

Cumann Comnae:
Constructing Christian Identities
in the *Book of Lismore's* Homiletic Saints' Lives

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Declarations

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution.

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Julianne Pigott

Abstract: *Cumann Comnae*: Constructing Christian Identities in *The Book of Lismore*'s
Homiletic Saints' Lives

Building from the premise that hagiographical texts provide important literary accounts of affective religious experiences in the medieval centuries, this dissertation examines the nine homiletic saints' lives in the fifteenth-century *Book of Lismore*. Specifically, the focus is on representations of the Eucharist, the axiomatic sacrament of Latin Christendom in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and how writers of and audiences for these Middle Irish texts perceived, or were intended to apprehend, the role of Communion in constructing and affirming their Christian identities. Throughout this work attention is drawn to parallels with and divergences from European Eucharistic orthodoxy and orthopraxy in the period contemporary with the texts' composition.

This dissertation is divided into six chapters: the first two offer important historical, literary and theological context for the texts which are the foundation of this enquiry, together with new insights into the scholarly profit to be derived from including vernacular hagiography in the corpus of texts mobilised in the study of theological developments of this period; the next three chapters examine specific dimensions of Christian identity - clerical, gender and lay; the sixth and concluding chapter synthesises the analysis of the foregoing sections.

Chapter I outlines the significance of the Eucharist in medieval religious life and its relationship to the reform impetuses of the long twelfth-century. The categorisation of the nine *Lismore* Lives as homilies is not uncontested and this work offers a comprehensive defence of that classification by reference to the extant corpus of Irish homiletic literature and internal structural and stylistic features of the core texts. A section of the chapter addresses questions of dating and advances arguments that situate seven of the nine texts broadly within the period 1050–1200, by amalgamating and augmenting existing research undertaken on individual saints' Lives.

In Chapter II, the focus is on both the literary and linguistic content of a number of contemporary homiletic and theological tracts and how these relate both to contemporaneous European debates on the Real Presence and the long tradition of Irish exegesis and religious speculation. Particular attention is paid to texts, and episodes within texts, from a diverse range of genres, that have not previously been adduced in discussions of Irish Eucharistic *doxa* and praxis. The final portion of II provides an overview of the origins and development of a select portion of the vernacular vocabulary of the Eucharist and the theological implications of those semantic choices.

Chapters III–V investigate three of the most significant medieval identity markers, as they intersect with corporate Christian identities. Chapter III provides a thorough-going overview of the clerical identities constructed for the male *Lismore* saints and attempts to differentiate the role of the Eucharist in the emergent episcopal identities of this period. Attention is also given to the significant role of viaticum in the texts and the inferences, on Irish perceptions of Eucharistic efficacy, we may draw from this. The primary focus of the fourth chapter is gendered Eucharistic narratives and important episodes from *Betha Shenáin* are analysed. Evidence is presented to suggest that gender demarcated not only the authority to perform the Eucharistic rite but also access to Communion. In Chapter V, *Betha Bhrénainn* is mined for details of lay and penitent Communication. The substantial intertextual relationships which exist between Brendan's *Betha* and voyage literature provide the foundation from which to consider how medieval and modern readings of content potentially were, and remain, inflected by genre classifications.

Chapter VI is a synthesis of the conclusions arising from the forgoing chapters and offers a tentative thesis on the extent to which these hagiographical depictions can be argued to provide a synoptic view of concomitant Eucharistic and reform ideologies, concluding ultimately that the results are pluriform rather than uniform. Finally, attention is drawn to how future research questions on Irish Eucharistic thought and practices might be better designed, given the insights which have arisen from this project.

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List of Abbreviations

AClon	Murphy, D., ed., <i>Annals of Clonmacnoise, being Annals of Ireland from the Earliest Period to A.D. 1408</i> (Dublin, 1896; repr. Felinfach 1993)
AFM	O'Donovan, J., ed. and transl., <i>Annala Rioghachta Eireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616</i> , 2nd ed., 7 vols. (Dublin, 1856)
AI	Mac Airt, S., ed. <i>Annals of Inisfallen</i> (Dublin, 1951)
ALC	Hennessy, W.M., ed. and transl., <i>The Annals of Loch Cé: A Chronicle of Irish Affairs from A.D. 1014 to A.D. 1590</i> , Rolls Series 54, 2 vols. (London, 1871)
AT	Stokes, W., ed. and transl., 'Annals of Tigernach', <i>Revue Celtique</i> 16 (1895), 374–419; 17 (1896), 6–33, 119–263, 337–420; 18 (1897), 9–59, 150–97, 267–303; repr. 2 vols. (Felinfach, 1993)
AU	Mac Airt, S. and Mac Niocaill, G., ed. and transl., <i>The Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)</i> (Dublin, 1983)
BB	Stokes, W., ed. and transl., <i>Betha Bhrigde in Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore</i> (London, 1890), pp. 34–53 and pp. 182–200
BBr	Stokes, W., ed. and transl., <i>Betha Bhrenainn in Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore</i> (London, 1890), pp. 99–116 and pp. 247–61
BC	Stokes, W., ed. and transl., <i>Betha Chiarán in Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore</i> (London, 1890), pp. 117–34 and pp. 262–80
BCC	Stokes, W., ed. and transl., <i>Betha Choluim Chille in Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore</i> (London, 1890), pp. 20–33 and pp. 168–81
BF	Stokes, W., ed. and transl., <i>Betha Fhindéin in Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore</i> (London, 1890), pp. 75–83 and pp. 222–30
BFc	Stokes, W., ed. and transl., <i>Betha Fhinnchua in Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore</i> (London, 1890), pp. 84–98 and pp. 231–46
Bib.	Mays, J., ed., <i>The Harper Collins Bible Commentary</i> (San Francisco, 1988)
BL	<i>The Book of Lismore</i> (Manuscript held at Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, U.K.)
BM	Stokes, W., ed. and transl., <i>Betha Mochua in Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore</i> (London, 1890), pp. 137–46 and pp. 281–9
BNÉ	Plummer, C., ed. and transl., <i>Bethada Náem nÉirenn: Lives of Irish Saints</i> , 2 vols. (Oxford, 1922)

BP	Stokes, W., ed. and transl., <i>Betha Phrátraic</i> in <i>Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore</i> (London, 1890), pp. 1–19 and pp. 149–67
BS	Stokes, W., ed. and transl., <i>Betha Shenáin</i> in <i>Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore</i> (London, 1890), pp. 54–74 and pp. 201–21
CC	Rubin, M., <i>Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture</i> (Cambridge, 1991)
CEMI	Ó Carragáin, T., <i>Churches in Early Medieval Ireland: Architecture, Ritual and Memory</i> , Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art Series (London, 2010)
Cor	Warren, F.E., ed. and transl., <i>The Manuscript Irish Missal Belonging to Corpus Christi College, Oxford</i> (London, 1879)
DIS	Ó Riain, P., <i>A Dictionary of Irish Saints</i> (Dublin, 2011)
DSE	Fleming, J., ed. and transl., <i>De statu Ecclesiae</i> in Fleming, J., <i>Gille of Limerick: Architect of a Medieval Church</i> (Dublin, 2001), pp. 143–69
EHl	Kenney, J.F., <i>The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: An Introduction and Guide. Volume I: Ecclesiastical</i> (Dublin, 1966)
Her	Herbert, M., 'Latin and Vernacular Hagiography of Ireland from the Origins to the Sixteenth Century', in <i>Hagiographies: Histoire Internationale de la Littérature Hagiographique Latine et Vernaculaire en Occident des Origines à 1550</i> , vol. IV, ed. G. Philippart, <i>Corpus Christianorum</i> , vols. 1–4 (Turnhout, 2001), pp. 327–60
Hom	Atkinson, R., ed. and transl., <i>The Passions and the Homilies from Leabhar Breac: Text, Translation and Glossary</i> , Todd Lecture Series 2 (Dublin, 1887)
ICD	Rittmueller, J., ed. and transl., 'In Cena Domini' in 'The Leabhar Breac Latin and Middle-Irish Homily In Cena Domini: An Edition and Source Analysis' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Harvard Univ., 1984)
ISOS	<i>Irish Script on Screen</i> , Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. Available at: https://www.isos.dias.ie/english/index.html
Lan	Clover, H. and M. Gibson, ed. and transl., <i>The Letters of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury</i> , Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford, 1979)
LB	<i>Leabhar Breac</i> [Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 P 16]
LFF	<i>Liber Flavus Fergusiorum</i> [Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 O 48 (a) and Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 O 48 (b)]
LIT	Warren, F. E., and Jane Stevenson (ed.), <i>The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church</i> , Studies in Celtic History 9, 2nd ed. (Woodbridge, 1987)

MISL	Sharpe, R., <i>Medieval Irish Saints' Lives: An Introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae</i> (Oxford, 1991)
MRHI	Gwynn, A. and N. Haddock, <i>Medieval Religious Houses: Ireland</i> (Dublin, 1970)
O'Don	O'Donoghue, N.X., <i>The Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland</i> (Notre Dame, 2011)
Sac	Hogan, E., ed. and transl., 'Instruction on the Sacraments' in <i>The Irish Nennius from L. na Huidre and Homilies and Legends from L. Brecc</i> , Todd Lecture Series 6 (Dublin, 1895)
TIC	Flanagan, M.T., <i>The Transformation of the Irish Church in the Twelfth Century</i> , Studies in Celtic History 29 (Woodbridge, 2010)
VanHamel	<i>Codecs: Online Database and e-Resources for Celtic Studies</i> , published by Stichting A.G. van Hamel voor Keltische Studies Available at: http://www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Project:CODECS
VB	Connolly, S. and J.M. Picard, trans., 'Cogitosus: Life of St Brigit', <i>Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland</i> 117 (1987), 5–27
VBr	Plummer, C., ed., 'Vita Prima Sancte Brendani', in <i>Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae, partim hactenus ineditae</i> , 2 vols. (Oxford, 1910) pp. 98–151
VI	Plummer, C., ed., <i>Vita Sancte Ite Virginis</i> , in <i>Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae partim hactenus ineditae</i> , 2 vols. (Oxford, 1910) pp. 116–30 Africa, D., transl., 'Life of the Holy Virgin Samthann', in <i>Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology</i> , ed. T. Head (New York, 2001), pp. 97–110 De Paor, L., trans., <i>Life of St Ita: Translation of Plummer's Edition of Vita Sancte Ite</i> (Unpublished typescript)
VM	Armagh Historical Society, ed. and trans., 'Vita Sancte Monennae', <i>Seanchas Ardmhacha: Journal of the Armagh Diocesan Historical Society</i> 9 and 10 (1979, 1980 and 1982), 117–41, 250–73 and 426–54
VS	Plummer, C., ed., <i>Vita Sancte Samthanne Virginis, Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae partim hactenus ineditae</i> , 2 vols. (Oxford, 1910) pp. 253–61
VSHH	Heist, W. W., ed., <i>Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae: ex codice olim Salmanticensi, nunc Bruxellensi. Lives of the Saints of Ireland, from the Salamanca Manuscript now of Brussels</i> , Subsidia Hagiographica 28 (Brussels, 1965)
VSHP	Plummer, C. ed., <i>Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae, partim hactenus ineditae</i> , 2 vols. (Oxford, 1910)
VT	<i>Vita Tripartita</i> in Stokes, W., ed. and transl., <i>The Tripartite Life of Patrick: with other documents relating to that saint</i> , 2 vols., <i>Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores</i> 89 (London, 1887)

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I have been blessed with many equally generous teachers through the years and I am grateful to them all. Sr Dorothy, whom I am now proud to call a friend, taught me twenty-seven years ago that it is okay to raise your hand to answer. I first heard of 'hagiography' from Dr Elva Johnston in my first ever medieval history lecture in my first week at UCD; I was immediately enthralled and were it not for her subsequent confidence in my scholarship, I might never have made this journey.

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I am the first woman in my family to attend university but it was my late nana, Mary McKenna, who instilled in me, the tremendous value of education. She was a woman of fierce intellect, who finished secondary school at fifteen, but could still correct my Leaving Cert. algebra homework at seventy. She was reared and educated, in challenging circumstances, by her mother and aunt, Hanora and Ellen Byrane.

From a seamstress in Pallasgrean, to a PhD candidate at Cambridge, in one century and four generations. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anam.

CHAPTER I: TEXTS, CONTEXTS AND IDENTITIES

And spare me Lord, likewise, my memory of
a woman's body rising from the bath –
the diamond water shining on her back
and how she turned towards me, the way that Eve
most surely turned towards Adam in her flesh
before embarrassment or baptism or death,
before love meant a willingness to die
or gibbet of the cross, before the wine
got consecrated into blood – Good Christ –
before the fall, the flood and days of wrath,
before the latter sacraments of death.
Veni, Creator Spiritus, create
once more the body's easy mystery:
the water, water; the wine, wine; the bread, bread only.¹

From, the invocation of the New Covenant in Matthew XXVI,² to poems such as the contemporary composition above, itself a response to a ninth-century Latin hymn, the language, symbolism, and iconography of the concomitant narratives of Christ's Last Supper and Passion have animated theological, philosophical, and literary speculation. To modern sensibilities, there are many presumed constants within that polyvalent corpus, not least the bread and wine, as the material objects of the rites of transformation. However, as with any social act, predicated on 'institution narratives' written almost two millennia ago, the parameters of orthodoxy and orthopraxy have been reformed and refined with time.³ For authors and their audiences in Latin Christendom, the Eucharist as the axiomatic expression of

¹ Lynch, '*Veni, Creator Spiritus*', in *Grimalkin and Other Poems*, p. 6; a modern response to the ninth-century Carolingian hymn by Benedictine monk Rabanus Maurus, himself a contributor to the ninth-century debates on the Eucharistic species which prefigured those of the eleventh and twelfth, see O'Connor, *Hidden*, pp. 90–1.

² Only Matthew XXVI.17–30 is mentioned above for succinctness. The term 'institution narrative' is applied by multiple authors to the combined accounts, in Matthew's Gospel, Mark XIV.12–26, Luke XXII.7–30, I Cor. II.23–6 and John XIII.1–30, of the accounts of the Last Supper and Passion which are the foundation of the Eucharist. See Bradshaw, *Eucharistic*, pp. 1–23.

³ Jungmann, *Mass* I, 1–5.

their faith and a public expression of their communal identity,⁴ occupied an almost unrivalled prominence in theological and exegetical tracts produced both in Latin and the vernacular languages,⁵ throughout much of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Concurrent with, and not unconnected to, this efflorescence, was the emergence of a reform impetus in the western church.⁶ The objective of this dissertation is to examine aspects of these comingled phenomena within a discrete selection of vernacular homiletic hagiographical texts.

In the first instance, this chapter provides a circumscribed synopsis of the historical context, both Irish and European, for that discrete selection of texts under consideration in this thesis: the nine homiletic Saints' Lives preserved together in the fifteenth-century *Book of Lismore*.⁷ Attention is drawn to the particulars of the reform agenda and how its impulses were articulated in a period coterminous with both, the putative renaissance of the western church,⁸ and the contentious disputes on the Real Presence, which centred on the nature of the transformation undergone by the Eucharistic species at the moment of consecration.⁹ The focus then shifts from contexts to texts and explores the profit which may be derived from using hagiographical texts as indicators of shifting patterns in doctrinal and ecclesiastical conformity. Specifically, the role of hagiography in inculcating affective responses, and how that intersects with identity development, is considered.¹⁰ Finally, the rationale for treating the nine Lismore Lives collectively is presented, together with a concise description of the methodology employed.¹¹

⁴ CC, pp. 1–9; Bossy, 'Mass', pp. 29–34. Bossy's treatment of the rite is not unproblematic and is considered further at p. 76.

⁵ Kilmartin, *Eucharist*, pp. 97–147; Kilmartin provides a synoptic review of the central doctrinal aspects of the literature at pp. 142–7.

⁶ Madigan, *Christianity*, pp. 119–47 provides a comprehensive, though not always geographically demarcated, overview of church reform.

⁷ Editions and translations from Stokes, *Lives*, as follows: BP, pp. 1–19 and pp. 149–67; BCC, pp. 20–33 and pp. 168–81; BB, pp. 34–55 and pp. 182–200; BS, pp. 54–74 and pp. 201–21; BF, pp. 75–83 and pp. 222–30; BFc, pp. 84–98 and pp. 231–46; BBr, pp. 99–116 and pp. 247–61; BC, pp. 117–34 and pp. 262–80; BM, pp. 137–46 and pp. 281–9. Hereafter all references to episodes in individual Lives refer to the line numbers given by Stokes and all translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

⁸ 'Renaissance' is employed by Benson and Swanson, following Haskins' application of the term to the twelfth century, in their respective contributions to scholarship: Benson and Constable, *Renaissance*, pp. xvii–xxx and in that volume, Ladner, 'Terms', pp. 1–33; Swanson, *Renaissance*, pp. 1–7. The usage is not uncontested: see Melve, 'Revolt', pp. 231–52.

⁹ O'Connor, *Hidden*, pp. 95–122 provides an accessible historical account of the debates, while more philosophically rigorous arguments are found in Macy, *Theologies*, pp. 35–72.

¹⁰ The usage of 'affective' relied upon throughout is that promulgated by Carruthers, among others; see Carruthers, *Memory*, pp. 53–5 and Carruthers, *Beauty*, pp. 7–8 and 231. Essentially, '[o]ur senses produce 'affects' in us, physical changes such as emotions', p. 54.

¹¹ For reasons of limited space, this section is substantially abbreviated.

I.i Historical and European context

The presumption that the Irish church experienced ‘a radical transformation’ over the course of the long twelfth century is problematised by Etchingham; disregarding consonances in the available texts, produced before and after the putative ‘transformation’, is detrimental to the development of a sustainable thesis of reform.¹² The search for evidence of change should not occlude observations on continuities and the variegated nature of reformation, along geographic and temporal dimensions.¹³ The core modalities of the reform attested in the Latin church in this period relate not only to the renegotiation of authority between the Papacy and secular leaders,¹⁴ and the elimination of perceived vices within the clerical ranks, including most prominently, simony, nicolaitism and concubinage,¹⁵ but to the standardisation of monastic and clerical practices, including liturgical coherence across disparate Christian territories.¹⁶ Certainly, the eleventh-century reform movement begot greater conformity in the canon, as Rome increasingly proclaimed cultic and ritual uniformity as the best evidence of loyalty to Christ’s ‘*consortium et communio fidelium*’ on earth;¹⁷ the ‘institutional skeleton’ provided by new international religious orders diffused these ideas through the various regions.¹⁸ By the end of the twelfth century the western church could be defined as a ‘single organism’, albeit with the caveat that religious practices at the periphery were often still different from those at the centre and the abuses, which had pre-empted the notion of a return to the ideals of the past, persisted in some quarters.¹⁹ Assessments of the extent to which the current of political and ecclesiastical change in England impacted on Irish reform have been modulated somewhat since Dumville characterised the Norman Conquest as having ‘the most

¹² Etchingham, ‘Reform’, pp. 215–37; TIC, p. 1; on the concept of the long twelfth century from 1050–1250, see Swanson, *Renaissance*, pp. 4–5. Flanagan’s brief conclusion, pp. 243–8, synthesises her thesis of ‘reform’; for the best overview of the complex configuration of European reform patterns see: Tellenbach, *Church*, pp. 135–84 and Constable, ‘Renewal’, pp. 37–67. For Ireland, see: Brett, ‘Canterbury’, pp. 13–35; Holland, ‘Dublin’, pp. 111–60; the most comprehensive, though not unproblematic (as noted by Etchingham), overview of Irish developments is TIC, pp. 1–33.

¹³ Etchingham, ‘Reform’, p. 237.

¹⁴ Madigan, *Christianity*, pp. 132–43.

¹⁵ Tellenbach, *Church*, pp. 160–75; p. 162.

¹⁶ Madigan, *Christianity*, pp. 120–124 and 144–73.

¹⁷ Brasington, ‘Summula’, pp. 107–11; provides a useful summation of the role of Eucharist in constructing community.

¹⁸ Bartlett, *Making*, p. 243–248.

¹⁹ Brett, ‘Canterbury’, p. 13.

profound external impact on the development of the Irish church'.²⁰ Reform is rarely the product of 'sudden exogenous shock' but rather 'a process driven by various 'performances' charged with reformist meaning', as appears to have been the case in Ireland.²¹ As noted by Sharpe, in the absence of definitive evidence, 'assumption has played a large part in current orthodox understandings' of the Irish church in the twelfth century and our data 'on what was to be reformed is often less clear than the identities of those who went about it'.²² The records, though incomplete, of a series of reforming synods, commencing with Killaloe in 1050 and culminating at Cashel in 1172, depict the institution and evolution of hierarchically demarcated episcopal and diocesan structures throughout much of the country, broadly conforming to European and English organisational norms.²³ However, the matter of the archiepiscopacy to which the Irish church was ultimately subject, remained contested throughout the period.²⁴ Holland theorises, chiefly from the surviving correspondence, that Lanfranc, as Archbishop of Canterbury between 1070 and 1089, perceived himself to have a very clear pastoral obligation with respect to Ireland but the extent to which this putative authority was effectively exercised is ambiguous.²⁵ The see at Dublin may have enjoyed a 'special relationship' with Canterbury but the available records from the rest of the country reveal less certainty in this regard.²⁶ Lanfranc, as the epitome of the reform-minded cleric, possessed of impeccable monastic credentials and the support of the conquering monarch, was undeniably concerned with the perceived absence of a functioning hierarchy in the Irish church, but his disquiet may have encompassed more than organisational practicalities.²⁷ His missive to Bishop Domnall Ua hÉnnna, who served at the court of Munster king Toirdelbach Ua Briain, expresses a more

²⁰ Dumville, 'Councils', p. 35.

²¹ Vanderputten, 'Reform', p. 263.

²² Sharpe, 'Churches', p. 103; Bethell, 'English', pp. 111–136.

²³ Bethell, 'English', p. 112; Dumville, *Councils*, pp. 1–51; with Cashel (1101), Ráth Breasail (1111) and Kells (1152) interposed between the first and last.

²⁴ TIC, pp. 2–7.

²⁵ Holland, 'Dublin', p. 122; Brett, 'Canterbury', pp. 13–35.

²⁶ Holland, 'Dublin', p. 144; O'Don, p. 27.

²⁷ Holland, 'Dublin', p. 116.

generalised interest in the doctrinal orthodoxy of the Irish church.²⁸ Although some commentators have argued that the tone of the letter from Lanfranc to the Irish prelates, which addresses questions of baptism and Communication, is ‘as much a friendly overture’ as a doctrinal directive, it must be noted that it does appear his advice was solicited by, rather than impressed upon his correspondent.²⁹ Subsequent correspondence in 1094/1095 between Lanfranc’s successor, Anselm of Canterbury, and Bishop Samuel of Dublin indicates that at this juncture Anselm was much more inclined to assert Canterbury’s rights than Lanfranc had been, though this is the only extant evidence of any attempt at invoking a ‘coercive authority’.³⁰ Post 1121, the Irish prelates had little left to ‘hope or fear’ from Canterbury as internal disputes occupied attentions and by the time of the Anglo-Norman incursion in 1169, the Irish church had structures that were ‘broadly in line’ with those elsewhere in the Latin west.³¹

However, the business of rejuvenating the church was not purely the preserve of external actors, and local ecclesiastical and secular leaders who forged international relationships were equally, if not more, involved in instituting reform agendas.³² An adroit politician, who managed to balance both external reform pressures and to advance his preference for native autonomy, Munster king Muirchertach Ua Briain, wrote to Anselm at Canterbury to petition him to consecrate a bishop for Waterford.³³ A similarly deft balancing act was managed by papal legate Gillebertus of Limerick, who in the role of reformer and canonist, produced documents of critical importance to historians of this era.³⁴ If Lanfranc epitomised the reformed cleric of Norman England, then Gillebertus embodied that same reform agenda in an Irish context and his work exhibits a mature and reflective engagement

²⁸ TIC, pp. 208–9; as we have only one correspondent’s letter, it is more difficult than one might suppose to disinter Lanfranc’s tone.

²⁹ Hudson, ‘William’, p. 151.

³⁰ Brett, ‘Canterbury’, pp. 25–7; the letter chastises Samuel for using a crucifer despite not having received his pallium from Rome.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30; TIC, p. 243.

³² TIC, pp. 45–91 and 246–7.

³³ Holland, ‘Dublin’, p. 128–33.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 140, DSE, pp. 143–69; TIC, pp. 54–91; Flanagan provides a comprehensive analysis of Gille’s *De statu ecclesiae* and it need not be rehearsed here. Sections of the treatise, from the edition and translation in Fleming will be adduced throughout the dissertation, where relevant, as will comments on the edition from Etchingham, ‘Reform’, pp. 215–37.

both with canonical and liturgical developments of his time and established Irish precedents from the first millennium.³⁵

However, the expectations of orthodoxy were more than merely functional and this period also occasioned the genesis of a renewed interest in specific aspects of New Testament theology and the requirements of living the truly apostolic life.³⁶ The precepts of the *vita apostolica* find full expression in two contemporary texts: Bernard of Clairvaux's *Vita s. Malachiae* and a vernacular Life of Martin of Tours composed in Armagh in the early twelfth century.³⁷ Malachy, credited with the introduction of the Augustinian rule to Ireland, and who became the first formally proclaimed Irish saint, is, in Bernard's hands, a paragon of virtue and ecclesiastical merit rather than Peter Brown's holy-man miracle-worker.³⁸ Correspondingly, fourth-century monk Martin is recast in an episcopal persona and although his monastic heritage is not excised, the homilist accords equal emphases to his pastoral obligations.³⁹ The intersection of these religio-cultural shifts with contemporary Eucharistic theology is considered next.

I.ii Medieval Eucharists

By the twelfth century the Eucharist, always 'the central phenomenon of the Christian tradition' in both Latin and Orthodox Christendom,⁴⁰ was becoming 'a focus for claims to universality and efficacy' throughout western Europe.⁴¹ An effluence of literature,⁴² of both the theologically sophisticated and the more popularly accessible varieties, extending from formal tracts and papal decretals to *legenda* and *vitae* populated with accounts of miraculous

³⁵ TIC, p. 246.

³⁶ Madigan, *Christianity*, pp. 124–6; TIC, pp. 95–6 and 101–3.

³⁷ Herbert, 'Martin', pp. 76–84; for examples of this focus, see: *Vita. S. Malachiae*, §I.7, §I.13 and §XVI.38. (transl. Meyer, pp. 28, 33 and 52).

³⁸ Scully, 'Ireland', p. 239–56; Clement III canonised him in 1190. The 'reformed' Malachy is noted throughout and considered in a Eucharistic context at II, pp. 56–9.

³⁹ TIC, p. 101.

⁴⁰ Perczel, *Eucharist*, p. vi.

⁴¹ CC, p. 13. Although Rubin's focus is frequently on the later Middle Ages, her analytical approach, in this seminal volume informs this research throughout.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 83–142.

transformations, engendered a heightened conviction that the salvific properties of Communion were of essential importance to the good Christian life.⁴³ The mass's combination of expiatory and imprecatory components in a rite with 'a public and social character' united communities in a shared physical and spiritual space.⁴⁴ That ritual, as a 'corporate symbolic activity', generated personal and collective identities which were not simply specific to the circumstances of their incorporation but fundamental to the participants' broader understanding of themselves and their respective roles in Christian society.⁴⁵ The entire life cycle of medieval men and women was punctuated by these 'encounters with God',⁴⁶ a state of affairs which was effectively productive of 'a human society normed by the Eucharist'.⁴⁷ As the role of celebrant was reserved to clerics, they occupied positions of unrivalled power as the de-facto gatekeepers of the salvific sacrament.⁴⁸ Their role, both as substitute for Christ in the communal meal, and as enactor of the consecration which produced the transformation in the bread and wine,⁴⁹ was of crucial import.

There is an important connection between the emergence of the debates on the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharistic species and the concurrent reform of the church, with respect to the questions which arose from the dispute about the impact of priests' qualities on the efficacy of the sacrament.⁵⁰ The complexity of the Real Presence discourse in our period is exceptionally well-covered in a multitude of volumes, written from both theological and historical perspectives,⁵¹ but it would be remiss not to provide at least an abbreviated summary here. Berengar of Tours, a prominent French theologian connected with the Cathedral School of Chartres in the mid-eleventh century, stood accused of disseminating a heretical perspective

⁴³ Communion and the connected verb, 'to Communicate', are capitalised throughout when used in a Eucharistic context.

⁴⁴ Rahner, *Celebration*, pp. 6 and 38. These ideas are explored in more depth at II, pp. 71–8 and V, pp. 222–5.

⁴⁵ Mitchell, *Meaning*, p. xi.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 36.; the degree to which this extended to the laity in Ireland is interrogated in V, pp. 180–5.

⁴⁷ Astell, *Eating*, p. 12.

⁴⁸ These facets of clerical Eucharistic identities are considered throughout III and in IV, pp. 140–6 (with respect to gender).

⁴⁹ The dualistic character of the Eucharistic rite is examined in II, pp. 71–8.

⁵⁰ Megivern, *Concomitance*, p. 34. Tellenbach appears to be alone in disputing this connection: Tellenbach, *Church*, p. 140.

⁵¹ See n. 9 above.

on the Eucharist.⁵² His Eucharistic doctrine was perceived to advance the concept that the transformation at the consecration was ‘symbolic’ and that ‘conversion happened only within the intellect of the Communicants’ with the result that the consecrated bread ‘belonged to the tropical or metaphorical’ mode of speaking.⁵³ These differences had existed within theological discourse since the time of Augustine and Ambrose and had been rehearsed again in the ninth century but they sprang forth with new vigour in the eleventh century.⁵⁴

Lanfranc of Canterbury, the previously mentioned personification of reform ideals in many respects, disseminated his treatise *De corpore et sanguine domini* in refutation of Berengar’s ‘heretical’ perspective.⁵⁵ For Lanfranc: ‘the earthly substances which on the table of the lord are divinely sanctified by the priestly ministry, are ineffably, incomprehensibly, miraculously converted by the workings of heavenly power into the essence of the lord’s body’ and it was heresy to assert otherwise.⁵⁶ Essentially, the dominant orthodox position was that at the moment of consecration, the interior essence of the species was transformed into the body and blood of Christ although they retained the appearance of bread and wine.⁵⁷ The sacrament was, according to Lanfranc, ‘manifestly full of every grace and virtue and the divine majesty’⁵⁸ of God on which all should ‘meditate tenderly’ and was to be offered to those in need of fortification ‘during their lives and when they are dying’.⁵⁹ However, it should be noted that even by the time of the promulgation of the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, lay Communication remained mandated only once a year.⁶⁰ The generally abstruse nature of the debates dictated that they were a minority sport but the impact on more practical aspects of

⁵² Holopainen, *Dialectic*, pp. 48–75 and 100–110.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 100. Modern analysis of his actually professed position suggests that this is an unfair characterisation, largely the product of Lanfranc’s rebuttal.

⁵⁴ Swanson, *Renaissance*, pp. 5, 117–39.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁵⁶ *De corpore*, §18 (ed. Vaillancourt, p. 5).

⁵⁷ Holopainen, *Dialectic*, p. 71.

⁵⁸ *De corpore*, §14 (ed. Vaillancourt, p. 8).

⁵⁹ Lan, pp. 155–61.

⁶⁰ TIC, p. 218.

Eucharistic experiences, as is clear from the words in Lanfranc's correspondence with Domnall ua hÉnna, were a matter for the many, as salvation was at stake.⁶¹

It should be noted, at this juncture, that one monograph, addressing the issues of Irish Eucharistic theology and practices was published in 2011, O'Donoghue's *The Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland*. However, there are significant deficits in this work, not least of which is the problematic assumption that the available sources can definitively be categorised as pre- or post- Norman.⁶² While his survey of the sources is competent, his treatment of the material is often superficial and his reliance on the scholarship of others, particularly translations that are riddled with flaws, often means nuances in meaning and context are lost.⁶³ The section on hagiography is comparatively lengthy but treats of Lives composed in the seventh century alongside those from the eleventh century with little evidence of an effort to disinter their relative contexts of production.⁶⁴ As is noted by Carey in his review, he both overlooks the Eucharistic dimensions of texts already ignored in the scholarship and gives only cursory treatment to those relatively neglected.⁶⁵ Notwithstanding this comparatively recent addition to the scholarship, therefore, it is clear the Irish hagiographical corpus remains an unmined resource for those interested in Irish Eucharistic theology.

I.iii Hagiography, affective religiosity and identities

In today's scholarship, it is generally accepted that hagiography as a 'paradigm, is a goldmine' for historians in search of 'social conditions, values and mental horizons', but as with all endeavours that involve disinterring historical data from literary texts, there are caveats.⁶⁶ What is attempted in this dissertation is the 'carefully controlled use of hagiographical evidence for

⁶¹ Swason, *Renaissance*, p. 136.

⁶² Seven reviews have been published. The critical include: Boyle, 'Review', pp. 93–5, Carey, 'Review', p. 1279, Rumsey, 'Review', p. 536–8 and the favourable: McNamara, 'Review', pp. 590–1, Buckley, 'Review', pp. 59–68, Ryan, 'Review', pp. 1–3 and Whelan, 'Review', pp. 79–81.

⁶³ For example, he relies on multiple translations from Ó Maidin's *The Celtic Monk*, which itself had been the object of negative reviews on its publication, see: Johnston, 'Review', p. 341.

⁶⁴ O'Don, pp. 102–24.

⁶⁵ Carey, 'Review', p. 1279: for example, *Instruction on the Sacraments*, a tract examined here in II, pp. 35–43 and the Brendan material in V, pp. 189–222, are among the sources not examined at all or poorly so in O'Don.

⁶⁶ Doherty, 'Irish', p. 10; Geary, *Living*, p. 12.

specific purposes’, ever mindful of the fact that extrapolating from a single text to a multitude is an unsound proposition, as is positing that a single text is reflective of, or productive of, an entire society’s social and cultural norms.⁶⁷ Clancy has argued that Irish hagiography composed between 900 and 1150 is a ‘religious genre neutralised by ecclesiastical politics’ in contrast to those contemporary texts such as *In tenga bithnua* or *Scél na hEsérge* with more ‘powerful’ messages which demonstrate an ‘acute awareness of contemporary European trends in theology and political thought’.⁶⁸ Given the ‘precocious intellectual fecundity’ exhibited by authors across all genres in the Irish canon and the consequent generation of audiences ‘equipped to engage with more demanding texts’, it is not preposterous to imagine that the same milieu, which produced the refined texts to which Clancy refers, might also have given rise to hagiographical compositions which embraced the complexities of contemporary religious life.⁶⁹ Given that hagiography remains the single largest body of evidence remaining to us,⁷⁰ and the Lives of the eleventh and twelfth century, both Latin and vernacular, have been argued by others to combine elements of ‘the old and the new, the native and the foreign’, it behoves us to examine how these texts were crafted to ‘embody the discourse on the continent’.⁷¹ Similarly, we cannot discount the possibility that the choice of vernacular over Latin in some instances potentially implies a ‘wider non-clerical audience’.⁷² Informed by Geary’s thesis that each text stands at a three-fold intersection of genre, total textual production and historical circumstance,⁷³ every effort has been made throughout to ensure that the analysis embodies that awareness. As both ‘texts of identity’ and ‘powerful instruments of ideology’ it is reasonable to expect that both theological and practical dimensions of the Eucharistic

⁶⁷ Herbert, *Iona*, p. 133.; Geary, *Living*, p. 20.

⁶⁸ Clancy, ‘Literature’, p. 651.

⁶⁹ Carey, *King*, p. 13; Clancy, ‘Literature’, p. 649.

⁷⁰ Doherty, ‘Irish’, p. 10; Geary, *Living*, p. 10.

⁷¹ Ó Corráin, ‘Foreign’, p. 230.

⁷² Boyle, ‘Reform’, p. 270; noting, of course, that the assumption of different audiences should not be automatic but driven by textual analysis.

⁷³ Geary, *Living*, p. 23.

sacrament, of a genus that may not be elsewhere identifiable, may be embedded within hagiography which incorporates homiletic components.⁷⁴

Within the corpus of Continental literature produced in this period, *legenda* are noted for their explicitly Eucharistic content, and as these stories were incorporated into and reproduced in different forms within saints' Lives for use in the liturgy, they 'in turn became part of the Eucharistic celebration'.⁷⁵ Liturgies as the fulcrum where 'worlds of oral and written' texts are inseparably linked served as the loci of identity formation, as argued below.⁷⁶ In order for this socially constructed coherence to persist the 'collective identity was substantiated through repetition and citation' and in the absence of masses in the vulgar tongues 'a void was filled by vernacular texts'.⁷⁷ If we accept, as I believe we must, 'textuality as both arising from and constitutive of social life' then we must accept its corollary: the role occupied by homiletic hagiography, as part of the broader 'narrative architecture', was productive of social identities.⁷⁸ Examining the discourse is the first level at which we may explore identities;⁷⁹ this project attempts to do so in a methodical fashion.

I.iv The Book of Lismore corpus

I.iv.i Manuscript context

The nine Lives considered here appear together in one section of the fifteenth-century Book of Lismore, between ff. 3 and 42b, at the front of the manuscript.⁸⁰ Three scribal hands have been distinguished throughout but the hand of unidentified Scribe 'A' is responsible for almost all of the work in the first 90 folios of a codex which was produced under the patronage of layman Fíngin Mac Carthaigh Riabhach († 1505) and his wife Caitilín († 1506). The only

⁷⁴ Pohl, 'Memory', p. 26; Cubitt, 'Memory', p. 30.

⁷⁵ Astell, *Eating*, p. 14.

⁷⁶ Cubitt, 'Memory', p. 64.

⁷⁷ Snoek, *Piety*, p. 4; Cohen, *Hybridity*, pp. 13, 27 and 43; Taft, *Liturgy*, p. 429.

⁷⁸ Cohen, *Hybridity*, pp. 13, 27 and 43.; Spiegel, 'Social', pp. 77 and 85.

⁷⁹ Pohl, 'Strategies', p. 20.

⁸⁰ ISOS; Stokes, 'Introduction', pp. v–cxx; Ó Cuív, 'Observations', pp. 269–92. There is only one interpolation within this section, as is discussed in III, pp. 109–12.

notable exception to this, with relevance for the work here, occurs within BC, in which another hand writes three columns before being replaced by Scribe A. The precept that the manner in which texts were copied into a manuscript established ‘a textual configuration’ that could ‘alter the significance of each individual text’ has gained ground in recent times.⁸¹ Throughout this work, most notably in Chapter II, reference is made to other relevant texts which appear in BL and which may have informed the scribes’ understanding of the Lives they sought to ‘corporately curate’.⁸² That the compilers, and potentially their predecessors, considered these materials sufficiently connected to be read in concert at their ‘moment of inscription’ recommends their treatment here as a discrete corpus.⁸³ Similarly, as is presented in *Figure I.i* below, these texts frequently ‘travelled’ together in other fifteenth-century codices.

Figure I.i Manuscript Distribution

	Paris, BnF, MS celtique 1 ⁸⁴	London, BL, MS Egerton 91	LB	Dublin, King’s Inns, MS 10	Dublin, RIA, MS 24 P 25 (Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne)	Brussels, Bibl. Roy., MS 2324–2340 (O’Clery)	Brussels, Bibl. Roy., MS 4190–4200 (O’Clery)	Dublin, RIA, MS A. iv. I
	s. xv	s. xv	s. xv	s. xv	s.xvi	s. xvii	s. xvii	s. xvii
BP	0		0	0	0	0		
BCC	0		0	0	0			
BB	0		0			0	0	
BS	0	0				0		0
BF						0		0
BFc						0		0
BBr	0	0					0	
BC							0	
BM	0	0				0		0

⁸¹ Pohl, ‘Memory’, p. 11.

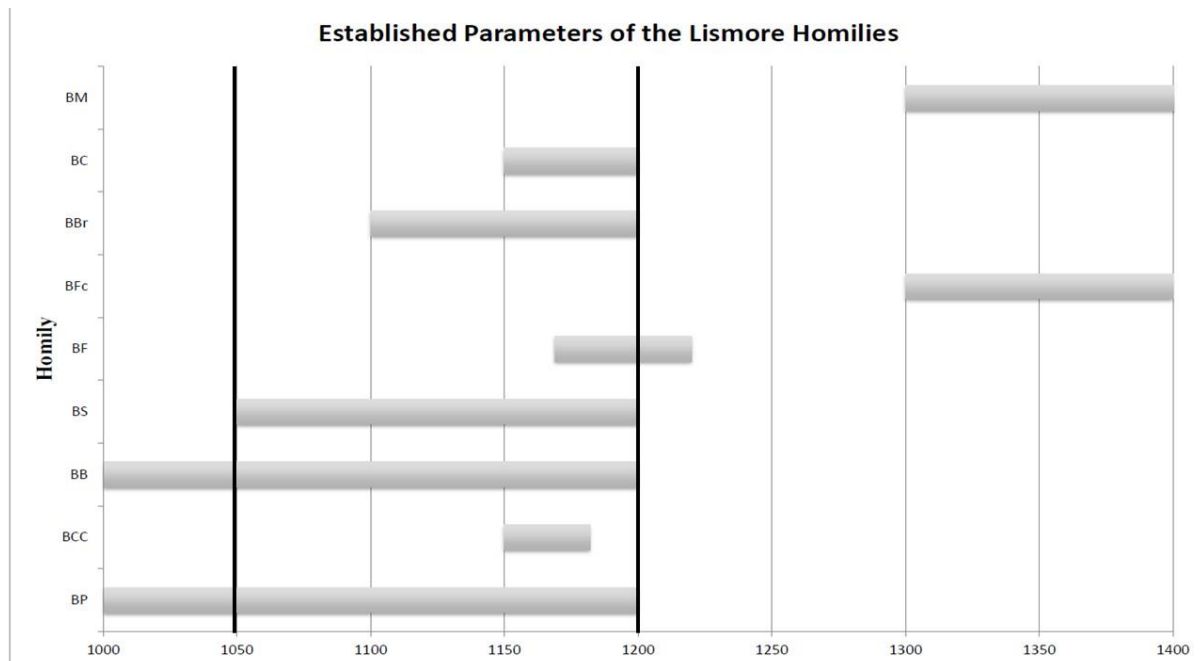
⁸² Clancy, ‘Literature’, p. 656.

⁸³ Spiegel, ‘Social’, p. 84 on the ‘moment of choice, decision and action that creates the social reality of the text’.

⁸⁴ It should be noted that the Lives appear in different sections of BnF celtique 1, which is a compendium in different hands; BM, BS and BCC appear in the third section, BP, BB and BBr in the sixth and final section in another hand. See *Figure II.iii*, p. 65 below for additional BL texts found in these manuscripts.

Liv.ii Methodology

Figure I.ii Dating



Relying on the precedents established in earlier scholarship on the individual Lives of the subject saints and general commentary, largely drawn from the works of Kenney, Ó Riain and Herbert, a plurality of these Lives can be situated within a temporal window centred on the period 1050–1200.⁸⁵ All editions and secondary works cited by Kenney and Ó Riain in the individual entries for the respective Lives were consulted and, where they proved relevant, are included in the final bibliography. When additional secondary materials were identified, these too were consulted. When the textual relationships and dating of the various Lives are pertinent to the broader analytical focus of the dissertation, a more complete treatment of those facets is given in the relevant chapters.⁸⁶ Complete textual stemmata are provided in Appendix I for eight of the nine Lives; BCC is excluded as the relationship between texts within that dossier is well established.⁸⁷ In respect of the two apparent outliers with regards to date (BFc and BM),

⁸⁵ Following the order of *Figure I.i*, which concurs with the texts' manuscript order, from BP to BM: EHI, pp. 327–48, pp. 422–36, pp. 356–63, pp. 364–6, pp. 375–6, pp. 457–8, pp. 406–17, pp. 376–82 and p. 461; DIS pp. 526–31, pp. 211–14, pp. 123–5, pp. 557–60, pp. 318–21, pp. 335–7, pp. 115–17, pp. 169–71, pp. 467–8.

⁸⁶ See sections on BP, BS, BC, BFc in Chapter III, BB in Chapter IV and BBr in Chapter V.

⁸⁷ See *Appendix I*, pp. 239–249.

as in *Figure I.ii* above, it should be acknowledged that even after thoroughgoing analysis of a Life, the dates assigned to it can vary wildly. For example, in respect of *Betha Molaga*, found in the Book of Fermoy, a manuscript which likely shares a hand with BL, Herbert has advanced a date of 1114 X 1119 while Ó Riain favours a thirteenth-century date.⁸⁸ In the case of BFc and BM it has been decided here to err on the side of objective caution, rather than subjective preference, and follow Ó Riain.

I.iv.iii Homiletic structure and content

The difficulties in applying the designation of ‘homily’ to Irish texts is frequently acknowledged in scholarship.⁸⁹ An opening exordial address, a passage expounding on a Biblical text, usage of first person plural verb forms, and a concluding benediction are the structural components agreed on by a plurality of scholars.⁹⁰ As Murdoch notes, ‘saints’ lives themselves are close to the thematic sermon in that they are more or less by definition exempla for good behavior’.⁹¹ However, it is also argued that the nominal addition of exordia and concluding prayers to texts which remain stylistically written *legenda* is at best a superficial adaptation.⁹² In his assessment of the BL Lives Murdoch ultimately concludes that the texts may ‘exist at the edge of preaching’ but they may not objectively be catalogued as homilies.⁹³

O’Loughlin offers criteria that are less dependent on perceived structural form than others writing on the subject, arguing that many texts with identifiable catechetical content were potentially deemed suitable for use in a para-liturgical context; ‘the audience “read” the liturgy not from a text’ but from the actions and words of the celebrant.⁹⁴ He suggests that homiletic designation should be determined by content and the probable medium of

⁸⁸ Herbert, ‘Observations’, pp. 127–40; DIS, pp. 480–2.

⁸⁹ Murdoch, ‘Preaching’, p. 40; Mullins, ‘*Imitatio*’, pp. 199–200.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*; Mac Donncha, ‘Medieval’, pp. 59–71.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 42–5; Herbert concurs with this assessment: Her, p. 344.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 43 and 47–50.

⁹⁴ O’Loughlin, ‘Irish’, pp. 18–19.

transmission rather than the identification of explicit addresses to an audience.⁹⁵ A text that ‘tries to persuade as well as to instruct’ the reader or listener is the true measure of homiletic functionality.⁹⁶ Among the features that are submitted as insignia of homilies is their relationship to specific feast-days;⁹⁷ as is noted in *Figure I.iii* below, seven of the nine BL texts contain references to the commemoration of the saint’s feast. However, many collections of the sort generally follow the calendar and it is clear from the random sequence of the feast-days within the BL Lives, the collection was not ordered in this manner.

Figure I.iii Homiletic structural patterns (Texts arranged as in BL)

Text	Feast-day⁹⁸	Life	Exordium	Peroration⁹⁹
BP	17 th March	✓	Isa. IX.1–2 & Matt. IV.16	Peroration & intercessory prayer
BCC	9 th June	✓	Gen. XII.1 & Gal. III.7 & Matt. XIX.29	Peroration & intercessory prayer
BB	1 st February	✓	Rev. XIV.4 & Lev. XI.44	Peroration & intercessory prayer
BS	1 st –8 th March	✓	Ps. LXVII.36	Intercessory prayer
BF	12 th December	-	-	Peroration & intercessory prayer
BFc	25 th November	-	-	-
BBr	16 th May	✓	Ps. CXI.1	Peroration & intercessory prayer
BC	8 th September	✓	Matt. VII.12	Peroration & intercessory prayer
BM	30 th March	✓	Matt. XXV.14	Peroration

The biblically-derived exordia are integrated into each of the Lives with varying degrees of coherence and the following discussion highlights both those connections that are harmonious and those where the conjunctions are incongruous. The intention here is not to provide an exhaustive analysis of each Life’s catechetical content but to highlight those structural and textual features which accord with and contradict the texts’ classification as homilies.¹⁰⁰ In BP, the choice of pericopes from Isaiah, with their prophecies of messianic salvation, married to the New Testament account of the prophecy’s satisfaction in Matthew IV, is patently intended

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19; however, he also notes the dangers inherent in this taxonomy as the body of catechetical texts is so voluminous as to potentially render the homiletic genre ‘so diffuse as to be meaningless’.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23; O’Loughlin, ‘Homily’, p. 31; Murdoch, ‘Preaching’, p. 41; Clayton, ‘Homiliaries’, p. 208.

⁹⁸ The contemporary feast-days most usually assigned to the subject saint have been collated from the various martyrologies.

⁹⁹ The classification of these sections as perorations is already attested in the scholarship: Wright, ‘Next-to-Last’, p. 325, n. 75, though he considers them ‘formulaic’, he notes that the pattern dates ‘probably to the eleventh century’.

¹⁰⁰ More complete treatments of the homiletic content are incorporated into the discussions of each Life in the relevant chapters.

to evoke Patrick's status as evangelist to the Irish and his matchless place in the history of Irish conversion.¹⁰¹ Structurally, the author moves from brief Latin Vulgate quotations to longer expansions in the vernacular, indicating expressly to his audience where he is providing both the historical and spiritual senses of the passages, in the manner of a thoughtful exegete.¹⁰² The vernacular expansion of the first lemma is an explicit statement on the fulfilment of Christian promise in Ireland:

Populus qui sedebat in tenibris vidit lucem magnam i. in pobul dossidh i ndorchaibh atconnaire soillse móir, et in foircann robui i bhfoscudh báis fuarutar soillsi dia tainig a inshorcugud.¹⁰³

The people who were settled in darkness saw a great light, that is, the people that sat in darkness saw a great light, and those that were in the shadow of death found a light from which came their illumination.

The consummation of Ireland's Christian destiny is attributed to Patrick in the parallel closing lines of the exordium, where the memorandum of his feast also occurs:

Oen iarum dona ruithnibh ro eisreid grian na firinne isin n-domun-sa, in ruithen 7 in lasair 7 in lia loghmhar 7 in lochrand lainderdha ro shoillsigh iarthar in bhetha, inti uasal dia ta lith 7 foraimet a n-ecmhong na réasea 7 na h-aimsire .i. noemh Patraic mac Calprainn, airdesbul iarthair domuin, athair bathais 7 creitmhe bh-fer n-Erenn.¹⁰⁴

One then of the splendours which the sun of righteousness spread into the world, the splendour and the flame and the precious stone and the shining lamp which illuminated the west of the world, the noble one for whom there is a feast-day and commemoration at this particular time and season, that is Saint Patrick son of Calpurn, chief apostle of the western world, father of baptism and belief of the men of Ireland.

¹⁰¹ Bib., pp. 503–4.

¹⁰² BP L 1–34.

¹⁰³ BP L 1–4.

¹⁰⁴ BP L 28–34. The memoranda of feast-days in five, of the seven Lives which mention the feast-day, share the phrasing found here: 'for whom there is a feast-day and commemoration at this particular time and season'; BB L 1145–7; BS L 1784–5; BBr L 3316–18; BM L 4628–32. BM actually incorporates the entire passage from BP, as above, with only small emendations.

The homiletic addenda in BP also occur in the first section of the earlier VT,¹⁰⁵ and although the complete length of the exordium is longer in VT, there is greater vernacular amplification in the BP text than in the macaronic VT. It is beyond the purview of the current work to engage in a metaphrastic comparison of the texts, but it is clear from cursory examination that there is limited originality in the relevant BP sections; the intention of both hagiographers in the prefatory sections is to introduce their audiences to a definitive characterisation of Patrick as apostle to the Irish.¹⁰⁶ Given the proximity of the textual relationship between BCC and BB in BL and LB, it is unsurprising that the homiletic exordia of these two texts are intimately related in the two recensions, drawing on the same Biblical verses.¹⁰⁷ However, as noted in the comparison between BP and VT, the BL author or scribe also exhibits a preference for vernacular over Latin here. The lengthy exordium of BCC, thematic aspects of which are fully integrated throughout the Life, is the lodestar that guides the audience to the emphatic portrayal of Colum Cille as the ideal embodiment of monastic virtue.¹⁰⁸ The coupling of God's call to Abraham to leave his own land and people, on the promise of being the source of blessing for all humanity,¹⁰⁹ with passages from Gal. and Matt. which recount the attainment of the promise,¹¹⁰ rehearses the patterning of Colum Cille's own path to sanctity, in the hands of successive hagiographers. In BB, the only Life of a female saint among the Lismore texts, the verses drawn from Rev. and Lev. are noteworthy for their conspicuous emphases on virginity and purity.¹¹¹ There is inconsistency in Stokes' assessment of the LB BB as 'a good example of the way in which heathen mythological legends become annexed to historical Christian saints',¹¹² given the irrefutable orthodoxy of this exordium, and the manner in which its lessons

¹⁰⁵ Stokes, VT, pp. 1–8; Stokes, *Three*, pp. 2–4. That the text of BP in both BL and LB is clearly an abridgement of the first section of VT is uncontested. See stemma at *Appendix Lii.i*, p. 236. It should be noted that the LB and BL exordia share the same preference for the vernacular over Latin.

¹⁰⁶ His Eucharistic identity is considered briefly in III, pp. 127–9.

¹⁰⁷ BCC L 655–741; BB L 1120–50; Stokes, *Three*, pp. 50–3

¹⁰⁸ See III, pp. 119–22.

¹⁰⁹ Bib., p. 91.

¹¹⁰ Bib., pp. 1108 and 892.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1197 and 156.

¹¹² Stokes, *Three*, p. vii.

are diffused throughout the Life. Its application to a Life of Brigid is not unproblematic though, as the passage from Rev. actually refers expressly to men who have avoided the taint of women.¹¹³ The homilist captures only the second clause of the verse, ‘hii sunt qui sequuntur agnum quocumque ierit’,¹¹⁴ entirely omitting the preceding line ‘hii sunt qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati virgines enim sunt’.¹¹⁵ However, in the closing lines of the homiletic introit the author notes that *noebhógh* (holy virgin) Brigid has honoured this commandment as well as any multitude of men.¹¹⁶ The prominence of chastity and general conformity to prevailing social norms in the Lives of female saints has produced a rich seam in hagiographical scholarship, which is examined further throughout Chapter IV.

Only eleven lines expanding on a lemma from Ps. LXVII are appended to BS and there is limited evidence of effort on the part of the hagiographer to fuse their somewhat generic content on the Holy Spirit and the customary greatness of saints into the main portion of the Life.¹¹⁷ The next two texts in the manuscript, BF and BFc do not incorporate even cursory homiletic opening frames and that applied to BBr immediately afterwards is slight.¹¹⁸ However, the homiletic content in the subsequent Life, BC, is exceptionally well-developed, as is considered in Chapter III.¹¹⁹ The lessons on *caritas* and *derrec* (Christian charity) in the opening lemma from Matt. VII.12, now known among Biblical scholars as ‘the Golden Rule’, are manifest throughout the Life, with a degree of intertextuality that is not otherwise found in the collection.¹²⁰ Furthermore, the exordium here shares significant textual connections with LB sermon XIV ‘On Charity’.¹²¹ In her recent treatment of a selection of homilies from LB Mullins argues, though without a comprehensive statement of her premises, that the exordia

¹¹³ NRSV: Rev. XIV.4.

¹¹⁴ BB L 1118; ‘these follow the lamb wherever he goes’.

¹¹⁵ Vulgate: [accessed 13/05/2017]; NRSV: ‘it is those who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins’.

¹¹⁶ BB L 1145.

¹¹⁷ BS L 1775–85.

¹¹⁸ BF L 2504; BFc L 2788; BBr L 3305–17. It is noted and discussed in Chapter V that after the memorandum of the feast day the text transitions to a second biblically-derived passage comparing Brendan to various prominent prophets and Patristic fathers.

¹¹⁹ BC L 3916–50; see III, pp. 102–115.

¹²⁰ Bib., p. 878; <http://www.dil.ie/15024>.

¹²¹ Murdoch, ‘Preaching’, p. 48.

appended to the texts proper was the liturgical reading for the day on which the saint's feast fell.¹²² This premise accords with the dissonance between the exordia and certain of the BL Lives, as the task of harmonising in some instances may simply have been too great. In essence, what emerges from this portion of the structural analysis then is an impression of the variegated quality of the marriage of homiletic and hagiographical components.

Seven of the nine texts contain passages in the final sections that are best categorised as perorations:¹²³ they provide a summation of what has preceded and a statement on the efficacy of the saint's veneration. Although there are differences in length, BP's the shortest and BM's the longest, similar details are found in each, relating the interment of the saint's relics, their ascension to heaven and the ultimate salvation of believers on Judgement Day. By way of example:

Itat a relce 7 a thaisi gu n-anoir 7 gu n-airmhidin i talmain, co fertuibh 7 co mirbhuilib gach laithe, co traeth gach aen tic friu 7 coimhedaíd gach aen cunghus leo. Gidh mor immorro intí noeim Fhinnen i n-etarscarad a chuirp 7 a anma on mhudh-sin colleic, bidh mo a anoir iar n-eiseirghi ind oentuidh noemh nem-truaillnidi, i mor-dhail bratha, in tan bus bretheamh for fheraibh Eirenn 7 for a mnaibh imalle fria Patraic 7 Issu Crist. Taitnighfidh insin amal grein. Biaid isin mhor-mhaith-sin, ind aentuidh noemh 7 noemogh in domuin, i n-aentaíd naei n-gradh nimhe na dernsat imarbhus, isan aentaíd is uaisli cech n-aentaíd, i n-aentaíd na naeimh-trinoidi, Athair 7 Mac 7 Spírut Noem.¹²⁴

His relics and his remains are on earth with honour and reverence, with miracles and marvels every day, so that he overpowers everyone against them and protects everyone who helps with them. Now though great is the Saint Finnian, while his body and soul are separated, his honour will be greater after the resurrection in the holy unpolluted union in the great assembly of doom, when he will be a judge over the men of Ireland

¹²² Mullins, *'Imitatio'*, p. 198

¹²³ BP L 645–50; BCC L 1106–14; BB L 1764–71; BF L 2774–84; BBr L 3899–911; BC L 4513–23; BM L 4864–97.

¹²⁴ BF L 2778–84.

and over its women along with Patrick and Jesus Christ. There he will shine like a sun. He will be in that great goodness, in the unity of saints and holy virgins of the world, in the unity of the nine grades of heaven who have not committed sins, in the unity that is more noble than every unity, in the unity of the holy trinity, father, son and holy spirit.

Seven of the nine texts also complete the peroration with an intercessory prayer, again potentially indicative of their status as homilies to be read or heard, although the uniformity between its various iterations may suggest it is purely a scribal reflex inserted at the end of a text by rote.¹²⁵ As the same prayer is found in the closing lines of BP, BB and BCC in LB,¹²⁶ it may have been added to the other BL Lives as a matter of course.¹²⁷ However, as argued by Nagy the ‘welter of cross reference’ in Irish hagiography, ‘is not an accidental by-product but precisely what the community of saints is supposed to engender’.¹²⁸ The form of the closing petition, beseeching both God and the subject saint, as in BCC for example, is again replicated in these seven texts:

Ailim trocuire Dhe uilechumachtuigh tre impidhe noemh Choluim, co rosium uile in aentaaid sin. Roissem, ro aitreabhun, in saecula saeculorum. Amen.¹²⁹

I beseech the mercy of almighty God through the intercession of holy Colum, that we may all reach that union. May we reach it, may we dwell there, *in saecula saeculorum*. Amen.

The absence of the formula in BFc and BM, the two texts in which the depiction of the subject saints is much closer to the thaumaturgical holy-man associated with hagiography produced in earlier centuries more than anything approaching the reformed cleric of the twelfth century, is

¹²⁵ BL L 650; BCC L 1115; BB L 1772; BS L 2500; BF 2785; BBr L 3912; BC L 4524.

¹²⁶ Stokes, *Three*, pp. 47, 87 and 125.

¹²⁷ Though of course we cannot say in which direction the copying occurred, from BL to LB or vice versa.

¹²⁸ Nagy, ‘Reproductions’, p. 282.

¹²⁹ BCC L 1115.

perhaps indicative of the scribe's own awareness that these Lives were outliers within the nine.¹³⁰ Notwithstanding this observation, there is a lengthy homiletic exordium on the requirements of a virtuous life appended to BM, which otherwise finds few echoes within the main body of the text itself and a closing peroration and intercessory prayer in BF despite the absence of an exordium.¹³¹ A comparison of the nine Lismore texts with the fourteen Irish Lives edited by Plummer provides an indication of how distinguishing these structural features are within the corpus of vernacular Lives: among those fourteen only three include either a peroration, prayer or both in their concluding sections and only one incorporates a homiletic introit.¹³² All of these inconsistencies speak perhaps to the imperfect realisation of a scribal project intended to impose a degree of uniformity and coherence on Lismore's hagiographical corpus.

I.v Conclusion

This dissertation began with an observation on the pervasive ubiquity of the iconography associated with the Eucharistic sacrament in our modern era;¹³³ that same eminence is attested in the summary of theological developments and reform agendas between 1050 and 1200 presented in this chapter. Lanfranc, a prominent figure in the contests of the Real Presence, loomed equally large, at least in some quarters, in the implementation of institutional and doctrinal reforms in Ireland. The nature of that intersection provides tantalising glimpses of the possibility that Irish authors and audiences were not only aware of, but fully engaged with, both the abstractions and practicalities of the doctrinal developments. It was argued that hagiography, as a literary genre which evolved in response to changing modalities of sanctity

¹³⁰ Bieler, 'Hagiography', pp. 13–24 on the wonder-working paradigm; TIC, pp. 14–17 and 94–115 for Flanagan's assessment of the 'reformulation' of Lives in the twelfth century. The clerical identities of Fionnchú and Mochua are examined in III, pp. 115–19 and pp. 95–102.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*; BFL 2774–86.

¹³² From BNÉ I: *Betha Bairre*, p. 22; *Betha Beraig*, p. 43; *Betha Ciarán Saigre I*, p. 112. BBr in BNÉ contains the same brief homiletic opening as that in BL, a function of Plummer's reliance on O'Clery's manuscript of BBr, as discussed in V, pp. 193–206. Two of the three, the Lives of Berach and Ciarán of Saigir, are drawn in Plummer's editions from O'Clery's s. xvii Brussels, Bib. Roy., 4190–200 (EHI, pp. 402–3 and 316–7) so the possibility exists that he emended his exemplars to include the peroration and prayers. Murdoch has argued that the closing prayer is a 'stock feature' in Irish Lives but its presence in BL and absence elsewhere attests otherwise; Murdoch, 'Preaching', p. 46.

¹³³ This should not be read as an assumption that the pervasiveness extends to all parts of the world.

and external circumstances, proffers a propitious window through which to view these developments. It was further asserted that the efforts of redactors and scribes to revise the Lismore Lives for homiletic usage, however imperfectly, buttressed the likelihood that echoes of the concomitant reform impulses and elaboration of Eucharistic theology, might find expression in their ranks. In these Irish hands did the bread and wine remain simply bread and wine or were they transformed into something altogether more powerful? *Veni*.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE OF THE IRISH EUCHARIST

Fath aile ar-arfacbad acaind in sásad sin, ardaig comad oenchorp in eclais uile do Crist iar n-oentaíd aicenta oenchiurp tri an caithem doib uli a firchiurp-sium 7 a firfolá, amal is oen eterru féin 7 fris-sium iar n-oeniris 7 iar n-oenduthracht menman.¹

Another reason that spiritual sustenance has been left with us: so that the whole church may be one body to Christ, following the natural union of one body, through their all partaking of his true-body and true blood, thus there is unity among themselves and with him, by reason of one faith and one desire of thought.

There is scarcely a more succinct expression of the perpetual social contract of the Christian faith to be found in the Irish corpus, yet this text, which offers extensive commentary on the origins and purpose of the Eucharistic sacrament, has received scant attention in recent scholarship.² The extent to which it embodies prevailing Irish Eucharistic theology in the long twelfth century is an unknown quantity, while a thoroughgoing modern appraisal of the literature remains a desideratum,³ but it certainly offers a tantalising glimpse of the possibilities of this scholarship. This chapter explores the most significant contours of the apprehension of the Eucharistic sacrament by Irish authors and their audiences in the period 1050–1200 by analysing a variegated range of relevant sources. Informed by this consideration of liturgical, homiletic, theological, prescriptive, literary and contemporary hagiographical texts, the latter portions examine how a vernacular vocabulary of the Eucharist was deployed in the Lismore homiletic corpus. A plurality of the texts incorporated into this survey has previously been

¹ Sac, §33, pp. 19–20, LB p. 257. Hogan elected to publish the text as ‘*Instruction on the Sacraments*’ while a more accurate titular choice may have been ‘*Instruction on the Eucharist*’, as there are only two brief mentions of extreme unction and baptism in the closing sections at §44 and §45, pp. 28–9. The text was not among those edited and translated by Atkinson in *Hom* but it is identified equally un-edifyingly in his recitation of LB contents (p. 40) as ‘Christ, the third person in the Trinity (Lord’s Supper)’. The text has not been subjected to comprehensive dating analysis to my knowledge but it is assigned to the ‘eleventh or twelfth century’ in McNamara, ‘Inverted’, p. 574. It is examined below at pp. 35–43.

² O’Don, pp. 126–7. O’Donoghue quotes sections of the text in his literature survey but without due deference to its context or the limitations of Hogan’s nineteenth-century translation.

³ The field is primed for an expansion of LIT, notwithstanding Stevenson’s contribution; the deficits in O’Don have been noted above in I, p. 9.

convincingly dated to a period proximally contemporary with the Lismore *bethada*,⁴ but it also makes reference to texts composed in an earlier period, which were presumably deemed by scribes to remain pertinent or estimable in later centuries, as attested to by their inclusion in LB and other manuscripts compiled contemporaneously with BL in the fifteenth century. These sections of the chapter are not intended to be read as an exhaustive *précis* of the individual texts or their specific contexts of production but to provide a discrete critique of the most important aspects of Irish Eucharistic rhetoric, while emending and augmenting the observations of foregoing scholarship. Additionally, many of these texts have not been mined for Eucharistic content. The focus on a *mélange* of genres is intended to demonstrate how Eucharistic discourses were mobilised to support and augment the understanding that priests and Communicants brought with them to the altar as they celebrated and received the sacrament. It is suggested that these diverse texts, operating at a nexus of vernacular and Latinate cultural production, generated meaning that blended productively with experiences to construct identities. The final section of the chapter considers the relationship between the linguistic dimensions of the BL Eucharistic economy and those advanced in the wider literature. Reference is made throughout to prevailing Eucharistic norms in Latin Christendom and how these are reflected in the Irish materials.

⁴ As is clear from the synthesis of the scholarship on the dating of the texts in *Figure I.ii* above, six of the nine texts were likely composed between 1050–1200 and one (BCC) shortly thereafter.

II.i Liturgical sources

Surviving liturgical sources have, for obvious reasons, been mined the most thoroughly for information on Eucharist practices but a survey of Irish sources would not be complete without providing a synoptic commentary on the extant liturgical materials. The most important documentary evidence remaining to us of liturgical practices in Medieval Ireland is the *Stowe Missal* and although its likely ninth-century provenance makes it significantly earlier than the period of the texts under examination in this dissertation,⁵ its comprehensiveness in an otherwise meagrely populated landscape of surviving liturgical texts means its content must inform our reading of Eucharistic accounts in homiletic hagiography. The relatively fixed nature of the central rite of the mass is supported by the materials from the *Corpus*, *Drummond*, and *Rosslyn* missals, assigned by scholars to the period contemporary with the Lismore texts.⁶ A further facet of the *Stowe Missal*'s medieval history also makes it worthy of priority here: the reliquary in which it was preserved has been definitively dated to the eleventh century, implying that the material object and potentially the texts therein remained relevant into the reform era.⁷ Warren's comprehensive analysis of the missal's liturgical texts, and in particular their relationship to the varying Roman and Gallican traditions which obtained on the Continent at this early date, has proven fruitful in fortifying the argument that 'Celtic' practices were not so far removed from orthopraxy as once assumed.⁸ Stowe contains a lengthy Eucharistic rite and order for three 'common' masses, for saints, penitents and the dead, which is an indicator of the priority afforded these three classes in contemporary Eucharistic theology.⁹ Notwithstanding the excellence of Warren's work, the more recent contributions by Meeder

⁵ LIT, pp. 198–269; Stevenson, 'Introduction', pp. xx–ix; O'Don, pp. 62–79; Coffey, 'Enigma', pp. 75–91; Follett, *Céli Dé*, pp. 132–6; Meeder, 'Stowe', pp. 179–94; Warner, *Stowe Missal*, I and II.

⁶ This is not to suggest that Eucharistic rites were entirely unaltered across the period and where significant divergences in relevant passages occur, materials from the relevant editions of the later *Corpus*, *Drummond* and *Rosslyn* missals will be adduced. See: O'Don, pp. 89–90; Holland, 'Dating', pp. 280–301; Gwynn, *Irish Church*, pp. 20, 3 and 9–30; EHI, p. 695. As noted in Chapter I, Jungmann, *Mass* I, 1–5, argues that 'the basic outline, the form of the Eucharist, once it was chosen, remained untouched' although the meanings ascribed to actions and words evolved in response to the 'religious tempers of the time'.

⁷ Ó Riain, 'Shrine', p. 285; Ó Riain's forensic attention to detail in this article makes his dating of 1026 x 1033 unimpeachable.

⁸ O'Don, pp. 63 and 65; the 'mainstream' character of the Irish liturgy is also supported by Capelle, *Travaux* II, 16 and Jungmann, *Mass* I, 45.

⁹ O'Don, p. 63; Hatchett, 'Eucharistic', pp. 153–70.

and O'Loughlin are also pertinent to the arguments advanced here.¹⁰ O'Donoghue posits what he terms a 'parochial' use for the missal, as distinct from the high-liturgy of a cathedral but in the absence of further liturgical material to support this thesis,¹¹ it is sufficient to note Meeder's argument that the *Stowe* materials remain the best available evidence of how the mass and Eucharistic rites were performed and experienced in early medieval Ireland, albeit in one specific locale or by connected members of one clerical order.¹² Given the probability that the missal served as a *vade mecum*, a designation that potentially privileges utility over authority,¹³ Meeder's suggestion that the *Stowe* texts be considered as 'functional' rather than model texts, is apposite.¹⁴ However, given the aforementioned persistence of the core of the mass throughout time, we can reasonably presume that the general parameters of some liturgies performed in the central Middle Ages in Ireland were quite similar to those found in *Stowe*.¹⁵ Where relevant exceptions to this general rule exist, such as in the case of infant Communication and marriage rites, as examined by Holland in his analysis of the *Corpus Missal*, these will be considered below.¹⁶ Although Warren argued that the *Corpus* materials were evidence of the 'sweeping away' of the old order after the reformist agenda inculcated by Malachy, the myriad similarities between the much earlier *Stowe* manuscript and the *Corpus Missal* cast some doubt on that assumption.¹⁷ Contrary to his own thesis, the concordance between the various central rites he provides, demonstrates no substantive changes to the Eucharistic rite in the intervening centuries.¹⁸ Given this persistence and the larger body of modern scholarship which has been devoted to *Stowe* than the other Irish missals, the Eucharistic liturgy referenced most frequently hereafter is that found in *Stowe*.

¹⁰ O'Loughlin, *Theology*, pp. 128–46; Meeder, 'Stowe', pp. 179–94.

¹¹ O'Don, p. 64.

¹² Meeder, 'Stowe', p. 184; Stevenson, 'Introduction', p. xii.

¹³ Meeder, 'Stowe', pp. 185 and 192; EHL, p. 695.

¹⁴ Meeder, 'Stowe', p. 182.

¹⁵ Stevenson, 'Introduction', p. lxiii; Stevenson believes that a preponderance of the evidence indicates that the Irish mass was 'relatively standardised across the country' but this position is difficult to defend given the substantial lacunae that exist in the textual history.

¹⁶ Holland, 'Dating', pp. 280–301.

¹⁷ Cor, p. 44; Warren's position was likely a function of his contemporary Anglican theological perspective that anticipated a deviant 'Celtic' liturgy.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–16.

The *Stowe* Eucharistic liturgy begins with a very lengthy litany of saints, even by Irish standards, and in so-doing distinguishes this rite from contemporary European missals.¹⁹ The qualitatively Roman chant, which followed the lengthy litany of universal and Irish saints which began the celebration of the mass, served to connect the congregation with the fundamental function of the sacrament. The juxtaposition of the saints and this expression of salvific theology, enforces the significance of the relationship between the Eucharist, saintly veneration and eventual salvation. As noted by O'Donoghue, following O'Loughlin's thesis, it is clear that the Eucharist, in this text, was seen as a communion with the saints in heaven,²⁰ and if we consider that a plurality of the Lismore texts operated as homilies, we are moved to consider the implications of the juxtaposition of the homiletic address and the litany as further emphasising this spiritual communion. Jungmann's classification of the homily as a 'step forward' in the liturgy, rather than as an interpolation into the constituent parts of the mass, is instructive; the homily, provided in the 'proper medium between the language of the people and the pretensions of the more highly educated' served as the initiating step into the solemn mysteries of the Eucharist.²¹ Although the extent to which the congregation felt a sense of alienation from the altar by virtue of the linguistic differences may be overstated in the scholarship,²² a mass in which the saint commemorated in the pre-Communion litany was also celebrated in the post-Communion vernacular homily certainly accomplished the ambition of connecting the congregation in the church with their sanctified patrons. The *Stowe* canon, as originally constituted, definitively married the redemptive qualities of the Eucharistic sacrament with the intercessory power of the saints. In his 'all-inclusive' amendments to the *Memento vivorum* the redactor of the prayers, Móel Cáich,²³ enabled congregants to entreat

¹⁹ Hatchett, 'Eucharistic', pp. 155–7; O'Don, p. 65; the long list of Irish saints which follows the expected universal listing, includes six of the nine Lismore saints, though their cults are either national in nature or so sufficiently well-attested that this is to be expected.

²⁰ O'Don, p. 68.

²¹ Jungmann, *Mass* I, 458–9.

²² Duffy, *Stripping*, p. 111.

²³ Meeder, 'Stowe', p. 181; Warner, *Stowe*, p. xxxvi; palaeographical evidence indicates Móel Cáich was working only shortly after the original scribe and his changes may indicate a change in the locality of usage for the missal.

God not only for mercy for those present, their families, their wider community and their dead but to meet their pressing worldly and material concerns.²⁴ The chastity of virgins, the modesty of widows, the well-being of kings and the return of captives are among the petitions composed by Móel Cáich.²⁵ As cogently argued by Meeder, these inclusions are evidence of an intention to make the Eucharistic rite reflective of the ‘general desires well known and shared by the common people’.²⁶ His analysis demonstrates that the language here is shared not only with canon law but with Irish exemplars of the instruction manuals for rulers.²⁷ That such intertextuality should exist between the canon of the Eucharistic rite and texts which were, at least nominally, secular in usage buttresses the argument that relevant passages in homiletic texts were also deemed suitable for liturgical usage as a means of further revealing the crucial aspects of the sacrament, as experienced in the mass.

Equally instructive are the length of the *fractio panis* chant and the Communion antiphon, which make provision for no fewer than four psalms, indicative that a significant number of people were intended to receive Communion.²⁸ The timbre of these sections is, as noted by O’Donoghue,²⁹ one of closeness to God and while the sacrifice on the cross is invoked, the language of both also serves to commemorate the Last Supper and the personal and corporate utility of the sacrament.³⁰ The congregation is moved to remember the salvific significance of the Eucharist, in the words spoken before, during and after the consecration on the altar. Before:

Credimus, domine, credimus in hac confractione corporis et effusione sanguinis nos esse redemptos; et confidimus, sacramenti hujus assumptione muniti, ut quod spe interim hic tenemus, mansuri in celestibus veris fructibus perfruamur.³¹

²⁴ Meeder, ‘Stowe’, pp. 185–9.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

²⁸ O’Don, pp. 69 and 71; Warner, *Stowe*, fols. 33b–35a; MacCarthy, ‘Stowe’, pp. 221–3.

²⁹ O’Don, p. 69.

³⁰ O’Loughlin, *Theology*, pp. 141–5; O’Loughlin emphasises the communitarian dimension of the *Stowe* liturgy and argues that ‘the breaking and sharing brings the union between their table, the table of the Last Supper and the table at Emmaus’, p. 142.

³¹ MacCarthy, ‘Stowe’, pp. 219–20; O’Don, pp. 68–9; translation: O’Loughlin, *Theology*, p. 143.

O Lord, we believe that in this breaking of your body and pouring out of your blood we become your redeemed people; we confess that in taking the gifts of this pledge here, we lay hold in hope of enjoying its true fruit in the heavenly places.

After:

Qui manducat corpus meum, Alleluia, et bibit meum sanguinem, Alleluia, ipse in me manet, [et] ego in illo, Alleluia...Hic est panis vivus, qui de caelo descendit, Alleluia; qui manducat ex eo, vivet in aeternum, Alleluia'.³²

He who eats my body, alleluia, and drinks my blood, alleluia, abides in me and I in him, alleluia...this is the living bread which comes down from heaven, alleluia, he who eats it will live forever, alleluia.

Arguably, these texts, the most important of the Eucharistic liturgy, as celebrated by priests and heard by Irish congregations are less concerned with the sinfulness of those approaching the altar, than might be presumed, given the explicitly penitential lens most readily evinced in Irish spiritual texts of this period.³³ They instead conjure the salvation that awaits the faithful rather than the damnation that is fated for sinners.

The extent to which we can disinter distinctively reformist material in texts is often a matter of debate, as will be further explored below. In the case of liturgical sources, by juxtaposing similarities and differences between the *Stowe* and *Corpus* liturgies, Holland seeks to reverse the previously held opinion, noted above in respect of Warren's analysis, that the *Corpus Missal* embodies reform elements.³⁴ Relying on a select number of discrete elements within the mass he argues that amendments to the *ordo baptismi* and the failure to revise the *memento vivorum* in particular substantiate his dating conclusions. Had the missal been a product of a reform house then the memento would have included, Holland posits, the post tenth-century emendation that has the celebrant voice that he is offering the sacrifice on behalf

³² MacCarthy, 'Stowe', pp. 221–3; O'Loughlin, *Theology*, p. 143; O'Don, p. 70.

³³ O'Loughlin, *Theology*, pp. 144–5; Godel, 'Irish', pp. 21–51.

³⁴ Holland, 'Dating', pp. 280–301.

of those not-present.³⁵ However, we saw above in the eighth-century hand of Móel Cáich that the *Stowe memento* includes a reference that might be taken to embrace all those within and without the church's walls. Thus, it might be suggested that even if the *Corpus memento* had been updated, it might not necessarily be read as evidence of a later date of composition. He further argues that references to the appropriate manner of practising the *tricenarium* in commemoration of the recently dead were already sufficiently well-embedded in the pre-reformed church as to not be regarded as evidence of a reformist impulse as once presumed, given an account in Bernard's *Vita* which records Malachy's failure to properly observe the full thirty masses on behalf of his fallen sister.³⁶ Holland posits, chiefly based, it appears, on Bernard's hagiographical account that Malachy was aware of but failed to meet the obligation, that the *tricenarium* was practised in Ireland before the reform period. Though Holland expresses his conclusions as definitive, I am less persuaded. His hypothesis falls even further short when he addresses the question of infant Communication.³⁷ Here he argues that the absence in *Corpus* of Communication immediately after baptism in contravention of what he assumes to be the directions issued by Lanfranc to the Irish prelates and the subsequent dissemination of Gillebertus of Limerick's prescriptions on the matter, is irrefutable proof that the missal predates the reformers' efforts to impose the orthodox position on the Irish church.³⁸ Undermining the argument advanced by Holland however is that the earlier *Stowe* rite includes infant Communication after the *ordo baptismi*.³⁹ Holland's close reading of *Corpus*' content is exemplary in many respects and his approach epitomises the manner in which we might address lacunae in our current understanding of Irish Eucharistic praxis. Nonetheless, the questions raised here on the conclusions, are a salutary lesson on the dangers of ascribing too much

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 292–3.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 282–92.

³⁷ Infant Communication, and the correspondence between the Irish prelates and Lanfranc, is dealt with more thoroughly below in V, p. 186–90, where further issues are raised with respect to Holland's reading.

³⁸ Lan, pp. 155–61; DSE, p. 157; Holland understands Lanfranc's letter to indicate the need for Communion but Boyle and Flanagan infer the reverse; Boyle, 'Sacrifice', p. 182; TIC, p. 208.

³⁹ Holland, 'Dating', pp. 294–300; Holland acknowledges the inclusion in *Stowe*, at p. 294, but concludes that it must have been practised not at all or sporadically.

weight to one text over another or to one aspect of a text over another. The *Corpus* liturgy, produced, Holland concludes, at some point in the earlier part of the eleventh century, is at a further remove from the reform ideals, than *Stowe*, composed some three centuries earlier.⁴⁰ It behoves us then to consider that we might find evidence of the reformist agenda if that is what we seek and its absence, if our ambitions are otherwise.

The allegorical *Old Irish Mass Tract* (OIMT hereafter), which was in all likelihood bound into the *Stowe Missal* at a later date, is also found in LB.⁴¹ It has been suggested that the inclusion of a vernacular text in a Latin liturgical missal is indicative of either a lay audience or its function as a primer for priests.⁴² As is argued below, in relation to Echtgus Úa Cúanáin's poetic treatise on the Eucharist, I find the latter rather than the former supposition more likely. The level of detail in the piece was unlikely to have been of significant interest or edificatory purpose for anyone outside of the clerical orders. O'Donoghue perceives OIMT as primarily filtered through a penitential lens with a particular focus on the persecution and suffering of Christ, although he acknowledges that the whole of salvation history is present.⁴³ However, this analysis fails to respect the differences which exist between the two extant exemplars.⁴⁴ The first scholar to take note of the two recensions, MacCarthy, dismissed the LB text as an 'imperfect copy' of *Stowe* in which the meaning was 'completely...lost'.⁴⁵ Reparations for this slight were made by Ó Néill who concluded that the LB version was the better of the two.⁴⁶ The LB recension passes almost entirely over the fraction and distribution section for which the tract is best known.⁴⁷ It is hardly surprising that a society as stratified as that which obtained in early medieval Ireland should give rise to a text in which that same stratification is replicated

⁴⁰ TIC, pp. 208–9, n. 32; Flanagan raises similar doubts about Holland's treatment of the extant sources on infant Communication.

⁴¹ O'Don, pp. 63 and 71–7; MacCarthy, 'Stowe', pp. 135–267; Meeder, 'Stowe', p. 184; linguistically MacCarthy ascribed a tenth century date to OIMT.

⁴² O'Don, p. 72.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ A concordance between the recensions is provided by MacCarthy, pp. 259–65 and updated with translations incorporated at O'Don, pp. 204–17.

⁴⁵ MacCarthy, 'Stowe', pp. 148–9.

⁴⁶ Ó Néill, 'Stowe', p. 203.

⁴⁷ O'Don, pp. 204–17.

in a ritual setting.⁴⁸ However, this omission from the LB recension is perhaps an indicator that the need to distinguish grades of Communicants was not a priority in the time or place of this redactor's work, and was necessary perhaps only in very specific settings where a large heterogeneous congregation was anticipated. It might be argued that the scholarly emphasis on the fraction in the text has diverted attention from its broader remit. Entitled *De figuris et spiritualibus sensibus oblationis sacrificii ordinis* by the LB scribe, the text provides some edificatory language on the perceived role of the church and Eucharist within that church in our time period as 'in tempul ditnes in popul 7 ind altoir - figuir inna nditen diadacda diada dianebrad sub umbra altorum tuarum protege me'.⁴⁹ The Christ to be commemorated in the oblation of the mass is 'figuir tra inchollaighi Crist o chompert co a chesad 7 co a fresgabail', the incarnate Christ from conception to passion and ascension.⁵⁰ The title and these opening lines are absent from the *Stowe* iteration. Both texts continue with recitations of the significance afforded to the various physical objects associated with the Eucharist, the altar is a figure of the persecution Christ suffered, the chalice, of the church that was built upon the martyrdom of the elect, the water added to the chalice, of the union between the people for whom the New Covenant is intended and the heavenly kingdom.⁵¹ The LB text then elaborates on the humanity of Christ at some length beyond that found in *Stowe*:

Fin iarum isin cailech ar in usce .i. deacht Crist ar doenacht 7 for in popul, in aimsir a thusten 7 tusten in popuil. Ut est: angelus sermonem fecit, Christum virgo concepit .i. is annsin tanic in deacht ar cend na doenachta.⁵²

Wine after that into the chalice on the water, that is, the divinity of Christ for humanity and for the sake of people, at the time of his begetting and of the begetting of the people. That is: the angel spoke, Christ was conceived by the virgin, that is, it was then the divinity came to meet the humanity.

⁴⁸ Douglas, *Ritual and Purity*, p. 112 on the connections between social structure and ritual.

⁴⁹ MacCarthy, 'Stowe', p. 259; '[t]he church that shelters the people and the altar, a figure of the divine God, of which was said: you guard me under the shelter of your wings'.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ O'Don, p. 205.

⁵² O'Don, pp. 206–7. The translation here is O'Donoghue's.

As will be highlighted in other texts examined in this chapter, most notably *Instruction on the Sacraments* (Sac hereafter), the author here demonstrates an interest in Christ's humanity as part of the Eucharistic rite and the virgin birth is an important part of that. Chapters 13–18 address the relationship between the *fractio panis* and the tribulations of Christ on the cross, relating the portions on the paten to particular injuries suffered by Christ in the Passion.⁵³ It is a detailed and evocative description and there can be little doubt that the primary intent is to draw attention to the sacrificial aspect of the sacrament.⁵⁴ However, the closing lines of the LB recension return to a more pastoral tone, reminding the audience that Christ calls all to follow him and as they witness the priest holding the mass chalice in his hands, they should see that as a figure of the assemblage of all the people in heaven and on earth into one people. As will be discussed further below in relation to ICD, the author offers an important distinction within this passage, as he notes the people of heaven are represented on the paten and the people of earth by the chalice: 'muintir nime per mensam, muintir thalman per calicem'.⁵⁵ This has potential implications for our understanding of concomitance in an Irish context and is addressed later in this chapter. O'Loughlin has argued that the *Stowe OIMT* is evidence of a very early stratum of the Eucharistic feast in which it was principally still thought of as a 'communal meal', an idea expanded upon below in reference to *In cena domini* (ICD hereafter).⁵⁶ However, it is difficult to allow that argument to stand in respect of the LB recension which apart from the passages on the creation, arrangement and distribution of the fraction, is more concerned with the actions on the altar than the sharing of the sacrament.

What remains to us then from the liturgical sources examined here is evidence of an orthodox Eucharistic rite in the context of contemporary European norms and paracanonical texts which exemplify an Irish interest in vernacular allegorical exploration of the sacrament.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 210–11.

⁵⁴ Hawtree, 'Christ', pp 136–7 on the 'affective' quality of this allegorisation.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 212–13.

⁵⁶ O'Loughlin, *Theology*, pp. 143–5; O'Loughlin, *Praxis*, pp. 9–10; Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural', p. 123; the communal meal origins are best explored in Bradshaw, *Origins*, pp. 118–21 and emphasised by Jungmann, *Mass* I, 179 and 191.

What is also clear, is that definitive statements that these texts exhibit particular features which place them firmly in the era of Church reform are problematic, as argued with respect to the *Corpus Missal*. It is necessary to look beyond the confines of the canon of the mass to find further illumination.

II.ii Homiletic literature

Figure II.i Texts Shared by BL and LB

Text	BL	LB
BB	11	61b–66a
BCC	7–11	29b–34a
BP	2–7	24–29
<i>Dígal fola Chríst</i>	41ra	150b–157b
<i>Is aire charaim Doire</i> [within BCC]	10	32a
<i>Riagail Phátraic</i>	81vb	11b
<i>Fís Adomnán</i>	77r [passage interpolated into BBr]	253b–256a

The nine macaronic homilies preserved in LB are illustrative of the form and function which characterise Irish homiletic compositions between 1050–1200.⁵⁷ Although Mac Donncha’s arguments,⁵⁸ that these texts preserve the core of a substantial Irish homiliary authored by Máel Ísu úa Brolcháin (d.1086), have received only limited support in the academy, it is still reasonably well accepted there are sufficient similarities between a plurality of the texts to posit a shared period and style of composition.⁵⁹ Murdoch has suggested that some of the texts are ‘much later than the supposed eleventh century date’ but none of those which has been independently edited in recent years falls outside this window.⁶⁰ Mac Donncha’s hypothesis that ‘so many phrases and sections are seen to be linked by sound’, ‘as if the sermons were actually delivered to the general populace’ and that their ‘clarity and simplicity’ and ‘positive’

⁵⁷ For homiletic designation, see: I, pp. 14–21; the counter argument is advanced by Murdoch, ‘Preaching’, p. 40.

⁵⁸ Mac Donncha, ‘Homilies’, pp. 59–71.

⁵⁹ Miles, ‘Sermo’, p. 143; although the sermon under consideration in Miles’ chapter is not among them and he ultimately concluded the text was not written for oral delivery, p. 157.

⁶⁰ Murdoch, ‘Preaching’, p. 53.

rather than ‘subtle language’ indicates an audience other than scholarly, is attractive.⁶¹ The body of shared texts between LB and BL, as in *Figure II.i* above, is not insubstantial in the context of fifteenth-century manuscripts and indicates a potentially shared milieu. In general terms, it has been argued that the LB texts are evidence of an ‘active ongoing dialogue with the work of previous generations’ and this perspective is substantiated by scholarship on a number of individual texts, as will be explored in the following sections.⁶² Carey has written persuasively that Irish writings exhibit both ‘cultural self-confidence’ and an impressive breadth of learning from a very early date; these same features are found in the writings of the Church reform era where he identified a ‘strong native element’ coupled with ‘inspiration from abroad’.⁶³ In his analysis of *Sermo ad reges* Miles, with a ready command of the Latin and vernacular sources, demonstrated that the author relied primarily on sources and parallels derived from a much earlier milieu than the eleventh century, and this can also be said of ICD which is considered next.⁶⁴ This section of the chapter considers two lesser-studied LB texts in some depth and concludes with a short overview of additional relevant homilies.

II.ii.i In cena Domini (ICD) and Máel-Brigte’s Commentary on Matthew (Com)

Despite the sterling work done by Jean Rittmueller,⁶⁵ the twelfth-century bilingual LB homily ICD and Hiberno-Latin Com,⁶⁶ remain among the body of texts neglected by scholars in search of details of Irish Eucharistic theology in the era of Church transformation.⁶⁷ Aside from the rare scholarly blessing of the availability of two texts firmly dateable to the period under consideration in this thesis, the two are treated together here because of the relationship that exists between them as narrative and exegesis of the Last Supper with substantial

⁶¹ Mac Donncha, ‘Homilies’, pp. 59–60.

⁶² Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Literature’, p. 35.

⁶³ Carey, *King of Mysteries*, pp. 13 and 16.

⁶⁴ Miles, ‘Sermo’, pp. 156–8.

⁶⁵ Rittmueller, ‘In Cena’, pp. 1–10; Rittmueller, ‘Matthew’, pp. 1–8; Rittmueller, ‘Gospel’, pp. 185–214; Rittmueller, ‘Postscript’, pp. 215–18; Rittmueller, ‘Edition: ICD’, pp. 1–305; Rittmueller, ‘Links’, pp. 331–53.

⁶⁶ Rittmueller, ‘Gospel’, p. 1; Rittmueller, ‘Edition: ICD’, pp. ii–iii; Rittmueller convincingly dates both texts, relying on a combination of historical and textual information: Com to 1138 and ICD to 1050–1150 (though she favours the earlier half of this period, p. 7).

⁶⁷ O’Don mentions neither in the chapter on written sources; Com receives a mention O’Donoghue’s endnotes, only to note its limited utility for scholarship on the Eucharist, p. 287.

additional Eucharistic content.⁶⁸ The macaronic ICD provides a lengthy and repetitious account of the Last Supper from Matt. XVI.17–30,⁶⁹ with each successive telling of the Last Supper highlighting and discussing different aspects of Christ's words and actions. If, as posited in Chapter I, we consider medieval Christendom as a 'human society normed by the Eucharist' then it stands to reason that we examine the contemporary accounts of the institution narrative.⁷⁰ Despite the obvious deficiencies that have become apparent in his approach to cultural anthropology, through the lapse of time and the evolution of scholarly objectivity, Lowie's *Primitive Religion*, offers a succinct expression of the psychological significance of the origin myth of an oft-performed ritual: 'the ceremonials....often receive an etiological and a teleological justification; they are avowedly performed because of events set forth in an explanatory origin myth for a definite, plausible purpose'.⁷¹ That Irish exegetes exhibited a pronounced interest in Matthew's Last Supper over the Eucharistic passages from the Gospel of John, for example, which have been described as exhibiting more cannibalistic overtones than any of the other Gospels, is in itself instructive.⁷² Eucharistic theologian Bradshaw advances a schema of the institution narrative that aids in distinguishing what he identifies as the distinct Semitic and Antiochene/ Hellenistic origins of the ritual, varyingly expressed in the narratological choices made by Mark and Matthew, Luke and Paul respectively.⁷³ Within his taxonomy the events of the Last Supper may be divided thus: 1. took bread, 2. blessed it, 3. broke it, 4. distributed it, 5. took a cup, 6. gave thanks and 7. handed it to disciples.⁷⁴ He argues that the distinctions at points two and six are instrumental as they are derived from 'two quite

⁶⁸ Rittmueller, 'Edition: ICD', p. 255; Rittmueller has credibly established that ICD relies on material also relied upon by Máel Brigte in Com and similarly the stemma she provides at 'Gospel', p. 213 demonstrates that ICD and Com share a connection with *De cena Domini/ Briathra aran Sacarbhuic* a text found only in BnF celtique 1 (s. xv) and presumed by Rittmueller to be an independent copy from the same source as ICD, as at 'In cena', p. 8, n. 2.

⁶⁹ Matt. XVI.17–30; Rittmueller, 'Edition: ICD', pp. 12–125; Hom, pp. 181–90 (Irish text) and pp. 430–7 (Latin text); the transcriptions and translations used here are Rittmueller's, excepting where the microfiche copy of her typewritten dissertation has deteriorated beyond legibility and Atkinson was resorted to.

⁷⁰ Astell, *Eating*, p. 12.

⁷¹ Lowie, *Primitive*, p. 291.

⁷² Harrill, 'Cannibalistic', pp. 133–6; Mac Donncha, 'Homilies', p. 61; John VI.53–8.

⁷³ Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, pp. 3, 8–9 and 12.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

different Jewish liturgical constructs' *barakah* and *hodayah*, 'blessing' and 'giving thanks'.⁷⁵ How these actions find expression in the hands of the Evangelists is at the heart of how the Eucharistic rite evolved over centuries. This may appear to draw a pedantic semantic distinction but given the questions which began to arise over concomitance in our period,⁷⁶ the matter is worthy of attention. Concomitance is of particular interest with regard to the Lismore texts as the authors frequently refer to Communion under both species, using the phrase *comman 7 sacarbaic*, when we might suppose that using only the former is sufficient to convey the sacrament in question. These lexical choices are considered further below, in the final analytical portion of this chapter, as attention now turns to the vernacular rendering of the Last Supper found in ICD.

The distinction highlighted above, between blessing and thanksgiving in respect of the bread and cup, is present in the Irish text, in every reduplication of the central moments:

[Coenantibus autem eis accepit Jesus panem et **benedixit** ac fregit deditque discipulis suis] Dia mbatar imorro icon choibfhleid arróet Ísu bargin ina láim 7 **ro-bennach** 7 robris 7 dorat iarsin dia apstalaib 7 is ed ro ráid friu ica tabairt dóib: ['accipite et comedite: hoc est enim corpus meum'] 'Gebid uaimm in mbairginse 7 dosmelid uair is e seo mo chorpasa' [Et accipiens calicem **gratias egit**, et dedit illis dicens] 7 o rogab iar sin blede lán do fhín ina láim, **dorígne altaigthe** buide, 7 dorat iar sin dia apstalaib 7 is ed atbert friu: [bibite ex hoc omnes] 'Ibid uile ásin chailechsa, [hic est enim sanguis meus novi testamenti qui pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum'] uair is i seo mo fhuilse, fuil ina nufhiadnaisi dailfider dar cend shochaide, i ndligud chinad 7 targabal'. ['Dico autem vobis quia non bibam de hoc genimine vitis usque in diem illum cum illud bibam vobiscum nouum in regno patris mei'] 'Atbeirim frib', ar Ísu, 'na hÍb ó shund immach don chenel fhina-sa, cein co n-ebur in fín nua immalle frib i fhlaith m'athar'.⁷⁷

Now while they were eating, Jesus took bread and **blessed** and broke <it> and gave <it> to his disciples. Now while they were at the feast, Jesus took bread into his hand

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.

⁷⁶ Kilmartin, *Eucharist*, pp. 157 and 169; the question of the presence of the whole Christ under each species was only settled definitively at the Council of Trent in 1551.

⁷⁷ Rittmueller, 'Edition: ICD', pp. 65–6 and 103–4; Hom, pp. 182 and 431.

and **blessed** and broke <it> and gave <it> after that to his disciples. And what he said to them while giving it to them was: ‘Take and eat for this is my body. Take from me this bread and eat, for this is my body’. And taking a cup, he gave thanks and gave to them saying. And when he took after that a cup full of wine into his hand, he **gave thanks** and gave <it> after that to his apostles, and what he said to them was: ‘Drink from this everyone’. ‘Drink, everyone, from this cup. For this is the blood of the New Testament, which will be poured out for many in remission of sins. For this is my blood, the blood of the New Testament, which will be poured out for the sake of many in remission of crimes and transgressions’. ‘Now I say to you that I shall not drink from this fruit of the vine until that day when I shall drink with you in the kingdom of my father’. ‘I say to you’, said Jesus, ‘that I shall not drink from here out of this stock of the vine until I drink the wine new with you in the kingdom of my father’.

In a later rendition of the same events, the Irish author is at pains to explain the transition to his audience even more explicitly:

O ro-cheleabair Ísu do leir cáisc na fetarlaicc, tanic focetoir co cáisc inda nu-fhiadnaise .i. iar tomait dóib ind uain chásca iar ndiultad rechtaí Moses, to-thídnaic iarsin glanrúin a chuirp fén 7 fhola dia apstalu.⁷⁸

When Jesus had carefully celebrated the Passover of the Old Testament, he came immediately to the Pasch of the New Testament, that is, after they ate the paschal lamb according to the prescript of the law of Moses, he bestowed after that the sacrament of his own body and his blood to his apostles.

Just as in the analysis of the *Stowe* texts, referenced above, the emphasis here is very clearly on the sharing of the paschal lamb according to the law of Moses as a prefiguration of the new sacrament and the communal meal is paramount in the narrative. The setting of Passover is explicit in all of the Gospels, and the introductory chapters of ICD include that material from Matthew, in which Jesus directs his disciples to prepare for his imminent death, but the Irish author seems intent on emphasising this context for the communal meal by returning to the

⁷⁸ Rittmueller, ‘Edition: ICD’, pp. 104–5 and 111–12; Rittmueller entitles the passage ‘exegesis of the historical sense’ but it appears this is her working title rather than a manuscript designation.

theme in his lengthy exegesis of the passage. The Latin text here is not from Vulgate Matthew but we may assume with some certainty, given the multiple Patristic and native Irish sources that Rittmueller has identified within the text, that the vernacular commentary is an expansion of a Latin source to which the author had access.⁷⁹ The author elaborates further in the same chapter: the body of Jesus is to be understood in three ways, that he was born of the Virgin Mary, the holy church of which he is the head, and thirdly through scripture.⁸⁰ ICD's author expands upon his Latin exemplar to specify that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary without loss of her virginity and that the church should be understood as 'the perfect assembly of all the faithful' under the 'son of the living God'.⁸¹ This noteworthy interest in the wholeness of Mary, and the stress placed on the maternal relationship, is replicated in other texts and will be considered further below under 'Christ's Humanity and the Eucharist'.

The Irish author in preserving the distinction between the actions performed over the cup and the bread, in expressing blessing and thanks separately, reflecting the Jewish origins of the rites, later in the text even seeks to distinguish between the gifts accruing to Communicants from the two species. The Latin explanation given is that bread strengthens the body of man and wine manufactures blood in the flesh while the vernacular section expands upon that slightly, noting that bread satisfies and strengthens the body while wine 'truly makes an abundance of blood in the body'.⁸² This passage is framed by a question about why the conversion of the body and blood of Christ was made within the bread and wine.⁸³ This is the most important point of intersection with Com, for the discussion herein, as the question is one of five Eucharistic interrogatives posited and answered therein.⁸⁴ Rittmueller traces these

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 126–260; Rittmueller, 'In Cena', pp. 1–10. Chapters 5 and 6 of the dissertation are dedicated to identifying all of the sources relied upon by ICD's author, either directly or mediated through the eighth-century *Liber questionum in Evangeliiis*, with which ICD shares a lineage. These include both Vulgate and *Vetus Latina* Biblical texts, Jerome's Commentary, Bede's Commentary on Matthew and Hieronymus on Matthew.

⁸⁰ Rittmueller, 'Edition: ICD', p. 112.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Rittmueller, 'Matthew', p. 7; Rittmueller, 'Gospel', pp. 200–3.

questions to the work of seventh-century exegete Manchanus, to whom Máel Brigte attributes various marginal glosses throughout his commentary.⁸⁵ That Eucharistic transformation was an object of interest to Irish authors, following Patristic sources, as early as the seventh century raises the possibility that not all discussions of the topic as found in Irish texts from the late eleventh to twelfth centuries are evidence of attentiveness to contemporary Continental authors.⁸⁶ In Com, questions three and five go to the heart of the matter: as in ICD, why is the offering made in bread and wine and why the form of the body is not seen visibly.⁸⁷ The explanation offered in response to the third question is the same as that found in ICD derived from the Gospel of John, with some expansion of the logic, the bread strengthens man's body and the wine makes his blood fruitful and Máel Brigte also notes that Christ applied this *nomen* to himself.⁸⁸ The reason supplied for the invisibility of the body is that found in many other sources,⁸⁹ that it is necessary that the spiritual sense of the sacrament be understood and that believers not incur the ridicule of infidels for consuming flesh and blood.⁹⁰ Eluding the opprobrium of non-believers, as an explanation for the Eucharistic transformation, was an argument advanced by Augustine, as discussed further below in the analysis of Echtgus' treatise on the Eucharist.

Not content to allow his responses to these questions to stand alone, Máel Brigte provides two miracle accounts that Rittmueller describes as 'proofs' in defence of his explanations. The first proof text, derived from Ambrosius' *Exposito evangelii secundum Lucam*, relates to angels and repentant sinners who witness the oblation and may be seen at the altar, as happened to a certain saint.⁹¹ The second miracle is of greater interest here, as it recurs in a similar form in the aforementioned tract by Echtgus, to be discussed below. A certain old

⁸⁵ Rittmueller, 'Gospel', p. 200.

⁸⁶ McNamara, 'Inverted', pp. 573–93, explores the early evidence well.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁸⁹ 'Quid necesse est <videri> corporaliter quod spiritaliter in totum factum est'.

⁹⁰ 'Et ut ab infidelibus non inrideatur carnem et sanguinem edere et bibere'.

⁹¹ Rittmueller, 'Gospel', pp. 211–12.

man is reported to have told his abbot that he believed the bread to be ‘merely “figura” of Christ’s body’ and two younger monks, fearing for the soul of the elder, fast and pray for a week, entreating God to provide a miracle that will correct his heresy.⁹² The transformation is revealed to the three and all in the congregation, prompting the disbeliever to repent, declaring ‘credo, Domine, quia panis qui in altario ponitur corpus tuum’.⁹³ Bischoff believed this account to have been copied directly from Radbertus’ *De corpore*, which in turn parsed the tale from Pope Pelagius I’s *Verba seniorum XVIII*, but as Rittmueller has effectively proven that Máel Brigte had no familiarity with Radbertus’ text, she suggests that its source is much more likely the original sixth-century text by Pope Pelagius.⁹⁴ The significance of this repurposing of much older exegetical texts for twelfth-century needs is discussed next.

Elsewhere in ICD, there is an interesting caveat to the beneficence produced by the Eucharist, as the author admonishes that just as Christ’s suffering did not profit all men, it cannot deliver fruitfulness of the earth, fecundity, affluence, or lengthen one’s days on earth.⁹⁵ There is not a little irony to be found in this admonition given the petitions for those very same aspirations found in the *Stowe* canon of the mass, discussed above. Similarly, this contrasts starkly with the similarly dated Sac, also found in LB, considered next, in which the author’s pastoral intent is amplified by his comparison of the Eucharistic transformation to the natural cycle of growth and decay over which God presides. This disparity in tone is indicative of the absence of what one might term a unified Eucharistic theology in Irish materials from the period 1050–1200. Instead, we are again left with a text which exemplifies the author’s ready repurposing and reworking of authoritative Patristic materials and native scholarly endeavour into a useful homily that neither breaches contemporary orthodox Eucharistic theology nor indicates an engagement with the Eucharistic debates elsewhere in Europe. It might be argued

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁹³ ‘I believe, Lord, that bread in place on the altar is your body’.

⁹⁴ Rittmueller, ‘Gospel’, pp. 212–13.

⁹⁵ Rittmueller, ‘Edition: ICD’, p. 115.

that the very act of revisiting these centuries' old texts hints at renewed interest in the material, as a consequence of the disputes on the Real Presence, but such a conclusion requires further exploration, particularly given the faulty conclusions arrived at in earlier scholarship that sought evidence to support such hypotheses.⁹⁶ Before Rittmueller's work the consensus opinion held that Com, in particular, was influenced by pre-scholastic arguments on the Eucharist and the Paris school of thought, perhaps introduced to Ireland by Cistercians in the 1130s.⁹⁷ Somewhat outlandishly, at one juncture it was even surmised that Máel Brigte himself had attended scholastic theologian Peter Lombard's lectures in Paris in 1139, under direction from St Malachy, ignoring Ua Máeluanag's own autographing of the work as composed in 1138.⁹⁸ Bischoff attributed the resemblances between sections of Com and Radbertus' ninth-century *De corpore et sanguine Domini*, a text which generated a theological quarrel that in many ways prefigured the Real Presence debates of the eleventh century, to the former's reliance on the latter.⁹⁹ However, Rittmueller's work discredits that conclusion, theorising instead a shared selection of earlier archetypal texts to which both had recourse, including Jerome's commentary.¹⁰⁰

Rittmueller's focus throughout her extensive scholarship on these texts is to establish the textual relationships and she achieves that ambition magnificently. However, the absence of thoroughgoing analysis of content, which is both theologically significant and of potentially historical import, is frustrating. The work she presents, to establish an exacting provenance for huge swathes of quotations from the two texts, is almost faultless. Despite what appears to be a sparse degree of engagement with the historical and theological context of the works, at least in her published articles, Rittmueller is comfortable asserting that ICD's author, who wrote

⁹⁶ Flanagan, for example, finds the confirmation of such earlier precedents for Com 'somewhat disappointing', TIC, p. 20 as presumably innovation accords better with a thesis in which change takes precedence over continuity. See Etchingham, 'Reform', pp. 218 and 233.

⁹⁷ Rittmueller, 'Matthew', p. 1; Rittmueller, 'Gospel', pp. 185–6; Ó Néill, 'Old', pp. 121–40 offers another great example of early exegesis 'actively appropriated' in the twelfth century.

⁹⁸ Rittmueller, 'Gospel', p. 190.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 190–1 and 200–2; the complexity of these intertextual relationships is somewhat reduced here for clarity.

with a ‘respect for...native Irish commentary tradition’, ‘had no knowledge of the disputes between Berengar and Lanfranc’.¹⁰¹ However, it might be argued that the absence of direct references to their respective works, or indeed connected texts, need not serve to entirely eliminate the possibility that the author was attempting to set out an orthodox Eucharistic theology, cognisant of the uncertainties that surrounded the Eucharist. Elsewhere in her scholarship Rittmueller has definitively proven a direct textual relationship between the previously mentioned Hiberno-Latin eighth-century *Liber questionum in Evangeliiis*, a text connected to both ICD and Com, and a homily composed at Worcester in the twelfth century.¹⁰² That a homilist working decades after Lanfranc entered the fray, at an English centre as large and orthodox as Worcester,¹⁰³ was comfortable relying on a Hiberno-Latin text which treated of many of the centrally important questions of the faith, potentially indicates that Irish orthodoxy on such matters was not in dispute. In fact, *Liber* contains the same five questions on the Eucharist as discussed above in relation to Com and ICD. The corollary of which is, that even for Irish authors, conversant with an external perception that indigenous Eucharistic practices were unconventional, there was no perceived need to ferment the wine anew but rather to reshape the bottles. Ultimately then, it might be concluded that the addition of the miracle tales to Com, a text which also expands upon the reasons for the transformation of the Eucharistic species found in ICD, denotes Máel Brigte’s apprehension of the contemporary contests, a willingness to address the matters at hand, but also a robust confidence that pre-existing native exegesis was sufficiently conformist.

II.ii.ii Instruction on the Sacraments (Sac)

Given that the selection of Hiberno-Latin, Irish and bilingual homilies in LB, embraces substantial bodies of Irish and Continental Biblical exegesis and theological learning, it is

¹⁰¹ Rittmueller, ‘Edition: ICD’, p. iii.

¹⁰² Rittmueller, ‘Links’, pp. 331–53.

¹⁰³ Tinti, *Sustaining*, pp. 246–8.

inevitable that the Eucharist should figure prominently in more than one text. This chapter opened with a quote from the eleventh- or twelfth-century vernacular Sac,¹⁰⁴ which explicitly treats of the cruxes of Eucharistic theology in an almost exhaustive fashion. The text follows a tract which gives a detailed exposition of the Trinity, details of Christ's life, Passion and resurrection, as well as discrete paragraphs on the other chief sacraments of the faith.¹⁰⁵ Although the exordium of the text does not include a direct address to an audience it may reasonably be inferred from the nature of the content across some eighteen chapters, that the intended audience was general rather than specifically clerical and the author's intention appears to be bi-fold: to provide an exegetical account of the institution narrative of the Eucharist drawn primarily from Luke XXII.14–20¹⁰⁶ (with Old Testament analogues also referenced) and provide devotional guidance to the laity. As noted in Chapter I, O'Loughlin has offered a very broad definition of homily which is less reliant on structure than that suggested by others working with this literary genre; this text fulfils his general criteria in seeking to instruct and persuade.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, it is worth noting that the text's proximity to the aforementioned discussion of core precepts of the Creed, the Ten Commandments and The Lord's Prayer, all texts central to a well-developed spiritual life, is indicative of its importance.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Sac, §1–45 (ed. and transl. Hogan, pp. 17–29). Though this text, from LB p. 257a, sits outside the fifty pages which form the homiletic core of the manuscript, it is found in the portion Atkinson considered the ancillary homiletic section near the end of LB. However, these pages also include 'On Fasting', recently edited by McLaughlin, which she regards not as a homily but as an incomplete 'biblical commentary': see McLaughlin, 'Latin-Irish Text', pp. 37–80, at p. 53. Given the bilingual nature of many of these compositions, it is plausible that 'On Fasting', as we have it in LB, is in a state of arrested metamorphosis from commentary to homily, as McLaughlin suggests at p. 50. It should be acknowledged, as highlighted by McLaughlin at p. 44, that Atkinson's editorial choices flatten the commentarial properties of a number of these bilingual texts as he published the Irish and Latin passages severally which fails to reflect their manuscript structure as vernacular elucidations of Biblical Latin *lemmata*. The same argument is advanced in Miles, 'Sermo', p. 142. Ideally, these observations should be incorporated more thoroughly into the overarching analysis of LB's homiletic material but is beyond the purview of the current work and will presumably inform the diplomatic edition under review at DIAS. It is sufficient to note that the text under immediate consideration is edited by Hogan just as it appears in the manuscript.

¹⁰⁵ LB p. 256a; Hogan, *Nemius*, pp. 29–38; Hogan's edition provides these texts consecutively but elected to place 'On some articles of the Creed' after Sac rather than adhering to the manuscript order. The emphasis in 'Creed' on Christ's humanity is an important element in my efforts to read and analyse Sac in its proper context, as further explored below at pp. 71–8.

¹⁰⁶ The reference to commemoration presumably comes from the Lukan Gospel XXII.14–20 or I Cor. I.23–5, as it is not explicitly found in Matt. XXVI.20–9 or Mark XIV.17–25.

¹⁰⁷ O'Loughlin, 'Irish', p. 19; by Murdoch's criteria this text may well be categorised as a theological tractate which exists 'at least at the edge of preaching', see Murdoch, 'Preaching', p. 43.

¹⁰⁸ *Hom*, pp. 39–40; Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Literature', p. 35, where Ní Mhaonaigh argues that '[t]heir placing of particular narratives adjacent to one another ... was an act of textual interpretation, designed to ensure that certain groups of narratives were read and assessed collectively'.

In the initial portions of Sac the origins of the Eucharistic oblation are detailed:

Ocas forácaib oc na hapstalaib sin 7 icon eclais uile cu forba in tsaegail gnáthugud
dénma na hedparta cetna do cuimniguid na cét-edparta dia rothairbir he fén fri croich 7
bás as umalóit don Athair némda.¹⁰⁹

And he left with those apostles, and with his whole church, to the end of time, the rite
of making the same offering to commemorate the first offering when he subjected
himself to the cross and death in obedience to the heavenly father.

It is commemoration of the sacrifice that is the focal point of the rite. There are references in
the initial and final sections of the text to the sinful nature of man, though in this instance the
first fault is laid at Adam's feet rather than Eve's, and these portions accord with the precept
generally prevalent in scholarship on the Irish materials that a reverence born of fear was
considered the appropriate affective condition for Communication.¹¹⁰ However, I would like
to suggest that the majority of the text is characterised by a compassionate concern for the
religious well-being of all who partake of the sacrament and the author attempts to explain the
affective dimension of the principle of the Real Presence in a manner that relates to actual
physical and spiritual act of Communication, rather than the theological debates of the times:

Ocus is aire nach ead ón [isin deilb chetna¹¹¹] ar na bud aduathmar lasna hirisechu a
caithem 7 na rothubtís amirsig friu fuil 7 feoil duine do chathium, 7 cumad logmairite
a cretium cin a chetfanugud in a deilb fein. Uair amal ba logmar thall cretim Diadachta
Crist a ndeilb deroil a Doenachta, is amlaid is logmar indíu a chretem a ndeilb
bairgine.¹¹²

And it is for this reason that it is not so [refers back to 'the same form' in previous
paragraph], so that partaking of it may not be considered abominable by the faithful,
and that unbelievers may not reproach them with partaking of the blood and flesh of a

¹⁰⁹ Sac, §27 (ed. and transl. Hogan, p. 17).

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, §28–§29, pp. 17–18; §41, p. 27. There is an equal if not greater emphasis in the text on the efficacy of confession and penance; see *Ibid.*, §43–5, pp. 27–9.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, §30, p. 19.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, §31, pp. 19–20.

man, and that all the more precious may their belief be without perceiving him in his own form. Just as once long ago it was precious to believe in the divinity of Christ in the lowly form of his humanity, so it is precious today to believe in him in the form of bread.

This is a sophisticated yet accessible expression of the core Christological development of the twelfth century and drawing the analogy between Christ's divinity and humanity with his invisible Real Presence in the Eucharistic species potentially exemplifies this author's ready command of the rhetoric of contemporary intellectual debates.¹¹³ It also echoes the passages considered above in OIMT, which emphasised the union of Christ's humanity and divinity in the water and wine of the chalice. The audience is exhorted to reflect not only on Christ's dual nature but the complexity of the most contentious Eucharistic debate of their times is here expressed with a striking simplicity. Yet, this kind of sophisticated analogy is not a new phenomenon in Irish Eucharistic theology. In a text from the seventh century, *Das irische Palimpsest Sakramentar*, an analogy is drawn between the transformation of the individual through their incorporation into the body of Christ's church and the transformation of the elements in the Eucharist.¹¹⁴ It might also be suggested that some of the passages on the 'natural' miraculous transformations from the Bible are echoes of the seventh-century *On the Miracles of Scripture*, now attributed to Augustinus Hibernicus.¹¹⁵ Equally, one is reminded of the miraculous as depicted in the probably late tenth-century Latin poem *De mirabilibus Hibernie*.¹¹⁶ The imagery in Sac is evidence perhaps not of innovation but its place within a long tradition of Irish allegorical speculations.

¹¹³ This idea is expanded below at pp. 71–7. The analogy of Christ's dual nature and the Eucharistic transformation finds its fullest expression in the later works of Thomas Aquinas, as in his statement on the 'Perfection of Faith' which occurs in his detailed discussion of the substance of the sacramental species: 'it belongs to the perfection of faith, which concerns [h]is humanity just as it does [h]is Godhead, according to John XIV.1: "You believe in God, believe also in [m]e." And since faith is of things unseen, as Christ shows us [h]is Godhead invisibly, so also in this sacrament [h]e shows us [h]is flesh in an invisible manner'; see Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 3.75.1 in the edition by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, *Summa Theologica*, p. 194. Despite this association in general terms with Thomist works, the analogy [of hypostatic union of Christ's divinity and humanity to the Eucharistic species] is found in earlier works connected to the Christological debates of the fourth and fifth centuries; Aquinas draws on the works [notably the commentary on the Gospel of John/Lamb of God] of Cyril of Alexandria in particular; see Walsh, 'Aquinas', p. 155.

¹¹⁴ Crehan, 'Theology', p. 338.

¹¹⁵ See Carey, *King*, pp. 51–74 for translation of *On the Miracles of Holy Scripture*; for example, Book II §17 on the staff changed into a snake, Book II §18 on the water changed into blood and most obviously Book III §2 on the incarnation.

¹¹⁶ Boyle, 'Wonders', pp. 233 and 256.

The rewards for true faith are manifold in this author's hands and believers are assured not only of their place in the temporal community of the church, as in the excerpt which opened this chapter,¹¹⁷ but also of their eventual entry into the celestial kingdom of heaven,¹¹⁸ just as the fate, of those who approach the altar in sin or without belief, will be 'everlasting destruction'.¹¹⁹ The text further elucidates the question of the Eucharistic transformation with a discourse on the other transformations which happen in the natural world under the direction of a loving God: he turns the seed into the fruit of the harvest, the earth itself into animals and fruit and eventually, in decay, those same fruits into earth.¹²⁰ These agricultural metaphors were written in such a way as to resonate with a general audience, with people accustomed to the ebb and flow of the natural order. It is probable, if not definitively verifiable, that he is drawing on and expanding upon, imagery used by Augustine in *Sermon 272*.¹²¹ In his most complete treatment of the challenges inherent in the transformation of the Eucharistic species, for congregations likely to struggle with the intricacies of a sacrament, Augustine identified as a 'figure', he advises Christians to think of their faith as uniting them just as grains in the bread and grapes on the vine are combined in a unitary whole.¹²² While Augustine utilises these natural metaphors to explain the relationship between Christ and his Church and among the people within that Church, our author who evokes that same principle elsewhere in the text, reserves the agrarian figures of speech for the more intractable questions of the altar.

This same pastoral tone is replicated in other inventive ways by the author: he compares the Eucharist to the food a new-born child needs in order to survive echoing Augustine's reminder to the faithful that Jesus was suckled as an infant by Mary.¹²³ Just as the central instruction of Augustine's *Sermon 272*, *intelligite et gaudete: unitas, veritas, pietas*,

¹¹⁷ Sac, §33 (ed. and trans. Hogan pp. 20–21).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, §40, p. 25.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, §37, p. 23; 'malairt bithbuan'.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, §39, p. 25.

¹²¹ Hill, *Saint Augustine*, pp. 300–1.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Sac, §42, p. 27; Hill, *Saint Augustine*, pp. 300–1.

charitas,¹²⁴ is a celebratory call to the laity to participate fully in the Eucharist, the Irish author emphasises that redemption from sin for all men is within the Church's purview, so long as the sacrament of the Eucharist exists.¹²⁵ Overall, the tone throughout this tract is one of gentle instruction on the efficacy of the sacrament, rather than admonition, and the author, while demonstrating a firm grasp of the finer points of Eucharistic theology, elucidates his sermon with simple metaphors and rustic imagery deftly crafted to evoke the lives and experiences of a largely agrarian population.

Though no other text in the Irish homiletic canon treats as explicitly of the Eucharistic sacrament as those considered above, there are incidental references and general dimensions of the corpus which merit some mention here. In particular, viaticum occupies an almost unrivalled prominence in the corpus of texts produced in this period.¹²⁶ In both the Latin-Irish and vernacular iterations of the previously mentioned tract on fasting, the first of three varieties of fasting which are displeasing to God is the failure to Communicate:

Aíne oc tomait chuirp Crist 7 a fhola; is triasin aíne-sin etarscarthar nech frisin mbethaid suthain, ut Christus dixit: 'acht mine chaití feóil meic in duine, 7 mine ebthai a fhuil, ní fhúigbithí in mbethaid suthain'.¹²⁷

Fasting from consuming the body and blood of Christ; it is as a result of that fasting that a person is separated from eternal life, as Christ said: 'Unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and unless you drink his blood you will not get eternal life'.

This is a clear statement of the essential quality of the Eucharist and again an expression which refers to Christ in a Eucharistic context as the son of man rather than God.¹²⁸ McLaughlin is confident that the two texts derive from the same Latin source so it should also be noted that

¹²⁴ Hill, *Saint Augustine*, p. 300; 'understand and rejoice: unity, truth, piety, love.'

¹²⁵ Sac, §44, pp. 28–9; 'ar amal marus i comus na heclaisi glanruin na baiste 7 glanruin a chuirp 7 a fola, is amlaid sin ata lee comus logtha 7 cuibrig na pecad'; 'for as there remains in the power of the church the pure mystery of baptism and the pure mystery of his body and his blood, so she has the power of forgiving/remitting and loosing sins'.

¹²⁶ Viaticum is considered in greater detail in III at pp.129–31, but it would be remiss to ignore its presence in this overview of relevant literature.

¹²⁷ *Hom*, L 8373–7; McLaughlin, 'Latin-Irish Text', pp. 67 and 74.

¹²⁸ The Latin and vernacular grammars of the Eucharist are explored further below at pp. 78–91; the author is explicitly quoting 'Son of Man' from John VI.53 while the Latin text uses John VI.54.

in the Latin text the sacrament is named as *communione corporis et sanguinis Christi*,¹²⁹ but the author of the Irish text replaces *communio*, which is redolent with Eucharistic meaning, with the rather generic verbal noun of *do-meil*.¹³⁰ That the more fitting term is translated in a generic manner by the author writing in the vernacular is conceivably evidence that the semantics of Eucharistic language were not as fixed as this scholar might have hoped.

The *Second Vision of Adomnán* is an eleventh-century production most readily categorised as a vision text repurposed as a homily.¹³¹ The oldest and lengthiest manuscript copy is found in LB, which is shown above in *Figure II.i* above to share significant textual intersections with BL. In §5 of this primarily apocalyptic text the author expounds upon the punishments of an expressly Irish Doomsday which will be incurred by the Irish if they fail to repent.¹³² The fire which will burn ‘teora cetraimi fer nErenn fri prapad súla’ will engulf them ‘cen chomand, cen cóibsin, cen sacarbaic’.¹³³ The implication is that Communion, confession and sacrament are imperative prerequisites to salvation and that failure to avail of the three immediately before death, damnation is inevitable. It was noted above that many of the Irish authors, whose works fall under the purview of this dissertation, relied on lexical constructions that included both *comman* and *sacarbaic*, as here. Again, it reinforces the precept that Communion must be received under both species as either term alone should surely suffice to convey the intended meaning. This is explored further below in the final sections of the chapter.

In summation, the homiletic materials which survive to us from LB, illustrate multiple dimensions of Eucharistic theology and praxis in Ireland in the central medieval centuries. The pastoral tone of Sac is in contrast to the firmly penitential lens of the references in the homilies on fasting and the *Second Vision*. The exegetical approach taken in ICD demonstrates a

¹²⁹ McLaughlin, 'Latin-Irish Text', pp. 66–7 and 74; 'Communion of the body and blood of Christ'.

¹³⁰ <http://www.dil.ie/18087>; 'to consume'.

¹³¹ Volmering, 'Second Vision', p. 647

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 661.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 661 and 660; 'three fourths of the men of Ireland in the blink of an eye'; 'without Communion, without confession, without sacrament.'; the same phrase appears in other eschaton from this period including, but not limited to, a short tract on the Fiery Arrow, LB, p. 242 as edited in Carey, 'Fiery Arrow', pp. 705–13.

sophisticated ability to repurpose and expand upon native learning of a much earlier provenance. Whether we can conclusively say that this reframing of preceding texts was in response to the exigencies of the Church reform movement is problematic, as is clear from the discussion of the intricacies of liturgical sources found above. Some recent scholars have been less reluctant to characterise texts as intimately connected to the reform agenda, and indeed to specific well-known texts of the period, as will be explored next.

II.iii Theological tract 'On the Real Presence'

The eighty-six stanza poetic treatise on the Real Presence, composed by Echtgus Úa Cúanáin in the eleventh or twelfth century, and most recently analysed by Boyle, is an incredibly accomplished and sophisticated treatment of a number of significant Eucharistic issues and is, despite its title, not confined to the doctrine and proof of the Real Presence.¹³⁴ Boyle, relying on the final stanza of the tract, which exhorts priests to memorise the text and 'deliver it to the people', suggests that the text's intended audience was both clerical and lay and that it may have been preached 'as some sort of poetic homily' during the mass.¹³⁵ There is some precedent within the Latin West for such texts and it had been noted by Bynum that in the century following the *praesentia realis* contests and the Synod of Rome decision in 1059 many hymns became 'veritable theological tracts' in the Church's efforts to promulgate the orthodox position.¹³⁶ While I find other aspects of Boyle's work compelling, I am less than persuaded by this argument. Her point, that the choice of poetic form was in many respects an 'insurance' against the potential for faulty transmission of an important text, which condenses complex and contentious theological arguments, is well made.¹³⁷ The possibility that this tract, for which we have an identified author, is the sole exemplar in the extant corpus of a self-consciously

¹³⁴ Boyle, 'Sacrifice', pp. 181–94; Murphy, 'Eleventh', pp. 19–28; though Van Hamel's edition and Murphy's translations are imprecise in places, as noted by Boyle, in the absence of her full edition which remains to be published, Murphy's translation is sufficient for the purposes of the general discussion here. Boyle's superior transcription and translation are relied upon, where available.

¹³⁵ Boyle, 'Sacrifice', p. 188, n. 29.

¹³⁶ Snoek, *Piety*, p. 47; Bynum, *Holy*, p. 52; a decree from the Synod prohibited priests living in concubinage from celebrating mass and challenged simony and lay investiture.

¹³⁷ Boyle, 'Sacrifice', p. 185.

homiletic treatment of the Eucharist, is an enticing prospect for those of us interested in lay religious experiences. Notwithstanding the closing statement, there are a number of factors which I would like to suggest militate against the likelihood of a lay audience for the text and suggest instead that the closing exhortation is a more general enjoinder to the clergy to conform to the orthodoxies put forward in the tract, in their future Eucharistic encounters with the laity.

The dimensions of the Eucharistic sacrament which exercise the author's interest most consistently here are primarily the preserve of the clergy, and in some aspects it may almost be read as a doctrinal primer for clerical students. The author provides explanations which relate the practicalities of the consecration to the theology underpinning the actions, such as the addition of water to the chalice to reflect the unity between the Church's congregations and Christ and the perfection of every host on the paten.¹³⁸ Elsewhere in the text the author refers directly to the appropriate actions of the priest at the altar and their proper understanding of their specific role in proceedings, such as in stanzas twelve to fifteen where he notes the presence of angels in attendance at the altar to bear aloft the host, unseen even by the celebrant, invoking the importance of the elevation of the host by the celebrant.¹³⁹ In his recitation of the miraculous appearance of the infant Jesus on the altar, which Boyle argues was appropriated from Paschasius Radbertus' *De corpore*,¹⁴⁰ the focus is entirely on the cleric's experience and affective response to the miracle, without a single reference to a witnessing congregation.¹⁴¹ As noted by Rubin in her interpretation of the affective dimensions of such miracles, the central- and late- medieval textual accounts were generally written to inculcate the appropriate piety in lay Communicants and particularly women.¹⁴² If Echtgus considered he was composing a text to be preached to an audience comprised of more than priests, surely then,

¹³⁸ Murphy, 'Eleventh', §31–5, p. 24; Murphy, 'Eleventh', §67–73, p. 27. These sections are not dissimilar to those previously discussed in respect of OIMT and the five Eucharistic questions in Com. However, the structure and nature of their presentation here seems more suited to a specialist audience.

¹³⁹ Murphy, 'Eleventh', §12–15, p. 22. The presence of angels at the altar, as discussed above under Com, has very early antecedents.

¹⁴⁰ Boyle, 'Sacrifice', p. 193.

¹⁴¹ Murphy, 'Eleventh', §55–66, p. 26.

¹⁴² CC, p. 112; see below, pp. 56–59 and IV, pp. 151–3.

prospective Communicants would be present in the text. The authority of such miracle tales, intimately connected to the evolving theology of the Real Presence,¹⁴³ is only validated in the popular imagination by reliable witnesses and the absence of any, excepting the officiating priest Flagellus, renders the account of limited edificatory value for lay Communicants. The tale might, however, resonate more acutely with priests who are elsewhere in the text reminded that their office is one of ‘ministry’ only and that the changes in the Eucharistic species are performed by God alone.¹⁴⁴ Additionally, the miracle of transformation on the altar to affirm the Eucharist, was, as discussed above in respect of Máel Brigte’s twelfth-century work often derived from much earlier texts and need not be interpreted as affirming the author’s engagement with the contests of the Real Presence.

The author’s focus between stanzas twenty-three and thirty is on good and bad priests, with Judas and Christ cast in opposing roles, and although Echtgus adheres to the orthodox position that the purity of the sacrament itself is unaffected by the calibre of the priest, he also records John’s apocalyptic warning that ‘true punishment will befall the noble church through a priest’s ill deeds’.¹⁴⁵ Adducing such an ominous portent was surely intended to admonish priests guilty of bad behaviours and petition others to avoid the same sins, as exposing lay congregations to such ideas was potentially only likely to reduce their confidence in the institutions and personnel of the church.¹⁴⁶ Of course, all Communicants were interested in the spiritual character of their priests and questions of how the qualities of the minister impacted the efficacy of the sacrament had been discussed since the time of Augustine,¹⁴⁷ but arguably the way in which the lesson is framed here, again speaks to correct priestly behaviour rather than lay apprehension of the office.¹⁴⁸ Equally, the portions of the text which address

¹⁴³ Bynum, ‘Metamorphosis’, p. 1000.

¹⁴⁴ Murphy, ‘Eleventh’, §15, p. 22.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, §28, p. 24.

¹⁴⁶ Boyle, ‘Sacrifice’, p. 187; Boyle notes that the discussion of priestly fitness is hardly incidental given the prominence afforded these issues in the reform era. Boyle and I differ on the likelihood that a twelfth-century author would deem these comments suitable for inclusion in a sermon directed to a lay audience.

¹⁴⁷ Pelikan, *Christian*, p. 29.

¹⁴⁸ Boyle, ‘Sacrifice’, p. 187; Murphy, ‘Eleventh’, §26, p. 23; the ‘calamity’ befalls the errant priest not the unwitting recipient.

themselves specifically to the correct affective disposition for those approaching the altar, offer counsel which was as applicable to the clerical as to the lay orders of society.¹⁴⁹ In quatrain eighty-two he again directly addresses priests and advises them not to dispense the host to the ‘ignorant’ until they ‘might discover correct belief’.¹⁵⁰

The final lines, which as identified above, refer to the memorisation and delivery of Echtgus’ work to the people, begin with a blessing but only for those in orders.¹⁵¹ In his edition, Murphy imposes divisions of doctrine and proof on the poem and although a thoroughgoing interrogation of his choices is outside the scope of the current work,¹⁵² his approach is intriguing, as it is suggestive of the catechetical format frequently found in Irish religious materials. For example, in the opening stanzas, the heretical Eucharistic perspective is noted in the first two stanzas, the orthodox presented in the next four and the ‘proof’ derived from Christ’s own words occupies the next four stanzas.¹⁵³ This putative explanation for the form and the content further persuades me to the idea of its being best categorised as a poetic primer for priests.

The preoccupation, with wholeness and completeness that Boyle identified in this tract and explored extensively, is seen elsewhere. In the LB tract on the Creed, as mentioned above, the author reminds his readers that Jesus was born of Mary ‘cen scailiud ball cen os lucad brond’.¹⁵⁴ Similar commentary was identified above in ICD, where the preservation of Mary’s virginity after the birth of Jesus was emphasised, in a section on the three bodies of Christ, as known to man. Boyle locates her analysis of the author’s intense interest in Mary’s virginity within the frame of his overarching thematic focus on issues of wholeness and completeness as it relates to priestly chastity, the need for an orthodox understanding of Eucharist at all levels

¹⁴⁹ Murphy, ‘Eleventh’, §1–5, p. 21.

¹⁵⁰ Boyle, ‘Sacrifice’, p. 188; Murphy, ‘Eleventh’, §82, p. 28.

¹⁵¹ Murphy, ‘Eleventh’, §86, p. 28.

¹⁵² I look forward to Boyle’s forthcoming edition and shall be interested to see if she concurs with his doctrine/proof divisions.

¹⁵³ Murphy, ‘Eleventh’, §1–9, pp. 21–2.

¹⁵⁴ ‘Creed’ in Hogan, *Nennius*, §49, p. 31; ‘without loosening of members, without opening of womb’.

within the Church and unity within the Church.¹⁵⁵ However, I believe we also need to consider the possibility that invoking Mary in these contexts served to remind audiences of Christ's humanity and to incorporate the associated affective responses of compassion and empathy into their Eucharistic understanding, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Ultimately, Boyle argues that Echtgus' work espouses, in a vernacular context but drawing on many of the same original Latinate sources, the same orthodox theological positions which found expression in the works of his more renowned European contemporaries; a perspective with which I cannot fully agree given the parallels it enjoys with other contemporary texts which are not as readily assigned to the church reform bracket.¹⁵⁶ Boyle primarily contextualises this tract by reference to the sacrificial dimensions of the Eucharist, drawing on what she identifies as his incorporation of and response to the writings of Lanfranc on the Eucharistic sacrament as primarily a 'symbolic re-enactment of Christ's Passion'.¹⁵⁷ Through her readings of these core texts and choice of select quotations, she presents this 'conjunction between the narrative of Christ's execution and resurrection' and 'the Eucharistic feast' as the preeminent element evinced in contemporary Eucharistic discourse,¹⁵⁸ which leads her to posit a question she considers to have been to the forefront of the minds of medieval theologians: '[h]ow does one overcome instinctive revulsion at the cannibalistic overtones of Jesus' commandment?'.¹⁵⁹

The 'horror of gore' is routinely cited in theological discussions from Ambrose in the Patristic era, through those of Peter Lombard in the Scholastic era, to Aquinas' final arguments for transubstantiation.¹⁶⁰ However, the Patristic references to this are a function of the times in

¹⁵⁵ Boyle, 'Sacrifice', pp. 189–90.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 193. See discussion of ICD and Com above for an interrogation of a twelfth-century text which addresses the same themes but which the scholar concludes is devoid of reform elements.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 181–2.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 185–6; though Boyle notes that Echtgus invokes the liturgical references to the Last Supper in his text, the theme she returns to most frequently is the sacrifice of the Passion.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹⁶⁰ Justice, 'Eucharistic', p. 320.

which they were written, to combat pagan charges against those practising what was essentially a new cult in the first centuries of Christianity.¹⁶¹ The rehearsal of the same imagery and commentary in later centuries is, it might be argued, a function of the predominance of Patristic thinkers in western theology, a pre-eminence that remains resolute to the present day. It is problematic to interpret such statements as evidence of a persistent Christian repugnance at the sacrament and perhaps equally questionable to rely on Lanfranc's selective quotation from Augustine as affirmation that this fear was a pervasive disincentive to Communication. It might be argued that Lanfranc, whose contributions to Eucharistic theology were written within the crucible of a heretical conflict to repudiate Berengar's teachings on the Real Presence, cited this particular passage from Augustine to emphasise the figurative dimensions of the sacrament rather than address a putative horror at the Eucharistic species. Indeed, as mentioned briefly above, the extensive corpus of Augustinian texts which treat of Eucharistic matters, indicate a Eucharistic theology that emphasised both the sacrificial dimensions of the rite and its place as a 'sacrament of piety and sign of unity' that fastened the 'bond of charity' among all Christians.¹⁶² Although elsewhere in her analysis Boyle emphasises the 'intimate moment of affective piety' and 'interiority' that Communion represents, she regularly returns to an interpretive lens that foregrounds this notional revulsion at the prospect of committing 'an outrage or obscene act'.¹⁶³ There is, of course, no attempt within Boyle's analysis, to extrapolate from a single text, to a hypothesis which claims Eghtgus' treatise epitomises Irish Eucharistic theology of his time, but as the only notable scholar in the field to approach questions of Irish Eucharistic thought in quite some time, it is tempting for following scholars to accept her conclusions and seek out the same model in other texts. However, there is, to my

¹⁶¹ O'Connor, *Hidden*, pp. 42 and 3.

¹⁶² See *Ibid.*, pp. 48–68, for a persuasive analysis of the dual focus in Augustine's works. The differing emphases are exemplified by contrasting Augustine's sermon on John VI, pp. 63–8 on unity and the sacrificial dimension in *Sermon 228 B*.

¹⁶³ Boyle, 'Sacrifice', pp. 182–3 and pp. 193–4. Boyle here quotes from Lanfranc's letter to the bishops of Munster in which he is parsing a passage from Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*. In contradiction to much of what precedes it, her concluding paragraph assigns an 'implicit' role to the crucifixion in the Eucharistic 'celebration' yet she references Eghtgus' interest in Christ as priest at the Last Supper and that Lanfranc favoured 'the resurrection theology of Ambrose' which 'also downplayed the role of Christ's crucifixion in his Eucharistic treatise'.

mind, a dissonance between her initial core equation of the Eucharist with a re-enactment of the crucifixion, almost entirely to the exclusion of its function as a commemoration of the Last Supper, and subsequently treating the lay experience of the sacrament as a rewarding moment of personal piety.¹⁶⁴ Any insistence on treating the rituals and performance of the Eucharist solely as a constant mimeographing of the corporeal bloodiness of Christ's crucifixion is incompatible, I would argue, with the more general spiritual trends of the long twelfth century and an incomplete reflection of the multivalent religious literature, both Irish and Continental which survives from this period. This is not to deny the multifaceted nature of the Eucharistic economy, and the prominence of Christ's sacrifice within that model, but rather to accept that the emphases placed by some contemporary medieval and earlier Patristic theologians, and in current scholarship, on specific elements of the sacrament may obscure other equally significant taxonomies. The sacrificial model may not have held such interest or relevance for lay Communicants whose understanding of the salvific qualities of the act might well have been sufficient to render them at least partially immune to thoughts of fleshy carnality.¹⁶⁵ This hypothesis, of a presumptive bifurcation in the medieval texts and modern scholarship, is examined further, in *II.vii* below.

II.iv Some observations on contemporary hagiography

A complete survey of contemporary hagiographical literature is beyond the purview of the current work but it would be remiss not to make some general observations on the extent to which the corpus has been a useful source for scholars investigating developments in Eucharistic theology and the wider developments of the reform period.¹⁶⁶ Where relevant Eucharistic episodes have been encountered in Lives beyond BL, they are incorporated into discussions in Chapters III, IV and V. Specifically, the three texts, *Vita Flannani*, *Vita*

¹⁶⁴ Perhaps the thematic focus of the volume in which her essay appears precipitated the occasionally awkward return to crucifixion iconography.

¹⁶⁵ Taft, *Liturgy*, p. 436. This doubt is shared by Taft who concludes that the question of whether the 'austere theological conception of the mass as sacrifice' dominated 'popular piety' remains 'open'.

¹⁶⁶ For an overview of Irish hagiography see Her; for a synthesis of reform impulses in the genre, see TIC, pp. 92–115.

Malachiae and the *Life of Martin* composed in Armagh in the twelfth century, which Flanagan considers to present exemplar models of the reformed churchman of the twelfth century are incorporated into the discussion throughout Chapter III.¹⁶⁷ For these reasons, discussion here is confined to *Vita S. Malachiae* and specifically to aspects of the text which intersect with the themes under discussion in this chapter. Bernard's focus in the text, on Malachy's spiritual maturity and his restructuring of Armagh's ecclesiastical organisation,¹⁶⁸ intentionally reduces the significance of the miraculous in his performance of sanctity. As noted above in the discussion of Echtgus' treatise, an account in the *Vita* of the host's miraculous transformation into the infant Jesus following the heretical statements on the figurative rather than Real Presence of Christ was adduced by Boyle as substantiating her thesis of Irish engagement with the debates on the Real Presence.¹⁶⁹ She further noted that Bernard's account very obviously 'contains so many Berengarian elements that it possesses little value as a historical account'.¹⁷⁰ Boyle identifies the use of a divine miracle as a means of affirming the Real Presence and ultimately here the salvation of an individual is 'evocative' of Lanfranc's position on the effectiveness of miracles in this regard.¹⁷¹ However, this is not the only Eucharistic encounter described in the *vita* and the others are not so readily identified as conforming to the emerging theology. In §65 Malachy is depicted preparing for the mass and the deacon who is assisting him admits after he has performed the sacrament that he 'suffered pollution' the previous night.¹⁷² Malachy instructs him to perform penance and further asserts that he should not have performed the sacrifice of the mass in such a state. On one level, this account affirms the spiritual ideals of the *vita apostolica* but on another, it might be interpreted as a suggestion that the efficacy of the sacrament is affected by the sanctity of the celebrant, a position disputed in

¹⁶⁷ TIC, pp. 92–115; *Vita S. Flannani* (ed. Plummer pp. 124–41); *Vita S. Malachiae* (ed. and trans. Meyer); Herbert, 'Martin', pp. 76–84.

¹⁶⁸ See for example: *Vita S. Malachiae*, §I.7 and §X.19 (ed. and trans. Meyer pp. 28 and 37–8); Scully, 'Ireland', p. 239–56.

¹⁶⁹ *Vita S. Malachiae*, §57 (ed. and trans. Meyer pp. 71–2); Boyle, 'Sacrifice', p. 191.

¹⁷⁰ Boyle, 'Sacrifice', p. 191.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 192.

¹⁷² *Vita S. Malachiae*, §59 (ed. and trans. Meyer pp. 82–3).

the prescriptive literature, including within Echtgus' treatise.¹⁷³ There is no easy solution to this tension, between potentially reformist and heterodox theologies, but it is worth noting as further evidence of the variegation which occurs in the corpus, even within individual texts.

The presence of a miracle of Eucharistic transformation also merits further attention here. The ubiquity and utility for 'teaching Eucharistic symbolism' through transformation miracle accounts in this period have been extensively covered by Rubin and Bynum.¹⁷⁴ As Rubin notes miracle accounts served to furnish explanations for the world and its complexities but equally 'more popular interpretations' perceived miracles as 'instrumental occurrences, as weapons against adversaries'.¹⁷⁵ These tales were, in Rubin's assessment, 'a manifestation of just how regular and reliable intervention was' and ultimately the miraculous lore became 'the main tool for popular instruction' and 'cure of simple disbelief'.¹⁷⁶ The dissemination of Eucharistic exempla was part of a process that created 'rhetorical rules, to correct the observed and on-going uses of the Eucharistic idiom'.¹⁷⁷ It should also be acknowledged that tales of this kind may have proliferated from the twelfth century onwards but, as noted above, their roots lay in much earlier iterations such as those found in Bede's *Historia* and Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*.¹⁷⁸ An interesting alternative reading has been advanced by Steven Justice who suggests that while we must certainly accept that these miracle stories were meant to 'discourage doubt and to encourage orthodox belief',¹⁷⁹ they were also operating within a paradox of their own creation: 'they cannot give reason for belief in orthodox [E]ucharistic doctrine to those who have no other reason to believe it, and they know they cannot'.¹⁸⁰ Though he does not cite her, Ward has proffered an argument that touches on this paradox, in her

¹⁷³ Boyle, 'Sacrifice', p. 187.

¹⁷⁴ CC, pp. 112–28 and 113; see examples of this analysis at: Bynum, 'Eucharistic', pp. 121 and 9–30; Bynum, *Holy*, pp. 3 and 8.

¹⁷⁵ CC, p. 112.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 113, 114 and 116.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 116; Justice, 'Eucharistic', pp. 307–8.

¹⁷⁹ Justice, 'Eucharistic', p. 310.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 312. Elsewhere Justice voices this paradox thus: '[t]hat no such confirmation is forthcoming is not an objection to the doctrine; it is the doctrine'.

exploration of how these miracle types affirm the transformation by inversion.¹⁸¹ Justice argues that they worked on a different kind of doubt: piety may inculcate ‘benign inattention’ and so the ‘truly corrosive doubt’ is that found in the mind that ‘cannot bestir itself to doubt’.¹⁸² ‘What God spares these miracle stories inflict’¹⁸³, so rather than trying to suppress scepticism the Eucharistic miracle accounts are ‘willing to risk them’ in the hope of catalysing ‘quiescent and unreflective’ believers into active engagement.¹⁸⁴ In the eleventh and twelfth centuries a single testimony was insufficient verification only adding ‘another difficult and unproved assertion’¹⁸⁵ but conversely by the thirteenth century scholars were expressing difficulty with accounts in which a multitude witnessed the transformation at the same time, as if the testimony is singular then nothing ‘in objective fact has happened to the host’ and the experience can be treated as subjective.¹⁸⁶ As posited above then, the assumption of a reformist impulse in a text can engender readings of these miracles which affirm those initial premises but we must acknowledge that such ascriptions are founded on less than certain presuppositions with respect to the function of these narratives.

II.v Eucharistic accounts in other genres

There is a significant number of Eucharistic episodes in a range of voyage tales and as this phenomenon is central to the analysis of BBr, discussion of them is reserved until Chapter V. Beyond texts formally identified as religious in nature, there are also Eucharistic references which merit attention. The prominence of viaticum in the Irish spiritual consciousness, as discussed above, is again attested to by its inclusion in the twelfth-century historical narrative *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gaillaibh*.¹⁸⁷ As has previously been noted by scholars of this text, the author takes tremendous care in crafting a Christian identity for Muirchertach Ua Briain’s

¹⁸¹ Ward, *Miracles*, p. 16.

¹⁸² Justice, ‘Eucharistic’, p. 312.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 315; Macy, ‘Theology’, pp. 59–63; theologians stopped using these miracles in support of the Real Presence by the thirteenth century because of the challenges they presented but continued in their efforts to explain such stories. Aquinas ultimately crafted an argument that explained these transformations in an orthodox manner while still believing them a useless argument against scepticism.

¹⁸⁷ Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Date’, pp. 354–77.

ancestors and the presence of the Eucharistic sacrament in the text is pivotal to that project, particularly given the Eastertide framing of the battle. In the heat of battle Brian's son Murchadh is depicted in his final death throes, beheading his foe Elbric, even as his own entrails spill to the ground, yet still clinging to life until after sunrise the following morning, in order that he should receive the appropriate sacraments:

Ocus ní ro marb Murchad in adaich sin itir, co trath eirgi arnabarach co taraid cretra
ocus comna, ocus atrigi, ocus cor chaith corp Crist, ocus do nderna aipiti, ocus a
thimna.¹⁸⁸

And Murchadh did not die that night, nor until sunrise the next day; until he had received extreme unction, and Communion and penance, and until he had taken the Body of Christ, and until he had made his confession and his will.

It is clear that from the author's perspective a hero of the piece could not be said to have died without confession and Communion, as his salvation was dependent upon those acts. In the same moments as his eldest son defers his death and his armies appear vanquished, Brian is depicted in private prayer, reciting fifties of the *Pater noster* and Psalms, while anticipating defeat and his own death. This act of personal piety is interrupted by the arrival of chain-mailed foreigners and Brian ultimately succumbs to his wounds, having elected not to flee despite the advice of his attendant. But prior to his beheading, Brian is not depicted in the same manner as his son, and rather than seek Christian sacraments, he outlines the provisions of his will and in so doing bequeaths substantial property to the church.¹⁸⁹ This portion of the text also depicts Brian telling his attendant that he had received a portent, in the form of a dream the preceding night, and somewhat anomalously the figure who foretold his fate was the pagan goddess Aibhell.¹⁹⁰ These two contrasting yet textually sequential accounts, of the deaths of Murchad and Brian, are perhaps indicative of a lesser significance accorded to viaticum that one might

¹⁸⁸ *Cogadh*, §cxii (ed. and transl. Todd p. 196).

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 201–2.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 200–1.

suppose existed from the evidence elsewhere.¹⁹¹ It is plausible that given Brian's exceptional status within the text, as Ireland's Alexander, and the private devotions in which he was engaged when he met his end, that the author perceived no need to make express statements about his penance and Communication, his soul already being in a state of grace. Both men are engaged in violent acts when their deaths arrive yet their need to be shriven is apparently unlike. On balance, in this instance it seems more probable that the author's explicit references to Murchad's reception of the viaticum is a formulaic insertion rather than instrumental in realising the author's ambitions for the text.

An emergent emphasis on the sacramental context of marriage, in accordance with changing ecclesiastical attitudes to the marital state, has been noted in a number of eleventh- and twelfth-century literary texts, including *Acallam na Senórach*, a copy of which is found in BL.¹⁹² This focus on 'good' marriage is only one element of a significant amount of Christian content in *Acallam*, a text which unites the pre-Christian heroes of the *fianaigecht* tradition with Ireland's chief apostle, Patrick, and his successors. Throughout this lengthy literary masterpiece there are multiple accounts of Patrick and his fellow clerics operating in sacramental and quasi-sacramental contexts, from the baptisms performed by the saint, to the blessings his clerics offer over the meats and wines of celebratory feasts.¹⁹³ However, none of the baptism accounts includes a reference to immediate reception of the Eucharist, as is indicated in three Eucharistic accounts in BL. The only Eucharistic reference I have been able to locate in the text relates to an exchange between Oisín and Finn, son of Fáebarderg, as the former explains the topography of their location to the latter.¹⁹⁴ Oisín recounts that when Fern,

¹⁹¹ For example, in IV, pp. 142–3 the sacramental content in annalistic references to important deaths is explored. The significance of viaticum in saints' Lives is considered in III, pp. 129–31.

¹⁹² Murray, 'Reworking', p. 302 on the changing representations of marriage in *Tochmarc Emire* to meet contemporary exigencies; Parsons, 'A Reading', pp. 204 and 209, on how marriage 'looms large' in the text.

¹⁹³ See *Acallam* (transl. Dooley and Roe pp. 1, 6 and 12).

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

a ‘warrior beloved by Finn’ died, the auspicious nature of the site of his interment was revealed to Finn who addressed the deceased, thus:

‘A Fhernn, maic Cairill, mo-genair duit ro h-adlaiced issinn inudh a táí. Uair mor do fhind-cheolanaib ceilebartha 7 do fhindleabraib trath 7 do eadbairt chuirp in Choimded do-gentar ós do chind’.¹⁹⁵

‘Fern, son of Cairell, you are fortunate to be buried in this place, for a multitude of blessed little bells and of blessed books of hours and offerings of the Body of the Lord will be made above your head’.

The site of bodily resurrection after Judgement Day was an abiding interest of Irish authors and the benefits of choosing a burial ground within the confines of a distinguished church are enumerated here: the presence of blessed bells, blessed books and frequent Eucharists. This same passage and the subsequent poem on Máedóg’s foundation at Ferns also appear in the twelfth-century *Betha Máedóg*, demonstrating that such accounts can travel between genres.¹⁹⁶ This reference indicates the efficacy of the sacrament to those already dead, as was also seen above, in the Eucharistic prayers from *Stowe*. As considered throughout the foregoing sections, the texts abound with explicit and implicit statements on the salvific quality of Communication for the shriven and penitent soul but significantly less ink was spilled in expressing the ongoing potency of the offering for souls in purgatory or heaven. In his analysis of *Stowe*,¹⁹⁷ O’Loughlin argues that sometime between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, the awareness of the Eucharistic liturgy as a ‘dynamic event’ that brought the living and the dead together was lost; it is certainly less than easily identifiable in some of the texts under consideration in this chapter.

It should also be noted that Irish ecclesiastical authors were fully capable of treating the Eucharist in a thoroughly irreverent manner. In the twelfth-century *Aislinge Meic Conglinne*,

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 80; CELT L 2608–11.

¹⁹⁶ *Betha Máedóg* I (BNÉ p. 192); *Betha Máedóg* II (BNÉ p. 186); Doherty, *Historical Value*, p. 157–9.

¹⁹⁷ O’Loughlin, *Theology*, p. 120.

a text which subverts the spiritual efficacy of clerical pilgrimage, Aníer Mac Conglinne, on the cusp of death by crucifixion asks for his satchel in order that he might take viaticum.¹⁹⁸ His requested ‘viaticum’ is in fact two wheaten cakes and a slice of old bacon. He consumes the food, denying a tenth in tithe to the monks dishonouring him and to the spectators to his humiliations, afterwards giving thanks to God, as is done during the Eucharistic sacrament.¹⁹⁹ Potentially, this willingness to subvert indicates that authors were not always obliged to treat the Eucharist with the degree of reverence once might suppose accrued to Christianity’s axiomatic sacrament.

II.vi *Book of Lismore texts*

II.vi.i *Dígal fola Chríst*

While the nine homiletic Lives form one distinct sub-section of BL,²⁰⁰ texts with Eucharistic content are not confined to this portion of the manuscript; there are two tracts in particular which demand attention, *Dígal fola Chríst* and *Scél in dá lenab*.²⁰¹ The former was described by Stokes as an acephalous ‘misplaced fragment’ which interrupted BP, in the extant opening folios of the manuscript.²⁰² However, since the manuscript’s more modern reappraisal it appears as though *Dígal fola Chríst* on 41ra–41vb precedes BP which begins on 42r, and the text is acephalous by consequence of the preceding lost 40 folios. An edition and translation of the comparatively widely transmitted Irish text remains wanting,²⁰³ but sufficient work has been done, particularly on its French cognates, to facilitate a general understanding.²⁰⁴ Stokes and Atkinson connected the text to Josephus’ account of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus but more recently Lambert has argued that the Irish author relied on Josephus’ account as

¹⁹⁸ *Aislinge Meic Conglinne*, (ed. and transl. Meyer, pp. 22–3)

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24–5.

²⁰⁰ With one interruption between BC and BM, as is considered below in III, pp. 109–12.

²⁰¹ 41ra; 111va; as noted and parsed in translation by Stokes: *Lis*, pp. vi–vii and pp. xx–xxii; noted as tenth-century apocrypha in McNamara, *Apocrypha*, p. 80.

²⁰² Ó Cuív, ‘Observations’, pp. 269–74.

²⁰³ Lambert, ‘La compilation’, pp. 246–7; Lambert indicates he has completed an edition but it does not appear in this article. See *Figure II.iii*, p. 69, below for the distribution of this text in manuscripts written before s. xvi.

²⁰⁴ Besson, Broussard-Dandré and Izydorczyk, ‘Vengeance du Sauveur’, pp. 371–98; Lambert, ‘La compilation’, pp. 235–58; it should be noted that Lambert situates the text with the context of the tradition of Irish writings of Biblical history and as such there is no appraisal in his article of Eucharistic connections.

mediated through the work of Eusebius, which emphasises just vengeance against the Jews for their refusal to repent for their ‘crime’ against Christ and subsequent martyring of his apostles.²⁰⁵ The final of three parts in the Irish text provides a description of the ‘numerous cruelties’ and ‘extraordinary punishment’ which characterised the siege.²⁰⁶ The emphasis here is not on Christ’s human suffering but on exacting revenge for a painful death and as such it prompts the audience to adopt a perspective that Christ’s death was a sacrificial offering beyond his control rather than implicating his agency in a preordained salvific act of faith, thereby redeeming all of humanity. In *Corpus Christi*, Rubin situates theological interpretation, which emphasised Jewish culpability in the crucifixion as contemporary with the ascent of the mendicant orders from the thirteenth century onwards, but elsewhere she identifies twelfth-century texts which mirror the priorities of these contemporary Irish texts.²⁰⁷ In the later iterations Jews were depicted as desecrating the Eucharistic host and thence subject to ‘gory punishments’ for their part in the original sacrifice, a premise which clearly connects the sacrament to the crucifixion.²⁰⁸ In LB this text is one of a sequence of three which treat of the Passion, culminating in an account of the events of Good Friday.²⁰⁹ Within this body of texts, on p. 166, and in the same ink as the main hand, the scribe has drawn an austere likeness of Christ on the cross, the only figural image of Christ in any Irish manuscript of this period.



Figure II.ii Christ’s Crucifixion, LB p. 166

²⁰⁵ Lambert, ‘La compilation’, pp. 237–9, 243 and 247; Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, III.V.4 (ed. Williamson, p. 111). As Lambert points out, Eusebius/Rufinus’ Eusebius translation is not cited as a source in this text but he is identified in the connected LB text on the discovery of the True Cross, p. 243; Poppe, ‘Textual’, p. 176 affirms this finding.

²⁰⁶ Lambert, ‘La compilation’, p. 255; ‘des nombreuses atrocités’ and ‘une punition exceptionnelle’.

²⁰⁷ CC, p. 122; Rubin’s ‘Introduction’ in *The Life and Passion of William of Norwich*, at pp. xxix–xxxii provides a succinct account of the representations and functions of Jewish culpability narratives in twelfth-century England.

²⁰⁸ CC, p. 122.

²⁰⁹ *Hom*, p. 37; Poppe, ‘Textual’, p. 159, in this consideration of ‘Christ’s First Preaching’, a text which is adjacent to the LB copy of *Dígal*, Poppe classifies these texts as Biblical or apocryphal history, notably devoid of theological speculation, but given the two texts which follow it in LB, I am disinclined to impose such a rigid distinction.

O'Reilly, in her treatment of the meaning of Irish artistic renderings of the crucifixion, argues that depictions of the crucified Christ rather than the cross without Christ were intended to 'focus attention on his identity' and to convey 'some view about his humanity and divinity'.²¹⁰ While the LB image is potentially affecting in its simplicity, it is patently less humanistic than the Insular manuscript iconography found in earlier illuminated manuscripts.²¹¹ Arguably, the scribe, while weighing the words he was committing to the vellum, was reminded not of Christ's humanity but the primitive violence of the act of crucifixion. Of course, passion texts abound in the religious sections of LB but this is the sole passion in BL and as such, it potentially informed the compiler's understanding of the Eucharistic accounts in the homiletic Lives under consideration in this dissertation.

*Figure II.iii Distribution*²¹²

LB (s. xv)	BL (s. xv)	Bod. Lib., Laud Misc 610 (s. xv)	RIA, 23 E 29 & BL, Egerton 92 (Book of Fermoy)²¹³ (s. xv)	BnF, celtique I²¹⁴ (s. xv)	BL, Egerton 91 (s. xv)	RIA, 24 P 25 (Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne) (s. xvi)
<i>Dígal</i> .. ²¹⁵	<i>Dígal</i> ...	<i>Dígal</i> ...	<i>Dígal</i> ...	<i>Dígal</i> ..	<i>Dígal</i> ..	
	<i>Scél</i> ...		<i>Scél</i> .. ²¹⁶	<i>Scél</i> ...		<i>Scél</i> ...
BP	BP			BP		BP
BB	BB			BB		
BCC	BCC			BCC		BCC
	BS	BS		BS	BS	
	BBr			BBr	BBr	
	BM			BM	BM	
	BF					
	BFC					

²¹⁰ O'Reilly, 'Seeing', p. 53.

²¹¹ O'Reilly, 'Seeing', plates at pp. 82–3.

²¹² This chart complements *Figure I.i* at p. 12 above.

²¹³ The possibility of an overlapping scribal hand between the Book of Fermoy and BL is considered in Ó Cuív, 'Observations', pp. 269–92.

²¹⁴ As noted in Chapter I, this manuscript is composed of discrete sections in different hands, *Scél* appears in the first, and BM, BS and BCC in the third, in the same hand as the first. BP, BB and BBr appear together in section V and interestingly *Dígal* appears in the same section as a tract entitled 'Some words on the Sacrament', identified by Rittmueller as an analogue to ICD, as discussed above. See Todd, 'Manuscript', pp. 223–9.

²¹⁵ VanHamel: *Dígal* is found only in these six manuscripts.

²¹⁶ VanHamel: *Scél* is found only in these three manuscripts before the sixteenth century and RIA 24 P 25 in the sixteenth.

II.vi.ii *Scél in dá lenab*

As can be seen in the figure above, in three of the six manuscripts, including BL, in which the *Dígal* text appears, *Scél in dá lenab* is also present, an indication of the shared interpretive lens through which these two texts were potentially viewed. This tale, which fills almost the two columns of 111v,²¹⁷ recounts a Eucharistic encounter by two children in France, one Christian and one Jewish. This was a widely transmitted text in Latin Christendom throughout the central and late medieval centuries, in both Latin and vernaculars.²¹⁸ The children enter a Christian church together and the Jewish child poses questions on the Crucifix to the Christian:

Fiafraigis in leanab iudaici: ‘Cret [in d]ealbh croiche ut 7 in crochaire innti?’ ‘Ar Tigerna is e sut’, ar in leanbh cristaide, ‘7 do muinnter-sa [r]ocroch é, ar fuath 7 ar format.’ ‘Dar linn is olc [i]n gnimh doronsad’, ar in leanamh iudaici. ‘Is olc immorro’, ar in leanab cristaide.²¹⁹

The Jewish child asked: ‘what is that shape of a cross yonder and the crucified one on it?’ ‘Our lord is who it is’, said the Christian child, ‘and it was your people who crucified him, through hatred and through envy.’ ‘It seems evil to us, the deed they have done’, said the Jewish child. ‘It is evil indeed’, said the Christian child.

The Jewish child then asks the same questions in relation to a statue of the Virgin Mary and is told that it is her son who was crucified by his people. The Christian child invites the Jewish child to approach the altar with him and ‘caithem bairghin coisrichta’.²²⁰ The Jewish child accedes to the request and returns home to tell his parents that he has visited a Christian temple and received Communion. His horrified parents respond in extreme anger:

²¹⁷ The folio is badly faded but between Stokes’ partial transcription, modern digitisation and the copy of the text in other manuscripts it is possible to reconstruct most of the narrative.

²¹⁸ Gaidoz, ‘L’enfant juif’, pp. 39–40.

²¹⁹ BL fo. 111v; it should be noted here that although the orthography is later, there are no immediately obvious linguistic features indicative of a late date.

²²⁰ ‘Partake of consecrated bread’.

Rofergaig 7 rolonnaig a athair fris,²²¹ 7 is ed in cetna dorigine a mathair, 7 doraidset: 'As bidbhu bais tu, a meic', ar siat 7 gabur leo 7 cuirther i surn teined ar derglasad 7 dobi ann on trath.... co ndernad min 7 luaithred de.²²²

His father grew angry and embittered against him and his mother did the same, and they said: 'you are a criminal deserving of death, o son', they said and he is taken by them and put in a furnace of red flaming fire and he was there for a period of time so that dust and ashes were made of him.

The next morning the child is miraculously revealed to be asleep rather than dead and the parents share the miraculous tale with everyone they meet. The child reveals that it was *Muire*, *mathair in airdrig* who saved him and his parents,²²³ together with all Jews, are persuaded of the efficacy of Mary:

Et tresan mirbuil moir sin do creideastar a athair 7 a mháthair, 7 tucadar a n-uile coibhsina do Dhia uilichumhtach 7 do Mhuire máthair Ísu. Ocus is mor in mhirbuil do Muire, co nach fetann bean iudaiddi tuismhedh a leinimh intan bis co n-idhnuibh nogu n-aitchenn Muire et reliqua.²²⁴

And through this great miracle, his father and his mother believed, and gave all their confessions to all-powerful God and to Mary, mother of Jesus. And great is that miracle of Mary's, that no Jewish woman is able to bring forth her child until she entreats Mary and so on.

This narrative operates on a number of levels which are relevant to the themes explored in this chapter. In the first instance it is a miracle connected with the Eucharist: the child, having partaken of Communion, despite not belonging to the Christian community, is saved through both its salvific quality and the intervention of Mary. Rubin identified a sub-genre within her trifold schema of Eucharistic miracle tales and these are accounts which relate specifically to protagonists in a situation of doubt, particularly actors such as 'Jews, women or a *rusticus*'

²²¹ This line is illegible in BL and is taken from BnF, celtique 1; edition, Gaidoz, 'L'enfant juif', pp. 39–40

²²² BL fo. 111v.

²²³ 'Mary, mother of the high-king'.

²²⁴ BL fo. 111v.

who abuse the sacrament while occupying a marginal social position.²²⁵ She argues that these classes of doubters were chosen as audiences ‘would willingly distance’ themselves from these miscreants.²²⁶ However, here the marginal figure of the Jewish child, who treats the host with respect and repents of his people’s sins before Communicating, is essentially converted and saved by the act, thus underwriting the salvific quality of the sacrament. His admission of guilt by association in the act of crucifixion is the key to his redemption and his parents also confess their sins before they are joined to the faith. Of equal significance is the prominence afforded to Mary in the narrative and by extension the emphasis that places on Christ’s humanity. The children see not only the crucified Christ on the cross but a statue of Mary, holding her infant son to her bosom and the Christian child informs the Jewish that it was this same infant that his people crucified. This tension, between literary depictions and conceptions of the Eucharist, which privilege the sacrificial act of the Crucifixion over the communal act of the Last Supper, and how this tension intersects with the growing awareness of Christ’s humanity in the twelfth century, is explored in the next section.

²²⁵ CC, p. 128.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

Figure II.iv All tracts on the Passion/cross in manuscripts before s. xvi

Manuscript	Folio	Title
RIA, 23 O 48 (b) [LFF] ²²⁷	10va and 25ra	<i>Mary describes her son's passion</i> ²²⁸
RIA, 23 O 48 (b) [LFF]	26ra	<i>On the Passion of Christ</i>
RIA, 23 O 48 (a) [LFF]	1ra	<i>Account of the Finding of the True Cross</i>
RIA, 23 O 48 (a) [LFF]	10va	<i>On the Four Kinds of Wood in the Cross</i>
RIA, 23 E 29 (Book of Fermoy)	p. 57	A version of <i>Dígal Fola Chríst</i> , here recorded in the catalogue as 'the Destruction of Jerusalem', beg. <i>(D)a bliadain ceathrachad...</i> ²²⁹
B.L., Egerton 92 (Book of Fermoy fragment)	67b	<i>Scél in dá lenab</i>
Bod. Lib., Rawl. B 512	71a	<i>Homily on the Passion of Christ</i> , beg... <i>o roscaich do Isu cona....</i>
LB	p. 1	<i>Páis imaigne Crist</i> , beg. <i>Araile cathair rigda fil...</i>
LB	p. 150b	<i>Dígal Fola Crist</i> , beg. <i>Da bliadhain .xl. uero batar na Hiudaide...</i>
LB	p. 160	<i>Pasio Domini Nostri Iesu Cristi</i> , beg. <i>Isin nomad bliadain déc...</i>
LB	p. 169	Homily on Good Friday, beg. <i>Doronad gním n-adbul ndiasnesi i...</i>
BL	41ra	<i>Dígal Fola Chríst</i> , beg. acephalous: <i>[n]a nIudaidhe. de ar daigh...</i>
BL	85va	Anecdote on Brendan (separate), beg. <i>[F]eacht do Breanuinn...</i> ²³⁰
BL	111va	<i>Sgél an da leanabh annso sí</i> [non-scribal], beg. <i>Feacht noen....</i>
Bod. Lib., Laud Misc. 610	18va	<i>Dígal fola Chríst</i>
Bod. Lib., Laud Misc. 610	23ra1	<i>Irish Liber de passione Christi</i>
BnF, celtique 1	28vb	<i>Scél in dá lenab</i>
BnF, celtique 1	90rb	<i>Dígal fola Chríst</i>
B.L., Egerton 91	63vb	<i>Dígal fola Chríst</i>
Kings Inn, 10	36c1	<i>On the Passion of Christ</i> , beg. <i>Omno dicto exierunt in montem...</i>

²²⁷ The question of dating in LFF is very problematic; the four texts cited here fall within the manuscript section (f.1–24) identified by Breatnach as containing both Middle Irish and Classical Modern Irish compositions and these four are designated Classical Modern by Breatnach. However, Breatnach confirms that a single scribe was responsible for the twenty-four folios which transition fluidly between the linguistic barriers, perhaps indicate the scribe was modernising some texts as he worked and not others. It is conceivable then that these texts as they exist in LFF were modernisations of earlier texts, contemporary with our compositions. They are included in this table to provide a general overview of scribal interests in this period. See Breatnach, 'Manuscript Abbreviations', pp. 96–7.

²²⁸ McNamara, *Apocrypha*, pp. 75–6; interestingly, this text takes the form of a colloquy between Mary and St Anselm, a figure associated with the development of a new awareness of Christ's humanity, as discussed in the next section.

²²⁹ ISOS

²³⁰ This anecdote is analysed in V below as part of that chapter's focus on Brendan, pp. 197–9.

Figure II.v Miscellaneous tracts on the Eucharist in manuscripts produced before s. xvi²³¹

Manuscript	Folio	Title
RIA, 23 O 48 (a) [LFF] ²³²	12va	Short note, beg. <i>Déna urnaithi no stuider no sgribadh no leghudh no...</i>
RIA, 23 O 48 (b) [LFF]	39rb	Tract on the Eucharist beg. <i>Nuimhir beg do sgelaibh Cuirp Críst...</i> ²³³
RIA, 23 O 48 (b) [LFF]	40rb	Tract on the Miracles of Christ's Body in the Eucharist, beg. <i>Deich mirbuile...</i> ²³⁴
RIA, 23 O 48 (b) [LFF]	33va	Story of the Priest and the Bees, beg. <i>Sagart maith uasal-onorac...</i> ²³⁵
RIA, 23 O 48 (a) [LFF]	36va	On the fourteen benefits of the Mass, beg. <i>Adeir Augusdin naemh...</i> ²³⁶
RIA, 23 O 48 (a) [LFF]	37ra	Quotations from St. Thomas Aquinas, beg. <i>B[r]iathra annso o Thomas...</i> ²³⁷
BnF, celtique 1	22ra	<i>Briathra ar an arán.....</i> ²³⁸
LB	p. 48b	Homily on the Lord's Supper/ <i>In cena Domini</i> , beg. <i>Prima autem die...</i> ²³⁹
LB	p. 251	Tract on the Mass ²⁴⁰
LB	p. 257	<i>Instruction on the Sacraments</i> ²⁴¹
LB	p. 11b	<i>Ríaghail Phátraic</i>
BL	81vb	<i>Ríaghail Phátraic inso</i> , beg. <i>Soeradh eaclaisi De co mbaithius 7 gcomna...</i>

²³¹ The contents of the following < s. xvi manuscripts were reviewed: LB; BL; LFF; RIA, 23 E 29; RIA, 23 E 25; RIA, 23 P 2; RIA, 23 P 12; RIA, 23 Q 6; RIA, D IV 2; RIA, 23 P 3; RIA, C I 2; Dublin, Trinity College, H 2.18; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc 610; BnF, celtique 1; London, British Library, Egerton 92; London, British Library, Egerton 91; London, British Library, Egerton 93; London, British Library, Egerton 1781; London, British Library, Addit. 30512; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawl. B 502 and Rawl. B 512; Dublin, Trinity College, H 2, H 3. 17, H 2. 12, no.8, H 2. 15a and H 2. 7; Kings Inn 10; NLI G9; Dublin, Franciscan Convent A9.

²³² This text is designated Classical Modern Irish in Breatnach, 'Manuscript Abbreviations', p. 97.

²³³ ISOS.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ Analogue of ICD, as noted above.

²³⁹ ISOS. As discussed pp. 35–43.

²⁴⁰ As in *Stowe*, as discussed above at pp. 31–3.

²⁴¹ As above, pp. 43–50.

II. vii Christ's Humanity and the Eucharist

The rise in the eleventh and twelfth centuries of 'a lyrical, emotional piety' has been connected by many scholars with an increased focus on the humanity of Christ.²⁴² This spiritual development which Bynum has characterised as indicating a 'new psychological subtlety and interiority'²⁴³ generated new iconography and new modes of expression, particularly in the hagiography of the time. Bynum's analysis of the maternal imagery and language which is diffused through much of the Continental literature produced in this period leads her to the conclusion that 'the dominant note of piety is optimism' and ultimately that '[c]oncentration on the Eucharist and on Christ's suffering in the Passion...is not primarily a stress on the sacrifice needed to bridge the enormous gap between us in our sin and God in his glory; it is rather an identification with the fact that Christ is what we are'.²⁴⁴ Throughout her work Bynum rehearses the thesis that there is a substantive shift in the nature of piety between the early and later medieval periods and she frequently argues that the Eucharist embodies that shift as 'the central moment of both union and affective response'.²⁴⁵ She argues that for twelfth-century thinkers the focus was on progress 'Godward rather than on sin as obstacle to that progress' and she identifies numerous source texts in which authors are less concerned with propitiation and atonement and more with the implications of the incarnation.²⁴⁶ In a recent treatment of modern sensibilities around suffering, moral theologian Banner argues, relying on notable work by medieval historian Fulton-Brown, that a directed focus on a 'desolate' Christ's suffering on the cross and iconographic and textual depictions thereof are phenomena of these centuries.²⁴⁷ In his survey of Patristic sources, specifically the Augustinian canon of some 450 sermons, he detected a notable lack of interest in a suffering Christ and suggests instead that

²⁴² Bynum, *Jesus*, pp. 2, 4 and 129; Constable, 'Spirituality', pp. 27–9; Kieckhefer, 'Currents', pp. 75–7; for a short but engaging perspective on this phenomenon in Irish materials see: Mullins and Ní Ghrádaigh, 'Introduction', pp. 4–7.

²⁴³ Bynum, *Jesus*, p. 4.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 214–5.

²⁴⁷ Banner, *Ethics* pp. 82–90.

the intent was to convey a display of power and triumph.²⁴⁸ Fulton-Brown argues that the fundamental shift in the early part of the second millennium was from one of fear to one of compassion and that texts such as Anselm's philosophical tracts *Cur Deus homo* and *Meditatio redemptionis humanae* contributed to the inculcation of this new response.²⁴⁹ Bernard of Clairvaux was among the twelfth-century authors whose writings on spirituality placed emphasis on Christ's humanity;²⁵⁰ evidence of this influence may be identified in *Vita S. Malachiae*.²⁵¹ Rubin concurs with those already cited in respect of the affective nature of this evolution: '[t]he suffering of the human Christ was the image most amenable to personal identification'.²⁵² However, in her consideration of the implications of this 'humanising of Christ',²⁵³ for Eucharistic theology, she notes that the wounds of Christ were 'hailed as the essence of Christ's humanity' and in particular the wound in his side where the lance pierced his flesh, and from which blood and water flowed.²⁵⁴ This side wound had since the earliest iterations of the liturgy been represented in the mixture of blood and water in the mass chalice,²⁵⁵ but over our period what Rubin terms the 'Christocentric fascination with sacrifice and bloodied Passion', found ever increasing convergence in the popular imagination, with the Eucharistic host and chalice.²⁵⁶ This tension in these depictions, between the violence of the Passion, and the notional affective response they were intended to provoke is considered next.

In modern scholarship it has been acknowledged, by Douglas among others, that the equation of fear and religion was frequently a function of subjective expectations among earlier researchers engaging with what they perceived to be 'primitive' religions predicated on a

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 84 and 87.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 87–8; Fulton, *Judgment*, pp. 177–91. Anselm's interactions with the Irish church are detailed at TIC, pp. 45–52 and 185–6. Boyle has argued there is evidence of Anselmian influence in contemporary Irish literature: Boyle, 'Scéla', pp. 218 and 221–2; as in n. 223 above, one of the Passion texts in LFF is presented as a colloquy between Mary and Anselm.

²⁵⁰ CC, p. 317.

²⁵¹ See for example: *Vita S. Malachiae* §XXXI.71 (ed. and trans. Meyer, pp. 88–9).

²⁵² CC, pp. 302–16. I rely here on sections which examine sources within my period and which predate 'The Man of Sorrows' iconography.

²⁵³ Banner, *Ethics*, p. 89

²⁵⁴ CC, pp. 303–5. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries this attention to the wounds eventually gave rise to formal liturgies and masses specifically dedicated to them.

²⁵⁵ The Irish formula for this was noted above in the discussion on OIMT.

²⁵⁶ CC, pp. 303 and 306.

reverence derived from terror.²⁵⁷ It is plausible that these same expectations inform the responses to the Eucharist of some contemporary scholars possessed of post-modern sensibilities. The assumption that Communicants needed to divest themselves of a putative revulsion at the carnality of the sacrament was noted above, in respect of the recent analysis of Echtgus Úa Cúanáin's poetic tract. That trope, of fear as the dominant affective response, may potentially be challenged by the revised thesis put forward by Bynum that European texts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries exhibited a fascination with the 'rules' of metamorphosis rather than a fear of 'mutability as a dark force', as she had previously argued.²⁵⁸ However, she excludes Eucharistic transformation miracles from this revision and argues that 'terror' continued to permeate such accounts and that God's 'goodness was in veiling the sacrament'.²⁵⁹ Notwithstanding Bynum's observation, I would like to suggest that the evidence presented from Sac above militates against such a reading, of this text at least. The author's emphases on the natural quality of the metamorphoses witnessed in the world was surely intended to allay any such fears that might be generated by the Eucharistic transformation. Fundamentally, the depiction of the sacrament in this text is one of gentle and humane affect.

Furthermore, references to Christ's humanity abound in the Irish religious literature considered above and the implications for contemporary understandings of the Eucharist should be clear. In the eleventh- or twelfth-century LB text 'On the Creed' and specifically the section on the Trinity therein, which immediately precedes Sac, the author addresses himself to the question of Christ's *doennacht* or humanity with some alacrity and relates the Passion and resurrection with a keen eye on the human dimension, in a manner intended to provoke sorrow and compassion.²⁶⁰ The sufferings of Christ are not just the physical injuries of the Passion but akin to those experienced throughout any human lifetime:

²⁵⁷ Douglas, *Ritual*, pp. 1–6.

²⁵⁸ Bynum, 'Metamorphosis', pp. 992, 995 and 1003; Bynum, *Metamorphosis*, pp. 104–5.

²⁵⁹ Bynum, 'Metamorphosis', pp. 1009–10.

²⁶⁰ 'Creed' §48–9 (ed. and transl. Hogan pp. 31–2).

...ic fulang bochta 7 daidbriusa, íad 7 ocorais, 7 dímiada 7 tarcasail, aithise 7 écnaig 7 cecha doccumla arcena...²⁶¹

...suffering poverty and penury, thirst and hunger, disrespect and contempt, insult and blasphemy and every distress...

The ultimate hopes of Christianity will be realised if the faithful keep Christ's offering and memory on their lips and in their hearts:

...saint 7 mian solsi cen dorchu, na slanti cen galar, in tsída cen chocad, no nóime cen chorbud, na firinne cen cheilg, na bethad cen bás...²⁶²

...the desire and longing for light without darkness, health without sickness, peace without war, holiness without wickedness, truth without deceit, and life without death...

This passage, which immediately precedes Sac's Eucharistic discussion, invokes a Christian future devoid of the vicissitudes of contemporary life. This marriage, of meditations on the privations of Christ's carnal life with the divinely ordered kingdom which is within man's grasp, read in concert with Sac is perhaps indicative of an optimistic strand in Irish theological thought of our period. The focus on attrition and expiation, manifest in the acts of extreme asceticism and mortification often recommended in the earlier penitentials, has been, here at least, supplanted by a more benign and compassionate entreaty to sinners to repent.²⁶³ Of course, it cannot be argued that these two texts alone represent a spiritual paradigm shift but they are, when read in concert with other texts adduced here, at least suggestive of an increasingly affect-driven strand in Irish religious thought in the central Middle Ages.

An additional aspect of the growing emphasis on Christ's humanity relates to the increasing presence of Mary in contemporary literature, both as witness to the Passion and independently as an object of veneration.²⁶⁴ Her role, as mediator on behalf of souls, was

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, §49, p. 32.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, §57, p. 37.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, §56, pp. 36–7; a recitation of sins remains a staple, but the remedies are more corrective than penalising, for example compassion and almsgiving is the remission of covetousness, dishonesty or robbery: '...condircle 7 almsana iar saint 7 esindracus 7 iar ngait..'.²⁶⁴

²⁶⁴ Finucane, *Miracles*, pp. 193–9, on the proliferation of Marian cults and shrines; Johnson, 'Marian', p. 392.

present in literature from the early medieval period onwards but from the twelfth century she was increasingly depicted in more human terms as mother of an infant and as an object for popular devotion that emphasised her role as ‘the gateway by which salvation entered the world.’²⁶⁵ Multiple references, to Mary’s role as Christ’s mother,²⁶⁶ were noted in the analysis above, not least of which is the account of a statue of the Virgin holding her infant son in *Scél in da lenab*, as the moment of exomologesis in the narrative of the Jewish child’s conversion. However, Ireland’s long tradition of devotional poetry addressed to God, Mary and the saints,²⁶⁷ may be said to have incorporated many characteristics of this affective dimension from a much earlier date. Salvador Ryan has analysed the eighth-century poems of Blathmac from this perspective, illuminating the author’s intense interest in Mary’s role as witness to the crucifixion.²⁶⁸ The short poem *Isucán*, from the ninth or tenth century,²⁶⁹ recounts Saint Íte rejoicing in her foster-motherhood of Christ.²⁷⁰ Texts such as these are evidence that Irish authors were capable of creative speculation and innovation in respect of Christ’s human nature from an early date and their parallels in the literary and theological texts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries cannot definitively be said to be markers of innovation.

Another tension evident in the textual discussions above, which merits further attention here, is between the analytical models which afford greater prominence to the sacrificial components of the Eucharist at the expense of those of the communal meal. In support of the argument that privileges the Last Supper over Passion narratives are certain architectural features of Irish church buildings in the twelfth century, in which it has been noted that the celebrant was particularly close to the congregation, facilitating what Ó Carragáin identified as a use of these spaces as ‘a site of anamnesis or re-enactment of the Last Supper’.²⁷¹ As

²⁶⁵ Finucane, *Miracles*, p. 137.

²⁶⁶ Discussion above: ICD, pp. 35–43; Sac, pp. 43–50; Echtgus, pp. 50–6.

²⁶⁷ Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Literature’, p. 54; McNamara, *Apochrypha*, pp. 122–23, McNamara, ‘Apacrafa’, pp. 200–1; Herbert and McNamara, *Apocrypha*, pp. 25–8; on *Timna Muire/Transitus Mariae*, the Irish adaptation of the Dormition of Mary.

²⁶⁸ Ryan, ‘Cross’, pp. 84–6; Hawtree, ‘Christ’, pp. 137–139 on the ‘affective’ component in Blathmac’s work.

²⁶⁹ Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Literature’, p. 54.

²⁷⁰ Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Literature’, p. 54; this imagery is paralleled above in the references to Mary feeding the infant Jesus in Sac.

²⁷¹ CEMI, pp. 147, 174 and 211; Ó Carragáin, ‘Architectural’, p. 119

previously discussed, this correlates with the *fractio panis* sections of OIMT which are indicative of a very elaborate ritual of bread and chalice sharing among congregants.²⁷² In *Stripping the Altars*, although his focus is on a much later period, Duffy offers some pertinent analysis in his discussion of the twelfth-century antecedents of the thirteenth-century feast of Corpus Christi.²⁷³ He argues that the ‘language of Eucharistic belief and devotion’ was ‘saturated with communitarian and corporate imagery’ and that membership of the ‘human community’ through participation in the ritual was a ‘deeply felt element in the Eucharistic piety of the individual’.²⁷⁴ However, it has also been argued that modern perceptions of the communitarian dimensions of the sacrament in medieval texts are a product of the pre-eminence of the social gospel of nineteenth- and twentieth-century theology, that emphasised Newman’s ‘feast of love, union and equality’ as the primary model.²⁷⁵ The anthropology of sacrificial rites was brought to bear on analysis of the mass as a social institution by Bossy. In his not entirely unproblematic treatment of the mass,²⁷⁶ Bossy examined the ‘sacrifice of the new law’ as the opportunity for congregations to ‘pay a debt to God’ and ‘the appeasement of his anger.’²⁷⁷ However, he elaborates thus: ‘as a sacrament the mass completes what the pacifying sacrifice made possible: the Eucharistic eating whereby the Christian participates in Communion, common union, the wholeness of Christ and of his church, the token of his entry into transcendent life’.²⁷⁸ He argues that contemporary scholarly perceptions, of medieval theology, overstate the extent to which one might distinguish between the sacrificial and sacramental dimensions of the Eucharist.²⁷⁹ For Bossy, the distinction between sacrifice and sacrament in the mass is more abstract than any previously mentioned here: he perceives a

²⁷² The communal component is discussed again below, at pp. X.

²⁷³ Duffy, *Stripping*, pp. 92–3

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ Härdelin, *Tractarian*, p. 229.

²⁷⁶ As argued by Rubin in CC, p. 2, the idea of a ritual experienced by all participants in a unitary manner is unsustainable. Additionally, his focus shifts rapidly between periods and regions without careful regard for context. These deficiencies notwithstanding, the ideas he explores are challenging and worthy of rehearsal here.

²⁷⁷ Bossy, ‘Mass’, pp. 33–4.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

tension between sacrifice as a representation of the ‘social universe as a concatenation of distinct parts’ and sacrament which ‘embodied unity and wholeness’.²⁸⁰ He refutes the later perspectives of Reformation theorists, such as Becon, that the mass served no communal function and differentiates the consecration from the shared activities which follow from it.²⁸¹ This decoupling, of the consecration from Communion for analytical purposes, is rarely if ever evidenced in current scholarship; it is a methodological approach which should be explored further. It is evident from the foregoing, much of which exemplifies the differences between Catholic and Reformation thought, that modern subjectivity is a potentially inescapable element of any effort to analyse Eucharistic content in medieval texts.

There are undeniable, and perhaps irresolvable, tensions between these competing analyses of medieval Eucharists. The two tables provided above, *Figure II.iv* and *Figure II.v*, are included to demonstrate the multiple foci of Irish compilers in the fifteenth century. The presence of multiple Passion texts is perhaps a function of an increased apprehension of Christ’s humanity in the period of their composition and may be associated either with a desire to inculcate compassion for Christ and his mother or to elaborate on the carnal realities of Christ’s wounded flesh, as experienced in the Eucharist. In the presence of accounts of the Last Supper, such as ICD, and OIMT which emphasises the communal dimensions of the Eucharist, there is an acknowledgment that the sacrament was intended to foster and support *consortio fidelium*.²⁸² Ultimately, the idea that the Eucharistic ritual and associated language can mean only one of the multitude of meanings ascribed to it is reductive. As Bossy notes, some Reformation leaders attempted to impose a ‘congregational homophony’ that sought to silence the ‘polyphonic mysteries’ of the earlier medieval mass.²⁸³ It is the very blankness of the host, which makes it ‘a pure mirror, a speculum’ capable of reflecting different images and forms

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 34–5.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁸² Lan, n. 49, p. 158.

²⁸³ Bossy, ‘Mass’, pp. 60–1.

into the world.²⁸⁴ I find the ideas on the Eucharist within the mass, put forward by Jungmann, the most compelling and the precision with which he distinguishes sacrifice from commemoration, the most exacting: '[i]t is a celebration which presents God with a thanksgiving, an offering, indeed a sacrifice. And it is a celebration which reacts with blessings upon those who gather for it'.²⁸⁵ He asserts that we cannot take the notion of sacrifice as an absolute and exclusive foundation of the rites but rather must acknowledge the meaning initiated by Christ in his exhortation to 'do this for a commemoration of me'.²⁸⁶ Ultimately then, the Eucharist was pluriform in medieval apprehensions: it was Jesus, it was sacrifice, thanksgiving, the cause of the unity of the Church, spiritual medicine, pledge of Resurrection and model for Christians to imitate.²⁸⁷ Fundamentally, what is advocated here is that scholars must approach texts in an awareness of that multivalence.

II. viii Latin and vernacular vocabulary of the Eucharist

In his magisterial review of Latin liturgies, Jungmann opined that Irish authors demonstrated a 'very lively sentiment...for a definitive meaning of the words of institution'.²⁸⁸ The extent to which that can be said to hold true in respect of how Eucharistic language and imagery are used instrumentally in the BL Lives is considered here. The hermeneutic of a social grammar of the Eucharist that informs the analysis here is derived from work such as Pohl's, which identifies Christianity as 'the most successful social language of all time' and consequently when that shared language 'meets' vernacular language a new 'shared matrix of meaning' must be crafted and new identities may emerge in that space.²⁸⁹ An approach which favours contextual over literal translations is favoured by Bynum among others, as expressed thus: 'I have simply assumed that the emotional significance of a word or image cannot be inferred from its modern

²⁸⁴ Astell, *Eating*, p. 31.

²⁸⁵ Jungmann, *Mass* I, 175–95.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

²⁸⁷ O'Connor, *Hidden*, p. 17; this is a parsing of a quote from O'Connor which describes the modern sacrament in these terms.

²⁸⁸ Jungmann, *Mass* II, 205.

²⁸⁹ Pohl, 'Social', pp. 128 and 138.

meaning but must be established by careful study of the other images and phrases among which it occurs in a text'.²⁹⁰ Rubin writes in her 'Introduction' to CC that religion should not be treated as *sui generis* but rather as 'a culture, a system of meaning which represents and constructs experience and imagination'.²⁹¹ The corollary of this is that we should not examine religious culture as 'something fixed but as a variety of coexisting idioms whose configurations and evolution produce cultural change'.²⁹² If we accept texts as active agents rather than passive reflections²⁹³ with the caveat that we can only extrapolate to the immediate milieu and not society as a whole,²⁹⁴ then we must embrace the possibility that the lexical choices made by vernacular hagiographers were instrumental in generating the meanings of the sacrament for the audiences of their texts. Both the semantic and semiotic dimensions of language are implicated in Eucharistic discourse and before examining the most important vernacular expressions, it is necessary to briefly consider the Greek and Latin origins, etymologies and usages which presumably informed, however indirectly in some instances, the development and deployment of the Irish vocabulary.

Bouyer's analysis of the origins of the Eucharist emphasises the etymology of 'sacrifice' which he argues is derived from 'a sacred meal' and connects the first Christian usages of the term to a variety of earlier Jewish and Hellenistic rites which arose from the common meal, as discussed above in relation to ICD.²⁹⁵ The term *eucharistia* from the original Greek *εὐχαριστία*, with a meaning of 'thanksgiving' and which does not actually appear in New Testament accounts, was later adopted into Latin, presumably after the wide dissemination of the second-century *Didache* in the fourth century, which employs the term.²⁹⁶ The use of

²⁹⁰ Bynum, *Jesus*, p. 7.

²⁹¹ CC, p. 7.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ Chapman-Stacey, 'Texts', p. 249.

²⁹⁴ Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Pagans', p. 145.

²⁹⁵ Bouyer, *Eucharist*, p. 14; Mitchell, *Ritual*, pp. 17–20; Souter's Latin dictionary offers little assistance in this regard with an entry for *sacrificium* that gives *the Eucharist*, *the offering* and *sacrificial victim* as the meanings.

²⁹⁶ Bouyer, *Eucharist*, p. 15; Kilmartin, *Eucharist*, pp. 3–61; O'Connor, *Hidden*, pp. 1–82. While Kilmartin argues that the Latin fathers 'show less concern for the speculative aspects of Eucharistic theology than the Greek' and 'their interest is more to the pastoral and practical side of the efficacy' of the sacrament, he does not address the origins of the vocabulary, which might illuminate these differences.

‘Communion’ in English, from the Latin *communio*, is a further Greek derivative from the New Testament usage of *koinōnía*.²⁹⁷ This term appears in I Cor. X.16 where Paul describes the sharing of the body and blood of Christ in these communal terms.²⁹⁸ Undoubtedly the modern semantic range of ‘sacrifice’ is somewhat divorced from this original meaning but we cannot ignore the probability that the Patristic sources relied on by Irish authors retained vestiges of an understanding of ‘sacrifice’ as a ritual meal which bound communities together, meaning that the semantic dissonance between ‘Communion’ and ‘sacrifice’ was not as great as one might suppose. Supporting the implicit transmission of the etymology advanced by Bouyer, Isidore, whose work was among those most relied upon by early Irish scholars,²⁹⁹ offers the following explanation of ‘sacrifice’:

Sacrificium dictum quasi sacrum factum, quia prece mystica consecratur in memoriam pro nobis Dominicae passionis; unde hoc eo iubente corpus Christi et sanguinem dicimus. Quod dum sit ex fructibus terrae, sanctificatur et fit **sacramentum**, operante invisibiliter Spiritu Dei; cuius panis et calicis **sacramentum** Graeci *Eucharistian* dicunt, quod Latine bona gratia interpretatur. Et quid melius sanguine et corpore Christi?³⁰⁰

The sacrifice is so called as if it were a ‘sacred deed’, because by a mystic prayer it is consecrated in commemoration of the Lord’s suffering for us, whence we call this sacrifice, at his command, the body and blood of Christ. Although it consists of the fruits of the earth, it is sanctified and made a sacrament with the Spirit of God invisibly working. The Greeks call the sacrament of this bread and chalice the ‘Eucharist’, which in Latin means ‘good favour’. And what is better than the blood and body of Christ?

‘Sacrament’ is defined immediately thereafter in VI.xix.39, as taking ‘place in a particular liturgical rite when an action is performed in such a way that it is understood to signify something that ought to be received in a holy way’. From this passage we might infer that

²⁹⁷ Bouyer, *Eucharist*, p. 16.

²⁹⁸ NRSV translates *koinōnía* as ‘sharing’ rather than ‘Communion’ while NKJV renders it as ‘Communion’.

²⁹⁹ Baumgarten, ‘Creative’, pp. 55–8.

³⁰⁰ Isidore, *Etymologiae*, VI.xix.38 (ed. and transl. Barney et al. p. 148).

Isidore, while acknowledging the commemoration of Christ's passion which is inherent to the sacrifice of the mass, is anxious to convey a more benedictory than expiatory tone in his association here of *sacrificium* with a 'sacred deed' and the 'good favour' of *eucharistia*. Indeed, he distinguishes *sacrificium* from *sacramentum* within the entry. However, his treatment of *sacrificium* elsewhere in *De libris et officiis ecclesiasticis* is markedly more explicit, as in his discursus on the *offertorium* within the mass:

Duo sunt autem quae offeruntur: donum et sacrificium.... sacrificium autem est victima et quaecumque in ara cremantur seu ponuntur...immolatio ab antiquis dicta eo quod in mole altaris posita victima caederetur. Unde et mactatio post immolationem est. Nunc autem immolatio panis et calicis convenit...³⁰¹

There are two things that are offered: a gift or a sacrifice...but a sacrifice is a victim and whatever is burnt or placed on the altar...an immolation is so called by the ancients because a victim would be slain when it is placed on the mass of the altar. Whence also the slaughtering is after the immolation. But now an immolation of the bread and chalice is proper usage...'

The next section of this chapter examines the extent to which this same level of semantic concern can be discerned in the Eucharistic language used in the Lismore Lives.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

II.viii.i Core vocabulary⁴³⁵

Figure II.vi Language

Text	Eucharistic References [Explicit] ⁴³⁶	Eucharist Performed	Viaticum Dispensed	Viaticum Received
BP	Fecht do Pátraic isin tSabull oc oifreannFocerd a eachlaise dar senistir na hecailsi isin coileach. Sluicid in talam in drai focétoir. ⁴³⁷			...dorat espoc Tassach corp Crist do.... ⁴³⁸ Arroét didiu comunn 7 sacarbaic o espac Tassach, 7 rofhaidh a spirut docum nime isin tSabhall. ⁴³⁹
BB	Feacht ann do Brigit oc techt do laimh in espuic cu tarfas di cenn puic do beith annsa chailiuch oifrinn . Roopastar Brigit in cailech..... Dochuaidh iarsin Brigit do laim 7 ní confacai in fuath. ⁴⁴⁰			...is he dorad comman 7 sacarbhaic dhi iardain. ⁴⁴¹
	Ba comra choisecartha coimeta chuirp Crist 7 a fhola . Ba teampul De. ⁴⁴²			Cunad he dorat comman 7 sacarbaic do Brigit 7 rofhaidh a spirut dochum nimhe. ⁴⁴³
BCC	Feachtus ann teasta fin 7 bairgen ar Fhinnen ocunn oifriunn . Bennachais Colum Cille in t-uisqui cu rosoidheth i bhfin cu tart isin cailech n-oiffrinn . Ramorad ainm De 7 Colium Cille tresin bhfirt-sin . ⁴⁴⁴	Asbert Comgall co ndernad Colum Cille idhpairt cuirp Crist 7 a fola 'na fiadnusi. Doroine Colum umuloid doibh imc sin. Is ann atconaic Caindech colomna teinntidhi os cinn Coluim Cille cein robai oconn edhpairt . ⁴⁴⁵ No idhbrudh corp Crist 7 a fhuil . ⁴⁴⁶		

⁴³⁵ The discussion here is very abbreviated, by virtue of the space constraints of the thesis, but it is hoped that a future publication may be generated from the substantial body of research which underpins it.

⁴³⁶ I have not included references to the mass or Easter celebrations which do not contain explicit Eucharistic language although the performance of Eucharist could reasonably be inferred.

⁴³⁷ BP L 287; 'once Patrick was in the church at mass...he[the druid] flung his horse-whip over the window of the church into the chalice. The earth swallowed up the druid immediately'.

⁴³⁸ BP L 615; 'Bishop Tassach gave him the body of Christ'.

⁴³⁹ BP L 643; 'so he received Communion and sacrifice from Bishop Tassach and he sent his body to heaven in the church'.

⁴⁴⁰ BB L 1630; 'once when Brigid was going to the bishop to receive Communion, she saw a goat's head in the offering chalice. She refused the chalice. After that she went to Communion and she did not see the apparition'.

⁴⁴¹ BB L 1565; 'he it is that gave her Communion and sacrifice when she was dying'.

⁴⁴² BB L 1696; 'she was a consecrated casket for keeping the body of Christ and his blood; she was a temple of God'.

⁴⁴³ BB L 1764; 'and he gave Communion and sacrifice to Brigid, who sent her soul to heaven'.

⁴⁴⁴ BCC L 838; 'at a certain time Finnian was lacking wine and bread at the mass. Colum Cille blessed the water and it was turned into wine and put into the mass chalice. God's name and Colum Cille's were magnified by that miracle'. This episode, the only mass explicitly celebrated, is examined at III, pp. 120–2.

⁴⁴⁵ BCC L 961; 'Comgall said that Colum Cille should make the offering of Christ's body and his blood in their presence. Colum ministered unto them as to that. Then Cainnech saw a fiery pillar above Colum Cille so long as he was at the offering'.

⁴⁴⁶ BCC L 1098; 'he offered the body of Christ and his blood'.

	Eucharistic References [Explicit]	Eucharist Performed	Viaticum Dispensed	Viaticum Received
BS	Et i n-adaig dorochtatar co Patraic, it é sin aimser dopritchaisét iris 7 creidium Crist 7 doronsat bathius 7 comna i crich Corco-Baiscinn. ⁴⁴⁷		...7 lotar aroen ra Senán docum a reclesa 7 deberur sacarbhuic dhoibh 7 tiagait docum nimhe. ⁴⁴⁸	Ropadh amra lium comtais iat na lamha ut atcím ocun sribenn doberad sacarbaic dam I laithe mo éitsechta. ⁴⁴⁹
	Bannscál ag nighi eduigh a meic asin tiprait asa tabarr usce oiffrind dún. ⁴⁵⁰		...7 sacarbhaic uaitisi damh...7 doberur sacarbhaic di, 7 teit docum nimhe focétóir. ⁴⁵¹	...7 dorat comna 7 sacarbaic dhó. ⁴⁵²
	...do chuinghidh shacarbaice7 doberar in rinde co sacarbaic . ⁴⁵³			
BF				...atbert; ‘Lámha ind fhir-sin,’ ar se, ‘dobera comunn 7 sacarbhaic damsa frisna déidenchu.’ ⁴⁵⁴
				..cun roghaibh Finnen coman 7 sacarbhaic dia láimh, cu rofhaidh a spirut dochum nimhe. ⁴⁵⁵
BFc			...comad dia láimh nodhighsed dochum nime.....Teit Comhgall docum nimhe innsin do laimh Ailbhe ...7 erbaidh to Ailbe co mbeth Finnhua ria udhacht ceb é tan no ghebhudh dia lámh fair. ⁴⁵⁶	
BBr			Iar caithium immorro chuirp Crist 7 a fola don ingin atbath nach snimh.... ⁴⁵⁷	
			‘Eirg,’ ol se, ‘7 caith corp Crist 7 a fhuil , 7 eirg iarsin docum na bethad suthaini...’ Iar caithiumh tra cuirp Crist 7 a fhola don crosan...’ ⁴⁵⁸	

⁴⁴⁷ BS L 1867; ‘and on the night that they came to Patrick, that is the time that they preached the faith and belief of Christ and celebrated baptism and Communion in the district of the Corco-Baiscinn’.

⁴⁴⁸ BS L 2346; ‘and they went along with Seanán to his church and the sacrifice was given to them and they go to heaven’.

⁴⁴⁹ BS L 2051; ‘I would deem it wonderful if those hands which I see writing would give me the sacrifice on the day of my decease’.

⁴⁵⁰ BS L 2161; ‘a woman washing her son’s clothes in the well from which the water of the mass is brought to us’.

⁴⁵¹ BS L 2438 and L 2446; ‘..and the sacrifice from you to me?’; ‘and the sacrifice was administered to her and she went immediately to heaven’.

⁴⁵² BS L 2489; ‘and gave him Communion and sacrifice’.

⁴⁵³ BS L 2403 and L 2409; ‘to ask for the sacrifice’; ‘and the box containing the sacrifice is put’.

⁴⁵⁴ BF L 2651; ‘...he said: “the hands of that man,” he said, “will give me Communion and sacrifice at the ending of days”’.

⁴⁵⁵ BF L 2773; ‘and Finnian received Communion and sacrifice from his hand and sent his spirit to heaven’.

⁴⁵⁶ BFC L 2880; ‘so that he might go to heaven after receiving Communion from him....Comgall goes to heaven after receiving Communion from Ailbe....and he entrusts to Ailbe that Fionnchú should be at his bequest whenever he should receive Communion from him’.

⁴⁵⁷ BBr L 3689; ‘after the girl had taken the body of Christ and his Blood, she died without any distress’.

⁴⁵⁸ BBr L 3738 and L 3751; “Go,” he said, “and partake of the body of Christ and his Blood, and to the eternal life...”; ‘so after the satirist had partaken of the body of Christ and his blood...’.

			...iar caithimh cuirp Crist 7 a fola dhó, teit docum nime. ⁴⁵⁹	
			...agut irnaidhi-si cu tarda corp Crist [7 a fuil] ⁴⁶⁰ dam 7 dula iarsodain docum nime. Iar caithimh tra cuirp Crist 7 a fola don t-senior, luidh docum nimhe... ⁴⁶¹	
BC	<p>...7 fogabut torba na hecalsa, eter comuinn 7 baithius 7 bhiadh 7 forcetul...⁴⁶²</p> <p>...cethra buile lána do cruitheacht cossecartha annsin tria rath De 7 Ciarain. Or on aimsir frith an main rundai tall ic macuibh Israel ní frith samail in tuara-sin..⁴⁶⁴</p>			Beannachuis dano Caeimhgen uiscui 7 do gní comman do Ciarán conad annsin dorat Ciarán a clog to Caeimgen i comurtha a n-oentad 7 i screpul a chomnae . ⁴⁶³
BM ⁴⁶⁵				
	Eucharistic References [Explicit]	Eucharist Performed	Viaticum Dispensed	Viaticum Received

⁴⁵⁹ BBr L 3765; ‘after partaking of the body of Christ and his Blood, he goes to heaven’.

⁴⁶⁰ Not in Lismore, emended by Stokes from BnF, celtique 1.

⁴⁶¹ BBr L 3837 and L 3839; ‘entreating you to administer the body of Christ and his blood to me, and that I may go to heaven’; ‘after the old man had partaken of the body of Christ and his blood, he went to heaven’.

⁴⁶² BC L 4059; ‘and who get the benefit of the church, both Communion and baptism and food and teaching...’.

⁴⁶³ BC L 4468; ‘and Coemhghein blessed the water and administered Communion to Ciarán so that then Ciarán gave his bell to Coemhghein in sign of their unity and as a scruple of his Communion’.

⁴⁶⁴ BC L 4191 and L 4194; ‘four sacks of consecrated wheat there, through the grace of God and Ciarán’; ‘for from the time that the mystical manna was found by the children of Israel...’.

⁴⁶⁵ There are no explicit Eucharistic references in BM, although he encounters one Coman, described specifically as ‘sacart meise’, L 4660, which Stokes translates literally as ‘table-priest’ but for which eDil provides chaplain: <http://www.dil.ie/32144>. However, the idea that a cleric fulfilled a specific function as the offering priest on behalf of a group is intriguing. We know that the business of private masses expanded exponentially in the central Middle Ages, see: Rahner, *Celebration*, pp. 1–3, and the notion that priests who occupied this role enjoyed a title derived from their specific function is interesting

1. *Comman*⁴⁶⁶ and *Sacarbaic*⁴⁶⁷

Although the principle of the Communion of saints had existed for some centuries some analysts have argued that the ‘special sense’ of the words ‘Communion’ and the act of ‘Communicating’ were a function of developments in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and their particular Eucharistic context of grace conferred.⁴⁶⁸ To be sure, the modern colloquial language of Catholicism treats the term as embracing both what happens on the altar, the congregation’s reception of the sacrament, and the wafer or host itself but as discussed above we might do better to distinguish ‘Communion’ as more rightly describing the act of sharing the sacrament. Both *comman* and *sacarbaic* originated as loan-words from Latin in the earliest stratum of Latin loans into Irish, derived from *communio* and *sacrificium* respectively.⁴⁶⁹ This group includes, as one might expect, a number of important ecclesiastical terms, notably the fundamental borrowings for *eclais* < *eclesia* and *saltair* < *psalterium*.⁴⁷⁰ Given the ubiquity of these last two terms it is perhaps an indicator of their comparable significance that *comman* and *sacarbaic* were such early neologisms in the vernacular. It has been noted that the terms most commonly found in a more learned register were later imports,⁴⁷¹ which perhaps also suggests that the terms were not adopted as part of sophisticated theological speculation but as basal terms, essential to naming the physical objects and actions of Christianity.

As is clear from *Figure II.vi* above, *comman* and *sacarbaic* are frequently coupled, particularly in viaticum narratives. The eDil entry for *sacarbaic* indicates that the term can refer both ‘to the service of Communion and also in a more restricted sense of the consecrated elements, especially the Host’ but the same clarification is not provided for *comman*.⁴⁷² There are at least four citations in eDil in which *sacarbaic* is clearly used as an abstraction for the

⁴⁶⁶ <http://www.dil.ie/11502>.

⁴⁶⁷ <http://www.dil.ie/35845>.

⁴⁶⁸ Pelikan, *Christian*, p. 184.

⁴⁶⁹ McManus, ‘Latin’, pp. 29, 59 and 63; using linguistic features McManus placed these two words in the early part of the *Pátraic* stage of borrowings.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴⁷¹ Russell, ‘“What”’, p. 437; McManus, ‘Latin’, pp. 66–9.

⁴⁷² <http://www.dil.ie/35845>.

sacrament as a totality. However, the usage in the Lismore corpus indicates perhaps a preference for *comman* as an expression of the rite and *sacarbaic* as the physical manifestation of the rite. In BC and BS, we find references to the sacrament in the abstract, certain clerics are reported to have performed baptisms and Communion in Seanán's home district and the responsibilities of the church enumerated in BC include Communion, baptism, food and teaching.⁴⁷³ In each of these instances *comman* is found, and *sacarbaic* is never deployed in an abstract manner; in the Lismore texts, contextually it might always refer to the object of Communion.

Of the nineteen references to viaticum across the nine texts,⁴⁷⁴ six refer to *comman* and *sacarbaic*, with four referring to *sacarbaic* solely and only one reference to *comman* independent of *sacarbaic*. The four instances in which *sacarbaic* alone is dispensed occur in BS, on three occasions in which Seanán dispenses the sacrament and once when he asks St Martin to aid him on his future deathbed. However, when Seanán is dying and is visited by Martin, he receives *comman* and *sacarbaic*. It is entirely plausible that the *comann* and *sacarbaic* construction was merely a trope of the genre for accounts of saintly deaths but that ignores the redundancy in the phrase. If either term is sufficient to convey the meaning, then why combine them so frequently?⁴⁷⁵ There is only one instance of *sacarbaic*'s usage in BS in which the term is explicitly used to refer to the physical object of the host when a nun requests that Seanán send her the physical host in a casket along the river.⁴⁷⁶ For the other instances of its usage in BS the more common phrase *comman 7 sacarbaic* might easily be substituted so perhaps it was simply a case of scribal preference for the simpler expression. Among the citations on eDil, there are two instances where the context of usage makes the materiality of

⁴⁷³ BS L 1869; BC L 4059.

⁴⁷⁴ A further six of the nineteen, which refer to the body and blood of Christ, are found in BBr. This is the only text to use this construction in viaticum accounts, with one reference in BP to the body and one reference in BFC to receiving from the hand.

⁴⁷⁵ The frequency of their coupling is noted in the eDil entry for *sacarbaic*.

⁴⁷⁶ See below, IV, pp. 156–60.

sacarbaic explicit, with all others being implicit usages. A majority of those implicit usages, it might be argued, could also refer to the physical host rather than the rite, as they include constructions such as ‘cen chomand, cen cóibsin, cen sacarbaic’, ‘iar ccomain 7 sacarfaic, ro gabh...Barrai sacarfaic..do laimh Fiama, tabair dún in saccarbaicc’,⁴⁷⁷ all of which could be said to refer to the element of the rite rather than its whole.

Might the phrasing of *comman 7 sacarbaic* be indicative of a differentiation between the two Eucharistic species and differing attributions accorded to each, as was implicated in the analysis of ICD and Com above? In that discussion, it was noted that the Irish author preserved the distinction between the actions performed over the cup and the bread, in expressing blessing and thanks separately, reflecting the Jewish origins of the rites. And later in that text, and in Com, the authors sought to distinguish between the gifts accruing to Communicants from the two species. The Latin explanation given is that bread strengthens the body of man and wine manufactures blood in the flesh while the vernacular section expands upon that slightly, noting that bread satisfies and strengthens the body while wine ‘truly makes an abundance of blood in the body’.⁴⁷⁸ The requirement for the entire congregation, not only the celebrant, to receive under both kinds was officially dispensed with at the Council of Trent, though the chalice had already been gradually withdrawn from congregants in Latin Christendom over the course of the twelfth century.⁴⁷⁹ Though it is possible that practices differed regionally in the central medieval centuries, the lengthy Communion antiphons, interspersed with psalms, found in *Stowe* certainly indicate there was sufficient time for a large congregation to receive under both species. Additionally, correspondence between Pope Paschal II and Thurgot of Scotland, at some date between 1112 and 1114, advised that infants

⁴⁷⁷ <http://www.dil.ie/35845>.

⁴⁷⁸ Rittmueller, ‘Edition: ICD’, p. 112

⁴⁷⁹ CC, pp. 70–1. O’Don, p. 76. Throughout, O’Donoghue seems to presume reception under both species, though direct references to this practice are absent and others have assumed the converse obtained. Where we might expect to find clarification, in the form of statutes, Gille’s pronouncement on the number of occasions per year on which the laity should receive, relies on the verb *communicare* only, DSE, pp. 156–7.

could receive under one species only due to their incapacity to receive the host, implying that under both kinds remained the norm in the region.⁴⁸⁰ That the learned authors of ICD and Com thought these questions of sufficient import to pose, is not an indicator that the Eucharistic liturgy, as experienced by Irish congregations, was the object of regular interrogation by those beyond the most educated and erudite. Notwithstanding these speculations on the extent to which a difference between blessing and thanks was apprehended by contemporary audiences, there is an additional question which arises on whether the physical act of receiving the bread, wine or both generated different responses from Communicants. Bossy has argued that the sharing of the chalice perhaps represented ‘a more total, or fluid’ realisation of the communal dimension of the mass given the disintegration implicated in the *fractio panis*, an aspect of the rite with which the Irish were especially concerned, as evidenced in *Stowe’s OIMT*.⁴⁸¹ However, his reading here is perhaps too reliant on the rejection of the *fractio* given voice to by Reformation thinkers who saw the process as analogous to the broken and divided church. Ultimately though, it seems too speculative to posit a widely held perception of a difference between the species and what their respective consumption represented, given the limited sources available to us. There is some evidence to suggest that the Irish had a well-developed concept of concomitance at an early point in the evolution of this doctrine, as is suggested by this passage from *Sac*:

Ni messu didiu a bec inas a mor in chuirp-si Crist, 7 ní mó is airberu a rand oltás a thoitt, at ata ulídetaid 7 toitt chómlan chuirp Crist in cech errandus dé; ocus ata lánnert legis 7 slánaigthe cech duine inntiblegis 7 slánaigthe cech duine inntib.

Not inferior is the little part to the great part of this body of Christ; neither is its part less than its totality, for the perfect whole and entire of the body of Christ is in each

⁴⁸⁰ Holland, 'Dating', p. 295.

⁴⁸¹ Bossy, 'Mass', p. 50.

particle thereof; and the full virtue and power of the healing and saving of every man abides in them.⁴⁸²

The idea then of receiving under one species may not have been a difficulty for Irish congregations in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

2. *Téit do lám*

There is a further phrase, *téit do lám* or ‘to go to a hand’, which occurs in the materials under discussion here and merits mention by consequence of the intimacy which it potentially implies. The phrase, which is not widely attested, appears in a Eucharistic context once within the *Stowe OIMT*, once in the *Rule of the Celí Dé* and is also found in a depiction of Communion in both the metrical and prose versions of *Immram Snédgus ocus Mac Riagla*.⁴⁸³ There is evidence that some translators have failed to recognise the construction as being related to Communion and it was misapprehended as relating to Confirmation in some instances; a thoroughgoing analysis of its usage remains to be completed. The phrase appears twice within the Lismore corpus, in BB and BFc, and both iterations are worthy of consideration.⁴⁸⁴ The occurrence in BB, within a narrative episode in which Brigid challenges the authority of a bishop and priest on the altar is particularly noteworthy. As she approaches the altar to receive Communion, a goat’s head appears to her in the chalice:

Feacht ann do Brigit oc techt do laimh in espuic cu tarfas di cenn puic do beith annsa chailiuch oifrin. Ro opastar Brigit in cailech. ‘Cidh ara n-opai?’ ar an fer graidh. ‘Cenn puic foillsighter dam ann’, ar Brigit. Ro ghairm in t-espoc in gilla tuc ind imaltoir, 7 adubairt ris tabhairt a choibhsen. ‘Do-chuadhus’, ar in gilla, ‘i tech a ngabhar puic, cu tallus poc méth as 7 aduadhus mo sáith de’. Ro phend in gilla 7 do-roine aithrige. Dochuaidh iar sin Brigit do laim 7 ní co nfacai in fuath.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸² Sac, §41, p. 26.

⁴⁸³ Murray, ‘Voyaging’, pp. 798–9; there is no ambiguity in its usage here as the text includes a reference to the offering of the mass.

⁴⁸⁴ BB L 1630 and BFc L 2880; the incident in BFc is examined below in III, pp. 116–17.

⁴⁸⁵ BB L 1630–6.

Once when Brighid was going to the bishop's hand, a goat's head appeared to her to be in the offering chalice. Brighid refused the chalice. 'Why do you refuse it?' said the celebrant. 'A goat's head is revealed to me in it', said Brighid. The bishop called the boy who had brought the altar table and said to him to give his confession. 'I went', said the boy, 'into the goat-house to take a fat goat from it and I ate my fill of it'. The boy did penance and repented. After that Brighid went to the hand and she did not see the apparition.

The implications of this encounter between a holy-woman and bishop are potentially very subversive, as Brighid's vision of the boy's transgression is not made manifest to the cleric, and she is effectively challenging his authority at the most sacred moments of the mass. The question of Eucharistic transformations was considered above and it was noted there that the reformers of the twelfth century asserted that the efficacy of the sacrament was not affected by the purity or impurity of the presiding priest. However, Brighid's revelation has the effect, within the text, of rendering the sacrament void until such time as the mass attendant has corrected his behaviour, in a parallel with the episode considered above from *Vita Malachiae*. Of course, it is well-acknowledged in scholarship that Brighid's form of sanctity regularly transgresses the supposed norms of female saints' Lives and the episode need not be read as a manifestation of a renewed interest in the Eucharistic species and transformation in the twelfth-century.⁴⁸⁶ Indeed, this same episode appears in the seventh-century *Vita Prima* in a near identical form and even the language construction is the same.⁴⁸⁷ It had initially appeared to me, that the intimacy of the expression was related to the gender of the Communicant in this account,⁴⁸⁸ but given it is essentially a metaphrastic rendering of the Latin analogue, it appears unlikely to have been an intentional choice by the author of the vernacular text. It should also be noted that some scholars have contended that touching the Eucharistic species was forbidden

⁴⁸⁶ Johnston, 'Pagan', pp. 60–78; Johnston, 'Transforming', pp. 197–220.

⁴⁸⁷ VP §92 (transl. Connolly, p. 42). The episode does not appear in Cogitosus' Life.

⁴⁸⁸ As it was the first such construction found in the Lismore corpus and the instance in BFc discussed below in III is more ambiguous. Similarly, the usage in *Snédgusa* makes note of the fact that both men and women were Communicating.

to all but the celebrant and attending clerics from the ninth century onwards.⁴⁸⁹ The foregrounding of the physical touching of the sacrament, within this construction, raises some as yet unanswered questions about whether the intent was to evoke intimacy, as I first presumed, or to reinforce the authority of the clerical orders.

II.viii Conclusions

This chapter has examined Eucharistic content found in a selection of important texts from multiple literary genres composed in a period largely coterminous with the core of the Lismore homiletic corpus. This analysis demonstrated that Irish authors, with access to substantial bodies of native and Patristic exegesis and theological learning, were adept in reframing and developing Eucharistic texts. It can be argued that some authors were potentially doing so in response to an awareness of Continental debates on the theologically complicated questions of the Real Presence. However, it is equally clear that authors of a selection of Irish liturgical, para-liturgical, catechetical and exemplar texts of the period had recourse to materials from earlier strata of theological speculation and were as comfortable parsing and rehearsing those texts as repurposing and reframing them for contemporary audiences. The contrasting conclusions reached by Rittmueller and Boyle, in respect of ICD and Echtgus Úa Cúanáin's poetic treatise on the Eucharist, demonstrate that when modern scholars approach texts composed within the same historical window and treating of the same themes, the potential exists that the sources underlying the respective texts can be convincingly identified as belonging to the earliest stratum of Irish and Continental Eucharistic theology or as prominent texts central to the Real Presence debates. Rittmueller's assertion, that the authors of two texts from the long twelfth century, were writing in complete ignorance of Radbertus' and Lanfranc's prescriptions on the topic finds its inverse in Boyle's contention that Echtgus demonstrates a competent command of the finer points of their arguments. Of course, accepting

⁴⁸⁹ CC, p. 27.

the hypothesis of one need not invalidate the other; both scholars' positions can and may well be correct. The disparate conclusions of analyses of the Stowe and Corpus missals evince similar doubts as to the soundness of making definitive statements as to the pre- and post-reform status of texts. If anything has been shown in the course of this chapter, it is, that diversity exists within the expression of Irish Eucharistic theology of the period and that situating texts within and without reformist contexts is exceptionally difficult. From the pastoral tone and bucolic imagery of Sac to the barely contained violence of the Passion found in *Scél* and *Dígal*, different authors sought to convey different dimensions of the sacrament by emphasising one aspect over another. It should also be considered that the confidence exhibited by Irish authors in reworking and reframing Patristic and other authoritative sources, in a manner that accorded with the prevailing orthodoxy in the wake of the Real Presence debates, need not be indicative of engagement with contemporary European texts but rather a part of the continuous process of theological, and literary, revision for which they are noted. In the section on Christ's humanity it was argued that the origins, of an increased degree of Marian piety and an attendant development of an ethics of compassion in the central medieval centuries, is in evidence in the treatment of the Passion in the LB and BL texts adduced here. However, that same affective dimension is present in Irish materials from much earlier centuries and it would be unsafe to suggest that the presence of this content is a reflection of innovation or a conscious response to reformist ideology. In the final sections attention turned to the premise that Eucharistic terms must be 'treated as part of a system of meaning' and the most prominent elements of the vernacular vocabulary found in BL were examined.⁴⁹⁰ Fundamentally, this consideration demonstrated that no absolute rules about the authors' usage of terms could be advanced. The Eucharistic language and literature examined in this chapter are pluriform rather than uniform and this conclusion informs all that follows hereafter.

⁴⁹⁰ CC, pp. 5 and 7.

CHAPTER III: CLERICAL IDENTITY

It has been suggested that hagiography in the twelfth century came ‘closer to biography’ than ever before, as authors amended the Lives of martyred and missionary saints to accord with changing social, political and ecclesiastical circumstances in a period of reformation.¹ As noted in Chapter I, the presumption that Irish church reform was thoroughly transformative is problematic,² and as is clear from the analysis in Chapter II, Irish authors were as likely to repurpose seventh-century exegesis as to draw their exemplars from contemporary European discourse. There is evidence of a similar willingness to reshape familiar content with new emphases in the hagiographical corpus; Herbert’s analysis of the twelfth-century *Life of Martin of Tours* provides ample evidence of the recasting of a monastic figure from the early church as a pastoral caregiver, aligning him with the principal tenets of reform ideology.³ As previously noted, instituting sacramental conformity was central to the reform agenda and reframing the Eucharistic identities of holy men in the most popular literary genre must surely have been recognised as pivotal to achieving that ambition.

III.i Chapter Outline

The focus in this chapter is on the Eucharistic identities crafted by hagiographers, in the Lismore Lives, and the extent to which these personifications reflect new twelfth-century patterns of sanctity or are characteristic of earlier hagiographical models.⁴ The individual clerical identity claimed for the saint and the corporate affiliations implicated in the text are considered in the appropriate historical context. Particular attention is paid to connections with the new international monastic orders, as potential indicators of a foundation’s reformist profile. The hagiographical careers constructed by the authors, including the subject saint’s clerical formation

¹ Ward, *Miracles*, p. 171.

² See I, p. 3–6; Etchingham, ‘Reform’, pp. 15–37.

³ Herbert, ‘Martin’, pp. 76–84.

⁴ Lifshitz, ‘Beyond positivism’, pp. 96 and 110 on the new models of sanctity as indicators of social change; Cubitt, ‘Memory’, p. 42, on the ‘static’ model of Irish sanctity advanced by Stancliffe.

and their later performance of religious and ecclesiastical functions, are charted. The idea of measuring patterns in hagiographical narratives is not new, as the work undertaken by Henken on the Welsh corpus attests, but the focus here is explicitly on indicators of identity.⁵ Close textual readings of the narrative accounts of clerical formation of the saint and their performance of sacramental duties throughout their lifetime are employed to evaluate the extent to which the Lismore hagiographers were attempting to convey abbatial or episcopal career paths or whether they treat these offices as interchangeable. A comparative approach will be applied to the texts when relevant Latin or vernacular Lives of the same or earlier period are extant and are relevant to the loci of identity under scrutiny here. The space and attention devoted to the respective Lives differs depending on the number of relevant episodes within the Life and the general relevance of the text to the emerging impression of clerical identity in the corpus; the intention is not to provide an exhaustive analysis of every text but an overview of the most pertinent sections. For example, BP is examined only briefly below, on the grounds that the Patrician corpus has been mined so extensively that the complexion of Patrick's sanctity is well-established. This data, on individual profiles, combined with the implications of institutional identities, potentially formulated to conform to the doctrinal and organisational requirements imposed by burgeoning connections to European orders and English and Anglo-Norman episcopal sees,⁶ offers a variegated portrait of the state of clerical identities in the Lismore Lives. Much of the analysis of the institutional connections of the saint's foundations is premised on the thesis that patronage associated with a particular order, which facilitated hagiographical production, might find expression in the texts, though this is far from certain.⁷ The approach is also premised on the idea that the character of Eucharistic episodes in the texts might serve as a useful indicator of

⁵ Henken, *Welsh*, pp. 26–30. Although Henken's work includes 'Education and Training' as a developmental stage, her premise that saints are Christianised folk heroes, leads her to focus on only the miraculous components of Lives rather than clerical identities.

⁶ See I, pp. 3–6.

⁷ TCI, pp. 136–54; Herbert, 'Observations', pp. 127–8; Ó Riain, 'Codex', pp. 91–7. Throughout, the dates for Augustinian and Arroasian affiliations are those provided in MRHI and as noted by Flanagan these were generally arrived at using secondary sources. However imprecise they may be, in the absence of better evidence, these dates serve as touchstones. The connection between patronage and content has been widely accepted with respect to the compilation of various codices but less well interrogated with respect to the content of individual Lives.

reform theology. The final sections of the chapter attempt to contextualise the evidence from the BL texts by reference to the clerical ideals presented in contemporary European hagiography and Ireland's own prescriptive literature on the topic of Eucharistic practices.

III.i Betha Mochua: context and history

As noted in Chapter I and evidenced in the stemma provided at *Appendix I.ii.viii*, among the nine saints commemorated in BL, Mochua (Balla, Co. Mayo) is the saint for whom we have the fewest Lives.⁸ Though in the earliest stratum of hagiographical scholarship, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he was often conflated with Mochua of Timahoe, the Lismore text is in fact the only extant Life for the Mayo saint, meaning that we are without a text against which to compare it, in contrast with other Lives considered in this chapter.⁹ Whilst there are two other s. xv manuscripts in which the vernacular text survives, given the limited sacramental content in the Life and thus its limited immediate relevance to the work undertaken in this dissertation, it has not been deemed necessary to compare BL BM to the other recensions.¹⁰ Deemed a 'very late and very crude composition' by Kenney, Ó Riain expands on this assessment to place the 'incomplete' text in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, composed with a particular emphasis on establishing the earlier political connections of the foundation at Balla.¹¹ Neither author has indicated their basis for settling on this late composition date but presumably it rests on a combination of contextual and linguistic evidence. There are no immediately obvious linguistic disparities between it and the other texts under consideration here. Likewise, a number of internal factors in the text indicate a concern with political events in the eighth through tenth centuries which would presumably have been entirely irrelevant in the utterly transformed political landscape of the fourteenth century.

⁸ DIS, pp. 467–8.

⁹ MISL, p. 248; EHI, pp. 460–1. As per the stemma in Appendix I, it had previously been believed by scholars, including Stokes (as in his note on sources at p. 360), that the office *vita* in Rawl. B 485/ B 505 and edited by Plummer in VSHP II at pp. 184–9 related to the same saint but the conflation has been corrected by Ó Riain and Sharpe both.

¹⁰ EHI, p. 461; for manuscripts see stemma at p. 243.

¹¹ DIS, p. 467; EHI, p. 461.

Mochua's contacts with secular leaders are greatly foregrounded in the text and the content of these interactions, as previously considered by Doherty, speak to the eclipsing of Uí Fhiachrach influence in the eighth century and the ascent of the Uí Briúin.¹² In the lengthy section of the *Life* which recounts Mochua's foundation of Balla, which will be discussed in further detail below with respect to the Mayo monastery's institutional identity, the Uí Fhiachrach seek and secure authorisation from King of the Connachta, Cellach mac Ragallaig who ruled in the late seventh to early eighth century, to donate their land to Mochua.¹³ A second property dispute at Lough Cime [Lough Hackett near Headford], during which Mochua takes umbrage at being denied passage onto the island and floods it, is connected by Doherty to the displacement of the Síl Cellaig, descendants of the aforementioned Cellach, by the Uí Briúin Seóla in the tenth century.¹⁴ The Uí Briúin Seóla remained the foremost power in the region until the thirteenth century when they were driven west into Iar Chonnacht by the Normans.¹⁵

The dearth of vernacular hagiographical production in the post-Norman centuries has led scholars, including Herbert, to the inference that 'conservation rather than creativity' prevailed,¹⁶ making the production of a *Life* for a little known or venerated monastic saint such as Mochua, connected to a foundation long in abeyance, seem unlikely. As Herbert notes, no codices devoted entirely to hagiographical texts were compiled in this period, rather, collections of saints' lives were incorporated into composite manuscripts such as BL, LB and LFF, volumes that represent an effort to 'collect literary monuments' of a fragmented cultural world;¹⁷ the inclusion of a freshly composed BM seems contrary to that intention. Though Herbert makes no explicit reference to BM, she identifies BCC as the only new vernacular

¹² Doherty, 'Aspects', p. 309. This article is a review of information on economic history that can be extracted from lives composed after the tenth century. As his focus is general and thematic, Doherty offers no opinions on the date of the text.

¹³ *Ibid.*; ECI, p. 584; BM L 4751–86.

¹⁴ Doherty, 'Aspects', p. 310; BM L 4790–8; Doherty connects the narrative of the saint taking the king, his son, and grandson as hostages until the dispute is settled to either the reign of Cléirchén who dies in 912 or to a reference in AFM 990 to the sinking of the island.

¹⁵ Norman displacement of Uí Briúin Seóla to Iar Chonnacht: ALC 1236; ALC 1256; ALC 1262; Moody, Martin and Byrne, *New History* IX, pp. 19, 29 and 234–5.

¹⁶ Her, p. 354; this assessment is connected to the presumed 'flowering' in Latin production in the same period.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

production, concerned with an Irish saint, in the period between the Norman invasion and 1550.¹⁸ It should also be noted that BM is present in fifteenth-century BnF, celtique 1 with recensions connected to Lismore's BP, BCC, BS, BB and BBr which have all been dated to significantly earlier dates, within the period 1050 to 1200.¹⁹ Similarly, a fragment of BM also survives in Egerton 91 (s. xv) with recensions of BCC and BBr. That BM, a text concerned with a minor holy-man, travels in three fifteenth-century manuscripts with a number of texts comprehensively dated to the reform era under consideration in this dissertation combined with the internal evidence of political interests from an earlier period should be sufficient to at least make us consider a date well before the fourteenth century. However, it should be noted that immediately adjacent to BM in BnF, celtique I, is the only other Irish saint's life contained in this manuscript apart from those listed above, the *Life of Maignenn* of Kilmainham.²⁰ This text is also characterised as 'late and fabulous' by Kenney, an assessment unchallenged by Ó Riain, though he notes that a critical edition remains outstanding.²¹ Ó Riain believes the vernacular *Life of Maignenn* was produced for the patron of an Anglo-Norman foundation, providing intriguing evidence of vernacular production *inter Anglicos* and placing this Life, and potentially its manuscript companion, at a much later point than the core Lismore compositions dated to a period between 1050 and 1200.²² On balance though, there are aspects of the text's manuscript transmission and internal evidence of political concerns that reasonably situate it within the same ecclesiastical milieu that gave rise to a plurality of the Lismore lives, though it must be acknowledged in the absence of a thoroughgoing linguistic investigation, that situation is far from assured.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 355. There were vernacular Lives of various foreign figures including Mary of Egypt and Catherine of Alexandria produced in this period. The Herbert article is comprehensive in its overview but not necessarily exhaustive; it is possible she concurs with Ó Riain on BM's late date.

¹⁹ *Dígal fola Crist* as considered above, also appears in BnF, celtique 1 and BL, Egerton 91.

²⁰ VanHamel.

²¹ DIS, p. 425; EHI, p. 466

²² DIS, p. 425. Ó Riain offers no detail on the Anglo-Norman patronage of the life other than noting the foundation of the Knights Hospitaller's Priory of St John the Baptist at Kilmainham.

III. i.ii *Individual identity and corporate affiliations*

Mochua's formation as a cleric follows the normative pattern present in most Irish Lives; he is fostered and educated by a prominent cleric, Comgall of Bangor.²³ His sacramental profile, once he has established his own foundation at the age of thirty-five is limited,²⁴ with the majority of the hagiographer's attention in this short text devoted to Mochua's miracles which range from curing a 'yellow fever' to relieving a barren woman's womb with his tears.²⁵ The one baptism attributed to him is a rather strange affair, involving the saint's inducement of two female warriors to repent and abandon arms after they have inflicted injuries on Mochua's envoy.²⁶ The text contains no account of Mochua's death and the lengthy final eulogistic peroration is concerned with his spiritual qualities and personal attributes rather than the priestly offices or any specific community he served.²⁷ As noted in Chapter I, the homilist who adapted this Life fails abjectly to integrate the exordium or peroration to any great degree into a text which owes more to the earlier hagiographical models.²⁸ His personal interactions are generally formulaic with a preponderance featuring Mochua either engaged in disputes with prominent political figures or dispensing miraculous cures to characters devoid of identifying characteristics. The author uses the generic designation of 'cleric' for Mochua and only once is the cleric addressed by or spoken directly of by another party in the text: on that occasion, he is identified as the *anamchara* of the speaker's enemy.²⁹ Fundamentally, there is nothing in this text that can legitimately be said to situate Mochua's clerical identity in the twelfth rather than in any earlier century.

The few textual references within the Life to his foundation are in keeping with a monastic environment, particularly the institutional statement: 'ro fhothaighesdar amhlaid sin

²³ BM 4645–7

²⁴ This age is derived from the details of his education provided in the text.

²⁵ BM L 4798 and 4649.

²⁶ BM L 4839.

²⁷ BM L 4864–900.

²⁸ See I, pp. 14–21.

²⁹ BM L 4792.

a cheall 7 a congbaíl, et tuc tri h-espaiç do coisecrad a releac 7 a reclés 7 do roind in feruinn dia manchaib’.³⁰ It is possible that this statement implies that the hagiographer considered Mochua, as a monk, unable to consecrate his own foundation and dependent on bishops for this service. Although Balla was rarely mentioned in the annals, it was surmised by Kenney that Mochua’s foundation may once have enjoyed a greater prominence but there is little extant evidence upon which to premise this assertion, saving the existence of the Life.³¹ Balla’s very scarce presence, as a religious institution, in later annalistic records is restricted to a mention in AU in 1246 that the son of the coarb of Mochua had taken possession of the bishopric of Elphin.³² Given these scant records it was classified by Gwynn and Haddock as belonging to the group of earliest settlements which survived until the eleventh century and possibly beyond but ultimately ceased to be monastic; it goes unmentioned in their accounts of monastic reform and changing monastic rules of the central Middle Ages.³³ Ó Riain suggests that Balla was ‘probably affiliated’ to the Augustinian priory at Annaghdown and he further argues that the multiple mentions in the text of foundations later affiliated with Augustinian practices support this assertion.³⁴ These include Bangor, where the Ulster-born saint is initially reported to have studied under Comgall, Durrow which he is made to visit, Roscommon whose founder he is said to have prophesied and the aforementioned Annaghdown, whose patrons were depicted as indebted to Mochua.³⁵

However, there are a number of problems with respect to assuming an affiliation of Balla with the Augustinians on the basis of these connections, as will now be considered. Though his fosterage and clerical education were provided in the text by Comgall, the

³⁰ BM L 4785–6; ‘thus he founded his church and his monastic enclosure, and brought three bishops to consecrate his graveyard and his church and to distribute the land to his monks’.

³¹ EHI, p. 461.

³² MRHI, p. 30; AU 1246; ALC: 1246 has John dying rather than taking the bishopric and at 1236, 1256 and 1262, Balla is mentioned as locale within disputes with Saxons and would appear to be a prominent staging post into and out of Connaught but it appears to refer to a place rather than an institution.

³³ MRHI, p. 30.

³⁴ DIS, p. 468.

³⁵ BM, Bangor: L 4640–72; Durrow: L 4688–91; Roscommon: L 4691–8; Annaghdown: L 4709–21.

hagiographer records that he was expelled from Bangor, having called a fatal malediction down upon the contemptuous sons of a local leader.³⁶ The encounter begins when Mochua is depicted visiting the territory of his matrilinear line and he causes some unspecified offence to the well-regarded chaplain of local worthy Fiachna: ‘Ro bai immorro senoir uasal don cinedh-sin .i. Comán sacart meise Fiachna mic Baetain; et is ed at-bert-sidhe rá Mu Chua: ‘Ro bentar anóir h' athardha fort amail ra benuis-si form-sa’.³⁷ However, in the absence of any real information on the content of the supposed slight inflicted by Mochua and whether Comán’s office was of any significance in that dispute, there is little further that can be extrapolated from the evidence. What we can say is that the event precipitated Mochua’s expulsion from the province, when Fiachna complained of his behaviour and reported Comán’s words to Comgall.³⁸ The strength of the expulsion’s force is somewhat tempered by Comgall’s accession to Mochua’s request for a *comhartha* (sign or symbol) upon which to rest his new foundation.³⁹ Though he ultimately leaves with a miraculous symbol of his connection to Bangor, a waterfall of which he is finally divested at Balla, the hagiographer’s depiction of discord and alienation between the founders seems to militate against Ó Riain’s posited affinity with Augustinian rules on the basis of the Bangor connection.

The Durrow and Roscommon visits as evidence of the Life’s connection to an Augustinian house and ethos seem predicated on even more slender foundations. The saint is depicted as visiting Durrow and Roscommon on his first circuit of travels after his expulsion from the north. This circuit is somewhat anomalous in that rather than narrating a series of relationships built and connections made, it catalogues failures and refusals: in his first visit the saint eschews the offer of a church from a British bishop;⁴⁰ in his third he fails to establish

³⁶ BM L 4659–72. As noted above in Chapter II, n. x.

³⁷ BM L 4659–61; ‘moreover, there was a noble elder of that race, that is Comán chaplain of Fiachna son of Báetáin; and this is what he said to Mochua: ‘may the honour of your patrimony be taken from you like you have taken it from me’.

³⁸ BM L 4666–7.

³⁹ BM L 4668.

⁴⁰ BM L 4676.

himself at Durrow ‘ár ní ro thoirinn in topur’;⁴¹ in his fourth stop at Roscommon he leaves of his own volition having prophesied their coming saint;⁴² and in his fifth and final stop before reaching Balla, he rids Lough Cime of its monster and despite this feat eliciting gratitude he moves onwards until granted land by the Uí Fiachrach.⁴³ The peripatetic life stage is well attested in the hagiographical genre but generally with more positive results. The only entirely affirmative relationship established by Mochua during his travels is with Feichín in County Westmeath.⁴⁴ Fore, the primary seat connected with Feichín was Benedictine by the late twelfth century but there is a connection to an Augustinian house here: Tráigh Eothaile, the modern Ballysadare, with which Feichín is linked, is mentioned twice when Mochua is settling the boundaries of his monastery and was the site of an Augustinian priory before 1169.⁴⁵ This account of a foundation indebted to Mochua for his miraculous restitution of their mill and the founder’s being favourably disposed to him seem a more likely source of Augustinian influence on BM than the others identified by Ó Riain. However, proximity to Augustinian houses, given their general proliferation and the mentioning of local landmarks is scanty evidence on which to posit an Augustinian provenance for BM. Of course, affiliation to an Augustinian house need not be indicative of a reformist agenda and conversely, the absence of such connections does not preclude reformist components in a text. Notwithstanding this observation, the cumulative effect of the internal evidence, primarily the character of Mochua’s religiosity and sacramental offices within the text, and the conjectural nature of the external evidence make me disinclined to categorise BM as embodying a depiction of an ideal clerical office-holder of the twelfth-century church. However, the content of the lengthy peroration in the text, which bears little resemblance to the subject holy-man of the Life expresses many of the attributes and actions

⁴¹ BM L 4690; ‘for I had not demarcated the well’.

⁴² BM L 4698.

⁴³ BM L 4721.

⁴⁴ BM L 4679–87.

⁴⁵ DIS, pp. 309–10; MRHI p. 160; there is no firm date for this foundation but it predates the Anglo-Norman presence.

considered central to the *vita apostolica*.⁴⁶ This is perhaps, as argued in Chapter I, evidence of a partially completed project of reinvention of these Lives as homilies.

III. ii Ciarán: context and history

The extant set of Lives for Ciarán extends to only four texts, three Latin and one Irish, preserved in five manuscripts.⁴⁷ A consideration of the relationship between the various texts was completed by Stewart-Macalister in his 1921 edition but there has been little effort made in the intervening century to examine the soundness of his conclusions.⁴⁸ Kenney opined that the texts ‘contain much the same material’ with the only differences arising from ‘arrangement and treatment of the episodes’.⁴⁹ It is clear on reviewing the concordances between the vernacular and Latin texts edited from the Dublin and Oxford collections by Plummer and Heist respectively that very close intertextual relationships exist but the vernacular is not simply a metaphrastic rendering of the posited lost original, thought to underlie the four extant recensions.⁵⁰ McCone was the first modern scholar to offer thoughts on the dating of the Lismore text and on linguistic grounds and the internal evidence of the political constellations in which Clonmacnoise operates he suggested a composition date in the first half of the tenth century.⁵¹ Kehnel, whose work is compelling in its attention to detail, modifies McCone’s analysis and suggests that while a tenth-century original may underlie the extant text, it was likely subject to extensive redaction around the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁵² She further surmises that the various extant recensions were composed in different houses for different purposes after this date, drawing on that original tenth-century text. As the only scholar whose focus has been exclusively on the history of this foundation, rather than on

⁴⁶ BM L 4864–97.

⁴⁷ See *Appendix I.ii.vii*, p. 242, for the textual stemma with manuscript details; EHI, p. 377.

⁴⁸ Stewart-Macalister, *Lives*, pp. 11–15; MISL, p. 391, where Sharpe is critical of the work done by Stewart-Macalister.

⁴⁹ EHI, p. 379.

⁵⁰ VSHP, pp. 200–16; Heist, VSH, pp. 78–81, (Abbreviated); MISL, pp. 80, 9, 391 and 291–2; Stewart-Macalister, *Lives*, pp. 172–83; Herbert, ‘Infancy’, p. 2; Her, p. 345; DIS, p. 169. Herbert suggests that the lost original may have been a bilingual text produced no later than the ninth century though Ó Riain disputes the possibility of a provenance this early, suggesting that the completest Latin exemplar in the Dublin Collection can be no earlier than the twelfth century.

⁵¹ McCone cited in Kehnel, *Church*, p. 18.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 19–20. She specifically connects the redaction to an account in AC 1095 of a major raid on the settlement.

developing hypotheses about the wider corpus of hagiographical productions in this period, her assessments are certainly worthy of the strongest consideration.⁵³ As Ó Riain's analysis of the historical details, that can be disinterred from the Dublin Codex *vita*, holds true for the vernacular text, and given this correlation it is possible to suggest a date in the second half of the twelfth century for the vernacular also.⁵⁴ However, in contrast Herbert situated it within the body of eleventh-century vernacular production that echoed the property concerns of the tenth century, having previously assigned it a composition date between 1050 and 1150.⁵⁵ Despite repeated Viking raids and recurrent attacks during internal disputes of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries the ecclesiastical vigour of Clonmacnoise was not 'permanently impaired' until the coming of the Anglo-Normans, making a date before 1169 seem the most reasonable.⁵⁶ The declining status of the site as manifest in the decreased efficacy of Clonmacnoise's political relationships in the later twelfth century further support the likelihood that the patronage necessary to produce a reconstituted Life existed in the first decades of the century rather than the last.⁵⁷ Ultimately, it can be said without equivocation that BC was composed within the 1050-1200 interval under consideration in this dissertation and as such we might expect to find evidence of reform ideals.

III. ii.i Ciarán: individual identity and corporate affiliations

Given the putative shared antecedent of the four recensions and the close connections among them, as noted above, it would be unproductive here to analyse the Lismore text against the Latin variants for evidence of intentional changes in the text's orientation and having established with reasonable reliability that the text was produced in a period generally assumed to have coincided with the era of church reform means it can be examined independently. The

⁵³ Etchingham, *Church*, pp. 43–5; Etchingham is critical of Kehnel, in the context of his study of church organisation, and her reliance on the hagiographical dossier and failure to define organisational terms but I think her command of the textual relationships is the best of those published.

⁵⁴ DIS, pp. 169–71.

⁵⁵ Her, p. 345; DIS, pp. 169–71; Herbert, 'Infancy', pp. 2–3; Herbert, 'Observations', p. 129.

⁵⁶ EHI, p. 377; AU 1038; AT 1095; CS 1091.

⁵⁷ Kehnel, 'Lands', pp. 12–15.

homiletic opening of BC, as noted in Chapter I, is the most textually integrated of the exordia in evidence in the Lismore Lives.⁵⁸ The text is suffused with episodes and motifs that echo the catechetical message of *caritas* or *dearrcc* (Christian charity) emphasised in the exegetical *lemmata* liberally bestrewn throughout the text by this sophisticated hagiographer. The text opens with a statement of the central precept drawn from Matthew VII.12:

Omnia ergo quemque vultis ut faciant vobis homines, ita es vos facite illis. Cech maith din is ail lib din do dénum duib o dóinib, co mba hamlaid-sin dognéthi-si doib; uair is e sin recht 7 faitsine.⁵⁹

All things therefore whatsoever you would want that men should do to you, do you also to them, that is, every good thing you desire to be done to you by man, let it be that, you do to them; because that is the law and prophecy.

The saint's comparatively short lifespan of thirty-three years is, as explored by Herbert, likely a function of the hagiographers' efforts to mirror the life of Jesus, just as is the shared carpentry profession of their respective fathers.⁶⁰ Herbert advances the thesis that BC is entirely patterned after the life of Jesus from the details of his father's profession as a carpenter, through his death and resurrection after three days to commune with Saint Coemhgheinn.⁶¹ I concur with Herbert on the *imitatio Christi* aspects of the text, but believe the modelling extends beyond the life stage patterning and incidental details she highlights, to a depiction of clerical identity that centres specifically on the humanity of Ciarán, in keeping with the twelfth century developments in Christology which subordinated Christ's divine nature to his human experience, to elicit both the recognition and empathy of the Christian audience, as discussed in Chapter II.⁶² The *caritas* motif and the central humane messages of Matthew's Gospel are

⁵⁸ See I, pp. 14–21; the exordium features only in the vernacular Life; it also appears in a discrete recension as a homily on charity in LB, see: Murdoch, 'Preaching', p. 48.

⁵⁹ BC L 3916–19; Matt. VII.12: 'So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets'.

⁶⁰ EHI, p. 378; Herbert, 'Infancy', pp. 2–3.

⁶¹ Herbert, 'Infancy', p. 5.

⁶² See above: II, pp. 71–7; Bynum, *Jesus*, pp. 27–53; CC, pp. 167–90; Rubin, 'Sacramental', p. 222; Leyser, 'Clerical purity', pp. 10–13.

evident in multiple episodes in the text in which Ciarán is depicted in mutually rewarding reciprocal relationships with other founders, with secular leaders, with his own monks, and with pilgrims, supplicants, and visitors to Clonmacnoise.⁶³ His interpersonal and institutional associations, including the accounts of his sacramental life, are constructed to conform to the fundamental principles of the *vita apostolica*, which privileged the virtuous and humble life over the thaumaturgical exploits of earlier depictions of sanctity.⁶⁴ Though firmly wedded to his status as an abbot in the text, as will be considered in the next sections, his characterisation shares commonalities with the Latin Lives of this period which have been said by multiple scholars to reflect the newer inspirational models of the twelfth-century orthodoxy, though these archetypes are usually presented in an episcopal rather than monastic setting.⁶⁵ In fact, this text includes explicit references to the pastoral obligations of the church, including with respect to access to the sacraments, which distinguishes it for example from BM, as considered above, which cast the saint more in the vein of folk hero than church official.

A tendency to exaggerate the distinction between regular and secular clergy in Irish sources has long coloured our ability to concede that monastic institutions were to the forefront of pastoral care provisions in medieval Ireland.⁶⁶ Until Sharpe's correction in the 1980s, scholarship predicated on the notion that monasteries were exclusively the site of contemplative life abounded and it can remain tempting to imagine a bifurcation in Ireland's ecclesiastical structures to simplify the historian's task, particularly where silence persists. However, Sharpe's model of a superstructure provided by 'mother churches', in a manner equivalent to that which pertained in England's ordinary minsters,⁶⁷ is evoked by the details in

⁶³ For example: BC L 4028–33 on the exchange of honey for his baptism; BC L 4132–6; BC L 4161–90.

⁶⁴ TIC, pp. 95–6; see n. 4 above.

⁶⁵ TIC, pp. 92–117; Herbert, 'Martin', p. 77; As discussed above, pp. 56 and 93–5; Flanagan's overview of the recasting of clerical models in the twelfth-century is biased towards Latin *vitae*, likely as a result of the greater availability of edited texts, and her decision to rely primarily on evidence from *Vita S. Malachiae* and *Vita S. Flannani*, means that vernacular exemplars of the new model are less known.

⁶⁶ Sharpe, 'Churches', pp. 81 and 102–7; Doherty, 'Idea', p. 23.

⁶⁷ Sharpe, 'Churches', p. 108.

BC, where monastic rule and pastoral provision are both emphasised. However, there is evidence in Gillebertus' *De statu* for the continued demarcation between the roles into the reform period.⁶⁸ Immediately following the exordium and the memorandum of the saint's day the hagiographer draws his audience's attention to the monastic rule of Ciarán's foundation and its promulgation all over Ireland:

Fear ro fhothaighstair aird-eclais asa rucad greim riagla ecna 7 forcetuil do uilib ecalsaih na h-Eirenn amal ro raidh in t-ecnaid cetna: 'Custodianur regmina' .i. Coimhéttar oc sruithibh na g-cathrach-so na riagla 7 na forcetla 7 na bésa arichta on maighister, o Ciaran, conid iat-saidhe riagla 7 besa ro scailtea 7 ructha do uilibh cathrachuibh noebh Eirenn, ár is aisti berar riagla 7 besa fo Eirinn uili.⁶⁹

A man who founded a cathedral out of which was born the power of rule, wisdom and instruction to all the churches of Ireland, like the same sage said: 'May the rule be preserved', that is: may the elders of this monastery preserve the rules and the teachings and the customs composed by the master, Ciarán, so that these are the rules and customs which have been scattered and brought to all the monasteries of the saints of Ireland since this is the manner the rules and customs are brought throughout all of Ireland.

In many of the other Lives associated with the reform era a patina of episcopal language has been applied to texts that were very clearly composed within a monastic environment, in order to support the claims made by foundations in search of diocesan status in the succession of synods and councils that administered the ecclesiastical landscape of the twelfth century; a phenomenon which is explored in reference to BS below.⁷⁰ There are no such pretensions here, audience attention is called to Ciarán's abbatial performance and his responsibility to those in his community at many junctures throughout the text. This is not to suggest that Ciarán is entirely without the trappings of episcopal office; he is depicted more than once effecting a

⁶⁸ DSE, p. 147–9; on the distinctions between 'moniales, canonicales, vel universales' or 'seculars, regulars and the laity' and the separate 'pyramids' within his schema for priest and parish/ abbot and monastery.

⁶⁹ BC L 3958–63.

⁷⁰ Herbert, 'Observations', p. 134; Herbert, 'Ireland', p. 346.

miracle through the use of his crozier.⁷¹ But these aspects are undeniably subordinated to his duties as *uasalshacart* (noble priest) ministering to a community. The only Lismore text with a comparable number of identifications of the subject saint as occupying an abbacy, rather than a bishopric, is BCC.⁷² Ciarán and Fionnchú are the only two saints who are not recounted to have developed relationships with named clerics who occupy episcopacies and even his education is received from a figure identified as a deacon rather than a bishop; Seanán by contrast, has encounters with eight named bishops.⁷³

As noted above, the monastic setting does not preclude the author from establishing Ciarán's pastoral credentials. Following an episode in which Ciarán is reported to have employed a kindly fox to transport his book of psalms between him and his former teacher Justus, the fox is hunted by a group of men and hounds after damaging the saint's book, until he finds shelter under the saint's cowl.⁷⁴ The statement on the nature of the relationship between a church and her community which follows is the most well developed hagiographical statement of pastoral obligation in the Lismore corpus:

Is friu as cuibhdhi sin fria drochdhainibh bite i comfhocraib don eclais, 7 fogabut torba na hecalsa, eter comuinn 7 baithius 7 bhiadh 7 forcetul, 7 arai ní anat-sum oc ingreim na hecalsa, cu tic mortlaid 7 galar anaithnidh chucu conadh andsin...seiced doibh tuidhecht fo ditén na hecailsi, amal dochuaidh in sinnach fo cochull Ciarain.⁷⁵

That it is well-matched to them, the bad men who are in close proximity to the church, who get the benefit of the church, both Communion and baptism, and food and instruction and nevertheless they do not desist from attacking the church until a plague and unknown disease comes to them and then they wish to come under the church's protection, like the fox went under Ciarán's cloak.

⁷¹ BC L 4235.

⁷² The metonyms applied to saint are potential indicators of the author's focus: Seanán and Patrick are identified as *episcopus* twice and three times respectively, Ciarán not at all; see *Appendix III.i*, p. 244, for further detail.

⁷³ Ciarán is depicted meeting no named and one unnamed bishop; Seanán meets eight named and two groups of unnamed bishops, the highest number of encounters by far with ecclesiastical authority for any saint in the Lismore corpus.

⁷⁴ BC L 4050–7.

⁷⁵ BC L 4058–62.

Clearly, the parable of the fox resonates throughout the prescription that follows and it is clear the author includes this lengthy passage purposefully. The church provides nourishment, of both the spiritual and bodily varieties, and expects those who avail of her generosity to respond in kind rather than seeking sanctuary only in times of strife. The juxtaposition of baptism and Communion is the aspect of greatest interest here. Baptism as the sacrament of entry to the Christian faith had long been acknowledged as essential to Christian identity and is the most frequently depicted Christian sacrament in hagiographical productions of all periods across the whole European corpus, far eclipsing the number of extant accounts of confirmation for example, which is nearly untraceable.⁷⁶ Elsewhere in BL, in *Acallam na Senórach*, baptism is afforded a pivotal role in reconciling past and present; a motif choice that Ní Mhaonaigh has connected to the ‘evolving spiritual ideals of the twelfth century’.⁷⁷ However hagiographical mentions of Communion, particularly with regard to lay reception are a much scarcer commodity.⁷⁸ That baptism and Communion are here married, as the two church offerings of most benefit, is significant. However, the warning is far from as rigorous as it might have been, in light of papal directions from the period which directed the anathemisation of anybody who laid hands on a cleric violently.⁷⁹ The passage was connected by Kehnel to an annalistic account in 1144 of the settlement of a dispute in the main church at Clonmacnoise.⁸⁰ Murchad Ua Máel Seachlainn was taken prisoner by Tairrdelbach Ua Conchobair and ultimately peace was concluded at the main altar in Clonmacnoise in the presence of the various shrines and relics reposing there.⁸¹ Etchingham considers this section of the Life in his chapter on pastoral care and in line with the intentions of his monograph, the focus is on the implications for our

⁷⁶ Sharpe, ‘Churches’, p. 89.

⁷⁷ Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Pagans’, pp. 144 and 152.

⁷⁸ The question of lay communication is considered in detail in Chapter V but it is generally assumed that regular lay reception remained the exception rather than the rule during the twelfth-century.

⁷⁹ TIC, p. 142–3; 2nd Lateran Decrees, 1139.

⁸⁰ Kehnel, *Church*, p. 127; AFM 1144; AC 1144.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

understanding of the organisational structures of the church rather than analysis of the socio-theological implications of the statement, which are more difficult to assess.⁸²

However, lest we were to doubt the significance of this salutary warning to the community at large and the clerics within the monastery, the scribe has ensured that the message is further reinforced. The nine Lismore Lives form one discrete section of the manuscript and the only interpolation that interrupts the sequence of the texts comes between BC and BM where the scribe, in the same hand as the preceding and subsequent texts, has used the space remaining in the last incomplete column of BC to include short excerpts from two well-known texts, *Riaghail Phátraic* and *Apgitir Chrábaid*.⁸³ As noted in Chapter I, the likelihood that the scribe perceived the texts to be connected is high and should inform our readings.⁸⁴ The rule extract, elsewhere entitled as the *Rule of the Céli Dé* and formerly associated with their now somewhat contested reform agenda, is categorised by Charles-Edwards as the most comprehensive prescriptive statement of the contract between a church and people remaining to us and it affirms that key responsibilities of a priest are ‘essentially sacramental and intercessory’.⁸⁵ The passage appended to BC reads:

Ni dlíged dechmadu, na bo chendaith, na tra in annoti, na díre seoit do mhainib,⁸⁶ mina bet a frithfolaid techta na heclasi innte do baithis 7 comnai 7 gabal n-ecnaire a manach etir biu 7 marbu 7 cor-roib oifrend for altoir i ndomnaigib 7 sollamnaib 7 cor-rabut aidne oga cech altoir dib.⁸⁷

It is not entitled to tithes, nor to a heriot cow, nor a mother-church’s third, nor honour price value of their monastic tenants, unless the fundamental compensation of the church has been provided, in baptism and Communion, and chanting requiems for their

⁸² Etchingham, *Church*, p. 265.

⁸³ *Riaghail Phátraic* is entitled as such but the excerpt from *Apgitir Chrábaid* appears under the heading of *Cosc moColmoc maic ui Boena*; fo. 81v; Carey, *King*, p. 13 and 231.

⁸⁴ See above: I, p. 11–13.

⁸⁵ Follett, *Céli Dé*, pp. 150–75.

⁸⁶ Translated here as monastic tenants to accord with Etchingham’s thesis below.

⁸⁷ Stokes, ‘Notes’, p. 359; Charles-Edwards, ‘Pastoral’, pp. 69 and 80; Sharpe, ‘Churches’, p. 81.

monks, both alive and dead and so that there is an offering on the altar on Sundays and high holydays and so that there is whole equipment on every altar of them.

Within the Life, the hagiographer's focus is on the congregation's obligations to the clergy but here that is reversed and the audience is asked to focus on the church's very clear obligations to provide service to the community and specifically the section again addresses the provision of baptism, masses, and Communion at regularly scheduled intervals in a sacred space properly equipped for the function. On initial reading it seems that the text is establishing the obligations of Ciarán's successors and foundation to lay Communicants, potentially in response to the increasing awareness of the efficacy of the sacrament in the twelfth century. However, as has been noted by Etchingham in his review of Flanagan's thesis of the transformation of the church in this period, these expressions of the contractual obligations of church and congregation are from a much earlier date.⁸⁸ Furthermore, Etchingham believes that the prescriptions of the probably ninth-century *Ríagal Phátraic* relate specifically to 'paramonastic tenants' rather than to a broader laity, such as that envisioned by Sharpe in his discussions of pastoral care.⁸⁹ On balance then, taking Etchingham's scholarship into account, the combination of these statements within the text and in the rule appended to it, cannot be said to be expressions of a reformed conception of pastoral care, but rather a reiteration of long established principles. As discussed in Chapter II,⁹⁰ the recasting of older materials in response to new exigencies is attested throughout the Irish literary canon, in texts from the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

In what might be read as an assertion of the rights of those in regular orders to perform the sacraments the second excerpt refers back to the monastic rule ascribed to Ciarán at the

⁸⁸ Etchingham, 'Reform', pp. 223–4; Etchingham, *Church*, pp. 244–8, 266–9 and 284–8; on eighth-century law tracts *Córus Béscna* and *Bretha Nemed Toisech*.

⁸⁹ Etchingham, 'Reform', p. 224; Etchingham, *Church*, pp. 239–89; Etchingham, 'Pastoral', pp. 99–118.

⁹⁰ See II, pp. 41–3 and 57–9

beginning of the Life.⁹¹ A selection from the tenth verse of the so-called ‘Alphabet of Piety’, composed in the eighth century, addresses the responsibilities of monks living under a rule:

Cidh as imgaibthe do duine? Ni anse. Fergughudh menic. Mordata cen dan. Discire fri senoir. Moille fri clocc. Coicce fri hantesda. Immat forluaman. Faitphed briathar. Briatra inglana. Agairbhe taiteisc. Tairisiumh fri secnapaid. Sithe fri cursachad. Commarbai do mhanchaib. Mence chestaigthe.⁹²

What is to be avoided by man? Not difficult. Frequent anger. Pride without a skill. Fierceness towards an old man. Tardiness at the bell. Doubtful thoughts. Mocking words. Impure words. Bitter answering. Being stubborn to the vice-abbot. Resisting reproach. Complaints to monks. Frequent questioning.

Some interpreters of Gillebertus’ *De statu* have suggested that he specifically prohibits monks from offering baptism but, as Sharpe noted, Gillebertus likely wrote in an awareness that the distinction between regular and secular clergy was not drawn in an entirely orthodox manner in the Irish church, despite the demarcated roles described in his schema.⁹³ It might be suggested that Gillebertus potentially sought to avoid any unnecessarily antagonistic efforts to restrict the scope of activity of the regular orders given the fact that both Lanfranc and Bernard had written admonishingly about the multiplication of bishops in the Irish church relative to the size and number of dioceses to administer.⁹⁴ The assessments of external reformers were undoubtedly important to his agenda but the realities of imposing reforms likely resulted in compromises. The financial and temporal power wielded by the Augustinians and Cistercians in the thirteenth and later centuries, the monastic organisations to which the majority of tithe income was rebated in the fifty years after 1169, is potentially a more organised extension of

⁹¹ BC L 3957–63.

⁹² Stokes, ‘Notes’, p. 359; McNamara, *Psalms*, p. 396; Plummer, ‘Introduction’, VSHP I, p. 58; Clancy and Markus, *Iona*, pp. 200–7; Haggart, ‘Some’, pp. 9–15; The *cosc* is drawn from §10 of *Apgitir Chrábaid*. Stokes, who had not identified the relationship to *Apgitir*, translated *commarbai* in the final line as ‘Communion’ perhaps mistaking some connection to *comman* but the most likely translation is ‘complaints’ from *comairb* which accords with the recent editions of the complete text.

⁹³ Sharpe, ‘Churches’, p. 100; DSE, p. 146–50.

⁹⁴ Lan, p. 27; on the perception of irregularity in Irish organisational patterns: *Vita S. Malachiae*, §X.19 (ed. and transl. Meyer p. 37).

the prevailing tithing pattern in the decades before;⁹⁵ the reforming bishop who interfered with such regular orders was likely to meet with a spirited riposte.

All of the foregoing speaks to the frame the hagiographer created for his narrative and of course this is of limited value, to our reading of Ciarán's clerical identity and sacramental authority, without evidence in the text that he performs these duties. Ciarán is not among those who are depicted performing actual Eucharistic consecrations in BL,⁹⁶ but he presides over an ersatz Eucharist,⁹⁷ when he transforms water into wine to be enjoyed by Clonmacnoise's monks after their toil in the fields: 'O thainic immorro in fescur robennach Ciarán lestur lan d'uscui, 7 rosoudh i fín togaidhi, 7 rodáiledh forna manchaib cona bai flaith roderrsaig don flaithsin'.⁹⁸ Material transformation is often regarded as a commonplace topos of the genre but in point of fact the water-wine binary is rarely evidenced.⁹⁹ The modelling of this episode on the Cana wedding is clear of course but it also echoes the institution narrative of the Last Supper and further enforces Herbert's position on the *imitatio Christi* model as central to this text's didactic purpose. Elsewhere in BC he is recorded taking possession of wheat that has already been consecrated,¹⁰⁰ presumably for Eucharistic use, and makes curative manna for his community from it:

O roscaich tra meilt in arbha frith cethra buile lána do cruithneacht cossecartha annsin tria rath Dé 7 Ciarain. O rosiact-sum dia thigh cona arbhur lais dorighne tuara dona sruithibh. Tuara on ba ferr thucad dhoibh riamh. Or on aimsir frith an mainn rundai tall ic macuibh Israel ní frith samail in tuara-sin, ár is amlaid roboi, gu mblas cacha

⁹⁵ O'Keefe, 'Augustinian', p. 465; O'Keefe, 'Environment', pp. 125–33; Preston, 'Canons', pp. 29–32.

⁹⁶ Eucharists: BCC L 837–42 and BCC L 959–64.

⁹⁷ CC, pp. 63–82; on the idea of ersatz or substitute Eucharists in narratives.

⁹⁸ BC L 4410–12; 'now when the evening came, Ciarán blessed a vessel full of water and it was turned into choice wine and was given to the monks so that there never was a feast greater than that feast'.

⁹⁹ I am very grateful to D.A. Bray, author of *A List of Motifs in the Lives of Early Irish Saints*, who provided me with her complete work-product of a trial database of motifs in Irish hagiography, which incorporates all miracles from all edited Latin and vernacular Lives from the seventh to twelfth centuries. Despite the perception of ubiquity only thirteen metamorphoses miracles are recorded as opposed to thirty-four resuscitations. Of these thirteen, only four are transformations of water to wine.

¹⁰⁰ Kelly, *Farming*, p. 229.

deghbidh, etir mhídh 7 fhín, cu roshas 7 cu roslanaig iat uili. Uair gach duine galair bai isin cathraig uili di neoch rochaith ní dhe ba hoghshlan fochedair.¹⁰¹

When the grinding of the corn finished, four sacks full of consecrated corn were found there, through the grace of God and Ciarán. When he reached his house with the grain he made food for the elders. That food was the best ever given to them. Because from the time the mystical manna was found there by the children of Israel, the like of that food was not found, for it was like this, with the taste of every good morsel, both mead and wine, so that it satisfied them and healed them all. Because every sick person in the dwelling-place, who partook of it, was wholly-healthy at once.

In receiving the bread, we are told, the almost-Communicants are restored to wholeness and health in the eyes of their fellow monks and their God. Wholeness being a precursor condition to salvation the significance of the boon Ciarán has bestowed in them is immense.¹⁰² Given the other Christ like characteristics and actions recorded in the text it seems surprising that there is no depiction of Ciarán presiding over an orthodox Eucharist, but these substitute narratives mitigate that absence somewhat. Though he is never the celebrant at a mass, Ciarán is depicted baptising, conferring orders and offering penance to sinners.¹⁰³ The baptism performed by Ciarán echoes other references to that sacrament in texts associated with the reform period in that the saint induces the water to pour over the catechumens three times, a motif which also appears in Lismore's *Acallam na Senórach*.¹⁰⁴ In many respects then, Ciarán's sacramental profile is almost entirely in accord with the presumed norms of the twelfth century. This is a figure, identified in the text as abbot and priest, who is depicted ministering to a monastic community and potentially the wider laity in the environs of his foundation. He embodies many of the ideals of the *vita apostolica* in a holistic portrait of a sixth-century monk reformed into

¹⁰¹ BC L 4191–8.

¹⁰² For the relationship between wholeness and salvation, see pp. 53–4, above.

¹⁰³ BC L 4132–6, 4176 and 4187.

¹⁰⁴ BC L 4132–6; TIC, p. 207.

a paragon of the twelfth-century Irish church. Traces of the thaumaturgical wonder worker remain but often the author deployed these attributes in service of a pronounced sacramental identity, as in the two substitute Eucharists discussed above. However, there are aspects of this personification, as noted by Etchingham in respect of the reciprocal nature of pastoral care contracts, which echo much earlier prescriptions. The analysis here ultimately accords with the conclusions tendered in Chapter II; the evidence for reformist impulses in this text is tempered by the author's reliance on long-established hagiographical models.

As ever, Ó Riain can be relied upon to have identified numerous connections to Augustinian houses, but in this instance the primary association is definitive rather than tangential, as in the case of Balla above; there was a house of Augustinian canons at Clonmacnoise from 1140.¹⁰⁵ The monastery enjoyed the support of Tairrdelbach Ua Conchobair, of the 1144 dispute mentioned above, whose connections with Arroasian houses under the auspices of Malachy are manifold.¹⁰⁶ The canons and the associated house of Arroasian nuns also enjoyed a fruitful relationship with another powerful sept, that of Murchad Ua Maeleachlainn: his daughter Dearbhfhorguill's generous donation to the convent is recorded in the annals, as are her retirement and death at Clonmacnoise.¹⁰⁷ It is plausible that the canons may have had a vested interest in maintaining the monastic and abbatial elements in BC, whilst also advertising his and the foundation's willingness to engage in a pastoral arrangement with the wider community. Ó Riain makes no definitive statements on the provenance of this text but given the close relationship between the vernacular recension and the abbreviated Latin text found in the Oxford Collection it is tempting to suggest a mutual connection to the canons regular at Saints' Island or Abbeyderg where this codex was probably

¹⁰⁵ MRHI, p. 165, DIS, p. 170.

¹⁰⁶ MRHI, p. 165; AU 1140; AU 1156. He was buried at Clonmacnoise.

¹⁰⁷ AFM 1167; ALC 1186; AU 1193.

compiled.¹⁰⁸ Ultimately, this provenance is speculative but what is clear from the foregoing analysis is that the tone and complexion of the text, the political relationships foregrounded in the saint's secular interactions, and the saint's sacramental profile are finely attuned to the priorities of an Augustinian house in the midlands region in the twelfth century.

III.iii Fionnchú: context and individual identity

This Life has been dated by Ó Riain to the fourteenth century, if not later, on unspecified grounds.¹⁰⁹ He surmises a potential connection to the Cistercian abbey at Fermoy, geographically close to Fionnchú's foundation at Brigown, County Cork, which was also at some early juncture also connected to Saint Abban.¹¹⁰ Brigown itself disappears from the record at an early date and the Fermoy connection is the sole association put forward by Ó Riain, though the saint enjoys what Ó Riain calls a 'countrywide odyssey' in the text. BFc is among those texts that were copied into BL from the now lost *Book of Monasterboice* and as that was produced near the earliest Cistercian foundation at Mellifont,¹¹¹ Ó Riain posits a Cistercian dimension to the Life's creation. I respectfully suggest the evidence for this corporate affiliation appears tenuous and much greater substantiation would be required to test the premise. Kenney considered the text to share greater similarities with popular romances than religious literature and multiple episodes in BFc have most recently been adduced as evidence of the most pernicious tendencies in the Irish vernacular canon,¹¹² Fionnchú's five separate forays into battle on behalf of various magnates do little to suggest the text is anything other than a barely hagiographical rendering of a tale more suited to a saga than a homily. As noted in Chapter I,¹¹³ this is the only BL Life to which no homiletic components have been appended. However, there are aspects of the saint's presentation in the text which may conform

¹⁰⁸ Sharpe disputes the certitude of Ó Riain's attribution of the Oxford Collection to Abbeyderg or Saint's Island, conceding only that the two manuscripts were produced in Longford or Westmeath; MISL, p. 265.

¹⁰⁹ DIS, p. 336.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 51–2; MRHI, p. 375.

¹¹¹ MRHI, p. 337.

¹¹² Her, p. 346.

¹¹³ See I, p. 15 above.

to our expectations of the clerical education, formation and career of a cleric in the reform period and merit our attention. Having studied under Comgall at Bangor from the age of seven, just as Mochua too is reputed to have done, Fionnchú is commended to the abbacy of the foundation by Comgall on his deathbed and the narrative episode in which this succession is presented is especially interesting, its ahistorical status, as noted by Ó Riain,¹¹⁴ notwithstanding:

Bai Comghall iar sin a m-Bennchar co cenn .ix. m-bliadne. Et foillsighter dó bás do beith 'na ghoiri, 7 tiagait teachta uadha ar ceann Ailbhe co Imliuch Ibhair, comad dia lámh no dhighsed dochum nime. Foillsighter do Ailbhe inní sin, 7 teit-sein cona dhírim cleirech cu rocht Bennchar. Et do-ghniat a n-aenta 7 a codach ann sin a triur .i. Ailbhe 7 Comgall 7 Finnchua. Teit Comhgall docum nimhe innsin do laimh Ailbhe, 7 facbhaidh Finnchua i n-apdhaine Benncair tara eisi co cenn secht m-bliadne, 7 erbaidh do Ailbe co m-beth Finnchua ria udhacht ceb é tan no ghebhudh dia lámh fair.¹¹⁵

Thereafter Comgall lived in Bangor to the end of nine years, and it is revealed to him that his death was to be shortly, and he sends messengers for Ailbe to Imlech Ibair so that he may [*receive Eucharist*] go from his hand that he may go to heaven. That is revealed to Ailbe and he went with his crowd of clerics until reaching Bangor. And there the three made their union and their covenant, that is Ailbe and Comgall and Fionnchú. Comgall goes to heaven then from the hand of Ailbe [*receiving Eucharist from Ailbe*] and he leaves Fionnchú in the abbacy of Bangor after him for seven years and he entrusts to Ailbe that Fionnchú should be at his bequest whenever he may take from his hand [*may receive Eucharist*].¹¹⁶

Although he is awarding the abbacy to Fionnchú, the dying Comgall summons another cleric to Bangor to administer the death rites and viaticum. The phrasing here, *gaibid dia lámh*, is similar to the *téit do lámh* construction considered in Chapter II.¹¹⁷ In the first two iterations within the passage, the relationship to the Eucharist may reasonably be inferred, however the

¹¹⁴ DIS, p. 336.

¹¹⁵ BFc L 2878–86.

¹¹⁶ An alternative translation of this final line is: ‘he entrusts to Ailbe that Fionnchú should be at his bequest whenever he may feel the hand of God upon him’, ie. at the hour of his death.

¹¹⁷ See II above, pp. 89–90.

third is more opaque, though may still be read as a reference to Eucharist. The significance of the hierarchical ordering of the viaticum relationships is considered further, in the relevant section below, but this account merits independent treatment here, as it is the only developed viaticum vignette of a cleric to appear in the Lismore lives that is not that of the subject saint. It could be argued that the text is reinforcing the stages of clerical formation, and that Fionnchú has not sufficiently progressed through the grades of the church to be in a position to dispense a sacrament, a right reserved to the two highest grades of bishop and priest.¹¹⁸ Yet Fionnchú is to assume the abbacy of Bangor and the stewardship of her monks which raises the possibility that the hagiographer imagines there to be no dissonance in the depiction of a monk having sufficient training to ascend to an abbacy yet still occupying a lower grade on the schedule of secular clerical offices. The hagiographer further endorses this subversive perspective by noting that Comgall secures Ailbe's assurances that he will remain at the bequest of Fionnchú should he need to receive Communion thereafter, during his abbacy. In this setting, while ostensibly ascending to the highest rank in his tutor's foundation, Fionnchú is entirely deprived of sacramental agency. The idea of an abbot dependent on a priest who does not subscribe to the requirements of life under the same rule is a deprivation which emasculates his abbacy, robbing it of its efficacy in many respects. In Gille's *De statu* the exclusion of monks from dispensing the sacraments is absolute,¹¹⁹ although as noted above, Sharpe has suggested this was aspirational rather than representative of historical reality. The sheer number of joint foundations situated at the sites of the country's major cathedrals in this period attests to the regularity with which regular clergy may have existed in an interdependent relationship with their secular counterparts. The inescapable inference from this episode is the limited authority wielded by Fionnchú and perhaps it was the hagiographer's intention to demonstrate the

¹¹⁸ Etchingham, *Church*, pp. 25–43.

¹¹⁹ DSE, p. 148–9; 'non est monachorum baptizare, communicare, aut aliquod ecclesiasticum lacis ministare nisi forte cogente necessitate imperanti episcopo obediunt'; 'it is not the task of monks to baptize, to give communion or to minister anything ecclesiastical to the laity unless, in case of necessity, they obey the command of the bishop'.

reliance of those in regular orders on secular priests. Of course, this assumes a degree of instrumentalisation on the part of the hagiographer which may well not have been present; the episode need serve no other purpose than strictly narrative. Subsequent to this event Fionnchú is expelled from Bangor and the north as a consequence of the scarcity of land, a statement which goes unexplained in the text.¹²⁰ Later in the course of his clerical career he is depicted with a greater pastoral efficacy and he baptises, confers orders, and fosters and educates his own oblates.¹²¹ His connections with secular leaders, aside from his role as standard bearer and chief combatant in their military adventures, are pervasive in the text, which is perhaps reflective of a moment at which Brigown enjoyed some prominence. A short tract also to be found in BL, entitled *Crichad an Caoilli gu cruaidh*, and dated by Sharpe to the twelfth century,¹²² contains a list of peoples and territories and their local churches with the clergy and coarb of each church identified. The list in this instance relates to smaller churches connected to the mother church at Brigown suggesting that at some point in or before the twelfth century Brigown was at the nexus of a web of pastoral relationships. BFc ends abruptly denying us a death scene to bookend the miraculous conception that opened the Life,¹²³ but given Fionnchú's exclusion from sacramental authority elsewhere in the text, this is unsurprising. The sparse Eucharistic content in this text combined with its few accounts of clerical identity in operation make the case for its inclusion here very slight and BFc does little to advance the thesis that these texts can be used as a reliable index of the religious climate at the time of their composition. However, the hagiographer's use of a Eucharistic episode to narrate a discordant relationship between tutor and pupil, and arguably the secular and regular orders, is a reminder of the pragmatic rather than spiritual use to which Eucharistic vignettes may be put.

¹²⁰ BFc L 2887.

¹²¹ BFc L 3056, 3032 and 2950.

¹²² Sharpe, 'Churches', pp. 96–7; fo. 182r^b.

¹²³ BFc L 2788–803.

III.iv Colum Cille: individual identity

The focus here is on two prominent Eucharistic episodes in BCC and, as the textual relationships between Lives within Colum Cille's dossier have been well established by Herbert, what follows is generally not dependent upon comparative analysis but rather treats the Lismore text independently of those relationships, whilst incorporating observations she has made on the LB recension of the Life.¹²⁴ Herbert, who considers that none of the hagiographical texts in LB or BL is 'truly a homily', considers the exordium and peroration 'extrinsic' to the Life but concedes that in the case of BCC, the Biblical verses are well chosen, given their emphases on pilgrimage.¹²⁵ Herbert's assessment of BCC finds that thaumaturgical elements have been excised and what she terms 'clerical content' has been foregrounded, relative to Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*, to which it is clearly related.¹²⁶ She further connects some of the obvious abbreviation in the Life to its function as a text to be preached on the saint's feast-day, despite her disquiet about the poorly executed integration of the homiletic structural features.¹²⁷ The ambition of the author, whom she argues to have been a cleric in a Columban foundation, is to craft 'a less dramatic and more durable' account of the saint's achievements.¹²⁸ While acknowledging that the text is a 'synthesis of old and new', Herbert concludes that it conforms in many respects to the new twelfth-century model of sanctity that was closer to biography with edificatory purpose than earlier models.¹²⁹ BCC is second only to BC in the prominence its author affords to monastic principles and from the outset of the text, Colum Cille's identity is grafted from the clerical branch that holds Anthony and the Egyptian fathers in the same esteem as Saint Paul:

¹²⁴ Herbert, *Iona*, pp. 180–226; she provides the stemma at p. 216; the differences between the LB and BL recensions are minimal and none is relevant to this discussion.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 185; Her, p. 344; see I, p. 17.

¹²⁶ Herbert, *Iona*, pp. 202 and 235; BCC and the Oxford Collection *vita* are identified as sharing material from VC as well as other sources in contrast, for example, to the *Codex Salmanticensis vita* which is wholly dependent on VC.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

Is e in cétna modh, gresacht 7 adhannadh na n-daine on rath diadha co tecait do fhoghnám don Coimdid iar n- deismirecht Phoil 7 Antoin manaig 7 na n-uili manach n-irisech olcena no fhognad do Dia thall is in Eghipt.¹³⁰

This is the first way: the urging and kindling of men through divine grace to serve the Lord after the example of Paul and of Anthony the monk and the other faithful monks who used to serve God there in Egypt.

Though Colum Cille is depicted interacting with secular authorities and external supplicants in search of cures or forgiveness his primary occupation is the spiritual direction and well-being of the monks entrusted to his care,¹³¹ which is of course unsurprising given the text's intimate relationship to Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*. His formation follows the established pattern from baptism to autonomous foundation by way of oblation to a first tutor, whose identity is undisclosed in this text.¹³² He is subsequently dispatched by the hagiographer to study under the learned Finnian of Movilla and it is in this portion of the text that one of the most fully realised Eucharistic episodes in BL occurs:

Feactus ann teasta fín 7 bairgen ar Fhinnen oc onn oifriunn. Bennachais Colum Cille in t-uisqui cu ro-soidheth i bh-fín cu tart isin cailech n-oiffrinn. Ra morad ainm De 7 Coluim Cille tresin bh-firt-sin.¹³³

At a certain time wine and bread were lacking unto Finnian for the mass. Colum Cille blessed the water and it turned to wine, and was put into the offertory-chalice. God's name and Colum Cille's were magnified through that miracle.

As noted above in respect of Ciarán's transformation of water into wine this metamorphosis is comparatively rarely attested in the corpus.¹³⁴ The depiction here of the least senior cleric in attendance, Colum Cille, being called upon to perform the sacred mysteries, is a narrative prefiguration of his later superiority in the ranks of Ireland's saints. Colum Cille's celebration

¹³⁰ BCC L 680–3.

¹³¹ For example: BCC L 893, 994 and 1000.

¹³² BCC L 812.

¹³³ BCC L 837–42.

¹³⁴ See above, n. 99.

of the Eucharist is the most complete account in the BL texts, of the mass preparations and celebration and given the monastic orientation of his clerical identity, this is a further instructive example of the declining utility of a secular-regular bifurcation.

A second, even more unusual and intriguing episode is recounted by the hagiographer at another early juncture within the cleric's career, when he presides over the consecration at the behest of the heretofore much-mentioned Comgall:

Fothaighis eclais i Recrainn airthir Breagh, 7 facbais Colman deochan innti. Fechtus batar isin eclais sin Colum Cille 7 Comghall 7 Cainnech. As-bert Comgall co n-dernad Colum Cille idhpairt cuirp Crist 7 a fola 'na fhiadnusi. Do-roine Colum umuloid doibh ime sin. IS ann at-connaic Caindech colomna teinntidhi os cinn Coluim Cille cein ro bai oc onn edhpairt. Ro indis Cainnech do Comgall sin, 7 at-conncatar diblinaibh in colomna.¹³⁵

He founded a church in Lambay in the east of Brega, and left deacon Colman in it. Once Colum Cille and Comgall and Cainnech were in that church. Comgall said that Colum Cille should make the offering of Christ's body and of his blood in their presence. Colm ministered that onto them. Then Cainnech saw a fiery pillar above Colum Cille so long as he was at the offering. Cainnech told that to Comgall and the both saw the pillar.

The proliferation of miracles associated with the Eucharist, and specifically with the moment of transformation in the European corpus was noted above in Chapter II, and is discussed again in IV, as this phenomenon is especially connected with women.¹³⁶ Generally in the European texts of this period, visual apparitions connected to the Eucharist are witnessed by non-believers or those for whom the sacramental transformation of the species is doubted. The pillar of fire revealed to both Comgall and Cainnech, neither of whom it is suggested is in need of spiritual edification, is an assertion of Colum Cille's direct relationship to the divine. This vignette is almost the complete inverse of the episode reported in the *Vita Malachiae* of a

¹³⁵BCC L 959–64.

¹³⁶ See IV, pp. 152–4.

learned Irish cleric who only accepts the doctrine of the Real Presence when his death is imminent, having refused to countenance the transformation at consecration, even when summoned to defend himself before a church council.¹³⁷ As discussed by Boyle, Bernard is potentially evoking the Berengarian controversy that exercised the attention of the Western church through much of the eleventh century and the image of a doubting Christian or indeed Jew provided with a miraculous inducement to doctrinal orthodoxy is a frequent trope of the literature but two clerics as the witnesses to another's transcendent connection with God is not. Right-thinking Christians of the twelfth-century should not have been in need, according to the orthodoxy of their day, of external validation of the power invested in that liminal moment of consecration that brought the temporal and divine worlds into momentary contact but the inclusion of this account in a text that, as discussed in Chapter I, likely circulated and was read or heard around the time of the saint's feast day is a salutary reminder of the didactic exigencies that informed the hagiographer's approach to his work. There is no mention of a congregation present in the church to share in the Communion but as with most of the hagiographical accounts available to us, sacral spaces are rarely invaded by the laity.¹³⁸ However, it should be noted that this episode is derived from an exemplar in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* and any effort to connect it to the contemporary debates of the eleventh and twelfth centuries would be flawed. The author calls further attention to the clerical identity he has crafted for Colum Cille in the closing eulogy, which is one of only three in the Lismore corpus to list the pastoral obligations and ministrations of the saint, as well as his personal qualities and ascetic heroism.

III.v Seanán: context, individual identity and corporate affiliations

Seanán is the Lismore saint for whom a hagiographer has crafted the most explicitly episcopal identity, although there are occasional missteps when he has difficulty reconciling Inis

¹³⁷ Boyle, 'Sacrifice', p. 190; *Vita S. Malachiae* §XVIII.57 (ed. and transl. Meyer, p. 73).

¹³⁸ See below: V, pp. 180–6.

Cathaig's monastic past with its putative future as the centre of a diocesan see. And afterall if Lanfranc himself, the epitome of the Anglo-Norman reform-minded churchman could transition from monk to prelate, there was no reason to suppose that an Irish saint's life could not be recast to effect a similar transition for the associated institution.¹³⁹ The contest between Inis Cathaig and Killaloe for supremacy in this part of Munster is well attested in the primary materials and the secondary literature and needs no rehearsing here.¹⁴⁰ As part of this contest, it is suggested that this vernacular Life was commissioned to advance the interests of the declining island monastery in a century of synodal activity that awarded bishops exponentially greater authority than abbots. Throughout the ninth and tenth centuries the annalistic notices for Inis Cathaig relate the appointments and deaths of various abbots and coarbs but by the later eleventh and early twelfth centuries those obituaries and notices refer to bishops.¹⁴¹ There is no report of the foundation achieving the status of diocese in the Ráth Breasail synod in 1111 and by 1188 Inis Cathaig had been absorbed into the Killaloe diocese. Just as Ciarán and Colum Cille's monastic credentials are established at the very beginning of the text so too is *Sanctus Senanus Episcopus* introduced, in a manner similar to that found in BP. In the course of his formation and throughout his clerical career Seanán is brought into contact with men serving in the very highest echelons of the ecclesiastical firmament; as previously noted above he has personal and professional intercourse with no fewer than eight named bishops. In addition his coming is prophesied by the episcopal paragon Patrick and he studies under and is administered viaticum by Saint Martin of Tours, the universal saint for whom a thoroughly reformed identity had been crafted at Armagh in the twelfth century, as noted above.

The author presents Seanán as taking up the crozier, a choice which identifies him as a potential bishop:

¹³⁹ Leyser, 'Clerical purity', p. 10.

¹⁴⁰ Gwynn and Gleeson, *HDK*, pp. 7–28; MRHI, pp. 44; DIS, pp. 557–60.

¹⁴¹ AI 797, 863, 901, abbots and AI 1070 and 1119 bishops.

Luidh dano Seanán co farcuibh a dhamha oca athair, 7 teit iarsin, 7 geibhidh bachaill o Cassidan carad rogabh recles i crich Urrais. Do Chiarraigi Chuirchi dano, do Cassidan. Leghaidh dano Senan a shalam 7 a ord ecalsa la Cassidan.¹⁴²

Then Seanán went to leave his oxen with his father and he goes after that, and receives a crozier from Cassidan, a friend who had a church in the district of Irrus. Of the Ciarraige Cuirchi was this Cassidan. Then Seanán reads his psalms and his ecclesiastical discipline with Cassidan.

But much more transgressive is the depiction of his decision to leave the regular life at the instigation of his mentor Notal, having already established a reputation for active participation in the community outside the monastic enclosure. As one of the few direct conversations reported in any of these texts, which addresses the question of the relationship between the regular and secular orders and the provision of pastoral care, this exchange is illuminating:

Ro leth tra clú Senáin fona cricha da gach leth ara mhet d' fertuibh 7 do mirbuilibh do-ghnith Dia aire. Ticdis na tuatha 7 na cenela as gach aird ina dhócum: foirenn dibh co n-almsanaibh 7 co n-duthrachtaibh, foirenn aile do chuinghidh almsan, foirenn do cuinghid a n-ictha o gallraib, foirenn do ghabhail a anmcairdiusa, foirenn da cur a n-aentad fris 7 do ail cu ro ghabad inad reampaibh.¹⁴³

O ro airigh Notail inni-sin ro raidh fria Senán: ‘A brathair inmain, as mithig duit dul do ghabail inaidh riasin popul fuil ‘god togha’. Do-ráidh Senán: ‘A athair, a Notail, ni coir inni it- berid, ár ni h-edh sin domidar-sa acht bheith i mainchine acut-sa do gres’. Do-raidh Notail: ‘Ni h-amhlaid bias, acht eirg 7 geibh baile risin popul fil ‘gut furnaidhi’. ‘A athuir thogaidhi’, ar Senán, ‘cidh no rag 7 cia h-airm i n-gebh inad?’ Do-raidh Notail: ‘A meic inmain, faillsighfidh duit inti fil ‘gud togha in maigin a n-gebha’.¹⁴⁴

So Seanán’s fame spread abroad throughout the territories on every side, because of the greatness of his miracles and the marvels which God was working for him. The peoples and the kindreds used come from every point unto him. Some of them with alms and offerings, others to seek alms, others to seek their cure from diseases, some to obtain

¹⁴² BS L 1955.

¹⁴³ BS L 2031–43.

¹⁴⁴ BS L 2031–43.

spiritual direction, some to bring about union with him and to ask him to take up a place before them.

When Notál perceived that he said to Seanán: ‘My dear brother, it is time for you to go and take up position before the people who choose you’. Then Seanán said: ‘O father, o Notál, what you are saying is not right; for that is not what I have intended, but to be in monkdom with you continually’. Notál says: ‘It shall not be so, go (you) and take up a position before the people who are awaiting you’. ‘O chosen father’, says Seanán, ‘where will I go and in what place will I take up position?’ Notál says: ‘My dear son, he who is choosing you, God, will show to you the place you will take’.

The content of Seanán’s responses to Notál’s urgings suggest a reluctance to abandon the solitude of the cloister for the clamour of the world outside; to serve in the world is an obligation he must bear rather than an opportunity he embraces. The men, in addressing each other as brother and father respectively in the exchange above, are depicted as enjoying an intimate spiritual relationship.

$N \rightarrow S$ A brathair inmain $S \rightarrow N$ A athair, a Notail

$N \rightarrow S$ A meic inmain $S \rightarrow N$ A athair thogaidhi

This dynamic, obviously patterned on familial relationships is not seen so explicitly anywhere else in the Lismore texts. Seanán mourns the loss of his monastic life but accepts his fate as the will of God. The complexion of this depiction is incongruous given the great lengths to which the author goes elsewhere to establish his episcopacy. Almost immediately upon separating from Notál we are told:

Teit as a apdhaine do Roim. Teit dano o Roim d’acalduin Martan cu Torinis. Is ann robhui Martan oc scriubhiunn t-soscelai arachinnson. Is ann roraidh Senán: ‘Ropadh amra liom comtais iat na lamha ut atcím ocon sribenn doberad sacarbaic dam i laithe mo éitsechta’. ‘Bidh iat ecín’, or Martan. Et doghniat a n-aentaid ann sin,.i. Senán 7 Martan, 7 dobeir

Martan do Senán i comartha a n-aentaid in soiscéla roscribh aracinn. Is essidhe soscéil Senáin inniu.¹⁴⁵

Seanán goes then from his abbacy to Rome. Then he goes from Rome, to commune with Martin, to Tours. Martin was then writing a gospel before him. Then Seanán said: ‘It would be wonderful for me if your hands, that I see writing, should give me the sacrifice on the day of my death’. ‘They will indeed’, says Martin; and then they make their union, that is Seanán and Martin, and Martin gives to Seanán, in token of their union, the gospel which he wrote before him. Today, this is Seanán’s Gospel.

This new relationship, with a saint of universal renown in the Latin church, is established by the exchange of meaningful tokens and Seanán returns from his travels with an item that no self-respecting bishop is without: a gospel book. The implication of the journey to Rome is that his episcopacy is affirmed by the Holy See; a trope noted by Flanagan in her treatment of contemporary hagiography.¹⁴⁶ The twelfth-century Irish perspective on Martin has been well-addressed by Herbert who positions him firmly within the number of those churchmen thought to exemplify the reform movement.¹⁴⁷ It is Martin who delivers Communion to him on his death bed and finally, lest there be any doubt as to the rank to which he has ascended Seanán’s eulogy records that he went to heaven:

...iar fothugud cheall 7 recles 7 mainistreach do Dhia, 7 iar n-oirnedh indtibh-sein espoc 7 t-sacart 7 aes gacha graidh arcena, fo ongad 7 coisecrad 7 bennachadh tuath.¹⁴⁸

...after founding cells and churches and monasteries for God, and ordaining therein bishops and priests and people of every other rank, with anointing and consecrating and blessing of peoples...

Not only is the hagiographer claiming that he ordained priests, he has consecrated bishops, a startling claim in an ecclesiastical environment ordered along robust hierarchies. From an

¹⁴⁵ BS L 2049.

¹⁴⁶ TIC, p. 97.

¹⁴⁷ Herbert, ‘Martin’, pp. 76–84.

¹⁴⁸ BS L 2472.

unsure novice monk to something approaching an arch-bishop, Seanán's hagiographer has mapped an auspicious and unlikely career trajectory.

III.vi A note on Patrick

This chapter opened with an analysis of the clerical identity of the saint with the least-developed hagiographical dossier in the Lismore group, and closes with Patrick the saint with the best-developed dossier and cult, as is clear from the appended stemma which condenses the existing scholarship on the various complex and sometimes contested intertextual relationships.¹⁴⁹ The earliest Patrician Lives, the Latin texts composed by Tírechán and Muirchú, in concert with the Patrician documents in the Book of Armagh form the foundation of the *Vita Tripartita* (VT hereafter), which is the vernacular source most closely related to the homiletic Life in BL.¹⁵⁰ The scholarly consensus rests on the existence of a close textual relationship between the vernacular homiletic lives (derived from the VT) found in the roughly contemporary BL, LB and LFF [and King's Inns 10 s]¹⁵¹ and BNF celtique 1).¹⁵² Herbert's assessment of what she terms the vernacular 'cognates' of VT or associated vernacular homilies is focused on what she identifies as the authors' efforts to address a secular as well as ecclesiastical audience.¹⁵³ She is of the view that these later texts place particular emphasis on Patrick's interactions with secular leaders and his exertion of authority in these encounters. Herbert argues that contemporary political developments, and specifically contests for supremacy, between ecclesiastical and secular power bases figured significantly in the authors and audiences' minds. Herbert is certainly correct on the emphases evident in the BL Life but this view should not preclude observations on the spiritual or Eucharistic identity carved for Patrick here. The most comprehensive recent survey of the multifaceted relationships between

¹⁴⁹ See *Appendix III.ii.i*, p. 241.

¹⁵⁰ Sources reviewed include but are not limited to: EHL, pp. 329–50; Her, p. 341; DIS, pp. 526–31; VT, Bieler and Sharpe's *Studies*, Colgan and Bieler's *St. Patrick*, Mulchrone's *Bethu Phátraic*, Dumville's *Saint Patrick*, Byrne's *Two Lives*, and most usefully for the discussion here Birkett's *Lives of Jocelin*.

¹⁵¹ As per Mulchrone this is a copy of the imperfect LFF text.

¹⁵² EHL, p. 345; The manuscript list provided by Kenney for what he classified as 'abridged versions of the Tripartite Life' is equivalent to a list of the different recensions of the vernacular homiletic texts connected to the Lismore text under discussion here. See stemma at p. 236.

¹⁵³ Herbert, 'Ireland', p. 342.

the various Latin Lives of Patrick in our period was undertaken by Birkett in her commanding survey of the hagiographical works of Jocelin of Furness.¹⁵⁴ Building solidly on foundations laid by Mulchrone, Bieler and others, her exposition of the concordances, interpolations and divergences and between Jocelin's 1184 Life and the other texts in the dossier are almost faultless.¹⁵⁵ Ultimately, Birkett categorises Jocelin's *Vita Patricii* as belonging to a 'subgroup of texts derived from the largely vernacular *Bethu Phátraic*' or VT.¹⁵⁶

There is evidence of shared Eucharistic content between the Lives, although some of the most interesting episodes from other recensions are not present in the BL text. For example, Birkett notes that Jocelin's *vita* contains a variant of a tale found in *Vita III* (there are 2 versions of III, named and classified as Continental and English by Bieler)¹⁵⁷ which details the interaction of the saint with a leper in need. In the English recension, Patrick ejects an altar from a ship on which he is travelling to make space for a leper to join him aboard the ship and the altar is discovered to be floating in the ship's wake to Ireland. In the recension designated as Continental by Bieler, the altar is thrown into the water and the leper is placed upon it. Birkett regards the former rather than the latter to better reflect 'the author's original intentions'.¹⁵⁸ She further notes that Jocelin greatly expands an episode from *Vita III* in which a magician upsets a chalice containing the Eucharistic wine: 'Alio autem die, cum Patricius in sua ecclesia sacrificium offerret, venit quidam magus et effudit calicem eius. Statimque aperiens terra os suum deuoravit illum magum'.¹⁵⁹ The analogue to this account is the only prominent Eucharistic reference found in BL's BP:

¹⁵⁴ Birkett, *Jocelin*, pp. 25–57 and 141–70.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30, n. 19; O'Leary, *Ancient lives, Vita Patricii*, pp. 135–44, 147–8, 164–5, *Vita Tertia*, in Bieler's Four, §1–9, 17, pp. 118–21, 133–4; Birkett, *Jocelin of Furness*, p. 49, n. 122.

¹⁵⁹ *Vita Tertia*, §32, (ed. Colgan and Bieler p. 137); Then on a certain day, when Patrick was in his church offering [the] sacrifice, a certain druid came and poured away his chalice. At once the earth open above him opened and devoured that druid.

Fecht do Pátraic isin tSabull oc oifreann....focerd a eachlaisc dar senistir na hecailsi isin coileach. Sluicid in talam in drai focétoir.¹⁶⁰

Once Patrick was in Saball at mass...he[the druid] flung his horse-whip through the window of the church into the chalice. The earth swallowed up the druid immediately.

The consequence of interfering with the sacred mysteries of the mass is clear but given Patrick's frequent disputes with druids, there is nothing exceptional in the treatment here. By contrast, Birkett notes that the quality of the changes made by Jocelin to this episode, include the addition of biblical analogues, serving to magnify the religious didactic quality of the episode.¹⁶¹ It is among the episodes on which she premises her conclusion that the Life was commissioned not to 'document the life of a fifth-century missionary but to record the legend of a twelfth-century saint'.¹⁶² Her treatment of these episodes provides substantive evidence that some authors were capable of consciously and intentionally using Eucharistic encounters to match theological developments and the prevailing norms of their times. However, as previously noted in this chapter, in respect of other Lives within the corpus, the BL depiction of Patrick owes as much to seventh century antecedents as to the reformist impulses of the twelfth century.

III.viii Viaticum: significant relationships

Figure III.i Saintly viaticum

Saint	Patrick	Brigid	Colum Cille	Seanán	Finnian	Fionnchú	Brendan	Ciarán	Mochua
Viaticum Dispenser	Bishop Tassach	Nindid	No viaticum/ dies at Pentacost	Martin of Tours	Colomb son of Crimthan and his gille	No death scene Comgall receives viaticum from Ailbe	No death scene	Coemhghein	No death scene

¹⁶⁰ BP L 287–9.

¹⁶¹ Birkett, *Jocelin of Furness*, p. 34.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 52

Arguably, the prominence of viaticum in Irish vernacular hagiography has elicited insufficient scholarly interest;¹⁶³ but space restrictions mean this section only briefly considers the implications of the viaticum narratives in the BL Lives. Five of the nine saints whose Lives are included in BL are afforded death bed visitations by a superior official of their church to administer the final sacrament of their mortal lives. The sixth, Colum Cille, is reported to have died at Pentecost and presumably has only recently Communicated on the holy-day, implicitly excusing him from the need to receive again. The Lismore Lives are not anomalous in the special treatment given to viaticum; in the thirteen vernacular Lives edited by Plummer six of the saints are not afforded a death scene as the text is abbreviated or incomplete but of the remaining seven, only one dies without the grace of the final Communication.¹⁶⁴ Seanán, among the Lismore saints, is the recipient of Communion from the most distinguished officiant in these texts; having secured a promise of his service from Martin of Tours, Martin is transported by a heavenly cloud to the site of Seanán's death where he delivers the sacrament and sends Seanán off to his heavenly reward. It is little wonder that Seanán's hagiographer sought his death-bed confessor outside of Ireland; he is at such pains to establish his subject's superior episcopal identity that no Irish figure could have been presented as occupying a higher position on the ecclesiastical ladder than Seanán himself. Finnian too secures the promise of a death-bed priest long before the need arises and one ponders this further correlation between the two lives most determined to separate their subject saint from the clerical masses. Arguably, the most intriguing viaticum episode occurs in BC, in which the hagiographer recounts the saint making a death bed transaction with Coemhghein in exchange for receiving viaticum:

¹⁶³ O'Don, pp. 119–21. O'Donoghue's monograph treats of it in three pages and is unsystematic in its approach.

¹⁶⁴ BNÉ I and II.

Bennachuis Ciarán iarsin Coeimhgen. Bennachuis dano Caeimhgen uisqui, 7 dogní comman do Ciarán, conad annsin dorat Ciarán a clog do Caeimgen i comurtha a n-oentad 7 i screpul a chomnae. As eiside Bobán Coeimhgin inniu.¹⁶⁵

Then Ciarán blessed Coemhghein. Then Coemhghein blessed water and gave Communion to Ciarán, until then Ciarán gave his bell to Coemhghein in sign of their unity and as fee of their Communion. It is Coemhghein's 'Bobán' today.

The association of a bell with the host is not unusual as the bell has been part of the consecration rites since the Middle Ages but as the price of receiving a sacrament it merits mention.¹⁶⁶ Ó Riain has connected the choice of Coemhghein, to minister to Ciarán on his deathbed and as the recipient of a post-resurrection visitation from Ciarán, to the relationship between the Augustinian canons at both Glendalough and Clonmacnoise, and the importance of maintaining favourable relations certainly implicates this factor.¹⁶⁷ Etchingham situates this episode within the accepted paradigm of payment for services rendered by clerics, which I think underestimates the significance of the sacraments.¹⁶⁸ He compares this death-bed transaction to Brigid giving seven cows to Mel after he spends Easter week preaching at Kildare. There can be no doubt but that tithing was of central importance to a church's economic survival but to reduce the matter of the soul's eternal salvation to a pecuniary affair is reductive, I believe. The relics mentioned in this exchange are those which were present on the altar at the peace negotiations of 1144 discussed above. Those historical events potentially served as catalyst to the statements on the community's and the church's reciprocal responsibilities.

III.ix The clerical ideal of the reform era in Irish prescriptive texts

It has been suggested by historians, that hagiography is not the locale in which to seek out sacramental information, as it was not the hagiographer's intention to shed light on the norms

¹⁶⁵ BC L 4468–71.

¹⁶⁶ CC, p. 79.

¹⁶⁷ DIS, p. 170.

¹⁶⁸ Etchingham, *Church*, pp. 247–8.

of pastoral care in their saints' constituencies.¹⁶⁹ And there are certainly texts within the Lismore corpus that attest to Sharpe's incisive indictment of the negligible value to be derived from this pursuit but conversely the investigation itself is surely better than the panoptic assumption of absence. Moreover, where the detail exists, as in the Lives of Ciarán, Seanán and Colum Cille it is surely to the betterment of our general apprehension of the state of the Irish church and her sacraments in the long twelfth century and we can better test the intersection of the prescriptive documentation with these literary models. Gillebertus's *De statu* offers us the clearest statement of the key functions of a priest in this period and unequivocally the focus is sacramental: 'preside, serve, pray, offer, preach, teach, baptise, bless, excommunicate, reconcile, anoint, communicate, commend souls to God, and inter bodies' is the directive from the magister of the Irish church.¹⁷⁰ He also reminds his readers that the 'sacrifice of the body and the blood of the Lord is to be celebrated often in remembrance of the Passion' with further specifics outlined later in the text: a good priest ought to give Communion to the baptised immediately and to all the faithful three times a year, at Easter, Pentecost and at Christmas, and to those near death should they seek it by word or by sign or if in evidence of a faithful witness they have already sought it.¹⁷¹ The force of his words gives clear insight into why some blatantly monastic saints were recast in the episcopal mould: 'the bishop governs the abbot, the abbess, the priest and the other six grades' was Gillebertus' unequivocal statement of church hierarchy; when the fortunes of a foundation were so intimately linked to its founder's profile the impetus to remodel is clear.¹⁷² In point of fact in Gillebertus' hierarchy Christ occupies none other than the office of bishop.¹⁷³ But what of those texts within the

¹⁶⁹ Sharpe, 'Churches', p. 83.

¹⁷⁰ DSE, p. 155.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 155–7.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

purview of this chapter in which the monastic milieu remains preeminent or the attempt to craft sacramental authority or an episcopal agenda is cursory at best or absent at worst?

Etchingham has distinguished two very explicit and disparate models of authority in the Lives composed in the pre-1000 period with authors very clearly anxious to distinguish between the abbatial and episcopal exercise of power.¹⁷⁴ The ratio of monastic to episcopal lives in the *Codex Salmanticensis* is 8:2.¹⁷⁵ It seems plausible that the task of remodelling a founding saint's biography to accord with the new parameters of the reforming and reformed church was beyond the capacity of some foundations. Equally, the absence of the political connections or a secular powerbase from which to frame and launch a reimagined clerical past for a foundation were also significant factors. The extent and quality of a saint's extant dossier need not correlate with the extent and vibrancy of their cult in our period, and it is plausible that recasting was not necessary to advance the aims of some foundations within their particular local constellations of ecclesiastical and secular authorities. Moreover, the assumption that ordination, and thence the capacity to act as the chief celebrant at the Eucharist, was the mandatory condition of clerical life in the twelfth century is not unproblematic. Before the eleventh century the ratio of ordained to non-ordained clergy in Europe was estimated to be 55% to 45% but during the reform era the proportions moved to 70% to 30%, though it is noted that Irish abbots were slower to move towards ordination than their European counterparts.¹⁷⁶ Flanagan states that all Augustinian canons were ordained priests, as distinct from Cistercians who identified as monks but she provided no citation for this assertion and the scholarship on this point is contested.¹⁷⁷ Barrow's research, which centres on England, Scotland and Wales, suggests that the process of self-definition of canons and monks only developed in the later twelfth century with the emergence of a body of literature that sought to define the orders vis-

¹⁷⁴ Etchingham, *Church*, p. 99.

¹⁷⁵ Herbert, 'Ireland', p. 338.

¹⁷⁶ DSE, pp. 26–30; TIC, p. 137.

¹⁷⁷ TIC, p. 137.

à-vis each other.¹⁷⁸ All of which means that texts produced within Augustinian houses were not necessarily disadvantaged by adducing the monastic past of their subject saint relative to those redacted to convey the episcopal aspirations of a foundation. Without doubt, the failure to provide an appropriate level of pastoral care was among the reasons that Bernard was so comfortable in his designation of the Irish as barbarous.¹⁷⁹ He regarded the work done by the orders introduced by Malachy as a renewed process of conversion, a necessary corrective to the greed and selfishness that marred the performance of the Irish clerical personnel.¹⁸⁰ There is no assumption on his part that those in regular orders will not be engaged in the pastoral care of their communities, the reverse in fact is his expectation, and the depictions examined here of Ciarán and Colum Cille potentially supported the provision of sacraments by those in orders well beyond the walls of their respective monasteries.

III.x Conclusions

The approach adopted in this chapter, mirroring that applied by Herbert in her analysis of the *Life of Martin of Tours*, was premised on the hypothesis that the depictions of clerical office in the nine BL homilies might be expected to reflect shifting patterns of sacramental and pastoral responsibility, to accord with the principal tenets of reform ideology.¹⁸¹ However, a preponderance of the analysis suggests that there is little uniformity to be found within the corpus. Individual Lives, such as BS, BP and BC, might be said, on balance, to corroborate the original premise but even within those texts there remain aspects of the clerical identities that are as congruous with earlier centuries as with the changing norms in a period of reformation. Geary's assertion that 'saints incarnated the moral ideals of their epoch' is only partially realised in the select texts examined in this chapter and the evidence is ultimately more

¹⁷⁸ Barrow, *Clergy*, p. 5.

¹⁷⁹ Scully, 'Portrayal', p. 254.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

¹⁸¹ See I, pp. 3–8 above on the intersection of Church reform and sacramental responsibility

reflective of Derrida's principle that 'hagiography reproduces hagiography'.¹⁸² Seanán and Patrick are presented in BL as fulfilling all of the requirements of episcopal authority yet Ciarán and Colum Cille, who are operating in monastic contexts, are also granted significant pastoral agency in a manner that potentially violates the demarcations established within extant prescriptive texts. In Chapter I it was advanced that BM was in all likelihood composed outside of the period of Church reform but the text was examined here for evidence of Eucharistic content that either affirmed or frustrated the central hypothesis. Mochua cleaves firmly to the thaumaturgical model of earlier centuries and it must reluctantly be admitted that the argument for treating these nine Lives together is further undermined by this analysis. However, there is utility in having established these dissonances exist and that the process of BL's compilation may not have been as intentional as originally anticipated. The general confidence with which Flanagan,¹⁸³ for example, argues that Lives of the reform era can be argued to embody the ideals of the period is challenged here. While discrete episodes within these texts and aspects of the clerical identities crafted for individual saints can be argued to conform to reformist precepts, the picture is variegated rather than homogenous. It must also be acknowledged, in respect of the multiple Eucharistic vignettes examined, that there is again no single dominant model. In Chapter II's review of vernacular vocabulary it was accepted that the extent to which the authors of the BL texts employed Eucharistic language and imagery with conscious intent remains uncertain. None of the Eucharistic episodes analysed here diminishes that ambiguity. However, interesting themes emerge from the viaticum narratives, as will be returned to later. The varied patterning in these Lives, of clerical roles and sacramental functions, further supports the conclusion advanced in Chapter II, that reformist impulses, even when actually evidenced in the Lismore texts, are pluriform rather than uniform.

¹⁸² Geary, *Living*, pp. 14 and 17.

¹⁸³ TIC, pp. 92–115.

CHAPTER IV: ENGENDERING THE EUCHARIST IN MEDIEVAL IRELAND

Quædam vero in perceptione illius panis, qui de cælo descendit, non solum refectionem in corde, sed dulciorem super mel & favum sensibilem consolationem percipiebant in ore. . . Quædam autem tanto desiderio post odorem tanti Sacramenti currebant, quod nullo modo eo diu carere sustinebant, nullam consolationem vel requiem suscipientes, sed penitus in languore deficientes, nisi suavitate cibi illius animæ earum frequenter vegetarentur.¹

When some of these women received the bread which comes from heaven, they took it not only as refreshment in the heart but also received it in their mouth as a perceptible consolation sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. . . Some of them ran with such desire after the fragrance of such a great sacrament that in no way could they endure to be deprived of it; and unless their souls were frequently invigorated by the delights of this meal, they obtained no consolation or rest but utterly wasted away in languor.²

The intimacy of the devotional relationship with the Eucharistic host, that many professed-women in Latin Christendom, are reported to have developed in the central to high Middle Ages, as the cult of the female mystic-type accelerated, is well-attested in contemporary continental hagiography.³ Accounts abound of later religious women engaged in a contemporised ascetic rehearsal of the fasting *topos* in the lives of the desert mothers; these twelfth- and thirteenth-century women are depicted as drawing on the earliest models of female piety through abnegation, but their survival is presented as a function of the particular spiritual sustenance provided by the Eucharist, and often associated with miracles.⁴ Having identified the ecstasy that the host engendered in some women, as quoted above from the preface of his *Vita Mariæ Oigniacensis*, Jacques de Vitry later recounts how this late twelfth-century/early thirteenth-century paragon of female virtue fasted for fifty-three days as she lay on her death

¹ *Vita Mariæ Oigniacensis*, §8 (ed. de Vitry p. 48)

² *Ibid.*

³ CC, pp. 4, 119–21 and 318; Peters, *Patterns*, pp. 16–19; Swan, *Beguines*, pp. 7–8, 25, 31, and 41; Bynum, *Holy*, pp. 81 and 191; Bynum, *Jesus*, pp. 190, 193, 203, and 256–63; Beckwith, *Christ's Body*, pp. 9–12; Bynum, 'Body', p. 84; Bynum, 'Women's Symbols', pp. 43–9; Elliott, *Proving*, pp. 2 and 15. Bynum asserts that '[i]n particular, the Eucharist was associated with female saints'.

⁴ See for example *Vitæ* and/or personal writings of Juliana of Liège, Christina Mirabilis, Margaret of Ypres, Mechthild of Magdeburg. There is only one known example in the entire European corpus of a male saint living on the Eucharist alone; see Bynum, 'Eucharistic', p. 123.

bed, only rousing herself to receive the Body of Christ.⁵ Of the fifty-five miraculous accounts in the European corpus which depict Jesus as priest administering the Eucharist, forty-five of the communicants are women,⁶ which given the asymmetry in the respective numbers of Lives of male and female saints, is an overwhelming plurality and speaks to the irrefutability of a gendered variation in Eucharistic narratives. Given women's long exclusion from the sacral privileges of the priesthood, it is of little surprise that they should seek to appropriate the arch-sacrament of their faith in a fashion which neither explicitly arrogated the authority of the cleric nor entirely vitiated their own agency. Whilst still dependent on the male cleric to Communicate, the fundamental characteristic of the affective relationship between the Communicant and the host in these accounts is of an intimacy, untrammelled by male authority.

However, these acute moments of affective piety belong to a point in time when the spiritual outcomes of the twelfth-century reform impetuses had solidified, rather than in the midst of the maelstrom of religious renaissance.⁷ Arguably, the historical period between the Synod of Rome in 1059, at which the Real Presence of the body and blood in the Eucharist was decreed and the official promulgation of the doctrine of transubstantiation at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215,⁸ has been subjected to less scholarly attention than it deserves, particularly with respect to women's sacramental access. The institution of the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1264 has focused researchers' attention on women and Lives produced in the decades immediately prior to that milestone, at the expense of a more thoroughgoing consideration of what preceded it. Bynum has presented extensive analysis to support her thesis that metamorphosis miracles were the 'paradigmatic scholastic miracles' and Eucharistic transformations are the zenith of that phenomenon, but her data place that apex at 1200, as the

⁵ *Vita Mariae Oigniacensis*, §105. (ed. de Vitry p. 123)

⁶ Bynum cited in CC, p. 120.

⁷ A more incisive focus on sacraments within the frame of pastoral responsibilities is also in evidence in this later period: see discussion of Matthew Paris' *Life of St Edmund* and *Life of Edward the Confessor* in Wilson, 'Saints, sacraments'.

⁸ McCue, 'Liturgy', pp. 430–2.

reform era draws to a close.⁹ Significantly less scholarly effort has been expended in defining and exploring the relationship of medieval women to the Eucharistic sacrament in the century and a half before that wave of independent female piety crested on the cusp of the thirteenth century.¹⁰ As the secular powers and prelates of Latin Christendom wrestled with the major structural and dogmatic transformations of the Church, hagiographies, as subjective witness to the social contests of the period, provide a perspective on female sanctity and sacramental praxis, elsewhere missing in our sources. His subject's Eucharistic devotion was the *sine qua non* of any fashionable hagiographer of the holy woman by 1200, but what preceded it?

IV.i Chapter outline

The intention in this chapter is to situate the representation of female Communion in the Lismore Lives within broader Irish, Insular and European context. In the first instance the established Irish norms, with respect to female Communication, are contextualised by reference to the extant prescriptive literature. By necessity, these sections require some discussion of the formal status of women, lay and religious, and the circumstances around female profession, which prevailed in the era of church reform, as Eucharistic devotion cannot be divorced from the context in which women experienced church authority and how their roles were perceived by prominent thinkers of the time. Having considered the formal identities available to Insular women in our period, the emphasis in the next sections is on three Irish Lives of female saints and the relationship between the expressions of sanctity therein and those found in Brigidine texts.¹¹ BB is not treated independently here, as her sanctity has been so thoroughly interrogated in secondary scholarship over many years, as to have become the paradigm against

⁹ Bynum, 'Metamorphosis', pp. 995 and 1009.

¹⁰ Rubin's CC is quite obviously the authoritative work in the field and while she herself notes that most of her focus is on the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, I would respectfully suggest that the vast majority of her textual analysis is concentrated in the thirteenth century and beyond. However, as she herself argues many of the compendia and *miracula* of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries on the continent were refinements of twelfth-century exemplars; see CC, pp. 110–14.

¹¹ Given that we only have Lives for 4 female saints in the whole medieval Irish corpus (Latin and vernacular) it would be remiss not to contextualise the Lismore material in which gender is implicated with reference to the *vitae* for Íte, Samthann and Monenna.

which all other Irish female saints are measured.¹² Rather, details and important motifs from BB are integrated into the broader discussion of this chapter. The hagiographical Eucharistic motifs in these Lives are then juxtaposed with the most significant topoi in lives from the Continent, later Anglo-Saxon England and early Anglo-Norman England that have been dated to a period essentially contemporary with the core of the Lismore works.¹³ These hagiographical accounts are explored and contextualised with reference to the most persuasive secondary scholarship, establishing a normative paradigm of European female Eucharistic reception, against which the Lismore episodes can be assessed.¹⁴ Whilst we can only ever extrapolate from a single text to localised views and experiences, the cumulative weight of these traces of practices and perceptions, facilitates in some measure, a greater understanding of the fuller religious architecture in which these Lives operated.¹⁵ The final sections of the chapter provide close textual readings of two female-centred prominent Eucharistic episodes in BS.

¹² Substantial work was undertaken on the relationship between the various Lives and their Eucharistic episodes in the course of this project but space constraints mean that work has been sacrificed here to the less studied episodes from BS. I hope to return to the topic in the future.

¹³ See I, pp. 13–14 above.

¹⁴ The work done on the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman corpora exceeds the level of research conducted on any other European corpus as a discrete body of work and as such much of the secondary work treats European and Anglo-Latin norms as synonymous.

¹⁵ Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Pagans', p. 145; Pohl, 'Introduction', p. 26; Stevenson, 'Introduction', p. xii; Chapman-Stacey, 'Texts', p. 231; Stock, *Implications*, p. 3.

Mé Ebá, ben Ádaim uill;	I am Eve, wife of great Adam,
mé ro-sháraig Ísu thall;	because of me has Jesus died;
mé ro-thall nem ar mo chloinn;	it were I, thief of my children's heaven,
	by all rights were crucified.
cóir is mé do-chóid 'sa crann.	

IV.ii Irish Women and the Eucharist: beyond hagiography

The shadow cast by Eve's sin darkens the fates of all medieval women and the Irish literati were not immune to attributing the source of post-lapsarian sinfulness to women, particularly sexual transgressions,¹⁶ a theme which will be explored further below, in the sections treating the encounter between St Seanán and Canir. From the various extant sources we may piece together a fragmentary likeness of the medieval Irish church's position on female Communication, though the gaps, particularly with respect to liturgical sources, as discussed in Chapter II, mean there are very obvious deficits in our efforts.¹⁷ Discussion here is restricted to those which make specific reference to the status of women as communicants.

Among the most significant treatments of the position of women in the church is that offered by Gillebertus of Limerick as part of his effort to regulate and administer the parish clergy of his diocese, and beyond, in the late eleventh century.¹⁸ Regularly accorded preeminent position by scholars in any examination of the efforts of the Irish church to conform to European standards and practices Gillebertus' *De statu ecclesiae* presents a threefold schema of society, modelled on but also expanded from, contemporary European productions.¹⁹ Within the ordinances, Gillebertus specifically addresses the position of women, defining their social role in relation to the three classes of men, women are 'married and subject to those who pray,

¹⁶ *Eve's Lament* is assigned to the late tenth or early eleventh century; McNamara, *Apocrypha*, p. 24.

¹⁷ II, p. 25 above.

¹⁸ Fleming, *Gille*, p. 72. Fleming believes Gillebertus' efforts should be recognised for his 'sensitivity to the place of women'.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 69 and 73; I, pp. 3–6 above on Canterbury's contested influence.

plow and fight'.²⁰ He later expands this with the exhortation that clerics should not think 'of women as separated from the church' as 'Christ places them with his mother in heaven'.²¹ This is a very explicit statement on women's salvific fate and indicates, as Fleming has argued, a particular empathy with women and a possible a response to their mistreatment at the hands of some religious men. Elsewhere in the statutes, as discussed in Chapter I, when he enumerates the responsibilities of the priest with respect to pastoral care, women are not singled out among those who are to be excluded from the Eucharist - Jews, pagans and catechumens.²² When the deacon, the official charged with the task of separating the communicating from the non-communicating, issued his diktat 'exeat qui non communicant',²³ there is nothing to suggest that this included a universal prohibition on women, unless they fell within one of the three proscribed communicants. This is an important piece of formal evidence of women's access to the Eucharist, given the sermon which is next examined.

A number of medieval churches in regions across Latin Christendom specifically excluded women from serving at or even approaching the altar and these prohibitions expanded over time to include all sacred space.²⁴ In early Irish materials we have a reference to division of the sexes in the church building in Cogitosus' *Vita s. Brigidae*, when the author indicates that men and women even enter the church through different doors.²⁵ Writing to Heloise in the twelfth century Peter Abelard opines that he would support a return to a female diaconate, premising his argument on the women who served Jesus, but other prominent voices of the age were greatly opposed, including Bernard of Clairvaux whose correspondence with Hildegard of Bingen reveals his belief that any association with women would preclude men from

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 148–9

²¹ *Ibid.*; 'Nec se junctas ab ecclesia putamus praesenti quas Christus cum matre sua collocat in coelesti'.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 153.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

²⁴ Schulenburg, 'Female Sanctity', p. 115; McNamara, *Sisters*, p. 153. The official restriction on consecrated women serving at the altar was reinforced at the Council of Soissons in 1121. McNamara is unapologetic about her feminist readings of texts and occasionally errs on the side of polemic but this does not negate the forensic quality of her analysis and her command of the sources.

²⁵ *Vita s. Brigidae* §2 (ed. and transl. Connolly and Picard p. 7); McNamara, *Sisters*, p. 155.

performing their religious duties.²⁶ Hildegard, a woman of extraordinary intellect and ability, did not herself believe women were adequately equipped for priesthood and the attendant sacral duties.²⁷ At the Oratory of the Paraclete, under the stewardship of Abelard's own Heloise, the dangers of intimate male and female contact at Communion were averted by the departure of the presumably young and virile deacon and sub-deacon after the consecration, and Communion was administered to the nuns by an elderly priest.²⁸ The only Irish manifestation of this position that I have been able to locate is a Latin sermon in LB, which was identified Warren in his seminal study of Irish liturgy.²⁹ *Sermo Synodalis* is ostensibly a list of directives to be issued by bishops to their clergy in synod. In the centre of a passage of prescriptions and proscriptions in relation to administering the Eucharist we find: 'nulla femina ad altare Domini accedat, nec calicem Domini tanget'.³⁰ Warren is of the view that the second portion of the prohibition means the text is of some 'considerable antiquity' but his reasons for this assessment are unclear. The Irish, as discussed in Chapter II, potentially continued to receive under both species well into the later Middle Ages so the reference to the chalice is not out of place.³¹ His second caveat though is less oblique, we can only suppose this to have applied in certain settings rather than a statement reflecting national predilections. Elsewhere in materials from the continent it becomes apparent that a tacit acceptance of women's exclusion from the sacrament during menstruation prevailed but there are no Irish analogues to this prohibition identified thus far.³² The LB sermon read in concert with the directives from Gillebertus above, is suggestive of women's potential exclusion from the Communion rites in some quarters, in dereliction of orthodox doctrine.

²⁶ McNamara, *Sisters*, pp. 235 and 237, n. 3.

²⁷ Bynum, *Jesus*, pp. 91–2.

²⁸ McNamara, *Sisters*, p. 292.

²⁹ LIT, pp. 136–7; '*Sermo Synodalis*', pp. 477–80. Although no dating has been done on this text, a plurality of LB sermons have been situated in the late eleventh through twelfth centuries, making it likely this text is of the same period. The only transcription and translation of the text were published in the Irish Ecclesiastical Record in 1868, without attribution.

³⁰ 'Let no woman approach the altar of the Lord, nor touch the chalice of the Lord'.

³¹ II, pp. 85–9 above.

³² CC, p. 149.

The nineteenth-century dictum that a lady's name should appear in print on only three occasions, the date of her birth, marriage and death, is witnessed in even greater rigidity in the Irish annals, where only their deaths regularly earned women a place in the records. Through the eleventh and twelfth centuries there is some evidence of an increase of detail in respect of obituaries of men, with specific references to their deaths having been preceded by a period of penance and pious behaviour, guaranteeing their place in the heavenly kingdom. The centrality of viaticum to Irish Christians was explored in the previous chapter and as over the centuries annalistic entries became longer and more fully developed, there are mentions of prominent figures receiving the sacrament before death from the tenth century onwards.³³ O'Donoghue opines that these eulogistic additions are only found in reference to secular men, on the assumption that those in orders have no need of a public affirmation of their piety.³⁴ Irrespective of whether the annalists were distinguishing between classes of men, there seems to be a gender differential at work here, as there are no women in the annals who are accorded the distinction of having Communicated or been anointed before death. For example, through the eleventh and twelfth centuries AU contain twenty-eight references to the deaths of prominent women, six of these women are in holy orders and their monastic affiliation is given, but a further twenty-two are the wives and or daughters of important men, and none of the twenty-eight is described as Communicating before death.³⁵ The comparatively low number of abbesses' deaths recorded can be explained, at least in part, by reference to the relatively low survival rate of women's houses, as discussed above. A further four of the twenty-eight are recorded as dying on pilgrimage, which is often treated as synonymous with a death in penance, but this

³³ Etchingham, 'Reform', pp. 227–9; O'Don, p. 120. An entry in AU 974.1 records that Murchad h. Flaithbertaich had received 'cummain 7 aithrige', that is 'Communion and penance' before his violent death. The reverse situation holds in the case of Diarmait Mac Murchadha who we are told in AU 1171 died without 'unction, without body of Christ, without penance', though this entry may of course be a function of Diarmait's political rather than personal sins. Elsewhere in AU 1086 Tairdelbach Ua Briain receives the body and blood of Christ before death and at AU 1177 Conchobur Ua Cairella partakes of the body of Christ.

³⁴ O'Don, p. 120.

³⁵ For examples throughout the period, see: AU 1009.8, 1016.2, 1047.5, 1063.2, 1072.3, 1112.4, 1116.7, 1118.5, 1127.7, 1171.4, 1187.2, 1190.3.

percentage seems low, in relation to the number of men said to have died in a presumed state of grace. Fundamentally, the evidence suggests that when recording the deaths of women the annalists did not imagine their audience to be as interested in the fate of the wives' souls as those of their men.

Though this evidence from historical records, ecclesiastical ordinances, and para-liturgical materials is slight, it is reasonable to suggest that religious women in Ireland, as was usual in Latin Christendom, were engaged in a problematical relationship with the Eucharist. As the official papal position on the public roles of women in the church increasingly truncated their sphere of action, it is clear that previously existing tensions around female access to the Eucharistic sacrament found renewed expression in official sources, which is why hagiography, as a genre more readily concerned with inculcating affective piety than orthodoxy may shed greater light on the issue at hand.

IV.iii Identifying professed Irish women and their European neighbours

It would be erroneous to assume that the only audience for Lives of female saints, or indeed episodes of female sanctity within the Lives of male saints, was to be found in the convent and given the suitability of the Lismore homilies and their English and continental analogues for para-liturgical uses on feast days or as lectionaries within other non-sacred settings,³⁶ it is just as likely that the Lives were read and heard by the same clerics charged with providing pastoral care, to both professed and lay women. However, it would be remiss if I did not here consider briefly the position of women within the institutional church during the twelfth-century renaissance. If women were not actively engaging with the sacraments in this period then this would surely change our readings of women communicants in our texts and equally if the number of women taking the veil exceeded that which might be demographically likely, we should expect to find a different emphasis in our texts, whether cautionary or approving.

³⁶ See above: I, pp. 14–21.

Changing patterns of female profession in Western Europe through this period remain the subject of some debate, with different schools of thought variously attributing the ebb and flow in the known number of women's houses, to various factors including the putative misogyny of the reformers or the emergence of a private strand of piety that could be practised within the domestic sphere.³⁷ Schulenburg's magisterial review of the position of holy women in Western Europe is emphatic on the changing fortunes of female houses in the reform area concomitant with the declining purchase of the female saint on the public imagination.³⁸ As the official sanctioning of canonisation began to gain momentum in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, fifty-one men were canonised versus four women.³⁹ Schulenburg believes the reform agenda ultimately 'closed the door to active participation within the orthodox structure' for women; an assessment which correlates with the disproportionate numbers of women involved in heretical and peripheral religious movements over the next centuries.⁴⁰ However, such assertions are contrary to much of the evidence available to us from Ireland and Britain in this period. Between 1130 and 1165 the number of women's houses in England grew from twenty to over one hundred and by 1200, English convents could accommodate more than three thousand women.⁴¹ Eleven double houses were also founded under the auspices of the new monastic orders in England between 1131 and 1164.⁴² A floruit of hagiographies of women saints developed in the century before that and it can hardly be a coincidence that the rise of female profession was associated with the dissemination of these texts.⁴³ Relying on the meagre supply of extant records, scholars have noted a similar pattern in the emergence of new women's

³⁷ Vauchez, 'Virginity', pp. 349–59; Sanok, *Life*, pp. 24–49; Wogan Browne, 'Powers', pp. 71–93.

³⁸ Schulenburg, *Forgetful*, pp. 17–58.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6; Schulenburg, 'Gynaeceum', p. 126.

⁴⁰ Schulenburg, 'Gynaeceum', p. 128. The periodization of women's changing public roles across the span of the middle ages is not uncontested, nor are the reasons adduced to explain those changing fortunes. For a review of the debates see: Vauchez, 'Virginity', pp. 349–59; Goodich, 'Contours', p. 23.

⁴¹ Elkins, *Holy Women*, pp. xiii and 105. Some reviewers have been critical of the methodology employed by Elkins. See: Warren, 'Review', p. 149. However, given the difficulties posed by the scanty evidence, Elkins' remains the best overview, as argued here: Vaughn, 'Review', pp. 397–99.

⁴² MRHI, p. 307.

⁴³ Love, 'Torture', p. 274.

houses in Ireland under the initial stewardship of Malachy, whose commitment to the reform agenda was referenced in the previous chapter.⁴⁴ Dianne Hall presents a convincing case for the establishment of a number of smaller communities of nuns in proximity to houses of canons regular with the two houses sharing access to a church.⁴⁵ Nineteen houses of nuns committed to following the Augustinian-Arroasian monastic rule as a consequence of Malachy's entreaties and although some of these were long established houses whose abbesses were content to exchange their independence for the security of allied houses, many were entirely new foundations. In the previous chapter the differences in pastoral and professional identities of the different orders were explored, in conjunction with the implications of the Anglo-Norman preferences for Cistercian and Benedictine reformers and the Gaelic commitment to the Arroasian rule. However, there is insufficient evidence in respect of women's houses to pursue a similar line of enquiry. Whilst we have details of the rule with which certain houses were aligned at the time of the dissolution during the Reformation, we do not have hagiographical texts connected with these same foundations and their presence in the annals, as discussed above, is slender. Therefore, our sense of the Eucharistic experiences of professed women is incommensurate with our knowledge of the roles performed by male religious; it is hoped the subsequent sections of this chapter, and the focus on Eucharistic encounters in hagiography, will begin to shed some light on the subject.

IV.iv Irish female saints

IV.iv.i Vita Samthanne

As tempting as it may be to imagine the Lives and experiences ascribed to hagiographical women as a direct reflection of the lives lived by medieval Irish women, it is a temptation which must be resisted.⁴⁶ However, as noted above in the chapter outline, in the

⁴⁴ MRHI, p. 308.

⁴⁵ Hall, 'Prosopography', pp. 3–15; Hall, *Women*, pp. 15 and 65–8. Though Hall's primary focus is the later medieval/ early modern periods, the opening two chapters of her monograph are relevant here.

⁴⁶ Bitel, *Land*, p. 192. Bitel's work here, despite her own acknowledgement of the dangers, exhibits some of the flawed conclusions which arise from reading women's Lives as unmediated reflections of abbesses.

absence of historical alternatives we must turn to literary productions to disinter some vital information on the contemporary understandings of female Eucharistic praxis. Leaving aside the ever-present Brigid, *Vita Samhthanne* belongs to the earliest stratum of extant lives of Irish saints, making her life the earliest non-Brigidine text available to scholars.⁴⁷ The early-eighth century abbess, but not foundress, of a convent at Clonbroney in the Irish midlands is patterned by her hagiographer on the best attested model of medieval feminine piety; she escapes the marriage debt, devotes herself to God and performs a series of miraculous feats before dying surrounded by her acolytes.⁴⁸ It is noteworthy that the account of Samthann's life is almost entirely devoid of sacramental references, in contract to the generally attested template in Irish lives, there is no record of Samthann's baptism or profession, nor are there even any incidental references to mass attendance or formal worship, despite her being credited with the construction of an oratory.⁴⁹ There is a reference upon her death to her being visited by Abbot Lasran and his satisfaction at being present as she had promised 'ad eum declinaret'.⁵⁰ While the imagery of Samthann bending to a priest is in some manner reminiscent of the favoured Irish vernacular phrase of 'going to the hand' as found in BB, I think it remains an ambiguous expression here and not indicative of viaticum.⁵¹ Securing access to viaticum was a commonplace of Lives of women, written in the same period on the continent, but this trope appears not to have been a stock insertion in Irish Lives.⁵² Samthann's brand of sanctity exists in a narrative space entirely distinct from the normative practices of orthodoxy. Though Africa has argued that Samthann's sainthood belongs to a 'unisex' rather than feminised model, I think

⁴⁷ *Vita Samhthanne* (ed. VSHP II pp. 253–61); *Life of Samthann* (transl. Luibhéid pp. 86–8); *Life of Samhthann* (transl. Africa pp. 97–110); Bray, 'Motival', pp. 78–9. Dating of the text remains contentious but Bray, as the scholar who has done most work on the text, deserves to be heard, and she places the text in the late eighth to early ninth centuries.

⁴⁸ Schulenburg, *Forgetful*, pp. 10–35; *Vita Samhthanne* (ed. VSHP II pp. 253–61); *Life of Samthann* (transl. Africa pp. 101–10); Love, 'Torture', p. 284. See Schulenburg, *Forgetful*, pp. 127–76 on the ubiquity of this model, with its roots in the lives of the earliest female martyrs.

⁴⁹ *Life of Samthann* (transl. Africa p. 104)

⁵⁰ *Vita Samhthanne* (ed. Plummer p. 261).

⁵¹ II, pp. 89–91 above.

⁵² McNamara, Halborg and Whatley, *Sainted Women*, pp. 156, 161, 168 and 228. McNamara identifies Lives of early women including Burgundofara (ca.603–645) and Gertrude (ca. 628–658) where viaticum is prominent; these are among what she terms 'plentiful' seventh- and eighth-century references.

given the pre-eminence of the marriage avoidance trope in the text, her argument is unsustainable.⁵³ Additionally, Samthann is also depicted as shaming a male cleric for his lustful behaviour, in an inversion of the accepted representation of women as the source of sexual dissolution.⁵⁴ Samthann is a thoroughly female saint, who is depicted transgressing the constraints of the gender binary, and yet the anonymous author, either consciously or unconsciously, avoided placing her in proximity to the sacraments at any juncture, even upon death. In some respects then, despite contravening expected behavioural norms, Samthann's infractions do not extend to Eucharistic praxis.

IV.iv.ii Vita sanctae Monennae

Conchubranus' *Vita sanctae Monennae*, which scholars have variously dated from the late eleventh to the mid twelfth century, is usually noted for the masculine quality of Monenna's sanctity.⁵⁵ Much ink has been spilled in the characterisation of her severely ascetic piety as conforming to models of male rather than female profession and although this essentialisation of the male paradigm is not unproblematic, there are elements of her interaction with the priesthood and sacraments that buttress this assessment. Following her veiling by Patrick, she is regularly depicted in close contact with male clerics and her brother Bishop Brón is implied, though not explicitly stated, to be present in her foundation to fulfil the sacral duties from which Monenna is excluded. Her interactions with external male clerics and saints often confound our expectations of the gendered hierarchical ordering of sanctity, but one instance in particular is noteworthy. Monenna is one of the few Irish saints, and the only woman, credited with the transformation of water into wine, specifically for a celebration of the Eucharist.⁵⁶ So although Monenna is excluded from performing the sacrament herself, as are the nuns whom she is

⁵³ Life of Samthann (transl. Africa p. 101); Smith, 'Problem', pp. 3–37; for the centrality of the marriage avoidance trope to feminised sanctity see: Vauchez, 'Virginity', pp.349–59; Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, p. 49.

⁵⁴ Life of Samthann (transl. Africa p. 105).

⁵⁵ Johnston, 'Transforming', pp. 197–220; Bray, 'Manly', pp. 171–81; MISL, pp. 396–7; *Vita S. Modwennae* (ed. Bartlett).

⁵⁶ See above: III, p. 112, and n. 99, on false perception of the ubiquity of this motif.

visiting, the priest at the convent is unable to ‘celebrate the mysteries of the body of Christ’ without her intervention.⁵⁷ In a second important episode which implies Monenna’s usurpation of roles perceived as the preserve of men, a visiting poet is dismayed to lose his gift for the saint, a glass vessel filled with wine, to a river on his journey. He recites this verse, in invocation of the lost item’s return: ‘Si ista ampula nunc fuerit inventa, sancte Monenne sine dubio erit donanda ut habeat illa secum in altaris ministerio quod suum meritum monstrabit de profundo’.⁵⁸ As discussed above, women were generally excluded by this period from even approaching the altar so the poet’s expectation that Monenna would serve at the altar at her own foundation is the obverse of orthodoxy. But like Samthann, and Íte, whose *vita* will be next considered, Monenna dies with a male cleric in attendance but is not recorded as having received viaticum, an exclusion from the last sacrament of her faith, which is perhaps a final conspicuous expression of women’s exclusion from sacral privileges.

IV.iv.iii Vita sancte Ite virginis

Among the Lives of women saints written in the reform era,⁵⁹ *Vita sancte Ite virginis*, has received the least attention, probably as a full modern edition and complete translation of the text remain a desideratum. Although her foundation at Killeedy recedes from the historical record in the ninth century, there remained sufficient interest in her cult to motivate a twelfth-century hagiographer to produce a complete *vita*, presumably reflecting the mores and values of the period in which he composed. Unlike Monenna, there are no mentions in the text of Íte’s foundation being served by a cleric and when this nun finds herself in need of the Eucharist, she is transported with angelic assistance to the monastery at Clonmacnoise, where she receives the body and blood of Christ from the hand of a worthy priest but without his knowledge or

⁵⁷ *Vita s. Monennae* §1 (ed. and transl. Armagh II p. 120)

⁵⁸ *Vita s. Monennae* §4 (ed. and transl. Armagh III p. 434); ‘If this vessel is now found, it must assuredly be given to Saint Monenna, so that she may have for service of the altar, that which will show her merit from the depths’.

⁵⁹ *Vita s. Ite* (ed. VSHP II, pp. 116–30); *Latin Life of Saint Íte* (ed. de Paor pp. 76–80); *Life of St Ita* (transl. De Paor unpublished); MISL, p. 394; DIS, p. 376. Sharpe’s dating of the extant text to the twelfth century is uncontested and Ó Riain has further narrowed this, based on internal evidence, to the third quarter of that century.

acquiescence.⁶⁰ Despite her famous admonition to a male acolyte that he should avoid the company of women lest he be afflicted by ‘the demons that greatly ensnare our sex’,⁶¹ Íte is apparently unrepentant when her theft of the consecrated host is discovered. The aggrieved congregation fasts and following a revelation from God, of Íte’s visitation, they travel to Killeedy to receive her blessing. Having healed a blinded member of the party, Íte instructs ‘the priest from whom she had secretly received the Lord’s Communion’ to sing mass for her. She offers him her altar vessels after the mass but the priest refuses, on the basis of his abbot’s instructions to receive nothing except counsel from her, but not to be dissuaded, Íte reminds him of her forgotten ministrations to the abbot and the gift is willingly received.⁶² The relationship between Íte and the monks of Clonmacnoise is an absolute inversion of the conventional ordering of relations between the minister and Communicant. She judges that there is no ‘worthy’ cleric in the vicinity of her own foundation from whom to receive, she appropriates the Eucharistic species without the consent of the ministering cleric and when her transgression is found out, she secures access to the sacrament a second time.⁶³ Theologically, the worthiness of the administering priest has no effect on the efficacy of the sacrament, as discussed in Chapter II, thus Íte’s appropriation of the authority to assess the priest’s honour is unnecessary, but is vindicated in the text by the outcome of the episode. In a further inversion of the Eucharistic model, Íte is presented as ministering, at his request, to Abbot Comgán on his deathbed, and although the language is opaque, there are certainly echoes of the viaticum rite, as Comgán says: ‘rogo te in Christi nomine, ut ponas manus tuas super labia mea, et claudas os meum in hora dormicionis mee’.⁶⁴ Among the most notable of the nominal phrases applied to Íte is ‘Tu enim templum Deitatis es, corpore et anima’,⁶⁵ it is almost as though Íte’s

⁶⁰ *Vita S. Íte* (ed. VSHP II p. 122).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁶³ Presumably, the mass she instructs the priest to say includes the Eucharistic rite.

⁶⁴ *Vita s. Íte* (ed. VSHP II pp. 119–20); ‘I ask you in Christ’s name to place your hand on my lips and seal my mouth in the hour of death’.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 117; ‘For you are a temple of God, in body and soul’. This is how the angel, who visits her before her profession, addresses her.

body serves as the body of Christ in the death rite. When the hour of her own passing arrives, Íte dies without receiving viaticum, though she manages to bless water to affect the cure of Clonmacnoise's abbot, while on her deathbed.

In a universe of absolutes, the simulacrum of female Eucharistic praxis emerging from these three texts would converge in a unified pattern, allowing us to craft a narrative of female Communion that accords with the liturgical and para-liturgical sources. However, in the imperfect scholarly universe in which we actually reside, the impression of the Communication of holy women is less than harmonious. The ordinances of some of the prescriptive documents examined above indicated an exclusion of women from sacred space, and by extension restricted their access to the Eucharist, but in the Lives of three female saints, spanning a period of some four centuries, we encounter women who regularly violate the circumscriptions of the orthodox to appropriate Eucharistic grace for themselves. Gillebertus' reform-age counsel to men, lay and clerical, to accept women as part of the church, is vitiated by the absence of viaticum in the textual Lives of these women. It might be suggested that the cohesion which exists between the Lives, in respect of the women's collective arrogation of Eucharistic authority, is a response to orthodox institutional segregation of women. But leaving more detailed questions of audience aside for the present, we cannot ignore that these texts were in all likelihood composed by the same churchmen tasked with upholding doctrinal standards and their attribution of defiant behaviour to these women might potentially have acted as an appeasing antidote to actual female iniquity. As always, when dealing with the didactic functions of hagiography, one must be mindful of the distance between what was deemed imitable and inimitable. However, if these authors were less concerned with presenting orthodox theology and more focussed on the less rigorously monitored realm of affective piety then these narratives potentially served to increase female commitment to Communication. Harrington has posited that the reform era is the 'herald of an Irish marginalisation of female

monastics' that manifested in a tension around female saints and 'traces of anxiety' arising from their 'questioning of authority'.⁶⁶ It is difficult to see how she reached this conclusion with respect to the foregoing lives which portray these women rewarded rather than punished for appropriating male privilege. The next section considers the extent to which the Irish model accords with European norms for the same period.

IV.v Feminized topoi in Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman and Continental Lives

The concept of *humanitas Christi* was among those most widely disseminated through the twelfth-century reforms and the Eucharist as the moment at which professed women (and the laity) encountered Christ's humanity, was the consummation of that union.⁶⁷ Neoplatonic metaphors for union abounded in the literature of the age and women's 'insistent' focus on their experience of 'flesh taken into flesh' was a new feature of the discourse.⁶⁸ This theological development found its voice in hagiographical depictions of women which emphasised the immediacy and the intimacy of their relationship to the physical host and present Christ. Those depictions which may best be categorised as miracles of transformation were examined above in multiple contexts.⁶⁹ As noted there, these miraculous accounts proliferated in the thirteenth century and their functions have been well interrogated. What of more realistic or natural depictions of women Communicating as part of their routine engagement with their religion? Whilst it could be argued that the ordinary has little place in a genre defined by the extraordinary, the consideration above of Irish female saints demonstrates a willingness on the part of Irish hagiographers to engage with routine sacramental encounters. Operating within the bounds of the limitations imposed by the scope and nature of my research project I have relied on secondary scholarship to gain an appreciation of the most prominent Eucharistic topoi in the European canon. However, as mentioned above, the focus of the existing scholarship has

⁶⁶ Harrington, *Women*, p. 223.

⁶⁷ Bynum, 'Eucharistic', p. 129.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ See above: II, pp. 56–9, II, pp. 89–90.

been on the proliferation of Eucharistic centred narratives in texts both written about and by women from the thirteenth century onwards. Bynum's research has identified 'at least eight lives from the Low-Countries, four from Northern Italy and dozens of vignettes from German-speaking areas' where Eucharistic devotion is the leitmotif around which complete texts are carved.⁷⁰ However, beyond the observation of this model in the canon, she devotes no further attention to the imagery or implications of women as commonplace Communicants. In matters of cult and hagiography, the British Isles was, as Bartlett opines, a 'unit' and the 'continual and fertile' communication might surely have given birth to shared Eucharistic topoi.⁷¹

My research thus far on the later Anglo-Saxon and early Anglo-Norman lives of female saints has yet to yield a single relevant Eucharistic encounter; in fact, the works seems notable for the absence of sacramental concerns rather than presence, at least relative to the Irish materials with which I am most familiar. In the first instance developing a hand-list of the Lives of women, which spans the linguistic and historical boundaries demarcating this period requires the researcher to make decisions about the periodization of English history that are occasionally arbitrary.⁷² An initial overview of Lives of women ranging from the Aelfric's eight texts on women,⁷³ through Goscelin of St Bertin's Lives,⁷⁴ to the emergence of the Katherine Group of lives after 1200,⁷⁵ has thus far failed to provide any analogues to the Irish materials, which provide the basis of the following analysis. Writing at the cusp of the reform era, Goscelin's depiction of female sanctity, in the Lives of almost ten women attributed to him, has been classified by Rosalind Love as an endorsement of an 'actively contemplative' model of female piety and she further opines that there may be 'room for the celebration of the feminine in

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁷¹ Bartlett, 'Cults', p. 86.

⁷² A list of texts was identified via: Macquarrie, 'Medieval Scotland', pp. 487–502; Lapidge and Love, 'Hagiography', pp. 203–325; Whatley, 'Late', pp. 428–99; Görlach, 'Middle English', pp. 429–86.

⁷³ Donovan, *Women Saints*, p. 65.

⁷⁴ From: Love, *Hagiography of the Female Saints of Ely*.

⁷⁵ From Salih, *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*.

Goscelin's work'.⁷⁶ However, his attention to affective devotion appears to exclude Eucharistic encounters. The *Book of Ely* which is generally acknowledged to belong to the hagiographical genre, if not strictly recounting the life narrative of a single figure, includes the account of impious priest Gervase, who having refused to celebrate the feasts of his congregation's saints is indisposed by severe physical reactions when he attempts to perform the consecration rite of the host.⁷⁷ This scatological episode is the sole foregrounded Eucharistic narrative encountered thus far.

IV.vii Betha Shenáin

A section of Chapter III examined the nature of the clerical identity crafted for Seanán in his Lismore iteration and how that depiction can be closely related to the secular and ecclesiastical politics of episcopal contests in twelfth-century Munster.⁷⁸ It has been established that BS in many respects exemplifies the reform-centred priorities of the vernacular hagiographers and consequently the prominent treatment of women seeking Eucharistic succour in this text provides a meaningful perspective on the position of women religious in the same period, albeit with the caveat that the likely localised audience for BS curtails the extent to which we can posit an ideological relevance beyond the narrowly geographic reach of Inis Cathaig.⁷⁹ Notwithstanding the truncated audience, these episodes provide some of the most interesting Eucharistic narratives in the Irish corpus.

IV.vii.i Seanán and women

In order to contextualise the specific Eucharistic vignettes in which Seanán encounters women, a brief survey of the presence and depiction of women in BS is now provided. In accordance with the structural patterning expected in Irish Lives, Seanán's birth-tale

⁷⁶ Love, 'Torture', pp. 305–6.

⁷⁷ Paxton, 'Book of Ely', pp. 486–7; the text is dated to 1133–1174.

⁷⁸ See III, pp. 122–7 above.

⁷⁹ See III, p. 123 above for the impact of Killaloe's diocesan ambitions on Inis Cathaig's national profile

foregrounds St Patrick's prophecy of a prince to lead the Corcu Baiscinn rather than his mother's miraculous delivery of her noble son, with the assistance of an angelic visitor.⁸⁰ It is the miraculous delivery, rather than shedding light on the personal relationship or her character, that is the priority of the hagiographer. In a reversal of the narrative episode of St Ciarán's thoughtful childhood interactions with his mother, as discussed in the previous chapter,⁸¹ Seanán's first encounter with a woman is his sharp correction of his mother's behaviour: 'An de sin a mháthair, ár is proinn riana trath coir insin'.⁸² During Seanán's childhood the family practise transhumance farming and the young saint is rebuked by his mother for failing to prepare the secondary homestead: 'A meic claindi 7 ceniuil' ar si, 'as beg do tharbha dhuin'.⁸³ Arguably, there is a touch of condescension rather than reassurance in Seanán's response: 'A mháthair', ar se, 'dena airisiumh 7 rat-fia comnacal'.⁸⁴ The situation is resolved by the miraculous appearance in the air of the sheds and farmyards needed but one cannot escape the impression that Seanán has bested rather than served his mother. In keeping with the depiction of his religious formation as taking place within a monastic milieu,⁸⁵ Seanán's next encounter with a woman is after he has been persuaded by Notál of his wider pastoral responsibilities beyond the cloister. As he undertakes the customary circuit of his lands and peoples he receives, as virgins to God, the daughters of a notable, Brenainn, King of Uí Fidgenti, as the first fruits of the Eoganacht Gabra.⁸⁶ Though no place-name is provided, an unusual oversight given the onomastic detail elsewhere in this text, the author reports that Seanán leaves 'in recles sin leosom', presumably referring to the women.⁸⁷ This is one of two references in the text, to a

⁸⁰Henken, *Welsh*, pp. 7–10; BS L 1875–89.

⁸¹ BC L 4064; Herbert, 'Infancy', pp. 1–8; BS L 4028–4033, L 4063–4081.

⁸² BS L 1894; 'Desist from that, o mother, for that is refection before the right time'.

⁸³ BS L 1903. 'O son of family and kindred', she said, 'your benefit to us is small.'

⁸⁴ BS L 1905 'O mother', he said, 'rest and you will have the needed/ needment'.

⁸⁵ See III, p. x above on formation.

⁸⁶ BS L 2154, the equivocation of the *noebhógha*/ holy-virgins with *primit Eoganachta Gabra*/ first fruits seems in keeping with the eDil entry on *primit*, without any implication of intentional diminishment of the women's profession.

⁸⁷ BS L 2154; 'that church to them'; Gwynn and Gleeson, HDK, p. 18 Gwynn and Gleeson take the view that this passage takes place at the same location as a foundation tale immediately prior to this, sited at the as yet unidentified Inis Luinge. At best, we can conclude this refers to either a Shannon estuary island or another location within the immediate bailiwick of Inis Cathaig. Given the completion of the foundation statement of *Inis Luinge* before the introduction of the women it seems clear this final statement refers to them.

female institution directly associated with Inis Cathaig, of which Seanán is credited as founding patron. Before his death he visits Cell Eochaille, whose nuns he has personally veiled, and which we are told is under the direction of his aunt Scath Craibhdhech.⁸⁸ The nuns ask Seanán to leave them the body of a *manach umhal* to act as a protective relic for their foundation and while acquiescing to their request, he assures them of his continued protection.⁸⁹ This episode, while bearing witness to the rewards accorded to virtuous women in the religious life, in the form of a visit from the dying patron saint and enduring material support, actually further serves to emphasise the reliance of female centres on male authority for survival, as discussed above under *IV.iii*. It might also be suggested that there is an element of antithetic parallelism in the nuns' leveraging of a monk's body as relic, with Canir's insistence on a burial spot within the male preserve of Inis Cathaig; a theme which will be explored further below under *Canir's Speech*. It seems clear from the explicit language of attribution that the hagiographer is comfortable connecting Seanán with female foundations and further, he has no difficulty in depicting his subject saint in an intimate spiritual relationship with women, but within very well-defined limits. A final episode with contextual significance also occurs on the saint's circuit, during a sojourn on Inis Mór when he meets with Bishops Sétna and Libern.⁹⁰ In a somewhat opaque passage, it emerges that the bishops have punished a woman found washing her son's garments in the well, from which water for the mass is drawn, and in retribution they have condemned her son to die by drowning. Seanán intercedes on her behalf, punishing the two bishops for their imprecations, extracting their penance and restoring the child to life. Though Seanán redresses the injustice suffered by the mother, the inclusion of the specifics of

⁸⁸ BS L 2475–82; DIS, p. 559.

⁸⁹ DIS, p. 559; BS, p. 221; Ó Cíobháin, 'Logainmneacha', p. 123; McNerney, *Clerical*, p. 63; Plummer, 'Miracles', pp. 14–15; 'Humble monk'; Stokes has transcribed the location of this monastery as Cell [E]ochaille. The manuscript reading (Lismore Folio 13) is Cill Ochaille. Ó Riain's Dictionary entry for Seanán refers to the site as Ceall na gCailleach or 'church of the nuns', which he identifies as 'now Kilnagalliagh in the parish of Kilfearagh'. The only citation reference to a source, outside the texts, is to the Dinnseanchas journal article on Inis Cathaig but it is unclear how he has arrived at this identification. However, following a reference from McNerney it emerges that Cill na Caillighi is explicitly mentioned in the later 'Miracles of Senan'. In §9 Senán avenges the abandonment of his favourite church, saving Inis Cathaig itself, at Killnagalliach, though there is no mention of its being a female foundation. Interestingly, its bereft status is described as the absence of ord, aifrionn, altóir (rite, mass, altar) which would lapse, were it a convent without an obliging priest.

⁹⁰ BS L 2158

her crime, in connecting female impurity with a debasement of the sacred materials of the mass, potentially continue to inform the reader or listener's sensibilities as the hagiographer presents more fully developed depictions of female behaviour. Through maternal rebukes, restitution for the unfairly punished woman and veiling of the willing supplicants, Seanán's interactions with women up to this point in the text, defy ready characterisation as wholly positive or negative. The tension in these gendered accounts is at the heart of the next vignettes under consideration.

IV.vii.ii Brigit and the chasuble exchange

In one of the most intriguing Eucharistic episodes in the Irish hagiographical corpus, a nun from a foundation in proximity to Seanán's Inis Cathaig exchanges alms for the host; contrary to the devotional dissonance such pragmatic bargaining might quicken in the modern reader, the transactional nature of the encounter is presented without opprobrium by the medieval hagiographer. This account likely bears some relationship to an encounter between Seanán and Brigid of Kildare as recounted in the *Vita Prima*; Brigid sends vestments on the sea, in a vessel or *scrinium* translated as a shrine by Connolly, to Seanán.⁹¹ However there is no mention of the Eucharist in connection with this event in the *Vita Prima* so whilst a textual relationship may exist, the Lismore account is sufficiently independent of the earlier *Vita Prima* vignette, and instructive in our understanding of the relationship of women to the Eucharist in this corpus to merit autonomous analysis. Brigit, a virginal woman, credited with having established her own foundation at Cluain Iníde, is identified by reference to parentage and population group.⁹² The author's choice of *reicles*, as also used in reference to the foundation left under the stewardship of Brenainn's daughters, maintains a textual precedent of not distinguishing foundations made by women from those attributed to men.⁹³

⁹¹ Connolly, 'Vita Prima', p. 46, §112

⁹² DIS, p. 122; This Brigit is otherwise unattested in the corpus, as is her family group, according to Ó Riain.

⁹³ eDIL; Stokes, *Lives of Saints*, p. 398; it is likely that originally *reiclés* referred to a small recluse's cell from the Latin *reclusum*, its meaning by the later period had developed to refer to a large church or subsidiary church within a larger monastic enclosure. What is most significant

Brigit ingen Con-cathrach de Húaibh maic Tail, naebh-ingen ógh gabhais reicles i Cluain Infide for bru Shinna. Robui aiciside casal⁹⁴ i n-aimsain do Senán, 7 ní bhui aice techtaire leis, co nderna cliab bec do fhleascaib cuill, 7 co tart cúnnach friss 7 co tuc an casal inn, 7 cu tard a rinde do chuinghidh shacarbaice, 7 foceird iarsin in cliabh for Sinainn, 7 atbert: ‘As ced duit sin do breith let co hInis Cathaig’.⁹⁵

Brigit, a daughter of Cú Cathrach, of the Huí Maic Tail, a virginal woman, established a church in Cluain Infide, on the banks of the Shannon. She had a chasuble as alms for Seanán and she had no messenger for it, so she made a small basket of hazel rods, and she put moss in it, and she put the chasuble in it, and she put her basket to request the sacrament and then she set the basket on the Shannon and said: ‘You may bring that with you to Inis Cathaig’.

Brigit’s primary ambition here, as presented by the author, is to deliver the chasuble she has procured or produced to Seanán,⁹⁶ and the inclusion of a basket to receive the sacrament is almost a secondary consideration. Plausibly one might read the items of exchange as reinforcing the hierarchical nature of the sacral relationship between men and women; the female in the equation trades the mechanical product of her labour for the divinely imbued bread. However, given the importance of the chasuble to the correct priestly attire for the mass, it is an apt corollary to the Eucharist’s centrality to the good Christian life.⁹⁷ Brigit is, in some respect, facilitating the orthodox consecration of the host by providing the chasuble and her assumption of appropriate recompense seems justified. It is also noteworthy that the chasuble is identified as being *i n-aimsain* rather than presented as a gift. This places the transaction more firmly within the context of the newly emerging priorities of the reformed church where

here is that the author uses the same term for male foundations, including for example, the centre where Senán trained under Cassidan; BS L 1955

⁹⁴ eDIL; the semantic range for *casal* includes mantle and cloak, given the number of attestations listed in eDil of its use in contexts that connect it to clerics, vestments and a religious significance (including *Liber Hymnorum* and *Aislinge Meic Conglinne*) it is reasonable to accept its meaning here, as chasuble.

⁹⁵ BS L 2398–2404.

⁹⁶ It is unclear from the excerpt if Brigit has made this clerical vestment herself or perhaps brought same from an important church visited on pilgrimage. The importance of the gifting of vestments (and related objects) is testified to in two separate instances in lives of Brigit of Kildare: Brigit secures lasting goodwill for gifting a chrismal to Bishop Brón and is later noted as giving Condlaedh’s vestments from overseas to the poor; Connolly, ‘Vita Prima’, §86; Connolly and Picard, ‘Cogitosus’, §29; O’Don, pp. 108–9

⁹⁷ Stevenson, ‘Introduction’, p. 112; DSE, pp. 152–7. See Warren for significance of the chasuble and *De statu* in Fleming for requirements in respect of priest’s garments.

the sacramental obligations of the priest are complemented by the duties of the congregation, the giving of alms being chief among them.⁹⁸

Nevertheless, despite being the foundress of her own church, Brigit remains dependent on a male cleric for access to a fundamental aspect of her religious life, and that cleric resides at a distance. As discussed above, in relation to the Lives of Irish female saints, the sacramental access of even the most prominent and powerful of female saints was regulated by the strength and intimacy of their relationship with a compliant male colleague.⁹⁹ The contrast in agency is further evidenced in the resolution of Brigit's supplication:

In la iarum rainic in casal co hInis Cathaig rareid Senán fria deochain: 'Is cead duit má fogheibhe ní isin traigh a tabhuirt lat.' Luidh in deochain co bhfuair in cliab isin traigh, 7 dobeir leis co Senán. Benaidh as in casal 7 nus-geibh Senán uime. Doberar íarsin dá cloich t-salainn isin cliabh cétna, 7 doberar in rinde co sacarbaic, 7 cuirtear for an uisqui cetna, 7 doraidh Senán fris: 'As ced duit so do breith cu rothaispenu an rinde 7 an salann cu Brigit, cu Cluain Infidhe, 7 [co tarda] in salann aili do Diarmuit, co hInis Clothrann.' O rasiacht in cliabh co Cluain Infidhe, luidh Brigit chuigi 7 geibhidh chuide as an rinde 7 indara salann. Dobair sruth Sinna beim uaithe forsin cliabh co[nid] farcuibh oc Diarmait a n-Inis Clothrann. Doghni dano Brigit 7 Diarmait altughadh buidhe do Dia 7 do Sheanán iarsin.¹⁰⁰

The day after that, the chasuble came to Inis Cathaig, Seanán said to his deacon: 'If you find anything on the strand you may bring it with you'. The deacon went and he found the basket on the strand and he brought it to Seanán. He took the chasuble out of it and Seanán put it on. Then two salt-stones are put in the same basket, as well as the basket containing the sacrifice, and it is put on the same water and Seanán said to it: 'You may bring this to Cluain Infide and show the basket and the salt to Brigit, and bring the other salt[-stone] to Diarmait, to Inis Clothrann.' On the arrival of the basket to Cluain Infide, Brigit went to it and she took to her from it, the basket and one of the two salt-stones. The current of the Shannon swept away the basket and brought it to

⁹⁸ TCI, pp. 238 and 196.

⁹⁹ The reliance of women on men's willingness to provide ministration is also referenced in BFc, where it is noted that wives and women are prohibited from visiting his church: BFc L 3008.

¹⁰⁰ BS L 2405–15

Diarmait at Inis Clothrann. After that Brigit and Diarmait gave thanks to God and to Seanán.

Whilst the idea of the river as conduit of the sacrament might seem potentially irreligious to us, the use of water to convey items of high value, including books and chalices, is elsewhere attested in the genre.¹⁰¹ Similarly, there are references to the Eucharistic host being transported via a basket and pulley system to accommodate the needs of desert pillar dweller Simeon Stylites, perhaps rendering the imagery of the Mosaic exploitation of the River Shannon less irreligious to modern palates.¹⁰²

Seanán returns the basket with the host with the addition of a salt-stone, via the river, as Brigit had done, exercising power over the physical environment, as has Brigit.¹⁰³ However, Seanán independently chooses to use Brigit's basket to send a gift to another cleric, but Diarmait,¹⁰⁴ enjoying the privileges of priesthood by virtue of his gender, has no need to receive the Eucharist from an external source and is gifted only salt. Salt was an integral part of the baptismal rite, during which it was placed on an infant's or catechumen's tongue; this is noted both in the liturgy of the rite in *Stowe* and by Gillebertus in *De statu*.¹⁰⁵ It further endorses the superior sacramental status of the male cleric over the holy-woman. Intriguingly, the same Diarmait is variously recorded in the Martyrology of Donegal, in the thirteenth-century Old Norse *Konungs Skuggsjá*, and by Gerald in *Topographia Hibernica* as having banned any female creature, human or animal from accessing his church, on pain of death.¹⁰⁶ Gerald informs his readers that dogs, cats and females of many other species have died instantly having breached the prohibition. Whether Diarmait's connection with a proscription on contact with

¹⁰¹ See for example Monenna and the silver chalice; 'Saint Monenna, II', p. 12, §7; 'Betha Chiaráin', L 4305; in the Ciarán episode the saint sends vestments to Senán using the river as medium.

¹⁰² Bartlett, *Why*, pp. 40–1.

¹⁰³ The manipulation of the physical environment is a regularly occurring power of holy men and women in the Irish corpus, in which there appears to be little gender differentiation.

¹⁰⁴ DIS, p. 263.

¹⁰⁵ On the economic value of salt: Kelly, *Irish Farming*, pp. 340–2; DSE, p. 157; Lit, p. 208.

¹⁰⁶ Meyer, 'Irish Mirabilia', p. 8; O'Clery, O'Donovan, Todd and Reeves, *Martyrology of Donegal*, p. 400; *Topographia*, p. 60, Book II, §37.

women arose in texts written before BS and was known to the Life's author or developed along side or after this episode, the significance of gender in this Brigidine vignette is further emphasised by the reference to Diarmait and Inis Clothram. Brigit, despite founding a church and further conforming to expectations of the *vita apostolica*, is reliant on the goodwill of Seanán, who shares the bounty of Inis Cathaig, with colleagues in enclosures which also potentially exclude women entirely, without imposing a moral or financial levy as in his exchange with a holy-woman. Ultimately, the prevailing impression engendered by this episode is a buttressing of the principles of distancing women from the sacrament, as explored above in relation to Irish materials outside of the hagiographical genre. The narrative immediately following this further fortifies this impression, as will be next considered.

IV.vii.iii A different female type

All of the holy women referenced thus far, in the analysis of gender-inflection in BS, have conformed to the most common representation of female religious life in Irish hagiography: that of a professed (or widowed) woman living in community, with differing degrees of contact with the wider public sphere.¹⁰⁷ Canir, the 'pious holy virgin' next encountered by Seanán in the narrative is reported to have established a hermitage in her own territory.¹⁰⁸ Certainly, given the general Christian preoccupation with 'the impurity of women' and the danger Eve's daughters posed to men, who were generally required to at least nominally profess celibacy, the female anchorite is a commonplace character in Eastern and Latin hagiographies, from the time of the writings of the Church Fathers and the actions of the desert mothers.¹⁰⁹ Hagiographically, there is evidence that the authors distinguished between types of female religiosity. Monenna is the Irish female saint most frequently adduced as possessing a

¹⁰⁷ For the pre-eminence of the conventual model of Irish women see: Bitel, *Isle of the Saints*.

¹⁰⁸ 'Betha Shenáin', L 2416; 'Canir craibhdech, naebhógh do Benntraighe deisceirt Eirenn, gabhuis disert ina crich fein'; 'Canir, a pious, holy virgin of the Benntraighe people in the south of Ireland, established a hermitage in her own territory'.

¹⁰⁹ Bitel, 'Enclosures', p. 31; Coon, *Sacred Fictions*, p. xviii; Schulenburg, *Forgeful* pp. 127–39; Salisbury, *Church Fathers*, pp. 7–10; Salisbury, 'Sex', p. 48.

piety that is heavily indebted to the isolation and asceticism of the desert mothers.¹¹⁰ However, this characterisation which emphasises her asceticism over other manifestations of her holiness, fails to account for the innumerable references to her enjoying conventual life with her sisters, after a brief period of formation living separately in her parents' home.¹¹¹ There are no other mentions of anchoresses in the Lismore Lives but there are four references in contemporary Latin lives of Monenna, Áed, Ailbe and Cainnech respectively.¹¹² In each of these accounts, excluding that in the life of Monenna,¹¹³ the female hermit is depicted as dependent on the male saint for various aspects of her religious life: in *Vita sancti Albei* Scíath of Ardskeah asks the saint for Gospel books and farm animals to enable her to live self-sufficiently, in *Vita sancti Cainnici* it is reported that on the death of her boy assistant the saint's sister Columba is without a person to aid her in providing hospitality and in *Vita sancti Aedi* an unnamed holy-woman calls on Áed's assistance, in the absence of any alternative support network, when accused of wrongdoing. It is clear from these representations that in general whilst hagiographers could conceive of women living on the margins of the social order they ultimately remained dependent on their male counterparts in times of material and spiritual crisis. It is possible that these women are hagiographical topoi,¹¹⁴ rather than representations of a historically affirmed role but there is some prescriptive evidence to suggest that a lone woman, living entirely apart from society, existed in the consciousness of the secular law-makers. Provision is made for the female anchorite in *Bretha Crólige*, where the jurists cite the community's responsibilities to observe a duty of care to the *bandeorad Dé*, including but not limited to furnishing her with

¹¹⁰ Harrington, *Women*, p. 123; Bray, 'Manly', pp. 171–2; Johnston, 'Transforming women', p. 205.

¹¹¹ *Vita S. Monennae* (ed. and transl. Armagh Historical Society).

¹¹² 'Vita s. Aedi', 'Vita s. Cainnici', and 'Vita s. Albei' in VSHH; 'Vita s. Cainnici', §31 and 'Vita s. Aedi', §33 in VSHP.

¹¹³ Monenna comes to the woman's aid when she is robbed by a man; the hermit is identified as living close to, but definitely not within Monenna's foundation, in a *monasteriolum*, a little monastery or hermitage. Monenna's interaction with this hermit was discussed above under 'Irish female saints'.

¹¹⁴ Harrington, *Women*, p. 124. Harrington is unpersuaded of the historicity of the female hermit model but her interrogation of the historical evidence is perfunctory.

food.¹¹⁵ In a recent contribution to scholarship on gender in medieval Ireland, Judith Bishop has argued that the figure of *deorad Dé* was often imbued with ‘exceptional power’ within the law texts and associated glosses, just as Canir exhibits.¹¹⁶ It is my contention that in presenting the anchorite’s need here as sacramental the hagiographer has invested the episode with considerable importance; the close reading which follows is a function of that.

IV.vii.iv Canir’s visitation

Bai adaig ann iar n-iarmeirghi oc ernaighthi co tarfas dí cealla Eirenn uili, 7 tor teined dá cech cill dibh docum nime. In tene thurgaibh a hInis Cathaig as í ba mó dibh, 7 ba hedrochta, 7 ba dirgha docum nime. ‘Is cain in recles ut’ ar si: ‘iss ed ragat-sa curub aice bias mo eiseirgi’. Tainic roimpi acétair cen eolus acht in tor teinid atconnaic oc lasad cen cumsanad etir la 7 aidhchi inafiadnaisi co toracht cuice. O dhorocht immorro cu m-bai for bru Luimnigh andes luid iarum [tar muir] cosaib tirmaibh amal bid ar talamh réidh, cu mbai i purt Innsi Cathaig. Rofhidir dano Senán inní sin 7 luidh cu mbui isin purt aracind, 7 feruidh failti fria. ‘Is ed dorochtus-sa’ ol sí. ‘A Chanir, eirigh’, ol Senán, ‘docum mo máthar do shethar fil isin indsi út tair, co nderntar h’áighidhecht ann’. ‘Ni hedh dorochtamar’ ol Canir, ‘acht is aire dorochtus, conam-raibh aighidhecht latsa isin indsi-seo’. ‘Ni thiagat mna a n-indsi-sea’, ol Senán.¹¹⁷

One night there, after nocturns, she was praying, when all the churches of Ireland appeared to her, and a pillar of fire from every one of them to heaven. The fire that arose from Inis Cathaig was the greatest of them and it was the brightest and the most direct towards heaven. ‘That church is bright’ she said, ‘I will go there in order that my resurrection will be there’. She set off immediately without knowing anything except for the pillar of fire she had seen continuously alight both day and night, until she reached it. When she arrived at the bank of Limerick in the south, she went across [the sea] with dry feet as if on level ground, until she was in the harbour of Inis Cathaig. Now Seanán knew that and he went to the harbour to meet her, and welcomed her. ‘I have come thus’, she said. ‘Go, Canir’, said Seanán, ‘to my mother, your sister, who is

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 185; Kelly, *Irish Law*, pp. 77, 129–34, 271, 351. *Bandeorad Dé* is translated by Kelly as ‘female exile of God’. Given that Canir is reported as having founded a *dísert*, in contrast to the foregoing episode where Brigit is the foundress of a *reclais*, her status as anchoress seems indisputable.

¹¹⁶ Bishop, ‘Gender-bending’, pp. 123–24.

¹¹⁷ Stokes, ‘Betha Shenáin’, L 2417–2429.

on the island that is to the east, so that you will receive hospitality there'. 'We have not come for that', said Canir, 'but it is for this I have come, to have hospitality with you on this island'. 'Women do not come onto this island', said Seanán.

Having been introduced to Canir by reference to her tribe and place, we are told that after nocturns she is witness to a divine sign, persuading her of the need to visit the church that has been identified as the greatest among the churches which were made visible to her in the vision. Canir is engaged in a form of worship for which she needs no male input, she has performed the appropriate ordinary office and is in private prayer when the apparition occurs, revealing to her the location of an extraordinary component of her religious life, the site of her death and resurrection. Identifying a place of resurrection is a common trope of the genre,¹¹⁸ although it is usually the preserve of the saint whose life is the subject of the hagiographer's attentions, making Canir's identification of a place within the environs of Seanán's church somewhat unusual. When discrete burials occur in these texts, of persons other than the founding saint, within the consecrated grounds of his church, it is usually at the subject saint's exhortation.¹¹⁹ Whilst the daily routine acts of devotion can be achieved independently by the female hermit, when reaching the culmination of her life and ensuring that her eternal soul is properly accounted for, she is compelled to seek out the assistance of a cleric. Although there is no explicit reference here to viaticum, the presumption that her death is imminent leads us to the reasonable inference that the last rites will be required.¹²⁰ Her miraculous journey to Inis Cathaig, walking over water without wetting her feet, is in the tradition of *imitatio Christi* and echoes a feat regularly performed by male saints, though not Seanán in this text.¹²¹ Her request

¹¹⁸ Saints' places of resurrection related to their principal foundations: Stokes, 'Betha Phátraic', L 466, L 602; BS L 1845, 1871, 2062, 2185, and 2195; BF L 2593; BFc L 2924; The importance of a place of resurrection is very pronounced in BS where Patrick foresees Inis Cathaig as Seanán's place of resurrection even before his birth; Patrick's deacons dispatched to convert Seanán's people before his birth are reported to have selected their own place of resurrection in proximity to that which they know will be Seanán's; Seanán's defeat of the monster inhabiting the waters at Inis Cathaig is presented as vital to his ordained destiny.

¹¹⁹ Stokes, 'Betha Shenán', L 2349. Having resuscitated, baptised and communed two boys who subsequently choose to proceed to heaven, Seanán directs their interment at Inis Cathaig.

¹²⁰ The priority afforded to viaticum was explored in Chapter III with respect to clerics and is further referenced with respect to the laity in Chapter V.

¹²¹ 'Life of Abban', §8; 'Máedóc I', §16; and 'Coemgen I', §7 in BNÉ; 'Vita S. Cainnici', §31 and 'Vita s. Aedi', §48 in VSHH.

for hospitality is poorly received by Seanán, though he anticipates her arrival, and he informs her that women may not enter Inis Cathaig.¹²² From his refusal it also becomes clear that Canir is not a stranger to Seanán but his aunt; this familial affinity makes his refusal to provide even basic hospitality a very clear breach of social obligations, gender notwithstanding. As referenced above, the law tracts specifically require the community to provide for the needs of anchorites, such as Canir. At an earlier juncture in the narrative, when Seanán is similarly refused lodgings at Dún Mechair, he prays for God's intervention and a troop then avenges his repulsion by slaying the household and destroying the fortress.¹²³ His repudiation of Canir's request is perhaps legitimate by contemporary standards, on the basis of gender alone, as a more compelling signifier of identity than any other, but it is in her response that we enter previously uncharted waters.

IV.vii.v *Canir's speech*

‘Cid dia ta latsa sin’? ol Canir, ‘Ni messa Crist, ar ni lugha thainic do thathcreic ban inás do thathcreic fher. Ni lugha roces ardaigh ban inás ardaigh fher. Robhatar mná oc umaloid 7 oc timterecht do Crist 7 dia aps[t]alaib. Ní lugha, dano, thiaghuit mna isin bhflaith nemhdha inait fir.¹²⁴ Cidh, dano, arna gebhtha- sa mná cucat at indsi? ‘Is talchar ataí’ ar Seanán. ‘Cidh on’ or Canir, ‘in roa inní connaigim, inat mo thaeibh isin indsi-sea 7 sacarbhaic uaitsi damh’? ‘Dobérthar’ or Senán, ‘inat eiseirghu duit sunn for brú thuindi, 7 is ecal lim in mhuir do breith do taisse as’. ‘Rom-bia-sa la Dia’ ol Canir, ‘ni ba hedh toisech béras an mhuir as don inis in maighin a mbiu-sa’. ‘Is cet duitsi, tra’ ol Senán, ‘techt a tir’. Ár is amhlaid robui sisi cein robatar oc imacallaim, 7 sí ‘na sesamh iarsin tuind, 7 a trosdan fo a bruinne amal bidh for tír nobheth. Tic iarum Caneir for tír, 7 doberur sacarbhaic di, 7 teit docum nimhe [focétóir].¹²⁵

¹²² There are no particularly religious connotations to the use of *aighidhecht* for lodging or hospitality (eDil headword *oígidecht*). Nor is it a peculiarly secular term as the distribution of references would appear to indicate its use across literary genres.

¹²³ BS L 1940.

¹²⁴ The important theological terms employed by Canir all appear appropriate to their context, as per eDil. *thathcreic*, from headword *taithechrecc*/ redemption, particularly religious salvation; *roces* from headword *césaid*/ to suffer, frequently associated with the Passion; *ardaigh* from headword *dáig*/ for the sake of, a wide range of attributions including in relation to Passion; *umaloid* from headword *umaldóit*/ humble or lowly service; *timterecht* from headword *timthirecht*/ ministration, attested a number of times paired with *umaldóit*; *flaith nemhdha* as kingdom of heaven is a construction seen elsewhere, including the LB homily XXXI, from John's Gospel account of the resurrected Jesus' appearing to Thomas, as at Hom, L 6907 and 6908.

¹²⁵ Stokes, 'Betha Shenán', L 2429–2449.

‘How did you come to that arrangement?’ said Canir, ‘Christ is better than you, for he came to redeem women no less than to redeem men. He did not suffer less for the sake of women than for the sake of men. Women have given humble service and ministration to Christ and his apostles. Moreover, women enter into the kingdom of heaven no less than men. Why, then, do you not allow women to you onto your island?’ ‘You are stubborn’. said Seanán. ‘Where then will I get what I ask for’, said Canir, ‘namely, my place on this island and the sacrament from you to me?’ ‘A place of resurrection will be given to you on the bank of the wave’, said Seanán, ‘but I am afraid that the sea will take your remains from there’. ‘God will grant me’, said Canir, ‘that the sea will not take away from this island first, the place in which I am’. ‘You may then’, said Seanán, ‘come to shore’. For while they were conversing, she was standing upright on the wave with her staff under her chest as if she were on the land. Then Canir came to shore, and the sacrament was given to her and she went to heaven [at once].

In what has been described by Schulenburg as a ‘feminist conversation’ Canir instructs Seanán in doctrine that has been connected by Johnston, in the most sustained treatment of this episode yet published, to the oft-cited passage on equality at Galatians 3:28.¹²⁶ Johnston argues that the author is here invoking a ‘more radical notion’ of Christian thought on gender difference derived from the writings of St Paul, which is at odds with the more ‘typical misogyny’ of the period.¹²⁷ Ultimately though Johnston reads Canir as maintaining rather than subverting the prevailing social order: her ‘success is unique and her victory pyrrhic’ as it reinforces her exclusion from sacramental authority.¹²⁸ Most scholars who have approached this text, with the exception of Harrington, have seen the preeminent didactic function of the text as the preservation of the division between the sexes, with the impurity of women particularly implicated.¹²⁹ The proliferation of anecdotes such as *Foscél ar Bannscail* and the almost anti-

¹²⁶ Schulenburg, *Forgetful*, pp. 319–20; Johnston, ‘Powerful women’, pp. 308–10; Bitel, *Land of Women*, p. 201.

¹²⁷ Johnston, ‘Powerful women’, p. 309 Bitel also characterises Canir as posing an ‘eloquent challenge’ that is ‘diverted’ by Senán.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

¹²⁹ Harrington, *Women*, p. 243; Bitel, ‘Enclosures’, p. 31; Hughes and Hamlin, *Traveller*, p. 8; Johnston, ‘Powerful women’, p. 309

hymnal *Eve's Lament*, as quoted earlier in this chapter, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries has been connected in the scholarship to a resurgence in the anxieties around contact between the sexes with the temptation of the holy-man embodied in the idea of the sexually promiscuous woman.¹³⁰ Unremarked by those who have addressed the text thus far is the semantic range of the condemnatory adjectival epithet Seanán uses to castigate Canir: *talchar*. Though most frequently translated, as done here, as stubborn, with as eDil notes 'a vaguer sense of wilful', the word has a semantic range which includes lustful.¹³¹ The sections of the *Old Irish Penitential* which map onto *De Luxoria* sections of the author's Latin sources make use of *talchar* in respect of sexual sins.¹³² If the implication of appetites of the flesh remained understood, by the author and audience, then Seanán's rebuke to Canir, is vested with additional denigration not just of her, but of her whole sex. It certainly appears to have made an impression on Thomas Moore in the nineteenth century whose suggestive lyric implies Canir is present to taint Seanán's sod with her 'rosy smile'.¹³³

But Seanán's caustic response should not obscure the authority and agency that Canir claims as her own. As mentioned above, the speech has been connected to the Pauline articulation of equity between races, peoples, and the sexes in his epistle to the Galatians and undeniably the unequivocal expression of equal access to salvation for men and women, as pronounced by Canir, recalls Paul's doctrine, but arguably it provides only a partial key to Canir's statements. As with all efforts to interpret Paul the application here of Galatians as a statement of equality arising from baptism into Christianity ignores statements to the contrary made elsewhere in his epistles, in 1 Corinthians III.19–29 and XIV.34–35, Paul argues for women's natural subordination to men: men are the glory of God and women are the glory of

¹³⁰ Harrington, *Women*, pp. 239, 78–79; fo. 140b Rawl. B 512; EHL, p. 744. The Rawl. B 512 recension of the anecdote appears next to the tale of the *Abbot of Drimnagh*, another text in which gender-tension is strongly implicated. Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Literature', p. 54; Ní Mhaonaigh describes this poem as 'almost an anti-hymn'.

¹³¹ eDil headword *talchar* / selfish, lustful, wilful, obstinate, lustful.

¹³² Gwynn, 'An Irish Penitential', p. 144 §28, Cummean ii.13.

¹³³ Moore, *The Poetical Works*, p. 257, from *St. Senanus and the Lady*.

men and he further prescribes silence in religious gatherings for certain classes of women.¹³⁴

In essence, no consensus exists in either medieval or modern commentaries on Pauline attitudes to women's position in religious life, relative to their male counterparts, which reduces the utility of the Galatians passage as a window on a heterodox gender politics for our period.¹³⁵

One of the pieces of evidence adduced by Canir in her claim on salvation is the humble care and ministration provided by women to Jesus in his lifetime and there can be no escaping the very clear biblical precedent upon which she is relying, the care taken by Mary Magdalene of Christ. The conflation in the early medieval period of the two women Mary of Magdala and the woman who ministered to Christ is generally accepted. Mary Magdalene is a biblical figure who is never mentioned by Paul. The authority with which Canir, a woman, addresses Seanán is, as far I can ascertain, unprecedented within the canon of Irish hagiography but Jesus very publicly extols the care given him by the Magdalene and exhorts his followers to preach her story widely. Matthew records Jesus as decreeing that 'what she has done will be told in memory of her', an idea which bears no little resemblance to the language of the first Eucharist and the significance of memorial.¹³⁶ Mary Magdalene exists as a moral exemplar within the Irish tradition; LB Homily XIV 'On Charity' cites her as a model for the redeemed life.¹³⁷ By the thirteenth century Mary Magdalene was second only to Mary, Mother of Jesus, as an object of preaching, throughout Latin Christendom, but the roots of what Jensen terms 'magdalenian fermentation' are found in the eleventh-century and the emergence of a greater emphasis on interior spirituality and personal redemption narratives.¹³⁸ We might suppose that there existed a great distance in medieval thought between the pious virgin and the reformed prostitute but

¹³⁴ Mays and Gaventa, *The HarperCollins Bible commentary*, pp. 1087, 90, 109.

¹³⁵ Ní Chatháin and Richter, *Irland*, p. 515 & 119. Kelly's article confirms that there is no commentary on Galatians in *Das Bibelwerk* so what the prevailing Irish interpretation was remains unclear.

¹³⁶ Atkinson, *Passions and Homilies*, p. 202L 5900; Matth. XXVI.13 (Homily XIV appears in the manuscript immediately after *Betha Bhrigdi* which, as noted in Chapter I, is closely connected to Lismore's Brigit.

¹³⁷ Atkinson, *Passions and Homilies*, Homily XIV

¹³⁸ Jansen, *Magdalen*, pp. 3, 35; Harrington, *Women*, p. 284. Harrington is the sole dissenting voice in this regard, suggesting that Mary Magdalene 'drew little interest at this time' but as elsewhere noted, Harrington's conclusions are not always well founded.

Mary Magdalene was regularly included under the category *virgines* in eleventh-century litanies; the sexual sinner who atoned for her sins could be made spiritually whole, if not physically intact.¹³⁹ Though I have been unable to source any Insular materials where voice is given to Mary Magdalene,¹⁴⁰ I remain persuaded of her evocation here by Canir.

IV.vii.vi Bantellach

Though we know Medieval Irish women lacked contractual capacity, save in a few enumerated exceptional circumstances, they could claim an entitlement to life interest in land holdings, under certain conditions.¹⁴¹ In the instance where a woman's circumstances make her the sole heir/ *banchomarbae* to her father's estate, that is, in the absence of an immediate male relative with any superior kinship relationship, she could pursue her claim through the legal system, in accordance with the prescriptions of the *tellach* process.¹⁴² However, *Inis Cathaig* is not identified as having belonged to Seanán's kin group, rather he is depicted as having secured something akin to adverse possession against the Uí Fidgenti king who claims ownership.¹⁴³ Land ownership confers additional legal and social rights on a woman¹⁴⁴ and Canir's insistence on entry might conceivably be connected to the procedure of *bantellach* or female entry in which a female heir seeks to secure her inheritance against the occupier whose legal claim she disputes. Canir is, as we know from Seanán's reference to the female foundation he believes she should visit in lieu of his own, the saint's aunt and thus the possibility exists, that were *Inis Cathaig* a holding originally belonging to a shared male ancestor, Canir has a claim. We are told that Canir's hermitage is in her own *crích*/ territory and this is a term that appears in law tracts with respect to boundaries and the phrasing seems to establish the principle of Canir as already occupying the role of independent landowner.¹⁴⁵ However, her

¹³⁹ Lifshitz, 'Priestly Women', p. 89

¹⁴⁰ As Mary Magdalene was understood by medieval audiences.

¹⁴¹ McLeod, *Contract Law*, pp. 71–80

¹⁴² Kelly, *Irish Law*, pp. 104–5, 87–88

¹⁴³ BS L 2249–2329. These passages chronicle a lengthy dispute between Seanán and the king for possession of the island, with Seanán eventually engineering the king's death.

¹⁴⁴ Kelly, *Irish Law*, p. 105 Stacey, *Dark Speech*, p. 31

¹⁴⁵ eDIL under headword *crích*

designation as *Benntraighe*, whilst Seanán is Corca Baiscinn, which places her hermitage in a geographic location at a remove from Inis Cathaig, separated by the Shannon Estuary.¹⁴⁶ As covered under the general terms of Din Techtugud, the requirements for a woman seeking satisfaction are essentially the same as those imposed upon a man in the same situation.¹⁴⁷ *Bantellach* commences in entry, by the claimant accompanied by female witnesses of good standing, over the burial mounds of the holding and progresses through various stages of occupation, contingent upon the gathering of various livestock and material possessions.¹⁴⁸ However, none of the specific legal terms connected to *tellach* procedures appear in our text, such as *forcomal* / seizure, *apad*/ notice or *naidm*/ surety.¹⁴⁹ Fundamentally therefore it seems unlikely that this episode was written to evoke *bantellach* within the audience's frame of reference; the author was perhaps relying on a different model.

Iv.vii.vii Mary of Egypt as model?

When confronted with the challenge of identifying an analogue for Canir's sermon, I believe the most promising relationship exists between BS and the Irish adaptations of the life of Mary of Egypt.¹⁵⁰ The archetype of the reformed prostitute began with Mary Magdalene, and her invocation by Canir is the signpost which prompted my exploration of resonances with the fully realised tale of female redemption found in the medieval lives of Mary of Egypt.¹⁵¹ The introduction of the early Eastern saint to Latin European audiences reached its zenith in the thirteenth century with the widespread dissemination of Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* but there is extant textual evidence to suggest that she was known in the Insular world

¹⁴⁶ Moody, Martin and Byrne, *New History V. IX*, p. 19

¹⁴⁷ Kelly, *Irish Law*, p. 187

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 187–8 Stacey, *Dark speech*, p. 32. The plural form of verb *do-roich dorochtamar* is put into Canir's mouth once as opposed to *dorochtus* and the singular forms used everywhere else in her relevant speech. Given its singular occurrence it is unlikely to be anything more than a scribal error/ misplaced plural and not a reference to witnesses in her company. Chapman-Stacey emphasises the necessity of witnesses as part of the ritualised performance of this legal mechanism; without their presence the process is little different 'from the actions of a regular farming day'.

¹⁴⁹ Stacey, *Dark speech*, p. 29

¹⁵⁰ Ó Laoghaire, 'Mary of Egypt in Irish', pp. 255–7; Poppe, 'Beatha Mhuire Egiptacdha', pp. 279–99; Ross, 'Mac an Leagha', pp. 259–78; Tristram, 'Introduction', pp. 1–17; Ó Laoghaire, 'Beatha Mhuire Éigiptí',

¹⁵¹ Salisbury, *Church Fathers*, p. 68

before the popularisation of her tale of extreme penance.¹⁵² Though frequently conflated with Mary Magdalene in European and Insular sources, she is specifically commemorated at April 9th in the twelfth-century *Félire hUí Gormáin* and in fact Seanán is mentioned in the same passage, though this date is not associated with his feast-day.¹⁵³ Though Mary of Egypt is most associated with the archetype of female repentance in the wake of licentiousness, and there is no suggestion of Canir's having lived a sinful life before assuming the rose of an anchorite, in almost every other respect the material facts of Canir's encounter with Seanán mirror that of Mary with Zosimas and the types of speech placed in both women's mouths are equally congruent. Having lived a penitent life in isolation from civilisation, without recourse to the sacraments, Mary encounters coenobitic monk Zosimas and recounts her life story to the awestruck man.¹⁵⁴ Having exchanged mutually respectful blessings, Mary levitates before Zosimas, as they stand on the banks of the River Jordan and finally secures from him a promise to return in the following years with the sacrament for her, having instructed him in the theological significance of the sacrament and the role of the priest. She receives the Eucharistic host from him the subsequent year but on his third visit he finds the hermitess has died; the miracles attendant to the discovery of her corpse confirm her ascension to heaven. All of these material facts are echoed in Canir's meeting with Seanán: she is reported to live in isolation, she levitates in Seanán's presence, they meet by water, she provides him with theological instruction and having secured the Eucharist from him, she dies in the certainty of her eternal salvation.

¹⁵² Ó Laoghaire, 'Mary of Egypt in Irish', p. 255; Donovan, *Women Saints Lives in Old English Prose*, pp. 97–9. For example, there are ten Anglo-Saxon religious calendars dated before 1100, which commemorate her feast. The matter of how early that transmission was, is disputed. Tristram suggests that the 'scant' connections between Ireland and the Carolingian world mitigate against a familiarity with Paul the Deacon's sixth century Latin life of Mary. However, it seems clear that by the late tenth and early eleventh centuries she was at least known in England, and I am unpersuaded of the scantiness of connections between Ireland and the continent.

¹⁵³ Gorman and Stokes, *Gorman*, pp. 72–3. 'Maire thodiur thrednach Egeptacdhá fhirgrind, Procoir, Aedach ármemm, buaid sec[h]t náemóg niamda, Senán. Colman ciuinbind'; 'Miserable and abstinent Maria, the truly lovely Egyptian; Procorius, Aedach, let us reckon; the victory of seven shining virgins. Senán, gentle melodious Colmán, Broccán, the complete, a holy gem'

¹⁵⁴ Tristram, 'Introduction', pp. 13–5. These basic components of the narrative are present in a preponderance of the sources and where any pertinent differences arise in the Irish texts, they will be highlighted below.

Though there are no direct correlations between the words attributed to Canir and Mary, in the chief Irish vernacular witness to her life, it might be argued that there are resonances which further sustain the parallels. One of the first utterances made by Mary to Zosimus echoes the salvific message of Canir's speech: 'Is beannaidhi Dia noch do cheannaidh ar n-anmanna'.¹⁵⁵ When he first arrives with the sacrament for her and prostrates himself at her feet, she responds thus:

‘Féich gan sin do dhénumh ó táit sacramintí in Tighearna agus ó dheallraighis ó dhínti na sagartachta, ach guibhim thú innus gumadh dingmhála leatt, a athair, teacht dom innsaidhi annsa bliadhain sa choguin.’¹⁵⁶

Try not to do that since you have the sacraments of the Lord and since you shone from the dignity of the priesthood, but I beseech you that you might think it worthy of you, o father, to come to me here next year.

Just as Canir instructs Seanán in his responsibilities with respect to facilitating her salvation, Mary counsels Zosimus on his priesthood. She acknowledges the sacramental privilege he enjoys and requests his aid but all without questioning her own worthiness to receive. In the Old English prose life, a significantly longer text, Mary is frequently voiced with positive statements on the function of priesthood and her dependence on his ministrations for access to the sacrament but it might be argued that her death before receiving the host for the final time cements her independently assured salvation. Donovan argues that Mary's path to salvation, in emphasising the 'passive eremitical life of contemplative devotion' over the 'actively heroic insistence on female chastity' places it in direct conflict with the orthodox model presented by Aelfric.¹⁵⁷ I would dispute the characterisation of her presence as passive: agency in voicing her spiritual needs and tutoring her confessor are evidence of active engagement with her salvific fate. Whilst voiceless women abound in the Lismore Lives, Canir, like Mary, is an

¹⁵⁵ Ó Laoghaire, 'Beatha Mhuire Éigipti', p. 512. The blessing of God is that which saves our souls.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 516.

¹⁵⁷ Donovan, *Women Saints*, p. 99.

especially eloquent representative of voiced womanhood. Whilst the textual presentation of women as lecturing men, in an effort to correct their inferior behaviour or moral understanding, are relatively rare, there are a number of prominent iconographic representations in contemporary English materials which attest to the principle. An image in the early twelfth-century Psalter of St Albans which was likely produced under the patronage of onetime anchoress Christina of Markyate, depicts a woman with her index finger extended, a typical representation of sermonising.¹⁵⁸ But is Mary intended to operate as an orthodox model of feminine piety in the reform period?

Certainly the three recensions in five manuscripts, the earliest of which is the late fifteenth-century LFF attributed to Uilliam Mac an Leagha, present a text where the language and orthography are ‘quite modern’ with only ‘the slightest traces of Middle Irish’ but the comparative lateness of the extant texts should not preclude us from considering the possibility that the text existed in Ireland, in some form, in a period contemporary with the Lismore compositions.¹⁵⁹ Ó Laoghaire notes that in an examination of the version of the text which exists in Brussels Bibliotheque Royale 20978-9, Ó Cúiv’s manuscript analysis posited a linguistic date placing the text in the Middle Irish period.¹⁶⁰ Ross’s analysis of the two recensions attributable to Mac an Leagha suggests that the scribe amended the second version to craft a redemptive narrative that was ‘more palatable and familiar’ to an Irish audience, including the addition of an opening exordium on repentance and reform.¹⁶¹ Ross further theorises that the Irish iteration of Mary of Egypt is substantially different from ‘contemporary European narratives of the same kind’, which perhaps suggests a greater degree of connection with the vernacular products of a more localised cultural milieu, such as that which gave rise

¹⁵⁸ Jansen, *Magdalen*, pp. 268–9

¹⁵⁹ Ó Laoghaire, ‘Mary of Egypt in Irish’, p. 257; Ó Laoghaire, ‘Beatha Mhuire Éigiptí’, p. 489; Ross, ‘Mac an Leagha’, pp. 259–61

¹⁶⁰ Ó Laoghaire, ‘Mary of Egypt in Irish’, p. 257 Greene published some of the exempla from this manuscript, with specific reference to the Virgin Mary (and there may have been some conflation of the Marys)

¹⁶¹ Ross, ‘Mac an Leagha’, p. 261

to the Canir episode in BS. But even the idea of a standardised European textual foundation for this tale is problematic given the extent to which its premises invert expected norms and present a challenge to the ‘horizon of expectations’ of its readers.¹⁶² Szarmach makes a compelling case for the extent to which this ‘troublesome’ narrative ‘intellectually subverts whatever our understanding and experience of the genre of female saints’ Lives may have been’;¹⁶³ Canir’s declamations engender the same re-evaluation in this reader. In the ‘more Irish’ of the texts, if we accept Ross’s thesis, the monk who ministers to Mary is unnamed but the head of his monastery is identified as Seón. The monk’s relationship with the post-penitent Mary is one of equals, they exchange blessings and eventually, having levitated at his blessing, ‘she moves to excel him in all other respects’.¹⁶⁴ While she recognises his sacramental authority, just as Canir recognises Seanán’s, she considers herself an adequate arbiter of her entitlement to the sacraments. The extent to which the figure of the saint, particularly the female saint, can be argued to embody traits to be imitated by the faithful, is always difficult to reconcile with our understanding of the functions of hagiography. In this instance, the degree to which Canir exemplifies an anachronistic, subversive, and potentially seditious threat to the established Eucharistic order, it appears unlikely that she was written as a model of behaviour to be forged by professed women.

IV.vii.viii Proprietorial exigencies

The final act of Canir’s foray onto Seanán’s stage is her death and interment at *Inis Cathaig* and in some respects it is presented as the antithesis of the earlier referenced dispute between Seanán and the local king, which results in the king’s death after the saint’s maledictions come to fruition.¹⁶⁵ In the exploration of Seanán clerical identity in Chapter III extensive reference was made to the circumstances of his securing and consecrating his island

¹⁶² Szarmach, ‘More Genre Trouble: The Life of Mary of Egypt’, p. 165.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

¹⁶⁴ Ross, ‘Mac an Leagha’, p. 273.

¹⁶⁵ See above, p. 169.

monastery. The particulars of place and ownership only seems to increase in significance over the course of the developments in the dossier of Seanán's cult. By the fourteenth century recension of the *Miracles of Seanán* the author recites lists of various saints, male and female, who have attempted to breach Inis Cathaig and who have been repelled by the continued power of its patron, and Canir is absent.¹⁶⁶ However, the Canir episode is included in the thirteenth-century metrical Latin Life, likely produced *inter Anglos*, and in this telling Canir's agency is reduced and the emphasis on the threat posed by female sexuality is emphasised.¹⁶⁷ There are no declarative statements of the equality of the sexes from Canir, rather she asks Seanán does he believe she can receive Christ: 'Si meum credis spiritum posse Christum suscipere, quid me repellis corpore'?'¹⁶⁸ It is interesting that the Eucharist is not distinctly identified here, it is not the material host but Christ that is named, removing the sacramental setting present in the Lismore text. Seanán informs her that 'sexum habes in corpore', a more explicit statement on the impurity of the female body than may be inferred from the Lismore text.¹⁶⁹ Rather than persuading Seanán of the validity of her request, as in the Lismore text, in the metrical Life, she promises that God will send only her spirit onto the island and it comes to pass that she dies before she physically encroaches upon Seanán's territory. She is buried by the monks but in the deft handling of her death prior to her setting foot on the island the threat of pollution is averted. This altogether more conventional presentation of Canir's interaction with Seanán is a fitting corollary to the arguments previously advanced in relation to the normalising impetus that appears to have informed the treatment of Irish saints and texts by Anglo and Anglo-Norman authors, concerned with the sensibilities of their audiences, such as in Jocelin's treatment of Patrick.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ Plummer, 'Miracles of Senan', pp. 1–35.

¹⁶⁷ Her, p. 353.

¹⁶⁸ Heist, 'Vita S. Senani', p. 317 §18; 'If you believe my spirit can accept Christ, why do you repel me in the flesh'.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; 'You have sex in your body'. Harrington, *Women*, pp. 243–4

¹⁷⁰ See above III, pp. 127–9.

Mary of Egypt is the quintessence of the independent female saint with inestimable agency and there is an attractive persuasiveness to the argument propagated by Salisbury that her performance of sanctity is a very explicit appropriation of control of the very sexuality that made her a social outcast; in choosing chastity Mary assumed a position of authority that challenged the stigmata of being sexed female.¹⁷¹ Whilst the early church fathers and writers responded to this independence by refashioning female sanctity in the subsequent centuries, it is possible that an Irish author chose Mary's life as a cipher onto which craft a subversive account of Irish female sanctity.

IV.viii Gender as identity signifier elsewhere in BL

Whilst the nine homiletic Lives which form the focus of this dissertation constitute a significant portion of BL, the greatest portion of the manuscript is reserved for *Acallam na Senórach*, a literary text in which gender is strongly implicated.¹⁷² If, as Parsons cogently argues, the texts as we receive them now are a product of author, editor, scribe, and compiler then it follows, that a unified perspective on female piety might exist across the manuscript. The text has been previously classified by Ní Mhaonaigh as belonging to a stratum of literary production intimately connected to the theological concerns of the reform era, including a focus on sacramental obligations, particularly with respect to baptism.¹⁷³ Though communing or professed women are without a presence in the text, the prescriptions for a good marriage and the responsibilities of the wife in that regard 'loom large' throughout.¹⁷⁴ Dooley has argued the authorial stance reflects an 'approbation of women', particularly in their role as patrons, but given the extent to which the moral, financial and social advantages of marriage are extolled, it could be read as a warning to the female sex on the dangers of eschewing the married state.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Salisbury, *Church Fathers*, p. 73.

¹⁷² Parsons, 'Reading of *Acallam*', pp. 204–8; Dooley, 'Constructing', p. 173. Dooley and Parsons concur on the thematic interest in the role of women exhibited in this text.

¹⁷³ Parsons, 'Reading of *Acallam*', p. 152.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

¹⁷⁵ Dooley, 'Constructing', p. 173.

It had previously been argued by Ó Corráin that the author's attitude to marriage was ambivalent but Parson's assessment of the text as cleaving to the model of marital accord advanced internationally by Gregory VIII and more locally by Anselm and Lanfranc at Canterbury, is persuasive.¹⁷⁶ Outside of the two largest cohesive components of Lismore - *Acallam* and the hagiographical corpus - the manuscript composition is a fragmentary collection of texts spanning the genre spectrum from historical to bawdy anecdote. There is one short text found at Folio 111v which is relevant to the topics under discussion in this chapter.¹⁷⁷ In the previously considered text,¹⁷⁸ *Scél in dá lenab* which might be classified as an exemplum, a Jewish boy and his Christian companion partake of the Eucharist, the Jewish child dies at his parents' hands, but is resurrected by the intercession of Mary, *máthair in airdríg*, as a consequence of his having Communicated. The tale ends with the observation that Jewish women cannot endure their birth pangs without recourse to Marian intervention on their behalf. Unquestionably this tale can be connected to the phenomenon of blood-libel which reverberated with sometimes tragic consequences through medieval Europe,¹⁷⁹ but the juxtaposition of Mary and the Eucharist in favourable terms is the salient point in respect of this chapter. It is in the positive foregrounding of Mary that we find a substantive difference between the Irish and English iterations of the tale; in English sermons all the non-believing Jews are burned alive. It might be tempting to reverse engineer from twentieth-century perceptions of Irish Catholics as exceptionally faithful to the figure of Mary and suggest that the earliest strands of Marian devotion were precipitated by or subsequently engendered a more positive understanding of the role of women in Christian life, but this is overreaching. Ultimately we cannot legitimately read such deviations from convention and orthodoxy as

¹⁷⁶ Parsons, 'Reading of *Acallam*', p. 209

¹⁷⁷ A partial transcription and translation of the tale is found in Stokes, *Lives*, p.xx-xxi.

¹⁷⁸ See above, II, pp. 66-71.

¹⁷⁹ Rubin, *William of Norwich*, pp. vii-xi, xx-xxv; Rubin, *Gentile Tales* pp. 7-28. In her introduction to the *Passion of William* Rubin outlines the earliest eleventh- and twelfth-century contours of the blood-libel and identifies this Marian tale as one of the most widely disseminated of its type.

evidence of practices or perspectives antithetical to doctrinal truths,¹⁸⁰ but rather as confirmation of an authentic degree of acculturation, which allows for localised responses to universal precepts.

IV.ix Conclusions

As indices of Eucharistic thought and praxis, hagiographical vignettes are particularly useful; in using a textual form intended to create social cohesion and inculcate personal piety, to examine a ritual performed for the same purpose, we are gifted with a confluence with special utility. In this chapter, the gendered Eucharistic vignettes from the Lismore Lives were contextualised with respect to historical and literary developments in the Isles and across the Continent. Specifically, evidence from contemporary hagiography produced in other traditions was examined to provide a comprehensive frame of reference for the Lismore texts. As presented in Chapter I and argued in Chapter III, the relationship between reformist ideals and sacramental identities is a significant one and it is generally reasonable to presume that the putative resurgence in misogyny, dated to the period of Church reform, by much of the scholarship relied upon in this chapter, might find expression in the treatment of female Communicants in the BL texts. Most importantly, the frame of this chapter encourages the reader to think specifically of these textual extracts as inextricably linked to the particulars of the historical and cultural context in which they were produced. That emphasis on context has included references to manuscript situations, intertextual relationships between Irish and externally produced works, situated the social grammar of the Eucharist within the wider frame of sacramental solemnities, sited female Eucharistic piety within the better developed scholarly architecture of female sanctity and historical data on female profession, and most importantly related medieval Irish depictions of female Communication and the relationship between women and the Eucharist to Latin European norms, in so much as universal norms can be said

¹⁸⁰ Ryan, 'Popular Piety', p. 969.

to have existed. The meanings of texts can only be found within a cultural context which considers the input of author and audience,¹⁸¹ and the catechetical homily as fundamentally a dialogical text, is an ideal place in which to locate the intersection of authorial intentions and audience understandings. While much of the scholarship on the particular affinity between holy women and the Eucharist concentrates on the centuries beyond 1050–1200, it was suggested that the origins of the affective piety inculcated in women, by Eucharistic reception, are found in our period. Notwithstanding these observations, the Lismore corpus fails to provide persuasive evidence of a truly affective dimension to female Communication, although it is, I would argue, definitively gendered and speaks to an especially virulent misogyny. Prominent episodes from BS and BBr were extensively mined for their conformity to conventional and subversive European models of female Communication and while some interesting analogues were presented, none was deemed wholly supportive of the original hypothesis. There are echoes of the notable transgressions of Mary of Egypt, Íte and Monenna, into male-controlled spaces, physical and metaphorical, in the actions of Brigit and Canir but none so redolent as to give rise to definitive conclusions. It was ultimately argued that the aggregated interpretations of these Lismore representations of female Eucharistic piety are not without persistent tensions around what may be deemed imitable and what is deemed admirable, and it is likely that these tensions were felt by the audiences for whom these homilies were potentially of edificatory import. These tensions are imprints of the broader warp and weft of the challenges faced by Irish clerical leaders as they navigated the vicissitudes of belonging and conforming to the reformed church. And while no single corporate identity for female Communicants can be identified from the available Lismore sources, we are, as one would expect, left with the distinct impression of a very firmly gendered relationship to the Eucharist. However, that relationship cannot be said to be distinct from that which prevailed in the pre- or post-reform Irish Church.

¹⁸¹ Poppe, 'Reconstructing', p. 35.

CHAPTER V: LAY AND PENITENTIAL IDENTITY

Bodies abound in Irish hagiography and the homiletic Lismore Lives are no exception to this truism. Human and animal bodies are diseased, cured, transformed, anatomised, and resurrected throughout the nine texts. Saints interact with agents and objects of the body politic across manifold variegated dimensions from the mundane to the miraculous. However, there is one corporate body which remains elusive: the lay congregation is a genuine *rara avis* of the texts produced in this period. In the various Eucharistic, sacramental and liturgical episodes considered throughout Chapters II, III and IV, the presence of lay-persons as participants in or witnesses to the mass or consecration of the Communion species is negligible. This chapter, by examining and contextualising accounts in which the presence of lay and penitent Communicants is unequivocal or may reasonably be inferred, seeks to expiate that sin of omission.

V.i Outline

In order to situate the textual evidence within the appropriate framework, the brief first section of this chapter explores current scholarship on church architecture in the period and prescriptive or juridical texts which offer details of the prevailing climate with respect to the frequency and pragmatics of Communication by lay men, women and children living and working outside of or on the margins of a secular church or community observing a regular rule.¹ It should be acknowledged that many of these sources date from a much earlier period than the Lives under review here, but in the absence of alternatives and the dearth of extant Irish liturgical documentation from the central Middle Ages, these texts provide a functional, if restricted, window on the uses and perceived abuses of the Eucharist that potentially still pertained in our period. Those texts which copyists deemed worthy of inclusion in manuscripts

¹ A useful overview of the existing scholarship on the material evidence, which includes chalices and patens appropriate to large congregations, is well covered in O'Don, pp. 147–98, and needs no rehearsal here.

contemporary with BL are particularly relevant in this regard.² Attention then moves to a review of the episodes in the texts in which the presence of lay persons can be discerned. An account of infant or child Communication in BS is examined with reference to correspondence between the Irish prelates and the see at Canterbury on the efficacy and orthodoxy of dispensing the Eucharist to juveniles. The greatest portion of the analysis thereafter is given over to an interrogation of multiple Eucharistic encounters in BBr and how these vignettes are perhaps best read as functions of the text's intersectionality, in bridging the genres of homiletic hagiography and *immrama* or voyage literature. The final section explores the relationship between texts and identities and how audiences were potentially primed to internalise the messages of these homilies.

V.ii Lay Communicants: archaeological and prescriptive evidence

One of the most important sources of information on Eucharistic practices in medieval Ireland has gone unmentioned until this juncture but no consideration of lay access to Communion could be considered complete without a brief discussion of the archaeological evidence available to us. Early scholars of the Irish church dismissed the likelihood of large congregations being regularly present at masses, given the small scale of the churches from the Pre-Norman era for which we have extant remains.³ It was suggested that priests and deacons were present at the altar for the consecration and the congregants remained outside the building, receiving Communion outdoors on the few high days of the liturgical calendar, on which they had an obligation to Communicate.⁴ However, Ó Carragáin's thoroughgoing analysis has doubtfully refuted those arguments and that Irish churches were congregational from the earliest period is now generally accepted.⁵ As argued by Ó Carragáin, the small church size in pre-Norman Ireland reflected the reality of smaller and more diverse religious communities but

² See I, pp. 11–13 above.

³ CEMI, pp. 169–97; Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural', pp. 119–54.

⁴ See p. 8 above.

⁵ CEMI, pp. 169–97.

also included structures that could accommodate up to 200 people.⁶ It might be argued that his thesis is less sound, however when he suggests, based it would appear exclusively on Cogitosus' *Vita S Brigittae*, that congregations were likely divided by rank and sex.⁷ Such postulations are sustained by what we know of the structured nature of Irish society and the emphasis placed on separation of the sexes in myriad texts.⁸ However, in the absence of additional supporting evidence this thesis flounders. In a supposition of specific relevance to the thesis of this chapter, he posits that the laity accessed the sanctuary of the church to receive the Eucharist.⁹ Unfortunately, this too is premised on slight evidence, drawn exclusively from Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*, and I would be hesitant to extrapolate from one text to an assertion that lay Communication within the most sacred space of churches was normative. His comments on the impetus to and implications of the developments in church architecture during the central Middle Ages, coterminous with the texts under consideration in this dissertation, are founded on more secure evidence. He convincingly connects the expansion of eastern cells and chancel spaces, beginning in the last two decades of the eleventh century, with an augmented respect for the Eucharistic liturgy.¹⁰ He enumerates the churches from Hiberno-Norse centres and those sites with pronounced contact with Lanfranc's Canterbury,¹¹ that rebuilt or enlarged the altar spaces in this period. As should be clear from the foregoing, the presence or indeed absence of lay Communicants cannot really be definitively inferred from this archaeological evidence, as congregants may indeed have been present to witness the consecration but not actually partake of the sacrament.

The efficacy of the Eucharist was acknowledged as a vital facet of the good Christian life, and more importantly death, in many of the texts produced in the central Middle Ages, as

⁶ Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural', p. 119.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁸ See IV, pp. 139–43 above.

⁹ Ó Carragáin, 'Architectural', p. 148.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 143–4.

¹¹ See I, pp. 3–6 above, on the influence of Canterbury on Irish ecclesiastical centres.

discussed throughout Chapter II, but the demarcations which existed within communities differentiated by clericality, gender, and socio-economic status were also germane to an individual's access to Communion. Given Continental trends in the same period where lay access to the sacrament was curtailed, alternative mechanisms to achieve a comparable salvific effect were offered to congregations. In the ninth-century *Féilire Oengusso* the author extols the virtues attendant upon the recitation of his martyrology by comparing his composition's salvific potency, for the 'faithful' and intercessory power for the 'dead', to that of a relic or receiving Communion:

Is cretar, is communn, is cantaic for salmaib, is dínad do chredlaib, is écnairc do marbaib.¹²

It is a relic, it is a Eucharist, it is a canticle together with the psalms, it is protection for the faithful, it is intercession for the dead.

However, just three quatrains previously the text contains an explicit reference to the differing spiritual prowess of holy men and the laity, a distinction which permeates the extant prescriptive literature on the orthodoxies and orthopraxis of Communication.¹³ The greatest amount of information on the topic of lay Eucharistic reception, which may be discerned in the Irish corpus of prescriptive and juridical literatures,¹⁴ is found in reference to penitents and those considered 'other' by the community for which the author wrote. It is not to suggest that all potential lay Communicants were perceived to be persistent sinners or to exist entirely outside of the Christian fold but certainly the evidence in the texts under consideration hereafter leads us to reasonably infer that those engaged in the performance of penance and those immediately after its completion were a sub-group of very particular interest to authors. In

¹² FÓ, v. 189, p. 273; Carey, *King*, p. 216. This verse is included by Stokes under 'Epilogue' in his edition and translated by Carey as part of what he identifies as the 'Second Prologue'.

¹³ FÓ, v. 185 and 186, p. 272; Carey, *King*, p. 215; 'Mad étal nod-gaba fo déraib co nglaini, fertae amrai ili dogénetair airi. Is arrae secht noiffrend mad nóeb arid-léga, is arrae trí cóecat don dilmain nod-géba'; 'If a holy man recites it with pure tears, many wonderful miracles will be wrought for its sake. If a saint recites it, it is worth seven masses, if a layman recites it, it is worth thrice fifty [psalms]'.

¹⁴ Broadly, this statement refers to the Irish penitentials, *Hib*, and DSE.

addition, the distinctions drawn between the holy-man and lay-man are less delineated within this group, than without, with texts often addressing categories of sins committed rather than the order of individual to commit the sin.¹⁵ Etchingham is of the view that the pre-reform idea that only the ‘elect’, a category which excluded lay persons, were destined for salvation persisted well into the presumptive reform era.¹⁶ Flanagan argues that the theological shifts of the twelfth century, as eventually manifest in the provisions of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, were the catalyst throughout Europe to a dramatically enlarged conception of the salvific path for the laity.¹⁷ I find the premises of neither hypothesis wholly persuasive; thus it is not presumed that the provisions discussed next can definitively be applied to the laity.

The earliest evidence from the penitentials has been argued as proof of a ‘minimalist approach’ to Communion in Irish Christian practice with the *Stowe* OIMT categorised as representing a ‘possible shift in Irish Eucharistic theology’ with its emphasis on an ‘inclusive message to the entire church community’.¹⁸ However, even with OIMT there is evidence of possible differentiation between clerical and lay orders: ‘anchorites of penance’ and ‘people of penance’ who receive Communion as the third and third from last groups respectively.¹⁹ Notwithstanding the universal access indicated in OIMT, a plurality of materials from our and earlier periods indicate a much greater degree of regulation. Among the LB homilies, composed in a period contemporary with the Lismore Lives as discussed in Chapter II,²⁰ there are multiple texts which reference the necessity of approaching the sacrament with a penitent and pure heart.²¹ The *Homily on the Passion of Christ*,²² contains some very pointed prescriptions on Communication by those who knew themselves to be in a sinful state. Similar proscriptions are

¹⁵ Connolly, ‘Penance’, p. 22

¹⁶ Etchingham, ‘Reform’, p. 224–5.

¹⁷ TIC, p. 215.

¹⁸ Herren and Brown, *Christ*, pp. 126 and 129; the lasting significance, into our period, of OIMT was discussed above: II, pp. 31–34.

¹⁹ MacCarthy, ‘Stowe’, p. 267.

²⁰ II, p. 34

²¹ A brief overview: McNamara, ‘Aspects’, pp. 81–3; II, pp. 43–50 and 50–6 above.

²² II, p. 69.

present in *Hib*, with particular attention given to clerical responsibilities in this regard: the exorcist (a class of priest addressed directly in the text) ought to expel demons and tell those who take Communion to ask to be cleansed by the water of ministry and the consecrating priest must know the conscience of the Communicant to whom he proposes to dispense sacraments.²³ The contours of collective identities can be elastic and as previously argued, in the central Middle Ages the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist provided the core focal points for community integration and group identity.²⁴ This was particularly so when ‘maintaining the community’ was dependent upon the ability of clerical personnel to ‘distinguish faithful members from those who were not yet loyal’.²⁵ The textual evidence confirms that catechumens and on occasion penitents were removed from the church by designated clerics before the order of consecration was performed.²⁶ A sinner’s punishment was fixed according to his rank and frequently the penance imposed in the penitential literature included specified periods in which the transgressor was not to receive Eucharist.²⁷ The dictat which is most pertinent to the subject under investigation here is the requirement that penitents at the end of their lives, cannot be denied the sacrament, no matter how great their sins.²⁸ Obviously, without evidence of the implementation of canon law, we can only speculate as to the extent to which these prescriptive laws were followed, but they do provide a useful barometer of the orthodox position with respect to Communication. The evidence from BS and BBr as considered in the following sections would appear to sustain the premise that no person was beyond redemption and that administering viaticum to the dying but repentant sinner was an accepted act of mercy.

²³ *Hib*, XLVII, §12, p. 229

²⁴ Astell, *Eating*, p. 15; Pohl, ‘Construction’, p. 5.

²⁵ Effros, ‘Ritual’, p. 221.

²⁶ Hom, p. 342.

²⁷ Flechner, *Hib*, p. 224, §17, made available by the author.

²⁸ *Hib*, XLVII, §12, p. 229.

V.iii Seanán and child Communication

The question of infant or child Communication was a thorny one for the Irish church in the central Middle Ages. The ‘vinegar of criticism’ in Lanfranc’s correspondence with the Irish prelates, though ‘sweetened with the honey of flattery’ was essentially unequivocal in its condemnation of the unorthodox practices of the Irish church in this regard.²⁹ Though the first missive from the Irish has been lost to time, Lanfranc’s response indicates that his Irish correspondent had requested clarification on the question of child or infant Communication immediately following baptism. However, as noted by Flanagan, in the absence of the first letter, we cannot properly discern whether the Irish believed it to be required or not.³⁰ Lanfranc’s response indicates that this practice is wholly unnecessary and the subtext to his words implies that its continued practice is indicative of a misapprehension of orthodoxy on the part of Irish practitioners.³¹ The context of this dispute makes the following encounter from BS especially noteworthy:

Luidh dano Dondan mac Leith, dalta do Senán, 7 da mac becu batar ic leighiunn imaille fris do bhuain duilisc leis ar tír. Beridh in mhuir a naei uadha, cu na búí oca naei ar cenn na mac, 7 ní raibhe noi ele isin innsi do cabair na mac. Ro baidhit dano na meic isin carraic. Tuctha dano a cuirp arnamharach cu m-batar i tracht na h-innsi. Tancatar a tuistidhi co m-bátar isin tracht 7 do-chuindighset a macu do tabairt doibh a m-bethaid. Do-raidh Senán fria Dondan: ‘Abair frisna macuib eirghi dom acallaim’. Ro raidh Donnan frisna macuibh: ‘As ced duibh eirghi dh’agallaimh bar tustidhi, ár it-beir Senán fribh’. At-rachtatar fo chedoir la forcongra Senáin, 7 do-raidset fria tuistidibh: ‘Is olc do-ronsaidh rind, oc ar tabairt as in tír rancamar’. ‘Cid armad fherr lib-si’, ol a máthair friu-som, ‘anadh isin tír-sin anas tuidecht cucaind-ne?’ ‘A mháthair’, ar iat-som, ‘gia do-bertha cumachta ind uile dhomuin duinne, 7 a aibhnes 7 airphiteadh, ro budh inann linne 7 no bhemis i carcair ic feghain bheith isin bethaid 7 isin tír rancamur. Na fuirghidh sinn, áir is mithig linn rochtuin arís an tíri asa tancumar, 7 do-ghena Dia

²⁹ Hudson, ‘William’, p. 150; Lan, pp. 155–61.

³⁰ TIC, pp. 208–9,

³¹ Lan, p. 157.

formne cona bia ar cuma foruibh díarneis’. Do-berud dano a tustidhi deonaghadh doib, 7 lotar aroen ra Senán docum a reclesa, 7 do-berur sacarbhuic dhoibh, 7 tiagait docum nimhe, 7 adnaicter a cuirp a n-dorus in reclesa a m-bai Senán. Et it eat sin cét mhairb ro h-adhnacht a n-Inis Cathaig.³²

Then Dondan son of Liath, a pupil of Seanán’s, and two small boys who were reading together with him, went to cut seaweed on the shore. The sea carried off his boat, so that he had no boat for the boys and there was no other boat on the island to help the boys. Then the boys were drowned on the rock. Then the next day their bodies were taken until they were on the strand of the island. Their parents came until they were on the strand and they demanded that their sons be given to them alive. Seanán said to Dondan: ‘Tell the boys to arise to speak to me’. Dondan said to the boys: ‘You may rise to speak with your parents, as Seanán said to you’. They immediately rose at Seanán’s command and they said to their parents: ‘It is a terrible thing you have done to us, taking us from the land we had reached’. ‘Why would you prefer’, said their mother to them, ‘to stay in that land rather than come back to us?’ ‘Mother,’ they said ‘if the power of the whole world, and its pleasantness and its joy were given to us, it would be the same to us as if we were in prison in yoke, than being in the life and the land we reached. Do not delay us as it is time for us to return again to the land, from which we came, and for our sake God will make it so you will not suffer grief’. Then their parents gave permission to them and they went with Seanán to his church, and the sacrifice was given to them, and they go to heaven and their bodies were buried in front of the church in which Seanán lived. And they were the first dead who were buried in Inis Cathaig.

As noted in the opening section of this chapter, lay recipients of Communion are a rarity in hagiographical texts but when they do occur the parameters of such accounts generally match those established in Tírechán’s seventh-century *Collectanea* which were mapped faithfully by subsequent Irish hagiographers.³³ In the archetypal episode, the daughters of Patrick’s sometime nemesis King Lóeguire, are inducted into the Christian faith, baptised, accept that

³² BS L 2330–49.

³³ Neville, ‘Eucharist’, p. 47; Tírechán, *Collectanea*, §26.16, as available on RIA, www.confessio.ie; for example, one of the few accounts of lay penitent Communication encountered in extensive reading explicitly echoes Tírechán’s narrative: *Vita S. Aedi*, pp. 34–45 in VSHP.

penance must follow sin and take the veil.³⁴ They demand further subjective experience of Christ and Patrick advises them that they cannot see Christ's face except in death, having partaken of the Eucharist. Their response is recounted:

‘Da nobis sacrificium, ut possimus Filium, nostrum sponsum, uidere’, et acciperunt euchariziam Dei et dormierunt in morte, et posuerunt illas in lectulo uno uestimentis coopertas, et fecerunt ululatum et planctum magnum amici earum.

‘Give us the sacrament so that we may see the Son, our bridegroom’, and they received the [E]ucharist of God and fell asleep in death, and their friends placed them on one bed and covered them with their garments, and made a lament and great keening.

The almost complete concurrence of conversion and death is not unusual but the manner in which it is recounted in BS deviates from the pattern established by Tírechán and imitated by later hagiographers. In the first instance, the Communicants are children who, given their established relationship with Seanán's foundation, have presumably already been baptised when they fall foul of the sea. There should be no need to administer Eucharist to ensure the safety of their souls in these circumstances and if the author of this text were aware of Lanfranc's admonitions on this matter then his choice to include it in the narrative might appear intentionally contentious. Conversely, it accords with Gillebertus' *De statu*, which indicates that Communion should be given immediately to the baptised.³⁵ As discussed in Chapter III,³⁶ the sacramental identity crafted for Seanán throughout BS cleaves neither to traditional Irish models of sanctity nor the ideal of the reform era bishop exclusively, but combines elements of both models. Of course, there is no legitimacy in extrapolating from this one vignette to hypothesise a hostile Irish reaction to Lanfranc's prescription, but nevertheless it provides some evidence of a continued Irish belief in the need for a child to Communicate before death. It has

³⁴ Given then contiguousness of their baptisms and death, despite the mention of their taking the veil, they are to all reasonable intents, lay women, within this narrative episode.

³⁵ DSE, p. 157.

³⁶ III, pp. 122–7.

been noted in respect of Byzantine hagiography, where a greater body of scholarship has been produced in relation to the representations of Eucharist in hagiography that such depictions generally make mention of the need for a period of spiritual preparation before the first Communion is received; the Irish accounts depict no such requirement.³⁷

The brief description of the land to which the children have been transported in death also represents an intriguing narratological choice. It is not explicitly a description of a Christian heaven and it might just as easily be categorised as a note on an Otherworld destination. This comment pre-empt the discussions below of Brendan's voyages but it would be remiss not to acknowledge the possibility within this analysis. The journey to a blissful land, a central element of this Eucharistic encounter, when juxtaposed with Seanán's most prominent Eucharistic moment,³⁸ his reluctance to provide viaticum to Canir or allow her ashore his island, are mildly suggestive of the same liminal circumstances which prevail in all five of Brendan's Lismore Eucharistic encounters. This point receives further attention in the closing sections of the chapter.

It is also noteworthy that when the parents of dead or dying children are present in such hagiographical narratives, their wishes to have their child restored to life are generally fulfilled. But here, the children having expressed their desire to return to the fabulous land from which their resuscitation has snatched them, are permitted to die again. The loss to the parents of two healthy sons seems grievous when an alternative was possible. However, the statement on their interment at Inis Cáthaig, as the first burials at that site, almost confers a consecrating status on their physical remains. Preserving the Eucharistic host on and within altar spaces was a formal act of institutional consecration throughout the medieval centuries, despite theologians' pronouncements that it should not be venerated in the manner of saints' relics;³⁹

³⁷ Perczel, Forrai and Geréby, *Eucharist*, pp. 99 and 104.

³⁸ IV, pp. 162–75.

³⁹ Rubin, CC, pp. 288–91.

here the two children serve almost as caskets to preserve the Eucharist, imbuing the new graveyard with their and the host's sanctity.

V.iv Saint Brendan

Figure V.i Textual Stemma of BBr⁴⁰

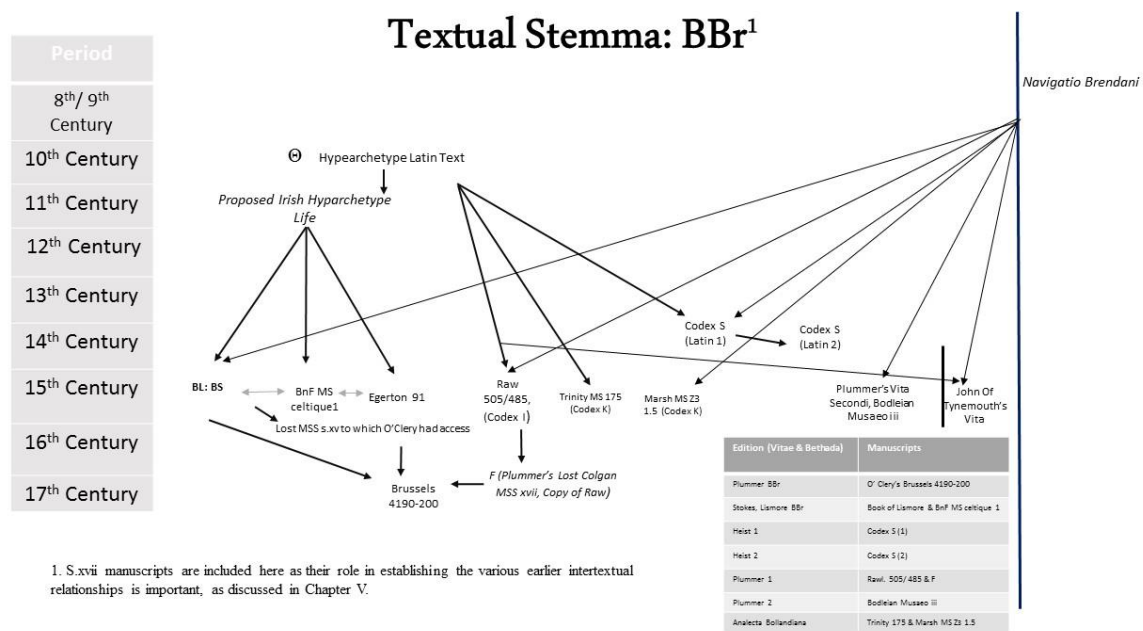


Figure V.ii Manuscript and edition relationships

Kenney ID	Edition (Vitae & Bethada)	Manuscripts
1	Heist 2	Codex S (2)
2	Plummer 1	Rawl. 505/485 & F
3	Analecta Bollandiana	Trinity 175 & Marsh MS Z ₃ 1.5
4	Heist 1	Codex S (1)
-	Plummer 2 [satirical verses on Brendan's voyage]	Bodleian Musaeo iii
6	Stokes/ BL BBr	BL & BnF1
7	Plummer/ BBr	O'Clery's Brussels 4190-200.

Figure V.iii Orlandi's Groups⁴¹

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
AB Edition/ Trinity 175	Heist 2/ Codex S Plummer 1/ Rawl. 505	Heist 1/ Codex S BBr/ Lismore

⁴⁰ Also at *Appendix I.ii.vi*, p. 241 in larger format.

⁴¹ Orlandi, 1968, pp. 29-41; Strijbosch, *Seafaring*, pp. 278-82.

The hagiographical dossier of Saint Brendan of Clonfert, as distinct from the voyage tradition, has generally been analysed in a piecemeal manner with scholars usually content to focus on either the vernacular or Latin texts or to engage in a comparative analysis of one Life and the much more prominent *Navigatio*.⁴² Each of the five Latin Lives and two vernacular Lives exist in readily accessible editions yet a complete analysis of the intertextual relationships between the Lives within the dossier remains a desideratum.⁴³ The categorisation of the two vernacular Lives as separate texts is not without problems. The Life edited by Plummer from O’Clery’s seventeenth-century manuscript is, as he himself noted, ‘extraordinarily conflate’ and consists primarily of an almost exact recension of the Lismore Life which then transitions into a vernacular translation of the *Navigatio* and concludes with translations of sections from the Latin *vita* in MS Rawl. 505.⁴⁴ Mac Mathúna argues that this Life represents the ‘most complete’ text in the ‘final stage of development’.⁴⁵ Given that we no longer have access to the manuscript from which O’Clery copied at least part of his text,⁴⁶ and we can only speculate as to the extent to which he emended his exemplar, such an assertion denigrates the value of the Lismore text which survives to us in the form an author and scribe, at lesser historical remove from the text, chose. Additionally, as much of the research has been concerned with the very pragmatic task of disinterring historical details to date the texts, there has been less focus on analysing the content of individual texts and the relationship between prominent motifs and the religious and social space in which they were written.⁴⁷ Though not insubstantial efforts have been made by

⁴² Plummer, ‘Some’, pp. 124–41; ‘Introduction’ in VSHP I, pp. xxxvi–xlili; ‘Introduction’ in BNÉ I, pp. xv–xxiii; Burgess and Strijbosch, ‘Introduction’ in *Legend*, pp. 1–12, Burgess and Strijbosch, ‘Introduction’ in *Voyage*, pp. 1–16; Mac Mathúna, ‘Contributions’, pp. 154–74; MacMathúna, ‘Irish’, pp. 117–58.

⁴³ DIS, pp. 115–17; Mac Mathúna, ‘Irish’, p. 158; writing in 2006, Mac Mathúna notes the impending publication of ‘Notes on the Irish Life of Brendan’ from Ó Riain but that has not appeared. Some scholars seem determined to treat the hagiographical dossier as a singular text; for example, in Wooding, ‘Date’, pp. 9–26, the author refers repeatedly to a single *Vita S. Brendani* as a text ‘reconstructed’ by Plummer and Mac Mathúna from multiple sources, p.19.

⁴⁴ Mac Mathúna, ‘Irish’, p. 136; ‘Introduction’ in VSHP I, p. xl; Plummer notes the first thirty-seven chapters are the same as the BL text, added to a large number of *Navigatio* episodes with most of the balance from Rawl. B 505; ‘Introduction’, in BNÉ I, p. xx; Plummer, ‘Some’, p. 135.

⁴⁵ MacMathúna, ‘Irish’, p. 136.

⁴⁶ ‘Introduction’ in BNÉ I, p. xxii–xxiii; a colophon to the Brussels manuscript sees O’Clery record that he copied the Life from a sixteenth-century manuscript by Seery O’Mulconry, a volume now lost.

⁴⁷ Mac Mathúna, ‘Irish’, p. 119.

Mac Mathúna to address the deficits in respect of the vernacular material, his work occasionally conflates the Latin Lives and treats episodes in the 1st and 2nd Irish Lives as interchangeable, despite the very clear composite nature of the 2nd Life (that edited by Plummer).⁴⁸ Plummer considered the Lismore Life a ‘defective’ recension of *Vita Brendani* ‘unconflated though not uncontaminated’ by materials from the *Navigatio* tradition, closely related to though not a perfect copy of the *vita* in MS Rawl. 505.⁴⁹ The relationship between that text and BBr is very clear in the episodes under discussion in this chapter and reference will be made throughout the following analysis to relevant analogues, although the question of which of the two is the earlier remains unanswered. Plummer further treated all seven extant texts as polyvalent recensions of one original perfective text, a position which diminishes the diversity, both in terms of content and structure, between the texts.⁵⁰ I undertook a search for the five Eucharistic episodes in which Brendan appears in BL in the other texts in the dossier;⁵¹ where they occur, they are incorporated into the analysis. Mac Mathúna’s work identified more than twenty manuscript versions of the BBr text preserved in Lismore but only three of these date to the fifteenth century and a multitude are copies made in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of the earlier three.⁵² Stokes relied on BnF, MS celtique 1 for the occasional reading where BL was deficient but his edition is a generally faithful copy of the Lismore text. This work relies on the BL text as it is found in the manuscript.

Many of the hypotheses which informed Plummer’s work on the Brendan dossier have since been superseded by newer scholarship, most notably his belief that the extant hagiographical texts preceded the *Navigatio* with a preponderance of scholars now subscribing to the hypothesis that a lost hypearchetype underlies both Lives and voyage, with a ninth-

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁴⁹ Plummer, ‘Some’, p. 125; ‘Introduction’ in VSHP I, p. xxxix.

⁵⁰ ‘Introduction’ in VSHP I, p. xxxix.

⁵¹ See below *Figure V.iv*, p. 195.

⁵² Mac Mathúna, ‘Irish’, pp. 119–22; BL, Egerton 91 and BnF, celtique 1 are the three relevant fifteenth-century recensions.

century date assigned to the *Navigatio* and dates between 1050 and 1200 assigned to the various Lives.⁵³ Mac Mathúna concurs with a date for the Lismore text of 1150 X 1190 as advanced in unpublished materials by Ó Riain which he cites.⁵⁴ The basis and soundness for this date are discussed further below, in relation to the saint's sacramental identity.

V.iv.i Brendan: sacramental identity

The sacramental identity crafted for Brendan is perhaps the most developed among all nine of the holy men and women commemorated in BL. Although, as discussed in Chapter I,⁵⁵ the exordium married to the short quotation from Ps. CXI cannot be said to be fully integrated into the remainder of the text, there is evidence of careful and insightful development of some unusual themes in the prefatory passage. In an analogy, otherwise unattested in the Lismore Lives,⁵⁶ Brendan whose named Biblical forefathers include Noah and John the Baptist, is compared to Latin and Greek church fathers: 'Tintodhach tidhnaictech amail Hieronymus Cirine fáidh. Intliuchtach amhra amail Aguistin. Mor-leighnidh primh-coitcheann amail Origen'.⁵⁷ Later in the same passage the author affirms that Brendan's commitment was to 'a mhancha 7 a mhuinntera' (his monks and his people)⁵⁸ implying that his pastoral role extends beyond the cloister to the community at large and the initial portions of the Life which depict Brendan in active ministry, until he embarks upon his voyage, support that claim.⁵⁹ Moreover, when he embarks on the second phase of his travels he is accompanied by '[con]a mhuindtir 7 [con]a phopul' (his family and his people) implying more than just his immediate religious community, particularly given the fact that he has not been said to have founded a church by

⁵³ Plummer, 'Some', p. 136; Dumville, 'Dating', pp. 120–32; Wooding, 'Date', pp. 9–26.

⁵⁴ Mac Mathúna, 'Irish', p. 155, though it should be noted that DIS does not proffer a date, simply noting the need for a critical edition of the entire hagiographical dossier and noting that there 'are some obvious signs of lateness', p. 115.

⁵⁵ See I, pp. 14–21.

⁵⁶ See III, pp. 119–22; Colum Cille is the only other figure compared to a non-Biblical figure of the universal Church.

⁵⁷ BBr L 3321–3; 'A gifted interpreter like Hieronymus, Jerome the prophet. A wonderful intellectual like Augustine. A great reader of chief-congregations like Origen'. This last epithet is intriguing, if a little obtuse, as it suggests an appreciation of a pastoral or liturgical role but in the absence of further development within the text, it cannot withstand further analysis. The author's mention of Greek as well as Latin fathers signals his credentials as a man of some learning.

⁵⁸ BBr L 3328.

⁵⁹ For example: BBr L 3403–25, 3435–48, 3484–553.

this juncture.⁶⁰ Genealogical sketches and miraculous conception tales are hagiographical staples but there is a further element in Brendan's, which merits mention, as this is the only text in which such a detail appears: we are informed that Brendan's parents are lawfully married in the eyes of the church: 'i smact 7 i coibligi dlighthigh fo riagail espuic Eirc'.⁶¹ Given the subsequent significance of the sacraments, and indeed various important events in the liturgical calendar, within this text, this mention of a canonical marriage is hardly incidental. We know from Archbishop Lanfranc's letter to Muirchertach Ua Briain's court bishop that Canterbury was appalled by the continued practice of polygamous marriage in Ireland as late as 1080, and perhaps the author's statement was intended to reassure audiences of Brendan's orthodox pedigree.⁶²

In this hagiographer's hands, Brendan's clerical formation charts a course similar to those outlined for each of the other seven male Lismore saints as he is baptised, fostered, and schooled by various prominent church men and women, but the depiction of his graduation from student to cleric is more pronounced and more formally sacramental than is evidenced in the other lives, where commendation rather than ordination may be read as evidence of the saint's progression through the clerical grades. He leaves his mentor Bishop Erc for a period of reflection on monastic rules but only secures permission to do so on the proviso that he commits to return to be ordained: 'Et adubairt espoc Eirc: 'Tar doridhisi cucam-sa, 7 na riagla-sin leat, cu ro ghabha tú gradha uaim-si''.⁶³ As discussed in Chapter III, the question of the intersection of regular and secular orders is a contested one and although the evidence suggests that a preponderance of those in orders were also formally ordained priests in this central Middle Ages, the juxtaposition here of the pupil's desire to familiarise himself with both the

⁶⁰ BBr L 3717.

⁶¹ BBr L3334-5; 'in dominion and lawful wedlock under the rule of Bishop Erc'.

⁶² Lan, pp. 160-1, n. 150; see I, pp. 3-6, for discussion of the historical context of Canterbury's influence on Irish reform.

⁶³ BBr L 3452-3; 'And Bishop Erc said; "Come back to me when you have the rules, so that you can take orders [ecclesiastical grades] from me"'.

rules for coenobitic life and his teacher's insistence that he be properly ordained accords with the similar hybridity in the Lives examined in Chapter III.⁶⁴ Brendan accedes to Erc's request and 'iar scribeann tra riaghla ind aingil 7 riagla noemh n-Eirenn cona m-besaibh 7 cona crabud do Brenainn, impais co h-espoc Eirc, 7 gabais gradha uaidh'.⁶⁵ Ultimately, the process described here is more structured than that found elsewhere and the progressions through stages are more clearly demarcated.

In DIS, Ó Riain connects the production and dating of the vernacular and Latin Brendan hagiographical materials, based on the multiple extant genealogical lineages and the political connections developed in the texts, to four prominent sites of canons regular in the vicinity of his primary foundation at Clonfert.⁶⁶ The sites at Rattoo, Canon Island, Annaghdown and Clonfert are undeniably potential locales for literary production in this period but equally the proliferation of Augustinian and regular houses as discussed in Chapter III, particularly in this region of Munster, means that there are a host of foundations from which to choose and surely we should resist making assertions in this regard in the absence of further evidence. As discussed in Chapter III, it is especially difficult to distinguish sacramental, theological or philosophical motifs in hagiographical texts that can be exclusively allied to Augustinian, Benedictine or Cistercian thought and practices, and as such, these conjectured connections are better discounted for our present purposes. In addition to the Arroasian houses of nuns and canons for which we have evidence at Clonfert,⁶⁷ a diocesan see was centred on Brendan's foundation from the Synod of Ráth Bresail in 1111 culminating in the construction of a large addition to the pre-1045 cathedral in c. 1167 and the bishop's putative declaration of

⁶⁴ See III, p. 134.

⁶⁵ BBr Lines 3554–6; 'After Brendan had written the rule of the angel and the rules of the saints of Ireland, with their customs and their piety, he returned to Bishop Erc and received orders [ecclesiastical grades] from him'.

⁶⁶ DIS, p. 116.

⁶⁷ MRHI, p. 153, 164, 310, 315, 58 and 64; the Arroasian houses of nuns and canons under the name St Mary de Portu Puro, which survived until after the dissolution, were probably founded under the auspices of Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair at the direction of Saint Malachy c.1140.

fealty to Henry II in 1172.⁶⁸ The depiction of Brendan cleaves to neither the office and duties of bishop nor abbot alone, but rather a hybrid of their presumed responsibilities. Although, the depiction of Brendan's sacramental identity, both as recipient and officiant, is extraordinarily well developed, given that fewer than two hundred lines of our extant text of some 577 lines are actually concerned with his deeds in a traditional religious environment, there is little in the material that must belong exclusively to one model or the other.⁶⁹ As is clear from *Figure V.iv* below, only Seanán (for whom an episcopal identity is crafted in BS) participates in a comparable number of sacraments. The prominent anomalies in his clerical identity, as further developed on his travels, will be considered next.

Figure V.iv Sacramental identities

Formation Stage	BP	BCC	BS	BF	BFc	BBr	BC	BM
Baptism	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Fosterage		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Education	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Commendation		X	X		X		X	
Tonsure			X					
Ordination			X			X		
Founding	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Consecrating Sites/ Graveyards		X			X			
Receiving Viaticum	X	X	X	X			X	
Sacramental & Pastoral Participation								
Baptism	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Anointing	X							
Appointing/ Training Clerics	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Conferring Orders	X		X	X			X	
Dispensing Penance	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Dispensing Viaticum			X			X		
Burials			X			X		
Celebrant at Eucharist/ Mass	X	X	X			X		
Present at Eucharist/ Mass	X	X			X	X		

V.iv.ii The voyaging Life of Brendan

The voyaging portion of BBr begins in a manner that differs substantially from the *Navigatio* and as such is worthy of interrogation as it relates to the thesis of this chapter. In the *Navigatio*, Brendan is encouraged to embark on a pilgrimage following an encounter with

⁶⁸ MRHI p. 64; CEMI, p. 298, 307 and 134; both the construction and the oath are connected to Conchobar Maenmaige Ó Ceallaigh of Uí Mhaine by Gwynn and Haddock, though the question of the historicity of the oath-taking is disputed. In respect of Clonfert's connections to the reformed church, we have AU 1171.11 which records the death by drowning of the bishop of Clonfert, presumed by many scholars to have occurred on his way to the Synod of Cashel. Ó Carragáin notes difficulties with specific dating of the eastern extension at Clonfert but situates it in the twelfth century. The Ó Ceallaigh connection is based on AFM 1167 entry re his sponsorship of a church at Clonmacnoise among others.

⁶⁹ As noted by Plummer the final 31 lines of the text are from *Fís Adomnáin*, which he believed were likely appended in a scribal error making the extant Lismore text incomplete with Brendan's voyage and subsequent biographical details unrecorded.

fellow cleric Barinthus [Barrind],⁷⁰ while in BBr the impetus to his travels is an explicitly divine intervention, in the form of a visitation from an angel of God:

Iar codlad immorro do-sum in adaigh-sin cu cuala guth in aingil do nimh 7 at-bert fris:
'Eirigh, a Brenainn', ar se, '7 do-rad Dia duit inní ro cuinghis .i. Tir Tairngire'.⁷¹

Moreover after he had slept that night, he heard the voice of the angel of heaven who said to him: 'Arise, Brendan', he said, 'because God has given you what you sought, that is, the Land of Promise'.

The dream apparition, undeniably a staple of hagiographical works, is also a motif readily associated with vision and Otherworld literature and establishes the tone for what transpires on his voyage. The choice to frame the narrative in this manner, rather than through establishing a legitimate premise to pilgrimage by means of a personal encounter, is rendered even more instrumental when we consider an anecdote in which Brendan appears, elsewhere in BL.⁷² The story of Brendan's encounter with a young clerical harpist appears at fo 85va:

Feacht do Brenainn mac hui Altaí a Cluain Ferta dia casc. vii bliadna rena eitsict ceilebarthar isin eclais lais 7 pritchaighter 7 aifrinntar. O tainic in medon lai immorro tiaguit na manaig da proinntigh. Do bhi maccleirech istigh 7 cruit ina laim oca gabais for a n-airfited 7 doratsat a mbennacht dó.⁷³

Once when Brendan son of the descendant of Alta was in Clonfert, on Easter Day seven years before his death, mass is celebrated by him in the church, and preaching and offering. Then when midday came the monks go to their refectory. There was a clerical student inside with a harp in his hand, he sets about their entertainment and they give him their blessing.

⁷⁰ *Navigatio* §1 (ed. Selmer p. 7).

⁷¹ BBr L 3562–4.

4; *Tír Tairngire* is attested as an early gloss on *terra repromissionis*, his destination in *Navigatio*; see EHL, p. 411; McNamara, 'Navigatio', p. 185, connects this to the land of Enoch and Elias.

⁷² Brendan is the only one of the nine subject saints to figure in BL tracts outside of the Lives, appearing in two texts. This episode is also incorporated into Plummer's BBr which gives further weight to the suggestion that O'Clery gathered material from multiple sources and compiled them as a single text; BBr in BNÉ I, §201–204. Plummer, though he is inconsistent on this point, believed the Lismore text to have been copied from the intermediate manuscript relied upon by O'Clery, rather than the reverse which seems to be indicated by the relative status (within and without the Life) of the harpist's tale, see 'Introduction' in BNÉ I, pp. xviii–xxii.

⁷³ Fo. 85va; Stokes, *Lives*, p. xiii. This short tract appears in BL and Rawl. B 512 and as far I can ascertain has not received any serious scholarly attention since it appeared in translation in O'Donoghue's 1893 publication, *Brendaniana*, pp. 270–3.

There are multiple signposts in this passage to an Otherworld dimension of this tale: the reference to Brendan's future death seven years hence, the celebration of the Easter Liturgy,⁷⁴ and the appearance of an unknown figure with a musical instrument in the refectory, a musician who prefigures the later angelic visitation.⁷⁵ As the narrative progresses, the monks inform the harpist that Brendan cannot listen to the melodies of the world and avoids doing so by placing balls of wax in his ears.⁷⁶ When the student requests an opportunity to play for Brendan, he is initially rebuffed but on appeal the saint relents, allows him to enter the church and removes the waxen balls. After listening for a period, he replaces the balls and when queried by the student he recounts the following:

Laithi dhamh isin eclais so, secht mbliadna cusaniu iar proicept sunn 7 iar n-aifreann dochuatar na clerig don proinntigh. Rom-facbhadsa sunn amaenur 7 rom-gabh imtholta andiaidh mu Thigearna iar ndul do curp Crist. A mbadhus hi suidhiu rom-gabh crith 7 uamon. Confaca én etrocht for an seinistir connessidh forsin altoir. Foreimdhuis silled fair lasna ruithnibh griandai batar imbe. 'Beannacht fort 7 bennach dhún, a cleirigh', ol sé. 'Rot-bennacha Dia', ol Brenainn. 'Cia thu?', ol Brenainn, 'Michél aingel', ol se, 'do th'acalluimsi'.⁷⁷

One day, seven years ago I was in this church, after preaching here and after mass, the clerics went to the refectory. I was left here alone and a great longing for my Lord seized me, after going to the body of Christ. As I was here, shaking and great fear took me. I saw a brilliant bird on the window which then sat on the altar. I could not gaze on it because of the sunny rays that were around it. 'A blessing on you and you bless us, cleric', he said. 'May God bless you', Brendan said. 'Who are you?', Brendan said, 'Michael the angel', he said, 'to converse with you'.

The angel shares 'music from the lord' with Brendan and he later explains to the harpist that having heard those heavenly notes he can no longer listen to earthly music. He blesses the

⁷⁴ The liminal quality of Eucharist, as a moment when temporal boundaries are made permeable, was noted in II, p. 27.

⁷⁵ In what may be further evidence of intertextuality, relevant to this chapter's thesis, in *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, the voyagers are also prompted to begin their pilgrimage by a visit from Angel Michael in the form of a bird; Stokes, 'Curaig', pp. 32–3.

⁷⁶ Stokes, *Lives*, p. xiii.

⁷⁷ Stokes, *Lives*, p. xiv; fo. 85va.

young cleric and advises him to save his playing for heaven. There is a finality to the closing line of the tract: *Cunad hi an dithramhacht Brenainn*, which perhaps implies that the author understands this tale to embody the core qualities of Brendan's sanctity.⁷⁸

It is clear from the foregoing passages that depicting Brendan communing with heavenly and potentially Otherworldly characters is not uncomfortable territory for the Lismore compiler.⁷⁹ Equally the bookending of the tale with two references to the Eucharist is perhaps indicative of an apprehension on an author's part that the sacrament itself exists on the boundary between contemporary mortal reality and the scriptural events it seeks to commemorate. Carey has written of the 'fundamental paradox' of the Otherworld, as its 'immediacy' exists in tension with 'its supernatural characteristics, inversion of mortal norms',⁸⁰ that same paradox has, as discussed in Chapter II, long been recognised as central to the Eucharist.⁸¹ The connection between the Otherworld and sacred places and times which has been well documented by Carey is in evidence here too.⁸² The parallel encounters, between Brendan and the harpist and Brendan and the bird who is revealed as Saint Michael, occur in the community's most sacred place, their church, at the most sacred time of the year, on Easter Day and at the climactic moment of that celebration, after the Eucharist. In this anecdote, which appears in the second part of BL, at some remove from the body of hagiographical texts, we have evidence of an author who perceives no disjuncture in placing his subject saint and the Eucharist within a moderately subversive narrative. This evidence, of willingness to challenge expectations, is wrought even more explicitly in the Eucharistic narratives considered later in this chapter.

⁷⁸ Stokes, *Lives*, p. xv; fo. 85va; 'so this is Brendan's hermit's life'.

⁷⁹ If, as I suggested above, the O'Clery Life was copied from BL, then that compiler's inclusion of the harpist episode within his recension of the Life affirms his impression of the compatibility of the materials.

⁸⁰ Carey, 'Otherworld', p. 2.

⁸¹ II, pp. 71–7.

⁸² Carey, 'Otherworld', p. 13.

Returning to Brendan's point of embarkation it is worth noting the continued emphasis on vision and angelic intercession, which differentiates this voyage account from the *Navigatio*:

Eirghis Brenainn iarum, 7 ba maith lais a menma on aitheasc-sin, 7 teit a aenar i Sliabh n-Daidche, 7 feghais ind aicen n-dermair n- dofholachta uadh for cech leth, et is ann sin at-connuic-sium an innsi n-aluind n-airegda co timtirechtaib na n-aingeldi. Iar sin tra anaith-siumh tredhenus annsin, 7 codlais doridhisi. Tic aingeal in Coimdhed dia acallaim annsin...⁸³

Then Brendan arose and his mind liked that answer and he went alone to Sliabh Daidche, and he saw the huge unendurable ocean about him on every side and then he saw the beautiful joyful island with angels going to and fro. After that he remains there for three days and he slept again. The angel of the lord came to speak to him then...

During the course of his two voyages, Brendan experiences visions of hell and converses directly with the devil.⁸⁴ In response to Brendan's descriptions of the horrors of hell one of his companions asks to see the torments for himself, he dies and visits but is resuscitated by Brendan's prayers. That death without viaticum results in damnation is suggested by the text when we consider the four subsequent deaths on the voyage all include the Eucharist, as considered below. There are indications that Brendan's colloquy with the devil and the perils of hell were well-known in the central Middle Ages, even beyond the attested transmission of the BBr text.⁸⁵ Carey's edition and translation of a short Old Irish speech attributed to Brendan and the accompanying Middle Irish preface finds the saint explaining to a pupil the reasons to fear death, having witnessed and battled demons in rescuing his mother's soul. The longer recension, of the two examined by Carey, concludes with a passage from *An Old-Irish Homily* as previously published by Strachan.⁸⁶ This repurposing and reframing of a tale connected to the BBr voyaging materials for homiletic usage, in a manner similar to the homiletic reframing

⁸³ BBr L3564–9.

⁸⁴ BBr L 3625–73.

⁸⁵ Carey, 'Brendan', pp. 445–51.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 445; Strachan, 'Homily', pp. 1–10.

of BBr as a whole, is indicative of the type of innovative reiteration for which Irish authors displayed a particular aptitude and affinity. Mirroring this adaptation, is the evidence presented by Nic Cárthaigh of the textual relationship between the depiction of hell in BBr and the likely early modern poetic and connected prose accounts of the Day of Judgement in *Dia Luain* and *Iss e a n-inad*.⁸⁷ The texts draw on materials from multiple well-known compositions from throughout the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries including *Saltar na Rann*, *Scéla Láí Brátha*, and *In Tenga Bithnua*.⁸⁸ It is clear that the early-modern author saw no difficulty in weaving imagery and ideas from texts in multiple genres, including the voyage portion of a hagiographical composition, into his contribution to apocalyptic literature.

After five years on the seas and with no sign of Tír Tairgne, Brendan returns to his foster mother Íte from whom he receives the following advice:

‘A meic inmhain, cidh dia n-dechadhais for longais cen a chomhairle frium-sa, uair in talam ica táí iarradh ar Dhia nocha n-fhagbhai h-i iarsna croicnibh marbhaibh mochlaigibh-sin. Uair talam noemh cosecartha h- í, 7 ni ro doirted fuil duine riam innti’.⁸⁹

‘O dear son, why did you go on a voyage without advice from me, because the ground which you are seeking from God, you will never find it after those stained dead hides. For it is holy consecrated ground and man’s blood has never been spilled on it’.

Most commentators have taken Íte’s word to indicate that his choice to travel in a boat covered in animal hides was to the detriment of his ambitions, particularly given that Brendan builds a wooden boat for the second voyage. However, the description of a land on which no human blood has ever been spilled has more interesting implications than the focus on her impugning his boat’s materials allows. Her words might be understood to mean a land in which no man

⁸⁷ Nic Cárthaigh, 'Judgement', pp. 721–51.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 723, 724 and 731; elsewhere a direct relationship between BBr and *Scéla Láí Brátha* has been posited as in MacMathúna, 'Irish', p. 131.

⁸⁹ BBr L 3727–30.

has died and where everlasting life is promised. It is potentially a description of a heavenly paradise which can be found on earth. There is an intriguing corollary to the encounter with Íte as impetus to a third journey in the Oxford Collection *vita* [Rawl. B 505 hereafter], the Latin text with the closest relationship to BBr as established above, and the Heist edition of the main text from *Codex Salmanticensis*.⁹⁰ In these two versions, Brendan is prompted by his foster-mother Íte to atone for his part in the drowning of a young boy: ‘*terram peregrinam debes visitare ut alios doceas et animus christo lucrifacias*’.⁹¹ The idea that Brendan is penitent is absent from BBr and it is his companions who are in need of opportunities to redeem themselves. The difference in the literature between a voyage of exploration and one of atonement is acute and that Brendan appears in both contexts in two of the extant Lives is suggestive perhaps of a perceived need by the authors to justify his earlier extraordinary travels by subjecting him to the strictures of a more attritional expedition.

The final portions of the Lismore recension of BBr are in fact complete sections taken from *Fís Adomnáin*. Plummer dismissed this occurrence as a mechanistic error on the scribe’s part but other scholars have disputed this explanation with Mac Mathúna noting its inclusion is not ‘entirely inappropriate and unreasonable’.⁹² There is a certain synchronicity in the choice not only thematically, but given that *Fís Adomnáin* is structured as a sermon, it also serves to reinforce the homiletic intent of BBr.⁹³ The passages included speak to the heavenly rewards awaiting the just man and the pains and punishments of hell which will greet the sinful on Judgement Day.⁹⁴ The echoes of the visions of hell and the Land of Promise afforded to Brendan during his voyage are redolent.

⁹⁰ VBr, §82, pp. 140–4; Vita Brendani, §13 in VSHH, pp. 56–78; Mac Mathúna, ‘Contributions’, p. 166.

⁹¹ VBr, §82, p. 141; ‘go on pilgrimage, in order to teach others and gain souls for Christ’.

⁹² Plummer, ‘Some’, p. 125, n. 2; Mac Mathúna, ‘Irish’, p. 135.

⁹³ Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Literature’, p. 54.

⁹⁴ BBr L 3882–911.

V.v.i The giantess

Nir' bho cian do-chuatar as sin in tan fuaradar an inghin min, macdachta, mong-bhuidhi. Gilithir snechta nó uan tuinne, 7 sí marbh iar tabairt buille do ghai trena formna, co n-deachaid itir a da cich. Ba dermhair immorro mét na h-ingini sin .i. céat traiged ina h-airdi 7 nai traighthe itir a da cich 7 secht traighid i bh-fot a meoir medóin. Taithbeoaigne Brenainn hi fo chedair, 7 ro baist iar sin, et ro fhiafraig a cenel di. 'Do aitreachtuibh in mhara damh-sa', ar si '.i. don lucht oilit 7 ernaidit eiseirgi doibh'. Fiafraigis Brenainn di cidh ba h-aíl le: 'In docum nimhe ragha fo chedair, nó in docum h'athardha?' Do-freagair an ingen tre berla nar' thuic nech aili acht Brenainn, 7 is ed adubairt: 'Docum nime', ar si, 'uair do-cluinim gotha na n-aingel oc molad an Choimdeth cumhachtaig'. Iar caithium immorro chuirp Crist 7 a fola don ingin at-bath cen nach snimh, 7 adnaicter co h-onorach h-i la Brenainn annsin.⁹⁵

It was not long after they had gone from there when they came upon the gentle honey-haired maiden of marriageable age. Whiter than snow or the foam of a wave and she was dead after taking the blow of a spear through her shoulder, so that it came between her two breasts. Moreover, the size of that maiden was huge, that is, one hundred feet in her height and nine feet between her two breasts, and seven feet in the measure of her middle finger. Brendan restored her to life immediately and then he baptised her and asked her about her people. 'I am of the inhabitants of the sea', she said, 'that is the people who pray and they expect their resurrection'. Brendan asked her what she wanted: 'Will you go to heaven immediately or to your fatherland?' The maiden answered in a language which nobody only Brendan understood and this is what she said: 'To heaven', she said, 'because I hear the voices of the angels praising the powerful Lord'. Then after the consumption by the maiden of the body of Christ and his blood, she dies without any anguish and she is buried there honourably by Brendan.

This specific vignette, which occurs on Brendan's first voyage, is present also in the Irish Life edited by Plummer, which is a function of the Brussels manuscript's probable derivation from the Book of Lismore.⁹⁶ This instance is also found in the closely related *vita* edited by Plummer

⁹⁵ BBr L 3678–90.

⁹⁶ BBr §xxviii in BNÉ I, pp.62–3.

from Rawl. B 505,⁹⁷ but it is not found in any other of the Lives nor in Selmer's *Navigatio*, which means that this narrative episode is confined to those texts categorised as hagiographical.⁹⁸ The title given to the episode in Plummer's vernacular edition is *Scel na Mna Mairbhe* but this is probably an interpolation from O'Clery in the seventeenth century or derived from the no longer extant manuscript he relied upon, as the two accounts are near identical in every other respect.⁹⁹ In the Rawl. B 505 *vita* the description and encounter with the woman are almost identical, with the exception of the reference to the Eucharist.¹⁰⁰ This absence is in itself interesting as in each of the other three encounters analysed here, the dying person received Communion. It is of course entirely possible that the omission here may simply be a scribal choice but equally it may also indicate that the image of the saint dispensing viaticum to a non-human figure was considered too transgressive. For example, the twelfth-century continental *Voyage of Saint Brendan*, which some have suggested was edited from its source materials, including from the *Navigatio* and hagiographical traditions of Brendan,¹⁰¹ with an eye to greater orthodoxy, includes juxtaposed encounters with the head of a male giant and a female mermaid.¹⁰² In this text when Brendan finds the heathen giant, he offers him baptism and salvation but is rebuffed as the giant doubts he could 'withstand the temptation of sin'.¹⁰³ The mermaid is a threat to the boat in the second episode but God's protection ensures the group's safety. It seems plausible that an author confronted with a text with a giant woman of the sea, conversing with the saint, being baptised and receiving the Eucharist, was excised in the interests of crafting a more normative account. We have evidence of a comparable contemporary reaction to Brendan's voyaging exploits in a twelfth-century satirical verse

⁹⁷ VBr, §lxviii, p.135.

⁹⁸ *Vita S. Brendani* in VSHH, pp. 56–67 and 324–31; VBr, pp. 270–92; AB, pp. 99–123; Selmer, *Navigatio*, pp. 3–83; O'Meara, *Voyage*, p. 5; Selmer's edition is accepted as the definitive early version, collated from eighteen continental manuscripts produced between the tenth and twelfth centuries.

⁹⁹ BBr §xxviii in BNÉ I, pp. 62–3.

¹⁰⁰ VBr, §lxviii, p. 135; 'Et statim postquam partem Marie elegerat sine labore ac dolore in pace requieuit, ac in eodem loco sepulta est'; 'and immediately afterward Mary had chosen the group, without effort and pain she rested in peace and was buried in the same place'.

¹⁰¹ Strijbosch, *Seafaring*, pp. 27–9.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 13, 20 and 58–9.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

composition which characterises his travels as heretical.¹⁰⁴ An analogous theory was put forward by Mac Mathúna, following Merdrignac, in respect of the *Vie de Saint Malo*, a text which is also intimately connected to the Brendan tradition.¹⁰⁵ Leaving aside the contentious matter of which Life of Malo is the earlier of those extant, it is clear that at some point in the text's development an author or redactor deemed it wise to excise references to the eponymous saint's encounter with a giant. Mac Mathúna believes authors Sigebert de Gembloux and Baudri de Bourgueil either ignored passages in the same sources Bili had relied or excised that content from their redactions of Bili's *Vie*, particularly those with Paschal and Eucharistic themes.¹⁰⁶ Readers of de Gembloux and de Bourgueil's Lives are directed to seek out Brendan's Life for the 'irrational and fantastic'.¹⁰⁷

Many aspects of the characterisation of this woman, not least her size and sex, place her within the category of 'other' and make the benign and permissive response she evokes in Brendan somewhat puzzling. The woman self-identifies as belonging to the people of the sea and though this opaque designation appears to place her outside of a recognisably Christian community, she asserts that her people believe in both prayer and the resurrection. Of course, the 'people of the sea' might be an oblique reference to the idea of Christ's disciples as fishers of men.¹⁰⁸ However, she makes no reference to God and she is baptised by Brendan in the first instance which suggests that she is indeed pagan. It has been suggested that Irish authors in this period not infrequently treated of pagans in a manner which reflected a pervasive 'pessimism and gloom' that suffused the thought in eleventh- and twelfth-century Europe.¹⁰⁹ Ní Mhaonaigh discusses the idea of the 'hostile pagan' as a manifestation of those contemporary concerns but

¹⁰⁴ Designated the *Vita Secunda* by Plummer and edited by him in VSHP II, pp. 293–4, the composition is better categorised as a satire on the Brendan voyage tradition as by Meyer: Meyer, 'Satire', pp. 376–9; Mackley, *Legend*, p. 65.

¹⁰⁵ Mac Mathúna, 'Contributions', pp. 162–3.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Matt. IV.18–22.

¹⁰⁹ Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Pagans', p. 148.

while many of the topographic and environmental features encountered by Brendan and his companions are hostile to human survival, this woman, despite the bodily violence she herself has encountered, is not so inclined. There are depictions of ‘benevolent pagans’ in this period also, not least in the Lismore recension of *Acallam*, but this woman is not a recognisable figure, as those characters are.¹¹⁰

Essentially, her physical characteristics, the place of her discovery and the obliging response she evokes in Brendan share most affinity with the familiar characterisations of Otherworldly women. The sea has long been recognised as a liminal space in Irish literature ‘that connects the real world to the supernatural world’ and this is not Brendan’s first encounter with a woman with supernatural overtones.¹¹¹ In the opening passages of BBr, which recount Brendan’s clerical formation, he encounters *ingen min macachta mongbhuidhe, do cenel rígdá* who approaches his chariot and seeks to engage him in activities of dubious moral rectitude.¹¹² Brendan responds violently and whips the girl for her impudence but when his mentor Bishop Erc returns he chastises Brendan for beating the ‘stainless’ maiden. Brendan repents of his actions and undertakes a severe penance in restitution. While not entirely conforming to the dynamics of Otherworld encounters, Brendan’s solitude while singing psalms in a chariot, the description of the maiden and his suspicion that she seeks to corrupt him, all serve as signposts to a supernatural engagement of sorts. When considered in juxtaposition to the sea-maiden, who is treated with kindness and compassion by Brendan, there is perhaps a suggestion of the ‘shaded parallelism’ often favoured by Irish authors.¹¹³ The sin of Brendan’s first violent encounter with the first woman is expiated by his sympathetic response to the second.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

¹¹¹ Hillers, ‘Voyages’, p. 66.

¹¹² BBr L 3406; ‘a fine fully-grown, yellow haired girl, of royal race’.

¹¹³ Clancy, ‘Subversion’, p. 206.

Neville addressed the giantess vignette in a note in *Treasures from Irish Christianity* and although the comments are preliminary and subjective rather than strictly analytical, by consequence of the book's format and intended general audience, she presents some stimulating if not altogether persuasive arguments.¹¹⁴ She regards this incident as evidence of an Irish Eucharistic perspective that extended the efficacy of the sacrament to 'non-human recipients'.¹¹⁵ Certainly the physical characteristics of this woman place her outside of the mortal realm but such transgressive figures are a staple of Otherworld intrusions into hagiographical literature.¹¹⁶ In Tírechán's *Collectanea* Patrick resuscitates a giant at his followers' behest to see the size of a man who occupies a grave 120 feet long.¹¹⁷ The giant, who informs the saint that he has rescued him from *doloribus multis*, is baptised and dies a Christian. The same feat is performed by Saint Crónán in the *vita* edited by Plummer.¹¹⁸ It is possible then, that the addition of Eucharist to baptism in Brendan's encounter is a product of the times in which it was written, when authors and audiences were more aware of the importance of viaticum to insure entry to the Christian afterlife.¹¹⁹

Unlikely as it may seem a description of a similar figure appears in historical sources from the ninth century and appears as a brief, though now illegible, note in BL beginning *bean ro la muir inn Albain*,¹²⁰ though whether the scribe intended it to act as corroboration of the BBr incident or not is unclear as it appears in a section of the manuscript that includes numerous apparently randomly selected short anecdotes and single verses of largely secular materials.¹²¹ The incident is recounted in AU:

¹¹⁴ Neville, 'St Brendan', pp. 78–81.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹¹⁶ Nagy, 'Encounters', pp. 137–9. Nagy advances the argument that these are men from the Otherworld who are 'perceived by the living as a giant' which echoes the idea advanced by Carey, that the division between mortal and other realms is one of perception.

¹¹⁷ Tírechán, *Collectanea*, §40, as available on RIA, www.confessio.ie.

¹¹⁸ *Vita S. Cronani*, §iv, in VSHP I, p. 23.

¹¹⁹ As III, pp. 129–31.

¹²⁰ Fo. 193v; the ISOS catalogue entry which reads 'description of a giantess who came ashore in Scotland' prompted me to investigate further. AU 891.9; AI 892.

¹²¹ The coherence of the hagiographical/religious portion of BL and the closing *Acallam* fos. is not found in the central sections; between fos. 112 and 201 numerous short texts appear abandoned mid-tale.

Banscal ro lai an muir a n-Albain, .cxc.u. traighidh ina fot; .xuii. fot a trillsi; .uii. traighi fot meoir a laime; .uii. traighi fot a srona; gilithir geis uile h-i.¹²²

The sea cast up a woman in Scotland, whose length was 195 feet; the length of her plaits seventeen feet; the finger of her hand seven feet; the length of her nose seven feet; and altogether she was as white as a swan.

The historical reality that may underlie such an account is difficult to discern. Suffice to say, that the giantess converted by Brendan is sufficiently strange in any context as to merit notice.

It should also be noted that Irish ecclesiastical authors were fully capable of treating the Eucharist in a thoroughly irreverent manner. In the twelfth-century *Aislinge Meic Conglinne*, a text which subverts the spiritual efficacy of clerical pilgrimage, Aníer Mac Conglinne, on the cusp of death by crucifixion asks for his satchel in order that he might take viaticum.¹²³ His requested ‘viaticum’ is in fact two wheaten cakes and a slice of old bacon. He consumes the food, denying a tenth in tithe to the monks dishonouring him and to the spectators to his humiliations, afterwards giving thanks to God, as is done during the Eucharistic sacrament.¹²⁴ That an author, and presumably an audience, could countenance such impiety in a text suggests that Brendan dispensing viaticum to a monstrous woman may not have been all that transgressive an episode. Ultimately, as noted by Mac Mathúna this is one of a number of episodes within BBr that accord with an allegorical reading of the Christian journey of ‘initiation, regeneration and transformation’; the giantess’ ascension presents that pattern in ‘microcosm’.¹²⁵

V.v.ii The satirist

The presence of a supernumerary or unauthorised participant in a voyage is a trope evidenced in all of the extant *immrama*.¹²⁶ Their presence has been connected by scholars to the failure

¹²² AU.

¹²³ *Aislinge Meic Conglinne* (ed. and transl. Meyer pp. 22–3).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24–5.

¹²⁵ Mac Mathúna, ‘Contributions’, pp. 169–70.

¹²⁶ Thrall, ‘Sea’, p. 17; Carney, ‘Review’, p. 48; Bray, ‘Allegory’, p. 179.

of those voyages to end successfully which most frequently gives rise to a narrative turn in which the supernumerary is eliminated from proceedings as a precursor to reaching the desired destination.¹²⁷ For example, in the *Navigatio* two out of three of the late-comers are destined for hell.¹²⁸ In the case of BBr, although there is no mention of whether he has permission to undertake travel or not, the satirist beseeches Brendan to allow him join the voyage on the basis of his wretchedness or affliction, which one might presume is a reference to his sinfulness:

Is annsin tainic in crosán cu Brenainn, 7 sléchtsais ina fhiadhnusi, 7 is ed at-bert fris: ‘A Brenainn’, ar se, ‘geibh ar Dhia mhé, 7 aircis dom troighi co n-dighser lat’.¹²⁹

And then the satirist came to Brendan and prostrated himself before him and this is what he said to him: ‘O Brendan’, he said, ‘take me for God and have pity on my wretchedness so that I may go with you’.

And although this motif is commonplace, it is in the detail provided and the Scriptural lesson adduced, that innovation is in evidence. Clancy has suggested that the supernumerary motif has been well examined excepting in how it relates to the tales themselves and how it is variegated between tales;¹³⁰ this section is an effort to redress that deficit in respect of this text.

The satirist’s martyrdom is recounted thus:

Iar n-dula, immorro, doibh sealad siar o Araind at-ciat in t-ailén mor n-ard n-airegda n-alainn. Is and sin immorro ro batar lochait amail mhur-chata, 7 linuit in tracht fo cétoir dia slucudh-som. Iarfaighit, immorro, na braitre do Brenainn: ‘Cidh áilgidit na lochait-si’? ar siat. ‘Ar n-ithi-ne 7 ar slugud’, ar Brenainn. Is annsin dano at-bert Brenainn frisin crosán: ‘Eirg’, ol se, ‘7 caith corp Crist 7 a fhuil, 7 eirg iar sin docum na bethad suthaini, ár at-cluinim-si clascetal aingel icot togairm cuca’. Ba maith lais-sium sin, 7 is ed as-bert: ‘A Thigerna’! ar se, ‘cia maith do-ronus in tan dom-berur acedair docum nime’? Iar caithiumh tra cuirp Crist 7 a fhola don crosan, lingidh fo chedair co faeilti dermhair, co n-duatar na mur-chata h-e uile acht beg dia chnamuibh. Et adhluicter leo-sum sin, 7

¹²⁷ Wooding, 'Introduction', p. xii; all the extant *immrama*, the *Navigatio* and the relevant lives of Brendan include the abandonment or death of a supernumerary character, with the sole exception of *Immram Snédgusa*.

¹²⁸ Carney, 'Review', p. 48.

¹²⁹ BBr L 3736–8.

¹³⁰ Clancy, 'Subversion', p. 210.

scribhthar a ainm a martralaic, ár ba mairtír amra h-é. Is follus as sin connaircle in Coimhdhed ar in follus-pectach tháinic fa dheoidh isin luing do thogha ar tus dochum nimhe. Is amhlaid sin tra bias cech caen-duthrachtach deidhinach thicfa isin eclais cu ragha ar tus docum nime tre imarcraidh caen-duthracha sech in lucht batar rompa: ut Christus ait: ‘nouisimi primi, primi nouisimi’.¹³¹

Now after they had sailed for some time west from Aran they saw a great island, high, remarkable, lovely. Moreover there were mice like sea-cats and the filled the shore immediately in order to engulf them. Then the brother asked of Brendan: ‘What do these mice want’? they said. ‘To eat us and to swallow us’, said Brendan. It was then Brendan said to the satirist: ‘Arise’, he said, ‘and consume Christ’s body and his blood, and go after that to eternal life, because I hear the choir-singing angels calling you to them’. That pleased him and this is what he said: ‘O Lord’, he said, ‘what good have I done so that I am brought immediately to heaven’? After consuming the body of Christ and his blood, he immediately lept with great joy, with the result that the sea-cats devoured all of him except a small (number) of his bones. And he was buried then and his name was written in a martyrology because he was a wonderful martyr. It is clear that this was through the mercy of the Lord, for it is the clearly sinful one who came last onto the boat was first chosen to go to heaven. It is thus that every devout person who will come last into the church will be first chosen to go to heaven, through his excess of devoutness in spite of the people who were before him; as Christ said: ‘the last first and the first last’.¹³²

As with the episode of the fair haired dead giantess above the Communication by and death of the satirist is also, as expected, present in Plummer’s edition and Rawl. B 505.¹³³ In the *vita* the martyr is identified as *vir Dei preconi* and in his translation of the vernacular text Plummer identifies the figure as a ‘jester’ but I would argue the designation of satirist better fits the context and intent underlying this episode.¹³⁴ Voyage tales, as previously noted, frequently

¹³¹ BBr L 3743–59.

¹³² Matt. XX.16.

¹³³ BBr §xv in BNÉ I, p. 53; VBr, §lxxii, p. 137.

¹³⁴ VBr, §lxxii, p. 137; these imperfect analogues present a question about the direction of the translation and the linguistic proficiencies of the authors or scribes responsible. The Latin nomenclature may be translated as crier or proclaimer which might accord with two attested meanings of *croán*, either as crucifix bearer in religious processions or a singer of satirical poems. Whether the Latin has the same pejorative connotations as the Irish is unclear from the passage.

include ‘a tyrant, a bandit, a pagan, someone with no justice’ who may be cleansed by their time on the sea, which acts as ‘a purgative force’.¹³⁵ Satirists were aligned with druids in the Irish literary imagination, with the following description of a devilish feast evoking the particular disdain with which they were regarded: ‘a devilish feast, ie. a feast which is given to sons of death and bad people, ie. to druids and satirists and poets and farters and clowns and bandits and pagans and prostitutes and other bad people’.¹³⁶ A similar reproof is found in the *Fifteen Signs Before Doomsday* text edited by Stokes.¹³⁷ As in BBr, the Latin text records Brendan informing his companions that the sea-monsters will kill them but differs slightly as Brendan expressly informs the satirist that he is to die as a sacrifice to save the others.¹³⁸ The vernacular expression is less overt in its statement of Brendan’s reasoning, indicating that heaven awaits him rather than emphasising that his martyrdom is necessary for the salvation of the others. As in BBr, the satirist accepts viaticum, dies and is buried.¹³⁹

The necessity of having repented of one’s sins and appropriately shriven was clear not only in the prescriptive literature examined above but in a myriad of religious texts from what has already been shown in Chapter II to have been a particularly Christocentric period in western theology.¹⁴⁰ In the *Navigatio* one of the three initial interlopers is ultimately dragged off to hell and Bray has interpreted this as a ‘sobering lesson to the rest of Brendan’s crew that irredeemable sinners may reside even amongst themselves.’¹⁴¹ Given that the BBr satirist, who perhaps represents the most reviled class of Irish society, can repent and be delivered to heaven is the inverse of that sobering lesson on irredeemable souls. The satirist as the supernumerary character in a voyage tale is not limited to this text; a *crosán* is among the number of the

¹³⁵ Clancy, ‘Subversion’, pp. 203 and 194.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*; Clancy quotes this from McCone, *Pagan Past*, pp. 220–3.

¹³⁷ Stokes, ‘Doomsday’, pp. 318–19.

¹³⁸ VBr, §lxxii, p. 137; ‘Surge, et accipe corpus Domini nostri Iesu Christi; et offer te in sacrificium Domino tuo, qui pro te se optulit Patri in sacrificium’.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*; ‘et accepto salutis vaitico’.

¹⁴⁰ II, pp. 70–7.

¹⁴¹ Bray, ‘Allegory’, p. 183.

travellers in the twelfth-century *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*.¹⁴² In that narrative his entrance is rendered truly ridiculous when his companions strip him of their clothing before he departs on his pilgrimage and he boards the boat stark naked.¹⁴³ Those already aboard agree to accept his presence when he promises to make ‘merriment of mind and nature’ for them in a manner that will not disrupt their devotional acts.¹⁴⁴ This jester dies after a short duration and is mourned by the men until he reappears in bird form and tells his erstwhile shipmates that he is bound for heaven.¹⁴⁵ The motif, of the supernumerary’s death has been read, in the context of *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, as a lesson in ‘mercy and humility’ for the other occupants of the boat.¹⁴⁶ The parallels between the two accounts are self-evident but the author of the hagiographical text has perhaps incorporated the reference to Eucharist into his account to add a more religious and canonical aspect to the death. He then reinforces that lesson by referencing a scriptural precept that explains the death in terms palatable to more refined Christian sensibilities. The reference to Matthew does not appear in Rawl. B 505,¹⁴⁷ suggesting perhaps that the author of BBr believed the didactic message of the narrative needed more reinforcement. The death of the satirist, without sacrament and appropriate burial, was acceptable in a voyage tale, but potentially less so as part of a homiletic Life.

V.v.iii *The smith*

Immediately following the death and ascension into heaven of the satirist is an episode involving the death and burial at sea of a smith. The smith is not strictly characterised as a supernumerary though a group of wrights and smiths is identified as having entreated Brendan to accompany him.¹⁴⁸ His value to the endeavour is affirmed after his death when the

¹⁴²Stokes, 'Curaig', pp. 38–41; Stokes translates *crosán* as jester and given the depiction in this text, it is an accurate rendering for that context, as satirist is in BBr.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 40–1.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42–3.

¹⁴⁶Clancy, 'Subversion', p. 211.

¹⁴⁷ Mac Mathúna, 'Irish', p. 145.

¹⁴⁸ BBr L 3735; Strijbosch, *Seafaring*, p. 287; Strijbosch identifies the smith as a supernumerary and her reading of the text leads her to infer that the smiths sought to accompany Brendan in restitution for their work on his boat. I am not convinced this is clear from the text.

travellers find themselves in great distress for want of an anchor, posthumously establishing his legitimacy as a voyager.¹⁴⁹ This episode differs from the self-directed martyrdom of the satirist as the smith is depicted as suffering a natural ailment precipitating death.

Iar bh-facbáil immorro doibh na h-indsí-sin gabais galar opunn in gabhuinn cu m-ba comfhocus bas. At-bert Brenainn fris: ‘Cidh mhachtuighi’, ar sé, ‘eirg dochum na flatha nemhdha amal ro thúiris duid cusaniu, nó mad ail lat beith isin t-saegul beous, do-gen-sa ernuighthi fort co Dia, 7 fo-ghebha slainti’. At-bert in gobha: ‘At-cluinim’, ar se, ‘guth in Coimded ocum togairm’ et iar caithimh cuirp Crist 7 a fola dhó, teit docum nime. Bai, tra, ceist mor itir na braitribh ‘mon corp do beith gan adhnacul, ar ní raibhi talam ‘na bh-farrad. Is annsin do-raidh Brenainn a adhnacul idir tonnaibh in mhara, ár in té do-róine nemh 7 talmain 7 na duili arcena, is tualang h-e tonna in mara dh’ fastúdh in cuirp inntibh co nemchumhscaighthi. Cidh tra acht adhnaicit-sium in gobainn itir tonnuibh in mara, cen rochtain cu talmain, sis, cen eirghi ar uachtar shaile, cen chumscugud anunn nó ille, acht amal bidh a talmain no beth; et biaidh annsin cen truaillnedh cu tora la an mesraighthi.¹⁵⁰

Then after they had left that island, a sudden illness seized the smith so that he was close to death. Brendan said to him: ‘Why do you marvel?’ he said, ‘go to the heavenly kingdom you have sought until today, or if you want to still be in the world, I will pray for you to God and you will get health’. The smith said: ‘I hear’, he said, ‘the voice of the Lord calling me’, and after taking the body of Christ and his blood, he goes to heaven. Then there was a great question amongst the brothers, about the body being without burial, for there was no land near them. Then Brendan directs its burial among the waves of the sea, for the one who made heaven and earth and the rest of the elements is able to hold back the waves of the sea, to keep the body in them without movement. So they bury the smith amongst the waves of the sea, without reaching land, down, without rising to the top of the sea water, without moving here or there, as though it were on land; and he will be there without corruption until Judgement Day comes.

¹⁴⁹ BBr L 3781–876. Brendan blesses a priest’s hands to gift him with the dead smith’s prowess, avoiding calamity.

¹⁵⁰ BBr L 3760–73.

The death of the smith is also found in Rawl. B 505 and as in the case of the satirist above, he accepts the body and blood of Christ, dies and is buried at sea by his fellow travellers.¹⁵¹ He, like the boys in the episode from BS, is offered the chance at recovery by Brendan but declines, the lure of the heavenly kingdom being too great. There is little in this account that might not just as readily happen on land as at sea, excepting the difficulty the crew faces in finding a suitable burial location for the deceased smith. In fact, this episode might be among those that can easily be recognised as having been derived from the real experiences of historical pilgrims. Both the giantess and the satirist are afforded what appear to have been traditional Christian burials on land but without that option in this instance Brendan directs the crew to inter the body in the sea, reassuring them that God will protect his body inviolate until Judgement Day when his soul will meet the same fate as his fellows. The presence of Eucharist in this passage seems almost reflexive on the author's part: an imminent death requires the viaticum to be administered, so it is.

V.v.iv The pilgrim

Towards the latter part of the second voyage the travellers encounter an Irish pilgrim living alone on an island.

‘Do feruibh Eirenn damh-sa’, ol in senoir, ‘7 da fhear dec do-dechamar diar n-ailithri, 7 do-rat-sum in mur-chat m-biasdaidi ut linn ana én bhic, 7 ba h-inmain linn h-e cu mor, 7 ro fhorbair iar sin cu mor, 7 ní ro erchoit duinne riam, et isat marbha aein-fher dec dhibh, 7 itu-sa sunn m' aoenar agut irnaidhi-si cu tarda corp Crist 7 a fuil dam 7 dula iar-soduin docum nime’. Foillsighius immorro in senoir doib-sium in talmain icca rabutar iaraid .i. Tir Tarrngairi. Iar caithimh tra cuirp Crist 7 a fola don t-senoir, luidh docum nimhe, 7 adlaicter annsin h-e maroen ria braithribh cu n-onoir 7 co n-airmhitin móir acus cu salmaibh 7 cu n-imnaibh, ind ainm in Athar 7 in Maic 7 in Spirta Nóimh.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ VBr, §lxxiii, p.137; ‘et accipiens corpus dominicum’.

¹⁵² BBr L 3833–42.

‘I am of the men of Ireland’, said the old man, ‘and we were twelve men when we went on our pilgrimage and we brought that beastly sea-cat with us, then a little bird, and we had great affection for him, and after that he grew greatly and he never injured us ever, and eleven of them are dead and I am here on my own beseeching you to give me the body of Christ and his blood and so that afterwards I may go to heaven’. Then the old man revealed to them the land for which they were looking, that is, the Promised Land. After the old man consumes the body of Christ and his blood, he went to heaven and he is buried there like his brothers with honour and with great reverence and with psalms and with hymns, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The motif of a pilgrim abandoned on an island to await the Day of Judgement recurs throughout voyage tales¹⁵³ and there is little unique to this account except the requirement that the old man believes himself in need of the Eucharist before death. Rawl. B 505 includes the same requirement: ‘et accipiens sacrificium de manibus Brendani’.¹⁵⁴ There is a potentially fascinating intertextual relationship between this narrative and a short BL tract, *Triar maccleirech*, which might be best characterised as a Christian *exemplum*.¹⁵⁵ In this anecdote, three clerical students undertake a pilgrimage and eschew provisions for the journey as an intentional demonstration of their piety. They are accompanied by a small cat and when they reach an isolated island it is the cat that initially comes between them and starvation as it catches and shares salmon with them. Christ intervenes and provides some additional victuals and the three clerics decide to honour that gift by committing themselves to a hierarchy of prayer: the first will sing the 150 psalms each day and celebrate mass, in addition to mass, the second will say 150 prayers a day and the third will also celebrate mass and sing fifty *hymnum dicats* each day. When the first two die, presumably of starvation, the third man, now burdened with the commitments of all three, rebukes God for favouring his companions over him. God

¹⁵³ Thrall, ‘Sea’, p. 15.

¹⁵⁴ VBr, §lxxv, p. 138; ‘and he accepted the sacrifice from the hand of Brendan’.

¹⁵⁵ This anecdote is found at fo. 84va in BL; partially transcribed and translated at Stokes, *Lives*, pp. viii–x. It is not dissimilar to the short *exempla* texts edited by Boyle from the *Book of Leinster*, though hierarchies of clerical morality rather than ‘dubious morality’ (p. 22) are implicated here: Boyle, ‘Morality’, pp. 9–48. I have not dated the tract as it is beyond the scope of the current work.

responds that the choices made by the first man resulted in a transitory and short-lived life and the second man's choice neither prolonged nor shortened his existence but his own choice grants him long life and the kingdom of heaven. It is unclear what logic underpins these judgements as all three men have undertaken the same arguably foolish pilgrimage. In her analysis of *Cethrur macclérech* and *Epscop do Gáedalaib* Boyle argues persuasively that the authors' intended the texts to serve as warnings against ill-conceived pilgrimage and though the moral lesson is more obliquely presented here, it potentially serves the same purpose.¹⁵⁶ In *Triar maccleirech* the survivor lives on into old age, just as the BBr pilgrim has, until Brendan comes from the sea 'conad essein rom-bennuch 7 dorat coman 7 sacarbaic dhó, co n-dechaid dochum nime'.¹⁵⁷ Arguably, this tale bears more resemblance to historical reality than the wondrous account provided in BBr and it might be suggested that the BBr narrative represents the final stage in the process of translation from historical to voyage literature,¹⁵⁸ with *Triar maccleirech* occupying the transitional stage of development. The experiences of the unfortunate pilgrims have been exaggerated as a narrative device to match the overarching wonder of Brendan's tale as, for example, in the transformation of the three clerics' small and helpful *caitín* into *mur-chat m-biasdaidi* in BBr. Wooding has given brief attention to this BBr vignette, and although he is more concerned with situating the archipelago of islands geographically, his work does offer a further potential analogue from the earliest version of *Immram Snédgusa ocus Maic Riagla*,¹⁵⁹ where the sole survivor recounts that his companions were martyred by foreign heathens. Wooding connects this text to a historical account provided in the eighth century by Dicuil.¹⁶⁰ The figure of a solitary Irish pilgrim awaiting Judgement Day is also found in *Immram Curaig Maíl Dúin*,¹⁶¹ a tale with an established relationship with

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21 and 41–4.

¹⁵⁷ 'So that Brendan blessed him and gave him Communion and sacrifice so he went to heaven'.

¹⁵⁸ Thrall, 'Sea', p. 15; Wooding, 'Monastic', p. 245 on the idea that *immrama* represent 'romantic accounts of actual experiences of Irish clerics on the sea'.

¹⁵⁹ Wooding, 'Date', p. 20; Clancy, 'Subversion', pp. 222–3.

¹⁶⁰ Wooding, 'Date', p. 18.

¹⁶¹ Stokes, 'Voyage', pp. 494–5, §19.

the *Navigatio* tradition,¹⁶² in which the stranded man is, as the three clerics, provisioned by God. The evidence then seems to favour a reading of this episode as a mythologised version of events known to have occurred with the inclusion of the Eucharistic reference, potentially only a reflex of the author's milieu, as in the case of the smith above. Its presence reinforces the requirement of receiving Communion before death but adds little additional knowledge to our understanding of Irish Eucharistic practices.

V.v.v Prominent Eucharistic episodes in the Brendan dossier

Figure V.v Distribution of Eucharistic Episodes

EPISODE	BL	PLUMMER BBr in BNÉ I	RAWL. B 505 (PLUMMER 1)	NAVIGATIO (ed. SELMER)	HEIST 1	HEIST 2	Bod Mus (PLUMMER 2)	AB Edition Trinity
Giantess	✓	✓	✓					
Satirist	✓	✓	✓					
Smith	✓	✓	✓					
Pilgrim	✓	✓	✓		✓			
Crystal Pillar		✓	✓	✓				
Gildas		✓	✓	✓		✓		
The Harpist	✓	✓						

There are two additional very prominent Eucharistic episodes in the Brendan dossier which do not appear in BBr but by virtue of the scholarly attention they have received elsewhere it would be remiss not to mention them here. Included in Plummer's BBr and Rawl. B 505, probably as a reflection of the intertextual relationships between those texts and the *Navigatio* are the encounter with a crystal pillar that furnishes Brendan with a crystal chalice and paten,¹⁶³ and Brendan's meeting with Gildas when the British monk is bewildered and

¹⁶² Mac Mathúna, 'Motif', p. 256.

¹⁶³ Murray, 'Cuilebad', pp. 189–91; Clancy, 'Subversion', p. 208; on the significance of the narrative of items brought back from voyages.

rendered impotent by the transformation of the wafer and wine into a human form and blood respectively.¹⁶⁴ Carey posits that the items retrieved from the crystal pillar, a chalice and paten, are analogues to the various material items frequently brought back to the mortal realm from the Otherworld as evidence of the miraculous journey undertaken.¹⁶⁵ However, the choice of items is indicative of an awareness of an author's part of the importance of Eucharistic themes in the Brendan tradition. It is universally accepted that the *Navigatio* emphasises the major feasts and obligations of the liturgical year but less attention has been drawn to the prominence of the Eucharist within that context.¹⁶⁶ From the celebration of repeated Paschal Eucharists on the whale's back,¹⁶⁷ to the four times in which Brendan is depicted administering Communion to Christian believers, new and old, the themes of penance, death and resurrection are reiterated with a constancy that cannot be ignored. Penance and the Eucharist must precede death in order to reach heaven and be assured of eternal life on Judgement Day.

The transformation of the Eucharistic species which Brendan instigates in the face of Gildas' attempted exclusion of the Irish saint and his companions from his church,¹⁶⁸ is a thoroughly fascinating encounter and had it been included in the Lismore BBr it would certainly have added to the cogency of this chapter. Gildas reacts in terror to the sight of the human form on the paten when he approaches Brendan to receive Communion and recognises that his maltreatment of Brendan has precipitated this travesty. Brendan is cast as his confessor and restores the Eucharistic species to their rightful state.¹⁶⁹ Other literary accounts of Eucharistic species' transformations were discussed in Chapter II but suffice to say the presence of this episode further supports the argument advanced by Boyle that Irish authors in

¹⁶⁴ BBr BNÉ §121,71, §170,84; VSHP §lvi, p.128, §lxxxiv, p.141; Also found in *Navigatio* at Selmer, *Navigatio*, §22, pp.58–61; O'Meara, *Voyage*, pp. 50–2. The Gildas episode is also included in the breviary life edited by Heist, VSHH, §14, p. 329.

¹⁶⁵ Carey, 'Crystal Pillar', pp. 74–5; Murray, 'Cuilebad', pp. 187–93.

¹⁶⁶ Bray, 'Allegory', pp. 175–86.

¹⁶⁷ BBr L 3601–17; in Mac Mathúna, 'Contributions', pp. 168–9 it is argued that the inclusion of the whale was a device to avoid the suggestion that any Eucharistic wine be spilled during the mass.

¹⁶⁸ BNÉ I, BBr, §168–171.

¹⁶⁹ Though the author's theology gets a little confused and he recounts that the human blood becomes wine again.

the central Middle Ages were aware of and responding to contemporary debates on the Real Presence.¹⁷⁰ In connecting the episode involving Gildas to those disputes, Neville argues that this transformation of the Eucharistic species is the first such mutation recorded in hagiography, making this text very much of its time.¹⁷¹ However, the transformation witnessed by Brigid in Cogitosus' *Vita sanctae Brigitae* is significantly earlier and arguably more subversive as it features a female saint impugning the authority of a male cleric.¹⁷² For the purposes of the analysis in this chapter it is sufficient to note that different authors and redactors approaching the Brendan materials in both Latin and Irish in this period recognised the centrality of Eucharist to their narrative ambitions.

V.vi Questions of genre

As has been noted above, the ubiquity of the *Navigatio* has at times impeded fruitful analysis of other texts in the Brendan dossier. It is undeniable that it was the 'most influential of all medieval Irish texts', preserved in over 120 European manuscripts, but that should not be sufficient reason to persuade scholars that the voyages in the hagiographical texts are of value only as inferior bowdlerised versions of the supposed paradigmatic text.¹⁷³ The bifurcation of the texts is exemplified by Sharpe's description of the *Navigatio* as 'not really a saint's life but a romance in the tradition of the voyage tales'.¹⁷⁴ *Immrama* were fundamentally 'ecclesiastical in inspiration and execution' and such texts owe a substantial debt to a variety of biblical, apocryphal and classical material; that same debt is owed by hagiography so evidence of extensive intertextuality should come as no undue surprise.¹⁷⁵ As has been demonstrated in the preceding sections, the relationship between BBr and the *Navigatio*, as well a variety of other Voyage tales and Otherworld materials, is well developed and we would do well to recognise

¹⁷⁰ II, pp. 39–59.

¹⁷¹ Neville, 'St Brendan', p. 79.

¹⁷² Chapter II, pp. 89–91.

¹⁷³ DIS, p. 115; Wooding, 'Introduction', p. xi.

¹⁷⁴ MISL, p. 17.

¹⁷⁵ Hillers, 'Voyages', p. 67.

that these texts were adapted and recast to serve potentially similar didactic functions in different contexts. Though it will generally be found on undergraduate curricula as a classic Voyage tale, the tenth-century versified recension of *Immram Snédgusa ocus Meic Ríagla*, has been described by Ní Mhaonaigh as ‘a religious tract designed to draw attention to the nature of God’s mercy’, a description that one might more readily expect to find applied to a homily from LB, for example.¹⁷⁶ McCone wrote scathingly of what he considered the ‘futile taxonomic exercise’ of distinguishing *immram* from *echtrae* and it might be suggested that past efforts to apply a ‘classificatory straitjacket’ to Irish literature have,¹⁷⁷ at least in the case of the Brendan dossier, obscured some meaningful avenues of research that interrogate the cross-pollination between the *Navigatio*, vernacular hagiography and those texts classified as *immrama*. Clancy has observed that much scholarly work on voyage literature has been hampered trifold by a blinkered focus on the generalities of genre, disproportionate interest in the minutiae of the sources of various motifs and islands and the last vestiges of the nativist debates.¹⁷⁸ The thematic approach taken in the analysis of this chapter has sought to ignore the restrictions of genre and consider each relevant Eucharistic episode within the frame of all available textual analogues, irrespective of the classification applied to the text from which they come.

With respect to the presence of the Eucharistic sacrament in those texts designated as Voyage tales, it should be acknowledged that it is a significant motif in multiple texts but the character of the representations is frequently quite different to those discussed above. There are multiple references to prominent feasts including Easter, Pentecost and Christmas and the necessity of being well-appointed physically in order to celebrate the required masses and offices.¹⁷⁹ There is only a single account of an individual penitent monk receiving Eucharist in the *Navigatio* and in fact the laity is notable for its absence in this text with the vast majority

¹⁷⁶ Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Literature’, p. 44.

¹⁷⁷ McCone, *Pagan*, p. 79.

¹⁷⁸ Clancy, ‘Subversion’, pp. 195–6.

¹⁷⁹ O’Meara, *Voyage* pp. 15, 36 and 45; *Navigatio*, §9, §15 and §17 (ed. Selmer pp. 17–20, 40–45 and 49–53).

of encounters, places and people sharing a decidedly monastic character.¹⁸⁰ The assertion that the *Navigatio* text was intended to convey ‘the ideal monastic life, with its rules, prayers, devotions and observance of the canonical hours’ is affirmed in the nature of the Eucharistic presence in the text. But unrestricted by the conventions of genre or perhaps with ambitions which differed from those of the *Navigatio*’s author, the composer of BBr had license to invent and provoke with this work.

An observation made by Thomas O’Loughlin in respect of the *Navigatio* tradition is especially pertinent here and worth quoting in full: ‘the author, in the manner of John Bunyan or C.S Lewis, deliberately chose a fictional form as this was ideally appropriate to the nature of the subject matter’.¹⁸¹ If we accept that BBr shares greater kinship with the Voyage materials than previous scholars have allowed then we open the possibility of exploring these Eucharistic vignettes in a new light. In contrast to the specificity with respect to place and locality that is characteristic of a plurality of hagiographical texts in the vernacular canon, we are here presented with an allegorical rendering of a saint’s spiritual journey that is entirely unfettered by the constrictions of time, space and orthodoxy. By transferring the site of the Eucharist to a liminal space, by signifying to his audience that the normative patterns of hagiography have been suspended, the author has been permitted to write Eucharistic encounters that contravene the expected behaviours of his society. The sea, in Irish literary invention, serves as a ‘field on which the greatness and marvels of God are displayed’,¹⁸² allowing an author the latitude to both subvert and validate social and religious norms.

A strand of scholarship in the earlier part of the twentieth century postulated that the Voyage tales and the search for a land of promise were related to the ideas advanced by

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14; *Navigatio*, §7 (ed. Selmer p. 16).

¹⁸¹ O’Loughlin, *Theology*, p. 193.

¹⁸² Clancy, ‘Subversion’, p. 194.

heresiarch Pelagius.¹⁸³ Despite an intriguing premise, that Voyage tales affirm central Pelagian tenets in relation to the absence of inherited original sin and death as a natural occurrence rather than a punishment,¹⁸⁴ the breadth of orthodox Christian theology in this period and the multifariousness of the tales, militate against such assessments. In the episodes from BBr and BS analysed here, with the multiple baptisms and Eucharists dispensed to pagan, sinning and dying men, women and children, the texts on some level corroborate the Pelagian denial that unbaptised children and virtuous adults are damned.¹⁸⁵ However, the narrative repeatedly asserts that the good death and certain entry to heaven are predicated on baptism, repentance of one's sins, and Communion, which by implication means that death without those acts is to court damnation.

I think it is worth considering the possibility, that the development of the Brendan legends within different genres, was potentially a response to the particular exigencies associated with conveying complex ideas to different audiences in different contexts; the core messages remained constant but the vehicle for their dissemination was altered in response to circumstances. In Neville's brief notes on Brendan she suggested that the Eucharistic vignettes from his voyages are evidence of 'an expansion of the sacramental imagination in popular legend';¹⁸⁶ broadly, the more thoroughgoing research of this chapter accords with that hypothesis. These texts operated on multiple levels, accessible to those with less well-developed frames of reference but equally interesting to more literate audience members who understood the 'conscious text-play' in which authors were engaged.¹⁸⁷ We would also do well to remember that medieval Irish audiences were equipped to approach complex narratives that

¹⁸³ Esposito, 'Enoch', pp. 28–9.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Neville, 'St Brendan', p. 79.

¹⁸⁷ Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Literature', p. 59.

demanded they ‘make mature interpretations of cause, effect and meaning’, as will be considered next.¹⁸⁸

V. vii Texts and identities

Throughout this chapter, and those preceding it, the fundamental argument with respect to medieval identities has been their mutability and interdependence on multiple matrices of meaning contained in the economy and grammar of the Christian life: identities are situational and in attempting to disinter their contours from texts which are not autobiographical or consciously reflexive, great care must be taken to not overstate the conclusions we may draw.¹⁸⁹ However, these texts were a ‘a locus of authority’ and Christian communities derived a ‘sense of solidarity and shared identity’ from didactic texts intended to be internalised.¹⁹⁰ It might reasonably be further asserted that textual accounts that treated of the most important sacrament of the *consortium fidelium* were imbued with additional authority. The evidence gathered in this chapter does little to suggest that existing scholarly assumptions about the limited accessibility of the Eucharist for the laity are flawed; Communication by the entire congregation was generally an event reserved to the highest holy days. However, the presence of the notable lay Communication narratives discussed above is perhaps indicative of a desire on the part of audiences to partake of the sacrament in a literary if not literal sense. It is also important to acknowledge that in each of these episodes of lay Communication, death was imminent. The lay members of the community in these vignettes are afforded no less opportunity to avail themselves of viaticum than those in religious life.¹⁹¹ Although we cannot assume that the equality of access depicted in the texts was directly reflective of historical realities we can make informed postulations about a widespread apprehension of the necessity

¹⁸⁸ Clancy, ‘Literature’, p. 649.

¹⁸⁹ Stock, *Implications*, p. 133; Pohl, ‘Social language’, p. 131; Pohl’s discussion of Geary’s introduction of the anthropological concept of identity as a ‘situational construct’ is especially instructive.

¹⁹⁰ Stock, *Implications*, p. 133.

¹⁹¹ III, pp. 129–31, for the importance of viaticum for religious men and women.

to receive the sacrament before death as the imperative key to the kingdom of God and salvation. From the young boys, potentially clerical oblates, through to the uninvited guest in Brendan's boat, the satirist, the smith and the hermit, to the fair-haired injured giant maiden in the sea, we are presented with a charter of lay Communicants who defy the normative categorisations of recipients of the Eucharist: children, a layman or lesser cleric whose status as a sinner or 'other' is implied, a skilled craftsman, a foolish hermit and a woman who is also 'other'. As discussed above, Foucault described the end of Christian penance and the return to full Communion with one's peers as 'a moment of maximum theatricality' and in these episodes these hagiographers have certainly achieved that level of high drama.¹⁹²

If we accept the premise initially laid out in Chapter I,¹⁹³ with respect to the para-liturgical uses of these texts or excerpts thereof as homilies within the setting of mass, then the implications of these narratives are all the clearer. Potentially, congregations were present through the mass, listened to the homilies in which the primacy of the sacrament was extolled, were necessary witnesses to the elaborate rituals of the consecration, and were then passive observers as only the presiding cleric partook of the body and blood of Christ. As previously discussed, the mass and the Eucharistic sacrament 'represented and embodied the unity and wholeness' of the Body of Christ,¹⁹⁴ and the tension between the scarcity of evidence for lay engagement in the rite and this principle has been difficult to reconcile, for many scholars. It was in accessing the sacrament that many contemporary authors believed that full membership of the church was ultimately conferred, as evidenced not only in the mandated exclusion of catechumens from the church during consecration but in prescribed pre-Communion prayers such as that written by Saint Anselm: 'May I be worthy to be incorporated into your body

¹⁹² Foucault, *Religion*, p. 172.

¹⁹³ See I, pp. 9–11 and 14–21.

¹⁹⁴ Bossy, 'Mass', pp. 5 and 30; CC, p. 2.

which is the church'.¹⁹⁵ If physical Communication was not a regular component of lay religious experience, then how might the individual feel incorporated into the corporate body of their church? It is possible that hearing or reading these textual accounts of the sacrament served as a meaningful substitute for actual reception, in the same manner as 'ocular Communion' has been argued to have operated.¹⁹⁶ The manifold benefits of the Eucharist, in fortifying the faithful in the face of temptation and the usual tribulations of life, were well recognised,¹⁹⁷ and in robustly preserving the demarcation between the sacred and profane spheres, the religious and lay orders, excepting when death was imminent, the clerical orders maintained the exceptionality of the Eucharist, further reinforcing its salvific efficacy. Audiences and individuals were explicitly reminded in these texts of both that exceptionality and efficacy; this was surely the most important aspect of the texts' multiple functions and how readers and listeners were intended to incorporate those messages into their personal religious identities. In some respects, the lay identity under discussion here is the most corporate of the identity classes examined in this dissertation and the least likely to persist as a collective without 'some narrative architecture to shape its contours and harmonise its content'.¹⁹⁸ It is perhaps therefore unsurprising to find narratological Eucharistic material in texts which blur the boundaries of the religious and secular as explicitly as the Brendan Lives and voyage literature discussed above.

V.viii *Conclusions*

History, has, on occasion, treated medieval Irish hagiographers and the authors of voyage and Otherworld tales harshly, and the notion that these men were the 'Grimms and Andersons of their day',¹⁹⁹ has lingered in the general imagination. However, as is clear from the analysis

¹⁹⁵ *Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm*, p. 13; DSE, pp. 152–3; Gille's *De statu* exhorts priests to ensure that 'no Jew, pagan or catechumen may be in the church during the hour of the sacrifice...and to exclude the excommunicated'.

¹⁹⁶ CC, pp. 63–82; Astell, *Eating*, p. 3.

¹⁹⁷ See: Lan, p. 158, 114 and 115.

¹⁹⁸ Cohen, *Hybridity*, p. 50.

¹⁹⁹ Esposito, 'Enoch', p. 41.

above, setting aside the restrictions of genre and juxtaposing related Eucharistic content from each genre potentially illuminates interesting dimensions of both. There is something ‘more appealing to an audience’ in a hagiographical text, replete with the thrills of a voyage, being adapted for use as a homily ‘than a strictly devotional text’.²⁰⁰ The liminal space of the sea facilitated hagiographical depictions of lay Eucharistic reception which may be read as subverting the supposed norms of the reform era, yet even that subversion may be read through some lenses as further affirming orthodox prescriptions. It was argued however, that these literary accounts, similar to those gendered depictions discussed in Chapter IV, were not intended for imitation but rather served as substitute Eucharistic encounters for lay audiences held at a distance, by clerical authority and orthodox prescriptions, from the central sacrament of their faith. There are substantial limitations to the overarching conclusions that can be drawn from these texts, in respect of the contours of lay and penitent religious identities in the period of church reform, as so much of the material adduced from BBr is so extraordinary and particular to that saint’s dossier that its status is probably unique among the canon. Equally the interrogation herein of child Communication within BS is not unproblematic; to extrapolate from one interesting narrative account, suggestive of altered or contested understandings of the orthodoxy of administering the Eucharist to Christians who are not yet of age, is untenable. What is rendered clear by the analysis of this chapter, leaving aside its tangential value in exploring the relationship between Eucharistic vignettes within Brendan’s dossier through a new lens, is that no absolutist statements may be made about the nature of the sacramental identities presented in these texts, either for these saints or their congregations. It is a useful reminder that even as a didactic genre directed at general audiences, Irish hagiographers, of this period, as in earlier centuries, remain more interested in the holy man’s miracles than his audience’s responses.

²⁰⁰ Bray, ‘Allegory’, p. 185.

‘We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots?’
‘Come buy,’ call the goblins
Hobbling down the glen.

Come and kiss me.
Never mind my bruises,
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeez’d from goblin fruits for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
Eat me, drink me, love me;
Laura, make much of me;
For your sake I have braved the glen
And had to do with goblin merchant men.’

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS

The lapsarian and Eucharistic echoes in these passages from Victorian poet Rossetti’s most famous composition, *Goblin Market*,¹ in which Lizzie immolates herself on the strange fruit peddled by the goblin merchants to effect her sister’s emancipation, have long been recognised. This oftentimes disturbing poem takes the almost universally recognisable iconography of the Last Supper and Christ’s Passion and subverts, though ultimately upholds, the message of sacrifice and salvation in bold and unexpected ways. That the Eucharistic institution narrative, of such prominence in the collective consciousness of the modern and medieval worlds, may be inverted in such a manner, is a germane reminder of the perpetual mutability of text and context. This poetic expression of the dire consequences of Laura’s capitulation to temptation is equally admonitory; scholars must resist the allure of pre-existing prejudices when approaching texts and look with new eyes. This is all the more the case where medieval texts are concerned because of the difference in time and cultural space that separates scholars from them.

It was argued in Chapter I that a causal and reciprocal relationship exists between canonical and literary textual records of the Eucharist and the development of communal

¹ Rossetti, ‘Goblin Market’ in *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, p. 4–5, L 42–47 and L 466–74; for analysis of the Christian iconography, see Amico, *Rossetti*, pp. 68–73.

identities. Christianity is, perhaps, the most successful force for collectivity ever witnessed and Eucharistic rites and the associated texts were central to the development of the still-aspired-to *communitas perfecta*. For believers in the central Middle Ages the Eucharist embodied, both figuratively and literally, after the emergence of the Real Presence doctrine over the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the entirety of the Gospel message, from Christ's sacrifice to man's ultimate salvation. The *Logos*, as prefigured in the Old Testament iteration of Melchizedek, and realised in the Last Supper of Jesus and his first faithful disciples, found its apothotic expression in the Eucharistic meal of bread and wine shared by celebrants and their congregations. Public iterations of ritual acts in a religious context retained both figurative and functional importance and the texts which ordered, interpreted and illuminated the axiomatic mystery of the Christian faith commanded a wide audience in medieval Christendom. Throughout the long twelfth century, the allied institution narratives of the Eucharist, the Last Supper and the Passion, were deconstructed and reconfigured in a multiplicity of texts, including vernacular homilies, by Irish authors. As they strove to understand, reproduce, and innovate they employed their vernacular idiom to add new shade and texture to the vast tapestry of medieval Irish religious literature.

It was further argued that the developments in sacramental identities in this period are intimately connected to and cannot be uncoupled from the diffuse processes of Church reform. The debates on the Real Presence occurred against the wider backdrop of structural and spiritual renaissance that generated new modes of sanctity within hagiography and precipitated refreshed understandings of what constituted orthodox Christian identities for both clergy and laity. It was originally anticipated at the outset of this project, that this overarching context of production, established in Chapter I, and returned to repeatedly again in subsequent sections of this dissertation, might plausibly have produced multiple points of consonance with reform

ideology and sacramental conformity within the corpus of texts under examination. However, as detailed throughout and addressed below, this expectation was ultimately unrealised.

The original premise for treating the nine Lismore Lives as a single corpus was the fact that first and foremost they are grouped together in a medieval manuscript and hence formed a unit for the scribe(s) of that codex, and arguably for his predecessors. The methodology was validated by the identification of unifying strands in the homiletic structuring, sacramental content of the Lives in question and even the absence thereof. However, the existence of outliers to the central diachronic and thematic paradigm within the group, namely the Lives of Mochua and Fionnchú, frustrated this hope. Notwithstanding that notable breach in the corpus, it was still considered profitable to investigate what affinities in terms of reformist agendas might be disinterred through the treatment of the nine Lives together. I believe that approach has demonstrated that there is some utility to be found in seeking out sophisticated patterning, shared Eucharistic language and symbolism and intertextual relationships within a body of texts preserved together by scribal intent, even when the results of the analysis are significantly less than absolute. It is legitimate to posit that the findings here will contribute meaningfully to the approaches taken by future scholars, this approach having rendered the dissonances, with respect to the character of the sanctity of the subject saints within the corpus, more readily identifiable. The significance of the Eucharistic content in these homilies, as potentially paraliturgical expansions of the core rite of the mass, was contextualised in Chapter II. However, given the persistent difficulties in attributing a collective identity to these nine texts as homilies with unifying content, it was subsequently concluded that it would be unsound to assume that all of these texts operated in that specific context or were experienced by audiences in that formal setting.

Yet by situating these texts within the broader fabric of liturgical, prescriptive, exegetical and theological literature produced in Ireland contemporaneously in both Latin and

the vernacular, it was possible to identify and chart the overarching and often contradictory foci of authors across multiple genres who addressed themselves to both the most pragmatic and perplexing Eucharistic questions of their times. That choice facilitated the adoption of an analytical frame for Chapters III, IV and V that respected the multivalent emphases of the extant Irish literary corpus with Eucharistic content. The pastoral tone and concern of *Instruction of the Sacraments*, with its emphasis on Christ's humanity, found its obverse in the latent violence of *Dígal fola Críst*, while the comparative analysis of the poetic treatise of Echtgus Úa Cúanáin and *In cena Domini* established that Irish texts composed coterminously and treating the same themes, albeit through different media and languages, can be shown to have relied on vastly different source materials. Boyle's work on Echtgus' poetic primer and Rittmueller's on *In cena* exemplify the sizeable challenges that thwart scholars seeking to distinguish innovation in Irish theological speculation, in response to contemporary Continental debates on the Real Presence, from work which represents a refinement of well-established indigenous theology drawing on Patristic sources. That the two could reach such disparate conclusions is perhaps a reminder that modern subjectivity can occasionally render us a little more near-sighted than we might care to admit.

Read holistically it is clear from the collection of texts considered in Chapter II, that Irish treatments of the Eucharist were pluriform, just as the Communion rite itself was and is experienced by individuals in multiple different fashions. This wide body of works convey an interest in both the inculcation of piety and the associated affective response of Communicants, and the more intractable theological and doctrinal questions inherent to the sacrament. The examination of the origins and development of a vernacular vocabulary of the Eucharist, which complemented the close textual readings in Chapter II, revealed a keen apprehension, on the part of Irish authors, of the need for a variegated vocabulary that could be adapted to meet all exigencies. However, it would be unsafe to assert that authors instrumentalised this language

of identity to convey differing aspects of the Eucharist in distinct contexts within the Lismore corpus. The near ubiquitous use of the ‘Communion and sacrifice’ construction on death, when the sacrament was most required, contrasts with the intimacy of the ‘going to the hand’ of the celebrant phrasing used in other settings. But it must be acknowledged that the construction, which I have speculatively suggested may be a reflection of Irish attitudes to concomitance, may indeed be evidence of a rather more prosaic Irish fondness for tautological pairings. That caveat notwithstanding, the materials analysed in Chapter II reveal that some authors working in certain genres were conversant with the broader implications of the language they employed in discussions of the Eucharist and as such their texts demonstrate substantial concern for their audience’s apprehension of the sacrament, figuratively and literally. The warp and weft of that vast tapestry of religious literature referred to above, was rendered pliable and supple in the hands of writers as finely attuned to the semantics of their vernacular as to its lyricism. These preliminary conclusions, of authors’ potential attentiveness to how Eucharistic vignettes might best be incorporated into homiletic hagiographies and an expectation of variation informed the approach taken in the next three chapters. However, as is addressed below, these expectations were inconsistently realised.

In the first of three chapters interrogating the role of Eucharistic accounts in developing and sustaining discrete identities, seven of the nine Lismore Lives were scrutinised for the particulars of clerical identity in the period 1050–1200 (Chapter III). Some textual details in the Lives support the premise that hagiographers working in an era of church reform, when the contests for diocesan authority were at their apex, were likely to attempt to craft distinct monastic or episcopal identities for their subject saints, yet even these are more likely to be a reflection of practical concerns around the exercise of regional authority than spiritual conformity. Although, Eucharistic encounters within the texts frequently accorded with the nature of the clerical office ascribed to the saints, tensions remain. The character of the

sacramental identity and sanctity crafted for these nine saints provides no single model, and even within texts inconsistencies abound. Premised on conclusions drawn from Herbert's convincing analysis of the twelfth-century *Life of Martin of Tours* and general observations by Flanagan on the reformist agendas to be discerned in hagiography of this period, it was initially hoped that a plurality of the Lismore Lives composed within the reform era, might legitimately be said to exhibit the same effort to transform the traditional monastic figures of Irish hagiography into paragons of episcopal virtue with concordant sacramental identities. However, were this the original ambition of the Lismore authors and scribes, their project is far from complete. Each of the Lives was considered in its relevant historical context, in so far as they are discernible, and a meticulous review of the substantial body of secondary scholarship related to each saint's extant Lives was undertaken. In the case of Saint Seanán, it was found that his twelfth-century biographer made every effort to assert his subject's ascent to the episcopacy and his Eucharistic profile accords with this ambition. It is perhaps unsurprising that the author laboured thus, given the lengthy battle for ecclesiastical supremacy in the part of Munster where Seanán was primarily venerated. It is probable that the pragmatic exigencies of the temporal disputes had far greater influence on the resultant hagiographical portrait than desires to characterise Seanán as an embodiment of reform ideology. This unequivocal claim on an episcopal identity, motivations aside, is not mirrored in other texts. In *Betha Mochua*, an outlier in multiple respects as noted above and in Chapter III, the saint is cast in the mould of the thaumaturgical master, so familiar to readers of much earlier Irish hagiography, rather than as the paragon of reform ideals exemplified by Bernard's Malachy. Among these disparate identities, and their correlated Eucharistic acts, there is, again, little homogeneity and rather more plurality. The shape and complexion of these Lives, as measured along this dimension, often owe more to the well-established contours of their existing dossiers than any aspiration to conform to orthodox European norms, by weaving in reformist inspired threads.

There were different kinds of texture and shade found in the exploration of gendered Eucharistic narratives in Chapter IV. The use of Eucharistic encounters to encourage affective responses in women is a well-acknowledged trope of the European hagiographical corpus in the central and later Middle Ages but Irish sources have never been the object of such inquiry. The scant extant evidence, from prescriptive canons and the recension of the *Old Irish Mass Tract* found in the *Stowe Missal*, indicated that women were, in some churches or in some parts of the country, potentially excluded from Communicating. While it is certainly possible that the proscription on women approaching the altar and touching the chalice may relate only to their unsuitability to act as acolytes at the mass, it is also possible that the intention was to inculcate a wider prohibition on women Communicants. The latter premise is suggested by multiple episodes, both within the Lismore texts and the wider hagiographical corpus of women's Lives. The challenges experienced by Brigit and Canir in accessing the sacrament even on point of death, as recounted in *Betha Shenáin*, are potentially reflexes of the provocations to which women's houses had to resort to gain admittance into the central mystery of their faith. Their imputed transgressions pale against the usurpation of priestly functions effected by Íte in her twelfth-century *Vita*, when she essentially steals the host from the altar at Clonmacnoise. Nevertheless, she is in good company as Brigid of Kildare in BBr, the female saint in possession of the most extensive dossier, is also among the number of transgressors. While receiving Communion from a bishop and his deacon, she witnesses an apparition of a goat in the chalice and pronounces that the attending deacon has been responsible for the theft of the animal and cannot preside over the Eucharist under such circumstances. The man repents and all is deemed in order by the bishop.

The research shows that this episode, among other prominent Eucharistic accounts in the Brigidine dossier, has been variously included and excised by a selection of hagiographers between the seventh and twelfth centuries. I can only surmise that its inclusion was deemed

acceptable in some contexts and not others as the evidence does not support a linear progression that indicates a transition from its apprehension as unconventional to orthodox. The primary tension which emerges in this chapter's work, as in all responsible treatments of hagiography, is the distance between qualities which were to be considered admirable and those which were to be imitable by audiences. Thus, we may conclude, from the historical sources that priests as gatekeepers of the sacraments permitted women limited Eucharistic freedoms, and in response to that control, the identities offered for female Communicants in literary texts are as supplicants or trespassers on sacred ground. It is the former rather than latter identity which was surely that intended for imitation. Although it must be acknowledged that no single and defined corporate female identity emerges from the texts and episodes analysed here, the frequent reliance of authors on female transgression, in proximity to or in search of the Eucharist, offers a potentially fruitful avenue for further exploration, the relationship of Irish holy women to the sacraments not yet having been examined in any substantial way.

Perhaps the most difficult thread to find and follow in medieval Irish Eucharistic discourse is the role afforded to the laity in the regular re-enactment of the Last Supper and commemoration of Christ's sacrifice. Incorporating a synoptic review of references to lay Eucharistic reception in Irish historical and literary sources, Chapter V examined a number of significant episodes in the Lismore texts, specifically from the Lives of Seanán and Brendan, as they related to the historically attested difficulties with infant Communication and wider lay apprehension of the Eucharist, particularly in what might be considered penitential contexts. A plurality of the accounts considered conformed to the expectations of the essentialisation of viaticum in Irish narratives, an argument previously advanced in Chapter III. Latterly, the analysis here focussed on the efficacy of dispensing with rigid taxonomies of genre, in specific circumstances, and approaching shared thematic strands within texts in the hope of better exploring their complex intertextuality. It was posited that the liminality of the sea as narrative

space, a feature common to the Brendan materials, in texts severally categorised as voyage or hagiographical, empowered the respective authors to include unconventional and occasionally entirely unorthodox Eucharistic encounters. The overwhelming impression derived from the Lismore vignettes examined here is that lay Communion, as indicated in the prescriptive literature, was a rite reserved to the highest holy days, excepting upon death. However, it was also suggested that these Eucharistic narratives operated for audiences in a similar fashion to the phenomenon of ocular Communion, widely attested in the European canon; reading and hearing accounts of the Eucharist served, to some degree, as a substitute for the physical act of reception.

In looking then, at one discrete corner of the tapestry of Irish Eucharistic literature, in the context of the whole, it becomes clear that expectations of homogeneity are certain to meet with disappointment. The economy and grammar of the Irish Eucharist, in these homiletic Lives from the period 1050–1200, are pluriform as are the indistinct and variegated identities to which they gave reflection and meaning. It is also clear that these texts were not cut anew from whole cloth but rather represent the accretion of centuries of learning and literary endeavour, only sometimes reframed to reflect contemporary circumstances and ideas and oftentimes maintaining traditional rather than innovative depictions of sacramental identities and sanctity. These authors were as wont to weave threads from the Patristic fathers and native exegesis composed in the seventh century as to embroider their texts with the theological speculations of Lanfranc and Bernard's reformed sanctity of Malachy. These observations give rise to one of the most important historiographical questions emanating from this research project and that is the extent to which the imposition of inelastic diachronic periodisations fetters our objective engagement with texts. The notion of the transformation of the Irish church in the long twelfth century currently enjoys a relatively secure purchase in scholarship, just as nativist arguments concerning the nature of medieval Irish writing once had. However, reform

is rarely undifferentiated and never monolithic. While it would undeniably be unreasonable to suggest that any single scholar, or group of scholars, can be accused of having advanced a body of work that reduces the vagaries of Ireland's Church reform, over the course of one hundred and fifty years, to a single undifferentiated portrait of an island's literature as reflective of only the reformed and renewed, it must be acknowledged that the evidence of thoroughgoing conformity to new ideals, as assumed by some to exist, is largely absent from the nine texts at the heart of this dissertation. The works of Ó Riain and Flanagan, for example, frequently present arguments on the scope and nature of reforms that rely on hagiography as evidence and while individual texts, treated independently, might often testify as to the soundness of those contentions, the results of the analysis undertaken in this dissertation are a potential, albeit limited, corrective to any assertions that the hagiographical corpus of the reform era provides unmitigated confirmation of such assumptions. Consonant with the varying shades of sanctity and Eucharistic orthodoxy and orthopraxy exemplified in the Lismore Lives is the prescription that, as scholars, we must report what we see, not simply find that which we seek.

As noted throughout, many important questions remain unanswered by this dissertation but where light has been cast, it has illuminated several avenues for further research. As is ever the case in this field of study, modern editions and translations of many of the texts considered here remain a desideratum. Among the texts considered here, there are a number, in particular that of *Instruction on the Sacraments* in *Leabhar Breac*, which I consider essential components in any future examination of Irish Eucharistic theology in this period. This homily, and many others in LB, are exemplars of Irish authors' ability to remodel sophisticated exegetical and theologically speculative texts for a potentially wider and less educated audiences; for this and other reasons, they deserve greater attention. This research scrutinised the nine Lismore Lives for very specific sacramental content but further treatments of the complete hagiographical corpus in the manuscript are possible and likely to reveal significant affinities and dissonances

not foregrounded here. That a thoroughgoing linguistic analysis of the Lives will reveal much more definite statements on their dating, achieved here only through contextual and historical considerations, is irrefutable. There is one final rejoinder to the next scholar to address themselves to Irish Eucharistic thought, and that relates to the analytical portions of Chapter II on the putative bifurcation in Eucharistic language and iconography between the sacrificial and salvific aspects of the sacrament. Future scholarship must challenge the dichotomies which exist both within the medieval texts and the modern commentaries. An approach which valorises refined theological contemplation of Christ's Passion and the transformations of the species over the communal implications of the Last Supper and the personal piety engendered by reflections on Christ's humanity is imperfect. It must be addressed as a dynamic event, embodied in similarly dynamic texts, permitting multiple meanings which can, and do, coexist both in tension and harmony with each other.

There are few words in the modern lexicon more certain to provoke myriad contentious responses than 'identity'. Today's politics of identity are a fraught affair and whether one speaks of nationality, sexuality, or religious conviction, it is a near rarity to find a notional or actual collective for whom their incorporation is uncontested, whether within or without the group. Identity in the central middle ages was not without contention and the indistinct and oftentimes conflicting markers of orthodox Christian identity and Eucharistic conformity found in the Lismore homiletic Lives, as propagated in Latin Christendom in the twelfth century, are perhaps less refined than I might have hoped at the outset of this project. However, the temptation of the goblin merchant's strange fruit was resisted and what remains is a considered and faithful reflection on and analysis of the threads of Eucharistic identity to be found, in this corner of an intricately woven tapestry.

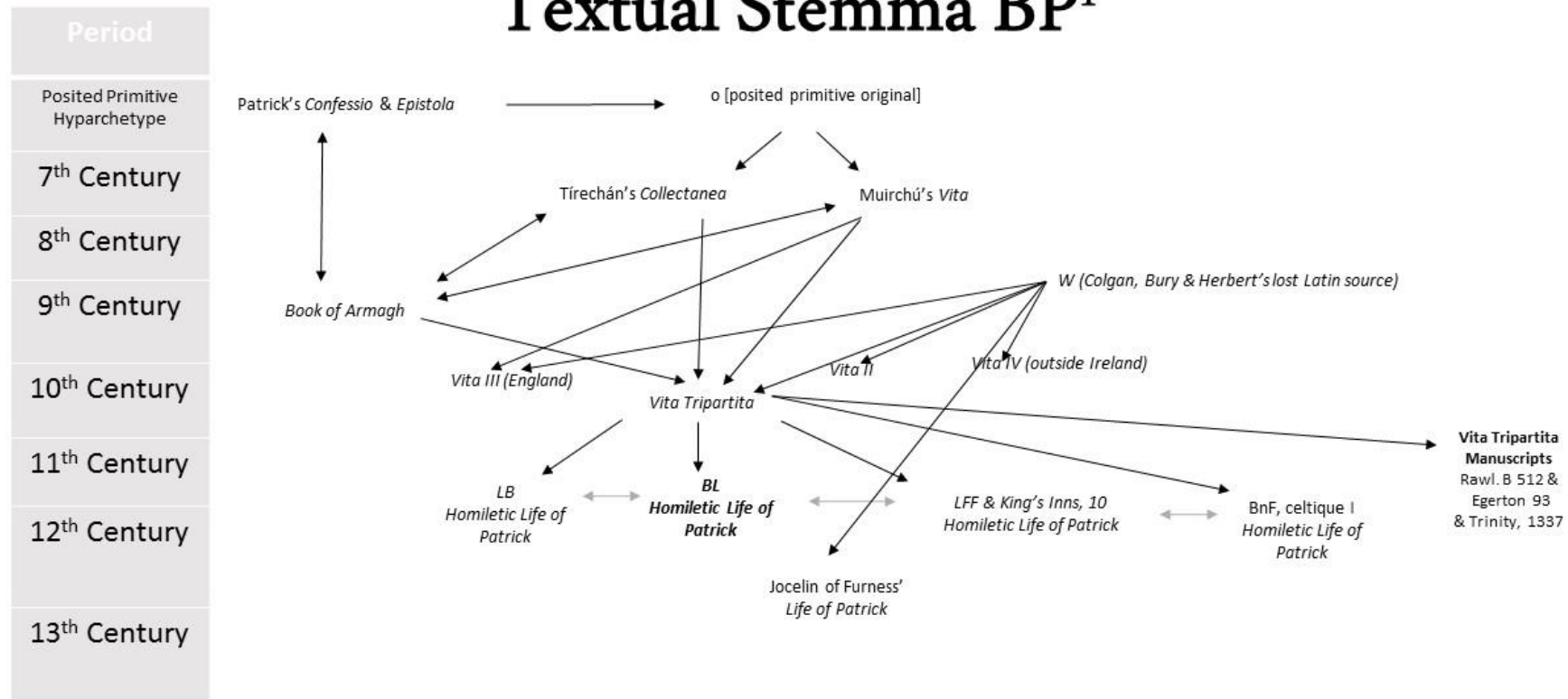
Appendices

BP	BCC	BB	BS	BF	BFc	BBr	BC	BM
BnF, celtique I (s. xv)	BnF, celtique I (s.xv)	BnF, celtique I (s.xv)	BnF, celtique I (s. xv)	Brussels, Bib. Roy., 2324–2340 (s. xvii)	Brussels, Bib. Roy., 2324–2340 (s. xvii) (1)	BnF, celtique I (s. xv)	Brussels, Bibl. Roy., 4190–4200 (s. xvii)	BnF, celtique I (s. xv)
Brussels, Bib. Roy., 2324–2340 (s. xvii)	King's Inns, 10 (s. xv)	LB (s. xv)	Oxford, Bod. Lib., Laud 610 (s. xv)	RIA, A.iv. 1 (s. xvii)	RIA, A.iv. 1 (s. xvii)	BL, Egerton 91 (s. xv)		Brussels, Bib. Roy., 2324–2340 (s. xvii)
King's Inns, 10 (s. xvii)	NLS, Adv. 72.I.40 (s. xv–xvi)	Brussels, Bib. Roy., 2324–40 (s. xvii)	RIA, A.iv. 1 (s. xvii)	BL, Addit. 30512 (s. xv–xvi)	Dublin, Franciscan Convent, A9 (3) (s. xv?)	Brussels, Bib. Roy., 4190–4200 (s. xvii)		RIA, A.iv. 1 (s. xvii)
Bod. Lib., Rawl. B 512 (s. xv)	LB (s. xv)	Brussels, Bib. Roy., 4190–4200 (s. xvii)	BL, Egerton 180 (RIA, A iv 1) (>s. xvii)	Brussels, Bibl. Roy., 4190–4200 (s. xvii)	Brussels, Bib. Roy., 2324–2340 (s. xvii) (2)			BL, Egerton 91 (incomplete) (s. xv)
BL, Egerton 93 (s. xv)	RIA, 24 P 25 (Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne) (s. xvi)	King's Inns, 14 (s. xv) (incomplete)	Brussels, Bib. Roy., 2324–2340 (s. xvii)					
LB (s. xv)		RIA, 23 P 2 (s. xv) (incomplete)	BL, Egerton 91 (s. xv)					
TCD, 1337 (s. xv and s,xvi)								
LFF (s. xv)								
RIA, 24 P 25 (Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne) (s. xvi)								
RIA, C iv 3 (s. xvii)								

Appendix I.i Manuscript Distribution up to s. xvii

Appendix I.ii Textual stemmata incorporating manuscripts up to s. xv

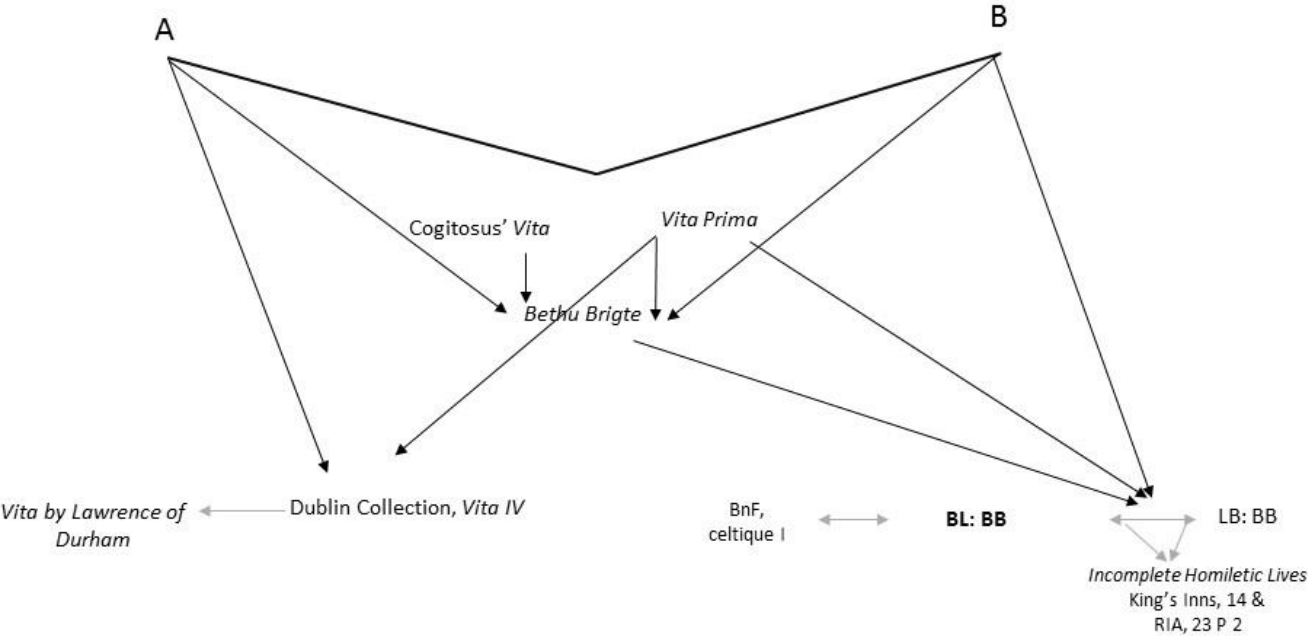
Appendix I.ii.i Textual Stemma: BP



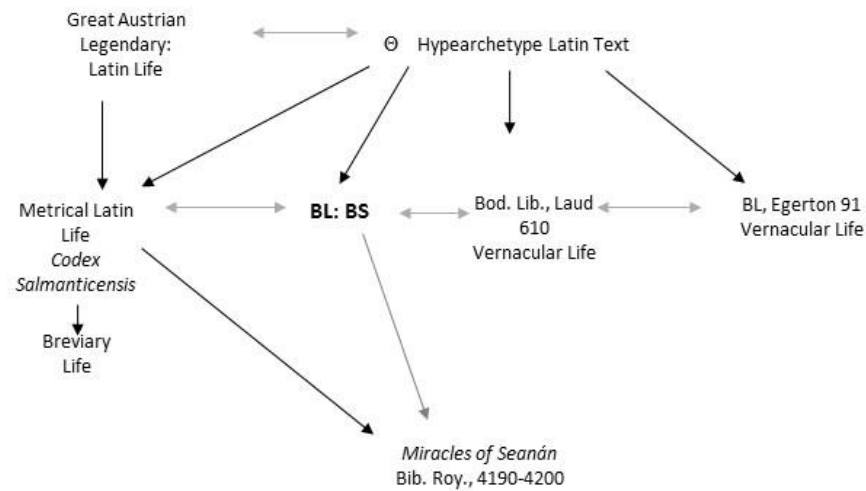
1. Parts of this stemma are based on Kenney's version of Mulchrone's scheme in EHI, p. 345.

Period
Posited Primitive Hyparchetypes
7 th Century
9 th Century
12 th Century

Textual Stemma BB

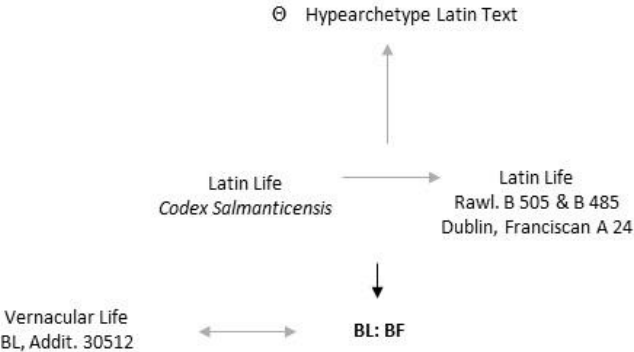


Textual Stemma BS



Textual Stemma BF¹

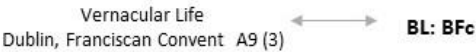
Period
Posited Primitive Hyparchetype
7 th Century
8 th Century
9 th Century
10 th Century
11 th Century
12 th Century
13 th Century



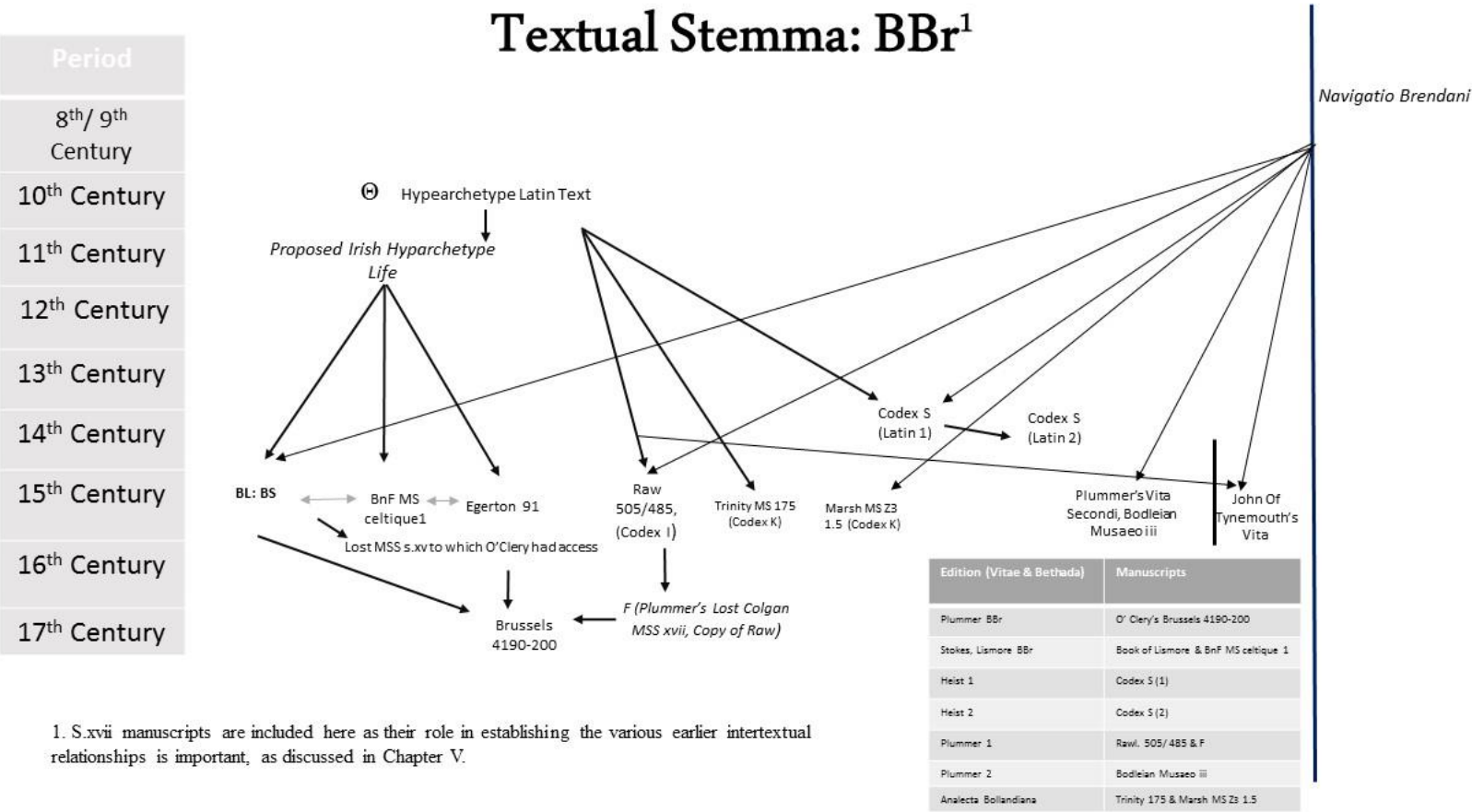
1. The primacy given here to the Vita, following Ó Riain, DIS, p. 319, reverses the position advanced in Hughes, 'St. Finnian', pp. 353–72.

Period
Posited Primitive Hyparchetype
7 th Century
8 th Century
9 th Century
10 th Century
11 th Century
12 th Century
13 th Century
14 th Century

Textual Stemma BFc¹

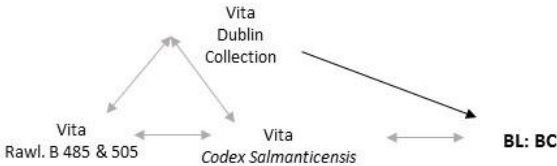


1. Ó Riain, DIS, p. 336, and Herbert, ‘Hagiography’, p. 346, are in accord on the ‘lateness’ of the Life, amending a twelfth-century date previously advanced by Kenney, p. 457.



Period
Posited Primitive Hyparchetype
7 th Century
8 th Century
9 th Century
10 th Century
11 th Century
12 th Century
13 th Century

Textual Stemma BC



Period
Posited Primitive Hyparchetype
7 th Century
8 th Century
9 th Century
10 th Century
11 th Century
12 th Century
13 th Century
14 th Century

Textual Stemma BM¹



1. Ó Riain, DIS, p. 467, and Kenney, EHI, p. 461 are in accord on the ‘lateness’ of this Life. Stokes had assumed, p. 360, that the *vitae* preserved in Rawl. B 485/ Rawl. B 505 and edited by Colgan were related to BM. However, the Latin texts relate to Mochua of Timahoe, as is clear from the notes at Plummer, VSH I, pp. lxxxix-lxxxi.

*Appendix III.i Metonyms for saints*¹

Text/ Metonyms	<i>Sacerdos/ sacart</i>	<i>Uasalshacart</i>	<i>Episcopus/ epscop</i>	<i>Cléirech</i>
BP			3	
BCC		1		1
BB				
BS		1	2	4
BF			1	6
BFc				6
BBr				
BC	2	2		1
BM				2

¹ A full digital text search for all nominative and genitive case citations of multiple clerical terms, not limited to those included in this table.

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