

DEMONS, DRUIDS AND BRIGANDS ON IRISH HIGH CROSSES:
RETHINKING THE IMAGES IDENTIFIED AS
THE TEMPTATION OF SAINT ANTHONY

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ABSTRACT

SALLY TOMLINSON: Demons, Druids and Brigands on the Irish High Crosses:
Rethinking the images identified as *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*
(Under the direction of Dorothy Verkerk)

Five crosses erected at ninth- and tenth-centuries monasteries in Ireland are decorated with carvings of biblical and saints' narratives, but these also include one in which two zoomorphic-headed figures in contemporary clothing confront a centrally placed man. Arthur Kingsley Porter identified the subject as temptation by demons, suggesting Saint Anthony as the probable protagonist, but the iconography bears no apparent relationship to the facts of Anthony's story, as related by his biographer, Athanasius.

The asceticism practiced by some early medieval Irish monks has long fascinated scholars, bleeding into assumptions about motivations behind the entire body of Irish monastic art work. During the era in question, the monasteries erecting these crosses were not retreats for solitary living, nor were they necessarily peopled by ascetic men in orders, leaving open the contextual basis supporting the "temptation" interpretation.

This essay considers alternate explanations for scenes, beginning with the animals pictured, seeking precedents in pre-Christian art forms. In addition to a visual survey, I explore Irish vernacular literature to explain some of the beliefs surrounding the creatures pictured.

I explore the history of, and other uses for, the heraldic compositional type used for the images, beginning with ancient Near Eastern art and applications in Irish art as drawn from the Merovingian culture.

From there, I investigate the topics of demons and animal-related magic, seeking information about the culture of druids and their poet-successors in Ireland. I look for related visual images of demons and devils within contemporary Western European art and elsewhere on the Irish crosses, comparing these with the zoomorphic-headed figures.

In the next chapter I illustrate and highlight details of the figures' costume, connecting visual evidence to scholarship on medieval dress and references in early medieval Irish Christian and non-Christian literature, to identify the social station and professional standing of the various figures, as suggested by their clothes and accoutrements. Finally, I define the circumscribed geographic area in which the five crosses stand, providing an overview of its history and the contemporary political situation, to provide context for the creation of these unusual images on public monuments.

To my partner, Steve Hall, whose unfailing support and piano sonatas lent harmony to this endeavor. And to my daughter, Siena Salazar, whose companionship means more than she will ever know.

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INTRODUCTION

The medieval stone crosses erected across the Irish landscape make a spectacular display. Locating individual monuments provides stimulating navigational challenges for a tourist possessing neither GPS equipment nor a costly set of ordinance maps. With these tools, one imagines, the adventure of locating the Arboe Cross, which faces the Irish Sea, or the remote cow pasture where the Kilree Cross sits amidst a grove of oak trees, would be far less dramatic than discovering, without them, a targeted destination after a good hour's search of surrounding countryside. Unlike American landmarks, few signs direct the tourist to the thousand-year-old monuments. Given their towering heights, ranging from ten to twenty-one feet, one might think they could be easily spotted from afar, but lush vegetation, tall hedgerows lining many roads and obfuscating hillocks result in their spotting only when standing within a reasonable number of feet. In some cases, where only fragments remain, asking the local citizens proves fruitless, and a couple hours' investigation, guidebook in hand, might produce no earthly vision of an ancient cross.

Because most crosses remain part of the landscape and are not protected by enclosure, the weather has damaged many of them, making the contours of individual scenes difficult, if not impossible, to trace. This fact of nature presents one challenge to cross scholars, while another is the medieval Irish tendency to depict scenes not easily identified, using features unknown from the Continental world of sculpture or manuscript illumination. Complicating the matter further, as Roger Stalley has pointed out,¹ Irish sculptors and

patrons maintained individuality when considering the iconography to be used in depicting a scene, and biblical narratives, from cross to cross, can be ingenuously rendered in their major and minor motifs. Unfortunately, no medieval guide books from individual monasteries exist to explain the scenes or why these scenes, in particular, were chosen for illustration. Also missing from historical documents are records of when the crosses were erected, by whom—with the exception of an occasional first name—or for what purpose(s). All of these factors are necessarily missing from the scholarly analyses of the crosses. What has been written is derived largely from circumstantial evidence, leading scholars down divergent highways and byways of interpretation, and often a single scholar's attribution can continue, unquestioned, for quite a while, influencing subsequent scholars' byways.

One such interpretation was offered in the early 1930s by medieval scholar, Arthur Kingsley Porter.² Porter wrote a book on the Irish crosses, in which he offered new insights, some roundly accepted and others almost shocking to the scholarly world in their novelty. Among the more untenable suggestions, in the eyes of other scholars, was Porter's tracing, in some scenes, of elements from Irish myths, amounting to a rejection of the purely Christian nature of the illustrations that continues to be assumed within the academic world.³ At the same time, he made a somewhat tentative suggestion in identifying a scene that appears on five crosses, where they are still fairly legible, and purportedly carved on at least two others that were, even by then, too weathered to see clearly. This scene, clearest on the Market Cross at Kells (figs. 1 and 2),⁴ had baffled scholars for some time: it depicts a figure facing forward, surrounded by two in profile that are human from the neck down and dressed in contemporary medieval costume, but their heads are those of animals or birds. Following is Porter's text, as he grapples with interpretation:

... in a relief of the [Moone] cross, the meaning of which has never been very satisfactorily explained [figs. 3 and 4].⁵ A human figure bearded appears in the center; on either side are two figures with human bodies, but animal heads. The one to the left seems to have clearly the head of a goat, for although the horns might seem to be rather those of a ram, the beard could be only a goat's. The figure to the right is harder to identify; there appear indubitably to be horns and a beard, but the head itself has a different character, and looks more like a bird than a goat.

What is meant by this enigmatical composition? The older school of Irish archaeologists was inclined to see in it a summary version of the Last Judgment, symbolized by the Separation of the Sheep from the Goats...

The difficulties of this interpretation will become more clear by comparison of the Moone Abbey relief with analogous panels on other crosses. At Castledermot the figure to the left is perhaps again a goat: there is what looks like a horn and there is possibly a beard [figs. 5-8; Porter did not identify which of the two crosses he described].⁶ The one on the right has a horn, an ear, a beard, and a snout-like muzzle; its general character is very like that of the Moone Abbey figure, and we are left in much the same doubt as to what animal is intended. It is notable that at Castledermot the right-hand monster is clearly whispering in the ear of the central personage. On the Market Cross of Kells [fig. 2], both are expressively whispering in the ear of the central personage; and each reaches over to take one of his hands...

There is a fourth [fifth] representation of this subject on the West Cross of Monasterboice [often called the Tall Cross, figs. 9 and 10].⁷ The left-hand one seems to have the head of a goat; the right-hand one has ears or horns tipped forward, and suggests a bull.

...One of these animals in every case seems to be clearly a goat, but the other animal is something different, not a sheep or a ram, but suggesting a bird, a swine...These monsters often whisper in the ear of the central personage, and lay their hands on him with a gesture of persuasion...

It is of course well known that Egyptian deities like Anubis and Horus were frequently represented as animal-headed human beings. This portion of the Irish iconography therefore suggests a Coptic origin, although I know of nothing precisely similar in the Christian art of the Nile Valley. It is also a truism that the early Christians often turned the old pagan divinities into demons. I therefore suppose that the Irish reliefs represent the temptation of a saint by two demons. In the monastic Psalter written at St. John Stoudion in 1066 (British Museum Add. 19352)...there is seen, just above the Crucifixion, Christ standing between two groups of figures, those to the left dog-headed...and those to the right...one...[is] also animal-headed. An animal-headed man is therefore the symbol of the wicked, of the demon...

The two devils whispering in the ear of a saint would then seem to represent a temptation. As for the saint intended, it may, I think, be Saint Anthony. His was the most celebrated of all temptations, and we have

abundant evidence that his legend was widely known in Ireland. If this be granted, it must be conceded that the sculptors held in their hands a version of the legend differing from that immortalized by Saint Athanasius...⁸

I consider his discussion of native mythological elements in some scenes to be credible, or at least possible, lending a polyvalent orientation that allows both Christian and pagan-directing readings. On the other hand, I disagree wholeheartedly with his identification of the scenes that include animal- and bird-headed figures as illustrating the story of Saint Anthony's temptation. I do not think it represents temptation at all, for that matter, unless temptation be one (minor) theme among several, for the image does seem designed for multiple layers of meaning. Porter is certainly correct in saying the Saint Athanasius story bears little resemblance to any element pictured in the scenes. As I relate in Chapter Three of this essay, Anthony was attacked by a variety of beasts, but they all "behaved according to their natures."⁹ I hardly need to point out that it is not natural for animals to dress in human fashion, stand as tall as a man on hind legs, or insistently push their snouts—or beaks—against human ears.

I copied the bulk of Porter's text, above, in part as the lightning rod to which all opinions preceding mine and mentioned in this essay are drawn, but also to demonstrate that he never stated conclusively that the Anthony story was the basis for the image; nevertheless, numerous discussions of the scene rely upon Porter's identification of this as the *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, even when authors, such as Carola Hicks in a book about animals in medieval art, veer off from the Saint Anthony story to suggest pagan roots for the composite figures, but maintain the scene represents a saint tempted by demons.¹⁰ The reason the saint-tempted-by-demon attribution has remained so steadfast is, I suspect, the fruit of generalizations made about the nature of early medieval Irish monasticism and the extreme

ascetic practices associated with some of its more esteemed representatives, such as Saints Patrick and Columba, and missionary Columbanus on the European Continent.¹¹

Robin Flower, writing in 1954, describes Irish monastic retreats and solitary practices as a context for his discussion of the crosses. He describes a “particular cult of Saints Paul and Anthony” in the Irish church during the early medieval era, before the year 1000 C.E., and relates that some of the monasteries were given the appellation *dísert* (Latin *desertum*, English desert), including Castledermot, originally named Dísert Diarmada. Flower opines the reason for the name was not to recall the Egyptian desert fathers, but referred to the Irish monk’s practice of solitude:

The solitaries, in their mean cells of drybuilt stones, poured out their supplication for help against the demons which their loneliness and self-examination and intense contemplation were always summoning out of the middle region between Heaven and Hell, calling upon God by the memories of Christ’s passion and the merits of his saints to help them in their desperate battle...Many of these prayers, from an early date, were plainly used as amulets, possessing a kind of magical efficacy to ward off danger and the assaults of demons.¹²

The above passage is imaginative and evocative, but it is not an accurate overview. The “prayers” Flower refers to were the *lorica*, or “breastplates,” which scholars say were penned and recited as protection against evil. Ironically, some of their passages included elements drawn from pagan lore, just as Irish saints’ hagiography did.¹³ One *lorica* begins, “I invoke the seven daughters of the sea...” and continues, “I invoke Senach of the Seven Ages/ whom fairy women fostered/ on the breasts of inspiration....”¹⁴ Another, quoted by Flower, includes the line, “Save me as Thou didst save Patrick from poison at Tara....”¹⁵ The reference is made to recall Patrick’s seventh-century *vita*, written by a monk named Muirchú, in which a druid attempts to poison Patrick, but Patrick turns the tables of druidic magic and expels only the drop of poison from his cup, and then enjoys the remainder of the beverage.¹⁶

Flower concludes that the *lorica* were used as a general formula against evil, adding that they belong to the same period as the crosses.¹⁷ The implication is that the crosses served primarily an apotropaic function—a context against which Flower’s concurrence with Porter’s interpretation of the scene makes sense, its function to guard against demonic influence.

John Moreland similarly describes the function of crosses in England and Ireland, expressly stating they possessed apotropaic and liminal roles. He talks about the cross as an image, and, as such, it “partook of the essence of the supernatural. They were not just physical objects, but objects which existed between heaven and earth.”¹⁸

Françoise Henry points to an Irish fascination with the Egyptian desert fathers as reason enough to accept Porter’s attribution: “In itself there is nothing surprising in the choice of events from the lives of St Paul and St Anthony the Hermits as the ascetics of the Egyptian desert were the obvious patrons of the Irish monks striving to follow their example.”¹⁹ She, too, discusses the images as temptation scenes without question.

T. H. Mason accepts the demonic baton and runs with it, seeking Christian references that may have inspired goat and cockerel images. The goat is a sign of wickedness, he argues, citing the biblical passage, Matthew 25: 32-33, in which Christ separates the goats from the sheep at the Last Judgment: “And when the Son of man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left.” The cock can be understood similarly, he advises, referring to an “old and significant connection between the cock and the powers of

evil,” found in the “magical rites of African natives and with devil worship in northern Europe.” He concludes, “Even today in Ireland, strange ceremonies with the cock are of undoubtedly pagan origin...[and] must go back to earliest times.”²⁰ This reader wishes he had delineated the “strange ceremonies,” which are presumably so vile as to be unmentionable—but unmentioned, leave too much to the imagination. And for those people believing that demonic possession is a superstitious relic from the past, I bring to mind the recent film, *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*, a Hollywood version of a 1976 court trial in which a priest was accused of manslaughter for his role in an exorcism, during which a young college student died. She and her parents were convinced she was possessed by Satan, and the film inspired newspaper essays arguing both sides of the legal issue, including accepting the faith, and consequences, of those involved.²¹

While this aspect of Irish monasticism has some historical merit, focusing on it as the context for cross patronage and carving could be described as one dimensional: the spiritual context is prized over political or other considerations. Where documentation is lacking, as it is with the crosses, relying upon imaginative recreations of spiritual life to explain motivation for artistic patronage can be misleading. As I stated earlier, the evidence is circumstantial. In an area of academic pursuit in which one imaginative context is set forward, another explanation, cast in an entirely different light and with equally valid historical justification, can always be argued. But before I describe another explanation for the cross images and motivations for their creation, which I do in the following five chapters of this essay, I shall begin this endeavor by explaining some of the problems surrounding dating of the crosses, and outline scholars’ arguments for dates.

The crosses on which this *Temptation* image appears, and on which it can still be seen clearly, include, once again, five crosses in Ireland: a cross at Moone Abbey, two crosses at Castledermot, one at Kells and one at Monasterboice. An additional one is considered by scholar Peter Harbison to display the image, located at Ullard, but if the image was carved on an arm of the Ullard cross, its contours are too eroded to see clearly what, exactly, is represented (fig. 11).²² A similar situation exists on the Isle of Man, where a cross at Kettins was reported by two scholars writing in 1903 as having the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* carved on it. These two, Romilly Allen and Joseph Anderson, published their fully illustrated, two-volume tome in that year, and at that time, the Kettins stone was so weathered that they reproduced a drawing of the image's outlines to compensate for its iconographical illegibility (fig. 12).²³ Since I cannot analyze or even confirm the appearance of these two purported repetitions of the image at Ullard and Kettins, I discuss them only briefly in this essay, particularly in the conclusion, where I address their geographical distance from the other five crosses, which are situated within a hundred-mile radius of one another, as illustrated on a map of Ireland (fig. 13).²⁴

Leading scholar of cross dating, Françoise Henry, developed a dating system for the crosses in the mid-twentieth century, using comparative stylistic analysis as her basis, a method that merits caution; still, her dates are generally accepted for the crosses in question. She claims the earliest of the five crosses is the Moone Abbey cross, which rises to a height of about seventeen feet (fig. 3).²⁵ Four miles from Moone is the Castledermot complex, where four high crosses remain standing, two of which, the Castledermot North Cross (about seven feet tall) and the nine-foot-tall South Cross (figs. 5 and 7) both include the image. Moone was founded in the sixth century, perhaps as a Columban foundation, although its

founding was not noted by annalists; Castledermot was built much later, in the year 812.²⁶ The scenes illustrated on the three crosses are similar, leading Henry to conclude they were created within a few years of one another.²⁷ The closely situated Castledermot crosses are thought to have defined the boundary of the monastery's sanctuary, and consensus is they were erected soon after completion of the monastic complex.²⁸ No evidence for these circumstances exists, either for their function or dating, but I would agree that the three granite crosses at Moone and Castledermot were erected in the first half of the ninth century. Certainly, the Castledermot crosses are no earlier than the 812 date for the institution's founding, and the similarity of their choice of scenes with the those on the Moone cross, together so different from scenes depicted on the crosses at Kells (fig. 1), Monasterboice (fig. 9) and the other leading monasteries, such as Clonmacnois, suggests a sympathy of purpose and temporal relationship. Also, if Moone was a Columban monastery, it makes sense that its administrators would feel a relation of purpose with Castledermot, the latter having been founded by a member of the Céli Dé. As I describe in Chapter Five of this essay, the two foundations shared a strong and fairly novel political position on the choice of an expressly Christian high king of Ireland, and on having the church direct an ordination ceremony for this office, the highest among numerous lesser provincial kings.²⁹

The remaining crosses in this group, at Kells and Monasterboice, are thought by some to have been carved by the same person or "school" of sculptors, who wrought the images from stone here and at Clonmacnois, located further to the south (fig. 14).³⁰ The monasteries of Kells and Monasterboice were almost as closely situated as those at Moone and Castledermot, and a small group of sculptors working in both areas is conceivable. Again, no certain dates exist for the Kells and Monasterboice crosses, but there is some

evidence orbiting around the crosses, from which points lines are drawn by scholars. The Columban-based Kells foundation was given as a land grant upon the Viking attacks on its mother house on the Scottish island of Iona, and some time in the first decade of the ninth century construction began. The Annals of Ulster states, rather enigmatically, that in the year 804, Kells was “given without battle to the melodious Colum Cille this year.”³¹ Dates assigned by the annals are notoriously imprecise, often followed by a corrected year in the writings of historians, so that an adjustment of a year or two might better reflect fact in this case. In any event, Monasterboice, like Kells, has numerous crosses, and one of the Monasterboice crosses has an inscription that runs behind an image of cats, near its base (fig. 15).³² This cross, appropriately called Muiredach’s for the name inscribed there, has inspired numerous treatises arguing for one abbot Muiredach or another. Most believe it is the more illustrious of the two abbots by that name, Muiredach, son of Domhnall, abbot of Monasterboice from 890-923 and also vice-abbot of Armagh, as well as High Steward of the illustrious clan of the Southern O’Neills, and, according to the Annals of Ulster, “head of counsel of all the men of Bregia.”³³ If created under his patronage, the cross would probably be dated 920 or slightly earlier. On the other hand, as Henry points out, since the nineteenth century, scholars have fallen into the “perhaps snobbish habit of choosing the second as the patron of the cross,” when the Muiredach mentioned might have been an earlier abbot of Monasterboice, who died in the 840s.³⁴ But it need not be one or the other, for, as Roger Stalley points out when he states, “absolute certainty is not possible, for Muiredach is a common name and the inscription is an afterthought, engraved around a pair of cats.”³⁵ For some scholars, the later patron’s identity is confirmed by an even more troubled inscription that appears on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois, a monument that is stylistically

related to Muiredach's Cross in its fine, precise carving (perhaps partly a function of preservation). All of this does relate to the *Temptation* images, in that another cross at Monasterboice, the Tall Cross, not only has a *Temptation* image, but one that has been moved from the shaft, in which position it appears on the three earlier Moone and Castledermot crosses, to a higher and more conspicuous position on a cross arm. The tallest of the crosses at over twenty-one feet, the relationship of the Monasterboice Tall Cross to its closely situated neighbor, Muiredach's Cross, is unquestioned in terms of dating. Also, these dated pairs are then compared with the Market Cross at Kells, where the *Temptation* image is also moved up to a cross arm, and which also has carving of a detailed character. The group, then, despite the early construction of the Kells monastery, is generally given as the later ninth or early tenth century, based on the two inscriptions at Monasterboice and Clonmacnois and the assumed relationships among the four crosses. I place the creation of the Kells Market Cross and Monasterboice Tall Cross around the turn of the tenth century.

As to the function of the crosses, solid evidence for them as apotropaic devices is lacking, whereas more generalized literary evidence for crosses does exist. Ann Hamlin relied upon the annals, hagiography, liturgical material, ecclesiastical legislation and poetry. A brief list includes the following: monastery boundary markers, roadside landmarks, burial sites, and commemoration of events involving saints. Hamlin says the first specific reference to a market cross appears in an annal entry for the year 1275, but that crosses may have been used as "places for sealing bargains" long before that time. She points out, as demonstrated in this essay by the descriptors used for the crosses, that many were apparently not named. She states further that the term used today, "high cross," derives not only from their stature, but also from a comparative term found in contemporary annals: "I suspect that the 'high

cross' referred to at Clonmacnois in 957 in the annals of the Four Masters was a tall cross, so designated to distinguish it from other, less tall crosses."³⁶

As to the monastic environment assumed by some scholars to provide explanation for an image of a saint's temptation, the circumstances described by Flower might be described as an ideal in the ninth and early tenth centuries, rather than an accurate picture of a real situation. The Céli Dé was established in Ireland during that era as a movement seeking greater devotion in monastic practice. One could argue the movement was responding to a perceived need for reform, which would counter the picture Flower creates. What's more, the Céli Dé did not necessarily hide in solitary seclusion, but among its ranks were important political commentators who addressed the issue of establishing a Christian kingship, outlined above, through "exhortatory poems," according to historian Francis Byrne.³⁷ As I explain in a subsequent chapter, members of this group acted on the political stage, as well, serving as mediators in a significant clan dispute.

The truth is the ninth century on the Irish monastic front was anything but calm, secluded or even particularly devotional in its orientation, at least in the areas in which the monasteries with the *Temptation* image on crosses are situated. As I explain at length in Chapter Five, monasteries were at the heart of land battles and political alliances; their administrators were members of ruling dynasties whose placement in office was not infrequently the result of murder or kidnapping; personnel engaged in battles with competing monasteries. They were under attack not only by rival clans, but by Vikings and native marauders. And the monasteries were not necessarily dominated by monks in orders; many Irish monks were not in orders, and a large lay population, which sometimes included the abbot, lived and labored within their walls.³⁸ Given these circumstances, I posit there were

far more pressing concerns than temptations by phantoms to be pictured on the imposing and expensive public crosses.

In the following chapters, I offer another context for the images, one which allows the possibility of these figures as demonic, but only insofar as all enemies of the church were considered to be both pagan and demonic. I suggest the physiognomies of the animals were drawn from a pagan Celtic heritage that probably continued to influence beliefs and practices that held traditional sway over many Irish Christians. In Chapter One, I analyze the beasts and birds pictured on the crosses with reference to surviving pagan images and what is known about their presumed realms of spiritual influence. The iconography of the new image was brilliantly conceived, and Chapter Two looks at its roots in ancient art and the meanings attached to it through the ages. In the next chapter, I discuss demonology briefly and focus on the lore surrounding druids and their ideological connections with groups active in the ninth century. In Chapter Four I take a close look at the dress worn by each of the figures and the objects they carry, in an attempt to identify the status and position of both human and composite figures. And in Chapter Five, I bring together the clues and look at the images in their contexts, both in terms the scenes surrounding the *Temptation* and the implications of the geographical circle in which the five crosses appear, drawing deductions from the history and literature specific to that area. And in the Conclusion, I discuss the urgency for creating an entirely new image, and relationships between Irish monasticism and the church in the Isle of Man, where at least one similar image may have been created.

First, I turn back the pages of time, to discover what preceded Patrick's arrival in Ireland, which occurred some time during the first half of the fifth century.³⁹

Notes to Introduction

¹ Roger Stalley, "European Art and the Irish High Crosses," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 90C:5 (1990), 135-58.

² Arthur Kingsley, Porter, *The Crosses and Culture of Ireland* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1931; reprint 1971).

³ Crosses on the Isle of Man are accepted as featuring Scandinavian myths. But the Manx scenes are so clearly unlike anything appearing in the Bible that such attributions are not questioned, at least in terms of their pagan mythical sources. Presumably, because the Irish iconography is, with the exception of the image discussed in this essay, comprised of humans engaging in human interactions, their themes are considered to be securely fastened to the worlds of the Bible and saints' hagiography. For information on the Manx cross themes, see P. M. C. Kermode, *Manx Crosses, or The Inscribed and Sculptured Monuments of the Isle of Man from about the End of the Fifth to the Beginning of the Thirteenth Century* (London: Bemrose & Sons, 1907). For a critical analysis of many of the long-abiding theories about Manx sources, see Sue Margeson, "On the iconography of the Manx crosses," in *The Viking Age in the Isle of Man. Select papers from The Ninth Viking Congress, Isle of Man, 4-14 July, 1981*, ed. Christine Fell, Peter Foote, James Graham-Campbell and Robert Thompson. (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1983), 95-106.

⁴ The image of the full cross, present south face, is a photograph by Dr. Dorothy Verkerk. The detail of the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* from the Kells Market Cross is reproduced from Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland. An Iconographical and Photographic Survey*, 3 vols. (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1992), III, fig. 949. The Kells cross must have stood at least twelve or thirteen feet high before it was damaged. It is not known when it was broken; Helen Roe suggests the possibility of it being "a victim of an iconoclastic fury of the religious factions" of the seventeenth century. In 1688, it was re-erected, as recorded in an inscription on the present west shaft, which required defacing and cutting back the original sculpture there. The inscription reads: THIS CROSS WAS ERECTED (AT) THE CHARGE OF ROBERT (BA)LFE OF GALL IRSTOWNE ES (Q) (BEI)NG SOVERAI(GN)E OF THE CORPORATION OF KELLIS. ANNOS DOMI 1688. The plinth on which it is mounted is dated 1893. See Helen Roe, *The High Crosses of Kells* (Dublin: Meath Archaeological and Historical Society, 1988), 26 and 35.

⁵ The two faces of the Moone Abbey Cross are reproduced from Harbison, II, figs. 516-517. The detail of the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* is Harbison's, III, fig. 950.

⁶ Castledermot North Cross, west and north faces, appears in Harbison, II, figs. 516 and 517. The *Temptation* image is a detail of fig. 516. Castledermot South Cross, west and south faces, is reproduced from Harbison, II, figs. 103 and 104, and the *Temptation* image is a detail of his fig. 104.

⁷ The Monasterboice Tall Cross, east face, is a photograph by Dr. Dorothy Verkerk. The *Temptation* image is from Harbison, III, fig. 950.

⁸ Porter, 81-84.

⁹ Athanasius. *Life of Saint Anthony*. In *Select Works and Letters*, vol. 4, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Reproduced in *Medieval Sourcebook Online*. <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/vita-antony.html>>.

¹⁰ Carola Hicks, *Animals in Early Medieval Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993). Other authors who rely on Porter's attribution are discussed in this chapter. That is not to say everyone agrees with Porter. Bettina Brandt-Förster sees another theme, that of a man torn between moral forces, which she relates to Persian myth and most particularly, Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophical theory of a figure called Ahriman. See Bettina Brandt-Förster, *Das Irische Hochkreuz. Ursprung, Entwicklung, Gestalt* (Stuttgart: Urachhaus, 1978), 87-90. Also, Helen Roe suggested two different theories. In 1945 she suggested the scenes represented pagans dressed in masks to enact rituals or ceremonies, "viewed with disapproval by the Christian church." Helen Roe, "An Interpretation of Certain Symbolic Sculptures of Early Christian Ireland," *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 75 (1945), 1-23; this on pp 18-19. And in 1959, she expressly states disagreement with Porter, stating "I prefer to describe this as an illustration of the Deadly Sin of Avarice," which she compares with Romanesque sculptures (of later dating, of course) that depict a "Miser or Usurer in the grip of demons who carry him off to Hell." Roe, *The High Crosses of Kells*, 31.

¹¹ For Columbanus's history, which resulted in his being called before a synod in the first decade of the seventh century, see Phillip Schaff, "Columbanus and the Irish Missionaries on the Continent," in *History of the Christian Church, IV: Medieval Christianity, A.D. 590-1073 Online*: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/hcc4.html>>. Saint Patrick and Columba are discussed by Whitley Stokes, who says the Irish monk Finnchu slept with corpses and suspended himself on sickles inserted into his armpits; Ultan kept a stone in his mouth during the whole of lent, and Ciarán mixed his bread with sand. More typical are the long fasts described repeatedly in hagiographical literature, or the tales of saints standing long hours in the icy ocean while praying. For example, Columcille taught his monks that fasting would help ward off demon attacks. Whitley Stokes, trans. and ed., *Tripartite Life of Patrick, with other documents relating to that Saint*, 2 vols. (London: Published by the authority of the Lords commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, 1887, I, cxcv. See also Bertram Colgrave, trans. *Two lives of Saint Cuthbert. A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940); Adomnán of Iona, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1995); and Ludwig Bieler, ed. and trans., *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979; reprint 2000).

¹² Robin Flower, "Irish High Crosses," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17 (1954), 87-97; this on pp. 91-2.

¹³ Kathleen Hughes remarks that “much of the hagiography probably represents continuity between Christian Ireland and the pagan past.” Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland. Introduction to the Sources* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1972), 245. John Carey says the *lorica* “evidently derive from references to the spiritual armor in the writing of Saint Paul (Ephesians 6:11-17, 1 Thessalonians 5:8),” and he concludes, “the *lorica* are protective prayers.” John Carey, *King of Mysteries: Early Irish Religious Writings* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 127.

¹⁴ Attributed to Cétnad N-Aíse, “A Chant of Long Life,” reproduced in Carey, 136-8.

¹⁵ Flower, 92.

¹⁶ Muirchú’s Life of Saint Patrick appears in Ludwig Bieler, ed and trans., *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh* (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979; reprint 2000), 62-122; this on p. 93.

¹⁷ Flower, 92.

¹⁸ John Moreland, “The World(s) of the Cross,” *World Archaeology* 31 (1999), 194-213; this on p. 194.

¹⁹ Françoise Henry, *Irish Art During the Viking Invasions, 800-1020 A.D.* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), 147.

²⁰ T. H. Mason, “The devil as depicted on Irish High Crosses,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 72 (1942), 131-35; this on pp.132-3. The passage from Matthew is quoted from the *Douay Reims Catholic Bible Online*: <<http://www.drbo.org/chapter/47025.htm>>.

²¹ See, for example, an article in a newspaper from Redding, California: Terry Mattingly, “Emily Rose is meant to be more than just a scary movie,” *Record Searchlight*, 3 September 2005, B-5.

²² The Ullard Cross detail is reproduced from Harbison, II fig. 644.

²³ The Kettins drawing is from J. Romilly Allen and Joseph Anderson, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland, with introduction by Isabel Henderson.*, 2 vols. (1903. Reprint. Balgavies, Angus: The Pinkfoot Press, 1993.

²⁴ The map is reproduced from Stalley, *Irish High Crosses*, fig. 1.

²⁵ Françoise Henry, *Irish Art During the Viking Invasions*, 147-8.

²⁶ F. M. Carroll, “Some Notes on the Abbey and Cross of Moone and Other Places in the Valley of the Griese,” *Journal of the Archaeological Society of County Kildare* 1 (1894), 284-295. He states that Moone was founded by Columba, and that the cross was probably

dedicated in Columba's memory. Carroll, 294. Carola Hicks says Moone *might* have been a Columban foundation; and other scholars largely ignore the issue of its foundation. Carola Hicks, *Animals in Early Medieval Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 235. She also states that Castledermot may have had links with Iona, the Columban mother institution. Peter Harbison lists the dimensions. Peter Harbison, *Irish High Crosses with the Figure Sculptures Explained* (Drogheda, Ireland: The Boyne Valley Honey Company, 1994), 95.

²⁷ Henry, *Irish Art During the Viking Invasions*, 147-8.

²⁸ Margaret Stokes claims they were sanctuary boundary markers. Margaret Stokes, "Celtic Crosses at Castledermot," *Journal of the Archaeological Society of the County Kildare* 1 (1894), 281-5; this on p. 281. The most factual treatise on the Castledermot crosses to date is Michael Herity's "The Context and Date of the High Crosses at Dísert Diarmada (Castledermot), Co. Kildare," in *Figures from the Past. Studies in Figurative Art in Christian Ireland. In Honour of Helen M. Roe*, ed. Etienne Rynne (Dun Laoghaire, Ireland: Glendale Press for the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1987), 111-30.

²⁹ Francis J. Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1973; reprint 2001), 158 and 162.

³⁰ Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois, west face, from Stalley, *Irish High Crosses*, Pl. 4.

³¹ The Annals of Ulster, *The Corpus of Electronic Texts Online*: <<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T100001A/index.html>>.

³² The photograph of Muiredach's cross at Monasterboice is reproduced from Stalley, *Irish High Crosses*, Photo 2, and the detail if from the same source, Pl. 18.

³³ R.A.S. Macalister, *Muiredach, Abbot of Monasterboice 890-923 A.D., His Life and Surroundings* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., Limited, 1914), 2.

³⁴ Françoise Henry, "Around an Inscription: the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois," in Françoise Henry, *Studies in Early Christian and Medieval Irish Art*, 3 vols. (London: The Pindar Press, 1985), III, 369-78; this on p. 371.

³⁵ Stalley, 38. For a good discussion of the problems of the Clonmacnois inscription, which is partly obliterated, and the many arguments for its text, see Henry, "Around and Inscription."

³⁶ Ann Hamlin, "Crosses in Early Ireland: The Evidence from Written Sources," in *Ireland and Insular Art, A.D. 500-1200*, Michael Ryan, ed. (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1985), 138-140. The passage she cites is this: "The Termon of Ciarain was burned this year, from the High Cross to the Sinainn, both corn and mills." Entry M957.10, quoted from the *Annals of the Four Masters, The Corpus of Electronic Texts Online*: <<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T100005B/index.html>>.

³⁷ Byrne, 158.

³⁸ For more information about this topic of a lay population and lay abbot, see Chapter Five of this essay. Kathleen Hughes is one scholar who discusses this topic in *Church and Society in Ireland, A.D. 400-1200* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987), 19 and 108.

³⁹ Patrick's dates are uncertain. Whitley Stokes says he probably died in 463. Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, cxlii.

CHAPTER I
THE ANIMALS SPEAK. BIRDS AND BEASTS AS DEITIES, DEMONS
AND DISCIPLES

Reporting on twelfth-century Ireland for King Henry II and an Oxford audience, Giraldus Cambrensis, or Gerald of Wales, was far from objective in his chronicle. Gerald, in his *History and Topography of Ireland*, negatively compares the Irish people to animals, revealing his ethnocentricity: “They are a wild and inhospitable people. They live on beasts only, and live like beasts. They have not progressed at all from the primitive habits of pastoral living.” That is, in Gerald’s view, they were not civilized, as the English thought themselves to be: they had not “progressed” from living in the fields and woods to occupy the “settlements and communities of citizens.”¹ As of the twelfth century, the Irish, unlike the Vikings in Dublin, had not yet built towns or cities, and to Gerald, this development, too, probably contributed to his impression of the Irish as a brutish nation, lacking civility.

As part of his account, crediting Irish informers and local annals for his information, Gerald relates a number of fabulous animal tales as if they were factual. For example, he tells of an anonymous saint’s curse that sterilized any goat grazing near St. Brigid’s ecclesiastical site.² Roosters, ravens, cows, goats and wolves are described as possessing different habits and characteristics in Ireland than their cousins exhibited in other

geographical regions.³ His most infamous tale, in which he describes a coronation ceremony involving the public mating of the new king with a white horse, has been erroneously reported as factual, even finding its way into Thomas Cahill's recently published book, *How the Irish Saved Civilization* (1996).⁴ While his opinion of the veracity of these tales is not revealed, I suspect either he was inferring that a people living so close to pagan nature evoked a sympathetic, almost demonic response from its wild inhabitants, or that he was relating the tales with tongue in cheek, casting the Irish as naive and uncultured, given the self-evident preposterousness of the accounts. Whatever his tone or intention, a saint cursing goats or, worse still, a king engaging in public bestiality could not have been favorable to God; perhaps such yarns helped justify the twelfth-century British-led invasions of Ireland.

As a backdrop for the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* images, in which the heads of animals and birds appear on men's bodies, such tales should be disregarded as products of Gerald's imagination rather than reflections of Irish attitudes toward beasts. In no way does his account of bestiality or his attribution of curses wrought on beasts enlighten a modern reader on the medieval Irish attitude toward animals, although he is quoted in modern accounts, such as Cahill's. Instead of relying on this text, created after the period in which the crosses were sculpted, the following chapter focuses on other sources that assist our understanding of the early medieval Irish attitude toward animals—not the least of which are miraculous events that were spun around animals in saints' lives. These stories, in which the saints interact with and dominate animals assigned behavioral traits that are almost human, were part of a broader Christian hagiographical tradition, revealing God's intended purpose for humans to subdue and dominate the animal kingdom. These tales and other Christian-

driven motivations are offered in this essay as more nuanced understandings of the Irish attitude toward, and relationship with, the animal kingdom.

Animal imagery in medieval Ireland

Pictured on the crosses are many renditions of animals, both natural and imaginary. On several cross bases, hunting or processional scenes include a variety of beasts, both domestic and wild.⁵ Higher on some crosses, placed on the shaft or head, medieval stone carvers fashioned fantastic creatures and imaginative species. Some were drawn from Christian bestiaries (see Appendix A for information on the bestiary), such as the human-headed Manticora on a cross fragment found at the Moone Abbey and another bestiary-derived creature on the Tibberaghny Stone.⁶ But generally, as art scholar Helen Roe observes, subjects drawn from the *Bestiary* are rare on Irish crosses.⁷

Unusual animal imagery on the high crosses drew Roe's comments, which are often insightful. On the base of a cross located in the Leinster-Munster area, the same area in which crosses with *Temptation* scenes are found, Roe draws attention to an enigmatic image of a man pictured with various animals that she says has been misidentified as *Adam Naming the Animals in Paradise*. She points to the tunic that "Adam" would not have been wearing in Paradise, and she notes that the animals are not species common to biblical lore, but those found on textiles of Persian and Middle Eastern origin.⁸ A few beasts on other crosses defy description: Roe describes one cross head at Killamery, where a "freakish creature...a goggle-eyed, shaggy little monster...seemingly cleft from head to tale" is depicted.⁹ On the Moone Cross, a lizardlike creature mysteriously extends its limbs in a protective gesture over the head of a crucified (or risen) Christ (fig. 16).¹⁰ A similarly self-encircling reptile appears as one of two circular motifs separating the *Temptation* image on the Kells Market Cross arm

from a depiction of Daniel with four lions on the adjacent cross head (figs. 17 and 18).¹¹

Also on the Moone Cross north face, just below the *Temptation* scene on the base, is a six-legged beast with two heads that face in opposite directions, and it apparently sprouts four more long-necked serpent-like creatures (fig. 19).¹²

Besides these fantastic or, to us, inexplicable creatures, on the same Moone Cross are naturalistic renditions of animals, remarkable for their placement on the shaft, where other crosses feature biblical scenes (fig. 20).¹³ Here one finds images of a stag, a fox or canine-like creature with curled tail, a bull readying for the charge, and perhaps an elephant with winding trunk at the top of the shaft. Each animal “portrait” is framed and isolated from the others, towering over the Crucifixion, other biblical narrative scenes and the *Temptation* image placed lower, near or on the base—perhaps the nineteenth-century reassembly of scattered segments of this cross was in error, and the animals on the shaft related to a lost base, since it is rare on Irish crosses for animals to be given prominence over Christ.¹⁴ At the same time, other monuments found in the Moone Abbey vicinity reveal a similar focus on zoomorphic creatures, both natural and fantastic.¹⁵

Perhaps the strange monsters surviving on crosses were linked in Irish minds to the wild beasts haunting the forests and threatening pilgrims and other travelers, described by Lisa Bitel as real concerns.¹⁶ But these explanations do not unravel the mystery behind the strange appearance of unearthly, animal-headed human figures pictured in the *Temptation* images. These are not fierce, like the shaggy creature with bared teeth described by Roe, and they do not turn in on themselves, as the lizard does over Christ’s head; rather, they stand calmly, without vigorous movement that might characterize animal behavior.

One of the reasons that scholars seek a strictly Christian literary source for the scenes identified as the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* is that Patrick's fifth-century mission to Ireland had taken place three hundred years before the earliest crosses under discussion were erected in about 800-850 C.E. But lingering paganism is certainly possible, if only in diluted forms and mixed with Christian beliefs. In the single surviving text from the Irish Mass, the Stowe Missal of c. 800, the First Memento §2.6, includes a petition that "the founder of the church" be converted from idols.¹⁷ Since pagan-animal-related ceremonies continued into ninth-century Gaul that aroused church condemnation, it would seem significant that the composite *Temptation* creatures bear the features of birds and animals central to Celtic paganism. (For an explanation of what I mean by "Celtic," please refer to Appendix 3 on Celtic history.)¹⁸

Pagan imagery in Christian lands

In Carola Hicks's 1993 book on animals in medieval art, which emphasizes Insular contexts, she states that Christian-era stone carvings of animals carry "pagan echoes" that "might imply that local stonemasons were carrying over their traditional techniques from pagan to Christian subjects."¹⁹ She explains that Celtic animal images had been carved in stone and wood, and that these undoubtedly appeared at pagan sites later consecrated to Christianity.²⁰

Hicks states that crosses created in the Viking-settled areas of the Isle of Man and England include images from pagan Nordic mythology positioned alongside Christian narrative scenes.²¹ In Sweden and Norway, scenes with animal imagery drawn from mythological tales "survived in the continuing pagan contexts of the rune stones...as a part of the heroic background of the dead warriors commemorated...."²²

“If these Scandinavian mythological references had been discredited by the conversion to Christianity,” she reasons, “they would not have been included [on crosses].”²³ Her conclusion is that pagan-derived imagery must have been used by Christian emissaries to the Vikings to “reconcile...different beliefs” among the newly converted inhabitants of the British Isles.²⁴ She concludes, “In these ways the church established subversive control over the invaders: those who had looted and destroyed the monasteries came to worship at, and be commemorated by, monuments decorated with a monastically determined range of subjects.”²⁵

In Gotland, Scandinavia, bird- and animal-headed men are common artistic motives.²⁶ One of the Torslunda plaques from Gotland illustrates men with animal heads (fig. 21),²⁷ as do the fourth-century Gallehus horns (fig. 22).²⁸

While the Vikings were in Ireland by the early ninth century, perhaps bringing such imagery with them, closer to Ireland geographically are animal-headed beasts on Scottish slabs and stones.²⁹ One stone discovered face-down in the mud on the Shetland mainland in 1992 is less worn than some of the Irish images. Called the Mail stone, it has an animal-headed human figure shown in profile, who carries axe in one hand and either a club or sword in the other, and is dressed a belted, knee-length tunic. The figure has a flattened snout, jagged triangular teeth, and what looks like long hair jutting forward from his hairline to reach his jaw. Val Turner, who first published information about the stone, makes comparisons with the Franks Casket of ca. 700, on which a figure with a horse’s head appears. Using this comparison, she dates the Mail stone to the seventh century, rather unconvincingly when compared with the later-dated Irish *Temptation* images, which she largely ignores in the essay.³⁰

Two important comparisons are made by Turner. The first is linking the image with one found on the Franks Casket, specifically a panel originally placed at the end of this small whalebone box from England.³¹ While many scholars have formulated theories to explain the horse-headed figure depicted there, it is generally thought to illustrate a scene from Scandinavian mythology. The box is also decorated with Christian stories and Roman history and legend, demonstrating a mix of pagan and Christian scenes.³²

The second significant fact related to the Mail stone is that animal-headed figures carved on Scottish stones generally wield an axe or adze, just as this figure does. Comparison may be made with a bird-headed figure on a stone found at Rossie, Scotland, and a bird-headed pair appearing on the Papil stone in the Shetland Islands (fig. 23), who wield two different types of axe.³³ While the Scottish animal-headed human figures may be related to the Irish *Temptation* figures, the standard Scottish iconography of the axe is missing from the Irish images, and perhaps this feature was significant to determining the characters' identity or social role.³⁴

Before moving on, I refer again to one extant image outside Ireland that apparently shares all the features of a *Temptation* scene: it appears on a much-weathered stone in Kettins, on the Isle of Man. Here, according to a drawing published of the image's contours, since the stone's carving was too weathered to be distinguishable in a photograph (fig. 12), one sees the contours of dressed, animal-headed profile figures with muzzles positioned alongside the ears of a forward-facing figure.³⁵ The animals' species are indistinguishable, although one has two ears or perhaps curved horns, similar to Irish versions. Because a drawing can be an unreliable archaeological record and the stone is not described as

originally part of a cross, I chose, for now, to disregard this possible appearance of a *Temptation* scene on a Manx monument.

The Christian kingdom: man over the animals

While Christian writers rarely refer to specific pagan practices or deities, they were surely aware of the reverence given animals in nature-based spirituality. Whereas in pagan religion animals might be divine or at least honored for physical qualities, such as keen vision or fierce aggressiveness, and powerful shamans or priests could communicate with the animal kingdom to engage such power, in the Christian scheme, a hierarchy existed among God's creations, and at the top of the sentient beings stood man. Validation for humankind's dominion over the animals was found in the first book of the Bible. Genesis 1:26 sets the tone for the Christian concept of man's relationship to birds and beasts:

And He said: Let us make man to our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth.³⁶

An apocryphal life of Adam and Eve from the early centuries of the Christian era suggests that, before the original sin in the Garden of Eden, the beasts of the world posed no threat to humankind. In this text, God makes it clear that beasts became ferocious due to human sin. God says to Adam after the Fall: "The beasts, over whom thou didst rule, shall rise up in rebellion against thee, for thou hast not kept my commandment."³⁷ In another version, it is the serpent who informs Eve, "Earlier I had no power over you, but after you broke the Lord's command we became bold and had power over you."³⁸ So the physical power animals wield over man was considered to be the result of evil, one could say demonic influence, worming its way into Paradise.

A text of the same period, the *Book of Jubilees* or "Little Genesis," states, "And on

that day was closed the mouth of all the beasts, and of cattle, and of the birds, and of whatever walks, and of whatever moves, so that they could no longer speak: for they had all spoken with one another with one lip and one tongue.”³⁹ Human disobedience of God’s law interrupted paradisiacal inter-species communication, and any transmission that took place after that act must have represented not only aberration, but an attempt to defy God’s judgment. Easy communication between the animal and human kingdoms, which characterized the relationship between pagan seers and their prophetic birds, could only be interpreted by Christians as demonically influenced. A different circumstance applied to the case of saints, whose obedience to the Lord granted them special power to speak directly to beasts, as I discuss later in this chapter.

In the early fifth century, Augustine, whose writings became widely influential among later Christians, was horrified by the invasion of Rome in 410 C.E. by Alaric the Barbarian, and Augustine wrote a text called *The City of God*, in which he addressed pagan “superstitions.”⁴⁰ He takes up the Genesis passage a number of times, iterating that man was granted Godlike status over animals: “The sin was a despising of the authority of God—who had created man; who had made him in His own image; who had set him above the other animals...”⁴¹ He also quotes from the New Testament book of Romans, 1:21-23—which one could view as weaving Northern pagan beliefs in place of those of the Middle Eastern religions to which Augustine probably referred—to lend authority to a critique of Classical philosophy: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of corruptible man, and of birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things...”⁴² Humans possess gifts greater than all the superior sense organs of beasts that man traditionally held in high esteem, and these gifts are

reason and understanding. Because of these, “We should learn to despise the bodily excellence of the demons,” by which he refers to pagan animal deities, which he expressly calls demons. We must, instead, according to Augustine, turn our focus toward the soul and the inner life.

One needs only comprehend the Christian view espoused by Saint Augustine to understand the response of Gerald’s audience to his characterization of the Irish as living “on beasts...[and] like beasts,” an uncivilized pastoral people who had “been accustomed to lead [life] in the woods and countryside.”⁴³ The Augustinian ideal amounted to a virtual anti-nature movement that sprang from the patriarch’s words, “Go not out of doors...Return into thyself. In the inner man dwells the truth.”⁴⁴ The Irish populace did not follow that advice.

I now turn to the specific ornithological and zoological features found on the heads of the human-animal composite figures in the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* images carved on the crosses at Moone, Monasterboice, Kells and the two at Castledermot. After identifying the species suggested by the features, I will report from literary sources attesting to Irish lore regarding the particular birds and animals identified on the stone monuments, and compare these with Christian writings about those creatures.

The bird and animal features depicted on the crosses

Reading the descriptions offered by various twentieth-century scholars reporting on the scenes identified as *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, one can draw no definite conclusions about which animals and birds are pictured. Disagreement among authors is not surprising, given the condition of the carvings after more than a thousand years of standing outdoors in harsh weather.

On the Moone Cross, Peter Harbison identifies two “goat-like” creatures (fig. 4).⁴⁵ Arthur Kingsley Porter, on the other hand, sees one bird and one goat.⁴⁶ Helen Roe, speaking collectively about all the Irish *Temptation* images, states that among the various animals represented are goats or rams, swine and birds; the figure on the right side of the Moone Cross image, she observes, seems to have a chin comb and beak, making it a hen or cockerel, an assessment with which I agree.⁴⁷ F. M. Carroll describes the two Moone animals as “goats or sheep.”⁴⁸ My direct observation of the crosses led to my conclusion that the animal on the left may have either horns or floppy ears, and it has a beard.

The descriptions of the Monasterboice figures are similarly varied (fig. 10); Carola Hicks describes goat- and cock-headed figures.⁴⁹ Porter sees a goat on the right, and the left figure suggests to him a bull “with ears or horns tipped forward.”⁵⁰ In my enhanced version of the image (fig. 62), on which I have emphasized lines to highlight areas of relief and indentation, the outlines of the left figure’s face suggest either a pig’s snout or possibly a bovine muzzle. His companion on the opposite side has an ear placed in front of a curving horn and a beard, which suggests a goat. But it has a distinctly flattened snout, ubiquitous among pagan boar representations, such as the two bronze boars from Hounslow, England, (fig. 24) which, like this animal, often lack tusks.⁵¹

Similar confusion surrounds the identification of beasts’ heads on other crosses. Harbison sees on the Castledermot South Cross “long-snouted animal heads” (fig. 8).⁵² The right-side figure has ears that appear to fall forward, and together with its snout, the animal has a canine appearance. Porter sees a goat, describing a horn and “possibly a beard.”⁵³ The corresponding figure on the right side of the Castledermot North Cross could be a more pug-nosed dog, but viewed *in situ*, it also has a chin beard (fig 6).⁵⁴ Porter describes it with ear,

horn, beard and snout-like muzzle, concluding, “its general character is very like that of the Moone Abbey figure,” which he describes as both birdlike and goatlike, “and we are left in much the same doubt as to what animal is intended.”⁵⁵ When looking at the photograph of the Castledermot South Cross image reproduced in Porter’s book (fig. 25),⁵⁶ an early record made before pollution decayed it further, both ear and horn do seem evident. So many similarities exist between the two Castledermot Cross images—the composition, the postures of the figures and the objects each carries (discussed in Chapter Four), the representation of birds on the left and snouted animals on the right—that one might expect to find analogous creatures, and so one might conclude that both originally sported beards, horns and snouts.

While the left-side figures of the Castledermot North and South Crosses have birdlike profiles, both also have some unusual features. The Castledermot South Cross figure is particularly odd looking (fig. 8). Its beak is anatomically strange, with rounded edges defining its extremity and a wide area of deep shadow in the center; and, are those head feathers positioned at its crown? Its eye seems set far back on its cranium and is shaped like a human or canine eye, with an iris in an almond-shaped lid. In the photograph, one could imagine this creature as a bird looking up and away from the central figure, and the “beak” would become softly rounded ears; but viewed *in situ*, I concluded that it clearly faces the central figure, and that it was simply given a remarkable beak. The North Cross figure has a more regular beak, but again, are those feathers encircling its neck, and standing almost aggressively erect on its chin and head?

On the Kells Market Cross (fig. 2), Porter sees a goat’s head on the right, although the left figure “seems much more like...a man than...an animal.”⁵⁷ Harbison says only, “The figure on the right certainly has an animal head, but the nature of the head of the figure on the

left cannot be made out clearly.”⁵⁸ I do not see human features on the left-side figure, but a long, flattened protrusion suggesting a waterbird’s bill, perhaps that of a goose or duck.

Summarizing the different opinions on the creatures represented on the crosses, scholars identify birds, which Roe specifies as a hen or cockerel, to which I would add a goose or duck, and perhaps a short-beaked raptor is depicted on the Castledermot North Cross, while the longer beak of the South Cross creature might suggest a waterfowl’s bill. The quadrupeds mentioned include the features of swine, bovines, goats and perhaps dogs. No two scholars agree on the species in all cases. But is it important to correctly identify these animals to determine their relationship to pagan lore? As Miranda Green explains with reference to a horse’s face suggested by a few simple lines (fig. 26),⁵⁹ Celtic artists tended to be more preoccupied with an animal’s “essence” than with naturalistic depictions of all of its features. A summary feature, such as the horse’s long face, was deemed characteristic enough to suggest the species.

Perhaps inattentiveness to naturalistic features is also true for the craftsmen who carved the Irish crosses. Also, a tendency to combine features from different animals and merge them into one creature is found in the Book of Kells of ca. 800. For example, note the specimen with visible ear, horn, snout, wings, birdlike legs and hooves on folio 1v (fig. 27).⁶⁰

Rather than argue for single, identifiable species, I suggest an ideological motive for combining the features of more than one animal into a single image. Irish medieval artists may have intentionally continued trends found in pagan Celtic iconography, where attributes of one species often combine with another. Horns and hooves are joined with human bodies,⁶¹ and almost any species might be given horns, as I discuss below.

Another artistic approach might also have been followed: in some examples of pre-Christian statuary, no specific species can be identified for an animal, such as the many masks created in bronze or the stone *Tarasque of Noves*, a monster who rests his paws on human heads and holds a human limb in its mouth (fig. 28).⁶² Monastic patrons and artists may have intentionally drawn upon pagan precursors to form creatures recognizable to an audience familiar with a local traditional art. To alter slightly Carola Hicks's proposal, then, that masons may have carried on local iconographical traditions for Christian patrons according to their training, instead, I suggest monastic patrons may have requested that animal representations found in pagan art and species significant to pagan lore be "Christianized" in contemporary artistic representations, where they assumed new narrative and symbolic roles.

Animals in Celtic pagan lore

Paganism, by definition, is a polytheistic belief system. Traditionally associated with elements drawn from the natural world, animals tended to play an important role in numerous, if not all, pagan cultures. Animal-headed human figures have an ancient lineage, the first known examples found in ancient Middle Eastern and Egyptian art (see Appendix 2). Scholars agree that it was from this heritage that church fathers derived the animal-headed images of three of the evangelists—John the eagle, Luke the calf, and Mark the lion.⁶³

The prehistoric Celtic period in Europe is dated roughly from the sixth through the first century B.C.E., depending on the area in question and the dates of Roman conquest.⁶⁴ About a dozen contemporaneous Greco-Roman writers on the Celts—including Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Julius Caesar and Athenaeus—based their reports not on direct observation, but largely on an earlier ethnological tract of Posidonius (135-51 B.C.E.).⁶⁵

Most of the authors focused attention on the druids—their social standing and education, principally—rather than on a description of the druids’ exact duties within Celtic society or broader explanations of Celtic pagan beliefs and rituals.

Some writers, such as Julius Caesar, did comment briefly on the Celtic pantheon. Caesar remarked that the god most favored by the Celts was Mercury, and that the Celts claimed descent from Dispater, a Roman name for the god of the Underworld.⁶⁶ As Miranda Green has aptly remarked, attempts to link archaeological evidence with any Gaulish god is difficult work. She suggests that a variety of Celtic gods bearing a funerary attribute, one of which was a raven (discussed below), may have supplied the basis for Caesar’s statement about the Roman god Dispater.⁶⁷ To complicate our understanding of a Celtic pantheon, one scholar enumerated almost three hundred Celtic gods mentioned in inscriptions. A likely conclusion is that the Gaulish tribes revered a large number of local deities across a broad geographical region that stretched from the Iberian peninsula to Britain and Ireland, and that some of these nature-based gods possessed qualities or attributes similar to Roman gods. Various amalgamations of tribal gods probably resulted in the assignation of single Roman identities, such as Dispater, to numerous Celtic deities.⁶⁸ Unfortunately, the only information remaining about these deities is drawn from Roman assumptions about Celtic spirituality, which they expressed in only cursory and vague reports.

Roman reports on Celtic spirituality are equally misleading with regard to the Celts’ attitudes toward animals. The numerous Celtic tribes had worshipped principally nature deities, and early sculptural representations, although occasionally human in form, more often possessed animal traits. Miranda Green contrasts the independent and supernatural aspect of animals in Celtic lore with Greek and Roman thought, in which gods

were “essentially suprahumans.” She concludes that when Greco-Roman gods did have animal companions, they were cast “in a clearly subordinate role,” as an aspect of the god’s mythology, rather than acting as links by which humans can reach the Otherworld, as evidenced in Irish vernacular literature.⁶⁹ Celtic beliefs and rituals involving animals must be hypothesized from evidence found at burials and inscriptions at sacred sites; the problem with the latter is that writing, for the Celts, postdates the Roman conquest.⁷⁰

Some record of pre-Christian Celtic belief about animals does appear in the Irish tales that include some scant information, although of dubious reliability, about a pagan past. These tales were committed to writing not by pagans, but by Christian monks.⁷¹ Whether or not the written stories are loyal to earlier oral-based versions is a hotly debated issue in recent scholarship. Would the monks have faithfully committed the pagan lore to writing, some scholars question incredulously, out of antiquarian interests? Or were the tales largely altered and used as “propaganda geared to contemporary social issues but using...figures from an ostensibly remote past to lend weight to the message,” as Irish historian Kim McCone argues.⁷² Aside from possible motivations behind the tales in their surviving form, passages do show credible evidence of the importance of natural phenomena, including animals, to the Irish pagan culture. Some of these instances are quoted below.

Tangible evidence

As Henry Maguire discusses in an essay on early medieval coins, monetary units, especially ancient ones, were perceived to possess magical significance,⁷³ a belief undoubtedly surviving from earlier eras. By the second century B.C.E., the Celts were striking coins and trading them throughout Europe. On these, animals, both natural and fantastic, appear far more often than the human form.⁷⁴ Among the birds depicted on coins,

the crane and the crow or raven—all birds with military associations—are most frequently pictured.⁷⁵

Much of the extant Celtic statuary is stone and dates from the Roman era. At the same time, Lucan mentioned wooden images in first-century Gaul, and about 140 wood carvings were found near the River Seine in the 1960s, which include both human and animal heads and figures, some over three feet tall.⁷⁶ In Patrick's *vitae* of unknown date and compiled in the tenth- or eleventh-century text, *The Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick*, the first bishop of Ireland frequently encountered "idols," but they are only summarily described. One image, named Cenn Cruaich, is called the "chief idol of Ireland," and described as covered with gold and silver (presumably stone underneath) and surrounded by twelve others covered in brass. A movement of Patrick's staff resulted in damage to the main image and the twelve images being buried up to their heads ("and they still stand thus," reports the anonymous author), while Patrick cursed the demon associated with the group and sent him into hell. The reference to "heads" suggests the images were some type of life form, human or animal.⁷⁷

Among the Roman-era artwork in Britain and the Continent, animals are significant: they appear as isolated figures, as companions to anthropomorphic gods, and features such as horns and hooves are joined with human bodies, as mentioned above. In some cases, animal forms adorn a helmet or shield (fig. 29), associating the animal represented with the warrior who wears, or bears, it in battle.⁷⁸

The animals and birds most often associated with Celtic spiritual beliefs and practices appear to be those represented by features given the composite figures pictured in the Irish *Temptation* images. I shall now discuss the individual species enumerated in the

descriptions of the cross scenes above, giving evidence of their importance to pagan Celtic cultures and followed by early medieval church writings on the same creatures.

As the crow flies and other birds of a feather

In a passage from the Irish pagan-era tale, *Táin Bó Cúalgne*, the storyteller alludes to associations made between extraordinary human qualities and birds:

Findabair of the fair Eyebrows, daughter of Ailell and of Maeve, went up, for she had a bird's sight, to her sunny parlour over the great door of the fort, to tell them what [who] was coming. "I see well...in the chariot a big stout man, with reddish yellow hair, with long forked beard. He has a soft purple coat about him, and it [is] striped with bright gold...a cover of strange birds' feathers over his head."

"I know well who that man is," said Maeve..."A companion of kings...a storm of war, a flame of judgment...mighty Laegaire of the Red Hand..."⁷⁹

The bird's eye was noted for its acuity, a metaphor for farsightedness even today.

The man seen from afar is recognized by his purple coat with gold threads and bird headdress, and the individual, the narrator relays, is known for his companionship to kings, his courage in war, and his astute judgment. The only societal position that meets these requirements is the druid, the king's poet and seer. Only the druid-poet, besides the royal family, had social standing meriting a costume of royal purple with gold, and he was the king's constant companion; druids also fought as warriors, and they were society's judges and arbiters. What is more, these prophets wore feathered headdresses on ceremonial occasions.⁸⁰

Druids, like other shamans, were associated with birds that assisted their prophecies, either through flight patterns that the seer "read" for signs, or, in the case of ravens, it might have been the birds' cawing that was interpreted, considered by some to mimic human speech.⁸¹ It was the raven, or crow, most frequently associated with Celtic druids or seers.⁸² Celtic respect for the crow dates back to at least Strabo's time (first century C.E.), when the

bird's habits were observed to help settle disputes.⁸³ The Irish belief in the prognosticating ability of crows endured, as indicated by a later medieval text on the usefulness of domesticated ravens to help prepare for unexpected events, such as visitor arrivals:

If the raven call from above an enclosed bed in the midst of the house, it is a distinguished grey-haired guest or clerics that are coming to you...If it be a lay cleric the raven says "bacach"; if it be a man in orders it says "gradh gradh" and twice in the day it calls. If it be warrior guests or satirists...it is "gracc gracc"...or "grob grob," and it calls in the quarter behind you...If women are coming it calls long. If it calls from the north-east end of the house, robbers are about to steal the horses....⁸⁴

On the Castledermot North Cross, the bird-headed figure on the left of the *Temptation* scene may represent a raven with a short beak (fig. 6). While the beak is not the characteristic long, straight bill of a raven, numerous examples of pagan statuary appear in which birds with short beaks are assumed by scholars to be ravens, such as the bronze figurine from Oxfordshire, England (fig. 30).⁸⁵

Crows appear on the shoulders of a man pictured on an English cross in the Viking settlement of Kirklevington (fig. 31).⁸⁶ Viking tales were, like those of the Irish, recorded after the pagan era, and a great deal of pagan material was pictured on stone crosses in the Viking-settled areas of the Isle of Man.⁸⁷ One might understand the Kirklevington figure as a seer with his bird companions, or perhaps the group illustrates stories of the Scandinavian hero Odin, who was brought daily tidings from throughout the land by two raven companions.⁸⁸ Like the Irish *Temptation* composite figures, the birds perch near his head and appear to speak into his ears.

In Celtic lore, the raven connoted not only fortune-telling, but also death, particularly in battle.⁸⁹ In Irish vernacular tales, war goddesses were accompanied by, or magically transformed into, crows or ravens; and the carrion-eating raven was associated

with war casualties.⁹⁰ The raven as a symbol of conquest is apparent on war helmets, such as the third-century B.C.E. headgear surmounted by a fearsome metal bird with movable wings, recovered from a Celtic burial in Romania (fig. 29). On the Celtic-created Gundestrup Cauldron, dated to around the first century B.C.E., a formation of warriors wear helmets with animal ornaments, one being a raven (fig. 32).⁹¹

Other birds significant to pagan tradition are the cockerel and the most common waterbirds: swans, ducks, and geese. Both a cockerel and a billed bird may stand among the other composite figures in *Temptation* images. The left-side figure on the Kells Market Cross has a long and narrow profile in the shape of a waterfowl's bill (fig. 2).

In Irish tales, the bird most often linked to magical power is the swan,⁹² an unlikely candidate for the left-hand figure of the Kells Market Cross, since the swan's long neck is usually an identifying feature—as seen on an Irish fleshhook of an Iron Age date displayed at the National Museum in Dublin, where the swans' necks and bills distinguish them from the ravens.⁹³ The Kells figure may have a duck's head, although ducks do not figure in extant Irish tales, and duck images are known only from a much earlier phase in Continental pagan Europe; we might conclude that the duck was not an important creature to Irish Celtic mythology.⁹⁴ More likely the head of the Kells Market figure represents goose. The goose, like the raven, was associated with war. The querulous bird bore an association with the Celtic cult of the head, perhaps because heads were important war trophies, as evident at a fourth-century B.C.E. Celtic site at Roquepertuse, France, where a portico with niches containing human skulls was surmounted by a sculpture of a watchful goose.⁹⁵ In later images, a Romano-Celtic version of Minerva in her war guise was frequently accompanied

by a goose; on a statue recovered from France, a goose, with a bill shaped similarly to that of the Kells Market Cross creature, was perched on her helmet (fig. 33).⁹⁶

To understand pagan associations with the cockerel who stands on the right side of the Moone Cross composition (fig. 4), I turn to Julius Caesar, who wrote a history of the Celts. While Caesar's history was written to glorify and exaggerate his military victories over the Celts at a time when he was seeking political office, his reports on bird lore would seem to be authentic, since they supported no self-aggrandizing agenda. Caesar did say something rather enlightening in this area: he suggested the Britons held the bird in high regard. He reported that Britons declined to eat both geese and chickens, suggesting the sanctity of each bird.⁹⁷

Cockerels were associated with the Romano-Celtic Mercury, as evidenced at a shrine to Mercury in Uley, England, where buried remains of chickens and goats, the god's traditional companions in Roman mythology, were uncovered.⁹⁸ Statues of Mercury were frequently depicted with a cockerel alongside him, as in a relief image from Gloucester, England.⁹⁹ Miranda Green speculates that the association between Mercury and the cockerel may relate to their shared roles as heralds: Mercury is messenger to the gods, and the cockerel announces the new day.¹⁰⁰

Other, perhaps more ancient Celtic deity images also included cockerels, as found on a triple-headed sculpture at Reims, which has both cockerel and ram emblems on it.¹⁰¹ In Insular Celtic contexts, the cockerel accompanies a British goddess figure found at Corstopitum, in Northumberland, who is graced by an altar with a bird perched on it, identified as a cock.¹⁰²

Valerie Flint offers a summary Christian view on divination, with a mention of the leading practices, including reliance on birds:

Common to the [Christian] antimagic legislation of the whole of our period, and to most of it a pressing concern, was divination...and energetic response to the invocations of the many types of diviner seems to have been a major activity of the pre- and non-Christian gods...Divination from the heavens took many forms. There was astrology, predictions from thunder and eclipses, from the flights and cries of birds...None of this could the early medieval church abide, for the mere mention of divinatory inquiry could call up a memory, or a present threat, of divinities and priestly invokers of a character most alarming to the new religion. It therefore attacked it wholesale.¹⁰³

Flint quotes Eligius (A.D. 588-660) in stating, "I detest above all things and I absolutely insist that no one give credence to sacrilegious pagan customs...Such wickedness will instantly deprive you of baptismal grace. Likewise, you may not look to signals...nor ask answers of the cries of birds when going on a journey. Instead...sign yourself in the name of Christ...and then nothing will be able to harm you...."¹⁰⁴ Martin of Braga (d. 579) put it this way: "God did not order man to know the future, but that he should always live in fear of Him and ask Him for guidance and help in his life. God alone possesses foreknowledge of events."¹⁰⁵ In other words, people should not look to animals for knowledge of the mysterious ways of the world, but pray only to God.

An exceptional regard for birds is also characterized in Irish harangues against divination. A poem attributed to Saint Columba includes the lines: "I do not adore the voices of birds/ Nor sneezing, nor lots in this world...My Druid is Christ, the Son of God...."¹⁰⁶ Whether or not Columba penned the verse, the oblique association made between birds and druids drives home the point: birds, when relied upon for divination, are demonic.

The raven's portrayal as a malevolent harbinger of death in the Irish tales probably reflected church attitudes toward pagan respect for the bird. The raven or crow became

associated in Christian writings with demons, and its jet black feathers were cast in contrast to the white dove of Christ.¹⁰⁷ In another source, Patrick was plagued by black birds after fasting for forty days and nights at a mountain in Cruachan. He first sang maledictive psalms at them, but finding this method of dissuasion ineffective, he rang his bell at them, then threw the bell, and finally broke down in tears. Without another mention of the birds, the passage follows with the statement: “No demon came to the land of Erin after that till the end of seven years and seven months and seven days and seven nights.” And, in the end, white birds surrounded him.¹⁰⁸ A legend of uncertain date surrounds a place known as Saint Patrick’s Purgatory on Lough Derg, where the saint was said to have transformed a demon into a great black bird named Cornu. Perhaps Cornu was the name of a local pagan deity, as Patrick’s transference of the sacred war bird into a demonic form fits neatly into the regular Irish Christian practice of assuming pagan sanctuaries and casting out “evil” forces in sanctifying the site.¹⁰⁹

Consider Pope Gregory’s seventh-century letter to abbot Mellitus of Britain, in which he prescribes assimilation of pagan sites rather than force:

...the idol temples of that race should by no means be destroyed, but only the idols in them. Take holy water and sprinkle it in these shrines, build altars and place relics in them. For if the shrines are well built, it is essential that they should be changed from the worship of devils to the service of the true God. When this people see that their shrines are not destroyed they will be able to banish error from their hearts and be more ready to come to the places they are familiar with, but now recognizing and worshipping the true God. And because they are in the habit of slaughtering much cattle as sacrifices to devils, some solemnity ought to be given them in exchange for this...Do not let them sacrifice animals to the devil, but let them slaughter animals for their own food to the praise of God...Thus while some outward rejoicings are preserved, they will be able more easily to share in inward rejoicings. It is doubtless impossible to cut out everything at once from their stubborn minds....¹¹⁰

Gregory clearly understood that a tolerant attitude was the most effective psychological

stance to assume when attempting to rechannel long-held and widely shared beliefs.

Belief in a malignant supernatural power that could be broken by the rooster's announcement of sunrise was a superstition that lasted well into the medieval era. Burchard, Bishop of Worms, wrote in the eleventh century:

Are you frightened to go out before dawn when you should, declaring the you should wait and not venture forth before cockcrow, because it is dangerous, for unclean spirits have more power to harm before cockcrow than after? And do you believe that the crowing of the cock can do more to repel and quiet these spirits than that divine power which is in man in his faith, and in the sign of the cross? If you do, then ten days' penance on bread and water.¹¹¹

I have argued that some birds in the Irish *Temptation* images may be ravens or waterfowl, although the visual evidence is inconclusive. The Castledermot South Cross left-side figure may have a rooster's comb on the top of its head (fig. 8), while the corresponding figure on the North Cross may have both comb and wattle (fig. 6). The Kells Market Cross left-side figure appears to have a long bill, like that of a waterbird, but there is a protrusion from its neck area, which could be intended as a wattle (fig. 2). The Moone Cross right-hand bird is certainly a chicken or rooster, as I concluded above (fig. 4).

The cockerel was not consistently viewed as evil, however. While Burchard of Worms did admonish against crediting the bird with the power to stave off evil, at the same time, the cock in medieval thinking was a complex symbol with both positive and negative associations. According to Colette Beaune, in a history of the cock as a French royal symbol, in antiquity, Pliny wrote about the bird as a symbol of ardent aggression in his *Natural History*.¹¹² This latter association influenced medieval thinkers, and the rooster's militant nature assume negative implications. In the fourth century, on the other hand, authors Prudentius and Ambrose advanced more positive rooster symbolism, with Prudentius linking the bird with Christ resurrected from the dead; in this role, the cock would announce the Last

Judgment. For Ambrose, it assumed the role of redirecting heretics to the path of faith.¹¹³ As a result of Gregory the Great's interpretation of the cock, rather than Jesus as the vanquisher of the lion of Judah in the Book of Apocalypse, it was concluded that the cock would represent the apostles and their successors, the saintly clerics who ignore their charnel desires and instead watch over and protect the Lord's faithful.¹¹⁴ According to this view, a more positive militant aspect was assigned to the bird.

Viewing each bird as a rooster, and considering the positive nature of the cock in some medieval writings, one conclusion would be that the cock standing on one side of the central figure is intended to represent a positive influence, one battling for influence over the negative horned being on the other side. The composition might be interpreted, then, as analogous with the battle between vice and virtue, an interpretation that unquestionably deals with temptation; this is the interpretation given the scene by Bettina Brandt-Förster.¹¹⁵ However, the absence of a bird of any kind in the Monasterboice Tall Cross image (fig. 10) would seem to negate such a reading, as positive associations cannot be made with any of the four-legged beasts suggested for the two figures: a goat, pig or bull. Also, the rooster-human is an aberration of nature that does not easily "read" as a benevolent figure. The bird, then, may very well be a rooster in each case rather than sometimes a raven or waterfowl, but only in the rooster's more negative aspect, as viewed by the church as a holdover from the pagan era, when the bird was considered to possess wisdom and power that only the Lord and his chosen representatives could exhibit.

The whispering muzzles of four-legged beasts

To review the mammal features identified on the crosses, they are: the flattened boar's snout on the right-side figure of the Monasterboice Tall Cross (fig. 10), which may

combine with a goat's horn and beard; the goat appearing opposite this creature on the Monasterboice Cross, and goats on the Moone Cross's left side (fig. 4), the right side of the Kells Market Cross (fig. 2) and possibly on the right side of the Castledermot South Cross (fig. 8); a bovine or a pig's snout also on the Monasterboice Tall Cross left-side figure; and what may be a dog's snout depicted on one or both of the Castledermot crosses' right-side figure (if the South Cross creature is a composite creature and not fully a goat, as Porter identified; the two are pictured in figs. 6 and 8).

All of these creatures are central to pagan lore. The boar or pig is one of the most significant, appearing in burials and represented iconographically as isolated statuettes, accompanying deities, shown with human figures in hunting scenes, and cast on coins and war regalia.¹¹⁶

In Irish tales, both mythical heroes Finn and Cú Chulainn hunt magic boar that draw them into the *sidh*, the subterranean realms where supernatural powers prevailed.¹¹⁷ The leading god of the Tuatha Da Danaan, called the Dagdha or the "good god," numbers among his assets an immortal pig.¹¹⁸ The Irish and Manx version of Neptune, the sea god known as Manannán, had a magic swine that reappeared after being eaten.¹¹⁹ Boars also appeared as the manifestations of human shape-shifting.¹²⁰ A statue from Haute-Marne, France shows a boar image superimposed on a man's (or god's) torso, perhaps indicating incorporation through either shapeshifting or ritual consumption (fig. 34).¹²¹

The boar is the warrior-related animal *par excellence*. It appears on the Celtic-created Gundestrup Cauldron as a helmet ornament (fig. 32),¹²² and a British war shield from the Iron Age is decorated with a stylized boar image.¹²³ In the *Táin Bó Cuáilnge*, the warrior hero Cú Chulainn refers to himself as a "wild boar of the herd."¹²⁴ A tale titled "Mac Dathó's

Pig” focuses on the so-called “hero’s portion” of a giant pig roasted for the enjoyment of feasting warriors, which was accorded to the leading hero of the day.¹²⁵ This story recalls the first-century B.C.E. observation of the Celts made by Diodorus Siculus, who reported that in celebratory feasts, “They honor the brave warriors with the choicest portion....”¹²⁶ Being granted the best portion of pork meat may have been a contest worth fighting over, due to the significance attached to eating a revered animal: in this case, perhaps the consumer would incorporate some of the animal’s aggressive and fearsome behavior.¹²⁷

Jacques Voisenet states that among all the domestic animals written about in the Christian era, the pig gained the most detestable reputation, begun in the classical world—perhaps, in part, as a response to its high status among barbarian tribes.¹²⁸ People were advised not to cast pearls before swine, not because pigs were ignorant of value, as we seem to interpret the saying today, but “lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turning upon you, they tear you.”¹²⁹ On the request of demons possessing two youths, Jesus cast the spirits into the bodies of swine (Matthew 8: 28-32). As Voisenet points out, however, the boar or pig retained a relatively positive aspect in Irish Christian literature, unlike its perceived impurity in the rest of the Christian world.¹³⁰

Given the importance of the pig and boar to pagan Celtic society, one might expect to find more representations of this animal on crosses, cast in a demonic role to correspond with temptations appearing in biblical and saints’ tales. Perhaps more boar images did once appear on crosses that have not survived. Or perhaps admiration for their various qualities was so lasting and widespread that the Irish church refrained from demonizing the beasts, as doing so might have seemed too confrontational. In this case, considering Kim McCone’s position on the vernacular tales written by monks as anti-pagan propaganda,¹³¹ using the boar

humorously or casting its inflated importance unceremoniously into stories might have proven a more prudent tactic. The self-destructive and raucous behavior of the warriors going to great lengths to win the hero's portion in "Mac Dathó's Pig" can be interpreted as satirizing the significance given to this tradition.

It is interesting to consider that in one *vita* of Saint Patrick, he labored as a swineherd before his escape from slavery and subsequent commitment to Christian missionary work. Certainly, his later pastoral role contrasts his existence as a swineherd, in which "it was meeter that Patrick should be a shepherd of sheep, that is, of the sons of life," but no demonic association is made with the first beasts he shepherded.¹³² In another tale, he needs a gold piece to purchase land, and finds it where pigs root.¹³³ The most negative Patrician tale regarding a wild boar shows it behaving as a wild beast. The boar ate a boy, and, called by the child's weeping parents, Patrick arrived and resurrected the child to life.¹³⁴

Finding a cow or bull on one of the *Temptation* images might also be expected, given the bovine's importance in Irish pre-Christian society.¹³⁵ As stated above, Porter thought the features on the left-side figure of the Monasterboice Tall cross resembles a bovine snout (fig. 10). The best-known among the Irish tales, the *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, concerns a battle fought over two magical bulls that had been metamorphosed into various animals through shapeshifting episodes, having even been human for a time before finally transforming into magnificent bulls.¹³⁶ Both cows and bulls have a presence in early Celtic burial sites, and bulls are presumed to have possessed magical qualities since they are frequently depicted in Continental Celtic statuary with three horns.¹³⁷ A ceremony was recorded in one of the ancient Irish tales in which a man drank bull's broth and slept in a bull's hide, while druids recited over his head, and to this man was revealed the identity of

the future king of Ireland.¹³⁸

Dogs, possibly represented on one or both of the Castledermot Crosses (figs. 6 and 8), were essential hunting companions and protectors.¹³⁹ They appear in sculpture as companions to several deities, were sculpted into votive offerings recovered from healing sites in Britain and on the Continent, and dog bones have been recovered from burials. As companion to the Gaulish Apollo, dog statuettes are thought to have served as intercessors for healing or hunting.¹⁴⁰ The dog was an identifying companion for a Celtic goddess, Nehalennia, revered by both Celtic and Roman seamen.¹⁴¹ In Britain, an important healing-dog cult was dedicated to a deity called Nodens, a god often represented iconographically with canine attributes.¹⁴²

A collection of stone carvings now in Armagh Cathedral in Ireland originally included three animals, although one was stolen in recent decades. Long identified as bears, Helen Lanigan Wood suggests they are more likely dogs, especially evident in a photograph of the stolen one who possessed a longer canine snout than those on the two remaining images, whose snouts look as though they may be broken (fig. 35).¹⁴³ Looking closely at the photograph, the animal on the left has another animal head carved in relief below its front leg, which looks like a dog. Wood argues that dogs were more common to Irish pagan culture than bears; in fact, bears are not known to have inhabited Ireland. The appearance of these statues near Patrick's Cathedral at Armagh is significant, suggesting the statuary from an earlier pagan site may have been reclaimed for Christian purposes.¹⁴⁴

Evidence of special reverence for dogs is apparent in the adoption of the Irish word for "dog" or "hound," in the Irish prefix *cu*, appearing often as names of Irish heroes. The most notable is Cú Chulainn, nicknamed for a dog belonging to a smith so named, and

translated as “Hound of Culann.”¹⁴⁵ In a later episode from the hero’s life, Cú Chulainn dies as a result of breaking a *geis* or taboo that prohibited him from eating dog flesh.¹⁴⁶

The above-mentioned tale of “Mac Dathó’s Pig” centers on two royals’ competition for a special dog, which suggests the animal’s value in pagan society:

...the hound defended the whole of Leinster...Messengers came from [King] Ailill and [Queen] Medb asking for the hound. Moreover, at the same time there came also messengers from [rival King] Conchobar Mac Nessa to ask for the same hound. [Ailill and Medb’s messengers said] “there shall be given three score hundred milch cows at once, and a chariot and two horses, the best in Connaught, and their equivalent gifts at the end of a year in addition to this” [in payment for the hound].

“We also have come from Conchobar to ask for it,” said the messengers from Ulster; “and Conchobar’s value as a friend is no less...and to give you treasure and cattle; and the same amount shall be given you at the end of a year, and close friendship will be the result.”¹⁴⁷

A king’s friendship and treasure were offered for possession of a single dog.

Archaeological evidence confirms that the Irish people ate dogs over the course of a several-hundred-year period, but that people in Britain did not.¹⁴⁸ One might question whether dog meat provided necessary nutrition or if physical assimilation of it as a sacred animal was considered beneficial in some way.¹⁴⁹ In Ireland, eating animal flesh certainly could have had magical implications. The prescription for a practice called *imbas forosnai*, said to be enacted by poets to gain inspiration or knowledge, is found in a tenth-century encyclopedic text called *Cormac’s Glossary*:

Imbas Forosni, 'Knowledge that enlightens,' i.e. it discovers everything which the poet likes and which he desires to manifest...The poet chews a piece of (the) flesh of a red pig, or of a dog or cat, and puts it afterwards on the flag behind the door, and pronounces an incantation on it, and offers it to idol-gods...and pronounces incantations on his two palms, and calls again unto him his idol-gods that his sleep may not be disturbed; and he lays his two palms on his two cheeks and he falls asleep; and he is watched in order that no one may interrupt nor disturb him till everything about which he is engaged is revealed to him....¹⁵⁰

According to Cormac's passage, Saint Patrick condemned the practice, "because it was renouncing baptism." While John Carey argues that Cormac imaginatively romanticized the pagan mantic aspects of *imbas forosnai*, and that *imbas* may have referred merely to poetic inspiration; at the same time, Carey demonstrates a widespread influence for Cormac's ideas, which may reflect general cultural beliefs or intellectual leanings prevalent at the time when the crosses were created.¹⁵¹

Goats are listed by every scholar describing the Irish *Temptation* images. Although goats were associated with the Celtic-Romano Mercury, and a few goat burials have been found in Britain and Continental Europe,¹⁵² goats do not appear to have been as significant in pagan Celtic culture as the other beasts and birds discussed.¹⁵³

The only Irish textual reference to a goat I have found, and significant to the topic of goat-headed humans, exists in a reference made by Arbois de Jubainville to a pseudo, mythologically-based history of Ireland found in the Book of Leinster (ca. 1100). In one passage it is said that an early race, called the Fomorians, generally perceived as evil and called demons by some authors, may have been described as men with goats' heads, depending on the translation of an obscure Old Irish term, *gobor-chind*.¹⁵⁴

The ram, perhaps represented by the curved horns of the Monasterboice Tall Cross right-side figure (fig. 10), had long been a sacrificial animal.¹⁵⁵ The ram connoted fertility in classical culture, and Hermes, the Greek precursor to Mercury, was sometimes pictured with a phallus terminating in rams' heads.¹⁵⁶ The Romano-Celtic Mercury, perhaps because of his association with the ram, often had horns, although they generally did not have the distinctive ram curved shape.¹⁵⁷ Strange, though, is the beardlike extension from the Monasterboice

figure's chin; rams do not have billy goat beards, a standard feature among the horned beasts found on the cross *Temptation* images.

Scholars may have identified goats for all the horned *Temptation* figures due to a preconceived notion: the goat's association with the classical god Pan has long been considered a precursor for satanic iconography. But as Debra Strickland points out, the hooved and horned image of Satan occurred only in the twelfth century, post-dating the Irish images.¹⁵⁸ It is possible that not all of the horned creatures pictured in these images were intended to be identified as goats. Note particularly the Kells Market Cross figure with long horns on the right side, but who lacks a beard and has a snout quite unlike those of goats. In pagan Celtic imagery, many creatures had horns, including birds, horses, humans, and even boars sometimes showed horns on top of their heads.¹⁵⁹ Among the most unlikely beasts to be assigned horns, a serpent with spiral-shaped ram horns, is one of the most frequently depicted Celtic beasts, appearing on more than thirty works in Gaul and Britain,¹⁶⁰ and repeated three times on the Gundestrup Cauldron, in one case held by a horned anthropomorphic god, often identified as the Celtic Cernunnos (fig. 36).¹⁶¹

Human-fashioned skullcaps adorned with antlers have been recovered from burial sites in Gaul and Britain.¹⁶² Perhaps the custom of endowing humans with horns inspired crowns and headdresses, such as the Petrie Crown, a first- or second-century C.E. bronze headdress recovered in Ireland, with one prominent, hornlike projection that may have originally been one of a pair. Three similarly-constructed horns recovered from Ireland's County Cork may have been created as adornments for a ceremonial headdress, according to Irish archaeologist, Barry Raftery.¹⁶³ Human-fashioned metal horns had long been attached to war helmets, as reported by Roman historian Diodorus Siculus, who said the projections

lent “the appearance of enormous stature to the wearer...”¹⁶⁴ Another of the metal plaques from Torslunda in Scandinavia demonstrates the broad geographical distribution of this type of headgear (fig. 37) and suggests it was common to Vikings, to whom the *Temptation* images may have referred.¹⁶⁵

A passage from the Irish hero tale, *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, suggests that battle gear fashioned into animal forms possessed magical properties:

He took his eight shields with his curved, dark-red shield into the boss of which a show-boar could fit, with its very sharp, razor-like, keen rim all around it which would cut a hair against the stream, so sharp and razor-like and keen it was. When the warrior did the “edge-feat” with it, he would cut alike with his shield or his spear or his sword. Then he put on his head his crested war-helmet of battle and strife and conflict, from which was uttered the shout of a hundred warriors with a long drawn-out cry from every corner and angle of it. For there used to cry from it alike goblins and sprites, spirits of the glen and demons of the air, before him and above him and around him, wherever he went, prophesying the shedding of the blood of warriors and champions...¹⁶⁶

The presence of horns on the heads of several *Temptation* images may relate to a long-lived respect for animal horns and the tradition of wearing horned headdresses by warriors and perhaps pagan priests, as suggested by one British archaeological find.¹⁶⁷ A ubiquitous horned god, named Cernunnos in one Roman-era inscription, is the most frequently depicted Celtic deity, suggesting its widespread and lasting influence, and a likely target for Christian anathema.¹⁶⁸

Christian assumption of animal power

Christian writers responded to animals in two essentially noncontiguous ways: one was to demonize animals that were most significant to pagans,¹⁶⁹ as demonstrated above, and the other was to demonstrate instances in which a Christian saint became a master over animals, respected by the animals and given evidence in demonstrations of humanlike

behaviors. Such demonstrations of domination and superhuman power drew from an ancient, traditional expression of hero dominance over the animal kingdom that I discuss in the next chapter.

The Christian assumption of pagan animal worship and belief that heroes, divinities and druids could harness animals' extraordinary qualities was blended with stories from Christ's life and folded into one literary expression: the saints' hagiographies. Most of the Irish saints' lives were preserved in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and may have contained earlier elements, while some, such as Adomnán's seventh-century *Vita Columbae*, were clearly written earlier.¹⁷⁰ Scholars of the medieval *vitae* have long acknowledged biblical references present in the compositions, while more recently, Carola Hicks and Miranda Green have pointed to pagan traces in these imaginative tales of animals serving and obeying saints.¹⁷¹

Preternatural interaction with beasts resides in classical tales of Orpheus, who calmed wild creatures with his music, lulling natural enemies into peaceful coexistence. Hicks points out that in the early medieval period there was a conceptual and iconographic blending of Orpheus lore into the biblical character of David, the psalmist-shepherd pictured with his harp, similarly quieting animals with his music.¹⁷²

The Christian saints immortalized in the Insular hagiographical tradition assumed roles also assigned to secular heroes. "Like oral poetry, hagiography is directed at an audience which knows the story being related," according to Celtic scholar Garrett Olsen.¹⁷³ William Short points out that the primary audience for Irish hagiography was a literate monastic community,¹⁷⁴ but he also points out that saints' lives were composed for use in the liturgy celebrated on saints' feast days to enlighten and entertain the lay population.¹⁷⁵

The Irish *vitae* abound with stories of animals behaving with deference to a holy man, usually a hermit living in a wilderness. Saint Ciarán of Saighir tames a wild boar that subsequently became his first disciple. Also, a fox, badger, wolf and stag behave toward the saint as disciples would, obeying his commands.¹⁷⁶ Saint Brigit was in almost continuous contact with both wild and domestic beasts who obeyed her command, including a flock of ducks tame enough for her to gently caress them.¹⁷⁷ Battling powers with a druid, Columba revived a dying bull in an instant.¹⁷⁸ C. Ferguson O'Meara enumerates several pagan animal and bird species present in the Life of Columba, pointing out that "Adamnán insists upon Columba's powers over [pagan] animal forces."¹⁷⁹

Patrick, shocked to find Irish people eating dog meat, which he considered sacrilege, resurrected the animal to the surprise of onlookers.¹⁸⁰ Several legends about Patrick and his special relationship with animals continued well into the twentieth century, including one recounted with slightly different versions in each of several Irish provinces. In this tale, a ferocious bull terrorized the countryside until Patrick wandered through and killed the beast; other versions have the bull kneeling in penitence before the saint. Maire MacNeill says this legend, and similar ones involving Patrick and birds or goats, probably derive from local pagan cults still flourishing in the era of nascent Christianity.¹⁸¹

Short, writing about Irish saints' stories, says that the implied message is that "submission brings dominion." That is, the saints' unquestioning and unfailing submission to God results in the boon of the saints' extraordinary powers over God's creatures. Bede, in his *Life of Cuthbert*, stated: "If a man faithfully and wholeheartedly serves the maker of all created things, it is no wonder though all creation should minister to his commands and wishes."¹⁸²

Saints can also shapeshift. In an Irish poem, Patrick and a group of monks chant “Patrick’s Lorica” or “Breastplate,” during which time they assume the appearance of deer to escape druidic ambushers.¹⁸³

Destructive animals are brought into line by saints. In Bede’s *Life of Saint Cuthbert*, the saint addresses birds, probably crows, which had devoured his barley crop: “If you have received God’s permission, do what He allows. If not, get out of here and never again harm another’s goods.” They obeyed, although one penitent raven returned and was granted permission by the saint to build his nest there.¹⁸⁴ Saint Columba ordered a monstrous-sized boar to stop mid-charge and die, which the animal promptly did.¹⁸⁵

The proliferation of such tales would seem to indicate that well into later centuries, Irish ecclesiastic writers were eager to grant their saints a supernatural power over animals, perhaps in response to lingering pagan lore. O’Meara, in noting that the animals especially significant to Celtic paganism were exactly those mastered by Columba in various *vitae*, states that conversion to Christianity in the Insular world was not instantaneous, but took place over several centuries. “Christian missionaries lived beside pagan populations for several hundred years,” he stated, so that “conversion necessarily involved compromise.”¹⁸⁶

The beasts in Irish tales are rarely described as evil, except in rare cases, as the one described above, in which a demon is turned into a black bird by Patrick. Jean-Michel Picard states that episodes in which the devil assumes animal disguise is common in Continental literature, but “does not exist in the Irish lives.” He adds that “even when an animal is a monster [in Insular hagiographies], it is not featured as an avatar of the Devil.”¹⁸⁷ It is not the devil the saint conquers in these passages, but rather, the saint assumes power over animals once assigned to pagans.

In the next chapter, I discuss the three-figure composition found in the *Temptation* images, tracing its long history and evolving content or meaning. The recasting of this familiar composition on Irish crosses might have been intended to transcribe its both its message and psychological effect.

Notes to Chapter I

¹ Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, transl. John J. O'Meara (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1951; reprint 1982), 101-02.

² Gerald of Wales, 82.

³ Roosters “do not here, as elsewhere, distinguish the third and last part of the night from the preceding by crowing three times at intervals. They are heard here rarely before daylight....” Ravens in Glendalough are prevented by a curse of Saint Kevin from alighting on the earth or taking food. And ravens, like owls, have their young around Christmastime. He describes a cow that was part stag, and a female wolf that makes human sounds and “welcomed” a priest “in a human way.” One wolf actually spoke with a priest, while wild wolves bear their young in December. Gerald of Wales, 70-78.

⁴ Gerald of Wales, 109-10. Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization* (New York and London: Doubleday, 1995), 135.

⁵ Among the crosses under discussion, the Market Cross at Kells has a hunting scene on its base, as does Castledermot South, Kells South Cross, and Killamery. Peter Harbison says that this cross and the Cross of Saints Patrick and Columba, also at Kells, show the “strongest traces of the hunting scenes and animal ornament of Lombardic type on any of the Irish crosses, and he suggests that Kells may have been the source for this imagery, which was “disseminated to other Irish crosses.” (He also says that *Noah's Ark* is found only in Kells and on crosses in Northern Ireland.) Kells, he argues, was a Columban center, and monks may have brought animal iconography from Scotland; the Kells Cathedral was built for refugees from the Columban mother monastery in Iona, Scotland, when a Viking raid of the 790s and others in the first decade of the ninth century resulted in many deaths. Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland. An Iconographical and Photographic Survey*, 3 vols. (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1992), I, 324. For a good and complete account on the Viking raids of Iona and the subsequent movement of some Ionan monks to the Irish site of Kells, see Maire Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry: The History and Hagiography of the Monastic familia of Columba* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988). Scenes with multiple horses and chariots are found on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois, and a strange and multi-figured scene with many animals and a tree appears on the Ahenny North Cross, which probably depicts Eden. Muiredach's Cross at Monasterboice has a scene with two horsemen followed by a dog, possibly. Hunting scenes are discussed by Arthur Kingsley Porter, *The Crosses and Culture of Ireland* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1931; reprinted 1971), 12-14.

⁶ See Helen Roe, *The High Crosses of Western Ossory* (Kilkenny, Ireland: Kilkenny Archaeological Society, 1969), 33, for her discussion of the Manticora or human-headed animal on the Tibberaghny Stone. The Moone Cross fragment is on display at the abbey ruins.

⁷ Roe, 33.

⁸ Roe, 14.

⁹ Roe, 47-8. Similarly, fantastic beasts adorn slab stones from the ancient Scottish kingdom of Pictland, a people converted to Christianity in the sixth century, whose kingdom was dissolved in the ninth when they were defeated by the Scots.

The dating of many of the Scottish stones is uncertain, but as a group, the Pictish cross slabs date from about the seventh to the ninth centuries, according to Pictish art scholar, Isabel Henderson. "Picti" was the name given to tribes in the far north of the British island by classical writers, who recorded the Pictish invasions of Roman Britain. Little is known about these peoples before about 300 C.E., except that various tribes existed in these regions, and they seemed not to have regarded themselves as united into a single nation. In Irish vernacular sources they were referred to as *Cruithni*. Isabel Henderson, *The Picts* (New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 15-16. Hereafter cited as "Henderson, *The Picts*." Cecil Curle points out that the Picts were never Romanized, and that the first Christian mission to the Picts occurred in 397, led by St. Ninnian, according to reports. Cecil L. Curle, "The Chronology of the Early Christian Monuments of Scotland," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 74 (1940), 60-116; this on p.68. Henderson raises doubts about the account of Ninnian converting the Picts so early, but certainly Columcille (Columba) visited the land in the sixth century, although his mission had questionable success if conversion was his goal. Henderson, *The Picts*, 68, and Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christianity in Pictland* (Jarrow on Tyne: Rector of Jarrow, St. Paul's Rectory, 1970), 12. Hughes points out there is no statement made by Adomnán, Columba's biographer, that Columba converted the king or his people in the sixth century, with the exception of two households. According to Bede, in 719, Pictland's southern boundary was the Firth of Forth, near Edinburgh. Bede, IV, 26. The Picts united with a Scottish king in the ninth century. Curle, 63. Information on their activities begins only with the Irish annals in the early seventh century. Henderson, *The Picts*, 51.

About eighty of the Pictish stones depict, alongside Christian symbols and figures, animals that Henderson calls "non-naturalistic." Interesting to note is that some of the fantastic animals, such as the griffin and centaur, are probably drawn from Roman art, but many Pictish animals are "unparalleled" elsewhere, according to Henderson. Different phases or eras of Pictish sculpture are identified with reference to their pagan or Christian content. A large group of stones carved with obscure, but in some cases recognizable, symbols are repeated from stone to stone and are assumed to be "nearly in time to the pagan period." These symbols "fit most naturally into the context of some kind of system of pagan concepts." But as Henderson points out, "no proof of such a connection is yet forthcoming." Henderson, *The Picts*, 67-8.

The placement of the fantastic animals on Scottish crosses suggests they have Christian associations, and the plethora of animals carved on Pictish stones are interpreted by Henderson as references to the richness of God's creation, providing visual commentaries on Genesis I, which describes God's creation of the earth, and on Psalms 103, in which praise for nature and its abundance is cause for rejoicing. Isabel Henderson, *Pictish Monsters: Symbol, Text and Image* (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, 1997), 2. Hereafter cited as "Henderson, *Pictish Monsters*."

Curle lists the most commonly depicted real animals on the Scottish stones as the fish, serpent, eagle, duck, stag, boar, deer and wolf. Curle, 64.

¹⁰ The figure of the so-called *Risen Christ* (with his arms out and looking more like a *Crucifixion*) is reproduced from Harbison, II, fig. 511 and III, fig. 930. Harbison explains: "A possible nail-head at the base of the middle finger on Christ's left hand could suggest that this is a Crucifixion scene—but if it were, it would be unexpected, as we would then have the Crucifixion being represented a second time on the same cross—presuming, that is, that all the parts re-mounted in 1893 originally belonged together." Harbison, I, 154.

¹¹ The Kells Market Cross head is reproduced from Harbison, III, fig. 949. The circle seen in the photograph that is iconographically related to the Moone image is the one nearest the animal-headed beast, and a visit to the cross *in situ* showed it to be a similar reptilian creature, in the same posture as the one on the Moone cross, with front legs splayed alongside its head. The other circular pattern, nearer Christ, is too worn to decipher, and may represent a second reptile in similar pose.

¹² The Moone Cross, north face, detail of the creature is reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 518.

¹³ Moone Cross, west face, shaft, reproduced from Harbison, III, fig. 967.

¹⁴ It was found buried and reassembled in 1835. He says it is 17.5 feet tall. F. M. Carroll, 293.

¹⁵ Fragments of crosses are exhibited outdoors at the abbey ruins at Moone. Here, both naturalistic animals and others more difficult to identify are carved on stone blocks displayed with interpretive placards.

¹⁶ Suggested by Lisa M. Bitel in her discussion of animals in saints' *vitae*. See Lisa Bitel, *Isle of the Saints. Monastic Settlement and Christian Community in Early Ireland* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 33-5. Roe suggests monsters on the crosses may represent scavengers symbols of the devil or signals of death. Roe, *The High Crosses of Western Ossory*, 33.

¹⁷ Hugh P. Kennedy, "The Eucharistic Prayer in Early Irish Liturgical Practice," in *Præx Eucharistica*, 2 vols. (Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1983), II, 225-36; this on p. 230. Michael Herity discusses the date of the Stowe Missal; Herity, 111.

¹⁸ I discuss these practices more at length in the Fifth Chapter of this Essay. The celebrations for the Kalends of January, and quotes from various church officials condemning such practices, appear in Yitzhak Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul, A.D. 481-751* (Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1995), esp. 154-206.

¹⁹ Carola Hicks, *Animals in Early Medieval Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 172. She explains this is a process also relevant for Germanic metalwork.

²⁰ She states that many monastic sites were founded in places previously occupied by pagan sanctuaries, and the stone-carving tradition was clearly continued from pagan through early Christian times. Hicks 172-3.

²¹ The pagan Viking content appears to have been first acknowledged by P.M.C. Kermode, who identified scenes depicting mythological figures Loki and Odin engaged in magical activities on crosses erected on the Isle of Man, created after about the middle of the ninth century. This view is widely acknowledged by scholars, who consider the Irish images under consideration, however, to be more strictly Christian. See P.M.C. Kermode, *Manx Crosses, or The Inscribed and Sculptured Monuments of the Isle of Man from about the End of the Fifth to the Beginning of the Thirteenth Century* (London: Bemrose & Sons, 1907). See also Hicks, 215, for other examples.

²² But, she adds, it is impossible to whether the survival of mythological subject matter was “as a forerunner to Christianity, or as a deliberate recognition of the historic past.” Hicks, 216-17.

²³ Hicks, 215.

²⁴ She argues there were two separate symbolic systems for the depiction of animals, one to represent magical or religious imagery drawn from Scandinavian mythology when appearing in, what might have been, pre-Christian contexts, but representing other messages “in the Christian sense;” and, hence, these expressed a spiritual reconciliation. The use of animals, she concludes, had one kind of symbolism in the Scandinavian world and another in the Christian, but only for these crosses and not for the Irish scenes. Hicks, 216-17.

²⁵ Hicks, 273-4.

²⁶ Hicks, 197.

²⁷ The Torslunda plaque is reproduced from Klingender, fig. 97d. As I will discuss in the next chapter on the three-figure compositions, these may be animals standing on their hind legs. It is difficult to distinguish if their hands and feet are pawlike or human.

²⁸ See Willy Hartner, *Die Goldhorner von Gallehus* (Wiesbaden, F. Steiner, 1969), fig. 34. There were two fifth-century golden horns unearthed at Gallehus, in Jutland, Denmark, in the seventeenth century. In 1802 a goldsmith stole them and melted them down to reuse the

gold. But sketches of the horns, their images and inscribed runes, had been made, and it from these drawings that the decoration is known, and the horns were reproduced.

²⁹ Other animal-headed figures include one appearing on a stone from Invernessshire, called the Balblair stone, described by Curle as a “curious human figure,” but appearing to me to be clearly animal-headed. The image is reproduced in Curle, fig. XVIIId. Henderson describes this figure as animal-headed in *Pictish Monsters*, 17.

There is a three-figure composition from Penmon, Anglesey, in which a central figure in hooded garment is confronted by two upright beasts—but in this case, the beast on the right retains its tail, and the stone is quite damaged, so that little can be seen clearly. The Anglesey image is reproduced by V. E. Nash-Williams, *The Early Christian Monuments of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1950), PL. LXX. The damage is so great that the viewer relies on the photographer’s or the author’s use of chalk outlines superimposed over figures on either the stone or its photograph (it is not clear which), and the accuracy of this image is open to question. In any event, the figure on the right appears to have a curved beak and a tail, making it another unidentifiable species. The left figure is impossible to see in the photograph, which suffers a high glare on that side of the image.

Two figures who stand astride the top arm of a cross on a stone from Kirriemuir, Angus, have animal heads, and Curle, writing in 1940, suggests they are evangelists, but adds that on Scottish stones, depictions of the evangelists are unprecedented, and that the figures he had just identified as evangelists “cannot have retained their significance in Scotland, for they are nearly always shown with two symbols of St John on the same slab.” Curle, 105 and 115. The image is reproduced in Curle’s fig. LXVII.

See also my note 72, below, for a list of others who carry weapons.

³⁰ Val Turner, who published the discovery, does not include a photograph, but only a drawing from the original stone. See Val Turner, “The Mail stone: an incised Pictish figure from Mail, Cunningsburgh, Shetland,” *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 124 (1994), 315-325.

The image from the Franks Casket is reproduced in Francis Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1971), fig. 102. Carola Hicks dates the Franks Casket to the ninth century. Hicks, 152; although

Marilyn Stokstad dates it to ca. 700. Marilyn Stokstad, *Medieval Art* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2004), 92 and 358. Hereafter cited as Stokstad, *Medieval Art*.

³¹ The casket is named for an English man named Sir Augustus Franks and not for the Frankish people. Stokstad, *Medieval Art*, 92.

³² Stokstad, *Medieval Art*, 92. Jessica Hemming, on the other hand, suggests the horse-headed figure refers to the Welsh mythological cycle, “The Four Branches of the Mabinogi,” in which a horse-related character named Rhiannon figures, linked by some scholars to the Celtic horse goddess Epona. See Jessica Hemming, “Reflections on Rhiannon and the Horse Episodes in Pwyll,” *Western Folklore* 57:1 (Winter 1998), 19-40. For earlier theories, including those suggesting the hero of the Germanic *Saga of the Volsungs*, Sigurd or Sigfried, and his faithful horse, Grane, as well as notions of shapeshifting, see O. M. Dalton,

“The Animal-headed Figure on the Franks Casket,” *Man* 8 (1908), 177-8. Stokstad discusses a Norse tale on p. 93.

³³ The Rossie stone is reproduced in J. Romilly Allen and Joseph Anderson, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland, with introduction by Isabel Henderson*, 2 vols. (Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1903. Reprinted Balgavies, Angus: The Pinkfoot Press, 1993), II, fig. 322.

The Pupil Stone image is reproduced from Curle, PL. XXIVa. Henderson calls these bird-headed figures “oppressive hybrid tempters,” and contrasts this scene with related animal-headed scenes found on Pictish stones in that it “has a monastic feel,” presumably a “feeling” lent by four cowled ecclesiastics. Henderson, *Pictish Monsters*, 20. However, the figures have webbed feet and may not be human in any way.

Another animal-headed figure from Glamis engages with a second figure, perhaps in combat, although the second figure appears as a fragment on this broken stone. The Glamis stone appears in Allen and Anderson, II, fig. 233A. A figure with horselike head attacks a smaller man with some type of weapon on the Inchbrayock stone, reproduced in Allen and Anderson, II, fig. 235. A pair of dualing, weapon-wielding, animal-headed figures, one with a beak and the other apparently a dog-headed foe, appear on the Murthly cross, which appears as Curle’s fig. XIII. Curle reproduces his image from Allen and Anderson, II, fig. 321.

Henderson concludes that although the animal heads vary from stone to stone in Scotland, the costumes and weaponry of the Pictish figures “show a significant degree of standardization.” This leads her to conclude that the hybrid figures shared a common pagan source and continued into the Christian era as a symbol of “malevolent forces.” Henderson, *Pictish Monsters*, 18-20. She states, “The Pictish dog-, bird- and ogre-heads, if we can understand them at all, seem...to be part of the native culture....”

She refers to another related figure at Strathmartine in Angus, which “has a beast-headed figure carrying probably an adze over his shoulder.” She relates these to a third brandishing a weapon at Rhynie, but says this one is “too worn to be certain of details.” She reports that all of these figures share the feature of having been “carved on irregularly shaped stones and apparently without accompanying imagery or designs.” Henderson, *Pictish Monsters*, 17. The latter fact would also distinguish them from the Irish *Temptation* images, which appear with other scenes and designs on crosses.

³⁴ It is interesting to note a reference in an Icelandic saga to axe symbolism, mentioned by Peter Foote, editor and translator of *The Laxdale Saga* (London and New York: J. M. Dent & Son Ltd, 1964). The Laxdale Saga was written about 1250 C.E., but thought to be derived from a compilation of historical material of ca. 1100-1145. Foote, v-vii. In one passage from chapter 67, dated 1020, a cloak speaks, presumably through an act of magic. Two translations are given by Foote, one in the text and another in the notes. The translation in the notes has the cloak speak the following words: “Hangs a wet hood on the wall; It knoweth of a trick; Though it be at most times ‘dry,’ I hide not now it knoweth two,” with “one” and “two” referring to people who were about to lose their lives, and the “trick” evidently a reference to prognostication. In the text, this “trick” is associated with an “inlaid axe” that a priest gives to a man about to die. One wonders if an axe, for the Scandinavians, had some connection with seers and prognostication. Foote, 233-4 and 273.

Difficult to explain is Gerald of Wales' dedication of a short chapter to the subject of the Irish and "How they always carry an axe as if it were a staff in their hand."

³⁵ The Kettins drawing is reproduced from Allen and Anderson, II, fig. 236.

³⁶ *Douay Reims Catholic Bible Online*: < <http://www.drbo.org/>>.

³⁷ Klingender, 154. The text appeared in Greek, Latin and Slavonic translations.

³⁸ Quoted from "De expulsione Ade et Eue de paradiso" 37-38 J, H. Mozley, transl., "The *Vita Adae*," *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (1929), 139-40; cf. William Short, *Saints in the World of Nature: The Animal Story as Spiritual Parable in Medieval Hagiography (900-1200)* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, Facultas Theologi, Institutum Spiritualitatis, 1983), 162.

³⁹ R. H. Charles, ed., *The Apocrypha and Pseudoepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (Oxford, 1913), XII, 147 and 17, quoted in Klingender, 154.

⁴⁰ Marcus Dodds, in his "Introduction" to *Saint Augustine's The City of God* (New York: Random House, 1950 and 1978; reprinted 1993), xi-xii, explains that Augustine wrote the text as a response to some Romans' claim that the presence of the Catholic Church had undermined the pagan gods' protection of the city.

⁴¹ Saint Augustine, XIV, 15. Demonstrating erudition on the writings of Classical philosophers, Augustine focuses on the Platonists, whom he explains had been aware of one God: "...because, knowing God, they glorified Him not as God; neither were they thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

⁴² Saint Augustine, VIII, 10.

⁴³ Saint Augustine, VIII, 15. A couple of references to animal gods as demons appear in VII, 33, where Augustine says, "...the gods of the nations are most impure demons, who desire to be thought gods, availing themselves of the names of certain defunct souls, or the appearance of mundane creatures....;" and in II, 11: "...but these gods of the pagans are all evil, because they are not gods, but evil spirits...."

⁴⁴ For more on the Augustinian ideal, see Charles Singer, *Short History of Scientific Ideas to 1900* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 134.

⁴⁵ Mentioned twice by Peter Harbison, I, 81 and 155. The image reproduced is the Moone Cross, north side of the base, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, from Harbison, II, figs. 517 and 518, and III, fig. 950.

⁴⁶ Porter, 81.

⁴⁷ Helen Roe, "An Interpretation of Certain Symbolic Sculptures of Early Christian Ireland," *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 75 (1945), 1-23; this on pp. 8-9.

⁴⁸ F. M. Carroll, "Some Notes on the Abbey and Cross of Moone and Other Places in the Valley of the Griese," *Journal of the Archaeological Society of County Kildare* 1 (1894), 284-94; this on pg. 294.

⁴⁹ Hicks, 243. The image of the Monasterboice Tall Cross, east face of south arm of cross, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, is reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 488 and 490, and Harbison, III, fig. 948.

⁵⁰ Porter, 82.

⁵¹ Two bronze boars are from Hounslow, Middlesex, England, and dated to the first century B.C.E. The image is reproduced from Venceslas Kruta and Werner Forman, *The Celts of the West*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Orbis Publishing Limited, 1985), 34. Other flat-snouted boars without tusks include a bronze statuette from third-century-B.C.E. Mezek (modern Bulgaria), reproduced in Sabatino Moscati, *et al*, scientific directors, *The Celts* (Milan: Bompaniani, 1991; reprint. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1997), 506. Hereafter cited as "*The Celts*." Another example appears in *The Celts*, a bronze boar of the first century B.C.E. from the Loire region, 426. Anne Ross includes three drawings of similarly configured boar: a relief from Corstopitum in Northumberland, Britain of unspecified date (her fig. 172), and a stone version from Spain (her fig. 174); a third drawing shows a bronze boar from Wattisfield, Suffolk (her fig. 176). Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain. Studies in Iconography and Tradition* (Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1967; reprinted 1996). An Irish statuette exists, sometimes called a boar, sometimes a pig, and the snout is less flattened than those pictured in this paper. A large reproduction appears in Polly Cone, ed., *Treasures of early Irish Art 1500 B.C. to 1500 A.D.* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1977), fig. 18. (Ross reproduces two similar tuskless Irish boars in her book, fig. 177.) Another example in bronze, with a very flattened snout, but which has a complex web of striations rendered in light relief on its face which may be intended as multiple tusks, is reproduced in Miranda Green, *Celtic Art. Symbols & Imagery* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1996), fig. 99. Hereafter cited as Green, *Celtic Art*.

⁵² Harbison, *High Crosses of Ireland*, 39. The Castledermot South Cross image, *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, on the west face, shaft, is reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 107 and 109.

⁵³ Porter, 82.

⁵⁴ Castledermot North Cross, west face, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, is reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 103.

⁵⁵ Porter, 82.

⁵⁶ Porter's fig. 122.

⁵⁷ Porter, 82. Kells Market Cross, present south face of the cross head, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, is reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 335 and 337, and Harbison, III, fig. 949.

⁵⁸ Harbison, *High Crosses of Ireland*, 106.

⁵⁹ Green, *Animals*, 131. The image is reproduced from Kruta and Forman, 96.

⁶⁰ Image reproduced from Henry, *The Book of Kells*. Also in the Book of Kells a creature has a man's body and fish tail, positioned within lines of text of folio 213r (enlarged in Henry, *The Book of Kells*, 117).

⁶¹ The figure known as the Bouray god is one fine example; it is pictured in Proinsias MacCana, *Celtic Mythology* (London and New York: The Hamlyn Publishing Group Limited, 1970), 118. A god identified in one inscription as Cernunnos, which had human body and head, hooves and horns, is the most frequently represented deity in Celtic art. For more on this figure, see Phyllis Fray Bober, "Cernunnos: Origin and Transformation of a Celtic Divinity," *American Journal of Archaeology* 55: 1 (January 1951), 13-51.

⁶² Reproduced from Proinsias MacCana, *Celtic Mythology* (London and New York: Hamlyn Publishing Group Limited, 1970), 48.

⁶³ See Zofia Ameisenowa, "Animal-Headed Gods, Evangelists, Saints and Righteous Men," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 12 (1949), 21-45.

⁶⁴ Miranda Green, *The Gods of the Celts* (Gloucester: A. Sutton, and Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble, 1986; reprint. 1997), 7. Hereafter cited as "Green, *Gods*."

⁶⁵ J. J. Tierney, "The Celtic Ethnography of Posidonius," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* C: 60 (1960). Strabo was the only author to remark on the Irish, stating that they have sex with their mothers and sisters and worse still, they have sexual relations in public. Strabo IV, V, 4. It is generally assumed that there was no factual basis to this report. The principal writers include Julius Caesar, Strabo, Pomponius Mela, Plina, Athenaeus, Tacitus, Dio Cassius, Diodorus Siculus, Ammianus Marcellinus and Lucan.

⁶⁶ Caesar said the Gauls claimed descent from Dispater, Roman god of the Underworld. Julius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, VI, 18. See also Green, *Gods*, 136.

Caesar's statement that the Celts worship Mercury above all gods, included the information that they many images of him, and that they also revered Apollo and Mars. J. A. McCulloch pointed out that Mercury was most likely associated primarily with the Celtic god known as Lug in Gaul and Ireland, while others point to the almost ubiquitous horned god, identified in one inscription as Cernunnos (see my note 58, above). The confusion among scholars about the deity associated in Caesar's mind with Mercury, and the likelihood that numerous Celtic gods fell under Caesar's sweeping identifications of principal Roman gods in his eagerness to bring Celtic spirituality under Roman dominion, together explain McCulloch's assessment of "some sixty names or titles of Celtic war-gods are...generally

equated with Mars.” MacCulloch lists the many names, 27 and n.5. He suggests the Gauls easily adapted their deities to Roman gods, having “acquiesced to the assimilation of their deities to those of their conquerors.” As a result, many Celtic deities bear inscriptions identifying them as named Roman gods.

⁶⁷ Green, *Gods*, 124-5.

⁶⁸ J. A. MacCulloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts* (London: Constable and Company Limited, 1991), 24 and n. 1. Most of these are mentioned only once, with twenty-four mentioned twice, and only eleven named three times.

⁶⁹ Even in early Celtic art contemporary with the Greco-Roman world, during the Hallstatt and La Tène periods, beasts were “far more significant than in classical iconography.” Miranda Green, *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 197. Hereafter cited as Green, *Animals*. Referring to pre-Roman and Roman-era Celtic culture, states that “iconography and faunal evidence on archaeological sites and in [Irish and Welsh] vernacular sources supports the argument that animals were central to Celtic religious beliefs.” Green, *Animals*, 127.

⁷⁰ Information about burials of specific species is found in Green, *Animals*.

⁷¹ This is common knowledge. Some of the more interesting theories about what might have motivated the monks to record—perhaps originate, at least in part—these tales is discussed by Kim McCone, “Werewolves, Cyclopes, *Diberga* and *Fíanna*: Juvenile Delinquency in Early Ireland,” *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 12 (Winter 1986), 1-22; and *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth, Ireland: An Sagart, 1990).

⁷² Kim McCone, “A Tale of Two Ditties: Poet and Satirist in Cath Maige Tuired,” in *Sages, Saints and Storytellers. Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney*, ed. Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone (Maynooth, Ireland: An Sagart, 1989), 128. See also, for a similar opinion, James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1955).

⁷³ Henry Maguire, “Magic and Money in the Early Middle Ages,” *Speculum* 72:4 (1997): 1037-54. For an opinion on the deification of animals as related to Celtic coins, see Adrien Blanchet, *Traité des Monnaies Gauloises* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1905), esp. 161, n. 5.

⁷⁴ Some Celtic coin images were derived from Mediterranean prototypes, but Green points out that Celtic iconography demonstrates independence from its models. The Celts had a penchant for abstracting and simplifying Roman imagery. The reverse of many coins have zoomorphic themes. Boars and bulls are frequently depicted, some of the latter with lunar crescents between their horns. Gods with bulls' horns also appear, especially on coinage from the Danube River areas. For reasons not understood, stags, which are important to Celtic religion and hunting, are rarely depicted on coins. Some Armorican tribal coins have a wolf. Green, *Animals*, 156-59, and Ross on the absence of stag, 418.

⁷⁵ Green, *Animals*, 160-1.

⁷⁶ Lucan, *Pharsalia*, III, 412; cf. Ross, 87 and n. 4. Celtic wooden images are reproduced in a number of sources; several appear in MacCana, 14-19, and all those he reproduces are anthropomorphic.

⁷⁷ Rawlinson B 512, fol. 11, a.1-a.2; quoted in Whitley Stokes, ed., *Tripartite Life of Patrick, with other documents relating to that Saint. Edited with translations and indexes* (London: Published by the authority of the Lords commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, under the direction of the Master of the rolls, 1887), I, 90-3. Stokes reports that a twelfth-century manuscript, the *Leabhar Laignech* or Book of Leinster, 213b, referred to the gold idol surrounded by twelve others rendered in stone, and this text names the god Cromm Cruaich. Stokes, ed., *Tripartite Life*, I, clviii.

⁷⁸ See Green, *Gods*, 168-170, and Green, *Animals*, 196. The helmet is in the Bucharest Museul National de Istorie. Photograph reproduced from *The Celts*, p. 410.

⁷⁹ Lady Gregory, trans. and ed., *Cuchulain of Muirthemne: The Story of the Men of the Red Branch of Ulster* (London: John Murray, 1902), 64-7.

⁸⁰ In the tale, "The Siege of Druim Damhghaire," a druid performing a magical incantation is described as wearing a speckled bird headdress with flapping wings before he flies into the sky. He restored the river and lake water to Leinster after magical spells had dried up these sources, which may link him with the Celtic reverence for waterbirds. M. L. Sjoestedt, "La Siège de Druim Damhghaire," *Révue Celtique* 43 (1926), 1-123; this is on pp. 110-113.

Cormac's Glossary (tenth century) describes a *tugen* as a "covering (*tuige*) of birds' (*én*), for it is of skins of birds white and many-coloured that the poets' toga is made from their girdle downwards, and of mallards' necks and of their crests from the girdle upwards to their neck." *Cormac's Glossary*, trans. by John O'Donovan, ed. Whitley Stokes (Calcutta: Printed by O. T. Cutter for the Irish Archeological and Celtic Society, 1868), 160.

⁸¹ Ross, 320-1, 324-5, 327-8, 330. Green, *Animals*, 178. The wren, in particular, is discussed by R.A.S. Macalister, *Tara. A Pagan Sanctuary of Ancient Ireland* (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), 121. In *Cormac's Glossary*, under the entry for "*dris*," the wren is called "*magus avium eo quod aliquibus praebet augurium.*" *Cormac's Glossary*, 60.

⁸² Peter Ellis mentions the raven and eagle as the two birds most often consulted for divination purposes, but he does not quote his source. Peter Berresford Ellis, *The Druids* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 223.

⁸³ Strabo reported on a story told by Artemidorous, who had visited a harbor called "Two Crows," where birds lived that had wings with white feathers. People engaged in disputes would put a plank up on a high place and place barley cakes upon it, each man separately; the birds would then fly up and eat some cakes and scatter the others. The man whose barley-cakes were scattered won the case. Strabo *Geographica* IV, IV, 6; trans. Tierney, 270. Ross dates raven imagery back to the Urnfield culture, where she says it was linked to a solar cult.

Ross, 311. See Appendix 3 of this essay for a summary of the three phases of Celtic culture, including the Hallstatt phase.

⁸⁴ R. I. Best, "Prognostications from the Raven and the Wren," *Ériu* 8 (1916), 120-6; this translated on pp. 123-4. Ross also quotes the passage, 327-8.

⁸⁵ The bronze raven image is reproduced from Green, *Animals*, fig. 3.7; photo credit: Betty Naggar.

⁸⁶ Image reproduced from Richard N. Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England* (London: William Collins Sons & Co Ltd, 1980), PL. 57, probably of the ninth or tenth century. Also, a bas-relief from Senlis is described by Ross as portraying a youthful deity with one hand raised in an oratorical gesture, and surrounded by geese and ravens, with two ravens apparently speaking into his ears. She describes an altar from Vaison which depicts a raven flying toward the ear of a god, while a goose is also pictured. "Several other monuments consist of the bust of a deity having a pair of birds, sometimes ravens, perching on either shoulder," one of which she illustrates. Ross, 320. She cites an illustration for the Senlis image in Émile Espérandieu, *Bas-Reliefs, Statues et Bustes de la Gaule romaine* (Paris & Brussels: G. van Oest, 1931), no. 3850. She also includes a drawing of a deity with birds on both shoulders from Mont Auxois, from the Côte-d'Or, France; her fig. 154.

⁸⁷ Peter Sawyer, "The Vikings and Ireland," in *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe. Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 345-361; this information on p. 345.

⁸⁸ The two ravens of Odin are discussed by Ross, 367.

⁸⁹ In Romano-Celtic burial sites, Green says the raven is "heavily overrepresented" at Winklebury and Danebury, both of which were hillforts in present-day Hampshire. One was placed with outspread wings and accompanied by a pig, another animal important to Celtic lore. She explains that their numbers are great in proportion to other wild birds found at the sites. Green, *Animals*, 52. She cites the report on this burial in G.A. Wait, "Ritual and Religion in Iron Age Britain," *British Archaeological Reports* (British Series), no. 149, (Oxford: B.A.R., 1985). Portrayals of the deceased in Gallo-Roman iconography used the raven or other bird against the breast fairly often. Ross, 312.

⁹⁰ One Irish war goddess, the Morrigan, changes into raven or crow in the *Táin Bó Cuáin*, lines 2103-2113. Ross points out that another name of an Irish war goddess associated with ravens is The Badb or *Badb Catha*, "Battle Raven," which "is parallel by an inscription from Gaul which reads (*C*)athubodva, 'Battle Raven'" from Haute-Savoie. Ross, 281-2. See F. Vallentin, "Les Dieux de la Cité des Allobroges," *Révue Celtique* 4 (1880): 1-36, especially p. 19, for more information on the Gaulish monument. Green says geese were found in Celtic warriors' graves, probably honoring the birds' alert, watchful and aggressive temperament. Green, *Animals*, 126.

According to J.A. MacCulloch, in Viking mythology ravens were the birds of the Valkyries, figures from the Otherworld or Valhalla, because the birds fed on the slain. J.A.

MacCulloch, *The Celtic and Scandinavian Religions* (London and New York: Hutchinson's University Library, 1948), 125.

⁹¹ In the National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen. Reproduced from Green, *Celtic Art*, fig. 69.

Also, a bronze Celtic Romano-British figurine of Mars who holds two ram-headed serpents and wears a helmet adorned with a bird, probably a raven, perched and ready for flight. It was found on an altar in King's Stanley, Gloucestershire; it is reproduced in Green, Miranda Green, *Dictionary of Celtic Myth and Legend* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1992), 143. Hereafter cited as Green, *Dictionary*.

Links between a raven-accompanied war goddess and druidic prophecies is made by Ross, 315. Also, the dead bodies left after battles are called "ravens' food" by Dubthach Dáel Ulad, a literary character who advises warriors to abandon the hero, Cú Chulainn, with the warning: "...there will be corpses of men because of him...ravens shall eat ravens' food..." *Táin Bó Cúalgne*, 205. Similarly, this passage in chapter 65 of the Icelandic *Laxdale Saga* states: "To Helgi's home a raid we led/ Gave ravens corpse-repast to swallow/ We dyed shield-wands [swords] with blood all red..." Muriel Press, trans., *The Laxdale Saga* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1964), 229.

In Romano-Celtic iconography, ravens are not always birds of destruction or prophecy, but can represent healing qualities. Green discusses anthropomorphic images found near healing springs are pictured with ravens, birds that appear to have been especially efficacious in helping the gods to cure eye diseases. Green, *Animals*, 211. She mentions a god found at a spring shrine at Mavilly, Burgundy, with a large raven and a sick pilgrim with an eye affliction. She continues that many goddesses had ravens as attributes, including Nantosuelta (one of the few with a name attached), who appears on two images accompanied by a raven, at Sarrebourg near Metz and Speier, Germany.

⁹² Swans in insular tales are often women with spells cast on them and linked together in pairs with gold or silver chains. One such tale is the *Dream of Oenghus*, in which Oenghus dreams of a girl whom he loves madly upon first sight. He discovers, after a year of looking, that she lives with 150 companions who, along with her, become swans every other year. Her name is Caer Ibormeith (Yew Berry) and her transformation occurs during the winter festival of Samhain on November 1, the Celtic New Year, when barriers between the physical and supernatural worlds dissolved. The birds are magical, and lull all within hearing range for three days and nights with song. The story is "Tochmarc Etainne," translated by A. Nutt and printed in *Revue Celtique* 27 (1906), 325-39. Water birds and thermal waters, and stories about swans, are discussed in Green, *Animals*, 174-5.

⁹³ From Dunaverney, Co. Antrim, and currently on view in the British Museum, London. Reproduced in numerous texts, including Peter Harbison, *Pre-Christian Ireland. From the First Settlers to the Early Celts* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), fig. 89.

⁹⁴ Ross describes a temple at the source of the river Seine, at which was found an image of Sequana, goddess of the source of the river, drawn along in a vessel consisting of a duck (Ross, 47). An ivory pendant found in Ireland is in the shape of a horn terminating in a duck's head and surmounted by a four-faced male head with drooping mustaches. Ross

states that the combination of duck heads with human faces is a recurrent motif of La Tène art. Ross, 112.

⁹⁵ A reconstruction of the Roquepertuse sanctuary appears in Green, *Dictionary*, 117. The crania are all of males, apparently none over forty years of age. These were, Ross states, probably the prizes taken by enemies in the prime of life, exhibited in a temple dedicated to the local war god who had a goose attribute. Ross, 99.

⁹⁶ The bronze figurine of a warrior goddess wearing a goose-crested helmet from Dinéault, Brittany, France, first century B.C.E., illustrated Miranda Green, *The World of the Druids* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1997), 96. Hereafter cited as Green, *Druids*.

While we might expect an owl in this role, Ross states, "...the owl does not appear in Romano-British iconography in contexts other than as the bird of Minerva, and the vernacular tradition is almost completely devoid of owl lore," and she cites an exception in Welsh literature. Ross, 345.

The goose may also have had healing associations. A healing god named Lenus identified through inscriptions found in Gaul and Britain is accompanied by a webbed-footed bird, probably a goose. Ross, 226 and 344.

In Green, *Animals*, 88, 126 and 214, she discusses burials with goose bones, and the aggressive nature of a healing-protector god is discussed in Green, *Gods*, 112. She equates the bird with both war and protection in her *Dictionary*, 107. She explains: The seeming dichotomy between the concepts of hunting and healing may be resolved by a close examination of the Divine Hunt, a theme which, in many cultures, including that described in early Insular legend, embodied ideas of regeneration and immortality by means of the pursuit and killing of prey, and of death. The shedding of blood, in order to give life and food, came to symbolize rebirth and healing/renewal. (Green, *Animals*, 199.)

⁹⁷ Julius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* V, 12. Green mentions both birds as food offerings found in Gaulish graves, and Caesar was apparently mistaken since chicken bones are found among domestic refuse in British Iron Age archaeological sites—or perhaps the Britons gave up chicken and goose flesh at a later date. Green, *Animals*, 125. See also A. Grant, "Animals in Roman Britain," in M. Todd, ed., *Research on Roman Britain 1960-1989, Britannia Monograph Series*, no. 11 (London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies), 135-146.

In ancient Roman culture, chickens were used for prophecy: Roman soldiers relied on the birds' habits to predict the outcome of battles, and sacred chickens were sometimes carried on forays. Ellis, 222-3, describes an event from the Battle of Drepanum during the First Punic War, in which chickens were so used. Perhaps ancient Celts, who served as mercenaries in the Roman legions, brought home news of the wondrous, divining bird.

The cockerel is the least-frequently-represented ornithological species appearing on extant statuary or coinage, and the chicken rarely figures in Irish literature. A few Celtic coins with cockerels survive, one in which a human profile forms the contour of the bird's breast. See Blanchet, figs. 38-42. Fig. 41 is a coin from Mount Caesar, in Bailleul-le-Sec (Oise). Blanchet dates the group with cockerels to the third century C.E. Blanchet, 192.

J.A. MacCulloch reports that the cock was associated with both gods and giants in Viking mythology. J.A. MacCulloch, *The Celtic and Scandinavian Religions*, 139. He says

that characters named Gollinkambi or Vithofnir are awakened by the crows of the roosters, and that roosters also awake gods, warriors, and giants to prepare them for battle.

In Irish lore, only one instance of chickens appears in the Irish topographical poem compilation called the *Rennes Dindshenchas*. In one poem, a mysterious and sinister chicken called Biorche's Hen (*Circe Bairche*) appears. The story is translated by Whitley Stokes, "The Prose Tales in the Rennes Dindshenchas," *Revue Celtique* 15 (1894), 272-336 and 418-84, this on p. 462; and in W. Stokes, "The Rennes Dindshanchas," *Révue Celtique* 16 (1895), 31-83.

⁹⁸ The Uley shrine is discussed by Green, *Animals*, 110, 124, 126, and 237.

⁹⁹ The Gloucester Mercury appears with his consort, Rosmerta, and a rooster. Reproduced from Green, *Gods*, p. 47. Another figure of Mercury is represented with an infant, a goat, and appearing in an arch over the god's head, two roosters face off: reproduced from Espérandieu, no. 554. A mutilated fragment shows just a cockerel and horned goat, and is presumed to have represented Mercury; Espérandieu, no. 582. These are only a few Germanic examples among many more found in present-day France.

Phyllis Fray Bober says the cock was a chthonic attribute of Mercury. Bober, 39.

In Celtic lore, Mercury with his cockerel and goat, as found at the Uley shrine, were located at sacred springs. Another duty apparently assigned to the Celtic Mercury and other gods presiding over healing sites must have inspired Christian consternation. Recovered from the thermal waters at Uley and Bath were hundreds of metal curse tablets fashioned into diptychs: thin metal sheets etched with curses directed toward persons who had committed offenses against the invoker, and sometimes requesting "blood" in return for the crimes. See Mike Ibeji, "An Overview of Roman Britain," British Broadcasting Company, 1 June 2001, Online *bbc.co.uk*. 28 April 2006.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/questions_05.shtml>.

The BBC online report states that more than 6,000 coins "were cast as offerings into the waters of Bath, along with vast quantities of lead or bronze curse tablets, asking Sulis-Minerva to intercede on behalf of the worshipper." It states that at Uley, two hundred curse tablets were found, which amounts to "approximately one third of all such tablets known in the empire."

Some of the curses are quoted:

"To Minerva the goddess of Sulis I have given the thief who has stolen my hooded cloak, whether slave or free, whether man or woman. He is not to buy back this gift unless with his own blood." (Bath)

"Uricalus, Docilosa his wife, Docilis his son and Docilina, Decentinus his brother, Alogiosa: the names of those who have sworn at the spring of the goddess Sulis on the 12th of April. Whosoever has perjured himself there you are to make him to pay for it to the goddess Sulis in his own blood." (Bath)

At a temple to the god Mars-Nodens at Lydney, this one a hill-fort of a fourth-century date, a tablet was found, which reads: "...let none enjoy health until he brings it [a ring] back to the temple of Nodens."

See also a report written by the British Academy professors responsible for the Uley find. A.K. Bowman *et al*, "A Corpus of writing tablets from Roman Britain. A British

Academy Research Project,” July 2000, *Portable Antiquities Scheme, The British Museum*. 28 April 2006. <<http://www.csad.ox.ac.uk/RIB/RIBIV/jp4.htm>>.

The role of Mercury as an executer of curses must have inspired particular consternation among Christian fathers.

¹⁰⁰ Green, *Dictionary*, 62.

¹⁰¹ Discussed by Ross, 107; Green, *Dictionary*, 62-3. Pictured in Ross, fig. 43, and earlier by Espérandieu, *Gaule*, who stated, “*L’identification du tricéphale et de Mercure ne fait aucune doute*” (no. 7700).

¹⁰² As Ross suggests, the cock may represent a sacrificial animal in this case. Ross, 274.

¹⁰³ Valerie Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 88.

¹⁰⁴ *Vita Eligii Episcopi Noviomagensis* II, 16a. B. Krusch and W. Levison, eds., *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, 4 (Hanover and Leipzig, 1902), 705 and 707. Quoted in Flint, 89.

¹⁰⁵ Martin of Braga, *Reforming the Rustics*, 12, in C. W. Barlow, trans., *Iberian Fathers I* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1979), 78.

¹⁰⁶ Excerpted from *Rule of Saint Columcille*, R. I. Best, trans. *Martyrology of Tallacht; from the Book of Leinster and MS. 5100-4 in the Royal Library, Brussels* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1931), 120.

¹⁰⁷ Whitley Stokes comments that devils in stories about Patrick assume the shape of black birds, while angels are associated with white ones. Stokes, ed., *Tripartite Life*, I, cxlv.

¹⁰⁸ Rawlinson B. 512, fol. 13 b. 2, quoted in Stokes, ed., *Tripartite Life*, I, 114-15.

¹⁰⁹ J. D. Seymour, *Irish Visions of the Otherworld. A contribution to the study of mediaeval visions* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and New York: Macmillan, 1930), 176. Ross, 312.

Ross suggested the holy site may have replaced a pagan sanctuary or divinatory shrine devoted to a raven deity called Cornu; Ross, 312. Wrens, birds often associated with druids, were assigned a similar function in Irish tradition, according to Ellis, 223. Evidently, animosity toward the bird continued well into later centuries, when it was ritually hunted and killed as part of a Christmas and Saint Stephen’s Day celebration (December 26) held in Ireland, the Isle of Man and Wales. See James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1922. Reprinted 1975), 621-3. Frazer also discusses the ritual in France, where the king carried the first wren to be killed on a pole in a procession. See also Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence, *Hunting the Wren: Transformation of Bird to Symbol. A Study in Human-Animal Relationships* (Knoxville : University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 46-49; and for the Isle of Man, 141.

In Scotland, a wren hunt occurred on New Year's Day, and it was not killed, but set free after capture; to kill a wren at other times of the year was considered bad luck. See Lawrence and Frazer, 59 and 36-7, respectively.

¹¹⁰ Bede records the letter of 601 C.E. Judith McClure and Roger Collins, eds., *Bede, The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999; reprint), I, 30.

¹¹¹ Burchard, Bishop of Worms, *Decretum XIX, Patrologia Latina*, J. P. Migne, ed. (Paris, 1878-90), CXL, 970-971; trans. Flint, 118.

¹¹² Pliny, *Natural History*, VIII, 52; X, 46-50; and XXIX, 100. See Colette Beaune, "Pour Une Prehistoire du Coq Gaulois," *Médiévales* 10, (1986), 69-80.

¹¹³ For the associations with Christ, see Prudentius (J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, LXIX, c. 775); discussed in Beaune, 70. The role of the cock as a helper in the world is discussed in reference to Ambrose, *Hexamaeron*, in J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, XIV, c. 240; see Beaune, 70.

¹¹⁴ Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, in J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, LXXVI, c. 527-28; see Beaune, 70-1. She discusses Gregory's reliance on Proverbs 30:3, in which it states that three animals can make king's armies cut and run: the lion, the zebra (which the Vulgate translated as the cock) and the ram. Gregory deduced that the cock scares the lion to flight, and he took from the biblical Apocalypse passage that stated, "He vanquished the lion of Judah," to mean not Jesus vanquished the lion of Judah, but the cock. From there, its role as clerics fighting evil for their flocks was born.

¹¹⁵ As discussed in the Introduction to this essay, she refers to Persian culture and the theories of anthroposophist Rudolf Steiner, concluding the figure is not Saint Anthony, but a man faced with moral choices, and she refers to a figure known in anthroposophy as Ahriman. Bettina Brandt-Förster, *Das Irische Hochkreuz. Ursprung, Entwicklung, Gestalt*. Stuttgart: Urachhaus, 1978, 87-90.

¹¹⁶ Iconographically, the boar is prominent both before and during the Romano-Celtic period. On Iron Age coinage, boars were selected as motifs for numerous tribes. An animal of equal importance is the stag. Green, *Gods*, 179.

¹¹⁷ Ross enumerates many tales of magic pigs in Celtic, particularly Irish, literature, 397-403. Green characterizes these passages as allusions to the notion of a divine hunt, which may bring death or immortality through the act of bloodshed. Green, *Animals*, 169.

¹¹⁸ T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin: Dublin University Press, 1946), 275. It can be eaten, after which it reappears.

¹¹⁹ O'Rahilly, 279.

¹²⁰ Green, *Gods*, 180.

¹²¹ The stone carving of a boar-god from either the second or first century B.C.E. is from Euffigneix, Haute-Marne, France, and is reproduced from Green, *Druids*, 30. Green makes the connection of this figure with both incorporation and with shapeshifting in *Gods*, 170. Note the image of an eye on the figure's side. First century B.C.E. Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée des Antiquités Nationales. Reproduced from Moscati, *et al*, eds., *The Celts*, p. 596.

¹²² Again, the piece is in the National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen. Reproduced from Green, *Celtic Art*, fig. 69.

¹²³ A bronze shield from the Iron Age was found near River Witham, and is decorated with an elongated, stylized boar image. Drawing made from the shield appears in Green, *Gods*, fig. 2. Interesting is that Tacitus reports that the "greatest disgrace that can befall" German tribal warriors is to abandon their shields in a battle. "A person branded with this ignominy is not permitted to join in their religious rites, or enter their assemblies; so that many, after escaping from battle, have put an end to their infamy by the halter." *A Treatise on the Manners of the Germans*, in *The Works of Tacitus* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1889), 6. Perhaps the shields were thought to embody power.

Green states that boar gods, such as Mercury Moccus among the Lingones and Arduinna tribes, and a boar goddess of the Ardennes, attest to the function of the boar as an important sacred animal. She also refers to a three-horned boar statue discovered in the Avrigney area of Bourgogne. Green, *Gods*, 181.

A first-century B.C.E. bronze boar from Hounslow near London almost certainly surmounted a helmet, she reports. Green, *Animals*, 46 and illustrated in fig. 5.12.

¹²⁴ Cecile O'Rahilly, trans. *Táin Bó Cúalnge from the Book of Leinster* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1984), 219. Hereafter cited as *Táin Bó Cúalnge*.

¹²⁵ Steve Taylor, ed. *The Story of Mac Dathó's Pig*. <<http://vassun.vassar.edu/~sttaylor/MacDatho/>>.

¹²⁶ Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliothèque*, V, XXV, 4; transl. Tierney, 250.

¹²⁷ Green discusses rituals in which a sacred animal was eaten by men and some of the flesh left for the gods to consume. Green, *Animals*, 95. In Zen Buddhism today, food is left for the spirit to consume, with the knowledge that birds and other creatures will find it.

¹²⁸ The pig was stigmatized as lazy and stupid. Among the Jews, it was considered especially impure and unfit for consumption. Jacques Voisenet, *Bêtes et Hommes dans le Monde Médiéval. Le bestiaire des clercs du Ve au XIIIe siècle* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers 2000), 33. "The Greeks could not decide whether the Jews worshipped swine or abominated them," according to George Frazer, who points out that taboos on eating sacred animals were frequent in the ancient world, and he suggests the Jews may originally have considered the swine as sacred rather than unclean and that was the source of their culinary disdain. Frazer, 546-7.

¹²⁹ Matthew 7:6.

¹³⁰ Voisenet, 141.

¹³¹ See my note 69 for this chapter, above.

¹³² “And he was entrusted [in Ireland, as a slave of Milius, son of Brian] with the herding of swine, and it was a mistake of him who ordained thus, for it was meeter that Patrick should be a shepherd of sheep, that is, of the sons of life....” Stokes, ed., *Tripartite Life*, I, 17.

¹³³ Rawlinson B 512, fo. 11, b.1, quoted in Stokes, ed., *Tripartite Life*, I, 94-5.

¹³⁴ Rawlinson B 512, fo. 12, b.1, quoted in Stokes, ed., *Tripartite Life*, I, 198-99.

¹³⁵ Cows and bulls are also prominent in Irish lore, in part due to the importance of cattle in the Irish economy. Ireland, with the exception of ninth-century Viking Dublin, did not mint coinage, but instead the cow served as a basic unit of value, just as it had for Continental Celts. Raftery, 125.

¹³⁶ In one passage, the bull’s virtues are clear, and probably relate to earlier associations with virility: “The bull called Donn Cúailnge would bull fifty heifers every day.” *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, 174. He was a huge bull: fifty youths played games every evening on his back, and his shadow could protect a hundred warriors from the heat, and provide shelter in the cold. Also, the Morrígan, a magical being, changes herself into a white, red-eared heifer. *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, 194.

¹³⁷ In the Iron Age faunal remains from Dún Ailinne, County Kildare, 19,000 bones were identified, with cattle represented by 53.9 percent of the bones, and pig bones made up 36.3 percent of the total. Raftery, 125. Bull iconography is discussed by Ross, 384-90. Olmsted says some forty statuettes of the bull were discovered in Gaul alone, with many others found in Britain, perhaps imported from Gaul. Olmsted, 146. Green depicts three examples of three-horned bulls from Britain, one with two anthropomorphic deities rising from between his horns and tail. Green, *Gods*, figs. 83-85.

¹³⁸ After a king died, a bull-feast was ordered. In this ceremony, “a bull used to be killed by them and thereof one man would eat his fill and drink its broth, and a spell of truth was chanted over him in his bed. Whosoever he would see in his sleep would be king, and the sleeper would perish if he uttered a falsehood.” Whitley Stokes, trans., “The Destruction of Da Derga’s Hostel,” *Revue Celtique* 22 (1901), 9-61, 165-215, 283-329, 390-437; this on pp. 22-3. See also “Serglige Conculainn,” in E. Windische and W. Stokes, eds., *Irische Texte mit Übersetzungen und Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900-), I, 200 and 213.

¹³⁹ British hunting dogs were prized in the Mediterranean, and Strabo mentions their importation into Rome. Strabo IV, IV, 3.

¹⁴⁰ Green, *Gods*, 175, describes the dog as “ubiquitous among Celtic cult representations,” and discusses bones found in ritual deposits in *Animals*, 51, 57-8, 83, 98, 102-05. Green, *Animals*, 155 and 176, for information on British burials with dogs.

Apollo was an archer and healer in Graeco-Roman mythology. At Nettleton Shrub in Wiltshire, Apollo is called by the Celtic epithet, Cunomaglus (Hound-Lord). Green, *Gods*, 160. Hunting and healing are curious associates; the obvious link is with dogs which are common to both concepts. Green, *Gods*, 161, Ross states that the dog was essentially connected with thermal cults. Ross, 439.

¹⁴¹ Over one-hundred-twenty altars to this native goddess have been recovered from the sea near the coast of Holland, dating to around 200 C.E., and she is invariably accompanied by a dog; she and her dog also appear at healing sites in present-day Germany. Green discusses a possible cult based in Holland, where evidence for two sanctuaries exist. She says that Nehalennia’s name appears on dedications, and her image, invariably accompanied by a dog, was depicted on over 120 altars recovered from the ocean, probably from a sanctuary of around 200 C.E. that later sank into the sea; she sees the dog as either a healing or “underworld emblem.” Green, *Gods*, 85-7 and 166. An equivalent goddess was Sequana, of the French Seine River area, who received offerings in the form of statuettes of people with dog companions. Ross, 424.

¹⁴² Green, *Gods*, 166. She says the god, Nodens at Lydney is a healing god; that this site was a healing sanctuary is indicated by oculists’ stamps, among other things. She adds that hunting may also be represented by dedications to Silvanus Nodens. Green, *Gods*, 176. She refers to a link between healers, dogs and a cult of Silvanus is reflected in iconography of a Gaulish hammer-god of Burgundy and the Lower Rhone Valley. In Provence, the hammer-god often depicted with leaf-crown and wolfskin cloak. She adds that on altars, for example one found at Glanum, France, hammers were engraved there and the altars dedicated to a local version of Silvanus. “Here and further north in Burgundy, images of the hammer-god are distinctive in their inclusion of a dog, seated at master's feet and gazing up at him.” Green, *Animals*, 199.

¹⁴³ Image reproduced from Harbison, *Pre-Christian Ireland*, fig. 137.

Helen Lanigan Wood, “Dogs and Celtic Deities. Pre-Christian Stone Carvings in Armagh,” in *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 16 (1000), 26-33. She reproduces the photograph of the three sculptures, her fig. 6. Another sculpture found here is the Tanderagee idol, reproduced in Barry Raftery, *Pagan Celtic Ireland. The Enigma of the Irish Iron Age* (London, Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1994), fig. 75.

¹⁴⁴ Wood, 33. Some scholars have long thought that Armagh was once a pagan sanctuary. See Etienne Rhyne, “Celtic Stone Idols in Ireland,” *The Iron Age in the Irish Sea Province: C.B.A. Research Report 9* (1972), 79-93; <<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/adsdata/cbaresrep/pdf/009/00906001.pdf>>. Wood reports, however, that the name evidence for this is drawn from place-names and the archaeological remains of a hilltop enclosure on the site, characterizing the evidence as “weak.” Wood, 33. She directs the reader to C. Gaskell Brown and A. E. T. Harper, “Excavations on Cathedral Hill, Armagh 1968,” *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* (1984), 109-61.

¹⁴⁵ *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, 162. Culand tells Cú Chulainn and his father, Conchobar, how displeased he is at losing the hound: "...my substance now is wasted, my livelihood a lost livelihood. Good was the servant you have taken from me. He used to guard my herds and flocks and cattle for me."

Cú Chulainn offers to raise a "whelp of that hound's breeding...until he be fit for action like his sire. I shall myself be the hound to protect Culand's flocks and cattle and land during that time." Upon which Cathbad, the druid, changes his name from Sétanta to Cú Chulainn, or Culand's Hound.

¹⁴⁶ See Lady Gregory, *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, pp. 335-6 for his encounter with hags cooking a dog.

¹⁴⁷ Mac Dathó realizes that if he gives the dog to one or the other requesters, the one denied the hound will attack him, so he contrives to award the hound to each separately, and let the dog decide which master(s) it will serve. It chooses Conchobar of the Ulstermen, which results in a brawl at a feast attended by both sides. Nora Chadwick, trans., "Mac Dathó's Pig" (part of the Ulster Cycle of tales): <<http://adminstaff.vassar.edu/sttaylor/MacDatho/>>. Chadwick lists six medieval texts as sources for the story.

¹⁴⁸ "The evidence is without parallel in the British Isles," according to excavator Ruairi Ó Baoill of the Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland. Dog bones are occasionally found in medieval towns elsewhere but only a small proportion seem to have been eaten." The article on the Irish eating dogs during the medieval era is found in "Dogs on the menu in medieval Northern Ireland, *British Archaeology online* 53 (June 2000), 12 April 2006. <<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/ba/ba53/ba53news.html>>.

¹⁴⁹ See Green, *Gods*, 180.

¹⁵⁰ *Cormac's Glossary*, 91-2.

¹⁵¹ Carey seems to suggest Cormac was an authority whose ideas resounded and wove throughout texts "spanning over four centuries." The public nature of the crosses point to their roots within the same "popular" cultural traditions or leanings as those represented by Cormac's texts, and, at the same time, they also represented Catholic orthodoxy. Condemnation of pagan practices, whether actual practices with well-defined historical roots or simply a belief that pagan practices once existed and possessed magical efficacy would certainly fall well within the objectives of Catholic patronage for the crosses. See John Carey, "The three things required of a poet," *Ériu* 48 (1997), 41-58. Reproduced with permission by *Celtic Digital Initiative*, <http://www.ucc.ie/academic/smg/CDI/articles.html>>.

¹⁵² Green states that goats do not appear to have been common in burials, although she says it is "often impossible to distinguish goats from sheep in faunal assemblages." Green, *Animals*, 124. Goats were buried entire as part of the funeral cortege at Soissons (115); and there is some evidence for ritual goat burials at Danebury (124 and her fig. 5.2).

¹⁵³ Interesting is Green's observation that goats are not hearty animals, and frequently die of exposure in cold climates, making them less suitable to farmers living in northern climes than the more robust sheep. Nevertheless, goat horns, sometimes ritually chopped from the skull, have been found in Britain. Green, *Animals*, 17; the goat horns are discussed on p. 42. Green states that horns, associated by the Celts with bulls, billy-goats and rams, represented both force and male fertility. Green, *Animals*, 227. Horns are certainly the most emphatic feature on a Romano-British goat figurine found in Scotland, reproduced in Green, *Animals*, fig 2.26.

¹⁵⁴ Author of a treatise on the origin of the human race, a document de Jubainville states seems to be analogous to one which serves as an introduction to the *Leabhar Baghala*, in the Book of Leinster and preserved in the *Leabhar na hUidhre* (Book of the Dun Cow), transcribed ca. 1100, has a chapter entitled, "History of Monsters, or of the Fomorians and Dwarfs." He reports that the author begins with an account, taken from Genesis, of the circumstances which led to Noah's cursing his son Shem. "Behold," he adds, "how it came about that Shem was the first man to be cursed after the Deluge. It is he that has begotten dwarfs, the Fomorians, men with goats' heads, and all deformed beings that are found among men. That is the reason the descendants of Shem were exterminated, and their country given over to the Children of Israel, because of the curse their father had put upon him. Shem is the ancestor of monsters. They are not descended from Cain, as the Goidels say. De Jubainville cites the *Leabhar na hUidhre*, 2, cols. 1 and 2, trans. Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, I (1870), 257. De Jubainville adds that the oldest Irish texts say nothing of these Biblical origins ascribed to the Fomorians by the Irish Christian scholars. The Book of Invasions simply says that the Fomorians came into Ireland over sea, citing the Book of Leinster, 6, col. 1, lines 39, 40, 46, 47, 53. He adds that "they are demons, veritable demons in human form," according to the twelfth-century *Chronicum Scotorum* (ed. Hennessy, 6). Finally, de Jubainville points, out, the piece couples the Fomorians with the goat-headed men, in Irish *gobor-chind*, "who seem to be a subdivision of or counterpart to the Fomorians," but which he thinks may represent a mistranslation and should read "horse-headed men." In any case, he concludes, these goat heads or horse heads "are the oppressors of mankind, and the divers races that have colonised Ireland have had to make war upon them." In Irish legend, he states, "the Fomorians demanded annually two-thirds of the children born within the year...in obedience to the dictates of a cruel religion." De Jubainville, 52-58. Of course, whether this text was considered by the cross patrons is unknown, and if so, how they translated *gobor-chind* is also unknown. But it may indicate, however tenuous the likelihood, that a thread existed between goat-heads and demons to whom sacrifices were made, making it one of the few possibilities for a tradition that considered goat-headed men, and rendering them evil, during the early Christian period in Ireland.

Saint Augustine addressed the issues of "certain monstrous races of men, spoken of in secular history," and asked if they had sprung from Noah's sons. While he doesn't address a goat-headed man, he describes others with one eye in the middle of their forehead, some with feet turned backwards, and other anomalies. He does mention here (and elsewhere) the dog-headed Cynocephali. He concludes that "no matter what unusual appearance he presents...nor how peculiar he is in some power, part of the quality of his nature...he springs from that one protoplast." He adds, "For God, the Creator of all, knows where and when

each thing ought to be, or to have been created...”He says that all monstrous men are descended from one man, namely, Noah. Augustine, *The City of God*, XVI, 8.

De Jubainville explains further that “the queen of night is the moon, distinguished among the stars by her crescent form, the one she usually presents to our gaze,” and this crescent is transformed iconographically into the horns of a cow, bull, or goat. He links this god to the Irish concept of the Fomorians, “people with goats' heads,” and in Gaul to the numerous horned [anthropomorphic] gods.” De Jubainville, 59.

¹⁵⁵ Scholars agree the ram acquired both war and chthonic associations. See Bober, 26. Ross discusses the ram's war symbolism (102 and 243); she calls the ram a chthonic symbol (198). The ram-headed serpent that often accompanies Celtic anthropomorphic horned gods, discussed later in this chapter, is analyzed by Ross (198). She says ferocity is emphasized by ram horns on a British deity from Netherby, north of Carlisle. She also links the ram with healing cults (243 and 382). Green discusses the ram as a war symbol in *Dictionary*, 174.

¹⁵⁶ Bober, 26-7. She refers to one at Delos. Ross links fertility with a ram- or bull-horned god in Britain and Gaul; p. 213. Ross links the ram with Mercury and Mars (428). Green links the ram with the classical Mercury as a fertility aspect, in *Dictionary*, 173. She says the Ram also accompanied a couple image of Mercury and Rosmerta in Britain at Bath, *Dictionary*, 174.

¹⁵⁷ Green, *Animals*, 237. Espérandieu, *Germanie*, nos. 77, 292, 294 and 425 provide just a few examples. See also Mars with a horned helmet, Green, *Dictionary*, p. 141.

¹⁵⁸ In bestiaries, according to Debra Strickland, the goat, frequently associated with sins of the flesh, was so lustful that this tendency affected it physically, turning its eye pupils sideways. Debra Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews. Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 78. The goat, and its association with lust, is discussed also by Voisenet, 32-3 and 62. He points out that during ancient times, the sins of the tribes of Israel were “transferred” to goats, and the animals were sacrificed to atone for them; in the Old Testament books of Leviticus and Numbers, the goat is mentioned many times in this sacrificial role. Voisenet, 31. The goat as sacrificial animal offered to the Lord for sin is mentioned in Leviticus in the following passages of the Douay-Rheims version of the Bible: 4:23, 4:28, 5:6, 9:3, 9:15-16, 16:15, 16:18, 16:27, 22:27, and 23:19. In Numbers, the passages are 7:16, 7:22, 7:28, 7:34, 7:40, 7:46, 7:52, 7:58, 7:64, 7:70, 7:76, 7:82, 15:24, 15:27, 28:15, 29:5, 29:11, 29:16, 29:19, 29:22, 29:25, 29:28, 29:31, 29:34, 29:38. Also in Ezechiel 43:22, 43:25, offered daily in Ezechiel 45:23. Also in Leviticus, mention of the goat as “emissary,” assigned the task of carrying the peoples' sins into the wilderness, occurs twice (Leviticus 16:8-10 and 16:20-26). *Douay Reims Catholic Bible Online*. <<http://www.drbo.org/>>.

¹⁵⁹ Green states that horned birds are common in Urnfield imagery from the later Bronze Age. Green, *Animals*, 234. See also Ross, 176. A bird with goatlike horns, which typically curve backwards rather than projecting forwards as bull horns do, appears on a tile from France, copied in a drawing by Anne Ross (her fig. 145). Horns appear on horses, on the

tops of boar heads (as distinct from tusks), and triple-horned bulls were depicted several times. Green describes a firedog ornament fashioned to look like a horse's head (probably actually a bull) with horns, in *Animals*, 141. She describes engraved horses at Mouriés, one of which is depicted with three horns, citing F. Benoit, *L'Art primitif Méditerranéen de la Vallée du Rhône* (Aix-en-Provence: Publications des Annales de la Faculté des Lettres, 1969), PL. 8, 9 and 11; Green, *Animals*, 150. Green illustrates a three-horned boar, her fig. 8.14, in Green, *Animals*, and she remarks on the strangeness of the image since the boar is hornless in real life (p. 219). Triple-horned bulls are discussed in Green, *Animals*, 215, 221-4, 227 and 234; in Ross, 69, 174-5, 420, and 440, n. 11.

The god Cernunnos is another horned god, a typical representation of which is seen on the Gundestrup Cauldron, in which he is shown with all the attributes that have come to be associated with this god: he is seated in a cross-legged position, depicted with deer antlers, wearing a Celtic torc around his neck and holding a ram-headed serpent. The Cernunnos identification has been expanded from a single inscription to include many similarly-posed horned deities discussed and illustrated by scholars. In Espe'randieu's volume on the images from France, *Gaule*, his illustration no. 3133, a partly-destroyed relief sculpture from Paris is photographed, with the letters, "ERNUNNOS," appearing above a an antlered god with both goatlike and human ears, and wearing a torc on each antler. Discussed by Ross, 180-1. Garrett Olmsted criticized the tendency that "every Celtic horned god should be called Cernunnos" after the single inscription on the Paris monument. He adds that female as well as male figures sitting in this pose and having stag horns negate the value of both these attributions as the identifying traits of a single deity. (Ross discusses examples of horned female deities in Kent and Suffolk, Britain. See Ross, 192 and fig. 103. Green speculates that horns on female deities may represent fertility or prosperity. Green, *Animals*, 237.)

Olmsted also says some of the figures Ross attributes to a British version of a horned Cernunnos-type god are dubious since most of the British examples have "bovine or ovicaprid horns," whereas the Gaulish figures have stag's antlers. Garrett S. Olmsted, *The Gundestrup Cauldron: Its Archaeological Context, the Style and Iconography of its Portrayed Motifs, and their Narration of a Gaulish Version of Tain Bo Cuailnge* (Brussels: Collection Latomus, CLXII, 1979), 160-1, 172-220 and 202. But Ross states that "regional variations [exist] in the attributes and characteristics of this cult figure," and she divides the images into two categories, one probably coming from Belgic peoples who imported the god from Gaul, and an indigenous cult in Britain. Ross, 179. It is true that other types of horns appear on Romano-Celtic-era images, suggesting the horn shape, and its species-specific associations, was not consistent among the various horned divinities. A first-century A.D. human head with bull horns from France is one example, pictured in Green, *Animals*, fig. 8.22 and Green, *Druids*, 34. See Esperadiou, no. 130, for a crescent-shaped headdress on an anthropomorphic deity. See also Green, *Gods*, fig. 97 for a strange, unrecognizable type of horns on a god depicted in a relief from Chesters, Northumberland. A god wearing a helmet with sinuously shaped horns appears in Green, *Dictionary*, 223, middle image.

Green states that the seated cross-legged pose may not be significant to the deity, but may represent the typical posture described by Diodorus, who observed: When dining they all sit not on chairs, but on the earth, strewing beneath them the skins of wolves or dogs. Diodorus Siculus, V, XXVIII, 4, trans. Tierney, 250; see Green's discussion in *Animals*, 232.

The Gaulish Mercury is another god often represented with horns, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Caesar had identified Mercury as the god most often depicted by the Celts, and he may have been referring to a horned god who became linked with Mercury. Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* VI, 17 and 18. The Celtic Mars was also sometimes horned. See Ross, 202-05 and 212. See image in Green, *Dictionary*, 141. Horned gods are particularly abundant in northern England, some having rams' curved horns. Ross, 115.

Similarly-conceived antlered gods predate the inscribed Cernunnos monument, with the iconography traced back to the fourth-century B.C.E. Green likens the Cernunnos imagery to a very early, fourth-century B.C.E. rock-cut image of a god depicted with antlers and torcs, which she reproduces as a drawing, making the image clearer than photographs in other sources: her fig. 3.13. Green, *Animals*, 231.

Ross traces the cult of the horned god into Ireland, based on literature and another image appearing on the Kells Market Cross (fig. 2), and concludes that his appearance on the Kells Cross may represent the pagan god that was most widely revered transformed into a figure of Satan or the Anti-Christ. Ross, 189-90. She adds it is likely that a cult of the horned god would have existed in Ireland, since images of the god appear in all other part of the western Celtic world. Ross, 191.

Green discusses horns representing sanctity (Green, *Animals*, 146 and 234), as a supernatural element (Green, *Animals*, 234), aggressive and virile force (Green, *Animals*, 234, and destruction and fertility (Green, *Animals*, 219 and 227). Ross states that horns are symbolic of virility and strength (175).

¹⁶⁰ Green, *Animals*, 146.

¹⁶¹ Image reproduced from Klingender, fig. 94.

¹⁶² Green, *Animals*, 63, lists a find at Digeon (Somme), which she states provides evidence of ritual activity, and such antlers may have been worn by a shaman-priest. Also, a deposit was found at Wasperton, Britain, where face down in a pit was a stone inscribed *feliciter*; on its upper surface, below a layer of burnt material, were two sets of unburnt antlers with bits of skull attached, in an arrangement forming a square in which a fire had been lit. Green, *Gods*, 182.

The fashioning of antler headdresses is ancient. Excavations at a British mesolithic site called Starr Carr, dated between the ninth and eighth centuries B.C.E., revealed almost two hundred stag antlers still attached to their skulls, suggesting they were prized by their hunters, along with more than twenty antler headdresses fashioned for human wear. Evidence suggests Starr Carr was both a meeting and settlement area, and comparison with related sites suggest it may have been a center for stag-centered rituals. Paul Mellars, "Revising the Mesolithic at Starr Carr." *British Archaeology* 4 (October 1999). 2006. *Council for British Archaeology Online*. <<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/ba/ba48/ba48feat.html#mellars>>.

¹⁶³ Crowns and were headdresses found at Hockwold, Norfolk and at Cavenham, Suffolk suggest pagan "clergy" dressed fir ceremonies. Metal face masks found at Bath and Tarbes

could have been made for a priest to hold in front of his or her face during religious ceremonies. The Tarbes mask may date as early as the third century B.C.E. Green, *Gods*, 23-4.

A photograph of the Petrie Crown is fig. 40 in Green, *Celtic Art*. The image of the Cork crown of my fig. 34 is reproduced from Green, *Celtic Art*, fig. 72. Raftery describes the two horned headpieces as coming from Cork and another of unknown provenance; both “consist of wholly bronze horns folded and sealed just as trumpets were, but on an even finer level.” Raftery, 154. The three horns are pictured in Raftery’s figs. 60 and 61, and discussed on the same page.

¹⁶⁴ Diodorus Siculus, V, 30; trans. Tierney, 251. One of these helmets appears on a stone stela from Bormio, Sondrio, of the fifth century B.C.E., pictured in Moscati, *et al*, eds., *The Celts*, p. 104. An actual helmet made of bronze, of fourth century B.C.E. date and found in Berlin, has columnal horns of an indistinguishable animal type, which resembles one of the helmets worn by the mounted calvary pictured on the Gundestrup Cauldron, reproduced in Moscati, *et al*, eds., *The Celts*, p. 184.

¹⁶⁵ The bronze plaque from Torlunda, now in the Stockholm Museum, is reproduced from Cecile L. Curle, “The Chronology of the Early Christian Monuments of Scotland,” *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 74 (1939-40), 60-115, PL. 29d.

¹⁶⁶ *Táin Bó Cúalgne*, 201.

¹⁶⁷ Crowns and were headdresses found at Hockwold, Norfolk and at Cavenham, Suffolk suggest pagan “clergy” dressed for ceremonies. Metal face masks found at Bath and Tarbes could have been made for a priest to hold in front of his or her face during religious ceremonies. The Tarbes mask may date as early as the third century B.C.E. Green, *Gods*, 23-4.

¹⁶⁸ See Bober for in-depth research on the Cernunnos or horned god images.

¹⁶⁹ See W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites. The Fundamental Institutions*, (1894; reprint New York: Schocken Books 1972). Smith claims the unclean, abominable beasts and birds associated in orthodox Jewish thought and in the Book of Revelation with devils, doleful creatures and foul spirits were the sacred animals linked in some cases with the deities of the ancient oriental religions and in others with more primitive rituals of the pre-Yahwedic Jewish cult. He refers to chapters 65 and 66 of Isaiah, in which apostate Jews are condemned for sacrificing and eating the forbidden creatures. This is discussed in Klingender, 213.

¹⁷⁰ Dorothy Ann Bray describes “motifs which cannot be related to Christian tradition” in Irish saints’ tales, but which may point to “an older stratum of beliefs, folktales, myths and so on.” Some of these include animals, such as a “brilliantly white cow.” Dorothy Ann Bray, “The Study of Folk-Motifs in Early Irish Hagiography,” in *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars*, John, Carey, Máire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain, eds, (Dublin: Four Courts Press), 2001, 269-77, this on p. 274. Adomnán was born ca. 628 and died in 704.

Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe (England and New York: Penguin Books, 1995), preface.

¹⁷¹ See Carola Hicks, *Animals in Early Medieval Art* and Miranda Green, *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth*.

¹⁷² Hicks 181-2. She points out that David was not only an ancestor of Christ, but also his precursor: David's appearance as the Good Shepherd was conceived as early as the second century C.E. Roman catacomb paintings.

David pictured as a harpist appears on both Castledermot crosses, the North Cross at Graiguenamanagh, the Kells Market Cross and a cross at Ullard. Interestingly, Ullard is also said by Harbison to have a *Temptation of Saint Anthony* image, but the stone is too damaged to assess the contents of the scene to which he refers. Also it appears on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnois, and the Durrow Cross. See a list of David playing the harp or lyre images in Harbison's tables 1 and 2, 387-90.

¹⁷³ Olsen, 6.

¹⁷⁴ William Short, *Saints in the World of Nature: The Animal Story as Spiritual Parable in Medieval Hagiography (900-1200)* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, Facultas Theologi, Institutum Spiritualitatis, 1983), 207.

¹⁷⁵ Short, 207.

¹⁷⁶ MacCana, 47-8.

¹⁷⁷ *Acta sanctorum Hibernaie. Reproduced at the Ordnance Survey, Dublin* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1948). Entry for 1 February. Also, Walter Berschin discusses Brigit and a fox, cattle, goats, pigs, fish and ducks. See Walter Berschin, "Radegundis and Brigit," in *Studies in Irish Hagiography*, John Carey, Maire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain, eds. (Dublin and Portland, OR: Four Courts, 2001), 312.

¹⁷⁸ Adomnán of Iona, *Life of St Columba*, Richard Sharpe, trans. (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1995), II, 27.

¹⁷⁹ C. Ferguson O'Meara, "Saint Columba and the Conversion of the Animals," *Micrologus: Natura, scienze e società medievali. Nature, Sciences and Medieval Societies* 8:1 (2000), 79-101, this on p. 95.

¹⁸⁰ Recounted in Voisenet, 148-9; cf.. *Révue Celtique* 35 (1914), 357 and 360. It is interesting to consider this story in light of the archaeological evidence that the Irish ate dogs.

¹⁸¹ Maire MacNeill, *The Festival of Lughnasa. A Study of the Survival of the Celtic Festival of the Beginning of Harvest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 129-30.

¹⁸² Bede, *Vita s. Cuthberti*, 21. “Qui enim auctori omnium creaturarum fideliter et integro corde famulatur, non est mirandum si eius imperiis ac uotis omnis creatura deseruiat. At nos plerunque iccirco subiectae nobis creaturae dominium perdimus, quia Domino et creatori omnium ipsi seruire negligimus.” B. Colgrave, trans. *Two lives of Saint Cuthbert. A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede’s Prose Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 224-5. Bede continues: “...for the most part we lose dominion over the creation which was made subject to us, because we ourselves neglect to serve the Lord and Creator of all things.” Colgrave explains that Cuthbert’s friendliness with animals and birds is both Egyptian and Irish tradition. Colgrave, note on “Animals and birds,” 320.

¹⁸³ Attributed to Saint Patrick. Discussed by Short, 95. Whitley Stokes says the actual poem known as the Deer’s Cry was taken from a copy of the *Liber Hymnorum* in Trinity College, dated to the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth century, but that the story of transformation “seems to represent the lost passage of the Tripartite Life.” Stokes, ed., *Tripartite Life*, I, ci. The chanting occurred during the time that Patrick lighted the paschale fire on the Hill of Slane, violating the king’s orders that no fires be lit before the ritual Samhain fire was lit, and the following day, when he traveled to the Hill of Tara, where he met and defeated King Loegaire’s two druids. Stokes, ed., *Tripartite Life*, I, cxlii. And from there, Patrick went to Telltown, site of an ancient pagan festival carried over into Christian times, and where the king’s brother, Carbre, sought to slay the saint. Egerton 93, fol. 3a. 1-3b.1, quoted in Stokes, I, 40-51. The actual poem, which protects Patrick “against black laws of heathenry...against craft of idoltry, against spells of women and smiths and wizards” appears in Egerton 93, fol. 31.1-3b.1, and is quoted in Stokes, ed., I, 48-51.

¹⁸⁴ In his *Life of St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne* (d. 687), Bede (d. 735) recounts the tale of birds destroying the saint’s crop just as it was reaching. The saint rebuked them: “Why do you touch crops you did not sow? Maybe you need them more than I? If you have received God’s permission, do what He allows. If not, get out of here and never again harm another’s goods.” At his words the whole flock of birds departed and never again harmed his crops. B. Colgrave, trans., *Two lives of Saint Cuthbert*, ch. 5 in the anonymous work (pp. 100-03), and chs. 19 and 20 in Bede’s (220-5). Colgrave’s note on ravens states that the medieval tradition describes the birds as crows, but Aelfric, in his homily on Cuthbert, calls them ravens (citing A. J. Wyatt, *Anglo-Saxon Reader*, Cambridge, 1925, 85). Colgrave then reports that J. T. Fowler (ed., *The Life of St Cuthbert in English Verse*, Surtees Society, 1891, 69), points out that there are no trees on Farne in which crows would build nests, but only rocks (on which crows do sometimes build), leading him to believe the birds were probably jackdaws, which “abound there now.” Colgrave, 327.

Short discusses this episode under the heading, “The Power of Command,” under which he explains, “Legends of this kind are a variation on the more general them of dominion over creation. Human dominion and animal obedience is pictured as a reality for holy persons, particularly for hermits.” Short, 48.

¹⁸⁵ Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, II, 26.

¹⁸⁶ O’Meara, 83.

¹⁸⁷ Picard describes, for example, Jonas's lives of the nuns of Faremontiers, in which a boar is actually the devil. Jonas, II, 22. Jean-Michel Picard, "The Marvellous in Irish and Continental Saints' Lives of the Merovingian Period," in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. H. B. Clarke and Mary Brennan (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports 113 (1981), 91-103; the quote is on p. 93 , and the boar story is recounted on pp. 98-9.

CHAPTER II

LORD OF THE BEASTS: ADAPTATION OF AN ANCIENT COMPOSITION

The composition consistently used for the Irish *Temptation of Saint Anthony* images found on several crosses, including the Moone Abbey Cross, the North and South Crosses at Castledermot, the Kells Market Cross and the Monasterboice Tall Cross, draws from an ancient lineage. This tripartite arrangement is found in other cross images, as I shall discuss later in this chapter, defined by a central human figure surrounded on either side by two zoomorphic creatures depicted with heads in strict profile, rendered in the same scale as the human. The substitution of animal-headed human figures for four-legged beasts does not interfere with scholar's recognition of the compositional formula: numerous authors remark upon the composition's ancient Near Eastern roots.¹

Francis Klingender, in his book on animals in medieval art, traces the image to a proto-literate phase of Mesopotamian archaeology called the Uruk period, named after remains found on the site of the ancient Sumerian city of Uruk, associated with literary hero, Gilgamesh (fourth and third millennium B.C.E.).² From these sites, many friezes and cylinder seals have been recovered, which Klingender states "provide a continuous record of changing fashions in Mesopotamian art for almost three thousand years."³ The seals, which preceded writing and were continued into a literate era, originated as documents of ownership and trade marks. Designs were engraved on the exterior of the stone cylindrical forms, from which impressions were made when the cylinder was rolled over

clay. Clay tablets so marked were used to seal bundles of merchandise or storage jars, and the seals themselves were sometimes worn as pendants.⁴

Many of the related compositions were illustrations of religious myths and rituals involving animals. Klingender traces the development of the animal scenes, illustrating an early example of an Assyrian seal of sixth-century B.C.E. date that depicts a central figure—in a twisted pose with body facing forward and head in profile—grasping the hind quarters of two lions in profile (fig. 38).⁵ A calmer mood is found in a frieze from Uruk, showing a figure who faces forward with head turned in profile, and who holds flowering tree branches as food for two, presumably sacred, animals (fig. 39).⁶ In another stage of iconographic development, possibly to illustrate scenes from the Gilgamesh epic, a Sumerian seal picturing a human hero and a composite bull-man show the companions grasping the limbs of two bulls in a clear representation of domination (fig. 40).⁷ Klingender names this compositional type a “beast-hero combat,” although other scholars call it “the Gilgamesh motif,” or “Lord of the Animals.”⁸ In some instances, no trace of a natural setting appears, leaving the figures isolated and surrounded only by text (fig. 41). The generation of artists representing Sumerian culture were “increasingly attracted by the beast-fight motif,” Klingender remarks, and the “next few centuries of Sumerian seal-design are marked by ceaseless experiments in heraldic grouping to enhance the expressive power of this motif as a symbol of cosmic strife,” in which the human hero is always victorious.⁹ In some cases, different species were joined into composite figures, including combinations of human torsos with lion’s legs, thereby substituting “monsters” for the beasts.¹⁰ Mesopotamian composite monsters assumed a “terrifying aspect,”

according to Klingender, statues of which may have influenced the Old Testament visions of Ezekiel (see Appendix 2).

The image of the central figure confronted by beasts is one type that does not appear in Roman catacomb paintings, which are considered by some scholars to have been a primary iconographical source for many scenes found on Irish crosses.¹¹ At a glance, similarities are striking between three-figure compositions found on the fourth-century sarcophagus of Junius Bassus in Rome and a number of scenes carved on numerous Irish crosses.¹² The repetition of three-figure compositions on the Irish crosses have to do, at least in part, with available space on shaft and cross arms, and the need to create and distribute figures large enough to view clearly from ground level. Evidence for this strategy is underscored on wider crosses, such as Muiredach's Cross at Monasterboice, where the cross shaft is considerably larger than those under consideration and accommodates larger compositions of five or more figures (fig. 15); also on the two narrower faces of many crosses, where smaller, single- and two-figure scenes are common.¹³

At the same time, the number three possessed spiritual significance. Edouard Salin, in his book on Merovingian art, states that compositions containing three and four elements are so common that Carl Jung considered them archetypal; he states, furthermore, that the number three is universally significant among religions, as found in myths, legends, magical rites and superstitions.¹⁴ Supernatural importance had been long assigned the number three, before Christianity's concept of the trinity was conceived: aspects of three—three faces, horns, aspects of deities—were so constant in pagan Celtic art and so frequently mentioned in Irish tales that a concept called Celtic "triplism"

appears in scholarship on these works.¹⁵ Perhaps the standard number of figures represented in cross scenes was chosen to bring the pagan concept of triplism under Christian authority, repeating and endorsing the three aspects of the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Salin says the *Lord of the Beast* images arrived in Europe from the Middle East via two routes: a Christian version traveling to Gaul from the Mediterranean area, and a pagan image transmitted to Northern Europe by the widely-traveled Norsemen.¹⁶ The compositional type found currency among bronze articles created in Luristan (western Iran) and Merovingian Gaul simultaneously.¹⁷ One of the best-known examples of the composition comes from England, found among other treasures in the sixth-century Sutton Hoo ship burial, as decorative attachments to a purse lid where the image is repeated twice (fig. 42). A detail of the image shows that the central figure physically engages with the beasts: his legs cross over theirs, and his are crossed again by the beasts' tails.¹⁸ If defending himself, one might expect the central figure's arms to be crossed in a protective gesture; instead, he touches the rampant beasts' paws, which rest on his shoulders, with his hands, his arms forming a self-encircling, and perhaps magical, gesture.¹⁹

As Salin's comment suggests, the Vikings also made images similar to the *Temptation* compositions. Among a group of four plaques found in Torslunda, Sweden, one shows a man surrounded by two beasts in profile and standing on hind legs (fig. 21).²⁰ Here, the central figure clearly protects himself with dagger held in one hand and a sword apparently piercing the belly of the animal on the right. He appears to be wearing a heavily-textured woven garment as added protection, perhaps indicating a composition of

chain mail or braided leather. The animals' paws restrain his upper arm, and their legs cross his own legs, and his are depicted as if representing vigorous motion, contributing to the sense that he struggles against his assailants. True to the mood of the Mesopotamian images that Klingender calls "beast-fight compositions," such as the cylinder seal image of fig. 38, the Norse artist depicts a man's struggle with beasts, but here engaged in mortal battle, rather than having already subdued his attackers, as the Mesopotamian images show. At the same time, the Torslunda beasts have open mouths placed near the central figure's ears, suggesting supernatural, interspecies communication—that is, assuming they are not humans wearing animal skins, as Helen Roe suggests.²¹

Numerous scenes depicted on the Irish crosses show three figures in an arrangement similar to that found in the *Temptation* scenes, with two iconographically related figures surrounding a distinct central figure. In some scenes, such as the *Mocking*, *Flagellation* or *Arrest of Christ* (figs. 43 and 44), physical confrontation and restraint placed on the central figure by the two others bring to mind the *Temptation* compositions.²² By way of contrast, however, the "evil" soldiers who assault Christ assume a profile stance, but turn their heads away from Christ to face the viewer. Only in one or two examples that I have observed are the confronted figures in Irish three-figure compositions rendered in strict profile. One of the most common is the depiction of the profile seated Abraham preparing to behead his son, Isaac (fig. 45).²³ Another is an unusual and unidentified image found only on the Kells Market Cross (fig. 46), in which a horned-and-bearded human engages physically with two animals standing on their hind legs.²⁴

Profiles better define animal features, certainly, but in the *Temptation* images, the pose suggests the beasts' intent focus on their victim, rather than the viewer. In later medieval optical theory, *spiritus* was thought to emanate from the eye, making tangible the process by which the eye illuminates the world for the beholder, but also joining the one who looks with the object beheld. In this way, beholders "could be literally trapped by the gaze of the image," according to Michael Camille.²⁵ This later theory may have had origins in earlier eras, with regard to the concept of the evil eye, for example.

Thinking about the gaze in this way, one can imagine that the carvers of the *Temptation* scenes did not want these supernatural creatures to pose a threat to the viewer, and so turned away their gaze. Ironically, at the same time, their profile pose separates their realm of their action from the viewer's: their apparent incognizance of the viewer's presence contributes to their menacing aspect. Contained within an inaccessible realm, where they undoubtedly draw upon supernatural powers, it is no wonder the central figure carries no object: the only weapon against these foe cannot be held in the hands, unless it be the apotropaic Bible, also missing from this composition.

Iconographical features

A significant difference distinguishing the *Temptation* images from their iconographic relatives is the absence of gesture for the central figure. When the different versions from the crosses are examined, the absence of any arm or hand movement for the central figure is striking. While weathering of the crosses may have played a role in erasing the feature, erosion did not affect the hands of the beasts, which are clearly visible and described by Arthur Kingsley Porter as assuming a "restraining gesture."²⁶ This is not as consistently true of another, closely related composition appearing on numerous

crosses, *Daniel in the Lions' Den*. In some scenes, the composition for Daniel and his beastly companions is almost identical to the *Temptation* composition (figs. 49 and 81), with the single difference being that the *Temptation* beasts are dressed as humans, whereas the beasts confronting Daniel are not.²⁷

It was the Merovingians in Gaul who developed the by-now ancient three-figure Lord of the Beasts composition as an illustration of the Old Testament story of Daniel confronted by lions. Middle Eastern tapestries imported into Byzantium, such as one found at the Cathedral Treasury at Sens, had *Lord of the Beast* compositions that could be interpreted as Daniel meeting the lions (fig. 47).²⁸ Used for this purpose, the “lord” of the beasts, Daniel, is met by lions subdued by God’s power, as a reward for Daniel’s piety; but instead of licking his feet, as the lions do in the biblical passage, they greet him on hind legs, with muzzles placed near his ears. According to Carola Hicks, it was from Merovingian Gaul that the Irish imported this scene,²⁹ but while the scene appears on twenty crosses and on all of those with the *Temptation scenes*, it is depicted only five times with two lions standing on hind legs, one of which is found on the Tall Cross at Monasterboice (fig. 48). While on the Monasterboice Tall Cross, Daniel’s hands are not apparent, he assumes different poses on other crosses, including the traditional orant pose with outstretched arms.³⁰

Among the five crosses with *Temptation* images, only on the Monasterboice Tall Cross is the Daniel scene not adjacent to a *Temptation* image. The sculptors of the other four crosses probably sought compositional variety among contiguous scenes, or they consciously avoided iconographical similarities between the two groupings.

In the early medieval era, Daniel was seen as a precursor of Jesus, and his lion trial was typologically linked to the Resurrection.³¹ Isabel Moreira argues that Daniel, as a seer, was also a biblical model for ascetic visionary saints in Gaul.³² If the *Lord of the Animals* compositional type had been placed alongside a *Temptation* scene with similar posture and gestures, confusion could result as to whether the central figure was winning or losing the battle, and whether the beasts were agents of salvation, as they were with Daniel, or demonic figures meeting Christ in the desert or an Irish saint.

Looking at the central figures of both the Kells Market Cross (fig. 2) and the Tall Cross at Monasterboice (fig. 10), one notices there is no indication of where his arms lie or how they are positioned.³³ On the Moone Cross, none of the figures has hands or arms, but this is not necessarily typical of Moone Cross figures. The Risen or Crucified Christ has oversized hands (fig. 16), and this same artist, who carved the scene of Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac, emphasized the protagonist's upper limbs (fig. 45).³⁴ On the Castledermot South Cross, the central figure's upper arms are indicated by lines of shadow (fig. 8), while the figure of the Castledermot North Cross is too weathered to determine (fig. 6).³⁵ One wonders about the significance of this evident absence, not typical of Irish cross compositions, in which gestures help illustrate the psychological tension present in the story, as in the images identified variously as the *Mocking*, *Arrest* or *Flagellation of Christ* (figs. 43 and 44).

This significant absence may actually help identify the content and characters of the scene. As I discuss more fully in Chapter Four on the subject of costume,³⁶ the central figure is consistently depicted in a long gown, the costume worn by ecclesiastics, and which served in manuscript illustrations as a defining feature. Because he appears on an

important public monument with liturgical and didactic associations,³⁷ he probably is an important church figure, likely a saint, just as Porter identified him when suggesting he might be Anthony tempted by demons.³⁸

Cynthia Hahn, in an essay investigating medieval arm reliquaries, states that clerics used the gesture known as the sign of the cross, called the *signaculum*, because it “insured the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit.”³⁹ One of its principal functions was to protect against demons or evil spirits, the agents of temptation.⁴⁰ A priest’s, and especially a bishop saint’s hands, were considered especially sacred, as they had the power of God coursing through them, especially when performing the sacred gestures of healing or performing the Mass. The *signaculum* was considered to be the “gesture of the Church, calling upon the grace of God,” according to Hahn.⁴¹

In Athanasius’s account of Anthony, the saint’s actions when confronted by demons are not described in detail, but he advises others that making the sign of the cross protects against and drives away demons. Anthony instructs a group of terrified onlookers not to be afraid of the demons that were affecting his behavior, but to “sign yourselves therefore with the cross, and depart boldly, and let these make sport for themselves.” In a later chapter, he advises fellow Christians about demons: “...they are nothing and quickly disappear, especially if a man fortify himself beforehand with faith and the sign of the cross.”⁴²

In the seventh-century life of the Irish Saint Columba written by Adomnán, the saint uses a hand gesture, which the reader might understand as the *signaculum*, to ward off demons:

Once, when St Columba spent some time in the land of the Picts, he heard reports of a well that was famous among the heathen population. Indeed

the foolish people worshipped it as a god because the devil clouded their sense...anyone who drank from the well or intentionally washed his hand or feet in it was struck down by the devil's art...When St Columba learnt of this, he made his way fearlessly to the well. The wizards...were glad, for they expected that he too should suffer the effects of touching the harmful water. The saint first raised his hands and called on the name of Christ...Since that day the demons have kept away from the well...⁴³

In another passage, driving a demon from a milk pail, Columba "raised his hand and made the saving sign of the cross in the air" before calling on Christ to bless the pail and banish the demon from it.⁴⁴

Cynthia Hahn discusses examples of saints gesturing in medieval manuscripts, stating that "in illustrated saints' lives, the arm, especially the hand, creates an important center of activity in saintly activity." She continues that the most important gesture was the one intended by manuscript illustrators: the saint or priest is to be understood as making the sign of cross.⁴⁵

If the man pictured in the *Temptation* scenes were intended as Anthony, or another noteworthy ecclesiastic figure in the act of encountering demons, one might expect him to be making the sign of the cross. Instead, the hands are tucked away, not gesticulating at all. His concealed hands may indicate he is overcome by demons whose physical coercion inhibits him from calling upon Christ's protection with the *signaculum*. But on the Monasterboice Tall Cross, the beasts' hands rest on the central figure's *shoulders* and do not inhibit arm movements at all (fig. 10). Physical coercion does not describe the Moone Cross activity, either, where no physical contact is made (fig. 4). While the blocky, limbless style of the Moone figures is repeated in a number of scenes, for those in which the action depicted merited limbs, as in the scene of Abraham and Isaac in which the father touches the son's head (fig. 45), the artist rendered the

figures accordingly. Physical force levied against the central figure could be argued for the other four *Temptation* images. At the same time, if the violence wrought were so immobilizing and overwhelming that it prohibits its victim from making a simple, self-protecting gesture, one would expect the forcing arms would be considered necessary, integral to the confrontation, and therefore commanding iconographical consistency among the representations. But on the Moone Cross, the figures stand even more calmly disengaged than they do in the other versions.

Another possibility to explain the absence of both Bible and spiritually shielding gestures on the part of the central figure, and one which I will explore throughout the rest of this essay, is that the animal-headed figures are not demons at all, *per se*. This suggestion does not preclude their identity as figures demonized by the church, which I believe they were. I see them as characters whose beliefs or actions were so censured that a “beastly” reputation followed them, inspiring church leaders to conceive an iconographical type for their physiognomies based on pagan precedents.

Notes to Chapter II

¹ See, for example, Carola Hicks, *Animals in Early Medieval Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 68 and 233. And Helen Roe, “An Interpretation of Certain Symbolic Sculptures of Early Christian Ireland,” *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 75 (1945), 1-23; this on p. 1.

² The site is also known as Erech in the Old Testament, and today it is called Warka, in Iraq. Francis Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1971), 40.

³ Klingender, 41.

⁴ Klingender, 40-4.

⁵ Reproduced from Klingender, fig. 33h.

⁶ Described by Klingender, 44-5. The image is reproduced from his fig. 33c.

⁷ Klingender describes it as a possible representation of the Gilgamesh epic. Klingender, 45. Image reproduced from Klingender, fig. 33g.

⁸ A.T. Lucas, writing about the composition used in Irish representations of Daniel in the Lions' Den, quotes N. K. Sanders: "The heraldic group of a warrior flanked by two lions rampant has passed into the iconography of the classical, medieval and modern worlds, and is called even now 'the Gilgamesh motif.'" N. K. Sanders, trans., *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (London: Penguin, 1972), 36-7; quoted in A.T. Lucas, "'In the Middle of Two Living Things': Daniel or Christ?" in *Figures from the Past. Studies in Figurative Art in Christian Ireland. In Honour of Helen M. Roe*, ed. Etienne Rynne (Dun Laoghaire, Ireland: Glendale Press for the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1987): 92-7; this on p. 94. "Lord of the Animals" is commonly used. For one author, see Edouard Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne d'après les sépultures, les textes et le laboratoire* (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1949-59), 295.

⁹ Reproduced from Klingender, fig. 33i; from the British Museum. Klingender traces this development to the Uruk and Early Dynastic periods of Mesopotamian culture (the latter phase began in ca. 3100 B.C.E.), and says it "probably reflects the taste of barbarians who invaded Mesopotamia at this time," and wholly abstract patterns also begin to appear. Klingender, 45-7. The image reproduced here, from Klingender's book, is from an earlier period, dated to the seventh century B.C.E. or earlier, and its early date seems to conflict with Klingender's claim.

¹⁰ Klingender, 48. He quotes Henri Frankfort: "While Egypt invented plant design,

Mesopotamia subjected the animal kingdom to art...for the first time animal shapes were used not for what they represented, but as pure decoration. In the second place, creatures were conceived which had no physical existence but which were so vividly imagined that they could take their place among the images of nature and have proved convincing to generations, sharing nothing with their creators but the acceptance of these monsters. It is by this fantastic fauna that Europe's artistic indebtedness to Asia can be traced." Henri Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals: A Documentary Essay on the Art and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (London: Macmillan, 1939), no page number cited. Klingender continues that the beast-fight triad was adopted in proto-literate Egypt, although he says the "main development of Egyptian animal art followed a different course." This "different course" includes animals in natural settings and different animal-human composite forms, including various deity figures and the sphinxes that represented pharonic deification (see my Appendix 2). Klingender, 49-51.

¹¹ Hicks, 233. Dorothy Verkerk observes that the crosses and sarcophagi share "thematic programs, iconographic details and formal devices..." since she sees the crosses as an Irish response to experiences, or imaginings, of Roman pilgrimage. She adds, however, that the concepts and motifs that she states were borrowed from Roman sarcophagi were subsequently adapted "to local vernacular artistic traditions" by the Irish. Dorothy Verkerk, "Pilgrimage *ad Limina Apostolorum* in Rome: Irish Crosses and Early Christian

Sarcophagi,” in *From Ireland Coming. Irish Art from the Early Christian to the Late Gothic Period and its European Context*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001): 9-26; this on p. 20. Verkerk cites a number of authors who have made comparisons between the two mediums, including Robin Flower, “Irish High Crosses,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17 (1954): 87-97; Francoise Henry, *Irish Art during the Viking Invasions (800-1020 A.D.)* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967), 185; Arthur Champneys, *Irish Ecclesiastical Architecture, with Some Notice of Similar and Related Work in England, Scotland, and Elsewhere* (London, 1910; New York: Hacker Art Books, 1970): 88-91; and eighteenth-century traveler to Ireland, Thomas Wright, who mentioned a folktale suggesting Muiredach’s Cross at Monasterboice was sent from Rome, quoted from H. M. Roe, *Monasterboice and Its Monuments* (Dundalk: County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society, 1981), 7. She also quotes Roger Stalley’s mention of stylistic similarities, including the sharing of rectangular frames, angle moldings, engaged shafts and arches. Roger Stalley, *Irish High Crosses* (Dublin: Country House, 1996), 13.

¹² The *Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus*, ca. 359, is illustrated in Marilyn Stokstad, *Art History*, 2 vols. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education LTD., 2005), I, fig. 7-21.

¹³ Muiredach’s Cross at Monasterboice is illustrated in Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland. An Iconographical and Photographic Survey*, 3 vols. (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1992), II, figs. 472-487. Nearly all of the crosses under discussion, including the Castledermot South Cross, as well as many others, are narrower on two sides, and on these narrower faces smaller figural compositions are common.

¹⁴ Salin, 119-20.

¹⁵ See Miranda Green, *Dictionary of Celtic Myth and Legend* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1992), 214-16, for a definition and numerous examples. She traces its importance through Indo-European traditions. She states, “Two main types of triplism occur [in sculpture]: where part of the human or animal form is multiplied, or where the whole form of a deity is repeated three times.”

¹⁶ Salin, 295.

¹⁷ Examples of Luristan bronzes are drawn by Salin. Photographs appear in Roe, accompanying her discussion of the compositional type.

¹⁸ Both the full image and detail are reproduced from Stokstad, I, fig. 14-3.

¹⁹ It is interesting to consider descriptions of gestures used in preparing and applying medicinal salves and other treatments in the Middle Ages. Different gestures possessed unique significance, one position of thumb and little finger signifying “priest-physician.” Particular gestures were evidently considered to have supernatural power, and specific hand movements were used to pick up animals used in healing. It is tempting to think of the Sutton Hoo figure as a healer who worked with animals, and the purse as having once contained animal or herbal products used for medicinal purposes. See Jerbert Fischer and

Joyce Adams, "The Use of Gesture in Preparing Medicaments and in Healing," *History of Religions* 5 (Summer 1965), 18-53; esp. pp. 22-4.

²⁰ The Torslunda plaque image is reproduced from Klingender, fig. 97d.

²¹ Helen Roe, "An Interpretation of Certain Symbolic Sculptures of Early Christian Ireland," *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 75 (1945), 1-23; this on p. 19.

²² *The Second Mocking of Christ/Ecce Rex Iudaeorum*, from the bottom panel on the west face of Muiredach's Cross at Monasterboice, County Louth, is reproduced as a detail in Harbison, III, fig. 875. *The First Mocking or Flagellation of Christ*, is from Harbison, III, fig. 866.

²³ Abraham on the The Moone Cross, north face, base, is reproduced from Harbison, Harbison, II, fig. 509. Another example that comes to mind is identified by Harbison as *St. Peter with his Sword*, who is surrounded by two figures in profile, but they are rendered in a smaller scale than he is, perhaps due to spatial constraints. They do not attempt to constrain him, but each holds objects hands. See image reproduced in Harbison, III, fig. 863.

²⁴ Image reproduced from Harbison, II, figs. 330 and 332, and III, fig. 971.

²⁵ Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in the Medieval Art* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 223.

²⁶ Arthur Kingsley Porter, *The Crosses and Culture of Ireland* (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1931; reprint New York, 1971), 83.

²⁷ Daniel in the Lions' Den, Arboe Cross, is reproduced from Harbison, II, fig. 30.

²⁸ Image reproduced from Harbison, III, fig. 765. Lucas says this figure was intended as Gilgamesh by its creators, but for the Christians who preserved the tapestry, it evoked Daniel in the Lions' Den. Lucas, 94.

²⁹ Hicks, 125. Carl Nordenfalk sees the compositional type coming more directly into Irish hands, through the person of Gallic bishop Arculf, whose pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Alexandria, Constantinople and Rome led to a sharing of tales and perhaps goods with Adomnán, who subsequently wrote *The Holy Places*, a text with wide circulation in Northumbria. See Carl Nordenfalk, "An Illustrated Diatessaron," *Art Bulletin* 50 (1968): 119-40, and his modifications in "The Persian Diatessaron Once More," *Art Bulletin* 55 (1973): 532-46. On the subject of Adomnán's text and questions surrounding what material goods he might have brought with him to Iona, see Richard Sharpe, Introduction, *Adomnán of Iona, Life of St Columba* (London and New York: Penguin Books Ltd, 1995), 53-5.

³⁰ Reproduced from Harbison, III, fig. 764. In the other fifteen examples of Daniel with the beasts, there are four lions, except in the case of the Moone Cross where seven appear. In eight of these, the four lions stand vertically, but they are placed in two registers on either

side Daniel, and do not match the *Lord of the Beasts* composition. Harbison lists the different types, I, 227-9. For discussion of the traditional orant pose in Coptic art, see Roe, 2. Daniel is portrayed in this pose on the Kells Market Cross head, present south face; a detail of the image is reproduced in Harbison, III, fig. 771. Harbison's fig. 770 shows another version of the orant pose on the cross at Dysert O'Dea.

³¹ See Lucas, 92 and 95ff.

³² Isabel Moreira, *Dreams, Visions, and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000); see esp. chapter two, "Daniel's Heirs: Visionary Ascetics in Gaul."

³³ The Kells Market Cross image is reproduced from Harbison, III, fig. 949, and the Monasterboice Tall Cross image is from Harbison, III, fig. 948.

³⁴ Harbison, II, fig. 209.

³⁵ The Castledermot South Cross is from Harbison, II, fig. 107. The North Cross is from Harbison, II, fig. 103. One wonders if the presence of arms might indicate an earlier date for the Castledermot crosses, with later versions hiding the limbs "perceived as the site of work or action" for figures in medieval art. The quote is from Cynthia Hahn, "The Voices of the Saints: Speaking Reliquaries," *Gesta*, 36 (1997), 20-31; this on 21.

³⁶ See a full discussion of his dress in Chapter Four on costume.

³⁷ See the Introduction of this essay for a brief discussion of the various purposes the crosses may have served.

³⁸ Porter, 84.

³⁹ Hahn, 23. She cites E. Maass, "Segnen, Weißen, Taufen," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 21 (1922), 241.

⁴⁰ Hahn, 23.

⁴¹ Hahn, 26.

⁴² Athanasius of Alexandria, *Vita S. Antoni* [Life of St Anthony], chs. 13 and 23, respectively. Full text quoted in *Medieval Sourcebook* website, <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/vita-antony.html>>, and credit is given therein to *Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, Volume IV of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series II, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, pp. 199 and 202, respectively.

⁴³ Adomnán of Iona, II, 11.

⁴⁴ Adomnán, II, 16.

⁴⁵ Hahn, 23.

CHAPTER III

THAT OL' DEMON MAGIC

Demons and magic were not only unquestionably real, as attested in medieval texts, but magic and demons were intrinsically related,¹ especially by early Christian authors who linked beasts with the devil's lair, as I will explain in this chapter. While I shall not wade too deeply into the complicated issue of demonology here, I begin this chapter with a brief historical outline of demonic beliefs that preceded the Christian era and contributed to medieval notions, followed by an early Christian perspective on the topic, according to which demons and pagan magic were in sympathy.

The word "demon" in the classical Greek language referred to a divine or superhuman power or activity. For the ancient Greeks, demons possessed none of the negative or evil associations that the term gained in later eras.² In the *Symposium* of Plato (ca. 427–ca. 347 B.C.E), demons are described as divine beings who intercede between the celestial realm of the gods and terrestrial domain of humans:

For the whole of the demonic is between the divine and the mortal... interpreting and conveying human things to the gods and divine things to men; prayers and sacrifices from below, and ordinances and punishments from above...Through it are conveyed all divinations, and all soothsaying and sorcery. God with man does not mingle: but the demonic is the means of all association and converse of men with gods and of gods with men, whether waking or asleep.³

Everett Ferguson, in his study on demonology, states that the Greeks in the first two centuries of the Christian era had begun to "objectify states of mind," and madness was

equated with demonic interference: “to be demonized” meant to be mad.⁴ According to Diana Walzel, a tremendous upsurge in “superstitious beliefs” arose in late antiquity, in great measure due to increased prominence of mystical religions originating in Asian cultures. According to her, it was from this “oriental influx” that the existence of purely evil demons was made known to Greeks and Romans.⁵

Jewish notions about demonology were prevalent in the pre-Christian era, leading to a perceived need for exorcisms to eradicate the ill effects of demonic possessions of individuals. While not many texts about magic and demons survive, having been destroyed by zealous inquisitors in later centuries,⁶ there is one document from ca. 300 C.E. called the Paris Magical Papyrus, which recommends applications of herb-infused oils and the recitation of sacred names, along with descriptions of amulets to be worn by the demoniac (a person possessed by a demon). According to Ferguson, Jewish elements, as found in this passage, are not unusual in the extant magical papyri, since “the Jews had a considerable reputation as magicians and exorcists, and magicians [elsewhere] freely borrowed from their competition.”⁷

Considering the surviving textual evidence, the dearth of reportage on demons in the Old Testament is notable; Satan is referred to in only a few Old Testament passages, and demons are never mentioned.⁸ While the serpent in the Garden of Eden came to be associated with the devil in the writings of biblical interpreters, early translations of Genesis do not name the serpent specifically as Satan; rather, God addresses the creature according to its reptilian nature: “And the Lord God said to the serpent: Because thou hast done this thing [encouraged Eve to bite the apple], thou art cursed among all cattle, and beasts of the earth: upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life” (Genesis

3:14).⁹ The concept of demonic interference in the human realm is certainly present in ancient Jewish thought, including possession by demons and demonic temptations, but demonology took on new significance in the New Testament. Ferguson provides a synopsis of the New Testament concept: “Evil may have varied manifestations, but ultimately there is only one principle of evil. Instead of a world dominated by many warring demons (a pagan and polytheistic conception), Jesus saw one kingdom of Satan.” He continues that Jesus “saw his work as demonstrating that the whole dominion of evil was being conquered. The demons functioned as part of a larger whole, the dominion of the devil.”¹⁰

Early Christian apologists, defending the new religion against pagan philosophers’ attacks on Jesus and Christianity,¹¹ took clues from their adversaries and concluded that “the main features of pagan religion were due to the demons,” and that pagan religion was actually originated by demons working as the devil’s lackeys.¹² In early monastic literature, even negative impulses and acts could be called demons, and sinful impulses were clearly identified demonic inspirations.¹³ According to Valerie Flint, demons were “one of the features of the old pre-Christian magical world most enthusiastically transferred,” and assigning blame to demons, rather than people, was one reason the church actively “rescued” (her term) demons.¹⁴ Ferguson adds, “One gains the definite impression that for many early Christians, more important than the promise of forgiveness of sins was the promise of deliverance from demons,” especially since Greco-Roman paganism “was quite demon-conscious.”¹⁵ Christian exorcists were represented in the literature as particularly successful at casting out demons from those possessed, a process that involved calling upon Christ’s name, while Jewish exorcism was known to be only “sometimes effective.”¹⁶

Frequent mention of monks battling demons may be, as Flint points out, the inability of many monks to live up to the “high moral purposes” expected of them.¹⁷

Later, in twelfth-century Cistercian spirituality, demoniac encounters are considered “rare spiritual gifts.”¹⁸ Given that they are rare, one looks to Irish monastic literature for evidence of regular meetings with the devil’s minions. Most often, in saints’ lives the saint heals a demoniac or casts demons from sites consecrated as church property. Only exceptional saints, such as Columba, battle demons directly, protecting themselves and their monastic *familia* from assaults. Columba advised praying and fasting as a method for keeping demons at bay, or to boost one’s spiritual defenses should an attack occur.¹⁹ One could argue that the extreme asceticism practiced by Columba, and noted among Irish monks in general, comprised of long fasts and other physical torments, may have actually stimulated imaginings of all kinds, including demonic encounters.²⁰

So one might expect to find Irish literature rife with demonic encounters, but among the monastic rules written to proscribe life in the monasteries, in only a couple of documents are demonic encounters mentioned. In the *Alphabet of Devotion*, pieced together from numerous fragments found in fourteen manuscripts of uncertain dates, the final “teaching” prepares the monk for five types of spiritual encounters: with pain, death, the family of God, devils and resurrection.²¹ Given its position in this sequence, encounters with devils seem to represent post-death experience rather than an episode from a monk’s lifetime. In the *Rule of the Céli Dé*, a document of uncertain date but linked to the ninth-century reform movement, a second reference to demonic confrontation appears. This curious text states that “the devil resides in the urinals and in the toilets, and so anyone who enters these buildings shall first of all bless the building and then himself.” Furthermore, “it is forbidden to pray in them....”²²

Presumably, the requisite blessing, including the *signaculum*, would ward off demons so that monks did not have to encounter them.

The Irish literary evidence is inconclusive, but what does survive suggests that despite the deprivations assigned to the extreme forms of asceticism followed by early Irish monks, encounters with demons were not frequent enough to warrant mention in the literature. In the penitentials, penance for practicing magic or consulting magicians is frequently specified, but no demonic encounters *per se* are mentioned.²³

Early medieval authors did link animals with paganism and demons. Peter warned, “Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).²⁴ Augustine refers repeatedly to pagan gods as animals or pagans engaged with animals in evil rituals.²⁵

Porter’s interpretation of the *Temptation* images as perhaps depicting St. Anthony’s travails leads naturally to a perusal of Athanasius’s *Life of Saint Anthony*.²⁶ The passage that describes demons as tormentors who assume animal shapes takes place in a tomb, to which place Anthony went voluntarily to meet them:

...And he could not stand up on account of the blows, but he prayed as he lay. And after he had prayed, he said with a shout, “Here am I, Antony; I flee not from your stripes, for even if you inflict more nothing shall separate me from the love of Christ...” But changes of form for evil are easy for the devil, so in the night they [the demons] made such a din that the whole of that place seemed to be shaken by an earthquake, and the demons, as if breaking the four walls of the dwelling, seemed to enter through them, coming in the likeness of beasts and creeping things. And the place was on a sudden filled with the forms of lions, bears, leopards, bulls, serpents, asps, scorpions, and wolves, and each of them was moving according to his nature. The lion was roaring, wishing to attack, the bull seeming to toss with its horns, the serpent writhing but unable to approach, and the wolf, as it rushed on, was restrained; altogether the noises of the apparitions, with their angry ragings, were dreadful. But Antony, stricken and goaded by them, felt bodily pains severer still. He lay watching, however, with unshaken soul, groaning from bodily anguish; but his mind was clear, and as in mockery he said, “If there had been

any power in you, it would have sufficed had one of you come, but since the Lord hath made you weak you attempt to terrify me by numbers: and a proof of your weakness is that you take the shapes of brute beasts.” And again with boldness he said, “If you are able, and have received power against me, delay not to attack; but if you are unable, why trouble me in vain? For faith in our Lord is a seal and a wall of safety to us.”²⁷

Athanasius is careful to describe each animal as “moving according to its nature.” They do not stand on hind legs in human posture, nor do they whisper. Similarly, in the *Life of Saint Guthlac*, produced in the Insular world, Satan is equated with a roaring lion with bloody teeth, as well as a bellowing bull, a bear gnashing its teeth, a howling wolf, a shinning horse, a belling stag, and a hissing serpent.²⁸ Demons, including those appearing in animal form in these texts, are consistently described in the early medieval era as noise-makers, raucous in their screeches and cries. As Debra Strickland comments in her book on demons and monstrous races, demons are noisy, and in art—where visual representations tend to appear later than the Irish cross images, as I discuss below—they appear often with wide open and contorted mouths to emphasize the horrendous noises they make.²⁹

Demoniacs too, since possessed by demons, make similar noises, as related in Irish literature. In an anonymously written version of St. Cuthbert’s *Life*, a boy possessed by a demon approaches the saint, and his symptoms were that he “cried and shouted and very many heard it with dread.” Bede’s later version of Cuthbert’s life, reporting an incident taking place in the later seventh century, is more emphatic in its description of a woman possessed: “...seized upon by a demon and most cruelly afflicted, so that she gnashed her teeth and uttered piteous cries, flinging her arms and limbs about in agitation, and so inspiring no little horror in all who saw or heard her.”³⁰

Elsewhere in Irish literature, demons are black and otherwise nondescript. In the saga called *The Battle of Mag Mucrime*, an evocative passage states: “Black, in sooth, at

once became the air...from the demons awaiting the wretched souls to drag them to hell....”³¹

Adomnan’s biography of St. Columba reports that he “...saw a line of foul, black devils armed with iron spikes and drawn up ready for battle.”³²

These literary descriptions could not be more unlike the visual representation of the three calmly composed and visually detailed figures in the *Temptation* scenes, all standing erect and none screaming or beaten to the ground as Anthony was. The two composite figures are represented as being so thoroughly imperturbable that Porter could identify their activity as “whispering” into the ears of the central figure.³³

Extant visual precursors for demon or devil iconography that might have influenced the composite *Temptation* figures do not exist. Strickland comments that a consistent feature of demons in medieval art is a combination of animal and human physical characteristics to “create a bestial perversion of God’s image,” but the earliest image she discusses is from the eleventh century, and none of her reproductions show creatures at all similar to the Irish figures.³⁴

Nearer to the creatures St. Columba encountered, a depiction of black demons appears in the ninth-century Stuttgart Psalter, in the illumination of *Christ’s Temptation on the Mountain*. Françoise Henry compares the Stuttgart Psalter image to a devil tempting Christ in the early-ninth-century Book of Kells (fig. 49).³⁵ Both are emaciated, winged figures, depicted as black silhouette forms and without three dimensionality.

Louis Jordan, in an essay on demon iconography in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, lists devil images from Carolingian sources that he describes as “fully human in appearance.”³⁶ He does, however, illustrate one with human limbs and a horned-animal head, resembling that of a goat, pictured in the early ninth-century manuscript, the Trier Apocalypse (fig. 50).³⁷

The figure, with its human appendages and clothing, bears a striking resemblance to some of the Irish *Temptation* figures. It is not inconceivable that an Irish pilgrim saw this or a similar illustration.³⁸ But how widespread was this type of image? Jordan concludes that through the Carolingian period, only occasionally were animal features added to human forms. He states that it was not until the Anglo-Saxon artistic revival occurring during the era of monastic reform, from the 970s to 1070s, that a consistent development combining zoomorphic and anthropomorphic elements are seen.³⁹ Strickland says interest in demon portraits “surged” only in the twelfth century in Western European art.⁴⁰

Images clearly representing the devil on the Irish crosses show no awareness of early devil iconography represented by the Trier Apocalypse, nor do they show similarities to the *Temptation* figures: Irish devils are not given horns or other animal features. A diminutive being carrying a three-pronged fork and marching away from Christ in a *Last Judgment* scene on the cross head of Muiredach’s Cross at Monasterboice is probably a devil figure (fig. 51); he is dressed in a pointed cloak and appears to have bare legs.⁴¹ Another version, on the same cross head, pictures the devil lying down with legs crossed and positioned under Michael’s scale on which souls are weighed; again, the devil is entirely human, and not completely clad (fig. 52).⁴² Another figure, turned upside-down and identified by Harbison as the victim over whom Solomon makes his ruling, appears on the Castledermot North Cross; note the pointed cloak, similar to the one depicted on Muiredach’s cross, and held rigidly in place despite the figure’s upside-down posture (fig. 53).⁴³ The latter figure may be misidentified, since similar iconography is identified as upside-down demons being suppressed by Saints Paul and Anthony, found on the Kells Market Cross (fig. 54) and the Monasterboice Tall Cross (fig. 55).⁴⁴ Both demons are barelegged, barefooted,

and one covers himself in a gesture of shame or modesty. A related scene is pictured on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise (fig. 56), again identified as a saint conquering a demon.⁴⁵ In all of these cross images, both of the devil and his minions, no visual relationship can be made with the well-heeled *Temptation* figures (fig. 2).⁴⁶

The visual evidence for demons on crosses, including images appearing on three of the crosses on which *Temptation* images appear—the Castledermot North Cross, the Market Cross at Kells, and the Monasterboice Tall Cross—seem to rule out the animal-headed figures as demons, *per se*. Unlike the Trier Apocalypse, examples of demons or devils appearing in near-contemporary Irish art, including the early ninth-century Book of Kells, seem to be conceived with more fully human features and quite unlike the hybrid *Temptation* figures.

Demons, according to some scholars, were not necessarily exteriorized beings or even spirits, but could be qualities, the “embodiment of concepts more abstract and fundamental to Christian belief.”⁴⁷ Ferguson states, “Even evil impulses and acts could be called demons,” in that “human passions could be objectified and personified as demons.”⁴⁸ If this perspective on demons could be applied to the Irish *Temptation* figures, then the central, fully-human figure could be interpreted as plagued by his thoughts and impulses.

One has to consider carefully the visual evidence the sculptors painstakingly presented as identifying features for these figures. Given the weighty materiality of the animal-headed figures, the attention given to clothing, gestures, and the casual poses some assume, with one leg bent and foot resting on a vertical support (figs. 2 and 10),⁴⁹ their actions are fully recognizable as human. Of course, their heads are not human. Might there be clues we can

“read” in the heads: what are the heads doing? In every case, they have their beaks or muzzles placed close to the central figure’s ears: they appear to be communicating verbally. What category of person relies heavily on verbal communication, perhaps whispered into another person’s ears, and could be connected in some way with animals and birds? Only one answer seems possible: a person reciting or whispering spells or incantations and associated closely with animals, people the church associated with magic. In the church’s view, all types of magicians engaged in evil practices and consorted with demons.⁵⁰

In medieval thinking, just as demons were real, so were magical rites and magicians with supernatural powers. Those on the church’s side who demonstrated such abilities were saints. Those non-Christians with matching abilities were magicians: sorcerers, seers, soothsayers, diviners, witches, even medical practitioners, as I discuss below.

The least complicated assumption would be to conclude that the *Temptation* figures are magicians who double as shapeshifters, people appearing in Irish and Scandinavian literature, especially, who possessed a special power to assume animal shapes at will; this would explain the figures’ dual natures.⁵¹ The notion of shapeshifting was so widely held in Ireland that Patrick had to compete to assert his own powers as equal to that of magicians: Patrick and a group of monks transformed into deer to avoid an ambush in the Irish forests.⁵²

Animal associations, as discussed in Chapter One, were not limited to shapeshifters. Certain animals were considered divine by pagans—many of those pictured on the *Temptation* images, in fact—and animals had been sacrificed and buried ritually. Medical treatises describe using animals to effect remedies, and animals were used for divining or thought of as spirit beings assisting magicians.⁵³ Druids were clearly associated with animals, as indicated by the description of a “bull sleep,” in which a person was wrapped in a

bull's hide and chanted over by four druids to determine who would be the next king.⁵⁴

While this practice may seem confined to a mythical and prehistoric era of Ireland, a similar type of oracular practice engaged with animal spirits reappears in a nineteenth-century text, described as a current practice:

Taghairm: said to signify and echo, as literally interpreted from the Gaelic language. Here the querent was wrapped in a cow's hide... and carried by assistants to a solitary spot, or left under the arch formed by the projected waters of a cataract, where he continued during night. While other [noncorporeal] beings seeming [sic] to flit around him, he derived that inspiration from them, which he delivered as an oracular response to his comrades, on the following day.⁵⁵

Flint states that magic was like demonology: necessary to the church, in part, because pagan magic “called out for a compensatory form” from the church, which came in the form of assistance rendered by angels and saints. Flint says that magic was also needed because it “might explain away...any embarrassing successes soothsayers might have had, and at the same time isolate the objectionable features of their practice,” that being their reliance on demonic assistance.⁵⁶

Natural magic included healing, which relied upon medicinal herbs and animals, as well as incantations recited over the ill person; it was prohibited by the church, despite its practice by both amateurs and trained physicians. The reason was that demons often inflicted illnesses, so nobody under suspicion of demonic association could be trusted to counter such influences. Demonicallly-induced illnesses required an especially powerful antidote, which could only be provided by an equally gifted healer who, as Flint states, was “beyond doubt respectable in Christian eyes.”⁵⁷ Church medicine was reliable, even though its forms, rites and practices might exactly match demonic medicine.⁵⁸ The difference lay not in the methods themselves, but in the practitioners who wielded them. Priests were preferred for

this duty, as they could bless both healing salves—such as dust taken from a blessed saint’s bones mixed with water—and the proceedings.⁵⁹

As Kieckhefer states, “Magic is an area where popular culture meets with learned culture,” in that elements from popular culture were taken up by “intellectuals” within the church, a group he defines as those with philosophical or theological education, and then the ideas were given a Christian twist and returned to popular culture through parish priests. “One of the most important tasks in cultural history,” he states, “is working out these lines of transmission.”⁶⁰

In Ireland, while there were many types of magicians, the best known was the druid. By the ninth century, the date assigned to crosses with *Temptation* images, druids were probably relegated to history; Patrick is credited with having outlawed druids and their practices.⁶¹ Hints of their practices exist in the ancient law tracts, committed to writing in the eighth century; some these laws concern a group of intellectuals, the *fili* or poet-seers, considered the inheritors of some druidic practices, but practicing legally and sometimes alongside ecclesiastic scholars.⁶² Undoubtedly, there were also independent practitioners of magical rites, certainly those practicing folk medicine and probably others performing functions the church associated with anti-Christian paganism. In times of strife, such as the ninth and tenth centuries were in Ireland—an era troubled by internal and Viking warfare—it is conceivable that lay people, and perhaps some clerics, would seek extra help from realm of the magical arts.⁶³

The only history of druids that includes any real activities and evidence of their ideology appears much earlier, in the writings of classical authors.⁶⁴ Some of the classical accounts support certain information presented in Irish heroic tales, although the Irish druids

are consistently portrayed as magicians, sometimes teachers, but never, as they appear in classical times, as valued philosophers, learned astronomers or solemn priests.⁶⁵

Druids were prominent in Continental Celtic Europe from at least the second century B.C.E., and in Julius Caesar's time, they were an "organized and powerful body having important educational, judicial, political and religious functions."⁶⁶ The first-century C.E. rebellion against Caesar by Vercingetorix, tribal leader of the Arverni, which ended in the Celt's imprisonment and eventual death sentence, seems to have "spelt their [the druids'] ruin as a corporate society," Kendrick reports, after which time traditional druidic philosophy and practice "was in the hands of a minority of individual anti-Roman members."⁶⁷ Druids were finally suppressed in Continental Europe by the Roman Emperor Claudius, who reigned 41-54 B.C.E.⁶⁸ Tacitus reports their existence in Britain as late as 60 C.E., although they were soon to disappear from that island.⁶⁹ Ireland was never occupied by the Romans, and consequently, Irish druids were not affected by Roman censure. In the Irish *vitae* of Saints Patrick and Columba, druids were reported as powerful foes of Christianity through the fifth and sixth centuries C.E. in Ireland and areas of Scotland.⁷⁰

While many aspects of druids and their alleged practices are fascinating and demonstrate diverse reasons for their reprobation by the Church, I will confine this discussion to those aspects relevant to the visual evidence under discussion and to those practices associated with pre-Christian druids and druidesses, as well as the medieval-era poet-seers.⁷¹ Noting, as I have, the importance placed on the "whispering" postures of the *Temptation* figures, I shall focus on the oral culture associated with these groups.

Golden is the silent text

No small significance was attached to spoken incantations and their association with demonically-inspired magicians. The church placed its faith in a text: the Bible, principally, as well as a vast body of patristic literature with tremendous influence in Catholic Ireland.⁷² The arrival of Patrick in the fifth century met with obstacles peculiar to Ireland, which, until that time, had remained a predominantly oral culture, free from the imposition of Roman Latin, which, by Patrick's time, had become the official language of the church. Part of Patrick's success could be attributed to his ability to overcome this tremendous cultural chasm, to reach out and engage with an illiterate population, establishing there a new tradition: a literate one, based on a non-native language.⁷³

Also, in the seventh century and just across the Irish Sea, Bede contrasted the superior power of the written text compared to oral narrative in his "Story of Imma," according to Seth Lerer's analysis. As Lerer states, "Writing is the province of Christian belief, and the miraculous is to be found in the workings of God's word and in the recognition that it needs a scripture or a history to document that power." He continues that "the miraculous power of the Mass or the symbolic quality of the Eucharist needed to be understood not as popular beliefs, but as learned, institutionalized practices," documented in textual form.⁷⁴

Within a couple of centuries of Patrick's remarkable mission, the Irish church was particularly text-proud, its *scriptoria* producing works of profound beauty, such as the Book of Lindisfarne and Book of Kells, and attracting pilgrims from across Christendom to its libraries.⁷⁵ But even beyond these practical considerations related to Irish history, text

remained at the very heart of Christian dogma: Christ was the embodiment of the *Logos*, the Word of God, and that Word was written in the New Testament.⁷⁶

The representation of magic as a practice engaged wholly with an oral tradition appears again and again in Irish literature: in the law tracts, which were created in a Christian context,⁷⁷ in the vernacular tales and saints' lives. Books, by contrast, were assigned their own miraculous power, perhaps in competition with magicians' incantations. Books written by St. Columba resisted water damage, even when a person carrying a Columban text fell into a river and drowned.⁷⁸ Holy books could protect people in war, if the book was carried onto the battlefield; one family is reported as having abided by this rule, carrying St. Columba's psalter into battle as late as the fifteenth century.⁷⁹

In ancient sagas, the belief in the magical and malevolent power of words was attached to druids, who sometimes "satirized men...to bespell them."⁸⁰ The most despicable satire, condemned in medieval Irish law tracts, was purely malicious in intent, and the poet working in this vein was considered a criminal.⁸¹ Interesting that undesirous rhyme is likened in one legal text to "a raven's croaking," while in another, a "base bard" is likened to a whispering beast: "...he says out of his snout in a whisper will he recite his poem to him for whom it makes (it)."⁸² Satirists were called *cainte*, the etymology for which is, "i.e., *canis*, a dog, for the satirist has a dog's head in barking, and alike is the profession they follow."⁸³

Bringing about satirically caused misfortunes was just one talent listed for the *fili* or poets in the eight-century legal tracts, written long after druids had been outlawed in Ireland. Among the various ranks of poets whose privileges, education and gifts were delineated, one was described as possessing "great knowledge which illuminates" and the ability to produce

“extempore chanting, the singing of *anamain* of four varieties...”⁸⁴ As I demonstrated in the Chapter One on the topic animals in pagan lore, the phrase quoted here, “great knowledge which illuminates,” is found in the tenth-century text, *Cormac’s Glossary*, in a gloss on the term *imbis forosnai*, a magical practice described by author Cormac as one in which “the poet chews a piece of (the) flesh of a red pig, or of a dog or cat, and puts it afterwards on the flag behind the door, and pronounces an incantation on it, and offers it to idol-gods,” in order to divine secret (or great) knowledge.⁸⁵

The reference to “extempore chanting and singing” probably relates to different forms of oral recitation, including bardic songs as well as magical incantations and spells. Such songs were considered very powerful when voiced by druids; in the *Dinsenchas of Laigen*, it states that druids nearly exterminated an entire tribe by their “songs.”⁸⁶ In the saga, *Da Choca’s Hostel*, a druid “sings” a prophecy of doom.⁸⁷ In ecclesiastic literature, as found in the *Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick*, druidic incantations or songs in the era of Saint Patrick were believed to affect weather: in a demonstration of power and challenge to the saint, the king’s wizard “began the chants of wizardry and the arts of devilry,” which brought about a deep snow and celestial darkness.⁸⁸

A complicated, multi-tiered organization of poets or *fili* in medieval Ireland is credited with the inheritance of the druidic orders, performing many of the druids’ functions and roles within Christian society.⁸⁹ Some of the *fili* were thought to possess supernatural gifts, able through different types of poetry or metered recitation to bring about actual physical disfigurement or even death to a person attacked by a poet’s delivery. The greatest potential for harm was assigned to the satire, which could be either legal or illegal, depending on the circumstances and, probably, the character of the deliverer of the verse.⁹⁰ Legal satire

could be leveled against someone who hired a poet, but neglected to pay for his or her services, or one who failed to offer a level of hospitality required by his social standing.⁹¹

An example of harmless satire could inspire laughter:

He was not talked about in Ireland
he was not discussed in Scotland;
I have been of advantage to Ó Fhlainn;
he would not have been known if I had not satirized him.⁹²

But some satirical practices were engaged with magical recitations, and more serious consequences were intended by their enactment. Consider the procedure known as *glam dícend*, described with elaboration in an early metrical tract:

There is fasting on the land of the king for whom the (unrequited) poem has been composed and counsel is taken with thirty warriors and thirty bishops and thirty poets about making a satire afterwards. And it is unlawful for them to hinder the satire once the reward has been refused. It only remains for the poet accompanied by six who have respectively the six degrees of poetry to go before sunrise to a mound where seven territories meet, and the chief poet faces the land of the king he is about to revile and they all have their backs to a thorn which stands on the summit of the hill, and there is a north wind, and each man carries in his hand a stone and a spike from the thorn and peaks into both of them a stanza in the measure called *laídh*. The chief poet says his stanza first, and then the other poets chant theirs in unison, and each puts his stone and his spike at the base of the thorn, and if it is they that are in fault the ground of the hill swallow them up; if it is the king, however, that is in the fault, the ground swallow him and his wife and his child and his horse and his weapons and his clothing and his hound.⁹³

The use of voice by druids was essential to their tradition and had been recorded in the classical era. In some accounts, pre-Christian Celtic priests were called *gutuatri*, and they presided at temples; John MacCulloch says this must have been another name for druids, and this nomenclature came from linguistic roots meaning “the speakers,” from their role of speaking with the gods.⁹⁴ Druids were identified with bards, as related above, as early as the first century B.C.E. by Diodorus Siculus, who described druids also as diviners and priests who presided over sacrifices.⁹⁵ Tacitus, in his history of Romans fighting in Britain

during Nero's reign, emphasized the use of unintelligible language by women "excited to frenzy" while they "prophesized impending destruction;" these prophesizers were given to "ravings in a strange tongue," and they gave counsel to a legislative senate in England.⁹⁶ In fact, the use of verbal language is incorporated into the very definition of magician.

Catharina Raudvere, writing about incantations in Scandinavian sagas, observes:

The pronouncement of words was recognized to have a tremendous influence over the concerns of life. The impact of a sentence uttered aloud could not be questioned and could never be taken back—as if it had become somehow physical. Strong and powerful words reappear throughout the sagas. Words create reality—not only the other way around. Concrete expression and utterance had a dignity and a status, as common in oral cultures.⁹⁷

The properties attributed to words in early medieval England is described by Karen Jolly, who said, "The power of words to effect changes in the material world...is the chief reason why much of medieval medicine is classified as magic instead of science."⁹⁸ And as Tom Duddy points out in his essay on druids and orality, written discourse lingers in the phenomenal world, whereas the spoken word leaves behind "no trace or sign of itself."⁹⁹ A spoken lore is one not easily misappropriated by the uninitiated, which may have been one basis of its appeal to the druids.

All practitioners of magic were associated with oral phrasing of one kind or another. Eli Buriss, in a book on the terminology of witchcraft, states that the principal nouns for incantations are "*carmen, cantus, canticum, canticulum, cantio, cantamen, incantamentum, and incantatio*," all of which have the fundamental meaning "song" or "tune," whether produced by a human voice or musical instrument. He quotes Ovid and Lucan in agreeing that *incantations*, a term used regularly from the fifth century B.C.E., were "often uttered as an undertone and...[as] unintelligible to the hearers as a foreign language; it was entirely

unlike any language of man.”¹⁰⁰ In Ireland, the practice was credited well into the nineteenth century, with a report of a man who could “whisper” into the ears of untamed horses to calm them. The “horse whisperer” told the author his technique was based on knowledge passed down from early necromancers.¹⁰¹

One can imagine church patrons reducing the difference distinguishing Christian from pagan beliefs to a single act: the act of speaking, which was the only form of communication granted paganism in the literature. The words spoken by magicians, whether druids or poet-seers, were inspired by demons; and demons, in the Christian view, could be characterized with reference to animals, as these were used in sacrifices and conceived as deities. The significance of these two essential aspects of pagan practice could be envisioned as an animal-headed being, one whose mouth, rendered in profile to make the message clear, attempts to whisper into the ears of an ecclesiastic or saint. The picture could function as text, at once narrative and certainly didactic.¹⁰² Here, the lesson of the picture is represented in chilling terms: consulting, or even listening to, a person whose knowledge relied entirely on the spoken word, and whose knowledge emanated, ultimately, from the beastly realm, was not a good idea.

In the next chapter, I discuss additional visual “clues” to the identity of the three figures, taking signals from the clothing they wear. And in the following chapter, “Beastly Men,” I discuss narrative possibilities for the image, as actual events to which it may refer. In both chapters, I elaborate further on ideas introduced in this chapter on magic and druids.

Notes to Chapter III

¹ All scholars make this point clear. See especially Valerie Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), in which she quotes numerous authors throughout her text to illustrate the point that both demons and magic were facts of medieval life. See also Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 1989; reprint, 2000); and Kieckhefer, "The holy and the unholy: sainthood, witchcraft and magic in late medieval Europe," in *Christendom and its discontents. Exclusion, persecution and rebellion, 1000-1500*, ed. Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Dieh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 310-37.

² Everett Ferguson, *Demonology of the Early Christian World*, Symposium Series, vol. 12 (New York and Toronto: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1984), 36.

³ Plato, *Symposium*, 202E-203A; quoted in Ferguson, 45-6. Diana Lynn Walzel maintains that "Though the idea of demons in the *Symposium* is noticeably different from its presentation in the other dialogues, it is this dialogue which is most frequently discussed in later [Christian] authors on demonology." She states that in Plato's other dialogues, demons are viewed as the departed souls of men, or their guardians and guides. Diana Lynn Walzel, "Sources of Medieval Demonology," in *Witchcraft in the Ancient World and the Middle Ages*, ed. Brian P. Levack (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), 79-95; this on p. 79.

⁴ Ferguson, 52. Walzel states that "whether one read Greek philosophers or Jewish romances, one cannot avoid the conclusion that demons increasingly occupied men's thoughts in late antiquity. Though it was admitted that demons could be benign, increasingly they were viewed as malignant and as harbingers of evil for man." She calls this character of thinking "hopeless despair," which she says continued into the early Christian era, and "it was in the Christian message that many found hope of deliverance." Walzel, 87.

⁵ Walzel, 86.

⁶ Kieckhefer, 8. See also W. J. Knox, "Jewish Liturgical Exorcism," *Harvard Theological Review* 31 (1938): 191-203.

⁷ She states that there follows a series of adjurations of the demon by the deity. Then the final instructions are given:

But I adjure thee, thou that usest this adjuration: the flesh of swine eat not, and there shall be subject unto thee every spirit and demon, whatsoever he be. But when thou adjurest, blow, sending the breath from above [to the feet] and from the feet to the face, and the demon will be drawn into captivity.

Flint cites: *Paris Magical Papyrus*, in *The New Testament Background*, trans. C. K. Barrett (New York: Macmillan, 1957), lines 3, 007-3, 085, pp. 31-33.

For the Jews' reputation as magicians and exorcists, Ferguson refers to 96 Acts 13:6-

11; 19:13; and 16. Ferguson, 54.

⁸ Ferguson points out that Satan is mentioned in only a few passages. In Job 1-2, he is a member of the divine court and an accuser of men. In Zechariah 3:1 ff., Satan accuses the

high priest Joshua, but is rebuked by the Lord. According to 1 Chronicles 21:1, Satan incited David to transgress by numbering the people of Israel. In 2 Samuel 24:1, the Lord incites David, and so, Ferguson concludes, apparently Satan was the instrument of the Lord in testing David. The Old Testament refers also to an "evil spirit from the Lord" which tormented Saul with mental illness in 1 Samuel 16:14 ff. Ferguson, 71-3.

⁹ Quoted from *Douay Reims Catholic Bible Online*: <<http://www.drbo.org/>>.

¹⁰ Ferguson, 20. He also states that demons inciting men to sin distinguishes Jewish demonology from earlier religion and Greek views. Ferguson, 80.

¹¹ Jesus and his followers didn't use verbal formulae and also avoided the "material means" associated with magic. They used only the word of command or prayer. Discussed by Ferguson, 11. Ferguson also states that the Christian case did not rest on whether any given wonder did in fact occur; the Christian case had to do with the source or cause: was it from God and his Spirit or from the devil and his demons? The argument made was that the moral superiority of Christ and Christianity proved their miracles were from God and not from other powers. Ferguson, 114. Ferguson states that "accusations that Jesus was either demon-possessed, out of his mind, or involved in magic appear to have been quite common. The charge had been made against John the Baptist that he had a demon;" see Luke 7:33. "It appears to have been a stock charge against anyone who acted contrary to the usual norms of behavior." Ferguson, 20.

For a interesting, if somewhat controversial, exploration on the adoption of a magician's wand for early images of Christ performing miracles, see Thomas Mathews, *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993; reprint, 1999).

¹² Ferguson, 111 and 118-19.

¹³ Ferguson, 118.

¹⁴ Flint, 157.

¹⁵ Ferguson, 127. He continues, "I am persuaded that an important factor in Christian success in the Roman world was its promise of deliverance from demons. Greco-Roman paganism was quite demon-conscious." And he says that one method for evidence for Christian efficacy was the practice of casting out demons from those who were possessed. Ferguson, 129-31.

¹⁶ Ferguson, 131.

¹⁷ Flint, 105.

¹⁸ See Tom Licence, "The Gift of Seeing Demons in Early Cistercian Spirituality," *Cistercian Quarterly Studies* 39 (2004), 49-65; this on p. 61.

¹⁹ After Columba protected the Iona monastery from devils, he reported that the “Spirit” told him the community had been “saved by prayer and fasting.” Adomnán, *Life of Saint Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe (London and New York: Penguin Books Ltd, 1995), III, 8.

²⁰ Whitley Stokes states, “No western Christians were so distinguished for their ascetic practices as the Irish.” He discusses individual instances of monks sleeping with corpses, being suspended on sickles placed in the armpits, keeping stones in the mouth throughout Lent, allowing bugs to eat their flesh, and more widespread practices of habitual fasting, as well as standing in cold water, wearing clothes made of torturous materials and keeping lepers. Whitley Stokes, Introduction to *Tripartite Life of Patrick, with other documents relating to that Saint* (London: Published by the authority of the Lords commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, 1887), cxcv-cxcvi. While numerous accounts of long fasts and standing in freezing water for hours on end are found in Irish histories, lives and penitentials, one of the most interesting bits of evidence to surface is found in Colman Etchingham's book on the Irish church. Etchingham argues convincingly that laypeople voluntarily engaged in a life of perpetual penance (or repentance, the term he prefers) to achieve what he terms a “paramonastic” existence, which granted them privileges similar to those given monks. See Colman Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland A.D. 650 to 1000* (Kildare, Ireland: Laigin Publications, 1999), 290-318.

²¹ Uinseann Ó Maidín, ed. and trans., *The Celtic Monk. Rules & Writings of Early Irish Monks* (Kalamazoo, Michigan and Spencer, Massachusetts: Cistercian Publications Inc., 1996), 169.

²² *The Celtic Monk*, 161-9; this on p. 169. Dates and manuscripts are discussed, 157-9.

²³ Magic in the penitentials is best represented by the *Penitential of Finnian*, 18-20:

If any cleric or woman who practices magic have led astray anyone by their magic, it is a monstrous sin, but it can be expiated by penance...for six years, three years on an allowance of bread and water, and during the remaining three years he shall abstain from wine and meat. If, however, such a person has not led astray anyone but has given (a potion) for the sake of wanton love to someone, he shall do penance for an entire year on an allowance of bread and water. If a woman by her magic destroys the child she has conceived of somebody she shall do penance for half a year with an allowance of bread and water, and abstain for two years from wine and meat and fast for the six forty-day periods with bread and water.

Ludwig Bieler, ed., *The Irish Penitentials. Scriptorum Latini Hiberniae*, vol. 5, (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1963): 79-81. Magic is also repeated in the Penitential of St Columbanus, as is a passage that mentions demons:

But if any layman has eaten or drunk beside temples, if he did it through ignorance, let him undertake forthwith never to do it again, and let him do penance forty days on bread and water; but if he did it in derision, that is, after

the priest has declared to him that this was sacrilege, and if then he communicated at the table of demons, if it was only through the vice of greed that he did or repeated it, let him do penance for three forty-day periods on bread and water; but if he did it in worship of the demons or in honour of idols, let him do penance for three years.

The Irish Penitentials, 105.

²⁴ Quoted from *Douay-Reims Catholic Bible Online*. Discussed by Ferguson, 132.

²⁵ Augustine, *City of God*, 12: "...as among animals, so among all kinds of gods are there...distinctions." In several passages he refers to pagan rites of animal sacrifices; see for example, XXI and XXIV. Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: The Modern Library, 1993). Augustine's writings are also discussed by William Short, *Saints in the World of Nature: The Animal Story as Spiritual Parable in Medieval Hagiography (900-1200)* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, Facultas Theologi, Institutum Spiritualitatis, 1983), 185.

²⁶ Arthur Kingsley Porter, *The Crosses and Culture of Ireland* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1931; reprint, 1971), 84.

²⁷ Athanasius, *Life of Saint Anthony*, para. 9-10, in *Medieval Sourcebook Online*, <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/vita-antony.html>>. The website notes that its text is reproduced from Athanasius, *Select Works and Letters*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, Series 2, 14 vols. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Henrickson Publishers, 1994), and uses their pagination; this appears in IV, 198-9.

²⁸ Felix, *The Life of Saint Guthlac*, ed. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 114.

²⁹ Debra Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews. Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 68.

³⁰ Anonymous, ch. 15; Bede's version, ch. 15. In Bertram Colgrave, trans., *Two lives of Saint Cuthbert. A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 132-5 and 202-07, respectively. Colgrave discusses the date of Bede's report, based upon an identification of the woman's husband as Hildmer, a reeve of King Ecgfrith, whose reign began ca. 671. Colgrave, 323.

³¹ Whitley Stokes, trans., "The Battle of Mag Mucrime," *Revue Celtique* 13 (1892), 426-74; this on p. 457.

³² Adomnán, III, 8.

³³ Porter, 82. Guy Ferrari compiled a list of images of Saint Anthony, with the earliest one appearing on *ampullas* from the fourth through sixth centuries, although he states that the identification of the subject matter for many of the early images called Saint Anthony is not

certain. See Guy Ferrari, "Sources for the Early Iconography of St. Anthony," in *Antonius Magnus Eremita, 356-1956*, ed. B. Steidle. *Studia Anselmiana* 38 (Roma 1956), 358-53. As Ferrari points out in his brief introduction, he does not discuss iconography, but merely lists image sources.

³⁴ She identifies the most common animal characteristics as horns, a tail and wings (and nudity), occurring after the eleventh century. Strickland, 62-4.

³⁵ Françoise Henry, *The Book of Kells. Reproductions from the Manuscript in Trinity College Dublin* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), fig. 42, which reproduces a black-and-white drawing of the Stuttgart Psalter picture (Landesbibliothek no. 23). She says the *Temptation of Christ* is "not a subject frequently represented before the Carolingian period," and lists this psalter image as an exception. Another entirely blackened and winged devil is reproduced in her fig. 43, from the *Golden Evangeliar* from Echternach, again representing the *Temptation of Christ*, and identified as a Carolingian manuscript. She says these black devils are of Byzantine origin, "suggested by the constant use of that type in Byzantine manuscripts...[and] later mosaics...such as those at Monreale in Sicily and in St Mark's in Venice." Henry, 189-90. Louis Jordan adds to the list of Byzantine manuscripts the illumination of Psalm 6 from Vatican MS. graec 752, fol. 28r, a Psalter dated 1059. Louis Jordan, "Demonic Elements in Anglo-Saxon Iconography," in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach with the assistance of Virginia Darrow Oggins (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1986), 281-317; this on p. 281.

³⁶ Such as the productions of the School of Metz, dated to ca. 850, including the *Drogo Sacramentary* (Bibliothèque nationale MS. Lat. 9428, fol. 41r) and ivory book cover (Frankfurt am Main, Stadtbibliothek Cod. Ausst. 68), in which the devil is pictured as "simply a man." Jordan, 281.

³⁷ Jordan lists Trier, Stadtbibliothek MS. 31, fols. 66r and 67r as the images he refers to. See Jordan, 294-5, and his PL. 10. The image reproduced here is fol. 67v, reproduced from ARTstor, image #103-41822003236674. ARTstor: <<http://www.artstor.org.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/info/>>.

³⁸ There are also the Anglo-Saxon illustrations of the personifications of *Vita and Mors*, with illustrations *Mors* similarly conceived with horns and animal ears, but also with wings, taloned hands, and wearing a loin cloth. The earliest known version is found in the Leofric Missal (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodl. 579), a late-ninth or early tenth-century manuscript. These illustrations were used to help foretell the outcome of an illness, with *Vita* personifying health and recovery, and *Mors* representing more dire consequences. See Adelheid Heimann, "Three Illustration from the Bury St. Edmunds Psalter and their Prototypes. Notes on the Iconography of Some Anglo-Saxon Drawings," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966), 39-59.

³⁹ Jordan, 306-11.

⁴⁰ Strickland, 61.

⁴¹ The east face of Muiredach's Cross at Monasterboice is reproduced in Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland. An Iconographical and Photographic Survey*, 3 vols. (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1992); image reproduced in I, fig. 472.

⁴² Reproduced from Harbison, III, fig. 941.

⁴³ Harbison tentatively identifies the image as either *The Judgment of Solomon* or *Saints Paul and Anthony Overcoming the Devil in Human Form*. He illustrates it in III, fig. 749. Another upside-down figure appears in a similarly attributed *Judgment of Solomon* found on the Kells Market Cross. This version clearly has bare feet, but the image is too worn to make out other details. Reproduced in Harbison, III, fig. 751.

⁴⁴ Kells Market Cross, *Saints Paul and Anthony Overcoming the Devil in Human Form*, reproduced in Harbison, III, fig. 955. Monasterboice Tall Cross, the same subject, is reproduced from Harbison, III, fig. 956.

⁴⁵ See Harbison's discussion of the image found on the east face, head, of the Cross the of Scriptures at Clonmacnois, II, 49; the photograph reproduced here appears in III, fig. 960, detail.

⁴⁶ Kells Market Cross, *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, is reproduced from Harbison, III, fig. 949.

⁴⁷ Strickland, 61.

⁴⁸ Ferguson, 118-19.

⁴⁹ Kells Market Cross is identified in my note 48, above. The Monasterboice Tall Cross, *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, is reproduced from Harbison, III, fig. 948.

⁵⁰ See Flint and Kieckhefer, who address this topic thoroughly.

⁵¹ Irish shapeshifters include the mother of Oisín, who was changed into a deer, and consequently, this child of Fionn was a beast child. (Fionn or Finn was the mythical leader of the *fianna*.) Discussed by J. A. MacCulloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911), 50. See also Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, *Fionn mac Cumhaill. Images of the Gaelic Hero* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd, 1988), 77-79. In numerous hero tales, such as "The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel," people change into birds and back again. Whitley Stokes, "The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel," *Revue Celtique* 22 (1901), 9-61, 165-215, 283-329 and 390-437; this appearing on p. 21 and 24. See also, Whitley Stokes, trans. "Da Choca's Hostel," *Révue Celtique* 21 (1900), 149-65, 312-27, and 388-402, in which 150 youths are shaped into the form of birds and one becomes a hawk; this on p. 157. In *The Battle of Mag Mucrime*, a character named Ailill, who had encounters with the magical people of the *sidh*, underwent a transformation, as indicated by another

character's observation: "Magical distortion has seized thy shape." Whitley Stokes, "The Battle of Mag Mucrime," 465. Also, the Morrigan, a sorceress in the *Táin Bó Cuáilnge*, shapeshifts into an eel, wolf and heifer to attack and confound the hero, Cú Chulainn. Lady Winifred Faraday, trans., *The Cattle-Raid of Cualnge. An Old Irish Prose-Epic. Translated from Leabhar na h-Uidhri and The Yellow Book of Lecan* (London: David Nutt, 1904; reprinted 1972), 74-5.

For information on shapeshifting in Scandinavian tales, see Catharina Raudvere, "Trolldomr in Early Medieval Scandinavia," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Middle Ages*, ed. Karen Jolly, Catharina Raudvere, and Edward Peters (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 75-108. She discusses characters in Scandinavian literature who take various forms as shapeshifters in order to better perform deeds while their human bodies lie sleeping. The concept is also found in Welsh literature, as demonstrated in "The Battle of Godeu," in the Book of Taliesen, in which a speaker reports having assumed "a multitude of shapes," with a list extending over several pages, and including "the light of lanterns," and "the foam of waves," as well as more corporeal forms. See John Matthews, ed., *A Celtic Reader. Selections from Celtic Legend, Scholarship and Story* (London: The Aquarian Press, 1991), 218-22.

Shapeshifters appear in Continental literature, as well. See Eli Edward Buriss, "The Terminology of Witchcraft," in *Witchcraft in the Ancient World and the Middle Ages*, ed. Brian P. Levack (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), 69-145.

⁵² Stokes, *Tripartite Life of Patrick*, I, 48-9.

⁵³ Kieckhefer, p. 51, describes animal spirits as magician's aids. See also Jerbert Fischer and Joyce Adams, "The Use of Gesture in Preparing Medicaments and in Healing," *History of Religions* 5 (Summer 1965), 18-53.

⁵⁴ Stokes, "The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel," 22-23.

⁵⁵ John Graham Dalyell, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland* (Glasgow: Richard Griffin & Co., 1835), 495. Dalyell summarily cites obscure texts for these passages, as: Martin, *Western Islands*, 111-12, and Pennant, *Tour 1772*, 311.

⁵⁶ Flint, 108 and 157. Flint says that saints' lives "retranslated" magical associations "which had been condemned and required treatment of a sympathetic kind." Flint, 264.

⁵⁷ Flint, 303. Kieckhefer says there were two types of magic in the medieval era: demonic and natural. That is not to say that the natural type did not also rely on demons, but it also overlapped an area of knowledge that today is considered scientific. Kieckhefer, 1.

⁵⁸ To understand how similar non-Christian and Christian medicinal practices were, consider this sixth-century passage in which Bishop Caesarius of Arles expresses frustration about the actions of mothers with ill children:

They do not ask for the church's medicine, or that of the author of salvation

and the eucharist of Christ. Nor...do they ask the priests to anoint them with blessed oil, or place all their hopes in God...They say to themselves: Let us consult that soothsayer, seer, oracle or witch. Let us sacrifice a garment of the sick person, a girdle that can be seen and measured. Let us offer some magic letters, let us hang some charms on his neck. In all this the Devil has one aim: either cruelly to kill the children by abortion, or to heal them still more cruelly with charms.

The “church’s medicine” may have seemed indistinguishable from the devil’s variety to many people in the early medieval era. Saints’ garments could be used to good effect;

Christian *characteres* or writing were also powerful healing agents; incantations that were part unintelligible speech and part liturgical passage were used; and relics were worn around the neck. Gregory the Great’s mother wore a gold reliquary shaped like a wolf’s head, as if her Christian charm was boosted by encasement within animal magic. Of course, no such comparison would have been made by a faithful Christian, but all these practices suggest that Christians did little more than rename pagan practices. Flint, 303-07; cf. Sermon 52 in *Caesarius of Arles, Sermons*, 3 vols., trans. M.M. Mueller (Washington, 1956-1973), I, 260.

⁵⁹ Flint, 317 and n. 184. See also Kieckhefer, 1.

⁶⁰ Kieckhefer, 1.

⁶¹ John Carey thinks that “druids of some sort were active in Ireland in the seventh and indeed the eighth centuries,” since they are mentioned in the laws and penitentials. John Carey, “Saint Patrick, the Druids and the End of the World,” *History of Religions* 36 (August 1996), 42-53; this on p. 43. Of course, as he infers, modern readers cannot determine how the term “druid” was applied, and in this era, the practices associated with one might have borne no resemblance to the historical figures. Patrick’s law against druids is stated in Cormac’s Glossary, 92.

⁶² Séan Mac Airt is one who associates the druid and *fili* as “different aspects of one and the same individual.” Séan Mac Airt, “*Filidecht* and *Coimgne*,” *Ériu* 18 (1958), 139-152; this on p. 139. He is one of many who defines the term *fili* as “seer.” He says “this official was seemingly qualified to fill different offices, e.g. those of king, jurist, poet, etc.,” which were also roles assigned to druids in earlier times. Mac Airt, 140. J. A. MacCulloch states: “When druids were overthrown at coming of Christianity, the *filid* remained as a learned class, probably because they abandoned all pagan practices, while bards were reduced to a comparatively low status.” MacCulloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, 299. See also Kim McCone, “Werewolves, Cyclopes, *Diberga* and *Fíanna*: Juvenile Delinquency in Early Ireland,” *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 12 (Winter 1986), 1-22; esp. pp. 19 and 224.

⁶³ Just as they did in politically troubled Anglo-Saxon England when “false teaching” was counteracted by the homilies of Aelfric, in which he reported many Christian miracles and roundly condemned magical practices. He even discusses a girl transformed into a mare by the devil. For a more in-depth discussion, see Karen Jolly, “Anglo-Saxon charms in the

context of a Christian world view,” *Journal of Medieval History* 11 (1985), 279-93. I will discuss warfare and other events in Chapter Five, “Beastly Men.”

⁶⁴ Only some of the historical information on the druids can be relied upon, as many scholars point out. According to Stuart Piggott, not only are most of the classical accounts second-hand reports based on the lost histories of Posidonius, who traveled in Gaul in the second century B.C.E., but also in the later accounts it can be difficult to separate witnessed fact from poetic elaboration. Also, as Piggott states, there are two competing traditions of reportage, each with its own bias. The “Posidonius” tradition is unfavorable toward the Celts and druids, and the original was written as part of a patriot’s account of the Roman conquest and occupation of Gaul. The other tradition, which Piggott calls “Alexandrian,” is also based on Posidonius, but it focuses on the “romantic” aspects of druidism: its authors are largely uncritical of exotic traditions, including Pythagorean, Egyptian, Persian and Indian spiritual views, an ideological *familia* into which the shamanistic side of druidism fits cozily. See Stuart Piggott, *The Druids* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1968; reprinted 1975), 92-9. Those with first-hand accounts of the druids in Western Europe are three: besides Posidonius, there are Julius Caesar and Tacitus. Caesar wrote an account of his military actions in Gaul, with the objective of self-promotion and glorification of his military actions in Gaul; and Tacitus wrote his account of the Britons while on a Roman mission there during Celtic Queen Boudicca’s infamous and nearly devastating rebellion against Roman rule. Unfortunately, all accounts of the druids, which span six centuries, are, as Piggott characterizes, “scanty and scrappy and full of second-hand quotes.” They span the second century B.C.E. to the fourth century C.E. Piggott, 18; his characterization of Caesar appears on p. 97. The (un)reliability of Caesar’s account is, as Piggott mentions, “much discussed” by modern scholars. Nevertheless, some information proves interesting, and other evidence supports the likelihood of some of his claims. And these bits further compare with hints gleaned from Irish stories and recorded in ancient Irish legal tracts.

⁶⁵ For a fairly complete reference to the many classical writers who commented on druids and the roles the writers assigned to this group, see Kendrick. Caesar said the druids possessed “much knowledge of the stars and their motion, the size of the world and of the earth,” along with other aspects of “natural philosophy.” Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, VI, 14; discussed in Piggott, 115. Piggott also discusses the Coligny Calendar, probably Augustan in date. This bronze plate, measuring five feet by three feet, six inches, is engraved with a calendar of 62 consecutive lunar months, with two “intercalary” months to adjust for extra days over the course of its long cycle. It reckons by nights rather than days, which classical authors reported as a druidic method of calculating, and while the lettering and numerals are Roman, the language is Gaulish, according to Piggott, 116. In the *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, although a saga and not a real historical account, a druid named Cathbad is described with 100 students “learning magic from him.” Lady Winifred Faraday, trans., *The Cattle-Raid of Cualnge*, 26.

⁶⁶ “The druidic orders included various kinds of officials, priests, prophets and poets, while we gather some of its members were free to devote themselves entirely to the duties of government and international affairs.” Kendrick, 96.

⁶⁷ Kendrick, 98-9. To quote directly from Kendrick, “In the second century A.D., there is no direct reference to druids or druidism, and after this we learn only that there were female fortune-tellers called *dryades* in Gaul in the third century, and that in the fourth century there were still certain people who could boast of druidic descent. This refers to Gaul in particular. We have no knowledge from these sources of the ancient druidism in Ireland, and of Britain there is one brief mention of druids in Anglesey.” See also J. A. MacCulloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, pp. 298 ff. He discusses their role in medicine, 299.

⁶⁸ Kendrick, 86. At the end of the first century, their status in the eyes of the outside world had sunk to that of mere magicians, though druidism “was still to some extent a current faith and capable of occasional revival wherever Roman power was temporarily weakened.” Kendrick, 99.

⁶⁹ Kendrick, 91. Tacitus, reporting on a raid on the Isle of Anglesey by Suetonius Paulinus in 60 C.E., makes them seem “little better than a pack of howling dervishes;” but his later report, in reference to the burning of the Roman British capitol in 70 C.E., suggests that druids had some political importance. Kendrick thinks that partial and local revivals of druidic activities in Britain followed “temporary weakenings” of Roman power, as happened in Gaul. Kendrick, 91-2. Tacitus does not even mention the druids in Britain in the *Agricola*, a biography concerned with events of seven years of administration there. For his information on the druids, see Tacitus, *Annals*, XIV, 30, and *Histories*, IV, 54.

⁷⁰ The translation in the literature is often “wizards.” Since they were in the close company of kings, one can assume their historical role was that of druids, and that the Christian writers, as classical writers had done before them, reduced their role to that of simple magician. Paul Lonigan discusses the translation of the words used in Irish church literature. He says in early Irish glosses, the Latin *magus* is written to translate the Irish *drui*, and that both classical and Insular writers apply the term to all sorts of magic purveyors. In Muirchú’s *Life of Patrick* of the late seventh century, King Loéguire is described as having “sages and druids, fortune-teller and sorcerers” in his entourage. Ludwig Bieler, ed., *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, 10 (Dublin, 1979), 75. Tírechán’s “collection of memoranda” of Patrick’s mission in Ireland (Bieler, *Patrician Texts*, 36), also from the late seventh century, reports Patrick’s conversion of someone in the king’s retinue named Máel, whom Tírechán describes using the terms *airbacc giunnae* and *norma magica*, translated by Ludwig Bieler as “the [haircut] in druidic fashion” (Bieler, *Patrician Texts*, 145). He goes on to state that Article 14 of the First Synod of Saint Patrick, dated to the late sixth century (*Irish Penitentials*, ed. Bieler, 54-65), decrees a year’s penance for murder, adultery, or swearing “before a druid [*ad aruspicem*] as pagans do,” and here Bieler translates the term as druid and not *magus*. Most scholars would deny that druidry lasted into the eighth century, but the passages discussed may refer to practices traditionally associated with them. Lonigan claims that Irish medieval scholars used the language of the Latin Bible, and so they called magicians *magi* and not druids, and they “took it for granted that their accounts would be understood.” Paul Lonigan, *The Druids. Priests of the Ancient Celts* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1996), 2-9. Stuart Piggott also disagrees with Chadwick in her assertion that druids did not constitute a priesthood. Piggott, 102.

⁷¹ Druidesses appear in stories of the mythical Fomorians, as reported by Eugene O'Curry, *On the manners and customs of the ancient Irish*, ed. W. K. Sullivan (London: Williams and Norgate, and New York: Scribner, 1873); cf. John Matthews, ed., *A Celtic Reader*, 19.

⁷² Thomas O'Loughlin has compiled a list of the holdings of the library of Iona in the seventh century, deduced from references in the writings of Adomnán. See Thomas O'Loughlin, "The Library of Iona in the Late Seventh Century: The Evidence from Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*," *Ériu* 45 (1994), 33-52. See also, J. N. Hillgarth, "Ireland and Spain in the Seventh Century," *Peritia* 3 (1984), 1-16.

⁷³ Patrick was not the first ecclesiastic in Ireland, although earlier Christians could not have been many, but these Latin-speaking clerics undoubtedly introduced the language, if only in small circles. D. L. T. Bethell remarks on the accomplishment of Patrick, faced as he was with an almost entirely non-Latin-speaking culture with few converts. D. L. T. Bethell, "The Originality of the Early Irish Church," *Journal for the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 3 (1981), 36-49. Documents state that Palladius, who was the first missionary sent to Ireland and whom Patrick replaced upon his death, brought relics of Peter and Paul and left behind books. Stokes, Introduction, *Tripartite Life*, clx-clxi. Stokes points out that the Irish words for "written," "pen," "paper," "parchment," "book" and other terms related to literacy are borrowed from the Latin, suggesting that pagans were not "lettered." Stokes, Introduction, *Tripartite Life*, cxlii. However, he also points out that Patrick is described in many instances as writing *abgitoria* or *abgatoria* and *elementa* for his "noble and bardic converts," suggesting a copy of the Psalms must have existed in Ireland before his arrival. Stokes, Introduction, *Tripartite Life*, cliii.

⁷⁴ Seth Lerer, "Literate Authority in Bede's Story of Imma," in *Literacy, Politics and Artistic Innovation in the Early Medieval West: Papers delivered at "A Symposium on Early Medieval Culture," Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA.*, ed. Celia M. Chazelle (Lanham, Md. and London: University Press of America, Inc., 1992), 19-47; this on p. 33. The text referred to is found in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, IV.

⁷⁵ Irish libraries in earlier centuries were well visited, which is common knowledge. Peter Ellis states this reputation is recorded as early as the fifth century. See Peter Berresford Ellis, *The Druids* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 166.

⁷⁶ "Logos," *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia Online*: <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/l.htm>>.

⁷⁷ The different "schools" responsible for recording the various laws tracts in the eighth century are discussed by D. A. Binchy, "Bretha Nemed," *Ériu* 17 (1955), 4-6. In the Introduction to the *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Ireland*, nine persons are listed as authors of the Senchus Mor, including Patrick, three bishops, three kings, a doctor and a poet. *Ancient Laws*, vii.

⁷⁸ Adomnán, II, 8. A similar story about a book resisting water is reported in II, 9.

⁷⁹ Joseph F. Kelly, “Books, Learning and Sanctity in Early Christian Ireland,” *Thought* 54 (September, 1979), 254-61; this on p. 256.

⁸⁰ Whitley Stokes, trans., “The Battle of Mag Mucrime,” 451.

⁸¹ *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Ireland* lists five types of crime, one of which is “crime of the tongue: satire, slander or false witness.” *Ancient laws of Ireland*, I, viii. Fred Norris Robinson states that elsewhere, as in the law relating to *eric*-fines, satirizing and assault are treated together. Fred Norris Robinson, “Satirists and Enchanters in Early Irish Literature,” in *The Bardic Source Book*, ed. John Matthews, 1998, 134-58; this on p. 138. Satires delivered against unpaying persons is discussed by Robinson, 142 and 148. In the *Old Table of Penitential Commutations*, druidism, satirizing, warrior-activity, heresy, kin-slaying, homicide, secret killing, adultery, perjury and transgressing one’s ecclesiastical grade are listed together as sins that do not merit any permissible penance. D.A. Binchy, ed., “The Old-Irish table of penitential commutations,” *Ériu* 19 (1962), 47-72. Discussed also in Colman Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland A.D. 650 to 1000* (Kildare, Ireland: Laigin Publications, 1999), 302.

⁸² These passages are found in Breatnach, Liam, ed. and trans., *Uraicecht Na Ríar. The Poetic Grades in Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1987). The raven’s croaking entitles the receiver to recompense. Bretha Nemed IV, 36-7 and notes 10-11; translation notes for *graice* and *coirne*, discussed in *Uraicecht Na Ríar*, 39; cf. D. A. Binchy, ed., *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, 6 vols. (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978). The passage on whispering out of a snout is found in Bretha Nemed VIII, 50 and notes 1-4, 51; cf. *Corpus Iuris Hibernici* 1131, 14-27.

⁸³ Discussed by Robinson, 141 and quoted from Cormac’s Glossary. See also Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Kildare, Ireland: An Sagart, 1991), 220-25.

⁸⁴ Bretha Nemed IV, 36-7, in Breatnach, ed., and trans., *Uraicecht Na Ríar*. The meaning of the word *anamain* is discussed by John Carey, who refers to Kuno Meyer’s translation of the Triads of Ireland, in which privileges are based on skills and knowledge, one of which is the singing of *anamain* of four varieties, a distinction Carey says is often named for the *olam* or highest-ranked category of poet. See John Carey, “The three things required of a poet,” *Ériu* 48 (1997), 41-58. Reproduced with permission by *Celtic Digital Initiative*, <<http://www.ucc.ie/academic/smg/CDI/articles.html>>.

⁸⁵ *Imbas forosnai* is found in *Cormac’s Glossary*, 91-2. See also Nora K. Chadwick, “Imbas Forosnai,” *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 4 (1934), 97-135, in which she describes chanting as part of the procedure. For John Carey’s arguments about the questionable historical basis for this ritual, and his attribution of its “romanticized” pagan associations that he attributes to Cormac, see this essay, page 111 and note 151 for Chapter One. John Carey, “The three things required of a poet” is cited in my note 84, above.

⁸⁶ Robinson, 147.

⁸⁷ Whitley Stokes, trans., “Da Choca’s Hostel,” *Révue Celtique* 21 (1900), 149-65, 312-27, and 388-402; this on p. 319. The text calls the singer of doom a “seer,” but Stokes specifies him as a druid: note on paragraph 42, p. 398. Wizards described as “uttering ill-omens to [King] Cormac” proved correct in their prophecies. Stokes, *Da Choca’s Hostel*, 155.

⁸⁸ Patrick’s magic was more powerful, however. While the wizard could not remove the snow or the darkness until the next day, Patrick was able to effect the changes immediately. Stokes, Whitley, trans. and ed., *Tripartite Life of Patrick*, I, 55.

⁸⁹ For documentation and explanation of their standing and roles in society, see Séan Mac Airt. See also, Liam Breatnach, ed., *Uraicecht Na Ríar. The Poetic Grades in Early Irish Law* (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1987), and *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Ireland*, IV, 359-51, and V, 27-29.

⁹⁰ See *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Ireland*, “Heptads,” V, 229-35, in which seven kinds of satire are listed. See also Robinson, “Satirists and Enchanters in Early Irish Literature,” who states, “There is manifestly a ‘long and large difference’ between these talismanic spells, often half-meaningless in content, and the highly acute and intellectual form of poetry which has been chiefly known in Europe by the name of satire.” Robinson, 135. In *Cormac’s Glossary*, Robinson adds, there are many entries related to the custom of causing blemish. *Leos* is a “blush wherewith a person is reddened after a satire or reproach of him, and “*ferb*” is “a blotch which is put on the face of a man after a satire or false judgment.”

The tale of *Cath Maige Tuired* concerns the effects wrought on hosts by satirists and poets as a result of generous and stingy hospitality. For a discussion, see Kim McCone, “A Tale of Two Ditties: Poet and Satirist in *Cath Maige Tuired*,” in *Sages, Saints and Storytellers. Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney*, ed. Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone (Maynooth, Ireland: An Sagart. 1989), 122-43.

⁹¹ McCone, “A Tale of Two Ditties,” and Robinson.

⁹² This satire is credited to Aonghus na naor, “A. of the satires,” and quoted in Eleanor Knott and Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), 83.

⁹³ Originally in the Book of Ballymote (Codex palatino-vaticanus, no. 830). Found in E. Windische and W. Stokes, eds., *Irische Texte mit Übersetzungen und Wörterbuch*, III (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900-), 96-7.

⁹⁴ MacCulloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, 298. His note 3 breaks down *gutuatros* as perhaps stemming from the root, *gutu-*, meaning “voice.” He says the word is known from a few inscriptions and is used by Caesar in *De Bello Gallico* VIII, 38.

⁹⁵ MacCulloch states that Diodorus referred to the Celtic philosophers and theologians as druids, diviners, and bards, as did Strabo, with Strabo giving the Greek form of the native name for the diviners, *vatis*, which MacCulloch says is a word probably derived from the Celtic form, *va(circonflex)tis*, which in Irish is *féith*. MacCulloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, 298; cf. Diodorus Siculus, V, 31; Strabo, IV, IV, 4.

⁹⁶ Tacitus, *Annals*, XIV, 32, in *Complete Works of Tacitus*, ed. Moses Hadas (New York: The Modern Library, 1942), 338. Piggott states that “The well-known scene in Tacitus of the confrontation of Druids and the Roman army in Anglesey shows that ritual cursing was another means of invoking divine wrath when needed.” Piggott, 109.

⁹⁷ Raudvere, 91.

⁹⁸ Karen Jolly, "Medieval Magic: Definitions, Beliefs, Practices," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Middle Ages*, ed. Karen Jolly, Catharina Raudvere, and Edward Peters (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 35.

⁹⁹ Tom Duddy, “Derrida and the Druids: Writing, Lore, and Power in Early Celtic Society,” *Religion & Literature*, 28:2-3 (1996), 9-20; this on p. 10.

¹⁰⁰ Buriss, 74. He cites Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 14.36. Also, Lucan refers to an incantation that was either sung at an almost inaudible level or muttered. Lucan, *Pharsalia* or *Bellum Civile* VI, 685-86.

¹⁰¹ Cited from Townsend, *Survey of the County of Cork*, V,1, 436, and quoted in Dalyell, who says the event happened some thirty years earlier. He also reported that a man living in Sussex in 1648, named John Young, demonstrated that he “could tame the fiercest bull or wildest horse by whispering in its ear.” Dalyell, whose incomplete and obscure citations are discussed in my note 55, above, cites Casaubon, *Treatise Proving Spirits*, 107. Dalyell, 444.

¹⁰² The notion of the image as text was expounded by Gregory the Great. See Celia M. Chazelle, “Pictures, Books, and the Illiterate: Pope Gregory I’s Letters to Serenus of Marseilles,” *Word and Image* 6 (1990), 138-153.

CHAPTER IV

CLOTHES (AND POSE) MAKE THE MAN

“A single warrior comes towards us, little Cú,” said Láeg. “What kind of warrior?” asked Cú Chulainn. “A dark-haired, handsome, broad-faced fellow. A fine brown cloak about him, a bronze pin in his cloak. A strong, plaited shirt next to his skin. Two shoes between his feet and the ground. He carries a staff of white hazel in one hand and in the other a one-edged sword with guards of ivory.” “Well, driver,” said Cú Chulainn, “those are the tokens of a messenger. That is one of the messengers of Ireland coming to speak and parley with me.”¹

In medieval Irish art and literature, adornment and accessories served as indicators of social status and role. In the above passage quoted from the *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, detailed descriptions of clothing and accessories attest to their significance to a medieval audience.² In this episode, the hero Cú Chulainn anticipates the nature of a man’s mission by assessing his appearance upon his arrival, indicated through description of the man’s clothing, shoes, jewelry, and the "white-hazel staff" and ivory-hilted sword he brandishes. In the paragraph that follows, Cú Chulainn asks the man whose vassal he is, because the hero knows that the visitor’s standing is relatively high, but he is not a noble or aristocratic warrior. Throughout this medieval Irish tale, specifics of dress and the objects carried by different personages serve as identifiers of military rank, economic status, and in this case, social or professional role.

As Alice Planche states in a book on medieval dress, costume signified not only a particular cut of fabric but also functioned as symbolic “text,” presenting “a message whose codes were well known by contemporaries...serving as an identity card, signifying

professional station, demonstrating...the place within a complex hierarchy, the functions one served, as well as one's wealth or poverty...."¹ Specific articles of clothing and jewelry were not merely the stuff of poetic discourse in Ireland, but laws regulated the dress and jewelry appropriate for different social classes and literature reflected that fact. Costume historian Bonnie Effros states that while dress for the upper classes was legislated in most Western European law tracts, only in Ireland was the dress of the lower stations specified, as well.²

Laws governing fosterage, a widely-practiced system by which children were raised outside the biological parents' home, demonstrate that children's social status determined the specifics of their habiliments, which the tract states parents were expected to provide when turning children over to foster caregivers:

Blay-colored, yellow and black are to be worn by the sons of inferior rank; red, green and brown by sons of chieftains; purple and blue by sons of kings. [The] custom now [is] satin and scarlet for sons of the king of Erin, and silver on his scabbards, and brass rings upon his hurling sticks, and tin upon the scabbards of sons of chieftains of lower rank, and brass rings upon their hurling sticks...and brooches of gold, having crystal inserted in them, with the sons of the king of Erin, and of the king of a province; and brooches of silver with the sons of the king of a territory [a lesser rank], or a great territory; or the son of each king is to have a similar brooch, as to material; but that the ornamentation of all these should appear in that brooch.

The footnote for this passage in the *Ancient Law Tracts* states that for each class the appropriate style of brooch was carved or ornamented according to the rank of the king whose child was sent into fosterage.³

Also significant among members of this society was the clothing appropriate to special days of the week. The same legal tract states that sons of the *aire-desa* chief, a high-ranking king, wear clothes of a different color every day, and "he is to wear clothes of two different colors on Sunday," while "sons of the superior *aire-forgill* chiefs and sons of kings have new colored clothes at all times," referring to weekdays, Sundays and festival days,

according to a footnote, “and all embroidered with gold and silver.”⁴

As I shall demonstrate in this chapter, the relevance of class distinctions, as indicated by clothing, extended to legal compensation for crimes committed by or against people of different ranks—known as the honor-price—and the level of hospitality given to, or received by, travelers. The rules of hospitality comprised an unbreakable code of conduct, related in the hero tales as morally binding, and death was preferred to their breaking.⁵ Hence, as Cú Chulainn and others in the stories assess the rank and station of approaching visitors, they may be mentally preparing for different kinds of exigencies.

Maggie McEnchroe Williams has written about the attire of figures carved on some of the better-preserved Irish crosses, stating that dress was an indicator of not only rank, but also secular or clerical station. Both Williams and Francoise Henry posit the crosses may have been painted at one time, which would have provided additional clues, as the law tracts indicate; however, any traces of polychromy that may once have existed have long since disappeared.⁶ In some cross scenes, costumes specific to military rank or clerical station have led scholars to identify the role of persons depicted within a narrative, although such identifications are never certain, evident in the fact that scholars do not agree on what each scene represents or what social role is held by the principal characters. Peter Harbison frequently mentions the garments depicted, although his comments on the crosses under examination are largely limited to observations about long gowns and short tunics, sometimes with reference to their role in identifying an ecclesiastic, biblical personage or saint; in a couple of instances he mentions trousers.⁷ Mary Fitzgerald takes a different position on the clothing worn in medieval Ireland: she states that while the Irish may have been familiar with ecclesiastical garments, they continued to wear local dress, presumably

secular, until at least the late twelfth century.⁸

Seeking common features among the different versions of the images identified as *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, and looking at similar details in other scenes, offer useful ground for comparative analysis. Undoubtedly, a survey of features common to the *Temptation* images has not been conducted in the past, in part because a millennium of weathering has obfuscated many details. Also complicating the issue of comparing similar images is Roger Stalley's demonstration that a theme can be treated with tremendous iconographic variety from cross to cross.⁹

I shall demonstrate that a great deal of iconographical inconsistency characterizes the related figures in the group of *Temptation of Saint Anthony* images, and in some cases, interpretations of details may be countered by conflicting evidence on other crosses. This is true even for the small number of crosses under consideration here—two at Castledermot, one at Monasterboice, one at Kells and one at Moone—and I shall also refer to Muiredach's cross, also in Monasterboice, which retains an uncommon level of clarity in its details, useful for discussion. These crosses, again, are situated within a hundred miles of one another and datable within a two-century span, and possibly created within a single century. (See map, fig. 13.)

I consider the appearance of the characters in the *Temptation* scenes to resemble criminals committing the perfect crime: evidence is left behind, but seen as a group, it is contradictory and somewhat inconclusive. Still, when looking at the images appearing on a single cross, reasonable comparisons may, I suggest, be more conclusive than those made among different cross images.

I shall begin an analysis of the figures' appearance with the head of the central

figure, the fully human actor in the scene. I have created color-enhanced versions of some scenes, reproduced alongside untouched black-and-white photographs to better highlight objects and direct the viewer's attention to details meriting close examination.

The victim: sifting through the composite drawings

The treatment of the central figure's head differs from image to image and erosion has obliterated details, so that few definite statements can be made with absolute assurance. Without clear visual information, such as clear and irrefutable signs of a monk's tonsure, for example, his head does not help much in identifying his social role or position. Despite the unavailability of clear and significant details, analysis of what does remain visible contributes to a full survey of his overall appearance.

The figure in the center of the scene pictured on the Castledermot South Cross (fig. 8) may have a beard, but comparison of his facial structure with the adjacent images of *Daniel in the Lions' Den* or either of the two figures of Adam or Eve, for that matter (fig. 57), demonstrates this sculptor's propensity for depicting chins that culminate in a point.¹⁰ The *Temptation* figure's hair appears receded from his forehead, but whether or not a tonsure is intended is impossible to say. The only statement that can be made definitely is that he has hair, rather than wearing a hat or helmet.

The Moone Cross central figure is carved in such a simplified style, with such broad treatment of the figures, that details, such as the top of the head, are clearly detailed by this sculptor (fig. 4). Almost every figure on this cross is indistinguishable from every other one, as demonstrated among the *Twelve Disciples* (fig. 58).¹¹ An arc rings the crown of his head, which could signify either hair or a headdress.

Possibly the most eroded feature of all among all the different *Temptation* images is

the head of the central figure on the Castledermot North Cross (fig. 6). His head looks strangely large, although the same might be said for other Castledermot North Cross figures (fig. 5). Relief is rendered in clumps that line the top of his scalp, similar to the treatment of Daniel's head on the other Castledermot monument, the South Cross, in the panel immediately below the *Temptation* (fig. 57); here Daniel's similarly enlarged head also has clumps of relief forming a horizontal band across the scalp, and the treatment presumably indicates hair in both cases.¹²

On the Kells Market Cross, this figure's head is also somewhat blurred by erosion. I have colorized a version of this image with a blue overlay covering an area of higher relief, where a hood appears to connect to the neck of his garment, and it may continue around his head (figs. 59 and 60).¹³ Small patches of (uncolored) higher relief come forward along the two sides of his temple; the clearest section lies on the viewer's right side, which touches the beast's nose, and looks like a tuft of hair: perhaps a tonsure or the last remains of fringe on a balding head is indicated, but again, no certain determination can be made.

An interesting feature is found on the Monasterboice Tall Cross figure (figs. 61 and 62).¹⁴ Tracing a faint line of shadow that encircles the top half of his skull, one can make out a band of raised relief separated by incision, similar to the treatment discussed for the Moone Cross figure. The arc stretches from ear to ear, ending in blunt edges of high relief and leaving just a hint of earlobes peeking out on both sides of his head. On his forehead, just above his eyebrow area, irregularly shaped relief suggests hair, like bangs, but the relief is too faint to be certain.

For comparison, I turn my attention to other figures on the Tall Cross. One is an image identified as *David as King*, who stands in the center of the cross head, separated from

the *Temptation* image by a small panel of ornament (fig. 63).¹⁵ Assuming two images so closely positioned were sculpted by the same artist, differences in treatment of a similar feature is significant. Something sitting on his head is placed in about the same position as the arcing circle of the head of the *Temptation* figure pictured on this cross, but David's cranium or ornament is shaped differently. David appears to wear a helmet, or perhaps that is hair, which curves around his head, extending out and away from his neck, its defining edge wide and ending abruptly, similar to the head covering for the *Temptation* image. Another Tall Cross image, also identified by Harbison as *David as King*, stands on the narrow north shaft of the cross, on this cross placed at a distance from the *Temptation* picture (fig. 64).¹⁶ Here the head gear is more clearly a helmet, perched on top of his head and well above his ears. The Tall Cross *Temptation* figure, in contrast, appears to wear a type of cloth headband, hugging his skull, or perhaps it is hair.

In summary, the survey of hair or headdress is perhaps the least promising feature for the pursuit of identity of any of the figures in the scenes. In each case, the surviving remnants of the head are too eroded to offer conclusive evidence of any one role or social position for the figure.

What was he wearing? Wardrobe descriptions

Turning to the clothing designer for each of the three figures, I begin again with the sculptor of the Castledermot South figure, who depicted the central figure wearing a long gown or tunic, called a *colobium* (fig. 8).¹⁷ The man's legs show clearly through his gown, which has a wide, continuous hem meeting both ankles. Similar treatment is found on Christ's garment in various Irish Crucifixion scenes, depicted with calves clearly showing through sheer fabric, as seen in the *Crucifixion* depicted on the Castledermot South Cross

(fig. 65), positioned on the same side as the *Temptation* picture.¹⁸ While they resemble trousers, they are not. Note the rolled hem on the viewer's right side, the edge of which is considerably wider than his ankle; the gown's contour rises straight up from there, suggesting bulkiness at some remove from his body. In other cross images, Christ is shown with a rope binding his ankles; that the related feature is a rope and not a hem is clear in the Muiredach Cross *Crucifixion* (fig. 66), where the hem of shorts is clearly indicated, leading Peter Harbison to conclude that in numerous *Crucifixion* scenes, Christ's ankles are bare and probably bound.¹⁹ A precedent for a sheer gown through which legs are seen exists in Irish manuscript illustration, in the early ninth-century Book of Kells (folio 114r, fig. 67).²⁰ Here, on Christ's gown, the sheer fabric is indicated by a change of color, from blue to red, in the triangle of fabric stretching between his parted legs. Also, if the Castledermot South Cross figure were wearing trousers rather than a gown, he would be the single exception among the *Temptation* central figures. Also, given the similarities of details shared with the Castledermot North Cross, such as identical rolled framing of the scenes, both scenes in corresponding positions on the west shaft, and the combination and position of figures with their respective zoomorphic heads (bird on the left and beasts on the right), these two cross images share iconography that likely extends to the garment worn by the central figure.

As just suggested, the central figure on the Castledermot North Cross wears a long gown (fig. 6), as do the analogous figures in all the *Temptation* images. This is the single feature common to all the *Temptation* images on Irish crosses, including those found at Moone Abbey (fig. 4) and on the Kells Market Cross (fig. 2). On the Tall Cross (fig. 10), the long garment has a collar or other attachment that opens in the middle of his body and creates bulk on each side, similar to a lapel, at the position where the two beasts grasp his person;

this additional section continues up and behind his head, seen alongside his neck on the right side. Given the differences outlined in the introduction to this chapter, and which will become clearer later in this chapter, this single consistent feature of the long gown must bear considerable significance.

The figures and their clothing are best preserved on the Kells Market Cross (fig. 2). Here the central figure is clearly elegantly attired: he wears the traditional Irish aristocratic dress consisting of *léine*, a sleeveless tunic usually worn next to the skin, and *brat* or cloak worn over the *léine*. Irish cloaks could be very large, wrapping around the body as many as five times, and requiring a brooch to hold it in place, as I shall discuss later in this essay.²¹

According to medieval dress scholars, clergy wore long gowns, and important or noble secular people wore a long *léine*, although the two are not always visually distinct from each other in art works, particularly given the outer garments sometimes worn over each of these. Owens-Crocker reports that in Anglo-Saxon manuscript illustration, costumes “of Roman origin,” such as the long gown and absence of shoes, served as “instant identifiers” of holy status.²² Her attribution of holiness associated with the long gowns of an earlier classical era seems to be true for a number of figures on the crosses, such as Daniel on the Castledermot South Cross (fig. 57, bottom panel) and Jesus crucified, as discussed above. Unfortunately, the figure’s feet are too summarily treated to be certain if he wears shoes or goes barefoot, since tight-fitting leggings sometimes extended over the feet and shoes are also sometimes depicted as closely fitted, and may have disappeared with erosion.²³

“Holy” figures from biblical narrative are pictured wearing different types of attire on the crosses, as I shall demonstrate. An example of how confusing dress can be to identify social station and role may be seen on two panels of the Cross of the Scriptures at

Clonmacnoise (fig. 68), where inconsistency in the types of costumes depicted for lay people and ecclesiastics is apparent.²⁴ In the upper panel, swords carried by the two indicate they are secular figures, as do their plaited beards, and they wear long gowns and cloaks. Below, a man most frequently identified as a cleric wears a similarly long tunic and cloak, while his secular companion, again with a prominent sword, is dressed in a short tunic that falls above the knees.²⁵

Significantly, the two types of *Temptation* figures—one fully human, the other an animal- or bird-human composite—are distinguished by clothing in nearly every case: the central figure wears clothes noticeably different from those worn by the dual-natured figures. Looking at the dress of the ten different animal-composite figures on the five Irish crosses, only three wear clothing similar to that of their fully human counterpart, and these appear on two crosses: one figure on the Tall Cross (fig. 10, left side), and both figures at Moone (fig. 4). The Tall Cross beast is dressed in a long *léine*, but it is noticeably shorter than the length of his human companion's gown. On the Moone cross, the three gowns are nearly identical, but not exactly. Compared with the *Twelve Disciples* on the Moone Cross (fig. 58), where the figures are grouped into three horizontal bands defined by identically rectangular gowns of uniform length, differences in the tunic lengths of the *Temptation* figures become noticeable, especially for the shorter gown of the birdlike figure on the right. Whether or not slight variations in gown length for the Moone figures are intentional remains open to question, but a distinction between the two types of garment would make this iconographical feature consistent among the related group of images.

Shorter tunics were the traditional dress of secular men in Anglo-Saxon and Continental art, according to Owen-Crocker. Short tunics were depicted almost universally

to represent workers, military men or others engaged in physical activity, whose industry would have been hampered by a long costume. Williams suggest similar circumstances exist on the Irish crosses, since long, heavy garments associated with nobles would have mitigated vigorous activity.²⁶

On the crosses in general, short tunics, reaching only to about knee level, are ubiquitous and worn by biblical heroes, Roman soldiers, and saints. More curious is that among the crosses under examination, including the Castledermot South and North crosses, Kells Market Cross, and Tall Cross, relatively few short tunics are depicted. Those clearly wearing knee-length tunics among all the personages on these crosses include Old Testament figures such as Daniel standing in the Lions' Den (Kells Market Cross, center of head, fig. 17); on the Tall Cross, Roman soldiers standing over the *Three in the Fiery Furnace* (east face), and both the kneeling Isaac and axe-wielding Abraham (east face) wear short tunics.²⁷ Not a single person wears this type of garment on the Castledermot South Cross. On the Castledermot North Cross, a few may wear short tunics or they may wear trousers—the area above the knees appears welded together where the legs show at all, inhibiting clarity. Those who may wear short tunics include the two composite figures in the *Temptation* scene (see my discussion, below); one figure of two identified together as Saints Paul and Anthony (east face), and even Christ standing among the loaves and fishes on the south base.²⁸

On the Market Cross *Temptation* scene, both figures wear short tunics, and faint horizontal lines are perceptible on the ankles of the right-hand figure, suggesting tight-fitting pants or leggings worn underneath the tunic (fig. 2). These are the clearest depictions of the short tunic among all those pictured in the various *Temptation* images.

Other *Temptation* figures clearly wear trousers. While it is difficult to determine the exact type of clothing depicted on the Castledermot North figures (fig. 6), as discussed above, both may be wearing short tunics, but I think this is not the case. A horizontal line stretched between the knees of the left figure, which looks like a tunic or cloak hem, might, in fact, be a pouch, as I discuss below in the section on weapons. The figure on the right appears to wear a short tunic, but trousers were sometimes worn with short cloaks.²⁹ The Castledermot South figures clearly wear trousers, and, similar to the Castledermot North image, the one on the left may wear also a cloak or short tunic, as I have indicated with a line (fig. 70). Given the similarities between the two Castledermot crosses, discussed above, conformity in dress style would seem likely. It is interesting to note that nearly every figure in every scene on the two Castledermot crosses wear either long gowns or trousers, rather than the short tunic that appears frequently on other crosses; trouser wearers dominate the South Cross, in particular.

On the Monasterboice Tall Cross, the right-side figure wears knee-length trousers (figs. 63 and 64) that show the shape his left thigh and allow flexing at the knee. Knee-breeches were neither classical nor ecclesiastical dress, according to Owen-Crocker, who notes that this type of garment was probably considered peculiarly Celtic by medieval viewers.³⁰ Trousers were called in Irish called *truibhas* or *triús*, and their association with Celtic peoples dates back at least to the classical era, when Strabo noted that the Celts "wear baggy trousers, instead of the ordinary tunics...."³¹ Some of the earliest examples of trousers in art are found on the Gundestrup Cauldron from the first century B.C.E. (figs. 32 and 36), where tight-fitting, short-legged garments are worn by figures thought to be Celtic warriors or gods.³²

In Irish medieval art, according to Owen-Levy, Dunlevy and William, trousers of all types were typically worn by secular people, and Irish nobles evidently disdained wearing them.³³ At least two exceptions to the secular rule for trousers exist, according to Owen-Crocker, who remarks on an anomalous scene on the Bayeux Tapestry in which a group of tonsured figures wear pants.³⁴ Both ecclesiastic and secular figures in trousers or leggings appear in Irish manuscript illustration, also noted by Owen-Crocker: one is a tonsured monk who trots his horse across a page of the Book of Kells (folio 255v, fig. 71).³⁵

A review of the crosses reveals a pattern among social groups whose garment type is consistent: military men are depicted in trousers or short tunics (perhaps with tight-fitting leggings underneath), and hunters appearing on cross bases wear trousers. Breaking with the pattern offered by dress scholars, the crosses also depict a number of Old Testament figures this way: on the head of the Castledermot South Cross, pants are worn by both Abraham and Isaac (fig. 7, right arm), whose Old Testament roles one might expect to warrant a classical gown; Saul on Muiredach's Cross at Monasterboice (east face) dons them, who might have been depicted in a gown for the same reason; and nearly every non-royal representation of David is shown wearing trousers, possibly illustrating his role as warrior.³⁶ Also, both figures in the scene, *Saints Paul and Anthony Breaking Bread in the Desert*, appear in trousers on the Castledermot South Cross, perhaps to emphasize their strenuous existence in the desert (fig. 57, top panel).³⁷ Harbison suggests some of the Old Testament figures were pictured naked on the crosses, an observation made also by Arthur Kingsley Porter, which lead him to identify one scene as nude warriors congregating around Finn, an Irish saga hero.³⁸ On the shaft of the Tall Cross, Harbison remarks that David displaying the head of Goliath is naked (fig. 72), and another is Samson, shown rending the pillars of a house (fig.

73).³⁹ I think it unlikely that either David or Samson would appear shamelessly naked on the crosses, and I am aware of no precedence for such depictions. Whether or not the scenes do represent David or Samson, the figures were probably originally wearing tight-fitting trousers, garments appropriate to their roles as brawny men. Imagining how such garments might have looked when freshly carved, one needs only consider two soldiers who hold a figure hostage on Muiredach's cross, and whose tight-fitting, short trousers are clearly evident (fig. 66).⁴⁰ Considering the body-hugging garments of the Muiredach Cross soldiers, it is easy to imagine details lost to a thousand or more years of weather, such as incised or lightly rolled hems, thus casting their wearers into virtual nudity. Such an explanation would seem to make more sense than the notion that Irish medieval sculptors intentionally depicted nude Old Testament figures. At the same time, an unlikely candidate for a naked body is a representation of Christ on the Tall Cross (fig. 74, left arm), who, like a "demon" also pictured there in upside-down posture (fig. 63, right arm, and fig. 55), similarly indicate their shame by covering themselves with crossed arms and hands.⁴¹

A brief accounting of the trouser-wearing figures on the five crosses on which *Temptation* scenes appear include such diverse figures as a soldier accompanying Judas to deliver the kiss on the Tall Cross; both Abraham and Isaac on the Kells Market Cross; nearly everyone but Christ and the central *Temptation* figure on the Castledermot South Cross, including *David Playing the Harp* and Abraham and Isaac (fig. 7, left and right arms, respectively), and perhaps even Christ and Judas embracing (north side), both of whom Harbison describes with "bare legs."⁴² Also, as discussed, David wears them frequently, and both Paul and Anthony wear trousers in a scene in which they appear together on the Castledermot South Cross (fig. 57, top panel). Trousers are depicted as acceptable clothing

for figures from Old and New Testament narratives and saints' lives, and used to clothe both "good" and "evil" characters, including some of the animal-headed *Temptation* figures.

Since trousers are worn by positive Christian role models on the crosses, I suspect that the upper classes of medieval Ireland did wear them, contrary to the opinions of dress scholars. The association of short trousers with Vikings, a topic to which I shall return, may explain their appearance on the legs of the "evil" Roman soldiers, although, as the Muiredach Cross *Crucifixion* demonstrated (fig. 66), they also appear on Christ.

To review the evidence stated so far, the dual-natured figures are not consistently depicted in similar garments, unlike the various versions of the central figure, who wears a long gown in every instance. Short gowns are worn by both composite figures on the Kells Market Cross (one with leggings underneath), while longer tunics are worn by three figures: the left-hand figure of the Tall Cross and both figures at Moone. Trousers or leggings are clear on the Castledermot South figures (one with a possible cloak or tunic), perhaps on both at Castledermot North (maybe with tunics or cloaks), and trousers are clearly pictured on the right-side figure of the Tall Cross. Given the varieties of garments and the absence of a clear system of clothing styles to represent secular, ecclesiastic, holy or evil figures on Irish cross imagery, and based on the visual information reviewed so far, no determinations about the identity of the figures can be made based on individual garments. On the other hand, looking at the full wardrobe ensembles worn by figures and the accessories carried, and comparing this visual information with scenes of similar composition and situated in proximity to the *Temptation* panels on the crosses, reasonable assumptions about class and station for the figures may be deduced.

Scholars agree on a single wardrobe particular: those with status wear cloaks. When cloaks are cut with ample fabric, decorated along the edges with embellishment such as embroidery, jewels or fur, the high station and wealth of the wearer is particularly emphasized.⁴³ The left-side figure on the Tall Cross appears to wear a cloak, which I have highlighted by a line tracing a shadow's edge; a straight diagonal line traverses his upper left and lower right thighs, outlined with black in figure 62. Also, a bulging form behind his neck suggests bulk, probably a hood, seen even more clearly in the wide area of high relief circling the shoulder of his companion on the right side—this is probably a hood, or it may be a thick trim sewn along the edges of a cloak, making bulk as fur would do, for example. The sinuous line running alongside his thigh and up his arm seems to hang in the manner of an open cloak's edge. The remainder of the right figure's garment is difficult to make out, and I have also highlighted its outlines and shadows with black. Two wide shadows drape over his arm, suggesting folds of a cloak meeting his bent elbow. If he wears a cloak, it is short in length, or it could be a short, hooded tunic—a suggestion of a garment's edge is faintly visible as a diagonal shadow crossing his thigh. The double shadows on his elbow could distinguish straps attached to something carried; a faint inverted triangle of relief may indicate an object dangling from straps, possibly creating bulk under his garment. With the original cuts and indentations of his garment worn by erosion into vague, amorphous shapes, it is difficult to determine which ones form an edge of something, and what, by contrast, indicates a drapery fold.

Easier to see are forms on the Kells Market Cross, where each of the two figures wears a hooded *brat* or cloak. On the right figure's cloak, a wide band of relief borders the bottom and continues up the front opening, suggesting trim, probably fur, due to its high

relief. His garment is longer at the back than the front, a device Owen-Crocker says indicated garment fullness in medieval relief sculpture, thereby accentuating a garment's generous cut to emphasize its sumptuousness.⁴⁴ The trimmed, full cloak worn by the Kells figure serves as an indisputable sign that he is no scoundrel of the peasant class. And yet, the station of his "victim" is higher still: his long *léine* and cloak pinned with a prominent brooch insist upon his social distinction, distinguished even from his fashionably dressed companions.

Jewelry inventory

I turn my attention to one final detail, the jewelry found on the person who stands on the Kells Market Cross: a large round brooch (see colorized version, fig. 60) that must be securing a cloak no longer distinguishable. The *brat* was typically secured, more often on the left breast or shoulder, by a pin of bronze, silver or iron composition, depending on the wearer's social status; the material distinction is made clearly in the *Senchus Mor* passage on fosterage, quoted above. Round pins, like the one worn by the Kells Market Cross figure, survive from medieval Ireland, one famous example being the elaborate Tara Brooch, dated to the eighth century (fig. 75).⁴⁵ The prominence of this brooch is a beacon of his status.

The inclusion of a prominent circular brooch suggests to Williams, discussing the similarly clad figure on the Muiredach Cross (fig. 43), that either the figure is dressed "in the typical costume of the secular nobility," or, acknowledging attributions by other scholars who identify the Muiredach figure as either Christ, an ecclesiastic or a saint, she suggests that if he is a cleric, he is dressed in native finery.⁴⁶ If Christ, she argues, dressing him as a distinguished Irish noble to represent the second mocking, when the soldiers dressed Christ in a robe of royal colors, suggests the cross patrons were making associations between

Christ's persecution and their own. Such a suggestion is possible, since this was the season of attacks on monasteries by both Irish and Norse warriors. (See my discussion in Chapter Five.)⁴⁷ The Muiredach figure's feet and toes are clearly bare, underlining his holy stature, if Owen-Crocker's statement is accepted. It may be that both the Muiredach and the Kells Market Crosses depict Irish clerics or saints—the saints were said to perform miracles similar to Christ's.⁴⁸

Another contextual explanation for the costume of the Kells Market figure is possible, with regard to the emphasis law tracts placed on maintaining Ireland's hierarchical society. Based on rank and status, determined largely by property, each tier of society was assigned a specific "honor price," described by Colman Etchingham as "the quintessential marker of all individuals' status in Irish law...."⁴⁹ Circumstances affected by honor-price included compensation for damage to persons or property, and the relative value assigned eye-witness testimony.⁵⁰ Honor-price also determined expectations for the supremely important rules of hospitality: according to a man's status, he had the right to demand a specific level of hospitality from his equals and superiors, for not only himself but also a specified number among his retinue; as host, he was obliged to answer with parallel generosity, with food and accommodations supplied for a given number of days.⁵¹ The tiered system leveled distinctions between lay people and clerics, gauging the relative social position within each realm and determining equivalencies between ecclesiastic and secular realms. For example, the honor-price of a chief bishop, such as the head of the two great churches at Emly and Cork in Munster, was equal to that of the king of the respective province, which in the case of Munster was great since he was overlord of the Southern Half of Ireland.⁵² Ireland's poets were also ranked according to education and birth, and the

highest among them, the *ollam*, held a position within the upper echelons, equal to kings and high-ranking ecclesiastics.⁵³

Significantly, when Patrick established himself as the Christian authority in fifth-century Ireland, rather than attempting to alter these long-held customs, he evidently equated his honor price with that of the highest-ranking king and traveled with a kingly retinue while making the rounds of Ireland. This demonstration of status was necessary, historians say, to impress upon the unconverted the relative honor and distinction of this man whose claim to status and power matched that of their local and provincial kings.⁵⁴ In the eighth century, emphasis continued to be placed on clerical travel and the hospitality accorded them; in the legal document, *Críth Gablach*, the bishop is said to go on visitation “for the profit of church and kingdom,” and travels with a company of twelve men.⁵⁵ The statement is understandable in the context of eighth-century Ireland and later: lay privilege earned access to the cleric traveling on a pastoral mission, and the faithful who received him in style were those who provided important economic benefit to the church. Important ecclesiastics also traveled when laws were enacted, providing opportunity to collect dues.⁵⁶ The depiction of lavish costume and large brooch may have served as visual reminder that this figure, whether historical or contemporary, possessed rank equal to a king. And in this class-conscious culture, affording him hospitality, as well as safety against assailants of flesh or spirit, would be of preeminent importance.⁵⁷

While I have suggested possible contexts in which the relevance of dress to a medieval Irish audience might be understood, I emphasize once again that iconography is not consistent among the crosses.⁵⁸ Patrons and sculptors in different geographical areas and laboring in different eras apparently made individual decisions about details such as those

discussed here, undoubtedly based on local circumstances and the message(s) they sought to convey.

Cloaks and daggers

Turning attention to metaphoric associations, cloaks possessed mysterious charm: in saints' lives, apocrypha and hero tales, they are associated with supernatural powers. In the hero's tales, cloaks were bestowed with magical properties. In a passage from the *Táin Bó Cuálgne*, a man who visited from the magical *síd* or fairy mounds arrived just in time to apply herbs and charms to heal the embattled and exhausted hero. Once Cú Chulainn had recovered after a three-day sleep, the two set out together, and the visitor assumed the role of charioteer. The story continues:

This was his hero's dress of charioteering that he put on: his soft tunic of skin, light and airy, well-turned, made of skin, sewn, of deer-skin, so that it did not restrain the movement of his hands outside. He put on his black [dark?] upper-cloak over it outside: Simon Magus had made it for Darius, King of the Romans, so that Darius gave it to Conchobar, and Conchobar gave it to Cú Chulainn, and Cú Chulainn gave it to his charioteer...[It was] four-cornered, with much of every color and every form...This was well-measured to him, and it was not an overweight...It is then that he cast a spell of covering over his horses and over his companion [Cú Chulainn], so that he was not visible to any one in the camp, and so that every one in the camp was visible to them....⁵⁹

In this passage, the pagan tale is joined with Christian narrative through the inclusion of the infamous magician, Simon Magus, known from the Bible and an apocryphal tale involving Saint Peter.⁶⁰ The garment passes from Simon to Darius, a Persian king who ruled while the biblical Daniel was alive (Daniel 6: 28), and from Darius to the pagan King Conchobar.⁶¹ This narrative is also obliquely related to Patrick's tale as written by Muirchú in the late seventh century, which the author carefully paralleled with Daniel's story. (See

Chapter Five of this essay.) The charioteer's cloak was of tainted lineage; hence, the source of his magical power was demonic.

Patrick also owned a cloak endowed with miraculous properties. An Irish text, *The Lebar Brecc*, recounts part of Muirchú's narrative in poem form, describing how Patrick confronted the pagan King Loégaire one Easter. The king's druid, Lochru, challenges Patrick to a test of powers. After Lochru loses a few rounds to the saint, a final test is concocted: Lochru will stand in a house—a new section, just built—while Patrick's servant is put into the same building, but he stands within an old, dilapidated and presumably dry section of the timber structure. The druid is covered with “Patrick's raiment about him,” which must refer to a cloak since it is wrapped “about” the druid, while Patrick's servant is clad in the druid's cloak. Soon,

fire was put into the house, and the fresh half is burnt with the wizard [Irish *indrai* or druid] therein, and Patrick's raiment which was about him [the druid] was not burnt. But the withered half [of the house] was not burnt, nor the *gillie* [servant], but the wizard's tunic which was about him was burnt.⁶²

Patrick's cloak presumably gets its miraculous power from physical association with the hallowed person of the saint. The druid's cloak, which the reader must assume possessed demonic wizardry under normal circumstances—evidently a fact so well known that the author felt no need to mention it—was no match for Patrick's powers. Perhaps the association of magic with cloaks had a long history. In classical writers' reports of druids, they typically appear in “robes,” just as the druid from the *síd* is described wearing a cloak in the Irish tale of Cú Chulainn.⁶³

Another Irish ecclesiastical source for magicians dressed in tunics and cloaks is found in an apocryphal nativity tale. While this tale is preserved in a sixteenth-century text, Martin McNamara claims a second-century basis for the tale. Details of the extant version

are undatable, but probably reflect general impressions current in the early medieval era. In this short tale, Joseph spots and describes approaching magi:

...as Joseph stood at the entrance to the house, he saw a large group approach him directly from the east. Thereupon Joseph said to Simeon...“It appears to me, son, that they practice druidic augury and divination, for they do not take a single step without looking upward, and they are arguing and conversing about something amongst themselves. I think that they are foreigners, come from distant lands,” said he, “for their appearance, colour and attire is unlike that of our own people. They are wearing bright flowing robes, even-coloured crimson tunics, long red cloaks, and variegated gapped shoes. From their apparel they seem like kings or leaders.”⁶⁴

The richly-colored cloaks are associated with both kings and magi, reflecting their parallel status as indicated by their garments. In the medieval era, the poets, the intellectual class whose higher-ranking members assumed many druidic functions, did possess status equal to a king, as outlined above.

Druids were not only associated with kings, but also warriors. In another apocryphal retelling of the Nativity, in a section described by Martin McNamara as a “specifically Irish addition,” observations of the magi assume a confluence of roles:

Now there were three heroes in the van of that band, to wit, a warrior of them delightful, reverend, and he bearded, grey, fawn-like...Another warrior bearded, with brown long hair upon him...Another warrior, yet, fair, having no beard....⁶⁵

The Irish concept of a warrior-druid is confirmed in the Ulster Tales. A tales titled “The Conception of Conchobor son of Nes” opens with the description of a “wondrous druid” named Cathbad, who had “great knowledge, and magic (*druídech*) and manly strength; he was a *féinnid*....,” the latter word translated by John Carey as “a warrior living apart from his tribe” who performed *féinnidecht* or “warlike deeds.”⁶⁶ Another example of a warrior-druid is found in the *Táin Bó Cúalgne* passage, quoted at the beginning of this

section. The druid who heals Cú Chulainn is also called a warrior by him, and he earns his reputation by battling scores of the enemy in Cú Chulainn's place while the hero sleeps.⁶⁷

Perhaps the concept of a druid-warrior explains why Irish mythology assigns magical properties to weapons. In the next section, I discuss the swords, daggers and other objects carried by the composite figures in the *Temptation* pictures. The *Temptation* assailants never turn their weapons against their victim, in contrast to their counterparts in other scenes, such as two antagonists who similarly surround Christ and manhandle him on the Muiredach Cross (fig. 43), or *Saints Paul and Anthony* poking the head of someone with a crooked staff on the Tall Cross (fig. 63, right arm, and fig. 55). Accessories, particularly weapons that are not wielded but simply carried, may offer clues to these mysterious characters' identity.⁶⁸

Retrieving the weapons

The "Sequel to *Crith Gabhlach*" makes stipulations about weapons appropriate to people of different stations:

A proper, becoming weapon is estimated for every true, lawful person, both clerics and laity, both man and woman: a three-angled stave to every cleric, or a handsome crooked staff for the purpose of defence, &c.; a slender, smooth distaff for every woman; two spears with the horse switch of a chariot-driver for every layman in his hand; a tablet-stave for poets according to the propriety of their order; because it is their becoming propriety that estimates an uncertain weapon for them.⁶⁹

As evident in American society, and undoubtedly even more so in medieval Ireland, people protect their right to bear weapons, in some cases resisting or simply ignoring regulations, such as the one quoted above. What the passage does show is that the church was concerned about weapons—not surprising, given the violence directed at the church from different groups (discussed in Chapter Five of this essay).

Weapons of different kinds abound on the crosses. Scholars have identified long swords found in several panels as Viking in origin, known to have influenced Irish weaponry.⁷⁰ Associating long Viking swords with Roman soldiers in biblical scenes undoubtedly inspired sympathetic anguish from Irish viewers.

Whether the weapons pictured in the *Temptation* images were particularly intended for use against humans is not certain, since warfare and hunting were closely allied.

According to medieval weapon historian, John Cummins:

The hunt, especially that of the boar, often reproduced the physical demons of man-to-man combat, training a man in the management of sword and spear, and at the tactical level of deploying one's forces it was a useful war-game for those in charge.⁷¹

Cummins states unequivocally that weapons engaged for one activity also served for the other. Archers should, according to a thirteenth-century text, carry a quiver with five arrows and three darts: the arrows for shooting at beasts, and the darts for self-defense against men. If not traveling in a war zone, hunters need to carry just two arrows, and these for bagging birds.⁷² Cummins adds that in medieval literature, hunting was associated with the aristocracy: "Exercise, the avoidance of sin, and a training for war" were all "necessary aspects of the princely education, of which hunting was therefore an integral part."⁷³ Weapons used to hunt were bows and arrows, spears, short blades, and even long swords used against the dangerous boar.⁷⁴

Historically, Celtic peoples made symbolic associations with weapons, using specific ones as attributes for their deities. According to J.A. MacCulloch, the supernatural qualities became confused between god and weapon, and certain beliefs continued into medieval Irish lore. He refers to oaths sworn upon weapons, and reports that in these cases, weapons were believed to turn against those who lied. The magical power of weapons,

especially of those over which incantations were said, is frequently referred to in Irish tales, he states.⁷⁵ The view of Christian authors was that demons were responsible for the speaking weapons.⁷⁶

The use of weapons in battle and hunting, and their association with supernatural forces or demonic qualities in medieval Irish lore, may all play a part in their appearance in the *Temptation* images on the crosses. Various individuals among the composite figures brandish objects of one kind or another, which bear closer examination. But first, I note that not one of the central, fully-human figures in these compositions carries anything at all; either he was caught off-guard, unprepared to meet exigencies, or unwilling to use force, unlike spiritual warriors found in images drawn from the Psalms, seen particularly in manuscript illustrations.⁷⁷ Other than the *Temptation* protagonists' wardrobes, no identifying objects are pictured, unlike another figure whom Harbison identifies as "Anthony," based on his *tau*-shaped crozier. Pictured on the Kells Market Cross, in the arm opposite the one occupied by the *Temptation* image, this staff-bearing "Anthony" overcomes a female devil wearing a dress, if Harbison's attribution is correct (fig. 76).⁷⁸

The animal- and bird-headed figures on the Kells Market Cross do carry weapons; I have colored indications of high relief shaped like weapons in figure 60. Blue-colored sections of relief emerging from behind the left figure in the *Temptation* scene may join together to form a bow. If just the blue areas are connected, it may be a crossbow, but adding another section of relief, colored orange, extends its length considerably. On two cross bases, centaurs carry extraordinarily large bows, suggesting Irish hunters were familiar with such weapons, and probably used them in addition to shorter crossbows.⁷⁹ Scholar Whitley Stokes claims bows are never mentioned in medieval Irish literature, and he concludes the

Irish seem never to have used them in battle; he surmises that the damp climate would render the bowstring untrustworthy.⁸⁰

Of course, if the *Temptation* image was originally painted, the accessories carried would be clearer than they are today. The figure on the right of the Kells Market image bears a long straight weapon, colored green in figure 60, which extends from behind his body and is held alongside his right leg.

Looking at the left figure in the Kells Market scene, one notes a strange round form appearing to hover behind him, which may be intended to visually associate with his person by a small bar of relief that touches him and the nearest disk; this bar I have colored orange. It may relate to the disk, and it could also be part of a long weapon that emerges on the front side of his body from behind his neck. When looking at the entire cross head (figs. 17 and 18), the disk, and another one next to it, appear as transitional forms creating a boundary between the *Temptation* scene and the central image of Daniel surrounded by four lions. These disks Harbison describes as "two small contorting animals."⁸¹ They recall another pair of filled roundels found on the Tall Cross, not attached to its *Temptation* scene, but located in a shaft panel tentatively identified as *Zacharias, Elizabeth and the Infant John the Baptist* (fig. 77). Harbison, understandably baffled, similarly explains these: "A lizard-like animal contorts itself above each of the two standing figures."⁸² The contents within the rings in each case have some type of projecting arms, clearer when seen *in situ* and which, I think, Harbison correctly identifies as animals. They also resemble rings similar to those known as *triskele*, common to ancient Celtic art, and these round forms MacCulloch associates with the Celtic god called Cernunnos, the horned god.⁸³ If MacCulloch's association of content-filled disks with Celtic deities is correct, similar objects may have survived as pagan-identifying

insignia into the medieval era, here linking the animal-headed figures to a pagan deity or mythical figure.

Of course, once conjectured as pagan, I must draw the reader's attention to another inexplicable shape, this one more clearly an animal, possibly a lizard, contorted into a vaguely rounded form (fig. 16), which appears above Christ's head on the Moone cross.⁸⁴

This may be another case of iconographical individuality, or the animal-filled rings observed at Kells and Monasterboice may have nothing whatsoever to do with ousted pagan beliefs. With contradictory appearances such as these, clues on the crosses seem often to advance and recede.

On the Castledermot South Cross, an unusual object appears, carried by the figure on the right: just behind his bent right arm it rises vertically and curves where it extends over his shoulder. I have highlighted the object with color to make it clearer (fig. 70). The vertical shape, its curve and the fringelike end compares with an image of a Celt carrying a similar object on a Roman coin (fig. 78), suggesting the *Temptation* figure carries a *carnyx* or some other type of curved, ornamented horn.⁸⁵ Horns made of metal and animal bone were used in hunting to sound different types of calls that signaled specific actions to retrieving hounds or fellow hunters. John Cummins calls the horn "the principal tool and symbol of the huntsman's craft."⁸⁶ Traditionally associated with the Celts, the *carnyx* was also used in battle, as were other types of horns.⁸⁷

Returning to the Castledermot South Cross, the other animal-headed figure appears to bear a straight object, probably a short sword or *scramasax*, also highlighted with color in figure 70.⁸⁸

Not surprisingly, the corresponding figures on the Castledermot North Cross appear

to have weapons of some kind. While the erosion is greatest on this image, I have highlighted with color areas of high relief that appear to be war or hunting gear (fig. 80). On the right, the figure may wear a bag or satchel, presumably carried with a strap, which I have colored orange.⁸⁹ A thin object projects vertically from the bag and appears to fan at the top; this I have colored blue. Adjacent objects also held in the satchel are less clear, their edges roughened by weather, so I have indicated only general shapes with yellow and pink. What appears at first glance to be this figure's arm held in a strictly vertical position—uncolored in figure 79 and separated from the satchel by a broad patch of shadow—may be a straight club or sword, or it could have originally curved downward, forming a bow. His companion figure is also equipped, and with numerous objects, including a rounded shape, colored orange in figure 80, and possibly a shield. He, too, appears to wear some kind of bag on his person, rectangular in form and colored yellow, with a strap extending from it, although the strap's exact breath or ultimate direction becomes less clear about halfway up his body. This extension of his satchel may, in fact, be connected to three diagonal forms extending over his shoulder, with each one separated from another by bands of shadow, highlighted here with pink; these could be arrows or even pipes of a musical instrument. Unfortunately, the only accessories clearly visible on the Castledermot North figures are the two rectangular bags or satchels, perhaps quivers in both cases, and the shield-like object of the left figure. Also, there is a long curved form on the left figure's right side (uncolored and catching the light in this photograph), which, if not a rubbery right arm, might be a bow. Judging from the position of all the objects strapped to his body, seen in relation to his posture, suggests that he stands with his back to the viewer, perhaps to better display his equipage.

The Monasterboice Tall Cross is also worn, its details even less clear than those just

discussed (figs. 61 and 62). To review comments made above in my discussion of cloaks, I again draw attention to an area of light relief, vaguely triangular shape and positioned just below the right figure's arm. This may be attached to something strapped over his elbow, or it may be a bulge covering an object carried underneath a cloak; and of course, it could be simply fabric bulk where his garment drapes from his arm.

Finally, the Moone Abbey Cross is difficult to decipher with certainty (fig. 4), and the great economy of form would seem to preclude details, such as carried objects.

Assembling the clues

So who might have worn such garments—trousers or short tunics worn with cloaks, some full and with hoods—and carried weapons that might be identified with both hunting and warfare? In Irish art, the combination probably indicated a man of means. The biblical men of action who wore trousers on the crosses, such as David and Abraham, described above, tended to be pictured without cloaks, allowing Harbison to interpret some of them as nude. Of course, some of the *Temptation* figures may be cloakless, such as the Castledermot North group, for example. But the Kells figures, as stated, appear to represent the fullest, perhaps latest development of the scene, and special attention and visual prominence seems to have been accorded the attendant figures' costumes.

Suggestions for some whose status might warrant such combinations include the aristocratic hunter, whose activity required freedom from the encumbering long *léine*. On the crosses, the few hunters identified with certainty (appearing on the bases and shown bearing weapons and in pursuit of their prey), those on the Castledermot South Cross wear trousers and not cloaks (fig. 82).⁹⁰ But if one considers the *fianna*, the youthful aristocratic “outlaw” warriors discussed in Chapter Five of this essay, who ravaged church property and

killed personnel, one can imagine these rogues depicted as well-heeled figures, since their ranks included kings' sons. Trousers, too, would seem appropriate dress for this group, who haunted the woods and earned their reputations as able hunters.⁹¹

Another possible group is the Irish Vikings, who had a reputation for wearing both trousers and expensive clothing, most particularly hooded cloaks.⁹² Archeological finds in Viking Dublin and English cities suggest that even those persons of middling rank spent money on imported luxury cloth, according to Owen-Crocker.⁹³ The Vikings traded with Eastern countries throughout the early medieval period, acquiring Chinese silks and other rich wares from the Eastern Mediterranean and Asian lands.⁹⁴ Donncha Ó Corráin quotes the twelfth-century *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* (*The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*), whose subject is the Norse invasions of Ireland. Whether or not details are always accurately reported in the history, its description of Viking treasure seized at Limerick in A.D. 968 reflects both the artifacts found elsewhere and the history of Viking trade. The purported treasure uncovered jewels and

saddles beautiful and foreign, their gold and their silver; their beautifully woven cloth of all colors and of all kinds; their satins and their silken cloths, pleasing and variegated, both scarlet and green and all sorts of cloth in like manner.⁹⁵

As I demonstrated above, with reference to quotes from apocryphal and popular Irish literature, the druids were also considered to have been an aristocratic warrior class, who therefore might have been depicted not only in cloaks, but also carrying weapons.

Suspicious behavior: pose and deportment

Cross designers, perhaps the sculptors themselves, found a clever solution for filling the curved sections on the two crosses on which *Temptation* images occupy the arms of the cross head. On both the Kells Market Cross and Tall Cross, the animal-headed figure closest

to the cross center stands with one leg flexed, his foot resting against a vertically positioned surface (Kells, figs. 16 and 59; Tall Cross, figs. 61 and 63). In the case of the Kells Market figure, his other foot does not touch the ground, but hovers above and in front of the leg of the central figure. While clearly designed to fit their constricted spaces perfectly, the pose struck by both animal-headed figures may serve an additional iconographical purpose. In the Irish tales, standing on one leg was a posture adopted by people with supernatural powers, and assumed when casting a magic spell or engaging in an act of prophetic warning, which usually signaled harm to another person. The pose also required one arm extended and one eye closed, which may characterize these profile figures who reach out and touch their victim.

In the tale, *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* (“The Destruction of Dá Derga’s Hostel”), a woman adopts a similar posture:

She came and put one of her shoulders against the doorpost of the house, casting the evil eye on the king and the youths who surrounded him...“Well, she-phantom,” said Conaire, “if you are seer, what fortune do you see for us? “Truly I see for you,” she answered, “that neither nail nor flesh of yours shall escape from the place into which you have come, except what birds will carry away in their talons.” ...On one foot, and holding up one hand, and breathing one breath she sang all that to them [reciting her many magical names] from the door of the house.⁹⁶

In the *Táin Bó Cuálgne*, it is Cú Chulainn who assumes the pose, to protect an area from an intruding army in his absence.

Cú Chulainn went into the wood and cut a prime oak sapling, whole and entire, with one stroke and, standing on one leg and using but one hand and one eye, he twisted it into a ring and put an ogam inscription on the peg of the ring and put the ring around the narrow part of the standing-stone at Ard Cuilenn. He forced the ring down until it reached the thick part of the stone. After that Cú Chulainn went to his tryst.⁹⁷

Subsequent paragraphs reveal the ring was endowed with a secret and destructive message, threatening to bring ruin on those who might violate its placement and requiring a druid to fully interpret it. Also, to neutralize the curse, another warrior would have to perform the same feat of dancing on one foot and using one hand and eye while making a similar ring, an evidently impossible feat. Cú Chulainn had studied with a druid during his warrior training, which may explain his aptitude at performing this feat.⁹⁸

According to Ellen Ettlinger, writing about a particular medieval stone sculpture in the British Isles, the single-foot pose may relate to kings and others “who enjoy the character of sanctity,” and whose feet should never touch the ground. As long as one foot was kept raised, she states, positive rewards would follow; but if the honored person’s foot dropped, it was a failing and regarded as a bad omen.⁹⁹

Standing figures balanced on one foot appear only in the cross heads, as far as I have observed; other figures with similarly bent knees in other scenes on Irish crosses are squatting or sitting. The pose is seen in two other scenes on the opposite face of the Tall Cross, again situated in the arms of the west face (fig. 74, left and right arms).¹⁰⁰ There, persecutors of Christ pose with one leg flexed, one foot resting on the curved border, just as the *Temptation* figures stand. The pose may have been associated with malevolent power, so that Roman soldiers who mock Christ (in the Tall Cross left arm) or witness the kiss of Judas (in the right arm) assume stances analogous to the beastly figures in the two *Temptation* scenes, and similar to those in saga literature, who either pronounce or actively bring about harm.

The evidence of costume, accessories and pose agree upon the differences between a central figure and his two assailants. The central figure’s long gown seems

to indicate he is an ecclesiastic, and his rank is higher than that of the two who face him. Even when the assailants are conspicuously dandified, as on the Kells Market Cross, his costume trumps theirs: in this case, his large brooch, especially if painted yellow gold, outshines their finery. The weapons and costume of the two bird- and animal-headed figures, as well as their beastly physiognomies, might have characterized them among a number of pagan types, including the *fianna* warriors whose ranks included disinherited kings' sons. The combination of high rank, hunting or warrior weapons, and the pose associated with magic would seem to match the literary descriptions of druids, who were equal to or greater than kings in social standing, as I describe in the final clue-gathering chapter of this essay.

Notes to Chapter IV

¹ *Táin Bó Cúalnge from the Book of Leinster*, Cecile O'Rahilly, ed. (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1984), 179.

² Various recensions of the *Táin Bó Cúalnge* exist, and the quote is from the Book of Leinster version of the tale, a twelfth-century copy, according to L. Winifred Faraday, trans., *The Cattle-Raid of Cualnge (Tain Bo Cuailnge). An Old Irish Prose-Epic. Translated for the first time from Leabhar na h-Uidri and the Yellow Book of Lecan* (London: David Nutt, 1904), xii. Faraday's translation is slightly different: "He has a yellow head of hair, and a linen emblem round it; a club of fury in his hand, an ivory-hilted sword at his waist; a hooded tunic with red ornamentation on him." In this version, Cú Chulainn asks Loeg, "Which of the warriors of the king is that?" Answer: "Vassal to the man down yonder." Faraday, 49.

¹ Alice Planche, "Les Robes du Rêve: Robe de Roi, Robe de Fée, Robe de Fleurs, Robes du Ciel," in *Le Vêtement. Histoire, archéologie et symbolique vestimentaires au Moyen Age* (Paris: Cahiers du Leopard d'Or, 1989), 73-91 ; this on p. 73 : "Si la robe, au sens large, est en général faite de *tissu*, elle est aussi un *texte* [emphases hers], ce que sous-tend l'étymologie commune des deux termes. Elle se présente comme un message dont les contemporains connaissent le code, tandis que la distance spatio-temporelle peut rendre étrange et obscur ce qui d'abord faisait sens. Pour le chercheur qui s'attache à une société ancienne, la robe se déchiffre comme une carte d'identité, un état civil, marquant, avec le sexe et l'âge, la place dans diverses hiérarchies, les fonctions, la richesse ou la pauvreté...."

² Bonnie Effros, "Appearance and Ideology: Creating Distinctions between Clerics and Laypersons in Early Medieval Gaul," in *Encountering Medieval Textiles and Dress. Objects,*

Texts Images, Desiree G. Koslin and Janet E. Snyder, eds. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 7-24; this on 17. She discusses garment color specified according to social standing, with reference to “The Law of Fosterage” in the legal tract, *Senchus Mór*. The gist of her text addresses ecclesiastical regulations on dress intended to distinguish between lay and clerical populations. This passage of the *Senchus Mór* appears in *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Ireland*, 6 vols. (1865-1901; reprint, Buffalo, New York: W.S. Hein, 2000), II, 148-9.

³ *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, II, 147-9. The footnote also expresses regret that the types of ornament were not specifically described in the passage, and their social associations remain indeterminate among archaeological findings, so that the specific qualities for each rank indicated in the law texts have been lost.

⁴ *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, II, 160.

⁵ As an example of ignoring or abiding by the customs of hospitality at one’s peril, there is a tale in the episode titled “The Death of Cú Chulainn” from the *Book of Leinster*. Cú Chulainn is traveling when he sees “three witches blind in the left eye, before him on the road.” They were cooking a lap-dog, using poison and spells. It was one of his *gessi* or taboos to pass the preparation of a meal without eating, undoubtedly related to the rules of offered hospitality. However, it was also a *geis* for him to eat the flesh of a dog, which was his namesake. One of the witches shames him for refusing a humble meal offered to him, resulting in his partaking of the canine meal, an act which caused him to suffer paralysis on one side just as he was venturing into battle. John Carey, trans., “The Death of Cú Chulainn,” in *The Celtic Heroic Age. Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe & Early Ireland & Wales*, John T. Koch and John Carey, eds. (Oakville, Connecticut and Aberystwyth, Wales: Celtic Studies Publications, 2000), 134-43; this on pp. 136-7. Hereafter the text shall be cited as *The Celtic Heroic Age*.

⁶ See Maggie McEnchroe Williams, “Dressing the Part: Depictions of Noble Costume in Irish High Crosses,” in *Encountering Medieval Textiles and Dress. Objects, Texts Images*, Desiree G. Koslin and Janet E. Snyder, eds. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 45-63. Williams argues that, although not a speck of color has been found on the crosses, traces of polychromy survive on continental sculptures, making it “reasonable to assume that Irish sculpture could also have been painted in this period, particularly considering the importance of color in determining a person’s rank and identity.” She credits Ireland’s damp climate for erosion of any paint that may once have decorated the crosses. Williams, 60, n. 17. See also Françoise Henry, *Irish High Crosses* (Dublin: Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland, 1964), 17, where she states that painted carvings were “the rule” in the Middle Ages, and in Ireland, different colored stones were used for some of the crosses. She concludes that they were probably painted to hide the changes in stone colors.

⁷ Among the descriptions of the four crosses under examination, the only “tight trouser-like garment” Harbison mentions is worn by Christ on the *Crucifixion* of the Tall Cross at Monasterboice. Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland. An Iconographical and Photographic Survey*, 3 vols. (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1992), I, 150. Hereafter in this chapter cited as “Harbison,” with a volume and page or figure number.

⁸ Maria Fitzgerald, "Insular Dress in Early Medieval Ireland," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 79:3 (1997), 251-61; this on p. 260.

⁹ Roger Stalley argues this point comparing several identical scenes on different crosses that include different iconography. See Roger Stalley, "European Art and the Irish High Crosses," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 90C:5 (1990): 135-58; see especially p.147.

¹⁰ The Castledermot South Cross image, on the west face, shaft, is reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 107 and 109. He identifies *Daniel in the Lions' Den* as the bottom panel, and above that is *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*. Above the *Temptation* is *Adam and Eve*, and at the top of the shaft, *Saints Paul and Anthony Breaking Bread in the Desert*.

¹¹ Moone Cross, north side of the base, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, is reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 517 and 518, and III, fig. 950. *The Twelve Apostles*, Moone Cross, west face of the base, is reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 514 and 515, and III, fig. 836.

¹² Castledermot North Cross, west face, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, is reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 103.

¹³ Kells Market Cross, present south face of the cross head, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, is reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 335 and 337, and Harbison, III, fig. 949.

¹⁴ Monasterboice Tall Cross, east face of south arm of cross, *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, is reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 488 and 490, and Harbison, III, fig. 948.

¹⁵ *David as King* on the east face cross head of the Tall Cross at Monasterboice is identified by Harbison, 148; images are reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 490 and Harbison, III, fig. 742.

¹⁶ *David as King* on the north side of the Tall Cross is reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 497 (truncated), and III, fig. 746.

A helmeted King David is not so unusual, given the conflation of helmet and crown in Anglo-Saxon England, where the two were called by the same name, and Christ was said to wear a thorn-*helm* at the Crucifixion. William A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England. The Transition from Paganism to Christianity* (Berkeley: University of Berkeley Press, 1970), 137. He says the practice of wearing a helmet-crown stemmed from early Germanic history, and that contemporary coins show the English king with a helmet. Perhaps the same circumstance was true in Ireland, where a warrior class doubled as the ruling aristocracy.

In both cross images, David's helmet, or crown, seems rigid, as if made of cast metal, and appears different from the flaccid, possibly fabric headband on the *Temptation* figure.

¹⁷ See Michael J. C. Buckley, “Notes on Boundary Crosses,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 30 (1900): 247-52, this on p. 251. He says the *colobium* is “standard for figures of Christ from the sixth to the twelfth century.”

¹⁸ Castledermot South Cross, west face, *Crucifixion*, reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 107 and 109.

¹⁹ Muiredach’s Cross, Monasterboice, west face, *Crucifixion*, reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 480 and 481. Harbison describes Christ’s clothing as “short ‘*gadroned*’ breeches rather than a tunic, and bearing a panel with vertical bands on the chest, often considered to be attached by a brooch with lozenge- or kite-shaped head.” I cannot see either bands or brooch on his chest. Harbison, I, 144. Harbison concludes that a number of *Crucifixions* show Christ in similar a “trouser-like” garment with bound feet, including Kells Market Cross and the Tall Cross.

²⁰ Book of Kells, folio 114 r, reproduced in Françoise Henry, *The Book of Kells. Reproductions from the manuscript in Trinity College, Dublin* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 45. The image was previously identified as *The Arrest of Christ*, but is more recently considered to be *Christ on Mount Olivet*. See Carol A. Farr, *Lection and Interpretation: the Liturgical and Exegetical Background of the Illustrations in the Book of Kells*, unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1989, and Carol Farr, *The Book of Kells: Its Function and Audience* (London: British Library; Toronto & Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1997) for complete analyses of the work and its reattribution.

²¹ Gale Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, England: The Boydell Press, 2004), 176. See also Mairead Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland* (London: Batsford, 1989), 18. Williams quotes extensively from descriptions of dress found in the *Táin Bó Cuálgne*, stating that the *léine* and *brat* had become firmly established as the “traditional” dress of ancient Irish warrior-kings by the ninth and tenth centuries. She adds that these garments were not exclusively Irish, since they closely resembled the Roman *tunica* and *sagum*, but their unique appearance in artwork suggests Irish costume differed from the standard dress worn in the rest of Europe during the early tenth centuries. Williams, 47-48. Gale Owen-Crocker states that the word *brat* derived from Celtic languages. She says that “*brat*” is glossed where the Latin word “*pallium*” appears, and cites the example of the tenth-century gloss in Old English to the Latin Lindisfarne Gospels on the folio for Matthew 5:40. Owen-Crocker, 176.

²² By “holy status,” she refers to angels, evangelists, saints and even God Himself. Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 31. She also states that the shorter tunic was found on male figures throughout Continental art. Discussing the Franks Casket, she calls short tunics, trousers and cloaks the “costume of seculars.” She adds that short cloaks, falling to the waist at the back and to waist or only mid-chest at the front, were sometimes depicted on agricultural workers in Anglo-Saxon calendars, since they were less expensive than long cloaks and “less of an impediment to movement.” In her opinion, in Anglo-Saxon art, a tunic that was usually about knee length was the most common male garment depicted, and it could be worn by kings, high-ranking men, fighting men, farm workers and servants. On the

Bayeux Tapestry, the “normal secular costume” consists of a short tunic, trousers, and in one case, a cloak. She makes the exception for one figure identified in a caption as *clericus*, who is also dressed this way. Owen-Crocker, 168-9, 183, 184, 238, 245 and 268. In an article on a king of Norse descent, named Cnut, she says he was distinguished in illustrations from other figures by his short tunic. Gale R. Owen-Crocker, "Pomp, Piety, and Keeping the Woman in Her Place: The Dress of Cnut and Ælfifu-Emma," in *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, Robin Netherton and Gale R. Owen-Crocker, eds. (Woodbridge, England: The Boydell Press, 2005), 41-52.

Williams states, “The carvings of noblemen and kings on the crosses portray a specific, codified language of dress that signifies the individuals' cultural, political and class identities. The carvings depict a rigidly defined costume used to signal a particular class of Irish man,” but she states later in her essay, “the *léine* and *brat* were not dissimilar from ecclesiastic garb of the period.” Williams, 46 and 55.

Furthermore, despite Williams defining statement that on the Irish crosses, the figures' clothing “serves to define their identities as Irish kings and noblemen,” she goes on to agree with scholars who state that, despite the fact that a figure on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise is dressed as a secular noble, he may represent an ecclesiastic or Christ himself. She states later in her essay, “the *léine* and *brat* were not dissimilar from ecclesiastic garb of the period.” Williams, 46 and 55.

²³ According to Williams, footwear extending over the foot was called “sole-less stockings.” Williams, 52. Owen-Crocker discusses an English archaeological find of a Viking Age sock, or shoe liner, from York, made of a needle-looping technique known in Scandinavia, where it is called *nalebinding*. Owen-Crocker, “Pomp, Piety, and Keeping the Woman in Her Place,” 45.

²⁴ Harbison tentatively identifies the upper panel as *The Chief Butler Gives the Cup into Pharaoh's Hand*, while Maria Fitzgerald calls it a warrior and a churchman using their combined effort to insert a post. She adds that the inscription on the cross, “pray for Flann, son of Maelsechalann,” lends support to a secular interpretation. Fitzgerald, 256. The lower panel Harbison calls (again tentatively) *Joseph Interprets the Dream of Pharaoh's Butler*, but Fitzgerald says the figure pictured in *brat* and *léine* on the left is a cleric, possibly Abbot Colman putting in the church foundation post with King Flann. Fitzgerald, 260. Fitzgerald's interpretation is suggested by several earlier scholars, including Françoise Henry, *Irish Art During the Viking Invasions*, 136. For a complete list of the various interpretations for the two images, see Harbison, I, 49. The image on the east face of the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise, County Offaly, is reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 132 and III, fig. 691.

²⁵ Those calling him a cleric include Whitley Stokes, R.A.S. Macalister, Arthur Kingsley Porter, Roger Stalley and others. A list of scholars and their opinions appears in Harbison, I, 49.

²⁶ Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 31. She contrasts shorter tunics for secular men as opposed to ecclesiastics who are depicted wearing vestments. She states that the shorter tunic was found on male figures throughout Continental art. While Owens-Crocker states that “it seems clear that the short tunic was the typical secular costume across mainland

Europe,” she does add that “Ireland, with its breeches, distinctive cloaks and long tunics, seems to have kept somewhat independent.” Owen-Crocker, 168-9 and 184. See also Williams, 49, who discusses short tunics worn with leggings. Also, Dunlevy, 17, and Fitzgerald, 252, both state that the short tunic allowed people to engage in physical work, which the noble classes did not do.

²⁷ *Daniel in the Lions’ Den* on the Kells Market Cross, head of south face, is reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 335. *Three in the Fiery Furnace* (east face), Monasterboice Tall Cross, is reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 488 and 490. *Abraham and Isaac* (east face), Monasterboice Tall Cross, is reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 488 and 489, III, fig. 681. Just for comparison’s sake, the two figures wear trousers in analogous scenes on the Castledermot South Cross, west face cross arm, detail image reproduced in Harbison, III, fig. 888; and Durrow Cross, east face, a detail of which appears in Harbison, III, fig. 680.

²⁸ *Saints Paul and Anthony*, Castledermot North Cross (east face), is reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 101. *Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes*, Castledermot North Cross (south face, base), is reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 102.

²⁹ Owen-Crocker, 184.

³⁰ Owen-Crocker, 168.

³¹ Strabo IV, 3, quoted in J. J. Tierney, “The Celtic Ethnography of Posidonius,” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 60: C (1960), 189-275, this on p. 268. Owen-Crocker also points out the close-fitting leg coverings on figures found on the Gundestrup Cauldron and the Scandinavian Torslunda die, 184. One section of the Torslunda die is reproduced in Arthur Kingsley Porter, *The Crosses and Culture of Ireland* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1931; reprint 1971), fig. 126.

³² Image is reproduced in Garrett S. Olmsted, *The Gundestrup Cauldron. Its Archaeological Context, the Style and Iconography of its Portrayed Motifs, and their Narration of a Gaulish Version of Ta’in Bo’ Cu’ailnge* (Brussels: Latomus, 1979), PL 3E. Olmsted compares the images with Celtic god figures found in Gaul and Britain.

³³ Williams explains that trousers were probably discussed less in Irish written sources because they were worn primarily by the lower class. A synonym for *triús*, *bern-bróc*, is, she says, often found in connection with men in subordinate positions, such as charioteers, troops of the king's bodyguard, food-bearers, doorkeepers and scouts or spies. Williams, 50. In note 23, p. 60, she says that before the year 1200, *triús* were probably called *bróc* or *bern-bróc*, which Kuno Meyer defines as "breeches, long hose or trousers," citing Kuno Meyer, *Contributions to Irish Lexicography* (London: D. Nutt, 1906). F. Shaw states: “The *brat-and-léine* costume...is not at all what one would have expected to find in Northern Europe, being loose fitting and of Southern or Mediterranean type, in fact little different in its elements from the dress of the ancient Greeks and Romans, the *peplos* and *chiton* of the Greeks and the *sagum* and *tunica* of the Romans...The *jacket-and-trews* dress on the other hand, close fitting, covering the whole body and designed for warmth, is thoroughly

Northern in type. Trousers or *trews* were worn by nearly all the “barbarian” peoples of Northern Europe with whom the Romans came in contact, such as the Gauls and Germans, so much so that they were known among the Romans by the name and adopted from the Gauls of *bracae* or *braccae*. Many representations of Gaulish *bracae* can be seen in Roman carvings or statuettes. They were sometimes tight, but more often loose and open at the ankles like modern trousers. The trews in Illustration 7 from the Book of Kells [fol. 130R, Mark I: 1], however, are tight and are fastened down by a strap under the sole of the foot...The word for trews in modern Irish is *triubhas* or *trúis* which is derived from the old French *trebus* whence comes the English word “trousers,” and therefore cannot be older in Gaelic than the year 1200. Previous to that their name appears to have been *bróc* or some compound of *bróc* such as *bern-bróc*.” F. Shaw, S. J. “Irish Dress in Pre-Norman Times,” in *Old Irish and Highland Dress*, second edition, H. F. McClintock, ed. (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1950), 10-18, this on p. 17. Fitzgerald points out that the aristocracy is “consistently described as wearing the *brat* and *léine* outfit,” and therefore “may not have favored” trousers. Fitzgerald, 253.

³⁴ She describes the distinction of figures in the Bayeux Tapestry, where a cloak helps to indicate important figures, while “servants and attendants usually lack them.” She adds, “This device is not used in manuscripts,” where “practicality seems to rule;” those engaged in energetic labor generally do not wear cloaks. Owen-Crocker, 234. Trousers are also depicted on Franks Casket figures, another work with Celtic associations.

³⁵ The page illustrates Luke 17: 2-7: Jesus preaches repentance and forgiveness of sins; reproduced in Henry, *The Book of Kells*, 76.

³⁶ Abraham and Isaac on the Castledermot South Cross, south arm of the head, *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 110. Saul on Muiredach’s Cross east face is in the scene Harbison identifies as *David Departs from Saul and Encounters/Smites Goliath*; Harbison, II, fig. 473 and III, fig. 738. An exception to David’s dress appears on the Kells Market Cross, south face, where a figure Harbison identifies as David being proclaimed king by his surrounding warriors is dressed in a short tunic. Reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 335 and III, fig. 745. Also, he appears in a tunic in a scene identified as *David Departing from Saul and Smites Goliath*, Harbison, III, fig. 738.

³⁷ Paul and Anthony in trousers is particularly curious among Harbison’s identified personages since he states in his discussion of the Castledermot North Cross that two figures whose identity are in question wear “long garments...[which] could favour an interpretation as Saints Paul and Anthony...,” presumably because of their ancientness or holiness. This image appears in Harbison, II, fig. 109.

³⁸ Porter identified the figure on the north face of the shaft of the Kells Market Cross, central panel, as Finn and his warriors, the *fianna*, since “all are naked, and all carry shields.” Porter, 11 (his fig. 11). Harbison identifies these as *David* (and his warriors) *Acclaimed King of Israel*, on the south face of the cross, and he says David is “dressed to the knees.” Harbison, I, 105; reproduced in detail in II, fig. 745; his description of the Kells Market Cross “David” is in I, 105.

³⁹ Both appear on the east face of the Tall Cross, panels E4 and E5, respectively. Harbison, I, 147, and III, figs. 707 (Samson) and 714 (David). Harbison says these are depicted “without any indication of clothing.” Harbison, I, 147.

⁴⁰ *The Second Mocking of Christ/Ecce Rex Iudaeorum*, from the bottom panel on the west face of Muiredach’s Cross at Monasterboice, County Louth, is reproduced as a detail in Harbison, III, fig. 875.

⁴¹ This is identified as *The First Mocking of Christ*. Pictured in Harbison, I, fig. 496.

⁴² Harbison, I, 40.

⁴³ Owen-Crocker observes that in the Bayeux Tapestry, cloaks help to indicate important figures; servants and attendants usually lack them. This device not used in manuscript illustrations. She states that long cloaks with long gowns tended to be worn by seated figures in authority, and also important people wore long cloaks with short tunics. She adds that cloaks falling just to the waist are sometimes pictured on Anglo-Saxon calendars for men engaged in agricultural activity (p. 238). Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 234, 238 and 246, respectively. See also Fitzgerald, 252, where she states emphatically that cloaks were a symbol of status.

⁴⁴ She makes the point that the more fabric used, the more costly the garment. Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 238.

⁴⁵ Photograph of the Tara brooch, a pseudopennannular style brooch, is from James Snyder, *Medieval Art. Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, 4th-14th Century* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1989), fig. 209.

⁴⁶ Williams concludes that the Muiredach figure’s costume amounts to “a resounding declaration of his status, wealth, and association with the secular nobility.” She continues:

It is tempting to believe that the images depict historical figures, for that would easily explain the inclusion of familiar Irish costume. If that is the case, then the image represents a high-ranking churchman—whose elaborate garb connects him with the secular nobility—being attacked by lower-class lay warriors [indicated by their clothing and, she argues, the kite-shaped brooch pinned to one warrior’s chest].

Even if we agree with those scholars who argue that these scenes represent episodes from the Passion of Christ...then the savior is depicted in the attire of an Irish nobleman, complete with a prominent (pen)annular brooch...This crucial episode in New Testament history is cast as a local social drama...[in which] two coarse working men, possibly [Norse] foreigners, brutally attack the regal personage of a religious leader, probably Jesus Christ himself.

Williams, 54-56. She goes on to argue that the central figure in the Kells Market *Temptation* scene is similarly dressed in noble costume and wears a brooch to indicate status. She suggests an interpretation for this image: "...Temptation... may be targeting wealthy Irishmen in particular."

Arthur Kingsley Porter thought this figure could be Columcille (Saint Columba) being exiled, which legend says prompted his move to Iona where he founded a monastery. Here, as Porter's interpretation would have it, Columcille is depicted in the noble costume that identified him as a member of a royal household, and in which role he was thought by some to have stirred up trouble leading to his banishment. Porter says the figure is "certainly in ecclesiastical costume." Porter, 42-3. For the legend of Columcille's exile, see Brian Lacey, *Colum Cille and the Columban Tradition* (Portland, Oregon: Four Courts Press, 1997), 18-19.

⁴⁷ She concludes that his identity is consequently "slightly ambiguous: his willing surrender and lack of weapon suggests he is an ecclesiastic, but his fine costume is a resounding declaration of his status, wealth, and association with the secular nobility." She adds that his attire might not reflect the garb he wore on a daily basis or even on special occasions; rather, "it could have signified his elevated rank and Monasterboice's influential political connections." Williams, 55.

The passage some scholars say is illustrated by this scene is the second mocking of Christ. Note the reference to two royal colors, purple and scarlet in two New Testament passages quoted here. The first is Mark 15: 16-20: And the soldiers led him away into the court of the palace, and they called together the whole band: And they clothe him with purple, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon him. And they began to salute him: Hail, king of the Jews. And they struck his head with a reed: and they did spit on him. And bowing their knees, they adored him. And after they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own garments on him, and they led him out to crucify him. Also, there is Matthew 27: 27-31: Then the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band; And stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him. And plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, king of the Jews. And spitting upon him, they took the reed, and struck his head. And after they had mocked him, they took off the cloak from him, and put on him his own garments, and led him away to crucify him.

⁴⁸ Bede, however, writing in the early eighth century, urged clerics to wear only humble garments, as indicated by his statement that a group of nuns imperiled their virginity by weaving elaborate garments with which to adorn themselves. Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, trans. and ed. Judith McClure and Roger Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994; reprint Oxford, 1999), IV: 25.

⁴⁹ Colman Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland A.D. 650 to 1000* (Kildare, Ireland: Laigin Publications, 1999), 380.

⁵⁰ This was a largely patriarchal system: women had such little status that their eye-witness testimony was almost completely disregarded. Hughes makes this point about women, citing

the *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, V, 284. See also Kathleen Hughes on eye witnesses and the laws. Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), 128.

⁵¹ Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society*, 6.

⁵² Hughes, 80, n. 8; quoting the Small Primer, *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, V, 110-12. This passage is also quoted by Liam Breatnach, discussing the *Uraicecht Becc* document, who states the status of the king of Munster is equal with that of the *ollam uasaleascub* “archbishop,” and the *ollam morchathrach*, “master of a great monastery.” Also, the *ollam filed*, or head poet, is stated to have the same status as the king of a single *tuath*. He adds that although the *Uraicecht Becc* recognized higher grades of king, bishop and abbot, it does not do so for the poet, but rather makes the poet dependent on the type of king who appoints him. In this, the tract is an anomaly among the legal texts and commentaries. Breatnach, 90-1.

⁵³ Ireland’s poets were also ranked according to education and birth, and the highest among them, the *ollam*, held a position within the upper echelons. In the *Sequel to Crith Gabhlach*, the various ranks of poets are listed, including *file*, *anruth* and others. It states: “‘Ollamh’ - poet, i.e. much does he protect; i.e. he teaches the four departments of (*poetry*, &c.); and because the number is greater which is wont to be upon his protection than upon that of all the grades besides...” *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, IV, 359.

Liam Breatnach points out that the church attempted to impose its seven-grade system for orders on other “classes of persons,” including lay grades; “this was achieved,” he concludes, “with the greatest success in the case of poets.” Breatnach, 86.

⁵⁴ Hughes states that Patrick traveled with a retinue comprised partly of princes’ sons, “as any important Irishman might have traveled with a retinue suited to his rank.” Also, she says, Patrick observed the rules of generosity, essential to garnering prestige, and gave many gifts, which she calls “unconventional measures of evangelization” merited by the cultural conditions. Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society*, 35.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society*, 80.

⁵⁶ “The ecclesiastical ordinances or *cánai* established or reinforced the legal jurisdiction of certain major churches, with an attendant opportunity to raise revenue.” Etchingham refers to church administrators as the “tribute-raising lord.” Etchingham, 459-65.

⁵⁷ Donncha Ó Corráin states that Irish literature is “aristocratic to the core,” and that attitudes contemptuous of the lower classes extended to the Church. Donncha Ó Corráin, *Ireland Before the Normans* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1972), 48. He refers to a tenth-century passage from the *Three Fragments* in which Abbot Flaithbheartach insulted king Cormac by calling him the son of a peasant: “This shows,” said Flaithbheartach to Cormac, when Cormac told him of an offer of peace at the brink of battle, “the littleness of thy mind, and the feebleness of thy nature, for thou art the son of a plebian...” This insult drove Cormac to enter into a battle in which he was outnumbered, and which caused his death. Entry for A.D. 908. Dubhaltach Mac Fírbisigh, *Three Fragments, Annals of Ireland*, trans.

and ed. John O'Donovan (Dublin: Irish Archaeological and Celtic Society, 1860), 202-03. In the same document, an entry for A.D. 909 has the King of Ireland say about an uprising, "It is the end of the world when plebians like these dare to attack noblemen." *Three Fragments*, 237.

One final aspect of the brooch fastening the garment of the *Temptation* figure(s): Robert B. K. Stevenson describes hexafoil designs inscribed on the back of some brooches found on English and Irish soil, which he states had a "traditional use as a Christian amuletic device, [an] alternative to the *Chi Rho*." The prominent brooches pictured on the cross sculptures may signal belief in their apotropaic powers against evil influence. Of course, if the brooch-wearing Muiredach figure is Christ, it would seem illogical for the Roman soldiers to furnish him with an amulet to guard against themselves; one might also question the anachronistic depiction of Christ dressed as a medieval Irish noble. If round brooches were widely believed to function as amulets, the prominent ones pictured on the crosses may point out that such devices, unsanctioned by the Church, were ineffective. However, I think its appearance on cross figures has more to do with status than supernatural power. See Robert B. K. Stevenson, "Brooches and Pins: Some Seventh- to Ninth-Century Problems," in *Ireland and Insular Art AD 500-1200*, Michael Ryan, ed. (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1987), 90-95; this on p. 90. Also, the belief may stem from older times, since brooches are believed to have been handed down, confusing their dating by archaeologists who find them in sites with other datable objects. See Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 321.

⁵⁸ Roger Stalley, "European Art and the Irish High Crosses," 147; discussed earlier in this chapter.

⁵⁹ Faraday, trans., *The Cattle-Raid of Cualnge (Tain Bo Cuailnge)*, 87-88.

⁶⁰ Simon Magus was a magician who appears in the Bible, Acts 8: 9-29, described as attempting to purchase spiritual powers; his name subsequently inspired the term "simony," the act of purchasing holy office. A confrontation between Saints Peter, Paul and Simon Magus appears in two separate Latin apocryphal works, *Passio apostolorum Petri et Pauli* (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta*, I. 223-34, esp. 231-32; *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina* no. 6667); and *Passio sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli* (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta*, I. 118-77, esp. 165 and 167; *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina* no. 6660). The citations are discussed by Aideen O'Leary, "An Irish Apocryphal Apostle: Muirchú's Portrayal of Saint Patrick," *The Harvard Theological Review*, 89: 3 (1996), 287-301; this on pp. 293-4.

⁶¹ Faraday, 87-88.

⁶² *The Lebar Brecc Homily on S. Patrick*, in *The Tripartite Life of Patrick, with other documents relating to that saint*, 2 vols., ed. and trans., Whitley Stokes, (London: Printed for H. M. Stationery office, by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1887), II, 428-489; this from lines 19-23, pp. 462-3.

⁶³ Pliny the Elder (first century A.D.) described the druids in white robes, ceremoniously harvesting mistletoe. Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, XVI, 95. The druids, both in Gaul

(enacting a mistletoe rite) and in Ireland, were described in white robes, but Strabo (first century A.D.) speaks of their scarlet and gold embroidered robes; Strabo, IV, 275.

⁶⁴ The Nativity story is from BM, Harley 1802 (*Gospels of Maelbrigte*, written in A.D. 1138), fol. 5b, and translated by Herbert McNamara as “The Magi,” in *Irish Biblical Apocrypha* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 36-42; this is §1, p. 36. Martin McNamara claims the text “was rooted in the early period.” Martin McNamara, *The Apocrypha in the Irish Church* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1975), 54.

⁶⁵ From the *Leabhar Breac* (BM, Egerton 1781, fol. 76, p. 137a), which occurs in the *Irish Infancy Gospel*, transl. Martin McNamara, 55.

⁶⁶ John Carey, trans., *Compert Conchobuir [Maic Nessa]*, in *The Celtic Heroic Age. Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe & Early Ireland & Wales*, ed. John T. Koch, and John Carey (Oakville, Connecticut and Aberystwyth, Wales: Celtic Studies Publications, 2000), 59-63, this on p. 59.

⁶⁷ Faraday, trans., *Tain Bo Cualnge*, 87. It is this warrior druid who wears the magic cloak given to the king by King Darius, who had received it from Simon Magus. The entire passage is found on pp. 83-88.

⁶⁸ One example of assailants bearing weapons against another is the so-called *The Second Mocking of Christ/Ecce Rex Iudaeorum* on Muiredach’s Cross, discussed above in connection with Williams’ study of this image, and reproduced in Harbison in a detail photograph, II, fig. 875. Also, two images of *Christ Overcoming the Devil in Human Form*, as identified by Harbison, appear on the Kells Market Cross and Tall Cross, just opposite the *Temptation* images in both cases, situated in the other arm of the cross head. These two appear as detail images in Harbison, III, figs. 955 and 956.

⁶⁹ *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, IV, 361.

⁷⁰ Nancy Edwards, *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 89 and 168.

⁷¹ John Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk. The Art of Medieval Hunting* (London: Phoenix Press, 1988), 4.

⁷² Guicennas, *De Arte Bersandi* (c. 1250), 24-5, quoted in Cummins, 4.

⁷³ Cummins, 5. Also, Ó Corráin states that archaeological evidence suggests that hunting in Ireland was more a sport than an economic necessity. Ó Corráin, 59.

⁷⁴ Cummins, 56 and 101-02.

⁷⁵ J. A. MacCulloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911), 290-91 for a summary of symbolic weapons and their associations with Celtic gods, which he discusses throughout the text, and pp. 291-2 on the cult of the weapons.

In the translation by Lady Gregory of the Cú Chulainn tales, King Conchobar's shield is named Ochain, "the Moaning One," because it made noise whenever Conchobar was in danger, and all the shields of the Ulster warriors would moan in answer to it. Lady Gregory, trans., 43-4. Cú Chulainn's sword was named the *Cruaidin Cailid-cheann*, meaning the "Hard, Hard Headed." It could "cut a hair on the water, or a hair off the head without touching the skin, or it would cut a man in two, and the one half of him would not miss the other for some time after." His spear, named the *Gae Bulg*, was made from the bones two monsters fighting and mortally wounded in the sea, and it passed eventually into the hands of a woman-champion, Aoife, who gave it to Cú Chulainn. Lady Gregory, trans., 44-5. The warrior Celthair's *Luin*, a spear, would spontaneously burst into flames; p. 97. Perhaps the anthropomorphic qualities of weapons in Irish tales related to their symbolic associations with deities in ancient myth, such as those found in Gaul and described by MacCulloch. He adds, "A reminiscence of the cult or magical power of weapons may be found in the Arthurian romances."

⁷⁶ For passages that suggest weapons were inhabited by demons, see Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique* 12 (1891): 106-07.

⁷⁷ For information on the psalters' spiritual warriors and images of their weapons reproduced from a variety of manuscripts, see Kathleen M. Openshaw, "The Battle Between Christ and Satan in the Tiberius Psalter," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 52 (1989), 14-33 and Openshaw, "Weapons in the Daily Battle: Images of the Conquest of Evil in the Early Medieval Psalter," *The Art Bulletin* 75:1 (March 1993), 17-38.

⁷⁸ Kells Market Cross, east arm of the present north face, *Saint Anthony Overcomes the Devil in the Guise of a Woman*. A detail of a plaster cast made of the original carving is pictured in Harbison, III, fig. 947. His reference to the crozier appears in I, 108.

⁷⁹ A centaur with large bow appears on the Kells Market Cross, east side base, reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 333; this is the image of my fig. 28. Also, a bow-wielding centaur appears on Muiredach's Cross, Monsterboice, north side, base, reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 483. In general, the bases of crosses are among the most eroded areas, and often have hunting scenes on them in which details are difficult to see.

⁸⁰ Whitley Stokes, ed. and trans., *The Tripartite Life of Patrick, with Other Documents Relating to that Saint*, 2 vols. (London: Published by the authority of the Lords commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, 1887), I, clxxix.

⁸¹ Harbison, I, 106.

⁸² Tall Cross, south side, *Zacharias, Elisabeth and the Infant John the Baptist* below, surmounted by a panel of interlace, and above *The Naming of John the Baptist*. Detail reproduced in Harbison, III, fig. 785. Described in Harbison, I, 149. A round object is

carried by either Saint Paul or Anthony, identified as overcoming evil in the form of a bird or winged beast on Muiredach's Cross at Monasterboice, top of east face, reproduced in Harbison, III, fig. 964. It may be that this type of object was used in exorcisms, or perhaps it is the demon spirit rising from the figure—that is, assuming Harbison's attribution of the scene is correct.

⁸³ MacCulloch, 35. That is, the deity images he thinks were the ones Julius Caesar called Dispater or Mercury, and which is linked iconographically to Cernunnos by horns. Of course, not all horned Celtic gods are necessarily Cernunnos. See Chapter One of this essay.

⁸⁴ The image is identified as *The Risen Christ* on the Moone cross, and reproduced in Harbison, II, fig. 511, and III, fig. 930. If it were a pagan emblem, it would more likely be placed under Christ's feet, not hovering over his head in the celestial sphere.

⁸⁵ The Roman coin with the carnyx-bearing Celt is reproduced in Stuart Piggott, *The Druids* (New York and London: Thames & Hudson 1975; repr. 1985), fig. 18, central image. While Piggott provides no specific identification of the coin, Olmsted cites a Roman denarius signed by Scaurus from c. 100 B.C.E. depicting "what is supposedly Bituitos with a carnyx." Olmsted, 28. See also Anthony Baines, "The Carnyx in Early Iron Age Britain," *The Galpin Society Journal* 13 (July, 1960), 108-111; this on p. 110. The *carnyx* is defined as a horn with an animal-shaped head.

⁸⁶ Cummins, chapter 12, pp. 160-86, where he even illustrates various calls of long and short notes for the reader's edification. See also Werner Flachs, *Das Jagdhorn, seine Geschichte von der Steinzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (Zug, Switzerland: Kalt-Zehnder, 1994). Cummins's statement appears on p. 160.

⁸⁷ Sounding instruments had been associated with the Celts since the classical era. Polybius, writing in the second century B.C.E., described the Celt's use of horns in battle: "The Romans...were...dismayed by the ornaments and clamors of the Celtic host. For there were among them such innumerable horns and trumpets, which were being blown at the same time from all parts of their army, and their cries were so loud and piercing, that the noise seemed to come not from human voices and trumpets but from the whole countryside at once." Polybius, *Histories*, II, 29. Long-necked carnyxes are sounded by warriors on the Gundestrup Cauldron. See the figures on the right side of my fig. 32. For more information on ancient Celtic *carnyxes* and the Gundestrup Cauldron, see Olmsted, 27-28. A Roman-era *carnyx* shaped as a boar's head was recovered in Scotland, near Dexford in Banffshire, which Stuart Piggott says may have been Hiberno-British in origin. Piggott, "The *Carnyx* in Early Iron Age Britain," *The Antiquities Journal* 39: 1-2 (1959), 19-32.

⁸⁸ For more information on the *scramasax*, associated with Germanic and Scandinavian peoples, see Katherine R. Brown, "The Morgan *Scramasax*," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 24 (1989), 71-3.

⁸⁹ Harbison calls this a book bag. "Despite the books," he says, "this scene may represent St. Anthony being tempted by two demons...." Harbison, I, 38.

⁹⁰ Reproduced from Harbison, II, fig. 111.

⁹¹ See Kim McCone, "Werewolves, Cyclopes, *Diberga* and *Fíanna*: Juvenile Delinquency in Early Ireland," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 12 (Winter 1986), 1-22.

⁹² Owen-Crocker discusses Vikings wearing trousers in *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 168. She suggests that the evidence from Viking-inspired sculpture in England indicates, however, that they rarely wore short tunics, but preferred longer ones when pictured without trousers, and that the long garments distinguished Vikings from other peoples. Owen-Crocker, 186. She also states that, "Irish Vikings had the reputation of wearing expensive clothing, especially hooded cloaks, sometimes adorned with pearls." See also David James, "Two Medieval Arabic Accounts of Ireland," *Journal of the Royal Society for the Antiquities of Ireland* 108 (1978), 5-9, in which he quotes from an eleventh-century journal kept by a Spanish Muslim geographer called Al-Udhri.

The same travel diary of Al-Udhri is discussed in an article that deals with trade between the Caucasus peoples and northern Europeans, in which trousers are discussed as moving from the Eastern world to the West. See Elfriede R. Knauer, "A Man's Caftan and Leggings from the North Caucasus of the Eighth to Tenth Century: A Genealogical Study," in *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 36 (2001): 125-54.

⁹³ Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 266. Ó Corráin states that archaeological evidence points to Viking Dublin as an important trading city. Ó Corráin, 106. The Vikings first plundered Dublin in 851, and soon after, they concentrated their forces in that area, eventually forming their principal Irish settlement there. In 902 they were expelled from Dublin, but returned around 920. It was during this era that Dublin became a major trading port for Viking trade. Edwards, 177-81.

⁹⁴ Some hundred thousand *Arabia dirhams* (currency) from the early medieval period has been found on the island of Gotland and elsewhere in Scandinavia, the Baltics and Russia. During the eighth-century Tang dynasty in China, when the Silk Route trade was at its height, trade firmly linked East and West. According to Elfriede Knauer, "a network of portages and smaller rivers draining into the Baltic joined these routes with Northern Europe." She discusses excavations at various Scandinavian sites, which she says has provided much information about the Baltic and North Sea trade that handled oriental merchandise. Also, many objects of eastern provenance have been recovered from Scandinavian sites and cemeteries, attesting to the presence of Central Asians in Norse trading communities. The Norse, in turn, adopted foreign fashions, among them sleeved jackets and lapelled coats. "On their far-flung voyages, whether as raiders, traders or mercenaries—for example at the Byzantine court—the Scandinavians...had ample opportunity to comprehend and appreciate garments that were splendid as well as serviceable." Knauer, 125-54.

⁹⁵ Ó Corráin reports that this text was written in the twelfth century to celebrate (and exaggerate) the history of Brian Boru, first king claiming the crown of most of Ireland from

926-1014, “for the pretensions of his descendants.” Ó Corráin, 78. Passage quoted in Ó Corráin, 106.

⁹⁶ *Bruidne Da’ Derga*, in *The Celtic Heroic Age*, ed. John T. Koch and John Carey, 166-184; this on p. 177. A footnote states this is an abridged version, based on Whitley Stokes’s translations, with some added passages based on the edited text of Eleanor Knott, *Togail bruidne Da Derga* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1936). Whitley Stokes, ed. and trans., “The Destruction of Da Derga’s Hostel,” *Revue Celtique* 22 (1901), pp. 9-61, 165-215, 282-329, 390-437, and *Revue Celtique* 22 (1902), p. 88.

⁹⁷ O’Rahilly, ed., *Táin Bó Cuálgne from the Book of Leinster*, 150-1.

⁹⁸ Whitley Stokes, trans., “The Training of Cú Chulainn,” *Revue Celtique* 29 (1908), 109-152.

⁹⁹ Ellen Ettlinger, “Contributions towards an interpretation of several stone images in the British Isles,” *Ogam* 13 (April-June 1961), 286-304; this on p. 303. She appears to be referring to passages in James Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1950). However, if I interpret Frazer correctly, he says that *neither* foot may touch the ground. Frazer, 195-97.

G. B. Kerverzhiou posits the balance and breathing required for Cú Chulainn’s energetic magical feats may be related to specific yogic poses practiced in Eastern spiritual disciplines, deemed to enhance metaphysical insight. G.B. Kerverzhiou, “Brumes, Fume’s and Colloides,” *Ogam* 4 (1953), 5-11; this on p. 11. The two authors suggest that a belief in such poses’ potential to increase insight and affect others was not limited to Irish folklore.

¹⁰⁰ Pictured in Harbison, I, fig. 496; he identifies the two as *The First Mocking of Christ* on the left in the north arm (detail in III, fig. 868), and *The Kiss of Judas* on the right in the south arm (detail in III, figs. 859 and 868).

CHAPTER V

BEASTLY MEN

Men in wolves' clothing

Models for the animal-headed figures in the *Temptation* images may be simply men dressed as animals. Certain celebrations in medieval Christian Gaul involved donning animal guises, which was apparently a continuation of pagan custom. Particularly loathsome to church commentators were celebratory expressions for the Kalends of January. Yitzhak Hen, in his book on Merovingian Gaul, quotes several church fathers: in the eighth century, Pirmin condemned wearing the guise of a stag or calf for the Kalends, and in the ninth century Halitgar of Cambrai wrote, "If on the Kalends of January, anyone does as many do, calling it 'in a stag,' or goes about in [the guise of] a calf, he shall do penance for three years." According to Hen's argument, the practice was not evidence of widespread or lingering paganism, but represented a pagan memory lightly etched upon an otherwise deeply entrenched Christian culture.¹

Carola Hicks argues that the Irish and Scandinavian images of animal-headed humans, such as those that she says are pictured on the Torslunda die (fig. 21) and the Papil Stone image of bird-headed humans holding a head between their beaks (fig. 23), may refer to masked celebrations such as those described by Merovingian fathers. Unlike Hen, writing about Continental culture, she thinks the customs in the cultures she describes were associated with active expressions of paganism, and they were created by Christian fathers as

admonitions against engaging in heretic practices. While she does not question the theme of temptation for the image, she suggests that by relating the image to pagan practices, the scenes were conceived to admonish against “contemporary transgressive behaviour.” Additionally, the “saint” she assumes was pictured gained currency “through his resistance to a surviving pagan cult.” In this way, she states, the image was intended as “church propaganda.”²

Francis Klingender and Helen Roe likewise argue that a body of related images that includes the Irish *Temptation* scenes may represent men wearing ritual masks. Animal-headed men in art would seem to demonstrate a long-lasting custom, “condemned as devilish,” according to Klingender, who concludes that medieval images of men wearing animal heads represent enactments of mythological or ritual scenes³ Roe states that in the seventh century similar practices were condemned in England, and eighth-century Northumbrian foundations were troubled by the persistence of a horse-related cult, which she sees as continuance of ancient pagan rituals demonstrating animal reverence. She points out that pre-Christian customs are not recorded in Ireland, but adds that animal disguise is common in the vernacular literature, while saints communicating with beasts in Irish hagiography “hints of some such ‘human’ animals.”⁴

Historian Eoin MacNeill, writing in the early 1920s, remembers Halloween celebrations from his Irish childhood. Halloween corresponds both calendrically and spiritually with a traditional Celtic pagan holiday called Samain, when the phenomenal and supernatural planes were thought to be closest and spiritual beings interacted with humans. For this celebration, MacNeill recalls, people wore costumes and masks, which he relates to an ancient practice of associating tribal leaders with deities by assigning animal epithets to

their names, such as “the horse-headed,” the “ram-headed” or “the horned.” He suggests that this type of naming, like the wearing of animal guise, amounted to impersonations of “divine ancestors of the race.” He cites sixteenth-century documentation of celebrations involving wearing animal and other disguises in Ireland, which he describes as “survivals of ancient myths.”⁵ Mask wearing, as is done on Halloween, is the modern expression for All Souls’ Day, a Christian holiday coinciding with, and probably intended to usurp the focus on, Samain.

Not only in Ireland did masked celebrations continue into later centuries. Mikhail Bakhtin, writing about the late medieval era in France and Italy, discusses the continuation of church feasts and festivals that were “genetically linked to ancient pagan festivities,” and which engaged in “temporary liberation from established order,” such as social norms and church prohibitions. At these annual celebrations, people not only wore costumes and masks, but enacted scenes representing pagan cults. Some of the costumes he describes combined human and animal forms, which he calls “one of the most ancient grotesque forms.” He states that “devils” were allowed to run in the streets days before the three-month-long celebrations to create an appropriately “demonic and unbridled atmosphere” for subsequent entertainments. He describes the church and state agreeing to, and sometimes participating in, the festivities, since they “were obliged to make concessions, large or small, to satisfy the marketplace.”⁶

Could festivities of this kind, particularly enactments of pagan rites, explain a frequently-quoted reference to “buffoons,” described in the *Córus Béscnai*, an Irish legal tract that describes three different types of feast? According to this document, the *fled déoda*

or “godly feast” includes ecclesiastical dues and acts of charity, the *fled dóenda* or “human feast” relates to *túath* celebrations and private obligations of a client to his lord, and the *fled demunda* or “devilish feast” is one that,

...is given to sons of death and bad persons, i.e., to lewd persons and satirists, and jesters, and buffoons [*drúí*] and mountebanks, and outlaws [or brigands] and heathens, and harlots, and bad people in general; which is not given for earthly obligation or for heavenly reward—such a feast is forfeited to the demon.⁷

The buffoons referred to here may have been actors or jesters who brought pagan practices to life for public entertainments, and the practices are condemned through character defamation of its participants. If medieval festivities of this kind were widespread, reaching to Ireland, a likely place for their performance would have been an annual festival held at Tailtiu (Teltown), a site located about halfway between the closely situated Kells and Monasterboice sites and the monasteries of Moone and Castledermot to the south.⁸ The festival was named for a pagan mythological queen whose traditional reign coincided with the era of king Lóeguire and Saint Patrick’s arrival in Ireland. The Tailtiu festival began in pagan times, and is related to another pre-Christian tradition, when the Feast of (nearby) Tara hosted the various members of Irish tribal royalty, along with their leading warriors and their druids, who came to discuss political matters with the high-king of Tara and enjoy entertainment and games. While no descriptions of the Tailtiu or other regional festivals exist from the early Christian medieval era, historian R.A.S. Macalister refers to a later medieval poem appearing in a twelfth-century text but possibly conceived earlier, which celebrated the memory of the Tailtiu festival. It begins:

From the lamentation for [Queen] Tailtiu of the Sele to the reign of Lóeguire mac Neill was held by the fairy host a fair every single year/ By the Fir Bolg [a mythical race], who were there, and by the Tuatha De Danann, by the Children of Mil [spirit beings thought to inhabit neolithic burial mounds]

thereafter down to Patrick after the first coming of the Faith...Till Patrick came after Christ was held the fair of Tailtiu that subdues curses....⁹

From evidence scattered throughout the poem, Macalister posits that pagan practices were featured in the festivities. He stresses that the assembly places were invariably burial sites, emphasizing the festivals' pagan origins:

They were doubtless the festivals of a pastoral and agricultural people, designed to increase by magico-religious means the fertility of flocks, herds and fields. And this essential paganism is not disproved by the survival of the Assemblies into the Christian period, or by the occasional presence there of important ecclesiastics...it is certainly suggestive that the last recorded celebration of Tara was under the auspices of the last king with pagan sympathies..But the literature which has preserved for us any knowledge of the Assemblies...has been edited by Christians: and it was against their will that any specific traces of paganism were allowed to remain in their writings....¹⁰

The poem also speaks of Saint Patrick having preached at the Fair of Tailtiu, where he denounced "certain heathenish practices."¹¹ In Tírechán's version of Patrick's life, the saint confronted a royal assembly of king Coipriticus at Tailtiu.¹² A tradition linking Patrick to the Fair of Tailtiu and its celebrations took different forms over the course of the early medieval era.

The custom of donning animal masks to honor a tradition with pagan origins would link the *Temptation* figures with pagan celebrations, particularly if such practices were condemned by church fathers in Ireland as they had been in Gaul. Different provinces held their own regional fairs, which could also explain the different species whose heads appear in the *Temptation* images: memories of local deities may have inspired regional expressions. Following this line of reasoning, images with precedents in festival costumes would not require explanatory texts—and none seem to exist: the viewing public would immediately understand the (pagan) references. All of this is conjecture without possibility of proof, and

yet it is not too far-fetched to consider that Irish enactments of ancient traditions, similar to the entertainments described by Bakhtin for Continental festivals, may have included recreations of Patrick's confrontation with such figures at festivals, as described above, particularly in the poem about the Fair of Tailtiu. Support for the symbolic significance of such a confrontation is discussed more at length below.

Conjecture about costumes as iconographical sources for the images is interesting to consider, but these considerations shed little light on what action, exactly, is taking place in the *Temptation* scenes. To address this question, I turn now to the context of the images—their placement in proximity to other narrative scenes on the crosses, and relevant history regarding the circumscribed geographical area in which the crosses were erected.

Daniel and Patrick together

I begin with a list of the scenes that are in close proximity to the *Temptation* images on each cross, the identification of many of which are disputed by scholars. In Peter Harbison's comprehensive three-volume publication on the high crosses, he lists individual scenes on each cross with descriptive titles that correspond, in large part, to his identifications of subject matter, followed by a list of other scholars' published opinions on what each scene conveys. In this essay, I report on Harbison's identifications, which usually match the general consensus among scholars, although in two instances his identification is in the minority opinion, as I indicate. While many of the scenes are difficult to determine with confidence, most scenes from the Old Testament story of Daniel are undisputed. I list the crosses in the tentative chronological order assigned their creation, with Moone as the earliest and the Kells Market Cross as the latest. (See the Introduction to this essay.)

The Moone Cross is unusual in having a large base with multiple scenes arranged in tiers, which is distinct in that narrative scenes appear on the shafts of other crosses. Also unusual is the Moone Cross shaft carved with animal images, isolated and framed (fig. 20). On the north side of the base is the *Temptation*. Below it is a strange group of fantastic animals (fig. 19, bottom), and above the *Temptation* is *Saints Paul and Anthony Breaking Bread in the Desert*. Appearing on the opposite or south side of the base is a summary image of *Loaves and Fishes* at the bottom, followed by the *Flight Into Egypt* and the *Three Children in the Fiery Furnace* at its top. On the east side of the base appear *Daniel in the Lion Pit* (with seven animals), the *Sacrifice of Isaac* and *Adam and Eve* (fig. 45). The west base has *Twelve Apostles* and the *Crucifixion*.¹³

On the Castledermot North Cross, the west face of the cross, beginning at the bottom of the shaft, most scholars agree on the following identifications: *Three Children in the Fiery Furnace* is positioned below the *Temptation of St. Anthony*, and above is *Daniel* (with four lions) *in the Lions' Den* (fig. 5). On the opposite east side, the identifications are less certain: two unidentified figures are in the bottom position, followed by *Saints Paul and Anthony Breaking Bread in the Desert*, and three figures stand together above. On the top of the cross on its west face is an image Harbison identifies as *Solomon's Ruling* (fig. 53), but its iconography appears identical to other scenes, which scholars argue represent either *The Fall of Simon Magus* or *Saints Paul and Anthony Overcoming the Devil in Human Form* (figs. 54 and 55). The south and north shafts have interlace.¹⁴

The Castledermot South Cross, west side, has *Daniel in the Lions' Den* below the *Temptation of St. Anthony*, and *Adam and Eve* sharing the apple above. Above *Adam and Eve* appears a scene of *Saints Paul and Anthony Breaking Bread in the Desert*, and at the top

of the shaft, just below the cross head, is a broken scene comprised of three figures, which some scholars think is *Three Israelites (or Children) in the Fiery Furnace* (figs. 7 and 57). The sides have a series of unidentified figures.¹⁵

The Tall Cross at Monasterboice shows the *Temptation* higher on the cross, on the south arm of the east face (fig. 63). On the north arm of the same face is an image of an naked, upside-down man with two standing clerics, identified by Harbison as *Saints Paul and Anthony Overcoming the Devil in Human Form*, although the greater number of scholars, including Arthur Kingsley Porter, Françoise Henry and Helen Roe, think it represents the *Fall of Simon Magus* (figs. 55 and 63). A figure within the cross head is puzzling: Harbison suggests *David Acclaimed King of Israel*, others think it is *Christ in Glory* or *The Ascension*, and Porter thinks it represents a mythical character, whom I discuss below in a section on the *fianna*, named Finn, portrayed with his warriors. Below the cross head, on same side as the *Temptation*, is the *Three Children in the Fiery Furnace*, appearing with the two Babylonian soldiers who locked them inside. On the west side of the head a *Crucifixion* appears in the center; the scenes surrounding it are less clear in content. Opposite the *Temptation*, on the north arm, may be the *First Mocking of Christ*, and the south arm may have the *Kiss of Judas* or *Christ's Arrest*. The scene above might show *Peter Drawing his Sword to cut off the Ear of Malchus* and at the very top may be *Pilate Washing his Hands*, while below the *Crucifixion* are two soldiers. On the North side is *Daniel* with two standing lions (fig. 48), which is so close in compositional type to the *Temptation* image that Porter and Macalister thought it might be an iteration of the theme on this cross.¹⁶ Other scenes are not conclusively identified. The attributions for scenes appearing on the south side are also inconclusive; Porter makes a case for one being a scene from St. Columba's life.¹⁷

The Kells Market Cross, in its present position, shows the *Temptation* scene on the south face, east arm of the cross (fig. 17). Next to it, in the cross center, is *Daniel* with four lions, with *Abraham Sacrificing Isaac* on the other arm. The top is broken. Directly below Daniel is a small, worn scene that Harbison says is *David Playing his Lyre*, and below that is a dual scene with *Adam and Eve* and *Cain Slaying Abel* (cut off in fig. 17). On the north face, the Crucifixion stands where Daniel is placed on the opposite side, and on the arm shared by the *Temptation*, but on its other or back side, is *Saints Paul and Anthony Overcoming the Devil in Human Form*, although again, many think it may be the *Fall of Simon Magus* (fig. 54). On the opposite arm (still on the north side) is a tentative identification of *St. Anthony Overcoming the Devil in the Guise of a Woman*—according to Harbison, who detects a bosom on one figure—although others suggest it is *St. Patrick and King Aengus of Munster* or *Saints Peter and Paul* (fig. 76). Below the *Crucifixion* may be a scene representing the *Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes*. And finally, on the end of the arm, where just one panel fits, and touching both the *Temptation* image on the south face and standing opposite to the *Simon Magus* image on the other arm, is an image of *Daniel Rending Open the Jaws of the Lion*.¹⁸

I list below in table form the scenes that bear a positional relationship to the *Temptation* image in more than one instance, omitting the *Crucifixion*, which naturally appears on every cross. Question marks in the last four cells of the table indicate that the image may be either Simon Magus or confrontations with demons in human form.

	Castledmt North	Castledmt South	Moone	Monasterb Tall	Kells Market
Daniel & Lions	X	X	X	X	X
Paul & Anthony	X	X	X		
Three in Fiery Furnace	X	X	X	X	
Adam & Eve			X		X
Sacrifice of Isaac			X		X
Fall of Simon Magus	?			?	?
Other Demon Confrontations	?			?	?

Three of the crosses have *Paul and Anthony Breaking Bread in the Desert*, which is one reason some scholars may think the *Temptation* scene represents an episode from the life of Anthony, evidently a popular theme among Irish monks. Adam and Eve appear twice. The two crosses that I think are later in date than the others with *Temptation* images, the Monasterboice Tall Cross and Kells Market Cross, have either demon confrontations or a scene in which the most infamous sorcerer in Christian literature loses ground.¹⁹ And the Moone and Kells crosses include the *Sacrifice of Isaac*. In short, all the crosses have representations of *Daniel in the Lions' Den* placed near the *Temptation* image, and all but the Kells Market Cross also show *Three in the Fiery Furnace* in proximity to the *Temptation*.

It may be more than simply interesting that two scenes from the Old Testament Book of Daniel appear repeatedly in relation to the *Temptation* scene; in fact, the frequent appearance of scenes from Daniel's story on these crosses may be a clue to the identity of the

so-called *Temptation of St. Anthony* image. Another clue may reside in the fact that two scenes have an almost identical compositional form: the arrangement of figures and beasts in *Daniel in the Lions' Den* is, like the *Temptation*, a compositional type with roots in the Mesopotamian beast-fight or *Lord of the Animals* images, discussed in Chapter Two. As mentioned above, two scholars misidentified a Daniel scene on the Monasterboice Tall Cross as a second *Temptation of St. Anthony* scene, understandable in that the two lions stand on hind legs and appear to bite (or whisper into) Daniel's ears (fig. 48). Close examination of the beasts reveals tails wound around the creatures' hind legs, so they must be lions or some other zoomorphic creature whose behavior, rather than form, suggests anthropomorphism. The Arboe Cross in northeastern Ireland has a similar composition for Daniel (fig. 81).²⁰ Harbison calls this compositional type "Daniel with two vertical lions," and he lists five instances of its appearance on Irish crosses.²¹ Other compositional types for Daniel with the lions are also represented. In some cases, Daniel, when confronted by lions, assumes an orant pose, with arms outstretched, as he does on the Kells Market Cross (fig. 17, center).²² On other panels, Daniel appears to stand stiffly or hold something in front of him, as the Castledermot South Cross pictures him (fig. 57, bottom).

Daniel does not make a restraining gesture or assume an aggressive posture toward the beasts, but stands passively and faces forward, so that his pose is similar to that of the central *Temptation* figure, as I discussed in Chapter Two, and quite unlike one other instance of the *Lord of the Beasts* type of composition. This is the horned figure on the Kells Market Cross (fig. 46),²³ whose arms intertwine with the limbs of the confronting beasts: he appears to be holding them back or physically restraining them at the waist. His full engagement with his companions suggests interchange, mutual interaction conveyed by movement at

once vigorous and coordinated with mirrored gestures assumed by both him and the animals, and quite unlike either Daniel with the lions or the central *Temptation* figures. The consistently stiff poses of the central *Temptation* figure suggests minimal physical contact with his companions, and provides counterpoint for the slight restraining attitudes of his adversaries.

The closely related iconography for the two scenes, Daniel with the lions and the *Temptation*, both having roots in the ancient compositional type discussed in Chapter Two of this essay, hints at a similar message for the two: just as Daniel rises in victory over the wild beasts with the help of God and without exerting physical force, so, too, is the central figure of the *Temptation* image—who does not attempt to save himself, not even with prayerful gestures—represented as lord of the two beastly men who confront him. I suggest he is Patrick, enacting a scene from accounts of his life. The specific literary episode to which the images may refer took place at Tara in County Meath—the five crosses with *Temptation* images surround the Tara site like satellites, all within a few hours' traveling distance by carriage.

The life of Saint Patrick

Two seventh-century accounts of Patrick's life survive. One is a *vita* written by Muirchú, presumed to have been a cleric, at the command of bishop Áed of Sléibte, who was incorporating his church in the *paruchia Patricia* in the late seventh century. This text focuses on Patrick's evangelical experiences.²⁴ The second is a *collectanea* by Tírechán, perhaps a bishop in a monastery, which includes some of the same episodes found in Muirchú's version, although Tírechán's text includes lists of churches Patrick founded and bishops he ordained.²⁵ Tírechán's work is distinct in that it was addressed specifically to his

monastic fellows in County Meath.²⁶ The two *vitae* were committed to writing within a decade of each other, and scholars conclude they were drawn principally from a common source or sources. Ludwig Bieler, who translated and edited the two accounts, states that an earlier tradition appears to have existed, and both he and J. B. Bury discuss evidence that points to oral sources as well as written ones.²⁷ While it is not certain which account was written first, Bieler argues for a slightly earlier date for Muirchú's *vita*.²⁸

The climactic event of Patrick's evangelical mission appears early in both accounts, which agree in large part on the central actions, and it is this event that I relate to the so-called *Temptation* scenes.²⁹ Muirchú states, probably drawing from Patrick's own *Confessio*, that the saint proceeded immediately to County Meath after landing in Ireland to carry out his evangelical mission—as distinct from the years he spent as a captured slave in Ireland in his youth—and that he traveled north briefly to confront his former owner, described as a druid, and returned immediately to Meath afterward. According to Muirchú's implausible chronology, which scholars note was his own invention,³⁰ Easter was approaching, and Patrick gave great consideration to the place where he and his companions should celebrate the most important Christian feast day during their first year in Ireland:

...after many proposals had been made in this matter, at last holy Patrick, divinely inspired, decided that this great feast of the Lord, being the principal feast of all, should be celebrated in the great plain of Brega, because it was there that there was the greatest kingdom among these tribes, the head of all paganism and idolatry; there, in the words of the Psalmist, he would smash the head of the dragon, and for the first time an irresistible wedge would be driven into the head of all idolatry....³¹

The chosen site was Tara, the traditional seat of the most powerful or “high king” of Ireland, where the king held counsel with his druids and where inauguration ceremonies, described above as the Feast of Tara, were held. The Feast of Tara was a great assembly of

all the tribal and territorial kings, their leading champions and their druid-consultants, who met at intervals to discuss politics and enjoy feasting and entertainment.³² Muirchú

acknowledges the Feast of Tara in Patrick's *vita*:

It so happened in that year that a feast of pagan worship was being held, which the pagans used to celebrate with many incantations and magic rites and other superstitious acts of idolatry. There assembled the kings, satraps, leaders, princes, and the nobles of the people; furthermore, the druids, the fortune-tellers, and the inventors and teachers of every craft and every skill were also summoned to king Lóeguire at Tara, their Babylon, as they had been summoned at one time to Nebuchadnezzar, and they held and celebrated their pagan feast on the same night on which holy Patrick celebrated Easter.³³

Tara is an ancient burial site: archaeologists have dated some of its burials to 2,500 B.C.E. According to vernacular literature, the Neolithic burial mounds, of which there are several on the Hill of Tara, were considered by the pagan Irish to be the dwellings of nature spirits (transformed into diminutive fairies by Christian writers) and places where supernatural activities were particularly in evidence; the Irish called both the mounds and their residents *síde* (singular *síd*).³⁴ Tara was, then, not only a royal center and the palatial estate of Ireland's most powerful king in Patrick's day, but it was also a site endowed with supernatural power. That Tara was considered a site with magical or supernatural properties is supported by Muirchú's report of a holy pagan fire traditionally lit on a particular evening, which Muirchú erroneously corresponded with Easter in the year Patrick arrived.³⁵

Muirchú explains the importance of the pagan fire ritual: "They also had a custom, which was announced to all publicly, that whosoever, in any district, whether far or near, should have lit a fire on that night before it was lit in the king's house, that is, in the palace of Tara, would have forfeited his life." Patrick violated that rule and on a nearby hillside in Sláine, Patrick lit his own Paschal fire, large enough for king Lóeguire and his guests to see.³⁶

As Muirchú's chronology unfolds, Lóeguire took with him a retinue to confront the brazen law-breaker, including the king's "two druids who were most powerful of all in a contest, that is, Lucet Mael and Lochru...."³⁷ The druids warned the king that if he went near the lawbreaker's fire, the king would end by adoring the man who had lit it, and he should, therefore, keep his distance. In the slightly later *Tripartite Life* rendition of the story, the druids warn the king in stronger terms: unless the fire is quenched that night, the man who kindled it will "vanquish the kings and lords of Ireland," and the fire "will not be quenched till doomsday." The druids demonstrate by their warning that they perceived the great power residing within Patrick.³⁸

The druid Lochru, upon meeting Patrick, "provoked the holy man and dared to revile the catholic faith with haughty words." The passage by Muirchú continues:

Holy Patrick looked at him as he uttered such words and, as Peter had said concerning Simon, so with power and with a loud voice he confidently said to the Lord: "O Lord, who art all-powerful and in whose power is everything, who hast sent me here, may this impious man, who blasphemes thy name, now be cast out and quickly perish." And at these words the druid was lifted up into the air and fell down again; he hit his brain against a stone, and was smashed to pieces, and died in their presence, and the pagans stood in fear.³⁹

Tírechán halts the narrative to explain that he had seen the stone where the druid struck, on the Hill of Tara.⁴⁰ While Muirchú had situated this action in Sláine, Tírechán locates the actions a few miles away, in Tara; in Muirchú's version, Patrick traveled to Tara for the next round of events.

To return to the tale, the king was understandably furious and ordered the execution of this audacious violator of his law. But Patrick demonstrated his magical—miraculous, in his case—powers before the king and his druids, and he brought on darkness followed by an earthquake, killing seven men. The queen begged Patrick to spare the king's life. King

Lóeguire, inspired by fear, pretended to revere Patrick, although Patrick saw through his deceit. It was after this episode in Muirchú's account that another occurred, related in Chapter Four of this essay: the king started home and ordered his men to surprise and kill Patrick and his companions as they traveled; Patrick's group turned into deer to escape the ambush. Lóeguire was "sad, frightened, and in great shame," when he returned to Tara at dawn on Easter Day, where he nevertheless resumed his celebratory feast.⁴¹

Patrick arrived at the palace, and one poet, Dubthach maccu Lugir, rose in his honor, and became a disciple of the saint. The remaining powerful druid, paired with the first who had been dashed on the rocks, was Lucet Mael, described by Muirchú as one "who had taken part in the conflict on the previous night, [and] was anxious even on that day, now that his colleague had perished, to fight against holy Patrick."⁴² After making an unsuccessful attempt to poison Patrick, the druid was ordered by the king to participate in a contest of powers with the saint. Lucet Mael demonstrated his magic through incantations that brought first snow and then darkness; but the druid was incapable of dispelling the conditions he had caused before a period of time had lapsed, while Patrick does so immediately, using blessings, to everyone's amazement. With no evident victor, king Lóeguire suggests both men throw their books into water, and the one whose books would remain unharmed should claim his power supreme. At this point, one might expect the druid to claim he has no books, as all information indicates the druids learned their lore through memorization and the pagan Celtic cultures were oral based. In fact, scholar Whitley Stokes denies this passage serves as evidence of literacy on the part of Irish druids; he points out parallels linking the event to Saint Peter's confrontation with Simon Magus, in which books tossed into water did demonstrate the saint's superior powers.⁴³ In Muirchú's account, it is

not the books that inspire the druid's decline to participate; Muirchú states that Patrick demonstrates Christianity's power by "the Lord working with him and confirming his word *by the miracles* which followed" (italics mine).⁴⁴ It is not the Bible, then, that symbolizes the druid's fear of Patrick and marks his eventual defeat by the saint; in the narrative, it is the druid's assumption that Patrick's obeisance to a water god, the act of baptism and first step in conversion, which to him proves an unfair advantage.⁴⁵ Significant to the iconography of the carved scene of Patrick confronting the druids, the authority of the Bible does not come into play in the narrative; following the story's action, no Bible is held by the saint in the image, unlike numerous other cross scenes in which saints and ecclesiastics carry books.⁴⁶

The druid is also skeptical about Patrick's command of a fire deity, but he finally agrees to a test by fire. As I described in Chapter Four, the druid, wearing Patrick's garment, burns in a building made of green wood, while Patrick's assistant, cloaked in the druid's garb and placed in a dry-wood structure, is unharmed. An important point of this passage is that magical accoutrements, such as a cloak, do not figure where spiritual faith is concerned. That is, the narrative brings a traditional pagan power object into the contest to demonstrate that Patrick could match paganism on its own terms: Patrick's cloak does not equate to a wizard's cloak in its magical properties, and it does not save the wizard; neither does the wizard's cloak save Patrick's servant, as that would be illogical. Rather, it is Patrick himself who embodies power and commands the outcomes through God's direct assistance.

After Patrick has brought about the destruction of the second most powerful druid in Ireland, he inaugurates his evangelical mission. Muirchú states:

Holy Patrick...following the command of the Lord Jesus, left Tara, going forth and teaching all peoples and baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and preached everywhere....⁴⁷

Never is Patrick described in this passage as praying or making the sign of the cross, although Muirchú noted in another passage that the saint enacted the gesture a hundred times a day.⁴⁸ The cross image is true to the actions of the saint in this important story, repeated from tradition and written down by both Muirchú and Tírechán.

Sublime victory

Patrick defeats the two high priests of paganism as an initial step in the conversion of the entire Irish nation. A Christian Ireland amounted to fulfilling Christ's prophecy: the Word had now been brought to the farthest reaches of the earth. In Acts 1:8, Jesus states, "But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth." In the commentary of Jerome, whose writings were well known in Ireland, the geographical area Jerome calls *Oceanus Britannicus* represents the western extremity of the earth.⁴⁹ Even without Jerome's authority, Ireland could view herself, situated west of England, as the most distant and isolated western outpost, based on the widely-held view that Jerusalem was situated at the center of Christendom, as attested on medieval maps, and Rome was perceived as a second important cultural and geographical center. In fact, an Irish lection for Easter vigil announced that the gospel had now been preached to the ends of the earth.⁵⁰ Muirchú's rearrangement of chronology insured that Patrick's pivotal actions took place on Easter. In this way, Patrick's work in saving the Irish from damnation bears intrinsic ties with Christ's sacrifice for humankind and with Peter's role as apostle and first priest.⁵¹

Patrick brought God's Word to Ireland, but first he defeated seemingly insurmountable obstacles, the twin forces of paganism and illiteracy. Druidic magic was

evoked through incantations, as related above. Patrick's Word was textual and Latin. It was important for hagiographers to demonstrate that the spirit behind the Word resided within Patrick, since few could read the text and fewer still could understand the Latin liturgy. Within Patrick, the power of God resided—not in his gesture, and he does not need to make the sign of the cross, and certainly not in the one-legged pose associated with Irish pagan magic and exhibited by his foes on the Kells and Monasterboice crosses (figs. 2 and 10)—nor did his power reside in his physical force or his (magical) clerical robes.⁵² God was in him, with him and expressed through him, and demonstrations of that powerful force had to compete with, and supersede, existing magical, druidical traditions. Existing tradition could be expressed most concisely in pagan references—the animal and bird heads—and in the principal episode from Patrick's hagiography.

Textual archetypes

The events described in Muirchú's account incorporate two references to the legend of Simon Magus and his confrontation with Saint Peter—one stated outright, and the other suggested through the episode of the books. The parallels may have inspired the enigmatic cross scenes that some scholars identify as the defeat of Simon Magus, found on the Castledermot North Cross (fig. 5, uppermost panel and fig. 53), Kells Market Cross (fig. 54), Monasterboice Tall Cross (fig. 55), and the nearby South Cross at Clonmacnoise (fig. 56).⁵³

Even more significant, as Thomas O'Loughlin points out, are the many parallels between Muirchú's *vita* and the Old Testament story of Daniel (3:1-24). As quoted above, Muirchú explicitly links Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar with Tara and king Lóeguire.⁵⁴

In Chapter One of the Book of Daniel, God gives the protagonist knowledge to understand others' visions and dream images (Daniel 1: 17). Daniel and his three youthful

companions, described as children, please the king: “And in all matters of wisdom and understanding...he found them ten times better than all the diviners, and wise men, that were in all his kingdom.” (Daniel 1:20). The king’s opinion is confirmed when Daniel alone interprets his dreams to his satisfaction.⁵⁵ Patrick came to Ireland as a result of a dream in which he is told to return to the land of his captivity to bring Christianity to the Irish people. The parallels with Daniel may have suggested to a ninth-century audience Muirchú’s selection of the Book of Daniel as a prototype.⁵⁶

Daniel, Chapter 3, includes the story of the Israelites, who had arrived as children, and who were cast into a fiery furnace for refusing obeisance to a pagan idol. They predict that God will save them from harm, and when they emerged from the flames unharmed, all were amazed. While the correspondence is not exact, Patrick’s saving act, in a sense, outdoes the fiery furnace incident, in that not only does a righteous boy live, but an evil man, a would-be assassin and pagan priest who refuses to acknowledge God, dies. The fiery furnace episode from the Book of Daniel is pictured many times on Irish crosses, and on each cross where *Patrick Confronting the Druids* appear.

Also, in Chapter Four, Daniel interprets another of Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams, in which the king dreams of a great tree and a messenger told him that he would cut down the tree and live among animals: “Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given him; and let seven times pass over him. (Daniel 4:4-13). Writers in Anglo-Saxon England interpreted the passage as Nebuchadnezzar suffering from lycanthropy: he shapeshifted into a werewolf.⁵⁷

O’Loughlin finds additional parallels. Among them, he points out that Nebuchadnezzar built a gold statue for his pagan liturgy, while Lóeguire lights a fire for his

great festival of idolatry and pagan worship. Nebuchadnezzar calls an assembly of his satraps, magistrates, judges, leaders, rulers, prefects, and all the princes of the people, and Lóeguire similarly convenes a large assembly, as described above, with Muirchú using the alien term, *satrap*, to make explicit the parallel.⁵⁸ The Babylonian king commands that all must partake in the liturgy through worship of the idol, and those who break the law must be cast into the furnace; Lóeguire orders death for those who break his law for the fire-lighting ceremony. Both kings gather around them their cortege to investigate the broken command, while the young men in Daniel's story, and Patrick and his companions in Muirchú's *vita*, do break the law. The breach is reported to the king in the Daniel story and witnessed first-hand in the Muirchú tale. In Daniel, religious experts report on the meaning of the breach, just as the druids prophesize the future resulting from Patrick's actions. Both kings, after an audience with their counselors, order punishment. The youths are thrown into the fiery furnace, while Patrick faces attacks by the king's retinue. In both accounts, the protagonists experience a miraculous escape from danger: the young men in Daniel are unharmed by the fire, and Patrick and his companions transform into deer.⁵⁹

As O'Loughlin points out, since several storylines are drawn upon by Muirchú, the parallels are not exact, but "the general parallel is clear, and the explicit reference to the Daniel passage...make it certain that for Muirchú the event of Ireland's conversion is to be seen as an act of deliverance typologically in line with that of the young men in the furnace and those of Christ breaking forth from the tomb."⁶⁰

The final result is similar in the two accounts. In Daniel's story, it is Daniel, the protagonist, who predicts the king's future loss of authority; in Muirchú's story, it is the

antagonists, the druids, who correctly predict the outcome of Patrick's mission: Ireland would experience social and political upheaval.

Additional clues

Returning to the cross image, I draw the reader's attention to the clothing worn by the central figure: the clerical dress that Gail Owen-Crocker links to classical-era garb, while pointing out that in medieval art, such dress suggests the antiquity of biblical times.⁶¹ I demonstrated in Chapter Four that in its consistency, the central figure's costume was unique among clothing depicted among similar figures on Irish cross images. Other figures who reappear on the crosses are depicted in different dress styles: even Christ was shown wearing shorts in a Crucifixion scene on Muiredach's Cross at Monasterboice (fig. 66).⁶² Perhaps the constancy in the depiction of antique dress signaled Muirchú's identification of Patrick with the Old Testament prophet, Daniel, who had brought knowledge of God to Babylon's king.

Patrick's *vitae* include other significant details that may be linked to the central figure of the *Patrick Confronting the Druids* compositions. In the ninth-century (or earlier) *Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick*, Patrick travels to present-day Sletty, located a few miles south of the crosses at Moone and Castledermot.⁶³ The region was the site of the chief idol of Ireland, which I referred to in Chapter One as an image surrounded by twelve others that were buried "as far as their heads" by Patrick's curse. In the *Tripartite Life*, a brooch worn by Patrick in another episode of encounter with both king Lóeguire and Ireland's most revered idol is assigned particular significance:

And he [Patrick] cursed the demon [residing in the idol], and expelled him into hell. And Patrick summoned all with king Lóeguire. These are they who adored the idol, and all saw him, namely the demon, and they feared they would perish unless Patrick should cast him into hell. Then his brooch fell out of Patrick's mantle as he was [passage lost]...the conflict and the prowess

against the idol. He stript off the heather in that place, and he found his brooch; and no heather-plant grows in that place....⁶⁴

The next passage has Patrick founding a church “in that stead.” The passage is unclear in its meaning, perhaps due to its summary version of a tale well known.

Patrick’s brooch effects a miraculous change, in that no heather grows in the place where it dropped. While the meaning of the action does not seem, to a modern reader, to further the cause of Christianity, the brooch is obviously related to the pivotal event through which pagan forces are banished. I draw attention here to the Kells Market Cross version of the *Patrick Confronting the Druids* (fig. 2). It is questionable whether the ascetic saint would have worn a brooch as ostentatious as the one appearing on his robe in this picture: perhaps it identifies Patrick and relates to the *Tripartite Life* passage. Maire MacNeill discusses at length numerous regional versions of Patrick’s story, each a bit different in its details; the brooch story may have been a local variation on the idol theme.⁶⁵ If so, the Kells version of the image combines two episodes of Patrick’s story into one narrative scene, common in medieval art and found elsewhere on the crosses.⁶⁶

Of course, Daniel images appear on Irish crosses that do not feature the scene under discussion. Much has been written about the Daniel scenes as part of an overall program, including *Abraham Sacrificing Isaac* and *Jonah and the Whale*, called by scholars “The Help of God” series of images.⁶⁷ Roger Stalley discusses “The Help of God” as a recurring theme of deliverance on Irish crosses. A prayer known as the *ordo commendationis animae* was recited in the Irish liturgy, and this fact, while significant, has served as a single-point perspective for interpretation of the group of scenes that include Daniel episodes.⁶⁸ But as Stalley demonstrates with his interpretation of scenes shared among crosses but using different iconography from cross to cross, no “visual or narrative logic” can be applied to

suggest one interpretation for each instance of an image. Acknowledging the work of another scholar, Stalley comments: “Ó Carragain is surely right to stress the multiple levels at which the crosses can be, and were no doubt intended to be, interpreted.”⁶⁹ That is, the scenes may, in some cases, be related to others as part of a “Help of God” program, but that does not limit their interpretation to this theme in every case or to restrict their meaning to the prayer. It seems more likely that, given the different levels of education and literacy on the part of Irish viewers of the large and highly visible crosses, a number of readings was possible for the scenes, intended to be understood according to the viewers’ backgrounds. In fact, they may have been intended to speak entirely different messages to groups of viewers, as I discuss below.

Might events from Patrick’s *vitae* have been enacted at the Fair of Tailtiu and other regional festivals, with actors impersonating two “nature worshippers” wearing animal or bird masks, and who may also have symbolized king Lóeguire’s druids in confrontation with Patrick? The poem that relayed the event in which Patrick confronted demon practices at the fair may have related to contemporary festivities. Whether or not animal costumes or dramas were part of the Tailtiu festivals, on the public crosses, what better symbol of paganism than the all-too-human druids, assigned the heads of the dumb beasts they had ceremoniously sacrificed at Tara and other sites.⁷⁰

Some crosses commemorated miracles or major events, and images of Patrick defeating paganism in the territories near Tara would seem a likely reference for cross imagery. Crosses also marked gathering places for specific services or liturgical ceremonies conducted next to the monuments.⁷¹ The appearance of *Saints Paul and Anthony Breaking Bread in the Desert* is recognized as a Eucharistic theme.⁷² Linking Patrick with Christ, as

savior of the Irish nation and fulfiller of Jesus's prophecy, could have related to an Easter service, especially in light of Muirchú's placement of events at Eastertide.

An image of Patrick confronting the druids might also have served as a visual archetype, symbolizing the defeat and banishment of paganism by the Irish Christian church—which, in ninth-century Ireland, had come to be associated with Patrick as its founder.⁷³ In the later eighth century, throughout the ninth and well into the tenth centuries, threats to the church posed by “pagans” or “heathens” were reported in the annals and other documents composed by ecclesiastics. As Colman Etchingham has pointed out, “pagan” and “heathen” were probably terms used by the literary class for anyone whose activities were found to be “inimical to the interest of the church.”⁷⁴

The would-be Christian king

More than defeating the druids, Patrick also confronted the high king of Ireland, the pagan Lóeguire, king of Tara. As Francis Byrne states,

Whether Celtic druids held priestly functions has been a matter of some controversy. It is probable that, strictly speaking, they did not, and that the king was the priest of his people...The Irish *rí* was literally hedged about with divinity in the form of taboos or *gessa*...The king of Tara might not let the sun rise on him in Tara, break a journey in Mag Breg on a Wednesday, travel over Mag Cuilinn after sunset, strike his horses in Fán Commair, enter nor Tethba on a Tuesday, have a scout at Bethra on the Monday after Beltaine...nor [follow] the track of his army at Áth Maigne on the Tuesday after Samain. His prerogatives were: the fish of the Boyne, the deer of Luibnech, the mast of Mana, the bilberries of Bri Léith, the cress of the Brosnach, water from the well of Tlachtga, the hares of Naas. [Byrne quotes the following passage, without citing:] “All of these used to be brought to the king of Tara on the first of August. And the year in which he used to consume them did not count against him as life spent, and he used to be victorious in battle on every side.”⁷⁵

In other words, the king of Tara presided over nature: partaking of nature's divine bounty, delivered from each region over which he ruled, prolonged his life and delivered military victory.

A symbol of kingship in ninth-century literature was Tara, even though it had not served as the king's residence for some centuries. According to the Annals of Tigernach, Diarmait mac Cerbaill's Feast of Tara celebration in 558 or 560 was the last celebration presided over by the high king.⁷⁶ In legend, the reason was probably linked to the story of Diarmait irritating a number of saints for different reasons, inspiring the "twelve apostles of Ireland" to assemble at Tara to "solemnly curse it," which rendered the site desolate thereafter. Diarmait purportedly lamented, "Woe to him who contends with the clergy of the churches."⁷⁷ Over time, Tara became a "memory...cultivated by some as a focus of national glory," but the church "regarded it with disfavor," according to Byrne, who concludes, "full use of this ambiguity was made by Muirchú in Patrick's confrontation with Lóeguire at Tara."⁷⁸ The "disfavor" toward Tara was expressed in a poem written about 800 C.E. by Óengus of the Céili Dé, celebrating the triumph of Christianity, represented by Armagh, over paganism, represented by Tara:

The strong fortress of Tara has perished with the death of her princes;
With its quires of sages great Armagh lives on.
Valiant Lóeguire's pride is quenched—great the obstacle;
The name of Patrick, glorious, famous, is still growing.
The Faith has grown and will live till the day of Doom.
The guilty gentiles have been carried off and their raths are uninhabited.⁷⁹

The story of Patrick's confrontation with the king's druids would have been inextricably woven with the notion that Patrick simultaneously interrupted the ascendancy of the king of Tara, a concept of relevance for at least some of those erecting crosses with *Patrick Confronting the Druids* images. By the ninth century, political alliances between

secular and ecclesiastical powers were common. Dynasties were consolidating before the arrival of the Vikings at the turn of the ninth century, and the arrival of the Norse invaders served to intensify assertions of dynastic sovereignty and territorial dominance.⁸⁰ One of many royal sons serving the church was Diarmait ua hÁedo Róin, a leader within the monastic movement in Ireland known as the Céli Dé or “clients of God.” Diarmait founded Dísert Diarmata, today called Castledermot, in 811 or 812.⁸¹ Probably shortly before this date, just a few miles away, Moone was established as a Columban abby, part of a growing a monastic *familia* founded by Colum Cille in the sixth century.⁸²

The Céli Dé, especially, and the Columbans with them, supported and propagated an ideal of Christian kingship, which, in the ninth century, was highly secularized within most dynasties. The Céli Dé propelled themselves onto the political stage by mediating between the warring dynasties of the Uí Néill and the Leinster-dominated Laigin in 780, Leinster being the province in which Castledermot and Moone were founded. By the late eighth century and well into the ninth, political strife was constant and bloody, and the monasteries were often engaged in the struggles, with ecclesiastic personnel sometimes participating in battle. Only in the year 804 did the high king excuse clergy from serving in his forces.⁸³ It is not surprising to find two leading forces in monastic politics, the Céli Dé and Columbans, pushing for Christian leadership.

In 780, after an invasion of Leinster by the high-king, a synod was convened at Tara in which the Uí Néill and Laigin met with anchorites and scribes under the leadership of Dublitter, friend and associate of the abbot of the new Céli Dé house of Finglas (just north of Dublin), named Máelruain. Tara was still clearly an important center for political assemblies, and it had come under Christian leadership. Not long after this convening of

political and ecclesiastic forces at Tara, in 797, according to Francis Byrne's reckoning, the first Irish high king was "ordained" by an ecclesiastic, an event important enough for him to be known thereafter as *Áed Oirdnide*, "the ordained."⁸⁴ In the year 751, the office of a Christian king had been sanctified in Merovingian Gaul, when the Carolingian ruler, Pippin, was consecrated by St. Boniface and the ceremony repeated by the pope at Saint-Denis in 754. Charlemagne's two sons were anointed in Rome in 781. By 787, the same practice was established in England, when Offa of Mercia had his son Ecgfrith anointed; and in 795, king Eadwulf was consecrated the king of Northumbria, where the Columban monastery of Lindisfarne had been established.⁸⁵

An image of Patrick defeating the king's druids—and, by extension, subduing the king—would serve as exemplary model for promulgation of a concept of Christian kingship, demonstrating an early alignment of secular and ecclesiastic powers with the Christians in ascendancy. Given the involvement of monasteries in the determination of royal prerogative and wealth, and the political position of the leaders of the *Céli Dé* and Columban establishments at Castledermot and Moone, the image may have promoted both their political and spiritual interests, while at the same time, honoring the Patrician tradition and impressing the leading monastic institution of Ireland, the Patrician *familia* centered at nearby Armagh, through expression of his *vitae* in visual form.

Marauding Christians and heathens

An original motive driving the creation of the image—establishment of a Christian ordination for Ireland's high king—might have been fulfilled with *Áed Oirdnide*, but this leader fell short of Christian hopes and continued to terrorize monastic compounds as a method of dominating territory and wealth. In protest of his militancy, Colum Cille's *familia*

went to Tara, and there solemnly cursed the high king. Áed's son did not improve upon his model, raiding Leinster in 835 and battling the king of Cashel in 841. And in that year, 841, another important development occurred: the Vikings stayed the winter in Ireland, establishing a permanent settlement in Dublin.⁸⁶

By the time the image of *Patrick Confronting the Druids* was carved on the Monasterboice and Kells crosses, probably later in the ninth century but perhaps as late as the early tenth (see the Introduction), the image had gained in stature: it moves up from the shaft and appears on an arm of these crosses, near the central cross-head. On the Monasterboice Tall cross, its higher position meant it was visible from a considerable distance: the cross stands almost twenty-two feet tall. (In the next chapter, I address historical events that may have merited increased status for the image on these later crosses.) The image abuts *Daniel in the Lions' Den* on the Kells cross (fig. 17), and an image of uncertain content on the cross head of the Monasterboice Tall Cross (fig. 63). For the latter, Peter Harbison identifies a helmeted warrior with his minions as David, the warrior king who composed the Psalms, while Arthur Kingsley Porter suggests it is the mythological Finn with his troops.⁸⁷

Both Kells and Monasterboice were Columban institutions by this time. Kells was completed and inhabited in 814, on land granted about a decade earlier to monks fleeing the Viking raids on Iona Island.⁸⁸ Monasterboice was established in 551 by Saint Buite, credited with a prophetic vision of Columba's birth.⁸⁹ By the ninth and tenth centuries, Columban abbots were in place at Monasterboice. Battles over monasteries continued to be fought: in 827, the future high king committed himself to Monasterboice's protection against rival claims of relatives of the current high king, Conchobar.⁹⁰ In the ninth century, Muiredach, son of Domhnall was both abbot of Armagh and high steward of the southern Uí Néill

dynasty.⁹¹ Viking raids also affected some monasteries. Castledermot was plundered in 841, and, while a Viking settlement was established just eight miles from Monasterboice, by miracle or cabal the monastery was spared, while neighboring Durrow and nearby Clonmacnoise were not.⁹² The history of these centuries suggest that the monastic establishments were not only embroiled in local political struggles and attacked by Vikings, especially in the first half of the ninth century, but also bands of youthful pagan gangs presented a security threat.

A number of men whose behavior could be described as “bestly” appear in Irish historical records.⁹³ Reports in the Annals of Ulster from the ninth and early tenth centuries reveal instances of attacks on church property and incidents resulting in the kidnap and slaying of ecclesiastics. Below are snapshots from events reported in the Annals of Ulster and occurring in the regions where the monasteries of Kells, Monasterboice, Moone and Castledermot were situated, listed with the year in which the occurrences were recorded:

- 856: Sodomna, bishop of Sláine, suffers a violent death.
- 879: Fergil son of Cumsad, abbot of Domnach Sechnaill [Dunshaughlin, County Meath], was secretly murdered.
- 881: The oratory of Cianán [near Kells] was destroyed by the foreigners, and many people were taken from it. Afterwards Barith, a great despot of the Norsemen, was killed.
- 885: Secret murder was committed in Cell Dara [Kildare].
- 886: Scannal son of Fergil, superior of Domnach Sechnaill, was killed by his own kinsmen.
- 904: Cenannas [Kells] was profaned by Flann son of Mael Sechnaill against Donnchad, i.e. his own son, and many were beheaded there around the oratory.
- 920: The stone church of Cenannas was broken down by the heathens, and a large number suffered violent death in it. The stone church of Tuilén was burned on the same day.
- 950: The bell-house of Sláine was burned by the foreigners of Áth Cliath [Viking Dublin]. The founder's episcopal staff, and the best of all bells, the lector Caenachair and a large number with him, were all burned.

- 951: Gothfrith, son of Sitriuc, with the foreigners of Áth Cliath, plundered Cenannas...and other churches. From Cenannas they were all plundered, and three thousand men or more were taken captive and a great spoil of cattle and horses and gold and silver was taken away.
- 970: Cenannas was plundered by Amlaíb Cuarán.
- 982: The plundering of Cell Dara by Ímar of Port Láirge [Waterford].
- 997: Cluain Iraird and Cenannas were plundered by the foreigners.
- 1016: Dún Lethglaise was totally burned. Cluain Moccu Nóis and Cluain Ferta and Cenannas were burned.⁹⁴

The Annals of Inisfallen report that in 823, “Mag Bile and Bennchor were plundered by the heathens,” a reference to Viking Norsemen. The following year, “Tamlachta was plundered by the community of Cell Dara,” and Scelec was “plundered by the heathens, and Etgal was carried off into captivity, and he died of hunger in their hands.”⁹⁵ The entries continue, until a “martyrdom” is reported in 920, when one man who was clearly a community leader was murdered: “Cormac son of Cuilennán, bishop and vice-abbot of Les Mór, abbot of Cell Mo-Laise, king of the Déisi and chief counselor of Mumu, died at the hands of the [tribe of] Uí Fhothaid Aiched.” In 927, the men of Mumu teamed up with “the foreigners,” probably the Norsemen, to retaliate for their loss. The reports of attacks and murders continue through the ninth and tenth centuries, signifying that they were considered important enough to record in the historical archives.⁹⁶

As mentioned above, the monasteries tended to be associated with families or dynasties, so that an enemy establishment was open to attack or retaliatory actions. Ireland “never evolved a pre-determined system of royal succession,” as Donnchadh Ó Corrain states, noting that one annalist remarks in the year 908 that “when a layman or cleric was spared in battle, it was not for mercy, but out of greed for ransoms or in order to enslave the captives.”⁹⁷

Wars between monasteries were also regular occurrences. Not only outsiders engaged in brutal conduct and forced monastery personnel into “hostings,” but in some cases, monastic personnel voluntarily took up arms, and, as the above Annals of Ulster entry for 886 demonstrates, family members sometimes took revenge on their high-positioned relatives. In 807, the monasteries of Cork and Clonfert engaged in a bloody battle in which many ecclesiastics were slaughtered.⁹⁸ In the late eighth century, a “great burner of churches and monasteries” was Feidlimid mac Crimthainn, who served as both cleric and king of Munster.⁹⁹

In times of famine, when the greatest number of raidings on monastic complexes took place, even more valuable than gold and silver were land and cattle. These valuables seem to have inspired many Viking raids, which became more intense and frequent in the 830s.¹⁰⁰

In 845, Vikings captured the chief ecclesiastic of Ireland, the Patrician abbot of Armagh, who was released the following year, probably with a ransom payment.¹⁰¹ It was at Castledermot that the provincial kings of Munster and Leinster joined forces and defeated a large Viking force in the mid-ninth century.¹⁰² About that time, Irish kings began to realize that alliances with Viking warriors could help them defeat their Irish rivals. In 850, Cináed mac Conaing, king of Brega, joined muscle with the Norsemen against a rival clan.¹⁰³ But even after the Vikings began to settle in Ireland in the 840s and marry Irish women, Norse groups could also act on their own, as mentioned above for the year 856, when a group killed the bishop of Sláine, just a few miles from Kells and Tara.¹⁰⁴ Norse conversion was evidently widespread in Ireland by the mid-ninth century, when the annals ceased referring to the invaders as *geinte*, or heathens. But a new wave of pagan Vikings appeared on Irish

shores in the early tenth century, and the descriptor was revived.¹⁰⁵ Coastal monasteries were frequently raided in the 920s and 930s, and large fleets of Viking ships were stationed along rivers, including the river that runs through Sláine, the site of Patrick's paschal fire.¹⁰⁶

Viking iconography

As mentioned in Chapter One, hybrid human figures were also created in Scandinavian art. Hicks states that in Gotland, “common motifs include bird-headed and animal-headed men.” She says this iconography was “not necessarily the result of direct influence, but represented the general continuity of classical and migration period themes,” so that it may have predated the appearance of composite imagery in Pictish Scotland and Ireland. She points out that since animal deities were part of Viking tradition and mythology, animal themes “recur in the art of the Viking colonies of Britain, but could be ingeniously adapted to a Christian context.”¹⁰⁷ In the final chapter of this essay, I address the image of *Patrick Confronting the Druids* that purportedly appears on a stone in the Isle of Man, which could have been carved during the time of Viking settlement there, but which more likely predates Viking-generated crosses.

Some or all of the images of *Patrick Confronting the Druids* could address the Viking threat, with the animal- and bird-headed figures adapted from images associated with the marauders. A possible secondary meaning of the image bearing a relation with Viking attacks would certainly have borne emotional overtones for survivors residing in monastic complexes such as Castledermot and Kells.

The maurauding *fianna*

At the same time as they were dreaded marauders, the Vikings took on a mythical aspect. While they did not figure in the group of fictional hero tales known as the Ulster

saga, which includes the *Táin Bó Cúalgne*, they did appear in another cycle of tales called the Finn stories. In some of these tales, Vikings and their homeland, referred to as Lochlainn, appear from time to time as sources and sites of magical occurrences.¹⁰⁸ These *fenian* tales centered upon the rivalries between the forces of Munster and Leinster, and, while they were fantastic in nature, they had historical bases and bore contemporary significance.¹⁰⁹ Finn, leader of a warrior band and hero of the tales, became a cult figure in the medieval era, especially in the Boyne Valley area, near Tara and Kells. Scholar Dáithí Ó hÓgáin explains the tales were particularly popular among a group of Leinstermen who had lost control of the political seat of the high king, which in one tale Finn wins for his overlord; these men associated Finn's exploits with their hopes of regaining Tara.¹¹⁰ The Finn tales were also popular in the Isle of Man, where an additional cross with the *Patrick Confronting the Druids* may have once stood, as I will discuss more at length in the next chapter.¹¹¹ In short, the sagas generated around Finn and his band of warriors embodied a number of concepts relevant to events in early medieval Ireland.

Finn stories were based on a traditional and continuing social phenomenon known as the *fianna*, an Irish term for youthful bands of warriors largely comprised of aristocrats' and kings' sons. Kim McCone paints a portrait of the *fianna* as the royal progeny who were not first- or second-born, but the younger sons positioned too far down the line to be granted property. At the traditional time for inheritance, after a period of fosterage, these youths were not privy to social advantages granted first-born sons, such as *tuáth* (tribal) membership and a well-placed marriage.¹¹² These displaced bachelor youths banded together in groups as small as five or as many as a hundred. McCone describes their characteristic profile succinctly and concisely:

...for many males of free birth...the termination of fosterage around fourteen years of age was followed by a stage in the *fían*, an independent organization of predominantly landless, unmarried, unsettled and young men given to hunting, warfare and sexual license in the wilds outside the *tuáth*, upon which it made claims, by agreement or force as the case might be, to sustenance and hospitality and for which it might perform certain elementary police or military services where relations were not strained by hostility. Upon the acquisition of the requisite property, usually by inheritance on the death of the father or other next of kin but not before the age of twenty, one would normally pass from the *fían* to full membership of the *tuáth* of married property-owners.¹¹³

While the *fianna* were historical fact and not literary fancy, the line separating reality from mythology is blurred, as revealed in scholars' research on the *fianna*. Scholarly expositions describe the characteristic habits and habitats of the *fianna* not only with reference to statements in eighth-century law tracts, but also with reliance on information gleaned from colorful passages in vernacular literature and hagiography.¹¹⁴ While the *fían* (singular) could be any type of fighting man, according to historian Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, the term was used to refer to a specific type of militia sanctioned within secular society.¹¹⁵ Since no centralized political organization existed in early medieval Ireland, legal stipulations could be difficult to enforce. Ó hÓgáin explains that senior *tuáth* authorities encouraged a positive image for the *fianna* among Irish youth in this era, since the warrior bands performed important duties, such as pursuing enemies of the *tuáth* who had committed offenses and fled the territory.¹¹⁶ In the early medieval era, secular society and ecclesiastic authority diverged in their opinions of this group.¹¹⁷

In their propensity to haunt the woods and conduct raids, Ó hÓgáin explains that the *fianna* were linked with a more unruly class of youthful outsider warriors called the *dibergaig*, who lived in the woods and from there conducted murderous raids, but operating without any tribal affiliations and acting out of pure self-interest.¹¹⁸ Ó hÓgáin states that the

dibhergaig were “social outlaws, desperate men who preyed on society and organized themselves into groups to pursue their purposes.”¹¹⁹ At the same time, as McCone is careful to point out, since modern scholars must rely largely upon descriptions of both groups generated by church authorities, it is difficult to determine exactly what actions either the *dibhergaig* or the *fianna* committed, or how they might have been characterized by writers within secular society.¹²⁰ The *dibhergaig* are represented in hagiographical literature as a ritualized form of brigandage, identified by the wearing of special marks on the head in token of a vow to commit murder—clerics called it “the sign of the devil.”¹²¹ Ó hÓgáin concludes that the two groups undoubtedly shared a “good deal of contact,” and McCone says the terms used to identify *dibhergaig* or *fianna* appear to have been “more or less interchangeable.”¹²²

In the early medieval era, the *fianna* were characterized as destroyers of church property—burning buildings and murdering clerics “in the manner of pagans” or Vikings. An entry in the Annals of Ulster for the year 847 associates the actions of brigands with those of Norsemen:

Mael Sechnaill destroyed the Island of Loch Muinremor, overcoming there a large band of *wicked men* [McCone translates the term as *fianna*] of Luigni and Gailenga, who had been plundering the territories in the manner of the heathens.¹²³

Such reports may have inspired a tale in which twin sons are conceived by a formerly childless woman through a pact made with the devil, and as they grow up, they become *fianna* who raid, destroy and burn churches and murder clerics in the Connacht province, “until they destroyed half of the churches” in the area.¹²⁴

An interesting correspondence might be made with the animal-headed images, in McCone’s emphasis on a connection between the *fianna* and the Norse *berserkers*. The *berserkers* were also dangerous warriors who wore wolfskin coats in battle; like the *fianna*,

they were unmarried and sometimes in the employ of tribal kings, particularly when vengeance was called for.¹²⁵

The Irish church's opinion of the youthful bands, referred to collectively as brigands, is apparent in the eighth-century *Life of Brigit*, in which warrior groups composed of king's sons are referred to as "serpents and sons of blood lettings and sons of death."¹²⁶ In Muirchú's *vita*, Patrick encountered a group of bandits lead by one who, "in his godlessness...had sunk so low..." that he "daily exercised his harsh rule, wearing emblems of the most wicked cruelty and cruelly killing wayfarers as they passed by."¹²⁷ After a miraculous encounter, the bandit is converted to Christianity and baptized by the saint. But Patrick imposes on him the severest form of penance, ordering the man to leave Ireland and take none of his property with him,

...except one paltry short garment which just barely covers your body, neither eating nor drinking anything that grows in this island, with this emblem of your sin on your head, and when you have come to the sea, fetter your feet with an iron chain, throw its key into the sea, board a small boat made of a single hid, without rudder or oar, and be ready to go wherever the wind and the sea shall carry you; and on whatever shore divine Providence may land you, dwell there and practice the divine commandments.¹²⁸

The church's opinion of the brigands led writers to associate the *fíán* with the druid. Ó hÓgáin draws a direct correlation, purporting that the mythological character, Finn, becomes a druidic personage in his role as a "figure of prophecy *par excellence*." Finn's gift of prophecy, gained through contact made with a magical fish he was cooking, was mirrored in a Viking saga in which a hero gained understanding of birds' speech through contact with a dragon's heart he was cooking. Both heroes, upon burning their thumbs, plunged the singed digit into their mouths, thus initiating their supernatural abilities.¹²⁹

Gaining insight through oral contact with his own flesh is connected to a pagan ritual by Ó hÓgáin, who links the action with the prophetic *imbas forosnai* discussed in Chapter One, which enhances prophetic ability through chewing the meat of a pig, dog or cat; he states that Finn's action is described as *imbas forosnai* in some recensions of the tale.¹³⁰ Ó hÓgáin reports on texts describing other ritual acts he thinks are connected to the thumb-sucking activity, including one called *dichetaldi chennaeg*, which translates “chanting from heads.” He suggests an underlying connection between all of these rituals and the pagan Celtic cult of the head—a version of which survives in several heroes' tales, in which the heads of slain warriors are displayed and honored, sometimes speaking to prophesize future events.¹³¹ The cult of the head was so central to pagan Celticism that it may have influenced the iconography of the cross figures, whose animal and bird heads suggest cranial-centered experience of a supernatural origin, distinguished from the phenomenal or “normal” body.

Ó hÓgáin explains that the character of Finn, in these ways, assumed druidic overtones, and it was Finn-as-druid who foretold the coming of Christianity to Ireland. Christianity was, he says, “personalized [in the poem] as Saint Patrick with his crozier.”¹³² The druidic prophecy recalls a similar passage in Muirchú's story, in which Lóeguire's two druids enacted a similarly prophetic role.

Finn and his band were hunters of great prowess who sometimes engaged with magical beasts. As Ó hÓgáin explains, living outside society in the wilderness meant the historical *fianna* had contact with animals and with the “spirit world” associated with them in nature-based Celticism.¹³³ Finn's mate periodically assumed the shape of a deer, and in this liminal form she conceived their child Oisinn, whose name means “little fawn.”¹³⁴ In one tale, Finn pursues a hybrid man who runs swiftly

on deer shanks. Ó hÓgáin points out the similarity between this character's name, Derg Corra, and Cernunnos, the horned god; he points out that both names contain references to horns.¹³⁵ In saga literature, the *fianna* are referred to often as wolves, and in some passages of the sagas, they are characterized as werewolves.¹³⁶

In other Finn tales, the heroes pursue magical boar who lead them through passages into the Otherworld.¹³⁷ Scholars writing about the *fianna* suggest membership required a rite of passage, perhaps through hunting the fearsome boar. In one text, a king, presumably once a *fían*, relates to his son how he had spent his youth, marking the evolution from boar hunting to killing men, and finally engaging in battle:

I used to kill a pig; I used to follow a track when I was alone. I used to march against a band of five when I was one of five. I was ready for slaughter when I was one of ten. I was ready for raiding when I was one of twenty. I was ready for battle when I was one of a hundred. Those were my deeds.¹³⁸

Fianna groups may have had an ancient past, if McCone is correct in his interpretations of scenes pictured on the first-century B.C.E. Gundestrup Cauldron, and a long lineage connected with pagan deities and rites may explain the continuing support from secular authorities as well as church opprobrium. In one scene on the outside of the Gundestrup vessel, an initiation ceremony may be represented by a large male figure plunging smaller ones into a vat; McCone sees in the image a symbolic reference to the induction of new members into a band or tribe (fig. 32). This may be a “Gaulish equivalent of the *fían*,” he states, noting that “it can hardly be a coincidence that an unmistakable wolf appears facing this line of young warriors.” Scenes of trouser-clad and unbearded youths hold pigs on other panels, and one of these is also accompanied by what McCone sees as an group identifier in the form of a wolf.¹³⁹ McCone's explanations suggest a long iconographical history in which *fían* members are intimately associated with beasts.

Church writers associated the *fianna* not only with pagans and druids, but also satirists. As discussed in Chapter One, satirists were poets whose recitations could inflict disgrace and even death, and they were characterized as despicable figures called *cainte* because they barked their satiric curses as dogs would do (see Chapter One). A penitential written in the Old Irish period expressed a “typical enough instance,” according to McCone, of associating *fianna*, druid and satirist:

For there are certain sins of them that are not entitled to remission of their penance, however long be the period prescribed for them unless God himself curtail it through death or a missive of sickness or the amount of mortification that someone impose on himself...and as are brigandages, druidries and satirizings (*dibergga*, *druidechta*, *caintecta*) and as adulteries, profanities, perjury, heresy and transgressions [of holy orders].¹⁴⁰

McCone refers to the frequent association of *fianna*, druid and satirist as “a trio of undesirables hateful to God.” In the text, *Bretha Crólige*, a legal document with ecclesiastical underpinnings (and scattered anachronisms in its eighth-century version), the high status of the three personages is revealed and decried at once:

There are three persons in the *túath* who are maintained at the maintenance [standard] of a *bóaire* [high-ranking person]...druid, brigand and satirist...it is more fitting in God’s sight to spurn them than to support them.¹⁴¹

McCone concludes that the church was promoting its agenda through such associations of its enemies: all “unchristian reprobates” should be “totally ostracized and placed outside the legal system, or, failing that, significantly reduced in status.”¹⁴²

The *fianna* was a social group whose history may have been relevant to the cross images of Patrick defeating the pagan druids. Geographically, the *fianna* was associated through Finn with Tara. They were characterized as pagan practitioners, linked to druids through Finn as prophet and associated with supernatural animals through shapeshifting episodes and contact with magical beasts. They were also associated with the dreaded

satirists. *Fíanna* and druids were encountered by both Patrick and Columba in their seventh-century *vitae*,¹⁴³ suggesting a long history of social influence countered by the church. The enemies of God had one newcomer in the first half of the eighth century: the Vikings, who were also eventually woven into *fenian* lore.

I discuss here the *fianna* at length not to suggest that these are the very figures represented as animal- and bird-headed humans in Patrician imagery, but to point out the complex associations monastic scribes could have made: an image could refer at once to hagiography, political power, conquest of paganism and to relate history with current events. Also, layers of associations could be peeled like an onion from the veneer of a single historical figure who was perceived as enemy of the church, such as the *fián*. For the literary monk or bishop, all threads of reference might be comprehended at once; for the less educated viewer, animal- and bird-headed figures could evoke meanings drawn from a more limited repertoire of figures.

At whatever level of engagement, the viewer could relate to the promise of Christian salvation offered by Patrick's story and by his role in the fulfillment of Christ's prophecy for Ireland. Patrick was more than Christlike, compared also to Daniel facing Nebuchadnezzar. And the Irish believed that Patrick, and not Christ, would deliver the faithful Irish to heaven on the Day of Judgment.¹⁴⁴

In the final chapter of this essay, I discuss later historical developments affecting Irish monasteries, which may have influenced the placement of the image higher on the later two crosses, the Tall Cross at Monasterboice and the Kells Market Cross. Also, I outline briefly the situation in the Isle of Man from the eighth through the early tenth centuries, since two

early-twentieth-century scholars writing about carved stone and cross images in the British Isles reported they saw at Man another version of the saint confronted by druids.

Notes to Chapter V

¹ Yitzhak Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul A. D. 481-751* (Leiden, New York and Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1995). The information is discussed in his chapter, "Superstitions and Pagan Survivals," 155-206. Pirmin is quoted from *Scarapsus* 22: "In cervulos et veculas in kalendas vel aliud tempus nolite ambulare." *De singulis libris canonicis scarapsus* ("Concerning the Single Canonical Book *Scarapsus*"), in Jacques Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina* 89, 1029 ff. Halitgar of Cambrai, *Poenitentiae liber VI*: 3, in J. T. McNeill and H. M. Gamer, eds., *Medieval Handbooks of Penance, a translation of the principal libri penitentiales and selections from related documents* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), 305. All quotes appear in Hen, 167-8.

² Hicks, 233. She states the assumption of animal characteristics and powers is an integral part of human ritual behavior from the earliest times, shown even in Palaeolithic art. She also refers to literary descriptions of shape-changing in Irish and Scandinavian texts.

³ Francis Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1971), 117-20. Klingender refers to decrees of the Council of Auxerre (573-603) and bishops of the sixth and seventh centuries in Visigoth Spain, Frankish Gaul and Saxon England, all of whom decried such practices, including Martin of Braga (d. 542) and St. Aldhelm (d. 685).

⁴ Helen Roe, "An Interpretation of Certain Symbolic Sculptures of Early Christian Ireland," *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 75 (1945): 1-23; this information on 19-20. She concludes that "it seems reasonable to assume that the wearing of animal masks...was closely associated with magic and the supernatural..."

⁵ Eoin MacNeill, *Celtic Ireland* (Dublin: The Academy Press, 1921; reprinted 1981), 62-3.

⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1968).

⁷ *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Ireland*, 6 vols (1865-1901. Reprinted Buffalo, New York: W.S. Hein, 2000), II, 526, lines 15-19. See also W. Stokes, ed. and trans., *Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick, with other Documents Relating to that Saint* (London: Published by the authority of the Lords commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, 1887), cli. Stokes comments that guests seem to have been entertained by buffoons, the word for which is *druith* in Old Irish. Druid is *druí*, and Kim McCone appears uncertain which term is intended in certain passages. See his questions about the translation from the *Córus Béscnai* in his essay, "Werewolves, Cyclopes and Fíanna: Juvenile Delinquency in Early Ireland," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 12 (1986): 1-22; this on p. 5. Stokes states that the word

for buffoon is apparently *druidic*, which may mean druid, “although most scholars agree on buffoon.” Stokes, ed. and trans., *Tripartite Life*, clvii.

⁸ For more information on the Fair of Tailtiu, three authors are most informative: Conor Newman, “Reflections on the making of a ‘royal site’ in Early Ireland,” *World Archaeology* 30 (1998): 127-41; Daniel A. Binchy, “The Fair of Tailtiu and the Feast of Tara,” *Ériu* 18 (1958): 113-38; and R.A.S. Macalister, *Tara. A Pagan Sanctuary of Ancient Ireland* (New York and London: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1931), especially the chapter, “The Assemblies of Tara,” 154-200.

⁹ The poem appears in a topographical tract called *Metrical Dindshenchas*, Edward Gwynn., ed and trans. (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1925; reprinted 1991), dated to the twelfth century. The quote here is taken from a translation by R.A.S. Macalister, ed., *Lebor Gabal Erenn. The Book of Invasions. Translated from the Book of Leinster*, for The Irish Texts Society, quoted on the website, *Jones Celtic Encyclopedia*, entry for “Tailtiu,” <<http://www.maryjones.us/jce/tailtiu.html>>.

The town of Tailtiu, today called Teltown, is situated near Navan, within easy traveling distance of all the crosses bearing the *Temptation* images. It was named, according to the *Dindshenchas*, for the foster-mother of Lug, after which the well-known Lughnasa festival of August 1 was named.

Tailtiu became the principal assembly place of the Ui Neill dynasty, of which Colum Cille was a descendant. *Wikipedia* on “Tailtiu,” <<http://www.answers.com/topic/tailtiu>>.

¹⁰ Macalister, 159.

¹¹ Macalister, 162. According to the *Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick*, Patrick proceeded to Tara during the celebratory Feast of Tara, described by Stokes as the “celebration of the high-tide of the heathen.” Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, 39.

¹² *Tírechán*, 9, lines 1-2. The king intended to kill Patrick, and Patrick “used to call him an enemy of God and told him: ‘Thy seed shall serve the seed of thy brothers, and there shall be no king of thy lineage for ever....’” Patrick’s “curse” held true; another branch of the Uí Néill dynasty, to which the king belonged, ruled for centuries.

¹³ This cross was reconstructed after the medieval era, and the sides may have faced in different directions originally. The Moone images are reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 508-519. His statements on the various attributions for the scenes appear in I, 154-56.

¹⁴ The Castledermot North images are reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 101-104 and discussed in I, 39-40. He notes that Hawkes and Streit think the broken scene is the *Three Children in the Fiery Furnace*, while Françoise Henry, Robin Flower, H. Gsanger and Brandt-Forster think the Three Children may be represented in a scene appearing above the cross head. The works whose authors are mentioned are as follows: Françoise Henry, *La Sculpture Irlandaise pendant les douze premiers siècles de l’ère chrétienne* (Paris, 1933);

Robin Flower, "Irish High Crosses," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17 (1954), 17-97; H. Gsänger, *Irland, Insel des Abel. Die irischen Hochkreuze* (Freiburg i. Br., 1972); and Bettina Brandt-Förster, *Das irische Hochkreuz: Ursprung-Entwicklung-Gestalt* (Stuttgart: Urachhaus, 1978).

¹⁵ Castledermot South images are reproduced from Harbison, II, figs. 105-111. He discusses the various attributions, I, 39-41.

¹⁶ Noted by Harbison, I, 151.

¹⁷ Harbison thinks it represents *The Naming of John the Baptist*. The images are reproduced from Harbison, II, figs. 488-99, and discussed in I, 150-52.

¹⁸ The Kells Market Cross images are reproduced in Harbison, II, figs. 330-344 and discussed in I, 103-08.

¹⁹ Simon Magus literature is discussed by Roger Stalley, who claims that the episodes from this story must have been familiar to an Irish monastic audience. The fall of Simon Magus is described in the Apocryphal Acts of St. Peter, 32:3. Roger Stalley, "European Art and the Irish High Crosses," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 90C: 5, 135-57; this on 155 and n. 78.

²⁰ The Arboe version of *Daniel in the Lions' Den* is reproduced from Harbison, II, fig. 30.

²¹ Many varieties of representations of Daniel with the lions appear on the crosses: lions may be standing or on all fours, on two legs; and they usually number two or four, although the Moone cross depicts seven beasts. Compositions with two vertical lions (Harbison's description) also appear on two crosses: Killary, Oldcourt and perhaps at Armagh—Harbison lists the latter with a question mark. Compositional types with four horizontal lions may appear on three crosses: the Cross of Patrick and Columba at Kells, and perhaps (again, Harbison lists these with question marks) at Lorrha and the Roscrea pillar. Four horizontal lions, stacked two and two in horizontal registers, so that the upper two almost reach Daniel's ears, are found on the Kells Market Cross and the Ahenny South Cross. Four vertical lions (standing on hind legs) appear on the two Castledermot crosses, and apparently twice on the Clones Cross, twice on the Drumcliff Cross, and twice on the Galloon Cross. Harbison lists the various types in I, 227-9.

²² Daniel imagery and the orant pose is discussed by A. T. Lucas, "'In the Middle of Two Living Things': Daniel or Christ?" In *Figures from the Past. Studies in Figurative Art in Christian Ireland. In Honour of Helen M. Roe*, ed. Etienne Rynne (Dun Laoghaire, Ireland: Glendale Press for the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1987), 92-7. Other interesting articles about the Daniel theme include Graham D. Caie, "The Old English Daniel: A Warning Against Pride," *English Studies* 59 (1978), 1-9; and Isabel Moreira, *Dreams, Visions, and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000), especially Chapter Two, "Daniel's Heirs: Visionary Ascetics in Gaul."

²³ Reproduced in Harbison, III, fig. 971.

²⁴ The two *vitae* are found in Ludwig Bieler, ed., *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979; reprinted 2004). The history of Muirchú is discussed by Bieler, 1.

²⁵ An analysis of Tírechán's work is found in J. B. Bury, "Tírechán's Memoir of St. Patrick," *The English Historical Review*, 17: 66 (1902), 235-67. Bury points out that Tírechán's work is "not a regular biography, like Muirchú's...it may rather be described as a collection of memoranda concerning the missionary acts of the saint in Ireland," and he argues it was never completed. Bury, 238. See also Joseph F. Kelly, "The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh," *Speculum*, 56:3 (1981), 585-7, in which he discusses succinctly the differences between the two. Bieler states that "very little is known" about Tírechán. Bieler, 35.

²⁶ Bury states that a phrase found in the *Tripartite Life*, a later version of Tírechán's account, includes the phrase, *in vestris regionibus*. Cf. *Tripartite Life*, 2, 311; Bury, 238 and n. 17. Bury states Tírechán's work was composed in an effort to support the supremacy of the saint's territorial claims in an era when Columba's monastic foundation was expanding and gaining political clout. Also in the sixth century, a number of new types of foundations were established, including those established by two bishops, Finnian, who founded Clonard, and Ciaran, founder of Clonmacnois, all of which followed more rigid monastic systems and lifestyle than the relatively lax Patrician foundations. Bury, 253-4. Tírechán mentions that Clonmacnois "holds many places of Patrick by violence" (*Tripartite Life*, v. 2, 314 ff.; discussed by Bury, 258. Tírechán complains within his text that "deserters and *archicloci* and *milites Hiberniae* "hate Patrick, having taken away from him what was his, and are afraid that if Patrick's heir were to seek his *paruchia* he could claim almost the whole island." Bury 238.

²⁷ Both were committed to writing near the same time, and scholars conclude they were drawn principally from a common source or sources. Ludwig Bieler states that an earlier tradition appears to have existed, and both he and J. B. Bury discuss evidence that points to oral sources, as well as written ones. Bury, 238 (written sources), 248-51 (common sources for Muirchú and Tírechán), and 251 (oral sources). Bury states that "the great part probably came to him [Tírechán] by word of mouth. Bury, 260. Bieler, *Patrician Texts*, 16-20 for Muirchú's sources, 39-41 for Tírechán's sources.

²⁸ Bieler, *Patrician Texts*, 40-3.

²⁹ The order in which events occurred and the names of some of the principal participants differ. Bury concludes that both accounts go back to a common source, "which is probably reproduced pretty closely in Tírechán." Bury, 250. As I demonstrate, Muirchú added some flourishes, such as making the events occur at Easter. Bury discusses the differences, 248-51.

³⁰ For information on the dating, see my note 34 for this chapter, below.

³¹ Muirchú, I, 13, line 2.

³² See my note 7 for this chapter, above, for references to reading about Tara and Tailtiu. Also, Francis Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), esp. Chapter Four, "The Kingship of Tara." Chief assembly centers for the various provinces were Carman (near Kildare) and Tailtiu, where assemblies took place on Lugnasad (August 1); Uisnech (Westmeath), where a Beltane (May 1) assembly was convened; Tlachtga's held on Samain (November 1); and Tara, on Samain. Macalister, 155-6.

³³ Muirchú, I, 15, lines 1-2.

³⁴ See my note 7 for this chapter, above. Also, as Byrne states, based on the tales, "Tara was surrounded by an aura of paganism and druidry." Byrne, 64.

³⁵ In fact, this timing was erroneous, as no pagan celebratory occasion lands in March or April. Beltaine would be the closest to Easter of the four principal Irish holy days, and while it could occur at the very end of April—and no exact day of Patrick's arrival has been determined—it is celebrated around May first, and probably not corresponding to either the Irish or the Roman feast day celebrating Easter. Tara's Feast was held on Samain, or November 1, as stated in my note 28, above. D. A. Binchy states: "It would seem...that the framer of the legend has amalgamated two or more separate manifestations of fire worship and arbitrarily transferred them to Tara for the greater glory of the saint." Binchy, "The Fair of Tailtiu," 130.

³⁶ Muirchú, I, 15, line 3.

³⁷ Muirchú, I, 15, line 2. Tírechán describes them as brothers "begotten of one man." Tírechán, 8, line 3, and he says their names were Cruth and Lochlethlanu.

³⁸ Muirchú, I, 15, line 3. Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, 35. For information on the date of the *Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick*, see my note 62 for this chapter, below.

³⁹ Muirchú, I, 17, lines 5-6.

⁴⁰ Tírechán, 8, line 6.

⁴¹ Muirchú, I, 20.

⁴² Muirchú, I, 19.

⁴³ Whitley Stokes denies this passage serves as evidence of literacy on the part of Irish druids; he points out parallels linking the event to Saint Peter's confrontation with Simon Magus, in which books tossed into water did demonstrate the saint's superior powers. Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, cliii-cliv. The confrontation was between Peter and Paul and Simon Magus,

and appears in two separate Latin works, *Passio apostolorum Petri et Pauli* (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta*, I. 223-34, esp. 231-32; *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina* no. 6667); and *Passio sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli* (Lipsius and Bonnet, *Acta*, I. 118-77, esp. 165 and 167; *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina* no. 6660). The citations are discussed by Aideen O’Leary, “An Irish Apocryphal Apostle: Muirchú’s Portrayal of Saint Patrick,” *The Harvard Theological Review*, 89: 3 (1996), 287-301; this on 293-4.

⁴⁴ Muirchu, I, 22.

⁴⁵ The druid says, “This man worships every second year in turn now water now fire as his god.” Muirchú, I, 20, line 9.

⁴⁶ On the Tall Cross, west side, shaft, for example, Harbison identifies a *Traditio Clavium* scene on the basis of a book held by one figure—this is a rather typical scene in which a book is included. Harbison, II, 150. On Muiredach’s Cross at Monasterboice, figures surrounding the Christ at the Last Judgment carry books, which is a more unusual display of the motif. An “angel” holds a book, and another figure holds a book above his head. Harbison, II, 141.

⁴⁷ Muirchú, I, 22.

⁴⁸ Muirchú, II, 1.

⁴⁹ Discussed in Thomas O’Loughlin, “Living in the Ocean,” in *Introduction to the Studies of the Cult of Saint Columba*, ed. Cormac Bourke, 11-23; this on p. 18. Cf. Jerome, *In Esaiam*, XI. 40. 21-c and *In Amos* III.8.11-14. Jerome’s *In Ezechielem* was in the library of Iona, and it mentions the ocean, but only as a simile, according to O’Loughlin. O’Loughlin argues that only D. Meehan speculates that the works of Jerome in which he mentions *Oceanus Britannicus* were on Iona. It is possible, however, that the notion was understood, even without Jerome’s authority.

⁵⁰ There were two Easter lections, according to Éamonn Ó Carragáin, with one stating that the gospel had been preached to the ends of the earth. Also part of the ceremony was that four deacons carried books the length of the nave, and placed the four gospel books on four corners of the altar. Éamonn Ó Carragáin, “‘*Traditio evangeliorum*’ and ‘*sustentatio*’: the relevance of liturgical ceremonies to the Book of Kells,” in *The Book of Kells: Proceedings of a Conference at Trinity College, Dublin, 6-9 September 1992*, ed. Felicity O’Mahony (Aldershot, Hants, England and Brookfield, Vermont: Scolar Press, 1994), 398-436; this at p. 401. For information on the relative positions of Jerusalem and Rome, and the construction of maps to reflect this concept of centrality on medieval maps, see O’Loughlin, “Living in the Ocean.”

⁵¹ Aideen O’Leary (see note 39, above) argues that among other themes and parallels, Muirchú consciously casts Patrick in Peter’s role. She illustrates many parallels with events described in a collection of apocryphal acts of the apostles, known as the *Historia apostolica* or *Virtutes apostolorum*. And for the Irish, it would be Patrick, and not Christ,

who leads them on Judgment Day, as Patrick had arranged this with God. Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, 31. Patrick asks to be on God's right hand in the kingdom of heaven, and that he might be the judge of the Irish on Doomsday. His third request was to have as much gold and silver "at the nine companions could carry," to be given to the Irish for believing. Thomas O'Loughlin says after the encounter at Tara, during which Patrick was nearly poisoned, he becomes the risen Christ. Thomas O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology. Humanity, World and God in Early Irish Writings* (London and New York: Continuum, 2000), 103-05. He points out that the Easter vigil, the most important celebration of the Christian year, included the phrase, "Nebuchadnezzar the king" twelve times in the pericope, and that "Muirchú needed only that tail word" to bring the parallel with Christ and with Daniel to mind. Daniel and Christ were commonly associated, too. See A. T. Lucas, "In the Middle of Two Living Things."

⁵² The only object endowed with power, which apparently was a late addition to the story, as I discuss below, was his brooch. This late addition may have appeared between the time of the creation of the Castledermot crosses and the Kells Market cross, or the folklore may have been a regional development, as I discuss later in this chapter.

⁵³ Harbison charts the many scenes found on the crosses, listed according to subject matter and location in I, Tables 1-3. Clonmacnois, Kells and Monasterboice are all listed in the Midland group of crosses.

⁵⁴ O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 95-107.

⁵⁵ Daniel 3: 24-48.

⁵⁶ Patrick's *Confessio* is reproduced in Arthur West Haddan and William Stubbs, eds., *Councils and ecclesiastical documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), II, 296-313. Muirchú says Patrick "was granted to hear a divine message" and that he had visions. Muirchú, I, 3.

⁵⁷ Caie, 2.

⁵⁸ O'Loughlin says the term is "straight from Persia," and points out Muirchú's conscious choice on the language, based on Daniel 3:2-3. O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 96 and note 35.

⁵⁹ O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 101-02.

⁶⁰ O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 102.

⁶¹ Gail Owen-Crocker says that costumes of Roman origin instantly identified figures in tenth-century Winchester-style manuscripts as holy figures: angels, evangelists and saints. "This was not the dress worn by Anglo-Saxon men." On the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses in England, Christ, evangelists and other Christian figures dress in Late Antique style. She concludes, "This 'classical costume' remains the dress for the Deity, Christ, angels and saints

throughout Anglo-Saxon art.” Gail Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, England: The Boydell Press, 2004), 31 and 168.

⁶² Christ was shown wearing shorts in a Crucifixion scene on Muiredach’s Cross at Monasterboice (fig. 68).

⁶³ Bieler discusses the date of the *Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick*, 21. T. M. Charles Edwards states that its date is due to minor revisions, but “the *Notulae* and later versions of Patrick’s life make it virtually certain that there was an earlier version no later than ca. 800.” T. M. Charles Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 11.

⁶⁴ Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, 93. Patrick had destroyed the land’s major idol, covered with gold and silver, and twelve others were buried up to their heads in the earth, as I discussed in Chapter XX (p. XX). This idol was described as facing Tara. *Tripartite*, 91; The idol was named Crom-cruach in the *Dinnsenchas*, which is included in the *Book of Leinster*, p. 213, col. 2. Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, 91.

⁶⁵ Maire MacNeill, *The Festival of Lughnasa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

⁶⁶ One common example seen on several crosses is the combination of Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel into a single frame, as on the east face of Muiredach’s cross (Harbison, II, 140 and fig. 473). Another example from Muirdach’s cross is David departing from Saul and his encounter with Goliath (Harbison, III, fig. 738).

⁶⁷ Liturgical cycles known as “The Help of God” were first devised in the catacombs, according to Carola Hicks. Another themes is Jonah and the Whale and Samson (or David) killing the lion, which are not always found on the crosses discussed here. Tírechán’s text may offer another visual clue for interpreting *Abraham Sacrificing Isaac*, in the context of the surrounding *Temptation* and Daniel images on the crosses under discussion here. She says the themes prefigure the Crucifixion. Carola Hicks, *Animals in Early Medieval Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 174.

Tírechán reported that Endeus, son of Amolngid, sacrificed his son and a part of his inheritance “to Patrick’s God and Patrick.” Stokes, *Tripartite Life*, 309; discussed in Bury, 255. The “sacrifice” was probably not literal, as Abraham’s was (or intended to be), but part of Endeus’s tithing of “first fruits” to the church, which, in Ireland, included one’s first-born son. (See *The Irish Penitentials. Scriptorum Latini Hiberniae*, vol. 5. Ludwig Bieler, ed, with appendix by D. A. Binchy (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1963), in “A Synod of the Wise,” 167: “Tithes are not only for animal creatures, they apply to human beings (also). And so the “first fruits”, that is, the first fruits of everything, and the animal which is first born in the year, which is similar to the first fruits.”) Tírechán’s text suggests the practice was established in Patrick’s time, giving authority to a medieval regulation that one can imagine inspired protest from some aristocratic parents during years when famine or property raids would make every able son invaluable.

⁶⁸ Roger Stalley, *Irish High Crosses* (Dublin: Town and Country House, 1996), 35.

⁶⁹ Stalley, “European Art and the Irish High Crosses,” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 90C:5 (1990), 135-58; this in n. 32, 147; cf. E. Ó Carragáin, “The meeting of St. Paul and St. Anthony: visual and literary uses of a eucharistic motif,” in G. MacNiocaill and P. Wallace, eds., *Keimelia, Studies in Medieval Archaeology and History in Memory of Tom Delaney* (Galway, 1989), 26-30.

⁷⁰ According to Françoise Le Roux and Christian-J. Guyonvarc’h, in their book on Celtic fairs, the celebrations were thanks to druids who organized and presided over them, and they were originally thought to be the place of encounter between gods and man at a time and place determined by precise calendrical calculations. “This is also a moment of passage and transformation, from one time to another or one state to another...at once of death and regeneration,” and “a social and religious act,” at which all social classes participated. They also discuss sacrifices for these festivities. Françoise Le Roux and Christian-J. Guyonvarc’h, *Les fêtes celtiques* (Rennes, France: Ouest-France, 1995), 7 and 24. Stuart Piggott reports that large quantities of animal bones were recovered from the Rath of the Synods, situated on the Hill of Tara, which has been partially excavated, and these “might be taken to indicate sacrifices.” Stuart Piggott, *The Druids* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1968; reprinted 1975), 64.

⁷¹ Stalley, *Irish High Crosses*, 40.

⁷² Donncha Ó Corráin, *Ireland Before the Normans* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1972), 16. See also Roger Stalley, “European Art and the Irish High Crosses,” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 90C:5 (1990): 135-58; this on 155 and n. 76.

⁷³ The followings of rival saints, Brigit and especially Colum Cille, sometimes vied for primacy in the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries. Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, *Fionn mac Cumhaill. Images of the Gaelic Hero* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan Ltd., 1988), states that the druids perceived Patrick in this light, according to Muirchú’s account. Ó hÓgáin, 37.

⁷⁴ Colman Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland A.D. 650 to 1000* (Kildare, Ireland: Laigin Publications, 1999), 304.

⁷⁵ Byrne, 23.

⁷⁶ Byrne, 94-5.

It is interesting that King Diarmait played a part in the life of Colum Cille, perhaps the second most important saint of Ireland. The king ruled against the monk on the legal ownership of a text Colum Cille had copied, in secret, from a scroll belonging to his teacher, Finnian. King Diarmait awarded the copy to the teacher—and one version of this saint’s biography has it that Colum Cille went into exile at Iona, where he founded an important monastic center, over his part in a bloody war subsequently waged between Diarmait and Colum Cille’s relatives, the Uí Néill dynasty of Cenél Conaill. According to legend, Diarmait’s army was surrounded by a magical barrier drummed up by his druid, but it proved ineffectual against Colum Cille’s divine power. D. A. Binchy sees in this story one piece of

evidence for a possible “recrudescence” of paganism and druidry in the sixth century. See Binchy, “Fair of Tailtiu,” 136.

One fact is certain, although its relationship to the purported role of Colum Cille in the historical battle is a matter of controversy: a synod held in Tailtiu excommunicated the saint, although the ruling was later overturned. Adomnán, Colum Cille’s biographer, does not mention the incident, although he does relate that a synod held at Tailtiu excommunicated Colum Cille “improperly as afterwards became known.” Colum Cille’s departure for Iona took place two years later; Lacey suggests the Tailtiu synod may have been held on the occasion of a festival of August 562. Lacey, 19. D. A. Binchy states the “synod” may well have been a meeting of ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries from the kingdoms of the Southern Uí Néill held during the Fair of Tailtiu, held in that year. He states, “While the accounts of his [Colum Cille’s] various grievances against Diarmait can be dismissed as later fables, we have no reason to doubt that the saint had been an active partisan of his near kinsmen and their cause and that the king of Tara took his revenge by inducing some of the churchmen within the Southern Uí Néill dominions to excommunicate (or censure) the Northern cleric. What influence, if any, the affair at Tailtiu had upon Colum Cille’s decision to leave Ireland it is difficult to say...” Binchy, “The Fair of Tailtiu,” 122-3.

A clear and concise account of this episode is found in Brian Lacey, *Colum Cille and the Columban Tradition* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 18-19. Saint Finnian of Clonard was Colum Cille’s superior in the church, and it was his manuscript of the Psalms that the young Colum Cille was said to copy secretly, fearing Finnian would refuse him permission.

Finnian knew Colum Cille was making the copy, as spies as reported, but he waited until the copy was completed and then claimed it was his own property. Colum Cille referred the matter to high king Diarmait mac Cerbaill, who found in favor of Finnian, making a judgment now famous: “To every cow its calf, to every book its copy.” From there, according to legend, Colum Cille vowed to avenge the unjust decision, and the subsequent battle, in which the northern branch of the Uí Néill defeated their southern Uí Néill rivals took place; the Annals of Tigernach state only the victory was gained “through the prayer of Colum Cille.”

⁷⁷ Byrne, 96.

⁷⁸ Byrne, 64.

⁷⁹ Reproduced by Byrne, 53.

⁸⁰ Byrne, 124 and 149.

⁸¹ Byrne, 124. Françoise Henry says that Castledermot was founded in 812, according to the Annals of Inisfallen. Françoise Henry, *Irish High Crosses* (Dublin: Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland, 1964), 20.

⁸² As stated in the Introduction to this essay, little is known about the dates of the crosses under consideration. Carola Hicks states that the Castledermot crosses have been placed, “in the necessarily stylistically-based sequence,” as succeeding the Moone cross, itself regarded

as considerably earlier than the other scripture crosses, on the grounds of its naive stylizations and parallels with eighth-century monuments. She refers to Françoise Henry's chronology, summarized in *Irish High Crosses* (Dublin 1964) and detailed in three volumes of *Irish art in the Early Christian Period*. Henry has the granite crosses of Moone and Old Kilcullen stylistically related to other eighth-century works, and the Castledermot crosses are seen as a "slightly later" ninth-century version with more complex iconography. Hicks states it is just as likely that the Moone and Castledermot crosses were created about the same time. Hicks, 233-4.

⁸³ Byrne, 157-9. He reports that the mediation took place at the *congressio senatorum nepotum* Neill, held at Dún Cuair on the Leinster border. Binchy suggested it was on this occasion that Áed was "ordained," for the ceremony was presided over by the abbot of Armagh, Condmach, and according to later sources it was here that monasteries were freed from the obligation of providing troops for the high king.

⁸⁴ Byrne discusses the synod of Tara and consecration, 159. Adomnán reports that in Iona, Colum Cille had ordained Áedán as king of the Dalriada residing in Scotland in the year 574, after an angel reprimanded the saint for refusing to perform the ceremony based on his own beliefs about who should be king. Adomnán, *Life of Saint Columba*, III.5. Richard Sharpe explains that scholars think the story should be viewed in light of Adomnán's views about the nature of kingship, rather than reporting an actual event. Adomnán, *Life of Saint Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe (New York and London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1995), 355-7, n. 358.

⁸⁵ Byrne, 159.

⁸⁶ Byrne, 162.

⁸⁷ Harbison, 148. While not everyone gives credence to Arthur Kingsley Porter's recognition of pagan themes on the crosses, some of his arguments are more cogent than others. There is no reason why an image cannot be polyvalent, and I have argued earlier, following Stalley's assertions, that some of the cross images certainly have more than one interpretation, and this was consciously rendered. Certainly, seeing Christian analogies and messages in the purportedly pagan stories was one of the intentions of the monks who wrote them. As Porter points out, Finn's famous weapons were his sword and shield, both pictured in the image under scrutiny. Arthur Kingsley Porter, *The Crosses and Culture of Ireland* (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1931; republished 1971), 11-12. A final remark is that Françoise Henry sees Finn with his thumb in his mouth (explained later in this essay) on a slab at Drumhallagh. Françoise Henry, *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period (to 800 A.D.)* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1965), 155.

⁸⁸ Henry, *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period*, 44.

⁸⁹ Saint Buite, the dying abbot of Monasterboice in Co. Louth, is said to have foretold the birth of "a child illustrious before God and men". Irelandseye.com site:

<<http://www.irelandseye.com/irish/people/saints/columba.shtm>>. The vision purportedly was reported on the saint's deathbed in 521, the year of Colum Cille's birth.

⁹⁰ Byrne 124-5. Muiredach was vice-abbot of Armagh and abbot of Monasterboice up to 923; Dubtach is the name of the head of Monasterboice from 926 to 938, of the Columban order, to which the monastery of Durrow also belonged. Françoise Henry, *Irish High Crosses* (Dublin: Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland, 1964), 18.

⁹¹ R.A.S. Macalister, *Muiredach, Abbot of Monasterboice 890-923 A.D., His Life and Surroundings* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., Limited, 1914), 2. This is the Muiredach who is credited by numerous scholars for creation of the cross known as Muiredach's at Monasterboice.

⁹² The attack on Castledermot was reported in the Annals of the Four Masters, and is discussed by Porter, 111.

One of the first permanent Viking settlements, a fortified stronghold, was made eight miles from Monasterboice at Annagassan on the Louth coast in 840 C.E. It is recorded that from there the Vikings plundered Clonmacnois in 841 and Armagh in 850. Yet Monasterboice, a couple of hours' march away, was never plundered by them. They remained at Annagassan until 925 and must have had contact with the monastery. Celtic Cross Hallmarked Irish Jewelry website:

<http://www.celticcrossonline.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=CCO&Product_Code=XP51>.

⁹³ Grotesques, images combining animal and human form, were well known in art by the early Christian era. Representations of exotic pagan cultures as "monstrous men" found favor among imaginative medieval Christian audiences; the best-known were the dog-headed humans known as *cynocephali*, who could be redeemed as converts or feared as cannibals, depending on the context and audience. Dog-headed figures were pictured on the tympanum of the church of Vezelay, situated on the Crusader route, probably as an instance of "name-calling" to represent pagan Saracens whose "barbar," or barbaric tongue, purportedly sounded like barking dogs to the Christian soldiers. The notion that heathens were beastly, literally nearer the animal kingdom and unlike Christians who stood at the top of God's creation, as discussed in Chapter One of this essay, lie behind this type of imagery. For more information, see John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000). For more on the Vezelay images, see Debra Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 159. *Cynocephali* appear in different Irish contexts, including litanies in which Kathleen Hughes concludes the term referred to pilgrims in Irish monasteries whose principal saint was Christopher, known in Eastern contexts as a *cynocephalus*. Kathleen Hughes, *Church and Society in Ireland A.D. 400-1200* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987), 306-16 and 329-30.

As Steve Baker pointed out in his book, *Picturing the Beast*, there is a long history behind the use of animal imagery to make statements about people. Baker states that animals are "frequently conceived as the archetypal cultural 'other'," and they play "a potent and vital role in the symbolic construction of human identity. He continues: "The animal has

power, secrets, *difference*.” In a pagan past, they had been “subjected *and* worshipped, bred *and* sacrificed.” But when animals and humans are joined in verbal or visual configurations, the animals “invariably represent the negative term in the opposition: the Other, the Beast, the Brute.” He continues:

In language, it is generally held that animals figure in the unfavourable characterization of others principally through the crude tactic of name-calling. Another writer puts it even more forcefully: “To suggest that someone of some group has behaved *like* an animal (or wild beast) is to accuse them of plumbing the very depths of moral degradation: no description could be more damning.”

Steve Baker. *Picturing the Beast. Animals, Identity and Representation* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993; reprint 2001), xxxv-xxxvi and 12.

⁹⁴ *The Annals of Ulster* online (years A.D. 431-1201), Corpus of Electronic Texts website: <<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T100001A/index.html>>.

⁹⁵ *Annals of Inisfallen*, ed. and trans. Sea'n Mac Airt (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1951), 121 and 125.

⁹⁶ *Annals of Inisfallen*, 147.

⁹⁷ Donncha Ó Corráin, *Ireland Before the Normans* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1972), 40 and 46.

⁹⁸ Ó Corráin, 86.

⁹⁹ Ó Corráin, 85-6; Feidlimid's activities are outlined on 97-9.

¹⁰⁰ Ó Corráin, 87-8.

¹⁰¹ Ó Corráin, 90-1.

¹⁰² Ó Corráin, 92.

¹⁰³ Ó Corráin, 92.

¹⁰⁴ Noted in the *Annals of Ulster*, as quoted in the text of this paper.

¹⁰⁵ Their return is discussed by Ó Corráin, 98.

¹⁰⁶ Ó Corráin, 102-03.

¹⁰⁷ Hicks, 197-200.

¹⁰⁸ Ó Corráin, 108. Nagy relates a magical deer with a supernatural being named “Lochlannaig,” who suddenly invade Ireland after traveling across the sea. The tale is *Duanaire Finn*, ed. and trans. Eoin MacNeill, in *Duanaire Finn: The Book of the Lays of Fionn I* (London: Irish Texts Society 7, 1908), 55-7.

¹⁰⁹ Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, *Fionn mac Cumhaill. Images of the Gaelic Hero* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan Ltd., 1988), 32-3. He says a conscious and deliberate Leinsterization of the Finn Lore, in which the fianna became a military symbol of Leinster, was behind the popularization of the tales in the early Christian period.

¹¹⁰ Ó hÓgáin, 50-1.

¹¹¹ Moore, 714.

¹¹² The leading writers on the *fianna* include Kim McCone, who has written two important articles and a book on the topic. These include: “Werewolves, Cyclopes, *Díberga*, and *Fianna*: Juvenile Delinquency in Early Ireland, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 12 (Winter 1986), 1-22; “A Tale of Two Ditties: Poet and Satirist in *Cath Maige Tuired*,” in Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone, eds., *Sages, Saints and Storytellers. Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney* (Maynooth, Ireland: An Sagart, 1989), 122-43; and *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth, Ireland: An Sagart, 1990). Another is Joseph Falaky Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw. The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1985). Richard Sharpe wrote about a related phenomenon, discussed later in this essay, in “Hiberno-Latin laicus, Irish láech and the Devil’s Men,” *Ériu* 30 (1979), 75-92. Also, Kuno Meyer has written about the fianna, including his translation, *Fianaigeacht: being a collection of hitherto inedited Irish poems and tales relating to Finn and his Fiana* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis; and London: Williams & Norgate, 1910).

¹¹³ Kim McCone, “Werewolves...,” 13.

¹¹⁴ Nagy, especially.

¹¹⁵ Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, *Fionn mac Cumhaill. Images of the Gaelic Hero* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1988), 35. In one legal text, the *fían* or *fénnid* is granted the right to commit *fogla dílsa* or “permissible acts of plundering.” Daniel A. Binchy, “Distraint in Irish Law,” *Celtica* 10 (1973), 22-71.

¹¹⁶ Ó hÓgáin, 36-7.

¹¹⁷ In a later work of literature called *Agallamh na Senórach*, found in the text, *Silva Gadelica*, Patrick is told by angels that the stories deserve not only to be listened to, but also written down for posterity. “Thus encouraged, the saint virtually becomes a collector of Fenian folklore...” Kim McCone, “Werewolves...,” 1. *Silva Gadelica*, ed. and trans. Standish H. O’Grady, 2 vols (London, 1892), I, 95, lines 29-35. McCone states that in the early period, “evidence points...to a marked clerical aversion to the *fianna*...because it embodied

values that were perceived as a threat to the hierarchical, settled society of the *túath* in which the Church had a vested interest. In time this aversion seems to have diminished as the threat of the *fián* receded...” McCone, “Werewolves...,” 2.

¹¹⁸ Leading Ó hÓgáin to conclude that the two groups undoubtedly had a “good deal of contact,” 34-5.

¹¹⁹ Ó hÓgáin, 34.

¹²⁰ McCone, “Werewolves...,” 3.

¹²¹ McCone, “Werewolves...,” 3. He credits Richard Sharpe with this observation; Sharpe, 80-7.

¹²² Ó hÓgáin, 34-5. McCone does acknowledge that the term *díberg* “had a more specialized reference to a particularly nasty aspect” of *fián* activity; “Werewolves...,” 6.

¹²³ McCone, “Werewolves...,” 5. McCone also discusses a manuscript called the *Apigitir Chrábaid*, or “The Alphabet of Piety”, ed. and trans. Vernam Hull, *Celtica* 8 (1968), 44-89; this on p. 72: “Four things that *fiannas* cause to a man, namely it contracts territories, it increases hostility, it destroys life, it prolongs torments.”

¹²⁴ This is the Middle Irish *Immram Curaig Ua Corra* or “Voyage of the Ui Chorra’s Boat,” paragraphs 7-8. It is discussed by McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present*,” 219.

¹²⁵ McCone, “Werewolves...,” 20. His definition of the berserkers is taken from Lily Weiser, *Altgermanische Jünglingsweihen und Männerbünde* (Bühl, 1927), 44-5.

¹²⁶ Discussed by McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present*, 219. This is the “first Life” of Brigit, as it appears on the feast date of 1 February. He cites Société des Bollandistes, *Acta sanctorum februarii* (Antwerp: J. Meursium, 1658), 118-35.

¹²⁷ Since language is an issue in this discussion, I quote the Latin: *...in tantum uergens impietatis in profundum ita ut die quadam in montosso aspero altoque sedens loco hi nDruim moccu Echach, ubi ille tyrannidem cotidie exercebat signa sumens nequissima crudelitatis et transeuntes hospites crudeli scelere interficiens...* Bieler, *Patrician Texts*, 102-03.

¹²⁸ Bieler, *Patrician Texts*, 102-03. Nagy discusses another of Patrick’s encounters with a *fián* named “Little Wolf,” which, he points out, is also the name of one of Finn’s sons. Nagy, 44.

¹²⁹ Ó hÓgáin, 37 and 59. Interesting, too, that Françoise Henry sees Finn sucking on his thumb on a carved slab at Drumhallagh. See also Henry, *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period*, 44.

¹³⁰ He says the specific reference to *imbas forosnai* appears in a ninth-century tale, the *Scéla Moshauluim*, and is translated in T. F. O’Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology*, Dublin 1946, 49-50, 78-80, and 201-02. Ó hÓgáin, 46. Joseph Falaky Nagy also refers to Finn as a “trained *fili*” who practices this specific rite. Nagy, 31.

¹³¹ Ó hÓgáin, 64.

¹³² Interestingly, the druids, who in the poem had not seen Patrick, focus attention on his cranium in their vision, and call him “Adze-head,” a reference to his crozier. Ó hÓgáin, 37. Ó hÓgáin states that as a result of Finn’s prophetic powers, the mythical *fianna* leader became a guiding figure for poets; 50-3.

¹³³ Ó hÓgáin, 74.

¹³⁴ Ó hÓgáin, 78-9.

¹³⁵ Ó hÓgáin, 46-8.

¹³⁶ McCone states that the word *luchthonn*, associated with various warriors as a proper name or epithet, meant “wolf-skin” and referred originally to this werewolf aspect of the *fian* member. Initiations commonly involve naming processes. McCone, “Werewolves...”, 16.

In the fictional tale, *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, §20, a group of the prince’s foster brothers wreak havoc and eventually kill their brother, by then a just and much-loved king. Their raids and murderous activity is described as *oc fàelad* or “wolfing.” McCone points out the expression makes explicit the connection between canine qualities, noted also with the satirist, and “werewolfing” or shapeshifting into a wolf. He relates the reference to a mythical-historical tract, *Cóir Anmann*, §215, in which the name of a character, Laignech Fàelad, is explained etymologically:

He was a man who used to go wolfing (*fri fàelad*), i.e. into wolf-shapes (*i conrechtaib*), i.e. into shapes of wolves (*a rechtaib na mac tíre*) he used to go, and his offspring used to go after him and they used to kill the herds after the fashion of wolves (*fo bés na mac tíre*), so that it is for that he used to be called Laignech Fàelad, for he was the first of them who went into a wolf-shape (*i conrecht*). (“wild dogs” in Irish),

These passages are discussed by McCone, “Werewolves...,” 15.

¹³⁷ Not only this pig, but a number of animals hunted by the *fianna* have magical qualities that “are imparted to all who eat of them,” according to Nagy, 56. One tale with a magic pig is found in Whitley Stokes and Ernst Windisch, ed. and trans. *Acallamh na Senórach. Irische Texte* 4, I (Leipzig, 1900). Nagy states, “Finn stands guard on the boundary zone between culture and nature, which also forms the boundary between this world and the otherworld.” Nagy, 55. Interesting, too, are the connections between Patrick and swine, pointed out by Ludwig Bieler: Patrick found a lost swine with the help of an angel, he

founded a monastery on a site where he was told he would find boar feeding, and he had been a swineherd while held in captivity by an Irish druid.

¹³⁸ The passage is from a saga called *Tecosca Cormaic*, paragraph 8; discussed in McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present*, 209.

Interesting, too, that in Tírechán's account of Patrick, a man raised from the grave by the saint introduces himself as a royal swineherd slain by a *fián*, and in the *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* §20, a swineherd is attacked by a band of *díbergaig*. Perhaps the *fianna* raided pig herds to feed themselves when game was difficult to find—or monastic authors may have wanted to reinforce an intimate association between the *fián* and the (to them) detestable pig. Bieler, *Patrician Texts*, 154.

¹³⁹ McCone, "Werewolves....," 16.

He makes similar observations about other scenes on the cauldron, in which beardless and bearded men appear, sometimes dress in fur—perhaps wolfskin, as he suggests. He points to the seated "Cernunnos" figure flanked by both wolf and stag, and the pigs, "a favored prey of the *fianna*," held by warriors in other panels.

¹⁴⁰ D. A. Binchy, ed., "The Old Irish table of penitential commutations," *Ériu* 19 (1962): 58-9. The quote from McCone appears in "A Tale of Two Ditties," 128.

¹⁴¹ *Bretha Crólige* §51, using the words for the three: *druí*, *dibergach*, *cainte*. Discussed by McCone, "A Tale of Two Ditties," 128.

¹⁴² McCone, "A Tale of Two Ditties," 128. He concludes: "It thus looks as if the tendency towards total denigration of the *cainte* and his associates was relatively recent and clerically inspired in early christian Ireland."

Also, in a gloss on the quoted passage from the *Bretha Crólige*, the association of satirist and canine was underscored: "it is said of the *drisiuc* [a bardic class, as the satirist was] that "he sticks in the face/honor of everyone," and "is a briar on account of laceration and a hound on account of fierceness and wickedness."

¹⁴³ Columba counters druids in Adomnán, *Life of Saint Columba*, II,11; II,32-4; he encounters *fianna*-style attackers in II, 24.

¹⁴⁴ Muirchú II, 6, line 3. Patrick was visited by an angel when his death was approaching. He ventured toward Armagh, when he spotted a burning bush, which was the angel Victor "who often used to visit Patrick," and Victor sent yet another angel to try to stop Patrick from traveling to Armagh. In return for Patrick turning around and not proceeding to Armagh (the reason for the prohibition is not given), the angel grants him four requests. The first was that his pre-eminence shall be in Armagh. The second, that whoever recited a hymn composed by Patrick on the day of his or her death will be judged by Patrick regarding the penance for his or her sins. The third was that the descendants of a certain person named Díchu, shall not perish. And the fourth was "that all the Irish on the day of judgment shall be judged by you, so that you may judge those whose apostle you have been."

CONCLUSION

King Loéguire and his retinue did not continue forever as Patrick's enemy in either Muirchú's or Tírechán's version of his *vita*. In Muirchú's manuscript, the king converts to Christianity after the contest with the druids, although his earlier offensive behavior was rewarded with a curse on his sons: Patrick declared none of his line would ever again be king.¹ In Tírechán's version, Loéguire explains to Patrick that he cannot convert—not because he is unwilling, but because he had promised his father that he would not, and would instead be buried pagan-style at Tara, in a standing position, facing his family's enemy.² The soothing of hostilities comes later in Tírechán's *vita*, when Loéguire's children convert; the prince gives Patrick land, and his two daughters die immediately after baptism, presumably as virgins, when Patrick tells them death is the only way to see the Lord's face.³ In short, while Patrick's defeat of Loéguire's two leading druids was fatal in Muirchú's version, Patrick's defeat of the king was not, but the events presumably brought about the conversion of a prominent royal line, beginning with the offspring of the high king of Tara.

Monastic politics

Abbatial offices tended to be hereditary in Irish monastic organizations. Ecclesiastics were not necessarily celibate, and numerous sons inherited their fathers' offices. Even when the title was not granted to someone in a family line, which was rare in the case of the Columban foundation, the office was called *comarba* or "heir," followed by the name

of the *familia*'s founding saint. In the case of celibate abbots, as numerous *comarba Columba* were, the office was awarded to more distant relatives, such as cousins or nephews. The result could be, as it was for the Columban *familia*, that the foundation could claim blood relations within the ruling dynasty controlling the kingship of Tara—which, through the seventh and early eighth centuries was most often the Cenél Conaill, a branch of the Uí Néill, or Columba's, clan. The Columban foundation's continuing growth and prosperity through these centuries were ensured through royal support, even though the abbatial offices were sited in distant Iona, Scotland.⁴

During his lifetime, Columba purportedly influenced other monastic foundations and their inhabitants. Clonmacnoise, founded in the sixth century by Saint Cíaran, was not a Columban foundation, but the saint visited there between 585 and 599, and he was warmly and respectfully received, according to his biographer, Adomnán:

Hearing of his approach, the monks, who were in the fields around the monastery, came from all sides, assembling with those who were inside, and all eagerly followed their abbot Ailither out past the boundary bank of the monastery and went with one mind to meet St Columba, as if he were an angelic messenger of the Lord. On seeing him, they bowed their heads and each kissed him reverently, and to the accompaniment of hymns and praises they brought him with honor to the church.⁵

The warm reception given Columba by the Clonmacnoise residents during his lifetime did not extend later generations of Columban monks, however: Durrow and Clonmacnoise battled for the position of leading monastery in the midland region, engaging in battle in 764, with two hundred casualties on the (Columban) Durrow side.⁶

When Áed Oirdnide of the Cenél nEogain dynasty gained the high kingship of Tara in 797, Columban fortune began to shift. Not only was the high king not a member of Columba's kin, but also, Áed took the unprecedented action of dividing the southern Leinster

territory, which had always supported the foundation, into two rival factions. Worse for the *familia* of Columba, Áed backed Armagh, Patrick's foundation and the Columban's strongest rival for preeminence among monastic foundations.⁷ The relationship between Áed and the Armagh foundation was cemented at the synod of 804, which may have been the occasion of Áed's ordination.⁸ As Columban historian Máire Herbert states, with the Cenél nEogain-Armagh alliance, both secular and ecclesiastic powers shifted into new hands.⁹

In 795, the Vikings attacked the Columban monastery at Iona and its sister community at Rechra. In 802, Iona was burned by the Vikings, and another attack in 806 left sixty-eight community members slain. The Annals of Ulster for the year 807 announce: *Constructio noue ciuitatis Columbae Cille hi Ceninnus*: "The building of the new monastery of Colum Cille in Cenannas [Kells]." In 814, the same document implies the work was completed: Iona's abbot, Cellach, retired on completion of the Kells church.¹⁰ As Herbert points out, although most scholars have long considered Kells to have been built as a refuge for those fleeing Iona, in fact, the martyrdom at Iona of a monk in the year 825, executed for refusing to reveal the hiding place of the saint's shrine, makes it clear that not everyone left Iona in the earlier decades.¹¹ Iona's continued possession of the saint's relics are evidence that the site remained the principal site of Columban administration. Herbert suggests that Kells, positioned in Southern Uí Néill lands, an unlikely site for the church of Columba of the (now-rival) Northern Uí Néill clan, was an important border area shared by several minor kingdoms. Geographically, the Kells area may have proven strategic in the territorial wars raging during the late eighth and early ninth centuries, and land grants to the church in disputed or newly acquired territories was common.¹² With the Assembly of 804 taking place in the same year that Kells was given to the Columban community "without battle," the

assembly would likely have discussed the land grant. This suggests to Herbert, as well as Françoise Henry, that Armagh may have had a say in the decision to grant the land to Columban refugees from Iona.¹³ The abbot of Armagh presided over the meeting and undoubtedly blessed the transaction, although the important decision would have been made by the secular ruler: Áed Oirdnide, of Columba's rival clan, must have been behind the gift.¹⁴

It is conceivable that the appearance on the Kells Market Cross of *Patrick Confronting the King's Druids*—which, as I explain in Chapter Five, amounted to a political statement about the relationship of the Irish church to a more fully Christian state—was given new prominence at this time: it appears on the arm of the cross, rather than lower, on the cross shaft. Áed Oirdnide was the preeminent king of Ireland's largest territory, Tara, and he had been ordained by church officials. He might have seen himself as fulfilling Patrick's mission to Ireland, wedding together secular and ecclesiastic powers—just as the high king of Tara traditionally was conceived as marrying a divine goddess, which was Erin or Ireland, and a wedding ceremony was the focus of traditional coronation ceremonies. The Christian orientation of this secular-ecclesiastic “marriage” was a process initiated by Patrick, whose faith claimed the progeny of Loegúire.¹⁵ Visual endorsement of Áed's rule could be provided by an image of Patrick meeting the pagan king's high priests and advisors, and by doing so, it suggests a link between secular power and ecclesiastic aims. In reality, however, dynasties such as Áed's helped determine the fate of ecclesiastic institutions during this era, rather than the other way around.

Despite Áed's likely role in the land grant, the newly ordained king felt no particular fondness for the Columban foundation, and evidence supports Herbert's suggestion

that his action was politically rather than altruistically motivated. In fact, he raided other Columban monasteries. In 817, he was behind the murder of the *princeps* of Raphoe, probably in retaliation for the death of his brother two years earlier, a death assigned to the clan that controlled Raphoe. It was this murder, initiated by Áed, which compelled the Columban community to proceed to Tara and curse the king.¹⁶

It was in the later ninth century that the next important shift took place within the Columban foundation. For the first time, the *comarba* or “heir” of Columba was not chosen from Iona, and he was not a member of the saint’s family; rather, the abbot of Armagh was assigned the abbacy of the Columban foundation in 891, so that the two leading monastic foundations of Ireland shared a single administration. This person, Máel Brigte, held the position until his death in 927, and, for a while, the two monasteries returned to be governed by two distinct administrations. But in 928, again the head of the Patrician organization at Armagh was put in charge of the Columban monasteries.¹⁷

At some point after the Kells monastery and church were founded, a high cross was erected with a shared dedication to both Patrick and Columba. It has been suggested that this inscription to the founding saints of rival institutions was a Columban tribute paid to Armagh in appreciation for the gift of the Kells site.¹⁸ On the other hand, the cross could have been erected later, when Kells and Armagh shared a single abbot. It is also possible that during this era, the Columban-oriented Monasterboice monastery, now sharing its abbot with Armagh, when planning its new high cross decided to raise the image of *Patrick Confronting the Druids* to the cross head, granting increased status to the symbol of Patrick’s triumph over paganism. The Kells version of the same image on its cross arm may have already existed, or the two crosses might have been conceived at the same time.

As I have demonstrated, Irish monastic foundations were intimately linked to dynasties during this period. One result of these political alliances was that monasteries were frequently and violently attacked. Historian A. T. Lucas published an essay, “The Plundering and Burning of Churches in Ireland,” in which he points out that the annals, which did not report all incidents, list 309 occasions on which ecclesiastical sites were plundered between the years 600 and 1163. Irish attackers were responsible for 139 raids, the Norse Vikings for 140 incidents, and Irish and Norse working together resulted in another nineteen attacks.¹⁹ One of the more controversial characters of this era was Feidlimid mac Crimthainn, king of Cashel in 819 or 820 and abbot of two monasteries. In 822, Feidlimid burned the monastery of Gallen in Co. Offaly; in 829 he burned two others in Meath, Fore and Fennor, and he ravaged the nearby countryside. In 832, he raided Clonmacnoise and burned their sanctuary, returning in 833 to slay many of the community; in 835 he raided Kildare and kidnapped the abbot of Armagh. In 836 he seized the abbacy of Cork, and in 838 he assumed Clonfert’s abbacy, both by force; and in 844, he again plundered Clonmacnoise. Despite this behavior, when he died in 846, the Annals of Ulster, written by monks, describe him as “the best of the *Scoti*, a scribe and anchorite.”²⁰ A.T. Lucas questions,

Is there any reason for not believing that Feidlimid, his friends and enemies, took it for granted that it was the most natural thing in the world for a king, if it suited him, to raid any monastery outside his territory, just as he and they would, undoubtedly, have thought it the most natural thing in the world for him to go raiding for cows anywhere outside that same territory? Is there any reason for believing that either kings or people before his time thought any differently?²¹

Francis Byrne explains Feidlimid’s actions as appropriate *in lieu* of his campaign to counter the Uí Néill expansion. Byrne explains that the cleric king appreciated the extent to

which the Tara high-kingship was dependent upon the support of Armagh, and he must have seen no reason to assume Armagh was necessarily attached to the Uí Néill, in particular, but simply positioning itself in relation to the nation's most powerful clan. In the year 835, Feidlimid captured and imprisoned the abbot of Armagh, but this did not get in the way of his good relations with the foundation, as his obituary indicates. Abbot Forindán, whom he imprisoned, earlier had ousted the rightful heir to the abbatial seat, leading to a seventeen-year dispute over Armagh's abbacy. The two contenders apparently shared the office for a while, according to Byrne, who explains that both went on individual circuits with Patrick's relics, sometimes concurrently. The two "evidently had worked out a theory of coexistence," Byrne explains. A fitting end to their rivalry is that they died in the same year, in 852, on which occasion the annals claimed them as "*duo heredes Patricii*." Feidlimid's actions merely demonstrated his support for one of the candidates, according to Byrne, and it was not construed as an attack on Patrick's foundation *per se*. Byrne concludes, "It was likely that Feidlimid's antagonism was founded on puritanical zeal," a motive comprehensible to his contemporaries. He was an important and powerful supporter of the Céli Dé movement, and the more extreme among the Céli Dé reform group were bitterly hostile to the "folk of the old churches," or as they called them, *lucht na sen-chell*, whom they denounced as corrupt and decadent. Clonmacnoise, Durrow and Kildare, Byrne suggests, were prime examples of the Irish church's "abuses" in the eyes of Céli Dé adherents.²²

Lucas points out that since the abbacy was frequently restricted to the founder's kin and tended to be monopolized by a *tuath's* leading family, ecclesiastical sites were natural targets for attack, as means by which rivals could rob the leading dynasts of wealth and power.²³ This background explains, at the same time, the battles fought among monks: in

759, a battle took place between Clonmacnoise and Birr; in 763, Clonmacnoise fought with Durrow and 200 were killed; in 806, Cork battled Clonfert; in 816, it was Taghmon, a Céli Dé establishment, against Ferns; in 824, Tallaght, another Céli Dé foundation, was plundered by the community of Kildare (the site of Brigit's *familia*).²⁴ Today's ideological standards assumed by some religious leaders, such as the Pope and the Dalai Lama, would have seemed ludicrous to the clerics of early medieval Ireland; clearly, the Irish monks and administrators observed no moral or ethical prohibitions against killing one another.

What might be difficult for someone with modern Western sensibilities to understand is that early medieval Irish monasteries were not necessarily places of spiritual retreat, despite the claims of writers such as Robin Flower, whom I quote in the Introduction to this essay as passionately enamored of the image of the Irish monk as a solitary ascetic.²⁵ Two strands of Irish monastic history appear to have descended through the ages, as yet unwoven together by historians: one is that the Irish monks were ascetic pilgrims of God, devoted to spiritual disciplines that distinguished them among fellow ecclesiastics; the other is, as I have presented here, that the monasteries were principally economic and political assets, at least in the eighth and ninth centuries, and that their residents sometimes engaged in battle and, less occasionally, in acts of murder. Richard Sharpe succinctly describes the monastery town and federations in these centuries, pointing out that their administration was not necessarily “structured by any policy or according to any model,” and “one may well question whether the [early medieval] Irish church has at any stage the appearance of being organized...or whether it was not rather the result of disorganized growth.”²⁶ He points out that the early Irish church had been characterized by what he calls two causal factors, “[namely] the influence of the peculiar un-Roman character of native Irish society, and an

especially enthusiastic response to ascetic monastic traditions....” He contends that the unplanned and haphazard patterns of growth of the church and its monastic organization led to conditions in which “churches clash with one another in disputes both major and minor without there being any agreed authority to whom recourse might be had.”²⁷

Also, monasteries were not necessarily populated by men and women in orders, but were comprised of lay populations; monks, too, were generally laymen, and “unable to provide the essential sacraments of baptism and communion.” Often, the abbot was a layman, just as elsewhere in Europe, where ecclesiastical rulership was not dependent upon clerical orders. Still, Sharpe refers to “the abnormality of the situation” of Irish administrative power being in the hands of presbyter-abbots rather than bishops. Bishops, he states, were those in priests’ orders who attended to pastoral care rather than administrative duties.²⁸ Sharpe states that modern concepts about medieval monasteries is in error, as its monks were not necessarily bound by religious vows or living in obedience to any particular monastic rule. A monastery “might grow into a monastic town in which monks form only a small part of the community,” he asserts.²⁹

These general descriptions of Irish monastic life and administration help to explain some of the reasons behind the frequent violence, especially when one considers that the monastery represented property, stock, and other valuables, and it was endowed with financial returns provided through alms, fees and tithes; as Sharpe states, “religious life, apparently, was not a principal focus within some organizations.”³⁰ Administrative posts were hereditary and controlled by those holding secular power, and the family who held an office of a large foundation could command a fortune. Sharpe states that the secularization of ecclesiastical office was a phenomenon peculiar to the eighth and ninth centuries.³¹ The

“abuses” of the church, brought about by competition for wealth and dominion, are thought by some to have inspired the Céli Dé reform movement in the eighth century, representing monks who sought a greater devotional practice and a more contemplative existence. Sharpe points out that, despite the “enthusiasm” attributed to some zealots in the group, the “monastic revival” did not attempt to change church organization, but only to spotlight its general neglect of devotional life.³² One could conclude from this information that early support for a Christian king was the single most political act of the Céli Dé, and one which never got off the ground. Sharpe concludes his essay with the statement that the medieval ecclesiastical state in Ireland should not be seen as an “abuse of the church’s role,” but rather represented a “characteristically Irish balance of the demands of family, dynasty, property interest and so on, with the duties of maintaining the services of religion.”³³

Saint Elsewhere

A version of the image of *Saint Patrick Confronting the Druids* may appear on a cross at Ullard, if Peter Harbison is correct. Ullard, like Monasterboice, was founded in the sixth century. Ullard lies within the Leinster province, about 25 miles south of Castledermot (see map, fig. 13), and falling well within the geographical radius defined in the previous chapter for the occurrence of the image.³⁴ If the image does appear here, which, as I have said repeatedly I cannot verify due to the advanced erosion of this cross, I cannot place it within the history presented here because when the Ullard cross was erected and what its circumstances or orientation were are all unknown.

But what about the purported appearance of a related image on a monument at Kettins, on the Isle of Man? If the drawing published by Allen and Anderson in the early twentieth century reveals an instance of the image appearing there, its occurrence in Man

would not run counter to my assertion of it as an image of Patrick confronting druidic paganism.³⁵ The Isle of Man had long been tied to Ireland, both politically and ecclesiastically, and in the ninth century, the island became a Viking settlement. I suggest the cross preceded the settlement and conversion of the Vikings there, which took place in the tenth century, and was more contemporary with the Irish crosses.³⁶

The Isle of Man allied itself with Patrick's mission: the *fíán* outlaw, whom Patrick encountered and banished by boat for his wickedness, as related in Chapter Five, was thought to have sailed to Man, according to the *Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick*, and established for himself a bishopric there. Numerous ecclesiastic foundations in Man were named after Patrick or associated with him, including Maughold, named after one of Patrick's first disciples.³⁷ The Manx evidently paid tribute to the king of Tara; their "fruit" is listed among his annual payments in a later account of Irish history.³⁸ An island just off the coast of Man was among the first ecclesiastic establishments plundered by the Vikings in 798, which would accord with this foreign group as one of those possibly targeted by the image.³⁹ And finally, a group of Céli Dé seems to have resided on the island.⁴⁰

The island also shared Ireland's pagan mythology, and was named after an Irish Celtic sea god, Manaán. Early Manx inhabitants were reported in the fifth century as speakers of the same dialect spoken by the Irish, unlike the language spoken in England and Scotland.⁴¹ In short, the issues of concern to the Irish nation, from its pagan prehistory through Viking incursions and settlement, had repercussions among the residents of Man, to which place Irish monks traveled near the beginning of Irish Christian history.⁴²

The full answer to why *Patrick Confronting the Druids* may appear on a Manx cross would seem best answered with the fullest interpretation of the theme, as is true of its

appearance on Irish crosses: it not only represented Patrick's victory over the high king of Tara, but also his defeat of paganism and the beginning of his evangelical mission.

An iconographic innovation

Against the historical background of Ireland, I reconsider the motives behind the creation of an entirely new and unprecedented image: two animal- or bird-headed human figures confronting an ecclesiastic in a long gown. The image was placed alongside narrative scenes drawn from the Old and New Testaments and an important Eucharistic image in which Saints Paul and Anthony break bread together in the desert. Also, supported by the fact that Saint Athanasius's recounting of Anthony's so-called temptation includes no episode related to the visual elements found in the cross image, I question the very premise assumed to lie behind its creation. That is, I doubt Irish ecclesiastics felt so threatened by demons that they were compelled to create an image to reflect upon, or warn against, the experience, and place this image of monastery-specific experience in full public view. My research into the exigencies of Irish monastic life in the eighth, ninth and early tenth centuries, the era to which the crosses are assigned, and the evidence that monks during this era were not necessarily devoted to an ascetic lifestyle, would seem to argue against such a motive for the creation of an iconographically unprecedented image. The annal accounts, which are by no means complete historical documents, demonstrate threats that, one could argue, were far more pressing and life-threatening than those presented by invisible phantoms—salvation of souls notwithstanding. It seems likely that, given the machinery driving the violence and political conditions of monastic life, the patrons for the image—the administrative personnel linked to dynasties and sometimes secular rulers themselves—would create a new image only if it were deemed relevant to their broader concerns and

equally hallowed to adjacent scenes selected from the Bible and *apocrypha*. The only reasonable conclusion is that the Irish Church, and initially perhaps the Céli Dé reformists in particular, sought to create an image representing Christian power and authority in Ireland in the person of Ireland's first sainted evangelist who met and defeated the forces of paganism. Later, as the Patrician *familia* ascended to a position of prominence over the foundations of Saints Columba and Brigit, the symbol would have served as a "readymade," with Patrick symbolizing the efforts of the Church of Ireland and ascending to the cross head just as Armagh climbed to a position of dominance within secular and ecclesiastic politics.

The power struggles, the violence wrought on ecclesiastic sites and personnel during these two centuries, could be deemed an urgent situation, calling for a visual signpost: an image that possessed historical, political and ideological significance, and at the same time, served as admonition for enemies of a given foundation, so ruthless and unprincipled in the eyes of the church that they were characterized as men without God, or pagans. For this image, the Irish turned to a prototype in Merovingian art, according to Edoúard Salin, at a time when the Merovingian royalty was turning to Christian authority, symbolically embodied in the ordination ceremony. It is no coincidence that, within the context of Irish church history, the Merovingians used the same composition to illustrate the episode of a holy man's confrontation with lions drawn from the Book of Daniel.⁴³ As demonstrated, Daniel and Patrick had been associated in Patrician literature, and both were linked with Christ.⁴⁴

In this reliance upon an existing model, the Irish were consistent in visual art and literature. Joseph Kelly has written that Irish scholarship, like that of most Christian writers after Origen, focused primarily on spiritual exegesis, "especially allegory and typology."⁴⁵

But as Kelly and others emphasize, another characteristic unique to the Irish was their vivid imagination. “The Irish supplied names for the nameless in the Bible,” Kelly writes, including naming the executioner of John the Baptist: this criminal was identified in a Middle-Irish poem as an Irishman, Mog Ruíth, an Irish druid and supposed student of Simon Magus.⁴⁶

The apparent tolerance of paganism on the part of the Irish also found authority in apocrypha, or perhaps the Irish attitude toward pagans was the reason they held onto the apocryphal belief that Hell was emptied by the Harrowing, so that pagans who had not heard the Gospel could be saved. The view was unorthodox, according to David Dumville, and subject to official disfavor, and yet it appears in Irish contexts. Saint Boniface, an eighth-century Anglo-Saxon missionary in Germany, reported to a Roman synod that he was having trouble with an Irish cleric named Clemens, who had announced his long-held belief:

He struggled against the faith of the Holy Fathers, saying that Christ, the Son of God, descending into Hell, had set free from there all those who were detained in the prison of Hell, both believers and unbelievers, God’s witnesses at the same time as worshippers of idols.⁴⁷

This belief accords with Irish law and custom, recorded in the *Senchus Mor*, an Irish law tract that scholars believe was written within ten years of Patrick’s arrival in Ireland, sometime in the 430s. According to this text, Patrick learned much from the poet and druid, Dubhthach mac Ua Lugair, who purportedly “first gave honorable respect to Patrick” by rising when the young ecclesiastic walked into Loéguire’s court at Tara. Whether true or not, an account of their subsequent association was summarized in the law tract. The *Senchus Mor* states:

There are many things that come into the law of nature which do not come into the written law. Dubhthach showed these to Patrick; what did not disagree with the word of God in the written law, and with the consciences of

the [Christian] believers, was retained in the Brehon [Law] Code by the church and the poets. All the law of nature was just, except the [pagan] faith and its obligations, and [its part in disrupting] the harmony of the church and the people...⁴⁸

One aspect of Irish holiness, recorded in hagiography, was power over animals, which Diarmuid Ó Laoghaire attributes to “harmony and power, achieved only by a loving, interior and exterior asceticism,” but which I have demonstrated was more likely set forward to show the saints as equals to pagan practitioners of magic, including shapeshifters.⁴⁹ These miraculous tales may be compared with those surrounding Patrick, who competed with the druids on their own terms, controlling the weather and natural events such as earthquakes, rather than relying on Christian methods, such as making the sign of the cross or displaying the Bible as a spiritual protector.

What aspects of paganism may have existed, particularly in the outreaches of Ireland, is an issue of great debate. Kim McCone holds that the *fianna* represented the “closest thing to an organized paganism,” and Sharpe, too, maintains that paganism survived into the eighth century; while Colman Etchingham counters that nothing resembling “old forms” of paganism continued, and that paganism was, by the eighth century, a “comparatively peripheral survival.”⁵⁰ Of course, Etchingham’s argument infers his opinion that paganism, which he describes as “actual pre-Christian beliefs and ritual,” was a constant and steady form of ritual, measurable against later forms of paganism or hybrids of Christian and non-Christian beliefs and ritual.⁵¹ There is no evidence that paganism was at all a constant or consistent system, and more probably it evolved and shifted as time went on—especially given that its rites were not committed to writing among the pagan Celts.

That the Irish from all walks of life were familiar with Patrick’s story may be true, if one is to believe D. L. T. Bethell’s unsupported claim that in the ninth century people sat up

all night on Saint Patrick's Eve to hear the stories recited from the *Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick* in the vernacular. If the report has any merit at all, it suggests that not just the literate and those who attended Christian services knew the tale of Patrick confronting the druids, but the tales of "wonder and miracle" would have been known to everyone.⁵²

While the views of Arthur Kingsley Porter on pagan themes for cross images have been roundly discredited, he may have been partly correct. If the sagas, authored by monks, reflected contemporary situations by targeting social elements not sympathetic to the Christian program, then I see no reason to doubt that an image could encourage a biblical interpretation from one audience and simultaneously suggest well-known native lore as an appeal to another group. The animal- and bird-headed beasts may have been polyvalent, referring to contemporary warriors or soldiers driven by demonic forces, as the *fianna* had been characterized.⁵³ In this sense, the notion of demon iconography could be argued as inspiration for the beastly figures, but only obliquely; that is, assuming they represent pagans—according to whatever ideological category the church used in defining groups they called pagan—the figures were intrinsically demonic in being inspired by Satan to act against the church, but they were not demons *per se*.

The four monasteries that erected five crosses with this image were important centers of learning and pilgrimage—Kells, Monasterboice and Castledermot, certainly, although little is known about Moone Abbey—and all were located on major roads.⁵⁴ The composition and iconographic elements selected for the creation of the new image undoubtedly referred to different aspects of sacred history and secular society. The appearance of the specific animal- and bird-headed figures may have been drawn from costumed festivities, so that explanation for them was unnecessary—hence, the absence of

texts referring to them. Also, a clear and specific interpretation might have inhibited a broader and a more layered range of meanings with enhanced benefit for advocating policies of the monasteries and church.

Expanding the repertoire of holy images was a significant and ambitious undertaking that might have been considered challenging to the orthodoxy of cross programs. When considering what type of image might prompt such action, one illustrating the life of Saint Anthony would seem a reasonable choice, given his significance for Irish monks. This type of thinking was undoubtedly behind Porter's tentative conclusion, despite his recognition that the iconography did not match any known version of Anthony's story. Another acceptable character for inclusion among the illustrious biblical figures would have been Ireland's first saint. It was Patrick who could be credited with fulfilling Christ's prophecy that salvation would reach the farthest corners of the earth, and Patrick would lead the Irish to Paradise on Judgment Day.⁵⁵ Every Irish person would have known the major episodes purportedly from Patrick's life, especially if Patrick's *Tripartite Life* was read on his hallowed eve.

Notes to Conclusion

¹ Muirchú, 1, 21: Loéguire summoned his elders and council and said to them: "It is better for me to believe than to die," and he became converted on their approval. Patrick says to him that, because of his earlier resistance and offending behavior, his sons would be cursed: "none of your offspring shall ever be king" (line 2).

² Tírechán, 12: Loéguire told Patrick that he could not accept the faith because his father, Níall, "bade me to be buried on the ridges of Tara, I son of Níall and the sons of Dúnlán in Maistiú in Mag Líphi, face to face (with each other) in the manner of men at war until the day of erdathe" (the druids' word for the day of the judgment), "because of such fierceness of our (mutual) hatred." For more on the druids' concept of the day of judgment, see John

Carey, "Saint Patrick, the Druids, and the End of the World," *History of Religions* 36: 1 (1996), 42-53.

³ Tírechán, *Additamenta*, 3. Fedelmid, son of Loéguire, gave a church to Patrick and Fedelmid's son, Loéguire's grandson, converted. Tírechán, *Additamenta*, 1. The two daughters of Loéguire are named Ethne and Fedelm; Patrick says, "Now I wish to join you to the heavenly king since you are daughters of an earthly king, if you are willing to believe." Then the king's druid, Caplit who, in Tírechán's version was one of the two who had been in attendance to the king and who had brought darkness on the land in response to Patrick (Tírechán, 19), had also fostered one of the daughters—was converted and had "the hair of his head...shorn off." His brother, Máel, swore to bring Caplit back to heathendom. Tírechán, 26.

⁴ Columban establishments included the prestigious institutions of Moone, Durrow, Derry, Dunkeld, Raphoe, Drumhome, Iona, Kells and Monasterboice, plus others less well known. Maire Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry: The History and Hagiography of the Monastic familia of Columba* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 66 and 78-9. For a list of institutions, see Brian Lacey, *Colum Cille and the Columban Tradition* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 63.

⁵ Adomnán of Iona, *Life of Saint Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1995), I, 3.

⁶ The Annals of Ulster report: "The battle of Argaman between the community of Cluain Moccu Nóis and the community of Dermag, in which fell Diarmait Dub son of Domnall, and Diglach son of Dub Lis, and two hundred men of the community of Dermag. Bresal, son of Murchad, emerged victor, with the community of Cluain." "The Annals of Ulster," *The Corpus of Electronic Texts* website: <<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T100001A/index.html>>. Also discussed by A. T. Lucas, "The Plundering and Burning of Churches in Ireland, 7th to 16th Century," in *North Munster Studies. Essays in Commemoration of Monsignor Michael Moloney*, ed. Etienne Rynne (Limerick: The Thomond Archaeological Society, 1967), 172-229.

⁷ Herbert, 67.

⁸ Daniel Binchy, "The Fair of Tailtiu and the Feast of Tara," *Ériu* 18 (1958), 113-38; this on p. 119. An earlier date of 797 is also given, and the discrepancy is presumably because scholars assume a lapse between the decision to hold a Christian ordination and the actual assembly for the occasion. Or perhaps Binchy's suggestion that the ordination would be held, most likely, during a synod is incorrect, and the earlier date should hold. For the earlier date, see Francis J. Byrne, *Irish Kings and High Kings* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1973; reprint 2001), 159.

⁹ Herbert, 67.

¹⁰ The Viking attacks are discussed by Brian Lacey, *Colum Cille and the Columban Tradition* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 63. “The Annals of Ulster,” *The Corpus of Electronic Texts* website: <<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T100001A/index.html>>. Discussed by Herbert, 68-9.

¹¹ “Annals of Ulster,” 825: *The Corpus of Electronic Texts* website: <<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T100001A/index.html>>. See also, Herbert, 70.

¹² Herbert, 80-1.

¹³ Herbert, 68-70. Françoise Henry, *Irish Art During the Viking Invasions*, 18-20.

¹⁴ Herbert, 70.

¹⁵ The office of king in pre-Christian Ireland was sacred, and the coronation ceremony was the sacred marriage of a tribal king to the territorial goddess of a province. It was at the Feast of Tara that the high-king wedded the goddess of Tara, a ceremony that Donncha Ó Corráin demonstrated survived into early Christian times. He reports that as late as 1310, the inauguration of Felim Ó Connor, the king of Connacht, on the hill at Carn Fraoich is described in the annals as his marriage to the province of Connacht, quoting the annals, “This was the most splendid king-marriage ever celebrated in Connacht down to that day.” Donncha Ó Corráin, *Ireland Before the Normans* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1972), 32-3.

¹⁶ Herbert, 71.

¹⁷ Herbert, 74-8.

¹⁸ Helen Roe suggests that this was the earliest of the Kells crosses. Helen Roe, *The High Crosses of Kells* (Meath Archaeological and Historical Society, 1988), 8. Françoise Henry, *Irish Art During the Viking Invasions*, 20, suggests the inscription commemorated the gift.

¹⁹ Lucas, 174.

²⁰ The Annals of Ulster were written on the island of Senait MacManus or Belle Isle in Upper Lough Erne. “Ecclesiastic Annals,” *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia Online*: <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01531b.htm>>.

²¹ Lucas, 176.

²² Francis Byrne, *Irish Kings and High Kings* (London, Batsford, 1973), 211-29.

²³ Lucas, 177.

²⁴ Lucas, 178.

²⁵ Robin Flower, “Irish High Crosses,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17 (1954), 87-97.

²⁶ Richard Sharpe, “Some Problems Concerning the Organization of the Church in Early Medieval Ireland,” *Peritia* 3 (1984), 230-70; this on pp. 240-1.

²⁷ And he argues against a traditional view that Irish monastic organization reflected the “tribal, rural, hierarchical and familiar” character of Irish society. The *tuaths* had local and provincial kings, and a high king exerted some limited jurisdiction over them, while the monastic *paruchia*, in the sense of a geographic unit, was unknown in Irish Christianity. Still, one might argue that the familial ties with a monastic federation substituted for geographically-determined administration, despite the fact that Columban monasticism, for example, extended from Scotland to both Northern and Southern Ireland. Sharpe, 240-3.

²⁸ “There were bishops without monastic vows...[as also true of other clerics], but these did not constitute the hierarchy of the country, a body superior to the monks.” Sharpe, 232; see also 251 and 259. Etchingam discusses European rulership. See Colman Etchingam, *Church Organisation in Ireland A.D. 650 to 1000* (Kildare, Ireland: Laigin Publications, 1999), 457.

Also, the exact meaning of the titles given to administrators in the annals is confusing, as consistently-used terms do not exist. For example, a *comarba* is presumed to have been the same as an abbot—*abbas* was also used, as was *airchindech*—and nowhere exists a contemporary guide to terminology. Sharpe, 244-5 and n.3; also, 251-2. Another term used is *airchindech*: Sharpe says this Irish word is close to Latin *princeps*, and its “conventional translation” as abbot is misleading. In the eighth century, he states, the word did not refer to the father of a religious community, but “lord of a monastic estate.” Sharpe, 259. *Comarba* or *coarb*, the “heir” of a patron saint, is a word “neutral in its ecclesiastical significance,” according to Sharpe, and “provides a convenient label for the controller of the church’s temporalities.” Sharpe, 264. Etchingam also discusses terminology, 174-5.

²⁹ Sharpe, 260-1.

³⁰ Sharpe, 247.

³¹ Sharpe, 266.

³² Although Sharpe states the revival “may have been rather limited,” 267. Etchingam suggests the group “may reflect no more than the continuation of the rigorously monastic tendency in this period, alongside and in more or less uneasy co-existence with greater laxity.” Etchingam, 463.

³³ Sharpe, 269. Etchingam states that the view about a “process of secularization” that was characterized “chiefly by its degeneracy and worldliness” was a product of nineteenth-century interpretation, “refined especially by [Kathleen] Hughes.” Etchingam, 455-6.

³⁴ This monastic settlement was founded by Saint Fiachra, who died in AD 670. Harbison says the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* appears on the west face, head, south arm. Judging from the photographs on the *Irish High Crosses* website, which are clearer than Harbison's, the west face is the most eroded. Harbison, I, 303, and III, fig. 644.

³⁵ J. Romilly Allen and Joseph Anderson, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland, with introduction by Isabel Henderson*, 2 vols. (Originally published 1903. Reprint, Balgavies, Angus: The Pinkfoot Press, 1993), II, fig. 236.

³⁶ David Wilson states that the crosses and stone fragments on the Isle of Man are "not easily datable," and, with only a few exceptions, it is not known which one were in place before the Vikings' arrival. Some were "apparently influenced from Ireland," he says. David M. Wilson, "The art of the Manx Crosses of the Viking Age," in *The Viking Age in the Isle of Man. Select Papers from the Ninth Viking Congress, Isle of Man, 4-14 July 1981*, ed. Christine Fell, et al (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1983), 175-87; this on pp. 175-77. The Vikings' conversion in the tenth century is discussed by Gillian Fellows-Jenson, "Scandinavian settlement in the Isle of Man and northwest England," in *The Viking Age in the Isle of Man*, 37-52; this on p. 43.

³⁷ A. W. Moore, "The Early Connexion of the Isle of Man with Ireland," *The English Historical Review* 4: 16 (1889), 714-722; this on p. 717.

³⁸ John O'Donovan, ed. and trans, *Leabhar na gCeart or the Book of Rights* (Dublin 1847), 8-9. Discussed in Moore, 720-21.

³⁹ Moore, 721; see also Marshall Cubbon, "The archaeology of the Vikings in the Isle of Man," in *The Viking Age in the Isle of Man*, 13-26, esp. p. 13.

⁴⁰ Moore, 719.

⁴¹ J. A. MacCulloch, *The Celtic and Scandinavian Religions* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1948), 33. See also Moore, 714-15. Moore reports the authority of Orosius, writing in 416 A.D. about the Manx as *Scoti*, those who, oddly enough, were the Irish and spoke the Q-dialect.

⁴² Indicated by a report of the *fían* traveling there. Also, Moore, 716-17. He says that, while no history of the arrival of Irish bishops is reliable, Manx historians have compiled a list of them from the year 360; perhaps the first reliable entry is for St. German's arrival in 447.

⁴³ See Edouard Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne d'après les sépultures, les textes et le laboratoire* (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1949-59), 299. Also, Helen Roe, "An Interpretation of Certain Symbolic Sculptures of Early Christian Ireland," *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 75 (1945), 1-23; this on pp. 2-6. Probably, the compositional type was imported complete with content, and placed on the crosses to illustrate Daniel with the lions, just as it had been used in Merovingian France. Whether or not Daniel was significant to the

Irish from the analogies made with Patrick by authors Muirchú and Tírechán, or whether they simply liked the two-century-old images that make up the “Help of God” cycle, viewed by Irish pilgrims to places such as the Roman catacombs, is open to question.

⁴⁴ A.T. Lucas, “‘In the Middle of Two Living Things’: Daniel or Christ?,” in *Figures from the Past. Studies in Figurative Art in Christian Ireland. In Honour of Helen M. Roe*, ed. Etienne Rynne (Dun Laoghaire, Ireland: Glendale Press for the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1987), 92-7.

⁴⁵ Joseph F. Kelly, “Hiberno-Latin Theology,” in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, ed. Próinséas Ni Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), 549-67; this on p. 560. The Irish monks also preserved apocrypha unknown elsewhere in Europe and thought to have been imported to Ireland from the East via Spain before the eighth century. Kelly, 563. See also D. N. Dumville, “Biblical Apocrypha and the Early Irish: A Preliminary Investigation,” in *The Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 73C (1973), 299-338.

⁴⁶ Kelly, 564. Diarmuid Ó Laoghaire writes, “What is termed ‘original’ may at times just mean ‘non-Roman.’” Diarmuid Ó Laoghaire, “Irish Spirituality,” in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, ed. Próinséas Ni Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), 73-82; this on p. 80. The Middle Irish period begins ca. 900. Dumville, 300. Dumville says the druid named was a legendary character from Munster. Dumville, 335-6. He says the origins of this legend are obscure, and “no record of them survives from a period anterior to the tenth century.” Dumville, 336.

⁴⁷ Dumville quotes from Michael Tangl, ed., *Die Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus, Die Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus in Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae Selectae* 1, second ed. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1955), no. 59, PL. 100; cf. Dumville, 302 and n. 12.

⁴⁸ The date of the tract is discussed in *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Ireland*, 6 vols. (1865-1901. Reprint, Buffalo, New York: W.S. Hein, 2000), I, 29 and 31.

⁴⁹ Ó Laoghaire, 82.

⁵⁰ McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (Maynooth, Ireland: An Sagart, 1990), 226. Richard Sharpe, “Hiberno-Latin *laicus*, Irish *láech* and the devil’s men,” *Ériu* 30 (1979), 75-92; this on p. 90. Etchingam, 298.

⁵¹ Etchingam, 300-01.

⁵² D. L. T. Bethell, “The Originality of the Early Irish Church,” *The Journal of the Royal Society of the Antiquaries of Ireland* 3 (1981), 36-49; this on p. 43.

⁵³ And, in some sagas it was stated that demonic forces encouraged warriors to fight fiercely. Also, Irish war goddesses were shapeshifters who assumed the appearance of birds. See

Jacqueline Borsje, "Omens, Ordeals and Oracles: On Demons and Weapons in Early Irish Texts," *Peritia* 13 (1999), 224-48.

⁵⁴ F. M. Carroll, writing in the late nineteenth century, states that Columba founded Moone in the sixth century. The Annals of the Four Masters states that in the year 1040, Moone and Castledermot were plundered by an Irish king Diarmaid. See F. M. Carroll, "Some Notes on the Abbey and Cross of Moone and Other Places in the Valley of the Griese," *Journal of the Archaeological Society of County Kildare* 1 (1894), 286-95. Castledermot "continued to be important into the tenth century, and its abbots received notices in the annals, according to Michael Herity, "The Context and Date of the High Crosses at Dísert Diarmada (Castledermot), Co. Kildare," in *Figures from the Past. Studies in Figurative Art in Christian Ireland. In Honour of Helen M. Roe*, ed. Etienne Rynne (Dun Laoghaire, Ireland: Glendale Press for the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1987), 111-30; this on p. 113. Robin Flower states that Castledermot was a "center of ascetic religion and of intense literary scholarship, both in Latin and in the vernacular." Robin Flower, "Irish High Crosses," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17 (1954), 87-97; this on p. 93. The importance of Monasterboice is attested by its several crosses and the linking together of abbasies discussed in the previous chapter of this essay. Kells is described as a "metropolis" by Françoise Henry in *Irish Art during the Viking Invasions (800-1020 A.D.)* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), 39.

⁵⁵ Muirchú, II, 4.

Appendix I:

The *Physiologus* and the *Bestiary*

An early Christian text that survived into the Middle Ages and was incorporated into several English manuscripts is titled the *Physiologus*.¹ Its contents were adopted from an original Greek text composed around the year 200 C.E.² Legends from several cultures contributed to its prototype, including Aristotle's *Parts of Animals*, based on observations of the natural world.³ Other classical writers whose works influenced the later medieval era *Physiologus* include Pliny the Elder, who wrote a *Natural History*, and Aelian's *History of the Animals*, both of which attached moral interpretations to animal behavior, somewhat similar to the better-known Aesop.⁴

Coined from the text, the word *physiologus* became a net for many concepts. For example, Cicero's brother, Quintus, making a reference to the practice of divination among the Gauls, states that he learned about this practice from a druid named Divitiacus, who "claimed to have that knowledge of nature which the Greeks call '*physiologia*,' and he used to make predictions...."⁵ Michael J. Curley, writing about the medieval text, states, "By the beginning of the Christian era...in both the Latin and the Greek worlds, [the word *physiologia*] had acquired a range of meaning extending from early Greek speculative zoology and physics to the occult religious practices of exotic peoples."⁶

Influential church writers—such as Isidore of Seville and Rufinus, a Latin translator of Origen's works—used material found in different versions of the *Physiologus* and its literary precursors, adding their own interpolations in order to nestle the animal "science" comfortably within the Christian stable; by doing so, they created completely new texts.⁷ Eventually, the *Physiologus* text "was responsible ultimately for some of the most enduring

iconography of Christianity;” that is, it became a sourcebook of symbolic meanings and moral lessons attached to specific animals, drawn from both knowledge of and legends surrounding their behaviors.⁸

Curley traces several animal tales as versions of an assumed original weave through different texts, spanning the classical through the medieval era. One example is the snake’s story. In the *Physiologus*, it is recorded that when the serpent grows old, its eyes become dim and, wanting to renew itself, it fasts for forty days and nights, its skin becomes loosened, and it finds a narrow crack in a rock through which to crawl to help it remove its skin. Similar legends are found in Pliny and Aelian, Curley adds, although these authors mention neither the forty-day fast nor the rock. The anonymous *Physiologus* author conceived those additions with reference to the New Testament book of Matthew, verse 4:2, in which Christ’s forty-day fast just before his temptation was combined with Matthew 7:14, in which it states, “The gate is narrow and there is tribulation on the way which leads toward life, and few are those who enter through it.” In this way, the bare skeleton of a classical-era snake story gains substance from the Bible to become a complex new creature, symbolizing Christ’s Passion and serving as example for each Christian in his or her analogous struggle to conquer temptations of the flesh. Also, as Curley points out, evident in the passage is language used by Paul in speaking to the Colossians (3:9) and the Ephesians (4:22), in which he admonished them: “Put off your old nature...and put on the new nature created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”⁹

The process of stringing together relationships from one source of lore to another and leading ultimately to a Christian moral interpretation is demonstrated with several examples recounted in full by Curley. Consider, for example, the ibis, a type of crane

described in the *Physiologus* as unclean because it feeds on carrion plucked from the shores of waterways. “Not knowing how to swim, the ibis feeds along the banks of rivers or ponds. He cannot swim in the depths but only where unclean little fish dwell, and is found outside the most deep places.” The text, without transition, immediately moves into a Christian sermon:

Learn how to swim spiritually so that you may come into the deep river, intelligible and spiritual, and to the depth of the wisdom of the power of God. If you want to go into the deep, and to learn the mysteries of Jesus Christ, learn to swim spiritually... Yet by avoiding the deep water where you might get spiritual food, and going along the shore and wandering, you will be fed on dead and stinking carrion. The Apostle said of these, “Now the works of the flesh are plain: impurity, adultery, fornication, immodesty, lust, idolatry, drunkenness, avarice, and covetousness.” These are the carnal and deadly foods by which unhappy souls are nourished to suffering.¹⁰

The process evident in the assimilation of pagan lore with added Christian layers to transform it into an exemplary teaching could be seen as mirroring the process outlined by Gregory the Great in his letter to the British bishop, quoted in the text of Chapter One of this essay, in which he advises Mellitus not change the pagan ritual itself, but rather use the bones of it and transform the meaning and message behind the ritual.¹¹

Isidore of Seville’s multi-volumed *Etymologies* of ca. 623, with its twelfth chapter devoted to animals, used material in common with the earlier *Physiologus*, but he omitted the allegories and focused on the derivation of the stories and etymologies of animal names.¹²

Scholars agree that Isidore’s texts were widely known and available in Irish and Scottish monasteries,¹³ but whether or not the *Etymologies* was illustrated in this era is unknown.¹⁴ Furthermore, the Irish cross imagery under scrutiny in this essay shows no trace of a *Physiologus* source: the *Physiologus* does not discuss any of the specific creatures identified in the *Temptation* images. Also, Isabel Henderson considers the possibility that

some of the Pictish animals appearing on cross slabs in Scotland served as moral allegories, but she argues against the *Physiologus* as a reference for these, since only a few of the many animals pictured on Irish crosses and Pictish cross slabs are those discussed in any known edition of the *Physiologus*.¹⁵ She adds, however, that the moral allegories present in Irish and Pictish images do demonstrate “awareness of aspects of the ‘thought world’ and conventions of Early Christian art in general.”¹⁶

By the end of the twelfth century, a new type of book about animals became popular, called the *Bestiary*. Some of the books in this genre swelled to about one hundred fifty chapters, and they typically assimilated Isidore’s etymological explanations for animals’ names, *Physiologus*-derived discussions of animals, and they reincorporated many of the ancient allegories that Isidore had dropped from his text, but made these more strictly Christian in tone and message.¹⁷ Most of the bestiaries postdate the Irish crosses, however; and while the animal symbolism found in them may include ideas drawn from earlier texts, no direct link between bestiary-related symbolic thinking and the Irish *Temptation* images may be drawn, since little is known about the ideology behind the cross images, or which animal texts, outside of Isidore’s *Etymologies*, found their way to Ireland.¹⁸ It seems far more reasonable to look to Irish history for explanations, which I do in Chapter One, “The Animals Speak,” and subsequent chapters of this essay.

Notes to Appendix 1

¹ The *Physiologus* appeared in both an Old English and a Middle English form. See, for example, Ann Squires, ed., *The Old English Physiologus* (New Elvet, Durham, England: Durham Medieval Texts, School of English, 1988) and Hanneke Wirtjes, ed., *The Middle English Physiologus* (Oxford: The Early English Text Society of Oxford University Press, 1991).

² Michael J. Curley, trans. and ed., *Physiologus* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979), *xix*.

³ Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*, 641a7; discussed in Curley, *x*.

⁴ Curley, *xxi*.

⁵ Quintus, *De divinatione*, 1.40.90, quoted in Curley, *xi*.

⁶ Curley, *xi*.

⁷ Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, Book 12, is devoted to animals (ca. 623), and it relied on several sources, including ancient authors and church fathers, "from whom he derived much material common to *Physiologus*," according to Curley, *xxxi*. The *Physiologus* had been translated numerous times by the seventh century, expanded in different ways and added to by numerous anonymous writers. According to Curley, Rufinus probably wrote his version of Origen's seventeenth homily on Genesis 4:9, in which Judah is described as a lion's whelp and the metaphor is attached to Christ, based on the *Physiologus*. Curley, *xviii*.

⁸ Curley, *xxx*. Also, translations included an Ethiopian version in the fifth century, a fourth-century Armenian version, an Old Syrian translation, and two in Arabic, of which one has eleven chapters and the other has thirty-five. Curley, *xxvi-xxvii*.

⁹ Curley, *xxiii-xxv*.

¹⁰ Curley combines two translations of the Latin *Physiologus*, including one considered closer to the Greek original and one with important additions, to formulate this translated passage. Curley, *xxiii* and 25.

¹¹ Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, I. 30, in Judith McClure and Roger Collins, ed., *Bede, The Ecclesiastical History of the English People, The Greater Chronicle, Bede's Letter to Egbert* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994; reprint 1999), 56-7.

¹² Curley, *xxvi-xxvii*. Isidore's chapter, "Animals," begins this way:

1. Adam first imparted names to all living creatures, naming each from its evident behavior, according to the condition of nature which it served.
2. The pagans gave names to each animal, in their own languages. Adam assigned names using neither Latin, Greek, or the barbarous tongues of the pagans, but Hebrew, the universal language before the flood.

Priscilla Throop, trans., *Isidore of Seville's Etymologies, Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX, vol. 2* (Charlotte, Vermont: Medieval MS, 2005), XII, 1.

¹³ Just about every author discusses Isidore's widespread and significant influence in the Insular world. See, for example, Martin McNamara, "Psalter Text and Psalter Study in the Early Irish Church (A.D. 600-1200)," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 73C: 7 (1973), 201-98; especially 255, n. 3. See also D. N. Dumville, "Biblical Apocrypha and the Early Irish: A Preliminary Investigation," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 73C:8 (1973), 299-338, and Thomas O'Loughlin "The Library of Iona in the Late Seventh Century: The Evidence from Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*," *Ériu* 45 (1994), 33-52. The transmission of North African texts, some of which may have been illustrated, through Visigothic Spain to Ireland is discussed by J. N. Hillgarth, who discusses Isidore's works in Ireland, in "Ireland and Spain in the Seventh Century," *Peritia* 3 (1984), 1-16.

¹⁴ Isabel Henderson, *Pictish Monsters: Symbol, Text and Image* (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, 1997), 12-13.

¹⁵ She states that the only Pictish animals appearing on stones that might be explained with reference to the allegories of the *Physiologus* are "restricted to the most common, lion and serpent, and possibly monkey and panther." She adds that these meager and uncertain connections are "insufficient to support a claim for access to a full text of the *Physiologus*, far less to an illustrated text." She adds further that on Iona crosses and in the Book of Kells, created in the Irish Columban monasteries, the serpent and lion might suggest knowledge of the text, but again, its influence was minimal, if existing at all. Henderson, 12-13.

¹⁶ Henderson, 13.

¹⁷ Curley's summary assessment of the Bestiary's contents, xxx-xxxii.

¹⁸ Jacques Voisenet devotes a chapter to various ideas circulating in the medieval era about animals, with Ireland featured, in his text on the Bestiaries. See his *Bêtes et Hommes dans le Monde Médiéval. Le bestiaire des clercs du Ve au XIIe siècle* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2000).

Appendix 2:

Animal-Headed Figures in Pagan Art

To understand how the concept of animal-headed humans could have arisen in the minds of literate medieval era patrons, glimpsing the long history of such imagery provides a background. Some of this imagery—from Coptic Egypt, at least—must have been familiar to Irish monastic scholars.

Humans with animal or bird heads figure in art from prehistoric times, suggesting that before the arrival of Christianity, hybrid figures were standard among pagan cultures. Certainly unknown to medieval audiences but representative of a long line of such images, in the Lascaux caves, dated ca. 15,000-13,000 B.C.E, a bird-headed man is the earliest-known representation of man's intimate connection with the animal kingdom. The beaked figure carries a bird-headed staff and appears to be engaged in some manner with a bison depicted nearby. Whether he represents a shaman or a man with a mask, is dying from a bison wound or engaged in a trance-induced ritual, remains an unsolvable mystery.¹

In the ancient Mesopotamian kingdoms of Sumer, Akkadia and Babylonia, spanning a long era from about 3,500 to 500 B.C.E., artworks were created that combined naturalistic features of humans and animals.² According to the British Museum website, people of these cultures believed that both beneficial and baneful demons with human bodies and animal or bird heads had been created by the gods to interact with humankind.³ One example known to both Sumerian and Akkadian peoples is the Ugallu, with its human body, lion's head with long ears and bird's feet.⁴ Others are the Apkallu beasts with various animal heads, some pictured as winged and bird-headed humans, who guarded Ashurnasirpal's palace and served

the cause of wisdom as mythical poet-sages and kings' ministers (ca. ninth century B.C.E.). The Babylonians thought the Apkallu had been sent to earth to teach wisdom to humans.⁵

Gigantic sculptures of animal-headed, human-bodied demons were set up by Assyrian kings at Nimrud (ninth-eighth centuries B.C.E.) and later at Khorsabad (founded early eighth century B.C.E.), and similar beasts were fashioned onto tiles for the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar (reigned 605–562 B.C.E.).⁶

In the ancient Babylonian Gilgamesh legend (early episodes date from about 2,000 B.C.E.), a hirsute and composite beast-man is Gilgamesh's comrade, named Enkidu, who becomes fully human only when his heart is "exulted" by a consort.⁷

Other Middle Eastern deities had animal companions, such Gula with her dog, to whom statuettes of dogs were offered at healing sites—an ancient custom also practiced in the Celtic era, as discussed in Chapter One of this essay.⁸ Scholars suggest some deities and their animal companions evolved into a single, composite figure at an undetermined point in history, as in the case of the horned human figure common to Celtic imagery.⁹

The ancient Egyptian civilization also revered animal-headed deities. Among these are Thoth, the bird-headed human considered the inventor of hieroglyphic writing, and the jackal-headed funerary gods, Anubis and Wepwawet.¹⁰ During the Old and Middle Kingdom eras, royal deification was expressed by a combination of lion and human features, seen on the sphinx monuments.¹¹

These composite human-animal forms were transmitted to the classical world through various media, including images on "magical" gems or amulets with incised images of bird- and dog-like figures standing upright and dressed as humans.¹²

Besides the beast- and bird-headed human images that may have come under attack by the Irish Church, a more positive example must be mentioned, the animal-headed evangelist symbols. The assignation of zoomorphic heads to three of the four New Testament scribes was derived, at least in part, from interpretations of the apocalyptic vision of John in the Book of Revelation. John describes a throne in heaven surrounded by “four living creatures...the first...like a lion; and the second living creature like a calf; and the third living creature, having the face, as it were, of a man; and the fourth living creature was like an eagle flying...And they rested not day and night, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come” (Apocalypse 4: 6-9).¹³

Zofia Ameisenowa, writing in 1949 about Jewish images and spiritual concepts related to hybrid figures, cites two sources for the vision reported in Revelation, suggesting that John derived his imagery from the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, who had reported his own vision of God appearing in a fiery chariot drawn by cherubims, three with animal heads and one human-headed being (Ezechiel 10). Ameisenowa also argues that Ezekiel had probably seen a statue of the four-faced pagan god, Baal Tetramorphos, which had four visages—those of lion, bull, dragon and human—and reported to have been erected centuries earlier in a temple in Jerusalem. Ameisenowa traces the evolving symbolism of this imagery through Judaism and early Christian Gnosticism.¹⁴

The earliest known representation of the four animal evangelist symbols appears in the *Rabula Codex*, a manuscript of 586 C.E., written and illustrated in a Middle Eastern monastery.¹⁵ In Insular art, in the Book of Kells, the evangelists’ animal symbols combine with human features, such as the eagle-headed apostle with human arms and hands of folio 5r.¹⁶

The Irish-Egyptian connection

John Carey expands on the work of earlier scholars and links Egyptian Gnostic writings with Irish apocrypha in his essay on the ninth-century Irish manuscript, “The Evernew Tongue.” He maintains that Egyptian magical papyri “reflect a wide range of influences—Mesopotamian, Greek, Iranian, Jewish, Gnostic, and Christian, together with a wealth of native Egyptian material,” and that “religious communities of all kinds existed in Egypt in the first Christian centuries.”¹⁷ Ameinsenowa’s essay would seem to confirm Carey’s supposition in terms of material evidence, in that Ameinsenowa compiled an extensive list of animal-human hybrid beings appearing in texts and images from different religions and geographic areas. Within their respective cultures, even as found in Jewish and early heretical Christian texts, most of the hybrid beings were considered positive figures benefiting humankind.¹⁸

Notes to Appendix 2

¹ Reproduced in Marilyn Stokstad, *Art History*, 2 vols. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2005), I, fig. 1-11.

² The date 500 B.C.E. is assigned to Mesopotamia’s assumption within the Persian Empire.

³ “Mesopotamia: Gods, goddesses, demons and monsters.” *The British Museum: illuminating world cultures*. 2003. The British Museum Online: <http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/gods/home_set.html>.

⁴ “Mesopotamia: Gods, goddesses, demons and monsters, Ugallu,” *The British Museum: illuminating world cultures*. 2003. The British Museum Online: <http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/gods/explore/exp_set.html>.

⁵ “Mesopotamia: Gods, goddesses, demons and monsters, Apkallu fish.” *The British Museum: illuminating world cultures*. 2003. The British Museum Online: <http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/gods/explore/exp_set.html>. For their role as poet-sages and kings’ ministers, see “Apkallu.” *Encyclopedia Mythica Online*: <<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/a/apkallu.html>>.

⁶ The hybrid Mesopotamian demon images created under the empires of Assyrian kings at Nimrud or Khorsabad, and later appearing on colored tiles in Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon and in the palace of Persian kings at Susa and Persepolis, are discussed by Francis Klingender. Francis Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1971), 47-8. Some are on permanent exhibit at the British Museum, London.

⁷ Klingender, 37.

⁸ "Mesopotamia: Gods, goddesses, demons and monsters, Gula." *The British Museum: illuminating world cultures*. 2003. *The British Museum Online*: <http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/gods/explore/exp_set.html>. My discussion of dogs appears in Chapter One.

⁹ See, for example, Miranda Green, *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

¹⁰ Gay Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 18 (fig. 6), 112 (fig. 119), and 138. See especially fig. 297, *Funerary Stele of Neswy*, on which the two jackal-headed gods appear identical. Klingender, 51, says Anubis was the inventor of funeral rites and embalming.

¹¹ Klingender, 51.

¹² See Simone Michel, *Die Magischen Gemmen im Britischen Museum*, 2 vols. (London: British Museum Press, 2001), I, esp. nos. 139, 178, 274, and 381. Also of interest are the animal-headed figures with serpent legs, which are occasionally depicted for horned human figures in Celtic contexts. *Die Magischen Gemmen*, I, nos. 184, 185 and 186.

¹³ *Douay Reims Catholic Bible Online*: <<http://www.drbo.org/>>.

¹⁴ Zofia Ameisenowa, "Animal-Headed Gods, Evangelists, Saints and Righteous Men," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 12 (1949), 21-45; this on pp. 34-38.

¹⁵ Ameisenowa, 38. It appears on a page illustrating the *Ascension*. *Rabula Gospels*, Zagba, Syria, c. 586. Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence. Reproduced in Marilyn Stokstad, *Medieval Art* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2004), fig. 3.27.

¹⁶ The Book of Kells (Dublin, Trinity College Library, #58 A.I. 6): folio 5r is an illustrated canon table. The image is reproduced in Françoise Henry, *The Book of Kells. Reproductions from the Manuscript in Trinity College Dublin* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 9.

¹⁷ John Carey, "The Sun's Night Journey: A Pharaonic Image in Medieval Ireland," in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 57 (1994), 14-34; this on pp. 22, 26, 32. See also David Dumville, "Towards an Interpretation of *Fís Adamnán*," *Studia Celtica* 12-13 (1977-8), 62-77, in which he discusses the same literary concept of a soul passing through

seven heavens. Dumville discusses early Latin sources rather than Coptic ones and thinks one may have been a lost text of *Visio Pauli*.

All of these “influences” wove together in the Mediterranean area and blended with classicism’s naturalistic animal renderings, according to Klingender, 99-101. In the case of Viking art, undoubtedly influenced by Eastern styles fostered by peoples with whom the wide-roaming Vikings came into contact, one finds both abstracted symbolic animals images and more naturalistic renderings, inspired by Mediterranean art forms. Carola Hicks, *Animals in Early Medieval Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 195.

¹⁸ Ameinsenowa discusses, for example, their depictions on amulets, which he states were used particularly against the baneful evil eye and all types of illness. Ameinsenowa, 25.

Appendix 3:

Celts of the Continent and the British Isles: A brief history

To get a grasp on what comprises pagan Celtic culture historically, I refer to three principle eras named and dated according to sites where large deposits of archaeological artifacts were recovered. These are the Iron-Age Hallstatt cemetery in Austria that lends its name to the Hallstatt culture; the La Tène region of Neuchatel, Switzerland, where a style of art was developed that had broad geographical distribution and continued well into the medieval era; and the Romano-Celtic cultures of Gaul and Britain, principally, as well as other Western European areas conquered by the Romans.

The Hallstatt region is the earliest of the three, a culture that saw activity from the second millennium B.C.E. onward, when deposits of rock salt were first collected from natural springs, then mined in the first millennium B.C.E. and traded throughout Continental Europe. In 1846, discovery of a large necropolis at Hallstatt revealed both burial styles and material artifacts, spanning a period beginning about 800 B.C.E. and continuing to ca. 500 B.C.E. The Hallstatt cemetery contained well over two thousand burials, with most dated between the eighth and sixth centuries B.C.E. and a few graves dating from the fifth century. Fortunately, the lead archaeologist on the nineteenth-century expedition, Georg Ramsauer, who excavated about a thousand of the graves, practiced meticulous care with both excavation techniques and records, and he had watercolor illustrations of important burials made to record in precise detail the objects discovered in the graves and the distribution of skeletons and artifacts. The wealth of luxury items in earlier graves and the relative dearth of objects in later ones suggests that competition from another, newer salt mine at Durnberg

increasingly reduced the profits reaped by Hallstatt chieftains, with the mine finally closing when a devastating landslide blocked cave entrances. Salt preserves organic materials, so that, in addition to iron weapons and jewelry, some clothing items were also recovered.¹

As a brief aside and pertinent to this essay, artwork from the Hallstatt era includes animal imagery, including species matching those found in the medieval Irish *Temptation* images. A sixth-century B.C.E. hydra from Switzerland shows a bird of prey, probably a raven, perched on the headdress of a winged-human figure.² A bronze chariot with waterbirds dating to about 500 B.C.E. was recovered from the area of former Yugoslavia.³ Art from this period also shows evidence of foreign trade and multiple influences, as found with the sculpture from a Celtic burial site in Germany, a Graeco-Italian work that recalls Egyptian and Mesopotamian art forms in a figure with elaborate braided coiffure, composite lion-human form and griffin wings.⁴

Celtic culture comes into sharper focus with the mention of Celtic people and customs by Greek writers, who called this people *Keltoi*, and whose reportage begins about the fifth century B.C.E. Classical chroniclers apparently witnessed shared traits among different communities or tribes, allowing the writers to assign a single name to these different tribes.⁵ In the view of some scholars, the Hallstatt culture is not clearly Celtic because the Celtic language is not attested in this period. According to this view, those speaking a common language did not penetrate central Europe until the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., although, as Otto Hermann Frey states, “We must assume a strong ethnic continuity in western Germany, Switzerland and certain areas of France...where similarities of customs in dress...funerary and other rites” are evident.⁶

The La Tène culture is named for a site on Lake Neuchatel, Switzerland, where a number of artifacts were found when the lake sank to an unusually low level in 1858. Like the term “Hallstatt,” the second phase of Celtic Culture is called “La Tène,” not merely as a reference to a geographical location, but rather the terms Hallstatt and La Tène are used to designate eras, temporal spans that divide the Celtic culture into two periods, each with its distinct style of artistic production.⁷ The Hallstatt culture produced “strong, vigorous work” in its animal ornament adorning utilitarian objects, while the La Tène artisans created art that was more elegant, lavish, even playful in form. Perhaps the best comparison for describing the swirling, organic forms of La Tène design to a modern audience would be compare it to nineteenth-century “Art Nouveau,” which conjures up mental images of similar curvilinear forms derived from nature. But that association leaves out much of La Tène iconography, most especially its tendency to subtly suggest zoomorphic and human facial features by means of simple, geometric forms, leaving the viewer to wonder if she really sees a face or dreamily projects one into abstract patterns. More aptly, writer Frank Delaney explains the La Tène style in just a few words:

Wildlife themes pushed into the realms of the abstract and fantastic. A tendril of a plant teased into itself, then spun outwards until it became pattern, a whorl, a whole inner world, leaping, coiling, dancing. And afterwards it strayed into other forms, not just the back of a mirror, not just the decoration of a pot—but into designs and images which eventually epitomised and perpetuated the legend of the Celts. When the oral tradition eventually received literary attention, the descendants of those early ironworkers ornamented their manuscripts similarly but even more lavishly.⁸

“Fantastic” wildlife includes human-animal hybrids, some of which are discussed in the body of this paper.

Etruscan art contributed to the La Tène style, as did Scythian and Thracian art forms, themselves influenced by Persian art, all of which may have inspired Celtic styling

through trade contacts.⁹ Later La Tène styles are elegantly abstract, with designs principally vegetal in nature and characterized by swirling biomorphic forms, often asymmetrically arranged and with no single point of focus. Metal objects created in this style are found in Ireland, Scandinavia and throughout central Europe.

The next phase of Celtic culture comes with Roman-occupied Gaul. Gaul was a territory larger than present-day France and Belgium that included sections of Holland, Switzerland, and Germany, and which began to coalesce into a single nation with annexation of its southernmost regions in 121 B.C.E. Julius Caesar had been Gaul's governor and military commander in 58 B.C.E., after leading campaigns against rebellious tribes there, and he secured Gaul's forced annexation by the time of his death in 44 B.C.E. Roman rule lasted until the early fifth century C.E., when Germanic tribes established strongholds in the area. The Visigoths took control of Gaul, placing their king on the throne in the later fifth century.¹⁰

Britain (Briton) also became Roman territory. Caesar landed on the island of Britain in 55 B.C.E. and again the next year, but neither effort was fully successful. Bad weather battered his ships, and the Britons used unfamiliar military tactics and their knowledge of dense local forests to great effect. Caesar, called to action in Gaul when uprisings threatened to upset Roman sovereignty there, departed the island without obtaining a complete victory. Roman rule was nominally established and trade relations blossomed, so that Britain was essentially "Romanized," but it was only with Claudius's occupation in 43 C.E. that the Celts in Briton were subject to consistent Roman rule. The Romans remained in Briton despite Saxon attacks beginning in the third century C.E., and the Romans abandoned Britain only in the fifth century, when the sun finally set on the Roman Empire.¹¹

Earliest inhabitants of the British Isles

Accounts of Scotland and Ireland from as early as 600 B.C.E. suggest peoples of Celtic-speaking peoples of Hallstatt ancestry lived in the British Isles and traded goods with inhabitants of Brittany.¹² Support for this assumption is offered by T. D. Kendrick, who discusses a shared pottery type found in the two areas.¹³ A later wave of settlers to the Isles came to Britain from the La Tène area of Switzerland, around 250 B.C.E., according to Anne Ross.¹⁴ Ross credits this later group with the “heroic ideals which we have come to associate with the stories of the Ulster Cycle in Ireland,” the tales in which Cú Chulainn features, and they introduced the eulogistic songs and cult legends found in Irish literature. “Whether these people introduced the druidic priesthood to preside over their religious rites or whether the Hallstatt predecessors were responsible for this must remain in question,” Ross states.¹⁵ The people she credits with introducing the Gaulish divinities and cult symbols are the Belgic groups, who settled in Southern Britain.¹⁶

Interesting is the language distinction between inhabitants of the British lands and those residing in Ireland: The Irish Celts spoke what is today called Q-Celtic language, different from the P-Celtic language spoken in Britain.¹⁷ Q-Celtic forms appear only in Ireland and Spain, and additionally, in a few Gaulish place-names and inscriptions—despite the fact that P-Celtic was the spoken language of Gaul. The Irish or Q-Celtic language was introduced into Scotland and the Isle of Man only at the end of the fifth century C.E.¹⁸ The language differences among the neighboring peoples are curious and demonstrate just one area of confusion about the histories of Celtic-speaking territories and their inhabitants.

Ross points out, with relation to the flow of inhabitants into Ireland, that “La Tène objects with continental affinities tend to be concentrated in the west [of Ireland], while those

with British affinities show a marked northeasterly concentration.” She posits two different routes to Ireland in the late third and second centuries B.C.E., including an early one from the Continent and another established via Britain one or two centuries later.¹⁹ The British immigrants must have changed their dialect at some point during their assimilation into Irish culture, according to Ross’s theory.

Irish archaeology

According to Barry Raftery, Ireland is not rich in pre-Christian archaeological finds when compared to recoveries from Britain and Gaul. Ireland’s relative archaeological dearth may be partly due to the destruction of objects during the Christian era and an enduring cremation custom, resulting in fewer burial goods.²⁰

Raftery describes Ireland’s Hallstatt–influenced objects as “extremely limited in extent and essentially insular in character.” He states that only later, with the La Tène era, were “radical and wide-ranging innovations...detectable in the Irish archaeological record,” although even these are limited in number, he asserts.²¹ He continues, “The migration of La Tène influences has often been interpreted as ‘the coming of the Celts’ to Ireland.” But this statement, he argues is misleading in its suggestion of takeover and domination. He argues against importation of La Tène culture, stating that every La Tène-style Irish object shows evidence of “undeniably native manufacture.”²² He posits that only in the northeastern Irish regions, where Iberian or Spanish influence appears to have taken hold, as indicated by both language and artifacts, are theories of continental Celtic influence tenable. At the same time, enigmatically, Spain “largely lacked La Tène material culture,” he says. The conclusion he draws is that there is “no conclusive archaeological evidence...for cultural contacts between the two areas,” namely Gaul and Ireland.²³

Contact between the Continent and Ireland is more evident during the Roman era, and a Roman fort may have been established in Ireland. Some archaeologists consider artifacts recovered in 1996 from Drumanagh, about fifteen miles north of Dublin, to provide evidence of a Roman fort, while others argue the site was more likely a trading station that imported Roman wares.²⁴ Evidence for Roman trade does exist. Raftery acknowledges that a second-century C.E. map of Ireland drawn by Ptolemy, on which the cartographer demarcated areas inscribed with tribe's names, makes it "reasonable to assume that commercial transactions took place in the vicinity of harbours and sheltered coastal inlets, and that merchants penetrated the interior along navigable rivers."²⁵

Archaeologist Richard Warner has a different opinion, stating that the "tribal names recorded by Ptolemy in the early second century are identical to the names of tribes in Gaul and Britain," arguing also that Roman presence does not necessarily mean an army incursion, but probably Romanized settlers indicated on the Irish map were, in fact, British and Gaulish peoples. In a brief mention of the Roman finds uncovered in Drumanagh in 1996, Warner observed another puzzling pattern among the artifacts:

There is surprisingly little Roman material in Ireland, but what there is has a strange distribution. None has been found in association with native material. Indeed, to a great extent the distributions of stray Roman and native objects are mutually exclusive. In other words, those native Irish possessed of a rich, La Tène-derived ornament industry seem to have been uninterested in Roman trinkets. Moreover, in the southeast, in Leinster, which has produced a fair number of Roman objects and even Roman-style burials and cemeteries, native material is surprisingly rare....²⁶

Raftery states that the ancient burial tumulus at Newgrange in the Boyne Valley, County Meath, seems to have been a center of pilgrimage during Roman times, and a number of Roman objects have been recovered there, as well as human burials with Roman objects.²⁷ Raftery reports that Roman objects found in Ireland demonstrate two distinct chronological

groupings: one represents a first- to second-century-C.E. date, while another group dates from the fourth to fifth centuries, while “finds of the third century are scarcely present.”²⁸

“One thing is clear,” he concludes, “Ireland was in no way isolated from the mainstream of Roman developments abroad during the early centuries of the Christian era.”²⁹

The transmission of Romano-Celtic coins and other objects into Ireland suggests that cultural contact was made with the Continent, and the Celtic peoples residing on the Continent and in Ireland may have shared certain ideological and cultural systems.

Notes to Appendix 3

¹ Fritz Eckart Barth, “The Hallstatt Salt Mines,” in *The Celts*, Sabatino Moscati et al, scientific directors (Milan: Bompaniani, 1991; reprint, New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1997), 191-94. He dates the Hallstatt culture to the seventh century, B.C.E.. Frank Delaney, *The Celts* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1986), pp. 25-27, dates this culture to the eighth century B.C.E., with its first glimmerings appearing in the ninth century.

² The image is reproduced in Delaney, 116.

³ Image reproduced in Delaney, 161.

⁴ Image reproduced in Sabatino Moscati, *et al*, 71.

⁵ Miranda Green, *Celtic Art. Symbols & Imagery* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1996), 11. Hereafter cited as Green, *Celtic Art*.

⁶ Otto Hermann Frey, “‘Celtic Princes’ in the Sixth Century B.C.,” in *The Celts*, Sabatino Moscati et al, scientific directors (Milan: Bompaniani, 1991; reprint, New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1997), 80-102; this on p. 80. Frey asserts that “the Celtic language must have begun in much earlier times,” that is, in prehistory. See also Green, *Celtic Art*, 11.

⁷ Delaney, 29. Also, T. D. Kendrick discusses what he saw as cultural unity throughout a single Iron Age civilization, extending from north of France to Hungary, which had been begun some five hundred years earlier with the arrival of Urnfield people from Central Europe. (“Urnfield” refers to a late Bronze-Age culture of ca. 1300-750 B.C.E., whose name comes from the custom of cremating the dead and placing their ashes in urns which were then buried in fields.). Kendrick reasons the Urnfield people migrated into western areas. Kendrick specifies that the La Tène culture, as it is considered in the modern era, is a term drawn from place names, language distribution and archaeological evidence. He defines the

Kelts as a people of La Tène culture who, expanding from Central Europe, introduced Keltic language into Gaul, Britain, Ireland, Spain, Italy, the Balkans and Asia Minor. He argues that the “cradle of the race” must lie between Gaul and Hungary, and the people he calls

Keltic were a mixed group from various Hallstatt races, themselves products of various Bronze Age folk. So what is the Keltic element operating in formation of culture of La Tène period that distinguished its bearers so decisively from others like the Germans, and led to development of their own tongue, he asks? The answer must be the Urnfield folk. He thinks it is a mistake to see more ancient roots, as some scholars suggest. T. D. Kendrick, *The Druids. A Study in Keltic Prehistory* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1927), 43 and 52-4.

⁸ Delaney, 29-30.

⁹ See Frey.

¹⁰ *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, “Roman Gaul” and “The Landings of Caesar in Britain, 55 and 54 BC,” drawn from *Athena Review* 1: 1 (Athena Publications, Inc., 1996-2004): <<http://www.athenapub.com/caesar1.htm>>. Also, *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, “The End of Roman Gaul (c. 400-c. 500),” <<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-40262>>.

¹¹ *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, “The Saxon Shore Forts: Coastal defenses of Roman Britain,” drawn from *Athena Review* 1: 2 (Athena Publications, Inc., 1996-2004): <<http://www.athenapub.com/saxshor1.htm>>.

¹² Anne Ross discusses early Hallstatt ancestry for the British Celts. She reports the presence of people who spoke a Celtic dialect was suggested by writer, Massiliote Periplus, in an account of a voyage taken before 530 B.C.E. down the Spanish coast and along the Atlantic coast to Tartessos. The Tartessians apparently reported that the Oestrymnians (of Brittany, one presumes) traded with the inhabitants of two large islands, Ierne (Ireland) and Albion (Britain). Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain. Studies in Iconography and Tradition* (Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1967; reprint, 1996), 39. Also, an account, originating about 500 B.C.E., attributed to a Carthaginian admiral named Himilco, addressed Celtic tribes living in the North Sea area, in France and southwest Spain; it makes brief mention of a popular, although inaccurate, etymology of the native name of Ireland. J. J. Tierney, “The Celtic Ethnography of Posidonius,” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* C: 60 (1960), 189-275; this on p. 193.

¹³ Kendrick discusses the “frill-comb-smear” style of pottery, which he describes as wide-mouthed vessels of coarse, gritty ware with a frilled lip, and examples of which appear as his figs. 5 and 6. He states the style appeared in Northwest Germany about same time as the formation of Hallstatt cultures in the Alpine countries (first and second centuries B.C.E.), and he traces what he refers to as an incursion into the Lower Rhineland of a culture characterized by this pottery, among other objects. Possessing a vessel body covered by comblike ornament, similar patterns of decoration are found on both finer wares and big objects with more “rustic” surfaces. He points out the ornament identical with that found on certain English ceramic types. He was less sure than the much later writer, Anne Ross, about

the date of this ware, but he suggested a date of ca. 600 B.C.E. He concludes that these people, after they had “absorbed something of the Hallstatt culture in Rhineland, adventured or were driven into Northeast Gaul and across the sea to Britain,” events which “cannot have been earlier than 600 BC.” The pottery has been found in Southeast British counties, including the Thames Valley, Kent and Sussex. He continues that intimate relations had existed between Britain and the Continent during the Bronze Age, and that Iron Age manufactures must have reached Britain before the inhabitants of the Rhineland crossed. He concludes that these wares are of “regular occurrence in Britain and Ireland.” Kendrick, 39-40 and n. 2.

¹⁴ She says settlements of people of Hallstatt origin, probably from France and the Low Countries, took place about 500-450 B.C.E. on the east coast and south of Britain. She adds that these Hallstatt-derived cultures are grouped by archaeologists under the heading, “British Iron Age A.” The next wave of immigrants arrived around 250 B.C.E., when settlers of La Tène origin came across from France to the east and south coasts of Britain and moved southward and westward. Ross, 39.

¹⁵ The La Tène-derived cultures are contained within what archaeologists call “British Iron Age B.” Ross, 39.

¹⁶ Ross states that a later Iron Age immigration brought Belgic peoples to southern Britain around 100 B.C.E. or perhaps earlier. The Belgic peoples who settled in Southern Britain are assigned to British Iron Age C. Ross, 39.

¹⁷ Ross, 41. And these peoples had a “distinctive material culture” (called the “Arras Culture”), consisting of burial traditions that included the chariot burial. The vehicles were buried with their owners, sometimes complete and other times dismantled, but, unlike similar burials on the Continent, only rarely did they include weapons. Women as well as men are represented: the “Lady’s Barrow” contained a human skeleton, pig bones (probably for an Otherworldly feast, she suggests), a dismantled chariot, whip, and a mirror was placed behind the head of the deceased. Another, called the “King’s Barrow,” contained a body accompanied by a horse team killed and buried with the chariot. Miranda Green, *The Gods of the Celts* (Gloucester: A. Sutton, and Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble, 1986; reprint, 1997), 124-5. Hereafter cited as “Green, *Gods*.”

¹⁸ Generally, the language is broken down into two types: one popularly called Goidelic—spoken in Ireland, the Scottish highlands and the Isle of Man, and also in Spain—which preserved the Indo-Germanic Q. The other type is referred to as Brythonic, spoken in Gaul and most of Britain. In this dialect, the “Q” is generally, although not always, changed into “P” (or sometimes “PP” in the written form). Kendrick, 54.

¹⁹ Ross, 42.

²⁰ Raftery discusses ancient standing stones as the focal point of outdoor religious ceremonies, describing one in Ireland’s County Cavan that had been “extensively smashed” and the pieces buried, although when the damage occurred cannot be determined. Barry

Raftery, *Pagan Celtic Ireland. The Enigma of the Irish Iron Age* (London, Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1994), 182. Cremation, introduced in Britain by the first century B.C.E., was practiced by some in Ireland well into the fifth or perhaps even late sixth century C.E., resulting in a dearth of burial goods, according to Raftery, 189. Kendrick states that Ireland does have pottery linked to Marne-Breton culture, while none appears in England. Also, spearheads ornamented on the wings are found in Ireland but not England. He says these two bits of evidence suggest the La Tène culture of Ireland was derived directly from Continent, independent of British transference. Kendrick 46-7.

²¹ Raftery, 221 and 225.

²² Raftery on invasion theories, 223. He clarifies that only horse-bridle bits occur in any significant numbers. Missing is a “range of domestic material,” as well as belt-fittings, mounts and fittings for horse-drawn carts, and many personal ornament types, coinage and pottery, all of which have been found in Gaul. Instead, what Ireland has are “occasional imports,” or perhaps Ireland demonstrates “isolated areas of stylistic or typological similarity” to artifacts found abroad. Raftery, 226. More likely, he reasons, foreigners or Irish emigrants, perhaps craftsmen, were responsible for importing the La Tène objects. He also imagines that there “may have been tribes and ambitions of rival rulers behind the influence and patronage of exotic metalworkers.”

²³ Raftery, 228. He states that the human faces of La Tène metalwork created on the Continent are virtually absent in Ireland. Only one exists in metal, on a horse bit. Raftery, 168.

²⁴ For a full account of which side specific archaeologists take, see Damien, “Roman Ireland: What did the Romans ever do for us?” (2002), which includes newspaper accounts, scholars’ comments and arguments. Article appears on *blather.net* website, © Dave Walsh 1997-2006: <http://www.blather.net/shitegeist/2002/07/hibernia_romana.htm>.

²⁵ He suggests Mediterranean goods may have been traded, and he cites evidence for a possible trading station near Waterford during the first century C.E. Raftery, 206-07.

²⁶ Richard Warner, “Yes, the Romans did invade Ireland,” *British Archaeology* 14 (1996), reproduced on *British Archaeology Online*: <<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/ba/ba14/ba14feat.html>>.

²⁷ In 1842, a hoard of precious gold objects were found near the entrance, including twenty-five Roman coins and other coins composed of silver and copper. These, he puzzles, these finds were concentrated in the vicinity of the three great standing stones situated in front of the Newgrange entrance, which was not detectable during this era, as the tumulus was buried under earth. Also found was a torc with Roman lettering. Raftery, 212. He says other Roman finds were found not far from Newgrange, on the Hill of Tara, which revealed similar signs of wealth. Raftery, 208-09 and 212.

²⁸ Raftery, 211 and 214.

²⁹ Raftery, 210.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Note: The identifications of scenes listed below from the Irish crosses are those put forward by Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland. An Iconographical and Photographic Survey*, 3 vols. (Bonn: R. Habelt, 1992), with the exception of scenes identified as both *The Defeat of Simon Magus* and *Saints Paul and Anthony Overcoming the Devil in Human Form*, discussed in Chapter V of this essay. Numerous other scholars offer different identifications for many of the scenes, and these scholars and their attributions are enumerated at length in Harbison, II, accompanying each cross description.



Fig. 1. Kells Market Cross, south face. Horsemen (bottom); worn panel (bottom of shaft); *Christ in the Tomb* (second from bottom); *David Acclaimed King of Israel* (?); *Adam and Eve/Cain and Abel* (top of shaft); *Abraham Sacrificing Isaac* (left arm of cross); *Daniel in the Lions' Den* (cross head); *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (right arm of cross).



Fig. 2. Kells Market Cross, south face, east arm of cross.
Temptation of Saint Anthony.



Fig. 3. Moone Abbey Cross, north face. Animals interlaced (bottom of base); *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (center of base); *Paul and Anthony Breaking Bread in the Desert* (top of base); individual panels with animals (shaft).



Fig. 4. Moone Abbey Cross, north side, base, detail.
Temptation of Saint Anthony.



Fig. 5. Castledermot North Cross, west face. *Three in the Fiery Furnace* (bottom), *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (above), *Daniel in the Lions' Den* (above *Temptation*), *Adam and Eve* (cross head), *Daniel Playing a Harp* (left arm), *Abraham Sacrificing Isaac* (right arm), and *Solomon's Decision* or *Saints Paul and Anthony Overcoming the Devil in Human Form* (top).



Fig. 6. Castledermot North Cross, west face, shaft, detail.
Temptation of Saint Anthony



Fig. 7. Castledermot South Cross, west face. Hunting scene (base), *Daniel in the Lions' Den* (bottom of shaft), *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (second from bottom), *Adam and Eve* (next), *Saints Paul and Anthony Breaking Bread in the Desert* (second from top of shaft), unidentified broken scene (top of shaft). *David Playing His Harp* (left arm), *Crucifixion* (center of cross), *Abraham Sacrificing Isaac* (right arm). Unidentified scene above the *Crucifixion*, and the *Mocking or Flagellation of Christ* (top).



Fig. 8. Castledermot South Cross, west face, shaft, detail.
Temptation of Saint Anthony.



Fig. 9. Monasterboice Tall Cross, east face. *David Slays the Lion* (shaft bottom); *Abraham Sacrificing Isaac* (second from bottom); *Moses Smites Water from a Rock* (shaft, second figure panel from top); *David with the Head of Goliath* (shaft top figural panel); *Three in the Fiery Furnace* (cross, bottom); *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (cross, left arm); *The Fall of Simon Magus or Saints Paul and Anthony Overcoming the Devil in Human Form* (cross, right arm); *David Acclaimed King of Israel or Finn mac Cumail and his Warriors* (cross head); *Christ Walks Upon the Water* (above cross head); *The Repentance of Manasseh (?)* (top).



Fig. 10. Monasterboice Tall Cross, east face, south arm of cross.
Temptation of Saint Anthony



Fig. 11. Ullard Cross, west face, head. *Fall of Simon Magus* or *Saints Paul and Anthony Overcoming the Devil in Human Form* (top); *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (?) (right side). Other scenes too worn to determine.

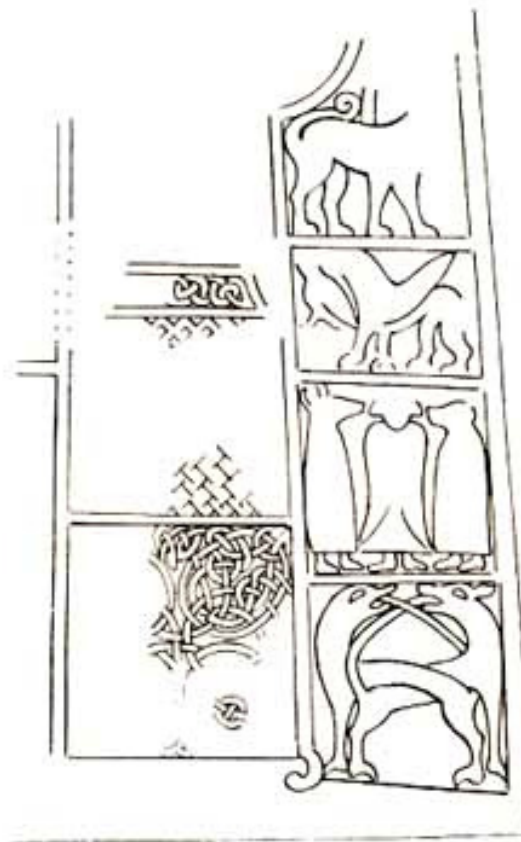


Fig. 12. Kettins cross slab. Drawing depicting relief sculpture.
Image identified as *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (?), right side,
second image from bottom. Isle of Man (n.d.).

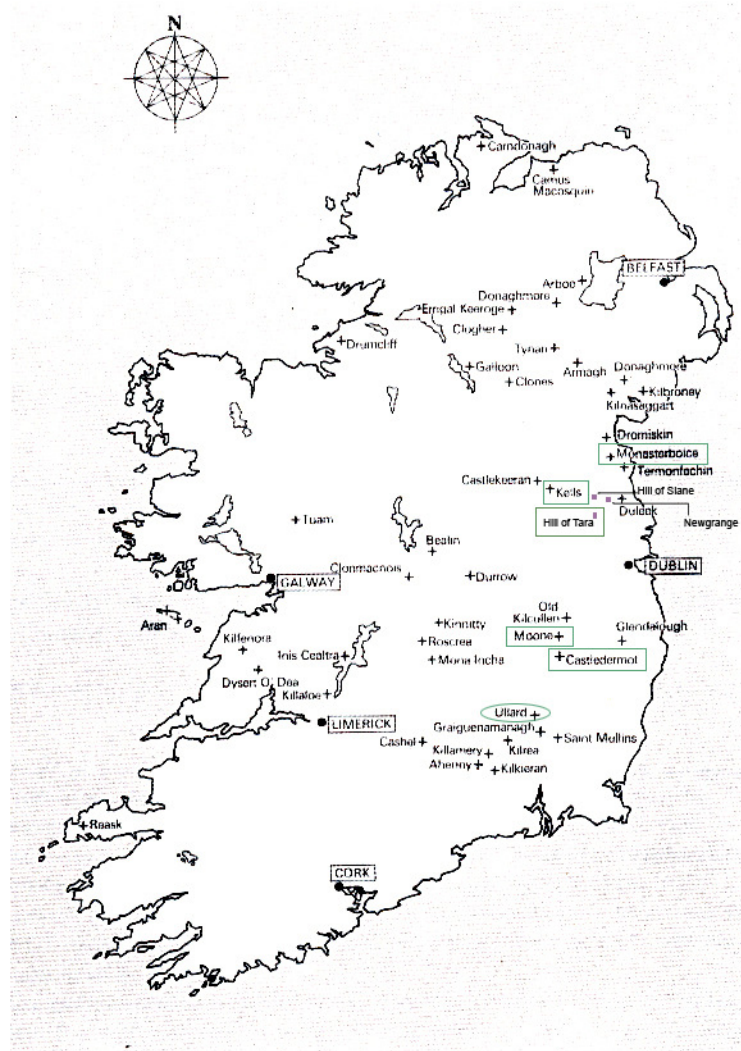


Fig. 13. Map of Ireland with medieval monastery sites.



Fig. 14. Clonmacnoise, Cross of the Scriptures, west face. Unidentified imagery on base; *Christ in the Tomb* (shaft bottom); *The Mocking or Flagellation of Christ* (shaft center); *The Soldiers Casting Lots for Christ's Garment* (shaft top); uncertain images of individual figures (cross arms); *Crucifixion* (cross head).



Fig. 15. Monasterboice, Muiredach's Cross, west face and detail with inscription. Hunting scene (base); animals and inscription (shaft plinth); *The Second Mocking of Christ* (shaft bottom); *The Raised Christ* (shaft center); *Traditio Clavium* (shaft top); *Denial of Peter* (left cross arm); *The Resurrection* (right cross arm); *Crucifixion* (cross head); *The Ascension* (top).



Fig. 16. Moone Cross, east face, head. *Christ Crucified or Risen* with animal overhead.



Fig. 17. Kells Market Cross, south face, cross head and arms.
Abraham Sacrificing Isaac (left arm), *Daniel in the Lions' Den* (center),
Temptation of Saint Anthony (right), *Adam and Even and Cain Slaying Abel* (below, cropped).



Fig. 18. Kells Market Cross, south face, cross head and east arm: detail with reptilian-like creature highlighted in green.
The rounded image next to it is too worn to see clearly, but it may have originally been a duplicate of the other or a reversed mirror image.



Fig. 19. Moone Cross, north face, base. A group of unidentified interlaced animals (bottom); *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (center); *Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac* (top).



Fig. 20. Moone Cross, west face, shaft. Animal panels.



Fig. 21. Torslunda plaque. Bronze.
Toslunda, Sweden (n.d.).

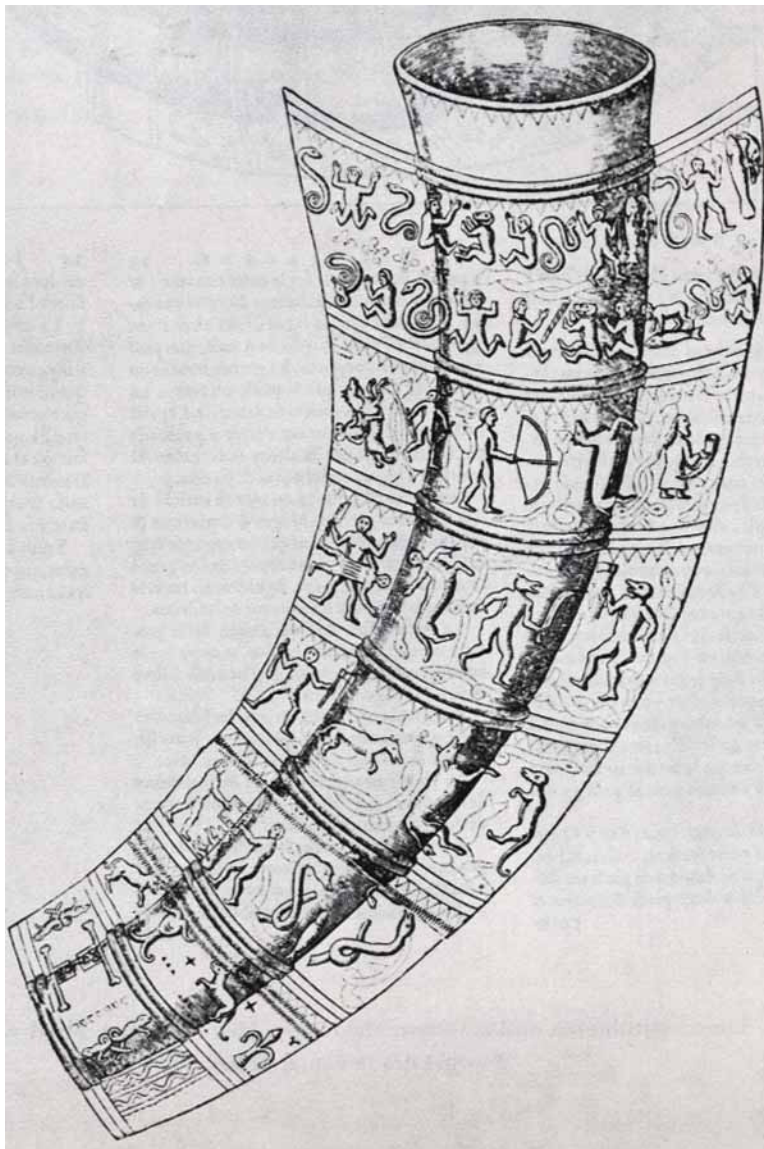


Fig. 22. Drawing made from Gallehus horn, original crafted in gold. Two animal-headed figures are in the third register from the top, right side. Gallehus, Jutland, Denmark. Fifth century C.E.



Fig. 23. Papil stone. Bird-headed men with human head (bottom).
Burra, Shetland, Scotland. 8th century C.E.



Fig. 24. Two bronze boars. Hounslow, Middlesex, England. First century B.C.E.



Fig. 25. Castledermot South Cross, west face, shaft, detail.
Temptation of Saint Anthony. Original photograph
in Arthur Kingsley Porter, *Crosses and Culture of Ireland*.



Fig. 26. Horse fitting from war chariot. Bronze.
Stanwick, North Yorkshire, England.
First century C.E.



Fig. 27. The Book of Kells, fol. 1v and detail. Ca. 800 C.E.



Fig. 28. Tarasque of Noves. Noves, France (n.d.).



Fig. 29. Iron helmet crowned with bronze bird, probably a raven, with movable wings. From the “chieftain’s tomb” at Ciumesti, Romania. First half of third century B.C.E.



Fig. 30. Bronze figurine identified as a crow or raven.
Woodeaton, Oxfordshire, England (n.d.).
Photo credit: Betty Naggar.



Fig. 31. Kirklevington Cross, head, detail. Man with birds on his shoulders.
Yorkshire, England (n.d.).



Fig. 32. Gundestrup Cauldron and detail. Embossed silver gilt. Gundestrup, Himmerland, Denmark. First century B.C.E.





Fig. 33. Warrior goddess with goose-crested helmet. Bronze.
Dinéault, Brittany, France. First century B.C.E.



Fig. 34. Stone statue from Euffigneix, Haute-Marne, France. First century B.C.E.



Fig. 35. Two carved stone animals. One with relief of another animal's head under its front paws. Armagh, Ireland (n.d.).



Fig. 36. Gundestrup Cauldron, detail: *Cernunnos* figure with animals. Embossed silver gilt. Gundestrup, Himmerland, Denmark. First century B.C.E.



Fig. 37. Torslunda plaque. Bronze. Torslunda, Sweden (n.d.).



Fig. 38. King standing on crouching sphinxes and holding two lions upside-down. Clay cylinder seal. Assyrian. Sixth century B.C.E.



Fig. 39. Bulls feeding from a sacred tree. Clay cylinder seal. Sumerian. Third millenium B.C.E.



Fig. 40. Bull-men and beasts. Clay cylinder seal. Sumerian. Ca. 2500 B.C.E.



Fig. 41. Winged figure grasping two winged and rampant bulls. Clay cylinder seal. Assyrian. Eighth to seventh century B.C.E.



Fig. 42. Purse cover from the Sutton Hoo ship burial and detail. Cloisonné plaques of gold, garnet, and checked millefiore enamel. Suffolk, England. First half of the seventh century, C.E.





Fig. 43. Monasterboice, Muiredach's Cross, west face, shaft, detail.
The Second Mocking or Arrest of Christ.



Fig. 44. Monasterboice, Muiredach's Cross, north face, end of cross arm.
The First Mocking or Flagellation of Christ.



Fig. 45. Moone Cross, east face, base. *Daniel in the Lions' Den* (lower), *Abraham Sacrificing Isaac* (middle) and *Adam and Eve* (above).



Fig. 46. Kells Market Cross, east face, shaft, detail.
Unidentified scene of horned figure with two beasts.



Fig. 47. *Daniel in the Lions' Den*. Tapestry. Cathedral of Sens, France (n.d.)



Fig. 48. Monasterboice Tall Cross, north face, shaft, detail. *Daniel in the Lions' Den.*

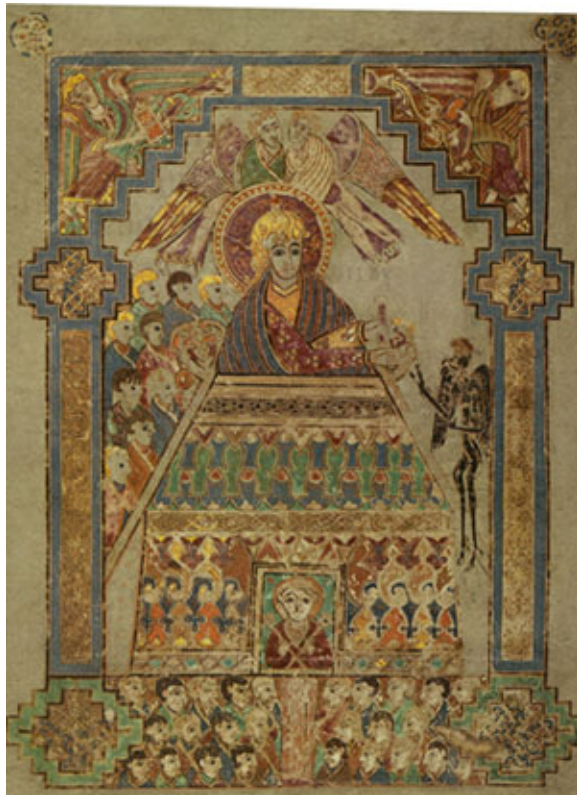


Fig. 49. Book of Kells, fol. 202v, and detail.
The Temptation of Christ, and devil. Ca. 800 C.E.





Fig. 50. Trier Apocalypse, fol. 67v. *Resurrection of the Dead and Last Judgment*. Early ninth century.



Fig. 51. Monasterboice, Muiredach's Cross, east face, cross head and detail. *Last Judgment* and devil from scene of *Satan Leading the Damned* (right cross arm).



Detail of a devil.



Fig. 52. Monasterboice, Muiredach's Cross, east face, cross head, bottom.
Saint Michael Weighing Souls.



Fig. 53. Castledermot North Cross, west face, top of cross.
*The Defeat of Simon Magus or Saints Paul and Anthony
Overcoming the Devil in Human Form.*



Fig. 54. Kells Market Cross, north face, west arm. *Saints Paul and Anthony Overcoming the Devil in Human Form or The Defeat of Simon Magus.*



Fig. 55. Monasterboice Tall Cross, east face, north arm. *Saints Paul and Anthony Overcoming the Devil in Human Form or The Defeat of Simon Magus.*



Fig. 56. Cross of the Scriptures, Clonmacnoise, north side, shaft, detail.
Saint Anthony Overcoming Overcoming the Devil in Human Form.



Fig. 57. Castledermot South Cross, west face, shaft. *Daniel in the Lions' Den* (bottom); *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (second from bottom); *Adam and Eve*; *Saints Paul and Anthony breaking bread in the desert* (top).



Fig. 58. Moone Cross, west face, base, detail. *The Twelve Apostles.*



Fig. 59. Kells Market Cross, south face, east arm of cross. *Temptation of Saint Anthony*.



Fig. 60. Kells Market Cross. *Temptation of Saint Anthony*. Colorized version.



Fig. 61. Monasterboice Tall Cross, east face, south arm of cross.
Temptation of Saint Anthony.



Fig. 62. Monasterboice Tall Cross. *Temptation of Saint Anthony.*
Enhanced version, with drawn lines.



Fig. 63. Monasterboice, Tall Cross, east face, cross head. *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (cross arm, left), *Saints Paul and Anthony Overcoming the Devil in Human Form* or *The Defeat of Simon Magus* (cross arm, right), *The Repentance of Manasseh* (uppermost), *Christ Walks Upon the Water* (above the panel of ornament), *The Three Children in the Fiery Furnace* (bottom of photograph).



Fig. 64. Monasterboice, Tall Cross, north side, shaft, detail.
David as King.



Fig. 65. Castledermot South Cross, west side, head. *David Playing his Harp* (left arm); *Sacrifice of Isaac* (right arm); *Crucifixion* (center); unidentified scene (below); unidentified figures (above).



Fig. 66. Monasterboice, Muiredach's Cross, east face, cross head. *Crucifixion*.



Fig. 67. Book of Kells, fol. 114 r. *Christ on Mount Olivet.*



Fig. 68. Clonmacnoise, Cross of the Scriptures, east face, shaft, detail.
*The Chief Butler Gives the Cup into Pharaoh's Hand (above);
Joseph Interpret the Dream of Pharaoh's Butler (below).*



Fig. 69. Castledermot South Cross, west face, shaft, detail. *Temptation of Saint Anthony*.



Fig. 70. Castledermot South Cross. *Temptation of Saint Anthony*. Colorized version.

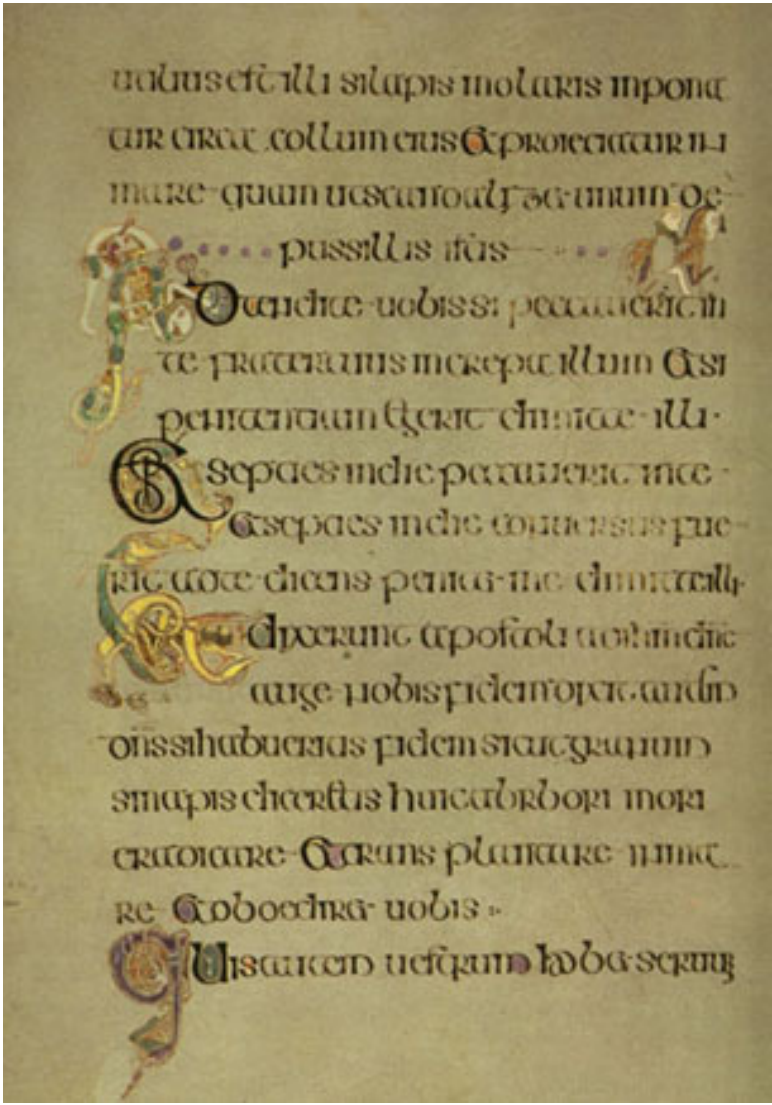


Fig. 71. Book of Kells, fol. 255v and detail.



Fig. 72. Monasterboice Tall Cross, east face, shaft, detail.
David with the Head of Goliath (left), and Samuel Anoints David (right).



Fig. 73. Monasterboice Tall Cross, east face, shaft, detail.
Samson Rends the Pillars of the House.



Fig. 74. Monasterboice Tall Cross, west face, head. *The First Mocking of Christ* (left arm); *The Kiss of Judas* (right arm); *Crucifixion* (center); *The Denial of Peter* (spanning both arm constrictions); *Pilate Washes His Hands* (top panel); *Peter Draws his Sword to Cut Off the Ear of Malchus* (just above *Crucifixion*); *Two Soldiers and a bird* (below Christ).



Fig. 75. Tara Brooch. Gilt, bronze, amber and enamel (diam. 3 5/8 in).
National Museum of Ireland, Dublin. Ca. 700.



Fig. 76. Kells Market Cross, north face, head, east arm.
Saint Anthony Overcomes the Devil in the Guise of a Woman,
and *St. Peter Warming his Hands* (in arm constriction).



Fig. 77. Monasterboice Tall Cross, south side, shaft, detail.
Zacharias, Elizabeth and the Infant John the Baptist.



Fig. 78. Roman coin showing Celt with horned helmet
and holding carnix in his left hand.



Fig. 79. Castledermot North Cross, west face, shaft, detail. *Temptation of Saint Anthony*.



Fig. 80. Castledermot North Cross. *Temptation of Saint Anthony*. Colorized version.



Fig. 81. Arboe Cross, east face, shaft, detail. *Daniel in the Lions' Den*.



Fig. 82. Castledermot South Cross, west face, base. Hunters and animals.

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