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The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Relics in Early Medieval Ireland

TOMÁS Ó CARRAGÁIN

Most early ecclesiastical sites in Ireland were characterised by a separation between the main congregational church and the principal reliquary focus. It is argued that this reflects the fact that they were often initially founded as ecclesiastical settlements, and that cemeteries were usually a secondary development. Translation only occurred at a minority of sites, but even then the separation between liturgical space and reliquary space was usually maintained by placing corporeal relics in outdoor stone shrines or in metal reliquaries housed in diminutive shrine chapels built over the original gravesite. In this regard, Irish clerics of the eighth and ninth centuries seem to have imitated Early Christian memoriae, perhaps especially the aedicule in Jerusalem, rather than contemporary relic-cults in Francia or England. It is suggested that they had indigenous reasons for doing this including the particularly close link in Ireland between the development of the cult of relics and the concept of the Christian cemetery.

This paper is concerned with a small group of diminutive mortared churches at major Irish ecclesiastical sites.[1] They are invariably the smallest churches at a particular site, usually well under twelve metres square, but are otherwise similar to other pre-Romanesque mortared churches: invariably unicameral with antae and a doorway in the west wall. Six in particular seem to comprise a formally and functionally cohesive group: at Iona, Argyll,[2] Temple Ciarán, Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly,[3] Ardmore, Co. Waterford,[4] Inishmurray, Co. Sligo,[5] Inishcleraun, Co. Longford[6] and Labamolaga, Co. Cork (Figs 1 and 2).[7] A range of evidence, archaeological, hagiographical and folkloric, suggests that they were repositories for the relics of the founding saint.[8] They are often referred to as tomb shrines but this is not really appropriate.[9] The term shrine chapel gives a much clearer sense of their form and function.[10] It is particularly apt because in Ireland '*scrín*', which derives from the same root as shrine, denoted the principal corporeal reliquary of a particular saint,[11] while, in origin, 'chapel' denoted a small free-standing building used to house a relic.[12] Four possible shrine chapels were among the churches whose mortar was radiocarbon-dated by Rainer Berger[13] and, as Harbison pointed out in the first

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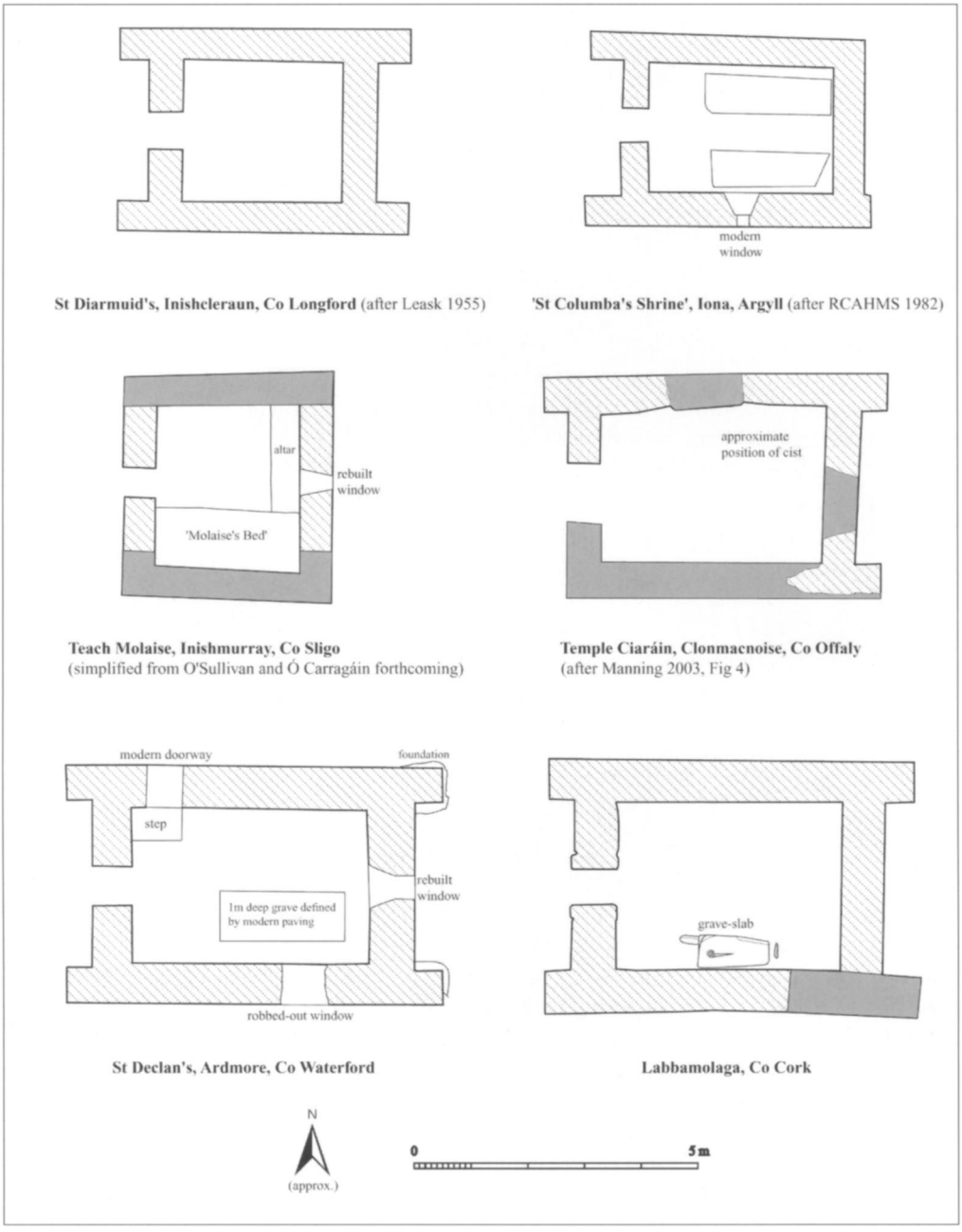


Fig. 1 Plans of six shrine chapels. Grey indicates stretches of wall that have been entirely rebuilt and do not follow the exact line of the original.



Fig. 2 Shrine chapel of St Declan, Ardmore. (photo: author)

substantial discussion of shrine chapels,[14] they produced unusually early date ranges centring on the eighth and ninth centuries. This is potentially highly significant because mortared churches only become common in Ireland during the tenth and especially the eleventh centuries.[15] Harbison's observation is underscored by the fact that the Clonmacnoise example is mentioned in two ninth-century sources.[16] There is also some

formal evidence to support it insofar as the best-preserved examples have broadly similar masonry[17] and antae that are unusually deep in proportion to the size of the church: a trait that appears to be indicative of an early date.[18] However Berger's date ranges must be treated with caution, especially the narrower 1 sigma ranges. For example, the round tower at Clonmacnoise can be dated to c.1124 on historical grounds which, as Manning has pointed out, lies outside Berger's 1 sigma range for the building (891-1012) and towards to upper end of his 2 sigma range for it (780-1150). The 2 sigma ranges for three of the four dated shrine chapels extend to 980, and so we cannot rule out the possibility that they are tenth-century.[19]

I am of the view that the correlation between form, function and radiocarbon estimates is too striking to dismiss, and that there may well be a link between the cult of relics and the development of mortared stone construction in Ireland. However most of the arguments put forward here do not depend on Harbison's suggestion. Whether or not these churches are unusually early, they are important because they cut to the heart of a number of key issues: including the shift from traditional burial grounds to churchyard burial, and even the siting and overall development of church sites. Brown has recently brought home to us the diversity of early Christianity in the West;[20] and nowhere is this more clearly in evidence than in the cult of relics.[21] The date at which corporeal relics become important varies from region to region, as do the formal contexts developed for their veneration. It is essential that these patterns are thoroughly interrogated for what they can tell us about the particular character of Christianity, and indeed society, in these different regions. As with all early medieval monuments we must, when studying reliquaries and their architectural settings, continually pose Carver's fundamental questions: Why that? Why there? Why then?[22] This paper begins with a brief outline of how the cult of relics developed in Ireland, and the place of shrine chapels in that process. In subsequent sections, contrasts with England and Francia will be highlighted, and the implications of these contrasts considered.

SHRINE CHAPELS IN CONTEXT: THE CHRONOLOGY AND CHARACTER OF THE CULT OF RELICS IN IRELAND

Secondary relics were venerated in Ireland from an early date;[23] and from the start of the seventh century some of them were kept in small, locally-produced house-shaped shrines.[24] Armagh, in particular, used relics of Roman martyrs as part of its campaign to be recognised, at home and abroad, as the metropolitan diocese of Ireland.[25] Generally, however, the principal relics were those of the founding saint. Though clearly perceived as such, metal bells and crosiers were not actually secondary relics, for the earliest extant examples were made in the eighth and ninth centuries, usually long after the saints with which they were associated had died.[26] Bourke has assembled some evidence to suggest that they were displayed over saints' graves.[27] In this regard, it is interesting that the earliest examples may be roughly contemporary with the first shrine chapels, for this method of display presupposes a building at the gravesite.[28] Metalwork shrines for corporeal

relics do not survive, except for a few tantalising fragments.[29] However the documentary sources, along with a number of excavations, suggest that the eighth and ninth centuries were also crucial in the development of the corporeal relic-cults, which are the main focus of this paper.[30]

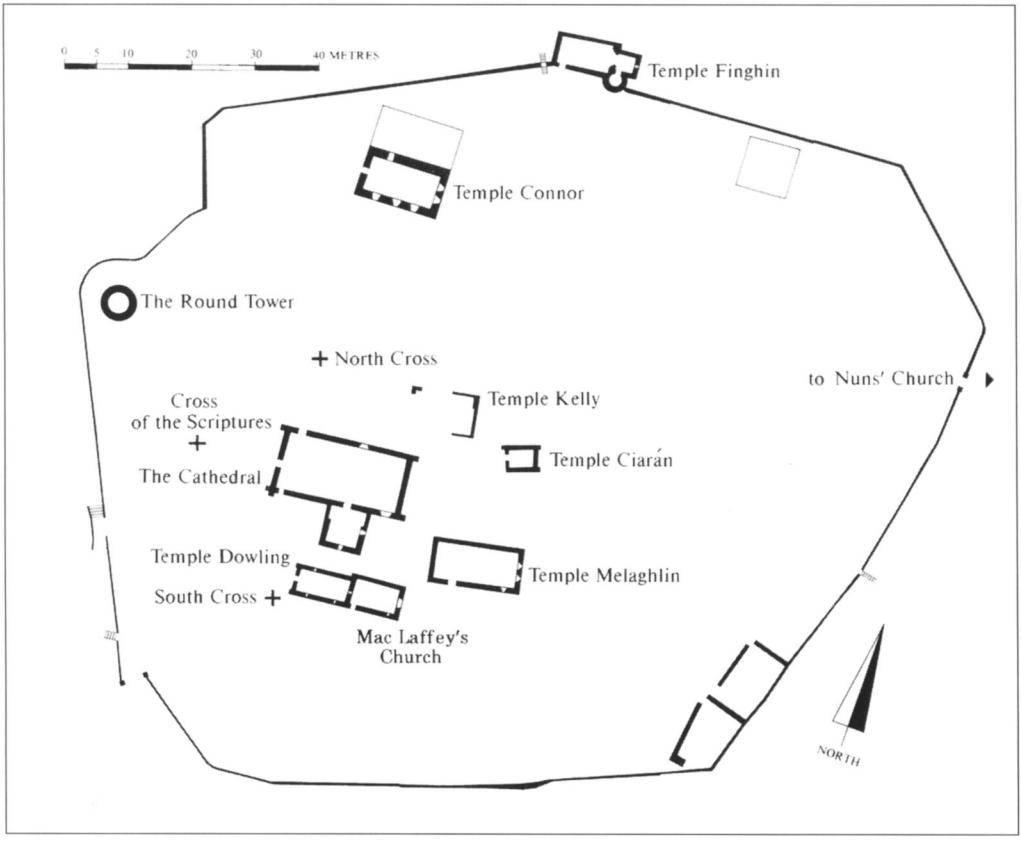
Evidence for translation occurs in the late seventh-century writings of Tírechán[31] and in Cogitosus' account of the new basilica at Kildare,[32] but neither instance appears to be a typical case (below). As MacDonald has shown, the bones of Columba himself remained in the cemetery on Iona, his grave marked by the simple epitaph (*titulus monumenti)* described by Adomnán,[33] until his remains were enshrined in the mid-eighth century.[34] This example may be more representative of the general trend, for evidence for translation in AU, be it direct or indirect in the form of references to corporeal relics, is virtually absent before 700, and only becomes common in the later eighth and early ninth centuries.[35] Archaeology paints a broadly complementary picture. For example, excavation has shown that the gable shrine at Illaunloughan was probably built in the latter half of the eighth century,[36] rather than c.600 as once supposed.[37] The corner-post shrine recently excavated at Caherlehillan appears to have been the last addition to a site that seems to have gone out of use during the eighth century.[38] Furthermore, while Irish stone shrines can rarely be dated closely by art-historical methods, where decoration is present it is usually consistent with an eighth- or ninth-century date.[39] Thus, while reliquaries for corporeal remains must have been manufactured in every century from the seventh onwards, it appears that the practice was particularly common in the eighth and ninth centuries. Though not considered at any length here, there is both archaeological and documentary evidence for a revival of the practice in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.[40]

Some of the examples just cited highlight a key characteristic of the cult of relics in Ireland: the prevalence of enshrinement in modest structures removed from the main liturgical space and often over the saint's original gravesite. This was certainly the case at Illaunloughan, where three empty rock-cut graves were discovered under the gable shrine.[41] The Church Island corner-post shrine was badly disturbed, but does not seem to have marked a special grave.[42] However that at Caherlehillan was built over a grave whose lintels exhibited wear-patterns consistent with devotional pilgrimage activity.[43] These examples are all in peninsular Kerry, an area that we understand particularly well archaeologically. It has been suggested that some of the dry-stone churches in this area were themselves reliquary foci built over founder's graves;[44] but the five examples excavated to date suggest that the reliquaries were outside, and that the churches themselves had no significant burial or reliquary function.[45] The shrine chapels at major sites perpetuate this dichotomy between reliquary focus and principal church. Though we lack definitive evidence that they were built over the original founders' gravesites, circumstantial evidence strongly supports this possibility. The majority incorporate a rectilinear feature that local tradition identifies as the saint's grave.[46] Furthermore, it is notable that, in contrast to other monuments like round towers,[47] the position of shrine chapels in relation to the main congregational church varies greatly from south-east (Ardmore), south

(Labamolaga and Inishcleraun), west (Iona), north-west (Kells), north (Inishmurray) and north-east (Clonmacnoise).[48] This may be because they were built over graves that were dug at an early stage in the formalisation of site layout and long before the development of corporeal relic-cults. For example, at Clonmacnoise the cathedral and high crosses are carefully arranged to inscribe the sign of the cross over the sacred core,[49] while later buildings like the round tower, Temple Dowling and Temple Kelly augment this scheme by and large. In contrast, Temple Ciarán is located behind the cathedral and on a markedly different axis: possibly that of the earliest burials and presumably also the first congregation church (Fig 3).[50]

Elsewhere in northern Europe, the original grave was sometimes monumentalised and venerated even after the relics were removed to the main church.[51] However it cannot be argued that shrine chapels belong to this category of monument because, in addition to the

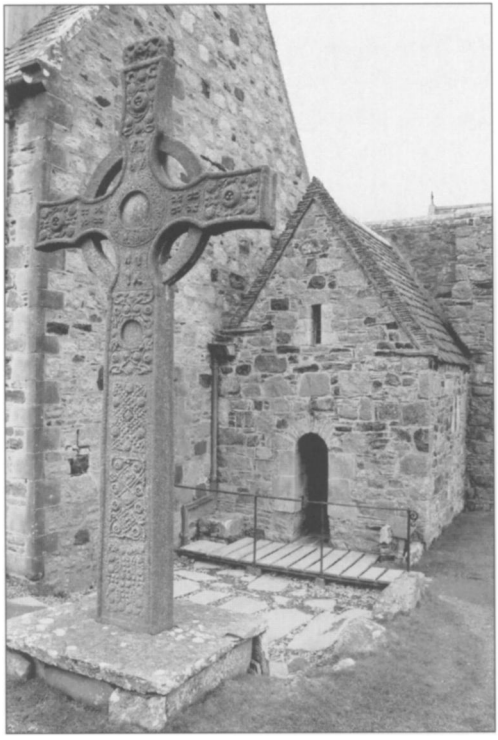
Fig. 3 Plan of the Old Graveyard at Clonmacnoise. Note position and orientation of the shrine chapel known as Temple Ciarán. (after OPW)



evidence that relics were kept inside them, incidents discussed below in the Lives of St. Kevin and St. Ciarán make it clear that the saint was believed to reside in his shrine chapel.[52] We cannot rule out the possibility that some shrine chapels were built as a way of developing a saint's cult without translating his remains.[53] However, we know that translations took place at two sites with shrine chapels, namely Clonmacnoise and Iona.[54] Excavations in the shrine chapel at Clonmacnoise in the 1950s revealed a subterranean dry-stone cist that was clearly earlier than, or coeval with, the shrine chapel.[55] Like the reliquary cist at Illaunloughan,[56] it was too short to be a grave, and it may well have housed some of the relics of Ciarán. In this regard, it is worth noting the reference (discussed below) to the relics of Columba being 'buried' in their house. The 'rosary of brass wire – a hollow ball of the same metal which opened – a pewter chalice and wine vessel' that were discovered in the chapel in c.1790 may well have been concealed in this cist.[57] Ware mentions that there was a relic of Ciarán's hand 'in the great church', but when Bishop Dopping visited Clonmacnoise in 1684 this was housed in 'St Kyran's Chapell.'[58]

The shrine chapel on Iona[59] may have been built to house the *scrín* of Columba which, according to the ninth-century hagiographer, Walafrid Strabo, was composed of 'precious metals wherein lie the holy bones of St Columba' (Fig 4).[60] If so, it must have been built before 849 when Cináed mac Alpín 'transported the relics of Columba to a church that he had built', probably at Dunkeld,[61] only for them to be moved to Ireland, almost certainly to Kells, in 878, 'to escape the foreigners.'[62] It would appear that a new shrine chapel was built for the saint at Kells. Ó Floinn must surely be correct to identify the small vaulted church of St. Columb's, Kells, as the building referred to in 1127 when the shrine of Columba was stolen by the Vikings of Dublin, but 'was buried again in a month in its house' (Fig 5).[63] St Columb's was probably built in the late eleventh-century to replace the reliquary church referred to in the Irish Life of Adomnán written at Kells in the tenth century.[64] While modern popular tradition held that a six-foot flagstone housed in the building's croft was Columba's *leaba* or grave,[65] the Kells community could never seriously claim that their shrine chapel marked his original grave. It is therefore all the more remarkable that they chose to locate his bones, their most prized possessions, in a small freestanding building, rather than in the main congregational church. Having established their function, the case that the first shrine chapels were eighth- or ninth-century is strengthened, given that this was the formative period in the development of Irish corporeal relic-cults. If we dismiss the radiocarbon and documentary evidence and insist that they are tenth- or eleventh-century like the larger mortared churches, we must at least envisage an interim arrangement that, in light of later developments, must surely have been at the original gravesite.[66]

It must be stressed that shrine chapels occur at only a small minority of sites; and it is clear from documentary sources that translation was not essential to the development of an Irish saint's cult.[67] Blair has suggested that most Anglo-Saxon translations were 'a reaction against special pressures from politics or inter-monastic competition, and the practice did not become general: most Anglo-Saxon saints probably remained undisturbed



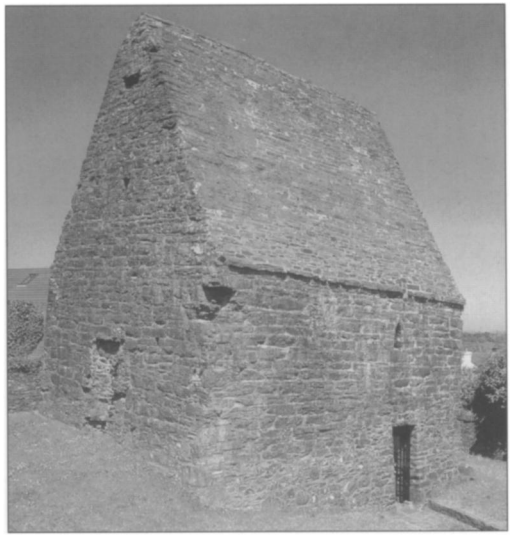


Fig. 4 'St Columba's Shrine,' Iona. This is essentially a modern structure built on the footings of the original. The antae were not rebuilt but their basal courses are still visible. Note the replica of John's cross in the foreground. (photo: author)

Fig. 5 St Columb's, Kells. Barrel-vaulted reliquary church, probably of late eleventh century date. Ground level has been lowered substantially along the south side in modern times and a doorway has been inserted. The original blocked doorway is visible in the west wall (photo courtesy of Jacqueline O'Brien)

for centuries in their below-ground graves.'[68] The same may well have been true in Ireland. Clearly the translation of the Kildare saints must be understood in the context of its rivalry with Armagh: Kildare was the only site that attempted to put itself forward as an alternative candidate for metropolitan of Ireland, and its campaign in this regard peaked at the same time that Brigit and Conlaed were enshrined.[69] Many shrine chapels also occur at important monasteries that were involved in territorial disputes during this period.[70] For example, Armagh's antipathy to the territorial ambitions of both Clonmacnoise and the Columban federation is clear from a number of sources.[71] There

were also disputes between the latter two *familiae*, which resulted in a pitched battle in 764.[72] Throughout Europe saints were conceived of as owners and defenders of ecclesiastical territories.[73] In this regard, translated, enshrined remains were more versatile than specially-marked graves, because they could be temporarily removed from the site, in order to promulgate laws around a territory, to collect tribute and even to act as battle talismans.[74] Little wonder, in this context, that the eighth and ninth centuries were formative in the development of Irish relic-cults, for historians have also identified this as the crucial period of territorial demarcation between rival *familiae*.[75] While rivalries persisted after this, the cessation of inter-church violence in the late ninth century reflects the completion of this process and the beginning of a relatively stable period. Obviously, though, the cult of relics should not be reduced to a mechanism for waging territorial disputes. While this correlation does begin to address the question, 'why then?', it does not bring us any closer to answering 'why that?'. To tackle this issue we need to place the shrine chapels in a broader context.

ILLUSTRIOUS ARCHETYPES: ROME AND JERUSALEM

Insofar as they are elaborations of the original grave, shrine chapels and stone shrines are reminiscent of the sequence of cult development in extramural cemeteries in the Late Antique period. To quote Rollason, '[in Ireland the] veneration of saints by the construction of special graves and of *cellae memoriae* had proceeded very much on the classic pattern of [...] early Christian sites.'[76] It is therefore easy to see how, prior to the chronological refinements of recent years (above), it was often assumed that Irish corporeal relic-cults developed directly from sub-Roman practice. Indeed, in the context of Thomas' model of site development, in which the majority of ecclesiastical sites ('developed cemeteries') have their origins in pre-existing burial grounds ('undeveloped cemeteries'),[77] one could envisage Irish church sites developing exactly like a Late Antique extramural cemetery. According to this model, saints' cults focused on specially-marked graves and, later, gable shrines containing translated remains could develop in enclosed cemeteries.[78] Churches and habitation were often later additions and, on occasion, the first church was a *memoria* erected over the special grave.[79] However, we have seen that a key characteristic of most Irish sites is a separation between the reliquary focus and principal liturgical space. In my view, this pattern says something fundamental about the origins and development of these sites: it reflects the fact that most of them were initially founded as churches with associated settlement, and that cemeteries, with their special graves, were a secondary development around these churches. While the 'developed cemetery' sequence must be applicable in a minority of cases, most excavations, including those discussed above, support this latter sequence.[80]

Thomas also postulated a direct formal link between *cellae memoriae,* the rectilinear enclosures built around Late Antique martyrs' tombs, and rectilinear features that surround some of the Irish gable shrines.[81] This link is still entertained by a number of scholars,[82] but it is unconvincing on two counts. First, while Thomas describes the Irish features

as 'enclosures defined by low walls or by fences of vertically set stone slabs,'[83] they are in fact just stone settings designed to revet the earthen platforms on which the gable shrines are built.[84] Secondly, the chronology now emerging for Irish corporeal relic-cults makes it highly unlikely that they were directly influenced by Late Antique *cellae memoriae* that, already by the late fourth century, were often replaced by large *martyrial* basilicas.[85] Like shrine chapels, Irish gable shrines seem to be products of the eighth and ninth centuries rather than the Late Antique world. Their most likely models are the lost metal reliquaries that were a feature of major Irish sites in this period, for at least some of these may have been gable-shaped.[86] It is somewhat more likely that shrine chapels were directly influenced by extramural foci on the Continent, for we know that some of the more minor cults were still focused on small churches and crypts in this period.[87] Certainly the essential dichotomy between the free-standing martyrial church, albeit usually a large congregational one, and the principal church within the city walls was still current at many of the old *civitates*. However if, as it appears, Irish clerics adopted this model during the eighth century, it must have been because they could adapt it to their own particular requirements, for it was no longer normal practice for new corporeal relic-cults in Francia or England.

A great number of new saints' cults were developed in Francia during the Merovingian period. The age of martyrs had by now long passed, and the new saints were usually bishops or monastic leaders who were usually translated by their successors not long after their deaths. Many of these translations took place at recently founded monasteries which, like those in Ireland, were not usually in pre-extant cemeteries; however these sites did not maintain a separation between liturgical space and reliquary focus. Their saints were usually moved from their original humble gravesite in the cemetery or, more often, in an inconspicuous location inside a church, to jewel-encrusted shrines in prominent positions within large pre-extant churches, either next to the high altar or, from the later eighth century, to purpose-built crypts.[88] This was seen as a form of canonisation because they were now taking their place at the altar alongside the martyrs,[89] who St. John depicted as calling to God from the foot of the altar,[90] and who were represented in most Continental altars by *brandea*.[91] The English took to this model with enthusiasm. Many of the first generation of saints in England (including Irishmen like Ultán[92]) were translated from the monastic cemetery or a modest grave in a church, into shrines in prominent positions next to the high altar or in the northern porticus.[93] In some cases the original grave remained important, but even then one can consistently see a clear preference for housing the saint's remains in the main liturgical space. For example, St. Wystan was buried at Repton in a freestanding semi-subterranean mortuary building[94] constructed by his grandfather, king Wyglaf; but in order to promote his cult the building was incorporated into the main church, which was extended over it so that it now formed a reliquary crypt under the chancel.[95] Similarly, when Swithun was translated at Winchester in 971, the minster was extended westwards over his original grave, and separate reliquaries containing some of his remains were kept both at the gravesite and at the high altar.[96]

The translation of the bodies of Brigit and Conlaed into jewelled shrines flanking the altar of the basilica at Kildare fits the Frankish model, though (like many Frankish basilicas) the building itself may have been influenced by the layout of basilicas in Rome.[97] In fact this Frankish model was given the Roman imprimatur in 688, just a few years after the basilica at Kildare was erected.[98] Before then, as a sign of their humility, most popes of the sixth and seventh centuries had been buried in a *porticus* at the entrance of St Peter's basilica where their graves would have been trodden on by pilgrims, but in that year Pope Sergius translated Pope Leo I from this western porticus to the south transept behind the altar, and this event established a precedent that was followed by most popes in the following centuries.[99] Most of the English translations were after 690,[100] and it has been suggested that some of them were inspired by Sergius' actions.[101] This is all the more likely given that the principal church at many of these sites was dedicated to Peter or Paul.[102] To some extent, then, monasteries such as Wearmouth were emulating a specific facet of the topography of Rome: its extramural cemeterial basilicas.[103]

In contrast, Canterbury is a rare, perhaps unique, case of an English site that consciously imitated post-Roman cities, and especially Rome itself, in their entirety.[104] Here, St. Augustine dedicated his intramural cathedral to the Saviour in emulation of the intramural episcopal basilica at the Lateran.[105] The archbishops of Canterbury and the kings of Kent were buried outside the walls of the town in a monastic church dedicated to Ss Peter and Paul. There appears to be an echo of this arrangement in the topography of Armagh (Fig 6). The principal and central church at the site was dedicated to Patrick, but the main reliquary and funerary church was another congregational building that Tírechán referred to as the southern church ('*aeclessia australi*').[106] Aitchison may be correct to suggest that this was the church dedicated to Brigit outside the inner vallum to the south.[107] Among the other peripheral churches at Armagh was one dedicated to Ss Peter and Paul which stood outside the inner vallum to the north,[108] and the *Ferta Martyrum* ('Burial ground of the Martyrs') that stood outside the outer vallum to the east, and from which we have archaeological evidence for the possible translation of saintly remains.[109] Thus, at Armagh, there is a dichotomy between Patrick's cathedral church at the heart of the site, and a series of possible reliquary churches that were extramural, like the martyrial churches of Rome. Given their ambitions, it is unlikely to be a coincidence that Canterbury and Armagh seem to be the clearest cases, in Britain and Ireland respectively, of the emulation of post-Roman *civitates*. In any case, considering that Patrick was not buried at Armagh, it is no surprise that the concept of the shrine chapel was not developed there.[110]

Shrine chapels are usually closer to the centre of their respective sites than the satellite foci at Armagh. Nonetheless it can be argued that, in their own idiosyncratic way, these buildings also emulate Early Christian martyr-cults. The form of translation carried out at Monkwearmouth and Kildare accorded their saints the same honour bestowed upon the most revered contemporary prelates on the Continent, including the popes. However, though architecturally less ambitious, shrine chapels were conceptually more audacious insofar as the saints in question were being treated not like recently-deceased bishops

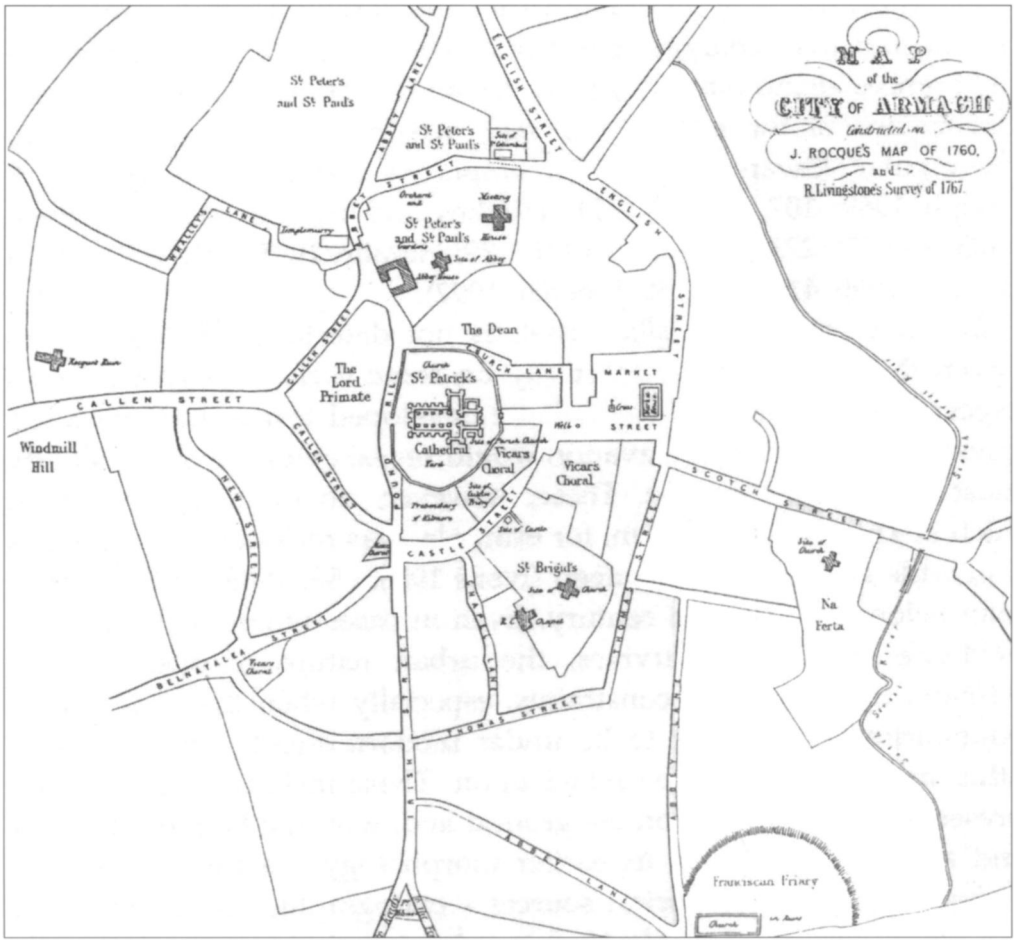


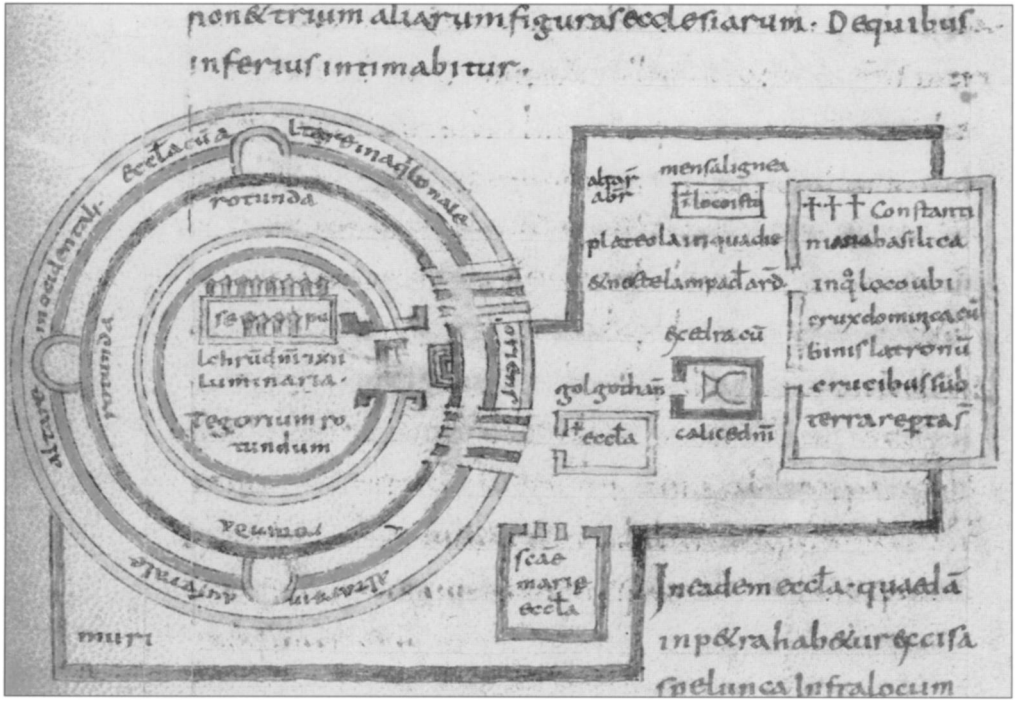
Fig. 6 Reeves' Map of Armagh (1860). Note especially Patrick's Cathedral, St. Brigit's, Na Ferta and Ss Peter and Paul's

buried near relics of the martyrs, but like the martyrs themselves. It is appropriate that this distinction between *martyrium* and principal church was maintained in the only country in the West where ascetics and *peregrini* did not need to die for their faith to be conceived of as martyrs.[111] From the reign of Paul I (757-767), many Roman martyrs were moved from their original gravesites to churches within the city or further afield.[112] However, I would not regard shrine chapels as evidence for slavish adherence to an increasingly defunct Roman relic policy. After all, they involve translation at the gravesite: a practice that was only slowly becoming acceptable at Rome during the seventh century.[113]

Furthermore, while Roman corporeal relics generally became more mobile in the Carolingian period, the most revered martyrs, including Peter and Paul, often remained at their original gravesites.

Those commissioning the first shrine chapel would certainly have been conscious of such precedents, but in terms of its form, scale and position within its city, another famous *memoria* provides a closer parallel for the shrine chapels, namely the Tomb of Christ, or aedicule, in Jerusalem. This was originally in an extramural cemetery, but Agrippa's expansion of Jerusalem in 44 AD meant that a second-century visitor could describe it as being 'in the centre of the city'.[114] Furthermore, like the shrine chapels, it was a diminutive building quite separate from Constantine's basilica, the principal liturgical building of the Holy Sepulchre complex.[115] *De Locis Sanctis*, one of the most detailed medieval accounts of this complex, was written by Adomnán on Iona in c.680 (Fig 7).[116] The discrepancies between Adomnán's plan of the Holy Sepulchre complex and the complex

Fig. 7 Plan of the Holy Sepulchre complex in a ninth-century copy of Adomnán's De Locis Sanctis. Vienna, Österreichisches National Bibliothek, Codex 458, f. 4v. Note the Constantinian basilica at the east (right) and Anastasis Rotunda at the west. The aedicule is depicted at the centre of this, and the rectilinear feature along its north side is the rock-cut tomb of Christ.



itself are interesting in that, intentionally or otherwise, they render it more familiar and intelligible to an Irish audience.[117] In particular the plan depicts what were in fact mostly integrated components of the Constantinian basilica as small freestanding churches, usually with a single door in the west wall. Adomnán depicts the Anastasis Rotunda, a great circular domed structure that surmounted the aedicule at the west of the complex, as a series of concentric circles. These circles, and the walls that they represent, served to identify the aedicule as the Sacred Centre situated, as Adomnán himself states, 'at the centre of the world'.[118] This is one of several statements which demonstrate that, far from being merely a simple pilgrim's guide, *De Locis Sanctis* was a cosmological and exegetical text describing not just a city in Palestine but the antetype of heaven: the heavenly Jerusalem.[119] Doherty and Aitchison have shown that Irish sites were also conceived as Sacred Centres laid out according to a hierarchy of sanctity articulated by a series of concentric circular enclosures that regulated access to their own holy of holies: the relics of their saints.[120] It must surely be significant in the present context that the rationale for this layout comes from Old Testament descriptions of settlements in the Holy Land including the Levitical cities of refuge and Jerusalem itself.[121]

While the Ark of the Covenant in Solomon's Temple was the symbolic centre of Jerusalem in Old Testament times, for Christians Christ's tomb now occupied this position.[122] Adomnán refers to it as Christ's *locus resurrectionis,*[123] a phrase that brings to mind a remarkable motif, ubiquitous in Irish hagiography but not found elsewhere, in which the location of a saint's principal monastery is revealed to him by an angel who identifies it as his *locus resurrectionis*.[124] Christ, who rose on the third day, was seen as 'the first fruits of those who have died.'[125] On the Last Day, when Christ would be revealed in glory, 'as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.'[126] In Irish hagiography, saints were privileged in that the place, and therefore obviously the fact, of their resurrection was predestined: they were clearly among those who belonged to Christ, and it was also implied that other Christians buried within the saint's *vallum* were under his protection and might also expect to rise to glory.[127] Thus Irish hagiographers chose the saint's *locus resurrectionis* as the defining characteristic, and ultimate focus, of their principal monasteries.[128] In this context, and given that Jerusalem was a model for the overall layout of these sites, it would not be surprising if sites that wished to elaborate the grave of their saint chose to visually 'cite' or recall Christ's *locus resurrectionis*. After all, throughout Europe buildings that alluded to the Holy Sepulchre were a focus for burial, 'aiding in the salvation of those buried nearby by making spiritually present the life-giving power of the Tomb of Christ.'[129] In the present case, the possibility is strengthened considerably by the fact that Temple Ciarán, Clonmacnoise, the only shrine chapel that receives a reasonable amount of coverage in the documentary sources, is explicitly equated with the Jerusalem aedicule. At the end of the Middle Irish Life of Ciarán we are told:

> This man [Ciarán] arose after three days in his *imdhaí* in Cluain to converse with and to comfort Coemgen, as Christ arose after three days from the grave in Jerusalem, to comfort and strengthen His mother and His disciples. So for these good things, and for many others, is his soul among the folk of heaven. His remains and relics are here with honour and renown, with daily wonders and miracles.[130]

A fuller account of this incident earlier in the same Life makes clear that in this case *imdhaí* refers to Temple Ciarán (see below).[131]

Adomnán describes the aedicule as a round building, in which only nine men can pray standing, with Christ's rock-cut tomb along its north side (Fig 8).[132] Notwithstanding some obvious formal differences, the tiny shrine chapels with their rectilinear saints' graves[133] are certainly reminiscent of this arrangement (Fig. 1). The outdoor stone shrines at minor sites are formally quite different again, but White Marshall and Walsh have convincingly argued that the perforated scallop shells placed with translated bones in examples like Illaunloughan and Killoluaig are a reference to the scallop motif over the door of the aedicule.[134] Finally, the case for a conceptual link between Irish corporeal relic-cults and the 'holy of holies' in Jerusalem is further strengthened by the fact that the Lemanaghan shrine, the only complete Irish metalwork shrine designed for a full set of corporeal relics, may well be modelled on the Ark of the Covenant.[135] Obviously, those commissioning the shrine chapels did not make a serious attempt to emulate the style or technology of the aedicule, except perhaps in their choice of mortared stone (below), but this in no way diminishes the possibility that they had this structure in mind, for Richard Krautheimer has shown that in this period referring to or 'citing' an important building was a very selective process and one that was focused on concepts rather than style.[136]

Shrine chapels may therefore belong to the long line of churches in the West that emulate one or more elements of the Holy Sepulchre complex.[137] Though not possible to prove, it is tempting to suggest that, as in so many other areas, Iona was where the original innovation took place: that Columba's was the first shrine chapel to be built, perhaps when he was first translated in the mid-eighth century.[138] O'Reilly has shown that, like *De Locis Sanctis,* Adomnán's other major work, his *Vita Columba*, 'also sketches a holy land, but at the northernmost edge of the Christian world.'[139] A number of episodes in the Life equate the landscape of Iona with that of the Holy Land; and on the day before his death Columba identifies the monastery with Jerusalem by foretelling its future greatness among all peoples, just as Old Testament prophecies foretold the greatness of Jerusalem.[140] Columba himself is equated with Christ at the moment of his death when he 'breathes out his spirit'.[141] Furthermore, at about the time that Columba was being translated, Iona was commissioning what may be the earliest stone high crosses in the Irish/west Scottish cultural zone,[142] crosses that were often set into stepped bases designed to recall another component of the Holy Sepulchre complex: the rock of Golgotha.[143] Kelly argues that John's cross in particular was inspired by the True Cross as described in *De Locis Sanctis*, and suggests that the influence of this text on the Iona crosses con-

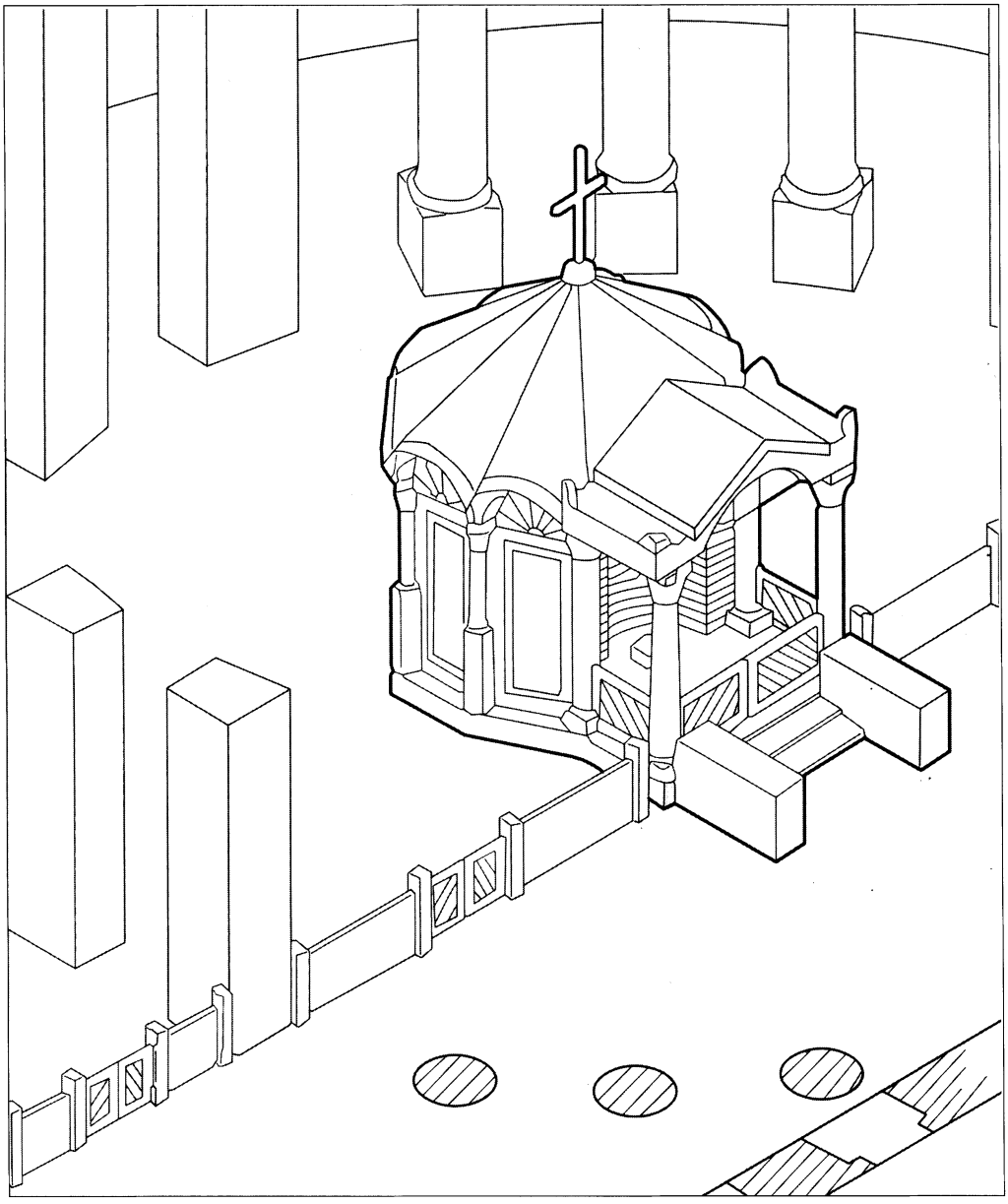


Fig. 8 View of the aedicule surrounded by the columns of the Anastasis Rotunda as it was in the seventh century. (after Wilkinson 2002. Redrawn in White Marshall and Walsh 2005)

tributed to the contrast in form between the crosses of the Irish/west Scottish cultural zone and those of Anglo-Saxon England where Greek crosses on stele prevailed.[144] The evidence outlined above raises the possibility that this text was also a factor in the contrast between the architectural settings of the cult of relics in these two areas. Just like the aedicule, Columba's shrine chapel stands at the west end of the late medieval abbey complex, which presumably occupies the site of the main complex of early medieval churches.[145] While its position was probably determined by a pre-extant grave (see above) it may be significant that, when Columban clerics came to build a successor to it at Kells, they also located this west of the main group of monuments. Their western position would have had a symbolic resonance beyond the specific analogy with the Holy Sepulchre complex, for in Judaeo-Christian and Irish cosmology generally the east stands for the beginning and the west for the end.[146] Quite independently, the same ideas also found architectural expression in Carolingian churches in which the upper storeys of the great westworks acted as chapels dedicated to the Passion and Ressurection of Christ.[147]

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELICS AND THE CEMETERY

There were, then, illustrious precedents for maintaining a separation between the cult focus and the principal liturgical space; but Irish clerics must also have had indigenous reasons for developing an architectural setting so different from that favoured by their Frankish and Anglo-Saxon contemporaries.[148] While Kildare is the only definite example, the Frankish model may have been somewhat more common in Ireland than the surviving evidence suggests.[149] After all, a stone shrine chapel is more likely to survive than a metal reliquary housed within a wooden congregational church; and, even so, shrine chapels occur at only a small minority of sites.[150] Arguably, however, shrine chapels are more representative because they are simply the most elaborate of a range of shrine-types, including corner-post shrines and gables shrines, which are sited in the cemetery, separate from the principal church. I will suggest that an important factor in this was the fact that in Ireland, to a greater extent than in neighbouring regions, corporeal relic-cults and the medieval concept of the Christian cemetery developed in tandem.

Three main conceptual stages can be recognised in the development of the Christian cemetery on the Continent. In the Late Antique and early Merovingian periods proximity to relics was what guaranteed salvation.[151] This is why burial within extramural reliquary churches was so prevalent, despite the objections of some clerics.[152] During the Carolingian period the salvation of the dead came to depend just as much on prayers and masses said for them by religious specialists as it did on the presence of relics.[153] These rituals now became the means by which the faithful fulfilled their obligations to the souls of their ancestors; and in this way clerics assumed the role of principal intermediary between the living and the dead.[154] On the Continent burial at church sites became much more common in this period. The taboo against burial around intramural churches in the old Roman towns began to break down;[155] and, in the countryside, many traditional burial grounds were abandoned in favour of burial around village churches.[156] As we shall

see, this is a trend echoed in contemporary Ireland, though the role of relics was somewhat different there. Episcopal policy on the Continent meant that many village churches were dedicated to major saints represented by brandea, rather than to local founders.[157] It seems that in England the network of local churches was relatively sparse prior to the tenth century. Burial at minsters did become reasonably common by the ninth century but, in contrast to Ireland (below), it does not appear that English relic-cults were developed in tandem with a campaign to promote churchyard burial.[158] It was not until the tenth century that the third key-characteristic of the medieval cemetery was put in place in England and on the Continent: namely formal enclosure and consecration through newly-devised liturgies.[159] While proximity to relics remained important, enclosure of the dead within a consecrated graveyard, and their commemoration in the liturgy, were now essential characteristics of Christian burial.[160]

O'Brien has cogently analysed the documentary evidence for the Irish churches' changing attitude to burial in the late seventh and eighth centuries.[161] A number of texts acknowledge the fact that familial burial grounds were still being used, but denounce the practice and insist that burial in ecclesiastical cemeteries is essential for salvation.[162] O'Brien convincingly argues that, in this period, 'burial near the bones of the saint became a substitute for burial near the bones of the ancestors.'[163] Because the saint was conceived of as the patron (*érlam*) of the kin-group, burial at his establishment now came to be seen as an expression of loyalty to one's kin.[164] However, burial at a church site in eighth-century Ireland was not simply *ad sanctos* burial in the Late Antique mould, for the other key attributes of Christian burial were also being put in place during this period. It is widely recognised that liturgical commemoration of the dead was spearheaded by the Irish Church and was well established there by the eighth century.[165] Furthermore, there is abundant evidence in late seventh- and eighth-century Irish law tracts and hagiography, for the ritual demarcation of church sites.[166] While these were not conventional consecrations, Gittos is surely correct to highlight the precociousness of the practice, and to suggest that it later influenced the development of consecration liturgies in England and on the Continent.[167] At the same time, Irish clerics were beginning to demand payment for the privilege of burial in these sacred spaces,[168] again some time before this practice was widely accepted on the Continent or in England.[169] Thus, uniquely in Ireland, corporeal relic-cults were first developed at a time when the concept of the Christian cemetery was also maturing. The intimate association between relics and the cemetery as these concepts developed in Ireland is exemplified by the fact that *reliquiae,* 'the remains of saints', was the term chosen to denote an ecclesiastical cemetery rather than to denote translated, enshrined remains as it did elsewhere in the West.[170] It is also illustrated by the Irish hagiographical motif in which the saint brings soil from the holy sites of Christendom to spread in his cemetery, instead of bringing back *brandea* to place in his church as one might expect him to do. It seems, therefore, that there was less of an emphasis on corporeal relics as objects because it was understood that their presence in the cemetery sanctified the whole space. This may have contributed to the fact that only a minority of sites

felt the need to translate the remains of their founder: as Charles-Edwards has observed, his role as patron of the kin-group was 'usually based on the presence [...] [of his body] in the cemetery.'[171]

This role was a crucial one, and in no way diminished by the fact that it was usually performed by undisturbed remains. It may be that translation into the principal church was perceived as unnecessary or even undesirable because it meant the removal of the patron from the cemetery proper. On the Continent the conceptual distinction between liturgical space and sepulchral space was blurred because many churches stood in pre-extant cemeteries and were riddled with interments seeking *ad sanctos* burial.[172] Given the developmental sequence of most Irish sites in which the cemetery developed around the church (above), it is likely that this distinction was clearer in the minds of Irish clerics. It would have been reinforced for them by Pope Gregory's Dialogues, which is cited as the authority for the severe restrictions on church burial in the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* of c.700.[173] Interestingly, this Irish text later influenced ninth-century reformers on the Continent who belatedly attempted to establish a distinction between eucharistic space and sepulchral space, apparently with some success.[174] In Ireland most sources suggest that burial in the cemetery was normal practice, even for important individuals.[175] Archaeology supports this conclusion: in most excavated churches there is limited evidence for indoor burial.[176]

Thus, the cemetery was clearly distinguished from the main liturgical space, as well as from the profane space outside the site. In this context it makes sense that, in those relatively rare cases when the patron was translated, an architectural solution was devised that allowed his relics to remain in the cemetery. The association of shrine chapels with the cemetery and with mortuary rituals is underscored by an episode in the tenth-century Life of Adomnán in which Columba's shrine chapel is opened in order to exorcise a devil from a corpse before it is interred.[177] It is reinforced further by a series of annalistic references to the deaths of various kings and clerics in the shrine chapel at Clonmacnoise.[178] This brings to mind incubation rituals in which sick people, or their relatives, sought cures by sleeping in a church.[179] However, Paxton has noted that eighth-century Irish anointing rituals for the sick were unusual in that they emphasised preparation for death, to the exclusion of any prayers seeking a cure for the illness.[180] Perhaps the deaths in Ciarán's tomb should be understood in the context of such 'rituals for the dying.' One wonders, further, whether these chapels were also the preferred place for private liturgical commemoration of the dead, especially when one considers that a number of eleventh-century pontificals refer to such masses as *missa in coemeterio*.[181]

Clonmacnoise and Iona are two sites with shrine chapels which, the documentary sources indicate, were particularly prestigious places of burial.[182] This is also reflected in the unusually large number of recumbent grave-slabs they produced during the eighth and ninth centuries.[183] Though individually modest, collectively these amounted to a monumental expression of the importance of the burial grounds across which they were paved. The translation of relics at such sites may, in part, have been 'a device to attract patronage, including burial',[184] though, as noted above, these communities also had particular

political motives for translating their saints. But these sites are exceptional and we should not, I think, link the development of corporeal relic-cults too closely to the more general shift in burial location that began in this period. If translation was fundamental to this process, we should expect evidence for corporeal relic-cults to be commonplace. In fact, the sophisticated model of Christian burial that developed in eighth-century Ireland meant that, to some extent, translation was superfluous to the process.

OATH-TAKING

While the Old Testament was cited as the authority for the Irish concept of sacred space, there is evidence that indigenous ideas about enclosure of settlements and burial grounds were also influential.[185] Similarly, liturgical commemoration of the dead implied an extension to the afterlife of the Irish system of tariffed penance, which in turn was based, in part, on indigenous ideas about gift-giving.[186] In the same way, it may have been important for ecclesiastical cemeteries to follow the same basic 'grammar' in terms of layout and function as traditional burial grounds, especially in the context of an active campaign for a shift in burial location. It is therefore not surprising to find that saints' graves and shrine chapels seem to have appropriated the legal functions of ancestral focal tombs in traditional burial grounds. The Church was anxious to usurp the secondary social functions that such burial grounds played, especially those that were sites of fairs or assemblies (*óenacha*).[187] In particular, the transfer of legal functions from *óenacha* was an important corollary to the shift to burial at church sites.[188] One eighth-century canon law states that courts were now to be held near the entrances of ecclesiastical sites;[189] and there is also evidence that the Church wanted oaths to be taken at ecclesiastical sites, specifically in the cemetery.

Elsewhere in Carolingian and post-Carolingian Europe, courts and other legal activities were also held at church sites and cemeteries.[190] However, oaths do not appear to have been as central to the legal process as they were in Ireland. Initially at least, oaths were often treated frivolously in the Germanic world and, even in the ninth century, they were only important 'for conflicts irresolvable by other means.'[191] Oaths could be taken on almost any object including the chair of one's lord, a ring, or even one's own beard.[192] Relics did come to be used, but only for clerical oaths initially; and it was only after Charlemagne's efforts to augment their legal and social role that they were widely used for secular oaths.[193] This development was far too late to have a major effect on the architectural context devised for them. In contrast, oath-taking was the primary mode of proof in the Irish legal system from an early date,[194] and was also essential in cementing treaties, declaring allegiance to one's lord and cursing one's enemies.[195] Most texts make clear that oaths should be taken at a particular tomb in a cemetery. While it is not always specified that the cemetery must be ecclesiastical, the benefits of swearing at cemeteries that contain the remains of saints are made very clear. Sometimes relics (presumably associative ones) are placed on top of the tomb while the oath is taken and this has the effect of making the oath more potent:

> Every oath respecting trespass must be made at three cemeteries *(ag teorib religi);* every oath respecting contract and covenant at a single cemetery *(ic aon rileg);* but if there be in the place three separate relics *(tri minna saine),* they have the force of three [cemeteries]; and there is no need for other relics to be on the tomb *(foran ulaid),* but if there are such, they all have the force of three cemeteries.[196]

There are instances of oaths being taken in other contexts, both ecclesiastical and secular,[197] and clearly clerics never managed to monopolise the legal system as they may have wished to do.[198] Nonetheless Binchy concludes that 'the more solemn oaths were still taken in graveyards.'[199] It may well be that this was another factor in the decision to maintain a direct link between relics and the cemetery, even in cases where translation had taken place.

The conceptual continuity between traditional burial grounds and churchyards can be illustrated by the following three instances of oath-taking. First, in a secular tale from *Silva Gadelica,* royal youths enter into a pact with the leader of their warrior band by striking their hands on his 'upon a tulach' or burial mound.[200] This is closely paralleled in a pact between two saints described in the eleventh- or twelfth-century commentary on the *Félire Oengussa*:

> the union of Columkille and Cianán was made thus, i.e. Colum Cille [put his] hand in through the southern side of the tomb even to the half, and Cianán [put his] hand even to the half side, and then they make the union.[201]

The third oath also involves a covenant between saints, but this time it is secured not at a tomb but inside one of the early shrine chapels. The episode, referred to already above, probably relates to the tenth-century agreement between Clonmacnoise and Glendalough;[202] versions of it occur in the Lives of both saints involved, namely the Latin Life of St. Kevin and the Irish Life of St. Ciarán.[203] It relates how, on Ciarán's death, Kevin spent a night in the *eclais bec* (little church) where his body was laid. During the night Ciarán came back to life long enough for them to make their covenant. Manning and MacDonald have shown beyond doubt that the little church in question is the shrine chapel of Temple Ciarán.[204] It is easy to see how such shrine chapels, and indeed other 'outdoor' shrine-types, would have helped to augment the role of churches in the legal process by providing a clear and familiar context for the swearing of oaths.[205]

THE CHOICE OF MORTARED STONE

Before concluding, I want to consider briefly why shrine chapels may have been among the earliest mortared stone buildings in Ireland. Harbison has suggested they were built of stone to 'give them special importance and status among the wooden buildings of a monastery, but perhaps also to protect the buildings from the firebrands of the Vikings, and the relics within from the preying hands of pilgrims.'[206] Clerics may indeed have been motivated by the need to protect the most potent symbols of their authority; but, in seek-

ing to convey the 'special importance' of these buildings, they would also have been very conscious of the symbolic resonances that mortared stone had, beyond the basic qualities of novelty and durability. In fact, we know that mortared stone had a specific meaning in the minds of eighth-century North Europeans: it signalled *Romanitas*.[207] It is not by chance that our earliest annalistic reference to a mortared congregational church in Ireland is at Armagh in 789.[208] Elsewhere this writer has argued that this church expressed Armagh's aspirations to become metropolitan of Ireland as effectively as its layout or its collection of Roman relics.[209] This idea was so prevalent during the eighth century that those commissioning the first shrine chapels must have been conscious of it, as indeed they would have been conscious of the functional similarities between their shrine chapels and the martyrial churches of Continental cities, including Rome itself. There may even be a formal reference to Roman architecture in the shrine chapel at Clonmacnoise for, as Manning has argued, it appears to have had a round-headed doorway: the only example known from Ireland prior to the late eleventh century.[210] It is important to emphasise that these clerics would have seen no contradiction in expressing their *Romanitas* while also alluding to the Holy Sepulchre which, as Adomnán notes, was built by the Emperor Constantine.[211] Several sites in Northern Europe chose to refer to both cities. For example, at ninth-century Fulda the main church was a close copy of St Peter's at Rome,[212] while St. Michael's just south of it reproduced the Anastasis Rotunda and the aedicule.[213] The same spirit is expressed in the work of Adomnán, who refers to Rome as 'the chief of all cities.'[214]

It is possible that the idea of Rome that these buildings evoked was slightly different from that championed at Armagh. As noted above, the word most commonly used in Irish texts for an ecclesiastical cemetery was *relig* ('the remains of the saints'). However an alternative term, especially for 'holy burial grounds' that attracted pilgrimage, was *ruam*: the Irish word for Rome.[215] For example, one Life of St. Kevin describes Glendalough as one of the 'four best Romes of burial' in Ireland.[216] This symbolic link between Irish cemeteries and Rome is reinforced by the hagiographical motif, already referred to above, in which the saint brings soil from the tombs of the Roman saints to scatter in his own cemetery.[217] For example the Life of Colmán of Lynn recounts how he and his companions

> [...] collected the soil of Peter's tomb and of the tomb of every other apostle and of every saint that is in Rome [...] Thence Colmán went to Lann Mic Lúacháin with the load of seven men of the soil of Rome and of the tombs of the apostles [...] and [it] was thereupon scattered in every direction in the cemetery of Lann, so that each one who has been buried there since has been buried in Roman soil.[218]

According to Hughes, this 'idiomatic use of the word *ruam* clearly shows Rome's primary significance in the Celtic imagination. The living pope was respected, but it was his great predecessor Peter, with the other saints and martyrs, who drew Celtic pilgrims to Rome. The power of the dead saints was a far more potent force than that of the living pope.'[219] With their unusually thin walls, many lacking a rubble core and built of quite small, reg-

ularly-coursed blocks, the shrine chapels represent a somewhat tentative use of mortared stone, especially in comparison to later churches with cyclopean masonry. But if we accept that they were usually the first mortared structures at a given site, they would have been very striking when first built. While they may be modelled on the aedicule, they can also be viewed in the context of the peculiarly Irish symbolic continuum between the cemetery, relics, Rome and mortared stone: a series of associations that expressed the fact that they were reliquaries situated within the cemetery.

The ideas about Rome and relics expressed at these sites are quite different to those evident in the architecture of Kildare, which briefly aspired to metropolitan status (see above), and arguably also in that of Armagh. For a time at least, these two sites *were* interested in the living pope insofar as they saw the Roman hierarchy as a potential source of great power. Geary has observed that centralising forces tend to promote universal saints, while those with an interest in resisting them choose local saints.[220] In the Irish context, Armagh's preoccupation with Roman relics, and indeed Christological relics in the form of the Bachal Íosa,[221] was unusual; as was its practice, in clear emulation of papal relic policy, of distributing some of them to sites that it wanted to bring directly under its wing.[222] But, as Sharpe has commented, 'invoking the name Rome was evidently not sufficient to impress on the independent-minded Irish churches a structure of authority comparable to that in England or on the continent' though the form their opposition took 'can only be guessed from fragmentary references.'[223] One clear strategy was to invest in the cults of their own saints in the form of hagiography, reliquaries and shrine chapels. In doing so these sites could evoke Rome and the other great shrines of Christendom on their own terms, while at the same time rejecting Armagh's aspirations to act as mediator of papal authority in Ireland. By developing their own cult centres they could, to paraphrase Brown, cancel out the hiatus between 'centre' and 'periphery' by making 'little Romes', or indeed 'little Jerusalems,' available on their home ground.[224]

CONCLUSION

Though the evidence is not conclusive, it would make historical sense if the first shrine chapels were eighth- or ninth-century, given that this was the formative period in the development of corporeal relic-cults in Ireland. After all, it is generally true throughout Europe that the cult of relics goes hand in hand with architectural innovation.[225] While they recall Early Christian *memoriae* rather than contemporary relic-cults in Francia or England, shrine chapels should not be seen as inherently conservative. Rather, they represent the creative adaptation of Early Christian archetypes to suit contemporary requirements at a time when a sophisticated model of Christian burial was already emerging, but when some continuity with traditional burial grounds also had to be maintained. The six extant examples discussed here are certainly pre-1000 and, while some shrine chapels must also have been built during the eleventh century, it is notable that virtually no buildings traditionally identified as saints' tombs have features that are characteristic of later pre-Romanesque architecture in Ireland, namely shallow antae and masonry belonging to one of the distinct local styles.[226]

However, though it cannot be discussed at any length here, there is evidence that the cult of relics was also a driving force for architectural change during its revitalisation in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. The barrel-vaulted church at Kells mentioned above belongs to a small group that represent the first significant new departure in the design of Irish churches since the first shrine chapels; and in most instances a strong case can be made that, like the Kells example, they belong to the, by now long-established, Irish tradition of modest freestanding buildings designed to house relics.[227]

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFM – Annals of the Four Masters (O'Donovan 1851)
AI – Annals of Inishfallen (Mac Airt 1944)
Ant Jour – Antiquaries Journal
Arch Ire – Archaeology Ireland
AU – Annals of Ulster (Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983)
BAR – British Archaeological Reports
BNÉ – *Bethada Náem nÉrenn* (Plummer 1922)
DIL – Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish Language Published by the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin
HE – Bede's Ecclesiastical History (Colgrave and Mynors 1969)
JIA – Journal of Irish Archaeology
JRSAI – Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland
PSAS – Proceeding of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland
RCAHMS – Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
VC – Adomnán's *Vita Columba* (Sharpe 1995)
Vita Greg. – Life of Gregory the Great (Colgrave 1985)
VSH – *Vitae Santorum Hiberniae* (Plummer 1910)

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NOTES

1 The title alludes to that of Crook's (2000) study, which is excellent on England and Continental Europe but makes no reference to Ireland whatsoever.
2 For example RCAHMS 1982, 42.
3 For example Manning 2003.
4 For example Brash 1868, 113-4.
5 For example Wakeman 1884; O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin forthcoming.
6 For example Leask 1955 61, fig. 24.
7 For example O'Keeffe 1998.
8 Harbison 1991, 147-51; Herity 1993, 190-1; O'Keeffe 1998, 116.
9 The term tomb-shrine has been used by Harbison (1991, 147-51), Herity (1993, 190-1), O'Keeffe

(1998, 116) and Ó Carragáin (2005a, 129-30). However this has recently been defined as a monument, rather than a building, erected over, and providing limited access to, a grave that is either undisturbed or has been emptied of its relics (Crook 2000, 244, 253-67; also Blair 2002).

10 The term *memoria* might also be used (O'Keeffe 1998, 116), though it does not convey the diminutive size of these buildings. This term denoted a 'relic-church' from at least the time of Augustine, and there are some instances of it in the Irish sources (Sharpe 2002, 144). Feretory is more problematic because it can sometimes denote a reliquary rather than a building housing a reliquary (Cross and Livingstone 1997; Stevens Curl 1999).

11 Ó Floinn 1997, 139; DIL which also mentions the compound word *scrín tech* (shrine house).

12 The term chapel was first used for the temporary structure in which Merovingian kings housed the 'cape' (*cappella*) of St Martin when on military campaigns (Cross and Livingstone 1997, 319).

13 Berger 1992; 1995.

14 Harbison 1991, 151; also O'Keeffe 1998, 116.

15 For example Manning 2000; Ó Carragáin 2002; 2005a; 2005b.

16 First, the death of Egeartach, *airchinneach* (i.e. head cleric) of the shrine chapel (Eaglais Beag) of Clonmacnoise is recorded in 893 (AFM). Secondly MacDonald (2003, 132; also Kenney 1929, 670-1) has drawn attention to a ninth-century note in the margin of the calendar of the Carlsruhe Bede (dated 836 x 848), which states that King Murchad son of Máeldúin (+826) died 'on the bed of Ciarán.' MacDonald (2003, 132-3) shows that the 'bed of Ciarán' was the saint's grave in the shrine chapel. This suggests that the present building, or a predecessor serving the same function, was already present in the ninth century. A cross fragment, for which Hicks (1980, 16-17) suggests a date of c.800, was incorporated into the door of the church until the 1950s (Manning 1998, 76-77).

17 Ó Carragáin 2005a, 129-30.

18 Manning 1998, 76; Ó Carragáin 2005a, 139.

19 Manning 1997, 13. The possible shrine chapels that Berger dated are Temple Ciarán at Clonmacnoise, Teach Molaise at Inishmurray, St. Columb's at Kells and St. Michael's at Skellig Michael. Only a small amount of original fabric from the Skellig Michael church survives and its categorisation as a shrine chapel is uncertain (though see Harbison 1991, 151), but the other three clearly were reliquary buildings. However, St. Columb's is a barrel-vaulted structure of late eleventh- / early twelfth-century date; and so it must be assumed that the sample was either corrupt in some way, or, as O'Keeffe (1998) suggested, that it was taken from fabric incorporated from an earlier structure. It should be stated that there is no evidence in the fabric of the extant building to support the second hypothesis. In any case the 1 sigma date range (654-786) for St Columb's, or even a predecessor at the same site, seems unlikely on historical grounds because the principal relics of Columba were not brought to Kells until the late ninth century (see below).

20 Brown 2003, 16.

21 McCulloh 1980, 313.

22 Carver 2001.

23 For example Bourke 1993, 17-18; Sharpe 2002, 141, 148, 151.

24 For example Bourke et al. 1991. On the likelihood that these were for secondary relics, often of Continental saints see Ó Floinn 1989/90, 54; 1997, 147; Harbison 1991, 236; Edwards 2002, 248.

25 Sharpe 1984a, 69; also 1991, 20; 2002, 150-51; Bieler 1979, 186-9; Stokes 1887, vol. 1, 237-8.

26 Bourke 1980; 1987.

27 Bourke 1997, 174; 2000, 7.

28 I am grateful to Griffin Murray for discussion on this point. As he has pointed out to me, most shrine chapels are at sites from which we also have bells and crosiers, including Clonmacnoise, Inishmurray (Bourke 1985), Iona (Bourke 1997) and Labamolaga (Bourke 1980, 65; Power 1932, 53).

29 On the possibility that raiding accounts for the low survival rate of corporeal reliquaries in Ireland see Bannerman 1993, 28-9; Ó Floinn 1997, 160; Edwards 2002, 226. On the similarly low survival rate of such shrines in Merovingian France see Crook 2002, 203. For metal finials from large eighth-/ninth-century Irish shrines see Bakka 1965, 39-40; Youngs 1989, no. 138; Edwards 2002, 249. 'Barge-board' finials of this sort do not occur on the surviving small house-shaped shrines (note 24), possibly because these are characterised by hipped rather than gable-ended 'roofs'. The larger corporeal shrines may have been house-shaped but with gable ends, or alternatively they may have been gable-shaped like the later Lemanaghan shrine (notes 40 and especially 135).

30 O'Brien 1992, 136; Ó Carragáin 2003.

31 The instance in Tírechán is somewhat unconventional in that its purpose was not the enshrinement of a saint's bones for display at his own foundation, but their removal from a site that had become abandoned, to a different establishment. The holy man in question, an obscure individual called Bruscus, appears in a vision and requests to be translated. This was a common motif in contemporary French sources: Crook 2002, 198.

32 Connolly and Picard 1987, 11-12.

33 VC iii 23.

34 MacDonald 1998, 25; also Thacker 1989, 108-09; *pace* Bannerman 1993, 22-23.

35 AU 650-850.

36 White Marshall and Walsh 1998, 106-09; 2005.

37 Thomas 1971, 144.

38 John Sheehan (forthcoming)

39 Most Irish corner-post shrines are plain, but their elaborately sculpted Scottish counterparts are dated to the eighth and ninth-centuries on art-historical grounds (Thomas 1998). At Toureen Peakaun, Co. Tipperary two posts with mortises and dowel holes (Waddell and Holland 1990), along with some miscellaneous blocks, are best interpreted as elements of a corner-post shrine of both wood and stone; and, though not closely dateable, the ringed crosses on the posts would not be out of place in an eighth or ninth century context. The slab-shrine fragments from Carrowntemple, Co. Sligo may also be eighth-century (Henderson 1989, 73; though see Wallace and Timoney 1987).

40 Most of the surviving corporeal reliquaries date to this period, most notably Lachtín's Arm (Murray 2004) and the Lemanaghan shrine (Kendrick and Senior 1936); and translation is a common motif in twelfth-century annals (e.g. AFM 1162 and 1170) and hagiography such as the *Vita Sancti Flannani* (Heist 1965, 300) and the Life of Colmán Mac Luacháin (Meyer 1911) in which the saint's followers ask to exhume his relics 'that they might be kept amongst them in an adorned shrine like every other great saint and chief apostle throughout Ireland.' Incidentally, this late revival, six centuries after the lifetimes of most Irish saints, reminds us that the development of a corporeal relic-cult was not necessarily hindered by difficulties in locating the true bones of the saint. Examples of cults that may have pagan origins but that were nonetheless focused on corporeal relics are those of Brigit and Lachtín of Donaghmore (Ó Riain 1978; Ó hÓgáin 1999). Two of the shrine chapels were also built over the reputed graves of historically dubious saints. Ó Riain (1978) has argued that St. Molaga of Labamolaga ultimately derives from the pagan cult of Lug; but this in no way diminishes

the possibility that the shrine chapel was erected over a grave that was, by that time, believed to be his (O'Keeffe 1998, 118; *pace* Bhreathnach 2003b). Furthermore, the shrine chapel on Inishmurray marks what is reputed to be the grave of Molaise, an individual who almost certainly arrived on the island through cult diffusion rather than in the flesh (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin forthcoming).

41 White Marshall and Walsh 1998; 2005.

42 O'Kelly 1958, 89, 115. Thomas (1971, 157-9) has suggested that the Scottish corner-post shrines were originally positioned within churches; and this is supported, in the case of the St. Andrew's Sarcophagus, by the excellent condition of its sculpture (Henderson 1998, 155). However it appears that the only *in situ* corner-post shrines are in Ireland; and these indicate that, here at least, this was essentially an outdoor monument type (for example Ó Carragáin 2003, Fig. 9.6).

43 John Sheehan (forthcoming)

44 Thomas 1986, 124.

45 For a fuller discussion see Ó Carragáin 2005c., also O'Kelly 1958, 62; Fanning, 1981, 79-84; Marshall and Walsh 1998, 104-6; Lynch 1988, 18; John Sheehan (forthcoming) on Caherlehillan.

46 For example Wakeman 1884; Westropp 1903, 366-7; Ó Cadhla 2002.

47 O'Keeffe 2004.

48 This is also true of stone shrines at minor sites (Ó Carragáin 1998).

49 King 1997, 130, Ó Carragáin 2002, 191–207.

50 Any judgement on this will have to await the publication of King's excavations, but it may be significant that some of the earliest burials she excavated were oriented south-west/north-east (King 1997, 130), which is essentially the same orientation as the shrine chapel. A similar pattern has recently been noted on Inishmurray where the phase 1 burials in the cemetery of Relickoran were on the same south-west/north-east axis as Teach Molaise, while the phase 2 burials were oriented east/west like the later churches (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin forthcoming). Arguably this is further evidence that these shrine chapels are relatively early insofar as it suggests they may pre-date the shift in orientation and the erection of stone congregational churches at their respective sites. While it is possible that their orientation was simply dictated by that of pre-extant special graves, the Caherlehillan excavations show that shrine orientation was not necessarily determined in this way. Here the shrine was built after a change in burial and probably also church orientation, and it complied with this new orientation rather than perpetuating that of the special grave underneath it (Sheehan forthcoming).

51 For example Biddle (1986) and also below on tenth-century Winchester; Blair (2005, 491) on seventh-century Lichfield; Crook (2000, 244, 253-67) for Continental examples.

52 Further below; VSH vol. 1, 248-9; Macalister 1921, 97; MacDonald 2003, 131; Manning 2003, 71.

53 For example, the only metal reliquaries known to have been housed in Teach Molaise, Inishmurray, were the saint's bell and crosier (Bourke 1985). However, it is possible that enshrined corporeal relics of Molaise were lost, perhaps during one of the Viking raids on the site (AI 795; AU 807).

54 Inis Pátraic, Co. Dublin is another site where we know a translation took place and which may also have had a shrine chapel. Ryan *et al* (2004, 114-116) have recently drawn attention to a description by Wakeman (1876) of a now lost diminutive building with a trabeate west doorway that stood north of the twelfth-century church on the island. Wakeman's description does not suggest it was exactly like the shrine chapels under consideration here, but if Ryan et al (2004, 116) are

correct to suggest it was a reliquary building, then it may have housed the shrine (scrín) of Do-Chonna, which the Vikings 'broke' when they plundered the site in 798 (AU).

55 Manning 2003, 69. It appears to have been open at the beginning of the century: Macalister 1909, 142.

56 White Marshall and Walsh 1998; 2005.

57 The information about this discovery comes from one of Petrie's notebooks (RIA MS 12 N 8, 195), but the published accounts of it, which suggest that one of the items recovered was a crosier, are unreliable (Griffin Murray pers comm.). Harbison (1991, 115) implies that the 'gold crown and collar' found at Clonmacnoise in c.1861 were also in the chapel, but his source (Macalister 1909, 155) does not specify where at the site they were found, except to state that they appear to have been in a subterranean, cave-like feature.

58 Both accounts are in O'Donovan 1856-7, 446-7. I am grateful to Griffin Murray for drawing my attention to the reference in Ware.

59 RCAHMS 1982, 41-2, 47-8, 137-8; Biddle 1986, 8; Henderson 1987, 186-7; McCormick 1997, 63-4. This is one of just three churches outside Ireland with antae (Ó Carragáin 2002, 76-77). It seems likely that it stood in the principal monastic graveyard (Sharpe 1995, 70-71; *pace* McCormick 1997). Limited excavation in its vicinity revealed quite a concentration of medieval burials (Redknapp 1977).

60 Reeves 1857, 315.

61 Smyth 1984, 187-8; Ó Floinn 1997, 138.

62 AU; Bannerman 1993, 20; Ó Floinn 1997, 139.

63 AFM; Ó Floinn 1997, 140. The fact that it is dedicated to Columba supports Ó Floinn's suggestion. See note 19 above for problematic radiocarbon evidence that nonetheless raises the possibility that this building incorporates earlier fabric.

64 Herbert and Ó Riain 1988, 61, 84 note 224. While the episode supposedly occurred on Iona in the seventh century, Ó Floinn (1997, 139-40) is probably correct to conclude that 'it actually reflects the existence of such a structure at Kells in the tenth.'

65 Brash 1868, 12. St Columb's may have been built in a cemetery, though no burials were uncovered in excavations some distance north of it (Swan 1994, Fig. 2).

66 At the less important sites with shrine chapels like Labamolaga, Inishmurray and Inishcleraun, it is possible that an outdoor gable or corner-post shrine served the purpose, but in the case of sites like Clonmacnoise and Iona, where the remains were enshrined in elaborate metal reliquaries, wooden shrine chapels seem more likely. Some modest stone shrines occur at important sites such as Slane (Westropp 1901), Monasterboice (Ó Carragáin 2003) and Iona (Thomas 1971, fig. 70). The latter in particular may have been for the bones of one of the island's lesser holy men rather than Columba.

67 Charles-Edwards 2002; Sharpe 2002, 152; further below.

68 Blair 2005, 145; also 2002, 490-4. Translation seems to have been rarer still in Wales: Edwards 1996, 55; 2002, 230-5.

69 Connolly and Picard 1987, 11-12; also Doherty 1984, 94-5; Neumann de Vegvar 2003.

70 Of course, possession of principal relics was also essential in consolidating a site's primacy *within* a federation. For example, for Bede, it was the presence of Columba's body on Iona that confirmed the site's position as head of the Columban *familia* (Charles-Edwards 2000, 289, note 38; Henderson 1987, 30). In fact the role of relics in this regard had legal weight, for an eighth-century law tract, the Córus Béscnai, defines a principal church as one 'in which there are relics of the founder' (Etchingham 1993, 154; also Bannerman 1993).

71 Stokes 1887, 79, 83, 97, 159; Charles-Edwards 2000, 252-4; Herbert 1988, 63-4.

72 AU; Herbert 1988, 66. Ardmore, which also features a shrine chapel, may not have been on a par with these others, but its patron, Declan, was one of the supposed pre-Patrician saints, cults that 'essentially represent an answer by the southern churches to the political ambitions of Armagh' (Ó Riain-Raedel 1998, 21).

73 On England see Rollason 1989, 207-8; Blair 2005, 142. On France see Little 1993, 226-29.

74 Hughes 1966, 151-2; Lucas 1986. Herbert (1988, 65) and Charles-Edwards (2000, 559-69, especially 564-65) see the use of relics in this way as an innovation of the eighth century, initiated by the Columban federation, but soon imitated by Armagh and others.

75 Ó Corráin 1981, 335-6; MacSamhráin 1996, 172; also Ó Carragáin 2003, 142-46 where a political context is suggested for the development of relic-cults at some relatively minor sites in peninsular Kerry.

76 Rollason 1989, 19.

77 Thomas 1971, 67-9, 78-9, 82; also 1995, 65.

78 Thomas 1971, 67-8, 143; 1986, 124.

79 Thomas 1986, 124. However, Thomas (1971, 145) sees most indoor shrines as additions to pre-extant congregational churches such as one finds in Anglo-Saxon England.

80 O'Brien 1992; Ó Carragáin 2003; 2005c. It must be emphasised that Thomas did envisage that some church sites were established on virgin ground or pre-extant settlements. However, he also refers to these as 'developed cemeteries', and therefore gives primacy to their burial function. He has been followed in this by other scholars (e.g. Mytum 1992, 99-100), and the prevalence of this terminology has helped to ingrain the idea that development from a pre-extant cemetery was the usual sequence (e.g. Stout and Stout 1997, 50, Fig. 49).

81 Thomas 1971, 140-44.

82 For example Rollason 1989, 19; O'Keeffe 1998, 116; Sharpe 2002, 135; Edwards 2002, 242.

83 Thomas 1971, 142. He seems to have made this assessment based on Henry's (1957) drawings.

84 Examples include Illaunloughan, Killoluaig and Killonecaha Co. Kerry. O'Sullivan and Sheehan 1996; Ó Carragáin 1998.

85 For example Brown 1981; Crook 2000, 40-44. *Pace* Sharpe (2002, 135), a link with sub-Roman grave-surrounds in southern Britain is equally unlikely.

86 See notes 29 and especially 135.

87 On the modest structures, including some of wood, that marked the graves of some martyrs in sixth-century Gaul see Beaujard (2000, 335-40) and Crook (2000, 48-52). For late survivals of such structures see for example Burnell (1988, 214) and Edwards (2004, 6).

88 James 1981, 43-4; Angenendt 1994; Dunn 2000, 168; Crook 2000, 68-134; 2002, 198-205, 210-217. Among the saints treated in this way were Irishmen like Kilian whose remains were transferred to the cathedral at Würzburg in 752, and Fursey whose remains were taken by the mayor of Neustria and placed in a new monastic church at Péronne (Kenney 1929, 500-1, 513; Dunn 2000, 168).

89 Angenendt 1994.

90 Rev 6: 9-11. On the 'compelling link' that this passage established between the relics and the altar see Grabar 1949, 99-102; also Häussling 1973, 211; Stalley 1999, 148.

91 Though *brandea* were simply tertiary relics, usually of cloth, McCulloh (1976, 177-8) shows that, by being lowered into the martyrs' tomb, they became conceptually equivalent to corporeal relics, and were therefore more potent than 'holy objects' associated with a saint (i.e. secondary relics). This

equivalence was not always accepted by Carolingian clerics, as their increasingly vociferous, and ultimately successful, demands for the actual bones of Roman martyrs shows (McCulloh 1980).

92 Campbell 1967, 33.

93 Thomas 1971; 1973b, 8-10; also Biddle 1986, 11; Rollason 1989, 34-44; Ó Carragáin 1999; Thacker 2000, 275-6.

94 Mortuary chapels like this are common in England (Blair 1992, 255; 1996, 7; Hill 1997; Biddle 1986, 13; Laing and Laing 1996, 150; Crook 2000, 62-3) and on the Continent (James 1981, 41-3; Dunn 2000, 178; Dierkens and Périn 1997, 86), but should be distinguished from Irish shrine chapels insofar as they were not dedicated *memoriae* but housed multiple interments, usually not including the remains of the founding saint. See further below note 176.

95 Biddle 1986, 16-22.

96 Biddle 1986, 11, 22, 24-5; also 1975, 136. The differences between Irish and Anglo-Saxon practice in this regard is also illustrated by the case of Whithorn (Hill 1997, 139-153). The ritual foci during the early phases of the site, when Irish influence was apparently strong (Hill 1997, 39-40), included an outdoor shrine; but when the site was taken over by Anglo-Saxons in the early eighth century the church was extended over what remained of this feature. Ninian's tomb, the main cult focus at Whithorn, also appears to have been within a large congregational church, at least by the twelfth century (Hill 1997, 20, 56).

97 Neuman de Vegvar 2003; also Connolly and Picard 1987.

98 On the date of the Kildare church see Charles-Edwards 2000, 438-40.

99 Picard 1969, 757-64. This startling importation of Frankish custom at St. Peter's may be due to the fact that the Vatican liturgy was, partially at least, the responsibility of the monks of St. Martin's monastery: they naturally had a particular familiarity with, and veneration for, customs prevalent at Tours (É Ó Carragáin 1994b).

100 Charles-Edwards 2000, 342; Blair 2005, 145. The unusual circumstances of Colmán's departure from Lindisfarne after the Synod of Whitby may account for the relatively early translation of Aidan in 664 and the division of his relics between Northumbria and Ireland (HE iii, 26).

101 É Ó Carragáin 1999, 31-2.

102 Rollason 1989, 24, 33; Cubitt 2002, 444-48. On the desire of Anglo-Saxons to emulate all things Roman see McCulloh 1980, 320; also Thacker 2000.

103 For the other ways in which they emulated Rome see É Ó Carragáin 1994b.

104 É Ó Carragáin 1999, 27-8; Thacker 1999; 2000, 257-8; Blair 2005, 189 and Morris 1986 on York.

105 The Lateran basilica was dedicated to the Saviour until the end of the ninth century (Cross and Livingstone 1997, 953).

106 Bieler 1979, 186-7.

107 Aitchison 1994, 249. See, however, Henry (1967, 41) who argues it was on the site of the church that, until the eighteenth century, stood immediately south of the principal church.

108 Reeves 1898, 220-24; Paterson and Davies 1940, 97-98. The earliest reference to this establishment is in 1126 when the building and consecration of a *damliac* (stone church) is recorded (AFM). It adopted the Augustinian Rule some time later (Reeves 1898, 222). It stood in the area known in the early medieval period as the Trian Saxan (Henry 1967; Aitchison 1994). It may well be that Anglo-Saxon visitors to Armagh stayed in this quarter, but in light of the possible presence there of a church dedicated to St Peter, it is also possible that its name was consciously chosen to recall the topography of Rome. The quarter in front of St. Peter's basilica in Rome had become known as the Borgo Saxonum,

partly because of the throngs of English and other northern pilgrims who stayed there and partly because of the *Schola Saxonum* that was founded there apparently by King Ina of Wessex in 727 (Reekmans 1970, 214-18). I am grateful to Éamonn Ó Carragáin for this suggestion.

109 Lynn's (1988) excavation at this site uncovered a short grave containing disarticulated remains and marked by two posts. It was not closely dated but a nearby, stratigraphically earlier grave was probably late sixth- or seventh-century.

110 Bieler 1979, 120-23; Sharpe 1982, 40-43; Doherty 1991. A church was built over the supposed position of Patrick's grave at Downpatrick in the seventh century, but its size and character are not known.

111 Stancliffe 1982; also Ryan 1931, 197-99. Apart from their first-hand knowledge of Continental sites, the distinction between principal church and *martyrium* would have been underscored for them by the structure of the liturgical year as reflected in their liturgical books: martyrs' feastdays were incorporated into the solar cycle (Sanctorale) while major liturgical events such as Lent, Easter and Pentecost formed part of the lunar cycle (Temporale) (de Blaauw 1994, vol. 1, 27-41, 53-65).

112 This had already become common in France at a much earlier date (e.g. Effros 2002, 75-8).

113 McCulloh 1980.

114 Wilkinson 2002, 361.

115 See Couasnon 1974; Wilkinson 2002, 361-68.

116 Meehan 1958.

117 For a fuller discussion of these discrepancies and their implications for our understanding of the Irish sites see Ó Carragáin (2002, 191-204; forthcoming).

118 Meehan 1958, 56-7.

119 O'Loughlin 2000, 78-83; 186-93; also Heitz 1980, 212-14; 1986, 96-99.

120 Doherty 1985; Aitchison 1994.

121 Doherty 1985, 57-60; Ó Corráin 1987 296-7; also Swift 1998, 113; MacDonald 2001, 30. In the *Hibernensis* specific reference is made to the layout of Jerusalem at xliv:2 (Wasserschleben 1885, 175).

122 It has been argued that Constantine's Holy Sepulchre complex was, in certain respects, modelled on the Temple, and it is clear that from the time of Eusebius the centre of the world was perceived as having shifted from the Temple to the Holy Sepulchre (Wilkinson 2002, 357-8, 363). Specific events were also transferred from one to the other in the popular consciousness: for example Jesus' cleansing of the Temple was now associated with the courtyard of the Holy Sepulchre complex. Adomnán mentions the site of the Temple, with its wooden mosque, only in passing (Meehan 1958, 43).

123 Meehan 1958, 43.

124 Lutterbach 1994.

125 I Corinthians 15:20.

126 I Corinthians 15:22-23.

127 For example VSH I, 101.

128 The *locus resurrectionis* motif also had the benefit of imbuing sites that had often been chosen on the basis of mundane criteria such as land grants (rather than, say, the presence of an earlier cult site: above), with a predestined, intrinsic sanctity.

129 Ousterhout 1990, 115.

130 Macalister 1921, 97.

131 Macalister 1921, 94-5. Macalister (1921, 97) translates *imdhaí* as bed, but it can also mean grave or tomb (DIL), and there are a number of annalistic references in which *imda Ciaráin* clearly refers to

Temple Ciarán (e.g. AFM 1046; MacDonald 2003, 132-3).

132 Meehan 1958, 46-7.

133 None of these rectilinear features survive in their original form. For example, the spiral-headed crosier carved on the recumbent slab that marks the saint's grave at Labamolaga may well be twelfth-century (Fig 1). Not unlike Christ's tomb as described by Adomnán, the Inishmurray example is raised a little over 'three hand's height' (Meehan 1958, 43) from ground level, but in its present form it must post-date the rebuilding of the sidewalls in the later or post-medieval period. Despite the fact that they are along the south rather than the north wall, the position of the Inishmurray, Labamolaga and Ardmore graves is reminiscent of the arrangement in the aedicule because its door was in the east rather than the west (cf. Figs 1 and 6). See further above note 46.

134 White Marshall and Walsh 2005, 89-96. Radiocarbon dating of the Illaunloughan shells show that they pre-date the association of scallops with St. James of Compostella.

135 Both the Lemanaghan shrine and the Ark were of wood overlain with decorative metal and there can be little doubt that the feet at the corners of the Lemanaghan shrine, and the pair of rings attached to them at each side, were meant to allude to the Ark: 'You will cast four gold rings for it and fix them to its four supports: two rings on one side and two rings on the other. You will also make shafts of acacia wood and overlay them with gold and pass the shafts through the rings on the side of the ark, by which to carry it.' (Exodus 25:10-22). No such poles now survive at Lemanaghan, but it seems likely that this is how the shrine was carried when brought on circuit (*commotatio*) around its territory (above at note 74). The proportions of the Lemanaghan shrine do not correspond to those of the ark (compare Exodus 25:10 with Kendrick and Senior 1936, Fig. 2), but its morphology may be significant. A number of scholars have referred to it, and to the stone gable shrines, as 'tent-shaped' (Edwards 1990, 114, 147; also Thomas 1971, 141; O'Sullivan and Sheehan 1996, 248). In this regard it is interesting to note that, even when inside the Temple, the Ark of the Covenant was kept in a tent (e.g. 2 Macc 2: 4-8; Heb 9:4; see discussion in Freedman 1985, vol. 1, 388).

136 Krautheimer 1969, 121-5; also Häussling 1973, 90-112.

137 The earliest of these are fifth-century. See for example Krautheimer 1969, 117; Ousterbout 1990; Biddle 1999.

138 Iona's influence in Ireland was at its height at this very period (Reeves 1857, 385; Herbert 1988, 67), so it is easy to imagine rival sites like Clonmacnoise following its example. It was already noted above (note 74) that other sites imitated Iona with regard to the use of relics for promulgating laws. There is independent evidence that Inishmurray modelled itself on Iona: both sites have satellite cemeteries dedicated to Odrán, an otherwise obscure follower of Columba (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin forthcoming).

139 O'Reilly 1995, 86.

140 Isa 2.2-3; VC iii, 23; O'Reilly 1997, 95-7, also 93-4.

141 VC iii 23. The phrase comes from Mt 27:50. For discussion see O'Loughlin 2001, 8.

142 See Edwards 1985. The East Cross at Toureen Peakaun, Co. Tipperary may be earlier (Charles-Edwards 2004), but it does not allude to Golgotha as explicitly as the early crosses on Iona.

143 See Roe 1965; Richardson 1984, 130-2; 1995, 182-3.

144 Kelly 1991, 138-9.

145 The shrine chapels at Clonmacnoise (e.g. AFM 1070; Manning 2000, 40; 2003, 72) and Kells (Herbert and Ó Riain 1988, 84 note 224; Ó Floinn 1997, 140) appear, on occasion, to have been termed *airdam.* This term derives from *air,* meaning 'before, in front of', and dom, meaning 'house

or church' (É Ó Carragáin 1994a, 401). The shrine chapel at Clonmacnoise is in fact behind the principal churches, but those at Iona and Kells would have been in front of them. Perhaps it was applied to the Iona building first and was later transferred to shrine chapels at other sites, even where its literal meaning was no longer applicable.

146 O'Loughlin 2000, 190-94. For example, in the *Navigatio Brendani* the heavenly Jerusalem is portrayed as an island with a river flowing through it from east to west, a motif borrowed from Apoc 22:1 and also referred to in *De Locis Sanctis*.

147 Heitz 1980, 214-22; 1986, 93-4, 99-100; Picard 1971-2. See O'Keeffe (1995; 2004) for other possible references to Jerusalem in early Irish architecture.

148 Harbison (1991, 148; also MacDonald 2003, 134) suggested it was a way of avoiding 'too many people milling around the saint's tomb in the altar area' of the relatively small churches at Irish sites. I would suggest, however, that space management was at best an ancillary consideration. After all, churches in contemporary Northumbria were not much larger than those in Ireland (Morris 1989, 287), and yet they often housed reliquary shrines (see above).

149 Other possible Irish instances of the translation of corporeal relics into a large congregational church occur in the early Patrician texts. For example Tírechán mentions one Mucneus 'whose relics are in Patrick's great church (*aeclessia magna*) in the Wood of Fochloth' (Bieler 1979, 135, 157). It should, however, be noted that Tírechán may have meant 'great ecclesiastical settlement' rather than 'large church building' (e.g. Bieler 1979, 125).

150 Furthermore, they are now absent from a number of sites the relics of whose principal saints we know were translated into a *scrín,* including Dromiskin (AU 801), Bangor (AU 824) and Lusk (AU 831).

151 Treffort 1996, 132-3. Also Brown 1981.

152 For example Duvall and Picard 1986.

153 Picard 1978, 728; Treffort 1996, 131-2; also Dunn 2000, 188-90; Brown 2003, 264-5; Effros 2002, 11.

154 Treffort 1996, 182-4.

155 Treffort 1996, 134-5, 137; Effros 2002, 75-8.

156 Treffort 1996, 136-7; Samson 1999, 138-9; Effros 2002.

157 Geary 1994, 179-90; Treffort 1996, 139-41.

158 Blair 2005, 75, 228-43; see also Gittos 2002, 202.

159 Treffort 1996, 141-43; Gittos 2002.

160 Treffort 141-3; also Gittos 2002; Blair 2005, 60.

161 O'Brien 1992, 136; 1999.

162 Especially Wasserschleben 1885, 208-9. Also Bieler 1979, 115, 155-7.

163 O'Brien 1992, 136. There is still debate about whether the Church's campaign targeted the whole population, or just particular sections of it, and indeed about the extent to which it was successful; but these issues do not have a direct bearing on the present discussion. See for example Swift 2003; Etchingham 2005.

164 Charles-Edwards 1992, 76; also Ó Riain 1989, 359-61.

165 Wasserschleben 1885, XV.3; Paxton 1990, 66-7, 204; Treffort 1996, 110, 177-79. This meant, for example, that inmates of subsidiary churches, who were not buried in the same cemetery as their patron, could depend on the prayers of other members of the *familia* for their salvation (Charles-Edwards 2002, 289; VC II 39). The popularity of this idea, even before translation became acceptable, may explain why division of relics between sites was relatively rare in Ireland. On the com-

mon practice of dividing and dispersing relics on the Continent see for example Geary (1990; 1994). See Ó Floinn's (1997, 148-9) discussion of the poem entitled *The Shrine of Adomnán,* which shows that fragmentary corporeal relics of saints from various Irish sites could sometimes be kept in one shrine.

166 For example Wasserschleben 1885, XLIV.3; Connolly and Picard 1987; Hughes 1966, 148; Doherty 1985, 55-6; Aitchison 1994; Swift 1998, 109

167 Gittos 2002, 205-7. The Irish rituals seem to be for sanctifying whole sites rather than cemeteries *per se.*

168 Ó Corráin et al 1984, 396; Etchingham 1999, 236, 280, 387, 439-43; Fry 1999, 108-10, 166.

169 For the Continental evidence see Treffort 1996, 172-4. For England see Gittos 2002, 201.

170 Some texts make it clear that one could visit the cemetery in order to see the relics of the saint. For example BNÉ ii, 287.

171 Charles-Edwards 2002, 289. A striking instance of a burial serving to sanctify an entire site occurs in a Middle Irish homily translated by Herbert (1988, 261). On arriving on Iona Columba says to his followers, 'Someone among you should go down into the soil of the island to consecrate it.' Odran volunteers and promptly dies and is buried.

172 For example Duvall and Picard 1986.

173 Wasserschleben 1885, XVIII.8.

174 Treffort 1996, 137-9; Krüger 2003, 158, note 58. Excavation since the 1980s at sites like St. Denis, Ladevennec, Ganagobie and Val-des-Nymphes suggests that burial inside Continental churches was much rarer in the ninth and tenth centuries than it had been previously.

175 After all, in contrast to Continental practice, the original graves of Irish founders were usually in the cemetery (e.g. VC iii, 23; VSH xciii note 3). In the eleventh- and twelfth-century annals there are some references to the burial of kings and important clerics near the altar (AFM 1010, 1014, 1074). Earlier sources also hint that burial inside a church sometimes occurred (e.g. Bieler 1979, 186-7) though, as the anonymous referee has pointed out to me, it is not always clear whether these sources refer to church burial or simply burial at a church site (e.g. Wasserschleben 1885, XVIII.8).

176 Ó Carragáin 1998, 10; forthcoming; White Marshall and Rourke 2000, 92. It is often difficult to be sure in the case of excavated churches that remained in use in the high medieval period, but most of those that fell out of use do not appear to have been used extensively for burial. Dunmisk, Co. Tyrone, is one likely exception (Ivens 1989). Dedicated mortuary chapels also seem to be relatively rare in Ireland compared to England and the Continent (note 94 above). Likely examples are Reefert, Glendalough (Leask 1950, 12), and Temple Connor and Temple Melaghlin at Clonmanoice (Manning 1994).

177 Herbert and Ó Riain 1988, 61; also 84, note 224. This episode reflects the emphasis on purification in Irish mortuary rituals (Paxton 1990, 203).

178 MacDonald 2003, 132.

179 Cross and Livingstone, 1997; Hill 1997, 19-20 on Whithorn; Waddell, 1972-73, 26 on modern incubation on Aran.

180 Paxton 1990, 83.

181 Gittos 2002, 200. In this regard, it is worth noting that narthex chapels of eleventh-century Cluniac churches were designed for this purpose (Krüger 2003, 151-2). The ground floor underneath them was probably used for privileged burial, and their western position meant that they had the same eschatological resonances as the Carolingian westworks and the Columban shrine chapels (above at

notes 145-47): indeed contemporary sources refer to them as *galilaea,* to recall the moment of entry into paradise.

182 On the role of Clonmacnoise as the burial ground of several royal dynasties see Bhreathnach (2003, 100-102). On the fame of Iona as a royal burial ground see Sharpe (1995, 71, 277-278). Along with its shrine chapel, Inishmurray has a much larger collection of grave-slabs than one would expect for a relatively unimportant site (Wakeman 1884).

183 For example Macalister 1909. On the date of the Clonmacnoise grave-slabs see Ó Floinn 1995. On the Iona sculpture see Fisher 2001. A relatively small proportion can convincingly be assigned to the seventh century.

184 O'Brien 1992, 136.

185 Doherty 1985, 45-6; Aitchison 1994; Swift 1998; Petts 2002.

186 Paxton 1990, 68, 99.

187 Doherty 1980; 1982, 302-3; 1985, 67; also Graham 1993, 30. The most important fair (*óenach*) in the country was held at an ancestral graveyard of the Ulaid at Teltown, Co. Meath, which was characterised by 'records from pillars over graves decked with arms [...] mounds over noble foreigners and walls built over the dead of great plagues' (Swift 2000, 115; also Binchy 1958, 123-4; see Fry 1999, 50-1 for another example).

188 Binchy 1958.

189 Swift 1998, 107.

190 Bullough 1983, 198; Burnell 1988, 544-5; Treffort 1996, 151-3; Davies 1986, 83.

191 Wormald 1986, 154, also 165; also Wood 1986, 16-17.

192 Geary 1990, 37.

193 Geary 1990, 37.

194 Ó Cróinín 1997, 137; also Sharpe 1986.

195 For example, when St. Mochuda is banished from his first foundation at Rahan, he curses his expellers at the Cross of the Angels which stood in the cemetery (Power 1914).

196 Plummer 1921-3, 114. Another text condemns any Christian who 'swears before a seer like the pagans' (Ó hÓgáin 1999, 201; de Paor 1993, 135-6).

197 For example, in one passage in the Book of Armagh a statement of allegiance is made inside the church at Drum Lías (Bieler 1979, 172; Breathnach 2001, 118; also AU 1179; Lucas 1986, 28). Also, open-air assemblies removed from ecclesiastical sites did continue to function, and obviously the legal business carried out there involved swearing oaths (Sharpe 1986, 186).

198 For example Sharpe 1986, 186-8.

199 Binchy 1941, 80; also Doherty 1982, 325.

200 O'Grady 1892, vol. 1, 356, vol. 2, 399; Fry 1999, 54.

201 Stokes 1905, 246.

202 Mac Shamhráin 1994

203 Stokes 1890, 132-3; Plummer 1910 vol. 1, 248-9; Macalister 1921, 94-5.

204 Manning 2003, 71; MacDonald 2003, 131.

205 Perhaps it is in the context of shrine chapels that one law tract envisages the making of judgements on the wooden *comrar* (i.e. shrine or coffin) of a patron saint (see Fry 1999, 128-9; DIL). In light of the law tract quoted above, we can presume that the secondary relics that we know were housed in these buildings would have made the oaths all the more potent.

206 Harbison 1991, 151.

207 Gem 1983, 1, 4; Gauthier 1997, 237, 240; Stalley 1999, 34; Charles-Edwards 2000, 329-30.

208 AU 789. See Tírechán (Bieler 1979, 146-7) for one earlier non-annalistic reference to a stone church at Duleek.

209 Ó Carragáin 2002, 170-75; forthcoming; also Neuman De Vegvar 2003, 166 who came to this conclusion independently.

210 Manning 1998, 76.

211 Meehan 1958.

212 Stalley 1999, 40-43.

213 Ousterhout 1990, 114.

214 VC III 23. Charles-Edwards (2000, 324) believes that the use of mortared stone was a material expression of a site's position on the Easter controversy, though he notes that it did not have this specific connotation within Ireland. This connotation may, nonetheless, have been in the minds of the Iona community when they built their shrine chapel. I suggested above that this may have been the first example, possibly built in the mid-eighth century. If so, it was erected not long after the community belatedly accepted the Roman Easter (c.715).

215 Ó Laoghaire 1984, 76. Ruam could also denote an entire ecclesiastical site (Stokes 1905, 24-6; Corish 1984, 13). In other cases it simply meant 'place of burial'. Thus for example the phrase '*Babilón a rrúam-som*' in relation to SS. Simon and Thadeus in the *Félire Oengussa* can be translated 'they were buried in Babylon' (DIL).

216 Hughes 1965, 23. Of course, the Holy Sepulchre complex also had funerary connotations (above; Ousterhout 1990, 115).

217 Doherty 1984, 99.

218 Daly 1999, 55-8.

219 Hughes 1965, 23.

220 Geary 1994, 168-9.

221 The Bachal Íosa ('Staff of Christ') was Armagh's most important relic (e.g. Bourke 1993).

222 Doherty 1991, 79-90; also 1984a, 311. Most of these references are seventh-century, a period when the papacy had a policy of distributing contact relics or *brandea* (e.g. Llewellyn 1971, 174-5; McCulloh 1976; 1980; *Vita Greg.*, 21), probably the type of relics that Armagh possessed. It was not until the later eighth century that it sanctioned the distribution of corporeal relics in this way (Häussling 1973, 93; McCulloh 1980; Geary 1990; 1994, 183; Crook 2002, 190). Some other Irish sites distributed secondary relics of their principal saint to lesser churches within their *familia*. The outstanding example of this is the *familia* of Columba (Ó Floinn 1997, 160).

223 Sharpe 1984a, 72.

224 Brown 2003, 14.

225 For example Grabar 1949; Dyggve 1951; Krautheimer 1986; Crook 2000.

226 On these indicators see Ó Carragáin 2005a, 137-40; also Manning 1998, 76. One exception is Tighlagheany, Co. Galway which, though somewhat larger than the early shrine chapels, is traditionally identified as Enda's tomb (Manning 1985, 96).

227 Ó Carragáin 2002, 336-37; forthcoming. See Gem (forthcoming) on the possibility that the Killaloe example had a reliquary function. Apart from the vaulted churches, the shrine chapel with Romanesque sculpture at Devenish attests to the continuing popularity of freestanding reliquary buildings in Ireland.