The Faddan More Psalter – A study of the early medieval book-making techniques and codicology of a recently discovered eighth-century Irish Psalter and an examination of its features and materials which suggest influences both domestic and remote in its materiality and manufacture.

John Gillis

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
School of Histories and Humanities
Department of History of Art and Architecture
Trinity College Dublin

2019
Acknowledgments

I am indebted to a number of individuals for getting me over the line with this body of work. There is no doubt without their contributions there would be no thesis. The acknowledgment naturally begins with the Leonard brothers, Patrick and Kevin and their eagle-eyed digger operator Edward Fogarty, who spotted one button from the cover of the Psalter peeking out from a bucket load of peat. The immediate and responsible action taken by Kevin and Patrick ensured no further deterioration occurred before Museum staff arrived on site.

Dr. Laura Cleaver, as my supervisor, guided, directed and re-directed my efforts with a calmness that on many occasions converted my blind panic into productive writing. Meetings in her office were akin to counselling sessions. My other ‘hand-holder’ throughout was my good friend Tim O’Neill; his advice, guidance, and expertise are to be seen on every page. I had the crème de la crème of proof readers: Dr. Bernard Meehan, who also worked directly on the project, was a tough but wise task master and kept me on track. Dr. Paul Mullarkey shared his extensive knowledge in this field and his advice provided much in the way of supporting material. Jessica Baldwin scrutinised every word and reorganised my writing, providing that final polish. In the early stages when I doubted if I could realistically do justice to this work, the encouragement, support and occasional cajoling from Professor Dáibhí Ó’Cróinín, Felicity O’Mahony, Dr. Jane Maxwell, and Dr. Roger Stalley, ensured I didn’t fall at the first fence. Maeve Sikora of the National Museum of Ireland, who was lead archaeologist for the Faddan More Psalter, was a constant source of assistance and advice as I attempted to put the manuscript in context. Carol Smith, who was conservator for the related material from Faddan More, generously shared her discoveries which greatly assisted in making sense of the material nature of the project. The National Museum of Ireland, my home for four and a half years during the conservation process, advanced knowledge of the find in many ways including inviting leading experts from a range of disciplines to visit and report, including Christopher Clarkson, Michael Gullick, Fr. Martin McNamara, and Dr. Roy Thompson, all of whom made valuable contributions that appear in this work. During my two ‘visiting scholar’ trips to the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles I was greatly supported and assisted by Nancy Turner, Dr. Alexa Sekyra and the rest of the team ‘on the hill’ with a
particular mention to Angie Donougher. Finally, the genuine interest and support of my colleagues in the Conservation Department in Trinity, kept me focused, believing and grounded over the seven years.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Conservation of the manuscript.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vellum text block.</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Writing and Decoration.</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Binding.</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Trial Motifs.</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Monastic Landscape.</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Find spot.</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion.</td>
<td></td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Images.</td>
<td></td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix.</td>
<td></td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography.</td>
<td></td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of images

Fig. 1  Faddan More Bog, Co. Tipperary
Fig. 2  SEM image of papyrus fragment from the inside cover of the FMP
Fig. 1.1 The Psalter in its state as found
Fig. 1.2 Backfolds visible prior to removal
Fig. 1.3 40X image of vellum fibres
Fig. 1.4 Air dried vellum sample; outline shows wet format
Fig. 1.5 Test samples of saturated vellum with dimensions recorded
Fig. 1.6 Colour Atlas 96 under 1000 lux
Fig. 1.7 Audionvac 401H vacuum machine
Fig. 1.8 Grid Bridge with the Psalter below
Fig. 1.9 Saturated folia being separated
Fig. 1.10 Separated quire supported between Bondina® sheets
Fig. 1.11 Folio 13r after removal and cleaning
Fig. 1.12 Removal of letter from bog material
Fig. 1.13 The use of high-resolution screens to assist psalm identification
Fig. 1.14 Virtually assembled bifolium (7v – 6r) from identified fragments
Fig. 1.15 Folio fragment in ‘Folio Flipper’ awaiting vacuum
Fig. 1.16 Vacuum housed bifolium fragment (ff.12v – 1r) in its storage folder
Fig. 1.17 Tabbed folders for each folia fragment
Fig. 1.18 Dedicated display space for the Psalter
Fig. 1.19 The tanned leather cover in its wet state after cleaning
Fig. 1.20 The cover submerged in a 15% v.v glycerol bath
Fig. 1.21 The leather cover dry and stable note the black dye surviving on the surface
Fig. 2.1 TCD MS 55 Usserianus Primus p.30
Fig. 2.2 St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 904), Institutiones Grammaticae, p.217
Fig. 2.3 Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek MSC. Patr. 5 f.1v
Fig. 2.4 Collation Map of the Faddan More Psalter
Fig. 2.5 Faddan More Psalter, head of f.10v
Fig. 2.6 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 570 (Barberini Gospels), f.11v
Fig. 2.7 Barb. Lat. 570 Barberini Gospels f.124v
Fig. 2.8 Reconstruction of pivoting knife
Fig. 2.8a Pivoting penknife, Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester
Fig. 2.9 Faddan More Psalter, f.29v
Fig. 2.10 St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, MS 904, Institutiones Grammaticae, p.75
Fig. 2.11 Faddan More Psalter, f.7v
Fig. 2.12 Faddan More Psalter, f.55v
Fig. 2.13 Faddan More Psalter, ff.27v-34r
Fig. 2.14 Faddan More Psalter, f.4v
Fig. 2.15 Faddan More Psalter, ff.32v-29r
Fig. 2.15a Faddan More Psalter, f.32v
Fig. 2.16 Faddan More Psalter, ff.29v-32r
Fig. 2.17 Faddan More Psalter, head margins ff.47v-48r-49r
Fig. 2.18 Faddan More Psalter, ff.40v-45r
Fig. 2.19 Faddan More Psalter, ff.60v-51r
Fig. 2.20 Faddan More Psalter, sewing threads ff.29v-32r
Fig. 2.21 Direct tacketing illustration
Fig. 2.22 Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Amiatino 1, (Codex Amiatinus, early-eighth century), f.5r
Fig. 2.23 Maeseyck, Church of St Catherine, Trésor, s.n., early-eighth century, f. 1
Fig. 2.24 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 1395, ninth century, p.418
Fig. 2.25 Paris, BnF, The Godescalc Evangelistary, (ms nouv. acq. lat. 1203), late-eighth century, f.1r
Fig. 2.26 Gospel Book, (Bodleian, MS Auct. D. 2. 16), early-tenth century, f.71v
Fig. 2.27 Byzantine Gospels (Bodleian, MS. Cromwell 16), mid-tenth century, f.30v
Fig. 3.1 Faddan More Psalter, detail f.3r
Fig. 3.2 RIA MS 23 E 25, Leabhar na hUidhre p.55
Fig. 3.3 Faddan More Psalter, f.9r
Fig. 3.4 Faddan More Psalter, f.9v
Fig. 3.5 TCD MS 59, (Book of Dimma), p.106
Fig. 3.6 Faddan More Psalter, dislocated ‘d’
Fig. 3.7 Faddan More Psalter, f.34v
Fig. 3.8 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 1394, f.95
Fig. 3.9 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 1394, detail, f.95
Fig. 3.10 Faddan More Psalter, ff.9v-4r
Fig. 3.11 Faddan More Psalter, f.6v
Fig. 3.12 Faddan More Psalter, detail f.6v
Fig. 3.13 Faddan More Psalter, f.8v
Fig. 3.14 Faddan More Psalter, f.5v
Fig. 3.15 Dublin, RIA MS D ii 3, The Cathach, p.36
Fig. 3.16 Faddan More Psalter, head f.27v
Fig. 3.17 Faddan More Psalter, f.29v
Fig. 3.18 Slab Crosses at Berrihert’s Kyle in Ardane, Co. Tipperary
Fig. 3.19 Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm, Z5075:1000, Helgö crozier terminal
Fig. 3.20 Faddan More Psalter, dislocated b
Fig. 3.21 Faddan More Psalter, folio fragment, f.25r
Fig. 3.22 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 51, p.8
Fig. 3.23 Faddan More Psalter, fragment, f.25r
Fig. 3.24 Faddan More Psalter, detail, f.29r
Fig. 3.25 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 51, p.42
Fig. 3.26 Faddan More Psalter, f.1r
Fig. 3.27 Faddan More Psalter, detail, f.1r
Fig. 3.28 National Museum of Ireland, Ardagh Chalice inscription
Fig. 3.29 TCD MS 58 Book of Kells, incipit of Mark’s Gospel
Fig. 3.30 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 51, incipit of Mark’s Gospel, p.79
Fig. 3.31 Lichfield Cathedral Library MS. 1, Lichfield Gospels, incipit of Luke’s Gospel, p.221
Fig. 3.32 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 1395, p.426
Fig. 3.33 Faddan More Psalter, Psalm 51, f.22r
Fig. 3.34 Oseberg no. 157 Oseberg enamelled mount
Fig. 3.35 TCD MS 57 Book of Durrow, carpet page, f.1v
Fig. 3.36 TCD MS 55 Usserianus Primus, chi-rho cross, f.149v
Fig. 3.37 Paris, BnF, Latin 9389, Echternach Gospels, symbol of John, f.18v
Fig. 3.38 Cod Sang. 15, Psalm 1.1 Beatus Vir, p.1
Fig. 3.39 Cod. F. v. I. 8, Leningrad Gospel, incipit of Mark’s Gospel, p.78
Fig. 3.40 Psalm 51.3, reproduction by Timothy O’Neill
Fig. 3.41 Faddan More Psalter, initial letter fragments
Fig. 3.42 Faddan More Psalter, Initial letter and decoration fragments
Fig. 3.43 Faddan More Psalter, text from Psalm 98.4
Fig. 3.44 Moone High Cross, Co. Kildare, west face
Fig. 3.45 National Museum of Ireland, Derrynaflan Chalice, detail
Fig. 3.46 Faddan More Psalter, bird, f.1r
Fig. 3.47 TCD MS 59, Book of Dimma, incipit of John’s Gospel, p.104
Fig. 3.48 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 60, incipit of John’s Gospel, p.4
Fig. 3.49 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 51, incipit of John’s Gospel, p.208
Fig. 3.50 RIA MS.D.ii 3, Stowe Missal, Portrait of John, f.11v
Fig. 3.51 Coptic Textile. https://quizlet.com/23335957/textile-history-test-2-flash-cards/
Fig. 3.52 Faddan More Psalter, detail at head, f.40r
Fig. 3.53 Nendrum, Co. Down, slate fragment,
Fig. 3.54 Faddan More Psalter, saturated folio, f.4v
Fig. 3.55 Faddan More Psalter, detail, f.4r
Fig. 4.1 The conserved binding of the FMP.
Fig. 4.2 Punched hole in the spine of the cover.
Fig. 4.3 Secondary holes in the spine of the FMP cover.
Fig. 4.4 X sketch of stitch pattern.
Fig. 4.5 Centre horn button attached to the flap of the FMP cover.
Fig. 4.6 Replica button, underside detailing knot
Fig. 4.7 writing on inside surface of the FMP cover
Fig. 5.8 Tram lines on the outer surface of the cover of the FMP
Fig. 4.9 Incisions on the inner surface of the cover of the FMP
Fig. 4.10 Outer surface features of the FMP cover
Fig. 4.11 London, Lambeth Palace, MS 1370, f.115v Luke
Fig. 4.12 The Book of Armagh Satchel (TCD MS 52)
Fig. 4.13 Model of the FMP
Fig. 4.14 Cairo, Coptic Museum, Codex xi, Inside surface of one of the Nag Hammadi covers showing secondary strip and papyrus lining fragments
Fig. 4.15 Paris, BnF NS suppl. Gr. 1120. Cover of the Philo Codex with flap and strap
Fig. 4.16 London, BL Papyrus 1442. Opened out leather cover with now fragmented flap
Fig. 4.17 F-III-15d. The contemporary outside cover of the manuscript
Fig. 4.18 Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 496a Helmst. Spine displaying ‘X’ pattern sewing
Fig. 4.19 Oxford, Bodleian MS. Marshall 19
Fig. 4.20 Oxford, Bodleian MS. Marshall 19 indent from button and hole pattern
Fig. 4.21 Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Codex Bonifatianus 3. The four matching evangelists
Fig. 4.22 TCD MS 59 f.104. The eagle of John
Fig. 4.23 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 1395 f.418
Fig. 4.24 Coptic Museum No. 94 f.131v
Fig. 4.25 Basilica of San Vitale. Portrait of the evangelist Luke
Fig. 4.26 Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. Portrait of St. Lawrence
Fig. 4.27 Codex Amiatinus (Bib. Med. Laurenziana, MS Amiatinus 1), f.5r
Fig. 4.28 Caherlehillan, Iveragh Peninsula, Co. Kerry, slab cross
Fig. 5.1 Deep incisions into the surface of the leather
Fig. 5.2 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek. Cod. 731 f.234
Fig. 5.3 Traced Motif identification system
Fig. 5.4 Optical Coherence Tomography scanning of the cover
Fig. 5.5 Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana (MS D. 23. sup.) f.1v
Fig. 5.6 St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek. Cod. 1395 f.426
Fig. 5.7 Leningrad Gospels (Cod. F. v. l. 8) f.78r
Fig. 5.8 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Auct. D. 2. 19 (Macregol Gospels) f.126v
Fig. 5.9 London, Lambeth Palace, MS 1370 (Mac Durnan Gospels) f.4v Portrait of Matthew
Fig. 5.10 Cambridge University Library, li 6. 32. (Book of Deer) f. 16v Portrait of Mark
Fig. 5.11 Cambridge, St. John’s College, C. 9 59 (Southampton Psalter) f.1v David and the Lion
Fig. 5.12 London, British Library, Harley MS 1802 (Gospel of Maelbrigte) f. 60v evangelist symbol Mark
Fig. 5.13 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 51, f 209r and London, Lambeth Palace, (MS 1370) Mac Durnan Gospels f.4v
Fig. 5.14 London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero D IV (Lindisfarne Gospels) f. 138v cross carpet page
Fig. 5.15 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D.2.19 (Macregol Gospels) f.51v evangelist Mark
Fig. 6.1 Monastic sites of the midlands
Fig. 6.2 Drumcullen Co ??????, church ruins and graveyard
Fig. 6.3 Church ruins and high cross at Loch Cré, Co. Tipperary
Fig. 6.4 The findspot at Faddan More bog
Fig. 6.5 Monastic locations within a day’s walk of the findspot
Fig. 6.6 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D.2.19 (Macregol Gospels) f. 126v 127r
Fig. 6.7 The present parish church at Saighir
Fig. 6.8 Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, RIA D ii 3, (The Stowe Missal) f.65v
Fig. 6.9 Shrine of the Stowe Missal, National Museum of Ireland, no. 1883:614a
Fig. 6.10 The Kinnitty Stone, Co. Offaly
Fig. 6.11 Dublin, Trinity College Library, TCD MS 57 (Book of Durrow) f.3v carpet page.
Fig. 6.12 Dublin, Trinity College Library, TCD MS 59 (The Book of Dimma shrine) upper face with substantial repairs
Fig. 7.1 Hollow identified as likely location of the FMP
Fig. 7.2 model of the FMP cover
Fig. 7.3 The position of the Psalter while buried
Fig. 7.4 larger fragment of the tanned leather bag or pouch in its wet state
Fig. 7.5 Springmount Bog Tablets (National Museum of Ireland (No. S.A. 1914: 2)
Fig. 7.6 loops of thicker leather wrapped around the bag
Fig. 7.7 Dublin, Trinity College Library, TCD MS 52 (Book of Armagh Satchel)
Fig. con.1 Catalogue entry in Abbey of St Gallen Library
Fig. con.2 unlocated fragments of the Faddan More Psalter
Fig. con.3 St Anthony’s monastery, Red Sea Desert
Introduction

When in 2006 an early medieval insular manuscript surfaced from the Faddan More Bog in North Co. Tipperary, the event afforded a unique opportunity to study in detail all aspects of what is now ‘one of the National Museum of Ireland’s top ten treasures’ (Fig.1).1 Entombed in its own inhospitable time capsule, many features of the original book have survived. One particularly unexpected feature was the vegetable tanned leather cover, which seemed to draw stylistically on Near Eastern models for its form.

The manuscript now popularly referred to as the Faddan More Psalter (from here on referred to as FMP) was discovered on 20th July when the operator of a peat-digger Edward Fogarty, during his daily working of the bog, un-earthed what he recognised as a book. The commercial bog owned by the Leonard brothers, Patrick and Kevin, is located in the townland of Faddan More (derived from the Irish name *Feadán Mór*) in the parish of Loughkeen, Co. Tipperary. Identification of the manuscript as a Psalter or Book of Psalms was quickly established on site by Raghnall Ó Floinn, then Head of Collections of the National Museum of Ireland, based on a small area of writing that was visible among the mass of peat surrounding the manuscript. This was Psalm 83:4-9, and the image was flashed around the world’s media as news of the discovery spread. An aid to this identification were the key words *in valle lacrimarum* ‘in the valley of tears’.

My involvement with the project began when I was invited by Rolly Read, then Head of Conservation at the National Museum, to examine and comment on the find. The FMP, like the majority of early medieval manuscripts, was produced on parchment, but as an untanned animal skin it presented a new conservation challenge, as archaeological survival of parchment is extremely rare and no major survival of this material of the same antiquity had ever been retrieved and conserved from a bog environment before. This, combined with the complexity of un-ravelling the structure of an early medieval book in such a poor state of preservation, prompted a broad consultation and gathering of expertise. I was seconded to the National Museum as the lead for the conservation project with responsibility to carry out initial investigation and all practical treatments including recording the find. A team of experts from several fields was assembled to form a steering committee to guide this complex project to a

---

1 Dr. Patrick Wallace, then Director of The National Museum of Ireland, in a national radio interview some years after the discovery of the Faddan More Psalter.
conclusion. The team consisted of Dr Patrick Wallace (Director of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI)), Mr Eamonn Kelly (Keeper of Irish Antiquities at the MNI), Mr Raghnall Ó Floinn (Head of Collections at the NMI), Mr Anthony Read (Head of Conservation at the NMI), Dr Bernard Meehan (Keeper of Manuscripts Trinity College Dublin), Ms Susan Bioletti (Keeper of Preservation and Conservation Trinity College Dublin, Mr John Gillis Senior Conservator Trinity College Dublin, Fr Martin McNamara (Professor Emeritus Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy and Professor Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (School of History National University of Ireland, Galway. Such was the significance of the FMP in relation to the history of Irish book-making that the Museum commissioned a filmed documentary of the conservation as it progressed. This was broadcast on RTE in 2010 and subsequently on The History Channel for a period after that. It also provided an additional format for the conservation record of the project.

The first task was to record the find in its as found state. The main aim here was to establish the make-up of the quires and produce a collation map, a feature used in the codicological examination of a book. However this painstaking work was greatly complicated by the lack of surviving backfolds of the folia. Once this had been achieved over several months and a number of failed attempts it was possible to produce a definitive make-up of the manuscript quires. The next stage of the programme was to employ a drying system to allow the extant fragments of the vellum folia to be taken from their saturated state to a dry and stable condition by removing the excess free water. Because of the unique conditions in which the manuscript had remained for over a millennium I could find no published comparative conservation reports that might guide the de-watering of the saturated vellum. It is known that unlike tanned leather, vellum was and is a material produced under high tension, resulting in a fibre network aligned at a low angle of weave and this combined with poor hydrothermal stability meant that shrinkage through the drying process was a major concern. After much experimentation and consultation an in-house method was developed and executed with only marginal loss of dimension and although the dry vellum now has little if any fold endurance it is stable and robust.²

With the completion of the drying stage my focus turned to the identification and re-location of floating fragments, the development of a housing system, and further

recording of codicological features, such as ruling, pricking, line count, edge trimming, margins, stitching, the use of colour etc. The second major component of this manuscript, the tanned leather cover was also in a saturated state, and maintained as such until the vellum folia fragments were conserved. This in many ways formed a separate project as the requirements and materials were very different from that of the vellum text block. The cover being an object was produced from vegetable tanned leather, I was able to draw from the world of archaeological conservation and employ a tried and tested method for de-watering the binding to reach a successful outcome (see chapter 1). The discovery of both the trial motifs and the small fragments of papyrus adhering to the leather prompted much speculation in relation to the origin of the cover and these became a key aspect of research for this thesis. After completion of the conservation and the design and construction of a storage and display system for the manuscript, I focused my attention on the relocation of folio fragments with identifiable text. It was evident from the early stages of the conservation that the project would generate questions in relation to the materials used and methods employed to make this manuscript. Questions around the origins of the structure, the chronology of the cover and its features required answers. In addition this was an unknown manuscript and presented a unique opportunity to contextualise it in relation to other manuscripts from the same epoch. These questions prompted me to continue working with the FMP in the form of a doctoral thesis. There is now a dedicated and permanent exhibition of FMP in The National Museum, which opened in 2010.

The treatise has an inter-disciplinary outcome, as during the four-and-a-half-year conservation process I collaborated with Dr Bernard Meehan (Trinity College Dublin), Fr. Martin McNamara and Timothy O’Neill in relation to the palaeography and orthography of the FMP. This includes noting abbreviations, spelling changes, scribal errors such as haplography and variations from the standard Vulgate Psalter. Although this is not my area of expertise, such has been my exposure to the manuscript that I have become quite adept at deciphering the hand, often difficult to read due to physical deterioration. I have employed current technology in digital imaging techniques to aid this aspect of the work in providing palaeographical assistance to Fr McNamara. I worked with staff from Digital Humanities in N.U.I Maynooth on hyperspectral imaging of the Psalter folia fragments as an attempt to enhance and record difficult to decipher text. A supplement produced as a result of the deciphering of the FMP is my identified text of the complete one hundred
and fifty psalms as they survive in this manuscript (see appendix). My research in this area will feed into the proposed production of a full transcription of the FMP by the relevant scholars. I also worked closely with Timothy O’Neill, a leading calligrapher and authority on the Irish manuscript tradition. His suggestion for threads of relevant research feature throughout.

From a codicological viewpoint, the thesis will add to our meagre understanding of early medieval bookmaking through the detailed examination of all aspects of the FMP. It is worth emphasising that the cover of the manuscript is the only one of its kind extant in a Western context, and as such is a particularly valuable contribution to our understanding of early medieval book making. Additional research into relevant material, manuscripts and artefacts will build a more informed and accurate picture of bookmaking practice in the insular world. By studying the individual components employed to produce the FMP we can learn more about its makers and their access to the raw materials required, some of which were locally sourced and in common use while others were imported through trade links, either specifically for use in book production or adapted from other use. This study aims to add to existing information on the transfer of goods and technologies between the eastern Mediterranean and the western extremities of Europe. Examination of the trial motifs found will inform on the process of decoration of liturgical material in an Irish monastic setting.

The Psalter had a central role in Christianity and in Ireland, it had an additional role as a teaching aid for Latin. Martin McNamara has written extensively on the Psalter, its additions and influence. He was directly involved in the early stages of this project and with the clarification of the surviving text, and hopefully the FMP will contribute its unique features to the corpus of extant Psalters. Written in an Irish majuscule hand, the quality and palaeographical comparisons of the writing can be analysed. In this regard I have drawn on the work of Timothy O’Neill, Bernhard Bischoff and William O’Sullivan among others. The extant decorated lettering also allows for comparative study and work by Gifford Charles-Edwards, John Higgitt and Nicolete Gray assists in placing and, importantly, dating the FMP. Finally, although scant, surviving decoration can be analysed and assessed against other insular manuscripts of the early medieval period. Fortunately, unlike codicological studies, this area of manuscript studies is well researched, and I have referenced important works from Françoise Henry, J. J. G. Alexander and Rachel Moss to assist in placing the decorative aspects of the FMP in context. The overall analysis will also
contribute to a greater understanding of the family of insular manuscripts and where the FMP is positioned within that group.

It is clear there was a hierarchy of book production within the insular monastic world, and comparatively speaking there is extant a relatively abundant number of highly decorated and probably once bejeweled gospel books: the Book of Kells (TCD MS 58), the Lindisfarne Gospels (Cotton MS Nero D IV), the Echternach Gospels (Paris, Bib. N., MS. lat. 9389) to name but a few all destined for display on the altar and/or commissioned to celebrate a particular saint’s life or a religious occasion. Conversely, there are the everyday copies required for canonical hours and didactic purposes, few of which have come down to us. One example is the eighth-century Northumbrian Gospel (Royal MS 1 B VII). The FMP sits more comfortably in the latter category, but serves as a reminder that the distinction was not always clear-cut.

The primary source of my research is the FMP as an archaeological object. I base my research on completed scientific analyses, including investigation of the black dye on the leather cover by Brian W. Singer at Northumbria University, radiocarbon dating of components from the manuscript and surrounding find spot by the Chrono Centre of Queens University Belfast, paleoenvironmental research of the find spot by the School of Geography, Archaeology and Paleoecology, Queens University Belfast, analyses of samples of the vellum text block by Rene Larsen at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and investigation of the leather of the cover by Roy Thomson, formerly of The Leather Conservation Centre, Northampton. Additionally, I have identified other areas for attention, including a palaeographical study of the hand or hands in the FMP and comparison with other manuscripts of similar date and possibly from the same general location. Investigation of this material combined with my own observations documented over the four years of the conservation process will result in a detailed description of the FMP as a material object from early medieval Ireland. Research will include codicological comparisons of other insular manuscripts, particularly those in contemporary bindings such as the Cadmug gospel book (Landesbibliothek Codex Bonifatianus 3), which like the FMP, is enclosed by a cover with definite eastern Mediterranean features. Researching literary sources from related areas of study, such as monastic life, insular art, saints’ lives and the social history of the period will clarify the setting in which the FMP was produced. The combination of this scientific and humanities research will inform us better as to
what influenced the choices of both the book maker and scribe that resulted in the style and format of the FMP.

The Faddan More Psalter

The surviving manuscript contains five quires of varying folio counts and layout, with two quires containing ten leaves and a twelve, a thirteen and a fifteen for the remaining three quires, giving a total of sixty folia. There are no flyleaves although the last folio of the fifth quire is blank. The layout does not follow the insular practice with the hair side of one folio facing the flesh side of another, nor is it consistent with having the hair side on the outside of the quire, a convention also associated with insular practice. Likewise the continental rule of ‘like facing like’, also known as ‘Gregory’s rule’ is not evident. It is more accurately described as an indiscriminate quire arrangement, in a tradition observed among the majority of other early medieval Irish manuscripts. There are however exceptions, such as the ninth-century St. Gall Priscian (Cod. Sang. 904), a product of a Northern Irish monastery, which I observed as more consistent in its make-up.

The FMP manuscript is written in long lines in an Irish Majuscule hand. There are approximately thirty-two lines to a page and the text block is approximately 305 x 226 mm. There are clear indications that, at the very least, the individual quires had tackets of vegetable fibres through the backfolds in order to keep the bifolia together, and this may have extended to connecting one quire to the next in a form of unsupported sewing. The material is calfskin vellum and, allowing for trimming, it is likely that one skin provided two bifolia. This takes into account that cattle were generally smaller than they are today, so somewhere in the region of fifteen animals would have been required to produce the FMP. The writing and substrate of the Psalter’s text block will be discussed in detail in this thesis.

The Cover

4 Named after the American born (1846) German, Casper Rene Gregory, Professor of Theology who is credited with discovering this feature in medieval manuscripts.
However dishevelled the cover of the FMP may appear, it is predominantly intact and complete. This situation is exceptional and affords the opportunity to examine the materiality surrounding its manufacture in detail. More typically the codicological study of medieval bindings requires searching for clues or ‘shadows’ of the now lost original structure. This is the unfortunate consequence of a revered manuscript existing above ground over a substantial period of time with the likelihood of it being re-bound in the style of the day by its custodian at that time and very often this process will occur more than once. This in turn results in the loss of the original binding structure and sewing and in the majority of cases, trimming of the leaves to suit the new binding or to ‘tidy up’ the appearance, which is even more injurious. In the case of the more elaborate manuscripts the often bejeweled and highly decorative bindings were sometimes plundered by the latest invaders with obvious disastrous results (see chapter 6). Evidence of this is clear when one looks at how few contemporary manuscript bindings survive today from the early Middle Ages and how many of our important manuscripts now display cropped text and decoration due to careless trimming, famously including the Book of Kells. All this unwelcome activity robs us of key codicological information. Rare surviving bindings from the Early Middle Ages include the late seventh-century St Cuthbert’s Gospel (British Library, Add. MS 89000), and the eighth-century Cadmug Gospels (Fulda Landesbibliothek Cod. Bonifatianus 3). Given the rarity of bindings from this period, it is even more unlikely that the plain and simple limp style cover of the FMP would have survived in its present form had it not been buried below ground for such an extended period.

The simple construction of the cover of the FMP, made as it is from a single piece of leather folded and creased to form a wallet-like enclosure for its contents, reaches back to technology employed at the earlier stages of the development of the codex. Thus far the physical description of the cover of the FMP allows for an obvious comparison with the Coptic Nag Hammadi bindings, discussed in more detail in chapter 4. The similarities were mooted at an early stage of the discovery, despite their being on two different continents and having a four hundred year time gap. Conversely, it would be easy to argue, given the straightforward nature of the technology involved in producing this format of book cover, that one did not influence the other, rather that it was a more ‘organic’ development influenced by the everyday surrounding domestic objects such as

---

6 Respected experts in the fields of medieval book structures and codicology examined the manuscript shortly after its discovery and by request, submitted initial reports on their findings. They included Dr Christopher Clarkson, Michael Gullick and Anthony Cains.
containers or satchels or even clothing. A study of the materials employed in making the cover of the FMP, however, suggests a more direct link between the two book binding forms. Initial comparative research focused on the Nag Hammadi codices, which I examined at close quarters at the Coptic Museum in Cairo in 2010. This approach was extended to locate, and study similar type covers from the same region or type but closer in date to FMP; this work forms part of the thesis.

Close study of the cover reveals wear and tear from use over an extended period, evidenced by splits along crease lines and rounding off of corners. Allied to this are the cut edges and lack of turn-ins, which could be the result of trimming. This may have been carried out to tidy up earlier damage or to improve the fit for the Psalter, having been originally made for a larger volume. A detailed description of the visible evidence on the cover will also be discussed in chapter 4. Discovered at a more advanced stage of the conservation was a collection of trial motifs on the surface of the cover displaying strong insular characteristics. This utilitarian approach to the binding of the FMP is somewhat at odds with the spiritual significance of devotional books. In the Christian tradition the book had its own meaning as witness to the promise of salvation and was almost as potent a symbol as the cross.  

This is reinforced when one takes account how often the image of a book appears in the Christian codex among miniatures and historiated initials and in the stone work of Irish High Crosses of the Middle Ages. For example on the west face of the Monasterboice Tall Cross (Co. Louth) Christ is shown giving the key of the new church to St. Peter and the book of the new law to St Paul. The insular habit of housing books in highly decorated and bejeweled book shrines or *cumdachs*, often centuries after they were written, usually because they were believed to be associated with a particular saint also demonstrates the important symbolic nature of the Christian book. Yet clearly the FMP received no such reverential treatment and it is for that reason that a higher percentage of the de-luxe volumes have come down to us, while their more utilitarian counterparts have not survived in the same numbers. During the period of their production, however, the contrary was surely the more likely scenario; the number of everyday working manuscripts coming from the scriptorium would have been considerably higher than the illuminated manuscripts intended for display on the altar, which required much in the way of skills, materials and time to produce.

---

When the evidence is considered, both stylistically and in the materials employed to produce the cover of the FMP, a strong association with eastern Mediterranean or more specifically Coptic book-making is apparent. Initial thoughts may seem to suggest that the cover is an anomaly, a stray that somehow found its way to the western edge of Europe and as such should be categorised as a one-off. Considering, however, the Cadmug gospel book, this time focusing on the binding, which is considered to be contemporary with its contents, it is typically described as an Eastern type with unsupported sewing. The other early medieval insular manuscript also retaining its original binding is St Cuthbert’s Gospel, recently purchased by the British Library. This again has a clear indication of Eastern influence in the form of un-supported sewing. This theme continues with the binding of red goatskin moulded over raised decoration contained within a panel, also raised. The surface displays tooling with interlace patterns, which were inpainted. This combination bears strong stylistic links with both Coptic and later Islamic leatherwork. Finally I refer to the comments of Sir William Betham on his opening of the Cathach (Dublin, RIA MS 12 R 33)\(^9\) Book Shrine in 1813, describing the additional material found inside: a thin piece of board covered with red leather, very like that with which eastern manuscripts are bound.\(^10\) Unfortunately Sir William had no regard for what may well have been the original binding of the Cathach, and it was discarded?.

The following chapters of the thesis will commence with a detailed description of the conservation process and how the many features identified during this work prompted the necessity for further research into the manuscript in a wider context. The second chapter is an examination of the remains of the vellum text block and despite the fragmented condition and extensive lacunae many manufacturing features are visible, supplying clues to production. In addition, codicological evidence is to be found throughout in the form of pricking and ruling and these conventions are examined and compared. The third chapter focuses attention on the different forms of writing employed in the FMP, its quality, chronology and how it compares with other manuscripts of the period. The scant surviving decoration is also scrutinised and categorised. It is in this chapter that the date of the manuscript is discussed given the

\(^9\) Royal Irish Academy, The Cathach is the oldest extant Irish manuscript of the Psalter. Although there is no definite date for its production it has historically been linked to St Columba, but current thinking cast doubts on his authorship. It is dated to the late 6\(^{th}\) or early 7\(^{th}\) century.

\(^{10}\) Dáibhí O’Cróinin ‘The Cathach and Domnach Airgid’, Treasures of the Royal Irish Academy Library (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy 2009), p. 6.
palaeographical evidence combined with art historical and scientific. Chapter four describes in detail the unusual yet simple binding structure and how its form and materials suggest a Coptic influence or even manufacture. Similar extant examples and contemporary illustrated version are discussed including two insular manuscripts: the Cadmug Gospels from mid eighth century and the MacDurnan Gospels\textsuperscript{11} from late ninth or early tenth century. Both contain miniatures depicting the evangelists John and Luke respectively, each holding a book, and are clearly similar in construction to the cover of the FMP. The multiple trial motifs inscribed randomly on the binding of the FMP are catalogued and described in chapter five. Among the designs there is interlace work inside a border, curvilinear and key patterns. Other more typical trial motifs on bone, with an example excavated from Fishamble Street in Viking Dublin also displaying a very similar cross to Faddan More. Comparable examples of the individual motifs are listed from various sources, mostly as components on the decorated folia of manuscripts. The question of where the FMP might have been produced is addressed in chapter six by examining the landscape in the immediate region around where the manuscript was found. This part of Ireland is associated with many ecclesiastical sites and their documented history is examined around the time the FMP was circulating. The ‘how and why’ the manuscript was found in a bog is investigated in chapter seven, considering particular physical features of the manuscript as it survives today combined with archaeological reports on the find spot. Although it is impossible to be definitive, certain scenarios are proposed describing the circumstances leading to the deposition of the manuscript. Finally the conclusion places the FMP among the corpus of insular manuscripts and demonstrates its role as an archetypal insular manuscript of the early medieval period. The particular features of what appears to be an object of two discrete parts are discussed.

\textbf{Development of the codex as a substrate for the written word.}

Before beginning analysis of the FMP as an early medieval book structure, a summary of the current understanding of the genesis of the codex up to the early Middle Ages may be helpful.

It was clear to the authors of our first written records that it would be necessary to devise a system for protecting the information they recorded. It should be recognized

\textsuperscript{11} Lambeth Palace Library, Ms1370, Maelbrigte Mac Durnan-name of scribe, written in Ireland or Iona.
however that very little has come down to us through either pagan or Christian written sources as to the methods and means of early book-production. Most of our evidence comes from the archaeological study of finds, either directly from the discovery of fragmented books or indirectly through iconographic illustrations of the book in contemporary art. In addition, clues can be extracted from casual references to the codex in early texts. One of the earliest substrates for the written word produced in any great numbers was the papyrus scroll. The date of invention for this historically significant material is uncertain but it can be traced as far back as the fourth millennium BCE in Egypt. The source material is a species of reed *Cyperus Papyrus* which grew in great quantities in Egypt, particularly along the Nile Delta, but also in other areas of the Near East and Sicily. The transformation of plant stem, typically three meters in length, to flat sheet involves the removal of the outer triangle shaped rind to expose the white pith within. The pith is cut into strips and laid side by side with a slight overlap; the operation is repeated, to create a second layer, with the strips lying at right angles to the layer beneath. The two layers are hammered and pressed before allowing to air dry. Pliny the Elder (CE 23 – CE 79) gives us an eye witness description of its production during Roman occupation: “being first inclined, the leaves of papyrus are laid upon it lengthwise, as long indeed as the papyrus will admit of, the jagged edges being cut off at either end; after which a crossed layer is placed over it….When this is done, the leaves are pressed together, and then dried in the sun”.13

It is this cross layer that provided the writing surface as it ran parallel to the direction of the hand. Throughout its long production, two layers of fibres appear to have been the standard thickness with only the occasional sheet of three layers being identified. The surface of the dry sheet is finished by dressing with pumice and finally burnishing with a polishing tool of ivory or stone. Intentionally or not, as writing was executed on the inside horizontal surface of the roll, the contents were protected when the roll was not in use and as such acted as a form of cover. This performed the same function as later intentionally produced book structures in a variety of formats. Papyrology studies have shown us that scribes employed only the inside/horizontal fibre face of the roll and where writing is found on the vertical fibre face, it is more often the

recycling of a discarded roll, where a more ephemeral text such as notes, registers etc. are recorded on the blank surface of the outside of the roll. The development of the papyrus roll was widespread not only in Egypt, the main source of the raw materials, but also in the world of her conquerors: Greece, by the time of Alexander in 332 BCE and later the Roman Empire in the first century BCE which adopted the Greek language along with the roll for use in administrative documents. As the main substrate for writing, papyrus was produced in abundant quantities and appears to have been treated very much like our modern machine-made paper, in being discarded when no longer required. An example of this abundance can be read in the documented travels of the Egyptian Wen-Amon (c.1090 BCE) who is recorded as carrying 500 hundred blank rolls of papyrus ‘of the finest quality’ to Phoenicia to barter for wood.

As a product of the Roman Empire, papyrus found its way into many regions, but the climatic conditions as one travelled west became less and less suitable, resulting in today’s minimal survival of papyrus documents or even fragments from Western Europe. There are some intriguing exceptions to this albeit in almost fossilised form. A quantity of British coins, potin or speculum thought to date from between 54 BCE and 43 CE display the impression of fine parallel lines running perpendicular to each other on the surface in low relief. These surface markings are not woven but rather lie one on top of the other, in the same manner as a finished papyrus sheet. The markings appear only on the ‘flan’ or the flat surface onto which any decoration or figure is worked. The features mentioned and the quantity in which they were found led one expert to the conclusion that papyrus was used as part of the manufacturing process of the coins, perhaps as a release from the clay mould. There are also extant a small quantity of actual documents surviving from the slightly more ‘papyrus-friendly’ climate of modern-day Italy, written in Ravenna in the fifth century CE.

It is thought that the individual sheets of a roll were initially attached to each other by sewing, attaching the trailing edge of one sheet to the leading edge of the next by employing some form of thread. The brittle nature of papyrus is likely to have

---

resulted in premature failure at the point of stitching and so the use of glue or paste to carry out the task was introduced to great success, with seamless joins between sheets allowing scribes to write easily across the overlap. There is also an indication that no adhesive was required to join the two sheets, particularly if the roll was formed during the manufacture of the papyrus sheets. Simply hammering the overlap between the two sheets before they had fully dried created a strong bond between the cell tissue of both layers.\textsuperscript{19} All of this activity indicates a deliberate effort during early development of the book structure in an attempt to extend its life and retain its contents; an aspect of the book that in future centuries would carry particular significance with the arrival of Christianity and the dissemination of The Word of God. Typically, the blank papyrus was supplied in rolls by the manufacturer to the scribe, who could extend the length of the roll by simply attaching additional sheets. Papyrus was rolled, as mentioned above, with the horizontal fibres on the inside, thus reducing the stress on the written surface, while the vertical fibres on the outside were orientated in same direction as the roll. It was also possible for the scribe to purchase individual leaves which would suffice for shorter documents. Extant examples include British Museum Pap. 128 (The Iliad), in which the sheets measure 250 x 121 mm. Writing was in columns and the Graeco-Roman scribe worked without the pricking and ruling guides, associated with later parchment manuscripts. The ink was for the most part carbon based, employing the soot from burned timber or oil mixed with a gum to bind it together. Pliny (Natural History) comments on the production of ink, listing soot and gum in the ingredients. It is worth noting that papyrus was not the only substrate employed to create a roll for writing purposes; bark, leather, textiles and even metal have been found in the book roll format.\textsuperscript{20} Copper scrolls (dating from the third to the first century BCE) were among the rolls found in the caves of the Wadi Qumran region near the Dead Sea.\textsuperscript{21}

Alternative formats for the roll were to be found in antiquity, and wooden tablets (the word ‘tablet’ from the Latin tabula meaning board) were in everyday use in ancient Rome.\textsuperscript{22} Writing was inscribed directly on to the thin plates of local wood prepared specifically and finished to a polished surface. A collection of hand-written documents found during excavations of the Roman fort of Vindolanda, located on Hadrian’s Wall in

\textsuperscript{22} P.W. Joyce, A Social History of Ireland, Vol. 1 (Limerick: The Celtic Bookshop, 1997), P. 482.
northern Britain, has proved a valuable window into the everyday life of a Romano-British garrison and testifies to the educated status of the occupants of the fort. The tablets are made of local timbers, birch, oak and alder and are fashioned into thin plates of approximately 200 x 80 mm and up to 3mm in thickness. The Old Roman Cursive script is written in iron gall ink. Nearly five hundred tablets have been recovered and date from the first to the second centuries CE.\(^{23}\) Of particular interest is the folding of the tablets by scoring down the centre to form a diptych but also technically as a step towards the codex format and away from the roll or tablet. This form of tablet was likely the antecedent of the ‘wax tablet’, a development that improved both the finished product and the speed on which it could be written on. Production involved coating the surface of the wooden plates with a thin layer of wax (often black), which could be easily inscribed with a pen-like tool known as a stylus. A further refinement saw a recessed trough cut into the face of the timber to allow a deeper layer of wax to be applied. The writing could be easily erased by smoothing out the surface of the wax, and indeed some styli had a spatula-end for just such a function.\(^{24}\) These tablets were useful for ephemeral writings, teaching purposes and legal documents. They were used singly, or as two tablets joined together (known as a diptych), or three (making a triptych) tablets joined; any more than this is referred to as a polyptych. Typical species of wood used in ancient Rome included beech, cedar and boxwood.\(^{25}\) Extant examples of the polyptych from the Roman world in the early Christian period display deliberate notches and holes along one long edge (being rectangular in shape), components of a sewing system used to join the leaves together. A similar system that was employed to join the multi quire codices of the same period. Georgios Boudalis has convincingly argued that the type of stitching that might have been employed to join the individual plates was likely adopted from craft methods such as basketry.\(^{26}\)

We retain an early medieval example of a polyptych in Ireland, namely the Springmount Bog Wax Tablets,\(^{27}\) discovered in the North of Ireland in the early twentieth century by a man cutting turf in Springmount Bog in Co. Antrim. Now in the National

\(^{23}\) Vindolanda Tablets Online. See http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk/about.shtml
\(^{26}\) Georgios Boudalis, The Codex and Crafts in Late Antiquity (New York: Brad Graduate Center, 2018), p. 29.
\(^{27}\) National Museum of Ireland S.A. 1914:2.
Museum of Ireland, they consist of six wooden (yew) tablets in a landscape format, measuring 210mm x 75mm and 6mm thick. These tablets have a trough hollowed out on both sides to accommodate the wax and to allow for recto and verso use. The first and last tablets however are hollowed out only on the verso and recto respectively and as such form proper book covers. The outer surfaces are smooth and shaped through manufacture and extensive handling in use. This contributes to the book-like impression of the object, which comes to hand in a very satisfying manner. The tablets contain the text of Psalms 30, 31 and 32 of the Vulgate Psalter written with a drypoint stylus. The writing appears to be the hand of a competent scribe, familiar with Irish majuscule script. The tablets have been dated to the late sixth or early seventh century. Two holes have been bored through the stack along one long-edge, through which wedge-shaped leather thongs were passed, anchoring the tablets along this edge and forming a spine and as such a proper codex. Although not as refined as the stitched type produced in the Roman world, this stab-sewing method survived through the evolution of binding structures and into the modern era. There were two secondary leather loops, only one of which is extant. These fitted the circumference of the book at each end and had the effect of keeping the book closed. They are a forerunner to the fastenings found on many Carolingian bindings from the eighth and ninth centuries. Attached to the loops was a longer strap, allowing the tablets to be carried like a book satchel. It can reasonably be argued that the Springmount Bog Tablets represent Ireland’s earliest book.

Along with the text of the Psalter, the wooden wax tablets would have been essential tools for the elementary studies which were carried out in the Irish monasteries by the oblati or young novices. After a period under the guidance of a cleric or hermit, permission was sought to enter the monastic order. The young student would learn through Latin which was propagated through books, as opposed to Celtic learning which was oral, therefore the general monastic term for monastic study was lectio ‘reading’. This also involved the art of writing and committing to memory the one hundred and fifty Psalms which formed the principal part of the canonical hours. The wax tablets allowed

the novice to practise perfecting the Irish Majuscule and Minuscule hand without the consumption of expensive and precious vellum. We see the benefit of this when we read of a student whose scribal attempts were so poor that ‘none could tell whether it was caused by a human hand or by a bird’s claw!’ As a student progressed it is reasonable to assume that he may well have produced his own personal copy of the Psalter, even though personal possessions were very much frowned upon under monastic rule. This would prove a most useful tool given the prominent role of the Psalms. We also find reference to the tablet in contemporary written sources; St. Ciaran (c. 512 - c. 549) is recorded as writing on staves. Additionally, we are very fortunate to have a somewhat romanticised description on the production of a wax tablet in the Hisperica Famina: a seventh-century collection of rhetorical descriptive poems written in Hiberno-Latin, possibly as grammatical exercises. ‘The wooden tablet was made from choice pieces; it contains rubbing wax from another region; a wooden median joins the little divided columns, on which lovely carving has played...’

The Romans are credited with influencing the development of the next significant format for transmitting the written word, the codex (from the Latin caudex meaning trunk or stem of a tree) which, it has been suggested, developed directly from wooden tablet diptychs in Roman Egypt, replacing the timber with a more flexible substrate. Our modern definition of the codex, firmly linked to the first centuries of Christianity, can be loosely described as a stack of papyrus or parchment leaves folded in half, written on both sides, with some form of tacket employed to keep the stack together, either passed through the backfold or stab-sewn through the side, close to the back edge. A clear descendent of the wooden polyptych, the papyrus or parchment leaves were far lighter and more portable and although now requiring the use of some form of ink, they remained re-useable, as the surface could be scraped with a knife to erase unwanted text, particularly in the case of parchment. In the first century CE the Romans employed a new format for taking notes and recording day-to-day business, typically, a rough parchment was used and these notebooks were called membrane, reflecting the origin of

34 Elizabeth Meyer, ‘Roman Tabulae, Egyptian Christians and the Adoption of the Codex’ Chiron (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), pp. 295-347.
the folia. More permanent works were also being scribed into codex form; in the first century CE, the Roman poet Martial mentions a parchment codex containing Homer’s Iliad, clearly not an ephemeral work. Another reference appears in Late Antiquity in the New Testament referred to by Paul in II Timothy 4:13, when he asks Timothy ‘When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.’

These first codices were composed of a single quire, which sometimes contained a staggeringly large number of pages. One extant example is the Milan BA MS P. Vogliano V, a single quire codex of papyrus with over 140 leaves containing a Coptic edition of St. Paul’s letters. Later, multi-quire codices eased the strain and improved the function of the text block, which was mechanically fixed to some form of cover or binding. It is likely that these early codices were bound first and then written in the reverse becoming the norm in later centuries when monastic centres became the producers of Christian literature. There is a suggestion that the new Christian religion chose the codex format over the more popular and abundant roll in an attempt to differentiate from pagan and Jewish faith.

As a general rule, the majority of earlier codices tended to use papyrus leaves (all extant single quire codices are on papyrus) rather than parchment, with a gradual reverse of the situation, so by the fifth century parchment had become the material of choice. Through historical records there is documented evidence of a dramatic arrival of parchment as the usurper of papyrus in the second century BCE. In Pliny’s Natural History Book xiii we find ‘owing to the rivalry between King Ptolemy and King Eumenes about their libraries, Ptolemy suppressed the export of papyrus, parchment was invented at Pergamum as an alternative and afterwards the employment of the material on which the immortality of human beings depends, spread indiscriminately’. The events in Pergamum give us our root word for ‘parchment’ today. Although forms of parchment were in common use long before the second century BCE, possibly as early as the Middle Kingdom of ancient Egypt (about 2000 BCE), not only as a writing surface but used in many applications that exploited its particular qualities, including drum heads and other

percussion instruments.\(^\text{39}\) In an Irish context the *bodhrán*, traditionally covered in goatskin is a good example of the use of parchment for other purposes. These skins however were less refined than those developed in Pergamum and were typically more akin to leather as the process involved some form of tanning agent.\(^\text{40}\)

The clearest evidence of how the early Christian books were bound comes from a collection of single-quire codices found in 1945 buried in an urn near Nag Hammadi, a city in Upper Egypt on the West Bank of the Nile.\(^\text{41}\) These limp and semi-limp structures are discussed in detail in chapter 4. As the multi-quire codex became more commonplace, there was a notable change to the binding format; as the limp and semi-limp style of covers of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts were replaced by stiff-boarded bindings of laminated papyrus sheets, or of timber, covered in leather. This afforded a higher degree of protection for the contents but the convenient and more easily produced nature of the limp structures ensured their continued production into the eighteenth century and beyond, with the tanned leather covers being superseded by covers of parchment. The attachment system of the quires initially continued to employ direct tacketing between cover and text block. In later centuries this changed, developing into supported sewing systems in the Western tradition and unsupported sewing in the Mediterranean world, both systems no longer mechanically connecting the individual quires directly to the cover.

To date, the study of book binding structures has leaned heavily on a few scholarly works published over the past hundred years. These include G.D. Hobson’s *English Binding before 1500* published in 1929, *Binding Structures in the Middle Ages* by Berthe van Regemorter from 1992 and the most complete overview to date in J.A. Szirmai’s *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* published in 1999. These volumes offer, in varying degrees of detail and accuracy, the technical descriptions of a range of bookbinding structures and charts, sometimes in fine detail, changes in the various elements and techniques, depending on geographical and chronological boundaries. Such publications proved useful when trying to make sense of the FMP, yet many questions remained unanswered, however, for the reason that the binding structure of the FMP is not


represented among the historically recorded types fitting the criteria of time, place and form.

The study of early medieval bookmaking, unlike other disciplines within the area of manuscript study, poses specific difficulties in any meaningful research leading to firm conclusions, primarily because codicology requires study of the original source material. There are other contributing factors leading to the dearth of research in this area. Firstly, medieval manuscript study has historically focused on content and context and scholars often ignored the carrier of that information, the binding, a fact regularly bemoaned by today’s codicologists. Secondly the quantity of early medieval manuscripts, western or otherwise, still in their contemporary or even first replacement binding is a very small percentage of the very small percentage of extant manuscripts from the insular period. Finally, the availability of the source material for codicological study is limited as such material is usually subject to severely restricted access, particularly when that study requires physical examination and manipulation of the book. The current situation is summed up by Julia Miller in her recent publication *Books Will Speak Plain*: ‘The book as an artefact occupies the most tenuous and complex position, perhaps of all the items made by the human hand: it is at once treasured and cavalierly interfered with on a whim’.\(^42\) It is the intention of this thesis to tell the story of the FMP and in doing so add to our knowledge of the early medieval book as an artefact and how this particular manuscript might have been perceived and utilised.

Chapter 1: Conservation of the Faddan More Psalter

The hands-on conservation of any object brings its conservator into a level of contact far and above that of any other person engaging with the artefact, either prior to the conservator’s involvement or after, with the exception of its original creator. This highly focused evaluation of the materiality of the object affords an opportunity to extract much in the way of valuable information. This information once studied and deciphered can reveal details relating to the object’s original manufacture and to events that affected it through the passage of time. These clues can be many and varied, for example the discovery of some minuscule extraneous material fragments hidden in the body of the object, or particular markings on its surface not directly related to its manufacture or everyday use. It was with this rationale to the fore that the conservation of the FMP proceeded. The archaeology of the manuscript uncovered many features and posed several questions in relation to its origins, use and ultimately, its disposal. Many codicological features of particular interest also came to light and indeed much of the content of this thesis is based on questions raised and answers presented. The function of this chapter is to chart the lengthy and unique conservation process, which continued uninterrupted for four and a half years. Although I have published aspects of the conservation work, this is the first full documented report of the four-and-a-half-year conservation process. In addition, it sets the framework for subsequent chapters of this thesis.

Assessment:

On arrival at the Conservation Department of the National Museum of Ireland in July 2006, the excavated remains of the manuscript, associated material (and a chunk of the Faddan More bog) were placed in a walk-in cold store at 4°C. The saturated moisture values were maintained throughout the investigative stages by monitoring and occasional spraying with deionized water (Fig. 1.1). The conglomerate sat on a plywood base and a grain sack; these items had been employed during the difficult on-site excavation. Exposure to the atmosphere was restricted by covering the collected mass with layers of Cellocast®, a resin impregnated bandage which is activated by water. Once dry, this material forms a rigid shell,
profiled to the approximate shape of the form underneath. The extremities of the hardened shell were screwed down to the plywood base beneath, further improving the enclosed environment. Examination of the manuscript was restricted during the initial stages of conservation in order to maintain the high level of moisture. Failure to observe this would result in uncontrolled drying out of the fibrous collagen material of which the vellum and leather from which the manuscript was constructed, in turn leading to irreversible shrinkage of the fibres. The purpose at this initial stage was to preserve as much of the find as feasible in the state in which it was found.

On first examination of the manuscript, it was evident that the combination of trauma as a result of its unearthing and the hostile environment in which the organic materials were entombed for a considerable time span would require many additional recording procedures of the find to be carried out before any conservation could commence. Such was the disruption of the manuscript, that in the early stages prior to any conservation the number of folia and even the number of quires were incorrectly estimated and reported upon. Given the significance of the codicological study of a manuscript and what clues this offers in relation to where and when the book was made, a primary aim was to establish a collation map for the extant folia. This would tell us how many leaves in how many gatherings had been employed in the making of the manuscript. In addition, as well as identifying the animal type, it was hoped that the hair/flesh orientation of the skins and perhaps even the spine direction could be established. In order to achieve these aims, the first stage involved examining the manuscript without any disturbance of the mass of material and attempting to identify backfold areas of bifolia where they lay (Fig. 1.2). This task was greatly complicated because of severe trauma, both historical and recent, which had in effect torn the quires horizontally in two across the middle of the folia. In addition to the damage suffered from its unearthing, research would show the manuscript also appears to have suffered considerable damage in its past (see chapter 7). Careful study of the manuscript followed under the restrictive conditions previously outlined and several

detailed photographs were taken both by me as working images and by the Photographic Department of the National Museum. These were studied at length and a preliminary folia layout recorded, which at this early stage allowed me to confirm the presence of five quires of an inconsistent folia count. At an early stage I also identified the lack of any flyleaves as a feature of this manuscript. Later examination after the dismantling of the text block would reveal the use of calfskin vellum. I was able to establish this through studying extant follicle patterns under magnification. The identification of the spine direction on the bifolia was much more challenging given the condition and percentage of survival, however I believe I have identified a spine pattern on the one almost intact bifolia, ff29 – 32, with the spine running across the skin fore-edge to fore-edge. This is important as it feeds into codicological conventions on the make-up of quires and can help in locating place of manufacture.

The steering committee listed in chapter 1, comprising of both National Museum staff from relevant departments and a number of external specialist scholars met at regular intervals throughout the project. Policy decisions were made in many areas including the proposed major conservation operations. I was also a member of this committee. Once a decision had been reached by the steering committee to dismantle the find and to conserve the individual components rather than simply stabilise the mass as an archaeological object, then further analytical investigation was suggested before the separation process began.

The additional procedures included an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan which was carried out at Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience with the intention of identifying the layers between folia and even possible areas of decoration within the manuscript. While this proved to be an interesting exercise, particularly as the software for processing the images gave results in 3D and certain features such as the edges of folia were visible inside the mass, the scan did not provide the level of detail necessary to guide the subsequent interventive conservation process. Computed tomography (CT scans) and X-radiography were excluded from the outset due to concerns of accelerated degrading of the fragile vellum matrix. The final recording procedure in its ‘as found’ state was the use of high-resolution digital video. This involved passing mobile cameras over the material on motorised gantries. The resulting images proved useful as reference material at later stages in the
conservation process.

Although not strictly a conservation process, the recording by Crossing The Line Films, an outside film company, commissioned to record the project should be mentioned. Over a four-year period, many aspects of the work were recorded with the intention of producing a factual documentary for national television. Ultimately, this provided a visual record of the processes involved including the investigation, conservation and research of this unique and highly complex project. As the conservator appointed to record, conserve and display the FMP, I was involved in all decision-making aspects of the work. This centred on assessing the conservation merit against risks to the manuscript, costs incurred and the potential value of any results in relation to any investigative procedures.

In addition to establishing the condition of the vellum from an overall macro perspective it was essential to establish the level of degradation at a cellular level. The reasoning was that vellum which looks and handles as expected, may in fact have suffered damage to its collagen network which is much exposed as a result of the manufacturing process; a procedure that strips away proteins, elastin and fats leaving the fibre network vulnerable.46 Gelatinisation can take place and not be perceptible to the naked eye. It was decided that two small samples of vellum from the Psalter would be sent under license to The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts School of Conservation. Under the supervision of Dr. Rene Larsen, the samples were put through the range of tests developed for the IDAP (Improved Damage Assessment of Parchment) programme with an additional amino acid test. The evaluation included assessment of the fibre condition and measurement of hydrothermal stability. The chosen samples were representative of different visual conditions of the Psalter vellum:

**Sample A:** vellum in reasonable condition that had been exposed to the bog material. Responds well to the drying process and has a tanned appearance once dry.

**Sample B:** very degraded and gelatinized vellum appears ‘pulped up’ and unstable. When cleaned before drying, often only the text (written in iron gall ink) remains with the vellum disintegrated.

---

The Academy commenced their analysis by examining the samples under 40x magnification, studying the fibre structure consisting of collagen, a major protein from which skin is formed. It is the triple helix that defines the structure of the collagen molecule \(^{47}\) (Fig. 1.3). Results from this examination found both samples classed as category 4, heavy damage, on a scale of 1 to 4. It was even suggested that if a category 5 had been available then the Faddan More vellum would have qualified, such was the level of deterioration of the fibre structure. Establishing the shrinkage temperature under magnification acts as a further indicator of the level of deterioration of the fibre structure. Surprisingly, in the case of the Faddan More samples, both displayed values comparable to that of good quality new parchment. The reason for this result is likely to be the partial tanning of the vellum from organic tannins in the bog. The amino acid analysis is employed to measure the degree of oxidation of the vellum. Both samples displayed moderate levels scoring a 2 on a scale of 1 to 4. The anaerobic environment of the bog played a major factor in this result. The report concluded that:

“Taken together, the analyses of the fibre samples show parchment structures that are heavily fragmented and partly gelatinised, although the remaining fibre structure has a high hydrothermal stability. This combination of characteristics may make the parchment very unstable in dry conditions, making it inflexible, brittle and very sensitive to handling and changing environmental conditions.”  

Having established the condition of the Psalter vellum at a microscopic/cellular level, I considered it essential for any proposed conservation process to understand the general reactive condition of the material given its long-term exposure to the extreme environment of Faddan More Bog. The fibre structure of vellum retains tension through its manufacture, making it sensitive to adjustments in relative humidity and temperature due to low hydrothermal stability.  

---


\(^{48}\) Rene Larsen, Dorte V.P. Sommer, and Natasha Fazlic, Analyses of Samples from the Irish Psalter, analytical report (Copenhagen: School of Conservation, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, 2007).

was selected for testing. It was flattened out and the outline was traced on to a piece of Mylar®. The fragment was then allowed to air-dry in normal ambient conditions. The change in its physical condition was so marked that the results were difficult to assess accurately. The air-dried fragment was now very brittle and had shrunk to less than half its original dimensions. It was also very dark and almost unrecognisable as vellum (Fig. 1.4). Although a similar reaction would be expected in modern vellum, it appeared exaggerated in the case of the Faddan More sample. This reinforced the findings of the Royal Danish Academy’s test results and emphasised the need to find an effective method of de-watering the extant fragments of the Psalter’s folia, while controlling dimensional stability.

**Dewatering:**

The next phase was to establish a procedure for the removal of the excess or unbound water from all components of the manuscript. During the investigative stage of the project it became evident that no vellum had ever been retrieved and dried from a wetland environment before and as a result there was little or no published material available for comparison. Consequently, in my role as conservator, I began to experiment and develop a method to complete this stage of the project successfully. Trials were carried out with vellum test sample; which were conditioned in an attempt to mimic the current state of the vellum in the FMP. The material utilised consisted of discarded vellum flyleaves from an eighteenth-century binding. In order to reproduce some level of degradation akin to that of Faddan More’s, the test vellum was hydrated and placed between saturated (tap water) blotting papers. The ‘sandwich’ was then placed inside a zip-lock bag, under light weight and left at ambient values for about one month. The results from these conditions were thoroughly saturated vellum with clear microbiological growth and evidence of degrading of the collagen protein. The production of vellum in the early Middle Ages varied somewhat from that of the eighteenth century as did the end product, but the conditioned samples were considered similar enough to render meaningful results during the subsequent de-watering trials. To prepare the test vellum for the several trials that were to follow over the next six months, samples were cut into triangles measuring 43x43x60 mm. The shape was chosen to provide the maximum test pieces from a limited supply (Fig. 1.5). Three tangible comparators were employed to assess
results before and after the de-watering trials. First thickness was measured with a
dial micrometer at a number of sites on the sample and an average figure calculated.
Second was flexibility, by comparing the flexibility of the sample to one of four plastic
discs of varying thicknesses, a value could be assigned. Lastly colour value was
measured by assessing each sample under a fixed light value of 1000 lux through a
small viewing hole and comparing and allocating a value based on the *Colour Atlas 96,
Natural* (Fig. 1.6). The remainder of the limited test vellum was cut into larger pieces in
order to have more representative sized samples as we homed in on a workable
methodology. These larger samples were treated ‘roughly’, i.e. scrunched up, cuts
added and wetted and re-wetted after partial drying. From the outset it was decided
that no chemicals would be used to aid the drying of the FMP’s folia fragments for fear
of traces remaining afterwards in the vellum, as well as concerns over the possible
long-term effects of chemicals such as polyethylene glycol and glycerol on the inks and
pigments present in the manuscript and their potential to obstruct future non-
destructive analysis. This decision ruled out some established archaeological
conservation drying techniques often employed for other organic material such as
leather and timber.

It was clear from the outset that the physical restraint of the vellum fragments
would be a major issue as unbound water was removed during the change from a
saturated state to a dry one. This would potentially be a problem whichever method
was chosen for drying. The drying of collagen-based materials from a saturated state
presents particular challenges due to the nature of their make-up.\(^{50}\) During the
manufacture of vellum, the cell structure is drawn into a low angle of weave and any
uncontrolled removal of unbound water will result in a loss of this tension as well as
unacceptable levels of shrinkage and irreversible gelatinisation as the fibres stick to
each other. Normally this is avoided by physically restraining the vellum around its
circumference as the drying process proceeds.\(^{51}\) This procedure has been illustrated in
numerous engravings among the pages of early printed books displaying scenes of a
stretched skin suspended inside a wooden frame known as a herse with the

\(^{50}\) H. Ganiaris, ‘A comparison of some treatments for excavated leather’, *The Conservator No. 6* (London:
The Institute of Conservation, 1982), p. 18.

\(^{51}\) Jessica Baldwin, John Gillis, ‘Conservation of a thirteenth-century Biblia Sacra Latine’ *Care and
Parchmenter at work. The folia fragments of the FMP however, were markedly too degraded for this approach. Four alternative methods of restraint were assessed using the test vellum samples described above. For the first test method, a saturated sample was placed on a low-pressure suction table and the surface of the table masked off as required. Pressure was set at 28 inches of H₂O (about 6.9kPa) with ambient values of 20° and 57% RH. In order to reduce cupping as the sample dried, layers of Bondina® masking were placed around its circumference. As drying of the sample neared completion, pressure was reduced to 13 inches of H₂O (about 3.2kPa). The use of this equipment was quickly eliminated because of difficulty in holding the sample vellum in place once evaporation had begun. Varying the suction settings and masking of the base proved ineffective for the most part.

The second piece of equipment trialled was an Audionvac 401H vacuum machine52 (Fig. 1.7). The principle here is to reduce air pressure inside a container, in this case a proprietary vacuum bag, which is ‘gas tight’ to below that of atmospheric pressure, measured at 1bar. Although absolute vacuum is not achieved, the removal of gas from the bag allows atmospheric pressure to be applied to the sealed contents. This has the effect of holding those contents in place with an even pressure being applied on all surfaces including the edges. The type of vacuum chamber used in our trials was developed principally for the packing of perishable foodstuffs and an option of ‘soft ventilation’ was available which extended the ventilation period and was designed for packing pressure-sensitive products. This would later prove useful for the ultimate stage of the project, to house the fragments of the FMP. The process proceeded as follows: a piece of the saturated triangular test vellum was placed between 100% cotton blotting papers and then into an Archipress® vacuum bag. A vacuum was pulled for 35 seconds, and the bag was seam-welded for 5 seconds. The bag remained sealed for twenty-four hours before it was opened and the results observed. The recorded results from this test gave a shrinkage value of approximately 1.5% with no distortion or change in thickness. A significant shift in colour value and a

52 The use of a vacuum machine was suggested by conservator Christopher Clarkson, private book conservator, who had already discussed the possibilities of drying parchment with Stuart Welch, formerly of Conservation by Design. The latter had established the vacuum machine as a conservation tool in the area of disaster recovery, and he organized the loan of a vacuum machine for our trials.
degree of translucency not present prior to testing did occur however. The flexibility remained at the same value. The next test method involved trials employing a vacuum freeze-drying unit. This involves sublimation, the transition of a solid to a gas without passing through the liquid phase. For the purpose of our trial, the saturated test vellum sample was frozen, then, while under vacuum, dried by passing from its frozen state to a dry without first reverting to the water stage; a process which took three days. The end results did not reach our criteria, with considerable change in colour, particularly on the hair side, becoming almost white in colour and a ‘pulping up’ of the vellum with noticeable increase in thickness. The third test method took a less interventive approach, drying under light pressure; the sample was placed between 100% cotton blotting papers and pressed under glass weights and after two or three hours the blotters were replaced with dry sheets. This process continued until the vellum reached ambient values. Although the trial vellum showed little distortion and maintained both flexibility and shrinkage values deemed acceptable, there was a marked increase in translucency, which suggested a gelatinisation of the collagen fibres due to insufficient tension to keep them apart while the drying proceeded.53

In addition to establishing a method to de-water the folia fragments of the FMP we also needed to demonstrate that a solvent exchange system could be used in tandem with the chosen drying method. The reasoning here is based on the premise that water as a solvent has a high surface tension and as it retreats during the drying process it can collapse the cell structure of the collagen causing excessive shrinkage and possible visual changes in the case of vellum. It is well documented in conservation practice that the tendency to shrink the material is reduced by replacing water with other less polar solvents with a lower surface tension, then drying through the chosen solvent.54 The transfer is achieved by immersion of the water saturated folio fragment in the solvent of choice, the fragment remaining in the bath until the solvent replaces the un-bound water. There is a range of non-polar solvents and less polar solvents available. Examining the working characteristics, polarity and toxic values, given that I would be working in close proximity with high volumes of the

chosen solvent over a lengthy time period, a short list was drawn up. Based on the criteria listed, the final choice was solvent exchange through denatured ethanol, although a solution of denatured ethanol and H2O 98:2 ran a very close second place and may even be preferable where the saturated vellum is less degraded.

The vacuum machine showed great promise at an early stage as it delivered the required criteria in a controllable fashion. The main advantage proved to be the ability of the blotting sandwich inside the vacuum bag to begin the drying process through capillary action by the transfer of solvent from vellum to blotting while maintaining the integrity of the vellum. After further successful trials using some of the larger pieces of test vellum, a small fragment of the FMP was chosen with no writing and no clear evidence of its correct location. It was processed through denatured ethanol solvent exchange, followed by drying through vacuum. I observed that the solvent exchange system also dealt with the issue of colour change experienced when drying through water in the vacuum machine, with only a slight lightening in value. Shrinkage did increase to an average of 3.5% but this was deemed well within acceptable levels, particularly considering that the saturated vellum of the Psalter was likely expanded beyond its original format, reinforcing the success of such small dimensional changes. Based on the successful treatment of this fragment, I repeated the process, this time with a larger fragment of a folio that also displayed some writing. Again, this satisfied the criteria laid down. Fine-tuning the operation with some adjustments to the interval times and materials, resulted in the following: the alcohol-saturated fragment was placed between two sheets of Bondina® after correcting any distortion or misalignment. The pack was placed between double layers of 100% cotton blotting papers and into the Archipress® vacuum bag. The pack was placed into the vacuum machine and a vacuum pulled for 40 seconds with a 5 second seal. The pack was left for between three to four hours, after which it was opened and the blottings were replaced with dry sheets and the polythene bag discarded. The pack was then placed under pressing boards and a weight. After a further three to four hours, the blottings were again replaced with dry sheets and the weight on the pressing boards reduced. This process could be repeated if required, and further blotting changes until the fragment came into equilibrium with ambient values. The moisture content of the processed vellum was monitored using an Aqua Boy® metre
with surface probe. For some of the larger folio fragments, a vacuum was pulled twice before continuing with the remainder of the drying stages, due to the volume of alcohol to be displaced. The procedure was put before the Faddan More Steering Committee and approval was given to proceed with the complete remains of the vellum text block; a process that continued over the following two years before all folia fragments were in a dry and stable state.

    Taking a retrospective view of this procedure some years on, and considering that it was and is in essence a unique conservation treatment developed for a unique project, there are many aspects to recommend the approach taken. The folio fragments remain stable in their inert environment with no visible change in condition some ten years on. The decision not to employ traditional repair methods maintains the original ‘as found’ integrity of the calfskin vellum. In addition, should the location of any of the remaining smaller text fragments be identified in the future, uniting them with their folio fragment is relatively straightforward due to the built-in reversibility of the housing system, detailed later in this chapter. The physical properties of the vellum, while much changed are now accessible and it will be possible for scholars and researchers to study the content of what is Ireland’s earliest Psalter text after the *Cathach.* 55 If our bogs decide to give up another early book in the future, I would confidently apply the same methods with perhaps a more exhaustive system of recording prior to dewatering.

**Dismantling:**

Having established the required methodology to dewater the folio fragments of the FMP, the next conservation stage involved the dismantling of the text block. Although the manuscript was stored in the Conservation Department cold store at 4°C, there remained the risk of biological attack, now that the conditions were far more aerobic than prior to the excavation. Microorganisms that require oxygen are mostly fungi, moulds and bacteria; the latter, however, do not favour the acid conditions of leather (the cover). 56 Close inspection and monitoring were carried out continually during dismantling until the entire manuscript was in a dry stable state. The anatomy of the

---

manuscript as found dictated the order of work. Prior to the removal of any folio fragment, a Perspex® (PMMA) grid bridge with x- and y-axes (which I designed) was employed, beneath this the manuscript mass was placed prior to the commencement of a given day’s work so that the part or fragment about to be removed had a grid reference allocated to it, followed by a digital image of the same area taken through the grid (Fig. 1.8). Often a working day would be spent studying the small area of backfolds remaining on a given quire fragment prior to removal and recording as much codicological information as possible to aid future identification. All statistics gathered were fed into the database (FileMaker Pro) which I developed in-house, to cope with the large volume of information generated. Typically, the type of information gathered prior to intervention included recording matching ‘cut patterns’ to the edges of two or more folio fragments. Due to the haphazard nature of the edge trimming of the FMP, it was sometimes possible to match the jagged edges, thus aiding which folia were adjacent, even those disturbed during excavation. An example of this is seen on the trimmed edges of folia 59 and 60, both present a ‘step’ in the trimming of their top edges at the same point about 60mm in from the fore-edge.

The work began by locating a natural separation layer from the top down, usually found between two quires. A thin slip of aluminium printer’s plate was cut to the width of a folio fragment and then covered with a fold of silicone-coated Mylar® (polyester film). The plate was slowly eased between the vellum layers to separate and lift the top layer. Spraying with deionized water at the separation point reduced surface friction and assisted the transmission. This process continued until the delineation between the layers was no longer in evidence. The remaining material was a single mass of gelatinized vellum, surviving ink letters and bog material, containing plant roots, seed pods and degraded plant matter, which was at a more advanced stage of deterioration. The intact folio fragments were lifted away and in a separate operation the associated mass material was removed for separate treatment. The next stage was to open out the vellum quire fragment, as all quire fragments of the manuscript remained closed, with their folia facing each other (Fig. 1.9). Once opened, they could be separated into individual bifolia fragments. Pre-facing with smooth Bondina®, a non-woven polyester material, held in place through the surface tension of the saturated vellum helped with this stage of the work (Fig. 1.10). Again, tracking
and identifying as work progressed was essential, particularly as often a fragment of a bifolium might display no extant text to help identify its location, and I was dependent on the physical position within the quire fragment to indicate which folio it was likely to be part of. At this stage other codicological features could be examined, such as the identification of singletons by examining the few millimetres of surviving backfold under magnification, or the location of pricking marks used to guide ruling of the folia. When compared to more typical codicological examination of medieval manuscripts the discovery of these features and others were hard-earned because of the extremely poor state of preservation of the FMP and the difficulty in deciphering the object. Nevertheless, this work resulted in making the FMP comprehensible as a book and laid the foundations for its future study.

**Cleaning:**

Now separated out, the next task involved the cleaning of individual folio fragments. Work commenced by laying a saturated folio fragment on its Bondina® support onto a sheet of glass; another sheet of Bondina® was laid on top and the fragment sprayed with deionized water. This allowed the piece to ‘float’ somewhat and be manipulated to lie as flat as possible, removing folds and creases in the vellum. Excess water was sponged off and the top sheet of Bondina® lifted away, and this unintentionally started the cleaning operation as it had the effect of lifting away some of the looser debris. The one single advantage of working with a saturated material is the opportunity of employing water as a cleaning agent. The method utilised a number of tools and techniques depending on the condition of the vellum in any given area of the fragment. In short, the main approach was to use a soft-bristle Japanese brush and, while keeping the area flooded and working under magnification, to brush the debris off the surface. This worked for the looser material composed mostly of bog material and plant matter and was followed by patting the surface with a small block of conservation sponge (a hydrophilic closed-cell structure) to pick up smaller pieces which were attracted to the sponge as it absorbed the water around it. Ultimately however, it was necessary to resort to a fine No3 tweezers in order to pick thousands of seedpods one by one from the surface of the vellum. All the above stages were carried out under a three-dioptre illuminated magnifier lamp. Once cleaned and still
saturated, the folio fragment was faced with a sheet of Silicone Mylar\(^\circ\) and turned over to allow the operation to be repeated on the other side. The final cleaning stage involved the addition of denatured ethanol to introduce the solvent to the vellum in a weak solution before total immersion as part of the de-watering technique. The clean and saturated folio fragment could be further manipulated at this stage into its correct shape, as all fragments had become ‘set’ in a distorted form over the long period of entombment (Fig. 1.11). After cleaning, a sheet of Mylar\(^\circ\) was placed over the fragment and the piece mapped using a permanent pen. Selected datum points were chosen, measured and marked on the Mylar\(^\circ\) sheet, as was the centre fold line, given that this feature was not always easy to locate once the bifolium fragment was dry. At this stage a final alignment of surviving edges, consisting of narrow strips of vellum no more than a few millimetres was carried out prior to the solvent exchange process.\(^{57}\)

The procedures above document the approach used when dealing with folio fragments of the FMP where some integrity of the collagen structure remained intact. However, this level of survival applies to only twelve to fifteen percent of the text block. Most of the folia have reacted in a more typical manner for vellum sitting in a saturated environment for over a millennium, dissolving into a gelatinous mass with little evidence of its existence remaining. There is, however, a unique and unexpected bi-product of this destructive process: it would appear that particular components in the iron gall ink employed to write the manuscript had a partial or mild tanning effect on the vellum, but only where it made direct contact with the surface. This had the effect that where the spaces between the letters dissolved into the bog, the surface of the vellum occupied by the ink survived. In this fragile state however, the matrix of letters did not maintain their position on the page and as a result of free water and shifting within the bog, these letters were picked up and moved out of position. This conclusion was reached after repeatedly finding clumps of this material with letters no longer in a regimented line of text but instead upside down, sideways and anywhere except where they should have been, all in a kind of alphabet soup. In addition, over an extended period these displaced manuscript fragments were engulfed by the

organic material of the bog, which had found its way between the covers of the manuscript and between the folia. After identification and recording the general location of this material within the manuscript mass, segments were lifted away. Because of their saturated state it was acceptable to immerse them in a Pyrex® dish filled with de-ionized water. From here the task was to separate out the remaining word fragments, individual letters and letter fragments from the detritus around them. Once removed, these smaller fragments were laid on Bondina® on glass and kept wet until they could be dewatered by the same method used for the larger folio fragments (Fig. 1.12). The result from this aspect of the project is several thousand individual letters, partial letters, words and partial words. In some cases where the words or partial words were identified these could be reunited with its associated larger extant fragment of the psalm. The process of separating out the smaller fragments was often hindered by the combination of very fragile degraded vellum and high surface tension of the water in which the fragments were suspended, causing them to clump and stick together. The situation was much improved by spraying between the two layers that were being separated with a 40% alcohol solution; this had the effect of reducing the surface tension enough to improve the chances of lifting away an individual fragment intact. It was also observed during the dewatering trials that immersion or spraying the folio fragments with denatured alcohol had the effect of stiffening the vellum. It was possible to use this to good effect when dealing with the smaller fragmented letters and words, as it allowed a degree of manipulation of the often very delicate matrix of the surviving material and in addition, as with the larger folio fragments, introduced the solvent to the saturated vellum. There are several hundred of partial word fragments and several thousand of individual letter fragments, now stable and preserved. The NMI has no immediate plans for them, but they will be available for future researchers.

**Identification and relocation of folio fragments:**

The main aid to establishing the collation map of the FMP and the identification of the individual folia was the content of the manuscript. The text of the one hundred and fifty psalms is readily available either printed or online and both were used extensively during this stage of the conservation project. The initial identification of folia and
quires was made in-situ, with all findings entered into the aforementioned database. Once removed, separated and cleaned and prior to dewatering, the process of confirming folia identification involved reading the extant text, often with the aid of enlarged and enhanced digital images, (Fig. 1.13) and comparing this to the Vulgate Bible against a searchable version online. During the initial on-site examination of the manuscript shortly after discovery, in addition to identifying the text as a Psalter, it was suggested that the version was the Gallican. This version is St Jerome’s second and more complete revision of the old Latin version against the Hexapala of Origen which he produced near the end of the fourth century A.D. The Gallican was the most popular version of psalms used in Ireland during the early medieval period and is the same version as the Cathach, (C. 600 CE) Ireland’s oldest, albeit incomplete copy of psalms. At a later stage of the project it was noted that the psalms of the FMP lacked the non-biblical headings (tituli) found in many early medieval Psalters including the Cathach.

The larger and more intact folio fragments were photographed digitally at high resolution in their wet state and these images along with the actual fragment (now dry) were studied simultaneously to establish the psalm and verse. Because the order of work was dictated by the position of the quires as they lay, the allocation of folio numbers was provisional, and a definitive version was not produced until all the larger folio fragments had been examined and identified. The identification of folia fragments where no text was extant and only ribbon-like strips of the folio edges remained was wholly dependent on its position in relation to an adjacent folio fragment where identifiable text had survived. All of the above information including location and re-location of fragments was recorded on the database. As a result, all major folio fragments of the manuscript can be tracked from their removal from the saturated mass through to their eventual locating and display housing. It was decided once the dewatering process was underway, to record photographically all folio fragments with discernible writing. This process was carried out at a fixed focal length

---

58 Biblia Sacra, iuxta Vulgatam Versionem (Deutsche Biblegesellschaft, Stuttgart, 1994).
60 RIA. MS. 12. R. 33.
with a camera set perpendicular to the fragment. Both sides were recorded and all photographic values such as exposure and light levels were kept constant throughout. This operation continued over a two-year time span of the dewatering process and as well as including the larger areas of psalm fragments, groups of the rescued smaller text fragments were also recorded. This database is archived in the Museum’s Conservation Department.

During the process it became evident that it would be possible to identify some of these smaller fragments of psalms and relocate them within the larger extant folio fragments. In order to achieve this with some accuracy a ‘character count’ was calculated. This involved working out an average character count per line of text and employing this to locate the physical position of fragments on a folio that did not continue directly from the preceding text. The method of working out the ‘character count’ involved counting the characters on eight full lines of text at Ps.72:14-on. The sample area was chosen as typically representative of the layout of the manuscript, although there wasn’t much choice given the survival rate of folia. This gave values between 41 to 48 characters per line. The total was divided by eight and multiplied by thirty-one, denoting the number of lines per folio, although a folio with thirty-two lines was identified. This gave an average of 1,364 characters per page (as this accounts for one side of the folio only). This exercise was repeated three times in different areas of the manuscript, resulting in a final mean average figure of 1,336 characters per folio. The calculation was tested by locating the beginning of a psalm in the manuscript and identifying another point two or three folia on. Then, by using the Vulgate, it was possible to calculate the number of characters from the start position to the finish and then compare this to the calculated finish point using the estimated values. Allowance was made for the typical use of abbreviations and contractions in Irish monastic writing. Results were positive and confirmed when the same exercise was replicated from a different area of the Psalter.

The FMP displays little in the way of decoration to take up space on its folios. This is evidenced by the fact that we found little in the way of additional decorated fragments, apart from those we could allocate to the tripartite division of the psalms. It therefore seemed logical that the decoration of the FMP was restricted to these areas of the manuscript, an arrangement adopted in other early medieval insular
Further confirmation was possible where no clearly identifiable decoration remained but was expected (Psalm 101) and the shifted position of the calculated characters after this point strongly suggests decoration did exist.

When a smaller text fragment was identified, and this may have involved reading text on one side of the vellum or, on occasion, both sides. In general the iron gall ink survived better on the flesh side of the skin and as a result was easier to decipher. The task of correctly positioning it with the larger surviving folio fragment was established using the character calculation. Very often the correct position resulted in a gap where no text was extant, and the small identified fragment was located ‘floating’ in the middle of the bi-folium mount. Other factors that assisted in positioning the fragment were the hair/flesh orientation which could be matched with the main folio fragment. Additionally, sometimes the run or angle of the hair follicles gave clues as to its position. Once the fragment had been positively located the operation had to be repeated ‘virtually’. This involved cutting and pasting the digital image of the fragments from the newly created digital library of the manuscript and repositioning it with its now identified folio fragment. In this instance it had to be carried out twice, because there were separate images, one for recto and one for the verso. Because all images were taken at the same focal length with the same values, a seamless image matching the actual fragment was recorded (Fig. 1.14). In addition to assisting with the location of small fragments, the character count also allowed me to recognise anomalies in the collation map of the manuscript, where the folio count does not tally with the position of a psalm. This in turn prompts further investigation and the possibility of further virtual reconstruction at some point in the future (see chapter on codicology).

**Housing / Display:**
When the conservation process had reached the stage that allowed a definitive collation map to be produced, and the identification and location of the vast majority of the text fragments had been established, the focus turned to the long-term storage of the manuscript. Given the fragmentary nature of the folia and the loss of almost all

---

62 The Southampton Psalter (Cambridge, St. John’s College, MS C.9); The Basel Greco-Latin Psalter (Basel, Universitätsbibliothek MS A. vii. 3)
fold endurance of the vellum, it was evident that the FMP could not be returned to any form of codex. Investigation into the housing of double-sided vellum or parchment material began. This resulted in examining a range of methods employed by conservators to deal with historical documents on collagen based substrates, typically single items or small collections of documents. None of the systems investigated proved viable, based as they were, on reasonably sound material with an intact structure. The Dead Sea Scrolls had been mentioned during the media coverage of the FMP shortly after its discovery. This comparison prompted some research into their conservation treatment over the decades and their current status. It should be noted that even these ancient fragmented documents dating from the third century B.C. to the first century A.D. were in a more stable state than the FMP. One interesting aspect of the current conservation of the scrolls was the reversal of previous conservation treatments carried out in the 1950’s, this and the fact that no physical repair or materials had been employed in the treatment of the FMP to date prompted trials for a system that required no new material to be introduced to the substrate in the form of support or adhesive. A number of suspension systems were trialled; this involved strips of polyester material suspended inside a rigid frame. The strips were slit to allow the folio fragment to be inserted between the cuts and leaving it suspended in position inside the rigid frame. The number of smaller now identified fragments combined with the highly reactive nature of the FMP vellum (vellum by its nature is very hygroscopic, reacting to small changes in humidity and temperature; the vellum of the FMP seemed to be even more reactive than would be expected) rendered this approach un-workable.

Further research pointed us back as far as the nineteenth century and traditional methods used to display and house fragile papyrus fragments and other badly degraded material. The use of thin sheets of glass on either side of the folio, fragment or textile which were sealed around the edge with some form of tape was and continues to be used in museums, libraries and galleries around the world. The

---

system does have its drawbacks; the weight of even twenty items in a box can be substantial, the danger of breaking the glass and the failure of the edge seal allowing ingress of air borne dirt. Despite this, however, it came to my attention that it remains a valid system because of its simplicity, lack of interference with the object and the absence of any much-improved alternative. It was further observed that the fragments of the FMP were in their most secure and stable state when under vacuum as part of the dewatering process. To investigate this further, some dry test vellum was placed under vacuum inside the Archipress® polyethylene bag but without the blotting sandwich employed for drying. Tests were carried out varying the vacuum time and employing the ‘soft seal’ system of the Audionvac 401H. This method proved very promising, meeting all our required criteria and similar to that achieved with the long-employed glass sheets. Replacing the glass with polyethylene, however, had the distinct advantage of reducing the weight and improving the air tightness and as a result dealt with those particular issues, in addition there is no risk of breakage if dropped.

Although polyethylene is considered reasonably inert, we wanted to ensure the optimum standard of material, given that it would be in direct long-term close contact with the folia fragments of the FMP. The search quickly led to Escal® film, a material specifically designed for long term storage of museum artefacts where an anaerobic environment is preferred, with long term resistance to oxygen permeation. The inner layer of Escal® is polypropylene, the outer barrier layer is a vacuum-deposited ceramic on a PVA substrate. Oxygen permeability is 0.05cc/m2/24hrs, water vapour transmission is 0.01gm/m2/24hrs. The use of polyethylene is a standard material for sealing films. Additional trials commenced with the Escal® film; the material is supplied on a roll or as pre-formed enclosures with a single opening, the former was chosen due to the difficulty of positioning all the components to be sealed through the one open edge of an enclosure. The roll on the other hand gave us complete control over the format of the housing and a much less tortuous assembly of the contents. It was decided for aesthetic purposes and in order to convey the form of a bifolium, that the void or area where none of the vellum folio had survived should be

---

infilled. The material chosen was Ligfree® card, which as well as being lignin free and of a conservation standard, is also similar in thickness and colour to the FMP vellum. A profile of the missing area was cut out and placed adjacent the folio fragment without actually making contact. Because of the difficulties in handling the fragile folio fragments and maintaining their position inside the fold of Escal® film prior to the vacuum process, a hinged folder of rigid boards was made. All components were placed inside this during assembly, which aided the handling during the positioning of fragments, a procedure that required viewing both verso and recto. The assembled material remained inside this ‘Folio Flipper’ during transport to the vacuum machine and while in the machine during the vacuum operation.

The procedure to house each folio fragment of the FMP proceeded as follows: A sheet of Escal® film was cut to a size of 760mm x 500mm and then folded in half along the long edge to give a finished size folder of 380mm x 500mm. The film was placed open in the Folio Flipper and the folio fragments along with the profiled card infill were placed on the film with the aid of additional support material. The Folio Flipper was closed and turned over, opened and the support material removed leaving the components to be vacuumed in position on the Escal® film. The film was folded over and a final alignment check made of the folio fragments before closing the Folio Flipper over. One of the three unsealed edges of the Escal® film was left protruding from the Folio Flipper and this rested on the sealing bar inside the vacuum machine (Fig. 1.15). A board weight was placed on top of the assemblage and the cast iron lid of the vacuum machine was closed. The first ‘pass’ had no vacuum time and served only to seal the open edge of the Escal® film. This was repeated on the second open short edge by rotating the Folio Flipper and contents and exposing the edge to the sealing bar. For the third and final open edge a ‘soft’ vacuum was also pulled for eight seconds before sealing. A sealing time of five seconds proved best for the film-to-film contact to create a strong bond. A narrow border was created through the sealing process and this was replicated along the top folded edged by inserting a strip of card as a distance piece while positioning the fragments and infill. A small identification tab was attached to the lower edge of the mounted folio fragment once complete. The finished product greatly alters the handling parameters of the manuscript. Without any direct intervention of additional materials adhered or chemicals added, the folio fragments
are stable enough for both study and display. In addition, the methodology employed is easily reversed should this be required (Fig. 1.16). Between singletons and bifolia, this process generated a total of thirty-three encapsulated folio fragments and represent approximately 12 to 15% of the manuscript. I took the opportunity at this stage to make a facsimile copy of the five quires of the text block, tracing all fragments onto double or single sheets of paper cut to the guesstimated size of the original manuscript. The identified psalm number and verse are written on the traced fragment. This has proved a useful tool for reference of what goes where and because of the accurate tracing, even for comparing cut edges to check possible matching folia. It is kept inside an accurate replica of the leather cover.

Once complete, the collection of mounted folio fragments was sorted into their five quires and assembled in order. A series of tabbed four-flap folders were made with identifying tabs as to the folio numbers. The final phase of the housing process involved the construction of a purpose made ‘document’ style box (Fig. 1.17). This substantial assembly, constructed from high-standard conservation materials, houses the more than thirty folders containing the folia fragments of the five quires. The vertical storage of the folia ensures no pressure or friction issues that would occur with horizontal housing. In addition, the system also allows the best use of the tabulated folders and easy location of specific sections of the Psalter. This work will allow safe access and handling for future scholars and researchers.

One of the additional responsibilities of the Steering Committee was the display of the FMP as part of the re-vamped permanent Treasury Exhibition in the National Museum in Kildare Street. A dedicated and separated space was allocated to the manuscript display accompanied by associated material and a video recounting the story of the FMP discovery and conservation. It was decided that two folio fragments would be displayed in vertical, two-sided display cases with internal fibre-optic lighting. The standard requirement for controlling the specific environment needed for the safe display of vellum or parchment was for the most part negated through the vacuum housing system, which enclosed each folio fragment in its own stable micro-climate. I submitted a proposal for a pair of two-sided window mounts made from powder-coated mild steel, on the inner face of which I placed registers for the mounted folio fragments made from a flexible magnetic material. This system
allows rotation of the folio fragments (typically every twelve weeks) on display at predetermined intervals. The folio fragment is positioned in one side of the window mount with the extended borders registering with the guides. The two halves of the mount are brought together and held secure by the magnetic registers. The front opening wall display case contains a platform for the window mounts, which are further secured by framing strips once in position. The system is designed to allow for easy rotation of the folio fragments. The lighting proved somewhat more challenging given the slightly reflective nature of the Escal® film combined with often difficult to interpret content. The employment of a professional company for this and the remainder of the Treasury exhibition was essential to the successful outcome achieved. Levels are controlled with lux values in the space maintained around 50 and ultraviolet screening on all glass (Fig. 1.18).

**Leather Cover**

The simple leather binding of the FMP lay beneath the mass of material comprising of the vellum folia fragments, bog matter, and evidential fragments of other deposited organic material. The ‘as found’ structure dictated the order of the subsequent conservation procedures as work commenced from the top down. The consequence of this approach resulted in the cover being the final major component of the manuscript to be conserved. When it was finally released, initial observations confirmed much of what information I had been able to gather while it was in-situ; it was a single piece of tanned leather folded to form a front and back cover a spine and a fore-edge flap. Three buttons had been attached to the flap using leather thongs (Fig. 1.19) (for a detailed description of the FMP cover see chapter 4.

Although both the leather of the cover and the surviving vellum folia fragments originated from the same source, the hide of a calf, once flayed and dehaired they were treated very differently. Man’s awareness of the need to stabilise the rawhide of an animal in order to make best use of its many attributes dates back at least twenty thousand years. This is based on the discovery of fine leather working tools, such as needles and awls, whose delicate nature suggests a well-refined and supple end

---

67 Sutton Vane Associates, Dimes Place, 106-108 King Street, London, W6 0QP, United Kingdom.
product. The flayed hide consists of three distinct layers. The *epidermis*, which contain dead and dying cells and is the area of the skin exposed; this layer also contains hair or wool follicles and sweat glands. The *dermis or corium* lies beneath the epidermis and consists of the fibre network of collagen that gives leather its unique characteristics. It also often contains some follicle, which is essential in visual species identification once converted to leather or parchment. The final layer is the *hypodermis* or flesh layer, which is a membrane of mostly fat cells connecting the hide to the animal, neither this nor the *epidermis* is not required by the leather or parchment maker and are removed in manufacture. Vellum remains in effect a rawhide product, an attribute of which is its tendency to dissolve in water, hence the partial and miraculous survival of the folia of the FMP. Vegetable tanned leather on the other hand, remains more or less unaffected even after prolonged immersion in saturated conditions, as witnessed by numerous leather artefacts retrieved from wetland environments, including the cover of the FMP.

Taking the same approach as with the vellum folia, the cover was maintained fully saturated during all stages prior to de-watering and while the folio fragments were undergoing treatment. This was achieved in the same manner as with the vellum, by spraying with deionized water and maintaining a low storage temperature of 4°C. Initially it was hoped that a similar approach to the drying process used for the vellum could also be applied to the vegetable tanned leather of the cover. A database was set up and trials were carried out to establish if a solvent exchange system similar to that employed for the vellum folio fragments would yield the same successful outcome. The leather drying trials were greatly assisted by having suitable material available, very similar in type and close in date to the leather of the cover. I could select a limited number of small vegetable tanned leather off-cuts from the 1980’s excavations at Wood Quay in Dublin. These were discarded fragments from leather found in a spoil heap, the result of craft-making activities in the Viking settlement during the manufacture of shoes, bags, belts and other day-to-day items of the settlers. The collection amounted to several thousand fragments of leather, all of

---

which had been maintained in a saturated state and at low temperature to reduce the risk of microbiological activity.

The trials involved the use of the same solvents and solvent exchange methods employed for the vellum dewatering tests. Similar parameters were also recorded before and after each treatment: thickness, colour and flexibility. Unlike vellum, during the production of leather, the spaces between the fibre bundles remain, being filled with a jelly-like ‘ground substance’ and also unlike vellum, the angle of weave is little changed: it is these features that give leather its soft feel and flexible nature. It became apparent at an early stage of these tests that regardless of the solvent or drying method employed, the end result rendered a material that lost a high percentage of its natural flexibility. It is possible that this characteristic might be restored through physical ‘working’ of the leather during the final stages of evaporation, but clearly this would not be an option for the ancient leather of the FMP cover. While the lack of fold endurance and flexibility was not an issue for the vellum fragments it was a cause of concern for the leather cover.

Discussions with the Steering Committee commenced as to what shape or form the cover should be placed in before dewatering, i.e. open or closed, given that it would be ‘set’ in whichever was chosen. Having to make a choice was seen as unsatisfactory to the committee, so the trials were extended. The additional tests involved drying straight from the unbound water, drying through PEG 400 (Polyethylene glycol) and drying through 15%vv glycerol, the latter two being more traditional archaeological approaches. Sublimation is required for both the PEG and glycerol and so the second part of the treatment requires vacuum freeze drying. The test results from the glycerol were, unsurprisingly, very promising. The method involves the water-bound tanned leather being immersed in the glycerol solution until saturated; this is judged by experience and depending on the dimensions of the material may occur over a twenty-four hour period. Once the solution has been fully taken up by the leather it is placed in the vacuum freeze drying unit, which as

---

previously described, remove excess moisture through sublimation.\textsuperscript{71} The test leather emerged from the unit after three days, retaining colour, thickness and with the flexibility properties associated with good quality vegetable tanned leather. There was concern about the effects of this treatment on the remnants of surface colour discovered on the cover at an earlier stage. A minute sample of the black pigment was sent for analysis\textsuperscript{72} and proved to be of a charcoal type (see chapter 4). In order to establish if this might be an issue, a piece of the saturated Viking leather off-cut, also displaying the remains of a surface colour was located. This was put through the glycerol method and the pigment displayed no change or loss once dry. This test fragment and the previous glycerol treated leather were monitored over the following number of weeks to see if any changes occurred, such as alteration of the surface texture or excess solution moving from the dermal layer outwards to the surface. Thankfully, the samples remained stable. The results were reported to the Steering Committee and agreement was reached that the cover of the FMP should be dewatered through the glycerol/vacuum freeze-drying method.

The saturated leather cover was prepared by laying it flat on a support sheet of Bondina\textsuperscript{*} and working under a three-dioptre illuminated magnifier, debris was removed from the outer surface, employing the same methods as those used to clean the folio fragments. It was at this stage that the addition of several trial motifs was noticed inscribed into the leather (see chapter 5). The inner surface was surface cleaned and finally, while still in a saturated state, the cover was recorded photographically in detail by the Museum’s Photographic Department. The 15%\textsubscript{v} glycerol solution was prepared in a large developing tray. The leather cover, supported on the underside with a sheet of Bondina,\textsuperscript{*} was lowered in until submerged. The top of the tray was covered and was monitored over an eighteen-hour period, until the leather was deemed to have reached full saturation of the solution (Fig. 1.20). Once removed, a Polyzote\textsuperscript{*} form wrapped in Bondina,\textsuperscript{*} which had been constructed to represent the size and shape of the text block, was inserted inside the cover. The covers were closed over and the leather flap rested onto the top surface of the

\textsuperscript{71} See p. 27 above.

front/left hand cover. The 15% v v glycerol-saturated binding was wrapped in insulation layers and brought to the vacuum freeze drying unit of the National Museum in Lanesborough Co. Longford. The cover was placed inside the capacious chamber and once filled, mostly with large ships-timbers, the unit was sealed, and the freezing process started. The cover remained in the unit for almost three weeks. On removal, the leather of the cover displayed the handling conditions that would allow some degree of flexibility. Although somewhat desiccated, the cover can, with expert handling be opened out and returned to its closed state without injury. The leather is now a typical hue of a vegetable tanned skin and the pigment remnants remain intact. The attached horn buttons were unaffected by the process. The incised trial motifs remained visible, even perhaps more clearly visible. A new former was constructed, to support the closed covers, this time more aesthetically pleasing. This remains in position while the cover is on display in its climate-controlled case in the Museum’s Treasury Exhibit (Fig. 1.21).

Conclusion
During the process of conservation, every component part of the FMP was quite literally under the microscope. While the overarching aim of the project during the conservation period was to stabilise the manuscript, many features were noted that potentially, with further study, will better inform us about the making of the manuscript and its associated cover. There was little doubt and complete consensus among all those who engaged with the manuscript, in whatever capacity, that the FMP had many unique features, and this conclusion was reached before any investigation or conservation had started. This had the immediate effect of influencing the conservation approach with emphasis placed on recording the manuscript in its pre-treatment state, given that any conservation process, regardless of how carefully planned and executed, is a disruptive process that results in loss of evidence. A typical example would be the displacement of fragments, from their ‘as found’ position within the body of the object and how that position can inform us on how the object was deposited, and what condition it was in at the time of deposition. A more specific example relating directly to the FMP were the minute areas of back folds that survived within the folio fragments and were identifiable, as the curve of the vellum could be
observed to locate the exact fold point. Once the de-watering process had taken place, however, this fold in the vellum was lost and the fold point no longer detectable. With the conservation process proceeding and these factors very much in mind, there was a concerted effort to observe and record all evidential detail. Many of these observations are related to physical features of the manuscript and form the basis of other chapters in this thesis.

When reflecting on the interventive aspect of the conservation, it can be said that the learning curve was a steep one. Even though all involved from the National Museum were fully supportive of the need for a well-researched approach to the conservation of the FMP, other factors did impose limitations to the process and time was one such factor. For a conservator on secondment there was a ‘ticking clock’ that influenced what was achievable within the time frame. Interestingly, even though extensions were requested and granted, it was financial restrictions that finally brought matters to a close. Financial restriction was also a factor in what was available to purchase in relation to very specialist equipment, which may well be redundant after its use in the project. Being so close and so totally absorbed in such a project one inclines to the opinion that there should be no limits when it comes to doing all that is possible to preserve and conserve such an object, however the reality is somewhat different and ultimately compromise is required to see the project through.

It was clear from the moment the first folio fragment was removed from the de-watering pack that the legibility of the text would present difficulties for scholarly study or research. Reading of certain psalms is more akin to trying to decipher a faint palimpsest. Although the conservation process was not capable of correcting this feature, by using latest digital technologies we were able to have the complete manuscript captured by Hyper Spectral Scanning.\(^73\) These very large files, stored on a dedicated server, are available for the application of other imaging processes or further manipulation on the spectral range with the goal of improving clarity of writing and possible analysis of inks.

I suggest that two important goals were successfully achieved. Firstly, the conserved material is now accessible for research and display purposes; this is the

\(^73\) An Foras Feasa: Maynooth University, Institute for the Humanities.
result of the purpose-devised housing system that allows the delicate and fragmented material to be handled safely. Secondly, the project meets a prime conservation goal of reversibility. In the case of the FMP this is particularly straightforward, since the lack of repairs or supports added to the material means that removal from its housing is simply a matter of cutting open the Escal® enclosure. In order to glean meaningful information from the folia of the FMP it was essential to unravel and stabilise the saturated mass of vellum. The conservation process delivered this and is the foundation of this thesis. The next chapter examines the manuscript folio by folio extracting further clues that would not be possible without the major conservation intervention.
Chapter 2 The vellum text block of the Faddan More Psalter

A range of components is brought together to make up a medieval manuscript, typically including leather, timber, thread, ink, pigments and the material that constitutes the bulk of the end product, parchment. All but the timber were found as components of the FMP during its conservation. Close examination of the parchment can inform on aspects of its life; from original construction and place of production through changes made and events experienced over time; this physical evidence can corroborate or contradict palaeographical arguments. In addition, features of the construction of the text block which is produced before the binding can help to narrow the window of manufacture. In this chapter the parchment and text block of the FMP are scrutinised with the intent of extracting such information, despite the dearth of surviving material and the effects of the extreme conditions in which the manuscript survived. The conservation process as expected, did not provide all answers in relation to the text block and separate examination of the now stable material was necessary. It did confirm that the manuscript was an early medieval book, that is to say in this context, belonging to the corpus of extant manuscripts such as the Book of kells, Book of Durrow, Book of Dimma and the Book of Armagh among others, and therefore approaching any additional study through what is already known about other early book making practices could shed light on the genesis of the FMP.

In what follows, the development of parchment as the essential material of the medieval manuscript is examined from origin to its arrival and use in Ireland. The term ‘insular parchment’ is a commonly used idiom in the study of the manuscripts of Western Europe and this description is scrutinised and compared with the vellum of the FMP. Converting the prepared skins into a text block ready for the ink of the scribe follows a range of conventions and, once written, the gathering and sewing also follows known practice. These features are observed and compared on the vellum folio fragments of the FMP.

The conversion of the raw animal pelt, flayed from the animal and transformed into a robust and long-lasting material, has been known to man since prehistoric times. Animal skin is a multi-layered tissue, the most substantial of which is the corium, a network of long fibres of collagen protein molecules interweaving together
to form a cohesive and flexible structure. Between these fibres is a matrix of ground substance, which acts as a lubricant with high water binding capacity. It is predominately this section of the skin that is converted into leather, parchment and other ancient material such as raw hide. Additional processes of tawing and chamoising also produced leather-like products. It is thought that the Irish word for the traditional hide covered boat, curach originated from the Latin corium, used by Julius Caesar to describe the small sea vessels he encountered there during his expeditions in 55 and 54 BCE. Simplified descriptions of the difference between leather and parchment usually state that leather undergoes a tanning process, while parchment does not. This is not an accurate representation, and many medieval parchment makers and scribes used various tanning solutions, either during manufacture, while still on the ‘hearse’ or frame or afterwards in the scriptorium, in order to enhance its handling properties and the writing surface. Other substances including fats, oils and salts were also known to have been added to the prepared skins. This indicates a sound understanding of the material, as a significant effect of these post-process applications was to restrict the entry of water vapour and bind the fats already present, both of which improve the product. I believe the Irish parchment makers embraced these additional processes with aplomb. The true constant that identifies leather from parchment is that the production of the latter requires it to be dried under tension, the result of which draws the fibre bundles into a low angle of weave. A secondary distinction is the ability of tanned leather to resist prolonged immersion in water, often with little change to its working and handling characteristics. Parchment however, will at best gelatinise or completely dissolve under the same conditions as it succumbs to putrefaction. The discovery of the FMP perfectly demonstrated these differing properties with the leather cover surviving saturated, over a millennium almost unscathed, whereas only fifteen percent of the sixty vellum folia endured through to excavation.

The story of the invention of true parchment as a writing substrate can be traced back to the second century BCE at Pergamum in Asia Minor due to friction between two kings, the Egyptian pharaoh Ptolemy and Eumenes II. The source of the

account is found in Pliny’s Natural History 13:21; (1st century CE). Ptolemy had halted all export of papyrus to Pergamum due to his jealousy of Eumene’s library, rivalling his own library at Alexandria, thus forcing him to invent a new material. Because hides were imported from the Black Sea area into the city, and the use of tanned leather as a substrate for writing was already known, the unprocessed hides would have suggested themselves as a suitable material for experiment. The finished product was *pergamen*, parchment, named after its place of origin, although the term was not typically in use before the fourth century CE. The material proved more suitable and longer-lasting than the papyrus it substituted. The validity of this tale is uncertain, as forms of parchment are known to have already existed by this period, it is possible that techniques or recipes were improved in Pergamum resulting in a material closer to the folia that would shortly be employed in the first Christian codices. It should be noted that at this period ‘books’ were for the most part in scroll form.

If it was no surprise that an early medieval book retrieved from a bog in central Ireland was a Psalter, then equally no eyebrows were raised when it was found to have been written on calfskin vellum. The use of the term ‘vellum’ as an alternative for ‘parchment’ is based on the popular description of vellum being manufactured from skins of young calves, the root coming from the Old French word *velin* for calfskin. This is by no means conclusive however, the words vellum and parchment being used interchangeably, both historically and currently. A useful exercise is to look at some dictionary definitions of vellum, where it is defined as: ‘a fine-grained unsplit lambskin, kidskin, or calfskin’ (Merriam-Webster). The Cambridge Dictionary states: made from the skins of young animals, especially cows or sheep. The consistent use of young cattle to produce a writing substrate by Irish scribes in the early medieval period is such that it can be considered a codicological aid to identifying the makers of insular manuscripts from the early centuries of Irish Christianity.

---


76 Reed, *The nature and making of parchment*. Reed is of the opinion that parchment, or parchment-like material was available in the ancient world, possibly as far back as 2500 BCE, although not necessarily for the use of scribes. Reed also references a discovery in Hebron, Jordan in 1969 where documents dated to around the eighth century BCE on palaeographical grounds are produced from camel skin and are of a type of parchment. Ronald Reed, *Ancient skins, parchments and leathers* (London: Seminar Press, 1972), p. 118.
These early scribes were for the most part monks, a result of the monastic church’s dominance in Ireland by the sixth century. The production of books copied from exemplars was required for both the liturgy, including gospels, psalters and martyrologies and books for teaching. Once firmly established on home soil, the Irish monks carried their mission as peregrini beyond this island and brought their books written in a distinctive Irish hand, on vellum folia, with them. Surviving material fitting this pattern attests to the practice; Codex Ambrosianus C.301 inf., a manuscript from the monastery at Bobbio, the Irish foundation of St. Columbanus (d.615) established with the help of the Lombard king Agiluf in the Apennines of modern-day northern Italy is a good example. Like many manuscripts that originated in Bobbio, it was transferred to the Ambrosiana Library in Milan in the seventeenth century as the Bobbio library was dispersed. The main content of MS C.301 inf. is a Latin commentary on the Psalms with extensive Irish glosses. According to E. A. Lowe it is written in an ‘Irish minuscule’ hand, saec. VIII-IX’ (CLA III 326). It is now generally accepted the commentary was produced in Ireland at some point in the early ninth century. The manuscript is written on calfskin vellum, atypical for Mediterranean book production, which favoured sheep or goatskin parchment.

Another manuscript firmly associated with an Irish foundation in Europe is the St Gall Gospels (Cod. Sang. 51), located in a monastery of the same name in north-east Switzerland. The illuminated manuscript is thought to be an import from Ireland, and according to O’Sullivan, a product of one of the cluster of monasteries located in the centre of the country. This is based stylistically on the majuscule hand ‘which substitutes compressed rectangularity for roundness’. It was produced around the middle of the eighth century, again on calfskin vellum. Of additional interest is that

79 Richter points to an Irish origin in the early ninth century and includes the use of vellum as opposed to parchment as an indicator. Lowe suggests Bangor as a location. Martin McNamara identifies the single scribe of the manuscript as Diarmait (d. 825), grandson of Æd Rón, from Castledermot, Co. Kildare. Pádraig Ó Riaín identifies the same Diarmait (Diarmuid) in A Dictionary of Irish Saints (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011), p. 262 but suggests there is little evidence to connect him as the Diarmait in the colophon of the manuscript.
80 Reed, The nature of parchment. p. 75.
attention has been drawn by more than one scholar to the palaeographical similarities between the St Gall Gospels and the FMP, which was discovered in the same geographic area as O’Sullivan’s Midlands group. The use of vellum folia can be traced back to the earliest extant codex produced in Ireland or by Irish scribes abroad, with the fragmented pre-vulgate Gospel of Usserianus Primus (TCD MS 55). The fine and expertly produced 182 folia are all on calf skin vellum, suspected to be so by Tony Cains and previous examiners of the manuscript, but positively identified by my detailed examination of the work in 2017. Such was the degree of preparation of the skins that determining features were difficult to locate and led to erroneous identification as sheepskin, an opinion likely influenced by its reported connections with Bobbio. The manuscript, dating around 600 CE and possibly earlier, can be cited as the starting point for the use of calf skin as the substrate of choice for Irish writing and lends weight to the argument of an Irish production for this manuscript (Fig. 2.1). This enthusiasm for the use of vellum is also attested in the corpus of Irish manuscripts and those produced under Irish influence in England during the pre-Carolingian period. In summary, it is one of the few constants relating to book making when many other conventions of the craft tended for the greater part to be ignored by the Irish scribe.

Long before the first extant codex was copied and bound in Ireland, the mainstay of domestic animal farming was predominately the rearing of cattle. Although archaeological evidence for Iron-Age animal husbandry is scant, cattle are presumed to have been the dominant beast. In the early Middle Ages the status quo was maintained and their importance both as a source of product and income and in addition an indicator of status continued. The archaeological evidence from the period

---

affirms that cattle accounted for 40% - 50% of the main domesticates on most sites. Collating the Irish place names associated with cattle further demonstrates their prominence across the country with locations such as Inisbofin (*Inis Bó finne* – Island of the white cow), Aghaboe (*Agha Bó* – Ox field), and Doonamo (*Dún na mBó* – cattle fort). Further evidence for the prevalence of cattle within the societal structure of pre-Christian Ireland can be found on the vellum folia of a manuscript produced at Clonmacnoise in the last quarter of the eleventh century, *Lebor Na Huidre* (RIA MS 23 E 25) (Book of Dun Cow). The much damaged and reworked manuscript contains among its historical sagas, tracts and legends of Irish Kings an incomplete version of the *Táin Bó Cuailgne* (The cattle raid of Cooley), the epic tale of Queen Medbh and her husband King Ailill of Connacht and their desire to own the best bull in Ireland. This required Medbh to go to war with Ulster and ultimately hand-to-hand combat between her champion, Ferdia and Ulster’s Cúchulainn. The name of the manuscript itself refers to cattle and a narrative related to the founder of the monastery at Clonmacnoise, St Ciaran (516–548 CE). Legend has it that a cow followed Ciaran and his companions on a journey from Clonard, Co. Meath to Clonmacnoise and provided them with the necessary sustenance. Ciaran later used the skin of the saint’s cow, named *Odhar Chiaráin* to write down the tale of *Táin Bó Cuailgne*, acquiring relic status and establishing its association with the extant manuscript now housed in the Royal Irish Academy.

A further reference to the importance of cattle is found in the Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee, the early ninth-century text surviving in at least ten manuscripts dating from the fifteenth century. Among the contents are the four laws of Erin: Patrick’s law not to kill the clerics, Adamnán’s law not to kill women, Dáire’s law, not to kill kine, and the law of Sunday, not to transgress at all (thereon). In addition to the abundance of calves as a source of writing material, their prominence as part of the social structure of Ireland and presence in Irish legend would make for an obvious

---


choice as the ‘carrier’ of sacred writings for the Christian religion. The dominance of cattle rearing in Ireland continued up to the beginning of the ninth century, and thereon an increase in arable agriculture combined with greater diversity in livestock saw a shift in balance, although some parts of the country were slower to change agricultural practices including Brega, the Southern Uí Néill stronghold on the east coast.\(^{89}\) Archaeological evidence supports this shift in agricultural practice with the emergence of platform ringforts, not suitable for the rearing of cattle; early medieval ringforts were for the most part farmsteads and this would have included their function as cattle enclosures. The argument is reinforced by the increase of mill construction at the beginning of the ninth century.\(^{90}\) Regardless of any move away from cattle farming, Irish manuscripts produced in scriptoria and later as secular commissions continued to use vellum as the substrate for their books. Examples such as the Stowe Missal (RIA MS D ii 3), a composite manuscript from the ninth century, Book of Leinster (TCD MS 1339) from the twelfth century and the Yellow Book of Lecan (TCD MS 1318) and the Red Book of Ossory (RCB Library D11/2/1) both dating from the fourteenth century attest to this practice, continuing the tradition exercised by the maker of the FMP.

Vellum was not be the only substrate employed for writing in early medieval Ireland. In common with the rest of the literate world, wooden tablets were also used for note taking. Ink was sometimes written directly on the surface, but more typically wax filled a recess on the surface of the timber, which was inscribed with a pointed stylus. In Ireland these tablets had various names, including \textit{taibhli filidh} and \textit{tamlorga filidh}, the first name uses the Irish derived from the Latin \textit{tabula}.\(^{91}\) Their use by ecclesiastics is documented, commonly described \textit{pólaire}, and Adomnán mentions Colgu recording the date and time on his tablet.\(^{92}\) The Springmount Wax Tablets (late sixth century) mentioned in the introduction are a rare and fortunate survivor and affirm their use in monastic centres.

\(^{90}\) Muris Ó Súilleabháin, Liam Downey and Dara Downey, \textit{Antiquities of Rural Ireland} (Dublin: Wordwell, 2018), p. 129.
Evidence is lacking to allow any certainty as to when the first Latin texts arrived in Ireland. No Christian codices survive from the introduction of the religion perhaps as early as the fourth century to its formally established state by the sixth century, with the missions of Palladius and Patrick between, a period Dáibhí Ó Cróinín calls ‘a no man’s-land of two hundred years, as unchartered terrain in the areas of literacy and literature’. This uncertainty as to when Christians in Ireland began to write, by association also leaves unanswered the questions of when the first vellum skins were produced in Ireland and who produced them? Given that the primary function of parchment was as a substrate for writing and it was for that reason that it was produced, then its genesis in Ireland coincides with the production of texts. It is possible that by adopting and altering the skills already practiced in tanning hides for leather, through trial and error, a variety of parchment could have been produced and this is perhaps the reason for the sometimes ‘leather-like’ qualities of ‘insular parchment’. Alternatively, perhaps the very first missionaries to Ireland arriving from Gaul and Britain prior to the arrival of Patrick and Palladius and bringing with them the necessary books for conversion were accompanied by monks who had the know-how to make parchment. Additionally, Irishmen who went to study in Britain at early monastic schools such as Candida Casa in Galloway, Scotland and Mynyw in Wales would have returned with their knowledge of Latin, theology and the Sacred texts and perhaps the skills to produce the parchment to make copies of the books they brought back with them.

The earliest word for parchment in Irish is *mem(m)rums(m)*, this has an obvious root borrowing from the Latin *membrum*, used for *membrana*. The use of the Irish word *memrrum* can be found in a copy of Cassiodorus’ Psalm commentary (Laon, 93 The Tripartite Life of Patrick relates how on entering the territory of Uí Maine, he founded Fidarta (in modern day Co. Roscommon) and left there a deacon, Deacon Justus and his book of ritual and baptism. Whitley Stokes, trans, The Tripartite Life of Patrick (London: Master of the Rolls, 1887), p. 105; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, Early Medieval Ireland (London: Longman, 1995), p. 171
Bibliothèque municipale, MS 26), a manuscript written by an Irish scribe in the early ninth century, either in Ireland or on the Continent. In addition to the transcribed commentary of the Psalms by Cassiodorus there are a series of Old Irish glosses in the margins, some of which include observations by the scribe on the quality of his writing material:

8r  *is lomm in membrum nacaline hisiu*  the parchment of this location is bare.

21r  *Isfinnach in membrumh hisiu im tra*  But this parchment is hairy once.

23r  *isém dúnn im in embrum hisiu*  But this parchment is thin for me.

A second example is found in the margins contained in another ninth-century manuscript now in St. Gall (Cod. Sang. 904), a copy of *Institutiones Grammaticae* by the grammarian Priscian (sixth century). It includes over nine thousand glosses, including over three thousand in Irish. It is believed to be a product of either Nendrum or Bangor in Northern Ireland, although Castledermot in Kildare has also been proposed. Among the Irish glosses further use of *memrum* is observed. Again, the focus of the comments in Latin *Institutiones Grammaticae* are disgruntled scribes bemoaning the standard of their writing material:

p. 195  *isgann in memr[umm] et ascribend*  the parchment is rough and the writing.

p. 217  *membrum naue droch dub ó ní epur na hail*  New parchment, bad ink. O, I say nothing more (Fig. 2.2).

p. 228  *isgann membrum*  The parchment is scanty.

---


98 http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/searchresult/list/one/csg/0904

All the above examples significantly post-date the production of the first books in Ireland and demonstrate the commitment of scribes and scholars, engaging with vellum as part of the Latin Christian culture and by this stage their awareness of the variable quality of the material. The presence of these scribblings and their nature suggest a scribe working in isolation, restricted by the silence in the scriptorium or perhaps in his cell or outside, with nobody on whom to vent his frustrations as to the quality of his vellum. Among the Rules of Ailbe, written in the mid-eighth century but named after the saint who died over two hundred years earlier, rule two states: Let his work be silently done, without speech. ‘Let him not be garrulous, but rather a man of few words’. The text of this rule is found in a number of manuscripts, including Royal Irish Academy 23. N. 10 and in the same collection, 23. p 3. It is also transcribed in Trinity College Library manuscript TCD MS 1285.

The fact that a loanword from a Latin root is used suggests that no word was available in the vernacular and moreover both the material and the word were introduced from a Latin source, in the guise of Christian pilgrims. If a word of Irish origin did exist, there would be no obvious reason for it to be supplanted by its Latin derivative. Caution is necessary with this hypothesis, however, take the Irish word *pell*, which translates as ‘an animal’s skin or fur’, hence a rug or blanket, generally one for sleeping on. The definition here dates from the ninth century, and is located in ‘Cormac’s Glossary’. Like *memmrum*, it also has a Latin root in *PELLIS*. It is hardly credible that the Irish had no alternative word prior to adopting *pell*, given the wide and varied use of rawhide products by the pre-Christian population.

Accepting that the monasteries of Ireland were the locations of book production, then all aspects of that process and the necessary know-how were contained and valued within its monastic enclosure, at least during the early medieval period. This would have included the production of skins of vellum, a detailed and highly skilled task. Recent archaeology has provided compelling evidence for the

production of vellum within a monastic community. On the Tarbat peninsula, on the north-east coast of Scotland lies the coastal town of Portmahomack, and at the south end of the village, and standing above the beach is St Colman’s Church. Excavations by Martin Carver and his team between 1996 and 2007 in the church building and the surrounding land unearthed layers of earlier Christian activity, including evidence of nine previous churches, the earliest dating from the eighth century. Several workshops were also discovered in the immediate location and were identified as associated with a monastic community. In the northern quarter, the excavation of building S9 revealed convincing evidence for the production of vellum during the eighth century. In addition to large quantities of cattle bones, the necessary tools identified included pumice rubbers, whetstones, and critically, a crescent bladed knife (*lunellum*), the typical shape of the blade used for scraping the tensioned vellum on the frame. Pits containing winkles and dog whelks were also found. It is thought these were reduced by burning to produce lime for vellum making as no local limestone was available. Carver believes the Pictish monastery was established in the sixth century and was destroyed in the late eighth, as a result of Viking raids. The likelihood of an Irish connection with the monastery and its foundation is based on the rationale that the St Colman, after whom the standing church was named, is Colman of Lindisfarne, the Irish monk who began his career on Iona and returned to Ireland and Inisbofin after the Synod of Whitby settled differences between the ‘Celtic Church’ and the Roman and came firmly down on the side of the latter. The discoveries from Portmahomack are highly significant in bringing the only material evidence of early medieval insular vellum production within the confines of the monastic community.

The literary sources are equally scant but suggest monastic involvement; one instance recorded is St Leobard of Marmoutier (c. 583 CE), son of noble parents from Auvergne in central France, whose life was recorded in the martyrology of St Gregory of Tours (538 – 594 CE). Leobard renounced the world and joined a hermit named Alaric, who spent his time making parchment and writing Holy Scripture, Leobard

---

104 Carver, Portmahomack Monastery p. 124.
continued the same tasks for twenty years.\textsuperscript{106} From the twelfth century, illustrated evidence is available in the form of a series of miniature roundels in a full-page illustration at the beginning of a German manuscript (Staatsbibliothek Bamberg MSC. Patr. 5 f. 1v) which depicts specialised monks engaged in the various stages of book production, but curiously, not writing (Fig. 2.3).

The source of the vellum for medieval manuscripts is of course calves. Matthew Stout believes that pastoral farming within the monastic settlement in Ireland was frowned upon and avoided if at all possible, preferring ‘tillage activity’ as part of their economy. He comments on the superior number of tillage-based miracles compared to pastoral and how monastic focus on crop growing would not clash with the secular cattle-based system.\textsuperscript{107} Examining this view against the requirement for vellum, a by-product of cattle rearing, requires the argument to be considered. In the early Christian period up to the ninth century, the prime consumer of vellum was the monastic scribe. It has already been proposed that, given the specific use of vellum, the secular society in Ireland at this time would have little use for the material, perhaps the occasional charter for a high king and the most plausible explanation for its production was the end user. The quality of early Irish vellum implies a profound understanding of the material by its makers. The many comments found in marginalia of extant Irish manuscripts, usually disparaging references about the quality of the skin (see above), further reinforces this in-depth knowledge. Finally, considering that this cattle-derived product was to be the carrier of the Word of God (and the source of knowledge and adoration on the altar), then it is difficult to imagine the cow being ‘undesirable’ in the monastic context. Furthermore, cattle and calves appear in saints lives and Brighid of Kildare († 524 CE) is said to have performed a miracle by milking cows three times in one day.\textsuperscript{108} This rearing of cattle and production of vellum would be the work of the larger monastic centres, possibly supplying the smaller churches with vellum and books.

\textsuperscript{106} Sabine Baring-Gould, \textit{The lives of the saints, Vol. 1} (London: John Hodges 1882), p. Interestingly there is Leobard who was an Irish disciple of Columbanus and founded a monastery in Marmoutier in the Alsace region of France in the late sixth century also known as Leobard of Marmoutier († 618).


\textsuperscript{108} Pádraig Ó Riain, \textit{A Dictionary of Irish Saints}, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011), p. 120.
Surviving manuscripts demonstrate that Irish scribes, in addition to learning the Latin language and letters, developed a script of their own using the books brought by the missionaries, written most likely in some form of half-uncial as a template.\textsuperscript{109} O’Neill points to exemplars from north Africa and the prototype of the initial letter employed in the fifth century that would influence the Irish style.\textsuperscript{110} The early adoption of the decorated capital by Irish scribes led Françoise Henry to suggest an Italian source of inspiration due to their use of the same feature from an early date.\textsuperscript{111} This insular hand was distinctive enough to have been identifiable abroad as early as the ninth century, as evidenced by an entry written in rustic capitals in the library catalogue of the monastery of St Gallen in Switzerland; ‘LIBRI SCOTTICE SCRIPTI’. In keeping with the inventive tradition of ‘doing it their own way’ the Irish makers of vellum folia also developed a particular type of skin as an end product. Reed believes the peak of ‘technical excellence’ in the production of parchment was reached in the medieval period and by the sixteenth century the skill, knowledge and experience had been lost.\textsuperscript{112} Based on my experience with parchment, I suggest a visible decline in quality by the end of the thirteenth century is generally observed. It is worth considering again the vellum of the earliest extant Irish writing on this material; Usserianus Primus. If this sixth century manuscript is a product of Ireland, then the quality achieved is quite remarkable and can be considered the work of experienced and technically proficient parchment makers.\textsuperscript{113} This suggests that the production of vellum for folia was solidly established at the time of Usserianus Primus, and by inference, so too was the making of books.

There are no extant recipes or descriptions of how the insular skins were manufactured from young Irish calves during what must have been a feverish period


\textsuperscript{112} Reed, \textit{Ancient skins, parchments and leathers}, p. 118.

\textsuperscript{113} I worked closely with this manuscript over a eighteen month period, during which I handled and examined every folio fragment. A particular feature was the thinness of the skins and their consistency in ‘feel’. This would not fit the category of the later ‘insular vellum’.
of book production. This lack of documentary evidence is not unexpected, from the late and post-Roman world, no account of the process has come down to us prior to the text from a manuscript written in a monastery in Northern Italy in the eighth century, a millennium after its refinement in Pergamum: ‘Place (the skin) in lime water and leave it there for three days. Then extend it on a frame and scrape it on both sides with a sharp knife and leave it to dry’. Later in the tenth century a more detailed description appears in an English manuscript (Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3501) in the form of a riddle. The following is included for preparing the skins in the description of the making of a book.

An enemy came and took away my life
and my strength also in the word; then wetted me,
dipped me in water; then took me thence;
placed me in the sun, where I lost all my hair.
The knife’s edge cut me— its impurities ground away;
fingers folded me.\textsuperscript{115}

Although it would be impossible to produce a finished product based on the scant instructions in these early recipes, they do provide clues, in some fashion by what they do not say. In the Exeter riddle there is no mention of the use of a lime liquor as a depliant to de-hair the pelt, rather it was ‘placed in the sun’. It is known that lime was (and is) widely used to de-hair pelts prior to their conversion into parchment, but it is not certain who was responsible for its introduction, and more specifically if it was an Islamic or European source. The Arabs, who by the eighth century were occupying parts of Europe and were known for their work with alkalis, may have adopted it for their own use.\textsuperscript{116}

It is reasonable to state that manuscripts produced across Europe by the end of the eighth century were composed of skins of varying species de-haired by lime liquors. Byzantine parchment was similarly produced possibly as early as the sixth century.

\textsuperscript{114} Codex 490 (Bib. Cap. Lucca), ff. 21-25.
century;\textsuperscript{117} however the practice might not have been widely adopted in Britain and Ireland, although no specific research has been conducted to substantiate this. Greek and Roman practices at the beginning of the fifth century CE list dove dung, urine from camels and humans as well as plant infusions of Bryony and Mulberry in depilation recipes.\textsuperscript{118} Other recipes based on infusions of fresh vegetable matter would have introduced tannins to the parchment, preferable no doubt due to the pungent nature of the former.

Reed observed that under controlled conditions and with the use of an ultra-violet light source at a wavelength of 2537 A.U., the presence of tannin in parchment will suppress any fluorescence, whereas those skins prepared employing lime without the addition of tannins will show pronounced fluorescence.\textsuperscript{119} This simple test method was carried out at different times on the two most significant of insular manuscripts and the findings suggest an alternative mechanism to lime in the preparation of their folia. When a blank area of the Lindisfarne Gospels (British Library Cotton MS Nero D.IV) a product of the Northumbrian Priory on Holy Island around 700 CE, was examined by Roosen-Runge and Warner, they noted the lack of fluorescence, which indicated the presence of tannins.\textsuperscript{120} When Cains carried out a similar test on the Book of Kells (TCD. MS. 58) (written and illuminated in an Irish monastic settlement around 800) he noted that the folia did fluoresce, however his close examination of the nature of the vellum in Kells convinced him that no lime had been used to de-hair the pelts, but rather a method of controlled putrefaction, or puering using farinaceous materials such as dung and urine.\textsuperscript{121}

This ‘feel’ of the skin is an overall impression when its physical nature and characteristics combine to define it in some manner. An example of this would be the slower or less violent reaction insular vellum has to changes in relative humidity,
particularly when those values drop. The folia of Kells typify as closely as can be defined the nature of insular vellum, although in reality it has no technical basis of definition. There was little merit in exposing the FMP folio fragments to an ultra-violet test as the effect of organic matter in the bog had introduced tannins to the vellum, as evidenced by the dramatic colour change to a ‘leather brown’.

The question of what characterises insular vellum was also posed by Julian Brown, who summed it up as: ‘It is rather thick. It has a kind of suede-like finish. You can generally see the mark of the scraper on both hair and flesh side; and the hair-side and the flesh-side are very alike in surface as well as colour.’ He believed its origin lay in a local variant developed in some Romano-British centre before the usual method of manufacture was established. Lowe was reluctant to venture far into the subject but did proffer the idea that many of the differences noted between Continental and insular skins were related to the ‘manner of preparation’. Bischoff describes insular vellum as ‘roughened on both sides with pumice stone, with the result that hair- and flesh-sides become indistinguishable from one another’. Bischoff also notes that the missionaries took their distinctive vellum with them and this is evidenced by the extant Carolingian manuscripts from Fulda and Mainz in Germany. De Hamel does not hold the insular parchment used to produce early Irish manuscripts in high regard, referring to it as ‘poor-quality vellum, consistent with the primitive nature of the communities’.

The survival condition of the vellum of the FMP restricts any substantial descriptive analysis of how it might fit with the criteria of insular vellum. Thickness values taken during the four-year conservation process recorded values from 0.19 to 0.37 mm. This is comparable with measurements from 0.08 to 0.39 mm Cains recorded in his examination of the folia of the Book of Kells, and my own recordings

---

122 This would be observed as the curling of a folio on dry days, especially in winter. It would suggest that the preparation of Insular skins result in a property that makes it less hygroscopic than skins de-haired with lime.
125 Bischoff, Latin Palaeography, p. 9.
across a selection of folia in the eighth-century gospel book of Durrow (TCD MS 57), which gave values ranging from 0.08 to 0.28 mm. A selection of thicknesses taken during the conservation of Usserianus Primus also delivered similar results: 0.09 to 0.44 mm with variations occurring on single folia fragments, for example 0.12 to 0.19 mm, 0.14 to 0.18 mm and 0.18 to 0.44 mm. In the case of the FMP it is necessary to take into consideration the extreme conditions in which the text block lay and the effect that saturation over such an extended period might have had on the fibre structure of the vellum; nonetheless, the values recoded (dry) represent an accurate mean of the FMP vellum.

The folio size of the FMP is approximately at 305 x 226 mm, a height-to-width ratio of 1.35:1, this is based on the only (almost) intact bifolium, folio 29-32. The edges of the folia of the FMP have been trimmed in a haphazard manner; with a generally short cutting stroke, followed by a second stroke, often with a slight change in angle. This would suggest that a blade without the guide of a straight-edge was typically employed for trimming. It is not possible to be definitive when describing the extant edges, as the originals were trimmed after the manuscript was produced or a later trimming to ‘clean up edges’ after the Psalter was in use for some period of time. Double cuts are also present, indicating a failed attempt to trim. These appear as incisions in the vellum close to the cut edge but do not penetrate the full thickness of the skin. One such example is seen at the head of folio 10v, where the cut is very close to the rough trimmed edge and is 20 mm in length. The trueness of the cut indicates a straight-edge was also involved, at odds with the otherwise chaotic edge work. Looking into the incision, the ‘walls’ have a smooth dark appearance, consistent with long-term wear and tear, similar to the original extant edges of the folia. The indicators here suggest that this incision has some age in the working life of the Psalter (Fig. 2.4). There are no corresponding incisions on adjacent folia in the quire and the position of the incision on the verso allows for the trimming or attempted trimming to be carried out with the quire folded. The margins for a manuscript of this format are tight, with typically only 20 mm at the head and fore-edge. This favours the argument for a second trimming of the edges. The practice of balancing the width of the inner

---

text margin to half the width of the fore-edge margin, creating a homogenous appearance to all borders when the manuscript is open and the two back-to-back inner margins are on view, needs to be considered however. The inner margin on the FMP is quite narrow, not the ideal 10 mm (half the fore-edge width) but close at approximately 13 to 15 mm. It is possible to identify from which side the edge trimming was carried out, as the incision side has a clean edge, which becomes somewhat jagged as the blade fails to cut cleanly all the way through. Examining the cut edges of the bifolium 29-32, the same short strokes are evident. An additional detail at the centre-fold of the tail provides further clues as to the trimming procedure of the folia. Here the short cut stroke matches either side of the centre-fold, indicating that trimming was carried out when the bifolium was folded. Further evidence to support this is seen when comparing the two fore-edges of the bifolium; folio 29 has a clean-cut edge all the way through, while the edge of folio 32 has the same clean edge for two-thirds its thickness and then becomes jagged and hairy, indicating that the knife failed to cut through both thicknesses cleanly. Unfortunately, no sequence of edges has survived to indicate if the folded and assembled quire was edge-trimmed in-situ, but I suggest this was the case. As was mentioned in my Introduction, the FMP has an indiscriminate layout in relation to the orientation of the hair-side and flesh-side of the folia, and as such complies with the \textit{modus operandi} of the early medieval Irish scribe and book maker.\footnote{William O'Sullivan, ‘Manuscripts and palaeography’, \textit{A New History of Ireland, I prehistoric and early Ireland}, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 516.} The collation map of the FMP shows equal disregard for regularity in the make-up of the quire numbers. It is evident from this comparison of materials that the FMP sits comfortably with those other books of the same period and, despite its appearance today, it is not difficult to imagine the source of vellum used to write the FMP also supplying the skins for Book of Dimma (TCD MS 59) or the MacRegol Gospels (Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D.2.19) a product of Birr and written around the same time. The same can be said of the scribe that prepared it for writing. The writing itself is the subject of the next chapter.

\footnote{Timothy O’Neill, \textit{The Irish Hand, scribes and their manuscripts form the earliest times} (Cork, Cork University Press, 2014), xiii.}
Pricking and Ruling

The physical preparation of medieval manuscript folia for writing has long been included in the descriptions of palaeographers and codicologists alike. Although some conclusions can be drawn based on the execution of pricking and ruling, the variety of patterns and possible combinations prevent definitive deductions based solely on these features. Rather, when combined with reliable traits such as a colophon or a distinctive hand they can reinforce an argument for placing a manuscript in a time or place. Pricking and ruling were to guide the scribe in his writing and to ensure a consistent and uniform appearance of the page. Aesthetics were considered by the scribe, who did not want anything distracting from the visual impact of his written word. Ruling was carried out with a ‘metal point’ or ‘hard point’ that was clear enough to guide the writing but less visible after. In addition to the horizontal lines, vertical bounding lines created a framework in which the writing could be contained. These lines could be single or double and allowances were, on occasion, made for the addition of illumination or decorated capitals, more typically, not exclusively, in the deluxe manuscript. By the twelfth century hard point was being replaced by graphic lines produced with plummet, a form of metallic lead. From the thirteenth century writing ink is also used to rule the folio. Interestingly, Irish scribes were slow to adopt graphic ruling and manuscripts with hard point ruling were produced till the end of the medieval period, examples include Leabhar Uí Mhaine (late fourteenth century) RIA MS D ii I, the Book of Ballymote (c. 1400 CE) RIA MS 23 P 12, the Book of Lecan (early fifteenth century) RIA MS 23 P 2 and the Book of Lismore (late fifteenth century) RIA MS 12 M 11.

This practice is typically included in the codicological study of manuscripts. In this section the conventions are discussed and compared against the evidence surviving on the FMP. As a means of guiding the ruling, small punctures were made in the skin against which a straight-edge could be lined up, before scribing the line. The position, shape of puncture and method of operation has come under the scrutiny of many scholars and from this, a range of conventions are established that attempt to draw some conclusions in relation to the period and place a manuscript was produced.

and on occasion even the exact location, usually reinforced by additional material evidence. Leslie Webber Jones identified seven different methods of pricking which he used to indicate date and place, though by his own admission the study was not conclusive, as access to particular manuscripts was hindered by the Second World War. Jones did manage to examine some eight hundred manuscripts, both originals and through secondary sources, including CLA I, II and III\textsuperscript{131} (the seminal paleographical study of surviving Latin manuscripts before 900 CE printed in eleven volumes). He identified prickings in the centre of the folio as originating in ‘very ancient times’. This system only works as a guide for the straight-edge if there is a second set of prickings on the conjoint folio and the bifolium is laid out flat. Jones identifies this as a fourth-century practice and cites Codex Sinaiticus (BL. Additional Manuscripts 43725) and Codex Vaticanus (Bibl., Vat., gr. 1209) both of which he identified from CLA II.\textsuperscript{132} Because both these manuscripts are written with four and three columns per folio respectively, the pricking can be placed between columns. He does, however, identify single-column manuscripts that also have their prickings down the centre of the folio, in what he terms ‘inside-text’ pricking.\textsuperscript{133} Jones produced a number of publications on the subject and in 1946 he wrote an article that attempted to identify the instrument employed to generate the prickings on medieval manuscript folia by studying the shape and size of the resulting punctures in the parchment. The discussion, assisted by reproductions of the varying types, also speculates on the working practice of the scribe.\textsuperscript{134} The tools under scrutiny were the awl, the dividers, the knife and the toothed wheel. Additionally, the angle of the hole and its ‘trueness’ indicated whether the pricking was guided by a straight-edge. E. A Lowe offered a brief observation on prickings in his introduction to CLA II, mirroring Jones’s observation on the ancient nature of a central pricking and adding the insular practice of pricking in both the inner and outer margins.\textsuperscript{135} Bischoff repeats this information, which by the 1980s was standard palaeographical information for the student of manuscript

\textsuperscript{131} Leslie Webber Jones, ‘Where are the Prickings?’, Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, Vol. 75 (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1944), p. 73.
\textsuperscript{132} Lowe, Codices Latini.
\textsuperscript{133} Webber Jones, ‘Where are the Prickings?’, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{135} Lowe, Codices Latini.
James Harmon carried out a detailed study on the subject, focusing on the collection of manuscripts produced in the Court School of Charlemagne scriptorium. The comprehensive study revealed an in-house style which evolved over time, but also compares influences from pricking, ruling and folding conventions outside the Court School.\textsuperscript{137}

I have applied Jones’s principle to the prickings that survive on the FMP with the resulting conclusions. Pricking was carried out after folding and with the quire assembled, as the corresponding holes on each bifolium line up. This demanded that the awl, compass or knife-tip be pushed through all of the folia in a single action. It also necessitated pricking on the inner margins of the writing space in addition to the outer margin, a feature of many insular manuscripts. Examples are observed over a considerable time-span, from the \textit{Cathach}, the fragmented Psalter dating as early as the end of the sixth-century,\textsuperscript{138} to the eleventh-century Ricemarch Psalter (TCD MS 50) produced in Wales under Irish influence. Given the typically thick nature of insular vellum, I doubt the possibility of driving a tool through as many as ten skins to puncture the final folio. The tool, whether awl or compass, needs a tapered shaft necessary for strength and rigidity, with the resulting perforations leaving a larger hole on the first folio and decreasing as it makes its way through the following leaves. My findings across the early medieval insular manuscripts I have examined (although with some variation) demonstrate that the perforations are generally uniform in size and shape. I believe more typically when the scribe was attempting to pierce through a quire of ten folia, he would initially push through perhaps three skins, leaving an indent on the fourth. He would then repeat the exercise starting from the indented folio and pushing through another three skins. In this scenario it would require three attempts before a pricking point or station was visible on all the folia in the quire.

Ruling was, as in the Continental practice, carried out in hard point employing a purpose-made tool. Again, adopting the same principle as pricking, the ruling of the

\textsuperscript{136} Bischoff, \textit{Latin Palaeography}, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{137} James A. Harmon, \textit{Codicology of the Court School of Charlemagne, Gospel Book Production, Illumination and Emphasized Script} (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1980). With detailed measurements, ratios and across a range of early medieval manuscripts, this publication is useful tool in placing the examined features of western manuscripts, including the FMP.
\textsuperscript{138} Dáibhí O’ Cróinin, ‘The Cathach and Domnach Airgid’, \textit{Treasures of the Royal Irish Academy Library}, eds. Bernadette Cunningham and Siobhan Fitzpatrick (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009), p. 3.
first outer folio would simultaneously impart ruling lines on the folia beneath. And 
again, it must have been necessary to repeat the ruling, as it became ever more faint 
further into the quire probably even more so than the pricking. Harmon agrees in 
relation to the likelihood of successfully ruling a quaternion in a single operation but is 
of the opinion that the pricking could be achieved as a single action. 139

The effect of ruling in hard point was to leave a furrow on the tool side and a 
ridge on the other. This particular feature is often difficult to discern with the passage 
of time and in some instances no trace whatsoever of ruling survives with only the 
pricking holes and straight lines of text to indicate its presence. The consensus is that 
ruling generally took place on the hair side, but again I have seen numerous 
exceptions to this. 140 There was a further refinement in the continental method, which 
came about early in the ninth century; whereby four bifolia were pricked and ruled on 
the hair side before folding (furrow on the hair side). Two bifolia were folded hair side 
out and two folded flesh side out. The quire was then assembled by gathering 
alternating bifolia from the two sets. The effect was in addition to having like facing 
like for the hair and flesh side; the ridges and furrows also faced each other to 
complete the homogenous appearance. Edward Rand noticed this feature on his 
examination of the manuscripts originating in Tours, but now dispersed through 
France and further afield. 141 It requires considerable detective work to identify this 
feature and such a refinement has yet to be seen in an insular context, and it is one 
that would be categorically impossible to identify on the FMP.

Surviving evidence of the ‘tools of the trade’, combined with secondary 
evidence from contemporaneous illustrations of these tools in use, facilitate a better 
understanding of the processes involved in writing books in the early medieval period. 
The following examples from the folia of medieval manuscripts illustrate scribes at 
work over a three-hundred-year period from the early eighth century (Figs 2.22-2.27). 
Although no positively identified parchment prickers (punctorium) have been 
recovered dating from the period of the FMP, a collection of five objects that can be

139 Harmon, Codicology of the Court School of Charlemagne, P. 22.
140 Brown, A Palaeographer’s View, P. 235; Harmon, Codicology at the Court School of Charlemagne, p. 20.
described as fit for purpose have been identified. The earliest of the five, discovered in Winchester, dates from the twelfth century and is constructed from bone, with a metal point inserted at one end, while the other end is shaped into a spherical knob. The metal pins are either of iron or copper alloy. Although variously identified in the past as pins, bodkins or styli, more recent research has suggested they are parchment prickers. In addition to the pricker, one of the other tools used to mark-up for ruling was the knife. The shape of the puncture marks in several insular manuscripts strongly suggests the knife was the tool of choice by the scribe. Its multi-function purpose must have made it an essential tool for the writer of medieval books. Uses would include the erasure of errors in writing or illumination by scraping the surface with its edge, or the preparing of the quill, or ‘nibbing’ as it dulled through use, which required both a sharp cutting blade and a paring action. Apart from the quill, the knife is the most frequently illustrated scribal tool in depictions within medieval manuscripts. The scribe is often depicted with quill in one hand and knife in the other as in the late eighth-century Barberini Gospels (Fig. 2.6, 7). Like the prickers, no positively identified example is known in the archaeological record. Biddle suggests that a collection of pivoting knives from Winchester meet the requirements. These contain two blades which swivel with one blade exposed while the other is housed inside the handle. Both blades are different shapes, one straight the other curved, to facilitate different tasks. The knives were recovered from contexts ranging in date from the late ninth century. Some knives had decorative inlays on the bone handle. A rivet passes through the bone scale through the centre of the double blade, then exits on the opposite bone scale where it is peened over, allowing for a pivoting action (Fig. 2.8, 8a). Biddle’s argument for scribal use is valid, although he does concede that penknives, as they are today, were an ‘all purpose’ tool rather than a specialised one.

The required skills needed to manufacture a penknife would be found within the monastic community and there is documented evidence to support this. In Adomnán’s Life of Columba, he relays the story of a monk named Molua Ua Briúin asking for a blessing from St Columba, for the implement he held in his hand, a knife. When he later tried to slaughter a bullock (further reference to cattle) the knife failed,

---

143 Biddle, *Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester*, p. 734.
Columba added ‘that the implement I have blessed will not harm man or beast’. On discovering this, the monks that knew the blacksmith’s craft melted down the iron of that knife and then coated all the other iron tools in the monastery. There is an allegorical element to the story, as smelting iron did not arrive till the introduction of the blast furnace in Ireland at the end of the sixteenth century, and prior to this iron was worked in the solid state. It does, however, give clear indication of the craft skill available within the monastic community.

Interpreting the surviving evidence of pricking and ruling on the folio fragments of the FMP is considerably more challenging than carrying out the same investigation on any contemporary or even earlier manuscript folia. In addition to the notable change in the physical appearance of the surviving folia fragments, the swollen state of the collagen fibres over such an extended period has had a disguising effect on any imprints - intentional or accidental - on the topography of the skin. This, combined with the fragmented nature of the manuscript makes definitive identification of specific modes of working somewhat speculative. What has been identified fits within the insular approach for preparing a manuscript for writing. Pricking perforations survive on a small number of the folia fragments, and again the fortunate almost intact survival of bifolium 29–32 has provided the best evidence. Along the inner margins of this only intact backfold, a series of prickings is observed. They are wedge-shaped horizontal slits measuring up to 3mm in length; the ‘fatter’ end of the wedge faces the backfold. The perforation shape suggests the tip of a penknife blade as the tool (Fig. 2.9). There are no corresponding prickings visible on the fore-edge, lost no doubt to edge trimming, equally, any prickings for the vertical bounding lines have also been trimmed off. The prickings on the FMP correlate with type H of Jones’s compilation of types. Of type H he states: ‘horizontal slits are made away from a ruler in an irregular line’. His example for type H is based on examination of Cod. Sang. 904, the manuscript referred to in this chapter for its Irish glosses (Fig. 2.10).

---

surviving prickings on the FMP are seen on folio 7, in this instance on the fore-edge, and again the perforations are slit shaped (Fig. 2.11).

I identified the evidence for ruling on the Psalter in two forms, either a faint furrow line under the text where the hard point ruling has imparted an impression, or more typically a graphic line in a silver/grey colour. Unsurprisingly, any evidence of a ridge on the opposing side of any surviving furrow was not found. Studying the surviving furrows shows that ruling was carried out in typical random fashion with little regard to which side of the skin was chosen, an excellent example is observed on bifolium 55-56. The centre bifolio of the ultimate fifth quire displays definite furrows on folio 55r, a flesh side and equally well-defined furrows on 55v, a hair side. Identification is assisted here by the thinning out of the vellum fragment through deterioration, which had the effect of enhancing the work of the scribes’ point (Fig. 2.12). No ruling can be seen on either side of folio 56. On the tail fragment of bifolium 27-34 a furrow runs across the vellum approximately 5mm from the bottom edge. The scribed impression crosses the backfold area in a continuous line, indicating that in this instance the ruling was executed before folding. There is some question regarding the purpose of the line, given its proximity to the bottom edge of the bifolium. Perhaps it served a different function, such as a trimming guide as seen in modern-day books, a feature which would naturally be lost after the manuscript was completed (Fig. 2.13).

The bifolium fragment 4-9 from the first quire retains interesting details with regard to its ruling. While in a saturated state prior to the dewatering process, what appeared to be graphic lines were visible as both horizontal and vertical bounding lines. These lines were grey/silver in colour and were visible on the flesh side (Fig. 2.14). As already mentioned it was not the intention of the scribe to graphically rule his bifolia, as this practice did not commence in earnest until the late eleventh century (when lead, or plummet was introduced).148 The grey/silver line is likely the result of trace elements from the scribing tool deposited on the surface and the particular conditions in which the FMP resided resulted in the line becoming visible. The colour would indicate deposition from a tool of lead or silver. Dr. Paul Mullarkey of the

---

National Museum of Ireland Conservation Department carried out XRF analysis on one site of this line, which returned graph peaks indicating the presence of lead. After the drying of the vellum, the lines were still visible, but now appeared more like a hard point ruled line, as expected. Under low magnification, the horizontal lines show evidence of more than one pass of the scribing tool, which is evidenced by double lines running side-by-side in places. This is most likely the result of needing to re-scribe lines too faint after the first attempt, as mentioned earlier. This would fit that pattern, as this bifolium is the fourth of five plus a singleton in the first quire. With eight folia above it 9r in this quire, the folio is unlikely to be effectively ruled at the first attempt. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the trace elements visible in the wet state, confirm that the tool was in direct contact with the surface and not the result of an indirect impression. Folio 4v and 9r, would not, in the insular tradition of ruling, have had direct contact with the scribe’s point. On the reverse of this bifolium fragment, i.e. 9v and 4r, faint ruling is in evidence, but much less so; this is the hair side where deterioration is generally at higher levels, so indistinct lines are to be expected. In the top corner of 4v, running parallel with the fore-edge of the folio is a partial double vertical bounding line. As with the horizontal ruling, in its wet state this appeared as a graphic line with the same grey/silver colour, and the associated pricking is just evident. The survival of fore-edges throughout the manuscript is minimal, making this is a key piece of evidence.

Throughout the manuscript faint rulings appear randomly, not due to inadequate preparation but because of the extreme conditions in which they survived. To establish some pattern to the ruling throughout the FMP, quire five was examined in its folio sequence, chosen because it retained the largest folio fragments. The quire commences with folio 51r, and this hair side shows no trace of any ruling; the verso flesh side, however has clear ruling under the extant writing. Folio 52r, is a hair side with considerable damage to the surface layer, but where writing has survived, no evidence of ruling is visible. The verso, flesh side, 52v, has clear ruling. Folio 53r is in a poor state of survival, but this flesh side does display evidence of ruling, while the verso hair side does not. Folio 54r, a flesh side, is similarly to folio 53, is in poor condition, but again, ruling can be detected, and on the verso hair side has one partial and now faint line. The verso of folio 55r, which, as already mentioned as displays not
only its ruling lines but also the furrow on the flesh side of the vellum, also displays
ruling on the hair side and confirms the practice of re-ruling or ‘double ruling’, with
two thin lines running in closely parallel in places. The second half of quire five
commences with folio 56r, also previously mentioned in relation to the clear furrows,
on its hair side. The flesh side verso does not show any extant ruling, perhaps because
the degree of deterioration here is high. Folio 57r is a hair side with no visible ruling,
the flesh side verso, 57v is equally lacking in any visible ruling, and again the degree of
deterioration is significant. Folio 58r is a hair side and no ruling is discernible under the
text, but the flesh side verso has faint evidence in places. Folio 59 is one of the larger
surviving folio fragments in the Psalter and the flesh side recto has clear ruling lines in
evidence, both on the major surviving fragment and the relocated additional fragment
at the bottom corner of the folio. The hair side verso shows the faintest trace of ruling
in places. The last folio of the manuscript, folio 60, is blank on both the recto and verso
and no ruling lines are present. The detached bottom corner of this folio also survives
and likewise displays no evidence of ruling. As stated, the conjoint folio, 51 has clear
ruling on its verso flesh side.

In the insular system of preparing vellum folia, the quires were pre-ruled ready
for the scribe’s quill, and accordingly, folio 60 of the FMP should display ruling lines,
even if not required. Careful pre-planning could result in calculating exactly how many
of the folia would require ruling, with the necessary spaces left for any illumination,
however the random make-up of the FMP folia, with the inclusion of singletons
suggests that this was not the case. If the re-ruling was carried out by the scribe as he
wrote, this would explain the blank final folio, which would have no trace of the initial
ruling process, as it was at the bottom of a pile of eight, and the scribe had reached
the end of the Psalter on the previous folio. On folio 32v, a set of parallel lines runs in
an ad-hoc fashion from the head down three quarters of the page. Examining the
marking under video microscope with raking light, a dark black pigment is visible in the
almost incision like grooves (Fig. 2.15, 15a). These markings were produced with a
single tool in one event as the lines remain parallel regardless of any change in
direction. The nature of the line and its incursion into the text indicate that it was not
an intentional addition to the Psalter, but more likely a secondary event at some later
date. Similar track lines are found on the leather cover.
In conclusion, it can be stated that the folia of the FMP were ruled following the insular practice of ruling after folding in hard point, but the pricking and ruling favoured the flesh side rather than the more common hair side. Vertical bounding lines were included, and these were narrow double lines. Without doubt, secondary ruling was carried out as required to clarify faint impressions. The spacing between lines is approximately 8mm. The fore-edge margin, due to the erratic trimming and lack of extant text margins is estimated at between 20 to 25 mm. The same applies to the head margins and 12 to 18 mm would be a mean value. This data was hard-won given the condition and survival of the folia of the FMP and in the following section the survival state of each quire is described and the codicological features observed are noted.

Collation of the text block
The description of the five quires of the FMP is included in the Introduction and informs us of sixty folia of vellum originally 305 x 226 mm and without any evidence of flyleaves. The difficulty in establishing the collation and the methodology employed to do so has been addressed in chapter 1. Many of the generally accepted conventions regarding the insular method of preparation of parchment for writing are found in the FMP, for example, the folio count favoured per quire was the quinion,149 whereas in the Latin west from the fourth century onwards the quaternion with eight leaves was the popular choice, likely because it produces a balanced quire, not too thick and when it is combined in a text block it produces a stable binding structure. The use of singletons often suggests planning that has gone awry or a shortage of parchment. However, my own experience based on dealing with Irish material from the early medieval period over several years, is that no particular convention was followed, and random quire counts are typically found between the boards of a single manuscript, including in the FMP. The observation I make however is that quires three and five, the only two quires in the FMP that have not been adjusted by the addition of singletons or bifolia, are both quinions. The insular arrangement displayed the hair and flesh side alternating on facing pages as a result of the bifolia being assembled with the hair side

149 A quire consisting of five bifolia resulting in ten folia and twenty pages.
on the outside of the fold. The Continental preference was to face like to like for a more homogenous appearance. Again, I have not observed the Irish scribe following either convention (with any real conviction), rather in most instances he appears to have been blissfully unaware of either. This includes the scribes of some of our ‘high profile’ insular manuscripts such as the Book of Dimma, the Book of Mulling (TCD MS 60) and even the eleventh-century Ricemarch Psalter (TCD MS 50).

Studying the collation map of the FMP (appendix 1), the random nature of assembly is evident. The notion of the medieval Irish practitioner ignoring protocol does not go unnoticed and H.V. Morton in his enlightening publication based on his travels here comments on a range of medieval church features; ‘there seems to be no limit to the indifference to the “rules of the game” which the Irish architects display when designing Gothic churches...’ 150

Observations on the individual quires of the FMP follow:

**Quire one, 1-12:** Has twelve folia with two singletons; folio 5 and folio 8, which sit either side of the centre bifolium. Although there is minimal survival of the backfold area, enough survives to confirm that both folia were singletons. Under magnification, a clean edge to the folded areas that hook around the next bifolium indicates that they were trimmed in this fashion rather than lost through deterioration or removal. The continuation in the sequence of the Psalms with adjacent folia affirms the collation. Folia 2, 3, 10, 11 and 12 survive only as outer margins with only a few lines of text from the Psalms, and folia 11 and 12 are lacking any of the written space. This quire lay inside the leather cover while buried, with folio 1 in direct contact with its inside surface. Folio 1r displayed Psalm 1:1 *Beatus Vir*, executed in display capitals (see chapter 3). Deterioration levels were high, but several detached fragments were identified and repositioned using the character count calculations (see chapter 1). Apart from the singleton the hair/flesh orientation follows the insular practice with the hair side on the outside of the bifolium.

Quire two, 13-25: Has thirteen folia; folio 15 is a singleton on the same evidence noted above. Folio 13 has a skin defect near the head, which the scribe in typical fashion has written around. Folio 18, 19 and 20 are lacking any written space with only the extremities surviving. Folio 22v has the beginning of Psalm 51 and the enlarged and decorated lettering associated with the tripartite division of the Psalms. Some additional fragments of text were relocated in this quire, particularly on folio 23, 24 and 25. The skin orientation follows insular practice, including on the singleton.

Quire three, 26-35: This quire is a quinion of ten folia, five bifolia, with no singletons. The percentage of survival is generally poor with any text areas located near the head. However, this quire contains the almost complete bifolium of 29-32, which has supplied the key codicological evidence for FMP. The reason for this survival is not clear given the level of loss of all other bifolia within the quire. One explanation may be because the skin for this bifolium was chosen from a different batch of vellum, a batch that was prepared with a modified recipe. Alternatively, there may have been some post-manufacture solution applied to the surface of the skin by the scribe, as discussed in chapter 2.

At the head of folio 34 and 35 vertical incisions have been made in the vellum which encroach on the text. The cuts do not align and were made individually. The incision on folio 34 was made from the recto; it has a change of direction halfway through, and a faint cut line can be seen on the vellum where the blade continued beyond the incision. Although the bifolium 29-32 is for the greater part intact, it has a horizontal split running across the entire skin, dividing it into two separate pieces (Fig. 2.16). The two halves were retrieved from different locations within the mass of fragments and bog material and have individual grid references in the database (see chapter 1). It was presumed that the trauma event suffered by this bifolium was the result of its unearthing when it was impacted by the backhoe of the mechanical digger. However, examining the two halves of the skin, it is notable that the level of deterioration is at a more advanced state on the lower half of the bifolium. This is manifest in perforations and losses, in addition to tears and splits, which are not in evidence to the same degree on the upper half. This can only be the result of both halves inhabiting different micro climatic conditions over an extended period of time.
The explanation therefore is that the trauma occurred at a much earlier stage in the Psalter’s existence, either prior to deposition, during it, or as a result of impact from an implement while buried. Every folio in quire three has some surviving and identifiable text. The hair/flesh orientation resembles the continental system with like facing like, and the hair side is on the outside of the first bifolium 26-35.

**Quire four; 36-50**: This is the most perplexing quire in the Psalter. It contains two singletons; folio 37 and 39; in addition, inserted before the last folio, f. 50, is a bifolium with a singleton inserted inside that, making up folia 47 to 49. There is no extant writing on these three folia or the last folio, as they consist only of the head margins and the start of the fore edge and do not include any of the writing space. The Psalm number and chapter has been estimated based on the character count formula. The unusual format in quire four was identified by studying the fragments while they were still in situ and observing the backfolds as they lay in position. Post-conservation analysis provided further evidence using the fixed focus high resolution images of the FMP folio fragments where it was possible to virtually overlay two edges and match up their form to indicate that they were the subject of the same trimming action. This was the method used to establish that the singleton was inserted into the bifolium despite being an unlikely arrangement. With this layout, any sewing, apart from a side-stabbing, would not secure these three folia. (Fig. 2.17). Of the remainder of the folia in this quire there is a reasonable amount surviving, with all the writing space located at the top of each folio, typically nine partial lines of text on each. Folio 40v now contains the relocated interlace fragment inside a frame. This is associated with Psalm 101 and could be a component of a decorated D from *Domine exaudi orationem meam* at the beginning of the Psalm (Fig. 2.18). The hair/flesh arrangement adopts a more typical Irish random selection with no apparent order.

**Quire five, 51-60**: The last quire of Psalter is again a quinion, with indiscriminate layout of hair and flesh orientation. As with previous quires, the area of survival is from the head down, and in some instances in this quire partial lines of writing in the bottom corner of selected folia are also extant. Identified text is seen on each of the ten folia
apart from folio 60. As mentioned earlier, this folio is blank due to the final Psalm concluding on folio 59, finishing half-way down on the verso. (Fig. 2.19).

The random make-up of the five quires fails to follow any of the assembly traditions of medieval manuscripts; in this regard what can be said is the FMP maintains the Irish tradition as expected. The use of singletons might hint at corrections or additions to the text, equally a shortage of vellum may have resulted in their use. The principal obstacle to a definitive description of the text block is the percentage of survival at a guesstimated 12 to 15% and in particular the lack of backfold areas of the folia. The particularly disjointed assembly of quire four and how - or if - the three additional folia were attached to the remainder of the quire remains unanswered. It is evident, however that some form of sewing was employed, and this is discussed in the following paragraph.

Sewing

Although the sewing of a manuscript is an expected aspect of the binding process, this was not a forgone conclusion with the FMP. The only conclusive evidence was the discovery of two short and very degraded fragments of vegetable fibre threads, without which it could not be assumed that any sewing ever existed and equally plausible was a ‘loose collection of leaves inside a leather cover’. However, even with the evidence of mechanical attachment of the quires, there are several possible types of sewing that could have held the text block together.

Any codicological study of a manuscript that endeavours to establish the chronology, methods or materials of previous sewings will use the backfolds of the bifolia as the primary source of evidence. The 2016 study of the Book of Dimma (TCD MS 59) included such analysis,\(^\text{151}\) but the lack of this feature in the surviving folio fragments of the FMP greatly reduced the possibility of definitive deductions. As a result, all analysis and conclusions in this field are drawn from a single bifolium, 29-32, the sole surviving backfold in the entire manuscript containing this single piece of evidence indicating some form of sewing, later identified as linen threads, located

between two enlarged and distorted holes, 35 mm apart with the two thread fragments laying side-by-side. This is a clear indication of some form of stitching, employed as part of a sewing system for the manuscript or as a means of keeping the individual quire together, in the form of a quire tacket. The linen thread fragments were in the upper half of the horizontally split bifolium, where the level of survival was higher. It would be expected that a corresponding set of holes and thread fragments would be found in the lower half of the backfold, but the poorer condition of the vellum makes positive identification difficult (Fig. 2.20). There are several holes in this area, some deliberate, identified as such by their form, while others caused by the deterioration of the vellum. Two purposely produced holes have been identified, a similar distance apart to those in the upper half, but in this case no evidence of any thread fragments is seen between them. This does not rule out the possibility of their use in this location, as fragile material such as linen thread would not be expected to survive in the circumstances.

According to the surviving evidence, there are two possibilities as to the function of the sewing of the FMP. The first is a primary tacket. This method of containing the folia of a codex belongs to the evolution of the codex itself (see introduction). It requires individual lengths of cord or thread to be passed from the centre of the quire through two holes in the backfold, exiting the backfold of the outer bifolium and passing on through aligning holes in the cover, where they were simply twisted together (Fig. 2.21). This would generally be repeated in a second location. In its inception this method was used for the single quire codex, resulting in a structure akin to the modern-day copy book with wire staples. Later, multi quired codices were handled in the same fashion, with each quire individually attached to the cover but not to each other.152 The evidence from the backfold of bifolium 29 32 would support this method, but while there are holes in the leather cover of the FMP, they do not align with those in the backfold. An explanation for this could be that the extant thread fragments emanate from an earlier cover or that the five individual quires were never attached to the cover - or each other - but rather they were individually secured gatherings. I briefly entertained the idea of a secondary support, typically of leather, to

which the five quires were tacketed, this support would then be attached by stitching or gluing it to the inside of the leather cover. The Nag Hammadi codices employ such as system. However, the lack of any trace of this support in the FMP rules it out. The second possibility is that the extant evidence represents the paltry remains of an unsupported link stitch sewing system. There are a number of variations to this early method of securing a multi quire-codex, but some speculation is required to establish which of these best fits the features surviving in the FMP. With an unsupported sewing, regardless of type, the threads, in addition to securing the bifolia in the quire, also link the quires together, thereby constructing the text block of multi quired codex. The sewing threads have the additional function of lacing into and attaching the two binding boards, thus completing the structure. One particular form of link stitch sewing is what Szirmai refers to as ‘paired sewing stations’. The method is typically executed with two or more needles, and its appearance in the centre of the quire is of two or multiple threads running between two locations, or sewing stations. There is no change-over point, or kettle stitch, at the head and tail where the thread would exit and enter from one quire to the next, instead at each end of the station each set of threads would climb up into the next quire. The two threads lying between what could be a sewing station in the backfold of the bifolio 29-32 match the criteria for the system. The caveat however is that the threads did not also attach the cover to the FMP text block, as typically the system utilises individual boards of cartonage or timber. Again, there is the possibility that the link stitch sewing is a remainder from an earlier binding structure, replaced by the leather cover and flap at a later date. It is of interest that this Near Eastern sewing method is to be found in three insular manuscripts from the early medieval epoch, which retain their original bindings, namely the St Cuthbert Gospel c.700 (British Library, Add. MS 89000), the Cadmug Gospels (eighth-century, Landesbibliothek, Codex Bonifatianus 3), and the Stowe Missal (late eighth-century, Royal Irish Academy, MS D. ii.3). Given that these account for the majority of insular manuscripts in original structures from this period, it can be said to be representative of a typical sewing despite its Oriental origins. If the FMP was

originally sewn in a similar fashion, it fits comfortably with its surviving contemporaries.

An overview of the text block of the FMP points to a book being made in the early medieval period and by a book maker and/or scribe practising the insular conventions as well as some particular Irish conventions such as the random nature of assembly of the quires. The text block is a good fit among the corpus of extant insular manuscripts of the period. Because, untypically, the text block preserves its original or perhaps first trim of its edges, which, given the deposition date in the early ninth century, were also representative of contemporary edge-trimming methods, it retains a feature more typically lost on medieval manuscripts due to later rebindings and subsequent edge trimming. The technique involved short knife strokes against a straight-edge. I have not encountered this method either on manuscripts of the same period or in the literature, of course the fact that the vast majority of comparative manuscripts have been at some time trimmed is a major factor here. More typically, although research is lacking on the subject, there is mention of the draw-knife, which was clearly not employed for the FMP text block. One possibility for this atypical edge treatment is the trimming by the scribe as he folds, pricks and rules his bifolia prior to writing; the operation may also include a ‘first trimming’, carried out with the scribe’s penknife. This would be lost as the binder applied his craft, but, as will be seen in chapter 4, the nature of the binding for the FMP suggests a simplified structure.

Writing and decoration in the Faddan More Psalter

When the remaining folia fragments of the FMP were slowly separated out, unravelled and dried, it was little surprise to find display lettering of divergent types employed with typical purpose among the insular majuscule or half-uncial script. The development and refining of enlarged and decorated lettering as an aid to visually separating sections of scripture, while drawing the reader’s attention to specific openings, chapters and verses, were achievements of the insular scribe. This was combined with another initiative of the Irish scribe: canonical separation, or the process of spaces after every word and part of what Malcolm Parkes termed the ‘Grammar of Legibility.’ Latin always remained a ‘foreign language’ in Ireland, hence aids to reading and understanding it were introduced and practised. The Psalms, as part of the liturgy, were especially suited to clear visual division in their written form as one of the most critical of Christian texts and as part of the monastic requirement to commit all one hundred and fifty to memory in order to achieve the level of ‘psalteratus’. In the first instance, the beginning of each Psalm required marking, furthermore various Psalms were selected for particular attention augmenting the liturgical division of groups of Psalms, including the tripartite division - or ‘three fifties,’ - which was the earliest division of the Psalms and known in Ireland from an early stage. In time this practice became common beyond Ireland. Whereas enlarged and decorated lettering assisted with the division of scripture, the use of word separation or ‘aeration’ of the text allowed for easier reading and subsequently

---

157 Paul Saenger, *Space Between Words, the origins of silent reading* (California, Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 34.
159 Martin McNamara, ‘Psalter Text and Psalter Study in the Early Irish Church (A.D. 600-1200)’, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Vol.73, Section C Number7* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1973), p. 269.
copying from exemplars.\textsuperscript{162} An additional visual factor encountered on viewing the page of scripture was the layout of the text; this could be arranged in one long line or in two or even three columns of writing. According to Patrick McGurk, the majority of Psalters were written in long lines,\textsuperscript{163} the Harley Psalter eleventh century and its exemplar the Utrecht Psalter c. 825 being notable exceptions. McGurk also points out that most Irish books were written in long lines, as are the FMP and the Cathach (RIA MS 12 R 33), Ireland’s earliest surviving codex and Psalter. This clear division and decoration of the Psalms would continue in later centuries.\textsuperscript{164}

The aim of this chapter is to examine the scribal activity in the FMP, and by identifying features among the initial letters, and the sparse decoration to draw comparisons with the body of insular manuscripts that are considered to have an established provenance. The archaeological evidence suggests that the FMP is a local product, but the transient nature of medieval books requires collateral evidence from palaeographical and art historical observations to support or question any presumptions. Additional extant writing in the psalter text has also been noted, as has the use of punctuation. Contractions are unsurprisingly found throughout the surviving writing of the FMP and are listed in the appendices. Material relating to this chapter also in the appendices includes a location guide identifying each folio fragment and its Psalm, the vulgate Psalter, indicating the extant text in the FMP and noting known and unknown variants as well as evidence of the scribe’s errors and a full listing of extant initials used to indicate the beginning of the Psalms.

Insular Script

Accompanying the arrival of Christianity into Ireland in the fifth century was Latin writing, introduced by the missionaries, in both formal and cursive forms. The half-uncial is the most likely script from which the Irish converts learned their letters.\textsuperscript{165} The Springmount tablets, dated c. 600 and containing segments of the Psalms are

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[162] Paul Saenger, \textit{Space Between Words, the origins of silent reading} (California: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 49.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
written in this hand using a pointed stylus. According to Timothy O’Neill the fragmented *Usserianus Primus* (TCD MS 55) containing similarly dated Gospels, on the more conventional writing surface of vellum, is also in what he describes as a calligraphic version of the same Roman hand executed with a quill.¹⁶⁶ Within seventy-five years the Irish scribes developed from this precedent a distinctive and influential version of their own.¹⁶⁷ This insular half-uncial or Irish majuscule had as its defining feature wedge serifs, a decorative element that also had the effect of slowing down writing and in doing so maintaining the quality of the end product. Nicolete Gray describes the writing as ‘majestic, rivalled only by Textura many centuries later’.¹⁶⁸ The earliest example of this hand is seen in the *Cathach*, also dated to c. 600 (RIA MS 12 R 33). Irish majuscule was employed for most major works of Irish monastic writings, including The Book of Durrow (TCD MS 57) and The Book of Kells (TCD MS 58).¹⁶⁹ The text of the FMP is also written in Irish majuscule to a high standard. An additional Irish feature was the use of enlarged initials, discussed in detail in this chapter, and the effect of reducing the following text incrementally down to the standard letter size, known as diminuendo, which features throughout the writing of the FMP. The Anglo-Saxons were introduced to this hand, a consequence of Irish missionaries to Britain and visiting Anglo-Saxon monks who studied in Ireland. The Lindisfarne Gospels are written in an adapted form called insular Phase II.¹⁷⁰ According to Bischoff the rise of Irish monastic activity resulted in the development of an alternative hand derived from the Irish majuscule. This hand is seen fully developed in the writing of The Antiphonary of Bangor (Bib. Ambr. C. 5. Inf.) securely dated between 680-691 is insular miniscule, which is notable by being more compressed and as such more economical, with more words per folio. According to O’Neill it is also faster to write with the sharper angle of the minuscule, but the serifs were maintained to control quality.¹⁷¹

**Initial letters of the Psalms**

In addition to the standard insular majuscule script in which the FMP is written, embellishment in the form of enlarged lettering occurs at the beginning of each Psalm. The average size of the standard letter is about 3mm; this is for letters without ascenders or descenders, such as \( m \) or \( e \). The first extant beginning of a Psalm, except for Psalm 1, which is dealt with separately below, is Psalm 6.2 on folio 3r. Scraps of text survive from Psalms 1, 2 and 4 but not from their initial verses. Psalm 6.2 commences with an enlarged \( D \) from \textit{Domine ne in furore}. It should be noted that the FMP does not display any of the Psalm headings or titles employed by the Latin Church.\(^{172}\) This observation and many of those that follow are issued with the caveat that fewer than one third of the first and second verses of the one hundred and fifty Psalms has survived. As is the case with much of the FMP’s surviving text, it is difficult to decipher the writing at the beginning of Psalm 6; the \( D \) survives almost alone on this folio, hanging precariously from the top margin, accompanied by what appears to be an \( n \) or \( m \) (Fig. 3.1). This most likely represents a contraction of one of the \textit{nomina sacra}, the commonly used abbreviations of sacred names in this case \( Dn(e) \) for \textit{Domine}.\(^{173}\) The enlarged \( D \) is three lines in height and can be described as insular majuscule with similar wedged serif letter forms seen in the Echternach Gospels (Paris, Bnf. N., MS lat. 9389), the Lindisfarne Gospels (London, British Library Cotton MS Nero D.IV) and the Book of Durrow (Dublin, TCD MS 57). The additional decorative element in the letter consists of two half circles facing back-to-back inside the bow of the \( D \).

There is no use of colour here and the letter is written in the same ink (iron gall) as the standard text. A stylistically similar letter-form can be seen in Ireland’s oldest surviving manuscript written entirely in the Irish language,\(^{174}\) \textit{Leabhar na hUidhre} (RIA MS 23 E 25) which dates from the beginning of the twelfth century and is historically linked with the monastery at Clonmacnoise.\(^{175}\) On p. 55 of this manuscript an enlarged \( D \) is penned half-way down the left-hand column. The similar insular letter form also

---


\(^{173}\) Bischoff, Latin Palaeography, p. 152.


\(^{175}\) John Carey, ‘Compilations of lore and legend: Leabhar na hUidhre and the books of Uí Mhaine’, \textit{Treasures of the Royal Irish Academy Library} (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009), p. 17.
contains the two half circles inside the bow, albeit in slightly different positions and with the space inside the half circles filled in (Fig. 3.2).

When examining the initial $D$ from Psalm 6.2 in the FMP, additional ‘standard’ size letters are also visible, one attached to the bottom of the letter. In this instance however, this is one of the ‘floating letters’ freed from its correct location as the substrate dissolved and deposited it out of place while enduring the fluid conditions buried in the Tipperary bog - this unique feature must always be considered whenever the writing of this psalter is under scrutiny.

The form of $D$ employed for Psalm 6.2 does not remain constant in this Psalter as is evidenced on folio 6r, the beginning of Psalm 13, located at the top of the folio. *Dixit insipiens* survives but is very faint. The $D$ is about two lines in height and is an insular majuscule form of what Bischoff calls a ‘round $D$’ more resembling an o with the minim (the upright stroke) leaning over the top of the bow terminating in a wedged serif. Examples of this form can be seen in both the Book of Kells and the Lindisfarne Gospels.

Yet another form of initial $D$ makes an appearance at the beginning of Psalm 20, with *Domine in virtut[e]* on line ten of folio 9r. *Domine* is presented *nomina sacrum* as *Dne*. The $D$ is approximately two lines in height. It is a square format with the two upright strokes slightly concave, the head stroke has a well-defined wedge-shaped serif at one end, the base stroke enclosing the space. Within the square are two half circles facing back to back as seen inside the $D$ of *Domine* at the beginning of Psalm 6, and although the form of the letter itself is very different the common element of the half circles suggest the same scribe. Additional double graphic lines in a light colour are barely visible following the contours of the letter (Fig. 3.3).

The economic writing by the scribe carries the final verse of Psalm 20 onto folio 9v; here a third form of $D$ occurs. The second line commences Psalm 21.2 *Deus Deus [m]eus respite in me*. The abbreviation has been employed and the initial *Deus* is almost heart-shaped (with what would be the minim leaning over the top of the letter and terminating in a wedge serif), and the $S$ is inside the bow of the $d$. The letter is three lines in height. The second *Deus* is similar, but due to deterioration, the $S$ has

---

‘dropped out’. This $D$ is about half the size of the first (Fig. 3.4). A similar form and construction can be seen in another insular manuscript with its origins in the centre of Ireland, the Book of Dimma c.750-800 (TCD MS 59), which has a likely origin from the same region as the FMP. On page 106 in the Gospel of John, at the top of the page, the nominum sacrum $DM$ is written with the same heart-shaped $D$ and the $M$ inside the bow. It could be argued that both scribes were exposed to similar scribal practices or had seen the same exemplars from where they borrowed the design (Fig. 3.5).

The deterioration and level of loss increases after Psalm 20 and although identified text fragments do survive, it is not until Psalm 37.2 on folio 16v (quire two) that an initial letter is identified. As before, this is a lone survivor as a single letter fragment, having been located in the area of this quire during conservation and placed in position on the first line of the folio. The $D$ is from $D[omine ne in furore]...$ and is likely to have been abbreviated, but this cannot be confirmed. The initial is over two lines in height and commences with a wedged serif. Inside the bow the two back-to-back half circles are again present (Fig. 3.6).

On the top of folio 34v, quite close to the head, Psalm 82 commences Deus quis [similis] erit. The nominum sacrum is employed and an insular $d$, again with the minim leaning over the top of the bow and terminating in a well-formed wedge serif, stands at three lines in height. The $s$ is placed inside the bow in its initial form. The $d$ mimics the survivors from Psalm 6.2 and 37:2 but it differs from the $D$ in Deus from Psalm 21:2, which also has the $S$ inserted inside the bow but is heart shaped. Because the heart-shaped $d$ falls between the more standard insular $d$’s practised in the FMP, it appears that the same scribe was competent in both forms. An additional thin line of colour has been worked on top of the $d$ letter form and possibly also the $S$. (Fig. 3.7) Three other examples of this form of $ds$ are found within the loose letters rescued from the floating debris within the mass of material taken from inside the cover (see chapter 1). Their positional location was recorded but was not precise enough to allow their identification of specific Psalm beginnings with confidence. There is an excellent if somewhat obscure parallel to this letter form within the contents of a composite manuscript brought together in the nineteenth century by Pater Ildefons von Arx (1755-1833) and dedicated to his former supervisor Pater Johann Nepomuk Hauntinger, Abbey Librarian. Held in St Gallen, Cod. Sang. 1394 contains fragments
from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries and includes among the variety of material fragments from the Aeneid and the Georgics by Virgil, fragments of Hebrew script and of interest here, an Irish missal fragment (ff. 95-98). Previously used as a binding component, the heavily trimmed bifolio now measures 230 x 220 mm. It is written in long line with twenty-two lines surviving in both expert insular majuscule and miniscule. There are several enlarged three-line initials, including a *nomina sacra* for *Deus in Deus placatus accipire* (Fig. 3.8). A drawn *d* is presented with a wedged serif on the terminal of the minim, similar in form to Psalm 82. The wedge has additional flourishes in the form of two circles. The initial *s* is also inside the bow of the *d*, but unlike Psalm 82 it is formed as a continuation of the closing bow of the *d*. This forms a spiral shape for the top half of the *s*, while the bottom half is augmented with a wedged serif and a flourish at its tip. There is no over-drawing with an additional colour as seen on Psalm 82 (Fig. 3.9). The St Gallen catalogue entry for the fragment makes the closing comment: ‘Origin of manuscript: written doubtless in Ireland.’

Textual similarities in the form of a Eucharistic antiphon used by Columbanus during the liturgy have been noted between this manuscript and the Stowe Missal, which might be a product of Lorrha in Co. Tipperary (see chapter 6), although the author does not associate the two manuscripts.

Beginning a third of the way down the page on line nine of folio 4r is Psalm 9.2. Without its heading, it begins *Confiteor tibi Domine. tibi* has been inserted above and between *Confiteor* and *Domine*, having been omitted during the original copying of the Psalter. Of interest here is *Confiteor*, the *C* is enlarged, written in ink and displays a similar decorative element seen in the *D* from Psalm 6.2, a half circle sits inside the bow of the *C* with its terminal ends attached to the inside face. The wedged serif, a feature of insular majuscule, is atypically employed at both terminals of the *C* with the addition of flourishes, which are both unusual and well-executed (Fig. 3.10). The same use of two wedge serifs is employed on Folio 6v with the beginning of Psalm 15 *Conserva me Domine quoniam* (Fig. 3.11). Both oversized *C*’s are followed by a few letters of decreasing size until the standard letter-form is reached (Fig. 3.12). This is a

---

177 I am grateful to Tim O’Neill for bringing this manuscript to my attention.

‘gentle’ form of diminuendo, the insular convention of the script taking the reader from an enlarged initial letter back to the standard writing.\textsuperscript{179} The Cathach displays the same feature, with more dramatic effect, which can be observed on folio 48r and the beginning of Psalm 90; \textit{Qui habitat in adiutorio altissimi}. The Q begins at five lines height, followed by the \textit{u i} and \textit{h}, all decreasing incrementally to the \textit{b} at the standard letter size.

A different treatment of the terminals can be seen at the beginning of Psalm 18 on the fourth line of folio 8v. At \textit{Caeli inarrant glor[iam] Dei} the first two words survive intact. The three-lines-high \textit{C} has trumpet terminals with the following \textit{A} placed inside the bow. The left minim extends through the back of the \textit{C} and terminates in a trumpet-like form. The right-hand stroke is vertical with a wedge-shaped serif at its head. The cross-stroke of the \textit{A} also extends beyond the bow of the \textit{C}, a convention often employed in insular writing. At the time of examining these letters prior to dewatering the vellum, it was possible to see thin graphic lines inside the body of both letters following their contours (Fig. 3.13). This was either additional decoration or marking an area to receive colour - or perhaps evidence of ‘building up’ the initials.

Another insular scribal tradition is found at the start of Psalm 11.2. \textit{Salvum me fac Domine} is located on folio 5v. Here there is an elongated \textit{S} with trumpet terminals. The much-enlarged letter extends along the inside edge of the following three lines of text. There is a vertical stroke behind the \textit{S} matching its length with a wedged serif at the top. Although the vellum is lost behind this area, it is identifiable as an element of the \textit{S} and what Timothy O’Neill describes as a ‘split initial’, a double-stemmed letter joining at the base with the space between the minims left blank; the join is no longer visible in this occurrence\textsuperscript{180} (Fig. 3.14). The Book of Dimma, thought to have been produced in Roscrea, less than 20km from Faddan More, displays several examples of the ‘split initial’.\textsuperscript{181} Other multiple examples can be seen in insular manuscripts from the same epoch, including the St. Gall Gospels (St Gallen, Cod. Sang. 51) and the Stowe Missal (RIA MS D ii 3). According to O’Neill this is an evolution of the double-stemmed

\textsuperscript{179} O’Neill, \textit{The Irish Hand}, p. 12.
initials employed in the Cathach. An example is seen in Psalm 75.2 (Notus in Iudaea) where both minims of the black inked $N$ are split with the uncoloured vellum as the centre line (Fig. 3.15). Another example of diminuendo is also seen on the same folio. The remaining letters in Salvum quickly drop to standard size with only the a slightly larger.

I had hoped to compare another capital $S$ in the FMP, but the only survivor is in very poor condition. Located in the third quire, where typically the folia from this part of the manuscript exist as narrow ribbons of vellum at the head, with even narrower occasional strips below the writing space of the page at the tail. On folio 27 the beginning of a Psalm is available for scrutiny. Psalm 68.2 $S[al]vum$ me $[fac$ Deus] is located on the first line of folio 27v. The surface is much abraded, and suspended from the head margin is an enlarged capital $S$ with wedge terminals. Little else survives of the Psalm and the condition of the letter itself limits any descriptive analysis, except to say it is not the split $S$ seen in Psalm 11.2, which again demonstrates the scribe employing variations of the same letter (Fig. 3.16).

On the verso of folio 29, at the start of line twenty-two, Psalm 73 commences $Ut$ qui$[d]$ Deus. The drawn enlarged letter $U$ is over two lines in height. Two wedge serifs and a wedge-shaped terminal at the base of the right-hand minim are employed. The letter is unremarkable apart from the decorative addition between the two minims, a vertical line of lozenges fills the space, quite crudely executed and worked in the same writing ink (Fig. 3.17). On folio 1r of the FMP the remains of a decorated border running along the head displays a similar run of lozenges as part of the decorative infill. In this instance they are filled in with a black pigment and they are discussed later in this chapter. A further example of connected lozenges can be seen in stone carving on one of the seventy-two surviving early medieval slab crosses at St Berrihert’s Kyle in Ardane, Co. Tipperary. Among the many simple carved Latin crosses there is a slim rectangular slab with a set of vertical connecting lozenges. They differ only from the infill in the $U$ on Psalm 73 by virtue of being a double-set and placed inside a simple line border (Fig. 3.18). Representations of the technique in metalwork are also available for comparison, such as the eighth-century Helgö crozier terminal (Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm, Z5075:1000) likely to be of Irish origin but
found in Helgö, Sweden, a trading and manufacturing centre.\(^{182}\) The socket is of copper-alloy inlaid in yellow enamel patterns including vertical rows of lozenges tip-to-tip mirroring those on folio 1r, but like the slab cross, in a vertical orientation (Fig. 3.19).

One of only two surviving B’s is found at the bottom of folio 17v. With only the \(B\) extant from the beginning of Psalm 40.2 \(\text{b}e\text{atus qu},i\) the insular majuscule letter displays a wedge serif at the top, the bow does not quite close and ends in a point. As in previous examples this is a relocated fragment with other surviving word fragments allowing positive identification and the estimated character count guiding its correct position on the folio (Fig. 3.20). The following twenty-five folia fragments do not reveal any Psalm beginnings, however the surviving text does allow almost all the Psalms after 80 to be identified through small extant fragments of verse. The second B is located at the first line of folio 58r in the final fifth quire, from Psalm 143.1 \(\text{D}ominus \text{D}eus \text{m}eus\). The insular \(b\) has an unclosed bow similar to Psalm 40.2 with a wedge serif on both terminals which could be considered a decorative flourish and not typical in the insular corpus of manuscripts from this period. The letter is almost three lines in height, with the following \(e\) about twice the size of a standard letter (Fig. 3.21).

An interesting combination of initials for comparison is Psalm 80.2 \(\text{Ex}ultate \text{Deo adiutori}\). Its survival consists only of the first two letters and these only as isolated fragments relocated through estimating their position on folio 33v, which is preserved as a fragment of the head margin and the first six lines of text. The insular \(e\) and \(x\) are over two lines in height, one minim of the \(x\) extends under the \(e\) and makes contact with the bottom of the preceding letter and terminates with a wedge serif. This is mirrored on 25r with the beginning of Psalm 60.2 \(\text{Exaudi Deus}\), seen here while the folio was saturated and the writing easier to decipher (Fig. 3.21a). Similar examples are not difficult to locate in the corpus of insular manuscripts from the same epoch. One example can be identified by returning to Cod. Sang. 51, where on page 8 a similar execution is seen starting the words \(\text{ex surtens}\), the ‘\(ex\)’ being slightly enlarged, the serif on the ‘\(x\)’ is smaller and less defined than the FMP example (Fig.

Subtle variations on the insular majuscule execution of these two letters is seen in the text of the Book of Kells, the Book of Durrow and the Lindisfarne Gospels.

Another noteworthy but in this instance difficult to decipher combination of initials is located on folio 25r. It is the relocated fragment from the beginning of Psalm 61.2 Nonne Deo subject[a]. The writing in this instance is particularly faint and identification was only possible through manipulating the high-resolution digital image by selecting a particular colour value of the faint ink and artificially enhancing any area of this colour. Both vertical bars of the two-line enlarged $N$ show well-defined wedge serifs. The second and smaller $N$ is placed between the vertical bars of the first as an abbreviation of the word. The application and end product here suggest a scribe confident in his skills (Fig. 3.23).

Located halfway down 29r, on the only complete bifolium in the manuscript; 29-32, line sixteen begins with Quam bonus Israhel Deus...from Psalm 72.1. The $q$ is almost three lines in height with a well-defined wedge serif on the termination of the minim. The upper part of the bow is more $U$-shaped with a thin cross-bar across the top to close the top of the letter. The letter appears to have additional tram lines inside the bow (Fig. 3.24). The execution of this form of insular $q$ can be seen with the same thin line cross bar in the mid eighth-century gospel book, written by Irish monks in Ireland or at the Monastery in St. Gall in Switzerland. Throughout the long line text of St Gallen, MS 51, slightly enlarged initials mark the start of passages, typically with the addition of some colour. Page 42 gives two examples of the FMP type $q$, albeit without the wedge serif (Fig. 3.25).

There is a consistency to the writing in what is available for examination in the FMP, but too little to be definitive on how many scribes were involved, if indeed there was more than one. The change in form of most of the initials suggests a certain freedom of choice, with the scribe displaying a breadth of knowledge of the insular hand and its variations. This is clearly not the work of a novice scribe or a pupil under instruction, rather a well-practised exponent of the craft. The ease in locating comparisons to letter forms and letter combinations reinforce the ‘good fit’ of the FMP among early medieval Irish manuscripts.

Display Lettering
Despite the fragmentary and incomplete condition of the FMP, it can be stated with some conviction that the one hundred and fifty Psalms had been divided into three fifties in the insular tradition and, as was typical for this tradition, the divisions were clearly marked. Psalms 1, 50 and 101 mark the tripartite division of the FMP with each displaying much enlarged and decorated lettering at the beginning of the verse. However, in the case of Psalm 101, small fragments of interlace decoration and some oversize dismembered letter forms are the only extant evidence of the once elaborate design.

Folio 1r is the first folio in the manuscript, as no flyleaves were included as part of its construction. As such, this folio was directly facing the inside of the leather cover. This layout was not conducive to the survival of the vellum folio, which had deteriorated badly over time (see chapter 1). The surviving remains are fragmented and disjointed but sufficient to confirm that Psalm 1.1 was presented in a form of display script described as ‘geometric display capitals’ or ‘calligraphic display script’ (Fig. 3.26). It is suggested that this form of lettering may have evolved for practical reasons, as it was first used by the stone carver or wood cutter for engraving crosses on both materials. It is unquestionably easier to engrave in a series of straight lines rather than the curved letter forms of the insular majuscule hand. This differs from the display lettering for Psalm 51, which includes a curvilinear form often employed in insular gospel books from the time of the FMP. The combination of both styles of display capitals on the one page and even in the one line of text, is mirrored in two pinnacles of insular manuscript production, the Book of Kells and the Lindisfarne Gospels, and has been a feature considered noteworthy by scholars. Its appearance in the FMP is significant in placing it with a particular corpus of manuscripts that were products of a distinctive tradition of insular lettering.

---


Only the first word from the opening verse of Psalm 1.1 *Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum* survives, with the B of *Beatus* fragmented and difficult to decipher. It is presented in slim geometric form with well-defined wedge serifs at terminals of the minims. The body of the letters is built up with the same ink utilised for the text and would have required more than one stroke of the pen. There is a fine outline following the contour of each letter with evidence of colour used to fill the space between. The much-enlarged letters occupy four lines of space on the folio (Fig. 3.27). The origin of this geometric insular display script is thought to have been Northumbria, this was based on the Anglo-Saxon use of the Runic alphabet and an earlier exposure to Roman letter forms prior to abandoning their most westerly outpost in the early fifth century.\(^{186}\) The acceptance of a Northumbrian origin is questioned by more current research however. Influences from epigraphy and in the case of Irish produced books such as the FMP, ogham is suggested as a possible influence.\(^{187}\) The Book of Durrow is considered to be one the earliest manuscripts to employ the insular geometric letter-form albeit in limited quantity.\(^{188}\) The Book of Kells and the Lindisfarne Gospels are already cited as examples and it can also be found in later manuscripts including the MacRegol Gospels (MS. Auct. D. 2. 19.) and the Book of Armagh (TCD MS 52), both of which were written in Ireland in the first part of the ninth century.

Extant examples of this letter form outside the pages of manuscripts also survive in both metal and stone; the eighth-century Ardagh chalice discovered in the 1868 as part of a hoard of buried objects in County Limerick, has inscribed in outline the names of eleven apostles and St. Paul against a stippled background beneath a girdle of gold filigree on its silver bowl. Higgitt compares the inscription type to the Book of Kells capitals, including matching up some of the letter forms\(^{189}\) (Fig. 3.28). The epigraphic application of this letter-form can be seen at Toureen Peakun, a monastic site in south County Tipperary founded by St. Alban in the seventh century. Here among a number of cross slabs and cross fragments is a free-standing cross shaft.

200 cm of which is above ground. On the west face of the shaft there is an equal-
armed cross with square expanded terminals. Immediately above the cross, a lapidary
inscription of six lines of insular geometric capitals is inscribed, mostly between
borders, mimicking the ruling of the manuscript page. Not unlike the FMP, the current
condition makes reading and interpretation difficult; it is thought however that the
text is either partially or wholly in Irish.\textsuperscript{190} Carved insular crosses with inscriptions from
the early medieval period employed an insular majuscule script in most extant
examples. The use of geometric lettering at Toureen Peakun is unusual despite the
epigraphic history of the letter form. A noticeable and typical feature of geometric
lettering is its placement between well-defined borders and those borders containing
the letters with little in the way of ascenders or descenders. Although the few
surviving letters on folio 1r of the FMP are much disturbed and the surrounding areas
of the folio are for the most part lacking, there is enough extant evidence to suggest
that the geometric insular capitals were not contained, at least at their base, with the
descenders of the A and T from \textit{BEATUS} extending well below their companion letters.
Furthermore, studying the badly fragmented B prior to dismantling the fragmented
text block, in addition to its interlace pattern, it could be observed that the outline of
the letter sits above that of its companions at the head, which are most unusual
executions for this form of geometric lettering, with a general rule the letters maintain
the same height. Again, the extreme and unique disturbance of the FMP text and the
possibility of distorted or misplaced letter fragments being responsible, must be taken
into account, however in this instance I believe that there is a variance in letter
heights.

Examining the extant letters individually, a very close comparison is identified
for the A, in which the right minim is vertical with a left facing wedge serif at the top
and a trumpet form at the bottom. The left-hand minim is set at an angle and
commences about one third of the way down the vertical right-hand minim. The cross-
stroke is also placed at an acute angle between the two. This ‘tilted’ A is similar to one
illustrated on folio 130r of the Book of Kells, the incipit of Mark’s Gospel and the word

evangelii, here the vertical right-hand minim is part of the ligature with N (Fig. 3.29). Another example is available in the Lindisfarne Gospels on folio 27r, although the similarities are less striking. The T has an elongated minim with a short horizontal stroke at the top, the right side of which is not visible as the space is filled by the wedge serif on the adjacent U. At the foot of the minim there is a line projecting at right angles to the right. This resembles the T from Initium, also on the incipit page of Mark’s Gospel in Cod. Sang. 51, p. 79, which has a right-facing projection at the foot of the minim, albeit shorter than in the FMP (Fig. 3.30). It is also possible that this projection in the FMP example might be part of a now lost border decoration for BEATUS. The U has two closely spaced minims joined at the base of the letter. The top of each minim displays well defined left facing wedge serifs. Comparative examples are not difficult to find as an archetypal geometric insular display letter, for instance, in the Lichfield Gospels (Lichfield Cathedral Library MS. 1) p. 221 the incipit of Luke has similar U letter forms among the Quoniam quidem multi conati (Fig. 3.31). In the Book of Kells, f. 114v, Matthew 26:31 Tunc dicit illis Iesus omnes vos sc[andalum], the v is a good match with the same left-facing wedge serifs.

The S in the BEATUS of the FMP has a very simple form with a vertical minim and no noticeable horizontal terminals. These parts of the letter form are represented by a wedged terminal at each end of the vertical, although the bottom one is now detached and no doubt faced the opposite direction to the wedge at the top. A similar form can be seen in the display script of the word Peccavimus on p. 426 of the composite manuscript in St. Gallen, Switzerland (Cod. Sang. 1395) which contains several Irish fragments dating from the seventh to the ninth centuries. The e is in majuscule form rather than the more typical capital employed for the geometrical insular script (Fig. 3.32).

The BEATUS B has survived in a poor state and is somewhat fragmented and ‘floating’ free. It is difficult to be certain of its original form and some speculation is required. What can be confirmed is the use of an interlace pattern inside the bow of the capital B as part of its construction. There are other fragmented minims and letter parts located on this folio which are awaiting further work and identification in the near future.
On folio 22r in the second quire, Psalm 51 commences on the sixth line of the folio, *Quid gloriat ur*. The *q* is presented as the largest letter in the surviving ‘*quid g*’ and stands at eleven lines (Fig. 3.33). The aspect of insular display script combines Higgitt’s type (i) and type (ii) with both ‘freer curvilinear lettering that is coloured and usually zoomorphic in form’ with ‘a more rigid, calligraphic and frequently angular capitals’.\(^{191}\) This is no great surprise as the FMP uses the stylistic format practised on the pages of other insular manuscripts of the era, the mixture apparently being derived from insular half-uncial (insular majuscule) and Roman capitals. However, the treatment of this lettering does not follow the more typical framing of the letters within decorated borders, but instead it is simply inserted into the line structure of the text, with no special treatment or isolation of the display lettering for visual impact. Michelle Brown identifies this particular treatment of insular display capitals in other manuscripts and expresses the opinion that it is a development from the calligraphic diminuendo lettering of the *Cathach* of Columcille, ‘evolving into the monumental display openings of the great insular Gospelbooks’.\(^{192}\) Brown cites Durham Cathedral Library MS A.II.10, the Book of Durrow and the Echternach Gospels as transitional manuscripts with more elaborate display lettering and greater space on the page occupied by it. Although it would be tempting therefore to apply this principle to the incipit of Psalm 51 in order to place the FMP chronologically among the corpus of Irish/insular manuscripts, Brown cautions that the continuing use of smaller unframed lettering continued throughout the eighth century.\(^{193}\)

The *q* is dominated by the very large bow formed with a narrow-drawn outline in proportion to its size and using what appears to be the same ink employed for the text. At the centre of the bow is a small square with an equal armed cross further dividing the square into four equal sized segments. The four arms of the cross extend out to the inner parameters of the bow, dividing the bow into four sections. There are expanded terminals on each arm of the cross where it contacts the inside of the bow, forming a small square with a cross inside. Each of the four quadrants of the bow is subdivided by another thin-armed cross. In the two lower quadrants there is a central


square with an equal-armed cross placed inside. The centre of the two upper quadrants displays a geometric pattern forming a squat equal-armed cross. The divided spaces within all the quadrants are defined with an outline and blocks of contrasting colours. The yellow, which has been identified as orpiment, is manifest.\textsuperscript{194} Other colours are present but are difficult to distinguish, however a typical insular palette is expected, with red, blue, purple and green all likely candidates. The geometric divisions within the bow of the \( q \) and the use of blocks of vivid colour are reminiscent of contemporary enamelwork and the same geometric division and infill can be seen in elements of the Moylough belt shrine (NMI 1945:81), found in Co Sligo and dated to the eighth century CE or the Oseberg enamelled mount (Oseberg no. 157), which displays geometric patterns around a central cruciform shape. The vivid yellow glass of the latter makes for a particularly interesting comparison to the FMP \( q \). The mount, dating from the eighth or ninth century CE, was discovered in the furnished grave of a Viking noblewoman, possibly among the spoils of a raid on an Irish settlement (Fig. 3.34).\textsuperscript{195} The influence of insular metalwork on the artists decorating the gospel books and psalters of the era is well-attested.\textsuperscript{196} Stylistic similarities to the decorated \( q \) can also be found in the same media; on the vellum folia of insular manuscripts and the cross carpet page on folio 1v of the eighth-century Book of Durrow which employs geometric blocks of colour forming a series of crosses, here combined with intricate interlace work (Fig. 3.35). The FMP displays an interesting mark/addition in the top expanded terminal of the cross, in the top left division of the square there is a pen stroke creating a curve, which is suggestive of the \textit{chi-rho} symbol; X and P (being a monogram of Christ’s name when written in Greek).

\textsuperscript{194} XRF analysis was carried out in the National Museum’s Conservation Department by Dr Paul Mullarkey on a small fragment of the vellum with the yellow pigment present. It displayed the signature peak of arsenic sulphide.


When clearly depicted, the P intersects the X, but it was also represented more subtly by using an illustrated or carved cross as the chi and the rho depicted as a loop at the top of the cross. An example can be seen in Codex Usserianus Primus (TCD MS 55), the pre-Vulgate gospel book, produced in Ireland or abroad under Irish influence (Fig. 3.36). The same interpretation can be seen on the small grave marker found at Inis Cealtra in County Clare and dated to the mid seventh century. It is evident that the rho stroke or curve in the FMP q is intentional; the only caveat is its left side application as opposed to right, to represent the bow of the p, a scribal error perhaps.

The descender of the letter q has a zoomorphic aspect in the form of a bird head in profile. The long, hooked beak is well defined below a round eye with an almond shaped outline. The head of the bird appears to have some form of plumage which flows back in a zig-zag pattern and was highlighted with colour. The body of the bird is represented by the curved stroke of the letter under the bow. Beneath the bird’s head is a single zig-zag pattern, starting under the beak and continuing back until loss of the vellum terminates it. Identification of the bird as hawk, peacock or other species with Christian symbolic meaning is not obvious. The use of the zig-zag plumage and the pattern is unusual and does not appear to be repeated in any insular illuminated manuscripts of the same epoch.

The remaining letters of Quid drop down one line and are reduced in size to five lines in height. The letter form returns to the sharp geometric aspect. The letters are drawn with broad minims outlined with a thinner line encasing the letter. The U and I are combined by inserting the I into the centre of the U, which resembles a ‘V’ shape with serifs on the two minims. There is a cross-bar at the base of the U with short upright strokes and serifs at the end of each stroke. This is similar to Higgitt’s type V3 and he cites examples in the Book of Kells, the Book of Armagh and the Leningrad Gospels (Cod. F. v. l. 8). Graphically the FMP example differs in having the upright strokes onto which the serifs are attached as opposed to the serifs attaching directly to the cross-bar. Examples of the FMP-type cross-bar can be observed, albeit rotated 180° and resting precariously on the top of an A on the symbol page of

198 Higgitt, The display script of the Book of Kells, Book of Kells Proceedings, p. 232
Matthew in the Echternach Gospels f. 18v, and likewise on the John symbol page 176v. In addition on the same page, an example of a ‘V’ shaped U with an I inserted inside is executed. The Echternach Gospels are considered to date from the late eighth or early ninth century and are possibly a product of one of the monasteries in Northumbria or Iona or Ecternach (Fig. 3.37).\textsuperscript{199} The Ardagh Chalice, employing geometric letters, also uses the cross-bar U on its inscription. On the opening page of a Psalter, Cod. Sang. 15, dating from the ninth century and possibly produced in France, the ‘Beatus Vir’ page from Psalm 1.1 displays lettering and illumination ‘heavily influenced by Irish models’ according to the library’s catalogue entry.\textsuperscript{200} In the framed panel of text both the V and the U are presented with the I inserted inside (Fig. 3.38). Based on the parallels of geometric letter types used in the FMP, the scribe or artist is patently aware and exposed to the current practice in this form of decorated writing.

The geometric D is adopted from the uncial type and as executed in the FMP is a basic rectangle; and as such, it replicates many of the insular geometric examples in manuscripts from the same time span. Blocks of varying colour inside thin drawn frames are inserted between the letters of Quid, filling the spaces of blank vellum and creating a closer visual coherence with the multi-coloured core of the q. A similar approach of creating a backdrop for the enlarged illuminated opening words to parts of the canonical text was widely practised among the scribes and artists producing manuscripts in the early medieval period. The use of different blocks of colour, shaped to fit between the letters, similar to the Quid in the FMP, can be seen to good effect on f. 78 of the Leningrad gospel book at the opening to Mark. Adjudged as an insular work of the late eighth century, E.A. Lowe attributes it to Northumbria.\textsuperscript{201} A similar treatment of the geometric letters with a less refined execution is displayed in the already mentioned Cod. Sang. 51. On p. 7, the ‘Xpi’ illuminated page (Fig. 3.39).

Only the g from gloriatur has survived on the fragment of f. 22r of the FMP, and here there is a return to an insular majuscule letter form at the same five-line height as the preceding letters. The left hand upward pointing serif on the cross-bar of


\textsuperscript{200} https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/searchresult/list/one/csg/0015 Accessed April 1st 2018.

the letter *g* is of a type practised in the standard text of the Book of Kells, the Book of Durrow, the Lichfield Gospels and others. No text has survived below this line on folio 22, but on the verso of the same folio, the first line starts with Psalm 52.3. Applying the calculated character count per line of text, it is possible to estimate the space required on folio 22r to fit from *gloriat*ur in Psalm 51.3 to *requi*rens *Deum* in 52:3. In order to achieve this the writing would have dropped to standard size after *gloriat*ur. Tim O’Neill’s reproduction on vellum of this Psalm expertly demonstrates how the pristine folio would have looked. (Fig. 3.40)

The location for Psalm 101 and its expected treatment as the ultimate beginning of the ‘three fifties’ is folio 40v, but the fragment of this folio terminated at the end of Psalm 100. The removal of this quire fragment from the mass of material inside the open leather cover also brought with it other fragments of the vellum folia in a more advanced stage of deterioration (see chapter 1). Among this material were a collection of individual enlarged majuscule letters with blocks of yellow painted into blank spaces and one piece of square interlace inside a narrow double border (Fig. 3.41, 42). Writing was present on the recto of this fragment, which after scrutiny was identified as two fragmentary lines from Psalm 98.4/5 *di[e]ctiones* *iu[dicium]* and *[sca]billum* (Fig. 3.43). This allowed accurate positioning and orientation of the fragment using the surviving text from Psalm 98 on folio 40r. Without the Psalm headings, as is the practice in the FMP, Psalm 101 would commence *Domine exaudi orationem meam*. Examining the enlarged majuscule letter fragments it might be tentatively possible to identify a *D* and *M*. It would be expected, even in the case of enlarged decorated lettering for *Dominum* to be abbreviated to *DM*. Other fragmented and distorted letters survive, but identification is speculative at best.

Similar to the ordinary writing in the FMP, the decoration and decorated lettering confirm a stylistic knowledge of current practice, attested by the close parallels available in typical media of the period. Clearly the work of the artist does not match that of the Book of Kells or Lindisfarne Gospels, or even his close neighbour MacRegol, but it still sits comfortably in the framework of early medieval insular manuscript making by a proficient exponent. It also displays what I believe is a most unusual treatment of the geometric lettering by allowing certain minims to break through the typical framing used to contain the word or words. The unfortunate
aspect is the poor condition of the vellum where this feature is employed, making it
difficult to be definitive. The use of geometric lettering without a border for Psalm 51
tentatively suggests an earlier use of the letter form and could assist in placing the
manuscript in the eighth century from an art historical perspective.

Other extant decoration in the Faddan More Psalter
In addition to the decorated letter forms, one distinct area of illumination has survived
on folio 1r: a broad border, which probably enclosed the text of Psalm 1, but now
survives only along the top edge and as it turns 90° down the fore-edge. The
construction is quite intricate, with the outer margins of the border consisting of two
narrow drawn parallel lines with the space between coloured. Between these lines,
individual panels with their own borders contain the elements of decoration and make
up the overall pattern. A single panel is employed as the border turns the corner from
head to fore-edge. It contains a multi-coloured interlace pattern, with which the
practitioner appears to have had some difficulty navigating the turn, with a stray
ribbon not following the expected pattern (Fig. 3.26). Errors like this, where a clear
understanding of the architecture behind interlace have not been fully understood
appear in other manuscripts of the period. Mildred Budny points out ‘the botched
version of interlaced animals in an initial P in the ninth-century Antwerp Sedulius’.

The ribbon interlace in the FMP border displays the use of at least two colours; a
yellow and perhaps red, stylistically where a strand comes to the end of its frame, a U-
bend system has been practised employing Budny’s diagnostics. The use of interlace
is ubiquitous among all media of insular art forms in the early middle ages and is
nowhere more prolific than on the pages of gospel books and psalters, particularly as a
form of border. The origin of this complex and structured design element and its
enthusiastic adoption among insular artisans is much discussed and often written
about by scholars. Mark Van Stone examines and explains the basic methods used to
produce what he calls ‘knotwork’ across several insular manuscripts. The premise
revolves around the use of a frame and a series of dots which guide the pen to quickly

202 Mildred Budny, ‘Deciphering the Art of Interlace’, From Ireland coming. Irish art from the early
Christian to the late Gothic period and its European context (Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University, in
203 Budny, Deciphering the Art of Interlace, p. 185.
build up a pattern.\textsuperscript{204} These guiding dots can sometimes still be seen, particularly with the help of magnification, such as in Cod. Sang. 51, portrait of John (p. 201), which places the evangelist inside a border of interlace, and close examination reveals the guiding dots as the artist’s aid.

At the top of the border a series of dark lozenges with the spaces between filled with two alternating colours, yellow and red(?), run across the folio. Within each lozenge, four small squares sit against the four sides of the form. Although not as prolific as interlace, the geometric lozenge pattern makes a regular appearance on the decorated page of insular manuscripts of the same epoch, including the carpet page of the eighth-century Barberini Gospels (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. lat. 570) f. 2v and on the opening of John f. 211r. A run of three plain lozenges tip-to-tip are placed in the columns of the arch enclosing King David and musicians in the Vespasian Psalter (British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian A. I) f. 30v, a ninth-century product from southern England displaying Mediterranean influences. The feature appears several times in the Book of Kells, including a principal role in the decoration of the four symbols page f. 290v, where one lozenge sits inside a larger lozenge to form the crossing point of the saltire cross dividing up the page into four. Its use extended beyond the vellum of manuscripts and was practised by the artisans of both stone and metalwork. A lozenge panel sits high up on the west face shaft of the Moone High Cross above a number of religious iconographic scenes from both Old and New Testament carved over its surface (Fig. 3.44).\textsuperscript{205} In metalwork, lozenges can be found on early medieval artefacts both liturgical and secular, examples are seen on such high-status artefacts as the Tara Brooch, the Cross of Cong and the Derrynaflan


\textsuperscript{205} The granite cross, like many high crosses is difficult to date with accuracy and anywhere from the 8\textsuperscript{th} to the 10\textsuperscript{th} century has been proposed. It is a ringed cross in three sections standing at 7.65 meters. The site of the cross is believed to be that of an early Columban monastery. The base is a tall rectangular block with a truncated pyramid on top. It was discovered originally without the centre shaft, which was located buried in Moone Abbey Churchyard, Co. Kildare. It is one of the Granite Crosses of the Barrow Valley. In modern times it has been moved inside the ruin of the nearby church which had a glass roof added to offer weather protection. See Elinor Powell, The High Crosses of Ireland Inspirations in stone (Dublin: Liffey Press, 2007), pp 36-45.
Chalice (Fig. 3.45). The lozenge as a Christian symbol is believed to represent the second person of the Trinity, the Logos or Word of God.\footnote{Hilary Richardson, “Lozenge and Logos,” Archaeology Ireland, vol. 10, no. 2 (Dublin: Wordwell Ltd. 1996), pp. 24–25; Bernard Meehan, The Book of Kells (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012), p. 125.}

Beneath the border pattern at the head of folio 1, the figure of a bird in profile looks out towards the edge of the page. Although the species cannot be identified with absolute certainty, it displays the distinguishing features of a predatory bird, including the large round eye and hooked beak. These features are typically accompanied by sharp talons but this expected trait is lacking, along with the tail due to the loss of vellum in these areas (Fig. 3.46). Comparisons are not difficult to locate in the lexicon of insular manuscripts from the same era and similar forms are seen in the same profile view. I draw attention to two examples here. On folio 176v of the Echternach Gospels, the full-page image of the eagle with all the requisite features stands on a perch surrounded by the description Imago Aquile (Fig. 3.37). Perhaps a more relevant example is to be found in one of the Irish pocket gospels, the Book of Dimma, which, as we have seen, was likely produced close to the location of Faddan More. On p. 104, John’s eagle is again displayed as a full-page image and in this instance holding a FMP type cover in its talons (see chapter 4) (Fig. 3.47). The well-defined beak of the FMP bird is yellow and closed with an exaggerated hook at its end, which is rather rounded at the tip. The black pupil is clearly visible, but any other feature of the eye is difficult to make out. Yellow segments form the bird’s neck in a collar-like form. The front of the body is drawn as two interlocking curves, one yellow the other a darker colour, possibly red. There is further detail inside the darker curve, now difficult to see. The wings and the rear part of the body display two arches reaching backwards; the upper is again coloured in yellow with the lower in the darker colour. Beneath is a panel, which originally contained some decorative detail but survives only as a ‘shadow’. Continuing use of digital enhancement will hopefully bring more clarity to this prevalent issue in the FMP as the research continues beyond this thesis.

As a zoomorphic feature in the FMP the eagle on folio 1 represents one of two surviving examples (the other as described as a feature of the ‘Q’ in Psalm 51). Different species of birds were well-established in the repertoire of animal decoration
in insular manuscripts at the time of the FMP (3.48, 49, 50). The adoption of animal figures from pagan Anglo-Saxon metalwork onto the pages of early medieval Irish gospel books and Psalters is well attested.\(^{207}\) The Irish artists avoided lifelike interpretations of their subjects, often resulting in strange limb angles and extravagant polychrome garments, plumage or fur. It is commonly believed that many of the animals depicted had Christian symbolic significance - none more so than the eagle of John the Evangelist. The FMP is not a gospel book however and the bird on f. 1 may represent a different symbolic meaning, or none whatsoever.\(^{208}\)

Although now very faint, a chain of dots can be observed closely outlining the figure of the bird is (Fig. 3.46). The use of dots, most typically red, as an element of decoration in early insular manuscripts is ubiquitous and the FMP can be included in that corpus. The adaption of this technique has links with metalwork. Inga Morris, while discussing the appearance of dots in Carolingian manuscripts and the influence of Irish manuscripts of the seventh-century, traces possible influences on the Irish artists to metalworkers of the same period, also suggesting that these might in fact be one and the same person.\(^{209}\) The use of dots in metalwork is seen to great decorative effect on the Ardagh Chalice, dated to the first half of the eighth century,\(^{210}\) as a background to the display script listing the names of the apostles (Fig. 3.28). Dots used in decorative metalwork can also be found on pre-Christian Celtic bronze applied to the surface of domestic objects dating from 300-100 BCE.\(^{211}\) Dotting on Irish manuscripts is first seen employed around the cross in the undated but clearly early Usserianus Primus (TCD MS 55) (Fig. 3.36). Scholars have over time also pointed


towards a Coptic influence for the use of dots.\textsuperscript{212} Examples of early Coptic textiles show the use of dots in the fourth century CE (Fig. 3.51). Alexander also suggests the influence of Christian decorated texts from the late antique period, citing the Greek Dioscorides manuscript.\textsuperscript{213} Of the many Irish manuscripts from the period of the FMP employing the use of dots as part of their repertoire, the Book of Dimma, already highlighted because of its close geographic and production date, is again illustrated. The use of red dots around the head of the eagle of John is a noteworthy comparison, given the same subject matter chosen for this treatment as in the FMP (Fig. 3.48). It is interesting how this small manuscript suggests itself for comparison across various features present in the FMP. Although written in an insular minuscule hand by several scribes, features of the decoration and initials match-up closely, and if a mid-eighth-century date for Dimma is accepted, it could push the making of the FMP back into the same period of that century.\textsuperscript{214}

In the same manner as the initials and decorated lettering display a knowledge of current practices, the use of the decorative elements likewise reinforces this and indicate an awareness beyond its monastic midlands location. The decorative elements in particular seem to me to have the qualities found in the MacRegol Gospels, produced six kilometres up the road from Faddan More, and approximately fifty-years later.

**Additional text**

A noteworthy palaeographical feature of the FMP is that, unlike the great majority of extant early medieval manuscripts, it lacks any additional writing such as marginalia, colophons, or interlinear glosses and has very few corrections. This gives significance to what additional material is to be found and at the same time, makes the lack of this characteristic interesting. The feature also prompts a comparison with a miracle of St Columba recorded by Adomnan. When Baithéne came to St Columba and asked him to help with any corrections for a psalter he had copied, the saint’s reply was: ‘Why do you bring this trouble on us when there is no need? For in your copy of the psalter


\textsuperscript{213} J.J.G. Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts 6\textsuperscript{th} to the 9\textsuperscript{th} Century* (London: Harvey Miller, 1978), p. 10.

there is no mistake – neither one letter too many, nor one too few – except that in
one place the letter I is missing’. Granted, as repeatedly stated, all evidence is based
on less than a third of the once-complete text.

Located along the head margin of folio 40r, are five letters in an insular
majuscule hand; a b (c or e) e and e (Fig. 3.52). The letters are undoubtedly a pen trial,
a device used by the scribe to test a newly trimmed quill pen, or alternatively for a
novice scribe to practise his letter forms. Lebor na Huidre or the Book of Dun Cow (RIA
MS 23 E 25), the late eleventh-century manuscript of Irish sagas, historical and
spiritual tracts and the legends of Irish Kings, written in the monastery Clonmacnoise,
Co. Offaly, displays on the top of page 55 Probatio pennae Maelmuiri (a trial of pen by
Mael Muire), the principal scribe of the manuscript. Although he wrote the text in
Irish, this trial was in Latin and probably an exercise Mael Muire had learned and
repeated many times as a novice monk being instructed in Latin and writing. Monastic
instruction in writing included at its base level the transcribing of the alphabet,
abecedarium, and this is reflected in the choice of letters with which the Faddan More
scribe chose to test his pen. An inscribed slate fragment from the monastic site at
Nendrum on Strangford Lough, Co. Down is believed to be a practice piece and is an
interesting parallel to the letters on folio 40r with the same opening alphabet letters b
and c scribed onto the slate (Fig. 3.53).

On the last extant line of folio 4v, Psalm 9.21 reads: super eos sciant gentes
quoniam homines sunt. The scribe omitted the word gentes and it was inserted above
the line in its intended position. The writing is more faint and lighter in colour -possibly
the work of the master scribe in his corrections of the text. Further up the folio on line
seven, the word cognoscetur is written with the n being omitted and inserted above
the word in a reduced size (Fig. 3.54). Recognising that trouble was taken to correct
the FMP text is another indicator of the manuscript being a product of a structured

---

Fergal McGrath, Education in Ancient and Medieval Ireland (Dublin: Studies, Special Publications, 1979),
p. 68.
monastic community, where the correction of texts was an integrated aspect of the production process.\textsuperscript{217}

On the recto of the same folio is the beginning of Psalm 9.2 Confitebor tibi Domine in corde meo. The scribe omits tibi and again it is inserted above the line in the correct position (Fig. 3.55). The observation here is that all interlinear corrections found in the surviving folia fragments of the FMP are on the one folio, namely folio 4. There are additional scribal errors present throughout the text, mostly relating to misspellings. (see appendix – Psalms). This does not suggest an incompetent scribe at work and the FMP displays a typical array of mistakes seen in the majority of early medieval manuscripts. It is possible that the correcting of the remaining Psalms never took place due to its premature deposition in the bog - examined in detail in chapter 7 - or as a result of structural damage and subsequent disposal (see chapter2).

In addition to the Nomina Sacra employed throughout and consistently, other words have been abbreviated in the FMP. In combination with abbreviations or sigla the expected use of ligatures is found in the insular tradition.\textsuperscript{218} The vast majority of the abbreviations employed for both whole words and syllables can be considered pan-insular and are listed as being in use in insular script before 850 CE.\textsuperscript{219} The list given in the appendices is not likely to be complete due to the often difficult to decipher writing in its current condition.

**Dating the FMP**

The FMP presents similar difficulties to most Irish early medieval manuscripts when attempting accurately to establish when it was written. Any definitive dating depends on a colophon providing either a date or the mention of a historically recorded individual as scribe or patron. A manuscript mentioned often in this thesis and generally held to have been produced in close proximity to Faddan More, the MacRegol Gospels, is an example of the latter, being linked to the abbot of Birr who died in 822. An inscription on the final folio asks for prayers for the scribe of the

---


\textsuperscript{219} David N. Dumville, *Abbreviations used in Insular Script before A.D. 850* (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic University of Cambridge, 2004).
manuscript, MacRegol. Interestingly, the inscription was not identified until the 19th century, when the link was made with the Birr MacRegol. Caution is required with such additions, as colophons are often altered, and examples of this are to be found in the Book of Durrow and in another midland manuscript near the find spot, the Book of Dimma. However, the FMP contains no such clues regarding scribes or patrons, indeed as already noted there is little or nothing in the way of text apart from the Psalms.

In the absence of direct evidence comparing features such as script and decoration with other extant manuscripts already dated to some degree of accuracy by scholarly study may be of some help. If we accept the deposition date to be circa 800 CE (see chapter 7) and consider a production period during the eighth century, this provides a chronological window in which to work. As was demonstrated in this chapter, the decorative features of FMP are sparse and interlace, the main element, is so commonplace with its application spanning the Middle Ages that it is of minimum use for accurate dating.

The insular display capitals in the FMP are, however a more productive indicator. As discussed, their combination of the curvilinear and geometric letters is represented in many early insular manuscripts. Charles-Edwards considers their use as an eighth century practice, but also tracks their evolution and decline, and places the examples in the MacRegol Gospels in the last phase. As was illustrated in this chapter, comparisons for the more geometric types similar to those in the FMP were found in among others the Book of Kells, the gospel book Cod. Sang. 51 and in the Echternach Gospels and this in general terms places the FMP in the second half of the eighth century. Although difficult to decipher clearly, I would suggest that untypically the geometric lettering on folio 1, Beatus vir, is not constrained inside a frame, but is apparently governed by a head-line. Higgitt observes this aspect of the geometric letters and comparing the Lindisfarne Gospels with the Book of Kells, states that, ‘Again in both the lines of lettering obey ruled head and foot lines. In Lindisfarne the letters float with some freedom between lines of red dots; in Kells letters are held

---

rigidly in place by the frames’. In this instance, I suggest that the FMP Beatus better fits the Lindisfarne model, the earlier of the two manuscripts. Gray lists a number of insular manuscripts that display this geometric form, again for the most part dating from the eighth century. She makes the additional observation that by this time ‘the round letter forms had been eliminated or squared up’. In the FMP’s Quid Gloriatur (psalm 51) we see a combination of the geometric and enlarged majuscule lettering. Higgitt uses the quality of the geometric lettering as a date indicator drawing attention to its decline, and also points to the MacRegol Gospels, describing the display capitals therein as ‘ponderous and unimaginative’. Whereas O’Neill in his assessment of the FMP’s drawn letters, comments on their quality referring to ‘some finely-drawn examples [that] follow a large initial’. Based on these criteria, the FMP may be placed before the MacRegol Gospels, dated before 822 CE.

Having established that the cover is a distinct object from the text-block, it cannot be used in dating the book. However, because of the unique circumstances of its discovery a dating method hitherto inapplicable to manuscripts may be applied to the FMP. As mentioned in the introduction, radiocarbon dating was carried out on a selection of components related to the archaeology of the book. The earliest dated material was from the vellum folia (see appendix) with a calendar range from 677 CE to 883 CE. Unfortunately, the science could not provide tighter parameters, although I understand that improved methods are currently providing a narrower range. So, if we consider a deposition date of circa 800 CE and allow for the manuscript to have been in use for some reasonable period of time - it would be reasonable to expect that the intentional disposal or deposition would be related to the usefulness of the psalter - then a production date in the mid eighth century is realistic. This would place the FMP somewhere between the Book of Durrow and the

---

223 Gray, A History of Lettering, p. 63
226 It is important to note that with C14 dating no mean can be extracted from the two projected dates and either extreme as well as any date between the two all have the same probability.
Conclusions

What can be deduced by examining the surviving contents of the FMP is how this early medieval manuscript is a ‘good fit’ in the corpus of insular books of the same epoch. It follows the conventions in relation to both palaeographical practice and decorative techniques, while also displaying some unusual elements to the script. As previously stated, when scrutinising this manuscript much is lost through the aggressive deterioration of the substrate of the vellum as a result of its prolonged submersion in the bog, but this does not prevent in-depth study of its characteristics, albeit requiring higher levels of concentration aided by some technology to enhance the heavily faded ink and pigments. The scribe of the FMP was clearly accomplished, and particular drawn initials demonstrate this well. *Caeli* at the beginning of Psalm 18 is for example a sophisticated and well-balanced execution of the first two letters. This skill is again manifest in *Nonne* from the start of Psalm 61.2, with a neat insertion of one N inside the other. The *Quid gloriatur* of Psalm 51 suggests a knowledge of a method practised in other insular manuscripts from a similar orbit, with the combined use of both insular and geometric letter forms in the one line of text. The untypical use of the half-circle additions inside the bow of letters suggests a short-lived convention of the scriptorium or a personal decorative feature of the scribe, as it is not seen elsewhere in extant insular texts until the twelfth century in *Lebor na hUidhre* and there are no features to suggest that the FMP was produced as late as that. Taking an overview of the initial letters, there appears to be a lack homogeneity, with variation in letter size, with two lines in height the chosen dimension for the majority, but three, five and values in between are also employed for the Psalm beginnings. There are also random stylistic appearances of particular features, such as diminuendo and the use of additional colour overlaying the ink of the drawn letter. When compared to manuscripts such as the Stowe Missal or the St. Gallen gospel book, the ‘randomness’ in the FMP is even more apparent. The drawing of the initials for the most part involves only the ink used for writing the text, apart from the marking of the ‘three fifties’. In this respect parallels could be drawn with the Book of Armagh or another manuscript that displays this feature and in addition, good parallels in its initial letter...

Book of Kells.
forms, viz. Ambrosiana C. 301. Inf, the so-called Milan Commentary, a commentary on the Psalms with old Irish glosses. The manuscript, similar in format to the FMP, was at one time in the library at Bobbio at the foot of Monte Penice in northern Italy. It was either written there by an Irish scribe or was brought from Ireland, possibly a product of Bangor or Leinster in the late eighth or early ninth century.228

All extant initials in the FMP fit Gumbert’s definition of what an initial is: ‘it occurs at the left-hand edge of the text area, and this makes it possible to give it a size of more than one unit of ruling’.229 The FMP initials also fit his criteria for an ‘instant initial’, i.e., the initial was written as the text was transcribed, not delayed to be filled in later with a space left vacant. Gumbert is convinced that this is a feature of the earlier manuscripts. A further observation of the FMP initials is that the continuing text is not in line with the top of the initial, but rather more typically half-way down its length and as such atypical.

It is evident that there was access to a standard palette of pigments to execute the additional decorative elements. These too followed insular convention as seen in the use of colour infills between letter spaces in Psalm 51. The use of interlace and lozenges inside framed borders as seen on folio 1 reinforce these credentials. The two surviving bird figures are well drawn with the bird form as part of the Q in Psalm 51 displaying an unusual zig-zag element, which has no known parallels. The body of the text is well spaced out on equally well spaced out hard point ruled lines on a generous sized folio albeit with narrow margins (see chapter 2), all of which suggest a considered production with the resources made available to ensure quality, despite its outwardly appearance, lacking as it does, any form of elaborate decorative binding or enclosure.

---

Chapter 4. The Binding of the Faddan More Psalter: Description and Origin.

The assessment process began almost immediately once the excavated manuscript had been retrieved from Faddan More bog by staff from the National Museum of Ireland. It was transported from North Tipperary to the Conservation Department in Collins Barracks, Dublin and over the weeks that followed, the Museum invited experts from different disciplines to examine the still saturated mound of manuscript and bog matter. One observation of particular interest was the nature of the binding enclosing this manuscript. Although it lay beneath the contents of the retrieved material, enough of it was exposed to allow some preliminary remarks. There was a consensus of opinion that the structure was not in any way typical of an insular binding from the early medieval period. This was premised on accepting the binding as being contemporary with the text block, as initial examination had placed the Psalter in the eighth or early ninth century (this dating is still considered to be accurate). The nature of the binding employed on the FMP has prompted broad speculation in relation to the origin of the manuscript. The similarity to structures more typically found in the early Christian period of the Eastern Mediterranean was for some unexpected, but no great revelation to those more informed. The reason for the latter is that the majority of extant early medieval manuscripts that come down to us in their original bindings (and this is a minute percentage of what existed originally) also display distinct technical features of the Coptic and Byzantine tradition.

Binding Description

The cover of the Faddan More Psalter is a semi-limp structure consisting of a single piece of vegetable tanned leather, measuring 330 x 530 mm, about 1.5 mm thick and from young cattle stock (Fig. 4.1). I identified the species under magnification and this was later confirmed by Dr Roy Thompson formerly of the Leather Conservation Centre in Northampton, England, who added that, based on common historical animal husbandry practice, the animal had been born in the spring and slaughtered in the autumn of the same year.\textsuperscript{230} This is supported through the archaeology of monastic

sites and in monastic laws, in which meat considered ‘winter food’. The conversion of raw animal hides to a stable versatile end product was highly developed by the time the binding of the FMP was produced. Vegetable tanning was one of the three widely-employed methods, the other two being tawing and chamoising. The process involved immersing the prepared pelt - which would have already gone through a de-hairing process either by chemical or mechanical means - in pits of an aqueous solution interspersed with layers of bark, often oak, leaves and other plant matter. The production of vellum and parchment cannot be considered a tanning method, because the skin remains vulnerable to putrefaction if re-wetted, as is evidenced by the condition of the vellum folia of the FMP. The archaeology of the FMP find spot also revealed additional material deposited around the general area. Among this material were fragments of a flat whitish substance, which after analysis was shown to be the degraded collagen of an animal pelt with hair roots and hair. Because the production of pelts with the hair still intact for items such as clothing and blankets did not involve tanning, the pelt, in the same manner as the vellum, could not survive the saturated conditions of the bog. A true leather on the other hand will withstand exposure to wet conditions - on occasion over extended periods of time. This too is evidenced by the survival of the FMP binding.

The leather cover has been scored at four points vertically, from top to bottom and on both sides, employing a blunt-edged tool and a straight-edge; the use of which is evidenced by the regularity of the score lines. The effect was to create a simple wrap or portfolio. The format of the binding in its closed form is 330 x 224mm, a height-to-width ratio of 1.47:1. The lower cover extends and is folded to form a flap that rests on the upper cover. The papillary layer or hair side of the leather is on the outside of the binding. This format is similar to the Islamic codex, albeit in a less refined and undecorated form. The adoption of the codex by the Arabs was strongly influenced by their conquest of Byzantium, Egypt and northern Africa in the mid-seventh century.

---

It is interesting to note that the first observed comparison to a structure similar to the binding of the FMP was the Nag Hammadi Codices from Egypt. The collection comprises of thirteen manuscripts dated to the mid fourth century CE and contains works of the Gnostic Gospels, within twelve codices and their bindings.

In the centre of the spine area of the FMP cover are two punched holes, approximately three millimetres in diameter, both equidistant from the head and tail respectively at eighty five millimetres. The holes were punched from the inside using a three-sided tool, which is confirmed by the orientation of the walls of the aperture. It is interesting to compare this feature to an observation made by Esther Cameron: ‘Awls for piercing leather, are traditionally shaped in cross section.’\(^\text{235}\) The holes themselves have an unused appearance with no evidence of ‘drag’ from any form of thong or tacket being passed through, as evidenced by all three edges of the aperture still coming together when compressed (Fig. 4.2). This supports the possibility that the five quires of the book block might not have been mechanically attached to the cover by any form of direct tacketing and that the cover served instead like a modern-day wallet-type folder, helping to keep the leaves together.

Both of the punched spine holes have four accompanying holes forming a square with the punched hole in the centre. The surrounding holes are much smaller and are positioned along the crease lines of the spine; their function, like the larger holes, is unclear to date, but could be considered as a form of primary tacketing. Similar ‘x’ tacket systems are employed in later limp binding structures with examples extant and housed in the Vatican Library.\(^\text{236}\) The method creates an ‘x’ pattern with the threads running diagonally across the spine at two stations. Examining the holes on the cover of the FMP, there appears to be a slight ‘drag’ in a similar diagonal direction for most of the four holes (Fig. 4.3). I have not as yet had the opportunity to examine these surviving manuscripts to establish the method employed, but two examples studied by Monica Langwe dating from the eighteenth century describe their use to attach the cover to the text block independent of the sewing.\(^\text{237}\) I would caution drawing any definitive conclusions given the time span between the Vatican


\(^{236}\) Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Arch. Cap. S. Pietro, Campomorto, libri di grani e bestiame 10

\(^{237}\) Monica Langwe, Limp Bindings from the Vatican Library (Mora: Langwe, 2013), p.37.
manuscripts and the FMP until earlier examples of the practice can be found. I have sketched a possible thread path to illustrate how this system might attach text block to cover. The use of diagonal stitching such as this served to attach an already sewn text block to the cover by catching the first and last quires with independent stitches forming the x pattern on the spine of the cover (Fig. 4.4). The bifolium 29-32 is part of the third quire of five, and as such would not be employed for this method of attachment. While the suggestion of a disconnect between the text block and the cover remains the most likely arrangement, the x pattern holes might offer evidence to the contrary. The examples I have found of its use are not a good fit for the reasons mentioned above and furthermore the date of their manufacture is later, adding for a need to err on the side of caution. However, because of the good alignment of the holes in both bifolio and cover, I shall keep an open mind and an open eye for examples that might be a better fit.

The edges of the cover are cut as opposed to having turn-ins (a feature where the leather is turned over on itself and stuck down on the inner face presenting a folded edge, common on a binding today). This is untypical and turn-ins on the covers of books are a feature that extends back to the development of the codex itself and continues to appear even on the most basic limp and semi-limp bindings. Its absence from the FMP cover must be considered a modification carried out later in its use. The outer surface of the leather has been coloured with a black pigment, some of which survived. After analysis, this was shown to be a vegetable charcoal or carbon black with a casein binder (milk proteins). Production of this deep black colour was known since ancient times, as its use was not only as a pigment but as a writing ink. More typically, the binder would be a form of gum, such as gum arabic. This ink/pigment does not fix itself permanently to its substrate and in effect sits on the surface, hence it is usually lacking on archeologically retrieved leather. Its partial survival on the cover of the FMP was unexpected.

Attached to the extending flap of the binding are three buttons made of horn, each held in place by a tanned leather thong passing through four holes in the button

---

239 Avrin, Scribes, Script and Books, p. 214.
and knotted on the inside (Fig. 4.5). As a readily available material from both domestic and native wild animals, horn has a long history of use in Ireland, often for domestic wares such as utensils and cups, which took advantage of the natural shape and form of the animal horn. It is a non-shedding cuticle composed of keratin and is naturally hollow, as it forms a sheath over a horn-core, which projects from the skull of the animal. In order to produce the flat disc shape for the buttons, either the base of the horn would be used, which is solid and could be cut and then easily shaped, or a sheet of horn would be produced by heating, cutting and flattening out the horn from its cylindrical shape. After allowing it to cool, the disc shapes can be cut from the sheet.

The location of the buttons on the flap is unusual and other examples of this style of binding from later centuries tend to have the buttons located on the spine or on the upper cover. Typically for this system, the button acts as an anchor point for a strap or thong which has one end fixed to the cover and functions by wrapping around the book, often more than once, and locking on the button. One might also expect some form of compensation or up-stand between the underside of the button and the cover, to allow a thong or strap, often of leather, to be secured beneath. The buttons on the FMP cover however are tight to the cover. Even allowing for some swelling during its extended wet state, the most that could be accommodated would be a thin thread. There is no evidence of this system having been in place with no visible marks on the cover where a thread, cord or thong would have left an impression. Given the format of this codex, the use of three closing straps seems excessive, further adding to the conclusion that the buttons are decorative rather than functional. The knotting on the underside of the leather flap holding the buttons in position is consistent for all three and remains intact; the centre button is pointed while the other two are round as demonstrated by a model I made (Fig. 4.6). This appears to be deliberate and is thus a design feature. Though its meaning is uncertain, the number three is one of the more significant numbers in Christian numerology: the Trinity of the three divine

240 Arthur MacGregor, Bone, Antler, Ivory and Horn: the technology of skeletal materials since the Roman period (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 20
241 MacGregor, Bone, Antler, Ivory and Horn, p. 66.
242 Medieval examples of this style can be found in the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Germany HAB Cod. Guelf 29.4. Aug. 4°, HAB Cod. Guelf 931 Helms.
persons in the one God, the number three is the first of the four perfect numbers and is said to denote divine perfection.

The inside surface of the cover is in a more advanced stage of deterioration, as the exposed flesh side of the skin lacks the protection of the tighter packed fibres on the top surface of the dermal layer. A certain degree of delamination had taken place over time, leaving the surface uneven and varying in thickness. At the period of its manufacture, this inner surface was lined with at least one layer of papyrus, employing an adhesive, either starch-based or an animal glue. The intention here was to produce a stiffer cover that would allow it to be folded in order to produce semi-rigid covers to protect the contents within. The examination of the inner surface of the cover resulted not only in the discovery of fragments of a papyrus lining but also three random lines of writing in the same majuscule hand used for the text block. These were examined by some members of the Faddan More Steering Committee while the cover was still in its saturated state and the writing clearer. Unfortunately, the highly degraded condition of both the substrate and ink made any positive deciphering impossible. There was a consensus that one word was likely to be filium, but the identification of whose son, was frustratingly illegible (Fig. 4.7). Equally intriguing is the fact that the writing is directly on the degraded flesh surface of the leather. This indicates that the papyrus lining was stripped off while the cover was still in use rather than dissolving away in the bog.

The general appearance of the cover is that of a much-used item and one that had a multi-functional purpose in the monastery, the most likely location of its home. One of the uses appears to have been as a support for the creasing, ruling and even cutting of the vellum folia for production of manuscripts. The evidence for this is in the form of a random series of impressed lines on the outer surface produced with an appropriate tool and a straight-edge. Their appearance is enhanced due to the survival of the black pigment in the trough of the impression. It appears that these lines are the ‘shadow’ from the process of ruling and perhaps folding the vellum folia in preparation for writing the text (Fig. 4.8). The leather cover would have been employed beneath the prepared skins as a base. In an insular tradition, several skins

243 Mr Raghnall Ó Floinn, Dr Bernard Meehan, Mr Eamonn Kelly
were often ruled at a time, by stacking them in a pile (see chapter 2). In practical terms, the leather acted as a surface that allowed heavy pressure to indent down to the bottom skin without damage. Some of these lines appear as a set of close parallel lines and may be the result of ruling the vertical bounding lines, which were sometimes double, although they are closer together than would be expected. Incisions on the surface indicate the use of a cutting tool, also with the aid of a straight-edge, and these do not penetrate the full thickness of the leather. These cuts are most likely the result of the cover being at the bottom of a pile of vellum folia being trimmed before writing (Fig. 4.9).

To expand on the apparent multi-functional nature of the cover, several randomly-placed incised trial motifs are seen across its outer surface of the cover. The patterns were created by a sharp instrument being drawn over the surface, both freehand and with the aid of instruments such as a straight-edge, particularly for borders but not exclusively so. This work had the effect of marking the surface but also of removing the colour layer and exposing the natural leather colour beneath. In many instances the drawing line cuts through the grain layer of the leather, and the cut is very fine and almost scalpel-like, (this unexpected feature is examined separately in chapter 5). There are several curved striations on both sides of the skin, these are related to its manufacture and the scraping process called ‘scudding’ to de-hair the skin on the upper surface and remove any fatty substances from the flesh side. A two-handed blunt-edged knife is thought to have been the tool of choice - an example of such a knife was excavated at Pompeii.

On the outer/hair side, a number of blemishes are visible, circular in shape with a diameter of between 3-5mm and slightly raised off the surface. Roy Thomson examined the defects and identified them as likely to be a form of wart. This type of infection was caused by a strain of virus and may be passed on to the cattle in a

---

number of ways including by insects carrying the virus. It is interesting to note that young cattle are particularly vulnerable, which agrees with Thomson’s observation on the age of the FMP leather.

In addition to the warts, a series of holes in the skin, with diameters up to 5mm, were identified as the ‘exit holes’ of the warble fly, a typical infestation of cattle up to the present day. The process begins when the adult female lays her eggs on the leg of the animal during summer. When hatched, the larvae burrow through the skin layers of the host and over several months make their way up to the spine area. During this process they produce a lump with a hole which is used for breathing and these are identified as the smaller holes in the leather. When fully developed, the grub emerges and drops to the ground to pupate for over a month before a new adult emerges.

There are several long splits in the leather, most of them corresponding to the score lines of the cover, this being the hinging area and as such subject to a higher degree of wear and tear. The score line between the flap and the front cover is split for over fifty percent of its length. There are other shorter splits, not related to the score lines; these start at the edges of the cover and are mostly, but not entirely, at the head. Other trauma on the body of the cover includes a large crescent-shaped split - rather jagged in form - on the front cover, and a smaller jagged split on the back. It appears that the jagged splits are recent and would have occurred during the unintentional unearthing of the manuscript by the backhoe bucket. However, the vast majority of the remaining splits are of some age and their appearance suggests their presence long before deposition of the manuscript in the bog. This is evidenced by the worn and rounded edges at the start of the splits, indicating that the area has been exposed to contact and abrasion over a long period. Overall the cover displays the signs of heavy and extensive use prior to its long immersion in the bog. The surviving pigment also indicates considerable use of the cover where strategic wear to the pigment and the leather beneath correspond with typical handling and carrying of a book of this format (Fig. 4.10). This typical ‘grip’ is illustrated on the pages of another Irish manuscript from almost the same period, the manuscript being held by the

evangelist Luke in the Macdurnan Gospels (London, Lambeth Palace, MS 1370). Here, Luke’s hand is in the same location as the wear pattern on FMP cover, and his book cover also has a flap and three buttons (Fig. 4.11).248 A more detailed description is given in the following section.

Given the Irish location of the FMP and its cover and its place of origin notwithstanding, inclusion of another iconic keeper of the Irish manuscript needs mentioning, namely the book-satchel or budget. Because there are similarities in the basic form of construction and in the materials employed to produce them it is interesting to make a comparison. A single piece of material, tanned leather is creased and folded to complete the construction, albeit a more complex exercise for the satchel. Three extant Irish satchels typically referenced around this subject are the Breac Moedóic, the Corpus Christi budget and the Armagh Satchel. The first two date from the eighth to tenth centuries, while the Armagh Satchel possibly post-dates its contents by six hundred years, placing it in the fifteenth century (Fig.4.12).249 Comparisons with the cover of the FMP were promptly identified and Mark Clark drew attention to similarities in 2008, not long after the conservation process of manuscript had begun.250

In the early stages of the conservation, I produced a close facsimile of the leather cover of the FMP, complete with surface dyeing, folding creases, papyrus lining and horn buttons and, in addition an accurate tracing of all the surviving text fragments onto a heavy paper representative of an intact vellum text block was also produced (Fig.4.13). Over the past eight years I have carried this model to the numerous talks and lectures, and encouraged its handling by the audience, while at the same time deliberately avoiding any extra care in its handling, storage or transport. This was to observe how the structure stood up to the rigors of everyday life and in particular with its ill-fitting contents. The results so far confirm a similar bowing on the spine of the cover due to the leaves within not filling the form. No splits

248 Mac Durnan Gospels, f. 115v.
or weakening along crease lines have occurred thus far, suggesting that it would require considerable time and use to produce those present on the cover of the FMP. I will continue to use and abuse my copy and observe developments.

The literary sources also inform us of the use of satchels, with a mention in the *Hesperica Famina*, as referenced in the Introduction, is a seventh-century work likely produced in Ireland as an aid to learning Latin. The text includes a typical day’s activity and as such describes a wealth of social events of the time. Lines 262-264 instructs; ‘Hang your white booksacks on the wall, set your lovely satchels in a straight line, so that they will be deemed a grand sight by the rustics’. Line 508 describes the adornments of an individual notes ‘...and carry bright booksacks around their necks’. My observation here is that there are clear structural differences between both items despite their identical function. The complexity in manufacturing the book satchel, as expertly demonstrated by John Waterer, displays the level of craft skills necessary and how at variance this is with the making of the cover of the FMP. It does nonetheless demonstrate the high degree of skill and craft in leatherworking at that time in Ireland. I did, however, note a common factor in another detailed description of a book satchel in *Hesperica*, although its meaning is not entirely clear. It reads ‘...a single opening, which is closed by a tight covering with many-angled turning knobs, then bound with twelve cords’. This brings to mind the three buttons on the cover of the FMP and the speculation that if they had a function, it would be to lock leather cords in position after wrapping around the cover. Perhaps the non-functioning buttons/knobs of the FMP were attached to mimic the look of a book satchel.

**Comparative bindings for the Faddan More Psalter**

This section examines similar book bindings or covers to the FMP and will endeavour to draw comparisons regarding form and context. Intentionally, medieval manuscripts originating in the West are for the most part bound in parchment and defined as ‘limp’ or semi-limp’ bindings and have been excluded from scrutiny here. This is because this

---


Western limp structure, developed from the tenth century on²⁵⁴ and was not directly influenced by the Near Orient, which was the inspiration and possible origin of the FMP cover. Although the term ‘limp’ has been applied to the FMP cover, it is a term of convenience and not all comparable material with a similar definition but different chronology can be considered an homogeneous classification. It becomes noteworthy that the dearth of Western limp structures from the time of the FMP to the beginning of their use in the tenth century further suggests a lack of continuity. Comparative material has been selected from the ninth century at the latest in relation to Western structures, here caution is required as many ninth-century texts are not within ninth-century covers, a fact not always conveyed in library catalogues. Mention of later material is brief and chosen for particular codicological similarities to the FMP.

The Nag Hammadi Library consists of thirteen codices, eleven of which retain their original bindings. The manuscripts were discovered in a jar at the foot of the Jabal al-Tarif site in the cliffs along the Nile in northern Upper Egypt by Mohammed Ali al-Samman in December 1945.²⁵⁵ The content of the Coptic manuscripts includes a large number of Gnostic scriptures, a complex religious and heretical movement of the second century CE. The theological content has both Christian and non-Christian elements, and scholars date the ‘Library’ to the second half of the fourth century. The bindings are often reported as being mostly ‘sheepskin and some goatskin’.²⁵⁶ This identification is open to doubt, as codicological examination of the Nag Hammadi bindings has been scant and the identification of sheep and goat is historically difficult due to their similar follicle pattern. The situation is further complicated by the cross-breeding of the two species in this part of the world for many centuries and the existence of a breed of sheep known as hair sheep.²⁵⁷ All but three of the bindings are made from a single piece of leather and all but two employ a fore edge-flap as an extension of the lower cover which is brought around and rests on the upper cover. Each flap has attached a long strip of leather which wraps horizontally around the book. Additional straps attached at the head and tail, wrap vertically around the book

²⁵⁴ Szirmai, The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding, p. 286.
keeping it tightly closed. Some straps are attached to the cover by a running stitch, while others appear to be inserted into a slot in the leather and are presumably glued down on the inside surface. The flaps are either triangular or rectangular, the latter matching the format on FMP’s cover. All the bindings employ generous turn-ins, a feature lacking on the FMP binding. Beneath the turn-ins a lining of papyrus was adhered in place, although all have now been stripped out. These multi-layered sheets were manuscript waste, and scholars were quick to remove them for study after their discovery, without any proper recording taking place. The remaining fragments bear evidence of their crude removal. The outer surface of some of the covers has been decorated with simple blind line tooling, apart from one (codex II), which displays a more complex pattern and the use of colour. All covers housed single-quire codices of papyrus, apart from codex I, which has three quires. Their attachment generally consisted of two rolled leather thongs passing through the centre fold of the quire and through a secondary strip of leather which was stuck down on the inside along the spine of the cover. The thongs would either pass on through the spine of the cover itself and be knotted on the outside, or, for a more aesthetically pleasing effect, stitched to a separate strip of leather, which was then stuck down on the inside of the cover resulting in no knots being visible on the outside of the cover (Fig. 4.14). Szirmai attempted to group the bindings into different classifications based on their technical details. His second group, codices VI, IX, X and possibly II, best fits the FMP binding type, having rectangular flaps and a lack of decoration (apart from codex II).  

The Nag Hammadi codices may be considered the antecedent of all similar structures by which the lineage of this format is traced and this now includes the binding of the FMP.

With so few surviving binding structures from the first centuries of Christianity, it is helpful to find another example outside the Nag Hammadi Library but with a similar date span, location and structural features. One such example is the leather cover of a manuscript (BNF MS suppl. Gr. 1120), known as the Philo Codex, after Philo of Alexandria (20BCE – 40CE) a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher and prolific writer from a wealthy family.  

---

258 Szirmai, The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding, p. 11.
used as flyleaves, containing parts of the gospels of Matthew and Luke, pre-dating the codex itself, possibly from the late second or early third century. The manuscript was discovered in a niche in a wall in Coptos in Upper Egypt in the late nineteenth century and is currently thought to date from the third century.\textsuperscript{260} It is a multi-quired papyrus book with additional papyrus waste, believed to be employed as a lining. With a format of 178 x 165mm, a height to width ratio of 1.07:1, it is an almost square format. This is to be expected, as the early codices tended to echo the square format of the \textit{rotuli} which they were for the most part replacing. The constructional details are identical to the majority of the Nag Hammadi Library codices and by extension, the FMP binding, in that they are constructed from a single piece of vegetable tanned leather folded with a flap as an extension of the back cover that folds onto the front and is secured by a leather strap, still extant in the case of the Philo Codex. The manuscript housed four quires, with evidence of the sewing structure remaining (Fig. 4.15).

The next extant example comes from the first quarter of the eighth century and as such is closer in date to the binding of the FMP. British Library Papyrus 1442 is an imperfect codex, containing a tax register from Arab Egypt written for the most part in Greek but with Coptic place-names. Although the use of Greek declined after the Arab conquest of Egypt in 642, the Greek language continued, particularly for administrative purposes.\textsuperscript{261} The extant text block consists of thirty-three folia and fragments: additional leaves from the codex are preserved in Berlin (P. Berol. Inv. 25006). The material is papyrus and the format is 340 x 250mm, a ratio of 1.36:1. Much of the original binding for this codex survives, albeit detached from the text block. It is a single piece of leather designated as goatskin, but with the same caveat as with the Nag Hammadi covers. It constitutes a front cover, a narrow spine, a back cover and a flap. The narrow spine and the single set of direct tacket holes indicates a single-quire codex. The flap as an extension of the back cover differs from both the Nag Hammadi codices and the FMP in its form. The profile is stepped, narrowing to the front edge. Unlike the FMP binding, the leather does not appear to have been


scored to define the different components of the cover and to assist with hinging during use. Instead it has been folded, resulting in more rounded hinging points. The edges have turn-ins similar to those of the Nag Hammadi bindings with generous margins. The inner surface is lined with papyrus in what appears to be two separate pieces, leaving the area of the spine unlined. This mirrors some but not all of the Nag Hammadi structures and would have been an intentional decision by the bookbinder, allowing more flexibility in the spine region, where it is most critical. The spine area displays a series of holes related to the attachment of the single papyrus quire by direct tacketing. The original number of holes can only be estimated, due to a large missing area at the tail and a smaller loss at the head of the cover. The eight extant holes are quite consistent in size and shape, and, interestingly, they appear similar to the two holes in the spine of the FMP cover, with three sides to the aperture. Unlike the FMP holes, however, they show signs of use, with the edges pushed up and out as a result of the thongs - most likely strips of tanned leather - being passed through the cover from the centre of the quire and knotted on the outside. The groupings of the holes suggest repairs over the years as perhaps more folia were added, a likely situation for a tax register, or as a result of the papyri leaves detaching and being resewn through a new set of tacket holes. The grouping consists of four holes on a vertical axis separated by a few centimeters and above this on the same axis, the remaining four holes are in two groupings, with the holes in each group only a few millimetres apart. The surface of the covers is decorated by drawing with ink or dye that appears to be black in colour. For each cover the decorative pattern consists of three double-lined panels of decreasing size placed inside each other. The space between the panels is filled with loose spiral patterns and dots. In the centre of the panel on the front / left hand cover is a six-pointed star inside a double-lined circle, the space between the points of the star being decorated with dots. There may have been similar decoration on the back / right hand cover, but severe damage has blackened and distorted the leather, making it impossible to clarify. The leather surface of the cover has a red/brown colour and this could be the natural colour of the skin as a result of the ingredients of the tanning infusion (Fig. 4.16).

In seventh-century Egypt before the Arab invasion of 641 CE, Egyptian monasticism was the basis of the Coptic Church. During the early stages of Arab rule,
the Copts enjoyed greater religious freedom than they had known under the Byzantines. They were no longer considered heretics but were now dhimmis, protected non-Muslims. However, they were still a subject people and were assessed for an annual poll tax as non-Muslims. During the eighth and ninth centuries, due to a combination of many conversions of Copts to Islam and intensive Arab migration to Egypt, the Copts became a minority people and were considered second-class citizens.

Two revolts sparked by their treatment were put down in the early ninth century, and a decline in the religion and language gathered momentum in the centuries that followed. It is highly plausible that British Library Papyrus 1442 was registering taxes collected from the Copts and Coptic Church during its use in the early eighth century.

Because of the geographical area of interest and some technical features matching the cover of the FMP, the following additional extant material is offered.

Although it consists of fragmentary pieces, it is relevant in strengthening the argument for a flap-type cover being typical and widespread in Coptic Egypt over an extended period of time. As a result of an archaeological investigation of the leather finds from the Coptic Monastery of Deir el-Bachit, which stands on the hilltop of Dra’ Abu el-Naga in Qurna (West Bank of Luxor), several book cover fragments were identified. The collection consisted of sixty-three pieces, undated but believed to be from between the 6th and 9th centuries, matching the active period of the monastery. All but the very small pieces display some form of decoration, and this mostly takes the form of parallel impressed lines. The arrangement of the lines confirms them as intended decorative features. The majority of all fragments have also remnants of papyrus adhered to the inner, flesh side surface. In the few cases where edges have survived, the bindings have turn-ins, the noted feature lacking on the FMP cover. One of the larger pieces (Cat. No.120, Find No. DB2146) includes a flap-type arrangement and a leather strap attached with a running stitch. The piece is described as, ‘a thin semi-circular fragment that is black on the obverse (outside) and brown on the reverse (inner side)’, which matches the colouring on the FMP. Veldmeijer observes that ‘The

---

262 Gabra, Coptic Monasteries Egypt’s Art and Architecture, p. 16.
book cover leather has not been identified, but possibly is calfskin judging the thickness of some', \(^{264}\) again matching the FMP cover.

The next manuscript scrutinised affirms knowledge of limp binding structures in Ireland in the eighth century. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, F III 15d is a manuscript of Fulda provenance but likely to be of Irish origin. The grammatical manuscript is written in an insular minuscule hand in two columns per folio and presents as its main text *De vitiis (*linguae*), which it attributes to an *Isidorus iunior*, the Codex Unicus. The Anglo-Saxon monastery founded by St. Strum under instruction of St. Boniface in Fulda in the mid-eighth century, located in the modern German state of Hesse, is known to have hosted Irish *Peregrini* monks\(^{265}\) and this is affirmed by the presence of the manuscript. Its format is 275 x 245mm, a height-to-width ratio of 1.12:1 There are two quires, a quinion and a ternion with a total of 16 folia, there is no back flyleaf and the front flyleaf is the first folio of the first quire. The Irish tradition of ignoring the conventions in assembling their quires even manifests itself in a simple two-quire arrangement of 16 folia. The contemporary cover is a single piece of vellum, probably calfskin; the skin displays ‘insular characteristics’ and is thick, with a leather-like quality, more flexible than Continental vellum and slightly brownish in colour (Fig. 4.17). The covering material of the manuscript corresponds to Ronald Reed’s description of early vellum making and the quality of the end product:

Where the medieval parchment makers were greatly superior to their modern counterparts was in the control and modification of the ground substance in the pelt, before the latter was stretched and dried. The inclusion of oils, fats, aluminium salts and vegetable tannins in the pelt structure, coupled with a more deliberate control of the drying rate, meant that the dried ground substance had different water-absorption properties in the final parchment. The fats and oils also had tanning, fat-liquoring and lubricative action on the pelt fibres so that limp and more flexible forms of stable vellum, such as are ideal for book covers were produced.\(^{266}\)

---

\(^{264}\) Veldmeijer, *Sandals Shoes and other Leatherwork*, p. 15.


This structure is the simplest of affairs and in effect is a ‘wrap’ for the two quires. There is no scoring of the surface to delineate the two covers from the spine area. The dimensions are barely sufficient to enclose the text block with resulting damage to the edges of many of the folia within. There are no turn-ins, as in the FMP structure, with the cut edges to view. The spine area displays at least six and possibly more holes, some of which have extended into slits as a result of the primary tacket material cutting through the vellum. The two extant vegetable fibre threads visible on the spine are not contemporary either with the cover or the text block. This attachment method is best described as a basic form of primary tacketing. Berthe Van Regemorter included a description of the structure in an article she wrote for Scriptorium in 1957:

La couture passe en même temps dans l’interieur des cahiers et dans la couvrure. Les deux fils sont visibles sur une distance d’environ 30mm et se trouvent à peu près à 55mm de la tête et de la queue. Travail assez primitif.

The cover lacks any decoration and is clearly a utilitarian structure, which perhaps was never intended to be a permanent housing for the manuscript, a theory that has also been postulated for the binding of the FMP. The relevance of this cover as part of the comparative structures against which to compare the binding of the FMP lies in its provenance as an Irish composition of a similar date, manufactured from a single piece of material and entirely utilitarian in its function.

Another manuscript present in the Fulda library at that time may be noted: the Cadmug Gospels (Fulda, Landesbibliothek Codex Bonifatianus 3), a ‘pocket gospel’ of the late eighth century with Irish glosses and colophon of the scribe, ‘cadmug scripsit’. It is uncertain where this manuscript was written, whether in Fulda or in Ireland, but it does present us with a relevant technical feature. The Cadmug Gospels is thought to be in a contemporary binding and although structurally it has little in common with the FMP it does mimic a ‘Coptic’ binding system, particularly in relation to the sewing methods employed.


Szirmai, The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding, p.97.
The next example is again from Fulda. *Admonitio generalis*, (Cod. Guelf. 496a Helmst,) is a late-eighth or early-ninth-century manuscript. The content of the manuscript includes as part of the ‘General advice’; interpretation of the Lord’s Prayer, a strong emphasis on order, uniformity and proper discipline within the church as well as learning and literacy. It is one of the earliest books copied at Fulda. 271 The manuscript contains three quires with a total of twenty-six folia. The inner face of the back cover forms part of the manuscript text block as a fully written folio and is in effect f. 27r. The generously spaced long-line text is written in an Anglo-Saxon minuscule. However, the marginalia and glosses, considered contemporary, are in an insular minuscule hand, and some insular abbreviation symbols are included. The vellum is described as ‘prepared in the insular fashion’.272 The binding is a single piece of material, in this instance calfskin vellum. The binding appears to have been creased at the hinging points or joints, rather than deliberately scored. The front joint now forms a defined hinging point through use, the rear joint, however has a more rounded form, as typically there is minimum flexing here with normal use of the manuscript. The format is 260 x 160mm, a height-to-width ratio of 1.62:1. The binding, as in the Basel manuscript, is economic in its format and is more or less the same size as the text block. There are no turn-ins and no fore-edge flap. Missing areas and modern repairs to damage are visible, particularly at the top corner of the front cover. The three quires are attached to the binding, employing a type of primary sewing (Fig. 4.18). This style is defined by Szirmai as ‘limp binding structures where the cover attachment has been carried out simultaneously with the sewing of the book block’.273 Judging by the thickness and brightness of the sewing threads, it may be surmised that this is not contemporary with the manuscript, although the original sewing holes/stations have been reused.

The relevance of *Admonitio generalis* in relation to the FMP binding, apart from the limp structure and similar date of manufacture, is in the attachment exit holes on the spine of the binding. Here there are three sets of four holes, one set more or less in the centre of the spine and the other two outboard of this approximately

equidistant but away from the head and tail. The layout of each set of three holes places them along the hinging or joint of the cover, two on the front joint and two on the rear joint and facing each other forming a rectangle. The threads from the current sewing exit and enter two holes diagonally forming an ‘X’ pattern across the spine. It cannot be certain that this is the original method employed, but the positioning and number of each set of holes does mirror the two sets of smaller holes found on the spine of the FMP binding as was discussed earlier in its description. Given there are no additional holes on the spine of the Admonitio generalis manuscript, it is reasonable to assume that they are original and were a result of the first primary sewing or primary tacketing of the text block to the cover. This in turn offers a plausible explanation for the seemingly redundant holes on the binding of the FMP.

The final comparative manuscript is Bodleian Library, MS. Marshall 19, written in the ninth century, most likely at the Benedictine Abbey of St Médard at Soissons in Northern France. Although the manuscript dates from the late ninth century, there are additions to the text from the tenth and early thirteenth centuries when it was first at St Aldhelm at Malmesbury and later at St Augustine’s in Canterbury. It is thought however that it may have been imported from France into Anglo-Saxon England. The manuscript contains Jerome’s Latin translation of treatise by Philo Judaeus, Interpreatatio nominum Hebraicorum. There are forty-two folia in six quires of four quaternions and two ternions written in two columns. The covering, which is generally accepted to be contemporary with the manuscript, is a single piece of thick tawed leather described in the Marshall catalogue as ‘rough sheepskin’. The binding style is in the same fashion as the FMP cover, the lower cover is extended and forms a rectangular flap that covers the fore-edge and rests on the upper cover. The format of the closed manuscript is 290 x 200mm, a height-to-width ratio of 1.45:1, a very similar ratio to the FMP. The flap of MS Marshall 19 is not sculpted, again mirroring the FMP. The outer surface lacks any decoration, apart from a label with a later shelf mark which adheres to the bottom of the spine. A feature of this limp binding not seen in other examples, are the remains of a tab, or extension of the leather, at the head of the spine, reminiscent of Carolingian hard board binding

structures but without its functional purpose, given that the edges of the cover are flush with the text block. There is no tab at the tail, presumably lost due to contact with the book shelf (Fig. 4.19). There are three braided cords attached to the flap, all of which have been cut back to their attachment points. Attachment of each cord to the flap was achieved by what appears to be a widely-spaced running stitch using a thinner version of the cord tie. The function of the cords was to secure the closure of the book by fastening around three aligned buttons located on the front cover about two thirds of the way across. All three buttons are now lost, but a clear imprint of their form remains, as does a four-hole pattern where each button was sewn to the leather cover. The diamond-shape pattern is identical to the attachment system employed for the FMP buttons. The impression left in the surface of the leather suggests slightly smaller buttons than those on the FMP (Fig. 4.20).

The proportions of the flap to the cover on both the FMP and MS Marshall 19 are very similar with the flap accounting for about one third of the width of the front cover. The attachment of the six quires to the cover is by primary sewing. The link-stitch sewing uses five equally-spaced stations which are visible on the spine of the limp binding; the change-over stations at the head and tail are not visible, as they do not penetrate the spine leather. There is mention of unused holes located in the centre of the quires, most likely as a result of quire tackets, used to keep a quire together while awaiting sewing. On examining this binding in 1982, Jean Vezin (Directeur d'Etudes à l'école pratique des hautes études, Paris) made the following summary in relation to the study of limp bindings:

*Nos bibliothèques conservent actuellement en assez grand nombre des reliures souples des XV et XVI siècles, dont certaines sont construites suivant une technique analogue à celle qui est employée dans le manuscrit d'Oxford. Pour les époques antérieures, seuls quelques spécimens subsistent, ce qui rend leur recherche d'autant plus importante, car il est vraisemblable qui cette méthode économique de couvrir les livres a été beaucoup plus utilisée que ne le laisseraient supposer les rares exemples que nous connaissons*.

275 Jean Vezin,’ Une Reliure carolingienne de cuir souple’, *Revue Francaise d’histoire du livre* No 36 (Bordeaux: Societe des Bibliophiles de Guyenne, 1982), p. 239.

276 Vezin, P. 241.
Unsurprisingly, my efforts to locate early medieval bindings with similar structural features to that of the FMP did not unearth a plethora of semi-limp covers with fore-edge flaps. The ephermal nature of this format of binding no doubt encouraged its replacement with the more elaborate Western hard-board structures which developed and gained popularity from the ninth century on.\textsuperscript{277} This circumstance further emphasises the codicological importance of the FMP cover. There can be little doubt, however, that these bindings did exist in much greater numbers and, as evidenced by the examples here, were geographically spread across the the literate world.

**Iconographical examples of the Faddan More Psalter style binding**

In addition to identifying extant examples of the type of semi-limp binding with some or all of the features of the FMP structure, an attempt can be made to identify this structure through illustrations in contemporary media as an additional source of collateral evidence. Representations of the FMP-type cover can be seen in depictions of the book in early medieval art, in certain iconographic images in the pages of manuscripts. This is particularly significant because it connects the contents of the FMP as an essential Christian text to the specific type of cover depicted on the folia of Christian books, therefore putting both the image and the FMP in context.

It is likely that the use of vellum for the folia of manuscripts throughout the medieval period prompted the addition of methods to keep the contents under pressure between the covers. Vellum and parchment are hygroscopic and will react, often dramatically, to a rise or drop in humidity, distorting and curling, usually towards the hair side. It is clear that these manuscripts were for the most part working texts as part of the liturgy or with a didactic function. They would not have been stored in the highly controlled conditions that the surviving manuscripts of today find themselves in. As a result, there would be a need to restrain movement within the text block, particularly with the larger format manuscripts. The use of these fore-edge flaps and later metal-work clasps would help achieve this.

The first example comes from an Irish manuscript dating from the late ninth or early tenth century, the Mac Durnan Gospels. An inscription on one folio (f. 3v) informs us that Máel Brigit mac Tornán (Mac Durnan), who either commissioned or wrote the manuscript, dedicated this book to God. Mac Durnan was abbot of Armagh from circa 888 till his death in 927.\textsuperscript{278} The inscription also records that the manuscript was given to King Athelstan of England, possibly as a gift and Athelstan in turn bequeathed the manuscript to Christ Church, Canterbury.\textsuperscript{279} The Latin vulgate gospel measures 159 x 110mm and therefore falls under the category of a pocket Gospel. It is written in an Irish minuscule hand with some decorated pages. In addition to the four evangelist portrait pages, other illumination includes an introductory cross page with the evangelist symbols. Of interest in the context of FMP is the St Luke portrait (f.115v). Standing inside a broad frame with ‘L’ shaped interlace panels at each corner and two fretwork panels each side, Luke holds a white crozier in his right hand and a book in his left hand, held by the spine with very long fingers and facing out to the viewer. Gripping the book by the spine would be a natural way to support it, and with the front of the book facing outward, as the artist intended it, displays three large black dots aligning with the fore-edge depicting three buttons on a flap. The flap itself differs from the FMP version, in that the edge is profiled around the form of each button resulting in a scalloped edge. On closer examination of the three buttons on Luke’s book, it can be seen that the centre button comes to a point while the other two have a round form (Fig. 4.11). This resembles the form of the FMP buttons as mentioned earlier. It can also be noted that the size of the book depicted in the Luke portrait is a large-format manuscript on a scale with the FMP.

The second manuscript of interest is the Cadmug Gospels (Landesbibliothek, Codex Bonifatianus 3) another Vulgate Gospel of the ‘pocket’ type measuring c. 125 x 112mm. It is written in both single and double columns in an Irish minuscule hand. The Gospel contains old Irish glosses believed to be contemporary with the main text.\textsuperscript{280}


\textsuperscript{280} Kuno Meyer, ‘Neuaufgefundene altirische Glossen’, Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie 8 (London:
An inscription on f. 65r ‘Do gratias ago cadmug scribsit’ gives the manuscript its name. It is not certain if the colophon of this Irish scribe was transferred from its exemplar or relates specifically to the manuscript. There is some notion that it was written before the death of St Boniface (d. 754) after whom it is named. The manuscript is dated to the second half of the eighth century. Illumination of the Cadmug Gospel includes four evangelist portraits and their incipit pages opposite. The portraits look very similar with not much distinction between the four. There are no symbols, rather the evangelist’s name is written beside each portrait as an aid to identification. In matching stylised dress, the four figures are presented facing forward and standing inside a decorated frame with their feet extending beyond the lower end of the frame. Each evangelist is holding a sceptre in his right hand and a book in his left. The book is gripped at the tail with the same distinctive long fingers as seen in Mac Durnan’s Luke portrait, again orientating the book with the spine down and the fore-edge up. In all four images there is the same sculpted type flap observed in Mac Durnan and in three of the four the three buttons are also illustrated. An inner frame of three sides runs close to the head, fore-edge and tail of the book which might be an attempt to give a three-dimensional aspect to the drawing. The absence of buttons from Luke’s book may be an oversight rather than something intentional, as there is a considered effort to match all four portraits in every other detail (Fig. 4.21). The Cadmug Gospel in effect provides four examples of the style of binding represented by the FMP.

Another Irish pocket gospel book, measuring c175 x 142mm, provides a third example, the Book of Dimma (TCD MS 59), named after the scribe whose colophon appears a number of times in the margins of the folia; however these are later additions, erasing the original scribe in an attempt to associate the manuscript with an early seventh-century scribe named Dimma. He gained notoriety when St Crónán (d. 619), who founded a monastery in Roscrea, County Tipperary, asked Dimma to write a gospel in one day. Dimma set to his task and wrote from sunrise to sunset. The sun did not set for forty days, allowing Dimma to complete his task. It is likely that the

---

forging of his name in the folia was an attempt to link this manuscript to the miracle. It is believed that the manuscript was a product of Roscrea and dates to the second half of the eighth century. The manuscript is written by a number of scribes in what O’Neill describes as an ‘economical insular minuscule hand’. Although scholars agree the gospel of John is of a better standard and by a separate scribe, it is his gospel that is relevant here. Each incipit page of the four gospels is preceded by an author portrait. For Matthew, Mark and Luke, are each presented looking out at the reader, dressed in highly stylised garments. Matthew and Luke stand while Mark is seated. All are presented holding books. The presentation of John differs in all respects from the preceding three. The quality of writing is more disciplined and the incipit page of John is written in long lines with large display lettering for ‘In p’ employing dots and a bird head figure at the base of the ‘I’. The portrait page, in contrast to the other evangelist pages, displays the symbol of John as the eagle. He stands with two sets of wings, a haloed head looking towards his incipit page with matching colours and dots generously distributed within the figure, all within a decorated frame of interlace and fretwork. Held in the talons of John, but positioned behind them, is a book and here again is a representation of the FMP style of binding, with the flap uppermost and the three buttons in view. Similar to the Cadmug Gospel, the flap following the profile of the buttons shows a sculpted edge. The slightly awkward depiction of the book behind the leg of the eagle required the artist to offset the left hand button and flap profile, to ensure that it would not be obscured for the viewer. The artist painted two rather awkward ‘V’ shaped shadows at the head and tail of the book referencing the same portfolio-type form of the FMP cover (Fig. 4.22). It should be noted that the association with Roscrea places it in the same general geographical location Faddan More in the centre of Ireland.

The next manuscript displaying a FMP-type cover within its pages comes from St. Gallen in Switzerland. The manuscript (Cod. Sang. 1395) is a collection of fragments from the Abbey Library spanning from the fifth through the tenth century and including a large number of Irish fragments dating from the seventh to the ninth

The manuscript appears to have been bound in this form in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, with a full tanned leather binding over wooden boards and brass furniture still extant although no longer attached to the manuscript. Currently the book is in modern half-vellum binding with marble paper sides. Of interest is ff. 418-19, the single folio measuring c. 219 x 178mm which is stitched the length of its back edge to a vellum guard. The recto shows a full-page miniature of Matthew, while the verso lists charms against illness written in Old Irish and Latin dating from the ninth century.  

Matthew is presented seated facing the reader with the tools of book-writing in his hands; a pen in his right, which is dipped into a cone-shaped ink well which appears attached to the back of the chair, and a knife in his left hand which rests on a book, more or less in his lap. A figure faces him also holding a book. The scene is set inside a polychrome frame of orange purple and blue with fret patterns and corner pieces. Beneath the chair is additional material related to book making; a number of scrolls of parchment tied around the centre awaiting folding, marking up and writing. There are two other objects beneath the chair, which take the form of broad ‘S’ shapes, narrowing slightly at each end and widest in the centre, which is marked by two parallel lines running across the body of the shapes. At the top of each form there is a projecting tab and beneath it a filled-in circular shape. One of the two forms has an additional inner border line following the profile. Carol Farr has suggested that these forms represent the FMP-type binding. Given the general stylised nature of the miniature, and examining both forms in detail, they appear to display the essential features of the binding style of the FMP, with the spine area defined by the close parallel lines and the tabs representing the flap while the filled-in circles correspond to the buttons.  

I noted while studying a digital image of this folio that it is presented reversed from its intended orientation. This is evidenced by a series of sewing holes.

---


287 pers comm, (23/3/2016)
along the fore-edge of what was originally a backfold. The correct order would place Matthew on the verso, facing the incipit page of his gospel (Fig. 4.23).

Although the following manuscript appears removed from the milieu of previous examples - both in date and geographically - it is included as a demonstration of the longevity of this type of structure from its source. This manuscript, dating from 1250 CE, contains the letters of Paul and the Acts of the Apostles (Cairo, Coptic Museum No. 94). The full-page miniature on folio 131v shows four Apostles standing facing the reader in a line, identified left to right as James, Peter, John and Jude. All are haloed and all but John have beards. They are identified by name, written below each figure in Arabic and above in Coptic. In the background is a pair of opened curtains, and above them decoration fills the space clearly heavily influenced by Islamic art. The Coptic-Arabic nature of the manuscript can be expected after centuries of Arabic rule. During the period of manuscript No. 94, Egypt witnessed a growth in Coptic-Arabic literature, which it declined thereafter as conversion of the population to Islam increased. Each Apostle holds in their hand - or hands, in the case of Peter - a book. All four books represent a slightly different form of the FMP style binding. The defining feature of the flap is visible in each; on James’s book it is rectangular, in the same fashion as the FMP but encroaches less onto the outer cover. Peter obscures the flap of his book with his hands, but enough detail is visible to make out an envelope-type flap, which appears to terminate about half-way across the front cover. John holds his book by the fore-edge and again obscures the view, though an abbreviated envelope-type flap is just discernible. In addition, John’s book also displays the only decoration on any of the four, in the form of an equal armed cross on the front cover. Finally, Jude holds a book with a more substantial envelope-type flap, with the tip terminating at least two thirds in on the front cover. There may also be a button depicted in the centre of the flap (Fig. 4.24).

The final examples documented here come not from the folia of medieval manuscripts but from the Byzantine mosaics decorating the interior of two medieval buildings in Ravenna, located in Emilia-Romagna in central Italy. Among the profuse

---

mosaics on the walls of the Basilica of San Vitale is a portrait of the evangelist Luke. He stands on a rocky outcrop holding an open book in his left hand. The format of the manuscript depicted here is somewhat different from the other examples presented in this text that employ the use of an extending flap in the same manner as the FMP cover; instead the illustrated binding in San Vitale displays either a three loop or three button closing system which extends from the fore-edge on the back / right hand board. The corresponding tying straps are visible on the front / left hand board. The mosaics on the walls of the Basilica date from the sixth century and serve to remind us that closing systems for manuscripts were employed throughout the medieval period in several guises. The second example comes from the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia with its portrait of St. Lawrence, the Italian Saint martyred in the third century and depicted here with the large gridiron on which he was burnt. In his right hand he holds an open book, with what appears to be page markers and an abbreviated fore-edge flap on the back / right hand board. This flap does not run the length of the cover, rather extends it out from the centre for about two-thirds the length. It seems to display a single button in the centre of the flap (Fig. 4.25, 4.26).

It is noteworthy that the illustrated comparative examples above, when presented between the folia of medieval manuscripts from the same period as the FMP all emanate from Ireland or produced under Irish influence abroad. I found no contemporary images from manuscripts produced under the Anglo-Saxon or Carolingian dynasty or a brief trawl through Mozarabic manuscripts from Spain in the same period. The example noted further east from Cairo post-dates the FMP by anything up to half a century. Furthermore, those illustrated all display the feature of the buttons on the flap

**Wider influence of the Coptic flap binding**

Accepting Egypt, and more specifically the early Coptic Church, as the place of origin for the binding style whose main features are a cover manufactured from a single piece of material, typically leather, with an extension to the lower cover forming a fore-edge flap, the Nag Hammadi Library can be put forward as an exemplar of this style. It can reasonably be argued that this format was adopted not only within the Christian churches, including what is commonly called the Celtic Church, as the FMP
demonstrates, but that it was also the prototype for bindings in non-Christian traditions. The Manichaean religion traces its origins to Mesopotamia in the third century CE, where its founder Mani having been exposed to Christian and Buddhist teachings, formed his own philosophy and at the age of twenty-four founded a new religion. The ‘Religion of Light’ was spread by missionary disciples across frontiers west into the Roman Empire and east into India and Central Asia. A clear indication of the Manichaean religion establishing itself in Roman-Egypt in the fourth century CE and in co-existence with Christianity, was the discovery of a large collection of Manichaean Coptic Papyri buried in the sands of Dakhla oasis, about two hundred and thirty miles west of Luxor in Egypt. The material now in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, includes a Psalter (CBL Pma 3 Psalmbook, Part I, CBL Pma 3 Psalmbook Part II) dating to the early fifth century.

Another archaeological discovery of Manichaean manuscript material was unearthed from a ruined medieval city near the oasis town of Turfan, also known as Turpan, located today in the Xinjiang region of North West China. The material, approximately dated between the mid-eighth and early eleventh centuries CE, is mostly fragmentary and includes scraps of book covers and fragments of illuminated manuscripts, one of these illuminations shows an elect beside a low table and on the table is a book (Berlin State Museums, MIK III 8260). The dating of this particular fragment is the subject of some discussion but the first quarter of the tenth century CE is suggested.  

Zsuzsanna Gulácsi, who surveyed the collection with the aim of establishing the codicological characteristics of Manichaean books, describes the book illustrated in this fragment as a ‘different kind of book cover’ and she goes on to draw comparisons with the Nag Hammadi style cover. Examining the illustration, a square format book cover is seen with a large curved flap, extending two thirds across the cover and with a button just forward of the flap. There appears to be a decorative element to the flap with an inner curved line following the profile of the flap’s edge.

The religion of Islam, which postdates both Christianity and Manicheanism by over half a millennium was to be influenced by both in book making. Evidence of this can be observed when examining what is considered the ‘classic Islamic book cover’.


This particular style was identified as early as the 1700’s when John Bagford (1650-1716) a British antiquarian, writer and bibliographer, wrote, when discussing the distinguishing features of the books of the Turks and Persians, noted that:

Their books are not bound as the Europeans’, theirs are set together with a sort of paste on the back of books, and over that they cover it with a piece of linen cloth, and with the headband the book is fastened to the cover, and all their books have flaps that cover the fore-edge of the book, not unlike our vellum pocket book and almanacs, but they have no clasps to them.\(^{291}\)

With the Arab invasion of Egypt in 641CE and the conversion of its population over the following centuries to Islam, the assimilation of the Coptic book making techniques is no surprise, particularly when considering the restricted use of the book in Islam, where there was early disapproval for any books other than the Qur’an.\(^{292}\) The distinguishing features mentioned by Bagford perhaps drew their inspiration from the Nag Hammadi tradition of Coptic book making but progressed it to a far more sophisticated and highly decorated level, in no small part due to the technology, ingenuity and skills of their crafts people. Extant binding fragments mirroring the Islamic models were found among the archaeological discoveries of the Manichaean manuscript material from Turfan, and here, when reconstructed\(^{293}\) we see an almost identical appearance to the Islamic book. The Manichaeans tried to integrate their religion with Islam in the Arab Islamic empires but also suffered persecution at the hands of their would-be religious partners.\(^{294}\) Although this would have restricted the number of Manichaean books circulating, supporters of Mansūr al-Hallāj (martyred 922CE.), the Persian revolutionary writer, imitated the lavish books of the Manichaeans and the decoration and religious status of the book became an important factor in Islam.\(^{295}\)

**The Treasure Binding**


\(^{293}\) Gulácsi, *Medieval Manichaean Book Art*, p. 84.


As a contemporaneous alternative to the semi-limp structure of the FMP and at the other end of the scale to what was achievable in the early medieval milieu, ‘treasure bindings’ are closely associated with Christianity and display a complex level of decoration where typically the decorated panel or plate is produced remote from the book and, when complete, is attached, as opposed to being an integral part of the materials used for the structure of the binding. Evidence of these deluxe structures is to be found in both rare extant examples and in the written sources, where they are described in both positive and negative light.

Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus (485-585), a Roman nobleman holding high office in the mid fifth century, retired from public life and travelled to Constantinople where he studied Christian writings. After twenty years he returned to Italy and followed his passion for books, abandoned the secular world and at his estate in Calabria, southern Italy, and established two monasteries, Vivarium and Castellum. Cassiodorus’s passion for producing books is clearly demonstrated in the guide he produced for his monks Institutiones where he includes provision for decorated bindings:

We have supplied artists well trained in bookbinding, so that the beauty of the sacred writings should have a comely outward appearance – In addition to these things we have provided workers skilled in bookbinding, in order that a handsome external form may clothe the beauty of the sacred letters; in some measure, perhaps, we imitate the example in the parable of the Lord, who amid the glory of the heavenly banquet has clothed in wedding garments those whom He judges worthy of being invited to the table. And for the binders, in fitting manner, unless I err, we have represented various styles of binding in a single codex, that he who so desires may choose for himself the type of cover he prefers.

Cassiodorus’ instructions say much about the emphasis placed on the visual impact of sacred writings and about the level of skill and artistry that was demanded when producing the words and illustration for the great Gospel and other liturgical works. It is logical that the structure employed to house such monumental books

---

297 Cassiodorus, Institutiones I.xxx.3 Mynors ed. P. 77.
should equal their contents in artistic endeavour. The text tells of the existence of a specialised trained group of individuals who were in effect bookbinders, although it is plausible these artisans were also skilled in other crafts, such as leather or woodworking or possibly metalworking. It can also be deduced that the profession was well enough advanced to have had a selection of styles from which to choose and the mechanical criteria of how a book was put together was standardised and understood by this period. If only Cassiodorus’ ‘sample codex’ had survived, how much better informed we would be about sixth-century European bookbinding. Although it is evident that similar skills and resources were available in the monastic midlands of Ireland, with extant metalwork in particular testament to this, no such treatment of the FMP was carried out and it was presented in a far more modest and practical housing, most likely intended as a temporary arrangement.

There is illustrated evidence of the products of Vivarium passed down from an exemplar, now lost, the Codex Grandior, a sixth-century bible, a Pandect which Ceolfrid (d. 716), Abbot of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow, brought back from Vivarium, or Rome and had three copies made, one of which, the Codex Amiatinus (Biblioteca Medica Laurenziana, MS Amiatinus 1), still survives. Produced in the early years of the eighth century it, as a product of its exemplar, Codex Grandior, contains a full-page portrait of Ezra, wearing the breast plate and headdress of a Jewish priest, (f. 5r) copying a manuscript on his lap while seated. He is surrounded by the apparatus needed for manuscript production. Behind him is a cupboard with the doors open containing a nine-volume bible, clearly displaying examples of the types of binding mentioned by Cassiodorus. The simple line drawings of the cover decoration employed on the shelved manuscripts were produced by Haseloff, presumably working from the source manuscript. We see a selection of geometric patterns as part of the cover decoration with the lozenge shape featuring predominately; this same design is included in the collection of trial motifs on the cover of the FMP and will be discussed in this chapter. A further observation on examining the volumes on the shelves of the armarium is that no sewing supports are visible on the spines, which would appear as a number of spaced raised bands running across the spine, an image associated with

Gunther Haseloff, .....................1978.
western binding structures from the medieval period. Instead the spines appear smooth and this suggests an un-supported sewing system employed for all the manuscripts (Fig. 4.27). This method of link-stitch sewing is of Coptic origin, yet it is not surprising to find this style of binding in southern Italy, as there is strong evidence to support the theory that the Coptic method of sewing was widely employed in the Mediterranean and further west. This can be supported by an examination of some of the early medieval western manuscripts still in their contemporary or near contemporary bindings. Here there is much influence from Eastern Mediterranean book making tradition, both stylistically and in the methodologies employed to assemble the components. The St Cuthbert Gospels (British Library Add MS 89000) is a good example, which as well as an un-supported sewing exhibits elements of eastern motifs on the decorated cover. Another small insular gospel book, the Cadmug Gospels (Fulda, Landesbibliothek Codex Bonifatianus 3) is also bound employing Coptic techniques, although the sewing has been repaired at some stage in the past. The cover of the FMP strongly follows this trend and is unique in also employing one of the materials only found on actual Coptic or eastern structures, namely papyrus.

Returning to the Ezra portrait image, it is worth considering that the visible volumes do not represent ‘a comely outward appearance’ of manuscripts produced at Vivarium in the sixth century but rather are more representative of the ‘house style’ of a Northern Anglo-Saxon Monastery in the late seventh century. I believe the artist adapted the portrait to some degree during his copying from Codex Grandior in order to make it current for a late seventh-century audience. Otto Pächt observes that ‘... as far as pictorial element is concerned, the assumption to absolute fidelity to the original will certainly create problems and can no more be taken as an absolute’. He continues: ‘Even the most unadventurous copyist will always interpret his copy according to his preconceptions. Thus a deliberate misunderstanding resides in any new form, in the sense of having to speak in the language of one’s own generation.’

To give an example of this in relation to medieval bindings, the limited-edition facsimile copies of the Book of Kells produced by Faksimile Verlag of Luzern in 1990 can be cited. These are now in many library collections around the world. In order to

---

complement the high-quality reproduction of the folia, including holes in the skin, a lavish medieval style binding was commissioned to accompany the contents, using traditional materials and methods and executed by hand. It is clear however, to anyone with an understanding of book structures, that the product is far from their robust and structurally sound exemplars from medieval times and is more accurately a pastiche, with many modern adaptations of traditional features. This was not an attempt by Faksimile Verlag to deceive the would-be purchaser of this not inexpensive volume with poor workmanship, it was simply a modern interpretation with current influences at play, including the influence of time. Today, ‘time’ plays a major role and is an important factor in most manufacturing processes, even when it comes to the production of a high value, hand-made medieval style binding. ‘Time’ would not have had the same influence on the production of a book in ninth-century monastic Ireland. This is evident through surviving examples by the quality of materials employed and the complexity by which they were worked in order to reach the high standard of the early medieval codex.

Closer to the environs in which the FMP was produced, the Annals of the Four Masters record that in A.D. 1006 ‘The Great Gospel of Columb Cille was stolen at night from the western erdavm of the great church of Ceanannus. This was the principal relic of the western world on account of its singular cover; and it was found after twenty nights and two months, its gold having been stolen off it, and a sod over it’. This is generally accepted to describe the looting of the cumdach, or book box, housing the Book of Kells. Paul Mullarkey argues that a box rather than a shrine would have been used for such a precious symbol of the Columban Community, as access to the manuscript would be required, rather than solely as a relic of the saint. The tradition of housing sacred writings in shrines, as venerated relics of the saint associated with the manuscript within, links that are often tenuous- is a particular Irish practice. However, given the loss of folia from the beginning and end of this pinnacle of insular manuscripts, possibly during its theft from the church at Kells, it can also be

---

300 Michaél Ó Cléirigh, et al., Annals of the Four Masters, Royal Irish Academy, MS C iii 3, seventeenth century paper manuscript, copies also held in Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin.
surmised that this was a result of the violent stripping of the precious bejeweled covers. Unlike a shrine, covers would have been mechanically attached to the manuscript and considerable force would have been needed to remove them given the robust nature of book structures in the early medieval period. The practice of that time of pasting down the first and last folia of the quires to the inside of the binding boards would also have resulted in detachment of the adjacent folia in the event of a forceful removal. Bernard Meehan states that ‘around 10 leaves are missing from the start’; this would equate with a typical quire.

There is direct reference to the production of decorated covers, or perhaps a book shrine by Tírechán, a seventh-century Irish bishop and biographer of Saint Patrick. In his life of the saint transcribed in The Book of Armagh (TCD MS 52) he lists the many disciples of St Patrick, including Assicus, was made bishop of Elphin. Asicus was also a skilled coppersmith and produced liturgical vessels and instruments for Patrick. Tírechán states that ‘he made altars and book-cases, which he made in plates, for the honour of Patrick the bishop, and also the three square plates well finished, which I saw.’ Documenting the continuation of this tradition there is the case of St Dageaus, Abbot of Inishcealtra (d. 587), who is described as ‘...equally skilful in making covers for books, which he adorned with gold silver and jewels.’

Across the water, the Lindisfarne Gospels (British Library, Cotton MS Nero D. iv) displays among its pages a tenth-century reference to its own treasure binding, written by a priest called Aldred, who glossed the manuscript ‘and Ethelwald, Bishop of the Lindisfarne Islanders, impressed it on the outside and covered it as he well knew how to do. And Billfrith, the Anchorite, forged the ornaments which are on it on the outside and adorned it with gold and with gems and also with silver over silver- pure metal’. It is not surprising that references found in the documented sources relating to book making focus their attention on these bejeweled, important high-status gospel books and Psalters, with little or no mention of the simple utilitarian type such as the

---

cover of the FMP. That is not to say they were not produced in significant numbers but were regarded as ordinary everyday items not worth recording.

The reason the majority of medieval Christian texts survive into the present day is related to their status of that time, originally adorned in complex and elaborate bindings and much cared for, many then became relics and were enshrined, thus improving their chances of survival even further. The survival of the FMP is for no better reason that it was buried in a bog and removed from the influences of time and repurposing, and as such it potentially provides insights into the more ‘ordinary’ book circulating the eighth century insular world.

The treasure or highly decorated manuscript was not always well received and St Jerome (347-420) wrote a diatribe in 384, criticising wealthy Christian women ‘whose books are written in gold on purple vellum, and clothed with gems.’ This fits the character of the saint who was a strict ascetic and was generally critical of all excess and creature comforts. No doubt he would have approved of the unadorned and simple binding of the FMP.

Finally, although not strictly in the realms of treasure bindings, it is worth mentioning the St John’s (Rinnagan) Crucifixion Plaque (National Museum of Ireland R554.H.20.) a thin sheet of copper alloy, which was worked into its form and then engraved with insular patterns. It displays a typical representation of the crucifixion of Christ with angels above, resting on the outstretched arms of Christ while Stephaton and Longinus stand beneath. The format of the plaque and the nail hole in each corner suggest it may well have adorned the cover of an Irish gospel book of the late eighth or early ninth century, and hints that Ireland had kept pace with the development and elaborate nature of European bindings of the period and it was not a lack of know-how that placed the FMP in its more utilitarian binding.

Conclusion

Considering the preference towards monasticism over the Roman church of Patrick in sixth century Ireland, and the adoption of many practices of the Egyptian prototype model, albeit modified as it passed through Europe and to Ireland (from 307 Migne, PLXXII col. 418 (Ep. 22 to Eustochium).
France and Britain). Much of this influence came through the writings of John Cassian, introducing Coptic asceticism to the West. It might not be surprising that the materiality of later Egyptian monasticism, now the Coptic Church, would also be embraced with some degree of enthusiasm in Ireland, perhaps more so than elsewhere in Christian Europe of the seventh and eighth centuries. The early monastic (fifth or sixth century) site at Caherlehhillan on the Iveragh Peninsula, Co. Kerry, supports this idea, with evidence to suggest it was a small cenobitic community similar to what was to be found in the deserts of Egypt. The site has produced archaeological fragments of eastern Mediterranean amphorae (Bii ware\textsuperscript{309}) and two cross-slabs on the site displaying what appear to be symbols of the Eastern Church’s stylised peacock, a symbol of the resurrection, and a flabellum, the liturgical fan used on the altar of the Eastern Church (Fig. 4.28).\textsuperscript{310} Father Gregory Telepneff tentatively goes as far as to suggest direct Celtic-Oriental contact, basing much of his argument on differences between Irish and Gallic monastic practices and a better alignment with Coptic monasteries, and cautiously concludes the likelihood of the presence of a few Coptic monks in Ireland in the early sixth century.\textsuperscript{311} Were it not for the papyrus cartonnage that originally lined the inside cover of the FMP, I would suggest that it was a local product constructed from a model or exemplar, however the exotic nature of the lining reinforces the argument for an import. This hypothesis is reinforced when considering the meagre writing discovered on the inside of the cover which is on the leather surface and therefore applied after the papyrus lining was removed. It occurs to me that perhaps the papyrus lining was stripped from the inside, because like the linings of the Nag Hammadi codices the FMP linings were also made from manuscript waste and would have been of immense interest to the Irish monastic scholars, even if


\textsuperscript{309} Amanda Kelly, ‘The discovery of Phocaean Red Slip Ware (PRSW) Form 3 and Bii ware (LR1 amphorae) on sites in Ireland—an analysis within a broader framework’, \textit{Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Vol. 110C} (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2010), pp. 35-88.


\textsuperscript{311} Father Gregory Telepneff, \textit{The Egyptian Desert in the Irish Bogs} (California: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2008).
they could not have deciphered the language, emanating as it did from Coptic Egypt and home of the inspirational Desert Fathers.

I believe the results of the extant examples of similar structures and even more so the illustrated images of the FMP type cover in manuscripts, indicate that what was an unexpected discovery from a codicological and binding history viewpoint, was most probably a reasonably abundant form of protection for early medieval insular, or perhaps more specifically Irish manuscripts. The artists producing the images of saints and apostles in liturgical writings were aware that their work, in addition to venerating the word of God also had a didactic role for the audience. If a book was to be illustrated in the hand of an evangelist, then it had to be recognized as such, and in the same way as the shoes on their feet are considered an accurate historical record of early medieval footwear, so too should their representation of a book be considered ‘typical’. The cover of the FMP might well be our only extant example, thus far, of what was once the standard binding in the eighth century insular world.
Chapter 5. The trial motifs on the cover of the Faddan More Psalter and decoration methods employed on books of the early medieval period.

One of the many complex and challenging tasks faced conserving the FMP was the preparation of the tanned leather cover for drying. In the same manner as the rest of the manuscript, the cover or binding of the Psalter had been lost in a watery hollow beneath the peat bog at Faddan More for something close to a millennium. A particularly time-consuming aspect of this preparation work was the surface cleaning of the leather. The process involved working under magnification (0.75x) to remove, by various means, the array of organic bog material adhering to the leather, none more challenging than the plethora of seed pods, which numbered in the thousands and took on a transparent appearance while wet (see chapter 1). It was during this close-up work that several ultra-fine incised lines became evident. They appeared in random zones across the entire outer surface excepting the spine area. Given what appeared to be the intentional application of these markings, it was critical that the incisions be recorded and mapped in the ‘wet state’ as I could not be certain of their behaviour during and after the drying process. In addition to the incised forms, unassociated markings were identified as a series of ‘tramlines’, likely to be the result of the hard-point ruling of the vellum folia, this is discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.

The result of the investigation was the mapping and identification of thirty-one trial motifs. The decoration on the cover of the FMP matches all the criteria of Uaininn O’Meadhra’s definition of a trial piece. In a motif there are always two distinct aspects: the pattern(s) and the piece, where the patterns are of primary importance and the piece of secondary importance – meaning that the patterns do not ‘decorate’ the piece but ‘use’ the piece as a support for their representation. This best describes the rudimentary results of the artist(s). I am guided here by Uaininn O’Meadhra for the descriptive terminology of the patterns that follows.\textsuperscript{312} The patterns appear to have been created with an extremely sharp-edged tool, ‘scalpel-like’ in its execution, indeed, in a number of instances, the keen edge has almost cut through the tanned leather cover.

leather surface (Fig. 5.1). The patterns can for the most part be described as incomplete, where the field-line or field in the case of the curvilinear patterns does not close. In other examples, the motif itself is un-finished. The quality of both the finished and unfinished patterns, the difficult working surface of the substrate notwithstanding, would be best described as naïve - perhaps the efforts of someone at the early stages of instruction in manuscript or metalwork decoration. Categorizing the motifs on the cover of the FMP using O’Meadhra’s classification, they come under either Category 2: Apprentice-artisans, learning attempts, copying exercises, test pieces (samplers), or Category 3: Artisans’ trial sketches and working drawings for testing pattern composition and technique. Her category 2 seems to provide more appropriate comparisons.

Although inscribed and impressed decoration was employed on the surface of leather bindings from an early point, as demonstrated by some of the Nag Hammadi bindings and nicely illustrated in an eighth-century legal manuscript from Leon now in St. Gallen in Switzerland, the figure is seen standing inside a interlace frame holding a staff and a book, the surface of which displays a simple repeated pattern in orange and black (Fig. 5.2). The trial motifs on the cover of the FMP were not intended as part of its decoration. Their random layout, poor quality and general disarray point clearly to a well-established tradition in early medieval Ireland of trialling and doodling patterns on surplus pieces made of a range of materials. According to Peter Harbison, the practice is rare outside Ireland. More typically the substrate would be bone, wood, or even stone. Archaeology has unearthed a large and varied quantity of this material with a high percentage from Dublin, but also elsewhere throughout the country. Some well-recorded examples include a piece of green slate found at Lissue Ringfort in Co. Antrim in 1946, now in the Ulster Museum (J228632), with a combination of patterns, including zoomorphic motifs. Excavated in the 1930s from the early Christian crannog at Lagore, Co. Meath, is a partial long bone, highly polished

---

and displaying incised patterns down its length (National Museum of Ireland, W.29/Wk12). 315

Although the incising of patterns on the tanned leather of an early medieval book cover, insular or otherwise, was not a typical method used to achieve a decorated surface, the incising of leather for decorative purposes was commonly employed on everyday items of their period, such as shoes, belts, and sheaths. There are examples of incised decoration on leather shoes taken from a bog in Co. Derry, now in the National Museum (W10, WII), where they are described as ‘covered with incised ladder-patterns and irregular and curvilinear motifs’. The type of shoe, ‘Type 2’ according to Lucas, dates from the early medieval period. 316 There are also two scabbard fragments from Dublin excavations, displaying an incomplete human figure in a tunic (DLS 283) and the incised image of a running animal (DLS 308). 317 The practice of incised decoration also occurs outside Ireland, and remains of substantial leather sheaths in which a weapon called a seaxe was housed, have been unearthed in Saxon cemetery sites in Britain dating from the seventh century. The mineralised remains display incised decoration and metal studs. 318

In the context of the trial motifs, it is important to examine the substrate or platform employed. In this instance, it is the tanned leather cover of the FMP. This is a unique combination and no other example is known where the cover of a manuscript has been utilised as a surface for the production of trial motifs. It is the nature of the FMP cover that allows the motif work to be carried out, presenting as it does a flat and yielding surface receptive to engraving with the appropriate tool. Surveying extant early medieval book covers demonstrates that the simple wrap of lined leather was only one of a variety of styles of bindings produced during this prolific period of manuscript production. Unlike the trial motifs on the FMP cover, the intentional marking of book covers as a form of decoration can be seen on the earliest surviving

book structures in a codex form, produced by impressing patterns using blunt pallet-like tools of metal, or possibly bone, inscribing the surface with simple strands, forming motifs, typically of a cross or panelled borders. Such decoration is to be found on the covers of the Nag Hammadi gospels,\textsuperscript{319} which have also been discussed in relation to their structural similarities with the FMP binding. The later and more sophisticated decoration employed metal dies, allowing the pattern to be repeated over the surface of the leather. This blind stamping was probably carried out after heating the tool.

Considered to be the earliest evidence of tooling on a binding,\textsuperscript{320} the fifth-century Glazier Codex of Acts (New York, Morgan Library G. 67) displays simple roundels blind stamped into the leather. As book structures became more technically advanced, so too did the decoration of their covers. The use of more complex patterns, the employment of colour to emphasise backgrounds and the addition of different materials to create impressive visual effects all became part of the bookmakers’ repertoire. Also in the Morgan Library, the seventh or eighth-century copy of the four gospels discovered in the early twentieth century in the Coptic monastery of St Michael of the Desert in southern Fayum, Egypt, exhibits all of the above techniques to great effect, displaying a well-balanced and visually satisfying pattern.\textsuperscript{321} To achieve this, different layers were laid down, the first being of gilded leather, over which red dyed goatskin with openwork patterns was applied, revealing the gilded surface beneath. The openwork itself was further worked with the threading of strips of vellum in both a large circular form in the centre and frames outside the circle. This upper piece was stitched to the gilded leather below. As indicated in chapter 4, the binding of the FMP owes its origins to the same geographical area, yet it does not display the advancement in design and manufacture seen in this Morgan Library gospel book, rather it reflects the archetype model from the fourth century.

\textsuperscript{320} Paul Needham, \textit{Twelve Centuries of Bookbinding: 400-1600} (The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, 1979), p. 10.
\textsuperscript{321} Four Gospels, Coptic, illuminated manuscript on vellum, Egypt, seventh or eighth century, Morgan Library M.569.
The Trial motifs on the Faddan More Psalter cover; description and parallels

Using the identifying key on fig. 5.3 the thirty-one trial pieces on the cover of the FMP can be sub-divided:

A1 to A4. Curvilinear patterns, two of which are penannular as a result of being basic unfinished outlines. One of the remaining two displays attempted interlace. The second pattern appears to be four double triquetras dividing the space inside the field equally. The background shows fine hatching both of the diagonal and cross type.

B1 to B6. Rectangular or square field-lines containing patterns that can be identified as an attempt of plait work, all interlaced. Three of the patterns have double field lines. One pattern shows hatching in the field behind the motif. All six appear incomplete.

C1. Square pattern employing double field lines creating a narrow border, filled with a diagonal layout of key patterns.

D1. Square pattern, the field lines overshoot at three of the four intersections, the field is filled with diagonal strands in two directions, to form a series of square patterns. Possibly the guide work for the key pattern, which is situated just above it. This theory is reinforced by J. Romilly Allen’s publication on the Christian Monuments in Scotland.322 He discusses the set out of key patterns by dividing up the space into squares; this, he says, was only occasionally used in Celtic art. The setting out of the squares in a diagonal ‘where the setting-out lines cut the border at an angle of 45° instead of 90°’ for which he tells us the Celtic designer had a marked preference. This accurately matches the motif (D1).

E1-E2. Square patterns, inside the field lines is divided by a double strand cross creating four inner squares, each of which contains an ‘X’.

F1 to F6. Square patterns whose main feature is a single ‘X’ figure terminating in each corner of the pattern. Four of the patterns display an ‘X’ of a double strand type, the other two are single strand. The fields behind the ‘X’ shows hatching and single and double strands to various degrees in four cases. One pattern (F.1) employs double field lines and the addition of a central diamond-shaped. This could be considered a loose interpretation of the Four Evangelist Symbols page on f.290v in The

Book of Kells. One pattern may be an attempt at a duplex. Examining similar patterns found in contemporary manuscripts and stone work it appears that where an ‘X’ pattern is displayed inside a square field, in most cases the ‘X’ is formed by placing four triangular motifs of some description inside the square, dividing it into quarters. The space between the triangles forms an ‘X’ from the background. In the motifs displayed on the cover of the FMP, the ‘X’ appears to be in the foreground and is itself a motif, as opposed to a consequence of the alignment of a repeated set of motifs.

**G1.** Rectangular pattern, a single strand runs horizontally inside, about one-third of the way from the top, creating two panels of un-even size. The larger lower panel displays an ‘X’ terminating in each corner. The smaller top panel includes ‘loose’ hatching.

**H1-H2.** Square patterns with double field lines, both contain an ‘X’ of the double strand type terminating in the corners of the pattern. One of the patterns displays a double strand cross behind the ‘X’. Single and double strands and curvilinear lines can be seen in the spaces between the motif. The second pattern is the most accomplished and complete of all thirty-one pieces it also displays an ‘X’ of the double strand type with a single strand type running inside it. Behind is a multi-stranded cross with expanded terminals. The background has fine hatching.

**I1 to I8.** The remaining motifs, all intended to be either rectangular or square, are fragments of patterns abandoned at such an early stage that it is impossible to determine the artists’ intent. Five of the eight are missing one, and in one case two, of the frame lines. Two of the smallest rectangular pieces are devoid of decoration. Three pieces appear to display ‘X’ patterns in one form or another. One shows some diagonal strands crossing inside the field lines resulting in an unfinished grid pattern. Two contain what appear to be random strands with no cohesive motif obvious.

It is useful to reinforce here what was stated at the beginning of this chapter, namely that the above description should not suggest any of the motifs - excepting two - show indications of expert execution or indeed in many cases the required knowledge to complete any given pattern. They appear to be in a real sense ‘trials’ without ever achieving an end product. The use of square and rectangular motifs outweighs the curvilinear at a ratio of 6.75:1. Perhaps dividers, a base tool employed
for executing curvilinear motifs were not readily available for use. Stevick demonstrates clearly the use of this tool as an aid for the production of curvilinear decoration in stonework and manuscript illumination. It could suggest there were no dividers available to the practising artist, but for direct evidence of their use, observed under magnification during the Optical Coherence Tomography scanning of the cover. Dr Hiada Laing and her team from Nottingham Trent University mapped selected areas of the trial motifs through a process, which renders an image in slices and slightly below the surface. I was able to identify a compass point not visible to the naked eye on one of the curvilinear motifs (A4) (Fig. 5.4).

The hatching of the field in a number of the patterns is not a feature that transfers easily to manuscript illumination when the medium changes from incising tool to pigment and dyes. More typically, this is a technique to introduce shading or to highlight the foreground motif in metalwork engraving. Françoise Henry notes that the technique was employed among Irish metalworkers in the early medieval period. It can be seen put to good use on the field of Ultimate La Tène decoration worked on a gilt and silvered cast-bronze piece thought to be the crest of a bell shrine. Another example can be observed on the first phase of the late eighth or early ninth-century Domnach Airgid Shrine. On one of the short sides, an original decorated plate is still visible, others having been obscured by later additions and mounts. Ó Floinn observes that ‘These plates are ornamented with crudely engraved broad ribbon interlace surrounded by a border of fretwork and is executed against a hatched ground. The covering may be dated to around 800 A.D. when engraving of this kind was common on Irish metalwork.’ Ryan observes that ‘Background hatching became a standard feature on tinned and engraved Irish and other insular eight-/ninth century objects and may also have an Iron Age origin.’

---

325 NMI: 1920:37, 9th century A.D.
326 NMI: R.2834, Late 8th – early 9th with 15th century remodeling.
National Museum of Ireland, has suggested to me that it also seems to be associated with tinned surfaces so that when the metal is incised, a colour contrast is set up with the golden-bronze metal revealed against the tinning.\footnote{Pers. comm. Nov. 2014} The use of hatching is found as a feature in manuscript illumination when that illumination is more accurately described as drawing, typically in monochrome. There is an excellent example of this from the beginning of the ninth century in the Book of Armagh (TCD MS 52). Here, on the evangelist symbol page (f. 32v) hatching is used particularly on the wings of the four figures in separate panels to create contrast. Interestingly, the Utrecht Psalter (Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS Bibl. Rhenotraiectiae I Nr 32.), a ninth-century manuscript believed to have been produced near Reims,\footnote{J. J. G. Alexander, \textit{Insular Manuscripts, 6th to the 9th Century} (H. Miller, London, 1978), p. 35.} is highly illuminated, also in a monochrome style, depicting a range of scenes from the Psalms and the New Testament. Rather than hatching, a subtle shading method is employed to good effect.

Moving to the foreground and examining the patterns typically executed on trial motifs of insular origin, it appears that the illustration of the cross does not feature as a central symbol. Does this indicate that trial motifs were for the greater part produced by the secular population, either inside or outside the monastery? A range of patterns can be observed with plait-work, interlace, duplex, triquetra, trumpet and zoomorphic features, while other pieces, display the influence of Norse settlement in the ninth century.\footnote{Lloyd Laing, \textit{European Influence on Celtic Art} (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2010), p. 127.} Throughout a trawl of hundreds of images of recorded trial motifs, for the most part from Uaininn O’Meadhra’s \textit{Early Christian, Viking and Romanesque Art Motif-Pieces from Ireland}, no obvious depiction of the cross was observed. On the motifs located on the FMP we can identify four cruciform motifs and in this respect is atypical in that sense, and combined with the nature of the substrate, strongly suggests that the work was carried out inside the confines of a monastery.

It is of no great surprise that parallels to the trial motifs on the cover of the FMP can be identified on metalwork and in manuscript illumination, the crossover being very well documented by scholars.\footnote{Michael Ryan, ‘Metalwork and Style in the Early Christian Period 7th-10th centuries A.D.’, \textit{Treasures of Ireland, Irish Art 3000 B.C. -1500 A.D.} (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 1983), p. 37.} The motif described above as ‘Six square
patterns whose main feature is a single ‘X’ figure, terminating in each corner of the pattern’ (F1-F6) is particularly well represented in insular manuscripts. It can be found as a corner motif in the border of illuminated folia in several manuscripts of the period. Here follows a selection, where clear parallels can be seen between motif and decoration.

The Chronicon of Paulus Orosius (MS D. 23. sup.) an early seventh-century insular manuscript produced possibly in Bobbio, the monastery founded by Columbanus in 614 and now in Milan Biblioteca Ambrosiana, displays on f.1v what may be the earliest insular carpet page. The top and bottom border areas for the large central rosette display a continuous line of square fields, each with a multi stranded ‘X’ filling the space. The background field is coloured pink and yellow (Fig. 5.5).

The Lichfield Gospels (Book of Chad) produced around 730 A.D, probably in Northumbria, displays eight illuminated pages, the first of which is the incipit page for Matthew’s gospel.333 It is also the first folio of the manuscript and had clearly been exposed without the protection of a binding for an extended period resulting in considerable erosion of the pigment. Among the badly-damaged decorated lettering and illumination, there are two dark, possibly black roundel fields, one of which displays a double-field line ‘X’ and behind a double-field line cross with expanded terminals. This is the closest to the motifs category H on the back cover of the FMP containing the cross, other than the roundel format.

In Switzerland in the Stiftsbibliothek of St Gall is a composite manuscript (MS 1395) with fragments from the Abbey Library of St. Gall. Among them are Irish fragments dating from the seventh to the ninth centuries.334 One of these, a single folio, displays an initial \textit{P (Peccavimus)} and continuation capitals housed inside a decorated frame of interlace and zoomorphic features. In each corner of the frame there is a square pattern, two of which (diagonally facing each other) display a double field line border, one coloured yellow, the other left with the vellum colour. Inside each there is a central field line ‘X’ with key patterns between the arms. The


334 Alexander, \textit{Insular Manuscripts}, p. 261
background field is coloured in black (Fig. 5.6). This folio is dated to the second half of the eighth century.

The insular gospel book located in Leningrad Public Library (Cod. F. v. I. 8) dates from the late eighth century. It is thought to have been produced in Northumbria under Irish influence.335 On the incipit page to St. Mark, f. 78, the enlarged decorated initial lettering Initium evangelii ih[es]u p[rist]i filii d[e]i sicut scriptu[m] est is accompanied by a broad decorated frame. The bottom corner of the frame displays a square pattern of double field lines, inside there is a central field line ‘X’ and behind a closed band outlining the ‘X’ (Fig. 5.7).

Among the early medieval manuscript collection at the Bodleian Library Oxford is the Macregol Gospels (MS Auct. D. 2. 19), an Irish gospel book written and illuminated by the Abbot of Birr in Co. Offaly sometime before 822, evidenced by an inscription by Macregol requesting a prayer for himself as writer and painter. Both geographically and chronologically this gospel book is close to the FMP. On f. 126v there is the portrait of St John. There are two rectangles centered top and bottom of the broad outer border of the St John miniature. There are two squares centered left and right of the broad inner border framing St John (Fig. 5.8). All four display a repeated pattern of an ‘X’ inside a square. The ‘X’ is a narrow single strand inside a band of the background vellum. The spaces between the arms of the ‘X’ are filled with black triangles. The examples on the St John page make for a good comparison to the repeated pattern of the motifs F3, F4 and F5, see fig. 5.1. Also in England, at Lambeth Palace Library, is the Mac Durnan Gospels (MS 1370), dating from the second half of the ninth century, it may have been written in Armagh by Máel Brígite mac Tornáin (Mac Durnan).336 This manuscript falls into the category of ‘pocket’ gospel, albeit produced to the standard of a decorated altar book. On f.4v is the evangelist portrait of St. Matthew, where a broad decorated border frames the portrait of St. Matthew. In each corner of the frame there is a square pattern, two of which (diagonally facing each other) display a double field line border with a central ‘X’ filing the square. Behind the ‘X’ there is a central square, flanked at each corner by four smaller squares.

335 Alexander, Insular Manuscripts, p. 64.
336 Alexander, Insular Manuscripts, p. 86.
Between the space there is closed band outlining. Dots have been applied inside the larger central square (Fig. 5.9).

For a comparison observed in a manuscript produced outside Ireland, the Book of Deer (MS ii. 6. 32) can be cited. Held in Cambridge University Library, it dates from the ninth or tenth century and was written in Scotland.\(^{337}\) On f. 16v is the evangelist portrait of St Mark, presented as a highly stylised figure of the saint standing inside a frame, holding a book or perhaps a satchel suspended from his neck (Fig. 5.10). The panel is a double strand square pattern coloured to form a narrow border, inside a multi-strand ‘X’ fills the space. Behind is open band work forming eight triangles to fill the field. There is a dot in the centre of the ‘X’. Also in Cambridge, at St John’s College, there is the early eleventh-century manuscript the Southampton Psalter (MS C. 9 (59)).

Produced in Ireland, this Psalter, like the FMP, adopts the tripartite division of the Psalms.\(^{338}\) On f. 4v there is a full-page illumination of David fighting a Lion. The miniature is framed in a broad decorated border with roundels dividing all four sides. In each corner of the frame there is a square pattern, two of which (diagonally facing each other) display a double field line border, coloured in a pinkish red with a multi-strand ‘X’ filling the square (Fig. 5.11). Behind, there is a single strand cross and between the arms are four equal squares with single field lines. This pattern is repeated with slight variation on f. 72 Initial D page.

The ‘youngest’ manuscript from which parallels were drawn with the trial motifs on the FMP is the Gospel of Maelbrigte (British Library, Harley MS 1802). This is another of the pocket gospel series, measuring only 165mm x 120mm, and is most likely to have been made for personal use. It dates from the early twelfth century and was probably written in Armagh. On f. 60v and f. 86v, two evangelist symbol pages of St Mark and St Luke are displayed (Fig. 5.12). Both illuminations are housed in broad double stranded frames. Within the frames is a series of uninterrupted square patterns and single square patterns. Each displays a single field line border, with a multi-strand ‘X’ filling the square. Behind, there is a single strand cross. Between the arms are four equal squares with single field lines.

\(^{337}\) Alexander, Insular Manuscripts, p. 87.

\(^{338}\) Alexander, Insular Manuscripts, p. 88.
During the research into this pattern, I became aware of what amounts to two almost identical designs appearing in different manuscripts spanning over a century. The first pattern is the one I describe as a square pattern, with a double field line border, housing a central ‘X’ terminating in each corner. Behind the ‘X’ there is a central square, flanked at each corner by four smaller squares. Between the space there is closed band outlining. This appears in the two manuscripts: St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, (MS 51),339 f. 209r, the initial page of St John gospel, the ‘I’ from ‘in principio’ about 750 A.D. and Lambeth Palace. MS 1370, MacDurnan Gospels,340 f. 4v, evangelist portrait of St. Matthew, second half of the ninth century (Fig. 5.13).

The second pattern I describe as a double field line border, with a multi strand ‘X’ terminating in each corner. Behind there is a single strand cross. Between the arms are four equal squares with single field lines. This also appears in two manuscripts: St John’s College. MS C. 9 (59),341 Southampton Psalter, f. 4v (David fighting the Lion) of the early eleventh century and British Library Harley MS 1802,342 Gospel of Maelbrigte, f. 60v and f. 86v two evangelist symbol pages of St Mark and St Luke early twelfth century. This demonstrates the standardisation of insular design motifs employed in the decoration of ecclesiastical ware and the longevity of such patterns. In context, I cannot imagine a graphic designer today producing a book cover and using composition and layouts from a post-world war one publication. It is also evident that pattern books must have existed, which circulated among monasteries where the motifs could be practised and mastered before being committed to the folia of a gospel book. In the same manner as the experienced scribe would instruct his pupil in the minuscule and majuscule letters, the artist would pass on the designs and techniques of the patterns we see repeated over the majority of our extant insular manuscripts, these covering a time span of two hundred years with impressive consistency.

In relation to the broad interlaced plait work motif in a rectangular frame (B5) located on the back cover of the FMP, many comparisons can be drawn, given the widespread use of this form of decoration in insular manuscripts and metalwork. A

339 Alexander, Insular Manuscripts, p. 66.
340 Alexander, Insular Manuscripts, p. 86.
341 Alexander, Insular Manuscripts, p. 88.
342 Alexander, Insular Manuscripts, p. 89.
motif similar in its proportions can be seen in the border decoration on the evangelist portrait of St Luke in the Macdurnan Gospels, f. 115v. Here it is presented as an L-shaped corner piece inside a double field line frame. The plait is interlaced with a double-field outline which is coloured ‘off white’ the inside displays pink and yellow and there are four dots in each corner of the terminal end of the motif, perhaps mimicking nails from its metalwork exemplar.

The almost complete square field on the back cover of the FMP displaying a key pattern inside a double field border (C1) is similar to that seen on the cross-carpet page of the Lindisfarne Gospels (London, British Library Cotton MS Nero D IV) f. 138v, albeit without a field border and presented diagonally repeated over the background field (Fig. 5.14). More interesting, however, is another comparative example of this key pattern, found in the broad decorated border of the incipit page to St. Mathew, f. 1 of the Macregol Gospels. A similar pattern can also be seen in the borders of the evangelist page of St Mark f. 51v and of St Luke f. 84v (Fig. 5.15). As in the Lindisfarne Gospels, it is presented diagonally and in this case as sets of stepped blocks of alternating colours. The geography and chronology make this an interesting and relevant study. The monastery of Birr, of which Macregol was abbot, is the closest recorded monastery to the find spot of the FMP, a distance of seven and half kilometers (see chapter 6). Both manuscripts fall into similar time periods at the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth centuries. Additional codicological and paleographical comparison of the two manuscripts does not suggest Macregol’s involvement with the FMP.

In connection to parallels to be found in other media for this pattern, an example worked in stone is seen on one of the Pictish cross-slab (no. 23, back) from St Andrews Church in Fife, on the east coast of Scotland. Here the carved ‘X’ is inside a square border with the pattern repeated above and below the arms of a central cross. Looking at this cross-slab, it could be stated that the trial motifs F3, F4, and F5 are not individual attempts but rather a repeated pattern of the one design as is the case with the St. Andrews’ slab.

---

Studying the spread of the thirty-one patterns across the surface of the leather cover in the FMP, two features become apparent: there are no patterns on the spine area of the cover and there is only one on the extended flap of the back cover. This strongly suggests that as a substrate, the cover was not laid out flat but rather worked while in its normal ‘book shape’, i.e. closed and if so, likely to contain its contents. The spine does not display any motifs as this would be a vertical surface and the flap would be more difficult to incise due to a smaller, less stable working area.

Examining the theory that the trial motifs are the workings of apprentice- artisans learning attempts, there is visual evidence to supports this. Two, maybe three, of the thirty-one pieces could be described as competent and display an understanding of the intended end-product. The contrast between these pieces and the remainder is considerable in their level of competency and is unlikely to be the work of the same individual. This is highlighted when examining two motifs which appear to be attempts at the same design, the curvilinear motifs A1 and A4 the latter containing four double triquetras\textsuperscript{344} with a cross hatched field. Motif A1 shows a rudimentary attempt at the same design but unlikely by the hand of the same person; a teacher/pupil scenario is probable in this case. Examining the motif H2, described earlier as a square pattern with double field lines, containing an ‘X’ of the multi strand type, terminating in the corners of the pattern, on front of a multi-stranded cross with expanded terminals, the background has fine hatching. Examining any of the other F or H category motifs, displaying an ‘X’ inside a square field, it is evident that are not simply unfinished versions of H2, but poorly executed versions, of whatever was the intended end product. With field lines over-shooting, un-true lines in the motif and a general untidy interpretation, they are unlikely to be the attempts of a skilled individual. Examining the historical backdrop against which the FMP was made, it can be observed that within the more developed monastic settlements, secular families lived within the communities to provide services and products for the ever-expanding needs of the Abbot and his monks.\textsuperscript{345} It has already been stated that these trial pieces are likely to be the work of a monk or monks and not a secular crafts person. This is

\textsuperscript{344} Interestingly, O’Meadhra lists as one of his criteria for identifying apprentice pieces the presence of the simplest designs including triquetra.

based on the fact that the motifs are carried out on the cover of a Psalter, and although personal devotion books were produced for the small percentage of literate lay people, the large format of the Faddan More Psalter makes it unlikely to be an example of such a book.

**Examination of the surface:**

A small sample of the black pigment used to colour the outer surface of the leather cover of the FMP was sent to Dr Brian Singer at the University of Northumbria for analysis.\(^{346}\) The pigment was identified as a carbon black. In addition, Singer discovered a minute fragment of extraneous material, which further analysis identified as gold leaf combined with alumino-silicates a possible component of Armenian bole. Most typically bole was an addition (to give colour) to gilders gesso, employed as a ground prior to the application of gold leaf, for which one historic recipe can be found in Cennino’s fifteenth century *Il Libro dell’Arte*.\(^{347}\) The method however is much older, and the use of a thick plaster base on which to lay gold leaf has been practised since at least 2000 BCE.\(^{348}\) The plaster combined with an adhesive was employed typically on porous surfaces such as timber. The plaster could be moulded while wet or worked when dry to form three-dimensional patterns on which to lay the ultra-thin gold leaf. The Egyptians used these methods to great effect, evidence of which can to be seen today from excavated tomb goods.

The use of gold for the illumination of the earliest Irish manuscripts up to and beyond the period of the FMP is not known\(^{349}\) and is very rare in any of the extant insular manuscripts during the early medieval era.\(^{350}\) As a reminder of anomalies, Janet Backhouse observed an exception to this dearth of precious metals on manuscripts of the period.


‘It was in general not a feature of early insular manuscripts, though both gold and silver are used quite extensively in the Codex Amiatinus, to emulate an earlier book from Italy. This was no doubt a matter of taste rather than lack of raw materials.  

Additionally, I have observed a more frequent use of gold directly onto the vellum, with some form of glue to fix it in place in manuscripts from Southern England, Codex Aureus (Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket, MS. A. 135) being a spectacular example. Dating from the mid eighth century, it was likely made in Canterbury. Similarly, the Vespasian Psalter (British Library, Cotton Ms. A.i.), also from Canterbury, displays well-executed flat gilding. Perhaps like its uncial script, this results from being aligned with the Roman Church and to a greater exposure to continental manuscripts.

Returning to FMP’s fragment of gold leaf, there is a strong possibility that this represents contamination from other activities in the workshop such as the gilding of metalwork, one of the skills practiced by the Irish craftsman of the eighth century, which also included engraving, enamel work and gold filigree. Examples with gilt components include the Ardagh Chalice (Limerick, NMI: 1874: 99), dated to the eighth century, and a silver gilt pseudo-penannular brooch (Cavan brooch, NMI: W.43), dating from the later eighth or early ninth century. During the first millennium, gold as a component of decoration, either for metalwork or illumination, was rare and hence employed sparingly. The practice of manufacturing gold leaf and foil would extend its use somewhat. Such was its scarcity in the early medieval period that the recycling of previously produced pieces appears to have been a typical supply source. There is a recorded event of the period related to St Moling (d. 697) when fishermen found a gold ring inside the stomach of a fish. The ring was divided in three and used for the benefit of the poor, to enshrine a relic and to finance labours and works.

However the presence of bole (if this is the case) points towards decoration of manuscript pages, as it had no use in the gilding of metalwork, but it is known to have been employed when combined with gesso to build up the surface of the vellum.

---

(raised gilding). This provided a smooth substrate and helped to maintain the integrity of the ultra-thin gold sheet. It also allowed the gold to be burnished and in some cases tooled, ultimately creating an impressive and magical effect for the viewer. Armenian bole was not always added, and recipes varied geographically.\(^{354}\) Clues to the type of gesso and any additives can be gleaned when examining a raised gilt illuminated folio by observing areas where gold has detached, as it inevitably does due to the flexing of the vellum or parchment folio. If a pinkish-brown colour is exposed, this indicates the presence of bole in the gesso. The issue in relation to the FMP is that its use is not recorded until around the twelfth century,\(^{355}\) and then it is to be found for the greater part on manuscripts produced outside the insular orbit, with the exponents of Byzantine influenced manuscripts being particularly enthusiastic about its application followed by Carolingian illuminators.\(^{356}\) However, considering other uses for the bole clay then perhaps its presence may not be adjudged as an aberration, and an early treatise on the use of gesso might offer an explanation;\(^{357}\) Included in the text was a set of instructions for the manufacture of gold leaf. It reads, ‘Take some Byzantine parchment, which is made from flax fibre, and rub it on both sides with the red pigment that is made by burning very finely ground and dried ocher.’ This is the same basic material as bole, and this stage of the work is the preparation of the modern equivalent of gold beaters’ skin, after which small, pre-flattened nuggets of gold are placed between the sheets and then beaten with a hammer, ‘cast from brass’ according to the instructor. It is therefore plausible that the gold leaf fragment and the bole together, as found on the cover of the FMP, is indeed related to preparation of gold leaf for the gilding of ecclesiastical metalwork. Perhaps a fragment was sitting in the receptacle containing the black carbon dye used to colour the cover. Taking into


\(^{357}\) John G. Hawthorne, Cyril Stanley Smith, trans, *On Divers Arts. The Treatise of Theophilus* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1963), p. 29. The interesting aspect of this instruction manual is its origin, although the original manuscript is lost, a twelfth century copy survives, it is believed that the identity of Theophilus is believed to have a Benedictine monk and metalworker; Roger of Helmarshausen, who penned the manuscript between 1110 and 1140. Some of his work is extant, including a book cover, held in Trier Cathedral Treasury.
consideration the motifs with hatching more akin to metalwork, the use of the cross, untypical in trial motif work, and the gold leaf fragment, it can be surmised that the FMP was present in a major monastic settlement, where metalworking and the use of precious metals were to be found and the motifs were those of a metalworker, rather than an illuminator, and probably a monk. However, it can also be argued that the gold leaf and clay are not extraneous products of the location where the trial motifs were produced, but rather where the cover was produced. Accepting that the trial motifs are good insular indicators, like the Irish majuscule hand of the manuscript their place of production can be located with some confidence within Ireland. The cover, however, displays enough codicological features to entertain the hypothesis that it is a product of Near Eastern origin. It is not known what age the cover was when the trial motifs were executed, but it seems clear that gilding of Coptic leather book covers was practiced in the Eastern Mediterranean during this epoch, as was the use of gold in the illumination of their pages.

**Metalworking**

One of the most enduring and visually impressive skills of the medieval insular craftsman was that of the metalworker. A single stylistic example of their craft is the almost iconic penannular brooch, with a range of extant examples displayed in museum collections. This clothing accessory demonstrates that high quality metalwork was not solely a product for the larger monasteries, and a healthy customer base existed in the secular world among the plethora of major and minor kings throughout Ireland. Fine metalwork required within the monastery would include the supply of chalices and patens for liturgical services. Archaeology has on several occasions indicated that metalworking took place in dedicated spaces within the monastic settlement. Not surprisingly this evidence is to be found from archaeological investigations at the larger more important sites, including Armagh,358 Nendrum on Mahee Island in Strangford Lough in the North of the country and Clonmacnois in the monastic midlands. Henry refers to this evidence from Nendrum, observing that a great number of crucibles with traces of bronze had been found in the location of

---

some huts on the site. Documented evidence of metalwork within monastic settlements is considerably scantier for the period before 900 CE although some sources are referenced by Michael Ryan from the later Lives of the Saints.

The question arises, who were the various craftsmen and no doubt women working within the monastic community? Were they specialists brought in from the lay community or if they were monks, could they have been conversi who unlike the novice or monkish boy, had already spent some of their adulthood in the secular world and could have acquired skills that were then employed inside the monastic settlement? Did these craftsmen have apprentices, and did the abbot allocate a novice monk to be trained in metalwork? Monasteries are habitually linked with education and the training of the oblatus from a young age in the skills of reading, writing and learning of scriptures, an attribute that is heavily documented and often quoted. However, according to O’Meadhara there is little reference to education outside that of a spiritual and academic world. Henry comments that ‘lay specialised craftsmen were probably employed when none was available among the community’ [monastic]. We have already mentioned a monk, Assicus, who seems to have been appreciated specifically for his skills in metalwork, which he put to use in order to supply St Patrick with the necessary liturgical vessels and shrines.

If the trial motifs on the cover of the FMP are that of an apprentice metalworker under instruction of a master, perhaps copying designs from an illuminated Psalter or gospel book, then it is credible that at least one of them was a member of the monastic community, either the apprentice, who as a novice monk had been designated as future metalworker for his community, with his required copy of the psalms, or the teacher, who had in his possession a Psalter for which he found the cover convenient for instructing his pupil in the patterns he would need to learn and use to transfer to his metalwork. On a technical note, the question of the tool employed to create the trial motifs on the tanned leather surface of the cover is one

359 Henry, Irish Art, p. 80.
362 Henry, Irish Art ,p. 103.
worth considering. I included as part of the conservation process tracings (see fig. 5.1) produced onto clear Mylar®. It was necessary to make a purpose-made scribing tool, as no graphic pen could reproduce the required line width, which brought sharply into focus the refinement and keen edge of the implement available at the time. Attempts were made to reproduce the motif patterns on a similar piece of tanned leather using a Swan-Morton® 10A scalpel blade. This fine edge also failed to produce a line of similar width. More in keeping with the available medieval technology, a second attempt was made using a sliver of obsidian, a form of volcanic glass and valued since prehistoric times for its naturally occurring razor-sharp edges. This produced something nearer to the incisions of the FMP motifs. The profile of the tool was visible under specialised magnification and displayed a ‘v’ cut consistent with the profile of napped glass. I intend to research this further with the goal of establishing the tool likely to have been held by our monk while trialing his insular motifs.

The hypothesis that the thirty-one trial motifs represent the efforts of teacher and pupil in the art of manuscript illumination cannot be discounted. Despite the presence of hatching in many of the pieces, the fact that stylistically a greater number of comparative examples was easier to find on the pages of insular manuscripts than on ecclesiastical metalwork of the same period is relevant. Perhaps a more thought-provoking question to pose is why was the cover of a Psalter chosen to carry out this work, and does the fact that it was utilised in this fashion reveal anything about the cover itself? Considering the mindset of the individual(s) who decided the cover of a Psalter book in the monastery was a suitable surface to ‘doodle’ or practice some current designs for whatever purpose, does this in turn, reflect on the status of the Psalter itself or just its cover? Putting this in context today, it is unlikely that many book owners would take a tome off their shelf and start to sketch some cartoon figure on the dust jacket or the cloth binding. Perhaps the association between the Psalter and its cover was not considered a permanent one and the fact that the presence of these motifs in addition to evidence of other uses as a surface for a range of tasks in the scriptorium, tells us that this Coptic style binding was a temporary housing while the manuscript awaited a more permanent structure. Finding little evidence to suggest

363 Dr. Laing, Nottingham Trent University, (see fig. 5.4).
that the five vellum quires were mechanically fixed into their protective cover reinforces this argument. Unlike other surviving early medieval manuscript bindings that inform us about ‘themselves’, the cover of the FMP proffers a glimpse into the day-to-day activities inside a monastic scriptorium or school in early medieval Ireland.
Chapter 6. The monastic landscape around Faddan More

Historically the portability of medieval manuscripts has led to difficulties in fixing their place of origin. Insular manuscripts are further complicated with stylistic and scribal similarities in the texts produced on these islands and in connected/allied continental monastic settlements. These overseas monasteries were established by *peregrini* who travelled from Ireland and Britain, bringing with them books produced at home and, once established abroad, had additional manuscript copies in the same insular style produced under their supervision. Colum Cille (d. 597), Columbanus (d. 615), and Wilibrord (d. 739) were responsible for the production of such material many miles from home. The physical format of books varied, and some books designed for ease of transport such as the ‘pocket gospels’ in a format ideally suited for personal use (typically the gospels and more often than not with additional illumination, mirroring their higher status and larger format liturgical manuscripts). They are routinely written in a more rapid, bordering on a cursive hand in contrast to the insular majuscule found in the larger liturgical books. Bernard Meehan lists a number of these small format manuscripts, including The St Cuthbert Gospel (BL, Add. 89000), Stowe Missal (RIA, MS Dii.3), Cadmug Gospels (Fulda, Landes., Codex Bonifatianus 3), The Book of Mulling (TCD MS 60) and the Book of Dimma (TCD MS 59). Another manuscript fitting this category is BL, Add. 40618, a small-format gospel book written in Ireland in the mid-eighth century some passages, remarkably, in a tiny insular majuscule hand whereas more typically for this format the more compact insular minuscule was the writing of choice. The diminutive manuscripts, apart from the St Cuthbert Gospel, are written in minuscule). However, by the tenth century, it had found its way to southern England, possibly Canterbury, where it was updated by erasing the insular initial letters and replacing them with the more austere classical forms in vogue in England of the period. Additional defacing of this manuscript involved removing the eighth-century evangelist portraits and replacing them with their tenth-century counterparts, this activity further blurring any clues as to its original place of production. Complexities such as these requires alternative indicators in any attempt to establish exactly where

---

such a manuscript from the middle ages was written. The fact that books produced across Europe at this period were for the most part products of the Christian Church and in the case of Britain and Ireland, a Christian monastic church. This provides a ‘target’ from whence to begin any search for the place of production of the FMP, mindful that the work was written in a style to be read by all literate contemporaries.

The location of the discovery spot of the FMP, buried deep in the inhospitable environment of a bog might seem incongruous, but a consideration of the surrounding landscape presents several local possibilities for its place of origin. The townland of Faddan More in North County Tipperary is perfectly placed in the centre of what William O’Sullivan called the ‘monastic midlands’.\(^{365}\) Kathleen Hughes describes the area as ‘thick with major monasteries’,\(^ {366}\) while Francis John Byrne somewhat poetically described the area as ‘a flowering garden of monasteries’(Fig. 6.1).\(^ {367}\) From a political viewpoint, the area around Faddan More would be considered an attractive location for ecclesiastical settlements. It was close to where territories of major dynasties from the early medieval period converged and whose patronage was key to growing an influential Christian base. Throughout Ireland monastic settlements varied in type, location and size; some were hermitages, or small eremitical groups similar to models in the Christian Orient,\(^ {368}\) others in contrast, were consciously placed in populated areas close to major transport routes. Geographically, the monastic midlands, positioned in the centre of Ireland, are reasonably sheltered with a combination of areas of well-drained soil, suitable for successful agriculture, contrasted by acres of raised peat bogs resulting from poor land drainage. Joseph Haughton views the latter as ‘useless for settlement and a barrier to communications’.\(^ {369}\) As is the case with much of history, it is problematic to gauge people’s resilience for discomfort in times past and it is likely to be just such attributes that initially attracted some of the monastic settlements to these poorer, more isolated locations. John Feehan in his forword to George Cunningham’s ‘The Anglo-

---


Norman Advance into the south-west midlands of Ireland’ talks of the monks ‘whose mind and eye sought out the extraordinary deserts of the medieval midland landscape rather than the grazing plains that drew the Celtic dynasties’. Referring to Munster’s isolated parts, Byrne suggests ‘the wandering scholar, monk or craftsman could cheerfully brave the wilds where an army would starve’. A nearby example can be found 19km north-east of the findspot. This Christian foundation was established by St Barrind in the sixth century, just over the border in the province of Mide. Known locally as Drumcullen church, it was positioned on the north bank of the river Camcor in a small area of bogland, somewhat remote from any secular dwellings and likely chosen originally as a hermitage site, however it expanded into a monastic settlement in time. The site continued in use and later ruins including a graveyard are to be found at the location. (Fig. 6.2)

Further examples of ecclesiastical settlements on bogland are found in nearby modern-day Offaly at Lemanaghan. St Manchan’s church was a monastic site established in the seventh century, surrounded by boglands. The founder of the monastery is recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters as Manchan of Maothla (Mohill, County Leitrim). Although he possibly chose the site because of its isolated location, the discovery of toghers or timber pathways across the bog, indicate it was accessible soon after it was established. The saint died in 664 CE and his corporal remains are held in a large twelfth century house-shaped shrine with decorative metalwork over a yew wood core, possibly made at Clonmacnoise but still kept at St Manchan’s Church at Boher, Ballycumber, close to the original site of his monastery. The nineteenth-century church also includes a stained-glass window by Harry Clarke depicting the saint. The monastery was linked by a bog road to St Mella’s cell; Mella was, according to popular belief, St Manchan’s mother. In both cases later structural ruins mark the location. Additional toghers dating from the late sixth and seventh

---

371 Byrne, Irish Kings and High-Kings, p. 170.
centuries have been located in the Lemanaghan bogs.\footnote{Elizabeth Fitzpatrick and Caimin O’Brien, \textit{The Medieval Churches of County Offaly} (Dublin: Government of Ireland, 1988), p. 12.} The same bog recently yielded a fragment of an eleventh-century crozier, now in the National Museum of Ireland.\footnote{Irish archaeological Wetland Unit, ‘Filling in the Blanks: An Archaeological Survey of the Lemanaghan Bogs, Co. Offaly’, \textit{Archaeology Ireland, Vol. 11, No. 2} (Dublin: Wordwell, 1997), pp 22-25.} With much of the country consisting of difficult terrain, it was necessary for its people to figure out how to navigate these areas successfully, as movement and travel was part of everyday medieval life and for the most part this was on foot. The many raised bogs, similar to Faddan More, presented such a challenge. The construction of these wooden tracks, discovered in multiple bog sites throughout Ireland, confirm that the solution was employed across this unstable topography. Many of these \textit{toughers} had been constructed during the Bronze Age, and no doubt were maintained, repaired and rebuilt into the historic era.\footnote{Aidan O’Sullivan, ‘Exploring past people’s interactions with wetland environments in Ireland’, \textit{Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature Vol. 107C} (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2007), pp. 169-178.}

About 50km south of St Manchan’s church Co. Tipperary lies another important ecclesiastical settlement on an island in the centre of a bog, The Holy Island of Loch Cré in Monaincha, close to Roscrea. The site was drained in the eighteenth century, improving access to the island.\footnote{George Cunningham, ‘The Holy Island of Loch Cré: Monaincha, the Thirty-First Wonder of the World’, \textit{Treasures of Irish Christianity}, eds, Salvador Ryan, Brendan Leahy (Dublin: Veritas, 2012), pp 53-56} The monastery was associated with a number of saints including St Crónán of Roscrea and St Cainneach of Aghaboe; the former who commissioned Dimma to write a gospel book for him.\footnote{Bernard Meehan, ‘Art of Worship and Devotion’, \textit{Art and Architecture of Ireland, Medieval c.400-c.1600}, ed. Rachel Moss, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2014), p. 238.} Probably established in the sixth century as a hermitage, like many churches in the midlands of Ireland, it became a centre of the Céli Dé movement in the ninth century.\footnote{Cunningham, ‘Loch Cré: Monaincha’, \textit{Treasures of Irish Christianity}, pp 53-56; Harold Leask, ‘Monaincha, Co. Tipperary. Historical Notes’, \textit{The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, Sixth Series, Vol. 10, No. 1} (Dublin: Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1920), pp 19-35.} The Annals mention an Elarius, anchorite and scribe of Loch Cré, who fell asleep in Christ in 807 (AU,AFM). At the close of the twelfth century the monastery came under the control of the Augustinians.\footnote{Hamlin, Hughes, \textit{The Modern Traveller to the Early Irish Church}, P. 106.} Today the ruins of the church include a finely decorated twelfth-century doorway and chancel arch in sandstone as well as later architecture including thirteenth-century windows. Two twelfth-century High Cross fragments, no longer in
their original locations stand west of the church (Fig. 6.3). The prominence and activity at this holy site suggests the production of books would be included among its activities. This is endorsed in the literary sources, recording the writing of a gospel book on the Island by St Cainnech; the now lost *Glas Cainnigh*, the green book of Canice.  

The townland of Faddan More is approximately 60m above sea level and is close to the border of modern day Co. Offaly, with the town of Birr approximately 9km north-east of the findspot. Two-metre long cores of peat were extracted from the findspot for the purpose of establishing the paleoenvironmental history of the locality. The time span from the pollen analysis covers a period from the Late Bronze Age to the thirteenth century. In the period of interest here, 400-1010 CE, human activity is in evidence in the area with a clearance of woodlands, particularly from the seventh century. By the end of the period however, human activity declined. This is indicated by the increase in woodland growth, as prior to this, the evidence suggests clearance of wooded areas for agriculture. This is consistent with other Irish midland sites though it is not until the late ninth century that more intensive woodland clearance was a feature of the area. The nearest current-day settlement is Carrig, 2km east of the bog on the main road (N52) back to Birr (Fig. 6.4).  

There are two holy wells in close proximity to the findspot; the first lies less than two kilometres to the northwest in the adjacent townland of Cloncorig (*Cluain-comhraic*) and is marked on the 1843 Ordnance Survey map as *Toberbrandy*, probably referring to St Brendan of Birr. The well is identified on the National Monuments database as TN008-002. The same distance to the southeast, near Loughkeen, the second holy well (TN008-12) is located in church grounds on poorly drained land. According to local tradition, the well was used to cure sore eyes. There are several

---

383 I have allocated the following coordinates for the location of the findspot. The visual identification was established using the NMI preliminary account of the excavation of the FMP, I transferred this to the National Monuments database and established the coordinates from here. Irish Transverse Mercator Easting: 600063 Northing: 700460.  
other archaeological features in the immediate area, including enclosures, barrows, ringforts and castles - evidence of activity and occupation before and after the deposition of the FMP. In addition, a wealth of decorated grave slabs and crosses related to the Christian sites of the area are extant, some still in situ and recorded on the National Monuments database.

The manuscript discovery site is almost 14km east of Terryglass on Lough Derg and 30km south of *Slige Mór*, the great highway that crossed in the centre of the country east to west on an esker. This was a product of retreating glaciers formed in melt-water tunnels inside the glacier. When the ice finally receded, the deposit of sand and gravel remained in the form of a ridge.\(^ {385}\) This raised land mass was ideally suited to provide a trackway across the boggy midlands. At Clonmacnoise it crossed the River Shannon, which provided an alternative mode of transport north to south. Modern underwater archaeology has led to the discovery of a substantial oak wooden bridge 120 metres in length, five metres wide and ten metres high that once traversed the river at the monastic site in the early ninth century.\(^ {386}\) To the south-east at Roscrea, 17.5km from the findspot, another ancient esker road, *Slige Dála*, terminated. This road, travelling from Tara through Naas and the seat of the early Kings of Leinster,\(^ {387}\) and provides the third transport route within striking distance of Faddan More.

It is necessary to ignore the county borders of modern times as they had no relevance in the period of interest here. In the eighth century the midlands, like the rest of the country, was divided into small kingdoms or *túatha* - *túath* loosely translated as tribe or people. Before the Norman invasion there were as many as one hundred and fifty of these petty kingdoms.\(^ {388}\) The ever-increasing desire for the control of the territories and the accompanying power, saw the rise of provincial kings and expansion of their dynasties. Modern Ireland retains the geographical imprint of this consolidation in the current four provinces. The area around Faddan More was


under control of the Éile Tuaisceart, subject to the Eóganachta, the Munster overkings. 389 This federation of dynasties had their seat of power in Cashel. Faddan More lies close to the boundary with the even more powerful Southern Uí Néill, and violent encounters between the two are recorded in the eighth century. In 721 CE, Cathal mac Finguine from the Eóganacht of Glendamnach took his seat as king of Cashel and began a campaign to stem the rising power of the Uí Neill dynasty. After some success he suffered a series of defeats and in 737 CE the annals record a meeting (dáil) with the Uí Neill high-king Áed Allán at Terryglass, close to Faddan More. 390 No details are recorded but the following entry in the annals records that ‘the law of Patrick was enforced throughout Ireland’ (‘Lex Patricii tenuit Hiberniam’). This was likely a form of truce between the two dynasties. 391 The volatile nature of Irish kingship ensured any truce was likely to be breached and less than forty years after the dáil at Terryglass, Dunnachad mac Domnall of the southern Uí Néill, Clann Cholmáin and then ‘high-king’ invaded Munster in 775 and again three years later with the assistance of men from the monastery of Durrow. 392

In the early part of the ninth century, the presence of another Munster king had a direct impact on the monastic landscape around Faddan More. Feidlimid mac Crimthann had seized the kingship of Cashel in 819 (A.U) or 820 (A.I) CE., and although named in the annals as an ecclesiastic, scribe and member of the Céli Dé, he raided and destroyed churches throughout Ireland, including parts of the Clonmacnoise lands. He also sacked the monastery of Gailline of the Britons (Gallen Co. Offaly) in 822 CE. 393 Three years later he attacked and burned Dealbhna Beatha, in the same area. In 831 CE he burned the sanctuary land in Clonmacnoise and again the land of Dealbhna Beatha. Recorded in the Annals as ‘the great burner of churches and monasteries’, 394

392 Stout, Early Medieval Ireland, p. 115; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200, (Essex: Longman Group, 1995), p. 57.
393 Annals of the Four Masters.
he was the first of the Irish High Kings to introduce this destructive practice. One of Mc
Crimthann’s churches, Derrynafain possessed a wealth of altarware, no doubt the
spoils of his violent exploits. He died in 847 CE and the Annals of Clonmacnoise
suggest the cause of his death was St Ciarán in retribution for the plunderings of the
monastery of which he was patron. These historical accounts demonstrate the
unstable nature of life in early medieval Ireland and emphasise that a monastery or
church did not in any way provide sanctuary from destructive and violent events,
indeed Christian centres were often the specific target of an ambitious king, including
those from the same dynasty. And in what appears at variance with the high ideals of
monasticism, monasteries were known to attack other monasteries, and their battles
were recorded in the annals with no more sense of consternation than those of any
warring kings.

The raiding and destruction of monasteries was not exclusive to local warring
 petty and high kings and during the period under examination here, it is necessary to
consider the devastation at the hands and weapons of foreigners, in the form of
invasions by the Northmen of Scandinavia - and more specifically Norway - a part of
the larger Teutonic race. Viking attacks, which commenced at the end of the eighth
century, were not unsurprisingly focused on locations along the Irish coastline,
particularly those on inlets or situated on offshore islands like Lambay, close to
modern-day Dublin, which would become a permanent Viking settlement. The
Lambay raid was one of the earliest recorded Viking attacks, noted in the Annals of
Ulster as ‘The burning of Rechru by the heathens.’ The island was the site of a
Columban foundation. Initially these incursions were in the form of raids and given
that Irish social structure did not include towns or cities in the Roman sense, the
marauders were denied concentrated targets. However, some monastic settlements

---

by the beginning of the ninth century had developed into structured communities with a commercial life and a secular community, functioning like a market town or city. In Irish-Latin, the term *civitates* was used to indicate larger monastic sites. The monastery at Clonmacnoise, founded 544 CE, fitted these criteria well and was identified as one of the great ‘monastic cities’, inevitably paying the price through multiple Viking raids during the phases in the ninth century; the Shannon providing them with an easy route inland directly to the midland monasteries and churches.

It is evident that these attacks were not primarily motivated by hostility towards the Christian religion, although elaborate metalwork including gold and silver was part of the booty, substantiated by the archaeological evidence found in Norse graves. The more practical and immediate reasons would have been the availability of provisions, stock and particularly, slaves. This argument is reinforced when considering the practice of using monastic settlements as a place of safe-keeping for lay property. It would not require many repeat raids before it became apparent to the aggressors that within the enclosure a ‘one-stop shop’ of spoils was available for the taking, with the bonus of some trinkets a possibility. Anthony Lucas indicated that ‘the bullion value of the great bulk of Irish metalwork of the time was exceedingly small’. Although much documented and often discussed, the Viking raids on ecclesiastical settlements around Ireland are easily outnumbered by native Irish attacks, though the former caught the headlines and imaginations of early historians. Statistics from the annals suggest that Irish attacks outnumbered those of the Vikings during the first wave of foreign incursions. The second wave of attacks later in the ninth century included battles between those Vikings who had settled here and fleets arriving from their Scandinavian homeland. The area around Faddan More in Munster also saw an increase in violence as a local chronicler in the twelfth century described:

---

400 Lucas, ‘The Plundering and burning of churches’ *North Munster Studies*, p. 199.
The whole of Mumhain became filled with immense floods and countless sea-vomitings of ship and boats and fleets so that there was not a harbour nor a land-port nor a Dún (all signify a fort or fortress) nor a fortress nor a fastness in all of Mumhain without floods of Danes and pirates, so that they made spoil-land and sword-land of her throughout her breadth and generally; and they ravaged her chieftanries and her privileged churches and her sanctuaries; and they rent her shrines and her reliquaries and her books.403 Another entry refers to an attack in the area: there came a fleet onto Loch Derg and the plundered Inis Celtra and they drowned its shrines and its books.404

The collective attacks, plunderings and sackings of the monasteries of Ireland by both native and foreign aggressors, and the internal turmoil, fear and confusion this generated must be considered in relation to the very specific circumstance that led to the FMP being deposited in such an unlikely location. Although Lucas, referring to his examination of the annals, reports that any plundering (Irish: argain) is never attributed to Irish attackers,405 this is hardly an accurate depiction as the exploits of Mac Crinthann, mentioned earlier confirm that the natives also indulged in the destructive practice. Penalties for such plundering are listed in the Old Irish Penitentials and specifically the stealing of books from the monastery incurred a penance of seven years.406 Arguably, if it was considered necessary to create a penance for this crime, it must have been a regular occurrence. Examining the hypothesis that the FMP is a local artefact and a product of a nearby monastery, say, one that could be reached in a day’s walk from the find spot, there is merit in checking out some of the possible contenders (Fig. 6.5). Material evidence for many early Christian foundations in Ireland is typically scant as monastic buildings and churches of the first phase up to 800 CE - were for the most part built from organic perishable materials that left little trace. The literary sources and sometimes a later stone-built replacement on the same site can, however, provide tangible proof. Archaeologists

403 James Todd trans., The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill, or, The invasions of Ireland by the Danes and other Norsmen (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867), P. 41
have on occasion found trace evidence of post holes marking the outline of original timber buildings. Oak was the timber of choice, with the addition of other organic perishables such as reeds for roofing. One Irish term for church *dairtheach*, translates as ‘oak house’ and emphasises the dominance of this construction method.  

Birr, a sixth-century foundation of St Bréanainn (d. 573?), is the closest of the major monastic settlements to the findspot in Faddan More bog. No documented Life survives for Bréanainn but traditionally it is held that he had close ties with Colum Cille and Iona. Likewise, archaeological evidence of the monastery’s existence is scant-to-lacking altogether. The site of the ruin of St Brendan’s Church, a mostly seventeenth-century structure and graveyard, north of the Camcor river in the Kingdom of Éile Tuaisceart is favoured as the location of the original monastery. It is described in the ninth century *Féileire Óengusso* as a monastery ‘on the brink of water’ and in the ‘confine of Eile and Fircell’. The Synod of Birr that enacted Adomnán’s *Lex Innocentium* (Law of Innocents) protecting women and children against violence as non-combatants was held there in 697. Paradoxically, the annals record the monastery in a battle with Clonmacnoise at Móin Choise Blae in 760. Further disruption is recorded in 841 when it was the focus of a Viking raid, a date which could fit the timeline of the FMP deposition. The event is reliably documented in several Irish annals, including the Annals of Ulster (AU), Annals of the Four Masters (AFM) and *Chronicum Scotorum* (C.S).

Of interest is a ninth-century manuscript proven to be a product of the monastery, the Mac Regol Gospels (Bodleian Library, Auct. MS D. 2. 19). On the last folio (169v) of this gospel book there is a colophon written in the same insular majuscule hand as the manuscript and contained in two panels of a six-panel frame, that reads: MACREGOL DIPINCIXIT HOC EVANGELIUM. QUICUMQUE LEGERIT ET

---

410 Fitzpatrick, O’Brien, *The Medieval Churches of County Offaly*, p. 3.  
412 Annals of Ulster, (TCD MS 1282).  
413 Lucas, 'The plundering and burning of churches in Ireland', *North Munster studies*, p. 216.
INTELLEGERT ISTAM NARRATIONEM ORAT PRO MACREGUIL Scriptori.

Mac Regol illuminated this gospel book. Whoever reads and understands the narrative, let him pray for Mac Regol the scribe.

The scribe can plausibly be associated with the Mac Regol, scribe, bishop and abbot at Birr whose death is recorded in the Annals of Ulster in 822. The manuscript is a large-format gospel book with the already trimmed folia measuring 350 x 270 mm. It contains the complete text of the four gospels although the prefaces and the Matthew portrait are now missing from the front of the manuscript. The remaining decorated folia include the three evangelist portraits and their incipit pages. In addition, other folia in the gospels have the text placed inside decorated borders. Plait-work, interlace, step patterns, zoomorphic and geometric lettering are all present. The manuscript’s decoration has been variously described as ‘rough’ ‘irregular’ and ‘slap-dash’.

Samuel Hemphill went as far as to describe Mac Regol’s work as ‘painfully rough’ when referring to some decorative elements. By contrast Hemphill is impressed by the geometric lettering, comparing it favourably to the Lindisfarne Gospels, the Book of Kells and the Ardagh Chalice. Tim O’Neill’s observations on Mac Regol’s hand describe the writing as ‘...free, yet stately, Irish majuscule script’.

By the late tenth century the manuscript was in England in a place called Harawudu, thought to be Harewood near Leeds. Here the text was glossed by two Anglo-Saxon scribes named Farman and Owun, who followed Mac Regol’s example and left a colophon.

Examining any parallel features between the FMP and The Mac Regol Gospels is an obvious exercise given their close. They are both large-format manuscripts, with similar height to width ratio, for the FMP it is calculated at 1.35:1 (see chapter 2) and a similar 1.3:1 for Mac Regol Gospel. Although further similar features are unsurprising, they are documented here as a matter of record. Both manuscripts are produced on
calfskin vellum. Geometric lettering and zoomorphic features are employed in the decoration, with a similar palette of colours, in particular a vivid yellow. Mac Regol and the scribe of the FMP both wrote in an insular majuscule hand, the standard for larger format gospel books from early medieval Ireland (Fig. 6.6). A palaeographical comparison would have merit if only to eliminate Mac Regol as the scribe of the Psalter. Michelle Brown does comment on a similarity in the hands, in what she terms ‘insular fractura’ of the late insular half-uncial. She places the FMP, Mac Regol Gospels, the St Gall Gospels and the Stowe Missal in this category, suggesting an Irish West Midlands origin for all and a dating from the second half of the eighth century. Codicological comparison with the Birr manuscript has not been possible thus far, as it would be necessary to investigate beyond, or more accurately behind its current much later binding.

Just over 12km east of the findspot is the location of another early Christian monastery, Seir Kieran, now located by the village of Clareen, Co. Offaly. Founded by Ciarán of Saighir, reputedly the first ordained bishop in Ireland - even before Patrick, who directed Ciarán as to where he should place his church. His pre-Patrician status is now, however, believed to be propaganda. The choice of location, in addition to an accessible water source; the Fuarán river may also have had some significance in pagan times. Seir Kieran has a well now dedicated to the saint close to the monastic site; natural wells such as this were a focal point in both pre-Christian and Christian times. Close-by, archaeologists have identified a bivallate hillfort and pre-Christian burial monuments. This re-purposing of sacred sites for Christian use helped smooth the transition from pagan worship during the initial conversion of the people. The strong traditions surrounding the well continue today and on March 5th, the feast day of St Ciarán, parishioners include the well as part of a pilgrimage and locals are reputed to always keep some of the well water in their homes. The monastery developed into a major settlement and had the support of local rulers who granted it lands in this gently sloping valley. Seir Kieran became the burial place of

---

419 Irish Transverse Mercator Easting: 613887 Northing: 7002255.
some of the supporting nobility, in similar fashion to Clonmacnoise.\textsuperscript{422} This included Cerball Mac Dúnlainge, the powerful king of Osraige, who died in 888.\textsuperscript{423} Evidence of the monastic site remains within a substantial earthen enclosure of c. 375m.\textsuperscript{424} Examining the ringforts in modern county of Offaly, Matthew Stout notes the location of a Cluster 3 ringfort, which denotes a high status dwelling compatible with a royal location, close to the site of the monastery and an area of 2km around the two sites without any other evidence of medieval habitation, emphasising both the isolation of the monastery and its support from local kings.\textsuperscript{425} Typically later stone structures and a graveyard remain above ground. The base of a high cross, a small sandstone ring-headed cross and some grave slabs all attest to the high status of this Christian settlement (Fig. 6.7). It is reasonable to speculate that ecclesiastical metalwork and manuscript production would be part of the repertoire of Seir Kieran; It was, after all significant enough to warrant the attentions of the Vikings from Dublin, who according to the Annals of Ulster plundered here in 842 CE.

9km north-west from the findspot in Faddan More bog, is the major ecclesiastical settlement at Lorrha, close to the current Tipperary/Galway border. It was founded in the sixth century by St Ruadhán (d. 583 CE), a noted pupil of Finnian of Clonard and included as one of twelve apostles of the Irish.\textsuperscript{426} The monastery flourished in the following centuries, and a chronology of archaeological evidence, mostly in the form of church ruins, are to be found in and around the original site, including a late medieval Augustinian priory and a Dominican friary. Two ninth-century crosses within the enclosure are possibly commissions from Cerball mac Dúnlainge, King of Ossory. Additional evidence of the settlement includes a graveyard, a holy well and recumbent graveslabs within the priory.\textsuperscript{427} The importance of this site is further enhanced by its close connection with the Céli Dé churches, in particular Tallaght.\textsuperscript{428}

\textsuperscript{422} O’Brien, Stories from a Sacred landscape, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{423} Byrne, Irish Kings and High Kings, p. 162.
\textsuperscript{425} Stout, ‘Early Christian Settlement’, Offaly History and Society, p. 51
\textsuperscript{426} Ó Riain, Dictionary of Irish Saints, p. 542.
\textsuperscript{428} Pádraig Ó Riain, Four Tipperary Saints (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014), p. 64.
and through the founder of the movement, Mael Ruain who came from Lorra.\textsuperscript{429} Considering the prolonged existence and prominence of this monastic locus, liturgical books would surely have been produced here.

An extant manuscript associated with Lorra is the small pocket-sized book now popularly called the Stowe Missal (RIA D ii 3), the name relating to a much later period in its life while in the possession of the Marquess of Buckingham at Stowe House. The manuscript and its book shrine were reputedly rediscovered hidden in the walls of Lackeen Castle, close to Lorra in 1735 by John O’Kennedy, while refurbishing the family estate.\textsuperscript{430} Similar to many early insular manuscripts, the date of its production is much discussed and somewhat fluid; the late eighth or early ninth century are most widely accepted today, making it a close contemporary of the FMP. In addition to the Liturgy of the Mass there are offices of Baptism and a Visitation of the Sick. Written in Irish in a different hand is a treatise on the mystical meaning of the mass and three spells against loss of eyesight, injury by thorns and disease of the urine. The first eleven folia of the manuscript contain a partial Gospel of John with his portrait included as a full page of decoration. This is considered to have been extracted from another manuscript and the two brought together as a matter of convenience, the common denominator being the same diminutive format (Fig. 6.8).\textsuperscript{431} Associated with the manuscript is its \textit{cumdach} or shrine dating from the early eleventh century and typically, altered substantially during later repairs. Despite the alterations solid evidence of its provenance remains in two inscriptions, naming a local king Find Ua Dúngalaig (d. 1033) and abbot of Lorra, Mathgamain Ua Cathail (d. 1037) (Fig. 6.9).\textsuperscript{432} Unlike the shrine, the origin of the Missal is less certain, and Tallaght is a popular choice given the inclusion of Maël Ruain in a list of Bishops at the end of the manuscript. However while discussing the shrine Pádraig Ó Riain suggests that ‘Lorra, which already demonstrably boasted a scriptorium in the eighth century,

\begin{footnotesize}
\end{footnotesize}
has as good a claim as Tallaght to be the place of origin of the Stowe Missal’.\footnote{Pádraig Ó Ríain, ‘The Shrine of the Stowe Missal’, \textit{Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Vol. 91} (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 1991), p. 294.} Supporting the hypothesis indirectly, William O’Sullivan compares the minuscule hand of the partial John gospel bound with the Stowe manuscript with the same gospel in the Book of Dimma, a product of Roscrea, about 26 km south-east of Lorrha. He describes the hands as ‘very close’ and suggests a ‘local style’ as a reason.\footnote{O’Sullivan, ‘Manuscripts and palaeography’, \textit{A New History of Ireland}, p. 533.}

Lorrha, as a well-established monastic site close to the Shannon, also suffered attacks from the Norsemen as recorded by the annals in 843 (AFM) when Clonmacnoise and Terryglass were also hit in the same raid. And in what appears to be an account of these attacks in the twelfth century \textit{Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh}, (The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill) a work from the lower Shannon region, mention is made of the destruction of the Shrine of Ruadhán.\footnote{Henthorn Todd, \textit{The war of the Gaedhil with the Gaill}, P. 17.}

Directly west of the FMP findspot, and on the shores of Lough Derg, lies the monastic settlement of Terryglass (Tír Dá Ghlas, land of the two streams). The area is associated with a St Colum who was buried there according to his own wishes (d. 552), Colum, like Ruadhán, was a pupil of Finnian of Clonard. After instruction in spiritual doctrine he left Ireland and travelled to Rome and later to Tours before returning to Ireland with relics of St Martin.\footnote{Ó Ríain, \textit{Dictionary of Irish Saints}, pp 209-210} He apparently established churches around Lough Derg before finally settling in Terryglass.\footnote{Ó Ríain, \textit{Dictionary of Irish Saints}, p. 210; Pádraig Ó Ríain, \textit{Four Tipperary Saints} (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014), pp 5-8.} The church in Terryglass receives attention from Adomnán in his Life of Colum Cille who was staying in Ireland and had travelled to visit the monks of Terryglass; on his arrival the keys of the church door could not be found. Colum Cille announced that ‘The Lord has the power to open his house to his servants even without keys’, upon which the locked door sprung open.\footnote{Adomnán of Iona, \textit{Life of Columba}, trans. Richard Sharp (London: Penguin Books, 1991), [1 35], p. 184.} The prominence of this ecclesiastical settlement and its likely association with Iona’s \textit{parochia} (hence its appearance as the only Munster church mentioned in Adomnan’s \textit{Life of Colum Cille}) would indicate that books would have been produced there from an early period. The mid-twelfth century Book of Leinster is likely a later legacy of this
tradition. The large-format manuscript is, for the most part, in Trinity College Dublin (TCD MS 1339) with the section containing the Martyrology of Tallaght held in the Archives Department of University College Dublin (UCD OFM A3). The manuscript contains Irish sagas, including the *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, and genealogies and although several hands have been distinguished in the manuscript, the compiler identifies himself in a note: ‘Áed Ua Crimthainn wrote this book and collected it from many books.’ He is identified as a scholar of the twelfth century and coarb of St Colum of Terryglass. Tim O’Neill describes it as having the appearance of a scholar’s compilation, from which scribes and illuminators could produce a fine manuscript’. In support of this, I might add that its current appearance strongly suggests that the manuscript was never bound, or if it was, it spent a substantial period of its use as individual parts defined by the quires and subject matter. Returning to Terryglass, like all the midland monasteries documented here, it too was raided by Vikings; one such attack recorded in the Annals of Ulster in 845 CE: ‘Turgéis a Viking leader attacked from his base on Lough Ree and laid waste to Clonmacnoise, Clonfert, Terryglass and Lorrah’. His destructive activities were brought to an abrupt end when he was captured by the Uí Néill king Maél Sechlainn and drowned in Lough Owel in Co. Westmeath.

At over 19km north-east of the findspot, Kinnitty is the furthest of the ecclesiastical sites examined here, but still within a day’s walk for a dedicated monk. Just as at Birr, no above-ground evidence survives to locate the monastery and similarly its exact location is not known, although it is likely to be in the vicinity of the current Church of Ireland church in the village. *Cenn-etig* was founded by St Fionán Cam (Finian the bent/squint eyed) in the sixth century. The saint is linked with Kinnitty through a liturgical text of the ninth century Martyrology of Oengus but later accounts place him with churches in south Kerry including the twelfth-century Martyrology of Gorman that mention Innisfallen. The monastic settlement at Kinnitty monastery became a significant site in the centuries following its construction and is thought to

---

441 Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, p. 246.
have been the principal legal centre for the Eóganacht dynasty in the ninth century.\textsuperscript{443}

An interesting grave slab discovered in the graveyard of the church is now housed in the porch of the Protestant church. The Kinnitty Stone is a large sandstone slab over a metre tall incised with pre-Christian spiral motifs in two parallel lines inside a curved border. The centre of the slab displays a cross terminating at the extremities of the stone. Within the cross and placed between the arms is a smaller cross with rounded terminals and spiral decoration and at the base an even smaller outline cross. An additional cross and crozier are incised in the top right-hand panel (Fig. 6.10). The spiral forms could be compared to simplified versions of those found on one of the carpet pages of the Book of Durrow (TCD MS 57, f. 3v) and the pre-Christian ‘Ultimate La Tené’ element of the decoration on that folio. Durrow is our earliest surviving decorated insular gospel book, produced in the late seventh or early eighth century (Fig. 6.11). Although the exact location of its production is not known and is often hotly debated, it was certainly located in Columban foundation of Durrow by the late eleventh century and plausibly considerably earlier.\textsuperscript{444} It was in Durrow that the manuscript was placed in a shrine (now lost) as a relic of St Colum Cille. Durrow is approximately 35 km north of Kinnitty on the modern R241.\textsuperscript{445} The Annals do not list any Viking raids on Kinnitty but there is little doubt that it too would have suffered and survived violent attacks from both foreign and native aggressors.

The final church to come under scrutiny in this context is Roscrea, already mentioned in relation to its close proximity to the hermitage site of Monaincha and its founder St Crónán (d. 619). Crónán decided to move from the remote site of Monaincha, which was not suitable for a cenobitic monastic community and establish Roscrea, located on Slige Dála, one of the principal travel routes. The impetus for the move may have been Mochuda of Lismore’s refusal to accept hospitality at Monaincha.\textsuperscript{446} Crónán’s decision proved wise and by the ninth century Roscrea was under the influence of the successful Céile Dé movement, as indeed was Monaincha. Both were mentioned in a treatise of Céile Dé practice of the time. Additionally,

\begin{footnotes}
\item 443 Fitzpatrick, O’Brien, The Medieval Churches of County Offaly, p. 3.
\item 446 Ann Hamlin, Kathleen Hughes, The Modern Traveller to the Early Irish Church (Dublin: Four Court Press, 2004), p. 28.
\item Pádraig Ó Riaín, Four Tipperary Saints (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014), p. 21.
\end{footnotes}
Crónán is listed in the Martyrology of Tallaght (the calendar for céili Dé saints).\textsuperscript{447} Crónán’s life is recorded in two recensions, one held in Marsh’s Library Dublin (MS Z. 3.1.5) and the other in Trinity College Dublin (MS E.iii.11). Today nothing remains of the original monastery. The site is identified by the west façade of the twelfth-century Romanesque church on the side of the road. Above the rounded doorway is a figure of bishop or abbot, probably St Crónán, there is also a High Cross close-by from the same period. On the other side of the modern road is a Round Tower now greatly reduced in height.\textsuperscript{448}

Roscrea did not escape the attentions of the Vikings, and the Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh, which recorded the ransacking by the Norsemen in Ireland, lists an attack in 845 CE the same year as attacks on its neighbours, as mentioned earlier. The ecclesiastical settlement at Roscrea has strong connections with an extant gospel, the Book of Dimma (TCD MS 59) and its relevance to the FMP have been discussed earlier.\textsuperscript{449} The manuscript was enshrined at Roscrea in the twelfth century, probably at the time of the construction of the Romanesque church and High Cross and when Roscrea was established as an independent diocese. The shrine does not have the usual timber core, however, typically it has been greatly altered over the centuries and it is possible the original dimensions have changed, as indeed have those of the manuscript. The decorative metal openwork displays interlace patterns in silver on the back and partially surviving on the sides represent the original craftwork.\textsuperscript{450} Domnall Ua Cuanáin, mentioned in the inscription, is likely associated with the Ua Cuanáin family who were the hereditary coarbs of Roscrea and as such considered the spiritual heirs and successors of St Crónán (Fig. 6.12).

If, as mentioned in chapter 2, that the discovery of an early medieval manuscript turned out to be a Psalter, was of no great surprise, then the location of its discovery was equally expected. The wealth of monastic settlements reaching back to the earlier Christian period in Ireland and continuing beyond the burial date of the FMP indicates the richness of potential sources for this Psalter. Accepting that the FMP

\textsuperscript{448} Harbison, Guide to the Monuments of Ireland, p. 313.
\textsuperscript{449} See chapter; The Binding of the Faddan More Psalter, pp 22-23.
is a local product, it provides material evidence of the knowledge and resources available in the mid-land monastic community. As demonstrated in chapter 3, the writing and decoration are representative of what was being produced across the western Christian world. Equally the binding shows historic influences and access to ‘exotic’ materials, conceivably through direct contact far beyond Irish shores. This short listing of ecclesiastical sites within walking distance of the findspot is by no means exhaustive and other known centres such as Kilcolman, Churchland, Glebe and Graigue would also warrant deliberation as a possible source of the FMP. Evaluating the period between the production of the FMP and its deposition in the bog - that is sometime between 750 - 850, an estimated date between the mid eighth century and the first half of the ninth. Activity in Ireland’s monastic midlands, while not perhaps at its zenith, remained influential and productive and while it is reasonable to suggest that the psalter is a local product, the possibility that it comes from outside the confines of Munster cannot be dismissed.
Chapter 7. The Findspot; intentional deposition or accidental loss.

The turn of events that resulted in the FMP being buried in a Midlands bog can be considered intrinsic to the history of the manuscript and the overriding question, was the psalter deposited, lost or hidden? Stepping back from the forensic investigation of the find spot and viewing the topography and layout of the immediate area, it is easy to arrive at the conclusion that the FMP was simply lost by its owner or custodian as he navigated the difficult terrain of the Faddan More bog. However, looking at the evidence gathered during its excavation and later evidence that emerged while conserving the manuscript, I am convinced that the manuscript was purposely deposited at this exact location and that a degree of preparation was involved in the event. The reasoning and evidence presented here is fundamental to this thesis, as the FMP has the potential to provide a contribution as a ‘marker’ from both art historical and codicological viewpoints due to its fixed location over most of its existence, an atypical situation for almost all the manuscripts from this period, although the Cuthbert Gospel has similar credentials. The aim in this chapter is firmly to link the findspot with the manuscript and at the same time, albeit more speculatively, reason why it was placed there.

It is worth repeating that the bogland from which the FMP was retrieved displayed a similar topography in the early middle ages as it does now. The precise presumed location of where the manuscript was recovered is a natural hollow within the strata of the peat; or so it is presumed since the dramatic unearthing of the find caused considerable disturbance in comparison to a controlled archaeological excavation (Fig. 7.1). This natural hollow is quite possibly the result of the removal of a tussock of peat. The tussock is a compact grass or sedge that grows readily on bogs; their compact nature resulting in a hollow if intentionally removed. The palaeoenvironmental research carried out on the find spot did locate such a tussock close-by, evidenced by the discovery of *Eriophorum vaginatum* confirmed by macrofossil analysis. 451 Typically the removal of a tussock and the creation of a hollow

results in a wet pool developing and such was the case in Faddan More. In effect the FMP and associated finds were submerged in this defined space. The research surprisingly, failed to locate *Eriophorum vaginatum* in or around the cavity itself, but according to the researchers, this does not write off the suggestion of a tussock removal based on this negative evidence. It does however present the notion that the ‘cavity itself arose from the position of the psalter’. The same research reports that broadly speaking the peat in the strata of the find is contemporary with the date of the manuscript.\(^{452}\) Given that neither the exact period of the strata in which the manuscript lay nor a close dating for its production is known, which could span anything from a decade to a century, unless and until dates can be narrowed down, any inferences drawn must be treated with caution.

As demonstrated in chapter 6, traversing and inhabiting areas of bog land was not uncommon in the early medieval period and the use of *toghers*, wooden pathways, aided the process. No archaeological evidence of any pathways was found in the immediate area around the findspot. This suggests it was not an area of typical human activity and was ‘off the beaten track’.

During the excavation of the site clumps of what appeared to be animal hair were discovered, somewhat disturbed but clearly associated with the find.\(^{453}\) Samples (#3) were sent to the Anglo-Saxon Laboratory in York and after initially being identified as animal pelt with degraded collagen and surviving hairs, a sub-sample was sent to Dr Phil Greaves at Microtex International, a specialist in modern coat fibres. Although the results were not conclusive, ‘white calfskin seems the best candidate at present, but this is far from certain’.\(^{454}\) Due to the disturbance at the findspot, it is difficult to be definitive about what lay where, but given the evidence presented, it is certain that the manuscript and the calfskin pelt are associated with the same event with the likelihood that the pelt was employed to cover the Psalter after deposition.

The other discovery of significance during the excavation was of fragments of a leather bag, which will be discussed later in the chapter. Having established that the

---

\(^{452}\) Plunkett, et. al., *Palaeoenvironmental Research*, p.15.


findspot contained not only the psalter but two other objects clearly associated but evidently different in their function and as such separate items, it would be reasonable to suggest that a hapless monk might drop his psalter in the boggy terrain, but it is most unlikely that he would have accidently lost all three without noticing it. A more difficult question arises if deposition is accepted: were the items being disposed of, or hidden, with the intention of a later retrieval? This leads to the consideration of a third scenario, albeit more speculative: that of intentional deposition without any later retrieval being intended, i.e. that the items were part of a ceremonial burial or even a votive offering/deposition. This pagan tradition from antiquity was carried on into the Christian period, at sites which had some particular significance, often close to a boundary between two territories. Developing this hypothesis leads the research to the subject of bog bodies and bog butter, due to the easily drawn parallels, most notably their shared location.\textsuperscript{455} The intentional nature of the deposition could represent an event which was part of a ceremony, perhaps a deathbed request of their owner, to have his most precious items buried at a location of some special personal significance. Although as a rule Christians were not buried with grave goods,\textsuperscript{456} nor were monks, a separate internment of his goods might be an option.

The tradition of bog butter deposition and its broad timeline, either side of the FMP, warrants consideration. Eamonn Kelly has observed by charting discovered bog butters, either in some form of container or simply compacted into a solid mass and buried in bogs and other wetland environments, that many were placed on or close to

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{455} In the case of bog bodies, most burials are the final act as part of a ceremony; a sacrifice or offering into the bog. However this can be embellished further by comparing the space in which internment took place. The FMP was most likely placed in a natural ‘readymade’ space within the bog, which has proven to also be the case for more than one of the bog bodies discovered, and the use of ancient peat cuttings were utilised for the internment, which like the tussock space, have a tendency to flood with water. Two examples are Grauballe Man, found in Denmark at Nebelgaard Mose in 1952 and Old Tollund Man from central Jutland in 1950. Both date from the fourth century BCE and both suffered violent deaths, see Miranda Aldhouse-Green, \textit{Bog Bodies Uncovered} (London, Thames and Hudson, 2015). Although there is an obvious time-gap with the later bog bodies dating from the late Iron Age and the eighth century deposition of the FMP, I would propose that the practice itself presents examples from 2000 -1600 BCE (Cashel Man) to 400 - 100 BCE (Gallagh Man) demonstrating a robust tradition that continued over centuries.

\textsuperscript{456} Well documented exceptions include the coffin of St Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne, the Irish founded monastery of the English north-east coast. Included with the body of the saint was a portable altar and the St Cuthbert gospel book (BL, Add, MS 89000) dating from the late seventh or early eighth century. Another ceremonial burial of a manuscript is the Mudil Psalter (LDAB 107731), a fourth century Coptic book of psalms found during excavations in a cemetery north of Oxyrhynchus in Egypt ‘under the head of a young girl’.
\end{footnotesize}
boundaries, either barony or parish and this included a number dating from the
medieval period. Proposing votive deposition as the most likely reason for the buried
butter, Kelly also suggests that the prehistoric practice might also apply to the those
deposited in the medieval period as a number of the bog butters from this era were
also located along a boundary, but he warns of ‘other practices may have come to
bear during the Christian era’.  

Bogs were utilised by the medieval population, who
recognised them as a natural source of tanning agent for leather, so the insertion of a
selection of collagen-based items into this environment would not necessarily be
considered detrimental to their survival, in the short-term at least. In addition, Irish
hagiography has numerous accounts of books being retrieved from waterlogged
environments with no ill effects due typically to the saint the book was associated
with. One account relating to St Columba tells of how a book of hymns written by the
saint and housed in a satchel fell from the shoulder of a boy into a river and remained
for three months before being retrieved by a woman who returned it and when
opened the book was dry and undamaged.

Were the items hidden because of the threat of theft? If so, what was their
worth as material goods? If the Psalter was housed in an elaborate bejewelled binding,
such as the gospel book of Colum Cille, as discussed in chapter 4, when it was stolen
from Kells in 1007 for the sole purpose of acquiring the precious covers, then there
would be a strong argument for hiding the FMP in the bog. This is not the case
however and though the manuscript itself was of value to the community that
produced and used it, this would have meant little to a gang of marauding Vikings or
warring locals. Although the ransoming of manuscripts is known to have taken place,
the FMP would not make for an obvious target. The two other artefacts, the pelt
covering and the leather bag, would have been equally if not even more modest in
their appeal to opportunist thieves.

As mentioned, the unearthing and gathering up of the find by the accidental
discoverers greatly disturbed the original intended position of the items. If the exact

---

459 As recorded in the Annals of Ulster, the manuscript was recovered two months later found under a sod, and is generally excepted as being the extant Book of Kells now bound in four separate volumes.
position and strata could be clarified, it might well give additional clues as to the purpose of the deposition. During the conservation process, however, it was possible to establish some trace evidence in relation to the leather cover of the Psalter. I propose a haphazard placement of the manuscript in its hollow. This is based on two noteworthy features observed during the conservation stage. Firstly, during the wet cleaning of the folia fragments, it was noticed that the final blank folio displayed a circular indent on the surface of the vellum near the fore-edge. After investigation it was discovered this was the result of one of the buttons on the flap of the leather cover impressing its form into the vellum. This indicates that the flap was tucked in behind the text block rather than wrapping around and resting on the front cover as was intended. Secondly, a constant feature of the conservation cleaning process involved the removal of a profusion of seed pods distributed over every part of the manuscript remains. When removing these pods from the leather cover I noticed a marked concentration of them running diagonally from the corner of the fore-edge to the corner of the spine. This accumulation is the result of the cover not lying prone, or upright as originally reported\textsuperscript{460}, but folded to some degree creating the diagonal trough in which the seed pods gathered over time. These features suggest a more haphazard approach to the deposition or alternatively a possible disturbance of the items at some point after burial (Fig.7.2,7.3). In relation to this point, I have already noted in chapter 2, the variance in condition of the two halves of the horizontally split and singularly intact bifolio f. 29-32 and how this suggests historic trauma of the manuscript, as the bottom half of the bifolio is in a more advanced state of decay due to being in a different micro-environment to the top half.

Supporting the evidence of historic damage to the vellum folia of the manuscript, it can be observed that for all the remaining fragments, the survival from the head area is superior to that of the tail, in fact there is practically no extant writing from the bottom half of any of the sixty folia, the material here comprising of only narrow strips of vellum from the tail edge, excepting f. 29-32. If considerable damage occurred before deposition, in effect tearing the manuscript in two halves and rendering it worthless, difficult as this may be to achieve - then an act of disposal

\textsuperscript{460} Kelly, ‘The Manuscript Discovered’, Archaeology Ireland, p. s 7.
rather than careful deposition should be included as a possible motive. I suggest that it is unwise to make a definitive statement as to why the FMP was discovered in such an unlikely location other than to say that it was positively the result of a deposition rather than an accidental loss.

The fragmented pieces of leather found during the excavation distributed over the findspot, indicate an artefact with a strong association to the FMP. The general form of what has been provisionally identified as a bag, or a more accurate description might be a ‘pouch’, appears to be an unstructured piece employing a single skin, stitched and then gathered. Around the resulting opening, a drawstring of thicker leather was introduced by turning over the bag leather to create a lip and a thonging stitch was used to connect the strap (Fig.7.4). There is a fragment of an additional leather strip, thicker and broader. This may have been part of a carrying strap, similar to the type surviving on the Springmount Bog Tablets (National Museum of Ireland (No. S.A. 1914: 2) (Fig.7.5). Another structural feature appears as loops of thick leather attached by lacing through the bag with the strap leather feeding through. Knots are also present in the leather strapping to lock the components in position (Fig.7.6).

Though the leather was identified as pigskin, I am unconvinced of this, having had the opportunity more recently to work with the object, which remains in its saturated state. There is a high degree of loss to the flesh side of the leather bag, which faced inwards as might be expected. The delamination of archaeological leather is a known condition and while the more compact grain layer may survive, the flesh side can lose any structural integrity. This effect on the Faddan More bag is the surviving grain layer displaying follicle holes through the full thickness, a feature of pigskin. My examination under binocular microscope leads me to believe that based on follicle layout, that the leather is sourced from a calfskin.

It is difficult to be certain as to the robustness of the bag given the degradation of the leather, but as prior to my recent examination, I remain unconvinced that the

---

462 Carol Smith, conservator in the National Museum, and I spent two weeks in 2018 examining the wide range of fragments associated with the bag/pouch. The primary aim was to identify the additional materials present and to establish the inside and outside surface of the larger tanned leather fragments. Initial discussion around the future dewatering of the components was also included.
manuscript was housed in the bag. For this I would expect a more structured and robust format such as the Armagh Satchel (TCD MS 52*) (Fig.7.7). Close examination during the recent assessment and treatment revealed small and minute fragments of additional organic materials, possibly the contents of the bag; these include textile, i.e. vegetable fibre, perhaps linen as found in the backfolds of the Psalter’s quire three, and papyrus. By noting that all these fragments were located on the flesh side (the inner surface of the bag), it is reasonable to suggest they were part of the contents. Interestingly, the vegetable fibre was wrapped into a ball, reflecting a convenient and contemporary method of storing linen thread. Could the bag therefore be a form of craft bag, carrying the materials required by a bookbinder monk to produce the manuscripts for his community?

To surmise, a site was prepared, either by removing a tussock or digging a hole in a remote area of the bog, the three objects identified by the archaeological excavation were placed into the hollow, or possibly the bag and book were buried and then covered with the pelt, which would have been in the form of a blanket or cloak. The event was a conscious act for a purpose that is likely to remain unknown.
Conclusion

In the same as manner of many archaeological discoveries, it is the combination of a fortunate set of circumstances that result in their unearthing. In the case of the FMP, if the back-hoe bucket, which plucked the Psalter from the saturated bog was 30cm in any other direction, the manuscript would go unnoticed and its contribution to early medieval monastic life is lost. I reminded myself of this constantly, as I progressed through the many discoveries it has thus far revealed.

The long and careful conservation of this archaeological artifact, followed by a thorough codicological study, has shed new light on aspects of medieval manuscript production. The nature and circumstances surrounding almost every aspect of the FMP and its discovery in 2006 has generated interest and questions which, like many relating to early medieval manuscripts, cannot be definitively answered. Nevertheless, this thesis addresses at least some of the more ‘clue-laden’ questions and adds to our understanding of this recently revealed manuscript, the first insular book to be discovered in two centuries.

It has been noted that the five vellum quires of the FMP and its tanned leather cover are not what could be considered a ‘good fit’ and aspects of both components suggest makeshift bedfellows. Dimension comparisons between the text block and the cover is a primary indicator here; the approximated size of the folia measuring a centimetre less than that of the cover from head to tail. In addition, the intentional creasings along the spine of the single-piece leather cover to accommodate its contents are over generous when the estimated thickness of the assembled vellum folia is calculated. These factors alone suggest that the cover of the FMP is a housing of convenience rather than an integral component of the manuscript. As a consequence, this provides two discrete parts, both of which are valuable additions to the small corpus of extant early medieval books and even smaller corpus of bindings. The cover in particular goes further, providing information beyond its function; the markings and trial motifs indicate day-to-day practices related to book making inside the monastery.

The manuscript itself was originally a complete Psalter of one hundred and fifty psalms and cannot be considered a work in progress. Evidence of this was established by examination of the folia fragments during conservation (see chapter 1). The text block lacks any flyleaves, commonly associated with a medieval book, although it must be acknowledged that there is a dearth of early medieval textblocks still in their original form.
and format capable of indicating typical practice in this regard. The eighth-century St Cuthbert Gospel does retain its original flyleaves and shows the convention of employing the first and last leaves of the first and last quires as flyleaves and pastedowns. It has been demonstrated that the cover of the FMP has the appearance of heavy and prolonged use, including the intriguing wear pattern on the spine area where it was gripped while being carried. These features are inconsistent with (the writing of) the textblock fragments, uncluttered as they are by the addition of glosses or any corrections over time. This evidence and the suggestion of deposition having occurred not long (in relative terms) after the Psalter was written (see chapter 7) leads to the conclusion that the cover is a repurposing of what was a binding for another manuscript. Modifications might have included trimming of the edges closer to the size of its new occupant and thus removing the expected turn-ins (all the Nag Hamadi and comparative covers discussed in the Binding chapter display this feature).

I have proposed that no mechanical attachment existed between the five vellum quires and the tanned leather cover, while presenting evidence to suggest that the individual quires were held together as a text block with a form of quire tacket, or an unsupported sewing, possibly a pair of sewing stations. Irrespective of which method was employed, the cover would have functioned as a ‘wallet type’ folder for its contents. There are obvious advantages for portability in retaining a manuscript as a collection of un-bound quires but also disadvantages for durability; the use of a light-weight container helps protect without adding the bulk and weight of a medieval timber binding. Jonas in his seventh-century *Life of St Columbanus* writes of the second abbot of Bobbio, Athala, who, as he prepared for his own death, concerned himself with the preservation of the library, which included having the books bound. This indicates that many early medieval manuscripts were in use, probably for extended periods after their production, without any solid structure in the form of a book binding. The options may have been to sew the text block, most likely using an un-supported sewing system or perhaps a side-stabbing, and housing the folded quires in a satchel or FMP type enclosure. An alternative possibility is that rather than an integral textblock, the psalter consisted of five individual quires, each held together with thread tackets. This would be a useful tool for the monastic scribe to teach his *oblates*, distributing a quire to each student, from which they

---

might copy the psalms. Within the oldest catalogue of the Library of the Abbey of St. Gall, there are additional catalogue titles of note, one of which reads ‘LIBRI SCOTTICE SCRIPTI’, followed by a list written in a minuscule hand (Fig. con.1). I have already referenced this document in relation to the identification of Irish manuscripts in the monastery (chapter 3). The catalogue also lists books by their physical format, nineteen *volumina* two *codicilli*, nine *quarterniones* and the term *quarternionibus* in two of the nine entries. This clearly shows several codices not bound into books.\(^{466}\) Corroborating evidence has been presented in chapter 5, where the use of the FMP cover as a form of sketch-book could be considered an unlikely utilisation of a functioning book binding. In presenting a counter argument by considering features on the cover of the FMP that could suggest mechanical attachment to the quires, the two ‘star shaped’ holes in the centre of the spine and the two sets of four smaller holes positioned in pairs on the front and back crease lines of the cover. The central holes, as described, show very little if any use or wear and do not align with any holes in the backfold of bifolio 29-32 (the only extant backfold in the manuscript) and they can be discounted. The smaller sets of holes positively display evidence of use and in the form of the diagonal exiting of a thread or cord as examined in chapter 4. These holes align with those that contained the vegetable fibre thread fragments in bifolio 29-32, however it is still not clear how this might have functioned as a primary tacket attachment system.

If it was no surprise that an early medieval manuscript pulled out of a bog in the monastic midlands of Ireland was a Psalter, the one-piece leather cover enclosing it provoked a different reaction as an exemplar of an early Irish bookbinding. The form, structure and even the materials employed to produce the cover of the FMP all originate from Eastern Mediterranean material culture under Roman influence. As illustrated in chapter 4, the search for parallel extant structures all resulted in examples from outside the Western European early medieval book making tradition. Considering book satchels as a historically recorded method of keeping manuscripts protected, with their stitched form and leather carrying straps, the format of the FMP cover would have appeared somewhat unfamiliar in an Irish setting. However, the representation of this ‘flap’ style binding illustrated in iconographical images of the period demonstrates a wider

geographical spread back to its source in Egypt. My search for comparative imagery in Western European art and more specifically in illuminated gospel books of the same epoch, involved studying illustrations from Irish, Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian source material. The research was restricted almost entirely to online resources, digital images, printed material and finally, in a few cases, actual examination of manuscripts themselves. The results detailed are interesting for what I consider to be semi-limp structures with flaps identified in a range of manuscripts, however I found no matching examples of the FMP type cover with its distinct flap with three buttons attached depicted apart from manuscripts considered to be of Irish origin or produced under Irish influence abroad.\footnote{Meehan, ‘Art of Worship and Devotion’, \textit{Art and Architecture of Ireland, Volume 1}, p. 246.} Any similar extant comparative models, such as the British Library Tax Register (BL Papyrus 1442) or the Nag Hammadi codices lack the three buttoned flap. Books illustrated on metalwork or stone carving provided no similar models. Additional, if somewhat less exhaustive, searches through Italian and Byzantine material failed to track the binding structure of the FMP from a source in North Africa to the island of Ireland. This leads to the hypothesis that the structural features, methods and materials employed in making the type of cover found with of the Faddan More Psalter, including the entirely decorative buttons, possibly related to Christian numerology, while copying monastic exemplars from the far-flung Orient were particular to Ireland and not uncommon.

Given the almost ephemeral nature of the FMP cover, it is no great surprise that it is the only known example extant from an insular, or possibly European, context from the early medieval period. Contemplating again a comparison of the FMP binding and its Coptic features with extant early medieval bindings, such as the Cadmug and St Cuthbert’s Gospel, it is important to note that the FMP preserves an intact structure that harks back to the very beginning of the Christian codex. Additionally and uniquely, unlike the two pocket gospels, there is in its manufacture, materials unlikely to be found locally but which are in fact found near to the location of its Eastern model, suggesting that it is not a model based on a Coptic model, but rather a product of its place of origin, albeit modified by its Irish owners, Bernard Meehan makes a similar observation.\footnote{Mac Durnan Gospels (London, Lambeth Palace, MS 1370), Cadmug Gospel (Landesbibliothek, Codex Bonifatianus 3), Book of Dimma (TCD MS 59).} Finally, this unique survival shows us that from the beginning of the Christian era the influence of
Eastern Mediterranean craft and technology extended beyond elaborate manuscripts to the everyday books employed in the didactic and spiritual life of monastic Ireland.

Unlike the cover/binding, the text block of the FMP leaves little doubt as to its place of origin. Even if the manuscript had been discovered with text obliterated, the evidence of its physical nature and construction, i.e. its codicology, would identify it as of insular origin. As pointed out in chapter 2, traits such as assembly of the quires, the ruling methods employed, and the nature of the skin firmly link the manuscript to the location where it was found in the monastic midlands of Ireland, but in so doing, puts it at odds with its cover. In addition, the insular majuscule hand combined with the decorative elements - scant as they are - and geometric style lettering further reinforce the Irish credentials of the text block and leave little doubt as to its place of production.

Although initially I coined the phrase ‘medieval paperback’ to describe the quality of the FMP as an end-product and a similar view is offered by Harry Gamble, who suggests that with the production of early Christian books, ‘the type of cover probably depended on the preferences of the owner and the value of the text’. However as my research progressed it became evident that this was no hastily produced copy of the Psalms for personal use, but rather a manuscript for didactic use, singing of the liturgy, or assisting the efforts of novice monks in their attempts to become ‘psalterati’. While it is true to say that the FMP was not intended as a visual spectacle to impress its viewers with intricate knot-work, interlacing and hidden creatures lurking in the insular majuscule text, it was a book carefully considered and produced by a skilled scribe or scribes. The FMP is unquestionably more comfortable in the company of the less elaborately produced manuscripts of the period, and even in its pristine state it would have appeared very plain and dour in the company of another presumed local product, the MacRegol Gospels, (accepting that it was produced within the orbit in which it was discovered).

Such divergence becomes even more apparent when side-by-side with the pinnacle of Irish manuscript production, The Book of Kells. Perhaps it is inequitable to compare The FMP with such gospel books, which were probably displayed in church and had a visual impact. The preferential status of the gospel book is further evidenced by being associated with or dedicated to particular saints, and examples include the Book of Dimma and the Book of Mulling, both linked with saints in an attempt to raise the status

---

of the church in which they were held and to increase the importance of the book itself. As a visual comparison the FMP does sit comfortably with well-executed and professionally produced manuscripts such as the Book of Armagh, where intentionally or because of a lack of resources a more sober spectacle was the result of the expert efforts of scribe and artist. It has been demonstrated in the chapters discussing the text block that the writing and decoration of the FMP are wholly characteristic of the Irish traditions of book making in the early medieval period. The choice of materials and the preparation of the folia both firmly locate the text block as an Irish product. The insular majuscule writing combined with the geometric and interlace-work executed with a basic palette of colours further anchor the Psalter to home soil.

The conservation of the FMP may be considered a success and a testament to the value of collaborative work across disciplines. Reflecting on my own role and with the benefit of hindsight, I would, were I given the opportunity to start again, change little in my approach or in the techniques applied. However, I would slow the project down somewhat and allocate more time to recording prior to using any treatment that might involve disturbing the fabric of the object. In turn this would have produced more digital images and recorded a range of features, some of which were to become more obscure in their dry state (see chapter 1). It was inevitable that even such a culturally and historically significant discovery such as the FMP would ultimately be subject to time restrictions. The National Museum of Ireland did, however, provide the maximum resources and expertise at its disposal to insure the highest standards at all stages of the work. The database produced will hopefully prove a useful tool and an aid to future research, as it maps (as best I could) the movement and identification of the plethora of folia fragments of the Psalter as conservation progressed. Anticipated scientific work might provide definitive analysis of both the vellum text block and the tanned calf skin cover. Protein and DNA testing has advanced greatly since the beginning of this project in 2006. Non-destructive and micro-sampling techniques might yet confirm not only the species - although I am convinced of my identification here - but also the geographic region in which both cover and text block originated. This would definitively answer the question as to where the cover of the FMP was produced and consequently add supporting physical evidence of craft practice, material culture and the much-discussed occidental-oriental connections in monastic Ireland of the early medieval period.
As was established and discussed in chapter 7, the FMP was the subject of a deposition and not an accidental loss. I found it difficult to come to terms with the notion of this manuscript being disposed of - discarded as no longer useful - but perhaps this scenario needs to be considered. There is a tendency in modern times to regard the few survivors of scribal achievement as symbolic and material witnesses to the dedication of the people who wrote and studied their contents. Books were an essential part of the monastic environment and as familiar as the buildings or church furnishings. As products of organic materials like the wooden buildings that housed them, they are vulnerable to decay and cannot have been considered permanent. It is reasonable to suggest that the contemporary users of these books understood this and according to Richard Sharpe did not necessarily regard them as possessing an unlimited lifespan. Sharpe sums up the situation in the medieval monasteries of Ireland by stating that ‘....books were being destroyed by overuse, or neglect, or being scrapped’.\footnote{Richard Sharpe, ‘Books from Ireland, Fifth to Ninth Centuries’, \textit{Peritia, Volume 21}, eds Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Dublin: Medieval Academy of Ireland, 2010), p. 16.} It has to be argued of course that dedicated volumes held a different status in the consciousness of their custodians and some were viewed as beyond mere material objects having acquired relic status because of their associations with founding saints.

One ongoing aspect of this project (as of November 2018) is the relocation of disjointed smaller text fragments. This time-consuming, and eye-straining but highly rewarding task will hopefully add additional text to the assembly of the Vulgate Psalter where extant writing has been highlighted and variants noted (chapter 3 and appendix). This will aid in the future a full transcription of the FMP. Once complete, the Psalter will add not only to the materiality of medieval Irish book making but also to the corpus of Irish liturgical material available for scholarly study and tools such as my identified text list and fragment database will assist specialists in extracting further information from this complex artefact. In addition to the ‘floating’ majuscule writing fragments, is a collection of disjointed capitals, both insular and geometric in style, often with blocks of colour still attached that also require identifying (Fig. con.2). These decorated letters were intended to highlight certain psalms such as those that began the ‘three fifties’. This task is complicated, as the strokes of the letters themselves are often deformed and out of position. However, I hope to continue any work in this area, with the goal of building a more complete picture of the writing and layout of the Psalter.
The observations of Françoise Henry, the famous scholar of early Irish art, were vindicated in 2006 when FMP was discovered. In her examination of three Irish Psalters, she thought it strange that between the Cathach, from the early seventh century? and the earliest of the Psalters in her study from the tenth century, no other Psalter texts were known. She commented that ‘There cannot be the slightest doubt that many copies of the psalter have existed in Ireland in the late seventh, eighth and ninth centuries’.471

The FMP undoubtedly makes a worthwhile and substantial addition to the corpus of early Irish medieval manuscripts. Its stature as such is unlikely to be fully realised until a concentrated scholarly appraisal has been completed. The difficulty however lies in the partial survival, physical condition and faded writing that add a substantial challenge to any detailed study, but like the Dead Sea Scrolls or the Oxyrhynchus Papyri given time and resources much can still be learned. The materiality of the FMP makes an even greater contribution, adding substantially to the codicological study of early medieval book making and more specifically to Irish book making. It now takes its place with the tiny number of insular manuscripts still retaining their original covers, and like the St Cuthbert Gospel and Cadmug Gospels, that also display influence from Eastern Mediterranean traditions. Uniquely, the FMP also presents materials from that tradition and in so doing brings additional evidence to Hiberno-Coptic discussion. Hopefully the work completed thus far will act as a catalyst for multi-disciplinary research to begin in earnest around this extraordinary survival. My continuing work includes a search for additional historic illustrations of like structures as well as extant structures, the latter may survive on the shelves of libraries or even in monastic communities such as St Anthony’s in the Red Sea Desert, where I believe bindings like that of the FMP are to be found (Fig. con.3). Closer to home the study and conservation of the bag or pouch, mentioned in the Find Spot chapter is already contributing data that might well better inform us of the provenance and role the Faddan More Psalter played in monastic Ireland of the eighth century.

John Gillis
February 2019

Fig. 1  Faddan More Bog, Co. Tipperary.  -Gillis
Fig. 1.1 The Psalter in its as found state  National Museum of Ireland

Fig. 2 SEM image of papyrus fragment from the inside cover of the FMP  -Caroline Cartwright, The British Museum
Fig. 1.2 Backfolds visible prior to removal  Gillis

Fig. 1.3 40X image of vellum fibres  Rene Larsen, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts School of Conservation
Fig. 1.4 Air dried vellum sample, outline shows wet format

Gillis
Fig. 1.5 Test samples of saturated vellum with dimensions recorded

Gillis
Fig. 1.6 Colour Atlas 96 under 1000 lux  Gillis

Fig. 1.7 Audionvac 401H vacuum machine  Gillis
Fig. 1.8 Grid Bridge with the Psalter below  Gillis

Fig. 1.9 Saturated folia being separated  Gillis
Fig. 1.10 Separated quire supported between Bondina® sheets  

Gillis

Fig. 1.11 Folio 13r after removal and cleaning  

Gillis
Fig. 1.12 Removal of letter from bog material  Gillis

Fig. 1.13 The use of high-resolution screens to assist psalm identification  Gillis
Fig. 1.14 Virtually assembled bifolium (7v – 6r) from identified fragments

Fig. 1.15 Folio fragment in ‘Folio Flipper’ awaiting vacuum  Gillis
Fig. 1.16 Vacuum housed bifolium fragment (12v – 1r) in its storage folder

Fig. 1.17 Tabbed folders for each folia fragment
Fig. 1.18 Dedicated display space for the Psalter

Fig. 1.19 The tanned leather cover in its wet state after cleaning
Fig. 1.20 The cover submerged in a 15% v.v glycerol bath

Gillis

Fig. 1.21 The leather cover dry and stable. Note the black dye surviving on the surface

National Museum of Ireland
Fig. 2.1 TCD M5 55 Usserianus Primus p.30  Trinity College Dublin

Fig. 2.2 (Cod. Sang. 904), Institutiones Grammaticae p.217  St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek
Fig. 2.3 Staatsbibliothek Bamberg MSC. Patr. 5 f.1v
Fig. 2.4 Collation Map of the Faddan More Psalter

Gillis
Fig. 2.5 Faddan More Psalter, head of f.10v

Fig. 2.6 Barb. Lat. 570 Barberini Gospels f.11v
Fig. 2.7 Barb. Lat. 570 Barberini Gospels f.124v

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

Fig. 2.8 Reconstruction of pivoting knife

Martin Biddle
Fig. 2.8a Pivoting penknife, Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester p.73

Martin Biddle 4
Fig. 2.13 Faddan More Psalter, f.27v-34r  National Museum of Ireland

Fig. 2.14 Faddan More Psalter, f.4v  National Museum of Ireland
Fig. 2.15 Faddan More Psalter, f.32v-29r  Gillis

Fig. 2.15a Faddan More Psalter, f.32v  Gillis
Fig. 2.16 Faddan More Psalter, f.29v-32r  National Museum of Ireland

Fig. 2.17 Faddan More Psalter, head margins f.47v-48r-49r  Gillis
Fig. 2.18 Faddan More Psalter, f.40v-45r  National Museum of Ireland
Fig. 2.19 Faddan More Psalter, f.60v-51r  National Museum of Ireland

Fig. 2.20 Faddan More Psalter, sewing threads f.29v-32r  National Museum of Ireland
Fig. 2.21 Direct tacketing illustration

Gillis
Fig. 2.22 Codex Amiatinus (MS Amiatino 1) early-eighth century, f. 5r
Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana
Fig. 2.23 Maeseyck Gospels, early-eighth century, f. 1.

Church of St Catherine, Trésor, s.n
Fig. 2.24, Cod. Sang. 1395, ninth century, p. 418  St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek
Fig. 2.25 The Godescalc Evangelistary, (ms nov. acq. lat. 1203), late-eighth century, f. 1r

Gallica Digital Library
Fig. 2.26 Gospel book, (Bodleian, MS Auct. D. 2. 16), early-tenth century, f. 71v  Digital

Bodleian

Fig. 2.27 Byzantine Gospels (Bodleian, MS. Cromwell 16), mid-tenth century, f. 30v
Fig. 3.3 Faddan More Psalter, f.9r  Gillis

Fig. 3.4 Faddan More Psalter, f.9v  Gillis
Fig. 3.5 TCD MS 59, Book of Dimma, p.106
Trinity College Dublin

Fig. 3.6 Faddan More Psalter, dislocated d
Gillis
Fig. 3.7 Faddan More Psalter, f.34v  Gillis

Fig. 3.8 Cod. Sang. 1394, f.95  St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek
Fig. 3.9 Cod. Sang. 1394, detail, f.95 St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek

Fig. 3.10 Faddan More Psalter, f.9v-4r National Museum of Ireland
Fig. 3.13 Faddan More Psalter, f.8v

National Museum of Ireland
Fig. 3.14 Faddan More Psalter, f.5v National Museum of Ireland
Fig. 3.15 RIA MS D ii 3, The Cathach, p.36  Royal Irish Academy

Fig. 3.16 Faddan More Psalter, head f.27v  National Museum of Ireland
Fig. 3.17 Faddan More Psalter, f.29v  National Museum of Ireland

Fig. 3.18 Slab Crosses at Berrihert’s Kyle in Ardane, Co. Tipperary  Pilgrimage Medieval Ireland
Fig. 3.19, Z5075:1000, Helgö crozier terminal
Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm

Fig. 3.20 Faddan More Psalter, dislocated b
National Museum of Ireland
Fig. 3.22 Cod. Sang. 51, p.8  St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek

Fig. 3.23 Faddan More Psalter, fragment, f.25r  National Museum of Ireland
Fig. 3.24 Faddan More Psalter, detail, f.29r  National Museum of Ireland

Fig. 3.25 Cod. Sang. 51, p.42  St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek
Fig. 3.28 National Museum of Ireland, Ardagh Chalice inscription  National Museum of Ireland

Fig. 3.29 TCD MS 58 Book of Kells, incipit of Mark’s Gospel  Trinity College Dublin
Fig. 3.30 Cod. Sang. 51, incipit of Mark’s Gospel, p.79  St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek
Fig. 3.31 MS. 1, Lichfield Gospels, incipit of Luke’s Gospel, p.221  Lichfield Cathedral Library
Fig. 3.32 Cod. Sang. 1395, p.426  St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek
Fig. 3.33 Faddan More Psalter, Psalm 51, f.22r Gillis

Fig. 3.34 Oseberg no. 157 Oseberg enamelled mount
Fig. 3.35 TCD MS 57 Book of Durrow, carpet page, f.1v
Fig. 3.36 TCD MS 55 Usserianus Primus, chi-rho cross, f. 149v
Trinity College Dublin

Fig. 3.37 BL Latin 9389, Echternach Gospels, symbol of John, f. 176v
British Library
Fig. 3.38 Cod Sang. 15, Psalm 1.1 Beatus Vir, p.1  St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek
Fig. 3.39 Cod. F. v. I. 8, Leningrad Gospel, incipit of Mark’s Gospel, p.78  e-codices
Fig. 3.40 Psalm 51.3, Reproduction by Timothy O’Neill

Fig. 3.41 Faddan More Psalter, Initial letter fragments
Fig. 3.42 Faddan More Psalter, Initial letter and decoration fragments  Gillis

Fig. 3.43 Faddan More Psalter, text from Psalm 98.4  Gillis
Fig. 3.44 Moone High Cross, Co. Kildare, west face  Erik Lounsbury
Fig. 3.45, Derrynaflan Chalice, detail National Museum of Ireland

Fig. 3.46 Faddan More Psalter, bird, f. 1r Gillis
Fig. 3.47 TCD MS 59, Book of Dimma, incipit of John’s Gospel, p. 104

Trinity College
Dublin
Fig. 3.48 Cod. Sang. 60, incipit of John’s Gospel, p.4  St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek
Fig. 3.49 Cod. Sang. 51, incipit of John’s Gospel, p. 208
St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek
Fig. 3.50 RIA MS.D.ii 3, Stowe Missal, Portrait of John, f.11v

Fig. 3.51 Coptic Textile
Fig. 3.52 Faddan More Psalter, detail at head, f.40r

Fig. 3.53 Nendrum, Co. Down, Slate fragment, Ulster Museum
Fig. 3.54 Faddan More Psalter, saturated folio, f.4v  Gillis

Fig. 3.55 Faddan More Psalter, detail, f.4r  Gillis
Fig. 4.1 The conserved binding of the FMP. National Museum of Ireland
Fig. 4.2 Punched hole in the spine of the cover. Gillis

Fig. 4.3 Secondary holes in the spine of the FMP cover. Gillis
Fig. 4.4 X sketch of stitch pattern  Gillis

Fig. 4.5 Centre horn button attached to the flap of the FMP cover. Gillis
Fig. 4.6 Replica button, underside detailing knot. Gillis

Fig. 4.7 Writing on inside surface of the FMP cover. Gillis
Fig. 4.8 ‘Tram’ lines on the outer surface of the cover of the FMP.  

Fig. 4.9 Incisions on the inner surface of the cover of the FMP.  

Gillis
Fig. 4.10 Outer surface features of the FMP cover. National Museum of Ireland

Fig. 4.11, Mac Durnan Gospels MS 1370 f. 115v Luke. Lambeth Palace Library
Fig. 4.12 The Book of Armagh Satchel  
Trinity College Dublin

Fig. 4.13 Model of the FMP  
Gillis
Fig. 4.13 Model of the FMP and text block tracings

Gillis
Fig. 4.14 Inside surface of one of the Nag Hammadi covers showing secondary strip and papyrus lining fragments. Gillis

Fig. 4.15 BNF NS suppl. Gr. 1120. Cover of the Philo Codex with flap and strap. Jean-Vincent Scheil
Fig. 4.16 BL Papyrus 1442. Opened out leather cover with now fragmented flap. British Library

Fig. 4.17 F-III-15d. The contemporary outside cover of the manuscript. e-codices

Fig. 4.18 Cod. Guelf. 496a Helmst. Spine displaying ‘X’ pattern sewing. e-codices
Fig. 4.19 Bodleian MS. Marshall 19. Digital Bodleian

Fig. 4.20 Bodleian MS. Marshall 19 indent from button and hole pattern Digital Bodleian
Fig. 4.21 Landesbibliothek, Codex Bonifatianus 3. The four matching evangelists. Fuldaer Digitale Sammlugen
Fig. 4.22 TCD MS 59 f.104. The eagle of John.

Trinity College Dublin
Fig. 4.23 Cod. Sang. 1395 f.418. St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek
Fig. 4.24 Coptic Museum No. 94 f.131v. 
Coptic Museum, Cairo
Fig. 4.25 Basilica of San Vitale. Portrait of the evangelist Luke. Patricia Lovett
Fig. 4.26 Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. Portrait of St. Lawrence. Mary Anne Sullivan
Fig. 4.27 Codex Amiatinus (Bib. Med. Laurenziana, MS Amiatinus 1), f.5r  World Digital Library
Fig. 4.28 Caherlehillan, Iveragh Peninsula, Co. Kerry, slab cross

Early Christian Sites in Ireland Database

Fig. 5.1 Deep incisions into the surface of the leather.

Gillis
Fig. 5.2 St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek. Cod. 731 f.234

Fig. 5.3 Traced Motif identification system. Gillis
Fig. 5.4 Optical Coherence Tomography scanning of the cover. Hiada Laing, Nottingham

Fig. 5.5 Milan Biblioteca Ambrosiana. (MS D. 23. sup.) Wikipedia
Fig. 5.6 St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek. Cod. 1395 f.426  St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek
Fig. 5.7 Leningrad Gospels (Cod. F. v. I. 8) f. 78r  e-codices
Fig. 5.8 Macregol Gospels (MS. Auct. D. 2. 19) f.126v Digital Bodleian

Fig. 5.9 Mac Durnan Gospels (MS 1370) f. 4v Portrait of Matthew Lambeth Palace Library
Fig. 5.10 Book of Deer (Cambridge Univ. Lib., ii 6. 32.) f.16v Portrait of Mark
Fig. 5.11 Southampton Psalter (Cambridge, St. John’s College C. 9 59) f. 1v David and the Lion

The Master and Fellows of St John’s College Cambridge
Fig. 5.12 Gospel of Maelbrigte, f. 60v evangelist symbol Mark  
British Library

Fig. 5.13 Cod. Sang. 51, f 209r and Mac Durnan Gospels f.4v  
Lambeth Palace Library
Fig. 5.14 Lindisfarne Gospels, (British Library Cotton MS Nero D IV) cross carpet page f. 138v

British Library

Fig. 5.15 Macregol Gospels, (Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D.2.19) evangelist page of St. Mark f. 51v

Digital Bodleian
Fig. 6.1 Monastic sites of the midlands

Fig. 6.2 Drumcullen church ruins and graveyard  Stephen Callaghan
Fig. 6.3 Church ruins and high cross at Loch Cré, Co. Tipperary

George Cunningham

Fig. 6.4 The findspot at Faddan More bog (indicated with a green flag)

National Monuments Service
Fig. 6.5 Monastic locations within a day’s walk of the findspot
National Monuments Service

Fig. 6.6 Mac Regol Gospels (Bodleian Library, Auct. MS D. 2. 19) f. 126v 127r.
Bodleian Digital
Fig. 6.7 The present parish church at Saighir.

Fig. 6.8 The Stowe Missal (RIA D ii 3), f. 65v
Fig. 6.9 Shrine of the Stowe Missal, National Museum of Ireland, no. 1883:614a
National Museum of Ireland

Fig. 6.10 The Kinnitty Stone
Fig. 6.11 Book of Durrow (TCD MS 57), f. 3v carpet page.  Trinity College Dublin
Fig. 6.12 The Book of Dimma shrine, (TCD MS 59), upper face with substantial repairs

Trinity College Dublin
Fig. 7.1 Hollow identified as likely location of the FMP

Fig. 7.2 model of the FMP cover
Fig. 7.3 The position of the Psalter while buried  

Gillis
Fig. 7.4 larger fragment of the tanned leather bag or pouch in its wet state

National Museum of Ireland
Fig. 7.5 Springmount Bog Tablets (National Museum of Ireland (No. S.A. 1914: 2)) National Museum of Ireland
Fig. 7.7 Book of Armagh Satchel, (TCD MS 52)  Trinity College Dublin
LIBRI SCOTTICE SCRIPTI.
Leptepou innoti. Eptecannoyn. vii. innoti.
En wol. sediob innoti. Enephius len. Innoti.
Inep epaptedlep innoti. Merep seduli. Innoti.
Degradib. eclesiastic. innoti. Archebacia boscavi.
Missa innoti. Nequi hiam. incodice.
Satio martyrr. morteiii. capsie.
Merep ving. innoti. Eneglosa inalter.
Chano i. de inuerto. capparis si stefpy.
Quax. Verelax. stresenyn. fagall. innui setam.
Dede drak. mi. infe.
Instructo eclesiatica ordin. incodice.
Lit. i. genest infe.
Accapou. apocalypshi. innoti. uali.
Quax. innot. inua. innocent. legem.
Orationes aliterm. varis. innoti.
Orationes. infe.
Epressive in capace. cae. Infe.
ii. Infe regi.
Fig. con.2 unlocated fragments of the Faddan More Psalter  Gillis

Fig. con.3 St Anthony’s monastery, Red Sea Desert  Gillis
### Vellum Drying Trials  
**Chapter 1**

#### Sample Number  | Drying mechanism
--- | ---
1 | Air Dry Control
2 | Freeze Dried
3, 4, 5, 6 | Vacuum Table
7, 8, 9, 10 | Under weight
11, 12, 13, 14 | In Vacuum Machine

#### Sample Number  | Drying Solvent
--- | ---
1 | Air Dry Control
2 | No solvent exchange
3 | No solvent exchange
4 | through denatured alcohol
5 | through acetone
6 | through acetone/H₂O 80:20
7 | no solvent exchange
8 | through denatured alcohol
9 | through acetone
10 | through acetone/H₂O 80:20
11 | no solvent exchange
12 | through denatured alcohol
13 | through acetone
14 | through acetone/H₂O 80:20

### Drying Test Results

1. **Air Dry Control**
   
   Placed on blotting uncovered from saturated. Ambient 21°C 57% R.H
   
   Result: Dry, 6 hours judged by touch, very distorted and less flexible, very translucent in places leaving a ‘blotchy’ appearance, approx. 5% shrinkage.
   
   Flexibility Disc C 0.30mm. Colour Value 3020-Y10 (hair side)

2. **Freeze Dried (Over five days)**
   
   Result: No distortion, approx. 3.5% shrinkage, opacity maintained, sample has ‘pulped up’ with a noticeable increase in thickness, loss of natural pigmentation on
hairside becoming almost white, surface feels ‘spongy’. Flexibility Disc B 0.20mm. Colour Value 1510-Y20 (hair side)

3. 4. 5. 6. Vacuum Table

Through various, see below. Sample laid on two thicknesses of Bondina®, area masked with Mylar® film, vacuum set at 28 inches of H$_2$O (about 6.9 kPa) with ambient values of 20°C and 57% RH, in order to slow regional drying and avoid ‘cupping’ of the sample. Two thicknesses of Bondina® were placed over the effected areas, as drying of the sample neared completion pressure was reduced to 13 inches of H$_2$O.

3. From wet state: dry in 90 minutes, judged by touch, vacuum struggled to hold sample in position, approx. 5% shrinkage, somewhat distorted, loss of flexibility and sample now translucent in areas.

Flexibility Disc C 0.30mm. Colour Value 3020-Y10 (hair side)

4. Through denatured alcohol: some slight distortion, approx. 3% shrinkage, opacity maintained, slightly blotchy appearance, considerable change in colour (lighter).

Flexibility Disc B 0.20mm. Colour Value 1510-Y20 (hair side)

5. Through acetone: some slight distortion, approx. 3% shrinkage, opacity maintained, slightly blotchy appearance, considerable change in colour (lighter).

Flexibility Disc B 0.20mm. Colour Value 1510-Y20 (hair side)

6. Through acetone/H$_2$O 80:20: very slight distortion, approx. 2% shrinkage, has become more transparent with loss of flexibility.

Flexibility Disc C 0.30mm. Colour Value 3020-Y10 (hair side)

7. Under Weight

Sample between blottings and 100% cotton heavy blotting papers. Glass weights placed on top 1.2kg. Blottings changed after two hours, then left overnight. No distortion, approx. 3.5% shrinkage, flexibility maintained but increase in translucency.

Flexibility Disc B 0.20mm. Colour Value 3020-Y10 (hair side)
Under Weight

no blotting change for No. 9, weight increased for all to 2.1 k.g, all dry after three
hours, No9 much sooner, ambient values of 20°C and 57% R.H

8. Through denatured alcohol: dried well, no distortion, approx. 3% shrinkage, slight
increase in translucency, some colour change (lighter) to hairside.
Flexibility Disc B 0.20mm. Colour Value 2020-Y10 (hair side)

9. Through acetone: no distortion, approx. 3% shrinkage, some areas becoming more
translucent others having dramatic colour change appearing very white.
Flexibility Disc B 0.20mm. Colour Value 2020-Y10 (hair side)

10. Through acetone/H₂O 80:20: no distortion, approx. 1.5% shrinkage, opacity
maintained.
Flexibility Disc B 0.20mm. Colour Value 2020-Y10 (hair side)

11. Vacuum machine

Vacuum timed at thirty-five seconds after vacuum is reached, sample in Archipress™
vacuum bag and between Bondina® and heavy 100% cotton blotting papers. For test
purposes there was no change of blottings and remained sealed for three days.

11. From wet state: no distortion, approx. 1.5% shrinkage, sample has become very
translucent across most of its surface, flexibility unchanged,
Flexibility Disc B 0.20mm. Colour Value 3020-Y10 (hair side)

12. Through denatured alcohol: no distortion, approx. 3.5% shrinkage, opacity
maintained, slight loss in flexibility, and slight colour change (lighter).
Flexibility Disc B 0.20mm. Colour Value 2020-Y10 (hair side)

13. Through acetone: no distortion, approx. 3.5% shrinkage, opacity maintained as
was flexibility, dramatic change to colour value on hair side (lighter).
Flexibility Disc B 0.20mm. Colour Value 1010-Y10 (hair side)

14. Through acetone/H₂O 80:20: no distortion, no shrinkage, opacity maintained,
flexibility maintained, as was colour value.
Flexibility Disc B 0.20mm. Colour Value 2020-Y10 (hair side)

Vacuum Machine – Denatured alcohol against Denatured alcohol/H₂O 98:2 Because
of the successful results achieved using the vacuum machine through Acetone/H₂O
80:20 in relation to the end results, but concern as to activity; bubbling from the sample, leaving a skin on the surface of the solution, it was decided to trial the denatured alcohol with a low percentage of additional water as it is understood that even laboratory grade alcohol contains some water content, .5% for I.M.S 100. As a comparison a tandem trial using only denatured alcohol was also carried out.

Conditions: New parchment soaked in tap water for three weeks. One sample placed in denatured alcohol bath and the other in denatured alcohol/H₂O 98:2 bath. Both baths were covered and left for forty-eight hours. Both samples removed and placed inside Archipress* vacuum bag between layers of Bondina* and double layers of 100% thick cotton blotting paper. Both bags placed in the vacuum machine and a vacuum pulled for thirty seconds. Vacuum bags were opened after five days.

Results: Both samples maintained opacity, showed no distortion from the wet state to the dry. Shrinkage was calculated as before on all four sides and a mean established. The alcohol-only sample showed a shrinkage of 1.5% while the alcohol/ H₂O 98:2 displayed no discernable shrinkage, with all dimensions identical to their wet values. The results prompted a repeat of this test using 19th-century vellum soaked and kept at saturated values between wet blottings for five weeks. As before, the samples were then placed in the two different solutions and left overnight. The same conditions for the vacuum machine were employed and the sealed samples left for twenty-four hours before opening. Blottings were changed and samples placed under vacuum again and left for a further seventeen hours.

Results:
Alcohol: sample maintained opacity, no distortion, good flexibility
Flexibility Disc B 0.20mm. Colour Value 2020-Y10 (hair side).
Alcohol/H₂O 98:2: sample maintained opacity, no distortion, good flexibility
Flexibility Disc B 0.20mm. Colour Value 2020-Y10 (hair side).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample 1 alcohol</th>
<th>thickness wet: 0.41-.55mm</th>
<th>average .48mm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample 1 alcohol</td>
<td>thickness dry: 0.19-.28mm</td>
<td>average .23mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample 1 alcohol/H₂O</td>
<td>thickness wet: 0.53-.59mm</td>
<td>average .56mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample 1 alcohol/H₂O</td>
<td>thickness dry: 0.25-.32mm</td>
<td>average .28mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both samples there was an average reduction of 50% in thickness from wet to dry.
Test sample dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>WET/DRY</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>alcohol</td>
<td>Wet</td>
<td>110mm</td>
<td>42mm</td>
<td>91mm</td>
<td>46mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alcohol</td>
<td>Dry</td>
<td>108mm</td>
<td>42mm</td>
<td>90mm</td>
<td>46mm</td>
<td>.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alcohol/H₂O</td>
<td>Wet</td>
<td>88mm</td>
<td>46mm</td>
<td>106mm</td>
<td>42.5mm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alcohol/H₂O</td>
<td>Dry</td>
<td>86mm</td>
<td>46mm</td>
<td>104.5mm</td>
<td>42.5mm</td>
<td>.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faddan More Psalter Databases  Chapter 1

FADDAN MORE PSALTER CONSERVATION FILE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tag No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session No.</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P-A85</td>
<td>08/12/2008</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Position of fragment prior to removal L/R based on facing the open Ms.

Quire: 1st  Folio: 04 - 09

Quire and folio numbers are based on the last examination of the fragment and are updated as new information becomes available.

Comments

A good percentage of this bifolium has survived with some interesting features. There are unusual capitals on both folios, with colour. There is also some interlinear work, both single letter and a complete word (4v), these appear to be corrections for omitted text, or "eye skip". The hand and the ink appear different to the text. There is also a small area on 4v where vertical ruling can be seen and what appears to be double lines and associated pricking, further investigation is needed here. With added fragments from f1-12 f4 has become almost complete, with only E29-32 more intact.

Sample page from main database

Faddan More Psalter Leather Drying Trials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>56</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Thickness based on average of several readings

Thickness wet: 1.6 mm

Species: Calf

Batch: 4

Flex Disc: C

Thickness dry: 1.2 mm

Thickens loss: -0.4 mm

Shrinkage: 12%

Test: Solvent Dry through I.M.S and blottings

Observations; Pre: Close grained piece.

Observations; Post: Good result.

Sample page from leather drying trials
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folio/bifolio</th>
<th>verso</th>
<th>recto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1_1v+12r</td>
<td>1v-Ps1:3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1_2v+11r</td>
<td>2v-Ps4:8-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1_3v+10r</td>
<td>3v-Ps7:7</td>
<td>10r-Ps21:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1_4v+9r</td>
<td>4v-Ps9:13-28</td>
<td>9r-Ps19:5-10, Ps20:2-3,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps20:10-12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1_5r</td>
<td>5v-Ps10:6-8, Ps11:2-9, Ps12:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1_6v+7r</td>
<td>6v-Ps15:1-10, Ps16:1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1_7v+6r</td>
<td>7v-Ps17:8-26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1_8r</td>
<td>8v-Ps17:50, Ps18:2-8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1_9v+4r</td>
<td>9v-Ps20:14, Ps21:2-10</td>
<td>4v-Ps8:6-10, Ps9:2-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1_10v+3r</td>
<td>3r-Ps6:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1_11v+2r</td>
<td>2r-Ps2:12-13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1_12v+1r</td>
<td>1r-Ps1:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2_13v+25r</td>
<td>13v-Ps31:4-10</td>
<td>25r-Ps60:2-9, Ps61:2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2_14v+24r</td>
<td>14v-Ps33:18-21, Ps34:1-4</td>
<td>24r-Ps56:5-6, Ps57:2-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2_15r</td>
<td>15v-Ps35:8-13, Ps36:1-3</td>
<td>15r-Ps34:15-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2_16v+23r</td>
<td>16v-Ps37:2-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2_17v+22r</td>
<td>17v-Ps39:7-13, Ps40:2-4</td>
<td>23r-Ps54:10-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2_18v+21r</td>
<td>18v-Ps41:13</td>
<td>22r-Ps50:19-20, Ps51:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2_19v+20r</td>
<td>19v-Ps42:13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2_20v+19r</td>
<td>20v-Ps43:13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2_21v+18r</td>
<td>21v-Ps49:20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2_22v+17r</td>
<td>22v-Ps52:3-6</td>
<td>17r-Ps38:4-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2_23v+16r</td>
<td>23v-Ps55:7-11</td>
<td>16r-Ps36:18-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2_24v+14r</td>
<td>24v-Ps58:9-13</td>
<td>14r-Ps32:11-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2_25v+13r</td>
<td>25v-Ps62:3-9</td>
<td>13r-Ps30:13-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3_26v+35r</td>
<td>26v-Ps64:10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3_27v+34r</td>
<td>27v-Ps68:2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3_28v+33r</td>
<td>28v-Ps70:11-13</td>
<td>33r-Ps77:69-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3_29v+32r</td>
<td>29v-Ps72:13-28, Ps73:1-6</td>
<td>32r-Ps77:30-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3_30v+31r</td>
<td>30v-Ps74:6-11</td>
<td>31r-Ps76:8-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3_31v+30r</td>
<td>31v-Ps77:9-12</td>
<td>30r-Ps73:7-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3_32v+29r</td>
<td>32v-Ps77:50-69</td>
<td>29r-Ps71:10-19, Ps72:1:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3_33v+28r</td>
<td>33v-Ps78:13, Ps79:2-4</td>
<td>28r-Ps68:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3_34v+27r</td>
<td>34v-Ps82:2-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3_35v+26r</td>
<td>35v-Ps84:12-14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It should be noted that extensive use of abbreviations are present throughout the Faddan More text; these are not included in this document.

1r(1) 1[1] beatus

vir qui non abit in consilio impiorum et in via peccatorum non stetit et in cathedra pestilentiae non sedit [2] sed in lege Domini voluntas eius et in lege eius meditabtur die ac nocte

1v(1) [3] et erit tamquam lignum quod

(2) plantatum est secus decursus aquarum quod
(3) fructum suum dabit in tempore suo et folium
(4) eius non deflueret et omnia quae secum faciet
(5) prosperabuntur [4] non sic impii non sic; sed tamquam pulvis
(6) quom proicit ventus a facie terrae; [5] ideo non
(7) resurgent impii in iudicio neque peccatores in
(8) consilio iustorum
[6] quoniam novit Dominus viam iustorum et iter impiorum peribit

2r(1) nequando irascatur Dominus et pereatis de via iusta cum exarserit in brevi ira eius beati omnes qui confidunt in eo


2v(1) et olim sui multiplicati sunt[9] in pace in id ipsum dormiam et requiescam[10] quoniam tu Domine singulariter in spe constituiisti me

5- No text extant


3v(1) exsurge Domine Deus meus in praecepto quod mandasti et synagoga populum circumdabit te et propter hanc in altum regredere[9] Domine iudicat populos iudice me
Domine secundum iustitiam meam et secundum innocentiam meam super me consummetur nequitia peccatorum et diriges iustum et scrutans corda et renes Deus iustum adiutorium meum a Deo qui salvos facit rectos corde Deus iudex iustus et fortis et patiens numquid irascitur per singulos dies nisi conversi fueritis gladium suum vibrabit arcum suum tetendit et paravit illum et in eo paravit vasa mortis sagittas suas ardentibus effecit ecce parturiit iniustitiam et; concepit dolorem et peperit iniquitatem lacum aperuit et effodit eum et incidet in foveam quam fecit convertetur dolor eius in caput eius et in verticem ipsius inquitas eius descendet confitebor Domino secundum iustitiam eius et psallam nomini Domini altissimi

8 in finem pro torcularibus psalmus David Domine Dominus noster quam admirabile est nomen tuum in universa terra quoniam elevata est magnificentia tua super caelos ex ore infantium et lactantium perfecisti laudem propter inimicos tuos ut destruas inimicum et ulorem quoniam videbo caelos tuos; opera digitorum tuorum lunam et stellas quae tu fundasti quid est homo quod memor es eius aut filius hominis quomuad minuisti eum Paulo minus ab angelis gloria et honore coro

(2) nasti eum et constituisti eum super opera manu (3) um tuarum omnia subieicti sub pedibus eius oves (4) et boves universas insuper et pecora campi voluces caeli et pisces maris qui perambulant semitas maris DomineDominus noster quam admirabile + nomen tuum in universa terra

9 confitebor tibi Domine in toto corde meon narrabo omnia mirabilia tua et exultabo in tepsallam nomini tuo Altisime in convertendo inimicum meum retrorsum infirmabuntur et peribunt a facie tua quoniam necisti iudicium meum et causam meam sedisti super thronum qui iudicas iustitiam

increpasti gentes et; perit impius nomen eorum delisti in aeternum et in saeculum saeculi; imici defecerunt frameae in finem et civitates deiistruxisti perit memoria eorum cum sunt et Dominus in aeternum permanet paravit in iudicio thronum suum et ipse iudicabit orbem terrae in acquitate iudicabit populos in iustitia et factus est Dominus refugium pauperi adiutor in oportunitatibus in tribulatione

et sperent in te qui noverunt nomen tuuom quoniam non dereliquisti quaerentes te Domine psallite Domino qui habitat in Sion adnuntiate inter gentes studia eius qui exaltas me de portis mortisut adnuntiam omnes laudes tuas in portis filiae Sion

exultabo in salutari tuo infixae sunt gentes in interitu quem fecerunt laqueo isto quem absconderunt comprehensus est pes eorum cognoscet Dominus iudicia faciens in operibus suarum comprehensus est peccator convertantur peccatores in infernoumonnes gentes quae obliviscuntur Deum quoniam non in finem oblivio eritpaeperis patientia pauperum non peribit in finem exsurge Domine non confortetur homo iudicentur gentes in conspectu tuo
constitue Domine legislatorem super eossiant gentes quoniam homines sunt diapsalma ut quid Domine recessisti longe discipis in oportunitatis in tribulation dum superbit impius incenditur pauper conprehenduntur consilis quibus cogitant quoniam laudatur peccator in desideri animae suae et iniquus benedicitur exaeclavit Dominum peccator secundum multitudinem irae suae non quaeret

non est Deus in conspectu eius inquinatae sunt viae illius in omnium temporibus auctorea tua a facie eius inimiciorum suorum dominabitur dixit enim in corde suo non movebor a generatione in generationem sine malo cuius maledictione os plenum est et amaritudine et dolo sub lingua eius labor et dolor sedet in insidiis cum divitibus in occultis ut interficiat

innocentem oculi eius in pauperem respicienti insinuaverit in conspectu eius inquinatae sunt viae illius in omnibus tempore auctor a facie eius omnium inimiciorum suorum dominabitur dixit enim in corde suo non movebor a generatione in generationem sine malo cuius maledictione os plenum est et amaritudine et dolo sub lingua eius labor et dolor sedet in insidiis cum divitibus in occultis ut interficiat

in Domino confido quomodo dicitis animae meae transmigra in montes sicut passer, quoniam ecce peccatores intenderunt arcum paraverunt sagittas suas in faretra ut sagittas in obscurum rectos corde quoniam quae perfecisti destruxerunt iustus autem; quid fecit Dominus in templo sancto suo Dominus in caelo sedis eius oculi eius in pauperem; respicienti palpebrae eius interrogant filios hominum

salvum me fac Domine quoniam defect sanctus quoniam demoniarum sunt veritates a filiis hominum locutus sunt unusquisque ad proximum suum labia dolosa in corde et corde locuti sunt disperdat Dominus universa labia dolosa linguam magniloquam qui dixerunt linguam nostram magnificabimus labia nostra a nobis sunt quis noster dominus est
330


16[1] exaudi Domine iustitiam meam intende deprecationem meam auribus Domine iustitiam meam adimplebis me dona mea et custodir mea et susceptor meus qua eripuit eum Dominus de manu omnium inimicorum eius et de manu Saul et dixit


et aparuerunt fontes aquarum et revelata sunt fundamenta orbis terrarum ab increpatione tua Domine ab inspiratione spiritus irae tuae misit de summo et accept me adsumpsit me de aquis multis eripiet me de inimicis meis fortissimis et ab his qui oderunt me quoniam sunt super me praevererunt me in die adfectionis meae et factus est Dominus protector meus et eduxit me in latitudinem salvum me faciet quoniam voluit me

et retribuit mihi Dominus secundum iustitiam meam et; secundum puritatem manuum mearum retribuet mihi quia custodi divas Domini nec impie gessi a Deo meo quoniam omnia iudicia eius in conspectu meo sunt et iustitias eius non repuli a me et ero inmaculatus cum eo et observabo ab iniquitate mea et retribuet mihi Dominus secundum iustitiam meam et secundum puritatem manuum mearum in conspectu oculorum eius

cum sancto sanctus eris et cum viro innocente innocens eris et cum electo electus eris et cum perverso perverteris quoniam tu populum humilem salvum facies et oculos superborum humiliabis quoniam tu inluminas lucernam meam Domine Deus meus inluminas terras meas quoniam in te eripiar a temptaione et in Deo meo transgrediar murum

Deus meus inpolluta via eius eloquiu Domini ignem examinata protector est omnium sperantium eum quoniam quis deus praeter Dominum et quis deus praeter Deum nostrum Deus qui praecinxisti me virtute et posui inmaculatam viam meam qui perfect pedes meos tamquam cervorum et super excelsa statuens me qui doces manus meas et proelium et posuisti arcum aereum brachia mea

dedi mihi protectionem salutis tuae et dextra tua suscepit me et disciplina tua corret me in finem et disciplina tua ipsa me docet dilatasti gressus meos subitus me et non sunt infirmae vestigia mea persequer inimicos meos et comprehendam illos et non convertar donec deficiant persequer meos omnium nec poterunt stare cadent subitus pedes meos et praecinxisti me virtute ad bellum subplantasti insurgentes in me subitus me

dedisti mihi dextra tua suscepit me et disciplina tua corret me in finem et disciplina tua ipsa me docet dilatasti gressus meos subitus me et non sunt infirmae vestigia mea persequer inimicos meos et comprehendam illos et non convertar donec deficiant persequer meos omnium nec poterunt stare cadent subitus pedes meos et praecinxisti me virtute ad bellum subplantasti insurgentes in me subitus me

et inimicos meos dextra tua suscepit me et disciplina tua corret me in finem et disciplina tua ipsa me docet dilatasti gressus meos subitus me et non sunt infirmae vestigia mea persequer inimicos meos et comprehendam illos et non convertar donec deficiant persequer meos omnium nec poterunt stare cadent subitus pedes meos et praecinxisti me virtute ad bellum subplantasti insurgentes in me subitus me

et inimicos meos dextra tua suscepit me et disciplina tua corret me in finem et disciplina tua ipsa me docet dilatasti gressus meos subitus me et non sunt infirmae vestigia mea persequer inimicos meos et comprehendam illos et non convertar donec deficiant persequer meos omnium nec poterunt stare cadent subitus pedes meos et praecinxisti me virtute ad bellum subplantasti insurgentes in me subitus me

filii alieni mentiti sunt mihi filii alieni inveterati sunt et claudicaverunt a semitis suis vivit Dominus et benedictus Deus meus et exaltet Deus salutis meae Deus qui dat vindictas mihi et subdidit populos sub me liberator meus de gentibus iracundis et ab insurgentibus in me exaltabis me a viro iniquo eripies me propterea confitebor tibi in nationibus Domine et psalmum dicam nomini tuo

magnificans salutes regis et faciens misericordiam suo David et semini eius usque in saeculum

[6] in sole possuit tabernaculum suum et ipse tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo exultavit ut gigans ad currendam viam suum. [7] a summo caeli egressio eius et occursus eius usque ad summum eius nec est qui se abscondat a calore eius [8] lex Domini inmaculata convertens animas testimonium Domini fidele sapientiam praestans parvulis iustitiae Domini rectae laetificantes corda praeceptum Domini lucidum inluminans oculos timor Domini sanctus permanens in saeculum saeculi iudicia Domini vera iustificata in semet ipsa


ponses eos dorsum in reliquis tuis praeparabis vultum eorum [14] exaltare Domine in virtute tua

9v cantuimus et psallemus virtutes tuas


[31]et anima mea illi vivet et semen meum serviet ipsi [32] adnuntiabitur Domino generatio ventura et adnuntiabunt iustitiam eius populo qui nascetur quem fecit Dominus;

22-No text extant

23-No text extant
in finem psalmus David in te Domine speravi non confundar in aeternum in iustitia tua libera me inclina ad me aurem tuam adcelera ut eruas me esto mihi in Deum protectorem et in domum refugii ut salvum me facias quoniam fortitudo mea et refugium meum es tu et propter nomen tuum deduces me et unities me educes me de laqueo hoc quem absconderunt mihi quoniam tu es protector meus

in manus tuas commendabo spiritum meum redemisti me Domine Deus veritatis odisti observantes vanitates supervacue ego autem in Domino speravi exultabo et laetabor in misericordia tua quoniam respexisti humilitatem meam salvasti de necessitatibus animam meam nec conclusisti me in manibus inimici statuisti in loco spatioso pedes meos miserere mei Domine quoniam tribulabat conturbatus est in ira oculus meus anima mea et venter meus

in manibus tuis sortes meae eripe me de manu inimicorum meorum et a persequentibus me inlustra faciem tuam super servum tuum salvum me fac in misericordia tua quoniam invocavi te erubescant impii et deducantur in infernum muta fiat labia dolosa quae loquuntur adversus iustum iniquitatem in superbia et in abusione quam magna multitudo dulcedinis tuae Domine; quam abscondisti timentibus te perfecisti eis qui sperant in te in conspectu filiorum hominum

abscondes eos in Abdito faciei tuae a conturbatione hominum proteges eos in tabernaculo a contradictione linguarum benedictus Dominus quoniam mirificavit misericordiam suam mihi in civitate munita ego autem dixi in excessu mentis meae
proiectus sum a facie oculorum tuorum ideo exaudisti vocem orationis meae dum clamarem ad te dilligite Dominum omnes sancti eius quoniam; veritates requirit Dominus et retribuit abundanter facientibus superbiam viriliter agite et confortetur cor vestrum omnes qui speratis in Domino


[6] pro hac orabit ad te omnis sanctus in tempore oportuno veruntamen in diluvio aquarum multarum ad eum non adproximabant tu es refugium meum a tribulatione quae circumdehit me exultatio mea erue me a circumdantibus me diapsalma dabo et instruam te in via hac qua gradieris firmabo super te oculos meos...nolite fieri sicut equus et mulus qui bus non est intellectus in camo et freno maxillas eorum constrinige qui non adproximant ad te multa flagella peccatoris sperantem autem in Domino misericordia circumdabit...laetamini in Domino et exultate iusti et gloriamini omnes recti corde


[2] quia in eo laebatitur cor nostrum et in nomine sancto eius speravimus fiat misericordia tua Domine super nos quemadmodum speravimus in te


dissipati sunt nec conjuncti tempertaverunt me subsannaverunt me subsannatione

et dilataverunt super me os suum dixerunt euge euge viderunt oculi nostri [22] vidisti

et praetende misericordiam tuam scientibus te et iustitiam his qui recto sunt corde

ipsi David noli aemulari in malignantibus neque zelaveris facientes iniquitatem [2]

et educet quasi lumen iustitiam tuam et iudicium tuum tamquam meridiem [7] subditis

et manus peccatoris non moverat me [13] ibi ceciderunt qui operantur iniquitatem

et adhuc pusillum et non erit peccator et quaeres locum eius et non invenies

mansuetti autem hereditabunt terram et delectabunt in multitudine pacis [12]

timor Dei ante oculos eius [3] quoniam dolose egit in conspectu eius ut inveniatur iniquitas
iniquitatem meditatus est in cubili suo adstetit omni viae non bonae malitiam autem non
odivit


spera in eum et ipse faciet

et educet quasi lumen iustitiam tuam et iudicium tuum tamquam meridiem [7] subditis
esto Domine et ora eum noli aemulari in eo qui prosperatur in via sua in homine faciente


et adhuc pusillum et non erit peccator et quaeres locum eius et non invenies

mansuetti autem hereditabunt terram et delectabunt in multitudine pacis [12]

observabit peccator iustum et stridebit super eum denuit suis [13] Dominus autem


[21] mutuabitur peccator et non solvet iustus autem miseretur et tribuet quia benedictentes ei hereditabunt terram maledicentes autem ei dispersibunt apud Dominum gressus hominis dirigentur et viam eius volet cum ecceiderit non conlidetur quia Dominus subponit manum suam iustum non vidi iustum derelictum nec semen eius quaerens panes

[26] tota die miseretur et commodo et semen illius in beneficione erit declina a malo et fac bonum et inhabita in saeculum saeculi quia Dominus amat iudicium et non derelinquet sanctos suos in aeternum conservabuntur iniqui punitur et semen impiorum peribit iusti autem hereditabunt terram et inhabitabunt in saeculum saeculi super eam os iusti meditabitur sapientiam et lingua eius loquetur iudicium.

37[2] 16v Domine ne in furore tuo arguas me neque in ira tua corripias me quoniam sagitae tuae infixae sunt mihi et confirmasti super me manum tuam non + sanitas carni meae a facie ictis tuae non est pax ossibus meis a facie peccatorum meorum quoniam inequitatus meae supergresae sunt caput meum sicut onus grave gravatae sunt super me putruerunt et corruptae sunt cicatrices meae facie insipientiae meae miser factus sum et curvatus sum usque in finem tota die contristatus ingrediens quoniam lumbi mei impleti sunt inflationibus et non est sanitas in carne meae adeflictus sum et humiliatus sum misis rugiebam a gemitu cordis mei Domine ante te omne desiderium meum et gemitus meus a te non est absconditus

[11] cor meum conturbatum est dereliquit me virtus mea et lumen oculorum meorum et ipsum non est mecum amici mei et proximi mei adversus me adpropinquaverunt et steterunt et qui iuxta me erant de longe steterunt et vim faciebant qui quarebant animam meam et qui inquirebant mala mihi locuti sunt vanitates et dolos tota die
meditabantur [14] ego autem tamquam surdus non audiebam et sicut mutus non aperiens os suum [15] et factus sum sicut homo non audiens et non habens in ore suo redargutiones


[21] qui retribuunt mala pro bonis detraxebant mihi quoniam sequebar bonitatem [22] non dereliquas me Domine Deus meus ne discesseris a me [23] intende in adiutorium meum Domine salutis meae


[6] multa fecisti tu Domine Deus meus mirabilia tua et cogitationibus tuis non est qui similis sit tibi adnuntiavi et locutus sum multiplicati sunt supernumerum 17v(1)[7] sacrificium et oblationem notuisti aures autem
(2) perfectisti mihi holocaustums et pro peccato non postulasti [8]
(3) tunc dixi ecce venio in capite libri scriptum est de me [9] ut
(4) facerem voluntatem tuam Deus meus volui et legem tuam
(5) in medio cordis mei [10] adnuntiavi iustitiam in ecclesia
(6) magna ecce labia mea non proba Domine tu scisti [11] iustitiam
(7) tuam non abscondi in corde meo veritatem tuam et salutare
(8) tuam dixi non abscondi misericordiam tuam et veritatem
(9) tuam a concilio multo [12] tu autem Domine ne longe facias
(10) miserationes tuas a me misericordia tua et veritas tua semper
(11) susceperunt me [13] quoniam circumdederunt me mala quorum

non est numerus comprehenderunt me iniquitates meae et non potui ut viderem
multiplicatae sunt super capillos capitis mei et cor meum dereliquit me [14] conplaceat tibi
Domine ut eras me Domine ad adiuvandum me respice [15] confundantur et revereantur
simul qui quærunt animam meam ut auferant eam convertantur retrorsum et revereantur
qui volunt mihi mala

[16]ferant confestim confusionem suam qui dicunt mihi euge euge [17] exulant et
laetentur super te omnes quaerentes te et dicant semper magnificetur Dominus qui diligunt
salutare tuum [18] ego autem mendicus sum et pauper Dominus sollicitus est mei adiutor
meus et protector meus tu es Deus meus ne tardaveris

40 (1a) [2] beatus qui intellegit super egenum et pauperem in die mala
(2a) liberavit eum Dominus [3] Dominus conservet eum et vivificet
(3a) eum et beatum faciat eum in terra et non tradat eum
(4a) in animam inimicorum eius [4] Dominus opem ferat illi
(5a) super lectum doloris eius universum stratum eius versasti in infirmitate eius

[5]ego dixi Domine miserere mei sana animam meam quoniam peccavi tibi

ingrediebatur ut videret vane loquebatur cor eius congreegavit iniquitatem sibi egrediebatur
foras et loquebatur [8] in id ipsum adversum me susurrabant omnes inimici mei adversus
me cogitabant mala mihi [9] verbum iniquum constituerunt adversus me numquid qui
dormit non adiciet ut resurgat [10] etenim homo pacis meae in quo speravi qui edebat
panes meos magnificavit super me subplantationem

quoniam voluisti me quoniam non gaudebit inimicus meus super me [13] me autem propter
innocentiam suscepisti et confirmasti me in conspectu tuo in aeternum [14] benedictus
Dominus Deus Israhel a saeculo et in saeculum fiat fiat

41-No text extant
42-No text extant
in finem filiis Core psalmus audite haec omnes gentes auribus percipite omnes qui habitatis orbem quique terrigiae et filii hominum in unum dives et pauper os meum loquetur sapientiam et meditatio cordis mei prudentiam inclinabo in parabolam aereum meam aperiam in psalterio propositionem meam

cur timebo in die malo iniquitas calcanei mei circumdabit me qui confidunt in virtute sua et in multitudine divitiarum suarum gloriantur frater non redimit redimet homo non dabit Deo placationem suam et pretium redemptionis animae suae et laboravit in aeternum et vivet adhuc; in finem

cum videbit interitum cum viderit sapientes morientes simul insipiens et stultus peribunt et relinquuet alienis divitias suas et sepulchra eorum domus illorum in aeternum tabernacula eorum in progeniem et progeniem vocaverunt nomina sua in terris suis et homo cum in honore esset non intellexit conparatus est iumentis insipientibus et similis factus est illis haec via illorum scandalum eipsis et postea in ore suo conplacebit diapsalma sicut oves in inferno positi sunt mors depascet eos et dominabuntur eorum iusti in matutino et auxilium eorum veterescet in Inferno a gloria eorum

verumtamen Deus redimet animam meam de manu inferi cum acceperit me diapsalma ne timueris cum dives factus fuerit homo et cum multiplicata fuerit gloria domus eius quoniam cum interierit non sumet omnia neque descendet cum eis pone gloria eius quia anima eius in vita ipsi benedicetur confitebitur tibi cum benedicere et introibit usque in progenies patrum suorum usque in aeternum non videbit lumen

homo in honore cum esset non intellexit conparatus est iumentis insipientibus et similis factus est illis

psalmus Asaph Deus deorum Dominus locutus est et vocavit terram a solis ortu usque ad occasum ex Sion species decoris eius Deus manifeste veniet Deus noster et non silebit ignis in conspectu eius exardescet et in circuitu eius tempestas valida advocabit caelum desursum et terram discernere populum suum congregate illi sanctos eius qui ordinant testamentum eius super sacrificia


haec fecisti et tacui existimasti inique quod ero tui similis arguam te et statuam contra faciem tuam [22] intellegit nunc haec qui obliviscimini Deum nequando rapiat et non sit qui eripiat [23] sacrificium laudis honorificabit me et illic iter quod ostendam illi salutare Dei


libera me de sanguinibus Deus Deus salutis meae exultabit lingua mea iustitiam tuam [17] Domine labia mea aperies et os meum adnuntiabat laudem tuam [18] quoniam si vultuisses sacrificium dedisset utique holocaustis non detectaberis [19] sacrificium Deo spiritus contributus cor contritum et

(1) humiliatum Deus non speret [20] benigne fac Domine
(2) in bona voluntates tua Sion et aedificentur
(3) muri Hierusalem [21] tunc acceptabis
(4) sacrificium iustitiae oblationes et holocausta
(5) tunc inponent super altare tuum vitulos


(2) declinaverunt simul inutilis facti sunt non est qui faciat bonum

(3) non est usque a unum [5] nonne scient omnes qui operantur iniquitatem

(4) qui devoram plebem meam ut cibum panis [6] Deus non

(5) invocaverunt illic trepidabant timore ubi non fuit timor

(6) quoniam Deus dissipavit ossa eorum qui hominibus placent confusi

(7) sunt quoniam Deus sprexit eos [7] qui dabat ex Sion salutare

(8) Israhel dum convertit Deus captivitatem plebis suae

(9) exultabit Iacob et laetabitur Israhel 53 [3] Deus in nomine tuo salvum me faciet in virtute tua iudica me Deus

(10) tuo saluum me facet in virtute tua iudica me Deus

(11) exaudi orationem meam auribus percipe verba oris mei

(12) [5] quoniam alieni insurserunt adversum me et fortes

(13) quaesierunt animam meam non proposuerunt Deum ante

(14) conspectum suum diapsalma [6] ecce enim Deus adiuvat me Dominus


timor et tremor venit super me et contextit me tenebrae et dixi quis dabit mihi pinnas sicut columbae et volabo et requiescam ecce elongavi fugiens et mansi in solitudine diapsalma expectabam eum qui salvum me fecit a pusillanimitate spiritus et a tempestate praecipuam Domine divide linguas eorum quoniam vidi iniquitatem et contradictionem in civitate
die et nocte circum habitabam eam super muros eius et iniquitates et labor in medio eius et injustitia et non defecit de plateis eius usura et dolus quoniam si inimicus maledixisset mihi sustinuisset utique et si is qui oderat me super me magna locutus fuissest abscondissem me forsan ab eo tu vero homo unianimis dux meus et notus meus qui simul mecum dulces capiebas cibos in domo Dei ambulavimus cum consensu veniat mors super illos et descendent in infernum viventes quoniam nequitiae in habitaculis eorum in medio eorum ego autem; ad Deum clamavi et Dominus salvabit me vespere et mane et meridie narrabo et adnuntiabo et exaudiet vocem meam redimet in pace animam meam ab his qui adpropinquant mihi quoniam inter multos erant mecum exaudiet Deus et humilhiabit illos qui est ante saecula diapsalma non enim est illis commutatio et non timuerunt Deum extendit manum suam in retribuendo contaminaverunt testamentum eius divisi sunt ab ira vultus eius et adpropinquavit cor illius molliti sunt sermones eius super oleum et ipsi sunt iacula iacta super Dominum curam tuam et ipse te enutriet non dabit in aeternum fluctuationem iusto tu vero Deus deduces eos in puteum interitus viri sanguinum et doli non dimidiabunt dies suos ego autem sperabo in te Domine in finem pro populo qui a sanctis longe factus est David in tituli inscriptione cum tenuerunt eum Allophili in Geth miserere mei Deus quoniam conculcavit me homo tota die inpugnans tribulavit me conculcaverunt mei inimici mei tota die bellantes adversum me ab altitudine diei timebo ego vero in te sperabo in Deo laudabo sermones meos in Deo speravi non timebo quid faciat mihi caro tota die verba mea exarcerabatur adversum me omnia consilia eorum in malum inhabitabunt et abscondent ipsi calcaneum meum observabunt sicut sustinuerunt animam meam pro nihilo salvos facies illos in ira populos confringes Deus vitam meam adnuntiavi tibi posuisti lacrimas meas in conspectu tuo et in promissione tua tunc convertentur inimici mei retrorsum in quacumque die invocavero te ecce cognovisti Deus meus es in Deo laudabo verbum in Domino laudabo sermonem in Deo speravi non timebo quid faciat mihi homo in me sunt Deus vota tua; quae; reddam laudationes tibi quoniam eripuisti animam meam de morte et pedes meos de lapsu ut placeam coram Deo in lumine viventium
in finem ne disperdas David in tituli inscriptione cum fugeret a facie Saul in spelunca miserere mei Deus miserere mei quoniam in te confidit anima mea et in umbra alarum tuarum sperabo donec transeat iniquitas clamabo ad Deum altissimum Deus qui benefecit mihi misit de caelo et liberavit me dedit in obprobrium conculcantes me diapsalma misit Deus misericordiam suam et veritatem suam et eripuit
animam meam de medio catulorum leonum dormivi conturbatus filii hominum dente eorum arma et sagittae et lingua eorum gladius


[11] laetabitur iustus cum viderit vindictam manus suas lavabit in sanguine peccatoris et dicet homo si utique est fructus iusto utique est Deus iudicans eos in terra


[6] exsurge in occursum meum et vide et tu Domine Deus virtutum Deus Israel intende ad visitandas omnes gentes non miserearis omnibus qui operantur iniquitatem diapsalma convertetur ad vesperam et famem patientur ut canes et circuibunt civilatem ecce loquentur in ore suo et gladiis in labiis eorum quoniam quis audivit et tu Domine deridebis eos ad nihilum deduces omnes gentes fortitudinem meam ad te custodiam quia Deus susceptor meus


[16] ipsi dispergentur ad manducandum si vero non fuerint satiati et murmurabunt ego autem cantabo fortitudinem tuam et exultabo manie misericordiam tuam quia factus es
susceptor meus et refugium meum in die tribulationis meae [18] adiutor meus tibi psallam quia Deus susceptor meus es Deus meus misericordia mea

59 - No text extant


63-No text extant

64-No text extant

65 in finem canticum psalmi resurrectionis iubilate Deo omnis terra psalmum dicite nobis eiu date gloriom laudat eiu dicite Deo quam terribilia sunt opera tua Domine in multitudine virtutis tuae mentientur tibi inimici tui omnis terra adoren te et psallant tibi psalmum dicant nomini tuo diapsalma venite et videte opera Dei terribilis in consiliis super filios hominum

[6] qui convertit mare in aridam in flumine pertransibunt pede ibi laetabimur in ipso qui dominatur in virtute sua in aeternum oculis eius super gentes respiciunt qui exasperant non exaltentur in semet ipsis diapsalma benedicite gentes Deum nostrum et auditam facite vocem laudis eius qui posuit animam meam ad vitam et non dedit in commotionem pedes meos quoniam probast nos Deus ignes nos examinasti sicut examinar argentum

[11] induxisti nos in laqueo posuisti tribulationes in dorso nostro ipsum ore meo clamavi et exaltavi sub linguam meam iniquitatem si aspexi in corde meo non exaudiat Dominus propterea exaudivit Deus ad tendit voci deprecationis meae benedictus Deus qui non amovit orationem meam et misericordiam suam a me

66-No text extant

67 in finem David psalmus cantici exsurget Deus et dissipentur inimici eius et fugiant qui oderunt eum a facie eius sicut deficit fumus deficiat sicut fluit cera a facie ignis sic perante peccatores a facie Dei et iusti epulentur exultent in conspectu Dei delectentur in laetitia cantate Deo psalmum dicite nobis eiu iter facite ei qui ascendit super occasum Dominus nomen illi et exultate in conspectu eius turbabuntur a facie eius

[6] patris orfanorum et iudicis viduarum Deus in loco sancto suo Deus inhabitare facit unius moris in domo qui educit vincitos in fortitudine similiter eos qui exasperant qui habitant in sepulchris Deus cum egredereris in conspectu populi tui cum pertranseris in deserto diapsalma terra mota est et enim caeli distillaverunt a facie Dei Sinai a facie Dei Israel pluviam voluntariam segregabis Deus hereditati tuae et infirmata est tu vero perfecti eam

[11] animalia tua habitant in ea parastis in dulcedine tua pauperi Deus Dominus dabit verbum evangelizantibus vir tute multa rex virtutum dilecti dilecti; et speciei


[31] increpa feras harundinis congregatio taurorum in vaccis populorum ut excludant eos qui probati sunt argento dissipa gentes quae bella volunt [32] venient legati ex Aegypto Aethiopia praevenerunt manus eius Deus [33] regna terrae cantate Deus psallite Domino diapsalma psallite Deo; [34] qui ascendit super caelum caeli ad orientem ecce da voci suae vocem virtutis [35] date gloriam Deo super Israhel magnificentia eius et virtus eius in nubibus

[36] mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis Deus Israhel ipse habee virtutem et fortitudinem plebi suae benedictus Deus


exercebantur qui sedebant in porta et in me psallebant qui bibebant vinum [14] ego vero orationem meam ad te Domine tempus beneplaciti Deus in multitudine misericordiae tuae exaudi me in veritate salutis tuae [15] eripe me de luto ut non infigar liberer ab his qui oderunt me et de profundis aquarum

[16] non me demergat tempestas aquae neque absorbet me profundum neque urget super me puteos us suum [17] exaudi me Domine quoniam benigna est misericordia tua secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum respice me [18] et ne avertas faciem tuam a puero tuo quoniam tribulor velociter exaudi me [19] intende animae meae et libera eam propter inimicos meos eripe me [20] tu scis improperium meum et confusionem et reverentiam meam


[36] quoniam Deus salvam faciet Sion et aedificabitur civitates Iudaeae et inhabitabunt ibi et hereditate adquirent eam [37] et semen servorum eius possidebunt eam et qui diligunt nomen eius inhabitabunt in ea

69- No text extant


dicentes Deus dereliquit eum persequimini et conprehendite eum quia non est qui eripiat Deus ne elongeris a me Deus meus in adiutoriu meum respice Deus meus in adiutoriu meum respice Deus meus in adiutoriu meum respice Deus meus in adiutoriu meum respice Deus meus in adiutoriu meum respice

tur et deficiant detrahentes animae meae experiant in confusione et pudore qui quaerunt mala mihi ego autem semper sperabo et adiciam super omnem laudem tuam os meum adnuntiabit iustitiam tuam tota die salutem tuam quoniam non cognovit litteraturam

introibo in potentiam Domini Domine memorabor iustitiae tuae saltem tuam quoniam non cognovit litteraturam

multiplicasti magnificiam tuam et conversus consolatus es me nam et ego confitebor tibi in vasis psalmi veritatem tuam Deus psallam tibi in cithara Sanctus Israhel

exultabunt labia mea cum cantavero tibi et anima mea quam redemisti sed et lingua mea tota die meditabitur iustitiam tuam cum confusi et reveriti fuerint qui quaerunt mala mihi

in Salomonem Deus iudicium tuum regi da et iustitiam tuam filio regis iudicare populum tuum in iustitia et pauperes tuos in iudicio suscipiant montes pacem populo et colles iustitiam iudicabit pauperes populi et salvos faciet filios pauperum et humiliabit calumniatorem et permanebit cum sole et ante lunam generationes generationum
descendet sicut pluvia in vellus et sicut stillicidia stillantia super terram orietur in diebus eius iustitia et abundantia pacis donec auferatur luna et dominabitur a mari usque ad mare et a flumine usque ad terminos orbis terrarum coram illo procedent Aethiopes et inimici eius terram lingent reges Tharsis et insulae munera offerent reges Arabum et Saba dona aducent et adorabunt liberabit pauperum a potente et pauperum cui non erat adiutor iuxta pauperi et inopi et animas pau-

perum salvum faciet exsussuris et iniquitate redimet animas eorum et honorabile nomen eorum coram illo et vivet et dabitur ei de auro Arabia et adorabunt de ipso semper tota die benedicent ei erit fir-mamentum in terra in summis montium superexstolletur super Libanum fructus eius et florebunt de civitate sicut femur terrae sit nomen eius benedictum in saecula ante solem permanet nomen eius et benedicentur in ipso omne estribus terrae omnes gentes magnificabunt eum benedictus Dominus Deus Deus Israhel qui facit mirabilia solus et benedictus nomen maiestatis eius in aeternum et replebitur omnis terra fiat fiat
72 (16) Quam bonus Israhel Deus his quirecto sunt
(17) corre mei autem paene moti sunt pedes paene effussi sunt
(18) gressus mei quia zelavi super iniquitatem pec-
(19) torum videns quia non est respectus morti
(20) eorum et firmamentum in aliqua eorum in lab-
(21) oroheminum non sunt et cum hominibus non flagillabunt ideo
(22) ienuit eos superbia operti sunt iniquitate et timip-
(23) tesa quod quasi ex adipe iniquitas eorum transierunt in affectum cordis
(24) in nequitia iniquitatem in excelso locuti sunt
(25) gregis mei quia zelavi super iniqui-
(26) pector et firmamentum in plagae eorum
(27) doctores et firmamentum in secundo nasci sunt
(28) est scientia in Excelso ecce ipsi peccatores et habun-
(29) nantes in saeculo obtinuerunt divitias et dixi sine
(30) ergo cusa iustificavi cor meum et lavi inter
(31) possuisti eis deiecisti eos dum adli-
(32) berent quomodo facti sunt in desolatione subito defe-
(33) cor perierunt propter iniquitatem suam velut som-
(34) ii surgentium Domine in
(35) iniquitatem tua imaginem ipsorum
(36) ad nihilum rediges quia inflammatum est cor meum et renn-
(37) es mei commotati sunt et ego ad nihilum redactus sum et nesci-
(38) ut iumentum factus sum apud te et ego semper tecum
(39) manum dexteram meam et in voluntate
(40) tua deditusti me et cum glorian suscepisti me quidenim
(41) mea et cor meum Deus cordis mei et pars mea Deus mie
(42) aeternum qui ecce qui elongant se a te peribunt
(43) perdisti omnem qui fornicatur abs te mihi autem
(44) adhære Deo bonum est ponere in Domino Deo spem meam
(45) ut adnuntiem omnes predicationes tuas in
(46) potis filiae Sion :

73 (22) Ut quid Deus repulsi in finem iratus est
(23) furor tuus super oves pascuæ tuae me-
(24) mor esto congregationis tuae quam posse-
(25) disti ab iniuria redemisti virgam hereditatis tuae
(26) mons Sion in quo habitasti in eo leva manus tuas in
(27) superbia eorum in finem quanta malignus est
(28) inimicus in sancto et gloriati sunt qui oderunt te in medio
(29) sollemnitatis tuae posuerunt signa sua signa [5] et non
(30) cognoverunt sic ut in exitu super summumquasi
(31) in silva ignorum securibus [6] exciderunt ianuas
(32) eius in id ipsum securi et ascia diecserunt eam: [7] incenderunt

30r igni sanctuarium tuum in terra polluerunt tabernaculum nominis tui [8] dixerunt in
corde suo cognatio eorum simil quiescere faciamus omnes dies festos Dei a terra [9] signa
nostra non vidimus iam non est propheta et nos non cognoscet amplius [10] usquequo
Deus improverabit inimicus irritat adversarius nomen tuum in finem

autem rex noster ante saeculum operatus est salutes in medio terrae [13] tu confirmasti in
virtute tua mare contribulasti capita draconum in aquis [14] tu confregisti capita draconis
dedisti eum escapem populis Aethiopum [15] tu disruptisti fontem et torrentes tu siccasti
fluvios Aetham;

[16] tuus est dies et tua est nox tu fabricatus es auroram et solem
[17] tu fecisti omnes terminos terrae aestatem et ver tu plasmasti ea [18] memor esto huius inimicus improveravit
Dominum et populus insipiens incitavit nomen tuum [19] ne tradas bestiis animam
confidentem tibi animas pauperum tuorum ne obliteriscaris in finem [20] respice in
testamentum tuum quia repleti sunt qui obscurati sunt terrae domibus iniquitatum

[21] ne avertatur humilis factus confusus pauper et inops laudabunt nomen tuum [22] exsurge Deus iudica causam tuam memori esto improperiorum tuorum qui ab
insipiente sunt tota die [23] ne obliteriscaris voces inimicorum tuorum superbia eorum qui te
oderunt ascendit semper

confitebimur et invocabimus nomen tuum narrabimus mirabilia tua [3] cum accepero
tempus ego iustitias iudicabo [4] liquefacta est terra et omnes qui habitant in ea ego
confirmavi columnas eius diapsalma [5] dixi iniquis nolite inique facere et delinquentibus
nolite exaltare corru

[6] nolite extollere in altum cornu vestrum nolite loqui adversus Deum 30v iniquitatem
iudex est hunc humiliat et hunc exaltat [9] quia calix in manu Domini veni mixto et inclinavit ex hoc in hoc
verum fex eius non est exinanita bibent omnes peccatores
[10] terrae ego autem adnuntiabo in saeculum cantabo Deo Iacob


75 - No text extant

ad Deum et intendit me [3] in die tribulationis meae Deum exquisivi manibus meis nocte
contra eum et non sum deceptus renuit consolari anima mea [4] memor fui Dei et
delectatus sum exercitatus sum et defecit spiritus meus diapsalma [5] anticipaverunt vigilias oculi mei turbatus sum et non sum locutus


[21] deduxisti sicut oves populum tuum in manu Mosi et Aaron
ideo audivit Dominus et distulit et ignis accensus est in Iacob et ira ascendit in Israel
quia non crediderunt in Deo nec speraverunt in salutare eius et mandavit nubibus
desuper et Ianus caeli aperuit et pluit illis manna ad manucandum et panem caeli
dedit eiusmodi et panem angelorum manucavit homo cibaria misit eiusmodi in abundanti

transulit austrum de caelo et induxit in virtute sua africum et pluit super eos sicut
pulverem carnes et sicut harenam maris. Volatilia dedit eiusmodi et desuper et ianuas
caeli aperuit. Non accendet eiusmodi et ira Dei ascendit in eos et occiderunt in omni
nubibus his peccaverunt adhuc et non crediderunt mirabili eorum. Et defecerunt in
tempus dies eorum et anni eorum cum festinateo et misit eis in abundanti

cum occideret eos quaerabant eum et revertendarunt et deluderunt veniebant ad Deum et
rememorati sunt quia Deus adiutor est eorum et Deus excelsus redemptor eorum est
dilexerunt in ore suo et lingua sua mentitui eum sint et cor autem eiusmodi non erat
rectum et defecerunt in tempus eorum et misit eum in inaquoso

et recordatus est quia caro sunt spiritus vadens et non reedit (o eye skip here?)

et concitaverunt eum in inaquoso et conversi sunt et temp-
taverunt Deum et Sanctum Israel exacerbarunt et non sunt recordati manus eiusmodi
die qua redemtit eos de manu tribulantis sic et posuit in Aegypto signa sua et

et prodigia sua in campo Tanes et convertit in sanguine fluminum et imbreries

eorum ne iberen misit in eis cynomiam et comedit eiusmodi et ranam et dispersid eiusmodi

dedit eiusmodi fructus eiusmodi et labores eiusmodi

eorum et moros eiusmodi et tradidit grandini iumenta eiusmodi

eorum et igni iumenta eiusmodi et timui eiusmodi iram

eorum et singulas males viam

eorum et timui eiusmodi et in missionem singulares

et animarum eiusmodi et iumenta eiusmodi in morte

eorum et omne primitivum in terra Aegypto

Cham et abstulit sicut ovum populum suum et per-
duxit eiusmodi tamquam gregem in deserto et eduxit eiusmodi in spe et non timuerunt et inimicos eiusmodi ope-
rui mare et induxit eiusmodi in montem sanctification

conclusit et percussit eiusmodi in tabernaculis

praemitit in laborum eiusmodi in tabernaculis
}

"
eius et eiecit a facie eorum gentes et sorte div-
isit eis tamquam in funiculo distributionis [55] et ha-
bitare fecit in tabernaculis eorum tribus Isra-
hel [56] et temptaverunt et ex-
acerbaverunt Deum excelsum et testimonia eius non custodierunt [57] et averterunt
se et non servaverunt pactum quemadmodum patres
eorum conversi sunt in arcum pravum [58] et in ira concita-
verunt eum in collibus suis et in sculptilibus suis ad
aemulationem eum provocaverunt [59] audivit Deus et spre-
vit et ad nihilum rededit valde Israel [60] et repulit
tabernaculum Selo tabernaculum suum ubi
habitavit in hominibus [61] et tradidit in captivitatem virtutem
eorum et pulchritudinem eorum in ma-
nus inimici [62] et conclusit in gladio populum suum
et hereditatem suam sprexit [63] iuvenes eorum come-
berotes eorum in gladio ceciderunt et viduae eorum
non plorabuntur [65] et excitatus est tamquam dor-
en Dominus tamquam potans crapulatus a vi-
percussit inimicos suos in posteriora obprobrium
empiternum dedit illis et repulit tabernaculum
Io sephet tribum Effrem non elegit [68] et elegit tribum Juda montem
Sion quem dilexit [69] et aedificavit sicut
unicornium sanctificium

suum in terra quam fundavit in saecula [70] et sustullit
eum de gregibus ovium de post fetantes acceptit eum
pascere Iacob servum suum et Israel hereditatem suam [72] et pavit eos in innocentia

cor dis sui et in intellectibus manuum suarum deudexit eos

psalmus Asaph Deus venerunt gentes in hereditatem tuam polluerunt templum
sanctum tuum posuerunt Hierusalem in pomorum custodiam [2] posuerunt morticin
ersvorum tuorum escas volatilibus caeli carnes sanctorum tuorum bestiae terrae [3]
effuderunt sanguinem ipsorum tamquam aquam in circuitu Hierusalem et non erat qui
sepeliret [4] facti sumus obprobrium vicinis nostris subsannatio et inlusio his qui circum
nos sunt [5] usque Domine irasceris in finem accendetur velut ignis zelus tuus

introeat in conspectu tuo gemitus conpeditorum secundum magnitudinem brachii tu
posside filios mortificatorum [12] et redde vicinis nostris septuplum in sinu eorum
inproperium ipsorum quod exprobraverunt tibi Domine [13] nos autem populus tuus et
oves pascuae tuae confitebimus tibi in saeculum in generationem et generationem adnuntiabimus laudem tuam


[16] inimici Domini mentiti sunt ei et erit tempus eorum in saeculo [17] et cibavit illos ex adipe frumenti et de petra melle saturavit illos

81 - No text extant
Deus quis similis erit tibi ne taceas neque conpescaris Deus super populum tuum malignaverunt consilium et cogitaverunt adversus sanctos tuos dixerunt venite et disperdamus eos de gente et non memoretur nomen Israhel ultra

Deus quis similis erit tibi ne taceas neque conpescaris Deus [3] quoniam ecce inimici tui sorauerunt et qui oderunt te extullerunt caput super populum tuum malignaverunt consilium et cogitaverunt adversus sanctos tuos dixerunt venite et disperdamus eos de gente et non memoretur nomen Israhel ultra


Disperierunt in Endor facti sunt ut stercus terrae pone principes eorum sicut Oreb et Zeb et Zebee et Salmana omnes principes eorum qui dixerunt hereditate possideamus sanctuarium Dei Deus meus pone illos ut rotam sicut stipulam ante faciem venti sicut ignis qui conburit silvam sicut flamma conburens montes

Ita persequeris illos in tempestate tua et in ira tua turbabis eos imple facies illorum ignominia et quaerent nomen tuum Domine erubescant et conturbent in saeculum saeculi et pereant et cognoscant quia nomen tibi Dominus tu solus Altissimus in omni terra

In finem pro torcularibus filii Core psalmus quam dilecta tabernacula tua Domine virtutum concupiscit et defecit anima mea in atria Domini cor meum et caro mea exultavit in Deum vivum etenim passer invenit sibi; domum et turtur nidum sibi ubi ponat pullos suos altaria tua Domine virtutum 35r rex meus et Deus meus beati qui habitant in domo tua in saecula saeculorum laudabunt te diapsalma

Beatus cui vir est auxilium abs te ascensiones in corde suo disposuit in valle lacrimarum in loco quem posuit etenim benedictiones dabit legis dator ibunt de virtute in virtutem videbitur Deus deorum in Sion Domine Deus virtutum exaudi orationem de virtute videbitur Deus deorum in Sion Domine Deus virtutum exaudi orationem Deus misericordiam et veritatem diligit; Deus gratiam et gloriam dabit Dominus non privabit bonis eos qui ambulant in innocentia Domine virtutum beatus vir qui sperat in te

Quia melior est dies una in atriis tuis super milia elegit esse in domo Dei mei magis quam habitare in tabernaculis peccatorum quia misericordiam et veritatem diligat; Deus gratiam et gloriem dabit Dominus non privabit bonis eos qui ambulant in innocentia Domine virtutum beatus vir qui sperat in te

In finem filii Core psalmus benedixisti Domine terram tuam avertisti captivitatem Iacob remisisti iniquitates plebis tuae operuisti omnia peccata eorum diapsalma mitigasti omnem iram tuam avertisti ab ira indignationis tuae convertere nos Deus salutum nostrarum et avertite iram tuam a nobis

Numquid in aeternum irasceris nobis aut extendes iram tuam a generatione in generationem Deus tu conversus vivificabis nos et plebs tua laetabitur in te ostende nobis Domine misericordiam tuam et salutare tuae da nobis audiam quid loquatur in me; Dominus Deus quoniam loquetur pacem in plebem suam et super sanctos suos et in
eos qui convertuntur ad cor et verumtam et prope timentes eum salutare ipsius ut
inhabitet gloria in terra nostra

misericordia et veritas obviam erunt sibi; iustitia et pax osculatae sunt veritas de
terra orta et iustitia de caelo prospexit etenim Domini debeat benignitatem et
terra nostra dabit fructum suum iustitia antec eum ambulabit et ponet in via gressus
suos

oratio ipsi David inclina Domine aurem tuam et; exaudi me quoniam inops et
pauper sum ego custodi animam meam quoniam sanctus sum salvum fac servum tuum
Deus meus speranter in te miserere mei Domine quoniam ad te clamabo tota die
laetificata animam servii tui quoniam ad te Domine animam meam levavi quoniam tu
Domine suavis et mitis et multae misericordiae omnibus invocantibus te

auribus percipe Domine orationem meam et intende voci orationis meae in die
tribulationis meae clamavi ad te quia exaudisti me non est similis tui in diis Domine et
non est secundum opera tua omnes gentes quascumque fecisti venient et adorabunt
coram te Domine et glorificabunt nomen tuum quoniam magnus es tu et faciens
mirabilia tu es Deus solus

deduce me Domine in via tua et ingrediar in veritate tua laetetur cor meum ut timeat
nomen tuum confitebor tibi Domine Deus meus in toto corde meo et glorificabo
nomen tuum in aeternum quia misericordia tua magna est super me et eruisti animam
meam ex inferno inferiori

respice in me et miserere mei da imperium tuum puero tuo et salu
vum fac filium ancillae tuae fac mecum signum in bono et videant qui oderunt me et con-
fundantur quoniam tu Domine adiuvasti me et consolatus es me

fundamenta eius in montibus sanctis delegit Domini portas Sion super omnia
tabernacula Iacob gloria dicta sunt de decivtas Dei diapsalma memor ero Raab et
Babylonis scientibus te ecce alienigenae et Tyrus et populus Aethiopum hii fuerunt illic
numquid Sion dicet homo et homo natus est in ea et ipse fundavit eam Altissimus

Domini narrabit in scriptura populum et principum horum qui fuerunt in ea
diapsalma sicut laetantium omnium habitatio in te

canticum psalmi filiis Core in finem pro Maeleth ad respondendum intellectus
Eman Ezraitae Domine Deus salutis meae die clamavi et noce coram te intret in
conspectu tuo oratio mea inclina aurem tuam ad precem meam quia repleta est malis
anima mea et vita mea in inferno adpropinquavit aestimatus sum cum descendentes
in lacum factus sum sicut homo sine adiutorio

dom mortuos liber sicut vulnerati dormientes in sepulchris quorum non es memor
amplius et ipsi de manu tua repulsi sunt posuerunt me in lacu inferiori in tenebris et
in umbra mortis [8] super me confirmatus est furor tuus et omnes fluctus tuos induxisti super me diapsalma [9] longe fecisti notos meos a me posuerunt me abominationem sibi traditus sum et non egредiebar [10] oculi mei languerunt prae inopia clamavi ad te Domine tota die expandi ad te manus meas


[16] pauper sum et in laboribus a iuventute mea exaltatus autem humiliatus sum et conturbatus [17] in me transierunt irae tuae et terrores tui conturbaverunt me [18] circuierunt me sicut acqua tota die circumdederunt me simul [19] elongasti a me amicum et proximum et notos meos a miseria


[26] et ponam in mari manum eius et in fluminibus dexterae eum [27] ipse invocabit me pater meus es tu Deus meus et susceptor salutis meae [28] et ego primogenitum ponam
illum excelsum prae regibus terrae [29] in aeternum servabo illi misericordiam meam et testamentum meum fidele ipsi [30] et ponam in saeculum saeculi semen eius et thronum eius sicut dies caeli

[31] si dereliquerint filii eius legem meam et in dictis meis non ambulaverint [32] si iustitias meas profanaverint et mandata mea non custodierint [33] visitabo in virga iniquitates eorum et in verberibus peccata eorum [34] misericordiam autem meam non dispergam ab eo neque nocebo in veritate mea [35] neque profanabo testamentum meum et quae procedunt de labiis meis non faciam irrita

[36] semel iuravi in sancto meo si David mentiar [37] semen eius in aeternum manebit [38] et thronus eius sicut sol in conspectu meo et sicut luna perfecta in aeternum et testis in caelo fidelis diapsalma [39] tu vero reppulisti et despexisti distulisti christum tuum [40] evertisti testamentum servi tui profanaste in terram sanctuarium eius


[51] memor esto Domine obprobrii servorum tuorum quod continui in sinu meo multarum gentium [52] quod exprobaverunt inimici tui Domine quod commitionem christi tui [53] benedictus Dominus in aeternum fiat fiat


exultavimus et delectati sumus in omnibus diebus nostris [15] laetati sumus pro diebus quibus nos humiliasti annis quibus vidimus mala


91-No text extant


viduam et advenam interfecerunt et pupillos occiderunt et dixerunt non videbit Dominus nec intellegit Deus Iacob intelleget qui insipientes estis in populo et stulti aliquando sapite qui plantavit aurem non audiet aut qui finxit oculos non considerat qui corripit gentes non arguet qui docet hominem scientiam

Dominus scit cogitationes hominum quoniam vanae sunt beatus homo quem tu erudieris Domine et de lege tua docueris eum ut mitiges ei a diebus malis donec fodiatur peccatoris fovea quia non repellet Dominus plebem suam et hereditatem suam non derelinquet quo ad aetatem tuam 39r

Domini Deus noster fodiatur peccatori fovea 39v(1) regnabit etenim correxit orbem quia terrae non
96[1] Dominus regnavit
(8) exultet terra laetentur insulae *et caligo in
(9) circuitu eis iustitia et iudicium correctio sedis eius
(10) [3] ignis ante ipsum praecedet et inflammabit in circuitu inimicos eius
fluxerunt a facie Domini; a facie Domini omnis terrae

confundantur omnes qui adorant sculpilias qui gloriantur in simulacris suis adorate cum
omnes angelii eis [8] audivit et laetata est Sion et exultaverunt filiae Iudaeae propter
iudicia tua Domine [9] quoniam tu Dominus Altissimus super omnem terram nimes
superexaltatus es super omnes deos [10] qui diligentis Dominum odite malum custodit
animas sanctarum suorum de manu peccatoris liberabit eos

memoriae sanctificationis eis

97[1] psalmus David cantate Domino canticum novum quoniam mirabilia fecit salvavit
sibi dextera eis et brachium sanctum eis [2] notum fecit Dominus salutare suum
in conspectu gentium revelavit iustitiam suam [3] recordatus est misericordiae suae et
veritatem suam dum domui Israhel viderunt omnes termini terrae salutare Dei nostri [4] iubilate
Domo omnis terra cantate et exultate et psallite [5] psallite Domino in cithara in cithara
et [40r] "abec" penned on the top of this folio) voces psalmi

moveatur mare et plenitudo eis orbis terrarum et qui habitant in eo [8] flummina plaudent
manu simul montes exultabant [9] in conspectu Domini quoniam venit iudicare terram
iudicabit orbem terrarum in iustitia et populos in aequitate ::

98[1] psalmus David Dominus regnavit irascanter populi qui sedet super cherubin
confiteantur nomini tuo magnopiam terribile et sanctum est [4] et honor regis iudicium
diliget tu parasit directiones iudicium et iustitiam in Iacob tu fecisti [5] exaltate Dominum
Deum nostrum et adorate scabillum pedem eis quoniam sanctum est

[6] Moses et Aaron in sacerdotibus eis et Samuhelm inter eos qui invocant nomen eis
invocabant Dominum et ipse exaudiabat illos [7] in columna nubis loquebatur ad eos
custodiebant testimonia eis et praeceptum quod dedit illis [8] Domine Deus noster tu
exaudiabas illos Deus tu propitiis fusti eis et ulciscens in omnes adinventiones eorum [9]
exaltate Dominum Deum nostrum et adorate in monte sancto eis quoniam sanctus
Dominus Deus noster


[26] initio tu Domine terram fundasti et opera manuum tuarum sunt cæli [27] ipsi peribunt
tu autem permanes et omnes sicut vestimentum veterescent et sicut opertorium mutabis eos
et mutabuntur [28] tu autem idem ipse es et anni tui non deficient [29] filii servorum
tuorum habitabunt et semen eorum in saeculum dirigetur

102[1] ipsi David benedic anima mea Domino et omnia quae intra me sunt nominis
qui propitiatur omnibus iniquitatibus tuis qui sanat omnes infirmitates tuas [4] qui redimit
de interitu tuam qui coronat te in misericordia et miserationibus [5] qui replet in
bonis desiderium tuum renovabitur ut aquilae iuventus tua

notas fecit vias suas Mosi filiis Israhel voluntates suas · [8] misscrator et misericors
Dominus longanimis et multum misericors [9] non in perpetuum irascetur neque in
aeternum [eye skip "um"] comminabitur [10] non secundum peccata nostra fecit nobis nec
secundum inustitias nostras retribuit nobis

timentes se · [12] quantum distat ortus ab occidente longe fecit a nobis iniquitates nostras
ipse cognovit figmentum nostrum recordatus est quoniam pulvis sumus [15] homo sicut
faenum dies eius tamquam flos agri sic effloreat

[16] quoniam spiritus pertransivit in illo et non subsistet et non cognoscet amplius locum
suum [17] misericordia autem Domini ab æterno et usque in aeternum super timentes eum
et iustitia illius in filios filiorum [18] his qui servant testamentum eus et memores sunt
mandatorum ipsius ad faciendum ea [19] Dominus in caelo paravit sedem suam et regnum
ipsius omnibus dominabitur [20] benedicite Domino angeli eius virtute facientes
verbam illius ad audiendum vocem sermonum eius

[21] benedicite Domino omnes virtutes eius ministri eius qui facitis voluntatem eius [22]
benedicite Domino omnia opera eius in omni loco dominationis ipsius benedic anima mea
Domino

103[1] ipsi David benedice anima mea Domine Domine Deus meus magnificatus es
vehementer confessionem et decorum induisti [2] amictus lumine sicut vestimento
extendens caelum sicut pellem [3] qui tegis in aquis superiorea eus qui ponis nubem
ascensum tuum qui ambulas super pinas ventorum [4] qui facis angelos tuos spiritus et
ministros tuos ignem urentem [5] qui fundasti terram super stabilitatem suam non
inclinabitur in saeculum 42r saeculi

increatione tua fugient a voce tonitri tu i formidabunt [8] ascendunt montes et descendunt campi in
locum quem fundasti eis [9] terminum posuisti quem non transgredientur neque
convertentur operire terram [10] qui emittis fontes in convallibus inter medium montium
pertransibunt aquae
potabunt omnes bestiae agri expectabunt onagri in siti sua super ea voluces caeli habitabunt de medio petrarum dabunt vocem rigans montes de superioribus suis de fructu operum tuorum satiabitur terra producens fœnus iumentis et herbam servitut hominum ut educas panem de terra et vinum laetificat cor hominis ut exhilaret faciem in oleo et panis cor hominis confirmat

saturabuntur ligna campi et cedri Libani quas plantavit illic passeres nidificabunt erodii domus dux est eorum montes excelsi cervis refugium erinaciis fecit lunam in tempora sol cognovit occasum suum posuisti tenebras et facta est nox in ipsa pertransibunt omnes bestiae silvae
catuli leonum rugientes ut rapiant et quaerant a Deo escam sibi ortus est sol et congregati sunt et in cubilibus suis conlocabuntur exhibit homo ad opus suum et ad operationem suam usque ad vesperum quam magnificata sunt opera tua Domine omnia in sapientia fecisti implebuntur terra possessione tua hoc mare magnum et spatiisum manibus illic reptilia quorum non est numerus animalia pusilla cum magnis

saturabuntur fœnus iumentis et herbam servitut et producens fœnus iumentis et herbam servitut et

cantabo Domino in vita mea deficiant peccatores a terra et iniqui ita ut non sint benedic anima mea Domino

alleluia confitemini Domino et invocate nomen eius adnuntiate inter gentes opera eius cantate ei et psallite ei narrate omnia mirabilia eius laudamini in nomine sancto eius laetetur cor quaerentium Dominum quaerite Dominum et confirmamini quaerite faciem eius semper mementote mirabilium eius quae fecit prodigia eius et iudicia oris eius

semen Abraham servi eius filii Iacob electi eius ipse Dominus Deus noster in universa terra iudicia eius memor fuit in saeculum testamenti sui verbi quod mandavit in mille generationes quod dispositu ad Abraham et iuramenti sui ad Isaac et statuit illud Iacob in præceptum et Israel in testamentum aeternum
dicens tibi dabo terram Chanaan funiculum hereditatis vestrae cum essent numero breves paucissimos et incolas eius et pertransierunt de gente in gentem et de regno ad populum alterum non reliquit hominem nocere eis et corripuit pro eis reges nolite tangere christos meos et in prophetis meis nolite malignari

et vocavit famem super terram omne firmamentum panis contrivit misit ante eos virum in servum venundatus est Joseph humiliaverunt in conpedibus pedes eius
et intraverunt Mosen in castris Aaron sanctum Domini aperta est terra et deglutivit Dathan et operuit super congregationem Abiron et exarsit ignis in synagoga eorum flamma conbusit peccatores et fecerunt vitulum in Choreb et adoraverunt sculptile et mutaverunt gloriam suam in similitudine vituli comedentis faenum.

obliit sunt Deum qui salvavit eos qui fecit magnalia in Aegypto mirabilia in terra Chanaan terribilia in mari Rubro et dixit ut disperderet eos si non Moses electus eius stetisset in confractione in conspectu eius ne disperderet eos et pro nihil habuerunt terram desiderabilem non crediderunt verbo eius et murmurabant in tabernaculis suis non exaudierunt vocem Domini.

et elevavit manum suam super eos ut prosterneret eos in deserto et ut deiceret semen eorum in regionibus et dispergeret eos in regionibus et initiati sunt Beelphegor et commixti sunt inter gentes et didicerunt opera eorum et inritaverunt eum in adinventionibus suis et multiplicata est in eis ruina et stetit Fines et placavit et cessavit quassatio et reputatum est ei in iustitiam in generatione et generat ionem usque in sempiternum et servierunt sculptilibus eorum et factum est illis in scandalum et immolaverunt filios suos et filias suas daemoniis et effuderunt sanguinem innocentem sanguinem filiorum suorum et sitientes anima eorum inipsis defecit et clamaverunt ad Dominum cum tribularentur et de necessitatibus eorum eripuit eos et deduxit eos in viam rectam ut irent in civitatem habitaculi non invenerunt esurientes et sitientes anima eorum inipsis defecit et clamaverunt ad Dominum cum tribularentur et de necessitatibus eorum eripuit eos et deduxit eos in viam rectam ut irent in civitatem habitaculi non invenerunt esurientes et sitientes anima eorum inipsis defecit.

et tradidit eos in manus gentium et dominati sunt eorum qui oderant eos et tribularunt eos inimici eorum et humiliati sunt sub manibus eorum saepe liberavit eos et ipse eorum exacerbaverunt eum in consilio suo et humiliati sunt in iniquitatis suis et vidit cum tribularuntur et audiret orationem eorum et memor fuit testamenti sui et paenituit eum secundum multitudinem misericordiae suae.

et dedit eos in misericordias in conspicu omnium qui ceperant eos salvos fac nos Domine Deus noster et congrega nos de nationibus ut confiteamur nomini tuo sanctoro domino et gloriamur in laude tua benedictus Dominus Deus Israhel a saeculo et usque in saeculum et dicent omnis populus fiat fiat alleluia confitemini Domino quoniam bonus quoniam in saeculum misericordia eius dicant qui redempti sunt a Domino quos redemit de manu inimici de regionibus congregavit eos a solis ortu et occasu et ab aquilonare mari erraverunt in solitudine in inaquoso viam civitatis habitaculi non invenerunt esurientes et sitientes anima eorum inipsis defecit et clamaverunt ad Dominum cum tribularentur et de necessitatibus eorum eripuit eos et deduxit eos in viam rectam ut irent in civitatem habitationis confiteantur Domino misericordiae eis et mirabilia eis filiis hominin quia satiavit animam inanem et
animam esurientem satiavit bonis [10] sedentes in tenebris et umbra mortis vinctos in mendicitate et ferro


[36] et conlocavit illic esurientes et constituerunt civitatem habitationis [37] et seminaverunt agros et plantaverunt vineas et fecerunt fructum nativitatis [38] et benedixit eis et multiplicati sunt nimi et iumenta eorum non minoravit [39] et pauci facti sunt et vexati sunt a tribulatione malorum et dolore [40] effusa est contemptio super principes et errare fecit eos in invio et non in via


Effraim susceptio capitis mei Iuda rex meus [10] Moab lebes spei meae in Idumeam extendam calciamentum meum mihi alienigenae amici facti sunt


[16] pro eo quod non est recordatus facere misericordiam et persecutus est hominem inopem et mendicum et dispereat de terra memoria eorum

[21] et tu Domine Domine fac mecum propter nomen tuum quia suavis misericordia tua libera me [22] quia egenus et pauper ego sum et cor meum turbutum est intra me [23] sic et umbra cum declinat ablatus sum excussus sum sicut lucustae genua mea infirma sunt a ieiunio et caro mea inmutata est propter oleum [25] et ego factus sum obprobrium illis viderunt me moverunt capita sua

[26] adiuva me Domine Deus meus salvum fac me secundum misericordiam tuam [27] et sciant quia manus tua haec tu Domine fecisti eam maledicent illi et tu benedices qui insurgent in me confundantur servus autem tuus laebabitur induantur qui detrahunt mihi pudore et operiantur sicut deploide confusione sua confitebor Domino nimis in ore meo et in medio multorum laudabo eum

[31] quia adstetit a dextris pauperis ut salvam faceret a persequentibus animam meam


110-No text extant
111-No text extant
112-No text extant
113-No text extant
114-No text extant
115-No text extant
116-No text extant
117-No text extant


[16] in iustificationibus tuis meditabor non obliviscar sermones tuos [17] gimel retribue servo tuo vivifica me et custodiam sermones tuos [18] revela oculos meos et considerabo
mirabilia de lege tua [19] incola ego sum in terra non abscondas a me mandata tua [20] concupivit anima mea desiderare iustificationes tuas in omni tempore


[26] vias meas enuntiavi et exaudisti me doce me iustificationes tuas [27] viam iustificationum tuarum instrue me et exercebor in mirabilibus tuuis [28] dormitavit anima mea praec turia confulisa me in verbis tuuis [29] viam iniquitatis amove a me et lege tua miserere mei [30] viam veritatis elegi iudicia tua non sum oblitus

[31] adhesi testimoniis tuuis Domine noli me confundere [32] viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri cum dilatasti cor meum [33] he legem pone mihi Domine viam iustificationum tuarum et exquiram eam semper [34] da mihi intellectum et scrutabor legem tuam et custodiam illam in toto corde meo [35] deduc me in semita mandatorum tuorum quia ipsam volui

[36] inclina cor meum in testimonia tua et non in avaritiam [37] averti oculos meos ne videant vanitatem in via tua vivifica me [38] statue servo tuo pk tuum in timore tuo [39] amputa obprobrium meum quod suspicatus sum quia iudicia tua iucunda [40] ecce concupivi mandata tua in aequitate tua vivifica me


[51] superbis inique agebant usqueaque a lege autem tua non declinavi [52] memor fui iudiciorum tuorum a saeculo Domine et consolatus sum [53] defectio tenuit me prae peccatoribus derelinquentibus legem tuam [54] cantabiles mihi erant iustificationes tuae in loco peregrinationis meae [55] memor fui in nocte nominis tui Domine et custodivi legem tuam

[56] haec facta est mihi quia iustificationes tuas exquisivi [57] heth portio mea Dominus dixi custodire legem tuam [58] deprecatus sum faciem tuam in toto corde meo miserere mei secundum eloquium tuum [59] cogitavi vias meas et avertisti pedes meos in testimonia tua [60] paratus sum et non sum turbatus ut custodiam mandata tua

[61] funes peccatorum circumplexi sunt me et legem tuam non sum oblitus [62] media nocte surgebam ad confitendum tibi super iudicia iustificationis tuae [63] particeps ego sum omnium timentium te et custodientium mandata tua [64] misericordia Domini plena
est terra iustificationes tuas doce me [65] teth bonitatem fecisti cum servo tuo Domine secundum verbum tuum

[66] bonitatem et disciplinam et scientiam doce me quia mandatis tuis credidi [67] priusquam humiliarer ego deliqui propterea eloquium tuum custodivi [68] bonus es tu et in bonitate tua doce me iustificationes tuas [69] multiplicata est super me iniquitas superborum ego autem in toto corde scrutabor mandata tua [70] coagulatum est sicut lac cor corum ego vero legem tuam meditatus sum

[71] bonum mihi quia humiliasti me ut discam iustificationes tuas [72] bonum mihi lex oris tui super milia auri et argenti [73] ioth manus tuae fecerunt me et plasmaverunt me da mihi intellectum et discam mandata tua [74] qui timent te videbunt me et laetabuntur quia in verba tua super speravi [75] cognovi Domine quia aequitas iudicia tua et veritate humiliasti me

[76] fiat misericordia tua ut consoletur me secundum eloquium tuum servo tuo [77] veniant mihi miserationes tuae et vivam quia lex tua meditatio mea est [78] confundantur superbi quia iustitiam iniquitatem fecerunt in me ego autem exercerem in mandatis tuis [79] convertantur mihi timentes te et qui noverunt testimonia tua [80] fiat cor meum inmaculatum in iustificationibus tuis ut non confundar

[81] caf defecit in salutare tuum anima mea in verbum tuum super speravi [82] defecerunt oculi mei in eloquium tuum dicentes quando consolaberis me [83] quia factus sum sicut uter in pruina iustificationes tuae non sum oblitus [84] quot sunt dies servo tuo quando facies de persequentibus me iudicium [85] narraverunt mihi iniqui fabulationes sed non ut lex tua

[86] omnia mandata tua veritas inique persecuti sunt me adiuva me [87] Paulo minus consummaverunt me in terra ego autem non dereliqui mandata tua [88] secundum misericordiam tuam vivifica me et custodiam testimonia oris tui [89] lamed in aeternum Domine verbum tuum permanet in caelo [90] in generationem et generationem veritas tua fundasti terram et permanet

[91] ordinatione tua perseverat dies quoniam omnia serviunt tibi [92] nisi quod lex tua meditatio mea est tunc forte perissem in humilitate mea [93] in aeternum non obliviscar iustificationes tua quia in ipsis vivificasti me [94] tuus ego salvum me fac quoniam iustificationes tua exquisivi [95] me expectaverunt peccatores ut perderent me testimonia tua 51r intellexi

[96] omnia consummationi vidi finem latum mandatum tuum nimis [97] mem quomodo dilexi legem tuam tota die meditatio mea est [98] super inimicos meos prudentem me fecisti mandato tua quia in aeternum mihi est [99] super omnes docentes me intellexi quia testimonia tua meditatio mea est [100] super senes intellexi quia mandata tua quaesivi

[101] ab omni via mala prohibui pedes meos ut custodiam verba tua [102] a iudiciis tuis non declinavi quia tu legem posuisti mihi [103] quam dulcia faucibus meos eloquia tua super mel ori meo [104] a mandatis tuis intellexi propterea odivi omnem viam iniquitatis [105] nun lucerna pedibus meis verbum tuum et lumen semitis meis
Domine vivifica me secundum verbum tuum voluntaria oris mei beneplacita.

Domine et iudicia tua doce me anima mea in manibus meis semper et legem tuam non sum oblitus posuerunt peccatores laqueum mihi et de mandatis tuis non erravi.

Domine vivifica me secundum verbum tuum voluntaria oris mei beneplacita.

Domine et iudicia tua doce me anima mea in manibus meis semper et legem tuam non sum oblitus posuerunt peccatores laqueum mihi et de mandatis tuis non erravi.

Domine et iudicia tua doce me anima mea in manibus meis semper et legem tuam non sum oblitus posuerunt peccatores laqueum mihi et de mandatis tuis non erravi.

Domine et iudicia tua doce me anima mea in manibus meis semper et legem tuam non sum oblitus posuerunt peccatores laqueum mihi et de mandatis tuis non erravi.

Domine et iudicia tua doce me anima mea in manibus meis semper et legem tuam non sum oblitus posuerunt peccatores laqueum mihi et de mandatis tuis non erravi.

Domine et iudicia tua doce me anima mea in manibus meis semper et legem tuam non sum oblitus posuerunt peccatores laqueum mihi et de mandatis tuis non erravi.

Domine et iudicia tua doce me anima mea in manibus meis semper et legem tuam non sum oblitus posuerunt peccatores laqueum mihi et de mandatis tuis non erravi.

Domine et iudicia tua doce me anima mea in manibus meis semper et legem tuam non sum oblitus posuerunt peccatores laqueum mihi et de mandatis tuis non erravi.
iudicium tuum vivifica me [150] adpropinquaverunt persequentes me iniquitate a lege autem tua longe facti sunt

[151] prope es tu Domine et omnes viae tuae veritas [152] initio cognovi de testimoniis tuis quia in aeternum fundasti ea [153] res vide humilitatem meam et eripe me quia legem tuam non sum oblitus [154] judica iudicium meum et redime me propter eloquium tuum vivifica me [155] longe a peccatoribus salus quia iustificationes tuas non exquisierunt

[156] misericordiae tuae multae Domine secundum iudicia tua vivifica me [157] multi qui persequestur me et tribulant me a testimoniis tuis non declinavi [158] vidi praeventes et tabescebam quia eloquia tua non custodierunt [159] vide quoniam mandata tua dilexi Domine in misericordia tua vivifica me [160] principium verborum tuorum veritas et in


[171] eructabunt labia mea hymnum cum docueris me iustificationes tuas [172] pronuntiabit lingua mea eloquium tuum quia omnia mandata tua aequitas [173] fiat manus tua ut salvet me quoniam mandata tua elegi [174] concupivi salutare tuum Domine et lex tua meditatio mea [175] vivet anima mea et laudabit te et iudicia tua aduivabant me

[176] erravi sicut ovis quae perii quaere servum tuum quia mandata tua non sum oblitus

119-No text extant

ificant cum loquebar illis inpugnabat me gratis


122-No text extant


125-No text extant


[6] et videas filios filiorum tuorum pax super Israhel
128-No text extant


130[1] oculi mei neque ambulavi in magnis exaltatum corneum in Domino non est neque elati sunt neque in mirabilibus super me [2] si non humiliter sentiebam sed exaltavi animam meam sicut ablactatum super matrem suam ita retributio in anima mea [3] speret Israhel in Domino ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum:~


[21] benedictus Dominus ex Sion qui habitat in Hierusalem


[136] super flumina Babylonis illic sedimus et levimus cum recordaretur mur Sion in salicimus in medio eius suspendimus organum nostra quia illic interrogerunt nos qui captivos duxerunt nos verba cantionum et qui abduxerant nos hymnum cantat nobis de cantibus Sion quomodo cantabimus canticum Domini in terra aliena si oblitus fueramus tu Hiesalem oblivionem datu dextera mea.

[6] adheret lingua mea faucibus meis si non meminero tui si non praeposuero Hierusalem in principi lactitiae meae memor esto Domine filiorum Domini in terra aliena si oblitus fuerit usus antiquum qui non est sermo in lingua mea ecce Domine tu cognovisti omnia novissima et antiqua tu formasti me et posuisti super me manum tua.

[137] No text extant.

[138] in finem David psalmus Domine probasti me et cognovisti me tu cognovisti sessionem meam et sucessionem meam intellextisti cogitationes meas de longe semitam meam et funiculum meum investigasti et omnes vias meas praeventistiquia non est sermo in lingua mea ecce Domine tu cognovisti omnia novissima et antiqua tu formasti me et posuisti super me manum tua.

[6] mirabilia facta est scientia tua ex me confortata est non potero ad eam quo ibo ab spiritu tuo et quo ascendero in caelum tu illic es si descendero ad infernum ades si sumpsero pinnas meas diluculo et habitaver in extremis maris etenim illuc manus tua deducet et tenebit me dextera tua.

[11] et dixi forsitan tenebrae concucabunt me et nox inluminatio in deliciis meis quia tenebrae non obscurabuntur a te et nox sicut dies inluminabit sicut tenebrae eius ita et lumen eius quia tu possedisti renes meos susceptisti me de utero matris meae confitebor tibi quia terribiliter magnificatus es mirabilia opera tua et anima mea cognosce nobis non est occultatum os meum a te quod fecisti in occulto et substantia mea in inferioribus terrae.
in perfectum meum viderunt oculi tui et in libro tuo omnes scribentur die formabuntur et nemo in eis mihi autem nimis honorificati sunt amici tui Deus nimis confirmati sunt. nemo in eis mihi autem nimis honorificati sunt. Deus nimis confirmati sunt principatus eorum in numerabo eos et super harenam multiplicabuntur. exsurrexi et adhuc sum tecum si occideris Deus peccatores et viri sanguinum declinate a me. quia dices in cogitatione accipient in vanitate civitates tuas.

nemo in eis mihi autem nimis honorificati sunt. Deus nimis confirmati sunt principatus eorum. d inumerabo eos et super harenam multiplicabuntur. exsurrexi et adhuc sum tecum si occideris Deus peccatores et viri sanguinum declinate a me. quia dices in cogitatione accipient in vanitate civitates tuas.

principatus eorum. d inumerabo eos et super harenam multiplicabuntur. exsurrexi et adhuc sum tecum si occideris Deus peccatores et viri sanguinum declinate a me. quia dices in cogitatione accipient in vanitate civitates tuas.

si ocideris Deus peccatores et viri sanguinum declinate a me. quia dices in cogitatione accipient in vanitate civitates tuas.
qua ambulabam absconderunt laqueum mihi [5] considerabam ad dexterae et videbam et non erat qui cognosceret me perit fuga a me et non est qui requirit animam meam

[6] clamavi ad te Domine dixi tu es spes mea portio mea in terra viventium [7] intende ad deprecationem meam quia humiliatus sum nimirum libera me a persequentibus me quia confortati sunt super me [8] educ de custodia animam meam ad confitendum nomini tuo me expectant iusti donec retribuas mihi


[21] laudationem Domini loquetur os meum et benedecat omnis caro nomini sancto eius in saeculum et in saeculum saeculi


suscipiens mansuetos Dominus humilissimus autem peccatores usque ad terram praecinite Domino in confessione psallite Deo nostro in cithara qui sperate caelum nubibus et parat terrae pluviam qui producit in montibus faenum et herbam servitutis hominum et dat iumentis escam ipsum et pullis corvorum invocantibus eum non in fortitudine equi voluntatem habebit nec in tibiis viri beneplacitum est ei

beneplacitum est Domino super timentes eum et in eis qui sperant super misericordiam eius

alleluia lauda Hierusalem Dominum lauda Deum tuum Sion quoniam confortavit seras portarum tuarum benedixit filiis tuis in te qui posuit fines tuos pacem et adipe frumenti satiat te qui emittit eloquium suum terrae velociter currit sermo eius qui dat nivem sicut lanam nebulam sicut cinerem spargit mittit cristallum suum sicut buccellas ante faciem frigoris eius quis sustinebit emittet verbum suum et liquefaciet ea flabit spiritus eius et fluent aquae qui adnuntiat verbum suum Iacob iustitias et iuvidia sua Israhel non fecit taliter omni nationi et iudicia sua non manebant eis

statuit ea in saeculum et in saeculorum praemunatum posuit et non praeterit qui dat nivem sicut lanam nebulam sicut cinerem spargit mittit cristallum suum sicut buccellas ante faciem frigoris eius quis sustinebit emittet verbum suum et liquefaciet ea flabit spiritus eius et fluent aquae qui adnuntiat verbum suum Iacob iustitias et iudicia sua Israhel non fecit taliter omni nationi et iudicia sua non manebant eis

alleluia cantate Domino canticum novum laudetur Israhel in eo qui fecit eum et filii Sion exultent in rege suo laudent nomen Domini qui exaltat sancti in gloria laetabuntur in cubilibus suis exaltationes Dei in gutture eorum et gladii ancipites in manibus eorum ad faciendam vindictam in nationibus increpationes in populis ad alligandos reges eorum in conpedibus et nobilis eorum in manicis ferreis ut faciant in eis iudicium conscriptum gloria haec est omnibus sanctis eis
alleluia laudate Dominum in sanctis eum laudate eum in firmamento virtutis eius
laudate eum in virtutibus eius laudate eum secundum multitudinem magnitudinis eius
laudate eum in sono tubae laudate eum in psalterio et cithara laudate eum in tympano et choro laudate eum in cordis et organo laudate eum in cymbalis bene
sonantibus laudate eum in cymbalis iubilationis
1r 1.1   [B]eatus vir
3r  6.2   D[omine ne in furore]
4r  9.2   Confiteor tibi Domine.
5r 10.2   IN [Domino]
5v 11.2   Salvum me fac Domine
5v 12.1   Usqueq[uo Domine is Usqueq]
6r 13.1   Dixit insipiens
6v 15.1   Conserva me Domine quoniam....
6v 16.1   Ex[audi]
8v 18.2   Cae[li inarrant glor[iam]
8v 19.2   Exau[diat].
9r 20.2   Domine in virtut[e]
9v 21.2   Deus Deus [m]eus respice in me
16v 37.2   D[omine ne in furore]
16v 38.2   Dixi cus[todiam]
17v 40.2   B[eatus qu,i]
22r 51.3   Quid g[loriatur]
25r 60.2   Exaudi Deus
25r 61.2   Nonne Deo subiect[a]
27v 68.2   S[alvum me [fac Deus]
29r 72.1   Quam bonus Israhel Deus
29v 73.1   Ut qui[d] Deus
33v 80.2   Ex[ultate Deo adiutori]
34v 82.2   Deus quis [similis] erit.
58r 143.1  Benedictus Dominus Deus meus.
59r 146.1  Laudate Dominum quoniam
Abbreviations  Chapter 3

terraē is a suspension, the syllable ter to a t with a stroke (macron) above.

cum is a suspension, to c with a stroke above.

david contracts to dd with a stroke through the ascenders.

deprecationem contracts the syllable pre to a p with a stroke above.
eius uses two symbols, an upside down e or back to front e.

est employs the symbol ÷

sunt is a suspension to st with a stroke over the two letters.

hominis is a suspension of the final syllable to a double curved stroke (tilde) over the i.

inmaculatam abbreviates the final syllable with a curved stroke over the a.
non is a suspension to n with an upward curve over the letter.

per is a suspension to p with a curved stroke from the top of the bow. Bischoff sees this an Irish invention based on the knowledge of the Latin notae tironiane.\(^\text{472}\)

quia is a suspension to q with a stroke through the descender.

quoniam is a suspension to qm with a short curved line over the m.

sanctisis is a suspension to scis with a stroke over the i.

sancto is a suspension to sco with a stroke over the o.

spiritu is a suspension to spiu with a stroke over the i.

sunt....et ego ad contractions and ligatures combined on all four words. sunt is ligatured to st with a curved stroke off the arch of the s. et ego ad is ligatured.
Insular punctuation makes an appearance in the form of a known as a trigon. It was used to indicate a point of emphasis or end of a section. This according to Paul Saenger is one of the ‘most enduring of insular emblematic punctuation’.473 (Fig. 46) Another punctuation form appears repeated in a row between Psalm 92 and 93. The colon to the left of an upward curve : ~ (positura) is an indication of the end of a section. There are a number of extant areas in the text of the FMP between two Psalms, none of which displays this feature.

---

C14 results  (95% probability – i.e. 2 sigma calculation)

Sample 1 (papyrus)          AD784-991          Late 8\textsuperscript{th} to late 9\textsuperscript{th}     cover lining
Sample 2 (vellum)           AD677-883          Last \(\frac{3}{4}\) 7\textsuperscript{th} to late 9\textsuperscript{th}   text block
Sample 3 (pigskin bag)      AD718-941          1\textsuperscript{st} \(\frac{3}{4}\) 8\textsuperscript{th} too late 10\textsuperscript{th}   bag
Sample 4 (Animal pelt)      AD779-977          Late 8\textsuperscript{th} to late 10\textsuperscript{th}   covering material
Sample 5 (plant matter)     AD712-889          Early 8\textsuperscript{th} to late 9\textsuperscript{th}   leaf inside cover


BHREATHNACH, Edel, *Ireland in the Medieval World, AD 400-800* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014)


BOUDALIS, Georgios, *The Codex and Crafts in Late Antiquity* (New York: Brad Graduate Center, 2018)


- *How Christianity Came to Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Lion Hudson plc, 2006)


BUCKLEY, J. J., ‘Some Early Ornamented Leatherwork’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, Volume 5 No. 4* (Dublin: Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1915), pp 300-309


BYRNE, Francis John, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001)


CAREY, John, ‘Compilations of lore and legend: Leabhar na hUidhre and the books of Úi Mhaine’, *Treasures of the Royal Irish Academy Library* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009), pp 17-32


CHADWICK, Nora K., The Druids (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997)


CUNNINGHAM, George, The Anglo-Norman advance into the south-west midlands of Ireland 1185-1221 (Roscrea: Parkmore Press, 1987)


CURZON, Robert, Visits to Monasteries in the Levant (London: Arthur Barker Ltd., 1955)


DE HAMEL, Christopher, *Scribes and Illuminators* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1992)


DUFT, Johannes, MEYER, Peter, *The Irish miniatures in the Abbey Library of St. Gall.* (Berne and Lausanne: Urs Graf-Verlag, Olten, 1954)


- ‘Foundation-moulded leather – a Rare Egyptian Technique also used in Britain’, *Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture in Honour of Professor K. A. C. Creswell*, (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1965), pp 63-71

FARR, Carol A, ‘Reused, rescued and recycled: the art historical and palaeographic contexts of the Irish fragments, St Gallen Codex 1395’, *An Insular Odyssey Manuscript Culture in Early Christian Ireland and Beyond*, Rachel Moss, Felicity O’Mahony, Jane Maxwell eds. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), pp 175-193


FITZPATRICK, Elizabeth, and O’BRIEN, Caimin, *The Medieval Churches of County Offaly* (Dublin: Government of Ireland, 1988)


Gabra, Gawdat, *Coptic Monasteries Egypt’s Art and Architecture* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2002)


- and MEEHAN, Bernard ‘Examining the Book of Dimma, the scribe Dianchride and the Gospel of John’, *An Insular Odyssey*, Rachel Moss, Felicity O’Mahony, Jane Maxwell eds. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), pp 86-113

GLEESON, Jennifer, *Materials and Methods, Fine Metalwork, Art and Architecture of Ireland Vol. 1 Medieval c. 400-c. 1600* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2014)

GOLDMAN, Norma, ‘Roman Footware’, *The World of Roman Costume* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), pp 213-262


HARBISON, Peter, *Guide to the national and Historic Monuments of Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1992)


HEMPHILL, Samuel, ‘The Gospels of MacRegol of Birr: a study in Celtic illumination’, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Vol. 29* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1911), pp1-10

HENDERSON, George, *From Durrow to Kells The Insular Gospel-Books 650-800* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987)


HENRY, Françoise, *Irish High Crosses* (Dublin: Three Candles, 1964)


HENTHORN TODD, James, *The war of the Gaedhil with the Gaill, or, The invasions of Ireland by the Danes and other Norsemen* (London: Longmans, 1867)


HOGAN, Margaret, *The gospel book of Macregol of Birr* (Offaly: Offaly County Council, 2007)
KELLY, Eamonn P., ‘The Manuscript Discovered’, *Archaeology Ireland, Autumn 2006 vol. 20 No.3, issue no.77* (Dublin: Archaeology Ireland, 2006), (supplement)
LANGWE, Monica, *Limp Bindings from the Vatican Library* (Mora: Langwe, 2013)

LAWLOR, H. C., *The monastery of Saint Mochaoi of Nendrum* (Belfast: The Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society, 1925)


MCGRATH, Fergal, *Education in Ancient and Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Studies Special Publications, 1979)


MCNAMARA, Martin, ‘Psalter Text and Psalter Study in the Early Irish Church (A.D. 600-1200)’, Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Vol.73, Section C Number7 (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1973), pp 201-298

- The Book of Durrow (Dublin: Town and Country House, 2000)
- The Book of Kells (Thames and Hudson, London, 2012)


MITCHELL, Frank, Michael Ryan, Reading the Irish landscape (Dublin: Town House and Country House, 2003)


MORTON, Henry Vollam Morton, In Search of Ireland (London: Methuen, 1930)

MOSS, Rachel ‘Materials and Methods, Fine Metalwork’, Art and Architecture of Ireland Vol. 1 Medieval c. 400-c. 1600 (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2014), pp 107-110


NÍ’MHEARA, Róisín, *Early Irish Saints in Europe; their sites and their stories* (Armagh: Cumann Seanchais Ard Mhacha, 2001)


O’BRIEN, Caimin, *Stories from a Sacred landscape, Croghan Hill to Clonmacnoise* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 2006)


Ó’CORRÁIN, Donncha, *Ireland Before the Normans* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1980)
- ‘What happened to Ireland’s Medieval Manuscripts?’, *Peritia, Volume 22-23*, eds Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Dublin: Medieval Academy of Ireland, 2011-12), pp 191-223


- ‘The Cathach and Domnach Airgid’, *Treasures of the Royal Irish Academy Library, eds Bernadette Cunningham and Siobhan Fitzpatrick* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009), pp 1-10


O’NEILL, Timothy, *The Irish Hand, Scribes and their Manuscripts from the earliest times* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2014)

- ‘Initial wanderings: continuity and development of the smaller initials in Irish manuscripts, c. 500-c.1500,’ *An Insular Odyssey, Manuscript Culture in Early Christian Ireland and beyond*, ed’s Rachel Moss, Felicity O’Mahony, Jane Maxwell (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), pp 283-301
Ó’RIAIN, Pádraig, ‘The Stowe Missal’, Treasures of the Royal Irish Academy Library, eds Bernadette Cunningham, Siobhán Fitzpatrick (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009), pp 11-16

- A Dictionary of Irish Saints (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011)

- Four Tipperary Saints (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014)

Ó’SÚILLEBHÁIN, Muris, DOWNEY, Liam, DOWNEY, Dara, Antiquities of Rural Ireland (Dublin: Wordwell, 2018)


PÄCHT, Otto, Book Illumination in the Middle Ages an Introduction (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1986)


PEACOCK, Elizabeth E., ‘Drying Archaeological Textiles’, Tidens Tand, Archaeological Textiles in Northern Europe Nr5, Lise Bendar Jørgensen, Elisabeth Munksgaard, eds. (Copenhagen: Konservatorskolen, Det Kongelige danske kunstakademi, 1992), p 201


POWELL, Elinor, The High Crosses of Ireland, (Dublin: Liffey Press, 2007)


REEF, Ronald, Ancient skins, parchments and leathers (London: Seminar Press, 1972)

- The Nature and Making of Parchment (Leeds; The Elmete Press, 1975)


RICHTER, Michael, Bobbio in the Early Middle Ages (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008)

RIPPIN, Andrew, The Islamic World (London: Routledge, 2013)


ROBERTS, Jane, Guide to scripts used in English writings up to 1500 (London: British Library, 2005)


RYAN, John, Irish Monasticism Origins and Early Development (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1972)
- Irish Monasticism (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1993)


Sheep & Man (London: Duckworth, 1983)

SAENGER, Paul, Space Between Words, the origins of silent reading (California: Stanford University Press, 1997)

SANDERS, Karin, Bodies in the Bog and the archaeological imagination (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009)

SAVAGE, Ernest A., Old English Libraries: the making, collection and use of books during the middle ages (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970)

-, Latin and Irish Words for Book Satchel’, Peritia, Volume 4 (Dublin: Medieval Academy of Ireland, 2010), pp 152-156
- ‘Books from Ireland, Fifth to Ninth Centuries’, Peritia, Volume 21 (Dublin: Medieval Academy of Ireland, 2010), pp 1-55
SLY, Dorothy, Philo’s Alexandria (London: Routledge,1996)
STEVICK, Robert, ‘Two coherent geometry of two Irish High Crosses’, Peritia Vol 14 (Dublin: Medieval Academy of Ireland, 2000), pp 297-322
STOKES, Dr. George T., Ireland and the Celtic Church (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1899)
STOKES, Margaret, Early Christian Art in Ireland (Dublin: Stationary Office Dublin 1932)
STOPFORD GREEN, Alice, History of the Irish State to 1014 (London: McMillan, 1925)
STOUT, Matthew, ‘Early Christian Settlement, Society and Economy in Offaly, Offaly
History and Society, eds William Nolan, Timothy P. O’Neill (Dublin: Geography
- Early Medieval Ireland 431-1169, (Dublin: Wordwell, 2017)
Ltd., 1999)
TELEPNEFF, Fr. Gregory, The Egyptian Desert in the Irish Bogs (California: Center for
Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2008)
THOMAS, Charles, Britain and Ireland in Early Christian Times AD 400-800 (London:
Thames and Hudson, 1971)
Related Materials, Kite, Marion, and Thomson, Roy, Ed (Oxford: Elsevier Butterworth-
Heinemann, 2006), pp 1-3
400-1100 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp 468-481
VAN REGEMORTER, Berth Van, ‘Le Reilure souple desmanuscrits carolongiens de Fulda’,
Scriptorium, International Review of Manuscript Studies, Tome XI (Amsterdam: Standaard-
Boekhandel S.A., 1957), pp 249-257
- ‘The Bound Codex from its origin to the Early Middle Ages’, Guild of Book Workers
VAN STONE, Mark, ‘Ornamental techniques in Kells and its kin’, The Book of Kells,
Proceedings of a conference at Trinity College Dublin, 6-9 September, 1992, ed. Felicity
O’Mahony (Aldershot, Scholar Press, 1994), pp 234-242
VELDMEIJER, A. J., Sandals, shoes and other leatherwork from the Coptic monastery Deir
VEZIN, Jean, Une Reliure carolingienne de cuir souple, Revue Francaise d’histoire du livre
No 36 (Bordeaux: Societe des Bibliophiles de Guyenne, 1982)
no. 1 (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis Ltd., 1962), pp 22-26


WARREN, Frederick E., *The liturgy and ritual of the Celtic Church* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1987)

WATERER, John W., *Leather and Craftsmanship* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1950)


-, *A guide to the conservation and restoration of objects made wholly or in part of leather* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1972)


