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SIGNACULUM SECRETORUM: EPISCOPAL AUTHORITY AND RITUAL IN THE EARLY IRISH CHURCH

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

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by

Viktoriia Krivoshchekova

(Russia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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I, the undersigned, **Viktoriia Krivoshchekova**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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Abstract

The research focuses on the construction of episcopal authority through ritual narrative in Hiberno-Latin texts. Previously, the study of episcopal office in early medieval Ireland (*c*. 600-900) has been mainly connected with the debate over the organisation of the early Irish church, where monastic and clerical hierarchy were seen as confronting. Recent research has shown that bishops retained their high legal status and the authority in the sphere of pastoral care. However, the liturgical significance of episcopal office has been hitherto neglected by the scholars.

This work sets out to cover this gap in scholarship and to investigate the question of how the image of episcopal authority was constructed through ritual narratives in Hiberno-Latin texts. The study adopts the understanding of ritual as a textual rather than an anthropological practice and, with the help of the cognitive approaches, views ritual descriptions as material for creating mental images of rituals by the audience. The main question is explored on three levels: first, the mindset—a conceptual framework which sets up the reference points for thinking about bishops in early medieval Ireland; second, the physical setting—the static environment of the ritual as conceptualised in writing; third, ritual performance—dynamic descriptions of such specifically episcopal rituals as ordination of clergy and consecration of churches. It is argued that texts can create powerful mental imagery which elucidates and strengthens the liturgical authority of episcopal office.

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List of Abbreviations

CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
Hibernensis	"Collectio canonum Hibernensis." In *Die irische Kanonensammlung*, ed. Herrmann Wasserschleben. Leipzig: Verlag von Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1885.
JRSAI	*Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*
MGH SS rer. Germ.	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina
PRIA	*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*
Vita Brigidae	Cogitosus. "Vita sanctae Brigidae." In *Untersuchungen zu den ältesten* 'Vitae sanctae Brigidae', ed. Karina Hochegger, 18-59. M.Phil. diss., Universität Wien, 2009.
VSH	*Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*. ed. Charles Plummer. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910.

Introduction

> Is there anybody so incapable of forming a mental picture of a scene that […] he does not seem not merely to see the actors […] the place itself and their very dress, but even to imagine to himself other details that the orator does not describe?
>
> Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory*[1]

The study of medieval ritual is as complicated as it is fascinating. Unfortunately, historians are poorly equipped for such a task, for only the remains—texts, images, and objects—of past rituals are available to them. However, the idea so masterfully pointed out by Quintilian provides a viable way to understand rituals: when a scholar deals with a written account of a ritual, (s)he is in the same position that a medieval reader once was in—both have to employ their imagination and knowledge to form a "mental picture" of what they read. Naturally, it was much easier for a medieval person who was better versed in the context surrounding the text. But with some effort, the scholar can come close to seeing a similar picture.

This approach is particularly valuable when dealing with the early medieval ritual, or more specifically with the episcopal ritual of the early Irish church, of which so little has survived. This topic can only be studied by relying heavily on textuality and intertextuality. This is what the present study is engaged with: it views texts about rituals as the source for "forming a mental picture of a scene" rather than as veritable accounts of any concrete ceremonies that took place at some point in the past. This approach allows to avoid speculating on "how it really was" and instead to concentrate on the conceptual world which surrounded the notion of episcopal ritual in early medieval Ireland.

[1] Cited in Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 131.

Research Question

This study is aimed at exploring ritual narratives, or texts describing or referring to ritual acts, in their capacity to create textual realities, or conceptual spaces, which can transmit the message of authority by using specific linguistic cues, metaphors, and tropes. This perspective allows to overcome the scarcity of source material pertaining to early Irish episcopal ritual, which prevented scholars from exploring this topic before. The work, therefore, seeks to answer the following question: how was ritual narrative used to construct the sacred authority of episcopal office in Hiberno-Latin texts? From this several sub-questions arise: what were the points of reference for thinking about bishops in early Medieval Ireland? How was the environment of episcopal ritual imagined? How could it help manifest episcopal authority? How was the performative aspect of episcopal ritual presented in the texts? What sort of mental imagery did it invoke?

In order to answer these questions fully, I propose to approach them using a three-level structure. The first level is the mindset—a conceptual framework which delineates the basic coordinates for episcopal authority in the ritual sphere; the second level is the physical setting—a static environment of the ritual set by the narratives; the final level is continuity—the ritual unfolding in time, that is ritual performance. It should be kept in mind that all three levels are viewed as parts of textual discourse and should be understood in terms of mental representation. I do not attempt to argue for the historicity of the rituals considered.

It should also be pointed out that this work is not aimed at showcasing the uniqueness of the Irish material in comparison to other western traditions. Quite the contrary, I demonstrate, to the best of my knowledge, the connections of the Irish sources to the developments in Britain and on the Continent in order to show that Irish liturgy was not isolated from the European

context, as the latest studies have come to acknowledge.[2] I should emphasise, however, that comparative analysis is not the primary goal of this research and only serves for contextualisation of the matters discussed.

Primary Sources

The sources for studying episcopal ritual in early medieval Ireland are extremely fragmentary. The only liturgical sources proper surviving from the period *c*. 600-900 are the Antiphonary of Bangor and the Stowe Missal, neither of which records episcopal liturgy. That is why in this work a broader understanding of a liturgical source was adapted, namely the one proposed by Eric Palazzo, which incorporates "diverse documents such as hagiographic material, chronicles, and charters, or even images and archaeological sources."[3] This definition allows to expand the source base considerably as descriptions of episcopal rituals or references to them can be found across a wide variety of texts and genres.

All sources used in this study originate from an ecclesiastical environment, but they can be divided into several categories: hagiography (lives of St Brigit,[4] Patrick,[5] and Columba;[6] lives

[2] See the "Previous Research" section.

[3] Eric Palazzo, "Performing the Liturgy," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 3, *Early Medieval Christianities, c. 600 – c. 1100*, ed. Thomas F. X. Noble and Julia M. H. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 473.

[4] There are two Latin lives of St Brigit: the one by a certain Cogitosus, a cleric at Kildare of whom nothing else is known, and an anonymous one known as *Vita prima*. The latter was for some time thought to be the earlier text. Currently, however, most scholars agree that Cogitosus's life should be dated to around *c*. 675, and *Vita prima* to *c*. 800-850. See Richard Sharpe, "*Vita S Brigidae*: The Oldest Texts," *Peritia* 1 (1982): 81-106; Kim McCone, "Brigit in the Seventh Century: A Saint with Three Lives," *Peritia* 1 (1982): 107-45; Seán Connolly and Jean-Michel Picard, "Cogitosus's Life of St Brigit: Content and Value," *JRSAI* 117 (1987): 5-27; Seán Connolly, "*Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*: Background and Historical Value," *JRSAI* 119 (1989): 5-49; Laurance Maney, "The Date and Provenance of *Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*," *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 23 (2003): 200-18.

[5] Patrick also has two biographical documents written about him in the late-seventh century. The earlier one is Tírechán's *Collectanea* (*c*. 680-685)—not a life but rather a collection of memoranda connected to Patrick's mission in Ireland. The second is Muirchú's *Vita Patricii* which is thought to be later than Tírechán's work, dating to *c*. 680-700. See Ludwig Bieler, "Muirchú's Life of St Patrick as a Work of Literature," *Medium Aevum* 43, no. 3 (1974): 219-33; Catherine Swift, "Tírechán's Motives in Compiling the *Collectanea*: An Alternative Interpretation," *Ériu* 45 (1994): 53-82.

[6] The work of Adomnán (d. 704), the abbot of Iona and one of the most outstanding ecclesiastics of his time, is arguably the most complex and ambitious of the three. It consists of three parts, with each concentrating on one aspect of Columba's sanctity: his prophesies, his miracles, and his visions. The life was written in in the 690s and, like the other two works, was a tool for promoting the cult of the monastery's founding saint both on ecclesiastical

from the O'Donohue group),[7] canon law (*The First Synod of Patrick*,[8] *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*),[9] exegetic works (*De duodecim abusivis saeculi*,[10] a group of pseudo-Isidorian texts),[11] letters (of St Columbanus),[12] liturgical poetry (Antiphonary of Bangor),[13] and, as scant

and secular arena. See Richard Sharpe, "Adomnán and the Writing of the Life," in *Life of St Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1995), 53-65; Jean-Michel Picard, "The Purpose of Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*," *Peritia* 1 (1982): 160-77; Mark Stansbury, "The Composition of Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*," *Peritia* 17 (2003-4): 154-82.

[7] A group of anonymous Latin lives which Richard Sharpe dates to *c*. 750-850. See Richard Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives: An Introduction to* Vita sanctorum Hiberniae (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 297-39.

[8] Despite its title, *The First Synod* has caused heated debate as regards its dating. Today most scholars seem to agree on its early, sixth or even fifth century, origin which means that it witnesses the church close to Patrician time. See Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 44-53; Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 246-47.

[9] A major document of early Irish canon law whose fundamental character lead to its wide dissemination not only in Ireland, but also on the Continent. The authorship of the collection is ascribed to two clerics—Cú Chuimne of Iona (d. 747) and Ruben of Dairnis (d. 725). The collection is dated to 716-725. The *Hibernensis* is a compilation of a remarkably wide variety of sources of Biblical, Greek, Latin, British, and Irish sources, mainly conciliar and synodal decrees, papal decretals, writings of the church fathers. See Roger E. Reynolds, "Unity and Diversity in Carolingian Canon Law Collections: The Case of *Collectio Hibernensis* and Its Derivatives," in *Carolingian Essays. Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in Early Christian Studies*, ed. Uta-Renate Blumenthal (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1983), 99-135; Luned Mair Davies, "The Biblical Text of the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*," in *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Learning and Literature*, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1996), 17-41; eadem, "Isidorian Texts and the *Hibernensis*," *Peritia* 11 (1997): 207-49; Thomas Charles Edwards, "The Construction of the *Hibernensis*," *Peritia* 12 (1998): 209-37.

[10] Pseudo-Cyprian's tract *De duodecim abusivis saeculi* (*c*. 630-650) is a curious collection of moral advices to twelve categories of people, one of which is bishops. See Aidan Breen, "*De XII abusivis*: Text and Transmission," in *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Texts and Transmissions*, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), 78-94.

[11] There is a fairly large group of texts which were for a long time ascribed to Isidore, but were eventually proven to originate in the circles affiliated with Irish monasticism on the Continent (these exegetical texts are not to be confused with pseudo-Isidorian forgeries of the ninth century). In a series of studies Robert McNally has demonstrated that *Liber de numeris* exploring symbolic properties of numbers and *Liber de ortu and obitu patriarcharum* offering short descriptions of biblical patriarchs were created in the mid-eighth century in the circle of Virgilius, the Irish bishop of Salzburg. Similar provenance, although in a centre in Upper Germany, has also been shown for *De vetere et novo tesamento quaestiones*, a collection of short questions and answers on biblical topics. McNally has also established a connection between two brief tracts known as *Dies dominica* found in two Breton manuscripts (*c*. 800) to the Old Irish *Cáin Domnaig* which led him to assume that the Latin texts also belong to the Irish tradition. See Robert E. McNally, "Isidoriana," *Theological Studies* 20 (1959): 436-37; idem, "'Christus' in the Pseudo-Isidorian *Liber de ortu et obitu patriarcharum*," *Traditio* 21 (1965): 168-70; idem, "The Pseudo-Isidorian *De Vetere et Novo Testamento Quaestiones*," *Traditio* 19 (1963): 38-43; idem, "*Dies dominica*: Two Hiberno-Latin Texts," *Medieval Studies* 22 (1960): 356-58.

[12] St Columbanus (*c*. 550-615) was probably the most famous and productive Irish monk on the Continent having founded four monasteries in Gaul and Northern Italy. Although only five of his letters survive, they present a peculiar perspective on the Irishman and his attitudes towards Frankish episcopacy and papacy. See Neil Wright, "Columbanus's *Epistulae*," in *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*, ed. Michael Lapidge (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997), 29-32; Tommaso Leso, "Columbanus in Europe: The Evidence from the *Epistulae*," *Early Medieval Europe* 21, no. 4 (2013): 358-363.

[13] Antiphonary of Bangor, compiled between 680-691, is a collection of hymns for the divine office used at the monastery of Bangor. See James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical. An Introduction and Guide* (New York: Octagon Books, 1927), 706-13; Michael Curran, *The Antiphonary of Bangor and the Early Irish Monastic Liturgy* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1984).

as they are, liturgical documents (Stowe Missal,[14] a tract on consecration of churches from the *Leabhar breac*).[15]

Almost all of these sources fall into the period *c*. 600-900, with only St Patrick's Synod dating to the sixth century and the *Leabhar breac* tractate being quite late (eleventh century). Nevertheless, this collection of texts might appear rather disparate, especially considering the fact that early medieval liturgies were notoriously diverse and subject to rapid transformation. While these considerations pose certain limitations to the study in that each source might represent a local tradition which could have changed considerably some decades after its creation, they can be neutralised by an important counter-consideration. Namely, this study deals with the textual dimension of the ritual which is more stable than the practical one, because texts build on broad and durable tropes and ideas which circulated across the Christian world since Antiquity: it is well-known that early medieval Christianity in the Latin West drew approximately on the same pool of sources (the Bible, church fathers, the Roman and neighbouring local traditions).

When dealing with particular sources, their intended audiences and possible agendas should be taken into account. Naturally, hagiographic texts were written to promote the cult of a saint, thus being more accessible to a wider audience, including the illiterate who could hear the lives read aloud; exegetical works could potentially be incorporated into sermons for general

[14] The only early Irish service book surviving in full, the Stowe Missal is considered to be a *vade mecum* mass book for a travelling priest and dated to *c*. 790–825. See Kenney, *Sources*, 692-99, Sven Meeder, "The Early Irish Stowe Missal's Destination and Function," *Early Medieval Europe* 13, no. 2 (2005): 179-94. Along with Latin ordinary for mass and baptism, the Stowe Missal also includes a short vernacular "Treatise on the Mass." According to Pádraig Ó Néill, the treatise might have been copied from an early-eighth-century version. Pádraig Ó Néill, "The Old-Irish Tract on the Mass in the Stowe Missal: Some Observations on Its Origins and Textual History," in *Seanchas: Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology, History and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne*, ed. Alfred P. Smyth (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 199-204.

[15] Written in vernacular, the text is found in the early-fifteenth-century manuscript known as *Leabhar breac*. The tract itself is dated to the eleventh century based on the language. However, the use of Latin formulas suggests that it is based on an older Latin original. "The *Lebar Brecc* Tractate on the Consecration of a Church," ed. and trans. Whitley Stokes, in *Miscellanea linguistica in onore di Graziadio Ascoli* (Turin: E. Loescher, 1901), 363; Tomás Ó Carragáin, *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland: Architecture, Ritual, Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 39.

congregation, but demanded a solid background in the biblical texts being primarily intended for literate clerics and monks; canonical decrees were more specialised and aimed at asserting a certain authoritative position in regulating the relationship between ecclesiastical subjects. Some of these sources were more "ideologically charged" than the others. For example, seventh-century hagiography, specifically the works of Cogitosus, Tírechán, Muirchú, and Adomnán, represents three major ecclesiastical centres which fought for primacy during this period: St Patrick's Armagh, St Brigit's Kildare and St Columba's Iona.[16] The first two were also prominent episcopal sees—a fact that manifests itself in the writings they produced. As for the *Hibernensis,* it has long been considered a product of the so-called *Romani*—a group of Irish ecclesiastic which adhered to the Roman tradition in church government and calculating Easter. However, recently it has been shown that the structure of the collection is more eclectic, implying that it was created not in the interest of a party, but as a practical guide to be used by ecclesiastical authorities.[17] It has been pointed out that the collection legislates for a church governed by bishops.[18] While there is still a wealth of information to discuss about the sources chosen, their content will hopefully speak for itself in each of the chapters.

Previous Research

Hardly any other topic pertaining to the study of the early Irish church has been so copiously discussed as the relationship between its episcopal and monastic organisation. After several decades of "monastic domination" in the scholars' minds, a revisionist point of view persisted which "restored" Irish bishops to a high legal status and independence in the matters of pastoral

[16] Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 416-29.
[17] Bart Jaski, "Cú Chuimne, Ruben and the Compilation of the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*," *Peritia* 14 (2000): 60-65.
[18] Hughes, *Church in Early Irish Society*, 123-25; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 258.

care.[19] However, little to no research has been done on another important side of episcopal office—its symbolic and liturgical significance.

But while bishops were sadly neglected in this respect, the study of early Irish liturgy in general has been a rather vivid research topic. Although the material is scarce, several scholars have been able to piece together evidence for sacraments in early Ireland.[20] The earliest works on the topic were powered by the notions of romanticism and tended to overemphasise the uniqueness of the so-called Celtic church.[21] As the concept was dismissed, scholars began to bring out the connections between Irish liturgy and contemporary developments in Gaul, Spain, and Rome.[22] Such research, however, has never been done for specifically episcopal rituals in the Irish context.

In a larger European perspective, the study of liturgy has been flourishing since the nineteenth century. Not only a vast body of source material has been published, but also several

[19] The idea that some time in the sixth century episcopal organisation of the church had been supplanted by the monastic one was first expressed by James Todd and picked up by John Bury. It was later developed and nuanced by John Ryan and especially Kathleen Hughes, who proposed a model of coexistence and confrontation of the Irish monastic party and the Roman episcopal one since the seventh century. See James H. Todd, *St Patrick, Apostle of Ireland* (Dublin: Hodges, Smith & Co., 1864), 87-149; John B. Bury, *The Life of St Patrick and His Place in History* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1905), 166-83, 243-4, 375-9; John Ryan, *Irish Monasticism: Origins and Early Development* (Dublin: The Talbot Press, 1931), 167-90; Hughes, *Church in Early Irish Society*, 44-110. This view has been challenged in two seminal papers by Richard Sharpe and Colmán Etchingham. Sharpe effectively demonstrates that clerical hierarchy retained their full significance in the field of pastoral care, in Richard Sharpe, "Some Problems Concerning the Organization of the Church in Early Medieval Ireland," *Peritia* 3 (1984): 230-70. Etchingham advances Sharpe's idea by showing that the legal status of bishops was not in any way hindered, but, on the contrary, it was almost as high as that of a king. In Colmán Etchingham, "Bishops in the Early Irish Church: A Reassessment," *Studia Hibernica* 28 (1994): 35-62.

[20] John Henning, "Studies in the Liturgy of the Early Irish Church," *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 75 (1951): 318-33; John Ryan, "The Mass in the Early Irish Church," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 50 (1961): 371-84; idem, "The Sacraments in the Early Irish Church," *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 51 (1962): 508-20; Próinséas Ní Chatháin, "The Liturgical Background of the Derrynavlan Altar Service," *JRSAI* 110 (1980): 127-48.

[21] The most prominent of such works is Frederick E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881).

[22] Aidan Breen, "The Text of the Constantinopolitan Creed in the Stowe Missal," *PRIA* 90C (1990): 107-21; Marc Schneiders, "The Origins of the Early Irish Liturgy," in *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Learning and Literature*, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1996), 76-98; Tomás Ó Carragáin, "The Architectural Setting of the Mass in Early-Medieval Ireland," *Medieval Archaeology* 53 (2009): 130-76; Neil X. O'Donoghue, *The Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011). See also Yitzhak Hen, "Key Themes in the Study of Early Medieval Liturgy," in *T&T Clark Companion to Liturgy*, ed. Alcuin Reid (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 76.

comprehensive studies appeared which systematise available information, most notably those by Gregory Dix, Joseph Jungmann, Andrew Hughes as well as a more recent handbook by Eric Palazzo.[23] While these works concentrate on technical aspects of liturgical texts, a study by Eric Palazzo called *Liturgie et société au Moyen Âge* applies an interdisciplinary perspective to explore other aspects of Christian ritual, such as its communicative and authoritative power and the ways this power was expressed through visuals, text, and performance.[24] In recent years, many scholars have begun to pay special attention to the spatial dimension of the liturgy by studying its architectural setting. The topic was explored in the European context by Alan Doig, while Insular material has been investigated in the works of Tomás Ó Carragáin and Helen Gittos.[25]

The narrower topic of episcopal ritual is again championed by Eric Palazzo and his insightful study of visual representation of bishops at liturgy in *L'évêque et son image*.[26] Episcopal rituals, often also from the visual perspective, are addressed in a number of articles by Roger Reynolds.[27] As for the specific rituals, clerical ordination is the subject of Gerald Ellard's classical study on ordination anointings as well as of Paul Bradshaw's more general exploration of ordination rites in Christianity.[28] The specifics of episcopal ordination from the Middle Ages

[23] Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Glasgow: The University Press, 1945); Josef A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, 2 vols, trans. Francis A. Brunner (New York: Benziger, 1951); Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: A Guide to Their Organization and Terminology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982); Eric Palazzo, *A History of Liturgical Books: From the Beginning to the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1993).
[24] Eric Palazzo, *Liturgie et société au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Aubier, 2000).
[25] Alan Doig, *Liturgy and Architecture: From the Early Church to the Middle Ages* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008); Ó Carragáin, *Churches*; Helen Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[26] Eric Palazzo, *L'évêque et son image: L'illustration du Pontifical au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999).
[27] Roger E. Reynolds, "Clerical Liturgical Vestments and Liturgical Colors in the Middle Ages," in *Clerics in the Middle Ages: Hierarchy and Image* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 1-16; idem, "Image and Text: The Liturgy of Clerical Ordination in Early Medieval Art," *Gesta* 22, no. 1 (1983): 27-38; idem, "*Ordinatio* and the Priesthood in the Early Middle Ages and Its Visual Depiction," in *A Companion to Priesthood and Holy Orders in the Middle Ages*, ed. Greg Peters and C. Colt Anderson (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 43-69; idem, "The Portrait of Ecclesiastical Officers in the *Raganaldus Sacramentary* and Its Liturgico-Canonical Significance," *Speculum* 46, no. 3 (1971): 432-42.
[28] Gerald Ellard, *Ordination Anointings in the Western Church before 1000 A.D.* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1933); Paul F. Bradshaw, *Rites of Ordination: Their History and Theology* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2013).

to the present time are discussed by Sharon McMillan.[29] Analysis of the medieval rituals of church consecration can be found in a monograph by Brian Repsher.[30]

All listed works are indeed instrumental for the present study, although none of them deals directly with the questions explored here. This research, however, has been vitally informed by three main assumptions borrowed from scholarship: that Irish bishops were not incapacitated by monastic networks; that the liturgy is an important tool of building authority; and that episcopal ritual is a multidimensional phenomenon which can be analysed on multiple levels.

Methodology

The study of ritual is not a simple task as testified by the ever-growing number of definitions of ritual and methods of working with it.[31] The field of Medieval Studies has developed its own discussion of the possibilities of ritual studies which in recent years has come to question its very validity.[32] Philippe Buc's postmodernist stance, controversial though it is, brings out an important restriction of ritual studies in historical context. He argues that because of the gap between practice and its textual representation, "there can be no anthropological readings of rituals depicted in medieval texts"—only "anthropological readings of medieval textual practices."[33] In order to understand these textual practices "the mastery of the thought-world that informs the documents" is indispensable.[34] These two premises—that a text presents its own ritual reality and that this reality draws on the broad intellectual context relevant for the time and place—constitute the methodological basis of this study. In another work, Buc also

[29] Sharon L. McMillan, *Episcopal Ordination and Ecclesiastical Consensus* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2005).
[30] Brian V. Repsher, *The Rite of Church Dedication in the Early Medieval Era* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998).
[31] For an overview of existing theories and their deconstructivist critique, see Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
[32] For an overview of medievalist approaches to ritual since the mid-twentieth century, see David A. Warner, "Rituals, Kingship and Rebellion in Medieval Germany," *History Compass* 8, no. 10 (2010): 1209-20.
[33] Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 4.
[34] Ibid., 3.

emphasises the fact that medieval ritual narratives, continuing the late antique tradition, have an interpretative strategy immanently built into them.[35] The implications of this idea are employed in this study, since I view ritual narratives as guiding and being suggestive of certain paths of interpretation.

Buc's insights are complemented by other methodological choices used in this study. One of them comes from the field of cognitive linguistics whose potential for working with narratives now begins to receive recognition among medievalists.[36] Particularly, I am incorporating elements of such approaches as conceptual blending, and text world theory. The theory of conceptual blending developed by Giles Fauconnier and Mark Turner is an effective tool for understanding how pieces of information belonging to different domains of meaning can merge and form a new conceptual structure which combines the input spaces surpassing their mere sum.[37] The text world theory created by Paul Werth and expounded by Joanna Gavins builds on this idea, but works on a larger scale.[38] Its basic premise is that people make sense of discourse by creating mental representations of its content, or text-worlds. Text-worlds constitute complex conceptual systems which are inferred from text and context. According to Joanna Gavins, a text-world provides "a framework through which the precise structure and cognitive effects of individual mental representations can be examined."[39] An advantage of text world theory is that it focuses not only on the authorial intentions behind the text, but also

[35] Philippe Buc, "Ritual and Interpretation: The Early Medieval Case," *Early Medieval Europe* 9, no. 2 (2009): 185-86.
[36] One of the most prominent such works is Antonina Harbus' study of Old English poetry, where the scholar combines the methods of cognitive poetics and cognitive literary studies to explore the creation and comprehension of poetic meaning in lyrical texts. See Antonina Harbus, *Cognitive Approaches to Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012). As for the Irish material, Tom Sjöblom's proposition to adopt the cognitive perspective as a broader methodological program for the study of Irish narratives has yet remained unanswered. See Tom Sjöblom, "Mind-Stories: A Cognitive Approach to the Role of Narratives in Early Irish Tradition," *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 47 (2004): 59-72.
[37] See Giles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).
[38] See Paul Werth, *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse* (Harlow: Longman, 1999); Joanna Gavins, *Text World Theory: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).
[39] Gavins, *Text World Theory*, 10.

on the audience's response as it is the audience who actively constructs text-worlds from the given discourse by involving their imagination and pre-existing experience into the newly deduced knowledge.

Finally, the terminology of performative studies is used on several occasions. Traditionally the performative approach applies to ritual in its anthropological understanding whereby the awareness of being watched is emphasised.[40] However, when it is viewed as a narrative practice, another perspective should be adopted. I propose to understand performativeness in text as the potential for "picture-making" by the audience. The idea that a person needs to create pictures, or cognitive images, for facilitating the thought process is the premise of Mary Carruthers' brilliant study of medieval practices of religious contemplation and interpretation. She argues that cognitive images, "these thought-devices, these fictions by which we can grasp God (or any concept) in our mind, are constructions that someone can hear, smell, taste, touch, and above all see mentally."[41] This framework demonstrates the tangibility of mental images allowing a description of a ritual to be seen as material for performative reconstruction which was carried out in the minds of those who encountered this description.

The structure of the work is based on the tripartite division of the main research question. The first chapter deals with the conceptual framework of episcopal office on a discursive level, exploring different models which informed the perception of episcopal power. In the second chapter, the imagined environment of the ritual is analysed using the methods of cognitive studies. The subject of the third chapter is ritual action and its performance as represented in narratives, with special attention paid to the multidimensional character of the ritual gesture.

[40] Ronald L. Grimes, "Performance Theory and the Study of Ritual", in *New Approaches to the Study of Religion*, vol. 2, *Textual, Comparative, Sociological, and Cognitive Approaches*, ed. Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz, and Randi R. Warne (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 112.
[41] Carruthers, *Mind Stories*, 120.

Chapter I – Mindset: The Many Faces of a Bishop

Looking past the glory of late antique and medieval episcopacy and straight into its roots, one will find them very humble indeed. The New Testament bishops are hardly distinguished from presbyters and deacons.[42] The eminent status that bishops acquired during the second and third century was largely propelled by the writings of such authors as Ignatius of Smyrna, Irenaeus of Lyons and Cyprian of Carthage as well as later church fathers who made extensive use of specific authoritative discourses rooted in the Bible, building them around models such as the good shepherd, apostles, and the high priest.[43] Some of these narrative strategies had to be reinvented or reintroduced by the Irish ecclesiastics when their own church was emerging during the early medieval period. In the present chapter, I will examine some of the biblical "moulds" or "masks" which Irish authors tailored to the image of a bishop thus expanding its semantic field with additional meanings.

[42] Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-7. The offices, as Frances Young points out might have been quite distinct from one another but the biblical texts themselves are extremely vague in that respect. Frances M. Young, "On *episkopos* and *presbyteros*," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 45, no. 1 (1994): 142-48; also Christine Mohrmann, "Episcopos – Speculator," in *Études sur le latin des chrétiens*, vol. 4, *Latin chrétien et latin medieval* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Litteratura, 1977), 231-52. In the early Middle Ages, bishops enjoyed numerous distinctions over the rest of the clergy. As far as the ritual sphere is concerned, the power of ordination and confirmation – pertaining exclusively to the bishops – in the later Middle Ages entered the list of seven sacraments, and the power to consecrate remained an important staple of episcopal authority, making the bishop "a specific channel of grace, arguably more than just a priest." Robert N. Swanson, "Apostolic Successors: Priests and Priesthood, Bishops, and Episcopacy in Medieval Western Europe," in *A Companion to Priesthood and Holy Orders in the Middle Ages*, ed. Greg Peters and C. Colt Anderson (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 31. Interestingly, despite the rise of episcopacy in the early Middle Ages, it nevertheless failed to become a separate clerical grade. In the Insular context, an attempt to equal priests and bishops in their sacramental role was made already by Bede. See Benjamin Thomas, "Priests and Bishops in Bede's Ecclesiology: The Use of *sacerdos* in the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*," *Ecclesiology* 6 (2010): 68-93. The failure of episcopal office to become a separate grade was ultimately caused by the emergence in the eleventh century of a narrower understanding of priesthood exclusively in terms of the power to administer the Eucharist. See Seamus Ryan, "Episcopal Consecration: The Legacy of the Schoolmen," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (1966): 3-38; Robert P. Stenger, "The Episcopacy as an Ordo according to the Medieval Canonists," *Mediaeval Studies* 29, no. 1 (1967): 67-112; Roger E. Reynolds, "Patristic 'Presbyterianism' in the Early Medieval Theology of Sacred Orders," *Mediaeval Studies* 45 (1983): 311-42. This tendency is also found in a work of Gille of Limerick, the early-twelfth-century Irish author. Himself a bishop, he left the office out of the hierarchy claiming that "[t]he priest alone, holding all seven grades, ministers to the Almighty." Gille of Limerick, "De statu ecclesiae," in *Gille of Limerick (c. 1070-1145): Architect of a Medieval Church*, ed. and trans. John Fleming (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 148-49.

[43] See Stuart G. Hall, "Institutions in the pre-Constantinian *ecclesia*," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 1, *Origins to Constantine*, ed. Margaret M. Mitchell and Frances M. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 416-21.

The Watchman

It is well known that the Latin term for bishop (*episcopus*) is a borrowing from Greek and literally means "the overseer," or less literally "the watchman." In the Irish context, one of the earliest elaborations on the origins of the word *episcopus* with a subsequent development into the "watchman" trope comes from a mid-seventh-century moral-theological tract *De duodecim abusivis saeculi* by an anonymous author known as Pseudo-Cyprianus. Starting with the exposition of the abuses of a neglectful bishop, he follows the familiar Isidorian pattern of starting an explanation with an inquiry into the parallels and translations from Greek: *episcopus cum Grecum nomen sit, speculator interpretatur*.[44] *Speculator* is a standard rendition of the Greek term into Latin also to be found in other sources considered in this chapter. [45]

The author further elaborates the idea of a "watchman" by referencing the Book of Ezekiel:

> But on what account he is considered a watchman (*speculator*) and what is asked from a watchman, the Lord himself revealed when He declared the rule of his ministry (*officii sui ratio*) to the bishop in the person of prophet Ezekiel (*sub Ezechielis prophetae persona episcopo*), saying: I made you a watchman to the house of Israel. Thus, hearing the word from My mouth, you will warn them from Me. But if you see the sword coming and do not warn the wicked to turn back on his way, he will indeed die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand.[46]

[44] Pseudo-Cyprianus, *De XII abusivis saeculi*, ed. Siegmund Hellmann, in *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur*, vol. 34 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1909), 53. A similar short explanation can also be found in the mid-eighth-century *De vetere et novo testamento quaestiones* formerly ascribed to Isidore but proven to be of Irish origin. The passage arranged in a question–answer fashion runs as follows: *Dic mihi. Episcopus, in cuius lingua dicitur? Respondit. In greca. In Latina speculatores. Episcopus autem nomen est operis, non honores*. Robert E. McNally, "The Pseudo-Isidorian *De Vetere et Novo Testamento Quaestiones*," *Traditio* 19 (1963): 45. See also idem, "Isidoriana," *Theological Studies* 20 (1959): 437. Isidore's works reached Ireland as early as the middle of the seventh century and became some of the most cited writings among Hiberno-Latin authors. For details, see Joscelyn N. Hillgarth, "Visigothic Spain and Early Christian Ireland," *PRIA* 62C (1962): 167-94; eadem, "Ireland and Spain in the Seventh Century," *Peritia* 3 (1984): 8-10; Michael Herren, "On the Earliest Irish Acquaintance with Isidore of Seville," in *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches*, ed. Edward James (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 243-50 (n.v.); Rolf Baumgarten, "A Hiberno-Isidorian Etymology," *Peritia* 2 (1983): 225-8; Luned Mair Davies, "Isidorian Texts and the *Hibernensis*," *Peritia* 11 (1997): 207-49.

[45] On the relationship between *episcopus* and *speculator* in the Latin West, see Mohrmann, "Episcopos – Speculator," 238-52. The scholar argues that the Greek borrowing was a technical term for the office, while *speculator*, as a Latin word, was introduced to emphasise its nature and function. However, I would not entirely agree (see footnote 62).

[46] Pseudo-Cyprianus, *De XII abusivis saeculi*, 53-4 (my translation).

In this passage, the author of *De duodecim* brings up the image of prophet Ezekiel to whom these words were originally addressed in Ezekiel 33:6-7. Although the speech's primary concern is prophetic power, we should not neglect the fact that Ezekiel was also known to be a priest in the Aaronic lineage.[47] This detail is not emphasized, but we can assume that this was background knowledge which undoubtedly added to the overall symbolic impression created by the analogy.

However, the more important and more explicit image put forward in this passage is that of a watchman—*speculator*.[48] The term usually implies a lookout from a high position since *specula* can be translated as "watchtower."[49] But while regular watchmen look down on the earth, the prophet has to keep his eyes on heaven expecting the word of God. And the author of *De duodecim* thought it proper to call Ezekiel *episcopus* thus connecting the episcopal order with the prophetic ministry and ascribing to the former the latter's eminence, both in a literal and allegorical sense.[50] Though this analogy may seem less apparent than comparing episcopacy with the high priesthood, it is just as valid. First of all, the task of the prophet, as described in the passage, resembles the pastoral duty imputed to every priest, let alone bishop. Moreover, insular hagiography does not lack prophetic discourse, whose access to divine mysteries apparently fascinated the writers.[51] Thus, one reference conveys a rather complex

[47] Ezek. 1:3.
[48] The Latin term is not an exact translation of the Greek ἐπίσκοπος. The latter is derived from ἐπί "over" and σκοπος "one that watches" or, in a narrower sense, "watcher stationed in a high place" (*The Online Liddel-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon,* s.v. "σκοπος"). In this regard, *speculator* is closer to σκοπος in that both convey the idea of being elevated. A closer analogy for *episcopus* would be *superintentor* suggested by Augustine and Isidore which will be discussed shortly. For now, it should be added that the Septuagint uses σκοπος in Ezek. 33:6-7 and elsewhere, and the Vulgate seems to be consistent in translating it as *speculator*.
[49] *Kirchenlateinisches Wörterbuch*, s.v. "*specula*." The image of a prophet as a watchman on a tower is to be found in 2 Kings 9:17: *speculator qui stabat super turrem Hiezrahel*. Also, the Book of Jeremiah is very much in line with the prophet – *speculator* metaphor (see Jer. 1:10; 6:17).
[50] According to Christine Mohrmann, the association of episcopacy with Ezekiel's watchman was common in the Latin West and can be found, for example, in Augustine, Cassiodorus, Leo the Great, Caesarius of Arles, Gregory the Great, and Isidore of Seville as well as in liturgical material. Mohrmann, "Episcopos – Speculator," 241-49.
[51] The most prolific prophet among the Irish was St Columba whose prophetic insights constitute an important part of his *vita*. See Michael Enright, "Prophets and Princes on the Isles of Ocean: A 'Call' for an Old Testament Style Regime in *Vita Columbae*," *Peritia* 21 (2010): 58-69. The prophecy motif also played an important role in the construction of the image of St Columbanus in *Vita Columbani* which was, however, written on the Continent.

symbolical construction involving the images of a high position, proximity to the divine and a sacred duty imposed by God.[52]

A similar narrative strategy can be found in the letters of St Columbanus which means that this symbolic convention already existed in the early seventh century.[53] He uses the word *speculator* three times in his letters of which two instances are a form of address to the popes and one refers to the bishops in general.[54] None of the cases is accompanied by the reference to the Greek word, most likely because Columbanus assumed his exalted correspondents to be cognizant of such a fact.

The passage to which I would like to draw special attention does not mention bishops directly, but it does offer a further elaboration on the "watchman" trope. In it, Columbanus appeals to Pope Boniface IV urging him to take action in the Aquileian schism. Again, the imagery used is inspired by a prophetic book, this time by Isaiah:[55]

> May Isaiah send you to the mountain, who publish good tidings to Zion, rather may God through Isaiah place you on the watch-tower of true contemplation (*in speculam verae contemplationis*) […] and there, as it were placed above all

Bede included a prophecy in his *Vita Cuthberti*. See Jonas of Bobbio, *Vitae Columbani abbatis discipulorumque eius libri II*, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SS rer. Germ. 37 (Hannover: Hahn, 1905), 190, 207, 218; Bede, "Vita sancti Cuthberti," in *Two Lives of St Cuthbert*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 234-38. See also [Krivoshchekova V. N.] Кривощекова В. Н. "Святость в политическом измерении: пророчество святого Колумбана" [Sanctity in the Political Dimension: The Prophecy of St Columbanus], in *Проблемы истории и культуры средневекового общества*, ed. A. Iu. Prokopiev (Saint-Petersburg: Свое издательство, 2017), 68-75.

[52] Liturgical imagery directed "upwards" was also typical for Frankish bishops. See Michael E. Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300-850* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 163-64.

[53] The similarity in use of the "watchman" trope in Columbanus's letter and *De duodecim* might be another addition to Aidan Breen's argument about the two authors drawing upon the same sources for their exegetical content in Aidan Breen, "The Evidence of Antique Irish Exegesis in Pseudo-Cyprian, *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*," *PRIA* 87C (1987): 71-101.

[54] Writing to Gregory the Great and Boniface IV, Columbanus addresses the two popes respectively as *egregius speculator* and *reverendissimus speculator*: Columbanus, "Epistulae," in *Sancti Columbani Opera*, ed. and trans. George S. M. Walker (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), 2, 36. When discussing the dangerous negligence of the *pastores*, he forestalls Pseudo-Cyprian's warning: *Inde quia iuxta minas Domini sanguis tantorum de manibus requirendus erit pastorum, vigilandum est diligenter, id est, praedicandum est frequenter verbum Domini, a pastoribus scilicet, ecclesiae speculatoribus et magistris*. Ibid., 42.

[55] Is. 40:9. Drawing on the models established by the prophets might also be a statement of the bishops' elevated place in the church hierarchy in that the Hebrew prophets, particularly Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, claimed their authority over the priests (but not over the high priest). For details see Klaus Baltzer, "Considerations Regarding the Office and Calling of the Prophet," *Harvard Theological Review* 61 (1968): 578-81.

> mortals and made near to the heavenlies, may you lift up your voice like a trumpet and proclaim their sins to the people […] and to the house of Jacob their iniquities.[56]

Although these words are addressed to the pope, the symbolic pattern is recognizable even when it is applied to a bishop of a higher rank. What is of particular interest in this excerpt is that it might have derived from an exposition on the same biblical passage by Gregory the Great with whose writings Columbanus was familiar.[57] In the *Regula pastoralis* Gregory more explicitly puts forward the idea of not just looking after the faithful by not letting them go astray but decisively guiding them which is exactly the message imparted in Columbanus's appeal to Boniface.[58] Like Gregory, he emphasises the distance between "all mortals" and the top of the mountain of "true contemplation" which reaches up to heaven. The make-up of this metaphor ultimately translates into the discourse of ecclesiastical leadership.

A development in this direction is offered in the opening clause of the early-eighth-century *Collectio canonum Hibernensis*: *Episcopus nomen a graeco ductum […] quod latine superspeculator sive superintentor dicitur*.[59] This might not seem like a striking difference, but I would argue that it does affect the semantic field of the word "bishop" and not only because translation variants with the prefix *super-* correspond more precisely to the Greek *episcopos*. It is important to point out that the word *superintentor* is not exactly a synonym of *speculator* in that it expresses a degree of appropriation and control over those who are being "overseen"

[56] Columbanus, "Epistulae," 40-43.

[57] In his letter to Gregory, Columbanus says that he had read the pontiff's "book containing the pastoral rule, brief in style, pregnant in doctrine, replete with sacred lore" and portrays himself well-informed about some of his exegetical works. Columbanus, "Epistulae," 11-12. Although Columbanus's use of Is. 40:9 does not show the signs of direct borrowing from Gregory, the idea of comparing a bishop to a prophet is distinctive enough to assume some form of influence.

[58] In the chapter appropriately called *Ut rector semper sit operatione praecipuus*, Gregory writes: *Hinc enim per prophetam dicitur: super montem excelsum ascende tu qui evangelizas Sion. Ut videlicet qui caelesti praedicatione utitur, ima iam terrenorum operum deserens, in rerum culmine stare videatur*. Gregory the Great, "Regula pastoralis," PL 77, col. 28. With *caelestis praedicatio* meaning both "heavenly prophesying" and "heavenly preaching," Gregory puts priests together with prophets on the "summit of things" and away from "the lowliness of the earthly concerns" which does not merely symbolize guardianship but propels them to an altogether more prestigious status with the spiritual power over those who stay below.

[59] "Collectio canonum Hibernensis," in *Die irische Kanonensammlung*, ed. Herrmann Wasserschleben (Leipzig: Verlag von Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1885), 3. References to this edition will hereafter be referred to as *Hibernensis*.

while *speculator* is a more neutral term which does not stipulate for a hierarchical connection between the watcher and the watched.

The compilers of the *Hibernensis* borrowed their definition from Isidore of which fact they promptly inform their audience: *Isidorus ait: scopus quidem intentio est, ergo episcopum latine superintendentem possumus dicere*.[60] But while Isidore is very accurate in his rendering of the Greek term, it does not appear in the Vulgate.[61] However, Jerome himself might have had a hand in helping construct the notion of the bishop's spiritual primacy especially within the church hierarchy when he declared: "Of presbyter and bishop, one is the name of age (*aetas*), the other—of the rank (*dignitas*).[62]

Thus, within the larger trope of presenting bishops as watchmen two narrower metaphors can be distinguished, each with its own symbolic context: *speculator* and *superintentor*. Both terms, therefore, reflect an elevated position of the bishop, but *speculator* puts emphasis on the element of duty in performing the task of a watchman, comparable to the duty imposed on the prophets, whereas *superintentor* conveys the ability to exercise power from the position of superior dignity.

The High Priest

Despite the fact that the Old Testament describes a very different cultic environment from that of the New Testament, it was still a crucial source for Christian sacred imagery. An apparent

[60] Ibid., 3. The Isidorian quote is accurate. See Isidore of Seville, "De ecclesiasticis officiis," PL 83, col. 782 (I could not consult the newer edition in Isidorus Hispalensis, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, ed. C. M. Lawson, CCSL 113 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989)). Isidore himself might have relied on a similar interpretation in Augustine: *Nam ideo altior locus positus est episcopis, ut ipsi superintendant, et tanquam custodiant populum. Nam et graece quod dicitur episcopus, hoc latine superintentor interpretatur; quia superintendit, quia desuper videt*. Augustine, "Enarrationes in psalmos," PL 37, col. 1669.

[61] If, as I have noted above, the Septuagint's σκοπος corresponds to the Vulgate's *speculator*, whereas the Greek ἐπίσκοπος, when it appears in the Old Testament, can be rendered as *princeps* (Num. 31:14; Judg. 9:28) or *praepositus* (2 Chr. 34:12; Neh. 11:9). This word association also indicates a dimension of power and eminence ascribed to the term *episcopus* which lacks in the more technical *speculator* but which was already hinted at in Gregory's and Columbanus's use of the prophet metaphor.

[62] Jerome, *Epistula* 146, CSEL 56, pt. 3, 311.

analogy for the clerical organisation of the church presided by the bishops was indeed the temple priesthood led by the high priest. The basic matrix for thinking about Christian clerical orders in terms of the temple priesthood is provided by the great proponent of the Hebrew wisdom, Jerome: "What Aaron and his sons and the Levites have been in the Temple, bishops, presbyters and deacons claim [to be] in the church, so that we know that the apostolic traditions were received from the Old Testament."[63] It is also apparent that for Christian imagery the single most important figure in the line of Levitical priesthood is Aaron, the brother of Moses, the first to receive the title of the high priest.[64]

When it comes to separating the high priesthood from the rest of the priestly order, the Old Testament is infinitely more precise about the levels of authority and their symbolical and ritual entourage than the New Testament is in distinguishing between the bishops and the presbyters. Therefore, comparing the latter to the former helps to delineate this difference with more clarity using the liturgical imagery of the Old Testament.[65] Considering a steady association between the high priest and the bishop, this imagery, as I will argue below, nourished the discourse of the sacred authority of the bishops.

[63] Ibid., 312. The passage ultimately derives from 1 Clement 40:5: "For to the High Priest his proper ministrations are allotted, and to the priests the proper place has been appointed, and on Levites their proper services have been imposed." *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Kirsopp Lake, Loeb Classical Library 24 (London: William Heinemann, 1919), 79.

[64] Claudia Rapp makes a valuable observation concerning Aaron's figure in late antique discourses of episcopal authority, namely that his prominence as a model of spiritual leadership was confined to the Latin Christianity, whereas in the East he was considered secondary to Moses who was the true "embodiment of ecclesiastical leadership." Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in the Age of Transition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 131-32.

[65] As Margaret Barker points out "there were two rituals exclusive to the ancient high priests: entering the holy of holies with the blood on the Day of Atonement and consuming the bread of the Presence. Since these two are closely linked to the elements of the Eucharist, it seems likely that the high priestly traditions are the ultimate source of the imagery." Margaret Barker, *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 75.

Summus sacerdos

Our first source to invoke the high priest trope does not, however, refer to Aaron. In his prologue to *Vita Brigidae*, Cogitosus, writing in the mid-seventh century, made special notice that the saintly abbess of Kildare "could not be without a high priest (*sine summo sacerdote*) to consecrate churches and confer ecclesiastical orders in them."[66] She sought out a holy hermit named Conláed and arranged for his episcopal ordination. His new priestly status is then encapsulated in the phrase *unctum caput* (anointed head). The two succinct expressions—*summus sacerdos* and *unctum caput*—confer with great precision the image of high priesthood in that they reflect both the principal position of the high priest within the priestly order and the ritualistic distinction of the office. We shall look at each of these features individually.

The term *summus sacerdos* used here is one of the possible renditions which the Vulgate offers for the title of the high priest.[67] It aptly corresponds to the standard English term "the high priest" unequivocally drawing upon the imagery of elevatedness and eminence which is measured against the lower status of the rest of the priestly order. Despite the fact that the Vulgate rarely makes use of this title (opting for *pontifex* instead), it became firmly associated with the ministry of Aaron in the writings of the Latin authors such as Ambrose, Augustine and Isidore.[68] The latter became a major influence for the Irish scholars and writers from the seventh century onwards.[69]

[66] Cogitosus, "Vita sanctae Brigidae," ed. Karina Hochegger, in *Untersuchungen zu den ältesten* 'Vitae sanctae Brigidae.' (M.Phil. diss.: Universität Wien, 2009), 18. References to this edition will hereafter be referred to as *Vita Brigidae*. Translation in Seán Connolly and Jean-Michel Picard, "Cogitosus's Life of St Brigit: Content and Value," *JRSAI* 117 (1987): 11.

[67] It should be noted that unlike the English Standard Version, the Vulgate and the Hebrew versions are remarkably inconsistent in their usage of the term "the high priest." For the Hebrew material, see Noam Mizrahi, "The History and Linguistic Background of Two Hebrew Titles for the High Priest," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130, no. 4 (2011): 687-705. In the Vulgate, the variants include *summus sacerdos* (used most prominently in Mark and the books of Maccabees), *pontifex* (to be analysed below), *princeps sacerdotum* and more peculiar forms such as *sacerdos maximus* (Lev. 21:10), *summus pontifex* (Jdt. 15:9) and *pontifex magnus* (Heb. 4:14).

[68] See Ambrose, "De apologia David ad Theodosium Augustum," PL 14, col. 899; Augustine, *De civitate dei*, CSEL 40, pt. 2, 484; Isidore of Seville, "De ecclesiasticis officiis," 780-1.

[69] See footnote 45.

It is difficult to say whether Cogitosus's Aaronic metaphor was an ingenious idea or if it was borrowed from elsewhere, but he undoubtedly used it with great skill. The subtle allusion to the high-priestly anointing (which is absent even from the otherwise very thorough *Hibernensis*) serves his ultimate purpose: to elevate Brigit's bishop to the metropolitan status.[70] Aaron's unction as a unique attribute of the high priesthood is emphasised in the Hebrew version of Leviticus through the use of a special term, "the anointed priest," which symbolically separates him from the rest of the priests.[71] Cogitosus did not have to know Hebrew to recognise the potential of the hierarchical discourse enforced by ritual distinction and apply it on a higher level of authority where episcopal superiority had to yield before metropolitan primacy. Thus, he could present the archbishop as the anointed one and other bishops as regular *sacerdotes*.

Pontifex

On another occasion Cogitosus refers to Conláed as *summus pontifex populorum*,[72] which presents a further enhanced expression of the bishop's authority in that it augments the term *pontifex* with an elevating *summus*. Referring to the peoples under episcopal oversight in the context of the life might be an attempt to symbolically impose Conláed's power over several dioceses. But while the metaphor is used consciously, there are no direct references to Aaron himself. Omitting them might have to do with Cogitosus's wish to keep Conláed's image powerful but blurred—very much like Kildare's metropolitan rhetoric itself.

[70] Cogitosus refers to Conláed as "primate of all the bishops" (*principale omnium episcoporum*) and "the archbishop of the bishops of Ireland" (*archiepiscopus Hibernensium episcoporum*). See "Vita Brigidae," 20; translation in Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosus's Life of St Brigit," 11. These claims, however, were not based on the real status of Kildare and served as an instrument in the contention over ecclesiastical primacy in Ireland. See Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 428-29.
[71] Lev. 4:3, 5, 16; 6:15. For details, see Mizrahi, "The History and Linguistic Background," 687.
[72] "Vita Brigidae," 46.

It should be noted also that the term *summus pontifex* has a distinct association with both the high priest ministering behind the veil of the Holy of Holies and the sacrificing Christ in two sermons by Leo the Great.[73] We should not rule out the possibility that such complex imagery was accessible to Cogitosus and to the anonymous Irish hagiographers since it was an important part of western exegesis. The title of *summus pontifex* as well as *gloriosus pontifex* for example has been applied to St Ciarán, the bishop of Saighir, and whereas St Aed Mac Bricc and St Ailbe were often referred to as *pontifices* in their saintly biographies.[74]

It is hardly surprising that St Patrick is also allotted with the title *summus pontifex.* It can be found in the mid-seventh-century *Liber angeli*—an anonymous text proclaiming primatial rights for Patrick's church at Armagh. It asserts that Armagh "has precedence, by a certain privilege and by the heavenly authority of the supreme bishop (*superna auctoritate summi pontificis*), its founder, over all churches and monasteries of all the Irish."[75] Interpreting *superna auctoritas* as "heavenly authority," rather than simply "high authority," can be justified by the parallel with the high priest, whose ministry was instructed by God through Moses. In this case, this rather bold claim receives an authoritative sanction from the associated discourse of the divinely instituted priesthood and its exalted leader.[76]

Patrick's "pontificate" is again invoked in a very different kind of setting: a liturgical one. One of the stanzas in the *Hymnus Sancti Patricii Magistri* from the Antiphonary of Bangor (*c*. 680) goes as follows:

[73] *Velum, cuius obiectu intercludebantur sancta sanctorum, a summo usque ad ima disruptum est, et sacrum illud mysticum que secretum quod solus summus pontifex iussus fuerat intrare, reseratum est, ut nihil iam esset discretionis, ubi nihil resederat sanctitatis*. Leo the Great, "Sermo 61," PL 54, col. 318-9.
Confirmabatur quoque testamentum nouum, et christi sanguine aeterni regni scribebantur haeredes. Ingrediebatur summus pontifex sancta sanctorum, et ad exorandum deum inmaculatus sacerdos per uelum suae carnis intrabat. Leo the Great, "Sermo 68," PL 54, col. 374.
[74] "Vita sancti Ciarani de Saighir," VSH 1, 232; "Vita sancti Albei," VSH 1, 51, 59; "Vita sancti Aedi Mac Bricc," VSH 1, 37ff.
[75] "Liber angeli," in *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, ed. and trans. Ludwig Bieler (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979), 186-87.
[76] See *The Dictionary of Medieval Latin from the British Sources*, s.v. "supernus."

Quem pro meritis Salvator
Provexit pontificem,
Ut in coelesti moneret
Clericos militia,
Coelestem quibus annonam
Erogat cum vestibus,
Quod in divinis impletur
Sacrisque affatibus.[77]

In this variation on the high priest analogy the emphasis seems to be on the bishop's spiritual superiority over other clerics, but it can also be a more specific hint at Patrick's celebrated exploits of ordaining the clergy in the predominantly pagan environment of fifth-century Ireland.[78] And since ordination is one of the few church rituals that cannot be performed by presbyters, the adoption of the high priest trope helps to highlight this important distinction.

It should also be noted that the term *pontifex* invokes a wide range of associations one of which albeit a slightly anachronistic one, is indeed with the papacy. It is to some degree reflected in the following passage from the *Hibernensis*: "Likewise, in the New Testament the pontifical order (*pontificalis ordo*) after Christ began with the apostle Peter and James the bishop of the bishops."[79] In this instance the compilers stepped away from Isidore, their main authority on episcopal office, and introduced two important changes. First, Isidore's *sacerdotalis ordo* became *pontificalis ordo* which, as was established, means that the heirship of Christ is now limited only to the bishops instead of the entire clerical organisation. But at the same time the Irish compilers add James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, as Peter's partner, as it were, in laying

[77] "Whom the Saviour has appointed a high priest for [his] good work, so that he would admonish the clerics in the heavenly host, to whom he delivers the heavenly provision and vestments, because he is filled with divine and sacred speeches" (my translation). "Hymnus sancti Patricii Magisri," in *The Antiphonary of Bangor: An Early Irish Manuscript in the Ambrosian Library at Milan*, ed. Frederick E. Warren (London: Harrison and Sons, 1895), 15.

[78] Tírechán, writing his memoir of St Patrick around 670, tries to give the figures but is at loss: "Concerning the number of bishops whom he consecrated in Ireland, (that is,) 450. As regards priests, we cannot give a number." Tírechán, "Collectanea," in *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, ed. and trans. Ludwig Bieler (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979), 127.

[79] "Hibernensis," 4 (my translation). Compare to the respective passage from Isidore: *In Novo autem Testamento post Christum sacerdotalis ordo a Petro coepit*. Isidore, "De ecclesiasticis officiis," 781.

the foundations of the episcopal office. His remarkable title *episcopus episcoporum* owes to Rufinus's translation of the spurious letter to James ascribed to Clement I, the second bishop of Rome.[80] Irish ecclesiastics, however, would have known it as authentic and therefore would imagine a twofold episcopal succession—from Petrine Rome and from Jerusalem."[81]

Aaron

Some of the sources also attempt to explore the charismatic roots of episcopal office. The *Hibernensis*, for instance, states: "Aaron was the first to receive the title in the sacerdotal law (*in lege sacerdotale*) […] In which place it ought to be considered that Aaron represented the high priest (*summum sacerdotem*), that is the bishop."[82] This short passage is notable not only in that it proclaims the interchangeability of the terms *summus sacerdos* and *episcopus* with utmost clarity, but also because it introduces the important concept of lawful priesthood.[83]

In order to properly understand the implications of the bishop – high priest analogy, the biblical distinction between two orders of priesthood must be taken into account: that of Aaron and Melchizedek. The Epistle to the Hebrews makes a case that Levitical priesthood is infinitely inferior to the priesthood after the order Melchizedek who in his royal and eternal ministry is

[80] *Clemens Iacobo domino et episcopo episcoporum, regenti Hebraeorum sanctam ecclesiam Hierosolymis, sed et omnes ecclesias quae ubique dei providentia fundatae sunt, cum presbyteris et diaconibus et ceteris omnibus fratribus*. "Epistola Clementis papae ad S. Jacobum apostolum fratrem Domini," PL 54, col. 731.
[81] On the central position of Jerusalem in the Irish worldview, see David Woodward, "Medieval *mappaemundi*," in *The History of Cartography*, vol. 1, *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient and Medieval Europe and Mediterranean*, ed. John-Brian Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 340.
[82] "Hibernensis," 3-4 (my translation). This is a very close quote in Isidore, "De ecclesiasticis officiis," 781. However, the compilers chose to leave out most of the ritual arrangements described by him.
[83] A legalistic connection between Levitical priesthood and Irish clerics (not only bishops) was firmly established in the *Hibernensis* through associating the latter with the former through such aspects as grants to the church, judicial function, and relationship with the rulers as well as in the concept of *civitas refugii* which in the Irish context transformed into the concept of a monastic town. See Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach, and Aidan Breen, "The Laws of the Irish," *Peritia* 3 (1984): 394-400; Charles Doherty, "The Monastic Town in Early Medieval Ireland," in *The Comparative History of Urban Origins in Non-Roman Europe*, ed. Howard B. Clarke and Anngret Simms. BAR International Series 225, bk. 1. (Oxford, 1985), 57-59. The presence of an episcopal see in a monastery could help elevate it to the status of *civitas*. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 119. Richard Sharpe also argues that *civitas* was defined by the fact that it was an episcopal foundation. Richard Sharpe, "Some Problems Concerning the Organization of the Church in Early Medieval Ireland," *Peritia* 3 (1984): 255.

presented to be the forerunner of Christ.[84] However, the deprecating stance towards Aaronic lineage in Hebrews has not affected its significance as a model for episcopate, since it was essentially the lawful priesthood. On the other hand, the compilers of the *Hibernensis*, following Isidore, refused to count as such Melchizedek's ministry before Abraham, because it was offered *spontanea voluntate, non sacerdotali auctoritate*.[85] Therefore, the bishops as the rightful heirs of Aaron ministered in full accordance and with the sanction of the divine law revealed to Moses, even if Melchizedek's priesthood retrospectively shared in Christ's glory.

The historical precedence of Aaron's priesthood and its interpretation as the origin of episcopacy is also attested in one of the two versions of a small Hiberno-Latin tract on Sunday found in two Breton manuscripts (*c.* 800) and known as *Dies dominica*: "The Lord's day, the blessed day when the first bishop was ordained, Aaron his name (*primus episcopus Aaron nomine*)."[86] This uncompromising wording draws a direct parallel between the ordination of a high priest and a bishop thus merging the two offices into one sacred lineage of God's ministers. It also bears some significant implications for the ritual imagining of episcopal ministry which will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapters.

Interestingly, the mid-eighth-century Hiberno-Latin treatise *De ortu et obitu patriarcharum* produced in an Irish centre of learning in Germany, which offers short accounts about important figures from both testaments, does not grant any distinction to Aaron's priestly title calling him simply *sacerdos dei*.[87] It does, however, recognise special attributes of his office that is his

[84] Heb. 7:1-28; Ps. 109:4.
[85] "Hibernensis," 13.
[86] Robert E. McNally, "*Dies dominica*: Two Hiberno-Latin Texts," *Medieval Studies* 22 (1960): 60.
[87] Another pseudo-Isidorian text, originating from one of the Irish monastic centers in Germany around the mid-eighth century. See Robert E. McNally, "'Christus' in the Pseudo-Isidorian *Liber de ortu et obitu patriarcharum*," *Traditio* 21 (1965): 168-69.

anointing, his liturgical vestments and his yearly atonement sacrifice.[88] These attributes also play an important role in episcopal ministry.[89]

Ultimately, the high priest metaphor with its liturgical imagery raises a number of more specific questions about the ritual arrangements and their representation in the Hiberno-Latin texts. The pronounced distinction which existed between the high priest and the regular temple priests is conferred on and enhances the symbolic authority of the Christian bishops who are thus elevated high above the level of presbyters.

Imago Christi

Another biblical *persona* in the symbolical frame of reference of episcopal authority is indeed Jesus himself. Since he is often portrayed as the high priest, points made in the previous section are still valid when his figure is used as a prototype for the bishops. Following from this, this section will focus on a particular way of perceiving the connection between Christ and a bishop: the *imago Christi*. As there is no in-depth study of the concept of *imago* in early Christian Ireland the observations are necessarily rudimentary, but raise important questions for further research.[90]

The most straightforward use of *imago Christi* trope is to be found in the *Hibernensis*, where the compilers reference Augustine: *Augustinus ait: Christus imaginem Dei habet, sicut*

[88] *Liber de ortu et obitu patriarcharum*, PL 83, col. 1276, edited as a part of Isidore's writings. I have not been able to consult the new edition: *Liber de ortu et obitu patriarcharum*, ed. J. Carracedo Fraga, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 108E (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996).
[89] It can be noted that the *Hibernensis* makes a special notice of the *pontificalis stola* as a symbol of Aaron's priesthood and a necessary attribute of his sacrificial ritual. "Hibernensis," 3.
[90] For a summary of early Christian ideas on this account, see Gerhart B. Ladner, "The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy," *Dumbarton Oak Papers* 7 (1953): 1-34.

episcopus imaginem Christi.[91] This is in many ways a telling passage opening many possibilities for interpretation.

That man was created after the image (*ad imaginem Dei*) of God was indeed common knowledge for everyone who had managed to get through the first chapter of Genesis.[92] Those who read Colossians would have known that Christ was not just created *ad imaginem Dei*, he was *imago Dei*.[93] By using the phrase *imago habere*, the passage from the *Hibernensis* clearly suggests that bishops *are* the image of Christ rather than just resembling it. This was to say that bishops at least partly shared in the divine nature of Christ in the same way that Christ combined divine nature of his Father with humanity. This mysterious connection, one may assume, was achieved through the anointing ritual, of which there is a confirmation in the omnipresent Isidore who in his exposition on Saul's unction noticed that the Old Testament king *in id quod unctus est, imaginem Christi portavit*.[94] Therefore, the anointing ritual as a way of communicating sacrality upon its recipient could be implied in the lapidary formulation of the Irish ecclesiastics responsible for putting together the *Hibernensis*.

Another way in which a bishop could be considered to bear the image of Christ is if Christ himself was the source of episcopal authority. This could be expressed through a familiar formula *episcopus episcoporum* applied to the son of God as in Augustine: "The Lord and the bishop of bishops made ensured that your hope not be in the man. Therefore, in Lord's name,

[91] "Hibernensis," 9. The quote is, however, most likely to derive from Ambrosiaster whose lengthy tract *Quaestiones veteris et novis testamenti* has long been attributed to Augustine. But on its way to the Irish canon law collection it underwent a considerable change since originally it referred to king David and stated that *dei enim imaginem habet rex, sicut et episcopus Christi*. Pseudo-Augustine, *Quaestiones veteris et novi testamenti*, ed. Alexander Souter, CSEL 50 (Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1908), 63. The passage from the *Hibernensis* is quoted word for word in the mid-ninth century writings of Sedulius Scottus, a prominent Irish intellectual. See Sedulius Scottus, *Collectaneum miscellaneum*, ed. Dean Simpson, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 67 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988) (n.v.).
[92] Gen. 1:26-27.
[93] Col. 1:15.
[94] Isidore of Seville, "Mysticorum expositiones sacramentorum seu Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum," PL 83, col. 397.

I speak to you as a bishop (*episcopus vobis loquor*).[95] This Augustinian quote underlines the aspect of divinity invested in the episcopal office as Christ himself speaks through his successors in the episcopal orders.

The parallel between the bishop and Christ is further developed and strengthened in the so-called ordinals of Christ—lists of clerical orders sanctioned with events and deeds from Christ's earthly life. The ordinal found in the *Hibernensis*, as is customary for such documents, places episcopacy at the summit of sacerdotal authority with its power to confer holy orders. It is represented in the *Hibernensis* under the rubric *De gradibus in quibus Christus adfuit*, but is also faithfully (though with some changes in the order of the priestly grades) reproduced in the slightly later *De vetere et novo testamento quaestiones*.[96] The last two grades in the *Hibernensis* version are of particular significance: "He was a priest (*sacerdos*), when he took the bread and broke it and blessed it; he was a bishop, when he lifted his hands to the heaven and blessed the apostles."[97] In this passage, the difference between a presbyter and a bishop is made clear: while both can offer the sacrifice of the Eucharist, only the bishop can confer holy orders—a ritual whose beginnings this analogy places confidently into Christ's own hands when he blessed his disciples.[98] Thus, only bishops were "equal" to Christ in having all seven grades of the clerical hierarchy.[99] This fact in itself took on an important symbolical and practical meaning in that it translated directly into prescribing seven years of penitence for murder

[95] Augustine, *Sermo* 340A, ed. Adalbert-Gautier Hamman, Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum 2 (Paris: Éditions Garnier, 1960), 644.
[96] See McNally, "The Pseudo-Isidorian *De Vetere et Novo Testamento Quaestiones*," 48-9.
[97] "Hibernensis," 26 (my translation).
[98] Luke 24:50-51.
[99] The septenary structure of the church hierarchy with the bishop at the top was an important part of Irish ecclesiastical tradition and became acknowledged in secular texts as well. See John Fleming, *Gille of Limerick (c. 1070-1145): Architect of a Medieval Church* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 88-91. Roger Reynolds also points out, the Irish were the most consistent when it came to the number and arrangement of clerical orders, and it was early Irish ordinals that influenced the continental tradition. Roger E. Reynolds, *The Ordinals of Christ from Their Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), 53-68; idem, "'At Sixes and Sevens' – and Eights and Nines: The Sacred Mathematics of Sacred Orders in the Early Middle Ages," *Speculum* 54, no. 4 (1979): 672-73.

committed in an episcopal church, whereas for a smaller church this term was reduced to a year and a half.[100]

Imago Christi, thus, is another important discursive device for describing the episcopal office. Not only does it establish an immediate connection with the central figure of Christian worship, but it also helps bring together the liturgical imagery of the Old Testament and Christian understanding of the church orders in their symbolical and practical enactment.

* * *

In this chapter, several distinct discursive strategies were established, which were employed by the Irish ecclesiastical authors to locate and define episcopal authority within the biblical paradigm. These are the "watchman" as a divinely appointed overseer with prophetic overtones and as an exalted but active leader of the church, the "high priest" with its varying terminology and rich liturgical imagery, and the *imago Christi*, which places the bishops within the divine lineage stemming from God and Christ. These tropes and parallels will now guide the study into the specifics of the discourse of episcopal ritual in Hiberno-Latin texts.

[100] *Quicumque […] in ecclesia Dei […] si in ea episcopi sunt sepulti, aut praesentes sint […] homicidium fecerint, VII annis peniteant. Unde hoc sumptum est, quod episcopus VII gradus habet et ecclesia septiformis est, si vero non habuerit episcopos… anno et dimidio peniteant*. "Hibernensis," 168. This canon is attributed to a *Sinodus Hibernensis* which can indicate a native origin for this piece of symbolically inspired legislation.

Chapter II – Setting: The (Mental) Space of Episcopal Ritual

From the domain of metaphors, the inquiry continues into a domain which is more spatially ordered but, being a part of textual reality, is still conceptual: the descriptions of the physical setting of the rituals. Again, the reading of sources which I propose for this chapter is discourse-centred because such an approach allows for a more flexible interpretation, not restricted by the scarcity of archaeological evidence.[101]

In this chapter, I will look for the details and features of the physical environment of episcopal ritual as they are related by different sources. These will further contribute to the conceptual picture of spiritual and liturgical authority of the bishops as they will provide an elaborately mapped space where positions and boundaries, play important discursive roles. This chapter will answer the following questions: How is the space of episcopal ritual conceptualised in the texts? What spatial cues play into the discourse of the bishops' sacred authority? What strategies were used to emphasise episcopal eminence in deictic coordinates? For answering these questions, I will be incorporating analytic tools of cognitive approaches, namely the text-world theory and the theory of conceptual blending as they allow to analyse spatial environment and infer complex meanings and relations embedded in it.

[101] The archaeological evidence of pre-Romanesque Irish architecture consists of around 150 drystone churches. Among them only less than one-fifth can be dated to as early as the eighth century, the rest being of later construction. This small group is very uniform in their plan: all of them are oblong unicameral structures with a single doorway in the west wall and two small windows in the east and south wall. See Tomás Ó Carragáin, "The Architectural Setting of the Mass in Early-Medieval Ireland," *Medieval Archaeology* 53 (2009): 119. This body of material, however, is unrepresentative of the textual accounts of the earliest Irish church buildings, which present a richer picture. This being said, I do admit that a comparison between the imagined environments and the extant buildings or their artistic representations might prove beneficial for my analysis. I will provide such comparison, where feasible.

Inside the Church

Though bishops' jurisdiction spread over sizable territories, the church where the bishop performed his sacraments remained the centre of episcopal power. It is therefore impossible to analyse these rituals without understanding their spatial environment. On the level of textual discourse, we are almost always dealing with idealised mental representations of this environment, where the narrative builds up conceptually, uncovering the liturgical meaning of the church space. This conceptual space will be the preoccupation of the present section.

The Plan

Hiberno-Latin sources present the scholar with several pieces of ekphrasis, all of which engage with different kinds of church buildings. The earliest and the most famous one is Cogitosus's description of St Brigit's church at Kildare. It is also the most detailed description of an episcopal church. The relevant passages are cited below almost in full due to their importance for further analysis:

> …a new reality is born in an age-old setting, that is a church with its spacious site and its awesome height towering upwards. It is adorned with painted pictures and inside there are three chapels (*oratoria*) which are spacious and divided by board walls under the single roof of the cathedral church (*maior domus*). The first of these walls, which is painted with pictures and covered with wall-hangings, stretches widthwise in the east part of the church from one wall to the other. In it there are two doors […]
>
> The second of these walls divides the floor of the building into two equal parts and stretches from the west wall to the wall running across the church. This church contains many windows and one finely wrought portal (*ornata porta*) on the right side […] and a second portal on the left side.[102]

This passage sets up the basic elements for the mental picture of an episcopal church. It is important to notice that for this descriptive part of his work Cogitosus switches the customary past tense of hagiography for a more appropriate present, thus redefining the temporal

[102] "Vita Brigidae," 54-56. Translation in Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosus's Life of St Brigit," 25-26.

coordinates of his narrative so that they match those of his audience. In this way, the author creates a new mental space accessible for every audience member as they can now directly project themselves into the environment being described. At the same time, continuity with the past stays uninterrupted. Moreover, it is reinforced with the words "a new reality (*nova res*) is born in an age-old setting", which connects the church as Cogitosus describes it to the same building during Brigit's lifetime.

In terms of deixis, Cogitosus's "tour" of the church consists of three parts: contemplation from the outside (spacious site, awesome height, painted pictures), exploration of the inside (three chapels, partitions), and, finally, re-establishing the connection to the outer world (windows and portals). This helps to establish that the church in question is not only of formidable size, but is also arranged in a way that elucidates the spheres of sacral authority.

The church described, while still maintaining the standard single-space rectangular design, presents a more sophisticated hierarchy of inner space. Its interior is said to be divided into three "chapels" (*oratoria*), but all of them are united "under the single roof of the cathedral church." Apart from its architectural significance,[103] this remark can be interpreted as a statement of ecclesiastical unity fashioned in spatial terms: as clerics, monks, and layfolk are all members of the body of the church with Christ as its head, so their designated sub-spaces within the church building are tied together by the common roof.[104]

[103] Tomás Ó Carragáin infers from it that early Irish "chapel" was not externally defined. Tomás Ó Carragáin, *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland: Architecture, Ritual, Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 34.

[104] The metaphor invoked by Cogitosus's text finds its literal illustration in the famous Book of Kells (*c*. 800), namely in the scene of the Temptation of Christ (Dublin, Trinity College Library MS 58, fol. 202v.). The image, being an illustration to the temptation passages in the Gospel of Luke, represents Christ on the roof of the Temple, which not only follows the story of temptation, but can also be interpreted allegorically, with the Temple as a metaphor for the Christian church—an idea well familiar in Irish exegesis. See Ó Carragáin, *Churches*, 38-46; David H. Jenkins, *'Holy, Holier, Holiest:' The Sacred Topography of the Early Medieval Irish Church* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 128-44. Also, Bede uses the image of the Tabernacle and the Temple as metaphors for the wandering Christian church on earth and the church of the faithful re-joined in heavenly Temple. See Carol Farr, "History and Mnemonic in Insular Gospel Book Decoration," in *From the Isles of the North: Early Medieval Art in Ireland and Britain*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Belfast: H.M. Stationary Office, 1995), 141. On Bede's historical

Thus, the scene of an episcopal ritual, as conceptualised by Cogitosus, engages both the floor and the roof of a church building. But while the single roof serves more as a reminder of the immanent and uniting presence of God, the ordering of the ground plan presents a mental map which helps direct the rituals. By mapping out the inner space of the church, Cogitosus directs his audiences' attention towards the key locations of ritual significance such as doors, partitions and passages all of which convey the idea of movement—a procession.

It is possible to assume that such a fragmented layout laden with boundaries is used by Cogitosus for emphasising the episcopal status of the church.[105] Ultimately, this indicates that a church where a bishop ministered liturgies demanded a more nuanced organisation of space like the one presented by Cogitosus.

Interestingly, a detail that is not featured in Cogitosus's ekphrasis is the centre of the church which otherwise is a natural locus of attention.[106] However, the "centre" should not always be

allegories of the Tabernacle and the Temple, see Conor O'Brien, *Bede's Temple: An Image and Its Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 47-72.

[105] Tomás Ó Carragáin points out that the mid- to late-eighth-century church at Whithorn (Scotland) excavated by Peter Hill has an inner partition very similar to that described by Cogitosus. Ó Carragáin, "Architectural Setting of the Mass," 140-41. It should also be noticed that the introduction of this complex layout was a result of transforming the initial British monastic site into a Northumbrian bishopric.

[106] That many smaller churches were centrally planned, or imagined so, is confirmed by a sufficient number of sources. The so-called *templa quadrata* were probably arranged around the centre. For example, in Tírechán's *Collectanea* Patrick is said to have established "quadrangular churches" (*aeclessias quadratas*), and the church of the community of Ailbe described in the ninth-century *Navigatio Brendani* is also "square both in length and in width" (*quadrata tam longitudinis quam et latitudinis*). Tírechán, "Collectanea," 150-51; *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis* from Early Latin Manuscripts, ed. Carl Selmer (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1989), 33. In *Navigatio* it is specifically said that there was an altar in the middle (*altar quod erat in medio*). *De oratorio*—a poem from the curious mid-seventh-century collection of Hiberno-Latin poetry known as *Hisperica famina*—also speaks about "square foundations" (*quadrigona fundamenta*) and "a holy altar in the centre" (*agea in gremio ara*). *The Hisperica Famina: I. The A-Text*, ed. and trans. Michael W. Herren (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), 108-09; cited in Niall Brady, "*De oratorio*: *Hisperica Famina* and Church Building," *Peritia* 11 (1997): 328. The central position of the altar in a church is also attested in an early-ninth-century Anglo-Saxon poem *De abbatibus* which mirrors many of the tropes found in Irish sources. See Harold M. Taylor, "The Position of the Altar in Early Anglo-Saxon Churches," *The Antiquaries Journal* 53, no. 1 (1973): 55-56. The importance of the centre in a quadrangular church is emphasised in a different way by Columbanus in one of his monastic rules: "Let the ranks who are senior be in the middle of the oratory (*in medio oratorii*), and the rest stand by on right and left, except for the celebrant and him who serves him." Columbanus, "Regula coenobialis," in *Sancti Columbani Opera,* ed. and trans. G. S. M. Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), 157-59. Here the altar presumably takes its more traditional place in the eastern part of the church, whereas the central spot is given to the higher ranks of the brethren. Still, the text deliberately draws attention to the mid-point of the church, thus marking it out with special authoritative meaning, in this case associated with the monastic chapter.

understood geometrically and may refer to anywhere on the east-west axis.[107] Thus, the eastern sanctuary can also be considered a valid "centre." Geometrical or not, the centre of the church often becomes the scene for certain ritual actions, like, for instance, the chanting of the psalms during the consecration of the church. A ritual described in a slightly later text (eleventh century) prescribes three priests to chant psalms in the middle of the church while the bishop goes around the building with the same chants.[108] Thus, the centre spot drew ritual attention due to its ability to most fully and visibly display authority.

The Entrance

Within any piece of ekphrasis a number of symbolically meaningful locations clearly stand out being emphasised by the author. They naturally facilitate the audience's attention and through that accumulate special sacred meaning.[109] Presuming that the mental space constructed by a text functions by the same principles as the actual space, the first focal point encountered when conceptualising a church building is indeed its entrance—the first of the many boundaries to be crossed.[110] While it might not have a direct association with episcopal rituals, it plays a crucial role in their organisation, particularly in the liturgical processions and dedication ceremonies.[111]

[107] See Brady, "*De oratorio*", 329-30.
[108] "The *Lebar Brecc* Tractate on the Consecration of a Church," ed. and trans. Whitley Stokes, in *Miscellanea linguistica in onore di Graziadio Ascoli* (Turin: E. Loescher, 1901), 374-77.
[109] The concept of place as an essential component of ritual is explored by Jonathan Z. Smith who argues that "a ritual object or action becomes sacred by having attention focused on it in a highly marked way" by means of "emplacement." Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 104.
[110] The significance of the door in Christian exegesis is based on the words of Christ in John 10:9: "I am the door [to salvation]." In the works of theologians such as Gregory the Great and Bede, this idea is combined with the imagery of the Temple and its entrance. The portico is taken to symbolise the time before the incarnation with Christ as the door leading inside the Temple which represents the Christian church. See Christiania Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind: A Study of Medieval Architectural Allegory* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 17-18; O'Brien, *Bede's Temple*, 71.
[111] In a recent book on liturgy and architecture in Anglo-Saxon England, Helen Gittos explored a number of different rituals which engaged the doorways as one of their key settings: Candlemas and Palm Sunday liturgies, public penance, baptism, marriage, and legal transactions. See Helen Gittos, "Machines for Thinking," in *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 257-74. She

The already familiar description by Cogitosus, for example, presents an arrangement unusual for early Irish churches with two doors on the northern and southern side of the building. Indeed, such an important detail does not go unexplained:

> This church contains […] one finely wrought portal (*ornata porta*) on the right side through which the priests and the faithful of the male sex enter the church, and a second portal on the left side through which the nuns and congregation of women faithful are accustomed to enter.[112]

Thus, the two-door arrangement plays into the general theme of fragmentation which seems to prevail in Cogitosus's text.[113] Two separate entrances for men and women together with the longitudinal wall dividing the nave into two parts delineate a common in the Middle Ages layout, whereby men would occupy the right or the south side of a designated area with women taking the left or the north side.[114] The use of relative denominators (right / left) instead of the absolute ones (north / south) also reveals that Cogitosus's audience visualised the interior of the church by positioning themselves in the nave facing the east wall. Marking out the doorways in this way thus gives direction to the processual movement.

Creating a segregated spatial arrangement can also imply a conscious attempt to bring order into the variegated crowd of people attending the liturgies and form the mass of the "living

specifically points out that the ceremonies of the Candlemas and Palm Sunday were concentrated on crossing the threshold of the church which was symbolically linked to the doors of the Hebrew Temple and the Christian concept of Heavenly Jerusalem. Ibid., 262-66. While Irish sources fall short on such detalisation, Catherine Swift makes a case that the doorways of Irish churches were the places for passing judgement—a practice which was likely local, but was legitimized by stretching the biblical material. For instance, the *Hibernensis* contains an article called *De loco, quo debent iudices iudicare* which describes Moses and Solomon giving judgement in the doors of the Tabernacle. "Hibernensis," 63; Catherine Swift, "Forts and Fields: A Study of 'Monastic Towns' in Seventh and Eighth Century Ireland," *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* 9 (1998): 107.

[112] "Vita Brigidae," 56. Translation in Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosus's Life of St Brigit," 26.

[113] Entering such a church for the first time (which probably happened often considering it was Brigit's cult site) would require either a pre-existing knowledge or guidance from the members of community itself. In this situation, Cogitosus's ekphrasis would be a useful reading for those who wished to visit Brigit's tomb: it provided the audience with a very clear mental image which included not only the basic layout, but also the rules attached to certain locations within the church.

[114] On the left and right separation of girls and boys receiving baptism in early medieval liturgical manuscripts, see Gittos, *Liturgy*, 269-70. On the association of the female religious with the northern part of the church, see Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women* (London: Routledge, 1994), 133-35. It might well be that the pictures and wall decorations mentioned by Cogitosus reflected the division as do the mosaics at St Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna which depict women's and men's procession on the north and south wall respectively.

stones" into a shapely "body" of the church, according to a well-known ecclesiological concept.[115] The head of this body would indeed be Christ, but in a local setting, this role could be symbolically relegated to the bishop since he, as established in the first chapter, *habet imaginem Christi*.

Obviously, the passage also implies that the south entrance would be the one through which the bishop would enter the church. However, Cogitosus's remark on the south portal being "finely wrought" combined with his silence on the decoration of the north portal should not be too readily interpreted as an indication of the superior importance of the former. While it might be set up to make such an impression, Cogitosus then goes on to describe the renovation of the north portal when the doorway was enlarged and the old door was miraculously made fit for it by the late abbess.[116] This "rivalry" between two entrances can be interpreted thus: the "finely wrought" portal for clerics and male congregations is marked out deliberately because the church was in the first place the domain of the bishop, and the story about the enlargement of the second entrance "on account of the growing number of the faithful of both sexes" creates a counterbalance showing that the presence of Brigit's tomb claimed a part of the otherwise uncontested episcopal authority.[117]

Another remarkable representation of a church doorway can be found in a text of an altogether different variety—in a manuscript illustration. The scene of Temptation of Christ in the Book

[115] For the exploration of the metaphor of head and body of the Church, see Jennifer O'Reilly, "Exegesis and the Book of Kells: The Lucan Genealogy," in *The Book of Kells: Proceedings of a Conference at Trinity College Dublin, 6-9 September 1992*, ed. Felicity O'Mahoney (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), 377-82; Carol Farr, *The Book of Kells: Its Function and Audience* (London: The British Library and University of Toronto Press, 1997), 72-75; O'Brien, *Bede's Temple*, 101-28.

[116] "Vita Brigidae," 26.

[117] This interpretation challenges Lisa Bitel's assumption that Brigit's presence in the church decidedly overshadowed that of Conláed. See Lisa M. Bitel, "Ekphrasis at Kildare: The Imaginative Architecture of a Seventh-Century Hagiographer," *Speculum* 79 (2004): 617. I would argue that like the church itself, the ritual roles of Brigit and Conláed were separated: Brigit became the centre of pilgrimage, while the liturgical prerogative of Conláed and his episcopal successors remained just as important.

of Kells presents a rare example of depicting a church building in early Irish art.[118] It also encapsulates the multivalent connotations between the Temple, the Tabernacle, and the Christian church.[119] For the present discussion, one part of the image has particular relevance, namely the doorway of the building with a figure holding two crossed rods standing in it. The figure in the doorway was interpreted by different scholars as Christ, Aaron, and even as Solomon.[120] However, the association of the figure with the high priest standing on the threshold of the Temple seems to be the most plausible.[121] This interpretation also facilitates the allegorical reading of the image, whereby the Temple can be seen as a Christian church and the high priest in the doorway as a bishop. In this case, the position of the figure in the portal invokes certain liturgical connotations, namely it draws attention to the opening part of the Eucharistic celebration: the introit, which in the early Middle Ages was an elaborate and solemn ceremony, especially in episcopal churches.[122]

Therefore, the church entrance was a significant part of the ritual space in an episcopal church. One of its primary functions was to control and direct the movement within the church, thus organising the assorted members of the congregation into the "body" of the church with Christ

[118] See footnote 105.
[119] Farr, "History and Mnemonic," 140-42.
[120] Michael Duignan interpreted the figure as Christ in Glory, Françoise Henry considered it to be Christ at preaching, and Carol Farr proposed a connection to the triumphal motif of Psalm 90. See Michael V. Duignan, "Three Pages from Irish Gospel-Books," *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 57 (1952): 14; Françoise Henry, "The Book and Its Decoration," in *The Book of Kells: Reproductions from the Manuscript in Trinity College, Dublin* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 189; Carol Farr, "Liturgical Influences on the Decoration of the Book of Kells," in *Studies in Insular Art and Archaeology*, ed. Catherine Karkov and Robert Farrell (Oxford, OH: American Early Medieval Studies, 1991), 132. Jennifer O'Reilly argues that the details of the figure's vestments and the budding rods allow for an association with Aaron. This idea is picked up in a later article by Carol Farr. Cormac Bourke also interprets the figure as the high priest with a group of regular priests on his sides. See O'Reilly, "Exegesis," 382-89; Farr, "History and Mnemonic," 142; Cormac Bourke, "The Book of Kells: New Light on the Temptation Scene," in *From Ireland Coming: Irish Art from the Early Christian to the Gothic Period and Its European Context*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 52. Peter Harbison points out that the pose of the figure might allude to Solomon as the judge. See Peter Harbison, "Three Miniatures in the Book of Kells," *PRIA* 85C (1985): 189.
[121] See the previous footnote.
[122] Originating as a papal ceremony, the introit quickly developed a complex structure and gained significance. However, after *c*. 1000 it began to lose its processional character. See Josef A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, vol. 1, trans. Francis A. Brunner (New York: Benziger, 1951), 269; Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: A Guide to Their Organization and Terminology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 84.

or bishop as his *imago* at its head. It was also one of the focal processional stations which marked, among other processions sadly not attested by Irish sources, the ceremony of episcopal introit.

The Sanctuary

The next boundary which crosses the church space is the partition separating the congregation from the area around the altar where the liturgical performance takes place. This boundary, serving for further zoning of holiness, imposes stricter rules as to who is allowed to cross it than does the entrance. The area behind this boundary, be it a physical screen or a conceptual one, is as close to the divine as an earthly place can get.[123] The imagery of a sanctuary is where the ongoing conceptual metaphor between the Christian church and the Tabernacle / Temple as well as between the Christian and Hebrew priesthood reaches its peak. For both the Holy of Holies and a Christian sanctuary contain sacred mysteries of cosmological significance performed behind the veil or the altar screen.

Such tangible partitions are very effective in communicating the idea of separation and restricted access. This goes both for the actual space and for the mental space, where a simple mention of a wall by the author immediately triggers the construction of one in the minds of the audience. This is demonstrated in yet another passage from *Vita Brigidae*:

> The first of these walls […] stretches widthwise in the east part of the church from one wall to the other. In it there are two doors, one at either end, and through the door situated on the right, one enters the sanctuary to the altar where the archbishop (*summus pontifex*) offers the Lord's sacrifice together with his monastic chapter and those appointed to the sacred mysteries.[124]

[123] According to Ronald Grimes, a ritual partition does not necessarily have to be a material object as any attempt at mapping out space automatically creates dividers on a conceptual level. He points out that "[a]lthough less tangible than altar rails […], epistemological screens—whether constructed of abstract ideas or mental images—are no less determinative of action than physical barriers are." Ronald L. Grimes, "Ritual Performance and the Sequestering of Sacred Space," in *Discourse in Ritual Studies*, ed. Hans Schilderman (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 159.
[124] "Vita Brigidae," 54. Translation in Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosus's Life of St Brigit," 26. The left door, just like the left entrance, was reserved for women: the abbess, nuns, and widows. They, however, are allowed to cross the boundary in a different state: they only "partake of the banquet of the body and blood of Jesus Christ."

Cogitosus makes sure that the wall which he creates for his audience is impermeable for a regular congregant: he emphasises its width and gives strict rules as to who is allowed through the openings and in what status. As a good guide, Cogitosus offers his audience an opportunity to participate in the ritual in the only capacity available to them: they can insert themselves into the vague "one enters" (*intratur*) and behold "the sacred mysteries."[125]

The tenth-century *Cormac's Glossary* gives a concise but metaphorically rich definition of an altar screen: "*Crand-caingel* i.e. a hurdle in the beam between laymen and clerics, after the likeness of the veil of the temple."[126] With that, it introduces a conceptual level into the understanding of a screen by continuing the consistent strategy of conceptualising Christian sacred spaces through the matrix of the Old Testament narrative. The phrase "after the likeness" (*fo chosmailes*) stimulates the creation of a new mental space, different from the casual one where a beam separates clerics and laymen in that it makes the readers combine the familiar Christian setting with their knowledge of the interior organisation of the Temple. The resulting image is what can be called a conceptual blend: it combines the mappings from two different conceptual domains—that of a Christian church with its screened chancel and of the Hebrew Temple with its veiled Holy of Holies—into a new autonomous construct where the properties of both are, as it were, blended. One should, therefore, consider how the Old Testament context could enhance and transform the understanding of an utterly Christian space.

[125] However, even with such heavy restrictions on entering, Kildare's sanctuary became involved in a scandalous incident, when around 760 "Eutighern, a bishop, was killed by a priest at the altar of St Brigit, at Kildare, between the *Crocaingel* [the altar screen] and the altar; from whence it arose that ever since a priest does not celebrate Mass in the presence of a bishop at Kildare." *The Annals of the Four Masters,* ed. and trans. John O'Donovan (Dublin: Hodges & Smith, 1851), 359. The event is also recorded, though in less detail, in the Annals of Ulster (762) and the Annals of Tigernach (760, 762). See *The Annals of Ulster, AD 431-1131*, ed. and. trans. Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983), 215; "The Annals of Tigernach," ed. and trans. Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique* 17 (1896): 260. This was indeed a sacrilege which must have reminded the contemporaries of the crime of which Christ accused the scribes and Pharisees and their forefathers: "on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar (Matt. 23:35; also Luke 11:51).

[126] *Sanas Chormaic: Cormac's Glossary*, ed. and trans. John O'Donovan (Calcutta: Irish Archaeological and Celtic Society, 1868), 46-47.

Symbolically, the veil dividing the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place is a boundary between the earth and heaven which, among other indications, is manifested in Psalm 11:4: "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven." The idea was enthusiastically upheld by the Christian tradition as, for example, in an epigram said to be inscribed over the chancel arch in St Martin's basilica at Tours: "This is truly the temple of God and the door to heaven."[127]

The veil also separated the earthly history unfolding in a linear manner and the eternity of the Holy of Holies where past, present, and future coexisted at every moment.[128] This concept found its reflection in the sacred time of Christian liturgy, as crossing the threshold of the sanctuary meant stepping out of the linear flow of historical time and into a multi-layered Eucharistic continuity. Here the milestones of the sacred history collapse into one and are re-enacted by the celebrant and relived in full by the participants of the ceremony.[129]

The cosmological symbolism of the church and sanctuary contribute considerably to the process of conceptualising the space of episcopal ritual. It also encourages the allegorical interpretation of sacred objects and particularly the most important one of them—the altar. The altar was indeed the liturgical centre of the church and the first thing to be consecrated.[130] Its ritual significance lies in its transitional character between the earthly and the heavenly, even in more condensed manner than the whole sanctuary.[131] The concept of an altar as a focal point

[127] *Vere templum Dei est et porta coeli*. Luce Pietri, *La ville de Tours du IVe au VIe siècle: Naissance d'une cité chrétienne* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1983), 809. Translation in Cynthia Hahn, "Seeing and Believing: The Construction of Sanctity in Early-Medieval Saints' Shrines," *Speculum* 72, no. 4 (1997): 1096.
[128] Barker, *The Great High Priest*, 192-93.
[129] See Patricia M. Rumsay, *Sacred Time in Early Christian Ireland: The Monks of* Nauigatio *and the Céli Dé in Dialogue to Explore the Theologies of Time and the Liturgy of the Hours in pre-Viking Ireland* (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 96-97.
[130] See "The *Lebar Brecc* Tractate," 370-71.
[131] A manifestation of this can again be found in an illustration, namely the diagram of the Heavenly Jerusalem concluding the Book of Revelation in the early-ninth-century Book of Armagh. *Liber Ardmachanus: The Book of Armagh*, ed. John Gwynn (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co, 1913), 335. It follows the description of the heavenly city in Revelation 21 depicting its square walls and its twelve gates, which results in a ground plan reminiscent of the Irish *templa quadrata*. This analogy becomes even more apparent when one associates the symbolic depiction of Christ as the Temple (an oblong rectangular) in the upper part of the square with an altar positioned towards the eastern part of a church. Such telling imagery might be in a similar vein to the idea developed in two sermons

where the earthly traverses into the divine also could be used in discourses outside the church environment.[132]

One crucial element is still missing from the mental image of a Christian sanctuary, and it is yet again provided by Cogitosus whose informed guidance facilitated the construction of an accessible and dynamic mental space of an episcopal church:

> [t]he church in which the glorious bodies of both – namely Archbishop Conleth and our most flourishing virgin Brigit—are laid on the right and left of the ornate altar and rest in tombs adorned with a refined profusion of gold, silver, gems and precious stones with gold and silver chandeliers (*coronae*) hanging from above and different images presenting a variety of carvings and colours.[133]

In Cogitosus's ekphrasis the description of the two tombs is a bigger focus of attention than even the "ornate altar." In this way, they added to the holiness of the screened chancel in that they enhanced the default mental representation of a sanctuary with an altar at its core with the imagery of the Ark of the Covenant and the Tomb of Christ at Jerusalem with which saintly burials came to be associated.[134]

But the symbolic benefit from placing the tombs in the sanctuary was reciprocal: their location in the most sacred place in the entire *civitas* of Kildare advanced the hagiographer's intention to establish the church at Kildare as a place of pilgrimage. It should be pointed out that at this

from *De sacramentis* – a work with contested attribution to Ambrose – where the author asks: *quid est enim altare Christi nisi forma corporis Christi?* Ambrose, "De sacramentis libri sex," PL 16, col. 437, 447.

[132] One remarkable example is the vision of St Colmán Elo in which the death of Gregory the Great was revealed to him allegorically: "…I saw a golden altar floating in heaven in the hands of angels and the soul of the holiest pope Gregory sitting on the altar; and the space between the heaven and the earth was replete with angelic light." "Vita sancti Colmani abbatis de Land Elo," VSH 1, 264 (my translation). The picture created by Colmán's anonymous hagiographer is a vivid illustration of the nature of an altar: it belongs to heaven rather than to earth, and due to its heavenly nature it is used to elevate the soul of the pope who himself was the most distinguished among those who ministered at the altar. The image of a golden altar surrounded by angels also might be drawing on a less peaceful motive from Revelation 8:3, where the eighth angel offers "on the golden altar before the throne" before devastating the earth with the fire from that altar.

[133] "Vita Brigidae," 54. Translation in Conolly and Picard "Cogitosus's Life of St Brigit," 25.

[134] Tomás Ó Carragáin, "The Saint and the Sacred Centre: The Early Medieval Pilgrimage Landscape of Inishmurray," in *The Archaeology of the Early Medieval Celtic Churches: Proceedings of a Conference on the Archaeology of the Early Medieval Celtic Churches, September 2004*, ed. Nancy Edwards (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2009), 219. In another article Ó Carragáin points out that a unique feature of Irish tradition linked the Tomb of Christ and a saint's place of death through the concept of *locus resurrectionis*. See idem, "The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Relics in Early Medieval Ireland," *JRSAI* 133 (2003): 143-44.

time (mid-seventh century) even the popes were buried only at the entrance of St Peter.[135] While the practice of linking relics to the altar might have been borrowed from Merovingian Gaul, their closeness was definitely authorised by the passage from Revelation 6:9: "When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God."[136] Such a combination of worship and veneration had a direct connection to ritual, since, being placed behind the altar screen, the tombs of Conláed and Brigit secured constant presence at all ceremonies performed at the altar.[137]

The two decorated tombs flanking the altar can also be compared to the two pillars which stood on the sides of the entrance to Solomon's Temple.[138] A context for such interpretation is provided by Bede and his meticulous exegesis in *De templo*.[139] But while he associates two pillars with preachers to the Jews and gentiles, in Cogitosus's case it is rather the dichotomy of clerical and monastic holiness. It has been established earlier that the altar might represent a point of intersection between the earth and heaven and is symbolically linked to Christ.[140]

[135] Ibid., 140.

[136] On the origins of the practice in late Antiquity, see Roger Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 148-49. According to John Crook, deceased bishops in late sixth-century Gaul were often buried near the high altar, "usually behind it, occasionally on the right-hand (south) side of it." John Crook, *The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Saints in the Early Christian West, c. 300-1200* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 69.

[137] Another example of bishops intangibly appropriating the space of a church can be found in a short vernacular "Treatise on the Mass" appended to the Stowe Missal. In it, special instructions for preparing the host for the Easter and Christmas services are proposed. Namely, it should be arranged in shape of a cross so that "[t]he middle particle is that to which the mass priest goes, i.e. the figure of the breast with the secrets. What is from that upwards of the shaft to bishops; the cross-piece on the left hand to priests; that on the right hand to all sub-grades; that from the cross-piece down to anchorites and penitents." "Treatise on the Mass," in *The Stowe Missal: MS D.II.3 in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin*. Vol. 2: *Printed Text*, ed. and trans. George W. Warner (London: Harrison and Sons, 1915), 42. Singling out a part of the host for bishops when they are not present in the church helps secure their spiritual presence during mass.

[138] "He set up the pillar on the south and called its name Jachin, and he set up the pillar on the north and called its name Boaz" (1 Kings 7:21).

[139] "For they signify the apostles and all spiritual teachers, those, that is, who are strong in faith and work and elevated to heavenly things by contemplation. Moreover, there are two of them so that they may bring both gentiles and circumcised into the church by preaching. They stood in the portico in front of the doors of the temple and strikingly adorned its entrance on both sides by their elegance and beauty. The temple door, on the other hand, is the Lord because no one comes to the Father except through him." Bede, *On the Temple*, trans. Seán Connolly (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), 74. I have been unable to consult the latest Latin edition: Bede, "De templo," in *Opera exegetica*, ed. David Hurst. CCSL 119A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969), 141-234.

[140] See footnote 132.

Therefore, the proposed allegorical reading combines different levels of conceptualisation into an image of the two saints showing men and womenfolk the way to the kingdom of heaven, the door to which Christ opens for them through the Eucharistic sacrifice on the altar.

Another noteworthy feature of Bede's text is the stress on the "elegance and beauty" of the two pillars which corresponds to Cogitosus's attention to the tomb decorations. Particularly, he describes the gold and silver *coronae* suspended above the tombs which in fact are lamps in the shape of crowns.[141] Their presence in Cogitosus's text is not incidental either, for they are meant to visualise the crown of righteousness promised by Paul to all the faithful and the crown of glory promised to the elders and shepherds.[142] The overall impression of the description of the two burials is that of colourfulness and decorative exuberance which helps convey the high status of the church and invoke the bright colours of the Holy of Holies and, quite possibly, of other well-known examples of rich church decoration, Roman basilicas.

Episcopal Church: A Basilica?

The term *basilica* was appropriated in the Irish language already in the mid-sixth century.[143] It had various connotations not all of which involved the discourse of episcopal authority. Probably the most stable meaning was that of a cemetery church, a usage borrowed from the Franks.[144] Another aspect of basilica had to do with its etymology and implied royal affiliations.[145] In terms of architecture, early insular basilicas came to be associated with

[141] Bitel, "Ekphrasis at Kildare," 620.
[142] 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4.
[143] Charles Doherty, "The Basilica in Early Ireland," *Peritia* 3 (1984): 309-10.
[144] One of the canons in the *Hibernensis* uses *basilica* as a synonym for grave (for a deceased monk). "Hibernensis," 58. For the Frankish material, Thomas Charles-Edwards points out that the term *basilica* was specifically used for non-episcopal churches in suburban cemeteries, as opposed to *ecclesia*, a cathedral church. Charles-Edwards, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 45, 249. It should be noted that the fourth and fifth-century Roman basilicas were also built outside the walls and stored relics of saints.
[145] In Muirchú's *Vita Patricii*, basilica is one of the terms in a chain of Greek words associated with royalty: "*Basilius*, that is, a (petty) king; *basilica* that is a royal dwelling […] *basilium* that is kingdom." Muirchú, "Vita sancti Patricii," in *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, ed. and trans. Ludwig Bieler (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979), 62-63. Basilica as a place of royal burial is to be found in the *Hibernensis*: *Basilion graece, rex latine, hinc et basilica, regalis, quia in primis temporibus reges tantum sepeliebantur in ea,*

structures of mortared stone, as opposed to simpler wooden churches.[146] Incorporating some of these aspects, basilican imagery became an important part in constructing the mental image of an episcopal church.

Basilican structure, inherited from Roman public architecture, was well known already in early Christian period. Churches of basilican type have a very distinct appearance, incorporating "a high central nave, separated by colonnades from aisles on either side. Above the columns, clerestory windows bring light to the central space, and the building has a pronounced longitudinal axis, as the eye is led forward to the semicircular apse at the east end."[147]

Comparing this description to the picture that Cogitosus created in *Vita Brigidae* hardly allows calling the church at Kildare a basilica. Yet, this is exactly how the hagiographer concludes his glorious ekphrasis: "And so, in one vast basilica (*basilica maxima*), a large congregation of people of varying status, rank, sex, and local origin, with partitions placed between them, prays to the omnipotent Master, differing in status, but one in spirit."[148]

However, even if the semblance between the continental basilicas and the church described by Cogitosus is not apparent, Richard Krautheimer has shown long ago that copying in medieval architecture was of special kind: it did not so much concentrate on capturing forms and exact measurements as on a "selective transfer" of symbolically significant features and connotations.[149] The same considerations apply to the textual "copying" through specific rhetoric: using the term basilica for technically a non-basilican church implied a set of elements

nomen sortita est. "Hibernesis," 179. *O'Mulconry's Glossary*, parts of which might be as early as the second half of the seventh century, defines basilica as "the house of the king of heaven" (*tech rig nime*). "O'Mulconry's Glossary," ed. Whitley Stokes, in *Archiv für celtische Lexikographie,* vol. 1, ed Whitley Stokes and Kuno Meyer (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1900), 242.

[146] Ó Carragáin, *Churches*, 65.

[147] This is a description which Roger Stalley gives to the basilica of Santa Sabina in Rome. Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, 17.

[148] "Vita Brigidae," 56. Translation in Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosus's Life of St Brigit," 26.

[149] Richard Krautheimer, "Introduction to an 'Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 1-33.

which were meant to invoke this type of structure. It is most prominent in the works connected to two rival churches fighting for primacy over Ireland: Kildare and Armagh. Both strived to secure for themselves metropolitan status by appealing to the imagery of the great papal basilicas in Rome, thus drawing upon the discourse of *Romanitas*.[150]

Kildare is the only church whose basilican claim can be analysed on the basis of an architectural description. The application of Krautheimer's model of copying to this text yields interesting results. First of all, even though it was not an aisled church, there was a clear attempt to create a strong impression of longitudinal division. Carol Neuman de Vegvar argues that the partition in the middle of the church dividing men and women was a reference to the *solea* of papal basilicas. *Solea* was originally a projection from the sanctuary to the nave protected by low barriers where a clerical procession could pass and communion was distributed to the lower clergy.[151] While it might be a stretch to equate *solea* to the middle partition at Kildare as the two structures implied different organisation of movement during the liturgy, a basilica was in its essence a highly partitioned space with flexible possibilities for mapping it out as needed. Roger Stalley compared it, rather anticlimactically, to "a great shed, which could be adapted to local requirements, with sections divided off by curtains or screens to suit the needs of the liturgy."[152] But at that, it still was a unified space, with dividers being symbolic rather than straightforward solid walls. This type of internal organisation was echoed in the church at Kildare. The mental image created by Cogitosus, where "under the single roof" partitions and separate entrances were arranged for men and women as well as spatial differentiation of

[150] The topic has been explored by Carol Neuman de Vegvar and Lisa Bitel for Kildare and Tomás Ó Carragáin for Armagh. See Carol Neuman de Vegvar, "Romanitas and Realpolitik in Cogitosus' Description of the Church of St Brigit, Kildare," in *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300,* ed. Martin Carver (York: York Medieval Press, 2003), 153-67; Bitel, "Ekphrasis at Kildare," 605-27; Ó Carragáin, "*Imitatio Romae* in Eighth-Century Armagh," in *Churches*, 60-66. Here, I will draw attention to some ritual implication of this *imitatio*.
[151] Neuman de Vegvar, "Romanitas and Realpolitik," 162.
[152] Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, 22.

priests, nuns, and layfolk, draws considerably on the great Roman churches designed for pompous and intricate liturgies.[153]

A feature in Cogitosus's description which even more clearly draws on the appearance of a basilica is the presence in the church of "many windows." This statement yet again contradicts archaeological material which invariably shows only two small windows in the east and south wall of the churches.[154] The emphasis on the number of windows is important to create an impression of a spacious and well-lit space, both being discerning qualities of a basilica.[155]

Spaciousness is another quality of Brigit's church which Cogitosus points out.[156] And again, it was intended to contrast the average congregational churches which were remarkably small.[157] In this respect, it should be pointed out that the size of the earliest basilicas was not so much

[153] Neuman de Vegvar, "Romanitas and Realpolitik," 161-66; Alan Doig, *Liturgy and Architecture: From the Early Church to the Middle Ages* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 89-94. The claim for Romanitas is asserted in another document of Brigit's life—a mid-eighth-century anonymous life of St Brigit known as *Vita prima sanctae Brigidae*. In it, an interesting miracle is ascribed to the saint, namely that she was able to metaphysically attend "masses in Rome at the tombs of Sts. Peter and Paul," while staying at Kildare, and twice dispatched her clerics to Rome to bring back "the order of this mass and of the universal rule" (*ordo et universa regula*). "Vita prima sanctae Brigidae," ed. Karina Hochegger, in *Untersuchungen zu den ältesten* 'Vitae sanctae Brigidae.' M.Phil. diss.: Universität Wien, 2009, 176; translation in Seán Connolly, "*Vita Prima Sanctae Brigitae*: Background and Historical Value," *JRSAI* 119 (1989): 41. The author showed an awareness that the liturgical rite was subject to change by having Brigit send her "experts" for the second time for the most up-to-date information. While neither modern historians (for the lack of sources), nor the contemporary congregation of Kildare (not being themselves able to track the changes of the Roman rite) could assert that the liturgy at Brigit's church actually followed that at Rome, the passage probably reached its goal and convinced quite a few congregants and those interested in the cult of Brigit that the mass ministered by the bishop of Kildare followed the most authoritative rite across the Western churches, and its most relevant version at that.

[154] See Ó Carragáin, "Architectural Setting of the Mass," 132-33, 137, fig. 8. This is taking into account the lack of the evidence for wooden churches which were dominant in Ireland up until the eighth century. See Ann Hamlin, "The Archaeology of the Early Irish Churches in the Eighth Century," *Peritia* 4 (1985): 283.

[155] In his description of the basilica of St Martin, Gregory of Tours very diligently counted its numerous windows: "It has thirty-two windows in the sanctuary and twenty in the nave […] In the whole building there are fifty-two windows." Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), 100. On the role of light in early medieval churches, see Charles B. McClendon, *The Origins of Medieval Architecture: Building in Europe, AD 600-900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 22.

[156] "[E]cclesia […] solo spatiosa", "basilica maxima" accommodating "populus grandis." "Vita Brigidae," 54.

[157] The smallest extant church, Temple Benen on Inishmore, measures only 3.35m by 2.13m. See Hamlin, "The Archaeology," 285; also, Françoise Henry, *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period (to 800 A.D.)* (London: Methuen & Co, 1940), 84-85; Harold G. Leask, *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings*, vol. 1, *The First Phases and the Romanesque* (Dublin: Dundalgan Press, 1955), 6. However, principal churches tended to be of a more formidable size. Courtenay Radford argues that stone cathedrals of the tenth century such as those at Glendalough and Clonmacnoise (14.75m by 9m and 18.9m by 8.75m respectively) might reflect the size of wooden churches of the earlier period. According to Ó Carragáin, the principal churches tended to be larger in size than most of the extant stone churches, measuring 40-60 sq m. Courtenay A. R. Radford, "The Earliest Irish Churches," *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 40 (1977): 3; Ó Carragáin, "Architectural Setting of the Mass," 119.

an expression of authority as a practical need to accommodate the growing urban congregation.[158] But according to Cogitosus, the church at Kildare was no less crowded by the faithful of all walks of life, so the size of Brigit's basilica stimulated the imagining of large public ceremonies in Rome—something that many Irish, being ardent pilgrims, were probably familiar with.

Another crucial point of comparison is the organisation of the space east of the altar which was usually designated for the administering clerics. Basilican structure borrowed by the Christians from Roman architecture, often included a semicircular apse or exedra, which provided "a point of authority." It could have been occupied by a magistrate or, in imperial basilicas, by the throne of the emperor.[159] In Christian basilicas it was the place for clergy and often accommodated an episcopal throne, or *cathedra*. The latter was usually situated behind the high altar, on the east-west axis, thus being a part of the liturgical heart of a church. It is possible to assume that in Ireland episcopal *cathedra* also was a prominent *locus* of attention, as a canon from the *Hibernensis* decrees: "Let the bishop sit in a higher place (*sublimior*) in the church than the assembly of presbyters."[160] Thus, the position of eminence which has been established in metaphorical connotation in the previous chapter finds its spatial expression in an elevated position among the clerical chapter.[161]

Two churches referred to as *cathedrae* are again Kildare and Armagh. But Cogitosus, while calling his church *cathedra episcopalis*, does not mention the actual throne in the sanctuary, only saying that the bishop entered there "with his monastic chapter and those appointed to the sacred mysteries."[162] Armagh aimed even higher by assuming the name of an *apostolica*

[158] Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, 29.
[159] Ibid., 22.
[160] "Hibernensis," 7 (my translation).
[161] Special significance of the place behind the high altar as a position of supreme authority is also attested in the description of an imagined monastic church in *Navigatio Brendani*: *Locus vero ubi abbas sedebat erat inter duos choros*. The choirs were situated on the sides of the altar. *Navigatio Brendani*, 33-34.
[162] "Vita Brigidae," 20, 54. Translation in Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosus's Life of St Brigit," 12, 26.

cathedra and it could have been equipped with a proper throne mentioned in annals in 1020: "All Ard Macha was completely burned […] i.e. the great stone church […] and the old preaching chair (*sen-chathair preciupta*)." [163] Therefore, the combined references to a *cathedra*, chair and the elevated position of the bishop among the priests help create a powerful image of an enthroned bishop in all the splendour of his liturgical attire which, even though not communicated in the sources directly, could have been pieced together from the spatial hints in the texts and the pre-existing knowledge of the audience which texts rely on.

The "great stone church" at Armagh mentioned above—another prominent example of an Irish "basilica"—unfortunately lacks such a flamboyant description as the one provided by Cogitosus. However, its splendour finds another expression in a text contemporaneous with *Vita Brigidae*:

> And these three orders [virgins, penitents, and monks] are allowed to hear the word of preaching in the church of the northern district on Sundays always; in the southern basilica (*australis bassilica*), however, bishops and priests and anchorites and the other religious offer pleasing praises.[164]

This brief passage not only conveys the formidable size of the *civitas* of Armagh with its multiple churches, but also designates its southern church only for the members of the clergy, which gives it a special status. Moreover, it is the cathedral see of the bishop of Armagh, which is emphasised by calling it a *basilica* as opposed to regular *ecclesiae*.[165] Considering that the bishops of Armagh deliberately employed the discourse of *Romanitas* on various levels, it is

[163] "Additamenta," in *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, ed. and trans. Ludwig Bieler (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979), 172-73; *The Annals of Ulster, AD 431-1131*, 456-57.
[164] "Liber angeli," 186-87. Note that north is again designated for women, albeit together with penitents and monks, and south is associated with men in clerical orders.
[165] The assumption that the term basilica became associated with episcopal churches is also confirmed by a passage from *Vita Colmani* where St Colmán visited St Finnian's tomb at the monastery of Clonard which was also a bishopric since *c*. 580: *Sanctus Colmanus […] perrexit ad basilicam, in qua sanctus pater Finnianus iacuit […] Ilico aperiens sanctus Finnianus basilicam, dixit ei sanctus Colmanus [...]*. "Vita sancti Colmani," VSH 1, 272.

possible to suggest that this choice of a words was expected to invoke the imagery of papal basilicas.[166]

Another crucial feature of a "classical" basilica is the presence of relics. The earliest basilicas were erected on the graves of the saints, like St Peter or St Paul in Rome; later foundations had relics transferred into them, like the basilica of St Martin in Tours. It was particularly prestigious to have the tomb of the founder to grace his or her foundation.[167] In this respect, Kildare was in a much more advantageous position having the relics of both its first abbess and bishop. Armagh, on the other hand, lacked the body of its famous founder, St Patrick, which is why a translation of prestigious Roman relics was secured around *c*. 640, so that a proponent of its metropolitan and basilican status could say that "it ought to be venerated in honour of the principal martyrs Peter and Paul, Stephen, Lawrence, and the others."[168] With such honourable saints on its side, Armagh's claim for the *apostolica cathedra* became much more substantial and eventually overpowered the intricately crafted metropolitan discourse of Kildare.

Thus, a close examination of symbolic and spatial parallels between Irish episcopal churches and Roman basilicas has shown that the use of the term basilica in this context was, among other things, used to transpose the imagery of illustrious liturgical entourage associated with the most prominent churches in the Latin West onto the episcopal sees in Ireland. While the actual buildings might not have lived up to the daring comparison, on a purely textual level the narratives achieved their goal by creating a conceptual space where the familiar environment of an Irish temple was interlaced with the spectacular features of Roman basilicas.

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[166] See Doherty, "Basilica," 310-11; Ó Carragáin, "The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Saints," 140; idem, *Churches*, 61-66.
[167] Doherty, "Basilica," 310.
[168] "Liber angeli," 186-87.

This chapter explored the spaces of episcopal ritual as they were constructed and conveyed in texts and processed by the audience in form of mental representations. It was possible to discern several crucial points which define episcopal ritual in deictic terms. First, the interior of the church building was described dynamically, expressing movement of the clergy and congregation as it was an intrinsic feature of liturgical ritual. Second, certain locations inside the church were focalised as the most prominent. These were the boundaries, such as the entrance and the altar screen, and objects in the sanctuary such as the altar and saintly burials. Third, a church description was often based on conceptual blending of different domains of meaning to convey the implied imagery more vividly and effectively. This strategy enhanced the space created in the minds of the audience with rich cosmological connotations and analogies with prominent contemporary architecture, thus elevating it to a whole new level of ritual significance.

Chapter III – Continuity: The Ritual Action in Writing

With the mental space of episcopal ritual established, it is possible to proceed to the representations of its temporal dimension, where ritual action enters the narrative. For a first glimpse at the areas of special sacramental jurisdiction of a bishop one might turn to the eighth-century vernacular *Ríagail Pátraic* (the Rule of Patrick) which opens thus:

> It is on the souls of the men of Ireland from the Testament of Patrick: each tribe to have a chief bishop (*Primepscop*) for the ordination of their clergy, for the consecration of their churches, and for the spiritual guidance of princes and chieftains, for the sanctification and blessing of their offspring after baptism.[169]

Here, three episcopal sacraments (ordination of clergy, consecration of churches, confirmation) are emphasised along with a very different responsibility—to offer spiritual guidance to the rulers. All of this helps to distinguish and elevate a bishop over the ranks of the clergy by defining his role in terms of concrete actions pertaining to his office which completes the broad establishing metaphors analysed in the first chapter.

The focus of the present chapter is, therefore, placed on the "active" aspects of ritual narrative, namely on the descriptions of the exclusively episcopal rituals: ordination of clergy and consecration of churches.[170] Special attention is paid to the performative aspect of the ritual and how it is represented in text.[171] Here I propose to look at how specific actions and gestures

[169] "The Rule of Patrick," ed. and trans. James G. O'Keeffe, *Ériu* 1 (1904): 221.

[170] I have left out confirmation as there is not enough material on this ritual. I will, however, refer to it now and then throughout the chapter.

[171] It should be noted that performative approach in liturgical studies is predominantly influenced by anthropology and is usually oriented at practices rather than narratives. Even when the role of narratives is taken into account, as in case of prayers, they are still viewed in the context of a specific practice. For a summary of the performative approach to ritual studies, see Ronald L. Grimes, "Performance Theory and the Study of Ritual," in *New Approaches to the Study of Religion*, vol. 2, *Textual, Comparative, Sociological, and Cognitive Approaches*, ed. Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz, and Randi R. Warne (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 109-38; Aad de Jong, "Liturgical Action from a Language Perspective: About Performance and Performatives in Liturgy," in *Discourse in Ritual Studies*, ed. Hans Schilderman (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 111-45. For medieval material, see Éric Palazzo, "Performing the Liturgy," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 3, *Early Medieval Christianities, c. 600 – c. 1100*, ed. Thomas F. X. Noble and Julia M. H. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 472-88.

described in the texts come together in a conceptual image of a ritual. This approach allows for a more flexible interpretation than viewing these elements as actual practices, since the domain of mental representation accommodates complex allegorisation and conceptual blending easier than rigid practicality.

Ordination

The Bishop Ordained

The most extensive account of episcopal ordination is offered by the *Hibernensis*, which touches upon such crucial elements of the ritual as the imposition of hands and the handing over of order-specific "instruments"—*traditio instrumentorum*.[172] The description of the former draws on Isidore's *De ecclesiasticis officiis* and on the fifth-century Gallican canonical compilation known as *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*. From Isidore *Hibernensis* borrows a row of Old Testament analogies establishing the "ancient institution" of laying-on of hands.[173] This again invokes a specific imagery which merges with the Christian practice and enhances it with an additional plane of performative meaning whereby the act of ordination is framed as an enactment of particular episodes from the Scripture. The same also pertains to other elements of the ordination rite, which will be discussed shortly.

The *Statuta ecclesiae antiquae* contribute to the picture that starts to take shape by providing concrete "stage directions": "When a bishop is ordained, let two bishops lay on their hands and

[172] Continental sources often present a more elaborate structure of ordination rituals which includes the election and presentation of the candidate and vesting of the ordinand as the first two steps in ordination. The act of ordination is followed by a mass. But since these elements are not present in the Irish sources concerning ordination, I will leave them out here. See Paul F. Bradshaw, *Rites of Ordination: Their History and Theology* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2013), 109; Roger E. Reynolds, "*Ordinatio* and the Priesthood in the Early Middle Ages and Its Visual Depiction," in *A Companion to Priesthood and Holy Orders in the Middle Ages*, ed. Greg Peters and C. Colt Anderson (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 48-53.

[173] The examples of Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 27:27), Jacob and his sons (Gen. 49:28), Moses and Joshua (Num. 27:15; Deut. 34:9) are said to be prototypes for episcopal ordination. Isidore, "De ecclesiasticis officiis," 782-83; "Hibernensis," 4.

hold the book of Gospels over his head, that is, over his neck, and while one pronounces benediction (*fundente benedictionem*), let all other bishops present place their hands over his head following the bishop's hand."[174]

The imposition of hands seems to be the cornerstone of the ordination rite in the early medieval West, starting with the *Sacramentarium Veronense*.[175] The gesture also meant to invoke Christ and his blessing of the apostles which bestowed them with the Holy Spirit. This idea is most unambiguously stated in the Pseudo-Isidorian *Liber de numeris* whose Hiberno-Latin origin and eighth-century date were substantiated by Robert McNally: "Seventh, [Christ] was bishop when he lifted his hand over the heads of his disciples and blessed them, and blessing them conferred on them the Holy Spirit."[176] Even though the imposition as such does not feature in the Lukan narrative on which this text most probably draws, it does not fail to establish this conceptual link between the biblical action and local rituals.[177]

Imposition of the Gospels

But while the laying-on of hands and related imagery stem from an older tradition, another element of the ritual emphasised in the passage—the imposition of the Gospel book—is more of a rarity in the West. The *Hibernensis* also assumed it from the *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*, and

[174] "Hibernensis", 4 (my translation); see also "Statuta ecclesiae antiqua," in *Concilia Galliae a. 314-506*, ed. Charles Munier. CCSL 148 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1963), 181. This and other passages from the *Hibernensis* describing clerical ordinations derive from the instructions contained in *Statuta*.
[175] Bernard Botte, "L'ordination de l'évêque," *La Maison-Dieu* 98 (1969): 113. However, the earliest surviving Roman ritual of ordination, the mid-eighth-century *Ordo Romanus XXXIV*, does not mention the imposition *per se*, only the blessing. See Sharon L. McMillan, *Episcopal Ordination and Ecclesiastical Consensus* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2005), 32.
[176] Cited in Reynold, *The Ordinals of Christ*, 67 (my translation). For dating and attribution, see Robert E. McNally, *Der irische* Liber de numeris*: Eine Quellenanalyse des pseudo-isidorischen* Liber de numeris (Munich: Universität München, 1957); Marina Smyth, "The Irish *Liber de numeris*," in *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland: Proceedings of the 1993 Conference of the Society for Hiberno-Latin Studies on Early Irish Exegesis and Homiletics*, ed. Thomas O'Loughlin (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 291-97. The only edition of *Liber de numeris* to date is in Isidore of Seville, "Liber de numeris," PL 83, coll. 1293-302.
[177] In Luke it is only said that Christ blessed the apostles "lifting up his hands" (Luke 24:50).

the latter presumably borrowed it from the Syrian *Constitutiones apostolicae*.[178] Writing in the first half of the ninth century, Amalarius of Metz, the most outstanding liturgist of the Carolingian renaissance, was rather sceptical towards the spurious origin of the *impositio evangeliorum*, "which was disclosed neither by an ancient authority, nor by the apostolic tradition or canonical power." [179] But despite this unfortunate lack of proper sanction, Amalarius justifies this practice by saying that it can "remind those who hold [the Gospel] that the Lord imprinted that Gospel in his heart so that they pray for and remind him who is consecrated to be mindful that he is more distinguished under the yoke of the Gospel than he was before."[180] The book, therefore, becomes a very tangible embodiment of Christ's yoke, and keeping in mind that early medieval Gospel-books were quite substantial, it makes the Lord's words in Matthew 11:30 sound rather ironic.[181]

The motif of imposing a book on the ordinand's neck is briefly, but fruitfully, analysed by Annette Kehnel in her study of the conceptual metaphor of human life as a text and of "inscribed body." She advances Amalarius's interpretation by arguing that the act of imposition represents the burden of the word of God which the newly ordained bishop now has to carry: "it weighs him down and makes his body suffer the weight of the grand narrative of death and salvation."[182] This interpretation echoes Paul's words to the Corinthians: "For necessity is laid

[178] Luned Mair Davies, "*Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua* and the Gallic Councils in the *Hibernensis*," *Peritia* 14 (2000): 96-97. She also notices that in Rome the imposition of the Gospels was an exclusive part of papal ordination until the tenth century.

[179] Amalarius of Metz, "De ecclesiasticis officiis libri quatuor," PL 105, col. 1092. The latest edition of the work, now under the title *Liber officialis*, was unavailable to me. See *Amalarii episcopi opera liturgica omnia*, ed. J.-M. Hanssens, vol 2. (Vatican: Biblioteca apistolica Vaticana, 1948).

[180] Amalarius, "De ecclesiasticis officiis," 1092-93 (my translation). Interestingly, several scholars, apparently following the lead of Bernard Botte (whose work I have been unable to trace), argued that Amalarius was opposed to the practice of *impositio evangeliarum* based only on the sentence cited above, whereas he actually proceeds to show its symbolic value. See Bernard Botte, "Le rituel d'ordination des *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médievale* 2 (1939): 233 (n.v.).

[181] "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). The burden of episcopal office is also recognised in the early-ninth-century vernacular *Rule of St Carthage*: "If you are a bishop, noble is the order, take your burden (*mam*) with industry." "The Rule of St Carthage," ed. and trans. Mac Eclaise, *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 27 (1910): 496-97.

[182] Annette Kehnel, "'Use My Body Like the Pages of a Book': Tracing the 'Body Inscribed' as a Conceptual Metaphor for the Experience of Life in Western Thought and Tradition," in *Schriftträger – Textträger: Zur*

upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel."[183] It is therefore only fitting that two illustrations from manuscripts depicting the ordinations of Gregory Nazianzus and pope Sylvester II show them bowing down under the weight of the codices.[184]

To return to Ireland, these considerations must hold true for the compilers of the *Hibernensis* as well. For the congregants of the large episcopal "basilicas" the *impositio evangeliorum* probably brought to mind such lavish and (literally) heavily decorated Gospel manuscripts as the Book of Kells or the Book of Durrow. Although the question whether such books were used in the liturgy or simply displayed in the church to be wondered at is unresolved,[185] it does not change the fact that these unique artefacts impressed themselves in the minds of visitors and could then become symbolically associated with the most solemn rituals.[186]

Anointing

The idea of anointing seems to have attracted Irish ecclesiastics from very early on, which is evidenced in a brief phrase from the *Vita Brigidae* discussed in the first chapter. Cogitosus narrates that after Conáed's ordination "the anointed head (*unctum caput*) and primate of all bishops and the most blessed chief abbess of the virgins governed their primatial Church."[187]

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materialen Präsenz des Geschriebenen in frühen Gesellschaften, ed. Annette Kehnel and Diamantis Panagiotopoulos (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 263-64.

[183] 1 Cor. 9:16.

[184] See Roger E. Reynolds, "Image and Text: The Liturgy of Clerical Ordination in Early Medieval Art," *Gesta* 22, no. 1 (1983): 30.

[185] Farr, *The Book of Kells*, 42.

[186] In fact, one of the most famous Irish texts, Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*, features a very special book in it in connection to the ordination ritual, although not clerical, but a royal one. The author relates how in a dream, Columba received from an angel "a glass book of the ordination of kings" (*vitreus ordinationis regum liber*) in order to ordain Áedán mac Gabráin as king of Dál Riata. *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, ed. and trans. Alan O. Anderson and Marjorie O. Anderson (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961), 472-75; translation in Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1995), 208-9. The heavenly appearance hits the right note in the ritual discourse: not only does it create an instant link to the divine, it also demonstrates that a finely embellished codex was thought to be an indispensable part of the most important rituals acting as a channel through which the Word as a divine sanction reached the ordinand. The episode from Columba's life, although not representing episcopal ordination, attests very effectively to the centrality of the book in the multifaceted conceptual space of ritual.

[187] "Vita Brigidae," 18-20. Translation in Connolly and Picard, "Cogitosus's Life of St Brigit," 11-12.

Even in the absence of the actual ritual narrative, the reference to *unctum caput* is a powerful means of expression that immediately brings to mind the Old Testament discourse of sacerdotal anointing. As Paul Bradshaw notes, it was one of the two rites, along with vesting, which constituted the ordination of the high priest.[188] It is important to emphasise that although all of Aaron's sons were anointed,[189] only in his own unction was the oil poured on his head: "And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him."[190]

This part of Cogitosus's text excellently demonstrates the possibilities of understanding the ritual in conceptual terms: two words can substitute an entire liturgical ordinary by simply invoking a familiar image, mental or seen on church paintings and in manuscripts, of Moses pouring the anointing oil on Aaron's head. The latter could be imagined as kneeling or bowing before his brother, but one vivid detail was invariably attached to it—that of "the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes."[191] The resulting imagery conveyed multiple meanings at the same time: first, it referred to a fully-fledged ritual in a concise manner; second, it substantiated the link between Aaronic priesthood and episcopacy through the crucial act of elevating a person to the

[188] Bradshaw, *Rites of Ordination*, 115. As for the vesting, there is, to my knowledge, only one explicit reference to it as a part of ritual. It is to be found in the *Vita Brigidae* where Cogitosus narrates the miraculous reappearance of Conláed's "foreign vestments from overseas" (*vestimenta transmarina et peregrina*), which Brigit previously gave to the poor. It is specifically said that before the liturgy it was "usual for this chief prelate of the people to be vested in his ceremonial robes" (*mutatoriis vestis indutus*). "Vita Brigidae," 46. By mentioning the "texture and colours" of the clothes, Cogitosus also gives his audience a glimpse into the colourful world of the liturgy. Two later Irish tracts found in *Leabhar Breac* and the *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum* (both fifteenth century) list eight liturgical colours: white, purple, blue, green, yellow, red, brown and black. All of them are ascribed various symbolic meanings. The same colour palette appears in *Saltair na Rann*, a Middle Irish poem of Christian cosmology. See Frederick E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881), 112-25; Roger E. Reynolds, "Clerical Liturgical Vestments and Liturgical Colors in the Middle Ages," in *Clerics in the Middle Ages: Hierarchy and Image* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 10-11; John Carey, "The Three Sails, the Twelve Winds, and the Question of Early Irish Colour Theory," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 72 (2009): 228-32.

[189] "You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests." (Ex. 30:30). On the divergence of this ritual from the anointing of the high priest, see Daniel Fleming, "The Biblical Tradition of Anointing Priests," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117, no. 3 (1998): 401-14.

[190] Lev. 8:12. The same tradition continued into the Latin Middle Ages, where deacons only had their hands anointed, presbyters—their hands and the thumb, and only episcopal ordination involved anointing of the head, along with the hands and the thumb. See Reynolds, "*Ordinatio* and the Priesthood," 53.

[191] Ps. 133:2.

performance of sacred mysteries; third, it offered a concrete model which in the mind of a medieval reader easily unfolded into a very "tangible" conceptual space where even such details as the oil running down the ordinand's face and the hem of his garment played a role.

Another argument in favour of interpreting this reference to episcopal unction as a part of discourse rather than of actual liturgical practice is the fact that it is not attested in continental liturgical sources up until the first half of the eighth century (*Vita Brigidae* was composed in the mid-seventh). And even then *Missale Francorum*, the first liturgical document in the West to record the ceremony of anointing in clerical ordination, only introduces it for presbyters and not for bishops.[192] That is why for a long time Cogitosus's *unctum caput* and some passages from Gildas led scholars to believe that anointing entered Western ordination rites from the British Isles.[193] But even if unction was not actually performed in the Irish ordination liturgies at the time, it was definitely present in the realm of discourse providing bishops, or at least the bishop of Kildare, with a special sacred authority.

An indication that the use of the concept of anointing was not restricted to just Cogitosus's work can be found in the passage from the *Hibernensis* cited above. Namely the phrase *uno fundente benedictionem*, which I translated above as "while one pronounces benediction," offers another reading: considering that the primary meaning of *fundere* is "to pour," *benedictionem fundere* can be understood as a rather opaque reference to anointing.[194] It is,

[192] Gerald Ellard, *Ordination Anointings in the Western Church before 1000 A.D.* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1933), 18-21; Bradshaw, *Rites of Ordination*, 126. Interestingly, the *Missale Francorum* is said to be considerably influenced by the Irish tradition found in the Bibbio Missal and the Stowe Missal. The anointing of the bishop's head appears slightly later, around 740 in the Gellone Sacramentary. Ellard, *Ordination Anointings*, 30-31.

[193] Ibid., 9-13; Jan Prelog, "Sind die Weihesalbungen insularen Ursprungs?" *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 13 (1979): 303-56. Michael J. Enright also developed an interesting theory that the motif of royal ordination in *Vita Columbae* referred to in footnote 187 alludes to anointing after the model of royal unction of Saul in 1 Sam. 10:1. The scholar argues that even though the anointing is not mentioned in the narrative, it is implied by the concept of sacred kingship which Adomnán adapted from 1 Samuel. Michael J. Enright, *Iona, Tara and Soissons: The Origin of the Royal Anointing Ritual* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1985), 5-78.

[194] Davies, "*Statuta ecclesiae antiqua*," 100.

nevertheless, not that much of a stretch, since the Vulgate verse for Leviticus 8:12 reads *[oleum] fundens super caput Aaron, unxit eum, et consecravit*. A similar formula is also used by Isidore in *De ecclesiasticis officiis* on which *Hibernensis* relies rather heavily: *et oleum unctionis fundes super caput eius, atque hoc ritu consecrabitur*.[195]

Traditio instrumentorum

The final element of episcopal ordination suggested by the instructions given in the *Hibernensis*[196] is the handing over of the bishop's "instruments," the staff and the ring:

> When [the bishop] is consecrated, he is given the staff (*baculus*) so that by its token (*eius indicio*) he may either rule the people subject to him or sustain the infirmities of the infirm. A ring (*annulus*) is also given to him as a sign of episcopal honour or as a seal of secrets (*signaculum secretorum*), lest the mysteries of God be revealed to every unworthy.[197]

This passage introduces two crucial objects into the ritual space established so far, both of which are traditional attributes of bishops. It is particularly interesting to investigate the conceptual implications of the symbolic explanation of the two objects and their significance for consecrating a bishop. I would argue that on the conceptual level both attributes are meant to be identified with the figure of the bishop, or in other words, the bishop himself becomes a living embodiment of his staff and ring. In the case of the former, it is obvious that the primary function of the staff is to provide support for those who have difficulties standing and walking. Then the bishop's crozier is introduced as a token (*indicium*) by which he sustains "infirmities of the infirm," and there arises a symbolic relation between the object and one of the functions of the episcopal office. With this, a shift occurs in the audience's perception, whereby the

[195] Isidore, "De ecclesiasticis officiis," 781.
[196] This is, however, not to say that the ordination ritual ended here. It has been discussed in the previous chapter that the discourse of basilica implied the presence of an episcopal *cathedra* which can also be considered as a telling part of the conceptual space of the ritual pointing to the awareness of such an act as enthronement which could be a part its imagined or desirable proceeding.
[197] "Hibernensis," 5 (my translation). Isidore, from whom this passage is borrowed, also adds that "there are many things that, keeping hidden from the worldly and less intelligent, priests establish as "under the seal" (*sub signaculo*). Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, col. 784. Translation in Isidore of Seville, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, trans. Thomas L. Knoebel (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2008), 74.

practical understanding of the staff merges with the symbolic reading put forward in the text, and thus the third meaning is produced—that of a bishop himself acting as a staff to support the weak.

As for the ring, which is defined as the "seal of secrets" (*signaculum secretorum*), it again calls forth the concept of a boundary, akin to the altar screen discussed in the previous chapter. The idea is that by receiving a ring, the bishop becomes a sealed container of the sacred mysteries. The container metaphor is one of the most common conceptual metaphors of human cognition.[198] Here, it is further advanced by making this container sealed off, thus separating the bishop from everyone else as a receptacle of the gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon him through anointing. An artefact such as a ring also serves as a "portable curtain" even when the bishop is not ministering in the sanctuary.[199] A sealed container of the divine mysteries also brings to mind the image of the scroll from the Book of Revelation: "Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll (*liber*) written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals (*sigilla*)."[200] This association refers to the act of *impositio evangeliorum* and completes it in that the newly ordained bishop not just accepts the yoke of the Gospel, but he himself becomes the sealed book of sacraments which he must guard from the ignorant and the unworthy. The ring here takes on the role of a protective shield—an idea which is also echoed in the Anglo-Saxon rite for episcopal ordination: "Accept the ring of pontifical honour, so that you are fortified by the integrity of faith."[201]

[198] On the very interesting and influential theory of conceptual metaphor and the intrinsic connection of physical experiences to abstract concepts, see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
[199] Grimes, "Ritual Performance," 157. The idea of episcopal ring as a boundary can be found in the Anglo-Saxon *Leofric Missal* (*c*. 900): *Accipe ergo anulum discretionis et honoris, fidei signum*. *The Leofric Missal*, ed. Frederick E. Warren (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1883), 215-16. According to Helen Gittos, the *Leofric Missal* might be connected to Irish liturgical tradition. Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 220-21.
[200] Rev. 5:1.
[201] *The Pontifical of Egbert, Archbishop of York*, ed. William Greenwell (London: Surtees Society, 1853), 3 (my translation).

Moreover, it can be added that both the staff and the ring represent separate spheres of episcopal authority. The staff, with its attached sanction to rule over the congregation and sustain the weak, designates the bishop's pastoral jurisdiction, whereas the ring, with its immanent connection to the sacramental mysteries, is a sign of his liturgical authority.

Overall, the ritual of episcopal ordination, as it is found in Hiberno-Latin texts, is centred around four pivotal acts: the laying-on of hands, *impositio evangeliorum*, anointing, and *traditio instrumentorum*. Each of these gestures holds an important place in constructing the performative dimension of the ritual discourse.

The Bishop Ordaining

Having explored ordination ritual with the bishop as the ordinand, it is now fitting to look at the bishop exercising his power to confer holy orders on other clerical grades. Again, the most detailed account of these rituals is provided by the *Hibernensis* which, in turn, follows the *Statuta ecclesiae antiqua* almost verbatim, save for the order of the offices. The instructions given in the text are extremely concise and tend to concentrate on just one aspect of the ordination ritual: for presbyters and deacons it is the imposition of hands, the key point of the entire ceremony, whereas for subdeacons, lectors, exorcists, and doorkeepers *traditio instrumentorum* is prescribed.[202]

The symbolic field of the laying-on of hands has already been outlined in relation to episcopal ordination. However, there are a few important points to add as regards other grades. The

[202] It should be noted that contemporary continental sources (seventh – eighth century) offer much more elaborated descriptions of ordination liturgies. See, for example, prayers for the ordination of presbyters and deacons in the Verona and Gregorian Sacramentaries, the Roman *ordo* for the consecration of presbyters, deacons, and subdeacons in the Gelasian Sacramentary, and vivid directions for ordinations in the *Ordo Romanus* XXXIV. *Sacramentarium Veronense*, ed. Leo Cunibert Mohlberg (Rome: Herder, 1966), 120-21; *The Gregorian Sacramentary under Charles the Great*, ed. Henry A. Wilson (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1915), 6-8; *The Gelasian Sacramentary: Liber sacramentorum Romanae ecclesiae*, ed. Henry A. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), 22-29; "*Ordo XXXIV*," in *Les* Ordines Romani *du haut moyen âge*, vol. 3, Ordines XIV-XXXIV, ed. Michel Andrieu, (Louvain: Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense, 1951), 601-19.

gesture is not identical for presbyters and deacons. For the former, the direction is as follows: "When a presbyter is ordained, while the bishop blesses him and holds his hand over his head, let all presbyters who are present put their hands over his head next to the hand of the bishop."[203] As for the deacons, "when a deacon is ordained, let only the bishop who blesses him, put his hand over his head, for he is consecrated not to the priesthood (*sacerdotium*), but to the service (*ministerium*)."[204]

Thus, the compilers of the *Hibernensis* borrowed the older Gallican tradition where the diaconal ordination required only the bishop to lay his hand on the ordinand's head.[205] This discrepancy between diaconal and priestly ordination helps highlight the episcopal power of orders. Comparing the two rituals back to back demonstrates that the conferral of clerical status was in fact the result of the bishop's touch, and not of the joint effort of the bishop and the priests. As the heir of Christ in his episcopal ministry, the bishop has the exclusive ability to bestow the gift of the Holy Spirit on the heads of clerical candidates following the Lord's own example, as the *Liber de numeris* (discussed above) suggests.

An interesting portrayal of the rules for priestly ordination comes from a passage where these rules are broken. Namely, in his *Vita Columbae* Adomnán relates a story about Áed Dub, the murderer of the High King of Ireland, and his shameful ascension to holy orders:

> This same Áed […] was ordained priest in Findchán's monastery, but the ordination was invalid even though a bishop had been brought. This was because the bishop had not dared to place his hand on Áed's head until Findchán (who had a carnal love for Áed) had first laid his right hand on his head in confirmation.[206]

[203] "Hibernensis," 13 (my translation).
[204] "Hibernensis," 21 (my translation).
[205] This custom caused some controversy in Gaul when Amalarius of Metz protested against such discrimination, as it were, of the priests. See Amalarius, "De ecclesiasticis officiis," 1087. For discussion, see John Gibaut, "Amalarius of Metz and the Laying on of Hands in the Ordination of a Deacon," *The Harvard Theological Review* 82, no. 2 (1989): 233-40.
[206] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae*, 138.

This episode is another illustration of the pivotal role ascribed to the imposition of hands by the bishop: a single interference with this act rendered the whole procedure invalid. Approaching the passage from the point of view of the audience, who presumably was quite familiar with such proceedings, the stakes become even higher. If the Irish ordination ritual was remotely similar to the continental rites in structure, then the solemn anointing of the hands and vesting preceding the imposition of hands would inevitably lose their sacramental value.

Generally, the touch of the bishop's hand seems to have been an impactful metaphor of "embodied" divine sanction. It is also evident in the article from the *Ríagail Pátraic* which talks about the ordination of the unworthy (like that of Áed) and condemns another widespread violation:

> For it is this which causes plague and sickness to tribes […] and not going under the hand of a bishop (*dul fo láim n-epscoip*) at the prescribed time; for the perfection of the Holy Spirit comes not, however fervently a person is baptised, unless he goes under the hand of a bishop after baptism.[207]

In this context, "going under the hand of a bishop" apparently means confirmation—another ritual reserved exclusively for bishops. The wording itself is concise yet vivid enough to sustain the imagery of the entire ritual: it addresses the main actor, the "instrument" of sanctification (bishop's hand), the positions of the participants (to go *under* the hand, one would have to kneel or bow down) as well as the temporal aspect of the whole act ("going" implies a change of state). Therefore, a simple phrase could be unfolded into a multidimensional ritual space defined by the discourse of episcopal authority.

In the ordination instructions for the lower part of clerical hierarchy in the *Hibernensis*, the recurrent motif is *traditio instrumentorum*. Thus, the subdeacon receives from the hand of the bishop (*de manu episcopi*—hands are in focus again) an empty paten and chalice, the lector

[207] "The Rule of Patrick," 221.

and the exorcist—a book, and the doorkeeper—the keys to the church.[208] These objects are indeed meant to represent their holders' respective duties within the church.[209] That this distribution of the clerical symbols was understood in conceptual terms across the Latin West is evident from the fact that many medieval depictions of clerical ordinations epitomise the entire ceremony in a single image of a cleric with his liturgical instrument, or even more abstractly, of the symbol alone.[210] It is safe to assume that behind such artistic expression stood a deep-seated cognitive structure where a long ritual sequence with all its intricacies could be condensed into one mental image for more convenient transmission.

The instructions for the ordination of lower grades, particularly for lector, exorcist, and doorkeeper, have another point of interest, namely because they finally introduce direct speech into the previously silent ritual. For example, the lector's rubric reads as follows:

> When a lector is ordained, the bishop introduces him (*facit verbum*) to the people, pointing out his faith, his way of life, and character. After that, with people watching, the bishop gives him a book, from which he is to read, saying: Take and reveal the word of God; if you fulfil this office faithfully and to good use, you shall have a share with those who ministered the word of God.[211]

Here, not only the words of consecration proper are given, but also the introductory word of the bishop to the congregation is mentioned. These details make the ritual audible and thus, more tangible even as a textual phenomenon. The effect is further intensified linguistically by the mere fact that in this short paragraph the word *verbum* is used three times. The bishop's speech is also tied in with the concept of *verbum Dei* as one of its incarnations, since bishops

[208] "Hibernensis," 23-25.
[209] The subdeacon's task is to mix water and wine in the chalice and to place the host on the paten, then taking it to the altar; the lector reads the passages required for the liturgy (except for the most important readings such as the Epistles and Gospels); the exorcist's duty is self-explanatory; the doorkeeper was entrusted to open the church at designated hours, ward off unwanted visitors, such as Jews or heretics, and to dismiss the catechumens before the Eucharist. For an early-twelfth-century exposition of clerical duties in the Irish church, see Gille of Limerick, "De statu ecclesiae," 152-53.
[210] See, for example, illustration cycles in the *Raganaldus Sacramentary* (Autun, Bibl. mun. MS Lat. 19bis, s. ix) and *Landulf Pontifical Rotulus* (Rome, Bibl. Casanatense 724 (B I 13), s. x ex.). For the discussion of both, see Roger E. Reynolds, "The Portrait of Ecclesiastical Officers in the *Raganaldus Sacramentary* and Its Liturgico-Canonical Significance," *Speculum* 46, no. 3 (1971): 432-42; idem, "Image and Text," 29-35.
[211] "Hibernensis," 23-24 (my translation).

had the Gospels laid down and "imprinted" on them. It should, therefore, be considered an integral part of the conceptual space of the ritual and an indispensable addition to its temporal dimension.

Consecration

Consecration or dedication of churches is another crucial aspect of episcopal power of sacraments. Dedication rituals were arguably some of the most elaborated liturgical ceremonies—the fact which has to do mainly with the rarity of such occasions. Because of their singularity and festivity, these ceremonies must have attracted large audiences of spectators, especially as they partly took place outside of the church and were generally more visible. As regards the role of the bishops, Helen Gittos notices that this visibility "partly reflects the extent to which they were considered a particularly significant expression of episcopal power."[212]

Moreover, the fact that a church could only be consecrated one time connects it most directly to another "once in a lifetime" ritual—baptism. In an insightful article, Lee Bowen suggested and elaborated the idea that the ritual of church dedication as developed in the West by the thirteenth century paralleled the ritual of baptism in many details, from the broad concept of purification and rebirth to the threefold-ness of certain actions.[213] In this context, the bishop performing the ritual of consecration acts as a "baptist" to the church which in the future will be the locus of multiple other baptisms.[214]

[212] Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 214.
[213] Lee Bowen, "The Tropology of Medieval Dedication Rites," *Speculum* 16, no. 4 (1941): 469-79.
[214] This conceptual parallelism can be traced in Irish material as well, if one compares the consecration ritual to *Ordo baptismi* from the *Stowe Missal*. The two rituals converge in their general structure in that both include the exorcism of salt at the start, proceed to anointing and end with aspersion. See *The Stowe Missal: MS D.II.3 in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin*, vol. 2, *Printed Text*, ed. and trans. George W. Warner (London: Harrison and Sons, 1915), 24-36. However, as Victor de Waal points out, baptism should be considered a less performative ceremony as the work is thought to be done by the Holy Spirit rather than by the minister. The scholar reaches this conclusion based on the fact that *Ordo baptismi* leaves out the baptismal formula *baptizo te…* Victor de Waal, "The So-Called Omission of Baptismal Formula in the Order of Baptism in the Stowe Missal," *Peritia* 13 (1999): 255-58. By contrast, the dedication ritual is built on the active role of the bishop.

In Ireland, a very early (mid-sixth-century) canonical collection attributed to St Patrick already registers the necessity of episcopal consecration for a newly built church: "if anyone of the priests will have built a church, he should not offer before he should lead his own bishop to it that he may consecrate it, because it is fitting thus."[215] This makes one think about the many lapidary reports in the Irish annals of countless burnt and destroyed oratories and imagine each of them carefully consecrated by a local bishop.

Unfortunately, early Irish material offers close to nothing on the rituals of church consecration. A helping hand comes from the eleventh century and in form of a small vernacular tract specifically dedicated to the consecration of churches known simply as *Coisecrad eclaise*, or the *Consecration of a Church*. Even though formally this source is somewhat beyond the chronological scope of this work, its directions comprise a recension of an older Latin text representing a more or less stable liturgical form which is attested already in the mid-eighth century Gaul.[216] Therefore, *Coisecrad eclaise* can be regarded as a witness to an older tradition of directing a church consecration.

The dedication ritual presented in the tract is relatively long and full of details, even with the final part of the text lost. The general outline of the ceremony includes five parts: consecration of the floor, consecration of the altar and its furniture, consecration from outside, aspersion of

[215] Text and translation in David Howlett, "*Synodus prima sancti Patricii*: An Exercise in Textual Reconstruction," *Peritia* 12 (1998): 242, 248.

[216] On the dating of the tract, see Ó Carragáin, *Churches*, 39. A similar rite can be found in *Ordo Romanus* XLI originally from Gaul (*c*. 750-775). See "*Ordo XLI*," in *Les* Ordines Romani *du haut moyen âge*, vol. 4, Ordines XXXV-XLIX, ed. Michel Andrieu, (Louvain: Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense, 1965), 319. Another argument for an earlier dating is the practice of inscribing the alphabet on the church floor elaborated in the Irish tract, which is also described in an earlier continental work, presumably by Remigius of Auxerre (early-tenth century). See Remigius of Auxerre, "Tractatus de dedicatione ecclesiae," PL 131, coll. 845-866. If, as some scholars argue, this curious practice was Irish in origin, it means that it was old enough to establish itself locally and to become recognised on the continent by the end of the ninth century. See, Herbert Thurston, "The Alphabet and the Consecration of Churches," *The Month: A Catholic Magazine* 115 (1910): 621-31; Cécile Treffort, "*Opus litterarum*. L'inscription alphabétique et le rite de consécration de l'église (IX^{e} – XII^{e} siècle)," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 53 (2010): 172-73; Dominique Barbet-Massin, "Le rituel irlandais de consécration des églises au Moyen Âge: le témoignage des sources irlandaises et bretonnes," *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest* 118, no. 2 (2011): 16-17.

water inside, and aspersion from without (the missing section).[217] All of these rubrics are then carefully elaborated by the author in ways that bring about the most vivid and tangible imagery actively involving the senses: seeing, hearing (chanting of the psalms), and smelling (the incense). Even taste is involved when salt is added to the water for aspersion.[218] It is, therefore, within such a richly established conceptual space that the consecration is taking place and episcopal power is manifested.

The opening act of a consecration is the introit when the bishop and accompanying priests enter the church singing Psalm 65:13 *Introibo in domum tuam Domine.*[219] The second entrance, following the outside procession is even more solemn. The ceremony to be performed seems to be common for many dedication rites: the bishop knocks on the door demanding "Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in."[220] A deacon or a priest inside the church asks: "Who is this King of glory?" One of the accompanying priests answers: "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory."[221] The doors, however, stay closed and the inquiry is repeated two more times.[222] For a Christian audience, this act presents an unambiguous association of the bishop with the *rex gloriae*, making the former a ritual enactor of Christ. If, however, the recited psalm is viewed as a dedicatory verse for the consecration of Solomon's Temple, then the entire imagery of chapter eight of 1 Kings can be deployed.[223] Such mixture of Old and New Testament typology in the introit rituals recalls the image from the Book of Kells analysed in the previous chapter where a bishop / high

[217] "The *Lebar Brecc* Tractate," 367.
[218] The multisensory character of the liturgy and particularly of the dedication rites has been pointed out in Dominique Iogna-Prat, *La Maison Dieu. Une histoire monumentale de l'Église au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2006), 266; Eric Palazzo, *L'espace rituel et le sacré dans le christianisme: la liturgie de l'autel portatif dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 89.
[219] "The *Lebar Brecc* Tractate," 369.
[220] Ps. 23:7.
[221] Ps. 23:10.
[222] "The *Lebar Brecc* Tractate," 379. See also "Ordo XLI," 317-18; *The Pontifical of Egbert, Archbishop of York*, 30-31.
[223] Palazzo, *L'espace rituel*, 92.

priest stands in the doorway of the church / Temple. When viewed in the context of consecration, the illustration may have communicated the concept of the second introit into the church being dedicated.[224]

A recurrent motif in the entire ritual is indeed that of the cross. The sign of a chi-cross is made on the floor, where two alphabets are inscribed diagonally beginning and ending in each of the four corners of the building; seven crosses are carved and anointed on the altar and, without anointing, in every corner of the church; the outside procession stops in the middle of each wall thus forming a cross.[225] Not surprisingly, in all of these activities the bishop takes centre stage: it is by his hand that the alphabets are inscribed and crosses carved and by him that the procession is led.[226] Step by step he transforms a regular building into the *domus Dei* by marking out its space with the sign of cross. It should also be noted that the mention of carving is a very specific choice. On the level of mental imagery, carving comes across as a markedly physical activity involving some effort on the part of the actor, more so than the widely used reference to tracing the sign of the cross with oil or water.[227] The fact that there are seven crosses to be carved on the altar, as opposed to only five in parallel sources, is also worth emphasising.[228] Following the concept of a protective seal developed above, it can be argued

[224] This suggestion is upheld by the presence on the picture of large groups of people outside the church which underlines the highly performative character of the consecration ritual.

[225] "The *Lebar Brecc* Tractate," 371-73, 377-79, 383-85. All these acts are extremely interesting in themselves, but it is impossible to go in more detail here. For a more thorough exploration of some of them, see Thurston, "The Alphabet," 621-31; Barbet-Massin, "Le rituel irlandais," 8-17; eadem, "The Rite of Church Dedication in Early Medieval Ireland and the Dedication Scheme in the Angers Manuscript 477," *Peritia* 27 (2016): 20-21; Ó Carragáin, *Churches*, 39-40. A very useful discussion of the early medieval dedication ordines, which sadly was unavailable to me, can be found in Brian V. Repsher, *The Rite of Church Dedication in the Early Medieval Era* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998). For a roughly contemporary interpretation of the inscription of the alphabet as a symbol of the word of God spreading in four directions, see Remigius, "Tractatus," 850-52.

[226] Although the tract itself does not mention that it is the task of the bishop to inscribe the alphabet, continental examples of the same act do specify it. See Remigius, "Tractatus," 850-52; "Ordo XLI," 319; *The Pontifical of Egbert*, 33.

[227] For example, *The Gelasian Sacramentary*, 134; *The Pontifical of Egbert*, 36, 38; *The Leofric Missal*, 219.

[228] Five crosses are advised by Remigius, and also by a later Irish Synod of Dublin (1185/6). Remigius, "Tractatus," 858-62. The relevant synodical canon is cited in Griffin Murray, "Altars in Ireland, 1050-1200: A Survey," *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* 19 (2010): 101. Seven crosses in the Irish text could, among other things, refer to the seven seals of the scroll described in Revelation 5:1. Though this numerical symbolism seems to be somewhat on the nose, I would contend that it played a role in how the text could be perceived and interpreted by the contemporaries.

that the act of carving was meant to more forcefully convey the idea of putting a seal on the altar and on the corners of the church so as to preserve their sacredness and protect it from the profane surrounding them. It is crucial that this act is performed by the bishop as the one who has the power to "seal the secrets" embodied by his ring.

Another curious element of the Irish consecration ritual is the inscription of two crossing alphabets on the floor. This procedure imbued with multifaceted symbolism was readily borrowed by the Anglo-Saxon and continental rites.[229] Imagining of alphabets inscribed diagonally also implies their intersection which marks the centre of the church. The author of *Coisecrad eclaise* even specifies that they should be written so that "the two *O*s meet in the middle of the floor."[230] It has already been established that the centre of the church was an important locus of authority. It is easy to imagine that in reality, inscribing letters with such precision that they fitted perfectly the diagonals of the church, while simultaneously making them intersect at *O*, was not an easy task which probably required some practice. Meanwhile, on a conceptual level such an arrangement created a neatly mapped out space which on the one hand, could be read as an exegetical statement referring to Christ at the centre of the fourfold world, and on the other hand, could be seen as a place where the bishop would return for prayers.[231] Unfortunately, the section of the text immediately following the explanation of how the alphabets should be inscribed is illegible, but one can assume that the instruction concerning the letter *O* was elaborated and probably involved some further directions for the bishop.

[229] On the Irish origins of the practice, see footnote 217. On its use in Anglo-Saxon rites, see Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 233-34.
[230] "The *Lebar Brecc* Tractate," 371. See a brief outline of how it could be done in Barbet-Massin, "Le rituel irlandais," 17.
[231] On the interpretation of a chi-cross in Irish art, see Jennifer O'Reilly, "Patristic and Insular Traditions of the Evangelists: Exegesis and Iconography," in *Le Isole Britanniche e Roma in età romanobarbarica*, ed. Anna Maria Luiselli Fadda and Éamonn Ó Carragáin (Rome: Herder, 1998), 49-94. One of the antiphons that the bishop could perform in the centre of the church was "Jacob saw a ladder." Its importance was defined by the centrality of the motif of Jacob's dream (Gen. 28:10-22) for the medieval understanding of a sacred place and, more specifically, of the altar. See Bowen, "The Tropology," 477; Palazzo, *L'espace rituel*, 53-59.

What is also important about the act of inscribing the alphabet, is that the letters delineated on the church floor might be interpreted as a representation of the first principles of the doctrine which the bishop teaches his flock.[232] The church building therefore becomes a metaphor for a book, more precisely for a book of Gospels with its teaching having spread in the four corners of the world, as represented by the cross shape which the alphabets form. The bishop is presented as a key figure in this process, for it is he who inscribes the letters, both for his congregation and for the universal cause of spreading the faith. Here, the second instrument of episcopal office acts out its symbolical purpose: the staff as a support for the infirm becomes the instrument for spelling out the word of God—a metaphor presumably informed by Isiah 11:4: "and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth."

Many times the author mentions a "bishop's book" (*lebor escuip*) which contains psalms and prayers necessary for conducting the dedication. This adds another detail to the image of a bishop arising from the text: he is in possession of a special liturgical book which only he can use. The book in question is most probably a pontifical—a liturgical book for the use of the bishop. While no such books survive from early medieval Ireland, a reference to it illustrates the fact that due to the specificity of sacraments, episcopal liturgies were drifting away from the priestly ones. By equipping the bishop with a book designated specifically for him, the author reinforces the aura of authority beyond that of a presbyter. Thus, considering everything that has been said in the section on ordination, the symbolism of a book seems to have played a vital role in the discourse of episcopal authority.

* * *

[232] So in Remigius: *Quid autem per alphabetum, nisi initia et rudimenta doctrinae sacrae intelligi convenit? […] Scribit ergo pontifex alphabeti ordinem, cum fidei docet simplicitatem*. Remigius, "Tractatus," 851.

The analysis carried out in this chapter has revealed several important aspects of the discourse of episcopal ritual in its performative aspect. There are larger, cross-connected metaphors such as that of a book and the word which illuminate the bishop's role in the sacred ministry by symbolically presenting him as a book and as the source of the word. These connotations are reflected in such gestures as the imposition of the Gospels during episcopal ordination and inscribing the alphabet on the floor of a church during consecration. Another prominent concept is the protective seal which arises from the act of receiving an episcopal ring and carving crosses on the altar and walls of the church. A close focus on the bishop's hand emphasises the power to bestow the Holy Spirit after the example of Christ with the act of imposition understood as the cornerstone of ordination ceremonies. The references to episcopal unction deepen the connection between episcopacy and the high priest of the Old Testament.

Conclusion

Constructing authority through ritual discourse was a common practice in the Middle Ages attested in numerous ritual narratives involving both lay and ecclesiastical actors. In recent years these narratives have come to be viewed exactly as elaborate constructs meant to showcase a desired symbolic and / or ideological content rather than as attentive and honest witnesses to particular events. The present study has attempted to further this understanding of ritual narrative by looking at it as a source of mental imagery which speaks not only in disparate symbols, but through cognitive processes creates a multidimensional conceptual space, where various levels of meaning are intricately interconnected, thus helping the audience infer the fullest grasp of a ritual in its spatial and temporal aspects. As the work concentrated on episcopal ritual, it has been argued that the multiple details of the said space are designed to communicate a message of authority specifically connected to the liturgical functions of the bishops.

The Vocabulary of Authoritative Discourse

The idea behind the first chapter was to analyse the vocabulary applied to episcopal office in Hiberno-Latin texts in order to elucidate the main points of reference on which the image of a bishop is built and which might be used to convey liturgical authority. Three important biblical metaphors were discerned: the watchman, the high priest, and *imago Christi*. Each of them reflects a certain aspect relevant in the liturgy. The "watchman" metaphor communicates the concept of eminence, not only in terms of supreme dignity, but also physically being above others. This idea then translates into particular liturgical images, for example, when someone kneels before the bishop to "go under" his hand, or when he sits in his high chair. The "watchman" trope also helps establish a connection between bishops and Old Testament

prophets and thus underlines the former's special divine sanction and sacred duty imposed on them by God himself.

The Temple imagery is fully employed in comparing bishops to high priests. This trope can be used by applying the Latin title of the Ancient Hebrew office, such as *summus sacerdos* or *pontifex,* to the bishops or by directly referring to Aaron as the forerunner of the episcopal office. It has been shown that *summus sacerdos,* when used with a subtle reference to anointing, brings out the important ritualistic distinction of episcopal office which allows it to symbolically rise above the priesthood. The title of *pontifex,* in some contexts, could invoke episcopal power of ordination and helped establish a link of the bishops to James' ministry in Jerusalem—a place where Hebrew and Christian priesthood overlap.

As far as the charismatic affiliations of episcopal office are concerned, the figure of Aaron was of utmost importance as it on the one hand, conveyed the idea of lawful priesthood, and on the other hand, provided Christian bishops with rich cultic imagery in such aspects as liturgical clothing and distinctive rituals both upon entering office and in office. It is important that Aaronic model, the lawful one, was chosen as a prototype, and not that of Melchizedek, associated exclusively with the sacrifice of Christ. However, the link to Christ was too powerful to be neglected. Painting the bishop as *imago Christi* could contribute to the picture of his unique liturgical role as it added the power to confer holy orders modelled on Christ's blessing of his disciples.

The Role of Space in Shaping the Image of Episcopal Ritual

The analysis of deictic aspects of ritual narratives undertaken in the second chapter was aimed at tracing the features of the spatial imagining of episcopal ritual and their influence on conceptualising its authority. The available material allowed for two perspectives for looking at an episcopal church: on the one hand, it was presented as a highly sequestered space with

several key *foci* of ritual attention; on the other hand, the image of a church could be generalised to the point where it could merge with the images of other authoritative buildings.

When the space of a church was dissected in narrative, certain points within it were focalised: boundaries and sacred objects could serve as mental signs indicating the dynamics of the ritual, the movements of actors and important points where attention should dwell. Mention of the entrance, for example, invokes such an important element of liturgy as introit. Moreover, the image of a bishop standing in the doorway alludes both to Aaron entering the Temple for sacrifice and Christ describing himself as the door to salvation. Another important boundary—the altar screen—acts as a conceptual divide between the earthly and the heavenly, thus underlining the cosmological significance of the liturgy. Overall, these narrative details translated into a carefully divided and mapped out space which facilitated the perception of the processual motion and division of liturgical roles.

When seen as a unified place, an episcopal church in Hiberno-Latin texts can be imagined in a conceptual blend with the Roman basilica. The texts analysed only reference separate features of basilicas such as spaciousness, light, the special point of authority, which help transform the image of a native church building into a true "basilica" on a conceptual level. Even simply calling an episcopal church a basilica was enough to enhance its ritual importance as it immediately called to mind the connection to papal basilicas in Rome and their festive liturgies.

Ordination and Consecration as Symbolic Performances in Text

The third chapter concentrated on the performative aspects of two rituals where episcopal authority is revealed in the most profound and specific ways: ordination of clergy and consecration of churches. Both rituals can only be performed by bishops and are, therefore, imbued with authoritative imagery.

Describing episcopal ordination, Irish sources refer to several key elements: the laying-on of hands, the imposition of the Gospels, anointing, and the tradition of the instruments. The first and the last of these gestures are also used in the ordination of other grades. The act of the laying-on of hands is symbolically connected to the Lukan motif of the blessing of the apostles, thus linking episcopal power of orders with Christ bestowing the Holy Spirit on his disciples. The bishop's hands are in focus, not only in the gesture of conferring orders, but also when giving the "instruments" of ministry to the lower clerics and in confirmation. From this, it can be inferred that bishop's hands were seen as the "embodied" divine sanction.

The imposition of the Gospels is an important element of the conceptual space of the ritual in that it introduces the imagery of a book into bishop's ministry. The image of a heavy Gospel book laid on the bishop's neck invokes the idea of preaching the word of God as a burden and creates a mental image of the bishops receiving the sacred text physically imprinted on their body. The fleeting references to episcopal anointing make it reasonable to assume that this ritual gesture belonged to the realm of the conceptual and was primarily imagined in terms of Aaron's unction, thus deepening the connection between Irish episcopacy and the Hebrew high priesthood. The tradition of the instruments is another gesture which reveals multiple meanings when viewed in the conceptual space: the staff and the ring handed to the bishop at the ordination symbolically epitomise his duties and his very figure. The staff can be imagined as a reflection of the bishop's pastoral duties in supporting the weak, but also in spreading the word of God since it acts as a writing tool during church consecration. The ring communicates the concept of a sealed container filled with divine mysteries which the bishop himself becomes after he is made the living embodiment of the word of God through *impositio evangeliorum*.

In the consecration rituals, much of the same imagery can be found. The crosses which bishops carve on the altar and on the walls can also be interpreted as "protective seals" guarding the

sacraments performed inside the church. The act of inscribing two alphabets on the floor again invokes the link between the bishop, book, and the word of God. Aside from that, the description of a dedication ritual also accentuates its processional character, with multiple movements both inside and outside the church. Narrating such a ceremony as a fluent sequence of changing places, positions, and gestures helps visualise it as a complex and spectacular ritual which showcases the extent of episcopal power in the most visible way.

* * *

The study that has been carried out has demonstrated the possibilities of analysing ritual as a narrative reflecting not any concrete practice, but the mental imagery which it might invoke among the audience. The results obtained add to the understanding of episcopal power in early medieval Ireland in that they elucidate some of the thinking patterns of the authors writing about episcopal ritual and the audiences decoding the message. This does not mean that this approach denies any possibility of these texts reflecting actual practices to some extent. Indeed, such texts could not have appeared without there being something substantial behind them. However, viewing ritual narratives as material for conceptualisation and intertextual emendation allows the scholar to take into account all elements of the text, including those that seem "implausible" or "anachronistic," such as episcopal anointing in the mid-seventh century, and explore their discursive capacity in shaping an authoritative image for the group of clerics whose very name asserts their leadership in the church.

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