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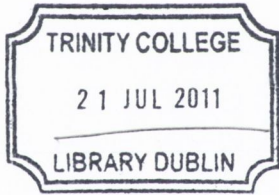
Liturgy and Architecture in Medieval Ireland
ca. 1100 - ca. 1315:
Evidence from the Diocese of Killaloe

Volume 1 of 2

(Text)

Submitted to Trinity College Dublin
(Department of the History of Art and Architecture)
In candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Frances Narkiewicz

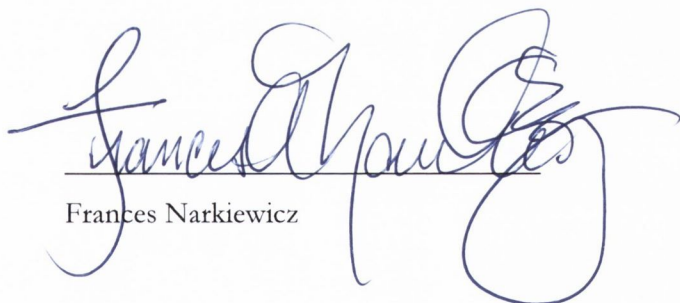


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DECLARATION

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Abbreviations

AFM	<i>Annala Rioghachta Éirann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters from the earliest period to the year 1616.</i> J. O'Donovan, ed. 7 vols (1845-51, repr. New York, 1996).
AI	<i>The Annals of Inisfallen (MS Rawlinson B503)</i> , S. Mac Airt (ed. and trans.) (Dublin, 1951).
AU	<i>The Annals of Ulster to A.D. 1311</i> , S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Noicaill (eds) (Dublin, 1983).
BAACT	British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
CDI	Calendar of Documents Relating to Ireland
CRSBI	Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland
Decies	Decies: Journal of the Waterford Archaeological & Historical Society
IER	Irish Ecclesiastical Record
GNMI	P. Harbison, <i>Guide to the National Monuments of Ireland</i> (Dublin: 1970).
JBAA	Journal of the British Archaeological Association
JGAHS	Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society
JNMA	Journal of the North Munster Archaeological Society
JRSAI	Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland
NMAJ	North Munster Antiquarian Journal
PRIA	Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy
RCHME	Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England
UJA	Ulster Journal of Archaeology

1. Introduction: Liturgy and Architecture in Medieval Ireland

The twelfth century was a time of dramatic change within the Irish Church as the waves of Gregorian reform arrived on the island. The foremost result was the replacement of a system of integrated, but essentially autonomous monastic churches with a hierarchy of diocesan bishoprics under the guidance of papal legates, thus bringing Ireland fully within the sphere of papal jurisdiction. However, the reform movement was not the only force at play in the twelfth century. The See of Canterbury, most notably the Archbishops Lanfranc and Anselm, had been in contact with Irish clerics and magnates since the late eleventh century, urging and exhorting adoption of practices in line with the Roman rite. By the middle of the twelfth century, continental-style monastic houses were being established, providing new models for the clerical life. The arrival of the Anglo-Normans some thirty years later would instigate further changes in not only the political and ecclesiastical spheres but also in the cultural dynamic of the country that would last for centuries.

The collective effect of these changes was to impact upon every facet of ecclesiastical life, and the material culture of the church was no exception. A number of different scholars have connected the appearance of new approaches to ecclesiastical art with the changing intellectual and political climate of the time. As Ragnall Ó Floinn has stated: ‘Insofar as we are able to demonstrate chronologically, church building, sculpture, church furnishings and ecclesiastical vestments were significantly different by the end of the twelfth century from what they were say around 1050.’ Although he acknowledged that the changes which prompted such a transformation of material culture were not yet fully understood, he saw such changes within the context of ‘the introduction of new liturgical practices, requiring completely new church and altar furnishings and ecclesiastical vestments...’¹

Many authors, explicitly or implicitly, refer to ‘liturgical change’ as an integral part of the twelfth-century reforms without specifying what these changes may have been. Indeed, there is a lack of scholarly consensus on the ways in which liturgical practice differed by the thirteenth century. While changes in the political hierarchy of the church have been thoroughly studied, any understanding of changes in the rites and rituals that constituted religious worship in twelfth and thirteenth-century Ireland remains vague. Exactly what were

¹ Ragnall Ó Floinn, ‘Bishops, liturgy and reform: some archaeological and art historical evidence’ in Damian Bracken and Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel (eds), *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth century. Reform and Renewal* (Dublin, 2006), pp 218-238.

these ‘new liturgical practices’ which required new church furnishings and ecclesiastical vestments? What evidence exists to suggest that the Reforming movement actually instigated changes in the public act of Christian worship in Ireland as opposed to administrative jargon? If so, what were they? Perhaps more pertinent to the question of parochial care and sacramental administration: would the laity in Ireland notice changes in their local churches? To what extent did the laity participate in religious worship and receive the care of sacramental administration during the twelfth and thirteenth century? Did the Anglo-Normans instigate a completely new ecclesiastical hierarchy and liturgical practice in the areas they occupied, or had some of these practices already found their ways to localities during an earlier period?

These questions, and many others like them, may never be fully answerable due to a variety of factors, among them a lack of documentary evidence for ecclesiastical practice in much of Ireland during the time. Yet, church building, furnishings, vestments, and other aspects of material culture had indeed changed by 1100, and would change further by the fourteenth century when the expansion of the Anglo-Norman colony had reached its fullest extent. Developments in church architecture during the period have certainly been noted, yet the cumulative effect of these events on the definition and articulation of Irish sacred space has yet to be explored.² The purpose of this thesis is not to answer the questions posed above, but to ask to what extent church architecture can inform their investigation, with particular regard to lay religious practices and pastoral care.

This thesis examines the standing fabric of medieval churches within the diocese of Killaloe that documentary and architectural evidence indicate were in continuous or intermittent usage from the twelfth through fifteenth century. While the majority of the churches included within the study are parish churches, a wide variety of site types are included within the study group, including the cathedral church, Augustinian houses, Mendicant friaries and churches of unidentified function. The standing medieval fabric of these buildings is analysed, with a focus on building programmes, to determine the ways in which the architecture can contribute to our understanding of the evolving social role and function of churches over the course of the middle ages.

To this end, the thesis is arranged around three primary themes of investigation and discussion to help isolate the ways in which architecture informs our understanding of

² See, for example, works by H. Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings* (3 vols, Dundalk, 1955-60), R. Stalley, *The Cistercian monasteries of Ireland: an account of the history, art, and architecture of the White Monks in Ireland from 1142-1540* (Yale, 1987) and T. O’Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland: Architecture and Ideology in the Twelfth century* (Dublin, 2003). A full discussion of methodological approaches follows presently.

changes within the broader spheres of social and ecclesiastical culture. These are architectural evidence for the emergence of parish churches within both Gaelic and Anglo-Norman territories, architectural evidence for church function and pastoral care at both parish and monastic churches and finally, evidence of geographical or chronological patterns in plan, style or patronage within the diocese. Specific focus will be placed on the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, as this is the period which saw not only the emergence of the parish network but the most significant developments in medieval theological belief and liturgical practice.

As will be discussed in the following chapter, very little scholarly work on the changing role of the church in medieval Ireland has been done from the perspective of the architectural historian. The study of parochial development in the twelfth and thirteenth-centuries, for example, has been a topic of increasing interest in recent years, yet the recent volume published on the subject included no contribution from any architectural historian.³ While archaeologists have seen the potential of medieval building fabric to inform the understanding of this very complex subject, architectural historians on the whole have been absent from the debate. Archaeologists certainly have much to contribute to our understanding of building programmes at these church sites, but their research tends to focus on different aspects of the medieval fabric than does the work of the architectural historian. In the absence of any specific documentation for changing liturgical practices, architectural evidence is the primary resource for the investigation of changes in use and function of the church within the landscape. This thesis contends that architectural grammar can be read as text, forming a body of knowledge which is able to communicate information about the past in its own right. Emergent patterns in style and patronage, sometimes only evidenced by sculptural style and moulding profiles employed in the elaboration of architectural features, can be combined with often patchy documentary evidence for ecclesiastical administration in medieval parishes to transmit information about changing religious practices and theological attitudes. This thesis contributes to this debate by not only gathering together a variety of disparate sources for liturgical practice in medieval Ireland, but by exploring the ways in which they affected attitudes towards church planning and furnishing. After reaching preliminary conclusions, it further explores architectural evidence for the evolving role of the Church in the medieval diocese of Killaloe.

³ E. FitzPatrick and R. Gillespie (eds), *The Parish in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006). This extremely valuable publication is the only volume to focus on the topic of the evolution of the medieval parish.

2. Form and Function: Methodologies of Art and Liturgy

The relationship between liturgical practice and architectural elaboration is complex, and not always readily apparent. Although the primary function of a church building is to provide a sacred space for the rites and ritual which encompass Christian worship, this function was never the sole determining factor in the design of the building. Many aspects came together to determine the shape, size, decoration and design of the medieval church building. These include diverse elements, such as the financial resources at hand, the wishes of the patron, the availability of building materials, in addition to the skill and imagination of the masons and stoneworkers involved in the buildings construction. The form and fabric of existing buildings, and local building practices and traditions must also be included. This last point is particularly relevant as the vast majority of parish churches underwent multiple building campaigns that mindfully incorporated earlier fabric.

Despite the fact that the primary function of the church was to provide a suitable space for the enactment of the liturgy, the discussion of the ‘relationship’ between liturgy and architecture remains problematic. The term relationship implies a certain back-and-forth, or influence of one aspect upon the other; that the architecture will impact the performance of the liturgy as the needs of the liturgy will impact the architecture of a church.¹ While this may be so in certain cases, it must be noted that the particular liturgies could be enacted in very different buildings just as one building could accommodate different rites and rituals. As one author has noted: ‘The indirect monumental setting [for the liturgy] is the church building whose scheme and shape are not exclusively determined by the liturgical functions’.²

A number of scholars have wrestled with the problematic relationship between liturgy and architecture throughout the middle ages, and despite a number of studies on the subject in many different contexts, no concrete methodology has arisen.³ Helen Gittos has described the relationship as ‘elusive’, the investigation of which is riddled with ‘fundamental

¹ For a discussion of the problematic nature of the ‘relationship’ between liturgy and architecture and the terminology used to discuss it, see K. van der Ploeg, *Art, Architecture and Liturgy: Siena Cathedral in the Middle Ages* (Groningen, 1993), 1-2.

² S. de Blaauw, *Cultus et décor; liturgie en architectuur in laatintiek en middeleeuws Rome: Basilica Salvatoris Sanctae Mariae Sancti Petri* (2 vols, Vatican City, 1994), I.45.

³ The various methodological approaches used by scholars will be discussed presently. For an overview of works, see here the discussion at page 8, especially fn. 13.

difficulties'.⁴ There are instances in which architectural features demonstrably reflect an identifiable liturgical rite, but such examples can only be produced by the existence of a text which can be connected to a particular phase of building in which the layout and organization of the space can be clearly understood. More often than not, any certainty with regard to the impact of liturgical practice on architectural design (or vice versa) can only be attributed to a particular fitting or fixture within the fabric of the church, as when a piscina placed in an unusual location indicates the presence of an altar.⁵

Nevertheless, much scholarship on medieval architecture has recently begun to consider, and even focus directly, on questions of function over more formalist stylistic studies. While stylistic inquiry remains at the heart of architectural history, the modern scholar is no longer content to catalogue various approaches to the treatment of different architectural elements, but also strives to place these styles within a broader cultural context.⁶

***Geistesgeschichte* and the Cultural 'Meaning' of Architecture**

The study of liturgy and architecture has philosophical roots dating back to the nineteenth-century Hegelian concepts of *Geistesgeschichte* and *Zeitgeist*. In terms of art and architectural history, these concepts combine to form a basis for the contextualization of a work of art within its cultural milieu. The German concept of *Geistesgeschichte* could be loosely translated in English as 'intellectual history' or 'history of the human mind'. It refers to the idea that at any given stage in human history the totality of a society and culture's varied aspects, including socio-political organization, economic basis, intellectual thought, religion, art and philosophy, are encompassed by a *Zeitgeist*, a spirit which represents the collective consciousness of the culture at the time. As one author has put it: 'Any given stage in history is a totality in which the same spirit manifests itself in all these different modes. And it follows that art is more than

⁴ H. Gittos, 'Architecture and Liturgy in England c. 1000: Problems and Possibilities' in N. Hiscock (ed.), *The White Mantle of Churches. Architecture, Liturgy and Art around the Millennium* (Turnhout, 2003), 91-106. Here, Gittos provides an overview of various methodological problems encountered in study of liturgy and architecture.

⁵ See, for example, A. Klukas, 'Liturgy and Architecture: Deerhurst Priory as an Expression of the *Regularis Concordia*', *Viator*, 15 (1984), 81-106 where he argues that the priory's architecture directly reflects both the liturgical rites of the *Regularis Concordia* as evidenced through the placement of architectural features.

⁶ One recent example of such work within an Irish context can be found in a study that not only catalogued different moulding profiles within the Ormond lordship, but used variation within these mouldings to comment on the technical ability of masons working in late medieval Ireland. See D. O'Donovan, 'Building the Butler Lordship' (PhD Thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2008).

mere form and style, that it has more than mere surface visual meaning, and that it is always charged with the basic attitude toward life of the civilization that produced it.⁷

This kind of analysis was first brought to art history around the turn of the twentieth-century by scholars such as Alois Riegl and Max Dvorák, and has remained a mainstay of architectural history ever since.⁸ Influential scholars such as Hans Belting, Gunter Bandemann, and Hans Sedlmayr among others adopted this type of methodological analysis in the mid-twentieth century. Perhaps the most famous scholar to apply these lines of thinking to medieval architecture was Erwin Panofsky. Panofsky eschewed traditional formalist approaches which tended to focus on the aesthetics of a work of art, irrespective of its environment or context and instead viewed the artwork as the bearer of both iconographical and iconological meaning.⁹ In the study of medieval architecture, Panofsky most famously brought his approach to the fore in his *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, where he argued that the birth of Gothic at St-Denis was directly related to the intellectual climate of the age.¹⁰

Panofsky's methodological approaches were certainly influential, but he was not the only one to popularize the connection between liturgy, theology and architecture at the time: scholars such as Meyer Shapiro, Paul Frankl, Carol Heitz and Richard Krautheimer were also influential in the spread of these new 'contextual' and 'representative' methodologies in the mid-twentieth century. Krautheimer himself wrote one of the key papers in the field of liturgy and architecture, 'Introduction to an Iconography of Architecture', in which he laid out a theoretical framework for applying iconographical principles to medieval buildings.¹¹ While there were severe problems with both Panofsky's and Krautheimer's proposed methodologies for locating meaning within decoration and fabric of the church building, the most significant impact of these and similar works was to draw attention to the context of a work in order to

⁷ A. W. Levi, 'Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte: The Lesson of Panofsky' in *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 20:4 (1986), 79-83 at 80.

⁸ On the influence of Geistesgeschichte on twentieth-century art historical methodology, see W. E. Kleinbauer, 'Geistesgeschichte and Art History' in *Art Journal*, 30:2 (1970-1971), 148-153.

⁹ Where iconography refers to the identification of the content of a work of art, iconology refers to the meaning, or cultural relevance, of that content.

¹⁰ E. Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (New York, 1957). Panofsky had earlier put forth his ideas about the nature of the Sant-Denis Gothic style and its intimate connection with Suger's Pseudo-Dionysian theological leanings in his work *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis and Its Art Treasures* (Princeton, 1946). Scholarly works discussing Panofsky and his views on early gothic architecture are plentiful: see, for example, Peter Kidson, 'Panofsky, Suger and St Denis' in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, 1 (1987), 1-17 and more recently, Andreas Speer, 'Is There a Theology of the Gothic Cathedral? A Re-reading of Abbot Suger's Writings on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis' in J. F. Hamburger and A. M. Bouche (eds), *The Mind's Eye. Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages*. (Princeton, 2006), 65-83. For an overview of current approaches to the study of intellectual culture and architectural form, see the excellent collection Eric Fernie and Paul Crossley (eds), *Medieval Architecture and its Intellectual Context. Studies in honour of Peter Kidson*, (London, 1990).

¹¹ Richard Krautheimer, 'Introduction to an 'Iconography of Medieval Architecture' in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, 5 (1942), 1-33.

more fully understand its design and function.¹² This attention placed on the context and function of a work in the mid-twentieth century has today found itself fully integrated into the corpus of medieval architectural and art historical methodologies.¹³ Indeed, the breadth and scope of art and architectural/liturgical studies indicate that it has become a significant sub-field within medieval art historical studies.¹⁴

The study of liturgy and architecture follows the trend of modern art and architectural scholarship more generally in its attempt to see church architecture from a variety of different perspectives.¹⁵ In the field of architectural history, the effect was a broadening of the conception of what buildings could reveal about the society that erected them, and a willingness to place a building within a broader cultural context.¹⁶ Medieval architectural historians no longer content themselves with listings and recordings of remains, but strive to understand why a building was constructed as it was, and what this can tell us about the society in which it was erected. Without overlooking more formalistic analysis of architectural style, this new approach seeks to ask what relationship, if any, exists between the layout and aesthetics of a church and the variety of religious practices taking place within it. The application of the principles of Cultural Theory and the New Art History to the study of the medieval church has resulted in new matrices for thinking about how architecture is informed by its cultural context and, conversely, what the architecture can reveal about the culture itself.¹⁷

These approaches have altered art historical studies by incorporating methodologies from history, archaeology, anthropology and architectural history to investigate the medieval built

¹² For a critical analysis of, and response to, Krautheimer's article see Paul Crossley, 'Medieval Architecture and Meaning: The Limits of Iconography' in *The Burlington Magazine*, 130 (1988), 116-121.

¹³ A number of recent collections have been published which highlight the extent to which the study of liturgy and art/architecture has become part of modern medieval scholarship. Among them are E. L. Lillie and N. H. Petersen (eds), *Liturgy and the Arts in the Middle Ages. Studies in Honour of C. Clifford Flanigan*, (Copenhagen, 1996); V. Raguin with K. Brush, and P. Draper (eds), *Artistic Integration in Gothic Buildings* (Toronto, 1995); and T. J. Heffernon and E. A. Matter (eds), *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church* (Kalamzoo, 2001).

¹⁴ Art/Liturgical studies have become so widespread since the 1990s that no less than three substantial review articles, detailing the evolution of methodological approaches and key works in the field, have been published. Each article in itself provides a substantial overview of the field in modern medieval scholarship: S. de Blaauw 'Architecture and Liturgy in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Traditions and Trends in Modern Scholarship' in *Archiv Für Liturgiewissenschaft*, 33 (1991), 1-34; C. Kosch, 'Auswahlbibliographie zur Liturgie und bildenden Kunst/Architektur im Mittelalter; in *Heiliger Raum. Architektur, Kunst und Liturgie in mittelalterlichen Kathedralen und Stiften* (Münster, 1998), 243 – 377; and E. Palazzo, 'Art and Liturgy in the Middle Ages: Survey of Research (1980-2003) and Some Reflections on Method' in *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 105:1 (2006), 170-184.

¹⁵ On the New Art History and its emphasis on works of art as products of varied cultural elements, see, for example, A. L. Rees and F. Borzello (eds), *The New Art History* (London, 1986).

¹⁶ An excellent introduction to modern architectural studies through the lens of cultural theory is N. Leach (ed.), *Rethinking Architecture: a reader in cultural theory* (London, 2005).

¹⁷ On architectural iconography as a branch of the New Art History, see for example J. Harris, *New Art History: A Critical Introduction* (London, 2001). See especially Chapter 5: 'Structures and meanings in art and society'.

environment through the lens of ritual and landscape studies.¹⁸ Such approaches have also influenced the field of archaeology and medieval landscape studies and helped to provide a bridge through which both architectural and archaeological methodologies can be combined in order to more fully elucidate the ways in which attention to the built environment can inform our understandings of social and cultural history.¹⁹ Indeed, a number of the significant works produced on liturgical use of space in medieval Ireland have come from archaeologists, such as Michael Ryan and Tomas Ó Carragáin.²⁰

It could be argued that this academic interest in building function and the relationship between architectural form and meaning influenced the spread of this new socio-cultural approach to ecclesiastical buildings within the wider population. In addition to the emergence of cultural theory within the humanities, church architecture and conceptions of the church as a liturgical space were raised outside of academic communities as Vatican II drastically reshaped the modern practice of Catholicism. Modern religious communities and church architects were given a wide ranging freedom to create a built environment which would reflect and represent new liturgical practices. Given that there was a renewed sense of liturgical openness and communication between the Roman Catholic Church and laypeople, questions were raised as to how this should be reflected in the place of worship. In what way should the 'new' Church be reflected by the new church; to what degree is an 'architecture of liturgical renewal' possible? Certainly, Vatican II did not precipitate the first questions such as this to be raised: Protestant Churches of the early modern period certainly took great pains to differentiate themselves in appearance and arrangement from their high medieval counterparts.²¹

¹⁸ British archaeologists John Blair and Richard Morris have produced two excellent monographs incorporating these methodologies to expand the understanding of the role of the church building within medieval England. See J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005) and R. Morris, *Churches in the Landscape* (London, 1999).

¹⁹ For the impact of visual studies on archaeological theory, see for example, the 2007 issue of *World Archaeology* entitled *Viewing Spaces*; particularly C. Frieman and M. Gillings, 'Seeing is perceiving?' in *World Archaeology*, 39 (2007), 4-16 and K. Giles, 'Seeing and believing: visibility and space in pre-modern England' in *World Archaeology*, 39 (2007), 105-21.

²⁰ These scholars have written about the liturgical use of space in a number of different publications, including M. Ryan, 'Eucharistic Vessels, Architecture and Liturgy in Early Medieval Ireland' in R. Bourke, *et al* (eds), *De re metallica: The uses of Metal in the Middle ages* (Aldershot, 2005), 125-46; M. Ryan, 'Sacred Cities?' in A. Minnis and J. Roberts (eds), *Text, Image, Interpretation. Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of É. Ó Carragáin* (Turnhout, 2007), 515-28; T. Ó Carragáin, 'Skeuomorphs and spolia: the presence of the past in Irish pre-Romanesque architecture' in R. Moss (ed.), *Making and Meaning in Insular Art Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Insular Art held at Trinity College, Dublin 25-28 August 2005* (Dublin, 2007), 95-109 and T. Ó Carragáin, 'The Architectural Setting of the Mass in Early Christian Ireland' in *Medieval Archaeology*, 53 (2009), 119-54.

²¹ The seminal work on changes in ecclesiastical devotion and artistic representation in England during the late medieval and Reformation period is E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (London, 1992). On the use of aesthetic intention in art and architecture of the early modern period, see also W. Coster and A. Spicer (eds), *Scared Space in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2005).

This concept of inherent and representative ‘meaning’ of architecture is not a modern construction. Indeed, sacred space and aesthetic intention have always been considerations of the Christian Church, and were at the forefront of medieval perceptions of ecclesiastical architecture. In addition to works detailing the complex layers of meaning as interpreted by Isidore of Seville and William Durandus, writers also warned against the dangers of overly embellished architecture: as early as the fifth century, Saint Jerome questioned the purpose of elaborate architecture: ‘What use are walls blazing with jewels when Christ in His poor is in danger of perishing from hunger?’²²

Liturgy, Architecture and Material Culture in Medieval Ireland

A number of scholarly works have incorporated this new ‘socio-liturgical’ approach to contextualising medieval ecclesiastical material culture, and yet there still remains a lack of understanding within the Irish studies field of the ways in which medieval ecclesiastical art, and more particularly architecture, may be reflective of their cultural context. Although many of these works are exemplary, the majority of them tend to adopt such a broad or narrow focus that even when collected, the sum total of published work does not provide the reader with a comprehensive picture of how Irish ecclesiastical culture was informed by either shifting socio-ecclesiastical polities, or presumptive ‘liturgical change’, over the middle ages.

One of the main problems in understanding the development of Irish architectural form and decoration over the course of the middle ages is the organization of the key survey texts. Based upon methods used in developing a chronology of English architectural form, survey works such as Leak’s *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings* attempted to chart the evolution of Irish architectural form based upon methods employed by Bond in charting stylistic developments. As more recent scholars have noted, many of the chronological patterns which apply to English designs are wholly unsuitable for the understanding of Irish methods and styles.²³ As a result of this narrowly defined focus, no clear picture of developments in church plan, size or internal arrangements have emerged. Where modern survey works do pay more attention to architectural features which help elucidate building usage and function, these tend to focus on stylistic approaches which correspond to roughly defined time periods. There are

²² Jerome, ‘Letter lviii to Paulinus’ in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ser. II vol. VI (ECF – vol. 29): *St. Jerome: Letters and Select Works* (<http://www.synaxis.org/cf/volume29/ECF00006.htm>) (09 March 2011).

²³ From about the year 1300 and the beginning of the Gothic style in Ireland, not even a very general chronological pattern can be seen as has been shown by R. Stalley, ‘Irish Gothic and English Fashion’ in J. Lydon (ed.), *The English in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1984), 65-86.

works which explore the development of ecclesiastical architecture within specific geographic areas, but these too tend to be grouped along the same chronological lines. While extremely useful in understanding developments within the Pre-Romanesque, Romanesque/Transitional or Gothic periods, no single work has emerged which provides a synthesis of changes over the course of the Middle ages.

This is further exacerbated by the poor survival rate of interior furniture and decoration, which have the potential to reveal much about not only the financial resources of the church and patron but also attitudes towards the necessary accoutrements for liturgical celebration. Of the major survey works of Irish architecture, none includes comprehensive listings or surveys of fittings and fixtures, such as were conducted by J. Charles Cox and Francis Bond in England.²⁴ There are no scholarly studies devoted to features such as the piscina or sedilia.²⁵

Liturgy and Architecture: Methodological Approaches

The task of trying to interpret either representational ‘meaning’ or patterns of usage through architecture is tricky enough in any setting, but becomes even more so in pre-Norman Ireland. There is no scholarly consensus regarding either the organization of, or the variety of, liturgical practices of the Irish Church at the time. A lack of manuscripts with rubrics or specific instructions for interaction with the building fabric, make liturgical usage near impossible to pin down with any certainty. Elusive as it may be, the investigation of liturgy and architecture is essential if we are to place the fabric of the medieval church within its cultural context. In many cases, problems arise when the architecture is investigated with a set of vague criteria in order to determine a variety of levels of undefined ‘meaning’. Much of this trouble comes from the need to draw information from a number of overlapping disciplines, which are not always accessible. There is a need to define more precisely the questions that can be posed: what does it mean when we ask about the relationship between liturgy and architecture?

²⁴ See F. Bond, *The Chancel of English Churches* (London, 1916) and J. Cox and A. Harvey, *English Church Furniture* (London, 1907).

²⁵ Rachel Moss is one of the few authors who has considered the appearance of liturgical fittings and fixtures in late medieval churches, but rather than discuss them in depth, she provides a brief overview of some of the more elaborately carved survivals. R. Moss, ‘Permanent Expressions of Piety: the Secular and the Sacred in Later Medieval Stone Sculpture’, in R. Moss, C. Ó Clabaigh and S. Ryan (eds), *Art and Devotion in Late Medieval Ireland*, 72–97.

The lack of a clearly defined methodology for the study of liturgy and architecture as recently as 2005 is made clear by Richard Gem in his article ‘How much can Anglo-Saxon Buildings Tell us about Liturgy?’.²⁶ In a relatively short article, he reviewed the difficulties inherent in attempting to determine a relationship between rite and building fabric, and proposed five general principles which are worth listing in full, as they comprise the first attempt to clearly define the methodological considerations to be undertaken in studies of this type:

1. Particular architectural forms may have their origins in providing for liturgical functions but, once they have entered the architectural vocabulary, can take on a life of their own.
2. Architectural forms alone, in the absence of other evidence, cannot tell us conclusively about the liturgical functions they actually house in a particular building, though they may raise important questions.
3. Either documentary evidence or archaeological evidence is generally necessary to supplement the purely architectural evidence in order to provide a reliable interpretation of how a particular building functioned.
4. Documentary accounts that seem to set out a liturgical brief for a building do not in themselves prove how an architect may have responded to that brief in forming his building.
5. A posteriori documentary interpretations of the form of a building are not necessarily a reliable guide to the original intentions of either the client or the architect.

Such caveats provide a very challenging starting point for the exploration of liturgy and architecture, further emphasizing the fact that correlation between rite and place cannot always be pinned down, even when the outline requirements have been fulfilled. Nevertheless, a variety of methodological approaches have shown that medieval liturgical and devotional practices did inform architectural design in a number of ways.

Broadly speaking, there are three main approaches to the study of liturgy and medieval architecture. Each has employed differing methodologies to determine the way that form and function correspond to rite, church type and specific liturgical practices; the way that architecture can reflect attitudes towards the creation and elaboration of sacred space within

²⁶ Richard Gem, ‘How much can Anglo-Saxon Buildings Tell us about Liturgy?’ in H. Gittoes and M. Bradford Bedingfield (eds), *The Liturgy of the late Anglo-Saxon Church*, (London, 2005), 271-290.

its theological context; and the way that architecture can inform understanding of the church's social and political roles in society.

Form, Function, Rite

The first methodological approach to be discussed is the attempt to reconstruct, through documentary and architectural evidence, the enactment of a specific liturgical rite within the ecclesiastical space in and around a church. This approach requires a text clearly describing the ritual that takes place which can be placed at a building at a time when its liturgical arrangements are known. It tends to approach the subject from the perspective of who did what where, how was the ritual enacted within the fabric of the building? Examples of this approach include the works by Klukas on the *Regularis Concordia*²⁷, Baldovin on the Roman Stational Liturgy²⁸, and Van der Ploeg on Siena Cathedral.²⁹

There are a number of challenges encountered when using this approach. Contemporary accounts documenting medieval liturgical rites do not typically include specific descriptions of how such rituals were to be enacted and how actions were to be performed by the participants. It must also be remembered that allusions to rites cannot always serve as evidence that these specific practices occurred. Even where a particular liturgical practice is described, modern scholars must account for wide variability in the enactment of that practice. Rites and rituals were not static events but were organic and continually evolved to convey new levels and patterns of meaning.³⁰ This variability in liturgical ritual is more problematic in the earlier middle ages, as by the later period many rituals had been firmly established and codified. The tenth and eleventh-centuries in particular were the time when many rites and rituals were first taking form; the Corpus Christi procession, so emblematic of late medieval devotional ritual, was at the time only enacted in a handful of small municipalities which may have developed similar rites separately.³¹ Even in the cases where documentary evidence for the enactment of a liturgical rite survives, it need not have been performed in exactly the way described each and every time.

²⁷ Klukas, 'Liturgy and Architecture: Deerhurst Priory'.

²⁸ J. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Rome, 1987).

²⁹ K. van der Ploeg, *Art, Architecture and Liturgy: Siena Cathedral in the Middle Ages* (Groningen, 1993).

³⁰ On the difficulty of studying medieval ritual in general, see G. Koziol, 'Review article: The dangers of Polemic: Is ritual still an interesting topic of historical study?' in *Early Medieval Europe*, 11 (2002), 367-388. On medieval ritual practices more generally, see G. Althoff, 'The Variability of Rituals in the Middle Ages' in G. Althoff with J. Fried and P. Geary, *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography* (Cambridge, 2002), 70-87.

³¹ M. Rubin, *Corpus Christ. The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991).

Another challenge is the ability to associate texts, where they survive, to a particular building where contemporary fabric remains discernable. The form and design of many ecclesiastical buildings, especially those first constructed in the early middle ages, has been significantly altered through later medieval building campaigns and more modern restoration programmes. In cases where a text describing ritual practice survives, if the building fabric where that rite was enacted has been substantially altered, it may not be possible to pinpoint a relationship between the two. Even in instances where liturgical ritual and building fabric can be connected, there need not be a necessarily discernable relationship between them. In a study which investigated connections between liturgical ritual and architectural design at Siena Cathedral, Kees van der Ploeg found that liturgy was not an important consideration in the arrangement of liturgical space:

‘... these changes in the liturgical arrangement of churches do not reflect changes in the liturgy itself. As has been noted, continuity is essential to the liturgy. Church building and church decoration were changing constantly, not because of the liturgy, but for non-liturgical, often not even strictly religious reasons. Since medieval society in all its aspects was strongly related to religion, it was also within the precincts of the church that excellent opportunities were to be found to express social distinctions and to make political statements. In general this accounts more for the development of art and architecture than the liturgy did.’³²

Architectural Indicators of Spatial Organization

The second methodological approach to the study of liturgy and architecture seeks to tie the presence of a specific architectural element to specific liturgical or devotional practices. Examples of this approach can be found in works by Fernie on pier design³³, Parsons on ablution drains³⁴, Jessiman on piscinas³⁵, Sekules on Easter Sepulchres³⁶, and Blum on cathedral west galleries³⁷.

³² Van der Ploeg, *Art, Architecture and Liturgy*, 26.

³³ E. Fernie, ‘The use of Varied Nave Supports in Romanesque and Early Gothic Churches’, *Gesta* 23:2, 107-118

³⁴ D. Parsons, ‘Sacrarium: ablution drains in early medieval churches’ in L. A. S. Butler and R. K. Morris, *The Anglo-Saxon Church: Papers on history, architecture and archaeology in honour of Dr. H.M. Taylor* (London, 1986), 105-120.

³⁵ I. Jessiman, ‘The Piscina in the English Medieval Church’ in *JBAA*, 20-21 (1957), 53-72.

³⁶ V. Sekules, ‘The Tomb of Christ at Lincoln and the Development of the Sacrament Shrine: Easter Sepulchres Reconsidered’ in T. A. Heslop and V. Sekules (eds), *Medieval Art and Architecture at Lincoln Cathedral* (London, 1982), 118-31.

³⁷ P. Blum, ‘Liturgical Influences on the Design of the West Front at Wells and Salisbury’ in *Gesta* 25:1 (1986), 145-50.

In cases where the above approach is successful in correlating a specific rite to a building, it sometimes sheds light on only one aspect of its design. Pamela Blum's work provides one example where this is the case: by reconstructing the Sarum Palm Sunday Procession, Blum provides an explanation for the function of western galleries on a number of cathedrals employing Sarum Use. Despite this extremely useful and innovative analysis, it only serves to contextualise one particular aspect of the cathedral's design. Studies of this kind tend to begin with the presence of one type of fitting or fixture (the sacrarium/piscina, the altar) and track its different variations over time. These variations are then explained through changing liturgical or theological approaches to the act taking place at the feature.

While these studies may give us insight into a particular aspect of liturgical practice, such as the celebration of the Eucharist, or the way in which churches were divided into separate liturgical spaces, they do not necessarily give us a whole picture of how the building relates to the activities taking place in it. This is especially applicable to Ireland, where most of the early stone churches have no surviving internal fittings or fixtures to suggest liturgical usage. Absence of evidence not being evidence of absence, the existence of fittings or fixtures, while extremely useful where they do exist, cannot always present a clear indication of building usage or function. At their most successful, studies incorporating this methodological approach use architectural forms and features to argue that performative actions took place at a particular space within the church. While these actions might point towards more elaborate rituals or spatial arrangements, it must be remembered that forms and features can take on a wide variety of meanings once they have entered the architectural vocabulary.³⁸

Architecture as the Bearer of Meaning

The third, and most broadly defined methodological approach, is the contextualization of the architectural elaboration of a building and its features with either theological attitudes or socio-political concerns. This approach has been exemplified in studies by Brooke³⁹, Gittoes⁴⁰, Morris⁴¹ and Blair.⁴² Instead of the connoisseurial approach sometimes taken by art and architectural historians to the design of architectural elements, this methodology draws heavily

³⁸ This principle was rightly noted by Gem in his discussion of methodological considerations in the study of liturgy and architecture. See Gem, 'How much can Anglo-Saxon Buildings Tell Us About Liturgy?', 276.

³⁹ C. N. L. Brooke, *Medieval Church and Society: Collected Essays* (New York, 1971).

⁴⁰ H. Gittoes, 'Sacred Space in Anglo-Saxon England: Liturgy, Architecture and Place' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Oxford, 2001).

⁴¹ R. Morris, *Churches in the Landscape* (London, 1989).

⁴² J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005).

on building archaeology and documentary sources to explore the changing use and function of the building within the society as a whole.

The types of questions such an approach poses are quite different than those posed by more traditional art historical studies, but nevertheless shed light on how a church's form might reflect its function. While a traditional approach may look for a distribution of the cushion capital in order to map patterns in patronage and schools of masons, this approach might look at the distribution of types of church building (apsidial or single-celled, for example) within the landscape to map patterns of parochial development. It poses questions such as: how does nave size correspond to population density? In cases where entrance doors to the parish are placed on the north or south, does this correspond to the location of a settlement in relation to the building? Do certain variations in building layout appear in areas of similar secular development? Is the addition of lateral space, such as naves, indicative of a rise in lay attendance in services, or a rise in the number of burials inside the building? This type of approach is best suited to perceiving a building's form and style as representative of theological or political concerns, as seen in the work of Rabe on Saint-Riquier⁴³.

This type of approach can be used in conjunction with the previous two and is particularly popular in studies on Irish medieval architecture. One scholar has employed this methodology to elucidate the function of the west gallery at St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny.⁴⁴ Building upon Blum's work on Salisbury Cathedral, Barry has argued that the presence of a similar west gallery shows that the same liturgical rite was used in Kilkenny when the cathedral was constructed. This feature's appearance can only be understood by placing it within the wider political context and relating its function to the Sarum Use as employed in Ireland. It has also been employed by Gem in his study of the Romanesque west door at St Flannan's Oratory, Killaloe.⁴⁵ His art historical approach reveals that the design could only have been the work of an Anglo-Norman mason, or at the very least, a mason fully versed in the repertoire of Anglo-Norman Romanesque of the 1190s. While the form of the doorway is not indicative of any particular liturgical rite or practice, contextualisation of this earliest datable appearance of Romanesque within the country does reveal that Irish magnates were clearly manipulating architecture to create powerful political statements.

⁴³ S. Rabe, *Faith, Art and Politics at Saint-Riquier. The symbolic vision of Angilbert* (Philadelphia, 1995)

⁴⁴ S. Barry, 'The Architecture of the Cathedral' in A. Empey (ed.), *A Worthy Foundation: The Cathedral Church of St Canice, Kilkenny 1285-1985* (Kilkenny, 1985), 25-48.

⁴⁵ R. Gem, 'St Flannan's oratory at Killaloe: a Romanesque building of c. 1100 and the patronage of king Muirchertach Ua Briain' in D. Bracken and D. Ó Riain-Raedel (eds), *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century. Reform and Renewal* (Dublin, 2006), 74-105.

This approach requires a broad definition of liturgy, and must take into consideration not only specific rites such as the singing of the hours, but all activities which represent for both the cleric and layperson, the practice of Christianity. It encompasses lay devotion, participation in pilgrimage or processions, and veneration of relics amongst a wide variety of activity. Despite the problems laid out, this thesis will show that by applying each methodological approach, the different building types and styles which evolved in Ireland during the twelfth and early thirteenth-centuries can be understood and contextualised in a variety of different ways.

Form and Function in Medieval Killaloe

This thesis uses each of the three previously discussed methodological approaches, with emphasis placed upon the final and most broadly defined. Although each methodology approaches the same problem from a different angle, an approach embracing all three is often necessary in order to place a building within a meaningful context:

‘... major elements in liturgical practice and church design are not due to whims of taste and fashion, but also express widely felt sentiments and attitudes; or, as I should put it, in every substantial variety in church design one may find an attempt to solve a problem in a church’s function, to follow this and that new or old fashion, and to reflect in an appropriate way some of the religious sentiments of the age.’⁴⁶

This perspective remains at the heart of this study’s approach by contending that architecture itself can be read as a text, capable of transmitting information about continuity and change of religious sentiment within medieval Ireland. This thesis compares documentary evidence for continuity and change in liturgical ritual and theological attitudes over the middle ages with contemporary evidence for attitudes towards architectural style and design. After reaching preliminary conclusions about how architecture reflects change in religious attitudes and practices, an in-depth study of selected churches within the diocese of Killaloe was conducted in order to determine how each line of methodological inquiry can be applied to the study of these buildings.

⁴⁶ C. N. L. Brooke ‘Religious Sentiment and Church Design in the Later Middle Ages’ in *idem, The Medieval Church and Society: Collected Essays* (New York, 1971), 162-81.

This thesis interrogates architectural fabric by asking the following questions, devised through application of the three methodological approaches described above, of both the study group as a whole and the particular churches which comprise it:

1. Can the layout or design of a building indicate the enactment of a specific rite or ritual?
2. Can the layout or design of a building suggest a particular function served by the church or changes in that function over time?
3. Do particular architectural elements, including fittings and fixtures, indicate any discernable spatial organization within a building?
4. Is there any continuity in the placement of these architectural elements that might indicate similar patterns of usage in buildings of a comparable function?
5. In what way, and to what degree, can architecture inform our understanding of the liturgical life of the medieval Irish Church?

A wide-ranging approach such as this will allow for an investigation of the particular questions posed by this thesis in addition to providing a means of evaluating the usefulness of each methodological approach to the study of liturgy and architecture within medieval Ireland.

3. Liturgical Practice in Medieval Ireland

Despite the volume of scholarly work dedicated to understanding the ramifications of the twelfth-century reform movement in Ireland, surprisingly little work has investigated possible changes in the liturgical practice of the time. The focus on the political changes within the church hierarchy and the establishment of diocesan bishoprics has produced a number of sophisticated works addressing the changing role of the Church not only within Ireland itself, but also within the broader sphere of Western Christendom.¹ Yet very little research has been done on the liturgical practice, the rites and rituals, of the twelfth century. Scholarly work on medieval Irish liturgical manuscripts tends to employ either pure art historical or musicological approaches. Art historians focus on illuminations and decorative features² while liturgists focus on musical notation and melodies within these manuscripts³; few studies from either discipline address the rites and rituals they might describe.⁴ While the appearance and transmission of melodies and notation might point to transmission of other liturgical practices, such works tend to remain inaccessible to the non-specialist.⁵ To further complicate matters, no comprehensive study of liturgical *acta* from Irish ecclesiastical synods and councils has been undertaken. Despite extant records of such councils, particularly after the Anglo-Norman colonisation, any comment on specific decrees and their impact tends to be found in specialist studies which do not endeavour to give a holistic picture of Irish liturgical life at any point within the middle ages.⁶ The aim of this chapter is then to investigate the history of the medieval Irish Church with particular reference to liturgical practice. Such background will be essential in placing the ecclesiastical architecture of the diocese of Killaloe within a broader theological socio-ecclesiastical context.

¹ See, for example, A. Gwynn, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Dublin, 1992) and J. A. Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1998). See also a number of works by Flanagan, which address the subject, including M. T. Flanagan, 'Hiberno-papal relations in the late twelfth century' in *Archivium Hibernicum*, 34 (1976-77), 55-70.

² The study of twelfth century manuscript decoration by F. Henry and G. L. Marsh-Mischeli, 'A Century of Irish Illumination (1070-1170)' in *PRLA*, 62 (1961 - 1963), 101-166, exemplifies this art-historical approach.

³ On musicological approaches, see the edition of *Early Music* on 'Early Music of Ireland': *Early Music*, 27:2 (2000) and note the inclusion of only two pages on liturgy within the discussion of medieval music in A. Buckley, 'Music in Prehistoric and Medieval Ireland' in D. Ó Cróinín (ed.), *A New History of Ireland I. Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), 776-778.

⁴ One author who has considered both the performative and, to some degree, architectural implications of manuscript liturgical evidence is Alan Fletcher, who has published a number of works revolving around medieval Irish liturgical drama. His works, however, tend to focus on the late medieval high church liturgies of the Anglo-Norman Church in Dublin. See, for instance, Alan Fletcher, 'Liturgy in the late medieval cathedral priory' in Kenneth Milne (ed.), *Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin: A History* (Dublin, 2000), 129-141.

⁵ See, for example, Patrick Brannon's investigation into the survival of Celtic chant in later medieval Irish Sarum manuscripts: P. Brannon, 'The Search for the Celtic Rite. The TCD Sarum Divine Office MSS Reassessed' in Gerard Gillen and Harry White (eds), *Irish Musical Studies 2: Music and The Church* (Blackrock, 1993), 13-40.

⁶ The records of, and secondary works dealing with, Irish ecclesiastical synods and councils will be discussed more fully throughout this chapter.

Religious Practice in Early Christian Ireland

While it is tempting to think of early Irish Christianity as a thing unto itself, cut off from the mainstream of Western Christianity by its location on the periphery of Europe, this is not the case.⁷ Although Ireland had developed its own particular rite of Christian practice since its conversion in the fifth century, its monks maintained contact with religious centres in Rome and France and established communities in Scotland and Northumbria.⁸ By the high middle ages, the Irish had established houses as far away as Germany and even in Rome itself.⁹ As early as the seventh century there are records of synodial activity instigated at the urging of papal letters as the paschal controversy reached its apogee.¹⁰ Around the same time there was a movement towards Romanisation, and indeed a faction within the Irish Church called the *Romani*. Roman practice had long been revered in the West as 'authentic', but by the eighth century it was coming to be seen as normative, in Ireland as well as on the continent. There is evidence for the presence of Irish clerics seeking Papal counsel in Rome as far back as 631,¹¹ on pilgrimage to Rome in 929, and references to Irish royals undertaking the journey in 1027 and 1030.¹² Although close contact with the continent was difficult during the Viking Age, it is important to be aware that the twelfth-century reforms were not a product of a sudden and renewed appearance of continental Christian influence on the island.

One aspect of early Irish Christianity, which might signal participation in the wider sphere of Western Church practice, is evidence for synodial activity. By the early fifth century the

⁷ The standard work on the role of the church in early medieval Ireland is T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, 2000).

⁸ The tradition of Irish *peregrinati*, especially in the seventh and eighth century, is well known. While there is evidence for Irish hermits as far away as Iceland by the eighth century, Britain and the Continent were more common destinations. Some of these Irish pilgrims founded important monastic centres, such as that of Bobbio, founded by St Columbanus. For a brief overview on the *peregrinati* tradition, see K. Hughes, 'The Church in Irish Society, 400-800', in D. Ó Cróinín (ed.), *A New History of Ireland I. Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), 301-329, especially 321-324.

⁹ Irish monks are found in Germany from the late eleventh century; by the twelfth century a congregation of Irish Benedictines was centred at Ratisbon, with houses commonly known as *Schottenklöster*. There are also records indicating the presence of an Irish community in Rome from 1095, *S. Trinitas Sactorum*, possibly located on the southeast corner of the Palatine hill. See A. Gwynn, *The Twelfth century Reform. A History of Irish Catholicism Vol. II* (Dublin, 1968), 8 and 53.

¹⁰ There are records of synodial activity in Ireland possibly dating as far back as the fifth century which will be discussed in the following sections. See D. Dumville, *Councils and Synods of the Gaelic Early and Central Middle ages* (Cambridge, 1988), especially 22-3.

¹¹ Cummián's *De Controversia Paschali* states that Irish legates were in Rome in 631 to seek advice from the Pope on the proper method of calculating the date of Easter. See Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 365. The Easter Controversy in Ireland will be discussed later in this chapter at 24-25.

¹² The Annals record the deaths of Céle Dabhaill, abbot of Bangor and Fergil, abbot of Terryglass in Rome in 929. The first royal pilgrimage recorded in the annals is that of Máel Ruanaid Ua Máel Doraid, king of Cenél Connaill in 1027. See M. T. Flanagan, *Irish Society, Anglo-Norman Settlers, Angevin Kingship. Interactions in Ireland in the Late Twelfth century* (Oxford, 1989), 11. Flaithbertach Ua Néill, king of Ailech, undertook a pilgrimage to Rome in 1030. See F. J. Byrne, 'Ireland and her neighbors, c. 1014-c.1072' in D. Ó Cróinín (ed.), *A New History of Ireland I. Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), 862-898, at 881.

tradition of synodial and conciliar government that would become the backbone of Canon Law had been established as the means of governance within the Western Church.¹³ Evidence for Ireland's participation in this means of governance can be gleaned from the *Collectio canonum hibernensis*, the earliest known Gaelic compilation of conciliar decrees and *acta*, assembled in the first half of the eighth century.¹⁴ Although no records of Irish conciliar activity exist from the eight to the mid-eleventh century, annalistic references indicated that such meetings were taking place.¹⁵ It was at Killaloe, adjacent to Brian Boru's royal palace of Kincora, that one of the first of the eleventh-century councils was held, in 1050, at the instigation of Brian's son, Donnchadh.¹⁶ The annals record eighteen councils held between 1040 and the arrival of Henry II in 1172, many at the instigation of Brian's descendants.

Nor was the twelfth century the first to witness a reform movement. The eighth century saw the rise of an earlier reform movement, the Céli Dé, centred around Lismore in Waterford.¹⁷ Intended to counterbalance monastic laxity and the impact of lay abbacy, it was characterized by strict asceticism and renewed spirituality. The practice of lay abbacy was one of the issues at the centre of the twelfth-century reforms. By that time the abbots of important monasteries controlled the Irish ecclesiastical polity, and these abbacies were normally held as the hereditary office of one local dynasty. The traditional image of the pre twelfth century Irish Church is one in which monasteries are at the core of religious life: '... by about 700, probably considerably before, the government of the Irish church was in the hands of abbots. So when we think of the Irish church we must think of a monastic church which performed spiritual duties for the laity – baptism, the saying of mass, preaching and burial.'¹⁸ The common conception is that the initial hierarchy of diocesan bishoprics established in the fifth

¹³ While early Latin terminology describing synodial and conciliar government can be irregular, modern scholarship differentiates between the two in the following manner: The term 'synod' describes an exclusively ecclesiastical gathering, while the term 'council' indicates lay participation. See Dumville, *Councils and Synods*, 20-21.

¹⁴ The *Collectio* remains the primary resource for the societal role of the Early Irish Church. For an edition of the *Collectio* see H. Wasserschleben (ed.), *Die Irische Kanonensammlung* (Leipzig, 1885). For an overview of the *Collectio*, see D. Ó Cróinín, 'Hiberno-Latin Literature to 1169' in *idem*, *A New History of Ireland I. Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), especially 391-93. Portions of the *Collectio* are reprinted, with translation in L. Beiler, *The Irish Penitentials* (Dublin, 1963), 160-175.

¹⁵ The *AU* record ecclesiastical meetings in 780 and 804, while the *Chronicum Scotorum* records a synod at Clonmacnois in 899. See Dumville, *Councils and Synods*, 33-35.

¹⁶ See the *AFM* 1050.8, *AI* 1050.2, and K. Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society* (London, 1966), 243-44. The only previous eleventh century council is recorded as taking place in Munster in 1040, also at the instigation of 'Brian's son', but mentions no ecclesiastical participation. See *AI* 1040.6 and Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society*, 36.

¹⁷ See P. O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé: Spiritual Reform in Ireland 750-900* (Dublin, 1981).

¹⁸ A. Hamlin and K. Hughes, *The Modern Traveler to the Early Irish Church* (London, 1977), 7. The pastoral role of early Irish monasticism is dealt with in more depth at R. Sharpe, 'Some Problems Concerning the Organization of the Church in Medieval Ireland' in *Peritia*, 3 (1984), 230-70 and C. Etchingam, 'Pastoral Provision in the First Millennium: A Two-Tier Service?' in E. FitzPatrick and R. Gillespie (eds), *The Parish in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), 79-90.

century was wholly supplanted by ‘monastic *paruchia*’, whereby the abbot of a powerful monastery authoritatively ruled over scattered subject churches. These abbots were invariably married laymen, inheriting their office through a system of hereditary succession, ruling over a proprietary church that retained its close association with noble families through blood ties. While this is certainly true, it is essential to consider the role of the bishop in the early Irish Church, as the reinvigoration of this office was at the core of the twelfth-century reform.

Recent research has argued that monastic abbacies did not entirely replace the role of the bishop, and that bishops remained the foremost providers of pastoral care.¹⁹ This ongoing role can be gauged from the opening book of the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*. This text stipulates that a bishop should be properly selected and canonically consecrated and accords him the distinctive powers of confirmation, ordination, consecration of churches and general supervision of pastoral ministry in addition to his judicial role. Although monastic abbots were sometimes accorded a general directing role in respect of the clergy, they were more closely identified as administrators of temporal lands; pastoral and judicial jurisdiction were reserved for the bishop. Bishops were accorded the highest legal status, equal to that of a provincial over-king, whereas a lay abbot’s legal status was tied to the episcopal status of his monastery. They also had a role to play in the secular polity, as support of a bishop greatly enhanced the status of a claimant to high-kingship. There is, then, direct evidence of a comparative relationship between the over-king and his subjects with the bishop and his *paruchia* at a time when bishops are generally presumed to have been ineffectual in the Irish Church, as well as indications that the diocesan system and fixed spheres of episcopal jurisdiction adopted in the twelfth-century synods were not as novel as might be imagined.²⁰

Neither is there substantial evidence that the Irish Church was out of step with either common Western European liturgical practice or theological belief. While the political structure of the church was certainly different from that of the Continent by the twelfth century, only one other aspect of Irish Christianity did not conform to the stipulations of Canon Law: that of marriage. Early Irish marriage practices garnered much attention from ecclesiastics abroad by the twelfth century and figure greatly in early medieval polemic against

¹⁹ See, for example, Richard Sharpe, ‘Churches and Communities in Early Medieval Ireland: Towards a Pastoral Model’ in J. Blair and R. Sharpe (eds), *Pastoral Care Before the Parish* (Leicester, 1992), 81-109 and C. Etchingham, ‘The Early Irish Church: Some Observations on Pastoral Care and Dues’ in *Eriu* 42 (1991), 99-118. What follows is drawn heavily from C. Etchingham, ‘Bishops in the Early Irish Church: A Reassessment’ in *Studia Hibernica*, 28, (1994), 35-62.

²⁰ See Etchingham, ‘Bishops in the Early Irish Church’, 35-62 for more information on the role of the bishop as gathered from the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* and other sources.

the country.²¹ Recent work on the status of marriage has found that although moral attitudes to the institution were substantially the same in Ireland as on the Continent, aspects of the vernacular Brehon Law provided for divorce, polygamy, and concubinage which Canon Law prohibited.²² Although such practices were not so different from those on the continent in the seventh and eighth centuries, differing conceptions of hereditary descendancy and inheritance law became increasingly problematic for the ruling Gaelic classes by the high middle ages.²³ Not only were Irish claimants to royal and noble succession becoming progressively varied and diverse, but such practices were inherently incompatible with the primogeniture-based feudal succession system in place across much of Europe by the time.

Evidence for a Celtic Rite?

If then, all evidence points to contact with the broader spectrum of continental religious institutions, including Rome, and participation in the wider sphere of Canon Law jurisdiction throughout the middle ages, from where does the notion of an unorthodox Celtic Rite stem?²⁴ Certainly, the Irish Church had developed its own liturgical customs. However, national and regional variation within liturgical and devotional practice was commonplace throughout Europe, and religious uniformity was not something that Rome required at this early date. Moreover, there is early evidence for an acknowledgement of Roman primacy and adherence to orthodoxy from at least the seventh century. In addition to the structure of Canon Law visible in the statutes of the *Collectio*, both Kildare and Armagh expressly acknowledged Roman primacy in their bids for primacy within the seventh-century Irish Church.²⁵

²¹ For a discussion of contemporary attitudes to Irish marriage practices, see A. Candon, 'Power, Politics and Polygamy: women and marriage in late pre-Norman Ireland' in D. Bracken and D. Ó Riain-Raedeal (eds.), *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century. Reform and Renewal* (Dublin, 2006), 106-127.

²² Although the Irish Church acknowledged canon law precepts from a very early date, traditional Brehon Law was practiced by ecclesiastics in conjunction with Roman custom throughout the middle ages. For an analysis of early Irish marriage practices, see B. Jaski, 'Marriage Laws in Ireland and on the Continent in the Early Middle Ages', in *'The Fragility of Her Sex? Medieval Irish Women in their European Context'*, ed. C. E. Meek and M. K. Simms (Dublin, 1996), 16-42; and A. Tatsuki, 'The Early Irish Church and Marriage: an Analysis of the Hibernensis', in *Peritia* xv (2001), 195-207. For an overview of early Irish legal systems and practices, see T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'Early Irish Law', in D. Ó Cróinín (ed.), *A New History of Ireland I. Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), 331-370.

²³ On this subject, see K. Simms, *From Kings to Warlords* (Woodbridge, 1987), particularly the discussion at 10-20. See also I. Warntjes, 'Regnal succession in early medieval Ireland' in *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2004), 377-410 and B. Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin, 2000).

²⁴ The terms Celtic Church and Celtic Rite have often been used to describe an early medieval religious practice practices by the native populations of Ireland, Great Britain and the north-west continent, particularly northern Spain and Brittany. The terms have often carried with them connotations of unorthodox practices out of step with mainstream contemporary Christianity, a concept which will be dealt with in this section. See one discussion about the validity of this terminology at K. Hughes, 'The Celtic Church: Is This a Valid Concept?', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 1 (1980), 1-20.

²⁵ Propaganda created by both Armagh and Kildare in support of their claims expressly acknowledges contact with, and the primacy of, Rome. The *Liber Angeli*, produced to support Armagh's claim, emphasizes the possession of Roman relics of Peter and Paul, amongst others, and stresses recourse to Rome for issues that are undetermined within the Irish Church. See L. Bieler (ed.), *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh* (Dublin, 1979).

The absence of evidence for any unorthodox theological teaching or liturgical anomaly from surviving writings and manuscripts suggests that the notion of the ‘Celtic Rite’ stems not from any particular Irish practice, but rather from early medieval polemic that remained in the consciousness of historians until the modern era. The first references to eccentric liturgical practices in Ireland are recorded in Bede’s *History of the English Church*, in particular reference to the Easter Controversy.

The Paschal controversy, which arose in seventh-century Insular Christianity, revolved around the proper method for the calculation of the date of Easter according to either the ‘Celtic’ or ‘Roman’ method.²⁶ Founded by Irish *Peregrinati*, the Northumbrian church followed the Celtic dating method, which Rome had long since abandoned. Convened in 664, and described by Bede in his *History*, the Synod of Whitby determined that the Northumbrian Church would adhere to the Roman calculation for the dating of Easter.²⁷ The Synod also determined that the Northumbrian Church would adopt the Roman style of monastic tonsure, which differed from the traditional Celtic style.²⁸

In describing the choice between a ‘Celtic or ‘Roman’ practice, Bede describes the issue as one in which either traditional regional observances or those in place in Rome should take precedence. The perception of the Irish methods as presented by Bede intimates that the Irish Church somehow saw itself as separate, or failed to acknowledge the primacy of Rome, even though most of Ireland had adopted the Roman date for Easter calculation at the Synod of Mag Léne in 630. The rest of the Irish Church soon followed at the Council of Birr in 697.²⁹

The impressions of Ireland and its Church put forth by Bede have coloured perceptions of the Irish Church ever since. Medieval authors, such as Giraldus Cambrensis and St Bernard, both seem to have taken on Bede’s view of the eccentricity and ‘otherness’ of Irish Christianity.³⁰

On references to Rome in the Armagh/Kildare primatial struggle, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, especially Chapter 10.

²⁶ For a comprehensive overview of the Paschal controversy in England and Ireland, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, especially 344-415, ‘The Paschal Controversy’.

²⁷ Bede’s description of the Synod of Whitby and the circumstances surrounding the Paschal Controversy can be found in his *Ecclesiastical History*, chapters xxv-xxvi; see B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (eds and trans), *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969), 295-311.

²⁸ On the tonsure, see E. James, ‘Bede and the tonsure question’ in *Peritia*, 30 (1984), 85-98.

²⁹ Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 408.

³⁰ It must be noted that both Giraldus and St Bernard describe the Irish in polemic works in support of specific agendas. It must also be noted that both Bede and Giraldus describe the island as an odd place, where magical creatures exist that can be found nowhere else in the world. Such descriptions surely did much to support the notion that not only the Irish Church, but the land and the people were somewhat unnatural or unusual.

Whereas Giraldus' criticisms of the Irish Church tended to mimic the claims laid by the English Church to Rome in support of political intervention in the island³¹, St Bernard mentioned the presence of heretical belief amongst the clergy.

In his *Life of St Malachy*, written around 1145, Bernard recorded: "There was a cleric in Lismore, good in his character, they say, but not in his faith. In his own eyes a knowledgeable man, he had the presumption to say that in the Eucharist there is only a sacrament and not the *res sacramenti*, that it is only the sanctification and not the true presence of the Body."³² Malachy called the man out publicly, but when he refused to recant, the heretic was struck ill by God. He died as he acknowledged his error, reconciled to the church.

The twelfth century saw the first serious challenge to the Church's understanding of Eucharistic theology and ushered in a period when ever more precise and nuanced understandings of sacramental theology in general were developed. The widespread reforms throughout Western Christendom in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries led to the convention of the ecumenical council Lateran IV in 1215, where the constitutions dealt with heresies and Church reform issues.³³ One of the outcomes of this council was the first official declaration of transubstantiation, the process by which the bread and wine were transformed into the body and blood of Christ. This was issued, in part, as a response to an eleventh-century Eucharistic controversy began by Berengar of Tours who asserted that the bread and wine did not, in fact, change in substance during consecration. Against this background, Bernard's allegations might appear more serious, suggesting perhaps that Irish Christianity was somehow un-Roman and out of touch with orthodox Latin theology.

However, this claim does not stand up to investigation. There is no indication that Eucharistic heresy was endemic, or even substantively present, in Ireland. On the contrary, it would seem

³¹ See Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, J. O'Meara (ed. and trans.) (London, 1982).

³² Bernard of Clairvaux, "The Life of St Malachy" in R. T. Meyer (trans.), *The Life and Death of St Malachy the Irishman* (Kalamazoo, 1978), p.71.

³³ The decrees of Lateran IV are reproduced and translated in N. P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils Vol. 1: Nicaea I to Lateran V* (Georgetown, 1990), 227-272. Eighteen Irish bishops and two bishops-elect attended this council. As Dunning has noted: 'Quite apart from its numerical strength this body ... was truly representative of the mixed character of the Irish episcopate. Six of them, perhaps seven, were Anglo-Norman; the remainder were probably native Irish. The English or Anglo-Norman bishops were: Archbishop Henry (Dublin), Simon Rochfort (Meath), Ralph (Down), Edmund (Limerick), Henry (Emly), Robert (Waterford), and possibly Daniel (Ross). The Irish bishops were: Archbishop Echdonn mac Gille Uidhir (Armagh), Archbishop Ua Lonargain (Cashel), Archbishop Ua Ruadhain (Tuam), Aedh Ua Maileoin (Clonmacnoise), Clement Ua Snedaigh (Achonry), Cormac Ua Tarpaidh (Killala), Cornelius Ua Éenne (Killaloe). The identity of the bishop of Raphoe and Enachdun remains unknown; all we know of the elect of Lismore is that his Christian name was Thomas; and the bishop-elect of Mayo, who was the archdeacon of the diocese, is also unknown.' P. J. Dunning, 'Irish Representatives and Irish Ecclesiastical Affairs at the Fourth Lateran Council' in J. Watt, *et al* (eds), *Medieval Studies Presented to Aubrey Gwynn, S. J.* (Dublin, 1961), 90-113 at 91-92.

that the doctrine of real presence was well established in Ireland. In the eleventh or twelfth century, Echtgus Úa Cúanáin of the community at Roscrea composed the poem beginning *A duine nácb creit iar coir*.³⁴ In describing the mystery of the Eucharist, the poet states: ‘though the priest notices it not, angels bear the host aloft to Christ, to his proper body. They bring it without spending a moment, with no interval of time, holily, as I consider, to pay for the sins of all in general.’

It is interesting to note that this understanding of the process of transubstantiation is also found in an early ninth-century Irish liturgical book, the Stowe Missal.³⁵ The prayer beginning *Supplices*, the final prayer uttered during oblation and following the Consecration of the Canon of the Mass reads as follows:

‘We humbly beseech Thee, Almighty God, bid these offerings to be borne by the hands of Thy holy Angel to Thine altar on high, before Thy divine majesty: so that as many of us as shall receive the most holy Body and Blood of Thy Son from this sharing of the altar may be filled with all heavenly benediction and grace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.’³⁶

Yet another indication of Irish belief in the doctrine of the real presence comes in a letter from Lanfranc to Domnall Ua hEnna, bishop of Munster and the leading Irish prelate of his time.³⁷ Tentatively dated to 1081, only two years after Berengar’s retraction, the letter illustrates the distinction between the Irish and Norse clergy. The bishop had enquired about the practice of administering the Eucharist to Irish infants immediately after baptism. Lanfranc advised that this practice was unnecessary, as baptism was enough to ensure the salvation of the infant. He then began to expound of the idea of the Eucharist and transubstantiation in terms heavily drawn from his treatise against Berengar. Lanfranc was not

³⁴ As translated in G. Murphy, ‘Eleventh or Twelfth century Doctrine Concerning the Real Presence’ in J. Watt with J.B. Morall and F.X. Martin (eds), *Medieval Studies Presented to Aubrey Gwynn*. (Dublin, 1961), 19-28.

³⁵ Dublin, R.I.A. MS D.II.3. This missal, likely written at Lorrha around the year 800, was discovered concealed within a wall of Lackeen Castle, Tipperary around 1735. A discussion of the chapel of this castle is included in the Catalogue, see the entry 42 Curraghlass. On the missal, see G. F. Warner (ed.), *The Stowe Missal, MS D.II.3 in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy*, Dublin (2 vols, London, 1906, 1916), where a translation of the Treatise on the Mass is included in an Appendix on pp 40-42.

³⁶ ‘*Supplices te rogamus et petimus, omnipotens Deus, iube [haec] preferri per manus sancti angeli tui in sublime altari tuo in conspectu divini maiestatis tuae, ut, quotquot ex hoc altari sanctificationis sacrosanctum filii tui corpus et sanguinem sumserimus, omni benedictione at gratia replemur.*’ This translation of *Supplices* is as found in J. A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its origins and development*. (London, 1959), 434. The prayer as found in the Stowe Missal is slightly different, indicating more than one altar, the relevant passage being: ‘*iube [haec] preferri per manus sancti angeli tui in sublime altari tuo in conspectu divini maiestatis tuae*’, as given in Murphy, ‘Eleventh or Twelfth Century Doctrine’, 22.

³⁷ Letter from Lanfranc to Domnall Ua hEnna ca. 1081, as translated in H. Clover and M. Gibson (eds), *The Letters of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury* (Oxford, 1979), 155, Letter 49.

shy about drawing attention to perceived abuses within the Irish Church, but he never once implies in the letter that improper Eucharistic belief is an issue in Ireland.³⁸

There is, then, no evidence of any anti-Roman, or even particularly Irish, rite in terms of theological belief. Neither is there any evidence of unorthodox practice in the celebration of the Eucharist in the early Church. The Stowe Missal contains instructions for the celebration of four masses, the Ordinary of the Mass and three special masses for the saints, the penitents and the dead, each with their own special preface and prayers. John Ryan has analysed the mass as described in the Stowe Missal and found that the form of the mass was not very different from that outlined in the medieval Roman Rite.³⁹ The chalice was prepared before the mass, which began with a Litany of the Apostles and Martyrs and Virgins. This was followed by the prayer *Rogo te*, the *Hymnus Angelicus* and the *Gloria*. The Epistle for daily use (First Corinthians 10:26-38) was then followed by a number of prayers, at which time a rubric directs for the 'half-covering' of the chalice. The Gospel reading (John 6: 35-40) was followed by the recitation of the Nicene Creed and the Offertory, the commemoration of the dead, the *Sursum Corda* with responses and the Preface. From this point, the Canon was that of the Roman Rite, with some small exceptions: two litanies and the *Per quem* which preceded the intinction of the consecrated species in the chalice and the *fractio*. The *Pater Noster* was recited, and during the communion a long series of antiphons and alleluias are sung. The prayer of thanksgiving was followed by the *Missa est*. Ryan concluded that the mass as described in the Stowe Missal is not only in accord with the medieval Roman Rite, but could in fact be happily celebrated in any modern Catholic Church.⁴⁰

Bede's view of a separate, different, Irish Church has curried influence far beyond the middle ages. His description of the events of the Easter controversy has been interpreted by some,

³⁸ Correspondence survives in which both Lanfranc and Anselm condemn Irish marriage practices as contrary to Canon Law; it follows that if they were prepared to correspond with Irish magnates regarding this subject, they would not hesitate to condemn any widespread unorthodoxy regarding Eucharistic theology. This would be particularly true of Lanfranc, who was heavily involved in the Berengarian Controversy regarding transubstantiation; he certainly did not hesitate to mention perceived religious laxity in a letter to an Ua Briain king when he wrote: 'Bishops are consecrated by a single bishop; infants are baptised without the use of consecrated chrism; holy orders are conferred by bishops for money.' Letter from Lanfranc to Toirdelbach Ua Briain, ca. 1074, as translated in H. Clover and M. Gibson (eds), *The Letters of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury* (Oxford, 1979), 71, Letter 10. 'No one who has the least familiarity with Christian learning is unaware that all these abuses and other slike them are contrary to the Gospels and to apostolic teaching, that they are prohibited by canon law and are contrary to what has been established...' For a discussion of the correspondence on the topic of non-canonical Irish marriage practices with pope Gregory VII and Irish magnates, see A. Candon, 'Women and Marriage in Late Pre-Norman Ireland' in D. Bracken and D. Ó Riain-Raedel (eds), *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century. Reform and Renewal* (Dublin, 2006), 106-127 at 106-110.

³⁹ J. Ryan, 'The Mass in the Early Irish Church' in *Studies*, 50 (1960), 371-84. The Ordinary of the Mass of the Roman Rite is described in detail in Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*.

⁴⁰ 'The Missal shows a reverence for the holy sacrifice of the mass and a depth of devotion in its celebration that would warm the cockles of the heart of a modern liturgical enthusiast.' On the orthodoxy of the Stowe Missal Canon of the Mass, see Ryan, 'The Mass in the Early Irish Church', 383.

into the modern period, as the opposition of two different institutions, a pre-Whitby ‘Celtic Church’ and a post-Whitby ‘Roman Church’. The translator of a popular paperback edition of Bede’s *History of the English Church and People*, perpetuated this notion as recently as 1968 by including the following observation in his introduction to the volume: ‘From that day the Celtic cause was doomed to gradual extinction’.⁴¹ This false dichotomy first resurfaced after the Protestant Reformation and has been used to inform more modern religious propaganda:

“From the days of George Buchanan, supplying the initial propaganda for the makers of the Scottish Kirk, until a startlingly recent date, there was warrant for an anti-Roman, anti-episcopal and, in the nineteenth century, anti-establishment stance in the Columban or ‘Celtic’ Church... The idea that there *was* a ‘Celtic Church’ in something of a post-Reformation sense is still maddeningly ineradicable from the minds of students.”⁴²

With this in mind, it is not difficult to see where the errant perception of an un-orthodox, un-Roman, un-European ‘Celtic Rite’ developed. Despite the lack of a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of liturgical and devotional practice in tenth- to twelfth-century Ireland, all evidence points to a regional variation of orthodox Latin Christianity. Bishops and clergy were consecrated, canonical hours were sung, the Eucharist was celebrated and administered to communicants, baptisms were performed, relics were venerated and devotional pilgrimages were undertaken, both within the country and abroad.⁴³ It must also be remembered that many aspects of Canon Law, sacramental administration and correct theological belief that would become the cornerstone of the Roman Latin faith in the high and late middle ages were just being debated and codified at this time. The famous decrees of Lateran IV, the first official statement from the Papacy on what constituted correct liturgical practice, were not issued until the early thirteenth century.⁴⁴

⁴¹ See the introduction at L. Sherley-Price (ed.), *Bede’s A History of the English Church and People*, (Harmondsworth, 1968), 23.

⁴² P. Wormald, ‘Bede and the ‘Church of the English’, in P. Wormald and S. D. Baxter (eds), *The Times of Bede* (Oxford, 2006), 207.

⁴³ Particular liturgical practices and their architectural settings will be discussed in the following chapter.

⁴⁴ Lateran IV and its impact on the Irish Church will be more fully discussed in the next chapter. The decrees of Lateran IV are reproduced and translated Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils Vol. 1*, 227-272. On the history of the liturgy, with particular focus on lay participation, see J. A. Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy* (London, 1962).

The Seeds of Reform: Canterbury and the Irish Church

The reforms taking place within twelfth century Ireland were part of a broader movement within western Christendom associated with the pontificate of Gregory VII (1073-85) and characterized by the definition and assertion of clerical privilege and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The Norman Conquest in 1066 brought this movement into England and soon thereafter into the sphere of the Irish Church through the involvement of the Anglo-Norman Church⁴⁵. The seeds of reform in Ireland can arguably be traced back to the influence of the Hiberno-Norse sees and the urgings of two reform-minded Archbishops of Canterbury in particular, Lanfranc (1070-89) and Anselm (1093-1109).⁴⁶

While the origins of the Dublin-Canterbury connection are uncertain, it is known that as early as 1072, Lanfranc was claiming Ireland within his ecclesiastical territory. Upon the succession of Gregory VII to the pontificate in 1073, Lanfranc again claimed jurisdiction over the island in a letter informing the new pontiff of unacceptable practices within the Irish Church.⁴⁷ As a result, Gregory granted Lanfranc legatine power over the island and the archbishop wrote to Toirdelbach Ua Briain, king of Munster, urging him to correct these problems and offering assistance.⁴⁸ Gwynn dates this letter to 1076 and interprets it as a 'diplomatic gesture to a country known to be loyal in its devotion to the Holy See, but which lacked the full organization of hierarchical government and the observance of the Church's full canon law.'⁴⁹

⁴⁵ It must be noted, however, that the reforming movement was not imported wholesale from the Anglo-Norman ecclesiastics; as the previous chapter has argued, Irish clergy and magnates were certainly aware of ecclesiastical practices and religious movements outside Ireland in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The key work on the impetus and effects of the Gregorian reforms in Ireland is D. Bracken and D. Ó Riain-Raedel (eds), *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century. Reform and Renewal* (Dublin, 2006).

⁴⁶ The origins and implications of the Dublin-Canterbury connection have been heavily debated in a number of different places. See for example, M. Brett, 'Canterbury's perspective on church reform and Ireland, 1070-1115' in D. Bracken and D. Ó Riain-Raedel (eds), *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century. Reform and Renewal* (Dublin, 2006), 13-35; D. Bethell, 'English Monks and Irish reform in the eleventh and twelfth centuries' in *Historical Studies*, 8 (1971), 111-35; numerous articles by Aubrey Gwynn as well as his *Twelfth century Reform*; and M. T. Flanagan, 'The See of Canterbury and the Irish Church', in eadem, *Irish Society, Anglo-Norman Settlers, Angevin Kingship*, 7-55; and Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 2-40. For an indication of reform-minded influence coming from elsewhere into eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland, see A. Gwynn, *Irish Church*, Chapter 1: 'Irish Monks and Cluniac Reform', 1-16.

⁴⁷ Gregory VII's response to the archbishop, where he confirms Lanfranc's primatial role and urges him to correct these abuses within the Irish Church, is included in H. Clover and M. Gibson (eds), *The Letters of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury* (Oxford, 1979), 64-7, Letter 8. See also H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Lanfranc: scholar, monk and archbishop* (Oxford, 2003), 144-46. The correspondence is included in James Ussher (ed.), *Veterum epistolarum Hibernicarum sylloge* (Dublin, 1632) and reprinted in C. R. Erlington and J. H. Todd (eds), *The whole works of the Most Reverend James Ussher* (17 vols, Dublin, 1847-64), IV:488-95 and are listed in J. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical* (Dublin, 1979), 758-60 at entries 635-38.

⁴⁸ This letter is included in Clover and Gibson (eds), *Letters of Lanfranc*, 71-3, Letter 10.

⁴⁹ Gwynn, *Twelfth century Reforms*, 2.

Lanfranc's claims to primacy over Ireland were not purely aspirational, for in 1074 the Church and people of Dublin petitioned him to consecrate their bishop-elect, Patrick. This practice would continue intermittently until 1140, with six bishop-elects from Hiberno-Norse sees professing canonical obedience to Canterbury. Four of these bishop-elects would have personal links with England, having been previously monks within an Anglo-Norman see: Worcester, St. Albans, Winchester and Canterbury itself.⁵⁰ These personal relationships aside, the connection between Dublin and Canterbury was a formal, canonical bond affirmed by the submission of the Irish bishops.

The influence of Canterbury on the Hiberno-Norse Church seems to have come mostly in the form of advice and admonition. Although Canterbury could exert no jurisdiction over any part of Ireland save the Hiberno-Norse sees which specifically professed their obedience, the archbishops had no qualms about addressing other kings and bishops, most notably the Ua Briain kings of Munster. Surviving correspondence between the archbishops and various people in Ireland, five letters from Lanfranc, eight from Anselm, address marriage law, consecration of bishops and other issues which were to later be at the centre of the reform movement. Both archbishops were particularly preoccupied with marriage which was conducted not under the auspices of canon law, but under Brehon law as previously discussed.⁵¹ As previously noted, this criticism of Irish marriage and sexual practices would continue throughout the middle ages, and prove instrumental in securing papal approval for the Anglo-Norman colonisation in the next century.

The greatest influence of both archbishops was on the Ua Briain kings of Munster, overlords of Dublin and claimants to the high-kingship. Both Toirdelbach and his son, Muirchertach Ua Brian, were encouraged to convene ecclesiastical councils in the hopes of addressing these and other such issues: "order the bishops and all men of religion to assemble together, attend their holy assembly in person with your chief advisors, and strive to banish from your kingdom these evil customs and all others similarly condemned by canon law."⁵²

While it might be slightly puzzling that the Ua Briain kings welcomed the interference of a foreign see in their kingdom, their motivation was undoubtedly political. Ecclesiastical endorsement had historically been pivotal in the success of a claimant to the high-kingship.

⁵⁰ Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 3.

⁵¹ On Lanfranc's discussion of traditional Irish marriage practices, see for example, essays by N. Power and A. Knoch in R. Thurneysen (ed.), *Studies in Early Irish Law*, 1 (Dublin, 1936), 81-108 and 235-68.

⁵² As stated in a letter from Lanfranc to Toirdelbach dated to ca. 1074 in Clover and Gibson, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 75, Letter 10.

Since the seventh century Armagh, Ireland's historical, if not official, metropolitan see, had been instrumental in promoting both the idea of high-kingship, as a parallel to its own status within the Church, and claimants to that title. In the late eleventh century a breakdown of the ecclesiastical polity prevented Armagh from endorsing the Ua Briains, or any contender. The Munster kings encouraged their relationship with Canterbury in an attempt to gain leverage in their quest for Armagh's support.⁵³

Archbishop Anselm also corresponded with the Ua Brian kings. Muirchertach received two letters likely dated to 1096, which repeated and strengthened Lanfranc's earlier admonitions.⁵⁴ The correspondence from Canterbury seems to have had its desired effect, for both kings presided over reforming councils at the prompting of the Archbishops: Toirdelbach in Dublin in 1080 and Muirchertach in Munster in 1096. The 1096 council, convened in response to a plague which had spread through Ireland the previous year, is of great significance in that it was 'convened in Munster with a full consciousness of the urgings of Lanfranc and Anselm for reform assemblies, and a mere five years later its conveyor, Muirchertach, presided over another Munster council, this time with an explicit reform agenda'.⁵⁵

The Twelfth-Century Reforms

The first reform council of which we know in any detail is the Synod of Cashel, held in 1101, presided over by both the king of Munster, Muirchertach, and his chief bishop, the papal legate Maol Muire Ua Dunáin.⁵⁶ This council is seen by many as the official instigation of a reform program within the Irish Church. Eight decrees were issued on issues ranging from simony to marriage practice in keeping with the character of Gregorian reforms.⁵⁷ Rather surprisingly, there is no outright condemnation of divorce and concubinage. The only decree to address marriage does so in terms of kinship degrees, prohibiting marriage between those too closely related. However, two decrees address the increased laicization of the church as

⁵³ M. T. Flanagan, 'Henry II, The Council of Cashel and the Irish Bishops' in *Peritia*, 10 (1996), 184-211. See especially 192-6 for the importance of Armagh's support for a claimant to the high-kingship and the challenge to Armagh's primatial status presented by Canterbury.

⁵⁴ For a discussion Anselm's correspondence with Irish king and bishops, see M. T. Flanagan, 'High-Kings with Opposition, 1072-1166' in D. Ó Cróinín (ed.), *A New History of Ireland I. Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), 899-933 at 911-13. Anselm's correspondence is included in Ussher, *Sylloge*, and Erlington and Todd, *Whole works of James Ussher*, IV:511-31 and listed in Kenney, *Sources for the Early History of Ireland*, 760-61 at entries 639-46.

⁵⁵ O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 44.

⁵⁶ This synod and the entire twelfth-century reform movement is discussed in a number of sources, among them the general overviews found in Gwynn, *The Twelfth century Reforms* and Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*.

⁵⁷ The decrees of this synod are included as an appendix to S. H. O'Grady and R. Flower (eds), *Caitheáim Thoirdealbhaigh* (2 Vols, London, 1929), though overviews of the eight decrees are widely available in the general sources.

represented by the figure of the *erenagh*, the sometimes ordained hereditary head of a monastery.⁵⁸ The third decree states outright ‘that in Eire a layman shall not be an *erenagh*’ while the fifth decree stipulates ‘that no *erenagh* of any church in Eire should have a wife.’⁵⁹ Though no mention is made of the episcopal diocesan structure that would soon be introduced, these two decrees indicate a concerted effort on the part of the Irish Church to undermine the power of lay hereditary abbacies.

Not only did this council instigate a renewed program of reform by conciliar decree, it also established the first formal link between the twelfth-century Irish Church and the Papacy through the participation of papal legates. The most notable feature of this Synod was the gift of the Rock of Cashel from Muirchertach to the Church. In effect, this created a southern see comparable to that of Armagh. The attendees at Cashel were primarily men of Munster and Leinster, presided over by a southern king and his bishop, and the decrees issued would affect only the southern half of the country.⁶⁰

Despite the encouragement of the English archbishops for the convening of reform councils, there is no evidence for Canterbury’s involvement or interest in the synod. This lack of participation could be the result of Anselm’s own troubles in England at the time;⁶¹ his pontificate is generally viewed as less eager to mould the affairs of the Irish Church than was Lanfranc’s. Further troubles with Irish-English relations would appear the following year, when Muirchertach fell out with King Henry I over his dealings with one of the English king’s rebellious subjects.⁶² Though Canterbury would intermittently consecrate bishops-elect from Hiberno-Norse sees until 1140, there was a definite movement within Ireland to take control of the reform movement around the turn of the twelfth century.

At this point, the reform movement was wholly Munster-based and aligned with the authority of the Munster king, as is evidenced by the absence of any northern representation at the Synod of Cashel. The internalization of reforms coincides with Muirchertach’s efforts to

⁵⁸ The *erenagh* (*airchinneach*) and *coarb* (*comharba*) were offices within early Irish monastic houses. The *erenagh* is defined as ‘headman: leader, superior, especially of a church-community, of church-tenants; in the later middle ages, an official, normally hereditary, under the authority of the local bishop, with responsibility for maintaining the fabric of a church and providing for the celebration of divine service when not himself ordained.’ The *coarb* is defined as ‘heir: especially abbot, or layman in that office, who succeeded to the authority and revenues of an early monastery or group of monasteries’. For these definitions, see K. Simms, *From Kings to Warlords* (Woodbridge, 1987), 170 and 173.

⁵⁹ As translated in Gwynn, *The Twelfth Century Reform*, 14–15.

⁶⁰ On the council, see D. Ó Corráin, ‘The synod of Cashel, 1101: conservative or innovative?’ in D. Edwards (ed.), *Regions and Rulers in Ireland, 1100–1650* (Dublin, 2004), 13–19.

⁶¹ Anselm was in exile from England from October 1097 through September 1100 and December 1103 through August 1106, due to problems arising between England and Rome regarding the Investiture Controversy.

⁶² Flanagan, ‘The See of Canterbury’, 22.

consolidate his political power and ensure his position as high-king, as he continued to court the see of Armagh in a bid for its endorsement.⁶³

This would soon change as the movement spread to the historic primatial see of the Irish Church at Armagh. The coarb of the church at Armagh, the successor to St. Patrick, had been for centuries a hereditary office held by laymen of one family. But with the appointment of an ardent reformer to that office in 1105, both north and south would unite in the reforming spirit.

As the reforming ideology was gaining a hold in Armagh, the Irish church was preparing for a drastic reorganization which would be instituted at the Synod of Rathbreasail in 1111.⁶⁴ The central concern of the reformers, in addition to issues surrounding adherence to canon law, was the lack of territorial diocesan structure in the Irish ecclesiastical hierarchy. This, combined with the lack of definition of the responsibilities and jurisdictional authority of bishops, was an issue which would have to be addressed before Ireland was fully in step with the governing hierarchy provided for by Canon Law. The Synod of Rathbreasail not only reiterated the reforming ideology of the Synod of Cashel, but also took a giant step further by instituting a territorial diocesan system for all of Ireland.

This newly established system divided Ireland into two, with the northern province centred at Armagh (*Leath Cuinn*) and the southern at Cashel (*Leath Mogha*). Each province was allotted an Archbishop with suffragan bishoprics in imitation of the plan which the Anglo-Saxon Church had adopted, and in keeping with the traditional division of the island into northern and southern provinces.⁶⁵ Authority and jurisdiction were now in the hands of the Archbishops, and there was a clear and established hierarchical structure within the church, governing itself through synodial councils and with the participation of papal legates.

Although the northern see of Armagh had become active within the reform movement since the Synod of Cashel and was officially recognized there as an Archbishopric with implied (if

⁶³ See Flanagan, 'Henry II', 195, fn. 41: 'Of relevance here is whether the synod of Cashel sought to recruit the support of Armagh, or whether Muirchertach had already attained the support of Armagh by 1101, to which the synod of Cashel would then have been public testimony.'

⁶⁴ In addition to general sources, information on the Synod of Rathbreasail, including the decree with commentary, can be found in John McErlan, 'The Synod of Raith Breasail' in *Archivium hibernicum*, 3 (1914), 11 and 24.

⁶⁵ The province of Armagh was comprised of the kingdoms of Meath and Connacht, subdivided into the eleven bishoprics of Clogher, Ardstraw, Derry or Raphoe, Connor, Duleek, Clonard, Clonfert, Tuam, Cong, Killala and Ardcan. The province of Cashel included the provinces of Leinster and Munster, subdivided into the twelve bishoprics of Lismore or Waterford, Cork, Rath Maighe, Deiscert (Kerry), Killaloe, Limerick, Emly, Kilkenny, Leighlin, Kildare, Glendalough and Ferns as stated in Gwynn, *The Twelfth Century Reforms*, 32-36.

not explicitly stated) primacy, Rathbreasail was still a Munster-driven reforming council.⁶⁶ The movement itself remained centred in the south, despite the attendance of the *comarba* of Armagh, Cellach. Circumstances surrounding this reforming synod have been interpreted as a ‘manifest reflection of Muirchertach’s dynastic interests’.⁶⁷ The exact location of Rathbreasail is unknown, but it was certainly well within the Ua Briain territory. The Synod was convened and presided over by Muirchertach and his appointee to the bishopric of Limerick, Gilbert, as papal legate.⁶⁸ Bishop Malachus of Waterford, also an Ua Briain nominee, was appointed to the newly established Archbishopric of Cashel. Diocesan boundaries were drawn in a manner that would ensure the coordination of secular and ecclesiastical administration.

The Synod of Rathbreasail ensured that the Irish reforms would be free from any undue influence from the English Church as it was so closely tied in to the political machinations of the claimant to high-kingship in Ireland. Though later modified, the diocesan system established at Rathbreasail not only ensured the progress of the reform movement through canonically approved channels, but also firmly entrenched the new ecclesiastical hierarchy in the evolving political power structure within Ireland.

Although Malachy had failed to receive palls from Rome in 1148, this request was finally granted in 1152 when Pope Eugenius III dispatched Cardinal Paparo to Ireland with not two, but four palls. These were formally conferred when the Cardinal presided over a synod at Kells in March 1152. The main thrust of this synod was the extension of the diocesan system established at Rathbreasail. This system, as refined at the Synod of Kells, remained in place with few alterations over the course of the middle ages.⁶⁹ The two existent sees, Armagh and Cashel, remained. Two more metropolitan archbishoprics were to be added: those of Dublin and Tuam.

These additions were not to go uncontested. Tuam’s elevation can be attributed to the fact that the high kingship of Ireland had passed in the mid-twelfth century to the kingdom of Connacht. However, despite Dublin’s status as a suffragan bishopric of Canterbury, it had traditionally been seen as subject to the power of the nearby monastery complex at

⁶⁶ The role of Armagh in the reforms will be discussed in a further section of this chapter, see 35-37.

⁶⁷ Ailbhe MacShamhrain, ‘The emergence of the metropolitan see: Dublin 1111-1216’ in James Kelly & Daire Keogh (eds), *History of the Catholic Diocese of Dublin* (Dublin, 2000), 51-71.

⁶⁸ Gille of Limerick, and his role in the reforms, will be discussed in a further section of this chapter, see 39-45.

⁶⁹ Armagh was allotted ten suffragan sees: Connor, Down, Louth (Clogher), Clonard (Meath), Kells, Ardagh, Raphoe, Rathluraig (later Derry), Duleek and Darnth (likely Kilmore). Dublin was allotted five sees: Glendalough, Ferns, Kilkenny, Leighlin and Kildare. Cashel retained twelve sees: Killaloe, Limerick, Iniscathaig, Kilfenora, Emly, Roscrea, Waterford, Lismore, Cloyne, Cork, Ross and Ardfert. Tuam was allotted six suffragan sees: Mayo, Killala, Roscommon (later Elphin), Clonfert, Achonry and Kilmachduagh. And for the first time, Armagh, which had historically been regarded as the primatial see in Ireland, was officially accorded such status.

Glendalough. Gwynn attributes Dublin's elevation to the machinations of its bishop, Gregory, who was eager to free his see from any possible interference from the English Church.⁷⁰

Though the text of the decrees issued at Kells have been lost, overviews of the legislation indicate that they were very much in line with earlier decrees issued at Cashel and Rathbreasail.⁷¹ The Annals of the Four Masters record the usual stance on adherence to canon law: 'namely to put away concubines and mistresses from men; not to ask payment for anointing of baptizing; not to take payment for church property; and to receive tithes punctually.'⁷² But the main impact of Kells was to establish the four principal sees within the country and to reiterate, officially, the primacy of the see of Armagh.

The effect of these three central reforming councils was to bring Ireland firmly into line with the rest of Western Christendom in hierarchical terms, but only superficial attention was given to liturgical issues. The decrees dealt to some extent with the canonical administration of sacraments, but the central focus and theme of the councils was the reorganization of the Irish Church along territorial, diocesan lines. An ecclesiastical hierarchy was installed, displacing the system of hereditary lay abbacy, and precedents for synodial councils were set, thereby outlining a clear method for instituting change and resolving disputes within the Church. The continuous presence of papal legates assured Ireland a direct line of recourse to, and the implicit approval of, Rome. This allowed the Irish Church to evolve into a self-governing institution, no longer in peril of Canterbury's alleged ecclesiastical imperialism and able to assert itself as a body free from the control of hereditary dynasties and secular rulers.

The Ascendancy of Armagh and the arrival of Reformed Monasticism

Since the late tenth century the *comarba* of St Patrick in Armagh, the abbot of the monastery, had been a married and unordained man appointed from the ranks of one family, *Clann Sinaich*.⁷³ In 1105 Cellach, a man of this family and ardent supporter of reform ideology, was appointed as *comarba*. Before his death in 1129 Cellach named his protégé Malachy, a man not of his family, to succeed him, thereby overturning the centuries old hold of his clan over the

⁷⁰ Gwynn, *The Twelfth century Reforms*, 54.

⁷¹ For an account of the Synod of Kells as preserved in the lost book of the annals of Clonenagh, see Geoffrey Keating, *Foras feasna ar Éirinn: The History of Ireland*, D. Comyn and P.S. Dineen (eds) (4 vols, London, 1902-14), III:315-17.

⁷² As quoted in Gwynn, *The Twelfth century Reform*, 60.

⁷³ See T. Ó Fiaich, 'The church of Armagh under lay control' in *Seanchas Ardmacacha*, 5 (1969), 75-127.

see of Armagh. Though Malachy would struggle to hold onto this office, his eventual success would ensure that the abbacy of Armagh was wrested out of the pattern of secular control.

Cellach would be the first Armagh *comarba* to become a priest, taking orders on his accession to the abbacy. In that year, during a visitation to Munster to collect tribute, the Annals of the Four Masters record that he ‘received the orders of a noble bishop by direction of the men of Ireland’.⁷⁴ This event, taking place in Munster and therefore with the approval of Muirchertach Ua Briain, marks a turning point with both north and south uniting in pursuit of the reforms to the exclusion of English influences. It has even been inferred that shortly thereafter, Cellach was called upon to consecrate the first bishop of Limerick in 1106.⁷⁵ Gilbert of Limerick was an Ua Briain nominee, and if Muirchertach did in fact call upon Cellach to perform the consecration, it would mark a further departure from the Ua Briain-Canterbury relationship in recognition of the spiritual authority of Armagh.⁷⁶

It has been argued that Armagh’s rising prominence within the reform movement was a result of the rise of the Ua Conchobair dynasty from Connacht. Upon Muirchertach Ua Briain’s death in 1119, the claim to high-kingship transferred away from Munster to Connacht, thus breaking the hold that the southern church and Ua Briain nominated prelates over the movement. This disengagement of political and ecclesiastical interests allowed Armagh, with the support of the Ua Conchobair’s, to take control of the reform process.⁷⁷

The most prominent figure associated with the twelfth-century reforms in Ireland is Cellach’s successor, St Malachy. Appointed *comarba* after Cellach’s death, he would hold the archbishopric until 1137, and the bishopric of Down and the office of papal legate subsequently. Much of what we know about Malachy comes from the hagiography *Vita Sancti Malachiae episcopi*, composed by Bernard of Clairvaux after the saint’s death in 1148.⁷⁸ In his role as primate of Ireland, Malachy set out for Rome in 1139. He sought both general papal approval for the reforms taking place within the Irish Church and specific confirmation of the

⁷⁴ AU, AFM 1105 and 1106.

⁷⁵ Aubrey Gwynn, ‘The first synod of Cashel’, in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 66 (1945), 81-92 and 67 (1946), 109-22. Gilbert was the author of the treatise *De usu ecclesiastico*, written during his commission as papal legate, outlining the canonical hierarchical structure of Pope-primate-archbishop-bishop as a blueprint for Irish reformers.

⁷⁶ Flanagan, ‘The See of Canterbury’, 21-23. Though Muirchertach had received Armagh’s endorsement to the high-kingship his relationship with Canterbury had not been entirely severed, as is evidenced by the ongoing correspondence between himself and Anselm.

⁷⁷ MacShamhrain, ‘The emergence of the metropolitan see’, 51-71.

⁷⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, ‘The life of St Malachy’. For a discussion of Bernard’s views of the Irish, see D. Scully, ‘The Portrayal of Ireland and the Irish in Bernard’s Life of Malachy’ in D. Bracken and D. Ó Riain-Raedel (eds), *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century. Reform and Renewal* (Dublin, 2006), 239-56.

metropolitan sees of Armagh and Cashel through the granting of palls.⁷⁹ Though Innocent II would confirm both the reforms in general and the two archbishoprics, Malachy was refused the palls until a more formal request had been made by the Irish Church through a diocesan council. Malachy would return to Ireland as papal legate in an attempt to convene such a council. But the saint had been so impressed with the Cistercians he encountered on his outward journey that he stopped again at Clairvaux, leaving a number of monks to be trained in the Order in the hopes of importing it to Ireland.

Upon his return to Ireland Malachy attempted to convene the diocesan council as directed by Innocent II. The council did not meet for almost a decade, at which point Malachy was again prevailed upon to travel to Rome. He would never reach his destination, dying at Clairvaux on his way to Rome in 1148.

The importation of the reformed monastic orders would be Malachy's greatest legacy.⁸⁰ The monks he left at Clairvaux on his return to Ireland in 1140 would return with a contingent of French monks and establish the first Cistercian monastery at Mellifont in 1142. The Cistercians were to be very successful in Ireland, so much so that five daughter houses were founded within the next four years. At the time of the Anglo-Norman colonisation, fourteen Cistercian communities existed in Ireland, and in total, thirty-three successful monasteries were founded between 1142 and 1273.⁸¹

The Order flourished in Ireland for a number of reasons, among them its initial independence from tribal power struggles and its ideals of poverty and austerity, already esteemed in traditional Irish monasticism. However, by 1216 the Irish Cistercians had all but cut themselves off from the mother church at Citeaux, and by taking on Irish recruits, they fell prey to local tribal interests and pressures.⁸² The patronage of these monasteries by both native kings before, foreign lords after, the Anglo-Norman colonisation ensured that they

⁷⁹ The *pallium* (plural *pallia*) was a short white cloak marked with a red cross, a symbol of archiepiscopal authority, without which an archbishop could not technically fulfil his role.

⁸⁰ On the arrival of the Augustinian canons regular in the twelfth century, see Sarah Preston, 'The canons regular of St Augustine: the twelfth century reform in action' in Stuart Kinsella (ed.), *Augustinians at Christ Church* (Dublin, 2000), 23-40.

⁸¹ On the Cistercians in Ireland, see Roger Stalley, *The Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland: An Account of the History, Art and Architecture of the White Monks in Ireland from 1142 to 1540* (London, 1987).

⁸² The withdraw of Irish Cistercian houses from Citeaux was precipitated when the General Chapter in France attempted to rectify lax practices and a wide range of abuses within the Irish houses. When visitors from the General Chapter attempted to undertake visitations of the houses, they were turned away and physically threatened. The trouble first began at Mellifont and Jerpoint in 1216 but continued throughout the thirteenth century. For a discussion of the 'Conspiracy of Mellifont' and the relationship between the Irish houses and General Chapter in the middle ages, see Stalley, *Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, 7-30, especially 17-20.

would become entangled in the ethnic struggles that the entire Irish Church faced in the thirteenth century.

Evidence for Liturgical Reform?

Now that the reforms were in place, and the last of the major reforming councils had met in 1152, what had actually changed in the Irish Church? The diocesan system had been firmly established, and bishops had regained their status as the heads of the Church. Armagh, always regarded as the primatial see due to its connection with the evangelizing St. Patrick, had been officially accorded metropolitan status. Four metropolitan archbishops had been installed, one in each province. The involvement of papal legates throughout the reform process ensured the approval of Rome in these reforms, as did the willingness of reformers to look to the Papacy for guidance. Reformed monasticism had taken hold in Ireland, with many traditional Irish monasteries becoming communities of regular Augustinian canons, and with the rapid spread of new Cistercian monasteries throughout the country.

However, the passing of such decrees did not mean that these practices immediately took effect.⁸³ The uprooting of the traditional dynastic abbacies was a problem that would continue throughout the middle ages. Sacramental administration was still an issue; despite the decrees, matrimonial laxity and concubineage was still common among both laymen and clerics. Political instability was a major barrier to the enactment of reforms; without political support and social status and the accompanying source of maintenance, bishops were impotent in asserting their authority. The relocation of ecclesiastical sites also proved problematic as both bishops and kings vied to have their diocese coterminous with their jurisdictions. Thus, the new bishoprics became entwined with tribal interests and pressures. Nonetheless, Ireland had taken control of the movement internally, and though the program of reforms had not been fully instituted in practice, there would be no cause to believe that they would not be if given time.

Although the changes implemented in terms of church hierarchy are well known, any liturgical changes instituted during the reforms remain unclear. Here, it must be remembered that the ultimate goal of the Gregorian reforms in Ireland, as elsewhere, was to ‘introduce a degree of order into the organization of the Church in which bishops tried to regain control of the

⁸³ For an excellent, and much needed, updated discussion of the reforms and their impact on the political and religious life of twelfth century Ireland see M. T. Flanagan, *The Transformation of the Irish Church in the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge, 2010). Unfortunately, this volume was published too recently to be consulted in the preparation of this thesis. A discussion of those challenges which faced the Irish Church will be found in the following sections of this chapter.

pastoral care of souls and monks were urged to concentrate on a life of contemplation'.⁸⁴ If the organizational restricting had a tighter grasp of pastoral care as the end goal, then did the Irish reforming councils attempt to legislate on that issue?

Seventeen councils and synods were held between the first reforming council in 1096 and the last council before the Anglo-Norman colonisation, which took place at Armagh in about 1170.⁸⁵ Most of these councils are known only through annalistic references, which do not lend much detail to the issues discussed and decisions reached. *Acta* from only two are known to us, transmitted through later medieval editions. The decrees of the 1101 Council of Cashel are found in two later medieval genealogical works that preserve a summary of decrees,⁸⁶ and the decrees of the 1111 Council of Rathbresail survive in a seventeenth-century copy of a now lost annalistic source.⁸⁷

Gille of Limerick and *de Statu Ecclesiae*

One of central points of contention in the debate on parish formation in Ireland centres on pastoral care, and the extent to which sacramental administration was available to different sectors of the population.⁸⁸ In the absence of much discussion on this topic by the reforming councils, one source that might shed light on the practice of pastoral care in reforming Ireland is the treatise *De statu ecclesiae*.

De statu ecclesiae was composed by Gille of Limerick († ca. 1145) in the first half of the twelfth century.⁸⁹ Little is known of Gille's origins, but he was most likely a native of Limerick, an important Hiberno-Norse town, and residence of the reforming king Muirchertach Ua Briain. Gille first appears in 1106, in correspondence with Anselm of Canterbury, whom he had previously met in Rouen, referring to himself as the bishop of the newly established city-

⁸⁴ See J. Fleming, *Gille of Limerick (c.1070-1145): Architect of a Medieval Church* (Dublin, 2001), 17-37 at 21.

⁸⁵ For a list of all known councils and synods from 1096 to 1201, see Dumville, *Councils and Synods*, 38-39. The only synod to take place within the subject area of this study occurred in 1144, at Terryglass, Tipperary.

⁸⁶ The two works are the *Senchas Síil Bhriain* and *An Leabhar Muimhneach*. See T. Ó Donnchadha (ed.), *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, (Dublin, 1940), 341. For the *Senchas Síil Bhriain*, see O'Grady and Flower, *Caithréim Thoirdhealbháigh*, I.174-5 and II.185-6.

⁸⁷ The partial text is found in Seathrún Céitinn's *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, copied from the now lost Annals of Cluain Eidnech Fintain, Clonenagh, from which we know of the 1152 Kells-Mellifont Synod. See Dumville, *Councils and Synods*, 43-44. For the decrees of Rathbresail, see Keating, *Foras feasna ar Éirinn*, III.298-307 and MacErlean, 'Synod of Ráith Breasail', 1-33.

⁸⁸ For a succinct overview of scholarship on parish formation, see Charles Doherty, 'The idea of the parish' in Elizabeth FitzPatrick and Raymond Gillespie (eds), *The Parish in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), 21-32.

⁸⁹ John Fleming has produced a much-needed critical edition of this text, with excellent analysis of Gille's impact on the Irish Church. See Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*.

bishopric of Limerick. Sometime between 1106 and 1111 Pope Paschal II appointed Gille Papal Legate, and it was in this capacity that Gille attended the Synod of Rathbreasail.⁹⁰ He would occupy this position until 1138, when Malachy undertook his commission as legate due to Gille's old age. By all accounts, Gille was well travelled and well versed in the issues of Gregorian reform and Canon Law.⁹¹

Gille composed *De statu ecclesiae* in his capacity as both bishop and papal legate, and as Gwynn notes, it 'was almost certainly written as a programme of reform for the [Rathbreasail] Synod'.⁹² In his treatise, Gille describes the proper orders and hierarchies, both lay and clerical, that the world is divided into and delineates their respective duties. Both surviving copies of the text also include a diagram in illustration of these divisions. **[3.1]** This document is particularly relevant to this discussion in that it stipulates the liturgical requirements for every level of the church hierarchy, specifically differentiating between the rights and responsibilities of the secular and monastic clergy. John Fleming's excellent edition of the treatise, with its comprehensive commentary, provides an in-depth look at the text in its historical and religious context. For the current purpose of determining what constituted religious practice at the time, a brief overview of the scope of pastoral care and liturgical duties described will suffice.⁹³

Gille listed seven grades of the secular clergy in hierarchical order: the parish priest, deacon, subdeacon, acolyte, exorcist, lector and porter, reserving the higher offices of bishop and archbishop as grades of the Universal Church. (11-17) 'In bestowing an abundance of pardon in baptism and through the Eucharist . . . The priest alone, holding all seven grades, ministers to fully to the Almighty.' (26-27) He then specified the duties of the monastic clergy, where he took great pains to explain that monks were not to assume the duties of sacramental administration and pastoral care which are accorded only to priests and secular clergy:

⁹⁰ On Gille as Papal Legate and a brief discussion of *de Statu Ecclesiae*, see Aubrey Gwynn, 'Six Irish Papal Legates, 1101-98' in idem, *The Irish Church in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Dublin, 1992), 116-54 at 125-29.

⁹¹ On Gille and his origins, see Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 38-47. Evidence in the form of correspondence also survives indicating that Gille had been acquainted with Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, during a visit he had paid to Rouen. Their correspondence is noted at Kenny, *Sources for the Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*, 761, entries 645 and 646 and are reproduced with translation in Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 165-169.

⁹² Gwynn, 'Six Irish Papal Legates', 125. The text of *de Statu Ecclesiae* survives in two late twelfth century English manuscripts, Durham Cathedral Library MS B.II.35, ff 36v-38r, and Cambridge University Library MS Ff.i.27, ff 237r-242v. The preface of the text, *de Usu Ecclesiae* survives in another manuscript without the accompanying text. On the manuscript sources, see Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 119-142

⁹³ The following discussion refers to the translation of the text included in Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 147-163. The numbers in parenthesis refer to the line number of the tract.

The monastery is placed under the second pyramid and it has the abbot, who is himself a priest, as its apex and under him the six grades. Under his care are those who only pray because it is not the task of monks to baptize, to give communion or to minister anything ecclesiastical to the laity unless, in case of necessity, they obey the command of the bishop. Having left the secular world to be free for prayer, their sole duty is to God. (45-49)

After providing an overview of the hierarchy of the universal Church, from the priest to the Pontiff and the Emperor, Gille went on to outline the liturgical duties of both the priestly grades and the laity. His main concern, both for the laity and for the clergymen he was writing for, was that of salvation which can only be achieved through pastoral care and sacramental administration. As Fleming stated: 'Pastoral care of the living and of the dead is the background against which Gille develops his blueprint for the Church and on which he bases his diagram.'⁹⁴ In his treatise, Gille discussed the Eucharist, lay communion, baptism, marriage, viaticum, burial and requiem masses.

An analysis of the liturgical duties of the different clerical grades during the celebration of the Eucharist reads as a list of rubrics for the performance of the mass. The church porter should ensure that 'no Jew, pagan or catechumen' is in the church during the service. Before the service began, the subdeacon prepared the chalice, paten, host and wine for the deacon. (116-18). Throughout the service, the deacon told the congregants when to bow their heads in blessing and prayer. (124) The subdeacon read the Epistles (116), while all other readings bar the Gospel were the responsibility of the lector. (105). The priest blessed each reader and reading, again, bar the Gospels. (174). The deacon incensed the altar (143) and then reads from the Gospel. (125). Before the Eucharist, all non-communicants were expelled from the church. (123) The priest then incensed the altar and sacrifice before the Sacrifice. (141). After the Eucharist, the priest blessed the people. (179) and the deacon dismissed the congregation with the *Missa est*. (125) On Sundays, the priest would preach against vices (170) and on solemnities would recite the *Te deum*, *Benedictus* and *Magnificat*. (140-41)

The priest was expected to sacrifice daily. (139) The laity should receive communion immediately after baptism; before death (if possible); and three times yearly at Easter, Pentecost and Christmas. (191-95) The priest reconciled penitents privately (186-88) while public reconciliation took place twice a year: 'The bishop absolves the people from venial sins

⁹⁴ Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 55.

at the beginning of Lent and from crimes on Holy Thursday.’ (250). In addition to receiving the last rites when possible, the faithful should have proper burial while the ‘unfaithful and vicious are to be far removed... for we do not communicate with these when they are alive or dead’. (210-12). The faithful departed were commemorated at mass and in prayer. (196-97). The priest blessed the bride and bridegroom (173), but only in the presence of a bishop.

On the sacrament of baptism, Gille stated: ‘It is his [the priest’s] duty to baptise to immerse three times in the sacred font... This, together with Mass, ought to take place in the church unless necessity prevents it’ (152-6). The newly baptised were to receive communion immediately following the ceremony. (192) A second baptism was prohibited. (156).

All together, then, a reading of the text shows that Gille conceived of a church based in pastoral ministry and sacramental administration. He indicated the correct practice of the sacraments and envisaged a lay congregation present at least once a week as evidenced by the priest’s duty to preach ‘every Sunday’ (169-70). While he took pains to state which clerical rank should perform each duty, he did not name any practice which was not known to have been practiced before the twelfth century. This tract was clearly written before the establishment of the diocesan system; nonetheless, a picture emerges of a populace in receipt of pastoral care which met the requirements for participation in the religious life of the church. As Fleming described it: ‘The people went to worship in church and formed an ecclesiastical community rather than a parochial unit’.⁹⁵

Architectural Implications of *de Statu Ecclesiae*

In addition to describing the orders and duties of clerics, Gille of Limerick included a wealth of information which has both liturgical and architectural implications. Gille takes pain to stipulate and describe all the books, vestments, church plate and other object that each church and clerical grade requires.⁹⁶ A close reading of these stipulations can provide an overview of what might be found in twelfth-century Irish churches.

Gille stated that the ‘bishop also dedicates the porch, sanctuary [church], altar and table of the altar’ (259-60).⁹⁷ His mention of the porch is curious, and initially seems to refer to a portion

⁹⁵ Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 109.

⁹⁶ The following discussion refers to the translation of the text included in Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 147-163. The numbers in parenthesis refer to the line number of the tract.

⁹⁷ Fleming sometimes translates the word ‘*templum*’ as church and sometimes as sanctuary; but it is clear that in these passages at least, it has the same meaning. See lines 222 and 259.

of the church building. In his description of the parish priest, Gille stated that he is to be supported, among other things, by the 'porch' (*atrium*) of the church (222), which he explained is 'his house together with the enclosure surrounding it' (226-7). The exact meaning of this remains unclear; he may be describing an ecclesiastical enclosure as in the same passage he refers to the mansus, or glebe lands, which are to be allotted to the priest (226). This suggests that it was intended, at least, for each parish church to have a resident priest responsible for pastoral care, though there is no architectural evidence for such a practice before the fourteenth century, when residences were often inserted into the west end of parish churches.⁹⁸

The church and its enclosure were to be staffed by a priest who was allotted land by which to support himself (222-227). Cemeteries were mentioned; but their location was not specified (207-211). Distinction was made, however, between types of burial grounds. 'Cemeteries of the saints' (208) were presumably located within the ecclesiastical enclosure. Separate burial space was to be made available adjoining these cemeteries for 'the bodies of the faithful who were drowned or killed' (209); possibly referring to those who died without reconciliation or viaticum. However, burial places for the 'wicked and vicious' should be far removed from the churchyard (210).

The church was to be staffed by a 'porter', responsible for guarding the building, its possessions and displays (100-01). The office of churchwarden was in existence by the eleventh century in England, and it is possible that Gille envisaged a similar arrangement in Ireland. Though the tract never specifically mentioned the *erenagh*, a quasi-clerical hereditary office in the early Irish Church, the *erenagh* performed a similar role in the administration of early monastic lands.⁹⁹ This office continued throughout the middle ages in Gaelic areas, and by the later medieval ages, the role effectively mirrored that of the churchwarden in Anglo-Norman diocese.¹⁰⁰

There seems to be some confusion as to those liturgical implements which must be consecrated by a bishop, and those which may be used without his blessing. Gille stated that the bishop only consecrated those things that were 'separated from common use for divine

⁹⁸ See the discussion at 197-201.

⁹⁹ On the function of the *erenagh*, see Kenneth Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 2003), 127-30 and Simms, *From Kings to Warlords*, 170.

¹⁰⁰ For the role of the *erenagh* in late medieval Ireland, see H. Jeffries, 'Erenaghs in pre-plantation Ulster: an early seventeenth century account' in *Archivium Hibernicum*, 53 (1999), 16-19 and H. Jeffries, 'Erenaghs and termon lands: another early seventeenth century account' in *Senchas Ard mhacha*, 19 (2002), 55-8. On the office of churchwarden, see C. Drew, *Early parochial organisation in England: the origins of the office of church warden* (London, 1954).

worship' (267-68), but his list of these items overlaps somewhat with his list of things which the priest may use 'without the blessing of a bishop'. (236-7). Nowhere in his text does he imply that the priest himself may consecrate these things. Those things which are deemed separated from common usage are as follows:

'...pontifical and priestly vestments, altar cloths, the chalice, the paten and corporal, the communion vessel, the chrism, the oil and the vessel for the chrism, the incense and thurible, the baptistery, the shrine for the relics, the ciborium, that is the canopy over the altar, the cross, the bell and the rod for judging. (263-268)

The things which a priest may use without blessing are:

'... the sprinkler for holy water, the book of the Holy Gospels, the Psalter, the missal, the book of the hours, the manual and the book of the synod. He should have the veil, the candelabra and candles, a wardrobe of vestments, a pyx with the offering and their irons, a flask for wine and a bottle for water, a basin and towel for washing hands, a tree trunk or a carved stone into which the water used for washing sacred things maybe poured away, the concealed base for a candle and a lectern for the lectionary.' (229-236)

When combined, these lists provide a good overview of the liturgical accoutrements which were deemed necessary for a priest and his church. The liturgical furniture described includes the altar, altar table and ciborium; the lectern and ablution drain; and the baptistery and font.

This tract was composed for the edification of the Irish clergy in the early stages of the reform movement and must be seen in this light; it cannot be taken as evidence for any of the practices described within. Even so, it emerges that there was a clear understanding of the role of the clergy in ministering to the population, the material good required for sacramental administration, and of the duties of the laity to keep themselves within the fold of the church.

The Anglo-Norman Colonisation and the Sarum Use

The beginning of Anglo-Norman political interest in Ireland can be traced back to 1155, when Pope Adrian IV ‘granted and donated Ireland’ to be held by Henry II ‘in hereditary right’ in a bull commonly known as *Laudabiliter*. The motivations behind English petition for this privilege have been heavily debated, but the Pope issued the bull on the grounds that the Irish were a rude and barbaric people who could only benefit from the rule of the pious King Henry, under whose auspices they would be brought into line with the practices of modern Christendom.¹⁰¹

A stance such as this seems strange, considering the papal approval of Irish reforming methods and ecclesiastical hierarchy just three years earlier at Kells. Nevertheless, the bull was issued and the privilege granted to the English king, who then made no use of it. The Anglo-Norman colonisation was not to occur for another sixteen years, at which point no reference was made to *Laudabiliter* in support of Henry’s legal claim to overlordship of Ireland.

In the years after Muirchertach’s death in 1119, Ireland continued to be plagued by political unrest. By the mid-1150s a breakdown of the secular polity led three men to claim rights to the high kingship: Ruaidri Ua Conchobair, of the Connacht dynasty; Diarmait Mac Murchada, king of Leinster; and Tigernan Ua Ruairc, King of Breifne. The period of 1156 to 1171 would be characterized by political turmoil as the three men, particularly Ua Ruairc and Mac Murchada, fought for overlordship.

As the war intensified, Mac Murchada looked to England for military aid, which came in the form of an errant vassal of King Henry. In return for assistance, Mac Murchada promised succession to his kingdom of Leinster to the lord of Pembroke and Strigoil, Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare, commonly called Strongbow. Strongbow landed in 1170 and quickly conquered Dublin. The power of an errant vassal in an area so close to his own kingdom prompted Henry to become involved.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Historians such as Watt and Gwynn have generally held that Canterbury’s ‘predatory interests’ in the Irish Church were incidental to the quest for primacy over the archbishopric of York. Flanagan has more recently argued convincingly for Canterbury’s role in procuring the papal bull in response to the independence of the Irish Church as ratified by the papacy at the Synod of Kells three years earlier. See especially Flanagan, ‘The See of Canterbury’, 38-55.

¹⁰² Many general texts provide an overview of the events leading up to and the occasion of Henry’s intervention in Ireland. One such example is Sean Duffy, *Ireland in the Middle ages* (Dublin, 1997), especially 57-80.

Henry II landed with his troops near Waterford in October 1171 and would remain in Ireland until April 1172. During this time, the Irish episcopate assembled once again at Cashel. The Church held yet another reforming council, convened under Henry's auspices, in which it swore fealty to the Anglo-Norman king and agreed to adopt the structure, though not the primacy of, the English Church. The Synod of Kells had finally accorded the Irish Church an independent status, as evidenced by the papal confirmation of the four archbishoprics. What the Irish bishops were submitting to in 1172 was not only the overlordship of Henry in Ireland, but also the system of church-state relations as it existed in England.

The decrees of the council are recorded in Gerald of Wales' *Expugnatio Hibernica*,¹⁰³ and follow along the lines of those issued at the earlier reforming councils concerning marriage practice, payment of tithes and the provision of wills. However, there are three decrees that should be expressly noted. The eighth and last decree reads: 'Thus in all parts of the Irish church on all matter relating to religion are to be conducted hereafter on the pattern of Holy Church, and in line with the observances of the English Church.'¹⁰⁴ The seventh decree reads: 'that those who die, having made good confessions, should receive that degree of ceremony which is their due, both as regards Masses and vigils, and in the manner of their burial.' The second decree reads: 'that children should be instructed in front of the doors of each church and should be baptized in the consecrated font in baptismal churches.'

The eighth decree signals the acceptance of English administrative arrangements and general liturgical practices, and for the first time, conciliar decrees specifically addressed the practice of the liturgy. There has been much conjecture over the motivations of the Irish episcopate in submitting to the English king and accepting English ecclesiastical practices, but the generally accepted position is that they were anxious to create a political environment stable enough to fully realize the reforms that had been implemented in the last seventy years.¹⁰⁵

Arguably, the greatest impact of the Anglo-Norman colonisation on the Irish Church would be on the liturgy of the Irish Church. As noted in the decrees of Cashel 1172, a new liturgical practice was being instituted, and with it would come vastly different requirements for liturgical space. Most notable was the importation of the Sarum Use, the body of custom

¹⁰³ A. B. Scott and F. X. Martin (ed. and trans.), *Expugnatio Hibernica: the conquest of Ireland*, by Giraldus Cambrensis (Dublin, 1978). For the Council of Cashel and decrees, see I.34-35 at pp 97-101.

¹⁰⁴ There is debate as to whether this was an actual conciliar decree or simply a statement by Gerald summing up the nature of the council.

¹⁰⁵ On the motivations of the Irish episcopate, see Flanagan, 'Henry II, the Council of Cashel and the Irish Bishops', where she argues that though the Irish Church would have desired secular stability to this end, it had not as yet formed enough of a collective identity to embrace English overlordship as a whole, which would lead to divisive problems over the course of Anglo-Norman colonization.

associated with Salisbury Cathedral which would become the normative liturgical practice of the English, and thus the Irish, Church over the course of the middle ages.¹⁰⁶ While there is little debate as to whether, at least within the Anglo-Norman colony, the Sarum Use became the standard liturgical rite in Ireland there is also little understanding as to what this exactly meant for the Irish Church.¹⁰⁷ To what degree did this adherence affect actual liturgical practices?

Ecclesiastical Legislation

One clue might be found in the decrees of the councils and synods convened to legislate to the Irish Church after the invasion. Nine ecclesiastical conventions took place between the third Council of Cashel in 1172 and 1201, four of them in Dublin. Such statutes are invaluable sources for the development of Canon Law and ecclesiastical influence and can be very useful in determining liturgical practices as well. Often, councils set down requirements for the usage and provision of fittings, fixtures, vestments, and various ecclesiastical goods, in addition to mandating ways in which pastoral care was to be administered.¹⁰⁸ Despite their usefulness, they remain extremely problematic sources preserved in second-, even third-hand incomplete copies of composite statute sets, amended over time and often haphazardly recorded. Christopher Cheney's comments on the state of English diocesan statutes can be equally applied to Ireland:

Preserved piecemeal, for the greater part in corrupt and unofficial copies, many of the survivors were published by scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and have never been re-edited. Their first editors were in no position to produce critical editions or (what was chiefly required) to survey the material as a whole.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ On the Sarum Use, see W. Frere (ed.), *The Use of Sarum* (2 vols, Cambridge, 1898, 1901), vol. 1: *The Sarum Customs as set forth in the Consuetudinary and Customary*; vol. 2: *The Ordinal and Tonary*; J. W. Legg (ed.), *The Sarum Missal, edited from Three Early Manuscripts* (Oxford, 1916); and P. Baxter, *Sarum use: the development of a medieval code of liturgy and customs* (Salisbury, 1994).

¹⁰⁷ St. Patrick's Cathedral, established in the early thirteenth century, followed the Sarum Use, as guaranteed by papal approval. The Sarum Use at St. Patrick's and its influence will be discussed in the next chapter. A number of surviving Sarum manuscripts with a known Dublin provenance have been catalogued and discussed in W. Hawkes, 'The Liturgy in Dublin, 1200-1500: Manuscript Sources' in *Reportorium Novum: Dublin Diocesan Historical Record*, 2:1 (1958), 33-67.

¹⁰⁸ See for example, *Constitutiones incerti loci*, a set of statutes composed in the first years of the thirteenth century for the abbey of Corbie (diocese of Amiens). The preamble states that the legislation is meant to 'appoint rules of conduct, of dispensing the sacraments and of behaviour towards the laity'. See the discussion in Christopher Cheney, 'The Earliest English Diocesan Statutes' in *English Historical Review* 75 (1960), 1-29 at 3.

¹⁰⁹ Cheney, 'The Earliest English Diocesan Statutes', 1. For a discussion of the antiquarian recordings of English councils and synods, see Christopher Cheney, 'Legislation of the Medieval English Church' in *English Historical Review*, 1 (1935), 193-224 and 385-417.

Although many of the *acta* of Irish councils have been recorded in these editions, they are not easily accessible to the non-specialist in Canon Law.¹¹⁰ Modern scholars still turn to David Wilkin's 1737 *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, which even in the mid-nineteenth century was declared 'exceedingly defective and incomplete . . . and uncritical'.¹¹¹ Translations and editions of these texts are rarely available, and even when they are, there remains an absence of scholarly commentary to place the decrees within their political and ecclesiastical context.¹¹² The Irish Church historian Aubrey Gwynn produced one of the most valuable modern editions of these *acta*, assembling many of the decrees issued by the Anglo-Norman diocese of Dublin.¹¹³ Again, the lack of translation or commentary makes such editions problematic for the non-specialist. Most of the scholarly work that has been done on medieval statutes examines them to determine how they were shaped, shared and exchanged by diocese. In such a study, Christopher Cheney has determined how a set of thirteenth-century Dublin statutes was clearly related to ones issued at York and Chichester in the same period.¹¹⁴

In the thirteenth century as a result of Lateran IV, the English Church began issuing longer and more precise series of statutes to clarify clerical standards and outline correct procedures.¹¹⁵ It is difficult to know the degree to which these councils initiated new practices through their legislation, as opposed to simply codifying already extant traditions and procedures. Also relevant is that post-reform Irish synods, as was the case in England, were held on a diocesan basis. Therefore, the decrees of one synod were not necessarily or entirely applicable to any others.¹¹⁶ With this in mind, a brief discussion of the decrees issued at an 1186 council might give a very good indication of the ways in which the new Anglo-Norman episcopate was trying to effect change within the Irish Church in the years during the colonization.

¹¹⁰ The chief source for Irish, and English, diocesan statutes is David Wilkins (ed.), *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae* (4 vols, London, 1737). More recent editions include A. Haddan and W. Stubbs (eds), *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland* (3 vols, Oxford, 1869-78), D. Whitelock (ed.), *Councils and Synods with Other Documents relating to the English Church* (2 vols, Oxford, 1964-81) and F. M. Powicke and C. R. Cheney (eds), *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church* (Oxford, 1964).

¹¹¹ Stated by W. Stubbs in 1868 as quoted in Cheney, 'Legislation of the Medieval English Church', 193.

¹¹² Although few works on the subject in Ireland exist, David Dumville's short pamphlet *Councils and Synods of the Gaelic Early and Central Middle Ages* provides the best overview for Irish ecclesiastical legislation before the Invasion. There is no comparable overview of ecclesiastical legislation in the post-Norman period.

¹¹³ Aubrey Gwynn, 'Provincial and Diocesan Decrees of the Diocese of Dublin during the Anglo-Norman Period' in *Archivium Hibernicum*, 11 (1944), 31-117.

¹¹⁴ See C. Cheney, 'A Group of Related Synodial Statutes of the Thirteenth century' in J. Watt, J.B. Morrall and F.X. Martin (eds), *Medieval Studies presented to Aubrey Gwynn, SJ* (Dublin, 1961), 114-132. While such work is extremely useful in uncovering relationships between diocese, the degree to which such *acta*, especially those related to liturgical practice, were followed cannot be known.

¹¹⁵ M. Gibb and J. Lang, *Bishops and Reform 1215-1272* (Oxford, 1934), 94-179.

¹¹⁶ Although the above noted synodial statutes from Dublin, York and Chichester clearly show how diocese often borrowed and reused decrees from one another. See Cheney, 'A Group of Related Synodial Statutes', 131-2.

Twenty decrees were issued at a provincial council held by John Comyn, first Anglo-Norman archbishop of Dublin, at Christ Church Cathedral in 1186.¹¹⁷ Originally known through a roll containing the text of Urban III's confirmation of these decrees, which was destroyed in 1921¹¹⁸, an eighteenth-century copy was preserved in the Christ Church volumes *Novum Registrum*.¹¹⁹

A number of these decrees are particularly relevant to the topic at hand as they stipulate the kinds of furnishings required in each church for the proper celebration of the Eucharist and baptismal ceremony.¹²⁰ The first five decrees deal with the accoutrements of the Eucharist. The first decree is well known, and prohibits priests from celebrating on a wooden table or altar 'according to the usage of Ireland'. However, it does state that a wooden altar is acceptable when a stone inscribed with five crosses is inset into the top of the table. The second decree goes on to state that altar cloths should be large enough to cover the entire altar, reaching to the ground. The third decree states that chalices should be made of gold or silver, but poorer churches might make do with a pewter chalice. The fourth and fifth decrees relate to the purity of the host and wine.

Decrees seven and nine state that a piscina, or 'lavatory' of stone or wood be set up with a drain running into the earth. This should be used for the disposal of the priest's ablutions after the celebration of the mass, but also for the disposal of the ashes of burnt vestments and altar cloths. Decrees eight and ten state that an immovable font be placed in each baptismal church. It might be made of stone or of wood, with a lead lined drain, and should never be reused for any domestic purpose.

Although these are the first synodical decrees that relate to church furnishings, it must be noted that both the piscina and font were expressly mentioned by Gille of Limerick almost seventy years beforehand as necessary possessions of a parish church. The decrees surrounding the accoutrements of Eucharistic celebration, including the piscina, can be seen as arising from

¹¹⁷ The council is described by Giraldus, whom Comyn incited to preach during the assembly. See Giraldus Cambrensis, 'De rebus a se gestis' in J. S. Brewer, J. F. Dimock and G. F. Warner (eds), *Giraldus Cambrensis, Opera* (8 vols, London, 1861-91), II.13.

¹¹⁸ Urban III's papal confirmation of the decrees is recorded in M. J. McEnery and R. Refuaussee (eds), *Christ Church Deeds* (Dublin, 2001), 36.

¹¹⁹ A full copy of the Latin text of the decrees, along with a brief discussion of the council, is found in Gwynn, 'Provincial and Diocesan Decrees', 39-44.

¹²⁰ An English translation of the decrees can be found in John D'Alton, *Memoirs of the Archbishops of Dublin* (Dublin, 1938), 72-5. The following discussion is based on this translation.

the heightened sense of the sanctity of the celebration of the mass and not necessarily as indicators of improper Irish practices.¹²¹

It was generally accepted in the middle ages that the proper celebration of the Eucharist stood at the centre of the Christian faith. It was the supreme sacrament, without which all other sacraments would lose their meaning. One controversy that arose in the eleventh century would centre around Eucharistic theology and the notion of transubstantiation, the belief that that during the Canon of the Mass, the bread and wine offered up by the celebrant would physically transform into the body and blood of Christ.¹²² This canonical position on the nature of the Communion was challenged by a number of theologians, most notably Berengar of Tours (c.1010-1088) in his book *On the Holy Supper*.¹²³

What Berengar and his followers denied, and what the Church decreed it necessary to believe, was that the bread and wine ‘are substantially converted’ into the very body of Christ, despite the lack of change in outward appearance. One of Berengar’s chief opponents was Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, who wrote a number of tracts and letters in condemnation of this heresy.¹²⁴ The controversy would continue until, under Gregory VII, Berengar appeared at the Synod of Rome in 1079 and was forced to issue a written declaration of his recantation.

The Berengarian controversy was the first serious challenge to the Church’s understanding of Eucharistic theology and ushered in a period when ever more precise and nuanced understandings of sacramental theology in general were developed. The widespread reforms throughout Western Christendom in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries led to the convention of an ecumenical council under the auspices of Pope Innocent III. Lateran IV took place in November 1215, and the constitutions dealt with heresies and church reform issues.¹²⁵ In the first constitution of Lateran IV, *On the Catholic Faith*, Rome issued the first conciliar declaration of its Eucharistic theology: ‘His body and blood are truly contained in

¹²¹ Evidence for altars, piscinas and fonts in medieval Ireland is more fully discussed in Chapter 4, ‘The Built Environment of Liturgical Practice’.

¹²² A tenth century treatise on the Eucharist accused of proposing false doctrine was denounced at a synod in Vercelli in 1050, and incorrectly attributed to the Irish theologian John Scotus Eriugina (ca. 810-ca. 877). It would be interesting to know precisely why this text was attributed to Eriugina, and if it had anything to do with continental presumptions about the sacrament as understood by the Irish Church.

¹²³ The background information on medieval Eucharistic theology, and Berengar in particular, is drawn from J. Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology 600-1300* (London, 1978), 184-203 and G. Macy, *The Theologies of the Eucharist in the Early Scholastic Period* (Oxford, 1984), especially 35-52.

¹²⁴ Though an alleged copy of Berengar’s *On the Holy Supper* resurfaced in 1770, it was thought lost and Berengar’s arguments were largely reconstructed from Lanfranc’s treatises in reply.

¹²⁵ The decrees of Lateran IV are reproduced and translated in Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 227-272.

the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine, the bread and wine having been changed in substance, by God's power, into his body and blood.¹²⁶

There is evidence of the Irish clergy's presence at Lateran IV in 1215. The Irish were well-represented, with six or seven Anglo-Norman and fourteen native Irish bishops in attendance, including Cornelius Ua Éinne, Bishop of Killaloe.¹²⁷ In their dealings with the Papacy at the council, a general picture of calmness within the Irish Sees emerges. No evidence of a reforming party seeking assistance to attack abuses is apparent, and Innocent III did not think it necessary to supplement the general decrees with an ordinance directed towards the Irish Church. In the light of the decrees issued by the Anglo-Norman archbishop of Dublin in 1186, it might be argued that this was because many of the edicts of Lateran IV were already being addressed by conciliar decree.

Although the general picture of sacramental understanding and administration in the Irish Church was in accord with that of Rome, the specific doctrine of transubstantiation as presented at Lateran IV would have an impact on church architecture, not only in Ireland, but throughout Europe. The specific affirmation of the real presence in the Eucharist prompted a change in the way that chancels and altars were arranged in an attempt to highlight the significance of this sacrament: altars move further eastward, chancel screens appear, and such fittings as the piscina were installed. Twelfth-century Irish evidence, as seen in both Gille of Limerick's *de Statu Ecclesiae* and the 1186 Dublin decrees, shows that such concerns were already being addressed in Ireland before the thirteenth century.

In addition to the decrees relating to sacramental administration and church furnishings, three of the 1186 Dublin decrees can be interpreted as regulations for the proper use of local, possibly parochial, churches. The twelfth decree 'Forbids the celebration of divine service in chapels built by laymen, to the detriment of mother churches'. The eleventh forbids burial in ground which had not been specifically consecrated as a cemetery, though they may be part of a consecrated churchyard. It also prohibits laymen burying in a properly consecrated place without the presence of a priest. The nineteenth decree, echoing a similar decree issued in 1172, stipulates that tithes be paid to 'the mother church'.

¹²⁶ The twentieth constitution, 'On keeping the chrism and the eucharist under lock and key', may also have impacted chancel fittings in the form of aumbries. However, this is debatable, as there is no hard evidence that the consecrated host or chrism would be kept in an aumbrey, which may only have contained Mass vessels such as the paten and chalice.

¹²⁷ P. J. Dunning, 'Irish Representatives and Irish Ecclesiastical Affairs at the Fourth Lateran Council' in J. Watt, J.B. Morall and F.X. Martin (eds), *Medieval Studies Presented to Aubrey Gwynn*. (Dublin, 1961), 90-113; the list of attending bishops is included here at 23, fn. 32 and Dunning, 'Irish Representatives', 90-91.

The reference to chapels built by laymen, and burial in church grounds not specifically consecrated as a cemetery, might be read as warnings against the establishment of local churches which have not been properly consecrated by the bishop as Gille of Limerick stated was required.¹²⁸ Gille also described proper burial practice, describing the ‘cemeteries of the saints’ and ‘other places adjoining the cemeteries of the saints’, but did not mention any proper consecration ritual for these places.¹²⁹

Bearing this possibility in mind, it is worth looking at some later conciliar and synodical decrees to see whether the problem of lay churches continued through the middle ages. The *Liber Ruber* of the diocese of Ossory was written between the years 1360 and 1396. Richard Ledred, bishop of Ossory from 1317 to 1360, figured prominently in the entries, and it is likely that the *Liber Ruber* was composed as a record of the diocese during his pastorate.¹³⁰ The calendar of the *Liber Ruber* contains constitutions from four councils which imply that churches were being improperly established, served by the clergy and used by the populace.

The earliest of these is entry fourteen, Constitutions of Diocese of Ossory, dated 1317.¹³¹ The second canon specifically relates to undedicated churches:

‘All undedicated churches, cemeteries, and chapels having rectors are to be dedicated, and all dedicated churches which have been violated to be reconciled. In every dedicated church the date of the dedication, with the names of the [saint] to whom it was dedicated and the person by whom it was dedicated, and the number of days indulgence granted at the consecration, is to be inscribed near the great altar, and the anniversary of the dedication is to be observed.’¹³²

It is tempting to see this decree in the light of the Anglo-Norman colony. It has long been argued that the parochial network, in the colony at least, developed as a result of

¹²⁸ In *de Statu Ecclesiae*, Gille of Limerick specifically stated that the bishop ‘dedicates the porch, the sanctuary [church], the altar and the table of the altar’. Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 161 at lines 259-60.

¹²⁹ ‘Other places also adjoin the cemeteries of the saints, where the bodies of the faithful who are drowned or killed (are laid)’ at lines 207-09.

¹³⁰ A copy of the *Liber Ruber* was made in 1686, and is now held by the British Museum. Lawlor refers to it as Additional Manuscript 4878 listed in Samuel Ayscough, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved in the British Museum* (2 vols, London, 1782), I.vii. The discussion of the decrees which follows is taken from Lawlor’s excerpts of the manuscript. H. Lawlor, ‘Calendar of the Liber Ruber of the Diocese of Ossory’ in *PRLA*, 27 (1907-9), 159-92.

¹³¹ H. Lawlor, ‘Calendar of the Liber Ruber’, 166-169. This is the 1320 Synod of Ossory included in Wilkins, *Concilia*, II.501-506. The full Latin text is also found in Gwynn, ‘Provincial and Diocesan Decrees’, 71-83.

¹³² Lawlor, ‘Calendar of the Liber Ruber’, 166.

subinfeudation and the establishment of manors with their associated parish churches.¹³³ As Otway-Ruthven has stated: 'nothing is clearer than the identification of manor and parish.'¹³⁴ If each of these churches required the dedication of a bishop, then it is likely that some of these parish churches may have been established, along with their rectories and vicarages, and in use without the proper consecration ceremony performed.¹³⁵ The second part of this decree highlights the degree to which there was concern about the dedication of these new churches, and the inscription commemorating the dedication may have been required to verify that this had taken place, and that the associated parochial tithes were being distributed to the proper mother church and not to the patron.

Canons fifteen and sixteen can also be read as indications of problems in the establishment of the parochial and diocesan hierarchies, and the proper collection and distribution of tithes. Canon fifteen states that anyone who despoils the goods or possessions of any churches, or impedes in the jurisdiction of any cleric of any rank, is to be denied ecclesiastical burial. Canon sixteen states that anyone who dies and does not allocate a proper offering of their goods and possessions to church, or who distributes their goods before death, 'defrauds the church' and will be denied ecclesiastical burial as well. These two decrees were to be recited publicly 'in the vulgar tongue by the vicars and parish priests in all parish churches' twice a year.¹³⁶ Both of these can be seen as statements of authority which support not only the higher ecclesiastical ranks and their possessions, but also the rights of rectors, vicars and the parish church itself. Proper payment and upward distribution of tithes was necessary for the diocesan economy and had to be protected.

Entry seventeen in the Calendar of *Liber Ruber* contains the constitutions of a provincial synod held in Dublin under Archbishop Alexander de Bicknor in the first half of the fourteenth century.¹³⁷ One decree in particular evidences further problems with the establishment and use of the parish church.

¹³³ The seminal publication arguing this point is that of A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'Parochial Development in the Rural Deanery of Skreen' in *JRS&AI*, 94 (1964), 111-122. For areas inside the diocese of Killaloe, see Mark Hennessy, 'Parochial organisation in medieval Tipperary', in William Nolan and Thomas McGrath (eds), *Tipperary: History and Society* (Dublin, 1985), 60-70.

¹³⁴ A. J. Otway-Ruthven, *A History of Medieval Ireland* (New York, 1968), 119.

¹³⁵ A similar problem of undedicated churches in use can be identified in early thirteenth century England. In 1239, the bishop of Worcester consecrated five major churches in one year implying that a similar problem of undedicated churches in use can be identified in early thirteenth century England. This spate of dedications is noted in H. R. Luard (ed.), *Annales Monastici* (5 vols, London, 1864-9), I.112.

¹³⁶ Lawlor, 'Calendar of the Liber Ruber', 168-9.

¹³⁷ Lawlor, 'Calendar of the Liber Ruber', 170-74. No date is given for the synod, but it does state that the synod was convened under de Bicknor, Archbishop of Dublin from 1317-49. The decrees of this synod are not included in Wilkin's *Concilia*.

Decree four prohibits clerics of any degree from petitioning laymen for promises to be buried in their church, or to administer sacraments to laymen resident in different parishes, specifically stating that the laws against such practices were disregarded. The problem was serious enough that a yearly diocesan inquiry was ordered to investigate these practices.¹³⁸ This decree suggests that even where parish churches were properly established and consecrated, laymen were receiving sacramental administration, and presumably paying the associated fees, to churches of their own choosing. The decree specifically mentions not only burial, but also the administration of extreme unction, the Eucharist and matrimonial ceremonies. Such a practice may well have been common, especially in areas where the laity were expected to attend newly established manorial churches. If they had traditionally resorted to churches or monastic centres that had long been seen as devotional loci within the ecclesiastical landscape, they may well have been loath to receive the sacraments from these newly established churches. It may also have been directed at the newly established Dominican and Franciscan houses, which were extremely popular in the thirteenth and fourteenth-centuries: fifty-eight houses had been established in Ireland by about 1340.¹³⁹ There have been no studies published to date, however, that might support either of these speculations; further research into lay religious practices and devotion at the parochial level needs to be carried out to determine which of these scenarios is most likely.

While a number of new manorial churches were established at Anglo-Norman settlements, it was not uncommon for the Anglo-Norman colonists to adopt pre-existent ecclesiastical sites for this purpose, and even sometimes to base their settlements there.¹⁴⁰ Elizabeth FitzPatrick notes that this was especially true in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries during the initial period of colonization and cites examples of such a practice at the early monastic site at Tullaherin, Kilkenny,¹⁴¹ and St Barrind's Church, Offaly,¹⁴² both of which became manorial churches. Later decrees show that the erection of new chapels continued through the fifteenth century, but the wording of these suggest more concern with the proper appropriation of tithes, rather than the possibility that the laity might ignore the new church in favour of a preferred establishment.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Lawlor, 'Calendar of the Liber Ruber', 171.

¹³⁹ On the coming of the friars to Ireland, see Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 60-84.

¹⁴⁰ Elizabeth FitzPatrick, 'The material world of the parish', in E. Fitzpatrick and R. Gillespie (eds), *The Parish in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), 62-75 at 66-69.

¹⁴¹ This early ecclesiastical site included an enclosure, early church, round tower, ogham stone and high cross. C. Manning, 'Some notes on the early history and archaeology of Tullaherin' in *Shadow of the Steeple*, 6 (1998), 19-31.

¹⁴² E. FitzPatrick and C. O'Brien, *The medieval churches of County Offaly* (Dublin, 1998), 122.

¹⁴³ See the discussion of the 1453 Synod of Cashel decrees below at 54-55.

From this point forwards, more decrees are issued with regard to liturgical and devotional practices, suggesting that whatever growing pains had been experienced in the establishment of the parochial system had largely been addressed by this time. After twenty three cannons were issued addressing the administration of benefices and ecclesiastical property, the final three decrees of the fourteenth-century Dublin synod address liturgical concerns, ordering the commemoration of Laurence O'Toole, and that the festivals of all diocesan patron saints be celebrated as sung double festivals.

The next set of decrees recorded in the *Liber Ruber* are those of a 1352 provincial Dublin synod, which deal almost exclusively with liturgical concerns.¹⁴⁴ The first decree instated the double festival of the Conception of the B.V.M., noting specifically that the service is the same as that for the Nativity of the B.V.M. and that 'on the festival day the people are to abstain from labour and attend their parish churches.' The second decree instituted the festivals of St Ann, the Translation of St Thomas the Martyr, and St Katherine, and noted that where local curates did not have the proper services for these festivals, they have six months to obtain them. The seventh decree read: 'On Good Friday rural and secular work shall be abstained from, that the day may be duly observed with fasting a prayer'. The eighth read:

'All person, clerks and laics, are exhorted, whenever the most Holy Name is pronounced in divine offices, to 'incline mind and head and body very devoutly.' Those who do shall have ten days' indulgence, namely on all Sundays and double festivals. All ecclesiastical persons present at divine services are to bow humbly when they say 'Gloria Patri'.

Although later councils certainly issued legislation designed to maintain the integrity of the ecclesiastical economy¹⁴⁵, these decrees show that synodial legislation had begin to consider more liturgical and devotional concerns, indicating that by the middle of the fourteenth century, the parish system had been well established.

One final set of statutes must be discussed, as they have commonly been cited as the impetus for the widespread rebuilding and refurbishment of parish churches across Ireland in the fifteenth century. A set of one hundred and twenty one decrees were issued at a Synod of the

¹⁴⁴ A decree issued by the 1453 Synod of Cashel states: 'all emoluments arising from the erection of a new chapel, erected in a parish by a pious layman, belong to the parish church'. Lawlor, 'Calendar of the *Liber Ruber*', 174-75. This is the 1348 Provincial Synod of Dublin included in Wilkins, *Concilia*, II.746-50.

¹⁴⁵ The 1453 Synod of Cashel, discussed below, issued a large number of degrees designed to maintain the proper administration of the church and its lands. See especially decrees 7 – 11.

ecclesiastical province of Cashel, held in Limerick in 1453. When taken together, these present a good picture of not only liturgical practices and decoration of the parish church in the fifteenth century, but also ongoing problems which had continually been mentioned in earlier Anglo-Norman legislation.¹⁴⁶

The sixteenth decree stated that the revenues of churches which have fallen into decay through the amalgamation of parishes and the appropriation of benefices may be diverted back to the parish and used for the repair of the church. In his discussion of Clare parish churches, O’Keeffe argues that the widespread architectural changes to churches in the fifteenth century can be seen primarily as a symbolic act of religious devotion and social power on the part of patrons.¹⁴⁷ What he overlooks is the financial ability of the curate and community of the church to maintain its fabric. Although contributing to the upkeep of the parish church was a common late medieval devotional act, the reallocation of revenues which had heretofore been inappropriate to various collegiate prebends and monastic foundations would certainly have affected the ability of the parish to fund building programmes.¹⁴⁸ In effect, this statute would have allowed the rectory or vicarage or any parish to withhold its funds from the prebend or monastery to which it was inappropriate, providing it substantial revenue for building programmes. Furthermore, the use of ecclesiastical funds to refurbish churches may account for the widespread phenomena of the insertion of vicarages and residences into the western portion of the parish church, a practice which became widespread in the fifteenth century.¹⁴⁹

In the thirteenth century English dioceses began to issue statutes that divided the financial responsibility for the upkeep of the church between the clergy and the laity, and it is likely that such a division had been in practice since the twelfth century.¹⁵⁰ Broadly stated, whereas the church was responsible for the fabric of the chancel, the laity was responsible for the fabric of the nave. Such a practice is known to have been in place in Ireland since 1304, when in a confirmation of privileges conferred on St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, the Archbishop Richard de Ferings stated:

¹⁴⁶ The full Latin text of these decrees is reprinted in J. Begley, *The Diocese of Limerick* (Dublin, 1906), 431-41. Some of the decrees have been translated by Begley, these are included at pp 289-94. They are included in D. Wilkin’s *Concilia*, III.565 ff.

¹⁴⁷ See his discussion on the possible reasons for fifteenth century widespread fabric rebuilding in Clare in T. O’Keeffe, ‘The built environment of local community worship’ in E. FitzPatrick and R. Gillespie (eds), *The Parish in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), 124-46 at 145-6.

¹⁴⁸ In the diocese of Killaloe, the revenues of nearly every rectory and vicarage are listed as inappropriate to an episcopal prebend or monastic house in the 1615 valuation. The valuation for Killaloe is printed in M. Murphy, ‘The Royal Visitation, 1615’ in *Archivium Hibernicum*, 3 (1914), 210-226.

¹⁴⁹ The insertion of residences will be discussed more fully at 197-201.

¹⁵⁰ A more detailed discussion of these English statutes can be found at 56-58.

‘...the dean and chapter are to elect a canon, or the chapter is to depute a cleric to supervise the chancels of prebendal churches and chapels belonging to the commons of St Patrick’s and their ministers as often as necessary, and to represent any defects in ornaments, books, chancels, buildings and ministers to the dean and chapter’¹⁵¹

While this dictate illustrates the responsibility of the Episcopal church to which rectorial tithes were bound, the 1453 Synod of Cashel statutes presents a much clearer picture of not only the items which were required for each parish, but also of the financial responsibility of the laity to provide them:

‘The parishioners of every parish should have in their parochial churches, at their own expense, for the proper celebration of the divine offices and the administration of the sacraments, a Missal, silver or gilt chalice, an amice, alb, cincture, maniple, stole, chasuble, surplice, a baptismal font of stone neatly constructed and well covered, and a suitable vessel for keeping the chrism for the use of the sick. The church, in nave and chancel, in roof and walls, inside and out, should be well constructed, and kept clean according to the means of the people, corn and animals and such things belonging to the laity should be excluded, and that men and women of whatever description, whether married or single, should not cohabit therein under pain of mortal sin and excommunication.’¹⁵²

In addition to a well-built and well-roofed church, the parishioners of the diocese of Limerick were responsible for providing vestments, ecclesiastical plate, liturgical books, and a baptismal font. In this context, the survival of heraldic emblems on so many of the surviving late medieval fonts, as at the parish church of Dunsany, Meath [Fig. 3.2] is hardly surprising.¹⁵³ Each church was also required to have a statue of the Virgin, a cross and statue of the patron and a ‘becoming vessel consecrated for the Body of Christ’, though there is no mention of who was responsible for the provision of these items.

A number of other decrees from the same council provide an overview of the liturgical life of the late medieval Irish parish. The canonical hours should be said and mass held at each

¹⁵¹ C. McNeill (ed.), *Calendar of Archbishop Alen’s Register, c.1172–1534* (Dublin, 1950), 159.

¹⁵² J. Begley, *Diocese of Limerick*, 290.

¹⁵³ A full discussion of medieval fonts can be found at 142-53. While few fonts survive, the majority of them date to the fourteenth and fifteenth-centuries. On the Dunsany font, see H. Roe, *Medieval Fonts of Meath* (Dublin, 1968), 49-56. On lay patronage of fonts in the late middle ages see Moss, ‘Permanent expression of piety’, 84-86.

church on every Sunday and holy day, and as often as possible during the rest of the week. The church bell should be rung three times before each mass, and apart from week-days, the laity are to 'cease from all civil work' on Sundays and holy days to attend services. The laity must make a confession and communicate once a year in order to receive Christian burial. Church and graveyards should be kept clean, and free of buildings.¹⁵⁴

However, all of these statutes were issued in Anglo-Norman dioceses and there is no way to know the extent to which such edicts would be followed in the marchlands and staunchly Gaelic territories, such as those lying within the diocese of Killaloe.¹⁵⁵ We know that there were different administrative apparatuses in place within Norman and Gaelic parishes; one example can be seen in the distribution of financial responsibilities at the parochial level. Despite the separation of responsibilities for the upkeep of the parish church between the clergy and laity documented by the Anglo-Norman councils, in the western parishes of Clare, the erenagh was responsible for the upkeep of the nave.¹⁵⁶

The Eucharist in Late Medieval Ireland

While the decrees and liturgical *acta* described above may provide evidence for practices in specific diocese, general trends in the development of theological attitudes and devotional practices as they developed over the high and late middle ages should also be considered. The most significant of these developments for the purposes of this study is the rise of Eucharistic devotion on the part of the laity and an increasing desire on their part for both visual and physical proximity to that sacrament.

Lay concern for such access can be seen as a direct result of the programme of uniform sacramental administration ushered in by the proclamations of Lateran IV.¹⁵⁷ The same

¹⁵⁴ This prohibition against buildings erected within the churchyard relates to the above quoted statement and seems to suggest that in some cases, lay residences were erected on church grounds.

¹⁵⁵ There is no doubt that Gaelic and Anglo-Norman ecclesiastics administered their churches and lands differently. For a discussion, see J. Watt, '*Ecclesia inter Anglicos at inter Hibernicos*: Confrontation and Coexistence in the Medieval Diocese and Province of Armagh', in J. F. Lydon (ed.), *The English in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 1984), 46-64 and K. Simms, 'Frontiers in the Irish Church – Regional and Cultural' in T. Barry, R. Frame and K. Simms, *Colony and Frontier in Medieval Ireland. Essays Presented to J. F. Lydon* (London, 1995), 177-200.

¹⁵⁶ The office of the erenagh continued to function in Gaelic territories throughout the middle ages and by the fifteenth century, they were heavily involved in controlling the finances of the parish church. See H. Jeffries, 'Parishes and pastoral care in the early Tudor era' in E. FitzPatrick and R. Gillespie (eds), *The Parish in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), 219-20.

¹⁵⁷ For a discussion of the Lateran Decrees and their relevance to issues of sacramental administration, see. N. Tanner, 'Pastoral Care. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215' in G. Evans (ed.), *A History of Pastoral Care* (London, 2000), 112-25.

theological debates that led to the declaration of transubstantiation at this council had also been concerned with the proper rites of sacramental administration: what these rites should consist of and how they should be performed to ensure efficacy of the rituals. By the middle of the twelfth century, these rites were being discussed as a group: the seven sacraments.¹⁵⁸ These included four which each individual should receive only once; baptism, confirmation, ordination and Viaticum and those that could be repeated: marriage, penance and reception of the Eucharist. One rite in particular, the Eucharist, emerged as the central sacrament whose validity underpinned all the others.

As doctrinal understanding of this sacrament became one in which the bread was wholly and substantively transformed into the body of Christ, the laity was increasingly distanced from the ritual enacting of transubstantiation. As will be seen in the following chapter, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were a time in which chancels were enlarged, altars moved further eastwards and large screens were erected to separate the chancel and nave. At the same time, it would seem that the laity were encouraged to receive communion less often. While there is no conclusive evidence for the frequency of lay communion before the thirteenth century, indications are that lay reception decreased in frequency over the course of the middle ages. By the twelfth century there is evidence that thrice-yearly reception was the norm.¹⁵⁹ This seems to have been the case in Ireland as well; although Gille of Limerick supposed that the laity would attend their parish church each Sunday and Feast day, he stated that they were only to communicate at Easter, Pentecost and Christmas.¹⁶⁰ It has been argued that the twenty-first decree issued by Lateran IV was ‘probably the council’s most influential degree of a pastoral nature’¹⁶¹:

‘All the faithful of both sexes, after they have reached the age of discernment, should individually confess all their sins in a faithful manner to their own priest at least once a year, and let them take care to perform the penance imposed on them. Let them reverently receive the sacrament of the eucharist at least at Easter unless they think,

¹⁵⁸ The seven sacraments were likely first discussed as a cohesive group by Peter Lombard in his theological textbook *Sentences*, written ca. 1158. On the development of sacramental theology in the run up to Lateran IV see, for example, N. Häring, ‘Berengar’s definitions of *sacramentum* and their influence on medieval theology’ in *Medieval Studies* 10 (1948), 109-46 and N. Häring, ‘The interaction between canon law and sacramental theology in the twelfth century’ in S. Kuttner (ed.), *Proceedings of the Fourth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law* (Vatican City, 1976), 483-93.

¹⁵⁹ In his twelfth-century allegorical exposition of the Mass, *Summa de ecclesiasticis officiis*, John Belet explained that lay communion was originally received daily, then reduced to weekly and by his time, occurred thrice yearly. See M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi. The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991), 64.

¹⁶⁰ He states that all should receive communion at baptism, before death (when possible) and three times yearly as stated, though he does not mention any specific prohibition against communication at other times.

¹⁶¹ Tanner, ‘Pastoral Care’, 117.

for a good reason and on the advice of their own priest, that they should abstain for receiving it for a time....¹⁶²

It emerges that as the supernatural nature of the act of transubstantiation was being codified by the Church, the laity were being distanced from its reception; they were encouraged to communicate at least once each year, and then only if they had made a proper penance. The frequency of lay communion in the middle ages is not well documented, but a general decline in frequency seems to be noted in many sources from the twelfth century when concerns about proper reception began to increase.¹⁶³

Although the laity may have been communicating less frequently, a number of new Eucharistic rituals and devotional actions began to be practiced around this time that allowed them to participate in a 'spiritual communion' effected through visual access to the actions of the celebrant.¹⁶⁴ These included the provision of more lighting at the altar during the Mass, the elevation of the chalice and the ringing of bells at the moment the priest uttered the Canon of the Mass, and the words which effected the transformation of the host into the Body of Christ.¹⁶⁵ These ritual actions on behalf of the clergy were supplemented by devotional actions performed by the laity; such as the circulation and kissing of the pax before the sacrifice began.¹⁶⁶ This emphasis on the Eucharist created a culture of veneration, which would culminate in the institution of the Feast of Corpus Christi, celebrated throughout Christendom by the early fourteenth century.¹⁶⁷

Although it may seem strange that the result of a heightened sense of sanctity surrounding the Eucharist would result in the distancing of the laity from the altar, and a reduction in the frequency of communion, this only heightened the sense of mystery surrounding the sacrament. This change in the theological basis of the Eucharist effectively altered the ritual action of the mass; whereas it had once been an intercessory act, undertaken by the clergy on

¹⁶² As translated in Tanner, 'Pastoral Care', 124. For a translation of the full set of decrees and their original Latin, see N. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, (2 vols, London, 1990), 227-71.

¹⁶³ For a discussion, see M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi. The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991), 63-82; evidence for the frequency of lay communion is discussed at 64-5.

¹⁶⁴ The idea of a spiritual communion was debated amongst a number of theologians, including Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great, Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas. See Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 64.

¹⁶⁵ For a detailed discussion of these developments in ritual and devotional activity in the high middle ages, see Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 49-63.

¹⁶⁶ The pax was a round disc inscribed with a cross or, more commonly, a crucifixion scene. While there is evidence for the liturgical use of the pax as early as the eleventh century, it was not until the later middle ages that it became common pastoral practice for the priest to circulate it amongst the congregation before the sacrifice. In the devotional act of kissing what can be described as a substitute for the host, the congregation were able to participate to some degree in the Eucharistic ritual. See the discussion at Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 74-77.

¹⁶⁷ On the origin and dissemination of the Feast, see Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 164-210.

behalf of the populace, by the thirteenth century it had effectively become a participatory act in which all members of the Christian community, the layperson and the Pope, the living and the dead, were involved. John Bossy describes the participatory actions of the laity as including both personal devotions and communal actions:

The congregation at a parish mass would see itself presented as a complex entity at the parsons *prône*, with its reading of marriage banns and other social information and the bidding of the bedes; it would be invited to act as a sacrificer by making its contribution to the offertory and, in principle, by responding to the priest's invitation to pray for the success of their sacrifice; it would be able, and was certainly anxious, to verify the presence of Christ on the sacrificial altar at the elevation of the host. It does not seem unreasonable to suppose that many attenders would have marked the transition from sacrifice to sacrament by saying their Paternosters at the same time as the priest, and they certainly participated, if still present, in the ceremony of the *Pax*; at the end of the mass they knelt to receive the priest's blessing, which was felt to convey to them its salutary protection.¹⁶⁸

But to what degree did the laity have a comprehensive understanding of these rituals in which they participated? Although the edicts of Lateran IV were intended to outline and codify a uniform, orthodox practice of, and theological basis for, sacramental actions throughout Christendom, their enactment was dependant on parish clergy and laity having a clear understanding of the doctrinal basis underpinning these edicts. In relation to the Mass, parish priests had to not only understand the key concept of transubstantiation and the heightened sanctity of the Eucharistic action, but also be able to pass this complex information on to their congregation. The effective transmission of the doctrinal concepts underpinning all the sacraments, but most importantly the Eucharist and its reception, to the laity was key to ensuring their salvation.

But before the parish clergy could ensure their congregation was properly informed of these doctrines, they had to be educated themselves. It should not be surprising then that a large number of manuals for the instruction of parish priests came to be produced in the thirteenth century.¹⁶⁹ These manuals can be divided into two types: comprehensive summaries of canon

¹⁶⁸ Bossy's argument is that the changes in Eucharistic theology resulted ultimately in a parochial liturgy that emphasised the social and communal aspects of the mass. See J. Bossy, 'The Mass as a Social Institution 1200-1700' in *Past and Present* 100 (1983), 29-61; the above description can be found at 35-6.

¹⁶⁹ For a discussion of the origin, varieties and uses of such manual as described below, see Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 83-107.

law and theological debates and shorter manuals containing formulaic sermons which devoted much attention to the exposition of the Eucharistic ritual. This second type is characterised by content which could be repeated verbatim or paraphrased to convey orthodox doctrinal concepts without the necessity for thorough theological understanding. This type was by far the most commonly available to the majority of parish priests in the later middle ages. However, even these simpler compilations were quite different in scope from that produced by Gille Limerick for Irish clergy in the early twelfth century. Whereas Gille's document was concerned with ensuring that each grade of the clergy understood his responsibilities in the newly established diocesan system, these sermon-tracts not only preached against sin and heresy, but also expounded on the nature of the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and its proper reception, in order to provide both the preacher and the congregation with the orthodox theological basis for the sacrament. A brief discussion of sermon manuscripts is warranted at this point as it provides evidence for the ways in which doctrinal truths were taught to both the parish clergy and the laity.

Perhaps the most famous of these manuals is the late fourteenth-century *Festial* produced by John Mirk, an Augustinian canon of Lilleshall Abbey, Shropshire.¹⁷⁰ Here, Mirk provided an English language sermon for each important feast day of the liturgical year, which not only explained the occasion but also illustrated the lessons with anecdotes. In the centre of this work is a section of slightly different composition; *Instructions for Parish Priests* was composed by Mirk in order to provide priests with answers to questions concerning liturgical rituals of Easter week which they might be asked by the laity:

Hyt is ofte sene Ðat lewed men quich ben of mony wordes and prowde of hor wytt will aske prestis diuerse questions of thyngis Ðat towchen Ðer seruice of Holy Church, and namely of the tyme, and gladly of such prestos Ðat cannot make a graythe awnswere, so for to put hom to shame. Wherefore I haue tytylt diuerse poyntes which Ðat ben nedefull to ych prest to know, so he Ðat will loke and hold in his hert he may make his awnswere so Ðat hit shall do hym self worchip and oÐer profett without dowte.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ The full text is available at T. Erbe (ed.), *Mirks' Festial: a Collection of Homilies by Johannes Mirkeus* (London, 1905). On the *Festial*, see also A. Fletcher, 'John Mirk and the Lollards' in *Medium Ævum* 1 (1987), 59-66.

¹⁷¹ From a tract entitled 'Answers for unlearned Priests, to certain Questions, which were wont to be propounded by the Layety', compiled from excerpts from Mirk's *Festial* and sermons as found in the British Museum MS. Harley 2250, ff. 85r-85v, as reproduced in K. Young, 'Instructions for Parish Priests' in *Speculum* 11:2 (1936), 224-231 at 225.

The provision of such details as the origin of the Mass, the reason for the removal of altar cloths and the hanging of Lenten veils during Holy Week indicates not only that the laity were likely to ask questions about the rituals which they witnessed, but that parish clergy might not be aware themselves of the origin and meaning of common liturgical actions. It is known that Mirk's *Festial* was also in use in late medieval Ireland, perhaps suggests that the laity in Ireland were increasingly curious about the theological underpinnings of liturgical rituals, but also that the means of dissemination of that information to parish clergy followed similar patterns to those in England.¹⁷²

Sermons and preaching manuals are an invaluable source for the transmission of theological belief and their doctrinal underpinnings from the clergy to the laity in the later middle ages. Preaching was seen as a vital part of pastoral care, and a necessary aspect of sacramental administration. In 1287 the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Pecham, addressed a letter to the parish clergy of his diocese in which he described the means by which the *cura animarum* operated: the preaching of sermons and celebration of the sacraments were pivotal, but the most important aspect of pastoral care was the reconciliation of penitents through confession and instruction.¹⁷³ Pecham was a Franciscan friar, and this may account for his placement of preaching first among the three aspects of pastoral care.

The mendicant orders placed a heavy emphasis on preaching; indeed it was one of the central tenants of their foundations in the thirteenth century. Both the Dominicans and the Franciscans were to become extremely successful in Ireland; by 1340 thirty-three houses of Franciscan friars and twenty-five houses of Dominican friars had been established.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, the vast majority of medieval Irish sermon manuscripts which survive are of a mendicant origin.¹⁷⁵ In addition to preaching at their own churches, Dominicans and Franciscans served as itinerant preachers, travelling the countryside delivering sermons at local churches. Their reputation was such that the compiler of the early sixteenth-century 'State of Ireland' believed that the friars were only clerics to undertake this role in late medieval Ireland:

¹⁷² An incomplete copy of the *Festial* is found in Trinity College MS.201, an early fifteenth century collection of sermons in Hiberno-English which belonged to a 'Dominus Thomas Norreys', chaplain and warden of the Guild of St Anne in St Audoens Church, Dublin. See A. Fletcher, 'Preaching in late-medieval Ireland' in A. Fletcher and R. Gillespie (eds), *Irish Preaching, 700-1700* (Dublin, 2001), 56-80 at 73-4.

¹⁷³ '...in spiritualibus; utpote in praedicatione verbi Dei et sacramentis ecclesiae dispensandis, et specialiter in confessionibus audiendis'. 'Injunctions for the parish clergy of the diocese of Canterbury, 8 July 1287' in Powicke and Cheney, *Councils and Synods II*, 1078-80 as discussed in W. Campbell, 'Dyvers kyndes of religion in sundry partes of the Ilande': the geography of pastoral care in thirteenth century England' (Ph.D. thesis, University of St Andrews, 2006), 2.

¹⁷⁴ For an overview of the mendicant orders in Ireland, see Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 60-84.

¹⁷⁵ On sermon manuscripts and the role of the Friars in preaching in Ireland, see A. Fletcher, 'Preaching in late-medieval Ireland' and C. Ó Clabaigh, 'Preaching in late-medieval Ireland: the Franciscan contribution' in A. Fletcher and R. Gillespie (eds), *Irish Preaching, 700-1700* (Dublin, 2001), 81-93.

Some sayeth, that the prelates of the church, and clergie, is much cause of all the mysse order of the land; for ther is no archebysshop, ne bysshop, abbot, ne pryor, parson, ne vicar, ne any other person of the Churche, highe or lowe, greate or smalle, Englyshe or Iryshe, that useyth to preach the worde of Godde, saveing the poore fryers beggers; and ther wodde of Godde do cesse, ther canne be no grace and wythoute the specyall [grace] of Godde, this lande maye never be reformyd....¹⁷⁶

It follows then that any uniformity in parochial practice was dependant on the ability of the Episcopal administration to disseminate proper information to the parish clergy, ensuring not only that they possessed proper liturgical texts, but also that the priests themselves were literate and informed. Documentary evidence suggests that the majority of late medieval preaching came from Dominicans and Franciscans, but there are indications that the state of clerical education amongst parish clergy was not as poor as contemporary sources claim.

No comprehensive work on the state of clerical education has been undertaken for the southern dioceses, but Henry Jeffries has looked at the evidence for pastoral provision and clerical knowledge in the late medieval diocese of Armagh.¹⁷⁷ Here, despite high levels of hereditary incumbency in the Gaelic parishes, he found no evidence that masses were not being held frequently or that the laity had any complaints about the quality of sacramental administration. In fact, a mid sixteenth-century visitation indicates that even in unroofed or ruinous churches, masses were held and satisfactory sacred vessels and equipment were possessed. While it is impossible to say how representative these findings are for the country as a whole, it must be noted that there is no indication that things were substantially different in the southern diocese of Cashel. The decrees issued by the 1453 diocesan synod show that a large number of parish churches were in disrepair, as was the case in Armagh. However, they do not refer to any deficiencies in the liturgical practices or provisions at the parish level.¹⁷⁸ Although there are fewer sermon manuscripts that survive from a parochial setting, all evidence points to a parochial clergy who, for the most part, were competent to undertake the sacramental and pastoral duties of the office.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ 'State of Ireland and plan for its reformation' in *State papers for the reign of Henry VIII* (2 vols, London, 1830-52), ii, 15 as quoted in C. Ó Clabaigh, 'Preaching in late-medieval Ireland', 81.

¹⁷⁷ Jeffries, *Priests and Prelates of Armagh*, 76-81.

¹⁷⁸ The decrees of the synod, particularly those related to building fabric, are more fully discussed above. The decrees of the council are reprinted at Begley, *Diocese of Limerick*, 431-41.

¹⁷⁹ For a discussion of sermon manuscripts outside of the mendicant remit, see Fletcher, 'Preaching in late-medieval Ireland' and B. Murdoch, 'Preaching in Medieval Ireland: the Irish Tradition' in A. Fletcher and R. Gillespie (eds), *Irish Preaching, 700-1700* (Dublin, 2001), 40-55.

The purpose of this chapter has been to pull together various documentary sources related to liturgical practices and their proper architectural setting; discussing not only what was proscribed, but also how this altered over the middle ages. It has also considered evidence for the ways that change in Eucharistic theology affected liturgical and devotional practices. Although the general picture of the medieval Irish church that emerges is a necessary underpinning for exploring approaches to ecclesiastical architecture, it must be noted that there was no one standard liturgical practice within the medieval church. While large secular and monastic institutions may have followed the same rite, regional and local diversity in liturgical rituals must be emphasised, not only from diocese to diocese but also from parish to parish. Despite evidence for the evolution of the parish network and corresponding sacramental administration in medieval Ireland, little is known about the enactment of ceremony and ritual in churches of all types, especially within the Gaelic territories, due to a lack of surviving liturgical texts. As a result, church buildings themselves must be approached as the primary source of evidence if one is to investigate liturgical change over the course of the middle ages. The next chapter will consist of an overview of architectural changes in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the degree to which these ecclesiastical and liturgical developments were manifest in architectural design. It will also consider architectural changes with no textual precedent, which may point towards changes in liturgical practice and the use of the church building.

4. The Built Environment of Liturgical Practice

As discussed in Chapter 2, scholarly studies of Irish architecture fall broadly into two categories. The first is largely confined to a chronological period as defined by the architectural style, Romanesque and Late Gothic being the most popular. The second is concerned with the architecture of religious houses, such as Cistercian foundations. The only modern work to survey Irish ecclesiastical architecture across a broad spectrum of time and building function is Leask's *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings*, but fundamental methodological problems in his approach makes a reliance on this text problematic.¹ Both of these approaches tend to ignore, or gloss over, the few survivals of fittings and fixtures which are invaluable tools for the reconstruction of liturgical practices. As a result, no overall picture of developments in church plan or internal arrangements have emerged.² The chapter will therefore outline general patterns of form and layout as they evolved over the middle ages in order pinpoint those changes which are indicative of functional varieties of spatial arrangement within medieval Irish churches. The first part of this chapter will outline the evolution of church design from the early to the late middle ages, arguing that changes in the plan and layout of churches can be seen as architectural responses to both the theological and socio-political climate of the era. The second part of this chapter will overview the evidence for the form and type of liturgical furnishings commonly found within medieval churches. Decoration such as wall painting, altar cloths and free-standing sculpture will not be considered. Though these are amongst the many elements which contributed to the architectural setting of liturgical practice, they are excluded from the present study on the basis that they had no direct effect on the architectural fabric of the building.

¹ Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Building*. Chapter 1 contains a full discussion of the approaches taken in scholarly literature and the difficulties presented in devising prospective morphologies or chronologies of ecclesiastical architecture.

² A very important publication has recently been released which seeks to redress this imbalance by providing an overview of archaeological and architectural evidence for the development of Irish ecclesiastical architecture from the seventh to early twelfth century and contextualising these changes within the evolving socio-religious and political climate of the time. Unfortunately, this volume was published too recently to be consulted in the preparation of this thesis. See T. Ó Carragáin, *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland. Architecture, Ritual and Memory* (London, 2010).

The Architecture of Early Irish Christianity

From the time of St. Patrick, Irish churches were traditionally made of timber or earth, and these remained the principal building materials for both secular and ecclesiastical buildings throughout the early middle ages. Although stone building would seem to have become commonplace by the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it is not certain that it was normative even then.³ A passage in the *Life of St. Malachy* is often used to illustrate the Irish reticence to embrace stone churches. When the saint began to construct an oratory at Bangor, the locals were surprised, having never seen a stone church before: 'Malachy thought that a stone oratory should be built at Bangor similar to those which he had seen erected in other places. And when he began to lay the foundations the natives were all amazed, because no buildings of that kind were found in the region'.⁴

While this passage can be seen as an indication of the rarity of stone ecclesiastical buildings it must be remembered that its author, St Bernard, had never visited Ireland himself. The passage may be more reflective of his desire to highlight Malachy's achievements than of the state of Irish building practices in the twelfth century. It may also be read in reference to the specific locality; pre-Romanesque stone construction was extremely unusual in early medieval Ulster.⁵ In a study of annalistic references to church buildings, Conleth Manning has demonstrated that stone church buildings were being constructed in the country as early as the middle of the ninth century.⁶ He concludes that 'the practice of building large churches in stone began to spread, mainly to centres of great importance, from around 900 only to become the commonest type of new church at relatively important centres by the late eleventh century'.⁷ Although there were numerous stone churches which had been erected by the 1140s, constituting a number of cathedrals, monastic buildings and even local churches,⁸

³ Michael Hare with Ann Hamlin, 'The study of early church architecture in Ireland: an Anglo-Saxon viewpoint with an appendix on documentary evidence for round towers' in L. A. S. Butler and R. K. Morris (eds), *The Anglo-Saxon Church: Papers on history, architecture and archaeology in honor of Dr. H.M. Taylor* (London, 1986), 131-145.

⁴ Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Life of St Malachy*, 77.

⁵ Ann Hamlin identified only seven surviving pre-Romanesque churches within the six northern counties. O'Carragáin has speculated that more may have existed, and identifies twenty-eight possible examples. He suggests that those constructed within the west and south of the area might be explained by political connections, as it seems if these areas were incorporated for a time into the kingdom of Breifne which was part of Connacht where stone church building was far more common. See Ann Hamlin, 'The study of early Irish churches' in P. Ní Chatháin & M. Richter (eds), *Irland und Europa: die Kirche im Frühmittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1984), 117-26 at 125 and Tomás Ó Carragáin, 'Pre-Romanesque Churches in Ireland: Interpreting Archaeological Regionalisms' (2 vols, P.D. thesis, University College, Cork, 2002), I.283 and Fig. 80.

⁶ The earliest appearance of the word *damliac*, indicating a stone church, is found describing a building at Armagh in 840. See Conleth Manning, 'References to church buildings in the Annals', in A.P. Smyth (ed.), *Seanchas: Studies in Early Medieval Irish Archaeology, History and literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin, 2001), 37-52, at p. 38.

⁷ Manning, 'References to church buildings in the Annals', 51.

⁸ Ó Carragáin identified just under two hundred stone churches which can be classified as pre-Romanesque in construction, the majority of these date to the eleventh century. Ó Carragáin, 'Pre-Romanesque Churches in

wooden building materials may have been the most common throughout the country, especially for local churches, until sometime in the twelfth- or even thirteenth-centuries.

No early wooden church survives, though the presence of wooden and earthen structures pre-dating later stone buildings have been uncovered at a number of sites during archaeological excavation.⁹ One such example has been found at Iniscealtra, Clare, an early ecclesiastical site whose stone buildings are included in the study group for this survey. The traces of an early church, reconstructed a number of times, were discovered to the south of St. Caimin's Church.¹⁰ The earliest phase was that of a small earthen building constructed of wattle and clay with internal measurements of approximately 5.5 x 4.1 meters. This was reconstructed at least twice; the use of timber in the later phases can be identified by the presence of wood stains in the foundations.

Another example was uncovered during excavations at Church Island, Kerry.¹¹ Here, the post holes inside the footing of a later stone oratory indicate the presence of a small timber church, measuring approximately 3 x 2 metres. No evidence for internal arrangements within the church survive, but the early timber phase was accompanied by a domestic dwelling and thirty-three burials. The inclusion of a woman in these burials has led O'Kelly to suggest that the site served as either a congregational church or a centre of devotional pilgrimage.¹² That this site continued to function in an ecclesiastical capacity is shown by the phase two rebuilding of the church as a corbelled, Gallarus-style oratory with a decorated finial.

Archaeological evidence for an early sod-walled church has been found on nearby Illaunloughan, Kerry.¹³ This early church was considerably larger in size, measuring 6 x 2 metres. It, too, was accompanied by round domestic dwellings and later replaced by a stone

Ireland', I.61-2. For a classification of the types of earliest stone churches, see Peter Harbison, 'Early Irish Churches' in H. Lowe (ed.), *Die Iren und Europa in Früheren Mittelalter*, (Stuttgart, 1982), 618-29 and, more recently, C. Manning, 'A Suggested Typology for Pre-Romanesque Stone Churches in Ireland' in N. Edwards (ed.), *The Archaeology of the Early Medieval Celtic Churches* (Leeds, 2009), 265-80.

⁹ The most recently published overview of archaeological excavations of early church sites can be found in Harbison, 'Early Irish Churches', though many more recent excavations have been conducted and individually published. The most recent extensive study of an early Irish monastic site to have been produced is J. White Marshall and C. Walsh, *Illaunloughan Island, An Early Medieval Monastic Site in County Kerry* (Bray, 2005).

¹⁰ For a discussion of the excavation results, including evidence for the early earth and timber church, see Liam de Paor, 'Inis Cealtra: Report on Archaeological and Other Investigations of the Monuments on the Island' (Unpublished report for the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin, 1997), 85.

¹¹ For an account of the early timber church and later stone church, see M. J. O'Kelly, 'Church Island near Valencia, Co. Kerry' in *PRLA*, 59C (1958), 57-136. A discussion of the phase one timber church can be found at 58-61 and 116-118.

¹² See O'Kelly, 'Church Island', 117.

¹³ The excavation report has been published at White Marshall and Walsh, *Illaunloughan Island*. See also a summary report at J. White Marshall and C. Walsh, 'Illaunloughan, Co. Kerry: An Island Hermitage' in M. Monk and J. Sheehan (eds.), *Early Medieval Munster: Archaeology, History, Society* (Cork, 1998), 102-11.

oratory. Here, however, the enclosure contained a gabled reliquary shrine. That the site continued in use throughout the middle ages is attested by a wide variety of burial goods and inhumations.

Yet another excavation in the vicinity has uncovered evidence for an early timber church, this time at Caherlehillan, Kerry.¹⁴ This timber church measured approximately 3.8 x 2 metres but unlike the previous excavations, evidence has survived indicating the position of an altar and the presence of a sacrarium.¹⁵ Sheehan interprets a post-hole located one-third of the way from the eastern gable of the church as evidence for the presence of a wooden table-altar, supported on a single post. The sacrarium, a drain for the disposal of Eucharistic ablutions, was found at the southeast corner of the church.¹⁶ Here, too, burials and a founder's tomb indicate that the site may have served a devotional function. The presence of these liturgical features is significant in that it shows that even the smallest churches were large enough to include the necessary liturgical furnishings while still providing enough room for the celebrant and any congregation.

While these early churches were small in size, it cannot be assumed that all early churches were as diminutive. Manning has argued that the annalistic reference to the burning of the wooden church at Trevet in 850 with 250 people inside indicates that the building was of comparable size to that of the largest surviving pre-Romanesque stone church at Clonmacnoise.¹⁷ A combination of architectural and archaeological evidence has revealed that the first phase of Clonmacnoise cathedral had internal measurements of 18.8 x 10.7 meters internally, with a total area of 201.16 square meters.¹⁸

The standard formula for determining the maximum number of congregants a church could comfortably accommodate is to allow for three people per square metre.¹⁹ Although this

¹⁴ For an account of the excavation results at the early medieval ecclesiastical enclosure at Caherlehillan, see J. Sheehan, 'A Peacock's Tale: Excavations at Caherlehillan, Iveragh, Ireland' in N. Edwards (ed.), *The Archaeology of the Early Medieval Celtic Churches* (Leeds, 2009), 191-206.

¹⁵ A discussion of the altar and sacrarium can be found at Sheehan, 'A Peacock's Tale', 196-7.

¹⁶ A full discussion of the history and function of the sacrarium and piscina can be found here at 125-34.

¹⁷ The burning of the church at Trevet is recorded in *AU*, *CS* and *AFM*. On the annalistic references and the suggested size of the building, see Manning, 'References to church buildings in the Annals', 38 and 46.

¹⁸ For a discussion of the medieval building programmes at Clonmacnoise Cathedral, see Conleth Manning, 'Clonmacnoise Cathedral' in H. King (ed.), *Clonmacnoise Studies, Volume 1: Seminar Papers 1994* (Dublin, 1998), 57-86.

¹⁹ This formula was first been proposed by David Parsons, but has since been used by other scholars. Note, however, that this formula presumes all congregants are standing and the number would decrease if they were kneeling. See David Parsons, 'Liturgical and social aspects' in A. Boddington (ed.), *Raunds Furnells: The Anglo-Saxon Church and Churchyard* (London, 1996), 58-66 at 64 and Richard Morris, *Churches in the Landscape* (London, 1989), 288-9 for this formula applied to English parish churches. More recently, Ó Carragáin has applied the formula to early Irish churches in Tomás Ó Carragáin, 'Church buildings and pastoral care in early medieval

calculation would surely underestimate the number of people who could crowd into a building while under attack, as seems to have been the case at Trevet, it is useful in reconstructing a possible size for the building. When this formula is applied, Trevet need only have had an internal area of roughly 86.66 square meters to accommodate the two hundred and fifty people. Using the same formula, Clonmacnoise could have sheltered somewhere around 600 people. Trevet, then, need not have been a particularly large building; assuming it was constructed using the $\sqrt{2}$ ratio favoured by early Irish builders, it would have measured approximately 11 x 8 meters.²⁰ Though Clonmacnoise is exceptional in being the largest church in Ireland before the arrival of Cistercian architecture in the twelfth century, the average size of the earliest stone churches can be discerned. Ó Carragáin has compiled a list of the square meterage for one hundred and three early stone churches; these churches range from the small island churches of Skellig Michael to the first stone phase of Clonmacnoise Cathedral.²¹ When these are compared, it emerges that the average area of a pre-Romanesque church is 33.06 square metres. If a church of this size were laid out using the $\sqrt{2}$ proportional system, it would measure roughly 7 x 5 metres. Although there is not enough evidence to suggest what the average size of wooden churches might have been, it is suggested that there is no evidence for the belief that timber churches were commonly larger than their earliest stone counterparts.²²

Evidence for the appearance of timber churches is found in a number of sources, including manuscript descriptions and artistic renderings in metalwork and stone carving which pre-date the earliest known stone structures. The seventh-century wooden oratory described in the *Hisperica Famina* boasted a vaulted roof and four steeples (*quatres pinnas*).²³ Brady has argued

Ireland' in Elizabeth FitzPatrick and Raymond Gillespie (eds), *The Parish in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), 91-123 at 114-5.

²⁰ Though George Petrie was the first to note that early churches tended to be built to the $\sqrt{2}$ proportional system, Leask was the first to propose this as a definitive indication of early date. Later medieval masons preferred to use the Golden Ratio (approx. 1.618:1) to lay out foundations. Though proportional systems do not provide conclusive chronological evidence, it would seem to hold true that earlier buildings tend to more closely approximate the ratio of 1.414:1 than later medieval buildings. On the early proportional system, see Leask, *Irish Churches and Medieval Buildings*, 1.49-51 and Ó Carragáin, 'Pre-Romanesque Churches in Ireland', 1.48-50. The definitive work on later medieval proportions is E. Fernie, 'A beginner's guide to the study of architectural proportions and systems of lengths' in E. Fernie and P. Crossley (eds), *Medieval architecture in its intellectual context: essays in honour of Peter Kidson* (London, 1990), 228-38.

²¹ Ó Carragáin, 'Pre-Romanesque Churches in Ireland', 244-48. The figures used in this exercise are included in Table 11, 245. In order to determine the average size of a pre-Romanesque church, the average area of the one hundred and three churches of different types listed in the first three columns were compared. Note, however, that Ó Carragáin fully describes how these sizes are correlative with site function, and that the average area of those churches which went on to become parish centres is significantly larger.

²² Ó Carragáin has reached the same conclusion. See Ó Carragáin, 'Pre-Romanesque Churches in Ireland', 248. Though the stone church at Illaunloughlan was, indeed, smaller than its predecessor more evidence is needed before this can be considered anything more than an unusual circumstance.

²³ Michael Herren, (ed. and trans.), *Hisperica Famina: 1. The A-Text. A New Critical Edition with English Translation and Philological Commentary* (Toronto, 1974). The relevant passage is found at lines 547-600. For a discussion of the

that the architectural features described can be correlated with gabled roof trusses taking the form of winged finials.²⁴ The presence of the winged finial can also be seen in replicas of church buildings across a variety of media; two examples are the early stone tomb-shrines as at Clones [4.1] and the page depicting the Temptation of Christ in the late eighth- or early ninth-century Book of Kells. [4.2, 4.3]

The simplicity of pre-Romanesque stone churches has been combined with similar depictions of timber buildings to suggest that earliest stone churches, at least, were largely devoid of architectural decoration.²⁵ Occasionally, early churches will bear an incised architrave surrounding the western doorway, which might also be paralleled in the Book of Kells drawing. But architectural embellishment is, on the whole, confined to the appearance of antae and wing finials, both of which are seen as skeuomorphic characteristics carried over from timber constructions.²⁶ Such decorative features remained part of the corpus of architectural decoration through both the pre-Romanesque and Romanesque periods. The late tenth-century west front of Tomgraney, Clare [4.4] boasts antae and a door with an architrave surround while the Romanesque church of Kilmalkedar, Kerry [4.5] shows that antae and winged finials were still employed in constructions of the twelfth century.²⁷ While there are instances of possibly pre-Romanesque crosses incised above doorways, as at St Fechin's, Fore, Westmeath and Clonamery, Kilkenny, [4.6] architectural decoration was not a standard feature of the Irish church until the twelfth century.²⁸ If these early stone buildings were decorated, it was likely in the form of paint and plasterwork that has long since disappeared.

architectural implications of this text, see Niall Brady, 'De Oratorio: Hisperica Famina and Church Building', in *Peritia* 11 (1997), 327-335.

²⁴ Brady, 'De Oratorio', 333.

²⁵ Rachel Moss has recently argued that a number of Romanesque sculptural motifs may have their origin in early architectural decorative programmes; it may be that these early churches were decorated with paintwork in a repertoire quite similar to that found in Romanesque architectural sculpture. See R. Moss, 'A twelfth century renaissance? Irish Romanesque sculpture and the Insular tradition' in *eadem*, *Making and Meaning in Insular Art Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Insular Art held at Trinity College, Dublin 25-28 August 2005* (Dublin, 2007), 126-141.

²⁶ Antae are projections of the side walls past the gable ends of the building, and derive from corner posts in timber buildings which would have supported roof trusses while the winged finial as a stylised version of the gable roof truss. Ó Carragáin has recently argued that the simplicity in form of early stone buildings was a deliberately employed to maintain continuity in architectural tradition. See Tomás Ó Carragáin 'Skeuomorphs and spolia: the presence of the past in Irish pre-Romanesque architecture' in R. Moss (ed.), *Making and Meaning in Insular Art Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Insular Art held at Trinity College, Dublin 25-28 August 2005* (Dublin, 2007), 95-109.

²⁷ On the continuing appearance of the winged final in the Romanesque period, see R. Moss 'A twelfth century renaissance?', 135-140.

²⁸ Although there are examples of linteled west doorways bearing incised crosses, as at St. Fechin's, Fore, Westmeath, the lack of stylistic identifiers mean that they are unable to be firmly dated, and could be features of either the twelfth century or examples of pre-Romanesque portal decoration. See Tadhg O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland: Architecture and Ideology in the Twelfth Century* (Dublin, 2003), 91-95.

This lack of evidence for architectural elaboration of pre-Romanesque churches does not, however, indicate a lack of interest in the elaboration of spatial arrangements at early ecclesiastical sites. In an important study, Neil Atchinson has argued that the spatial arrangement of the monastic enclosure at early medieval Armagh was imbued with cosmological symbolism, consciously echoing the secular and ecclesiastical divisions of the country as a whole. [4.7] This highly elaborate *imago mundi*, with the church of Armagh centred on the axis, served as a topographical corollary to the many literary claims made by Armagh in a bid to assert its primatal status within Ireland.²⁹ There also exists a colophon drawing in the eighth- or ninth-century Book of Mulling, which has been interpreted as depicting the layout of high crosses within a monastic enclosure. [4.8] There is debate as to whether this might represent an accurate depiction of the layout of liturgically significant dedicatory crosses, or simply a ‘more abstract, visual evocation’ of the placement of apotropaic devices in the form of free-standing crosses.³⁰ In either case, the illustration ‘appears to represent the concept of the ideal city as seen from an Irish perspective, emphasizing the location of the boundary and the intermediate cardinal orientation of the (presumably high) crosses and their dedications.’³¹

The creation of spatial hierarchies within the monastic compound is further suggested by compartmentalised layout of many early ecclesiastical enclosures. These enclosures often contained a number of buildings, including an oratory, shrine and living quarters surrounded by a roughly circular enclosure.³² Within the enclosure, space was further subdivided as can be seen on the plans of a number of early sites such as Reask, Kerry and Inishmurray, Sligo. [4.9] These buildings were often accompanied by free-standing features such as *leachta* (dry-stone altar like features) and cross slabs [4.10]. By the later middle ages, a multiplication of churches can be found at a number of larger sites such as Clonmacnoise, Offaly. [4.11]

It is clear, then, that sacred space was deliberately manipulated in the early Irish Church to convey an arrangement of complex and multi-faceted layers of meaning within the monastic

²⁹ For a full discussion of not only the spatial arrangements, but primatal pretensions of early medieval Armagh, see N. B. Atchison, *Armagh and the Royal Centres in Early Medieval Ireland: Monuments, Cosmology and the Past* (Woodbridge, 1994), especially 233-254.

³⁰ Nancy Edwards, *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Ireland* (London, 1990), 164. This possible apotropaic function of free-standing crosses has also been noted by a number of other scholars, including Françoise Henry, *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period* (London, 1940), 102. On the colophon drawing, see Lawrence Nees, ‘The colophon drawing of the Book of Mulling: a supposed Irish monastery plan and the tradition of terminal illustration in early Medieval manuscripts’ in *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 5 (1983), 67-91.

³¹ Atchison, *Armagh and the Royal Centres*, 236.

³² On spatial arrangements within these early ecclesiastical enclosures see Françoise Henry, ‘Early Monasteries, Beehive Huts and Dry-Stone Houses in the Neighbourhood of Caherciveen and Waterville (Co. Kerry); in *PRLA* 58C (1957), 45-166 and Michael Herity, *Studies in the Layout, Building and Art in Stone of Early Irish Monasteries* (London, 1995), especially 19-65.

compound. But what those layers of meaning were remains less clear. One suggestion for the multiplication of features within the enclosure is that the layout of these enclosures was arranged to replicate arrangements found in Rome and allow for the enactment of stationaral liturgies.³³ There is also evidence that processional liturgies were being enacted in England and the Continent during the early middle ages.³⁴ Though there are strong circumstantial indications that similar liturgical rites were enacted in the early Irish Church, the absence of firm documentary evidence makes this supposition conjectural at best.³⁵

These early stone churches were square or rectangular single-celled buildings of small dimension. [4.12] Until the twelfth century there is no distinction in form between buildings which served a variety of functions.³⁶ Episcopal, monastic and local churches all make use of the same formulaic design which remained remarkably homogeneous throughout the early middle ages: an unelaborated single-celled structure with a west doorway and two small windows on the east and south walls, respectively. As one scholar has noted: ‘What is striking about [these early churches] is that studied avoidance of architectural innovations subsequent to the arrival of Christianity in Ireland.’³⁷ Nor can decorative schemes help to elucidate building function; as noted, architectural decoration of these buildings is on the whole confined to the appearance of antae and wing finials which are not in themselves indicative of function or status.³⁸

³³ On the origin of stationaral liturgies and their practice in Rome, see John Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship: The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stationaral Liturgy* (Rome, 1987).

³⁴ There are a variety of individual articles and chapters dealing with processional liturgies in early medieval Europe, though there is no collected volume which provides a good overview of known practices. Amongst the more specific studies are Donald Bullough, ‘The Carolingian Liturgical Experience’ in R. N. Swanson (ed.), *Continuity and Change in Christian Worship* (Woodbridge, 1999), 29-64; Geoffrey Nathan, ‘The Rogation Ceremonies of Late Antique Gaul. Creation, transmission and the role of the bishop’ in *Classica et Mediaevalia* 49 (1998), 257-303 and Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *The City of Rome and the World of Bede, Jarrow Lecture 1994* (Jarrow, 1995). A thorough discussion of processional liturgies in Anglo-Saxon can be found in Helen Gittos, ‘Sacred Space in Anglo-Saxon England: Liturgy, Architecture and Place’ (Ph.D. thesis, University of Oxford, 2001), 117-44. For an overview of the more performative aspects of processional liturgy, see Roger Reynolds, ‘The Drama of Medieval Liturgical Processions’ in *Revue de Musicologie*, 86:1 (2000), 127-42.

³⁵ Though the arguments put forward in its favour are quite strong. Michael Ryan is the most vocal proponent of this hypothesis. See M. Ryan, ‘Eucharistic Vessels, Architecture and Liturgy in Early Medieval Ireland’ in R. Bourke, et al (eds), *De re metallica: The uses of Metal in the Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 2005), 125-46 and Michael Ryan, ‘Sacred Cities?’ in A. Minnis and J. Roberts (eds), *Text, Image, Interpretation. Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of É. Ó Carragáin* (Turnhout, 2007), 515-28.

³⁶ See Ó Carragáin, ‘Church buildings and pastoral care’, 91-123 and ‘Skeuomorphs and spolia’ 95-109 for this argument. It must be noted, however, that this argument is made only in regard to church buildings themselves, and does not take into account smaller shrine chapels, larger barn-style churches (as Clonmacnoise Cathedral was) nor does it take note of possible differences in internal arrangements, the manipulation of which may have created vastly different spaces in the interiors of churches which are architecturally similar.

³⁷ Ó Carragáin, ‘Skeuomorphs and spolia’, 99.

³⁸ A full discussion of ancillary features such as antae, gable embellishment, door architraves, plinths, etc. which are not related to church type or function but are commonly employed in the decoration of pre-Romanesque churches can be found at Ó Carragáin, ‘Pre-Romanesque Churches in Ireland’, 84-99.

One theory is that these buildings remained so small and simple precisely because they did not accommodate substantial a substantial number of people but instead, served as a sanctuary entered only by the celebrant and attendant clergy during the Eucharist. Any congregants (bar perhaps, royal patrons), would remain outside during the service.³⁹ A passage in Adomnán's *Life of St Columba*, describing Columba entering the church with visiting saints 'after the Gospel had been read' has often been cited as evidence for such a practice.⁴⁰ Commenting on this passage, Richard Sharpe states:

'In many places, including Ireland and Scotland, it was convenient to build churches of very small size in which the priest could perform the liturgy while the faithful remained outside. Under such circumstances it appears that the early stages of the service took place outside, and for the celebration itself the priest entered the building as he would otherwise enter the sanctuary.'⁴¹

But, as other authors have pointed out, there are fundamental problems with Hunwicke's argument.⁴² Not only does Adomnán describe an exceptional incident, the concelebration of the Eucharist by five saints, but the small church buildings cited as corroborating evidence for such a practice are in no way a representative sample of early Irish churches.⁴³

One other possibility is that clergy and laymen worshipped in separate churches, a practice that the *Liber Angeli* describes as taking place at Armagh in the seventh century.⁴⁴ The proliferation of churches at other important monastic sites, such as Clonmacoise, Offaly and Glendalough, Wicklow, might seem to suggest that this was a common practice. The island monastery of Iniscealtra, Clare, possesses the remains of seven churches and oratories. This

³⁹ The most recent proponent of this theory is J. Hunwicke, who based his argument around liturgical evidence found in the Stowe Missal and small churches in the west of the country. His argument also relies heavily on the description of outdoor mass by Adomnan which will be described presently. See J.W. Hunwicke, 'Kerry and Stowe Revisited' *PRLA*, 102:C (2002), 1-19.

⁴⁰ Book III.17 reads: "When the sacred mysteries of the Eucharist were to take place, with one accord they chose St. Columba to act as celebrant. He obeyed their command, and with them he entered the church as usual on the Lord's day after the Gospel had been read." Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, Richard Sharpe (ed.) (Harmondsworth, 1995), 219.

⁴¹ Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, 368-9, fn. 387.

⁴² Both Ryan and Ó Carragáin have discussed and rejected Hunwicke's argument. See Ryan, 'Sacred Cities', 520-1 and Tomás Ó Carragáin 'The Architectural Setting of the Mass in Early Christian Ireland' in *Medieval Archaeology* 53 (2009), 119-54.

⁴³ As noted by Ryan, 'Sacred Cities', 521, these were only small drystone Kerry churches.

⁴⁴ *Liber Ar(d)machanus*, XI.15: 'In this city of Armagh Christians of both sexes are seen to live together in religion from the coming of the faith to the present day almost inseparably; and to this aforesaid (city) also adhere three orders: virgins and penitents, and those serving the church in legitimate matrimony. And these three orders are allowed to hear the word of preaching in the church of the northern district on Sundays always, in the southern basilica however, bishops and priests and anchorites and the other religions offer pleasing praises', as translated in Ludwig Bieler (ed.), *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh* (Dublin, 1979), 185.

site was excavated by Liam de Paor who found there was no evidence for multiple churches at the site before the twelfth century:

Questions are raised also about the proliferation of small churches, often with their own enclosures, on monastic sites. This has been taken to be a distinctive feature of Irish monasticism ...as indeed, in some sense it is. On Iniscealtra at any rate, such evidence as there is now, is for the multiplication of church sites within a comparatively brief and comparatively late period ...it is not until the twelfth century that we find clear evidence of a multiplication of churches on the island.⁴⁵

If de Paor's findings at Iniscealtra can be equally applied to other important monastic sites, it may then be that the multiplication of churches found in early medieval Armagh was an exceptional arrangement not widely paralleled until the twelfth century. While excavations on a comparable scale have not been carried out at Clonmacnoise, a cursory overview of architectural evidence at the site would seem to indicate a similar pattern in development: the earliest stone constructions are those of the main church and a corresponding tomb shrine, while additional stone churches are not erected until the twelfth century.⁴⁶

It would seem then, that although these earliest churches were relatively small, simple structures that they were indeed church buildings in every sense of the word. While it is possible, and even likely, that some liturgical and devotional activities took place in the open air, these churches were designed to accommodate the celebration of the mass and the attendant community. As Michael Ryan has argued: 'where the church was in a monastic setting it must surely have been conceived of as being sufficient in size to enable the entire community of monks to assemble within it for divine service.'⁴⁷

⁴⁵ De Paor, 'Inis Cealtra', 98-9.

⁴⁶ The results of small-scale archaeological investigations and architectural studies of church buildings at the site can be found in H. King (ed.), *Clonmacnoise Studies, Volume 1: Seminar Papers 1994* (Dublin, 1998) and H. King, (ed.) *Clonmacnoise Studies Volume 2. Seminar Papers 1998* (Dublin, 2003). De Paor speculates that the multiplication of churches at Iniscealtra may be related to increased pilgrimage activity at this site in the twelfth century; there would be no reason to assume a similar rise in pilgrimage did not take place at Clonmacnoise during this time. It must be noted, however, that in contrast to Iniscealtra, Clonmacnoise was in receipt of royal patronage from an early date and there is evidence for early medieval pilgrimage practices at a number of monastic sites, including Inishmurray, Sligo. On early pilgrimage evidence at Inishmurray, see T. Ó Carragáin, 'The Saint and the Sacred Centre: The Early Medieval Pilgrimage Landscape of Inishmurray' in N. Edwards (ed.), *The Archaeology of the Early Medieval Celtic Churches* (Leeds, 2009), 207-26.

⁴⁷ M. Ryan, 'Sacred Cities', 520.

The Interior of the Early Medieval Church

As neither the plans nor the appearance of these early churches provides any clue as to their function of usage, we might turn to other documentary sources which describe the internal arrangements and liturgical furnishings which might be found in the building.⁴⁸ The only early text which describes the internal arrangements of an identifiable early Irish church is that found in Cogitosus's *Life of St Brigit*, dated to the third quarter of the seventh century.⁴⁹ Although this contemporary description of the interior of the monastic church at Kildare is quite detailed, it leaves room for conjecture as to the exact placement of the features within this timber church, particularly the arrangement of the internal dividing walls:

'It is adorned with painted pictures and inside there are three chapels which are spacious and divided by board walls under the single roof of the cathedral church. The first of these walls, which is painted with pictures and covered with wall hangings, stretches width wise in the east part of the church from one wall to the other. In it there are two doors, one at either end, and through the door situated on the right, one enters the sanctuary to the altar where the archbishop offers the Lord's sacrifice together with his monastic chapter and those appointed to the sacred mysteries. Through the other door, situated on the left side of the aforesaid cross-wall, only the abbess and her nuns and faithful widows enter to partake of the banquet of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The second of these walls divides the floor of the building into two equal parts and stretches from the west all to the wall running across the church.'⁵⁰

Although a number of conjectural reconstructions have been produced⁵¹, comparative and textual analysis undertaken by Carol Neuman de Vegvar has produced a new and convincing

⁴⁸ The one exception might be the church at Caherlehillan, described above. While this example of possible altar placement within an early timber church is certainly important, it cannot in itself provide evidence for normative arrangements in churches throughout the country over the course of the middle ages.

⁴⁹ A translation of the text, along with commentary, can be found in S. Connolly and J.M. Picard, 'Cogitosus's Life of St Brigit: content and value' in *JRSAI*, 117 (1988 for 1987), 5-27.

⁵⁰ As translated by Connolly and Picard, 'Cogitosus's Life of St Brigit', 25-6.

⁵¹ See, for example, the reconstructions suggested by R. A. S. MacAlister, *Ancient Ireland: a Study in the Lessons of Archaeology and History* (New York, 1978); C. A. Ralegh Radford, 'The Earliest Irish Churches' in *UJA*, 40 (1977), 1-11 and C. Thomas, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain: The Hunter Marshall Lectures delivered at the University of Glasgow, 1968* (Oxford, 1971).

suggestion for the arrangements: a single celled building divided into a nave and sanctuary by a curtained barrier, with a shorter barrier running down the centre of the nave space.⁵² [4.13]

She argues that the placement of dividing walls was deliberately conceived in imitation of common Roman internal arrangements and compares Kildare with the Lateran Basilica, a single-celled central space which was also divided laterally and horizontally. [4.14] During the middle of seventh century, a power struggle was taking place between Kildare and Armagh as they each attempted to establish primacy within the ecclesiastical polity. It appears then the reconstruction of the church building at Kildare was part of a programme undertaken by the monastery in conjunction with the advancement of the cult of its founder saint to strengthen its claims to ecclesiastical power. Roman practice had long been revered in the West as 'authentic', but by this point it was coming to be regarded as normative throughout Western Christendom; Ireland was no exception. By building a church whose internal arrangements would remind the Irish clergy of those at the Lateran, the community at Kildare was trying to achieve a very visual statement of its power and alignment with Rome.⁵³

But just how unusual were these internal divisions? One indication that the church at Kildare might have been singular in its appearance is the placement of two church doorways on either side of the building. While lateral doors are not expressly mentioned, Cogitosus's description seems to indicate clearly that they were present. But a central western entrance is found at every standing, or archeologically known, early medieval Irish Church. The liturgy was designed for such an arrangement, with consecration rites repeatedly indicated to begin at the single western doorway.⁵⁴ While we have no way of determining how normative the arrangements at Kildare were, some sort of internal division within the church building itself was neither unknown nor unusual in early medieval churches; references to such a structure can be found in native Irish sources from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries.⁵⁵

These references employ a variety of different terms; although they all describe barriers, there is no consistency in the terminology which might give an indication of their appearance or location within the church. For example, an entry in the *Annals of the Four Masters* for 755

⁵² C. N. de Vegvar, 'Romanitas and Realpolitik in Cogitosus' Description of the Church of St Brigit, Kildare' in M. Carver (ed.), *The Cross Goes North. Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300* (York, 2003), 153-170.

⁵³ There is considerable evidence for interaction between Ireland and Rome in the early middle ages. Ireland accepted the Roman date for the calculation of Easter in the early seventh century, by which point there is a clear association of Irish synodial activity undertaken at the instigation of the papacy. Around the same time, there is a movement towards Romanization, and indeed a faction within the Irish Church called the *Romani*. A full discussion is found at 18-25.

⁵⁴ See the discussion of the early Irish consecration rite below at 84.

⁵⁵ The following references are among those first collected and discussed by de Vegvar, 'Romanitas and Realpolitik'; they have more recently been reviewed in Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural Setting of the Mass'.

refers to a *cróchaingel*, translated as chancel screen.⁵⁶ The ninth-century *Rule of Tallaght* refers to both a *chlais tarsna* and a *chraun-saingéal*:

It was not customary among them to pass between the altar and the *chlais tarsna* which is in front of the altar, and if anyone so passes, he is held to have incurred penance. They were unwilling to kill any creature whatever between the *chraun-saingéal* and the altar, for by custom only the body of Christ and his blood might be sacrificed in that space.⁵⁷

Here, it seems probable that the text refers to two different structures; the *chlais tarsna* is situated directly in front of the altar while the placement of the *chraun-saingéal* is not noted. Perhaps here we find a reference to both a chancel screen and an altar rail. The church at Tallaght served a monastic community, and it is possible that one set of railings divided the altar space from the choir while the other divided the choir space from the nave. In fact, the definition of the term *crann-chaingel* (a variant form of the term used in the *Rule of Tallaght*) in the largely tenth-century *Cormac's Glossary* reads:

‘Crann-chaingel, ie a wooden partition, a beam-hurdle there ie a hurdle in the beam between laity and ecclesiastics (eter loacha 7 cléirc[h]u), after the likeness of the veil of the Temple. For cliath (ie hurdle, wattle panel) is its name with its *fochra claraid* (ie a partition or boards) ut dicitur *cro-chaingel* ie *cro-cliaith*.’⁵⁸

This definition clearly states that the partition was designed to divide a single-celled church into a chancel space for the clergy and a nave space for the laity. It is possible then, that both altar rails and chancel screens were features of early Irish churches.

Some churches may have found the use of altar rails sufficient, especially if they did not accommodate a mixed community of clerics and laity. In local churches where there was no clerical assembly, or monastic churches which did not attract a lay congregation, an altar rail may have been sufficient to demarcate the sanctuary area around the altar. Larger churches

⁵⁶ The entry states that Bishop Echthigern was slain in the church at Kildare between the chancel screen and the altar (etir an cróchaingel 7 an altóir). *AFM* 755.

⁵⁷ The original text reads: ‘Nir ghnath leo imtheacht idir an altoir 7 an chlais tarsna bhios ar béulaibh na haltóra, 7 gibe theid annsin as cuis pheannaide aca é. Nir bh’ail leo peisd ar bith do mharbad ón chraun-saingéal gus an alóir oir as í iodhbairt chuirp Críost 7 a fola amhain fa gnath do dheunamh san ait sin.’ See E. Gwynn (ed.), ‘The Rule of Tallaght’, in *Hermanathena*, xlv (1927), 11.

⁵⁸ After the translation by K. Meyer, *Sanas Chormaic, an Old-Irish Glossary compiled by Cormac mac Cuilennáin, King-Bishop of Cashel in the Tenth Century, edited from the copy in the Yellow Book of Lecan* (Halle, 1912), 31; see the discussion at Ó Carragáin, ‘Architectural Setting of the Mass’, 125.

with both a monastic choir and lay congregation may have employed both altar rails and a chancel screen. As de Vegvar states: “It is evident that where chancel screens existed in early Irish churches the terminology [used to describe them], and perhaps also the arrangement were variable, suggesting that such spatial dividers were neither consistent in design nor mandated by common liturgical practice.”⁵⁹

Charles Thomas has argued that the construction of Pictish corner post shrines, constructed of corner posts and panels, provides a precedent for a similar type of screen construction.⁶⁰

[4.15] All evidence for the construction of early chancel barriers or screens in the early Christian period shows that the post and panel method of construction was standard from the fourth through the twelfth century; such a design is consistent with the description of a screen found in *Cormac’s Glossary*.⁶¹ Reconstructions of the fourth-century basilican church of SS Peter and Paul, Tyre, show this type of screen arranged around the altar in front of the central apse.⁶² **[4.16]** The placement of the screen can still be seen in the trough lines which supported the structure to the east of the chancel and apse of the late sixth-century Theotokos Chapel, Greece.⁶³ **[4.17]** In many cases, the post rose above the panel to provide support for a decorated architrave. Such an arrangement was found at the Hagia Sophia, Constantinople in the sixth century **[4.18]** and continued to be popular throughout the early middle ages.⁶⁴ A similar barrier dated to the late eleventh or early twelfth century still stands in the church of Sta Maria in Porclaneta, Italy. **[4.19]**

Closer to Ireland, Cramp has argued that sculptural fragments found at the Anglo-Saxon church of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow are fragments of similar post and panel chancel barriers with architraves.⁶⁵ The possibility that the painted wooden panels depicting the apostles which adorned the coffin reliquary of St Cuthbert were part of the original architrave of this barrier has also been raised.⁶⁶ A number of fragmentary Anglo-Saxon sculpted stones have been

⁵⁹ See de Vegvar, ‘Romanitas and Realpolitik’, 157-160 for a discussion of the documentary evidence for chancel barriers.

⁶⁰ For this argument, see Thomas, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*, 150-62.

⁶¹ On the early appearance of church screens, and their derivation from older synagogue arrangements, see J. R. Branham, ‘Sacred Space under Erasure in Ancient Synagogues and Early Churches’ in *The Art Bulletin* 74:3 (1992), 375-94.

⁶² On SS Peter and Paul, Tyre, see J. W. Crowfoot, *Early Churches in Palestine* (London, 1941) and J. R. Branham, ‘Sacred Space under Erasure’, 380-1.

⁶³ On the Theotokos Chapel, see S. J. Saller, *The Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo* (Jerusalem, 1941) and J. R. Branham, ‘Sacred Space under Erasure’, 381.

⁶⁴ On the chancel screen of Hagia Sophia, and comparable examples such as the one at Porclaneta, see S. Xydis, ‘The Chancel Barrier, Solea, and Ambo of Hagia Sophia’ in *The Art Bulletin* 29:1 (1947), 1-24

⁶⁵ R. J. Cramp, ‘Furnishings and sculptural decoration’ in L. A. S. Butler and R. K. Morris (eds), *The Anglo-Saxon Church. Papers on history, architecture and archaeology in honour of Dr HM Taylor* (London, 1986), 101-4.

⁶⁶ This possibility was raised by Lawrence Nees, ‘The Iconographic Program of Decorated Chancel Barriers in the Pre-Iconoclastic Period’ in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 46:1 (1983), 15-26, particularly 20-1.

identified as belonging to chancel screens.⁶⁷ While the Anglo-Saxon church at South Kyme, Lincolnshire no longer stands, a number of stones with sculpture dated to the sixth or seventh century have been found built into the fabric of the post-Conquest church.⁶⁸ [4.20] The moulded framework surrounding them shows that they would have originally formed part of rectangular screen panels.

No similar panels have been identified in Ireland, though the possibility remains that some early cross slabs may have originally formed part of such a barrier. The base of the high cross at Dysert O'Dea [4.21, 4.22] incorporates architectural fragments which seem likely candidates. The sides of each base are formed by square stones bearing incised cross-motifs. Although the bonding of the stones makes inspection impossible, it may be that the top, or the sides, of these square stones retain socket-holes by which they could have been attached to a chancel rail of some sort. The possibility that figure sculpture was used in a similar way has also been raised. Six catydids survive from the monastic site at White Island, bearing the ecclesiastical insignia of staff and bell. [4.23] Sockets at the top of their heads has led to the suggestion that they may have served as supports for an ambo-like structure.⁶⁹ An ex-situ figure from Lismore, may suggest that similar stone figures were more common in the eleventh and twelfth century than current survival indicates. [4.24]

There is little architectural or archaeological evidence for the presence of screens in Irish churches before the high middle ages, but evidence from England may indicate the ways in which smaller churches employed similar barriers. One such example of how a small, single celled church incorporated a chancel barrier is to be found at Raunds Furnells, England.⁷⁰ Located in east Northamptonshire, this church was altered a number of times over the middle ages.

The initial single celled construction was erected in the late ninth or early tenth century and served as a field church, a small chapel not accorded pastoral or burial rights. [4.25] It is the smallest surviving Anglo-Saxon church, with internal measurements of just 3.1 meters NS x 4.5 meters EW. One notable feature of the first phase is the presence of a sacrarium, or floor

⁶⁷ See the discussion of some of these fragments at Thomas, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*, 161-2. In addition to those fragments from South Kyme, examples have been found at St Ninian's Isle, Scotland, and Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire.

⁶⁸ These fragments are discussed at H. M. Taylor and J. Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture* (2 vols, Cambridge, 1965), I.365-6.

⁶⁹ J. McKenna and D. Lowry-Corry, 'White Island, Lough Erne: its ancient church and unique sculptures' in *JRASI* 60 (1930), 23-37.

⁷⁰ Andy Boddington (ed.), *Raunds Furnells. The Anglo-Saxon church and graveyard* (London, 1996). See especially Chapter 5 'Liturgical and social aspects' by David Parsons.

drain, a precursor to the piscina.⁷¹ Located just beneath the altar, they were receptacles for sacred wastes and ablutions. The presence of the sacrarium, while immensely interesting in itself, also provides us with two possible locations for the altar, situated directly east or west of the drain. Also found in the excavations were two postholes, likely representing the position of a screen situated directly east of the southern entrance. If this interpretation is in fact correct, it provides evidence for the use and position of a chancel screen in a small, local church before it had attained parochial status. The position of this screen would have created a small congregational area which possibly served only the immediate family of the patron.⁷² The small number of congregants who would have comfortably fit inside the building is well illustrated by photographs taken during the excavations. [4.26]

Ó Carragáin has argued that the arrangements at Raunds could have been easily replicated in a number of smaller Irish churches and has found no evidence to preclude the possibility that these small churches could accommodate a congregation.⁷³ Even the smallest church in his study of pre-Romanesque stone churches, a dry-stone oratory on Skellig Michael with an internal area of only 4.5 square metres, could have accommodated a small congregation. If, as discussed above, one square metre could provide enough space for a maximum of three congregants, even this small church could fit about five people.⁷⁴ [4.27] While the location of the Skellig Michael church, a rocky outcrop in the Atlantic, makes a parochial function impossible, it is nevertheless useful to note that small size does not in itself preclude parochial ability.

As noted above, the second building phase at Raunds was characterised by the addition of an architecturally defined chancel. This was added in the late tenth century, at the same time the boundaries of a graveyard were established, suggesting that Raunds was elevated to proto-parochial status at this point. [4.28] Although square-ended, the presence of a clergy bench running along the east wall indicates that this chancel was the functional equivalent of the apse; its addition did not create an architecturally defined sanctuary space.⁷⁵ The addition

⁷¹ A full description of the development of the piscina can be found at 125-35.

⁷² At its maximum, the nave space could have accommodated only twenty-three people, but if the chancel rail were taken into account, this number would fall drastically. See Parsons, 'Liturgical and Social Aspects', 64.

⁷³ See Ó Carragáin, 'Church buildings and pastoral care'. Another author in the same volume disagrees with his assessment; see T. O'Keeffe 'The built environment of local community worship'. Ó Carragáin has reiterated his belief that Irish churches were congregation more recently in Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural Setting of the Mass'.

⁷⁴ On the ability of smaller buildings to accommodate congregations, see P. S. Barnwell 'The Laity, the Clergy and the Divine presence: The Use of Space in Smaller Churches of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries' in *JBA*, 157 (2004), 41-60.

⁷⁵ The function of the square-ended apse at Raunds is also discussed by P. S. Barnwell, 'Churches Built for Priests? The Evolution of Parish Churches in Northamptonshire from the Gregorian reform to the Fourth Lateran Council' in *Ecclesiology Today*, 32 (2004), 7-23 at 16-7. Only one known example of an apse has been identified at an Irish parish church, this will be discussed at 88-89.

simply served as sacristy where the priest would prepare for the liturgy. The altar remained within the nave, but here it would seem that the partitioning screen was replaced by a ciborium. A similar arrangement was in place in the seventh century at the Old Minster, Winchester.⁷⁶ The ciborium, or baldachin, is a canopied structure surrounding the altar; the canopy covering the altar is usually vaulted and supported by four free standing columns. While the removal of the screen would have created a larger congregational space, the distance between the laity and the priest at the altar would not have changed and the ciborium would have provided a clear demarcation of sanctuary space surrounding the altar.

Ciboria may have been more common in insular churches than has previously been thought. They were common features of Continental church architecture from the early Christian period; the *Liber Pontificalis* records Constantine's gift of one to the Lateran basilica in Rome during the pontificate of Sylvester I, pope from 314 to 355.⁷⁷ The oldest surviving ciborium, dated to the early ninth century, is now located in the church of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna.⁷⁸ [4.29] Ciboria were also found in parish churches throughout Europe during the middle ages, though they became less common as large altar retables came into fashion.⁷⁹ A twelfth-century example can be found standing over the altar at Visciano, Italy.⁸⁰ [4.30]

Archaeological evidence indicates that a ciborium was present over the altar of St Peter's parish church, Waterford, in the early twelfth century.⁸¹ Post-sockets which would have supported vertically set slabs were located in the corners of the square chancel, and these have been interpreted as the base for the supporting posts of the canopy.⁸² [4.31] Also related to this phase were a number of post-holes suggesting that presence of a wooden altar towards the centre or possibly the east end of the chancel. St Peter's however, is not a typical Irish church; the plan and morphology of the site is more closely related to English examples. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that in his *de Statu Ecclesiae*, Gille of Limerick listed this

⁷⁶ At this point, the Old Minster had a square apse and two square transepts projecting from the body of the nave. The altar was situated at the east end of the nave and surrounded by a ciborium, as evidenced by post holes uncovered during the excavation. See M. Biddle, 'Excavations at Winchester 1967. Sixth interim report' in *Antiquities Journal* 52 (1968), 230-64, discussed in Barnwell, 'The Laity, the Clergy and the Divine Presence', 46.

⁷⁷ J. Peterson, 'Baldachinum of the Altar' in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1907) (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02217c.htm>) (April 27, 2011)

⁷⁸ Though now in Sant' Apollinare, it originally stood in the church of Sant Eleucadio, also in Classe. The ciborium is dated by inscription to 806-810. On the ciborium, see A. Vandersall, 'Five 'Romanesque' Portals: Questions of Attribution and Ornament' in *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 18 (1983), 129-139 at 134-5.

⁷⁹ For a discussion of ciboria in parish churches, see J. Kroesen and E. Steensma, *The Interior of the Medieval Village Church* (Louvain, 2004), 46-51.

⁸⁰ Kroesen and Steensma, *Interior of the Medieval Village Church*, 49.

⁸¹ M. F. Hurley and O. M. B. Scully with S. W. J. McCutcheon (eds), *Late Viking and Medieval Waterford: excavations 1986 - 1992* (Waterford, 1997); especially Hurley and McCutcheon, 'St Peter's church and graveyard', 189-205 and B. Murtagh, 'The architecture of St Peter's church', 228-243. The archaeological excavation of this church site will be discussed more fully in the next section.

⁸² Hurley and McCutcheon, 'St Peter's church and graveyard', 200.

as one of the items of church furnishing which required consecration by the bishop.⁸³ The possibility remains that many small Irish churches employed a ciboria in place of a screen before the thirteenth century, at which point the architecturally defined chancel became commonplace.

The presence of a ciborium, as opposed to a chancel screen, might be corroborated by the early Irish church consecration ritual. The eleventh-century *Tract on the Consecration of a Church* found in the *Leabhar Breac* lists the inscription of the alphabet on the church floor as part of the consecration ritual.⁸⁴ While the internal consecration ritual begins with the Bishop chanting psalms and verses ‘in the place where the chancel is’, it is later instructed that the alphabet be written twice on the floor, beginning in the south-east and north-east corners of the building so that the two letter O’s meet in the middle.⁸⁵ Such an inscription would certainly be awkward to produce were there a fixed barrier separating the chancel and nave areas.⁸⁶ The tract describes both a chancel (*caingel*) and a rather more curious *crand mbith*. Although it has been argued that the term *crand mbith* may refer to a chancel barrier, a closer reading of the text reveals that this is unlikely.⁸⁷ The consecration ritual begins with a procession to the church during which the bishop and clergy would singly the *Intrioit*, *Intrioibo in domum tuam Domine* and *Laudabo te*. Once the *crand mbith* was reached, the group would process past it and begin another set of psalms en route to the chancel. It becomes clear then that the term refers not to any screen or railing, but instead describes the lintel set atop the west doorway.⁸⁸

Here, mention must be made of the *dambliag mór*, large, barn-like stone churches which began to be erected at sites of major importance, such as Armagh, Glendalough and Clonmacnoise at the end of the millennium. Not only is their construction reflective of high-level patronage

⁸³ As discussed at 44.

⁸⁴ The *Leabhar Breac* was compiled in the fourteenth century and contains a number of earlier works including the consecration tract. Two translations of the text, both with commentary, have been produced. The earliest is that of J. Olden, ‘On an Early Irish Tract in *Leabhar Breac*’ in *Transactions of the Cambridge Camden Society*, 4 (1900), 98-104. The next was produced quickly thereafter as the author found that Olden’s translation contained a number of errors. See W. Stokes, ‘The Lebar Brecc Tractate on the Consecration of a Church’ in *Miscelanea Linguistica in Onore de Grazzadio Ascoli* (1901), 363-97.

⁸⁵ As found in section 14 of the *Tract on the Consecration of a Church*. On the possible Irish origin of the alphabet rite, or *Abecedarium*, see H. Thurston, ‘The Alphabet and the Consecration of Churches’ in *The Month* 552 (1910), 621-631. For an overview of similar consecration rituals in use in Anglo-Saxon England, see H. Gittos, *Sacred Space in Anglo-Saxon England*, 192-230.

⁸⁶ Ó Carragáin, however, does not see this as any impediment and argues that a similar ritual was used in Carolingian churches with subdivided naves. See Ó Carragáin, ‘Architectural Setting of the Mass’, 125.

⁸⁷ The first translation by Olden does include a translation of the term in the commentary, describing it as an *ambitus altaris* separating the chancel from the nave. Olden, ‘On an early Irish Tract’, 100. De Vegvar also considers this possibility in de Vegvar, ‘Romanitas and Realpolitik’ 157-160.

⁸⁸ Stokes recognised this error in Olden’s translation and corrected it in his where the *crand mbith* is translated as a ‘threshold beam’. See Stokes, ‘Tractate on the Consecration of a Church’, 369.

at these sites, but the sheer size and scale of these churches, in comparison to the comparatively small churches which have been described above, suggests a possible change in function as well. Ó Carragáin has recently speculated as to the likely liturgical arrangements in place in such buildings.⁸⁹ The original size of the Clonmacnoise *dambliag mór*, the building which later became the cathedral church, is known.⁹⁰ Although the building has undergone at least four phases of construction, the original east, north and south walls of the single-celled church still stand; the original building had internal measurements of 10.7 x 18.8 metres. By comparison with other pre-Romanesque churches, we might expect it to have had a linteled west doorway and two windows placed in the east and south gables, respectively. The building, along with the high cross, was constructed in 909 under the patronage of Flann Sinna of Clann Cholmáin.⁹¹

There, however, is no archaeological evidence for how the internal space of the church was laid out. Ó Carragáin has suggested that in this, and other large buildings, the altar was likely placed about two-thirds of the way to the east of the building.⁹² Were this the case, a large amount of empty space would be created to both the east and west of the altar. Ó Carragáin has vociferously contended, in a number of different publications, that the early Irish churches were designed primarily with a congregational function in mind.⁹³ Certainly, it is possible to image a large congregation gathered within the church, which as known to have been a major pilgrimage site throughout the middle ages.⁹⁴ Where Ó Carragáin's argument falters in his account of the use of space to the east of the altar. He suggests a number of different functions the east end might have served, including an internal sacristy space, but settles on the idea that it was designed to accommodate 'substantial groups of religious' concelebrating elaborate Eucharistic liturgies.⁹⁵ His argument is based on the fact that in many Continental churches, and indeed the station churches of Rome, a rounded apse was placed at the east end of the building to accommodate the bishop's chair and other clerical seating as seen at SS

⁸⁹ Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural Setting of the Mass', discusses possible internal arrangements in both large and small churches during the early medieval period.

⁹⁰ For an account of the medieval building programmes at the cathedral, see Manning, 'Clonmacnoise Cathedral'; the form of the *dambliag mór* is discussed at 60-63 and 71-77.

⁹¹ As Manning notes, 'The building of the *daimliag* ... marks the culmination of successful partnership between Clonmacnoise and the Clann Cholmáin dynasty, in whose territory it lay.' See Manning, 'Clonmacnoise Cathedral', 72. On medieval patronage of the site more particularly, see R. Ó Floinn, 'Clonmacnoise: Art and Patronage in the Early Medieval Period' in H. King (ed.), *Clonmacnoise Studies Volume 1: Seminar Papers 1994* (Dublin, 1998), 87-100.

⁹² On altar placement, see Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural Setting of the Mass', 132-38.

⁹³ This belief serves as the basis for many arguments put forward in both Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural Setting of the Mass' and Ó Carragáin, 'Church Buildings and Pastoral Care'.

⁹⁴ On pilgrimage at the site, see P. Harbsion, *Pilgrimage in Ireland: The Monuments and the People* (London, 1992), 117-128. See also A. Kehnel, *Clonmacnois: The Church and Lands of St Ciaran* (Münster, 1997).

⁹⁵ See his discussion at Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural Setting of the Mass', 138-43.

Peter and Paul, Tyre [4.148] and Visciano, Italy.⁹⁶ [4.149] There is, however, no evidence in either the architectural or archaeological record for similar arrangements in Irish medieval churches of any size. As will be seen in the following section, the only known Irish church to have possessed a rounded east end, or apse, was St Peter's, Waterford, [4.31] an unusual Hiberno-Norse building that does not reflect Irish approaches to church design.

One building outside the Hiberno-Norse tradition which does possess an extended east end is Cormac's Chapel, Cashel, Tipperary.⁹⁷ Here, however, the small recess is not an apse, but was clearly designed to accommodate and illuminate the altar via the two heavily splayed windows cut through the north and south walls of the recess.⁹⁸ Cormac's Chapel is an interesting and much debated building, partly because of its original approach to church design within the corpus of contemporary churches and partly because, until recently, it has been the earliest datable Romanesque building within the country.⁹⁹ At least six annals record that the chapel was consecrated in the year 1134 'by a synod of the clergy assembled in one place.'¹⁰⁰ With its elaborate Romanesque ornamentation, flanking towers and unusual twin doorways, Cormac's Chapel has sometimes been described as an 'architectural manifesto' of the twelfth-century reform movement.¹⁰¹ Its design is, however, unparalleled in the Irish corpus. Instead of a bold declaration of reforming spirit, Stalley has argued that instead it should be seen as a visual evocation of political achievement: 'The chapel was not so much a reflection of church reform, more a celebration of Mac Carthaig success in recapturing Munster.'¹⁰² But what was the function of the chapel, what sort of community might it have served? No clear answer to this question has emerged; current theories being that it housed a community of German Benedictines or that it was intended to serve as a burial chapel for Cormac Mac Carthaig.¹⁰³ In either case, no evidence has been presented to suggest that it ever served a regular, lay, congregation.

⁹⁶ A discussion of the forms of medieval clerical seating can be found in this chapter, 137-42.

⁹⁷ The literature on this building is extensive; for an account of the chief works see R. Stalley, 'Design and Function: the construction and decoration of Cormac's Chapel at Cashel' in D. Bracken and D. Ó Riain-Raedel (eds.), *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century. Reform and Renewal* (Dublin, 2006), 162-75 at 162, fn. 2.

⁹⁸ Ó Carragáin, too, sees the recess as an altar space. See Ó Carragáin 'Architectural Setting of the Mass', 133 and a plan of the church at 134. Only one parallel for an altar recess is known in the corpus of medieval Irish architecture, this can be found at Kilmalkedar, Kerry.

⁹⁹ Gem has recently argued, quite persuasively, that the Romanesque doorway of St Flannan's Oratory, Killaloe, can be dated to the last decade of the eleventh century. If this is true, as it seems to be, Flannan's Oratory predates Cormac's Chapel by at least thirty years. See R. Gem, 'St Flannan's oratory at Killaloe: a Romanesque building of c. 1100 and the patronage of king Muirchertach Ua Briain' in Damian Bracken and Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel (eds), *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth century. Reform and Renewal* (Dublin, 2006), 74-105.

¹⁰⁰ *AFM* 1134.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, Liam de Paor, 'Cormac's chapel: the beginnings of Irish Romanesque' in E. Rynne (ed.), *North Munster Studies: essays in commemoration of Monsignor Michael Moloney* (Limerick, 1967), 133-45. A discussion of the merits of this assertion can be found at Stalley, 'Design and Function', 165-66.

¹⁰² Stalley, 'Design and Function', 166.

¹⁰³ See the discussion at Stalley, 'Design and Function', 166-7.

While there were undoubtedly churches built with a specific function in mind, and to serve a specific community, in the early Irish church no apparent distinction in approaches to building layout or design has emerged which would indicate such an arrangement. It has been shown that even the smallest churches, however unlikely, had the space to accommodate a very limited number of congregants. We must bear in mind then that these churches could have served a variety of functions, both monastic and pastoral, and that it is not necessary to place them in one camp or the other. It must also be remembered that although there is evidence that the laity were accommodated in early churches, it need not follow that *every* early church was congregational. The interior arrangements of these early churches were variable and designed to reflect the needs of the community the church would have served.

The Architecture of Hiberno-Norse Ireland

Some of the first differences in ecclesiastical plan and layout in Ireland can be found within the Hiberno-Norse towns, established as Viking raiders began to settle in Dublin, Limerick, Waterford and Wexford from the tenth century.¹⁰⁴ This might not be surprising, in light of the connection between Hiberno-Norse Ireland, Canterbury and the English Church which have already been noted.

Given the effect of the Norman invasion on the liturgy and architecture of England, it is odd that neither Lanfranc nor Anselm makes any reference to Irish liturgy or church building despite their contact with both Hiberno-Norse Ireland and Gaelic rulers. The Normans were quite anxious to correct what they viewed as abnormalities in the Anglo-Saxon liturgy, despite native resistance. In 1082, Abbot Thurstan introduced a new Norman liturgy at Glastonbury, causing a riot among the monks in residence.¹⁰⁵ Anglo-Saxon churches were also viewed as inferior: almost immediately after taking office in 1170, Lanfranc began to rebuild Canterbury Cathedral. The old Anglo-Saxon building was demolished and a new building was erected, no larger in size, but completely different in style, heavily based on that of St-Etienne in Caen, Normandy.¹⁰⁶ It is doubtful that the archbishops were unaware of Irish liturgical or building

¹⁰⁴ On Hiberno-Norse Ireland, see P. Wallace, 'The Archaeology of Ireland's Viking-Age Towns' in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (ed.), *A New History of Ireland I. Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford: 2005), 814-840.

¹⁰⁵ See D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge, 1940), 114-15.

¹⁰⁶ The Anglo-Saxon cathedral had been damaged by fire in 1067 and so was in need of some refurbishment. The decision to demolish it, however, is significant as it had origins in Roman antiquity and was one of the oldest cathedrals north of the Alps. Anselm also took part in a rebuilding scheme at Canterbury, beginning to reconstruct the east end in 1093. See Eric Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford, 2000), 104-106.

practices, though they make no mention of church buildings themselves in their correspondence with Irish magnates or prelates.¹⁰⁷ There are, however, at least two buildings whose plans suggest that Canterbury may have exerted a degree of influence over architectural styles within Hiberno-Norse towns: Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin and St Peter's parish church, Waterford.

Canterbury's possible influence on the earliest incarnation of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, is difficult to assess. Precious little medieval fabric remains, and the building as it stands today is largely the result of a late nineteenth-century reconstruction. Little can be said regarding the appearance or construction of the building until after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in the late twelfth century.¹⁰⁸ While the date is uncertain, it is generally accepted that the cathedral was founded around the year 1030 by the Hiberno-Norse king of Dublin, Sitriuc, and his bishop, Dúnán. It is possible that Dúnán appealed to Canterbury for consecration, though this remains very much debatable.¹⁰⁹ The only indication of what this cathedral might have looked like appears in an early fourteenth-century text found in the cathedral priory register, the 'Liber Niger'.¹¹⁰ This text attributes the construction of a nave and two aisles (*cum duobus collateralibus structuris*) to Dúnán.¹¹¹ As Roger Stalley notes, this is more representative of a basilican arrangement than the simple, rectangular Irish churches, a fact which might be explained by Sitriuc's pilgrimage to Rome in 1028. Though the evidence is not definitive, the possibility remains that eleventh-century English influence was to be found in the early medieval plan of Christ Church Cathedral. Certainly, the plan of the cathedral was quite different from those found at Irish cathedrals, such as Glendalough, Wicklow, and Clonmacnoise, Offaly.

¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, we might consider the possibility that a different, indigenous liturgy and building practice may have been part of the argument used by Canterbury as it petitioned Pope Adrian IV to grant the bull *Laudabiliter* in 1155, although there is admittedly no evidence of this. The architectural impact of the Anglo-Norman colonisation in Ireland will be considered at 100-05.

¹⁰⁸ See K. Milne (ed.), *Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin: A History* (Dublin, 2000), especially R. Stalley, 'The construction of the medieval cathedral, c. 1030-1250', 53-74.

¹⁰⁹ Gwynn seems to think this likely; see *Twelfth Century Reforms*, 3. Flanagan is much less certain; see 'Canterbury and the Irish Church', 12-13. More recently, it has been argued that Dúnán's consecration took place in Cologne, Germany. On this, see Pádraig Ó Riain, 'Dublin's oldest book? A list of saints 'made in Germany' in Seán Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin V* (Dublin, 2004), 52-72 and Ragnall Ó Floinn, 'The foundation relics of Christ Church cathedral and the origins of the diocese of Dublin' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin VII* (Dublin, 2006), 89-102.

¹¹⁰ For a collection of translated foundation narratives for Christ Church, see S. Kinsella, 'An architectural history of Christ Church cathedral, Dublin c.1540 - c.1870' (Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2009), appendix 4.

¹¹¹ The text is published in A. Gwynn, 'Some Unpublished Texts from the Black Book of Christ Church, Dublin' in *Analectica Hibernica*, 16 (1946), 281-337 at 308-10 and translated in Aubrey Gwynn, 'The origins of the see of Dublin' in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, lvii (1941), 40-55, 97-112 at 46-8. See also R. Stalley, 'The architecture of the cathedral and priory buildings, 1250-1530' in K. Milne (ed.), *Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. A History* (Dublin, 2000), 53-74.

English influence on the design of St Peter's parish church, Waterford, is more apparent; most noteworthy is its possession of the only known apse in any Irish secular church.¹¹² Located just east of Waterford Cathedral, St Peter's church and graveyard were established at some point before the late eleventh century.¹¹³ [4.32] This first church took the form of a rectangular timber structure.¹¹⁴ In the early twelfth century, the church was rebuilt; it is likely that the timber-built church was retained to serve as the nave, while a small, rectangular stone chancel was added to the east end. Not long after, likely at some point in the second quarter of the twelfth century, this timber nave was replaced with a stone structure with doors on both north and south walls. It is possible that the apse was added at the same time as the stone nave; the excavators could only be certain that the apse post-dated the stone chancel. A conjectural reconstruction of the twelfth-century church shows that it was a three-celled building. [4.33] The chancel would have been divided from the nave by the means of a wide arch with the same width as the chancel.¹¹⁵ The base of a stone altar was discovered at the east end of the chancel; this likely dates to the later phase contemporary with the addition of the apse. An arc of post-holes situated directly west of the stone altar marks the position of an earlier stone altar and possible ciborium, as noted in the previous section.

The addition of the apse is a clear indication of English influence. While apses were a feature of major church architecture from a very early date, they were not regular features of smaller, local churches until the early twelfth century. It is at this point that English parish church chancels begin to exhibit a wide variety of styles and plans, perhaps the most common form being the two-celled variety created by the addition of an apse to the small, square eleventh-century chancel.¹¹⁶ One of the most famous apsidal churches is that of Kilpeck, Herefordshire,

¹¹² While the Cistercian abbey of Mellifont, founded 1142, possessed apsidal chapels, the English phenomena of apsidal east ends on smaller secular churches is not found in Ireland.

¹¹³ Though documentary evidence does not refer to St Peter's as a parish church until the fifteenth century, the Hiberno-Norse towns of Dublin, Cork and Wexford also contained churches dedicated to Peter, all of which were founded before the Anglo-Norman colonisation. This strongly suggests that each of these sites functioned as a parochial church from the beginning. For an overview of the archaeological excavations of these sites and the implications for the chronology of building at St Peter's, see Hurley, Scully and McCutcheon (eds), *Late Viking and Medieval Waterford*; especially Hurley and McCutcheon, 'St Peter's church and graveyard' and Murtagh, 'Architecture of St Peter's Church'. The description of building morphology which follows is drawn from these two sources.

¹¹⁴ A series of post-holes have been interpreted as the possible foundations of a timber church associated with a contemporary graveyard. See Murtagh, 'Architecture of St Peter's Church', 228.

¹¹⁵ The projecting stone returns of the east nave wall likely served as springers for the base of the chancel arch from the earliest chancel phase, during which time the nave was still constructed of timber. See Hurley and McCutcheon, 'St Peter's Church and Graveyard', 199.

¹¹⁶ While apsidal chancels do not survive to a great degree in England, the vast majority of later medieval parish church excavations have uncovered an earlier apse suggesting that this was the most common twelfth century chancel arrangement. On the appearance and use of the apse in minor English churches see C. F. Davidson 'Change and Change Back: the development of English parish church chancels' in R.N. Swanson (ed), *Continuity and Change in Christian Worship* (Woodbridge, 1999), 65-77 and C. Cragoe, 'Written in Stone: Architecture, Liturgy and the Laity in English Parish Churches, c. 1125 – c. 1250' (PhD thesis, University of London, Birkbeck, 1998), 132 – 137.

widely known for its elaborate Romanesque sculpture, which retains the typical post-Conquest parish church plan of a rectangular nave and long apsidal chancel.¹¹⁷ [4.34] It is likely that the apse was added onto the earlier square chancel at some point in the early twelfth century.¹¹⁸ Romanesque arches mark the entrances to both the earlier chancel and the apse. [4.35]

The addition of the apse is a curious and short-lived phenomenon within English parish church design. Although the two-celled apsidal chancel was common in the twelfth century, it had fallen out of favour by the thirteenth century when the vast majority were replaced by long single-celled chancels that became the standard form for the rest of the middle ages. As Davidson has noted, experimentation in chancel forms was a characteristic feature of English parish church architecture during the period from *ca.* 1125 to *ca.* 1175¹¹⁹:

The wide variety of twelfth-century chancel forms, and the speed with which chancel types changed during this period, form a striking contrast to the homogeneity and stability of parish church chancel types in the earlier and later Middle Ages. This suggests that, having been stable for a long time, the demands placed on chancels changed quite rapidly in the twelfth century before settling down again towards the beginning of the thirteenth century ... it seems likely that these demands were functional rather than iconographic or nationalistic.¹²⁰

While Davidson has drawn attention to the variety of chancel arrangements in the twelfth century, the most comprehensive study to explore precisely what these functional demands may have been has been produced by Paul Barnwell.¹²¹ In looking at the possible uses of the two and three-celled chancel, he concluded that the easternmost compartment, be it a square chancel or rounded apse, would have provided a clerical space from which the priest would

¹¹⁷ On the Romanesque sculpture at Kilpeck, see the Ron Baxter, 'SS Mary and David, Kilpeck, Herefordshire' *CRSBI* (<http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/county/site/ed-he-kilpe.html>) (May 14, 2010), which contains an extensive bibliography on the site.

¹¹⁸ The dating of the sculptural programs at Kilpeck is widely contested, but the church itself is certainly of the first half of the twelfth century and likely dates to *ca.* 1130. The debate over the dating of the church is comprehensively overviewed in Baxter, 'SS Mary and David, Kilpeck'. (<http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/county/site/ed-he-kilpe.html>) (May 14, 2010). The RCHME suggested that an earlier, square-chancelled Anglo-Saxon church is evidenced by quoin fragments at the east end of the nave. See The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Herefordshire, 1: South-west* (1931) 156-58 and Davidson, 'Change and Change Back', 70. On the function of the twelfth century chancel at Kilpeck, see Barnwell, 'Laity, the Clergy and the Divine Presence', 42-4.

¹¹⁹ Davidson notes that single, double and triple celled chancels with both square and apsidal east ends appear in a wide range of combinations over the period, and many parish churches employed more than one of these arrangements during the twelfth century. See Davidson 'Change and Change Back', 73-4.

¹²⁰ Davidson 'Change and Change Back', 74.

¹²¹ Barnwell, 'Laity, the Clergy and the Divine Presence', especially 42-8.

process to the altar for the celebration of the Eucharist. This convincing argument centres around evidence for the placement of the altar in early medieval churches.

Until the tenth century freestanding altars were situated at the eastern end of single-celled local churches. The addition of the architecturally defined chancel did not affect the placement of the altar; instead the second cell was a clerical space as indicated by the presence of benches along the east wall of the compartment. This morphology is clearly evident in the first two phases of the church at Raunds Furnells, as discussed above. [4.25, 4.28] The same pattern can be seen in the development of the three-celled church at Kilpeck. Though no comparable archaeological excavation of the site has been undertaken, Barnwell has shown how the architectural arrangements clearly indicate that the twelfth-century altar would have been placed in the central, square chancel. [4.34] Not only would this have allowed for the most visibility of the altar and the celebrant, but such a placement would also have the strongest ritual impact:

‘While the mystery celebrated at the altar might not have been in the lightest part of the church, the light would have lain beyond the altar, perhaps symbolically suggesting that paradise was obtained through the intermediary of the priest and by means of the sacrifice he performed, in a way analogous to that in which a late medieval altar was viewed through the rood screen with its crucifix and images of saints. Similarly, the vaulted area would have appeared particularly to a kneeling congregation, to be above and beyond the altar, rather than almost in form of it, and the sacrifice to have taken place at the entrance to the symbolically heavenly realms.’¹²²

The architectural development of St Peter’s Waterford is then directly related to contemporary patterns evident in English parish church design. While similar designs may have been found at parish churches located within Hiberno-Norse towns, there is no evidence that such arrangements were to have any impact on traditional Irish church planning. When the architecturally defined chancel first begins to appear in Ireland in the twelfth century, its function is clearly different from these English examples: instead of serving as a sanctuary space for the clergy, the earliest Irish chancels were clearly designed to accommodate the altar and celebrant.¹²³

¹²² Barnwell, ‘Laity, the Clergy and the Divine Presence’, especially 44.

¹²³ The appearance of the chancel in twelfth-century Ireland will be discussed at 98-100.

The Architecture of Reformed Monasticism

The arrival of reformed monasticism, most notably the Cistercian Order, was to have a dramatic effect on ecclesiastical architecture.¹²⁴ The Cistercians brought new modes of singing and a new liturgy, and with them, a new architectural model in which to perform that liturgy. The long established monastic layout, so common in continental Cistercian foundations, was unfamiliar in Ireland. Despite a simplicity in design which made Cistercian buildings seem understated in much of Europe, these new monasteries appeared as ‘monumental architecture’ in contrast to the austerity of traditional Irish churches. As such, the new architecture was to have an enormous impact on the layout of larger Irish church buildings.

Before the arrival of the Order, the largest early Irish monastic church was evidently that of the tenth-century Clonmacnoise *daimbliag mór*, measuring sixty-two feet in length.¹²⁵ [4.36] By contrast, the first Cistercian church at Mellifont measured just over 188 feet.¹²⁶ [4.37] While no traditional Irish church possessed lateral liturgical spaces such as aisles or transepts with a true crossing,¹²⁷ Mellifont boasted not only aisles, three transeptal chapels on each side of its presbytery and possibly even a true crossing. Whereas the initial foundation adopted a Burgundian style of design¹²⁸, by the 1160s, the Order was erecting some of the finest examples of Irish Romanesque, as at Jerpoint and Boyle.¹²⁹ By the 1230s, the influence of Anglo-Norman patronage was such that Cistercian monasteries took on very English styling and the first Irish Gothic buildings appear at Grey, Inch and Graignamanagh.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ The seminal work on the arrival of the Cistercians in Ireland and their architectural impact is R. Stalley, *The Cistercian monasteries of Ireland: an account of the history, art, and architecture of the White Monks in Ireland from 1142-1540* (London, 1987). The Augustinian Canons Regular, also imported to Ireland during the twelfth century, were to have less impact on architectural form and design as they tended to make use of previously established Irish monastic sites and churches, whereas Cistercian churches were new, purpose-built constructions.

¹²⁵ The early architecture of Clonmacnoise Cathedral is discussed at 84-85. See also Manning, ‘Clonmacnoise cathedral’.

¹²⁶ Established in 1142, Mellifont was the first and most influential Irish Cistercian monastery. A detailed study of its architectural development has been undertaken by Roger Stalley: R. Stalley, ‘Mellifont Abbey: A Study of Its Architectural History’ in *PRLA* 80:C (1980), 263-354

¹²⁷ While it is possible that lateral liturgical space was present in the early phases of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, there is no proof of its existence, nor was Christ Church a traditional Irish ecclesiastical building. See Stalley, ‘The construction of the medieval cathedral.’ There is also debate over the nature of the *erdam*, sometimes translated as sacristy, in the early Irish church, however, there is no hard evidence of any lateral liturgical space.

¹²⁸ The pointed arch and pointed barrel vault were Burgundian-style imports to Ireland, though doors and windows remain rounded. It is interesting to note that a similar method of emphasis and articulation is found in the initial appearance of nave and chancel buildings in Ireland, where the adoption of the true, vousoir-constructed, arch for the chancel stands in opposition to the traditional linteled doorway.

¹²⁹ The late Romanesque decorative scheme which appears at Boyle is a stunning example of the ‘School of the West’, sometimes described as transitional architecture as it employs forms common to both the Romanesque and Gothic architectural styles. See B. Kalkreuter, *Boyle Abbey and the School of the West* (Bray, 2001).

¹³⁰ Jill Unkel has recently completed a thesis in which she considers the role of Anglo-Norman patronage in the appearance and diffusion of Gothic architectural styles. See J. Unkel, ‘Architectural Patronage in Ireland: The Early Anglo-Norman Lords’ (Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2010).

Continental monastic architecture was influential both in its introduction of new stylistic forms and its provision of a new ecclesiastical layout. The arrival of the Cistercian Order brought both a highly developed system of monastic planning and church building on a scale never before seen, with a predominance of lateral space in which the liturgy was carried out.¹³¹ The Cistercian use of aisles and transepts, along with chapels for private prayer and individual masses would have provided a new example of the ways in which liturgical space could be ordered and utilized. The prime example of monastic influence in architectural terms can be found at Limerick Cathedral, the first secular Irish building whose plan is clearly influenced by the architecture of the reformed monastic orders. [4.38] Built at the end of the twelfth century, its layout clearly shows that the native Irish were not only interested in, but willing to adopt, new architectural forms.¹³²

While the Cistercian Order has often been given a prime of place in studies which chart the architectural impact of reformed monasticism in Ireland, it must be remembered that the Augustinian Order also flourished in the twelfth century.¹³³ By the time of the Norman invasion, roughly sixty-five houses of canons regular had been founded in the country. Although new Augustinian foundations were certainly established, most houses were conversion of older Irish monastic houses to the Rule of St. Benedict.¹³⁴ A similar pattern has been identified in England, where a large number of eremitic monastic communities were transformed into Augustinian priories during the twelfth century. The appeal to older monastic houses stemmed from the nature of the Rule, which provided a 'general framework for community life rather than a set of detailed instruction and could therefore be assimilated more easily by an established group'.¹³⁵ A number of powerful early Irish monastic

¹³¹ Stalley, *Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, 51, has argued that the Cistercians brought the claustral plan, in which the church building and its attendant domestic range were arranged around a square central cloister. This view has most recently been challenged by Stuart Kinsella, who argues that a cloister was present at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin long before the first Cistercian foundation was established at Mellifont. See Kinsella, *Architectural history of Christ Church Cathedral*. As this thesis is primarily concerned with the arrangement and furnishings of the church building itself, this argument need not be addressed here.

¹³² On Limerick Cathedral, see R. F. Hewson, 'St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick. Its Development and Growth' in *NMAJ*, 4:2 (1944), 55-67 and T. J. Westropp, 'St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick: Its Plan and Growth' in *JRSAI* 8:1 (1898), 35-48 and 'St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick: Its Plan and Growth (Continued)' in *JRSAI* 8:2 (1898), 112-125.

¹³³ A number of Benedictine houses were also established in the twelfth century. The majority of these quickly became affiliated with the Cistercian Order, as happened at Holycross, Kilcooly and Monasternevin, amongst others. Only sixteen Benedictine foundations did not transfer to the Cistercian Order; the most famous of these being the establishment at Cormac's Chapel, Cashel (though here, a secular chapter replaced the Benedictine monks in the early thirteenth century). For a discussion see A. Gwynn and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: Ireland* (Dublin, 1970), 104-09.

¹³⁴ For a discussion of early Augustinian foundations, see Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 45 onward. See also Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, 146-200.

¹³⁵ See J. Herbert, 'The Transformation of Hermitages into Augustinian Priories in Twelfth Century England' in W. J. Sheils (ed.), *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition* (Oxford, 1985), 131-45.

communities, including those at Armagh, Clonmacnoise and Glendalough, all of which were elevated to cathedral status during the reforms, had transformed into houses of Augustinian Canons by the middle of the twelfth century.¹³⁶

No comprehensive study of Irish Augustinian architecture has yet been published.¹³⁷ As such, no overall picture emerges of the forms and varieties of church design which appealed to the order. It is quite likely, however, that no particular architectural layout was either favoured or required for these new Augustinian houses. As noted, the Rule of St Benedict contained guidelines for communal living but did not proscribe a strict liturgical observance; churches which adopted the Rule would not have required any specific architectural plan for the enactment of rituals. Superficial observation would suggest, however, that at a number of sites, Glendalough being one example, the adoption of the Benedictine Rule coincided with the appearance of the architecturally defined chancel.¹³⁸

The Architectural Impact of Reform

As has been discussed, early Irish churches were built to a standard, homogenous plan: an unelaborated single-celled structure with a west doorway and two small windows on the east and south walls, respectively. During the twelfth century, however, changes in the layout and elaboration of church buildings within a traditional Irish context began to appear. The two most significant of these were the appearance of the elaborated Romanesque portal and the architecturally defined chancel.

While it was not a feature of any known Irish church, the nave-and-chancel plan was commonly found in England from the ninth and tenth centuries. But as the above discussion has shown, these chancels were not sanctuary spaces. As at Raunds Furnells, the eastern compartment served as a clerical space while the altar remained in the nave of these two-celled churches. The internal arrangements of early Christian basilicas, such as were designed so that

¹³⁶ Augustinian canons had been installed in SS Peter and Paul, Armagh, by 1126; they are found Clonmacnoise after 1140 and at the Cathedral, St Kevin's and St Saviour's, Glendalough around 1163. For a complete list of Augustinian canons in Ireland, with indications of which houses were installed at previously extant monasteries, see Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, 153-200.

¹³⁷ Studies of individual houses have been published, but as yet no scholarly work has weighed and considered the architectural impact of twelfth century Augustinian foundations. It is hoped that this situation will be rectified by the completion of the doctoral study currently in progress by Antionette Dornan at Trinity College, Dublin. For studies of individual houses, see the important works by A. Empey, 'The Sacred and the Secular: The Augustinian Priory of Kells in Ossory, 1193-1541' in *Irish Historical Studies*, 24:94 (1984), 131-151 and T. O'Keefe, *An Anglo-Norman Monastery: Bridgetown Priory and the architecture of the Augustinian canons regular in Ireland* (Cork, 1999).

¹³⁸ The appearance of the architecturally defined chancel will be considered in the following section, see 98-100.

the clergy would sit in the apse while a celebrant performed the mass facing the congregation to the west. A similar plan was found in a number of larger English churches during the pre-Conquest period, including Canterbury Cathedral.¹³⁹ It has been argued that the presence of the apse within local churches from the early middle ages can therefore be regarded then as an adaptation of major church arrangements.¹⁴⁰

As has been noted, the twelfth century was a time of great experimentation in chancel forms. The basilican arrangement described above remained popular, but was more generally created by a two-celled apsidial chancel, as at Kilpeck [4.34] and St Peter's, Waterford. [4.32] One variation which began to appear at the beginning of the century was to have a far greater impact, however. This is the extended, rectangular single-celled chancel. One very early example might be found at Raunds Furnells, where around the turn of the twelfth century the first church was demolished. A second, larger, nave-and-chancel church was constructed. As can be seen from the footings of both churches, the change in scale was significant and represented a 266% increase in space.¹⁴¹ [4.39] Excavation of the site did not produce any evidence for the internal arrangements at this second church, but it is likely that a free-standing altar was placed towards the eastern end of the chancel.

The morphology of Irish chancels is somewhat different. Apart from the singular example at Waterford, it is unlikely that the basilican arrangement found in Anglo-Saxon churches was present in either large or small Irish churches.¹⁴² When the architecturally defined chancel first begins to appear in Ireland around the year 1100, its function was to serve as a sanctuary and all evidence points to the placement of the altar within this compartment. By the turn of the twelfth century, at least seven churches with architecturally defined chancels had been constructed in Ireland.¹⁴³ [4.40] Significantly, these seven churches are located at just three sites: Killaloe, Clare; Glenadlough, Wicklow and Waterford town. The form of the early

¹³⁹ The vast majority of pre-Conquest apsidal churches were of high status, suggesting that a basilican arrangement was indeed in place. See Cragoe, *Written in Stone*, 135. On the pre-conquest plan of Canterbury Cathedral, see H. M. Taylor, 'The Anglo-Saxon Cathedral at Canterbury' in *Archaeological Journal*, 126(1969), 100-21.

¹⁴⁰ Cragoe has argued further that the appearance of this major church form by minor churches can be connected to elevation to parochial status. See Cragoe, *Written in Stone*, 136-38.

¹⁴¹ On the second church at Raunds, see Boddington, *Raunds Furnells*, 8-19.

¹⁴² Ó Carragáin, however, disagrees. He has recently argued that exactly such an arrangement could have been present in some of the larger early Irish churches, such as Clonmancoise Cathedral. Though he rightly draws attention to the fact that some Irish churches, at least, were congregational, this author remains unconvinced by his suggestion that the eastern space of early single-celled churches would have served as a clerical space or sacristy. See Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural Setting of the Mass', 138-43.

¹⁴³ Currently, only seven churches with architecturally defined chancels dating to the turn of the twelfth century have been conclusively identified, though future research is likely to identify more. It must also be noted that more chancels dating to this period may be obscured by later medieval building programmes. Though the following argument closely follows that presented by Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural Setting of the Mass', published in 2009, it is based upon independent research conducted between 2004 and 2007.

chancelled church at Waterford has already been discussed; though it is significant that a church of this plan can be found in twelfth-century Ireland, the morphology of the church cannot be described as representative of approaches to the design of traditional Irish churches during the period.

Two of the churches, St Flannan's Oratory and Friar's Island, are located in Killaloe, Clare. St Flannan's Oratory, situated just north of the Cathedral, boasts the earliest datable chancel of the group.¹⁴⁴ On the basis of striking similarities between the west doorway and the south door at St-Etienne, Caen, France, Richard Gem has argued that St Flannan's could only have been constructed by a mason well-versed in the styles of late eleventh-century Anglo-Norman architecture and dates the building to *ca.* 1100.¹⁴⁵ [4.41] This, in turn, provides a date for the construction of the chancel. Though this has since fallen, stonework still stands at the eastern end of the nave, which shows that nave and chancel were coeval constructions. [4.42] The rounded chancel arch is uncarved; the only decorative feature present are the chamfered imposts which project from the interior rebates of the jams. The overall form of the arch is similar in design to the moulded interior arch of the west doorway which also contains chamfered imposts. Though there is no indication as to the length of the chancel, comparison with other early chancels of its width suggests it would have been small and square.

The nearby church of St Molua's on Friar's Island is the site of another early chancel.¹⁴⁶ [4.43] Here, however, a stone roofed chancel was added onto the east end of an earlier nave around the end of the eleventh century. The chancel is barrel vaulted and contains a croft above; a linteled south doorway likely led to an attached wooden sacristy. Two small, unarticulated aumbries are set against the east end of the side walls and the compartment is lit by a small, round-headed east window set into a stepped embrasure. The form of the chancel arch is quite curious; the arch itself is constructed of undecorated voussoirs resting on a dividing wall.¹⁴⁷ [4.44] Little is known about the history of the site, but the lack of any building works after the early twelfth-century alterations indicates that the church went out of use relatively early in the middle ages. The appearance of the chancel, however, suggests that the site was connected in some way to the only other contemporary nave and chancel church in the vicinity: St Flannan's Oratory at Killaloe. The monastic site at Killaloe and the nearby fort of

¹⁴⁴ For a description of the building, see catalogue entry 5.

¹⁴⁵ R. Gem, 'St Flannan's oratory at Killaloe: a Romanesque building of c. 1100 and the patronage of king Muirchertach Ua Briain' in D. Bracken and D. Ó Riain-Raedel (eds), *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century. Reform and Renewal* (Dublin, 2006), 74-105.

¹⁴⁶ For a description of the building, see catalogue entry 7.

¹⁴⁷ There is debate as to whether or not this is the original form of the arch, as the projecting jambs are an extremely unusual feature as this church was moved from its original location on Friar's Island in the Shannon 1929. It was restored twice in the nineteenth century while still in its original location.

Kincora, stronghold of high king Muirchertach Ua Briain, a pivotal figure within the twelfth-century reforms and the patron who erected St Flannan's Oratory around the year 1100.¹⁴⁸

The remaining four churches in possession of chancels at the turn of the twelfth century are all located within the monastic town of Glendalough, Wicklow. A stone chancel and sacristy were added onto the earlier single-celled church of St. Kevin's. The coeval nave and chancel church of St. Kieran's also had an attached sacristy, but as at Friar's Island, this was a wooden structure. The two nave and chancel churches at the site which have garnered the most attention, however, are the churches of Trinity [4.45] and Reefert.[4.46] Both are coeval structures, but what sets them apart is the fact that the responds of their arches are set flush against the chancel walls.¹⁴⁹ Both arches are round, plain and devoid of any decoration; not even the impostes which were so frequently found in early chancel arches are part of the composition. Although both chancels are comparable in size, they contain slightly different features.

At Trinity, the chancel is lit by two lancets, one in the south wall and the other set into the centre of the east gable; a small unarticulated aumbry is set into the southern corner of the same wall.¹⁵⁰ At Reefert, a single window in the east gable provides the only light. No aumbry is present in the chancel, though one is placed at the east end of the south nave wall. While this might initially point to an altar location at the east end of the nave, an altar base set flush with the east chancel wall remains *in situ*.

Ó Carragáin has recently made the tantalising suggestion that most of the churches at Glendalough, including the ones described above, were rebuilt around the turn of the twelfth century under the collaborative patronage of Glendalough clerics, the local king Máel Muire Ua Dúnáin and Muirchertach Ua Brian, high king and patron of the two Killaloe churches described above.¹⁵¹ Such an assertion is not entirely surprising, given Muirchertach's role in the advancement of the ecclesiastical reforms of the twelfth century. But neither is it necessary for a single patron to have played a pivotal role in new approaches to ecclesiastical architecture. Each of these three sites can be independently connected with the ecclesiastical reforms

¹⁴⁸ For a discussion of Muirchertach Ua Briain and his role in championing the ecclesiastical reforms of the period, Gem, 'St Flannan's Oratory', 83-86.

¹⁴⁹ See T. O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, who draws particular attention to this fact at p. 83. He also finds it significant that although both chancel arches are round, each church is entered by a more traditional linteled west doorway.

¹⁵⁰ O'Keeffe incorrectly identifies this niche as a piscina at O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 85. It has neither drain nor basin and is clearly an aumbry.

¹⁵¹ Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural Setting of the Mass', 144-5. A fuller discussion can be found in Ó Carragáin, *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland*, 242-53.

underway in the twelfth century. Certainly, the Killaloe churches were under Muirchertach's patronage. The relationship between Waterford and indeed, all of the Hiberno-Norse sees, and the English Church has already been noted. And Glendalough, a powerful early monastic site, was jostling for power and elevation to diocesan status alongside a number of other monasteries during the period. It has already been noted that in the seventh century, both Kildare and Armagh made use of spatial arrangements to convey a sense of allegiance with Rome in a bid for primacy within the Irish Church; Glendalough could easily have employed new architectural forms to convey a similar sense of theological orthodoxy in the twelfth century.

The Architecturally Defined Chancel: Theological Implications

The appearance of the architecturally defined chancel in Ireland can be seen as a physical manifestation of changes in Eucharistic theology which developed over the course of the eleventh century and were made manifest by the first conciliar declaration of Transubstantiation as issued at Lateran IV in 1215.¹⁵² Its appearance has obvious connotations for the performance of the liturgy, as it would have further distanced the celebrant from the main body of the church and provided an elaborated frame for the celebration of the Eucharist. Despite the relatively diminutive status of these early chancels in comparison to their later medieval incarnations, the visual effect would be dramatic. [4.47] In the context of the establishment of a new church hierarchy, the architecturally defined chancel would also have drawn attention to the special status of the clergy as a corporate body. In describing the impact of the reforms on the Irish episcopate as a corporate body, Marie-Therese Flanagan has noted that:

'While synods provided a vehicle of action for the episcopate in the first instance, reform ideology more generally, with its emphasis on a clearer distinction between clergy and laity it would also have highlighted the clergy as a distinct group within society. It is no coincidence that nave and chancel churches, churches which physically separated clergy from laity in the public act of worship, are a feature of twelfth-century Irish ecclesiastical architecture.'¹⁵³

¹⁵² One of the chief proponents of the Real Presence was Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury. Both Lanfranc, and his successor Anselm, were in correspondence with various Irish kings and prelates, including Muirchertach and his father Toirdelbach Ua Briain, although none of these letters make reference to the architectural setting of sacramental administration. A discussion can be found in Chapter 3, 29-31.

¹⁵³ Flanagan, 'Henry II, the Council of Cashel and the Irish Bishops', 204.

One overlooked consequence of the architectural chancel is the creation of two distinct spaces within the church building. As well as providing a separate space for the clergy within the building, the addition would create architecturally distinct space for the layperson: the nave. This is a small distinction, but one that has not been emphasized enough. And it is particularly relevant within the context of the establishment of parochial boundaries which began to take place over the course of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries through the efforts of both the reforming councils and the establishment of an Anglo-Norman lordship.¹⁵⁴ Although steps toward a clear division of boundaries had been taken by the reforming councils, this did not immediately translate to a more local, parochial level. In firmly Anglo-Norman areas, parish boundaries seem to have been established in conjunction with the delineation of manorial lands, while in some Gaelicised areas, parishes may not have appeared until some point in the thirteenth century.¹⁵⁵

In whichever terms one might choose to define it, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries witnessed a concerted effort to reshape society along more clearly distinct hierarchical lines, both within the socio-political and ecclesiastical spheres. The church building itself served as a focal point of this change. Not only did the laity come increasingly into the fold of sacramental administration, but the buildings they would have recognized as symbolic of both religious and secular power were transformed within a rapid period of time.

Just as the chancel served to highlight the status of the clergy as a distinct group within society, the nave highlighted the status and collective identity of lay congregations. Beginning in the thirteenth century, the laity were given the responsibility for the financial upkeep, maintenance and elaboration of the nave within their parish churches, and it can be inferred that, as was often the case, some variation of this practice had been in place prior to the

¹⁵⁴ Both the topics of sacramental administration in the early Irish church and the formation of parochial boundaries are matters of intense debate, and a full treatment of the subject is outside the scope of the present thesis. Some, but certainly not all, of the important works on this topic include A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'Parochial development in the rural deanery of Skreen' in *JRSAl*, 94 (1964), 11-22; K. Nicholls, 'Rectory, vicarage and parish in the western Irish diocese' in *JRSAl*, 101 (1971), 53-84; S. Ní Ghabhláin, 'The origin of medieval parishes in Gaelic Ireland: the evidence from Kilfenora' in *JRSAl*, 126 (1996), 37-61; and more recently A. Empey, 'The Origins of the Medieval Parish Revisited' in H. Clarke and J. R. S. Phillips (eds), *Ireland, England and the Continent in the Middle Ages and Beyond: Essays in Memory of a Turbulent Friar, F. X. Martin, O.S.A.* (Dublin, 2006), 29-60. The role of architecture and building programmes in determining the creation of parochial boundaries has come to the fore in recent years. This approach is taken by Michael O'Neill, 'The Medieval Parish Churches in County Meath' in *JRSAl*, 132 (2002), 1-56; Ó Carragáin, 'Church buildings and pastoral care', T. O'Keefe, 'The built environment of local community worship', and S. Ní Ghabhláin, 'Late twelfth century church construction: evidence of parish formation?' in E. Fitzpatrick and R. Gillespie (eds), *The Parish in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), 147-67. This volume, edited by FitzPatrick and Gillespie, provides a good overview of the nature of the parochial problem in general, along with examples of various architectural approaches.

¹⁵⁵ Parish formation in the diocese of Killaloe will be more fully discussed in the next chapter.

issuance of any formal decrees.¹⁵⁶ The diocesan statutes for Salisbury (1217-1219) were the first to deal specifically with the fabric of the English church.¹⁵⁷ The Winchester Statutes of 1224 were the first to require specifically that the parishioners provide for the upkeep of the nave.¹⁵⁸ The division of responsibility between the clergy (for the upkeep and ornaments of the chancel) and the laity (for the upkeep and ornaments of the nave) quickly become more specific so that the Salisbury Statutes of 1228-1256 stipulated that the parishioners must provide for the following exhaustive list of items: a roof and tower, bells and bell cords, the crucifix, crosses, images, a silver chalice, a missal, a silk chasuble, books, altar cloths, a font with the appropriate covering, a funerary bell and litter, all candles, and unconsecrated bread to be distributed after Sunday mass.¹⁵⁹ Similar arrangement for financial responsibility of the church were also in place in Ireland from the thirteenth century.¹⁶⁰ Although such requirements would certainly have created a significant financial burden for the laity, the imposition of such responsibility might have engendered in the laity a sense of allegiance to, and perhaps even a sense of ownership over, the church within their parochial boundaries.¹⁶¹ The increase throughout the middle ages in bespoke liturgy, private masses and chantry chapels, along with the rise in lay piety stand as a testament to the enthusiasm with which the laity were to embrace this responsibility.

Sarum Use and the Ecclesiastical Architecture of Anglo-Norman Ireland

The coming of the Anglo-Normans was to have a tremendous influence on Irish church architecture, as colonizing lords become patrons of numerous churches and monasteries, importing decidedly English styles and masons. One might look to the Norman invasion of England for some indication of the effect their coming would have had on Irish ecclesiastical architecture. As Eric Fernie has pointed out: 'no English cathedral retains any standing masonry of Anglo-Saxon date. One could hardly wish for a more emphatic statement than

¹⁵⁶ For a discussion of the following statutes and the increasing responsibility of the parishioner in the thirteenth century, see Davidson, 'Written in Stone', 108-126.

¹⁵⁷ Powicke and Cheney (eds), *Councils and Synods*, 82, c. 68.

¹⁵⁸ Powicke and Cheney (eds), *Councils and Synods*, 128, c. 11.

¹⁵⁹ Powicke and Cheney (eds), *Councils and Synods*, 512-13, c. 8.

¹⁶⁰ A full discussion of Irish statutes giving the financial responsibility of the church fabric can be found at 56-58.

¹⁶¹ It cannot be assumed, however, that such a financial imposition would have gone uncontested. In a study on tithing, Giles Constable has found that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, documented resistance to the payment of tithes usually stemmed from specific circumstances as opposed to an objection to the principal of tithing itself. As recorded in a charter of the archbishopric of Trier in 1154, the parishioners vehemently opposed the requirement to provide for the 'ordering and furnishing' of their church in Briddel, which they considered to be a 'second tithe after the better one'. See G. Constable, 'Resistance to Tithes in the Middle Ages' in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XIII:2 (1962), 172-83, at 179-80.

this of the imposition of one culture on another.¹⁶² Though native Irish structures survive to a much greater extent than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts, such extensive rebuilding does give some indication of the importance the Anglo-Normans attached to creating a landscape which clearly reflected not only their lordship over a country, but their sense of what was appropriate and essential for the conduct of the Christian office.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the importation of the Sarum Use, the specific body of customs associated with Salisbury Cathedral, was to be one of the significant consequences of the Anglo-Norman colonisation on the Irish Church. As the normative liturgical practice of the English Church, its adoption in Ireland can be viewed as a clear indication that the Irish Church was intended to be brought fully within the sphere of the English Church, in both political and liturgical aspects. This new liturgical practice was clearly reflected in the new ecclesiastical architecture erected by the Anglo-Normans.

One of the best examples of the effect of the Sarum Use on Irish architecture can be seen on the west façades of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, and St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny. The two largest cathedral churches in medieval Ireland, both were erected by the Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical hierarchy in solidly colonized urban centres. Design elements present in the west façade of both cathedrals can be clearly related to liturgical rites as recorded in the Sarum Use.

The Sarum Use included a number of very dramatic processions, one of the most elaborate taking place on Palm Sunday.¹⁶³ While a number of surviving Sarum manuscripts provide a description of the processions, there is some disagreement as to the exact locations of the stations.¹⁶⁴ What is agreed upon is that the procession would begin after Tierce or Sext, where the officiating priest would be assisted by a deacon, a sub-deacon carrying a text of the gospel, a thurifer, two taperers, an acolyte carrying a cross, and two boys, one to carry the salt and water, and the other to hold the book the priest read from. After the sprinkling of the congregation and High Altar with Holy Water, branches were blessed and distributed and the procession began to move to the first station, located outside at the edge of a lay cemetery.

¹⁶² Eric Fernie, *Romanesque Architecture: Design, Meaning and Metrology* (London, 1995), see especially chapter IV, 'The Effect of the Conquest on Norman Architectural Patronage', 41-55.

¹⁶³ The description of the Palm Sunday procession which follows is derived Bailey's analysis of the most complete Processional in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Rawl. Liturgy. D 4. This fifteenth-century manuscript was in the possession of The Church of St John the Evangelist, Dublin. Terrence Bailey, *The Processions of Sarum and the Western Church* (Toronto, 1971), 16-18.

¹⁶⁴ See the confusion as to their locations as evidenced by Nigel Davidson, 'So Which Way Round Did They Go? The Palm Sunday Procession at Salisbury' in *Music and Letters*, LXI:1 (1980), 1-14. The processions of the Sarum Use are well known, and the Palm Sunday procession has been given particular attention due to its highly theatrical nature. In addition to Bailey, *The Processions of Sarum*, and Davidson, 'Which Way Round Did They Go?' see the authoritative work on the Sarum Use by Frere, *The Use of Sarum*.

While the gospel was read, the first procession would be joined by a second, sub-procession. Singing Litanies, psalms and antiphons, the company would process to two, or possibly three, stations around the exterior of the building, pausing finally at the Rood Screen for the final station before the commencement of the High Mass.

The location of the middle stations is unclear. This is most probably because the original processional route was designed for use in the original of Old Sarum, and adapted when the cathedral was reconstructed with an expanded and altered ground plan at Salisbury in the early thirteenth century.¹⁶⁵ An early source gives their precise location at the south side of the church, but later manuscripts are vague.¹⁶⁶ It is clear, however, that one of the stations “is made outside . . . where seven boys in a high place together sing the antiphon: *Gloria, laus et honor.*”¹⁶⁷ One very persuasive explanation for the confusion surrounding the stations is that when the new cathedral was built, the second and third stations were merged into one, located at or near the west door.¹⁶⁸ This solution would seem to be corroborated by the architectural evidence, for not only at Salisbury, but at Wells Cathedral, St. Patrick’s, Dublin, and St. Canice’s, Kilkenny, the west fronts seem specifically designed for the singing of antiphons from a high place. All four buildings were completed by about the middle of the thirteenth century, by which time all were also employing the liturgical practice outlined in the Sarum Use.¹⁶⁹

St Patrick’s Cathedral was founded as a collegiate church by John Comyn in 1191, and construction of the building began sometime between 1220 and 1225.¹⁷⁰ Although early nineteenth-century restoration work has changed the appearance of the west front, the

¹⁶⁵ On the origins and development of the Sarum Use, see Baxter, *Sarum Use*. On the processional route as practiced at Old Sarum, see W. Hope, ‘The Sarum Consuetudinary and its relation to the Cathedral Church of Old Sarum’ in *Archaeologica*, LXVIII:2 (1917), 11-126.

¹⁶⁶ The processional route and identified stations indicated in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century manuscripts differ from those found in the later sources. See Davidson, ‘So Which Way Round Did They Go’; Bailey, *The Processions of Sarum*, and Frere, *The Use of Sarum*.

¹⁶⁷ From the 1508 Processional as given in W.G. Henderson (ed.), *Processionale ad Usam Sarum* (Leeds, 1882), 51-52 as quoted in Pamela Blum, ‘Liturgical Influences on the Design of the West Front at Wells and Salisbury’ in *Gesta*, xxv:1 (1986), 145-150.

¹⁶⁸ For a discussion of the second Palm Sunday station and its architectural setting, see Blum, ‘Liturgical Influences’.

¹⁶⁹ The earliest surviving copy of Wells customs, dated to the early thirteenth century, is drawn entirely from Sarum sources. See Frere, *Use of Sarum*, I:xxxii.

¹⁷⁰ On the history and architecture of the cathedral, see M. O’Neill, ‘St Patrick’s Cathedral in Dublin and its place in the history of Irish Medieval Architecture’ (PhD. thesis, 2 vols, Trinity College Dublin, 1995) and M. O’Neill, ‘The Architectural History of the Medieval Cathedral’ in J. Crawford and R. Gillespie (eds), *St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin. A History* (Dublin, 2009), 96-119. From its inception, the Sarum Use was employed at the Cathedral, and one of the earliest complete Sarum Manuscripts, the Dublin Troper (University of Cambridge Add. MS. 710), hails from St. Patrick’s.

character of the original design can be seen from earlier drawings.¹⁷¹ [4.48] An entrance portal surrounded by a pointed arch was originally supported on each side by an engaged colonette. The west window was divided into five lights by mullions; then divided again into three rows by transoms at half and three-quarters height. Between the doorway and the west window ran a frieze with eight quatrefoils. As is visible on early plans of the church, the southern turret contained a small stairwell providing access to the gallery.

The original composition of the west façade of St. Canice's Cathedral is still visible despite having undergone restoration around the same time.¹⁷² [4.49] The Kilkenny west door dates to about 1260, and is comprised of a pointed arch enclosing two cusped portals. The spandrel is decorated with foliage bosses and angels within decorative quatrefoils. As at St. Patrick's, a small frieze, here with three openings, stands above the doorway lighting a small interior gallery. [4.50] The gallery is quite small, and would likely only accommodate three or four small choristers. The doorway at Kilkenny is clearly derived from that of Wells Cathedral, carved about forty years earlier.¹⁷³ [4.51] Though the composition is slightly different, Wells also possesses two portals within a pointed arch, above which four small quatrefoils opened to the exterior. Here, too, runs an interior passage above the central portal.

A similar arrangement was originally found on the west façade of Salisbury Cathedral, constructed between 1220 and 1265, [4.52] where eight small quatrefoils originally opened from an interior gallery. [4.53] As Pamela Blum has shown, the openings above the western entrances at Salisbury and Wells were clearly designed and conceived with the practice of the liturgy in mind.¹⁷⁴ As the procession arrived at the final exterior station, the choristers would be able to sing the *Gloria* from inside the gallery so that the voices would seem to ring out from the building itself. And indeed, the Palm Sunday ritual as celebrated at Salisbury was similarly practiced at St. Patrick's, as can be seen by tracing the processional path and its stations at the Dublin cathedral. [4.54]

¹⁷¹ The Cathedral underwent a number of restorations in the nineteenth century; the west front was rebuilt in the 1830s. See M. O'Neill, 'Nineteenth century architectural restorations' in J. Crawford and R. Gillespie (eds), *St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. A History* (Dublin, 2009), 328-352. On drawings of the original west front, see M. O'Neill, 'St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin', I.101-2, and II, plate 10.

¹⁷² St Canice's was restored in 1844-67. See N. Lynas, 'The restoration of St Canice's cathedral 1844-67 under Dean Vignoles' in J. Kirwan (ed.), *Kilkenny. Studies in honour of Margaret M. Phelan* (Kilkenny, 1997). On the west front, see Siuban Barry, 'The Architecture of the Cathedral' in A. Empey (ed.), *A Worthy Foundation: The Cathedral Church of St Canice, Kilkenny 1285-1985* (Kilkenny, 1985), 25-48, where she takes particular note of the similarities between Kilkenny and Wells.

¹⁷³ On the architecture of Wells Cathedral, see N. Pevsner, 'Wells' in *North Somerset and Bristol* (Harmondsworth, 1958), 284-285.

¹⁷⁴ The solution to the problematic location of the second station is presented in Blum, 'Liturgical Influences', who convincingly argues that the internal galleries found on the west ends of Salisbury and Wells Cathedrals were specifically designed to accommodate the boy choristers singing the *Gloria* antiphon.

It should not be at all surprising to see the same arrangement employed in the design of St. Patrick's and St. Canice's, which were founded under the first Anglo-Norman episcopate and employed the Sarum Use from the outset. Both served as concrete symbols of the Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical regime, and as an assertion of Anglo-Norman political power. As such, the direct imitation of cathedral design as displayed at both Salisbury Cathedral and Wells Cathedral sends a clear message of unity not only in liturgical practice, but of the new ecclesiastical hierarchy.¹⁷⁵

While it is clear that the Anglo-Normans went to great lengths to institute the use of new liturgical practices and architectural styles in these two cathedrals, there is no clear understanding of how this may have influenced smaller cathedrals or even parish churches. The discussion of liturgical *acta* in the previous chapter has shown that, in the Anglo-Norman dioceses at least, synods and councils were concerned with maintaining not only the economic integrity of the diocesan network but ensuring that liturgical practices were properly observed in parish churches. A lack of parochial service books surviving in areas outside of Dublin makes any understanding of the degree to which the Sarum Use was employed in parish churches outside the city uncertain.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, there is no conclusive evidence of how or when the Sarum Use was adopted in either cathedral or parish churches in areas outside the Anglo-Norman colony. If a demonstrable correlation between rite and architectural design sometimes occurs in the larger cathedral churches, as shown above, then one might also presume to find such a correlation in some parish churches.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Further indication of the evident architectural association between St Patrick's Cathedral and Salisbury has recently been published by Michael O'Neill, who has argued for a direct correspondence in spatial arrangement between St. Patrick's and Old Sarum. See O'Neill, 'The Architectural History of the Medieval Cathedral', 102.

¹⁷⁶ Though surviving service books show that the Sarum Use was in use at the parish churches within the city, particularly at St John the Evangelist. Unfortunately, there are no standing remains of this building which might be analysed for evidence of a demonstrable relationship between spatial arrangements and liturgical usage. On the Sarum service books of Dublin, see Hawkes, 'The Liturgy in Dublin'.

¹⁷⁷ No scholarly work has been published which has investigated the influence of the Sarum Use in cathedrals or parish churches in medieval Ireland. As such, there has been no methodology proposed for how, in the absence of documentary evidence, one might suggest what liturgical rites were enacted in parish churches. As discussed in chapter 1, 15-16, one of the aims of this thesis is to determine the extent to which architecture might inform this investigation.

Later Medieval Parish Church Architecture

There are a variety of approaches to parish church design in high and late medieval Ireland. As a general rule, the most architecturally complex churches are to be found in areas where Anglo-Norman control, both politically and ecclesiastically, was strongest. In substance, this refers to the success of the administrative apparatus in securing ecclesiastical appointments and ensuring the successful collection and distribution of tithes. In an important study of parish churches in late medieval England, Pamela Graves has argued that the ability of the Church to ensure common liturgical practices and theological orthodoxy at the parochial level was also dependant on that administrative hierarchy.¹⁷⁸ As episcopal power varied, so too did the ability to ensure uniformity in liturgical practices and doctrinal teachings at the local level.

Her findings indicate that in areas of strong episcopal control, such as Devon, parish churches exhibited surprising uniformity in the placement and design of screens, lofts and furnishings in order to restrict lay access to the altar and enhance the sense of mystery surrounding the Eucharistic rite. The combined effect reflected not only arrangements at Exeter Cathedral but its theological and political priorities: the elaboration of the Eucharistic liturgies and an emphasis on the sacred role of the priestly class which performed the ceremony. In Norfolk, where Norwich Cathedral was less able to promote a strong episcopal agenda, internal arrangements within parish churches were instead more reflective of local social hierarchies and the desire of the laity to have more extensive visual and physical access to the clergy and altar during the ceremony.¹⁷⁹

Michael O'Neill has highlighted a demonstrable architectural relationship between St Patrick's Cathedral and its prebendal churches, particularly evident from the late fourteenth century, in the transmission of window tracery forms.¹⁸⁰ The fact that these churches were deriving design elements from the cathedral is a clear indication that the responsibility laid upon the chapter in 1304 for the upkeep of prebendal churches was taken seriously.¹⁸¹ In addition to fabric maintenance, the same decree stated that the dean and chapter were to ensure all prebendal churches and dependant chapels had the requisite ornaments, liturgical books and

¹⁷⁸ P. Graves, *The Form and Fabric of Belief. An Archaeology of the Lay Experience of Religion in Medieval Norfolk and Devon* (Oxford, 2000).

¹⁷⁹ P. Graves, *Form and Fabric of Belief*, see particularly 156-57 for a summary of this conclusion.

¹⁸⁰ M. O'Neill, 'St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, and its Prebendal Churches: Gothic Architectural Relationships' in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin V* (Dublin, 2004), 243-276.

¹⁸¹ In 1304, St Patrick's deputed a canon to bring to the attention of the chapter and need for the repair of prebendal churches. For a discussion of financial responsibility for fabric maintenance at parish churches, 56-58.

(presumably properly educated) ministers, suggesting that St Patrick's was able to maintain a degree of control over liturgical practices and the dissemination of orthodox belief in lesser churches within its remit.

In Graves' study, the distinction which emerges is one of lay control over the arrangement of their parish church, and the degree to which they were able to influence spatial arrangements to maximise both visual and physical access to the Eucharistic liturgies. Lay concern for such access can be seen as a direct result of the programme of uniform sacramental administration ushered in by the proclamations of Lateran IV.¹⁸² One result of this heightened sense of mystery surrounding the Eucharistic rituals was the introduction of screens into both large and small churches. In light of the varied manifestations of Eucharist devotion which evolved from the thirteenth century, the introduction of such a structure may seem odd. A description of the role of the parish church screen by Eamon Duffy encapsulates the variety of functions this feature served:

‘The screen itself was both a barrier and no barrier. It was not a wall but rather a set of windows, a frame for the liturgical drama, solid only to waist-height, pierced by a door wide enough for ministers and choir to pass through and which the laity themselves might penetrate on certain occasions, for example, when, as at Eye on festivals, they gathered with torches to honour the sacrament, and in processions like the Candlemas one and the ceremonies and watching associated with the Easter sepulchre. Even the screen's most solid section, the dado, might itself be pierced with elevation squints, to allow the laity to pass visually into the sanctuary at the sacring. This penetration was a two-way process: if the laity sometimes passed through the screen to the mystery, the mystery sometimes moved out to meet them. Each Mass was framed within a series of ritual moments at which the minister, often carrying sacred objects, such as the Host itself at Easter, or on ordinary Sundays, Gospel texts, the paxbread, or sacramentals like holy water or holy bread, passed out of the sanctuary into the body of the church.’¹⁸³

The screen stood in a liminal place, demarcating the ritual area of the chancel from the congregational area of the nave. It was a permeable barrier, both visually and physically, which

¹⁸² For a discussion of the Lateran Decrees and their relevance to issues of sacramental administration, see Tanner, ‘Pastoral Care’.

¹⁸³ E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (London, 1992), 112. For a discussion of Eucharistic rituals that took place within later medieval English parish churches, see his discussion of the Mass at pp 91-130.

served to highlight the ritual actions which took place within both the nave and chancel of the church.¹⁸⁴

As discussed earlier in this chapter, there is evidence for the presence of some sort of screen or chancel barrier in Irish churches from the early middle ages. But there is no evidence that their presence was widespread and they were most likely to be found only in the larger and more important churches; the fact that they could have been present in even the smallest churches does not suggest that they necessarily were. Where such barriers were present, it is likely that they were constructed of waist-high walls constructed of posts and panels surrounding the altar and choir area. The later medieval screen, a deep structure spanning the width of the nave, was not a common feature of larger cathedral or collegiate churches in England and the Continent until the early thirteenth century, though they first begin to appear at some point in the twelfth century.¹⁸⁵ The form of the Romanesque screen from Ely Cathedral, England, for example, is known through antiquarian drawings.¹⁸⁶ [4. 55]

While there are a number of common screen types, larger English (and presumably Irish) churches frequently employed a partitioning screen, similar in form to the Ely Cathedral screen.¹⁸⁷ This can be described as a structurally solid wall-like feature, pierced with one or more doorways, and heavily decorated with sculpture, niches and baldachins, as is the case in the Exeter Cathedral screen dated to the early fourteenth century.¹⁸⁸ [4.56] In some cases, treatment of screens strongly resembled that of the west façade of a building.¹⁸⁹ The composition of the central portal within partitioning screen installed in Naumberg Cathedral, Germany ca. 1250 [4.57], with its double opening surmounted by a quatrefoil, is not dissimilar to that of the western doorways at both Wells Cathedral and St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny. Though no screen survives at St Canice's, one similar to the Naumberg example might easily be imagined to have been in place during the thirteenth century.

¹⁸⁴ The function and uses of screens at larger medieval churches are discussed by J. Jung, 'Beyond the Barrier: the Unifying Role of the Choir Screen in Gothic Churches' in *The Art Bulletin*, 82:4 (2000), 622-57 and P. Draper, 'Enclosures and Entrances in Medieval Cathedrals: Access and Security' in J. Backhouse (ed.), *The Medieval English Cathedral. Papers in Honour of Pamela Tudor-Craig* (Harlaxton, 2003), 76-88.

¹⁸⁵ Jung, 'Beyond the Barrier', 624.

¹⁸⁶ Davidson, 'Written in Stone', 187.

¹⁸⁷ A discussion of the evidence for early screens at major English churches can be found in Davidson, 'Written in Stone', 184-92. On the origin and variations of the Gothic choir screen, see Jung, 'Beyond the Barrier', 624.

¹⁸⁸ Bishop Stapleton is credited with the erection of the Exeter screen sometime between 1317 and 1324. See F. Bond, *Screens and Galleries in English Churches* (London, 1908), 155.

¹⁸⁹ For a discussion of the relationship between screen and façade design, see C. Malone, *Façade as Spectacle: Ritual and Ideology at Wells Cathedral* (London, 2004) at 119-30.

The earliest architectural evidence for the presence of a chancel barrier within a major Irish church of pre-Norman foundation can be found at Glendalough Cathedral. This church exhibits multiple phases of construction indicating that a smaller stone church was erected on the site in the late ninth or early tenth century. This was rebuilt at a later date after which a chancel, sacristy and north doorway were inserted. The wide chancel arch is decorated with chevron ornament and filleted rolls contemporary with a heavily moulded north nave doorway, dating its construction to the early thirteenth century.¹⁹⁰ [4.58] The soffit arch terminates on either side at a decorated capital.¹⁹¹ It is clear that engaged shafts would have run from the base of the arch to support these capitals, but neither survives. Perhaps the most significant design aspect of the arch is the projecting plinths set to either side of the chancel steps. Each is comprised of two stones, one set at the level of the nave floor and the other resting above at the level of the first chancel step. The latter of these contains a square rebate into which the base of the engaged pillar would have sat. The lower of the stones projects north and south from the arch towards the side walls of the nave. The western ends of both plinths have openings which served as socket holes into which the base of a chancel screen would have been placed.¹⁹² [4.59] Both openings are of equal shape and size, measuring 0.15m EW x 0.29m NS. Though the width of the screen, just under 8 m wide, can be determined, its height and depth are less certain.

Indications are, however, that the screen would not have resembled the common later medieval partitioning screens as much as the earlier, waist-high post-and-panel barrier. This type of screen was still in use during the high middle ages; one twelfth-century example can be seen in the parish church of the village of Brancoli, Tuscany.¹⁹³ [4.60] Although the responds of the Glendalough arch are plain and undecorated, suggesting perhaps that the screen rose to the height of the chamfered imposts, this is unlikely. There are no holes or sockets higher on the nave face of the arch to suggest that any frame or structure was attached to this face of the wall. Neither is there any indication that an upper part of the screen was attached to the interior of the arch. The now missing square columns may have contained some sort of socket or post, but this is extremely unlikely once it is realised that these columns would have set

¹⁹⁰ O’Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 241-2, suggests a late twelfth century date, but the mouldings of the contemporary north doorway, comprised of multiple filleted rolls, place it firmly within the thirteenth century. For a discussion of building phases at the cathedral, see C. Manning, ‘A Puzzle in Stone: the Cathedral at Glendalough’ in *Archaeology Ireland*, 16:2 (2002), 18-21 who dates the chancel arch to *ca.* 1200.

¹⁹¹ The northernmost of these capitals is decorated with fluted scallops, while the southernmost is plain and undecorated. The former is likely original and in keeping with the stylistic programme of the arch, suggesting that the latter is a replacement.

¹⁹² This function was first proposed by Leask in his guidebook to the site. See H. Leask, *Glendalough, Co. Wicklow* (Dublin, 1950), 27.

¹⁹³ This twelfth-century screen was partly reconstructed in the twentieth century. See Kroesen and Steensma, *Interior of the Medieval Village Church*, 174.

directly in the middle of the chancel step making such an arrangement awkward. [4.61] In the absence of any other evidence, a waist high post-and-panel barrier, similar in design to the early medieval examples discussed above, seems most likely. Though the overall composition of the chancel arch at Compton, Surrey, England is different, it dates to the late twelfth century, as does the wooden balcony railing set above. [4.62] Here, the chancel railing dates to the seventeenth century, but almost certainly replaces a similar medieval barrier.¹⁹⁴ A comparable arrangement of arch and chancel railing is likely to have been present at Glendalough Cathedral in the early thirteenth century.

But at what date might we expect to find screens to have been commonly installed within parish churches? Davidson has posed the same question in regard to smaller English parish churches and concluded:

‘... in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, screens were desirable and indeed usual, in larger churches, but that it was only in the fourteenth century that they came to be seen as a necessity for very small churches.... Screens are very much a part of later medieval attitudes towards the mass....’¹⁹⁵

Here, Davidson argues that the arch through which the chancel is entered served as a barrier of symbolic import comparable to that of the waist high walls found in larger churches. This argument is also put forward in a survey of interior arrangements at smaller medieval churches throughout Europe.¹⁹⁶ The argument is based upon the premise that the often elaborate sculptural decoration and mouldings found on a large proportion of twelfth and thirteenth-century arches is indicative of their prominence within the decorative scheme of the church and representative of their function as symbolic barriers between chancel and nave.¹⁹⁷ The lack of any barrier is further suggested by the relatively narrow width of many early chancel arches; by the fourteenth and fifteenth-centuries, arches tend to be taller, wider and less heavily ornamented.

This lessening of emphasis on the arch, and the dividing wall in which it stood, becomes common at the same time that large partitioning screens appear in parish churches. In fact, Davidson notes a striking pattern of chancel reconstructions at minor churches in the early

¹⁹⁴ Though here, the barrier is set inside the chancel arch. On the arrangements at Compton see Bond, *Screens and Galleries*, 87 and Davidson, ‘Written in Stone’, 185.

¹⁹⁵ Davidson, ‘Written in Stone’, 193.

¹⁹⁶ Kroesen and Steensma, *Interior of the Medieval Village Church*, 174, where they describe dividing wall pierced by an arch as one common threshold marker which required no other screen or barrier.

¹⁹⁷ Her argument can be found at Davidson, ‘Written in Stone’, 189-91.

fourteenth century: chancels were widened and lengthened, arches were enlarged and screens installed. Davidson further argues that the later medieval plan variation, with no dividing wall or arch, can be seen as an 'extreme manifestation' of the reduction of emphasis on the arch itself, though this in no way indicates that the nave/chancel distinction was less relevant. It was simply created by a different means: a large wooden partition screen dividing the body of the church.

Whether placed in an undivided or nave and chancel church, this type of screen took a common form from the thirteenth century: a base comprised of dado panels, sometimes painted or embellished with iconographic imagery, while the upper portion of the screen was decorated with wooden tracery. The decoration of the base can be seen as a continuation of the tradition of decorating early medieval cancelli panels, as can be seen at St Clemente, Rome. [4.63] The mid thirteenth-century examples at Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire, [4.64] and Kirkstead, Lincolnshire, [4.65] are the earliest examples of English parish church screens.¹⁹⁸ The fifteenth-century example from Bridford, Devon, shows that this form of screen remained popular throughout the middle ages.¹⁹⁹ [4.66]

Modifications in the design of the arch then, were directly related to a change in design of chancels in the later middle ages, chancels were in turn altered in response to new Eucharistic practices. Paul Barnwell has described the process as follows:

'... emphasis came to be placed on the ability of the congregation to see the host ... at the moment of consecration. This gave rise to what to become the vitally important ritual of the elevation of the host, with attendant ceremonies, including its illumination by lights held by torch bearers for whom space had to be found in the chancel. The consequence was that, while the physical separation of the generality of the laity had to be maintained, more space was needed west of the altar, and the whole areas had to be opened up to enable those in the nave to see into the chancel. What had until the mid-twelfth century often been relatively narrow chancel arches were gradually superseded by wider ones, and the altar was pushed to the far east end of the chancel both to create the necessary space to its west, and also to allow the elevated host to be seen against the backdrop of a reredos or of a decorated east window. It was largely these

¹⁹⁸ Davidson, 'Written in Stone', 191. Note however that the screen at Stanton Harcourt was altered in the later middle ages when cutaways were inserted into the top of the dado panels to allow kneeling congregants a view of the elevation of the host.

¹⁹⁹ Kroesen and Steensma, *The Interior of the Medieval Village Church*, 190. Though similar screen types were found throughout England, there are marked regional variations in their treatment. For a discussion of these regional variations, see Bond, *Screens and Galleries*, 48-69.

factors which led to the lengthening, sometimes also the widening, of chancels in the thirteenth and subsequent centuries . . .²⁰⁰

While early chancels tended to be narrower than the nave to which they were attached, by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they were gradually rebuilt to the same width as the nave. The arch, as well, grew to span the width of the building to allow for maximum visibility in to the chancel. This process first began at larger churches in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century; the rebuilding of smaller parish churches did not begin in earnest until the early fourteenth century.

The delayed architectural reaction of smaller sites is noteworthy; but it cannot be assumed that the congregations of these churches had less of a desire to see and access the Host. Instead, it is much more likely that limited access to funds hampered large-scale building projects. The architectural development of Ingworth parish church, Norfolk, reflects just such a circumstance.²⁰¹ [4.67]

The sequence of early medieval building phases remains unclear, but it is evident that the initial stone church was constructed at some point in the early eleventh century and consisted of a nave, chancel and attached western round tower. Though the tower is now truncated to a single story, blocked doorways in the west nave wall show that it once led to a western gallery. This is significant, as it indicates that the early foundation was monastic: Klukas has argued that western galleries were inserted in Anglo-Saxon monastic buildings to accommodate liturgical requirements of the tenth-century *Regularis concordia*, a set of customs imposed on all monastic houses in England by the Council of Winchester *ca.* 970.²⁰²

While extant chancel windows were enlarged in the early thirteenth century, significant alterations to the building did not take place until the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. It was at this point that a large rood with a loft was inserted, the nave was extended to the

²⁰⁰ In the same argument, Barnwell contends that this was also the reason for the removal of the apse from many churches. See Barnwell, 'Churches Built for Priests?', 19.

²⁰¹ The following discussion of Ingworth is taken from Graves, *The Form and Fabric of Belief*, 82-6.

²⁰² The institution of the *Regularis concordia* was a product of the tenth-century reformation in England, whose impetus was the Carolingian reforms on the continent; widespread constancy in the performance of liturgical rites was one aspect of this movement. A number of the rubrics in the *Regularis concordia* require specific architectural arrangements for their enactment and, as such, it is often easy to identify early monastic sites which would have followed this Rule. It was widely influential in England until the early thirteenth century when reforming councils of the Benedictines made it obsolete. There is no evidence that the *Regularis concordia* was ever adopted in Ireland. For a discussion of the *Regularis concordia* and its architectural impact, see Klukas, 'Liturgy and Architecture'. This and other Anglo-Saxon architectural responses to liturgical change are also discussed in Gittos, 'Sacred Space in Anglo-Saxon England'.

south and a two-storey porch was added to the exterior of the south doorway.²⁰³ [4.68] Graves has argued that the enlargement of the chancel windows can be seen as a direct reflection of the heightened sanctity of the Eucharistic rite as promulgated by Lateran IV. She has also proposed, quite convincingly, that the lighting offered by the thirteenth-century windows indicates that the altar had not yet moved flush with the east wall, but remained in the centre of the chancel.²⁰⁴ [4.69] As there was no change made to the chancel arrangements at this time, other than increased lighting, it would seem that the edicts issued by Lateran IV did not have a substantial impact on the architecture of the church. Instead, any heightened sense of mystery surrounding the Eucharist would have been created by ritualistic performance on the part of the priest: 'The distance placed between priest and laity, and the treatment accorded the bread at and after the moment of consecration were the principal means of conveying the sacral nature of the priesthood and the presence of Christ in the bread'.²⁰⁵ At Ingworth, it would seem that the significant changes to the plan of the building were brought about in the late middle ages as a result of lay patronage. Until that point, the rectory was divided amongst four lordships, each with its own rector who took turns celebrating the mass and offices. It was not until the early fifteenth century that local lordship patterns changed, and the moieties of the manor were united to a Sir Simon Felbrigg, under whose patronage the church was expanded.

This discussion of Ingworth has highlighted two important facts which relate to the discussion of Irish parish churches. Firstly, a large proportion of churches which came to serve as parochial centres were initially constructed to suit the needs of a monastic congregation. Secondly, the ability of these churches to adapt their plan and layout to the needs of a lay congregation was dependant on access to financial resources; as was the case at Ingworth, lay patrons were often the only source of such revenues.

²⁰³ The presence of a rood loft is evidenced by a blocked doorway high up in the nave wall. It is interesting to note that no aisle was added to the church, the south wall was simply extended.

²⁰⁴ Window placement has been used by a number of authors as an indication of altar placement. See, for example, Morris, *Churches in the Landscape*, 296-301. T. Ó Carragáin has used window placement to argue for a more central altar location within the early Irish church, see Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural Setting of the Mass'.

²⁰⁵ Graves, *The Form and Fabric of Belief*, 84.

The Parish Church Chancel

Suggesting a prospective morphology of Irish parish churches is somewhat more complex. The difficulty arises, in part, from the fact that it is impossible to know the point at which many sites were accorded parochial status. The earliest list of parish churches compiled during the middle ages is the 1303 Taxation.²⁰⁶ A large proportion of the sites listed were built before the fourteenth century, many to serve a monastic community. Monastic churches may have had different architectural requirements; for example, the need for arches and screens allowing for visibility from the nave to the chancel may have been quite different in churches which served primarily lay or monastic congregations.

Adding a further layer of complexity is the fact that few thirteenth- or fourteenth-century parish church chancels can be conclusively identified.²⁰⁷ This problem is not confined to chancels, however: as a number of scholars have noted, there are grave difficulties in dating later thirteenth and earlier fourteenth-century architectural forms.²⁰⁸ This may be because a large number of not only ecclesiastical, but also secular, buildings were constructed of wood in the early thirteenth century. Although many of these structures were re-erected in stone during the later middle ages, the lack of any identified chronological sequence of architectural style over the course of the period makes dating contentious. As noted, Irish churches throughout the country underwent a great deal of rebuilding and refurbishment in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; this often included alteration and enlargement of the chancel making the form of earlier phases architecturally indiscernible.²⁰⁹ It would seem that in a large number of cases, a substantial rebuilding was completed and the dividing wall and arch were done away with completely creating a long, rectangular single-celled building.²¹⁰ With these caveats in mind, a brief discussion of the chancels in two thirteenth-century parish churches, one located within the eastern Anglo-Norman colony and the other in the Gaelic west, will prove useful.

²⁰⁶ For a discussion of the 1303 Taxation, see Chapter 5.

²⁰⁷ Michael O'Neill raises this point in his discussion of Meath parish churches. Adrian Empey has suggested that initial Anglo-Norman manorial parish churches were first constructed in wood, only later to be replaced by stone buildings. It has been suggested that this is the case with secular building as well: the first incursion of Anglo-Norman settlement was characterised by the construction of mottes and wooden baileys, which were later replaced by stone hall and tower houses. See M. O'Neill, 'The Medieval Parish Churches in Country Meath' in *JRSAl*, 132 (2002), 1-56; A. Empey, 'The layperson in the parish: the medieval inheritance, 1169-1536' in R. Gillespie and W.G. Neely (eds), *The Laity and The Church of Ireland, 1000-2000* (Dublin, 2002), 7-48; T. McNeill, *Castles in Ireland* (London, 1997) and D. Sweetman, *The Medieval Castles of Ireland* (Cork, 1999).

²⁰⁸ The difficulty in dating works of this period was first discussed in Stalley, 'Irish Gothic and English Fashion'.

²⁰⁹ This rebuilding has often been connected with the decrees issued by the ecclesiastical Synod of Cashel in 1453 as discussed at 53-55.

²¹⁰ Evidence for the morphology of parish churches in the later middle ages will be discussed presently, see 118-22.

Cannistown, Meath, was an early monastic site adapted to serve as a parish centre when the de Angulo family established a manor at nearby Ardsallagh in the early thirteenth century.²¹¹ The first stone church, consisting of a nave and chancel, was erected at this time. Major alterations to the church were made in the fifteenth century when the nave was replaced but the thirteenth-century chancel arrangements remained substantially unchanged. The chancel measures 7.32 m EW x 4.56 m NS and was entered through a door in the south chancel wall. This narrow doorway was topped by a pointed arch which has been incorrectly restored in the modern period as is evidenced by the insertion of a cusped window light, complete with glazing rebate, into the east end of the arch. [4.70] The chancel was lit by three windows: one tall pointed lancet on each of the side walls and a twin-light east window which no longer remains.²¹² Directly east of the south window is an interesting bracket piscina set into a pointed arch. [4.71] Directly east of the north window is a curious pointed niche; [4.72] the eastern half is heavily broken away, but over all form and composition can still be gathered from the cut stone remaining on the western side. Here, the opening of the niche was formed of a rebated, pointed arch. A slot for the insertion of a wooden shelf can still be seen on the western rebate, and the niche most likely served as an aumbry.²¹³

The chancel was separated from the nave by means of a semi-circular chancel arch. [4.73] The arch is heavily moulded with hollows and filleted rolls; a similarly moulded hood springing from blocks carved with human and animal figures surrounds it. The carvings are now quite worn, but were identified by Du Noyer in 1867 as depicting an otter hunt and the last supper.²¹⁴ [4.74] The arch itself springs from Early English foliate capitals which descend into three-quarter rolls down the piers of the arch. Though the base of the arch is no longer visible due to a rise in ground level, Crawford notes that the arch had no bases; instead the mouldings simply died out about three inches above the ground level.²¹⁵ Situated above the arch are two corbels which would have supported a large rood beam. These too are decorated; the southern

²¹¹ The history and architecture of Cannistown which follows is heavily drawn from that given in H. Crawford, 'Cannistown Church, County Meath' in *JRSAI*, 51 (1921), 125-32. Though the church still stands, it has undergone restoration and repointing work so that a number of features described by Crawford, such as the east windows, are no longer visible.

²¹² The centre of the east gable is entirely broken away, but the form of the window was recorded by Crawford and is visible on his plan of the building.

²¹³ The arch is heavily broken away, and the stonework on the west side gives the impression that the arch may have been set into a rectangular embrasure. A more complex architectural treatment of the niche, combined with its position on the north wall, might suggest its function as a sacrament house but these were not architectural features of church architecture until the middle of the fourteenth century. On the liturgical background and usage of such a niche, see P. Sheingorn, *The Easter Sepulchre in England* (Kalamzoo, 1987). For a more concise overview of the architectural forms of the less elaborate sacrament house, see R. Fawcett, *Scottish Medieval Churches: architecture and furnishings* (Stroud, 2002), 258-62.

²¹⁴ Du Noyer described the carvings in his account of original drawings presented to the Royal Irish Academy published in the *PRLA*, 10(1867), p. 91 as quoted in H. Crawford, 'Cannistown Church,' 132.

²¹⁵ Crawford, 'Cannistown Church,' 129.

corbel with a standing figure above three small heads and the northern with a hunting scene.

[4.75]

It would seem then that at Cannistown, the arch was intended to stand alone as a chancel barrier and that no screen was needed. This can be confirmed by the presence of external moulding descending along the responds of the arch; as has been noted, mouldings in such a position are found in early arches which would not have incorporated screens. But the presence of a large rood beam is significant. The carvings on the corbels make it clear that this was contemporary with the arch and while not unknown, roods were not standard features of smaller English parish churches until the later thirteenth century.²¹⁶ It is clear then that the early thirteenth-century church chancel of Cannistown possessed a significant number of architectural features. The clergy had their own entrance to the chancel, which was well lit by the tall lancets and had an elaborate piscina in which to dispose of Eucharist ablutions while the congregation would have viewed the ceremony through an elaborately decorated frame.

The chancel found at the parish church of Noughaval, Clare is considerably different. Little has been written about this church, and less is known about its history. Like Cannistown, it is reputed to have been the site of an early monastic foundation.²¹⁷ Westropp investigated the remains of this church and identified a number of 'ancient' features, including east and south windows whose circular heads were formed of single blocks and cyclopean masonry present at the west end of the nave. Based on these features, he dated Noughaval to the tenth or eleventh century.²¹⁸ Sineád Ní Ghabhláin has more recently conducted a detailed masonry survey of the site; her findings corroborate his suggestion by revealing that portions of the nave are indeed pre-Romanesque in their construction.²¹⁹ Her study found that the church was substantially rebuilt at some point in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century when a chancel was inserted; she further argues that this building programme was directly connected to the elevation of the site to parochial status.²²⁰ The well-known south doorway was inserted

²¹⁶ For the early history of the rood, see C. D. Cragoe, 'Belief and Patronage in the English Parish before 1300: Some Evidence from Roods' in *Journal for the Society of Architectural History Great Britain* 48 (2005), 21-48.

²¹⁷ Thomas Westropp first put this supposition forward based on the existence of a nearby holy well dedicated to St Mogua, to whom the church is also dedicated. But there is no concrete evidence for any religious foundation at the site before the eleventh century and the etymology of the name Noughaval, meaning 'New Church' or 'New Chapel' may point to a later date for its establishment. See T. J. Westropp, 'Notes on the Antiquities around Kilfenora and Lehinch, Co. Clare' *JNMA* 1:1 (1909), 14-29 at .24-26. and A. Swinfen, *Forgotten Stones. Ancient Church Sites of the Burren & Environs* (Dublin, 1992), 99-100.

²¹⁸ Westropp published descriptions of the church at T. Westropp, 'Notes on the Antiquities around Kilfenora and Lehinch, Co. Clare' in *Journal of the North Munster Antiquarian Society* 1:1 (1909), 14-24 at 24-27.

²¹⁹ Ní Ghabhláin, 'Late twelfth-century church construction'. Twelfth-century chancel addition at a number of sites, including Noughaval, is discussed at 155-6. See also S. Ní Ghabhláin, 'Church and Community in Medieval Ireland: the Diocese of Kilfenora' in *JRSAI*, 125 (1995), 61-84.

²²⁰ Ní Ghabhláin, 'Late twelfth-century church construction' and 'Church and Community'.

not long after. This doorway is perhaps one of the most famous of the period; the unusual herringbone chevron found on the arch is an example of the ‘School of the West’ style commonly employed in Clare architecture of the period.²²¹ [4.76]

The church is in a state of dilapidation, and a large portion of the nave has fallen. The walls of the chancel are heavily covered with ivy making the appearance of any architectural features difficult to discern. There is, however, no evidence of any fittings or fixtures nor are any mentioned in the scant literature of the church.²²² The chancel is lit by a single round-headed lancet in the east gable and two windows in the south wall; the easternmost of these is also a single lancet while the westernmost is a late medieval three light quadrangular window. The fact that both have been rebuilt is suggested by the reset masonry beneath the splays and in fact, a blocked single lancet with an external chamfer is visible on the exterior of the south chancel wall just west of the thinner single lancet. [4.77] The eastern light, as previously noted, was identified as ‘ancient’ by Westropp. While the current overgrowth makes the form of this window difficult to determine, the exterior window head is formed by a curious attachment which comprises an arch carved of a single-stone supported on two corbels. [4.78] The *CRSBI* has also noted the presence of a Romanesque windowsill fragment reused in the masonry of the east wall.²²³ [4.79] The evidence then points to the fact that although the twelfth-century church was in possession of a chancel, it may not have borne much resemblance to the one currently standing at the site.

The chancel arch, however, has been firmly dated to the late twelfth century.²²⁴ The rounded arch is tall and wide; the arch itself is formed of undecorated voussoirs while each of the jambs is decorated with an angle roll. The northmost roll is decorated with a beast head set just below the springers of the arch. [4.80] The arch has been repaired in modern times, as is evidenced by the comparison of two photographs of the arch; one published in 1909 [4.81] and the other taken in 2009. [4.82] While the form of the arch has not been altered in modern

²²¹ On the south doorway and other late Romanesque decoration at Noughaval, see T. Garton, ‘St Mogua, Noughaval, Clare’, *CRSBI* (<http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/county/site/id-cl-nough.html>) (Accessed January 17, 2010). On the ‘School of the West; see Kalkreuter, *Boyle Abbey. On Corcomroe Abbey*, where the distinctive herringbone chevron is also found, see R. Stalley, ‘Corcomroe Abbey. Some observations on its architectural history’, *JRSAL*, 105 (1975), 21-46. Stalley has dated the initial phase of construction at Corcomroe to the first decade of the thirteenth century.

²²² The architectural features of the church are best described by Westropp in both ‘Notes on the Antiquities around Kilfenora and Leinch’ and ‘The Churches of County Clare, and the origin of the ecclesiastical divisions in that county’ in *PRLA*, 22 (1900), 100-80 at 133. Though neither of these descriptions can be viewed as a comprehensive record of the building during his site visits, Westropp did tend to notice and comment on the presence of any fitting or fixture.

²²³ Garton, ‘St Mogua, Noughaval, Clare’.

²²⁴ As argued by both Ní Ghabhláin, ‘Late Twelfth-Century Church Construction’, 165 and Garton, ‘St Mogua, Noughaval, Clare’.

cleanup campaigns, the southern jamb has been reset and cemented. Though the arch is otherwise unelaborated, the damaged remains of an impost are visible on the northern respond only. The earlier photograph of the arch clearly shows that the arch and dividing wall have been repaired and repointed recently, and it is likely that a corresponding impost was once found on the southern respond.

The early photograph also suggests that the entire arch and dividing wall may have been a later medieval reconstruction. Well-coursed masonry incorporating large blocks forms the base of the dividing wall; a thin course above this extends along the wall at the same height as the arch imposts. Above this, however, the masonry changes and is comprised of smaller, more roughly coursed stones. The roll mouldings and beast head found on the arch responds clearly show that Noughaval possessed a chancel arch from the late twelfth century. Stylistically, however, they pre-date the early thirteenth-century south door, indicating that there were at least two building programmes underway at the site during the period. Structural changes evident in the fabric of the chancel show that this was followed by later medieval alterations.

Taken together, this evidence might suggest that the initial stone church constructed at the site was of the common form found in eleventh-century Ireland: a single-celled building, likely with a western entrance and two windows, one in the east and south wall, respectively. A building programme was undertaken in the twelfth century, when a chancel was added; perhaps the early window heads were retained and moved into a similar position in the new chancel. It has already been noted that twelfth-century chancel arches in Ireland, as elsewhere, tended to be narrow; though sometimes elaborately decorated, they were not of great height or width and their overall form was shaped to create a frame through which the celebration of the Eucharist at the altar could be viewed. It may have been that the earliest chancel was accessed through a smaller, narrower opening which, though later enlarged, incorporated the sculpted jambs of the initial arch. One possible reason for the enlargement of the arch would be the inclusion of a rood; the imposts of the arch may have been used to form the support of a crucifix beam. Such an arrangement is known to have been present in contemporary churches as at Hemse Kirke, Gotland, Sweden, dated to *ca.* 1200.²²⁵ [4.83] Though it would seem likely that this arch was rebuilt, it need not have occurred any later than the early thirteenth century; the insertion of the south doorway is clear evidence that expensive alterations were underway during that period. Large arches of similar form were erected

²²⁵ On Hemse kirke, see B. Söderberg, *Kyrkorna på Gotland* (Visby, 1979), 114-5. While the arch is *ca.* 1200, the well-preserved rood can be conclusively dated to *ca.* 1170-80.

around the turn of the fourteenth century at Inchbofin, Westmeath [4.84] and Oughtmana, Clare.²²⁶ [4.85]

Morphologies of Plan

Although Glendalough Cathedral is a major Irish church, situated at a centre of great ecclesiastical import, the size and layout of the building are more comparable to that found at minor English parish churches than major sites of equal status.²²⁷ Its simple nave and chancel plan (with attached sacristy) is representative of a common layout of Irish churches throughout the later middle ages. The other commonly found plan is comprised of a long, undivided rectangular building. Studies exist of parish churches within both areas of Anglo-Norman and Gaelic remit, but no morphology of plan emerges other than the simple single-celled or nave and chancel distinction.²²⁸ While there are certainly parish churches with more complex plans, including aisles and transepts, these are found in towns of Anglo-Norman establishment and more often than not, housed colleges of secular canons.²²⁹ Of the five parish churches discussed by Anna Dolan in her study of larger churches in Leinster, three are nave and chancel structures with nave aisles while two have nave aisles and transepts.²³⁰ These are the parish churches of Callan, Gowran, Kilkenny, New Ross and Thomastown; all, bar one are located in Kilkenny, and all were houses of secular canons dedicated to St Mary.²³¹ [4.86]

Such elaborate plans were, however, unusual. By the later middle ages the most commonly employed plan would seem to be that of an elongated, single-celled church. A single doorway located towards the western end of the south wall is the only entranceway. While some sites employ a dividing wall pierced by a large, un-ornamented arch at the nave/chancel barrier, at the majority of sites there is no architectural indication of internal division. There are certainly exceptions which must be noted; the parish church of Kilnamarbe, located within the monastic island complex of Scattery Island, Clare, once had a north aisle joined to the nave by

²²⁶ On the dating of these arches, see O'Keefe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 51-3. Here, O'Keefe notes the difficulty inherent in dating such structure due to their stylistic simplicity, which could be an indication of either early or late construction. Further complicating matters is the fact that so many of these churches underwent later medieval building campaigns and more modern restoration.

²²⁷ For an excellent overview of the history and socio-political role of Glendalough in the early middle ages, see A. Mac Shamhráin, *Church and Polity in Pre-Norman Ireland: The Case of Glendalough* (Maynooth, 1996).

²²⁸ This distinction was the only one to be made in studies of medieval churches located in both the diocese of Kilfenora, Clare and outside Dublin city. See M. Ni Mharcaigh, 'The Medieval Parish Churches of South-West County Dublin', *PRLA* 97C (1997), 245-296 and Ní Ghabhláin, 'Church and Community'.

²²⁹ The secular collegiate houses of Ireland are listed in Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, 358-62. Of the thirty-five houses they list, the vast majority are located within the Anglo-Norman colony.

²³⁰ A. Dolan, 'The Large Medieval Churches of the Diocese of Leighlin, Ferns and Ossory: a study of adaptation and change' in *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies* 2 (1999), 27-65.

²³¹ The parish church of New Ross is located in Wexford.

plain pointed arches.²³² [4.87] But the vast majority of churches were indeed built to a simple plan. Of the twenty-nine churches located within the Clare diocese of Kilfenora, the only two to deviate from this simple single-celled or nave-chancel plan were the Cathedral, which had a southern transept, and Corcomroe Cistercian Abbey.²³³ In her study of these churches, the only distinction which Ní Ghabhaláin was able to identify was the one to two-celled plan. This simplicity in plan was not confined to the Gaelic west, however, as similar morphologies were identified by both Michael O'Neill and Máirín Ní Mharcaigh in their studies of parish churches in Meath and Dublin, both areas within the Anglo-Norman Pale.²³⁴

Commenting on the simplicity of later parish church plans, one author has suggested that the lack of aisles can be explained in the following way:

‘The parish church was the focal building of an operation involving the passage of money from parishioner to monastery. It was thus a building of administration as well of salvation... Is it possible, then, that the naves of newly-built churches were intended to be administrative spaces for the geopolitical entities that were simultaneously parishes and manors, and that their architecture, with its almost begrudging accommodation of liturgy, was conceptualised accordingly?’²³⁵

While it is correct that parish churches fulfilled a secular role within late medieval society, for instance in the issuing of banns and the collection of tithes, to assume that this overrode their religious function is incorrect. The parish church and its clergy remained the key providers of pastoral care, and therefore access to salvation, to the populace throughout the late middle ages. The absence of aisles outside of a few urban parish churches, however, is certainly noteworthy. While O’Keeffe is correct in his suggestion that it points to different patterns in usage, a more fundamental understanding of the function of the aisle can help to pinpoint these patterns.

²³² On Kilnamarbhe, and all six churches located on Scattery Island, see Westropp, ‘On the Churches of County Clare’, 169-71.

²³³ It must be noted that a slight deviation from form is found at two parish churches; Killalagh had a stone-built southern sacristy while Kilmacreehy possessed a stone-built southern porch. Ní Ghabhaláin calls the Killalagh sacristy a ‘side chapel’ but gives no reason for assigning it this function. As has been noted above, the wooden or stone built sacristy was a common feature of twelfth century Irish architecture, and in the absence of any evidence, such as a piscina, for a liturgical function of this is assumed to be a simple sacristy. See Ní Ghabhaláin, ‘Church and Community’, 75. On Corcomroe, see Stalley, ‘Corcomroe Abbey’.

²³⁴ See O’Neill, ‘The Medieval Parish Churches in County Meath’ and Ní Mharcaigh, ‘The Medieval Parish Churches of South-West County Dublin’.

²³⁵ This theory was posited by O’Keeffe, ‘The built environment of local community’, 141.

Aisles began to be added to local English churches in the latter half of the twelfth century, and became so ubiquitous in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that by the end of the middle ages, almost every English parish church possessed at least one nave aisle.²³⁶ While aisles certainly increased the space of the nave, Davidson has found that neither a need for increased congregational space nor changes in processional liturgy can adequately account for their popularity. Instead, they provided additional space for the inclusion of chantry, guild and lady chapels. These chapels were privately funded by patrons, be they a family, individual or guild; their primary purpose was the provision of funeral rites and memorial masses for the dead. Analysis of the placement of a number of these chantries has shown that their locations in the aisles of the church were specifically chosen in order to ensure that priests celebrating at each altar had a clear view of the high altar in order to ensure that the consecration of the Host occurred simultaneously, as can be seen in the spatial arrangement of chantries at Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire.²³⁷ [4.88] It should not be surprising, then, that so few Irish parish churches possessed aisles or to note that the ones that did were located in the few urban centres which existed in medieval Ireland for it was those churches whose congregations had the funds to establish such foundations.

As noted, many of these parish churches were of the nave and chancel plan, divided by a large central arch as at Knockgraffon, Tipperary. [4.89] O’Keeffe has dated the construction of the church to the third quarter of the thirteenth century based upon the in mouldings surrounding the infilled east window. The pointed chancel arch, however, probably dates to the fifteenth century and is contemporary with the smaller inserted east window.²³⁸ Within the diocese of Killaloe, as well, the nave and chancel plan was rare and appeared at only fourteen of the sixty-three churches included in the study group.²³⁹ That this plan was used throughout the middle ages is evidenced by both early and late medieval chancel arch forms found at Friar’s Island, Clare; [6.16] Monaincha, Tipperary; [6.20] St Caimin’s, Iniscealtra, Clare; [6.23] Dysert O’Dea, Clare; Rahtblathmaic, Clare; [6.111] and Dorrha, Kilbarron and Lisbunny, all in Tipperary.

²³⁶ On the addition and function of aisles in the English parish church, see Davidson, ‘Written in Stone’, 225-43. What follows is heavily drawn from this source.

²³⁷ On the placement of chantries within the parish church and the consequential architectural implications, see S. Roffey, ‘Constructing a Vision of Salvations: Chantries and the Social Dimensions of Religious Experience in the Medieval Parish Church’ in *Archaeological Journal*, 163 (2006), 122-46.

²³⁸ As noted earlier in this chapter, thirteenth-century chancel arches were rounded; the pointed arch form does not appear until the later middle ages. On Knockgraffon, see O’Keeffe, ‘The built environment of local community worship’, 136.

²³⁹ A discussion of these churches can be found at 191-97, while a complete list can be found at Appendix 8.

Far more common, however, was the undivided single-celled plan as found at St Finghin's Church, Quin. [4.90] Forty-nine of the sixty-three churches were built to this plan; the construction dates of these churches too span the middle ages.²⁴⁰ Single-celled buildings can be found at Kilcredaun, St Brigid's, Iniscealtra, Killinaboy and Killadysert, all in Clare; at Ardcroney, Killodiernan, Garrabaun and Cloghprior, all in Tipperary. Although structurally single-celled, these churches would have been divided by some means to create distinct nave and chancel areas. In some cases, evidence for such a structure survives in the form of beam holes indicating the placement of a screen or loft. This can be seen at Rathmore parish church, Meath, where a stairwell in the north nave wall lead to a rood loft above the screen.²⁴¹ [4.91] But the vast majority bear no architectural trace of where such a division might have been placed or how it would have been divided.

Late medieval documentary evidence, however, might provide a clue. As has been discussed, by the thirteenth century the financial responsibility for the upkeep of the parish church had been divided between the rector and laity. As discussed in Chapter 3, research in to the financial administration of the church in Armagh has shown that in Gaelic parishes of Clogher and Dromore, the *erenagh* were responsible for the upkeep of the nave, or 'two-thirds of a unicellular building'.²⁴² This then indicates that in single-celled churches, the chancel barrier would have been placed in roughly the same location as we find structural chancel arches.

Surviving later medieval parish church screens suggest that although these late medieval barriers may have been more elaborate in their design, their overall form was not substantially different from those screens found in thirteenth-century parish churches.²⁴³ The only significant different seems to be that by the fifteenth century, screens were installed in all churches; the chancel arch no longer served as a sufficient barrier between the nave and sanctuary.

Late medieval screens such as that found at Ashton, [4.92] and Bridford, both in Devon are constructed of a set of decorated dado panels topped by elaborately traceried openings.²⁴⁴ In some cases, however, the decorated dado panels were done away with and instead the base of the screen provided space for the installation of nave altars, as can be seen in the sixteenth-

²⁴⁰ A discussion of these churches can be found at 184-91, while a complete list can be found at Appendix 8.

²⁴¹ On the manorial parish church of Meath, see O'Neill, 'The Medieval Parish Churches in County Meath'.

²⁴² H. Jeffries, 'Parishes and pastoral care in the early Tudor era' in E. FitzPatrick and R. Gillespie (eds), *The Parish in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006).

²⁴³ These have been discussed at 94-100 and 102-09.

²⁴⁴ On Ashton, Bridford Patricio (discussed presently) and English screens in general, see Kroesen and Steensma, *Interior of the Medieval Village Church*, 184-94.

century screen at Patricio, Powys, Wales. [4.93] At Patricio, the screen itself has been deemphasised and the elaboration has been transferred to the loft above. The presence of a loft in a parish church is a strong indication of complex liturgical rites, as its main function was to provide room for musicians and a choir. They begin to appear in large numbers in England during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a time when choral singing became a more integral part of secular liturgies.²⁴⁵ We might imagine then, that an elaborate liturgy complete with choral and instrumental accompaniment, might have taken place at the parish church of Rathmore, Meath, discussed above.

The Architecture of the Mendicant Orders

Brief mention must yet be made of mendicant architecture. Both the Dominicans and the Franciscans were to become extremely successful in Ireland; by 1340 thirty-three houses of Franciscan friars and twenty-five houses of Dominican friars had been established.²⁴⁶ Although the liturgical life of the friary church is not a central focus of this thesis, the layout of their churches must be briefly considered.²⁴⁷ No comprehensive work on the architecture of the mendicant orders yet exists which is comparable to that of Stalley's seminal work on the Cistercians.²⁴⁸ Most of the individual studies which do exist focus on the more elaborate fifteenth-century foundations, such as the Franciscan friaries of Quin, Clare, Ross Erilly, Galway and Moyne and Rosserk, both in Mayo. The most succinct overview of morphologies of plan in mendicant churches to date is that included in Harold Leask's *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings, Vol. III*. Here, Leask devotes a chapter to friary architecture after 1400, but he includes a few pages of discussion on early friary plans and their adaptation in later centuries.²⁴⁹

In keeping with their vows of poverty, the earliest foundations tended to be simple structures built to a claustral plan.²⁵⁰ The church itself would be a long, narrow, single-celled building

²⁴⁵ On the function of the rood loft and the rise in parochial choral services in later medieval England, see J. Cox and A. Harvey, *English Church Furniture* (London, 1907), 82-140 and Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 26.

²⁴⁶ For an overview of the mendicant orders in Ireland, see Watt, *The Church in Medieval Ireland*, 60-84.

²⁴⁷ A discussion of the pastoral role of mendicant orders in Ireland can be found at 93-94.

²⁴⁸ Stalley, *Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*. A series of articles by C. Mooney were published in the 1950s, but these were concerned with fitting friary complexes into typological categories and are now regarded as outdated. See C. Mooney, 'Franciscan Architecture in Pre-Reformation Ireland' in *JRSAl*, 85 (1955), 133-75; 86 (1956), 125-69; 87 (1957), 1-38 and 103-24. For more general accounts of the individual orders see P. Conlan, *Franciscan Ireland* (Mullingar, 1988) and D. D. C. Pochin Mould, *The Irish Dominicans* (Dublin, 1957).

²⁴⁹ H. Leask, *Irish Churches*, vol. III. The discussion of friary architecture can be found at 89-113; 89-96 briefly overview the twelfth- and thirteenth-century approaches to plan and layout.

²⁵⁰ As with all literature on mendicant architecture, significant attention is given to the cloisters and domestic ranges. Though certainly important, this thesis is concerned only with the plan and internal arrangements of the

divided by a large screen presumably equipped with an upper gallery from which the friars could preach to the assembled laity in the nave. The chancel would be subdivided by either altar rails or a change in floor level to indicate the distinction between the sanctuary space for the altar and the choir space for the community. Choir stalls would have been installed to the west of the chancel against the side walls. In the majority of Irish mendicant foundations, the cloister and domestic range was situated to the north of the building; as such windows were confined to the southern side of the chancel and were generally arranged in a series of tall lancets under which a piscina and sedilia would be placed. The chancel would also be lit by a large eastern window, comprised of a series of graduated lancets, occupying the entire upper half of the gable. The nave would be comparatively poorly lit, usually only by one or two windows and a large western light set over the doorway. Most Irish mendicant churches underwent substantial rebuilding campaigns in the later middle ages; the most significant alterations were the insertion of a large central dividing tower and a southern transept.

This morphology of plan can be clearly seen in a number of early mendicant foundations. One in particular warrants mention: Kilmallock Dominican Friary, Limerick, a Fitzgerald foundation of *ca.* 1291. Though it was restored and enlarged in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it retains significant early features. The important work produced by Arlene Hogan allows for a discussion of the architecture of the church; a brief overview of changes in plan to this friary will serve well to illustrate morphologies in plan found in the vast majority of medieval Irish friaries.²⁵¹

The long rectangular church was initially constructed in the late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century. [4.94] The chancel was divided into a sanctuary and choir space, as evidenced by the change in floor levels at the eastern end of the chancel. [4.95] The east window is comprised of a series of five graduated lancets set within a moulded embrasure surmounted by a hood mould which terminates in foliate stops; each lancet is separated by thin, banded mullions rising to moulded capitals. [4.95] An arcade of six two-light lancets lines the south chancel wall. That a separate piscina and sedilia were original features is demonstrated in the rise in window sill level at the east end of the chancel; the only cut stone from these features which survives is a single column with a moulded capital. [4.96] The undercut mouldings and necking band of the capital, combined with the angle of the springers, suggest that the sedilia would have been similar in form and style to that still *in situ*

church building and as such cloisters, chapter houses and domestic ranges remain outside the scope of this inquiry.

²⁵¹ A. Hogan, *Kilmallock Dominican Priory* (Kilmallock, 1991). The discussion which follows is drawn from this work.

at Kilkenny Dominican Friary.²⁵² [4.97] Overall, the initial building phase, dated to the last decade of the thirteenth century, exhibits strong Early English styling.

A second building programme was carried out shortly thereafter when the aisled south transept and south nave aisle were inserted. [4.98] Hogan has dated this work to *ca.* 1320 and credits the building programme to the patronage of Maurice FitzGerland, first earl of Desmond.²⁵³ During this time, two elaborate tombs were inserted, one into the north wall of the chancel [4.99] and the other into the east wall of the south transept. [4.100]. The arrangement of the south chancel tomb is highly suggestive of a personal mortuary chapel, as two altars would have been installed to either side of the tomb underneath the recessed windows.²⁵⁴ The idea that addition of the transept would have facilitated the inclusion of personal chantries is further corroborated by the insertion of two tombs in the south wall. [4.101] Though no cut stone remains to date the two tombs found in the north nave wall, the form and shape of the niches is suggestive of gabled tombs of a similar shape to that found in the south transept, and it is possible that they also date to this period. One final building campaign took place in the fifteenth century, when the central tower was installed and portions of the north range and cloister arcade were rebuilt. As noted above, the construction of a large, central tower during this period was a common feature of Irish mendicant architecture; two large corbels visible to either side of the arch would have supported a large rood.

The building programmes which took place at Kilmallock are then indicative of general patterns of alternation found in many early mendicant foundations. Whereas the initial structure was constructed as a long, plain building that would have been divided by a wooden screen, southern transepts and central towers were commonly added in the later middle ages, often as a result of the patronage of a wealthy magnate.

²⁵² The similarity in design is noted at Hogan, *Kilmallock*, 17.

²⁵³ See Hogan, *Kilmallock*, 39.

²⁵⁴ See Hogan, *Kilmallock*, 9.

Liturgical Furnishings

While this chapter has provided an overview of developments in the form and design of medieval Irish churches over the course of the middle ages, mention must yet be made of a number of furnishings which, though not integral to the plan of the building itself, are relevant in reconstructing liturgical patterns and practices. Their presence is reflective of not only contemporary attitudes towards the necessary accoutrements for liturgical celebration, but the financial resources of the church and patron. These include the piscina, aumbry, sedilia and font.

The Piscina

Piscinae are essentially drains inserted into the fabric of a church for the disposal of sacred wastes such as ablutions and other remnants from church ritual. These might include spoiled consecrated wine and water used to wash the Eucharistic vessels. Its basic features are simply a small bowl or basin with a drain leading into the wall or floor of the church.

Some special place had long been provided for the disposal of sacred waste. As early as the ninth century, a Synodical admonition by Pope Leo IV stated:

‘...a place must be provided in the sacristy or near the altar where the water can be poured away when the sacred vessels are washed. And that a fair vessel with water must hang there that the priest may wash his hands there after communion...’²⁵⁵

Bede also refers to the disposal of water used to wash the bones of St Oswald into a corner of the church.²⁵⁶

While there is no apparent mention of the disposal of ablutions in the early Irish Penitentials, a number of them take pains to describe possible desecrations of the host. The most

²⁵⁵ Minge, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. cxxxii, col. 458, as cited in I. Jessiman, ‘The Piscina in the English Medieval Church’ *JBA* (20-1), 53-72 at p. 68.

²⁵⁶ There is debate, however, as to the meaning of the text: *in angularo sacrarii funderunt*. B. Colgrave and R. Mynors (eds), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, (Oxford, 1969), Book III, chapter 11. Some editions translate this as a corner of the cemetery, though Parsons argues that this should be read as an inside corner of the church. D. Parsons, ‘Scararium: ablution drains in early medieval churches’ in L. A. S. Butler and R. K. Morris (eds), *The Anglo Saxon Church* (London, 1986), 105-120 at 117.

substantial treatment of this subject is found in the *Penitential of Cummean*, composed by the seventh-century bishop of Clonfert.²⁵⁷ Section XI of this work is devoted to the treatment of the host.²⁵⁸ This not only deals with penance if the host is eaten by animals or vomited by a communicant, but also contains a large amount of information on the host during the Eucharist and while it never expressly mentions ablution, it does refer to both the washing of the chalice and the disposal of a host which has become tainted.

20. If it [the host] is entire but if a worm is found in it, it shall be burned and the ashes shall be concealed beneath the altar.

23. If the host falls from the hands of the celebrant to the ground and is not found, everything that is found in the place in which it fell shall be burned and the ashes concealed as above.

26. If he spills anything from the chalice to the ground through negligence, it shall be licked up with the tongue; the board shall be scraped; (what is scraped off) shall be consumed with fire (and the ashes) shall be concealed as we have said above. . . .

27. If the chalice drips upon the altar the minister shall suck up the drop ... and the linens which the drop has touched he shall wash three times, the chalice being placed beneath, and he shall drink the water used in washing.

These penances indicate that in the early Irish Church, the practice was for ablutions and ashes to be disposed of beneath the altar. In the mass of the Roman Rite, an ablution rite followed the Communion. This consisted of the rinsing of the chalice and the celebrant's fingers to ensure that all consecrated particles of the host or wine were disposed of properly.²⁵⁹ It had long been common for the celebrant to wash his hands and the mass vessels in the sacristy after the service. A similar practice might be evidenced much earlier in the Irish Church, as the *Penitential of Cummean* specifically refers to the celebrant drinking cleaning water from the chalice. In the early church, the place for the disposal of these ablutions was a specified drain under the altar, as indicated by the *Penitential of Cummean*, or in a corner of the church.²⁶⁰

At least two probable ablutions drains have been identified during excavations of early Irish timber and sod churches at Caherlehillan and Illaunloughlan, both located on Ivearagh

²⁵⁷ Bieler, *Irish Penitentials*, 5-7, 109-35.

²⁵⁸ *The Penitential of Cummean*, Section XI 'Of Questions Concerning the Host' in Bieler, *Irish Penitentials*, 130-33.

²⁵⁹ On the development of the ablution rite, see Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 524-26.

²⁶⁰ Evidence for the development and the uses of these floor drains have most recently been discussed by Parsons, 'Sacrarium'.

penninsula, Kerry. The mid fifth- or early sixth-century timber church at Caherlehillan possessed not only a free-standing table-altar, but also a drain.²⁶¹ The position of this feature, which began at the east end of the south wall and extended for 5.5 metres outside, suggests that it was accessed either at the base of, or fed through a recessed feature set within, the timber wall of the church.²⁶² It has been suggested that a similar feature running outward from the eastern end of the south wall of the early sod church at Illaunloughlan may represent a similar feature.²⁶³

One identified ablution drain was uncovered during an archaeological excavation at the late ninth or early tenth-century Anglo-Saxon church of Raunds Furnells, Northamptonshire.²⁶⁴

[4.10] Excavation at this site revealed the presence of a sacrarium, set either under or directly west of the altar.²⁶⁵ By the twelfth century, the majority of these floor drains had been replaced with elevated piscina. There are a number of sites where such drains can still be seen, examples including side altars at Riveaulx **[4.103]** and Furness Abbeys and in the morning chapel at Lincoln Minster.²⁶⁶ Though very unusual, a fourteenth-century combination of niche piscina and floor drain can be found at Barton Bendish, Norfolk, England.²⁶⁷ **[4.104]**

By the twelfth century, the floor drain was generally replaced by a freestanding basin with a drain. This was likely a gradual change over the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries, arising from a combination of factors, including subtle changes in the ablution rite and a shift in the position of the celebrant to face east during the mass.²⁶⁸ By the eleventh century, it had become usual for the priest to wash his hands in the chalice, and then wash the chalice at the altar during the service.²⁶⁹ By the thirteenth century, the basin was found fixed into a purpose built niche, generally on the south side of the altar. The standard position of the niche piscina, set towards the east gable of the south wall, suggests that free-standing piscinas were also placed at this location. As early as the twelfth century, Gerald of Wales described the position

²⁶¹ A summary excavation report has been published at Sheehan, 'A Peacock's Tale'. The early timber church is discussed at 70.

²⁶² The drain is discussed at Sheehan, 'A Peacock's Tale', 197.

²⁶³ For this suggestion, see Ó Carragáin, *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland*, 191.

²⁶⁴ Boddington, *Raunds Furnells*. On the sacrarium, see especially Chapter 5 'Liturgical and social aspects' by David Parsons. The architectural development of this church has been fully discussed earlier in this chapter.

²⁶⁵ It must be noted that the term sacrarium only took on the meaning of ablution drain in the later middle ages. See Parsons, 'Liturgical and Social Aspects', 119.

²⁶⁶ For a longer list of surviving floor drains, see Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 155-6.

²⁶⁷ Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 144 and 156.

²⁶⁸ Though a review of documentary evidence for the position of the celebrant in the early Irish Church suggests eastward facing celebration was common from the seventh century.

²⁶⁹ Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 144.

of the piscina to the south of the altar: '*piscina quoque decenter secus dextrum altaris cornu*'.²⁷⁰ Where a piscina can be identified, there is every reason to assume an altar was close by.²⁷¹

In his article on the piscina in the English medieval church, Ian Jessiman identifies six different types of piscina: the free-standing pillar, the single niche, the half-pillar, the bracket, the double or twin piscina and the angle piscina.²⁷² Examples of all but the free-standing pillar piscina can be found in Ireland.

The freestanding pillar is one of the most common types to be found in Norman England. This type is usually a slender replica of a pillar, around one metre high, decorated on two to four sides and built to stand alone from the wall. The capital is generally square, with a square basin and central hole and was intended to stand over a hole or drain in the floor into which would run the ablutions, as seen in drawings of a pillar piscina found at Guisborough Priory, England.²⁷³ [4.105] A piscina of this type can be found at Tollerton, Nottinghamshire, England; the column is decorated with chevron ornament while the square basin takes the form of a capital with large scrollwork.²⁷⁴ [4.106] A particularly interesting example survives at Bodmin, Cornwall.²⁷⁵ [4.107] Here, the pillar and capital are octagonal, and the basin is formed of eight deep scallops. [4.108] Though not always employed, the scalloped basin remains the most consistent decorative feature of all forms of the piscina throughout the middle ages.

The freestanding pillar generally died out around the turn of the thirteenth century.²⁷⁶ It is likely that this form of design represents an earlier wood or metalwork design articulated in stone. The 1186 Anglo-Norman Council allowed wooden piscinas, so long as they were lined with lead,²⁷⁷ and it is possible some of the earliest piscinas were of this type.

Two later forms derived from the freestanding pillar are the half-pillar and bracket piscina. The half-pillar is more unusual and consists of a pillar attached to the wall, unable to stand on its own. This form begins to appear in England as the free-standing pillar was dying out; the

²⁷⁰ Brewer, *et al*, *Giraldus Cambrensis, Opera*, II.36.

²⁷¹ Though there are no examples within Ireland, piscinas are sometimes found in a rood-loft as at New Shoreham, Sussex, or the upper room of a porch, as at Salle, Norfolk, indicating the presence of an otherwise unindicated altar. See Jessiman, 'The Piscina in the English Medieval Church', 67.

²⁷² Jessiman, 'The Piscina in the English Medieval Church'.

²⁷³ D. Heslop, 'Excavations within the church at the Augustinian Priory of Gisbrough' in *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 67 (1995), 51-126, at 109, figure 5. This drawing is referenced by Davidson, 'Written in Stone', 158.

²⁷⁴ Cox and Harvey, *English Church Furniture*, 61.

²⁷⁵ Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 145-6 and 152.

²⁷⁶ Jessiman, 'The Piscina in the English Medieval Church', 54.

²⁷⁷ As discussed at 49-50.

majority are Early English in style as is the piscina dated *ca.* 1250 at Shepton Mallet, Somerset.²⁷⁸ [4.109] A rare survival of a late medieval wooden half pillar piscina is found in the Beauchamp Chapel, Warwick. [4.110] Here, the piscina takes the form of an engaged column set into the middle of a projecting ledge. The piscina is mirrored to either side between two similarly moulded engaged columns descending from the window mullions; the overall style of the chapel is early Perpendicular, but it is not clear that the piscina was part of the original programme.²⁷⁹ The half-pillar piscina was never very popular and fell out of fashion by the middle of the thirteenth century in England, only to undergo a small revival in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. One of the most unusual piscinas in the Irish corpus can be found at St Patrick's Church, Trim, Meath.²⁸⁰

The elongated basin of the piscina takes the form of a half-octagonal shaft set flush against the wall. [4.111] The lip of the basin is moulded, while animals from the bestiary are carved into the underside of the rim. The shaft is decorated with angles holding shields bearing the Royal Arms and those of James Butler, fourth earl of Ormond and Richard Plantagenet, duke of York, the combination of which dates the font to the winter of 1449-50, when both the earl and duke were in attendance at the vice-regal court at Trim Castle.²⁸¹ Although heraldic symbols generally do not decorate piscinas, they are often found on fonts and sedilia as symbols of patronage.²⁸²

Though certainly less elaborate in composition, two possible half-pillar piscinas can be found at the Cathedral and O'Heyne's Church, Kilmacduagh, Galway.²⁸³ Both are attached to the face of the wall, but their overall shape suggests that they would have been finished with a thin column descending to the floor. The Cathedral underwent restoration in the early thirteenth century, about the same time as O'Heyne's Church was being built, but the ogee-headed basin in the Cathedral piscina suggests these features date to the fifteenth century. Both piscinas are similar in style, though that at the Cathedral is slightly more elaborate. The Cathedral piscina is formed of a stone with a rectangular top fixed into the wall. [4.112] The stone is corbel-

²⁷⁸ Bond, *The Chancel of English Churches*, 157 and 160. On the engaged pillar piscina, see Jessiman, 'The Piscina in the English Medieval Church', 56.

²⁷⁹ Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 162 and 168.

²⁸⁰ H. Roe, *Medieval Fonts of Meath* (Dublin, 1968), 101-5.

²⁸¹ The arms of York and Mortimer were also installed in the new tower of the parish church, suggesting that the donation of the piscina was part of a larger building programme undertaken at the same time. See Roe, *Medieval Fonts*, 105.

²⁸² Fonts and sedilia will be discussed later in this chapter. For a discussion of the patronage of stone fittings and fixtures in late medieval Ireland, see Moss, 'Permanent expressions of piety'.

²⁸³ Kilmacduagh is the site of an early Christian monastery. Within the enclosure there is a group of four churches, a round tower and the remains of a glebe house. Peter Harbison, *Guide to National and Historic Monuments of Ireland* (Dublin, 1992), 95.

shaped; the sides of the basin taper to a flat bottom from where a pillar would have descended. The basin is formed of a poorly shaped shallow ogee, suggesting perhaps that the mason was unfamiliar with this form. [4.113] The basin drains into the fabric of the wall. Though the ogee shaped basin is certainly unusual, a parallel can be found in the unique piscina in the lady chapel of Grantham Church. [4.114] The basin at Grantham is ogee-headed, but in this later example the spandrels have been incised to resemble the treatment given to the niche piscina at Holy Cross Abbey. At Grantham, the unusual basin drains into a removable drawer.²⁸⁴

The piscina in O'Heynes Church, Kilmacduagh, is similar in overall composition. [4.115] Though it has been reset into its current position, the back of the stone indicates that it was meant to stand flush with the wall. Again, the sides of the basin taper to a flat bottom, but here a moulded double roll, the larger of which appears to be incised with a rope pattern, is found only at the front base of the stone. Though obscured by the cement used in its resetting into the wall, the top of the stone had a very shallow basin which drained again, into the back of the wall. [4.116]

The bracket piscina is characterized by a bowl which projects from the wall, but does not necessarily have an associated niche. These are rarely seen in England after the thirteenth century, but the form remained in use in Scotland through the fifteenth century. Examples at Melrose Abbey include the south transept piscina, dated to ca. 1400 [4.117] and a mid fifteenth-century piscina in a south nave chapel.²⁸⁵ [4.118] In Ireland, one early thirteenth-century example of the bracket piscina form is found at Cannistown Parish Church, Meath.²⁸⁶ [4.119]

The most common piscina form found in Ireland is the single niche piscina. It consists of a niche in the wall of the church where a basin is fitted. The majority of the examples are late medieval and found in churches and monastic houses of Anglo-Norman establishment. The embrasures surrounding these piscinas take a variety of forms, but are usually elaborated in some way. Many larger late medieval churches had a piscina for each altar. Examples of such

²⁸⁴ Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 158.

²⁸⁵ Fawcett, *Scottish Medieval Churches*, 273-75.

²⁸⁶ The chancel has been dated to the early thirteenth century, and the appearance of this piscina form which was current in England at the time, suggests it was installed when the chancel was constructed. On Cannistown, see H. Crawford 'Cannistown Church'.

an arrangement can be found at St Mary's Parish Church in Callan, Kilkenny, which has two piscinas.²⁸⁷

The more elaborately decorated of the two is set into the south chancel wall. [4.120] Here, the pointed arch is moulded with a quadrant flanked by hollow chamfers tapering down to a stop chamfer at the bottom of the jamb. The hood is moulded with an unusual pear shaped moulding and a hollow chamfer broader than that of the jamb. The basin is formed of six shallow scalloped lobes. [4.121] The piscina set into the south wall of the north transept is simpler. [4.122, 4.123] With its rebated, circular basin and simple chamfered jambs terminated at the bottom with pyramidal stop chamfers it is likely to date to the time when the church was largely rebuilt, around 1460.

A similar arrangement can be found at Holy Cross Cistercian Abbey, Tipperary, where a heavily moulded piscina sits in the chancel.²⁸⁸ The transeptal altars are furnished with a piscina, and while these are also well carved, none are as elaborate as that of the high altar.²⁸⁹ The chancel piscina is partially blocked from view by modern furniture, but the arch and a portion of the jambs are visible. The jamb is moulded in two orders separated by a right-angled rebate; the outer order comprises of a quadrant while the inner is formed of a hollow flanked by angled double-chamfers. The square hood is moulded with a quadrant and hollow chamfer.[4.124] This feature is topped with a carving of a small figure with hands in prayer. The piscina set to the south wall of the southernmost transept chapel takes a similar form, but here the mouldings are simpler and the spandrels of the square hood are decorated with foliate design. [4.125] The basin is formed of six deeply cut scallops. [4.126] While such deeply incised scallops are unusual, examples do occur throughout the middle ages, as noted in the eleventh-century pillar piscina at Bodmin, Cornwall. [4.108] A scalloped basin formed of 4, 6 or 8 petals and a single, central drain was the standard design.²⁹⁰

The earliest niche piscinas tend to be smaller. Over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth-centuries the niches sometimes expand allowing room for a credence shelf either at the base of the piscina or as a separate shelf above the basin.²⁹¹ The Latin *credentia* refers to a common

²⁸⁷ On Callan parish church, see H. Leask, *Irish Churches*, vol. III, 83.

²⁸⁸ On Holy Cross see Stalley, *Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, esp. 113-128.

²⁸⁹ Two piscinas are set to the south wall of the southernmost chapels in the north and south transepts, respectively. The northernmost chapel of the north transept does not include a piscina, but had a structure which has been interpreted as a second shrine for the relic of the True Cross which the Abbey possessed. The piscina attached to the altar in the northernmost south transept chapel has gone unidentified until now. On the possible second shrine in the north transept, see Stalley, *Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, 117.

²⁹⁰ Jessiman, 'The Piscina in the English Medieval Church', 54.

²⁹¹ On the credence, see Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 164-168.

table or shelf; in the context of church furnishing it refers to the place where the Eucharistic elements were placed while they were readied for consecration.²⁹² This credence was not always incorporated into the piscina, especially in smaller churches, but its function helps to highlight the preparation of Eucharistic vessels:

In England the ancient custom at plain services in the greater churches, and at most services in parish churches, seems to have been to place the chalice at the south end of the altar at the beginning of the service, and to take it thence to the middle of the altar at the time of offering, thus making the end of the altar itself serve as a credence. At solemn services *cum tibus ministris* in quires (i.e., in cathedral, collegiate, and monastic churches) the chalice was 'made' at a side altar or other fit place some distance away, so that by the stateliness of the approach greater dignity might be given to the ceremonial offering.²⁹³

The piscina in the chancel of Portumna Dominican Friary, Galway, dates to the second quarter of the fifteenth century as the friary, the first Dominican Observant house in Ireland, was founded in 1425.²⁹⁴ [4.127] The round-headed piscina is moulded with a continuous chamfer. A chamfered rebate runs around its upper face terminating in a lopsided ogee, this whole arrangement is topped by a square hood. A small leaf decoration is cut into the terminal of the western chamfer stop. The plain, round basin is offset towards the east of the base stone, creating a small credence.

A much larger credence/piscina combination can be found in the south chancel wall of Inch Cistercian Abbey, Down. [4.128] Though Stalley has suggested this feature is contemporary with the initial construction of the abbey, *ca.* 1210, it is more likely to date to the fifteenth century when the chancel was remodelled to serve as the entire church and the nave and transepts abandoned for liturgical use.²⁹⁵ Here, the side embrasure is formed of an unmoulded segmental arch. The piscina basin sits to the west of the feature and is clearly not contemporary with the rest of the feature. The front of the basin extends beyond the wall, forming a projection under which a chamfer is cut into the base of the stone. The basin is formed of four scalloped petals and a central drain. [4.129] This basin clearly belongs to an earlier piscina and was reset when the large embrasure was installed in the fifteenth century.

²⁹² Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 164.

²⁹³ J. T. Mickelthwaite, *Ornaments of the Rubric* (London, 1901).

²⁹⁴ On Portumna Dominican Friary, see Harbison, *GNMI*, 98-99 and Leask, *Irish Churches*, III.185.

²⁹⁵ See Stalley, *Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, 67 and 199 for the fifteenth-century alterations and the dating of the piscina at Inch.

Another piscina form which is found fairly commonly in late medieval Ireland is that of the double or twin piscina. These are variations on the same theme. The double piscina has two bowls within one central niche whereas the twin piscina has separate niche for each bowl which may or may not be connected. The piscina in the south nave aisle of St Mary's Parish Church in Youghal, Cork is an example of the double piscina. [4.130] Here, the embrasure takes the form of a pointed arch with a roll and hollow chamfer. Two plain, round basins are set into the base of the piscina. [4.131] The feature probably dates to *ca.* 1400 when the early thirteenth century church underwent a rebuilding programme.²⁹⁶

A much more elaborate twin piscina is found in the chancel of Rosserk Franciscan Friary, Mayo. [4.132] This is contemporary with the mid-fifteenth century observant architecture of the building. Here, the large feature is formed of two moulded and pointed arches set into a rectangular hood. The arch on the left has plain, deeply incised spandrels while that on the right has spandrels decorated with finely carved angles holding instruments of the Passion. These arches rest upon octagonal pillars with moulded capitals and bases. The underside of the niche is formed of two vaulted arches. [4.133] Two octagonal basins are set towards the front of the table, leaving ample room behind for a credence. Very unusually, each opening of this piscina has a small, round window set into the back of the wall. An angle piscina also survives at Rosserk, set into the northwest corner of the northernmost south transept chapel. [4.134] This is formed by two plain chamfered arches set to the north and west of the feature, both opening onto a small, single deeply cut basin.

The existence of the double or twin piscina poses an interesting liturgical question: why two basins when one was sufficient for the proper disposal of ablutions? One explanation popular amongst antiquarian authors was that each basin was used for a different purpose. The tract *In Celebratione*, composed by Edmund Rich, archbishop of Canterbury from 1234-45, describes three ablutions taking place within the ceremony.²⁹⁷ The first ablution took place at the altar during mass where the chalices and priests fingers were rinsed with wine inside the chalice; these rinsings were then consumed by the celebrant. The second ablution took place immediately after, when the priest left the altar to rinse his hands with water. The final ablution took place after the mass had finished, when the chalice and paten were rinsed at the piscina. The other explanation proffered is that the second drain was reserved for the disposal

²⁹⁶ Harbison, *GNMI*, 85-6.

²⁹⁷ 'Si vero de patina, sicut quidam faciunt, eam (Hostiam) sumat, tam patinam quam calicem faciet aqua perfundi, vel solm calicem si eam non sumat de patina.' As quoted and expanded upon in Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 146-7. A similar explanation for the double piscina can be found in Cox and Harvey, *English Church Furniture*, 63.

of ablutions form secondary altars. Davidson argues that the double piscina was most popular in the thirteenth century in England, but becomes less frequent in the fourteenth century when minor altars began to be furnished with their own piscina.²⁹⁸

As noted, the function of the piscina can be directly related to the Eucharist rite, and their presence was called for by both Gille of Limerick and Dublin Archbishop John Comyn at either end of the twelfth century. But a large number of churches which were in use from the twelfth century to the end of the middle ages do not possess a piscina.

Jerpoint Cistercian Abbey is one example. Set into the south chancel wall is what would appear to be a twin piscina, but without a basin in either of the niches where they would be expected. [4.135] While its foundation date is uncertain, construction of the church most likely took place *ca.* 1175-80 and was undoubtedly complete by 1200, and the twin niche dates to this period.²⁹⁹ It is especially curious that this foundation did not incorporate a piscina, as the rite of ablution prior to the Eucharist was part of the Cistercian rite by the twelfth century: 'the minister, after helping the celebrant to vest, is to pour water over the celebrant's hands *postea infundat ei aquam super manus ejus.*'³⁰⁰ And in fact, the majority of smaller Irish churches do not contain a piscina. In some cases it is possible that a wooden or stone pillar piscina was used, though none have survived.

It may be that case that, especially in Gaelic churches, the practice of disposing of ablutions under the altar resulted in the inclusion of the drain within the altar itself. Such a design is certainly unusual, but examples of such an arrangement are known. A minor altar at Asthall, Oxon., England, [4.136] possesses a basin set into the eastern leg of the structure. A similar mid-thirteenth-century arrangement can be found at the altar of Lojsta Kyrka, Gotland, Sweden where a small, rounded basin is attached to the south side of the altar.³⁰¹ [4.137]

Another possibility is that wooden or metal basins were used; these could be simply set into an aumbry or niche. While piscinas are relatively rare in smaller churches, almost every medieval church possesses at least one aumbry. A bronze basin was discovered alongside a number of eighth or ninth-century Eucharistic vessels at Derrynaflan, Tipperary.³⁰² [4.138]

²⁹⁸ Davidson, 'Written in Stone' 160.

²⁹⁹ A discussion of the history and architecture of Jerpoint can be found in Stalley, *Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, 80-87.

³⁰⁰ As quoted in Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 144.

³⁰¹ On Lojsta kyrka, see Söderberg, *Kyrkorna på Gotland*, 114-5.

³⁰² On the Derrynaflan Hoard and its relation to other early Irish Eucharistic metalwork, see M. Ryan, *Early Irish Communion Vessels* (Dublin, 2000). The find consisted of a silver chalice, paten fragments, strainer and basin.

The function of the basin is unknown; there is no indication that it related to the paten as a vessel for the consecrated host.³⁰³ Among his early twelfth-century description of the items required by each priest, Gille of Limerick included ‘a basin and towel for washing hands, a tree trunk or a carved stone into which the water used for washing the sacred things may be poured away’.³⁰⁴ In the absence of any other suggestion for the function of this basin, obviously considered part of the altar service discovered at Derrynaflan, it is suggested that this served as the basin for the rite of ablution during the Eucharistic ceremony. Many more metal or wooden basins were likely to have existed, but were either reappropriated to a non-liturgical function or destroyed.

The Aumbry

The aumbry is a curious structure, whose function remains somewhat elusive. Essentially, it is a niche or recess set into a wall of the church for the storage of liturgical goods such as Eucharistic vessels, liturgical books, candles, censers and the like. Though the niche will sometimes be rebated, indicating that a door secured the cupboard, this is not always the case. Little has been written about the function of the aumbry, but a brief debate emerged in the middle of the twentieth century as to whether or not they were also used to store consecrated hosts reserved for the purpose of veneration.³⁰⁵ Having considered both possibilities, Davidson has concluded that, in England at least, there is no evidence that the aumbry was ever used to store consecrated materials. She points to the plainness of aumbries which, when contrasted with the often elaborately articulated piscina, indicates that there was nothing particularly noteworthy about these compartments.³⁰⁶ Instead, the Eucharist seems to have been reserved primarily in a hanging pyx over the altar or within a specially designed sacrament house.

³⁰³ The Stowe Missal tract on the mass describes the arrangement of the consecrated bread, called the *suidigoth combuig*, or ‘arrangement of the confraction’ where the bread ‘in the form of a cross is set all over the paten’. For a description of this practice and the Eucharistic rite in which the Derrynaflan items would have been used, see P. Ní Chatháin, ‘The Liturgical Background of the Derrynaflan Altar Service’ in *JRS&AI* 110 (1980), 127-48, especially 143.

³⁰⁴ Gille of Limerick, *de Statu Ecclesiae*, lines 233-35 as translated at Flemming, *Gille of Limerick*, 159-60.

³⁰⁵ This theory was posited by Gregory Dix, but this view was later contradicted by Van Dijk and Walker who argued that there was no evidence of such a practice. See G. Dix, *A Detection of Aumbries with Other Notes on the History of Reservation* (London, 1943) and SJP Van Dijk and J. Walker, *The Myth of the Aumbry: Notes on Medieval Reservation Practice and Eucharistic Devotion* (London, 1957). See also A. King, *Eucharistic Reservation in the Western Church* (London, 1965), but King seems not to make the distinction between the sacrament house and the aumbry, instead referring to elaborately decorated tabernacles as aumbries.

³⁰⁶ Her discussion can be found at Davidson, ‘Written in Stone’, 165-6.

The sacrament house or tabernacle was a purpose built locker within which the Host could be reserved.³⁰⁷ In many cases, this was a freestanding, tower-like structure as can be seen in the fifteenth-century example from Fresles, Normandy.³⁰⁸ [4.139] Wall niches were also used to store the reserved host. On the Continent, and particularly in Sweden, these niches were formed of plain rebates cut into the fabric of the wall but their function as a sacrament house was highlighted by the addition of elaborately carved doors and painted surrounds, the subject of which invariably included Eucharistic iconography. Two thirteenth-century examples can still be seen at the parish churches of Lärbo [4.140] and Ekeby [4.141], both located in Gotland, Sweden.³⁰⁹ Richard Fawcett has discussed the evidence for surviving Scottish sacrament houses where no freestanding examples have survived.³¹⁰ Instead, the only identifiable tabernacles are heavily sculpted wall niches dating to the later middle ages, such as the elaborate example from Fowles Easter dated to *ca.* 1452.³¹¹ [4.142] He does however note that any aumbry may have served this function; even the simplest niche may have once been decorated with doors and paintings, as can be seen in the Swedish examples, which would have announced its status as a tabernacle. He also notes that any moulded elaboration of a niche may signify that it once served this purpose, citing the example of Newburn church.³¹² [4.143] Here, two niches are situated in the north wall of the chancel; the lower is plain and quadrangular while the upper niche is arched and moulded. The different treatment of these niches may signify that the upper was reserved as a special storage place for the consecrated host while the lower was a simply cupboard. Perhaps the double aumbry niche located in the north wall of the chancel at Ardfert Cathedral, Kerry, once served as a sacrament house. [4.144] The feature is topped by a square hood which terminates in a decorated stop to the west. Each niche is rebated for a door and contains a shelf slot. Though there are no specific indications that it may have served such a function, other than perhaps its location at the east end of the north chancel wall, the most common position for such a feature. As Fawcett notes, often the only indication that an aumbry served such a function would be indicated by decoration which no longer survives: ‘Although most of the late medieval sacrament houses which can be identified with certainty were framed by carvings, in other cases it is possible

³⁰⁷ A full discussion of the wide variety and forms of the sacrament house in parish churches can be found in Kroesen and Steensma, *Interior of the Medieval Village Church*, 105-38.

³⁰⁸ Kroesen and Steensma, *Interior of the Medieval Village Church*, 106.

³⁰⁹ On Ekeby and Lärbo, see Söderberg, *Kyrkorna på Gotland*, 38-9 and 122-3.

³¹⁰ The earliest datable sacrament houses, found at Roslin, St Salvator in St Andrews and Fowles Easter, are all *ca.* 1450. On Scottish sacrament houses, see Fawcett, *Scottish Medieval Churches*, 258-62.

³¹¹ Fawcett, *Scottish Medieval Churches*, 258-62.

³¹² Fawcett, *Scottish Medieval Churches*, 260.

that any decoration was in the form of painting or that there were surrounds of carved timber.³¹³

The aumbry is the one feature which is most consistently found within medieval Irish churches. The vast majority, however, are plain unarticulated niches with no indication that they may once have served any purpose other than as a shelf or storage cupboard. Because of this, their presence, while sometimes noted in the description of a church, is never thought to have significance. But the location of many aumbries at or near the south chancel corner may point to a possible function.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the nave-and-chancel church first begins to appear in the landscape around the turn of the twelfth century and seven churches are known to have possessed an architecturally defined chancel at this time. Of these seven, the chancels of four are still standing; three of these, Trinity and Reefert Churches, Glendalough [4.145, 4. 146] and Friar's Island, Clare, [4.147] contain aumbries.³¹⁴ While the early appearance of the architecturally articulated chancel has already been placed in the context of more nuanced Eucharistic doctrine which arose at the same time, none of these early churches possessed a piscina. Nor were piscinas particularly common features of less elaborate parish churches at any point during the middle ages, despite documentary evidence calling for their usage from an early date. It has already been suggested that the majority of parish churches may have made use of bowls or basins for the ablutions rites, but if this were the case they would need a stand or shelf on which to rest. If this were in fact a common practice, then it is likely that many aumbries situated to the south of the altar may have served as a credence shelf on which such a bowl may have sat.

The Sedilia

Some form of seating for the clergy and mass celebrants since the early Christian period. In the basilican arrangement, the bishop's throne, or *catbedra*, was placed at the eastern end of the apse as can be clearly seen in the conjectural reconstruction of the fourth century church of SS Peter and Paul, Tyre.³¹⁵ [4.148] The same arrangement can be found in the early eleventh

³¹³ 'It cannot be automatically concluded that any aumbry or wall locker to the north or east of an altar was necessarily a sacrament house, since many aumbries were provided as a storage place for the vessels to be used at the mass, the chalice and paten. Conversely, however, it cannot be assumed that a simple architectural form for an aumbry means that it was not a sacrament house.' See Fawcett, *Scottish Medieval Churches*, 259.

³¹⁴ The appearance of the architecturally defined chancel is discussed at 98-100.

³¹⁵ A discussion of internal arrangements found in the early Christian church can be found at 77-87.

century church of Visciano in Umbria, Italy, where benches running along the curve of the apse to either side of the *cathedra*.³¹⁶ [4. 149] As has already been noted, similar seating arrangements were found in the apsidal eastern chambers of the eleventh- and twelfth-century incarnations of both Raunds Furnells, Northamptonshire, [4.28] and St Peter's Church, Waterford.³¹⁷ [4. 31]

Such an arrangement, however, is predicated upon a free-standing altar with enough room to the east for the provision of such seating and as altars moved closer to the eastern wall of the chancel over the course of the early middle ages this type of design became impractical. By the later middle ages, clerical seating came to be placed at the south side of the chancel, directly west of the piscina. Whereas piscinas come to be regarded as a necessity for proper celebration, sedilia were never required by any English or Irish diocesan statutes.

The purpose of the sedilia was more specific than to provide general clerical seating; it was designed for the repose of the mass celebrant and his assistants during the chanting of the, *Kyrie*, *Gloria* and *Credo*. The priest would have set in the middle, while the deacon to his right and the subdeacon to his left.³¹⁸ It was also used during readings, as the thirteenth-century Sarum missal calls for the celebrant and his assistants to retire to 'seats which have been prepared' at this time.³¹⁹ The use of sedilia spread gradually over the middle ages; as their presence indicates that more than one cleric was involved in the celebration of the mass it is not surprising that they are more commonly found in churches which housed a monastic or collegiate community. Indeed, the earliest English stone sedilia, dated to the 1150s, are found at the Cistercian Abbeys of Kirkstall and Buildwas.³²⁰ [4.150] Sedilia do not become regular fixtures in English parish churches until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but even then they are most commonly found in larger, more elaborate buildings.

Sedilia could be constructed of stone or wood; a fourteenth-century stone sedilia survives at Burs Kyrke, Gotland [4.151] while a late medieval wooden example can be found at

³¹⁶ On the apsidal seating arrangements at Visciano, see J. Kroesen and R. Steensma, *The Interior of the Medieval Village Church*, 148.

³¹⁷ The internal arrangements at both Raunds Furnells and St Peter's Waterford are discussed at 87-91.

³¹⁸ Kroesen and Steensma, *Interior of the Medieval Village Church*, 148.

³¹⁹ 'Quo finito, sacerdos cum suis ministris in sedibus ad hoc paratis se recipiant'. J.W. Legg, 'On some ancient liturgical customs now falling into disuse' in *Essays on the Ceremonial* (London, 1904), 37-81 at p 134 as cited in Davidson, 'Written in Stone', 166.

³²⁰ Davidson has suggested that, in England at least, 'the early popularity of sedilia in Cistercian churches and in smaller collegiate churches is probably due to the fact that these buildings were constructed with flat east ends, against which the altar was placed.' See Davidson, 'Written in Stone', 168.

Clemenskirche, Wissel, Germany.³²¹ [4.152] Far more commonly, however, the seating was created by an enlarged niche set into the chancel wall. In some cases, this niche was wide enough for just one celebrant; fourteenth-century single sedilia can be found at Garde, Gotland [4.153] and Shennington, Oxfordshire.³²² [4.154] In some cases this single, undivided niche was broad enough to accommodate three clerics. While double sedilia, such as the one found in the Lady Chapel of Hereford Cathedral [4.155], and quadruple sedilia, as is found in Furness Abbey [4.156] are known, the most common design for sedilia was a recessed niche divided into three separate seats. These sedilia are often elaborately decorated and incorporate a variety of tracery forms; the overall effect is one which strongly resembles a short row of blind arcading.³²³ Quite frequently, the sedilia is grouped together with the piscina to form a cohesive composition, an arrangement not frequently found outside of the British Isles.

Late twelfth-century triple sedilia decorated with chevron survive at Castle Hedingham, Essex, [4.157] and St Mary, Leicester.³²⁴ [4.158] A triple sedilia is preserved at Great Whelnetham, Suffolk, but here the piscina is less elaborate and separate from the overall composition. [4.159] While the piscina and sedilia at Elsing, Norfolk, are also separated, the cusped ogee heads found on both features ensure that the overall decorative scheme remains cohesive. [4.160] A fourteenth-century double piscina and triple sedilia combination survives at Norton Subcourse, Norfolk, though the piscina is smaller than the sedilia, both features are topped by cusped ogee arches and hoods with corbel heads. [4.161] A similar combined piscina and sedilia are found at Langport, Somerset, but in this elaborate fifteenth-century feature the piscina is set into a niche which is part of the sedilia arcade. [4.162] Seating could also be created by dropping the sill of the south chancel window to a low level, a sedilia has been created in this way at Brundish, Suffolk, and an angle piscina has been inserted into the corner of the dropped sill. [4.163]

As is the case in England, the sedilia was first imported to Ireland via Cistercian establishments.³²⁵ Boyle Cistercian Abbey, Roscommon, retains a wide sedilia dated to *ca.* 1161-70 formed of a single arch with no division between the seats.³²⁶ [4.164] The simple arrangements is formed of uncarved voussoirs while the jambs bear the remains of engaged

³²¹ Wooden sedilia were particularly common in Germany and a large number of later medieval examples have survived. See Kroesen and Steensma, *Interior of the Medieval Village Church*, 150.

³²² On Garde Kyrke, see Söderberg, *Kyrkorna på Gotland*, 66-7. On Shennington, see J. Sherwood and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Oxfordshire* (Hammondsworth, 1974), 753-4.

³²³ Davidson has thoroughly discussed the forms and varieties of sedilia found in England. See Davidson, 'Written in Stone', 166-74. On English church sedilia, see also Cox and Harvey, *English Church Furniture*, 67-74.

³²⁴ On the sedilia at these two sites, see Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 177-8.

³²⁵ Fittings and fixtures which survive at Irish Cistercian houses are discussed at Stalley, *Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, 199-226.

³²⁶ On the architecture of Boyle abbey, see Kalkreuter, *Boyle Abbey*.

columns. The sedilia of Jerpoint Abbey, Kilkenny, is of the more common type formed by three arches, here each is decorated with a strip of chevron. **[4.165]** Stalley states that the sedilia is an original feature of the building dating to *ca.* 1160-70, but it has also been suggested that the sedilia was inserted in the middle of the fifteenth century when building works were carried out at the site as the incised chevron ornament is not in keeping with that found at other contemporary Cistercian foundations.³²⁷ Corcomroe Abbey, Clare, possesses an interesting double sedilia whose design is in keeping with the School of the West style found at a number of western foundations in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century.³²⁸ **[4.166]** As at Boyle, the niche is formed of a single arch flanked by engaged columns with decorated capitals, but the design is much more elaborate. Chevron ornament runs across the arch and the two seats are designated by moulded blind arches resting on capitals and tapering corbels. A triple sedilia was inserted at Baltinglass Abbey, Wicklow, in the early-thirteenth century where the trefoil headed niches are decorated with nail-head ornament. **[4.167]**

By the thirteenth century, the sedilia can be found at non-Cistercian sites in Ireland. The design of the thirteenth-century sedilia at Cong Augustinian Abbey, Mayo, is reminiscent of that found at Boyle but more extravagantly decorated.³²⁹ **[4.168]** The arch and hood of the wide, single arch are moulded and the jambs are decorated with engaged columns resting on bulbous bases. Thirteenth-century sedilia can also be found at Limerick Cathedral, Limerick **[4.169]** and St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny. **[4.170]** The Early English designs of these sedilia are much more in keeping with English fashions of the time, as should not be surprising at these newly-built cathedrals.³³⁰ The separate sedilia and piscina at Adare Augustinian Abbey, Limerick, also bear similar Early English stylings. **[4.171]** Perhaps one of the most famous examples of late medieval Irish stone carving can be found on the sedilia of Holy Cross Cistercian Abbey, Tipperary. **[4.172]** This elaborate structure, over five metres tall, has been described as a decorative 'tour de force' within the corpus of Irish Gothic sculpture.³³¹ Here, the three seats are set into separate vaulted niches, the heraldic shields of England, Ormond and Desmond sit between the cusped ogee arches. Above the foliate finials rests a hipped roof again decorated with foliate finials. Detailed structural analysis of the sedilia recently carried

³²⁷ Rachel Moss has suggested the possibility that the sedilia and piscina are fifteenth century insertions. (personal comment) Jerpoint was granted an indulgence to help pay for repairs in 1442, see Stalley, *Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, 296, fn. 61.

³²⁸ A detailed study of the architecture of Corcomroe can be found at Stalley, 'Corcomroe Abbey'.

³²⁹ On Cong, see H Leask, 'The Augustinian Abbey of St Mary the Virgin, Cong, Co. Mayo' in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, XIX (1941), 107-117 and H. Gardiner, 'Cong, Mayo', *CRSBI*, (http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/location/cong*/site/id-ma-cong.html) (Accessed January 19, 2010).

³³⁰ The architecture of St Canice's Cathedral is discussed at 100-05. On Limerick Cathedral, see Hewson, 'St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick' and Westropp, 'St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick' and 'St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick (Continued)'.

³³¹ Stalley, *Cistercian Monasteries of Ireland*, 200.

out by O'Donovan convincingly argues that it could only have been constructed between the years 1429 and 1444.³³²

There are a wide variety of forms found in later medieval sedilia. The simplest of these might be that found at the Abbey church at the monastic complex of St Mullins, Carlow.³³³ [4.173] Here, the sedilia is formed of a single chamfered arch and is much simpler in form than the cusped ogee-headed piscina which stands to the east. A fifteenth-century sedilia stands in the south wall of Adare Franciscan Friary, Limerick, set against a tomb niche. [4.174] Here, the moulded arches of the seats are set into a quadrangular surround, the sides of which is formed by the crocketed pinnacles of the adjoining tomb niches. Though scant traces remain today, paintwork was visible on both the piscina and sedilia here at the turn of the twentieth century. Westropp records that the separate piscina still bore the following decoration: 'a diaper of reddish-orange and greenish blue all round the head and sides of the recess, and a figure in the space between the arch and the hood moulding ... the chamfer was painted a deep crimson'; while 'bands of greenish-blue on the sides and arch' remained on the sedilia'.³³⁴ The fifteenth-century aumbry and sedilia combination at Ardfert Cathedral, Kerry, is also set into a surround, but here it is formed of a continuation of the moulded arches atop the niches which serves to raise the level of the thirteenth-century window sill.³³⁵ [4.175] The easternmost aumbry niche hood terminates in a stop; the pointed arches of both features are decorated with a diaper pattern.

By the later middle ages, sedilia can also be found in a number of parish churches, but as in England, these tend to be more important sites. A triple sedilia/piscina combination still stands in the parish church of St Mary, Youghall, Cork, where heavily moulded arches and hoods top each niche.³³⁶ [4.176] The parish church of Rathmore, Meath, possesses a triple sedilia set against, as opposed to cut into, the south chancel wall.³³⁷ [4.177] Here, the simple rectangular shape of the feature is offset by the elaborately sculpted pseudo-vault. [4.178] It

³³² O'Donovan, 'Building the Butler Lordship'; a discussion of the Holy Cross sedilia can be found at 111-113.

³³³ The remains of seven churches dating from the early Christian to the early modern period can be found at the monastic complex. See C. Manning, *St Mullins: An early ecclesiastical site and medieval settlement in County Carlow* (Bray, 1999).

³³⁴ As recorded in T. J. Westropp, 'Paintings at Adare 'Abbey', Co. Limerick' in *JRS&AI*, 5:2 (1915), 151-2.

³³⁵ Although it would appear that the two smaller eastern niches formed a double piscina, or piscina and credence, neither contains a drain. A fragment of a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century piscina consisting of a slab containing half of a double-lobed basin was uncovered during excavation of the site, which has been heavily restored in modern times. It is possible that this was once set into this feature, as there is no other obvious location from which it might have come though there is no indication that the base of the feature has been so significantly reworked. See F. Moore, *Ardfert Cathedral. Summary of Excavation Results* (Dublin, 2007), 30.

³³⁶ On St Mary's Parish Church, see D. Kelly, J. Mulcahy and C. Tait, 'St Mary's Youghal, Co Cork' in *Irish Arts Review*, 20:1 (Spring, 2003), 114-121.

³³⁷ On Rathmore, see O'Neill, 'The Medieval Parish Churches of County Meath', 25-28.

must be noted, however, that the vast majority of Irish parish churches had neither the funds nor the need for such an elaborate and luxurious piece of furniture. It may be that a large number of wooden sedilia have been lost but a more likely scenario is that sedilia was a luxury item which never became a staple of Irish parish church architecture.³³⁸

The Font

There are no surviving Irish baptismal fonts conclusively dated to before the twelfth century; the vast majority date to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.³³⁹ In the absence of any early medieval architectural evidence for the practice of baptism one possibility is that, until the later middle ages, the sacrament most frequently took place outdoors in streams or in holy wells. Certainly many authors have noted the association between holy wells and early religious foundations: ‘There must be several thousand holy wells in Ireland, many of them at early church sites. There were pressing practical reasons for building a church so close to a good water supply, and it is surely this source which has sometimes come to be regarded as a holy well.’³⁴⁰ Though these wells have served as ritual *loci* within the landscape through the early modern period to the present day, their function within the early medieval church remains uncertain.³⁴¹ At least one site, St Mullins, Carlow, baptisms were performed in a holy well until the nineteenth century.³⁴² A full treatment of the subject has recently been published by Niamh Whitfield, who in reviewing the documentary, liturgical and architectural evidence for baptism in early medieval Ireland, has reached the conclusion that holy wells must have played a role in the sacrament and were clearly part of the liturgical sphere of the Irish Church.³⁴³

³³⁸ That the sedilia never became a common feature of Irish parish churches is confirmed by the presence of only one within the Killaloe diocesan churches under investigation in this study. This sedilia is found at Kilfinaghta, Clare, discussed at catalogue entry 8.

³³⁹ Their earliest Irish fonts bear Romanesque decoration and belong to the twelfth century. These, and their later medieval counterparts, will be discussed presently.

³⁴⁰ Hamlin and Hughes, *Modern Traveller to the Early Irish Church*, 108-9. There are numerous works describing the holy wells of Ireland, including E. Healy, *In Search of Ireland's Holy Wells* (Dublin, 2001). A list of sources can be found in A. Gribben, *Holy Wells and Sacred Water Sources in Ireland and Britain: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York, 1992).

³⁴¹ For an account of modern devotional activities taking place at a holy wells see S. Ó Cadhla, *The Holy Well Tradition. The Pattern of St Declan, Ardmore, County Waterford, 1800-2000* (Dublin, 2002). A contemporary account of these early-modern traditions can be found at P. D. Hardy, *The Holy Wells of Ireland, Containing an Authentic Account of those Various Places of Pilgrimage and Penance which are still Annually Visited by Thousands of Roman Catholic Peasantry* (Dublin, 1836).

³⁴² For this comment, see Eoin de Bhaldraithe ‘Kildara and Tulrahan’ in Michael Conor (ed.), *Becan/Bekan: Portrait of an East Mayo Parish* (Ballinrobe, 1986), 112-17 at 116 and Eoin de Bhaldraithe, ‘The New Asperges’ in Sean Swayne (ed.), *New Liturgy* (1983).

³⁴³ N. Whitfield, ‘A Suggested Function for the Holy Well?’ in A. Minnis and J. Roberts (eds), *Text, Image, Interpretation. Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin* (Turnhout, 2007), 495-514.

Early documentary sources make it clear that natural water had clear religious associations. There are indications in early Celtic hagiography that early saints, including St Patrick, would stand in lakes and rivers during prayer and the recitation of psalms. Such a practice would certainly be in keeping with the strong asceticism of the early Irish church.³⁴⁴ There are, however, more specific indications that natural springs or wells might be used for baptism. An episode in Adomnán's *Life of Saint Columba* describes just such an incident:

‘Once during the saint’s life of pilgrimage he was on a journey when a child was brought to him for baptism by his parents. But there was no water to be found in that spot. So the saint turned aside to the nearest rock, here he knelt and prayed a little while. When he stood up, he blessed the face of the rock, and at once water bubbled out from it in great quantity. Thereupon he baptized the child. . .’³⁴⁵

Despite indications that wells may have been used in such a way throughout the middle ages, there is a lack of specific documentary references describing such a practice. The only documentary evidence for the baptismal rite in early medieval Ireland is the *ordo baptismi* contained in the late eighth-century Stowe Missal, but this contains no direct references to the place in which the ceremony is performed.³⁴⁶ The baptismal formula as found in the Stowe Missal is ‘peculiar in that it does not contain the direction to the minister to use the baptismal formula, but associates the moment of baptism with the creedal responses of the candidate’.³⁴⁷ Such an approach to the conveyance of the sacrament would be more in keeping with earlier traditions of adult baptism in a missionary context, but references to infant baptism found in a

³⁴⁴ A full discussion of the role of water in the early Christian ritual landscape of the British Isles, including Ireland, can be found in J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2006), see particularly Chapter 4. See also Gittos, ‘Sacred Space in Anglo-Saxon England’ and M. Herity, *Studies in the Layout, Buildings and Art in Stone of Early Irish Monasteries* (London, 1995), 78-80.

³⁴⁵ Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, II.10, 161. On this, see also Gittos, ‘Sacred Space in Anglo-Saxon England’, 36-8. There are a number of other instances where early Irish hagiography contains accounts of baptism in natural water. These are collected and discussed in Whitfield, ‘A Suggested Function for the Holy Well?’.

³⁴⁶ The baptismal formula as found in the Stowe Missal is ‘peculiar in that it does not contain the direction to the minister to use the baptismal formula, but associates the moment of baptism with the creedal responses of the candidate.’ Such an approach to the conveyance of the sacrament would be more in keeping with earlier traditions of adult baptism in a missionary context. See Victor de Waal, ‘The So-called Omission of the Baptismal Formula in the Order of Baptism in the Stowe Missal’, *Peritia* 13 (1999), 255-58. A full discussion of the history and development of the baptismal rite is outside the scope of this study, but a number of scholarly works have been published on the subject, amongst them is J. D. C. Fisher, *Baptism in the Medieval West. A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation* (London, 1965) and P. Cramer, *Baptism and Change in the Early Middle Ages c. 200 – c. 1150* (Cambridge, 1993). A number of medieval baptismal rites are given in translation, with extensive commentary, at E. C. Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy* (London, 1970).

³⁴⁷ See de Waal, ‘The So-called Omission of the Baptismal Formula’.

number of early Irish Penitentials suggests that the Stowe Missal text preserves a much older version of the rite.³⁴⁸

References to the sacrament can be found in a number of documents from the reforming period. In about 1081, Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, wrote to Domnall Ua hEnna, bishop of Munster, in which he responded to an inquiry about the necessity of giving infants the Eucharist directly following baptism.³⁴⁹ Lanfranc believed this to be unnecessary, but instead of discussing the baptismal rite used the opportunity to expound upon the nature of the Eucharist and Transubstantiation. While this indicates that Irish clerics were concerned with ensuring the efficacy of the sacrament, it tells us nothing about where it might have taken place. In his early twelfth-century text, *De statu ecclesiae*, Gille of Limerick referred to a baptistery (*baptisterium*) as one of the items that a parish priest must possess; it must be consecrated by a bishop and separated from common usage.³⁵⁰ Only one external baptistery is known to exist in Ireland; this is found at the holy well of St Doulagh's Church, Dublin, where an octagonal structure has been erected over the site of the well.³⁵¹ [4.179] Gille of Limerick did, however, mention a piscina drain amongst the things a priest should possess for the celebration of the Eucharist: 'a tree trunk or carved stone into which the water used for washing sacred things may be poured away.'³⁵² Examples of wooden fonts survive in Wales, and there is no reason to suppose that fonts of a similar type were not used by the Irish clergy.³⁵³ [4.180, 4.181] It is also possible that metal basins were used as fonts. In England, thirty lead fonts dated to the twelfth and early thirteenth century survive; one twelfth-century example can be found at Brookland, Kent.³⁵⁴ [4.182] No similar fonts have survived within an Irish context, but a ninth-century decorated bucket found at Clonard, Meath, [4.183] closely

³⁴⁸ The earliest surviving penitential, *The Penitential of Vinnian*, a sixth-century text, states: 'If the child of anyone departs without baptism and was lost through negligence, great is the crime...' as translated in Bieler, *Irish Penitentials*, 93. A description of the document can be found at 3-4.

³⁴⁹ Letter from Lanfranc to Domnall Ua hEnna ca. 1081 as translated in Clover and Gibson, *Letters of Lanfranc*, 155, letter 49. A discussion of the correspondence between the archbishops of Canterbury and Irish prelates and magnates can be found at 29-31.

³⁵⁰ *De Statue Ecclesiae*, line 265 as translated in Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, 161. A full discussion of this text can be found at 39-44.

³⁵¹ On St Doulagh's, see R. Moss, 'St Doulagh's Church' in *Irish Arts Review* 20-2 (2003), 122-125 and P. Harbsion, 'St Doulagh's Church' in *Studies*, 71:281 (1982): 27-42. External baptisteries were also uncommon in early medieval England, see Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 201-02.

³⁵² *De Statue Ecclesiae*, line 234 as translated in Fleming, *Gille of Limerick*, p. 235.

³⁵³ One such font is located at St Michael's Church, Efenechtyd while another was found in a bog near Siman Mowddwy, both in Wales. See J.C. Wall, *Porches and Fonts* (London, 1912), 190-2.

³⁵⁴ Only in England and France made frequent use of lead fonts during the early middle ages; it would seem that the technique originated in England and was later adopted by the French. In England, thirty lead fonts dated to the twelfth and early thirteenth century survive. See C. S. Drake, *The Romanesque Fonts of Northern Europe and Scandinavia* (Woodbridge, 2002), especially 170-74 and F. Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers* (London, 1908), 75-87.

resembles a number of decorated Scandinavian metalwork buckets, such as the one from Skei, Norway, [4.184] which played a presumed role in the baptismal ceremony.³⁵⁵

There are examples of font-like features at early ecclesiastical sites which may have played a role in baptism. Bullaun stones, or stones with rounded hollows are often found at early ecclesiastical sites; the water within is often credited with restorative powers.³⁵⁶ One example can be found within the ruins of Timoleague Franciscan Friary, Cork, which is clearly marked with a sign indicating that the water contained can cure warts. [4.185] It is also possible that the large basin located within the ground of St Maelruan's Church, Tallaght, Dublin served a similar function. [4.186]

While many studies have been published on English fonts,³⁵⁷ the only work which has attempted to catalogue surviving Irish fonts is H. K. J. Pike's *Medieval Fonts of Ireland*.³⁵⁸ This work contains a brief history of the baptismal rite and a catalogue of ninety-one known medieval fonts, many of which have been moved from their original location to nearby Church of Ireland churches. While this is an invaluable work, its main drawback is that Pike did not include photographs; instead a line drawing of each font is included. While her drawings do resemble the objects she describes, they are not detailed enough to present a clear image and certainly cannot help to identify any sculpture or iconography which decorates the fonts. Helen Roe has published a study of medieval fonts from Meath which is also incredibly useful, but this work is confined to surviving fonts within the county and as such is most representative of decorated Anglo-Norman work.³⁵⁹ The remaining scholarly work on medieval fonts is found in small articles scattered throughout local history journals. The Archaeological Survey of Ireland has documented the survival of numerous fonts throughout the county; large numbers survive in the counties of Kilkenny and Tipperary especially. However, no study has been published which provides an overview of these survivals.

³⁵⁵ This possibility was raised in Whitfield, 'A suggested function for the Holy Well?' at p. 510 and at Ryan, *Early Irish Communion Vessels*, 31. The bucket is now in the National Museum, Ireland. On the Skei bucket and other metalwork pails, and their likely liturgical context, see J. Graham-Campbell, 'National and Regional Identities: "The Glittering Prizes"' in M. Redknapp, *et al* (eds), *Pattern and Purpose in Insular Art: Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Insular Art held at the National Museum and Gallery, Cardiff 3-6 September 1998*, (Oxford, 2001), 27-38.

³⁵⁶ For the possible function of bullaun stones in early medieval Ireland, see P. Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland: The Monuments and the People* (London, 1991). Whitfield notes that similar stones are found in religious contexts in Anglo-Saxon England, see Whitfield 'A suggested function for the Holy Well?', 510, fn. 68.

³⁵⁷ See, for example, the classic antiquarian work of Francis Bond which is still the standard reference work on English fonts today: Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*. More modern works, such as that by Drake, *Romanesque Fonts of Northern Europe*, do exist, but these do not confine themselves to England specifically.

³⁵⁸ H. K. J. Pike, *Medieval Fonts of Ireland* (Greystones, 1989).

³⁵⁹ H. Roe, *Medieval Fonts of Meath* (Longford, 1968).

It must be noted that in addition to those which originally served parish churches, a number of fonts survive from a cathedral and monastic context. These are important in signalling not only significant patronage, but also the parochial function of these sites.³⁶⁰ A large Romanesque font still stands in the nave of Killaloe Cathedral. [6.90, 6.91] The cathedral church at Clonfert, Galway, retains a decorated early-thirteenth-century font. [6.95]

The majority of surviving fonts came originally from foundations under the patronage of the Anglo-Normans; although their design does not correspond exactly to the changing fashions of English font design, it should not be surprising that certain parallels can be drawn. Although an exhaustive treatment of development in font design is not warranted here, a brief overview will be provided with a heavy focus on the earliest known fonts dated to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

There are examples of early fonts, but these are so plain and undecorated that they are impossible to date. One example might be found at Ballywiheen Church, Ballyneanig, Kerry; this plain circular basin is only ten inches deep and fourteen inches in diameter.³⁶¹ [4.187] Another circular tub-shaped font is now located at the modern Catholic church of St Colmcille at Wyanstown, Louth.³⁶² [4.188] Cahill has argued that the shape of this font is based upon the cushion or block capital font so frequently found in England in the mid to late twelfth century; she further argues that this font, though less elaborately carved, is stylistically comparable to that found at St Audoen's, Dublin, dated to *ca.* 1200.³⁶³ [4.189] Stylistically comparable fonts are found in late twelfth-century England; but Bond has noted that although cushion capital fonts were popular throughout the twelfth century, those without enriched sculpture should be dated to the first half of the century.³⁶⁴ In her assessment of the Dublin font McMahon has followed Cahill's lead in comparing the Wyanstown and Dublin fonts with one another, and drawing stylistic links with the Launceton group of fonts found in Cornwall.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁰ A discussion of surviving fonts from the diocese of Killaloe can be found in Chapter 5 under the heading 'The Font' and a full list can be found in Appendix 9.

³⁶¹ See Pike, *Medieval Fonts of Ireland*, 8 and R. A. S. Macalister, 'Ballywiheen Church, Ballyneanig, Co. Kerry' in *JRSAI*, 8:1 (1898), 15-20.

³⁶² A full description of this font can be found at M. Cahill, 'A Baptismal Font at Wyanstown, Co. Louth' in *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society*, 20:3 (1983), 237-239.

³⁶³ On this font, see M. McMahon, *St Audoen's Church, Cornmarket, Dublin: Archaeology and Architecture* (Dublin, 2006), 88-9.

³⁶⁴ For a discussion of the variety of cushion capital fonts found in England, see Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, 151.

³⁶⁵ This group of fonts is discussed at Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, 151; see also the plates of three of the fonts from this group at 202-3.

While all four fonts are certainly modelled on the cushion capital, a brief comparison of the two Irish fonts from Wyanstown and Dublin with two fonts of the Launceston group found at Launceston [4.190] and Bratton [4.191] shows that the Irish fonts do not owe a significant stylistic debt to this group. The corners of both Launceston fonts are decorated with large carved heads while the scalloped cushions are decorated with floral motifs set into roundels; while the Wyanstown font is uncarved, the cushions of the Dublin font are set into a hooded semi-circular surround. The base of the cushion is decorated with square pellets set between filleted rolls and decorated with a leaf-like pattern inset, again, with square pellets. Instead, it might be argued that the two Irish fonts, despite both being based on the cushion capital design, are not in fact closely related. A better comparison for the Wyanstone font might be found at Ubley, Somerset, where the basin takes the form of an undivided capital.³⁶⁶ [4.192] The Dublin font, also might find better comparisons; one could certainly be made with the font from St. Nicholas, Thames Ditton, Surrey.³⁶⁷ [4.193] Here the treatment of the cushions is more in keeping with that found at Dublin; though sculpted heads are found at the corners, they are much smaller and a continuous moulding decorated with a rope pattern set between two fillets runs across the feature in a design which strongly resembles that given to the cushions at Dublin.

Another early font survives at Killeshin, Laois. This church is well known for its Romanesque west portal, the design of which dominates the literature on the site; the surviving font has only been noted in one publication dated to the early twentieth century.³⁶⁸ The basin is circular and retains traces of an incised line which divided the bulbous form into two bands; a vertical incision indicates that it was equally divided into four quadrants. [4.194] A small bulbous lip sits at the base of the feature while the top of the basin retains small drill holes which would have secured a font cover. [4.195] While the font retains no sculptural detail which might help to date it, comparison with the Romanesque font at Kilpeck, Herefordshire, suggests that it is contemporary with the mid-twelfth-century building programme which took place at the site.³⁶⁹ [4.196] Not only do both churches retain elaborate Romanesque decoration dated to

³⁶⁶ This font has been published at Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, 40. Cahill also compares the Wyanstown font to Ubley, stating the font at Ubley, Somerset, is a more sophisticated expression of the cubic (cushion) capital form but the similarities between it and the Wyanstown example are clear' See M. Cahill, 'A Baptismal Font at Wyanstown', 238.

³⁶⁷ On this font, see Wall, *Porches and Fonts*, 265-7.

³⁶⁸ Killeshin was a site constructed under the royal patronage of the Leinster king Diarmait MacMurchada around the year 1141. On the patronage of Diarmait at Killeshin and other sites, see T. O'Keeffe, 'Diarmait Mac Murchada and Romanesque Leinster: Four Twelfth century Churches in Context' in *JRS:AI*, 128 (1997), 52-79. On the architecture of the church and its position within the corpus of Hiberno-Romanesque decoration, see R. Stalley, 'Hiberno-Romanesque and the sculpture of Killeshin' in P. Lane and W. Nolan (eds), *Laois: History and Society* (Dublin, 1999), 89-122. The font is discussed in H. Crawford and H. Leask, 'Killeshin Church and Its Romanesque Ornament' in *JRS:AI*, 15:2 (1925), 83-94.

³⁶⁹ The architecture of Kilpeck Church is more fully discussed at 89-90.

the middle of the twelfth century, but the fonts at both sites are similar in design. The Kilpeck font is less bulbous and has a plan basin, but its overall shape and form is comparable to the Killeshin font. The rounded Kilpeck basin is also set upon an attached lip, but here the pedestal survives and indicates that the Killeshin font would have been supported by both a large central drain and smaller, possibly decorated, columns. Bond suggests that the Kilpeck font may be dated to the eleventh century on the basis of the Corinthian-style capitals supporting its piers, and it is certainly less elaborate in design than the church itself.³⁷⁰ The comparison, however, suggests an early date for the Killeshin font which is likely to be contemporary with the Romanesque building programme underway between the years 1145 and 1155.³⁷¹

One final Irish Romanesque parish font from the east of the country has been noted. This is the font now standing in Wicklow church, Wicklow.³⁷² Unlike the fonts from Wyanstown and Dublin, however, the Wicklow font is tub-shaped and bears unusual and inconsistent decoration. One side of the tub is rounded, and decorated with an incised sawtooth pattern. **[4.197]** But the other side of the font is decorated with roll-moulded scallops. **[4.198]** Beneath these cushions is an incised chevron pattern. This is extremely curious, as it is unusual to find a piece bearing two distinctly different decorative programmes. Sawtooth ornament was not a common font design and when it was employed, instead of covering the face of the font as at Wicklow, it formed a ring around the basin. The font at Buckfastleigh, Devon, has sawtooth ornament ringing the bottom of the basin **[4.199]** while the font at Sandridge, Hertfordshire **[4.200]** employs a similar ring around the top of the basin.³⁷³ In both cases, however, this ornament is secondary and the main focus is placed on the decorative carvings occupying the face of the basin.

The three small moulded cushions which appear on the opposite side of the font are also unusual, but might be seen as a precursor to the three-cushion font form which is found in some thirteenth-century designs. One example is found at Shere, Surrey, where each side of the shallow basin is formed of three unmoulded scallops. **[4.201]** Carved of Purkbeck marble and dated to *ca.* 1200, Bond has described the style of this font as marking a transition from

³⁷⁰ On the Kilpeck font, see Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, 150.

³⁷¹ This date is as suggested by O’Keeffe, ‘Diarmait Mac Murchada and Romanesque Leinster’, 65-69.

³⁷² The font has been discussed by Helen Hickey, who suggests that both the Romanesque doorway and font now located in Wicklow church originally belonged to a now unknown church located in Old Kilcullen, Kildare. She also raises the possibility that they may have once belonged to a now lost church at Glendalough. H. Hickey, ‘A Romanesque Arch and Font at Wicklow’ in *JRSAI*, 102 (1972), 97-112.

³⁷³ The font at Buckfastleigh is described in Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, 41, while the font at Sandridge is described at Cox and Harvey, *English Church Furniture*, 202. Hickey also draws attention to the use of sawtooth ornament at Sandridge at Hickey, ‘A Romanesque Arch and Font at Wicklow’, 112.

Romanesque to Gothic design in font ornamentation, at which point the emphasis changed from sculptural decoration to proportions of shape.³⁷⁴

Two Irish fonts from Wexford have basins which employ this three scalloped design, but here the emphasis is squarely placed on elaborate sculptural decoration. One now stands at St Mogues' Church of Ireland at Fethard-on-Sea [4.202] while the other is still in use at the Roman Catholic church at Carrick-on-Bannow.³⁷⁵ [4.203] The first of these, at Fethard-on-Sea may have originally stood at one of the nearby Cisterican Abbeys, Tintern or Dunbrody. The second, at Carrick-on-Bannow, is said to have come from the medieval parish church of Bannow, a town founded by the Anglo-Normans in the late twelfth century. The designs of these fonts are clearly related, but the Banow font is more finely cut work. Here, a fleur-de-lis is deeply incised into the face of the block. The side petals of the design are formed of elongated ribbons, one of which spirals inwards while the other descends into the base of the scallops and is finished with an upturned leaf. Two small leaves also rise from the ribbons to fill the upper corners, while two small flowers rise from the shoulders of the fleur-de-lis. Close inspection will show that the head of the fleur is decorated with an incised internal surround, as is the leaf resting in the leftmost scallop, but no other leaves bear such a decoration suggesting perhaps that this was left somewhat unfinished. The face of the font is surrounded by a continuous wide moulding decorated with incised chevron, but in contrast to the well-carved fleur-de-lis, the moulding is unevenly shaped and so thick that the overall design appears cramped. This suggests the possibility that the moulding and the sculpture were carved by different hands, this might be corroborated by the somewhat unfinished fleur-de-lis.

The design of the Fethard font is less expertly executed but clearly derived from the Bannow font. The fleur-de-lis is not as deeply incised or finely executed and the mason has omitted the small leaves which fill the upper corners of the block. The lower ribbons are also differently treated and here terminate in a scalloped leaf form. The moulded surround also bears lightly incised chevron ornament, and though quite thick, fits better with the overall composition of the design. Could it be that the mason who finished the Bannow font attempted to replicate the design at Fethard?

³⁷⁴ See the description at Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, 211. At 225, he also explains the lack of sculptural decoration found on a number of thirteenth century fonts carved of Purbeck as a purposeful attempt to eschew decorative stylings in favour of a stranger emphasis on proportion.

³⁷⁵ A discussion of these two fonts can be found in Pike, *Medieval Fonts of Ireland*, 14-5.

Pike has identified a group of twelve fonts she terms the ‘Ossory Group’.³⁷⁶ These fonts are characterised by large square bowls with rounded basins, the external faces are decorated with continuous fluting. Pike suggests that the earliest of these fonts is that preserved at St Canice’s Cathedral, Kilkenny, which she suggests bears traces of Romanesque styling based upon the rounded arches of the flutes.³⁷⁷ [4.204] While one example of a fluted front with Hiberno-Romanesque stylings survives at Kilfenora Cathedral, Clare, [4.205] they two are obviously derived from different traditions. The Kilfenora font might be more favourably compared with the cushion capital fonts found in twelfth-century England as its design is clearly derived from the fluted capital commonly employed in the repertoire of late twelfth-century Irish Romanesque decoration. Examples of similar fluted capitals can be found within the ruins of Kyle church, Laois and in the aumbries of Killaloe Cathedral.

The flutes of the Kilfenora font rise to undecorated scallops; at Kyle, the capitals design is similarly fluted but here, spiral decoration is found running across to top of the feature. [4.206] As the design of the Kyle font, particularly the spiral band, is typical of the approaches taken within Hiberno-Romanesque sculpture, it would seem that the Kilfenora font incorporated elements of both traditions; it is easy to see how the scrollwork atop of the Kyle capital can be seen as a more elaborated version of the scallop as it creates a similar band of rounded cusps. At Killaloe Cathedral, small capitals from the Romanesque cathedral were reused in the aumbries set into the east wall of the chancel.³⁷⁸ [4.207] Here, the small capitals set stop both the moulded dividing wall of the double-niche feature and the south arch jamb are decorated with a stylistically comparable form. [4.208, 4.209] Here, the decorative emphasis is placed upon the chamfered face of the columns where plain conical flutes are interspersed with asparagus-shaped flutes; the scalloped rim remains plain and undecorated. Though clearly derived from a capital form, the Kilfenora font is stylistically distinct from the font found at St Canice’s, Kilkenny, and the wider Ossory Group.

Although the Ossory fonts discussed by Pike do share similar characteristics, a clear distinction must be made between them. The basin of the St Canice’s font is formed of large square blocks decorated with an arcade of hollow flutes. [2.204] It sits upon a central pillar and is supported by four columns rising from bulbous bases decorated with spurs. It is

³⁷⁶ Pike, *Medieval Fonts of Ireland*, 17-25.

³⁷⁷ Pike, *Medieval Fonts of Ireland*, 17-18.

³⁷⁸ A description of the aumbries and capitals, with multiple images of the capitals, can be found at T. Garton, ‘St Flannan, Killaloe, Clare’, *CRSBI* (http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/feature/1_Fonts/site/id-cl-kilca.html). (Accessed April 15, 2010).

contemporary with the initial building phase of the cathedral and can be dated to *ca.* 1260.³⁷⁹ The font found at Old Leighlin Cathedral, Carlow is clearly modelled on the St Canice's font and can also be dated to the mid-thirteenth century. [2.210] Two contemporary fonts can be found at St Francis' Abbey, Kilkenny [2.211] and Saul, Down. [2.212] Here, however, the flutes are much wider and divided by a raised vertical band.

Five fonts within the group can be dated to the later thirteenth century; all display similar decorative treatment of the basin. Here, however, the form of the fluting has been inverted and developed into a row of blind arcading formed by tall, pointed lancets as can be seen on the font at St. Mary's Parish Church, Callan. [2.213] The stylistic treatment of these basins can be favourably compared with a number of late twelfth and thirteenth century English fonts decorated with rows of blind arcading. The font at Crambe, Yorkshire is dated to the last quarter of the twelfth century on the basis of the water-leaf capitals which support the basin.³⁸⁰ [2.214] Here, the basin is decorated with rows of rounded interesting arches supported by columns on cushion capitals. By the thirteenth century, the treatment of the arches changes; rounded-headed trefoils decorate the font at Buxted, Surrey [2.215] while pointed trefoils are found on the font at Ashbourne, Derbyshire. [2.216]

Rows of blind arcading were further developed into more complex architectural forms; and window tracery becomes a common decorative feature as can be seen on the font at Brailes, Warwickshire, dated to *ca.* 1330 on the basis of the trails of ballflower decorating the bottom of the basin.³⁸¹ [4.217] While window forms are not frequently found in late medieval Irish font decoration, the use of tracery patterns to create decorative schemes was particularly popular in Gaelic Ireland. O'Donovan has shown how Irish workshops adapted forms found in purely English contexts to a more regional variant of Gothic architectural sculpture and one result was the appearance of pattern book designs on fonts and tombs; this can be clearly seen on the early sixteenth-century font from Fertagh.³⁸² [4.218]

In contrast, surviving fonts from many Anglo-Norman foundations in the east of the country often bear elaborate figure sculpture and varied iconographic programmes. Representations of the Apostles are common, the font at Clonard contains a depiction of St Peter with his keys

³⁷⁹ A discussion of the Cathedral fabric can be found earlier in this chapter at 100-05.

³⁸⁰ On both the Crambe font and the vogue for blind arcading in late twelfth-century font decoration, see Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, 149-50.

³⁸¹ On the Brailes font and the popularity of window tracery in fourteenth-century font decoration, see Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, 229.

³⁸² O'Donovan, 'Building the Butler Lordship', has discussed the use of pattern books for sculptural design sources and finds that their use is particularly common in the work of the O'Tunny atelier.

amongst the figures on the basin.³⁸³ [4.219] Four documented fonts contain representations of all twelve and Roe suggests that these form a distinct iconographical group she terms the ‘Apostle Fonts’³⁸⁴ These are the fonts of Dunsany, Kilcarne and Crickstown, all in Meath, and one from St. Peter’s Church, Drogheda, Louth. The large, octagonal font from Drogheda has lost its original base and now rests on a modern construction.³⁸⁵ [2.220] The apostles figures are set into arched arcades separated by columns with moulded bases and capitals, each holding his symbol. Angles with scrolls occupy the lower panels which are differentiated by rope moulding.. Though the faces of the apostles are no longer clear, the round arcading and necked capitals are stylistically consistent with thirteenth-century font design. The angels decorating the lower course, however, are stylistically representative of later Irish stone carving and thus perhaps the upper arcading may have been inspired by an earlier font. This copying from an earlier design might also account for the uncommonly large size of the font which Roe comments on, as smaller basins were the norm in later medieval font design.

A similar design is found on the font from Dunsany, Meath.³⁸⁶ [4.221] Here the Apostles are set into a row of arcaded niches at the top of the basin, while the angels, here bearing shields, have moved to the pedestal. The entire composition is contemporary, and can be dated to the fifteenth century on stylistic grounds. A number of fonts also contain scenes depicting the Flight out of Egypt, as can be seen at both Clonard and Dunsany while the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan is depicted at Clonard [4.222] and a particularly fine example occupies one panel of the octagonal font at Rathmore, Meath.³⁸⁷ [4.223]

³⁸³ A description of the Clonard Font can be found at Roe, *Medieval Fonts of Meath*, 28-30 and D. Harris, ‘The Baptismal Font of Clonard, Co. Westmeath’ in *JRSAI*, 10:2 (1940), 89-91

³⁸⁴ For a overview of the Apostle Fonts, see Roe, *Medieval Fonts of Meath*, 19.

³⁸⁵ A description of the Drogheda font can be found at H. Roe, ‘Two Decorated Fonts in Drogheda, Co. Louth’ in *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society*, 18:4 (1976), 255-262.

³⁸⁶ On the Dunsany font, see Roe, *Medieval Fonts of Meath*, 50-53.

³⁸⁷ On the Rathmore font, see Roe, *Medieval Fonts of Meath*, 94-99.

Liturgy and Architecture: Some Preliminary Conclusions

This chapter has drawn together information from a wide variety of documentary and architectural sources in order to present a concise overview of evolutions to the plan and layout of Irish churches over the middle ages. It has considered evidence for internal arrangements within large, single-celled early Irish churches and shown that the appearance of the two-celled plan in the twelfth century can be seen as an architectural response to changes in Eucharistic theology and the reforming effort to increase the division between monks, clergy and the laity. The discussion of chancel arches, however, has shown that there is no evidence for the inclusion of screens in nave and chancel churches before the thirteenth century. It is at this point that large, wide arches begin to be found, often with imposts, which may have supported a large rood. This, too, can be connected with the Eucharistic ritual and evolving theological and devotional attitudes towards the consecrated Host.

In addition to providing an overview of Hiberno-Norse, Cistercian and Mendicant architecture, it has overviewed the morphology of the later medieval parish church and argued that the simplicity in plan is more reflective of the socio-political climate in which these churches were erected than a lack of interest in the patronage or furnishing. To date, no evidence has been advanced to show how the layout or design of Gaelic Irish churches indicates the enactment of any specific rite or ritual. While the discussion of the Anglo-Norman cathedrals of St Patrick's, Dublin and St Canice's, Kilkenny has shown that both of these buildings were built and designed to accommodate the liturgy of the Sarum Rite, no work has been undertaken as yet to determine if any similar arrangements were in place in any other Irish cathedrals in the thirteenth century. Nor has any scholarly work considered any architectural evidence for liturgical practices or rights at parish churches.

No evidence has yet been produced to show if, or how, the layout and design of churches reflects their function. Though evidence shows that Ó Carragáin's argument that Irish churches were designed to accommodate congregations is warranted, no clear distinction has emerged to distinguish between church types. It is argued here that though churches could accommodate congregations, there were invariably churches of different functions that would have served different groups: canons, monks or the laity. Though each church could accommodate a congregation, it does not necessarily follow that this every church was primarily congregational.

Although the treatment and placement of fittings and fixtures can sometimes be used to reconstruct liturgical rites and practices at a site, a lack of attention is paid to these features in the existing literature. Their presence is reflective of not only contemporary attitudes towards the necessary accoutrements for liturgical celebration, but the financial resources of the church and patron, and as such need to be studied more intently by scholars. The second portion of the chapter has therefore provided an overview of a few types of furnishings commonly found in Irish churches: the piscina, aumbry, sedilia and font. It has discussed not only the liturgical background, but also the stylistic appearance, of these features. In order to more fully explore these preliminary conclusions, the next section of this thesis will discuss the results of a case study carried out in the Diocese of Killaloe.

5. Reconstructing Medieval Killaloe

As presented in Chapter 3, Irish culture underwent significant changes in ecclesiastical practices and theological attitudes over the course of the middle ages. Presumably, such changes would have an impact on ecclesiastical building practices, and as shown in Chapter 4, alterations to building practices do, in part, correspond to liturgical and theological developments. In order to investigate these preliminary conclusions in a more focused study area, a survey was conducted of selected ecclesiastical sites within the medieval diocese of Killaloe, which architectural evidence indicates were in use throughout the middle ages. Site selection criteria was based on architectural evidence for continuous usage throughout the middle ages as defined below. This chapter will focus on methodological considerations and selection criteria employed to determine which sites to include in the study group.

The Medieval Diocese of Killaloe

The diocese of Killaloe was identified as a suitable case study area for this research for a number of reasons. The diocese was first established at the Synod of Rathbresail in 1111, and again confirmed at the Synod of Kells in 1152.¹ [5.1] Despite alterations over the middle ages, diocesan boundaries remained roughly in place through to the modern era and include the area from Ballaghmore, Offaly, to Loop Head in Clare, from the Feakle Hills to Cratloe Hills, and then on to Glenkeen, Borrisoleigh.² Killaloe then became one of the largest dioceses in Ireland, incorporating portions of the ancient territories of Thomond, Éile and Uí Cairin (Ely O'Carroll) and what would become the Anglo-Norman stronghold of Ormond. In modern geographic terms, the diocese includes the majority of the modern counties Clare and North Tipperary, a portion of Offaly and small areas of Laois, Limerick and Galway. [5.2]

Killaloe includes a number of important early Irish monastic sites, such as Iniscealtra, Roscrea and Tomgraney, among others, which continued in use through the twelfth and thirteenth-

¹ A full discussion of the established boundaries can be found in A. Gwynn and D. F. Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe* (Dublin, 1962), 116-134.

² The boundaries were established 'From Slighe Dala to Leim Conn Culainn, from Echghthe to Sliabh Uidhe and Riogh, and from Sliabh Uidhe an Riogh to Sliabh Caoin or Gleann Caoin' as listed by Keating, *Foras feasna*, II. 305. The two Synods in 1111 and 1152, while stipulating the general geographic borders of diocese, allowed for the local bishops and churchmen to make modifications as to the specific boundaries. During the twelfth century, there were problems in establishing whether Killaloe would include the ancient monastic sites of Roscrea and Scattery Island, both of which attempted to form independent dioceses of their own. By about 1200, Killaloe had firmly amalgamated Roscrea and would hold it for the rest of the middle ages. A discussion of the status of Scattery Island can be found at 168.

centuries. A close study of building programmes at these sites might indicate the evolution of such sites and provide insight into how the political, sociological and ecclesiastical function of these ancient monastic communities evolved over the middle ages. The diocese incorporates a substantial area that remained under Gaelic control throughout the middle ages. [5.3, 5.4, 5.5] Killaloe itself was the ancient seat of the Uí Bhrian, leaders of the senior sept of the Dál Cais of Thomond, who were heavily involved in support of the reform movement at the end of the eleventh and through the twelfth century, and who have been identified as patrons of the earliest dateable Romanesque building work in the country.³ While the western portion of the diocese remained within Gaelic territorial control through the middle ages, Anglo-Norman settlement in east Clare and Tipperary was well established during the thirteenth century.⁴ [5.4, 5.5, 5.6] The investigation of ecclesiastical sites established under the control of these settlers allows for investigation of how these newly established church buildings differed in form and function from more ancient monuments.

Killaloe is thus an ideal ‘test’ area for the investigation of interplay between Gaelic and Anglo-Norman influences in ecclesiastical culture and architectural patronage over the course of the middle ages. The difficulties in mapping the ecclesiastical landscape over time have been fully discussed by Sharpe, who pointed out the weaknesses of relying on documentary evidence for ecclesiastical sites.⁵ The collation of documentary references to churches that were in use within a region, even for a relatively short period of time, would be extraordinarily laborious to produce, given the distribution of these references amongst such a wide variety of sources.⁶ Even were such a list to be produced, there is no guarantee it would be complete. Thus, for the purposes of this study, architectural evidence for continuous usage throughout the middle ages has been selected as the determinate criteria.

³ On the ecclesiastical associations of the Dál Cais, see D. Ó Corráin, ‘Dál Cais – Church and Dynasty’ in *Eriu* 24 (1973), 52-63. On the early architectural patronage of the Ua Briains, see R. Gem, ‘St Flannan’s oratory at Killaloe: a Romanesque building of c. 1100 and the patronage of king Muirchertach Ua Briain’, in D. Bracken and D. Ó Riain-Racdel *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century. Reform and Renewal* (Dublin, 2006), 74-105.

⁴ For a discussion of manorial settlement and parish formation in eastern Clare, see P. Nugent, ‘The dynamics of parish formation in high and late medieval Clare’ in Elizabeth FitzPatrick and Raymond Gillespie (eds), *The Parish in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), 186-210.

⁵ Sharpe, ‘Churches and communities in early medieval Ireland’.

⁶ Such sources include the annals, saints lives, lists of local saints and, by the twelfth and thirteenth-centuries, papal privileges and Anglo-Norman documentation.

The Medieval Ecclesiastical Landscape

Once the diocese of Killaloe had been selected as the case study area, it was necessary to compile a list of ecclesiastical sites that fell within the borders of the medieval diocese. Although Roman Catholic diocesan and parish borders have changed in the modern era, pre-reformation parish boundaries were still in place in the early eighteenth century, and the borders of 115 diocesan parishes can largely be reconstructed from eighteenth century documentary evidence.⁷ **[Appendix 1]** A map of the parishes and their corresponding baronies is also included. **[Map 1]** This list of pre-reformation parishes was then correlated with the nineteenth century *Irish Townland Index* to determine the geographical area that each occupied.⁸ A survey of published archaeological and architectural records was then conducted to determine the number of known ecclesiastical sites within each parish.

The compilation of this list was made easier for the parishes within Clare and Galway as Westropp's survey of Clare ecclesiastical sites clearly indicates not only the diocese, but also the parish, to which each site belongs.⁹ The task was more difficult for the counties of Tipperary and Offaly.¹⁰ The reference works consulted for these counties were the Archaeological Inventories published by Duchas, where ecclesiastical sites are listed by townland.¹¹ In order to determine the diocesan sites within these counties, the Archaeological Inventories were cross-listed with the previously compiled parish/townland index described above. No inventory has yet been published for the counties of Laois or Limerick. In order to determine the sites within these counties, the parish/townland index was again consulted, and then cross-referenced with the online Sites and Monuments record to locate ecclesiastical sites within the townlands known to have been within the Killaloe diocesan parishes of

⁷ For a discussion of pre-reformation parish borders in the diocese, see Ignatius Murphy, *The Diocese of Killaloe in the Eighteenth century* (Dublin, 1991) and D. Gleeson, 'The Diocese of Killaloe in the 13th Century' in *NMAJ*, 1 (1936-39), 142-158. A full list of eighteenth century parishes and their modern counterparts is found on 282-87. Medieval and modern parish bounds are also listed at Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 323-31.

⁸ A. Thom, *General Alphabetical Index to the Townlands and Town, Parishes and Baronies of Ireland* (Dublin, 1861).

⁹ Published in 1900-02, this article remains the standard reference for medieval ecclesiastical sites in Clare. The one Galway parish in the diocese had previously been located within county Clare, and as such was included in this survey. See Westropp, *Churches of County Clare*. The Clare County Library has also published a significant amount of antiquarian research online. Although field reports on many of the buildings are available for consultation at the OPW Archaeological Inventory, results of this survey work are not yet published.

¹⁰ E. FitzPatrick and C. O'Brien, *The Medieval Churches of County Offaly* (Dublin, 1998), includes a number of maps in that county with noted diocesan boundaries. The large scale of this map, however, does not allow for a clear indication of the townlands contained within each diocesan portion, though many of the churches located within the diocesan borders are noted.

¹¹ For Tipperary, see J. Farrelly and C. O'Brien, *Archaeological Inventory of County Tipperary. Vol. 1 – North Tipperary* (Dublin: 2002), 229 – 271. For Offaly, see C. O'Brien and P. D. Sweetman, *Archaeological Inventory of County Offaly* (Dublin, 1997), 83-111 and FitzPatrick and O'Brien, *Medieval Churches of County Offaly*. Unpublished field surveys conducted under the auspices of the OPW were also consulted for the sites chosen for inclusion.

Stradbally and Castleconnell (in Limerick) and Kyle (in Laois).¹² The result was a list of 233 known ecclesiastical sites which fell within the medieval borders of the diocese. [Appendix 2] Although this list includes both known and presumed ecclesiastical sites with no remaining medieval fabric, it is not a comprehensive list of all possible ecclesiastical sites within the diocesan boundaries.

The Medieval Churches: Site Selection Criteria

In order to arrive at a site list for inspection, criteria had to be established that would determine which sites would be included in the study area. As the aim of this thesis is, broadly, to investigate the extent to which architectural fabric reflects changes in the role and function of the Church, the most determinate criteria was evidence of continuous usage throughout the period.

One surviving contemporary documentary source for ecclesiastical sites in medieval Ireland is the 1303-06 ecclesiastical taxation.¹³ A site named in this taxation is presumed to have been in use during that period. Despite its usefulness in determining the extent of the ecclesiastical landscape of Killaloe, and indeed Ireland, it must be noted that the list is not a comprehensive list of all functioning churches in the country. It simply lists those valued by the crown's officials.

In architectural terms, the most obvious indication of continued use is alteration to the building fabric. Successive building programmes or refurbishment efforts at a building may be evidenced in a number of ways, ranging from the appearance of variant masonry styles indicating rebuilding to the insertion of more fashionable windows in an otherwise unaltered church. When assessed in a systematic way, changes to the plan and size of building may reflect changes in the needs of the communities they served, whereas changes to the form and style of such architectural features as windows and doorways may reflect on the economic status and patronage of a site. It must be noted that a lack of multi-period building or refurbishment programmes does not in and of itself preclude continuous usage of a site, but the lack of evidence in the architectural fabric precludes its inclusion in this study. Alterations to the size, shape or style of a church may have been desirable, but the ability to effect such changes would have been dependant on a number of factors, not least financial resources. It

¹² The online Sites and Monuments Record is part of an OPW programme, and available for consultation at <http://www.archaeology.ie/smrmapviewer/mapviewer.aspx>.

¹³ A full discussion of this taxation follows presently.

must always be remembered that changes in the look or style of a church to bring it into modern fashion could certainly have been achieved by means of wall painting and wooden furnishings that have not survived.

Bearing these caveats in mind, the two determinate factors for inclusion in the present study group were documentary evidence for multi-period building fabric and inclusion within the 1303-06 ecclesiastical taxation. While architectural evidence from both the early and late middle ages will be considered, the previous two chapters have shown that the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were the period during which Irish ecclesiastical culture underwent the most dramatic changes, politically, theologically and architecturally. As such, the following discussion will focus more heavily on architectural evidence from this period.

Multi-Period Medieval Fabric

The first step was to determine not only which of the 233 ecclesiastical sites retained standing medieval fabric. In order to qualify for inclusion, documentary sources had to indicate that a site retained not only architectural fragments or wall footings, but also standing walls with datable architectural features. The documentary sources consulted were Westropp's surveys of Clare and Limerick ecclesiastical sites, Tomás Ó Carragáin's survey of pre-Romanesque dry-stone churches, Fitzpatrick and O'Briens survey of Offaly churches, the Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland (*CRSBI*), and the published Archaeological Inventories for the counties of Laois, Offaly and Tipperary.¹⁴

A spreadsheet was created for all sites with such remains, noting which retained features broadly defined as reflecting the following stylistic and chronological periods: pre-Romanesque style or tenth and eleventh century fabric, Romanesque or Early English style or twelfth and thirteenth century fabric, and Gothic style or thirteenth to sixteenth century fabric. Although too loosely defined to be used for detailed structural analysis, such broadly defined criteria was useful in determining if successive building campaigns had been carried out at a particular church. If a site was determined to contain features dated to two of the three stylistic or chronological periods, it was included on the site list. All buildings with

¹⁴ Westropp, 'Churches of County Clare'; T. J. Westropp, 'Ancient Churches in Co. Limerick' in *PRLA*, 15 (1904-5), 327-480; Ó Carragáin, 'Pre-Romanesque Churches in Ireland'; FitzPatrick and O'Brien, *Medieval Churches of County Offaly*, Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland (*CRSBI*), published online at www.crsbi.ac.uk; Farrelly and O'Brien, *Archaeological Inventory of County Tipperary*; O'Brien and Sweetman, *Archaeological Inventory of County Offaly*; and P. Sweetman, O. Alcock and B. Moran, *Archaeological Inventory of County Laois* (Dublin, 1995).

indications of wholly pre-Romanesque fabric or complete late medieval reconstruction were omitted on the basis that they would not evidence significant changes in usage or patronage.

In a handful of cases, sites were included even where there was no indication of multi-period fabric or stylistic features. However, all of these inclusions were listed in the *CRSBI* and have standing walls decorated with Romanesque features; examples include St Cronan, Roscrae, Tipperary and St Brigid's Church, Iniscealtra, Clare.¹⁵ Despite the lack of multi-period evidence, inclusion of such sites was based upon the premise that the appearance of Romanesque decorative motifs coincides with the first discernable change in attitudes towards church buildings, as described in Chapter 3. Indeed, the lack of significant later medieval or modern building works might help to preserve liturgical arrangements reflective of the needs of twelfth and thirteenth century communities.¹⁶

The result was a list of seventy-three sites that preserved standing medieval remains indicative of multi-period building programmes or substantial Romanesque decoration. This list was then cross-listed with the 1303-06 ecclesiastical taxation to determine which of the sites were known to have been in use during the early fourteenth century. **[Appendix 3]**

The 1303-06 Ecclesiastical Taxation

In 1290-01, Pope Nicholas IV granted Edward I permission to levy a tax on all the dioceses and parishes of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland to raise funds for a proposed crusade to the Holy Land.¹⁷ While the Irish returns for this taxation do not survive, the returns from a corresponding tax levied in 1303-6 were preserved, and a transcript of the original returns was made by Bishop Reeves in the 1880s.¹⁸ The standard edition of these returns cited in modern scholarship is that recorded in Sweetman's *Calendar of Documents*.¹⁹ **[Appendix 4]**

¹⁵ A full list of sites not yet published by the *CRSBI* was kindly provided by Dr. Rachel Moss.

¹⁶ This was the case at the parish church of Ingworth, Norfolk. A discussion of this site is at 111-12.

¹⁷ The Irish returns for the 1290-91 taxation have not been preserved, but the returns for the 1303-06 taxation are recorded in *Calendar of Documents, relating to Ireland, preserved in Her Majesty's Public Record Office, 1171-[1307]*, H. S. Sweetman and G. F. Handcock (eds) (5 vols, London, 1875-86). On the taxation, see nos. 48, 90, 113, 140, 160, 183, 208, 222, 261, 282, 290, 301, 332, 364, 396, 409, 443, 475, 507, 528, 549, 586, 612. The returns for the diocese of Killaloe are listed on 299-303. On the 1290 Taxation, see B. Campbell, 'Benchmarking medieval economic development: England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, circa 1290' in *Economic History Review*, 61:4 (2008), 896-945.

¹⁸ For a discussion of this taxation, see the introduction to W. Reeves, *Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Down, Conon and Dromore* (Dublin, 1847).

¹⁹ The returns for the diocese of Killaloe are listed at *Calendar of Documents, 1171-[1307]*, 299-303.

Of the thirty-four Irish diocese included within the taxation (those of Ferns are absent), the most valuable was that of Dublin with a total tax value of £2,964 and the least was that of Armagh, with a value of just over £11. Killaloe ranks fourteenth on the list with a value of £318. However, it must be noted that many of the values listed may be notional, and the relative poverty of some dioceses and parishes may be exaggerated, especially in areas outside the effective remit of the Crown, where an accurate valuation could not be established.²⁰ In his important study of the returns, Campbell notes that very low values are indicative of the conspicuous poverty of Irish dioceses relative to even the least valuable English, Scottish and Welsh dioceses. The possibility that many Irish returns may not be accurate indications of spiritual income must be considered, especially in staunchly Gaelic areas where the political climate would have made accurate valuation by a Crown official difficult.²¹ Within the returns for Killaloe, sixty-eight of the one hundred and ten parish church levies do not list a corresponding tenth; the majority of these sites are located within the Gaelic territory of Thomond. While an investigation of possible implications is outside the scope of this study, it is hoped that further research into the 1303-06 taxation will clarify some of the issues pertinent to local studies, such as this one.²²

One hundred and twenty levies were issued on church income, temporalities and spiritualities within Killaloe, representing 116 church sites.²³ The temporalities of the dean and archdeacon of Killaloe were levied, as were both the temporalities and the spiritualities of the bishop. The temporalities of the abbots and priors of six Augustinian houses were also taxed. The remaining one hundred and ten returns were levied on parish churches. Two of these parish levies were placed on Augustinian sites whose temporalities were also taxed, Clare Abbey and Killone Convent. Three of the parish levies were placed on a church and accompanying vicarage: 'Kilbarrin', 'Garda', and 'Usgeayn'. This taxation, then, indicates that in the early fourteenth century, the diocese comprised one hundred and ten parish churches (two located within monastic houses, three with vicarages), six Augustinian houses, and one cathedral church.

²⁰ B. Campbell, 'Benchmarking medieval economic development', 905, Table 3.

²¹ Some of the Irish parishes are given token valuations, particularly in areas outside the effective jurisdiction of the Crown. See Campbell, 'Benchmarking medieval economic development', 903.

²² In addition to problems surrounding site identification to be discussed in the following section, no modern study has confirmed that the values levied are as recorded by Sweetman or confirmed that Reeve's edition corresponds to those listed by him.

²³ Four levies were issued on the temporalities and spiritualities at Killaloe Cathedral.

Problems of Interpretation

One of the most significant problems with Sweetman's documentation of the taxation is the site identifications. In his record of the levies, Sweetman included a modern identification for each listed site, but as the following discussion will show, this cannot be assumed to be accurate in every instance. This point is especially noteworthy, as most modern scholarship seems to derive taxation values for sites based upon Sweetman's identification.²⁴

In order to determine the accuracy of Sweetman's site identifications, a list of his named sites was compared with those identifications offered by Gwynn and Westropp.²⁵ Brief consultation of the site concordances shows a considerable amount of confusion, with each one disagreeing with earlier identifications.²⁶ In order to determine the most likely identification, a concordance was created, with site identifications as proposed by all three men, resulting in the identification of ninety-nine sites. **[Appendix 5]**

In addition to the sites that none of the three could identify, there are a number of uncertain identifications that must be noted. Some identifications were deemed spurious enough for exclusion from the final site list, whereas others did not correspond to any documented remains and thus could not be located on modern maps. When all identifications were agreed upon by the two authorities (or three, for Clare sites), this identification was accepted. When none were able to suggest a modern identification, the site was listed as unidentified. Where modern identification was contentious, research was conducted to determine the most likely site identification. All three authorities agree that the levies were arranged in general geographic order by deaneries, beginning with Uí mBlóid, moving on to Dromcliffe, Uí Caisin, Ormond and ending in Éile and Uí Cairin.

²⁴ Sweetman's site identification is accepted by the majority of scholars in the absence of a more detailed investigation, as noted most conspicuously in the OPW's published Archaeological Inventories by county.

²⁵ Gwynn's discussion of the taxation and site identification for the entirety of the Diocese can be found in Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 312-15. Westropp's identifications were compiled from his survey of Clare churches where he noted if the site was named in the taxation. Westropp, 'The Churches of County Clare', 100-180.

²⁶ It must be noted that none of these scholars was independently able to identify every church. Gwynn's site identifications are printed in Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 312-315. Westropp only provided identifications for those sites in Clare, which can be found in his 'Churches of County Clare', 115-16.

Taxation Site Identification Analysis

The initial concordance pinpointed twelve sites for which modern identifications were uncertain or spurious. Here a discussion of the method by which these site identifications by Sweetman, Gwynn and Westropp were analyzed is warranted, as many scholarly works cite these identifications without hesitation. The following discussion will show that a number of attributions made by these authors in their discussions of the taxation are uncertain, and should be regarded as such by modern scholars. Where possible identifications correspond to archaeologically recorded evidence, a reference to the Archaeological Inventory site number has been included.²⁷

An identification for Taxation levy 24, named as ‘Kellongeneayn’ was identified as three different sites: Killard, Kilquane or possibly Templeharrigan, all in Clare. Both Gwynn and Westropp dismissed Sweetman’s suggestion of Killard, leaving two possible sites. Although the site is identified in the concordance at Templeharrigan, architectural evidence was unable to corroborate this identification, as neither Kilquane nor Templeharrigan retained any standing remains by the time of Westropp’s survey in 1900.

A similar set of circumstances applies to Taxation levy 41, named as ‘Inali’, which both Sweetman and Gwynn identify as Inagh. This suggestion was dismissed by Westropp, who instead identified it as Templemaley, in Clare. As Westropp was intimately familiar with the local landscape of co. Clare, his suggestion has been accepted for the purposes of site identification, but neither Templemaley nor Inagh retain standing remains that might help to corroborate this identification.

There was also confusion over identifications for Taxation levy 75, named as ‘Arthmynchella’ and levy 79, named as ‘Milo Church’. The placement of these sites within the Taxation indicates that they were both located in Ormond. Both Gwynn and Sweetman have suggested that Aghnameadle Church, Tipperary, should be included in the Taxation but do not agree as to which site it corresponds; Gwynn suggested that Aghnameadle be identified as ‘Arthmynchella’, which Sweetman listed as ‘Milo Church’. Gwynn suggests that ‘Milo Church’ refers to a different, unidentified site within the townland of Aghnameadle. Neither proposes

²⁷ This information has been included within parenthesis when discussing the site, and takes the format of the Archaeological Inventory – County and site reference number within the published Inventory or the SMR number identification. For example, a site listed in the *Archaeological Inventory of Tipperary* as site number 1800 would be listed as AI-TN-1800. Where no published inventory exists, the site is listed by its SMR id.

an alternate identification for either Taxation levy, so while the identification of both sites remains doubtful, Aghnameadle Church has been included in the site identification for both sites on the premise that one or the other of the levies was placed on this site.

Taxation levy 102, 'Bourney', was identified by both Sweetman and Gwynn as Bourney Church. Its probable location in Offaly, or perhaps Tipperary, is deduced by its position within the Taxation, placing it within the territory of Ely O'Carroll. However, neither Archaeological Inventory for either county lists ecclesiastical remains in a Bourney townland, nor do they include a 'Bourney Church' among the sites located in townlands of other names. However, there is a Bourney parish in Tipperary within the Ely O'Carroll territory, and two townlands within this parish, Ballyhenry and Clonakenny, have recorded ecclesiastical remains. The Ballyhenry remains constitute a possible medieval church site currently occupied by an eighteenth century Protestant church and graveyard (AI-TN 1810). However, Clonakenny townland preserves the remains of a medieval church presumed to have been the Bourney parish church listed in the taxation.

Taxation levy 65, 'Dromonane' was identified as Dunamona by both Sweetman and Gwynn. Its location in the site listing shows that it was in Ormond, but there is no townland or parish in Tipperary, Offaly or Laois with this name. No Dunamona townland or 'Donamond Church', located within a differently named townland, could be identified.

Taxation levy 76, named as 'Arnyfrawyn', was identified by Sweetman as Templehaven, whereas Gwynn pronounced it unidentifiable. The site Templehaven, referred to by Sweetman, could not be located, as there is no townland, parish, or church site by that name within Tipperary, Laois or Offaly, though its location in Ormond is certain because of its placement within the taxation.

Taxation levy 11, 'Castroconyng' was identified by both Gwynn and Sweetman as the church of Castleconnell in Limerick. Indeed, Castleconnell is the only diocesan parish to be located within the modern county of Limerick. The modern parish is comprised of the combined medieval parishes of Stadbally Uí Duimin and Killeenagarrieff.²⁸ Of the sixty-five townlands included within the modern Castleconnell parish, four contain medieval ecclesiastical remains. Of these four, three have been positively identified as other sites on the Taxation. The remaining site, in Raheen townland (SMR LI013-101004), does possess ecclesiastical remains, but as is often the case, there are a number of Raheen townlands in Limerick, and it cannot be

²⁸ On the amalgamation of these parishes, see Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 327.

confirmed that this Raheen lies within the borders of the modern Castleconnell parish. However, it is extremely unlikely that this Raheen Church is the Castleconnell to which Sweetman and Gwynn referred. Castleconnell is a modern village located west of Limerick City, in territory that formed an ancient demesne of the O'Brien family which was incorporated into the Anglo-Norman colony when it was granted by King John to William de Burgo *ca.* 1201.²⁹ It remained firmly under Anglo-Norman control, in the hands of the de Burgos, through the fourteenth century. It is named in a 1237 market grant is listed as 'Castrum Conyng', which is nearly identical to the Taxation site of 'Castroconyng', and therefore it can be inferred that the levy was placed on either a pre-existent or manorial church within the village of which no trace remains. Another site located less than a kilometer away from the current town centre, Cloon Island, has also been included in the Taxation. This site contains early medieval architectural remains that pre-date the subinfeudation of the village, suggesting that the Cloon Island site was established within the Uí Briain demesne and that a manorial church was established by the de Burgos in Castleconnell, possibly around the time that the market grant was issued.

Gwynn was the only scholar to attempt an identification for taxation levy 77, 'Kelknenyn'. He identifies it as Kilconane, Ballintotty, which he suggested may have been an early name for Ballymackey Parish, Tipperary, otherwise absent from the Taxation. The Archaeological Inventory for Tipperary North includes the ecclesiastical site 1874 in Cloonmore townland, identified as 'Ballymackey Church' on the OS maps. This may be the site to which Gwynn referred. Unfortunately, no medieval remains now stand at this location to corroborate this identification. A portion of the west gable which was recorded in the 1930 OS letters had fallen by 1995.

The Taxation levy 92, 'Clokán', was identified by Sweetman as Cloghan Aiglish and by Gwynn as Aghlishcloghane Church. Of the twenty-six townlands which comprise Aghlishcloghane parish in Tipperary, only two have recorded ecclesiastical remains. Archaeological Inventory 1830 for Cloghleigh townland records the site of an enclosure and graveyard on the border of Cloghleigh and Kylebeg townlands. The enclosure was included in the 1843 OS maps, but even then no building remains were recorded. The townlands of Feigh and Feigh West (AI-TN 1848) are also within the borders of Aghlishcloghane parish, and contain the remains of a church and possible ecclesiastical enclosure. Given that no remains of a church have stood in Cloghleigh/Kylebeg since at least the early nineteenth century, it is assumed that in naming

²⁹ As noted in Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 191. For the grants, see Orpen, II.167-8 and III.164-5.

Agliscloghane, both Sweetman and Gwynn referred to the only standing remains within the parish, presuming them to be those of the parish church.

Sweetman did not attempt an identification for Taxation levy 106, 'Pa...ness'. However, Gwynn suggests identification with Birr because of its absence from the taxation otherwise. Despite the spurious nature of this identification, Birr has been included in the site listing with the caveat that there is little evidence for this identification. Although no remains exist to determine a precise location, documentary sources confirm the establishment of an early monastery at Birr by St. Brendan in the sixth century. The medieval parish church and graveyard that now stand in Birr town possibly occupy the original monastic site. Annalistic references to ecclesiastical activity at the site from the sixth through twelfth century confirm that the site was in continuous usage throughout the period. Architectural evidence dates portions of the current parish church remains to the thirteenth or fourteenth century at the earliest. Because of its placement in the Taxation, it would appear that 'Pa...ness' was located in Offaly, and so may in fact have referred to Birr. Given this evidence, it can be presumed that a site in Birr was active and in use throughout the period in question and thus has been included in the site identification, even if it cannot be definitively equated with 'Pa...ness'.

Taxation levy 107, 'Athdubyloff', was identified by both Sweetman and Gwynn as Ettagh Church, in Offaly. Ettagh parish is comprised of twenty-one townlands, of which only one, Aghadouglas, contains ecclesiastical remains (AI-O 613). Presumably then, the remains in Aghadouglas represent the Ettagh parish church. No standing remains existed in 1994, but the position of the church was indicated by stones and rubble.

There remains one final controversial identification to be noted, that of Taxation levy 108, 'Aitheketon or Aghacon'. Sweetman identified this site, along with the previous levy 107 'Athdubylof', with Ettagh Church, although this is likely to be an oversight on his part rather than a suggestion that two levies by different names were placed on Ettagh Church. Gwynn suggested an identification of Aghacon, also in Offaly. Of the twenty-four townlands within Aghancon Parish, only one contains medieval ecclesiastical remains. These are presumed to be the remains of Aghancon parish church, located in Ballybritt townland (AI-O 621).

This detailed investigation of taxation site attributions resulted in the positive identification of ninety-nine of the one hundred and sixteen named sites. Of the remaining seventeen, eleven identifications remain uncertain and six valuations remain unidentified. The final concordance

of identifications are included in the appendices. [Appendix 4] A distribution map of identified sites was then created. [Map 2]

The Early Fourteenth-Century Ecclesiastical Landscape

Once satisfactory site identification had been compiled for the taxation, it was compared with the documentary survey that recorded the existence of 238 known ecclesiastical sites within the diocesan borders. Of these 238 sites, 111 can be identified in the taxation, with 127 remaining sites not valued. Although a number of these 127 sites were established after 1306, a careful analysis of the taxation can reveal much about the ecclesiastical landscape of the diocese at the turn of the fourteenth century, especially when compared with standing architectural remains.

The 1303-06 taxation records the values for one cathedral church, four Augustinian houses, two Augustinian houses also serving as parish churches and thirty-six parish churches within Killaloe. Further documentary and architectural research indicates that there were also three Mendicant houses established by 1306, and at least thirty-two churches of unspecified function in use. The following section discusses the variety of church types that both documentary and architectural research indicates were in use within the diocese from the eleventh to fourteenth centuries.

Early Irish Monastic Sites

The diocese incorporates forty known or alleged early monastic foundations.³⁰ [Appendix 6] Of these, thirty-three, or 82%, are named within the taxation, indicating that a significant number of them continued in use through the twelfth century reforms, the vast majority becoming parish churches. Of the thirty-three, one is listed as a cathedral church (Killaloe), one as an Augustinian priory (Monaincha), one as an Augustinian convent also serving as a parish church (Killone) and twenty-eight are listed as parish churches. Of the eight that are not valued, two are only possible early foundations (Canon's Island and Castletown Arra). The other six are known early monastic sites.

³⁰ This list includes both monastic sites known from documentary references, particularly the annals, and parishes with known origins within early monastic termons. On the early monastic foundations of the diocese, see Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, especially chapter 1, 'The Monastic Churches of the Diocese', 3 – 88, where the histories are discussed in detail. Also see the appendix to chapter XI, 'Diocesan Parishes having their Origins in monastic Termons', 323-4.

The position of Scattery Island within the diocese has caused a great deal of confusion. Scattery, or Iniscatha, had been the seat of a tribal bishopric for one of the powerful early tribes of Thomond, the Corcovaskin, since the early sixth century.³¹ In his discussion of the taxation, Gwynn noted the absence of the site but could find no obvious reason for this omission and suggested that it might have been included within the returns for the diocese of Limerick.³² Although Scattery Island was declared an Episcopal see in its own right at the Synod of Kells in 1152, Gwynn later stated that it was amalgamated into the diocese of Killaloe in the 1190s.³³ Throughout Gwynn and Gleeson's *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, Scattery is discussed as if it were part of the diocese and the lack of any documentation for this is noted and then ignored. Westropp also noted this omission; he went a step further and checked the returns for the Limerick taxation and found an entry for 'Yniskeftin' in the deanery of Rathkeale.³⁴ Variations of this name are found in entries in the Black Book of Limerick for 1222, 1250 and 1310.³⁵ In the light of this evidence, it would seem that Scattery Island was never a part of the diocese of Killaloe, despite its strong secular ties to a powerful Clare sept. Because of this, it has been excluded from the study group.

Of these thirty-nine sties, only seven are included in the list of early foundations by Gwynn and Hadcock in *Medieval Religious Houses Ireland*.³⁶ These are Iniscealtra, Killaloe, Latteragh, Lorrha, Monaincha, Roscrea and Tomgraney. Why do Gwynn and Gleeson list so many more sites in their *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*? There is certainly documentary evidence for some of the sites in the list compiled by Gwynn and Gleeson; the monastery of St Brendan at Birr is one example. Both the *AU* and the *AFM* record a succession of abbots at this site from 750 to 900.³⁷ However, some of the sites to which Gwynn and Gleeson attribute an early foundation are not based on documentary references. The description of the early church at Killodiernan, or Cill Ua dTiernan, is a case in point. No ancient record of this church survives, but the ruins that can still be seen show that a church was erected here before the end of the twelfth century, as evidenced by the Romanesque west portal. The church takes its name from the family, Ua dTiernan, which presumably was the erenagh family in medieval times. While

³¹ Westropp, 'Churches of County Clare', 111.

³² The returns for the Diocese of Limerick are found in *Calendar of Documents, 1171-[1307]*, IV.270-273.

³³ For a discussion of the short lived Episcopal see at Scattery Island, see Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 129-130.

³⁴ Westropp, 'Churches of County Clare', 112. The returns for the diocese of Limerick included in the *Calendar of Documents, 1171-[1307]* show an 'Ynyskeftin' in the deanery of 'Garthe'. These returns are listed at IV.270-73 and the returns for both deaneries are found on IV.272.

³⁵ The 1222 and 1250 entries are grants to the church of St Mary at Iniskeftin. This is the parish church of Kilnamarbhe. See Westropp, 'Churches of County Clare', 111-3.

³⁶ The list of early monastic sites can be found in Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses Ireland*, 20-46.

³⁷ Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 83.

placename evidence can certainly indicate a strong association with a secular family, it seems here that that Gwynn and Gleeson assigned the site an early status based upon fabric evidence and not on any documentary source. Although there very well may have been a termon or proprietary church at the site from an early date, ascribing an ecclesiastical site to the early middle ages on the basis of twelfth-century fabric evidence is not only confusing, but incorrect.

Monastic Houses

A brief glance at the identified sites listed in the Taxation will show additional omissions. Thirteen reformed monastic foundations were established within the diocesan bounds between the late twelfth and late fifteenth-centuries. Of these, eleven were established before the Taxation was carried out: six houses of Augustinian canons (three of which were established at pre-existent Irish monastic sites), one hospital of Augustinian Cruciferi, one house of Augustinian nuns, one Dominican friary, and two Franciscan friaries.³⁸ Seven of these sites are listed in the taxation; eight are included within the study group. The absence of the three mendicant sites, the Dominican friary at Lorrha and the two Franciscan friaries at Ennis and Nenagh, can be easily explained. Because of their recent establishment, and their vows of poverty, mendicant sites were excluded from the taxation by Nicholas IV.³⁹

The absence of the only Augustinian site also warrants a brief note. Inisgad, or Canon's Island, Clare, is the location of a possible early monastic site where a house of Augustinians was founded around 1180, and the site continued in usage through the Reformation. Architectural remains of a church and cloister, dated by Westropp to the late twelfth century, are still present at the site, although a rebuilding campaign took place around the turn of the fifteenth century, as evidenced by a 1393 papal grant of 'three years and three quarantines of enjoined penance to those 'who on the feast of the Assumption visit and give alms for the

³⁸ It is interesting to note that all twelfth-century foundations within the diocese are Augustinian houses, founded either from earlier monastic sites or established by Irish kings. All thirteenth-century foundations are mendicant houses founded within Anglo-Norman boroughs, bar the single hospital of Fratres Cruciferi founded near Nenagh town by Theobald Walter Butler. Two post-1315 foundations are located within the diocesan bounds: Corbally Augustinian Priory, established *ca.* 1485 and Roscrea Franciscan Friary, founded *ca.* 1477. The Augustinian house at Corbally was not a new establishment but formed when the monks from the nearby Augustinian Abbey at Monaincha moved to the site. Documentary evidence suggests that Corbally was an early monastic site founded by St. Cainnech and administered throughout the middle ages by the monks at Monaincha. Architectural remains can be dated in part to the thirteenth century, and the site is overviewed at catalogue entry 58. On Corbally, see Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 324.

³⁹ Both the Dominican and Franciscan Orders were founded in the early thirteenth century. The first Irish Dominican house was established in 1224 in Dublin, and the first Irish Franciscan house was established *ca.* 1230 in Youghall, Cork. For an overview of the establishment of the mendicant orders in Ireland, see Watt, *Church in Medieval Ireland*, 60-85. On the exclusion of mendicant sites from the levy, see S. Mitchell, *Studies in Taxation under John and Henry III* (Yale, 1914).

repair of the church of St Mary the Virgin at Inysgad in the diocese of Killaloe, which is so destroyed in respect of its buildings as of its books, chalices, etc. and likewise of its temporal goods, that it is threatened with ruin'.⁴⁰ The conclusive architectural and documentary evidence for continuous occupation of this site give no indication as to why it was not included in the Taxation.⁴¹

The taxation of monastic houses within the diocese raises a number of questions as to their role within the ecclesiastical landscape of Killaloe. Two of the sites, Clare Abbey and Killone Augustinian Convent, were twice subject to levies in the Taxation, once for the site itself and once for the abbot's temporalities. At Inchicronan, a tax was levied on the church, but no levy was made on the abbot's temporalities. Four sites, Lorrha Augustinian, Monaincha, Toomeyvarra and Tynoe Hospital, were taxed for the temporalities only, but levies were also issued for separate churches at Lorrha and Toomeyvarra. Here, the levying of taxes and temporalities indicates that the site may have served as a parish church, in addition to a monastic house, during the early fourteenth century. A brief note is thus required on these levies and what they indicate about the function of the church.

The levies imposed on both the churches and abbot's temporalities at the Augustinian houses of Clare Abbey [5.7] and Killone Convent [5.9] indicate that these sites also served as parish churches. The Augustinian Abbey of SS Peter and Paul of Clare (de Forgio) was founded on 29 June, 1189 by the Munster king, Domnall Mór Ua Briain. The house of Augustinian canonesses at nearby Killone was founded at or about the same time and was listed among the possession of Clare Abbey in the preserved foundation charter.⁴² [5.7] While Clare Abbey may well have included a parish church within the monastic house, as indicated by the taxation, every identified medieval ecclesiastical site within the pre-reformation parish of Clare Abbey is listed in the taxation. Although there was then no lack of parochial administration within the locality, architectural investigation of the site may provide evidence of congregational space within the building. The house at Killone is the only known convent of nuns within the

⁴⁰ Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 460-61.

⁴¹ The foundation date for the house at Canon's Island, at or before 1189, is surmised from its inclusion in the grant of lands for the foundation of Clare Abbey of that date. For the history of the site, see Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 209-210 and 460-465.

⁴² The foundation charter of Clare Abbey survives in a fifteenth-century manuscript created for the bishop of Killaloe, TCD MS.F.1.15, f. 115. The list of possessions survives in the late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century manuscript Royal MS.13.A14, f. 117. Both have been reprinted in full by Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 201-203. On the assignation of lands to Clare Abbey and its importance for parish formation within the diocese, see Nugent, 'Dynamics of Parish Formation'.

medieval diocese.⁴³ As it is mentioned in the charter of Clare Abbey, the sisters would depend on the canons of Clare Abbey for the provision of sacramental administration, including the celebration of the Eucharist. In addition to serving the monastic community, such services could have easily accommodated the local community's needs as well. While architectural indications of congregational space within the church will be considered in the following chapter, it must be noted that in addition to a large number of medieval burials, one of the few surviving medieval fonts within the diocese is located on the grounds of the convent. **[5.9, 5.10]**

The only taxation levied on the site of a monastic house that does not include temporalities is found for Inchicronan Augustinian Priory (Arrouasian). The site, dedicated to St Cronan, was also included with the possessions of Clare Abbey listed in 1189. While a church certainly existed here from some point prior to 1189, there is some confusion as to when the canons were installed.⁴⁴ Although a house of Augustinian canons was established on the site, Gleeson points out that documentary evidence indicates that this did not happen before about 1400, which would explain the absence of a levy on temporalities in the Taxation. It would seem, then, that the site listed in the Clare Abbey charter and the Taxation corresponds to a diocesan parish church that would have depended on the abbey for the cure of souls until the fifteenth century.⁴⁵

Levies were imposed on temporalities only for the Augustinian foundations of Lorrha, Monaincha, Toomeyvarra and Tynoe. Of these sites, Tynoe was the only one to occupy a completely new foundation, as early monastic sites are known to have existed at Lorrha, Monaincha and Toomeyvarra.

The house of Augustinian Fratres Cruciferi dedicated to John the Baptist was established at Tynoe, just east of Nenagh, about the year 1200 by Theobald Walter Butler. Documentary sources recording the existence of hospitals or hospices for sustaining the poor or infirm can be found in the annals as early as the tenth century.⁴⁶ The Cruciferi were Augustinian regulars, similar to, and often confused with, Hospitaliers. Although the original foundation

⁴³ On the history of Killone, see Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 206-08 and 465. Gwynn and Hadcock mistakenly list this site as without the bounds of Kilalla Diocese, an apparent typo. See Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses of Ireland*, 311.

⁴⁴ In his 1900 paper, Westropp erroneously states that the Augustinian community had been founded at the site in the twelfth century, see T. Westropp, 'The Augustinian Houses of the County Clare'.

⁴⁵ On Inchicronan, and the establishment of an Augustinian house at the site, see Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 208-09 and 457-460.

⁴⁶ See, for example, the reference in *AU* for 921, when the Lis-acidheadh (hospital or guest-house) of Armagh was spared during a raid at Armagh. For a full list of Irish Hospitals, see Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses Ireland*, 344-55.

charter has not survived, the terms of a corresponding bond between Butler and the prior have. This bond included a list of the possessions donated by Butler and the terms on which the hospital was founded.⁴⁷ This bond records the conditions of the donations of land as follows: ‘on condition, however, that in the said house of St. John there shall be forever at least thirteen bed patients (*infirmi decumbentes*), who shall be supported from the property of the said house, so that they may have every day at least a whole loaf and drink from the cellar and a dish from the kitchen’. There is no mention of a pastoral function for the community at large, although it can be expected that cure would be provided to the patients in the hospital. Given the proximity to Nenagh, which had not only a Franciscan friary but a parish church, and the lack of a site levy in the Taxation, it is doubtful that any sort of congregational church was located at Tynoe.

The Augustinian priory of Monaincha, following the Arrouasian rule, was the site of an early Irish monastery founded after 1140. [5.11] Although the remains today consist of a single twelfth-century church, one of the finest examples of Irish Romanesque, the site originally consisted of two churches on islands in a raised bog. Both churches existed in 1185, when Giraldus Cambrensis described the site as located on two islands, ‘one rather large and the other rather small. The larger has a church venerated from the earliest times. The smaller has a chapel cared for most devotedly by a few celibates called ‘heaven-worshippers’ or ‘god-worshippers’.⁴⁸ It is known that Monaincha survived as a pilgrimage site throughout the middle ages,⁴⁹ but there is no concrete evidence that it ever served as a parish church. The existence of two churches, combined with Giraldus’ description, indicate that perhaps a Céli Dé community continued to exist at the site alongside the Augustinian House. There is no evidence for how long the Céli Dé community remained at the site, although the continued existence of Monaincha as a pilgrimage site would suggest that some sort of community remained after the Augustinians abandoned the site for Corbally in about 1485. The lack of a second levy on a church in the taxation would seem to indicate that there was no cure being served on the island in the early fourteenth century but also raises questions as to the status of remaining Céli Dé establishments within the post-twelfth-century ecclesiastical polity.

⁴⁷ The original text can be found in *Irish Episcopal and Monastic Deeds, A.D. 1200-1600*, N. B. White (ed.), (Dublin, 1936), 227. Gwynn has produced a translation of the document at Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 216-17.

⁴⁸ Giraldus Cambrensis, *The history and topography of Ireland*, J. J. O’Meara (trans.) (Harmondsworth, 1982), 60.

⁴⁹ The description of pilgrimage and devotional practices site was recorded by a foreign traveller in the late sixteenth century. See D. Ó Riain-Raedel, ‘A German visitor to Monaincha in 1591’ in *Tipperary Historical Journal* 11 (1998), 223-33.

The remaining two Augustinian houses listed in the Taxation, Lorrha and Toomeyvarra, are also foundations at sites with pre-existent monastic associations. Both churches were serving as parochial centres at some point before 1303. Toomeyvarra Augustinian Priory, Tipperary, was founded sometime after 1140 as a daughter-house of Monaincha. Taxation levy 120 is imposed upon the ‘Temporalities of the abbot of Custod’ de Thome, in Thothom’, which has been identified as Toomeyvarra. Taxation levy 78 is imposed upon ‘de Thom Church’. These separate levies indicate that there was a functioning parish church in Toomeyvarra, separate from the priory. The location of this parish church is contentious; architectural remains standing close to the priory may or may not be those of a medieval parish church.⁵⁰ While both the taxation and architectural remains indicate the presence of a separate parish church in Toomeyvarra, the ecclesiastical remains of the priory include features that could be associated with cure and parochial function: a late fifteenth-century tomb slab with inscriptions and figure sculpture [5.14], the basin of a late medieval font [5.13], and architectural evidence for a possible gallery inside the body of the priory church [5.13].⁵¹ The possibility remains that, as at Killone and Clare Abbey, the parish church was not a separate building but housed within the monastic church.

The Augustinian priory at Lorrha, Tipperary, was founded after 1140 at a site just north of the early monastic ecclesiastical site. Taxation levy 119 is imposed upon the ‘Temporalities of the prior of Loghera’, while levy 95 simply refers to ‘Loghtra’. A Dominican friary, not listed in the Taxation, was also founded at Lorrha in the thirteenth century. Although there is architectural evidence of patronage at the site, in the form of an elaborate fifteenth-century west doorway [5.15], there is no material evidence for a pastoral function at the site.

Mendicant Houses

The three mendicant sites known to exist in Killaloe before 1315 are of great interest because of possible architectural indicators of congregational function. The mendicant orders were founded on a mission of preaching, and as such, evidence of congregational function and space within these buildings have the potential to reveal much about the network of pastoral care in place within the thirteenth-century diocese. Of the three mendicant sites not levied in the taxation, two were located within proximity of known parish churches: Lorrha Dominican Friary and Nenagh Franciscan Friary, both in Tipperary. As already noted, Lorrha was the site

⁵⁰ These remains and their possible ecclesiastical associations, are overviewed at catalogue entry 61.

⁵¹ The architectural evidence for Toomeyvarra Priory is overviewed at catalogue entry 60. On the fifteenth-century O’Meara tomb slab, see J. Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture* (2 vols, Dublin, 1974), I.231, catalogue entry 248.

of an early monastery which later became a parish church and an Augustinian priory when the Dominican house was established in 1269. Although its proximity to these two other previous foundations ensured that there would be no need for cure within the locality, the architecture of the friary is heavily suggestive of lay patronage and congregational space. The Franciscan friary at Nenagh was founded in the 1260s in the town which Theobald Water established in the early thirteenth century as the head of his Norman barony.⁵² The architecture of this friary is less suggestive of lay patronage and congregational space than Lorrha, but the standing fabric of the Nenagh Friary dates largely to the thirteenth century and shows little evidence of later building programmes. [5.16] This may be more indicative of spatial arrangements in thirteenth-century friary planning than the lack of lay involvement with the friary. Also relevant is the parish church that was established within Nenagh town at some point in the thirteenth century. Listed in the Taxation as levy 61, 'Enconagh Church', the approximate location of Nenagh Parish Church is indicated only by documentary sources; no standing fabric remains at this site.⁵³

While both of these foundations were located near established parish church sites, this is not the case for Ennis Franciscan Friary, Clare, founded in the 1240s.⁵⁴ [5.17] Ennis town is located within the parish of Dromcliffe, where the early monastic site had become the diocesan parish church by the early fourteenth century.⁵⁵ There is architectural evidence at the friary for lay patronage and congregational use [5.18], although the thirteenth-century arrangements have been altered by fifteenth and seventeenth-century building programmes.

The Taxation also raises questions in regard to the non-monastic sites listed, particularly in regard to the terminology used to describe them. Although the majority of sites were listed in the Taxation simply by the site name, eighteen sites were listed as a 'Church', ten in Tipperary and eight in Clare.⁵⁶ By the thirteenth century, the Church had developed a standardized administrative vocabulary for the description of church sites, wherein the term '*ecclesia*' denotes the parochial function of a site. Although it is not suggested that only eighteen of the levied sites within the county may have served a parochial function, it does raise questions regarding

⁵² On the subinfeudation of lands to Theobald Water by King John, see Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 175-182. There is confusion as to the initial patron and foundation date of the friary, see 263-268.

⁵³ The possible location of the parish church is on the ground of the eighteenth-century church towards the south of Nenagh town. See the description of ecclesiastical site 1898 in Farrelly and O'Brien, *Archaeological Inventory of County Tipperary*, 262.

⁵⁴ On the possible foundation date of Ennis Friary, see Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 268-73.

⁵⁵ The early monastic site of Dromcliffe was founded in the sixth century and had by 1307 become the diocesan parish church. It is named in the Taxation as 'Drumleb' at levy 22. In the later middle ages, the parish of Dromcliffe was held in union with that of Kilmayley.

⁵⁶ As shown in Appendix 3, these are levies 79, 59, 66, 57, 64, 58, 60, 56, 55, 54, 63, 68, 53, 8, 61, 78, 65 and 67.

the status of some local churches in more strongly Gaelic areas within the wider ecclesiastical polity of the diocese.

One other aspect of non-monastic site taxations worth noting is the presence of vicarages at three sites, all within Tipperary. These are levies 87 (Ballingarry Church), 86 (Kilbarron Abbey), and 88 (Uskane Church). No rectories are noted within the diocese. In the diocesan economy, a rector was a person, religious house or institution to whom the entirety of parish tithes was appropriated. This rector was bound by the stipulations of Lateran IV to establish a vicarage to administer the site in place of the rector, in exchange for a portion of those parochial tithes. The establishment of vicarages at these sites suggests that, at least in certain portions of Tipperary, the parochial administration had been well enough established by the fourteenth century to allow for further subdivision of some parishes.

Documentary Survey: Initial Results

Of the 233 archaeologically known ecclesiastical sites within the diocesan borders, 111 can be identified in the taxation, leaving 127 untaxed sites. The documentary survey of all 233 sites was conducted to identify remaining medieval fabric that would date to the period *ca.* 1100 – *ca.* 1315. The following chart summarizes the findings:

	Taxed Sites	Untaxed Sites
Site doubtful	-	10
Remains doubtful	5	6
Foundation only	2	17
Fragments only	5	9
No medieval remains	16	34
Retain medieval fabric	78	46

The survey then determined that 133 sites within the diocese retain standing medieval fabric. Of these, fifty-four were excluded from the site list because evidence suggests that their fabric was either wholly pre-Romanesque or post-fourteenth century in date, leaving a remaining eighty-four sites. Once this preliminary list of sites had been assembled, documentary evidence was again revisited to determine which of these was most likely to inform this study based upon the two most specific methodological lines of inquiry as outlined in Chapter 2

(Form, Function and Rite and Architectural Indicators of Spatial Organisation) and the more specific methodological questions they propose:

1. Can the layout or design of a building indicate the enactment of a specific rite or ritual?
2. Can the layout or design of a building suggest a particular function served by the church or changes in that function over time?
3. Do particular architectural elements, including fittings and fixtures, indicate any discernable spatial organization within a building?
4. Is there any continuity in the placement of these architectural elements that might indicate similar patterns of usage in buildings of a comparable function?

In devising the final site listing, care was taken to ensure that churches of each presumed function were included: early foundations abandoned in the later middle ages, early foundations which became reformed monastic houses, early foundations which later became parish centres, monastic houses and the cathedral church. The result was a list of sixty-three churches, dispersed throughout the diocese. **[Map 3]**

A building recording sheet was devised, based upon 1996 standards set out by the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments and the Council for British Archaeology, in order to ensure standardized information was recorded for each site.⁵⁷ Only sites that I was personally able to inspect have been analysed. This is because documentary sources are often vague in their discussion of features relevant to this study. In some cases, the presence of a liturgical feature, such as a piscina, may be noted, but the feature will not be described. In other cases, features are overlooked or misinterpreted; this is particularly problematic in the case of beam or post holes that might indicate internal division.⁵⁸ In cases where such indicators were found, it was particularly important to take measurements to determine the relative size of the nave and chancel.

⁵⁷ For these standards see Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments: England (1996), *Recording Historical buildings: A Descriptive Specification* (London, 1990) and J. Blair and C. Pyrah (eds), *Church Archaeology; Research Directions for the Future* (York, 1994). For a description of how these standards have been used in devising recording standards for English parish churches, see S. Roffey, 'Recording the Parish Church Fabric: Objective and Subjective Approaches to Structural Analysis' (e-paper, 1995) (http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/res_rec/parishnetwork/bibliography/englishworks/roffey.doc) (Accessed 17 October, 2009)

⁵⁸ Similar problems have been encountered by other scholars; in her study of later medieval priest's residences, Helen Bermingham found that in the cases where such evidence was noted in building recording, it was often described as structural putlog holes or as a 'western gallery'. See H. Bermingham, 'Priest's Residences in later medieval Ireland' in E. FitzPatrick and R. Gillespie (eds), *The Parish in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2006), 168-185.

Brief note must also be made of the difficulties of site recording, particularly when undertaken alone. Although every attempt was made to ensure accuracy, taking internal measurements of buildings without assistance is awkward, and as such all measurements discussed must be considered approximate. The vagaries of Irish weather also posed problems; rainy and overcast skies make searching for masonry breaks or cut stone reused as grave markers difficult. Nevertheless, the main focus of the fieldwork was not to undertake building recording at these sites. Instead, it was to corroborate the published accounts of buildings and to ensure that no architectural indications of usage had been overlooked.

Each of the sixty-three indicated sites was visited; standing fabric was analyzed for pre-determined architectural indicators of function and usage, as set out in Chapter 4 and the methodological lines of inquiry described above. The Catalogue contains a description of these sites while the following chapter consists of a discussion and analysis of the findings.

6. The Architecture of Medieval Killaloe

As outlined in the previous chapter, the sixty-three buildings included in the survey constitute a cross-section of the types of churches which were in use throughout the diocese within the middle ages. The list includes the cathedral church, Augustinian and mendicant foundations, parish churches and churches of unidentified function. The following chapter discusses the evidence uncovered for the ways these buildings were altered over the course of the middle ages. As the aim of this thesis is to explore the way that architectural alterations reflected changing liturgical practices and attitudes towards the role of the church within medieval society, more focus will be placed on alterations to standing building fabric which may be described as structural rather than stylistic. Structural alterations might include wall movement, the movement or addition of doorways and windows and the addition of residences within the building. Such changes to the shape and layout of a building may have been instigated by a variety of needs, varying from changing attitudes to the proper setting of the Eucharist to the need for more congregational space for the laity. Stylistic alterations include the addition of updated or more fashionable doorways or window heads, which are less indicative of spatial considerations and more reflective of the financial resources available and contemporary architectural fashion. Economic concerns must always be taken into consideration when assessing both structural and stylistic changes, as changes of either type are indicative of the financial resources available to the church or its patron.

Architectural fittings such as piscinas, sedilia and aumbries, and moveable fixtures such as fonts will be discussed as they are the architectural features most closely related to the Eucharistic and sacramental practice. Their presence is reflective of not only the financial resources of the church and patron, but contemporary attitudes towards the necessary accoutrements for liturgical celebration. This study includes a variety of church types, serving different communities in different ways and, as such, direct comparison between them is not always possible or useful. Monastic churches incorporate cloisters and chapter houses, which certainly served liturgical functions, but the use of these is outside the scope of this study which focuses on the main liturgical space of the body of the church.

Many smaller medieval churches do not have architectural features which are stylistically definable. Most medieval architectural history concerns itself with buildings which do contain features with stylistic identifiers. These studies place church features within well-defined formalistic categories, and overlook or ignore those buildings which lack the trappings of

architectural style. Such an approach does a disservice to many of the smaller medieval churches which, despite a dearth of architectural detail, retain stylistically and chronologically dateable features. As a result, these simpler buildings are often abandoned to the remit of archaeologists. Often, the result is the inclusion of smaller churches only within discussions of settlement patterns and parish formation. Nevertheless, parish churches were the primary provider of pastoral care and sacramental administration for the populace throughout the high and later middle ages.

The churches included within this study were surely more elaborate in appearance than architectural survival indicates. While decoration such as wall paintings, altar cloths and plate, crosses and candlesticks would have significantly altered the appearance of these buildings, the plan and structural layout of the church building remains the central focus of this thesis.¹ Where such features would have significantly altered the appearance of a building, however, the general form that they may have taken will be considered. This will be particularly the case when types of internal divisions are discussed; while no metal or timber medieval screens or roods survive in Ireland, as the discussion in Chapter 4 has shown, is sometimes possible to speculate on the general form they may have taken by looking at contemporary features from outside the country.

The Architectural Evidence

As discussed in the previous chapter, site visits were conducted for the sixty-three churches within the study group. Based upon the evidence laid out in the previous chapter, all were determined to have been in use during the twelfth and thirteenth-centuries. But, as the discussion in Chapter 3 has shown, the vast majority of Irish churches underwent significant rebuilding programmes in the later middle ages. Many buildings were altered or enlarged in such a way as to make it almost impossible to suggest their form in the twelfth and thirteenth-centuries, the period with which this study is chiefly concerned. Further complicating matters is that many of the buildings have been restored or repointed in the

¹ While such decorations are certainly noted as they may be indicative of the overall grandeur and patronage of a particular building, changing fashions in ornamentation are outside the architectural scope of this study. Though such features do not survive to a great deal in Ireland, a corpus of scholarly work has been published which discusses those that do. See, for example, C. MacLeod, 'Mediaeval Wooden Figure Sculptures in Ireland, Mediaeval Madonnas in the West' in *JRS&AI*, 75:3 (1945), 167-182; M. McGrath, 'The Materials and Techniques of Irish Medieval Wall-Paintings' in *JRS&AI*, 117 (1987), 96-124; M. Ryan, 'The Formal Relationships of Insular Early Medieval Eucharistic Chalices' in *PRLA*, 90C (1990), 281-356. and C. Hourihane, 'Holye Crossys', a Catalogue of Processional, Altar, Pendant and Crucifix Figures for Late Medieval Ireland' in *PRLA*, 100C:1 (2000), 1-85.

modern period, obscuring medieval workmanship which might reveal changes in plan. Few medieval churches of any kind have been subjected to thorough archaeological investigation.² This is particularly true of smaller parish churches, which frequently continue in use as cemeteries and burial grounds today.³

Many of the sites were included in the site list based on documentary evidence recorded in the late nineteenth century.⁴ While in some cases the site remains much as it did then, in some cases the described features could no longer be located or were so heavily ivied that the report could not be corroborated.⁵ At a number of sites, the few features which did remain were so heavily ivied that they could not be seen. This was the case at Moynoe, Clare. Westropp described the east windows as ‘two high Gothic lights [which] probably date to 1280’.⁶ The standing fabric does not seem to have altered much since Westropp’s visit when only the east gable and portions of the side walls were standing. The east window is still in place, but was so heavily ivied that it was impossible to verify Westropp’s dating. [6.1]

A brief discussion of the fabric of Templemaley, Clare, will highlight a number of the other difficulties encountered in trying to reconstruct likely building programmes at many sites. The name of the church and parish is derived from Tempull Us Mhaille, or O’Malley’s Church.⁷ Though it has been suggested that this O’Malley may be the patron saint of the church, it is far more likely that this was the site of an early proprietary church belonging to a family of the

² Published reports of excavations include: J. Bradley, C. Manning and D. Newman Johnson, ‘Excavations at Duiske Abbey, Graigueanamanagh Co. Kilkenny’ in *PRLA*, 81C (1981), 397-405, 407-426; T. Fanning, ‘Excavation of an Early Christian Cemetery and Settlement at Reask, County Kerry’ in *PRLA*, 81C (1981), 67-172; P. Sweetman, ‘Archaeological Excavations at Kilcash Church, Co. Tipperary’ in *NMAJ*, xxvi (1984), 35-43; M. Clyne, ‘Excavation at St. Mary’s Cathedral, Tuam, Co. Galway’ in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, 41 (1987/1988), 90-103; M. Clyne and J. Norton, ‘Excavations at Rosshill Abbey, County Galway’ in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, 44 (1992), 195-208; F. Moore, *Ardfert Cathedral. Summary of Excavation Results* (Dublin, 2007). Within the churches of the study group, only two excavation reports have been published: C. McCarthy, ‘The Excavation of Clonrush Church, near Whitegate, Co Clare’ in *NMAJ*, xxxiii (1991), 7-15. Even here, however, a full excavation of the site was not possible due to modern burials. See also E. Rynne, ‘Some preliminary notes on the excavation of Dolla Church, Kilboe, Co. Tipperary’ in *Tipperary Historical Journal* (1988), 44-52.

³ Churches of varied functions were commonly used as burial grounds until modern times; many of the buildings have been restored and in this process, interior burials removed to the exterior cemeteries. This is particularly true of the larger monastic churches, such as the Franciscan friary at Ennis, which have been taken into state care and are now open to the public as Heritage Centres.

⁴ This is particularly true of Clare, where in some cases the only published description of a church is a short paragraph contained in Westropp’s 1900 survey, ‘Churches of County Clare’. Where more modern building descriptions were published, these were consulted, but in many cases, these catalogues of church sites simply reiterate the information provided by Westropp. See for example as A. Swinfen, *Forgotten Stones- Ancient Church Sites of the Burren and Environs* (Dublin, 1992).

⁵ Only a handful of the few fonts which Westropp records as located at church sites could be located.

⁶ Westropp, ‘Churches of County Clare’, 155.

⁷ As suggested by J. O’Donovan and E. Curry, *The Antiquities of County Clare. Letters containing information relative to the Antiquities of the Count of Clare collected during the progress of the Ordinance Survey in 1839; and letters and extracts relative to Ancient Territories in Thomond*, 1841 (Dublin, 2003), 172. This volume is a reprint of the typescript prepared by O’Flanagan containing the correspondence of O’Donovan and Curry written as they conducted the 1824 Ordinance Survey. See M. O’Flanagan, *The Antiquities of County Clare*, typescript (Bray, 1928).

same name. In his survey of Clare churches, Westropp concluded that the building dated to about 1080 based upon window forms, one of which he dated to this period; the other he suggested was even earlier.⁸ [6.2] In his analysis of the church, Ó Carragáin suggests that this window is either late medieval or the result of a modern refurbishment campaign and that the entire church is a late medieval construction.⁹ Though the windows were heavily ivied at the time of site inspection, it would appear that the tall, thin single lancet in the east gable is likely to be thirteenth century in date. The external head of the window was heavily ivied, but the form of the pointed internal embrasure was visible. [6.3] Some cut stone was visible on the exterior, however, and shows that the limestone sill and jambs were chamfered and rebated. [6.4] The composition of the embrasure and the jambs of the Templemaley east window is almost identical to that found at Dromineer Church, Tipperary.

Dromineer is comparable in size and retains a reconstructed west doorway incorporating Romanesque cut stone. Here, the internal east window embrasure is also pointed and devoid of mouldings. [6.5] The exterior sandstone light is also surrounded by a chamfered rebate, but here diagonal tooling, so characteristic of twelfth and thirteenth-century Irish stonework, is clearly visible. [6.6] The east gables of both churches are identical in design, containing only the east window and a small, square aumbry set low at the south end of the wall. The similarity between the two gables suggests a likely early thirteenth-century date for the east end of Templemaley. The easternmost south window may be contemporary or slightly older. The head of the window is carved of a single block and incised decoration can be seen on the eastern face of the light. The round head is formed of a single stone; both it and the surviving west jambs are rebated. [6.7]

The pointed south door is decorated with a chamfer running across the arris of the arch. [6.8] The simple design is characteristic of many late medieval parish church doorways; and can be compared with that found at the church of Killadysert, Clare.¹⁰ [6.9] A possible masonry break visible in the exterior of the Templemaley south wall, located between the two south windows, suggests that the east end of the building was constructed in the early thirteenth century and was later extended west in the fifteenth century when the doorway was inserted.¹¹

⁸ See Westropp, 'Churches of County Clare', 146. An early gabled south window is illustrated in Plate XI but this was too ivied to be seen during the site visit.

⁹ See Ó Carragáin, 'Pre-Romanesque Churches in Ireland', II.316.

¹⁰ Though the doorway at Killadysert is further embellished by a projecting pointed hood, the plain, stilted doorway with chamfered arris and square jambs is by far the most commonly found design for fifteenth-century parish church doorways.

¹¹ The westernmost of these windows, too heavily ivied to see during the site visit, is the gabled window Westropp suggested was of possible eleventh century date and Ó Carragáin suggested was late medieval or

[6.10] While this is the most likely chronology of building campaigns undertaken at the site, it must be noted that the building has also undergone at least one modern restoration which has left no trace in the fabric of how or in what way the building has been altered.¹² [6.11] Considering not only the heavy overgrowth but also the restoration, it is difficult to suggest a prospective morphology of this building with any accuracy. This discussion of Templamaley has served to highlight some of the difficulties encountered in interpreting architectural change at many of these small parish churches. It also has shown, however, that it is possible to form likely hypotheses as to the chronology of building programmes, even where surviving cut stone is not decorated in such a way as to allow for precise dating.

Morphologies of Plan

There are a number of sites within the study group which incorporate possible early masonry.¹³ In many cases, however, this early fabric is only identifiable in a small portion of the building; while it certainly indicates the presence of an early stone church at the site, it does not help to reconstruct the plan or size of the church. Nevertheless, a number of sites retain enough early medieval fabric to pinpoint alterations to the plan and the size of the church. Although careful analysis of masonry patterns is not the focus of this study, breaks in the fabric of walls and changes in the size and coursing of blocks has helped to reveal alterations to the form and size of buildings.¹⁴ Because a number of the buildings included in the site survey were covered in ivy or only partially standing, the following chapter will consist of a discussion of those buildings which are most suggestive of the development of church layout and planning.

modern. Westropp, 'Churches of County Clare', 146 and Ó Carragáin, 'Pre-Romanesque Churches in Ireland', II.316.

¹² Further information indicates that this restoration took place in 2002 as a result of a Heritage Council Buildings at Risk award for the stabilisation of the building. (<http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/grants/architecture-research-grant/buildings-at-risk-programme/grant-recipients/2002/>) (Accessed April 08 2011)

¹³ Tomflinlough, Clare is one such site. Here, the presence of some pre-Romanesque masonry in the west end of the south wall indicates that a stone church was erected at the site before the twelfth century. The north wall was later rebuilt and the building extended both to the east and west in the later middle ages but without archaeological excavation the form and size of the early church remains unknown. For an account of the pre-Romanesque fabric, see Ó Carragáin, 'Pre-Romanesque Churches in Ireland', II.26.

¹⁴ Two studies have been produced which focus on the masonry styles of medieval Irish churches, these are Ó Carragáin, 'Pre-Romanesque Churches in Ireland' and S. Ní Ghabhláin, 'Church, Parish and Polity: The Medieval Diocese of Kilfenora, Ireland' (Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1995). The results of these two studies are published at T. Ó Carragáin, 'Habitual masonry Styles and the Local Organisation of Church Building in Early Medieval Ireland' in *PRLA*, 105C (2005), 99-149; S. Ní Ghabhláin, 'Church and Community in Medieval Ireland' and S. Ní Ghabhláin, 'The Origin of Medieval Parishes in Gaelic Ireland'.

Single-Celled Churches

As discussed in Chapter 4, the single-celled plan is by far the most common to be found in Irish churches throughout the middle ages, this is true as well of the churches within the study group. Forty-six of the sixty-three churches within the study group fall into this category. Eight of these are associated with reformed monastic communities.¹⁵ [Appendix 8] For the purposes of this study, a single-celled church is defined as one without an architecturally defined chancel. While there are a number of buildings which fall under this category with added transepts or sacristies, this section seeks to explore the arrangement of space within the main body of the church building. This is not to say that lateral liturgical space, as is provided by transepts, is unimportant; this thesis is, however, concerned with the primary liturgical space within the church building.¹⁶ This section will contain a discussion of single-celled churches within the study group which are representative of the approach to spatial organisation in buildings of this form.

Little is known of the history of Cloon Island, situated just outside of Castleconnell village. [6.119] An ancient O'Brien demesne, Castleconnell parish was among lands granted to William de Burgo in 1185.¹⁷ The village was granted a market in 1237 and the manor of Castleconnell remained under strong Norman control throughout the thirteenth and early fourteenth century.¹⁸ Gwynn has suggested that Cloon Island be identified as the site named 'Clonmakida' in the Taxation.¹⁹ While this is possible, it must be noted that there is no documentary evidence that this site ever became a parish centre during the middle ages, and it is possible that the Castleconnell parish church was situated in the village itself.

The church exhibits at least three building phases, the chronology of which is difficult to pinpoint. The building retains a number of very large stones within the masonry, and this combined with the presence of early, cut sandstone incorporated into the fabric of the south wall, suggests a pre-Romanesque date for the first stone structure at this site. The positioning of the large masonry, for the most part in the north and west walls, indicate that the original building ran along the line of the current north wall. [6.120] Possible masonry breaks at the base of the exterior north wall at the western corner make it unclear if the northwest corner is

¹⁵ These are Clare Abbey, Ennis Franciscan Friary, Killone Augustinian Convent, Lorrha Augustinian Priory, Lorrha Dominican Priory, Nenagh Franciscan Friary, Toomevarra Augustinian Priory and Corbally Sean Ross.

¹⁶ Only four non-monastic buildings possess transepts or sacristies; three are parish churches and one is the cathedral. These are noted at Appendix 8.

¹⁷ De Burgo received a number of grants around Limerick, including the parish of Castleconnell. See Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 177.

¹⁸ Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 190-91.

¹⁹ See the discussion of this site identification at 164-65.

in its original position, or if the west wall was extended. The unmortared construction of the south wall may indicate the westward extension of the building and the construction of a new south wall in the later twelfth or early thirteenth century when the east window was inserted into the original east wall. [6.121] The head of the original, earlier window has been incorporated into the fabric of the west end of the south wall. [6.122]

The building was significantly altered later, possibly in the fifteenth century, when the eastern extension was added. It was at this time that the east window was reset into the wall, the north and south windows were added and the aumbry inserted. [6.123] The masonry at the exterior north and interior south walls indicate that before the windows were inserted, the walls were broken down to a level just below the current window splays and the two central windows set atop previously standing masonry.

The exact chronological development of the building remains unclear. This may be due to the fact that the building is located on the grounds of a privately owned home and currently serves as a garden feature, suggesting it may have been restored and altered in the modern period. While masonry breaks indicate a building which underwent expansion to the west and south and east, the off-centre east window remains a puzzle. Masonry breaks at the exterior northeast corner and interior southeast corner seem to indicate the addition of the east gable onto standing wall fabric. Why, then, would the window be offset almost 0.5 metres to the south? The original line of the south wall clearly pre-dates the eastern portion of the wall, making either the outward movement of the north or inward movement of the south walls unconvincing solutions.

The only entrance was placed at the centre of the west gable, although the original form this doorway may have taken is unknown as the current opening appears rebuilt and repointed in modern times. Quite significantly, two stones set to either side of this entrance are decorated with incised crosses. These two crosses are extremely interesting, and quite rare in Ireland. [6.124, 6.125] The larger cross sits within a quadrangular border in a large stone set to the north of the entrance. The southern takes quite a different form, and is accompanied by a faded inscription.²⁰ While this stone has likely been reused and reset into the wall, the location of each of these suggests that they may have functioned as consecration crosses.²¹

²⁰ On the Castleconnell inscribed stone, see Okasha and Forsythe, *Early Christian Inscriptions of Munster*, 185.

²¹ Discussion of an early Irish consecration ritual can be found at 84.

Despite a lack of evidence that Cloon Island ever served a parochial function, its close proximity to Castleconnell would certainly have allowed it to serve as a congregational church for the village. There is no masonry evidence in the form of post or beam holes, which might indicate if or where any internal divisions may have been placed. The current proportions of the building are approximately 1:3, however, and masonry evidence suggests that before expansion to the east, the church was approximately nine metres in length. If the west wall is in its original position, and the south wall was rebuilt in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, this would put the original length/width ratio at approximately 1:2, making this the most likely solution. The later eastward expansion then extended the building length by one third.

The 1:3 proportions can be seen as an indication that some sort of partition would have stood at a position which divided the space so that two-thirds was allocated for the nave while the easternmost third served as a chancel space. Perhaps the need to insert a chancel screen served as the impetus for the later medieval eastward extension? It has been noted that while early medieval churches may have possessed chancel barriers or altar rails of some kind, the chancel screen was not a common feature of English parish churches until the fourteenth century.²² While screens may have been desirable features in the twelfth and thirteenth-centuries, it was not until the fourteenth century that they become widespread, and indeed necessary, within the parish church. By the fifteenth century, it was common to find parish churches without chancel arches; by this time large, wooden partitioning screens were commonly used to mark the nave/chancel distinction.²³

This pattern seems to hold true in an examination of the parish churches of Killaloe, as well. The widespread refurbishment of parish churches in the late medieval period has already been noted and it can be no coincidence that the vast majority retain no architecturally defined distinction between the nave and chancel areas. In Ireland, as in England, it would seem that the large wooden chancel screen was seen as a necessary accoutrement for late medieval churches without an architecturally defined chancel.

Without extensive archaeological evidence, it is not possible to determine how many parish churches may once have possessed an architecturally defined chancel in the early and high middle ages. Evidence suggests, however, that this was never a common feature and a number of single-celled buildings dated to the twelfth and thirteenth-centuries are located within the

²² A discussion of the development and form of the parish church chancel screen can be found at 105-13.

²³ See Davidson, 'Written in Stone', 189-91.

study group. Three twelfth-century examples, each with Romanesque decorative features, are found at St Brigid, Iniscealtra and Kilcredaun, Clare and Ardcroney, Tipperary.

Though Ardcroney, Tipperary, underwent significant alterations in the sixteenth century, including the addition of a large tower house to the west, the form and shape of the twelfth-century church is still discernable. The church measured approximately 6.7 x 20 metres and was lit by two windows in the east and south walls, respectively. A dividing wall and arch now stands within the building, but this is an early modern insertion contemporary with the tower house to the west. **[6.126]** The original length of the church is difficult to discern. The above measurements are based on masonry breaks visible in the external south wall which show that the tower house was built partly atop the south wall of the original church; a masonry break to the west of the inserted south door below the rising tower is clearly visible. **[6.127]** There is no indication that the church would have been any longer, but this length places the twelfth-century south window in an unusually westerly position, and would have provided light to the small nave once the dividing wall was inserted. Though devoid of any sculptural detail, this window is clearly twelfth century; the jambs bear diagonal tooling marks and it is set into a contemporary widely-splayed embrasure that does not appear to be a later insertion. Given the evidence for sixteenth-century building works at the site, it may be that a more easterly south window was removed at that time. There are no indications of where any original chancel barrier may have been placed, but the Archaeological Inventory notes that springers for an east-west vault are visible on the chancel walls.²⁴ The placement of the sixteenth-century wall might indicate that the earlier church was divided at the same point; but as noted, this would have created an incongruously small nave space unless the western gable was placed further to the east.

St Brigid's, Iniscealtra, Clare, is a less complicated structure having undergone no major building alterations in the later middle ages. **[6.128]** It was completely rebuilt in recent times, having been levelled to its foundations at the time of Westropp's visit to the island in 1877.²⁵ It has been rebuilt, and although the Romanesque west door was incorrectly reassembled, the form of the original 8.5 x 7 metre structure has remained intact.²⁶ The decorations on the door have been dated to the mid-twelfth century and are contemporary with the addition of the chancel at St Caimin's. Excavations revealed that St Brigid's was abandoned as a church by the

²⁴ For a description of the church, see Farrelly and O'Brien, *Archaeological Inventory of County Tipperary*, 229.

²⁵ Westropp, 'Churches of County Clare', 157.

²⁶ On the Romanesque decoration at St Bridgit's, see T. Garton, 'St Brigid, Iniscealtra, Clare', *CRSBI* (<http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/county/site/id-cl-inisb.html>) (Accessed 28 March 2011).

early thirteenth century, at which point the parish church of St Mary's was constructed.²⁷ This pattern of construction and abandonment raises a number of interesting questions about the function of church groups in medieval Ireland. A full analysis of this subject is outside the scope of this study, but it must be noted here that whatever the function of St. Brigid's church, it went out of use at the time that the larger parish church on the island was constructed.²⁸ St. Brigid's retains no indication that it possessed any internal barrier to demarcate nave or chancel space; any such evidence, if it ever existed, has been obscured by medieval burials and a modern restoration campaign.

One further building initially constructed in the twelfth century must here be noted. This is the church of Kilcredaun, Clare.²⁹ [6.129] There is no known early history of the church; and it was not named in the 1303-06 Taxation. The site has been used as a burial ground since the least the early modern period. A badly ruined later medieval parish church (not included within the study group) stands atop a hill to the north-east. The church in question has approximate internal measurements of 5 x 7.5 metres, and although there is evidence that it was in use through the late middle ages, the original form and structure of the building has been retained. The building is lit by two windows set into the east and south walls, respectively. Internally, the east window is set into a finely formed twelfth-century embrasure [6.130, 6.131] Though too heavily ivied to be confirmed, it would seem that the Romanesque window head Westropp noted in the early twentieth century is still in place. [6.132] He compares the Romanesque decoration here with that found on the chancel arch of St. Saviour's Priory, Glendalough, Wicklow and if this is the case, Kilcredaun can be assigned a mid twelfth-century date on the basis of stylistic comparison.³⁰ There is no indication that any kind of chancel screen or rail was ever installed, though the late medieval south window and slate roofing tiles littering the site indicate that the church was in use through the early modern period.

Two of the thirteenth-century churches within the study group, Dromineer and Templmaley, both in Clare, are also built to the single-celled plan. Both of these sites contain cut stone indicating that earlier buildings once stood on the sites, but the nearly identical east windows

²⁷ See the discussion at De Paor, 'Inis Cealtra', 59.

²⁸ For an account of the archaeological excavations at the site, and a discussion of the evolution of the island site, see De Paor, 'Inis Cealtra', 92-99.

²⁹ The churches of Kilcredaun, Clare are described in T. Westropp, 'Carrigaholt (Co. Clare) and its Neighbourhood. Part III. Kilcredaun to Ross' in *Journal of the North Munster Antiquarian Society*, II:2 (1912), 103-118 at 107-09.

³⁰ See Westropp, 'Carrigaholt', 107. The window is illustrated in Westropp, 'Churches of County Clare', Plate XI.6. The window seems to have been forgotten, and no further mention of it has been published since nor is Kilcredaun included in the preliminary list of sites for recording in the *CRSBI*. On the dating of St. Saviour's Priory, Glendalough, see O'Keefe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 239.

show that they were refurbished or rebuilt in the thirteenth century.³¹ Neither was provided with a chancel at this time and no evidence at either site remains to indicate where or what sort of chancel barrier may have been in place.

Only one church within the study group, Kilballyowen, Clare, **[6.133]** retains clear indication of the placement of a chancel screen.³² This is a very interesting church which, despite its plain appearance, retains significant evidence for the internal arrangements. The building contains no mouldings or cut stone which might help assign a date to its construction, but the site is named in the 1303-06 Taxation. Upon close inspection, the church exhibits at least two building phases suggesting that the earlier phase is twelfth or early thirteenth century in date and that the building was substantially altered in the late middle ages. Kilballyowen is a long, single-celled construction measuring approximately 6.4 x 23.5 metres. **[6.33]** Two sets of beam holes placed along the north and south walls indicate the position of a large screen set approximately 4.5 metres from the east gable. **[6.134, 6.135]** The screen was at least 2.5 metres deep, suggesting perhaps it took the same form, if not style, as the late medieval screens found at Exeter Cathedral, **[4.56]** or Patricio, Wales. **[4.93]** The chancel was lit by an east and south window. If the east end of the screen was placed at the easternmost jamb of the beam holes, the chancel would have measured 4.5 metres in length. Three aumbries are located in the chancel: two long, thin niches are set along the base of the east gable to the north and south of the window and one larger aumbry set into the east corner of the south wall. All are plain and unarticulated with no evidence of doors.

If the west end of the screen was located at the westernmost jamb of the beam holes, the chancel would measure nearly 17 metres long. The area was lit by one window in the south wall located directly west of the chancel screen. A priest's residence was added to the western end of the building as evidenced by the presence of beam holes running along the north and south walls. **[6.34]** This residence had two floors as evidenced by the presence of two windows set into the west end. One is set at the upper level of the west gable, the other, located at the west end of north wall is partially blocked by the raised ground level. A bellcote sits atop the gable. It is possible that this residence replaced an earlier external dwelling or sacristy. A blocked doorway, clearly visible from the exterior, stands underneath the easternmost chancel screen socket on the north wall. **[6.136]** Two flag corbels extend from the exterior of the wall to the west of this blocked doorway, indicating the placement of the

³¹ A discussion of these windows can be found in this chapter, 181-82.

³² The church is described in Westropp, 'Carrigaholt', 114-15; he makes no mention of the beam holes in his description of the church though they are clearly visible in the photographs included in his publication.

external structure. The building was entered by a doorway placed to the west of the nave area along the south wall. [6.137] Interestingly, two beam sockets can be seen above the door, suggesting perhaps that an attached wooden porch was once in place.

Despite the lack of cut or moulded stone within the building, careful analysis of the fabric has shown that Kilballyowen underwent at least two phases of construction during the middle ages. The later phase, in particular, indicates that the building was once richly furnished. In addition to the evidence for the large chancel screen which would have been in place, Kilballyowen retains one of the few surviving baptismal fonts from the study group.³³ [6.113] The combination of evidence suggests that Kilballyowen was an important parish centre in the late middle ages, and in receipt of significant patronage. The elaborately carved font suggests as well that the interior of this church would have been richly decorated and reiterates the point that a simplicity in the design of doorways and windows is not always indicative of attitudes towards church decoration or furnishings in the middle ages.

Although only Kilballyowen retains clear traces of a partition, it is likely that similar structures were once commonplace within Irish parish churches, however no evidence from the study group suggests when they began to be installed. The discussion of chancel barriers in Chapter 4 indicates that it was possible to partition even the smallest churches. Given the function of the chancel screen in late medieval devotional ritual it might be assumed that widespread installation of the features in Irish parish churches took place during either thirteenth or fifteenth-century building campaigns when so many of these buildings were refurbished.

Despite a lack of evidence for the design and development of the Irish chancel screen, documentary evidence indicates that they would have been positioned so that the chancel occupied one-third of the internal space which the nave occupied the rest, as was the case at Kilballyowen. That this position would have been consistent in both Anglo-Norman and Gaelic churches is shown by both medieval and early modern statues allocating financial responsibility for the western two-thirds of the building to the parishioners.³⁴

³³ This font is discussed in this chapter, 226-27.

³⁴ An overview of evidence for the two-thirds division of parish churches in both Anglo-Norman and Gaelic parish churches can be found at 56-58.

The Architecturally Defined Chancel

As noted in Chapter 3, perhaps the most significant development in approaches to church building is the appearance of the architecturally defined chancel in the twelfth century, and indeed, a number of nave and chancel churches are included within the study group. This plan, however, is surprisingly uncommon: of the sixty-three churches within the study group, only fourteen churches are built to the nave and chancel plan.³⁵ [Appendix 8] These include the Augustinian Priors of Clare Abbey, Clare and Monaincha and Tyone, both in Tipperary. The Franciscan friary at Ennis is divided, but as at Clare Abbey, this was accomplished by the insertion of a large late medieval crossing tower. Killaloe Cathedral is built to a cruciform plan, with side transepts and a crossing which divides the nave and chancel space. St Caimin's, Iniscaltra, Friar's Island, and St Flannans Oratory are divided internally by chancel arches as are seven later medieval parish churches: Dysert O'Dea, Kilrush, Rathblathmaic and Tomgraney, all in Clare, Graffan, Offaly, Kilbarron and Lisbunny, all in Tipperary.

Of the earliest identified chancels within the country, two are located within the diocese. The earliest dateable chancel in the country is found at St Flannan's Oratory, Killaloe, constructed around the year 1100 under the patronage of Muirchertach Ua Briain.³⁶ [6.12] Although the chancel no longer stands, a small portion of the masonry forming the side chancel walls remains bonded into the fabric to either side of the dividing wall indication that it was an original feature of the church. [6.13] The other is found at Friar's Island oratory, where around the same time, a small chancel with a vaulted stone roof was added to an earlier single-celled building. [6.14] Here, the small chancel is built with a stone roof; the interior is barrel vaulted creating a small roof croft, accessed through the west end of the ceiling. Gem has argued that the chancel of St Flannan's Oratory would have been similarly vaulted.³⁷

The rounded chancel arches at both buildings are plain and undecorated. At St Flannan's Oratory, the only decorative features present are the chamfered imposts which project from the interior rebates of the jams. The overall form of the arch is similar in design to the moulded interior arch of the west doorway which also contains chamfered imposts. [6.15] The form of the chancel arch at Friar's Island is quite curious; the arch itself is constructed of

³⁵ An arch and dividing wall separate the nave and chancel at Ardcroney, Tipperary, but this is an early modern insertion and does not reflect medieval arrangements at the site.

³⁶ This has recently been argued by Richard Gem on the basis of the building's west doorway. See R. Gem, 'St Flannan's Oratory at Killaloe' and the discussion at 94

³⁷ The nave of the Oratory is vaulted in this way, and it seems likely that the chancel would have been as well. Gem believes that the barrel vault of the chancel would have been set just above the chancel arch and that a crease line visible. Gem, 'St Flannan's Oratory at Killaloe', 101.

undecorated voussoirs resting on a dividing wall.³⁸ [6.16] The interior of the chancel is lit by a single east window set into a stepped embrasure and two plain quadrangular aumbries are set into the east end of the side walls. [6.17] The chancel is quite small, with an internal area of only 6.5 square metres.

The study group sites also contain three churches later twelfth-century chancels. Two of these are located at the famous Romanesque churches of Monaincha, Tipperary and Iniscealtra, Clare. Monaincha is a coeval nave and chancel construction dated to the third quarter of the twelfth century.³⁹ [6.18] Here also, the chancel is quite small with an internal area of only 5.92 square metres. [6.19] The exterior of the chancel is treated with quoin columns resting on a surrounding plinth; this is significant in that it draws attention to the cell by treating it as a stand-alone building. The elaborate chancel arch, just over 2 metres wide, is formed of three chevron decorated orders resting on scalloped capitals set atop three-quarter columns descending to bases with tori and scotia mouldings. [6.20] The chancel is lit by two windows. A small south window light is set into a large rounded embrasure beneath which are set two small unarticulated aumbries. [6.21] The east window was enlarged in the mid to late thirteenth century as evidenced by the presence of stiff leaf capitals set atop the moulded jambs.⁴⁰

The church of St Caimin, Iniscealtra, Clare, contains a similar chancel, but here the feature was added to the standing fabric of the pre-Romanesque stone church in the middle of the twelfth century.⁴¹ [6.22] The chancel and Romanesque west doorway were extensively restored in the late nineteenth century.⁴² Here, the arch, dated to *ca.* 1148, is of three plain orders with decorated block capitals while the jambs are formed of attached shafts rising from

³⁸ There is debate as to whether or not this is the original form of the arch as the projecting jambs are an extremely unusual feature. This church was moved from its original location on Friar's Island in the Shannon 1929. It was restored twice in the nineteenth century while still in its original location. For a photographic essay including pictures of the demolition and re-erection of the building, see P. Harbison, 'Friar's Island Oratory, Killaloe, and its Fascination for James Gandon and Others' in *The Other Clare*, 29 (2005), 70-77.

³⁹ Because of the elaborate Romanesque decoration, many authors have written about the west portal and chancel arch at Monaincha. See, for example, O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 252-55; E. Okasha and K. Forsyth, *Early Christian Inscriptions of Munster: a Corpus of Inscribed stones* (Cork, 2001), 206-08 and H. Leask, 'Monaincha Church. Architectural Notes' in *JRSAL*, 1 (1920), 24-35

⁴⁰ The thirteenth-century stiff leaf capitals found in the chancel and nave of the church are discussed at J. Unkel, 'Faced with Faces: The Head Capital in Medieval Ireland' (M.Phil. thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2004).

⁴¹ The island site underwent extensive archaeological excavation during recent times, the results of which can be found at de Paor, 'Inis Cealtra'. For an extensive account of the history of the site and the ecclesiastical monuments, see R. A. S. Macalister 'The History and Antiquities of Inis Cealtra' in *PRLA*, 33C (1916/1917), 93-174.

⁴² The west portal was incorrectly restored at this time, but has recently been reconstructed again.

double bases with a large torus mouldings and with large rounded spurs.⁴³ [6.23] The chancel is more than three times larger than that of Monanicha and contains the remains of a rebuilt Romanesque altar set towards the east end of the nave. [6.24]

The most notable feature of these early chancels is their small size. While St Caimin's is the largest of the group, with an internal area of 16.92 square metres, the next largest is that of Friar's Island, with an internal area of 6.51 square metres. As has been discussed in Chapter 3, the appearance of architecturally defined chancel in Ireland can be seen as a direct result of changes in Eucharistic theology but also the growing emphasis on the separation of the church and laity at the time. But the small size of these chancels raises questions as to whether this second hypothesis is true. The chancel first appears at monastic churches under the patronage of reform minded magnates, most notably Muirchertach Ua Briain.⁴⁴ Ó Carragáin has argued quite forcefully that the early Irish church was primarily congregational.⁴⁵ Although he conceded that there were churches which served exclusively monastic or congregational communities, he contended that the vast majority of churches would have accommodated a range of functions. The question then becomes, what function were the four churches described above likely to have served?

The history of Friar's Island is obscure; the site seems to have gone out of use at some point in the twelfth century having previously served an early monastic community.⁴⁶ Gem has suggested that St Flannan's Oratory may have been a subsidiary building used by the clerics from the larger church that was later raised to cathedral status. He also raised the possibility that it housed a separate monastic body perhaps following a more modern rite, and he suggested this is more likely given that the architecturally defined chancel reflects contemporary English liturgical practices.⁴⁷ Monaincha had adopted the Augustinian rule at some point after 1140, while there is a tradition that the monks at Iniscealtra adopted the Benedictine Rule as early as the ninth century.⁴⁸

⁴³ A full description of the arch and other Romanesque decoration at St Caimin's can be found at T. Garton, 'St Caimin, Iniscealtra, Clare', *CRSBI* (<http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/county/site/id-cl-inisc.html>) (Accessed July 09, 2010).

⁴⁴ This point is discussed by Gem, 'St Flannan's Oratory at Killaloe', 93-4 and Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural Setting of the Mass', 143-47.

⁴⁵ While he has made this assertion in a number of publications, his most vociferous argument can be found at Ó Carragáin 'Church buildings and Pastoral Care'.

⁴⁶ Eleven burials were uncovered during the early twentieth-century excavation of the site; see R. A. S. Macalister, 'On some excavations recently conducted on Friar's Island, Killaloe' in *JRSAL*, 59 (1929), 16-24.

⁴⁷ Gem, 'St Flannan's Oratory at Killaloe', 93.

⁴⁸ Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses Ireland*, 109 and 187-8.

The architecturally defined chancel was more likely, then, designed to serve as an altar-house than a clerical space. None of the chancels, bar St Caimin's, could have accommodated more than an altar, a celebrant and perhaps an assistant. Further supporting this theory is the design of the chancel arches. The arches at St Flannan's and Friar's Island are formed of undecorated voussoirs. While this is also true of the arch at St. Caimin's, here the jambs are decorated with attached shafts with carved bases and capitals. The arch at Monaincha, however, is elaborately decorated. Davidson has argued that in the early middle ages, heavy ornamentation on a chancel arch was sufficient to demarcate the liminal place between the nave and chancel, serving not only to frame the celebrant but to highlight the sanctuary space which lay beyond. In England, painted decoration was used in buildings from the seventh century, and Moss has recently argued that this may be the origin of the chevron pattern, which became a popular decorative motif in twelfth-century Ireland.⁴⁹ We then might imagine that these four churches had no need for screens or dividers, but instead bore elaborately painted decoration, highlighting the chamber in which the altar was placed as a more sacred space.

Within the study group, two thirteenth-century chancel arches also survive. These are located at Rahblathmaic and Dysert O'Dea, Clare. At Dysert, the arch takes the form of a wide semi-circle of uncarved voussoirs resting upon imposts. [6.25] The jambs of the arch are plain and undercoated. The composition is identical to many thirteenth-century arches such as those found at Nougheval, [6.26] and Oughtmana, [6.27] both in Clare, and Inchbofin, Westmeath.⁵⁰ [6.28] It is quite likely that these arches were also painted; an arch similar in form but heavily decorated with Romanesque carvings including saw-tooth and intrados chevron and embellished beading was constructed at Templenahoe, Ardferf, Kerry *ca.* 1158.⁵¹ [6.29]

The chancel arch at Rathblathmaic, Clare, dates to both the thirteenth and fifteenth-centuries. Here, the form of the jambs and imposts is clearly similar to the other thirteenth-century example shown above. The incorporation of cut stone with Romanesque decoration and mouldings dates its initial construction to the early thirteenth century, at which point the nave of the church was rebuilt and a number of carved Romanesque stones were reset into the fabric. In the southern face of the jamb are two stones with organ-pipe reed decoration; the

⁴⁹ On the design sources for chevron, including painted decoration, see R. Moss, *Romanesque Chevron Ornament. The language of British, Norman and Irish sculpture in the twelfth century* (Oxford, 2009), 6-11.

⁵⁰ The chancel arch at Nougheval is fully discussed at 113-116. On Oughtmana and Inchbofin, see O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 52-3.

⁵¹ On Templenahoe, see O'Keeffe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 188-90 and T. O'Keeffe, 'Lismore and Cashel: Reflections on the Beginnings of Romanesque Architecture in Munster' in *JRS.AI*, 124 (1994), 118-152.

upper of these contains spiral interlace.⁵² [6.30] The arch was rebuilt in the fifteenth century when building works were undertaken at the site; a large number of cut stone fragments can be found reused as grave markers. [6.31, 6.32]

Architecturally defined chancels are also present at the parish churches of Graffan, Offaly, Kilbarron and Lisbunny, both in Tipperary. Graffan is very dilapidated, however, and no indication of the arch or dividing wall survives.

Kilbarron Abbey, Tipperary, [6.138] is a large nave and chancel church initially constructed in the early or mid-thirteenth century. Little is known of the early history of the site, but it was certainly established before the 1303-06 Taxation was carried out; it is one of the three valuations with a noted vicarage. In 1462, the vicarage was provided to the dean of Killaloe.⁵³ By the time of the 1615 Valuation, a rectory inappropriate to the Butler Cistercian house at Abington is also noted.⁵⁴ The site is commonly called the 'Abbey' though there is no tradition of any monastic order at Kilbarron; it may be that its association with Abington is the source of this name. It may also be that the church and vicarage were established in the early thirteenth century as a source of revenue for Abington, as the site lay within the ancient termon lands of Terryglass, also held by the Butlers.⁵⁵

Though the initial phase of construction dates to the thirteenth century, the building was heavily altered during a late medieval building programme, when the chancel arch was enlarged and a barrel-vaulted residence was inserted into the west end of the nave. The size of the building and presence of eight large windows indicate it was a wealthy foundation. A large dividing wall separates the nave and slightly narrower chancel. Though the jambs of the arch are gone, a small portion of unchamfered cut stone belonging to the pointed chancel arch is still in situ, and visible through the overgrowth. It is not possible to discern if the arch is an original feature, though the dividing wall seems to be. Neither is it apparent if any beam or socket holes remain within the feature to indicate the presence of a chancel screen.

Lisbunny, Tipperary, is the final remaining parish church built to the nave and chancel plan. [6.139] Lisbunny is a thirteenth-century foundation located just east of Nenagh. Though it is

⁵² On the arch at Rath, see T. Garton, 'St Blathmac, Rathblathmaic, Clare', *CRSBI* (<http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/county/site/id-cl-rathb.html>) (Accessed September 15, 2010) and P. Harbison, 'The Church of Rath Blathmach – A Photo-essay' in *The Other Clare*, 24 (2000), 23-31.

⁵³ Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 479.

⁵⁴ Murphy, 'The Royal Visitation', 220, where the site is named 'Kilborrin'.

⁵⁵ On the position of Kilbarron within the termon lands of Terryglass, see Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 327.

in a damaged state, portions of the church still stand, including the east and west gables, south chancel wall and jambs of the large dividing wall. The south nave wall has fallen entirely, as has the chancel arch. The heavily ivied chancel arch jambs bear no discernable indication of a chancel barrier or screen.

There is little documentation of the parish or church of Lisbunny, though it is named in the 1303-06 Taxation. There is some indication that in the fifteenth century, both a parish priest from Ballygibbon and the O'Mearas of Toomeyvarra Priory attempted to annex the benefice attached to the church.⁵⁶ The church is situated near the remains of three ringforts and directly south of a thirteenth or fourteenth-century hall house and deserted settlement.⁵⁷ It seems likely, therefore, that the church was established in the thirteenth century as a parish centre for the newly established settlement at Lisbunny. The 1615 Valuation lists both a rectory and vicarage at the site, with the rectory inappropriate to Abington.⁵⁸ In the absence of any other evidence as to the foundation of Lisbunny, it is suggested that Anglo-Norman tenants of the Butlers, who occupied nearby Nenagh, established both the castle, manor and parish church of Lisbunny in the thirteenth century.

Ní Ghabhláin has suggested, in her study of the parish churches of the diocese of Kilfenora, that chancels seem to be associated with higher status sites.⁵⁹ While this is certainly true of the sites within Killaloe, a more distinct pattern emerges: each church in possession of an architecturally defined chancel is located on the site of an early Irish monastic community (Monaincha, Iniscealtra, Friar's Island, St Flannan's Oratory, Dysert O'Dea, Kilrush, Rathblathmaic, Tomgraney, Graffan) or at a purpose-built Anglo-Norman parish church (Dorrha, Kilbarron, Lisbunny).

By the thirteenth century, chancels were widespread features of English parish churches. That they should appear at churches constructed at this time by Anglo-Norman patrons, possibly by Anglo-Norman masons, is hardly surprising. That both Anglo-Norman parish churches built to this plan were large and wealthy foundations is clear; the association of both sites with the Butler Cistercian house at Abington suggests that perhaps they both benefited from Butler

⁵⁶ It seems that the Ballygibbon priest was unsuccessful in 1485 but that the O'Meara's were able to secure the benefice in 1493. See Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 445 and 475-6. By 1615, the Lisbunny vicarage is listed as 'No Curat. Vicaria ibidem. Impropriata. Vacat', though the rectory . Murphy, 'The Royal Visitation',

⁵⁷ On these features, see Farrelly and O'Brien, *Archaeological Inventory of County Tipperary*, 137, 202, 215, 320 and 334.

⁵⁸ By 1615, the Lisbunny vicarage is listed as 'No Curat. Vicaria ibidem. Impropriata. Vacat', while the rectory is listed as 'Impropriata ad monasterium de Owey'. Murphy, 'The Royal Visitation', 219.

⁵⁹ Ní Ghabhláin, 'Church and Community in Medieval Ireland', 74.

patronage. This would certainly account for the size and scale of these newly founded parish centres.

The distribution of Gaelic parish church chancels at sites which housed important early monastic communities is, however, unexpected. Each of these sites, bar one, also retains decorated Romanesque features or fragments.⁶⁰ While not all of the Gaelic chancels within the study group date to the twelfth or thirteenth-centuries, given the evidence for later medieval parish church refurbishment, it is likely that each of these churches acquired their initial chancel during this time.

O’Keeffe has suggested the possibility that Romanesque decoration can be read as an architectural expression of the reforming impulse in twelfth-century Ireland.⁶¹ While certainly the twelfth century was a time of dramatic change within the Irish Church – politically, liturgically and architecturally – this thesis has argued that one of the most significant efforts underway at the time was to create clear lines of demarcation between the ordained clergy, who could effect the process of transubstantiation, and the monastic clergy not canonically bestowed with that ability. While other scholars, such as Gem⁶² and Ó Carragáin,⁶³ have connected the appearance of the chancel with high-level patronage, it seems as well that these sites were concerned with establishing their place within the newly emergent ecclesiastical polity. In such a light, these chancels can be read as bold architectural statements that these sites were fully committed to the reforming movement.

Residences

One of the most significant changes to the plan and use of parish churches discovered during site investigation was the addition of residences into the fabric of the western end of the church building during the late middle ages. While in some cases, the fabric indicates that the nave was extended to the west to accommodate this addition, in other cases it seems that the nave space was simply truncated. Fourteen parish churches within the study group retain evidence of an internal residence; two other churches retain possible evidence of an attached residence. **[Appendix 8]** Of these fifteen, ten are built into the fabric of the west end of the

⁶⁰ No Romanesque stonework survives at Graffan, Offaly, but as has been noted, the church is in a state of decay with only portions of the walls standing. On the remains, see O’Brien and Sweetman, *Archaeological Inventory of County Offaly*, 98.

⁶¹ O’Keeffe insulated this in a number of his publications, most particularly T. O’Keeffe, ‘Romanesque as metaphor: architecture and reform in twelfth-century Ireland’ in A. Smyth(ed.), *Seanchas: Studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin, 2000), 313-22.

⁶² Gem, ‘St Flannan’s Oratory at Killaloe’.

⁶³ Ó Carragáin, ‘Architectural Setting of the Mass’.

church; one, at Youghalarra, Tipperary, is created by an addition to the west gable and three take the form of western towers. One, at Letter, Offaly, no longer stands but is known to have existed from documentary sources.⁶⁴

The institution and evolving role of the parish priest over the course of the middle ages is not yet fully understood. Documentary evidence suggests that monastic communities, and their residential clerics, were the foremost providers of pastoral care within the early church.⁶⁵ The main impetus of the twelfth-century reforms was the establishment of a political hierarchy mirroring that of western Europe, which included the creation of diocese and, over the course of time, parishes. Gille of Limerick took great pains to outline the duties and responsibilities of the parish priest in his *de Statu Ecclesiae*, suggesting that the duties of the office were not fully understood in Ireland.⁶⁶ His treatise makes it clear that these responsibilities were two-fold and included both pastoral care and administrative duties such as the collection and distribution of tithes. By the later middle ages, however, parishes were generally served by both rectors and vicars; vicars were primarily responsible for the cure of souls while rectors served as administrators of the church holdings and its revenues, though both were allotted a portion of the tithe income.⁶⁷

Monks and clergy within the early middle ages lived in huts located within the early monastic enclosure. Though these were generally constructed of wood, or wattle and daub, examples of stone cells survive most famously at Skellig Michael. Each hut would usually accommodate a number of clergy, though abbots and the aged may have sometimes had individual residences.⁶⁸ While this was the common practice during the early middle ages, there is no indication of where officiating clergy may have resided once parish churches were established over the course of the twelfth to thirteenth century. Neither is there any documentary evidence which would indicate if the majority of these churches would have dedicated officiating clergy. It is possible that a number of these newly established parish centres, associated with and dependant on larger monasteries, would have been served on a regular or semi-regular basis by itinerant clergy who were based at a central site. Evidence for such a practice can be seen in the early seventeenth-century valuations where vicars are occasionally named. It is obvious that in some cases, the same vicar was officiating at a number of nearby

⁶⁴ On the documentation for the residence at this site, see FitzPatrick and O'Brien, *Medieval Churches of County Offaly*, 137.

⁶⁵ A discussion of the likely pastoral function of the study group monastic churches can be found at 169-73.

⁶⁶ A full discussion of Gille of Limerick's *de Statue Ecclesiae* is found at 39-44.

⁶⁷ The complex administrative system in place in late medieval Killaloe is described by L. McNerney, 'Clerics and Clansmen: The Vicarages and Rectories of Tradriaghe in the Fifteenth century' in *NMAJ*, 48 (2008), 1-23.

⁶⁸ Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, 290.

churches, as did one Bartholomeus White who is noted serving cure at the churches of Kilfarboy, Killinaboy, Rath and Dysert O'Dea in Clare.⁶⁹

There is widespread architectural evidence, in the form of these inserted apartments, that many parish churches were staffed by residential vicars by the fifteenth century. By the late middle ages, four different forms of clerical residence were in existence. These were residences inserted into the body of the church; others attached to one side or gable; some residential towers attached to the body of the church; and free-standing houses.⁷⁰ In her study of priestly accommodation, Bermingham noted a preference for residences inserted into the western portion of the church and attachments to the side or, more frequently, western gable. She also notes the fact that a large proportion of survey works overlook the presence of a residence as evidenced by beam holes set into the western end of parish churches, by far the most common type of late medieval clerical residence. Not only does the poor survival of parish church fabric and heavy overgrowth often obscure evidence for such residences where it survives, survey works often misinterpret the evidence which does exist, citing the presence of 'galleries' and 'lofts', or occasionally putlog holes. The description of these residences as 'galleries' and 'lofts' is indicative of the inherent problems in defining the function of such structures, as this terminology implies that the structure served a liturgical function for which there is absolutely no evidence.⁷¹

Inserted western residences are found at a number of parish church sites. In some cases, as at Killeenagarriff, Limerick, [6.34] and Tomfinlough, Clare,⁷² a second storey was created at the west end of the building to accommodate the apartment as evidenced by the placement of corbels and beam holes. In both cases, the south doorway was situated under the residence, which would be entered from within the nave of the building. In other cases the residence occupied two stories. This was the case at Kilbarron, Tipperary, where a stone structure with a barrel vault was inserted into the standing fabric of the nave. [6.36] Though the door has

⁶⁹ The 1615 valuation includes notes on both the rectors and vicars of parish churches. A copy of the 1615 valuation is printed in P. Dwyer, *The History of the Diocese of Killaloe from the Reformation to the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin, 1878), 89-92.

⁷⁰ The free-standing house is the least common, accommodation incorporated into the east end of the church, as a second story over the chancel, is also very rare. For an overview of late medieval parochial accommodation, see Bermingham, 'Priest's residences in later medieval Ireland'.

⁷¹ Although the presence of western galleries in Anglo-Saxon churches has been tied to liturgical rites described in the *Regularis Concordia*, there is no evidence that this early medieval rite was ever in use in Ireland. Nor would this early medieval monastic rite have any impact on the internal arrangements of late medieval parish churches. On the liturgical function of western galleries, see Klukas, 'Liturgy and Architecture'.

⁷² The beam holes which indicate the residence at Tomfinlough are located in the west and south gable. While discernable during site inspection, the church was so heavily ivied that they cannot be seen in photographs.

broken away and heavy overgrowth obscures the feature, the insertion can clearly be seen at the junction to the south where the wall has been clearly bonded onto the existent wall.

While the nave space at Kilbarron was truncated to accommodate the insertion, masonry breaks at other sites indicate that the church was extended to the west when the apartment was added. This seems to have been the case at Kilballyowen, Clare and Bonahum, Tipperary. At Kilballyowen, a set of beam holes running along the western end of each wall indicates the position of the first floor level. **[6.34]** A window inserted in the lowest level of the north wall would have provided light to the apartment. Masonry breaks are visible on both the interior and exterior of the north and south walls; as can be seen in this photograph where the break is discernable between the south doorway embrasure and the westernmost beam hole. **[6.140]** The residence at Bonahum, Tipperary was nowhere near as spacious. Beam holes (seen here infilled with rubble), extend for just under four metres from the west wall. **[6.141]** Here, too, changes in masonry size and coursing on both north and south walls indicate that the western gable was extended when the residence was added.

One of the most interesting manifestations of this western residence is its development into a residential tower. This occurs at three sites within the study group, at Ardcroney and Dolla, Tipperary and Killadysert, Clare. All three sites were episcopal mensa, which accounts for the grandeur of the housing.⁷³ The tower apartment at Dolla is the simplest of these.⁷⁴ Though it does not survive, a dividing wall stands to mark its eastern boundary. **[6.37]** Here, the second story is indicated by sleepers set against the east and west walls of the residence. The tower at Ardcroney, Tipperary takes a slightly different form and has been enlarged into a four-story tower.⁷⁵ **[6.38]** Masonry evidence on the exterior west end of the south wall indicates that a portion of the church nave has been incorporated into the first floor of the sixteenth-century tower. The thin tower found at Killadysert, Clare is the most elaborate of the three. **[6.39]**

⁷³ For a discussion of the later medieval diocesan economy and the episcopal mensa, see Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 293-95.

⁷⁴ E. Rynne, 'Some preliminary notes on the excavation of Dolla Church, Kilboy, Co. Tipperary' in *Tipperary Historical Journal* (1988), 44-52.

⁷⁵ Farrelly and O'Brien, *Archaeological Inventory of County Tipperary*, 353.

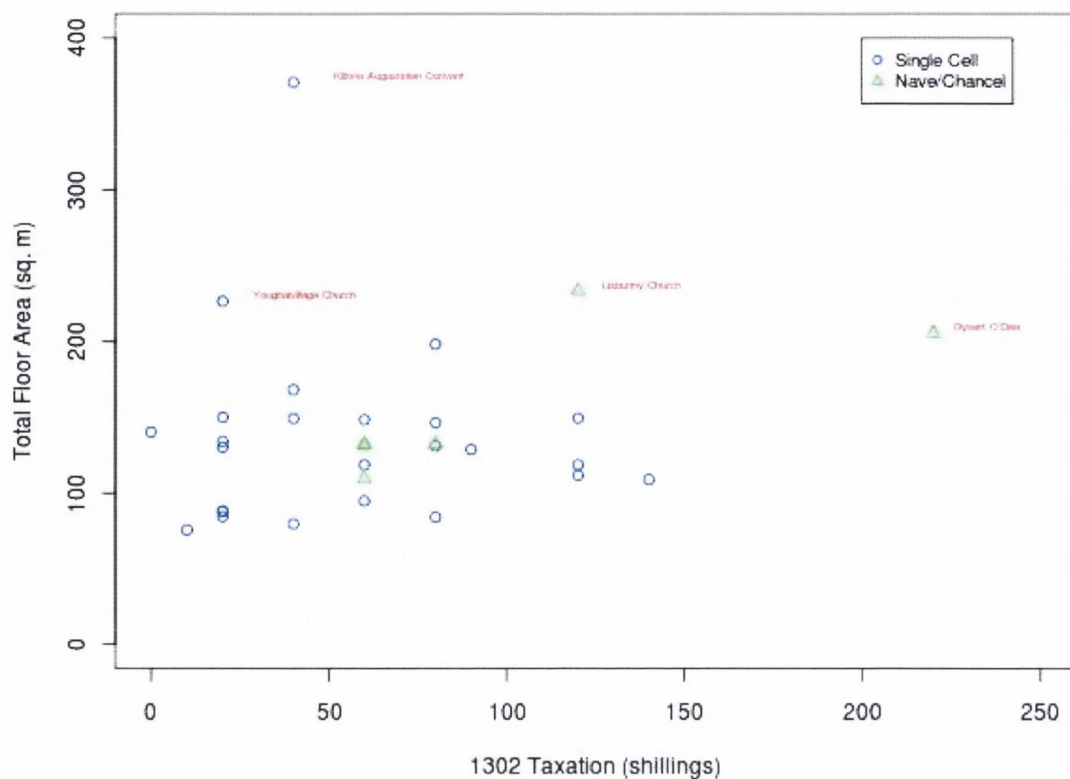
Architectural Implications of the 1303 Taxation

In her study of parish churches in the diocese of Kilfenora, Ní Ghabhláin has postulated that there was a correlative relationship between church size and local population in the later middle ages.⁷⁶ She based her finding on census data taken in 1659, which she contended can serve as an indicator of relative population for the late middle ages. As this study is primarily concerned with the fabric and morphology of church buildings at an earlier period, a similar experiment could not be expected to return any positive results due to fluctuations in population over the course of four hundred years. Instead, it was decided to see if any correlation between taxation valuation and total area or congregational size could be arrived at.⁷⁷ Although it must be noted that the value accorded to each parish church was not entirely dependant on tithes, it was postulated that perhaps the relative size of the building might in some way reflect its standing within the diocesan economy. In order to test this, the value assigned to each site in the 1303 taxation was compared to both the total church area and the number of congregants it could accommodate.

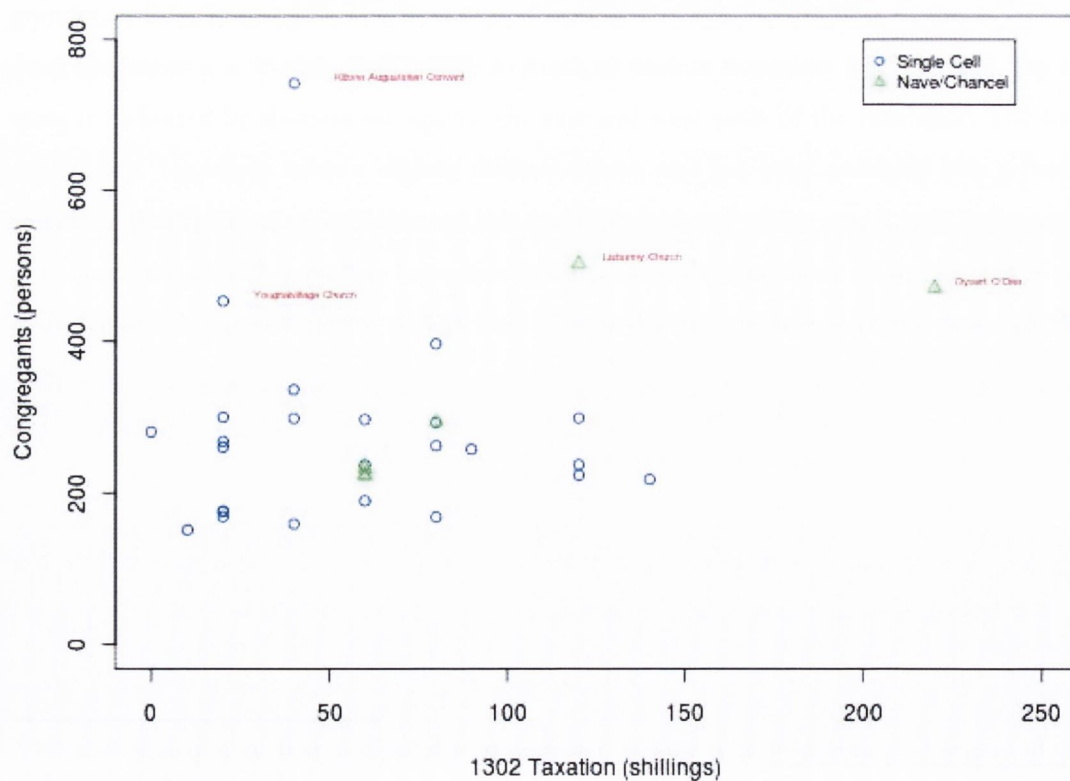
⁷⁶ S. Ní Ghabhláin, 'Church and Community in Medieval Ireland', 76-8.

⁷⁷ As has been noted, the standard formula for calculation the maximum number of congregants a church could accommodate is to assume that three people could comfortably stand within each square metre. See the discussion at 67-68.

Scatterplot of the 1302 Taxation Valuation and the Total Area of the Church



Scatterplot of the 1302 Taxation Valuation and an Estimate of the Congregation Size of the Church



The most striking feature of the two plots is how similar they are, with the two main outliers being two churches with a separate nave and chancel layout. This explains the similarities, as the estimated congregation size was based on the area of the nave area, and as the nave area for single-cell churches was just two-thirds of the total area, this would largely explain the similarity. It does not look like there is a very strong relationship between the taxation assessment and the size of the church; while taxation has a tendency to increase with the area, it was by no means strong enough to be considered the primary influence in the Taxation assessment.

As vertical groups of points on the plot are churches with the same Taxation evaluation, the clustering on either graph shows that there was quite a reasonable amount of variance in the total size of the church for any given evaluation. This might be taken as an indication that a large number of churches were assigned similar random valuations, as was suggested in Chapter 4. This analysis does admit that it is quite possible changes have been made to the churches in later periods, which may also explain the weak relationship between the data. The widespread refurbishment of parish churches which took place in the fifteenth century has been discussed throughout this thesis, and as such there is no surprise that many churches enlarged their naves at this time. As discussed in Chapter 3, aisles were not a common feature of the Irish parish church, save for a number of Anglo-Norman urban centres in the east. As the addition of aisles can be directly related to later medieval patronage in the establishment of chantry and guild chapels, perhaps the enlargement of naves in later medieval Ireland can be seen as a result of lay endowment. The insertion of residences must also have some bearing; while sometimes they were inserted into the standing fabric of the building. (As at Killeenagarriff, Limerick, and Kilbarron Abbey, Tipperary). The nave was often enlarged to the west to accommodate the apartment so as not to affect the congregational space available.

Analysis of the Taxation valuations is then most useful in providing a blueprint for the early fourteenth-century ecclesiastical economy. This analysis has shown that, in the diocese of Killaloe, valuations cannot be read as indicators of the size or scale of surviving architectural elaboration at any given site.

Liturgical Furnishings

Few liturgical furnishings survive within the churches of the study group. **[Appendix 9]** The most ubiquitous feature found was the aumbry; nearly every site possessed at least one. But as was the case at Dysert O’Dea, Clare, these were usually small, unremarkable niches set into the eastern gable or south wall. **[6.40]** Certainly these churches would have been a great deal more elaborate than the surviving fabric indicates; the following section will discuss the surviving evidence for those furnishings which do survive.

The Aumbry

The aumbry is by far the most common liturgical feature to be found within the study group. In all, twenty-eight of the study group churches retain at least one aumbry.⁷⁸ The vast majority of these features, however, are unarticulated quadrangular niches set into the south-east corner of the church. As has been noted, the aumbry is a niche or recess set into the wall of the church for the storage of liturgical goods such as Eucharistic vessels, liturgical books, candles, censers and the like.⁷⁹ Sometimes the niche will be fitted with a door, but this is not always the case.

Perhaps the earliest church within the study group to possess an aumbry is Friar’s Island. This small oratory was constructed in two phases; around the year 1100, a vaulted chancel was added to the east end of a small, pre-Romanesque church.⁸⁰ Here, two plain, unarticulated aumbries are set into the north and south walls. The east end of the niches are formed by the fabric of the east wall. **[6.17]** The Friar’s Island chancel is quite small in dimension, and as has been noted, would only have been large enough to accommodate an altar and celebrants. Given its diminutive status, it would seem that the aumbries were necessary features to allow for the celebration of services. Not only did they allow for storage of goods, but the relative large size of the niches (roughly 70 centimetres wide, 45 centimetres high and 36 centimetres deep) could provide enough space for an assistant or concelebrant to prepare for the service.

⁷⁸ It must be noted that not all of the churches within the study group retain standing east and south walls; it is possible that the original number would have been higher.

⁷⁹ See the discussion of the function of the aumbry at 135-37.

⁸⁰ This church is discussed at catalogue entry 5. See also Ó Carragáin, ‘Pre-Romanesque Churches’, II.10-12.

The Romanesque chancel at Monaincha, Tipperary, retains a similar arrangement, though here the two square aumbries are set into the south chancel wall just above a thick stringcourse. **[6.142]** The Romanesque fabric at this site has been dated to the third quarter of the twelfth century on the basis of a wide range of stylistic parallels.⁸¹ Though the niches here are smaller than those found at Friar's Island (each measuring roughly 29 centimetres square), their presence suggests that similar arrangements were in place at both sites. Despite a difference of about seventy-five years, both chancels were being constructed to similar dimensions; **[6.14, 6.18]** neither would have the space to accommodate more than an altar and celebrant(s).

The chancel at St Caimin's, Iniscealtra, Clare, also possesses an aumbry. **[6.143]** As at Friar's Island, the chancel at St Caimin's was added to a pre-Romanesque building around the middle of the twelfth century.⁸² Here, however, the chancel is proportionally larger than those found at Friar's Island and Monaincha and possesses only one small aumbry set into the western end of the south wall. The chancel had fallen into disrepair by the modern period, and although restored by the Board of Public Works in the nineteenth century, it would seem that the aumbry was an original feature that remained *in situ*.⁸³ **[6.144]** This is significant because close inspection of the masonry comprising the feature suggests that it was constructed from reused fabric from the earlier east wall of the church: a large square sandstone block forms the west jamb of the niche; the corner below this is cut into a single stone. The eastern jamb of the niche is angled; if the twelfth-century chancel did incorporate masonry fabric from the earlier east wall, it is possible that this stone once formed a portion of the splayed jamb of an earlier window.

If this aumbry is indeed an original feature of the chancel, its composition from reused masonry suggests that it was a functional, rather than a liturgically significant, feature. As previously noted, there is no evidence that the aumbry was ever used or designed with a liturgical function, such as the housing of the consecrated host, in mind. Both the small size and simplicity of the vast majority of aumbries points instead to their function as a simple cupboard.⁸⁴

⁸¹ For an overview of the Romanesque sculpture of the church and the likely date, see O'Keefe, *Romanesque Ireland*, 252-55.

⁸² On the pre-Romanesque fabric of St Caimin, see Ó Carragáin, 'Pre-Romanesque Churches', II.13-15.

⁸³ On the restoration of the chancel, see R. A. S. Macalister, 'The history and antiquities of Inis Cealtra' in *JRS&AI*, 33 (1916), 93-174 at 128. For a discussion of the restoration and the likelihood that the south wall retains its original features *in situ*, see Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural Setting of the Mass', 135.

⁸⁴ On the function of the aumbry, see 135-37.

There are, however, examples of much more elaborate niches within the study group. One particularly elaborate example of *ca.* 1200 is found set high in the east end of the south wall of Tomgraney, Clare.⁸⁵ [6.145] Though identified as an aumbry by signage at the site, both the position and elaboration of this feature suggest otherwise. It is an original feature of the chancel, which as at Frair's Island and St Caimin's, was added onto the east end of a pre-Romanesque building.⁸⁶ Unlike the previous examples, however, this feature is set high into the wall; the arch is level with the similarly carved window heads. The location of this feature would preclude its use as a store niche. It may represent a small window designed to light the altar space at the east end of the chancel, though this remains uncertain. One other possible function for such a niche might be to serve as a sacrament house, where the consecrated Host might be reserved.

As discussed in Chapter 3, sacrament houses or tabernacles were purpose-built structures within which the Host could be stored and venerated. Wall niches which served this function, where they can be conclusively identified, are invariably accompanied by carved doors or painted surrounds. The elaborately moulded surround, carved by the same workshop responsible for the Romanesque incarnation of Killaloe Cathedral, might suggest that this Tomgraney niche served the same function.⁸⁷

One other unusually elaborate niche was identified within the study group at the parish church of Kilfinaghta, Clare. Here, two niches can be found set into the east gable just south of the east window. [6.41] The lower, blocked from view by a modern tomb and shrubbery, is a quadrangular chamfered niche while the upper aumbry is heavily decorated. The gabled head is surrounded by an angle roll and surmounted by a damaged finial. [6.43] The form and shape of this niche suggest that it was more than a plain aumbry, and it is possible that here, too, is an example of a twelfth-century Romanesque sacrament house. Certainly, the arrangement of the two niches is reminiscent of those found in Newburn, Fife, which Fawcett has identified as a possible sacrament house.⁸⁸ [4.143] The niche itself is quite shallow, suggesting that it would not have had space to accommodate a statue, as was the likely function of the larger niches set to each side of the east gable at St Finghin, Quin. [6.146] The

⁸⁵ On the date of Tomgraney's Romanesque carvings, and comparison with contemporary zoomorphic mouldings at both Killaloe Cathedral and Rathblathmic, Clare, see T. Garton, 'Masks and Monsters: Some Recurring Themes in Irish Romanesque Sculpture' in C. Hourihane (ed.), *From Ireland Coming: Irish Art from the Early Christian to the Late Gothic Period and Its European Context* (Princeton, 2001), 121-140 at 131.

⁸⁶ On the pre-Romanesque fabric of Tomgraney, see Ó Carragáin, 'Pre-Romanesque Churches', II.27-8.

⁸⁷ On the assertions that the same workshop was responsible for the sculpture at these sites, see T. Garton, 'St Flannan, Killaloe, Clare' at CRSBI (<http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/county/site/id-cl-kilca.html>) (Accessed 06 March, 2011).

⁸⁸ See the discussion at 136.

presence of these features might also be read as an architectural reference to Killaloe Cathedral where the east window lancets are flanked to either side by double aumbries. [6.147, 6.148] The cathedral's east gable, constructed in the early thirteenth century, incorporates Romanesque fragments from an earlier building phase dated to *ca.* 1200; the reused aumbry capitals, with scalloped heads and asparagus-like fluting, are contemporary with that Romanesque building campaign. [6.94] Certainly, the presence of a sedilia at Kilfinaghta points to a close relationship with the cathedral during the twelfth century and the presence of an elaborated aumbry or sacrament house might be seen as the incorporation of major church forms within parish church decoration during the early thirteenth century.⁸⁹

Clare Augustinian Abbey, Clare, retains evidence of an interesting aumbry within the south chancel wall. The abbey was founded in 1189 by Domnall Mór Ua Briain, king of Munster, at the site of a probable earlier monastic foundation.⁹⁰ [5.7] Though the church underwent significant changes during later medieval building campaigns, including the insertion of large, traceried windows and a crossing tower, it retains its original form and a number of late Romanesque features.⁹¹ A breach in the stonework under the south chancel window obscures the form of what was once an arched niche set into the wall. [6.149] The niche is an unusual shape and form for an aumbry, and when combined with the location on the wall, is more suggestive of a piscina with side credence. There is, however, no basin or drain and no indication that one was ever present. [6.150] Another Irish monastic example of a similar niche is found at Jerpoint Cistercian Abbey, Kilkenny. [6.151] Here, a double niche is placed in a similar location along the south chancel wall, beneath a window. Stalley has suggested that the feature is an original feature of the building, which dates to *ca.* 1160-70.⁹² If he is correct, perhaps the arrangement at Jerpoint provided some inspiration for arrangements at the newly constructed Augustinian foundation.

None of the later medieval aumbries within the study group churches were so elaborate. Thirteenth-century aumbries are built into the fabric of Dromineer, Dromcliff, Dysert O'Dea and Moy, all in Clare. The Dromineer aumbry is formed of a small, unarticulated niche set low in the south side of the east gable. [6.152] A larger niche occupies the same location within the gable of Dromcliff. [6.153] At Dysert O'Dea, two aumbries are placed together in a

⁸⁹ The Kilfinaghta sedilia is discussed at 208-09.

⁹⁰ On the foundation of Clare Abbey and the presence of an earlier community on the site, see Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 198-206.

⁹¹ On Clare Abbey, see T. Westropp, 'The Augustinian Houses of the County Clare: Clare, Killone and Inchicronan' in *JRS&AI*, 30 (1900), 118-35. The Romanesque features of the abbey will be discussed in a forthcoming entry within the *CR&BI*.

⁹² It has been suggested, however, that this niche and the nearby sedilia are fifteenth-century insertions. See the discussion at 140. On the dating of the Jerpoint chancel features, see also Stalley, *Cistercian Monasteries*, 296, fn. 61.

similar location on the east gable. [6.40] Here, however, evidence survives which shows that the cupboards would have been secured by doors. [6.154] The church at Moy also contains two aumbries, but here they are formed by the south-east interior corner of the walls. [6.155, 6.156] Fifteenth-century aumbries found within the study group were no more elaborate. The parish church of Killadysert, Clare, also contains two aumbries set near the south-east corner of the building. [6.157] Broken stone on the top right corner of the east wall aumbry suggests that it may have once possessed a door. The aumbry on the south wall is set directly under the window; the head of this niche appears to have been cut away to mimick the arch forms found in the embrasures of the window above and chancel door set directly to the west.

The Sedilia

As has been discussed, the sedilia was a seat provided for the celebrant and his assistants during the mass; during allotted portions of the service, the celebrant, deacon and subdeacon would retire to the seats.⁹³ Sedilia were, however, luxury items and their presence was never required by any English or Irish diocesan statutes and they are rare fixtures in Irish churches. Only one church within the study group, at Kilfinaghta, Clare, retains a sedilia.

Kilfinaghta, is a parish church which exhibits three phases of construction. [6.41] Large limestone blocks can be found towards the west end of the north wall, suggesting that a church was first erected on the site at some point before the late twelfth century. It was extended towards the east at some point in the 1220s or 1230s and contains a number of features with sculptural decoration and moulding placing it firmly within the late Romanesque tradition described as the 'School of the West'.⁹⁴ There is no recorded history of the site, and no known information about its dedication, though the elaborate Romanesque decoration suggests it was an important and well-funded church in the early thirteenth century.

A sandstone double sedilia is located at the east end of the north wall. [6.42] The jambs of the feature are chamfered while each gently pointed arch is decorated with a hollow and small chamfer. The presence of this a feature at such a relatively unknown site is striking: while parish church sedilia do exist in Ireland, they are rare and tend to be located at churches with significant lay patronage. Indeed, the presence of such an early sedilia is also striking; in England, parish church sedilia do not become common features until the latter thirteenth or

⁹³ A full discussion of the function and development of the sedilia can be found at 137-42.

⁹⁴ The Romanesque features at Kilfinaghta are discussed at T. Garton, 'Kilfinaghta, Clare', *CRSBI* (<http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/county/site/id-cl-kilfi.html>) (Accessed 07 July 2010).

fourteenth-centuries. Irish examples, too, tend to date to the later middle ages. Why then might an unknown parish church in Clare possess such a feature at such an early date?

Graves has shown that in late medieval England, parish church arrangements directly reflect the level of episcopal control over the theological and political priorities of the diocese.⁹⁵ Were this also the case in twelfth-century Ireland, the appearance of a sedilia at Kilfinaghta would not be so surprising. Killaloe Cathedral underwent two major building campaigns in the early thirteenth century: the first is represented by a large amount of Romanesque decorative work dated to *ca.* 1200; the second by the standing early Gothic church building dated to *ca.* 1220.⁹⁶ Although no trace of a sedilia remains at the cathedral, it is possible that it once possessed a stone or wooden example. The appearance of this high church feature at Kilfinaghta would then suggest a close relationship, both liturgically and politically, between the two sites in the early thirteenth century. This theory is corroborated by the presence of an elaborated aumbry at the site, which also makes architectural reference to the east gable of the cathedral.⁹⁷

The Piscina

Of the sixty-three churches within the study group, only four retain a piscina. One site, Lorrha Augustinian Priory, once contained piscina, removed in modern times.⁹⁸ A further three retain evidence of a possible piscina: Killeenagarraiff, Limerick, and Lisbunny, Youghalarra and Nenagh Franciscan Friary, all in Tipperary. The evidence for possible piscinas at these sites will be briefly discussed.

Cemented into the base of a quadrangular aumbry in the south wall of Killeenagarraiff, Limerick, is an unusual moulded base, which may have once formed the base of a pillar piscina or small font. **[6.158]** The base is octagonal in shape and measures 51 centimetres wide with a circular rebate measuring 17 centimetres in diameter. The base is designed to be seen in the rough, as it is moulded on all faces. The moulding is broken where the base would have attached to the column, so the remaining moulding comprises a bell with a roll half way down, two rolls, a rebate, a fillet and a plinth. The mouldings are comparable to those found in the double piscinas set into the south transepts of Ennis Franciscan Friary **[6.73]** and Quin

⁹⁵ A discussion of Graves' work and its implications for Irish architecture can be found at 111-12.

⁹⁶ On the architecture of Killaloe Cathedral, see T. Garton, 'St Flannan, Killaloe, Clare' and T. Westropp, 'Killaloe: Its Ancient Places and Cathedral (Parts I and II) in *JRSAI*, 2 (1892), 398-40 and 3 (1893), 187-201.

⁹⁷ On the Kilfinaghta aumbry, see 206.

⁹⁸ Gleeson states: 'In the nineteenth century, a piscina was removed from this church by an American priest of local extraction and is now in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Minneapolis, USA, with an inscription showing its origin.' D. F. Gleeson, 'Churches in the Deanery of Ormond' in *NMLAJ*, 6:3 (1951), 96-107 and 6:4 (1952), 130-35.

Franciscan Friary, [6.81] both in Clare.⁹⁹ Architectural evidence at the site suggests that the building was first constructed in the thirteenth century and underwent at least one later medieval building campaign in the fifteenth or early sixteenth century.¹⁰⁰ [6.159]

One indication of these later medieval building campaigns is found in the unusually large amount of architectural spolia found within the ruined church. No less than seven large, elaborately moulded fragments were found which appear to have come from a number of different building features. The rubble contains the remains of the head of at least one double-headed ogee light and three large features of similar scale which would have jambs and hoods, each differentiated from one another. [6.160, 6.162, 6.163] The church itself is small and none of the *in situ* architectural features are particularly elaborate: the interior of the south doorway retains a thirteenth-century moulded jamb [6.70] when it was refurbished in the later middle ages. Neither is the single-light window standing in the south wall particularly elaborate; a faux architectural head decorates the exterior of the light. The head is formed by a chamfered, depressed ogee arch with faux spandrels decorating either side, both decorated with incised carvings.¹⁰¹ [6.164] Given the comparative simplicity of these two features, it is difficult to suggest where the large assemblage of moulded rubble would have originally stood within the building. Nevertheless, the moulded rubble would seem to indicate that the church was a much grander structure in the late medieval period than the standing fabric might otherwise indicate. Perhaps an elaborate pillar piscina would not have been out of place in such a decorative scheme.

The thirteenth-century nave and chancel parish church of Lisbunny, Tipperary, [6.139] retains a niche set low to the ground at the east end of the south chancel wall.¹⁰² [6.165] This is a quadrangular niche which has been identified as a piscina niche by the Archaeological Inventory.¹⁰³ While it is certainly possible that a piscina was once located in this position, the niche is currently infilled with rubble making it difficult to discern whether a base stone which may have contained a basin and drain might have been an original part of the feature. Given the large number of plain aumbries placed found in similar locations throughout the study group, the presence of a medieval piscina at Lisbunny remains uncertain.

⁹⁹ These piscinas will be discussed in detail later in this section, see 214-19.

¹⁰⁰ A full discussion of Killeenagarriiff can be found in catalogue entry 35.

¹⁰¹ Both spandrel carvings are in relief. A rose decorates the western spandrel; the eastern spandrel appears to contain foliage but this is obscured by a crack in the stone. Similar versions of the rose carving can be found in window spandrels at Kilconnell Franciscan Friary, Galway and a number of other late medieval sites in Clare.

¹⁰² A discussion of Lisbunny can be found at catalogue entry 50.

¹⁰³ Farrelly and O'Brien, *Archaeological Inventory of North Tipperary*, 253.

The parish church of Youghalarra, Tipperary, also contains the remains of a possible piscina niche. The site has early monastic associations,¹⁰⁴ but the remaining standing fabric of the church is late medieval in date, though it incorporate some earlier twelfth or thirteenth-century building fabric. The standing south wall has been heavily restored and repointed in the modern period and a large portion of the exterior is covered in concrete render. **[6.166]** A large niche is set into the east end of the south wall; the head is formed of a rounded arch with a shouldered chamfer cut into the arris.¹⁰⁵ The size, placement and form of this niche suggests that it may once have contained a piscina basin, a suggestion also made by the Archaeological Inventory.¹⁰⁶ Like the rest of the standing fabric, however, the niche has been substantially rebuilt and no sign of a basin remains.

Here, a brief discussion of one unusual basin warrants discussion. At Nenagh Franciscan Friary, a basin has been inserted into the north nave wall under the base of a window along an arch fragment. **[6.87]** The function of this stone is unclear, for although it takes the form and shape of a piscina, it has no drain hole. The basin is carved into a single stone 0.15 metres wide and 0.15 metres tall. It seems to have been set on four legs, two of which are visible.¹⁰⁷ The basin is circular; eight thin lobes are cut into one side while the other remains bare. **[6.88]** The presence of so many thin lobes is unusual in piscina design; by the thirteenth century it was common to find as many as eight. If more than eight lobes are used, they usually appear set underneath the frontal lobes, as is the case at Monsea. **[6.89]**

Though the church has undergone recent restoration, Leask published an account of the ruins in 1938, where he described ‘traces of a piscina niche’ found beneath the south window.¹⁰⁸ The masonry here has been restored and repointed, and no indication of such a niche remains. The presence of the scalloping on only half of the basin suggests that the stone was half inserted into the wall, the scalloped bowl projecting outwards, and resting on two legs. Though there are examples of piscinas which required emptying, such as the unusual example at Grantham¹⁰⁹ **[6.77]**, both the large size of the basin and its position on legs would preclude this possibility. Although in all other regards this may resemble a piscina, the lack of a drain hole suggests that it instead served as a holy water stoup, perhaps inserted into the fabric of

¹⁰⁴ The site was supposedly founded by a St Coelan, who also has strong associations with Iniscealtra in the early medieval period. See Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 324 and Gleeson, ‘Churches in the Deanery of Ormond’, 97.

¹⁰⁵ The niche measures 68 centimetres wide by 103 centimetres tall.

¹⁰⁶ See the description of the church at Farrelly and O’Brien, *Archaeological Inventory of North Tipperary*, 271, where the authors suggest that this is either an original aumbry or piscina niche.

¹⁰⁷ These descend for approximately 0.10 metres from the base of the stone.

¹⁰⁸ H. Leask, ‘The Franciscan Friary, Nenagh’ in *Molua* (1958), 36-38.

¹⁰⁹ This piscina is discussed at 130.

the west wall of the church in the fifteenth century when the western doorway was remodelled.

Of the five sites which retain their original piscinas, two are Anglo-Norman parochial foundations, Dolla and Monsea, both in Tipperary. The remaining two are mendicant foundations: Ennis Franciscan Friary, Clare, and Lorrha Dominican Priory, Tipperary.

Parish Church Piscinas

Both Dolla and Monsea are named in the 1303 taxation at levies 94 and 96. While architectural evidence at Dolla suggests that an earlier church stood at the site, it is likely that both of these churches were erected as Anglo-Norman manorial foundations.¹¹⁰ Both have niche piscinas with a single basin.

The sandstone piscina at Monsea, though small, is very well formed and likely dates to the first half of the thirteenth century.¹¹¹ [6.44]. The head is formed by a trefoil but the exterior is plastered over, making it difficult to see. The head seems to have been moulded with a broad hollow chamfer perhaps emphasised by an outer roll, now so badly damaged it is impossible to be sure of the original form (perhaps the outer moulding was knocked off to allow for a smooth plaster surface at some later date?). Some diagonal tooling is visible through the plaster on the flat surface of the head stones at the interior of the wall; this is particularly evident outside the moulding of the western jamb. This tooling is particularly suggestive of twelfth-century work.¹¹² A separate stone forms the base of the piscina, though now damaged; it would likely have been rounded and extended beyond the face of the wall.

The basin is slightly unusual in that it is formed not of cut scallops, but of eight raised petals. [6.45] Here, a double floral pattern is employed and another eight petals are set behind the eight raised petals; a single drain is set at the centre of the pattern. The diameter of the floral

¹¹⁰ Though there is little documentary evidence for the early history of either site, Monsea is situated in the old manor of Ballertella, which remained in the property of the Earl and Countess of Ormond through the eighteenth century. A fifteenth-century stone bearing Tudor rosettes and Butler initials was found in the mid-twentieth century but it was not found during the site visit. See D. Gleeson, 'Churches in the Deanery of Ormond' in *NMAJ*, 6 (1951-2), 96-107; 130-35 at 89. On twelfth-century architectural fragments uncovered at Dolla, see E. Rynne, 'Some preliminary notes'. As noted, it was common for Anglo-Norman colonists to adopt earlier churches as manorial parish centres.

¹¹¹ It is set 0.66 metres above the current ground level, which does not appear to have been much raised, and 1.01 metres from the east gable. The opening is 0.40 metres tall from the base to the top of the trefoil and the opening at the interior of the niche measures 0.37 metres wide.

¹¹² R. Moss, 'Tales From The Crypt: The Medieval Stonework of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin', in S. Duffy (ed.) *Medieval Dublin III* (Dublin, 1993), 95-114.

pattern is 0.30 metres wide from east to west and 0.28 metres from north to south, indicating that the basin would have projected at least a further 0.03 metres from the face of the wall. The design of the piscina is in keeping with the cut stone set into the east end of the building, which can also be dated to the first half of the thirteenth century. The east gable is lit by three round-headed lancets, each set into their own splayed embrasure. **[6.46]** The heads of these lights, visible on the exterior, are also cut from sandstone and take the form of a cusped trefoil. **[6.47]** While the central lancet was altered in the fifteenth century, the sandstone head is still visible in the masonry; the north and south windows remained unaltered. These are gently chamfered and externally rebated.

The fabric of Dolla church dates to the late medieval and early modern period, though at least two twelfth-century cut stone fragments have been found at the site. The piscina at Dolla is not as elaborate as that of Monsea. The embrasure measures 0.50 metres in width and 0.52 metres in height, but has been entirely reconstructed, probably in the nineteenth century when an early modern tomb slab was set into the south wall.¹¹³ **[6.48]** This slab is set into a blocked doorway which would have led to the southern transept. **[6.49]** The opening is currently topped by a lintel, but as the entire portion of the surrounding wall has been rebuilt, there is no indication of the shape of the original piscina niche. The basin is the only original piece of this fixture. It is formed from a single stone which has been inset into the base of the embrasure. The basin is formed of a circle decorated with four raised ridges and slopes gently to a single drain hole in the centre. The basin is currently offset towards the northwest of the base, but was likely placed at the centre of the original feature. **[6.50]** The basin likely occupied the majority of the base of the opening and any credence would have been incorporated at the top of the feature.¹¹⁴

The surviving late medieval architectural features at Dolla containing cut stone include a reconstructed north door and three windows at the east end of the chancel and the east and south end of the transept. The south doorway is plain; the pointed arch is chamfered only on the arris of the head. **[6.51]** This doorway was reconstructed from loose fragments, and may have originally stood at the entrance to the residence at the west end of the nave. The exterior window heads are of late fifteenth-century date, all are twin ogee-headed lights with incised spandrels surrounded at the head by chamfered hood mouldings. The east sacristy window is the only one to bear any decoration; here a leaf has been carved into the southernmost

¹¹³ A large amount of the standing fabric seems to have been restored around this time; a metal label was found in the uppermost portion of the south wall which had been used to support climbing roses. On the nineteenth-century rebuilding, see Rynne, 'Some preliminary notes', 52.

¹¹⁴ The basin measures 0.24 metres in diameter.

spandrel. [6.52] The east window lights are ogee-headed as well, but carved of three blocks and internally rebated. [6.53] In a partial excavation of the site, Rynne discovered a stone of late twelfth or early thirteenth century date which is chamfered on two sides and appears to be an arch impost.¹¹⁵ [6.54] A raised spur is cut into the corner of the stone which would have sat at the exterior base of the opening. Another raised portion of the shorter side of the stone may have supported a fillet running along the jamb and soffit of the arch. A damaged stone which possibly matches this was rebuilt into the southeast corner of the church in the nineteenth century.¹¹⁶ A stone with Romanesque cable moulding has been reused in the exterior northeast corner of the chancel. [6.55]

Despite the presence of cut stone from the twelfth, thirteenth and sixteenth-century building programmes, none can be used to give a clear indication of the original shape of the piscina niche. The basin, however, may indicate that the piscina likely dates to the earlier phase of the building. It certainly does not match the well-cut stone found in the late window embrasures. Nor does it contain scallops or petals sometimes found in more elaborate basins of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, though this in and of itself cannot be used as a strict indicator of date. It most likely dates to the same late twelfth or early thirteenth-century building phase represented by the impost.

Monastic Piscinas

The two monastic sites retaining piscinas are both mendicant sites founded in the thirteenth century.¹¹⁷ Ennis Franciscan Friary, Clare, retains two twin piscinas, while Lorrha Dominican Friary, Tipperary, retains two double piscinas. At both sites, the chancel piscina is earlier, while the secondary piscina is a later medieval insertion. A third monastic site, Lorrha Augustinian, Tipperary, retained its piscina until the nineteenth century, but nothing is known of the form of this feature.¹¹⁸

At Lorrha Dominican Friary, one piscina is placed in the south wall of the chancel whereas the other stands in the south wall of the nave. The thirteenth-century chancel piscina takes the form of a double niche with a credence shelf inserted above the basins and is the more

¹¹⁵ Rynne, 'Some preliminary notes', 48.

¹¹⁶ Rynne, 'Some preliminary notes', 48.

¹¹⁷ Ennis Franciscan Friary was founded in the 1240s while Lorrha Dominican Friary was founded *ca.* 1269. See Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 268-77.

¹¹⁸ Gleeson records that the piscina was removed and reinstalled in an American church at some point in the nineteenth century. See Gleeson, 'Churches in the Deanery of Ormond', 102.

elaborate of the two.¹¹⁹ [6.56] Matching engaged columns are set into the chamfer of each jamb. The columns are topped with bell capitals which are moulded with a broad roll at the abacus and a narrow roll at the neck. The central sections of the capitals are badly damaged but seem to have comprised at least three rolls with a band around the bell. The bases of the columns are also badly worn, but indications of the moulding survives at the rear of the base suggesting they were waterholding bases. [6.57] Overall, the composition of the columns was probably not that different from other thirteenth-century work such as a piscina found in the northeast transept of Salisbury Cathedral.¹²⁰ [6.58]

The head of the arch is unusual. While it does not seem to sit well atop the capitals, the angle of the hood fits exactly with the bonding stones of the capitals and the broad moulding is suggestive of a thirteenth-century date. Given the overall composition of the feature, a trefoil arch might be expected, as is found in the piscina at Ennis Franciscan Friary, Clare.¹²¹ [6.59] A number of English piscinas with similarly moulded capitals and bases also contain trefoil heads; one such example can be found at Ashby, Suffolk¹²² [6.60] However, it has been noted that somewhat eccentric approaches to Early English design begin to appear in Ireland from the middle of the thirteenth century.¹²³ At places like Christ Church and St Patrick's Cathedrals in Dublin, decorative forms were completely in accord with contemporary styles found in England; indeed, it is at Christ Church Cathedral that the first stiff-leaf capitals appear in Ireland.¹²⁴

By about the middle of the thirteenth century there seems to be a degeneration of both form and execution of these Early English features. This can be attributed to the fact that while the earliest Irish buildings to employ such designs were constructed by English masons with first-hand knowledge of the vocabulary of Early English forms, after about 1250, locally trained masons were responsible for the majority of Irish building campaigns. Although these masons

¹¹⁹ The niche measures 42.5 inches wide internally and 62.5 inches from the base to the top of the gable and is 19.25 inches deep. The basins are so damaged that their diameter cannot be determined, but the drain holes are separated by approximately 16 inches.

¹²⁰ On this piscina, see P. Draper, *The Formation of English Gothic: Architecture and Identity* (London, 2006), 220. Salisbury, and West County architecture in general, has long been known to have heavily influenced the first stages of Irish Gothic. This was first argued by Roger Stalley, who pointed out that the first wave of Anglo-Norman settlers came largely from the Severn Valley and its hinterland in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. This was to have a dramatic impact on architectural form, and Early English style was a significant influence on Irish architecture. See, for example, R. Stalley, 'Three Irish Buildings with West Country origins' in N. Coldstream and P. Draper (eds), *Medieval art and architecture at Wells and Glastonbury*, (London, 1981), 71-5 and Stalley, 'Irish Gothic and English Fashion'.

¹²¹ This feature will be discussed presently.

¹²² Bond, *Chancel of English Churches*, 155.

¹²³ Roger Stalley was the first to note this degeneration in form, and the argument which follows is drawn from R. Stalley, 'Irish Gothic and English Fashion'.

¹²⁴ On the appearance of Early English at the Dublin cathedrals, see Stalley, 'The architecture of the cathedral and priory buildings' and O'Neill, 'The architectural history of the medieval cathedral'.

sought to recreate Early English forms and styles, their lack of experience with such designs resulted in sometimes odd or unusual execution. This can be clearly seen in the small windows set between the embrasures of the north choir windows at Cashel Cathedral, Tipperary.¹²⁵

[6.61] Though the cathedral contains many features which point to English origin, including the row of large lancets lining the choir wall, the design of the smaller windows is completely unorthodox and characteristic of the unusual approaches taken by Irish masons during the late thirteenth century. The offsets of the buttresses at Cashel Cathedral are gabled, suggesting that these gabled forms may have achieved some measure of popularity in late thirteenth-century Ireland. **[6.62]** By the early fourteenth century, the gable had become an integral element of Decorated buildings in England, and makes an appearance in Ireland in the south transept of Kilmallock Dominican Friary, dating from the *ca.* 1320s, already discussed above. **[6.63]**

It is perhaps most likely that degeneration in form and execution account for the appearance of the broadly moulded, cusped pediment in the piscina at Lorrha Dominican Priory, rather than inventive local masons evolving Early English design into a new form. The gable or pediment found a renewed popularity in fifteenth-century Ireland and is evolved into new forms. It appears in monuments such as the Daly tomb at Kilconnell Franciscan Friary, Galway, **[6.64]** and the Bultingfort Galwey tomb at St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick. **[6.65]**

Major building works were conducted at the Lorrha Dominican Priory in the later middle ages, the majority of which can be dated to the early fifteenth century. In January 1401 Pope Boniface issued a bull granting an indulgence of seven years to all who gave alms for the repair of the fabric of the building.¹²⁶ It was at this point that the large crossing tower was inserted. Little of this tower survives, but a portion of the large southern foot still stands. Set into the western face of this wall is a small altar, a double piscina and a tomb niche. **[6.66]** This piscina is far less elaborate in design. The niche embrasure takes the shape of a pointed arch.¹²⁷ **[6.67]** Both the head and jambs are chamfered and the jambs finish with two differently shaped stops, the one the east taking the form of a simple angular stop-chamfer while the one on the west is taller and may have had some small sculptural decoration at the top. **[6.68]** Though broken away, small portions of a credence survive at the back corners of the niche. Here, each basin is set into a separate stone. Both basins are formed of undecorated, shallow circles with central drainage holes.

¹²⁵ For a discussion of the building programmes at Cashel Cathedral and unusual design elements found there, see R. Stalley, 'Style and Identity: early Gothic architecture in the archdiocese of Cashel' in *idem, Medieval Art and Architecture in Munster* (Leeds, forthcoming).

¹²⁶ Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 498.

¹²⁷ The niche measures 37.5 inches wide internally, 44.5 inches from the base to the apex of the arch and 15.5 inches deep.

Ennis Franciscan also boasts two twin piscinas, one located in the south wall of the chancel and the other in the south wall of the southernmost south transept chapel. Although the twin piscina niche in the chancel differs in form from that found at Lorrha Dominican, it too can be seen as an example of Early English influence. Here, the heads twin opes take the form of ogees. [6.69] The moulding on the head and jambs is comprised of a filleted three quarter roll flanked on each side by a chamfered hollow. This moulding is comparable to that found in the south door embrasure of Killeenagarriff, Limerick, where the diagonal tooling visible on the stones indicates a late twelfth-century date for the feature.¹²⁸ [6.70] Neither the mullion nor the base is original to the feature, though the capital is likely to be coeval; it is a bell capital with two units set above a tapering bell. The necking roll of this capital was obliterated when it was reset. The moulding of the polygonal base is comprised of a necking band with short bell below and two broad rolls above the plinth. The cloister arcade incorporated dumb-bell piers within similarly moulded bases.¹²⁹ [6.71] Diagonal tooling is visible on the flat surfaces of both the arch and the base projection. The basins of each are formed of separate stones, both with a projecting lip over the edge of the embrasure. The basin in the eastern niche is formed of six wide, scalloped petals descending to a single, central drain. The basin in the western niche is less elaborate, and formed of only four scallops.

The dating of the original construction of the friary church at Ennis is somewhat contentious. The earliest accounts of the Franciscans in Ireland state that the friary itself was founded about 1240, by the Thomond king, Donough Cairbreac Ua Briain, who wished to establish a house of friars near his stronghold at Clonroad.¹³⁰ The *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh*, a record of the deeds of the Ua Brians compiled in the fourteenth century, states that Toirdelbach Ua Briain, king of Thomond from 1284 to 1306, was responsible for the construction of the monastery:

‘... Ennis, diversely beautiful, delectable: washed by a fish-giving stream; having lofty arches, walls limewhitened; with its order of chastity and their golden books, its sweet religious bells; its well-kept graves, homes of the noble dead; with furniture of both crucifix and illuminated tomes, both friar’s cowl and brodered vestment, with

¹²⁸ An overview of Killeenagarriff is included at catalogue entry 35, see also the discussion at 209-10.

¹²⁹ On the reconstructed cloister at Ennis, see C. Ua Briain, ‘County Clare’ in *Irish Architectural and Topographical Record* 1 (1908), 164-66.

¹³⁰ This was first recorded by Sir James Ware in his *Antiquitates* (1654), 212-13. For a discussion of this and other early accounts of the establishment of the Franciscan Friary, see Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 268-69. For a history of Clonmore and results of an excavation undertaken in the 1940s, see J. Huft, ‘Clonroad More, Ennis’ in *JRSAI* 76:4 (1946), 195-209.

windows glazed, with chalice of rare workmanship; a blessed and enduring memorial of the prince that raised it.¹³¹

The overall character of the choir, including the five-light east window and twin-light south windows, [6.72] is consistent with early thirteenth-century Irish architecture, but as has been noted, after about the year 1250, Irish architectural forms began to stagnate. As a result, it is often difficult to differentiate between those features which date to the middle of the thirteenth century and those which belong to the early fourteenth century. Although a mendicant house may have been founded at the site in the middle of the thirteenth century then, it was substantially refurbished in the early fourteenth century. The extent to which any fabric may survive from the initial mid-century foundation remains open.¹³² All that can be stated with any certainty is that the piscina is an original chancel feature, but the well cut three-quarter roll, the overall form of the trefoil-headed niches of the piscina, and the diagonal tooling all point to the possibility that this work possibly pre-dates Turlough's 1306 renovation of the building.

The style of the chancel piscina stands in marked contrast to that in the transept. [6.73] This feature is elaborately moulded, and contemporary with the early sixteenth-century southern extension of the transept.¹³³ The moulding of the jamb and arch is continuous. It is comprised of abroad hollow chamfer at the front, with quadrant, hollow chamfer and fillet behind. A moulded square hood with squared terminals covers the embrasure. Here, the moulding is comprised of two hollows separated by a freestanding-fillet. The bottom spandrel stone and mullion are modern replacements, though the base may be original. It is heavily damaged, so the original moulding remains unclear, but it appears to have been octagonal in form. The capital, also may be original; but the replaced head makes it impossible to tell how the arches would have sat upon it. It is moulded with a square abacus, which splays out to a broad roll flanked by fillets and a bell below. The necking roll is very damaged.

¹³¹ O'Grady and Flower, *Caitbréim Thoirdealbhaigh*, II.32. The *Caitbréim Thoirdealbhaigh* was composed in 1459 by the Ua Briain panegyrist Sean MacCriath to record the deeds of the Ua Briains. On the veracity of text, see T. Westropp, 'On the External Evidences Bearing on the Historic Character of the "Wars of Turlough," by John, Son of Rory Mac Grath' in *PRLA* 32C (1902 - 1904), 133-198.

¹³² However, it must be noted that no modern work has attempted to do so. On the architecture of the choir, see Ua Briain, 'County Clare', 152-5; T. Westropp, 'History of Ennis Abbey, Co. Clare, 1240-1693' in *The Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland*, 9:78 (1889), 44-48; and T. Westropp, 'Ennis Abbey and the O'Brien Tombs' in *JRSAI* 5:2 (1895), 135-154. It may be the case the friars initially made do with a wooden chapel while the church was under construction.

¹³³ The transept was added around the middle of the fifteenth century and the two northernmost chapels date to this time. The transept was extended in the early sixteenth century when the chapel to which this piscina belongs was created. See Ua Briain, 'County Clare', 152-5.

The rectangular basins of this piscina are unusual.¹³⁴ [6.74] Basins were usually circular in form, but could take any shape as shown by the examples from Kilmacduagh Cathedral, Galway [6.75], Barton Bendish, Norfolk, [6.76] and Grantham.¹³⁵ [6.77] The underside of each niche is decorated with a chunky ribbed vault [6.78], which is identical in composition to that found under the tower and the Inchiquin tomb located in the south chancel wall.¹³⁶ As these two features were erected in the fifteenth century, it seems likely that this vaulting was inserted in emulation of their design. The overall design of the feature is very similar to that found in the south transept of the nearby Franciscan friary at Quin, Clare. [6.79] Here, the piscina has two octagonal basins, one set rather too far to the east. [6.80] The similarity in mouldings is striking and raises the possibility that both features were carved by the same mason.¹³⁷

The transept extension undertaken at Ennis Franciscan Friary in the early sixteenth century created a small chapel which project east past the original transept wall. [6.81] Though the absence of a tomb suggests that this was not a mortuary chapel, the location of the piscina at Lorrha Dominican Friary is part of a triplet of features, including an altar and tomb niche, which is highly suggestive of a chantry chapel. [6.82] Altars could easily have been placed at the west end of inserted mendicant towers as can be seen at Ennis Franciscan Friary, where small altar abuts the northwest pier of the crossing tower above which can be found sculpture of St Francis. [6.83] The altar at Lorrha Dominican Priory is set into the tower under a plain embrasure with chamfered jambs and arch stones. The embrasure of the trefoil-headed tomb niche is equally simple. [6.84] Though the features are treated with cut stone, there is no sculpture or moulding elaborating the embrasures.

This suggests that this was not a chantry chapel funded by a patron for the burial and memorial masses of himself and his family; rather it is likely that it functioned as a general mortuary chapel where the body of the dead would lie within the small tomb niche while the memorial mass was said. Where private chantries exist, the tomb niches tend to be elaborately decorated as can be seen at Kilmallock Dominican Priory,¹³⁸ [6.85] previously discussed, or Gowran in Co. Kilkenny, rebuilt in the late thirteenth century, which acted as a chantry to the

¹³⁴ These basins each measure 0.15 metres in length and 0.20 metres in width and are both offset towards the centre of the feature.

¹³⁵ These, and other similar piscinas are discussed at 130.

¹³⁶ On the Inchiquin tomb, see T. Westropp, 'Ennis Abbey and the O'Brien Tombs' and H. Gilmore, 'The Inchiquin tomb, Ennis Abbey' in *The Other Clare* 5 (1981), 28-30.

¹³⁷ As suggested by D. O'Donnovan, personal comment.

¹³⁸ The tomb niche at Kilmallock dates to the early fourteenth century, and on the basis of the ball-flower ornament, so prevalent in English designs of the time, it has been suggested that it is the work of an Anglo-Norman mason. See Hogan, *Kilmallock Dominican Priory*, 43-5.

Butler earls of Ormond.¹³⁹ [6.86] At the latter site the liturgical arrangement somewhat reflects that at Lorrha, but the ornamentation of the piscina and tomb niches are far more elaborate. The tomb niches have segmental, cinquefoil cusped, pointed arches, the soffits of which are deeply moulded. These arches are supported by columns with crocket capitals and water-holding bases, while the hood mouldings are terminated with cranial hoodstops. This elaboration stands in marked contrast to that at Lorrha.

It is apparent, then, that the chancel piscinas were part of the original fabric of both Lorrha Dominican Priory and Ennis Franciscan Friary, both secondary piscinas inserted in the later middle ages served smaller chapels. The style of the chancel piscinas found at both Lorrha and Ennis show that the repertoire of Early English was very much present in the west of Ireland during the late thirteenth century.

The Font

Few baptismal fonts survive within the study group sites. In his survey of Clare churches, published in 1900, Westropp noted that five fonts survived within in the study group, located at the churches of Killaloe Cathedral, Clare Abbey, Killone Convent, and the parish churches of Kilballyowen, Kilkeedy and Dysert O'Dea.¹⁴⁰ No comparable list of surviving fonts has ever been prepared for the other three counties located within the diocese. During the site visits, fonts were found at only five sites: Killaloe Cathedral, Killone Abbey, Rathblathmaic and Tuamgraney, all in Clare. The basin of another font was found at Toomeyvarra Augustinian Priory, Tipperary. The base of a possible small font at Killenagariff, Limerick, has already been noted though the diminutive size of this heavily moulded base suggests that it may be been part of a pillar piscina.¹⁴¹ One more font from Kilballyowen, Clare survives; Westropp noted its presence at the site in the late nineteenth century, but it had disappeared by the turn of the century. It resurfaced in the middle of the twentieth century and is now displayed in the Eamon de Valera Library and Museum in Ennis, Clare.

¹³⁹ S. O'Brien, 'An Architectural Analysis of St Mary's Church, Gowran, Co. Kilkenny' (B.A. thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2004).

¹⁴⁰ In his survey of Clare churches, Westropp includes a list of surviving fonts at Westropp, 'Churches of County Clare', 125.

¹⁴¹ As this would have formed the base of a very small font, the discussion of this feature has been included with that of possible piscina evidence. There is, however, no firm indication as to the type of feature to which it originally belonged and the octagonal shape of the base might point more heavily to a font. See the discussion at 209-10.

This poor survival rate is, however, not necessarily indicative of the presence of fonts within the medieval churches. Because fonts were moveable features, it was possible for them to have been taken from church sites and repurposed. This is particularly likely to have happened at Irish churches which, unlike many English parish churches, were sometimes abandoned in the sixteenth century. Even in England, many fonts did not survive the Reformation and have been discovered in gardens and fields, used as planters and cattle troughs.¹⁴² The survival of a large number of English fonts is due only to the zeal of early ecclesiologists who restored these items to their proper place. Even in the middle ages there was concern that fonts might be used for secular purposes. The 1186 synod convened under the auspices of the first Anglo-Norman archbishop of Dublin decreed not only that every parish church should possess a font, but cautioned that it should never be reused for a domestic purpose.¹⁴³ This synod also stated that so long as it was provided with a lead-lined drain, the font could be made of wood, and this may be one reason for the low survival rate of fonts.

The earliest of the surviving fonts can be dated to the twelfth century and is found at Killaloe Cathedral, Clare.¹⁴⁴ [6.90] Here, the large square basin is set atop a modern supporting pillar, but the conical capitals carved into the base of the stone show that it would originally have been supported by a large central drain and four columns in an arrangement not unlike that of the thirteenth-century Kilkenny Cathedral font. [4.204] Unlike the equally large Romanesque font at Kilfenora Cathedral, Clare [4.205], here the entire stone has been hallowed out to form a square basin with a small drainage hole set into the centre. The font at Killaloe is unfinished; although each corner contains a capital, carving appears only on one face of the basin and even here, a blank space in one shoulder of the incised cross shows that work on the feature was abandoned quite early. [6.91] Offset towards the bottom and right of the face is a shallowly incised cross; the two side arms extend to flat expanded terminals while the terminal of the top arm splits to form two leaves. The cross is surrounded by foliage design which, as already noted, is unfinished. It is likely that the cross was deliberately carved off-centre, with asymmetrical terminals, because of a fault in the stone or an error on the part of the mason who originally created the capitals. As can be clearly seen, the foliage stalk set to the left of the face has been carved to cover a groove which runs from the hollow of the capital.

¹⁴² A discussion of the desecration and destruction of English fonts can be found in Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, 257-80.

¹⁴³ A discussion of the decrees issued by the 1186 Dublin synod can be found at 49-50.

¹⁴⁴ This font was published as early as 1893 when Westropp included a notice and drawing of it in a plate showing the plan and some sculptural details found at the site. See T. Westropp, 'Killaloe: its ancient palaces and cathedral (part I)' in *JRSAI*, 22 (1892), 398-410 and 'Killaloe: its ancient palaces and cathedral (part II)' in *JRSAI*, 23 (1893), 187-201. It is described in detail at Garton 'St Flannan, Killaloe, Clare'.

It is difficult to suggest an exact date for this feature. The Romanesque west doorway inserted into the south wall of the nave also contains foliage ornament set within the lozenges of chevron ornament decorating the soffit of the arch.¹⁴⁵ [6.92] Here, the design is much more developed and skilfully executed but there are some similarities in form which suggest either that the font was carved at the same time, but abandoned because of the differences in quality of the execution, or that it was carved later by a less able mason, in emulation of the doorway. The base of the lozenge on the west side of the soffit contains a rosette formed of a central double roundel and rounded petals with articulated surrounds. The rosette sits on a separate stem which rises from the base of the arch. The general shape and form of this feature is not dissimilar to the unfinished rosette placed on the upper right hand corner of the font basin. Here, the non-existent stem of the rosette would seem to descend at an angle from the rim of the basin and branch out forming central spokes within which are placed similarly articulated petals. The two leaf-like terminals of the upper arm of the cross might also find comparison with decoration on the door soffit. The second lozenge from the base contains a rosette-like cross, and here the terminals each extend and separate to form similarly shaped drops. The foliage pattern found decorating the left side of the basin may also derive from the decorative repertoire of the doorway as foliate pattern is scattered throughout the feature on both the arch and jambs. And though the chamfered columns of the font are unfinished, their overall form suggests that they may have been intended to carry scalloped scrollwork and fluting, both found on the capitals of the south doorway [6.93] and the aumbries set into the east chancel wall. [6.94]

It should not be surprising, however, to find one of the only surviving fonts within the diocese at the cathedral church. There are a number of surviving twelfth-century fonts at western cathedral churches with significant Romanesque architectural sculpture; the font at Kilfenora Cathedral, Clare has already been noted. Clonfert Cathedral, Galway, also possesses a font carved by the same hand responsible for portions of the chancel arch, both have been dated to the second decade of the thirteenth century.¹⁴⁶ Here, the large octagonal basin is decorated with foliage patterns, rosettes and scrollwork. [6.95]

¹⁴⁵ This elaborate Romanesque doorway has been discussed in a number of places, amongst them T. Garton, 'A Romanesque Doorway at Killaloe' in *JBAA*, 134 (1981), 31-57. and J. Ellis and R. Moss, 'The Conservation of the Romanesque Portal at Killaloe: exposing the history of one of Clare's finest carved doorways' in *JRSAI*, 129, (1999), 67-89. A detailed description of the Romanesque architecture found at the Cathedral can be found at Garton 'St Flannan, Killaloe, Clare'.

¹⁴⁶ For this argument, see P. Harbison, 'The 'Ballintober Master' and a Date for the Clonfert Cathedral Chancel' in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, 35 (1976), 96-99

Baptismal fonts also survive at two Augustinian houses within the diocese: Killone Convent, Clare, and Toomevarra Priory, Tipperary. Westropp stated that a font was present at Clare Abbey in the early twentieth century, but it was not noted during the site visit. Only the fonts at Killone Convent and Toomeyvarra Priory were present during site inspection.

The Killone font is devoid of any sculptural detail; the base is missing but the basin and pedestal can still be found in the cloister garth.¹⁴⁷ [6.96] The square basin is decorated with a hollow roll while both pointed stops and rolls can be found on the octagonal pillar. [6.97] The decorative restraint of the font might be paralleled in the only other late medieval cut stone to survive at Killone: the archway leading from the western cloister arcade into the nave of the church.¹⁴⁸ [6.98] Although heavily moulded, the moulding profile found on both the arch and shouldered hood is not particularly elaborate and consists only of a series of rolls and fillets. Here, however, some small decorative indulgence has been accommodated by the inclusion of incised square rosettes the rolls [6.99] The reconstructed archway is badly weathered, but even so it is obvious that the rosettes are in no way as elaborate as those found on other contemporary doorways. For example, a fifteenth-century inserted arch at the south doorway of St Ruadhan's Church, Lorrha, Tipperary, [6.100] is also decorated with square rosettes, but here there is more variety in design and the sculpture takes on a much more naturalistic appearance. [6.101]

The font basin which survives at Toomeyvarra Priory is octagonal and decorated with unornamented, incised quatrefoils and would have rested upon a single, central pillar. [6.102] Horizontal tooling is visible across the faces of the basin. Though the simple design makes the basin difficult to date, the moulded chamfer of the basin suggests a late medieval or early modern date, though the design certainly does not have the same feel as the fifteenth-century moulded north doorway. [6.103] While the form and shape of the pillar and basin would help to clarify the likely date of the font, similar designs were employed in England from the fourteenth century, as can be seen on the fonts from Sutton Bonnington, Nottinghamshire, [6.104] and Minterne Magna, Dorset.¹⁴⁹ [6.105]

The presence of fonts at these three of the Augustinian houses is telling as it supports the argument that these foundations were responsible for sacramental administration of the

¹⁴⁷ No mention of the font is found in Pike, *Medieval Fonts of Ireland*, but Westropp included a notice and drawing of it in T. Westropp, 'The Augustinian Houses of the County Clare: Clare, Killone, and Inchicronan' in *JRSAI*, 10:2 (1900), 118-135.

¹⁴⁸ This archway has been re-erected in the modern period from portions of cut stone found lying in the cloister.

¹⁴⁹ See Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, 67.

populace since their foundation. It also supports the suggestion that the double levy placed on both the church and temporalities of Clare Abbey and Killone Augustinian does indicate that both a parish church and a monastic community were housed at each site.¹⁵⁰ It may further corroborate the notion that Toomeyvarra Augustinian Priory did in fact serve as the parish church during the middle ages. Although the remains of a building stand to the north-east of the Augustinian Priory, there is no concrete evidence that this was ever a church building, and no precise location for a purported separate parish church have been uncovered.¹⁵¹

When the Cistercians arrived in Ireland in the twelfth century, they established themselves at new, purpose built monasteries while the Augustinian Rule tended to be adopted by extant monasteries. A similar pattern of transformation has been identified in England and attributed to the fact that the Augustinian Rule was not a strict set of rules and regulations. Instead, it provided an easily assimilated general framework which was easily adoptable by ecclesiastical communities.¹⁵² It has already been established that monasteries were the foremost providers of pastoral care to the laity in early medieval Ireland; it should come as no surprise that these churches would continue to serve that function even after they had adopted the Augustinian Rule.

A font stands within the nave of Tomgraney, Clare, the site of a seventh-century monastic foundation. The church itself is of two phases; the nave is a pre-Romanesque structure which dates to about the year 964.¹⁵³ **[4.4]** The chancel is a twelfth-century addition adorned with Romanesque decoration including external quoin-columns and elaborately carved internal window surrounds. Annalistic references to Tomgraney indicate that it was an important eleventh-century site, but all references stop after the year 1118.¹⁵⁴ By the time of the 1303-06 Taxation, it was serving as a parish church. The font is comprised of a large round basin set atop a thin column which descends to a gently moulded base. **[6.167]** The lip of the basin contains a scalloped band. This font could be late medieval in date, but is certainly not contemporary with either of the main building phases at the church.

¹⁵⁰ See the discussion of taxation levies placed on monastic houses at 169-73.

¹⁵¹ This possible church is discussed at catalogue entry 61. Gleeson has suggested that this is not a church, but a dwelling associated with the Priory which was ruined as early as the sixteenth century. See the discussion at Gleeson, 'Churches in the Deanery of Ormond', 133-4; the ruins are also recorded at Farrelly and O'Brien, *Archaeological Inventory of Tipperary North*, 233.

¹⁵² For this argument, see J. Herbert, 'The Transformation of Hermitages into Augustinian Priors in Twelfth-Century England', in W.J. Sheils (ed.), *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition* (Blackwell, 1985), 131-45.

¹⁵³ For a description of the pre-Romanesque architecture at the site, see Ó Carragáin, 'Pre-Romanesque Churches', II.27.

¹⁵⁴ An overview of the early history of Tomgraney can be found at Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 29-32.

Two fonts survive at parish churches within the study group; these can be found at Rathblathmaic and Kilballyowen, Clare. Both are unusual examples of approaches to font design in the later middle ages.

The basin of the font at Rathblathmaic now serves as a stoup set into the eastern embrasure of the south doorway which has been reassembled from a number of different features.¹⁵⁵

[6.106] Its small size is curious and the lack of any decoration or carving makes it undatable, though the *CRSBI* lists it within its account of the Romanesque features of the site.¹⁵⁶ It is formed of a single, square block with a chamfered base. A round basin is cut into the feature with a single drain hole visible in the centre; it appears to have been repaired at some point as one corner is fitted into the feature. **[6.107]** While no other comparable fonts are known to have existed within the study group, one small basin of comparable size had survived at Ballyhale, Kilkenny, where it has been reused as a stoup.¹⁵⁷ **[6.108]** The simplicity of the font is in stark contrast to the reused Romanesque sculpture at the building, suggesting it is late medieval in date. Although Rathblathmaic is the likely site of an early monastery, the fabric of the nave can be dated to the early thirteenth century on the basis of a three-quarter engaged column with a broad fillet which stands at the north-east corner of the nave. **[6.109]** The fabric contains a large number of reused stone with Romanesque mouldings and carvings, including the elaborate windowsill built into the interior south wall.¹⁵⁸ **[6.110]** The chancel dates to the thirteenth century, as evidenced by the reused Romanesque stone in the jambs of the chancel arch, but the tall pointed arch reflects a fifteenth-century building campaign. **[6.111]**

If the font at Rath is representative of the small and simple fonts found at many medieval parish churches, this may account for the lack of survival. As already noted, many fonts have been lost as they were reused for domestic purposes, and this is much more likely to have occurred when the basin was as small and simple as is found here. One other feature of Rathblathmaic is worthy of note here; this is a large flagstone situated on the ground of the

¹⁵⁵ The lower portion of this embrasure was reassembled from loose stones at some in the early modern period, before Westropp's visit to the site in 1891. See T. Westropp, 'Churches Churches with Round Towers in Northern Clare. (Part I)' in *JRSAI*, 4:1 (1894), 25-34.

¹⁵⁶ The square basin measures just 43 centimeters wide. Though the *CRSBI* includes images of the feature, it does not speculate as to its date. See Garton, 'St Blathmac, Rathblathmaic, Clare'.

¹⁵⁷ This small basin measures only 67 centimetres across though its depth is uncertain. Here, however, the rows of rounded arcades suggest a likely twelfth century date for the feature. See T. Garton, 'Ballyhale, Kilkenny', *CRSBI* (http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/feature/1_Fonts/site/id-kk-balhl.html) (Accessed 16 December 2010).

¹⁵⁸ The window sill is set upside down into the wall. A description of the Romanesque work rebuilt into the fabric of the church can be found at Harbison 'The Church of Rath Blathmach'. See also T. Garton, 'St Blathmac, Rathblathmaic, Clare'.

church directly north of the inserted south doorway.¹⁵⁹ Though the original position of the flag cannot be known, it bears a square hollow and small drain hole, suggesting that the font may have rested upon a thin, square pillar atop a flagged floor. [6.112]

A font now in the Eamonn de Valera Museum and Library, Ennis, once belonged to the parish church of Kilballyowen, Clare.¹⁶⁰ [6.113] This unusual and highly decorated limestone font consists of a tall decorated square pillar resting upon a moulded octagonal base. Westropp has dated the font to *ca.* 1460-70 on the basis of its sculptural detail. Although the top of the pillar is broken away, each corner is decorated with a three-quarter roll with spiral decoration descending to carved, chamfered stops. Higgins has suggested that the base of the font may be upside down, but this is patently not the case as the sculptural decoration of the panels is continued down past the break. Two panels contain figure sculpture; while one is so worn as to be indiscernible the other clearly contains a representation of John the Baptist. The other panels are ornamental and contain cusped ogival arches with floriated finials.

Overall, the work has an odd feel and despite the appearance of figure sculpture it is not consistent with later medieval font design as discussed in Chapter 4. Although Higgins had followed Westropp's lead in suggesting that the design owes a debt to the late medieval carvings at Ennis Franciscan Friary, this seems unlikely.¹⁶¹ While Westropp drew comparisons between the crocketed canopy on the flat panel of the font and the ones above the arches of the Creagh tomb located in the chancel. [6.114] Higgins prefers to see a comparison with the canopy above the sculpture of St Francis located on the northwestern tower pier based upon the thin finials which are found on both features, though he does note that similar ornamental panels with can be found on a number of tombs.¹⁶² [6.115] But it would seem that on the font, the thinness of the finials is a result of the limited space available, rather than a design choice. Though the canopy carved on the font panel is different in design to that found at the

¹⁵⁹ The south doorway is clearly inserted as evidenced by a disturbance in the masonry, however the date of insertion is less discernible. It is formed of a rounded arch with a chamfered arris. Though this is the standard form taken by late medieval south doorways, the majority of comparable doorways have a pointed arch, suggesting perhaps that this is earlier.

¹⁶⁰ A description of this font has been published a number of times, most recently by J. Higgins, 'The Medieval Font from Kilballyowen, Co. Clare' in *The Other Clare*, 19 (1995), 29-32. The font was removed from the site to the Roman Catholic Church at Cross at some point in the early nineteenth century and remained there until the middle of the twentieth century. It is described at T. Westropp, 'Ancient Remains on the West Coast of Co. Clare' in *JNMAAS* 3:4 (1915), 344-61 at 354.

¹⁶¹ Westropp compared the Inchiquin Tomb located in the south chancel of Ennis. See Westropp, 'Ancient Remains on the West Coast of Co. Clare', 355.

¹⁶² Westropp refers to the McMahan tomb. This is presumably the nineteenth-century Creagh tomb located on the north altar wall which incorporates panels dated to *ca.* 1470 from the McMahan tomb. See Westropp, 'Ancient Remains on the West Coast of Co. Clare', 355. On the sculpture of the McMahan tomb, see J. Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, I:121-6. For Higgins' comparison to late medieval tomb sculpture, see Higgins, 'Medieval Font from Kilballyowen', 30.

Creagh tomb, surely Westropp was correct in drawing comparisons between the style of the font and late medieval tomb sculpture. The feel of the large roped rolls and the canopies is quite similar to designs found on a number of altar frontals such as that on the O'Craian tomb at Sligo Abbey.¹⁶³ [6.116] It would seem then that the mason had much more experience with tomb sculpture and replicated similar designs when called upon to produce a baptismal font. Indeed, the design of this font appears to derive from a number of different design sources. The proportion of the rolls which clasp the corners are not dissimilar to the dumbbell piers in the cloister at Ennis and Quin Franciscan Friaries, Clare. [6.117, 6.118]

Despite the unusual design, the appearance of this font at Kilballyowen strongly suggests that the interior of the church was much more elaborately decorated than the surviving fabric would indicate. Although Kilballyowen is an extremely large parish church, it retains no cut stone whatsoever, and there is no indication in the fabric that this has been robbed away. Instead, every indication is that this was a thirteenth-century church constructed entirely of flagstones. [6.33] It was refurbished in the fifteenth century, as evidenced by a blocked north doorway and extended to the west to accommodate a priest's residence as evidenced by a ground floor window and beam holes along the side walls. [6.34] The presence of another set of beam holes towards the east of the single-celled building indicates that a large wooden screen was installed to separate the nave and chancel.

In summary, though few fonts survive those that do indicate that there was a wide variety of styles employed in font design from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. The appearance of fonts at the Augustinian priories valued as parish churches in the 1303 taxation suggests that these sites were providing pastoral care and sacramental administration to the laity from their establishment, and continued to do so through the late middle ages. The surviving font at Kilballyowen, Clare also provides evidence for the elaborate interior decoration which must have been present at churches even where there is no architectural indication that the site was particularly elaborate, and as such it cannot be assumed that the plain form of windows and doors is indicative of an austerity in the furnishings of such churches.

¹⁶³ The O'Craian tomb frontal is dated to 1506. See Hunt, *Irish Medieval Figure Sculpture*, I.218.

Liturgy and Architecture in Medieval Killaloe

A close investigation of the sixty-three churches within the study group has revealed much about not only changing fashions in ecclesiastical architecture, but also the evolving political and religious climate within the diocese over the course of the middle ages. It has revealed that many of the preliminary conclusions drawn at the end of Chapter 4 were correct, and has expanded upon them in order to illustrate more precisely how a careful analysis of sometimes unremarkable architectural fabric can inform scholarly understanding of liturgical theological and political issues. In order to better summarise these findings, direct reference will be made to the specific questions raised by the various methodological approaches to the study of liturgy and architecture, as outlined in Chapter 2.

The first question posed was: Can the layout or design of a building indicate the enactment of a specific rite or ritual? Preliminary conclusions indicated this was possible at two of the major Anglo-Norman cathedrals in the east of the country. They also suggested that it may be possible to show that an episcopal church was could manipulate parochial attitudes towards the clergy and the liturgy by maintaining strict control over the layout and furnishings of the parish church. One indication that St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, may have been able to do this was the presence of late medieval tracery found within the windows of its prebendal churches, the design of which was derived from the cathedral.

While decorative forms may suggest a strong association between an episcopal and parish church, they cannot suggest the enactment of a rite or ritual without the inclusion of an iconographic programme specific to that rite. More telling would be a discernable consistency in the design or placement of particular pieces of ecclesiastical furniture, such as the chancel screen or piscina. For example, it is possible that the design and placement of aumbries located at St Finghin's, Quin [6.146] and Kilfinaghta, Clare [6.41] were intended to make a clear architectural reference to the double aumbries placed on either side of the large east window of Killaloe Cathedral. [6.147, 6.148] However, the aumbries located to either side of the window at the thirteenth-century church at Quin are much larger than either of the other examples. It would seem that they were designed to hold devotional statues. There is no evidence of a chancel screen or barrier at Quin; although it is possible that one was installed when the church was erected there is no way of verifying this. It may have been that a simple chancel or altar rail was deemed sufficient to demarcate the sanctuary space around the altar. Were this the case, we might image the niches to contain statues of John the Baptist and Mary, gazing towards the altar where a tall cross bearing a likeness of the crucified Christ would

stand. Unlike Killaloe and Quin, Kilfinaghta only possesses one articulated aumbry. This niche, with its moulded jambs and an incised gable finial, was designed to draw special attention to something placed within. But here, the depth of the space would not have accommodated a free-standing cross or statue of any significant size. There is no way of knowing what was displayed in this niche, but one possibility is that it served as a sacrament house containing the consecrated host for veneration.

More significant than the decorated aumbry is the presence of the only sedilia located within the study group at Kilfinaghta. [6.42] This sedilia is notable not only for its rarity, but also because it is the earliest documented sedilia to survive in an Irish parish church. The sandstone feature is set into the north wall near the east gable and is formed by two gently pointed arches, each with a hollow chamfer descending to chamfered jambs. Sedilia were never required by any Irish or English diocesan statutes and can be regarded as a luxury item. Not only does the appearance of a sedilia at Kilfinaghta point to high-level patronage of the site during the early thirteenth century, but it might also be read as an indication that the liturgy of the parish church was that of the Sarum Use by that time.

As has been noted, the sedilia was designed specifically for the use of the celebrant and his assistant(s) during the liturgy, and would have been used during the chanting of the *Kyrie*, *Gloria* and *Credo*. The thirteenth-century Sarum Missal specifically states that during readings, the priest should retire to a pre-prepared seat.¹⁶⁴ In the absence of any liturgical or ecclesiastical documentation for the liturgy rite of Killaloe parishes in the middle ages, the presence of the sedilia might suggest that Sarum Rite was in use at Kilfinaghta during this time. Although there is no evidence that Killaloe Cathedral ever possessed a sedilia, it is possible that one constructed of stone or wood was part of the liturgical furnishings when the cathedral was rebuilt in the early thirteenth century. And though no liturgical manuscripts survive from the cathedral, the 1303-06 Taxation valuations levied on the Bishop, Dean and Archdeacon of the cathedral point to the adoption of an Anglo-Norman episcopal administrative hierarchy by the early fourteenth century.

The second question posed was: can the layout or design of a building suggest a particular function served by the church, or changes in that function, over time? Here the most surprising and definitive evidence has emerged. The correlation of the architecturally defined chancel with buildings of a very specific building function allows for the development of a concrete morphology of the parish church within the diocese.

¹⁶⁴ The history and function of the sedilia is discussed 137-42.

Distinction must be made here between those churches established as purpose-built parish churches and those which acquired that status during the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, Anglo-Norman colonists often made use of extant churches to serve as parochial centres within new settlements. Within the diocese of Killaloe, it was rare to find newly built parish churches for a number of reasons, among them the cost of constructing a new church and the ready availability of pre-existing churches that could be used for this purpose. The use of older churches allowed for a continuity within the ecclesiastical landscape, and this is borne out in the building fabric of so many churches within the study group. However, this study has highlighted that those purpose-built Anglo-Norman parish churches were quite different in plan, scale and style than the Gaelic churches within the diocese: both Lisbunny and Kilbarron, Tipperary, were built to a grand scale and provided with a dividing wall and large chancel arch. Although little is known of their history, it seems likely that both were built under the patronage of Butler tenants, and the revenues of these churches were allocated, by the later medieval period at least, to the Butler Cistercian house at Abington, Limerick.

More intriguing is the distribution of the architecturally defined chancel within churches of Gaelic foundation: all of these are located at sites with strong early monastic associations and all, bar one, retain decorated Romanesque sculptural details. Eleventh and twelfth-century chancel arches are found at Friar's Island; St Flannan's Oratory, Killaloe, and St Caimin's, Iniscealtra, all in Clare. Thirteenth and fifteenth-century arches are found at Dysert O'Dea, Kilrush, and Rathblathmaic, all in Clare, and at Graffan, Offaly.

The form and shape of the arches are consistent with changes in the morphology of the feature as described in Chapter 3. The early arches are comparatively narrow and in some cases, as at Monaincha and St Caimin's, are decorated with elaborate Romanesque carvings. These carvings allow a date to be assigned to these chancels (the third quarter of the twelfth century for Monaincha and *ca.* 1148 for St Caimin's), while the form of the west doorway at St Flannan's points to a date of *ca.* 1100 for the construction of the chancel arch.

Each of these churches retained their original chancel and arch throughout the middle ages. As also noted, these chancels were small structures; all bar the chancel at Iniscealtra would have had only enough space to accommodate an altar, a celebrant and perhaps an assistant. One reason for the retention of these chancels throughout the middle ages might lie in the function of these churches. While Friar's Island went out of use as an ecclesiastical site by the

high middle ages, but Monaincha, St Caimin's and St Flannan's Oratory were part of expanding and evolving church groups.

At least two churches were in use at Monaincha through the early modern period; one further church was added to the group when the Augustinian community of Monaincha relocated to nearby Corbally Sean Ross in the thirteenth century.¹⁶⁵ The chancel was obviously regarded as sufficient for the enactment of the Eucharistic rite throughout the middle ages; the larger church at Corbally could have accommodated any more elaborate rituals involving the Augustinian community.

Similarly, St Caimin's was part of a larger church group at Iniscealtra.¹⁶⁶ In addition to St Caimin's Church, a confessional and oratory, the island hermitage contains the remains of the twelfth-century church of St Brigid and the thirteenth and fifteenth-century church of St Mary. The function of St Brigid's church remains obscure, but St Mary's served as a parish church through the later middle ages and may be the church valued in the 1303-06 Taxation. As at Monaincha, alternate spaces were provided for the enactment of rites and rites requiring more space than St Caimin's twelfth-century chancel was able to accommodate.

The original function of St Flannan's Oratory remains unclear, but it is situated within the grounds of Killaloe Cathedral and it seems to have always functioned as a subsidiary chapel or oratory; it was never the primary church at the site.¹⁶⁷ The cathedral building as it stands today retains architectural evidence of two phases of elaborate building programmes dated to the early thirteenth century. It follows then that as at the other sites, rites and rituals could easily be accommodated at other locations; there was never a need or desire to alter the original form of the building.

In contrast, the four early monastic sites with later medieval chancels (Dysert O'Dea, Kilrush, Rathblathmaic and Graffan) were not part of church groups, and this may account for their enlargement and alteration in the later middle ages. Their earliest chancel forms cannot be ascertained with any certainty without archaeological investigation, but it seems likely, based on the evidence given above, that each of these possessed a small, Romanesque chancel with a decorated arch in the twelfth century. Certainly, the reconstruction of the south doorway at

¹⁶⁵ The Augustinian community relocated to Corbally around 1485. See Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, 155. It was at this time that the thirteenth-century church at Corbally underwent significant building works; two transepts and elaborately traciered windows were constructed at this time. On Corbally, see Farrelly and O'Brien, *Archaeological Inventory of Tipperary*, 239.

¹⁶⁶ For a discussion of the development of the church group on Iniscealtra, see De Paor, 'Inis Cealtra', 92-99.

¹⁶⁷ On the possible function of the Oratory at Killaloe, see Gem, 'St Flannan's Oratory', 93-4.

Dysert suggests this is likely to have been the case, as it contains incongruous fragments not originally part of the feature. The possibility that some belong to a Romanesque chancel arch has been noted in a number of sources.¹⁶⁸ It is also possible that the single-celled church at Drumcliff, Clare, was once in possession of an architecturally defined chancel; a series of later medieval and early modern alterations makes it impossible to determine any meaningful building sequence.¹⁶⁹ It seems likely that the lack of alternate liturgical space at these sites led to the enlargement of the chancel area during the high and late middle ages; it should be no surprise that the arch forms take on the wide, high style fashionable at the time.

As the discussion of single-celled churches has shown, not all Romanesque churches within the study group were provided with a chancel. One possible explanation for this can be found in the original function of these sites. Though both Killodiernan and Dromineer, Tipperary, were altered in the later middle ages, each church retains decorated architectural fragments indicating that stone churches were initially constructed at these sites in the twelfth century, and further suggesting that both churches were provided with west doorways embellished with Romanesque decoration at that time.¹⁷⁰

The origins of both sites are obscure at first glance. No mention of an early foundation at the sites is listed in Gwynn and Hadcock's *Medieval Religious Houses of Ireland*¹⁷¹ but Gwynn and Gleeson include both within their list of early monastic churches within the diocese.¹⁷² In a circular argument, Gleeson suggests the presence of an early monastic foundation at Killodiernan based upon the presence of those Romanesque fragments incorporated into the door jambs. Noting that the name of the church is a derivation of Cill Ua d'Tiernan, Church of O'Tiernan, he suggests that '... the church takes its name from the family which presumably was the erenagh family in medieval times'.¹⁷³ He is unable to suggest the origin of the name Dromineer, instead noting a local tradition that it was associated with the monastic island of Iniscealtra. Though he does draw attention to the similarities of the Romanesque carvings

¹⁶⁸ On the reconstructed south doorway at Dysert, see T. Garton, 'St Tola, Dysert O'Dea, Clare' in *CRSBI* (<http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/search/county/site/id-cl-dyset.html>) (Accessed 17 February 2011). A discussion of the possible chancel arch can be found in Section VIII, Comments and Opinions.

¹⁶⁹ A discussion of this church can be found in catalogue entry 2.

¹⁷⁰ On the twelfth-century decoration at Killodiernan, see M. Clyne, 'Romanesque Carvings at Killodiernan, Co. Tipperary' in *NMAJ*, 26 (1984), 44-53. On Dromineer, see T. Garton, 'Dromineer, Tipperary', *CRSBI*, forthcoming. Both sites are described in Farrelly and O'Brien, *Archaeological Inventory of Tipperary*, Killodiernan at 246 and Dromineer at 241.

¹⁷¹ This list of early monastic sites can be found at Gwynn and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, 20-46.

¹⁷² See Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of Diocese of Killaloe*, 88.

¹⁷³ Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 88.

found at the sites, he has overlooked the more relevant connection between the two churches.¹⁷⁴

In trying to fit these twelfth-century churches into the monastic model, he fails to notice that neither of these churches exhibits any evidence of the presence of an early monastic community. Instead, both of these were proprietary churches belonging to an aristocratic branch of the Múscraige. The Tiernans, from whom Killodiernan derives its name, were a family of the Múscraige,¹⁷⁵ and a reference within the genealogies of the Lóichsi shows that Dromineer (Druim Inbar) was also held by an unknown branch of this family.¹⁷⁶ Both of these churches were thus proprietary foundations first established in the eighth or ninth-century by the same family. It would appear that in the twelfth century, the early timber or earthen building were replaced by stone structures embellished with Romanesque doorways. Given the similarity between the two sites, it may be that they were held by the same branch of the family, or that the same masons were responsible for their construction at that time. But Dromineer and Killodiernan are not exceptional; a number of proprietary churches on the east shore of Lough Derg are also known to date from this time, including Kilkeary, Toomyvarra and Kilaughnane.¹⁷⁷

A pattern thus emerges: Gaelic Irish churches erected in the eleventh and twelfth centuries at sites with a monastic community were generally provided with architecturally defined chancels; those which served a primarily lay community were not. Although the appearance of the chancel must be seen within the context of the increasing liturgical and theological emphasis placed on the act of consecration, as well as the heightened sanctity with which the ritual was imbued, it must also be seen within the particular context of twelfth-century Ireland. Chapter 2 has argued strongly that one of the main efforts of the reform movement was to distinguish and differentiate between monks and priests and to ensure that each clerical grade was aware of the rituals and rites within their sphere of duty. The transmission of this information was certainly at the heart of Gille of Limerick's *de Statu Ecclesiae*, written as the reform movement began to effect significant change within the ecclesiastical polity. One of the key rights which was reserved for the priest was the ability to effect transubstantiation, the process by which the bread and wine were substantively transformed into the body and blood of Christ. Surely the architecturally defined chancel, creating a distinct space large enough for

¹⁷⁴ This comparison is noted in Gleeson, 'Churches in the Deanery of Ormond', 99. In this article, he describes the church of Dromineer at 99 and the church of Killodiernan at 100.

¹⁷⁵ Gleeson, 'Churches in the Deanery of Ormond', 100.

¹⁷⁶ D. Ó Corráin, 'Ireland c.800: aspects of society' in D. Ó Cróinín, *New History of Ireland I*, 549-608 at 602.

¹⁷⁷ See the discussion of early proprietary churches around Lough Derg at Ó Corráin, 'Ireland c. 800', 601-05.

only the altar and celebrant, viewed by the community through a narrow, decorated arch, would serve as a strong visual statement of this division of powers.

In summary, there is ample evidence that the layout of these churches indicates both particular building functions and changes in these functions over the course of the middle ages. The presence of an architecturally defined chancel in a Gaelic church is clearly associated with the presence of a monastic community in the eleventh to thirteenth-centuries. Conversely, a single-celled Gaelic church of the same period is unlikely to have ever served a monastic community; instead, the lack of a structural chancel points to its function as a propriety church designed to accommodate a lay congregation. Furthermore, evidence indicates that where an architecturally defined chancel is located at a twelfth or thirteenth-century parish church, one must look to the Anglo-Norman colonists for evidence of the site's foundation and patronage.

The third question posed was: Do particular architectural elements, including fittings and fixtures, indicate any discernable spatial organisation within a building? Few of the liturgical fittings and fixtures described in Chapter 3 were found within the study group churches. However, this does not necessarily mean that more were not present in the middle ages, only that they have not survived to any great extent. Of those which were noted and recorded, none indicated anything unusual or unexpected about the churches in which they were found. Brief mention must be made of the possible font base found in the grounds of Rathblathmaic, Clare. **[6.112]** This flagstone was found lying within the nave of the church directly north of the south entrance door. Though the original placement of the feature cannot be known, evidence for the placement of fonts within English parish churches suggests that there is no reason it could not have been located here during the middle ages. The stone contains a square rebate inset with a round drain hole into which a pillar would have been placed. The small rebate, just 20 centimetres square, could easily have accommodated a pillar supporting the small font found reset into the south door jamb. **[6.106]** This font basin is plain and undecorated, and though there is nothing about it that indicates a possible date, its lack of decorative embellishment suggests it is unlikely to be contemporary with the twelfth-century building phase evidenced by elaborate Romanesque architectural features at the site. Instead, perhaps, it dates to the thirteenth-century building phase. Rath was the site of an important early monastery, and both this church and nearby Dysert O'Dea underwent extensive rebuilding in both the twelfth and thirteenth-centuries. Though the feature is now missing,

Westropp recorded the presence of a 'round' font at Dysert in the late nineteenth century.¹⁷⁸ Perhaps at both sites, the thirteenth-century phase might be seen as an indication of a change in the sites' function from a primarily monastic to a primarily congregational parish church? Both are named in the 1303-06 Taxation; it would not be surprising should either of the sites have acquired a baptismal font at some point before the early fourteenth century.

The evidence for a large dividing screen at Kilballyowen, Clare, was unexpected, particularly because the church itself contains no cut or moulded stone that might suggest an elaborately furnished building. No late medieval parish church screens survive in Ireland, but the overall form and shape of the Kilballyowen screen, as indicated by the beam holes, seems to have been in keeping with contemporary English examples as discussed in Chapter 3, and may point to the existence of similar structures in the many single-celled churches within the diocese. The placement of the screen within the church does corroborate the documentary evidence describing the two-thirds division of the parish church in contemporary Anglo-Norman and Gaelic Irish sources.

The fourth question posed was: Is there any continuity in the placement of these architectural elements that might indicate similar patterns of usage in buildings of a comparable function? This question is closely tied in with the second question posed above, and is the line of inquiry that has revealed the most, as it seeks to define patterns of building usage, rather than to identify the enactment of a specific rite or ritual at a church. The emergent correlation between the architecturally defined chancel and the liturgical practices of a twelfth-century monastic community has already been discussed. One other structural alteration found within the churches of the study group warrants mention, as it also points to a change in the usage of these churches: the addition of internal residences in the later middle ages.

Unlike the architecturally defined chancel, inserted residences were found distributed through the study group and appear at churches of every type. They were inserted into the western naves of the Gaelic parish churches of Kilballyowen and Killimer, Clare; parish churches of Anglo-Norman foundation at Killeenagarriff, Limerick, and Monsea, Tipperary; parish churches of unknown foundation at Bonahum, Garrabaun and Dorrha, all in Tipperary; and parish churches with their origin in early monasteries at Tomfinlough, Clare, and Lorrha, Tipperary. One is found attached to the exterior west end of the church at Youhalarra, Tipperary, possibly associated with an early monastic foundation. Research conducted on

¹⁷⁸ See Westropp, 'Churches of County Clare', 127.

residences in other areas of the country indicate that the insertion of these residences was not unique to the Killaloe diocese in the later middle ages.¹⁷⁹

FitzPatrick and O'Brien have argued that this can be seen in the light of rising concern over the abuses of the parish priests in the fifteenth century, when Gaelic clergy were widely accused of collecting parish revenues to support their families and concubines, who resided with them in these apartments.¹⁸⁰ The existence of a residence at the church of Letter, Offaly, is only known because of surviving correspondence in which the parish priest is reprimanded for selling off the church goods and housing his concubine and their son in the ecclesiastical residence.¹⁸¹ The addition of these residences, and the corresponding documentation indicating that they were abused by parish priests, provides evidence that allows for a perhaps more realistic outlook on the function of these churches within their communities. Although these were buildings of worship, built primarily to accommodate the Christian liturgy, they also played a role within the secular life of the communities they served.

Although no discernable patterns were identified as to the placement of fittings and fixtures, bar perhaps chancel screens, the distribution of piscinas and fonts within the study group does point to patterns in usage. Few piscinas were noted within the study group; two mendicant houses (Ennis Franciscan Friary and Lorrha Dominican Priory) each possessed two; one Augustinian Priory (Lorrha) was known to have had one; and the final two are located at parish churches of Anglo-Norman foundation (Dolla and Monasea). Evidence for a further four possible piscinas was noted at one mendicant house (Nenagh Franciscan Friary), two parish churches of Anglo-Norman foundation (Killeenagariff and Lisbunny) and one parish church of uncertain origin (Youghalarra).

A clear pattern emerges: piscinas were only possessed by large monastic or mendicant foundations of considerable endowment or parish churches patronised by Anglo-Norman colonists. No evidence of even a possible piscina survives in any known Gaelic parish churches.¹⁸² As seen in the discussion of architecturally defined chancels, the inclusion of a piscina within a parish church seems to be a clear indication of Anglo-Norman patronage.

¹⁷⁹ See other work conducted by Bermingham, 'Priest's Residences' and FitzPatrick and O'Brien, *Medieval Churches of County Offaly*, 134-39.

¹⁸⁰ See the discussion at FitzPatrick and O'Brien, *Medieval Churches of County Offaly*, 134-5.

¹⁸¹ FitzPatrick and O'Brien, *Medieval Churches of County Offaly*, 137.

¹⁸² There is no clear understanding of the origin of Youghalarra parish church. Gleeson suggests it was associated with Iniscealtra in the early medieval period, but there is no hard evidence of this. As with Dromineer and Killodiernan, its origins may lie in an early proprietary church but by the later middle ages, the parish constituted a prebend for the dean of Killaloe Cathedral. See Gwynn and Gleeson, *History of the Diocese of Killaloe*, 297 and 324.

Here, the distribution of baptismal fonts also warrants mention. Ten fonts belonging to study group sites are known to have existed. One is located at Killaloe Cathedral, six belong to parish churches and three survived from Augustinian establishments. Surely many more fonts once existed; due to the movable character of these features, the survival rate cannot be taken as an indication of the frequency of baptismal fonts in the middle ages. However, the survival of fonts at Augustinian establishments is significant. As argued in chapter 2, monasteries were the primary providers of pastoral care to the laity in the early medieval period. During the twelfth century, a number of early monastic foundations adopted the Augustinian Rule, in part because, rather than a strict set of rules and regulations, it offered a broad set of guidelines for the monastic life easily adaptable to the needs of the current community. There is no reason to suspect that upon adopting this Rule, the communities would cease to provide for the lay communities surrounding them. A discussion of the levies placed on these Augustinian houses in the 1303-06 Taxation highlighted the fact that at each of these sites, both the prior and the church were being taxed. It was suggested that this indicated the presence of both a monastic community and a parish church at the site. The presence of three baptismal fonts at Clare Abbey, Killone and Toomeyvarra corroborates this assertion and indicates that monastic communities continued to be significant providers of sacramental administration and pastoral care throughout the middle ages.

The fifth and final question proposed by the various methodological approaches to the study of liturgy and architecture asked: In what way, and to what degree, can architecture inform our understanding of the liturgical life of the medieval Irish Church? In light of the evidence presented throughout this thesis, the study of architecture can and does inform our understanding of not only the liturgical, but also the political and social, role of the medieval Irish Church.

7. Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

The central aim of this thesis has been to explore the evidence for the liturgical life of the medieval Irish church through the lens of ecclesiastical architecture. As the summary conclusions presented in the previous chapter have shown, changing attitudes towards ecclesiastical architecture and furnishings do reflect the evolving role of the Church in medieval Ireland.

This thesis has argued that, in the diocese of Killaloe at least, there was a discernable difference in Gaelic and Anglo-Norman approaches to parish church design. Until the thirteenth century, every nave and chancel church within the study group can be connected to an early monastic foundation. The appearance of the architecturally defined chancel at these sites is seen as an architectural manifestation of the growing desire to differentiate between the role of monks and ordained priests within the Irish Church. When Anglo-Norman colonists began to settle within the diocese in the thirteenth-century, chancels began to appear at newly-built parochial churches. These large chancels with tall, wide arches were quite different in design to those which Irish monastic communities had erected in the previous century, and when those Gaelic churches underwent building renovations in the thirteenth and fifteenth-centuries, they too were provided with large chancels with wide arches in the contemporary style.

This thesis has also shown how the form of a church can, though does not necessarily, indicate its function. Although clear differences emerged in churches of Anglo-Norman and Gaelic foundation, churches with clear Gaelic origins also have distinct forms that can point to their origins. In cases where the origin of a site is uncertain, it is suggested that the combination of a single-celled plan and Romanesque architectural ornamentation can point to the existence of a proprietary church first erected in stone during the twelfth-century.

This thesis has compiled the first overview of development of Irish liturgical fittings and fixtures and compared them with evidence for the development and design of English and Continental examples over the course of the middle ages. This discussion has shown that a surprising number of Irish fittings and fixtures do survive, and that their form and design is reflective of contemporary styles abroad. It has argued that the survival of fittings and fixtures within the study group can be used to identify church function at some sites: the presence of fonts at the Augustinian churches with early monastic origins shows that these monastic

communities continued to provide sacramental administration and pastoral care to the laity throughout the middle ages.

In addition to differing approaches to church layout, there is an emergent difference in the provision of liturgical fittings and fixtures: the piscina is only found in parish churches of Anglo-Norman foundation. No Gaelic parish church within the study group was in possession of a piscina niche at any point in the middle ages. Though these churches may have been equipped with a free-standing pillar piscinas, the more likely scenario is that the Gaelic clergy continued to make use of a basin and floor drain for the disposal of ablutions. There is thus a clear indication that Gaelic and Anglo-Norman clergy and patrons differed in their conceptions of the necessary accoutrements for the celebration of the Mass. Perhaps too, there were clear differences in clerical vestments and internal decoration in the form of paintings and textiles, but no evidence emerged in this study to indicate if this was the case.

One of the central contributions of this thesis to the understanding of the political life of the medieval Irish Church was a close analysis of site attributions in published literature on the 1303-06 Taxation. Although this extremely valuable record is cited constantly in sources discussing the early fourteenth-century ecclesiastical economy and landscape, this thesis has shown that the site attributions suggested in Sweetman's edition are not always reliable. Further research is required to determine the extent to which this is a problem in other dioceses. It must also be noted that no modern research has been undertaken on the Irish taxation; a new edition of the document and a commentary on its historical context in specific regard to Ireland is badly needed.¹

One aim of this thesis has been to propose a set of questions for the investigation of the relationship between liturgy and architecture in medieval Ireland. After a review of literature on the subject, and the different methodological approaches taken by various art and architectural historians to the subject, a set of five questions was devised:

1. Can the layout or design of a building indicate the enactment of a specific rite or ritual?
2. Can the layout or design of a building suggest a particular function served by the church or changes in that function over time?

¹ The work recently published by Bruce Campbell does analyse the Irish returns and compares them with those for England and Scotland. See Campbell 'Benchmarking Economic Development'. Though this is an extremely valuable piece of work, a study focused exclusively on Ireland would be valuable to medieval historians of all disciplines.

3. Do particular architectural elements, including fittings and fixtures, indicate any discernable spatial organization within a building?
4. Is there any continuity in the placement of these architectural elements that might indicate similar patterns of usage in buildings of a comparable function?
5. In what way, and to what degree, can architecture inform our understanding of the liturgical life of the medieval Irish Church?

It has emerged that although each is useful in the analysis of architectural fabric, the most successful are questions two and four. While the discussion of the church at Kilfinaghta, Clare, has shown that it may be possible to speculate that the Sarum Rite was practiced at this church from the twelfth-century, the presence of two liturgical furnishings cannot be regarded as definitive evidence for the enactment of an entire liturgical rite. Neither do architectural fittings or fixtures survive to any great extent; even the most elaborate parish churches within the study group do not contain more than two. However, the discussion of architectural fabric at Kilballyowen has shown that even where there is no architectural indication that a church was particularly elaborate, the plain, unelaborated forms of doors and windows do not point to an austerity in the interior decoration of these buildings. The two most effective lines of inquiry are those which attempt to correlate church layout and design with site function and those which seek to establish patterns across geographical and chronological lines.

Finally, it is hoped that this study has shown how architectural history can contribute to a line of inquiry which to date, has been dominated by archaeologists, especially in Irish medieval studies. It has drawn attention to the ways that more formalistic approaches to the study of architectural history can be applied to buildings with little or no cut stone, and how these approaches can be combined with a line of multi-disciplinary inquiry to place variations in parish church design within their historical, religious and political context. It has also shown that these small, often overlooked churches contain a wealth of information for the architectural historian. It seems sometimes that many art historians focus their studies on the rich and well-endowed Anglo-Norman foundations in the east of the country; it is hoped that this thesis will show that the comparatively simple foundations in the Gaelic west have much to offer not only the architectural historian, but also anyone seeking to explore the religious life of the high and late medieval Irish Church.

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