Terms and Conditions of Use of Digitised Theses from Trinity College Library Dublin

Copyright statement

All material supplied by Trinity College Library is protected by copyright (under the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000 as amended) and other relevant Intellectual Property Rights. By accessing and using a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library you acknowledge that all Intellectual Property Rights in any Works supplied are the sole and exclusive property of the copyright and/or other IPR holder. Specific copyright holders may not be explicitly identified. Use of materials from other sources within a thesis should not be construed as a claim over them.

A non-exclusive, non-transferable licence is hereby granted to those using or reproducing, in whole or in part, the material for valid purposes, providing the copyright owners are acknowledged using the normal conventions. Where specific permission to use material is required, this is identified and such permission must be sought from the copyright holder or agency cited.

Liability statement

By using a Digitised Thesis, I accept that Trinity College Dublin bears no legal responsibility for the accuracy, legality or comprehensiveness of materials contained within the thesis, and that Trinity College Dublin accepts no liability for indirect, consequential, or incidental, damages or losses arising from use of the thesis for whatever reason. Information located in a thesis may be subject to specific use constraints, details of which may not be explicitly described. It is the responsibility of potential and actual users to be aware of such constraints and to abide by them. By making use of material from a digitised thesis, you accept these copyright and disclaimer provisions. Where it is brought to the attention of Trinity College Library that there may be a breach of copyright or other restraint, it is the policy to withdraw or take down access to a thesis while the issue is being resolved.

Access Agreement

By using a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library you are bound by the following Terms & Conditions. Please read them carefully.

I have read and I understand the following statement: All material supplied via a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all or part of any of a thesis is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or for educational purposes in electronic or print form providing the copyright owners are acknowledged using the normal conventions. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone. This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.
Art and Devotions to the Passion of Christ in Ireland, 1450-1650

(Volume One)

Jill Meghan Connaughton
Doctor in Philosophy, History of Art
Trinity College, Dublin
2012
Declaration Statement

I, Jill Meghan Connaughton, declare:

(a) that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university,
(b) that this thesis is entirely my own work,
(c) and, that I, Jill Meghan Connaughton, agree that the Library may lend or copy this thesis upon request. This permission covers only single copies made for study purpose, subject to normal conditions of acknowledgement.

Signed: Jill Meghan Connaughton
Summary

Passion devotion was an important element of the spiritual lives of the Irish Catholics who lived between the years 1450 and 1650. This interdisciplinary study explores the possible interpretations and uses of devotional art work related to the Passion of Christ in Ireland during this period. By not only considering the art but also elements of contemporary history, bardic poetry, and devotional literature, a deeper understanding of the meanings and uses that the devotional art of the Passion had for the people who encountered it and had it made has been developed in this study.

This thesis begins with an introduction to the topic and an overview of some of the common late medieval and early modern theological history and traditional practices, in Ireland and abroad. The major elements of Passion iconography including representations of the Crucifixion, images of Christ, the Wounds of Christ, and the role of the Virgin Mary in the Passion have all been analysed by subject to interpret the possible influences to the works, both stylistic and ideological, and to demonstrate the ways in which a contemporary viewer would have understood them. This study surveys surviving works from these periods in all mediums and materials in attempt to better understand the spread and impact of Passion iconography through out the centuries. Lastly, the various forms of iconography are looked at from the perspective of the patron, to assess their motivations for commissioning devotional art and utilizing specific imagery.

Devotional art and objects had an important place in the lives of the Irish people during the late medieval period, as well as the more turbulent period of the Reformations in Ireland. Throughout these centuries however, the Catholics of Ireland continued to patronise devotional arts, revealing themselves to be both traditional and open to innovation. Devotional prayer and ritual were elements of religion in this period that were seen as necessary for forming bonds with Christ, the Virgin Mary and the saints. Devotions to the Passion of Christ were especially popular and related to the concerns held by many relating to salvation and the afterlife. This thesis has synthesised all these factors to provide an insight into the variety, the complexity, and the centrality of the art of the Passion, and Passion devotion, in the daily lives of the people of Ireland between 1450 and 1650.
Acknowledgements

It would not have been possible to write this thesis without the support and guidance of many kind people, only some of whom it is possible to give particular mention here.

Above all, I would like to thank my husband Cillian for his great patience, enthusiastic encouragement, and loving support that he has shown at all times. My parents, in-laws, brother, and sister-in-law, all have also offered a great amount of loving support for which I cannot thank them enough.

This thesis would not have been possible without the help, support, and patience of my principal supervisor, Dr Rachel Moss, whose great wisdom and encyclopaedic knowledge helped guide me through this study. I would also like to thank, Dr Graeme Murdoch, my current supervisor for his flexibility and help in the last days. I would like to acknowledge the financial support of Trinity College, Dublin, for the award of a Postgraduate Research Studentship that provided the necessary funding for this research.

I would like to also acknowledge and thank the following people for their help, support and advice over the years: Roger Stalley and the other members of the History of Art Department; Hazel Dodge and Joseph Clarke; Raghnall Ó Floinn, Mary Cahill, Albert Siggins, Paul Mullarkey and the other members of staff at the National Museum of Ireland; Niall McKeith with the St Patrick’s College Museum of Ecclesiology; and the members of staff at the Trinity College Library and the National Library of Ireland. Thank you, also, to Dr Salvador Ryan and Dr Peter Cherry who have agreed to be the examiners of this thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank all my other family and friends, near and far, for their enthusiasm and support throughout the years. For any errors or inadequacies that may remain in this work, of course, the responsibility is entirely my own.
Table of Contents

Volume One

*List of Abbreviations* 13

*Chapter One – Introduction* 15
  - Analysing written works 19
  - Analysing the object 27
  - Portable devotional art 28
  - Fixed devotional art 28
  - Interpretations 29
  - The Reformations in Ireland 31
  - Devotion and liturgy 40
  - Devotion and patronage 41
  - Methodologies 42
  - Conclusions 45

*Chapter Two – Devotional prayer: an overview of late medieval and early modern theological history and traditional practices* 49
  - Theological history from the late medieval period 49
  - Traditional Practices 53
  - Bardic poetry 62
  - Passion devotion during Holy Week: a case study in devotional ideas and practice 63
  - Passiontide: objects and iconography 65
  - Easter sepulchre 67
  - Conclusions 75

*Chapter Three – The iconography of the Crucifixion in Ireland, 1450-1650* 77
  - History of Crucifixion iconography in Ireland 77
  - Devotional uses of Crucifixion imagery 88
List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEBO</td>
<td>Early English Books Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRSAI</td>
<td><em>Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS/MSS</td>
<td>manuscript/manuscripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLI</td>
<td>National Library of Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMI</td>
<td>National Museum of Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIA</td>
<td><em>Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIA</td>
<td>Royal Irish Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TARA</td>
<td>Trinity’s Access to Research Archive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCD</td>
<td>Trinity College Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V&amp;A Museum</td>
<td>Victoria and Albert Museum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter One - Introduction

Devotional art is defined by its form, its iconography and its functional aspects. In the strictest sense, devotional art was used as a visual focus when praying or meditating with the goal of obtaining a certain psychological state of mind.\(^1\) As this study focuses exclusively on Christian instances of devotion, such prayer in these cases was directed at Christ, the Virgin Mary, the saints and various delineations of such Christian subject matter. While this was the official purpose of devotional art, the iconography and material culture associated with the devotion could take on different meanings to different patrons and viewers. The object or image itself sometimes became what is now referred to as a cult object and was considered to have spiritual power by its physical presence. Though a line between cult objects and devotional art is sometimes drawn, that line was a blurry one and this study will consider both types of objects.

In most cases, the way in which a viewer personally interacted with an object or image cannot be absolutely known. One of the challenges of this kind of study therefore can be assessing the spiritual or psychological states of people in the past. The internal reactions or beliefs of a person are hard to quantify and are only rarely recorded to a satisfying conclusion in historical accounts. In this way, devotional images are an insight into the mental priorities of the original viewer. But they are not only that. Modern people who are bombarded by images every day are affected by those images whether consciously or subconsciously. The late medieval and early modern person would have had far fewer encounters with imagery in their day to day lives and the devotional images they saw would have therefore impacted the mental lives of the viewer in the past in a much stronger way than today's viewer might imagine.\(^2\) The patrons of devotional art were both influenced by the iconography and devotional prayer and practices they encountered and were influential in the propagation of further images that they chose for the works they commissioned. This

---


study will attempt to better demonstrate both how the patron was guided by previous works, as well as how the works they commissioned affected later devotional art in Ireland.

Margaret Miles has written that in the absence of the original worshipper the image is all that is left, but as Richard Marks points out, the other material culture of a period can add to our understanding of an image. An interdisciplinary approach has been taken in this study. In addition to the visual arts, the literature, poetry, and other historical written records of the era have been examined. Opinion concerning the ideal state of mind of the beholder and one’s reliance on images to obtain that state varied between philosophers and theologians throughout history. Such writings present today’s reader with an insight into the instruction the laity may have received and the ideas they may have considered. They provide the academic side of devotional theology. Without a background in the devotional teachings of the day the modern viewer may not as easily identify the full meanings of devotional works that were understood by their earlier viewers.

This study will focus on the transitional centuries between 1450 and 1650, a time when Ireland moved from the late medieval to the early modern period. Devotional art was being created throughout the medieval period in Ireland but judging from the surviving works and historical evidence, the mid-fifteenth century saw a new wave of devotional art-making taking place. Some new trends in devotional art forms appear to have been introduced by families rising in social status at this time. The Plunkets were one of those families and their patronage of the devotional arts will be closely examined in a case study in chapter seven of this thesis. While the Plunkets stand as an example of an eastern, Anglo-Irish family, a similar increase in devotional stone work in western Ireland among Gaelic Irish families and the wealthy merchant class began in the second half of the fifteenth century as seen in places such as the Franciscan friary in Ennis, Co. Clare, the Dominican friary at Strade, Co. Mayo, and the St Nicholas Collegiate Church in Galway City. The re-covering of reliquaries, a practice that can be seen taking place in the late fourteenth century with examples such as the Shrine of the Stowe Missal and the Shrine of St Patrick’s tooth, was a practice that also increased around the

---

second half of the fifteenth century and into the sixteenth century among Gaelic Irish families in south-west Ulster, perhaps due to a resurgent interest in hagiography. The mendicant orders began arriving in Ireland in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries but a ‘spiritual resurgence’, known as the Observant Reform, began in the fifteenth century revitalizing and strengthening the primacy of the mendicant orders in Ireland, especially the Franciscans, the Dominicans and the Augustinians. This increased presence may have in part been the impetus for the noticeable increase in devotional art production at that time.

The following two centuries saw many changes in the religious, political and social structure as the Reformation and Counter-Reformation came to Ireland. Devotional art survives during these two centuries fairly consistently in one form or another until the mid-seventeenth century. Following the Battle of Kinsale in 1641, Ireland spent over a decade in revolt and perhaps as a result, the devotional art production that continued at a fairly steady pace until then seems to have dropped off. Surviving examples of devotional art on stone tombs and gravestones as well as smaller works such as wooden ‘Penal’ crosses begin to be found again in larger numbers from the late seventeenth century. A recovery of sorts had taken place and devotional art was again in demand. The art that was being made was not so different in form but a shift had occurred in the general style of the work. While this period between the late seventeenth century and the end of the eighteenth century is full of interesting pieces, to include the work of that century in this study would be to stretch this thesis too thinly. The dip in production of devotional art that occurred in the mid-seventeenth century therefore has been judged to be an appropriate end date for this study.

There were many types of devotions in the years between 1450 and 1650, and at least equal to the number of devotions was the variety of artworks and objects that

---


represented them. To provide a summary of all devotions and associated art would require encyclopaedic volumes. For this study, the focus will be limited to analyzing art that reflects devotions to the Passion of Christ. The Passion of Christ is a central element to Christianity, representing Christ's death on the Cross, the events leading up to his death and his Resurrection. There were devotions to various aspects of the Passion developed that gained and lost popularity at times within different areas. However, devotion to the Passion could be found virtually everywhere in Christian Western Europe from the twelfth century throughout the eighteenth century, and on a lesser scale to the present day. There was no exception to this devotional enthusiasm in Ireland, as witnessed by historical written documentation and by surviving art and objects. Surviving example of devotional art of this kind can be found in Ireland from the around the end of the twelfth century, but this type of art, judging from what survives, seems to have especially grown in popularity across the country beginning in the fifteenth century, and continuing to flourish with some hiatuses through out the early modern period which followed.\(^5\)

The terms 'late medieval' and 'early modern' are flexible, meaning different things in different countries. When discussing Ireland's past in this study, however, the transition between the late medieval period ending and the early modern period beginning will be considered as taking place during the first half of the sixteenth century. The coming of the Reformation to Ireland around 1537 helps to define this transition and the Reformation and Post-Reformation period then continues for almost three centuries to the beginning of the nineteenth century, which ushered in the 'modern' period. By looking, therefore at the years between 1450 and 1650, this study will take into account the two centuries surrounding the transition in Ireland from the late medieval to the early modern period.

The utilization of image and imagination as tools in spiritual and devotional understanding was viewed in the middle ages as both necessary and dangerous. Imagination and dreams could be a force for evil, allowing demons to lead otherwise good Christians astray, or they could be a path toward a higher understanding of God. Aristole said, ‘the soul never thinks without an image’, and Augustine theorized that the ‘knowing mind’s’ ability to create cognitive images allowed the mind to know God. By the later middle ages the role of imagination in theology most commonly centred around its use in contemplating Christ’s Passion, an event that was believed to have enabled the human mind to understand spiritual truth. Beginning in the thirteenth century, a growing interest concerning theories of cognition sparked debates throughout the universities of Europe over how the power of imagination could develop and increase the potency of devotional meditation.

During the same decades, around the year 1200, a great re-orientation of religious life in Western Europe was taking place which emphasised a focus on the spiritual life and welfare of the laity. As a result, preaching became an increasingly popular form of spreading theological ideas to the laity. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, shows this marked change, requiring not only that every man and woman confess to their parish priest and take communion at least once a year, but also that bishops choose ‘suitable’ men to help them in ‘not only in the office of preaching but also in hearing confessions, and imposing penances and in other matters that pertain to the salvation of souls’. At a local level, the Fourth Lateran Council required that

---


8 Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation and Cognition in the Middle Ages*, pp. 63-64.

parish priests ensure their parishioners understand the sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the meaning of the confession and baptismal rites, the seven deadly sins and the meaning of the Creed. While secular clergy, bishops and monks, were sometimes involved in preaching, it was the orders of friars that were in a large part responsible for spreading these ideas and practices throughout Western Europe by developing a programme for preachers and preaching aids. One of the distinct literary genres to emerge from this period as a result were exemplum, which were morality stories used by preachers that drew on situations familiar laymen in their day-to-day lives in order to make the preachers’ theological teachings more relatable and memorable.10

Preaching aids had existed before the thirteenth century but the great increase in popular preaching meant that many more exemplum were being produced. Some notable examples can be cited from several of the orders of friars including the Dialogus Miraculorum compiled by the Cistercian prior of Heisterbach in the Rhineland, Caesarius (d. 1240), the collected exemplum from the sermons of the Augustinian canon, Jacques de Vitry compiled after his death c. 1240, and Martin of Poland’s Promptuarium Exemplorum (c. 1261-1279).11

Exemplum were circulating in the British Isles before the 1270s, when one of the more relevant exemplum to Ireland, the Liber Exemplorum, was assembled by an English Franciscan working in Ireland. The compiler of the Liber Exemplorum drew on many sources, including: older standard Christian works such as the Dialogues of Gregory the Great; sources closer to his own time, including 28 stories from Gerald of Wales’ Gemma Ecclesiastica; Dominican authors Jordan of Saxony and Richard


Fishacre; Irish Franciscan works such as the book of John of Kilkenny; as well as stories that he seems to have drew from his own experience. Exemplum, and especially for this study, the Liber Exemplorum, are valuable sources as they record not only the theological ideas of the day but also the ways in which these ideas, such as the importance of devotion to the Passion of Christ, were being addressed to the laity in a form that was specifically designed to appeal to their current life experiences and beliefs.

In addition to the Liber Exemplorum, other theological works would have been circulating in Ireland that promoted devotion to the Passion of Christ, often housed in the libraries of the orders of friars. Every Franciscan friary, for example, would have had a library. At the dissolution of the friaries, beginning in Ireland around 1537, many of these were destroyed or broken up, but a catalogue survives from the friary library at Youghal that was compiled at different times between 1490 and 1523. The catalogue, which is reproduced in Ó Clabaigh’s book on the Irish Franciscans, gives the titles of many books which confirm this devotion to the life of Christ and the Passion. Ó Clabaigh cites, among others, the pseudo-Bonaventuran Meditationes vitae Christi, the Vita Christi of the fourteenth-century Carthusian, Ludolph of Saxony, and two copies of Lothar of Segni’s De miseria humanae conditionis. Not only in Ireland but across Europe the Meditationes vitae Christi was a hugely influential text in the late medieval period. It ‘encouraged use of the imagination, the emotions, and the affections in meditating on the Incarnation,


Passion and Crucifixion of Christ as well as on the human condition.\textsuperscript{14} The \textit{Meditationes vitae Christi}, which described the entire life of Christ stressed that the readers were to imagine the moments of Christ’s life as if they were present at them, a central element to the practice of devotional meditation.\textsuperscript{15}

Family prayer books and manuscripts which survive from the late medieval and early modern periods also provide an insight into the ways that families were exposed to and directed in devotional prayer and can reveal the devotional interests of lay patrons. These manuscripts which were often passed down through generations were commonly a mix of official church doctrine and elements that may be considered folkloric in origin. The \textit{Leabhar Breac} was created c. 1400 most likely for the MacEgan family and is recorded as being in the family’s possession in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.\textsuperscript{16} Though the identity of the \textit{Leabhar Breac} scribe is unknown, the MacEgans were themselves a family of scribes and would have had an awareness of the devotional materials available in their area, and presumably selected those that they felt were most important or meaningful to them. Much of the material in the \textit{Leabhar Breac} is taken from the ancient manuscripts of

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{15}] For texts and translations see Sr Mary Immaculate Bodenstedt, \textit{Praying the Life of Christ: the First English Translation of the Prayers Concluding the 181 Chapters of the ‘Vita Christi’ of Ludolphus the Carthusian}, Ed. by J. Hogg, Analecta Cartusiana 15 (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universitüit Salzburg, 1973). Salvador Ryan, ‘Reign of Blood: aspects of devotion to the wounds of Christ in late medieval Gaelic Ireland,’ \textit{Irish Yearbook} (2002), pp. 137-149 (p. 138); Anne Derbes, \textit{Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy: Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levant} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 17. The term “Franciscans” as used in this thesis is a general umbrella term that includes many defined groups, such as the Order of Friars Minor, the Poor Clare Sisters and several others, that all stem from the original followers of St Francis of Assisi’s teachings. The divisions and histories of these factions are too numerous to discuss in this study.
  \item[\textsuperscript{16}] Tomáš Ó Concheanainn, ‘The Scribe of the Leabhar Breac’, \textit{Ériu} 24 (1973), pp. 64-79 (p. 65).
\end{itemize}
Clonmacnoise and Lorrha but it also includes some contemporary homiletic, hagiographic and devotional literature.\textsuperscript{17}

The \textit{Liber Flavus Fergusiorum}, by contrast, was written around 1434 by an apparently amateur scribe. While it has many identical tracts to those in the \textit{Leabhar Breac}, there are fewer homilies and a larger number of Apocryphal elements, miracle stories and Irish folklore, including the story of Conchobar Mac Nessa, a legend from the Ulster cycle. In this story Mac Nessa is an Irish king whose life and death mirrored that of Christ’s. Mac Nessa was said to be born on the same day as Christ and dies only shortly after him. Mac Nessa’s brain, which was previously wounded in battle, was said to have burst upon hearing the news of Christ’s death. The blood that poured forth acted as his baptismal anointing, and consequently it was said that Mac Nessa died as a Christian convert, allowing his soul to go to heaven.\textsuperscript{18} This story, though it might be categorised as folklore rather than devotional literature, emphasises a similar theme to other more ‘official’ Passion teachings. Blood saved MacNessa’s soul in this story which mirrors Christ’s bloodletting by which he saved all souls. In addition, though the physical consequence of Mac Nessa’s mental anguish upon hearing of Christ’s death was extreme, his deep felt empathy with Christ’s suffering made him a role model for others when contemplating the Passion. The \textit{Leabhar Breac}, which followed a more formal, traditional literary style, is perhaps more typical of the work of the professional scribe, while the \textit{Liber Flavus Fergusiorum} incorporates more of the type of popular devotional tales that would have developed within the Irish community.\textsuperscript{19}

By the mid-fifteenth century the current, popular devotional texts of the continent were being circulated in Ireland. The \textit{Meditationes Vitae Christi}, the texts of \textit{De Contemptu Mundi} and the \textit{Dialogus de Passione Christi}, which were all


\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Liber Flavus Fergusiorum}, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 O 48 a-b, part II E, fol. 9; Edward Gwynn, ‘The Manuscript known as the Liber Flavus Fergusiorum’, \textit{PRIA} 26C (1906/1907), pp. 15-41.

\textsuperscript{19} Meigs, \textit{The Reformations in Ireland}, pp. 19-20.
devotional works that emphasised lay piety and devotion, were translated into Irish in the fifteenth century and became popular in Ireland as they were on the continent.²⁰

Most of these manuscripts relate their devotional content through the written word and have few representative images. Unlike the famed early medieval Irish manuscripts, such as the Book of Kells, which interspersed written pages of text with masterly miniatures, the later medieval and early modern manuscripts produced in Ireland have fewer embellishments and often do not include any full page miniatures. The Leabhar Breac includes an image of Christ on the cross [image 1.1] placed within the right column of text on one of its folios but the manuscript is otherwise a more typical Irish example in the predominance of written its text.²¹

This does not mean that the illuminated manuscripts were unknown in Ireland. Devotional works such as Books of Hours by English and Flemish artists were making their way into Ireland during these centuries and were an influence both on the devotions and the devotional imagery of the period. The fifteenth-century Glenstal Book of Hours is one example of this kind of manuscript. It most likely was created in England possibly for a patron from the Oxford area in the last decades of the fifteenth century. Heraldic symbols found in the book suggest that it was brought to Ireland in the early modern period by the FitzGerald family who were the earls of Kildare. Though incomplete in many sections of the text, this manuscript, as was common to the medium, paired devotional prayers with devotional images in historiated initials that would have encouraged a connection between the visual and the written or spoken words.²²

Devotional topics were not only to be found in explicitly religious books. Surviving from the 1570s is the manuscript TCD MS 1440, commonly known as the Seanchas Búrcaigh. This manuscript was created for the Burke family of north Mayo and is a rare surviving example of an illustrated manuscript commissioned by Irish

²¹ Leabhar Breac, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 P 16, p. 166.
patrons from this period. Though the content of this manuscript is primarily secular, the inclusion of four devotional miniatures depicting scenes from the Passion, transformed this manuscript from a family history to an aid for personal devotion in which the owner could meditate on the Passion of Christ, which was perhaps a devotion special to the family. This combination of secular and sacred was not uncommon to the period as will be seen in other ways throughout the different mediums of Irish devotional art.

The manuscript tradition continued longer in Ireland than it did in other countries but the printed book also had its influence in Ireland. The *Book of Common Prayer* was first printed with movable type in Dublin by Humphrey Powell in 1551 but before that date printed books were already being regularly imported into Ireland from abroad. By the 1540s it appears that London was printing books specifically for the Irish market and Dublin booksellers, like James Dartas in 1545, were importing a wide range of printed materials for the Dublin market. Like the Youghal Franciscan library, lay people also began amassing libraries. The surviving list of the books from the Earl of Kildare’s library in the 1520s, and the Stanihurst’s library in Dublin in the 1570s, show that a family with means and interest could amass large quantities of printed works from around Europe if they so desired. The seventeenth century saw the influx of printed materials into Ireland intensify, whether through legal trade or illegal smuggling. The number of Catholic books in the library of Trinity College, for example, caused James Ussher to write a letter to Luke Challoner in 1612 expressing his concern over access to ‘English popish books’.

---

26 Elizabethanne Boran, ‘Reading Theology within the Community of Believers’, in *The experience of Reading: Irish Historical Perspectives*, ed. by Bernadette Cunningham and
It was not only the written word which influenced devotion, however. During the late medieval and early modern periods in Ireland the oral tradition of storytelling and bardic poetry began to be recorded in texts. This poetry, which survives from the late medieval and early modern periods in its written form, gives insight into what people would have heard as well as read, and in some instances provides further insight into the devotional leanings of the people. It is true that the bards who composed the poetry were an exceptional group among the general public. They were learned, travelled more extensively than most, and perhaps were exposed to more experiences and ideas than others. But it is also true that they composed to please an audience, and in doing so their poetry most likely would have reflected the beliefs, at least in part, of that audience. They referenced the ideas that were familiar to the Irish society at the time and in turn, they would have spread ideas through their travels. These poems can further provide context to the ideas behind the images found in the devotional art of the period and can reveal some of the qualities of the patrons of the time. Poets had a tradition of composing flattering odes to their patrons. Of the many qualities that were complimented, piety was one that was often mentioned and obviously a trait that was desirable. These poems were made to be flattering and character traits may have been exaggerated to show a patron in the most positive light. What can be drawn from the poems therefore is what the poet may have considered an ideal form of piety.

Historical records, including diaries, memoirs, letters or wills, also must be considered. These documents present current opinions and sentiments of the period both of the writers and those they encountered. In Ireland, descriptions of pilgrimages to holy wells, the performance of a ritual, or even letters complaining of perceived idolatry and superstition, let the modern reader better understand the habits of the devotee. Such research into the written documentation of the period can open

up aspects of devotional art that have not survived to modern day, whether that is due to changes in beliefs or due to the vulnerability of the materials the art was traditional made from.

The secular documents of the period, as found in collections like the Calendar of State Papers, are equally important to explore. The Plunkets, the case study family in chapter seven, along with being patrons of many devotional works, were very active in society and the government of the period. By broadening the focus to the secular aspects of the patron’s life, valuable insights to actual actions and deeds of a patron, how they were placed in society and possible social or political influences on their patronage of devotional art can be better assessed. Once the historic context of devotion is taken into account the art of the period can be more fully appreciated and further information can be understood from the analysis of the devotional artworks themselves.

Analysing the object

While function is what defines something as a devotional work, iconography and form both play roles in further understanding it. Iconography was often what became the focus of devotional attention in these objects because it provided a physical image the power to inspire devotional sentiment. Passion devotion was represented in visual art in many ways, but some iconography was more prevalent than others. This study explores some specific, regularly occurring formulas of images such as Christ on the Cross, Christ as the Man of Sorrows, or as Ecce Homo, the Instruments of the Passion and devotions that split off from the Instruments, such as Christ’s Five Wounds and Veronica’s Veil. These icons of popular devotions will be investigated both in the Irish and broader European context to fully understand what was being expressed with this art at the time of its conception.

The form of an object can often lead one to understand that work’s original function. Through the form of a work, one can understand how the viewer might have engaged with it, whether it was held, worn, approached by the viewer or revered from a distance. This study will look at a variety of forms of both portable art and fixed devotional works.
Portable devotional art

Portable devotional art came in many forms: panel paintings, small carved plaques, diptychs and statuary, crosses, books and printed paper art, and objects of personal adornment. Some examples of portable devotional works such as wooden statuary or small shrines were housed in church settings, but many portable objects were found in the home or could be worn on the body. In houses of the upper levels of society private chapels would have included small altars of such goods, while in homes of lesser means simpler objects such as small crucifixes or devotional prints may have been hung in the common room. Devotional art could also take the form of personal adornment, like devotional jewellery. In 1575, the Flemish artist, Lucas de Heere, painted a group of watercolors that he based on sketches he had made of the people he encountered in Ireland when traveling earlier in the sixteenth century; thus providing rare, early portraits of this type. In these drawings he depicts men and women of all stations of life. Both the 'noblewoman' and 'townswomen' are shown wearing pendants respectively of a cross-shape and a heart-shape. The heart could have been either a secular or a devotional symbol while the cross would almost certainly represent the Crucifixion. Besides pendants, other jewellery such as rings, brooches, reliquaries, and paternoster beads or rosaries, would have been common elements of devotional jewellery.

Fixed devotional art

Fixed devotional art can include wall paintings, tombs, memorial plaques, wayside and churchyard crosses, and other forms that were made with the idea of permanence. The actual permanence, either in sustainability or in location did not always live up to the expectation. Though often placed in public spaces, some examples are found in private residences or other private spaces. In Ireland, there are several examples of fixed devotional art from the period of this study which reflect devotions to the Passion. As in the case of personal adornment, the ornamentation of a tombstone would act as a sign of the devotions that the inhumed carried in life but that would not have been the only purpose of the iconography. With the encouragement of indulgences attached to certain iconographical images, their

inclusion in the scheme of ornamentation could indicate a wish for others to pray at the tomb or gravestone. The images provided a focus for prayer and the further incentive of indulgences, with the understanding or at least hope that some of the prayers would be offered up for those persons buried in the tomb.

By considering public devotional works, this thesis will be taking a more inclusive stance as to what is considered devotional art. Some studies define devotional art as art that is private, reasoning that private equates to personal and that devotional prayer was a personal activity. While this thesis will encompass devotional art that was available only to the individual owner or family in a private space, this was not the only way in which devotional art was viewed or created. Patrons were influenced by their community and devotional art in public forums cannot be overlooked if one is to better understand that community’s devotional outlook. The development of public devotional art was a significant element of patronage in Ireland. These public works not only present us with an idea of what images the common man or woman had available to them but also the devotional concerns and preferences of the patrons who commissioned them. These works also commonly provide valuable information concerning dating and provenance that are less often found on the small, portable, private devotional works.

Interpretations

When analyzing a devotional object, the fact that little is known concerning its history is an issue that arises frequently. However, by evaluating the known visual qualities of the object (i.e. the form and iconography), comparing it to like objects, and adding to that the written historical accounts that relate to the use of similar objects, one can provide some context to the object, and often a better understanding of the work.

A girdle, previously in the collection of the Hunt Museum in Limerick is an example. [image 1.3] In form it is an element of clothing or personal adornment, a

---

28 This belt is now reported missing from the collection but it is still listed on the museum’s online catalogue as of August 2011. For further images and a more detailed discussion of this belt, see: Ilse Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen und späten Mittelalters* (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1971), pp. 341-342, cat.no. 72.
category to which many devotional objects belong. This girdle, due to stylistic qualities, has been assigned a German provenance and may not have come to Ireland at all until the twentieth century when much of the Hunt Museum collection was acquired. While this specific example is not Irish, it is notable that Irish women wore girdles, or belts, similar to this one as a part of fashionable dress in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. 29 [images 1.4, 1.5]

Iconographically, the belt is ornamented with several images typical to devotional art. On the fifteenth-century ivory belt buckle is a bust portrait of Christ and on the ivory terminal of the belt a Virgin and Child is carved on the obverse and St Hieronymus (also known as St Jerome) on the reverse. 30 These elements alone might seem to define the object as a devotional one but one must also ask in what way this belt would function as a devotional object.

The tactile as well as the visual should be considered. There are a series of small rectangular and circular carved discs riveted to the length of the belt. The rectangular carvings secured the belt in place but the circular discs would have been left on the hanging end of the belt. As it appears (judging by the spacing of the discs) there could very well have been ten discs. Perhaps the discs acted as markers when counting prayers, as one prays decades of the rosary.

It could be that the belt was a sort of cult object. In the fifteenth century, belts referred to as “Girdles of Our Ladaye” were thought to aid a woman through her pregnancy. In some instances the belts were relics that contained a small fragment of the girdle of the Blessed Virgin. In other instances they were belts inscribed with prayers such as the ‘Magnificat’, a prayer also known as the ‘Song of Mary’. 31 Though the belief in the power of the object itself to prevent physical discomfort or death during pregnancy perhaps strays into the realm of superstition, the belief was entwined with faith in the power of the Virgin Mary, which was reflected by the

29 John Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, 1200-1600: a study of Irish tombs with notes on costume and armour, 2 vols (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1974), vol. 2, pls 138, 152.
visual and physical elements related to her. The iconography of the Hunt Museum girdle is not positioned to be regularly viewed by the wearer, but would be a symbol nonetheless of the intentions of the wearer and could indicate an intention similar to those of the ‘Girdles of Our Lady’.

Another scenario in which this girdle may have been utilised as a devotional object was as an adornment for a statue. In other areas of Europe the dressing of statuary to show devotion to a saint was quite common. While few statues survive in Ireland from this period, there is evidence that this practice also occurred here. John White, mayor of Dublin in the years 1424, 1431, and 1432 left a girdle to the statue of Our Lady in Christchurch, Dublin. The girdle, worth 20s, may have been a commissioned piece or a girdle owned by a wife or family member before it was bequeathed to the statue.\(^{32}\) White, as the patron, may have seen himself as benefiting by this donation in many ways. He would have been remembered for beautifying the image which would have provided not only a secular status boost for him and his descendants because he had the financial ability to donate such an item, but also possibly a spiritual benefit in hope that the donation would mean he would be remembered in the prayers of the parishioners. By donating this item to the church, he may have considered himself to be gaining grace through charity, a good act and an important element to salvation. White would also have probably considered the act a gift to the Virgin herself, whose favour and intercession with Christ was so important to patrons at this time.

The brief investigation of this belt has not provided one answer to the question of its use or meaning but has provided several possibilities. By both examining the physical object, in its form and iconography, and exploring the recorded functions of other similar objects, one can begin the process of understanding the context in which devotional art was made and understood during the late medieval and early modern periods.

**The Reformations in Ireland**

The two centuries between 1450 and 1650 saw political, religious and social events that affected the context that devotional practice and devotional art was

\(^{32}\) Waterton, *Pietas Mariana Britannica*, pp. 92, 268.
understood. During the Reformations some common devotional practices and the physical, devotional tools and artworks that were associated with the practices, were banned or elevated depending the confessional position one took. Some types of devotional art were suppressed in Protestant areas of Europe while they were promoted in Catholic countries. In England, images and items considered especially Catholic, including Pater nosters and rosaries, reliquaries linked to the Virgin Mary or a saint, fragments of the True Cross and Agnus Dei medallions, due to their association with the Pope, were banned.33

Ireland was an unusual case in Europe. Unlike most other countries, Ireland did not fit into the formula of *cuius regio eius religio* devised in Augsburg in 1555 whereby it was agreed that the people and their rulers would adhere to the same religion. Though the Reformation affected Catholicism greatly in England, the English regulations as they applied to Ireland had a lesser immediate impact.34 Though the reasons for this and the timing has been debated, it is generally agreed that the Protestant Reformation ultimately failed in Ireland and that Catholicism, whether through the strength of tradition or through the efforts of the Counter-Reformation, prevailed.35 The effects of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation on the people of Ireland, being political and social as well as confessional, by

---

extension, affected the context, production, and creation of devotional art during this time and so understanding the changes felt during this time is essential to this study.

In the beginning, how the Reformation affected the people of Ireland seems mostly to have depended on where one stood in society. In May of 1536, the Irish parliament passed an act which recognised Henry VIII as the head of the church of Ireland and forbade appeals to Rome. In the following year another act passed against the power of the pope, termed the bishop of Rome, began the dissolution of the monasteries. These acts met with only limited resistance. The friars were some of the most active opponents to the changes being made, along with the lower clergy who faced a threat to their way of life with little benefit in return. The upper clergy, bishops and archbishops, in many cases however, cooperated with the new directive concerning the authority of Henry VIII. Two archbishops and eight bishops in Munster along with others in the Pale and elsewhere took the Oath of Supremacy at the beginning of 1538 which recognised Henry VIII as the head of the church. Among the laity, those in the parliament and other government positions were probably the most aware of the possible ramifications of the changes being made. The suggestion that some of the monasteries were to be dissolved by Henry VIII was opposed by many of the MPs who themselves had lease holdings of monastery lands. Their opposition stemmed from fears that with the suppression of these religious houses possession of their lands could be challenged and perhaps given to the newly arriving English. Once Sir Patrick Bamewall of Turvey, Co. Meath, and his delegation were reassured of their position during a visit to Henry VIII’s court in early 1537, the members of the Irish parliament dropped their objections and the closure of the first thirteen monasteries began later that year.36

The rest of the laity did not seem to offer much in the way of great objections to the changes. Lennon supposes that they simply followed the lead of their government out of habit but especially at first, it may be that the rest of the laity would not have noticed much difference or disruption to their devotional practices. Private devotion would be very difficult to censor and the religious rituals they knew probably did not change much at first. Eamon Duffy has found that even in England where the Reformation took hold much faster and firmer, the censoring of personal

devotional materials, such as Books of Hours was done with a sparing hand which followed the letter of the law rather than the spirit. English proclamations of 1535 and 1538 demanded that the names and any images of the Pope and St Thomas Beckett be ‘erased and put out of all books’. Judging from surviving prayer books, these instructions were heeded. Devotional prayers were carefully stripped of the name of the Pope or St Thomas Becket but not of an entire prayer or indulgence associated with them, and as a result the use of the book and the practice of the devotions therein must have changed very little.37

In Ireland the enforcement of devotional changes seems to have been even less consistent though much depended on who was the authority in the area. The Pale was, of course, more closely monitored than other areas of Ireland, many of which the English had little control over. George Browne, the first Reformation Archbishop of Dublin, began enacting changes by 1538 that would have been noticeable to almost everyone in the area. Browne strove to hold his Irish clergy to the ‘New Injunctions’ that had been recently published in England. One element of these Injunctions included an end to superstitious practices and pilgrimages to shrines. As a result up to fifty shrines in the Pale were inspected and some of the most popular were destroyed. A celebrated Crucifix in the Abbey of Ballyboggan in Co. Meath, and the Baculum Jesu from Christchurch Cathedral in Dublin were taken and burned as superstitious objects. Before their destruction these two objects were revered as miracle-making objects that drew pilgrims from around Ireland to their shrines.38

The destruction of these notable shrines in the Pale has been repeatedly cited by modern historians but how significant was the destruction of these shrines at the time? Michael Carroll in his book on Irish pilgrimage and popular Catholic devotion uses this moment in history as evidence of the Irish laity’s relative disinterest in devotional imagery or ‘image cults’. Carroll argues that had devotional images or objects been an important part of the Irish lay person’s devotional concerns they would have risen up in revolt upon the implementation of these reforms. While it is

---

true, as Carroll points out, that Ireland has a sparse surviving canon of devotional art from the late medieval and early modern periods when compared to Renaissance Italy, a significant amount of devotional imagery still survives from fifteenth-century Ireland, which, as will be discussed in later chapters, was commissioned by patrons who were being influenced by the devotional trends and currents of the continent. Carroll's study of Irish holy wells is valuable but his dismissal of imagery within the devotional practices of Irish laity seems to neglect much evidence to the contrary. As this thesis will show, devotional art in Ireland was often a significant expression both of a patron's religious belief as well as their social status even after the inception of the Reformation in Ireland.

Though the named shrines do seem to have been popular and traditionally important to the local communities it may be that many of the devotional shrines, art and objects as well as the religious communities attached to chantries and fraternities were shielded from many of the reforms of this period by their wealthy lay patrons. Even the people put in charge of the reforms were not always completely dedicated to their task. The statue of the Blessed Virgin kept at the Abbey of the Canons Regular at Trim, Co. Meath was one of the popular shrines that is often named as being destroyed in the sweep of the superstitious 'idols'. Thomas Alen, in a letter to Cromwell complains that when their party, which included Archbishop Browne, William Brabazon the vice treasurer, and Cowley the master of the rolls, arrived in Trim that there was an unexpected acquittal of a Bishop and a friar accused of crimes against the king, due to the so many people 'been seche papists, ypocrites, and wurshippers of idolles'. After this Brabazon, Alen and Cowley were seemingly afraid to enter the chapel where the 'Idoll of Trym stode', as they did not wont to 'occasion the people'. The Lord Deputy Grey, who was with them as well, was the only one to enter the chapel and he seemingly did not share in the feeling that this was a superstitious idol. Alen reports that he, 'veray devoutely kne leng befor Hir, h[e]ard thre or fower masses'. The statue is often described as being burnt in that year but


40 ‘Thomas Alen to Crumwell, 20 Oct. [1538]’, *State Papers Published under the Authority of His Majesty’s Commission: King Henry the Eighth, 1830-1852*. Vol. 3: Part III: *Correspondence between the Governments of England and Ireland, 1538-1546* (London: His
some records suggest that only the jewels and gold were taken from the shrine before it was taken in by the Hamon family in whose care it survived until 1641 when it was broken up for firewood by an unbeliever.41

Though some important devotional objects were lost, others were simply moved to private hands and as long as the majority of devotional practice went undisturbed, perhaps at first it did not seem like a fight worth having. Though new reforms were filtering in, even some large public devotional rituals continued in Ireland mostly undisturbed for some years. Even in Archbishop Browne’s see, the annual pilgrimage and pattern day at the holy well at Kilmainham on Palm Sunday drew large crowds in 1538 despite, or more likely, due to the papal indulgence granted to those who assisted in the ritual. Corpus Christi day pageants continued to be performed in Dublin for at least another fifteen years and possibly for much longer in Kilkenny.42

The Reformation in England and Ireland seems on the face of it to be centred on religious belief, but like so many struggles throughout history, the ultimate motivation of power cannot be overlooked. As Europe was being divided along Catholic and Protestant lines, the removal of the Pope’s power over the Catholics of Ireland in order to ensure their loyalty to the monarch of England was a central concern of the King. Henry VIII did not wish to lose Ireland to a Catholic monarch but it was not just the King flying the flag of religion in the struggle over power. In

Majesty's Commission for State Papers, 1834) SP 60/7 f. 150, p. 120 [State Papers Online, Gale, Cengage Learning, 2011, MC4317700042]; Catriona MacLeod, ‘Some Late Medieval Wood Sculptures in Ireland’, JRSAI 77, no. 1 (1947), pp. 53-67, 121-133 (p. 54).

41 A contemporary history of affairs in Ireland from 1641 to 1652, ed. by John T. Gilbert, 3 vols (Dublin: Irish Archaeological and Celtic Society, 1879), vol. 1, p. 32; MacLeod, ‘Some Late Medieval Wood Sculptures’, p. 54; Clodagh Tait, ‘Art and the cult of the Virgin Mary in Ireland, c. 1500-1600’, in Art and Devotion in Late Medieval Ireland, ed. by Rachel Moss, Colmán Ó Clabaigh OSB, and Salvador Ryan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 163-183 (p. 174).

42 Lennon, Sixteenth-Century Ireland, p. 139; A.J. Fletcher, ‘The Civic Pageantry of Corpus Christi in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Dublin’, Irish Economic and Social History 23 (1996), pp. 73-96; ‘Notes of Particulars extracted from the Kilkenny Corporation Records relating to the Miracle Plays as performed there from the year 1580 to the year 1639’, JRSAI 6, no. 57 (1884), pp. 238-242.
1534, even before the Reformation officially came to the shores of Ireland, Thomas FitzGerald, Earl of Kildare, incorporated the calling of a sort of religious crusade into his struggle for dominance over the English crown in Ireland. This is not to say that for some the defence of the faith was not a sincere impetus to the fight. It has been noted that many priests joined FitzGerald’s rebellion as a way to protest against Henry VIII’s ecclesiastical changes. Rather, this highlights the way that religious culture was fluidly combined with political and social culture at this time in Ireland’s history.

It was not long before Counter-Reformation actions were taken in Ireland as well. The Council of Trent did not begin to meet until 1545 but the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church were concerned about Ireland and many other potentially vulnerable areas of Europe before that time. As stated above, the mendicant orders, especially the friars were notably opposed to the reforms being enacted in Ireland. Even with the suppression of the monasteries, many religious communities were sheltered by Irish patrons and so their influence must have been felt, especially in areas where they remained. The first Jesuit mission to Ireland arrived in 1542 to assess Irish religiosity, especially focusing on the Gaelic Irish areas. Their mission was focused on reconnaissance and catechising. Upon their arrival they found the local populace were well-informed and deeply entrenched Christians but too poor to support the mission. The local Irish lords, whom the Jesuits tried to connect with, would not receive the Jesuit missionaries. The Ulster lords were, at that point, cooperating with the Lord Deputy St Leger and the Jesuits’ ties to the French and Scottish monarchs would have been politically troublesome to their political arrangements. In later chapters, this study will track some of the significant events of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation in Ireland through the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century. But from these few events at the beginning of the period one can see that the Reformations in Ireland were a mix of socio-political and religious issues that would have had layered consequences and meaning for the people of Ireland.

---

43 Lennon, Sixteenth-Century Ireland, pp. 107-108.
45 Lennon, Sixteenth-Century Ireland, p. 303.
Though the political and the religious were often intertwined, this does not mean that confessional leanings dictated one's political loyalties. Political leaders, such as Thomas Cusack, held important governmental positions throughout the reigns of Henry VIII to Elizabeth I, including the reign of Queen Mary I. Though he greatly benefited from the suppression of monasteries and presented himself as a member of the Church of Ireland, memorials commissioned upon his death and his will suggest he quietly retained at least some of his Catholic beliefs. As will be seen in the case study of the Plunket family, this quiet recusancy, even among those highly appointed in the English government in Ireland, was not unusual in the sixteenth century. Even clergy often walked the dividing line. Some bishops found themselves appointed to sees by both the Pope and the English government. This arrangement seemed to highlight the diplomatic competency in some clergy while others, such as the infamous Archbishop of Cashel, Miler McGrath, gained disrepute among their communities due to their blatantly fluctuating religious affinities.

The early modern period in Ireland was a confusing period of religious, social and political upheavals not only for modern historians looking back but for the people living through the times as well. Raymond Gillespie has pointed out in several books and articles that when asked to defend their self-stated devotional beliefs the Irish laity were sometimes lacking in sound theology and doctrinal foundations. While the Irish Catholics were more often accused of superstition, Gillespie has pointed out that faith-based belief without a strong basis in apologetic theory was recorded on both sides of the confessional divide.


While modern people may read this deficit of knowledge to be a signal of ineptitude of faith it was at the time not considered such a damaging concern. The dogma of the Trinity, for example, was defined in the fourth century but it was still a difficult concept for many by the fifteenth century. In dealing with this a fifteenth-century English manuscript stated that ‘Ther shal no creature discusse or studie hou [th]at God may be thre and oon but fully bileue as al Hooli Chirche bileeueth.’ It was better to believe what the Church believes without knowing why than to disbelieve. Salvador Ryan outlines three types of believers who followed this mode of thinking: those who believed as the Church did and understood what those beliefs were and were able to explain those beliefs; those who understood the beliefs of the church, adhered to those beliefs but were unable to explain them; and those that believed in what the Church believed though they weren’t quite sure what those beliefs were.

Devotional art played a role in the understanding of lay viewers, though sometimes the result was further confusion rather than enlightenment. An image of the Trinity that became popular in the late fifteenth-century depicts the Coronation of Mary by the figures of the Trinity. The several surviving Irish examples of this type of Trinity image dating to the seventeenth-century, when considering the dominance of Mary in the composition, could be a possible source for some seventeenth-century Irish Catholics’ belief that the Trinity sometimes had four members or that the Virgin Mary was one of the three. The tenets of Trent encouraged a greater emphasis on catechism and a ban on misleading devotional imagery but images by their nature can be read in many ways. The depth of meaning given to an image could depend on many factors.

The art of devotion was not created in a bubble. Just as religion was intertwined with the social and political aspects of Irish culture, devotional

---

iconography and imagery was part of the everyday fabric of society. Because of this, political or social meanings can also be read in some of the religious iconography. The Monogram of Christ, for example, has been argued to have been used as a political marker in seventeenth-century Ireland, carved into the walls of private homes to signal their part in the Catholic resistance. That alternative meanings could be assigned to the use of familiar icons is likely, especially during a time where religion was being presented as a dividing factor within Europe and especially within the country of Ireland.

**Devotion and liturgy**

Some of the devotional practices considered in this thesis can be categorised as, or are related to, liturgical rituals. A broader definition of devotional art is useful when attempting to fully analyze the motivations of patrons and the practices of a community. While liturgical and devotional objects are often considered separately, liturgical rituals and practices were nonetheless significant elements of religion and would have had an influence on the meaning of devotional beliefs and practices, and the appearance of devotional art.

Especially in the pre-Reformation period, the understanding of liturgical rituals depended on one’s role in the performance. The clergy followed the missal, reading prayers and the gospels which in many cases may not have been heard or, when audible, may not have fully been understood by members of the congregation who did not understand Latin. The average lay person did not necessarily know or understand the meaning of all that the clergy did, but they had their own role to play in the rituals. To the laity, the liturgy was more of ‘a series of collective devotions and ritual actions’ and so it is not surprising that the rituals celebrated as part of the liturgy would in some cases influence the production and iconography of devotional art.


While in this way the liturgy and devotional prayer were connected in practice, the visual objects that were associated with these categories of religion were even more intertwined. The objects that were used during liturgical rituals were sometimes works that would also have functioned as devotional art. Alternately, important liturgical rituals may have influenced the appearance of devotional art, even when an object was not utilised in the liturgy. Belting has pointed out that conceiving of devotional works only as ‘instrument[s] of personal, non-institution piety... blocks our view of devotion images that are not only to be experienced affectively, but are to be contemplated cognitively as well, namely as the pictorial symbol of a cult or mystery of faith’. 53 By looking to the traditions in the liturgy, along with the other contextual materials, one can reveal further functions and inspirations for the surviving devotional works.

Devotion and patronage

It is important to contextualise devotional art within history but this thesis will also focus on how the art can offer insights into the beliefs and desires of the people who created it. Patrons were a critical factor in the production of devotional art in Ireland and the kinds of art they commissioned can signify the traditions held by the wider community and what influences were acting upon that community. A devotional work or group of works can indicate how traditional or innovative a patron or community was. Ireland is often described as being more traditional, anachronistic, or even insular during this period. In some ways Ireland was traditional. There are some examples of devotional iconography that are used longer in Ireland than in other areas of Europe. But what is also clear is that Ireland was not insular. Patrons such as the Plunket family were aware of trends in architecture, art, devotion and fashion as their commissioned works will show. This and other devotional art that survives in Ireland from both the pre- and post-Reformation periods, shows an awareness of current devotional trends and participation in

devotional practices that, while not always strictly orthodox, were quite normal within the context of popular devotion and certainly Christian in nature.

Devotional art can reveal how a patron wished to be identified or remembered. Establishing one's identity was important for spiritual as well as secular purposes. Sometimes this manifested in a direct portrait of the patron, as is sometimes found on some of the memorial stone tombs and crosses. By depicting themselves dressed in a certain way patrons could indicate their rank and position in society. By positioning themselves in a composition among holy figures or symbols they could indicate their spiritual beliefs. If a family had the wealth, they were able to commission works of art, great and small. Patronage was an important part, not only of the creation of devotional art, but also in the sustaining of the church in Ireland. Patrons built churches, funded clergy, commissioned and donated furnishings for the church buildings while also commissioning personal items of devotional art. Patrons were not insular in their influences. Both pre-Reformation and post-Reformation patrons commissioned works from artisans at home and abroad. After the Reformation, importing works became more difficult at times but the practice continued throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Methodologies

The study of Irish popular devotion and devotional art from the period of 1450 to 1650 is in some ways just beginning and this thesis is presented with the hope of filling some of the gaps in the current scholarship. Many historians of devotion and religion in Ireland tend to base their arguments only on written evidence, not taking into account the rich source to be found in the visual arts. While there has been interesting and valuable art historical research into areas of devotional art in Ireland, most texts have either focused on an individual work, collection or typology and only some examine a span of objects in the context of the belief systems which brought about their creation. This study focuses on one area of devotion, the Passion of Christ, but extends to works of all mediums. By taking in a cross section of works from all mediums a better idea can be garnered of what was being made and who was engaging with the ideas of devotional art. Ireland is rarely mentioned in more general studies of European devotional art. This may be because Ireland is rarely seen as contributing to the devotional attitudes of Europe and only
seen as a receiver of influence. Another reason could be that Ireland's surviving devotional works are generally made of less expensive materials or found in more humble settings than in other areas of Europe.

As with any study based on historical materials, the rate of survival is an important factor. To overcome gaps of surviving materials, this study examines not only a range of important written historical evidence but has included the study of devotional art from a variety of locations and sources. Due to Ireland's primacy in the study, special attention has been paid to devotional art surviving within the country. Fixed art in religious and secular areas are invaluable because of their permanent quality. In many cases they provide the valuable opportunity to analyze an artwork in its original physical context. The larger works more often have informative inscriptions that provide a confident date and patron to the object. This type of larger fixed object is a large part of this study but portable works that often have a lesser known history are an important aspect of devotional art and are also considered.

While small devotional works in the form of jewellery, small statues, and small icons of other countries have been the subject of many extravagant exhibitions and publications, little has been published on Ireland's equivalent objects. This is not because Ireland does not have such objects surviving, but more likely because they are more humble in material. Few are on public view in museums, which would lead one to believe that there are few examples surviving, but this is not the case. In the course of a study of pendant reliquaries, only a handful were found on display in the National Museum of Ireland, while at least thirty others were being kept in storage, few of which had been published. For the purpose of this broader study into all forms of devotional art, a further search of the registers of collections has been completed and many hours have been spent in the storage vaults of institutions in order to collect as many images and as much information about the devotional art that is, for now, hidden from the general public. This was done to help form a comprehensive, if not complete, survey of the types of devotional objects that survive today.

---

The original provenance of portable devotional art is unfortunately rarely known. One must rely on stylistic qualities to best place the pieces geographically and often chronologically. Attention has been paid to those objects in both the private and public collections of Ireland, but substantial research into devotional art abroad has also been conducted, resulting in an even wider base of artwork to inform this study. Public collections tend to have more examples of relevant art in a single place and better accessibility for the researcher. As a result more public collection pieces will be found in this study, but private collections have been investigated and represented when possible.

Even when kept in public institutions, portable objects present a challenge to the researcher. Though in some other countries these objects have been given more academic attention in modern times, most of the personal devotional objects in collections in Ireland have had little scholarly attention. Objects from the National Museum of Ireland which were donated or obtained in the last few decades have been carefully recorded with as much information as is available. Unfortunately, even when the most careful of record keeping is upheld, often the find site is the earliest provenance that can be initially assigned. The find site at least can provide a point of reference as to where the object was once was held and can allow us to imagine that, for whatever reason it was discarded, it was utilised within Ireland at an earlier date. There are some that are inscribed with a date and initials, which, while not detailed, allows for a relative date of ownership and possibly creation.

However, large parts of the collection from the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) came to be held at the museum by way of nineteenth-century antiquarians who, unfortunately for today’s researcher, were often more focused on collecting than on preserving the information on where and from whom they collected the objects. Many of these objects came to the NMI from the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) to form the beginnings of the museum’s collections.

Rev. Henry Richard Dawson was an avid collector of coins and antiquities until his death in 1842, when he bequeathed his collection to the RIA. He was a contemporary of George Petrie and like Petrie sent scouts around Ireland to seek out objects of interest. Dawson’s letters provide examples of transactions he made with people around Ireland and the ‘finds’ his colleagues procured for him. In one letter, from James Saurin of Portadown, written in February of 1837, Saurin describes a bell that is owned by the Hermon family. He describes them as ‘sweet bigoted Papists’ as
he tells of their attachment to the bell. ‘They have a superstitious love for it’ Saurin relates, ‘when a member of the family dies the Bell rings before them to the Chapel yard. This tinkling they believe will procure rest and peace for the departed spirit.

There are some characters inscribed on the Bell which they translate thus “Happy is the Hermon whom this rings before”.\(^{55}\) The Hermon family’s enduring regard for the bell made Saurin believe he would not be able to obtain it for Dawson as the family had not wished to part with it, and so wrote him of the situation. A note added later to the top of the second page of the letter re-assures the reader that Saurin was, in the end, successful, purchasing the bell for £8, surely too tempting a sum in that day to be passed up, and that it was to be found in Dawson’s collection. Other letters do not include as much detail, as they were perhaps written with the idea that Dawson was already aware of the fine points of the situations referred to, but some do mention brass crucifixes and religious medals on offer.\(^{56}\) When looking at what survives of his collection at the NMI one can see that many items like this must have gone his way.

Some of the objects that were from his collection are, through stylistic analysis, thought to have originated abroad. While it could be that Dawson collected these from outside of Ireland one must also consider the idea that they were found in Ireland or bought from Irish families before they made their way to Dawson. As already discussed, there were several ways that Irish people could acquire foreign made devotional objects and so this idea provides a plausible source for the items in Dawson’s collection, even those that appear to originate outside of Ireland.

Conclusions

In the next chapter, a brief overview of some key points in the history of devotion will be presented. This will include an overview of the origins of the practice of devotional prayer and the ways in which devotion was understood in the late medieval and early modern periods in Europe. More specifically the chapter will begin to look at how these ideas may have been understood and received in Ireland.

\(^{55}\) Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 4 B 36 (8), ‘Letters of Dean Henry Richard Dawson’.

\(^{56}\) Dublin, Royal Irish Academy. MS 4 B 36 (88), (89), (123), ‘Letters of Dean Henry Richard Dawson’.
both in theory and in practice. Chapters Three, Four, Five and Six will analyze some of the major elements of Passion iconography that survive in Ireland from between the mid-fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century. Under the broad designation of 'Passion devotion' there fell many devotions and practices which developed in the late medieval and early modern periods. In these chapters, the iconography will be explored thematically, attempting to identify how the viewer interacted with the iconography, and the objects on which it appeared, to better understand what it would have meant to the viewer. Each chapter will be divided into sections in which each type of icon will be examined in regards to the history of the image and the devotional and historical context of the images, as well as the changing appearances and possible influences on the iconography from within Ireland and from abroad. The iconography of the Passion, which includes images that are central to Christianity such as the Crucifixion, can be difficult to write about in an orderly fashion. The meanings behind the iconography were often multilayered and commonly an idea may have been expressed by more than one type of image or, just as regularly one type of image could be utilised for many purposes. In chapter seven, the Irish art and iconography that is analyzed in the previous chapters will be looked at from a different angle. The role of the patron and the motivations behind creating the devotional art that survives today will be questioned. Why the patrons selected the iconography they did and the art they commissioned reveals their concerns, both spiritual and secular.

Popular devotion in Ireland is a subject that has been discussed for decades but is only in recent years becoming clearer as scholars begin to look with fresh eyes upon the tumultuous period of the Reformations in Ireland. Devotional art and objects had an important place in the lives of the Irish community during the late medieval and early modern periods. Devotional acts, which could range from mental prayers to physical practices, was an element of religion in this period that was seen as necessary for forming bonds with Christ, the Virgin Mary and the saints. Devotions to the Passion of Christ became very popular in the late medieval period

and continued to develop throughout the early modern period, not only in Ireland but also in continental Europe. The sacred and the secular were not separate elements of life as one may think of them now. Prayer and ritual often were interspersed throughout secular activities and secular concerns were not excluded from religious activity. Devotional prayer and devotional art, though centred on belief, was subject to trends and fashion. By tracking the development of the art of Passion devotion in Ireland and the patrons who had it made, this thesis will bring a better understanding of what types of Catholicism were being practiced by the societal groups within Ireland, who participated in devotional rituals, how devotional art was utilised, and what it meant to the people who interacted with it.
Chapter Two – Devotional prayer: an overview of late medieval and early modern theological history and traditional practices

The history of devotion can be viewed from two angles: the theological writings and ideas of devotion, and the historic evidence of how the theology was put into practice by individuals or communities. Both aspects are important to understand because they informed each other.

Theological history from the late medieval period

Images played a role as an element of prayer or meditation from the Early Christian period, but in late Middle Ages a reinvigorated interest in the role of imagination and images in individual spiritual understanding took shape that influenced the devotional practices of both the clergy and the laity. As mentioned in the previous chapter, theology concerning the role of the image and imagination in devotional practices was disseminated throughout Europe primarily by the spread of the preaching programmes of the orders of friars. From the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the friars typically first settled with the ‘Norman’ or ‘Anglo-Irish’ communities before spreading to the Gaelic Irish areas. During these early years, an examination of their continental counterparts can provide an idea of the types of messages they would have been preaching to their Irish audiences.\(^{58}\)

The Order of Preachers, or Dominicans as they are more commonly known, first arrived in Ireland in 1224. They were charged with spreading the devotional practices of their founder, St Dominic, who had died only three years previously. St Dominic advocated and practised a form of devotional prayer which was recorded after his death as the ‘Nine Ways of Prayer of St Dominic’ in a book written between 1260 and 1288. The ‘ways’ included self-flagellation and prolonged meditations on images of the Crucified Christ.\(^{59}\)

---

\(^{58}\) Michelle Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages*, pp. 63-110; Ó Clabaigh, *The Friars in Ireland*.

By the end of the thirteenth century, St Thomas Aquinas’s work and teachings were being spread throughout Europe. St Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274), another Dominican theologian, addressed the issue of how a sacred image should be treated and defended the veneration of images in his work the Summa Theologica. He argued that the images were not worshipped in themselves as things ‘but as images leading us to God incarnate’. The veneration for the image did not end at the image but continued ‘on to the thing it represents’. Latria, the highest form of worship that is given to God alone, could be appropriately directed at images of Christ or even representations of Christ’s cross. Reverence directed at the image is directed at Christ himself and so he concluded that ‘the same reverence should be shown to Christ’s image as to Christ himself’.

An early history of the first Dominicans, the Vitae Fratrum, was compiled in 1260 by Gerardus de Frachet. It describes how the friars may have put some of these ideas into practice. ‘They had her [the Virgin’s] image and her Son’s in their cells, so that whether reading, or praying, or sleeping, they might cast loving glances upon them’. Each cell in the convent of Limoges was described as having ‘an image of our crucified Lord’. One brother, who was ‘vexed with grievous temptations in addition to a dangerous and painful malady,’ was said to ‘continually turn the eyes of soul and body towards it in most earnest entreaty. As his devotion increased, he began first to kiss the feet, and then, taking courage, he clasped the crucifix lovingly to his bosom.’ In this case the ‘image’ must have been a relatively small crucifix that could be held in the hands. What form the image of the Virgin and Child from the first description took is unclear. It could have been a small statue figure or a two-dimensional wall or panel painting.

A comparison could be made to a surviving Irish wall painting found in the dormitory at the Franciscan friary at Askeaton, Co Limerick. Though Askeaton was a

60 St Thomas Aquinas, St Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica, trans. by Fathers of English Dominican Province, (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1947), part 2 of 2, question 81, art. 3.
61 St Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica, part 2 of 2, question 81, art. 3.
62 St Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica, part 3, question 25, art. 3.
Franciscan friary, the wall painting may have served a similar purpose. The painting is damaged but the instruments of the passion, including the ladder, the lance, the sponge and a cudgel, can be identified painted in a rectangular frame.\(^6\) It is possible that the images were painted by the friars themselves, and as the image was in their personal quarters it is likely it was utilised for personal devotional prayer.\(^6\)

The Franciscans, like the Dominicans, were avid preachers in Ireland from the time they arrived. As mentioned in the introductory chapter a library catalogue from the late fifteenth century reveals the Franciscan library at Youghal to have been well stocked with continental texts concerning devotional practice and theory. These texts would not have been available to some through the dissemination of important tracts by the copying of them into personal prayer books of the wealthy and literate, as seen in several examples of surviving manuscripts in Ireland, such as the _Leabhar Breac_ or the _Liber Flavus Fergusiorum_. The ideas were then further spread to a greater audience through “interpreters,” such as the preaching friars, who orally communicated them to the illiterate population, as well as artists who visually did so.\(^6\)

The manuscript tradition continued in Ireland even after the advent of printing. Printed materials were largely imported into Ireland, even after printing presses were established here in the mid-sixteenth century. The two forms of text, supported by oral transmission, continued on in Ireland as important means of communication through the nineteenth century. One may assume the manuscript tradition to be a stilting anachronism that hindered the dissemination of current printed materials but the opposite was in fact true. The manuscript tradition allowed scribes to bring the foreign texts to the people of Ireland, adjusting to indigenous needs and assimilating them to the local culture. Continuing the tradition from the

---


medieval period, sixteenth-century manuscripts ‘acted as a bridge between the local community and the latest trends in international religious reform’.  

For example, the first printed Gaelic catechism was not available until after the turn of the seventeenth century but a bilingual catechism (English/Irish) was produced by Richard Creagh in 1556 titled ‘Epitome officii hominis Christiani’ that circulated widely in manuscript form. The possible source for the text was a catechism produced in the same year in Louvain. It seems that Latin or foreign language printed works were often disseminated through English and/or Irish manuscript versions in Ireland.  

The Council of Trent did little to change the ideas held in the medieval period when it came to the subject of devotional and sacred imagery, the invocation and veneration of saints, relics and images. Rather it reaffirmed and renewed the official guidelines concerning sacred art. The Tridentine Council makes direct reference to the Second Council of Nicaea and its earlier dealings with similar issues in order to emphasise that the Protestant teachings were old heresies, already dealt with by previous ecumenical councils. St Thomas Aquinas’s teachings, so popular in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Church, were specifically acknowledged during the Council as the basis for the then current theology of the Church. Accordingly, the changes in Ireland brought about by the efforts of the Counter-, or Catholic Reformation did not appear in sweeping swaths of difference. In many cases the actions of the devotional prayer of the Irish people still resembled the traditions of their ancestors but in some cases the thrust of the devotion had been directed to focus on alternate subjects.  

Printed catechisms began to be circulated in Ireland in the late sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century to encourage and promote the teaching of the Catholic Church among the Irish and in an effort to correct those traditions that had developed in Ireland that did not comply. Of those created, there were four important Irish catechisms of note: Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaíre’s catechism of Christian...  

---

70 Henning Laugerud, ‘Some remarks on the Sacredness or the Sanctity of Images’, paras 10 and 15 of 39.
doctrine (1593), Bonaventura Ó hEoghusa’s *An Teagasg Críosdaidhe* (1611 and 1614), Theobald Stapleton’s *Catechismus* (1639) and Antoin Gearnon’s *Parrthas an Anma* (1645).71

Gearnon’s catechism, which he returned to Ireland to distribute himself, was divided into sections including ‘Daily Practices’, ‘Faith’, and ‘The Tree and Clock of the Passion’. ‘Daily practice’ encouraged regular prayers throughout the day which would bring one’s mind continuously back to devotional thought as one performed one’s daily tasks. For instance, when putting on one’s shoes one was instructed to think of the nailing of Christ’s feet during the Crucifixion. The ‘Clock of the Passion’ divided the day into twenty-four meditations on the period between the Last Supper and Christ’s entombment. Each day of the week was given a meditation on the Passion event which included favourite Franciscan devotional subjects such as the Instruments of the Passion, the Seven Words of Christ from the cross, and the Seven Sorrows of Mary. This integration of the sacred into the secular was a traditional part of Irish piety and was a familiar element of medieval devotion that was continued into the early modern period.72

The Jesuit mission to Ireland began in the sixteenth century but became more of a presence in the seventeenth century. Missionaries would travel from region to region contacting first the local lords and then ministering to the general population, preaching, hearing confessions, catechising and establishing sodalities. Upon leaving the area the Jesuits would leave behind them small devotional objects with the people, free of charge, including rosaries, Agnes Dei medals and small crosses.73

**Traditional practices**

In the greater Western European area the practice of using devotional images as an aid to prayer was actively encouraged, first in monasteries and convents in the

thirteenth century, after which they quickly spread to the lay world. Creating family chapels where wealthy lay patrons could worship in their homes or in relatively private areas of churches and cathedrals became more common throughout Europe from the thirteenth century and by the mid-fifteenth century was a popular architectural feature. In some cases, portable chapels were set up for travelling dignitaries as illustrated in a miniature portraying Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy in which in a tent that has been set up for him beside the high altar in a church while mass is being celebrated. [image 2.1] In another example, James IV of Scotland and his wife Queen Margaret are depicted in miniatures within James’s own prayer book presenting an idea of how a home chapel, at least in the homes of royalty, may have been decorated.^[64, images 2.2, 2.3]

In Ireland, the royal chapel at Dublin Castle is first mentioned in 1225 though not in the context of the decoration of it, nor the specifics of devotional activity that may have been practiced in it. In 1361 however, Thomas Fitz-Maurice, Earl of Kildare who had been acting Viceroy at Dublin Castle for King Edward III, recorded the expenditures on the Castle and Royal Chapel for the previous ten years. In the document, it is recorded that ‘diverse ornam ents for said Chapel were made and purchased’ mentioning ‘one small Crucifix painting newly made for the Chapel, and also a large Crucifix painting, an image of Mary and John, and an image of the Virgin Mary’.^[65 Ferns Castle, thought to have been first built for William Marshall, first Earl of Pembroke, had a home chapel room built in the south east tower that can be dated to the second half of the thirteenth century by its elaborate windows, capitals and vaulted ceiling.^[66 Built into the walls of the chapel are two niches, one

---


small and one large. The large niche could have been employed to hold devotional statuary.

From the fourteenth century this practice seems to have become even more common and there is a noted increase in requests for dispensations by lay people in Ireland to be allowed to have portable altars and private chapels in their homes. Between 1344 and 1469 there were over one hundred requests recorded in the papal records for permission for private chapels and confessors. These requests were obviously not exclusive to royalty, but did tend to come from the members of the gentry and higher levels of society as they would be able to afford the space and financial expenditures of a private chapel and chaplains. These grants for private chapels were in theory to allow lay people to attend to their private devotions and to celebrate mass even in poor weather or ill-health but it was expected that they would still attend the public parish churches at regular times. Alicia Keppok was granted permission to hear mass in her private chapel by the Archbishop of Armagh in 1406 with the proviso that she must attend Sunday mass and festivals at her parish church. Complaints in the Papal Calendar of Letters against the owners of private chapels that they had completely ceased attending the parish church for mass shows that this agreement was not always upheld.77

Family and guild chapels were also established in churches and cathedrals and were often associated with a chantry. A chantry was a group of priests who were endowed by private individuals or families, religious guilds or fraternities, or trade and craft guilds to sing or chant masses for the dead members of the family or group. Edmund Butler, Earl of Carrick (1290-1321) for example, founded a family chantry in Gowran abbey, Co. Kildare in the early fourteenth century and chantries in Co. Louth are known to have existed from at least the twelfth century. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth century several chantry chapels were established by families like

the Plunkets of Co. Meath who with a new infusion of wealth included this feature in three newly-built churches of which they were patron. Chantry chapels were also being added to established churches at this time: at St Mary’s Church, Howth, Co. Dublin by Sir Christopher St Lawrence (c. 1460), at St Audeon’s Church, Dublin, by the FitzEustaces, at St David’s Church, Naas, Co. Kildare by the Bellews. 78

Both private chapels and chantry chapels seem to have been more prevalent among lay people of Anglo-Irish descent and in areas which were more typically ‘English’. This could signal that the trend for these devotional spaces arrived to Ireland first through England rather than other areas of the continent where such facilities were also common. That there are also several examples of Gaelic Irish families who requested dispensations for chapels and confessors during this same period reveals that the Gaelic Irish, at least in the upper levels of society, were aware of and participated in the trends of the ‘Anglo-Irish’. That so many people in Ireland applied for these permissions is on one hand a demonstration of the role of personal piety in Irish society but it must be realised that these chapels would also have been status symbols and as such were also desirable for less pious reasons. 79

In Ireland, as seen with the example in the Askeaton friar’s dormitory, religious imagery was often painted directly onto the walls of a room. Ardamullivan Castle, near Gort in Co. Galway, presents an interesting case. The castle was the home of the O’Shaughnessys, a powerful family in the area. Wall paintings have recently been uncovered in a large, second-floor chamber in the tower house that include images of St. Michael the Archangel, a St Christopher scene, a bishop in the act of blessing, and a set of scenes thought to represent the Passion of Christ, which include the Last Supper and the Pietà. [image 2.4] The function of the room at Ardamullivan and similarly painted rooms in tower houses at Ballyportry, and Urlan More, Co. Clare, has not yet been established. At Barryscourt Castle, wall paintings


79 Hall, Women in the church in medieval Ireland, p. 23-24.
survive in a room in which the remaining architectural clues would suggest was a private chapel. Other devotionally themed examples of wall paintings, however, survive in rooms that are thought to have been used for many purposes, perhaps including at times, private chapels. That paintings such as these appeared on the walls of multi-functional secular rooms of houses, suggests that this type of wall painting was a popular aspect in the homes of the elite class not only for devotional but also for decorative purposes. Like the Passion, St Michael the Archangel representing the Last Judgement, was an extremely popular figure in bardic poetry in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. That the O'Shaughnessys were able to adorn their homes with current religious and devotional iconography, would have displayed to visitors their spiritual alliances but also their ability to afford luxuries.

It is nearly impossible to know exactly how the individuals in an audience would have applied sermons, poems and other religious teachings to their individual lives. Only rarely were specific personal reactions to devotional art, prayer or ideas recorded in any great detail. One of the most emphatic examples is The Book of Margery Kempe where a lay woman dictates her personal experiences and extremely empathetic reactions regarding her Christ centric devotions. Irish crowds at sermons did sometimes react in ways that indicated fairly clearly the impact the speaker’s message had on them. On Good Friday in Carrick-on-Suir in 1605, the Jesuit Walter Wale, who frequently preached on the Passion of Christ, caused his audience to sob and wail to the point that he had to cease his preaching as he could no longer be heard. Another Jesuit, Barnaby Kearney, was refused right of passage until he was willing to hear the Confession of several cattle robbers, who after hearing his sermon in Munster were desperate to be absolved.


81 Margery Kempe, The Book of Margery Kempe, ed. by Sanford B. Meech and Hope Emily Allen (London: Oxford University Press, 1940); Edmund Hogan, Distinguished Irishmen of the sixteenth century (London: Burns and Oates, 1894), pp. 430-433; Bernadette
Reports on the spiritual practices of the Irish laity survive especially from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when missions were sent from Rome to assess the Catholic situation in Ireland. At the same time, descriptions can be found from non-Irish and/or non-Catholic observers who were inclined to make note of behaviours that seemed inappropriate or foreign to their eyes.

A Spanish man, in Ireland on an expedition aiding the Geraldines in 1581, reported that the Irish ‘are so firmly attached to the Catholic faith that they seem never to have given ear to the heretics’. He commented on private devotional practices, ‘[t]hey arise at midnight for prayer and meditation, to which some devote an entire hour, others a half an hour’, displays of public reverence, ‘[a]t the Lord’s Prayer in the Mass, they arise, and remain standing during its recital’, and their strict fasting practices. The Spanish writer was obviously sympathetic to the Irish and eager to show them in a good light. For instance, he claimed that ‘In swiftness, they equal or sometimes surpass the horses’. With this exception, he does not seem completely given over to hyperbole and one can assume an element of truth behind his claims in regards to the practices of at least some of the Irish people he encountered.

Similar behaviours had also been recorded by somewhat less sympathetic observers. A Jesuit, William Good, was stationed in Limerick in 1566 as part of the Jesuit mission to Ireland. He was an Englishman and a graduate of Oxford and his disdain of the habits of the native Irish he encountered was evident in his writing. He does however, praise those Irish who are religious for their austerity in penance and their strict fasting practices. Other practices for which he is less approving highlight an area of behaviour and belief that could be taken as superstition or as popular religion. Good notes that children were given amulets to wear around the neck that contained the beginning of St John’s Gospel and ‘a crooked nail from a horse’s hoof


History of the Catholic Archbishops of Dublin, since the Reformation, ed. by Patrick F. Moran (Dublin: James Duffy, 1864), pp. 91-92.
Traditions such as this were being recorded by Good just previous to the Council of Trent and many of them were elements of popular or traditional religion in Irish society that would be discouraged or redirected by the efforts of various religious organizations in the coming century.

Another frowned-upon tradition that is mentioned by several sixteenth-century sources is the swearing of oaths. The tradition of swearing oaths on religious objects, often relics or graves of holy people, goes back to the early medieval period in Ireland and seems to have still been in practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Good describes people swearing by ‘the Trinity, God and the saints, Patrick and Brigid, their baptism, their faith, the Church, their godfathers and their hand’ and swearing on Mass books, or by kissing crosiers or bells, presumably ones that were known as relics. A religious bardic poem by Diarmuid Mac an Bhaird included in a collection compiled in 1631 called The Book of the O’Conor Don, and Aodh Mac Aingil’s catechism, Scáthán Shacramuinte na hAithridhe (1618) warned against the act of swearing on the blood, limbs and wounds of Christ, implying that this was a regular element of oath taking as well.

Though thought blasphemous by the official church, these acts of supposed ‘superstition’, the wearing and use of charms, the saying of amuletic prayers, the swearing of oaths on religious subject matter, are nonetheless indications of the importance of religious and devotional objects, ideas and iconography in Irish society during this time. It is clear that the community understood these things to hold spiritual power even if that power was used for secular purposes. While this aspect of devotional belief may have in the past been viewed as a difference between the Irish and their more orthodox counterparts in reality, there was only a thin line which separated the two.

86 Camden, Britannia, p. 659.
George Story in his book, *A continuation of the impartial history of the wars of Ireland*, from 1693, describes finding a prayer on the body of a Jacobite Colonel Skeleton after he was taken prisoner at the siege of Limerick in 1691. The paper had a drawing of the side wound of Christ and written all around was both an explanation of the image and the benefits one would gain from carrying it on their person. Story was surprised that Colonel Skeleton would have such a paper on his person, since, as he described, ‘Colonel Skeleton was no Irishman’. He justifies this perceived inconsistency by asserting that it must have been created by ‘some poor ignorant Irish priest’ as it was made by someone who ‘understood neither English nor Latin, nor yet Common Sense’. While Story obviously disapproved of these devotional devices he does share that he knew a ‘great many of those Papers’ were ‘kept amongst them [the Irish] with a great deal of Devotion’. He also mentions that ‘In former Wars we have several Relations of such like Religious Papers found upon the Irish, with a great many Charms, and other such like Stuff’. For another example of such ‘Charms’ he singled out and transcribed one ‘remarkable’ example, found on an Irish person at the Battle of Knocknaclasby. He transcribed it as follows: ‘This is the Print of our Lady’s Foot; and whoever wears it, and says twenty Ave Marias, shall be free from Gunshot’.

George Story, like Good in his own descriptions of the ‘wild Irish,’ attributes these devotional habits to the ‘superstitions’ of the Irish. While the Irish had certain traditions and characteristics of their own, these traditions were not unfamiliar to those in England or other areas of the continent. Prayer-charms which promised protection to the devout user were often recorded in late medieval English books of hours and devotional compilations. The tradition seemed to be especially popular with soldiers and remained so. French and German soldiers were still carrying versions of this type of prayer into battle in the First World War.

This type of ‘superstition’ comes from very orthodox origins. A detail of an illustration from a thirteenth-century manuscript, the *Cántigas de Santa Maria* of

---

King Alfonso X of Castile, depicts *The sale of a Madonna*. [image 2.5] Along with the Madonna and Child being sold, several other panel paintings are on display, two others of the Virgin and Child and one of the Crucifixion. *The sale of a Madonna* image is just one of many panels in the manuscript illustrating a story. In the story, the monk who is on pilgrimage in Jerusalem purchases the icon for a woman he had met in a small town near Damascus. She had made a request for the image and he had promised to return with one for her. However, on his return journey the monk encounters several near-disasters, each time protected by the painted icon. Discovering the power of the icon, he decides to take an alternate route home by ship, in order to avoid Damascus and the woman to whom he had promised the painting. While at sea a storm forces the boat to shore and he realises that God is showing him that he should bring the icon to its rightful owner, rather than keep it for himself. By travelling in the presence of the icon, the monk taps into the power of the holy. In the fourth panel of the series, the monk is protected from wild animals and robbers by Christ who appears as a figure in the sky. Though the monk holds the image it is clearly illustrated that the power does not come directly from the image but from Christ. Though this is emphasised by Christ’s presence in figural form, there is no way around the importance of the physical icon itself. Presumably were the icon not present, then neither would Christ be, but this is not because the icon is a unique or special miraculous image. In the scene in which the monk purchases the image, it is noticeable that the seller has many copies of the Virgin and Child icon, similar to the one the monk takes with him. Presumably it is not only his icon that would have garnered such a connection with Christ. It was not a difficult task for the monk but an easily found item for him to acquire. Besides the physical availability and popularity of the icons, the story also speaks to the perceived spiritual power that was thought to be harnessed and controlled within devotional art and iconography.\(^{90}\)

Centuries later, in 1607, as Hugh O’Neill fled Ireland on a ship a similar scenario is played out. Attempting to reach Spain, the ship had been at sea ‘for thirteen days with excessive storm and dangerous bad weather’. The ship and

---

\(^{90}\) Cántigas de Santa Maria of King Alfonso X of Castile, Madrid, Escorial, Ms. T.I.1, f. 17; Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, the wise, trans. by Kathleen Kulp-Hill (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000); Bergen Henning Laugerud, ‘Some remarks on the Sacredness or the Sanctity of Images’, para. 32 of 39.
passengers are saved however when 'cross of gold which Ó Néill had, and which contained a portion of the Cross of the Crucifixion and many other relics, being put by them in the sea trailing after the ship, gave them great relief'. Though the idea that relics and iconography were portals to the holy finds its roots in the medieval period, it was still actively believed in the early modern period.

It was acceptable to believe that a golden crucifix housing many relics could perform, or at least channel, minor miracles. Considering that such objects, many which survive today in Irish collections, were viewed as valid devotional objects of significant spiritual power, it is not hard to believe that people might develop traditions attributing similar powers to other materials that seemed sufficiently connected with the holy and that were more accessible to everyone, such as prayers or lines of scripture. Besides the matter of materials, the ideas are the same.

**Bardic poetry**

Bardic poetry offers insights into the meanings and beliefs behind devotional iconography in late medieval and early modern Ireland that could be said to span the difference between devotional instruction, reported practices and the devotional art itself. Like any source, what Irish poetry reveals has its limitations and vagaries. These considerations, much like those taken when analyzing the visual arts, are primarily questions as to the dating of the works and to the understanding of whose ideas the poems express. The influence of the bardic poets was strong among Irish communities through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the bardic period, from approximately 1200 to 1600, hereditary families of poets were maintained and their work was utilised not only for entertainment but for many other elements of social discourse. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a shift occurred in the style of bardic poetry that coincided with a shift in the political structures of Ireland that can be seen as beginning in 1601 with the defeat of the Irish forces in Kinsale. Over the course of the seventeenth century, many of the educational, legal, religious and

---

economic elements that supported the bardic poets disappeared and with them went much of their traditional status and privileges.\(^{92}\)

Bardic poetry has been shown to be very conservative in language but this conservatism did not prevent the poets from steadily incorporating the new and innovative forms of devotion that arose in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries into their religious poetry. Their poetry reveals specific awareness of popular devotional texts and new devotional cults, such as the cult of the Five Wounds, as they arrived in Ireland. The treatment in bardic poetry of the Passion of Christ specifically can be seen to change as important continental texts such as the *Meditationes Vita Christi*, the *Liber de Passione Christi*, and the *Vita Rhythmica* were translated into Irish in the fifteenth century. Though this thesis is primarily focused upon the visual arts, it would be incomplete without taking into account Irish bardic poetry in the evaluation of the devotional art of the period.\(^{93}\)

**Passion devotion during Holy Week: a case study in devotional ideas and practice**

Holy week saw many devotional and liturgical traditions taking place in late medieval Europe. Fifteenth-century Ireland was no exception and the Irish took part in rituals, commemorations and dramatic re-enactments as part of their Holy Week traditions. These annual practices were conducted both as part of the liturgy in the church and as non-institutional devotional rituals.

The liturgical traditions of Holy week in pre-Reformation Europe are fairly well recorded through rubrics and missals that survive from that time. The rituals were dramatic, involving actions that symbolised different events of the Passion, as well as re-enactments that involved participants acting out scenes of the Passion.


Different places had their specific customs but after comparing medieval rubrics from Rome, several areas of France, Spain, England, Wales and Scotland it has been found that a general set of common traditions were followed. Perhaps because the traditions were required of every parish, they became an ingrained element of popular piety and even in some places in England are recorded to have continued at least until the second year of Edward VI’s reign. From some surviving documents and surviving objects many of the traditions as seen in areas of late medieval Europe were also being performed in parts of Ireland during the time in which focus of this study begins, the mid-fifteenth century.

One of the rituals was the Adoration of the Cross. This ritual was spread over several days. On Good Friday, a veiled crucifix would be presented to the congregation after the Gospel of St John had been solemnly read. The crucifix would be unveiled in three stages as the priests sang, ‘Behold the wood of the cross, on which hung the saviour of the world. Come, let us worship’. When the crucifix was unveiled, the priests and congregation ‘crept to the cross,’ barefoot and on their knees, and kissed the foot of the cross. After the liturgy the cross was re-veiled and placed in the Easter Sepulchre along with a pyx or monstrance holding consecrated hosts. In doing this, both the crucifix, as the image of Christ in his sacrifice, and the Eucharistic hosts, which after their consecration were considered the actual body of Christ, were symbolically buried in the Sepulchre to represent Christ’s entombment. The sepulchre was censed, candles were lit and placed in the sepulchre, and a continuous vigil was kept before the sepulchre to protect its contents, which were valuable in both a secular and spiritual sense. This vigil continued until very early on the morning of Easter Sunday when the crucifix and hosts were raised from the sepulchre both solemnly and triumphantly representing the Resurrection of Christ. The pyx and crucifix were placed on an altar and in some cases the objects were once more venerated by people creeping towards them.

---


Later in the Easter Sunday liturgy, the interaction with the Easter Sepulchre that formed the core of the Adoration of the Cross ritual continued with a Latin-liturgical drama known as the *Visitatio sepulchri*. After the *Elevatio crucis et hostie* ritual, the dramatization takes place in which the ‘Three Marys’ seek out the sepulchre and find it empty. An angel or angels are there to instruct them to announce that Christ has risen. Two manuscripts survive which were written for, or at least owned by, the church of St John the Evangelist in Dublin in the fifteenth century which contain the *Visitatio sepulchri* play. The presence of the play in these manuscripts does not unequivocally prove that the play was performed in Dublin but it should be noted that both manuscripts show clear signs of extensive use through their wear. This combined with the commonality of the play’s performance in other areas of Europe would suggest that here too the play was part of the Easter liturgical tradition. The manuscripts are most closely related to works from Chester, a port with important trading links to Dublin. Many Cheshire natives settled in Dublin in the later medieval period and it may have been the influence of their traditions and ways of speech that shows through in the manuscript copies of the play.\(^7\)

**Passiontide: Objects and Iconography**

The objects used during these rituals and performances were important elements to the liturgical/devotional practices. In general, as has been described, a crucifix and pyx were required during the rituals. In some places these elements varied. The use of a pyx was in line with Sarum use and is found in most rubrics in England and Scotland. The ceremony in the office of Rome, which seems to have been followed more typically on the continent, describes how a monstrance was used instead of a pyx to hold the sacrament. In some places in England, another type of plate was used to display the host. While in Durham, the Cathedral of Lincoln, and

---

Wells Cathedral, statues of the Resurrected Christ were used. These statues are described as holding the hosts in a crystal covered space in the breast of the figure.\(^98\)

In Ireland, there are no such surviving statues but there are several altar and processional crucifixes, as well as some pyxes and monstrances that date from the late medieval and early modern period. These items would have had many other functions beyond the possible inclusion in Passiontide rituals and so can not be identified as being related specifically to these rituals.\(^99\)

Iconography on some grave slabs does suggest a reference to the practice of the veiling of the cross. Cross slabs have been a motif in Irish burial imagery from the early medieval period. In some later sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century examples, such as the tomb slab of Denis Felan (1577) in St Mary’s church, New Ross, Co. Wexford, the Pembrock family floor slab (c. 1590) in St Canice’s Cathedral, and the Ledger Slab for Robert Felane and his wife (1607) in St Patrick’s church, Kilkenny, streamers or bands are carved that appear to drape around and hang parallel to the shaft of the cross. [images 2.6, 2.7, 2.8] The space of the stone carved bands on the grave slabs was used for commemorative inscriptions. It would not have been surprising if the linen that veiled the crucifixes would have been donated by parishioners, and perhaps even embroidered with the names of those donors. This iconography included on these grave slabs is unusual and may be unique to Ireland. While it is not known if it explicitly refers to the veiling ceremony of Easter it does seem credible. If this is the case, the late date of the slabs would suggest a continuation of the ceremony long after the Reformation.\(^100\)

\(^98\) Heales, ‘Easter Sepulchre’, pp. 269-270; Christopher Hunter, *Durham Cathedral, as it was before the dissolution of the monastery; containing an account of the rites, customs and ceremonies used therein* (Durham: printed by J. Ross for Mrs. Waghorn, 1733), p. 17.


\(^100\) Paul Cockerham and Amy Louise Harris, ‘Kilkenny Funeral Monuments 1500-1600: A statistical and analytical account’, *PRIA* 101C, no. 5 (2001), pp. 135-188 (pp. 150, 154); Paul Cockerham, ‘My body to be buried in my owne monument': the social and religious context of Co. Kilkenny funeral monuments’, *PRIA* 109C (2009), pp. 239-365 (pp. 240-241, 255).
Easter sepulchre

The Easter sepulchre was central to these rituals, representing the saving power of Christ’s Passion, death on the cross and Resurrection, as well as emphasising the doctrine of the Eucharist. Perhaps because of its central role within these important liturgical rituals, by the fifteenth century the Easter sepulchre was a popular focus of lay piety and devotional initiative. The Easter sepulchre could be a temporary or permanent structure. Early continental examples of permanent Easter sepulchres were typically built as replicas of the Holy Sepulchre church in Jerusalem and were built in the nave of the church, as one can see in the thirteenth century example in Magdeburg Cathedral, Germany. [image 2.9] In England, temporary Easter sepulchres were typically a large wooden box- or ‘hearse’-like structure that a person or people could stand inside as part of the liturgical drama. In England, the Easter sepulchre was more normally placed on the north wall of the chancel or choir. In some churches small niches were built into the wall of the chancel as a permanent symbol of the Easter sepulchre. This sort of permanent sepulchre niche can be seen at St Andrew’s Church in Heckington, Lincolnshire. [image 2.10] The niche is clearly identified by its surrounding iconography that appropriately includes a Resurrected Christ figure, the Three Marys, and the sleeping soldiers.101

Niche or table tombs were also commonly built in the north wall of the chancel of English churches and several references exist in English wills that show people were building their tombs in this position so that it could stand as part of the Easter Sepulchre. This idea is reinforced by the wishes of other testators who expressed a desire to be buried near the north wall of the chancel where the Easter Sepulchre would be erected. Both the Easter sepulchre niches and the dual-use sepulchral tombs would most likely have served as the receptacle on which the cross and pyx were placed during the Adoration of the Cross ritual, with the larger temporary wooden Sepulchre structure built around it. The wealthy patrons of these tombs were able to insinuate themselves and their families into this important annual

ritual by offering their own tomb to represent Christ's. Parishioners of less wealth contributed to the ritual by donated candles or other materials in their wills.  

The Dublin *Visitatio* plays suggest that the Easter sepulchre should be positioned on side wall of the chancel near the altar. Using the idea that Easter Sepulchres were most often found on the north wall of the chancel in English churches as the first criteria of evaluation there are several tombs surviving in Ireland that could have functioned as Easter sepulchre tombs. Tomb niches in the north wall of the chancel were found in almost every religious house in pre-Reformation Ireland and many examples of suitably positioned tombs can be found dating from the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries. [images 2.11 – 2.20] Several survive from the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, a time when the devotional enthusiasm for the ritual in England had grown, suggesting that the trend may have found a similar growth in Ireland.

In some English churches, such as John Hopton's tomb (d. 1486) in the Holy Trinity Church in Blythburgh, Suffolk, and the Clopton tomb and Easter sepulchre (c. 1490) in Long Melford, Suffolk, the tombs are not niches but arches, opening onto family chantry chapels that are positioned to the north of the chancel. [images 2.21, 2.22] Roger Martyn, a recusant and resident of Long Melford, recorded in a sixteenth-century account how he remembered the Easter Sepulchre being arranged: ‘[t]he Sepulchre being always placed and finally [sic] garnished at the North End of the High Altar, between that and Mr. Clopton’s little Chappel there, in a vacant place of the wall, I think upon a tomb of one of his ancestors: the said frame with the tapers to be set up, all along by Mr. Clopton’s Ile’.  

A sacristy, like a side chapel, could also be used for the sepulchre. In Ireland, a few places may have utilised this arrangement. A now blocked up door in the north wall of the chancel once led to a sacristy or chantry chapel in the Cashel Cathedral.

---


103 Roger Martyn, *The State of Melford Churche and of Our Ladie’s Chappel at the East Ende, as I, Roger Martin, Did Know It* was transcribed in 1692 by Nathaniel Bisbie and sometime after the original manuscript was lost. For a copy see, Sir William Parker, *The History of Long Melford* (no location: Wyman, 1873), pp. 70-73 (p. 72); Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 92-93, 200.
Some other smaller parish churches, such as St Mary’s Church in Killeen, St Nicholas’ Church in Dunsany, St Lawrences’ Church in Rathmore, and the church of St John the Baptist in Kilsharvan, all in Co. Meath and built in the fifteenth century, all had a sacristy off of the eastern part of the north wall of the chancel which could have also acted as an Easter sepulchre.104

The first thing to note when looking at possible Irish Easter sepulchre tombs as a group is that although they were built in stone and were undoubtedly constructed with the idea of permanence, their appearance or even location has not always remained as they originally were made. Some of the difficulty in assessing the iconography found on these tombs comes from the fact that the tombs have often been damaged or disassembled only to be reassembled, sometimes incorrectly, with pieces from other sculptures, or placed in new locations.

The programme of iconography on many of the tombs in the Easter sepulchre location in Irish churches does not substantially differ in appearance when compared to tombs of similar time periods found in other areas of the church. There are some examples that include iconography that would suggest a specific reference to the Passion and therefore perhaps the Easter Sepulchre’s function, but in general the iconography and form of the Easter Sepulchre tombs does not appear as a group uniquely distinct from other tombs. This would suggest that the tombs themselves were created mostly with an eye towards its year-round usage, as a commemorative monument to the person or people buried there. The added status and grace that was associated with the tomb’s role in the Easter sepulchre tradition would have been recognised by the congregation simply by its location in the church and memory of its yearly use in the ritual. Any iconography that was incorporated into the composition of the tombs would most likely have been out of sight during the actual Easter ceremonies. In England a similar array of typical tomb iconography can be found, for example, a thirteenth/fourteenth century Easter Sepulchre niche tomb that can be found in Holy Trinity Church, Bosham, West Sussex now stands with little ornament, only blank ogee-arched niches on the tomb front; an arrangement very similar to the Irish examples from these centuries. [image 2.23] John Hopton’s tomb

---

(d. 1486) in the Holy Trinity Church utilises primarily secular imagery perhaps to ensure the recognition of his family and heritage in association with the tomb. [image 2.21] The Clopton tomb (c. 1490) in Long Melford also includes heraldic ornament on the tomb front but images of the donor’s family and the Resurrected Christ are additionally painted on the vaulting above the tomb. [image 2.22] From John Clopton’s will the expected appearance of the Easter Sepulchre during yearly ritual can be ascertained from his bequests: ‘Also I will that such clothes of velwet, with all maner braunches, flowers, and all maner oder stuff that I have set abowte the sepulture at Ester … as well the grene as the red, I yefe and bequeath it alwaye to the same use of the sepulture’.¹⁰⁵ The sepulchre’s wooden structure and probably a cloth with embroidered or stained scenes from the Passion and images of the Resurrection would have been built around the tomb niche during Passiontide. Therefore, a permanent display of these images was not necessarily required for the purposes of the ritual.¹⁰⁶

Some iconography may have more regularly been included on tombs to refer the viewer to the use of the tombs during the Easter liturgy and perhaps to further encourage the viewer to direct devotional prayer towards the patrons. The most common type of iconography found on Easter sepulchre tombs in England was an image of Christ rising from the tomb much like the Resurrection panel seen on the possible Irish Easter sepulchre tomb, known as the Creagh tomb, in the Franciscan Friary in Ennis, Co. Clare. Of all the possible Easter Sepulchre tombs in Ireland this is the one that survives today with the most comprehensive display of Passion iconography. The Creagh tomb stands on the north wall of the chancel, the same position where the earlier MacMahon family tomb (c.1470) is believed to have once stood. Elements of the MacMahon tomb had been reused in the building of the

¹⁰⁵ William Hervey (d. 1567), The visitation of Suffolke, made by William Hervey, Clarenceux King of Arms, 1561: with additions from family documents, original wills, Jermyn, Davy, and other mss., &c., ed. by Joseph Jackson Howard, 2 vols (Lowestoft: Tymms, 1866), vol. 1, p. 36; Gibson, The Theater of Devotion, p. 92.

Creagh tomb including one of the only sets of carved panels depicting the Passion Cycle that survives in Ireland from the late medieval period. These stone panels depict the Arrest of Christ, the Flagellation, the Crucifixion, the Entombment and the Resurrection. The Ennis Friary panels were mostly likely commissioned by More Ní Brien, who is reputed to have erected the original MacMahon tomb. No sculptor is recorded as making the panels but because of the typically Irish use of a Labarum charged with a swastika in the Resurrection panel and the use of local limestone for the relief carvings, it is believed they were made by an Irish sculptor. Though created within the Gaelic community, the panels were very closely modelled upon English alabaster altarpieces made in Nottingham in the early fifteenth-century which were created in great numbers and regularly exported. In 1502 a large alabaster retable was donated for the high altar of the parish church in Lusk, Co. Dublin and in 1537 a similarly described retable was found in the friary of St. Augustine in Limerick. These examples show that this type of item had been imported to Ireland at least by the early sixteenth century. This suggests that the sculptor or patron of the Ennis Friary panels could reasonably have had direct knowledge of English alabaster carvings and the iconographical compositions used on them when creating the Irish panels.  

A different type of ‘Risen Christ’ icon figure is carved on another possible Irish Easter Sepulchre tomb (second half of the fifteenth-century) at the Strade Friary, Co. Mayo. [image 2.24] The Strade tomb icon differs from the more typical Resurrection scene, as found on the Creagh tomb and many of the Easter Sepulchres

in England. The Strade figure is a less narrative-specific figure without the added details of the tomb or the sleeping soldiers. By removing the narrative elements, the figure becomes a devotional image that could also invoke other devotional foci, such as the Five Wounds of Christ or the Image of Pity. The ambiguity of identification of this figure, whether it is a 'Risen Christ' image, a representation of the Five Wounds of Christ or the Man of Sorrows is a common issue when identifying these figures as will be discussed below.108

Painted iconography may have been a significant element of ornamentation on the Irish Easter sepulchre tombs that is now, for the most part, missing. The remains of polychrome decoration were seen by Hunt on the effigy tomb of King Conor na Siúdáíne Ó'Brien (c. 1300) though only an interlace pattern could be discerned. From the fifteenth century, more elaborate painted iconography survives. The Clare Island Abbey tomb (fifteenth century) and the O'Ceallaigh tomb in Abbeyknockmoy (c. 1402) both had a Crucifixion scene painted within the niches of the canopied wall tombs. In the Clare Island tomb niche, the Crucifixion is only just discernable but the O'Ceallaigh tomb Crucifixion when recorded in drawings from the late eighteenth century was much clearer and included four attendants. [image 2.25] The Crucifixion in the context of the tomb would represent Christ’s Passion and his promise of Resurrection and would have been an appropriate reminder of the Passiontide rituals.109 A carved Crucifixion scene is also found on the tomb surround on the sixteenth-century Purcell double tomb. In this instance Christ is accompanied by the figures of the Virgin Mary and St John. The Crucifixion scene, if this is its original position, is placed on the west end of the tomb surround and would have

---


faced the congregation. The Crucifixion was such a commonly used image, both in the iconography of tombs and other devotional works so while it clearly was a suitable icon to include on an Easter sepulchre tomb it would not, on its own, indicate a specific reference to the Passiontide liturgy or devotional rituals.

The painted Crucifixions on O’Ceallaigh and Clare Island tombs are just part of the painted iconographical schemes that continue in the wall space surrounding the tombs. The Clare Island wall paintings were done in two phases, the first to celebrate the creation of the founder’s tomb, probably for a member of the O’Malley family, and the second for another significant, though unknown, interment. The first phase shows a stag hunt. A hunting scene may seem secular in nature but in bardic poetry the Passion was sometimes depicted as a hunt. (Christ on the cross was the hunter and the human race was his quarry. The Gaelic Irish O’Malley family may well have been acquainted with this metaphor when commissioning the wall paintings. The second phase of painting in the chancel was made up of several elements of iconography including some more universally recognised Passion symbolism including the Pelican of Piety representing the Eucharistic elements of the Passion, and St Michael with the scales, representing the Day of Judgement, a time when all souls will be resurrected as Christ was.  

On the wall above the O’Ceallaigh tomb, a male and female figure are painted and are most likely images of the patrons of the tomb. The inclusion of patrons’ images is not unique to Irish tomb art; often carved effigies were included on the mensa slab of tombs. As mentioned above, painted images of the Clopton family appeared in the vault of their tomb. The wall paintings on the eastern half of the north wall at Abbeyknockmoy, adjacent to the tomb niche, include a depiction of the ‘The three living and the three dead kings’. The story behind these kings is not a direct reference to the Passion, rather the transitory nature of life and the inevitability of death, but the image does reference another dramatic performance, the earliest known morality play written in Dublin called The Pride of Life. The visual image of these kings was very popular in English church wall paintings, recorded in at least

twenty-six country churches, which also points to an English influence upon these Gaelic Irish patrons.\(^{111}\)

As mentioned previously, the Passiонтide rituals continued to be performed in some places in Reformation England into the 1540s, and perhaps surprisingly, in some areas of England, sepulchre tombs were not only created after England’s break with Rome but were created with more pronounced devotional iconography. [image 2.26] In Ireland, many of the tombs given as examples from the pre-Reformation period were found in friaries. In many cases after the friaries were dissolved, the orders continued to use the buildings so the ceremonies may have continued in some places with the pre-Reformation tombs in place. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Catholics in Ireland continued to bury their dead in traditional places, even in churches which had been converted to the use of the Church of Ireland or were in ruins. In some cases, it seems that later tombs or grave slabs have been placed in the significant position of a niche in the north wall of the chancel, perhaps because of its association with the Easter sepulchre. One example is a grave slab of Donat O’Suibne (c. 1577) which was inserted in a niche on the north wall of the chancel in Sligo friary. [image 2.27] This grave slab could have been placed here for reasons that have nothing to do with the Easter sepulchre tradition but the iconography on the slab does seem significant. The slab’s iconography includes two soldiers like those shown guarding Christ’s tomb, an IHS monogram which represented Christ, and the figure of St Peter, who along with St John appears in the *Visitatio* play as a herald of Christ’s Resurrection. The monogram of Christ is a significant inclusion because it also would have been recognised as a specifically Catholic symbol. It is known that the Sligo friary, through special dispensations by Elizabeth I, continued to be a place in which religious services were celebrated and because of this became a favoured choice for Catholic burial. New relics coming to the friary from the continent and an indulgenced miraculous crucifix that was housed there would have also made the

friary an important centre of Catholicism in the area. That the Easter devotional practices could have continued by the Catholic community in Sligo friary is bolstered by the evidence that civic funding appears to be given in Kilkenny city in 1588 for these traditional devotional activities. The Corporation Records for Kilkenny show that Thomas Archer, the ‘suffraine’ or sovereign of the city, authorised the town baliffe to give John Bussher funds for the ‘setting forth’ and the gloves that the ‘Maryes’ would wear, as well as 7d ‘for twoe pereles for the Sepulcre’ and 6d ‘for the Making of the Same’. Kilkenny admittedly seems to have been a more openly Catholic community in Ireland in the early modern period. The exceptional openness of these devotional traditions in the late sixteenth century in Sligo and Kilkenny may have been isolated bastions of traditional practice but perhaps the devotional sentiments and practices associated with the Easter Sepulchre continued in other areas of Ireland in the early modern period as well.

Conclusions

This chapter has begun to explore the ways in which the people of Ireland were taking part in the devotional rituals and practices that were developing in Western Europe from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. By the mid-fifteenth century, many of the devotional texts that were popular elsewhere were also circulating in Ireland and their message was being spread even further into Irish communities by the first translations of many of these significant devotional texts into Irish. Devotional ideas were clearly being spread in Ireland by the mendicant orders, especially the Franciscans, but the practices of the laity show that they were also taking active roles in the style and quality of their own devotional lives. The increasing requests for private domestic chapels and the creation of family chantry


113 ‘Notes of Particulars extracted from the Kilkenny Corporation Records relating to the Miracle Plays as performed there from the year 1580 to the year 1639’, p. 239; John D. Seymour, ‘The Early Religious Drama in Ireland’, The Irish Church Quarterly 10, no. 39 (1917), pp. 177-185 (p. 183).
chapels are clear indicators of this, as are the reports of the devotional practices and prayers that the Irish laity wove into the otherwise secular elements of daily lives, not only in the late medieval period but well into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Though an increase in the personalisation of devotion has in the past been interpreted as an act on the part of the layperson of distancing oneself from the Church, it is clear that this was not the case. As the case study has shown, communal devotional practices related to liturgical rituals were important to the layperson. This is clearly demonstrated in the case study, as seen in the desire on the part of the lay patron not only to participate in the Passiontide liturgical rituals, but, if they were able, to insinuate their own identities into the liturgical tradition. This was accomplished, as discussed above, by donations of materials to the yearly building of the Easter sepulchre, or the more lasting reminder that was created in the form of Easter sepulchre tombs. Patrons strove to incorporate themselves into communal devotional activities as well as bringing devotional prayer into their personal daily lives. In the next chapter, the iconography of Passion devotion in Ireland during the late medieval and early modern periods will be explored, beginning with what could be considered the central image of not only Passion devotion, but all of Christianity, the Crucifixion.
Chapter Three – The iconography of the Crucifixion in Ireland, 1450-1650

The Crucifixion is central to the Passion narrative and central to the very concept of Christianity. While the idea of the Crucifixion has always been important in Christianity, the way in which people viewed it has changed over time. The Crucifix and images of the Crucifixion were tied to many devotional practices and beliefs. In part, there was a great devotion to the Crucifixion itself but images of the Crucifix or a Crucifixion scene were also used to represent other branches of Passion devotion. The iconography used to visually represent the Crucifixion was altered over time to reflect the multiple layers of meaning behind the idea of the Crucifixion. Details of the imagery were in some instances added or changed to emphasise or clarify aspects of liturgical teaching or devotional practices. This section will include a brief history of the visual representation of the Crucifixion in Ireland and attempt to interpret, through visual analysis and historical contextualisation, what devotional interpretations these images may have had to the patrons and their contemporaries, and in what way the images and objects may have been utilised in devotional practice.

History of Crucifixion iconography in Ireland

The earliest Irish depictions of the Crucifixion present Christ as a living being. His suffering is often represented by the presence of Longinus and Stephaton who respectively pierce his side and offer him the vinegar, but otherwise he is shown with his eyes open, and an upright head and strong body. This was a common portrayal of the crucified Christ during the early medieval period. From the fourth to the eighth centuries a major theological concern was the duality of God and man found in Christ. The iconography was intended to represent the moment of Christ’s human death, the Crucifixion and specifically the piercing of his side, but also the ever-present divinity of his being. It was feared that by showing Christ as a dead man, his simultaneous divinity would not be evident to the viewer.114

The earliest surviving Irish Crucifixion scene is from the seventh-century Durham Gospels. [image 3.1] From the seventh through the tenth centuries there are many examples of the Crucifixion scene in Irish art found in manuscript illuminations, stone-carvings, and metalwork. The Christ figures in these examples tend to follow a specific iconographic model. Christ’s head is upright and his eyes open. He generally has long hair and a beard, though there are instances when he is clean-shaven. He has a cowl-like halo and his arms extend straight out from his body upon the arms of the cross. Christ’s feet are depicted side by side pointing down and the nails are most often visibly illustrated in his hands and feet. The side wound, interestingly, is depicted as being on the left side of Christ’s body in Irish examples, a detail that is anatomically correct but unusual. Though the Gospels do not specify on which side Christ was wounded, the side wound was more commonly depicted following the Roman tradition as being on Christ’s right side probably due to the preference of dexter over sinister held by the Romans. There are exceptions to aspects of this description within the Irish paradigm. It has been argued, for example, that the Christ figure on an early medieval Crucifixion plaque found near Athlone has his eyes closed and his head slightly inclined to represent his death. [image 3.2] Differences in details such as these do exist but for the most part the early Irish images of the Crucified Christ are consistent.115

In Ireland, Christ continued to be depicted in a long tunic through the twelfth century. [images 3.3, 3.4] The twelfth century, however, was a turning point in the iconography of the Crucified Christ. As discussed in the previous chapter, the twelfth century saw the beginning of a change in the ideas of how the Passion of Christ should be regarded and the use of imagery as devotional aids. The call for a more empathetic response to the Passion of Christ required a more physically detailed representation of the Crucified Christ, and in Passion iconography in general, that emphasised the suffering of Christ. The Romanesque style of the crucified Christ

figure can be seen in Ireland beginning in the twelfth century. Some of the Irish high crosses of the twelfth century, such as the Market Cross (c. 1150) at Tuam, Co. Galway, and the Market Cross at Glendalough, Co. Wicklow, seem to bridge the old and new styles of representations of Christ. [images 3.5, 3.6] Christ is wearing a crown like that of a king, representing his victory over death but his eyes are closed and his head is tilted, indicating he is dead. Some of these twelfth-century high crosses may have been influenced in this appearance by the famous Volto Santo crucifix in Lucca, Italy. [image 3.7] The Volto Santo crucifix was famous in the middle ages and had a cult following that extended in the late eleventh-century to England. Images of the wooden Cross in the Cathedral of San Marino may have influenced Irish patrons or artists, or perhaps Irish pilgrims even visited the site. A carving of a labyrinth on the base of the Cashel high cross strengthens the connection to the Cathedral of San Marino where a similar labyrinth is found.\footnote{Peter Harbison, ‘A Labyrinth on the Twelfth-Century High Cross Base on the Rock of Cashel, Co. Tipperary’, \textit{JRSAI} 128 (1998), pp. 107-111 (p. 109); Peter Harbison, \textit{The Crucifixion in Irish Art} (Blackrock: The Columba Press, 2000), p. 20; Jenifer Ni Ghradaigh, ‘Christ on the Cross in Early Medieval Ireland’, \textit{Archaeology Ireland} 23, no. 4 (2009), pp. 26-30 (p. 28).}

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries generally mark the beginning of the Gothic style of art in Western Europe and the rise of the mendicant orders. The images of the Crucified Christ that the artists produced became even more centred on the suffering of Christ, emphasising Christ’s sagging, emaciated body, and taking more effort in illustrating the blood coming from the Christ’s wounds. Though there were much earlier examples of devotional art that graphically depicted Christ’s bloodletting, such as an early surviving image of Christ found in an eighth-century manuscript, the Sacramentary of Gellone, and, less dramatically, the Crucifixion scene in the St Gall gospel, the violence depicted in images of Christ’s Crucifixion became more common during the rise of Gothic art.\footnote{Chazelle, \textit{The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era}, pp. 75-131; Harries, \textit{The Passion in Art}, p. 66.} [images 3.8, 3.9 ]

From the fourteenth century, a noticeable change in some examples of Irish Crucifixion figures, such as the one on the Shrine of St Patrick’s Tooth, c. 1376, and a tombstone at St. Columba’s Church, Kells, Co. Meath, is the arrangement of his
feet. [images 3.10, 3.11] Whereas previously Christ’s feet were positioned side-by-side, beginning in the fourteenth-century, surviving Irish examples represent Christ’s feet, more typically, as being depicted overlapping and attached to the cross with a single nail and this eventually became the standard form of the image in Irish art. This change in Irish images of the Crucifixion can be seen as part of a larger shift in the depiction of the Crucifixion that began around 1200. Though there does exist occasional examples of three-nail crucifixes from the Early Christian period, it was not until Peter Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica* (c. 1170) that the three-nail depiction began to become the accepted norm in Christian thought. Despite the fact that some traditionalists condemned the use of the three-nail crucifix, and even the popular mystic St Bridget of Sweden described the use of four nails in her visions in 1373, the depiction of the three-nail crucifix prevailed. It has been suggested that the use of only one nail to pierce both of Christ’s feet emphasised uncomfortable, contorted arrangement of his legs, resulting in the desired portrayal of the enhanced physical suffering of Christ. That the surviving evidence from Ireland shows that the feet began to be depicted as overlapping, pierced with one nail, beginning in the later fourteenth century indicates that at least some of the patrons and/or artisans were aware of this trend and innovative enough to break with the old tradition that on its way out of favour in most areas.¹¹⁸

Other details of Crucifixion imagery changed as the focus of Passion devotion shifted during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries toward a greater desire to ‘know’ the physical details of Christ’s suffering. For example, Christ’s clothing on the cross changed noticeably during the centuries of the late medieval period. The clothing that the Christ figure was depicted in, in Ireland, was fairly consistent in the early Crucifixion images. Most often he was depicted in a long tunic garment with sleeves. The sleeves differentiate the garment from the long but sleeveless *colobium* that was represented from the sixth to the ninth centuries in Rome in the tradition of the Rabbula Gospel Crucifixion scene. [image 3.12] In the Romanesque period it was more common for Christ to appear in loincloth, though they were depicted as a

---

modest knee-length variety which along with the crown on many of the Irish examples, points to the older symbols of divinity.\textsuperscript{119}

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it became more common for Christ to be shown in only a loincloth. Partly this element of Christ’s depiction was an effort toward historic realism. The narrative of the Passion in fourteenth-century devotional texts such as the pseudo-Bonaventuran \textit{Meditationes Vitae Christi} and Richard Rolle’s \textit{Meditation on the Passion}, described for the reader the removal of Christ’s clothing before the Crucifixion. To emphasise the physical suffering, the authors added gruesome details to the scene, describing how the cloth when pulled from Christ’s body stuck to the wounds and took with it ‘gobbets of flesh’.\textsuperscript{120}

Besides a physical suffering, the stripping of Christ’s garments was also a humiliation. By presenting Christ in only a loincloth his humiliation is emphasised. The smaller the covering that Christ is given, the more the indignity of his situation grows. It was common, especially in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, for artists to depict Christ’s loincloth as only a film of gauzy material. [images 3.13 – 3.15] By depicting Christ as nearly nude, the artists may also have been wishing to express Christ’s humanity, which, paradoxically, could be viewed as a victorious image. Christ’s condescension to become human and hold the same status as the common viewer was also emphasised by exposing his body and wounds on the cross.\textsuperscript{121}


\textsuperscript{121} Mitchell B. Merback, \textit{The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe} (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), p. 73.
Beginning in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century the loincloth is further highlighted by creating dynamic depictions of intricately wrapped and tied cloths, billowing in the air. All manners of loincloth were depicted: front or side knotted, wrapped around the body, and through the legs. These extravagant depictions of the loincloth seem to have been created mostly for aesthetic purposes and perhaps so the artist could show his skill in depicting the flowing folds of fabric. [images 3.16 – 3.20] The several examples of continental Crucifixion figures illustrate that this motif was found in a variety of media and in many areas across Europe. Perhaps the most interesting evidence that shows the amount of thought an artist may have put into the modelling of this feature is a sheet of sketched studies of Christ’s loincloth by the Master of the Coburg Roundels from around 1490. This artist is also known as the ‘Master of the Drapery Studies’ and from this sketch it is obvious he was interested in the depiction of cloth and its movement. [image 3.21]

Just as is seen on the continent, a variety of styles of loincloth were being employed concurrently in Irish Crucifixion art. Artists were probably using different styles depending on the source they were working from. It is evident that Irish artisans were aware of the distinctive continental billowing loincloth motif by the beginning of the sixteenth century, not long after it became popular on the continent. There are differing levels of talent from artist to artist but often the folds of the cloth are depicted and like continental examples, with the tail ends of the cloth represented like flying wings on the sides of Christ’s body. From the beginning of the sixteenth century the billowing cloth or ‘wing’ style and loincloths with large side-knots begin to appear regularly on surviving Crucifix figures though more neatly wrapped loincloths were also being depicted at the same time. Examples like the Crucifixion figure on the Brenach altar-tomb in Jerpoint, Co. Kilkenny (1501), the Crucifixion on a tomb chest panel in the Carmelite Priory at Kildare (second half of the sixteenth century) and the Crucified Christ figure on the ‘James MacDonnell’ Chalice (1596) were all created in typical Irish style but included this continental feature. [images 3.22 – 3.34] From the materials that survive, the O’Tunney workshop may have been one of main groups to spark this trend in Ireland. Because this motif appeared in several mediums and in several areas of the continent from around the same time period it is difficult to say with certainty the exact source or sources that Irish artists
may have obtained but this motif demonstrates an Irish familiarity with current continental trends in devotional art.122

There does not seem to be any explicitly named reason for the trend of the billowing, ‘winged’ loincloth and it may be for purely aesthetic reasons. However, the loincloth that Christ wears on the cross was perhaps considered special and worth extra embellishment for a devotional reason. Nicholas Love in his fifteenth-century English language version of the Meditationes Vitae Christi, titled Speculum Vitae Christi, states that the Virgin Mary upon seeing Christ naked and shamed, went to him and ‘gyrde hym about the lendes with the keuerchefe of her heed’.123 Mary’s role in furnishing Christ with his loincloth was also included in the Smaointe Beatha Chriost, the first Irish language version of the Meditationes Vitae Christi, translated c. 1450 by Tomás Gruamdha Ó Bruacháin, which was very popular, surviving whole or in part in thirty-two manuscripts. A similar passage was found in the Dialogus Beatae Mariae et S. Anselmi de Passione which was circulating as an Irish translation by the fourteenth century at the latest and survives in six Irish manuscripts, three from the fifteenth century. In this case the emphasis on the loincloth would also be a symbol representing the Virgin Mary’s role in Passion devotion, which as will be discussed further below was significant.124

In many ways, the Irish depiction of the crucified Christ follows the common trends and patterns that are found in other areas of Europe but in a subtle way the Irish Crucifixion seems to have its own flavour. Hourihane, from his study of surviving metalwork crucifixes of the late medieval period in Ireland, has suggested that in Ireland the emphasis on the wretchedness of Christ’s physical state peaked in the fourteenth century before returning the following century to a more victorious live Christ figure. When trying to understand how the Crucifixion was understood in Ireland in the late medieval period, this theory is problematic in that its scope is

122 Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, vol. 1, pp. 159-160, 177; J.J. Buckley, ‘Some Irish Altar Plate’, JRSAI 9 (1939), pp. 1-32 (p. 24).

123 Nicholas Love, Speculum Vita Christi (London: Wynken de Worde, 1525), Ca. xlii [Early English Books Online, image 133]

124 Smaointe beatha Chriost: .i. innsint Ghaelge a chuir Tomás Gruamdha Ó Bruacháin (fl.c.1450) ar an Meditationes vitae Christi, ed. by Cainneach Ó Maonaigh (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies in Dublin, 1944); Peter O’Dwyer, Mary: a history of devotion in Ireland (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1988), pp. 149, 154-156.
limited to metalwork crucifixes which, even when only looking at this one medium, are only a small surviving collection compared to what must have once existed.\textsuperscript{125}

It is true that there are examples of crucifixes from the fourteenth century, as seen in Hourihane’s study, that depict a distressed figure of Christ. This was common to the century in which the Black Death ravaged much of Europe including Ireland. However, examples of more strikingly grotesque Crucifixion figures can also be found in later centuries, though admittedly they are few when compared with the many examples found in other areas of Europe. The Crucified Christ in the \textit{Leabhar Breac} (c. 1400), with its severely emaciated body, small loincloth, pronounced nails in his hands and feet and the crown of thorns could draw a likeness to continental examples of that period. [image 1.1] From the later sixteenth century is a stone crucifix at Johnstown, Co. Kilkenny, which again presents a drastically thin and grimacing Christ. [image 3.35] Even later on many examples of seventeenth-century Irish chalices the Crucified Christ is engraved with pronounced ribs and wounds dripping with blood.\textsuperscript{126} [images 3.36, 3.37]

It is not so much that the suffering was not represented but, when looking at Crucifixion imagery in all mediums, one can see that by comparison to many continental works, the representations of the Crucified Christ in Ireland during this late medieval / early modern period finds a much less gruesome image. Christ’s suffering is represented, but in more abstracted ways. This could be attributed to materials or lack of artistic talent and sometimes these may have been the reasons, but when considering the ability of some sculptors to carve the many examples of cadaver effigies on tombs for example, one realises that the Crucified Christ figures could also have been carved with more graphic physicality as well had they wished. [images 3.38, 3.39] The main purpose of the cadaver effigies, however, was not to express pain or to shock. They were \textit{memento mori} figures, employed to remind viewers of their own fleeting mortality. Perhaps Christ’s physicality was depicted in

\textsuperscript{125} Hourihane, ‘Holye Crossys’, pp. 33.


84
a more abstracted manner to balance the humanity of Christ the man and the
immortality of Christ as God.

In Irish literature, both common devotional descriptions of the Crucified
Christ and devotional visions that were specifically popular in Ireland can be found.
A group of poems commonly known as ‘The Kildare Poems,’ which were recorded
by Franciscans in Waterford c. 1330, provides in part a more casual, often humorous,
aspect to the life and concerns of Franciscans in Ireland in that time. These poems
were most likely originally oral compositions before being collected into the
manuscript. Some, like ‘Satire,’ lampoon the characteristics and practices of several
societal groups found in Ireland at the time. Others like ‘Sarmun’ take a more
serious tone and provide us with an example of a sermon that may have been
presented to an Irish audience.

The author, seemingly wishing to validate what he is about to say at the
beginning of the poem ‘Sarmun’, references in the first few stanzas his sources for
his message. He states that ‘In Latin hit is i writte in boke’, as well as ‘So seith Seint
Bernard in his boke’. His audience must have been expected to value books
written in Latin and the instruction of Saint Bernard, but his statements also seem to
imply that his audience would not have read these books themselves, hence the need
for him to preach their messages. That the poem is in English rather than Latin or
Irish is also telling. The sermon was composed neither for an audience of native Irish
speakers nor was it for the benefit of clergy, to whom Latin would have been the
more common language of communication.

---

127 London, British Library, MS Harley 913, fols 3r-66v; Angela M. Lucas, Anglo-Irish
Poems of the Middle Ages (Blackrock: The Columba Press, 1995).

128 ‘Satire,’ MS Harley 913, fols 7r-8v; ‘Sarmun,’ MS Harley 913, fols 16r-20r.

129 ‘Sarmun,’ MS Harley 913, fol. 16r.

130 For arguments on the use of language in recorded sermons see, Albert Lecoy de la
Marche, La chaire française au moyen âge, spécialement au XIIIe siècle d’après les
twelfth-century monastic sermon’, in The Sermon, Typologie des sources du Moyen Age,
fasc. 81-83, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000) pp. 271-323 (p 287); Carolyn Muessig, ‘Sermon,
The speaker continues to preach against pride of worldly goods, the pains of Hell, and the sacrifice of Christ. In referring to Christ’s Passion he speaks of the dread one feels ‘to se / The wondis of Jesus Crist is side. / His hondes, is fete sul ren of blode’ and the damning evidence of man’s sin as represented by the Instruments of the Passion: ‘The sper, the nailes and the rode / Sal crie: “Tak wrech of sinful man!”’ He further warns that the time to revere Christ and live as he taught is not after death but during one’s life. In death he explained it would be too late.

Another poem of the group titled ‘Christ on the Cross’, directly addresses the audience with a graphic description of Christ’s wounds, pain and suffering on the Cross. The audience is instructed to ‘Be-hold to thi Lord, man, whare He hangith on rode, / And weep, if thou might, teris al of blode.’ Such instructions, directing the audience to mentally place themselves at the scene of Christ’s Crucifixion and to emotionally connect with the pain and suffering, are directly aligned with the continental teachings on devotional prayer at the time.

While in the instance of these poems, these ideas were directed toward an Anglo-Norman or at least English speaking audience, the bardic poetry of the Gaelic Irish provide evidence that similar ideas were to be found in those communities. Just as in the ‘Kildare poems’ discussed above, popular medieval religious themes concerning the nature of sin and pride in Man, the punishment of Hell and reward of Heaven, and depictions of Christ as both one to be feared and the saviour of man are found in Bardic poetry from the thirteenth century.

The image of the Red Cross, while not unique to Ireland, was a significant symbol in Irish tradition which linked the Passion of Christ to the Last Judgement. The image of Christ on his Red Cross, ‘awash in blood’, appearing in the sky was described in the Leabhar Breac and in the poetry of thirteenth-century Irish poet Donnchadh Mór Ó Dálaigh, ‘Tis right for me to fly to thee, / O Cross of Jesus protect me; / may the flash of thy anger not face me, / O precious Red Cross of God.’

---

131 ‘Sarmun’, MS Harley 913, fol. 18r.
132 ‘Sarmun’, MS Harley 913, fol. 18v.
133 ‘Christ on the Cross’, MS Harley 913, fols 28r-28v (fol. 28r).
Diarmuid Mac an Bhaird (c. late sixteenth- to late seventeenth-century) continues to use the motif in his poem ‘My Body My Soul’s Foe’ describing Christ ‘who died on the blood-covered Cross’. As the others before him, he writes that ‘the red Cross is on its way to us with the Maker of this world lying on it’ to arrive on Judgement Day.136

Possible visual references to the Red Cross of Christ can also be found in Irish devotional art. The ‘Moyne Friary’ Reliquary (NMI 1882:1) is a lozenge shaped silver reliquary and is quite small, only one inch square. [image 3.40] There is a subtly formed cruciform design on both sides, expressed through patterns worked into the ornamentation. On the front arrangement this is achieved using bezel set stones that appear to be either red coral or carnelian, a type of quartz. This pendant was found buried along with a gold cross in the ruined Cloisters of the Moyne Friary, Killala, Co. Mayo. Founded in 1458 by Thomas Burke, the Burke family continued to be the friary’s principal patrons through the sixteenth century until it was suppressed in the 1590s. After its suppression the friary continued to be used by the Franciscans until around the year 1800 so it is hard to know when the pendant would have been buried here but judging from its ornamentation the pendant appears to be of Irish origin and was probably made during the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. While the compositional reference to ‘the red cross of Christ’ on the pendant may be an Irish motif, the use of red stones to represent Christ’s blood is equally found in European art of the period. Likewise, the pendant reliquary was a form of devotional paraphernalia common throughout Western Europe.137

Though not a Crucifixion scene, the image of Christ Bearing the Cross, found in the Seanclias Buircach, f. 18v, is another example of this theme continued in later sixteenth-century art. [image 3.41] This full-page miniature shows Christ bowed under the weight of a cross that is covered in dashes of red, representing Christ’s

blood. While Christ struggles to carry the red, bloody cross to his own death, the Irish viewer of the image is reminded by the colour of the cross that he will return at the day of Judgement on a cross covered with blood, not forgetting his earlier sacrifice for mankind.

**Devotional uses of Crucifixion imagery**

After looking at the iconographic trends and many examples of surviving Irish examples of Crucifixion images, we now will address more specifically how this imagery would have been utilised and involved in devotional rituals. The use of Crucifixion imagery as a focal point in devotional prayer is documented in the written word and is demonstrated in images in late medieval European works. Already mentioned in the previous chapter was the Dominican *Vitae Fratrum* (1260) by Gerardus de Frachet which described the friar kissing and holding his crucifix in his cell as part of his devotional prayers. The popular *Meditationes Vitae Christi* in a seventeenth-century English vernacular version, recommended ‘beholdyne of our savyour Jesus han[g]yne so upon the crosse by devoute imagynacyon of soule’ and through ‘longe exercise o f sorowfull compassyon’ so that viewers could better understand Christ’s sacrifice to better feel the great joy from within the ‘pyteous syght’ in knowing of their redemption through the Crucifixion of Christ.138

This sentiment is evident in many bardic poems including one by an unknown author titled, ‘To Christ on the Cross’. The ‘voice’ of this poem is addressing Christ directly, begging to ‘suffer a Passion in Thy Passion’ and in many differing ways take on the suffering and experience of Christ.139 As this poem is addressed to Christ on the Cross one could easily imagine that it was written based on prayers that one might say in the presence of a physical Crucifix.

---

138 *The miroure of the blessed life of our Lorde and Savioure Iesus Chryste. Written in Latin by the venerable and famous doctor Saint Bonauentre. Newlie. Set forth in Englishe for the profitte and consolacion of all dewoute persons* (Douai: C. Boscard, ca. 1606) [EEBO, Image 136-137].

One point when it was considered especially necessary to have an image of
the crucifix was during the moments before one’s death. The medieval *Ordo
Visitandi*, instructed priests to hold a crucifix up in the face of the dying. Devotional
treatises such as the *Ars moriendi* also recommended meditation on the crucified
Christ in order to ward off temptation and despair during one’s final living
moments. The image of the Crucifix was used as a comfort and a protective aide
that the dying could use to ‘set betwene the[e] and my evil dedis [deeds]’ when
facing God after death, but also when facing the possible last minute attacks of the
devil before death. Henry VII’s ‘good death’ as preached by John Fisher at the
English king’s funeral sermon particularly dwelt on the king’s devotion to the
crucifix on the day of his death when ‘[t]he ymage of the cruycfyxe many a tyme that
day full devoutly he dyd beholde with grete reverence… & oftenembracyncge it in
his armes & with grete devotion kyssyng it’. This was a tradition that continued
into the modern period as was related by a woman from Smithstown, Bunratty, Co.
Clare in the 1960s. Her family owned a carved black slate Crucifixion plaque (NMI
F.1967:5) which, by comparison to the style of stone carving on Irish gravestones,
appears to date to the eighteenth- or early-nineteenth century. The woman recalled that as her father was on his deathbed he had asked her mother to put
the plaque into his hands.

It was a popular practice was to wear a crucifix, often as a pendant around the
neck, though other forms of adornment were also utilised. Wearing a crucifix or
other forms of religious jewellery on one’s person was an outward symbol of faith
and a devotional tool on hand to ensure regular prayer and could even be utilised in
ensuring a good death. The habit of wearing crucifix pendants in the late medieval
and early modern period was common in Europe and is evident in Ireland from
images of patrons found in stone sculpture, such as the tomb effigy of Walter
Bermingham (c. 1548), or in commentary describing Irish dress. William Brereton

---

140 Nancy Lee Beaty, *The Craft of Dying: A study in the literary tradition of the Ars
141 John Fisher, *English Works*, ed. by J.E.B. Mayor (London: Early English Text Society,
Plaque from County Clare’, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* 6, no. 2 (1944), p. 78.
recorded in the first half of the seventeenth century that the women of Wexford wore ‘a crucifix, tied in a black necklace, hanging betwixt their breasts’ and after that concludes that, ‘[i]t seems that they are not ashamed of their religion, nor desire to conceal themselves; and indeed in this town are many papists’ suggesting this was a recognisably Catholic tradition at the time.\textsuperscript{143}

An inscription carved on the stone base (c. 1608) of a now lost memorial cross, erected by Margaret Fagan for her husband Richard Shee (1550-1608), gives evidence for the continuing importance of devotional art. The inscription, carved in English, read,

Christ's picture humble worshipp[.] thow which by the same doest pass th[e] picture worshipp not but him for whom depicted was ffor what this picture shois ys God[.] itself noe God can be[.] this vewe un with thy harte * * * dost see[.] this monument of pieti dame margaret fagan arected for her husbande Sir Richarde Shee Knighte deceased[.] pray for him[.].\textsuperscript{144}

The express wish to clarify that Christ was only being represented by the image, and that the image should not itself be worshipped, suggests an educated and orthodox Catholic understanding of how devotional images benefited the viewer. The placement of this specific idea on a stone sculpture as an instructive inscription is unusual and unique in surviving Irish devotional art but is perhaps not as surprising to find in the Kilkenny area which was relative bastion of the Counter Reformation compared to other areas of Ireland at the time. By placing the cross with its inscribed base by the wayside at St Mary’s church-yard, where her husband had endowed an Alms Hospital, Margaret Fagan, was eliciting not only prayers for dead husband, a local benefactor, but she was also attempting to ensure those prayers were clearly in line with the Counter Reformation ideas concerning devotional prayer.


The kissing, touching and handling of a Crucifix was also a well documented part of regular devotional practice in Ireland and in other parts of Europe. In an image of the Descent of Christ from the Cross in a late fifteenth-century Flemish Book of Hours made for export to England, the figure of Christ has been worn to invisibility in the places it was regularly kissed.[^4] The practice of kissing, and even licking, images and relics was common enough in 1539 for it to be specially mentioned in instructions to Commissioners in Ireland when investigating superstitious and idolatrous practices in Ireland.\(^{146}\)

Kissing appeared as a part of liturgical rituals such as the ‘kiss of peace’ performed during the late medieval mass. The Crucifixion scene was a common image found on a pax board though other devotional images such as the Man of Sorrows were sometimes used in continental examples. The pax board was passed around the congregation during the mass just after the Transubstantiation of the host. The pax board would be kissed first by the priest and then by each of the congregation in turn. At this time the laity typically only received communion a few times a year and it was only considered appropriate for the most holy people, such as St Catherine of Siena, to communicate daily or even weekly. For many of the laity, the pax board ritual stood in of the regular reception of the Eucharist. The translated reverence for the kiss of peace ritual can be found reflected in late medieval French treatises. One text demonstrates the connection between the pax ritual and the communion by stating that ‘No one should take the pax board if he has not fasted and is without mortal sin… For whoever takes it in great faith receives the body of our Lord spiritually, and participates in all the goods done by the entire holy Church’.\(^{147}\)


[^146]: Charles McNeill, ‘Accounts of the Sums Realised by the Sales of Chattels of Some Suppressed Irish Monasteries’, *JRSAI* 12, no. 1 (1922), pp. 11-37 (pp. 11-12); Catriona MacLeod, ‘Some Medieval Wood Sculpture in Ireland’, *JRSAI* 77, no. 1 (1947), pp. 53-67 (p. 53).

The imagery on the pax boards would have been viewed regularly and at close proximity by all members of the laity and would have developed a further importance for the laity in connection to the ritual.\textsuperscript{148}

There are few examples of possible Irish pax boards that survive from the late medieval or early modern periods, putting in question whether the practice was very widespread in Ireland. Irish bronze Crucifixion plaques which have been estimated to date between the seventh and twelfth centuries, have been suggested as possible pax board elements, though there are several other theories for their use.\textsuperscript{149} [images 3.2, 3.44] The practice must have been a regular one at least among the Anglo-Norman Irish by the beginning of the fourteenth century, however. The practice is mentioned during an inquisition in 1310, into the religious practice of some members of the Order of the Templars in the Dublin area. William le Botiller testified against one Templar resident in Clontarf, William de Warecome, that he witnessed de Warecome avert his gaze during the elevation of the host, pay ‘no attention’ during the Gospel, and refuse the kiss of peace, for the reason that ‘Templars did not care for peace’.\textsuperscript{150} A small fifteenth-century, open-work bronze pax in the collection of the NMI could be of Irish manufacture, though the similarity to English work of the same period means that it may have been imported.\textsuperscript{151} [image 3.45] The practice continued in Ireland at least into the sixteenth century, as suggested in an entry from 1511 in Churchwardens’ accounts for St Werburgh’s Church in Dublin, where a ‘pax bord of sylver gylt’ was listed among the church plate.\textsuperscript{152}


\textsuperscript{151} Hourihane, \textit{Gothic Art in Ireland}, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{152} John L. Robinson, ‘Churchwardens’ Accounts, 1484-1600, St Werburgh’s Church, Dublin’, \textit{JRSAI}, sixth series, vol. 4, no. 2 (1914), pp. 132-142 (139-140).
As has already been mentioned, the Crucifix was kissed as part of the liturgical/devotional traditions of Easter. Humility before the Crucifix was expressed by the removal of a person’s footwear before they would ‘creep’ to the cross, on their knees, kissing the foot of the cross upon arrival. The kissing of the cross’s foot represented the kissing of Christ’s foot or feet. Similar practices are described at pilgrimage sites in Ireland such as Lough Derg, where the cross would be kissed and touched at certain points in the pattern.\textsuperscript{153}

Several images exist which depict Mary Magdalene kissing Christ’s feet either on the cross or as he is being removed from it. [images 3.15, 3.46, 3.47] In kissing the feet of the crucified Christ, one was taking on Mary Magdalene as a devotional role model, a practice that was encouraged in medieval homilies and popular medieval devotional texts such as the \textit{Meditationes Vitae Christi} and Ludolph of Saxony’s \textit{Vita Christi}, which includes a prayer dedicated to the ‘Repentance of Mary Magdalene which reads: ‘Merciful Jesus, despise not a sinner kneeling at the feet of thy clemency, bathing them with tears of deepest contrition, and kissing them in devout prayer. Make me hear thy gracious words, which she merited to hear, that my many sins may be forgiven through thy grace and her merit’.\textsuperscript{154} The poem of Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn (d. 1448), titled \textit{Beag nach tainig mo thearma}, perhaps influenced by those devotional works, similarly holds up Mary Magdalene’s related act of washing Christ’s feet, which ‘she washed with her eyes’ tears’, as a moral lesson in repentance and forgiveness.\textsuperscript{155}


Whether these penitential sentiments would have been directly connected to the Adoration of the Cross ritual in every layperson’s mind is unknown, but the use of the kiss as a subservient and honouring act would have been familiar to most. It was common until the eighteenth century for Catholics to kiss the foot of the pope. A kiss was included in more secular arrangements as well, as described in the Rental book of Gerald FitzGerald, f. 31, (1518), the formalised act of ‘Doing Homage’ to the lord in feudal land arrangements included a kiss. A kiss was seen as a binding act, a person may bind themselves in devotion to Christ or to more secular acts as noted by the seventeenth-century Jesuit missionary, William Good, in 1566 who recorded that the Irish swore oaths by kissing crosiers and bells. Perhaps the other half of this ‘binding’ agreement was an understanding of protection from the recipient of the kiss. A cross taken from Dunluce Castle in 1584, was described by Sir John Perrot as being a powerful spiritual tool of protection. He described the local people as being ‘happy he thought himself that could get a kiss of the same cross’. In this case, the spiritual power of the object was thought to come from the grace of St Columkill, the purported former owner of the cross.

Conclusions

As this chapter has shown the Crucifixion and the image of the Crucified Christ were regular elements of Irish devotional art throughout the late medieval and early modern periods. The ways that Christ was depicted on the cross changed especially over the course of the late medieval period as the focus of devotional sentiment shifted the meaning and purpose of the image. Awareness of these changes can be seen in the similar developments of Irish Crucifixion imagery, though the Irish style of depicting Christ on the cross seemed to stray rarely to the extremes of shocking imagery that can be found developing elsewhere in Europe during this

---

156 Herbert Francis Hore, ‘The Rental Book of Gerald, Ninth Earl of Kildare, AD 1518 (continued)’, The Journal of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society 5, no. 3 (1866), pp. 501-518, 525-546 (p. 526); Camden, Britannia, p. 659.

period. Crucifixion imagery and devotions to the Crucified Christ were found and acted upon in both personal and liturgical settings. Irish poetry and evidence for devotional practices along with the ubiquity of Crucifixion imagery that continued consistently in Post-Reformation Ireland, attests to the centrality of Christ’s sacrifice and his Passion in the devotional concerns of Irish Catholics throughout the late medieval and early modern periods. The next chapter is dedicated to exploring the role of perhaps the second most important figure represented in the art and practice of Passion devotion, the Virgin Mary.
Chapter Four - The importance of the Virgin Mary in devotions to the Passion of Christ

Another important aspect of many Crucifixion images was the regular presence of two figures, St John the Evangelist and Christ’s mother, the Virgin Mary, who attended him while on the cross. This three figure arrangement that was ubiquitous in late medieval and early modern art was just one of the images that demonstrated the significant role that the Virgin Mary played in Passion devotion. The intense devotional focus upon any and all details of Christ’s humanity that developed in the late medieval period brought a greater interest in Mary. As Christ’s mother, her relationship with her son, her actions and physical presence during the events of the Passion were all brought to the fore of devotional conversance. In this section, the role of that the Virgin played in Passion devotion and the ways these ideas were expressed in the devotional art of the period between 1450 and 1650 in Ireland will be examined.158

Compassion and the Crucifixion

One of the major roles of the Virgin in Passion devotion was as a figure of compassion. Compassio was a goal of devotional prayer in the ‘affective’ piety of the late medieval period and the Virgin was seen as the ultimate embodiment of compassion. Examples in poetry, literature, and dramatic performance exist from as early as the ninth century that expressed the lament of the Virgin at the Crucifixion of Christ but it was in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that the compassion of the Virgin was commented upon with an increasing vigour. The Virgin as she represented compassion was a partner to her son who embodied the Passion. As the faithful grew more desirous to be witnesses to an ever more ‘historical’ realistic idea of the Crucifixion and Christ’s Passion, the Virgin Mary became the perfect witness and example to aspire to. By the fourteenth century, the desire to know what the

Virgin’s actions, words and emotions were during the Passion became of greater importance and were given voice in devotional literature and sermons. The fact that the Virgin’s involvement in Christ’s Passion is barely mentioned in the Gospels was not considered a block to this knowledge, but a grievous oversight on the part of the Evangelists. Jean Gerson reprimanded them in a fourteenth-century Passion sermon, exclaiming, ‘I ask you then, the true recorders and historians of the life and works of Jesus Christ, you my lords the evangelists, why have you written nothing of your good lady and mistress, where she was, what became of her?’¹⁵⁹ This, of course did not stop him from producing those details. In these devotional texts, the Virgin Mary appears in the narrative of the Passion at several key moments. The popular *Meditationes Vitae Christi* and vernacular versions of that text such as, Nicholas Love’s English-language version, titled, *Speculum Vitae Christi*, and the Irish-language translation, *Smaointe Beatha Chríost*, present several moments in the Passion narrative in which the Virgin takes part. The Virgin and the other women meet Christ as he is being first taken to Pilate the morning after his arrest. Mary sees her son again on the road to Calvary and then interacts with him at the Crucifixion. After the Crucifixion, Mary is described as one of only a few that has stayed by Christ’s side. After Christ’s body is taken down from the Cross Mary laments his death before he is carried to his tomb. She remains at the tomb with St John and the other women until nightfall when John tells her they must go. Equal in popularity to the *Smaointe Beatha Chríost*, was the *Beatha Mhuire* an Irish-version of the *Life of Mary*.¹⁶⁰

Similarly, works like St Bridget of Sweden’s popular *Revelations* included several chapters that had the Virgin describe Christ’s Crucifixion in great detail from her own point of view as an eyewitness. Besides simply witnessing the Crucifixion, in her compassion the Virgin actually feels physical pain when Christ does and her experience was described as paralleling that of Christ’s. Christ’s ‘precious blood


went out of him through as many arteries as the lances that pierced Mary’s heart. When Christ’s life went out of him, so too did Mary find that her ‘eyes were covered in darkness and [her] face became pale as death’ before she lost consciousness as well.\(^{161}\) This swoon into unconsciousness became a regular image in the visual art of the Crucifixion from as early as the thirteenth century, signalling the idea put forth in devotional writing. The image would perhaps have been even more effective in an age of widespread illiteracy, whereby even those unfamiliar with the texts could look at the image of the Virgin swooning at Christ’s Crucifixion and understand a mother’s pain and grief at the suffering of her child.\(^{162}\) [image 4.1 – 4.3]

Books of hours, which developed around the Little Office of the Virgin Mary, proliferated in late medieval England and elsewhere in Christian Europe. St Peter Damian’s (1007-1072) version of the Hours of Mary may have been most familiar in Ireland as there are references to it in the Litany. The Little Office of the Virgin Mary was a set of prayers or meditations, which based on monastic practices was read or recited at set times during the course of each day. Latin manuscripts of English provenance survive from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the Trinity College Library (MS 312 and MS 277) and Irish translations of the Hours have been noted. If not in manuscript form, printed versions of the text must have been imported into Ireland. In the sixteenth century, the Little Office of the Virgin is revealed to be a valued part of Irish Catholic practice, perhaps as is often the case, when the practice was challenged. The Irish poet Eoghan O’Duffy chastised the infamous bishop Miler McGrath, c. 1578, that in taking up Protestantism he had ‘abandoned God’s breviary and Mary’s – a wrong rite! Shame, alas!’\(^{163}\) The Hours of the Virgin were recited verse by verse, by Robert Scurlock, George Netterville and Christopher Eustace, as they were led through the streets of Dublin to be executed on the 18th November 1581, for their part in the Baltinglass and Nugent risings. The text

---


was clearly a strong element of their devotional identity as seen by the vehemence they directed at the English-born, Protestant Bishop of Meath, Thomas Jones, who accompanying their procession urged them to instead pray according to the Book of Common Prayer. Jones reported that Netterville responded by ‘gnashing his teeth against me, and punching me with his elbows [saying] “Vade Satana, vade Satana, vade post me Satana”’. The Hours of Mary continued to be encouraged in seventeenth-century Irish Catholicism as seen, for example in Antoin Géarmón’s catechism and prayer book, Parrthas an Anna (Louvain 1645), which included the Hours of Mary as a suitable devotion.

Prayers like the ‘Stabat Mater’, a very frequent devotional prayer in late medieval English Horae, addressed the Virgin at the Crucifixion, pleading with her to be the reader’s guide into the suffering and pain of the Passion and the perfect compassion that she embodied, ‘Make me weep lovingly with you, make me feel the pains of the crucified, as long as I shall live. I long to stand with you by the Cross, and to be your companion in your lamentation’. The prayer was often accompanied by an indulgence that related it specifically to the image of the Virgin at the Crucifixion. It was offered to all those who devoutly said ‘thys lamentable contemplation of our blessyd lady stondynge onder the crosse wepyng and having compassion with her swethe sone Jesus’. The ‘Stabat Mater’, as a Franciscan prayer, may well have been spread to the people in Ireland through the strong influence of the Franciscans in the country during this period.


For the complete text of the prayer and a discussion of the attribution problem see, Analecta hymnica mediæ ævi, ed. by G.M Dreves and C. Blume, 55 vols (Leipzig, 1886-1922), vol. 54, pp. 312-318. Carol M. Schuler, ‘The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin: Popular
In earlier medieval Irish art, the typical figures shown at the Crucifixion were Longinus, who pierced Christ’s side with a spear, and Stephaton, who offered Christ the draught of Gall. [image 4.4] The shift to the Virgin and St John accompanying Christ on the Cross begins to appear with regularity in surviving Irish art in the fourteenth century, and from this point the Virgin and St John almost exclusively are used in this role in three-figure compositions of the Crucifixion in the place of Longinus and Stephaton. [images 4.5, 4.6] This complete change over must have seen some overlap, probably in the thirteenth century. At that time, influences from the continent were felt in Ireland through the influx of the Anglo-Norman settlers and members of the monastic orders who brought with them an enthusiasm for devotions to the Virgin Mary. The assertion made by Hourihane that from the time this new composition is introduced to Ireland ‘additional figures such as the Holy Ghost, Lamb of God, angels and so forth are never represented in Ireland’ is an overstatement. Censing angels can clearly be seen included in the Crucifixion images on the Double Head slab (c. 1425-1450) at St Patrick’s Church, Trim, Co. Meath, the similar Double tombstone (c. 1425-1450), at St Columba’s church, Kells, Co. Meath, and the east end panel of the Plunket/Preston tomb chest (second half fifteenth century), in St Mary’s Church, Duleek, Co. Meath. [image 3.11, 4.7, 4.8] From the fourteenth century, however it is true that when the Crucifixion incorporated attendants they nearly always were the Virgin and St John.  

Examples of Irish Crucifixion scenes with the Virgin and St John can be found in most mediums when surveying what survives between 1450 and 1650. Notably, the only surviving example that depicts the Virgin in a swoon is the Crucifixion scene in the set of Passion themed relief stone panels on the Creagh tomb in Ennis Friary, Co. Clare. [image 4.9] As stated above, these panels were heavily influenced by fifteenth-century English alabaster relief carvings and the depiction of the Virgin at the Crucifixion in the Ennis Friary Crucifixion scene fits with this theory. [image 4.10] The rest of the considerable number of Irish Crucifixion scenes found in relief stone carvings, wall paintings, processional crosses, life-sized polychrome wooden statuary, book and other shrine metalwork, and engraved

Culture and Cultic Imagery in Pre-Reformation Europe’, *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 21. no. 1/2 (1992), pp. 5-28 (pp. 9-10).

images on chalices, depict the Virgin upright and conscious. She and St John stand on either side of Christ expressing their grief and compassion through gestures. 

There were a small group of gestures that were typical in these works. They were symbolic gestures of mourning that had long developed in medieval European art, possibly from early Christian Roman art. The gestures - a hand to the cheek sometimes with the other hand supporting the elbow, a hand on the breast, both hands crossed on the breast, the hands clasped together with fingers interlaced - were interchangeable between the two figures. The Virgin or St John sometimes would be shown lifting their hand towards the cross, to encourage the viewer to behold the Crucifixion. This seems to appear more often in Irish art on metalwork pieces, for instance, the fifteenth-century additions to the Shrine of the Cathach and the Shrine of the Book of Dimma. [image 4.5, 4.11] This gesture, like the others that had been consistently in use since antiquity, can also be found being used on the seventeenth-century image of the Virgin and St John flanking the Crucifixion in the guise of the Seat of Mercy on the foot of the Boetius Egan Chalice (1634). [image 4.12] A slightly more unusual gesture is found on the Double Purcell tomb (sixteenth century) in St John’s Priory, Kilkenny where John is shown grasping and pulling his garment. [image 4.13] Both Mary and St John grasp at their garments, though in a quieter manner on the McCragh tomb (1557) in St Carthage’s Cathedral in Lismore, Co. Waterford. [image 4.14] Though it was less common in surviving Irish art, the tearing of clothing was a common expression of grief in the medieval period.170

The representation of the Virgin and St John as attendants to Christ’s Crucifixion is compositionally consistent when depicted in Irish art throughout the two centuries concerning this study indicating that the image was thoroughly ingrained in the Irish visual devotional tradition. Examples of similar compositions and depictions of the Virgin and St John at the Crucifixion continue in the art of the early eighteenth century though it is notable that by the late eighteenth century the depiction of the Crucifixion scene on Irish gravestones had changed quite substantially showing an emphasis on the Instruments of the Passion and representing a number of figures, including the figures of Longinus and Stephaton

---

which again are represented with regularity.\textsuperscript{171} The lack of swooning Virgin Mary images could be due to the type of sources available in Ireland but this is unlikely considering the inclusion of the motif in popular printed work, such as images by Dürer. [image 4.3] More likely, it is because the Crucifixion, when depicted as a three-person composition never depicts a swooning Virgin Mary because there would be no one there to catch her. The primacy of the three-person Crucifixion scene composition in Irish art from this period means that there is no room for a swoon. The tendency to limit the Crucifixion scene to fewer figures in Irish art could suggest that many of the two dimensional images were based on three dimensional models. As in examples such as the Kilcorban statue group or the Multyfarnham processionional cross, the attendants were often included in three-dimensional images of the Crucifixion but more often were limited to the simpler three-person arrangement so commonly found in Irish relief carving. [images 4.17, 4.18] The wall painting of the Crucifixion scene in Cashel Cathedral in its depiction of the Crucifix, comparable to processionals like the Sheephouse Cross, seems to provide a direct example in which a two-dimensional image of the Crucifixion is based on a three-dimensional model. [images 4.19, 4.20] It is, however, significant that the Cashel wall painting is one of the rare Irish images that does appear to incorporate other figures into scene. It would not be surprising to learn that in some cases three-dimensional works inspired the two-dimensional Irish images of the Crucifixion. It should be noted however, that it was quite common elsewhere in Europe for the Crucifixion scene to be pared down to the three-person arrangement even in two-dimensional art and images such as these could as easily have influenced the Irish traditional use of the composition. [images 4.21 – 4.24]

There is a great chance that many examples of this type of Crucifixion scene once existed that now do not survive. Every church in Ireland was required to have a Crucifix or Crucifixion image by the fifteenth century. Many of those images may

have included the Virgin and St John. Both sculpture and wall paintings are likely to have been lost in great numbers. Wall paintings of Christ on the Cross with attendant figures are found in the Ó Ceallaigh tomb niche (c. 1403) at Abbeyknockmoy, in a tomb recess in Buttevant Franciscan friary, Co. Cork, and in Cashel Cathedral. The Buttevant image provides only an eye of an attendant and so very little information. The Abbeyknockmoy Crucifixion survives in a nineteenth-century drawing which suggests there were four attendants to Christ. Who the figures are is hard to know from the drawing though the Virgin is probably the figure to Christ’s right, as she is the only one with a sunburst of a nimbus behind her head. Trusting the drawing, both at Abbeyknockmoy and Cashel, the Virgin clearly is standing upright though, due to damage at Cashel, little can be gathered concerning what gesture she might be making. Both images undoubtedly were painted as a type of altarpiece. In England there are several examples of wall paintings of the Crucifixion with the Virgin and St John, that could have influenced the similar work in Ireland and even more examples would have been on view on rood screens but there must have been a plethora of examples for the artists and patrons to consult.¹⁷²

The Pietà

The compassion of the Virgin was also visually expressed in images of the Pietà, or Our Lady of Pity image. The Pietà was developed as a devotional image in twelfth-century Byzantine art but became popularised in Western Europe in the thirteenth century with many examples of both paintings and sculpture to be found developing in Northern Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Heather King has identified thirteen surviving examples of the Pietà in public settings in Ireland that date between the mid-fifteenth century and the early seventeenth century, to which at least two other examples can be added from the seventeenth century. Both are relief carvings on tombs created by the O’Kerin sculptors. One is on the tomb of Richard Cantwell and his wife, a member of the Grace family, (c. 1608) in

Kilcooly abbey, Co. Tipperary. The other Pieta is found on a tomb front panel that was recently uncovered in the Belfry graveyard in Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny. [image 4.25] This was not its original position and it is speculated that it may have once been part of the Archdekon tomb (c. 1609) in Thomastown parish church.¹⁷³

The Pieta image was developed in the devotional texts of the mystics, like some of the other devotional images discussed here, from an imagined moment, during the deposition of Christ from the Cross. In this moment as Mary took the body of her son into her lap, she has lost all sense of time and place. There were many ways of depicting the Pieta that developed in various national and regional schools of sculpture and other arts. The Irish piétas display a range of slight changes of composition and details that indicate these different types, suggesting there were several sources available in Ireland as these images were being made.

The stepped style in which Christ’s body is held partially upright in Mary’s lap can be seen on the Keenoge Cross (c. 1490), the Drogheda Cross fragment (c. 1500) and in the Kilcormac Pieta (sixteenth century), though the latter was not of Irish manufacture. [images 4.26 – 4.28] The stepped style is the oldest style of Pieta that developed in the earliest German sculptures in the thirteenth century. [image 4.29] This style softened as it spread to other regions, where examples typically displayed the wounds and body of Christ in a less ravaged state. [images 4.30, 4.31] Most of the other Irish Piétas are in the horizontal style, in which Christ lays horizontally across Mary’s lap. [images 4.33 – 4.38] The horizontal type was most likely established by Claus Sluter, the sculptor to the Dukes of Burgundy, in 1390, and was commonly found in France. It was not until the latter half of the fifteenth century when the Pieta image became popular in France and began appearing in other regions such as England and Ireland. [images 4.39 – 4.41] The Pieta image sometimes included a larger number of figures, such as Joseph of Arimathea and

Mary Magdalene, which relates the image more closely to the Lamentation of the Virgin and to the narrative of the Passion. [images 4.42, 4.43] As is found with the Irish Crucifixion scenes, the group Pietà images do not seem to have resonated with either Irish artists or their patrons, and only one example of the image exists in Ireland from the period, on a brass plaque of a monument to Dean Fyche in St Patrick’s Cathedral from 1537. [image 4.44] The brass plaque had been directly imported from a workshop in London and from what survives did not influence the later Irish examples of this image. The next closest example to a group image is the Strade Pietà relief carving which depicts angels flying over the Pietà and praying figures, probably representing the patrons of the image, in side panels. [image 4.33] The other relief carving presents the Pietà in its most simple, two-person composition, which could suggest that the carvers of these images were looking to three-dimensional statues as their models, and perhaps even referencing devotional statues at specific shrines or locations.

It is arguable that the depictions of the dead Christ being held by his mother in the Pietà images are part of a much longer tradition of depicting death. [image 4.32] However, more contemporary inspirations for the early common composition of the figures in the earlier examples of the Pietà image that influenced the Irish Pietàs may have been found in late medieval devotional texts. In many of the Irish Pietàs, the Virgin appears to be looking down at Christ on her lap. [images 4.33, 4.34, 4.45] St Bridget of Sweden describes the Virgin viewing Christ’s face in her Revelations, describing that ‘his eyes were lifeless and full of blood, his mouth as cold as ice, his beard like twine, his face grown stiff’. St Bridget goes on to describe the stiffness of Christ’s hands and arms saying that he laid on Mary’s knee ‘[h]is hands had become so rigid that they could not be bent farther down than to about his naval’. He was ‘just as he had been on the cross, like a man stiff in all his limbs.’ This description and others like it may have led to the common motif as seen in the Balrath Cross or Kilcormac pietà which shows Christ’s arm hanging straight down from his body, stiff and unbending. [images 4.28, 4.34, 4.46, 4.47]

---


175 The Revelations of St Birgitta of Sweden, vol. 1, Book 1, Chap. 10, p. 70.
Similar to the figure of the Virgin at the Crucifixion, some of the gestures of the Pietà figure were composed to express her concern and compassion in this image. The Balrath and Cloran Old pietà figures raise their hands to their faces, while the Thomastown (c. 1600) and the NMI Pietà figure holds her hand to her breast, both gestures of despair as discussed above. [images 4.34, 4.38, 4.25, 4.36] While many of the figures faces are damaged, the NMI Pietà Virgin raises her head and her eyes gaze out expressing her grief to the viewer. [image 4.36] The Christ figure in all the examples of Irish Pietàs has, as was typical in other European examples, been depicted as substantial smaller than the Virgin’s. The child-like proportions given to the Christ figure puts the emphasis of the suffering upon Mary and stressed her role as Christ’s mother. Christ is cradled by the Virgin, who in some examples gently supports his head from lolling back in death, as a mother would a newborn child. This visual reference to a relatable image of a mother with her son imbued the Pietà with yet more emotive cues for the devotee. The relationship of mother and son that this image stressed can be seen in Irish poetry as well. Philip Bocht Ó hUiginn (d. 1487) wrote of Mary’s compassion and special sorrow in losing her son in his poem, Do geineadh inghean ón umhla:

> By softening the hearts of God’s folk thy perfect faith saved His race from its fall till its salvation – wondrous work for a woman! When the Shepherd, left by His flock, suffered the Cross, Mary was no longer in life, and yet died not. All strength was gone, she was alas! Stunned, unable to weep, her eyes wasted by tears. Different was the cause of grief for God’s mother and His Son; He grieved for my soul, she watched Him grieving[...] After her darling’s death, she had no one to care for; though she and men were akin, they were naught to her when He was gone.

The Pietà was created with these details signalling the grief and sorrow of Mary for her dead son, lying in her lap, as emotive visual images that could be utilised by a viewer during devotional meditation. One recorded reaction to such an

---


177 O’Dwyer, Mary: A history of devotion in Ireland, pp. 115-117.
image is given by Margery Kempe. She recounts entering a church where she viewed a Pietà image:

[TH]orw the beholding of that pete hir mende was al holy occupied in the Passyon of owr Lord Ihesu Crist & in the compassion of owr Lady, Seynt Mary, be which sche was compellyd to cryyn to hir the… preste sayyng, “Damsel, Ihesu is ded long sithyn.” Whan her crying was cesyd, sche seyd to the preste, “Sir, hys deth is as fresse to me as he had deyd this same day, & so me thynkyth it awt to be to yow & to alle Cristen pepil. We awt euyr to han mende of hys kendnes & euer thynkyn of the dolful deth that he deyd for vs.178

Kempe’s reaction to the Pietà image was, as typical for her, more extreme than average as is suggested by the priest’s reaction to her emotional display. Nevertheless, an emotive response during devotional contemplation was the purpose of this image.

The Mother of Sorrows

The Clonmel Pietà is notable in that it is the only Irish example that survives that depicts a figure of the Virgin with a sword piercing her heart. [image 4.48] Though it is rare in surviving Irish art from the period, the sword motif commonly appeared in images of the Virgin at the Crucifixion and in variations of the Pietà image where it directly depicted the metaphorical language commonly used in late medieval and early modern devotional writing. The sword motif is a reference to the prophecy of Simeon who in Luke 2:34-35 told Mary ‘Behold this child is set for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted; and you yourself a sword will pierce’. The image of a sword piercing Mary’s breast was employed by artists from the mid-thirteenth century and could also be interpreted as a symbol of Mary’s pain at the Passion. The physical appearance of the sword piercing Mary’s heart was a visual parallel to the lance that pierced Christ’s side and heart. The similar usage of the weapons in this way were demonstrative symbols of their shared pain during the Passion. To further emphasis the connection between the Virgin’s pain and the Passion, the Virgin with a sword piercing her heart is often

shown sitting under Christ’s Cross or surrounded by the Instruments of Christ’s Passion. [images 4.49 – 4.51]

The Sorrows of Our Lady developed as a literary genre between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries and probably developed from Passion-plays. The earlier works put the number of sorrows at five. St Bridget of Sweden describes Mary at the death of her son as being ‘like a woman who had her heart pierced by five lances’, which she experienced at five instances during the Passion. [image 4.52] This idea also developed in Ireland as can be seen in the poem Cúig cáis as mhó le Muire, attributed to Donnchadh Mór Ó Dálaigh (d. 1244) that survives in at least ten Irish manuscripts. Ó Dálaigh’s list of five sorrows differs from St Bridget’s, but like hers, centres on the Passion of Christ. An apocryphal devotion to the five sorrows attributed to St Anselm, found in many fifteenth-century manuscripts, offered an indulgence for the devout contemplation of each of the five sorrows. An Irish-language version of this tract can be found in the fifteenth-century Liber Flavus Fergusiorum manuscript that describes the benefits of reciting the five sorrows as follows:

anyone who says the first prayer will be freed from all sin. The second prayer brings the promise of true repentance before death and thirty years (or fifty years) indulgence. The third brings liberation from all evil. The fourth will be rewarded with the fire of God’s love in one’s heart and freedom from sickness. The fifth will be rewarded by the love of God in the heart of the devotee and Christ will give Mary the mercy and power so that she can use them as she wishes for her client.

In the late fourteenth century, an alternative number of sorrows began being widely recognised. The seven sorrows of the Virgin were established as: the flight into Egypt, the loss of the Holy Child, meeting Jesus on the way to Calvary, standing at the foot of the cross, the taking down of Christ from the cross, and his burial. Confraternities of the Seven Sorrows that were first established in the 1490s in three

---

180 The Revelations of St Birgitta of Sweden, vol. 1, Book 1, Chap. 27, p. 98.
181 Dublin, RIA, MS 23 O 48 (b), f. 33v; O’Dwyer, Mary: a history of devotion in Ireland, p. 110-111.
Netherlandish churches, quickly spread throughout the Low Countries and beyond in the sixteenth century. The number as well as the description of the sorrows centred around other significant Passion symbolism, with five reflecting the Five Wounds of Christ and seven reflecting the Seven Words of Christ on the cross.\(^{182}\)

The devotional iconography that represented these ideas became known as the Mother of Sorrow, sometimes referred to as Mater Dolorosa or the Lady of Dolours. The Mother of Sorrows image in the late fifteenth century can often be seen to promote the new devotion to the seven sorrows and a variety of representations became common. The simplest depicts a seated Virgin figure with seven swords piercing her chest or radiating around her. [images 4.53, 4.54] More elaborate Mother of Seven Sorrows images also depicted small scenes of some or all of the seven sorrows.\(^{183}\) [images 4.55, 4.56] The one other figurative image of the Mother of Sorrows that survives from the late fifteenth century in Ireland can be found embroidered in the central panel of the cross ophrey on the back of the Flemish chasuble from Waterford Cathedral.\(^{184}\) [image 4.57] This embroidered image is of the simpler type but the connection between the sorrows of the Virgin and the suffering of the Passion of Christ is reinforced by the flanking panels of the ophrey in which angels carry some of the Instruments of the Passion. The Seven Sorrows can be found in seventeenth-century devotional Irish works such as Antoin Gearnóin’s Parrthas, but no further late medieval or early modern figurative images of the Mother of Sorrows or the Sorrows of the Virgin survive in Irish devotional art. What appears instead is a symbolic rendering of the image that stands as a type of Instrument of the Passion.

The earliest surviving Irish images of the pared down Mother of Sorrows image, depicted as a heart with two swords piercing it, are found in mid-fourteenth century tomb sculpture. The icon is often called the Arma Virginis and the name is apt. It is found on a pseudo-heraldic shield and is consistently paired with the Arma

---


Christi in the Irish examples. The icon is obviously a derivation of the figural Mother of Sorrows image and must have been available in one or more very consistently rendered sources by the mid-fifteenth century when the surviving Irish examples begin to appear. These earliest surviving examples are all found on works in the area of counties Meath and Dublin and they all appear on works that can be connected to the Co. Meath based Plunket family and their close peers. [images 4.58 – 4.62] Only small differences can be found between these examples, for instance the Plunket/Cusack tomb (c. 1441-1445) has the swords with their hilts at the top of the shield while the other tombs and fonts all show the swords’ hilts at the bottom of the shield.

As one looks into the sixteenth century, the Arma Virginis iconography remains fairly consistent when, as the surviving works suggest, the image begins to migrate to other areas of the country. The image of the Arma Virginis can be found on the tomb of a FitzEustace knight (early sixteenth century) in St Mary’s church at Castlemartin, Co. Kildare and on the south side of the chest of the tomb of two Butler knights (first half of the sixteenth century) in Gowran Church, Gowran, Co. Kilkenny. 185 [images 4.63, 4.64]

The McCragh tomb (1557) is the one surviving Irish example in which the devotion to Seven Sorrows is most obviously represented with seven swords. The tomb carving is similar to the image of the seven swords piercing the Virgin’s breast on the Waterford Cathedral chasuble though on the McCragh tomb pierce the symbol of a heart. [image 4.65] Should there be any doubt, the McCragh tomb symbolism is made clear with the accompanying letters M and A surmounted by crowns, and the first line of the popular prayer, the ‘Ave’, carved in the border of the shield. The pairing of the Arma Virginis shield with the Arma Christi shield on this tomb was a strong visual reference to the importance of the Virgin’s compassion and sorrow in the devotional impact of the Passion of Christ. Another unusual tomb design that expresses this message can be found on tomb slab dedicated to William Hay (1557) in St Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny. [image 4.66] The tomb is carved with a typical representation of the Arma Christi shield at the bottom, the heart pierced with two

---

185 The piece of the FitzEustace tomb that had on it the carving of the Arma Virginis may now be missing it though it was photographically recorded by Edwin Rae, see TCD, TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/34907.
swords in the middle and an image of a chalice and host at the top. The bottom two images represent the sacrifice of Christ and his mother at the Passion, while the chalice and host represent the embodiment of that sacrifice in the sacrament of the Eucharist. The inscription accompanying the image of the chalice reads ‘Da michi cor’ tuum’ & suffesit, or ‘Give me your heart and it is enough’ encourages the viewer to attempt to mimic the devotional ideal of Mary’s compassion, giving their heart as Mary gave her’s. That the tomb dates to the same year as the McCragh tomb is quite interesting considering the Mass of Gregory imagery used there which also emphasised the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist. As both date to the later years of Queen Mary’s reign maybe patrons and carvers were feeling more open to expressing this type of devotional imagery.

More typically in the second half of the sixteenth century, the Arma Virginis symbol continues to be depicted with two swords though in most surviving examples after the mid-century mark the image is presented without a shield. As will be discussed below, this is consistent with the typical arrangements of the Instruments of the Passion from this period, into which the Arma Virginis symbol now was visually subsumed. Most surviving examples are found in the south-east of the country, and continued to be utilised as an Instrument of the Passion in the popular O’Kerin school of tomb sculpture. [image 4.67 – 4.70]

**The Virgin as Intercessor**

The Virgin was a model of compassion, the partner of Christ in his Passion, and Christ’s mother. The Virgin was also considered the most influential spiritual intercessor between God or Christ and her dedicated devotees. In Ireland, her role as intercessor seems to have begun to develop by the beginning of the tenth century when a devotional poem, dated to c. 900, was written which begins, ‘O Mary, my blessing on thee in every part that thou mayest commend me tonight to thy Son’. An eleventh-century copy of a poem attributed to Columcille, which survives in eight manuscripts, also stresses this devotional aspect. Addressing Mary the poet says, ‘Merciful, forgiving one who hast the grace of the pure Spirit, join us in entreat
the just-judging King on behalf of His fair fragrant children'\textsuperscript{188}. In later centuries the reasons for Mary's effectiveness as an intercessor became more fully developed and was regularly a topic in the bardic poetry of the late medieval and early modern periods.

In devotional works from these periods, the value of Mary as a defender against Christ's possible wrath or as a bridge over the gaps of a person's perceived spiritual shortcomings seems to outweigh any other devotional virtue she may have provided. The idea of Mary as an intercessor was not unique in Irish writing. As in Ireland, it developed during the early medieval period in European devotional ideology. St Bridget of Sweden described in her \textit{Revelations} how Mary intercedes with Christ on behalf of those in Purgatory and those on earth. Christ and Mary are recorded as if in a conversation praising the holiness and virtue of one another. Christ, seemingly satisfied with Mary's virtue and her respectfulness of his greatness, tells her that anything she asks he will do. She describes that there are four places, heaven, hell, Purgatory and earth and requests that Christ help those who suffer in Purgatory and to direct those on Earth towards salvation. Christ grants this, instructing,

\begin{quote}
To everyone who invokes my name and has hope in you along with the purpose of amendment for his sins, these three things [contrition for sins, reparation, and the power to do good] shall be given as well as the kingdom of heaven.\textsuperscript{189}
\end{quote}

In writings like this one, devotion to the Virgin is encouraged and seen as a part of one's path to salvation. In Irish bardic poetry, the benefits of a good relationship with the Virgin become more than a step to salvation. It often seems instead to be considered as a guarantee. Fear Flatha \O\ Gnímh (fl. c. 1600) wrote,

\begin{quote}
Blessed is he who secures the love of the queen, that lady of graceful powerful noble hand, for whom I fashion this artful poem; by way of escaping punishment, I will bind a pact with the sweet virgin-queen beyond reproach. [...] 'Tis the queen of the fair virgins in Heaven whom I have bound to myself [...] who at Judgement can best contest my evil conduct.\textsuperscript{190}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{188} O'Dwyer, \textit{Mary}, p. 67.

\textsuperscript{189} \textit{The Revelations of St Birgitta of Sweden}, vol. 1, Book 1: Chap. 50, pp. 140-142.

\textsuperscript{190} 'Some Irish Bardic Poems XXIV. Queen of Heaven', ed. by Lambert McKenna, \textit{Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review} 21, no. 84 (1932), pp. 576-578 (pp. 577-578).
Looking at the way in which poets depicted their devotional relationship with the Virgin and, through the Virgin, with Christ, allows the modern reader to better understand how the late medieval or early modern devotee may have viewed the promises, mechanisms and results of devotional prayer.

A good relationship with the Virgin seems to be something that was pursued aggressively. Praise of the Virgin’s virtues, sometimes to the point of flattery, in poems addressed to her or concerning her was employed often and with flourish as part of requests for a good word from her to Christ. This type of praise directed towards the Virgin can be found in poetry spanning the centuries of this study; from Philip Bocht Ó hUiginn in the late fifteenth century, ‘O smooth satin couch, O branch which gives us support; O golden apple’, and into the seventeenth century. Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird, living in the late sixteenth and well into the seventeenth century, is credited with a lavish example of a praise poem directed at the Virgin. The poem’s title, ‘Help me, O Mary’, from the start reveals that the poet wishes to curry the Virgin’s favour to aid in his quest for salvation. Over and over he addresses her in flattering terms, ‘O voice sweet and noble, O Mary, O treasure of all eyes [...] O Lady whose teeth are white as foam [...] O lime-white cheek, O tresses gold, O delicate curving eyebrow, O choicest of our virgins’. The poets focused their praise not only on the spiritual virtues of the Virgin but also her physical beauty as if wooing her. This poem by Mac an Bhaird has its roots in much earlier works. The terms of praise he uses are similar to the titles given to the Virgin in the Old Irish litany of Mary, which can be found in the Leabhar Breac manuscript, though the prayer itself probably dates to the twelfth century. The Old Irish litany of Mary does not technically fit the definition of a litany which would include petitions such as ‘pray for us’ between the invocations. Rather the Old Irish litany was written in the tradition of compositions called Laudes Marianae or ‘Praises of Mary’ that were popular in the middle ages. Latin poems, such as the ‘Gaude Virgo Mater Christi’

---

192 *Aithdioghlium Dana*, vol. 2, p. 122.
also included praise for the Virgin and were commonly imitated in vernacular prayers recorded in English *Horae*. An English devotional poem collected by a London grocer, Richard Hill, praises the Virgin, ‘Gaude Maria, yglent with grace! [...] Gaude Maria, thou rose of ryse!’^194 Though the act of praising the Virgin was not unique to Irish poetry it was certainly a pronounced element of the genre.

The delivery of one’s salvation was often framed in reference to the workings of secular social structures. The Virgin and Christ were often referred to as ‘kin’, a concept that is reflected in the use of heraldic shields in combination with shields of the Arma Christi and Arma Virginis and other Passion imagery in many examples of Irish devotional art, especially in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn pleads the case of kinship to the Virgin in his poem from the fifteenth century, saying, ‘Seeing that Mary’s son cares not to remember the kinship I can boast of (with him), wilt not thou, O mother of the flowing-haired Jesus, remember the closeness of my kinship with thee?’^195 These lines by Ó hUiginn were written as part of a prayer pleading for the release of a man from an earthly prison which is significant as the metaphorical language of bardic poetry often refers to the fight for salvation in secular terms of the courts. Uaithne Ó Cobhthaigh (d. 1556) writes, ‘Thou, O Virgin, art the best advocate in court; plead against the nailed foot; it can not prevail if thou plead for us’.^196 In this regard, the poems sometimes took on the form of an argument that one might expect in a debate as if the writer believed that should he present a good enough argument for his salvation he would get it. The poets presented the Virgin with the ways she could use to sway Christ’s opinion, and presented Christ with arguments as to why he could not refuse their entrance into heaven even though he may be enraged by the acts perpetrated against him, though perhaps the people they were really aiming to convince with these poetic arguments were themselves and their audience.

The images of the Virgin at the Crucifixion, as the Pietà or as the Mother of Sorrows all expressed the pain and compassion that the Virgin felt at the suffering and death of her son but these images of compassion would not only have spoken to the viewer as instructive models of devotional emotion. The compassion of the

---

195 *Aithdioghlium Dana*, vol. 2, p. 52.
196 *Aithdioghlium Dana*, vol. 2, p. 158.
Virgin during Christ’s Passion would also have been viewed as part of the reason for the Virgin’s intercessory powers with Christ. An unattributed poem explains that the Virgin’s pains and sorrows earned her a special status that was valuable to man, ‘I should treasure in my heart the excess of Mary’s humiliation as she watched beside Thy tomb with none to pity her’. The humiliations and pain that she suffered were, as discussed above, a part of man’s salvation in partnership with Christ, but in bardic poetry the salvic power of her pain also came from its use as a way of softening the heart of an angry Christ as Judge figure.

Perhaps the greatest source of power the Virgin was thought to hold over Christ was the fact that she was his mother. St Bernard of Clairvaux’s (1090-1153) Liber de Passione Christi et Doloribus et Planctibus Matris Eius is one example of a devotional text which emphasised Mary’s maternal sorrow and the human relationship between Mother and Son, and was known in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Ireland where the Liber de Passione Christi can be found in part copied into the Liber Flavus Fergusiorum (c. 1437-1440, Co. Roscommon), the Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne (1513-1514, Co. Donegal), and Máire Ní Mháille’s ‘Book of Piety’ (1513, Co. Roscommon). Mary was his mother but remained pure in her virginity. More importantly, she nurtured him as a child and specifically her act of breast-feeding him is referenced regularly. ‘The King’s Exploit’, by Fearghal Ó Cionga (fl. 1560) wrote, ‘In return for nursing her Son, Mary received man’s salvation; none of us had ever reached (Heaven) her home until she placed the Lord of the world at her breast’. Nursing Christ was the sacrifice of the Virgin’s breast, just as the side wound was the sacrifice of Christ’s breast. Just as it was understood that the breast-wound of Christ could not be denied as it provided for the salvation of

199 Aithdioglium Dana, vol. 2, p. 130.
man, the breast-sacrifice of the Virgin, above all other pains she partook in, meant that Christ could not deny the wishes of his mother.

**The Virgin and Child**

The Marian iconography that perhaps best expressed the special connection between the salvation of man and the Virgin’s maternal role was the image of the Virgin and Child. Images of the Virgin in the act of nursing the Christ child or exposing her breast exist from antiquity but became especially popular in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In Ireland, an image of the Christ child suckling can be found on the Domhnach Airgid shrine (fourteenth/fifteenth century), while on the Shrine of the Stowe Missal (fourteenth century) and the Shrine of the Miosach (sixteenth century) the Virgin, holding the Christ child, exposes her breast. The power of the Virgin’s act of nursing Christ as a baby can be looked at as a metaphor; all that the Virgin did when she nourished, protected and raised Christ through his childhood is more narrowly described in the early act of feeding him from her own body when nursing. However, the language of the poems and the literal imagery created of the Virgin with the Christ child demonstrates that the focus of the devotion was seen as lying in the specific relationship between the Virgin and the infant Christ rather than a more developed relationship that a mother would have with a son throughout his childhood.

The salvific power ascribed to the nursing of Christ also transferred to the physical elements associated with the act. The actual milk of the Virgin was widely associated with her powers of intercession in late medieval European devotion. Phials of what was believed to be the milk of the Virgin were venerated as holy relics across Europe from the thirteenth century, with one such relic recorded in the collection at Christchurch Cathedral in Dublin. Though images of the *Maria Lactans* and images of the exposed breast of the Virgin generally begin to fade from popularity in the fifteenth-century the power of the image continued in Irish poetry in the sixteenth century. Uaithne Ó Cobhthaigh (d. 1556) writes, ‘No words of His

---


mother could clear off the charge against me; she must coaxingly show her breast to her Son that thus His wrath may abate.'

Even when not described in the act of nursing or exposing her breast, the memory of the Virgin’s maternal care is regularly mentioned as an effective protective power that she might use to defend man. Again, in his poem, ‘Hopes and Fears’, Ó Cobhthaigh addresses Christ, presenting him with the idea when reasoning with Christ, ‘Thy right hand is not, I believe dearer to Thee than Mary’s breast.’ Here he seems to be suggesting to Christ that though he wishes to punish man for the wounds he received, the ‘breast sacrifice’ of the Virgin should be considered as paying at least part of mankind’s debt. Christ is also regularly referred to as a ‘nursling’ even when obviously referring to a grown incarnation of Christ. The lines, ‘Let me devoutly in holy love dwell on Thy heaped up suffering among the fierce soldiery, O lamb-like nursling of Mary; then, let me think of Mary (suffering) owing to the streams of His (pierced) breast and the agony she felt at His sore-wounded feet’ in Laoiseach Mac an Bhaird, poem ‘Christ’s Five Wounds’ clearly encourages a visual image of the Crucifixion but nonetheless refers to Christ as the ‘nursling of Mary’. This is also reflected in images of the Virgin and Child, which reinforced the idea of the ‘nursling’ Christ and the source of the Virgin’s power as an intercessor.

The compositional context of the image of the Virgin and Child in Irish art further reinforces the understanding of the message of the icon. Images of the Virgin and Child survive on at least fifteen fifteenth-, sixteenth-, and seventeenth-century Irish tombs reflecting the hope expressed in poems of the same date that the Virgin’s ‘breast sacrifice’ could bring the salvation of the dead. [images 4.74 – 4.77] The now lost tomb slab of James Grace and his wife Ellis (1543) which was once at Tullaroan church, Co. Kilkenny, was one that had an unusual composition for the

204 Aithdioghlium Dana, vol. 2, p. 123.
period. [image 4.78] Whereas many tomb slabs had relief carvings of a large cross on Calvary steps with other elements of iconography around it, this tomb slab presents a grouping of imagery whose message is quite clear. The Virgin represented in the image of the Virgin and Child which signifies her role as Christ’s mother and all the power that brings, is placed between the image of the arms of the Grace family and an arrangement of the Instruments of the Passion. The Virgin is physically placed between the other two images, sending the message that she will intercede for salvation of the Grace family, when they come before the judgement of Christ, who, as represented by the Instruments of his pain, may be an angry judge, still sore from the Passion. James Grace and his wife Ellis, obviously wished to represent their devotion to the Virgin, and the imagery on their tomb may also have signified their hope that the Virgin would in fact play a role in their afterlives. That this composition of iconography is not found surviving more often could mean that it was relatively rare. However, knowing that Marian devotion was very popular in Ireland during the late medieval and early modern periods, it could be that this type of iconographical arrangement, with its focus on Marian devotion, was a more common target for destruction by representatives of the Protestant Reformation. That the tomb survived as long as it did, could be due to its location in Co. Kilkenny, where the leading family, especially Thomas Butler, the tenth Earl of Ormond, was known for its tolerance of religious belief.206

That the Virgin and Child image was often found on the reverse of crucifixes of both monumental and personal sizes also ties this sacrificial relationship between the Virgin and Child Christ to the relationship between the Virgin and the Christ during his Passion. A cluster of surviving wayside crosses in Co. Meath that date from the late fifteenth century to the early seventeenth century pair the Virgin and Child image and the Crucifixion image in this way. [images 4.79 – 4.81] A small group of pendant crucifixes in the collection of the NMI also display this formula of iconography. [images 4.82 – 4.87] Nothing is known of the provenance of these crucifixes but the similarities of the cast figures of Christ on the Cross and the Virgin and Child suggests they were all based upon the same source image, perhaps a particular statue located at a pilgrimage site or shrine. Interestingly, on the tubular crucifix which is least worn (NMI R2844) the figure of the Virgin is clearing baring

206 Cockerham and Harris, ‘Kilkenny Funeral Monuments 1500-1600’, pp. 154-156.
her breasts. These crucifixes are most likely of Irish origin though the influence of imported Spanish work can be seen in the tubular cross form. By pairing the Virgin and Child image with the image of the Crucifixion, the respective and complementary contributions of Christ and the Virgin to the salvation of mankind are being visually emphasised.207

The Rosary

These crucifixes, both large and small, most likely were created with the devotional practice of the Rosary in mind. The rosary was a set of prayers devoted to the Virgin. This kind of the devotional prayer no doubt would have been seen as one of the ways a person could show their devotion to, and gain the favour of, the Virgin. Both vital to one’s salvation, as has been shown above. The feast of the Rosary was officially recognised in 1573 but the practice had earlier roots. Both the Dominicans and the Franciscans were advocates of different forms of the Rosary and they had a hand in spreading the practice through Ireland as early as the mid-fifteenth century as seen in the dedication of a chapel in Kilcorban, Co. Galway to the Blessed Virgin of the Holy Rosary, in 1446. Jesuit missionaries arriving in Ireland in the mid-sixteenth century also encouraged the devotion by distributing rosary beads to people as they travelled through the country.208

Pendant crucifixes, like the examples above, were often found on rosary beads as can be seen by the NMI F1967:140 crucifix and rosary (sixteenth/seventeenth century). [image 4.87] The image of Helen Lawles on her and her husband, Nicholas Walsh’s, tomb (1599) in St Mary’s church, Kilkenny and the image of the woman patron on the Cantwell/Grace tomb (c. 1608) at Kilcooly abbey, Co. Tipperary, depicts the use of rosary beads in the devotional practice at the turn of the seventeenth century in Ireland. [images 4.88, 4.89] The beads were, as they are

today, held in the hands and used to keep track of the number of prayers recited. On the Cantwell/Grace tomb it should be noted that the woman on the tomb holds rosary with the cross up, in front of her face, where perhaps, with a crucifix like those mentioned above, one could meditate on the image of the Crucifixion and the Virgin and Child as one prayed the rosary. The regularity of the use of these two images on pendant crucifixes and their association with rosaries may have been the inspiration for the images found on the monumental wayside crosses. Annesbrook Cross (c. 1600) is especially referential of the devotional practice as it includes an inscription of the ‘Hail Mary’ or Ave prayer. Just as the Bardic poetry of the late medieval and early modern periods expressed the theme of the Virgin’s maternal role in salvation, so too did the devotional representations of the Virgin and Child found in Ireland from these periods.

Conclusions

As seen in this chapter, the Virgin Mary was an integral figure within the devotional art and devotional practices related to the Passion of Christ in Ireland in the late medieval and early modern periods. Representations of her in the visual arts as well as the devotional literature and bardic poetry from these periods places her role in the Passion as almost on par with that of Christ. Just as Christ was seen as repairing the original sin perpetrated by Adam through his Crucifixion, Mary was regularly described in bardic poetry as being the counterpoint to Eve. The Virgin was perhaps most importantly a figure of intercession. Devotion to her offered comfort in her compassion and confidence in her ability to fight for one’s salvation. Though devotion to the Virgin Mary was discouraged in the ideologies of the Protestant Reformations, devotional imagery continued to be produced in Ireland through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that suggests that among the Catholic communities of Ireland her role in their personal devotions did not wane. Though it has been suggested that devotions to the Virgin declined in the early modern period,


the continuing representations of her in the visual arts, whether as a figure or in symbolic images, and evidence to devotional activities such as the forming of Sodalities to Our Lady in the second quarter of the seventeenth century in several areas of Ireland, disputes this idea.\textsuperscript{211} The devotion to the Virgin was actively encouraged in Counter-Reformation ideology and with active devotional ideas concerning the Virgin already ingrained in the Irish mind, these new elements of devotional practice were seemingly accepted and integrated into Irish Catholic devotional life.

\textsuperscript{211} O'Dwyer, Mary: a history of devotion in Ireland, p. 210.
Chapter Five - Lesser known images of Christ in the iconography of the Passion in Ireland, 1450-1650

The centrality of the Passion to the devotional Catholicism of the laity in late medieval and early modern Ireland meant that even small details of the Passion narrative were at times held up for devotional contemplation and a wide variety of iconographic images developed over the centuries. Some elements of iconography that have been discussed are still popular and well-known in today’s canon of religious iconography, though the images’ relevance to specific prayers or devotional practices in some cases have changed or become less familiar. In this section, a selection of icons relating to the Passion that survive in Ireland will be discussed. This group of images are all of Christ and many of them have much in common. By placing these images under closer scrutiny one can better understand the depth and variety of Passion iconography that was being utilised and created in Ireland during the late medieval and early modern periods.

The Man of Sorrows, Ecce Homo, and other related images of Christ

The Man of Sorrows became a popular devotional image in Western Europe in the fourteenth century. This popularity continued through the sixteenth century after which the image faded out, and other images, like Ecce Homo, took its place. In Ireland examples of the Man of Sorrows image are found in several places dating from the period of its popularity.

Many of these devotional images of Christ have similar elements of iconography and unlike Crucifixion images which are still common, many of them would not be as familiar to the viewer today. As with images like the Man of Sorrows and the Ecce Homo, one icon would often influence another and at times they can be hard to distinguish from one another. There are several different types of devotional images of Christ that survive in Ireland but many of them have been incorrectly identified and grouped most often under the title ‘Ecce Homo’. The misidentifications of these images are understandable. These images, and the devotions they represented, may have easily blended one into the other. Some were seemingly even mislabelled in their own time. By viewing several similar, but
ultimately different, devotional types as the same, however, the true extent of the variety of Irish devotional images has been underestimated.

**History of the Man of Sorrows and Ecce Homo**

Unlike many of the other types of Passion imagery the Man of Sorrows image did not begin as an element of the Passion narrative. The name ‘Man of Sorrows’ probably was taken from Isaiah 53:3: ‘He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief’. The *Imago Pietatis*, as the Man of Sorrows is also known, is not attached to one temporal moment of the Passion but developed as a devotional image representing all the suffering, sacrifice and redemption of Christ’s Passion. As a result, besides being used as an icon for *Imago Pietatis* cults, the iconography was sometimes used to represent other devotional and liturgical ideas associated with the Passion, the sacrament of the Eucharist, the Resurrection and Judgement Day.

There is some debate as to where and when the Man of Sorrows image originated. The earliest surviving examples date to the twelfth century in Byzantine art and the thirteenth century in Italian art. The most popular argument is that the image originated as a Byzantine icon and came to the West through Italy. Hans Belting argues that the Man of Sorrows originated as a liturgical image developed in twelfth-century Byzantine monasteries. The Man of Sorrows icon was created as a feast image for use during the newly extensive Passion services. Rather than display several icons, ‘e.g. the Deposition, the Lamentation, or the Burial’, the complex Man of Sorrows image was created to stand for all of them. These early Byzantine examples were the simplest type of Man of Sorrows image. A frontal view of Christ’s head and shoulders is painted but the Wounds and the Crown of Thorns are not included. The Passion is indicated by Christ’s head inclining to the side and his closed eyes. His closed eyes were described in the liturgy as being closed in sleep rather than death to make clear that though his body died, God lived on. A gold frame in the Treasury of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is believed to have housed an early Man of Sorrows icon. The frame, in its ornate and costly decoration,
indicates that this image would have been highly treasured and probably venerated in a shrine or carried in processions.  

By the end of the thirteenth century, the use and acceptance of the Man of Sorrows icon was spreading and two types of the icon were being created. The first type of Man of Sorrows icon shows a portrait of Christ which depicts him with his eyes closed and head slumped, suggesting his death. At the time this type began to be used in place of the Crucifixion in works such as the Greek Gospel Manuscript from Karrahissar (c. 1280s) and an early Italian triptych (c.1300), which was probably commissioned by its patron to resemble the Byzantine icon. [images 5.1 – 5.3] The triptych includes images of the Virgin Mary and St John in the side panels gesturing in sorrow with a hand to their face as they were often depicted when witnessing the Crucifixion. Most surviving early Man of Sorrows images seem to have been created as a part of a diptych or triptych, most do not survive in one piece. Both of these examples were made for personal devotional use, in the case of the triptych for the use of a Dominican friar, in forms that were easy to transport which would allow for daily use in prayer even when travelling.  

A Franciscan prayer-book (c. 1293-1300) made in Genoa has a miniature of the Man of Sorrows that is an example of the second early type of Man of Sorrows image. [image 5.4] The general posture of Christ is the same as in the first type but Christ’s arms are shown folded in front of him in the second type, perhaps to further display the wounds from the Crucifixion and Christ’s suffering. An accompanying prayer in the manuscript demonstrates that the affective piety associated with the image in later centuries was already established in the thirteenth century: ‘O how

---


intensely Thou embrace me, good Jesu, when the blood went forth from Thy heart, the water from Thy side, and the soul from Thy body. Most sweet youth, what hast Thou done that Thou shouldst suffer so? Surely I, too, am the cause of Thy sorrow.²¹⁴

The Man of Sorrows image became widespread in Italy through the thirteenth century, where more detailed images developed that included a wide array of the Instruments of the Passion, and attendant figures of the Virgin Mary and St John, and angels. [image 5.5] The quick distribution of the image from Italy to much of the rest of Europe may be due to the ideas associated with the image that fit so well with the emotive piety and devotional practices being popularised especially by the Bernardine and Franciscan orders. Whereas the Byzantine Man of Sorrows icon principally held a liturgical function, in the west, the image had become more flexible, used for liturgical functions, for instance as the decoration on a tabernacle, but also utilised for devotional prayer and contemplation.²¹⁵

The spread of the image may also have been encouraged by an indulgence that begins to appear in many English, French and German manuscripts around the year 1400, linking the image of the Man of Sorrows to the story of St Gregory the Great’s miraculous vision. St Gregory the Great became the pope in 590 and his vita was recorded in the Legenda Aurea (written before 1267). One of his miracles concerns a vision he had while saying mass. The story tells of a ‘doubting matron’ who provided the bread for the communion of the mass. During the communion the woman smiles and St Gregory seeing this asks her why. She tells him that she is amused at the idea that the bread she made herself could become the flesh of Jesus Christ. St Gregory prays for the truth to be shown to the woman and a vision of the true flesh of Christ appears, described in the text as being the size of a finger. A rare early illumination of the Mass of St Gregory vision is found in a twelfth-century German manuscript accompanying the text of St Gregory and the Doubting Matron.

In this early work, the vision of the flesh of Christ is quite literally painted as a finger, lying on a dish! [image 5.6] By the second half of the fourteenth century the legend and the iconography associated with it had changed to include the Man of Sorrows icon as the image that St Gregory saw in his vision. The Man of Sorrows, which had already symbolised the culmination of all of Christ’s sacrifices for man, was used in this story to reinforce the idea of the Transubstantiation of the host during the mass. The image, in association with this legend, was accompanied by an apocryphal indulgence that was attributed to Pope Gregory and gave varying huge amounts of pardon – 20,000 years in some copies, 45,000 years in others – to all people who said five Paternosters and five Ave Marias before the ‘original’ image of the Man of Sorrows. Of course there was no ‘original’. The indulgence which accompanied the image was there to legitimise and create a relic out of the image of the Man of Sorrows – which one however, depended on one’s source.216

In the fifteenth century, when the Carthusians of S. Croce wished to attract more pilgrims, they began publicizing their Man of Sorrows mosaic. They claimed it was the portrait of Christ commissioned by St. Gregory himself to record the image he saw during his miraculous vision. In reality the mosaic probably came from Constantinople and was given to the church around the year 1380. Judging from its size it was probably conceived of originally as a private devotional aid, much like the examples discussed above. To better spread the devotion to their icon, the Carthusians at S. Croce commissioned Israhel van Meckenem, ‘the best known printmaker of his day,’ to create engravings of the icon. Van Meckenem created two versions of the image, one larger for the wealthier pilgrim and the other simpler and smaller as an option for those devotees of lesser means. [images 5.7, 5.8] At the bottom of both versions of the image is an inscription which reads: ‘This image was made after the model and likeness of the well known first image of the Pietà, which is preserved in the Church of the Holy Cross in the city of Rome, which the holy Pope Gregory the Great ordered to be painted according to the vision that he had had

and that had been shown to him from above'.

This claim was certainly untrue, but such claims were not uncommon. Several Roman churches are recorded by fourteenth-, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sources as having contained the chapel or altar where the Gregorian miracle happened.

Over the course of the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries several types of Man of Sorrows images developed in the west. Some followed the older Byzantine model but most worked from the Italian models creating derivative types as the image spread. The Man of Sorrows images were used to illustrate a variety of texts. One of the most common texts combined with the Man of Sorrows, especially in English manuscripts, was the newly introduced Psalms of the Passion, which would have further solidified the Man of Sorrows image as one that represented the Passion in the minds of late medieval and early modern people.

The Man of Sorrows image remained popular through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries but faded out of use in European art during the seventeenth century. The *Ecce Homo* icon, a very similar image, seems to have filled the gap that the Man of Sorrows left. The earliest surviving *Ecce Homo* picture is found in the eleventh century but the image did not gain popularity in Western art until c. 1400. At first it was primarily represented as a narrative element of the Passion story. In the Gospel of John it is said that when Christ had been whipped at the pillar, Pilate presented him one more time to the people outside the court of justice. In a bid for sympathy from the crowd he says, 'Ecce Homo! Behold the man!' But he is met with cries of, 'Crucify him!' after which Pilate turns over Christ to be crucified.

Narrative images of this scene often included large groups of figures but from the sixteenth century the Ecce Homo figure becomes more pared down, often only

---


220 John, 19:4-6.
including an image of Christ and Pilate or Christ and a guard, or the single figure of Christ on his own.\textsuperscript{221}

The Ecce Homo image is very similar to the Man of Sorrows image. In both Christ is often depicted in a similar manner, hands crossed in front of him wearing an expression of anguish, but the Ecce Homo, unlike the Man of Sorrows is a temporal one, and represents Christ at a specific point in his Passion before the Crucifixion, just after the Mocking but before he is given his cross to carry. One of the key differences is that the Man of Sorrows always shows the Five Wounds of the Crucifixion, whereas the Ecce Homo Christ would never, since the icon represents a point in the Passion narrative before the Crucifixion. While this distinction seems fairly definite, the similarities and popularity of both the Man of Sorrows image and the Ecce Homo images meant that at times the two were hard to distinguish from one another. No obvious examples of the Ecce Homo image survive in Ireland that are known to this author, though as will be discussed several other closely related iconographical images of Christ have a small presence.

In Ireland, a handful of images suggest that Man of Sorrows images of some of the different types that developed over the centuries became familiar to at least some of the Irish people. The following discussion will analyse what kind of Man of Sorrows images survive in Irish devotional art, what influences appear to have affected their appearance, and how they may have been utilised in devotional practice in Ireland.

**The Man of Sorrows in Ireland**

*The ‘Indulgence Stone’*

The ‘Indulgence stone’ is now built into a wall of St. Brigid’s Cathedral, Kildare, though it most likely was originally placed elsewhere and possibly used as part of a tomb. [image 5.9] This is a classic Man of Sorrows figure but for two things, the Crucifixion wounds are not obviously apparent and the words ‘ECCE HOMO’ are carved behind the figure. The wounds could very well have been represented by paint or shallow markings that have now worn away. A mark on Christ’s left hand is just visible and could be intended as a wound. One of the required elements in a Man

\textsuperscript{221} Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. 2, p. 76.
of Sorrows image is the presence of the five wounds of the Crucifixion whereas the Ecce Homo Christ does not have the wounds. Regardless, it is more likely in this case that the figure is intended as a Man of Sorrows image due to the accompanying indulgence.

The phrase ‘Ecce Homo’ may appear to today’s viewer as a type of label explaining what they are looking at. When the phrase is found on a Man of Sorrows image, as it is here, the visual similarities to the Ecce Homo iconography make it an easy assumption. It is unlikely though that this was the original purpose of the phrase, since it is also found used in the same way in devotional images that were most definitely not the ‘Ecce Homo’ Christ. A late fifteenth-century Flemish woodcut of Christ on the Cross has to either side of the Christ figure the words just as we see on the stone slab, ‘Ecce’ and ‘Homo’. [image 5.10] The ‘Ecce Homo’ phrase seems to be placed in the image to direct the viewer to ‘Behold the Man’ and specifically the humanity of Christ that is also expressed by the gushing blood coming from Christ’s wounds. The viewer is to consider the way he bleeds just as they would. The phrase also urges them to truly behold him, to absorb the image, rather than look away in disgust. Similar injunctions to ‘behold’ would have been familiar for the contemporary viewer of the image from late medieval sermons and lyrics from appeal poetry. The late sixteenth-century Irish poet Diarmuid Ó Cobhthaigh in his poem ‘Christ’s Honour Price’ instructs the listener to ‘behold his wound guiding thee forward on the way’, while another poem by Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn, called ‘Christ lives Again’, exhorts the listener to ‘Behold the wounds on Christ, the three nails, the Cross with the crown on it; great even yet is the pain pictured by it’.222

At the same time, the use of the phrase may have reminded the viewer that these were the words of Pilate who spoke them to the angry mob when trying to dissuade them of their wish to crucify Christ. Reading the words the viewer may

---

mentally place themselves in the role of a member of the mob, provoking a sense of regret, and see the words as an exhortation towards compassion. The words were a symbol or an instruction rather than a label and it is likely that the words, positioned so similarly on the St Brigid Indulgence Stone, were included for the same purpose.

An indulgence is carved on a rectangular panel below the Christ figure that resembles a scroll. It was common, in woodcuts for example, to place the indulgence just below the devotional image. The indulgence on the St Brigid’s Cathedral carving is hard to make out as some of the lettering has been damaged and worn away but it is carved in English and was described by Helen Roe in 1983 as reading: ‘To him that devoutly say V Paternoster and V Ave before this Image Ar grant XXV yeres and XXV Dayes of Pardon’.\(^{223}\) As discussed above, the number and content of the prayers requested was a common rubric that was found attached to other Man of Sorrows images.\(^{224}\)

Printed devotional works are the likely source for this image as they often included indulgences with the image. Many late fifteenth-century English woodcuts include similar indulgence inscriptions and other elements that closely compare in style and content to the St Brigid Cathedral indulgence stone. [image 5.11] However, prints from other regions show strong similarities as well, such as an early sixteenth-century Netherlandish engraving that includes a Man of Sorrows image that like the Indulgence stone includes the words ‘Ecce Homo’ behind the figure, making it difficult to pinpoint an exact source or influence.\(^{225}\) [image 5.12]

The Crucifixion scene that is carved to the left of the Man of Sorrows image cannot be ignored, as it also suggests a strong influence from outside sources. From the thirteenth century, it was common to find flying angels collecting Christ’s blood in chalices in Crucifixion scenes in examples of European Crucifixion art, but it never seems to have become very common in surviving Irish works. A Crucifixion panel (late sixteenth century/early seventeenth century) originally in the Galwey chapel in St Multose’s Church, Kinsale, Co. Cork and the carved Crucifixion panel

---


\(^{224}\) Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p 239.

on the Creagh tomb in Ennis Friary, Co. Clare, are the two other surviving Irish Crucifixion images that show flying angels collecting the blood of Christ in this manner. The Creagh tomb panels, as discussed above, were most likely influenced by fifteenth-century English alabaster carvings. The St Multose Crucifixion panel seems most related to sixteenth-century painting and prints from Germany and the Low Countries. In Dürer’s crowded Crucifixion scenes from *The Great Passion* one can see the angels twisting and turning as they fly through the sky. [image 4.3] The same is attempted in the St Multose Panel and the Indulgence stone though to lesser effect. The Centurion carved at the centre of the Indulgence slab also points to a possible Dürer print influence, in his strange headgear which in its curving shape may have been an attempt at a feather, a common element of Dürer’s centurians’ headwear. [images 5.13]

*Ennis Friary Man of Sorrows*

Another Irish example of this figure is found on a stone panel positioned at the east end of the nave at Ennis friary, Co. Clare. [image 5.14] This Man of Sorrows, a half length Christ figure surrounded by a wide variety of the Instruments of the Passion developed from some of the Italian works created in the thirteenth century. By the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, when the Ennis Man of Sorrows was most likely created however, it was common for the Instruments of the Passion to be included with the Man of Sorrows images in the devotional art of many areas in Europe. They were presented in several ways. When there are only a few Instruments they were often attached to the Cross or in a realistic manner to the front of Christ’s sarcophagus or to the back wall in the image. [images 5.15, 5.16] Larger numbers of the Instruments were sometimes compartmentalised in small boxes. [image 5.17] The arrangement of the Instruments in the Ennis Friary panel was also quite common, and one can find similar compositions in late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century altarpieces and prints from many areas of Europe. 226 [images 5.18, 5.19]

The Indulgence Stone sculptor incorrectly carved ‘IMRI’ on the titulus of the Crucifixion scene of the panel. This betrays that he may have been copying source material without really understanding it. The sculptor of the Ennis Man of Sorrows panel on the other hand displays a better knowledge of the meaning of the material. Among the Instruments of the Passion in the carving the sculptor inserted the Cock and the Pot motif, an Instrument of the Passion that, while not of Irish origin seems to have been used almost exclusively in Irish depictions of the Instruments of the Passion. The similarities between the Ennis Man of Sorrows panel and other European Man of Sorrows images would suggest that the sculptor at Ennis was familiar with continental sources, but was probably Irish himself.227

The Ennis Man of Sorrows may have acted as a type of permanent altarpiece on the wall behind a side altar. The placement of the panel however is perhaps most significant in relation to a carving of St Francis built into the wall on the other side of the nave. [image 5.20] The marks of the stigmata, which are clearly displayed in the Ennis carving, were seen by the Franciscans as a divine seal of approval. This idea was expressed in the late fifteenth century by Philip Bocht Ó hUiginn, a Franciscan and bardic poet, who described St Francis in a poem as ‘Christ’s standard bearer’ and the Franciscans as ‘the perfect order he belongs to’.228 The pairing of these images would emphasis a connection between the wounds of Christ in the image of the Man of Sorrows and the corresponding wounds of the stigmata that St Francis was believed to have received.229

*The Mass of St Gregory Man of Sorrows*

A ‘historical’ type of Man of Sorrows image developed in the mid-fifteenth century that depicted St Gregory having his vision while celebration mass. The Mass of St Gregory Man of Sorrows image may have primarily developed in French and

228 Philip Bocht Ó hUiginn, ed. and trans by L. McKenna (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1931), poem 8, verses 19, 21, trans. p. 150.
Flemish books of hours where it commonly accompanied a prayer attributed to St Gregory called the ‘Seven O’s of St Gregory’. This type of image like the others quickly became popular and spread around Europe. The images of the Mass of St Gregory are often quite similar, showing St Gregory with at least one acolyte and attendants, sometimes including the patrons of the image, kneeling or standing in front of an altar where any of the several types of common Man of Sorrows images appear. The Mass of St Gregory Man of Sorrows image was also associated with the indulgence, which was included in an inscription in many examples of the image including the Van Meckenem engraving of the Mass of St. Gregory event at the request of the Carthusians around the same time created the engraving of the S. Croce icon discussed above.

A surviving Irish example of the Mass of Gregory Man of Sorrows iconography can be found on the mensa slab of the tomb of John McCragh and his wife Katherine Prendergast (c. 1557), in St. Carthage’s Cathedral, Lismore, Co. Waterford. The McCragh tomb is the only surviving example of the Mass of St Gregory image to have been created in Ireland, but it is fully developed and displays in its use of iconographic elements an understanding of the meaning of this image and a wish for those viewing it to understand what the image signifies. Inscriptions are included in this image that both instruct and ensure that the viewer would understand who and what they were viewing. St Gregory is labelled by his name, ‘S Gregori’. The words ‘Ecce Homo’ are included as they were on the Indulgence Stone, in this case, carved within a band which may also be placed as they are to represent the Cross behind Christ. The host that sits in the chalice on the altar in the image has carved on it the monogram of Christ, ‘IHS’. The inclusion of the monogram would emphasise the idea that the flesh of Christ, a vision of which appears before St Gregory, is present in the host as well.

The Mass of St Gregory image and accompanying devotional prayers appears to have been available in expensive manuscripts such as the *Hours of Henry VIII* and

---

231 Van Os, *The Art of Devotion*, pp. 110-112.
232 Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, vol. 2, cat. no. 250e; John Ribton Garstin, ‘On the McCragh Tomb in Lismore Cathedral’, *JRSAI*, fifth service, 14 (1904), pp. 295-312 (p. 311, fig. 5).
less expensive printed prayer books and primers made for the English market. It is likely that some of these same books may have been imported to Ireland in the fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries, at the very least, finding their way into the hands of the wealthy. As in Ireland, few examples of the Mass of Gregory image survive in other, more public materials in England. English examples do survive however in a variety of mediums including stained glass, wall painting, funerary brass, and wood and stone carving. [images – 5.27 – 5.29] Hampton Chapel, which was also mentioned above in regards to its Easter Sepulchre there, has a rare in situ stone carving of the Mass of St Gregory. The sculpture is believed to have escaped destruction during the reign of Edward VI by the plaster covering it was discovered under in modern times. These examples, as well as surviving examples of the Mass of St Gregory image in English alabaster retable carvings, now removed from their original surrounds, suggest that the image was at one time more prevalent in English religious settings.²³³ [image 5.30]

By comparing the Irish Mass of St Gregory image on the McCragh tomb to other surviving fifteenth and sixteenth-century examples from England and the continent, one begins to discern that there are some elements of this carving that are unusual and can be used to narrow down the possibilities of what source that may have influenced the composition. The first is the placement of the host in the chalice. In other images, the host is placed on the altar, is in the hands of St Gregory, or is not present at all.

canon of the mass and accordingly in many images of the Mass of St Gregory the tiara is shown placed on the altar or being held by an accompanying figure, such as a bishop, cardinal, or in at least one example an angel. [images 5.22, 5.31 – 5.33] The wearing of the tiara would suggest that the image is not depicting the moment of consecration. This could explain the unusual representation of the host is in the chalice, a placement that is not found in any other images of the Mass of St Gregory image that this author has viewed. In the liturgy of the Sarum Use, the celebrant would place the broken particle of the Sacred host in the chalice after the ‘Agnus Dei’, so perhaps this moment is indicated in the carving. The placement of the monogram of Christ on the Eucharistic host could further this idea, showing that the bread has already been transformed into the body of Christ. A similar visual depiction of the activation of Christ’s Eucharistic sacrifice can be seen in a German altarpiece (c. 1473). [image 5.34] In this example, St Gregory, wearing the tiara, is witness to the truth of Transubstantiation through the blood of Christ, rather than the body, as the Man of Sorrows blood spurts from his side wound to the chalice on the altar. The blood also bounces out of the chalice and onto graves of the dead who rise upon receiving the power of the Eucharistic blood.  

The artist of this altarpiece must have based his work upon the nearly identical earlier altarpiece, created in 1440, by the Flemish artist Robert Campin. [image 5.35] This ‘moment after’ version of the Mass of St Gregory image can also be found on a Spanish panel painting, created by the artist Carillo, c. 1480, for a priest to hang in the church of Torrico in the Toledo province of Spain looks to be of the same stylistic group. [image 5.36] That different artists, in different countries, were painting original works of striking similarity can be easily explained by the regular practice of creating prints based on painted images. A fifteenth-century German or Netherlandish print, now in the British Museum, appears to be influenced by this type of image and also other iconographical motifs in common with the McCragh tomb carving. [image 5.37] The Lismore carving does not replicate this print, but may have been influenced by a print like this one. The figure of St Gregory and the figure of Christ as the Man of Sorrows are similar and like the McCragh

tomb, the print depicts the Four Evangelists in each corner of the frame around the image. This print, though created in Germany or the Low Countries, was found pasted into a binding of a book imported from a Spanish printing centre in Huesca, which would suggest the image may have travelled and been replicated outside of its country of origin. Two other prints that must also be from the same family-source as the German metal-cut can be found in a printed Parisian work from the 1490s. Again these prints are not identical to the German/Netherlandish print, but the overall composition and details, such as the two pitchers shown on the near side of the altar, suggest a common source image. While the sculptor of the Lismore tomb appears to have been influenced by continental sources when composing the Mass of St Gregory image, the Cock in the Pot, a distinctively Irish motif, has been prominently carved in the bottom corner of the image.

The Mass of St Gregory story places an emphasis on the celebration of the Eucharist and the belief of the validity of Transubstantiation. The McCragh tomb was erected during the lifetime of John McCragh and his wife, and so should more correctly be termed a cenotaph. The McCrags therefore, as living patrons of the tomb, must have specifically chosen the design. Such a large segment of a tomb dedicated to the Mass of St Gregory image could suggest that the McCrags held a special devotion to the feast of Corpus Christi. This feast was not solely practiced by Catholics but the emphasis upon Transubstantiation in the image of the Mass of St Gregory Man of Sorrows suggests a Catholic devotional point of view. The fact that this tomb was most-likely created around 1557 when Queen Mary I still reigned would make the free use of such imagery all the more understandable. Otherwise, little evidence is available concerning the religious leanings of John McCragh or Katherine Prendergast, but their sons were recorded followers of the Earl of Desmond from 1550 to 1569, which at least could point suggest a Catholic influence in their upbringing.235

The full-length single figure of the Man of Sorrows

A type of full-length standing Man of Sorrows developed as early as the thirteenth century and became popular alongside the other versions of the Man of Sorrows images. Like the other types, this Man of Sorrows was incorporated into

works of many mediums. [images 5.40 – 5.42] The development of this Man of Sorrows type was probably influenced by the image of the Risen Christ in some ways and, below, a group of Irish Risen Christ figures from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that are very similar to these images will be discussed.\textsuperscript{236}

The full-length, standing Man of Sorrows was the most common depiction of the Image of Pity in three-dimensional sculpture. From the beginning of the fourteenth century statues of the Man of Sorrows figure became popular in German art as part of devotional programmes of sculpture set up on altars for meditative prayer. Wooden sculpture survives in Ireland from this period in only small numbers though it is likely that it was once a far more common medium in which devotional statuary was made. One surviving example is a greater than life-size Irish wooden sculpture of Christ in the round. [image 5.43] This sculpture shows Christ in a cloak or mantle open to reveal his chest. Both of his arms are broken off (as are his feet) and a more modern replacement for the right arm has been attached. The replacement arm has Christ holding an orb, a typical attribute of the Risen Christ, but this is not likely to be what the arm looked like on the original sculpture. This statue of Christ wears the Crown of Thorns and the side wound is visible on his right side, which would further suggest that this is an Irish version of the Standing Man of Sorrows rather than the Risen Christ, despite the modern addition. More likely the statue would have resembled a fifteenth-century German wooden statue of the Man of Sorrows which, like the Irish statue, is wrapped in the cloak that is open at the chest and raises his palms to display his wounds. [image 5.44] The Irish wooden statue stood until the twentieth century in the Holy Ghost Hospital, founded within the recently suppressed Franciscan friary in 1545. Floors were inserted into the friary nave and transept, allowing burial to continue below, while a chapel and altar, originally with eight devotional statues, were established above, thus ensuring continuity of devotional inspiration within the medieval building.\textsuperscript{237}


\textsuperscript{237} Schiller, \textit{Iconography of Christian Art}, vol. 2, pp. 201-202; Catriona MacLeod, ‘Mediaeval Figure Sculpture in Ireland, Statues in the Holy Ghost Hospital, Waterford’, \textit{JRSAI} 76 (1946), pp. 89-100 (pp. 94-95, pl. 10, no. 1).
Other related Christ figures

After identifying the iconographical types of Man of Sorrows images that survive from Ireland in the late medieval and early modern periods, the following sections explore some of the other Passion related Christ-based iconography that survives in Irish art. Though the examples that remain are few when compared to the abundance of surviving imagery on the continent, their existence demonstrates that the variety of iconographical images in Ireland was greater and more sophisticated than has been understood in the past.

_Herrgottsrüh (The Repose of Our Lord) tomb panels_

On the head end-slab of the Wellesley tomb (c. 1539) in St. Brigid’s Cathedral, Kildare, and on a fragment from a tomb-chest (second half sixteenth century) in the Carmelite Priory, also in Kildare, are two carvings of Christ figures that are of the same type. [images 5.45, 5.46] A third appears to have once existed at Dunferth, Co. Kildare on the foot-end panel of the Bermingham tomb (c. 1548) though all that survives is a fragment of Christ’s head. [image 5.47] These carvings, which may have all been created by the same workshop of sculptors, have in the past been identified as the Ecce Homo Christ and it is true that in some ways the figures do resemble the Ecce Homo. Perhaps the most direct persuasion is the presence of the engraved words ‘ECCE HOMO’ on the Carmelite Priory panel, but this phrase, as has been discussed in relation to the Indulgence Slab at St Bridgid’s Cathedral in Kildare and the McCragh tomb at Lismore Cathedral, Co. Waterford, is not necessarily a label. By comparing these images to contemporary iconography from the continent one can find that these Christ figures more closely resemble a lesser known devotional image by today’s standards, the Herrgottsrüh image.²³⁸

The Herrgottsrüh icon seems to have first appeared in fourteenth-century Italian painting before spreading north and being commonly reproduced in sculptural works north of the Alps. The Herrgottsrüh image depicts Christ before his death. Though he has been mocked as signalled by the Crown of Thorns, he has not yet been crucified and thus does not display the Five Wounds. While these details place the figure within the timeline of the Passion narrative, the image is more focused on presenting an affective devotional idea, not meant to express so much the pain of

---
²³⁸ Hunt, _Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture_, vol. 1, p. 160.
Christ, as it is meant to show Christ’s extreme solitude during the Passion and in his death. The Christ figures on two of the Irish tomb panels are damaged, making it harder to read Christ’s expression but from what is still visible, the Christ figures appear to be gazing out to the viewer with an expression of contemplative unhappiness, which is typical in the Herrgottsruh Christ figure. 

The Wellesly and Carmelite Priory panels have much in common with fifteenth- and sixteenth-century examples of Herrgottsruh images from outside of Ireland. One of the main iconographical differences between the Herrgottsruh Christ and the Ecce Homo Christ is that the Herrgottsruh Christ is always shown sitting and often in an architectural setting. The Wellesly tomb figure sits on a table or low wall with supporting columns on either end. The columns decorated with carved foliage could be compared to the decorated columns found in some of the continental images. The Carmelite Priory figure sits on a more non-descript low wall though a vine-like motif just outside the edge of the panel may be a reference to the decorative element in the Wellesly carving. In both the tomb carvings Christ’s seamless garment is spread below him on the bench, a motif also found in continental examples of this image.

The Instruments of the Passion are shown in the Wellesly Herrgottsruh panel. They are scattered around Christ in the space, leaning against Christ’s bench and hanging on the wall behind him. The Instruments are used here as they are in Man of Sorrows images, to signify the other elements of Christ’s Passion to the viewer, though this representation of Christ does not interact with any of the Instruments in real time. The Instruments were not a required element of the Herrgottsruh iconography, but are sometimes included in continental examples of the image.

The clustering of the surviving images in the Kildare area suggests that an example of the image was owned by a patron of one of the tombs or otherwise known locally. The Wellesly tomb, considered to be the earliest of the three examples, was the tomb of Bishop Walter Wellesly. Looking at the rest of the tomb carvings, the architectural details and the treatment of the figures suggest a greater familiarity with renaissance style than was normally seen in Irish carving at the time. Hunt believes that the tomb was carved by a native workshop, but perhaps under the

---

instruction of a foreign mason. If this was the case, it is possible that the mason brought with him the less common iconography. Likewise, the patron, as a bishop would most likely have had relatively good understanding and familiarity with the current literature and iconography of Passion devotion. This tomb could have then served as a source of inspiration for the design of the other two[^240].

One later possible Irish example of the Herrgottsruh Christ figure is found carved on the Duleek wayside cross that was erected to the memory of Walter Bathe by his wife Jennet Dowdall, c. 1601. The figure is small and damaged but what remains suggests a Herrgotsruh icon in the tradition of the earlier Kildare images. Herrgotsruh iconography continued to be used in late sixteenth/ early seventeenth-century devotional prints and such a work could be the new source of the Duleek cross image but the cross with its decorative programme of saints and other icons, could easily have been based on the Kildare tombs discussed above. [image 5.53]

*Christ in Distress / Christ on Calvary*

A devotional image, often referred to as Christ in Distress or Christ on Calvary, developed from around the late fourteenth century. The preparations and the process of Christ’s Crucifixion are not discussed in the Gospels. It is simply stated that Christ is crucified but, as has been seen in previous sections, the pious imaginations of the mystic writers of devotional works were inspired by these gaps in the Passion narrative. The Christ in Distress image is an imagined moment that shows the viewer an instance in which Christ has paused to rest during the flurry of activity of those around him who are preparing for his Crucifixion. In this way, the Christ in Distress figure is very similar, both visually and in concept, to the Herrgottsruh figure. The figures are representative of different moments in Christ’s personal journey through the events of the Passion however, and whereas the Herrgottsruh image presents calm moment of solitude, the Christ in Distress figure wears an expression of mute grief that reveals him in a moment of mourning, both over his personal suffering during the Passion and for the entire world for whom he suffered. This type of Christ figure depicted as Christ in Distress may have

developed from early Christian imagery depicting Job in Distress. Job, the Old Testament figure, represented human suffering and was seen as a proto-type of Christ and his suffering during the Passion. Just as the Christ in Distress figures is depicted sitting on Calvary, Job in Distress is shown sitting on a dunghill. Like Christ who holds attributes of his suffering, Job holds potshards he uses to scrape at his wounds. In these ways the images offered the viewer meditations on suffering that encouraged compassion in the viewer. \(^{241}\)

At least two Christ in Distress figures survive in Ireland from the period between 1450 and 1650. One example is now in the collection of Maynooth College, Co. Kildare but is said to have been rescued from Cromwell’s troops during the seventeenth-century sack of Drogheda, Co. Meath, who had already partly mutilated it, leaving it armless. [image 5.54] It was kept by the Caddell family until the twentieth century. The other Irish example is originally from Fethard, Co. Tipperary, now in the collection of the NMI. [image 5.55] Both of these Irish Christ in Distress figures are of the same type. They are wooden, life-sized (or nearly life-sized in the case of the Maynooth statue) statues of typical Christ in Distress figures who sits alone. The Fethard Christ in Distress sits on a skull-embedded rock that signifies the place of his Crucifixion, ‘Golgotha’ or the ‘hill of the skulls’ but it was also common for Christ to sit on the shaft of his yet to be erected cross. [images 5.56, 5.57] Christ in Distress images typically were one of two types. The first showed Christ gesturing despair with his head in his hand, the other, type that is represented by the Fethard Christ in Distress statue shows Christ with his hands crossed before him bound with ropes. The ropes were a visual reference to the Flagellation of Christ, symbolic to the viewer of those sufferings that Christ, and the viewers themselves were contemplating and mourning. Other details of the Fethard statue would refer the viewer to other elements of Christ’s Passion. The large crown of thorns on Christ’s head and the robe that drapes on the rock beneath him, coloured red as is found in other Irish representations, would suggest the Crowning of Thorns, in the same way

that in other examples of the image other instruments of the Passion are shown to represent other points of the narrative. A single figure sculpture of Christ in Distress like the two Irish examples, was commonly found from the late-fourteenth through the seventeenth century, especially in Germany statuary, but numerous sixteenth- and seventeenth-century artists developed variations of the Christ in Distress devotional image in two-dimensional mediums as well. [image 5.58 – 5.60]

A challenging analysis: a case study in the Seanchas Búrcach, f. 18r

The painting in the Seanchas Búrcach on folio 18r is the least straightforward of the four Passion images that appear in the manuscript. [image 5.61] The first element to note is the obvious presence of the Five Wounds on Christ’s body, which dictates that this is a type of Man of Sorrows image. The other elements of the figure do not contradict this categorization but the iconography that surrounds the figure could lead to the assumption that the image represents either the Ecce Homo Christ or possibly the Mocking of Christ.

Within the context of the manuscript itself, the image would make sense as Ecce Homo in its position among the other three Passion miniatures. Sequentially, in the gospel of John and the narrative common to late medieval Passion treatise, Pilate presents Christ to the crowd after the Flagellation but before Christ is made to carry his cross to Calvary. The Seanchas Búrcach Christ figure stands on a strange structure which could be a reference to the raised platform that is often depicted in medieval images of Pilate presenting Christ to the crowd, such as the Ecce Homo scene on the painted altarpiece (c. 1440) by the Master of St Veronica. [image 5.62] If this is the Ecce Homo scene in the Seanchas Búrcach, then Pilate is unusually absent but the figures that surround the structure could easily represent the angry


crowd. The top two figures could be pointing at Christ in a gesture of mocking or perhaps pointing to indicate the crowd's response to Pilate's offer, choosing Christ to crucify. This interpretation seems reasonable, the only issue being that the Five Wounds take it out of the narrative and present a Christ figure who has already been crucified, i.e. the Man of Sorrows.

Another interpretation is that this was intended as a Man of Sorrows image that was enhanced with other elements of Passion iconography. The Man of Sorrows appeared in many different types as has been described above. As an image representing the suffering of the Passion in its entirety, it is common to find the Man of Sorrows Christ figure paired with other symbols or elements of the Passion narrative. Often this was accomplished symbolically with the Instruments of the Passion but in other examples figural elements are used. The frontispiece of *The Engraved Passion* by Albrecht Dürer shows Christ on a platform at the top of some stairs. He holds some of the Instruments, though not the reed, and wears the crown of thorns, like in the *Seanchas Bárcach*, and stands near the flagellation column. There are people standing next to the stairs, though in this case they are not mocking and have been identified as the Virgin Mary and St John. The image is not as explicitly bloody as the *Seanchas Bárcach* miniature but the five wounds are clearly displayed. [image 5.63] Another of Dürer's woodcuts, on the title page of the *Large Passion* (1496-97), also presents an image of the Man of Sorrows. [image 5.64] In this image the Man of Sorrows sits on a flat stone bench, clearly displaying the wounds of the Crucifixion in his hands and feet but next to him is one of his tormentors, kneeling and offering Christ the Sceptre-like Reed. Below the image Dürer placed this verse by Benedict Chelidonius:

> I bear these cruel wounds for thee, O man! And I heal thy frailty with my blood. I heal thy wounds with my wounds, with my death I expiate thy death. I am God and have become man for thee. But thou dost not thank me. With thy sins thou often tearest open my wounds. I am still lashed for thy misdeeds. Have done now. I once suffered great torment from the Jews. Now, friend, let peace be between us. 

---


This quote, as spoken by the Man of Sorrows in the image, emphasises the idea that the Mocking and abuse that Christ suffered for mankind is repeated anew each time the viewer sins and could be the message on offer in the Seanchas Búrcach miniature as well.

There are some other examples of the Mocking of Christ that compare to the Seanchas Búrcach image and show that the image may have been meant to depict, in part, that moment of the Passion narrative. One example is a painting by Hieronymus Bosch (d. 1516). His painting 'Christ Mocked (The Crowning with Thorns)' (c. 1490-1500) shows Christ a moment just before he is crowned with the Thorns. [image 5.65] Though the Bosch image in many ways does differ from the Seanchas Búrcach painting, the images share a composition in which Christ is centralised and the figures gather around him poised on the edge of a moment.

A closer comparison can be found in a painted miniature of the Mocking of Christ, found in an early seventeenth-century Netherlandish locket. [image 5.66] The Mocking image is found on the left inner panel paired with an image of the Vernicle held by St Veronica, and on the outside of the locket are engraved images in silver of the Adoration of the Shepherds and the Resurrection. This small painting has a composition very close to the Seanchas Búrcach image. Like the Seanchas Búrcach image, Christ is standing, dressed in the cloak, the Crown of Thorns and a loin cloth with his hands tied in front of him with ropes. The tormentors are painted on either side of him. Christ stands taller than the other figures though no structural platform is indicated. This image, like the Seanchas Búrcach Man of Sorrows, also at first glance seems that it could be an Ecce Homo image, but if one follows Christ’s gaze down to the lower figure on his left, one can see that he is in the act of accepting the Reed from his tormentor. One wonders if the figure in the same position in the Seanchas Búrcach image, who reaches his hand through the rails could be just pulling back after giving Christ the Reed that he holds. This action places the locket image in the Mocking of Christ category. The Christ figure in the locket, does not display the Five Wounds of the Crucifixion and therefore is without the ambiguity of the Seanchas Búrcach image in that regard, but the similarity of the two compositions could indicate that the artist of the Seanchas Búrcach image was placing his Man of Sorrows Christ figure within the framework of the Mocking of Christ, as was done by Dürer in his woodcut from the Large Passion.
Conclusions

The examples of Christ imagery in this chapter have demonstrated that a wider variety of Passion iconography existed in Ireland in the late medieval and early modern periods than has previously been recognised. While these images have often been glossed over or considered as interchangeable figures, exploring the contextual history of meaning that could be found in these differing images helps to provide an insight into the depth of meaning in Irish devotional ideology during this period. In the next chapter, elements of Passion iconography related to the suffering and wounds of Christ will be further explored.
Chapter Six - The Wounds of Christ and the Instruments of the Passion

As the previous chapters have already begun to demonstrate, the wounds that Christ obtained during the Passion were a consistent concern that arose in most areas of Passion devotion. The focus on Christ’s wounds and his suffering may have in part developed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as a result of the increased knowledge of the relics of the Passion that soldiers returning from the crusades in the holy land brought back with them to Western Europe. Relics of the Instruments of the Passion suddenly became available to be seen and touched, measured and recorded in visual detail. With these relics claims to the ‘knowledge’ of the length of the three nails of the Crucifixion or formulas to work out the exact number of Christ’s wounds, for example, became more popular, most likely because the facts suddenly seemed more attainable. The claims were often based on numeric symbolism rather than any actual deductive evidence gained from relics, but the idea that the formulas came from evidence based on physically tangible objects must have made them more intriguing. The relics of the Instruments of the Passion in their physicality made Christ more human and his humanity came to dominate the devotional interests of the late medieval period. In this case therefore, the objects and images of them may have as often inspired the devotion and the devotional texts, rather than the often assumed equation that visual imagery was always inspired by the written works. Here the interaction between word and text, liturgical and lay popular tradition can be seen as developing in a type of responsive conversation.²⁴⁶

Like the sorrows of the Virgin discussed in chapter four, the sorrows and sufferings of Christ were often developed into numbered lists in prayers and other devotional writing. The Legenda Aurea listed that Christ had five sorrows, each related to the five senses: his weeping tears of sorrow related to sight; he sorrowed in hearing the blasphemies and reproofs directed toward him; he sorrowed in the smell

of ‘ordure & fylth’ on the Mount of Calvary where ‘bodyes of dede men stynkinge’ lay; he sorrowed at tasting the ‘vynaygre medled wyth myrre & galle / To thende that he sholde the sooner deye : and the kepars myghte the sooner depaite’; and finally he sorrowed at the touch of the many wounds that were inflicted over all of his body.\textsuperscript{247} The connection between the five senses and the sorrows of Christ emphasised the human element that Christ and man shared and provided people with an outline of the sorrows that could be more easily remembered.

Christ’s sorrows were not always limited to five in number, however. Christ was described as having fifteen sorrows by the Irish poet Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn (d. 1478), in the poem ‘Christ Lives Again’, the number and description of which he says he learned from ‘wise men’. Ó hUiginn is referencing the popular devotional prayer, the ‘Fifteen Oes of St Bridget’, which developed in England, though it was commonly attributed to St Bridget of Sweden. This reference suggests that Ó hUiginn was familiar with this prayer but while his poem addresses similar events of the passion, it is by no means an attempt at a translation of the prayer. The English ‘Fifteen Oes’ is a prayer that pleads to Christ directly for mercy, while the Ó hUiginn poem addresses an audience who he tells, in part, of the fifteen sorrows that Christ faced. A closer comparison to the language of the poem can be found in devotional texts that were coming into Ireland at this time, from which he would have likely been familiar with the torturous language he uses, describing veins bursting and the splitting of the skin on Christ’s feet and hands.\textsuperscript{248}

The wounds of the Flagellation of Christ

Graphic descriptions of events of the Passion were recorded in the thirteenth-century *Meditationes Vitae Christi* and other devotional works that built detail into the basic story of the Passion as found in the bible. The flagellation or scourging of Christ, for example, is mentioned in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and John but only as a single line in each, simply stating that Christ was taken to be scourged at Pilate’s instruction. Historically, the scourging of a prisoner was an integral part of the

\textsuperscript{247} Jacobus de Voragine, ca. 1229-1298, *Legenda Aurea*, trans. by William Caxton (Westminster: Printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1493) [EEBO, images 20-21].

Crucifixion penalty during Christ’s time. More notable to the authors of the gospels was the mocking of Christ, which in all gospels except Luke’s was performed right after the flagellation. The mocking was an extra humiliation put upon Christ by the soldiers outside of the normal procedure. Though Christ had endured humiliations before this point, the Flagellation is the event in the Passion in which Christ’s physical suffering begins, and with the late medieval focus on the humanity and physical suffering of Christ this event gains special meaning. The *Meditationes Vitae Christi* brought the description of the Flagellation to new levels in its time.

The lord is therefore stripped and bound to a column and scourged in various ways. He stands naked before them all, in youthful grace and shamefacedness, beautiful in form above the sons of men, and sustains the harsh and grievous scourges on his innocent, tender, pure and lovely flesh. The flower of all flesh and of all human nature is covered with bruises and cuts. The royal blood flows all about, from all parts of his body. Again and again, repeatedly, closer and closer, it is done, bruise upon bruise, and cut upon cut, until not only the torturers but also the spectators are tired; then he is ordered untied.

By explicitly documenting the proliferation of Christ’s wounds and comparing his ravaged state with his previous beauty the author of the text is demonstrating that the Flagellation of Christ fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which predicted that ‘From the sole of the foot to the head there is no sound spot: Wound and welt and gaping gash, not drained, or bandaged, or eased with salve’. Christ is reduced to the ‘quasi-leprous’ appearance described by Isaiah after the extended whipping he receives. The *Meditationes* author encouraged the reader to push past their natural revulsion to such ideas and to take in the full depth of Christ’s suffering.

---


251 Isaiah 1:6.

Devotions to the number and measure of Christ’s wounds were related to the newly emphasised textual and visual imagery of the Flagellation which was growing in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Devotees would use the calculations of the strokes of the whips and drops of blood that Christ shed during the Flagellation to number the recitations of Paternosters and Aves over a year as a devotional exercise. At times, the desire to participate fully in the suffering of Christ at the Pillar was taken beyond compassionate imagining into the physical realm. Franciscans in late medieval Italy included self-flagellation in their ascetic lifestyle. This act was primarily a penitential one but also was pursued by the flagellants in an effort to identify themselves with Christ, to experience the humiliation Christ felt, and to try to understand his physical pain. This practice spread into Ireland by the mid-fourteenth century, probably promoted by the Franciscans who were the primary supporters of the flagellant movement. The Flagellants may have had a fairly widespread following in Ireland at that time as suggested by the letter sent to the Archbishops of Armagh, Dublin, Tuam and Cashel by Pope Clement VI in 1349. The letter was a mandate for them to ‘warn and induce certain persons calling themselves Flagellantes to leave that vain religion’. In his letter, Pope Clement VI specifically cited mendicants as the source of the spreading movement, probably the Franciscans. The practice was officially banned by a papal bull issued on the 20th October 1349. Nevertheless, the practice was continued prominently enough for Richard FitzRalph to warn against the excesses of the practice in his sermon given on 14 May, 1355 in Kells, Co. Meath. At this point in the mid-fourteenth century, however, the movement in Europe was already waning, and likewise, there is little evidence for the continuing of the flagellant movement in Ireland in later years.

Less physical elements of devotion to the wounds of Christ as understood through the Flagellation may have continued into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

---


in Ireland however. At least four figurative images of the Flagellation survive from those centuries in Ireland. They are found on relief carved stone panel (c. 1470) on the Creagh tomb at Ennis friary, Co. Clare, the west end of the Plunket/FitzGerald tomb (c. 1460) in St Nicholas’s church, Dunsany, Co. Meath, the south side-panel (sixteenth century) now supporting the tomb of Piers Butler in St Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny and a miniature on folio 17v in the *Seanchas Búrcach* manuscript (c. 1570). [images 6.1 – 6.4]

The Flagellation panel on the Creagh tomb, and the full-page miniature in the *Seanchas Búrcach* manuscript are both part of a series of Passion images. As with the other panels in the series of Passion carvings, the relief carving of the Flagellation on the Creagh tomb has much in common with examples of fifteenth-century English alabaster altarpiece panels. [images 6.5 – 6.7] Both the Ennis Flagellation carving and the English alabaster examples of the Flagellation share distinctive compositional elements, such as the depiction of four tormentors whipping Christ. Likewise, the positioning of Christ with his arms encircling the pillar in front of him as seen on the Creagh panel was also common on the English alabaster though in other European representations it was generally more common from the fifteenth century for Christ to be positioned with his back to the pillar. The Flagellation in the *Seanchas Búrcach* manuscript, created about a hundred years later, also seems to have ties to English sources though of a different medium. The image of the Flagellation, along with the images of Christ before Pilate and Christ Carrying the Cross also in the manuscript, are very similar in style and appearance to fifteenth-century wall paintings of the same subjects in the parish church of St Peter and Saint Paul in Pickering, Yorkshire and may have been based on a shared source.²⁵⁶ [images 3.41, 5.61, 6.4, 6.8, 6.9] The programme of wall paintings in the Pickering parish church may have been related to the liturgical calendar which could point to the images themselves having been based on images from a book or manuscript, where liturgical calendars were often found. The iconography found on the walls of Pickering church and other churches were often the same group of important devotional scenes that were made into woodcuts and other prints and included in printed devotional texts. Imported printed Catholic-prayer books

²⁵⁶ Thank you to Dr Rachel Moss and Dr Bernadette Cunningham for drawing my attention to this similarity.
circulate in the area around the time of the *Seanchas Búrcach*’s creation, as is seen by their active confiscation in the province by Barnaby Googe in the 1580s. As Cunningham has pointed out, German woodcuts were widely disseminated in both Ireland and England and could have been a point of common inspiration for both the wall painting and the manuscript illumination. The *Seanchas Búrcach* manuscript as a whole seems to be a work created in part to impress the London court, and so in this regard it would not be unlikely that the patrons were keen to reference works from outside of Ireland, especially those that they may have considered fashionable to the English eye.²⁵⁷

As has been seen with other iconography, the crowded compositions found in the Flagellation images in the Ennis Friary and the *Seanchas Búrcach* were unusual to Irish devotional imagery and are perhaps explained by the heavy influence in both of these works by outside imagery. In the other two tomb images of the Flagellation, the fifteenth-century Flagellation on the Plunket/Fitzgerald tomb is closer in composition to the *Seanchas Búrcach* image, while the sixteenth-century Christ figure on the tomb surround in St Canice’s is arranged in a similar manner to the Ennis friary image, which suggests that several exemplar images must have been available in Ireland during these centuries. The Plunket/FitzGerald tomb panel and the St Canice’s image, though related in compositional terms to the other two flagellation images, differ in that they are removed from the direct narrative of the Passion. The censing angels that appear in the flanking niches of the Dunsany tomb flagellation image are not part of the image itself, but were positioned to emphasis the devotional, sacred importance of the image. The act of censing would have been familiar to the late medieval viewer, as it was a common occurrence in the mass and other liturgical rites. The smoke of the incense was seen as purifying and sanctifying,

and viewers could very well have been aware of Psalm 141 which compares the rising of incense smoke with prayers offered to God. 258

The image of the Flagellation Christ on the St Canice’s Cathedral tomb is even more removed from the narrative image and, though the full figure of Christ is depicted bound to the pillar, has become more of an Instrument of the Passion, like those on the Arma Christi shield it is positioned next to. The placement of the Flagellation Christ on one side of the Arma Christi shield and the Crucifixion on the other may indicate that the three images were meant to be read together as a representation of all of Christ’s physical suffering from the first, the Flagellation, to the last, the Crucifixion. The Dunsany and Kilkenny images, in their removal from the narrative, demonstrate that these images were less likely used for didactic purpose, though most likely the other two images were similarly far more useful as devotional images rather than teaching aides.

Though the Flagellation of Christ was one of the main events that caused his wounds, devotions to it do not seem to be overtly popular in Ireland between 1450 and 1650, and perhaps such devotions peaked in the mid-fourteenth century, dying down with the fading presence of the flagellant movement. The two images in which the Flagellation Christ appear on the Dunsany and the Butler tomb do present the possibility of a special personal devotion on the part of the patron, while the other two images can be viewed more as a part of a larger devotion to the Passion. Many more representations of the Flagellation of Christ survive in Irish art as part of the Instruments of the Passion where the symbols of the Flagellation are consistently included but specially highlighted over the other symbols. The topic of the Flagellation does not arise often in bardic poetry where conversely, as will be discussed below, the topic of the Five Wounds is regularly found.

It is perhaps significant that the two Flagellation images that were created outside of an established narrative of the Passion are found on the tombs of patrons that may have been familiar with the representation of the Flagellation in Corpus Christi and Passion plays. The plays, which would have presented events of the Passion as tableaux vivants or short sketches, were known to have been performed in Dublin in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and in Kilkenny possibly as late as the

seventeenth century. Though the Plunket/FitzGerald tomb is found in Co. Meath, the probable patron of the tomb had a wealthy family with links to Dublin and it is likely that they could have witnessed the Corpus Christi plays there.  

Devotion to the Five Wounds of Christ

As the wounds of Christ became more of a concern of devotional piety, the Five Wounds that Christ received on the Cross grew even more important as a devotional focus. The transition of the Five Wounds to a distinct devotion in itself developed through private devotions and through the development of the votive mass of the Five Wounds being included in liturgical calendars. Though the votive mass only began to appear in European missals in the fourteenth century, a rubrical legend was created that placed the origin of this mass much earlier. The apocryphal tale tells that Pope Boniface II (530-2), who was mortally ill, appealed to God to prolong his life. The Archangel Raphael appeared to Boniface II with a text of a votive mass and a promise that if he celebrated the mass five times he would return to good health. After the success of the mass, Boniface II was said to have granted an indulgence for remission of a seventh part of all sins to anyone who performed or had the Mass of the Five Wounds performed five times. The creation of legends around new liturgical practices was not uncommon in the medieval period. The legend provided legitimacy through its new found ‘long tradition’ and secured the origin story of the devotion firmly within the legitimacy of church and liturgical practice.

The Five Wounds are referenced in Ireland as early as the mid-fourteenth century in the poem ‘The Song of Michael of Kildare’ but devotion to the Five Wounds does not begin to appear with regularity in Ireland until the fifteenth century when it can begin to be found strongly featured in bardic poetry. The growth in the devotion to the Five Wounds in Ireland mirrors the development of this devotion in

---

259 Dublin, Dublin Corporation Archives, MS C1/2/1, f. 56v; Fletcher, ‘The Civic Pageantry of Corpus Christi’, pp. 73-74; ‘Notes of Particulars extracted from the Kilkenny Corporation Records relating to the Miracle Plays as performed there from the year 1580 to the year 1639’, pp. 238-242.

England and in both countries this spike in awareness of the devotion may be attributed to the appearance of the Mass of the Five Wounds in the Sarum missal. The growing availability of Irish translations of important continental devotional texts that emphasised Passion devotion would have led to a greater awareness of this devotional focus among the Irish people as well.\(^{261}\)

An account in a sixteenth-century manuscript suggests that the power of the votive mass of the Five Wounds was recognised in Ireland by the early sixteenth century. More than the generally understood indulgence attributed to Pope Boniface II, the Mass of the Five Wounds was believed to have political pull. In 1504, Gerald Fitz Thomas, Earl of Kildare and deputy of Ireland, when preparing for a battle against the Briens and the MacWilliam Burkes, had Mr Nicholas Kerdiff, the chancellor of St Patrick’s Cathedral of Dublin sing the mass of the Five Wounds ‘successively’ to ensure their victory in battle. This he did good and early, a month before the battle. Too late, therefore, was Ellen Burke, the daughter of the MacWilliam Burke, when she later engaged a monk to likewise sing the mass of the Five Wounds for the benefit of her side. As the monk sang the second mass an angel appeared to him and warned him not to proceed any further because the petition to the Five Wounds had already been granted to the opposition. Six days later, the benefit of the Five Wounds was felt by the earl of Kildare when he was successful in the battle of Knockdoe. This story was written not long after the battle and whether one believes in its complete veracity or not it does reveal the way in which devotional practice was used and to what means it was believed to be able to achieve.\(^{262}\) The mass of the Five Wounds was called upon later in the century when Primate George Dowdall requested every priest to celebrate the votive mass for the benefit of his own prosperity and the health of Queen Mary I and Philip at the provincial synod in Armagh in 1558. The benefits of this petition to the Five Wounds


were significantly less successful than the Earl of Kildare's, as both Primate Dowdall and Queen Mary I died later that same year.²⁶³

Devotional use of the number five was regularly employed in the counting of prayers. A regular set of prayers to gain an indulgence were five each of a paternoster, aves, and creed, which is for example the rubric required on the Indulgence Stone found in the Kildare Cathedral. At the hanging of Netterville, Eustace, and Scurlock in 1581, mentioned earlier the understanding in Irish culture of the connection between the five repetitions of these prayers and the five wounds of Christ was made explicit. In addition to prayers to the Virgin, Bishop Jones reported that one of the men suggested 'Let us say fyve paternosters, 5 aves & 5 credes in the remembrance of the 5 wounds of Christ (which thus accordinglie they did).²⁶⁴

Surviving examples of iconography used to express the devotional ideas of the Five Wounds can be found in Ireland from the second half of the fifteenth century, which is around the same time that the topic was becoming more prominent in Irish devotional poetry and literature. Most surviving late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century imagery in Ireland that features the Five Wounds is figural and not necessarily made exclusively to represent the Five Wounds as a subject. Rather the Five Wounds can be seen as emphasised in other iconographical types of Christ figures, such as images of the Crucifixion or the Man of Sorrows, in which the Five Wounds were a defining element of the iconography and the ideology behind the image.

The Five Wounds and Salvation: the figure of Christ as Judge

Another important Christ figure which displayed the five wounds was Christ as Judge. Christ as Judge was an image of the risen Christ, like the Man of Sorrows,

but represented the coming of Christ for the Last Judgement at the end of the world. Margaret Phelan has identified six nearly identical Christ figures that survive in Ireland from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which seem represent this image. [images 2.24, 6.10 – 6.14] These figures were all sculpted in bas relief on stone, by different sculptors, and are found scattered in counties Kilkenny, Galway, Meath and Mayo but the similarities of the images suggest a common source. Five of the six figures appear as part of tomb sculpture but one is found on the Baptismal font at Rathmore, Co. Meath. Most of the surviving examples are found on works that were commissioned by Anglo-Irish families which could indicate that this image was special to that community.\(^\text{265}\)

In English wall painting the image of the Last Judgement or, ‘Doom’ as it is referred to, was the subject probably most commonly painted on the walls of medieval English parish churches. The subject can be found surviving in wall paintings in at least forty churches from around England. Most often the subject was painted on the wall above the chancel arch, facing the congregation, above the rood-screen with the image of the Crucifixion in the space of the arch below.\(^\text{266}\) No examples of this image appear in wall paintings in the surviving Irish parish churches from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries but it would not be surprising if the topic was similarly painted on the chancel arch of Irish churches as well.\(^\text{267}\)

The figure of Christ found in these English wall paintings bear a great similarity to the surviving Irish bas-relief carvings. [images 6.15 – 6.18] The image of Christ is shown sitting on a rainbow displaying his wounds. The Irish figures in their present condition appear to show Christ standing but, especially considering the disproportionate shortness of the legs of the Christ figures, especially noticeable on the Joyce tomb and the Butler tomb at Gowran. Rather, it is likely that the Irish Christ figures were also depicted sitting on a painted rainbow, though no remains of


this detail remains. This composition can also be found in the fifteenth-century art of other regions, so an English influence is not an absolute certainty but the popularity of the image as seen in English wall painting does make one wonder if the 'sudden' appearance of the image in late fifteenth-century Ireland is actually a continuation of the image in stone sculpture that had already been established in now lost mediums such as wall painting. [images 6.19, 6.20]

The crown that Christ wears in the Irish examples is unusual and may be a motif that specifically developed in the Irish version of this image. Kingly crowns were more often found on image of God rather than Christ. Images of Christ as Judge, both in England and elsewhere tend to depict Christ with a crown of thorns or no crown at all. The nearest comparative image seems to be a fifteenth-century English alabaster carving of Christ in Majesty, in which Christ wears a similar crown to the Irish figures, though here he is shown only displaying one hand wound, with his torso covered. [image 6.21] This alabaster was once part of a larger altarpiece depicting the Last Judgement, and so despite the differences, perhaps the Irish Christ figures were based on an altarpiece figure such as this one. The great similarity between the Irish figures, though geographically scattered throughout the country, has caused Helen Roe to speculate that there must have only been a single exemplar image for the Irish craftsmen to reference. It is unlikely however, that this is the case, considering the great popularity of the image held in neighbouring England for centuries. Rather, especially considering the unusual but consistent inclusion of the crown, it is likely that these six figures were based on one specific, well-known Irish representation of the image of Christ as Judge that has now been lost.  

Another Irish example of Christ as Judge, not noted by Phelan, can be found surviving from the early sixteenth century on a tomb in the now Church of Ireland church in Athboy, Co. Meath. [image 6.22] It was created around the same time as the other six Irish figures but significantly it was obviously based on a different exemplar than the others. The geographical proximity of Athboy to Rathmore, where an example of the other type of Christ as Judge figure is found on a baptismal font, proves that other versions of this image were available in Ireland by this time. The

Athboy image of Christ as Judge has much in common with other European examples and certain elements suggest a possible influence from Germany or the Low countries. As one can see in several examples of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century prints from that region, the figure of Christ often has a sword and a lily crossing behind his head, representing the damned and the saved respectively. [images 6.23 – 6.26] This feature rarely appears in English art, though it is found on a surviving wooden panel from a fifteenth-century English rood screen, and half of the motif, just one sword, is depicted on the thirteenth-century wall painting of doom at St John the Baptist’s church in Widford, Hertfordshire. [images 6.18, 6.27] The Athboy artist must have been slightly confused as to the purpose of these motifs, as it appears that two swords, rather than a sword and a lily, are depicted in the usual position behind Christ’s head. That Judgement day is being depicted in the Athboy image however, is undoubted. A small bit of the rainbow is carved between the figure of Christ and the attendant figure on his left who is likely St John the Baptist a regular figure in this scene, along with the Virgin Mary on the other side of Christ, who were depicted as intercessors on Judgement Day. To complete the image of the judging is the figure of St Michael, with the scales for weighing souls.

The connection between the Five Wounds of Christ and the day of Judgement can be clearly seen in bardic poetry from the period in which these images appear. Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn (d. 1448) addresses the Five Wounds directly in lines where he imagines facing them on Judgement Day, ‘Remember, we beseech thee, the back of the hand fixed to thy blood-stained wood, the foot pouring blood, the pierced body stretched on thee.’ Christ displaying his wounds would have been both a dread and perhaps a comfort to the Irish viewer of these images. The idea of doomsday appears in several poems by Diarmuid Ó Cobhthaigh (fiant 1563) who seems to struggle with the dual salvific and damning aspects of Christ’s Five Wounds. In his poem, ‘Christ’s Honour Price’, he writes,

In the wounds of His hands and feet He gave us a passport for our road; behold His wound guiding thee forward on the way; no foe ventures on King’s highway! (‘Twere strange) had He not prevailed over us seeing His

\footnote{Ryan, ‘A Slighted Source’, p. 88.}
determination to make us His own; strange too, seeing the eagerness of His pursuit if His debt should remain (clinging to us) till Doomsday! Christ’s wounds were the passport on the road to salvation but Ó Cobhthaigh seems worried about, as he puts it, the ‘debt’ that may still remain to be paid for those wounds at the Last Judgement. Another of his poems is dedicated to a similar issue as the title, ‘Defence on Doomsday’, reveals. In this poem he again makes efforts to reason away the possible negative impact of the Wounds but still fears them. The wounds he argues, are not fresh, ‘the blood is dry on Christ’s foot, ‘twere strange were that foot at the height of its anger against us’, but yet he worries that Christ’s anger could still affect him. ‘I fear He will point to His wounded hand – a hostage has a long memory for the pain in his (manacled) hands; He has a day in mind when He will take vengeance for the nail – kings’ anger is long lived.’ Other poets, were even less confident of their chances of getting past Christ’s Five Wounds when their time of Judgement came without the help of the Virgin Mary as an intercessor. As discussed above, the poet Uaithne Ó Cobhthaigh (d. 1556) cited the act of the Virgin baring her breast as his only hope, for ‘If He be set on charging us with His wounding, His wounded side and pierced foot, not merely can I atone for them, but I shall be cast off and He will not listen to my defence’. An example of just this scenario appears in an image of Doom on a wall painting (c. fourteenth/fifteenth century) in North Cove parish church, Suffolk. [image 6.28]

The symbol of the Five Wounds

Other than the figurative representations that emphasised the importance and role of the Five Wounds of Christ in devotional belief, there were symbolic images both in visual and written works that were regularly used to describe and honour the Five Wounds. Metaphors for the Five Wounds were many in bardic poetry, especially in the work of the sixteenth century. The wounds could be roads, as Laoiseach Mac an Bhaird, writing in the sixteenth century, describes in his poem titled ‘Christ’s Five Wounds’. In this poem the wounds are ‘the easiest roads to be found to His goodly dwelling’ and Christ’s side wound is a home to which his

271 Aithdioghlium Dana, vol. 2, p. 150-152.
followers are taken. Farming and food references were common, which named the ‘red drops of the five great wounds’ as the ‘shower that made our seed grow’ as well as the growing fruit or ‘corn-grass’ that feeds us. Christ’s breast wound was ‘the autumn ploughing’ and the ‘wine-blood’ came from that wound. The wounds were sometimes also referenced more directly, naming the hand, foot or breast wound as having qualities and specific powers or meanings. Again in Mac an Bhaird’s poem ‘Christ’s Five Wounds’, he addresses the bodily areas of Christ which received the important Five Wounds, ‘may Thy wounded foot protect me from my evil deeds; may Thy white hand and empurpled breast be my defence’.  

Considering the specific focus on the Five Wounds, it is notable that they are not more often represented as an independent symbol. One early exception is the Moyne Abbey Reliquary, discussed previously, which probably dates to the fifteenth century and symbolically represents the Five Wounds by five red stones arranged in a cruciform shape. Another possible example of a more abstract representation of the Five Wounds is seen on the Plunket/Cusack tomb (c. 1441-1445), at St Mary’s church, Killeen Castle, Co. Meath. The heraldic shield on this tomb displays four family coats-of-arms, one Arma Christi shield, one Arma Virginis shield, and a seventh shield which is the possible representation of the Five Wounds. On the shield in question are five unusual shapes which could be seen as five wounds with blood dripping from them, joined with three smaller symbols which could represent the three nails. A comparative use of this type of imagery that clearly represents the five wounds can be found in decorative border with other Instruments of the Passion in a Netherlandish print of the Man of Sorrows. The motif is presented on a shield as it is on the Plunket/Cusack tomb among other instruments of the Passion, just as the possible Five Wounds shield is just one of the pseudo-heraldic shield that display the Instruments of the Passion on the Plunket/Cusack tomb. This Netherlandish print provides the best comparison to the Plunket/Cusack tomb but there are other examples of the ‘dripping’ wounds motif that can be found used in similar ways in the art of other countries. A late-fifteenth

century manuscript, where page after page is painted with dripping wounds similar in shape to the symbols on the Plunket tomb shield and a similar type of depiction of the Five Wounds can be found on a sixteenth-century dalmatic collar. [images 6.31, 6.32] The five symbols on the Plunket/Cusack tomb shield may alternatively be the heraldic ermine symbol as Hunt has suggested, though if so, the corresponding family that it represents is unknown.276

Iconography that represents the Five Wounds, composed of the two hands, two feet and heart of Christ, all displaying wounds became a regular element of devotional imagery, especially as found in German and Netherlandish prints, in the second half of the fifteenth century. [images 6.33 – 6.36] The Five Wounds symbol was sometimes depicted on its own or grouped with other instruments of the passion and was also depicted in relation to the devotional practice of the rosary which in the Dominican tradition had five decades. [images 6.37, 6.38] This Five Wounds symbol can also be found regularly depicted in surviving fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century English devotional art from stained glass to carved ornamentation on church benches to simple woodcut prints distributed by religious groups like Carthusians of Sheen.277 [images 6.39 – 6.41] In Ireland, the earliest surviving use of this Five Wounds icon dates to c. 1575 and is found on the Kilmore wayside cross in Co. Meath. Here the Five Wounds symbol is combined with other Instruments of the Passion. [image 6.42] After this example, the symbol begins to occur with more regularity from around the turn of the seventeenth century in the O’Kerin school of tomb sculpture where it is found used in arrangements of the Instruments of the Passion.278 [images 6.43 – 6.45] The reason for the late use of this iconography is puzzling since it was so regularly found circulating in printed imagery. Perhaps earlier Irish examples of this symbol are simply now lost or perhaps the Five


278 King, ‘Late Medieval Cross in County Meath’, p. 108.
Wounds were understood to be represented by other Instruments of the Passion like the three nails which appeared in almost all images of the Instruments of the Passion.

**Instruments of the Passion**

Like the image of the Crucifixion, the understanding of the Instruments of the Passion in the early medieval period was that the Instruments were Christ’s weapons in his victory over death. With the turn in devotional focus in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to the suffering and humanity of Christ during his Passion, the Instruments took on a more literal role, as implements of torture and pain. The dichotomy between the Instruments helping and hurting Christ is similar to the way in which the Five Wounds were considered in Irish bardic poetry. Were they to be feared or to be praised and loved? Did their role in the Passion mean salvation or damnation? The close relationship between the wounds of Christ and the Instruments of the Passion, which caused Christ’s wounds and other suffering, meant that they were often referenced in a similar manner in Irish poetry.279 In a mid- to late-sixteenth-century poem, ‘Praise God Alone’, Domhnall Mac Bruaideadh, stressed,

> We have cause to fear even the blood that saved us, the nail and the blood-stained foot, and the Cross whereon His head drooped (in death), and the delicate hand and side which He had pierced.
> We should fear too the flashing reddened spear tempered in the Lord’s blood, and the rope that dragged out bout His bright arms so that neither of them was left unwounded.280

While these Instruments could be feared they also could be viewed as evidence of Christ’s love for mankind. Fearghal Ó Cionga in his poem ‘The King’s Exploit’, describes the instruments as a barrier that Christ had to go through to save us and he explained that, ‘God’s Son, to save us spite of the Law, forced His way through the nail-points; out beyond the nails were we, His folk; He stepped forward to reach us.’ The instruments and the wounds they caused man to be saved and were proof of that saving, ‘Now that the three nails have been driven into His body He can not reject us;

280 Aithdioghliuin Dana, vol. 2, pp. 128-129.
the wounds of Mary’s Son testify to the salvation of the world even were He to deny it.’ In doing this all this, Ó Cionga explains, Christ was making a choice, and was motivated by his love for man, ‘He might easily have saved himself from the spear in His breast; He let His side be pierced; never have we experienced such love!’ However, in the same poem he explains that the pain and wounds inflicted by the Instruments must be atoned for through penance. 281

In the visual devotional arts, the Instruments of the Passion were developed into a set of pictographs that signified the tools and moments of Christ’s physical and emotional suffering during the Passion. Even the more difficult to portray instances of psychological suffering were represented as ‘Instruments’, by use of small figures, often just the heads, to represent, for example, the Virgin Mary and St. John in their grief at seeing Christ on the Cross. The many Instruments presented together allowed the spectator to visually denote each aspect of the Passion and meditate on those elements. The arrangement of the Instruments on a shield was a popular motif in Europe from the twelfth century and was seen as a heraldic coat of arms for Christ commonly called the Arma Christi. At the same time the Instruments of the Passion were being depicted in other, more free form compositions, either with images of Christ and other figures or on their own, some examples of which have already been seen above. Earlier images of the Instruments tended to have fewer elements but images with a large variety of the Instruments quickly developed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as understanding of the devotion spread. The inclusion of images that represent specific actions against Christ such as a hand to signal the striking of Christ, or a fist with a clump of hair pulled out in the Flagellation may have been influenced by the visual spectacle of dramatic plays and pageants during events such as the feast of Corpus Christi, during which actors re-enacted the Passion of Christ. 282

The earliest surviving images of the Instruments of the Passion in Irish art date to the fourteenth century. The Domhnach Airgid Shrine, c. 1340-50, and the seal of Stephen de Derby, Prior of Holy Trinity in Dublin (Christchurch), 1379, both utilised the Instruments of the Passion. [image 6.46] Both examples are quite simple depicting a few of the Instruments, the Cross, Nails, Crown of Thorns, Scourges. On the Derby seal, in addition to the imagery, an inscription surrounding the shield lists the Instruments even mentioning some that are not depicted which Roe suggests could refer to an early Corpus Christi hymn.\(^{283}\) On the Domhnach Airgid shrine, the Arma Christi shield was part of the shrine’s fourteenth-century refurbishment and may have been especially included in this arrangement to signal the presence of the relic of the holy cross that is believed to have been housed behind the rock crystal directly below it.\(^{284}\)

While the Arma Christi shield on the Domhnach Airgid Shrine stands out as one of the few surviving examples from the fourteenth century, the use of the imagery must have remained familiar in Ireland over the next century in some forms that are now lost to us. Many examples of the Arma Christi shield and the Instruments of the Passion can be found surviving beginning in the mid-fifteenth century with greater regularity. The Plunket/Cusack tomb (c. 1441-1445) in St Mary’s Church, Killeen, Co. Meath and the Plunket/Talbot tomb (c. 1438-1445) in the church at Malahide Castle, Co. Dublin are two of the earlier examples of tombs that incorporate the Arma Christi shield. [images 4.58, 4.59] On the Plunket/Cusack tomb the shield is again simple, and almost identical to the one found on the Domhnach Airgid shrine. This would suggest that the same or a similar source image was still familiar to artists in Ireland separated by nearly a century. The Arma Christ shield on the Plunket/Talbot tomb however is of the more complicated style that depicts several of the Instruments in one arrangement.

The patron of the Plunket/Talbot tomb, or more likely cenotaph, was Maud Plunket the daughter of the patrons of the Plunket/Cusack tomb, Sir Christopher Plunket and his wife Joan Cusack. Which of these tombs came first is not known as

---

\(^{283}\) Roe, ‘Instruments of the Passion,’ p. 530; The book of obits and martyrlogy of the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity, pp. 102-3. The seal has been dated by the document its impression was found on.

\(^{284}\) Hourihane, Gothic Art in Ireland, pp. 133-134.
they both may date to roughly the same time in the mid-fifteenth century. There is no reason to imagine that they would not have been aware of each other's commissions and indeed the similarities in decoration of the tombs bear this out. Both include the same two pseudo-heraldic shields, the Arma Christi and the Arma Virginis, among other heraldic shields representing their families and ancestry. Though the Plunket/Cusack tomb seems to reference an older source in its Arma Christi shield, it was not unusual that Maud Plunket might have a different version.

Several examples of the Arma Christi shield were incorporated into the devotional programmes of iconography in stone carvings in tombs and baptismal fonts by this family in the course of the next couple of decades. In most instances, the arrangements of the Arma Christi are more like the complicated version on Maud Plunket's cenotaph. Some examples are more similar to others but none are exactly the same. Considering these tombs and other works were created within a small area in counties Meath, Louth, Kildare and Dublin primarily, the sculptors who made them were no doubt familiar with each other's work if not part of the same school of sculptors. What this does suggest is that the sculptors were very familiar with the imagery, and perhaps were creating compositions of their own, though some features in the arrangements of the Instruments do show that they must have been exposed to and influenced by images of the Arma Christi shields from outside Ireland which were readily available in prints and other forms. Looking at the tomb of the Baron of Portlester (c. 1496) in New Abbey, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare, for example, the placement of the crown of thorns on the arm of the cross is similar in that way to the crown of thorns is represented in two examples of fourteenth-century manuscript illuminations from England and Bohemia. [images 6.47 – 6.49]

It was not only in the Pale region in which Arma Christi and Instruments of the Passion begin to survive with more regularity beginning in the fifteenth century. Carvings above the west doorway at Augustinian priory, Clontuskert, Co. Galway, which date to the first half of the fifteenth century, include two small angels hold Arma Christi shields. 285 [image 6.50] Here the Instruments are limited to just a few per shield. This seems to have been another style of displaying the Instruments of the Passion that developed in Ireland through the fifteenth and sixteenth-centuries and

285 Moss, 'Permanent Expressions of Piety', p. 76-77; Hourihane, Gothic Art in Ireland, p. 76.
can be seen in examples such as the ‘Arma Christi’ font (late fifteenth/early sixteenth century), St Peter’s Catholic church, Drogheda, Co. Louth, and the tomb of two Butler knights (late fifteenth/early sixteenth century) in Gowran church, Co. Kilkenny and in the beginning of the seventeenth century, in a similar manner as the Drogheda Arma Christi font, on the Duleek wayside memorial cross (c. 1601) in Duleek, Co. Meath.  

This way of depicting the Instruments could point to a familiarity with the illustrations of the Instruments that accompanied a popular English devotional prayer or poem known as the ‘Arms of the Passion’. The prayer poem expounded on the salvation of man gained through the use of the instruments from Christ’s Crucifixion as well as their spiritual use to the contemporary viewer. The earliest surviving English example of the poem appears before the end of the fourteenth century in Middle English but the later surviving copies suggest it became more popular in the fifteenth century. The poem survives in at least fifteen manuscripts including the Huntington MS 142 which includes the Arms of the Passion prayer poem and images of the instruments with each verse. At least seven of the fifteen English manuscripts survive in scroll form. The awkwardness of the form and the accompanying inscriptions providing indulgences to those who view the images rather than read the prayer themselves suggest that these scrolls were more likely presented to the public to promote the devotion rather than used by an individual during private prayer. The colour images would have been understood by both the literate and illiterate and the short accompanying verses could be easily read out to the viewer or viewers to flesh out the meaning of the image. Some unusual indulgences were associated with the images of the Instruments of the Passion that were found at the end of all fifteen English texts that survive with this poem. Indulgences, examples of which have been described above, were normally awarded for prayer that was performed in association with an image. The rubrics associated with the Instruments of the Passion in these texts however, only seem to require that

one looks upon the images. In one manuscript the rubric after the poem describes that, ‘Wat man this armes ouer-se, For his sinus sori and schereuen be, thre[e] year of pardon is the summe’.  

No prayer is mentioned in the requirements of this indulgence, only the act of over-seeing the image of the ‘armes’ and being sorry and shriven for one’s sins. An indulgence listed in another English manuscript from the first half of the fifteenth century makes this indulgence more clear. It states, ‘Item: He that devoutly behaldeth the Armes of the Passyone of Our Lorde hathe x yere and xl days of perdone’. The English Arma Christi poem was familiar in other areas of Europe where it was translated into the vernacular as can be found in a Dutch manuscript (BL Harley MS 3828; c. 1445) which Kathryn Rudy has shown to have been compiled for a child.

The idea that images of the Instruments of the Passion could provide indulgences just from the act of meditating on them would be a great motivation to include them in devotional art. Just as the Virgin Mary was often found on the reverse of Crucifixes, alternately the Instruments of the Passion commonly took that position. That the Irish understood them in this way is not definitely known but a line found in the late sixteenth/early seventeenth century Irish poem by Laoiseach Mac an Bhaird, which was referenced above, titled ‘Christ’s Five Wounds’ may suggest that this was the case. Mac an Bhaird states, ‘too late have I dwelt on the injustice inflicted on Him; let me now in love dwell on the thick-headed nail fastened in His hand’. Whether Mac an Bhaird believed that with this loving meditation he would grant a specific indulgence is not known but he certainly seems to be describing the nail in this case as a suitable image for devotional meditation.

The Instruments of the Passion were also likely familiar to fifteenth-century Irish people through images of the Man of Sorrows such as the one at Franciscan friary in Ennis, Co. Clare that was discussed in the previous chapter. The influence of


the use of the Instruments in this way can be seen in the style and use of the Instruments in the memorial floor-slab of Abbot Philip O’Molwanayn (c. 1463), Kilcooly abbey, Co. Tipperary. [image 6.55] The area in which the Instruments are arranged is suggestive of a shield which could compare to the style of those being made at the same time in the Meath region. The Cross on the shield, however, rises up from behind the Abbot’s head and into the space of the Instruments. The positioning of the cross behind the figure of the Abbot could well be a reference to the cross and Instruments that were often positioned behind the figure of the Man of Sorrows. Later arrangements of the Instruments around the cross but with a figure at all became popular through the sixteenth century and can especially be found on tomb and floor slabs especially in the Pale and the south eastern region of Ireland, a style that continued into the seventeenth century. [images 4.67, 6.45, 6.56, 6.57]

In the medium of metalwork the use of the Instruments of the Passion can be found consistently on Irish Catholic altar plate that date from as early as 1598 through the eighteenth century. [images 6.58 – 6.63] There are also several small reliquary pendant crucifixes which though often undated and unprovenanced, are stylistically comparable to the engraved images of the Irish chalices and may have been made by the same silversmiths who made the chalices. [images 6.64 – 6.67] Whether the Instruments were regularly found in metalwork before the late sixteenth century is unknown because so much of it was lost during the mid-century but the use of it in the surviving pieces seems to correspond with the use of the images in contemporary Irish stone sculpture.

That devotional iconography should be used on Catholic liturgical materials, like chalices, or small personal items, like the reliquaries, is not surprising since they were portable and could be readily hidden if necessary. The continued and emphasised use of the Instruments on tombs, often built within church buildings in the first half of the seventeenth century is somewhat more surprising. The trend in the use of the Instruments in tomb sculpture was, as has been shown above, a growing one in the sixteenth century. From surviving works, it appears that the use of the Instruments on tombs increased at the end of the sixteenth century and continued to do so in the seventeenth century. The style of tomb directly linked to the O’Kerin school of sculptors, whose work is mostly found in the south-east region of Ireland, prominently displayed the Instruments of the Passion. Judging from the surviving evidence the south-east region was the only area in Ireland where the
Instruments were used on tomb sculpture with any regularity. The surviving evidence in this case may skew the reality of the story, as is always the danger in a study of such materials. It is known that the Instrument of the Passion symbols were being removed from churches in 1563, including the Christchurch Cathedral in Dublin, because they were ‘popish’ symbols, which could mean that many examples of the imagery made before that date are now destroyed.\textsuperscript{291}

This also makes clear that the Instruments of the Passion were recognised by 1563 as specifically Catholic symbolism. Their placement therefore on tombs were not an ambiguous or elusive code but in fact would have clearly declared the recusant status of those memorialised on the tombs. What is confusing, therefore, is the use of the Instruments by the Protestant bishop of Limerick, Bernard Adams, on his monument created sometime around the year of his death in 1625.\textsuperscript{292} The same religious iconography was sometimes used by both Catholic and Protestant groups, especially in the early years of the Reformation, but at this late date, and when the symbols have already been firmly established in Ireland to be of a ‘popish’ nature, this example is confusing. Adams was educated at Trinity College and, as a bishop, one would think he would have known well the meaning of the iconography. One explanation is that he did not commission or select the tomb himself and after his death someone with a different point of view or a less knowledgeable understanding of imagery designed the tomb. There were many Catholics in the Limerick area during Adam’s time as bishop, an element that he complained about himself in a letter to Cecil, the Earl of Salisbury, written on July 22, 1609.\textsuperscript{293} It is possible the iconography on his tomb was simply the typical choice for the area and so was created as such by the sculptor.


\textsuperscript{293} \textit{Calendar of the manuscripts of the most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury}, 24 vols (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1883-1976), vol. 21 (1609-1612), p. 91.
Conclusions

The suffering and wounds of Christ were a defining element of Passion devotion that encouraged emotive, affective piety and inspired both fear and hope in the hearts of devotees. These ideas were expressed in figurative images and more symbolic images. In images of the Five Wounds and the Instruments of the Passion, the wounding and suffering of Christ were abstracted from the narrative and held as symbols of devotion to be praised and feared in their own right. The rise in popularity of the Instruments of the Passion seen in the mid-fifteenth century both in the visual devotional arts and the bardic poetry was likely influenced by the graphic descriptions of the Passion events in devotional literature that was circulating in Ireland at that time. The devotions to the Wounds and the Instruments that caused Christ’s suffering continued in image and practice through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Ireland. Despite the fact that the symbolic representation of the Instruments of the Passion was recognisably Catholic imagery, the trend for using the Instruments in both public and private devotional art steadily rose over the hundred years following the coming of the Reformation to Ireland. In the next chapter, the motivations behind the use of these and the other forms devotional iconography discussed in the previous chapters will be further explored.
Chapter Seven – The patron’s perspective

In the previous chapters, devotional art and devotion to the Passion of Christ in Ireland has been examined in several ways. The history of devotional practices, in Ireland and other areas of Europe, has been reviewed. The types of Passion iconography that survive in Ireland from the late medieval and early modern periods have been analyzed to assess their devotional meaning and iconographical influences, and the evidence for the use of these images to signify devotional ideas and practices has been considered. From this analysis, it has become clear that Passion iconography was ultimately viewed as an expression of the promise and hopes of salvation in the afterlife. Whether the image was of Christ suffering through the events of the Passion, his mother the Virgin Mary in her compassion, or the very Instruments and wounds that caused Christ’s physical suffering, all these images were seen as a message of both warning and hope, as has been further clarified by an exploration of the topic of the Passion in the poetry, prayers and literature from the period. In this final chapter, the devotional art that has been discussed in the previous chapters will be considered from a slightly different point of view. Understanding that Passion iconography and devotion was related to the idea of salvation, this chapter will look at how late medieval and early modern Irish people integrated these images into their personal quest to achieve spiritual salvation.

By commissioning devotional art, a patron may have hoped to achieve many things. Creating devotional art ensured that a person’s personal devotional preferences were represented for their own use and for encouraging these devotions in others. Besides being visual statements of belief, devotional art could also become a declaration of status or identity. A case study of the Plunket family makes up part of this chapter. Their patronage of devotional arts and how their use of Passion iconography changed over the course of the two centuries between 1450 and 1650 will be examined, as will the possible influences that caused those changes. Of course not all devotional art was created for a specific patron or by the same sort of patron, nor does the identity of the original patron necessarily remain known to the present day. Most of the people in Ireland during this period would not have been financially able to become patrons of the arts at all and so this chapter will also examine the evidence as to how those of lesser means engaged with Passion
iconography and devotion and how they may have utilised the ideas and images in their own concerns for the afterlife.

Achieving Salvation

Devotional art and practice could have many purposes. Some images or prayers could help you in life while others were thought to help in death. The Passion of Christ as the story of Christ’s death before his Resurrection, connected most often in popular devotional belief to elements related to the preparation for death, dying and the afterlife. The main motivation behind the devotional iconography as has been shown in the preceding chapters has been a concern and hope for salvation in the afterlife. Besides the images themselves the ways in which the images were put together, used and why they were made in the first place can further show how the patrons of the devotional arts understood the idea of how salvation was achieved.

In the late medieval period, there was a great fear not only of Hell but also of Purgatory. Only saints were believed to go directly to Heaven, all others, who were not damned, went first to Purgatory. Christians would have believed that both penitence and satisfaction for sin were necessary for salvation in the afterlife. All repentance for sin had to be completed before a person died. There was no opportunity for repentance after death hence the pre-occupation with ensuring a ‘good death’ and not a sudden one in which one might not have time to repent. The other step towards salvation was making satisfaction for ones sins. To make satisfaction during life, one could do several things: pray, do good acts, perform pilgrimages, gain indulgences and participate in the Mass. Once dead and in Purgatory, however, a soul could do nothing to help itself but simply suffer for its sins until satisfaction was made. While the soul in Purgatory could do nothing but wait, those still living had the power to transfer any grace or satisfaction they attained to the souls of the dead with the hope of more quickly ending their suffering in Purgatory and attaining their salvation.

A Good Death

A Good Death in late medieval and early modern Europe was one of the most important steps on the way to salvation. As was already discussed in chapter three, an image of the Crucifixion was a devotional tool that was used at one’s deathbed to help ensure a Good Death but this was just one of the elements.

The formal treatment of death and dying in texts aimed at the laity hardly existed before the fourteenth century, but due to the plague, the massive increase in the mortality rates of that century created a demand for works that dealt with the issue. The late medieval understanding of the steps to ensure a Good Death was formally laid out in a text commonly called the *Ars moriendi* or the ‘art of dying’. The *Ars moriendi* was based on the Office of the Dying, a liturgical text that nevertheless sometimes was included in late medieval books of hours as devotional reading. The *Ars moriendi* was composed in the style of an instructional text for the laity. The *Ars moriendi* text was produced in Latin and vernacular languages including French, German, Dutch, English and Catalan and many were incorporated into longer works. Two basic and related texts developed in the early fifteenth century that fall under the generic title of *Ars moriendi*. One was a longer version that is normally titled *Tractatus*, or *Speculum, artis bene moriendi*. The other was a shorter version that was typically found under the simpler title *Ars moriendi*. The shorter version, more often reproduced, arose as an abridged version of the longer work, basically consisting of one chapter from the *Tractatus* text.

The shorter works were often created as block books. These were books printed by means similar to the production of woodcuts, where in both the text and the images were carved into a block of wood to produce a printing plate. The *Ars moriendi* block book illustrations consisted essentially of a group of eleven woodcuts. The first ten depicted the five temptations and five ‘inspirations’ that would lead the dying everyman out of each temptation. The eleventh image depicts the moment of death in which the dying everyman has conquered the temptations and is making a Good Death. [images 7.1 – 7.3] Each woodcut would be paired with a page of text explaining the image. Woodcuts were created for these scenes by different artists but the iconography was fairly consistent and examples of the images from different hands contain much of the same subject matter. The iconography and devotional text found in the shorter *Ars moriendi* as well as the longer works place
the Passion of Christ as the central devotional idea upon which the dying should focus to obtain a Good Death and through that come closer to salvation. The *Ars moriendi* continued to be influential throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in part due to the fact that the text was adopted and adapted by members of the Protestant Reformation, the Humanist movement and the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Each group took the medieval ideas and left out what did not reflect their point of view. The Lutherans eliminated devotions to the saints and the sacrament of penance. The idea of Purgatory was generally eliminated in most Protestant ideologies, but a Good Death, which focused upon Christ, and his salvation, was seen as a comfort to the dying and a way to mediate on the role of Christ in their eminent salvation. In his treatise, *Preparing for Death*, the sixteenth-century Christian humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam, encouraged the use of the *Ars moriendi* texts for helping one prepare for death. Understanding and being ready for one’s death was considered essential, though the presence of a priest to ensure the validity of a Confession was not necessary in his interpretation for salvation, more simply the belief in Christ. The seventeenth-century Jesuit, Robert Bellarmine, in his popular version of ‘The art of dying well’, stressed the importance of the last sacraments of Confession and taking the Eucharist, as the medieval models would have. These later versions of the *Ars moriendi* were as popular as the medieval texts, which suggests that the idea of death and dying was still a major point of interest for the early modern person.

---


The earliest copies of the *Ars moriendi* in England appear in the fifteenth century, both copied into the manuscripts and as imported block books. Textual evidence shows that the *Ars moriendi* was known in Ireland by the seventeenth century. A fifteenth-century *Ars moriendi* block book was known to be owned by James Ussher in the early seventeenth century before it was donated to the TCD library in the 1670s, though it is doubtful that this was used as a devotional book in Ussher's hands. In the later seventeenth century, the Catholic Bishop of Ferns, Luke Wadding recorded 'de ars bene moriendi’, probably Bellarmine’s text, in his library. The ideas found in the *Ars moriendi*, which stressed of the importance of a Good Death and devotion to the Passion of Christ, can perhaps be best seen in the visual devotional art of the period in Ireland.297

The combinations of the spiritual figures that appear in the *Ars moriendi* illustrations and the way they have been depicted are very similar to the combination of iconography being used in much Irish devotional art. The connection between the imagery and the Good Death is perhaps most significant on Irish tomb surrounds of the sixteenth century. Here if one compares the final image in the *Ars Moriendi*, in which the dying man is shown conquering death one finds the same figures as are depicted on tomb surrounds. The Virgin and St John are shown grieving at the foot of the cross; the apostles and saints, specified by their attributes, and angels stand around the sides of the tombs as if they were surrounding the bed of the dying. Even the demons that are depicted tempting the dying man into despair can be found on many examples of Irish tombs, for instance, on the upper edge of the McCragh tomb surround (c. 1557) in Lismore Cathedral. [images 7.4, 7.5] Images of Christ in other guises, including the Man of Sorrows, and the Risen Christ, can be seen as taking part in the ‘inspiration’ images of the *Ars moriendi*, as they can likewise be found in the tomb sculptures. [images 7.6, 7.7]

Of course these figures are found on many forms of devotional art, as has been seen for example on the Domhnach Airgid Shrine (fourteenth century), where


undoubtedly the figures are represented as images of spiritual protection, the same role they play in the scenarios of the *Ars moriendi* illustrations. These figures in their role at the deathbed, however, lend a significant further meaning to their appearance on Irish tomb surrounds and other memorials such as churchyard and way side crosses. Here the figures also stand as a representation of a ‘Good Death’, and are incorporated into the tomb iconography as a way of expressing both the hope of a Good Death and most likely to signify to later viewers that indeed the person or persons memorialised on by the tomb or cross did in fact have a Good Death.

The changing ideas of the Good Death in the Protestant texts may also be reflected in the tomb imagery that was created in Ireland by Protestant patrons. Unlike the saints that lined the tombs of Catholics, Protestant patrons began representing their families engaged in prayer, commonly kneeling before a prayer book, rather than a crucifix or holy image which would be considered a more Catholic representation. The emphasis on the importance of reflecting on one’s death during one’s life is found in both the Protestant and Counter-Reformation *Ars moriendi* related texts and was interpreted into the *momento mori* symbols found on some Catholic and many Protestant tomb and grave sculpture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These symbols include the *transi* effigy figure, and the inclusion of skeletons, skulls and hourglasses.

Less formal ideas on the power of certain formulaic arrangements of words or images to prevent a sudden death, also existed in late medieval and early modern Ireland. Sudden death, whatever the cause, would mean there would be no time for the acts of Confession or Communion essential to the Catholic idea of a Good Death. Prayers, or charms as they sometimes were considered due to their lack of orthodoxy, which invoked Christ, the Virgin, or other elements of the Passion were commonly believed to protect a person from harm. One example has already been discussed in chapter two, in which the measure of the Virgin’s foot was thought to protect soldiers. A similar written prayer-charm was found on a solider in 1688, though in this case, it was an enumeration of Christ’s wounds, similar in form to the Fifteen Oes of St Bridget. The charm was written in Irish and is believed to be much older and probably dating from the medieval period. Several benefits are allotted to different devotional acts in this ‘charm’ but the simple act of keeping the paper on one’s person ensured that he or she ‘will be free from all his enemies, neither will he die a sudden or unprovided death: & if any Woman be with Childe, that carryes this
Revelation about her, will feele noe Paine or Prejudice in Child-bearing… & whosoever will carry it about him, the glorious Virgin Mary will appear unto him 20 Days before his Death’. Not only would a person avoid a sudden death but the Virgin would provide twenty days notice, allowing a person to put his spiritual house in order.

The recitation of holy names either written or inscribed on objects worn on the body, or said aloud were thought to have protective powers against harm or death. The angelic salutation, the words from the titulus at the Crucifixion, and the names of the Magi were all commonly used in formulaic inscriptions on medieval jewellery, and were thought to bring protection to the wearer. A pendant reliquary cross in the collection of the NMI, engraved with the Crucifixion, the name ‘MARIA’ and the Instruments of the Passion’ was found to house a slip of paper which listed the names of the Magi, ‘Sancti Res Reges Caspar Melchior Belthazar’, and was most likely viewed as a protective devotional item to by its owner. [image 6.75]

Understanding the idea that these figures may have represented a guarantee that one would not face a sudden death, and therefore could hope for a Good Death, brings new layer of meaning as well to the figures found on double front slabs of the canopied tomb (second half fifteenth century) in Strade friary, Co. Mayo. This tomb has already been mentioned in chapter two due to its position on the north wall of the chancel, suggesting it may have stood as an Easter Sepulchre tomb. On the left panel, a formula to protect against sudden death has been created visually, placing the three magi with Christ. [image 2.24] On the right panel, there is an image of a kneeling figure, most likely the patron himself, holding his hands up in prayer before an archbishop, St Peter and St Paul. [image 7.8] While these figures may simply be included due to a special devotion to them by the patron it is significant that Ss Peter and Paul were commonly included in the illustration of ‘Comfort from despair’ in Ars moriendi woodcuts. [images 7.9, 7.10] Their inclusion in the image was as martyrs or examples of saved sinners. In the Ars moriendi illustrations they were

299 Mary Deevy, ‘Ring-Brooches in Medieval Ireland’, Archaeology Ireland 10, no. 2 (1996), pp. 8-10 (p. 10).
accompanied by Mary Magdalene and the ‘good thief’ on the cross. On the Strade tomb carving the third figure of the archbishop may be St Thomas à Becket, who as a martyr would be an appropriate figure. To complete the formula, three angels hover above the group, perhaps referencing the angels that are shown comforting the dying man in the Ars moriendi illustrations. The Christ as Judge figure on the tomb already references salvation but considering the other carved images that joined it, the patron’s familiarity with the visual language of the idea of a ‘Good Death’ is revealed.

All of these examples suggest that the idea of the ‘Good Death’ was not just an important idea to the people of late medieval and early modern Ireland but one that they expressed, in part, with the devotional iconography they used in their art. The creation of the tombs, crosses and other memorial works were, as has been described, often created by a patron for themselves before death. The incorporation of the imagery of the Passion in the company of the saints and apostles on to these works, was, in part, a way for patrons to both ward off the possibility of a bad death and create a lasting statement that would indicate to viewers that a Good Death had been achieved.

**Good works in life, Remembrance in Death**

Good works in life were believed to shorten one’s time in Purgatory after death. Feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, relieving the prisoner, housing the stranger, and burying the dead, were known as the Seven Acts of Mercy in late medieval Europe. These good acts, over any professions of faith, were believed to be the evidence that Christ would use to judge one’s fate and so aiding the less fortunate was not so much seen as a civic duty but a devotional act. These acts given to the poor or needy were seen as acts given to Christ. Evidence that the Irish in the late medieval period were aware and believed that good acts were a way to salvation is revealed in descriptions of the notably pious that are found in the Irish annals and bardic poetry as well as the requests of testators in their wills. Mór (d. 1527), daughter of Maelsechlainn MacCāba and wife of Ó hAinlige, was recorded in the *Annals of Connacht* as ‘a woman of good repute… piety and virtue, the bestower of alms and charitable gifts

---

of food and clothing to God’s poor and needy and to all who stood in need thereof. Hospitality was a regularly referenced virtue in bardic poetry and one that was obviously an important factor of Gaelic culture. A fifteenth-century poem, ‘Poem to MacDiarmuda’, by an unknown author is just one example that praises generosity and works of mercy. In the poem a story is related in which the message is stated,

Blessing, eternal blessing I leave to thy household; never was, never shall be, nobler deed than what thy folk have done. Ugly being though I am, I foretell to thee: hospitality is destined to abide with thy race till Doomsday.

Though there are few surviving Irish wills from the late medieval and early modern periods, it appears in those that do survive that it was common to leave charitable bequests. The will of a clerk in Dublin in the late fifteenth century, Nicholas Suttowne seems to have had the seven mercies in mind when structuring his will, in which he left provisions of food to the poor of ‘Rechell Street’ and ‘St John without the walls, Dublin’, and ‘legacies’ to the prisoners at Dublin Castle. Provisions for the food and drink at one’s own wake could also be seen as a final act of feeding the hungry and specific quantities were sometimes listed as in John Kempe’s late fifteenth-century will that provided allotted money for a cow, a hog, five sheep, geese and capons, as well as 9s worth of bread and ale to be served at this wake.

---

302 ‘Poem to MacDiarmuda’, ed. by L. McKenna, The Irish Monthly 49, no. 571 (1921), pp. 26-29 (p. 28).
Though good works were believed to be rewarded in themselves, the patron of these good works also expected remembrance in their death in the form of prayers for the salvation of their soul from Purgatory. The prayers of the poor were considered especially powerful as were the prayers of priests and other clergy. In many instances prayers were directly requested for money given to specified parties. In the late medieval period the bequest for prayer from clergy was normally directed at a clergy man or friar in the place of burial and if the testator’s financial situation allowed, to other religious houses in the area. Special prayer requests were often included for certain masses to be said on a person’s month’s or year’s mind, the anniversaries of a person’s death day, or for certain numbers of masses. Requests for a set or sets of five masses most likely reflected a special devotional appeal to the wounds of Christ, while a ‘Trental’, a set of thirty masses said in thirty days, was believed to have a special indulgence related to St Gregory the Great. Chantries, as discussed in the introduction, were also set up by the wealthiest of patrons, ensuring that prayers and masses would be sung for the founder and his family ‘in perpetuity’ by specially assigned chaplains.

By beautifying the church or creating a work that would allow the veneration of devotional subjects the donor or patron was performing a charity of sorts and would have considered the act to go towards the satisfaction of their sins. But, like expectations of other good works and charities, the patronage of devotional art was also created with the expectation of remembrance in prayer. Even more than the bequests of wills the creation of visual devotional art meant that a patron could insert their identities and even images into the hearts and minds of future viewers.

The inscriptions found on devotional art are of course some of the easier to understand messages provided by patrons in relation to how they wished their devotional art to be both understood and utilised in their favour. Most direct was the request to pray for the person who had the image or object made and often the person or people to whom the work was dedicated. Basic phrasing was often used, specifically to pray for the soul of someone making clear the connection between these prayers and the belief that they would benefit a soul after death. Notably the objects of personal use, such as the small crucifixes that have been looked at in this thesis rarely have an inscription that requests prayers. Some examples bear initials of the owner or owners, which marks their relationship with the object, but do not
give the kind of information that is expressed when eliciting prayers. This is presumably because the personal objects were made with the purpose of providing a devotional outlet for the living, while the more public art was made for the purpose, at least from the point of view of the patron, in order to ensure prayers for oneself after death.

In some instances the standard ‘pray for the souls of’ request was expanded to include references to specific devotions. The stone memorial slab of Archbishop Tregury (c. 1471 or later) in St Stephen’s Chapel in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, indicates that the Archbishop may have had strong devotions to elements of the Passion. The inscription from his tomb (translated from Latin) begins, ‘IHS Saviour of Mankind, is my salvation’ and ends with ‘Although [I am] entombed in marble, Christ was scourged for me’. 304

After the Reformation, the recusant Catholics of Ireland continued to work towards their salvation through good acts in life to ensure remembrance and prayers in death. Rory MacMahon’s tomb slab (1575) found just outside of the medieval church wall at Kilmore, Co. Meath directly demonstrates his belief in these ideas. MacMahon also was the patron of a churchyard cross at Kilmore. As has already been discussed in chapter six, the imagery on the cross reveals a devotion to the Passion through images of the Crucifixion, the Five Wounds, and other Instruments of the Passion. The inscriptions on MacMahon’s tomb also are paired with a bas relief carving of Christ on the Cross. The first inscription, translated from the Latin, reads ‘No one ought to be grieved at death, since in living there is labour and danger, while in dying there is peace and the assurance of resurrection. Pray for the soul of Rory MacMahon who had me made’. The second inscription is in Irish and of a similar nature but a slightly different message. Translated it reads, ‘God expects everyone who reads this, and understands that the pains of Purgatory are the shorter and the mercy of God the more speedy for the prayers of Christians, to offer a prayer of charity for the soul of him who wrote this, and for whom it was written, namely Rory Bui MacMahon’. 305 The bi­lingualism of the inscriptions reflects both the language of the religion, Latin, and the likely native tongue of MacMahon, Irish, but is uncommon. Latin was more

304 Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, vol. 1, p. 141.
305 Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, vol. 1, pp. 210-211.
typically used for inscriptions in the late medieval period and through much of the sixteenth century though towards the end of the century and into the seventeenth, one finds English inscriptions much more often.

Clodagh Tait has examined the somewhat confusing will of Thomas Cusack (1571) who though a Protestant in his public life seems to have been a careful recusant in the mid-sixteenth century. In his will, he signals his Catholic leanings in several ways. He left money to the local poor in Lismullen and Cossingston, to be distributed at his funeral, and on the yearly anniversary of his death, or twelve month’s mind, for the next three years. These bequests would be given with the expectation that the poor would pray for him at his memorial masses, a tradition that did not correspond with Protestant beliefs. Though he left £10 to the Church of Ireland Christ church Cathedral, he also left vestments to his son, a Catholic priest, who held the advowson at Kentstown. Cusack, if Catholic, was also careful with the symbolism used on the religious objects he commissioned. The vestments and chalice he commissioned display only heraldic imagery, a type of imagery common to both Protestant and Catholic religious objects but of neutral confessional meaning.306

Though Cusack continued to donate to churches in his will, many Catholic recusants’ wills show a tendency away from donations to churches that no longer represent their religion, and towards other forms of charities. Hospitals and the poor, are some of the obvious recipients but even seemingly secular acts were seen as devotional works. Duffy has found that in English wills, bequests to the upkeep of roads and bridges can be seen to increase as overtly religious bequests decrease during the Reformation. Though to the modern mind such bequests would seem secular in nature, such works were considered charitable and so quietly devotional in the early modern period. Bridge building and repairing was an especially symbolic act of mercy as a bridge was a recognised metaphor for Christ in the Middle Ages.307

An example of this nature can be found on the Duleek bridge in Co. Meath where a plaque records that ‘This bridge with the causies [roads] were repaired and builded bi William Bathe of Athcarne Justice and Jenne Dowdall his wife in the year of Our Lord 1587, whose souls God take to mercy. Amen’. Like Cusack, William Bathe was a Justice of the Court of Common Pleas and so employed at a high level within the Irish government. Though recusancy was becoming more emergent in Co. Meath in the 1580s, Bathe probably could not risk overt recusant behaviour and so performed arguably secular acts such as repairing the Duleek bridge and roads. A repair by James Butler and his wife, Margaret O’Brien, on a bridge near Holycross Abbey, Co. Tipperary in 1626 more overtly signified the Catholic nature of the act by an inscription which asked the reader to pray for their souls.

The likelihood that William Bathe was Catholic is revealed quite clearly by the two memorial crosses erected after his death in 1599 by his wife in Duleek and Annesbrook in Co. Meath. Both of these crosses display a common but through programme of iconography, emphasising clearly Catholic devotions. Not only are their images of the saints and apostles, the Virgin and Child, the Crucifixion, a possible Herrgotsruh Christ figure, and the Instruments of the Passion, but many of these figures are labelled with their names should their be any confusion to their identity. The Duleek cross holds an inscription similar to that on the bridge plaque, stating her status as patron and the dedication of the cross in the memory of her husband with a wish at the end of, ‘whose sovles I pray God take to his mercie’. A very similar message is found on the west side of the Annesbrook cross, while, as was discussed in chapter four, on the east side the inscription bears the first lines of the ‘Hail Mary’ prayer is inscribed along with a request to the ‘very excellent Qven of Heaven’ to ‘praye for vs poore sovles’. The erection dates of these crosses were 1600 and 1601, respectively. Though the month and year are not given it

could be speculated that they were erected at the year’s mind in the two years following her husband’s death. Notably Jennet Dowdall also erected two similar memorial crosses for her second husband, Oliver Plunket, the Lord of Louth, after his death in 1607. The crosses were not identical but significantly similar to the two she erected for her first husband. The language and iconography in these examples all point to traditional Catholic devotional practices and to the traditional Catholic imagery related, as discussed above, to a Good Death. These crosses along with the bridge and road repairs recorded on the plaque, were all ways in Reformation Ireland that Catholics continued to work towards salvation.

The reception and use of devotional art among the merchant classes and the poor

While the wealthy may have been more financially able to commission the devotional art of their preference, devotional art and practices were not beyond the reach or the understanding of the lower classes. One important way that the common lay person could interact with devotional art and practice was through the church. As already discussed in chapter two, there were several communal activities that surrounded Passiontide in the late medieval church. The liturgical rituals such as creeping to the cross and the dramatic performances concerning the Passion of Christ during the Easter weekend would have involved the parish community emphasising the importance of the Passion and further fuelling devotions to the topic. Year round liturgical rituals that also have been mentioned, such as the kissing of the pax, would have presented the common lay parishioner with an interactive experience of devotional imagery.

Though a lay person may not have had the wealth to found a chapel in a church or create an altar tomb memorial, there were many ways to participate in the patronage of a parish or other church community that were less financially draining but comparable in idea to the donations of the rich. Guilds were a common way for members of the working classes to partake in special devotion to a saint or other spiritual subject, by communally funding the upkeep of a dedicated chapel. The benefits were the same as those of the family chantry chapels that were discussed in chapter two. The prayers, indulgences and grace that the guild gained from their devotional works and prayers were believed to go to the good of all members of the guild, helping to shorten their stay in Purgatory and bring them to
salvation. Guilds could be formed among the practitioners of a craft, such as tanners or butchers, or as 'religious' guilds that formed for the purpose of promoting a specific cult. The distinction between craft and religious guilds in practice was little to none, as both functioned in the same capacity. These guilds, which were led by the laity were one way in which the devotional prayer of this time can be seen to be directed from not only the hierarchy of the church but also from the laity. The role of the craft and religious guilds in promoting Passion devotion was perhaps best displayed in the yearly Corpus Christi pageant when guilds would take on various roles in the dramatic re-enactments of the Passion of Christ, though some guilds such as the Corpus Christi guild would have been dedicated to Christocentric devotions throughout the year. In Ireland records only survive for about fifteen guilds in the Dublin area, though others were known to exist such as the guild of St Canice, Hollywood, for example, suggesting that others elsewhere may very well have existed.\(^\text{311}\) Though the guilds were in essence devotional groups, even those expressly formed as ‘religious’ guilds were not actively challenged by the post-Reformation authorities in Ireland until the seventeenth century. The role of these guilds in the promotion of Catholicism after the Reformation in the 1530s is not clear, though St Sythe's guild in Dublin, whose 1476 foundation charter set them out as being dedicated to the praise and reverence of the Blessed Virgin, may have helped to fund Catholic priests as late as 1630.\(^\text{312}\)

The strength of devotional feeling among people who had little means to create lasting visual statements of their devotional beliefs is perhaps easier to gauge in times when those beliefs are being challenged. In the 1580s, as was mentioned in chapter five, Barnaby Googe, the provost marshal of Connacht reported, in a letter he wrote to Sir Francis Walsingham, the resistance he met he when attempting to confiscate Catholic prayer-books from the locals. He relates that in the course of taking them from the people he was 'threatened with the greatest curses they have'.\(^\text{313}\) This not only implies that the prayer books were


\(^{312}\) Colm Lennon, 'The Foundation Charter of St Sythe's Guild, Dublin, 1476', Archivium Hibernicum 48 (1994), pp. 3-12 (pp. 4-5, 9).

\(^{313}\) Cunningham, 'Illustrations of the Passion', pp. 28-29.
owned by several individuals but that the books must have been important to the owners.

More extreme, and disturbing, was an event that occurred in Kilkenny in the days following the ascension of Queen Mary I to the throne. John Bale was still the Protestant bishop of Ossory that August in 1553 shortly after King Edward VI had died. After a few days of general merriment on the part of the citizens of Kilkenny at the prospect of the return of a Catholic monarch, Bale made the mistake of sending his servants at the Episcopal mansion out to save the hay on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. Working on this day, which would have been a strict day of obligation to the Catholics of the region, was seen as an insult to the Mother of God and this action ‘so exasperated the people of the locality that, unable to control their indignation, they rushed upon the haymakers and slew them on the spot’.314 Bale was said to have escaped a similar fate only due to the protective iron gates of the Uppercourt castle. Whether this type of mob violence can be accurately ascribed to purely devotional motivations is doubtful. That the angry mob took the perceived insult to the Virgin as a personal insult in a time of high emotion does however indicate that the change in situation regarding their personal confessional freedoms was significant to them.

Availability of devotional materials

Even if a person was not able to commission a piece of devotional art, there were many other ways to obtain devotional images and objects. In Ireland, evidence in late medieval and early modern wills and other records suggest that devotional items such as crucifixes and prayer beads were regularly owned by the laity and in their death were either bequeathed to family or friends or to the church. Nicholas Suttowne’s will, mentioned above, left a crucifix to be given to St. Werburgh’s church, Dublin.315 The will of Thomas Westoun, rector of Liones, living in Dublin, died circa 1450 and left ‘his shrine’ which in the inventory is

315 Christ Church Deeds, p. 95.
valued at 20d, 'and a spoon to John Erle, tailour [sic]'\textsuperscript{18}. From the seventeenth century, Lisagh O'Connor left his son his amber beads and crucifix in 1626 and in a will of ten years later Sir Geoffrey Gallway left his daughter 'my chayne my crosse and my Reliques'.\textsuperscript{17} In 1510, the Churchwardens at St Werburgh's in Dublin recorded items that had been given to the church as sureties against debt owed. Alison Selyman had pledged 'a pair of bedys of Corall gaudeyt with sylver' for the price of 6s8d and James Eustace offered a silver gilt cross for the same amount.\textsuperscript{18} As one can surmise from the quality of the goods listed some of the people named in these examples were not the poorest of citizens. The evidence in these records, however, does suggest that small devotional objects such as crucifixes, relics and pairs of beads, which were most likely rosaries, were in the hands of the laity throughout these centuries. As has been mentioned in chapter four, rosaries and crosses survived in many materials, from bone and wood to amber and silver, allowing for most to obtain some level of the goods.

The uses of these types of devotional items were depicted within devotional art from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries. Maria Cruise had herself depicted on the Plunket/Cruise wayside cross (c. 1470) at Killeen, Co. Meath wearing a crucifix around her neck. [image 7.11] Neither the practice of wearing crucifixes, nor the practice of representing oneself as wearing such an item was curtailed by the Reformation in Ireland. The effigy on the tomb of Walter Bermingham (c. 1548), Dunferth, Co. Kildare, has one of the finest surviving examples of a carved pendant crucifix represented on an effigy in Ireland. [image 7.12] The cross itself is worn but many details are still identifiable. The detail in which the figure on the cross has been rendered suggests that in this case at least, that this specific cross existed, and was an item that Bermingham was both proud of and wished to be remembered in association with. Another example of this type of

\textsuperscript{18} Christ Church Deeds, pp. 189-190; Thank you to Dr Rachel Moss, who drew my attention to this and the previous reference.

\textsuperscript{17} W. FitzGerald, 'Miscellanea', \textit{Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society} 6 (1909-11), p. 244; 'Sir Geoffrey Gallway, will 1636', Dublin, National Archives of Ireland RC 5/16, p. 41; Clodagh Tait, ‘Irish Images of Jesus 1550-1650,’ \textit{Church Monuments} 16 (2001), pp. 44-57.

\textsuperscript{18} John L. Robinson, ‘Churchwardens’ Accounts, 1484-1600, St Werburgh’s Church, Dublin’, \textit{JRSAI}, sixth series, vol. 4, no. 2 (1914), pp. 132-142 (p. 140).
representation can be found on the early sixteenth century double effigy tomb at Athboy, Co. Meath, on which both effigies are wearing pendants: the woman wears a small jewel or cross on a twisted chain and the knight wears a large ring-like pendant which may have represented the Crown of Thorns.\textsuperscript{319}

The rosaries mentioned in the above wills were, as discussed in chapter four, devotional tools used in praying the Rosary, a devotion encouraged by Counter-Reformation elements in Ireland. Depictions of the rosaries in use have been seen on examples such as the Cantwell/Grace tomb (c. 1608) in Kilcooly abbey, discussed in chapter six. [image 4.89] While amber beaded crucifixes would have been a more expensive item, plainer rosaries were likely to be available to even the poorest members of society, through the distribution of rosaries by Jesuit missionaries in the mid-sixteenth century. When not praying with the rosaries it appears that it was common in late sixteenth-century Ireland for women to wear them as reported in 1579 by Marmaduke Middleton, the Protestant Bishop of Waterford.\textsuperscript{320} The wearing of rosaries, besides being a way of signifying one’s devotional beliefs and having the tools for devotion close at hand, was probably also believed to offer prophylactic properties to the wearer.

There are suggestions from surviving materials from the eighteenth century that suggest crosses and crucifixes made of less expensive materials may have been created and offered for sale in Ireland in the late medieval and early modern centuries. Crucifixes carved in wood, commonly referred to as penal crosses, seem to suddenly appear in the scope of surviving devotional art in Ireland in the early eighteenth century. The crucifixes have been found in many locations but the similarities between them suggest a common area in which they were produced. [image 7.13] Lucas has postulated that they were collected by pilgrims to St. Patrick’s Purgatory at Lough Derg, Co. Donegal. John Richardson who visited the famous pilgrimage destination in the eighteenth century noted that crosses were an important item for the pilgrims to carry.\textsuperscript{321} A century later, when Thomas Campbell Foster visited the site in 1846 he found carved wooden crucifixes offered for sale on road approaching the site. He wrote,

\textsuperscript{319} Hunt, \textit{Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture}, vol. 1, pp. 202-203.
\textsuperscript{321} Richardson, \textit{The Great Folly of Pilgrimages in Ireland}, pp. 49, 62.
As I drove down the road to the lake, some children ran out of two or three peasants’ huts on the roadside with handfuls of rudely carved little wooden crucifixes, to offer me for sale. These are sold to the pilgrims on their way to the ‘station’, and are afterwards preserved by them with the greatest devotion, as proofs or trophies of their pilgrimage. I bought a child’s handful of these crucifixes for a shilling.322

What is notable is the repeated use of the Instruments of the Passion on these wooden crucifixes, which could easily be a continued tradition from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in which the Instruments of the Passion are found on tombstones, church altar plate and perhaps most significantly, small metal pendant crucifixes that were made in Ireland in the early modern period into the eighteenth century. [images 6.74 – 6.76] The wooden penal crosses continue the Irish tradition of including the cock and the pot symbol among the Instruments of the Passion which began to appear in Irish art from the fifteenth century, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Several stone moulds that have been found in Ireland suggest that there was also a practice of casting small crosses and crucifixes, probably in inexpensive materials such as lead. Little is known concerning the date of the moulds though the use of stone moulds for making pewter goods in England was common in the late medieval period, as was production of pewter pilgrimage badges and tokens.323 [image 7.14] One of these moulds in the collection of the NMI (no reg. no.) was recorded as being found near a church wall where ‘stations’ were formerly held. [image 7.15] A mould like this one would allow a metalsmith to create several copies of the same crucifix. The small crucifixes made from moulds like this could have been created and sold like the penal crucifixes on the roadside or in the markets that often were set up in conjunction with feast days or pattern days where ‘stations’

were often performed. A famed stone mould which was found at the grave of St Declan of Ardmore, Co. Waterford that became locally known as the Duibhín Déagláin was thought to have been a relic of the saint that could cure toothache. [image 7.16] The stone had a cross carved into it and is notably broken, as is the other example above. It was no doubt a discarded stone mould but in local lore it became a relic of St Declan and was believed to have worn like a pendant. While in this case the small stone carving was most likely a mould, the practice of wearing small stone plaques with crosses carved into them is known from some nineteenth-century examples of such pendants that are found in the collection of the NMI and was recorded as a specific tradition in the Aran Islands.  

Apart from local production, there is evidence that a large amount of devotional materials was coming into Ireland from abroad. For much of the early modern period, Catholic items were illegal to own or bring into the country, but that did not stop them from being imported and the international relic trade continued in Ireland through the early modern period. In 1642, a ship heading to Ireland from Italy was discovered to be carrying rosary beads, ‘some of St Peter’s teeth, a vial of Mary Magdelene’s tears, and a fragment of the true cross’ when it was forced to land at Cornwall. 325 From an entry in The Lismore Papers we find another example of these types of items being smuggled into Ireland from abroad. On the 22nd January 1617, a French ship called the St Martin of Polgan docked in Cork harbour at Monkstown. Among the ‘popish’ items confiscated were several books, including a copy of the Summa Doctrinae Christianae, a vita of St. Patrick, the Malus Malificarum, a Rituale Romanum and a Bible, along with divers printed pages with pictures’. Besides books and printed images some other items of interest that were confiscated were a three foot long Crucifix and a statue of the Virgin Mary, a ‘gilded ring with a little chaine’ attached, ‘one wooden cross, a guided piece of wood, two little pictures, five pair of beads, one paper of Agnes

---


Deis, [and] one paper of little brass crosses’. The ‘beads’ are likely a reference
to rosary beads and the ‘paper’s of Agnes Dei and ‘little brass crosses’ could be a
reference to small packets of these objects that could have been easily distributed.

There is also evidence that the people of Ireland were given these items by
members of clergy and Religious groups to help promote devotions and prayer. We
know from the records of the Jesuits in Ireland that in the early seventeenth century it
was typical to conclude a mission to a townland or village by leaving a selection of
rosaries, small crosses, Agnus deis and medals with the people. Fr. Leynich, a
Jesuit in the early seventeenth century, was one such missionary, who noted that the
Irish people ‘greatly revered’ the items.

Though it is slightly later than the specified time line of this study, it is also
worth noting that Bishop Luke Wadding kept records of the books he imported and,
as he describes, the ‘Bookes given and bestowed on Relations, friends, benefactors,
poore Gentry and widdowes, children, etc. from the yeere 1668 [when] I came to
Ireland till the [year] 1687 which I hope brought some good.’ While he had a
substantial private library of his own, it is clear from this list that he was buying
multiple copies of these books for the express purpose of distributing them. That he
would buy several hundred of some books implies a surprisingly large literate
population in Wexford. Most were small devotional and catechetical works. Some
he imported from places such as Paris and Ghent but he also was able to source some
from Dublin, Wexford and New Ross that had already been imported and for sale
from within Ireland.

---


Case Study: The Plunket Family in Ireland, 1450-1650

The Plunkets were an important family of varying wealth and power during the late medieval and early modern period. This was in part due to their estates and landholdings in counties Meath, Louth and north county Dublin, and the positions many members of the family held in the government and law courts in Dublin. The Plunkets were members of the ‘Old English’ or Anglo-Irish Catholic land-owning gentry. As the Reformation and Counter-Reformation came to Ireland, most of the members of the Plunket families remained Catholic, though like many of the Irish elite class, public displays of their confessional beliefs varied as political and social situations dictated. By identifying the devotional art that was commissioned and displayed from the pre-Reformation period through the first half of the seventeenth century from within one familial group that lived within one region throughout these centuries, the ways in which various aspects of Catholicism and devotion are displayed through art can be more comprehensively examined and contextualised to the individuals and historical events they lived through.

At least twenty-eight examples of devotional works can be assigned to Plunket patrons between the mid-fifteenth and the mid-seventeenth centuries (for the list see Appendix 1). The iconography and imagery that does survive on these objects have, in some instances, been examined in previous chapters as individual images and compared to others of similar topic. Some of the tombs, crosses, and fonts are damaged or fragmentary, and others are only known by earlier historical documentary reference. Though there were most likely many more instances of Plunket patronage than what survives today, it is hoped that since this case study will be looking specifically at a family about which some information is known, it may help illuminate the kinds of influences that affected the choices of patrons in this period.

Family lore places the Plunkets arriving in Ireland during the Norman Conquest. Over the course of the late medieval and early modern period the Plunket family tree developed several influential and aristocratic branches, the most notable lines becoming the Lords Louth (Sir Oliver Plunket, the first Lord (Baron) Louth, cr. 1541), and the Plunkets of Beaulieu (who lost their estate in the seventeenth century), the Lords Killeen, who later became the Earls of Fingall (Sir Lucas Plunket, 8th Lord (Baron) Killeen, cr. 1st Earl of Fingall in 1628), the Lords Rathmore, and the Lords
Dunsany. The Plunkets of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries held positions of authority such as Sheriff of Louth and King’s Sergeant-at-law. They held estates that would imply an upper level of wealth but unfortunately there are no surviving examples of devotional art from these earlier times that history has preserved as being the result of Plunket patronage. It was around the beginning of the fifteenth century, when one Plunket family gained a large amount of land and wealth, that commissioned devotional art and religious patronage begins to make a greater and more consistent appearance in the surviving record of the Plunket family.

Around the turn of the century, Sir Christopher Plunket (1370-1445) of Rathregan, Co. Meath, a knight, was in possession of the manors of Kilskeer and Girley, married Joan de Cusack of Rathmore, Co. Meath, the daughter and heir of Sir Lucas de Cusack in the late fourteenth century. Joan was the sole heir of her family and in c. 1403 her inheritance brought control of substantial lands in Co. Meath, including Killeen and Dunsany as well as the manors of Killallon, Clonmacduffe, and Clony, with advowsons of the churches in the same into the Plunket family. Sir Christopher and Joan had a large family. Many examples of devotional and religious patronage survive from this generation of the family and their immediate descendants.

Sir Christopher, as well as his second and third born sons, built new churches on their respective properties in the first half of the fifteenth century. These churches, at Killeen, Dunsany and Rathmore, are significant in the history of gothic architecture in Meath as they likely introduced architectural design elements into the


greater Pale area from Dublin. Elements of St Mary's church at Killeen in particular are closely based on parts of St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin that had been remodelled between c. 1370 and 1400. The treatment of north and south nave doors and the tracery elements in several of the windows are similar enough to those at St Patrick's Cathedral as to suggest that a mason who worked in the late fourteenth century on the renovations at the Cathedral, or one who had trained there, headed the commission at Killeen. These churches were built to impress and it is notable that the Plunkets chose a decidedly English treatment in the design of the buildings as well as the features of the interior elements to express their sophistication. St Nicholas's Church at Dunsany and St Mary's church at Killeen Castle were built with an extended nave and chancel, a design that was not the norm in Ireland and probably came from a desire to provide more space for the rituals associated with the mass. As has already been discussed above, the churches housed chantry chapels which would have been built to help ensure the salvation of the souls of the Plunket families through the regular prayers and masses sung in their names by the chantry chaplains.

It is significant that in the years just following the building of their architecturally innovative churches the Plunkets also began to commission seemingly innovative stone memorial works. Beginning around the mid-fifteenth century, Sir Christopher and his wife, and their children in their turn, began commissioning stone tombs and memorial crosses, many of which have been discussed in previous chapters. In the scope of surviving devotional art, it has been noted that these works commissioned by the Plunkets and the network of their close family and peers in the Co. Meath area, appear to have been on the cusp of a new style of Irish devotional art as created in the medium of stone. The wayside and churchyard crosses that were commissioned by Plunket patrons have been noted by King to be the earliest of their sort in Ireland and have been suggested as the impetus for later works of similar forms in other areas of the country. As has been discussed in chapter six, the Plunket tombs from the late fifteenth-century show some of the earliest consistent use of the Arma Christi shields on family tombs, a trend that seemed to spread to other areas by the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century.

334 King, 'Late medieval crosses in County Meath', p. 92.
Most of the Plunket tombs in the late fifteenth century are made up of two long sides of blank ogee-niches with heraldic shields placed between the upper spaces of each niche and two short sides of ogee-arch niches that have bas relief carved figures of Christ on the Cross, the Flagellation, saints, the Virgin and other devotional figures. [images 4.8, 4.58, 4.61, 6.2, 6.29, 7.17] Though no traces of paint remain on the Plunket family tombs, it is probable that the tombs were at one time painted. The Joyce tomb in the parish church of St Nicholas of Myra in Galway City which dates to approximately the late fifteenth century, just slightly later than the Plunket tombs, is a canopy type tomb found in the eastern wall of the south transept. [image 6.10] Like the several Plunket tombs, the tomb chest is decorated with a series of uncarved niches with floriated crocketed ogee-arches above them. In this case the stonework of the tomb has remains of a gesso foundation pointing to an originally painted surface.335 The blank niches of the Plunket tombs, and others like the Joyce tomb, were most likely painted with the Apostles and the saintly figures that one finds carved into these spaces by sculptors when the trend moves to the Ossory area. A comparable conception of what these tombs may have looked like can be found on a gothic altar frontal in Marsannay-le-Bois, Côte-d'Or, France. [image 7.18] The combination of painting and sculpture also resembles wooden rood screens that survive from the same period in English churches and probably would have appeared in the Plunket churches.336 It is likely that the wooden furniture, which was undoubtedly present in these Irish churches, influenced the imagery found on the stone works. It would not be surprising if the wayside and churchyard cross that seem, from surviving evidence, to have only begun being created by Plunket patrons in late medieval Ireland were actually based on wooden exemplars as well. Other works, such as the baptismal font at St Nicholas Church, Dunsany, display images such as the Pelican in Piety which are reminiscent of embroidered work, and panels of groining that resemble architectural designs.337 The school of stone sculptors that developed in the Co. Meath area during the second half of the fifteenth century due to the many works commissioned by the Plunkets and other gentry families seems to have harvested their ideas from sources of many materials. While much of the

335 Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, vol. 1, pp. 148-149.
iconography displayed on the stone works of Plunket patrons at this time seems new to Irish devotional art, it is probable instead that the iconography was already familiar through images in other sources of more ephemeral materials that are now lost. The trend to turn these images and forms into lasting stone carvings, however, may well have been instigated in the Plunket’s employment of stone workers to build their churches earlier in the century.

The will of the first Lord (Baron) Dunsany, Sir Christopher Plunket (1403-c.1462), was written in 1462. In its bequests of material goods and requests for prayers for himself and his loved ones was a typical fifteenth-century effort to ensure his last acts in life would work towards his salvation. As already discussed above, Sir Christopher, like his father built a church on his Dunsany property before his death and endowed a chantry to be formed at St Nicholas’s church. Though the chantry wasn’t established during his life time in Dunsany, one can guess that Sir Christopher was involved in the chantry at the nearby church of his childhood home at Killeen. During his lifetime he had amassed a small library of liturgical books which upon his death he left to the church at Dunsany, presumably for use by the soon to be formed chantry there. He bequeathed four antiphoners which are books of antiphons or anthems that are sung or chanted during the liturgy, four graduals which contain the plain song for mass, along with three missals, two psalters, one with an epistolary, and other liturgical books that provided for the three chaplains and one clerk that initially made up the chantry. Sir Christopher also provided for altar plate to be made, a chalice that he was commissioning from a goldsmith in Trim at the time of his will, and textiles including a cope and a chasuble.

Besides the substantial monetary funds that would help to ensure the functioning of the church, Plunket’s bequests of the liturgical objects may have been in part responding to the stipulations rendered at the Synod of Cashel in 1453 which placed the responsibility of maintaining and furnishing a church with the laity. The detailed list concerning church furnishings stated that the laity were to provide the missal, silver chalice, alb, stole, chasuble, surplice, a font and vestries. Many of

338 ‘The Will of Sir Christopher Plunket’, f. 211.
these items are those mentioned in Plunket’s will and others, such as the font, appear
to have been commissioned for the church previous to his death. Unfortunately these
specifically named items can no longer be found, but by leaving these items Plunket
was ensuring that the church would not only have the materials it needed to function
but also ensured he would leave an impressive testimony to his memory. As
discussed above, all of these donations would have acted as a bid to be closer to the
ritual of the Mass by association. By offering personal possessions to be made into
liturgical items or by creating items to give to the church, the patron insinuated him
or herself into the ritual and it seemed that they believed a spiritual gain was to be
had from this. The ‘grete rede chaplet of perlys’ donated to clothe the statue of the
Our Lady in Dunsany in Sir Christopher’s will, may have been a garment worn by
Anne FitzGerald during her lifetime. Looking at the gift as a kind of reverse to the
idea of associative relics of saints being considered holy, Plunket would have
believed that his wife would benefit from the donation of her personal goods in
honouring the holy statue. A chaplet was similar to a rosary; it was a string or
necklace of beads, used for counting prayers. The description given in the will
describes the chaplet as being ‘great’, ‘red’ and of ‘pearls’. Chaplets can be of
varying numbers of beads and as this one is ‘great’ perhaps it had many beads. Red
pearls could be beads of coral, which as we have already seen in examples such as
the Moyné Abbey reliquary, was a significant material for devotional objects.

In the case of Sir Christopher’s chalice it is unknown if his name was
inscribed on the work but as judging from the later chalices that survive in Ireland,
this would have been likely. By placing his name on the chalice, or indeed putting his
name on any of the other donated items, Plunket would hope that the priest, when
saying mass, would see his name and in the case of a chalice would raise the item
and symbolically the patron’s name to God’s eyes as well. This type of patronage
continued in the Plunket family into the early modern period, as known from at least
one surviving example. Alexander Plunket, a Franciscan friar, had his name
inscribed onto the chalice he had made in 1633, in the typical phrasing noticeably
placed around the foot of the chalice, ‘Fr. Alexander Plunkett, me fieri fecit pro
Convent fratru minoru de Trym 1633’. [image 7.19] The decoration of the chalice in

---

*legislation and pastoral care*, in *The Churches, Ireland, and the Irish*, ed. by W.J. Sheils and

199
this case was fairly plain, depicting only the Cross on three ‘Calvary’ steps. The ornament is slightly more sober than many Franciscan chalices made at this time, but it does compare with other Irish chalice ornamentation from later in the seventeenth century. [images 7.20, 7.21] Alexander appears to have donated the chalice to the Franciscan friary at Trim, Co. Meath upon the occasion of his cousin, Patrick Plunket, being appointed guardian there that year.340

Christopher Plunket also expressed in his will the common wish to benefit from being buried near an important devotional image, in this case, he wished to be buried in the chancel of the church at Killeen ‘before Our Lady’. All churches in Ireland were required by the fifteenth century to have statues of Christ on the Cross, the patron saint and the Virgin Mary. In this case the church was dedicated to St Mary, meaning the statue of Our Lady was the patron image. Marks, in his study of the perceived spiritual value of burial sites in Luton Church (c. 1425-1545), found that a burial spot in the chancel and in front of the patronal image or the high altar was the ‘best’ position in the church to be buried. Physically, Plunket wished to position himself in the ‘best’ spot of the Killeen church, the church of his ancestors, while ensuring his legacy would continue in the church he founded in Dunsany through the donation of material goods.341

In 1511 the Plunkets were listed as one of the most powerful families in Co. Meath and as such they can be found to express their devotions in some elite ways.342 In the first decade of the sixteenth century, there are several examples of devotional monuments being created, including the fragment of a wayside cross at Sarsfieldstown, Co. Meath, which was erected by Elizabeth Plunket, the daughter of the first Lord (Baron) Rathmore, and her husband Sir Christopher Barnwall. [image 7.22] Though only a fragment of the cross remains, the carvings thereon display the

342 Dublin, TCD, MS 804, fols 168v-170v; Bradshaw, *Religion and Reformation in the Tudor Diocese of Meath*, pp. 118, 149-151.
couple’s devotional wishes as well as their status in society. The inscription found on the west side of the cross shaft, translated from Latin, reads as follows,

Archbishop Octavian, Primate of all Ireland, has granted an indulgence in perpetuity, to every penitent, as often as they shall devoutly say an Our Father and a Hail Mary, for the souls of Christopher Barnewall; Kt, and Elizabeth Plunket, and all the faithful departed.343

The gaining of an indulgence for the act of praying for the souls of the couple was a major incentive for anyone who would have viewed the cross. The specific prayers required for the indulgence were two of the basic prayers of the age and would have been selected in part to allow the largest number of people participate. The issuing of the indulgence by the Archbishop of Armagh for the benefit of the couple, suggests that they had also probably been major patrons of the archdiocese in other forms. Though unfortunately most of the imagery is now lost from this cross fragment, the figures of a man and woman, most likely the patrons themselves, were also created to display their wealth and power, as seen in their fashionable clothing. They are joined by an image of a bishop, most likely representing Archbishop Octavian, himself, to lend an air of further credence to their promise of the indulgence. Elizabeth Plunket and Sir Christopher Barnewall were likely also the patrons of the Keenoge wayside cross, which was discussed in chapter four in relation to its Virgin and Child imagery. This cross, which now only survives in a fragmentary state, can be identified as work likely to be connected to Elizabeth Plunket by the image of St Lawrence on the east face of the shaft. [image 7.23] St Lawrence, a rarely depicted saint in Ireland, seems to have been held in special devotion by Elizabeth Plunket’s parents, who depicted him on their tomb and dedicated the church they founded at Rathmore, Co. Meath, to him.344

In post-Reformation Ireland, many branches of the Plunket family remained at least quietly Catholic and their moderation in public displays of confessional belief seems to have benefited their fortunes by allowing them to hold positions of power in the Dublin government. Like many of the Catholic gentry of the region, the Plunkets were supporters of the monarchy in Ireland but retained their confessional beliefs. Because of this, it is perhaps understandable that after the Reformation, fewer public

examples of devotional patronage come from Plunket family members. One of the most interesting discrepancies between the works of Plunket patronage before the Reformation and after is the use of imagery representing the Virgin Mary. Before the Reformation, the Plunkets regularly integrated the Virgin into their devotional patronage, whether in the visual representation of her as the Arma Virginis, the Pietà, or the Virgin and Child, as well as founding several churches dedicated in her name along with the holy well at Killeen, known as the Tobarmurray or Lady’s well, where stations were performed in honour of the Virgin.\textsuperscript{345}

In those works that survive from the post-Reformation period, the Plunkets no longer seem to include any of these forms of Marian iconography. They did still create works with Catholic devotional themes but they seem to have been created exclusively with images of Christ and the Instruments of the Passion. It should, of course, be stressed that the Instruments of the Passion, as well as images of the Crucifixion and Christ, were in use from the earliest of the Plunket works, and so are not new additions to the devotional imagery used. Tomb slabs that depicted the Instruments of the Passion in the sixteenth century can be found in several surviving works of dates spanning the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth, in the examples of the tomb slab of Sir Christopher Plunket, fourth Lord Rathmore, and his wife Catherine Preston (1531), St Lawrence’s church, Rathmore, Co. Meath, the tomb slab of Edward Plunket of Balrath and his wife Ellen Forster (c. 1584), at St Mary’s church, Killeen, Co. Meath, the tomb slab of Oliver Plunket of Clonebraney and his wife Elizabeth Dillon (c. 1595), at Clonebraney church, Co. Meath, and the tomb slab of Christopher Plunket of Moyagher, and his wife Katherine Begg (c. 1630), in Moyagher churchyard, Co. Meath.\textsuperscript{346}

There are a couple of surviving exceptions such as the tomb of Walter Bermingham (1548) which was made during his marriage to his second wife, Anne

\textsuperscript{345} Mary-Rose Carty, \textit{History of Killeen Castle}, p. 93.

Plunket, and depicts the Virgin in a Crucifixion scene. The Baronstown and Louth Hall wayside crosses (c. 1607), mentioned earlier, that were erected for the fourth Lord (Baron) Louth, Oliver Plunket, by his wife, Jennet Dowdall, after his death, while the image of the Virgin is not included, she is clearly manifested in the devotional sentiments of the ‘Hail Mary’ prayer found on both of the crosses.347

There is also the strong possibility that many more private works of patronage were created by the Plunkets, which in being now lost skew the picture of what was created at the time. Sir John Plunket of Donsoghly (d. 1582) was a member of the Plunket family who worked in the Dublin government beginning during Queen Mary’s reign but continued in Queen Elizabeth’s, even receiving a knighthood during that time. He was much of the same kind of quiet recusant as Thomas Cusack, who he worked closely with in, among other things, the administration of the oath of supremacy. Plunket’s closeness to Cusack continued after Cusack’s death when Plunket married Thomas Cusack’s last wife, Jennet Sarsfield. Just as Cusack had left a bequest in his will for a chantry chapel, John Plunket in the few years between his marriage to Sarsfield and his death built a private chapel at his home in Dunsoghly Castle. While Sir John Plunket for all professional appearances was a Protestant, he was suspected even in his own time as being a Catholic at home. The only indication of devotional art in the chapel that has been recorded from Plunket’s time was a stone plaque above the doorway which was carved with the Instruments of the Passion and the initials ‘J.P.M.D.D.S’, which stood for ‘John Plunket Miles de Donsoghley, Sarsfield’. That other elements of devotional art and objects would have been created to furnish this chapel is certain. Whether those works included imagery of the Virgin will never be known.348

347 Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, vol. 1, p. 157; King, ‘Late medieval crosses in Co. Meath’, pp. 105-106, 112.

From the surviving evidence in the visual arts, the literary arts, and the historical written records, it can be seen that devotions to the Virgin and her presence in devotional art continued to be utilised in post-Reformation Ireland. However, the clear presence of Marian devotion among the Plunkets’ devotional works before the Reformation, paired with the very few examples among the devotion works after the Reformation, suggests a change in the patrons’ usage of such images. The continued use of other devotional imagery may indicate that the Plunkets were self-editing to cast fewer scandals or suspicions upon themselves. While the Instruments of the Passion, as discussed in the previous chapter, were singled out as ‘popish’ symbols in the 1560s, it may be that imagery related specifically to Christ rather than the Virgin or the saints was considered ‘safer’ in some circles and for those who were concerned with their standing in the Irish administration.

The crosses dedicated to Oliver Plunket by his wife Jennet Dowdall were created after Plunket’s death, and so were possibly less of a concern in that regard, but they may also signal the changing attitudes of many of the Plunkets by the early seventeenth century. From around the 1580s, members of families who were noted as recusants were no longer offered political appointments or crown patronage, which in turn began to alienate those families from the Dublin government. At the turn of the century, the Plunkets, still for the most part firmly Catholic, were sending many of their sons to the Catholic colleges on the continent. Several Plunkets are recorded for instance as studying at Douai, where an Irish college with strong links to Co. Meath had been established. In the seventeenth century, some Plunkets prospered such as Lucas Plunket who was granted a large territory and was created the Earl of Fingall in 1628 by Charles I, despite the fact that he was a Catholic recusant. In 1641 however, when the Lucas’s son, Christopher, the second Earl of Fingall, and the other Catholic lords of Meath were relegated as outlaws, many of the Plunkets broke their ties to the monarchy and engaged in active rebellion. In this one family for instance, Sir Christopher was a leading figure at the gatherings at Tara and Duleek and was involved at the siege in Drogheda. His brother, Sir Nicholas, who was knighted by the Pope, was the chairman of the Catholic confederation in Kilkenny in
1642, and his other brother Patrick Plunket later became the Catholic Bishop of Meath.349
Final Conclusions

Passion devotion was an important element of the spiritual lives of the Irish Catholics who lived between the years 1450 and 1650. The interdisciplinary approach taken in this thesis has opened the scope of this subject beyond that of many of the past studies in the area of devotional art, which often have focused primarily on analyzing the stylistic changes of the art of specific mediums as they progressed through the decades. By assessing the devotional art work in conjunction with the contemporary history and devotional literature of the period, this study has provided a deeper understanding of the meanings and uses that the devotional art of the Passion had for the people who encountered it and had it made.

During the tumultuous sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the role of politics more aggressively entered the realm of religious belief. The challenges of the Reformation, however, did not seem to sway the use of Passion imagery in Ireland significantly. Traditional imagery continued to be expressed in devotional art through out the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries though in some instances, as has been discussed, that art was specifically targeted for destruction, and in other instances may have been purposefully edited by its patrons. In some cases the form and location for the art changed. In the west of Ireland for example, the patronage of chalices and other portable devotional goods seems to have been a more popular choice in the late sixteenth and seventeenth century than the permanent stone memorials found in the south and east. By, for the first time, creating a survey of surviving devotional works relating to Passion devotion in Ireland between 1450 and 1650, the similarities between these works in different materials can be tracked between forms and locations to show how the use of devotional imagery was perceived and continuously utilised across the country. In analyzing the probable influences of the devotional art of Ireland at this time, many examples have arisen in which the work of one medium most likely influenced another. The O’Kerin tombs of the Ossory area, for example, were undoubtedly influenced by the medium of print. The Crucifixion wall painting in the Cashel Cathedral was most likely based on a three dimensional processional cross. The artists and patrons of devotional art were taking inspiration from a variety of mediums and so it is all the more important to assess the imagery in a similarly multi-medium manner.
By taking this interdisciplinary and multi-medium focused approach several conclusions about the nature of late medieval and early modern Irish devotional art and devotional practices can be drawn. The first is that the devotional lives of the Irish people during these periods were rich in tradition but open to innovation. The idea that the state of Irish Catholicism had been left corrupted to the point of collapse by the time of the Reformation is a conclusion that some scholars have arrived at by only assessing the state of the official church hierarchy and behaviour of specific clergy. While the abilities and knowledge of church officials are relevant, the acts and interests of the laity must also be considered to fully understand the devotional status of a community. Some historians have already begun to reveal the importance of this aspect of devotional studies, but by making a thorough study of the devotional artwork of the period the extent of the patron’s role in devotional art and prayer can be more firmly understood.

In the fifteenth century, a boom of devotional art work seems to have occurred in Ireland, spurred on by the further integration of popular devotional works of literature from the continent and the rise in the observant movement among the mendicant orders in Ireland. The depictions of Christ on the Cross and other images of the events of the Passion show that Irish patrons were conversant in the current ideas of devotional art. The bardic poetry of the period supplements and confirms these enthusiasms, helping to deepen our understanding of the concerns behind the creation of the images. Because Passion devotion, and the iconography associated with it, was popular across Europe it can be difficult to pinpoint an exact source for any one image. Sometimes, as was seen in the case of the Mass of St Gregory image on the McCragh tomb in the Lismore Cathedral, some elements of a composition can be analysed to provide a general background for the work. But by considering the role of devotional art in regions outside of Ireland more than just stylistic influences can be garnered. With careful consideration, comparing how similar imagery was used in other regions can lend further layers of meaning and purpose to the art and iconography found in Ireland. The examination of the role of Easter Sepulchre tombs in England here has furthered the understanding of the possible ritual uses for tomb structures in Irish churches as well as revealed some of the possible motivations for patrons to create such structures. By studying the popular use of the images in the devotional Ars moriendi texts this study has been able to reveal another way in which the contemporary patrons and viewers of the devotional art of Ireland
may have read meaning into the groupings of the figures of the apostles, saints, Christ and the Virgin.

The importance of the role of the Virgin Mary in the Passion of Christ, and ultimately her role in the salvation of late medieval and early modern souls, is evident in the devotional art of Ireland but is even better understood with the added voice of bardic poetry. The centrality of the Virgin’s place in Passion devotion in Ireland, as has been seen in this study, clearly places any argument that the Virgin was an unimportant part of devotion in Ireland into serious question. Similarly, quotes of seventeenth-century Irish laity that ranked the Virgin Mary as one of the Trinity can perhaps be more sympathetically understood, considering that in so many ways the devotional art and beliefs of the period placed the Virgin as Christ’s equal in devotional terms.

Irish Catholics of the late medieval and early modern periods were personally interested in advancing their devotional lives and taking an active role in their own salvation. The folk traditions that have been discussed in this study have shown that people were continuously interested in passing along devotional protective prayers or charms that in many cases developed from the more formal or orthodox devotional elements of church teachings. While these popular devotions were sometimes discouraged by the church they were also sometimes co-opted by the church. Popular devotions to the Five Wounds, the Crown of Thorns, and Compassion of the Virgin all grew from being devotional enthusiasms of the laity to part of the liturgical tradition in the form of votive masses and liturgical feasts. The continued enthusiasm among Irish Catholics for Passion devotion as displayed by their use and creation of devotional art throughout the late medieval and early modern periods emphasises the great concern among the laity with their salvation in the afterlife. Through this study, the variety, the complexity and the centrality of the art of the Passion and Passion devotion in the daily lives of the people of Ireland between 1450 and 1650 has become clearer.
Appendix 1 – Plunket Patronage list and iconography chart

Plunket Patronage List

1. St Mary’s Baptismal Font (poss. Sir Christopher Plunket and Joan Cusack),
   St Mary’s Church, Killeen Castle, Co. Meath, first half of the fifteenth
   century
2. Plunket/Cusack Tomb (Sir Christopher Plunket and Joan de Cusack), St
   Mary’s Church, Killeen Castle, Co. Meath, c. 1441-1445
3. Plunket/Talbot Tomb (Maud Plunket cenotaph), private church, Malahide
   Castle, Co. Dublin, c. 1438-1445
4. Plunket/St Lawrence Tomb (Anne Plunket and Sir Christopher St Lawrence),
   St Mary’s Church, Howth, Co. Dublin, c. 1462
5. Plunket/FitzGerald Tomb (Sir Christopher Plunket and Anne FitzGerald), St
   Nicholas’s Church, Dunsany, Co. Meath, before c. 1462
6. Plunket/Preston Tomb (Elizabeth Preston), St Mary’s Church, Duleek, Co.
   Meath, second half of fifteenth-century
7. Plunket/Cruise Tomb (Sir Thomas Plunket and Marie Cruise), St Lawrence’s
   Church, Rathmore, Co. Meath, c. 1471
8. Plunket/Cruise Cross (Sir Thomas Plunket and Marie Cruise), Killeen Castle
   estate, Co. Meath, c. 1470 (only
9. St Nicholas’s Baptismal Font (prob. Sir Richard Plunket and Joan
   FitzEustace), St Nicholas’s Church, Dunsany, Co. Meath, c. 1462-1482
10. Plunket/FitzEustace Churchyard Cross (Richard Plunket (d. c. 1480) and Joan
    FitzEustace), St Nicholas’s Churchyard, Dunsany, Co. Meath, c. 1480 (base
     and shaft remain)
11. Keenoge Wayside Cross (prob. Elizabeth Plunket and Sir Christopher
    Barnewall, 2nd Lord Trimbleston), Keenoge, Co. Meath, c. 1490 (only shaft
     remains)
12. St Lawrences’s Baptismal Font (Sir Christopher Plunket, 4th Lord Rathmore,
    and Catherine Preston), St Lawrence’s Church, Rathmore, Co. Meath, c. 1500
13. Sarsfieldstown Wayside Cross (Elizabeth Plunket and Sir Christopher
    Barnewall), Sarsfieldstown, Co. Meath, c. 1500
14. Plunket/Marward Tomb (Sir Alexander Plunket, 3rd Lord Rathmore, and
    Anne Marward), St Lawrence’s Church, Rathmore, Co. Meath, c.1500
15. St Mary’s Churchyard Cross (poss. Sir Edmund Plunket, 4th Lord Killeen,
    and Eleanor Fleming), near north door of St Mary’s church, Killeen Castle,
    Co. Meath, c.1500-10
16. Plunket/Preston Wayside Cross (Sir Christopher Plunket, 4th Lord Rathmore
    and Catherine Preston), north of St Lawrence graveyard, Rathmore, Co.
    Meath, c. 1519
17. Plunket/Preston Tomb Slab (Sir Christopher Plunket and Catherine Preston),
    St Lawrence’s Church, Rathmore, Co. Meath, c. 1531
18. William Bermingham Tomb (created after his marriage to second wife Anne
    Plunket), Dunfierth, Co. Kildare, c. 1548
19. Donsoghly Chapel Plaque (Sir John Plunket (d. 1582) and Jenet Sarsfield),
    Latin inscription, above the door of St Margaret’s, Donsoghly Castle, Co.
    Dublin, c. 1580
20. Plunket/Forster Tomb (Edward Plunket of Balrath and Ellen Forster), St
    Mary’s Church, Killeen Castle, Co. Meath, c. 1584
21. Plunket/Dillon Tomb (Erected by Christopher Plunket and Anne Reilly for his father and mother, Oliver Plunket and Elizabeth Dillon), Mason: William O’Mulligan, Clonebraney, Co. Meath, c. 1595
22. Dunsany Wayside Cross (prob. Sir Patrick Plunket, 6th Lord Dunsany, and Ismay Barnewall), Dunshaughlin Rd outside gates of Dunsany Castle, Co. Meath, c. 1600
23. Baronstown Wayside Cross (Jenet Dowdall, for Sir Oliver Plunket, 4th Baron), near Carrickdexter Castle, Baronstown, Co. Meath, c. 1607
24. Louth Hall Cross (Jenet Dowdall for Sir Oliver Plunket, 4th Baron), Tallanstown, Co. Louth, c. 1607
25. Wogan altar tomb (William Wogan of Rathcoffie, Co. Kildare, husband of Anne Plunket (dau. of Christopher Plunket, 9th Lord Baron Killeen)), Clane Churchyard, Co. Kildare, 1616 (unfinished)
26. Plunket/Begg Tomb (Christopher Plunket (d. 19 July 1630), of Moyagher, and Katherine Begg), Moyagher Churchyard, Co. Meath, c. 1630
27. Alexander Plunket Chalice, donated to Franciscan Friary, Trim, Co. Meath, 1633
28. Golden/Plunket gravestone (Peter Goldwen Gollden and Anne Plunket), in the chancel of the church at Athboy, Co. Meath, c. 1635
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1635</th>
<th>1600</th>
<th>1580</th>
<th>1561</th>
<th>1531</th>
<th>1500</th>
<th>1470</th>
<th>1445</th>
<th>1410</th>
<th>1400</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Timeline**

- Heraldic shields
- Images of BVM
- Crucifixion/Cross
- Flagellation
- Instruments of the Passion
- Other images of Christ
- Four Evangelists
- Apostles & Saints
- Angels
- Patron(s)
- Inscriptions
List of Images

Chapter One

Image 1.1, Crucifixion, *Leabhar Breac*, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 P 16, p. 166

Image 1.2, Lucas de Heere, (a) *Townswomen: married and maid* (detail) and (b) *Irish noblewoman and poor man* (detail), c. 1575, Centrale Bibliotheek, Rijksuniversiteit, Ghent.

[Image from Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland: A History*, pls 2, 3]

Image 1.3, Girdle, linen and ivory, German, late fifteenth century, L: 172.7cm, W: 2.5cm, Limerick: The Hunt Museum, HCM 097 (missing)

[Image (a), from The Hunt Museum Online Catalogue, Image details (b) - (e), from Ilse Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen und späten Mittelalters*, pl. 380-383]

Image 1.4, Plunket/FitzGerald tomb, c. 1462, St Nicholas’s church, Dunsany, Co. Meath

[Image from Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, vol. 2, pl. 138]

Image 1.5, Effigies of Piers Butler, 8th Earl of Ormond, and his wife Margaret FitzGerald, c. 1539, St Canice’s, Kilkenny City

[Image from Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, vol. 2, pl. 158]

Chapter Two

Image 2.1, Jean le Tavernier, *Philip the Good at Mass*, 1457, Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek Albert I, MS 9092, fol. 9r

[Image from Sixten Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative: the rise of the dramatic close-up in fifteenth-century devotional painting*, fig. 73]
[Image from Ringbom, ‘Devotional Images and Imaginative Devotions’, fig. 6]

[Image from Ringbom, ‘Devotional Images and Imaginative Devotions’, fig. 7]

Image 2.4, wall painting (detail), north wall above the window, Ardamullivan Castle, Co. Galway
[Image from Morton, ‘Aspects of image and meaning in Irish medieval wall paintings’, pl. 6a]

Image 2.5, *The sale of a Madonna* (detail), Madrid, Escorial, Ms. T.I.1, fol. 17
*Cántigas de Santa Maria* of King Alfonso X of Castile
[Image from van Os, *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*, fig. 22]

Image 2.6, Floor slab of Denis Felan, 1577, New Ross, St Mary’s church, Co. Wexford
[Image from Paul Cockerham and Amy Louise Harris, ‘Kilkenny Funeral Monuments 1500-1600: A statistical and analytical account’, pl. 8]

Image 2.7, Grave slab of Thomas, David and Thomas Pembrock and family, c. 1590, St Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny
[Image from Cockerham, My body to be buried in my owne monument’, pl. 1]

Image 2.8 Ledger slab to Roger Felane and wife, 1607, St Patrick’s church, Kilkenny
[Image from Cockerham, ‘My body to be buried in my owne monument’: the social and religious context of Co. Kilkenny funeral monuments’, pl. 13]
Image 2.9, Permanent stone replica of the Holy Sepulchre, c. 1240, nave of Magdeburg Cathedral, Germany
[image from www.medievalart.org.uk/Germany2007/Magdeburg_Interior_Index.htm]

Image 2.10, Easter Sepulchre, fifteenth century, St Andrew’s Church, Heckington, Lincolnshire
[image from: http://www.astroft.co.uk/heckington.htm]

Image 2.11 Tomb niche, thirteenth century, north elevation of chancel, St Mary’s parish church, New Ross, Co. Wexford
[image from TARA, Stalley Collection http://hdl.handle.net/2262/39436]

Image 2.12, Effigy tomb said to be that of King Conor na Siudaine O’Brien, c. 1300, North wall of the chancel, Cistercian Abbey of Corcomroe, Co. Clare
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/11722]

Image 2.13, Niche tomb, early fourteenth century, east end of the north wall of the chancel, St Fachtna’s Cathedral, Kilfenora, Co. Clare
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/11532]

Image 2.14, Ó Ceallaigh/Ó Conchobhair monument, 1402, north wall of chancel of Abbeyknocknboy, Co. Galway, sculpted by Matha O Cogli
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/14523]

Image 2.15, Canopied tomb niche, fifteenth century, north wall of chancel, the ‘Abbey’, Clare Island, Co. Mayo
[image from Conleth Manning and Karen Morton, ‘Clare Island, Co. Mayo – The Abbey and Its Paintings’, p. 3]

Image 2.16, Tomb of Thomas Fleming (d. 1436), north wall of the east end of the chancel St Mary’s Collegiate Church, Youghal, Co. Cork
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/7407]
Image 2.17, Tomb niche, second half fifteenth-century, north wall of the chancel, Dominican Friary, Strade, Co. Mayo
[image from Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, vol. 2, pl. 253]

Image 2.18, Creagh tomb (original c. 1470), Franciscan Friary, Ennis, Co. Clare
[image author’s own]

Image 2.19, Tomb niche, early sixteenth century, the east end of the north wall of the chancel, Dominican friary, Athenry, Co. Galway
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/13779]

Image 2.20, Tomb of Piers Fitz Oge Butler, c. 1526, in Kilcooly abbey, Co. Tipperary
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/40609]

Image 2.21, Sir John Hopton’s tomb (d. 1489), north side of chancel, Holy Trinity Church, Blythburgh, Suffolk, England
[image from http://www.suffolkchurches.co.uk/Blythburgh.htm]

Image 2.22, John Clopton tomb, second half of fifteenth century, north wall of chancel, between Clopton chantry chapel and chancel, Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford, Suffolk, England
[image from Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pl. 8]

Image 2.23, Tomb niche, 13th/14th century, north wall of chancel, Holy Trinity Church, Bosham, West Sussex, England
[image from http://sussexchurches.co.uk/easter_sepulchres.htm]

Image 2.24, Detail from Tomb niche, second half fifteenth-century, north wall of the chancel, Dominican Friary, Strade, Co. Mayo
[image from Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, vol. 2, pl. 254]
Image 2.25, Drawing of the O’Ceallaigh Monument, c. 1790, Abbeyknockmoy, Co. Galway
[image from E. Ledwich, Antiquities of Ireland, pl. 19]

Image 2.26, Ernley tombs, West Wittering, Covert tomb, Slaugham, Sussex
[image from http://www.flickr.com/photos/stiffleaf/4319598704/in/photostream]

Image 2.27, Tomb slab of Donat Ó Suibne and his wife, 1577, niche in the north wall of the chancel, Dominican Priory of the Holy Cross, Sligo, Co. Sligo
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/56225]

Chapter Three

Image 3.1, Crucifixion page, illuminated miniature, Durham Gospels, seventh century, Durham, Cathedral Library, MS A.II.17, f. 38v

Image 3.2, Bronze Crucifixion plaque, said to be found at St John’s near Athlone, 21x13.9cm
[image from Harbison, ‘The Bronze Crucifixion Plaque said to be from St John’s (Rinnagan), near Athlone’, pl. 1]

Image 3.3, St. Tola’s Cross, c. twelfth century, east face, Dysert O’Dea, Co. Clare
[image from http://highcrosses.org/dysert_odea/index.htm]

Image 3.4, Cross, twelfth century, The Rock of Cashel, Co. Tipperary
[image from http://www.megalithicireland.com/High%20Cross%20Rock%20of%20Cashel.html]

Image 3.5, High cross, c. 1150, Tuam, Co. Galway
Image 3.6, Market Cross, twelfth century, east face, Glendalough, Co. Wicklow
[image from Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland*, vol. 2, fig. 304]

Image 3.7, Volto Santo (Holy Face) crucifix, c. thirteenth century, San Martino Cathedral, Lucca, Italy

Image 3.8, Crucifixion page, *Sacramentary of Gellone*, c. 790, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Latin12048, fol. 143v

Image 3.9, Crucifixion page, c. 750, St Gall Gospel Book, Abbey of St Gall Cathedral Library, MS 51, p. 266

Image 3.10, Shrine of St Patrick’s Tooth, c. 1376, Dublin, NMI
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/10845]

Image 3.11, Double tombstone with Crucifixion, second quarter fourteenth century, St. Columba’s Church, Kells, Co. Meath
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/39801]

[image from http://www.aug.edu/augusta/iconography/iconographySupplementalImages/crucifixion/rabbula.html]

Image 3.13, Master of Hallein (active first half fifteenth century), ca. 1453, diptych, Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum
[image from van Os *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*, p. 151]
Image 3.14, Giovanni di Paolo (ca. 1403-1482), The stigmatization of St Catherine of Siena, c. 1461, tempera and gold on wood, Italian, 27.9 x 20 cm, New York City, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975.1.34

Image 3.15, Niccolo da Bologna (Bologna, active ca. 1369 – ca. 1402), Single Miniature from a Missal: The Crucifixion, tempera and gold leaf on vellum, 26x20.3 cm, Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 24.1013

Image 3.16, Comelis Engebrechtsz (Netherlandish, 1468-1527), The Crucifixion with Donors and Saints Peter and Margaret, ca. 1525–27, oil on wood, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 88.3.88

Image 3.17, Print made by Albrecht Dürer, Crucifixion with the Virgin on the left and St John on the right. 1493, woodcut on paper, German, London, The British Museum, 1911.0617.4

Image 3.18, Northern French Painter, The Crucifixion and (verso) Saint Francis of Assisi, about 1460, Oil on wood, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 32.100.106-7)

Image 3.19, Crucifixion, ca. 1500, German, Wood, polychromy and gilding, Chicago, Loyola University Museum of Art, 2005-04

Image 3.20, Print made by Marcantonio, Christ on the Cross, c. 1500-1527, engraving on paper, Italian, 82x49mm, London, The British Museum, H.1.92

Image 3.21, Master of the Coburg Roundels, Studies of Christ’s Loin cloth (recto); Studies of Bookbindings and of Christ’s Loin cloth (verso), German, about 1490, Brown and black ink, brown and grey wash (recto); same with white heightening (verso), 11 x 8 1/8 inches, Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum, 93.GA.10

Image 3.22, Tomb of Walter Brenach and Katherine Poher, 1501, west end of tomb chest, stone relief carving, Jerpoint Abbey, Co. Kilkenny
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/25712]
Image 3.33, Panel from a tomb chest, second half sixteenth century, stone relief carving, Carmelite Priory, Co. Kildare
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/25802]

Image 3.34, ‘James MacDonnell’ Chalice, 1596, height: 20.3 cm
[image from Buckley, ‘Supplement: Some Irish Altar Plate’, vol. 9, (1939), pl. 2, fig. 3]

Image 3.35, Crucifixion, sixteenth century, stone relief carving, Johnstown parish church (originally Fertagh), Co. Kilkenny,
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection: http://hdl.handle.net/2262/16420]

Image 3.36, French-Darsy Chalice, 1638, silver, silver gilt, height: 24.1 cm, Galway
[image from Krasnodębska-D’Aughton, ‘Catalogue’, *Franciscan Faith*, cat. no. 6a]

Image 3.37, Colman-Gould Chalice, 1639, silver, silver gilt, height: 25.6 cm, Cork
[image from Krasnodębska-D’Aughton, ‘Catalogue’, *Franciscan Faith*, cat. no. 11]

Image 3.38, Transi effigy (detail), Tomb of James Rice, after 1487, Waterford Cathedral, Co. Waterford
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/56072]

Image 3.39, Transi effigy, Beaulieu (Bewley) Manor Church, Co. Louth
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/35057]

Image 3.40, Reliquary pendant, c. fifteenth century, 2.54x2.45x.63cm, found at Moyne Franciscan friary, near Killala, Co. Mayo, Dublin, National Museum of Ireland, 1882:1
[image author’s own]

Image 3.41, ‘Christ Bearing the Cross’, *Seanchas Búrcach*, c. 1570, Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1440, f. 18v
[image from *Art and Devotion*, ed. by Rachel Moss and others, pl. 3]
Image 3.42, Crucifixion plaque, c. eighteenth/nineteenth century, carved slate, 26.2 x 15 x 2.5 cm, Dublin, National Museum of Ireland, F.1967:5
[image author’s own]

Image 3.43, Deposition of Christ from the Cross, c. 1450-1475, Sarum use Book of Hours, Flemish made for English use, London, British Library, MS Harley 2985, f. 71v

Image 3.44, Crucifixion plaque, bronze, early medieval, Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly
[image from Ruth Johnson, ‘Irish Crucifixion Plaques’, fig. 29]

Image 3.45, Pax, bronze, fifteenth century, Dublin, National Museum of Ireland
[image from Hourihane, Gothic art in Ireland, pl. 14]

[image from Hass, ‘Two Devotional Manuals by Albrecht Dürer’, pl. 25]

Image 3.47, Print made by Raphael Sadeler, after Maerten de Vos, engraving on paper, 1603, Flemish, 134x98mm, London: British Museum, 1868, 0612.387

Chapter Four

Image 4.1, Nicola Pisano, Crucifixion, 1259, detail from the Pulpit, Pisa Baptistery, Pisa, Italy
[image from Neff, ‘Pain of Compassion’, fig. 4]

Image 4.2, Crucifixion, c. 1350, detail from an ivory diptych, French, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum
[image from Neff, ‘Pain of Compassion’, fig. 17]

Image 4.3, Albrecht Dürer, The Crucifixion from The Great Passion, c. 1498, Woodcut, 39.2 x 27.9 cm, New York City, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.37.80

223
Image 4.4, Muiredach's Cross, west face, Monasterboice, Co. Louth
[image author's own]

Image 4.5, Shrine of the Book of Dimma, fourteenth-century additions
[image from Hourihane, *Gothic Art in Ireland*, pl. 151]

Image 4.6, Crucifixion, late fourteenth/early fifteenth century, relief carving, west end of the Apostle Tomb, St Erc's Hermitage, Slane, Co. Meath
[image from Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, vol. 2, pl. 190]

Image 4.7, Double head slab, c. 1425-1450, St Patrick's church, Trim, Co. Meath
[image from Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, vol. 2, pl. 100]

Image 4.8, Tomb of Elizabeth Preston, second half fifteenth century, east end of tomb surround, St Mary's Church, Duleek, Co. Meath
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/39775]

Image 4.9, Crucifixion panel, Creagh tomb (detail), c. 1470, Ennis friary, Co. Clare
[image author's own]


Image 4.11, Shrine of the Cathach, c. 1470, gilt bronze and silver on a wooden core, 24.3 x 19 x 5.5 cm, Dublin, NMI
[image from Hourihane, *Gothic Art in Ireland*, pl. 145]

Image 4.12, Boetius Egan Chalice, 1634, silver, silver gilt, height: 24.7 cm, Elphin, Co. Roscommon
[image from Krasnodèbska-D'Aughton, 'Catalogue', *Franciscan Faith*, cat. no. 9]

Image 4.13, Double Purcell tomb, sixteenth century, west end of tomb surround, St John's Priory, Kilkenny City
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/25504]
Image 4.14, McCragh tomb, 1557, west end of tomb surround, St Carthage’s Cathedral, Lismore, Co. Waterford
[image from Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, vol. 2, pl. 338]

Image 4.15, John Welch Chalice, 1708, silver, silver gilt, height: 24.5 cm, Galway
[image from Krasnodębska-D’Aughton, ‘Catalogue’, *Franciscan Faith*, cat. no. 19]

Image 4.16, Gravestone of John Pluck, c. 1778, Glenealy graveyard, Co. Wicklow
[image from Longfield, ‘Some 18th Century Irish Tombstones’, pl. 2, fig. 4]

Image 4.17, Calvary figures, sixteenth century, polychrome carved wooden figures, originally Dominican priory, Kilcorbin, Co. Galway
[image from MacLeod, ‘Medieval Wooden Figure Sculptures in Ireland’, pl. 43]

Image 4.18, Multyfarnham Processional Crucifix, late fifteenth century, copper alloy, 31.5x11.8cm, Franciscan friary, Multyfarnham, Co. Westmeath
[image from Hourihane, ‘Holye crossys’, pl. 13]

Image 4.19, Wall painting, c. fifteenth/sixteenth century, Cashel Cathedral, Co. Tipperary
[image author’s own]

Image 4.20, Sheephouse Processional Cross, c. 1450, gilt bronze, found near Oldbridge, Co. Meath, NMI 1889:53
[image from Hourihane, ‘Holye crossys’, pl. 4]

Image 4.21, Manuscript illumination, Crucifixion scene, London, British Library, MS Add 37049, f. 36v
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/56472]

Image 4.22, School of/style of Albrecht Dürer, *Der Titel des Creutzs in drey sprach*, 1515, woodcut and letterpress on paper, German, 28.9x18.8cm, London, The British Museum, 1919,0616.42

225

Image 4.24, Leaf from a Missal, c. 1270-1290, French, made in Paris, tempera and gold leaf on parchment. 22.2x14.9cm, New York City, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1981.322

Image 4.25, tomb surround, found in Belfry graveyard, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny [image from Phelan, ‘Discovery of a Tomb at Thomastown’, p. 129]

Image 4.26, Keenoge wayside cross shaft fragment, c. 1490, Keenoge, Co. Meath [image from King, ‘Late Medieval Crosses in Co. Meath, pl. 2]

Image 4.27, Drogheda stone cross fragment, c. 1500 [image from King, ‘A Possible Market Cross Fragment from Drogheda’, fig. 2]


Image 4.29, Pietà, fourteenth century, painted wood, German, Bonn, Provincial Museum [image from Forsyth, Medieval Statues of the Pietà in the Museum, p. 178]

Image 4.30, The Virgin with the Dead Christ, c. 1370-1400, statuette, 31.5 x 15 x 9.5 cm, England (made), London, V&A Museum, A.85-1927

Image 4.31, Tomb of Sir John and Lady Boteler, c. 1463, Church of St Elphin, Warrington, Chesire, England [image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/14956]
Image 4.32, The winged, idawn-goddess Eos lifts the body of her son Memnon from the battlefields of Troy, detail of Attic Red Figure Kylix, c. 485-480BC, Late Archaic, Greek, Paris, The Louvre, G 115
[image from http://www.theoi.com/Gallery/T19.2.html]

Image 4.33, Pietà, second half fifteenth century, stone tomb Front or altar frontal, Dominican Friary, Strade, County Mayo
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/39083]

Image 4.34, Pietà, c. 1490, stone wayside cross, Balrath, Co. Meath
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/39865]

Image 4.35, Pieta, fifteenth century, stone fragment, Franciscan Friary, Ennis, Co. Clare
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/11449]

Image 4.36, Pietà, late sixteenth century, wooden statue, National Museum of Ireland
[image from MacLeod, ‘Some Medieval Irish Wooden Sculpture’, pl. 16, no. 2]

Image 4.37, Pietà, stone tomb surround, early sixteenth century, Kilboy, Co. Tipperary
[image from Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, vol. 2, pl. 320]

Image 4.38, Pietà, c. 1550, relief carved stone slab, Cloran Old, Co. Tipperary
[image from Cahill, ‘A Pietà from Cloran Old, Co. Tipperary’, pl. 13]

Image 4.39, Pietà, early sixteenth century, limestone sculpture, Burgundian style, from Dijon, New York City, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
[image from Forsyth, ‘Medieval Statues of the Pietà in the Museum’, p. 181]

Image 4.40, Pietà, fifteenth century, alabaster statue, German, New York City, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
[image from Forsyth, ‘Medieval Statues of the Pietà in the Museum’, p. 178]
Image 4.41, Pietà on the façade, fifteenth century, in a niche to the right of the west door, church of St Mary the Virgin, North Petherton, Somerset, England

[Image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/15637]

Image 4.42, Virgin with the Dead Christ, c. 1400, mother-of-pearl in a gilt metal mount, German, dia: 5.5 cm (with mount), London: V&A Museum, A.59-1929

Image 4.43, ‘Monvaerni’ Master, Pietà, c. 1484-1497, Limoges, copper plated in polychrome enamels including foil-backed translucent enamels, and gilding, V&A, 4868-1901

Image 4.44, Brass memorial plaque of Dean Fyche, 1537, St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin

[Image from King, ‘Irish Memorial Brasses’, fig. 10]

Image 4.45, The Master of Rimini (probably), The Virgin with the Dead Christ, c. 1430, carved alabaster, 39.7 x 32.6 x 11.4 cm, Netherlands (south, probably), V&A Museum, A.28-1960

Image 4.46, Pyx, c. 1520, copper-gilt with cast and applied figures, Height: 15.50 cm, Spain, London, V&A Museum, M.459-1956

Image 4.47, Pietà, fifteenth century, polychrome stone sculpture, 96x47x28cm, France

Image 4.48, Pietà, early seventeenth century, stone tomb surround, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary

[Image from Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, pl. 167]

Image 4.49, ‘Crucifixion with Mater Dolorosa and St John’, fifteenth century, woodcut, 7 x 5.8 cm, Repository: Berlin-Dahlem

[Image from The Illustrated Bartsch, vol. 162, ARTstor Collection, ID Number: 16201.686; S.686]
Image 4.50, The Mother of Sorrows, hand-coloured engraving on paper, 1500-1525, Netherlandish, 68x57mm, London, British Museum, 1877.0714.10

Image 4.51, ‘Virgin of the Seven Sorrows, Lamentations of the Dead Christ, Pietà’, early seventeenth century, clear glass panels with enamel and yellow (silver) stain, Netherlandish or German, 11.6 x 8.5 inches, London, V&A Museum, 945-1907

Image 4.52, Memmingen, Five Sorrows of the Virgin, c. 1440-50, Munich, Graphische Sammlung
[Image from Schuler, ‘The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin’, fig. 10]

Image 4.53, The Mother of Sorrows, hand-coloured engraving on paper (from a Flemish prayer book), 1500-1525, 4 x 4.5 cm, Netherlandish, London, British Museum, 1868,1114.54

Image 4.54, Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, Paris, Louvre, Cabinet de Rothschild
[Image from Schuler, ‘The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin’, fig. 4]

Image 4.55, Bernard van Orley (c. 1488-1541) and Pedro Campana (1503-1580), The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, c.1520-35, Central panel of a triptych, oil on panel, Netherlandish, Besacon, France, Musee des Beaux-Arts et d’Archeologie
[Image from Schuler, ‘The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, fig. 1]


Image 4.57, Chasuble back showing Our Lady of Sorrows, fifteenth century, from Waterford Cathedral, Flemish
[Image from MacLeod, ‘Fifteenth Century Vestments in Waterford’, pl. 15]

Image 4.58, Tomb of Sir Christopher Plunket and Joan de Cusack, west end of tomb, c. 1441-1445, St Mary’s Church, Killeen Castle, Co. Meath
[Image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/39692]
Image 4.59, Maud Plunket/Talbot cenotaph, c. 1438-1445, detail of west side of tomb, private church, Malahide Castle, Co. Dublin
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/12049]

Image 4.60, Drawing of the tomb of Sir Christopher Plunket and Anne FitzGerald, before c. 1462, St Nicholas’s Church, Dunsany, Co. Meath
[image from Westropp, ‘The Churches of Dunsany and Skreen, Co. Meath’, p. 228]

Image 4.61, Tomb of Elizabeth Preston, second half of fifteenth-century, north side of the tomb, St Mary’s Church, Duleek, Co. Meath
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/39772]

Image 4.62, Baptismal Font (detail), c. 1462-1482, St Nicholas’s Church, Dunsany, Co. Meath
[image from Roe, Medieval Fonts of Meath, pl. 8]

Image 4.63, Tomb of FitzEustace Knight, early sixteenth century, St Mary’s Church, Castlemartin, Co. Kildare
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/34907]

Image 4.64, Effigy of Two Butler Knights, South side tomb surround, Gowran Church, Gowran, Co. Kilkenny
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/16396]

Image 4.65, McCragh tomb, detail of shield with the shield of the Seven Sorrows, c. 1557, St Carthage’s Cathedral, Lismore, Co. Waterford
[image author’s own]

Image 4.66, Tomb slab of William Hay, 1557, St Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny
[image from Cockerham and Harris, ‘Kilkenny Funeral Monuments 1500-1600’, pl. 14]
Image 4.67, Floor slab of Edmonde Butler and Katrin Lee, 1552, Kilmacow, Co. Kilkenny
[image from Cockerham and Harris, ‘Kilkenny funeral monuments, 1500-1600’, pl. 3]

Image 4.68, Tomb of Richard Butler, 1571, St Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny
[image from Phelan, ‘The O’Kerin School of Monumental Sculpture in Ossory’, fig. 32]

Image 4.69, Tomb of Oliver St Leger and Ellen Comerford, 1598, Grove, Co. Kilkenny
[image from Phelan, ‘The O’Kerin School of Monumental Sculpture in Ossory’, fig. 26]

Image 4.70, Tomb of Richard Comerford and Johanna St Leger, 1622, Kilree, Co. Kilkenny
[image from Phelan, ‘The O’Kerin School of Monumental Sculpture in Ossory’, fig. 27]

Image 4.71, Domhnach Airgid Shrine, main face, fourteenth/fifteenth century, tin, bronze, silver gilt and enamel on a wooden core, 23 x 16.5 x 9.8 cm, Dublin, NMI
[image from Hourihane, Gothic Art in Ireland, pl. 158]

Image 4.72, Shrine of the Stowe Missal, main face, fourteenth century, silver, gilt bronze, gold foil on a wooden core, 18.5 x 15.5 x 5.6 cm, Dublin, NMI
[image from Hourihane, Gothic Art in Ireland, pl. 143]

Image 4.73, Shrine of the Miosach, sixteenth century, silver, bronze and enamel with crystals and glass beads on a wooden core, 26.2 x 23.2 x 6.4 cm, Dublin, NMI
[image from Hourihane, Gothic Art in Ireland, pl. 150]

Image 4.74, Virgin and Child carving, second half fifteenth century, Ennis friary, Co. Clare
[image author’s own]
Image 4.75, Virgin and Child carving, tomb of James Rice, after 1487, west end, Waterford Cathedral, Co. Waterford
[image from Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, pl. 273]

Image 4.76, Virgin and Child carving, c. 1500-20, Purcell tomb, detail of east end tomb surround, St Werburgh’s church, Dublin
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/12118]

Image 4.77, Virgin and Child, sixteenth century, fragment of tomb front panel, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/25470]

Image 4.78, Illustration (1832) of now lost tomb slab of James Grace and his wife Ellis, 1543, Tullaroan church, Co. Kilkenny
[image from Cockerham and Harris, ‘Kilkenny funeral monuments 1500-1600’, pl. 10]

Image 4.79, Crucifixion and Virgin and Child carvings, c.1480-1500, west and east face of wayside cross fragments, Platin, Co. Meath
[image from King, ‘Late medieval crosses in co. Meath’, pl. 5]

Image 4.80, Virgin and Child and Crucifixion carvings, late sixteenth century, south and north face of wayside cross fragment, Arodstown, Co. Meath
[image from King, ‘Late medieval crosses in co. Meath’, pl. 12]

Image 4.81, Annesbrook wayside cross, c. 1600, west and east faces, Annesbrook, Co. Meath
[image from King, ‘Late medieval crosses in co. Meath’, pl. 11]

Image 4.82, Crucifix (front and back views), c. sixteenth/seventeenth century, silver, 6.9 x 3.8 cm, Dublin, NMI, R.2844
[image author’s own]
Image 4.83, Crucifix (front and back view), c. sixteenth/seventeenth century, silver, 6.7 x 2.9 cm, Dublin, NMI, R.2845
[image author’s own]

Image 4.84, Crucifix (front and back view), c. sixteenth/seventeenth century, silver, 6.2 x 4.4 cm, Dublin, NMI, R.2846
[image author’s own]

Image 4.85, Crucifix (front and back view), c. sixteenth/seventeenth century, silver, 5.2 x 2.9 cm, Dublin, NMI, R.2847
[image author’s own]

Image 4.86, Reliquary crucifix pendant, c. sixteenth/seventeenth century, silver, 7 x 3.2 cm, Dublin, NMI, R.1428
[image author’s own]

Image 4.87, Rosary beads with Crucifix, c. sixteenth/seventeenth century, wood and silver, Turlough Park, NMI, F1967.140
[image author’s own]

Image 4.88, Rubbing of the side panel of the altar tomb of Helen Lawles and her husband, Nicholas Walsh, 1599, St Mary’s church, Kilkenny
[image from Cockerham and Harris, ‘Kilkenny funeral monuments 1500-1600’, pl. 17]

Image 4.89, mensa slab (detail), Richard Cantwell and his wife a member of the Grace family, c. 1608, Kilcooly abbey, Co. Tipperary
[image author’s own]
Chapter Five

Image 5.1, Man of Sorrows image, twelfth century, illumination in a book of gospels, Greek, Lenigrad, Lenigrad Public Library, MS gr. 105, f. 65v
[image from Belting, ‘An Image and its function in the liturgy’, fig. 7]

Image 5.2, Man of Sorrows, twelfth century, illustration in a book of gospels, Greek, Lenigrad, Lenigrad Public Library, MS gr. 105, f. 167v
[image from Belting, ‘An image and its function in the liturgy’, fig. 8]

Image 5.3, Triptych, c. 1300, views of the interior and exterior, Italian, Dordrecht Museum
[image from van Os, The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500, pl. 32]

Image 5.4, The Man of Sorrows, c. 1293-1300, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS. Plut. Xxv.3, f. 183v
[image from van Os, The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500, fig. 53]

Image 5.5, Robert Oderisi (Italian, 1350-1385), The Man of Sorrows, c. 1354, painting, tempera and gold leaf on panel, 62.2 x 38 cm, Naples, Campania, Italy, Boston, Harvard Art Museum/Fogg Museum, 1937.49

Image 5.6, Scriptorium of Weingarten Abbey, ‘St Gregory and the Doubting Matron’, late twelfth century, manuscript cutting, tempera on vellum, Southern German, 34.9 x 24.6 cm, Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1944.704
[image from Heinlen, ‘An early image of a Mass of St Gregory and Devotion to the Holy Blood at Weingarten Abbey’, fig. 2]
Image 5.7, Israhel van Meckenem (ca. 1440/45 – 1503), ‘Vera Icon’, ca. 1490, engraving, Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. no. 943-1
[image from van Os, The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500, pl. 33]

Image 5.8, Israhel van Meckenem, ‘Vera Icon’, ca. 1495, engraving, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale
[image from van Os, The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500, fig. 54]

Image 5.9, ‘Indulgence slab’, c. sixteenth century, St. Brigid’s Cathedral, Kildare, Co. Kildare
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/26297.]

[image from Swanson, ‘Passion and Practice’, pl. 1]

Image 5.11, Indulgenced Man of Sorrows, fifteenth century, woodcut, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. D. 403, f. 2v
[image from Swanson, ‘Passion and Practice’, pl. 3]

Image 5.12, Engraving on paper, c. 1500, Netherlandish, London, British Museum, 1892,0714.437

Image 5.13, School of/style of Albrecht Dürer, Crucifixion, 1500, woodcut on paper, German, London, British Museum, 1909,0403.52

Image 5.14, Man of Sorrows, late fifteenth/early sixteenth century, relief carved stone panel, east end nave wall, Ennis friary, Co. Clare
[image author’s own]
Image 5.15, ‘Man of Sorrows’, fifteenth century, hand-coloured woodcut, German, Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, 1947.731


Image 5.17, Illuminated miniature, c. 1370, 45.2 x 30.4 cm, London, British Library, Royal 6.E.VI, f. 15r

Image 5.18, Print made by Lucas van Leyden, Man of Sorrows, 1517, engraving on paper, Netherlandish, London, British Museum, 1849,1027.38

Image 5.19, Man of Sorrows, 1450-1500, hand-coloured engraving on paper, German, London, British Museum, 1885,0509.1604

Image 5.20, St Francis of Assisi, c. late fifteenth century, relief stone carving, Ennis friary, Co. Clare
[Image author’s own]

Image 5.21, Hans Baldung Grien (German, 1484/5-1545), ‘The Mass of St Gregory’, oil and tempera on wood, Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art, 1952.112

Image 5.22, Mass of St Gregory, 1460, London, British Library, Additional MS 62523, f. 88r

Image 5.23, Mass of St Gregory, fifteenth century, French or Flemish, Cambridge, Emmanuel College Library, MS I.2.20, f. 39v
[Image from Lewis, ‘Rewarding Devotion’, pl. 5]

[Image from van Os, The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500, fig. 55]
Image 5.25, Simon Marmion (French, active from 1449–1489), *The Mass of St. Gregory*, 1465, oil and gold leaf on wood panel, 45.1 x 29.4 cm, Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario

Image 5.26, Tomb of John McCragh and his wife Catherine Prendergast, c. 1557, St. Carthage’s Cathedral, Lismore, Co. Waterford  
[image author’s own]

Image 5.27, Mass of St Gregory, wooden panel in Rood Screen, sixteenth-century, St George’s Church, Wyverstone, Suffolk, England  
[image from http://www.suffolkchurches.co.uk/wyverstone.html]

Image 5.28, Mass of St. Gregory, c. fourteenth/fifteenth century, wall painting, Slapton parish church, Northants, England  
[image from http://www.paintedchurch.org/slapimp.htm]

Image 5.29, The Legh Pardon Brass, Funerary Brass dedicated to Roger Legh (d. 4 November 1506) and his wife Elizabeth (d. 5 October 1489), the Savage Chapel, St Michael’s church, Macclesfield, Cheshire, England  
[image from http://www.thornber.net/cheshire/htmlfiles/maccstmichaels.html]

Image 5.30, Mass of St Gregory, mid-fifteenth century, English alabaster panel, 51.5 x 26 cm, London, Strachan Fine Art

Image 5.31, Adriaen Isenbrant (c. 1490 – c. 1551, Bruges, Belgium), Mass of St Gregory, Painting, Oil on canvas, 72 x 56 cm, Flemish, Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain

Image 5.32, Master of the Mass of St Gregory (German, active c. 1523-1548), ‘The Miraculous Mass of St Gregory the Great’ with the coats-of-arms of the Venediger and Remees families, oil on panel, 48 x 38.7 in/121.8 x 98.4 cm, Christie’s London, Old Master & British Pictures (Evening Sale), Tuesday December 2, 2008, Lot 16
Image 5.33, The Mass of St Gregory, second third of the fifteenth century, from the charterhouse of Champmol, near Dijon, 6 x 4 cm, Paris, Louvre, R.F. 1941-8

Image 5.34, Mass of St Gregory, 1473, German, Outer wing from the St Anne Altar in St. Maria zur Wiese, Soest, Germany

Image 5.35, Robert Campin or assistant, The Mass of St Gregory the Great, 1440, painted panel (oak), Flemish, 85.1 x 72.2 cm, Brussels, Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium, 6298

Image 5.36, Carillo (Spanish school, active late 15th century), Mass of St Gregory, c. 1480, tempura on panel, Spanish, 55.9 x 38.7 cm, Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum, 3046

Image 5.37, Mass of St Gregory, 1460-1485, metalcut on paper, German or Netherlandish, 18.5 x 12.9 cm, London, British Museum, 1921,0409.1

Image 5.38, Thomas Kerver, Mass of St Gregory, 1497, Book of Hours [image from Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars, pl. 92]


Image 5.40, School of/style of Andrea Mantegna, ‘Christ as the Man of Sorrows’, 1470-1500, engraving on paper, Italian, 20.8 x 11.2 cm, London, The British Museum, 1845,0825.835

Image 5.41, Albrecht Dürer, ‘Man of Sorrows’, c. 1500, engraving on paper, German, 11.8 x 7.4 cm, London, The British Museum, E.4.174
Image 5.42, Altar Frontal with Man of Sorrows and Saints, ca. 1465, Wool, linen, and metallic thread, 89.5 x 166.4 cm, Made in Nuremberg, German, New York City, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991.156

Image 5.43, Man of Sorrows statue, c. sixteenth century, oak, Holy Ghost Hospital, Waterford
[image from MacLeod, 'Mediaeval Figure Sculpture in Ireland Statues in the Holy Ghost Hospital, Waterford pl. 10, fig. 1]

Image 5.44, Hans von Judenburg, ‘Man of Sorrows’, c. 1425, wood carving, 110 cm, Vienna, Österreichische Galerie
[image from Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, pl. 694]

Image 5.45, Man of Sorrows, c. 1539, head end slab, Wellesly tomb, formerly at Great Connell, Kildare, Co. Kildare
Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, vol. 2, pl. 218

Image 5.46, Man of Sorrows, second half sixteenth century, Carmelite priory, Kildare, Co. Kildare
Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, vol. 2, pl. 234

Image 5.47, Man of Sorrows, c. 1548, fragment of end slab, Bermingham tomb, Dunfierth, Co. Kildare
[image from Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, vol. 2, pl. 231]

Image 5.48, ‘Christ in Repose (Herrgottsrh)’, c. 1500, painted panel, southern German, 53 x 30.2 cm, Claremont, CA, Pomona College Museum of Art, Montgomery Art Center, Kress Collection

Image 5.50, Attributed to Antonio Cicognara (active 1480-1500), ‘Mystic figure of Christ’, late fifteenth century, tempera on wood, 50.8 x 33.3 cm, London, National Gallery, NG 3069

Image 5.51, Hans Holbein the Younger, ‘Herrgottsrnruh’, c. 1521, Diptych (Left leaf), tempera on limewood, 29 x 19.5 cm, Basle, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung

Image 5.52, ‘Christ on the stone’, c. 1495-1504, wood, Southern Netherlands, Utrecht, Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent
[image from van Os, The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500, fig. 59]

Image 5.53, Raphael Sadeler the Elder (Flemish, 1561-1628/32), Engraving, Harvard Art Museum/Fogg Museum, R4926, H47

Image 5.54, Christ on Calvary statue, c. sixteenth/early seventeenth century, wood, Drogheda, Co. Louth, Maynooth, St Patrick’s College Museum of Ecclesiology
[image from Niall Mc Keith]

Image 5.55, Christ on Calvary statue, c. sixteenth century, Fethard, Co. Tipperary, Dublin, NMI
[image from MacLeod, ‘Some Late Medieval Wood sculptures in Ireland’, pl. 15, fig. 1]

Image 5.56, ‘Christ in Distress’, fifteenth century, woodcut, from an Album of several Passion prints, 26 x 20.4 x 1.3 cm, Netherlandish, New York City, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003.476

Image 5.57, ‘Christ in Distress’ (bottom), ‘St John the Evangelist’ (top), c. 1500, Rosary bead, carved boxwood, Lower Rhine or Northern Netherlands, Dia. 4 cm, London, V&A Museum, 265-1874
Image 5.58, ‘Christ in Distress’, end of fourteenth century, oak, lower Saxony, 162 cm, Brunswick Cathedral
[image from Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, pl. 311]

Image 5.59, Hans Leinberger, Christ in Distress, c. 1525-1530, Limewood, 75 cm, Berlin Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Staatliche Museum
[image from Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, pl. 312]

Image 5.60, Zürn family workshop, Christ in Distress, wood carving, mid-seventeenth century, Linz, Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum
[image from Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, pl. 313]

Image 5.60, Maarten van Heemskerck, Christ in Distress, c. 1545-50, oil on panel, St. Waltrudiskerk, Herentals
[image from Nichols, ‘Man of Sorrows with a Chalice’, fig.5]

Image 5.61, Man of Sorrows, c. 1570, illuminated miniature, Seanchas Búrcach manuscript, Dublin, TCD MS 1440, f. 18r
[image from Rachel Moss and others, ed., Art and Devotion, pl. 2b]

Image 5.62, Master of St Veronica, ‘Ecce Homo’ (detail), c. 1440, Altarpiece of thirty-one scenes of the Life and Passion of Christ, painting, Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum
[image from Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, pl. 263]


Image 5.65, Hieronymus Bosch (living 1474; died 1516), ‘Christ Mocked (The Crowning with Thorns)’, c. 1490-1500, oil on oak, London, National Gallery, NG4744  
[image from Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, pl. 255]


Chapter Six

Image 6.1, Flagellation of Christ, c. 1470, carved stone panel, originally the MacMahon Tomb, now Creagh Tomb, Ennis friary, Co. Clare  
[image author's own]

Image 6.2, Flagellation of Christ, c. 1460, carved stone panel, west end, Tomb of Sir Christopher Plunket and Anne FitzGerald, St Nicholas’s church, Dunsany, Co. Meath  
[image from Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, pl. 195]

Image 6.3, South side-panel, sixteenth century, now supporting the tomb of Piers Butler, St Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny  
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/25922]

Image 6.4, Flagellation of Christ, c. 1570, illuminated miniature, *Seanchas Búírcach* manuscript, Dublin, TCD, MS 1440, f. 17v  
[image from Moss and others, ed., *Art and Devotion*, pl. 2a]

Image 6.5, Flagellation of Christ, fifteenth century, carved, painted and gilt alabaster, 44.3 x 27.5 cm, English, London, V&A Museum, A.74:1-3-1946

Image 6.6, Flagellation of Christ, fifteenth century, carved, painted and gilt alabaster, 41 x 24.5 cm, English, London, V&A Museum, 1527-1902
Image 6.7, Flagellation of Christ, c. 1440-1460, carved, painted and gilt alabaster panel, 42.5 x 23.9 cm, English, London, V&A Museum, A.178-1946

Image 6.8, Christ before Pilate, c. 1570, illuminated manuscript, Seanchas Búrcach manuscript, Dublin, TCD, MS 1440, f. 17r
[Image from Moss and others, ed., Art and Devotion, pl. 1]

Image 6.9, Passion cycle, wall painting, fifteenth century, Pickering parish church, Yorkshire, England
[Image from Giles, ‘Marking Time?’, http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/archive/00000910/]

Image 6.10, Christ as Judge, late fifteenth century, relief stone carving, Joyce Tomb, St Nicholas’s church, Galway
[Image from Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, pl. 261]

Image 6.11, Christ as Judge, first half sixteenth century, relief stone carving, east end, Tomb of a Butler knight, Gowran church, Co. Kilkenny
[Image from Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, pl. 305]

Image 6.12, Christ as Judge, sixteenth century, relief stone carving, fragment of a tomb front, west wall of the north aisle, St Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny
[Image from Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, pl. 314]

Image 6.13, Tomb chest panels, sixteenth century, relief stone carving, beneath thirteenth-century tomb niche, north end of north transept, St Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny
[Image from Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, pl. 319]

Image 6.14, Baptismal font stem, St Lawrence’s church, Rathmore, Co. Meath
[Image from Roe, Medieval fonts of Meath, pl. 37]
Image 6.15, Doom, c. fifteenth century, wall painting, Bradfield parish church, Norfolk, England
[image from http://www.paintedchurch.org/bradfiel.htm]

Image 6.16, Doom, c. fifteenth century, wall painting with Victorian restorations, Chelsworth parish church, Suffolk, England
[image from http://www.paintedchurch.org/chelswor.htm]

Image 6.17, Doom, c. fifteenth century, wall painting, Holy Trinity Church, Coventry, Warwickshire, England
[image from http://www.paintedchurch.org/coveht.htm]

Image 6.18, Christ in Judgement, c. 1300, wall painting, St John the Baptist church, Widford, Hertfordshire, England
[image from http://www.paintedchurch.org/widford.htm]

Image 6.19, Last Judgement, c. 1500-1510, clear, coloured and flashed glass with painted details and yellow (silver) stain, 70 x 75.2 cm, Lower Rhine, Germany, London, V&A Museum, C. 273-1928

Image 6.20, Illuminated Initial, thirteenth century, Manuscript leaf cutting, 5.1 x 5.5 cm, French, London, V&A Museum, 245:14


Image 6.22, Christ as Judge with St Michael, early sixteenth century, dexter front slab, originally end of tomb chest of double tomb, Athboy, Co. Meath
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/39741]

Image 6.23, Last Judgement, 1450-1500, woodcut hand-coloured on paper, 8.7 x 6.2 cm, German, London, British Museum, 1922,1209.6
Image 6.24, After Master of the Berlin Passion, Last Judgement, 1470-80, hand-coloured metalcut print on paper, 5.9 x 4.3 cm, German, London, British Museum, 1912.0808.40

Image 6.25, Print made by Master S, Last Judgement, c. 1520, one print in a series titled ‘Life of Christ’, hand-coloured engraving, 10 x 6.8 cm, Netherlandish, London, British Museum, 1845.0809.1100

Image 6.26, Last Judgement, 1450-1500, woodcut print on paper, 38.2 x 27 cm, German, London, British Museum, 1850.0612.112

Image 6.27, Last Judgement, 1450-1475, carved oak panel, 24 x 22.8 x 8.5 cm, England, London, V&A Museum, W.63-1938

Image 6.28, Doom (detail of the Virgin baring her breast), c. fourteenth/fifteenth century, wall painting detail, North Cove parish church, Suffolk, England
[image from http://www.paintedchurch.org/ncovedo.htm]

Image 6.29, Tomb of Sir Christopher and Joan Cusack, c. 1441-1445, west part of the south side of mensa tomb, St Mary’s church, Killeen, Co. Meath
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/39691]

Image 6.30, ‘Man of Sorrows’, 1490-1510, hand-coloured woodcut on paper, 11.3 x 8 cm, Netherlandish, London, British Museum, 1895.0122.6

Image 6.31, Devotional manuscript, c. 1490, English, London, British Library, MS Egerton 1821, f. 6v-7

Image 6.32, Collar of dalmatic, c. 1550-1650, silk, linen and possibly paper, 16cmx56.5 cm, Spain (probably), London, V&A Museum, 1418-1900

Image 6.34, *The Infant Christ in the Sacred Heart, with the Five Wounds*, 1450-1500, hand-coloured woodcut on paper, 7 x 6 cm, German, London, British Museum, 1872,0608.320

Image 6.35, *The Infant Christ in the Sacred Heart, with the Five Wounds*, c. 1495-1505, hand-coloured woodcut on paper, 105x76mm, Netherlandish, London, British Museum, 1856,0209.84

Image 6.36, Printed by Sigmund Grimm and Marx Wirsung, Print made by Hans Weiditz, Five Wounds, c. 1521, woodcut on paper, book illustration, printed in Augsburg, 7 x 6.6 cm, German, London, British Museum, E,9.91

Image 6.37, Virgin and Child in the rosary with St Dominic, 1495-1505, hand-coloured woodcut on paper, 9.3 x 6.8 cm, German, British Museum, 1895,0122.11

Image 6.38, Print made by Israhel van Meckenem, Virgin and Child in the Rosary, 1478-1490, engraving on paper, 26.9 x 18.7 cm, German school, London, British Museum, 1856,0209.157

Image 6.39, Stained glass, fifteenth-century, Glastonbury parish church
[image from http://medieval-church-art.blogspot.eom/2010_07_01_archive.html]

Image 6.40, Relief carving, wooden bench back, fifteenth century, St Swithin church, Ashmanhaugh, Norfolk
[image from Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pl. 98]

Image 6.41, Arma Christi on a devotional card circulated by the Carthusians of Sheen [image from Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pl. 99]

Image 6.42, Kilmore churchyard cross, c. 1575, south and north faces, now on south side entrance of the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Moynalvey, Co. Meath
[image from King, ‘Late medieval crosses in co. Meath’, pl. 18]
Image 6.43, Detail of front panel of altar tomb of Nicholas Walsh and his wife Helen Lawless, 1599, St Mary’s church, Kilkenny
[image from Cokerham and Harris, ‘Kilkenny Funeral Monuments’, pl. 18]

Image 6.44, Comerford family tomb, 1604, St Mary’s church, Callan, Co. Kilkenny
[image from Phelan, ‘The O’Kerin School of Monumental Sculpture in Ossory’, fig. 20]

Image 6.45, Tomb of William Galwey, c. 1628, St Multose church, Kinsale, Co. Cork
[image from Journal of the Association for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead in Ireland 3 (1895-97), image facing p. 46]

Image 6.46, Arma Christi shield detail from Domnach Airgid Shrine, c. fourteenth/fifteenth century, Dublin, NMI
[image from Hourihane, Gothic Art in Ireland, pl. 162]

Image 6.47, Arma Christi shield, Tomb of Roland FitzEustace, Baron of Portlester, and Margaret Janico, c. 1496, New Abbey, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/26212]

Image 6.48, Illuminated manuscript, fourteenth century, ink and pigments on vellum, 25.2 x 19.5 cm, English, London, British Library, Cotton MS Faustina B VI, vol. II, f. 17v

Image 6.49, Passional of the Abbess Kunigunde, c. 1320, manuscript illumination, Bohemia, Prague, National and University Library, MS XIVA 17
[image from Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, pl. 656]

Image 6.50, Stone carving above the doorway, first half fifteenth century, Augustinian priory, Clontuskert, Co. Galway
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/13702]
Image 6.51, ‘Arma Christi’ font (full view and detail), late fifteenth/early sixteenth century, St Peter’s Catholic church, Drogheda, Co. Louth
[image from Roe, ‘Two Decorated Fonts in Drogheda, Co. Louth’, pls 1a, 1b]

Image 6.52, Tomb of two Butler Knights, north side tomb surround, first half sixteenth century, Gowran, Co. Kilkenny
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/16394]

Image 6.53, Duleek wayside cross (from left to right – W, E, N, S), 1601, Duleek, Co. Meath
[image from King, ‘Late medieval crosses in co. Meath’, pl. 16]

Image 6.54, Manuscript pages with ‘Arms of the Passion’ poem, San Marino, Huntington Museum MS 142, ff. 14v-15

Image 6.55, floor-slab of Abbot Philip O’Molwanayn, c. 1463, Kilcooly abbey, Co. Tipperary
[image from Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, vol. 2, pl. 184]

Image 6.56, Tomb slab of Sir Christopher Plunket and Catherine Preston, c. 1531, St Lawrence’s Church, Rathmore, Co. Meath
[image from FitzGerald, ‘Rathmore (St Lawrence’s Church and Burial-Ground), Co. Meath’, facing p. 435]

Image 6.57, Tomb slab of Edmund Purcell, c. 1549, St Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny
[image from Hunt, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, vol. 2, pl. 165]

Image 6.58, The O’Fogarty Chalice, 1598, height approx. 14.6 cm
[image from, Buckley, ‘Supplement: Some Irish Altar Plate’, 9 (1939), pl. 7, fig. 1]

Image 6.59, Dale-Browne Chalice, c. 1600, silver gilt, height 20.4 cm, Timoleague, Co. Cork
[image from Krasnodębska-D’Aughton, ‘Catalogue’, Franciscan Faith, cat. no. 3]
Image 6.60, The Robert Creagh Chalice, 1621, height 23.5 cm
[image from Buckley, ‘Supplement: Irish Altar Plate (Continued)’, 9 (1939), pl. 13, fig. 2]

Image 6.61, The Richard Arthur Chalice, 1626, height 19 cm, Limerick, Dublin, NMI
[image from Buckley, ‘Supplement: Irish Altar Plate (Continued)’, 9 (1939), pl. 16, fig. 1]

Image 6.62, Everard-Donoghue Chalice/Monstrance, 1667, silver, silver gilt, glass, height 50 cm, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary
[image from Krasnodębska-D’Aughton, ‘Catalogue’, Franciscan Faith, cat. no. 31]

Image 6.63, The Murphy-Ffargus Chalice, 1720, height 20.3 cm
[image from Buckley, ‘Supplement: Some Irish Altar Plate (Continued)’, 11 (1941), pl. 47, fig. 5]

Image 6.64, Reliquary pendant (front and back views), c. sixteenth/seventeenth century, silver, 4.9 x 3.6 x .5 cm, found on the shore of Friar’s Lough, Lorrha, Co. Tipperary, Dublin, NMI 2000.183
[image author’s own]

Image 6.65, Reliquary pendant (front and back views), c. sixteenth/seventeenth century, silver, 6.2 x 4.5 cm, found in Co. Westmeath, Dublin, NMI 1884.15
[image author’s own]

Image 6.66, Reliquary pendant, c. sixteenth/seventeenth century, gold, 4.3 x 2.8 x .3 cm, Irish, Turlough Park, NMI F1947.151
[image author’s own]

Chapter Seven


Image 7.2, Prints made by Master MZ, ‘Triumph over all temptations’, *Ars Moriendi* illustrations, 1500-1510, engraving on paper, German, London, British Museum, 1845,0809.467

Image 7.3, Triumph over all temptations, *Ars Moriendi* woodcut, English, from *Here Begynneth a lytell treatyse called ars moryendi* (Enprynted at London: In flæstestrete at the synge of the sonne by Wynkyn de worde, in the yere MCCCCC.iv [1506])
[Early English Books online]

Image 7.4, McCragh tomb, c. detail of side panel, relief stone carving, St Carthage’s Cathedral, Lismore, Co. Waterford
[image author’s own]

Image 7.5, Prints made by Master MZ, ‘Avarice, the third temptation’ (detail), *Ars Moriendi* illustrations, 1500-1510, engraving on paper, German, London, British Museum, 1845,0809.463

Image 7.6, Prints made by Master MZ, Comfort from Impatience, (including images of St Catherine, St Barbara, St Lawrence, and Christ as the Man of Sorrows), *Ars Moriendi* illustrations, 1500-1510, engraving on paper, German, London, British Museum, 1845,0809.471

Image 7.8, Sinister slab, second half fifteenth century, relief stone carving, Canopied tomb, Dominican friary, Strade, Co. Mayo
[image from Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, pl. 255]

Image 7.9, Prints made by Master of the Blumenrahmen, after Master ES, ‘Consolation against despair’, *Ars Moriendi* illustrations, c. 1450-1470, hand-coloured engraving on paper, German, London, British Museum, 1892,1201.1.5

Image 7.10, Prints made by Master MZ, ‘Comfort from despair’, *Ars Moriendi* illustrations, 1500-1510, engraving on paper, German, London, British Museum, 1845,0809.466

Image 7.11, Plunket/Cruise wayside cross, c. 1470, south face, Killeen, Co. Meath
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/7279]

Image 7.12, Tomb of Sir Walter Bermingham (detail), before 1548, relief, stone carving, Dunfierth, Co. Kildare
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/25412]

Image 7.13, Penal Crucifix, 1722, 16.5 x 4.7 x 1.5 cm, Irish, Turlough Park, NMI, 1910.579
[image author’s own]

Image 7.14, Stone mould, Irish, Dublin, NMI, no reg. no.
[image author’s own]

Image 7.15, Stone mould (front and back view), found near a church wall, Dublin, NMI, no. reg. no.
[image author’s own]

Image 7.16, Drawing of *Duibhín Déagláin*, stone mould, found at the grave of St Decian, Ardmore, Co. Waterford
[image from Ó Floinn, *Irish Shrines & Reliquaries of the Middle Ages*, photo 25]
Image 7.17, Tomb of Anne Plunket and Sir Christopher St Lawrence, c. 1462, west end panel, St Mary’s Church, Howth, Co. Dublin
[Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, vol. 2, pl. 193]

Image 7.18, Altar frontal, gothic period, Marsanny-le-Bois, Côte-d’Or, France
[image from TARA, Edwin Rae Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/2262/16193]

Image 7.19, Alexander Plunket chalice, 1633, silver, silver gilt, height 15 cm, Trim, Co. Meath
[image from UCD, Material Culture of the Mendicant Orders in Ireland Collection, http://hdl.handle.net/10151/OB_5100022_CI]

Image 7.20, James O’Neill Chalice, 1662, silver, silver gilt, height 20.7 cm, Galway
[image from Krasnodębska-D’Aughton, ‘Catalogue’, *Franciscan Faith*, cat. no. 14]

Image 7.21, Andrew Russell Chalice, 1684, silver, silver gilt, height 14.2 cm, Youghal, Co. Cork
[image from Krasnodębska-D’Aughton, ‘Catalogue’, *Franciscan Faith*, cat. no. 17]

Image 7.22, Sarsfieldstown wayside cross (views of each side) c. 1500, north of Gormanstown, Co. Meath
[image from King, ‘Late medieval crosses in Co. Meath’, pls 7, 8]

Image 7.23, Keenoge wayside cross, east face, c. 1490, Keenoge, Co. Meath
[image from King, ‘Late medieval crosses in Co. Meath’, pl. 2]

Image 7.24, Baronstown wayside cross, c. 1607, near Carrickdexter Castle, Baronstown, Co. Meath
Bibliography

Manuscripts

Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff. 1.14

Dublin, Dublin Corporation Archives, MS C1/2/1

Dublin, Marsh’s Library, MS Z.4.2.20

Dublin, NLI, MS 2521

Dublin, NLI, MS 2524

Dublin, RIA, MS 4 B 36

Dublin, RIA, MS 23 O 48 (a) and (b), Liber Flavus Fergusiorium

Dublin, RIA, MS 23 P 16, Leabhar Breac

Dublin, TCD, MS 804

Durham, Durham Cathedral Library, MS B.IV.19

Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Plut. xxv.3

London, BL, MS Add 40674

London, British Library, MS Egerton 1821

London, BL, MS Harley 913

London, BL, MS Harley 2985
London, The National Archives of the UK, SP 63/86

Madrid, Escorial, Ms. T.I.1, Cántigas de Santa Maria of King Alfonso X of Castile

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Th. C 57

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlson liturgy D 4

**Printed Sources**


Bartley, Patrick, ‘The Old Irish Litany’, *The Irish Monthly* 47 (1919), pp. 293-300

254


Bergin, Osborn, Irish Bardic Poetry, ed. by David Greene and Fergus Kelly (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, reprint, 2003)

Berry, H.F., ed., Register of wills and inventories of the Diocese of Dublin in the time of Archbishop Tregury and Walton, 1457-1483, from the original manuscript in the library of Trinity College, Dublin (Dublin: University Press for the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1898)


Bliss, W.H., and others, ed., Calendar of entries in the Papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland, Papal Letters, 13 vols (Burlington: TannerRitchie Publishing in collaboration with the Library and Information Services of the University of St Andrews, 2005-2006)

Bodenstedt, Sr. Mary Immaculate, Praying the Life of Christ: the First English Translation of the Prayers Concluding the 181 Chapters of the ‘Vita Christi’ of Ludolphus the Carthusian, ed. by J. Hogg, Analecta Cartusiana 15 (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1973)

Boran, Elizabethanne, ‘Reading Theology within the Community of Believers’, in *The experience of Reading: Irish Historical Perspectives*, ed. by Bernadette Cunningham and Máire Kennedy (Dublin: Rare Books Group of the Library Association of Ireland, 1990), pp. 39-59


Brady, Maziere, ed., *State papers concerning the Irish Church in the time of Queen Elizabeth* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1868)


Butler, Cuthbert *Western Mysticism: the teachings of Ss. Augustine, Gregory and Bernard on contemplation life*, second edition, reprint (London: Constable, 1951)


258
---, Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007)


Calendar of the manuscripts of the most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, 24 vols (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1883-1976)

Calendar of the State Papers relating to Ireland, of the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth, 1509-1670 23 vols (London: Longman, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1860-1912)


---, “My body to be buried in my owne monument’: the social and religious context of Co. Kilkenny funeral monuments’, *PRIA* 109C (2009), pp. 239-365

Cockerham, Paul, and Amy Louise Harris, ‘Kilkenny Funeral Monuments 1500-1600: A statistical and analytical account’, *PRIA* 101C, no. 5 (2001), pp. 135-188


Corish, Patrick J., ‘Bishop Wadding’s Notebook’, *Archivium Hibernicum* 29 (1970), pp. 49-113


Crawford, H.S., ‘The Mural paintings and inscriptions at Knockmoy abbey’, *JRSAI*, sixth series, 49 (1919), pp. 25-34

---, ‘The carved altar and mural monuments in Sligo Abbey’, *JRSAI* 51 (1921), pp. 17-31


---, ‘Illustrations of the Passion of Christ in the *Seanchas Búrccach* Manuscript’, in *Art and Devotion in Late Medieval Ireland*, ed. by Rachel Moss, Colmán Ó Clabaigh, OSB, and Salvador Ryan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 16-32

---, ‘The Poor Clare Order in Ireland’, in *The Irish Franciscan, 1534-1990*, Ed. by Edel Bhréathnach, Joseph MacMahon OFM, and John McCafferty (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), pp. 159-174


D’Alton, John, *History of the County of Dublin* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1838)


Deevy, Mary, ‘Ring-Brooches in Medieval Ireland’, *Archaeology Ireland* 10, no. 2 (1996), pp. 8-10

Derbes, Anne, *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy: Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

de Voragine, Jacobus (ca. 1229-1298), *Legenda Aurea*, trans. by William Caxton (Westminster: Printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1493) [EEBO]

Dodgson, Campbell, ‘English devotional woodcuts of the late fifteenth century, with Special Reference to those in the Bodleian Library’, *The Walpole Society* 17 (1928-29), pp. 95-111


Egan-Buffet, Máire, and Alan J. Fletcher, ‘The Dublin “Visitatio Sepulcri” Play’, PRIA 90C (1990), pp. 159-241


Fingerlin, Ilse, Gürtel des hohen und späten Mittelalters (München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1971)

Fitzgerald, Patrick, and John James McGregor, *The history, topography, and antiquities of the city and county of Limerick*, 2 vols (Dublin: George McKern, 1827)


---, ‘Rathmore (St Lawrence’s Church and Burial-Ground), Co. Meath’, *Journal of the Association for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead in Ireland* 7 (1907-1909) pp. 424-436


---, ‘Miscellanea’, *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society* 6 (1909-1911), pp. 244


Gilbert, John T., *History of the Viceroy of Ireland; with notices of The Castle of Dublin and its chief occupants in former times* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1865)

---, ed., *A contemporary history of affairs in Ireland from 1641 to 1652*, 3 vols (Dublin: Irish Archaeological and Celtic Society, 1879)

---, *The Calendar of the Ancient Records of Dublin I* (Dublin: Dollard, 1889), pp. 127-131


Gillespie, Raymond, *The Sacred in the Secular: Religious Change in Catholic Ireland, 1500 – 1700* (Colchester, VT: St. Michael’s College, 1993)

---, ed., *The Proctor’s Accounts of Peter Lewis 1564-5* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996)

---, *Devoted People: Beliefs and Religion in Early Modern Ireland* (Manchester: University Press, 1997)


---, *Reading Ireland: Print, reading and social change in early modern Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005)

---, 'Relics, reliquaries and hagiography in south Ulster, 1450 – 1550', in *Art and Devotion in Late Medieval Ireland*, ed. by Rachel Moss, Colmán Ó Clabaigh, OSB, and Salvador Ryan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 184-201

---, *Seventeenth Century Ireland: Making Ireland Modern* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2006)


Glynn, J.A., 'Knockmoy Abbey, County Galway', *JRSAI* 34 (1904), pp. 239-243


Green, Alice Stopford, *The making of Ireland and its undoing 1200-1600* (London: Macmillan, 1908)


Gwynn, Edward, ‘The Manuscript known as the Liber Flavus Fergusiorium’, *PRIA* 26C (1906/1907), pp. 15-41

Hall, Dianne, *Women and the Church in Medieval Ireland, c. 1140-1540* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2003)


Harbison, Peter, ‘The Bronze Crucifixion Plaque said to be from St John’s (Rinnagan), near Athlone’, *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* 2 (1984), pp. 1-17

---, *The High Crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey*, 3 vols (Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1992)


---, *The Crucifixion in Irish Art: fifty selected examples from the ninth to the twentieth century* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin: Columba Press, 2000)


271


Hervey, William (d. 1567), *The visitation of Suffolke, made by William Hervey, Clarenceux King of Arms, 1561: with additions from family documents, original wills, Jermyn, Davy, and other mss., &c.,* ed. by Joseph Jackson Howard, 2 vols (Lowestoft: Tymms, 1866)


Hill, Rev. George, *An Historical Account of the Macdonnells of Antrim* (Belfast: Archer, 1873)

---, *Gold & Gilt, Pots & Pins: Possessions and People in Medieval Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006)


Hogan, Edmund, *Distinguished Irishmen of the sixteenth century* (London: Burns and Oates, 1894)


Honée, Eugène, 'Image and Imagination in the Medieval culture of prayer: A Historical Perspective', *The Art of Devotion in the late Middle Ages in Europe, 1300-1500*, ed. by Henk van Os and others (London: Merrell Holberton in association with Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1994), pp. 158-74

Hore, Herbert Francis, 'The Rental Book of Gerald, Ninth Earl of Kildare, AD 1518 (continued)', *The Journal of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society* 5, no. 3 (1866), pp. 501-518, 525-546


Hunt, John, Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture, 1200-1600, 2 vols (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1974)


Hunter, Christopher, Durham Cathedral, as it was before the dissolution of the monastery; containing an account of the rites, customs and ceremonies used therein (Durham: printed by J. Ross for Mrs. Waghorn, 1733)

The Irish saints of the Tudor sovereigns during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Philip & Mary, and Elizabeth I (Dublin: Éamonn de Búrca for Edmund Burke, 1994)

Jefferies, Henry A., Priests and prelates of Armagh in the age of Reformations, 1518–1558 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997)

---, The Irish Church and Tudor Reformations (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010)


Jones, David, *Friars’ Tales: Thirteenth century exempla from the British Isles*  
(Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2011)

Karnes, Michelle, *Imagination, Meditation and Cognition in the Middle Ages*  

Kavanagh, Art, *The Landed Gentry & Aristocracy: Meath (Volume 1)*  
(Dublin: Irish Family Names, 2005)


Kempe, Margery, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. by Sanford B. Meech and Hope Emily Allen (London: Oxford University Press, 1940)


King, Heather, ‘Late Medieval Crosses in County Meath, c. 1470-1635’, *PRIA* 84 (1984), pp. 79-115


---, ‘Irish Memorial Brasses to 1700’, *PRIA* 94C (1994), pp. 111-140


Knox, H.T., The history of the county of Mayo (Dublin: Hodges Figgis, 1908)


Kulp-Hill, Kathleen, trans., Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, the wise (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000)


---, ‘A Calendar of the Register of Archbishop Fleming’, PRIA 30C (1912/1913), pp. 94-190


Lecoy de la Marche, Albert, La chaire française au moyen âge, spécialement au XIIIe siècle d’après les manuscrits contemporains (Paris, 1886; 2nd edition)

Ledwich, E., Antiquities of Ireland (Dublin: printed for Arthur Grueber, 1790)


Les misteres de la saincte messe (Lyon: Guillaume Le Roy, c. 1490)


Lightbown, Ronald W., Mediaeval European Jewellery (London: The Victoria & Albert Museum, 1992)

Little, A.G., ed., Liber Exemplorum ad usum praedicantium saeculo xiii compositus a quodam Fratre Minore Anglico de Provincia Hiberniae (Aberdeen: British Society of Franciscan Studies 1, 1908)


Love, Nicholas, Speculum Vita Christi (London: Wynken de Worde, 1525)

---, The miroure of the blessed life of our Lorde and Savioure Iesus Christe. Written in latin by the venerable and famous doctor Saint Bonauenture. Newlie. Set forth in Englishe for the profitte and consolacion of all deuoute persons (Douai: C. Boscard, ca. 1606)


Lucas, Angela M., Anglo-Irish Poems of the Middle Ages (Blackrock: The Columba Press, 1995)

Lyons, Mary Anne, Church and society in county Kildare, c.1470–1547 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000)


MacLeod, Catriona, ‘Mediaeval Figure Sculpture in Ireland: Statues in the Holy Ghost Hospital, Waterford’, *JRSAI* 76 (1946), pp. 89-100

---, ‘Some Medieval Wooden Figure Sculptures in Ireland: Statues of Irish Saints’, *JRSAI* 76 (1946), pp. 155-170; 77 (1947), pp. 53-67, 121-133


Manning, Conleth, *Rock of Cashel, Co. Tipperary* (Dublin: Office of Public Works, no date)


McEnery, M.J., and Raymond Refaussé, eds, Christ Church Deeds (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001)


---, ed., Philip Bocht Ó hUiginn (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1931)


---, ed., *Aithdioghlum Dána: a miscellany of Irish bardic poetry, historical and religious, including historical poems of the dunaire in the Yellow Book of Lecan*, 2 vols (Dublin: published for the Irish Texts society by the Educational Company of Ireland for the Irish Texts Society, 1940)

McKeith, Niall E., ed., *St Patrick’s College Maynooth Museum of Ecclesiology: A catalogue of Ecclesiastical items spanning two centuries of the history of the College* (Maynooth: St Patrick’s College, Maynooth, 1995)


McNeill, Charles, ‘Accounts of the Sums Realised by the Sales of Chattels of Some Suppressed Irish Monasteries’, *JRSAI* 12, no. 1 (1922), pp. 11-37


Millet, Benignus, ‘Ancient altar-plate and other furnishings of the church of Armagh’, *Seanchas Ardmhacha: Journal of the Armagh Diocesan Historical Society* 3 (1958), pp. 87-95

---, *The Irish Franciscans 1651-1665* (Rome: Georgian University Press, 1964)


Mooney, Canice, *Smaointe Beatha Chriost* (Dublin: Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies, 1944)

---, *Devotional Writings of the Irish Franciscans, 1224 – 1950* (Killiney: Four Masters Press, 1952)

---, *The Church in Gaelic Ireland: Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1969)

Moran, Patrick F., ed., *History of the Catholic Archbishops of Dublin, since the Reformation* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1864)


Muessig, Carolyn, ‘Sermon, preacher and society in the middle ages’, *Journal of Medieval History* 28 (2002), pp. 73-91

Muller, Priscilla, ‘Spanish and Spanish Colonial Jewelry’, *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies: Renaissance Jewelry in the Alsdorf Collection* 25, no. 2 (2000), pp. 35-51

Muller, Priscilla, and Ian Wardropper, ‘Devotional Objects’, *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies: Renaissance Jewelry in the Alsdorf Collection* 25, no. 2 (2000), pp. 79-81


---, ‘*Man of Sorrows with a Chalice* by Hendrick Goltzius’, *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* 49, no. 2 (1990), pp. 30-38

Ní Ghrádaigh, Jenifer, ‘Christ on the Cross in Early Medieval Ireland’, *Archaeology Ireland* 23, no. 4 (2009), pp. 26-30

‘Notes of Particulars extracted from the Kilkenny Corporation Records relating to the Miracle Plays as performed there from the year 1580 to the year 1639’, *JRSAI* 6 (1884), pp. 238-242


---, ‘The other Christ: the cult of St Francis of Assisi in late medieval Ireland’, in Art and Devotion in Late Medieval Ireland, ed. by Rachel Moss, Colmán Ó Clabaigh, OSB, and Salvador Ryan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 142-162

---, The Friars in Ireland, 1224-1540 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012)


O’Dwyer, Peter, Mary: A History of Devotion in Ireland (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1988)


---, Irish Shrines and Reliquaries of the Middle Ages (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1994)

Ogden, Dunbar H., The Staging of Drama in the Medieval Church (London: Associated University Presses, 2002)


Ó Maonaigh, Cainneach, ed., Smaointe beatha Chriost : i. innsint Ghaelge a chuir Tomás Gruamdhá Ó Bruacháin (fl.c.1450) ar an Meditationes vitae Christi (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies in Dublin, 1944)

Ó Mearáin, L., ‘The Apostasy of Miler McGrath’, Clogher Record 2, no. 2 (1958), pp. 244-256

O’Súilleabháin, Seán, *Handbook of Irish Folklore* (Dublin: Educational Company for Folklore of Ireland Society, 1942)


Parker, Sir William, *The History of Long Melford* (no location: Wyman, 1873)


Perrine, Mane, and Françoise Piponnier, *Dress in the Middle Ages* (London: Yale University Press, 1997)


---, ‘The O’Kerin School of Monumental Sculpture in Ossory and its Environs in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, *JRSAI* 126 (1996), pp. 167-181

---, ‘Discovery of a Tomb at Thomastown, County Kilkenny’, *JRSAI* 127 (1997), pp. 129-130


Quinn, D.B., ‘Edward Walsh’s *The Office and Duety in Fightyng for our Country* (1545)’ *Irish Booklore* 3 (1976-7), pp. 28-31

R.H., ‘Stone Penal Plaque from County Clare,’ *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* 6, no. 2 (1944), p. 78


Raftery, J., ed., *Christian art in ancient Ireland*, (Dublin: Stationary Office), vol. 2


Redington, Matilda, ‘Note on the Origin of Rosaries’, *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 8 (1913), pp. 240-244


Richardson, John, *The Great Folly, Superstition, and Idolatry, of Pilgrimages in Ireland; Especially of that to St. Patrick’s Purgatory: Together, with an Account of the Loss that the Publick sustaineth thereby; truly and impartially represented* (Dublin: J. Hyde, 1727)


Ringbom, Sixten, ‘Devotional Images and Imaginative Devotions: Notes on the Place of Art in Late Medieval Private Piety’, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 73 (1969), pp. 159-70

---, *Icon to Narrative: the rise of the dramatic close-up in fifteenth-century devotional painting* (Doomspijk, The Netherlands: Davaco, 1984)

Robinson, J.L., ed., ‘Churchwarden’s accounts, 1484-1600, St Werburgh’s Church, Dublin’, *JRSAI* 4th service, vol. 44 (1914), pp. 132-142


---, ‘Two decorated fonts’, *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society* 18, no. 4 (1976), pp. 255-262


Ryan, M., *Treasures of Ireland: Irish Art 3000BC – 1500AD* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1983)

---, ‘Reign of Blood: aspects of devotion to the wounds of Christ in late medieval

---, ‘The Persuasive Power of a Mother’s Breast: The Most Desperate Act of the
Virgin Mary’s Advocacy’, *Studia Hibernica* 32 (2002/2003), pp. 59-74

---, ‘A Slighted Source: Rehabilitating Irish Bardic Religious Poetry in Historical
Discourse’, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 48 (2004), pp. 75-100

---, ‘Windows on late medieval devotional practice: Máire Ní Mháille’s ‘Book of
Piety’, (1513) and the world behind the texts’, in *Art and Devotion in Late
Medieval Ireland*, ed. by Rachel Moss, Colmán Ó Clabaigh OSB, and
Salvador Ryan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 1-15

---, ‘Weapons of Redemption: piety, poetry and the Instruments of the Passion in
late medieval Ireland’, in *Instruments of Devotion: The Practices and Objects
of Religious Piety from the Late Middle Ages to the 20th Century*, ed. by
Henning Laugerud and Laura Katrine Skinnebach (Aarhus: Aarhus
University Press, 2007), pp. 111-124

---, ‘A wooden key to open Heaven’s door: lessons in practical Catholicism from St
Anthony’s College, Louvain’, in *The Irish Franciscan, 1534-1990*, Ed. by
Edel Bhreathnach, Joseph MacMahon OFM, and John McCafferty (Dublin:
Four Courts Press, 2009), pp. 221-232

Rynne, Etienne, ‘Slate Models and Amulets from the Aran Islands’, *Journal of the
Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 37 (1979/80), pp. 78-84

Scarisbrick, Diana, *Jewellery in Britain 1066-1837* (Norwich: Michael Russell
Publishing, 1994)

Schroeder, H.J., *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation and Commentary* (St Louis: B. Herder, 1937)


---, ‘Monuments of the Dead: Irish tomb sculpture in the Middle Ages’, in Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture 1200 to 1600, John Hunt centenary exhibition October to November 2000 (Limerick: The Hunt Museum, 2000), pp. 14-16


Story, George Walter, A continuation of the impartial history of the wars of Ireland (London: Ric. Chiswell, 1693)


---, Death, Burial and Commemoration in Ireland, 1550-1650 (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002)
---, ‘Art and the cult of the Virgin Mary in Ireland, c.1500-1660’, in *Art and Devotion in Late Medieval Ireland*, ed. by Rachel Moss, Colmán Ó Clabaigh, OSB, and Salvador Ryan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 163-183

---, “As a legacie upon my soule’: the wills of the Irish Catholic community, c. 1550-1660’, in *Community in Early Modern Ireland*, ed. by Robert Armstrong and Tadhg Ó hAnnacháin (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 179-198


‘Thomas Alen to Crumwell, 20 Oct. [1538]’, *State Papers Published under the Authority of his Majesty's Commission: King Henry the Eighth, 1830-1852. Vol. 3: Part III: Correspondence between the Governments of England and Ireland, 1538-1546* (London: His Majesty's Commission for State Papers, 1834) SP 60/7 f. 150


Tutty, Michael J., ‘Dunsoghly Castle and St Margaret’s Well’, *Dublin Historical Record* 32, no. 4 (1979), pp. 155-157


‘Two Masterpieces Illuminated by Jean Poyer’, *The Morgan Online Exhibitions*, <www.themorgan.org/collections/swf/exhibOnline.asp?id=331>
van Os, Henk, ‘The Discovery of an Early Man of Sorrows on a Dominican Triptych’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41 (1978), pp. 66-75

---, *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*, trans. by Michael Hoyle (London: Merrell Holberton in assoc. with Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, 1994)


---, ‘History of Ennis Abbey, Co. Clare, 1240-1693’, JRSAI 9, no. 78 (1889), pp. 44-48

---, ‘Painting at Adare “Abbey”, Co. Limerick’, JRSAI 45 (1915), pp. 151-152

Wilkins, David, Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, 4 vols (London: S. Richardson, 1737)


Windele, John, Esq., ‘Irish Medical Superstition’, JRSAI 8, no. 2 (1865), pp. 306-329


---, ‘The Glenstal Book of Hours’, in Art and Devotion in Late Medieval Ireland, ed. by Rachel Moss, Colmán Ó Clabaigh, OSB, and Salvador Ryan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 98-120