relocation of the Columban community to Kells from AD 814 onward. However, this does not necessarily mean that the crosses discussed here were made during this period; it simply presents the possible historical framework for the development of the Maria Regina typology and the use of narrative Infancy panels to express political ideals.

⁶⁸ Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 72. Relics from Iona were transferred from Iona to Dunkeld, and the church was placed under Columba's patronage.

⁶⁹ John Bannerman, 'Comarba Coluim Cille and the relics of Columba', *The Innes Review* 44, no. 1 (1993), pp. 32-33. It was in this year that the relics of Columba were divided between Kells and Dunkeld, at which time Iona 'ceased forthwith to be the administrative centre of the Columban church in either Scotland or Ireland'. For the quote, see Bannerman, 'Relics of Columba', p. 32.

⁷⁰ Bannerman has agreed with Herbert's assessment that the increasing use of the title of *comarba* (plus the saint's name) from the middle of the eighth century onwards was 'symptomatic of the greater emphasis being placed on the competing *familiae* of saints in both political and financial terms'. Bannerman, 'Relics of Columba', p. 17.

⁷¹ Bannerman, 'Relics of Columba', p. 33. The 'annalists' here refers to the compilers of the Annals of Ulster. Bannerman has argued that the notice of the foundation of Kells cited in the Annals of Ulster was included because of Kells' relationship to Iona, and not because of any real interest of Armagh in Kells itself. However, the evidence presented here suggests that the annalists may have included the information about Kells because it directly related to Armagh's bid for primacy, evidenced by the fact that in both AD 804 and AD 807, the Patricians reacted to an event relating to Kells—first, through Áed Oirdnide's ordination, and second, by producing the Book of Armagh.

The crosses discussed here are generally dated to the ninth century, but the precise years of construction remain a topic of debate. Françoise Henry believed that the Kells crosses may have been erected shortly after the completion of the monastery in AD 814.⁷² She argued that it was equally plausible that a roughly contemporary date could be assigned to the crosses at Castledermot, where she believed that ‘at least one of the crosses may date to shortly after the foundation (AD 812)’.⁷³ Peter Harbison originally supported the theory that Kells was a ‘pivotal developer of crosses’ and dated the crosses at Kells, Monasterboice, Clonmacnoise and Durrow to the second quarter of the ninth century, during the reign of Louis the Pious (AD 814-840).⁷⁴ However, as discussed above in the Introduction, he has since altered his theory to date the creation of most of the crosses, including those at Kells and Monasterboice, to the last quarter of the ninth century, shortly after the death of the Carolingian Emperor Charles the Bald (AD 843-877), based primarily on iconographic comparisons between the two crosses at Monasterboice and the Carolingian art produced during Charles the Bald’s reign.⁷⁵

Roger Stalley has argued for an early-tenth century date for the crosses, based primarily on the inscription found on the base of Muiredach’s cross at Monasterboice. The early-tenth century date is dependent on the belief that the Muiredach mentioned in the inscription is the same Muiredach who held the abbacy of Monasterboice from AD 887-923/924.⁷⁶ Based on what he perceived to be stylistic similarities between the

⁷² Henry states that ‘there is a probability, but no more, that the cross of the tower at Kells belongs to a time very near the foundation of the monastery in the first decades of the ninth century’. Although the Tower Cross at Kells has not been discussed here because it does not appear to display any Marian images or Infancy narratives, it seems possible that if the Tower cross was created in the early ninth century, then the Market Cross and Broken Cross at Kells may have been created at roughly the same time. See Henry, *Irish high crosses*, p. 60.

⁷³ Henry, *Irish high crosses*, p. 60. For further discussion of the date of the Castledermot crosses, see also Michael Herity, ‘The context and date of the high crosses at Dísert Diarmada (Castledermot), Co. Kildare’, in *Figures from the Past*, ed. Etienne Rynne (Dun Laoghaire, 1987), pp. 111-30.

⁷⁴ Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 370.

⁷⁵ Harbison, ‘An Irish stroke of European genius: Irish high crosses and the Emperor Charles the Bald’, in *Insular and Anglo-Saxon art and thought in the early medieval period*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Publication forthcoming, expected Autumn 2011).

⁷⁶ Stalley, *Irish high crosses*, p. 38. See also Stalley, ‘Artistic identity and the Irish scripture crosses’, in *Making and meaning in insular art*, ed. Rachel Moss (Dublin, 2007), pp. 161-62; Henry, *Irish high crosses*, p. 18; Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 143.

figural style of the crosses at Monasterboice and those at Kells, Clonmacnoise and Durrow, Stalley has suggested that these crosses were made by the same sculptor, whom he calls the ‘Muiredach master’, or, at the very least, produced by the same sculptural workshop.⁷⁷ However, no concrete evidence exists to support this theory. Although the inscription on the base of the cross does state ‘Pray for Muiredach who had the cross erected’,⁷⁸ precisely who Muiredach was and when he had the cross erected remains unknown. Although most scholars believe that the Muiredach in question was the man who held the abbacy during the last decades of the ninth century and early decades of the tenth, Françoise Henry has argued that that an earlier Muiredach, who held the abbacy of Monasterboice in the 840s, may have commissioned the cross, and cautioned against scholars’ tendency to favour the ‘perhaps snobbish habit of choosing the second as the patron on the cross’.⁷⁹ Similarly, Harbison has argued that even if the later Muiredach is presumed to be the patron, the dates of his abbacy are not necessarily indicative of the cross’ construction date, as Muiredach could have had the cross commissioned before he took over the abbacy and the inscription could have been added to the cross sometime after he became the abbot.⁸⁰ Stalley himself points to the limitations of his theory, by saying that ‘absolute certainty is not possible, for Muiredach is a common name and the inscription is an afterthought, engraved around a pair of cats’.⁸¹

Therefore, if the crosses discussed here date to the early to mid-ninth century, shortly after the foundation of the monastery at Kells, as Henry and Harbison’s initial theory

⁷⁷ Stalley ‘Artistic identity’, pp. 154-64; for a discussion of the role of the individual sculptor in quarrying the stone and his possible influence on the overall design of the cross, see pp. 165-66.

⁷⁸ The original text of the inscription reads: ‘*OR DO MUIREDACH LASNDERN RO*’.

⁷⁹ Henry, ‘Around an inscription: the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise’, *JRSAI* 110 (1980), p. 38. For more information on the extant inscriptions and the difficulties in interpreting them, see Peter Harbison, ‘The inscriptions on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise, County Offaly’, *PRIA*, 79C, pp. 178-85; John Higgitt, ‘The stone-cutter and the scriptorium: early medieval inscriptions in Britain and Ireland’, in *Epigraphik*, ed. Walter Koch (Vienna, 1990), pp. 149-162; R.A.S. Macalister, ‘The ancient inscriptions of Kells’, *JRSAI* 64 (1934), pp. 16-21.

⁸⁰ Harbison, ‘An Irish stroke of European genius’, n. 53.

⁸¹ Stalley, *Irish high crosses*, p. 38.

suggested, then the possible transmission of the narrative Infancy panels may have been fairly immediate; however, if the crosses date to late ninth or early tenth century, as Stalley and (more recently) Harbsion have argued, then there may have been a chronological lapse between the relocation of the Ionans in the early decades of the ninth century and the creation of the crosses that display narrative Infancy panels. If, as suggested here, the narrative Infancy panels were used to denote the political position of a monastery, and particularly the favourable position of the Patrician *paruchia*, then the continued relationship between Kells and Armagh throughout the latter half of the ninth century means that it is possible that the crosses could have been constructed in the late ninth/early tenth century. The culmination of this relationship can be seen most clearly during the reign of Máel Brigte mac Tornáin (d. AD 935) who held the joint abbacy of Kells and Armagh in the early tenth century.⁸² While the idea of a joint abbacy leading to overlapping iconography is intriguing, there is no evidence to indicate that Máel Brigte had any influence on the iconographic program of the crosses, and therefore, this later date of construction remains equally speculative. However, the continued influence of Armagh on Kells into the tenth century would seem to support the theory that the narrative Infancy panels were used by the Patricians to express their supremacy over the Columban *paruchia*.

Because no concrete evidence exists to definitively date the crosses in this study, the dating question must remain unanswered, and if the later date is accepted, the precise reason behind the chronological gap between the Ionans' relocation to Kells and the construction of the crosses remains similarly unclear. Because the development at Kells was relatively slow and the relocation of the Ionans only partial in the initial years, the transmission of the Maria Regina typology may have been similarly slow to develop in Ireland. In addition, the period between AD 830 and AD 870 ushered in the most destructive period of Viking activity in Ireland, which would have undoubtedly affected the artistic output and the transmission of art and artefacts in a negative way. Harbison has suggested that after this period, Ireland experienced a period of 'forty years peace

⁸² D'Aughton, 'Epiphany sequence', p. 17. See also Helen M. Roe, *The high crosses of Kells* (Longford, 1966), pp. 2-24 for a discussion of the potential overlap between the midlands crosses (including Kells) and the Ulster crosses.

which gave respite from Viking raids,' so it is possible that the crosses could have been made during this period.⁸³ The inability to determine precisely which Ionan artefacts were brought to Kells and at what time they were transferred means that the transmission of artistic models is difficult to trace, and the transmission of ideological and political ideals is even more difficult to discern. As a result, this study is not an attempt to provide absolute dates for the crosses' construction; it simply suggests a *terminus post quem* for the possible use of narrative Marian images as a visual statement of orthodoxy and the political position of a given monastery.

Thus it seems plausible that the Irish narrative Marian panels may have been chosen to express a similar message to the Ionan iconic Virgins, a message of the refutation of heresy and acknowledgement of Rome's primacy in the wake of the second phase of iconoclasm. By removing the Virgin Mary from the iconic context of the Ionan panels, and placing her into a narrative context, the Patricians were able to make Mary a Patrician symbol that simultaneously supported the orthodoxy of Rome and papal supremacy, as well as the primacy of Armagh in the wake of the Columban community's relocation from Iona to Kells. The Patricians' secular alliance with the Cenél nEogain, coupled with the declining influence of Iona in the wake of the Viking invasions and the lack of power yielded by the new foundation at Kells, created an ideal context for the Patricians' assertion of primacy. The typological shift from Ionan icons to Irish narratives was therefore caused by a need to combine the theological and the political, in much the same way that Pope Paschal's contemporary *Sancta Sanctorum* objects had done. The creation of a complete Infancy cycle, rather than simply a Marian icon, not only allowed the Irish artists to illustrate a sermon in stone, but also allowed them to incorporate multiple layers of secular meaning into their art. While the iconic representations from the Iona group fused the political and theological in a more enigmatic way, the Irish Marian panels did so more explicitly; the Marian panels became not just a static statement, but an active commentary on events in Ireland and abroad.

⁸³ Harbison, 'An Irish stroke of European genius', n. 53.

Conclusion

The Irish high crosses are, at their very core, monuments that fuse multiple layers of meaning into one comprehensive artefact, and because of this, any attempt to understand the true meaning of the crosses must be similarly multi-dimensional. Attempts to discover the iconographic and stylistic ‘sources’ that influenced the crosses is a necessary first step, and identification of the panels is essential, regardless of the obvious complications that accompany this task. However, while these steps are important as a starting point, true understanding of the crosses can come only from analyzing their artistic programs in a variety of contexts—theological, political, historical, and ideological. In this study, the historical and political events of the eighth and ninth century have not only served as a backdrop for the creation of the Irish high crosses, but have also served as a catalyst for their creation. In the process of this methodology, the crosses have become not just artistic creations, but unique historical sources that provide insight into the beliefs of the monasteries where they were created.

Although there were undoubtedly a variety of sources and models available to the Irish sculptors, including the art and artefacts that were likely brought to Ireland by the relocating Ionan monks in the early decades of the ninth century,¹ the Irish artists do not appear to have passively copied these models for their own creations; this is evidenced most clearly by the fact that the iconic Virgin and Child with angels, which enjoyed some popularity in the Iona context, does not appear on the Irish crosses.² Rather than passively copying the tangible ‘sources’, the creators of the Irish crosses appear to have been actively designing uniquely Irish schemes, and the decision regarding which scenes

¹ See Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry: The history and hagiography of the monastic familia of Columba* (Oxford, 1988), p. 68.

² The fact that the Book of Kells (and thus, the iconic the Virgin and Child page) was probably brought from Iona to Ireland in the early ninth century further supports the idea that the absence of the iconic Virgin and Child with angels scene on the Irish crosses was not caused by a lack of contemporary sources. During the eighth century, the abbots of Iona repeatedly visited Ireland, often bringing relics (and thus, probably decorated reliquaries) on circuit. This close interaction with the Iona monks would have allowed for the exchange of ideas and the transmission of visual influences, but the evidence does not indicate that the Irish incorporated these influences into their creations. In the course of this study, Françoise Henry’s assertion that the Virgin and Child with angels does not appear on the extant Irish crosses has been confirmed. See Françoise Henry, *Irish high crosses* (Dublin, 1964), p. 41; Henry, *Irish art in the early Christian period (to 800 AD)* (Ithaca, 1965), p. 146. For further information about the visits by Iona abbots to Ireland, see Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 57-67.

to illustrate must have been influenced by the intangible sources that were affecting them, namely, the ideological and political developments. The manipulability of the order of the panels, and the fact that the schemes do not always conform to a biblical chronology, further indicates that the scenes must have been selected to promote a similar theme or message.³

The question remains: is the presence or absence of panels featuring the Virgin indicative of a particular devotion to her? Based on the evidence presented here, the presence or absence of Marian scenes does not appear to have been indicative of the theological beliefs of a particular monastery, but was used as an expression of power, orthodoxy, and supremacy.⁴ The absence of the Infancy panels does not seem to indicate an aversion to the Virgin, but rather, it may indicate that the monastery was not enjoying a favourable political position at the time that the cross was constructed. However, it is essential to remember that the concept of ‘power’ is a fluid one that can change rapidly; this is evidenced by the fact that the Columbans were the first to use the symbol of the Virgin to express their position of power during the eighth century (through the Iona group icons and possibly the Carndonagh icon), whereas not long after, the Patricians were using the Marian symbol to reassert their position of primacy in the ninth century. The fluidity of power was similarly evidenced by the Roman takeover of the

³ This is demonstrated most clearly by the inclusion of the Baptism of Christ, an event which happened when Jesus was an adult, in the Infancy cycle. Another example of non-adherence to biblical chronology was discussed above in Chapter Three, where the cross at Killary was shown to break from biblical chronology, as the Baptism of Christ is placed between the Annunciation to the Shepherds and the Adoration of the Magi scene.

⁴ The fact that Blathmac’s Old Irish poems, which may be considered part of Céli Dé literature, are dedicated to the Virgin and recount the Infancy narratives would suggest particular devotion to the Virgin on the part of the Céli Dé community; however, if this was the case, their devotion is not expressed through Infancy panels on the extant crosses located at known Céli Dé centres (for example, the crosses at Castledermot, which do not display Infancy of Christ panels). Therefore, there appears to be a disconnect between devotion and visual promotion. This is similar to the theory discussed in Chapter One, which demonstrated that, despite depicting the *Maria Lactans* icon, the Coptic monks were not necessarily expressing their devotion through the icon, but rather, could have been using the symbol to express abstract concepts. See Elizabeth S. Bolman, ‘The enigmatic Coptic *Galaktotrophousa*’ in *Images of the Mother of God: perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Aldershot, 1988), particularly pp. 16-17. For Blathmac’s poems, see James Carney, ed. and trans., *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 47 (Dublin, 1964); James Good, ‘The Mariology of the Blathmac poems’, *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 104 (1965), pp. 1-7; Brian Lambkin, ‘Blathmac and the Céli Dé: a reappraisal’, *Celtica* 23 (1999), pp. 132-54.

Byzantines' Marian symbolism—despite the long history of devotion to the Virgin in the Byzantine Empire, the symbol was re-assigned as power shifted away from Constantinople and towards Rome as the first phase of iconoclasm broke out. Therefore, while the presence or absence of the Infancy cycles does not appear to be representative of a distinct theological purpose, it does appear to represent the political agendas being promoted by the monasteries. Although the crosses retained their didactic function, their didacticism was focused on political truths as much as theological truths. Whether the political subtext of the crosses was intended to be understood only by the members of a given monastic community, or whether the messages would have been easily discernable by outsiders, is unclear; but the fact that the Patricians essentially commandeered the Columban *paruchia*'s Marian symbolism suggests that, at least in relation to the Marian panels, the implied political meaning was known amongst different *paruchia*.

Rather than placing the crosses outside the mainstream of medieval art, the methodological framework used in this study has suggested a link between the developments of Irish Marian symbolism with continental developments in Marian imagery, particularly those occurring in Rome. With the outbreak of the first phase of iconoclasm (AD 726-87), the symbol of the Virgin underwent a shift in meaning and typology—rather than being associated with the Byzantine Empire, the Virgin was now used as a political tool for the papacy, representing Roman orthodoxy and papal supremacy.⁵ The *Maria Regina*, known as the 'Madonna of the Popes',⁶ maintained the same imperial attributes of the earlier Constantinopolitan icons, but now featured Mary as an enthroned, crowned queen, who was often flanked by angels, and wore sumptuous jewelry and the dress of an empress. The *Maria Regina* was used by the papacy to directly respond to iconoclasm, and the effect was two-fold: on the one hand, the papacy used an actual image to demonstrate that images were acceptable, and, on the other, the

⁵ See Erik Thunø, *Image and Relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome* (Rome, 2002), pp. 34-35; Thomas F.X. Noble, *Images, iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009), pp. 130-34; Marion Lawrence, 'Maria Regina', *The Art Bulletin* 7 (1925), pp. 150-61; Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: a history of the Virgin Mary* (London, 2009), pp. 95-99.

⁶ Ursula Nilgen, 'Maria Regina—Ein politischer Kultbildtypus?', *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 19 (1981), pp. 3-33.

papacy used the Byzantine Empire's own symbol against them, making it expressly clear who was being targeted by their visual politicking. The distinctly Roman *Maria Regina* was not intended to function as a devotional image or as a tool for pious reflection, but was rife with political subtext, proclaiming the ultimate authority of Rome and the triumph of orthodoxy in the face of the heretical iconoclasts.

Iconographically speaking, the Iona group Virgins possess the three main characteristics of the Roman *Maria Reginas*—her enthronement, her halo/elaborate headdress, and the accompaniment of the imperial angels. Although the iconographic attributes differ slightly amongst the Ionan icons,⁷ the four icons appear to be typologically similar to the *Maria Regina*. Therefore, it appears that the Iona group icons may have been promoting a similar message of orthodoxy and Roman primacy, which would have been an appropriate sentiment in the years following the Easter controversy, when the orthodoxy of the Iona monks had been called into question.⁸ The iconic Virgin and Child on the pillar at Carndonagh is also of a similar type to the Iona group icons; therefore, it could potentially be identified as a *Maria Regina*, and it is likely that it was made at roughly the same time as the Iona group icons (mid-late-eighth century).⁹ The monastery at Carndonagh was a Columban foundation, and it also had close ties with the Columban foundation of Derry,¹⁰ so it is likely that the presence of the Marian icon here

⁷ For example, as described in the preceding chapters, Saint Oran's cross and the Kildalton cross have only two flanking angels, while Saint Martin's cross and the Book of Kells Virgin and Child page display four flanking angels. See Jane Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins: iconic images of the Virgin and Child in insular sculpture', in *Studies in the cult of Saint Columba*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Dublin, 1997); Martin Werner, 'The Madonna and Child miniature in the Book of Kells', *The Art Bulletin* 54 (1972), pp. 1-23, 129-39; Ross Trench-Jellicoe, 'A missing figure on slab fragment no. 2 from Monifieth, Angus, the a'Chill Cross, Canna, and some implications of the development of a variant form of the Virgin's hairstyle and dress in early medieval Scotland', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries in Scotland* 129 (1999), pp. 597-647.

⁸ See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 58-61; Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society*, (Ithaca, 1966), pp. 47-49; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland, 400-1200* (London, 1995), pp. 151-53; Maura Walsh and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, eds, *Cummian's letter 'De controuersia paschali' together with a related Irish computistical tract 'De ratione computandi'*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Studies and Texts 86 (Toronto, 1988); Daniel P. McCarthy, 'On the shape of the insular tonsure', *Celtica* 24 (2003), pp. 140-67.

⁹ See Trench-Jellicoe, 'A missing figure', p. 621. Trench-Jellicoe argues for a date in the second-half of the eighth century for the Iona group crosses.

¹⁰ Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', p. 128 (n. 9). See also Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 73-4, 109-23.

is the result of a direct influence from Iona, which functioned as the head of the Columban *paruchia* during this period. Like the Roman Maria Reginas, the *raison d'être* of the Iona group icons was to function as visual declarations of power and commitment to orthodoxy. Because the Columban *paruchia* in Ireland enjoyed a favourable political position during the eighth century, particularly evidenced by their new alliance with the Southern Uí Néill branch of the Clann Cholmáin,¹¹ it seems particularly striking that more eighth-century Marian icons do not exist on crosses located at Columban centres; however, it is possible that additional Columban Marian icons did originally exist, but were either expunged by the Patricians in the ninth century, or simply did not survive the many centuries of exposure to wind and rain.

Although the iconic Virgin and Child at Drumcliff was also created at a monastery with Columban ties, it is unclear whether this icon can be similarly interpreted as a Maria Regina, as its current condition does not allow for a more detailed analysis of the iconographic attributes. However, as the Drumcliff icon is located on a cross that also has narrative scenes from the Infancy cycle of John the Baptist, it is unlikely that it was made before the typological shift from iconic to narrative that occurred in the early decades of the ninth century, and it does not appear to be directly related to the Iona group icons or the Carndonagh Virgin. The Drumcliff icon seems to have been recalling the memory of the Iona schemes, as Jane Hawkes has previously suggested.¹² The exact reasons behind why the monks at Drumcliff wanted to visually recall the monastery of Iona are unclear, but it may have served as a visual protest against the Patrician takeover of the Marian symbol. The icon's isolated position on the end of the cross arm, and the fact that Drumcliff was an outlier of the Ulster group, may further support this theory. Although the two extant Irish icons appear at foundations with Columban connections,¹³ the Virgin and Child icon does not appear to be representative of Columban identity in

¹¹ See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 66 for information on the rise of the Clann Cholmáin.

¹² Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', p. 129.

¹³ See Harbison, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien 17, 1 (Bonn, 1992), p. 246; Hawkes, 'Columban Virgins', pp. 128-29.

the Irish context after the relocation of the Iona community, as the absence of the scene at other major Columban centres, particularly Durrow and Kells, has been demonstrated.

When the second phase of iconoclasm was initiated in AD 815, the papacy once again responded to the controversy by employing the powerful symbol of the *Maria Regina* to refute the iconoclasts' arguments. However, unlike the earlier eighth-century images, the *Maria Regina* was now placed into a narrative context, specifically relating to the Infancy of Christ cycle. This trend towards the promotion of the *Maria Regina* in narrative Infancy scenes may have begun with Pope Leo III, who commissioned mosaics in the basilica of Santi Nereo ed Achilleo in Rome featuring both an iconic *Maria Regina* and a narrative Annunciation scene.¹⁴ Because Leo died in the year following the outbreak of Second Iconoclasm,¹⁵ it is unclear whether his artistic commissions can be seen as a direct response to iconoclasm; but, based on his use of the *Maria Regina* at the same time that the iconoclastic debates were renewed, it is likely that he was visually responding to the controversy in much the same way that his papal predecessors had done in the eighth century.

Under Pope Paschal I, the use of the narrative Infancy scheme as a visual refutation of iconoclasm was developed further; this development is evidenced most clearly by the *Sancta Sanctorum* objects, particularly the enameled reliquary cross and the rectangular casket. Paschal's emphasis on the Nativity added a new meaning to the Marian symbol, as the Nativity scene was used to depict the Incarnation, which, in return, was used as a theological justification for the depiction of holy images.¹⁶ Paschal was clearly continuing to use the *Maria Regina* to promote papal power and Roman orthodoxy, while simultaneously promoting the imperial nature of the Virgin by directly addressing her as a queen and designating the reliquary cross a *vexillum*, a term derived from Roman military terminology.¹⁷ The *Sancta Sanctorum* objects have a number of scenes

¹⁴ Caroline J. Goodson, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I: papal power, urban renovation, church rebuilding and relic translation, 817-24* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 110, 127; also Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 128.

¹⁵ Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 148.

¹⁶ Thunø, *Image and relic*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁷ Thunø, *Image and relic*, p. 29.

in common with the Irish high crosses, most notably the inclusion of the Baptism as an Infancy scene, and the fact that the enameled cross features Infancy panels displayed in a cruciform shape, much like the Irish crosses, further confirms their schematic similarities. Because the exact function of the Sancta Sanctorum objects is unknown, it is uncertain whether they would have been publicly displayed;¹⁸ this uncertainty makes a direct relationship between the Irish crosses and the Sancta Sanctorum objects unlikely. However, because the typological shift from iconic to narrative Infancy scenes was utilized on other Roman artefacts during this period (for example, the publicly displayed mosaics commissioned by Leo III and Paschal), it is possible that the Irish pilgrims who came to Rome may have seen them, or possibly even brought similar prototypes back to Ireland in the form of reliquaries *via* the pilgrimage routes. The Irish Infancy panels appear to have incorporated the iconic Maria Regina into a narrative context, in much the same way that Paschal's Sancta Sanctorum objects did; this is evidenced particularly by the static, enthroned, front-facing Virgin and Child depicted in the Adoration of the Magi panels, which are semi-iconic in nature. The concept of Mary's queenship was certainly known in Ireland as early as the mid-eighth century, as demonstrated by the poet Blathmac's repeated use of the title in reference to the Virgin,¹⁹ so the designation of the Virgin as a queen (*regina*) would not have been a completely new concept in Ireland. However, the visual depiction of her queenship in a narrative context as a visual representation of power and orthodoxy does appear to have been a new development.

Rather than including the Adoration of the Magi panel in the Epiphany cycle, as suggested by previous scholars such as Helen Roe²⁰ and Malgorzata D'Aughton,²¹ the fact that the Adoration is surrounded by the Annunciation to the Shepherds, the Baptism

¹⁸ For a discussion of the function of the Sancta Sanctorum objects and their possible liturgical implications, see Thunø, *Image and relic*, pp. 18-23.

¹⁹ Carney, *The poems of Blathmac*, pp. 49, 55.

²⁰ Helen M. Roe, 'The high crosses of County Armagh: a photographic survey with notes on the monuments', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 1, no. 2 (1955), pp. 109-110. Roe, 'The high crosses of East Tyrone: a photographic survey with notes on the monuments', *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 2, no. 1(1956), p. 83.

²¹ Malgorzata D'Aughton, 'The Kells Market Cross: Epiphany sequence reconsidered', *Archaeology Ireland* 18, no. 1 (2004), p. 16.

and the newly identified Presentation of Jesus in the Temple and Circumcision of Christ panels, suggests that these panels should actually be seen as comprising the Infancy cycle. Although the absence of any extant Nativity panels on the crosses is unusual, and is a key differentiator between the Irish crosses and the Sancta Sanctorum objects, it is possible that the scene could have been depicted on the crosses in their original state, but, because they are now damaged, it is impossible to know for certain. For the crosses that show only one Infancy panel, rather than a complete or semi-complete cycle, it is likely that they were promoting a different message, and were therefore not promoting the same message as the nine crosses²² that display more than one Infancy of Christ panel.

The second phase of iconoclasm was not limited to the Byzantine Empire, but also involved the Carolingian Empire. Although the Carolingian approach to iconoclasm was milder than the Byzantine approach, ultimately they were still questioning the orthodoxy of Rome and challenging papal authority. While previous scholars have argued in favor of a Carolingian influence on the high crosses,²³ by means of ivories and frescoes, these assertions have focused solely on possible models and sources, rather than considering the ideological and political position of the Carolingians, especially in relation to Rome. If the crosses were, in fact, made during the period of Second Iconoclasm, it seems unlikely that the Irish artists would have modeled themselves on an empire that was at odds with Rome. The theory that the Irish artists were not emulating the Carolingians is strictly based on ideological and political motivations—the Carolingians were not completely opposed to art, and they continued to produce art during the period of Second Iconoclasm,²⁴ so it is not due to a lack of artistic production coming from

²² The crosses that have been identified here as displaying more than one Infancy of Christ panel include those at: Arboe, Armagh, Camus, Clones, Donaghmore, Galloon, Kells Market Cross, Kells Broken Cross, and Killary. The cycle on the Duleek cross could potentially be included in this group; however, it is unclear whether this cross was depicting scenes from the Infancy of Christ or scenes from the Infancy of the Virgin, as Harbison has suggested. See Chapter Three for an in-depth iconographic analysis of these crosses, and see Harbison, *High crosses* 1, p. 77 for a discussion of the Duleek cross.

²³ Particularly Françoise Henry, 'Around an inscription: the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise', *JRSAI* 110 (1980), p. 44; Harbison, *High crosses* 1, pp. 311, 328-29. For a challenge to this theory, see Roger A. Stalley, 'European art and the Irish high crosses', *PRIA* 90C (1990), p. 141.

²⁴ Noble confirms the Carolingians' acceptance of and production of art during the second phase of iconoclasm, and states that the Carolingians 'agreed that art could exist, and of course they produced art in

Francia; but rather, it is their negative relationship with Rome that could have led the Irish to employ Roman iconography, rather than Carolingian iconography. Therefore, the reason that the Irish were choosing not to emulate the Carolingians was not because the Carolingians were opposed to art, but because they were opposed to Rome. No contemporary sources specifically detail the Irish response to iconoclasm, but the fact that there were Irish pilgrims to Rome as early as the sixth century and there were Irishmen active in the Carolingian court (namely, Dúngal of Pavia), suggests that the Irish would have at least been aware of the controversy.²⁵ An analysis of the response to iconoclasm by Irish monks who were active on the continent would be the subject of a much larger study; however, the fact that Dúngal actively opposed Claudius of Turin's iconoclastic policies may provide some insight.²⁶

In terms of the Irish context, the typological shift from iconic to narrative Marian panels is accompanied by a power shift, as the Patrician *paruchia* reasserted their bid for ecclesiastical primacy in the early decades of the ninth century. Throughout most of the eighth century, it was the Columban *paruchia* that maintained power in Ireland, and not only did they enjoy a favourable ecclesiastical position, but they also thrived politically, through alliances with the secular rulers. This was a time of relative peace and prosperity for the Columban *paruchia*, as the secular rulers demonstrated an active alliance with the Columbans and directly patronized Columban monasteries, particularly Durrow.²⁷ With the reign of the Cenél nEogain overking Áed Oirdnide, Columban fortunes were reversed, as the king was openly hostile towards the Columban community.²⁸ A known Patrician sympathizer, Áed actively promoted the Patrician

exuberant profusion'. See Thomas F.X. Noble, *Images, iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009), p. 368.

²⁵ Chapter Four has demonstrated that a reference to iconoclasm from Bede and a citation in the York Annals suggests that the controversy would have been known in Britain, and it seems likely that the Irish would have been similarly aware of the issues surrounding the iconoclastic debates.

²⁶ Noble, *Images*, pp. 306-12; Dúngal, *Responsa contra Claudium: a controversy on holy images*, ed. Paolo Zanna. *Per Verba* 17 (Florence, 2002).

²⁷ Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, p. 64; Francis J. Byrne, *Irish kings and high-kings* (London, 1973; repr. 2001), p. 156.

²⁸ Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 160-62.

paruchia's bid for primacy by promulgating the Law of Patrick, issuing propagandistic Patrician materials in the Book of Armagh and performing an iconographic *coup d'état* on the symbol of the Virgin, which had previously been associated with the Columbans. By taking over the image of the powerful, enthroned Virgin and placing her into a narrative context, the Patricians were removing any Columban connotations associated with her and reclaiming the symbol of the Maria Regina as their own, in a move that paralleled the Roman takeover of the Byzantine Marian symbol. Because Armagh, the head of the Patrician *paruchia*, saw itself as the 'Rome of the Irish',²⁹ the Marian symbol of orthodoxy and primacy would have been appropriate for the Patricians, as it would have had the dual function of representing Roman authority and, by extension, Patrician authority, in the wake of their bid for primacy. The issue of orthodoxy may have been particularly relevant to the relocating Ionans, as although they had visually demonstrated their commitment to Rome through the iconic Marian symbol, they had previously been associated with heretical beliefs during the Easter controversy, and the use of the Simon Magus panel may have been a visual reminder of their seemingly heretical past.³⁰ The fact that this panel appears on crosses at Columban centres indicates that the Columbans may have been using this narrative to reaffirm their commitment to orthodoxy, and it may have functioned in much the same way that the Ionan Marian icons did—as their visual acknowledgement of the supremacy of the church of Rome. The Patricians' open hostility towards the Columban *familia* may have been caused by the fact that in AD 804, the Ionans were granted the land of Kells, and in AD 807, the Ionans began the relocation of some of their residents to the new foundation.³¹ Although the land grant was ultimately presided over by Áed Oirdnide and

²⁹ Aideen O'Leary, 'An Irish apocryphal apostle: Muirchú's portrayal of Saint Patrick', *Harvard Theological Review* 89, no. 3 (1996), pp. 293-96; Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in early Irish society*, (Ithaca, 1966), p. 115; Dorothy Verkerk, 'Pilgrimage *ad limina apostolorum* in Rome: Irish crosses and early Christian sarcophagi', in *From Ireland coming: Irish art from the early Christian to the late Gothic period and its European context*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton, 2001), pp. 9-26, n. 18.

³⁰ See Alberto Ferreiro, *Simon Magus in patristic, medieval and early modern traditions*, ed. Robert J. Bast. Studies in the History of Christian Traditions Series 125 (Leiden, 2005), pp. 212-19. See also B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, eds and trans. *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History of the English People'* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 533-55.

³¹ See Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, pp. 68-73.

the Abbot of Armagh, which would suggest that relations between the two *paruchia* were at least civil, the relocation of members of the chief Columban monastery back to Ireland may have been seen as a potential threat to Patrician domination, which in turn garnered a response in the form of Patrician promotion and hostility towards the Columban *familia*.

As the Patricians visually promoted their power and authority through the Infancy of Christ cycle, the Columbans appear to have chosen an alternative Infancy cycle to promote—the Infancy of John the Baptist. The new identification of the Visitation panel presented here, and the suggestion that the Massacre of the Innocents should be considered part of the Baptist’s cycle, has allowed for a more complete Baptist Infancy cycle to be detected on the crosses. The Columban *familia*’s decision to depict the Baptist’s Infancy cycle may be evidence of a growing asceticism adopted by the Columbans, which could have been caused by a number of factors, including their declining secular position, the initial Viking attacks, and their physical displacement from Iona. In addition, their relocation brought the Columbans into closer contact with the ascetic Céli Dé movement, with whom they enjoyed friendly relations.³² The fact that crosses at known Céli Dé centres, particularly the monastery of Castledermot, also display John the Baptist Infancy panels further supports their potential exchange of ideas. By representing a cycle which was essentially the opposite of the Patricians’ Infancy of Christ cycle, it is possible that the Columbans (and possibly the Céli Dé) may have been ideologically differentiating themselves from the Patricians and visually protesting the Patrician takeover of the Marian symbol. Two crosses at Kells,³³ although located at a Columban foundation, appear to have Infancy of Christ panels that are similar to those found on Patrician crosses, and the Market Cross also shows evidence of a John the Baptist panel.³⁴ This oddity can be explained by the fact that the monastery of Kells was ultimately granted and approved by the abbot of Armagh, and so its artistic

³² Byrne, *Irish kings*, p. 162.

³³ The two crosses are the Market Cross and the Broken Cross at Kells.

³⁴ Although the Market Cross does display a possible Visitation panel, it does not appear to display any additional Baptist Infancy scenes. See Chapter Three for more information on the iconography of the Kells Market Cross.

program could be representative of an iconographic cross-pollination, with both Columban and Patrician attributes. Similarly, the cross at Arboe appears to have two complete Infancy cycles, one of the Baptist and one of Christ, so it is possible that Arboe could have also been a cross-over foundation, like Kells.

Thus, it seems that the Irish narrative Infancy panels were attempting to convey a similar message to the Ionan Virgin and Child icons, a message of power, orthodoxy, and Roman primacy in the wake of iconoclasm. By removing the Virgin from the iconic context and placing her into the narrative panels, the Patricians were able to add an additional layer of meaning, as they were able to not only promote the primacy of Rome in the wake of Second Iconoclasm, but were also able to promote the primacy of Armagh and the Patrician *paruchia* in the wake of the Iona monks' relocation to Kells. Whether the threat posed by the relocating Ionans was real or perceived is unclear, but the evidence suggests that the Patricians felt sufficiently threatened to the point that they drastically and, in the case of Áed Oirnide, violently, reasserted their authority and visually promoted their supremacy. The Irish narrative Marian panels, then, functioned as an active commentary on the political events occurring both within Ireland and abroad, promoting the power of Rome and the 'Rome of the Irish', Armagh.

Although this study has considered the extant Marian panels on the Irish high crosses, it is ultimately limited by the fact that only a fraction of the original crosses still exist,³⁵ and, had the rest remained intact, then a fuller study of the use of the Virgin as a symbol of power could have been undertaken. The results presented here are based only on the surviving material, and it is possible that the results could vary if additional crosses were included, or if additional Marian panels were identified in the future. The broader implications of this study are that it suggests that the distinctly Roman Maria Regina type may have been used outside of the Mediterranean context and adapted to

³⁵ Oengus the Culdee, writing c. AD 800, refers to Durrow as 'a devout city with a hundred crosses', and describes Clonenagh as 'Clonenagh of many crosses'. He also describes Disert Bethech as 'a pious cloister behind a circle of crosses'. These references imply that it was normal to have dozens of crosses at a given monastic site, and provide some insight into how few crosses remain today. See Henry, *Irish high crosses*, p. 19; Whitley, ed. and trans. *Féilire Óengusso Céili Dé: The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*. Henry Bradshaw Society Publications 29 (London, 1905; repr. Dublin, 1984)

local needs, and links the development of the Irish iconographic schemes with those on the continent. The Roman influence on the Irish high crosses has been confirmed, but rather than suggesting that the crosses were merely copying early Christian sarcophagi, this study has shown that they were influenced by contemporary political events. Designing the artistic scheme of the crosses was not simply a case of importing stylistic and iconographic models, but rather, was about expressing an awareness of the ideological and political developments happening both within Ireland and in the broader continental context.

This study has also suggested that the Irish may have been similarly influenced by the issues surrounding iconoclasm. Whether the Irish Marian panels were meant as a direct response to iconoclasm, as the Roman *Maria Reginae* were, is unclear, but it is clear that their intentions were the same—to use images of the Virgin Mary to promote power and authority. Through their use of the Marian symbol, the theological beliefs of the Irish monasteries became entangled with their complex political commentary, and the Marian scenes were no longer about devotion, but promotion. The use of the *Regina* type has implications for the broader study of Irish Mariology during this period, as it suggests that the concept of the Virgin as a symbol of power must have been significantly developed by this time, in such a way that the subtext of ‘power’ would be understood by anyone who viewed it. The fact that the Virgin is not shown in Crucifixion scenes means that the Irish artists were not simply adhering to her biblical portrayal, but were specifically choosing panels to highlight her designation as a *regina*.

In terms of future studies, the methodological synthesis of visual and historical evidence applied to this study could be developed further to determine whether other narrative cycles are reflective of contemporary political events. Analyzing the influence of political events on the artistic programs could ultimately contribute to the development of a more concrete chronology for the construction of the crosses, as the presence or absence of a given panel or cycle could provide a *terminus post quem* for specific crosses. The appearance of a given panel or cycle at monasteries connected with the same *paruchia* could also contribute to the understanding of monastic identity and beliefs, and could allow for a more comprehensive study of the iconography associated

with different monastic *paruchia*. This study has demonstrated that the meanings behind the panels are not fixed, but are fluid; and it is possible that in addition to the macrocosmic view of the Infancy cycle as a complete entity, the microcosmic interpretation of the individual panels could illuminate further levels of meaning, both from a theological standpoint, as well as from a political standpoint. The order in which the panels were displayed, then, could alter the intended meaning of the entire cycle. The Infancy cycles of John the Baptist and Christ should be considered in the context of the cross as a whole, in order to determine whether a broader relationship exists between the cycles, and to determine whether a cohesive message was created by the combination of specific cycles. The role of the sculptor and/or patron should also be analyzed, in order to determine whether they were individually responsible for the selection of schemes, or whether they were simply following orders from their superiors.³⁶

Thus, rather than merely creating sermons in stone, this study has demonstrated that the creators of the Irish high crosses were truly iconographic innovators, merging the theological, political and ideological into a comprehensive artistic program that would have had a multi-layered significance for their viewers. While the Iona group Virgin and Child icons fused the theological and political in a more indirect way, the Irish Infancy panels did so more explicitly, and functioned as symbols of power for the Patrician *paruchia*. This multilayered approach to Marian iconography, incorporating canonical accounts, apocryphal legends, political statements and Patrician propaganda, is distinctive in its ambiguity, and could explain why the Irish artists chose which panels to depict, and why the Irish Marian panels are so unique.

³⁶ Stalley believes that ‘the iconographical connections also give the lie to the myth that the compositions were designed by ecclesiastical experts who then handed them out to the craftsmen’. He further argues that ‘while local dignitaries may have exercised choice, the sculptor must have had at his disposal some sort of portfolio of potential subjects’. See Roger A. Stalley, ‘Artistic identity and the Irish scripture crosses’, in *Making and meaning in insular art*, ed. Rachel Moss (Dublin, 2007), p. 166.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 1. Virgin and Child. Saint Martin's cross, Iona.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 2. Virgin and Child. Saint Oran's cross, Iona.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 3. Virgin and Child. High cross, Kildalton, Islay.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 4. Virgin and Child. Book of Kells,
fol. 7v.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 5. Virgin and Child. Cuthbert's Coffin.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 6. Virgin and Child. Drumcliff, Co. Sligo

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 7. Virgin and Child. Carndonagh pillar,
Co. Donegal.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 8. Zacharias and Elizabeth with the infant John
the Baptist. Durrow, Co. Offaly.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 9. The Last Judgment page. Saint Gall Gospels,
MS. 51.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 10. Zacharias and Elizabeth with the infant John
the Baptist. West cross, Monasterboice, Co. Louth.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 11. Zacharias and Elizabeth with the infant John
the Baptist. Drumcliff, Co. Sligo.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 12. Presentation of John the Baptist.
Drumcliff, Co. Sligo.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 13. Presentation of John the Baptist.
Boho, Co. Fermanagh.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 14. Visitation. Durrow, Co. Offaly.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 15. Visitation. Ivory book-cover from
Genoels-Elderen. Late eighth century.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 16. Visitation. Ivory relief, Milan or
Reichenau. c. 962-73.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 17. Visitation. Market Cross. Kells, Co. Meath.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 18. Four-part sequence from the life of
John the Baptist. Killamery, Co. Kilkenny.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 19. Four-part sequence from the life of
John the Baptist. Kilree, Co. Kilkenny.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 20. Cross of the Scriptures. Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 21. Visitation, left arm. Ardane, Co. Tipperary.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 22. Visitation. Graiguenamanagh, Co. Kilkenny.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 23. Zacharias and Elizabeth with the infant John
the Baptist. Graiguenamanagh, Co. Kilkenny.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 24. John the Baptist Infancy cycle. (From top) Visitation, Massacre of the Innocents, Zacharias fleeing with the infant John (?), Martyrdom of Zacharias (?). South cross, Castledermot, Co. Kildare.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 25. John the Baptist Infancy cycle. (From top) Annunciation to Zacharias, Massacre of the Innocents, Presentation of John, Baptism of Christ. Arboe, Co. Tyrone.



Fig. 26. The Fall of Simon Magus. North cross. Castledermot, Co. Kildare.



Fig. 27. The Fall of Simon Magus. Market cross. Kells, Co. Meath.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 28. The Fall of Simon Magus. Tall or West cross. Monasterboice, Co. Louth.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 29. Infancy of Christ cycle. (From top) Unidentified panel, Baptism of Christ, Adoration of the Magi, Annunciation to the Shepherds. Donaghmore, Co. Tyrone.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 30. Infancy of Christ cycle. (From top) Adoration of the Magi,
Baptism of Christ, Annunciation to the Shepherds. Killary, Co. Meath.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 31. Infancy of Christ cycle. (From top) Damaged panel, Baptism of Christ, Adoration of the Magi, Annunciation to the Shepherds. Armagh, Co. Armagh.



Fig. 32. Annunciation to the Shepherds. Market cross. Kells, Co. Meath.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 33. Annunciation to the Shepherds. Ivory book-cover from Lorsch. Ninth century.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 34. Adoration of the Magi. Muiredach's cross. Monasterboice, Co.
Louth

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 35. Adoration of the Magi. Killary, Co. Meath.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 36. Unidentified procession scene. May represent the Adoration of the Magi. Kilree, Co. Kilkenny.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 37. Baptism of Christ. Broken cross. Kells, Co. Meath.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 38. Infancy of Christ cycle. (From top of shaft) Circumcision of Christ, Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, Adoration of the Magi. Clones, Co. Monaghan.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 39. Two panels from the Infancy of Christ cycle.
(From bottom) Adoration of the Magi, Baptism of
Christ. Galloon, Co. Fermanagh.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 40. Two scenes from the Infancy of Christ cycle. (From bottom)
Adoration of the Magi, Baptism of Christ. Camus, Co. Derry.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 41. Circumcision of Christ (bottom).
Arboe, Co. Tyrone.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 42. Circumcision of Christ. Clones, Co. Monaghan.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 43. Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. Arboe, Co.
Tyrone

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 44. Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. Clones, Co.
Monaghan.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 45. Infancy of Christ cycle. (From top) Annunciation to Mary, Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, Annunciation to the Shepherds. Market cross. Kells, Co. Meath.



Fig. 46. The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. Market cross. Kells, Co. Meath.



Fig. 47. The Annunciation to Mary. Market cross. Kells, Co. Meath



Fig. 48. The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. North cross. Castledermot, Co. Kildare.



Fig. 49. The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. Moone, Co. Kildare.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 50. The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes. Clonca, Co. Donegal.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 51. Annunciation. Mosaic, triumphal arch. Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, c. AD 432-40.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 52. Annunciation. Ivory relief. Ravenna
or Constantinople, c. AD 545-56.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 53. Annunciation. Marble relief. Ravenna,
c. AD 400-10.



Fig. 54. The Flight into Egypt. Moone, Co. Kildare.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 55. Infancy scenes (possibly from the life of the Virgin Mary).
(From bottom) Fondling the infant Virgin, the raven brings bread to the Virgin
in the Temple, Anne and Joachim meet at the Golden Gate. Duleek, Co. Meath.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 56. Copy (c. 1596) of the apse mosaic, SS. Nereo ed Achilleo.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 57. Annunciation. Apse mosaic, SS. Nereo ed Achilleo.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 58. Vicopisano reliquary cross. Pieve di S. Maria e S. Giovanni, Pisa.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 59. Pliska reliquary cross. Archaeological Museum, Sofia.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 60. Apse mosaic from S. Maria in Domnica

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 61. Madonna della Clemenza. S. Maria in Trastevere, Rome

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 62. Pope Paschal's enameled reliquary cross, c. AD 817-24. Musei Vaticani.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 63. Side of Pope Paschal's rectangular casket. Scenes from the Infancy of Christ (from left):
Annunciation, Visitation and Nativity.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 64. Side of Pope Paschal's rectangular casket. Scenes from the Infancy of Christ (from left): The
Magi Adoring the Star, with a Shepherd.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 65. Side of Pope Paschal's rectangular casket. Scenes from the Infancy of Christ (from left):
Adoration of the Magi and Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.

**Image unavailable in digital version
due to copyright restrictions.**

Fig. 66. Pope Paschal's cruciform casket. Musei Vaticani.

Bibliography

- Alexander, J.J.G., *Insular Manuscripts, 6th to the 9th Century*. London: Harvey Miller, 1978
- Allen, J. Romilly and Joseph Anderson, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*. 2 vols. Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1903. Reprint, Balgavies, Forfar: Pinkfoot Press, 2003
- Allen, J. Romilly, 'The Celtic brooch and how it was worn'. *The Illustrated Archaeologist* 1(1894): 162-75
- Allen, J. Romilly, 'On some points of resemblance between the art of the early sculptured stones of Scotland and of Ireland'. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 31 (1896/97): 309-32
- Allen, J. Romilly, *Celtic art in pagan and Christian times*. London: Methuen Press, 1912
- Angelidi, Christine and Titos Papamastorakis, 'Picturing the spiritual protector: from *Blachernitissa* to *Hodegetria*'. In *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. by Maria Vassilaki, 209-24. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005
- Annals of the Four Masters. CELT: The Corpus of electronic texts online, a project of University College Cork*: <<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T100005B/index.html>> [accessed 24 July, 2011]
- Annals of Inisfallen*, trans. and ed. by Seán Mac Airt (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1951)
- Annals of Ulster (to AD 1131)*, ed. by Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983)
- Annals of Tigernach. CELT: The Corpus of electronic texts online, a project of University College Cork*: <<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/online/G100002/>> [accessed 24 July, 2011]
- Bannerman, John, *Studies in the History of Dalriada*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1974
- Bannerman, John, 'Comarba Coluim Cille and the relics of Columba'. *The Innes Review* 44, no. 1 (1993): 14-47
- Bhreathnach, Edel, ed. *The Kingship and Landscape of Tara*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005
- Bieler, Ludwig, ed. *Clavis Patricii II: Libri epistolarum Sancti Patricii episcopi*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1952. Reprint Dublin, 1993.
- Bieler, Ludwig, ed. and trans. *The Patrician texts in the Book of Armagh. Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979
- Bieler, Ludwig, *Ireland: harbinger of the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963
- Bigger, Francis Joseph, 'The *Dextera Dei* sculptured on the high crosses of Ireland'. *PRIA* 6 (1900-1902): 79-84
- Binchy, D.A., 'The Fair of Tailtiu and the Feast of Tara'. *Ériu* 18 (1958): 113-38
- Bolman, Elizabeth S., 'The enigmatic Coptic *Galaktotrophousa*' in *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*. In *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. by Maria Vassilaki, 13-22. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1988
- Bourke, Cormac, ed. *Studies in the cult of Saint Columba*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997

- Bourke, Cormac, ed. *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain: Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Insular art held in the Ulster Museum, Belfast, 7-11 April, 1994*. Belfast: HMSO, 1995
- Bourke, Cormac, 'A panel on the North Cross at Clonmacnoise'. *JRSAI* 116 (1986): 116-21
- Bourke, Cormac and Malcolm Fry, 'Outdoors or in? The future of Ireland's stone crosses'. *Archaeology Ireland* 3 (1989): 68-71
- Brown, Peter, *Society and the holy in late antiquity*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 192. Reprint 1989
- Brown, Raymond E., *The birth of the Messiah: A commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*. New York: Doubleday, 1993
- Byrne, Francis J., *Irish kings and high kings*. London: B.T. Batsford, 1973. Reprint, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001
- Byrne, Francis J., 'The Ireland of Saint Columba'. In *Historical Studies: Papers read to the Sixth Irish Conference of Historians. 2-5 June, 1965*, ed. by J.L. McCracken, 37-58. Belfast: Routledge and K. Paul, 1968
- Calvert, Judith, 'The Early development of high crosses and their relationship to Scottish sculpture in the ninth and tenth centuries'. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, 1978
- Cameron, Averil, 'The *Theotokos* in sixth-century Constantinople'. *Journal of Theological Studies* 29 (1978): 79-108
- Cameron, Averil, 'Images of authority: elites and icons in sixth-century Byzantium'. *Past and Present* 84 (1979): 3-35
- Carey, J., M. Herbert and K. Murray, eds. *Cín chille cúile: texts, saints and places—essays in honour of Pádraig Ó Riain*. Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 2004
- Carney, James, ed. and trans. *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 47. Dublin: Educational Co. of Ireland, 1964
- Carney, James, *The Problem of Saint Patrick*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1973
- Charles-Edwards, T.M., *Early Christian Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000
- Charles-Edwards, T.M., 'The social background to Irish *peregrinatio*'. *Celtica* 11 (1976): 43-59
- Clancy, Thomas Owen and Gilbert Márkus, eds. *Iona: the earliest poetry of a Celtic monastery*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995
- Clayton, Mary, *The cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990
- Colgrave, B. and R.A.B. Mynors, eds and trans. *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical history of the English people'*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969
- Cormack, Robin, *Painting the soul: icons, death masks, and shrouds*. London: Reaktion Books, 1997
- Crawford, Henry S., 'A descriptive list of early Irish crosses'. *JRSAI* 37 (1907): 187-239

- Crawford, Henry S., *Handbook of carved ornament from Irish monuments of the Christian period*. Dublin: Royal Society of Antiquaries in Ireland, 1926
- Crawford, Henry S., 'The Early Crosses of East and West Meath, County Meath'. *JRSAI* 56 (1926): 1-10 71-81
- Davis, Raymond, ed. and trans. *The Lives of the ninth-century Popes*. Translated Texts for Historians, Latin Series 5. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995
- Deevy, Mary B., 'The three wise men and medieval Ireland'. *Archaeology Ireland* 12 (1998): 30–31
- de Paor, Liam, *Ireland and Early Europe*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997.
- de Paor, Liam, *Saint Patrick's world: The Christian culture of Ireland's apostolic age*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1993
- de Paor, Liam, 'The high crosses of Tech Theille (Tihilly), Kinitty and related sculpture'. In *Figures from the Past: studies on figurative art in Christian Ireland: in honour of Helen M. Roe*, ed. by Etienne Rynne, 131-58. Dun Laoghaire: Glendale Press, for the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1987)
- de Paor, Liam, 'A grave-slab associated with the high cross at Durrow'. In *Dublin and beyond the pale: Studies in honour of Patrick Healy*, ed. by Conleth Manning, 203-05. Dublin: Wordwell in association with Rathmichael Historical Society, 1998
- de Paor, Máire and Liam de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1978
- Deshman, Robert, 'Servants of the Mother of God in Byzantine and medieval art'. *Word and Image* 5 (1989): 33-70
- Doherty, Charles, 'The use of relics in early Ireland'. In *Irland und Europa: Die Kirche im Frühmittelalter*, ed. by Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984
- Doherty, Charles, 'The cult of Saint Patrick and the politics of Armagh in the seventh century'. In *Ireland and northern France AD 600-850*, ed. by J.M. Picard, 53-94. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1991
- Dumville, David, 'Biblical apocrypha and the early Irish: a preliminary investigation'. *PRIA* 73C (1973): 299-338
- Durand, Jannic, *Byzantine Art*. Paris: Terrail, Pierre Editions, 1999
- D'Aughton, Malgorzata, 'The Kells Market Cross: Epiphany sequence reconsidered'. *Archaeology Ireland* 18, no. 1 (2004):16-19
- Eastmond, Anthony and Liz James, eds. *Icon and word: the power of images in Byzantium*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2003
- Edwards, Nancy, *The archaeology of early medieval Ireland*. London: B.T. Batsford, 1990
- Edwards, Nancy, 'An early group of crosses from the kingdom of Ossory'. *JRSAI* 113 (1983): 5-46
- Edwards, Nancy, 'The origins of the freestanding stone cross in Ireland: imitation or innovation?'. *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 32 (1985): 393–410
- Edwards, Nancy, 'Review-article: The iconography of the Irish high crosses: Carolingian influence in Ireland in the ninth century'. *Early Medieval Europe* 3 (1994): 63-71
- Etchingham, Colmán, 'The implications of *paruchia*'. *Ériu* 44 (1993): 139-62

- Etchingham, Colmán, *Church organization in Ireland AD 650 to 1000*. Kildare: Laigin Publications, 1999
- Fatouros, Georgios, ed. *Theodori Studitae Epistulae*. 2 vols. Berlin and New York: Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, 1992
- Ferreiro, Alberto, *Simon Magus in patristic, medieval and early modern traditions*. ed. by Robert J. Bast. Studies in the History of Christian Traditions Series 125. Leiden: Brill, 2005
- FitzPatrick, Elizabeth, 'Raiding and warring in monastic Ireland'. *History Ireland* 1, no. 3 (1993): 13-18
- Flower, Robin, 'Irish high crosses'. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17 (1954): 87-97
- Follett, Westley, *Céli Dé in Ireland: monastic writing and identity in the Early Middle Ages*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006
- Gambero, Luigi *Mary and the fathers of the church: the Blessed Virgin Mary in patristic thought*, trans. by Thomas Buffer. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999
- Geary, Patrick, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of relics in the central Middle Ages*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990
- Gelly, Mary Ann, 'The Irish high cross: methods of design'. In *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain. Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Insular art held in the Ulster Museum, Belfast, 7-11 April 1994*, ed. by Cormac Bourke, 157-66. Belfast: HMSO, 1995
- Good, James, 'The Mariology of the early Irish church'. *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 100 (1963): 73-79
- Good, James, 'The Mariology of the Blathmac poems'. *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 104 (1965): 1-7
- Goodson, Caroline J., *The Rome of Pope Paschal I: papal power, urban renovation, church rebuilding and relic translation 817-824*. Cambridge: University Press, 2010
- Hahn, Cynthia, 'Icon and narrative in the Berlin Life of Saint Lucy (Kupferstichkabinett MS. 78 A 4)'. In *The sacred image East and West*, ed. by Robert Ousterhout and Leslie Brubaker, 72-90. Urbana-Champaign: Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, 1995
- Hahn, Cynthia, *Portrayed on the heart: narrative effect in pictorial Lives of Saints from the tenth through the thirteenth century*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001
- Hamlin, Ann, 'Crosses in early Ireland: the evidence from written sources'. In *Ireland and insular art AD 500- 1200: Proceedings of a conference at University College Cork, 31 October- 3 November 1985*, ed. by Michael Ryan, 81-98. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1987
- Hamlin, Ann, 'Iona: a view from Ireland'. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 117 (1987): 17-22
- Harbison, Peter, *The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*. 3 vols. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien, 17, 1. Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 1992
- Harbison, Peter, *Ancient Irish monuments*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1997
- Harbison, Peter, *The Golden Age of Irish art: the medieval achievement 600-1200*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1999
- Harbison, Peter, *Irish high crosses with the figure sculptures explained*. Drogheda: The Boyne Valley Honey Company, 1994

- Harbison, Peter, 'The Oliver Davies Lecture: Regal (and other) patronage in Irish inscriptions of the Pre-Norman period'. *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, Third Series, 58 (1999): 43-54
- Harbison, Peter, 'A high cross base from the Rock of Cashel and a historical reconsideration of the "Ahenny Group" of crosses'. *PRIA* 93C, no. 1 (1993): 1-20
- Harbison, Peter, 'The inscriptions on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise, County Offaly'. *PRIA* 79C (1979): 177-88
- Harbison, Peter, 'Earlier Carolingian narrative iconography—ivories, manuscripts, frescoes and Irish high crosses'. *Jahrbuch des romisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz* 31 (1984): 455-71
- Harbison, Peter, 'A group of early Christian carved stone monuments in County Donegal'. In *Early medieval sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by John Higgit, 49-85. BAR British Series 152. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985
- Harbison, Peter, 'The Carolingian contribution to Irish sculpture'. In *Ireland and insular art AD 500-1200*, ed. by Michael Ryan, 105-10. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1987
- Harbison, Peter, 'An Irish stroke of European genius: Irish high crosses and the Emperor Charles the Bald'. In *Insular and Anglo-Saxon art and thought in the early medieval period*, ed. by Colum Hourihane. Publication forthcoming, expected Autumn 2011
- Hawkes, Jane, 'An iconography of identity? The cross-head from Mayo Abbey'. In *From Ireland coming: Irish art from the Early Christian to the late Gothic period and its European context*, ed. by Colum Hourihane, 261-76. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001
- Hawkes, Jane, 'Figuring salvation: an excursus into the iconography of the Iona crosses'. In *Able minds and practised hands: Scotland's early medieval sculpture in the 21st Century*, ed. by Sally M. Foster and Morag Cross, 259-75. London: Society of Medieval Archaeology 23, 2005
- Hawkes, Jane, 'Columban Virgins: iconic images of the Virgin and Child in insular sculpture'. In *Studies in the cult of Saint Columba*, ed. by Cormac Bourke, 107-35. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997
- Hawkes, Jane, 'Old Testament heroes: iconographs of insular sculpture'. In *The worm, the germ and the thorn: Pictish and related studies presented to Isabel Henderson*, ed. by David Henry, 149-58. Forfar: Pinkfoot Press, 1997
- Healy, John, 'Irish theologians—No. VI, Dúngal'. *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 3, third series (1882): 296-309
- Healy, John, 'The unfinished crosses of Kells'. *JRSAI* 21 (1890): 450-55
- Healy, John, "'The baptism of our Lord", as represented at Kells and Monasterboice'. *JRSAI* 23 (1893): 1-6
- Henderson, Isabel and George Henderson, *The art of the Picts: sculpture and metalwork in early medieval Scotland*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2004
- Henry, Françoise, *Irish high crosses*. Dublin: The Three Candles, 1964
- Henry, Françoise, *Irish art in the early Christian period (to 800 AD)*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965
- Henry, Françoise, *Irish art during the Viking invasions (800-1020 AD)*. London: Methuen, 1967

- Henry, Françoise, 'Around an inscription: the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise'. *JRSAI* 110 (1980): 36-46
- Henry, Françoise, 'A cross at Durrow (Offaly)'. *JRSAI* 93 (1963): 83-84
- Herbert, Máire and Martin McNamara, eds. *Irish biblical apocrypha: selected texts in translation*. London: T&T Clark International, 1989. Reprint 2004
- Herbert, Máire, *Iona, Kells, and Derry: the history and hagiography of the monastic familia of Columba*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988
- Herity, Michael, 'The context and date of the high crosses at Dísert Diarmada (Castledermot), Co. Kildare'. In *Figures from the Past*, ed. by Etienne Rynne, 111-30. Dun Laoghaire: Glendale Press, 1987
- Herity, Michael, *Studies in the layout, buildings and art in stone of early Irish monasteries*. London: The Pindar Press, 1995
- Herity, Michael, 'Carpet pages and Chi-Rhos: some depictions in Irish early Christian manuscripts and stone carving'. *Celtica* 21 (1990): 208-22
- Higgitt, John, 'Words and crosses: the inscribed stone cross in early medieval Britain and Ireland'. In *Early medieval sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by John Higgitt, 125-51. BAR British Series 152. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986
- Higgitt, John, 'The stone-cutter and the scriptorium: early medieval inscriptions in Britain and Ireland'. In *Epigraphik*, ed. by Walter Koch, 149-62. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990
- Hood, Alan B. E., ed. and trans. *St. Patrick: his writings and Muirchú's Life*. Chichester: Phillimore, 1978
- Horn, Walter, Jenny White Marshall and Grellan D. Rourke, *The forgotten hermitage of Skellig Michael*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990
- Hourihane, Colum, 'De camino ignis: the iconography of the Three Children in the Fiery Furnace in ninth-century Ireland'. In *From Ireland coming: Irish art from the Early Christian to the late Gothic period and its European context*, ed. by Colum Hourihane, 61-82. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001
- Hourihane, Colum, ed. *Irish art historical studies in honour of Peter Harbison*. New Jersey: Princeton University, in association with Four Courts Press, 2004
- Howlett, David, *Muirchú moccu Machthéni's 'Vita Sancti Patricii' (Life of Saint Patrick)*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006
- Hughes, Kathleen, *The Church in early Irish society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966
- Hughes, Kathleen, *Early Christian Ireland: introduction to the sources*. London: Camelot Press, 1972
- Hughes, Kathleen, 'Evidence for contacts between the Churches of the Irish and English from the Synod of Whitby to the Viking Age'. In *England before the Conquest*, ed. by Peter Clemons and Kathleen Hughes, 49-67. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971
- Hunt, John, 'The Cross of Muiredach, Monasterboice'. *JRSAI* 81, no. 1 (1951): 44-47
- International Marian Research Institute, Dayton, Ohio. Created by J.C. Tierney. Last modified Monday, 6 October, 2008 at 15:14:27 EDT by Kelly Bodner.
<<http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/questions/yq/yq162.html>>.

- James, Liz, 'The Empress and the Virgin in early Byzantium: piety, authority and devotion'. In *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. by Maria Vassilaki, 145-52. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1988
- James, M.R., *The Apocryphal New Testament: translation and notes*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924
- James, M.R., *Latin Infancy Gospels: a new text with a parallel version from Irish: edited with an Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927
- Jaski, Bart, 'The Vikings and the kingship of Tara'. *Peritia* 9 (1995): 310-53
- Jaski, Bart, *Early Irish kingship and succession*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000
- Kalavrezou, Ioli, 'Exchanging embrace: the body of salvation'. In *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. by Maria Vassilaki, 103-16. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1988
- Kelly, Dorothy, 'Irish high crosses: some evidence from the plainer examples'. *JRSAI* 116 (1986): 51-67
- Kelly, Dorothy, 'The heart of the matter: models for Irish high crosses'. *JRSAI* 121 (1991): 105-45
- Kelly, Dorothy, 'A sense of proportion: the metrical and design characteristics of some Columban high crosses'. *JRSAI* 126 (1996): 108-46
- Kelly, Dorothy, 'The Virgin and Child in Irish sculpture'. In *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain. Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Insular Art held in the Ulster Museum, Belfast, 7-11 April 1994*, ed. by Cormac Bourke, 197-204. Belfast: HMSO, 1995
- Kelly, Fergus, *A guide to Early Irish law*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988
- Kenney, James F., *The sources for the early history of Ireland: Ecclesiastical*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1929; repr. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1993
- King, Heather A., 'Late medieval Irish crosses and their European background'. In *From Ireland coming: Irish art from the Early Christian to the late Gothic period and its European context*, ed. by Colum Hourihane, 333-50. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001
- King, Heather A., ed. *Clonmacnoise Studies*, 1. Dublin: Wordwell Press, 1998
- King, Heather A., 'Late medieval crosses in County Meath c. 1470-1635'. *PRIA* 84C, no. 2 (1984): 79-115
- King, Heather A., 'A late medieval cross from Kilpatrick, Co. Westmeath'. In *Keimelia: Studies in medieval archaeology and history in memory of Tom Delaney*, ed. by Gearóid Mac Niocaill and Patrick Wallace, 67-70. Galway: Galway University Press, 1998
- King, Michael, 'Diamonds are forever: the Kilbroney cross, the Book of Kells and an early Christian symbol of the Resurrection', Down County Museum
<www.downcountymuseum.com/uploads/DiamondsareForever.doc>
[accessed 25 July 2011]
- Kitzinger, Ernst, *Studies in late antique Byzantine and medieval western art, Vol. 2*. London: The Pindar Press, 2003
- Kitzinger, Ernst, 'Interlace and icons: form and function in early insular art'. In *The age of migrating ideas: early medieval art in northern Britain and Ireland: Proceedings of the second International Conference on Insular Art held in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, 3-6 January 1991*, ed. by Michael Spearman and John Higgitt, 3-15. Edinburgh: Stroud, 1993

- Koutrakou, Nike, 'Use and abuse of the "image" of the *Theotokos* in the political life of Byzantium (with special reference to the iconoclast period'. In *Images of the Mother of God: Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. by Maria Vassilaki, 77-90. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1988
- Lacey, Brian, *The Cenél Conaill and the Donegal kingdoms AD 500-800*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006
- Lacey, Brian, *Colum Cille and the Columban tradition*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997
- Lambkin, Brian, 'Blathmac and the Céili Dé: a reappraisal'. *Celtica* 23 (1999): 132-54
- Lambkin, Brian, 'The structure of the Blathmac poems'. *Studia Celtica* 20-21 (1985/6): 69-77
- Landau, Brent, *Revelation of the Magi: the lost tale of the Wise Men's journey to Bethlehem*. New York: Harper Collins, 2010
- Lawrence, Marion, 'Maria Regina'. *The Art Bulletin* 7 (1925): 150-61
- Leveto, Paula D., 'The Marian Theme of the Frescoes in S. Maria at Castelseprio'. *The Art Bulletin* 72, no. 3 (1990): 393-413
- Lowden, John, *Early Christian and Byzantine art*. London: Phaidon Press, 1997. Reprint 2008
- Lucas, A.T., "'In the middle of two living things": Daniel or Christ?'. In *Figures from the past: studies in figurative art in Christian Ireland, in honour of Helen M. Roe*, ed. by Etienne Rynne, 92-97. Dun Laoghaire: Glendale Press for the Royal Society of Antiquaries in Ireland, 1987
- Lynch, Kevin, 'An Irish motif on a group of Early Irish high crosses?'. *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 16/17 (1996/1997): 55-76
- Macalister, R.A.S., 'The ancient inscriptions of Kells'. *JRSAI* 64 (1934): 16-21
- Macalister, R.A.S., 'Sculptured crosses in Ireland'. *The Archaeological Journal* 88 (1931): 331-32
- Macalister, R.A.S., *Muiredach, Abbot of Monasterboice, 890-923 AD: his life and surroundings*. Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1914
- Macalister, R.A.S., 'The panel representing the *Traditio Evangelii* on the Cross of Muiredach at Monasterboice'. *JRSAI* 62 (1932): 15-18
- Mac Airt, Seán, ed. *The Annals of Inisfallen (MS Rawlinson B. 503)*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1951
- Mac Airt, Seán and Gearóid Mac Niocaill, eds. *The Annals of Ulster (to AD 1131)*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983
- Mackie, Gillian, 'The San Zeno Chapel: a prayer for salvation'. *Papers of the British School at Rome* 57 (1989): 172-99
- Maclaren, Shelley, 'Seeing the whole picture: a "Madonna and Child" in the collection of the Walters Art Museum and the "Praesepe" of Santa Maria Maggiore'. *The Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 63 (2005): 15-30
- MacLean, Douglas, 'The status of the sculptor in Old-Irish law and the evidence of the crosses'. *Peritia* 9 (1995): 125-55
- MacLean, Douglas, 'Technique and contact: carpentry-constructed insular stone crosses'. In *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain. Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Insular art held in the Ulster Museum, Belfast, 7-11 April 1994*, ed. by Cormac Bourke,

- 167-75. Belfast: HMSO, 1995
- Mac Niocaill, Gearóid *Ireland before the Vikings*. The Gill History of Ireland 1. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1972
- Mason, T.H., 'The Devil as depicted on Irish high crosses'. *JRSAI* 12, no. 4 (1942): 131-35
- Mathews, Thomas F. and Norman Muller, 'Isis and Mary in early icons'. In *Images of the Mother of God: perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. by Maria Vassilaki, 3-22. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1988
- McCarthy, Daniel P., *The Irish Annals: their genesis, evolution and history*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008
- McCarthy, Daniel P., 'On the shape of the insular tonsure'. *Celtica* 24 (2003): 140-67
- McCarthy, Daniel P., 'The chronology of the Irish annals'. *PRIA* 98C (1998): 203-55
- McCarthy, Daniel P., 'The chronology of Saint Brigit of Kildare'. *Peritia* 14 (2000): 255-81
- McCarthy, Daniel P. 'The origin of the Latercus Paschal cycle of the insular Celtic churches'. *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 28 (1994): 25-49
- McCone, Kim, *Pagan past and Christian present in Early Irish literature*. Maynooth: An Sagart, 1990
- McNab, Susanne, 'Styles used in twelfth-century Irish figure sculpture'. *Peritia* 6-7 (1987-88): 265-97
- McNab, Susanne, 'Celtic antecedents to the treatment of the human figure in early Irish art'. In *From Ireland coming: Irish art from the early Christian to the late Gothic period and its European context*, ed. by Colum Hourihane, 161-82. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001
- McNamara, Martin, *The apocrypha in the Irish church*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1975
- Meehan, Bernard, *The Book of Kells: an illustrated introduction to the manuscript in Trinity College, Dublin*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1994. Reprint 1995
- Meehan, Denis, ed. *Adomnán's 'De Locis Sanctis'*. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 3. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1958
- Meeks, Wayne A., 'Simon Magus in recent research'. *Religious Studies Review* 3, no. 3 (1977): 137-42
- Mercati, Giovanni, ed. *Paschal I, Letter to Emperor Leo V (Note di letteratura biblica e Cristiana antica)*. *Studi e Testi* 5 (1905): 228-235
- Meyvaert, Paul, 'Bede and the church paintings at Wearmouth and Jarrow'. *Anglo-Saxon England* 8 (1979): 63-77
- Moss, Rachel, ed. *Making and meaning in insular art*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007
- Mulchrone, Kathleen, *Bethu Phátraic: The Tripartite Life of Patrick*. Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1939
- Nees, Lawrence, 'The colophon drawing in the Book of Mulling: a supposed Irish monastery plan and the tradition of terminal illustration in early medieval manuscripts'. *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 5 (1983): 67-91
- Nees, Lawrence, 'The iconographic program of decorated chancel barriers in the pre-iconoclastic period'. *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 46 (1983): 15-26

- Nilgen, Ursula, 'Maria Regina—*Ein politischer Kultbildtypus?*'. *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 19 (1981): 3-33
- Noble, Thomas F.X., *Images, iconoclasm, and the Carolingians*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009
- Ó Carragáin, Éamonn and Carol Neuman de Vegvar, eds. *Roma Felix: formation and reflections of medieval Rome* Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007
- O'Brien, Elizabeth, 'Contacts between Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England in the seventh century'. *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 6 (1993): 93-102
- Ó Corráin, Donnchadh, 'The Vikings in Scotland and Ireland in the ninth century'. *Peritia* 12 (1998): 296-339
- Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí, *Early medieval Ireland, 400-1200* (London: Longman Group, 1995)
- Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí, ed. *A new history of Ireland: I, Prehistoric and Early Ireland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005
- Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí, *Early Irish history and chronology*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003
- Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí, 'Early Irish annals from Easter-tables: a case restated'. *Peritia* 2 (1983): 74-86
- Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí, 'Rath Melsigi, Willibrord, and the earliest Echternach manuscripts'. *Peritia* 3 (1984): 17-49
- Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí, 'Cummianus Longus and the iconography of the apostles in early Irish literature'. In *Sages, saints and scholars: Celtic studies in honour of James Carney*, ed. by Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone, 268-79. Maynooth: Maynooth University Press, 1989
- O'Dwyer, Peter, *Céli Dé: spiritual reform in Ireland 750-900*. Dublin: Carmelite Publications, 1977
- O'Dwyer, Peter, *Mary: a history of devotion in Ireland*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1988
- O'Dwyer, Peter, *Towards a history of Irish spirituality*. Dublin: The Columba Press, 1995
- Ó Fiaich, Tomás 'The church of Armagh under lay control'. *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 5, no. 1 (1969), 75-127
- O'Leary, Aideen, 'An Irish apocryphal apostle: Muirchú's portrayal of Saint Patrick'. *Harvard Theological Review* 89, no. 3 (1996): 287-301
- O'Leary, Aideen, 'Mog Ruith and Apocalypticism in Eleventh-Century Ireland'. *The Individual in Celtic Literatures: CSANA Yearbook* 1, ed. by Joseph Falaky Nagy, 51-60. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001
- O'Loughlin, Thomas, 'The Latin version of the Scriptures in Iona in the late seventh century: the evidence from Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*', *Peritia* 8 (1994): 18-26
- O'Rahilly, Thomas F., *Early Irish history and mythology*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946
- O'Reilly, Jennifer, 'Signs of the Cross: medieval religious images and the interpretation of Scripture'. In *The history of British art, 600-1600*, ed. by Tim Ayers and David Bindman, 176-97. London: Tate Britain and the Yale Center for British Art, 2008
- O'Reilly, Jennifer, 'Early medieval text and image: the wounded and exalted Christ'. *Peritia* 6-7 (1987-88): 72-118

- O'Reilly, Jennifer, 'Patristic and insular traditions of the evangelists: exegesis and iconography'. In *Le Isole Britanniche e Roma in Età Romanobarbarica*, ed. by A.M. Luiselli Fadda and Éamonn Ó Carragáin, 49-94. Rome: Herder, 1998
- Ó Riain, Pádraig, 'A misunderstood annal: a hitherto unnoticed *cáin*'. *Celtica* 21 (1990): 561-66.
- Osbourne, John, 'Images of the Mother of God in early medieval Rome'. In *Icon and word: the power of images in Byzantium. Studies presented to Robin Cormack*, ed. by Anthony Eastmond and Liz James, 135-56. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003
- Ousterhout, Robert G. and Leslie Brubaker, eds. *The Sacred Image East and West*. Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois, 1995
- Pelikan, Jaroslav, *Mary through the centuries: her place in the history of culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996
- Pentcheva, Bissera V., *Icons and power: the mother of God in Byzantium*. University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 2006
- Picard, Jean-Michel, 'The purpose of Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*'. *Peritia* 1 (1982): 216-49
- Powell, Elinor D.U., *The high crosses of Ireland: inspirations in stone*. Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2007
- Porter, Arthur Kingsley, *The crosses and culture of Ireland*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931
- Porter, Arthur Kingsley, 'An Egyptian legend in Ireland'. *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 5 (1929): 25-38
- Pulliam, Heather, *Word and image in the Book of Kells*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006
- Redknap, Mark, Nancy Edwards, Susan Youngs, A. Lane and J. Knight, eds. *Pattern and purpose in insular art: proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Insular art, held at the National Museum and Gallery, Cardiff 3-6 September, 1998*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001
- Reeves, William, ed. *Life of Saint Columba, founder of Hy, written by Adamnán, ninth abbot of Iona*. Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1874
- Reeves, William, *The Culdees of the British Isles, as they appear in history: with an appendix of evidences*. Dublin: M.H. Gill, 1864
- Richardson, Hilary, 'Number and symbol in Early Christian Irish art'. *JRSAI* 114 (1984): 28-47
- Richardson, Hilary, 'Lozenge and *Logos*'. *Archaeology Ireland* 10, no. 2 (1996): 24-25
- Richardson, Hilary, 'The cross triumphant: high crosses in Ireland'. In *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin*, ed. by Michael Richter and Jean-Michel Picard, 112-17. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001
- Richardson, Hilary, 'The jewelled cross and its canopy'. In *From the isles of the north: early medieval art in Ireland and Britain. Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Insular art held in the Ulster Museum, Belfast, 7-11 April 1994*, ed. by Cormac Bourkem 177-86. Belfast: HMSO, 1995
- Roe, Helen M., 'The "David Cycle" in Irish art'. *JRSAI* 79, no. 1/2 (1949): 39-59
- Roe, Helen M., *Monasterboice and its monuments*. Dundalk: Louth Archaeological Society and Historical Society, 1981

- Roe, Helen M., 'The high crosses of County Louth: a photographic survey with notes on the monuments'. *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 1, no. 1 (1954): 101-14
- Roe, Helen M., 'The high crosses of County Armagh: a photographic survey with notes on the monuments'. *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 1, no. 2 (1955): 107-14
- Roe, Helen M., 'The high crosses of East Tyrone: a photographic survey with notes on the monuments'. *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 2, no. 1(1956): 79-89
- Roe, Helen M., *The high crosses of Kells*. Longford: Turner's Printing Co., 1966
- Roe, Helen M., *The high crosses of western Ossory*. Kilkenny: Kilkenny Archaeological Society, 1969
- Roe, Helen M., 'The Irish high crosses: morphology and iconography'. *JRSAI* 95 (1965): 213-26
- Rynne, Etienne, 'Ireland's earliest "Celtic" high crosses: the Ossory and related crosses'. In *Early medieval Munster: Archaeology, History and Society*, ed. by Michael A. Monk and John Sheehan, 125-37. Cork: Cork University Press, 1998
- Rubin, Miri, *Mother of God: a history of the Virgin Mary*. London: Penguin, 2009
- Rubin, Miri, *Emotion and devotion: the meaning of Mary in medieval religious cultures*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009
- Schapiro, Meyer, 'Cain's jaw-bone that did the first murder'. *The Art Bulletin* 24 (1942): 205-12
- Schiller, Gertrud, *Iconography of Christian art*, 1. London: Lund Humphries Publishers Limited, 1971
- Sharpe, Richard, 'Saint Patrick and the See of Armagh'. *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 4 (1982): 33-59
- Sharpe, Richard, 'Palaeographical considerations in the study of the Patrician documents in the Book of Armagh'. *Scriptorium* 36 (1982): 3-28
- Sharpe, Richard 'Some problems concerning the organization of the church in early medieval Ireland'. *Peritia* 3 (1984) [1986]: 230-70
- Sharpe, Richard, 'Armagh and Rome in the seventh century'. In *Irland und die Christenheit/Ireland and Christendom: Bibelstudien und Mission/The Bible and missions*, ed. by Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987
- Sharpe, Richard, *Adomnán of Iona: Life of Saint Columba*. Penguin Classics Series. London: Penguin, 1995
- Smyth, Alfred P., *Celtic Leinster: towards an historical geography of Irish civilization AD 500-1600*. Blackrock: Irish Academic Press, 1982
- Smyth, Alfred P., 'The effect of Scandinavian raiders on the English and Irish churches: a preliminary reassessment'. In *Britain and Ireland 900-1300: insular responses to medieval European change*, ed. by Brendan Smith, 1-38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999
- Smyth, Alfred P., *Warlords and holy men: Scotland AD 80-1000*. The New History of Scotland I. Baltimore: Edward Arnold, 1984; repr. Edinburgh: Edingburgh University Press, 2005
- Stalley, Roger A., 'European art and the Irish high crosses'. *PRIA* 90C (1990): 135-58
- Stalley, Roger A., *Irish high crosses*. Dublin: Town House and Country House, 1996

- Stalley, Roger A., 'Scribe and mason: the Book of Kells and the Irish high crosses'. In *The Book of Kells: proceedings of a conference at Trinity College Dublin, 6-9 September 1992*, ed. by Felicity O'Mahony, 257-65. Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1994
- Stalley, Roger A. 'Artistic identity and the Irish scripture crosses'. In *Making and meaning in insular art*, ed. by Rachel Moss, 153-66. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007
- Somerville, Orna, 'Kite-shaped brooches'. *JRSAI* 123 (1993): 59-101
- Stevenson, R.B.K., 'The chronology and relationships of some Irish and Scottish crosses'. *JRSAI* 86 (1956): 84-96
- Stevenson, R.B.K., 'Aspects of ambiguity in crosses and interlace'. *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 44-45 (1981/82): 1-27
- Stevick, Robert T., 'The coherent geometry of two Irish high crosses'. *Peritia* 14 (2000): 297-322
- Stevick, Robert T., 'The ancestry of "Coherent Geometry" in insular designing'. *JRSAI* 134 (2004): 5-32
- Stevick, Robert T., 'The shape of the Durrow cross'. *Peritia* 13 (1999): 142-53
- Stokes, Margaret, 'Celtic crosses at Castledermot'. *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society* 1 (1894): 281-85
- Stokes, Margaret, 'The holed-stone cross at Moone'. *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society* 3 (1899): 33-38
- Stokes, Margaret, 'Christian iconography in Ireland'. *The Archaeological Journal* 57 (1900): 270-86
- Stokes, Margaret, 'Notes on the high crosses of Moone, Drumcliff, Termonfechin, and Killamery', ed. by T.J. Westropp. *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* 31 (1901): 541-78
- Stokes, Margaret, *Early Christian art in Ireland*. Dublin: Chapman and Hall, 1887. Reprint 1911
- Stokes, Whitley, ed. and trans. *Félire Óengusso Céili Dé: The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*. Henry Bradshaw Society Publications 29. London: Harrison and Sons, 1905. Reprint Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1984
- Stokes, Whitley, ed. and trans. *The Tripartite Life of Patrick, with other documents relating to that saint*. 2 vols. London: HMSO, 1887. Reprint 1965
- Tanner, Norman P., ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990)
- Thunø, Erik, *Image and relic: mediating the sacred in early medieval Rome*. Rome: l'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002
- Thunø, Erik, 'Materializing the invisible in early medieval art: the mosaic of Santa Maria in Domnica in Rome'. In *Seeing the invisible in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages*, ed. by Giselle de Nie, Karl F. Morrison and Marco Mostert, 265-29. Turnhout: Brepols, 2005
- Trench-Jellicoe, Ross, 'Pictish and related harps: their form and decoration'. In *The Worm, the Germ and the Thorn: Essays on Pictish and related subjects presented to Isabel Henderson*, ed. by David Henry, 159-72. Balgavies, Forfar: Pinkfoot Press, 1997
- Trench-Jellicoe, Ross, 'A missing figure on slab fragment no. 2 from Monifeith, Angus, the a'Chill Cross, Canna, and some implications of the development of a variant form of the Virgin's hairstyle and dress in early medieval Scotland'. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries in Scotland* 129 (1999): 597-647

- Veelenturf, Kees, 'Irish high crosses and continental art: shades of iconographical ambiguity'. In *From Ireland coming: Irish art from the early Christian to the late Gothic period and its European context*, ed. by Colum Hourihane, 83-101. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001
- Verkerk, Dorothy, 'Pilgrimage *ad limina apostolorum* in Rome: Irish crosses and Early Christian sarcophagi'. In *From Ireland coming: Irish art from the Early Christian to the late Gothic period and its European context*, ed. by Colum Hourihane, 9-26. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001
- Walsh, Maura and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, eds. *Cummian's letter 'De controuersia paschali' together with a related Irish computistical tract 'De ratione computandi'*. Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Studies and Texts 86. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1988
- Werckmeister, Otto K., *Irish-northumbrische Buchmalerei des 8. Jahrhunderts und monastische Spiritualität*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967
- Werner, Martin, 'The Madonna and Child miniature in the Book of Kells'. *The Art Bulletin* 54 (1972): 1-23, 129-39
- Werner, Martin, 'On the origin of the form of the Irish high cross'. *Gesta* 29, no. 1 (1990): 98-110
- Whitelock, Dorothy, Rosamond McKitterick and David Dumville, eds. *Ireland in early mediaeval Europe: studies in memory of Kathleen Hughes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982
- Whitfield, Niamh, 'Brooch or cross?'. *Archaeology Ireland* 10, no. 1 (1996): 20-23
- Whitfield, Niamh, 'The "Tara" Brooch: An Irish emblem of status in its European context'. In *From Ireland coming: Irish art from the early Christian to the late Gothic period and its European context*, ed. by Colum Hourihane, 211-47. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001
- Wolf, Gerhard, 'Icons and sites: cult images of the Virgin in medieval Rome'. In *Images of the Mother of God: perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. by Maria Vassilaki, 23-50. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1988
- Woolf, Alex, *From Pictland to Alba 789-1070*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007
- Zanna, Paolo, ed. *Dúngal: Responsa contra Claudium. A controversy on holy images*. Per Verba 17. Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2002