

OPENING THE SENSES : THE GOSPEL BOOK AS AN
INSTRUMENT OF SALVATION AS ARTICULATED BY
THE MINOR DECORATION AND FULL-PAGE
ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BOOK OF KELLS

Heather Pulliam

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



1998

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Opening the Senses: The Gospel Book as an Instrument of
Salvation as Articulated by the Minor Decoration and Full-Page
Illustrations of the Book of Kells.

By Heather Pulliam



Ph.D. Dissertation

April 14, 1998

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Acknowledgments

I would like to express my appreciation to all those who have assisted me in the production of this thesis, especially my supervisor Rosemary Muir Wright and the staff and postgraduates of the School of Art History at the University of St. Andrews. Professor Bullough's guidance concerning early lection systems was invaluable, and John Higgit's comments on my *Cosmos* article led to a rethinking of the question of tonsure and audience within the manuscript. At the 1993 Book of Kells conference discussions with Professor Alexander and Dr. Farr provided encouragement for the present endeavor. Also, I am grateful to Ben Gunterson for his assistance in checking the veracity of the Latin translations used in this thesis.

During the course of my research, the following libraries proved most helpful: the Würzburg Universitätsbibliothek, Trier Landesbibliothek, Leiden Univeriteitsbibliotheek, St. Gallen Stiftsbibliothek, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Trinity College Library in Dublin, the British library in London and the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. The Bibliothèque Municipale in Amiens has been extremely cooperative in providing photographs and allowing repeated access to such an unusual and fragile manuscript. The National Library of Scotland has been exceptionally accommodating, granting constant and continual access to the new facsimile of the Book of Kells despite the library's closure for renovation. I am especially indebted to Alisdair Cherry and his colleagues for arranging viewings, supervision and, when necessary, even providing an escort through the gutted building. Also, Christine Gascoigne, Celia Black and the staff of the manuscript room at the University of St. Andrews' library have shown remarkable patience and forbearance throughout.

The production of this thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of the Elizabeth Holt Scholarship, Russel Trust and Gapper Award. Also many thanks are due to those who organized and contributed to the Student Bursary for the Fourth Insular Art Conference, which was an invaluable experience in the interim between submission and *viva*. I can never fully express my debt to Professor von Kupferburg Odle, Dr. Thaler and Erwin Stawski for their encouragement, to my parents for their love and to my husband for his constant support and assistance

Abstract

This thesis argues that the minor decoration and full-page images of the Book of Kells reflects a cohesive theme: the role of the gospel book in man's apprehension of God. This is demonstrated by an examination of the decorated initials and smaller images in relation to the text and a reinterpretation of the full-page images within the context of patristic commentary and the writings of the period. It is argued that the decorated initials and minor imagery are not merely ornamental but instead emphasize and comment upon the text. They do so in three ways: Firstly, they draw the eye to passages of gospel text that describe the visual apprehension and recognition of Christ as the Son of God. In demonstrating this, the assumption that the decorated initials operate in a traditional manner, such as marking lections or Eusebian sections, is rejected. The atypical function of the decoration, highlighting themes rather than liturgical or content divisions, indicates the unique function of the manuscript. Secondly, it is argued that the decorated initials employ the metaphorical imagery of the Psalms to describe the distinction between the manuscript's audience who acknowledge Christ as the Son of God, and those described within the text as confused and unable to recognize the identity of Christ despite his presence in their midst. Thirdly, the imagery of the decorated initials describes the manner in which the Godhead is literally contained within the text of the gospel book. The larger images also emphasize the recognition of Christ and distinguish between those who look to the Word of God and those who fail to do so. Additionally, the full-page imagery instructs the audience in the use of the manuscript. To an even greater extent than the minor decoration, the larger images articulate the role of the Gospel book and liturgy as a visible guide to an invisible deity and shield against temptation.

The Book of Kells (Dublin Trinity College Library A. I. 6) is one of the finest examples of the Insular illuminated gospel book. Its pages, now trimmed, measure 330x240mm; its text covers 250x170mm of this area, averaging 17 lines a page. Folios were folded before ruling; and pricking lines are visible. The manuscript consists of 38 quires, with a varying number of folios per quire. The script, Insular majuscule, and decoration are the work of multiple hands. The script is written with iron gall ink, red lead, orpiment, red ochre and chalk. The vellum appears to be from calfskin. All text after John 17:13 is missing, and the folios from the latter half of John are damaged and faded. The decoration of the manuscript is incomplete. Additionally, the manuscript is missing folios after folio 177v, 239v and 330v. Its flawed text is a mixture of Old Latin and Vulgate, but the preliminary matter belongs to the Old Latin tradition. The decoration is extraordinary, permeating much of the text. The question of provenance and date remains a matter of debate. Most scholars agree that the manuscript was made sometime between 750 and 850 in a Columban scriptorium, most likely that of Kells or Iona.

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Preface:

The Present State of Scholarship and the Question of Methodology

In 1990, a complete and full-color facsimile of the Book of Kells was published.¹ This has made a thorough examination of the visual apparatus of the manuscript possible for the first time. Until the 1990 publication, the minor decoration, the bulk of which was only accessible in the black and white facsimile, had been largely neglected in favor of the full-page images and display script, all of which were available in color reproductions.² An examination of the finely colored 1990 facsimile reveals the clarity of the minor decoration and script of the manuscript. The forms of the lively creatures that speckle the pages of the manuscript's text are easily seen, their bright color and dark lines catch the eye as it moves over the page. In black and white, the text is remarkable only because of its size and regularity. In a good, color reproduction, certain words and phrases leap off the page, as the scribe has filled them in with bright red, orange, blue, green and yellow. The yellow is particularly eye-catching, as the orpiment pigment's grains flicker like fish scales.³ The black and white facsimile engenders a misreading of the decoration of the text, as many of the brightest and most visible colors are rendered almost imperceptible. The strong, flickering yellow becomes almost invisible, making phrases and decorated initials that are the most noticeable

¹ Peter Fox, ed., *The Book of Kells, MS 58, Trinity College Library Dublin: facsimile* (Lucerne: Fine Art Facsimile Publishers of Switzerland, 1990). It is necessary to mention at this juncture that the Turabian system of notation is employed throughout the thesis.

² Previously, the most extensive color reproductions were in Francoise Henry's *The Book of Kells* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974). Unlike other reproductions available at the time, it included over forty pages of text with minor decoration. Because this partial facsimile lacks the other 560 pages of text, it is somewhat misleading. Pages of text are placed together that do not belong together, making it impossible to establish any pattern to the decoration. Obviously, even more so than other manuscripts, the precious and fragile nature of the Book of Kells meant that repeated and sustained consultation of the original was, and still is, impossible.

³ As striking as it is today, it has lost much of its brightness, which has faded over the past millennium. See Robert Fuchs and Doris Oltrogge, "Colour Material and Painting Technique," in *The Book of Kells: Proceedings of a Conference at Trinity College Dublin, 6-9 September 1992*, ed. Felicity O'Mahony (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), 135.

and vivid in color appear no different from those that lack any color highlights.

The visibility of the minor decoration and colored text demands a reassessment of the manuscript. It disrupts the normal flow of text to such an extent that it is impossible to believe this is merely accidental ornament. An excess of 2,000 decorated initials occur throughout the manuscript, most of which include figurative or zoomorphic ornament. Additionally, unique to the manuscript, is the number of strange creatures and human figures that float, walk or fly between lines of text. Why was so much striking and varied decoration included in a space normally reserved for the text? What, if any, is its relation to the full-page imagery and the rest of the manuscript? This study attempts to rectify the somewhat artificial and hierarchical division imposed upon the manuscript by twentieth-century reproductions, which have divided the manuscript into a series of full-page images only remotely connected to the remaining pages of text, almost 600 in number, and decoration. Instead, it seeks to treat the manuscript as a cohesive object, examining the manner in which the parts relate to the whole.

Because so much has been written on the Book of Kells, it is necessary to summarize past scholarship so as to distinguish the present undertaking from those that have gone before, as well as to indicate works that have directly affected the approach of this thesis. Art historical examinations of the manuscript can be divided into four categories: analyses of date and provenance, monographs, survey volumes and interpretations of the iconography in light of the liturgy and patristic writings.⁴

As an academic discipline, one of art history's traditional roles has been to assess visual evidence such as stylistic and iconographic similarities in order to ascribe provenance and date. Although the evidence is extremely

⁴ This brief summary of scholarship focuses upon works published after 1950 and before 1998.

fragmented and sparse, a significant number of studies have focused upon this aspect of the Book of Kells.⁵ These have demonstrated the diversity of stylistic and iconographic influences evident within the Book of Kells. Its canon tables and the thrones depicted in the full-page imagery resemble later continental manuscripts from the Ada School.⁶ The variety and quantity of its decorated initials are unique in Insular manuscripts, but a Merovingian Sacramentary and an early Carolingian Psalter have comparable decoration.⁷ The Virgin and Child page, on the other hand, shows some visual semblance to Coptic imagery.⁸ Despite the amount of research into stylistic and iconographic similarities, the question of where and when the manuscript was made remains a matter of debate. As recently as 1997, Michelle Brown pursued Henry's observation of the similarities between the Book of Kells and the Barberini Gospels.⁹

The Book of Kells belongs to the group of manuscripts described as Insular, but its decoration is far more sophisticated than that of other Insular manuscripts. Its minor decoration, complex iconography and full-page illustrations placed in the midst of its text are all unique in Insular art making it impossible to arrive at any specific conclusions about date or artistic development. Those attempting to do so have had to resort to comparisons with the high crosses. This has only complicated matters, as the high crosses

⁵ The number of works devoted to this subject is too extensive to be cited here. For a full bibliography of works before 1978, see J. J. G. Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts: 6th to 9th Centuries*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, vol. 1 (London: Harvey Miller, 1978), 75-6. Martin Werner's annotated bibliography offers a broader survey of bibliographical references. Martin Werner, *Insular Art: An Annotated Bibliography*, ed. H. Kessler (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1984). One of the most recent and more thorough examinations of the question of date and provenance is Nancy Netzer's "The Origin of the Beast Canon Tables Reconsidered." This is published alongside several other articles that touch on the question of date, provenance and art historical evidence in the 1994 conference volume. Nancy Netzer, "The Origin of the Beast Canon," in O'Mahony, 322-32.

⁶ Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, 74.

⁷ Henry, *Book of Kells*, 215.

⁸ Martin Werner, "The Madonna and Child Miniature in the Book of Kells," *Art Bulletin* 54 (1972): 1-23.

⁹ Michelle Brown, *The Book of Cerne: Prayer, Patronage and Power in Ninth-Century England*, British Library Studies in Medieval Culture, vol. 1 (London: British Library, 1996), 117-18.

also lack established dates. Visual semblance between the Book of Kells and high crosses has led to conflicting claims for connections to Clonmacnois, Pictland and of course, Kells and Iona.¹⁰ The many, varied attempts to establish the date and place of origin of the manuscript have been unsuccessful. Because of the abundance of research devoted to this question, the present undertaking does not seek to contribute further to this elusive question of date and provenance. The accepted assumptions, that the Book of Kells originated in a Columban monastery between 750 and 850 AD, is sufficient for the present investigation.

Several monographs have been devoted to the Book of Kells, the two most recent are by Francoise Henry and Bernard Meehan, published in 1974 and 1994 respectively.¹¹ Monographs, by definition, attempt to answer questions on a broad range of material such as paleography, style, codicology, technique, the manuscript's background, iconography, date or provenance. Because of the breadth of material covered, they touch on many aspects of the manuscript, but only in passing. Often, as with survey volumes, ideas are suggested but never fully developed. Francoise Henry's monograph provoked two lines of inquiry followed by this thesis. Henry was the first and, for many years, the only one to argue that the decorated initials and minor decoration might contain meaning.¹² She suggests that the decoration of the text

¹⁰ For a review of the varied positions held by art historians concerning the connections between the Book of Kells and the high crosses see Roger Stalley, "Scribe and Mason: The Book of Kells and the Irish High Crosses," in O'Mahony, 257-66.

¹¹ Henry, *Book of Kells* and Bernard Meehan, *The Book of Kells: An Illustrated Introduction to the Manuscript in Trinity College Dublin* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994).

¹² Henry, *Book of Kells*, 174-75. One other study must be mentioned, Isabel Henderson's article, "The Book of Kells and the Snake-Boss Motif on Pictish Cross-Slabs and the Iona Crosses," in *Ireland and Insular Art A.D. 500-1200: Proceedings of a Conference at College Cork, 31 October-3 November 1985*, ed. Michael Ryan (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1987), 55-65. Henderson discusses the serpent imagery in the minor decoration of the Book of Kells, noting its recurrent appearance during the text of the Last Supper. Henderson does not treat the other elements of the decoration, pointing out the difficulties of working with this material, "The decoration of Kells is so profuse and is often on such a small scale that the mind becomes confused when working with it. . . . For this preliminary study, I have for the most part confined myself to commenting on passages of ornaments where snakes are used alone." Henderson's work is discussed in greater detail in chapters four and five. *Ibid.*, 157.

escalates during the Passion sequences, responding to the mood of the text: in the emotional manner of a piece of music. Henry cites only three instances of a decorated initial corresponding to the text. It was this suggestion, in conjunction with the publication of the color facsimile, that prompted an investigation as to whether or not her claim could be supported and developed. Additionally, Henry's work points to the similarities between the minor decoration and that of the Corbie Psalter and Gellone Sacramentary.¹³ Although the decorated initials of the Gellone Sacramentary superficially resemble those of the Book of Kells, their direct, illustrative nature differs from the more metaphorical method of the Book of Kells decoration. The Corbie Psalter, however, has proved instrumental in understanding the meaning behind the minor decoration of the text.

Bernard Meehan's monograph published in 1994 reflects the advances made in Insular scholarship since 1974. Specifically, it includes recent exegetical and liturgical interpretations of the full-page imagery. As with Henry's monograph, two aspects of his work touch upon the present undertaking. Meehan divides the imagery into "decorative themes" such as the book and cross, angels, Eucharist symbolism and the peacock and dove, beginning to explore the thematic relationships within the decoration. The nature of the short monograph, however, does not allow for an examination of more than a few examples of the minor themes carried by the imagery of the manuscript. Meehan's work also addresses briefly the meaning behind the minor decoration, especially the human heads and figures that appear next to and above the text, but does not explore the relationship between these images and the rest of the manuscript's decoration.¹⁴

Several survey volumes examine the Book of Kells in some detail. Otto Werckmeister's *Irish-Northumbrische Buchmalerei des 8 Jahrhunderts*.

¹³ Henry, *Book of Kells*, 215.

¹⁴ Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 68-77.

und monastische Spiritualität was widely criticized at the time of its publication and is rarely cited in current literature on the Book of Kells.¹⁵ Despite its poor reception, the work, published in 1967, was well ahead of its time in its use of exegetical texts and liturgical ceremonies to interpret Insular imagery; however, Werckmeister examines only four images from different manuscripts and depends upon a small and random group of patristic writings. Although his methodology predicts what is currently the dominant approach in Insular studies, its limited range of imagery leads the author into misconceptions and unfounded assumptions.

George Henderson's *From Durrow to Kells: The Insular Gospel-books 650-800* charts the artistic development of Insular manuscripts, interpreting their imagery through comparisons with continental and eastern iconography.¹⁶ Henderson's work is admirable in its use of both textual and visual sources and in its treatment of the full-pages as sharing a common theme, with the latter aspect of his work particularly relevant to this thesis. Specifically, referring to the recurrence of the four evangelist symbols within the manuscript, the depiction of the Virgin as the *fons vitae* and the imagery of folio 29r, Henderson writes, "In Kells . . . I sense a more pervasive influence of the Apocalypse, giving color to the Gospels as an oracle, or mystery revealed--a concept of the Gospels made overtly formidable--that sealed book in the Almighty's hand, which the Lamb opens."¹⁷ Although Henderson's interpretations of several of the full-page images are refuted by the present study, the ramifications of this remark are explored, showing how all of the imagery and even the decoration of the text points to the special role of the gospel book not as a mystery revealed but as an instrument that leads

¹⁵ Otto Karl Werckmeister, *Irish-northumbrische Buchmalerei des 8 Jahrhunderts und monastische Spiritualität* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967).

¹⁶ George Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells: The Insular Gospel-books: 650-800* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987).

¹⁷G. Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells*, 158.

man towards that revelation.¹⁸ Like most work on the Book of Kells, however, Henderson fails to consider the minor decoration of the text.

Martin Werner, in his article, "Crucifixi, Sepulti, Suscitati: Remarks on the Decoration of the Book of Kells," states even more explicitly than Henderson that the full-page imagery might reflect a single theme.¹⁹ He describes the whole, decorative program as a celebration of Easter rites. Apart from his overwhelming emphasis upon liturgy, his approach is similar to that of the present undertaking in its assessment of the decorative program of the whole. Werner, although realizing the need to include the decorated initials when examining the decorative program of the manuscript, does not do so.²⁰

Other recent approaches depend almost exclusively upon textual evidence, whether patristic or liturgical. A single image is interpreted through a barrage of written sources. These include patristic and contemporary exegesis, lection systems and directions for liturgical rites. Primarily, an attempt is made to reconstruct the context of the art object. This approach has shed light on the sophisticated iconography of the Temptation Page and Arrest Page of the Book of Kells, which had previously lacked a satisfactory explanation. However, although this methodology has led to new discoveries concerning the Book of Kells, there is a tendency to exaggerate the relevance of the textual sources while ignoring the visual evidence.

Patrick McGurk and Suzanne Lewis are largely credited with initiating this new dependence upon text.²¹ McGurk emphasized the necessity that scholarship look at the "architecture" of the manuscript, analyzing where the

¹⁸ Henderson bases his comment on folio 39r, the Christ in Majesty Page, the Arrest Page and the Chi Rho page. *Ibid.* Ironically, he does not include the John Page and its facing image, which has proven essential to understanding this theme within the manuscript.

¹⁹ Martin Werner, "Crucifixi, Sepulti, Suscitati: Remarks on the Decoration of the Book of Kells," in O'Mahony, 450-88.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 452.

²¹ Patrick McGurk, "Two Notes on the Book of Kells and Its Relation to Other Insular Gospel Books," *Scriptorium* 9 (1955): 106-7 and Suzanne Lewis, "Sacred Calligraphy: The Chi Rho Page in the Book of Kells," *Traditio* 36 (1980): 139-59.

decoration occurs with the manuscript. This has provoked a rethinking of the full-page images in the Book of Kells in light of their position in the gospels. For example, Suzanne Lewis has reinterpreted the Arrest page by noting its location next to the text of the Last Supper.²² And so, using patristic exegesis and liturgical evidence, many of the perplexing stylistic and iconographic deviations of this image have been explained. Carol Farr's thesis, "Lecture and Interpretation: The Liturgical and Exegetical Background of the Illustrations of the 'Book of Kells,'" also employs McGurk's approach, attempting to explain why full-page imagery appears in specific places in the manuscript. She argues placement is neither illustrative nor accidental but instead reflects lection readings.²³

Most proponents of this approach are overly dependent upon textual sources. The most superficial familiarity with the *Patrologia Latina* reveals the sheer enormity of the textual evidence available. Even if only Augustine, Cassiodorus and Bede are consulted, the wealth of text is overwhelming. With diligence, the exegesis can be made to support almost any hypothesis. Appropriate to the Kells Temptation page is Christ's own warning that even the devil can quote scripture. In citing the literary evidence, it is necessary to maintain a system of checks and balances. Additionally, using only one or two images leads easily to misinterpretation. This is best exemplified in Insular studies by Jennifer O'Reilly's statement that the articulated ears of the flanking figures of the Arrest Page are unique and refer to the opening of the

²² Lewis, 155. See also Jennifer O'Reilly, "The Book of Kells, Folio 114r: A Mystery Revealed and yet Concealed," in *The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieval Art in Northern Britain and Ireland: Proceedings of the Second International Conference of Insular Art Held in the National Museums of Scotland in Edinburgh, 3-6 January 1993*, eds. Michael R. Spearman and John Higgit (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, Stroud: A. Sutton, 1990), 106-14.

²³ Carol Farr, "Lecture and Interpretation: The Liturgical and Exegetical Background of the Illustrations in the 'Book of Kells'" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin). See also, Carol Farr, *The Book of Kells: Its Function and Audience*, British Library Studies in Medieval Culture, vol. 4 (London: British Library, 1997). The 1997 publication closely resembles her doctoral thesis, but is less specific. For that reason, unless referring to new material in her 1997 publication, this study cites the unpublished thesis. Farr's work and methodology are discussed at length in chapter three.

senses during baptism. A brief inspection of the manuscript shows that nearly every figure has similar ears.²⁴ Indeed, many Insular manuscripts, including non-liturgical books, have figures with clearly articulated ears.²⁵ Also, the scarcity of evidence in the Insular field necessitates caution when attempting to make specific connections between textual sources and the manuscript. For example, Carol Farr's work, which has been widely accepted by Insular scholars, states that the full-page imagery of the manuscript was determined by its lection system. And yet, not a single piece of evidence exists as to the lection system employed by the Irish communities, let alone what system was used by the community that created the Book of Kells. As the provenance and date of Kells remains an uncertainty, the contents of its library, its lection systems and liturgical rites are unknown.

Although scholars have searched far and wide in terms of exegetical and liturgical writings and iconographic comparisons in order to shed light on the mysterious full-pages of the Book of Kells, they have neglected the abundance of visual evidence inextricably bound to the manuscript. The present study is largely a reaction against this trend. Instead, it employs all of the minor decoration and full-page imagery. Unlike textual sources, their relevance is not a matter of debate. Of all the approaches discussed above, none has used the decorated initials and inter-textual decoration in order to determine the overall decorative program.

It is necessary to mention briefly those methodologies outside the field of Insular studies which have influenced this study. The theories of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Peirce have expanded the realm of manuscript studies, provoking scholars such as Meyer Schapiro, Norman Bryson, Michael Camille and Suzanne Lewis to rethink the modes of signification within the visual arts. In particular, Schapiro's argument that

²⁴ O'Reilly, "The Book of Kells," 112.

²⁵ For example, the Leiden Priscian, B. P. L. 57, folio 34r.

posters and title pages must be re-examined in terms of how a field of space is expressive has been critical to the understanding of the layout of text and image within the Book of Kells and its relationship to the larger, decorative program.²⁶ Additionally, Michael Camille's insistence that there is meaning in the margins initiated an interest in the question of the minor decoration in the Book of Kells.²⁷ In recent years, historians and specialists in Irish literature have repeatedly examined the full-page imagery of the Book of Kells, but relatively little work has been done by art historians. As a result of this omission, although art history has developed significantly as a discipline, this progress is not reflected in the Insular field, which has been dominated by traditional, art historical methodologies such as iconographic and stylistic analysis.

The present study attempts to redress the neglect of the marginal and minor decoration that makes up the bulk of the manuscript as well as to examine its modes of expression. A thorough exploration of the visual apparatus of the manuscript imparts information as to how that apparatus works, as well as indicating its purpose. In order to accomplish this, no single methodology has been permitted to dominate the investigation. Comparative visual evidence, such as the high crosses and Corbie Psalter, is used but not to establish stylistic affinities. Instead, comparisons are made so as to understand how these art objects functioned. The Book of Kells operates on a particularly sophisticated level of signification, employing various devices to direct the eye of the reader. These have never been adequately addressed and many have passed unnoticed. Additionally, the self-referential aspect of the manuscript has not been investigated. The present study does not attempt to

²⁶ Meyer Schapiro, *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist and Society* (New York: George Braziller, 1994). Also, Norman Bryson's work was particularly influential in the consideration of the gaze within the margins of the Book of Kells. Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (London: Macmillan, 1983).

²⁷ Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992).

present a full investigation of the semiotics of the Book of Kells as this would prevent treating all aspects of the manuscript's decorative program. Instead, it is used as a tool in the analysis of the decoration.

Additionally, textual evidence is used. As such material can be easily manipulated in order to fit a single image, interpretations are repeatedly verified against the entire visual body of evidence. As the provenance of the manuscript is unknown, exegetical commentary can only be cited as indicative of commonly accepted beliefs appropriate to a Columban scriptorium. Irish commentaries on the gospels are extremely conservative, depending almost exclusively on the patristic texts.²⁸ There is little that is revolutionary in their commentaries beyond the tendency to overcomplicate matters in an attempt to demonstrate a breadth of knowledge.²⁹ While writers such as Gregory the Great, Columbanus and Bede are cited in order to reconstruct the Christian beliefs of the period, it is never argued that they are a direct influence upon the iconography of the work. Rather, it is suggested that their works embody commonly accepted interpretations of the scripture that are reflected in the manuscript's decoration. The writings of Augustine are the exception. Carol Farr has shown with some certainty the influence of

²⁸Joseph Kelly's comprehensive catalogue of Hiberno-Latin commentaries discusses their conservative views and dependence upon patristic sources, "A Catalogue of Medieval Hiberno-Latin Biblical Commentaries I," *Traditio* 44 (1988): 537-71 and "A Catalogue of Medieval Hiberno-Latin Biblical Commentaries II," *Traditio* 45 (1988-9): 393-423.

²⁹The best review to date of Irish exegesis is Robert McNally, "The Imagination and Early Irish Biblical Exegesis," *Annale mediaevale* 10 (1969): 5-27. McNally shows that while the overly complicated nature of Irish exegesis was condemned by some, their knowledge of patristic texts was admired by scholars throughout Europe. He emphasizes that despite their unique methods, their sources were quite ordinary. They knew no Greek, but depended upon "the great tetrad of Latin Fathers: Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and Gregory the Great," 12. Columbanus' writings show a familiarity with Virgil, Eusebius, Jerome, Sedulius, and Gregory the Great to name but a few. Máire and Liam de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland* (Thames and Hudson: 1958), 65. Augustine and Gregory the Great, the works most frequently cited within this thesis figured prominently in many Irish works. See Kelly, "A Catalogue" and Kelly, "Das Bibelwerk: Organization und Quellenanalyse of the New Testament Section," in *Irland und die Christenheit: Bibelstudien und Mission* (Ireland and Christendom: the Bible and the Missions), eds. Ní Chatháin, Próinséas and Michael Richter, *Kulturwissenschaftliche Reihe* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), 117 and Charles D. Wright, "Apocryphal Lore and Insular Tradition in St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek MS 908," 128 and Martin McNamara, "Plan and Source Analysis of Das Bibelwerk, Old Testament," 112, both in Ní Chatháin and Richter, 128.

Augustine's commentaries on the imagery of the Temptation page³⁰

The aim of this thesis is to determine the purpose of the decorative program through an analysis of the whole visual apparatus, appropriating whatever methodology is thought necessary. Such an open approach is unfashionable in the current climate, as in recent decades there has been a tendency to make the methodology itself the center of investigation. An alternative approach returns the focus of scholarship to the art object. Additionally, the difficulties inherent in using liturgical and patristic evidence are overcome by repeatedly examining these interpretations against the wealth of visual data in the manuscript. Most significantly, the relationship of the parts to the whole can be assessed: Why is there so much imagery in the Book of Kells? What do the decorated initials indicate about the word-image relationships in the manuscript? How does the imagery affect the reading of the manuscript? Can the complex iconography of the Temptation page shed light on other pages? By placing each image within the context of the rest of the manuscript, the decorative program of the manuscript can be better understood.

The present approach can therefore be distinguished from other investigations into the manuscript, in its employment of a wide range of visual imagery, including minor decoration and design. Liturgical and exegetical texts are used to interpret the imagery of the manuscript, but these are applied with caution; their relevance determined by the rest of the imagery within the manuscript. Finally, in examining the visual apparatus of the manuscript in its entirety, the existence of a cohesive, decorative program is revealed.

The structure of the thesis reflects its approach. It is grouped into three parts, proceeding from the microscopic to the macroscopic. It begins

³⁰Farr, "Lection and Interpretation," 74-112.

with the layout of text, the size and decoration of the script before proceeding to the decorated initials and finally, the full-page images. The first section demonstrates how the mode of expression itself is indicative of the meaning carried by the imagery of the full-pages and minor decoration. Parts two and three explore the theme that unites the decorative program of the manuscript, that is, the role of the gospel book in man's apprehension of God. This complex theme operates on two levels. On a superficial level, the decorative program points to the necessity of looking toward and recognizing God and has strong eschatological implications. On a deeper level, it explains the role of the gospel book as a guide towards recognizing God.

Increasingly, Insular studies are turning to textual sources and easily defined methodologies that reflect popular trends in scholarship. While it is helpful to examine the historical, liturgical and literary context of the manuscript, it is surely more important to understand how the parts of the manuscript relate to the whole. Before exploring continental liturgies and ancient texts, the many folios that are attached to these full-page images should be looked at. In other words, the primary source for studies in the Book of Kells must be the Book of Kells.

Introduction to Part One: Word and Image

Francoise Henry describes the text of the Book of Kells as having “more than its share of errors . . . as if the Kells scribe did not care very much, knowing that nobody was going to use the volume for reference, and that it had, first of all, to be a beautiful object.”¹ The “illegibility” of the Book of Kells is well established.² Repeatedly, the designer chooses visual perfection over legibility and practicality. Henry remarked upon the many unusual aspects of the manuscript that contribute to its illegibility. For example, the manuscript contains many textual mistakes but only a few corrections; numerous small animals appear in the margins, frequently pointing to inserted passages, but many of these small animals were drawn before the script, suggesting that the omissions and insertions were planned and deliberate.³ Every page of text contains decorated initials, yet, with the exception of a few folios at the beginning of John, no Eusebian markings. Also the Old Latin *Breues causae* do not match the mixed-Vulgate text.⁴ The text is marred further by a large number of conflate readings, or “doublets,” and poorly copied contractions.⁵ Additionally, the syllabification of the text is erratic.⁶

¹ Henry, *Book of Kells*, 153.

² The term illegibility is used, unless indicated otherwise, in its modern sense referring to the ease with which individual letters of script, lesser and greater pauses and words can be distinguished.

³ These are called “turn-in-the-paths,” a term used by Irish scribes. Typically these consist of a dash or stroke, which indicates where omitted text has been inserted. In the Book of Kells birds and beasts indicate the omitted text. Frequently the script overlaps these “corrections,” indicating that the creatures were present before the text had been written. *Ibid.*, 157.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 153-57.

⁵ James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical, An Introduction and Guide* (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1968), 640. George Dublin, “The Doublet Reading in the Book of Kells,” *Hermathena* 94 (1960): 103-06. Dublin suggests that the Old Latin glosses of the Vulgate text were included to assist the reader unfamiliar with the Vulgate. He admits, however, that there are several instances where the doublet “old latinises [sic] the vulgate rather than vulgatises the old latin [sic], it is difficult to draw conclusions and dangerous to generalise. The scribe’s mind is obviously fully conversant with the old latin but it is impossible to say whether he is copying from two exemplars or merely using his memory and making the common errors of the memoriser. . . . Occasionally, the alternative version is marked off by medial points (Mark iii, 21), but usually no indication of the conflation is given.” *Ibid.*, 105.

⁶ Alton, “Introduction,” in Alton and Meyer, 22.

Even the ornate display script contains its share of textual errors.⁷ Other textual anomalies in the manuscript include the irregular layout of the text in individual folios, the exaggerated calligraphy of certain sections, the inter-textual and marginal decorations and the assertive yet irregular presence of the decorated initials. Although these have not been remarked upon to the same extent as the problems of the prefatory material and lack of Eusebian markings, they suggest that the Book of Kells could only have been read aloud with difficulty. Even Françoise Henry failed to explain why the designers of the manuscript might place such value on the manuscript's visual perfection while remaining indifferent to its legibility. If the Book of Kells were used for liturgical readings, its flawed text and remarkable decorated initials must be explained.

In its emphasis upon the design and decoration of its script, the manuscript treats text in a manner typically reserved for imagery. Moreover, throughout the manuscript, word and image are treated as interchangeable. Two sets of folios, 7v and 8r and folios 123v and 124r, best demonstrate this equivalence. Folio 7v contains an image of the Virgin and Child enthroned, surrounded by four attending angels (Ills. 1a). The Virgin is the focal point of the image; the Christ Child and angels all look towards her. The artist emphasizes the gaze of all five figures, especially that of the angels behind the throne, who peer around it so as to obtain a better view.⁸ Additionally, the

⁷ Folios 124r, 203r and 292r all contain garbled text. John Higgit, "The Display Script in the Book of Kells and the Tradition of Insular Decorative Capitals," in O'Mahony, 212.

⁸ Otto Werckmeister first noticed the emphasis upon the gaze in the John portrait of the Book of Kells, but this was heavily disputed by André Grabar. Grabar disagreed with Werckmeister's claim that John on folio 291v can be said to be looking upward. Grabar put forward the view that John's eyes are not represented to direct their gaze towards the sky but rather according to current formulae of the art at the end of antiquity. While this may indeed be the source for the representation, Grabar cannot account for the eyes of most figures in the Book of Kells, which do not follow this formula. Indeed the variation of types of gaze in Kells is unique. On the Virgin and Child page, the Virgin's gaze is straight outwards. The child, in profile stares at the Virgin, while the two angels below contort their upper torsos to look up at the Virgin. The eyes of the angel at the top left corner of the folio, clearly look across and downward towards the Virgin. Additionally, the noses of the four angels are all directed towards the Virgin, suggesting an Insular rendering of three-quarter profile. Grabar's dismissal of the directed gaze in Kells fails to consider the scope of the manuscript. The

image is surrounded by a thick, ornate frame, and its four corners are bounded by additional sections containing vines. The image appears enclosed on all sides, independent from the rest of the manuscript and its text. The Virgin looks out towards the viewer, setting up a visual dialogue with the gaze of the manuscript's audience. Inserted into the frame, a small rectangle contains a group of figures, who shatter the closure of the image and its central focus.⁹ Unlike the angels and the Christ child, they do not gaze toward the Virgin, but instead face directly away from the scene, looking out across the manuscript to the opposite folio containing the description of the Nativity in the *Breues causae* of Matthew (Ills. 1b). Their gaze and profile point to the opposite folio acting as a link between the two pages, verso and recto, image and text.

Folio 124r contains the display script of Matthew 27:38, "Tunc crucifixerant XRI cum eo duos latrones (Ills. 3)."¹⁰ The text is framed by a thick border of interlace, terminating in the head of a quadruped. In three places the frame indents, and inserted into these spaces are three groups of figures that resemble the small group of figures on folio 7v in dress, style and composition. The opposite folio, 123v, is blank. Folio 123r contains only fifteen lines of text, so that it ends with the text of the *Titulum*, "This is Jesus, King of the Jews." This, and the careful pricking of folio 123r suggests that folio 123v was intended for a full-page illustration.¹¹ The ending of 123r, the blank folio, and the text of 124r strongly suggest that folio 123v was meant

immense variation of gazes within the Book of Kells shows that while the artist may have been copying from classical formulae, he had a vast selection to choose from. See Otto Karl Werckmeister, 133-38 and André Grabar, *Cahiers archéologiques* 17 (1968): 254-56.

⁹ It is generally accepted that these figures, because of their erratic number and appearance in the Temptation page represent the *populi Christiani* rather than the Magi or Jews demanding Christ's crucifixion. See George Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells*, 155 and Jennifer O'Reilly, "The Book of Kells," 109. In private correspondence, John Higgit has pointed to their lack of tonsure. Even if the manuscript's audience were homogeneous, the Church was not, and these figures are of an Everyman type. In a similar manner the contorted figures in the margins do not wear tonsure, representing instead the more generalized theme of the soul in torment.

¹⁰ When referring directly to the script in the Book of Kells, the Latin text is cited as it appears in the manuscript, including all errors, doublets, syllabification and omissions.

¹¹ Meehan, "The Script," in Fox, 247.

for a Crucifixion scene.¹² As with folios 7v and 8r, the groups of figures look out across the manuscript to the opposite folio, acting as a link between the two otherwise self-contained pages.

Thus, folios 123v and 124r would act as a set pair, in which folio 124r contained the textual description of the Crucifixion, while folio 123v would have illustrated the event. Jennifer O'Reilly has pointed out that the text, "Then were two thieves crucified with him," was interpreted as a fulfillment of Habakkuk's prophecy that the Lord would be recognized between two animals. She argues that the small figures of folio 124r, who look across to the page that would have depicted the Crucifixion, represent those who recognize the Lord, suggesting that "these onlookers graphically evoke the common scriptural and exegetical use of looking and seeing as a metaphor for the spiritual insight or recognition enjoined on the reader."¹³ In order to understand this deeper meaning, the spectator must look at both folios. The combination of the two folios produces a greater range of meaning than the sum of their parts.

The two sets of folios--folios 7v and 8r and folios 123v and 124r, emphasize the act of looking, leading the eye of the audience from one page to the other. As Jennifer O'Reilly has shown, it is necessary to view the pages in this manner so as to fully understand the meaning of both the image and the text. The interdependence of facing pages demonstrated by these two examples occurs throughout the manuscript.¹⁴ Repeatedly animals, birds and human figures look out from the page that they decorate to the facing page, and, as with folios 124r and 123r, the interaction of the two folios introduces another level of meaning. The way in which facing pages work together

¹² Henry, *Book of Kells*, 173.

¹³ O'Reilly, "Book of Kells," 109. This comment, which O'Reilly discusses only in relation to folio 124r and to a certain extent folio 114r, is applicable to the whole manuscript as will be shown in the following chapters. All English citations from the scriptures are taken from the Douay Bible (Dublin: McGill & Son, 1899) unless special mention is made in the notes.

¹⁴ Further examples of this are cited throughout the thesis.

indicates that the manuscript's pages were not meant to be read in the traditional manner, where pages are independent and sequential entities, but rather were intended to be looked at as a cohesive unit.

The two sets of folios indicate the consciousness of the design of the "architecture" of the manuscript. They are mirror images of one another--birth and death, Christmas and Easter.¹⁵ Most significant to the question of word and image is the way in which the gaze of the small groups leads away from the text to the image in one instance, and from the image to the text in the other. No hierarchical division is made between the text on folio 8r and the intended image on folio 123v; both are objects of the gaze. In light of early Christian perceptions of images and writing, the equivalence with which the two are treated in this set of paired folios is remarkable.

When examined independently from the intended Crucifixion, the Nativity folios seem to reflect the position of Gregory and pseudo-Gregory on the role of the image in the Church. Gregory instructs that it "is one thing to adore a picture, another through a picture's story to learn what must be adored. For what writing offers to those who read it, a picture offers to the ignorant who look at it."¹⁶ In the Nativity folios, the small group of non-tonsured figures look from the image to the text, as if having learned from the image to look to the scriptures. Pseudo-Gregory emphasizes, "We do not

¹⁵ The symmetrical relationship found in these four folios also occurs in the canon tables and the Mark and John incipit. See chapter seven.

¹⁶ Celia M. Chazelle, "Pictures, Books and the Illiterate: Pope Gregory I's Letters to Serenus of Marseilles," *Word and Image* 6 (April-June 1990): 139. Gregory I *Epistula* 11(10), "Aliud est enim picturam adorare, aliud per picturae historiam quid sit adorandum addiscere. Nam quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis praestat pictura cernentibus." CCSL 140A, 873-76. Gregory I seems to have been respected by the Columban *familiae* despite the confrontations over Easter dates. In his letters appealing to Gregory I, Columbanus refers to having read Gregory's book and asks for more, "I confess that the work is sweeter than honey to the needy." *Sancti Columbani Opera, Scriptores latini hiberniae*, vol. 2, trans. and ed. G. S. Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), 11. It is not suggested that Gregory's letters to Serenus would have been available or even of great interest to the monastic community responsible for the Book of Kells, but the Irish were not so isolated from Rome as to be unaware of the accepted opinions and views. The two, specific points with which the Irish or "Celtic" church disagreed with Rome are well-known, that is, the question of tonsure and the date of Easter. Gregory's letter is cited as one rare, surviving statement on the role of art.

prostrate before this image as before the Godhead, but through the image we adore him whose birth, passion and enthronement we recall.”¹⁷ On folios 7v and 8r, the viewer’s eye, following the gaze of the small group of men, looks from the image of the Virgin and Child to the scriptural summary of the gospel’s account of Christ’s Nativity. Image leads the viewer towards meditation upon the life of Christ and the letter of the scripture. In medieval, artistic tradition, the image of 7v is peculiar in its depiction of figures looking away from the Virgin and Child, rather than towards them. While such a depiction is unusual, it can be understood in reference to patristic writings which direct the viewer to use images as a starting point in his contemplation of God. Possibly, the book held open by the figure on folio 8r makes further reference to this function of the manuscript.

From this single example, the designer appears sympathetic to views similar to those held by Gregory and pseudo-Gregory. In the Crucifixion folios, however, the figures look from the text to an image (Ills. 3). Two of the three groups are placed in the right hand margin, so that their gaze incorporates both the text, “Tunc crucifixerant XPI cum eo duos latrones,” as well as the intended image of the Crucifixion, but one group occupies the left side in the gutter margin. These figures clearly have their backs facing the scripture and look toward the opposite folio intended for the Crucifixion illustration.

The depiction of figures looking at an image, while ignoring the gospel text itself, runs counter to the various approaches towards word and image represented in the writings of Gregory and pseudo-Gregory. Although Gregory directs that visual images can act as a substitute for scripture, he emphasizes that this is only for those ignorant of letters and dwells on the

¹⁷ Ann Freemann, “Scripture and Images in the *Libri Carolini*,” in *Testo e immagine nell’alto medioevo: 15-21 aprile 1993*, vol. 1, *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo* 41 (Spoleto: Presso La Sede del Centro, 1994), 173. CCSL 140, 1110-11.

danger of idolatry inherent within the use of images.¹⁸ The sophistication of the manuscript's imagery and literacy of the Irish monks suggest that the manuscript was not intended for the ignorant.¹⁹ Even stronger than Gregory, are the warnings of Isidore's *Etymologiae*, XIX.16, which describes the deceitful nature of paintings.²⁰ The *Etymologiae* is quoted by the mid-seventh century in Ireland, and the only known seventh century copy is written in Irish minuscule.²¹ In the face of such attitudes, the parity with which word and image are handled in these folios, and within the Book of Kells, demands further investigation.

Throughout, image invades the manuscripts textual territory. Full-page images appear in the middle of chapters, interrupting the flow of text. Display script, surrounded by and incorporating figurative imagery, occurs in similar locations. Unique to the Book of Kells is the unexplained and seemingly random appearance of human figures and animals between the lines of text. Moreover, decorated initials occur on almost every page. Many of these are formed by complex beasts, birds and human figures. Even in terms of Insular script, these are almost unrecognizable as letters. Color and

¹⁸ The incident which provoked the letter, Bishop Serenus' destruction of the images of his church in order to prevent their adoration, suggests that idolatry was a concern, at least for some, in the late sixth century; however, Serenus' non-serene reputation suggests that his approach was not typical as does Gregory's admonition, "What priest has ever done what you did?" See Celia M. Chazelle's discussion of the political situation between Gregory and Serenus.

¹⁹ An Irish monastic community would have a relatively, high standard of literacy. Columban communities saw themselves as the inheritors of Columba's commitment to scribal practice. The copying of sacred text defined much of Columba's life and even his death. See Timothy O'Neill, "Columba the Scribe," in *Studies in the Cult of St. Columba*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 69-79. Bede describes how those who went about Aidan, "whether tonsured or lay-people, had to study, that is to perform the task of either reading the Bible or learning the Psalms." Jane Stevenson, "Literacy in Ireland: The Evidence of the Patrick dossier in the Book of Armagh," in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 16. Many children were taught to read *before* they were given to the monastery. Martin McNamara, "Psalter Text and Psalter Study in the Early Irish Church." *PRIA* 73C (1973): 206.

²⁰ Freeman, 178-79.

²¹ Kathleen Hughes, *Church and Society in Ireland: AD 400-1200* ed. by David Dumville (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987), 66-67.

abstract decoration leave the margins of the manuscript and enter into the central run of text.

If the deacon used the Book of Kells in the liturgy, art historians must account for its textual and decorative anomalies. The decorated initials do not correspond to any extant lection system and their relationship to Eusebian sections is dubious at best.²² The erratic initials, unlike those of the Lindisfarne Gospels, might even mislead the deacon into reading the wrong passage.²³ And what of the confused text, irregular margins and ornamental clutter? Do these have a purpose, or can we simply accept without explanation Henry's conclusion that the scribes of Kells were more concerned with making a beautiful object rather than a legible one?

An examination of the lesser-known pages of the manuscript indicate that the text of Kells, when read in conjunction with its images, decoration and layout, can be read although not in the direct and conventional manner of the Lindisfarne Gospels or a typed page of script. Instead, the meaning of the text can be understood through its decoration and layout. These act like punctuation marks that guide the eye of the viewer along the page, stopping and starting at the appropriate points in the text. Like exclamation marks, they signal passages of greater significance or heightened drama and so manipulate the reader's response to the text. This suggests an audience that relies upon image and the appearance of the page to impart meaning as much as upon the reading of the words. Additionally, the layout indicates that the two open folios, recto and verso, interact. If one looks at the pages sequentially, in the manner expected when reading down a page of text, meaning is lost.

²² See chapter three.

²³ The Irish penitentials spell out the punishments dealt out upon making mistakes in the Mass. Ludwig Bieler ed., *The Irish Penitentials, Scriptorum latini hiberniae*, vol. 5 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1963), 135.

Before exploring in greater detail the manuscript's unusual treatment of word and image, it is necessary to address briefly the use of the terms "reader," "audience" and "spectator" as well as "reading" and "congregation." The imagery and size of the Book of Kells indicates that it was a book used during the liturgy; however, the peculiarities of the text can only be understood if the manuscript was never read aloud, but rather displayed open on the altar while the gospel was read from a lectionary or small gospel book. Therefore terms such as "reading" and "reader" refer to the act of looking at the gospel passage in the Book of Kells while listening to the lesson being read by the deacon.²⁴ Because of the extraordinary merging of text and image, as well as the equivalence with which both are treated, it is possible to speak of an audience "looking at" the text as well as "reading" the image.

²⁴ See discussion in chapter one. Michael Camille, citing Benedict's worry about noise levels in the scriptorium, suggests that reading was a matter of hearing and speaking, not seeing. Michael Camille, "Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Art History* 8 (1985): 28. The decoration, layout and text of the Book of Kells indicate that this manuscript is the exception to the rule. This is not surprising, as the Irish approach to Latin was equally atypical. As Ireland remained independent from Roman rule, Latin was treated largely as a written, visual and silent language. This is reflected in their punctuation, abbreviation and separation of text according to parts of speech, and in the manner in which decorated initials interact so intimately with the script. It is even possible, that unlike the majority of their European counterparts, the Irish agreed with Isidore's endorsement of silent reading. M. B. Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Semination of Medieval Texts* (London and Rio Grande, Ohio: Hambledon, 1990), 2-9.

Chapter One

Word and Image: Page Layout and Script

An examination of the page layout and script of the Book of Kells shows how text functions as image, and as such was intended to be looked at rather than read. Its very appearance communicates its meaning. Henry's accepted assertion that the text of Kells is illegible will be modified, showing how the varied layout and decoration, although appearing to clutter and confuse the text, imparts additional information that aids the audience in a visual apprehension of the text while at the same time rendering it illegible in the conventional sense. Certainly, the Book of Kells could never have been used for study or read aloud during the Mass.

E. A. Lowe described the script as "very expert Irish majuscule--a veritable masterpiece of calligraphy."¹ The script appears very clear and even. The writing is well-spaced without cramping in a single block format and the letters well-rounded. The page is relatively uncluttered by corrections or punctuation.² The lack of corrections gives the page the superficial appearance of perfection and clarity. The most remarkable aspect of the Book of Kells' script is its size and spacing. The Book of Kells distributes only seventeen lines of text over a space on the vellum measuring 250 mm by 170 mm. This, as well as the lack of punctuation and corrections, gives the text its unique clarity. Related display gospels contain at least twenty, and more typically, twenty-two lines of text. Some cover a slightly larger amount of vellum, typically 270 mm by 180 mm or even 270 mm by 210 mm. Although this provides them with between 8-9% more vellum to cover, the use of 22 lines of text results in the incorporation of 23% more text per page than the

¹ E. A. Lowe, ed., *Codices Latini Antiquiores: A Paleographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts prior to the Ninth Century*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), 43.

² *Ibid.* The pages contain many turn-in-the-paths, but these can be distinguished from more common and necessary corrections both by their decorative quality and artificiality.

Book of Kells.³ Therefore, the Book of Kells has a much lower text-vellum ratio. The effect, when viewed, is striking.

Additionally, many other gospel books use the Neapolitan-styled double column text. These manuscripts include some of the more elaborate display books.⁴ This layout allows a double margin entry system for colophons and Eusebian notations giving the text a greater legibility and practicality. It further limits the displacement of text, however. Such a system while increasing the manuscript's legibility for a reader close to the text, reduces its clarity when viewed from a distance. Several other manuscripts, including the Book of Kells, employ a single block of text.⁵ Like the Book of Kells, some manuscripts are written *per cola et commata*. Unlike the Book of Kells, their text runs systematically from the left to the right-hand margin with alignment falling on the left-hand margin or on both margins. Of the manuscripts consulted, only the Canterbury Gospels does not maintain this careful alignment.⁶

The layout of text in both the Canterbury Gospels and the Book of Kells lack the consistency found elsewhere. In some places, a word or phrase is centered in the middle of a line, indented on both the left and right. In several instances, as will be shown below, the same word is isolated in both manuscripts; however, in places the Book of Kells isolates text that is aligned in the Canterbury Gospels. While indentation of the left margin might be dismissed as the result of the scribe leaving more space than necessary for the decorated initial, this would not explain the indentation of the right margin. The Canterbury Gospels' size, purple stained pages, illustrations and

³ See appendix A1.

⁴ Durham Cathedral Library, A. II. 10 and A. II. 16; Lincoln Cathedral Library 298; London, Cotton Nero D. IV; London Royal MS. 1. B. VII and Echternach Gospels. Manuscripts are referred to by name in the main text, their shelf mark numbers are cited in appendix A3.

⁵ Cambridge Corpus Christi College, 197; Durham Cathedral Library A. II. 17; Lichfield Gospels, Canterbury Gospels, Macregol Gospels and Oxford, Bodleian Rawlinson G. 167.

⁶ For a list of manuscripts consulted see appendix A2. Facsimiles, catalogues and reproductions have also been examined where available (see bibliography). These also show no evidence of the type of alignment found in the Book of Kells and Canterbury Gospels.

decoration indicates that it was also a display book. The quire numeration suggests that the manuscript was once a part of a large Bible, probably based on an early Christian prototype.⁷ Despite isolating many of the same phrases as the Book of Kells, it fails to decorate and color them. Additionally, the manuscript employs a double column system and has 42 lines of text per page. Because of this, its isolated phrases do not have the same effect as those of the Book of Kells.

The possible reasons for such spacing are numerous. Perhaps the scribe simply wished to spread out his script at this point in order to cover as much vellum as possible with limited text, although this is unlikely even in a luxurious manuscript when the cost of vellum is considered.⁸ Also, in the Book of Kells, the surrounding folios frequently contain relatively dense text, indicating a conscious effort to save space for these pages. Another possibility, although equally unlikely, is that the breaks in the text were intended to indicate the pauses, lections or Eusebian sections of the manuscript as the breaks occur throughout the text without any obvious pattern.⁹ In the Book of Kells, decoration suddenly peaks for a few folios, initials become larger and more complex, while color invades the text. Just as suddenly the decoration and non-aligned text disappears. These breaks appear in the specific passages of text, including the Passion, the Last Supper, Christ's Entry into Jerusalem and the Signs of the End of the Age.¹⁰

The words that are centered vary, but frequently those with special significance receive distinctive decoration. Folios 99r to 104v contain multiple breaks. In three of these breaks, the isolated text is insignificant. On

⁷ The illustrations depicted the Baptism of Christ, the consensus of the evangelists and the annunciation to Zaccharias. J. J. G. Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts: 6th to 9th Centuries*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, vol. 1 (London: Harvey Miller, 1978), 68. Unlike the Book of Kells, they do not occur within the text of the gospels.

⁸ See discussion of vellum costs in Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 138-41.

⁹ See chapter three.

¹⁰ Henry points out the increased decoration of the script during the Passion, but does not refer to these other passages. Henry, *Book of Kells* 174-75. See discussion in chapter three.

the third line of folio 99v, the text is centered and colored bright yellow and red (Ills. 9). Red line-fillers surround the text. The centered text does not contain any significant words or phrases, but simply the last three letters of the word *exaltabitur*. On the opposite recto, the second line is also centered and surrounded by decoration. The words themselves do not have any special significance but by centering the text on both folios in parallel positions the scribe brings further attention to these two highly decorated folios.

Similarly the letters *tas occiderunt* centered in line three of folio 101v draw attention to the verse that follows, "Fill ye up on the measure of your fathers. You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell?" (Ills. 26a). An inspection of the decoration of folio 101v and its facing page, folio 102r, shows that this emphasis is not accidental. On folio 102r, directly opposite, a large, knotted quadruped with flowers issuing from its mouth looks directly across to the verse (Ills. 26b). Directly below, an extremely long quadruped, also with flowers in his mouth, looks directly up to the verse.¹¹ The break and the decoration, all draw attention to this verse. As will be shown, the verse's threat of damnation and castigation of the Pharisees plays an important role in the decorative program of the Book of Kells.

Much of the centered text, however, makes specific reference to the name or person of Christ. The XPS of folio 99r, for example, is highlighted in bright yellow and terminates in colored spirals and is surrounded by red waving lines and painted tri-dots.¹² Similarly near the bottom of folio 102r, the words "in nomine dni" are centered, colored and laterally extended (Ills.

¹¹ For a discussion of the significance of emphasis upon the mouths within the minor decoration see Bernard Meehan, "The Book of Kells and the Corbie Psalter," in *The Transmission of Learning to Ireland*, eds. Toby Barnard, Dáibhi Cróinín, and Katherine Simms. Forthcoming. Additionally, there does seem to be a specific association between prophecy and flowers issuing from the mouths of beasts. See for example folio 90v (Ills. 13a). This initial is discussed in chapter two.

¹² The Canterbury Gospels do not isolate Christ's name in this manner.

26b). On folio 104v, the *minis* of “filii hominis” is extended out, the M and S containing exaggerated curves and terminating into a design somewhat reminiscent of the budding foliage found elsewhere in the manuscript. The script is colored and surrounded on either side by multi-colored foliage. In the last line of folio 104v, the words “hominis in caelo” are similarly centered and decorated. In this manner, the breaks within text in the Book of Kells distinguish themselves from the more traditional pauses in text.

On folio 103r, which begins the conclusion of the Matthew section on sin and judgment, breaks in the text are much more numerous than before (Ills. 23). Although one of these breaks relates to an Eusebian section, the others do not. The first two lines of text, “Te ne turbemini oportet enim haec fieri sed nondum est finis,” on the folio introduce the description of the end of the world (Matthew 24:6). The scribe has crammed together the first words of the first line of text so that the phrase, “sed nondum est finis,” stands alone. The words, “sed nondum est,” however, are also packed together, leaving the *finis* isolated on the line. The scribe gives additional emphasis to the word, extending the N outward. The consciousness of the arrangement is evident. The scribe could easily have avoided both the awkward cramming of initials and the vacuum around the word *finis*. If the first line were normally and regularly spaced, the last two words, “haec fieri,” of the first line would begin the second line, which in turn would have ended fully aligned at the right margin. Additionally, the insertion of a space into the middle of a line of text, that is between “sed nondum est” and “finis,” so deviates from the typical scribal practice that it can only be understood in terms of a conscious effort to emphasize the word “finis.” The scribe clearly manipulated the text so as to underline both the significance and the sense of the passage. The isolation and extended N of the word *finis* closely resembles the decorated *finis* that typically marks the end of a book. The word in its isolation and exaggeration

need not be read so much as recognized. Its shape and layout signify its meaning.

The rest of the folio goes on to detail the occurrences that will mark the end of the world (Ills. 23). The second section of text, Matthew 24:7, “*Consurget enim gens in gentem, et regnum contra regnum et erunt pestilentiae et fames et terrae motus per loca,*” might have been spaced so as to avoid a non-aligned left margin. Matthew 24:8, “*Haec autem omnia initia sunt dolorum,*” could have also fitted on one line. The T of the word *sunt* extends outward unnecessarily and the whole line is very well spaced. The last line in the fourth section, “*Tunc tradent uos in tribulationem et occident uos et eritis odio omnibus gentibus propter nomen meum,*” Matthew 24:9, contains only the word *meum*, which again could have fit onto the line above, thus maintaining the alignment of the margins. The multiple breaks in this folio reflect the significance of this Doomsday passage, which presaged the full description of the Last Judgment in Matthew chapter 25, one of the most popular passages in the period.¹³ The words that are centered echo the sense of the passage: *fnis, dolorum* and *meum* of the phrase, “*nomen meum.*” The bright yellows, reds, blues and their striking combination in each word draws further attention to it as does the calligraphic interlace and spiral terminals and bright red flourishes.

The breaks in the page and the decoration draw attention to the passage. After the description of the end of the world, decoration and layout return to normal. These folios, 107r to 109v, contain the Parable of the Ten Virgins, which contain a similar number of Euesbian sections and pauses; yet, the script flows from left to right without interruption or incident ending in an aligned right margin. Decoration then peaks again when the subject returns to

¹³ Canterbury Gospels also isolates the word “*dolorum,*” although not “*meum.*” The decoration of Matthew 24 builds until a climax at Matthew 25, see discussion below. Diarmuid Ó Loaghaire, in an examination of scriptural references and exegesis, noted the overwhelming popularity of the description of Judgment in Matthew 25. Diarmuid Ó Loaghaire, “Irish Elements in the Catechesis Celtica,” in Ní Chatháin and Richter, 149.

the Last Judgment with its emphasis upon the feeding of the hungry and naked. The four breaks in the script of 103r demarcate the passage from the rest of the gospel text. The word "finis," isolated and emphatically decorated, explains the significance of the passage.

The effects rendered through the manuscript's color and decoration is best exemplified by folio 122r. On folio 122r the ninth line is indented beneath the eighth allowing room for the decorated initial above it (Ills. 4 and 5). The tenth line is indented a further 4.5 centimeters. One possible explanation for an indentation of the tenth line is the decorated initial beneath on the eleventh line of text; however, the equally significant indentation on the right-hand, exterior margin cannot be explained by the presence of a decorated initial. The decoration, script and text of the folio make evident the consciousness of the layout of the text on this and similar folios in the Book of Kells.

The three lines of text contain Matthew 27:26, "Tunc dimissit illis Barbaran Ihs vero flagillatum tradidit eis ut crucifigeretur." Despite the amount of space in the right margin, the letters of the IHS have been closely compacted and narrowed to the point of becoming illegible. Additionally, the "ut crucifigeretur" omits the T of *ut*. Moreover, the verse falls in the exact center of the page of text with seven lines above it and seven lines below it. This has been accomplished through a series of spaces in the lines of script on the preceding folios, 121 and 121v. The scribe, at the cost of legibility, has centered the text perfectly between the top and bottom and right and left hand margins with additional emphasis upon the last phrase, "ut crucifigeretur." The phrase is surrounded by blank vellum, almost framed by it. This void and the inverted pyramid arrangement stops the eye by interrupting the normal linear flow of the text from the left to the right. The decorated initials add to the visual isolation of this verse. The quadruped at the beginning of the verse looks down the gutter margin. At the end of the verse, a symmetrical

quadruped, looks up to the quadruped above. The two, with some variations, are mirror images of one another, and as such stop the movement of the eye. The top initials sends the eye downward, the bottom initial stops the eye and sends it back upwards. The two brightly colored quadrupeds act like a pair of parenthesis separating the text from its normal flow. Both are strongly and simply painted in identical colors of bright yellow and green. No other quadrupeds or beast head terminals interfere with their visual impact upon the page.

In these folios, layout and decoration signal the reader to the solemnity and importance of specific phrases, words or passages. Decoration further emphasizes the demarcation of these passages, often acting in conjunction with the void like colorful parenthesis. On folio 103, the red, blue and yellow in the decorated initial of the first and the last letter highlight the verse, while on 122r the green and yellow quadrupeds of the decorated initials serve a similar purpose. Such breaks in the text go well beyond the typical pauses of *per cola et commata*. Non-aligned text appears centered in the page. Only a few words or syllables occupy the central space. The words are often extended laterally with calligraphic flourishes such as spirals, interlace and foliage. Thus, non-aligned, centered text attracts the eye, breaking the rhythm of the page. Frequently, the scribes use this to call attention to certain pairs of folios. When breaks and interlinear decoration occurs on one folio, the facing folio has similar decoration in a parallel position.

The significance of these breaks can only be fully understood in contrast to the rest of the manuscript, where scribes go to extraordinary lengths to strictly align the margins. The Kells' scribes often create the rigid "formatted" margins of the single block text by extending the script towards the right hand margin rather than allowing spaces to invade the line of text. On folio 91v, for example, the word *latronum* stretches across the page, while elsewhere the words *et sanauit eos* are crammed together (Ills. 88). The I has

had to be inserted below while the S of *eos* hovers above the word. The E and O have been written in successively smaller letters so as not to extend beyond the right margin. The space between and around the decorated initials on this folio and the overlap of text and initial on folio 92r indicates that the artist completed the decorated initials before the text. While this operating procedure would explain the extreme discipline exercised in these folios, very regular margins and the twisted script occur throughout the manuscript in sections with few decorated initials as well as on folios where a close relationship between text and decorated initials is maintained.¹⁴ As a result of the manipulation of script, the text, although in some ways less legible, is visually perfect.

The Book of Kells is not the only manuscript to employ this device. It is a common feature of de luxe manuscripts. The Durham Gospels extend the D of the last word of the bottom line of folio 60r so as to maintain its block margin; however, this is done with great restraint. Letters are merely extended laterally, their shape maintained as much as possible. Neither are they colored as is often the case in the Book of Kells. Also, unlike the Book of Kells, such extensions are the exception rather than the rule. Almost exclusively, the extended letters are T's, where the cross-bar can be extended without distorting the letter.

In the Book of Kells, the calligraphy of the text is often exaggerated in conjunction with layout deviation in order to mark out passages. This type of exaggeration is best seen in folios containing centered text. Folio 99v exemplifies this (Ills. 9). The layout of the text, its decorated initials and marginal decoration point to the significance of the page. The visual impact is certain, but the legibility of the text suffers. The first three lines of text contain Matthew 23:12, "Qui autem se exaltauerit, humiliabitur; et qui se

¹⁴ Folios 135v, 88r, 101r etc.

humaliauerit, exaltabitur.” The actual text of the manuscript is crammed together in sections and yet the last three letters occupy an entire line:

Qui autem exaltauerit se humilia
bitur et quisehumiliaueritexaltabi

TUR

The text is made even more difficult to read by the manner in which the T and U are distorted into undulating rectangular shapes sharing the same stem. The manner in which the sentence is spaced and the exaggerated calligraphy of the last three letters make the sentence difficult to read, even in terms of Insular calligraphy. On folio 101r on the first line the word *mundum* is even more distorted. Its M extends out on both sides, creating an unrecognizably elongated shape. The N is widened in a more traditional manner and would be easily legible to an Irish audience; however, the M at the end of the word twists outward and loses its shape completely. It transforms into a bud-like shape that dominates much of the minor decoration. Folio 273v contains two similarly extended M's (Ills. 89). The first extends out into a complex lattice of interlace and then terminates in a spiral. The second forms a bud-shape similar to the one described above.

The letters literally take on the shapes of images, losing their identity and legibility. The color and decoration scattered over the open folios invite the eye to wander across the page. These contorted letters require the viewer to ponder over the hidden meanings locked within the decoration. Michael Camille describes the impetus behind such decoration as a need to create difficult to read showpieces that were “indices of exclusiveness.”¹⁵ It will be demonstrated in the following chapters that in isolating, distorting and decorating words and phrases of the gospel text, the decoration underlines the role of this text as an outward sign or visible husk that must be permeated in

¹⁵ Camille, “Seeing and Reading,” 28.

order to be understood fully. In these instances, the script closely resembles display script in its use of color, ornament and contorted letters.

Just as it is difficult to distinguish “regular” script from display script, it is equally difficult to separate display script from image. Display script appears in most of the gospel books associated with the Book of Kells. Most incipit pages containing display text lack legibility. Even the Lindisfarne Gospels, with its great clarity, uses rectilinear letters that often share the same stem. This and superimposed letters such as seen in the Matthew incipit in the St. Petersburg Gospels were common decorative devices. This conflation of abstracted letters, especially in the first word of the gospel, often renders the word illegible. The decoration of the Book of Kells is the apotheosis of these illegible incipits.¹⁶ The letters are hidden within the decoration; hidden within one another and scattered at random over the surface of the folio. In Mark the first two I’s of *Initium* also serve as the vertical bar of the N (Ills. 115). The remaining letters float in random sections of the page. The A of *Evangelii* slants, inserted at a diagonal between the V and N.

Traditionally, scribes used display text to mark out incipits and Matthew 1:18.¹⁷ The monastic reader was familiar enough with the gospels to know the beginning word or phrase of each gospel. The placement of the folio and the tradition of incipit decoration signal to the reader that this is the beginning of a gospel, whether he can read the text or not. A similar tradition in decoration would render even the most ornate Chi Rho recognizable as a signal for the beginning of Matthew 1:18. The placement of the decoration, right after the start of the Matthew gospel, would signal to an audience accustomed to finding Matthew 1:18 decorated in such a manner that the passage was Matthew 1:18. Familiarity with the “architecture” and shape of

¹⁶ For a discussion of design of display script in the Book of Kells, see Higgit, “Display Script.”

¹⁷ Even small gospel books indicated these divisions. Françoise Henry and G. Marsh-Micheli, *Studies in Early Christian and Medieval Irish Art*, II (London: Pindar Press, 1984), 124.

the Chi Rho would render legible text unnecessary. Even in the pocket gospels, in the case of Matthew 1:18, the exaggerated shape of the Chi rather than the text communicates meaning. Matthew 1:18 would be recognizable to anyone used to the sight of a gospel book, even if illiterate. The broad sweeping shape of the Chi and spiral ornament so closely following the beginning of the gospel text could only suggest one specific verse, Matthew 1:18.

In most decorated Insular manuscripts, the display script that marks the *Breues causae* is much clearer than that of Matthew 1:18 and the gospel incipits. This is because the prefatory material appears in different locations in different manuscripts and its content would be less familiar to the reader. The *Breues causae* for Matthew in the Book of Kells is unique both for its decorative emphasis and its lack of clarity.¹⁸ A reader might not recognize the decorated page of folio 8r as the *Breues causae* for Matthew. The display script consists of six lines of illegible text. There is no division between word and image (Ills. 1b). The first line of text, "Natiuitas," is formed by a large N more typical of gospel incipits. Two birds issue out from its terminus. Quadrupeds loop around forming the rest of the word. Single bodies make up several parts of various letters and most letters consist of parts of more than one animal. The U and I are the more typical rectilinear script, but even these are entangled and intertwined in bodies. The second line of script is in a highly ornate display script and quadrupeds interweave with the letters of the third line. A human figure sits alongside the third and fifth lines of script.

The first, full-page, display text in an Insular manuscript typically contains either the Matthew incipit or Matthew 1:18. While display text was used most commonly in the early eighth and ninth centuries as a marker for the beginning of a new chapter, section or book, the use of so much

¹⁸ Patrick McGurk, *Latin Gospel Books From A.D. 400 to A.D. 800*, Les Publications de Scriptorium 5 (Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam: 1961), 80.

decoration rather than indicating the beginning of the *Breues causae* might confuse a reader accustomed to the more traditional decoration of Insular gospel books. Furthermore, the designer of the Book of Kells has placed the *Breues causae* of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John at the beginning of the manuscript. Only the Book of Durrow and the Book of Kells group the gospel summaries away from the individual gospel, and the Book of Kells differs from Durrow in its placement of all of the summaries near the beginning of the manuscript.¹⁹ The unusual position would further confuse the reader of the manuscript who might conceivably expect to find the summaries before the individual gospels. The illegibility, unusual decoration and placement of the *Breues causae* demonstrates the manner in which script often could not be read as text. Unlike the Chi Rho, the reader would not expect to find the *Breues causae* in a specific place. His knowledge of its location would not assist him in recognizing and interpreting the intricate text. The image of the Virgin and Child on the opposite page is a necessary indicator as to the meaning of the contorted and confusing script. Repeatedly in the manuscript, images shed light on the frequently illegible text.

The Book of Kells is also exceptional in its amount of display text. Display text occurs on 19 folios.²⁰ Although in most instances display script marks incipits and prefatory material, it also occurs in the midst of the gospel text interrupting its normal narrative flow. Whereas Chi Rho pages, prefatory markers and incipits occur in other Insular manuscripts with some regularity, the amount of display script in the prefatory material and the display script marking Matthew 26:31, Matthew 27:38, Matthew 28:1, Mark 15:24-25, Luke 1:5, Luke 4:1, and Luke 24:1 are unique. Although other manuscripts often employ decorated initials to mark out certain passages of text, only the Book of Kells uses display script within the text itself. Display script,

¹⁹ Henry, *Book of Kells*, 153.

²⁰ Folios 8r, 12r, 13r, 15v, 16v, 18r, 19v, 29r, 34r, 114v, 127v, 130r, 188r, 188v, 203r, 285r, 292r, 203r and 292r.

particularly the type employed by the Kells scribes, interferes with the legibility of the passage to a much greater degree than the decorated initials. On folio 114v, Matthew 26:31 is so illegible the scribe has re-written in red the verse beneath it (Ills. 10). In Matthew 27:38 on folio 124r, the script, "Tunc crucifixerant XPI cum eo duos latrones" is written in the shape of a cross (Ills. 3).²¹ The text is completely illegible. The over-all appearance of the text; its Chi shape, communicates its meaning. The cross shape, associated with Christ's name would suggest the Crucifixion.²² Most significantly, while the text would be illegible from a distance no matter how clearly executed, the X-shape would be clearly visible and comprehensible at a distance. Although its decoration hampers its legibility, the scribe has not, as he did with Matthew 26:31, had to rewrite the verse beneath. As with the text of the Matthew 1:18, it seems the reader must recognize rather than read the script. Across from the *Breues causae* on 7v, the image of the Nativity aids recognition. It seems likely that folio 123v was intended for an image of the Crucifixion, which would have directly illustrated the Crucifixion described by the illegible text and hinted at in its shape. In both folios, image would help communicate meaning. Additionally, in the case of 123v and 124r, the layout would also assist in conveying the event described by the gospels.

²¹ The relationship of the shape of the Chi in the Book of Kells to the alphabet ceremony, in which churches were consecrated by writing the Greek and Latin alphabets in a X shape on the floor, has been discussed in Farr, "Lecton and Interpretation," 180-83. Farr does not mention the ceremony in relation to the Chi shape of folio 124r, but the use of letters to outline the shape does seem to recall this ceremony, as the letters of the scripture outline the cross-shape. However, the direction of writing varies, which suggests the scribe might not have had this association in mind. In the alphabet ceremony the letters are written in a diagonal, moving from the top left to bottom right and then from the top right to the bottom left. In the Book of Kells, the writing begins at the top left moves to the crossing point in the middle and then returns up again. Then beginning at the bottom left it moves upwards to the midpoint and then down to the right hand bottom corner. The difference might be the result of the scribe attempting to avoid the awkwardness of overlap which would occur if the text were arranged in the order of the alphabet ceremony.

²² Jennifer O' Reilly, "The Book of Kells," 109.

The script, layout and display text of the Book of Kells indicate a unique approach to word and image where legibility is often sacrificed in favor of visual perfection. The script although illegible has a striking visual clarity. Its decoration and layout allows the viewer, even from a distance, to recognize the significance of certain key passages and phrases. This would only make sense if the Book of Kells was displayed on the altar. As has been shown, it is highly unlikely that the manuscript was ever read aloud; and yet, it is obviously a liturgical book. The most likely explanation is that the manuscript was displayed upon the altar where, even if the majority of the text would be illegible to much of the congregation, it would be visible to the clergy closest to the altar. Although the size of the oratory cannot be established with any certainty, in even the largest of churches, those nearest the altar would be able to have a clear view of the manuscript.²³ As they would most likely be the most senior members of the community, they would be the best educated.²⁴ The deacon could proceed to read from a lectionary or smaller gospel book, leaving the Book of Kells on the altar next to the chalice.²⁵ Such lectionaries were available as evidenced by the fragment now housed in the Durham Cathedral library thought to have originated in eighth-century Northumbria.²⁶ Additionally, the binding used by Irish scribes would

²³ Both archaeological and textual evidence suggest that many large, monastic communities such as Clonmacnois simply added small oratories rather than building a larger church as their populations grew. Maire and Liam de Paor, 54. Equally there is evidence of large buildings. The church on Iona appears to be large enough for the entire community to attend and elsewhere an annal describes 260 people burnt in a church by the Vikings. Aidan MacDonald, "Adomnán's Monastery of Iona," in Bourke, *Studies*, 30 and Ann Hamlin, "The Archaeology of the Irish Church in the Eighth Century," *Peritia* 4 (1985): 285.

²⁴ The Irish had a clear sense of protocol as to where one stood in the church. Cogitus emphasizes this hierarchical separation, "and thus in one very great temple, a multitude of people, in different order and ranks, and sex and situation, separated by partitions." F. E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1881), 90. The Irish addition in the Stowe Missal exhibits a similar distinction of ranks. The communion is arranged into the shape of a cross, with the most senior members receiving the superior parts of the cross. George F. Warner, ed., *The Stowe Missal: ms. D. II. 3 in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin*, vol. 2 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1906-15), 42.

²⁵ Joseph Jungmann, *The Mass of the Sacred Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, trans. Francis A. Brunner (London: Burns and Oates, 1951), 284.

²⁶ Durham Cathedral Library A. IV.19 (pp. 177-78). Lowe, 10.

have enabled manuscripts even larger than the Book of Kells to lie flat.²⁷ What was heard audibly would have been understood visually, whether or not the whole text could be read.

Augustine describes the words and teachings of Christ as the visible husk of the grape containing the wine of knowledge.²⁸ The text and images of the Book of Kells remind the congregation of this. The act of looking at the letters of the holy script, even if illegible, would protect and reassure the reader of salvation. Isidore, pointed out that certain letters have mystical signification.²⁹ The historical evidence shows some indication of an Irish belief in the apotropopaic qualities of script. Adomnán cites the miraculous effects rendered by Columba's handwriting in eight different instances of his *vitae*.³⁰ The alphabet ceremony, in which the alphabet was written in ash over the floor during the sanctification of a church site, also suggests an association with letters and protection or sanctity.³¹ The evidence indicates that letters, as well as words, were imbued with power.

²⁷ Gatherings were sewn onto thongs and laced onto a wooden board that was flush with the edge of the leaves. Spines were neither glued nor covered. O'Neill, 78.

²⁸ Augustine, *Saint Augustine: Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, Philip Schaff ed., A. Cleveland Coxe, trans., Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, vol. 8 (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1894), 28. *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Ps. VIII.2 CCSL 38, 50.

²⁹ Robert E. McNally, *The Bible in the Early Middle Ages*, Scholars Reprints and Translation Series (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1959; Reprint, Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1986), 52.

³⁰ McNamara, "Psalter Text," 212.

³¹ For a description of the ceremony see Herbert Thurston, "The Alphabet and the Consecration of Churches," *The Month* 552 (1910): 621-631.

Chapter Two

Word and Image: The Decorated Initials and Minor Decoration

Like the script and layout of text, the manuscript's decorated initials and minor decoration make it difficult to distinguish word from image. Much of the minor imagery indicates omissions in the text, acting in a manner more appropriate to punctuation than imagery. The decorated initials, on the other hand, prevent the eye from moving smoothly across the text. Instead they guide the eye, illustrate and comment upon the text or react emotionally to its content. In some places, they highlight the significance of the text, often by looking towards a related passage elsewhere on the folio or on the facing folio. In other instances, especially in passages concerning the Passion, the Last Days or Judgment, they react to its content, tumbling out of control, biting their paws or pulling their hair. Less frequently, the decorated initials and minor decoration illustrate the text. Otto Pächt first noted the ease with which decoration and text interacted in early Insular manuscripts, suggesting that the spiraling and dynamic element of Insular decoration introduced great flexibility and enabled the decorated initials to flow easily into script.¹ This Insular characteristic of merging decorated initials into the script possibly explains the close interaction of decorated initials with the text of the Book of Kells, however; the relationship goes well beyond one of visible semblance to the point where word and image function in the same way; both communicate the sense of the text.

The use of zoomorphic and figurative initials introduces immediately an element of interaction between word and image, as the letters are formed by imagery, whether of animals, beasts or even human figures. Moreover, these interact with the smaller script, often biting and grasping letters. This

¹ Otto Pächt, *Book Illumination in the Middle Ages: An Introduction* (London: Harvey Miller, 1986), 65.

level of interaction is somewhat unremarkable, even expected. The use of animals and humans biting or gripping letters to link them together is a natural development in Insular art. It occurs in the so-called Cathach of St. Columba, dated to the early seventh century, where line-play combined with the diminution of initials introduces an ambiguity between word and image.² Nowhere in Insular art, however, are decorated initials so prevalent and consistent. The Lindisfarne Gospels, an equally luxurious manuscript, contains a similar number of decorated initials, but these are extremely limited in scope. Despite the sophistication of their execution, they lack any variation or detail. Indeed, the initials divide into two basic categories, decorated initials with whorls and those without (Ills. 11).³ The Book of Durrow has only a few decorated initials, limited in quality and isolated to the twenty prefatory folios. The Echternach Gospels contain a small number of decorated initials throughout its text. With the exception of folio 17r, where an initial is shaped like a duck, only an orange outline distinguishes the decorated initials from the rest of the text.⁴ The decorated initials of St. Gall Codex 51 also run throughout the text, the majority lacking any significant decoration, distinguished only by size and color. Two exceptions do occur: on page 15 the P of the *Pater Noster* terminates with a small bearded face with spiral hair and at the beginning of the second chapter of Luke, page 134, where the FA of *Factum* also terminates with a small, human head. Other Insular gospel books have similarly limited types of decorated initials, with the exception of the Trier Gospels. Like Kells, Trier contains an extensive system of decorated initials, including a small number of human heads and figures as well as multiple quadrupeds. However, unlike Kells, the majority

² Carl Nordenfalk, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting: Book Illumination in the British Isles 600-800*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1977), 13-14. For information as to the date and provenance of the Cathach see Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, 28-29.

³ T. D. Kendrick, et. al., eds., *Evangeliorum Quattuor Codex Lindisfarnensis*, commentary volume (Bern: Olten and Lausanne, 1956-1960), 77.

⁴ Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, 42.

of these initials show a strong Merovingian influence, consisting of numerous fish-bird combinations.⁵ The decorated initials that are more Insular in style are awkward and copied without understanding (Ills. 12).⁶ The St. Gall Priscian, Book of Armagh and Leiden Priscian have more sophisticated initials, but these are restricted to six or seven in number (Ills. 13).⁷

The decorated initials of the Book of Kells, however, on the other hand occupy the majority of the pages of text, including its prefatory material. All of the initials are of outstanding quality and infinitely varied. Text and image interact in a variety of ways. Almost half of the decorated initials are formed by animals. In the most common design, the heads or limbs of an animal erupt from the letter of text. On folio 90v, the T of *Tunc* is written in the black ink common to the rest of the script (Ills. 14a). The left end of the bar of the T terminates in a small, painted beast head. This type of termination can be seen as a direct descendent of the decoration of the Cathach. In Kells the distinction between the image of the beast head and script is blurred. The letter itself often takes the place of the beast's body. In most cases, this is emphasized by painting the letter the same color as the rest of the beast. An example of this occurs on folio 91r, where the horizontal bar of a T takes on the role of an upper torso (Ills. 14b). The letter is colored blue and green, matching the beast's lower body. Elsewhere, even this much "signposting" is unnecessary. The horizontal bar of the T discussed on folio

⁵ It has been suggested that two artists worked on the Trier Gospels, one trained in the Insular style, the other Merovingian; however, the Insular type initials in Trier are awkwardly rendered and appear to have been executed by the Merovingian scribe. The Insular scribe's work is confined to the incipit initials and illustrations. Nancy Netzer, *Cultural Interplay in the Eighth Century: The Trier Gospels and the Making of the Scriptorium at Echternach*, Cistercian Studies in Paleography and Codicology 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 45-55.

⁶ For a more detailed discussion of the nature of Trier's decorative program see chapter three.

⁷ These manuscripts, with the exception of the Book of Armagh, were examined, but the meaning of the initials, if there is any, remains to be established, as does the sources for the decorated initials of this period. It is hoped that this thesis will provide the starting point for such an examination by demonstrating how these initials function. Because of the complexity of the Book of Kells images, interaction between word and initial and the number of decorated initials, it was necessary to concentrate solely upon the question at hand, that is the role of the decorated initial within the manuscript's articulation of its own function.

90v has not only a beast's head, but a barbed tail at its other terminus. The black letter itself acts as a substitute body (Ills. 14a). The signals denoting "beast" have been reduced to their bare minimum, tail and head, and through association the letter takes on the role of the body, although it remains merely script. The border between letter and image, even at this basic level, is disintegrated.

Elsewhere, the imagery is expanded beyond the mere form of the initial. Birds and animals independent of the initial shape are captured or contained by the creatures that form the initial.⁸ In this manner, the ornamented initial interacts with an independent image, either a beast, or more commonly a bird. Such is the case on folio 82r, where a beast forming the *et* monogram grapples with a large bird intertwined within the letter (Ills. 15). The independent image is firmly woven within the pictorial space of the letter. Elsewhere, beasts are entangled by an initial decorated only with color. On folio 44r, the E beginning the word *ego* is formed by a human figure, who struggles with the letter G, which does not have a body as such, but simply a head, which bites the man in response (Ills. 16). The human figure responds by clutching the bottom section of the G and biting the top bar. Throughout the manuscript, letters are treated as objects placed within the equivalent visual field of the images. They are physical entities, which the creatures and human figures sit on, bite, fight or are held captive by. In visual terms, they have substance.

While in some places, the animals "sit" on letters, in others human figures are entrapped by the shape of the letter. A similar level of interaction occurs in manuscripts associated with the Armagh scriptorium, however, unlike the Book of Kells, these manuscripts contain only one or two of this

⁸ See the first column of appendices C1, D and E.

type of initial (Ills. 13).⁹ Uniquely, Kells employs the structure of the letters so as to add to the meaning of the text. On folio 67r a cat sits upon the left-hand serif of the U of “uos autem” in the Parable of the Sower (Ills. 104). A colorful bird sits on the right-hand serif with its legs tucked up underneath its body. A man bites his own hair, while tugging his foot over his shoulder. This contorted and confused figure is trapped within the bow of the U that forces him into this twisted posture, holding his head in his hand, chewing on his hair, and pulling his own leg. As will be shown later in the thesis, the man represents the confusion of a figure trapped by his own ignorance, unable to understand the teachings of Christ.¹⁰ Suffice to note the way in which the letter is incorporated into the image of the man’s entrapment.

Throughout Kells, there is a consistent yet varied interaction between word and image. Often, decoration takes on the function of punctuation.¹¹ On folio 40r the scribe has written, “Et abiit opinio eius insi totam siri [am et obtule] runt ei omnes male habentes uaris languoribus et tormentis comprehensos et qui demonia habebant (Matthew 4:24).” He has forgotten to add, or been unable to add for reasons of space, the AM in *Siriam* as well as the *et* and first three syllables of *obtulerunt*. Above the verse, a lion stands on the words *opinio eius* (Ills. 17). The lion, standing on its hind legs, reaches up and over towards the letters of text *am et obtule* that have been inserted in the space above. Its front claws are extended, capturing the missing text. The lion is executed lightly in brown ink similar to that of the script. This suggests that the lion is the work of the scribe as does the manner

⁹ St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex 904 and Leiden, University Library, MS B. P. L 67 are both associated with the Armagh scriptorium. Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, 82 and 85. Both manuscripts contain similar images of animals sitting on letters.

¹⁰ This interpretation disagrees somewhat from previous discussions of this figure. See chapter five for a full discussion of its meaning.

¹¹ Françoise Henry first suggested this, pointing out that instead of using “the usual single or double slanting stroke” to indicate the missing line such as used in other Insular texts, “a whole crowd of little figures or animals gesticulates directions to the readers.” Henry, *Book of Kells*, 157.

in which the lion fits so snugly into the empty space and text of the page with no visible overlap.

A similar lion reaches up on folio 61r to capture the text “patrem quisquam” that has been relocated from Matthew 11:27, “Omnia mihi tradita sunt a Patre meo et nemo nouit Filium nisi Pater neq: [patrem quisquam] nouit nisi Filius et cui uoluerit filius reuelare.” The pose and delicate penwork resemble the lion of folio 40r; however, the paw of one hind leg has been bent back so as to fit in above the word *nouit*, indicating in this instance that the main text was written before the correctional decoration as well as suggesting that the scribe began drawing at the top of the lion, working his way down. This suggests that the scribe who entered the correction completed the lion. This would seem to be an obvious point; however, Henry suggests that some of these small creatures were placed on the folio page before the text, “The use of what the Irish scribes call ‘turn-in-the-path’ . . . becomes in the Book a sort of game . . . ends of lines are thrown up or down, as is convenient.”¹² In other words, the majority of the so-called “corrections” were executed before any mistakes could be made, and therefore, both correction and mistake had to be intentional and planned well in advance.

On folio 71r, a quadruped sits above a verse and extends its foreleg towards the missing section, “filia herodiadis (Ills. 18).” On folio 71v, *cesse ire da* has been omitted (Ills. 19). The beast sits above the verse with the missing phrase, looking down and back over its body to where the omitted text belongs at the beginning of the third line, between *non habent nec* and *te illi uos*. The viewer, following the gaze of the lion, spots the missing text. Similar corrections occur throughout the script. In some instances animals indicate the end of a verse, such as on folio 92v where a small cat curled into

¹² Ibid.

a ball marks the end of Matthew 21:23. More commonly, beasts apprehend missing phrases or letters, but in every instance the animal's posture and body shape reacts to its task in an almost naturalistic fashion. Quadrupeds point or leap up to "catch" missing phrases, while serpents and fish encircle a word so as to link it and its missing letters inextricably together.¹³ Often, image takes on the form of abbreviation, usually when the scribe utilizes the IHS abbreviation.¹⁴ Sometimes, this is completed in the traditional manner, with a very thin stroke over the IHS, such as found on folios 62v and 63r. Elsewhere, the abbreviation has been replaced by a fish, such as found on folios 70v and 87r. Image once again functions as punctuation. Here, however, the image flirts with meaning, making a visual reference to Christ's name.

As early as 1974, Francoise Henry suggested that "very few" of the marginal images in the Book of Kells "seem to have a close connection to the corresponding text."¹⁵ While the supposition that the decorated initials and marginal imagery are not just random ornament has become more acceptable to some, the recent facsimile commentary dismisses the notion of meaning in the margins. J. J. G. Alexander, referring to Henry's interpretation of the marginal imagery of the Parable of the Sower, writes, "But even if this at best tenuous link were accepted, it seems unlikely that in every case they have some specific connection with the text, still less any more complex or theologically inspired meaning."¹⁶ Indeed, in the Book of Kells, the decorated initials and marginal illustrations rarely illustrate the text in the traditional manner, but rather act more like the initials of Lindisfarne, controlling the reader's gaze and directing it to specific sections of script. Unlike Lindisfarne, the manner in which this is achieved, is highly complex

¹³ Folio 52v. A serpent/eel surrounds the word *fretai* and its inserted T.

¹⁴ Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 50.

¹⁵ Henry, *Book of Kells*, 174.

¹⁶ J. J. G. Alexander, Fox, 285.

and independent of liturgical demands. In Kells, the imagery comments on the text, pushing the eye along the page and stopping it at significant passages, provoking specific responses in the reader.

The illustrative aspect of the initials and marginal decoration can be seen in two, brief examples. This type of illustration occurs on folio 48r (Ills. 20).¹⁷ The folio contains the text of Matthew 7:7-11, the third section of the Sermon on the Mount:

Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or, what man is here among you, of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or, if he shall ask him a fish, will he reach him a serpent? If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Above the the lines of text, a large, sleek mouse with a piece of cheese or bread in its mouth, leaps directly in front of a plump, striped cat. Suzanne Lewis suggests that the object carried by the mouse is bread and therefore underlines the Eucharistic aspect of "if his son ask for bread."¹⁸ This aspect of the decoration will be discussed in chapter seven; however, it must be noted that the "eucharistic bread" is neither white nor does it have any sign of a cross as is the case with the white disk in the Chi Rho page that is thought to represent the Eucharist (Ills. 59).

Moreover, at the end of the text, a lean hound reaches out and strikes at a white hare. The presence of the hound introduces an unarguably domestic note to the decoration. The relation to the text is clear, if not direct. The hound has its appropriate desire, a large hare. The mouse has its fondest wish, a piece of bread or cheese. The cat also has his appropriate gift, a sleek mouse. Each creature has its appropriate food. The scribe could have

¹⁷ Henry finds three examples of this type of illustration in the manuscript. Henry, *Book of Kells*, 174. Henry makes no mention of the example cited but does reproduce the detail.

¹⁸ Lewis, 151.

interpreted this passage directly, with the image of a fish or a serpent, two favorite designs, but as always, the artist avoids direct interpretation, and instead embroiders on the text, in this instance with irony and humor. The mouse has what it desires, the cat has its wish; however, the reader must pause and question, whatever is to become of the mouse and his cheese. Possibly, the subtle humor makes an ironic comment upon the fulfillment of earthly desire. Certainly Augustine's sermon on the passage repeatedly warns against asking for such material goods like eggs and wheat, warning that although good in themselves, they cannot make their owners good. He concludes by suggesting that in order to focus upon seeking God and salvation, man should avoid indulging in and desiring rich foods. The illustration of the hound pursuing a hare, and the merry chase of the cat, the mouse and the cheese reflect these wanton desires, avoided by the conscientious inhabitants of the monastery.¹⁹

Another, more simple illustration occurs on folio 46r (Ills. 21). A large, oddly-shaped creature begins Matthew 6:22, "The light of thy body is thy eye. If the eye be single, the whole body shall be lightsome." The initial is an L, the first letter in the word *Lucerna*, or light. The letter L rarely occurs as a decorated initial in the manuscript, which in itself makes the initial somewhat noticeable. Most remarkable is the coloring of the beast. Its neck and lower body are colored bright blue. Its torso, however, has not been colored in. Instead, the scribe has placed a series of undulating diagonal lines across its body. No where else does this type of thing occur within the decorated initials; however, similar lines are found within the brightly colored

¹⁹ *Saint Augustin: Sermon on the Mount. Harmony on the Gospels. Homilies on the Gospels*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. William Findlay, S. D. F. Salmond and R. G. MacMullen, the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, first series, vol. 6 (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1988), 294-98. *Sermones de Scripturis*, Sermon 61, PL 38, 409-14. The eating and drinking habits of the Columban monasteries were severely regulated. Rules describe to the letter what could or could not be eaten or drunk. The majority of monks were vegetarian and intake of dairy products was limited. Although rules vary, the severely restricted diet is common to most rules. See Uiseann Ó Maidin, *The Celtic Monk: Rules and Writing of the Early Irish Monks*, Cistercian Studies Series 162 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1996).

circle that surrounds the figure at the top of the canon table on folio 3r (Ills. 123b) and behind the figure identified as the Logos “enthroned in light” on folio 292r (Ills. 22).²⁰ A similarly undulating line surrounds the head of Christ in the Durham Crucifixion (Ills. 2). The only possible explanation for the presence of the same lines on the body of the beast on folio 46r is that they were intended to represent “the light of the body.” The L of *lucerna* directly illustrates the word that it illuminates. Word-illustration, previously thought of as the special provenance of Gothic manuscripts, is clearly manifest in the Book of Kells.²¹

More prevalent than this sort of literal illustration are decorated initials that appear to react to the content of the text. The initials act as a type of chorus, responding to the text in front of them. Francoise Henry hinted at this in 1974, suggesting that the initials might relate to the text “as music does to the words of a song.”²² Henry’s comment has been repeated but never explored, verified or refuted. No one has pointed out the extent to which the initials react to the text that they decorate or remarked upon the unusual function. Possibly, this is because it is such a unique and subjective function, difficult to prove or catalogue; yet, nonetheless scholars familiar with the manuscript’s decorated initials seem to accept Henry’s statement. This role of the initials can be seen as an extension of their role as punctuation; acting as parenthesis and full stops. Turn-in-the-paths stop the eye or alternatively point out inserted phrases and words. Initials perform a similar function. One of the most effective examples of this is found on folio 90v (Ills. 14a). The beast which forms the decorated initial H responds to the passage which it

²⁰ Henry, *Book of Kells*, 204.

²¹ Papers presented at a Symposium on Medieval Illustration of the Psalms held at the University of St. Andrews 16-17 May 1997 indicate the growing interest in early, word-illustration in medieval studies, specifically that of William Noel on “The Visual Syntax of the Utrecht Psalter” and Bernard Meehan on “The Book of Kells and the Corbie Psalter.” William Noel’s article will be presented in a forthcoming publication on the conference. Bernard Meehan’s paper will appear as an article in *The Transmission of Learning to Ireland*, eds. Toby Barnard, Dáibhi Cróinín, and Katherine Simms. Forthcoming.

²² Francoise Henry, *Book of Kells*, 175.

decorates, Matthew 21:4-5, "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying: *Tell ye the daughter of Sion Behold thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass.*"

Typically, beasts forming the letter H look to the left or right. In this instance, the scribe has departed from the normal formula. The beast looks upwards. Its neck, torso, legs, head and eyes form a taunt, elegant line pointing without deviation to the upper portion of the page. But why this deviation? What is it looking at? The beast looks upwards, to the passage of text above and the beast head which decorates it. The passage, Matthew 21.1-3, describes Christ's entrance to Jerusalem. The beast, in looking to this passage, looks literally towards the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophesy that the king would come upon an ass. The promise of the Old Testament which it decorates, Matthew 21:5, has been made flesh. The viewer following the gaze of the creature also looks up to the word fulfilled. The decorated initials direct the gaze of the viewer, underlying the significance of the script as the visible shell of prophecy fulfilled, the New Testament.

Many of the decorated initials react to the text, guiding the reader in much the same manner as an exclamation or question mark signals to the modern reader that a statement is exciting, questionable or authoritatively stated. Henry noted that in the decoration of the Passion text the proportion of elongated animals was high, "and a sort of anguished feeling grows out of their constant agitation."²³ This type of emotional response to the text, however, occurs throughout the manuscript. One of the most striking instances of this is in Matthew 24, the Signs of the End of the Age. The initials reach a great height. Large amounts of black ink replaces the bright color used in other pages (Ills. 9). This combination creates a desolate page. Most interesting, is initial E of *erit enim*, which begins Matthew 24:21 (Ills.

²³ Ibid.

24b). The verse describes the unimaginable terror of the last days, "For there shall be great tribulation, such hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be." The beast which forms the initial reacts to the text it illustrates. Its mouth is drawn back in fear, its ears forward as if cowering. It tumbles out of control, legs in the air, arms dangling, head-first into the horror which is described. This creature is unique in Kells. Only one other inverted animal occurs on folio 121v, where the verse, Matthew 27:20, describes mankind's betrayal of Christ.

Another example of this type are the two beasts in the compound *ID* initial, which begins the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant cited in Matthew 18:23-35 on folio 83v (Ills. 25). The parable describes a king who is piteous at first, but will eventually demand payment from the unjust, "And his lord being angry, delivered him to the tortures until he paid all the debt." At the end of the parable, Christ warns, "So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one of his brothers from your hearts." The two beasts form the initial that begins the parable, Matthew 18:23. The initials look away from the text, biting their paws in fear.²⁴ The anthropomorphic gestures of these animals occur throughout the manuscript.

One of the more dramatic initials is that on folio 101v (Ills. 26a). Here, a long quadruped stretches along and above the verse, Matthew 23:34, "Therefore behold I send to you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them you will put to death and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues." What is of note is the creature's pose. It is long and thin, as if pressing itself along the ground in the manner of an animal that is about to be beaten. Its paws are raised over its head as if to cover its eyes that look upward in fear at the decorated initial and verse above it, Matthew 23:33, "You serpents! You generation of vipers! How will you flee from the

²⁴ Paw biting in the decorated initials is infrequent, but when it does occur it is carefully articulated by the artist with great emphasis. See Bernard Meehan, "The Book of Kells and the Corbie Psalter."

judgment of hell?" The small head, under the letter O, that emerges from the *et* monogram that begins the verse gazes directly back at the cowering creature below. The visual link between the two initials connects the two verses. The action and the punishment; the sin and the retribution. On the opposite folio, another, large decorated initial gives further emphasis to the passage (Ills. 26b). The initial decorates the verse, Matthew 22:37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets . . . how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not." The quadruped that forms the initial does not face the verse that it decorates, but looks instead to the opposite page, to the passage describing the certainty of hell. All three beast initials turn to face the text, from three different directions. Both folios and their initials underline the passage that so clearly sets out the nature of hell and judgment.

The creatures react to the text, look up and down the margins, pointing and gesturing to passages like a tragic chorus. Two aspects of the gospel text are repeatedly highlighted, the Passion and Judgment. As chapter four will demonstrate, it is in Christ's Passion and Judgment that man comes to recognize and know Christ for who and what he is. The manner in which the initials react to the Passion, alerts the viewer to the content of the text and heightens the drama of the reading. The emotional tone of the decoration, although not generally associated with Insular art, is unsurprising. Both it and the anthropomorphic gestures of the creatures that form the decoration can be understood within the context of the historical and liturgical evidence.

Martin Werner argues that the prayers of the Book of Cerne suggest a familiarity with the Veneration of the Cross liturgy. In this ceremony, the role of the cross as a witness to the Crucifixion is highlighted while the Passion is re-enacted. The savior reproaches the Jews while the priest and

choir respond as a type of tragic chorus.²⁵ In the Book of Kells, the decorated initials perform the same role as the priest and choir. Another example of an emotional reaction to the gospel events can be found in the margins of the Book of Armagh, folio 38r. The scribe writing, "Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him," interrupts his copying to insert the word "wretch" in the margins. The interruption indicates that the scribes did not copy passively, and that the passages before them prompted sincere and immediate emotional responses.²⁶

Images also provoked similar responses. Carved onto the Ruthwell cross is a small section of the "Dream of the Rood" poem. In the early Anglo-Saxon poem, it is not an animal that is anthropomorphized, but the cross itself. In the Ruthwell version, in what Ó Carragáin refers to as the third sententia, the cross reacts to Christ's suffering, "Christ was on the Cross. But eager ones came thither from afar, the noble ones [came] together. I looked upon all that: I was terribly afflicted with sorrows."²⁷ By placing a poem spoken by a cross on the stone cross, the carved stone itself seems to speak. The connection between looking and responding with emotion is made explicit: "I looked upon all that" is followed directly by "I was terribly afflicted with sorrows."

To the modern eye, no image could be less likely to provoke a sympathetic response than the Crucifixion illustration in the Durham Gospels (Ills. 2). Christ stares out at the viewer, as do the flanking angels. All three figures are directly frontal. Christ is fully dressed, eyes open, his halo is an undulating line of bright yellow. The colors have an hallucinogenic quality--acid green, yellow and orange. At the top of the page, directly to the right of the image the scribe has written, "Auctorem mortis deiciens, uitam nostram

²⁵ Ibid., 189.

²⁶ Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), 202.

²⁷ Éamon Ó Carragáin, "The Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem in its Iconographic and Liturgical Contexts," *Peritia* 6-7 (1987-88): 16.

retituens si tamen compatiamur." The invocation that "if only we have compassion" directly above the crucifixion illustration indicates that the image was used as a guide for meditating upon the sufferings of Christ.²⁸ Additionally, the verse points specifically to the link between having compassion and salvation.

As well as the Passion, the decorated initials react emotionally to descriptions of Judgment, with its connotations of eternal reward and damnation. That such dramatic descriptions of would provoke an emotional response is unsurprising. Indeed, this type of response was encouraged, in the hope of inducing proper behavior. Gregory warns in his commentary on the Lucan Signs of the End of the Age, "Dearly beloved, keep that day before your eyes, and whatever you now believe to be burdensome will be light in comparison with it."²⁹ By looking at the decorated gospel account, the congregation would indeed keep that day before their eyes, as the gestures and gaze of the agitated creatures clearly express its dreadful nature.

The use of animals as a type of zoomorphic chorus, commenting on the gospel story, is certainly unusual as are their anthropomorphic gestures of despair. But so is the use of animals as punctuation. Jan Ziolkowski, when reviewing early Christian literature on beasts notes two distinct views, "the one either theocentric or anthropocentric and dismissive of animals, the other anthropomorphic and inclined to humanize animals."³⁰ A superficial examination of Irish literature and art demonstrates that the early Irish Church aligned itself with the latter view. Animal stories are an essential part of both continental and Irish saints' lives but are much more evident in the latter.³¹

²⁸ Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, 41.

²⁹ Gregory the Great, *Forty Gospel Homilies*, trans. David Hurst, Cistercian Studies 123 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1990), 19. *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia*, Hom. I.6, "Illum egro diem, fratres charissimi, ante oculus ponite, et quidquid modo grave creditur in eius comparatione leuigatur," *PL* 76, 1081.

³⁰ Jan M. Ziolkowski, *Talking Animals: Medieval Latin Beast Poetry, 750-1155* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 32.

³¹ Jean Michel Picard, "The Marvellous in Irish and Continental Saints' Lives of the Merovingian Period," in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, eds., H. B. Clarke and

The Book of Kells and the Book of Durrow are unusual in giving the evangelists human characteristics. Martin Werner points to the awkward and unusually upright posture of the lion and the ox as an example of the anthropomorphic tendencies in the Book of Durrow.³² In the Book of Kells, this tendency is even more pronounced, as the animal symbols are both upright and have human arms, which carry books.³³

Irish voyage poems and saints lives also include beasts exhibiting anthropomorphic tendencies. One of the best known instances of anthropomorphized behavior makes its first appearance in the Voyage of Snedgus.³⁴ The story tells of a group of Psalm-singing birds that sit listening to a great bird that tells the story of Creation, the Nativity, Passion and the Resurrection, "And then he tells tidings of Doom; and then all the birds used to beat their sides with their wings, so that showers of blood dropt out of their sides for dread of the tidings of doom."³⁵ The birds react as humans, and the

Mary Brennan. BAR International Series 113 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1981), 98.

³² Martin Werner, "The Four Evangelist Symbols Page in the Book of Durrow," *Gesta* 8 (1969): 6-7.

³³ George Henderson disagrees with Werner, stating that the Book of Kells folio is the only genuine Insular example of this type. Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells*, 131. It must be pointed out that a continental manuscript, the Gellone Sacramentary, has similar anthropomorphic symbols. Henry, *Book of Kells*, 198.

³⁴ Whitley Stokes, ed. and trans., "Imram Snedghusa agus Mic Rialga," *Revue celtique* 9 (1888): 14-25. The story of the birds listening to the gospel occurs in several voyage poems. Stokes dates the poem to the mid-seventh century, although Kenney places the poem within the ninth or even tenth century. Kenney, 447-48.

³⁵ C. S. Boswell, *An Irish Precursor of Dante: A Study on the Vision of Heaven and Hell ascribed to the Eighth-century Irish Saint Adamnán, with Translation of the Irish Text* (London: David Nutt, 1908), 163. The majority of voyage tales containing versions of the tale describing birds listening to the tale of Passion and Doomsday are dated from the ninth and tenth centuries; however, sources suggest the Irish would have been familiar with the apocryphal story of Enoch and Elias at an early date. The St. Gall manuscript MS 908, from the eighth or ninth century indicates Irish scriptoria had access to and made use of apocryphal lore. Máire Herbert and Martin McNamara, *Irish Biblical Apocrypha* (T. & T. Clark, 1989), xxi. Charles Wright cites the Irish characteristics within the manuscript including vocabulary, themes, style and similarities to the *Catechesis celtica*. Wright, 124. Robert E. McNally also argues for the Irish familiarity and acceptance of the Apocrypha through an analysis of their exegetical writings. McNally, 27. In an eleventh century rendering of the story, Elijah preaches "with gospel book in hand to the birds," the birds continue eating from the tree of life until Elijah opens the book. At this point the birds "pressed their wings and feet to their bodies, and stirred neither wing nor foot until the sermon ended." Máire Herbert and Martin McNamara, 19. It is not suggested here that the story directly influenced the Book of Kells scribes, but simply that they could conceptualize animals in this manner.

description of them as Psalm-singing suggests an identification with clerics or educated nobles. The birds act as substitutes for the human audience, showing the proper response to such sad tales.

The saints lives also depict animals responding in an emotional manner. Saints communicated easily and frequently with animals. Dallan Forgaill, a contemporary of Columba writes, "Columcille understood the voice of the birds of the air and the beasts of the sea."³⁶ Most frequently, however, the animals take on the role as emotional chorus. At the death of St. Molua, described in the *Martyrology of Oengus*, the birds mourned and "all living creatures bewail him. . . not more do men bewail him than the other animals, and the little bird thou beholdest."³⁷ Similarly according to Adomnán, Columba's horse burst into tears at the sad news of the saint's death.³⁸ "The Wonders on the Night of Christ's birth," which dates from the eleventh century, is worth mentioning despite its late date because of its explicit brief on the reason for these emotional animals. It describes animals on the night of the Nativity singing with the angels, "The beasts and the brute animals . . . were praising the creator in the presence of the hosts." The narrator goes on to admonish, "when the brute, unthinking animals adored the savior, it behooves human beings to give him increasing praise forever."³⁹

Clearly, in the literature, animals react to the tragedy of the Passion and glory of the Incarnation in a manner humans are meant to imitate. Their role as heralds or tragic chorus stems ultimately from Biblical sources such as

³⁶ Sr. Mary Donatus, "Beasts and Birds in the Lives of the Early Irish Saints" (Ph.D. diss., University of Philadelphia, 1934), 182.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 162. The Martyrology is taken from ten manuscripts ranging in date and provenance, indicating the Martyrology was well known. Stokes suggests its language indicates that it dates from the Old Irish period, sometime between the seventh and ninth centuries. Oengus the Culdee, *The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee (Féilire Óengusso Céili Dé)*, ed. and trans. Whitley Stokes (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1905), viii-xxxviii.

³⁸ Adomnán, *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, Alan Orr Anderson and Margorie Ogilvie Anderson, eds., revised by Majorie Ogilvie Anderson. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 222-23.

³⁹ Herbert and McNamara, 34. For its date see Martin McNamara, *Apocrypha in the Irish Church* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1975), 49.

Revelations 5:12-14, "The lamb that was slain is worthy And every creature, which is in heaven, and on the earth and under the earth I heard all saying: To him that sitteth on the throne . . . glory and power." It is unsurprising, although certainly unique, to find animals fulfilling a similar role in the manuscript. Equally, in the literature of the saints lives, animals are often shown pointing the way, either to food or more frequently, sacred sites.⁴⁰ In such a context, it is less surprising that images of animals perform a similar function in the manuscript.

The decorated initials, in conjunction with the layout, calligraphy, and illustrations of Kells guide the readership of the text. The scribe makes little distinction between the image and the text. Emphasis is given through any combination of factors including the style and layout of the script, the decorated initials, prevalence of color, illustrations on the opposite folio and interlinear and marginal decoration. In the modern sense of the word, the Book of Kells is illegible. Its gospel text is constantly interrupted by imagery, decoration and contains artificial "corrections" while other places lack needed corrections. Upon closer examination, however, these factors communicate more clearly the sense of the text as the scribe perceived it. Certain passages are given specific emphasis and stand out from the rest of the text. Just as the artist of Kells added interpretive meaning into the images of the Temptation and Arrest that go beyond the narrative, so the scribe arranged and decorated the script so that the text reflected meaning beyond its narrative flow.

Although some patterns do occur, the decoration cannot be described as systematic, and rarely occurs where expected.⁴¹ The *Pater Noster*, although illustrated with the largest decorated initial found on a text page of Kells, is formed by two lions rather than a figure or head of Christ as might be expected, as found in the St. Gall Codex 51. Similarly inexplicable

⁴⁰ For a review, see Donatus, 91, 109, 155 and 160.

⁴¹ Henry, *Book of Kells*, 174.

decoration occurs in other notable passages of text. The Beatitudes are marked by a decorative chain of initials, four of which terminate in bearded heads and booted feet, while the other four take on the form of twisted quadrupeds (Ills. 8). Despite this variation, the initials are identical. The scribe makes no distinction between the depiction of man and beast, and no such imagery is called for in the Beatitude text. This decoration merely points to the significance of the passage, but not its meaning. One possibility that has been suggested and cannot be dismissed immediately is that there is absolutely no pattern or design whatsoever.⁴² Possibly, the scribe simply took more time in the decoration of a certain page without cause or reason. Certainly, folio 48r, contains an abundance of fine, delicate decoration as well as its cat and mouse ornament (Ills. 20). The decorated O at the bottom of the page contains a small, frontal angel with its arms outstretched.⁴³ The flowers at the end of the passage are especially delicate, with their acanthus-like curves. The hair of the hound is finely and extensively articulated as is the fur of the mouse.⁴⁴ The unpainted hare has faint decoration over its body.

Simply because the manuscript lacks easily classifiable systems, does not mean that the decoration is accidental. Martin Werner writes, "As regards the issue of analysis of ornament for iconographic meaning, there are those who believe symbolic interpretation to be pointless because unprovable, yet for the reason that so much of the decoration of the Book of Kells is clearly symbolic, there is need to scrutinize ornament for such expression."⁴⁵ Although the decoration is not systematic, its meaning reflects that of the rest of the decorative program. The following chapters will demonstrate the

⁴² Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, 284.

⁴³ The appearance of an angel seems unrelated to the passage, "Omnia quae cum que uultus bona ut faciant uobis homines ita & uos facite eis haec est enim lex et profetae." Possibly, the angel's presence indicates the importance of the commandments of Christ or the writings of the prophets, or even underlines that Christ has come in fulfillment of these prophets.

⁴⁴ The fine hair of the hound is extremely unusual. Of the manuscripts examined, only those associated with the Würzburg scriptorium share this characteristic.

⁴⁵ Werner, "*Crucifixi, Sepulti, Suscitati*," 452.

manner in which the decorated initials, layout and minor decoration echo the same concerns as the full-page images. The decoration emphasizes the role of the gospel book and script as a perceptible and tangible aspect of Christ. In looking at and listening to it, the congregation comes to know Christ. The manner in which word and image operate as a single entity points to the manuscript's function as a visual object, to be held up before the eyes as the visible, accessible aspect of Christ, which will lead the viewer towards him.

Chapter Three

The Decorated Initials: A Rejection of Traditional Function

Because of the manuscript's unusual layout and decoration of the text, the reader cannot approach the manuscript as straight-forward narrative, but instead must interpret the page's many visual signals, such as form, color and shape, so as to fully understand its meaning. This unconventional treatment of text, which contributes significantly to the manuscript's illegibility is also apparent in its use of decorated initials. Instead of clarifying the structure of the gospel book and indicating traditional divisions such as Eusebian sections and liturgical lections, they appear at random in varying shapes and sizes throughout the manuscript. Although the decorated initials have never been examined as a complete system, several hypotheses have been made as to their function. Carol Farr, discussing the decoration at Matthew 4:1-11 in relation to the Temptation page, points to the difficulties inherent in attempting to ascertain the function of decorated initials, citing the variation in decoration within manuscripts and even within the individual gospels, and proposing the possibility that decorated initials serve multiple functions such as marking Eusebian sections, prayers and important Christian maxims "and probably for other purposes as yet undisclosed to the modern eye."¹

The functions cited are those commonly performed by decorated initials, which primarily serve as markers indicating a new section of text whether a new chapter, psalm or book.² In Insular manuscripts such as the

¹ Farr, "Lecture and Interpretation," 157-8. Other difficulties include the number of hands at work, the shifting relationship between scribe and artist, missing and unfinished pages and changes in design. Bernard Meehan suggests that the relationship between the scribe, artist and colorist fluctuated depending upon the scribe. The scribe identified as Hand A, for example, appears not to have participated in the decoration of his folios, whereas Hand D seems to have written and decorated his pages in tandem. Meehan, "The Script," 245-56. Much work remains to be done in terms of isolating the varying hands at work on the script, color and drawing of the manuscript. For further information on hands in the manuscript see Erika Eisenlohr, "The Puzzle of the Scribes: Some Paleographical Observations" in O'Mahony, 196-208 and her table, reproduced as Fig. 1 in this thesis.

² For discussion of the development of the initial see Otto Pächt, 45-128.

Lindisfarne Gospels, decorated initials demarcate chapters, Eusebian sections, the Our Father, Beatitudes, *Magnificat* and possibly lections.³ This is an obvious development from the classical tradition where initials standing outside of the text in a separate and marginal space aided the legibility and clarity of the text.⁴ It has been suggested that initials can be categorized as either "classical" or "anti-classical; medieval," with the former characterized as having an "independent and unvarying" letter form and the latter as having altered and fragmented letter forms.⁵ In such a division, the initials within the Book of Kells obviously belong to the "anti-classical" category. The initials of other Insular manuscripts such as the Lindisfarne Gospels, Durham Gospels and Echternach Gospels, however, do not necessarily qualify.⁶ Although the scribe distorts the initials, they do occur in standardized forms. Alteration for the most part is mere ornamentation, such as a terminal ending in a spiral-shape (Ills. 11). The form of the letter remains relatively unchanged, so that letters are clearly recognizable. Moreover, like "classical" decorated initials, they are quite legible and easily distinguished from the text. The technique of outlining initials in red dots creates a clear boundary between text and initial making each initial clearly independent in much the same manner as "classical" initials are in their marginal spaces. Additionally, the use of color ground completes this separation.

The primary indication that the decorated initials of the Book of Kells do not serve a traditional function is the manner in which they differ from decorated initials in other manuscripts. Other Insular manuscripts delimit decoration, line and color to the initials of the text. This clear visual separation of the initial through color and line facilitates its role as marker. In the Book of Kells color, line and even figurative forms spill into main body of

³ T. J. Brown, "The Nature of the Latin Text," in Kendrick et al., 34-43.

⁴ Pächt, 45-128.

⁵ J. J. G. Alexander, *The Decorated Letter* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 8.

⁶ The term "initials" when used in this thesis refers specifically to decorated initials within the text and not those letters belonging to display script.

text. Additionally, unlike the decorated initials of other manuscripts, the initials vary throughout the folios and do not stand clearly separate from the text, "The classical space in which objects exist with their own identity, is replaced with two-dimensional interlacing space, and so the initials too begin to merge and interlace . . . letters no longer have a separate identity nor are they anchored to a particular spatial context."⁷ The distinction between decorated initial and script is lost. As can be seen on folios 250v and 273r, color, decorative line and form, used with such restraint in classical, Carolingian and early Romanesque manuscripts, occurs throughout the page, including the main body of text. (Ills. 28 and 29).

Additionally, while conventional divisions might dictate the position of the decorated initials in the Book of Kells, they do not explain the extensive nature of the decoration, its variation, its content nor the manner in which it interacts with the text to isolate certain words or meanings. No Insular manuscript contains decorated initials that approach the variety and detail of those in the Book of Kells. Decorated initials vary in size, number, color, content and detail. In this period, only two continental manuscripts, the Corbie Psalter and Gellone Sacramentary, contain a similar variety of initials.⁸ The initials in the Book of Kells form human figures and heads, fish, zoomorphic beasts, birds, serpents, geometrical forms and interlace.⁹

⁷ Alexander, *Decorated Letter*, 9.

⁸ These remarkable manuscripts have received very little art historical study. See Bernard Teyssède, *Le sacramentaire de Gellone: et la figure humaine dans les manuscrits francs du VIIIe siècle: de l'enluminure à l'illustration* (Toulouse: Privat, 1959); J. Desobry, "Le manuscrit 18 de Bibliothèque municipale d'Amiens," in *Techniques narratives au moyen-âge* (Amiens, n.p. 1974), 73-118; U. Kulder, "Die Initialen Amiens 18" (Ph. D. diss., University of Munich, 1977) and Jean Porcher, "L'Évangélaire de Charlemagne et la Psautier d'Amiens," *Revue des Arts* 6 (1957): 51-58. Kulder attempts to isolate the sources for Corbie's initials, the hands at work and the possible meaning of the initials, but on the whole this is a limited and confused study. Desobry's work, on the other hand, although relatively unknown, offers the best introduction to the Corbie initials. See also, Bernard Meehan, "The Book of Kells and the Corbie Psalter," forthcoming. The initials of both manuscripts include figurative imagery, but while Corbie has proven instrumental to the understanding of the Kells imagery, Gellone's initials, as shown in the work of Teyssède, simply illustrate the text. Gellone's initials evidence a strong Byzantine influence and may point to a possible source for the decorated initials of this period.

⁹ P. Meyer, 51. See appendices C, D and E.

Within each of these categories, exist an endless number of poses and arrangements.¹⁰ Decorated initials depict John the Baptist, Christ, God, the damned, beard-pullers and, possibly, Lot's wife.¹¹ Moreover, unlike the Corbie Psalter and Gellone Sacramentary, ornament in the Book of Kells includes marginal images between the lines of text, exaggerated script and variations in layout. Color is not restricted to the domain of the initial, but rather occurs in a superficially random fashion throughout the text.

In places, only one initial may decorate a specific passage or page, and yet capture the eye through its size, color, decoration, relation to other initials or deviation from the norm. The *Pater Noster* on folios 45r to 45v contains only a single decorated initial, yet its size and decoration demarcate the passage from the rest of the Matthew text (Ills. 27). The initial equals almost nine lines of text in length. Two quadrupeds compose the P of the first verse. The beasts have large bodies, with clearly detailed hind legs, tails, manes, ears and heads. Additional decoration includes two flourishes in yellow overlaid with bright red. The combination of colors creates a bright glowing orange-red. The second flourish terminates in a yellow and red rosette. The first flourish transforms into an acrobat signaling the insertion of the phrase, "tur nomen tuum," emphasizing the name of God.

The B of the text on the line above clearly overlaps the flourish. This suggests that the scribe drew the "correction" or turn-in-the-path before writing the verse, as the flourish and acrobat are executed in the same red and yellow pigment. Although the scribe has outlined the acrobat, the undulating line consists only of the red and yellow pigment suggesting its execution was consecutive with the coloring of the acrobat. The text above also overlaps the decorated initial, which is executed in the blue and yellow of the acrobat's costume and hair. The similar color palette and the overlaps proves the

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Meehan first identified the heads of God, John the Baptist and Lot's Wife. Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 68-71.

coloring of the initial, the acrobat and the flourish all took place before the text was laid out revealing that the "correction" or at least the decoration of the turn-in-the-path was intentional.¹²

Throughout the gospel text in the Book of Kells, decoration varies and fluctuates. In some places eight or even ten initials mark a section while in others only one initial introduces a section. Some of these initials measure the same height and width as the script, while others equal the height of nine lines of text and the width of ten or more letters. Some contain a minimum of decoration such as color and possibly diagonal bars or the ever-present "tri-dot" motif.¹³ Other initials are full-bodied creatures with legs, tail and mane. Some zoomorphic initials interact with unattached and unnecessary beasts and birds.¹⁴ In places decorated initials are inconspicuous yet the marginal decoration, color and layout captures the eye. Such variation makes it difficult to analyze the margins according to exclusive, measurable standards such as initial size or number. This, as well as the lack of a color facsimile, has prevented any attempt to examine the minor decoration of the manuscript as a whole. Certainly such variation indicates the difficulties inherent in approaching only one section of the manuscript and drawing conclusions as to decorative emphasis of a specific passage.

Another indication that the decorated initials do not function as markers is their illegibility. The form, decoration and pose of the beast often completely obscures the form of the initial as is the case on folios 247v and

¹² These folios are identified as by Hand C whose work often demonstrates an intimate relationship between script and decoration. Meehan, "The Script," 253-256. Meehan surveys the relationship between scribe and artist in the manuscript, but a more detailed analysis of the interaction between hands, decoration and color would be useful. Unfortunately, since the publication of the 1990 color facsimile, the manuscript has not been available for consultation making such a project impossible. The Gellone Sacramentary, which resembles Kells in having several initials per page, also demonstrates an erratic relationship between scribe and artists.

¹³ This is a common motif in Insular manuscripts, consisting of three circles or dots arranged in a pyramid shape. In the Book of Kells minor decoration, this motif is often shown at the end of a vine. In some places the tri-dot motif is replaced by a cluster of circles that very much resembles a bunch of grapes.

¹⁴ See chapter two appendices C, D, and E.

250v (Ills. 30 and 29). Other Insular manuscripts may distort letters slightly, but the distortion comes from a limited and familiar repertoire. Frequently in Kells, as in folio 250v, additional animals are added that do not contribute to the shape of the initials. These bite, sit on or hold onto the animals that form the initial or the letter itself making it difficult to discern those that form a letter from those that are simply surplus decoration. Additionally, the initials often interact with one another down the left-hand margin. Often, as in folio 250v, initials are linked in such a manner so as to become indistinguishable from one another.

Despite the many unusual features of the manuscript's decorated initials, it has been proposed that they mark Eusebian sections.¹⁵ In several early Latin gospel books, decorated initials occur at the beginning of Eusebian sections. The Lindisfarne Gospels, Echternach Gospels, and Paris Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 1587 use decorated initials in conjunction with Eusebian numerals to mark out the various divisions. The Macregol Gospels do not have Eusebian notation but depend upon colored initials and punctuation marks to denote Eusebian sections.¹⁶ Although the initials of the Trier Gospels do not decorate Eusebian sections, they serve a similar function highlighting chapter sections.¹⁷ These initials serve a conventional function marking out sections of text according to accepted and established systems. Lindisfarne, with its clear text and images, adheres most rigorously to the system, employing different initial types to mark out the beginning of Eusebian sections, *capitula* and passages that introduce both new Eusebian sections and chapters.¹⁸ Twenty-one initials do not mark Eusebian sections or chapter divisions but indicate lections.¹⁹ However, unlike Kells, both the text

¹⁵ Meyer, 20.

¹⁶ McGurk, "The Gospel Text," in Fox, 59.

¹⁷ Netzer, *Cultural Interplay*, 45-46.

¹⁸ T. J. Brown, 38. Some confusion between initial types is explained by the influence of pericopae. See discussion below.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

and decoration of Lindisfarne have a "classical" clarity. Text is regular and strictly bound within its columns. The initials of Lindisfarne employ a regular and simple decorative scheme including colored backgrounds, dotting, a single or double contour line, and whorls. Initials marking Eusebian sections or chapter divisions are marked by color and a single contour line with dotting, and initials marking the beginning of an Eusebian section and a chapter have double contour line with dotting, while initials marking lections have additional whorls.²⁰ The simple and regular nature of the Lindisfarne decoration allows for such a systematic approach. Even within Lindisfarne, however, there are numerous deviations and unexplained variants from this system.²¹

The Book of Kells, on the other hand, does not contain any marginal Eusebian notation, its canon tables are flawed and its chapters lists do not correspond to its text. Despite this, it has been suggested that although the Eusebian sections "were unnumbered, they certainly dictated the layout of the text."²² A comprehensive comparison between the occurrence of decorated initials in the Matthew gospel of the Book of Kells with the Eusebian divisions and corresponding decorated initials in the Lindisfarne Matthew gospel shows that approximately half of the decorated initials in the Book of Kells do not relate to Eusebian sections.²³ Two Eusebian sections in this

²⁰ Ibid., 40.

²¹ Nineteen Eusebian sections that seem to have no liturgical importance or correspondence to *capitula* are marked with contour lines while a large majority of the initials within Luke have whorls but do not relate to known lections. Ibid.

²² McGurk suggests that the presence of Eusebian notation indicates the scribe had access to a text with Eusebian notation. He argues that the "majority" of paragraphs mark Eusebian sections, but sometimes the decoration varies according to "mood." McGurk, "The Gospel Text," 59-61. While this is true, a survey of the Matthew gospels shows that 310 initials correspond to Eusebian sections but 248 are independent of Eusebian sections. Additionally the question of the inconsistency with which minor initials are treated within the decorative scheme remains unanswered. McGurk does suggest that the monogram *et* is often decorated regardless of its position in the manuscript. Just as frequently, however, the monogram does not receive decorative emphasis. The question of why these initials receive decoration in some places and not in others remains.

²³ This number has been placed at 78. Meyer, 21. The present survey indicates the number is almost double this figure. See appendix B.

gospel, 281 and 345 are not marked even with the smallest of initials. The majority of Luke's initials also do not correspond to Eusebian sections, nor do thirteen from the Mark gospel.²⁴ A few of these initials may mark *capitula*, but as the *Breues causae* in the Book of Kells contains chapter summaries that correspond to an Old Latin text rather than to the mixed-Vulgate text in the Book of Kells, it is impossible to conclude where chapter divisions occur in the text.²⁵ Nevertheless, these would account for only a few of the decorated initials.²⁶

An examination of 559 decorated initials in the Matthew gospel of the Book of Kells shows a remarkably inconsistent approach to Eusebian divisions and chapter sections; however, nearly all of the Eusebian sections are marked with decorated initials. Scribal error may explain the absence of decorated initials at Eusebian section 281 and 345. This and the Eusebian notation on the two John folios indicate the scribe had access to a text with marginal Eusebian numbers. The absence of marginal notation and the confused canon tables, however, demonstrates a conscious decision on the part of the designer. One possible explanation is that the scribe for aesthetic reasons chose not to introduce Eusebian numbers.²⁷ Such an explanation demands further investigation into the question of readership and why aesthetic perfection was valued more than legibility.

Additionally, the unique variation within the initials, cannot be accounted for by Eusebian sections, *capitula* or indications of verses and

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Henry, *Book of Kells*, 153.

²⁶ While it is unlikely that the two manuscripts employed the same chapter divisions, Durrow's *capitula* can offer a foundation for comparison. If the Book of Kells used the same *capitula* system, then only nine initials can be accounted for in this manner, leaving 232 initials that do not relate to *capitula* or Eusebian sections. Additionally, the casual approach of the Durrow scribe to chapter notation within the text suggests that these divisions were not essential. A. A. Luce, et al., eds., *Evangeliorum Quattuor Codex Durmachensis*, 2 vols (Olten, Lausanne and Freiburg I. Br.: Urs Graf, 1960), 27. Also, the generalized nature of the chapter summaries in early gospel books intimates the nebulous character of these chapter divisions.

²⁷ Meyer, 20.

minor pauses. In the Book of Kells, decorative emphasis cannot be reduced to the question of where and when decorated initials occur. Unlike the Lindisfarne Gospels, where variation occurs within a rigid hierarchy relating to separate functions, in the Book of Kells decorated initials show variations without pattern: Some of the decorated initials corresponding to Eusebian sections are larger than non-Eusebian initials and some are smaller. Some are more highly decorated; some less. On folio 50r, Eusebian sections 63 and 64 are both marked by initials (Ills. 31).²⁸ The initial marking section 63 is quite small, in fact, only one line in height. The fairly standard decoration consists of a small bird curled within the initial. On the other hand, the initial marking section 64 is large and complex. It stretches along six lines of text. The decoration consists of one quadruped biting another quadruped with a bird standing next to the initial. This fluctuation in size and decoration indicates that such characteristics could not have been used to distinguish those initials that correspond to the start of the Eusebian section from those that do not. A similar inconsistency has been noted within the Durham Gospels where the size and decoration of the initials depends on the location of the initial on the page, where those occurring on the first or last line of the page received greater decorative treatment.²⁹ While the Eusebian system might explain the consistent presence of initials throughout the four gospel texts, it does not account for the constant variation within the decorated initials.

Such variation and the insertion of full-page illustrations to the text has led to the speculation that the decoration might reflect liturgical readings of "special significance."³⁰ Again, this work has focused upon the display

²⁸ Both initials in Lindisfarne also mark chapter sections.

²⁹ Christopher Verey, "Description of the Manuscript," in *The Durham Gospels*, eds. Christopher D. Verey, et al. (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1980), 26.

³⁰ McGurk first introduced the notion that the full-page illustration and display script might reflect passages of "liturgical significance." McGurk, "Two Notes," 106-7. McGurk was perplexed, however, by the greater emphasis on Luke 24:1 than Matthew 28:1 which has "great liturgical significance." Carol Farr's doctoral thesis "Lection and Interpretation" further pursues McGurk's theories and attempts to address these conflicts. See discussion below.

script and the full-page illustrations, thought to have developed from the large, decorated initials that indicate lections in other Insular manuscripts such as the Lindisfarne Gospels.³¹ Such an approach when applied to the Book of Kells raises questions about the decorated initials: If the larger illustrations demarcate important Lenten and Easter lections, perhaps the decorated initials introduce less important readings. As the initials of Lindisfarne and Durham seem to introduce lections, perhaps so do those within the Book of Kells.³² The liturgical explanation certainly suits the odd iconography and location of some of the larger illustrations, but the lack of textual evidence does suggest the need for caution.

Unlike Lindisfarne and Durham, the Book of Kells incorporates no liturgical notation. Liturgical information occurs in manuscripts in the form of liturgical rubrics in the *capitula lectionum*, a list of feasts following the *capitula lectionum*, liturgical notations in the text itself, and even decorated initials. The Durham Gospels contain liturgical marginalia and Lindisfarne has relatively extensive liturgical information.³³ In the ninth century, numerous lection systems existed and within these systems there was much variation. Unlike Gallican, Neapolitan and Visigothic lection systems there is no evidence of an "Irish" lection system or even whether the Gallican or Roman use was followed. The Lindisfarne Gospels, the Durham Gospels and Bede's homilies all reflect a Romano-Neapolitan use.³⁴ The Stowe Missal reflects a Gallican liturgy with some possible Roman overtones.³⁵ This fragmentary evidence does not point to any single lection system but instead reveals the conflicting and diverse nature of early eighth- and ninth- century lection systems.

³¹ McGurk, "Two Notes," 106.

³² Verey, 26.

³³ T. J. Brown, 41-44.

³⁴ Verey, 28.

³⁵ The text of the *Sanctus*, for instance, closely resembles that of the Roman usage, but the position of the following prayer, *Qui perdie*, stems from the Gallican rite. Kenney, 695-96.

Carol Farr proposes that the display script and full-page images indicate the beginning of lection readings. These include the Temptation page at Luke 4:1, the Arrest page at Matthew 26:30, the human figure at Mark 15:24-25, the display script and blank folio at Matthew 27:38, the angels at Luke 24:1 and display script at Matthew 28:1. The images occur at key episodes of Christ's life: the Last Supper, Temptation, Crucifixion and Resurrection. Employing all known lection systems, including Syriac, Gallican, Visigothic, Neapolitan and Northern Italian, Farr suggests these images also relate to important liturgical lections: Quadragesima Sunday, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday.³⁶

Three of the seven images within the Book of Kells show some correspondence to readings from a single, non-Roman lection system. Unlike the system employed by the Durham and Lindisfarne Gospels, the Syriac Rabbula Gospels contain lection notes at Luke 4:1, in Mark 15:1 and Mark 15:33, at Luke 24:1 and Matthew 28:1.³⁷ However, the Rabbula Gospels have no corresponding readings at Matthew 26:31, Matthew 27:38 or Luke 1:5. These correlate only to readings drawn from an enormous variety of lection systems. Also images at Mark 15:24-25, Matthew 26:30 and Matthew 27:38 do not completely align with the textual evidence. The Rabbula Gospels cite readings at Mark 15:1 and Mark 15:33 for Good Friday, rather than beginning the lection at 15:24.³⁸ Similarly, the Maundy Thursday reading calls for the entire chapter of Matthew 26 to be read, rather than beginning at Matthew 26:30. Additionally, only one lection cites Matthew 27:38 as a reading, and this is from an eleventh-century Spanish manuscript.³⁹ At best, half of the

³⁶ Farr, "Lection and Interpretation," 118-131, 162-3, 271-87, and 320-40 and "Liturgical Influences on the Book of Kells," *Insular Art and Archaeology: American Medieval Studies* 1 (1991) 127-37.

³⁷ Farr, "Lection and Interpretation," 181 and 320-40. Carol Farr's bibliography of lection sources is proving an invaluable aid to studies in early Christian art. Certainly, this study reflects the contribution of her bibliography.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 333-34.

³⁹ Farr, "Liturgical Influences", 128-29.

Rabbula lections correspond to the display script and illustrations in the Book of Kells.

Within lections systems, there is little agreement as to which gospel section was read or when it was read. In the marginal lection notes of the Gospels of St. Killian, the Epiphany reading is John 6:1 (Christ Feeds the Five Thousand) while the Luxeuil lectionary cites three readings: Matthew 3:13-17 (Baptism of Jesus), Luke 3:23-38 (Genealogy of Jesus) and John 2:1-11 (Jesus Changes Water to Wine).⁴⁰ Even within closely related systems, readings do not always agree. The Bobbio Missal and Trèves 134 represent Gallican lection systems, but Bobbio cites Matthew 1:1, 2, 16, 18-25 and Matthew 2:1-6 as readings for the Nativity, while Trèves 134 notes Luke 1:26.⁴¹

Lection systems, and non-Roman lection systems especially, contain dense, complex Easter readings. Many incorporate entire chapters that cover the complete Passion narrative.⁴² Additionally, up to three lections a day are cited in some Easter and Advent readings.⁴³ With so much material covered, it seems statistically inevitable that a correspondence between images within a gospel book and lections from important liturgical seasons show some overlap; however, the unusual position of the Arrest and Temptation pages and their strange iconography can only be explained in terms of a liturgical function.

The presence of the Virgin and the emphasis upon the genealogies in the Book of Kells indicate that not all the imagery can be understood as lection markers. The genealogies and the Incarnation emphasize earlier

⁴⁰ Pierre Salmon, "Le système des lectures liturgiques contenu dans les notes marginales du Ms. Mp. Th. q. la de Würzburg," *Revue bénédictine* 61 (1951): 49 and Godu, "Évangiles," in *DACL*, VI.1, 863-66.

⁴¹ Godu, 867 and 869.

⁴² See Luxeuil, no. 36-40 in Godu, 864. I am indebted to Professor Bullough for indicating the fundamental difficulties in attempting to match lection systems to the Book of Kells; specifically, the variety of lections and the complete absence of any evidence as to which lection system might have been employed by the scribes responsible for the manuscript.

⁴³ Luxeuil cites John 13:33-5, John 14:1-14, and Luke 24:49-53. *Ibid.*

aspects of the life of Christ that do not play a significant role in the non-Roman lection systems such as the Rabbula Gospels.⁴⁴ Moreover, the image of the Virgin and Child occurs in the earlier prefatory material. Although there is no codicological evidence that the image belongs in this position, the visual evidence is extremely persuasive.⁴⁵ If the image belongs in this location, it obviously does not mark any lection reading. If located elsewhere, it must reflect either a Nativity or more likely an Epiphany reading.

The genealogies of Matthew and Luke have such a high quantity of framed decoration and figurative imagery that they must be considered under the category of full-page decoration. The Matthew genealogy, has less decoration, but is largely incomplete. The Lucan genealogy occupies five pages of text with numerous human figures, a merman, beasts and an image of Christ (Ills. 7b). Matthew 1:1-16 does not occur in any lection system with the exception of the Bobbio Missal, which cites verses two and sixteen in its extensive Nativity reading.⁴⁶ The Lucan genealogy, which receives the greater decorative emphasis, has no corresponding lection system.⁴⁷ Obviously, the Insular tradition of demarcating the genealogies shows no dependence on lections.

The lack of Irish lectionary evidence, the variety of continental lection systems and the number of decorated initials makes it difficult to determine whether the decoration indicates the beginning and end of liturgical readings. The number of initials and the number of lection readings make some correspondence between the two inevitable; however, the visual evidence suggests that while decoration may increase in passages of special liturgical significance, it does not mark out lections for the deacon. There are simply

⁴⁴ Farr, "Liturgical Influences," 130.

⁴⁵ See discussion of these pages in "Introduction to Part One: Word and Image."

⁴⁶ Although the genealogy does not feature as a lection reading, its significance is discussed in Bede's Matthew 1:18-25 sermon, *Homiliae*, Hom. 5. *CCSL* 122, 32.

⁴⁷ For a discussion of the exegetical importance of the Lucan genealogy see Jennifer O'Reilly "Exegesis and the Book of Kells: The Lucan Genealogy" in O'Mahony, 344-97.

too many decorated initials to be restricted to the role of indicating lections. Moreover, they show too much variation and complexity to be mere markers. Also, in manuscripts where the decorated initials indicate lections, the initial occurs at the beginning or end of the lection. In the Book of Kells, only infrequently do complex initials occur singly. On the contrary, increased decoration typically occurs in clusters of initials. Possibly the cluster decorates the lection in its entirety rather than marking its beginning.

Carol Farr, when first proposing that decoration might mark liturgical lections, confronted the question of decorative emphasis of a single event in more than one gospel. Both Matthew and Luke versions of the Temptation receive decorative treatment.⁴⁸ Matthew 4:1-11 has inter-textual ornament, large decorated initials and color within the initials and the text, while the Temptation in Luke has a full-page illustration.⁴⁹ Farr attempts to circumvent this problem by suggesting that this decorative emphasis, also found in related manuscripts--the Canterbury Gospels and Lindisfarne Gospels--may reflect an established tradition of using Matthew 4.1-11 for Quadragesima Sunday while the larger illustration and incipit of Luke 4:1-13 marks the non-Roman lection for Quadragesima Sunday in the Book of Kells.⁵⁰ This suggests that the Book of Kells artist was familiar with both systems but confused the two versions.

This would not account for the decoration of the Baptism in Mark and John. The decoration of the early chapters of Mark is quite sparse, but the Baptism on folio 130v-131r contains the same type of inter-textual ornament as Matthew 4:1-11. The decorated initials of Mark are admittedly small in keeping with the more delicate hand. The John version of the event, also

⁴⁸ Farr, "Lection and Interpretation," 154-56.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 158-59. Farr's argument illustrates one of the hazards of focusing on only one section of the manuscript. Before employing minor decoration as proof in such an argument, one must examine the other occurrences in the manuscript. The decoration of Matthew 4:1-11 is not that remarkable or atypical. See below for discussion of the decoration as a whole.

written by a conservative hand, uses the device of a human head on folio 294r (Ills. 65b). Human heads occur throughout the manuscript, but their number is limited and appearance typically reserved for significant passages.⁵¹

In order to assess the exact relationship between the decorated initials and liturgical lections, six events from the gospels have been chosen. These include the Passion, Signs of the End of the Age, Entry into Jerusalem, Jesus Speaks of John, Parable of the Lost Coin and the Parable of the Shrewd Manager. Each event occurs in more than one gospel and receives unusually heavy decorative treatment in at least one gospel's version of the incident. Obviously, the lack of liturgical notation within the Book of Kells presents a difficulty in any assessment as does the diversity of the lection systems in this period. Instead of attempting to show a connection between specific verses with a citation in a single lection system, however, the lection systems as a whole will be examined. Patterns and logical consistencies exist even at this level of diversity.⁵² The examination reveals the manner in which the decoration of the Book of Kells cannot be limited to marking Eusebian sections and liturgical lections but rather enhances and carries underlying themes and meanings present within the gospels.

Because of the complexity of the decoration of the Passion, it must be examined in greater detail than the other events that have been chosen and is therefore treated separately. The folios containing the episodes from the Passion in each gospel receive extensive decorative treatment in terms of decorated initials, color, layout, calligraphy and marginal decoration. Additionally, Matthew contains display script on folio 124r that was most

⁵¹ For a full discussion see chapter four.

⁵² W. H. Frere when discussing the lack of evidence of early Roman lection systems pointed out that the surviving later versions "show plainly the character of the original nucleus" in *The Liturgical Gospels*, vol. 2, *Alcuin Club Prayer Book Revision Pamphlets* (London: A.R. Mowbray 1913), 1. Obviously, the greater diversity of the non-Roman systems does not reveal the original "nucleus" so clearly, but certain aspects of the liturgy are consistent in all or most of the lection systems. It is these logical consistencies that will be referred to in the present discussion.

likely intended to be accompanied by a Crucifixion image. Mark contains display script at Mark 15:24-5. Luke does not contain a full-page image at the Passion and John is missing the Passion narrative. The two instances of display script, one in Matthew and the other in Mark indicate that the full-page images do not always act as lection markers. Within the existing lection systems only one reading vaguely corresponds to Matthew 27:38 and none to Mark 15:25.⁵³ In the lection systems examined, nowhere do Matthew 27:38 and Mark 15:25 appear together.

Possibly, the lection belongs to a lost lection or alternatively, Matthew 27:38 and Mark 15:25 belong to a lost cento. Cento readings attempted to reconcile the diversity of the gospels. As different gospels relate different episodes within a single event such as the Crucifixion, cento readings attempted to gather all of the episodes together so as to present the fullest possible version of an event. Cento readings, however diverse, all follow a certain pattern and reason. They relate the gospel story by taking the most extensive version of a specific event from one gospel and then moving to another gospel for the next event in the narrative. This allows for the most complete reading of events as told by the gospels. In Luxeuil, for example, the *ad sexta* reading involves the gospels of Matthew, Luke and John.⁵⁴ The cento begins with the crucifixion as told by Matthew 27:37; then moves to John 19:25-7, where Christ places Mary in the care of John; then on to Luke 23:38-43 for the description of the conversation with the Good Thief.⁵⁵ The readings are strung together into a cohesive narrative, each describing a different event. The reading moves to John because only John incorporates the incident where Jesus releases Mary to John. Similarly, only Luke mentions the Good Thief and Christ's promise to him of eternal life.

Matthew 27:38 and Mark 15:25 do not make sense as cento readings.

⁵³ The Würzburg manuscript shows a reading for Matthew 26: 31. Salmon, "Le système," 43.

⁵⁴ Salmon, "Le système", 41-47.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

They occur at almost identical points in the narrative. Mark 15:25, "It was the third hour when they crucified him," occurs slightly before Matthew 27:38, "Two robbers were crucified with him." The phrase written beneath the image in Mark comes from slightly earlier in the narrative, Mark 15:24, "... dividing up his clothes." When strung together Mark 15:24-25 and Matthew 27:38 would constitute a cento moving from the description of the soldiers dividing up Christ's garments, to the Crucifixion, to the description of Christ between the two thieves. The three verses only marginally qualify as separate episodes or incidents. Even more incomprehensible is the selection of the gospels. The decoration highlights Mark's description of the soldiers dividing up his clothing, but Matthew's description is much more extensive, relating the action to the Old Testament prophesy. In the same way, the decoration marks out Matthew's description of the Crucifixion of the two robbers, but Mark contains the better known version where the event is also attributed as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophesy.

Possibly, each Passion narrative was read as in some Gallican and Mozarabic liturgies.⁵⁶ If this were the case, the images illustrate the climax of the Passion in both gospels, explaining the occurrence of images in such similar points of the Passion narrative. The images simply reflect the significance of the text, rather than indicating the beginning of a lection or part of a cento. Certainly the minor decoration supports this. It is not limited to the beginning of the Passion as would be expected if it acted as a marker. Additionally the minor decoration, like the larger images, focuses on the same specific events in each gospel's version of the Passion, indicating that it does not mark cento readings.

Each gospel version of the Passion contains significant minor decoration. Most remarkable is the decoration of the Mark Passion.

⁵⁶ G. G. Willis, *St. Augustine's Lectionary*, Alcuin Club Collections 44 (London: S.P.C.K., 1962), 64.

Although the Mark Passion does not make a significant appearance in any known lection system, the decoration is extremely diverse, increasing dramatically from folio 176v to folio 186v; from the narrative of the Last Supper at Mark 14:17 until the resurrected Christ appears to Mary Magdalen at Mark 16:9. The decoration includes a variety of beasts, extremely large decorated initials and two human figures. Color plays a vital role in distinguishing these folios. The color palette is extremely broad. Folio 176v employs strong, copper greens and blue with thickly drawn black initials. Nor is the color restricted to the margins but appears within the extended letters at the ends of lines, which also increase in number. Consequently, the page contains a luxurious amount of space, color and decorative line while the number of words on the page is extremely limited; yet, only three lections contain any reference to the short Mark Passion. The Rabbula Gospels cite Mark 15:1 and Mark 15:33 and the Bobbio Missals mention Mark 15:28.⁵⁷ These sections do not receive particular emphasis in the Book of Kells despite the amount of decoration in Mark 15.

Mark 15:6-20 on folios 181r-182r describes the release of Christ into the hands of the Jewish populus and the subsequent mocking of Christ. The passage includes seven Eusebian sections, each with a corresponding decorated initial in the manuscript. Additionally, smaller colored initials intrude upon the text at Mark 15:7, 15:8, 15:13, 15:16 and in the middle of 15:9 at "et dixit." These do not correspond to known Eusebian divisions. While some agree with minor pauses in the text, this does not explain why the scribe has chosen at this point in the narrative to begin to mark out minor pauses. The decoration sets the passage apart from the text of the rest of the gospel. The striking color and amount of bright yellow orpiment and intricate labyrinth within the bowl of the P of Mark 15:6 on folio 181r captures the

⁵⁷ Farr, "Lection and Interpretation", 333-34 and Godu, 867.

eye.⁵⁸ Bright yellow begins to appear with greater frequency on the previous folio, folio 180v where it occurs in ten separate instances. On this folio, it speckles over the page creating a flickering effect across the entire surface. On folio 181r, the yellow orpiment appears in nine separate locations, but the yellow areas are much larger and more extensive, especially at Mark 15:6. The bowl of the P contains a large and unusual labyrinth partially filled in with bright yellow and brown color. Part of the labyrinth consists of bare vellum, but the traces of bright yellow in some of these areas suggests that yellow pigment was present and has rubbed off. Additionally the "T" that ends the verse contains extensive bright yellow infill. The use of bright yellow within the bold geometrical design and the amount of bright yellow used at the beginning and end of the verse punctuate the folio.

A quadruped biting its own leg and entangled in loose knotwork forms the initial of Mark 15:7. On folio 181v a bright yellow initial marks the beginning of the verse, Mark 15:11-12. The three lines of text are indented on both sides (Ills. 32). The initial beneath, marking Mark 15:12-14, which describes the release of Barabbas and demand by the Jews for the crucifixion of Christ, stands out amongst the thousands of initials in the Book of Kells. In terms of size, only the P of the Matthew Pater Noster surpasses it. Mark 15:15 is formed by a human figure, and on the opposite page, folio 182r, a human head, executed in strong green, yellow, red and blue, decorates Mark 16:16.

The extensive decoration of Mark 15 suggests that the minor decoration of the Book of Kells does not demarcate lection readings. The entire chapter receives strong decorative treatment although only two verses ever appear in any lection system. Moreover, the treatment of Mark 15 is

⁵⁸ Fuchs and Oltrogge, 133-71. Fuchs and Oltrogge in their analysis of color in the Book of Kells state that although the "fatty, glittering scales" of the orpiment still retain their vigor, the brightness of the yellow hue has been lost through the effects of light, humidity and dirt, 135.

remarkably similar to the decoration of the same event in the Luke Gospels, and to a certain extent, in Matthew. As Henry pointed out, all three Gospels have heightened decoration at the Passion. More specifically, the decorated initials in two of the three versions of the Passion focus upon the same section of text when the Jews demand the release of Barabbas and the crucifixion of Christ.

In the Mark Passion the Jewish demand that Pilate "crucify him" occurs on folio 181v (Ills. 32). The initial is unusual not only in its size, but also in its position and color. Its elongated form hugs the text, weaving in and out along the margin. The body juts into this left-hand marginal space at the last line of text because of the sharp angle of the hind legs, which underline the word "eum." The tail of the creature atypically makes only one loop around the creature's body before thrusting forward into the text over the word "eum" and terminating in a yellow bud and a tear-shaped tuft decorated with stripes.

The atypical manner in which the beast's hind legs twist around to underline and grasp the word "eum" indicates the conscious intent to highlight the word, further emphasized by the unusual simplicity and decorated tuft of the tail. The beast of the decorated initial, like the turn-in-the-path animals, physically interacts with the text and guides the eye of the reader. Just as the turn-in-the-path beasts grasp, retrieve, or point to escaping text, the decorated initial holds on to and surrounds the critical text highlighting the "eum" of Mark 15:13, "At illi clamabant iterum dicentes crucifige *eum*."

The color of the page further emphasizes the word. The scribe uses bright yellow throughout the page, including the entire *et* monogram, and even its abbreviation mark. The two quadrupeds that form the P of the initial below are also painted with strong colors. The whole body of the quadruped that forms the bowl of the P is bright yellow, whereas the beast beneath is

blue, with three remarkable exceptions--its tail, hind leg, and paw. These three parts of its body frame the word *eum*. The bright yellow is even more noticeable against the deep blue of the body, drawing the eye to the pronoun. The decoration does not simply demarcate the passage, but highlights the allusion to the person of Christ. This emphasis upon script that refers to God or Christ occurs throughout the minor decoration.⁵⁹ The larger images, such as the Arrest page and Chi Rho page, show a similar concern with the name of Christ.⁶⁰

The crowd repeats their decision at Mark 15:14 at the top of folio 182r, "At illi magis clamabant crucifige eum (Ils. 33)." Although the phrase is not decorated to the same extent as that on the opposite folio, its script is colored, and the M of the word "eum" extends out into the margin in a complex, circular, interlace design. The extended terminus of the M is colored in deep blue and its delicately interlaced end in bright yellow. Further emphasis results from the presence of a quadruped, which stands on the line below, marking an inserted U. As has been noted by Françoise Henry, these creatures were often unnecessary and at times inserted before the text. Although this quadruped appears to have been added after the text, its presence is unnecessary. Firstly, the U could easily have been placed at the end of the word, making such a correction unnecessary. Secondly, even if the scribe chose not to insert the U at the end of the line so as to preserve the strict alignment of the margin, numerous examples of similar corrections occur throughout the manuscript without the benefit of such marginal creatures.⁶¹ The creature with its yellow and green mane, blue body and bright red dotted outline brings further emphasis to the phrase "crucifige

⁵⁹ The turn-in-the-path of the *Pater noster* initial discussed earlier in this chapter is one such example. See also discussion of initials in chapter four.

⁶⁰ See discussion in chapter four and seven.

⁶¹ Many words at the end of lines have their last letter inserted above the text, but do not have creatures above them. On folio 170v, the word "docens" at the end of the line has the S inserted above even though there is a large amount of space above the line that could have easily accommodated one of these creatures.

eum.” Directly following the word, the creature looks over its back towards the verse with its tail in its mouth. Its gaze, the diagonal of its tail and its bright color all bring additional focus to the phrase.

On folio 281v, the parallel passage in the Luke gospel, Luke 23:20-24, “But they kept shouting ‘Crucify him! Crucify him!’” shows the same decorative emphasis found in the Mark version (Ills. 34). Again, the initial is elongated and lies flat against the lines of the text with the hind leg at a similar 90 degree angle as the hind leg of the beast in the Mark section. In the Luke version the pose is more natural, as the foot does not twist around in order to grasp the noun but simply hovers directly over the phrase, “crucifige illum.” Directly beneath, another long, thin quadruped bites the heel of the one above. Its foreleg is raised and inserted directly under the text. Thus, the hindleg of the beast above and the foreleg of the beast below, both point into the text, framing the line, “crucifige illum.” The decoration of this version of the event and that of Mark is extremely similar; both incorporate long thin quadrupeds that hug the text, demarcating the same phrase, “crucify him” with the parts of their bodies.

In Matthew, the decoration emphasizes a slightly later passage, the text of Matthew 27:26, “Then he released to them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him unto them to be crucified (Ills. 4 and 5).” The text, marked out by two, identical and brightly colored quadrupeds, is arranged in an inverted pyramid, ending at the phrase, “ut crucifigeretur.” In all three gospels, the decoration draws attention to passages that make clear the Jewish role in the crucifixion. In Matthew, on the same page as the brightly colored quadrupeds and pyramid layout, in the verses that separate the decorated passage from the Jewish command for the crucifixion, Pilate himself places blame, “I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it. And the whole people answering said: His blood be upon us and upon our children.” The use of two entangled quadrupeds in each instance

reinforces this emphasis, as the roaring lion was frequently associated with the Jews demanding Christ's crucifixion.⁶²

The visual semblance between all three gospels strongly suggests that the decorated initials do not function in the manner ascribed to the larger illustrations. All three versions, including Mark, receive equal decorative emphasis in terms of treatment of text, layout and decoration. Even more so than the larger illustrations and display script, which emphasize the Matthew and Mark accounts of the Crucifixion, the minor decoration of the textual pages of all three gospels are remarkably similar. Indeed, the scribes even use similar techniques and design to isolate the phrase "crucify him."

A similar emphasis can be found in the Last Supper. Isabel Henderson has noted that serpents repeatedly highlight the text of the passion.⁶³ Serpent initials do more than highlight the Passion, appearing in every gospel version of the Last Supper, exactly at the point in the text when Christ institutes the Eucharist, specifically when he offers the chalice as his blood; Matthew 22:28, Luke 22:20 and Mark 14:23 are all marked by a serpent initial.⁶⁴ Henderson has suggested that the appearance of the snake in the Passion relates to the traditional pairing of the cross with Moses' brazen serpent provoked by John 3:14, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so the Son of Man must be lifted up." Just as looking at the brazen serpent would heal man from the bite of a serpent, so in looking at the cross, man would be saved.⁶⁵ The appearance of the serpent next to passages in which Christ urges man to partake of his blood is not coincidental, but reflects the underlying theme of the manuscript, which emphasizes the association between the uplifted chalice of the liturgy and the visual

⁶² The association was largely based on Christological interpretations of the Psalms. See discussion in chapter five.

⁶³ I. Henderson, "The Book of Kells," 64.

⁶⁴ The serpent also appears when Jesus refers specifically to "cup" elsewhere in the manuscript. See appendix E.

⁶⁵ G. Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells*, 64.

apprehension of Christ.⁶⁶ It is interesting to note that in the Book of Durrow the initials at the Passion also increase in size, indicating that, even in this comparatively straight-forward text, the decorated initials are not restricted in function to the demarcation of lections, but also indicate the significance of the text that they decorate.

Because some liturgies are read from all four versions of the Passion, the parallel decoration in all three extant versions in Kells does not necessarily prove that the decoration does not act as liturgical marker. However, similar decorative emphasis in different versions of the same events occur throughout the Book of Kells. These include both longer passages such as the Signs of the End of the Age, and shorter, more specific episodes such as the Parable of the Lost Coin. Instead of simply marking the beginning of a reading, the form and content of the initial often correspond to the meaning or significance of the passage that it decorates.

As with the Passion, the folios containing the description of the Signs of the End of the Age also have a sudden increase of the decoration in each gospel. In Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, the disciples question Christ for the sign of the end of the age and Christ responds with a description of wars, pestilence, false prophets and the coming of Son of Man in glory. This incident, especially the Matthew version, features prominently in lection systems, however, only one lection system includes Matthew, Mark and Luke's description of the incident. Trèves 134 contains readings for Matthew 24:3-25:14, Mark 13:1 and 13:14, Luke 21:5-36.⁶⁷ No other lection contains a reading from Mark. Other known lections refer only to Matthew 24, Luke 21 or both. Although the decoration of the Signs of the End of the Age is most prevalent in Matthew and Mark, the decoration in all three gospels is

⁶⁶ See chapter four and seven.

⁶⁷ Trèves 134 has an extremely extensive lection system. It does not include lections for Luke 4:1 (Temptation page) or any from Mark chapter 15 (Display script and human figure). Matthew 27:38 (Display script) and 26:30(Arrest page) occur in the middle of lections.

extensive, appearing consistently throughout each chapter rather than occurring at selected verses as would be expected if it marked a lection.

In both Matthew and Mark, the initials become dark and angular; their geometrical forms heavy and twisted. In Matthew, the heightened decoration runs through the entire length of Matthew 25, folios 103r through to 104r. The initials contain dark blue infill contrasted with bright yellow orpiment (Ills. 24a and 24b). Blue and yellow rosettes run down the right margin. One of the initials is formed by a zoomorphic quadruped tumbling out of control (Ills. 24b). Another one of the initials includes a human head, most likely a portrait of Christ (Ills. 24a).⁶⁸ The head, occurring on folio 103v, shows a black line emerging from its mouth, terminating in a large, bright yellow spiral set against a dark blue background. The unusual feature seems to underline that it is Christ himself describing these things. Rosettes and large red tri-dots surround the initial marking Matthew 24:24.

As with Matthew, the decoration heightens throughout the entire chapter of Mark 13, from folio 171v to folio 174v (Ills. 35-37b). Two sets of identical initials introduce the first Eusebian sections describing the Signs of the End of the Age, Mark 13:1-2 and Mark 13:3-9. The first set of initials are unusually complex, rectangular versions of the *et* abbreviation, terminating in a serpent with exaggerated horns (Ills. 35). Mark 13:10 and Mark 13:11 repeat this pattern (Ills. 37a). Again, the two initials are almost identical although these have a more typical, rounded form. Their strong background colors of blue, reddish-brown, copper green and thick black outline are striking as are the exaggerated manes of the beasts.

The decoration not only draws the eye to the passages, it also clarifies their meaning. In Mark 13:1-2, on folio 171v, Christ refers to the destruction of the temple buildings, "Not one stone here will be left upon another; every

⁶⁸ See chapter four.

one will be thrown down.” The form of the second initial echoes that of the first, just as Christ repeats his prophesy of destruction, elucidating his meaning to the disciples. The unique design and strong similarity link the two passages; the metaphor and the explanation. In the second set of initials, which describe the preaching of the gospel and the assistance of holy spirit, the use of identical initials, strong color and an interactive gaze between the creatures connects the two passages, but in this instance with difference (Ills 37a). The second initial has a large and strangely exaggerated tongue, alluding to the content of the verse that it decorates, Mark 13:11, “Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given to you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the holy spirit.” When viewed with the text, the significance of the exaggerated tongue of the beast becomes clear. The beast looks up to the cause of the prosecution, Mark 13:10, which describes the preaching of the gospel.

The following verses, Mark 13:21 and 13:22 on folio 173v are decorated by extremely wide initials, both equivalent to approximately 10 letters of text in width and between two and three lines in length (Ills. 36). More noticeable in the context of Insular design, is the amount of plain vellum exposed in these folios. The script is often extended laterally across the page, with extensive calligraphic flourishes and color. Although the number, and especially the size and decoration of the initials and textual ornament increases, so, paradoxically, does the amount of spare vellum.⁶⁹ The lack of clutter renders certain parts of the text clear and easily legible from a distance. The “necredideritis” of Christ’s admonition, “do not believe” stands out from the page. The “abit dies” of the Mark 13:20 remains

⁶⁹ One possibility that must always be considered is that the scribe has intentionally left the space so that the decorator could add further ornament; however, the fact that void appears so frequently in conjunction with increased decoration suggests that either the decorator was extremely lax, or that the empty vellum was intended. The sumptuous and careful detail of the decoration repudiate the possibility of the former suggestion.

centered and isolated at the top line of folio 173v although the scribe could have easily fit this on the line above, which ends short of the right margin. The relatively empty line stops the eye and creates a break before verses 13:20 and 13:21 giving their beginning an even greater visual emphasis. The consciousness of the design is evident. Again, the page is spotted with strong colors such as bright orange, red, green, yellow and blue.

The same passage in Luke also receives strong decorative emphasis. Initials are large and exaggerated; those at Luke 21:7 and 21:10 on folio 270v are approximately four lines in length (Ills. 38a). The scribe employs the common technique of identically shaped initials, the IN of Luke 21:7 and Luke 21:10 to introduce the section. Although these initials lack zoomorphic bodies, they are extremely large, thickly drawn and similar in design. The N of Luke 2:10 terminates in a knot while the N of 2:7 terminates in a beast head. With the exception of one serpent initial, six of the nine initials following Luke 21:10 are formed by at least two large, zoomorphic bodies interacting or interwoven with one another from folio 271r to 272v.⁷⁰

Another remarkable aspect of the decoration of Luke are the two birds on folios 270v and 271r (Ills. 38a and 38b). Both are unnecessary to the formation of the decorated initials. Free-floating birds do occur throughout the gospels, but not with any great frequency.⁷¹ Like marginal banners, the presence of these interlinear decorations depend entirely upon the decision of the scribe. The decorated initials must occur at the beginning of a sentence, verse and usually an Eusebian section. Inter-textual decoration, unlike the decorated initials, is not an integral component of the manuscript's structure. Moreover, unlike the decorated initial which has a traditional function inherited from classical manuscripts, the inter-linear zoomorphic and anthropomorphic decoration had no set or fixed role. The randomness of its

⁷⁰ Luke 21:14, 21:19, 21:20, 21:24, 21:27, and 21:34.

⁷¹ See appendix D.

appearance in the Book of Kells reveals its relative freedom of use.

The significance of the presence of these birds, in such close proximity, cannot be ignored. More intriguingly, the birds interact with one another, across the surface of the folios. In Luke 21:10, a bird stands upon the verse that begins the description of the End of the Age, "Nation will rise against nation (Ils. 38a)." The bird looks across the page towards Luke 21:19, "By standing firm you will save yourselves." At the beginning of this verse is another bird that is close to but independent of the initial (Ils. 38b). It flies towards the text, but looks back over its wing towards the left-hand folio. Its eyes rest on the bird standing at Luke 21:10. The gaze of the two birds meets across the space of the two folios. The two passages, the threat of destruction and the promise of salvation for the elect are visually linked. The significance of the presence of these birds in Luke 21 becomes even more apparent when examined in relation to the Matthew and Mark versions of the End of the Age. Another bird floats next to the lines of text of Matthew 24:22, "If those days had not been cut short, no-one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened (Ils. 24b)." Yet another bird appears in Mark 14:35, "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back--whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the cock crows, or at the dawn."⁷²

Again, as with the Passion, the decoration does not indicate lection systems but rather interacts consistently with the text, underlining meanings. The decoration occurs consistently throughout each gospel. Like the decoration of the Passion, the emphasis does not conform to the common pattern of the lections. In this instance the entire chapters of Mark, Matthew and Luke receive decorative emphasis, yet; in the lection systems, Matthew is

⁷² The remarkable consistency with which birds appear when Christ predicts the End of the Age can be understood in the context of early Irish Saints' lives which repeatedly describe birds as heralds of woe. This is discussed at greater length in part two as is the association between birds and the Godhead.

usually cited on its own, or less frequently, in conjunction with Luke. Also, as with the serpents in the Passion narrative, the presence of the birds and the manner in which they interact with the initials also indicates why an examination into the function of the decoration cannot be reduced to where the initials occur.

Elsewhere, the decoration is less complex, pointing to a singular passage. In these instances, the decoration could conceivably mark lections as, unlike the decoration of the Signs of the End of the Age or the Passion, it is much simpler occurring in one or two places as would be expected if it were marking the beginning or the end of a reading. Such is the case where Christ speaks of John; yet, the two gospel versions describing the event never appear together in any known lection. Both Matthew 11:1-19 on folios 58r to 60v and Luke 7:18-35 on folios 216v to 217v detail Christ's description of John the Baptist. The passages are quite long but unlike the Signs of the End of the Age they do not receive constant decorative emphasis. The initials at Matthew 11:11 and Matthew 11:12, where Christ praises John, "Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John," on folio 60r are large and occur within folios lacking much inter-textual decoration and containing only small, sparsely decorated initials. The first initial on folio 60r is formed by three large, starkly colored creatures (Ills. 39). A prone quadruped with a lolling tongue bites a quadruped with a mane. This beast bites the original quadruped. Within the initial another quadruped bites itself. The initial begins Matthew 11:11, "Amen, I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist . . ." The following initial, marking 11:12, "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing," is identical with the exception that a serpent replaces the quadruped. The initials that come before and after, on folios 59v, 60v, 61r, 61v and 62r, are small and lack any ornament or diversity. Similarly in Luke, the initials marking the entire

passage are unremarkable with the exception of that marking Luke 7:28, "Among those born of women there is no-one greater than John," on folio 217v. This initial contains a delicate human head with a curling hair. Again, the same exact event receives emphasis within two gospels. Unlike the Matthew passage, which does appear in lections, Luke 7:18-35 makes no appearance within any lection system: Tréves, and Rehdigeranus have a reading beginning at Matthew 11:2. No lection mentions a reading beginning or ending specifically at Matthew 11:11 or 11:12, and neither initial corresponds to a Durrow or Lindisfarne chapter heading.

Matthew 10, Mark 6:7-13 and Luke 9:1-9 each describe the Sending Out of the Twelve. Again, as with the Passion and Christ's reference to John, the same specific passage receives unusual decorative treatment. In Matthew the entire chapter from folio 55v to 59r receives heavy decorative emphasis with large initials, unusual creatures, interlocking initials and a human figure. Matthew 10:11-12, Mark 6:10-14 and Luke 9:5 each introduce the passage in which Christ instructs the disciples to enter a house and remain with the occupants if they are worthy. In both Matthew and Mark the scribe employs large and repetitive initials throughout the section. In Matthew on folio 56v, the set of initials terminate in beast heads (Ills. 40). The one above bites the one beneath, linking the two verses. One of the initials juts sharply to the right into the textual field between two lines of text. Again, color is applied freely, filling in the spaces circumscribed by the tongues and mane with green, blue and yellow. In Mark on folio 146r, four identical initials mark the same passage (Ills. 41). Like those in Matthew, the simple design dominates the margin through its repetition, size and, in this instance, complex color patterns of green and yellow.

Each consists of a rounded *et* monogram terminating in a beast head. The abbreviation marks in Mark 6:10-14 are unusual, formed by a simple, yellow horizontal line rather than the more common almond shape or fish.

The abbreviation mark of the first initial forms a cross while the contraction at the end has two vertical cross bars creating a "true cross." Although chapter nine of Luke's gospel has relatively little decoration, the initials on folio 225v marking the relevant section are quite unusual with a checkerboard background that is rarely used in the manuscript. Folio 226r is the obvious exception, containing an almost identical initial in a parallel position, but this has the effect of bringing further attention to the passage.

The decorative emphasis again occurs at the same location in the narrative of the three gospel versions. Unlike the passages described above, however, the decoration does show some correspondence with the lection systems. Certain lections incorporate sections of Matthew 10. These include the liturgical notes of Trèves 134, which cite readings at Matthew 10:16.⁷³ St. Killian Gospels mention Matthew 10:19-22, 10:23-25 and 10:27-30.⁷⁴ Codex Fuldensis includes Matthew 10:16-22, 10:23-31, 10:32-36, and 10:37-42 and the Bobbio Missal lists Matthew 10:32, 33, 37, 39-42.⁷⁵ Only the Luxeuil lectionary does not cite a single reading from Matthew; however, the sections in Luke and Mark do not appear in any of the lection systems examined.

The decoration in Matthew stands out amongst the other gospels (Ills. 42a and 42b). At Matthew 10:11 and 10:12, which do not feature in any of the lections, the decoration increases. The initial introducing Matthew 10:33 on folio 58v, which occurs in both Bobbio and Fuldensis lections, contains a human head. The initials marking 10:39-41 on 59r form a chain similar to that marking the Beatitudes in Luke and Matthew and the genealogy in Luke (Ills. 42b). Possibly the decoration indicates an important lost lection, but it is just as likely that the decoration is responding to the content of the text. Mark and Luke contain extremely short versions of the episode. Mark's

⁷³ D. Donatein de Bruyne, "Les notes liturgiques du manuscrit 134 de la cathédrale de Trèves," *Revue bénédictine* 33 (1921): 47.

⁷⁴ Salmon, "Le système," 41 and Godu, 867-69.

⁷⁵ D. Germain Morin, "Un système inédit de lectures liturgiques en usage au VIIe/VIIIe siècle dans une Église inconnue de la haute Italie," *Revue bénédictine* 20 (1903): 381.

consists of seven verses; Luke's only six. Both can be reduced to three incidents--Christ's sends out the apostles, he instructs them where to stay and then where not to stay. Matthew, on the other hand, consists of 42 verses, many of which touch on issues of salvation. While this makes the passage more suitable than the others for a liturgical reading, it also invites decoration on a contextual basis. Indeed, the decoration is most prominent at sections dealing specifically with salvation. On folio 58v in Matthew 10:33, Jesus warns "But whosoever disowns me before men, I will disown before my Father." The initial terminates in a human head, most likely of Christ (Ills. 42a). The decoration suggests to the viewer that he does not belong to the group who disown the Christ, but rather to those described in the verse above, who recognize Christ and will be acknowledged by him in front of the Father. From the letter of the gospel, the head of Christ appears in a manner similar to the Chi Rho page. Both the text and image present the viewer with the Christ, his physical body and his word. The scripture and the image lead the viewer towards Christ, enabling him to come to know and acknowledge Jesus as Christ.⁷⁶

At Matthew 10:39-41 Christ states, "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward." The initials on 59r link together in a chain, similar to those in the genealogy and the Beatitudes (Ills. 42b). The text of Matthew 10:39-41 resembles the genealogy in the way one passage is linked to the next. Just as through the bloodline of Adam humanity is linked to Christ, so through receiving Christ, mankind is linked to the father; through his own actions to his salvation. Like the genealogy, the decorated initial renders the

⁷⁶ See discussion of this initial in chapter four.

connections into a visible chain. While the decoration of the Matthew passage may reflect its place in the liturgy, the initials cannot be reduced to the simplistic function of marker. Their form and content comment upon and heighten the meaning of the text. Additionally, they point to an underlying theme that occurs throughout the manuscript--the recognition of the Christ. Moreover the decorative emphasis in Luke and Mark of the same passage suggests that the decoration does not reflect a lection reading.

Christ's Entry into Jerusalem is remarkably decorated in all four gospel versions. The entire chapter in Luke receives decorative emphasis with five-line initials at 263v and 264r. On folio 263v an extremely wide interlaced initial terminating in two animal heads decorates Luke 19:28. Folio 264r begins the Entry into Jerusalem passage where Christ instructs his disciples to look for a colt (Ills. 44). A large A terminates in three beast heads at Luke 19:32, "Those who were sent ahead found it just as he had told them . . . as he went along, people threw their cloaks on the ground." Folio 264v at Luke 19:37 has the largest and most unusual initial, over 12 letters wide and three lines in height (Ills. 45). Its thick, black angular lines resemble those of Luke 19:28 but twist and loop much more extensively with greater vigor. Five heads appear at each angular turn, facing out in five different directions. Initials incorporating two or more heads are not that uncommon in the Book of Kells, but this is the only instance of an initial with as many as five heads. The initial introduces Luke 19:37-38, "When he came to the place where the road goes down to the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen. 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.'" Both decorated initials seem to react to the spectacle described in the text. The multiple heads face outward in every direction as if bearing witness to the miracles of Christ or indicating the numbers of the crowds that play such an important role in the Entry into Jerusalem. Possibly, the multiple

heads merely embroider the decoration, responding to the heightened drama of the text.

The decoration of Matthew's version of the Entry into Jerusalem has already been discussed in the previous chapter. Like Luke, the initial on folio 90v marking the beginning of the section at Matthew 21:1, "As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethpage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent out two disciples," is remarkable both in its size and content (Ills. 14a). Three quadrupeds, each biting the other, are locked together to form the *et* monogram. They are brightly colored in yellow orpiment, blue and green. The interlacing of the lappets, manes and limbs is so extensive that it is difficult to distinguish the forms of the quadrupeds. The initial is approximately five lines in height and equivalent to nine letters in width. At Matthew 21:2 and Matthew 21:4, two beasts gaze at one another, one marking the fulfillment of the prophecy, "See your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey," and the other the text of the prophesy itself.

Just as with Matthew and Luke, an unusual initial introduces the Entry into Jerusalem narrative in the John narrative. John 12:12 on folio 329v introduces the passage, "The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem." An ornate, uniquely formed initial of looped flourishes and interlace begins the passage at John 12:12 (Ills. 46). Sitting directly beneath the initial, a small cross legged human figure looks toward the text. John 12:12 figures prevalently in the lections. In Tréves 134, John 12:1 to John 12:50 are cited with the rubric *in simbuli traditione missa prima legenda*.⁷⁷ In Codex Rehdigeranus and the Bobbio Missal, it is read at *simbulo super olivio*.⁷⁸ The Luxeuil lectionary cites John 12:1 to John 12:24 as the Palm Sunday reading.⁷⁹ Matthew 21, on

⁷⁷ de Bruyne, "Les notes liturgiques," 49.

⁷⁸ D. Germain Morin, "L'année liturgique à aquilée antérieurement à l'époque Carolingienne: d'après le Codex Evangeliorum Rehdigeranus," *Revue bénédictine* 19 (1902): 6 and Godu, 867.

⁷⁹ Godu, 864.

the other hand, appears in only one lection, in the Fuldensis Codex, where Matthew 21:10-17 is marked as an pre-Nativity reading.⁸⁰ By 920, if not much earlier, John 12:12 became widely accepted as the Palm Sunday reading.⁸¹ Although Matthew spells out more clearly the Entry as the fulfillment of the scriptures, it makes no mention of the crowds praising Christ's entry, only of the disciples. John places emphasis upon the crowds and is the only gospel to specifically mention the palms carried by them. This makes it a logical choice for the lection at Palm Sunday. It seems likely that the decoration must reflect the influence of the liturgy of Palm Sunday, with its depiction of the small man with crossed legs gazing toward the text's description of the Entrance into Jerusalem. As the priests of the Church would have reenacted Christ's entry, the congregation, holding palms, imitated the crowds welcoming Christ in Jerusalem, as the Eucharist was processed through the church.⁸² The decoration takes on a mimetic function; the figure, like the congregation and the crowds described in the passage, watches the entrance of Christ as described in the text.

Again, the decoration emphasizes the act of witnessing and recognizing the Christ, in this instance possibly in a direct response to the liturgy. The passages in Matthew and Luke reflect this theme as well although not to such a great extent. In Matthew the interaction between the two beasts isolates the passages that describe the prophetic vision and its fulfillment. In Luke, the creatures looking outward in every direction also seem to refer to the act of looking or witnessing the event. Whether or not this is the case is debatable. The sudden increase of decoration at the beginning of the Entry into Jerusalem in all three gospels, on the other hand,

⁸⁰ Morin, "Un système," 382.

⁸¹ Evidence suggests an earlier date, however for Palm Sunday processions. These originate as early as the fourth century, and Isidore makes reference to a Palm Sunday procession in *De officiis ecclesiasticis*. O. B. Hardison, Jr., *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages: Essays in the Origin and Early History of Modern Drama: Essays in the Origin and Early History of Modern Drama* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1965), 113.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 47.

is unquestionable. Certainly the scribe has chosen to emphasize this passage in at least three of the gospels in response to the context of witnessing Christ's Entry rather than to mark a lection reading.

From the passages examined, the manner in which multiple versions of a single event receive emphasis indicates that the decorated initials do not mark lections but rather signal or underline meanings within the text. In each instance, more than one gospel's description of a single incident in Christ's life receives some decorative emphasis. In some instances, such as the Jews' demand for Christ's crucifixion and the Entry into Jerusalem, the emphasis occurs in remarkably similar points in the narrative. The variety of the decoration suggests that it cannot function as a systematic marker of gospel concordance. The similarities within some sections, however, indicate that the initials do not function as lection markers either. The decorated initials react to the text or physically point to relationships between meanings within the text.

One further indication that the decorated initials do not act as lection markers is the manner in which they interact with one another. For example, on folio 250v two initials unite two separate passages, the Parable of the Lost Coin, Luke 15:10, and the Parable of the Lost Son, Luke 15:11 (Ills. 29). The initials are ornate and large. A quadruped forms the first initial biting a peacock that holds a fish. Beneath, another quadruped forms the second initial, biting and clawing at the one above. A serpent with a bird biting its tail weaves between the quadruped's legs. Another quadruped bites the neck of the main quadruped. The result is a squirming mass of beasts, birds and snakes that cannot be easily distinguished from one another. The two initials appear as one large initial, uniting the end of the first parable and the beginning of the second. Although separate parables, they repeat the same theme of rejoicing in the salvation of one fallen soul; however, the two parables never appear together in a lection. The Parable of the Lost Coin is

read in conjunction with the Parable of the Lost Sheep, which has a similar theme, in the Codex Fuldensis.⁸³ In all other lection systems surveyed only the Parable of the Lost Son is read.

A few folios later, at folio 253v, the scribe employs this technique again. Two initials mark Luke 16:13 and 16:14-16. The first initial is formed by two human figures pulling on each others beards, marking the end of the Parable of the Two Masters. The latter is composed of two beasts, one of which holds a human head in its mouth while the other bites the foot of the initial above. The two initials are physically and dramatically linked (Ills. 43). Like Luke 15:10 and 15:11, Luke 16:14-16 and Luke 16:13 do not appear together in lections. In terms of meaning the connection between the two initials makes sense. It has been suggested that the two beard-pullers reflect the two Masters in the Parable of the Shrewd Manager.⁸⁴ Below, the two beasts that form the initial that marks the verse, "Now the Pharisees, who were covetous, heard all these things and they derided him," most likely represent the Pharisees with the head of Christ between their jaws. In Psalm 7:3, the narrator speaks of deliverance from lions. Psalm 21, verse 14, quoted by Christ himself, says, "They have opened their mouths against me, as a lion ravening and roaring."⁸⁵ These Psalms were interpreted as referring to the Pharisees who sought to entrap Christ and the Jews who were convinced by the Pharisees to demand Christ's crucifixion.⁸⁶ One alternative is that the head represents the human soul devoured at Judgment. Beast heads devour human figures head-first in the Hell page, folio 188r and Psalm 67:22 speaks of God breaking the heads of his enemies, "the hairy crown of them that walk on their sins."⁸⁷ This interpretation offers an alternative explanation for the

⁸³ Godu, 917.

⁸⁴ Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 66.

⁸⁵ "Aperuerunt super me os suum, sicut leo rapiens et rugiens."

⁸⁶ See discussion in chapter five.

⁸⁷ "Uerumtamen Deus confringet capita inimicorum suorum: veticem capilli perambulantium in delictis suis."

joining of the two initials: The figure from the initial above could be interpreted as "walking" upon the beasts below, who in turn devour him. Unfortunately, commentaries on Luke with an established Irish provenance have little to say on the verses; however, simply because the meaning of initials such as this cannot be irrevocably established, does not mean that none exists.

Whether or not the larger, illustrated pages mark important liturgical readings or not remains a subject for debate, but the minor decoration clearly does not operate in this manner. This, however, does not suggest that the decoration does not peak in passages of liturgical importance, but rather that they do not mark lections. There are too many initials within Kells for them to function as liturgical markers. Too often, decorative emphasis is repeated in two or more gospels when lections would have focused on only one gospel. Additionally, decoration often physically links what would most likely be separate gospel readings. Frequently, heightened decoration spills over multiple folios, often highlighting whole chapters--sections too long for liturgical reading.

In examining six various sections of the gospels in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the nature of the decorated initials becomes apparent. They are somewhat erratic, appearing in clusters, and do not mark lection systems. In terms of number, they reflect Eusebian divisions and minor pauses, but not always. Moreover, Eusebian sections, cannot account for the variation in their decoration, color and content. Systematically marking lections and Eusebian sections is certainly not the main concern of the scribes and illuminators of the manuscript. Instead, themes within the gospel text are revealed and commented upon. Two themes become clear even in this short survey; the soul in conflict and the witnessing and recognition of Jesus Christ.

Introduction to Part Two: Images of God and Salvation

As shown in the previous chapter, the occurrence of remarkable, decorated initials throughout the manuscript shows no significant relation to lection systems or even Eusebian sections. Despite this, certain patterns of emphasis do emerge. The more complex and unusual decorated initials repeatedly mark passages concerning the contemplation or recognition of Jesus as Christ who will return in glory to judge the living and the dead. Many of these verses emphasize the visual aspect of man's apprehension of the glorified Christ, specifically referring to "seeing" or "looking."¹ Blonde, human heads emerge from decorated initials marking passages in which Christ speaks of his identity and return. Equally, text that describes the blindness of evil is also singled out. Contorted human figures form the initials of verses that describe the Jewish leaders' failure to recognize Christ. The decorated initials employ a familiar sign system largely derived from the scriptures to underline the meaning of the passages. Additionally, the full-page decoration of the manuscript demonstrates a similar emphasis upon the visual apprehension and recognition of Christ.

The unusual, consistent emphasis upon "looking" would explain much in a manuscript, "Having more than its share of errors as if the Kells scribe did not care very much, knowing that nobody was going to use the volume for reference, and that it had, first of all, to be a beautiful object."² Part one has demonstrated the manner in which the decoration of the Book of Kells suggests that it was not so much read as looked at, in the same way as its images were looked at. Its beautiful script, like the chalice on the high altar, acts as a container for the word of God. The manner in which Christ's head

¹ Although these are discussed in some detail in chapters four and five, appendices C and D give an overview of the correspondence between scriptural references to "seeing" or "looking" and the appearance of human heads and birds in the manuscript.

² Henry, *Book of Kells*, 153.

physically emerges from the script repeatedly reinforces this association. The erratic decoration, the manner in which the eye is guided over the open folios and the repeated emphasis upon the necessity of looking towards and visually apprehending the Godhead suggest that the Book of Kells was designed as an object to be displayed on the high altar, inviting the congregation to gaze upon its script and images and thus approach a visual apprehension of the Godhead.

One of the greatest desires expressed in early Christian writings was to be in the presence of God, so as to adore him and to look upon him. Of the Irish writers, Columbanus best expressed this desire, "Though invisible to us, He must be sought by us, often besought . . . we must pray by the merits of intercession of His saints, that He would bestow some ray of His light upon our darkness . . . that He would lead us to Himself, by the favour of our Lord Jesus."³ A recurrent theme emerges in the writings of the early Christian period. In order to apprehend God, man must be led from his earthly existence towards this enlightenment. The journey was frequently compared to traveling along a path as a pilgrim, "But until she [the church] come unto those spiritual embraces, where she may without apprehension enjoy Him whom she hath loved, and for whom she hath sighed in this tedious

³ Columbanus, *Sancti Columbani Opera, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, vol. 2, trans. and ed. G.S. Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), 67. *Instructio* 2, "Invisibilis licet nobis, a nobis tamen pulsandus est, saepe pulsandus . . . et per sanctorum suorum merita et interuentus orandus est, ut uel aliquam sui luminis particulam nostris tenebris largiatur . . . ut nos ad se ducat, donante Domino nostro Iesu Christo." *Ibid.*, 66. It must be noted that these texts are cited in order to reconstruct the belief system of the early Irish church and not to establish the influence of specific texts as influential upon the Book of Kells. All patristic authors and early commentators cited are either connected to the early Irish Church or available to the Columban community. It has been noted that while the Irish were noted for their somewhat overcomplicated exegesis, their scholarly works show an extreme conservatism, following closely the works of the patristic fathers. See Joseph F. Kelly's discussion of Irish sources in "A Catalogue of Medieval Hiberno-Latin Biblical Commentaries II," *Traditio* 45 (1988-9): 393-423.

pilgrimage, she is betrothed."⁴ Jesus Christ, as God made flesh, led the soul along this path:

And from that city whence we wander, letters have come to us; these are the scriptures, which exhort us that we may live for the sake of good. Why do I say letters have come? The king descended, and he has made a road for us . . . so that walking in him, we may neither go astray, nor fail . . . nor blunder into the snares which have been placed beside our road.⁵

The decoration of the Book of Kells plays upon the role of the gospel book as a type of signpost that leads the viewer towards "that city," Heavenly Jerusalem, and the full vision of the Godhead. Christ is shown literally emerging out of its script. It leaves the viewer with little doubt that in looking toward Christ, through the witness of the gospels, the viewer prepares himself for the moment of Second Coming when he will look upon the face of God as described in the decorated verses.

As he physically looks at the script of the manuscript, displayed on the altar during the Mass, he looks upon the visible shell of the invisible Christ. Augustine describes the teachings of Christ, his words, as a husk:

Even the Divine Word may be understood by the grape: for the Lord even hath been called a Cluster of grapes. . . . Accordingly, when the Divine Word maketh use of, by the necessity of declaring Himself, the sound of the voice, whereby to convey Himself to the ears of the hearers; in the same sound of the voice, as it were in husks, knowledge, like the wine is enclosed. . . . For that wine, which from the produce of the vine of the New Testament the Lord is to drink with His saints in the kingdom of His Father.⁶

⁴ Augustine, *Saint Augustine: Expositions*, 597. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 122.5, "Sed donec ueniat ad amplexus illos spiritales, ubi secure perfruatur eo quem dilexit, et cui suspirauit in ista diuturna peregrinatione, sponsa est." *CCSL* 40, 1818.

⁵ Augustine, *Enarrationes*, Ps.90. 2., "Et de illa ciuitate unde peregrinamur, literae nobis uenerunt: ipsae sunt scripturae, quae nos hortantur ut bene uiuamus. Quid dicam uenisse litteras? Ipse rex descendit, et factus est nobis uia . . . ut in illo ambulantes, nec erremus, nec deficiamus . . . nec in laqueos irruamus, qui ponuntur iuxta uiam." *CCSL* 39, 1266.

⁶ Augustine *Exposition*, 28. *Enarrationes* Ps. 8.2, "Nam et Uerbum diuinum potest uia intellegi. Dictus est et Dominus botrus uuae. . . . Uerbum itaque diuinum, cum enuntiationis necessitate usurpat uocis sonum, quo in aures peruehatur audientium, eodem sono uocis tamquam uinacii, intellectus tamquam uinum includitur. . . . Nam illud uinum quod de generatione uitis Noui Testamenti bibiturus est cum sanctis suis Dominus in regno Patris sui." *CCSL* 38, 49-50.

Repeatedly, exegesis and the scriptures speak of “looking toward” or “seeing” the “face of God.” The apprehension of the Godhead is rendered in purely visual terms and thus easily translates into visual media such as painting or sculpture. Columbanus’ wrote, “Joyful after crossing death they shall see their joyful king . . . the king of kings . . . shall be seen by the pure.”⁷ Eusebius, commenting on the gospel, wrote, “Thus he made himself known not only on the basis of his invisible and unseen role, as fleshless and incorporeal in nature. He now made himself visible to eyes of flesh, enabling human sight to behold superhuman miracles.”⁸ Augustine, in his discussion of the Trinity, made Christ’s role even more explicit, “Man in his search for bliss ought to follow no one but God, and yet he was unable to see God; so by following God made man he would at one and the same time follow one he could see and the one he ought to follow.”⁹ In his Epistle to the Colossians, Paul describes Christ as the “Image of the invisible God.”¹⁰ As a visible image of an unknowable God, Christ presented mankind with an example as well as a physical witness to the glory of God. When the Word became flesh and Christ took on visible form during his time on earth, the scriptural metaphors of “seeing” and “looking” toward the face of God became less metaphorical and more literal.

Looking at Christ carries strong eschatological connotations and it is these that Insular scholarship has focused upon. Éamonn Ó Carragáin’s work on the Ruthwell cross and its poem explores the influence of Zechariah 12:10,

⁷ Columbanus, 186. “Laeti leto transacto/ Laetum regem uidebunt. . . . Tunc rex regum . . . A mundis uidebitur.” *Ibid.*, 184.

⁸ Wiles, Maurice. *Documents in Early Christian Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1975) 47.

⁹ Augustine, *De trinitate*, 7.3.5, “Quia enim homo ad beatitudinem sequi non debebat nisi deum et sentire non poterat deum, sequendo deum hominem factum sequiretur simul et quem sentire poterat et quem sequi debebat.” *CCSL* 50, 253-54.

¹⁰ Colossians 1:15. Timothy Gregory Verdon discusses this verse in some detail, specifically in terms of “image” and “icon” in *Monasticism and the Arts*, eds. Timothy Gregory Verdon and John Dally (Syracuse University Press, 1984), 2.

“They shall look at me, whom they have pierced,” and Revelation 1:7, “Behold He cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see him,” in relation to the complex iconography of Ruthwell. Drawing upon a vast range of liturgical and exegetical sources, Ó Carragáin shows how those “who pierced Christ” were associated with those who fail to discern Christ. The connection centers on 1 Corinthians 2:8, “If they had known it [the mystery of Christ], they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory,” and 1 Corinthians 11:26-29, “For whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthy, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. . . . not discerning the body of the Lord.”¹¹ Pursuing this line of inquiry, Jennifer O’Reilly has outlined the connection between the visual apprehension of the crucified Christ and *Majestas Domini*.¹² Both O’Reilly and Ó Carragáin point to the use of blindness as a metaphor for sin and the ability to see and recognize Christ’s identity as man and God as a sign of salvation or even redemption.¹³ Although both sinners and saints will see Christ at Judgment, the two groups will be distinguished--the unrepentant damned, those who pierced him, and the elect who will be allowed to gaze upon Christ for eternity, singing his praises.¹⁴ Those who fail to recognize Christ, that is, those who fail to look to him and believe in him as the incarnate Logos,

¹¹ As will be shown in chapter seven, this verse has strong implications upon much of the decoration in the Book of Kells and in particular folio 188r. Ó Carragáin has published extensively on the eschatological vision of the pierced and glorified Christ and the role of sight in the art, text and poem of the Ruthwell Cross. His argument is best summarized in “The Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem,” 1-71.

¹² Jennifer O’Reilly, “Early Medieval Text and Image: The Wounded and Exalted Christ,” *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland*, vol. 6-7 (1987-8): 72-118.

¹³ Ó Carragáin examines the emphasis upon iconography such as the Healing of the Blind Man and its emphasis upon sight. Éamonn Ó Carragáin, “Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem,” 23-5. Paul Meyvaert also points to the visionary quality of the iconography and text of the Ruthwell Cross underlining the focus in exegetical writings on the visual apprehension of the Godhead as both a privilege of the elect and as a sign of redemption through baptism. Paul Meyvaert, “A New Perspective on the Ruthwell Cross: Ecclesia and Vita Monastica” in *The Ruthwell Cross: Papers from the Colloquium Sponsored by the Index of Christian Art: 8 December 1989*, ed. Brendan Cassidy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 95-166.

¹⁴ This is based upon John 19:37, “Then will they look on him whom they have pierced.” O’Reilly, “Early Medieval Text and Image,” 103-08 and Ó Carragáin, “Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem,” 48-9.

number among the damned. The visual image, whether sculpted or painted, allowed for the expression of man's visual apprehension of Christ in the Second Coming. By contrasting images of Christ's glorification and Crucifixion, the viewer is presented with two possible visions that will confront man at Judgement--the pierced Christ, who will confront the damned with their sin, and the glorified Christ, to whom the elect will look upon for eternity.

Looking at Christ takes on multivalent significance. Firstly, the act of looking becomes a metaphor for contemplation.¹⁵ Augustine repeatedly interprets looking towards the face of God as metaphor for coming to know God, interpreting verse 8 of Psalm 29, "Auertisti faciem tuam a me," as "for thou sometimes turned away thy face from the sinner, and I became troubled, when the illumination of thy knowledge withdrew from me."¹⁶ Bede, closely paralleling Cassiodorus, stated a direct relationship between looking upon an image and contemplating Christ, "In all such visions, holy men contemplated God not in his very nature but only through certain images."¹⁷ Secondly, by looking to Christ, as a visible image of an invisible Godhead, the Christian soul partially apprehends the unknowable. Thirdly, the act of looking at Christ has natural eschatological associations, foreshadowing the time when all of humanity will gaze upon Christ as Judge. In the same vein, looking at Christ gives the Christian soul a glimpse of the heavenly reward of the elect, when the saints and martyrs will gaze upon Christ for eternity. In so doing, looking to Christ becomes a sign of salvation; that those who look to him in this life will do so in the company of the elect in heaven, "And this is the will

¹⁵ "The theme illustrates both the use made by exegetes and artists of the scriptural practice of rendering physical sight as an image of spiritual insight." O'Reilly, "Early Medieval Text and Image," 1.

¹⁶ Augustine, *Expositions*, 68. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 29.8, "Quod auertisti aliquando a peccante faciem tuam, et factus sum conturbatus, recedente a me illuminatione notitiae tuae." *CCSL* 38, 172.

¹⁷ Meyervaert, "A New Perspective," 120. Bede, *Homiliae*, Hom. I.2 (On John 1:18). *CCSL* 122, 11.

of my Father that sent me: that every one who seeth the son and believeth in him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day.”¹⁸ Finally, it allows the Christian soul to commune with the Godhead; in contemplating Christ they are brought nearer to him. As the early Irish “Alphabet of Devotion,” written in the vernacular, succinctly phrases it, “Who is nearest to God? The one who contemplates Him.”¹⁹

Christ as the image of God served as a guide towards the time when man would look directly upon the face of God. Like the scriptures, however, and the painted image, Christ provided only a partial glimpse of the full glory in order to inspire man toward salvation. Augustine states, “And truly this is the sense of the words, ‘Seek His face evermore;’ meaning that discovery should not terminate that seeking, by which love is testified, but with the increase of love the seeking of the discovered One should increase.”²⁰ Columbanus repeatedly asserted that God, although only ever partially seen, was viewed directly in proportion to the purity of the soul looking towards him, “Since our weaker nature could not bear the pure nature of the invisible God . . . God remains invisible . . . let us beseech Him, since God the Trinity, though imperceptible, is known and present to each one, in proportion to the deserts of our purity.”²¹

¹⁸ John 6:40.

¹⁹ Thomas Own Clancy and Gilbert Márkus, *Iona: The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 207.

²⁰ Augustine, *Expositions*, 521. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 104.3, “Et nimirum hoc est: *Quaerite faciem eius semper*, ut non huic inquisitioni, qua significatur amor, finem praestet inuentio, sed amore crescente inquisitio crescat inuenti.” *CCSL* 40, 1537.

²¹ Columbanus, 95. *Instructio* 7 “Quia inconspicibilis Dei naturam sinceram natura infirmior, ferre non poterat, ideo Deus pius . . . inconspicibilis Deus est. Pulsemus tamen illum, quia unicuique pro merito pruitatis notus adest, inuisibilis licet, inaeestimabilis licet, Deus Trinitas.” *Ibid.*, 94. The concept of God as invisible and unknowable stemmed largely from Exodus 33:19-23, where Moses asks God to show his glory to Moses and God replies, “I will show thee all good, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord before thee: and I will have mercy on whom I will, and I will be merciful to whom it shall please me. . . . thou canst not see my face: for man shall not see me, and live. . . . stand upon the rock And [sic] when my glory shall pass, I will set thee in a hole of the rock, and protect thee with my right hand, till I pass: And I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face thou canst not see.”

The decoration of the Book of Kells refers to the role of the gospel book as an instrument of salvation that enables man to perceive God more clearly, and so avoid the blindness and confusion of those who fail to properly discern Christ. The gospels, and the gospel books themselves, played a vital part in the *Apertio aurum* ceremony.²² The third scrutiny of Lent, *Apertio aurum* marked the "opening of the ears" of the catechumens, so that they could receive the Word of Scripture and a "transmission" of the Creed and Pater Noster.²³ This was the first time the catechumens were allowed to remain for the gospel reading, and each gospel was introduced and shown to the catechumens, their sponsors and the congregation as a whole. The use of evangelist symbols at the beginning of individual gospels such as in the Book of Durrow and Lindisfarne Gospels suggests a familiarity with this scrutiny.²⁴ Whether or not the full-page images of the Book of Kells visually cite the "opening of the ears" ceremony or not, the designers would have been familiar with the ceremony and the gospel book's role in the ritual.²⁵ Patristic writers often referred to non-believers as asps because they, like the asp, could close their ears to Christ's preaching.²⁶ The presentation of the gospel to the congregation, with its emphasis upon the opening of the ears of the catechumen, worked toward the exorcism of evil from the uninitiated. In

²² Ó Carragáin explored the possible influence of the ceremony on the four symbol pages in the Book of Kells, "'*Traditio evangeliorum*' and '*sustentatio*': The Relevance of Liturgical Ceremonies to the Book of Kells," in O'Mahony, 398-436. It has been suggested that Dr. Sims-Williams in his review of Kathleen Hughes, *Celtic Britain in the early Middle ages* in the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 36 (1985): 308 was the first to make the association; however, Werckmeister first pointed to the connection in 1965 between this ceremony and Insular gospel books, suggesting that it might explain the presence of individual evangelist symbols at the beginning of each gospel. Werckmeister, 9-10.

²³ Godu, 2523-37. Hardison, 105-09.

²⁴ Werckmeister suggests that this explains the presence of the evangelist symbol at the front of each gospel in the Book of Durrow. Werckmeister, 8-10. In light of this, it is interesting to note Michael Richter's observation that the first folio of many gospels show evidence of extreme wear as if the four separate gospels were not bound together until later. Michael Richter, *Irland im Mittelalter: Kultur und Geschichte* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1983), 66.

²⁵ For a discussion of the export of Roman liturgies into Britain, see Ó Carragáin, "*Traditio evangeliorum*," 403-04.

²⁶ Augustine, *Enarrationes*, Ps. 57.6-7. CCL 39, 714-15.

many early rites such as the Gallican, the celebrant actually touched the ears and nose of the candidate, saying, "Be thou opened."²⁷

The gospel book has strong associations with the awakening of man's senses to the Godhead. The gospels themselves also fulfilled this role in several ways. Because they were divinely inspired, they were the literal word of God.²⁸ Images such as the Matthew incipit in the Lindisfarne Gospels emphasize God's hand in the writing of the Gospels. The Lindisfarne image shows the evangelist writing the gospels at the dictation of a figure with gray hair and nimbus (Ills. 47).²⁹ Scripture, and the gospels in particular, contained the teachings and commandments of God. Smaragdus argued for the sanctity of Latin grammar because God had revealed himself in scripture and the scripture was known through grammar.³⁰ The gospels bore witness to Christ's corporeal existence on the earth. Unlike the apostles, the Christian of the Columban community could not look directly upon the face of Jesus Christ the man, but only to the witness of the scripture. Looking to Christ's example through the descriptions of the gospels, the Christian could find a model to emulate on his path to salvation.³¹ The gospels, as the divinely inspired word of God, described the life and teaching of the image of God, and so, led man towards an apprehension of the invisible Godhead.

Image often functioned in a manner remarkably similar to the gospels themselves, acting as witnesses to the Godhead. In his famous letter to Serenus of Marseilles, Gregory refers to pictures as a type of testimony, "Quae pictura teste pandebatur."³² Images gave witness to the gospel story,

²⁷ Hardison, 107.

²⁸ Augustine describes the New Testament as God's fingers and as the husk of the grape containing the wine of Christ. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 8.2 and 8.7. *CCSL* 38, 50-2.

²⁹ Smaragdus died in 843. McNally argues that Smaragdus may have been Irish. McNally, *Bible in the Early Middle Ages*, 60.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

³¹ See Eusebius' *Demonstration of the Gospel* 4.10, 15-4. See also Augustine's discussion of the Trinity 7. 3.5 cited above.

³² Gregory I *Epistula* 11(10). *CCSL* 140A, 873-76: "revealed through the witness/testimony of a picture."

just as the gospels did to Christ, and as God the Son did to God the Father. John in the Apocalypse 1:5 describes Jesus as "Christ, who is the faithful witness." Pope Gregory II defended icons and religious pictures, saying that these images of Christ and the Virgin Mary remind man of the reality of the Incarnation.³³ Each testified to the reality of the Incarnation and each, like Christ himself, enabled man to come to know the invisible Godhead. Pope Hadrian, reacting against the *Libri Carolini*, outlined the accepted role of images, "through images we are led from the visible to the invisible."³⁴ Obviously, images were not seen as the equivalent to the scriptures, no more than the scriptures themselves were seen as equivalent to Christ; yet, all three shared the same role as beacons in mankind's journey.³⁵

Images within Bibles and gospel books connected to the Book of Kells show signs of the similar preoccupation with the visual apprehension of the Godhead that is so evident in the Book of Kells. Jennifer O'Reilly has argued that the Durham Crucifixion, the St Gall Crucifixion and Judgement pages and the Crucifixion in the Gellone Sacramentary all refer to the pierced and glorified Christ; however, this type of imagery occurs in many continental manuscripts as well as in the Turin Gospel fragment. Folio 1a recto of the Turin Gospels fragment contains an image of the Ascension, while the facing page, folio 2a recto, shows Christ surrounded by 96 figures carrying books (Ills. 49). The Ascension page contains the inscription, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking to heaven? As you have seen him going, so he

³³ Barbara C. Raw, *Trinity and Incarnation in Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 21 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 58.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ A large amount of scholarship has been devoted to the question of whether images acted as substitute scripture for the illiterate. Lawrence G. Duggan's article, "Was Art Really the 'Book of the Illiterate'?" offers a broad survey of attitudes from the sixth century to the high middle ages. *Word & Image* 5, (July-September 1989): 227-51. See also Kessler, "Diction in the Bible of the Illiterate," 297-304; Michael Camille, "Seeing and Reading," 26-49 and Chazelle, 138-53. The relationship between reader, text and image is discussed in depth in chapter seven.

shall come to you, Jesus who is returned [to heaven] from you.”³⁶ Alexander, following the work of Beat Brenk, identifies the latter scene on folio 2a recto, which also includes an angel blowing on a trumpet, as the Second Coming. He argues that the inscription on the Ascension scene suggest that the two folios act as a pair, as does the combination of the Ascension on one page and the Second Coming on the other, for, as evidenced in the Rabbula Gospels, which conflates the iconography of the vision of the glorified Christ and the Ascension, these two scenes were frequently depicted together in early Christian art (Ills. 50).³⁷

The semblance between the Turin and Rabbula images is even more specific than that noted by Alexander. Although the Ascension page does appear as a straightforward narrative depiction of the event as described in Luke 24:51-52, “And it came to pass, whilst he blessed them, he departed from them, and was carried up to heaven. And they adoring went back into Jerusalem with great joy,” the image contains additional references. The patterned circle, arrangement of angels, book held by Christ and the gesture of blessing are reminiscent of Christ in the Second Coming. Indeed, the image strongly resembles the *Maiestas Domini* as it is depicted in the Codex Amiatinus (Ills. 48). Both show Christ, separated by a rainbow or similar decorative device and holding a book while flanked by angels. As in the Rabbula Gospels, the artist has conflated the Ascension scene with a Christ in Majesty in a single folio.³⁸ The verse inscribed on the Ascension page does

³⁶ As the folios were removed from the manuscript, which is no longer extant, the date and relationship of the leaves has had to be reconstructed. Also, Alexander points out that the text, “Uiri Galilei [sic] quid hic statis aspicientes in celum [sic]. Quemadmodum uidistis eum euntum, sic ueniet ad uos Jesus qui reversus est a uobis,” is a somewhat abbreviated version of Acts 1:11, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heavens shall so come, as you have seen him going to heaven.” Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, 81.

³⁷ Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, 81 and Beat Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des Ersten Jahrtausends*, Wiener Byzantinische Studien III (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1966), 69.

³⁸ Early theophanies commonly conflate the Ascension with a vision of Christ as described in Ezechiel and Revelation. See for example the Bawit wall paintings in Egypt or the small wooden icon in the Museo Sacro, the Vatican. André Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A*

not necessarily refer to the opposite page, the image of the Christ surrounded by 96 figures, but to Christ, flanked by angels in the medallion above. It seems more likely that the image of Christ surrounded by 96 figures represents the elect. Although Brenk argues that the number 96 simply refers to the numerological symbolism carried by the numbers 4 and 12 or alternatively 8 and 12, which when multiplied equal 96, it seems more likely that the number refers to the 144,000 elect described by Revelation 7:4, which is divisible by 96.

Both images dwell on the visual apprehension of Christ by man. The text places clear emphasis upon the visual apprehension of Christ. The men stand "looking to heaven;" they will see Christ return as they "have seen" him going. On the opposite page, Christ is shown surrounded by the elect, whose eternal reward is to look directly upon the face of God and adore him for eternity.³⁹ The men of Galilee look to heaven, just as the manuscript's audience look to the images of Christ in Glory and Christ surrounded by the elect. In looking at the manuscript, the audience participates directly with the elect and apostles who look to the glorified Christ.⁴⁰ It is worth noting that each of the 96 elect hold a small book in their hands. As will be shown in chapter six, this unusual iconography reflects the role of the book as an

Study of Its Origins (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 118-19, Ills. 118, 119 and 260. The Rabbula gospels (Syriac MS. Plut. I, 56) folio 13b, which show liturgical and iconographical connections with the Book of Kells, also contain a theophany/Ascension with Mary and the apostles beneath an ascending Christ. The angels in white garments, pointing to the vision of Christ must refer to Acts 1:10, "two men stood by them clad in white garments" making evident the reference to Acts 1:11, which is inscribed upon the Turin image, see below.

³⁹ The description of the 144,000 elect is quite specific about the robes of the elect as white, which is obviously not the case in the Turin image. Revelation 7:9-17 explains that the robes are white because the martyrs have washed their clothes in the blood of the lamb. The Irish insisted that martyrdom not be limited to the spilling of blood, describing three levels of martyrdom. A fifth century Spanish work, *De reparatione lapsi*, used in early Irish commentaries, describes the robes of such martyrs as washed in the white of tears, the scarlet of the blush of humility, and the blue of the bruises of those who suffered from Christ. Stancliff, "Red, White and Blue Martyrdom," in *Ireland in Mediaeval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, eds., Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick and David Dumville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 33-35. Possibly the variation from the traditional, white robes can be understood in this sense.

⁴⁰ This possibility will be discussed further in chapter four.

instrument of salvation. The image confirms that the audience, by looking to the gospels and thus to Christ, might someday number among the elect. This emphasis upon participation with the prophets and apostles in the visual contemplation of Christ appears repeatedly in the decoration of the Book of Kells.

The frequency with which Insular images emphasize the vision of the glorified Christ by man is evident. The emphasis upon the visual apprehension of Christ in the Ruthwell cross, Durham Gospels and St. Gall Codex 51 has been documented by both Éamonn Ó Carragáin and Jennifer O'Reilly.⁴¹ What has not been noted, is that of the surviving Insular gospel books, only four--St. Gall Codex 51, Turin Gospels, the Book of Kells and the Durham Gospels--have full-page illustrations beyond the typical evangelist portraits and symbol pages. Of these, all four contain images that make some reference to the visual apprehension of the Godhead.

The majority of continental examples occur as frontispieces, which contain an abstract cross and a central figure of the glorified Christ, and so, the page conflates both images that will confront man at Judgment, the glorified Christ and the cross of the crucifixion. Additionally, the images often include the four living creatures, an abundance of animals and/or human figures that look upon the cross or its central figure. The Veneration of the Cross ceremony, known and possibly practiced by Irish and Northumbrian churches, has led some to speculate that Insular images such as the cross carpet pages and the Ruthwell cross were directly influenced by the liturgy.⁴² Both the ceremony and the images reflect the same impetus within the

⁴¹ Ó Carragáin, "Ruthwell Crucifixion," 1-71 and O'Reilly "Text and Image," 72-118.

⁴² Ó Carragáin, "Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem," 1-71. Martin Werner, "The Cross-Carpet Page in the Book of Durrow: the Cult of the True Cross, Adomnán and Iona," *Art Bulletin* 72 (1990): 174-223. Werner has also argued that those continental images discussed below that incorporate the four evangelists around the figure of Christ and his cross emphasize the consensus of the gospels. Martin Werner, "The Four Evangelist Symbols," 3-15. While this is certainly one purpose of such imagery in gospel books, and explains the four symbols pages in Insular manuscripts, the visual adoration element that is a part of such pages appears in a greater variety of kinds of manuscripts as will be shown below.

Church--the desire to gaze upon the crucified Christ, and in so doing, to look toward the time when the earthly church will adore the glorified Christ with the elect.

In the manuscript, Laon 137, a large cross dominates the page. A lamb with a cross-nimbus, labeled "Angus Dei" stands in its center (Ills. 52). The evangelist symbols occupy the four terminals of the cross. The artist makes it evident that the symbols on the left and right look toward the lamb of God; the figure on the left turns to look at Christ, and that on the right peers out of the corner of his eyes. The manner in which the evangelists gaze upon the lamb and its position in the center of the cross certainly evokes Revelation 5:6, "In the midst of the [throne] and the four living creatures . . . a lamb standing as it were slain." Both the cross and lamb confront the viewer. The image presents the viewer with the two aspects of Christ, the pierced Christ and the Lamb who will rule the elect.⁴³ The elect look upon the lamb with adoration, but the damned, on the other hand, plead for the mountains to fall upon them in order to "hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."⁴⁴ The designer has inflated the text, "XPI IHU" until it dominates the upper half of the page, spelling out the duality that the image presents, Jesus the man and Christ the anointed one.⁴⁵ The device of expressing linguistically the hypostatic union of Christ's two natures, *communicatio idiomatum*, frequently occurs in this period.⁴⁶ Text and image both present the reader with a description of the unification of Christ's two natures. As he looks at the image, he joins with the four living creatures

⁴³ Revelation 7:17.

⁴⁴ Revelation 6:16.

⁴⁵ "Jesus" refers to the name of the man, while "Christ" signals his identity as the "annointed one." In Matthew 16:16 when Simon Peter recognizes the true identity of Jesus, he declares, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God."

⁴⁶ Ó Carragáin's article, "Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem," 15-16, includes an excellent introduction to this linguistic device. Ó Carragáin cites 1 Corinthians 2:8, "they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" pointing to its conflation of "crucified" with "Lord of Glory."

looking towards Christ and enacting the moment when all of creation will look upon the lamb that was slain.

Another image that conflates the cross with the apocalypse is the frontispiece of Paris lat. 12168 in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Ills. 54).⁴⁷ A large cross dominates the front page of Augustine's *Quaestiones in Heptateuchon*. Alpha and Omega pendants dangle from its arms. Although no lamb is depicted, a large bird stands at the top of the cross. The size and the dominant position of the bird suggest that it represents the resurrected Christ.⁴⁸ The "XPI" and "IHU" is written in display script, but not as large as before. Foliage emerges from a lozenge in the central square, most likely referring to Christ as the vine. Above in the arcade two quadrupeds eat from a more substantial looking plant, while at the bottom of the page, two more quadrupeds lick the base of the cross. The Insular influence on the page is strongly evident in the style and decoration of the arcade, the awkward interlace and the manner in which the beasts' tails snake around their legs in an extremely barbaric rendering of the zoomorphic types found in the Book of Kells and Corbie Psalter. Both the similarity and the awkwardness, suggests the possibility that this might be a direct copy of an Insular work.

The depiction of animals eating the vine, like most inhabited vine scrolls, carries eucharistic connotations with the vine symbolizing Christ's blood and the animals representing the Christian soul.⁴⁹ Images of a cross or crucified Christ between two animals were common in this period. One source for such imagery is the prophecy that Christ would be "recognized

⁴⁷ For a discussion of provenance and artistic influences see Jean Hubert, Jean Porcher, and W. F. Volbach, *Europe in the Dark Ages*, ed. Andre Malraux and Andre Parrot (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 178.

⁴⁸ L. Wehrhahn-Stauch, "Adler" in *Lexicon der Christlichen Ikonographie I*, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1968), 70-76.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of Christ as the grape see Augustine, *Enarrationes Ps.* 8.2. CCL 38, 50-52.. The basis of these comparisons was of course the wine as the "blood of the grape" (Genesis 49:11 and Deuteronomy 32:14) and Christ's declaration, "I am the vine," in John 15:5.

between two animals.”⁵⁰ Less common is the manner in which the quadrupeds lick the cross, carrying unmistakable connotations of adoration.⁵¹ As with the marginal animals in the Book of Kells, the animals take on anthropomorphic roles. As mentioned chapter two, Revelation 5:6-12 provides a scriptural source for animals as an adoring audience:

In the midst of the throne and the four living creatures . . . a lamb standing as it were slain. . . . the lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power . . . and glory. . . . And every creature, which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as in the sea, and that are in them . . . I heard all saying: To him that sitteth on the throne, and to the lamb, benediction and honour.

Scripture provides a textual source for the use of animals both in the adoration and recognition of Christ while the Apocrypha and Irish saints' lives suggest a possible source for the portrayal of birds animals as emotive creatures setting an example for mankind through their loyalty and devotion.

A related liturgical manuscript, Vatican Bibliotheca Apostolica Reg. lat. 316, directly reflects the influence of the Revelation passage (Ills. 53). On folio 131b, at the incipit of the second book, a cross dominates the page, with a seven-horned lamb with a cross and star occupying the central medallion. On either side, two quadrupeds, possibly goats or horses, flank the lamb, with their forelegs raised. Two large birds stand above the quadrupeds, while two smaller birds touch the Alpha and Omega with their beaks. A stag and a fish look back towards the cross from the other side of the page. Although these most likely carry additional meaning, the combination of birds, fish and mammals in an image already strongly imbued with

⁵⁰ A. T. Lucas, “In the Middle of Two Living Things’: Daniel or Christ?” in *Figures from the Past: Studies on Figurative Art in Christian Ireland: In Honour of Helen M. Roe*, ed. Etienne Rynne (Dun Laoghaire: Glendale Press for the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1987), 92-97.

⁵¹ The eighth-century Narbonne slab in the Musée Lapidaire contains a similar image, but uses human figures. While adoring the cross they appear to be sitting on a basilisk. This would seem to underline the apotropaic effect rendered by such devotions. See Porcher, Ills. 118.

apocalyptic iconography, does seem to refer to the various creatures of the earth, air and sea cited in Revelation 5:12.

The rest of the manuscript also emphasizes the visual apprehension of the Godhead. On folio 4r, another lamb appears in the center of a cross with alpha and omega pendants, from which dangle two birds (Ills. 55b). This page most closely agrees with conflation of the glorified and pierced Christ discussed in Jennifer O'Reilly's article. The lamb, with the cross behind it, obviously depicts the Christ as the slain Lamb. Within the arch directly above the cross, the artist has depicted the head and shoulders of a human figure who must be interpreted as the glorified Christ or an image of the Godhead. This is indicated by his position above the cross, the same as the large bird depicted in the frontispiece of the Paris Augustine. Also, within the arch are four beasts on either side of Christ, eating an abbreviated vine.

Finally, the Gellone Sacramentary must be mentioned although it has been cited already by Jennifer O'Reilly in her survey of imagery of the pierced and wounded Christ. O'Reilly notes the manner in which the Crucifixion image in the Gellone Sacramentary also makes reference to the exalted and pierced Christ through the presence of angels above the cross (Ills. 56a).⁵² A closer look at the visual evidence reveals that Gellone's imagery goes well beyond this in its reference to the time of Judgment and the audience's visual apprehension of Christ as wounded and glorified. A living Christ, stares out at the viewer. The artist has taken pains to articulate the blood spurting forth from Christ's side, which obviously refers to the eucharistic wine, befitting an initial marking the beginning of the *Te Igitur* as well as underlining Christ's role as "him they pierced." Even more remarkable is the small, figure with gray hair on the opposite folio, who clearly looks to the page opposite (Ills. 56b). The figure, positioned at the

⁵² O'Reilly, "Text and Image," 81.

top of the opposite folio, does not look to the Crucifixion itself but to the text, which is the preface of the canon, in which the celebrant enjoins the congregation to join with the angels and saints to glorify God.⁵³ The figure's position and gaze, even the manner of depiction, closely resembles the figures in the Book of Kells that look across from the text to the intended Crucifixion page (Ills. 3). The conflation of the exalted and wounded Christ and the small, marginal figure staring towards the image, all seem to emphasize the visual apprehension of the crucified Christ while at the same time making reference to the vision of the glorified Christ that will come in the last days.

These images show that the emphasis upon looking at Christ and its eschatological connotations were not unknown in the period. As shown in the Gellone and Turin images, such images referred not only to Judgement, but also to the time when the whole Church would be unified, when the angels, saints and elect would gaze upon the glorified Christ and sing his praises. As will be shown in the next chapter a similar association is found within the full-page imagery and minor decoration of the Book of Kells. Jennifer O'Reilly first noticed an emphasis upon looking at the Godhead, pointing to the groups of men that look to the intended Crucifixion image, "the onlookers graphically evoke the common scriptural and exegetical use of looking and seeing as a metaphor for the spiritual insight or recognition enjoined of the reader."⁵⁴ O'Reilly limits her discussion of recognition and looking in the Book of Kells to folios 124r and 114r, however, the theme of recognition occurs throughout the decoration of the manuscript, including almost all of the full-page illustrations. The manuscript evidences an awareness of itself, as a visible guide that opens the senses of man.

⁵³ "Per quem maiestatem tuam laudant angeli, adorant dominationis tremunt potestates. Caeli celorumque uirtus ac beata seraphyn socia exultatione concelebrant cum quibus et nostras uoces ut admitti iubeas deprecamur, supplici confessione dicentes sanctus sanctus sanctus . . ."

⁵⁴ O'Reilly, "Book of Kells," 109.

Chapter Four

Discerning God: "Everyone that Seeth the Son, and Believeth."

The prevalence of imagery referring to the visual apprehension and adoration of Christ, either as man or God, indicates the popularity of these images. In part, these can be dismissed as fulfilling the traditional role of theophanies so evident in early Christian wall painting and frescoes, but the apocalyptic overtones, the contrast between the wounded and exalted Christ and the emphasis upon the gaze makes these images exceptional. In the Book of Kells, the consistency of the emphasis upon the visual apprehension and recognition of Christ is extensive, specific and demonstrates a self-conscious articulation of the gospel book's function. As the previous section demonstrated, images, the gospels and the gospel book functioned as aids towards mankind's apprehension of the Godhead. It is therefore unsurprising that a highly decorated and extensively illustrated gospel book should reflect its role in the process. What is unusual is the manner and extent to which the Book of Kells achieves this.

The decoration points to the role of Christ, the man, as a physical manifestation of the Godhead and a visible sign of salvation. It highlights passages of text that refer to the moment when mankind, both saved and damned, will look upon his return. The manner in which Christ is shown visibly emerging from the script clearly indicates that in looking to the script, the audience looks toward Christ. Additionally, the manuscript's full-page images present man with the vision of Christ at the Last Judgment. These images would provoke opposing emotions of joy, fear and repentance. The Church fathers repeatedly instruct man to look towards Judgment day with fear but also with joy. In the same homily in which Gregory warns, "The more you anticipate his severity by fear, the more securely you will behold the coming of your eternal judge," he states, "Those who love God are ordered to

rejoice and be merry at the world's end."¹ While images of Judgment and the Second Coming, would certainly provoke thoughts of Judgment and the joyous and fearful emotions associated with it, the decoration of the Book of Kells points to the instruments of salvation at the disposal of man. These include the Eucharist, the Church and the scriptures, all of which lead man towards Christ and the Godhead.² The primary aid to man's salvation, however, is Christ, who came so that man would be saved. It is Christ's physical manifestation as witnessed by the gospels that the Book of Kells repeatedly shows as both a sign and a shield that enables man to look to the vision of the Godhead with joy and adoration as a member of the elect. Additionally, the manuscript decorates passages that describe the blindness of the Jews with the head of Christ. The manuscript's audience, looking upon text and image and recognizing it as Christ, thus distinguish themselves from the Jews and the damned.

The Book of Kells consistently highlights text that deals with the revelation of the Godhead to man either by decoration, illustration, size, layout or a combination of the four. The Chi Rho, marking Matthew 1:18, employs illustration, size and decoration to arrest the eye and illuminate the meaning of the text, "Now the generation of Christ was this wise." The text marks Christ's entrance into the world of the flesh, but also into the gospel text itself. Insular gospels often employ a large initial to distinguish between the prologue of the gospel and the story itself.³ Matthew 1:18, however, receives extra emphasis, often occupying an entire page. Matthew, as the first gospel, contains the first description of Christ's entrance into the world, "The generation of Christ was in this wise," and so introduces Christ into the

¹ Gregory the Great, *Forty Gospel Homilies*, 20 and 17. *Homiliarum*, Hom. 1.6, "Aduentum namque aeterni iudicis tanto securiores quandoque uidebitis, quanto nunc distractionem illius timendo praeuentis," and Hom. 1.3, "Deum diligunt ex mundi fine gaudere atque hilarescere iubentur," in *PL* 77, 1080 and 1079.

² The association between the gospel book and Eucharist as instruments of salvation are discussed in chapters six and seven.

³ Verey, 26. The Book of Kells does this at Luke 1:5.

gospel book. In terms of the gospel book, Matthew 1:18 offers man his first glimpse of the Logos made visible. The decoration renders this literally, showing the image of Christ, the "image of God," emerging from the Logos (Ills. 59). The large Chi, or "X", with its resemblance to both the cross and an ancient symbol of divinity, would encapsulate both the purpose of the incarnation as well as the incomprehensible infinity of the Logos.⁴

Additionally, the decoration may refer to the adoration of Christ at the end of the world. The surrounding decoration includes angels, cats, mice, butterflies, an otter with a fish, and a human head.⁵ The bizarre conglomeration of angels and beasts, otters and man closely agrees with the description of Christ's adoration given in Revelation 5:13, "And every creature, which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea." Angels inhabit heaven, cats the earth, mice under the earth, otters and fish occupy the sea. Additionally, as pointed out by Suzanne Lewis, the otter eating the fish, the butterflies nibbling their chrysalis and the mice eating a wafer with a small red cross make obvious references to the Eucharist. Such references to the Eucharist, also seen in the continental examples discussed earlier, repeatedly occur in connection with the adoration and revelation of Christ.

The Chi Rho, with its image of Christ emerging from the letter, size and decoration, isolates the verse that marks Christ's entrance both into the world and gospel book. The viewer looking at the text with its almost infinite and unfathomable design is confronted with a simple frontal head and blonde curls. Despite the complexity of the page, the head is clearly and easily visible emerging from the bright red Rho, surrounded by gold with red

⁴ Lewis identifies the animals described below as representing the earth, air and sea, serving as "metaphorical guises for Christ and his mystical body." This is an extremely abbreviated summary of Suzanne Lewis' complex discussion of the symbolism of the Chi shape. See Lewis, 139-59.

⁵ Ibid., Lewis fails to take note, however, of the eschatological implications of these creatures. See discussion below.

interlace. The body, however, is absent. Christ, although flesh, is rendered only partially visible by the artist. This frequently occurs in the Book of Kells. Possibly the artist depicts only the head as a type of abbreviation, but the consistency with which this is done in both the minor and full-page imagery suggests an element of consciousness. In the minor decoration, Christ's body is never fully shown. Most frequently Christ is depicted as he is here; a human head with blonde hair. On folio 95r, his arm, head and upper torso are depicted and on folio 58v, his foot and head is shown (Ills. 61 and 42a). Frequently, his head is only partially shown in profile such as on folio 179v (Ills. 63). The head of Christ emerges from the letter. The letter acts as a substitute body; the visible shell of Christ.

The Psalms frequently refer to the apprehension of God as looking specifically on the "face" of God. The association between damnation and the inability to perceive the Godhead is succinctly stated in Psalm 142, verse 7, "Turn not thy face away from me, lest I be like unto them that go down to the pit."⁶ The Psalmist repeatedly looks to the Lord, desiring to see his countenance and find salvation, "My eyes are ever towards the Lord: for he shall pluck my feet out of the snare."⁷ Repeatedly the Psalmist asks to see the face of the Lord, "Make thy face shine upon thy servant; save me in thy mercy."⁸ The connection between the face of the Lord and salvation is often explicit, "And show us thy face, and we shall be saved."⁹ Augustine, commenting on this verse, interpreted Christ's appearance on the earth as God showing his darkened face.¹⁰ The appearance of Christ's face emerging from the Chi Rho at the point in the gospel book where Christ first appears on earth closely parallels the verse and its Christological interpretation. The Psalms

⁶ "Non auertas faciem tuam a me: et similis ero descendentibus in lacum." Because the language of the Psalms plays such an important role in the manuscript's decoration, the Latin Vulgate is cited in the footnotes.

⁷ "Oculi mei semper ad Dominum: quoniam ipse euellet de laqueo pedes meos (Ps. 24:15)."

⁸ "Illustra faciem tuam super seruum tuum, saluum me fac in misericordia tua (Ps. 30:17)."

⁹ "Et ostende faciem tuam, et salui erimus (Ps. 79:4)."

¹⁰ Augustine, *Enarrationes*, Ps. 79.4. *CCSL* 39, 1113.

make clear that the vision of the Lord and even the search itself strengthens the soul seeking salvation, "Seek ye the Lord, and be strengthened: seek his face evermore."¹¹ The Psalmist frequently refers to his eyes as looking towards or unto the face of God.¹²

The monks who executed the Book of Kells and decorated the high crosses knew the Psalms intimately and were constantly inundated with the language of the Psalms.¹³ Within the environs of the monasteries, the Psalms were naturally sung day and night. On one occasion Mael Ruain of Tallaght asks whether reciting fifty Psalms a day, instead of the 150 a day prescribed by the Rule of the Céli De, would be acceptable if they were accompanied by instruction.¹⁴ Also the Psalms were used as a reading primer and learned by rote as part of a child's preparation for the monastery.¹⁵ In light of this, the association between the language of the Psalms and that of the gospels is not surprising. It seems likely that the human heads might reflect the influence of the metaphors of the Psalms.¹⁶

Besides the influence of the Psalms, there are theological reasons for the partial depiction of Christ. Man while on earth can only partially apprehend the Godhead as Christ's glory is hidden by his flesh. In looking at Christ the Man as witnessed in the gospel, the audience only partially comprehends Christ's true nature.¹⁷ In the gospels, Christ often alludes to his true nature and its revelation in the Second Coming. Despite the

¹¹ "Quaerite Dominum, et confirmamini: quaerite faciem eius semper (Ps. 104: 4)."

¹² See, for example, Psalm 122 and Psalm 140, verse 8.

¹³ See Martin McNamara, "Psalter Text," 201-71. Timothy O' Neill cites the case of Baire of Cork who learns to read the Psalms with his tutor and then begins to visit the bishop in order to study the gospel of Matthew. O'Neill, 71. The subconscious influence of the language and metaphor of the Psalms should not be underestimated. Tom Clancy, in conversation, has pointed out that the poetry of the period seems to demonstrate the same dependence upon the Psalms.

¹⁴ Martin McNamara, "The Psalter in Early Irish Monastic Spirituality," *Monastic Studies* 14 (1983): 183-84.

¹⁵ McNamara, "Psalter Text," 206.

¹⁶ While the use of heads is not that atypical, the depiction of evil seems to show particular influence of the Psalms. See chapter three.

¹⁷ See discussion in part one of this chapter.

unimaginable nature of this event, early Christian art often attempts to depict it. The Codex Amiatinus and Bawit frescoes exemplify such attempts. In the depiction of Christ glorified, the artists almost without exception isolate the vision of the Godhead within an aureole of light or within a disk or similar shape, thus explaining that the image is an exceptional and momentary vision.¹⁸ In Insular manuscripts, Christ is typically shown within a frame, clearly separated from those who witness his glory.¹⁹ Possibly, the depiction of only Christ's head or face within the Book of Kells operates in a similar manner, underlining that only a glimpse of Christ glorified is afforded to man while on earth.

Most remarkable is the manner in which these blonde heads appear emerging from the script in sections of text in which Christ refers to his glorification. Within the pages of text of the manuscript, twenty-seven human heads occur.²⁰ Superficially, at least, the majority of these appear similar. Most frequently, they are shown in profile with blonde hair. They do not, for the most part, contain any identifying characteristics such as a cross nimbus as is the case with many Corbie Psalter initials. They might represent the reader, the various characters from the gospel, Christ or be merely decorative. As shown in the previous chapter, they do not show any association with the beginning of readings or chapter divisions. They are relatively large and easily perceived even from some distance. Ten of the heads occur alongside text that refers specifically to Christ's glorification or identity as the Godhead, and five more emerge from text that places emphasis upon man's visual apprehension of the event. Three appear next to text that describes Christ's incarnation as the fulfillment of the scripture. Of the remaining nine heads, two occur in text describing life after death and at least two occur in text that

¹⁸ Grabar, *Christian Iconography*, 117.

¹⁹ For a discussion of Insular Last Judgment iconography, and the division of Christ from witnesses, see Jane Hawkes, "A Question of Judgment: The Iconic Programme at Sandbach, Cheshire" in Bourke, *From the Isles of the North*, 213-15.

²⁰ See appendix C1.

does not refer to Christ at all. Others appear in passages that have some exegetical significance.

The fifteen heads that appear in text relating to Jesus' identity as the glorified Christ do not show much variation, appearing very similar. Two of the heads, do not depict Christ himself, but are quite similar to those that portray Christ. The appearance of these heads does not follow a strict system or nor are they as explicit as the full-page imagery; and yet, the emphasis upon the man's recognition of Jesus' identity remains. They do not always appear where expected, for example, Luke 24:31, where the apostles eyes are opened at Christ's breaking of the bread, is one of the most important recognition passages with specific reference to the role of the Eucharist, but it contains no significant decoration. Despite such omissions, a pattern can be identified when each of the fifteen initials is examined individually and systematically.

The most obvious initial, with a readily apparent meaning and identity occurs on folio 179v. A blonde head, beardless, emerges from the H of the IHS (Ills. 63). The passage, Mark 14:62, incorporates all aspects of the apprehension of the Logos discussed in the first part of the chapter: recognition, or lack of recognition of Jesus' true identity, allusion to the Second Coming and a specific reference to seeing the glorified Christ at that moment. Mark 14 describes the first part of the Passion, where Christ is captured and questioned by the high priests. At Mark 14:61 they attempt to entrap him into blasphemous utterance after failing to condemn him by false witness. They ask Christ, "Art thou the Christ the Son of the blessed God?" The initial marks Christ's response, "And Jesus said to him: I am. And you shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

The script is extended, prominently colored and highly visible even from a distance. The last part of the priests question, ". . . xps filius di" stands

directly over the IHS and its emerging blonde head. The blue pigment within the S and interlace of the initial echoes the color of the line-end of the verse above. Instead of acting as a question, the phrase acts like a label, confirming the identity of the figure of Jesus Christ depicted both by the text, the IHS, and its image. Instead of an abbreviation mark, the artist uses a fish, further confirming the identity of the figure.

The initial, the script and Christ's response all assert his identity. The audience, looking upon the image and the sacred name, look to the face of Christ, recognizing his true identity. In so doing, they distinguish themselves from the blind priests who fail to recognize Jesus, despite his assertions and physical presence in their midst. The audience by recognizing Christ hope to align themselves with the elect, so that they will be able to look upon him when he returns seated at God's right hand, in contrast to those who will stand among the damned. Christ's response is also directed toward the priests who plot his execution. They too will witness his return, "when the heavens are opened . . . everyone, elect and condemned together will see him, that the righteous may rejoice unendingly at receiving their recompense, and the unrighteous may groan forever in the torment of their punishment."²¹

A similar blonde, beardless head shown in profile, emerges from the initial beginning Matthew 16:28. The text is quite similar to that of Mark 14:61. At the end of Matthew 16, Christ tells his disciples that they must follow his suffering in order to be saved. Matthew 16:27, the verse above the initial, says why this must be done, "For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels: and then he will render to every man according to his works." The passage at this point has prophesied the Second Coming and the need for man to imitate Christ in order to be saved, both of

²¹ Gregory the Great, *Forty Gospel Homilies*, 40. *Homiliarum*, Hom. 20.7 (Lk. 3:1-11), "Ubi cum apertis coelis . . . in sede majestatis suae Christus appuerit, omnes huac et electi et reprobi pariter uidebunt, ut et justii de munere retributionis sine fine gaudeant, et injusti in ultione supplicii in perpetuum gemant." PL 76, 1163.

which, according to exegesis, are fundamental aspects of man's apprehension of the Logos. The decorated verse follows immediately, Matthew 16:28, "Amen I say to you there are some of them that stand here, that shall not taste death, till they see the son of man coming in his kingdom." The passage makes specific verbal reference to the visual aspect of man's apprehension of the Godhead. The head of Christ stares out towards the text, emerging from the top of the letter. The head as the "face of God" carries strong connotations of the time when man will once again see Jesus, in the Second Coming. More significantly, a human head with its large eyes, staring across to the text, has immediate associations with looking and seeing. The verse refers to the transfiguration that is described in the verses below, in which the disciples see Christ in glory. Bede, in his Lenten sermon on the passage suggests the vision of Christ in Glory described here and elsewhere in the gospels acts as aid and comfort to man in his struggle against the sin of earthly desire enabling him to think instead of the rewards of the next life. Citing Matthew 16:28, Bede writes:

So the benevolent Master [willed] to point out in advance the joys of the eternal promise to some of his disciples while they were still living their lives on earth, in order that those who had seen [him], and everyone that was able to hear [about him], would more easily tolerate present adversities if they recalled in their minds the gift of the future reward for which they were waiting, Hence there follows "there are some of them standing here. . . ."²²

The Book of Kells presents the reader with an image of the reward to come, the face of God.²³ A similar, although badly damaged initial marks

²² Bede, *Bede the Venerable: Homilies on the Gospels: Book One, Advent to Lent*, trans. Lawrence Martin and David Hurst, Cistercian Studies Series 110 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 236. *Opera Homiletica*, Hom. I.24 (Mt. 16:27-17:9), "Pius magister aliquibus discipulorum suorum adhuc in terra degentibus aeternae repromissionis gaudia praemonstrare quatenus et ipsi qui uidissent et omnes qui audire possent leuius aduersa praesentia tolerarent reducto saepius ad mentem futurae retributionis munere quod expectarent. Unde sequitur: Amen dico uobis, sunt quidam de hic stantibus. . ." CCSL 122, 171.

²³ The serpent within the letter also supports this; not as a symbol of resurrection but as the staff of Moses.

John 16:33, "These things I have spoken to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you shall have distress: but have confidence; I have overcome the world." The verse carries the same assurance of future reward as an incentive to suffer in this life, and in the same manner as in the Matthew gospel, the decoration presents the reader with a visual sign of that reward. The gospel book not only describes the occurrence in its text, it also physically and visually presents the reader with an image of the face of Christ. Image, as well as text, gives the audience a description of the face of God, which the Psalms, patristic writings and poetry state is the desire of all those who love God. In his sermon on this passage Bede makes this explicit, saying, "Because one who eagerly desires to see God, and to reach the glory of the blessed resurrection, he should do good things."²⁴

Other human heads appear in verses that presage the sentiment of Columbanus, "Great fear for the end, my dearest brethren, is instilled in us by the Lord through the Gospel and Paul. . . . What tears have we need of, and how many sighs . . . that we may escape the anger of our judge? This is threatened by the creator."²⁵ On folio 296r, a blonde head marks the verse that introduces Christ's clearing of the temple. Bede's sermon on the episode urges his listeners to remain vigilant for Christ's return, "These things should cause some great perturbation. . . . Lest he come unexpectedly and find something evil in us, as a result of which we should be rightly scourged and cast out of the Church."²⁶ Jerome voices a similar sentiment in his

²⁴ Bede, *Homiliae*, Hom. I. 24 (Mt. 16:27-17:9), "Et quia qui Deum uidere qui ad gloriam beatae resurrectionis pertinere concupiscit debet agere bona."

²⁵ Columbanus, 101. *Instructio* 10, "Multum nobis de fine, fratres carissimi, timorem Dominus . . . per Evangelium et Paulum incussit. . . . Quibus lacrimis, quantis suspiriis opus est. . . . ut iram iudicis tantam effugere possimus? Quam universitatis creator . . . minatur." *Ibid.*, 100.

²⁶ Bede, *Bede the Venerable: Homilies on the Gospels: Book Two, Lent to the Dedication of the Church*, trans. Lawrence Martin and David Hurst, Cistercian Studies Series 110 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 3. *Homiliae*, Hom. 2.1 (John 2:12-22), "Unde multum tremenda sunt haec . . . ne ueniens inprouisus peruersum quid in nobis unde merito flagellari ac de ecclesia eici debeamus inueniat." *CCSL* 122, 186.

commentary on Matthew's version of the same incident.²⁷ The Book of Kells holds up the face of God to the viewer as a warning. Listening to the gospels' warning, the decoration reminds the congregation that Christ may appear at any moment and judge them in the same manner as described in the verse.

Two similar images occur in text that highlights the question of Jesus' identity as Christ who will return in glory. On folio 311v, the face of Christ emerges from the "H" that begins the passage in John 7:9-15, which describes Christ's secret attendance at the Feast of the Tabernacles while the crowds discuss his identity. Some believe he is a good man while other reject him as deceitful. The first line of the passage, "When he had said these things . . ." refers the listener to the passage above, where Christ replies, "My time is not yet come."²⁸ Both passages focus upon the hidden face of Christ that was not perceived by all during his time on earth, but that will be made known to all at the time of Judgment.

On folio 336r, a head with an unusually robust beard and blonde hair is shown in profile emerging from the initial that marks John 15:13 (Ills. 64). In the Book of Kells, Christ is sometimes shown with a full beard, in places a shadow of a beard, and in others he is completely beardless. Christ has a beard at his arrest on folio 114r and also in his glorification on folio 32v, and yet lacks a beard in the Temptation and Chi Rho pages. In the minor decoration, Christ appears most often in a beardless state, especially in passages that refer to seeing or looking upon Christ in his second coming. It is interesting to note that the head with the most distinctive beard marks John 15:13, "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." The head has quite a full, brown beard with carefully delineated strands of hair. The passage was considered by many patristic writers as one of the greatest examples of how man could follow Christ's earthly existence.

²⁷ Jerome, *Commentariorum in Matheum Libri IV, In Matheum*, 3 (21:15) CCL 77:188.

²⁸ John 7:6.

Hair and beards especially have strong associations with the frailty of human existence.²⁹

In another passage, John 16:33-17:2, Christ reveals his true identity but speaks very much as a man, awaiting glorification:

These things I have spoken, that in me you may have peace. . .
 . I have overcome the world. These things Jesus spoke, and lifting his eyes up to heaven, he said: Father the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over the flesh, that he may give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him.

The image presented to Kells' audience is of Christ, bearded and looking to heaven from his earthly flesh. The head acts to draw attention to the verse that describes the Second Coming. Both the beard and the verse, reminds the audience that Christ became flesh, so that mankind could look upon the glorified Christ for eternity. The bearded face verifies that Christ became a man, and thus, even sinners might hope for membership amongst the elect. A similar initial on folio 41v also begins a verse that focuses upon the confirmation of Christ's identity and power. A blonde head looks directly at the verse that it decorates, "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am come not to destroy but to fulfill (Ils. 62)." The head lacks a beard. Its long hair loops around the initial in a loose tri-knot. Several initials depicting both Christ and God the Father employ this device.³⁰ The verse does not refer to Jesus existence in the flesh, but refers to his role as the prophesied Christ. The image of Christ verifies his appearance in fulfillment of the scriptures.

A somewhat different human head appears on folio 294r in the initial beginning John 1:28. Unlike the heads discussed above, it does not look

²⁹ For a discussion of early medieval attitudes towards beards see Giles Constable, "Beards in History," 47-56, in Burchard of Bellevaux, *Apologia de Barbis. Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 63 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1962). I am indebted to my colleague, Jennifer Thompson, for this reference.

³⁰ See appendix C.

towards the verse that it decorates and wears a long, curled beard (Ills. 65b). The verse summarizes the actions and words of John the Baptist while in Bethania and has been identified as John the Baptist.³¹ The reason for the artist's decision to depict John the Baptist, however, has not yet been explained. The section of text that the initial decorates does not correspond to modern verse divisions. The Kells' block of text is much longer and includes John's greeting to Christ, "These things were done in Bethania, beyond the Jordan, where John was baptising. The next day, John saw Jesus coming to him and said: Behold the lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sins of the world." John is one of the few people in the scriptures to know Christ's identity and purpose immediately, as even the disciples have difficulty comprehending Christ's mission and true nature. John the Baptist, instantly recognizes Christ from afar and succinctly summarizes his identity and the reason for the Incarnation. He not only tells this to everyone, but instructs man to look upon him, to behold the lamb.³² The verse then, like the others discussed so far, deals with man's visual apprehension of Christ as the image of the Godhead. Additionally, John the Baptist's identification of Jesus as the lamb of God, has obvious apocalyptic associations.

The artist chooses not to depict Christ, however, but rather the one who recognizes and heralds Christ. The long beard distinguishes John, but so does the manner in which he stares away from the text that he utters to the verse on the opposite folio. Directly in the line of his gaze are the words, "Ad eum interrogarent . . . non egavit et confessus est quia non sum ego xps (Ills. 65a)." The verse, John 1:19-20, describes the approach of the Jewish priests and Levites who question John as to his identity and John's response, "I am not the Christ." John's denial, "non sum ego xps," directly confronts the gaze of the face in the initial. The interaction between text and image prevents any

³¹ Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 68.

³² See discussion of Flavianity Gospels in chapter seven where Christ has a similar role.

confusion as to the identity of the head. Such interaction between opposite folios indicates that the Book of Kells was displayed on the altar, its paired folios meant to be viewed as a single entity. Interaction across folios, as shown in part one is not coincidental but occurs with great consistency throughout the manuscript.

Folio 309r contains another example of this type (Ills. 66b). The folio contains two heads. One faces the verse John 6:39-40, "Now this is the will of the father who sent me. . . . I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again on the last day. Now this is the will of my Father that sent me: that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in him, may have life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day." The verses virtually run together; the tri-dot punctuation of a lesser pause, hidden with the first letter of the second verse. Only this and a green in-fill distinguish the two verses, as a result the text appears as a singular block, with the face at its start. The face unlike the others discussed, has a full, gray beard despite its yellow hair. The unusual appearance and the specific mention of "me patris" in the verse has led to the head's identification as God the father while the face below has been identified as a youthful Christ.³³

The head below does seem to correspond to an image of Christ. It looks away from the text, lacks a beard and has yellow hair. Additionally, the initial is surrounded by red tri-dots and a dotted border and contains bright yellow interlace on a red background. The head decorates the next verse, John 6:41, "The Jews therefore murmured at him because he had said: I am the living bread which came down from heaven." The verse could suggest that the head be identified as the Jews murmuring against Christ in the same manner that the head of John the Baptist decorated the verse spoken by him. However, as will be established in the following chapter, the manuscript

³³ Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 68.

places special emphasis upon Jews speaking against Christ and depicts them as beasts or full-bodied figures entangled by their own tongues and limbs. Additionally, the face looks across to the text directly opposite on the verso, to John 6:35-6, "I am the bread of life. . . . But I said unto you, that you have seen me, and you believe not (Ills. 66b)." The face of Christ looks directly at his utterance, "I am the bread of life," which is quoted against him by the Jews. The audience, looking at the image of Jesus, himself the "image of God," directly beneath the artist's image of God, confirms the foolishness of the Jews. Christ in Luke 4:4 says, "It is written, that Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word of God." The audience of believers, look only upon a painted face and script, yet they believe. Christ became flesh, became visible, so that man could eat the bread of life, the Word of God, and live.

The verses above, marked by the head of God the father, emphasize the visual apprehension of Christ and salvation, "Everyone who seeth the Son and believeth in him, may have life everlasting, and I will raise him up on the last day." The folios, text and decoration show an emphasis upon the visual perception of Christ, on the Last Judgment, salvation and the Eucharist. The Eucharist, as seen in the discussion of the Chi Rho and continental manuscripts, repeatedly appears in connection with the apprehension of the Godhead. This relationship will be pursued further in part three. Sufficient to note at this point, that both the gospel book and the Eucharist were visible to the congregation at points during the liturgy and sat next to one another on the altar.³⁴ By looking at the image of Christ, housed within the text of the gospel book, the viewer insured that he would count amongst those who "seeth the Son" and would therefore number amongst the saved. The decoration shows the manner in which Christ is housed within the text, by depicting him emerging from the script.

³⁴ See discussion of Temptation page later in this chapter and in chapter seven.

The association of the text of the gospel book and the image of Christ is best illustrated on folio 336r (Ills. 67). A blonde, human head in profile faces the verse that it begins, "But I told you not these things from the beginning because I was with you. And now I go to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me: Whither goes thou." The block of text extends from John 16:5 to John 16:10 with little interruption. The passage details the descent of the holy spirit that, "Will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin: because they believed not in me. And of justice: because I go to the Father and you shall see me no longer." Augustine's commentary on the passage stresses the visual apprehension of the Godhead at the moment of the Ascension, "He means that His departure should be such that none would ask of that which they should see taking place in broad daylight before their eyes. . . .Of His going into heaven they made no verbal inquiry but had ocular evidence."³⁵ The passage describes Christ's true identity, judgment, as well as emphasizing that Christ's incarnation as flesh was only for a short period of time. The head decorating the passage is unusual in that it seems to bite the letter of text, or alternatively, the letter emerges from the mouth of Christ. It shows Christ's connection to the text of the gospel book, "These things I have spoken to you." The passage makes clear, that after his death, the visible Christ is absent from the world of the flesh. Man is left with the record of the spoken word and the invisible holy spirit.

Shortly before this, John 15:20 refers directly to the memory of the spoken word, where Christ says to his disciples, "Remember my word that I said to you." Again, a blond head in profile looks at the text that it decorates (Ills. 68a). The head draws attention to the verse, stressing the importance of

³⁵ Augustine, *Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel according to St. John*, trans. Rev. John Gibb (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1874), 356-57. *In Iohannis Euangelium*, tract 94.3, "Significat sic se iturum ut nullus interrogaret, quod palam fieri uisu corporis cernerent. . . . et euntem in caelum non uerbis quaesierunt, sed oculis deduxerunt." CCSL 36, 563.

the gospel text as a witness to Christ's life. The rest of the passage outlines why Christ's life and words have such significance to man, "If I had not come, and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin." John 15:20 occurs on folio 336v. Because of the misordering of folios 335 and 336, the text continues on the previous folio, folio 335r. The text intended to appear directly opposite of the initial, directly in the line of sight of the head, is the script, "uiderunt et oderunt et me et patrem meum sed ut inpleatur sermo quim lege eorum scriptus est quia o dio (Ills 68b)." In the verse, John 15:24, Christ tells his followers that he came so that he, and therefore the father, could be seen and hated so that scripture would be fulfilled. Christ concludes by saying that the spirit and the disciples shall give testimony of him.

The two heads, one at John 15:20 and one at John 16:5, mark out one of the most extensive descriptions in the gospels of Christ's identity and return. Both verses refer specifically, if not directly, to the role played by the gospel. John 15:20 begins, "But I told you these things," and John 16:5 states, "Remember my word." These verses do not feature in any related lection system, nor are they the beginning of Eusebian verses.³⁶ Nor do they feature especially within patristic writings. The only explanation for the decision to place emphasis on these verses within the passage is their specific reference to Christ's spoken word and the inference of the role of the gospels as authorized witnesses. The visual evidence, the unusual depiction of the letter emerging out of Christ, rather than the more typical initial where Christ

³⁶ Trèves has a reading beginning at John 15:26 that ends at John 16:15; Würzburg has no reading for chapter 15 and a reading at 16:7. de Bruyne, "Le notes liturgiques," 46-52 and Salmon "Le système," 38-53. Luxeuil has a reading from John 15:17 to 16:4 for *de pluris unius martyris*. Godu, 865. The Lindisfarne gospels have a decorated initial marking John 16, thought to correspond to a Easter lection. Brown, 40-1. The Mozarabic liturgy has readings for John 15:12-16 and John 16:16-33. Godu, 858-61. The Rabbula codex notes that John 15:1 began an Easter reading. Merk 205-09. Clearly chapters 15 and 16 of the John gospel played an important role of the liturgy, suggesting that these folios would have been displayed during the liturgical year; however, none of these lections start or end at John 15:20 and 16:5, indicating that the Kells scribe has chosen to emphasize the beginning of these two verses for thematic reasons.

emerges from the letter, supports this explanation.

Another blonde head appears on folio 296v (Ills. 69). It appears at the top of the initial. Its beard terminates in a spiral and its hair in a well-formed, interlaced knot. The initial marks John 2:17, which begins the description of Christ's discussion with the Jews concerning the destruction and raising of the temple. In the verse below the Jews demand from Christ a sign of his authority. The text has been written first, with the initial and its decoration awkwardly inserted. This effort suggests that the decoration was not erratic and casual but rather considered a necessary addition to the text. The passage clarifies that Christ spoke of his body, "When therefore he was risen again from the dead, his disciples remembered, that he had said this, and they believed the scripture, and the word Jesus had said." The passage does not at any point mention the Second Coming, but does dwell upon the recognition, by the disciples and others, of Christ's identity. Not only do the disciples realize the truth of Christ's word, somewhat after the fact, but also many others "believed in his name, seeing his signs which he did."³⁷ It is when the Jews demand for a sign, that Christ tells them to destroy the temple and he will raise it. The Jews fail to understand that Christ speaks of his own flesh. The initial depicts the sign, the face of Christ. The manuscript's audience, looking at and listening to the gospel text's description of Christ signs and deeds, the sacred scripture and the face of Christ, also look and believe.

Folio 182r also plays with the ironic dialectic between the faithful audience and the disbelieving generation (Ills. 33). The image is one of the most unique heads in the manuscript, wearing a yellow and brown head covering.³⁸ The head decorates Mark 15:16-19, the passage that describes the

³⁷ John 2:23.

³⁸ Meehan suggests that the hat might be a skull cap or tonsure, which would suggest that the figure does not represent Christ. Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 68. The Kells' artists are quite adept at depicting a naturalistic tonsure on a small scale such as on folio 188r and 255v. This image is quite different. Also a skull cap would seem at odds with the surrounding text and the yellow shape is quite separate from the figure's naturalistic sideburns and beard and is therefore unlikely to represent hair.

mocking and beating of Christ by the soldiers, "And the soldiers led him away. . . . And they clothed him with purple and plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon him. . . . And bowing their knees, they adored him." The soldiers' mocking of Christ epitomized the blindness of the generation. Despite Christ's presence, they fail to recognize him as the king of kings, adored for eternity. The surrounding text and unusual head gear suggests that the head depicts Christ being mocked, wearing a crown of thorns, as does the manner in which the image looks to the lines, "the King of the Jews," on the opposite page.³⁹ The image of the soldiers mocking Christ appears frequently on the high crosses, often shown among a series of images that focus upon the dialectic between those who look upon Jesus and recognize him as the one, true God and those who rejected him.⁴⁰ The image in the manuscript, showing Christ, wearing a semblance of a thorny crown, throws into contrast the ironic adoration of the soldiers to the sincere adulation of the congregation. Both look upon God's image, but while the soldiers look directly at Jesus Christ, the faithful look upon an image of Christ. The soldier's closer physical proximity only highlights their blindness.

The recognition of Christ had immediate eschatological implications. Those who discerned Christ the man as the face of God would be rewarded with the eternal vision of the Godhead, while those who failed to recognize Christ's true identity, would be damned eternally, and as such would no longer be able to gaze upon God in his full radiance. The images of Judgment on Monasterboice and Clonmacnois high crosses render this literally, showing the elect turned facing Christ and the damned facing away. In Monasterboice the legs of the damned, unlike those of the seated or kneeling

³⁹ The Latin "spineam coronam" can be translated into the less specific "thorny crown."

⁴⁰ The mocking/flagellation motif appears on ten of the Irish high crosses, see Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland: An Iconographical and Photographic Survey*, Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, *Monographien* 17 (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt, 1992), 1:Tables 1 and 2. The dialectic between those who discern Jesus' identity and those who refuse to acknowledge him as the glorified Christ is discussed with particular reference to the high crosses in part three.

elect, are bent and they appear to be running, or in the case of the figure with a noose around his neck, pulled, away from the vision of Christ (Ills. 82). The figures who flee from the vision of Christ may represent the damned as described in Revelation 6:16 attempt to run from the face of the glorified Christ. In Matthew 10:33 on folio 58v, Christ warns, "But he that shall deny before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven." The initial is the one of the two minor decorated initials that contain a fully frontal head (Ills. 42a). Blonde and beardless, it stares out at the viewer. From the bottom of the initial emerges a foot. The initial is both arresting and confrontational. The face of God peers out from the folio, its role as the physical manifestation of the Logos emphasized by the substitution of the letter for its body.

The only other initial where Christ is shown frontally occurs on folio 95r and marks the beginning of the Parable of the Invitation to the Wedding Banquet (Ills. 61). At the top of the *et* monogram is the head, upper torso and arm of a human figure. The *et* initial terminates in a body of a brown and gold bird. The shape and color resembles the birds at the end of the Lucan genealogy. Its coloring also matches the robes of the figure above. The association between divinity and beautiful birds is well documented in early Irish writings.⁴¹ While the figure might represent the Pharisees, Christ, or even Matthew, the decorative conventions of the manuscript and the surrounding text suggest that the image does not represent the Pharisees. All other figures of evil, including the Pharisees on folio 96r, are shown in acrobatic poses and costume. Additionally the passage deals strictly with the parable rather than the Pharisees as Christ's audience. Origen interprets the servants of the parable as the apostles.⁴² Possibly the figure is meant to

⁴¹ Celtic mythology is filled with stories of birds that either attend a God and of Gods that transform themselves into birds. Most commonly, Gods adopted the form of the eagle, as in the case of Fintan. See Ross, 257.

⁴² Origen, *Commentariorum In Mattaeum, Tomus 17, In Matheum*, 15.2 (Matthew 22:3-4), PG 13, 1524.

represent Matthew and thereby the apostles, but this seems unlikely. Not only does the figure lack wings, the artist only shows the bust, head and arms of the figure. In this, the image is almost identical to the depiction of Christ in the Temptation page. The bird, colored in the same brown and gold as the figure would seem to have some significance, which cannot be understood if the figure is interpreted as Matthew.⁴³ Additionally, the unusual outer clothing worn by the figure, and especially the manner in which it wraps several times around the body would suggest the figure represents Christ.

Gregory interpreted the Parable of the Invitation to the Wedding Banquet as a symbol of the union of Christ's two natures, divine and human, within the wedding chamber of the Virgin's womb.⁴⁴ Certainly, this would fit with the pattern of illustration within the manuscript, exemplified on folio 51v, where emphasis falls upon Christ, the Man, predicting his return as Christ, the Judge. Additionally, most patristic works interpret the food at the banquet as the words and teachings of Christ, that if accepted lead to salvation but when rejected lead to damnation.⁴⁵ Origen, citing Romans 10:3, describes the Jews as those who were invited but did not come; rejecting Christ and his law.⁴⁶ The association of the passage with Judgment, the scriptures and those who fail to perceive explains the unusual appearance of the initial. Only this initial depicts the bust and arms of Christ; also, it is much larger than the initials discussed so far. It marks out the passage with its emphasis on the acceptance of the scripture as a mark on salvation and the dual role of Christ as the man whose teachings provide salvation and as the judge who returns in glory. This emphasis would also explain another unusual aspect of the initial, that is, the clothing worn by Christ. In all other initials, with one possible exception, only Christ's head or head and foot are shown. This initial is

⁴³ See discussion of "Sign of Jonah" in this chapter five.

⁴⁴ Gregory the Great, *Homiliarum*, Hom. 38.3. (Matthew 22:1-13) *PL* 76, 1283.

⁴⁵ Gregory the Great, *Homiliarum*, Hom. 38.4. (Matthew 22:1-13). *PL* 76, 1285; Jerome, *Commentariorum in Matheum Libri IV, In Matheum*, 3 (Matthew 22.4). *CCSL* 77, 200.

⁴⁶ Origen, *In Matheum*, *Matheum* 15.2 (Matthew 22.8). *PG* 13, 1524.

unique in showing Christ's upper body. Possibly, the scribe departs from the standard practice in order to depict Christ's clothing, emphasizing his role as teacher in contrast to the man described in the parable who comes without a nuptial garment and is cast out of the feast. The robe, and the manner in which it wraps around Christ, is reminiscent of the seamless garment worn by him in depictions of the Crucifixion such as in the St. Gall Codex (Ills. 51). Jerome interpreted the nuptial garment as the "commandments of the Lord and the works which fulfill both the Law and the Gospel."⁴⁷

Of the initials discussed so far, each occurs at the beginning of a passage that discusses the manner in which the Christ revealed his true identity while on earth. Many of the verses make specific reference to the act of looking upon the Godhead. These include Christ's description of the time when "they see the son of man coming in his kingdom" and his prophecy that "you shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God" as well as John's instruction, "Behold the lamb of God."⁴⁸ Other initials focus upon the recognition of Jesus as God made man. Christ reveals his true identity both to the disciples who fail to recognize him until the Resurrection and to the Jews, who mock and persecute him. With the exception of the John the Baptist passage, the heads depict Christ. The audience, unlike the Jews and the disciples, are left bereft of his physical presence and have only the gospel text and images as a tangible reminder of him. Despite the scant nature of the physical evidence, the audience distinguishes itself from the Jews, and even the disciples, in recognizing Christ immediately as the face of God.

Christ's physical absence from the world of the congregation in

⁴⁷ Jerome, *In Matheum, Matheum 3* (Matthew 22.11). *CCSL* 77, 201. Jerome's warning that those who are not wearing the nuptial garment at Judgment will be damned has interesting implications in the apotropaic role of the gospel book discussed in chapter seven.

⁴⁸ Matthew 16:28, "donec uideant filium hominis uenientem in regno suo," Mark 14:62, "uidebitis filium hominis sedentem adextris uirtutis," and John 1:28-29, "ecce agnus di." Text cited as occurs in the Book of Kells.

contrast to the time of the gospel, when he walked among humanity as flesh and blood, is a constant undercurrent within the decoration, and one that shall be discussed in greater depth later in the thesis. It does bear somewhat upon one last initial, the *et* monogram on folio 286r that marks the beginning of Luke 24:9, "And going back from the sepulchre, they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest (Ills. 70)." The head with its long hair and delicate face has been described as an illustration of the return of the women from the sepulcher.⁴⁹ This agrees with the verse. From the figure's mouth emerges a strand of intricate interlace that terminates in a flower. This kind of emphasis upon the mouth occurs elsewhere in the manuscript and seems to be associated with speech.⁵⁰ The head, like that of John the Baptist, denotes the speaker rather than the content of what is spoken. The head does not face the text it illustrates, but rather the verso folio and the text directly opposite which describes the events at the sepulcher. Like the initial on folio 309r, the head looks across to the opposite folio where the text describes the event referred to by the speaker.⁵¹ The verse does not speak directly of recognition, revelation or the visual apprehension of the Godhead. Somewhat fittingly, the head of Christ is conspicuously absent, as Luke 24:9 is about the absence of Christ, for his revelation is in his absence. An early Irish commentary on Luke 24:3 states, "'And going in they found not the body in the sepulcher: [for] true faith knows of the dead body; yet nevertheless believes not by the corpse, but by prophesy finds belief in the resurrection.'"⁵²

The full-page illustrations also play upon the visual presence and absence of Christ. Luke 24:1 on folio 285r introduces the Visitation to the

⁴⁹ Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 71.

⁵⁰ For example, the initial marking Matthew 24:17, where Christ is speaking, describing the occurrences before the Last Judgment. See discussion in chapter two.

⁵¹ This is a constant feature of the Book of Kells decoration and occurs vertically, that is up and down the folio, as well as across folios.

⁵² *Scriptores Hiberniae Minores*, ed. Joseph Kelly. *Lucam 24:3*, "Et ingressae non inuenerunt corpus in monumento: Uera fides scit mortuum corpus, tamen non in morte sed in diuinitate inuenit credendo resurrexisset." *CCSL* 108 C, 9.

Tomb (Ills. 71). Four angels sit upon the display script. Martin Werner suggests that the page refers to a Roman liturgical ceremony, in which the women's entrance to the tomb, including a search for the body and the angels response, "He is not here," was reenacted.⁵³ Werner notes that in the ceremony the four clergy, dressed as angels, show to three of their brethren, dressed as the three women, a linen that previously had been wrapped around the cross. Werner suggests that the four angels and the double cross-bar of the M of the word "autem" on folio 285r refers to this ceremony. This seems unlikely. The M, while unusual, occurs in three other manuscripts.⁵⁴ Also, if the cross were wrapped in linen during the ceremony, it would not be visible.

The image of folio 285r cannot be explained solely by this liturgical reference. Comparison with the surrounding decoration sheds further light on its meaning. Like the initial that follows at Luke 24:9, it is Christ's physical absence that confirms his glorification. The unusual iconography of the Visitation to the Tomb also carries connotations of privileged sight. Gregory in his homily on Mark's version of the Visitation contrasted the sight of the crucified Christ and the empty tomb, describing the Crucifixion in which Christ suffered as visible to the world and the Jews in particular while the empty tomb was a sign reserved for the elect.⁵⁵ Gregory's homily suggests that the empty tomb is a sign for the believers whereas the Jews only beheld Christ's death. One of the more unusual aspects of the Visitation image is the absence of the three women. The women are essential to the story and a common feature of the iconography of the Visitation of the Tomb.⁵⁶ In the

⁵³ Martin Werner suggests that folio 285r refers to this ceremony. Martin Werner, "Crucifixi, Sepulti, Suscitati: Remarks on the Decoration of the Book of Kells," in O'Mahony, 464-71.

⁵⁴ Higgit, "Display Script," 214.

⁵⁵ Gregory the Great, *Homiliarum*, Hom. 21.6-7 (Mark 16:1-7). PL 76, 1170-1.

⁵⁶ Although the number of figures vary, depictions of the Visitation to the Tomb typically include angels and women. J. Myslivec and G. Jászai, "Frauen am Grab," in *Lexicon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, vol. 2, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1968), 54-58 and Franz Rademacher, "Zu den frühesten Darstellung der Aufstehung Christi," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 28 (1968): 195-224. Grabar notes that privileged glimpses of the Godhead are often demarcated as such by the presence of the spectator. Grabar, *Christian Iconography*, 119.

Book of Kells, the artist depicts the vision that confronted the women, the angels and absence of Christ, and so the congregation share the same vision as greeted the three women in the gospel story.

The presence of the angels, God's messengers, and the liturgical objects that they carry point towards a union between the heavenly witnesses and the audience of the altar-book. Gregory writes, "[Behold] in the resurrection of our Maker we have recognized that the angels, his servants, are our fellow citizens. Let us hasten to their well-teeming festival, let us join with them with our desire and in heart, since we cannot yet see it with our eyes."⁵⁷ The image of angels, like the images of Christ in the decorated initials, threaten the sinful while comforting the saved. Their presence suggests to those with a clean conscience a union with the elect in the presence of the Godhead and to the guilty a warning of his return as judge. The clothing of the angels is described in Mark's version of the same event as like both snow and lightning, leading Gregory to conclude, "In lightning, indeed, are dread and fear, but in snow there is the soothing quality of whiteness. Because almighty God is both fearful to sinners and soothing to the righteous, the angel who witnessed his resurrection aptly was described. . . . By its very sight the angel might then frighten the condemned and reassure the devout."⁵⁸

The physical absence of Christ that is the focus of this image would have most likely been counteracted with a depiction of his Ascension a few pages later on folio 289v. The text on folio 289r, which describes the Ascension, is quite tightly packed and the opposite folio is blank, suggesting

⁵⁷ Gregory the Great, *Forty Gospel Homilies*, 163. *Homiliarum*, Hom. 21.7 (Mark 16:1-7), "Ecce in resurrectione auctoris nostri ministros ejus angelos concives nostros agnouimus. Ad horum ergo ciuium illam frequentem solemnitatem festinemus. His, cum necdum uisione possimus, desiderio et mente iungamur." PL 76, 1173-4.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 161. *Homiliarum*, Hom. 21.3 (Mark 16:1-7), "In fulgure etenim terror timoris est, in niue autem blandimentum candoris. Quia uero omnipotens Deus et terribilis peccatoribus, et blandus est iustis, recte testis resurrectionis eius angelus et in fulgure uultus...ut de ipsa sua specie et terreret reprobios, et mulceret pios." PL 76, 1171.

that an illustration of the Ascension was intended.⁵⁹ The contrast between the absence of Christ emphasized by the display script on folio 285r and the decorated initial on folio 286r and his Ascension would dramatically express Christ's departure from the earth. The presence of such an image would more closely align the decorative program of the Book of Kells to other Insular manuscripts such as St. Gall Codex 51 and the Turin Gospels. It also seems likely, although it can only be conjectured, that like the St. Gall and Turin images, the Ascension in the Book of Kells would carry elements of Christ's return.

Folios 123r and 124r and 7v and 8r refer to the visual apprehension of the Godhead. One of the most unusual features of the Book of Kells is the small group of figures on folios 124r and 7v who stare out across the folios. Jennifer O' Reilly, in a survey of Insular and Anglo-Saxon imagery of the pierced Christ, has discussed the eschatological connotations of folio 124r, where the crowds stare at what was surely intended to be an image of the Crucifixion.⁶⁰ Curiously, Dr. O'Reilly neglects to mention the most obvious example in the Book of Kells, folio 291v. Here, behind the image of John, Christ is shown with pierced ankles while grasping the nails of his Crucifixion. Of all the Insular images referring to the vision of the glorified and pierced Christ, this is perhaps the most striking example.⁶¹

Folio 8r is more unusual as it focuses not on the Second Coming or the pierced Christ, images typically associated with the vision of the Godhead, but on the description of the Nativity. (Ills. 1a). The group of men look toward a script containing the description of Christ made man, the visible face of God. The message of salvation is clear: If men look to him, and in so doing learn to follow his teachings, they will be saved. As will be shown in

⁵⁹ Henry *Book of Kells*, 173.

⁶⁰ The text on the opposite page describes the Crucifixion, and the preceding page is deliberately spaced so as to end with the text of the Titulum. Henry, *Book of Kells*, 173.

⁶¹ This image is discussed at length in chapter seven.

part three, the manuscript points repeatedly to Christ's example, his teachings and the Eucharist as instruments of man's salvation. In this image, the artist shows clearly that it is Christ's example that man must look to. The audience looking towards the gospel book prepare themselves for the sight of the glorified Christ, by looking to his more gentle manifestation. The group of figures, at the birth and death of Christ mark his entrance into and exit from this earth. With the exception of the Ascension, the next time Christ is sighted will herald the terrible day of Judgment.

Unlike the Nativity and intended Crucifixion image, the Christ in Majesty page did not necessitate a depiction of an audience (Ills. 57). As a depiction of Christ enthroned, surrounded by four angels and two splendid birds, the spectator would recognize that this is Christ in Majesty where he is worshipped and glorified for eternity by the elect. A similar image on the Ruthwell cross shows Christ in Majesty, with the word "Adoramus" written underneath. The use of the first person plural hints at the incorporation of the viewer into the world of the elect. It is conceivable that the designer chose not to depict the congregation looking directly upon the glorified Christ, because this was unnecessary. As the Ruthwell Cross indicates, the hope that man will join with the heavenly host in the adoration of Christ, is implied automatically.

Directly above Christ's head is a bright yellow cross, and yet, it is not a part of a nimbus. The cross accompanies Christ in his Second Coming. The *Altus prosator* describes it, "When Christ, the most high Lord, comes down from the heavens, the brightest sign and standard of the Cross will shine forth."⁶² The poem makes clear that this is the image that will confront the souls at the end of the world, Christ glorified and surrounded by angels and his standard, the bright yellow cross. The image would undoubtedly inspire

⁶² Clancy, 53. *Altus prosator*, "Xristo de caelis Domino descendente celsissimo/praeifulgebit clarissimum signum crucis et vexillum." Ibid., 53.

fear in even the purest of mortal hearts. In the *Altus prosator*, the poet makes no distinction between his use of first person plural describing those who will "stand trembling before the Lord's seat, and . . . break out into most bitter weeping and sobbing" and those who "shall surely fly off to meet him [Christ/God the Father] straight away . . . to abide in glory from age to age."⁶³

The presence of the cross, chalice and peacocks on folio 32v on either side of Christ soften the image, reminding the viewer that although Judgment should cause fear and trembling, Christ has provided man with the instruments of salvation. If the sequence of images is essentially correct, the frightening aspect of Christ in Majesty would be further lessened by the Cross Carpet and Chi Rho pages. Like the image of the Nativity, these would remind the viewer that Christ had originally come into the world, was crucified and resurrected to save man, leaving not only his teachings but also the sacrament of the Eucharist. The designer articulates this by surrounding the Chi Rho with signs of the Eucharist--an otter eating a fish, butterflies eating a chrysalis, and mice nibbling on a communion wafer.⁶⁴ Following a fearful image of Judgment, the Chi Rho page reassuringly depicts the instruments of salvation--the Eucharist, the Incarnation and the scripture.

The Temptation Page, with its gigantic bust of Christ and brightly colored temple crowded with people, was the most mysterious and debated of the full-page illustrations within the manuscript until Carol Farr interpreted its unusual iconography using the writings of Bede and Augustine (Ills. 73). Farr argues that the image depicts the temptation of the Church past, present and future with Christ as its head and the crowds below as the faithful, "Those who imitate Christ and dwell under his defense as stones or planks in the body of the Church."⁶⁵

⁶³ Clancy, 53. *Altus prosator* "Stantes erimus pavidi ante tribunal Domini. . . in fletus amarissimos ac singultus erumpemus," and "Nos uero euolabimus obviam ei protinus." Ibid., 52.

⁶⁴ Lewis, 144-51.

⁶⁵ Farr, "Lection and Interpretation," 84.

Within the frame, two angels hover directly over and behind the figure of Christ. Only the head and bust of Christ are shown, as in many of the high crosses.⁶⁶ Christ is wrapped in a chasuble and lacks a beard. Beneath him, a temple or tabernacle substitutes as his body. This structure has a doorway, inside of which stands a figure holding crossed staves. Under the structure, twenty-five figures with varied clothing and hair styles look towards the legs of the figure. Remarkably, little mention has been made in the literature concerning the object in Christ's left hand. Christ's left hand, highlighted in its bright, yellow sleeve, holds a curved, cylindrical object. A similar object, obviously a chalice, is found in the Gellone Sacramentary on folio 237r, marking the beginning of the benediction of the wine (Ills. 74). Continental chalices tended to have a much more slender shape than the surviving bronze and silver Irish chalices.⁶⁷ The object in Christ's hands greatly resembles the slender continental chalice with its slim silhouette and funnel-shaped bottom. The glass or crystal chalice is delicately colored, the rim and the vessel indicated by outline and its contents by the same purple-brown color as Christ's sleeve and nimbus.

The depiction of a glass or crystal chalice, along with its unusual shape, might explain why no one has identified the chalice as such. Only metallic chalices remain, but the comparative fragility of glass would explain the lack of surviving glass vessels. Edward Bourke's recent study, "Glass Vessels of the First Nine Centuries AD in Ireland," has shown the wealth of glass material available in Ireland. Significantly, these are all continental

⁶⁶ See chapters five and six.

⁶⁷ For a discussion of Irish chalices, see Michael Ryan, "The Formal Relationships of Insular Early Medieval Chalices," *PRLA* 90 C (1990): 281-356. Ryan suggests that the chalices on folio 32v of the Book of Kells are made of glass, suggesting that the image was copied from abroad. *Ibid.*, 287. Possibly, however, the artist had seen imported glass chalices (see discussion below). Richardson identifies the chalices on folio 32r and 202r as made of glass. Hilary Richardson, "Derrynavalan and the Other Early Church Treasures," *JRSAI* 110 (1980): 93. Curiously, neither of these examples show the same transparency as the three chalices in the Temptation page.

imports.⁶⁸ F. E. Warren suggested that the earliest chalices were made of glass, citing the glass chalices mentioned in the Patrick life and the evidence of Gallican use in the life of St. Hillary, who owned a paten and chalice of glass.⁶⁹ The unusual shape of the chalice in the Temptation page, long and narrow differs from the squatter chalices found elsewhere in the manuscript and in surviving metal chalices.

As the chalice held by Christ, the designer's decision to depict it as made from the same material as the legendary crystal chalices described in the Patrick life is not surprising. The *Martyrology of Oengus* describes Christ as "a pure crystalline vessel."⁷⁰ This, and the role of Christ as both priest and sacrifice explains the choice of material, which most likely dictated the change in shape as the Gellone chalice exhibits the same slender qualities. In both Gellone and Kells, the chalice is shown grasped in one hand. Its narrow shape makes this possible as a more squat chalice requires both hands. The Stuttgart Psalter depicts a chalice twice in a singular image, once on an altar and then held by a figure with a nimbus.⁷¹ On the altar the chalice is shown as squat and round, and when held by the figure it is depicted as a slender, continental type chalice similar to that of the Gellone Sacramentary. Additionally, in the Book of Kells, the chalices in the upper corner of the Temptation page, with their flowing vines, verify the identification of the chalice. Although more typical in shape, they are made of the same transparent material with the same purple-brown liquid within.⁷²

Christ holding out the chalice confirms O'Reilly's argument that the genealogy meditates upon Christ's role as priest.⁷³ It also alters significantly

⁶⁸ Edward Bourke, "Glass Vessels of the First Nine Centuries A.D in Ireland," *JRSAL* 124 (1994): 163-209.

⁶⁹ F. E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* (Clarendon: Oxford 1881), 143.

⁷⁰ Oengus, 157.

⁷¹ Ernest T. de Wald., et al., *The Stuttgart Psalter: Biblia Folio 23 Wuerttembergische Landesbibliothek Stuttgart* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930) 130v.

⁷² Although this is not as clear on the left hand side of the picture owing to wear.

⁷³ Jennifer O' Reilly, "Exegesis and the Book of Kells: The Lucan Genealogy," in

the tone of the page. A similar image occurs in the so-called Psalter of Charlemagne underneath the heading that comments upon Psalm 109, verse four, "Thou art a priest forever (Ills. 75)."⁷⁴ Christ wearing liturgical garments and cross-nimbus appears standing in front of a table or altar, flanked by angels. He holds in his hands a narrow chalice similar to that within the Book of Kells. The two images resemble each other closely, both depicting Christ as High Priest. The depiction of Christ as priest offering the Eucharist, like the rest of the decoration discussed, reassures the Christian audience that although the day of Judgment is near, Christ, by becoming flesh, has provided for their protection. His presence, represented both by his image and the chalice shields the crowd from Satan. The viewer, like the crowd on Christ's right, looks to him present in the Eucharist, and hopes for salvation.

Christ as priest offering the Eucharist points to the sacred role of the priest as Christ's representative during the Mass. The scene visually echoes the liturgy, which itself is a deliberate imitation of Christ at the last supper: "In a like manner, when he [had] supped, he takes [sic] also this goodly cup in his sacred and venerable hands."⁷⁵ The celebrant, mimics the actions of Christ, in order to suit Christ's instruction, "Whenever you shall do these things you shall do them in memory of me."⁷⁶ The image closely follows the liturgical description. Christ holds the chalice in one hand while the other is extended, possibly in the act of blessing the wine. The Stowe Missal, and even the Roman Missal, clearly use the plural "hands." The act of blessing the wine, however, would require that the chalice either be placed down upon the altar or alternatively held in one hand. A ninth-century ivory plaque depicting

O'Mahony, 344-97.

⁷⁴ Lowe writes that the image "seems a slightly later addition." Lowe, 5:62. An inspection of the manuscript shows no evidence of this. Porcher, who reproduces this singular image from the manuscript, makes no mention of it as a later addition. Jean Hubert, Jean Porcher and W. F. Volbach, 206 and 359.

⁷⁵ "Simili modo posteaquam cenatum [est] accipit et hunc preclarum calicem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas Item tibi gratias agiens benedixit dedit discipulis suis dicens." George Warner, 2:13.

⁷⁶ "Haec quotienscumque feceritis in mei memoram faciatis." Ibid.

the Carolingian rite shows the chalice sitting on the altar, while the priest blesses the chalice with flattened hands raised upwards (Ills. 76). This chalice is quite wide with double handles and sits comfortably on the altar. The high crosses testify to the Insular use of the flattened hand as a sign of blessing.⁷⁷ In the Temptation page, Christ holds the chalice, while blessing it with his right hand. Possibly this reflects one of the many Celtic variations of the liturgy. Alternatively, the image simply conflates two separate gestures, the holding of the chalice in the hand and the blessing of the wine. Christ, in his role as priest, invites the congregation to salvation through his sacrifice.

The chalice also introduces further notes of intimacy. Read without the chalice, the image simply shows Christ, possibly delivering a lesson, to the people of his earthly church. At this level, the image follows the gospel account. In Luke 4:4, Christ responds to Satan, "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word of God." Directly after the Temptation, Christ reads Isaiah in the Synagogue. But the Temptation page does not, as some have suggested, depict Christ reading the scripture to his people.⁷⁸ He does not hold a book as he does in the canon tables and Majesty page, but, instead, he holds out a chalice. Christ offers the Eucharist to his people, not a scriptural lesson. The "word of God" by which man lives is represented in Christ's own person both as priest and sacrificial blood. The gospel book carried Christ's words and teachings, describing his historical presence on the earth, but the Eucharist provided contemporary audiences with an actual encounter with Christ. The congregation looked to Christ, in the person of the priest and was physically present after the transubstantiation.⁷⁹

In the celebration of the Eucharist, the congregation mimicked the role of the elect whose task was to look upon Christ, acknowledging him as

⁷⁷See for example, Monasterboice, Muiredach's cross on the underside of ring on North side.

⁷⁸George Henderson points to the relationship between Luke 4:4 and the reading at the synagogue. G. Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells*, 173 and Farr, *Lection and Interpretation*, 83-7.

⁷⁹Bieler, *Irish Penitentials*, 107.

savior. Just as the elect sing his praises, so in the canon preface the congregation addresses Christ, represented by the Eucharist, in the singing the *Sanctus*, "Holy, holy, Lord God of *sabóth*, the heavens and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna on high, blessed be he who comes from the heavens."⁸⁰ The liturgy imitates Isaiah 6:2-5, which describes a vision of the Lord surrounded by seraphims singing, "Holy, holy, holy Lord of God of hosts, all the earth is full of his glory."⁸¹ The singing of the *Sanctus* reminds the congregation of the adoration of the seraphim recounted by Isaiah, and joins the Church with the heavenly choir.⁸² The celebration of the Eucharist was a celebration of the union of the Church with its savior and all of its members, including the saints and angels that praised the Lord.

The crowd on Christ's right, by looking towards him, hope that through him, they will be able to join the crowd below as members of the heavenly Church. These figures within the tabernacle stare at a central figure whose pose resembles that of Christ in the Second Coming found on many of the high crosses.⁸³ The doorway surrounding the figure is quite narrow, appropriately reminiscent of the narrow door.⁸⁴ Curiously, the door seems to close at the figure's torso, like a two-part barn door. The division gives the appearance that the crowd, and the lower half of the Osiris figure, are located

⁸⁰ Warner, 10, "Sanctus, sanctus dominus deus sabóth pleni sunt caeli et uniuersa terra gloria tua. Ossa in excelsis benedictus qui uenit de celis." At this time Christ is only "represented" by the Eucharist because the transubstantiation has not yet been instigated.

⁸¹ Clement of Rome writes, "Let us consider the vast multitude of His angels, and see how they stand in readiness to minister to His will. For the Scripture says: 'Ten thousand thousand stood ready before Him, and a thousand thousand ministered to Him, and cried out: Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole creation is replete with His splendour.' And so we, too, being dutifully assembled with one accord, should as with one voice cry out to Him earnestly, so that we may participate in His great and glorious promises." Jungmann, 381.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 379-84. In his discussion and history of the *Sanctus* Jungmann points out that until well into the twelfth century *ordines* show that the *Sanctus* was very much the role of the people, with the priest's role much kept to a minimal. As the priest takes on the role of Christ, this makes sense as it would seem improper to praise oneself.

⁸³ Farr's argument interprets the figure as referring to "the holy man that has imitated Christ" and then later as the triumph of Christ and the Church over asp and basilisk. Farr, "Lection and Interpretation," 83 and 96.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

within the Church, at its foundations. The manner in which the figures are turned to face the central figure and as well as his pose suggests that the figure represents Christ.

The image sets up two parallel situations. The Temptation page, with its two groups of figures meditates upon the role of the Eucharist as an instrument of union. The rite of the Eucharist, as the *Sanctus* indicates, celebrated the union of the congregation with the Church as a whole. The mixed cup, practiced by the Celtic church, was thought to represent the unity of the Church with Christ,⁸⁵ and Augustine described the Eucharist as the mystery of the Church in union with its head, Christ.⁸⁶ The Temptation page depicts this, showing Christ as the head of the church united with its body through the celebration of the holy communion. Moreover the incorporation of two groups, that on Christ's right and that within the temple, emphasizes the union between the heavenly and earthly Church. Those on Christ's right represent the earthly congregation facing the altar where the gospel book and chalice were displayed, while those in the temple depict the heavenly congregation, singing Christ's eternal praises. The two scenes are united by the desire to apprehend the Logos. The crowd on Christ's right look upon him whom they have pierced, represented by the blood of Christ, while those below look upon the glorified Christ of Revelation. The designer represents the pierced Christ in a highly sophisticated manner, setting the scene firmly in its liturgical context. The depiction of New Jerusalem, with the elect in adoration of Christ, presents the viewer with an image of his reward, should

⁸⁵ F. E. Warren cites Adomnán's account of St. Columba fetching water for the celebration of the Eucharist, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1881), 132. The mixed cup as a sign of the unity of the Church with Christ was based upon the wine as representative of Christ and the water as a symbol of the Church. See Cyprian, Epistles 63.17 and R. E. Clements, et al. eds., *Eucharistic Theology Then and Now*, Theological Collections 9 (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1968), 42-45 for a full discussion.

⁸⁶ "For the Virtue that is apprehended there, is unity, that gathered together into His body, and made His members, we may be what we receive," Augustine, *Sermon on the Mount*, 282. *Sermones de Scripturas*, 57b.7 (Matthew: 6:9), "Uiruts enim ipsa quae ibi intelligitur, unitas est, ut redacti ia corpus eius, effecti membra eius, simus quod acipimus. PL 389.

he steadfastly look towards Christ in his earthly life. The instruments that lead him towards the contemplation of the godhead are clear: the Eucharist, the Mass, and the Word of God.⁸⁷ The Temptation passage, where Christ refers to both the "bread of life" and "word of God" made such connections obvious.

The emphasis upon the visual as a metaphor for recognition and adoration explains the unusual decision to depict crystal or glass chalices. One of the main objections against raising up the wine for the congregation to see, was that unlike the bread on the paten, it would not be visible. Instead, only the chalice would be visible. In the crystal or glass chalices shown in the Temptation page, the artist has taken great pains to make explicit that the purple-brown color is not the color of the chalice itself, but its contents. Although no written record mentions whether or not the chalice was elevated in the Celtic mass as it was in many early Eastern rites, the Celtic liturgy made great show of the revelation of the chalice from under its linen cover.⁸⁸ Through the use of a transparent chalice, the designer emphasizes the visual apprehension of the crowd, looking directly upon the blood of Christ.

The Temptation page, with multivalent layers of meaning, incorporates the complex themes carried throughout the decoration of the manuscript. The imagery displays the instruments provided by Christ for man's salvation. As with the many of the high crosses and the minor decoration, recognition of Jesus as Christ plays a key role. The group gazes upon the pierced Christ, represented by his blood, while below, the elect adore the heavenly Christ. By the power of the Eucharist, the two groups, the hopeful congregation and the elect, are joined. The image expresses the hope of the congregation, that some day they will number as the elect. Instead of an implied audience, the designer of Kells makes his audience explicit,

⁸⁷ For further discussion see part three.

⁸⁸ John Ryan, *Irish Monasticism: Origins and Early Development* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1931), 348-49.

showing them at worship, on Christ's right.

As with the minor decoration, the manuscript's full-page images confirms that the readers, if they remain vigilant and look to God, they will number amongst the faithful. In the minor decoration, when the gospel text instructed the audience to look to Christ or remain vigilant for the Second Coming, the image of Christ literally emerging from the words confirmed that they were doing just this, looking to Christ. Augustine commented on Psalm 90 and the Temptation of Christ:

And from that city whence we wander, letters have come to us; these are the scriptures, which exhort us that we may live for the sake of good. Why do I say letters have come? The king descended, and he has made a road for us . . . so that walking in him, we may neither go astray, nor fail . . . nor blunder into the snares which have been placed beside our road.⁸⁹

The image of Christ as priest, offering the Eucharist to a group of people, confirmed to the manuscript's audience, how they, sitting in Mass, listening to the epistles and gospels, obeying Christ's command to "do these things in memory of me," were following his path and avoiding the snares of Satan.

⁸⁹ Augustine, *Enarrationes*, Ps. 90. 2., "Et de illa ciuitate unde peregrinamur, literae nobis uenerunt: ipsae sunt scripturae, quae nos hortantur ut bene uiuamus. Quid dicam uenisse litteras? Ipse rex descendit, et factus est nobis uia . . . ut in illo ambulantes, nec erremus, nec deficiamus . . . nec in laqueos irruamus, qui ponuntur iuxta uiam." *CCSL* 39, 1266. See also Farr, "Lectio and Interpretation," 87.

Chapter Five

Blind Sinners: "He Hath Blinded their Eyes and Hardened their Hearts."

The viewer looking at the pages of the Book of Kells is confronted by two types of imagery in the decorated initials, the head of Christ and the contorted figures of the wicked. As the image of Christ, these heads present the spectator with a preview of the privileged sight enjoyed by the elect. The images of the entangled figures, on the other hand, depict the senseless confusion of those who fail to recognize Christ and his teachings. The decoration shows the pains of the damned and so reminds its audience to stay on the path of righteousness, just as Gregory, in his sermon on the Signs of the End of the Age, warns his own congregation, "Keep that day before your eyes, dear brethren, and whatever you believe to be burdensome will be light in comparison with it."¹ In the gospel text, the Pharisees repeatedly display their inability to recognize the Christ in their midst. As has been shown, the association between the inability to recognize Christ and those who rejected, mocked and crucified Christ is largely derived from 1 Corinthians 2:8, "If they had known it [the mystery of Christ], they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory."² Despite Christ's presence and miracles, some failed to believe. These unbelievers were seen as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart (John 12:40)."

The imagery of the Book of Kells emphasizes that the ability to recognize Christ distinguishes the saved from the damned. In Matthew 16:1 the Pharisees demand a sign from Christ. The passage in which Christ responds, Matthew 16:4 is marked out as a separate block of text on folio 76v

¹ Gregory, *Forty Homilies*, 19. *Homiliarum*, Hom. 1.6 (Lk. 21:25-33), "Ille ergo diem, fratres charissimi, ante oculos ponite, et quidquid modo grave creditur in eius comparatione leuigatur." *PL* 76, 1081.

² Ó Carragáin, "Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem," 16.

(Ills. 77).³ Christ replies, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, a sign will not be given it, but the sign of Jonah the prophet." A plump, white, blue and green bird flies across the verse, directly above the word "sign" in the first part of the verse. The bird, a well-known symbol of resurrection and divinity, hovers directly over the "sign" sought by the wicked.⁴ Additionally, Columban writers associated the dove with the Sign of Jonah.⁵ Large birds repeatedly occur in the Book of Kells next to passages that refer to Christ's identity and the moment of Judgment when he would be recognized by all men.

The placement, in this instance, directly over the word "sign" cannot be coincidental. The Sign of Jonah is presented clearly to the reader, in this case both visually and through the text, although the Jewish leaders are oblivious to its meaning as they are to the presence of Christ in their midst. Gregory the Great pointed to this particular feature of the Sign of Jonah:

And therefore it was he that gave the signs of miracles [to men of God], just as he alone promised to give the sign of Jonas to his enemies: so that he conferred to die in the sight of the proud, and to rise again before the eyes of the humble. . . . whereas the proud looked upon the ignominy of his death, the

³ Matthew 15:4 begins a new Eusebian section; Matthew 16:7 does not but is marked by a similar initial. Equally the T on folio 77r, from which issues the head of Christ, does not correspond to an Eusebian section.

⁴ Birds, especially the eagle and the peacock, were associated with Resurrection. It was believed that the flesh of the peacock would not decay. Isidore, *Etymologiarum Libri XX, Liber 12.7.48*. PL 82, 466. The eagle had associations with both the triumph of the resurrection and Christ's ascension. The Psalmist writes, "Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's (Ps. 102:5)." A large eagle appears at the top of the cross on folio Cb of Paris Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 12168 (Ills. 55) and at the top of Muiredach's Cross in Monasterboice, these are thought to represent the triumphal resurrection of Christ. Wehrhahn-Stauch, 70. Gregory in the *Moralia* describes the Incarnate Lord flying back to heaven like an eagle. Meyvaert, "A New Perspective," 145. It is not surprising that the motif was so readily adopted by Celtic peoples, whose literature is littered with stories of gods that transformed themselves into birds. Ross, 237-39. Some high crosses show a bird as the soul of Christ departing from his body. Roger Stalley, "European Art and the Irish High Crosses," *PRIA* 90 C (1990): 147-52.

⁵ The name "Iona" was thought to be derived from the Latin, "columba." Columbanus was certainly familiar with the association, referring to himself as the "poor dove." Meyvaert interprets the man emerging from the fish, next to the name "Iona" in the Lucan genealogy as referring to Columba, playing upon the relationship between "Iona" and "columba." Paul Meyvaert, "The Book of Kells and Iona," *Art Bulletin* 71 (1989): 8.

humble learned of the glory of his power against death.⁶

Gregory emphasizes the distinction between the humble who see and recognize Christ as the fulfillment of the Sign of Jonah and the proud who failed to perceive that Jesus is the Christ. The decoration within the Book of Kells closely echoes the sense of this passage, depicting birds near sections of text that describe his death, especially in sections where the proud "look on with scorn." In Matthew 27:41-3 on folio 124v, the criminals crucified with Christ, the priests and the crowd mock Christ on the cross:

In like manner also the chief priests with the scribes and ancients mocking, said: He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusted in God, let him deliver *him* now, if he will have him; for he said: I am the Son of God.

Above the block of text, independent of any initial, a large bird perches over the word "chief-priests (Ills. 78)," drawing attention to the proud, who fail to see Christ as the Sign of Jonah despite the fact that he is directly in their midst. Possibly the artist's placement of the bird directly over the word "chief-priests" refers to this irony, that the Jewish leaders cannot see Christ despite his proximity. The viewer, and coincidentally the scribe himself, knows that through his Crucifixion and Resurrection, Christ fulfills the Sign of Jonah. By this belief, the viewer distinguishes himself from the crowds who see Christ as having been defeated. Ó Carragáin points to a similar distinction in the Ruthwell Crucifixion poem, which in its arrangement of the *sententiae* highlights the contrast between the "men" who "insulted the pair of us together [Christ and the Cross]" and "the noble" and "eager ones" who come to the cross to look upon the body of Christ and bury it.⁷

Repeatedly, a bird appears when the priests mock Christ and question

⁶ Gregory I, *Dialogorum, Liber 2.8*, "Ille autem signa uirtutis dedit subditis, qui se daturum signum Jonae promisit inimicis: ut coram superbis mori dignaretur, coram humilibus resurge. . . . ut duni superbi aspiciunt despectum mortis, humiles contra mortem acciperent gloriam potestatis." *PL* 66, 150-51.

⁷ Ó Carragáin, "Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem," 26-28.

his identity. On folio 118v, for example, at Matthew 26:63, the high priest questions Christ as to his identity, "Tell us if thou be the Christ the son of God (Ills. 79)." Christ asserts in the next verse that he is and states, "Hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." At this, in Matthew 26:65, the high priest condemns Christ as a blasphemer. A large and extremely ornate bird forms the T that begins this verse. Although birds quite often occur within the bowl of initials, only infrequently do birds form the initials. The pose of this bird is striking and unique in the manuscript. The formal convolutions to take on the T shape are quite complex, involving lengthening the bird's wing and tail feathers in undulating lines. The bird is highly colored and decorated with an extensive lappet terminating in the abstracted feather design.

The same incident is described in Mark's gospel at 15:2-3, on folio 181r, where Christ concedes that he is the King of the Jews in response to the priest's provocative questions. In Mark 15:3, the chief priest responds, condemning Christ "in many things." As with Matthew 27:4-3, a bird hovers directly over the word "chief-priests." The consistency of placing the bird directly over the word referring to those who reject Christ in their midst suggests a conscious sign system that plays upon the blindness of Christ's accusers who fail to recognize his identity. The viewer, on the other hand, looks at the bird and understands it to signify Jesus as Christ who will be resurrected and return in triumph.

The bird's appearance is not limited to passages describing the rejection of Christ by the Jewish leaders and crowds; however, it also occurs, as would be expected, in those places where Christ's identity is made explicit. A bird with a spiraling lappet stands at the bottom of folio 78v next to the initial marking Matthew 16:27, "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father and his Angels: and then he will render to every man according

to his works (Ills. 80a)." Further attention is directed to the bird by the human face on the opposite folio, which looks down toward the passage signaled by the bird initial. The human face begins Matthew 16:28, "Amen I say to you there are some of them that stand here, that shall not taste death, till they see the Son of Man coming to his kingdom (Ills. 80b)." On folio 311v, John 7:3-5, Jesus is urged to "manifest thyself to the world. For neither his brethren believe in him." Jesus refuses, telling them that it is not yet the right time. A bird walks over the words "not yet."

In Matthew 16:15-20, folio 77v, Christ asks the apostles if they know who he is (Ills. 81a). Simon Peter responds that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus replies, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but by my Father who is in heaven." At the end of the passage, Matthew 16:20 on folio 78r, Christ warns the disciples not to tell anyone that he is the Christ (Ills. 81b). The decoration of the entire passage is complex, involving both verso and recto (Ills. 81a). Attached to one terminal of the initial beginning Matthew 16:17 is an extremely naturalistic quadruped with an open mouth. Its mane and coloring suggest that it represents a lion rather than the stylized beasts seen elsewhere. Typically terminals end in heads, tails and paws of animals rather than entire beast. The lion raises its paw resting it upon the "atus" of the "beatus" in "Blessed art thou." A bird is attached to the opposite terminal. Its body faces away from the lion, but its head turns back over its wing and looks toward the lion, which in turn looks back at the bird, open-mouthed. The manner in which the lion's paw touches the "beatus" highlights the "Blessed art thou." Its strangely open mouth would also seem to underline speech, either Christ's utterance or that of Peter. The bird's presence confirms that Peter's identification is correct.

Another full-bodied bird marks the conclusion of the passage at Matthew 16:20 where Jesus instructs his disciples to tell no one of his identity

as revealed by Peter (Ills. 81b). Augustine comments on this passage:

Those eyes, that is, the holy Apostles, to whom not flesh and blood, but the Father which is in Heaven had revealed Him . . . when they saw Him betrayed and suffering such evils, saw Him not as they wished, as He did not come forth . . . but still hidden in His secrecy.⁸

The commentary emphasizes the way in which Christ's whole nature is concealed from man until the day of Judgment, yet is briefly and secretly disclosed to the apostles, whom Augustine calls the eyes of Christ.⁹ Also, the bird's unusually curled neck positions its head so that the passage on the opposite folio, where Peter proclaims Christ's identity, falls directly in the line of its gaze. In similar way the pure of heart can perceive a glimpse of Christ's nature through the grace of God.¹⁰ Those who do not believe, however, are blind to Christ's nature and cannot perceive it even when it is directly in front of them. The use of the bird in the decoration continually reminds the reader of the hidden nature of Jesus, a sign that is never fully disclosed and yet must be sought for constantly. Similarly, on folio 326r a brightly colored bird with ornately marked wings hovers between the text of John 11:22 and John 11:23. John 11:22 contains the statement of Martha's faith, "I know that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it to thee." Like Peter and unlike the Jewish crowd at the Crucifixion who mock Christ's claims and faith in God, Martha's faith in Jesus' powers holds fast. As with Peter, Christ rewards her faith in the following passage, promising to raise her brother and revealing his identity as the "Resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, although dead, will live." The viewer, with Martha, looks with faith to the sign given by Christ of resurrection and salvation.

Large, ornate birds repeatedly occur in places where Jesus' identity as

⁸ Augustine, *Expositions*, 427. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 87.8, "Et illi oculi, id est sancti apostoli, quibus non reuelauerat caro et sanguis, sed Pater eius qui in caelis esst . . . Uidentes eum tradi, ac tanta perpeti mala, quoniam non eum uidebant qualem uolebant, quia non egrediebatur . . . sed in suis interioribus occultus." CCSL 39, 1213-14.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Columbanus, *Instructio* 7, 94-5.

Christ, Savior and Judge, is discussed. The passages of text describe two receptions to the revelation of Jesus as Christ. The Jewish leaders, priests and crowds reject and mock Jesus, blind to Jesus' true identity. Martha and some of the disciples demonstrate their faith and ability to perceive that Jesus is the Christ who will return in glory. The bird, with its connotations of Resurrection and the Sign of Jonah, repeatedly verifies to the readers of the manuscript the identity of Jesus as the Christ. The decoration insures that they will look to Christ and follow his way. The division between the Christian, who by his faith remains vigilant, and the wicked, who are blinded and defeated by their own lusts, is made clearer by the supporting decoration.

The minor decoration of the Book of Kells and some of its full-page illustrations show a similar concern with depicting the nature of those who reject Christ. The artists use serpents, human figures, and even quadrupeds to describe the moral confusion of the damned. This portrayal of the damned as a contrast to the followers of Christ occurs frequently in the high crosses and is evident in the Ruthwell crucifixion poem.¹¹ Last Judgment scenes in the high crosses show the most obvious manifestation of this dualistic emphasis, where the elect sit on Christ's right gazing faithfully towards him, while the damned face away from him, some being dragged away from Christ. The appearance of two distinct groups, the damned and the saved, is a necessary component of the Last Judgment, inextricably bound with man's visual apprehension of the glorified and wounded Christ, "When the condemned fall down to their punishment, the righteous are led to the brightness of his glory, as is written: The wicked is taken away, so that he will see the glory of the Lord."¹² Additionally, it will be argued, that the presence of the damned and the manner in which they are described acts as a warning, both of the self-

¹¹ Ó Carragáin, "Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem," 26-28.

¹² Gregory, *Forty Homilies*, 153. Gregory *Homiliarum*, Hom. 13.4 (Lk.12:35-40), "Sed cum reprobi in supplicum corrunt, iusti ad claritas eius gloriam pertrahuntur, sicut scriptum est: Tollatur impius, ne uideat gloriam Dei." PL 77, 1125.

defeating nature of evil, its continual presence amongst mankind and the necessity of vigilance.

Although the presence of fallen man in scenes such as the Last Judgment are to be expected, the high crosses feature entire iconographic programs that contrast those who deny Christ with scenes of his crucifixion or glorification. The West face of the Tall Cross of Monasterboice combines an image of the Crucifixion with three different scenes of Christ's rejection by man: Pilate Washing his Hands, Peter's denial of Christ, and the Mocking of Christ (Ills 83).¹³ The gospel text of these three episodes in the Book of Kells received special emphasis in the minor decoration.¹⁴ Pilate fails to recognize Jesus' identity and in so doing is blind to his own sin and need for repentance. 1 Corinthians 2:8 points out that only because of their ignorance of Christ's identity could the princes of the world persecute Christ. The soldiers ironically mock Jesus as King of the Jews when, in truth, Jesus is Lord and Judge of all creation. Within the center of these scenes, dominating the cross is the crucifixion, showing Christ with his side pierced.

The combination of the large crucifixion, surrounded by images of mankind's denial of Christ would have strong associations of judgment. Gregory makes clear that it is Christ in his human form who will at first confront the two groups at judgment:

The Lord comes to us after the judgement, because he lifts us up from his human appearance in the contemplation of his divinity; his coming means that he leads us to the vision of his glory. We see in his divinity after the judgment the one we beheld in his humanity at the judgment. At the judgment he comes in the form of a servant and appears to everyone, since it is written: They will look upon him whom they pierced.¹⁵

¹³ See Harbison, *High Crosses*, cat. 175. For discussion of dates and relevance see chapter six.

¹⁴ See chapter four and later in this chapter for discussion.

¹⁵ Gregory, *Forty Homilies*, Gregory, *Homiliarum* Hom. 13.4 (Lk.12:35-40), "Uel certe Dominus nobis post iudicium transit, quia ab humanitatis forma in diuinitatis suae contemplationem nos eleuat. Et transire eius est in claritatis suae speculationem nos ducere, cum eum quem in humanitate in iudicio cernimus etiam in diuinitate post iudicium uidemus."

The image of the crucified Christ, surrounded by those who rejected and pierced him asserts the failure and damnation of man. The image of Peter's denial reminds the viewer that even one close to Christ has the ability to fall. The spectators, looking upon the carved cross and its large crucifixion scene, become its audience. The image foreshadows doomsday when they will also look upon the wounded Christ.

The shaft of the cross plays upon the distinction between the spectators' recognition of Christ and his denial by "this generation (Ills. 84)." The bottom panel, the closest to anyone kneeling before the cross, shows the dead Christ entombed. Like the Crucifixion, this superficially appears as a moment of defeat, but not to the faithful, who would perceive that the image, following the apocryphal gospel of St. Peter, shows an empty cross rising up behind the tomb.¹⁶ The Dream of the Rood poem refers specifically to a "signebeam," or cross of triumph. Although the part of the poem in which the dream appears may come from a slightly later date than that of the Ruthwell Crucifixion poem, the presence of the words "his sigbecn" on the Bewcastle cross demonstrate its use at an earlier date as well as indicating the popularity of the term.¹⁷ The sleeping soldiers, like Pilate and the soldiers in the Mocking of Christ, are blind to the identity of him whom they guard and oblivious to the events behind them. The audience, however, recognizes the sign of triumph. The contrast echoes that found in the Sign of Jonah passage in the Book of Kells. Both the empty cross and the bird are signs of resurrection and both occur in a close physical proximity to those who fail to believe. In the Book of Kells, the bird appears immediately over the word "chief-priests," and in the panel, the cross is depicted directly behind the

Ad iudicium quippe ueniens, in forma serui omnibus apparet, quia scriptum est: *Uidebunt in quem transfixerunt.*" PL 1125 Migne.

¹⁶ Helen M. Roe, *The High Crosses of Kells*. (Meath: Meath Archaeological and Historical Society, 1959), 28.

¹⁷ Michael Swanton, *The Dream of the Rood*, eds. Marcon Glasscoe and M. J. Swanton, Exeter Medieval English Texts and Studies (Exeter: University of Exeter: 1987), 109.

soldiers. Despite this proximity, they are unaware and oblivious. The spectators distinguish themselves from the blind, non-believers in their faithful recognition of the signs of Christ's triumph. Unfortunately, the panels above this one are less distinct and impossible to identify with any certainty.¹⁸ Harbison suggests that the panel directly above the Guarding of the Tomb represents the Visitation to the Tomb.¹⁹ As established earlier, the latter was seen as indicative of the ability of the faithful to believe without visible sign, as distinct from the Jews who could only perceive the visible. If this identification is correct, the scene would further emphasize the distinction between those who believe in Christ and those who deny him.

Like the Tall Cross at Monasterboice, the Kells Market Cross, South face distinguishes between the recognition or vigilance of the Christian spectator and the blindness of the sleeping soldiers by depicting the Resurrection of the Cross (Ills. 85).²⁰ The Christian audience venerates the cross while the soldiers sleep unaware of the events directly behind them. Other scenes, although difficult to distinguish, may include the Healing of the Blind Man, an episode associated with the enlightenment of man at baptism and salvation, and the Pillar of Fire, one of the few instances in the scripture when God made himself visible to man.²¹ The central image of the South face depicts Daniel in the lion's den, frequently cited in exegesis as a prototype of Christ before Pilate.²²

Directly above the panel showing the Guarding of the Tomb is a controversial image showing a large, central figure holding a spear and shield (Ills. 85). Twelve figures also holding shields surround the figure. Although

¹⁸ See Harbison, *High Crosses*, 149-50.

¹⁹ Others have suggested the Transfiguration. Although this agrees with the iconographic program of the cross, it does not explain the vessels carried by the figures that Harbison identifies as the spices carried by the women to the sepulcher. *Ibid.*

²⁰ Roe dates this cross to the mid-ninth century. Roe, *High Crosses*, 8.

²¹ Meyvaert quotes Augustine, "That blind man is the human race; for the first man incurred this blindness through sin." Meyvaert, "A New Perspective," 109. See also Ó Carragáin "Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem," 39.

²² Roe, *High Crosses*, 27.

the cross is worn, it is clear that each of the figures, whether on the left or right of the figure look towards him. Peter Harbison argues that figure represents David acclaimed King of Israel, but the necessary attributes are missing. Unlike the manuscript examples cited by Harbison, there is no sign of anointing, or even a crown, which should be the central focus of the episode.²³ Additionally, the figures hold shields, whereas David is typically shown surrounded by elders, bearded and expressly lacking in arms.²⁴

The Utrecht Psalter illustrates Psalm 23, "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates: and the King of Glory shall enter in" with the image of Christ carrying a spear that terminates in a cross, leading twelve warriors toward the gates; the hand of God and a group of angels hovers above.²⁵ Henry has suggested that in light of the Utrecht image, the image on the Kells Market Cross might depict the Harrowing of Hell. The number, twelve, would suggest identification of the apostles.²⁶ The absence of any other indication of Hell, however, makes this somewhat questionable. Additionally, a similar image in Monasterboice, discussed in Chapter Five, which Henry also interprets as the Harrowing of Hell, has features that clearly dispute this claim. The shields carried by the men and by Christ are not unusual or inexplicable. Ephesians 6:10-16 contains multiple references to the armor of God:

Finally, brethren, be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of his power. Put you on the armor of God that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling

²³ Folio 132r of the Leon Bible shows David seated holding a sword with a prominent crown. Standing figures flank him on either side. In the Byzantine example, Bibliothèque Nationale MS Gr. 139, a figure crowns David, who holds a scepter. Neither example includes clouds or water. Harbison cites an Italian ivory which depicts David as King, but in this image the crown is also very evident.

²⁴ In the Leon manuscript, the figures are merely robed with the exception of the figure on David's left who wears a sword and blows a horn. A similar figure guards over David as King in the Italian ivory, but the rest of the figures lack any sort of armor. Instead, their beards and bowed legs, indicate that they are indeed the elders mentioned in 2 Samuel 5.

²⁵ Roe, *High Crosses*, 30.

²⁶ Henry, *Irish Art during the Viking Invasions: 800-1020 AD* (London: Methuan, 1967), 174.

is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers . . . against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Therefore take unto you the armor of God . . . Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having the breastplate of justice, And your feet shod in the gospel of peace; In all things taking the shield of faith.

This passage would explain the hitherto unexplained and unusual presence of the loincloth as well as the armor carried by the men, but it does not indicate why Christ is shown armed as well. In Psalm 34:2 the narrator asks the Lord to "take hold of arms and shield: and rise up to help me."²⁷ Augustine commenting on the Psalm writes, "A great spectacle is it, to see God armed for thee. And what is His Shield and His Arms? . . . If we have well profited, shall we ourselves be. For as we from Him have this, that we be armed, so is He armed from us."²⁸ The image shows the faithful, protected under Christ's shield. The two images, the sleeping soldiers and the vigilant faithful, articulate the same opposition as found in the Monasterboice cross and the Book of Kells.

The iconography of the East side of the cross also plays upon the distinction between the believers and the non-believers. One scene, unique to the Kells Market Cross, is effective in demonstrating this distinction (Ills. 86). It depicts Satan as a human figure with horns flanked on either side by large upstanding quadrupeds. The tails of the creatures loop around their bodies and the one on the left licks the face of the devil. It has been suggested that the figure might represent an Anti-Christ type deity.²⁹ This identification as a type of "Anti-Christ" seems indisputable. The panel, located in the underarm of the cross, forms a perfect antithesis to the central scenes of the Crucifixion on the North face and Daniel in the Lions' Den on the South face. Both of these scenes have strong associations of recognition and adoration.

²⁷ "Apprehende arma et scutum: et exsurge in adiutorium mihi."

²⁸ Augustine, *Expositions*, 79. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 34, s.i.2, "Magnum spectaculum est, uidere Deum armatum pro te. Et quod eius scutum? quae arma? . . . Si bene profecerimus, et nos erimus. Sicut enim nos, ut armemur, ab illo habemus, sic ipse armatur de nobis."

²⁹ Ross, 44.

The lions recognize the power of God and leave Daniel unharmed. The devil adored by his minions forms a perfect counterfoil to this image. These quadrupeds, like the sleeping soldiers, are blind to the lies of the devil and the power of Christ and his Resurrection. Certainly the image is demonic, and the centrality of the figure, adored by animals, suggests he represents Satan as the Prince of Hell as opposed to Christ, King of Creation.

The panel establishes that the recognition of Christ as a theme was so familiar that it could be easily manipulated and even inverted. It underlines the already pervasive theme of recognition and adoration that permeates the iconography of the cross and sets up Satan as an inversion of Christ, or "Anti-Christ" to use the term loosely, in an effective manner.³⁰ In so doing, like the other crosses, it presents the viewer with the familiar opposition of Christ's followers who recognize, adore and imitate him against those who deny Christ and fail to recognize his power. Of all the crosses, Kells' Market cross most closely resembles the thematic program of the Book of Kells in its depiction of those who misplace their faith, believing evil propaganda, whether the teachings of the Jewish leaders or the lies of Satan. These figures are not only blind but deluded, believing their own misconceptions as true. In the minor decoration of the Book of Kells these figures are depicted literally entangled in their own lies and misconceptions, in several cases inverted in confusion. In the Market Cross, the confusion of these souls is effectively rendered by the use of an anti-type. Their adoration of the Satan appears ridiculous, its blasphemous nature heightened by its close resemblance to familiar representations of Christ adored by animals. The quadrupeds, like those in the Book of Kells, are entangled by their own tails.

The panel directly beneath shows another group of three figures with

³⁰ The Leofric Missal (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS 579) offers a similar depiction of Satan as a perverse imitation of Christ. Folio 49v depicts the figure of Christ while the facing recto depicts the same image with some Satanic additions. The Leofric Missal is of much later date however, c. 970.

entangled legs and arms. The manner in which the arms and legs of the three figures interweave is extremely unusual for an Arrest or Mocking of Christ and very reminiscent of the tormented sinners in the minor decoration of the Book of Kells. Helen Roe suggested that the scene represents the torments of the damned.³¹ If the scene does depict the Mocking of Christ, it upholds the theme of confusion and the ironic adoration of the animals above. Including this theme directly below the image of the adoration of Satan underlines the misconception and moral blindness of those who fail to recognize and follow Christ.

The patterns exhibited in the high crosses also occur in the Book of Kells. The decorated initials and line-fillers emphasize those passages of text that describe the denial and rejection of Christ's identity by "this generation." The decoration does more than highlight such passages. Both its form and style reflects the nature of fallen man, emphasizing his blindness, moral confusion and miserable state. In presenting its audience with such images, the manuscript warned them of the constant need for vigilance, that man is easily tempted and must look constantly to the face of God for salvation. Although patterns can be distinguished, the decoration is not systematic in an easily recognizable fashion. A lion does not necessarily represent the Jews, evil or Christ. Any attempt to deconstruct the decorated initials as a set of codified symbols collapses. No less an authority than Augustine, cautions against such attempts:

Learn thus to understand, when these things are spoken figuratively, lest perchance when you read that the rock signifieth Christ ye may understand it to mean him in every passage. In one place it meaneth one thing, another in another, just as we can only understand the meaning of a letter by seeing its position.³²

³¹ Roe, *High Crosses at Kells*, 40.

³² Augustine, *Expositions*, 516. *Enarrationes Ps.* 103, s.iii.22, "Discite sic intellegere, cum figurate ista dicuntur, ne forte ubi legeritis quod Christum significat petra ubique petram Christum putetis. Significat alia atque alia, sicut littera quo loco ponatur uide, ibi intellegis

In his sermon of the Parable of the Sower, Augustine comments specifically on the slippery symbolism of the lion, "For what is so different as Christ and the Devil? Yet both Christ and the devil are called 'a lion.'" He continues by saying that the symbolism of the serpent is equally difficult to pin down, "The devil again is a serpent, 'that old serpent' and are we commanded to imitate the devil, when our Shepherd told us, "Be ye wise as serpents, and simple as doves."³³ The decoration of the Book of Kells shows a much closer affinity to the sentiments of Augustine, than to the codified world of modern scholarship. This does not necessitate, however, that the decoration is without meaning or that the meaning is lost, simply that on the whole, each initial must be treated individually. Some are merely decorative, while others stand out from the page, either because of their color, unusual pose or size, the manner in which they interact with text or a combination of these elements.

Serpents, birds, quadrupeds, human heads and human figures make up the scribes' vocabulary. Of these the quadrupeds are by far the most numerous and the most flexible in terms of meaning. The serpents, birds, human heads and figures show a greater consistency. Despite this, the manner in which the decorated initials convey meaning is unique. Unfortunately, no purely Insular source for comparison exists. An inspection of the two thousand decorated initials within the manuscript, shows that no two are exactly alike. The sophistication of the variation suggests that the scribes or the source from which they copied derived from an extensive and established collection of decorated initials. Despite this, no other Irish or Northumbrian equivalent remains. This deficiency is paralleled by the

eius uim." *CCSL*, 40, 1518.

³³ Augustine, *Sermon on the Mount*, 334. *Sermones*, Serm. 73.2 (Matthew 13:24-30), "Quod enim tam distat ab inuicem, quam Christus et diabolus? Tamen leo et Christus est appellatus, et diabolus? . . . Ipse coluber diabolus est, serpens antiquus; numquid iussi similis diabolum imitari, quando nobis dixit Pastor noster, *Estote simplices ut columbae, astuti ut serpentes.*" *PL* 38, 471.

equivalent absence of psalters even though it has been established that psalters were among the most commonly used texts in Columban houses.³⁴

The decorated initials in the Book of Kells, it will be argued, repeatedly borrow from the metaphorical language of the Psalms. Possibly, the lost source for the type of decorated initials found in the Book of Kells is in fact the psalter, now lost. Intriguingly, the only contemporary manuscript to closely resemble the decorated initials of the Book of Kells is the Corbie Psalter, executed in a scriptorium in close contact with an Irish foundation.³⁵ The initials of the Corbie Psalter so closely follow the language of the Psalms that their function and meaning seems beyond doubt. Through close comparisons with the Corbie Psalter's more obvious decorated initials, the more subtle and varied initials of the Book of Kells can be better understood.

The use of serpents in the Book of Kells is consistent, but like Augustine's example of serpent symbolism, they take on opposing roles, representing both good and evil.³⁶ When serpents appear in the initials, the vast majority are decorative and delicate, housed within the bow of an initial rather than forming its shape. Initials actually formed by serpents are less common, and tend to reflect the sentiment of the surrounding text. They appear in passages referring to the Passion and the Eucharist, Doomsday and

³⁴ See McGurk, "Psalter Text and Psalter Study," 201-72, for a description of Psalter use in Ireland.

³⁵ Henry, 215. Henry notes that the connection between Insular art and the Amiens Psalter was explored by G. L. Micheli as early as 1940. G.L. Micheli, *L'entluminure du haut moyen âge et les influences irlandaises*, Brussels: Éditions de la connaissance, 1939), 86-87. Micheli's work surveys Irish influence from seventh centuries to the Gothic period, so its treatment of the Corbie Psalter is extremely limited.

³⁶ Isabel Henderson surveyed the serpent imagery of the manuscript in her article, "The Book of Kells," 55-65. Henderson commented that the snakes forming the initial on 273v discussed later in this chapter, "would seem to symbolize the evil which entered Judas." Henderson, in agreement with Henry, suggests the prevalence of the serpent in the Book of Kells suggests it represents good rather than evil. Her list of serpent initials on pages 60-62 is incomplete. See Appendix E for an expanded list. Henderson goes on to note the number of serpents highlighting the text of the Passion and compares these with Pictish sculpture such as the Nigg cross-slab where the serpent represents hope of resurrection. See also Henry, *Book of Kells*, 208.

Judgment, Christ's Resurrection and in passages describing the plots of the wicked and the temptation by Satan. Over two-thirds of the serpent initials appear in passages referring to Judas, Satan or the Pharisees.³⁷

Christ, in his denunciation of the Pharisees, refers explicitly to the Pharisees as serpents and vipers. In Matthew 23:33, Christ castigates them, "You serpents, generations of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of hell?" Also, the serpent was interpreted as a symbol of evil on two levels. Firstly, the serpent's role in Genesis made him an obvious symbol of deceit, temptation and Satan. The number of Irish high crosses that depict images of the serpent tempting Eve show the symbol's familiarity.³⁸ Secondly, and most significant to the decoration in the Book of Kells, the serpent represented those who did not listen to the teachings of Christ because the serpent was thought to have the ability to stop up its ears. Augustine, compares the Pharisees to the deaf serpent, saying "The Pharisees could not hear the Law, would not hear the precepts of truth from Christ, being like to that serpent and asp."³⁹ Psalm 57:5 compares the demeanor of the impious to the deafness of a serpent, "Their madness is according to the likeness of a serpent: like the deaf asp that stoppeth up her ears."⁴⁰ The significance of the *Apertio aurum* ceremony with its emphasis upon the gospels and the "Opening of the ears" has already been discussed. The serpent would remind any audience familiar with the Psalms that as fully-fledged members of the Church their ears had been opened. Thua, they are allowed to look upon the sacred text, which directs them towards knowing the Godhead.

Serpent initials occur in at least eighteen instances where the text

³⁷ Thirteen initials out of a total of eighteen.

³⁸ The serpent is clearly visible in eighteen images of Adam and Eve on crosses covering a broad spectrum of dates, counties and styles. Only three panels showing Adam and Eve do not contain the serpent.

³⁹ Augustine, *Expositions*, 232. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 57.11, "Nolebant audire legem, nolebant audire precepta ueritatis a Christo pharisaei, similes serpenti illi et aspidi." *CCSL* 39, 718.

⁴⁰ "Furor illis secundum similitudinem serpentis: sicut aspidis surdae, et obturantis aures suas."

describes the actions of Satan, his demons, Judas or the Pharisees. The serpents most often appear in association with the rejection of Christ and the deceit of the Pharisees. Two large serpent heads emerge from the letter U beginning Matthew 21:15 (Ills. 88). They are brightly colored and awkwardly knotted throughout their bodies. The use of two, rather than one serpent, may not be coincidental as the verse refers specifically to the two factions, "The chief priests and scribes seeing the wonderful things he did . . . were moved with indignation."

On folio 179r, a serpent forms the initial marking Mark 14:55, when the chief priests and whole Sanhedrin attempt to entrap Christ, many falsely testifying against him (Ills. 87). On folio 41v, a similar initial marks the beginning of Matthew 5:19, "He therefore that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." The serpent interacts with the initial, weaving in and out of the abstracted S, its tail looped around the letter (Ills. 62). Throughout the manuscript, as seen in some of the human head initials in the John gospel, particular care seems to be taken with the manner in which images interact with text. The way in which the serpent winds through the initial in a passage describing the perversion of the Christ's teachings is unlikely to be coincidental. Although the passage does not mention the Pharisees immediately, the implication is clear.

The association of the serpent with Judas is unsurprising. The decoration makes manifest the deceitfulness of Judas' betrayal and Satan's role in it. Luke 22:3 introduces the betrayal of Christ, "And Satan entered Judas, who was surnamed Iscariot, one of the twelve." The initial is formed by two snakes, one with a double head (Ills. 89). The deceitful aspect of the serpent might explain the unusual incorporation of the double head, which

was associated with duplicity even in early Celtic religion.⁴¹ The only other appearance of the double-headed serpent in the Book of Kells occurs on folio 117r. The initial decorates Matthew 26:55, one of the rare occasions when Christ directly confronts the multitudes with their treachery, "You are come out as a robber . . . I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you laid not hands on me." The serpents of both initials are unusual and eye-catching, their bodies executed in a unique ribbon style found in no other initial in the manuscript.

In Matthew 26:14, the decoration again has an obvious descriptive function. The passage marks the beginning of Judas' association with the plotting priests, "Then went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests." The initial shows a serpent twisting up to capture a fish with its tail (Ills. 91). The unique combination of the serpent and the fish is large and well-placed on the page. It visually captures the essence of the passage, showing the turning point in the narrative, the closing of the trap, and the treachery of Judas. Both fish and serpent, are quite clearly formed, lacking the decorative additions and abstract contortions so common throughout the manuscript. As such, their symbolic roles are made clear. A large serpent and fish appear in one other place in the manuscript, on folio 116r, where a twisted serpent forms the initial, and a fish acts as an abbreviation mark (Ills. 90). The fish and serpent carry very opposite connotations, and the verse that they decorate contains a similar opposition. In Matthew 26:41, Christ chides the disciples after they fail to obey him, "The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." The initial captures the two elements within man, his ability for good and evil; to follow Christ or Satan.

On folio 255v, in Luke 22:31 Christ cautions Peter that Satan "hath desired to have you . . . But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." The

⁴¹ Ross, 122. Isabel Henderson first noted this initial and its association with the verse, but she does not mention the other initials discussed in this thesis or the significance of the double-head. I. Henderson, "The Book of Kells," 62.

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decorated initial is formed by a large creature, half-serpent, half-beast. Possibly, it refers to Satan, but the unusual hybrid more likely reflects the ease with which evil enters man, even Peter, one of Christ's most faithful, who is prayed for by Christ. In the next verse, Christ responds to Peter's confident avowal of faith by prophesying that he will deny Christ.⁴² Peter's denial in Mark 14:54 is marked by one of the most unusual initials in the manuscript (Ills. 87). The initial is formed by a quadruped that looks away from the verse that it decorates, to the text on the facing page. A bird seems to bite at its ear. Its forelegs curve round to form the curve of the P. The bird, to a certain extent, is caught within its legs. A bright yellow serpent follows the curve of its arm, its head terminating over the bird's breast. Its tail ends in a tri-knot around the neck of the quadruped. All three creatures look in the same direction, towards the middle of the opposite page. Directly in the line of their gaze is Matthew 14:46, "Then his disciples leaving him, all fled away." The script of the text is exaggerated, the N and T at the end of the line extending about four times the normal length. The background of the T is strongly colored. A brightly colored quadruped with a hanging head marks the verse. One part of its body forms the cross bar, knotting at the end of the letter, with a dangling paw. No other T initial contains this type of knot, unusual both in its size and position. The initials on these two folios reflect the drama of the text as Christ's followers deny him, placing emphasis on the verses that describe their failure. The initial marking Peter's denial shows three beasts in conflict; a serpent, a quadruped and a bird while the verse itself describes the conflict within Peter. He, unlike the others follows Christ, "Even to the court of the high priest," and yet he stops by the fire and begins his denial of Christ. The use of two animals as representatives of the conflict of the soul occurs frequently. The fish and serpent of Matthew 26:41 express

⁴² This type of over-confidence in one's faith, frequently highlighted in the decorated initials and illustrated pages, is discussed in greater detail in part three.

succinctly the struggle between the flesh and soul. In the initial marking Peter's denial, two creatures, the bird and serpent, struggle over the quadruped. The serpent encircles it, while the bird tugs on its ear. The large initial, brightly colored, reflects the struggle within Peter, between the fear of the flesh and the faith of the soul.

On folio 205r, the initial, or the serpent's body as it is difficult to distinguish between the two, forms a complex, angular network of woven knots. It begins the section of text corresponding to Luke 4:23-4, "And he said to them: Doubtless you will say to me this similitude: Physician heal thyself Amen I say to you that no prophet is accepted in thy own country." Shortly before this, four lines directly above the initial, is Luke 4:21, "This day is fulfilled this scripture in your ears." The serpent, visually striking, has no reason to exist other than to signal the content of the text. It describes the fulfillment of the scripture "in your ears" while the verse decorated by the initial marks the rejection by those very people listening to the teachings of Christ. No symbol or image could be more appropriate than the serpent and its association with closed ears.

The decorated initial, as shown in the description of Satan's entrance into Judas, visually echoes the textual description. The double-head of the serpent highlights the duplicity of the Pharisees and Judas. Moreover, in the initial marking the Judas passage, the manner in which one serpent's tail interweaves with the tail of the double headed serpent echoes visually the manner in which Satan enters Judas. This visual paraphrasing is subtle and not coincidental. Two factors argue against mere coincidence. Firstly, the consistency with which the decoration renders into a visual language the sentiments of the text and secondly, the more easily accessible but related arrangement at work in the Corbie Psalter. While scholarship expects meaning in the margins of Gothic manuscripts and even, to a certain extent Romanesque decorated initials, the notion of meaning in the margins of early

manuscripts has largely been wholly unexpected and even derided.⁴³ Despite this, the decorated initials echo the sentiment of the verses they decorate with great frequency.

In sections detailing the events leading up to the Passion, the decoration depicting the conflict between symbols of Christ and Satan, like the text itself, loses the triumphal tone found in earlier texts and the images of the canon table.⁴⁴ The initial on folio 112r, described earlier, exemplifies this by highlighting the passage where Judas first approaches the high priest (Ills. 91). The manner in which the serpent's tail curls around the fish paraphrases the textual description of entrapment and the eventual deceitful embrace of Judas. The decorated initials often reflect the conflict between Christ and Judas or Christ and the priests and are not restricted to the use of the serpent and the fish. The bird, as the symbol of Christ, is used more frequently. Within the manuscript, the bird often serves as a sign of the glory of Christ clothed in the weakness of his flesh.

The motif of the bird occurs in twenty-four places in the manuscript. Birds and bird initials appear next to two types of passages: those describing Christ's identity and those describing his betrayal.⁴⁵ In some cases, passages refer to both his betrayal and his glorification. On folio 111r, a large quadruped forms the initial (Ills. 92). It holds a bird firmly within its mouth. The bird is not only unnecessary in terms of the shape of the initial, it actually distorts the shape of the letter. The initial marks Matthew 26:3, which describes the priests and elders plotting to kill Christ. Lions, like serpents, were frequently associated with the Jews, especially the priests and Pharisees. Psalm 57:7 prophesies, "God shall break in pieces their teeth in their mouths: The Lord shall break the grinders of the lions."⁴⁶ Augustine commenting on

⁴³ See chapter two.

⁴⁴ For a discussion of canon table imagery, see chapter seven.

⁴⁵ See appendix D.

⁴⁶ "Deus conteret dentes eorum in ore ipsorum: molas lenum confringet Dominus."

the verse, writes:

Not only of asps. . . . Asps treacherously desire to throw in their venom. . . . Most openly raged the nations, and roared like lions. . . . When they were lying in wait for the Lord. Is it not lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or is it not lawful? Asps, they were. . . . Afterwards they cried out, "Crucify, Crucify." Now is there no tongue of asp, but roar of lion. . . . Nevertheless, even their jaw-bones were broken utterly: having been crucified, He rose again, ascended into heaven, [and] was glorified as the Christ.⁴⁷

In a discussion of Psalm 34, Augustine again refers to the Jewish leaders, "these lions who sought to ravish and devour; first fawning they spake peace, and then with wrath devised craftily."⁴⁸ The image of the quadruped biting the head of a bird in Matthew 26:4 where the chief priests plot to arrest and kill Christ eloquently represents "lions who were seeking to seize and devour" Christ. The bird, small in the jaws of the lion, reflects both the frailty of Christ in his human body and yet has connotations both of Resurrection and Christ's ability to "break the jaws" of his jailers.

On folio 62v, Matthew 12:14, the Pharisees plot "how they might destroy him (Ills. 93)." Of the two quadrupeds that form the "EX" of the verse, one bites its own legs and both are entangled within each other's tails. Curled within the space made by their bodies is a bright green bird, which is ensnared by the bodies of the quadrupeds. The verse below, however, cautions that Christ has not yet been caught, "Aware of this [the plots of the Pharisees] Jesus withdrew from that place." Here, the bright green bird

⁴⁷ Augustine, *Exposition*, 233. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 57.14, "Non totum apidum. . . . Aspides insidiose uolunt uenena immitere. . . . Apertissime saeuierunt gentes, et fremuerunt sicut leones. . . . Quando insidiabantur Domino: *Licut dare tributum Caesari, ad non licet*, aspides ertant. . . . Postea clamaruerunt: *Crucifige, crucifige*: iam non est lingua aspidis, sed fremitus leonis. . . . Tamen et eorum molae contritae sunt: crucifixus resurrexit, adscendit in caelum, glorificatus est Christus." *CCSL* 39, 720. The implications of this commentary on the consistent quadruped imagery of the passage describing the Jewish demand, "crucify him," discussed in chapter three are obvious.

⁴⁸ Augustine, *Expositions*, 85. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 34, s.ii.11, "Leones illi quaerentes rapere et deuorare, primo blandientes pacifica loquebantur, et super iram dolos cogitabant." *CCSL* 38, 318. Augustine continues, listing the various times the Pharisees attempted to entrap him into blasphemy as well as when they mocked him on the cross.

appears once again, this time free of the encircling quadrupeds. Instead, it sits comfortably upon the raised stems of the I and H of "Ihs autem sciens secissit." The two initials form a remarkable contrast between entrapment and freedom. The independence of the bird bespeaks of its power to escape through flight. In a similar manner, Christ's withdrawal in the narrative, establishes that his eventual capture will occur on his own terms. The Arrest page also carries this implication, where Christ's outspread hands and large size show his ability to overthrow the soldiers who come to arrest him.

The decorated initials of the Corbie Psalter also portray the entrapment of Christ though the use of serpent and quadruped initials that encircle figures of good. Christ as David stands within the initial of Psalm 108 (Ills. 94).⁴⁹ A serpent loops around him forming the initial. The sense of ensnarement is furthered by the serpent's tail, looping once more around Christ's feet. The serpent's tongue protrudes directly into the mouth of the Christ/David figure. The image illustrates verses two, three, and five of the Psalm, "For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful man is opened against me. They have spoken against me with deceitful tongues; and they have compassed about me with words of hatred . . . and they have repaid me evil for good."⁵⁰ The image shows the serpent with its open mouth and tongue reflecting the

⁴⁹ A Hiberno-Latin Gloss, dated from the eighth century, identifies the voice of Psalm 108 as David, but interprets verse 17, as referring to Judas. Martin McNamara, *Glossa in Psalmos: The Hiberno-Latin Gloss on the Psalms of Codex Palatinus Latinus 68, Studi e testi 310* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1986) 72; 230-31. McGurk points to the Christological nature of Columba's Psalm headings in the Cathach, "Psalter Text." Kathleen Openshaw's article on Insular psalter tradition examines Christological exegesis and its influence on the Durham Cassiodorus, the Southampton Psalter and the Beatus page of the Corbie Psalter, "The Symbolic Illustration of the Psalter: An Insular Tradition," *Arte Medievale* II 6 (1992): 41-50. The evidence found in this thesis strongly supports Openshaw's suggestion that Irish psalter decoration shows the influence of patristic commentary.

⁵⁰ "Quia os peccatoris, et os dolosi super me apertum est; Locuti sunt aduersum me lingua dolosa, et sermonibus odii circumdederunt me. . . . Et posuerant aduersum me mala pro bonus." Desobry first pointed out that the image illustrated verses two, three, five and six of Psalm 108. Desobry, 99. While not every Psalm was interpreted as messianic, certainly every Psalm was thought to have a mystic reference to Christ. Many of the Psalms of the Corbie Psalter beyond the Beatus initial discussed by Openshaw contain images of Christ, either wearing a cross-nimbus, gesturing a blessing or as the lamb of God. The figure of Psalm 108 represents David, but the illustration also refers to Christ.

"open mouths against me" and "lying tongues" of verses two, while the serpent's tail encircling the figure and looping around its legs illustrates, "With words of hatred they surround me."⁵¹ The figure with a nimbus, its fingers extended in blessing over the serpent that encircles clearly depicts verse five, "They repay me evil for good."

Like the Kells initial beginning Matthew 12:14, the initial acts as a trap encircling Christ. In Corbie, the initial is formed by a single serpent. As it bends around to form the shape of the letter D, it entraps the human figure within. In the Book of Kells, the two entangled quadrupeds form the EX of the beginning of the verse. Trapped within their intertwined bodies is the small bird, a symbol of Christ. It is interesting to note that only a single beast, the serpent, entraps Christ in the Corbie initial despite the fact that the Psalm speaks consistently in the plural "their mouths" and their "tongues." Both Augustine and a seventh-century Hiberno-Latin commentary interpret verse seven of the Psalm as referring to Judas.⁵² Matthew 12:14 in the Book of Kells speaks of the Pharisees as a group, working together to devise a plot to kill Christ. Again, possibly, the number of creatures involved in the creation of the initial relates directly to the text. Due to the scarcity of other Insular manuscripts with decorated initials, however, it is impossible to establish this level of interpretation with any certainty.

In the Corbie Psalter, the meaning of the initial, as referring to those lying to entrap Christ, is made obvious because of the presence of the representational figure of Christ and the metaphorical language of the Psalms.

⁵¹ Méridol, in his article on the beard-pullers in the Book of Kells and the Corbie Psalter, agreed with Desobry. Méridol's interpretation of the initial's emphasis upon the tongue as relating to the pagan belief in "fecundity" through the mouth, however, seems less likely. Méridol, 299. The manner in which the human figure's mouth opens to receive the tongue of the serpent shown no sign of struggle. Augustine's commentary on the Psalm, however, explains the unusual image, "His [Christ's] weakness appeared, lay hid, when the mouth of the ungodly and deceitful opened upon Him; and for that reason His mouth was opened, because his virtue was concealed." Augustine, *Expositions*, 537. The open mouth of the figure in the Corbie Psalter can be understood fully through Augustine's Christological interpretation.

⁵² Augustine, *Enarrationes*, Ps 108.17. CCSL 40, 1682 and McNamara, *Glossa*, 231.

Additionally, unlike the Book of Kells, the Corbie' Psalter's place of origin and the contents of the monastic library are well documented.⁵³ The abbot of Corbie, during the period in which the Corbie Psalter was made, commissioned an extensive copy of Augustine on the Psalms. The work involved thirteen manuscripts and multiple scribes.⁵⁴ The combination of the language of the Psalms, the contemporary influence of Augustine's commentaries and the naturalistic detail of the Corbie Psalter makes the meaning of the initials very accessible to modern scholarship like a Rosetta stone, unlocking the visual language of the decorated initials of the Book of Kells. In the Book of Kells, such specific reference is gone. Despite this, the manuscripts' audience would have been so familiar with the language and Christological interpretation of the Psalms that the image of quadrupeds encircling a bird, entangling it with their tongues, would have been easily legible as a reference to the attempted entrapment of Christ by the lies of the Pharisees.

On folio 257r, another bird is trapped by a quadruped initial. Luke 17:24 describes the coming of the Kingdom of God, "For as the lightning that lighteneth from under heaven, shineth unto parts that are under heaven, so shall the son of man be at his day (Ils 95)." The following verse, Luke 17:25, describes that generation who will attack and reject Christ, "But first he must suffer many things, and be rejected by this generation." Again, as with the Kells' Matthew initial and the Corbie initial, the letter is formed by a beast that surrounds and entraps the bird. The quadruped is entangled in its own knotted tongue and loops its tail around its legs.

In one instance on folio 203v, Luke 4:5, the bird within the quadruped/initial motif occurs in a passage that does not specifically refer to the Jewish betrayal and rejection of Christ. The passage describes the second

⁵³ David Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1990), 124-158.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 135-36.

temptation of Christ by Satan, when Satan leads Christ to a high place offering him authority over all of the kingdoms of the world. Satan, like the Pharisees seeks to triumph over Christ, and like the Pharisees fails to do so, revealing his blindness to Jesus' true identity, power and authority. The initial is formed by a quadruped in knots around bird. In Psalm 7, the narrator asks, "O Lord, my God . . . save me from all of them that persecute me. . . .Lest at any time he seize upon my soul like a lion."⁵⁵ In any Christological interpretation, these words issue from Christ himself.⁵⁶ In 1 Peter 5:8 the apostle warns, "Be sober and watch: Because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour."⁵⁷ The use of the lion-like quadruped in the role of aggressor seems particularly appropriate.⁵⁸ An exaggerated version of this motif occurs on folio 79v. Here, the monogram *et* is formed by a large quadruped with a flamboyant mane, circumscribing a brightly colored peacock that bites the letter that encircles it. The abbreviation mark is formed by a cross-shaped intersection of a horizontal bar and an unnecessary vertical stroke. The quadruped bites the cross-shape itself. The initial decorates the passage in which Christ predicts his suffering at the hands of man, Matthew 17:10-13:⁵⁹

And his disciples asked him, saying: Why then do the scribes say that Elias must come first? But he answering said to them: Elias indeed shall come, and restore all things. But I say to you, that Elias is already come, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they had a mind. So also the Son of Man shall suffer from them.

⁵⁵ "Domine Deus meus . . . saluum me fac ex omnibus persequentibus me. . . . Nequando rapiat ut leo animam meam."

⁵⁶ See for example, Augustine, *Enarrationes*, Ps 7.3 in *CCSL* 38, 37-38.

⁵⁷ "Sobrii estote, et vigilate: quia aduersarius uester diabolus tanquam leo rugiens circuit, qauerens quem deuoret."

⁵⁸ This is not to say that the quadruped acts as a symbol or sign for Satan. Like the serpent, the creatures within the Book of Kells often take on conflicting roles, and it is style and context that allows for interpretation in very much the same manner as "lions" and "serpents" take on different roles in the scriptures.

⁵⁹ The passage corresponds to Eusebian section 173 and is not interrupted by any other initial and so is treated as a coherent whole.

The unusual cruciform abbreviation stroke can possibly be explained by Christ's prophetic reference to his crucifixion. As with the initial described above, the lappet forms a knot around its neck.

A later passage in Luke, which speaks specifically of the Jewish leader, Luke 20:17-20, also carries this note of eventual triumph in his fall, "But he looking on them said: What is this then that is written, 'The stone, which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?' Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be bruised: and upon whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." The initial that begins the passage consists of a striped beast biting a bird very similar to the initial on folio 257r (Ills. 95). Both text and decoration again evokes the imagery of Psalm 57:7, "God shall break in pieces their teeth in their mouth: The Lord shall break the grinders of the lions." Augustine writes, "He willed to break utterly their teeth, wherewith they were gaping to bite."⁶⁰ The quadruped is extremely large with its legs askew, entangled in the tri-knots of its tail. The position of its legs distorts the form of the letter. Again, a singular striped beast forms an initial that encircles a bird although in this instance the sense of attack is heightened by the manner in which the quadruped snaps at the bird's tail feathers. The verse, although less direct in some ways than Luke 17:25, contains the same meaning. Jesus' people will fail to recognize the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Old Testament and reject him. In this passage, the criticism is directed firmly towards the Pharisees, "the builders" who direct and instigate this rejection, "For they [the Pharisees] knew that he spoke this parable to them (Luke 20:19)." The motif occurs again on folio 179r, where a quadruped encircles a bird (Ills. 87). Its green and gold tongue loops around the "neck" of the initial, which marks the beginning of Mark

⁶⁰ Augustine, *Expositions*, 232. *Enarrationes* Ps. 57.11, "Et uolebat dentes eorum, quibus inhiabant ut morderent, conterere." *CCSL* 39, 718.

14:57 in which the chief priests attempt to trap Christ with false testimony.

Nor are the initials limited to quadrupeds and serpent. On folio 96r, a blonde, full-bodied man reaches out to throttle a beautifully colored bird (Ills. 96). Bernard Meehan in his discussion of the minor decoration suggests that "if the bird is a peacock, the hands around its throat may be those of the Pharisees, who are attempting to ensnare Christ."⁶¹ The figure's excessive hair and the manner in which it wraps around the body strongly suggests that the figure represents evil. Certainly, it closely resembles the initial marking Matthew 26:14, where the serpent reaches up with its tail to capture the fish. Also of note is the manner in which the lappet of the bird wraps around the arms of the figure in a delicate yellow tri-knot as if pointing to the self-imposed nature of its entrapment as well as to the eventual defeat of the aggressor. In the majority of initials depicting quadruped encircling birds, the same sort of self-entanglement is evident. The quadrupeds' bodies that circumscribe the brightly colored birds are shown entangled in knots by their own limbs and lappets. This type of entanglement often appears in Augustine's commentary on the Psalms, "But let them . . . carp at all words, seeking somewhere to make snares and knotty false accusations wherein they are themselves entangled before those whom they strive to entangle."⁶²

Indeed, in both the Book of Kells and the Corbie Psalter, human

⁶¹ Meehan goes on to raise the possibility that the figure may depict Christ himself holding one of his symbols in the manner of an eighth-century Italian manuscript where a "disembodied hand" holds a peacock by its neck and in the Gellone Sacramentary where hands clutch snakes, harpoons and fish. Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 67. Gellone's initials follow a Byzantine formula established as early as the fifth century where disembodied hands frequently grasp various objects. See for example, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Grec 277, folios 9r and 28v and Paris Bibliothèque Nationale Grec 62. The latter does not bear such a close resemblance to Gellone. That a manuscript written in North Italy reflects a similar influence would not seem surprising. Often, as is the case in Gellone and the Bibliothèque Nationale manuscripts, the hands form gestures of expression, blessing or oratory. They lack identity although like Gellone, they often have ornate sleeves that suggest ecclesiastical robes. Possibly, they reflect the ecclesiastical reader or even the hand of God. This is not the case in the Book of Kells.

⁶² Augustine, *Expositions*, 221. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 55.10, "Illi autem . . . aucupantur uerba omnia, quaerentes alicubi laqueos et nodosas facere calumnias, quibus prius ipsi implicantur quam quos implicare contendunt." *CCSL* 39, 685.

figures and beasts are sometimes shown as simply entangled in their own limbs. A comparison with the Corbie Psalter explains the occurrence of such initials. On folio 64r an old man forms part of the initial, his wrists entangled in his own beard, and an angel stands over him with a whip (Ills. 97). The initial begins the Psalm 72, in which the speaker describes the manner in which contemplation of the eventual but sure justice of God overcomes his temptation upon seeing the prosperity of the wicked:

But my feet were almost moved; my steps had well nigh slipt.
Because I had a zeal on occasion of the wicked, seeing the
prosperity of sinners. For there is no regard to their death. . . .
They are not in the labor of men: neither shall they be
scourged like other men. Therefore pride hath held them fast:
They are covered with their iniquity and their wickedness.⁶³

The Corbie initial closely follows the sentiment of the Psalm. The angel illustrates the scourging of the man. The man's excessively long beard binds his right hand, while the left struggles with his clothing, rendering visually, "Pride hath held them fast: they are covered with their iniquity and impiety." The implication of the old man's long hair, entangling him is easily legible within the context of the Psalm.

The motif appears to be a common one, occurring in the initial of Psalm 9 as well (Ills. 98). The figure's long beard twists around in a knot about his own wrists, and his lower body transforms into the knotted tail of a serpent. The Psalm is filled with references to the wicked as caught in traps they make themselves, "Their foot hath been taken in the very snare in which they hid. The Lord shall be known when he executeth judgments: the sinner hath been caught in the works of his own hands."⁶⁴ The scribe renders this literally, showing a man trapped by the beard he has grown; his feet

⁶³ "Mei autem pene moti sunt pedes: pene effusi sunt gressus mei. Quia zelavi super iniquos, pacem peccatorum uidens. Quia non est respectus morti eorum. . . . In labore hominum non sunt, et cum hominibus non flagellabuntur. Ideo tenuit eos superbia, operi sunt iniquitate et impitate sua (Ps. 72:2-6)."

⁶⁴ "In laqueo isto, quem absconderunt, comprehensus est pes eorum. Cognoscetur Dominus iudicia faciens in operibus manuum suarum comprehensus est peccator (Ps. 9:16-17)."

transformed into a demonic tail knotting upon itself. In his interpretation of Psalm 9, Augustine describes the manner in which the justice of God, mentioned in verse 16, acts upon the sinful:

Not from that tranquillity of His blessedness nor from the secret places of wisdom, wherein blessed souls are received, is the sword, or fire, or wild beast, or any such thing brought forth whereby sinners may be tormented: but how are they tormented, and how does the Lord do judgment? "In the works," he says, "of his own hands hath the sinner been caught."⁶⁵

The image of Psalm 9, and those throughout the Corbie Psalter emphasize the manner in which the sinner entraps himself. He is not set upon by evil beasts, but rather caught in nets of his own making. The Psalms suggest that the image of a man caught in his own sin predicts what is to come after judgment, "The Lord shall be known when he executeth judgments: the sinner hath been caught in the works of his own hands." More specifically, Psalm 9 states that man will *know* his Lord in the execution of his judgments. The decoration of the Book of Kells focuses upon these two aspects of the Psalm: firstly, looking at and recognizing Christ as the one who will return in Judgment and secondly, the description of the wicked as defeated by their own sin. In the light of Psalm 9, the complementary nature of the two themes is clear.

Repeatedly in the Book of Kells, passages describing the Pharisees are marked by initials showing figures entangled by their own hair and limbs. The more blatant images in the Corbie Psalter show that such initials can certainly carry meaning. The Book of Kells appears to borrow the visual language of the Psalms in order to depict the self-defeating nature of sin. As Psalm 72 spells out, meditation upon the eventual downfall of the sinner

⁶⁵ Augustine, *Expositions*, 37. *Enarrationes Ps. 9.16*, "Non ab illa tranquillitate beatitudinis suae, nec a secretis sapientiae, quibus recipiuntur beatae animae, profetur ferrum, aut ignis, aut bestia, aut aliquid tale quo cruciantur peccatores. Sed quomodo cruciantur, et quomodo facit Dominus iudicium? *In operibus, manuum suarum comprehensus est peccator.*" CCSL 38, 67.

could act as a barrier towards the temptation of earthly pleasures. The depiction of creatures bound by their own excesses captures the sentiment so common in the Psalms; that sinners will always fall into the traps of their own making.

Both the artists of the Corbie Psalter and the Book of Kells make little distinction between the use of human figures and beasts, as the half-man/half-beast of Psalm 9 suggests. Psalm 72 may explain the easy transition between beast and human figures. In verse 23, the narrator says to God, "I am become a beast before thee: And I am always with thee."⁶⁶ Possibly, the use of anthromorphized beasts reflects this sentiment. Certainly, these creatures carry meaning in the same way as human figures. Again, this is most clearly demonstrated in the Corbie Psalter. The initial forming the B of Psalm 31 contains two winged beasts whose tails knot around their bodies (Ills. 99). The beast at the top bites its own leg, and the beast at the top bites its own tail. The tails of both creatures loop and twist around their necks in knots. Verses 3-4 describe the confusion of the sinner, "Because I was intent, my bones grew old; whilst I cried out all day long . . . I am turned in my anguish."⁶⁷ The manner in which the beasts turn upon themselves closely parallels the language of the Psalms.⁶⁸ Psalm 57, in which David castigates the wicked and foretells their punishment, contains a similar image. Two beasts with knotted tails form the S of "Si vere uti que." (Ills. 100). The Psalm deals largely with the blindness of the sinful, "Their madness is according to the likeness of a serpent: like the deaf asp that stoppeth up her ears."⁶⁹

⁶⁶ "Ut jumentum factus sum apud te: et ego semper tecum."

⁶⁷ "Quoniam tacui, inueterauerunt ossa mea, dum clamarem tota die . . . conuersus sum in aerumna mea."

⁶⁸ "Deux chiens ailés donnet bien cette impression de repli et d'emprisonnement de soi-même" Desobry, 86. (Two winged dogs give a good impression of the contortion and the imprisonment within the self.)

⁶⁹ "Furor illis secundum similitudinem serpentis: sicut aspidis surdae, et obturantis aures suas." (Ps. 57:5). The Hiberno-Latin gloss compares the deafness of the serpent to the Jews who could not hear the voice of Christ calling in the gospels. McNamara, *Glossos*, 121.

Yet another example occurs in Psalm 55 where the tongues of two quadrupeds knot around their front legs while their tails loop around their hind legs (Ills. 101). The Psalmist recites the acts of his enemies as they plot against him. Augustine identifies these enemies discussed by Psalm 55 as heretics. He interprets the conclusion of the Psalm, which describes the turning back of the Psalmist enemies as referring to the manner in which those seeking to make "knotty false accusations" become entangled themselves.⁷⁰ Again, the image depicts beasts entangled into knots formed by the contortions of their own bodies, limbs, tails and tongues. In the Book of Kells, zoomorphic creatures are similarly entrapped by their own tongues and limbs. Such images, like those in the Corbie Psalter, depict the confusion and futility of sin. In almost every instance these correspond to textual descriptions of the wicked, most typically the Pharisees, plotting to ensnare Christ. Again, the scribes' familiarity with the language of the Psalms cannot be overstated. It is therefore not surprising that the knots, self-entanglement, beasts and tongues described in the Psalms, and as revealed in the Corbie Psalter, as an established part of the monastic, visual repertoire should manifest itself in the decoration of a gospel book.

The initial marking John 8:3 on folio 315r consists of an entangled beast whose tongue loops in several knots around its body (Ills. 103). It is curiously and unnecessarily upside-down, its body bending backwards over its head. The passage that the initial marks extends from John 8:3-11. The Pharisees and teachers of law present Christ with an adulterous woman and, quoting the Old Testament's command that such women be stoned, ask for Christ's opinion as to what should be done to the woman. John 8:6 states explicitly, "And this they said tempting him, that they might accuse him." In the conclusion of the episode, Christ manages to turn their own questions

⁷⁰ "Nodosas facere calumnias. . ." Augustine, *Enarrationes* Ps. 55.6. *CCSL* 39, 685.

against them, and the Pharisees fall into the snare of their own tongues just as the quadrupeds are entangled by theirs. Commenting on this specific passage, Augustine employs the imagery of the snare, "When did such men prepare snares, into which they did not first thrust their own heads? Behold, the Lord in answering them will both keep righteousness, and will not depart from gentleness. He was not taken for whom the snare was laid, but rather they were taken who laid it, because they believed not on Him who could pull them out of the net."⁷¹ The image portrays the self-entanglement of the Pharisees instigated by their own tongues. The initial, inserted mid-line, is directly above the word "Pharisees." The angle of the creature and its gaze point like an arrow to the word.

The *et* monogram is frequently decorated in this manner, often in a purely ornamental fashion. A great number of this type of initial, however, occur next to passages concerning the Pharisees or the impious. One of the most remarkable instances of this type of initial occurs repeatedly across several folios. A large quadruped, between two and three lines in length, bends over itself to form the shape of the letter P. Each initial of this type is brightly colored, most commonly in bright yellow. They are thickly drawn and easily visible from a distance, including their minor details, such as the manner in which their tails and manes bind their legs. The first initial of this type appears on folio 117v, beginning Matthew 26:58. The verse tells how, after Christ is taken, Peter follows, "That he might see the end." The last phrase is centered and decorated at the top of the opposite folio, "finem rei." The initial marks the beginning of the Peter's betrayal of Christ. The next passage is marked by similar initial, its paws, head and tail resting upon the word "falsum." The initial starts Matthew 26:59, where the chief priests bring false witness against Christ.

⁷¹ Augustine, *Lectures*, 437. In *Iohannes*, Tract. 33.4 (John 8:1-11), "Non est captus cui tendebatur, sed potius capti sunt qui tendebant, quia in eum qui eos posset de laqueis eruere, non crededebant. *CCSL* 36, 308.

A similar initial occurs on folio 119r, Matthew 26:69-70, where Peter denies Christ. It is similarly entangled, its tongue prominently colored, looping numerous times around the neck and forelegs of the animal. The initial appears again on folio 121r, marking Matthew 27:15, which states that according to the law, the Jews have the power to release Barrabas. Another initial on 121v marks out Matthew 27:20, when the chief priests convince the people to demand that Christ be crucified. The initial appears once more, on folio 124v, where the chief priests "blasphemed against him. . . . If thou be the Son of God, come down off that Cross (Ills. 78)". There are no other such initials in the Matthew gospel. Admittedly, the letter P only occurs three other times within the Matthew Gospel, but in these three instances the initials are not formed by the same contorted beasts.⁷²

Finally, on folio 269v, two initials mark Luke 20:45-6 and Luke 20:47 (Ills. 102). The first initial consists of a large quadruped approximately six lines in length. Its tongue loops around its neck in a knot and its tail entwines its hind legs in several places. Its decoration is quite striking with a double-lappet in yellow orpiment with red stripes and a "bossed" effect down the length of its body. The initial marks the verses in which Christ warns his disciples to beware of the teachers of law citing their hypocritical nature. The second initial contains two extremely contorted and interconnected quadrupeds. Their necks and front legs loop into knots around each other while their tails knot their hind legs together. Their lappets are similarly knotted. Like the initial above, it is quite long, extending down four lines of text to the bottom of the folio. The initial marks Christ's explicit warning that the punishment of the hypocritical teachers of law will be severe. The image depicts the two quadrupeds entangled; by each other--by their tails, limbs, lappets and neck--making explicit Christ's warning of punishment. The tails

⁷² These initials are formed by men and quadrupeds, and on folio 48r, the letter P is enlarged but not decorated.

of the quadrupeds terminate in a unusual shape that appears exclusively in figures of entanglement and may have evil connotations. As with the other initials, the images show the manner in which the wicked damn themselves and become trapped in nets of their own making.

While the vast majority of entangled beasts occur in passages referring to the Jewish leaders, these images of entrapment also occur in sections that refer specifically to the confusion and self-defeating nature of sin. The manner in which the creatures are tangled by their own tongues and hair, renders visually the nature of evil described in the scriptures and commentaries. The human initials in the Book of Kells depict with even greater clarity the nature of man without the saving grace of God. Augustine's commentaries on the Psalms gives a close portrayal of this type of man:

He hath received the distinction of the senses in the body, eyes for seeing, ears for hearing . . . and even the very health and soundness of the body. But up to this point we have these things in common even with the brute; he hath received yet more than this; a mind capable of understanding, capable of Truth, capable of distinguishing right from wrong; capable of seeking after, of longing for its Creator, of praising Him, and fixing itself upon Him. All this the wicked man hath received as well as others; but by not living well he fails to repay that which he owes.⁷³

Elsewhere, he compares this kind of moral confusion to a type of paralysis or palsy.⁷⁴ The decorated initials depict human figures as senseless beasts, bound by their own tongues and chewing on their hair.

Folio 67r contains one of the best known decorated initials within the text of the manuscript (Ills. 104). Since Françoise Henry discussed the initial

⁷³ Augustine, *Expositions*, 96-7. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 36.s.ii.13, "Accipit in corpore distinctionem sensuum, ad uidendum oculos, ad audiendum aures . . . salutemque ipsam corporis. Sed adhuc ista et cum pecore habemus communia; accipit etiam amplius, id est mentem quae possit intellegere, quae possit capere ueritatem, quae possit iustum ab iniusto discernere, quae possit indagare, desiderare creatorem, laudare et inhaerere illi. Haec omnia accipit et peccator, sed non bene uiuendo non reddit quod debet." *CCSL* 38, 355.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 356.

in 1974, it has been described as referring to the Parable of the Sower, as the initial begins Matthew 13:18, "Hear you therefore the parable of the Sower." Above the first line of text walk three birds, most likely two hens and a rooster. A man is imprisoned within the initial, tugging on his leg while tearing at and eating his hair. Henry has suggested that the hens and rooster represent the birds that interfere with the sowing of the seed, while the figure within the initial of *uos* depicts the evil one that comes and takes away the seed from the good men in Matthew 13:19.⁷⁵ While the former suggestion concerning the hens and rooster seems quite likely, resembling the type of "illustration" found elsewhere in the manuscript where passages are interpreted through familiar, domestic animals, the latter suggestion is less likely. The man depicted, imprisoned within the word, tied up in knots, eating his own hair seems completely powerless, more in keeping with the images of ignorance found in later manuscripts, where the world of reason is turned upside down. It is also reminiscent of the description of the state of the sinner in Psalm 31:3-4, "I am turned in my own anguish." This is in keeping with the rest of the initial, where a mischievous bird takes on the role of predator and attacks a sleeping cat, now the victim. Possibly this is a play on Isidore's assertion that the animal is called "Catus" because it catches.⁷⁶ The parable warns against the one whom "catcheth away that which is sown in his own heart."

The human figure, entangled in his own ignorance, is not the active evil one that comes and "catcheth away that which was sown in his heart," but rather the lost soul in ignorance, that hears the word of the Kingdom "and understandeth not." If any figure represents the evil one, it is the bird that preys upon the sleeping cat that "seeth not." It is interesting to note that the man's pose, unlike the contorted figures described elsewhere, is not

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Isidore, *Etymologiarum, Liber 12.2 38. PL 82, 440.*

necessitated by the initial's shape. Unlike the other human figures, he does not delineate the initial but rather sits inside it. The artist could have easily shown the man seated within the bowl of the U, merely clutching his knees, or even standing. The damned are choked by cords of their own making, in this image the cords are the figure's hair, and wrestling with their own sins, in this instance, the figure wrestles with his own limbs. Proverbs 5:22 warns, "His own iniquities catch the wicked and he is fast bound with the ropes of his own sins."⁷⁷ Columbanus refers to this verse when describing men as bound by Satan with the lengthy cord of their own errors.⁷⁸ In the Luke version of the Parable of the Sower on folio 220r, a quadruped sits within the initial with its leg over its body (Ills. 105). The pose is similar to that of the human figure in Matthew version of the same incident. The quadruped bites its own body and is tangled within its lappet and tongue. The scribe does not so much as illustrate the text, as he comments upon it, showing the struggle of ignorant and their distorted perception of the world.

The damned, and the Pharisees in particular, are often depicted as human figures or quadrupeds entangled by their own tongues, hair, tails or manes. On folio 182r in Mark 15:15, Pilate releases Barabbas to the Jews (Ills. 33). The initial consists of a figure pulling on his own leg and blonde hair. His hair loops around his wrist in a knot similar to the manner in which tongues of the beast in the canon tables loop around the wrist of Christ (Ills. 123a). Augustine repeatedly interprets the crowd of Jews and the Pharisees as the enemies of Christ who have "false tongues" and end up entangled in nets of their own making. In his commentary on Psalm 108, "They have spoken against me with false tongues." He writes that they did this chiefly, "When they praised him as a 'good master' with insidious adulation. . . . Because they burst into cries, 'crucify him, crucify him' he hath added 'they

⁷⁷ "Iniquitates suae capiunt impium, et funibus peccatorum suorum constringitur."

⁷⁸ Columbanus, 45.

compassed me about with words of hatred."⁷⁹ The text that the initial illustrates describes only the sin and "triumph" of the priests as their plots to capture and kill Christ come to fruition. The scribe, however, drawing upon the imagery of the Psalms, reminds his audience that the tongues of the Pharisees and the Jewish populous that they lead will be turned on them and they will fall into their own snares.⁸⁰

In Matthew 23:24 on folio 100v, when Christ describes the Pharisees as blind guides who strain out a gnat but swallow a camel, a similar figure eats his own hair (Ills. 106). On folio 97v, Matthew 22:34, the Pharisees, seeing that Christ had silenced the Sadducees, attempt to trap Christ by questioning him as to which is the greatest commandment. The initial that forms the P of the "Pharisees" that begins the text consists of not one but two figures (Ills. 107). It has been suggested that one of the figures might be a woman.⁸¹ There are many figures with long hair in the Book of Kells, including a bearded figure on folio 86r, who, although shown from profile, has very similar hair; short, full and curled on top with two long strands or plaits on either side terminating in spirals. The two hair styles may distinguish between the two orders of priesthood, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, which would suit the description in the text. The two figures wrestle with one another, entangled within one another's limbs. They pull on their own hair, which in the case of the bearded figure ensnares his own hands. These two figures reflect the confusion of the Pharisees and the Sadducees who repeatedly attempt to entrap Christ and repeatedly end up entangled by their own questions and plots. Bede describes the wicked as

⁷⁹ Augustine, *Exposition*, 537. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 108.3, "Tunc utique quando eum tamquam magistrum bonum captiosa adulatione laudabant. . . . Deinde quia eruperunt clamantes: *Crucifige, crucifige* secutus adiunxit: *Et sermonibus odii circumdederunt me.*" CCSL 40, 1586.

⁸⁰ The equivalence with which beasts and human figures are treated is readily apparent on this set of folios. On 181v, a very similar initial begins Mark 15:12 where Pilate asks again what should be done with Christ. The initial is formed by two extremely long quadrupeds with distorted legs, and knotting about their bodies.

⁸¹ Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 71.

piling "sins upon sins, weaving as it were, a very long rope by their heedless addition."⁸² Columbanus uses a similar image, "Then lest the old enemy bind men with this very lengthy cord of error."⁸³

In Matthew 9:12, Christ reminds the Pharisees that it is the sick not the healthy that need the physician (Ills. 108).⁸⁴ The figure grips one ankle and seems to kick himself or tread on his own neck. His tongue wraps around his body and limbs. The initial depicts the self-inflicted plight and suffering of sinful man. Quoting James 3:8, Augustine writes, "Man tames the wild beast, yet he tames not his own tongue."⁸⁵ The unusual position of the foot can only be explained as a symbol of pride described in verse twelve of Psalm 35, "Let not the foot of pride come to me."⁸⁶ In his commentary on this verse, Augustine writes that sinners fell "by the foot of pride. Hear the foot of pride. 'When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God.' Therefore came against them the foot of pride, whereby they came into the depth," he continues, describing the foot of pride as a wound, and Christ as the doctor, "God came humbly, that from such great wound of pride He might heal man. . . He was taken by the Jews; He was reviled by them. . . . He let go what He heard as though He heard it not. For a Physician was He, and to cure the madman had He come."⁸⁷

⁸² Bede, *Homilies*, vol. 2, 3. *Homiliae*, Hom. 2.1 (Jn. 2:2-12) "Insequuntur addentes uidelicet peccata peccatis et quasi funem longissimum incauta eorum aumentatione texentes." CCSL 122, 185.

⁸³ Columbanus, 45. *Epistula* 5, "Ne igitur hoc fune erroris longissimo liget latro antiquus homines." Ibid., 44.

⁸⁴ This figure is described as referring obliquely to the text, "a contorted man sticks out his tongue, at the point where Christ asks if the healthy need a doctor as much as the sick do." Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 66-67. As shown in the discussion above, the exaggeration of the tongue and the manner in which it loops around the body is a common device, suggesting that its connotations with physical sickness may be only coincidental.

⁸⁵ Augustine, *Sermon on the Mount*, 273. *Sermones*, Sermon. 55.1 (Matthew V:22), "Et homo domat feram, non domat linguam." PL 38, 375.

⁸⁶ "Non uniat mihi pes superbiae."

⁸⁷ Augustine, *Expositions*, 90. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 35.17, "In pede superbiae. Audite pedem superbiae: *Qui cum cognouissent Deum, non sicut Deum glorificauerunt. Uenit ergo illis pes superbiae, unde uenerunt in profundum. . . . Uenit humilis Deus, ut a tanto superbiae uulnere curaret hominem. . . . Comprehensus est a Iudaeis, insultatum est ei. . . . Medicus enim erat, et phreneticum curare uenerat.*" CCSL 38, 334-35.

On folio 68v, a dark-haired man grabs his own legs, pulling them apart (Ills. 109). The initial marks Matthew 13:34, "All of these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes." Bernard Meehan, in his account of the illustrative features in the minor decoration says of this initial, "It is tempting to suppose that the verse may have inspired the form of the initial."⁸⁸ Is this an illustration of Christ speaking in parables? This certainly seems to fit the text. Meehan notes that only this figure and the head of Christ on 335v have teeth.⁸⁹ It would seem the identification of this initial as Christ speaking in parables is a feasible one; however, several features seem to counter this.⁹⁰ The initial depicts the whole body of the man. Also, the figure, like all other figures of sinners in the manuscript, is entangled and seems to pull its own body apart in order to form the letter. This seems an unlikely way of representing Christ.

Earlier in the chapter, Christ explains to his apostles why he speaks in parables, "Therefore do I speak to them in parables: because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand."⁹¹ Possibly, the contorted figure with the dark hair refers to the sinners with callused hearts who cannot comprehend Christ's parables. Considering the emphasis laid upon the knowledge of Christ as the path of salvation and the confusion of sinners, this would reflect the emphasis found elsewhere in the manuscript. The contorted nature of the figure within the initial and the manner in which his own tongue or hair binds him is so similar to initials marking verses concerning sin and the Pharisees, it seems unlikely this figure could represent Christ. Additionally, in the passage which follows directly after Matthew 13:36-43, Christ explains the Parable of the Weeds. The explanation consists

⁸⁸ Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 67.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Unlike the majority of images of Christ, the man has dark hair; however, one initial contains an image of a human head that is most certainly Christ with dark hair but the coloring seems accidental. See appendix C.

⁹¹ Matthew 13:13.

entirely of detailing the destiny of sinners and refers explicitly to the Isaiah passage concerning ears and eyes that is quoted above, "The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth . . . He who has ears let him hear (Matthew 13:41-3)." The figure with its unusual teeth, twisted in its own tongue reflects the damned who do not understand the parables of Christ.

The wealth of initials depicting twisted and contorted figures, imprisoned by their own tongues, hair and limbs located next to verses or passages that describe the confusion and self-defeating nature of evil raises questions as to what purpose these initials could possibly serve. Patristic writings and contemporary literature shed some light on these remarkable initials, as do the full-page illustrations in the manuscript. As seen in the discussion of Psalm 72, cited above, the Psalms themselves advised man, when feeling tempted to follow the luxurious example of the rich, to imagine the torment the miserly will endure after Judgment. Contemplating the torment of the wicked at Judgment would insure the avoidance of sin, "All these things which the Psalm records simply, do we read likewise in others of the Lord's books, and there the hand of the Lord is great. When thou seest what has been done to the wicked take heed lest it be done to thee. . . . when the good man sees what the wicked has suffered, let him cleanse himself from all iniquity."⁹²

Scriptures and patristic writings make it clear that at Judgment each person will stand with one group or the other. In his commentary on Psalm 36, Augustine warns, "Your last day at all events cannot be far off. Make

⁹² Augustine, *Expositions*, 626. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 134.9, "Omnia ista quomodo commemorat breuiter psalmus, sic ea legimus in aliis libris dominicis, et magna ibi manus Domini. Quando tu uides quae facta sunt in impios, caue ne fiant in te. . . . Quando autem pius uidet quod passus est impius, purgat se ab omni impietate." *CCSL* 40, 1948. See O'Reilly, "Text and Image," 76-8 for a discussion of the appearance of the Beggar and the Rich man in later Anglo-Saxon art and literature of the eleventh century.

thymself ready against this!" He points out that although the soul will not join the elect until Judgment, immediately after death it is allotted to one group or the other:

But you may already be there, where that beggar, once "covered with sores," was seen at a distance, at rest, by that proud and unfruitful "rich man" in the midst of his torments. Surely laid in that rest thou waitest in security for the Day of Judgment, when thou art to receive again a body, to be changed so as to be made equal to an Angel.⁹³

One of the most unusually contorted quadrupeds occurs on folio 254v (Ills. 110). To the modern viewer, the flattened, twisted pose and perspective of the small creature can only be described as slightly comic; however, it seems unlikely that this is the intent.⁹⁴ The quadruped faces the bottom of the page; its paws, legs and lower half in the air above. Its legs have been split apart and generate two separate tails that bind the beast into position; its legs and tails tied into complex knots. The pitiful state of the quadruped corresponds to the pathos of the passage that it illustrates, Luke 16:23-6, which relates the story of the beggar and the rich man that Augustine mentions above:

And lifting up his eyes when he was in torment, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom: And he cried, and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, to cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame. And Abraham said to him: Son, remember in that thou didst receive good things in thy life-time, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted; and thou art tormented.

⁹³ Augustine, *Expositions*, 94. *Enarrationes* Ps. 36. s.ii.10 "Sed iam poteris ibi esse, ubi illum ulcerosum pauperem, diues ille superbus et sterilis in medii suis tormentis uidit a longe requiescentem. In illa requie positus certe securus exspectas iudici diem, quando recipias et corpus, quado immuteris, ut angelo aqueris. PL 36, 361-62.

⁹⁴ Whether some of these initials had comic overtones to a ninth-century audience is impossible to ascertain. Certainly none of the patristic writings show any evidence that the torment of the damned and blind confusion of the wicked was a laughing matter. One possible exception is the initial on folio 255v, where a bird appears to peck at the bottom of one of the contorted human figures. This initial is discussed in detail in part three. Philip O'Leary in his survey of laughter in early Irish literature argues that laughter was seen a type of attack or even physical blow. If any of these initials are to be interpreted as humorous, the reaction initiated would certainly be that of scorn rather than amusement. Philip O'Leary, "Jeers and Judgments: Laughter in Early Irish Literature," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 22 (1991): 15-30.

The passage touches on themes that seem to appear repeatedly in the decoration of the manuscript. Christ describes the plight of the damned; firmly and eternally bound to hell unable to escape its tortures. More specifically, Abraham's reply reminds the Rich Man of his own short-sighted nature while on earth, blind both to his own sinful nature and the plight of Lazarus. On the opposing folio, 255r, a contorted quadruped introduces Luke 17:1-2 wherein Christ cautions the disciples "It is impossible that scandals should not come: but woe to him through whom they come. It were better for him, that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should scandalize one of these little ones (Ills. 111)." The quadruped that forms the initial is quite unusual. Its front legs and hind legs are not only tied together but also tied to each other, literally "trussing" up the beast. The tail, after knotting the beasts front and hind legs together, thrusts horizontally towards the text ending in a distinctive terminus. Although images of contortion and bondage are frequent in the manuscript, in no other initial is the figure, human or animal, so clearly tied up in knots. Possibly, the text's reference to a situation worse than having a millstone tied around the neck has prompted this image. Certainly, the image reflects the state of the sinner tied in his own sin.

The purpose of this type of imagery in the early Christian world fulfilled a similar purpose to the passage of Lazarus and Dives. It reminded the Christian while on earth to contemplate the nature of the damned and to remember that temporary pleasure or power in this life leads to suffering without reprieve in the next. Columbanus and Gregory advised men to ponder daily the end of their life and to amend their ways.⁹⁵ The pages of text abound with these contorted creatures, entangled by their own bodies, decorating passages that describe the treachery and lies of Satan, the Jewish

⁹⁵ Columbanus, 101. Gregory, *Forty Homilies*, 19. *Homiliarum*, Hom. 1.6 (Lk. 21:25-33) "Ille ergo diem, fratres charissimi, ante oculos ponite, et quidquid modo grave creditur in eius comparatione leuigatur." *PL* 76, 1081.

leaders, the crowds, and even the disciples. The image makes the wickedness in the text manifest in the manner that it will be made on Doomsday; in the way it became apparent to Dives and Lazarus. Such images of suffering, like that of Dives, are countered by images of the elect, like the person of Lazarus. As images of Christ in the minor decoration reflected the desire of the early Christian to number among the elect and gaze upon the face of God, images of the wicked bound by their sins, would provoke horror and repentance. Gregory, in his *Dialogues*, describes a devouring dragon that appears to a young and wayward monk as he leaves the monastery. St. Benedict, his abbot, had prayed that the monk would "see with his own eyes the invisible dragon that had been leading him astray."⁹⁶ The images render the nature of the wicked, including the manner in which they will be bound by their own sins, manifest.

The minor decoration shows the viewer the nature of evil. Such images describe the confusion of the wicked, showing them to be inverted and twisted, struggling with themselves and their own bodies. They promise the swift and severe justice of Christ. The human figures in particular occur in passages that speak specifically of the rejection of Christ by his people and their inability to perceive his teachings. Although some of the initials such as the twisted figure marking the Lucan Parable of the Sower could not have been made out easily at a distance, the majority are large and brightly colored. Additionally, even at a distance the sense of contortion and confusion, made more apparent by the atypically awkward quality of the drawing, would be visible. In Psalm 9:17, the Psalmist writes, "The Lord shall be known when he executeth judgements: the sinner hath been caught in the works of his own hands." In looking at images in which those who have sinned against Christ are shown bound by the chains of their sins, the audience would come to

⁹⁶ Gregory, *Dialogorum* 2.25. PL 66, 182.

know Christ. This would explain the presence of such imagery in a manuscript where so many images focus upon man's recognition of God at the time of Judgment.

Introduction to Part Three: Necessary Instruments of Grace

The minor decoration of the manuscript depicts the face of God and the confusion of evil through the use of unusual, startling initials and line-fillers. These consistently appear next to or above verses or passages that discuss mankind's recognition of or failure to recognize Christ. The opposition between good and evil that appears throughout the text of the manuscript also occurs in its larger, full-page illustrations. These also show the confusion of evil and emphasize the necessity of looking to Christ. Because of their greater complexity, the larger images achieve a greater specificity. Like the minor decoration, they describe in visual terms the nature of the wicked and show the punishment that awaits those who succumb to temptation; however, the full-page images articulate to a much greater extent than the minor decoration the way in which man should look to the Godhead in this earthly life. Whereas the minor decoration merely presents the viewer with the image of the Incarnate Christ issuing out of the text of the gospel, the larger pages make the relationship between the gospel book and the apprehension of the face of God explicit. Moreover, the images clarify the role of the gospel book, the Eucharist and the liturgy as instruments that enable man to look towards the Godhead in this life, and thereby to gather strength for the daily struggle against the temptations of Satan. The Psalmist associates looking upon the face of God with grace and protection. In Psalm 83:10 the narrator commands, "Behold, God our protector: And look on the face of thy Christ."¹ Augustine commenting on the verse, writes "Let your Christ become known to all that we may be able to go from strength to strength, that grace may the more abound, since sin hath abounded."²

Both the art and writings of the period indicate that man was perceived

¹ "Protector noster aspice Deus: et respice in faciem christi tui."

² *Ennarationes*, Ps. 83.13, "Notus sit omnibus Christus tuus, ut possimus ire a uirtutibus in uirtutem, ut possit superabundare gratia, quoniam abundauit peccatum." *CCSL* 39, 1159.

as defenseless against temptation and utterly dependent upon the grace of the Incarnation for protection and guidance. Because man was weak and flawed, God provided him with instruments such as the gospel book, images of Christ, and the sacraments, so that he could contemplate the nature of God while at the same time guarding against the lies of Satan. The call for constant monitoring of one's faith and vigilance against over-confidence co-existed with the paradoxical need to show belief without question. Perhaps the best example of the unquestioning nature of Irish faith are the stories related in the Anglo-Saxon chronicles of Irish monks sailing in coracles without oars and rudder.³ The early Irish faith contains a seemingly paradoxical combination of blind belief and wary vigilance. Although appearing at odds with one another, these aspects of faith are not completely contradictory. The monk in the coracle places his faith in God rather than himself as demonstrated by the absence of a rudder. His faith should not be described as blind faith, but rather as total faith in God. Instead of being blind, his faith must be ever-vigilant so as to insure that the being in whom he places his faith in is indeed the true Godhead. False gods and teachings were always masquerading as the truth. The *Martyrology of Oengus* relates the story of the monk who is approached by someone claiming the authority of Christ. The wise monk repeatedly questions the man, until by holding up the gospel, he forces the impostor to admit that he is actually Satan.⁴ Mankind needs the protection and guidance of the gospel book, the Eucharist and the liturgy in order to recognize in whom to place his faith.⁵

³ Brendan Bradshaw, "The Wild and Wooly West: Early Irish Christianity and Latin Orthodoxy," in *The Churches, Ireland and the Irish*, ed. W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood, Studies in Church History, vol. 25 (Oxford: Blackwell published for the Ecclesiastical Society, 1989), 7.

⁴ Oengus, 155.

⁵ Augustine and the Council of Orange in an attempt to stamp out Pelagianism promoted the view that man lost his free will at the Fall, was handed over to the devil and can now escape only by grace. Clare Stancliff, "The Miracle Stories," 102-04. Although Stancliff suggests that the Irish were less influenced by the Council of Orange and held the view that man was meant to fall, so that he could repent and be resurrected to a higher state, the art and writings of of the period emphasize the necessity for divine assistance in the fight against Satan, as will

The manuscript's decoration does more than articulate the function of the gospel book in mankind's path to salvation. It emphasizes the necessities of such aids, showing mankind as frail and easily tempted. The decoration of folio 255v gives particular emphasis to man's need for guidance (Ills. 112). The initial consists of a large human figure who bends over and turns backwards to grasp an equally large quadruped, which in turn bites the human figure at the waist. The figure pulls at his own hair and is almost naked, with his torso, arms, legs and feet exposed. The man resembles the other images of contortion described in the previous chapter. The mane of the beast loops around his wrists, literally knitting the ankle and wrist of the man to the beast. A bird stands on the beast and pecks at the man's backside, which seems more reminiscent of late gothic marginalia or misericords than Insular art.

This initial marks the verse Luke 17:3 in which Christ warns, "Take heed of yourselves. If your brother sin against thee reprove him, and if he do penance, forgive him." Above the word "peccauerit" a tonsured monk rides across the first line of verse. The monk is remarkable, for despite the number of human figures in its margins and full-page illustrations, the Book of Kells depicts only two men with tonsure.⁶ To date, the image has merited little comment, described in conjunction with another marginal image of an acrobat on horseback as revealing "no purpose as they ride off the page; no purpose, that is, beyond surviving to demonstrate the virtuosity and wit of an artist who could extend the serif of the final minim of the *m* of the *unum* to form the tonsure of the rider."⁷ It seems unimaginable that one of only two monastic figures within such a sophisticated and expressive manuscript--where the designer, artist and scribe were tonsured clerics and the audience must have included tonsured clerics--has no significance; especially in a verse with the

be demonstrated in chapter six.

⁶ The other tonsured figure appears on folio 188r and is discussed later in chapter seven.

⁷ Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 74.

phrase "frater tuus." Moreover, the verse contains an explicit statement by Christ on repentance, penance and forgiveness and the manner in which it should be implemented on earth.

The decoration of this verse suggests its importance in Irish monasticism. Unique to the Irish penitentials was the manner in which absolution was not given until penance was completed.⁸ This system would have placed a great weight on the penitent, who would be at risk of eternal damnation throughout the whole length of his penance. However, it is the verse's explicit urging towards the monitoring of brethren, "if thy brother sins, reprove him," that suggests its importance to the manuscript's monastic community. It contains an explicit instruction from Christ that bears upon another particularly Irish feature of monastic life, the soul friend, a kind of private confessor and moral sounding board. While penance was handed out by an abbot and public confession did exist, the soul friend was considered an essential part of Christian life.⁹ St. Brigit is supposed to have said, "anyone without a soul friend is a body without a head."¹⁰ Often these soul friends were appointed by saints or even divine intervention. The notes in the *Martyrology of Oengus* relate the story of Comgall's search for a soul-friend. Molua tells Comgall that in order to receive his soul friend he must, "take Christ's gospel to thee, and let someone uplift it before thee, and kneel to it till thou gettest a soulfriend out of it."¹¹

Certain aspects of the decoration of folio 255v provoke further questions. The figure fighting the quadruped and pulling its own hair seems to depict someone in the process of sinning. A similar initial in the Corbie

⁸ Bede in *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4.25 describes the misfortunate case of a youth named Adamanus who was given a long penance. Before the youth completed the penance, his confessor died and as a result the youth had to perform the penance for the rest of his life. *PL* 95, 215-16.

⁹ "The need for a fixed confessor [was] so insisted on that the saying 'a person without a confessor is like a body without a head,' became proverbial." Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, 355.

¹⁰ Oengus, 75.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 183.

Psalter introduces Psalm 35, in which a human figure wrestles with a large serpent that encircles him, forming a knot around his wrists. Despite his entanglement, the man manages to grasp the serpent (Ills. 113). As with the Kells initial, it is somewhat ambiguous as to whether the human figure is simply holding onto the beast that attacks him or wrestling with it. Unique to the Corbie initial is the inclusion of another man, who kneels in prayer. The initial has been described as depicting the “opposition between the human depravity and divine providence, the predicament of the soul of the obstinate impious: this is similar to the general meaning of Psalm 35. The unrepentant sinner, caught in its appropriate snare, contorted and weighed down.”¹² Psalm 35, verse three, describes the moral confusion of the sinner, “For in his sight he hath done deceitfully, that his iniquity may be found unto hatred. The words of his mouth are iniquity and guile: he would not understand that he might do well.” Augustine comments on this, “If a man cannot but have wickedness, let him at least hate it. . . . It is one thing not to fight, and to be in true and lasting peace; another to fight and overcome; another to fight and to be overcome; another not to fight at all, but to be carried away.”¹³ Like the Kells initial, this initial is atypical in its depiction of a figure struggling with a beast. Possibly, the incorporation of a beast in the Corbie initial reflects the slightly unusual emphasis within the Psalm of the sinner embracing and actively choosing to sin or not to sin. More commonly, as discussed in the previous chapter, sin is described and depicted as a self-inflicted snare, rather than something that is consciously embraced or rejected as described by Augustine in his commentary above. Possibly this interpretation of the Psalm, which the scribe would have been familiar with, dictated his choice of

¹² “Opposition entre la dépravation humaine et la Providence divine, état de l’âme de l’impie obstiné: tel est sens général du psaume 35. Le pécheur impénitent, pris à son propre piège, se contorsionne et trébuche,” Desobry, 89.

¹³ Augustine, *Expositions*, 87. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 35.6, “Si non potest non habere malitiam, uel oderit illam. . . . Aliud est non pugnare, et esse in pace uera atque perpetua, aliud pugnare et uincere, aliud pugnare et uinci, aliud nec pugnare, sed trahi.” *CCSL* 38, 325.

imagery. The Kells initial, like that of Corbie, is also unique in its incorporation of a beast into its design. Possibly, like Corbie, the beast signals the manner in which sin, although inherently within a man, is something he must struggle against once ensnared. Certainly this would fit with the verse's emphasis upon penance and confession as well as depicting the role of the soul friend as the brother that must rebuke the sinner and urge him not to remain passive and be "carried away" by his sin but instead to do penance and thereby defeat sin and gain absolution.

This fails to address the more striking of the two images, the monk on horseback. Possibly, the monk represents the soul friend, or the good "brother" instructed to rebuke his erring friend. In such an instance, the initial would bear an interesting resemblance to the Corbie initial in its opposition of sin and piety. The presence of the horse, however, demands explanation. Psalm 31:9-11 instructs, "Do not become like the horse and the mule who have no understanding. . . . Many are the scourges of the sinner."¹⁴ Augustine interprets this, "Do you then, O God unto them, what is done to horse and mule, that by scourges you make them to bear your rule."¹⁵ The image of the horse and rider occurs repeatedly in the Corbie Psalter. The initial that marks Psalm 72 shows an angel standing upon a man whose beard loops around his own wrists (Ills. 97). Although there is no clear bit or bridle, the angel uses the man's hair as rein and harness. Dangling from the angel's right hand is a scourge. The illustration reflects the verses 21, 22 and 24 of Psalm 72, "For my heart hath been inflamed, and my reins have been changed: and I am brought to nothing and I knew not. I am become a beast before thee: and I am always with thee. Thou hast held me by thy right hand; and by thy will thou hast conducted me."¹⁶ Although Augustine urges man to "bridle" carnal

¹⁴ "Nolite fieri sicut equus et mulus, quibus non est intellectus. . . . Multa flagella peccatoris."

¹⁵ *Enarrationes*, Ps. 31.s.i. 9, "Egro fac illis, Deus quod fit equo et mulo, ut poenis eos cogas ferre regimen tuum." *CCSL* 38, 224.

¹⁶ Desobry, 100.

pleasure, the only image within the Corbie Psalter where man bridles a beast is Psalm 51 where a man rides backwards upon a beast.¹⁷ The scribe has taken pains to illustrate the bridle and harness; however, this figure is thought to represent the anti-Christ.¹⁸

Possibly, the horse and rider in the Book of Kells does refer to the bridling of carnal desire, but it seems unlikely, for although the metaphor of the horse and rider is a part of the visual language of the Corbie Psalter, its initials emphasize that it is not man, but God and his angels that "hold man's jaws in bit and bridle." In the initial where man himself is shown riding with the reins, the image has connotations with evil and associations with the anti-Christ. The word "horse" appears in the Vulgate Bible in 49 places. In only two instances, Zechariah 10:3, where the good man is compared to the "horse of his [God's] glory," and Isaiah 63:13 where Moses is compared to a horse in the wilderness "that stumbleth not," does the horse have positive connotations. In every other occurrence the horse takes on a negative role, typically either as a symbol of lust or of man's misplaced faith in his own strength.¹⁹ In Tobias 6:17, the horse and mules are cited as examples of lust, "For they who in such manner receive matrimony, as to shut out God from themselves, and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power." Similar comparisons are made in Psalm 31:9, Ecclesiastes 30:8 and Jeremiah 8:6. The horse and rider are repeatedly associated with those who place their trust in their own strength rather than that of God. This originates in Exodus 14:9 and 15:1, where the Egyptians riding on horseback and in chariots, pursue Moses leading his people out of Egypt. The Jews lack the

¹⁷ Augustine, *Enarrationes*, Ps. 50.3, CCL 38, 601.

¹⁸ Desobry, 97 and Rosemary Muir Wright, "The Rider on the Sea-Monster: Quid Gloriaris in Malitia," forthcoming. The identification of the figure as the anti-Christ is based upon the text of the Psalm and his backwards position on the beast.

¹⁹ The one exception occurs in Esther 6, where the horse does not appear to have any symbolic function other than as one of the riches bestowed upon Mordecai.

powerful horse and chariots of the Egyptians but place their trust in God who intervenes and parts the sea. Exodus 15:21 praises the Lord, "For he is gloriously magnified, the horse and rider he hath thrown into the sea." In Jeremiah 8:6, the horse is specifically compared to the man who will not admit his sin or do penance, "No man speaketh that which is good, there is none that doth penance for his sin, saying: what have I done? They are all turned to their own course, as an horse going with violence to do battle." In Amos 2:14 the people are warned "and the rider of the horse shall not save his life." A similar warning occurs in Psalm 32:17, which tells the king not to trust the strength of his horse to save him.

Psalm 75:6-7 speaks of the foolish of heart, saying, "They have all slumbered that mounted on horseback."²⁰ Augustine writes, "Who are they that have mounted horses? They that would not be humble. To sit on horseback is no sin; but it is a sin to lift up the neck of power against God, and to deem one's self to be in some distinction."²¹ Augustine continues, expounding upon the deafness of those who sleep through Christ's chiding, "I ask you, my brethren, [look] how they sleep . . . while the Gospel is sounding."²² It seems likely, that the Kells initial depicts the brother, who in pride, attempts self-rule. Moreover, the rider's unusually low position on the horse allows his foot to land squarely on the word "peccauerit." Augustine cautions those mounted on horseback against their deafness; their inability to hear God's chiding or the message of the gospel. Psalm 32:16-17 warns against too much faith in one's own strength, "The king is not saved by a great army. . . . Vain is the horse for safety: neither shall he be saved by the abundance of his strength."²³ The decoration of the Book of Kells repeatedly

²⁰ "Dormitauerunt qui ascenderunt equos."

²¹ Augustine, *Expositions*, 357. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 75.10, "*Qui adscenderunt equos? Qui humiles esse noluerunt. Non in equis sedere peccatum est; sed ceruicem potestatis contra Deum erigere, et putare se in aliquo honore esse.*" *CCSL* 39, 1044.

²² "Rogo uos, fratres mei, uidete quomodo dormiunt, qui sonante euangelio." *Ibid.*

²³ "Non saluatur rex per multam uirtutem. . . . Fallax equus ad salutem: in abundantia autem uirtutis suae non saluabitur."

points to man's need for guidance and the gospels role as such a guide. It would seem this odd initial and unusual line-filler reflect this. Such an interpretation would also explain the use of a somewhat placid looking horse rather than the knotted beasts, quadrupeds, serpents and human figures that occur so frequently within the Book of Kells and the Corbie Psalter figures.²⁴

Within the gospel text, Christ repeatedly warns his disciples to remain vigilant against the teachings of the Pharisees and false prophets. The artists of the Book of Kells use the space above these passages to highlight the waiting dangers of evil. In Matthew 16:6, Jesus warns the disciples, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." A fierce wolf walks over the verse (Ills. 77a). Later in the passage, Christ clarifies his meaning and the disciples understand, "that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees." The wolf rather than being mere ornament, represents the ever-present threat of false teachings to the church. In Luke 10:3 Christ cautions, "Behold, I send you as lambs among the wolves."

On folio 99v, Matthew 23:15, Christ points to the teachings of the Pharisees as a cause for damnation, "But wo to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you go round about sea and the land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him the child of hell twofold more than yourselves." Above the word "Pharisees," a figure reclines, holding a shield and spear that points down to the word (Ills. 9). The figure, like the wolf of Matthew 16:6 has caused some confusion as to its meaning.²⁵ Considering the consistent use of Psalm imagery in the decoration of the manuscript and the emphasis upon the threat of the Pharisees, it seems likely that the figure stems from the militant metaphors of Psalm 56:5, "Men, whose teeth are weapons and arrows, and their tongue a sharp as a sword."

²⁴ The way in which the foot of the monk rests upon the word "sin" may also refer to the "foot of pride," which is discussed in chapter four.

²⁵ Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 71;76.

Augustine interprets this verse as referring to those who clamored for Christ's crucifixion.²⁶ The Pharisees and the teachers of law instigated the clamoring of the Jews, leading to their mutual damnation.

The decoration of the manuscript repeatedly warn its audience that the deceit and lies of the wicked are constantly present, waiting to attack and mislead man. It is worth noting that the one instance in Irish saints' lives in which Satan directly attacks a saint is when the saint is asleep.²⁷ Constant vigilance and the contemplation of the Godhead can protect man from these attacks. Perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of the Book of Kells decoration is the manner in which it articulates its own role as a defensive weapon against the temptation and false teachings of Satan.

The decoration of the Book of Kells makes continuous references to man's need for protection and guidance. Man cannot access God directly, but must be guided along the path by instruments of grace such as the scriptures and the liturgy. The iconography of the crosses and the single image within Würzburg Epistles also portray this need. In both, the decoration emphasizes the importance of recognizing or looking toward Christ in order to defeat Satan and obtain salvation. The high crosses instead of employing the motif of the chalice or book as instruments of salvation, with one exception, use the more obvious imagery of the crook, shield and sword as well as simply depicting the source of mankind's protection--the incarnate Christ, often as an armed warrior.

²⁶Augustine, *Enarrationes*, Ps. 56.12, *CCSL* 39, 702.

²⁷Stancliff, "Miracle Stories," 108.

Chapter Six

Necessary Instruments of Grace in the High Crosses and Related Manuscripts

Insular art is scattered with specific references to tangible objects that assist man in contemplating the Godhead. Frequently, they focus on the apotropaic role of these instruments, depicting saints and clerics using them as a shield or weapon against evil. A survey of the high crosses and related continental manuscripts demonstrates that the themes that shaped the decorative program of the Book of Kells were not unique but widespread and continued well into the mid- to late ninth century.¹ Because the imagery of the high crosses, like that of the Book of Kells, operates as a cohesive unit, it is necessary to examine images within the context of the entire iconographic program in order to properly understand their meaning.

The East face of the Tall Cross at Monasterboice contains only one scene from the New Testament, Christ Walking on Water. The cross head contains five scenes, which have been somewhat controversially identified as the repentance of Manahsseh, Peter and Christ on the Water, the Three

¹ The dating of the high crosses discussed in this thesis is controversial, as the evidence is so scarce. There are two basic schools of thought, those who argue for an early ninth-century date (c.800 to 850) and those who suggest a late ninth-century/early tenth-century date. Much of the argument depends upon whether the "Muiredach" referred to in the Muiredach Cross inscription is identified as the Muiredach who died in 844 or the one who died in 922. Harbison, *High Crosses*, 367. Using either of these dates as a reference point, the remaining high crosses can be dated according to stylistic and iconographic developments. However, this approach is perilous, not just because of the uncertain starting point (the date of Muiredach), but also because it assumes a "Darwinian insistence that things evolve in an orderly sequence." Roger Stalley, "Scribe and Mason: the Book of Kells and the High Crosses," in O'Mahony, 262. This article summarizes the argument for a later date. *Ibid*, 257-65. Harbison sets forth the alternative view. Harbison, *High Crosses*, 367-73. Judith Ann Calvert's doctoral thesis presents the most thorough and unbiased survey of the evidence, showing the relationships between the Irish and Pictish crosses. Calvert concludes that the crosses developed over a period of time, with Muiredach's Cross dating from before 844, the Kells Market Cross from the 850's and the Durrow Cross from 900. Judith Anne Calvert, "The Early Development of Irish High Crosses and their Relationship to Scottish Sculpture in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1978). The purpose of the present discussion of the high crosses is not to establish a date, but to suggest the wide-spread influence of the theme that is so central to its decorative program.

Children in the Oven, the Temptation of St. Anthony and Paul and Anthony Overcoming the Devil.² Whereas the West face points to the rejection of Christ by his generation, the East face highlights the manner in which those who place their faith in Christ are protected by him. Frequently, the imagery refers to some instrument of grace that aids man. The most obvious example occurs in one of the most prominent locations on the cross, the lateral arms. On the left, Anthony is confronted on both sides by two demonic figures. One creature is completely naked, but has an animal head. The two creatures hold him by the shoulders and appear to be whispering in his ears or threatening to bite him.³ The Life of St. Anthony relates, "The devil, therefore . . . gnashed his teeth against him, but Anthony was consoled by the Savior, and continued unhurt by his wiles and varied devices. . . . The Devil sent wild beasts against him . . . and he was in their midst, while each one threatened to bite."⁴

On the opposite arm, St. Paul and St. Anthony are depicted overcoming the devil. Some have argued that the scene depicts Peter and the Fall of Simon Magus rather than Paul and Anthony defeating the devil.⁵ The image appears in four crosses, including the Market Cross at Kells. Harbison suggests that the presence of two figures and the crook suggests Paul and Anthony rather than Peter, who is usually shown with his attribute of a key.⁶

² Harbison, *High Crosses*, 148.

³ The scene occurs in seven crosses, including the Kells Market Cross. Helen Roe suggests that the image might instead portray sinful man in the grip of demons who carry him to Hell. It is impossible to identify with complete certainty the majority of images in the high crosses. While the identification of Anthony, given the prominence of Paul and Anthony on the high crosses and their importance to Irish monasticism, is likely, Roe's more general and open suggestion matches the actual imagery and lack of identifying characteristics. The most general identification that can be easily verified by the imagery is that a human central figure clothed in a long robe, being beset by demonic hybrids. Roe, *High Crosses of Kells*, 31.

⁴ Harbison, *High Crosses*, 303.

⁵ Porter's identification of the scene as the Fall of Simon Magus is widely accepted. See Arthur Kingsley Porter, *The Crosses and Culture of Ireland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), 123 and Roe, *High Crosses*, 39.

⁶ Harbison, *High Crosses*, 307. Inversion appears to have associations with evil in the minor decoration and Hell page of the Book of Kells; however, in this instance the inversion of the creature may simply show a prone state. Later images from Irish Psalters depict the slain Goliath in this position. The apocryphal Acts of Peter, which described the rivalry between

However, the peculiar manner in which the figures' legs and arms are splayed, especially in the Kells Market Cross, could be explained as an allusion to the fall and the breaking of Simon Magus' leg. In the case of the Cross at Monasterboice, however, the figure's splayed legs are remarkably similar in pose to those of the naked figure on the left arm of the cross, as if the artist has simply inverted the figure. It is impossible to state with complete certainty the identity of the three figures in each group; however, the opposition between good and evil; the godly and demonic is clear. On the left arm, the figures that flank "Anthony" are unarguably demonic. The figures on the right arm, with their crooks and long robes, are most likely clerics. The naked, inverted figure that they defeat with their shepherd's crook represents evil, whether demon or devil.

The shepherd's crooks are not specifically mentioned in either the story of Peter and Simon Magus or Anthony and Paul in the desert. The crook--and in the Kells cross, the crook and codex--literally acts as a weapon against evil. It occurs again, in the same context at the top of the East face of the Muiredach Cross, also in Monasterboice. Here, the cleric is shown putting down a winged creature with his crook while holding what Harbison identifies as a paten or plate with five loaves.⁷ The presence of the loaves adds strong Eucharistic overtones, suggesting the Eucharist's role in the defeat of enemies. The shepherd's crook, a symbol of Christ and his parish on earth, is used to push down the threats and devices of Satan, depicted at work on the left arm. The decoration of the cross makes clear that even though lies and temptations flourish on earth, man has the facilities at hand to defeat Satan through the person of Christ and his earthly representative, the Church.⁸

Peter and Simon Magus, were available in Ireland. See discussion of availability in chapter two.

⁷ Harbison, *High Crosses*, 142.

⁸ The similarity between the visual symmetry of folios 130r and 292r (see discussion of the relationship between these two folios in chapter seven) in the Book of Kells and the left and

The Children in the Oven and Peter Walking on Water on the Monasterboice Tall Cross belong to the "Help of God" tradition that lists events where God intervened to aid man in distress such as the saving of Noah from the Flood, Jonah from the whale's belly and Daniel from the Lions (Ills. 126).⁹ In both images the actual, physical intervention of God is made visually manifest. In all six crosses that depict the Children in the Oven, including the extremely abbreviated Moone Cross, an angel appears over the children.¹⁰ In Monasterboice, the fire is not depicted, instead two soldiers bearing wood for the fire approach, yet the children are protected on all sides by the angel's wings. It is difficult to imagine that an audience so familiar with the Psalms would not associate the large wings of the angel with Psalm 90, "For he hath delivered me from the snare of the hunters: and from the sharp word. He will overshadow thee with his shoulders: and under his wings thou shalt trust."¹¹

The image of Christ Walking on Water shows Christ extending out his hand to save a kneeling Peter who lifts his hands in prayer or supplication as he sinks into the sea. The image underlines Peter's lack of faith showing him sinking in his own doubts. This is further emphasized by Peter's denial of Christ shown on the West face of the cross. The connection between Peter's hand, lifted upward in a gesture of prayer, and Christ's own outstretched hand amidst the threatening waters would have had a powerful impact upon a monastic audience familiar with the threats of the sea. Again, man is shown

right arms of the Tall Cross at Monasterboice is worth noting. In both, man is first shown attacked and seemingly defenseless (on the left arm and folio 130r) and then alternately invulnerable (on the right arm and folio 292r) when defended by the instruments of Christianity, the crook and chalice respectively.

⁹ These had a great influence on the iconographic programs of the Irish high crosses. The Help of God series appears in the Martryology of Oengus. Its presence in the Ordinary Mass of the Stowe Missal suggests that it would be familiar to a Columban audience. Henry, *Irish High Crosses*, 36-37.

¹⁰ Moone Cross, the Cross of SS Patrick and Columba at Kells, the Tall Cross at Monasterboice, the Arboe Cross, the lower shaft at Armagh and Galloon.

¹¹ "Quoniam ipse liberavit me de laqueo uenantium, et a uerbo asperero. Scapulis suis obumbrabit tibi: et sub pennis eius sperabis (Ps. 90:3-4)."

threatened by external forces, weak in his own right, but safe as long as he shelters in the Lord.

The identification of the pivotal central image is more complex. It resembles a similar panel in the Kells Market Cross discussed in the previous chapter. The central figure dwarfs the surrounding figures and occupies most of the panel. He wears a long robe and carries a shield, sword and scepter that terminates in a bird head. A winged figure hovers at his head. Ten smaller figures surround him on either side, carrying shields. The central figure and majority of the group stand on three undulating lines, most likely meant to represent clouds. The identification of the image as Christ in Glory or Judgment is largely accepted.¹² Harbison, however, points to the unusual scepter and the arms sported by all of the figures as more typical of David acclaimed King of Israel depicted in continental manuscripts and ivories as described in 2 Samuel 5:3, "So all the elders of Israel came to the king in Hebron . . . and they anointed David king over Israel."¹³ Harbison's identification is compelling, but fails to explain several features of the high cross. Firstly, and most significantly, the clouds beneath the central figures' feet remain unexplained. Even if the lines were interpreted as water, 2 Samuel 5 makes no reference to water or bodies of water. Secondly, as with the image in the Kells Market Cross also identified as David king of Israel, there are no signs of anointing or kingship. The central figure might be interpreted as wearing a helmet, but this is simply the hairstyle given to many of the figures on the cross including Christ in the Crucifixion on the opposite face. In the images cited by Harbison, the surrounding figures are not armed.¹⁴ Nor does Harbison account for the presence of the angel at the central figure's head.

¹² Harbison, *High Crosses*, 221.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ In the Leon manuscript, the figures are merely robed with the exception of the figure on David's left who wears a sword and blows a horn. A similar figure guards David in the

The figure in the center of the cross must surely represent Christ surrounded by the faithful. This suits its iconography, its position and the thematic content of the cross. The image resembles the depiction of Christ surrounded by the Elect in the Turin Gospels and the Temptation page in the Book of Kells. All three images depict a larger central figure surrounded by angels with a group of smaller figures. In the Monasterboice Tall Cross, Christ holds a scepter and armor and his body is fully depicted. A similar image occurs on the Market Cross at Kells, where a large figure carrying a shield and spear is surrounded by smaller figures also carrying shields. The armor is easily explained. Christ is frequently depicted as a warrior king, his people's only defense against evil.¹⁵ Francoise Henry suggests that when compared to the Utrecht image, the images on Monasterboice and the Market Cross at Kells might be seen as showing the Harrowing of Hell.¹⁶ Again, this would not account for the undulating lines. Additionally, unlike the Utrecht image and the scene in the Kells Market Cross, Christ is surrounded by ten not twelve figures. More likely, the image depicts Christ, as warrior king, surrounded by the faithful of his Church, who in turn are protected by the armor of Christ. Whereas the figures in the Turin depiction carry books; the figures in Kells carry shields.

A similar image is shown on the Arboe Cross, where Christ is shown surrounded by smaller figures (Ills. 125). Like the Temptation page, the Arboe image shows only the bust of Christ, with small figures positioned where his lower body should be. On the Tall Cross, Temptation page and Arboe cross a large, powerfully built Christ towers over the small figures who stand beside him. Similarly, the large figure on the Kells Market Cross, with

Italian ivory, but the rest of the figures lack any sort of armor. Instead, their beards and bowed legs, indicate that they are indeed the elders mentioned in 2 Samuel 5.

¹⁵ See discussion of the Kells Market Cross in chapter five.

¹⁶ Henry, *Irish Art during the Viking Invasions*, 174. Henry, however, aware of the incongruity of clouds in a Harrowing of Hell scene suggested that it is equally possible that the image depicts Christ's ascension.

his extremely broad shoulders, dwarfs the small figures at his sides. These images agree closely with Psalm 90, which describes Christ as "overshadowing thee with his shoulders." The shields carried by the smaller figures in the Tall Cross at Monasterboice, Kells' Market Cross and even the figure with brown hair in the Temptation page surely reflect the ideas of Psalm 90, "his truth shall compass thee with a shield," and Ephesians 6:11-16, "Put on your armour of God. . . . In all things taking the shield of faith."

The imagery on the head of the Tall Cross seems to especially reflect the tone of Psalm 90 with its depiction of demonic beasts attacking St. Anthony in the night, small armed figures sheltered by a large armed Christ and protective wings of the angel. The first two verses of the Psalm, like the imagery of the cross, promise Christ's aid and protection, "He that dwelleth in the aid of the most High, shall abide under the protection of the God of the heavens. He shall say to the Lord: Thou art my protector, and my refuge: my God, in him I will trust."¹⁷ This is reflected in the manner in which Peter, although lacking in faith, reaches out from the waters to Christ. The Psalm continues in verses five and six listing the many dangers that prowl the earth, but follows with the reassurance that as long as man trusts in the Lord, he shall remain safe, "His truth shall compass thee with a shield: thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night. Of the arrow that flieth in the day, of the business that walketh about in the dark: of invasion, or of the noon-day devil."¹⁸ The life of St. Anthony describes the beasts as attacking him at night. Possibly, the figure on the right, defeated by the two men, refers to the "noon-day devil." Certainly, the image of the sheltering angel is invoked not only in verse four, "under his wings thou shalt trust" but also later in verse eleven, "For he hath given his Angels charge over thee." Even the defeat of

¹⁷ "Qui habitat in adiutorio Altissimi, in protectione Dei caeli commorabitur. Dicet Domino: Susceptor meus es tu, et refugium meum: Deus meus sperabo in eum (Ps. 90:1-2)."

¹⁸ "Scuto circumdabit te ueritas eius: non timebis a timore nocturno, a sagitta uolante in die, a negotio perambulante in tenebris: ab incursu, et daemonio meridiano."

the naked figure has possible associations with Psalm 90, verse eight, "But thou shalt consider with thy eyes and shalt see the reward of the wicked."¹⁹

The Psalm and the cross both reassure the Christian audience that they, despite their own frailty and the threats of evil, will remain unharmed and protected as long as they hold their faith like a shield about them. It is impossible to know whether or not the cross was directly influenced by the imagery of Psalm 90; however, the imagery of the Cross and Psalm have much in common: protective wings and angels, trust in Christ, the threat of night creatures and the noon-day devil and the sheltering shadow of Christ. Also, the literature repeatedly refers to Christ as Warrior and Protector with faith as armor. Columbanus describes the commands of the Lord as "our weapons, shield and sword, these our defense," and refers to Christ as the "Captain of our war."²⁰ Later he advises that his congregation take up "that armour of God . . . and make a path to heaven."²¹ The depiction on the Tall Cross, with Christ as Warrior Captain, does not appear out of place in this context. The surrounding figures have made a path to heaven and sit in adoration, displaying the armor of their faith instrumental to their success. The *Martyrology of Oengus* describes Christ as a "high champion" and "mighty pillar" that aids the Christian in his combat with the devil.²² The Martyrology continues, "This excellent host of this king, along whom is my fight," and concludes, "Ye have nothing that is dearer than the love of God, if ye achieve it, adoration of the cloudy king."²³ The large, central image of the

¹⁹ "Quoniam angelis suis mandavit de te (Ps. 90:11)." and "Uerumtamen oculis tuis considerabis: et retributionem peccatorum uidebis (Ps. 90:8)".

²⁰ Columbanus, 83. *Instructio* 4, "dux belli nostri," Ibid., 82.

²¹ Ibid., 27. *Epistula* 4, "Contra quos arma Dei arripite...et uiam facite in caelum." Ibid., 26.

²² Oengus, 23, 27, 141. Similar militaristic descriptions occur throughout the martyrology. In the prologue alone: Quiricus renowned for the fair "shout of his battle"(stanza 137), "a hundred times nobler are Jesus' lowly soldiers" than the kings of the world (stanza 149), and Christ as the "high champion" (stanza 89), who "ever minishes his foes, He ever magnifies his champions" (stanza 229). Saints are again referred to as "Jesus' soldiers" (stanza 77) and the Christian is assured, "Though we may have evil combating, a battle with the bold Devil; to aid us, a lofty pillar, the same Christ remains." (stanza 241). Ibid., 20-7.

²³ Ibid., 25.

East face of the Tall Cross presents the spectator with an image of his high champion, literally "a cloudy king" adored by an excellent host. The spectator is invited to fight against evil alongside the good host, in the hopes of joining them in their adoration. As in the Book of Kells, in each of the images on the Cross, however, man's need for aid and armor, whether represented by the Christ's physical presence, the chalice, the crook, and codex is maintained. Man, even in Psalm 90, is repeatedly described as on the defensive, attacked on all sides by demonic forces and his own frailty. In each instance, the faithful look to Christ and his church for salvation, and in each instance, even though their faith may be imperfect, they are protected by Christ.

The iconographic program of the East face of Durrow is a simplified and overt version of that of the East face of the Tall Cross at Monasterboice. Christ is presented standing on interlace holding a scepter and cross staff. The scepter instead of terminating in a bird's head produces two spirals and a human head. Christ is flanked on either sides by music making angels, and the lamb of the apocalypse stands in a circle above his head (Ills. 121). Clearly, the image depicts the glorified Christ. Although some of the iconography of the East face differs from that of the Tall Cross Monasterboice, the thematic emphasis also falls upon the recognition of Christ's identity and the ability to overcome evil. The West face of Durrow has three of the same images that appear on the West face of the Tall Cross, focusing upon the denial of Christ. These include the Soldiers Guarding the Tomb, the Denial of Peter and Pilate Washing his Hands.

An image of David slaying the lion occurs at the same place in the Durrow Cross where the Tall Cross depicts St. Anthony and St. Paul overcoming the devil. Although there is no explicit reference to the church through motifs such as codex or crook on the lateral arms, the image refers to the triumph of faith as does the Sacrifice of Isaac and the Children in the

Oven, also depicted. Although these episodes differ from those on the Tall Cross, both belong to the "Help of God" series, and they make explicit the need for angelic intervention. The most striking difference between the two crosses is the absence of armor and the crowds of the faithful in the Durrow Cross, where angels replace the Church's faithful.²⁴ Christ is not depicted as a warrior king, but simply as a king. Although adored by angels, the human audience so fundamental to the role of recognition in the high crosses is noticeably absent from the cross head.

The difference in the height of the crosses might explain the cause of this deviation. The Tall Cross is the tallest high cross in Ireland, towering 6.45 meters, while the Durrow Cross is less than half the height at 3.13 meters.²⁵ As a result of its great height and crowded panels, the Tall Cross contains nearly thirty scenes on its East and West faces. Durrow further curtails its already limited space through the use of abstract ornament and large panels. Its East and West faces contain only twelve scenes. Naturally there is variation between the two iconographic programs; however, the Tall Cross does include all of the scenes found on the Durrow Cross discussed above including the *Traditio clauium*, David Slaying the Lion and the Sacrifice of Isaac. Additionally, Durrow has one panel that is unique among the high crosses. At the bottom of the cross shaft, Christ with angels on either side of his head looks down to an open book held by two figures (Ills. 119). The position of inscriptions near the bottom of the cross and Jonas' *Vitae Columbae* description of Athala placing his brow to the cross every time he left and entered his cell suggest that crosses were approached while kneeling.²⁶ The position of this panel makes it the most prominent, as it would be directly in front of a kneeling spectator. Size gives emphasis to the

²⁴ Although possibly these are glimpsed in the head that emerges from the angels trumpet and the head that blossoms from Christ's scepter.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 146; 79.

²⁶ John Higgit, "Words and Crosses," 127 and 142.

central image of Christ in glory, but the position of the lower panel makes it more accessible to a kneeling audience.

The image shows Christ resting his feet on the knees of two seated figures, who hold an open book between them. Peter Harbison suggests these two figures represent the apostles, "almost certainly Peter and Paul."²⁷ The men do not look up towards their Lord, a remarkable deviation from typical images of the raised or glorified Christ.²⁸ Instead, they seem oblivious to his presence, engrossed in their book. The figure on the left reflects the Irish observance of natural detail that marks so much of their art and poetry. He hunches myopically over his book, neck askew. The figure on the right looks down to his book with greater reserve. He is rendered in three-quarter profile, his face clearly turned away from the figure of Christ behind him. The artist takes great care to show that unlike so many other figures surrounding Christ in the high crosses, these two do not look towards him. Harbison and others have had some difficulty in identifying the iconography of the scene suggesting the raised Christ, the Trinity, Christ in Glory and even Columcille with two angels.²⁹ None of these would explain the presence of the book or the manner in which both the book and Christ rest on the laps of the figures, nor the reason that the figures seem oblivious to the central figure. If, however, the two figures are interpreted as men, either apostles or monks, meditating upon the gospels, and led via the gospel towards Christ, all of the unusual iconography can be understood.

Directly above the figures, at the head of the cross, is the large image of Christ with the lamb above his head (Ills. 121). Christ glorified, occupies

²⁷ Harbison, *High Crosses*, 79. Although Harbison does not state his reasons for this identification, it possibly relates to his argument that the top of the West face depicts Peter and Paul in the *traditio clauium*. Elsewhere, he argues that the Christ in Majesty page in the Book of Kells depicts a similar image, showing Christ standing above Peter and Paul. This suggestion is unlikely, as three of the figures beneath Christ in the Kells page clearly have wings. Harbison, "Book of Kells Miniatures," 183.

²⁸ See part two for discussion.

²⁹ See Harbison, *High Crosses*, 79 for a review of the earlier interpretations.

a central, elevated position, approximately seven feet above the ground. In this location, even the tallest person in the community would be forced to look up to the image of Christ, which occupies a raised, aloof position. The bottom panel occupies a more earthly realm, easily accessible to someone kneeling at the foot of the cross. The scenes suit their placement on the cross. Two robed figures, at least one of whom appears to be tonsured, offer an open book to the kneeling audience. Behind the book, Christ hovers with his angels. The glorified Christ is directly over this scene at the center of the cross. The panel, and the proffered open book, draws the viewer in. It represents the accessible, tangible guides left by Christ that will protect and guide man towards the vision represented in the central panel.

The faithful, armed by Christ, are not implicitly depicted in the central panel as in the Tall Cross at Monasterboice because in this smaller cross such a conflation is not necessary. The angels and two figures look not to Christ, but to his gospel. Christ himself looks to it as does the spectator. The gospel leads the members of the Church to the Christ; it is their armor. It acts as a shield and a guide in this life, allowing the spectator a glimpse of the vision that the elect enjoy in the next life. In the Durrow Cross, the figures do not look up towards the face of God, but rather focus upon their books while the central figure of a glorified Christ, flanked by angels hovers behind them. Through study, they begin to apprehend the Godhead. The large glorified Christ at the head of the cross refers to the time at the end of the journey, when all will behold the glorified Christ.

The Flavigny Gospels, a continental manuscript showing Insular influence, contains an image that closely parallels the iconographic program of Durrow.³⁰ Christ stands at the top of the canon tables flanked on either

³⁰ Folio 15r in the canon tables of the Flavigny Gospels (Autun, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 3) show a clear Insular influence, but the manuscript cannot be described as Insular. It is simply cited here to show that the perception of the gospel book as a path or beacon towards looking upon the Godhead was well-established in the period.

side by the four creatures (Ills. 118). Each creature, and Christ himself, holds a book. Directly beneath, at the bottom of the tables, are the corresponding evangelists, who are connected to their corresponding symbol by a column containing a verse from the *Sedulius Carmen Pascale*.³¹ Two of the evangelists are writing their gospels and crane their necks to look up towards the general direction of Christ. The other two evangelists appear to inspect their work. Luke, in particular, looks directly at the text of his open book. Between the figures of the evangelists, standing below Christ is the figure of John the Baptist. He, too, looks up toward the figure of Christ, pointing with his finger. The text that runs along the column between John the Baptist and Christ contains John's words when he first looks upon Christ, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The writing utensils, the varied poses of the evangelists, their books and John's command, all underline the association between the gospel book and looking to God. The placement of Christ at the top of the page, removed and above the evangelists, holding a staff and book and flanked by the four creatures, makes it evident that this is a depiction of Christ glorified. The words, text, gaze and pointing fingers all lead the eye from the gospels up towards him.

The Durrow Cross exhibits striking similarities to both the Flavigny Gospels and the Book of Kells.³² In each, man is led up towards the upper image, with the book playing a central role. In the Flavigny Gospels, two of the figures occupying the bottom page look towards the gospel book, seeming to ignore the apparition of Christ above them, while the other two stare up at him and the central figure looks and gesticulates to him. In all three images the role of the book as an aid or instrument that enables man to approach his God is made clear. In Flavigny the bridge between the gospel book and the apparition of the glorified Christ is shown in a physical and tangible way,

³¹ Hubert, Porcher, and Volbach, 182.

³² See discussion in chapter seven of folio 1r in the Book of Kells.

through the lines of the *Carmen Paschale* and John's command to "Behold the Lamb of God." Between the image of the apostles and the vision of the glorified Christ, float the contents of the gospels as summarized and categorized by Eusebius. The connection between the earthly contemplation of the gospels and the vision of Christ is made explicit. As with the Durrow Cross, man is positioned at the bottom of the image and the glorified Christ at the top.

The extremely worn cross at Arboe focuses less upon the role of the instruments of the Church in the apprehension of the Godhead (Ills. 125). Still, there are some similarities worth noting. Scenes from the familiar "Help of God" series are present including the Children in the Oven, Daniel in the Lion's Den and the Sacrifice of Isaac. God's protective intervention is signaled in two of the scenes by the protective wings of the angel over the Children in the Oven and the angel that physically places itself and a sacrificial lamb between Abraham's sword and the prone body of Isaac. Unfortunately, the scenes on the lateral arms are too worn to be identified. The central images do not so much resemble those of the high crosses discussed above, as the Temptation page itself. Through the conflation of imagery, the head and lower arm of the cross, reflect both the frailty of man and the necessity of Grace.

The central panel depicts Christ in Glory surrounded by a number of human heads. Beneath his feet are a pair of scales. Beneath this is another panel depicting the bust of Christ surrounded by human heads and possibly two angels. The scene has been identified as depicting Judgment, the Transfiguration and Christ with the apostles. In the light of early Christianity's frequent conflation of Christ in Majesty with the Ascension of Christ discussed in part two, it seems that the scene depicts the Ascension of Christ. The eleven heads below represent the eleven remaining apostles

looking upon the Ascension of Christ, while the panel above depicts his glorification in heaven.

Alternatively, such images of Christ surrounded by the faithful would also have strong associations with the Church on earth as a parallel to the eternal Church in heaven. The presence of the crook held by Christ reinforces associations with an earthly Church as does the manner in which only Christ's head and upper body are depicted. Human heads, most likely those of the apostles, act as a substitute body. The metaphor of Christ as the head of the Church and mankind as its body was a very familiar interpretation, as shown in the discussion of the Temptation page. Visually, the Arboe panel closely resembles the Kells Temptation page. Unlike the Temptation page, in which the church is shown opposed by a rather frail-looking Satan, the Arboe panel makes no mention of Satanic threat. However, directly above the image, is a pair of weighing scales, which may contain a small soul although it is difficult to distinguish.³³ Flames surround the scales. The juxtaposition is striking. Below, Christ in his role as the head of the Church gathers his flock to him under the watchful eyes of angels. Above, the flames burn the essence of the soul. The scales reveal the fate of the soul in the scene above determining whether it will live in heavenly splendor praising the creator or be damned for eternity. Like the Book of Kells, the Arboe image makes clear Christ's protective role yet all the while asserting the consequences of evil action. The panels beneath, to a certain extent, contain similarly contrasting imagery. Adam and Eve show mankind falling succumbing to evil, while the Sacrifice of Isaac, Daniel in the Lion's Den and Children in the Oven, on the other hand, show mankind trusting in the Lord and finding salvation therein. The artist uses every device to emphasize the opposition of those who have faith

³³ Harbison, *High Crosses*, 14.

with those who fall; the flames from the oven counter the flames that lick the scales.

While the Arboe Cross does not contain the specific references to the role of the instruments of the Church in mankind's protection and salvation, it does relate mankind's need for protection and salvation, while at the same time focusing upon the importance of recognizing, looking towards and attempting to apprehend Christ in this life, so that man can look upon his glory in the next. In the Arboe Cross, man's aid is Jesus Christ and his Church. In the imagery in the Book of Kells, the Tall Cross at Monasterboice and the Durrow Cross the emphasis falls instead upon the instruments of the Church and the Incarnation, its visible and physical objects such as the crook, the chalice and codex that guide man within the Church, enable him to come to know Christ and his teachings, and direct him towards the apprehension of the glorified Christ.

One other manuscript demonstrates the Insular tendency to articulate man's need for guidance in the form of tangible and accessible beacons. Again, as with Arboe, the objects such as the chalice and codex are not specifically referred to; however, the Church and Christ's role as a guide towards salvation is clearly delineated. The Würzburg Epistles depict Christ crucified between two thieves (Ills. 127).³⁴ Large birds sit on both arms of the cross. Two angels with bird-like bodies fly upward beneath Christ's right arm while two black birds with white heads are beneath his left arm. George Henderson suggests that the angels on the right represent those coming to take the good thief to heaven while those on the left peck at the bad thief. Beneath the crucifixion image, sails a small boat containing nine smaller men and one larger man with a nimbus who gestures with an open hand towards the sea.

³⁴ The manuscript is listed in the Würzburg catalogue of c. 800. Its bright color, Insular initials and stylized figures, as well as the Irish features of its text, bear a close resemblance to the Macregol Gospels and suggest an Irish model. Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, 78. See also Aubry Gwynn, "The Continuity of the Irish Tradition at Würzburg," *Würzburger Diözesangeschichtsblätter* 14/15 (1952/1953): 57-59.

The identification of the image as Christ calming the seas is undisputed. The image remains unexplained; however, the seemingly bizarre conflation of the cross and the boat has caused much consternation.³⁵

A close examination of the image explains the unusual conflation of images. A multitude of strange creatures swim beneath the choppy seas. One, with a tail so large that it equal's the figure of Jesus in size, dives under the water beneath Christ's gesturing hand. Psalm 103 describes the sea and the creatures in it:

This great sea, which stretches wide its arms: there are creeping things without number. Creatures little and great. There the ships shall go. This sea-dragon which thou hast formed shall play therein. . . .When thou openest thy hand, they shall be filled with good. But if thou turnst away thy face, they shall be troubled.³⁶

Augustine, commenting on the Psalmist's description of the terrible sea, writes, "Snares creep into this world, and surprise the careless suddenly. . . . Let us keep watch on the Wood; even in the water, even on the waves, we are safe . . . He will calm the sea, the voyage will be ended, and we shall rejoice."³⁷ Augustine continues, interpreting the ships as the church, the creatures of the sea as enemies of the church and the sea-dragon as Satan.³⁸

Augustine's commentary on Psalm 103 closely echoes the imagery of the Würzburg folio. It explains the unusual effort made on the part of the artist to articulate different types of fish, large and small; plump and sleek. The reference to the sea-leviathan would explain the extraordinarily large tail

³⁵ Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells*, 88.

³⁶ "Hoc mare magnum, et spatiosum manibus: illic reptilia, quorum non est numerus. Animalia pusilla cum magnis: illic naues pertransibunt. Draco iste, quem formasti ad illudendum ei. . . .aperiente te manum tuam, omnia implebuntur bonitate. Auertente autem te faciem, turbabuntur (Ps. 103: 25-29)."

³⁷ Augustine, *Expositions*, 517. *Enarrationes*, Ps. 103.s.iv.4, "Insidiae repunt in hoc saeculo, et incautos repente occupant. . . . Uigiletur in ligno; etiam in auis, etiam in fluctibus tuti sumus . . . imperabit uentis, placabit mare; finietur uia, gaudebitur." In some manuscripts, the association between the cross and the ship is more explicit, "in cruce nauigamus" or "non recendum a ligno crucis, in quo hoc asuum mare . . . transeatur." *CCSL* 40, 1524.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Ps. 103.s.iv.6, 1525.

of the fish, singled out by its black color. Additionally, it illuminates the perplexing conflation of the crucifixion and calming of the waters. Augustine discussing verse 26 of the psalm, writes, "By ships we understand churches; they go among the storms, among the tempests of temptations, among the waves of the world, among the beasts, both small and great. Christ on the wood of His cross is the Pilot."³⁹ The designer presents the viewer with the image of Christ on his cross and Christ as the Pilot who calms the waters and the beasts of the sea. The message is clear. If the spectator has faith and looks to Christ, the Church and the salvation promised by the cross, he has no need to fear despite the dangers of demonic temptations.

The frailty of man and the necessity of God's protection and guidance appears as a consistent theme in Insular art. The writings of the period make frequent references to the gospels and the person of Christ as both a shield of protection against damnation and a beacon to salvation. This brief survey of the imagery of the high crosses and related manuscripts demonstrates how visual imagery was commonly manipulated so as to make explicit the role of the Church, the Eucharist and the gospel book in man's progress towards his eternal reward. Having shown how widespread and enduring this theme was in Insular art, it is not surprising that a manuscript as sophisticated as the Book of Kells would evince an awareness of its role as a gospel book and produce self-referential decoration that explained its function as an aid to man in his journey towards a vision of the Godhead.

³⁹ Augustine, *Expositions*, 517. *Enarrationes* Ps. 103.s.iv.5 "Naues ecclesias intellegimus, commeant inter tempestates, inter procelas tentationum, inter fluctus saeculi, inter animalia pusilla et magna. Gubernator est Christus in ligno crucis suae." *CCSL* 40, 1524. This image might also explain the unusual manner, noted by Harbison, in which the Tall Cross of Durrow depicts Christ in the boat when he gestures out to Peter. Harbison, *High Crosses*, 258. According to gospel accounts, Christ was walking on the water when he gestured to Peter. This deviation from the gospel story can be understood as a reference to Christ as the Pilot of the Church.

Chapter Seven

The Role of the Gospel Book as Articulated in the Prefatory Pages and Full-Page Images

As might be expected, Satan and his followers feared religious books, the scriptures and the liturgy. In the "Amra Choluimb Chille," Mass is described as a noose to the devil.¹ St. Brendan's Mass caused monsters to flee the site.² And in the story of the devil disguised as Christ, it is the cleric's raising of the gospel book that forces the devil to confess, begging the cleric to put away the gospel.³ Columbanus points to the scriptures, "For these are our rules, the commands of the Lord and the apostles, in these our confidence is placed, these are our weapons, shield and sword, these our defence."⁴ The Mass and the gospel book enabled man to contemplate the Godhead and carried strong apotropaic connotations, for they were the instruments through which the defeat of evil and eternal salvation could be obtained.

The book appears repeatedly in the manuscript. In eleven places it is shown lifted up, and in eight of these instances, it is shown held up by an angel. The manner in which books appear in the manuscript either elevated or resting in the lap is unusual as frontal evangelists are usually depicted holding the book with both hands.⁵ The decoration uses the motifs of the chalice and the book almost interchangeably, often depicting the two together.⁶ Although they are often depicted in an abstract manner, several of the images incorporate the chalice and book into an almost narrative context, showing

¹ Clancy, 107.

² Donatus, 182.

³ Oengus, 155.

⁴ Columbanus, 17;19. *Epistula* 2, "Hi sunt enim nostri canones, dominica et apostolica mandata, in his fides nostra est; haec arma, scutum et gladius, haec apologia." Ibid., 18.

⁵ Henry, *Book of Kells*, 183.

⁶ This is illustrated on folio 4r. Beneath the Matthew canon, the Matthew symbol holds up his book. Beneath, at his feet is a small chalice containing sprouting vines.

human figures, including Christ himself, holding chalices and books. In each of these images, both chalice and book seem to serve some function, either guiding the viewer to an apprehension of the Godhead or acting as a shield against the Satanic threats embodied in the beasts that prowl amongst the pages of text and decoration. Most unusual perhaps, is the manner in which Kells incorporates its audience into the image, depicting small human figures looking into the frame, and in one instance--the Temptation page--as participating in the illustration itself.

The presence of the chalice within the manuscript and its role as protective armor is best introduced by examining a set of folios. These include folio 291v, the John portrait, folio 292r, the John incipit and folio 130r, the Luke Incipit. Folios 291v and 292r contain several unusual and unexplained images and therefore must be examined as a whole in order to assess the function of the bright, red chalice in the upper right-hand corner of folio 292r (Ills. 72b). At the center of the top of this page, the John incipit, a large frontal figure with a dark brown beard and blonde hair holds a large book. The figure's placement over the opening words of John, the color of his hair and beard, the manner in which the figure is "draped in light" and the large book in his hands has led to the figure being identified as the Logos.⁷ Additionally, the way in which the figure holds the book, with the right hand over the book and the left hand covered and holding the book from underneath suggests an affinity with the Christ in Majesty of folio 32v, as only these two figures hold books in this manner (Ills. 57). The book held by the figure in the John incipit, with its broad red outline and plain front, resembles the two books held by the angels on folio 285r (Ills. 71). A close inspection of the Lucerne facsimile of folio 292r shows no evidence of

⁷ Henry cites the "throne of light," the text, the purple robe and large book as identifying characteristics. *Ibid.*, 204. Henderson agrees with this identification but sites the hair and beard color as additional proof. G. Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells*, 176. The waving striations that appear behind Christ on folio 292r occur in an inverted form behind Christ in the canon table on folio 3r.

pigment and suggests that the blank vellum of the book's cover was intended, possibly referring to the unknowable nature of the Logos. The book carried by Christ in Majesty, on the other hand, is colored bright red. Its pages, unlike other images of books in the manuscript, are clearly delineated. This and the faint red lines covering the edges of the pages suggest an intended reference to the sealed book. These features are not present in the depiction in the John incipit, indicating that the figure represents Christ as the Logos rather than Christ in Majesty.

The identity of the second individual in the top, right-hand corner of the page is somewhat more controversial. The figure is bearded and sits holding a chalice in front of him. His back is turned towards the figure of the Logos and the opposite folio, which contains the image of John. A beast head with an ornate mane faces him. Henry, noting the attribute of the chalice, identifies the figure as John.⁸ George Henderson rejects this identification as unsuited to the "context of this most sacred of Gospel passages."⁹ Instead, he identifies the figure as Christ suffering as a man before his arrest and crucifixion, "This cup, which the Father has given me, shall I not drink it?"¹⁰ Neither interpretation adequately satisfies the surrounding decoration or text. In the rest of the decoration, the designer repeatedly emphasizes the role of the gospel book and the Eucharist in the apprehension of the Logos. The frontal figure introduces the theme of the apprehension of the Word by presenting the viewer with a partial image of the Logos. As with the other images of the glorified Christ, the artist has only partially rendered the body, leaving the lower portion covered by the text. The other, smaller figure sits

⁸ Henry, *Book of Kells*, 204. Maclean argues that the story of John and the poisoned chalice was known in Ireland, appearing in the writings of Pseudo-Abdias, the *Book of Cerne* and the *Martyrology of Oengus*, and suggests that the Keills Cross may refer to this story. Maclean, "The Keills Cross in Knapdale," 176. Despite the occurrence of the story in Irish writings, and possibly in the Keills Cross, it seems unlikely that the designer of the *Book of Kells* intended this image to explicitly refer to John and the poisoned chalice.

⁹ G. Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells*, 178.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

on the letters of the opening of John's gospel. It seems unlikely that a figure surrounded by the text, "In the beginning was the Word," and seated next to a depiction of the Logos would have no associations with the Logos in a manuscript where its apprehension is a central theme of so many pages.

Augustine's commentary on the John incipit, "In the beginning was the Word" immediately sheds light upon the figure's identity:

You understand that in raising your heart to the Scriptures when the gospel was sounding forth, "In the beginning was the Word" . . . you were lifting your eyes to the mountains. . . . Thence John, who said these things, received them--he who lay on the Lord's breast, and from the Lord's breast drank in what he might give us to drink. But he gave us words to drink. Thou oughtest then to receive understanding from the source from which he drank who gave thee to drink; so that thou mayest lift up thine eyes to the mountains from whence shall come thine aid, so that from thence thou mayest receive, as it were, the cup, that is, the word, given thee to drink; and yet, since thy help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth, thou mayest fill thy breast from the source which he filled his. . . . But perhaps you will say that I am more present to you than God. Far be such a thought from you! He is more present to you; for I appear to your eyes, He presides over your consciences. Give me then your ears, Him your hearts, that you may fill both. Behold your eyes, and those your bodily senses, you lift up to . . . the gospel itself and to the evangelist himself: your heart, however, to the Lord to be filled.¹¹

The passage explains the conflation of the image with the surrounding text and decoration as well as showing the manner in which the page fits into the decorative system of the manuscript. The figure looks into the chalice, about to drink from the fountain of the word. Similarly, the audience who looks at

¹¹ Augustine, *Lectures*, 5-6. *In Iohannes* Tract. 1.7, "Ut quando existis cor ad scripturas, cum sonaret euangelium: *In principio erat Verbum* . . . intellegatis uos leuasse oculos ad montes. . . . Inde qui haec dixit, accepit Iohannes ille, qui discumbebat super pectus Domini, et de peccatore Domini bibebat quod propinaret nobis. Sed propinauit uerba; intellectum autem inde debes capere, unde et ipse biberat qui tibi propinauit: ut leues oculos ad montes, unde auxilium ueniet tibi, ut inde tamquam calicem, id est, uerbum propinatum acciperes; et tamen quia auxilium tuum a Domino, qui fecit caelum et terram inde impleres pectus, unde impleuit ille. . . . Sed forte hoc dicetis quia ergo uobis sum praesentior quam Deus. . . . Multo est ille praesentior: nam ego oculis uestris appereo, ille conscientis uestris praesidet. Ad me aures, ad illum cor ut utrumque impleatis. Ecce oculos uestros et sensus istos corporis leuatis ad . . . ipsum euangelium, ad ipsum euangelistam; cor autem implendum ad Dominum." *CCSL* 36, 4.

the manuscript are about to drink by reading the word given to the evangelist. The Augustine passage and the image itself show the close association between the chalice and the word.

As always in the manuscript, the designer employs the audience's visual senses as a metaphor for the apprehension of the Logos. On the opposite folio, folio 291v, John holds up his book, dipping his pen into an inkwell (Ills. 72a). It has been argued that John's gaze and his gestures draw attention to the book in his hand although this is difficult to prove with any certainty.¹² However, the artist has exaggerated the size of the writing instrument and the inkwell resembles a chalice. John's gesture, the size of the writing implement and the inclusion of the chalice-like inkwell all draw attention to the act of writing, making evident that John wrote the book that he displays to the reader. Behind the portrait of John, the resurrected Christ triumphantly grasps the nails of his crucifixion in his hands. The placement of John, in the center of Christ, refers to his closeness to Christ as shown at the Lord's Supper when he placed his head upon Christ's breast.¹³ In the passage cited above, Augustine writes that it is from the Lord's breast that John drank instruction.

Augustine makes clear that John is contemplating Christ as the Logos, "he was contemplating the divinity of the Word."¹⁴ He goes on to compare listening to the scriptures as looking to the mountains but points to the necessity of further illumination. More specifically, when inspired by the gospels, man can look to the mountains for himself and drink directly from the cup that John drank from. The two folios at the opening of the John

¹² See discussion in "Introduction to Part One."

¹³ Werckmeister first suggested John's position referred to his special status as the one who rested on the breast of Christ at the Last Supper and was granted a vision of heaven while on earth. Werckmeister, 129. The association in the Irish Church between John and the incident of the Last Supper was so strong that John was called "Eoin Bruinne" in Irish writings, which means "John of the Breast." See Martin McNamara, *Apocrypha*, 95.

¹⁴ Augustine, *Lectures*, 3. In *Iohannis*, Tract. 1.5, "contemplabatur diuinitatem Uerbi." *CCSL* 36, 2.

gospel show the manner in which man, by reading the gospels, drinks from the chalice and in so doing drinks from the same fountain as John. As the audience looks upon John's book, physically present on the altar as well as visually depicted in John's portrait, they see the fountain from which the chalice comes. On folio 291v, as John's pen dips into the "chalice" of ink at Christ's breast, the spectator glimpses John's source, the Logos, stretching out behind him. On the opposite page, man is shown about to drink from the chalice of wisdom received from the breast of Christ. The Logos, the "word given thee to drink" is dramatically present in this folio as well, sitting in what Henry describes as a throne of light.

The decoration of the page, the text and Augustine's commentary on the passage delineate a way of looking towards the Godhead. The role of looking operates on two levels, the metaphorical and the physical. The commentary and image exhort man to look with his own, mortal eyes toward the visible appearance of the word, as well as listening to its audible sound. This physical act of using the bodily senses enables them to gain metaphorical insight into the nature of the Word. In a similar manner, the congregation looks to the words of the gospel text and the letters of its script, in order to come to a partial understanding of the unknowable Word.

The passage in Augustine, borrowing from the Psalms, employs the imagery of vision and sight as a metaphor for man's attempt to apprehend the Logos, "So that thou must lift up thine eyes to the mountains . . . to the intent that thou mayest fill thy breast from the same fountain." The artist renders this visually, placing before the eyes of the audience an image of the Logos. On folio 292r, the image confronts them directly; whereas on 291v, Christ as Logos hovers behind John and his book. The message is clear. Folio 291v shows that the Logos can be partially apprehended through the gospel of

John.¹⁵ On folio 292r, the Logos is shown holding a book next to the man drinking from the chalice, confirming that man must look beyond the gospels to their source. The man, looking into the chalice from which he is about to drink, presents the viewer with an image to imitate. Just as he looks to the chalice and contemplates the Word, so the viewer must not only look to the gospel book with his eyes, but must contemplate its source with his heart.

Two final aspects of the opposing pages remain to be explained, the nails held by Christ and the beast confronting John. Little attention has been paid to the presence of the nails in Christ's hand.¹⁶ The manner in which Christ's body is obscured, its full silver beard, the surrounding decoration, and the text on the opposite folio all suggest that the identification of the figure as the Logos is correct. If the figure represents Christ as the Logos, why does he hold the nails of his crucifixion? Equally mysterious is the monster that faces the figure of John looking into the chalice. Henderson speculates that the beast refers to the imminent assault of Satan upon Christ in the Passion narrative.¹⁷ The beast, however, is singularly unthreatening despite its size and proximity. Its tongue lolls upon the lap of the seated figure. Folio 130r, the Mark incipit, explains the presence of the beast (Ills. 115). A comparison with the man/beast relationship in the Mark incipit, quickly highlights the non-threatening aspect of the John image. In the same place on the page, on folio 130r, a man fights a beast. He has hair and a beard like the figure in the John incipit. The beast-head, like that in the John incipit, emerges from the decorated frame. With the exception of color, it greatly resembles the beast-head in the John incipit, in its location, position and

¹⁵ The meaning is remarkably similar to that of 1r, where the gospel book leads the viewer towards the apprehension of the Godhead. Note that in both pages there is an emphasis on the gesture of holding up the books.

¹⁶ Martin Werner identified the objects as nails, rejecting the possibility that they might also represent the broken lance because of their size. He notes that S. F. H. Robinson first spotted an object in Christ's fist in 1908. Martin Werner, "Crucifixi, Sepulti, Susitati: Remarks on the Decoration of the Book of Kells," in O' Mahony, 480.

¹⁷ G. Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells*, 176-78.

appearance. Unlike the John incipit, the beast bites the man in half. The man, unlike the figure in the John page, is naked. He struggles, but in vain, pulling on the tongue of the creature, which only serves to tighten its grip on him. He pulls uselessly upon his own knotted beard. His nudity underlines his frailty and points toward his eventual defeat.¹⁸ The struggle depicted between beast and man shown so dramatically in the Mark incipit reveals the relatively harmonious relationship on the John page.

The seated figure of John on folio 292r stares into his cup (Ills. 72b). He looks to it as his salvation from the beast that threatens him. The beast's lolling tongue is reminiscent of panels on the high crosses that show animals licking Christ or his cross in adoration and the lions that lick Daniel in the lion's den.¹⁹ The chalice protects him, rendering the beast harmless. The chalice as an apotropaic sign occurs throughout the manuscript. The most comparable instance is the canon tables, where birds emerging from the chalice grasp the tongue of a similar beast-head emerging from a frame (Ills. 123b). Although the chalice lacks the vines that accompany other chalices in the Book of Kells, it would still certainly carry Eucharistic connotations.²⁰ On folio 201v, over the name Abraham, a figure stares into a chalice in a similar manner (Ills. 7a). Like the chalice on the John incipit page, it also

¹⁸ In early Irish iconography, nakedness was commonly, but not exclusively, associated with damnation. In the complex Last Judgment scene on the Muiredach Cross at Monasterboice, the damned on Christ's left are shown naked in contrast to the saved on Christ's right who wear long robes. Unfortunately in the only other complete Last Judgment scene, on the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacois, it is impossible to distinguish whether the damned are clothed or not. In the Tall Cross at Monasterboice on the lateral arms, two creatures attack Anthony. The one on his left is naked with the head of the beast. On the opposite arm, two robed monks put down an inverted figure with their shepherd crooks. The defeated figure is also naked. In the underside of the ring of the Market Cross at Kells, a Satanic, horned figure is shown naked and flanked by two beasts. Above what is described as a depiction of Hell, writhing, naked figures eat human limbs. These images are discussed in chapters five and six. Satan in the Temptation page appears naked or partially-naked. It is interesting to note that the figures in the Hell page are shown fully clothed in contemporary dress, neither naked nor robed. This would seem to support the argument that the image depicts the figures in earthly life drinking their own damnation. See discussion below.

¹⁹ See for example the cross-fragment at Lancaster where figures with bird-like heads lick a central cross and the lions licking Daniel on the Kells Market Cross.

²⁰ The canon tables, folio 32v, 114r, Temptation page and 202r depict chalices with vines issuing from them.

lacks the usual vine accompaniment. Despite the absence of vines, the Eucharistic overtones are certain, as the figure refers to Abraham and Melchisedek, whose sacrifice was considered as a prototype of the Eucharist.²¹

The decision to decorate the name of Abraham with a figure drinking from a chalice emphasizes Christ's role as high priest of the Church, descended from a long line of priests, but also shows the significance of the chalice and its Eucharistic associations, whether or not vines are included in the image.²² As discussed earlier, the visual apprehension of the Eucharist was made much of in the liturgy and the manuscript gives the chalice and bread a suitably high visual profile. For a great part of the Mass, including any processions through the church, the Eucharist, because of its linen cover, would be invisible despite its visual prominence. Even when the cover was removed and the chalice elevated, it could only be partially or awkwardly glimpsed, as the congregation would be prostrate during this time.²³ The one time the congregation would have a clear view of the chalice would be when they took communion.²⁴ In showing the figures in the genealogy and in the John Incipit looking upon the chalice before they drink, the designer chooses an image familiar to any member of the congregation, the moment they most closely approached the Logos, other than the actual act of consuming the host. Like the gospel book and its text, the Eucharist was a familiar, tangible and accessible sign of the invisible, unknowable and intangible. Augustine commented that the Eucharist was "visibly celebrated, yet it must be invisibly

²¹ O'Reilly, "Exegesis," 362.

²² Ibid.

²³ John Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, 348. For a discussion of the elevation of the chalice, see chapter four.

²⁴ Another possibility is that the celebrant may have had his own smaller chalice, which would have been visible while the congregation took communion from the larger ministerial chalice. The chalice of the congregation was larger, with two handles. See Hilary Richardson, "Derryavalan and the Other Early Church Treasures," *JRSAI* 110 (1980): 93.

understood.”²⁵

Similarly, the nails clutched by Christ on folio 291v refer to the visual apprehension of the Godhead (Ills. 72a). Whereas on folio 292r the depiction of the Logos serves as a visual metaphor for an invisible process of contemplation, folio 291v presents the audience with an image that they would see on the day of Judgment, when everyone would face Christ including those who pierced him.²⁶ The first epistle of Peter 2:24 makes clear that anyone who has sinned has offended Christ and will number amongst those that pierced him, for “ he bore our sins in his body upon the tree . . . by those stripes you were healed.”²⁷ The image presents the pierced body of the Lord to the viewer, reminding him of his sins and the upcoming day of Judgment while at the same time giving him the opportunity to discern the body of the Lord and avoid damnation. For, as 1 Corinthians 11:29 makes clear, those who do not discern the body of the Lord are damned for eternity.²⁸

The John portrait page achieves this by presenting Christ as the Logos, but also referring to his role in Judgment and his suffering on earth. The two facing pages articulate that with the aid of the Eucharist and the gospel man can contemplate the Logos with his heart. Additionally, the passage of scripture that provoked so many images of the pierced Christ, 1 Corinthians 11:26-29, explains the presence of the Eucharist in these images, “For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord, until he come. . . . But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh

²⁵ “Visibilter celebrari, oportet teman invisibilter intellegi.” *Enarrationes in Psalmos*. Ps. 108.9 *CCSL* 39, 1386.

²⁶ O’Reilly first pointed out the iconography of the “wounded and exalted” and its emphasis upon physical sight or recognition. She cites the example of the late Anglo-Saxon ivory with the text “Look at my hands and feet says the Lord.” Inexplicably, she does not apply this to the Kells image. O’Reilly, “Text and Image,” 79. For further discussion of her work see part two.

²⁷ Ó Carragáin, “Ruthwell Crucifixion Poem,” 29.

²⁸ For a discussion of the relationship between images of Christ pierced by nails and discerning the body of Christ see part four.

unworthy, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.”

Folio 188r also reflects the influence of this passage (Ills. 116). Bernard Meehan notes the similarity to the Last Judgment in an Anglo-Saxon ivory carving and a depiction of hell in the Corbie Psalter, suggesting that the manner in which the legs and arms are interlaced represent homosexual practices dwelt on by the Irish penitentials.²⁹ He argues that although the tenor of the image is not liturgical, the peculiar presence of the chalice and ladle possibly parody the Eucharist. Several oddities remain unexplained and unnoticed. The interlaced figures at the top and bottom of the page have long hair. All of the figures at the top of the page and some on the bottom of the page also have beards.³⁰ However, the figure holding the ladle has short hair and seems to wear the habit of a monk. The shape of the figure's hair certainly resembles that of the small monk shown on folio 255v; it is cut short and above the ears with no forelock or excessive curls, dipping at the center--the area of tonsure (Ills. 112). On folio 255v pale, white pigment clearly delineates the tonsure. While this is absent on folio 188r, the pigment might have easily flaked off as it has elsewhere in the manuscript. Additionally, unlike the figures that surround him, the man wears a cloak with a hood. The only other figure within the manuscript wearing a hood is that of the monk on folio 255v. The figure on folio 188r stands out amongst those imprisoned with him. He is clearly upright, and unlike all of the figures around him, does not have any attributes of the damned such as interlaced body parts or knotted hair.

The presence of a monk offering drink to the damned only adds to the image's peculiarity. Significantly, the monk seems unharmed and unaffected by his surroundings. Unlike many of those that surround him, his mouth is

²⁹ Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 72 and “The Book of Kells and the Corbie Psalter.”

³⁰ These are difficult to make out. The figure in yellow inside the final curve of the M is the most easily perceptible.

not turned down in a grimace of dismay.³¹ The verse in Corinthians, however, would explain such an image, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord."³² The figures, chained by their sins, take part in the Eucharist, offered by the monk.³³ In so doing, they drink their own judgment. In Psalm 74: 8-9, the Psalmist writes, "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup of strong wine full of mixture. And he hath poured it out from this to that: but the dregs are not emptied: all the sinners of the earth shall drink."³⁴ The image forms a powerful contrast to that on folio 292r. In the John incipit, the beast does not attack man while he holds the chalice, but rather seems to adore him; whereas, in folio 188r the beast-head devours the men with the knotted forelocks, despite the fact they seem to take the Eucharist. The differentiation is clear: The figure in John looks to the source and discerns the body of the Logos. Looking to Christ, he is protected from damnation and will number amongst the elect. The figures on 188r are so entangled in their own sin that they can no longer discern Christ, who is conspicuously absent (Ills. 114 and 115). In the frame, a double-headed beast bites a serpent or dragon (Ills. 114). At the top of the page, beneath the frame another dragon bites an only partially completed human figure.³⁵ The damned and monstrous occupy this page, looking only to each other.

These pages reveal how the full-page illustrations function in a very similar manner to the minor decoration that runs throughout the manuscript.

³¹ See for example the figure in the bottom of the letter N whose mouth opens in a grimace or the row of figures with down-turned mouths above the "iam."

³² A similar sentiment is expressed in the "Penitential of Columbanus," which warns, "For Christ's throne is the altar, and His Body there with His Blood judges those who approach unworthily (Tribunal enim Christi altare, et corpus suum inibi cum sanguine iudicat indignos accedentes)." Bieler, 106-07.

³³ The ladle is not that unusual in the context of the liturgy. Both Orthodox and Eastern rites administered the wine with a spoon, and a liturgical spoon was present in the St. Ninnian's Isle treasure from c. 800. The Derrynavalan strainer both strained and poured. Richardson, "Derrynavalan," 95.

³⁴ "Quia calix in manu Domini uini meri plenus misto. Et inclinavit ex hoc in hoc: uerumtamen foex eius non est exinanita: bibent omnes peccatores terrae."

³⁵ Meehan, *Book of Kells*, 24.

In the pages of text, Christ's generation repeatedly refuses to acknowledge his identity and ask for a sign, blind to his presence in their midst. The decoration highlights these passages with images of Christ emerging from the word. The audience looking at the text, recognizes Jesus as the Logos, visually rendered by a blonde head emerging from the sacred text. By looking at these images and recognizing the power of Christ, the audience distinguishes themselves from the damned who fail to recognize Jesus as Christ. The decoration of the larger pages makes a similar differentiation between those who look to Christ and those who fail to do so. In some pages, beast-heads attack and devour figures, and the image of Christ is conspicuously absent. Without his presence, the figures are helpless. In the John page, on the other hand, Christ is present on both folios. John and the audience look to the source of the gospel, the Logos, and drink in salvation.

The Temptation page also underlines the role of the chalice and the book as shields against temptation and as aids in the apprehension of the Godhead (Ills. 73). It focuses upon the role of the Eucharist and the liturgy as the instruments that enable man to apprehend Christ through the earthly Church.³⁶ Additionally, the page has strong apotropaic overtones, proclaiming the weapons at the disposal of the Christian soul in his battle against evil. An overly large Christ stands between the shadowy figure of Satan and the crowd of tiny humanity that huddles behind and beneath him. Carol Farr, in her interpretation of the Temptation page, points to the protective aspect of the tabernacle-like structure.³⁷ Additionally she suggests that the figure carrying the shield refers to the "shield of truth" described in

³⁶ See chapter four.

³⁷ Farr cites extensive literary sources in which Psalm 90 is used in an apotropaic context such as an Anglo-Saxon prayer book that instructs its audience to keep the writing containing the text of Psalm 90 with them at all times to protect him from evil. She argues that the Psalm was most likely recited nightly for the office of compline, which is thought to have been instituted in Ireland c. 800. See chapter three for a discussion of Farr's argument concerning lections and Psalm 90. Farr, "Lection and Interpretation," 61-117.

Psalm 90 and the "armour of God" in Ephesians 6.³⁸ The relationship between the Temptation of Christ and Psalm 90, established within the gospel passage, was naturally echoed in exegetical writings.³⁹

What has not been noticed is the connotations that this shield carries, specifically its association with the scriptures. Ephesians 6:15, when describing the arming of the Christian, speaks of feet "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."⁴⁰ Psalm 90 specifically states, "His truth shall compass thee about with a shield."⁴¹ Christ's "truth" was interpreted as the scriptures and Christ's teachings. Columbanus described Christ's teachings as "our weapons, shield and sword."⁴² Bede, following Jerome, comments on Luke 4:12, "He breaks the devil's false arrows from the scriptures with the shield of truth of the scriptures."⁴³

The shield makes specific reference to the scriptures, which is further emphasized by the presence of two angels in the top corners of the frame, each carrying a book. The designer has carefully inserted into the available space a chalice out of which undulates a blossoming vine. Thus, the two objects, so prevalent throughout the manuscript--the chalice and the book--frame the image. The two books are roughly identical, most likely referring to the gospels and the epistles. The image does, as Farr suggests, show the whole church tempted by Satan, but more implicitly, it reveals the instruments provided by Christ for their salvation: the Eucharist, the Church and the Gospel book.

The peculiar manner in which Christ's arms swing left towards the

³⁸ Ibid., 68-71.

³⁹ Ironically, it is Farr's thesis that best surveys the wide-spread nature of this association. The fact that it also is emphasized in certain lections is therefore unsurprising. See Farr, "Lecture and Interpretation," 61-117.

⁴⁰ "Calceati pedes in praeparatione euangelii paciis."

⁴¹ "Scuto circumdabit te ueritas eius (Ps. 90:5)." Farr, "Lecture and Interpretation," 68-71.

⁴² Columbanus, 19. *Epistula* 2, "Haec arma, scutum et gladius, haec apologia." Ibid., 18.

⁴³ Farr, *Lecture and Interpretation*, 71. Bede, *In Lucam*, CCSL 120, 97 and Jerome, *In Mattheum*, "Falsas de scripturis diaboli sagittas ueris scripturarum frangit clypeis." CCSL 72, 21-22.

hovering black figure makes it appear that Christ is offering the Eucharist to Satan. A more likely interpretation, however, is that Christ defends his Church from Satan with the Eucharist. This would suit the decoration of the rest of the manuscript and the liturgical evidence. Repeatedly the chalice, and frequently the gospel book, are shown as shields that ward off Satan. In the liturgy, Christ himself is quoted as instructing the congregation to drink so that they might be saved, while the *Liber Nos* and *Pater noster* said at the height of the canon ask for delivery from temptation and evil. Satan, appropriately presents little threat to those under Christ's protection although his large, protruding tongue points to his deceit, particularly evident in the Temptation episodes. Christ literally places himself, the sacrament, and the Church between Satan and mankind. The gospel books and the shield reminded the audience that they are compassed about by the shield of Christ's truth.

The emphasis on the scriptures as the shield of truth and their close association with the Eucharist is not surprising. As has been shown, the decoration of the Book of Kells consistently refers to its role and that of the Eucharist as protector and guide. The association between the gospel and the chalice is clearly spelled out in the John Portrait and its incipit; however, no story in the gospels could be more appropriate for highlighting the role of the scriptures than the Temptation, where Christ specifically states, "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word of God." Both Eucharist and gospel protected man and enabled him to draw closer to God. Augustine describes the moment when man will be taken up to heaven, pointing out that these aids will no longer be needed as man will see God for himself, "Nor shall we have to receive the Sacrament of the Altar, because we shall be there with Christ, whose Body we now receive; nor will those words which we are speaking need be said to you, nor the sacred volume be read, when we shall see Him

who is Himself the Word of God.”⁴⁴

The canon tables also indicate the role of the gospel book in the man's journey towards the apprehension of the Godhead. Folio 1r depicts the four evangelists holding up their gospels (Ills. 117).⁴⁵ These men had seen, touched and listened to Christ made flesh. The image shows them holding up the testimony of their vision, in a gospel book like the Book of Kells. As the audience looked to the manuscript on the high altar or ambo, a visual association would occur between the gospel books held by the evangelist, represented in its pages, and the gospel book in the hands of the reader. Henry suggested that the top part of the page outside of the decorative frame may have once contained a bust of Christ as in the other canon tables.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, the folio is too worn to verify or reject Henry's identification although traces of decoration are evident; however, the correspondences with the Flavigny Gospels, discussed in chapter six, support this suggestion. If Henry's assertion is correct, the bust of Christ would appear directly above the evangelists carrying their gospels. Indeed, they would appear to be walking towards the image of Christ, while carrying the gospel books before them. The image would confirm their veracity as witnesses of the Incarnation.

Such an image, would also point to the role of the gospel book in man's pilgrimage towards God. Christ's teachings literally proceed before the evangelists, not only testifying to the fleshly incarnation, but leading them

⁴⁴ Augustine, *Sermon on the Mount*, 289. *Sermones*. Sermon. 59.3, “Nec Sacramentum altaris habemus accipere, quia ibi erimus cum Christo, eius corpus accipimus; nec uerba nobis ista dici habent, quae dicimus uobis, nec codex legendus est, quando ipsum uidemus quod est Uerbum Dei.” *PL* 38, 401.

⁴⁵ The evangelist symbol of Matthew holds a lock of his hair in his hand. While tugging on hair and tongues in the minor decoration repeatedly occurs in images describing evil, this does not appear to be the case in this instance. The artists take considerable effort to emphasize the manner in which hair binds the figures in the minor decoration, but not in this instance. Most likely, the image of figures tugging on their hair derives from an older, Celtic artistic tradition sympathetic to the interlaced forms of early Insular art. Such images did not carry connotations of evil, but were purely decorative devices.

⁴⁶ Henry, *Book of Kells*, 197.

toward their final apprehension of the Godhead where they will sit by his throne for eternity. This eschatological emphasis would explain the odd integration of the evangelist animal symbols.⁴⁷ The human arms and posture emphasize the manner in which they march towards the top of the page, holding out their books, while their animal characteristics confirm their identity as the four creatures. As men, they bore witness to the Christ the man and as the four creatures they testify eternally to the glorified Christ. The image shows the gospel book as instrumental in the apprehension of the Logos. The manner in which the evangelists carry the gospels before them as they march upwards toward the Godhead is reminiscent of Augustine's discussion of the role of the scriptures, "And from that city whence we wander, letters have come to us; these are the scriptures. . . . Why do I say letters have come? The king himself descended and he has made a path for us. . . so that walking in him, we may neither go astray . . . nor blunder into the snares which have been placed beside our path."⁴⁸ In both Augustine's description and in the image on folio 1r, the gospels act as beacons, leading man forward towards an apprehension of the Godhead.

Folios 7v and 8r also point to the role of the book as a guide towards the apprehension of the Godhead (Ills. 1a and 1b).⁴⁹ Like the Durrow panel and Flavigny canon tables, these images deviate from traditional images of Christ in that some of the figures around him do not look towards him, but rather away from him (Ills. 19 and 18). The image of folio 7v shows the Virgin seated on a jeweled throne. Angels surround her and the artist has taken great pains to depict the manner in which three of the angels gaze upon

⁴⁷ Ibid. See also discussion of hybrid evangelist symbols in Sofia Ameisenowa, "Animal-headed Gods, Evangelists, Saints and Righteous Men," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11-12 (1948-49): 21-45.

⁴⁸ Augustine, *Enarrationes*, Ps 90 s.ii.1., "Et de illa ciuitate unde peregrinamur, literae nobis uenerunt: ipsae sunt scripturae, quae nos hortantur ut bene uiuamus. Quid dicam uenisse litteras? Ipse rex descendit, et factus est nobis via . . . ut in illo ambulantes, nec erremus, nec deficiamus . . . nec in laqueos irruamus, qui ponuntur iuxta uiam." *CCSL* 39, 1266.

⁴⁹ See discussion in chapter four.

the Christ child. The page presents the viewer with an image of the Virgin and Child. By looking at it, the audience join with the angels in contemplating the scene. Despite the amount of focus upon the Virgin and Child, the six men inserted into the frame of the image look away to the text summarizing the birth of Christ. Within the text of this recto, a figure sits holding a book. Possibly, the figure holds a closed book, which he balances precariously on his knee with both of his hands directly behind it. This is an unusual method for holding a closed book, shown nowhere else in a manuscript filled with closed books. Alternatively, it might represent an open book, propped on his knee and held open by his hands. The depiction of the open book as a flat rectangle with only a vertical divide to indicate its shape was quite common in the period. In the Durrow Gospels, Matthew holds open his gospel with two hands, and the Flavigny artist renders the book in a similar fashion. In the Kells image, the dark pigment that the colorist has used on the surface of the book would seem to suggest the cover of the book rather than the interior; however, the artist might be attempting to portray a book with dark purple pages typical of antiquity and the Carolingian period. The Canterbury Gospels, which shares some of the Book of Kells more unusual characteristics, contains purple-stained pages.⁵⁰ Another possibility is that the colorist mistook the book for a closed one.⁵¹

Whether or not the book displayed remains open or closed cannot be answered with any great conviction. Certainly, the book seems offered up for show. The artist has gone to some length to emphasize this, showing the book propped up on the knees of the figure. One is reminded of the cross at Durrow, where the book is propped between the knees of the two clerics. A small green rectangle next to the knees of the figure raises even further

⁵⁰ See discussion in chapter one.

⁵¹ In the minor decoration the colorist frequently ignores or neglects to notice the finer detailing and design of the pen-work. Even on folio 8r, the green square at the knees of the figure has fallen victim to such carelessness. The fine design, discussed above, has been carelessly painted over.

questions. Beneath its coat of green pigment, the artist has carefully drawn a cross and what appear to be book clasps. The rectangle is slightly larger than the book. In size, shape and design it greatly resembles a book cover or book shrine.⁵² Folio 8r raises more questions than answers, but what is certain, is the manner in which it emphasizes both text and codex. The small figures that seem to depict an audience of some sort look away from the Virgin and Child toward the description of the Nativity, and the figure within this description holds up a book for the manuscript's audience to look at.

Folios 7v and 8r function in a manner extremely similar to the John Portrait page and its Incipit discussed above. Within the Incipit, the imagery depicts a man, in this case John, holding out an instrument of salvation, that is a chalice. Within the *Breues causae*, the imagery shows a man holding a book. In both the John pages and the Virgin and Child pages, the opposite page depicts an aspect of the Godhead. In John, the viewer is confronted with the wounded Christ while in the Virgin and Child page, the *Fons Vitae* is depicted.⁵³ Both are privileged glimpses into the sacred world. The Virgin and Child, with her rich robes, yellow throne and surrounding angels is not part of a Nativity scene, nor even a common type of Virgin and Child. The two folios work together in order to depict the manner in which this sacred world can be accessed by man. Like the Durrow panel, the earthly audience must look to the text and the codex in order to approach the Godhead.

The depiction of the Virgin in the Book of Kells is one of the earliest in Western art and its inclusion has caused much comment.⁵⁴ One possible explanation is the Virgin's role in Irish theology, which placed a strong

⁵² Etienne Rynne suggests that this represents a wax tablet such as the Springmount Tablets. Etienne Rynne, "Drolleries in the Book of Kells," in O'Mahony, 314.

⁵³ G. Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells*, 153-55.

⁵⁴ See "Introduction to Part One" for discussion.

emphasis on the Virgin and redemption.⁵⁵ The Irish pseudo-Jerome, explains that Mary means Star of the Sea, "Because a star is sweet, while the sea is bitter. Thus it is with Mary. In the sea of this world she was among sinners like the star of the sea, because, as we know, a star leads men to port, if they follow it. So it is with Mary in this world in which Christ was born who leads all men to life, if they follow her."⁵⁶ In this role, Mary holds a similar function as the gospel book and chalice, leading men towards salvation.

Suzanne Lewis has suggested that the Chi Rho page's complex imagery meditates upon the Logos, the Incarnation and the Eucharist.⁵⁷ On a more basic level, the minor decoration also reflects the protection afforded by the Eucharist, the Logos and the Incarnation. The two angels beside the stem of the "X" hold up books while the third holds the flabella, referring to the gospels and the liturgy respectively (Ills. 60). The protective role of angels is well documented and frequently occurs in Insular images of scriptural events.⁵⁸ While neither the otter holding the fish nor the butterflies and chrysalis have overtones of protection, they maintain the Eucharistic theme of the page (Ills. 59).⁵⁹ They would also carry connotations of the Lord's provision for mankind.⁶⁰ The odd scene of cats and mice at the bottom left of

⁵⁵ McNally, *Bible in the Early Middle Ages*, 68. Two prayers to the Virgin in the Book of Nunnaminster and Book of Cerne with strong Irish elements show the emphasis on her role in mankind's redemption, "Mother of God, who deserved to give birth to the salvation of the world and offered the light of the world and the glory of the heavens to those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, be to me a kind patroness . . . and helper before God," and "Undefined Mary . . . who are mediator for the whole world when faced with danger. . . Pray and intercede for us. . . You can obtain everything you wish from your son." Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 98-9.

⁵⁶ *PL* 83, 1285.

⁵⁷ Lewis, 139-59.

⁵⁸ For examples of depictions of angelic protection, see chapter six. The *Vision of Fursa*, one of the earliest vision tales, describes how Fursa is attacked verbally and physically by demons. One of the angels that accompanies him fends off the attack with his buckler, while other angels defended him verbally. Boswell, 166.

⁵⁹ Both Ambrose and Jerome cite butterflies as proof of rebirth and resurrection. Lewis suggests the image of the butterflies eating the chrysalis that enabled their rebirth acts as a parallel to man's consumption of the Sacred Host. Lewis, 150.

⁶⁰ In her survey of otters in Irish saints lives, Mary Donatus, writes, "Primarily his part seems to provide the saints with fish." Donatus, 155.

the page does seem to be an explicit statement of the protection of the Eucharist.⁶¹ With the exception of the head of Christ, its position is the most prominent. It is directly below a bright yellow cross shape in a relative void with a plain, red background that is striking amongst the swirls and whorls of the rest of the page.⁶² In this void sit two cats facing one another. Two mice sit on their backs. Two mice sit between them, nibbling on a cross marked wafer that represents the Eucharist. The cats have their paws on the tails of the mice, but leave them unharmed.

Suzanne Lewis suggests that the cats, known for keeping down swarming mice in Noah's ship, serve a protective role, "analogous to the cross which Augustine saw as the devil's mousetrap."⁶³ She also cites Isidore's description of a cat as a catcher of mice.⁶⁴ While it is tempting to interpret the role of the cats in this manner, they appear ineffective. Irish penitentials do speak of the need to prevent animals from eating the Eucharist.⁶⁵ But these cats, despite holding the mice with their paws, allow them to nibble the Eucharist.⁶⁶

The decoration of the canon tables also articulates the gospel book and the chalice as instruments of grace and protection. On folio 2v, a nude figure with a large nimbus and somewhat ragged black beard holds the tongues of

⁶¹ Sally Mussetter first proposed this in 1977. Mussetter draws attention to the "pocket of void" in which the cats inhabit and their proximity to the cross, quite similar to the position of the cats of Muiredach's cross. Noting the inertia of the cats and Augustine's description of Christ entering the "mousetrap" of the enemy in order to save man, she suggests that the image must be read as "a representation of sinners fallen into the hands of the enemy and released by the sacrificed body of Christ," Sally Mussetter, "An Animal Miniature on the Monogram Page of the Book of Kells," *Medievalia* 3 (1977): 123. Mussetter's work has largely been ignored since the publication of Suzanne Lewis' article on the Chi Rho page.

⁶² For discussion of the use of void within the manuscript's decoration see Heather Pulliam, "The Book of Kells: Demarcating the Sacred Environment," *Cosmos* 12 (1996): 393-423.

⁶³ Lewis, 147.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Mussetter, 125.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 123.

two dragons (Ills. 123a).⁶⁷ Éamonn Ó Carragáin argues that the figure, in an undressed state with large nimbus and positioned between two beasts, surely refers to Christ on the cross, who by grasping the dragons by the base of their tongues, renders them harmless although they attempt to bind his wrists. The image echoes the manner in which by his crucifixion, although appearing defeated, Christ triumphed over Satan.⁶⁸

On folio 3r, a blonde man occupies the same central space, above and outside of the canon tables themselves (Ills. 123b). Beneath him is a chalice and vine motif. Ó Carragáin notes the manner in which the two folios complemented one another, noting:

. . . the continuity and contrast between historical event and liturgical enactment of that event. On folio 2v, there is a direct representation of Christ, revealed in his Passion . . . this is matched on folio 3r by a representation of the life offered to men by the glorified Christ, the true vine (John 15:1) who offers life from the Eucharistic cup."⁶⁹

The figure of Christ is depicted in a brightly and multi-colored round arch or partially completed circle. Within the arch, the artist employs parallel sweeping lines remarkably similar in shape to those behind the depiction of the Logos enthroned in light in folio 292r. The figure lacks any evident tonsure, is beardless and possibly wrapped in a chasuble. In these aspects, it seems to resemble the depiction of Christ on the Temptation page. The image shows the glorified Christ, who appears behind the Eucharist in much the same way that the glorified Christ appears behind the book in the high cross at Durrow. Possibly, the absence of his beard indicates his presence in the liturgy as high priest. Certainly, the connection that Ó Carragáin makes

⁶⁷ This type of beard appears in several places in the manuscript such as folio 292r, 202r and 114r. Despite the emphasis in medieval Irish literature on what sort of beards were worn by the disciples, the style and color of Christ's hair varies throughout the manuscript although his hair is usually represented in the same abstract, decorative manner. For review of manuscript sources on beards, see McNamara, *Apocrypha in the Irish Church*, 84-5.

⁶⁸ Ó Carragáin, "'Traditio evangeliorum,' 426.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 427-8. Ó Carragáin goes on to identify the figure above not as the glorified Christ, but as a priest or member of the community offering the Eucharist.

between revelation of Christ in his Passion and the Eucharist, suggested by the crucifixion references on the opposite folio, is incontestable.

What has not been remarked upon is the manner in which the two images dwell upon the protective nature of the Eucharist. On folio 3r, two birds stand in the vines issuing out of the chalice. They bite at the tongues of two attacking dragons. As with the image on 2v folio, although the dragons tongues encircle the necks of the birds, they are rendered harmless. The design makes the apotropaic function of the Eucharist clear. The tongues that seek to snare mankind are halted. The liturgy of the Stowe Missal shows how the Eucharist was perceived as a shield against the temptations of evil. At the height of the canon, the congregation recite the *Pater Noster* ending at, "And lead us not into Temptation." The *Libera nos* follows immediately, "Deliver us Lord from all evil, past, present or future . . . and we may always be free from sin."⁷⁰ Both prayers occur at the height of the ritual, directly after the breaking of the host, and before the commingling and consumption of the host.

On the following set of folios, folio 3v and 4r, the themes of protection and apprehension continue but instead of referring to the Eucharist, the imagery focuses on the book and glorification (Ills. 124a and 124b). On folio 3v a plain reddish-brown cross outlined in yellow occupies the place of the "crucified" Christ on folio 2v. The recto depicts a figure holding two books. Physically, he resembles the crucified Christ of 2v, with ornate blond hair and dark brown beard. The ornate curls, typical of images of Christ in the manuscript, are present although difficult to perceive in the page's worn condition. The hair is awkwardly rendered, possibly the result of an intended halo. While it is tempting to identify the figure as Christ with the book of seals, the unusual use of two books makes such an interpretation impossible.

⁷⁰ "Libera nos domine ab omni preterito et futuro . . . a peccato simus semper liberi." Warner, 17.

Most likely, the two books refer to scriptures, either the gospels, the gospels and the epistles or the Old and New Testament. Considering the resemblance between folio 2v and 3v and the symmetry of so much of Kells' decoration, it seems likely that the liturgical context on folio 3r would be repeated on 4r. Both the epistles and the gospels played a vital role in the liturgy. While gospel books feature prominently in Kells, the presence of two instead of four or even one book, suggests that one of the books might refer to the epistles. Either way, the presence of two books must refer to the scriptures rather than the sealed book.

Christ holding out the gospels over the canon tables is not a surprising image; yet, in the context of the previous folios and complexity of Kells' decoration, the choice of such an image cannot be casual or meaningless decoration. On folio 3r, Christ as priest, offers the Eucharist to the members of the church. The Eucharist aids the congregation in their fight against Satan and leads the participant closer to the Godhead. As the embodiment of Christ's sacrifice, it acts as a bridge towards salvation. The liturgy repeatedly emphasizes this in the ubiquitous phrase, "*through* our Lord, Jesus Christ." The *Hanc Igitur* said over the bread and wine, asking for membership amongst the elect, ends on this point, "through our Lord."⁷¹ The image presents the viewer with the literal road to salvation, the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Folio 4r, articulates another instrument of man's salvation, the gospels that lead man toward the Godhead. The manner in which Christ holds them up shows his connection to the gospels. Folio 3r shows Christ as priest commanding that the members of the Church drink and be saved. Folio 4r shows Christ holding up the gospels, inviting man to partake of his word.

Additionally, as with the previous folios, evil is shown attacking from the margins. Unlike folios 2v and 3r, however, the artist does not use the

⁷¹ "Per dominum nostrum," *Ibid.*, 12

dragon motif. Instead men carrying spears and shields, representing those who speak falsely, attack birds in the top right- and left-hand corners.⁷² The birds appear to fight back, pecking at the arms of the soldiers. The soldiers are firmly fenced in by the decoration of the gospel, offering little threat. The gospels, like the Eucharist, once again take on an apotropaic role in the manuscript.⁷³

In this image, and all the images in the manuscript, Christ draws the spectator towards himself, and through him to salvation. The decoration articulates the instruments of this process, the chalice and the gospel book. Both are merely containers of the divine, and yet the key to mankind's access of the invisible. The images within the gospel book assist it in its function, enabling the spectator to partially perceive God with his physical senses and to contemplate the true nature of the Godhead as much as possible while on earth, thus leading him to salvation. Pope Hadrian described this as one of the primary functions of images, that "through pictures we are led from the visible to the invisible."⁷⁴

Repeatedly in the decoration the book and the chalice are used as almost interchangeable motifs. Throughout the manuscript the chalice acts as a shield between human figures and the threatening forces of Satan. The Stowe Missal delineates how the Mass would impress such a role upon the congregation, but the question arises as to why such an image repeatedly occurs in a gospel book. Both the book and the chalice brought man closer to the apprehension of the Godhead and further from the temptations of Satan. In the liturgy, writings and images of the early Christian world, both chalice and gospel book were repeatedly linked to one another. The most constant and obvious link was a visual one, reinforced on a weekly basis in the Mass.

⁷² See "Introduction to part two" for a discussion of the association between figures carrying spears and the wicked.

⁷³ Repeatedly, the angels, chalice, book and birds--the 'instruments' discussed above--are placed in this position, in the corners at the top of the manuscript page.

⁷⁴ Raw, 59.

Only the chalice, paten and gospel book were allowed upon the high altar.⁷⁵ Throughout the sacred drama of the mass, the audience and celebrants would see the chalice and gospel book set next to one another on the altar. Additionally, both chalice and book were processed throughout the church.⁷⁶ Obviously, the gospel book plays an active role in the Mass. Its position in the ritual loosely links the chalice and the gospel book. Directly following the reading of the gospels, the *Credo* and offertory were recited at which point the chalice was completely uncovered for the first time.⁷⁷ Also, the deacon cared for both the chalice and the gospel book.⁷⁸

Gregory, writing on Ezekiel 3:1-2, in which God commands Ezekiel to eat the book, comments, "For whatever is found in Sacred Scripture is to be eaten. . . . For the Sacred Scripture is our food and drink."⁷⁹ Augustine, commenting on the frequent imagery of wine, vineyards and cups, comes to the same conclusion, "The Divine Word can be understood by the grape: for the Lord even has been called a cluster of grapes. . . . Accordingly when the Divine Word maketh use of, by the necessity of declaring Himself, the sound of voice . . . in the same sound of the voice, as it were in husks, knowledge, like wine is enclosed."⁸⁰

Throughout the minor decoration of the manuscript, budding vines appear next to the text where Christ speaks.⁸¹ Perhaps one of the most

⁷⁵ Jungmann, 284.

⁷⁶ Although there is no direct evidence, the Old Irish term for mass "oifrend" is derived from the Latin "Offrenda," which was sung in the Ambrosian Rite of Milan during the Offertory procession, suggesting that the chalice was processed to the altar. Michael Ryan, *Early Irish Communion Vessels: Church Treasures of the Yellowen Age* (Dublin: A National Museum of Ireland Guide, 1985), 7.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 348.

⁷⁸ Farr, "Liturgical Influences," 135.

⁷⁹ Gregory the Great, *Homiliarum in Ezechielem*, Hom. 10.2-3, "Quidquid enim in sacra Scriptura inuenitur edendum est. . . . Scriptura sacra cibus noster et potus est." *PL* 76, 836.

⁸⁰ Augustine *Expositions*, 28. *Enarrationes* Ps. 8.2, "Nam et Uerbum diuinum potest uua intellegi. Dictus est et Dominus botrus uuae. . . . Uerbum itaque diuinum, cum enuntiationis necessitate usurpat uocis sonum . . . eodem sono uocis tamquam uinaciis, intellectus tamquam uinum includitur. *CCSL* 38, 49-50.

⁸¹ Bernard Meehan noted the emphasis upon speech in the manuscript's decoration in a paper given at the St. Andrews Psalter Conference. See Meehan, "The Book of Kells and the Corbie Psalter."

beautifully executed examples of this occurs on folio 309v (Ills. 128). Above the text of John 6:46, "Not that any man hath seen the father; but he who is God, he hath seen the father," stands a quadruped, its leg raised to its mouth indicating the inserted script, "nisi is qui est." Out of the quadruped's mouth issues foliage, which terminates in the tri-dot motif that also covers the body of the quadruped. The beast draws attention to the significance of Christ's utterance. Below, another quadruped looks to the inserted text, "ex ipso mandu." The script has been omitted from John 6:51-52, "I am the living bread that comes down from heaven. If any man shall eat of this bread he shall live forever." Beneath the initial beginning the passage, is an independent bird that looks up at the text. From both the mouth of the quadruped and the bird issue vines with a single tri-dot. A small independent vine further emphasizes the association between the script and the grape. The decoration reflects the Eucharistic content of the text as well as underlining this association. On folio 58v, the head of Christ emerges from an initial, as do tri-dots and clusters of circles that closely resemble grapes (Ills. 42a). The artist indicates that these are indeed grapes, by clearly delineating the beast's open mouth and rounded teeth as he bites the grape. Both the foot of Christ and the grapes emerge from the same part of the letter.

These vines often issue out of the mouths of a quadruped initial. The unusual buds, repeatedly connected to Christ's speech and Old Testament prophecies as shown in folio 90v, refer to the role of the letter as the voice of the Divine Word--a husk containing the wine of knowledge (Ills. 14a). The gospel book, then, like the chalice served the holy function of acting as a container to the wine of knowledge and salvation. The congregation, as they sat listening to the gospels, took in the word of God, just as later in the Mass, they would drink his blood.

The Book of Kells, as a liturgical gospel book, articulates its role alongside the chalice and Church, as a guide that leads man towards the

apprehension of God. Following to the letter Pope Hadrian's definition of the purpose of imagery, its decoration and script led man from the visible to the invisible.⁸² In so doing, it guided them and protecting them, in the words of Augustine, from the "snares which have been placed beside our path."⁸³ The Book of Kells, in its full-page imagery and minor decoration, portrays the frailty of man and the necessity of aids such as the book and chalice that lead him towards a contemplation of the Godhead. Moreover, it shows the rewards this entails and the punishment that results in the failure to do so. Quite simply, the imagery, like the gospel book itself, opens man's senses and in so doing protects him from evil.

⁸² Raw, 59.

⁸³ *Enarrationes* Ps. 90.2. *CCSL* 39, 1266

Conclusion

An analysis of the visual apparatus of the Book of Kells demonstrates how the decorative program articulates the function of the gospel book. The minor decoration and layout of text guides both the eye and response of the its audience. Its full-page images indicate the manuscript's function as a visible representation of an invisible God, appealing to the senses in order to guide the soul in its contemplation of him. In so doing, the imagery of the Book of Kells agrees with Gregory's dictum that "it is one thing to adore a picture, another through a picture's story to learn what must be adored." The manuscript's distinction between itself as a physical object, and that which it represents, the Logos, demonstrates a sophisticated awareness of itself as a visible, tangible entity. Both minor decoration and full-page imagery point to the benefits afforded to those who make proper use of the manuscript. The discovery of a singular program has also led to new interpretations of the imagery of the John portrait and its incipit, the Mark incipit, as well as a re-evaluation of previous interpretations of the Temptation page and Luke incipit.

This thesis has ramifications for at least five areas of previous research. It lends further support to Jennifer O'Reilly and Éamonn Ó Carragáin's suggestion that the distinction between those who recognize Jesus as the Son of God and those who fail to do so is a dominant theme within Insular art. Continuing the work initiated by Françoise Henry and Bernard Meehan, further similarities between the decorated initials of the Corbie Psalter and the Book of Kells have been enumerated. The close agreement between the decoration of the John incipit and Augustine's commentary indicates that the imagery does not simply reflect a common belief system. This endorses the suggestion that the writings of Augustine affected the choice of imagery for the Temptation page. Finally, it has been demonstrated

that while the decoration may appear more frequently in passages of liturgical importance, it could not have served to demarcate lections.

This study has shown the benefits of returning the focus to the art object itself. The oversight by previous scholarship of the chalice held by Christ in the Temptation Page demonstrates explicitly the necessity of returning to a more rigorous examination of the visual data. Instead of depending exclusively on external sources, this method fully exploits the visual evidence, exploring the entire visual object and assessing the relationship of the parts to the whole. This holistic approach has proven successful in two previous investigations, specifically in the case of the Ruthwell Cross and in Kathleen Openshaw's work with later Irish Psalters. In this process, interpretations of a single image are affirmed through a comparison with the whole apparatus of the manuscript or stone cross.

This thesis suggests several avenues for future research. The controversial imagery of the high crosses has only been addressed randomly by art historians despite Peter Harbison's extensive photographic survey. The cohesion of the decoration within the Book of Kells, Irish Psalters, Ruthwell Cross, the Tall Cross at Monasterboice and the high cross at Durrow suggests that a re-evaluation of the internal relationships of the imagery of the high crosses would prove invaluable. Additionally, while the scriptural sources for the narrative elements of the imagery have been examined, the relationship between the metaphorical language of the Psalms and decoration of the high crosses needs further investigation. The metaphors of Psalm 90 in particular have been shown to be influential throughout the decoration of the Book of Kells, Corbie Psalter and several high crosses.

The architecture of the manuscript is so rigid, intricate and formal as to indicate that either the type of decoration found within the Book of Kells was not unique or alternatively that the design and decoration of the manuscript was supervised by a single individual. This is exemplified both

by the content and position of the full-page images and the minor decoration. The manuscript's full-page images often appear in sets and pairs that balance and oppose one another throughout the manuscript. Two examples of this pairing has been cited in the thesis.¹ The findings of this thesis indicate that further work into the architecture of the manuscript, independent of the lection question, would show that the insertion of full-page decoration is not so much dictated by lection systems as by design. Also remarkable is the rigid codification of the field of the page. Eschatological images are frequently depicted beneath the frame of the image, such as in the John and Luke incipit, while images of the chalice, book and angel typically occur in the top corners of the page.²

The minor decoration shows similarly rigid patterns in the placement of decoration on the page. For example, a small bird with loosely drawn wings repeatedly occurs at the bottom right-hand corner of passages where the Pasch is mentioned. Inter-textual decoration typically refers to the verse below rather than the verse above. Also, word-image relationships are frequently made explicit through physical interaction between script and decoration. The monk who commits the sin of pride in his attempts to govern himself, places his foot directly on the word "sin." The quadrupeds that mark the verses in which the Jews demand Christ's crucifixion grasp the phrase, "crucify him." The Pharisee, represented by a man with a spear and shield, reclines above the word "Pharisees," poking it with his spear.

The cohesiveness of the decorative system of the Book of Kells is so complex as to suggest the existence of a prototype with a similar layout and minor decoration. Directly at odds with the manuscript's confused canon tables is the effortless way that script and decoration are interact. Decoration is strewn throughout the text, often added before the script; and yet, overlaps

¹ Folio 7v and 8r show Christ's entrance into the world; folio 123v and 124r his exit. The Mark incipit and the John incipit also balance one another. See chapter seven.

² See for example, the canon tables and Temptation page.

are relatively rare and never awkward. Additionally, decoration frequently interacts with text and imagery on the opposite folio. Without a close model to work from, it would be extremely difficult to coordinate such a close interaction across folios before the manuscript's leaves were sewn together. The hypothetical presence of such a prototype raises questions as to why a copy was deemed necessary. One possibility is that the original manuscript would have remained at Iona while the copy would proceed to the new foundation at Kells. Possibly the copy was begun shortly after 804, when the land for the Kells monastery was granted.³ If this were the case, the incomplete nature of the manuscript's decoration might be explained by the terrible viking raid of 806 when 68 members of the monastery were killed. Obviously, this is only speculation; however, a new examination of the codicological evidence would be beneficial in light of the present findings. Also, while the scribal hands have been examined and debated, there is only a single, short study available on the question of the scribe-artist relationship. The cohesion of the decoration suggests that despite the multiple hands at work, the manuscript is the product of a single imagination. Even in the John Gospel where the hand and style of the decoration for the most part lacks the confidence and flair of the rest of the manuscript, the ways that the decorated initials carry meaning remains unchanged. A close, systematic exploration of the relationships between artist and scribe might point to one dominant personality at work within the manuscript.

Francoise Henry first noted the stylistic similarities between the decorated initials of the Corbie Psalter, Sacramentary of Gellone and the Book of Kells in 1974. During the course of research, the initials of the Gellone Sacramentary were dismissed as too dissimilar to add to the argument of this thesis because of their directly illustrative character. The complex

³ The dates given above are taken from Paul Meyvaert's summary of the evidence within the *Annals*. Meyvaert, "The Book of Kells," 12.

word-image relationships found in the Book of Kells and Corbie Psalter need further explanation. A detailed investigation of the pre-Romanesque initial, which focuses upon the differences in word-image relationships as well as looking at visual similarities, would help chart the sources and development of the initials and minor decoration. Many of the Insular manuscripts consulted were not incorporated into this investigation because of the scarcity of decorated initials. Having discovered the ways that the decorated initials within the Book of Kells carry meaning, a comparative framework for analysis has been established. This could be applied to these singular initials in an attempt to isolate sources, relationships and meaning.

During the 1980's and 1990's, the art of the eighth and ninth centuries has increasingly become the realm of the historian, literary expert, codicologist or archaeologist. The art historian has been delegated the role of tracing of stylistic influences. Images are frequently cited in order to prove arguments concerning liturgy or chains of literary exegesis. An unfortunate by-product of this, is that images are handled carelessly, treated as independent entities and frequently only partially consulted. With the exception of two or three works, to a great extent this has been the case with the Book of Kells. It is hoped that the publication of the new facsimile and production of this thesis will encourage a return to examining the image within its own context and searching for meaning rather than mere visual semblance.

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- DACL *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 15 vols. Edited by Ferdinand Cabrol and H. LeClerq. Paris: Letouzey etané, 1905-07.
- JRSAI *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*
- Peritia *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland*
- PG *Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*, 162 vols. Edited by J-P. Migne. Paris: n.p., 1957-1912.
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Appendix A1: Text-Vellum Ratios

Manuscript	No. of Lines	Measurement of Text mm
Book of Durrow	25	207 x 120
Book of Kells	17	250 x 170
Canterbury Gospels	42	365 x 265
Durham Gospels	22	257 x 195
Hereford Cathedral Library P.I.2	33	167 x 120
St. Petersburg Gospels	18-27	260 x 190
Lichfield Gospels	20	250 x 190
Lindisfarne Gospels	24	235 x 190
Oxford, Bodleian Rawlinson G. 167	20-22	270-275 x 180-200
Macregol Gospels	22	270 x 210
St. Gall Codex 51	24-25	220-250 x 155-65

Appendix A2: Manuscripts Consulted

Amiens, Bibliothèque
Municipale 18

Leiden, University Library
B. P. L 67.
Voss. Lat.F.4, ff 4-33.

London, British Library,
Cotton Tiberius C. II.
Harley 2788.
Harley 2965.
Royal I. B. VII.
Royal II. E. VI.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale,
Grec. 62
Grec 2389.
lat 2110
lat. 12048
lat. 12097
lat. 12155
lat. 122241

St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek
Codex 51
Codex 60
Codex 904
Codex 1395; pp. 422-423
Codex 1395; pp. 425-427

Trier, Domschatz
Codex 61

Würzburg Universitätsbibliothek
Codex M. p. h. 12
Codex M. p. q. 18
Codex M. p. th. f. 69

Appendix A3: Table of Manuscripts Cited by Name in Text

Name as cited in text	Library
Barberini Gospels	Vatican City, Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica, Barberini lat. 570.
Book of Armagh	Dublin, Trinity College Library, 52
Book of Durrow	Dublin, Trinity College Library, A.4.5
Canterbury Gospels	London, British Library, Royal 1. E.VI
Cathach of Columba	Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, S.n.
Codex Amiatinus	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Amiatinus I.
Corbie Psalter	Amiens Bibliothèque Municipale 18
Durham Gospels	Durham, Cathedral Library, A. II. 17
Echternach Gospels	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 9389
Flavigny Gospels	Autun, Bibliothèque Municipale 3
Gellone Sacramentary	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 12048
Hereford Gospels	Cathedral Library, P. I.2
Leiden Priscian	Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek B.P L 67
Lichfield Gospels	Lichfield, Cathedral Library
Lindisfarne Gospels	London, British Library Cotton Nero D. IV
Macregol Gospels	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. D. 2.19
Psalter of Charlemagne	Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 13159
Rabbula Gospels	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Syriac Plut. I, 56
St. Gall Codex 51	St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 51
St. Gall Priscian	St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 904
Trier Gospels	Trier, Domschatz, Cod. 61
Turin Gospels	Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, Cod. O. IV. 20
Würzburg Epistles	Würzburg Universitätsbibliothek Codex M.p.th.f.69

Appendix B: Comparison of initials, Eusebian sections and *capitula*
(For the Matthew gospel)

<i>Key to Table:</i>	
<i>Y</i>	= Initial present in Lindisfarne
<i>Roman numeral</i>	= Capitulum indicated in Lindisfarne

Vulgate Chapter and Verse	Folio	Initial	Eusebian Number	Lindisfarne initial/chapter	Durrow capitula
1:1	29r	L	1	Y i	
	31r	P	2	Y	
1:18	34v	X	3	Y ii	1
1:19	34v	J	4	Y	
1:24	35r	E			
2	35r	C		Y iii	2
2:3	35r	A			
2:5	35v	A	5	Y	
2:7	35v	T	6	Y	
2:13				Y	
2:15	36v	E			
2:16	36v				
2:19	36r*	D			3
2:20	36r	D		Y iv	
2:22	36r	A			
3	36v	IN	7	Y v	4
3:3	36v	H	8	Y	
3:3	36v	U			
3:4	36v	IP	9	Y	
	37r	U	10	Y	
3:10	37r	O			
3:11	37v	E	11	Y	
3:12		C	12	Y	
3:13	37v	T	13	Y vi	
3:16	38r	B	14	Y	
4:1	38r	T	15	Y vii	5
4:2	38r	E	16	Y	
4:5	38r	T			
4:7	38v	A			
4:11	38v	T	17	Y	
4:12	39r	C	18	Y	6
4:13	39r	ET	19	Y viii	
4:17	39r	EX	20	Y	
4:18	39r			Y ix	7
4:19	39v	ET	21	Y	
4:21	39v	ET	22	Y	
4:23	40r	ET	23	Y x	
5:1	40r	U	24	Y xi	
5:3			30	Y	8
5:13	41r	UOS	31	Y xii	
5:14	41r	UOS	32	Y	

Vulgate Chapter and Verse	Folio	Initial	Eusebian Number	Lindisfarne initial/chapter	Durrow <i>capitula</i>
5:17	41v	NO	33	Y xiii	9
5:18	41v	A	34	Y	
5:19	41v		35	Y	
5:19	41v	Q			
5:20	42r	D			
5:21	42r	A		Y	
5:22	42r	E		Y	
5:22	42r	Q		Y	
5:23	42r	S			
5:24	42r	ET			
5:25	42v	E	36	Y xiv	
5:26	42v	A			
5:27	42v	A	37	Y	10
5:29	42v	Q			
5:31		D		Y xv	
5:33	43r	IT			
5:34	43r	ET			
5:38	43v	A			
5:39	43v	EGO			
5:40	43v	S	38	Y	11
5:41	43v	ET	39	Y	
5:43	44r	A	40	xvi	
5:44	44r	EGO			
5:46	44r	SI	41	Y	
6:1	44v	A	42	Y xvii	12
6:2	44v	C			
6:5	44v	ET			
6:5	45r	A			
6:7	45r	OR	43	Y xviii	
6:9	45r	PA		Y	
6:14	45v	S	44	Y	
6:16	45v	C	45	Y xix	
6:16	45v	A			
6:19	46r	N			
6:20	46r	T	46	Y xx	13
6:22	46r	L	47	Y	
6:25	46r	S			
6:25	46r	S			
6:24	46v	N	48	Y	14
6:25	46v	ID	49	Y	
6:26	46v	R			
6:26	46v	ET			
6:29	47r	D			
6:30	47r	S			
6:31	47r	N			
6:32	47r	S			
6:33	47r	Q			
6:34	47v	N			
6:34	47v	C			
7:1	47v	N	50	Y xxi	15
7:3	47v	Q	51	Y	
7:5	47v	H			

Vulgate Chapter and Verse	Folio	Initial	Eusebian Number	Lindisfarne initial/chapter	Durrow capitula
7:6	47v	N	52	Y xxii	
7:7	48r	P	53	Y	
7:9	48r	A			
7:10	48r	A			
7:12	48r	O	54	Y	
7:13	48v	IN	55	Y xxiii	16
7:15	48v	ATTEND	56	Y	
7:16	48v	N	57	Y	
7:17	48v	SI	58	Y	
7:21	49r	NON	59	Y xxiv	17
7:22	49r	M	60	Y	
7:23	49r	ET			
7:24	49r	O	61	Y	
7:26	49v	ET			
7:28	49v	ET	62	Y	
8:1	50r	C	63	xxv	18
8:5	50r	P			19
8:5	50r	C	64	Y xxvi	
8:8	50v	ET			
8:9	50v	N			
8:10	50v	A			
8:11	50v	D	65	Y	
8:13	51r	ET	66	Y xxvii	
8:14	51r	ET	67	Y	20
8:16	51r	U			
8:17	51r	U			21
8:19	51r	ET	68	Y xxviii	
8:20	51v	ET			
8:20	51v	F			
8:21	51v	A			
8:22	51v	IH			
8:23	51v	ET	69	Y xxix	
8:26	52r	T			
8:28	52r	ET		Y xxx	22
8:33	52v	P			
9:1	52v	ET	70	Y xxxi	23
9:6	53r	T			
9:9	53r	ET	71	Y xxxii	
9:10	53r	ET	72	Y	
9:12	53v	A	73	Y	24
9:14	53v	T			25
9:16	54r	ET			
9:18	54r	HA	74	Y xxxiii	26
9:22	54v	A			
9:23	54v	ET			
9:25	54v	ET			
9:26	54v	ET			
9:27	55r	A	75	Y xxxiv	27
9:32		E			
9:33	55v	ET	76	Y xxxv	28
9:36	55v	U	77	Y	
9:37	55v	T	78	Y	

Vulgate Chapter and Verse	Folio	Initial	Eusebian Number	Lindisfarne initial/chapter	Durrow <i>capitula</i>
10:1	55v	ET	79	Y	
10:2	56r	D	80	Y	29
10:5	56r	H	81	Y	
10:7	56r	E	82	Y	
10:8	56v	Q			
10:11	56v	IN	83	Y	
10:12	56v	IN	84	Y	
10:14	56v	ET	85	Y	
10:15	57r	A			
10:16	57r	E	86	Y xxxvi	
10:17	57r	CA	87	Y	
10:19	57r	C	88	Y	30
10:21	57v	T			
10:25	57v	CU	89	Y	
10:24	57v	NON	90	Y	
10:25	57v	SI	91	Y	
10:26	58r	NI	92	Y	
10:27	58r	Q	93	Y	
10:30	58r	U			
10:33	58v	Q	94	Y	
10:34	58v	NO	95	Y xxxvii	
10:37	58v	Q	96	Y	31
10:39	59r	QU	97	Y	
10:40	59r	QU	98	Y	
10:41	59r	QU	99	Y	
10:42	59r	ET	100	Y	
11:1	59r	ET	101	Y	32
11:2	59v	JO	102	Y xxxviii	
11:6	59v	ET			
11:8	59v	E			
11:10	60r	H	103	Y	
11:11	60r	A	104	Y	
11:12	60r	A	105	Y	
11:13	60r	O	106	Y	
11:16	60v	C	107	Y	
11:20	60v	T	108	Y xxxix	33
11:23	61r	Q	109	Y	
11:25	61r	IN	110	Y xl	34
11:27	61r	O	111	Y	
11:27	61r	ET	112	Y	
11:28	61v	U	113	Y	
12:1	61v	IN	114	Y xli	35
12:5	62r	AU	115	Y	36
12:9	62r	ET	116	Y xlii	
12:13	62v	T			
12:14	62v	EX	117	Y	
12:15	62v	IH	118	Y	
12:18	62v	E			
12:22	63r	T	119	Y	
12:23	63r	ET	120	Y xliii	
12:24	63r	F		Y	
12:25	63r	IH	122	Y	

Vulgate Chapter and Verse	Folio	Initial	Eusebian Number	Lindisfarne initial/chapter	Durrow capitula
12:26	63v	Q			
12:30	63v	Q	123	Y	
12:33	64r	A	124	Y	
12:35	64r	B	125	Y	
12:36	64r	D	126	Y	
12:38	64r	T	127	Y xlv	37
12:39	64v	Q	128	Y	
12:41	64v	U			
12:42	64v	R			
12:43	65r	C	129	Y	
12:44	65r	T			
12:46	65r	A	130	Y xlv	38
13:1	65v	IN	131	Y xlvi	39
13:3	65v	E			
13:5	65v	A			
13:7	66r	A			
13:8	66r	A			
13:11	66r	Q			
13:12	66r	QU	132	Y	
13:13	66r	ID	133	Y	
13:15	66v	ET			
13:16	66v	U	134	Y	
13:18	67r	U	135	Y	
13:19	67r	H			
13:20	67r	G			
13:20	67r	H			
13:22	67r	G			
13:24	67v	A	136	Y xlvii	
13:31	68r	A	137	Y	40
13:33	68v	A	138	Y	
13:34	68v	H	139	Y	
13:36	68v	T	140	Y	
13:44	69r	S		Y xlviii	41
13:45	69v	I			
13:47		I			
13:53	70r	ET			
13:54	70r	ET	141	Y xlix	
13:57	70v	IHS	142	Y	
14:1	70v	IN	143	Y l	42
14:3	70v	H	144	Y	
14:6	71r	DI	145	Y	
14:13	71v	QU	146	Y li	43
14:15	71v	U	147	Y	
14:16	71v	IH			
14:19	72r	ET	148	Y lii	
14:20	72r	ET	149	Y	
14:23	72v	U	150	Y	44 ¹
14:28	72v	R	151	Y	
14:32	73r	ET	152	Y	

¹ At this point the the *capitula* numbers in the Durrow text become somewhat confused. The numbers cited above correspond to those in the *Breues causae*, which does not duplicate these errors.

Vulgate Chapter and Verse	Folio	Initial	Eusebian Number	Lindisfarne initial/chapter	Durrow <i>capitula</i>
14:34	73r	ET	153	Y	
15:1	73r	TU	154	Y liii	45
15:6	73v	ET			
15:12	74r	TUNC	155	Y	
15:14	74r	SI	156	Y	
15:15	74r	RES	157	Y	46
15:18	74v	Q			
15:19	74v	D			
15:20	74v	HA			
15:21	74v	ET		Y liv	
15:22					47
15:24	75r	IP	158	Y	
15:25	75r	A	159	Y	
15:28	75r	T			
15:29	75r	ET	160	Y lv	
15:32	75v	IHS			
15:34	75v	ET			
16:1	76r	ET	161	Y lvi	
16:2			162	Y	
16:2	76v	FA			
16:3	76v	H			
16:4	76v	G	163	Y	
16:5	76v	ET		Y lvii	
16:6	76v	Q	164	Y	
16:7	77r	AT			
16:7			165	Y	
16:8	77r	SC			
16:12	77r	T			
16:13	77v	UE	166	Y lviii	
16:17	77v	RE	167	Y	
16:18	77v	ET			
16:19	78r	ET			
16:19	78r	ET			
16:20	78r	TUNC	168	Y	
16:21	78r	EX		Y lix	
16:22	78r	ET A	169	Y	
16:24	78v	TUNC	170	Y	
16:27	78v	FIL	171	Y	
16:27	79r	ET TUNC			
16:28	79r	AM	172	Y lx	
17:1	79r	ET		Y	
17:4	79r	R			
17:5	79v	A			
17:10	79v	ET	173	Y	
17:13	80r	T			
17:14	80r	ET	174	Y lxi	
17:16	80v	C			
17:18	80v	R	175	Y	
17:19	80v	T			
17:21	80v	A	176	Y	
17:23	81r	ET CO	177	Y lxii	
17:24	81r	ET CU			

Vulgate Chapter and Verse	Folio	Initial	Eusebian Number	Lindisfarne initial/chapter	Durrow <i>capitula</i>
17:25	81r	ET			
18:1	81v	IN	178	Y	
18:4	81v	QU			
18:5	81v	ET G			
18:6	81v	QUI	179	Y	
18:8	82r	SI	180	Y	
18:9	82r	ET			
18:10	82v	UI	181	Y	
18:12	82v	QUI	182	Y lxiii	
18:15	83r	SI	183	Y	53
18:16	83r	SI	184	Y	
18:19	83r	IT	185	Y	
18:19	83r	AMEN	186	Y	
18:21	83v	TUNC	187	Y	54
18:23	83v	ID	188	Y	
18:28	84r	EGOR			
18:32	84v	TUNC			
19:1	84v	ED	189	Y lxiv	55
19:9	85v	D	190	Y	
19:10	85v	D	191	Y	
19:12	85v	ET			
19:13	86r	TUNC	192	Y lxv	56
19:14	86r	IHS			
19:15	86r	ET	193	Y lxvi	
19:21	86v	AIT	194	Y	
19:22	86v	CUM	195	Y	
19:23	86v	IHS			
19:24	86v	ET			
19:25	87r	A			
19:27	87r	TUNC			
19:28	87r	IHS	196	Y	
19:28	87r	SI D	197	Y	
19:29	87r	ET	198	Y	
19:30	87v	MOL	199	Y	
20:1	87v	SI	200	Y lxvii	57
20:17	88v	ET	201	Y lxviii	58
20:20	89r	TUNC	202	Y	
20:23	89v	AIT			
20:24	89v	ET AT	203	Y	
20:25	89v	IHS			
20:26	89v	NON			
20:28	90r	SI	204	Y	
20:29		ET	205	Y lxix	59
20:34		M			
21:1	90v	ETC	206	Y lxx	
21:1	90v	TUNC			
21:4	90v	H	207	Y	60
21:6	91r	EUN	208	Y	
21:8	91r	AL			
21:9	91r	TUR	209	Y	
21:10	91r	ET	210	Y	
21:12	91v	ET IN	211	Y	

Vulgate Chapter and Verse	Folio	Initial	Eusebian Number	Lindisfarne initial/chapter	Durrow <i>capitula</i>
21:14	91v	ET ACC	212	Y	
21:15	91v	UID	213	Y	
21:16	91v	ET			
21:16	92r	IHS			
21:17	92r	ET R	214	Y lxxi	61
21:18	92r	MA			
21:19	92r	ET			
21:21	92r	RE	215	Y	
21:22	92v	ET OM	216	Y	
21:23	92v	ET CUM	217	Y lxxii	
21:23	92v	ET Q			
21:24	92v	R			
21:25	92v	B			
21:26	93r	SI			
21:26	93r	O			
21:28	93r	QUID	218	Y	
21:33	93v	ALIAM	219	Y lxxiii	62
21:35	94r	AI			
21:37	94r	NO			
21:38	94r	AG			
21:40	94v	CU			
21:42	94v	DI			
21:42	94v	LA			
21:42	94v	AD			
21:43	94v	ID			
21:44	94v	ET			
21:45	95r	ET C	220	Y	
22:1	95r	ET R	221	Y lxxiv	
22:2	95r	SI			
22:11	96r	IN	222	Y	63
22:15	96r	TUNC			
22:16	96r	ET			
22:18	96v	CO			
22:21	96v	TU	223	Y lxxv	
22:22	96v	ET			
22:23	96v	IN		Y lxxvi	64
22:29	97r	R			
22:31	97v	DE			
22:32	97v	EGO			
22:34	97v	PH	224	Y	
22:35	97v	ET		Y lxxvii	
22:38	98r	HO			
22:41	98r	CON	225	Y lxxviii	
22:42	98r	DI			
22:44	98r	DIXIT			
22:45	98v	SI ERGO	226	Y	
23:1	98v	TUNC	227	Y lxxix	65
23:4	98v	ALL	228	Y	
23:5	99r	OM	229	Y	
23:8	99r	UOS	230	Y	
23:8	99r	OM			
23:11	99r	QUI	231	Y	

Vulgate Chapter and Verse	Folio	Initial	Eusebian Number	Lindisfarne initial/chapter	Durrow <i>capitula</i>
23:13	99v	UAE	232	Y	66
23:14	99v	UAE	233	Y	
23:15	99v	UAE			
23:16	100r	UAE			
23:17	100r	ST			
23:18	100r	ET			
23:23	100v	UAE	234	Y	
23:24	100v	DU	235	Y	
23:25	100v	UAE	236	Y	
23:25	100v	ET IN			
23:27	101r	UAE	237	Y	
23:28	101r	SI			
23:29	101r	UAE	238	Y lxxx	
23:32	101v	ET UOS	239	Y	
23:34	101v	ID EO	240	Y	
23:35	101v	A			
23:36	102r	AMEN			
23:37	102r	HER	241	Y	67
23:38	102r	EC			
23:39	102r	DI			
24:1	102r	ET EG	242	Y lxxxi	68
24:2	102v	A			
24:3	102v	SED	243	Y	
24:4	102v	ET			
24:7	103r	CON			
24:8	103r	HAEC			
24:9	103r	TUNC	244	Y	
24:10	103r	ET TUNC	245	Y	
24:12	103r	ET QU			
24:14	103v	ET P	246	Y	
24:15	103v	CUM ER	247	Y	
24:16	103v	TUN	248	Y	
24:19	104r	UAE	249	Y	
24:20	104r	ORAT	250	Y	
24:22	104r	ERIT	251	Y	
24:22	104r	ET NI	252	Y	
24:23	104r	TUN	253	Y	
24:24	104r	SUR	254	Y	
24:26	104v	SI ER	255	Y	
24:27	104v	SI CU	256	Y	
24:28	104v	UBI	257	Y	
24:29	104v	STA	258	Y	
24:29	104v	ET			
24:30	104v	ET	259	Y	
24:30	105r	ET TU			
24:31	105r	ET C			
24:31	105r	AQ			
24:32	105r	AB			
24:33	105r	HAEC			
24:35	105v	CAE			
24:36	105v	DED	260	Y	
24:37	105v	SI	261	Y	

Vulgate Chapter and Verse	Folio	Initial	Eusebian Number	Lindisfarne initial/chapter	Durrow <i>capitula</i>
24:40	105v	TUNC	262	Y	
24:41	106r	DU			69
24:42	106r	UIG	263	Y lxxxii	
24:43	106r	ILLUO	264	Y	
24:45	106r	QUIS	265	Y	
24:46	106v	BE	266	Y	
24:47	106v	AM			
24:48	106v	SIA	267	Y	
25:1	106v	TUN	268	Y	70
25:4	107r	P			
25:6	107r	ECC			
25:7	107r	TUNC			
25:9	107v	R			
25:9	107v	ITE			
25:10	107v	DU			
25:10	107v	ET			
25:11	107v	NO			
25:12	107v	AT			
25:12	107v	A			
25:13	107v	U			
25:13	107v	QU			
25:14	107v	SI CUI	269	Y lxxxiii	
25:15	108r	ET	270	Y	
25:16	108r	A			
25:16	108r	ET			
25:18	108r	Q			
25:19	108r	B			
25:20	108r	O			
25:22	108v	ET			
25:24	108v	A			
25:27	109r	O			
25:28	109r	T			
25:29	109r	O	271	Y	
25:30	109v	IN	272	Y	
25:31	109v	CUM	273	Y lxxxiv	71
25:31	109v	ET			
25:32	109v	ET			
25:33	109v	ET			
25:34	109v	T			
25:35	110r	ES			
25:35	110r	SI			
25:35	110r	HO			
25:36	110r	N			
25:36	110r	IN			
25:37	110r	T			
25:37	110r	AUT			
25:38	110r	Q			
25:39	110r	AUT			
25:39	110r	AUT			
25:40	110r	ET R			
25:40	110v	A			
25:41	110v	T			

Vulgate Chapter and Verse	Folio	Initial	Eusebian Number	Lindisfarne initial/chapter	Durrow <i>capitula</i>
25:41	110v	D			
25:42	110v	SI			
25:43	110v	HO			
25:43	110v	N			
25:43	110v	I			
25:44	110v	TUN			
25:44	110v	AU			
25:45	111r	TU			
25:45	111r	AM			
25:46	111r	ET	274	Y	
25:46	111r	IU			72
26:1	111r	ET			
26:2	111r	SCI			
26:3	111r	TU	275	Y	
26:6	111v	CUM	276	Y	
26:12	112r	M	277	Y	
26:13	112r	A			
26:13	112r	ET			
26:14	112r	TU	278	Y	73
26:15	112r	ET			
26:15	112r	A			
26:17	112v	PR			
26:18	112v	AT			
26:18	112v	AP			
26:19	112v	ET			
26:20	112v	UE	279	Y	
26:21	112v	ET A	280	Y	
26:22	113r	ET	281	Y	
26:24	113r	UAE	282	Y	
26:24	113r	BO			
26:25	113r	RE	283	Y	
26:26	113v	CA	284	Y	
26:27	113v	ETA	285	Y	
26:29	113v	DICO			
26:30	114r		286	Y lxxxv	
26:31	114v		287	Y	
26:31	115r	SC	288	Y	
26:32	115r	P			
26:33	115r	RE	289	Y	
26:33	115r	ET			
26:34	115r	AIT	290	Y	
26:35					74
26:36	115r	TU	291	Y	
26:37	115v	ET	292	Y	
26:38	115v	TU	293	Y	
26:39	115v	ET PR	294	Y	
26:39	115v	UER	295	Y	
26:40	115v	ET	296	Y	
26:41	116r	SPS	297	Y	
26:42	116r	IT	298	Y	
26:43	116r	ER			
26:45	116r	TU	299	Y	

Vulgate Chapter and Verse	Folio	Initial	Eusebian Number	Lindisfarne initial/chapter	Durrow <i>capitula</i>
26:46	116v	SUR			
26:47	116v	AD	300	Y	
26:48	116v	QUI	301	Y	
26:48	116v	QUE			
26:49	116v	ET			
26:51	117r	ET	302	Y	
26:52	117r	TU	303	Y	
26:55	117r	IN	304	Y	
26:56	117v	HO	305	Y	
26:56	117v	TU			
26:57	117v	A	306	Y	
26:58	117v	P	307	Y	
26:59	118r	P	308	Y	
26:60	118r	NO	309	Y	
26:64	118v	D			
26:64	118v	UE	310	Y	
26:65	118v	TU	311	Y	
26:65	118v	EC	312	Y	
26:67	119r	TU	313	Y	
26:69	119r	PE	314	Y	
26:71	119r	EX	315	Y	
26:74	119v	TU			
26:75	119v	ET R	316	Y	
27:1	119v	MAN	317	Y lxxxvi	
27:2	119v	ET TR	318	Y	
27:3	120r	T	319	Y	
27:3	120r	P			
27:3	120r	ET			
27:4	120r	A			
27:5	120r	ET			
27:6	120r	TU			
27:9	120v	TU			
27:10	120v	ET			
27:11	120v	IHS	320	Y	
27:11	120v	DI	321	Y	
27:13	120v	TU			
27:15	121r	PER	322	Y	
27:16	121r	HAB	323	Y	
27:19	121r	SE	324	Y	
27:20	121v	PR	325	Y	
27:21	121v	R			
27:22	121v	D	326	Y	
27:23	121v	A			
27:24	121v	U	327	Y	
27:25	122r	ET			
27:26	122r	T	328	Y	
27:27	122r	T	329	Y	
27:28	122r	ET			
27:29	122r	ET			
27:30	122v	ET	330	Y	
27:32	122v	EX	331	Y	
27:33	122v	ET U	332	Y	

Vulgate Chapter and Verse	Folio	Initial	Eusebian Number	Lindisfarne initial/chapter	Durrow <i>capitula</i>
27:34	123r	ET	333	Y	
27:35	123r	PO	334	Y	
27:37	123r	ET IN	335	Y	
27:38	123v				
27:38	124r		336	Y	
27:39	124v	PR	337	Y	
27:41	124v	SI	338	Y	
27:44	125r	ID	339	Y	
27:45	125r	AS	340	Y	
27:46	125r	CIR	341	Y	
27:46	125r	HOC	342	Y	
27:48	125r	ET	343	Y	
27:49	125v	CA			
27:50	125v	IHS			
27:51	125v	ET	344	Y	
27:54	126r	CE	346	Y	
27:55	126r	ER	347	Y	
27:57	126r	CU	348	Y	
27:58	126v	H			
27:59	126v	ET	349	Y	
27:61	126v	E	350	Y	
27:62	126v	A	351	Y	
28:1	127v	Display Script	352	Y lxxxvii	75
28:4			353	Y	
28:5	127v	R			
28:8	128r	ET	354	Y	
28:9	128r	ET	355	Y	
28:16	128v	U		Y lxxxviii	

Appendix C1: Human Heads Decorating the Pages of Text.

<i>Key to Table:</i>			
<i>Quad.</i>	<i>=Quadruped.</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>=Passage treats the recognition or denial of Jesus identity as Christ.</i>
		<i>L</i>	<i>=Passage describes the Last Days and Christ's return in glory as judge.</i>
		<i>O</i>	<i>=Some reference to the senses, either seeing, hearing, or a direct comment on understanding the word of God.</i>

Folio	Description	Gospel Text ¹	Context	
f.41v	Human head, its hair or beard(?) looped around letter in tri-knot.	<i>Nolite putare quia ueni soluere legem sed aut profetas non ueni soluere sed ad complere.</i> (Mt. 5:17)	Sermon on the Mount.	C
f.58v	Frontal human head emerging at top of initial, which terminates in a foot. Initial also contains two animal heads biting at yellow and red "grapes" issuing from letter.	<i>Qui autem negauerit me coram hominibus negabo et ego et ego eum coram patre meo qui in caelis est.</i> (Mt. 10:33)	Those who deny Christ.	C L
f.77r	Head with dark mustache, tongue loops around letter	<i>Tunc intellexerunt quia non de panibus dixerit caute a fermento panium pharisseorum et sadducaeorum sed de doctrina pharissaeorum et saducaeorum ad tendere sibi.</i> (Mt. 16:12)	Christ warns the disciples against the Pharisees.	
f.79r	Human head in profile, beardless, emerges from top of letter. Beast heads emerge from two other terminals.	<i>Amen dico uobis sunt quidam de hiis ad stantibus qui non gustabunt mortem donec uideant filium hominis uenientem in regno suo.</i> (Mt. 16:28)	Peter's confession of Christ.	C O L
f.80v	Human head in profile looking away from text. Hair terminates in feather-like decoration.	<i>Tunc accesserunt discipuli ad ihm secreto et dixerunt ei quare nos non potuimus ei ecere illum et dixit eis propter incredulitatem uestram"</i> (Mt 17:18-19)	Disciples cannot heal boy.	
f.103v	Head in profile facing away from text. Hair and spiral terminus of tongue in bright yellow. Tri-dot motif at end of hair. Beast with budding tongue.	<i>Tunc qui in iudea sunt fugiant ad montes et qui in tecto non discendat tollere aliquid de domu sua et qui in agro non reuertatur tollere to nicam suam.</i> (Mt.24:16)	Signs of the end.	L
f.125r	Human head in profile, its hair loops once around the initial. Open, down-turned	<i>Hoc est deus meus quare me direliquisti quidam autem illic stantes et audientes dicebant</i>	Christ on the cross.	O? C

¹ In this and the appendices that follow the gospel text is quoted as it appears in the Book of Kells, including spelling, omissions, insertions abbreviations and errors.

Folio	Description	Gospel Text ¹	Context	
	mouth.	<i>heliam uocat iste.</i> (Mt. 27:46-47)		
f.161v	Human head in profile with dark, black-green hair. Green background initial. Fish abbreviation. Looks to the decorated verse on the opposite folio, Mk.10:27, "And Jesus looking on them saith: With men it is impossible; but not with God: for all things are possible with God."	<i>Ihs autem intuitus eum dilexit eum et dixit illi unum tibi deest uade quecumque habes uende et da pauperibus et habebis thesaurum in caelo et ueni sequere me.</i> (Mk 10:21)	Rich cannot enter kingdom of God.	L
f.170v	Head looking away from text, beardless with spiral hair and fish/serpent. Tri-knot within initial.	<i>Et nemo iam audebat eum interrogare.</i> (Mk. 12:34)	Christ's commandment.	O
f. 170v	Human head identical to one above, except lacking fish/serpent.	<i>Et respondens ihs dicebat docens in templo quomodo dicunt scribae xpm filium esse david ipse enim david didit in spusco.</i> (Mk 12:35-6)	Whose son is the Christ.	C
179v	Human in profile, lacking beard. Hair interlaces with terminal of letter. Beast head emerges from other terminal, tongue wrapping around letter. Fish above S. B and TI and S colored deep blue. Color throughout verse.	<i>Ihs autem dixit ei ego sum et uidebitis filium hominis sedentem a dextris uirtutis et uenientem in nubibus caeli.</i> (Mk 14:62)	Christ predicts his return in glory.	L C O
f.181v	Head with crown (?) faces text on opposite page: <i>Et dixit uultis dimittam uobis regnum iudorum sciebant enim quod per in uiam radid erunt eum summi sacerdotes.</i>	<i>Milites autem duxerunt eum intro in atrium praetorii et comuocant totam cohortem et induxerunt eum purpuram et inponunt ei plectentes spineam coronam et coeperunt salutare eum dicentes haue rex iudeorum et percutiebant capud eius harundine et conspuebant eum et ponentes genua adorabant eum.</i> (Mk 15:16-19)	Mocking of Christ.	C
217v	Small head at end of initial.	<i>Dico enim uobis maior inter natos mulierum propheta iohanne baptista enmo est. Nemo est qui autem minor est in regno di maior est illo.</i> (Lk. 7:28)	Jesus praises John the Baptist.	
f.245r	Upside down human head looking at verse. Hair ends in ornate loop design and tri-dot and tri-buds.	<i>Dicebat ergo cui simile esse existimabo illud simile est grano sinapis quod acceptum homo misit in hortum suum et creuit et factum est in arborem magnam et uolucres caeli requierunt in ramis eius.</i> (Lk 13:18-19)	Parable of the mustard seed.	

Folio	Description	Gospel Text ¹	Context	
f.253v	Quad. holds head by scalp by quad. Another quad. bites the initial above.	<i>AAudibant haec omnia farisaei qui erant avari et diridebant illum.</i> (Lk 16:14)	Man cannot serve to masters.	C O
f.257v	Human head, beardless, looking away from text. Similar to that on 309v	<i>Memores estote uxores Loth.</i> (Lk 17:32)	Jesus predicts his return as judge. text on opposite page?	C L
f.294r	Human head with spiral beard and hair looking to verso.	<i>Haec in bethania facta sunt trans jordanen ubi erat iohannis baptizans. Altera die uidit iohannis ihm uenientem ad se et ait ecce agnus di ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi.</i> (Jn 1:28-9)	John baptises Christ.	CO
f.273r	Frontal head at end of "audire eum"	<i>Et omnis populus manicabat ad eum in templo audire eum.</i> (Luke 21:38)	People come to hear Jesus preach.	O
f.286r	Head with long hair.	<i>Et regressae de monumento nuntia uerunt haec omnia illis undecim et ceteris omnibus.</i> (Lk. 24:9)	Visit to the tomb.	O
f.296r	Head and fish, very small and in gutter margin.	<i>Et inuenit in templo undentes boues et bas et numularios sedentes, et cum fecisset quasi flagilium de funiculis omnes eiecit de templo. . . .</i> (Jn 2:14-7)	Jesus clears the temple.	
f.296v	Human head with spiral beard and bright yellow hair in complex tri-knot.	<i>Recordati uero sunt discipuli . . .</i> (Jn 2:17-25)	Christ describes the destruction of the temple.	
f.309r	Human head with dark beard in profile, looking to text.	<i>Haec est autem uoluntas eius qui misit me pateris ut omne quod dedit mihi non perdem ex eo sed resuscitem illud in nouissimo die.</i> (Jn 6:39)	Jesus as the bread of life.	C L
f.309r	Human head, without beard, looking to verso: <i>Dixit autem eis ihs ego sum panis uitae qui uenit ad me . . .</i>	<i>Murmurabant ergo iudaei de illo quia dixisset ego sum panis qui de caelo discaendi.</i> (Jn. 6:41)	Disbelief of Jewish leaders.	C
f. 311v	Human head with faint beard, down-turned mouth. Fish above.	<i>Haec cum dixisset ipse mansit in galileam ut autem ascenderunt fratres eius tunc et ipse ascendit ad diem festum nonmanifeste sed quasi in occulto.</i> (Jn 7:9-10)	Feast of the tabernacles.	C
f.335v. color slide	Beardless head biting letter formed by quad.	<i>Haec autem ab initio uobis non dixit qui uobiscum eram et nunc uado ad eum qui memit et nemo ex uobis interrogat me quo uadis sed qui haec locutus sum uobis</i>	Jesus speaks of his return and judgement.	L C

² Text continues on folio 337r.

Folio	Description	Gospel Text ¹	Context	
		<i>tristitia inpleuit cor uestrum sed ego ueritatem dico uobis expeddit uobis ut ego uadam.</i> (Jn 16:5-6) ²		
f.336r Color slide	Human head with distinctive beard and spiral hair looking to text.	<i>Maiorem hanc dilectionem nemo habet ut animam suam quis ponat pro amicissuis.</i> (Jn 15:13)	Jesus commandment.	
f.336v Color slide	Human head with hair looped around letter.	<i>Mementote sermonis mei quem ego dixi uobis non est maior sermo domino suo.</i> (Jn. 15:20)	The world will hate the disciples.	O
f.339r color slide	Initial awkwardly inserted at the end of extended initial. Shown in profile, faces text.	<i>Haec locutus sum uobis ut me pacem habetis mundo praesuram habebitis sed [con]fidite ego uici mundum haec locutus est ihs sublevatis oculis in caelum dixit pater uenit hora clarifica filium tuum ut filius tuus clarificet te sed dedisti ei potestatem omnis carnis ut omne quod dedisti ei det ei uitam eternam.</i> (Jn. 16:33-17:2)	Time for Christ to be glorified.	O C

Appendix C2: Human Figures Decorating the Pages of Text.

Key to Table:			
<i>D</i>	=Forms or is caught within decorative initial.	<i>C</i>	=Depicts Christ
		<i>S</i>	=Describes the confusion and/or blindness of the wicked.
<i>I</i>	=Occurs between lines of text.		
<i>Quad.</i>	=Quadruped.		

	Folio	Description	Gospel Text	Context	
D	12r	Head and upper body of man with two vines issuing out of quasi-cylindrical objects are shown behind the initial. Lower body emerges out from the initial.	Matthew <i>Arugmentum</i>	Position behind and in word and the vines on either side represents Christ rather than Matthew.	C ?
D	44r	Man bites initial that terminates in beast head.	<i>Ego autem dico uobis diligite inimicos uestros et benefacite his qui oderunt uos et orate pro persequentibus et calumpniantibus uobis ut sitis filii patris uestri quin caelis est.</i> (Mt. 5:44-45)	Love your enemies.	
T	45r	Man Turn-in-the-path: <i>tur nomen tum</i>	<i>Pater noster . . .</i> (Mt. 6:9)		
D	53v	Man with short, curly, blonde hair forms A, his tongue wraps around his body and limbs. His foot is raised against his head and/or neck.	<i>At ihs audiens ait non est opus ualentibus medico sed male habentibus euntes autem discite quid est misericordiam uolo et non sacrificium non enim ueni uocare iustos sed peccatores ad penitentiam.</i> (Mt. 9:12-13)	Christ has come to save sinners.	S
D	67r	Man trapped within bowl of initial, eating his own hair and pulling his leg over his shoulder.	<i>Uos autem audite parabolam seminantis omnis qui audit uerbum regni et non intelligit uenit malignus et rapit quod seminatum est in corde eius. . .</i> (Mt. 13:18-19)	Those who hear and do not understand (parable of the sower).	S
D	68v	Man pulls torso over head and knee towards ear. His mouth open is open and teeth exposed. His knotted tongue weaves around limbs and hair.	<i>Haec omnia locutus est ihs in parabolis ad turbas et sine parabolis non loquebatur ies ut inpleretur quod dictum est per profetam dicentem aperiam in parabolis os meum eructabo absconsa a constitutione mundi.</i> (Mt. 13:34-35)	Christ speaks in parables.	S
I	f.89 r	Man and horse.	Text beneath : <i>Tunc accessit ad eum mater filiorum zebedei cum filiis suis adorans et petens aliquid ab eo qui dixit ei quid uis</i>	Ambition of James and John.	S

			<i>ait illi dicunt sedeant hii duo filii mei unus ad dexteram tuam et unus ad sinistram in regno tuo.</i> (Mt. 20:20-21) Text above: <i>et tertia die resurget.</i>		
D	95r	Head and torso of man rest on top of letter formed by bird.	<i>Et respondens ihs dixit iterum in parabolis . . .</i> (Mt. 22:1-14)	Parable of the wedding banquet.	C
D	96r	Man holds onto bird by neck, his hair loops around his body. Bird's lappet loops in tri-knots around the man's arms.	<i>Tunc abeuntes pharissaei consilium fecerunt ut caperent eum in sermone.</i> (Mt. 22:15)	Pharisees try to entrap Christ.	S
D	97v	Two men, one with beard and short hair and one with long hair, pull on their hair.	<i>Pharisei autem cum audientes quia inposuisset saduceis sillentium conuenerunt in unum aduersus eum et interrogauo eum</i> ... (Mt. 22:34)	Pharisees attempt to entrap Christ.	S
I	99v	Purple figure with spear and shield above the word, "Pharisees."	<i>Uae autem scribae et pharissaei cypuchritate . . .</i> (Mt. 23:15)	Seven woes.	
D	100v	Man eating his hair, legs knotted within initial.	<i>Duces caeci excolantes culicem camellum autem glutentes.</i> (Mt. 23:24)	Seven woes.	S
	182r	Figure pulls his torso over head. Above the line of text, stands a quadruped looking back to next line of text: <i>clamabant crucifige eum.</i>	<i>Pylatus autem uolens pro populo satisfacere dimissit illis barban et tradidit ihm flagillis cessum ut crucifigeretur.</i> (Mk. 15:15).	Passion	S
I	213r	Mermaid or, alternatively, Jonah emerging from the whale. (?)	Text above: <i>Et prout uultis ut faciant uobis homines et uos facite illis similiter.</i> (Lk. 6:31). Text below: <i>Et si dilegitis eos qui uos diligunt quae uobis est gratia nam et peccatores diligentes se diligunt.</i>	Love your enemies.	
D	253v	Two figures pull on one another's beards. One places his foot on the other's knee while holding his own leg. Beast-head from initial below bites foot.	<i>Nemo serus potest duobus dominis seruire aut enim unum odiet et alterum dileget aut uni adhaerbit et alterum contemnet non potest do seruire et mammonae.</i> (Lk. 16:13)	No one can serve two masters.	S
D	255v	An almost naked figure bends over, twisting around to grab the quadruped that bites him by the neck. Bird interwoven around figure.	<i>Adtendite uobis si peccauerit in te frater tuus increpa illum et si paenitentiam egerit dimitte illi.</i> (Lk. 17:3)	Beware of sin and forgive others.	S
I	255v	Monk on horseback rides across "peccauerit."	[See above entry]	[See above entry]	S

Appendix D: Birds decorating the pages of text.

Key to Table:			
<i>T</i>	=Turn in the Path	<i>C</i>	=Passage treats the recognition of, or failure to recognize, Christ. Also the capture and betrayal of Christ (in this case, typically involves quadruped and bird).
<i>D</i>	=Decorated Initial	<i>R</i>	=Passage describes the resurrection of the body.
<i>I</i>	= Relatively independent bird (next to the initial or appears above line of text).	<i>L</i>	=Passage describes the Last Days and Judgement.
<i>Quad.</i>	= Quadruped.	<i>O</i>	=Some reference to the senses, either "watch," "look," "listen" or direct comment on understanding the word of God.
<i>brhc</i>	=Occurs at bottom right hand corner.		

Folio		Description ¹	Gospel Text	Context/Comments	
39v	I	Bird within initial.	<i>Et circumibant ihs totam galileam docens in sinagogois eorum et praedicans euangelium regni et sanans omnem langorem et omnem infimitatem.</i> (Mt. 4:17-18)	Jesus begins his ministry.	
47v	I	Bird within initial.	<i>Nolite iudicare ut non iudicemini.</i> ... (Mt. 7:1-2)	Judging others.	L
47v	I	Bird attached to terminal.	<i>Quid autem uides fistuicam in oculo fratris tui et trabem in oculo tuo non uides. . . .</i> (Mt. 7:3-4)	Judging others	O
50r	I	Bird within initial.	<i>Cum autem descendisset de monte secutae sunt eum turbae multae et ecce leprosus quidam ueniens adorabat eum.</i> (Mt. 8:1-4)	Faith of the leper.	
54r	I	Bird perching on stem.	<i>Haec illo loquente ad eos ecce princeps unus accessit et adorabat eum. . . .</i> (Mt.9:18-21)	Christ heals the dead girl.	R
55r	T	Large bird and smaller, more delicately drawn quad. next to inserted text.	<i>Ecce obtulerunt ei hominem mutum demonium habentem et eiecto demonio locutus est mutus et miratae sunt turbae dicentes num quam apparuit sic in israhel.</i> ... (Mt.9:32-34)	Jesus expells a demon.	
55v	I	Large bird with abstracted	<i>Et conuocatis duodecim discipulis</i>	Jesus sends out the	

¹Because of the number of initials containing small birds within the initial, only a sample group is cited above. These were taken from a list compiled by Meyer, "Notes," 51. Meyer's list of folios containing bird and beast imagery was helpful in composing this and the following tables. Although it makes no reference to the text, it incorporates a wider range of types of minor decoration and for this reason is replicated as Fig. 2 in this thesis.

		crown over "disciples."	<i>suis deditis potestatem spsm inmundorum ut ei cerent eos et curarent omnem languorum et omnem infirmitatem.</i> (Mt. 10:1)	twelve.	
62v	I	Large bird within an initial formed by quadruped.	<i>Exeuntes autem farissaei consilium faciebant aduersus eum quomodo eum perderent.</i> (Mt 12:14)	Pharisees plot against Christ.	C
64r	D	Large, vividly colored bird initial. Looks down to initial below.	<i>Bonus homo de bono thesauro profert bona. Et malus homo de malo thesauro cordis sui profert mala.</i> (Mt. 12:35)	Judgement.	L
64r	D	Large colored bird initial looks to initial above.	<i>Dico autem uobis quoniam omne uerbum ostiosum quod locuti fuerint homines redent rationem pro eo indie iudicii.</i> (Mt. 12:36)	Judgement.	
67r	I	Rooster and hens over "audite parabulam."	<i>Uos autem audite parabulam seminantis omnis qui audit uerbum regni et non intelligit uenit malignus et rapit quod seminatum est in corde eius. . . .</i> (Mt. 13:18-19)	Parable of the sower	O
67r	I	Bird and cat perching on stem.	[See above entry]	[See above entry]	O
69r	T	Bird curves around missing text. A cat with a drooping tongue sits next to it.	<i>Simile est regnum caelorum thesauro abscondito in agro. . .</i> (Mt. 13:43-44)	Cat looks to the line of text above: <i>qui habet aures audiendi.</i>	O
72r	I	Large bird, with a domestic appearance, over "disciplulis."	<i>Et statim iussit discipulis suis ascendere in nauiculam ut praecederent eum trans fretum donec ipse dimitteret turbas.</i> (Mt. 14:22)	Christ Walks on Water.	
72r	I	Bird within initial that terminates in three beast heads. The bird bites the initial.	[See above entry.]	Pharisees plot against Christ.	C
76v	I	Large bird.	<i>Generatio mala et adultera signum quaerit. . . .</i> (Mt. 16:4)	Demand for a sign.	C
77v	I	Bird attached to terminal. It faces the text looking directly at the quadruped, also dangling from letter. Quadruped has an open mouth and raised paw on "atus." Both intricately executed and atypically naturalistic.	<i>Respondens autem ihs dixit ei beatus es symon bar iona quia caro et sanguis non reuelauit tibi sed pater meus qui in caelis est.</i> (Mt. 16:17)	Peter's confession of Christ	C
78r	I	Bird looking to lower verso, section discussed above.	<i>Tunc praecipit discipulis suis ut nemini dicerent quia ipse esset ihs xps.</i> (Mt. 16:20)	Peter's confession of Christ	C
78v	I	Bird standing on spiral emerging from initial, facing text: <i>Filius enim homi.</i>	<i>Filius enim hominis uenturus est in gloria patris sui cum angelis suis.</i> (Mt. 16:27)	Christ fortells his return in glory to judge mankind.	C L

79v	I	Initial terminates in beast head that bites a cross-shaped abbreviation mark. Bird trapped within, biting letter.	<i>Et interrogauerunt eum discipuli dicentes quid enim scribae dicunt quod heliam primum oportet. . . .</i> (Mt. 17:10-13)	Christ foretells his future suffering as Messiah.	C
80v	I	Bird beside initial, which terminates in a beast head.	<i>Respondens ihs ait o generatio incredula et perversa quousque ero uobiscum. . . .</i> (Mt. 17:16-17)	Demand for a sign.	C
84v	I	Bird within initial. Initial terminates in odd beast-head and vines. Bird bites initial.	<i>Et factum est, cum consummasset Jesus sermones hostranstulit se agalilea. . . .</i> (Mt. 19:1-8)	Pharisees question Christ.	C
86v	T	Small bird.	<i>Et iterum amen dico uobis facilius est enim camellum per foramen acus transire quam diuitem intrare in regnum caelorum.</i> (Mt. 19:24)	Rich man cannot enter heaven.	L
87v	T	Average-size bird.	Multi autem erunt primi nouissimi et nouissimi primi. (Mt. 19:30) "And many that are first, shall be last; and the last shall be first."		L
91r	I	Beast initial, bird trapped within. Bird bites beast and visa-versa.	<i>Et cum intrasset hyerusalimam commota est universa dicens: Qui est hic.</i> (Mt. 21:10)	Entry into Jerusalem.	C
91v	I	Bird intertwined with monogram, bites second letter A.	<i>Et accesserunt ad eum caeci et clodi in templo et sanauit eos.</i> (Mt. 21:14)	Jesus heals the blind.	O
94v	I	Bird behind initial looking up to verse above, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? By the Lord this has been done; and it is wonderful in our eyes."	<i>Ideo dico uobis quia auferetur a uobis regnum di et dabitur genti facienti fructum eius.</i> (Mt. 21:43)	Parable of the tenants.	L C
95r	D	Torso of man on top of letter, draped in unusual garment, right arm exposed. Bird same color as garment forms initial.	<i>Et respondens ihs dixit iterum in parabolis dicens. . . .</i> (Matthew 22:1)	Parable of the wedding feast..	O L
104r	I	Large bird, with red and yellow line-filler behind it. Above the word "dixerit."	<i>Tunc si quis uobis dixerit ecce hic xps aut illic nolite credere.</i> (Mt. 24:23)	False prophets.	C
108r	I	Bird intertwined with initial that terminates in beast head with a mane of vines.	<i>Et uni dedit u talenta ali duo ali autem unum et unicuiq: saecundum propriam uirtutem et profectus est statim.</i> (Mt. 25:15)	Parable of talents.	L
111r	I	Bird (possibly a dove?) stands in front of the mid-line initial, "A." Some foliage comes out of birds mouth, and it faces the word "dicens" from previous line.	<i>Amen dico uobis quandiu nunfecistis uni ex his fratrib: meis minimis ambulantis in nomine meo mihi nec fecistis.</i> (Mt. 25:45)	Parable of the sheep and the goats.	L
111r	I	Beast bites bird.	<i>Tunc congregatisunt principes sacerdotum et seniores populi in atrium principis sacerdotum. . . .</i> (Mt. 26:3-5)	Priests plot against Christ.	C

115v	D	Large, brightly colored bird, biting wing forms initial.	<i>Et dixit discipulis suis sedete hic donec uadam illuc orarem et ad sumpto petro et duobus filiis zebeadaei coepit contristari et metus esse.</i> (Mt. 26:37)	Jesus prays at Gethsemane.	
118v	D	Large colorful bird, awkwardly fitted.	<i>Tunc princeps sacerdotum scidit uestimenta sua dicens blasfemauit quid adhuc aegemus testibus.</i> (Mt.26:65)	Priest's reject Jesus' claim to be the Christ.	C
120r	T	correction: <i>uideris</i> .	<i>Ait illi dixerunt quid ad nos tu uideris.</i> (Mt. 27:4)	Judas tells the priests that Christ was innocent.	
121v	D	Large, bright yellow bird, head extends up to next line of text above: <i>dimittam atilli dixerunt baraban.</i>	<i>Dicit illis pylatus quid igitur faciam dei hu qui dicitur xps dicunt omnes crucifigatur.</i> (Mt. 27:22-23)	Jews demand crucifixion.	C
124v	I	Large standing bird over, "sacerdotum."	<i>Similiter et principes sacerdotum inludabant eum cum scribis et senioribus dicentes alios saluos fecit se ipsum non potest saluum facere si rex israhel est. . . .</i> (Mt. 27:41)	Mocking of Christ on the Cross.	C
152v	I	Three birds are inside the initial and a large bird sits on its stem. Initial terminates in beast head that bites the mane of the initial below.	<i>Quanto autem eis praecipiebat tanto magis plus pradicabant et eo amplius admirabantur dicentes.</i> (Mk.7:36-37)	Jesus tells the crowds not to publish his miracles.	
174r	D	Large colored initial formed by bird.	<i>De die autem illa et hora nemo scit neque angeli in caelo neq: filius hominis nisi pater.</i> (Mk. 13:32)	Hour and day unknown.	L
174v	I	Large, bird flying over "Vigilate."	<i>Vigilate ergo nescitis enim quando dns domus ueniat. . . .</i> (Mk. 13:35)	Servant must keep watch for the master's return.	L O
175v	I	Bird with unusually excessive plumage. Large, darkly colored initial.	<i>Quod habuit haec fecit praeuenit enim ungere corpus meum in sepulturam.</i> (Mk. 14:8)	Mary anoints Christ.	C
176v	I	Bird trapped within quad. initial. Bites leg of quad. Quad also bites its leg. Centered text and decorated page.	<i>Ait illi coeperunt contristuri et dicere ei singillatim numquid ego sum.</i> (Mk 14:19)	Judas will betray Christ.	C
177v	I	Bird caught within initial, beast head with excessive mane and tongue, which entangle serpent/fish.	<i>Et ait illis ihs omnes uos scandalum patiemini in mei ista nocte.</i> (Mk. 14:27)	Disciples betray Christ.	C
178v	I	Bird caught w/in initial. Bird looks up and over to initial on 179r.	<i>Et adduxerunt ihm ad summum sacerdotem. . . .</i> (Mk. 14:53)	Jesus brought before high priests.	C
179r	I	Unusual entanglement of independent quad., serpent and beast. Large, brightly colored. Bird bites ear of quad. Quad. entangled w. serpent that bites bird.	<i>Petrus autem secutus est eum a longe usque in atrium summi sacerdotis et sedebat cum ministris et calefaciebat se ad ignem.</i> (Mk. 14:54)	Peter denies Christ.	C

181r	I	Bird above the word "summi."	<i>Et accussabant eum summi sacerdotes in multis ipse uero nihil respondit. . . .</i> (Mk. 15:3-5)		C
182v	I	Bird entangled with initial terminating in beast head.	<i>Et educunt illum ut crucifigerent eum. . . .</i> (Mk. 15:20-21)	Crucifixion.	C
182v	I	Bird looks to opposite folio, which depicts Christ, robed in purple, emerging out of the decoration and an angel holding up book.	<i>. . . . Et perducunt illum in golgotha locum quod est interpretaatum calariae locus.</i> (Mk.15:21-22)	Although the text does not mention Christ's identity, the interaction between the folios contrasts the suffering of Christ during his Passion with Christ the Logos.	C ?
184r	T	Small bird.	<i>Ecce heliam uoca iste.</i> (Mk. 15:35)	Crucifixion.	C
185r	I	Two large, colored birds biting initial. Wings and necks interwoven with initial.	<i>Et cum iam sero esset factum quiaerat parasceue quod est ante sabbatum. . . .</i> (Mk. 15:42-45)	Joseph asks for body of Christ; Pilate discusses with centurion.	
185v	I	Large, colored bird, interwoven with initial, biting wing.	<i>Et ualde mane una sabbatorum uniunt ad monumentum orto iam sole et dicebant ad inuicem quis reuoluit nobis lapidem ab ostium munumentum.</i> (Mk. 16:2-3)	Visit to the tomb.	R
186r	I	Large, bird over "expaues." Verse begins with beast initial with a bird standing on its hind legs.. Strong color throughout, including "bis" of "uobis."	<i>Qui dixit illis nolite expauescere ihm quaeritis nazarenum non est hic crucifixum surrexit ecce locus ubi possuerunt eum sed ite discipulis eius et dicit et petro quia ecce praecededit uos in galileam ibi eum uidebitissicut dixit uobis.</i> (Mk.16:6)	Visit to the tomb	R
186r	I	Bird stands free on hind legs of a beast that has its tongue knotted around its body. Brightly colored large initial.	[See entry above]	Visit to the tomb.	R
187r	I	Small bird facing line above, "autem eos qui crediderint" "Crediderint" ends in intricate, colored flourish.	<i>Haec sequentur in nomine meodemonia eicient loquentur linguis nouis serpentes tollent.</i> (Mk. 16:17-18)	Christ tells the disciples to carry on his work.	
191r	T	Small bird at brhc.	<i>Exurgens autem maria in diebus illis abiit in montana confestatione . . .</i> (Lk.1:39)	The visitation	
191v	I	Large, brilliantly colored initial decorated with interlace in manner similar to metalwork. One terminal ends in a beast head. The bird's beak and mouth of beast are interlocked. (as distinct from instances where a bird's head is within the mouth of a beast).	<i>Magnificat anima mea dnm. . . .</i> (Lk. 1:46-55)	Mary praises God.	

199r	I	Two birds, one appears to be a dove that sits on top of the initial, awkwardly positioned against shape of letter.	<i>Respondens iohannis dicens omnibus.</i> (Lk 3:16)	Next line (marked by new initial): John foretells of Christ and the baptism by fire.	O
200r	D	Birds form initials in genealogy.	Genealogy.		
200v	D	See above entry.	Genealogy.		
201r	D I	Birds form initial. Also, six independent birds bite end of word: <i>fuit</i> .	Genealogy		
203v	I	Bird's neck looped into tri-knot around initial ending in beast-head with knotted tongue and articulated teeth.	<i>Et duxit illum zabalus in montem excelsum et ostendit illi omnia regna orbis terrae in momento temporis et ait ei tibi dabo potestatem hanc uniuersam et gloriam illorum quia mihi tradita sunt et cui uol uero do illa.</i> (Lk. 4:5-6)	Satan offers to make Christ king.	C
212v	I	Large, startlingly white and green bird with outspread wings over the words "dixerint omnes." Looks to verse above: <i>Uae uobis qui riditis nunc quia lugebitis et flebitis.</i>	<i>Uae cum bene uobis dixerint omnes homines secundum haec faciebant seodo patres eorem.</i> (Lk. 6:26).	Sermon on the Mount.	
213r	I	Large, brightly colored bird with outspread wings; directly opposite the bird on 212v.	<i>Et si benefeceritis his qui uobis benefaciunt quae uobis est gratia siquidem et peccatores hoc faciunt. . . .</i> (Lk 6:33-34).	Sermon on the Mount.	
234r	T	Flying bird inserts, "bea" right hand, bottom corner.	<i>Maria autem optimam partem elegit, quae non auferetur ab ea.</i> (Lk.10:42)	Mary and Martha.	
242r	I	Independent, white bird, looking to verse above, standing next to initial.	<i>Ille autem seruus qui cognouit uoluntatem dni sui et non preaeparauit et non fecit secundum uoluntatem eius uapulabit multa. . . .</i> (Lk.12:47-48)	The servant must be ready for the return of the master.	L
256r	T	Bird at brhc.	<i>Et leuauerunt uocem dicentes ihu preceptor misere nostri.</i> (Lk.17:13)	Faith of the lepers.	
257r	I	Bird trapped by brightly colored quadruped. Bird bites beast. Chalice and vine line-filler (verse below script ends in distinct leaf and bud.)	<i>Primum autem oportet illum multa pati et reprobati a generatione hac.</i> (Lk. 17:25)	Rejection of Christ.	C
260v	T	Bird at top, right-hand corner.	<i>Facilius est enim camellum per foramen acus transire. . . .</i> (Lk. 18:25)	Rich man cannot enter heaven.	L
260v	I	Unusual. Complete, full-bodied brown bird attached by its talons to terminus of large initial with brightly colored infil..	<i>Qui dixit eis amen dico uobis nemo est qui relinquat domum suam aut parentes aut fratres aut uxorem aut filios propter regnum di et non recipiat multo plura in hoc tempore in saeculo autem uenturo uitam aeternam possidebit.</i>	Who can be saved.	L

			(Lk 18:29-30)		
268r	T	Small bird, brhc, resembles other brhc birds in appearance.	<i>Et sequens accepit illam, et ipse mortuus est sine filio.</i> (Lk. 20:30)	Pharisees question Christ.	
268v	T	Bird at brhc. Inserts "ne," which could have onto the line.	... <i>et resurrectione ex mortuis.</i> ... (Lk. 20:35)	Resurrection.	R
270v	I	Large, brightly-colored, plump bird above "contra"; looking across to opposite folio's bird-initial. Bird on same line as Lk. 21:9, "these things must occur."	Bird stands on In illis diebus surget gens contra gentem et regnum aduersum regnum terror esq: de caelo et signa magna erunt et tempestates. (Lk. 21:10-11)	Signs of the end.	L
273r	T	Small bird, inserts missing letters of "pascha." Its appearance is similar to that of the other turn-in-the-paths associated with the word "pascha." Appears to have been executed before text or correction.	<i>Adpropinquabat eum dies festus azimorum qui dicitur pascha.</i> (Lk.22:1)	Pasch.	
273v	T	Minor turn-in-the-path. This bird and the one on the recto are parallel to each other.	<i>Et misit petrum et iohannem dicens euntes parate nobis pascha</i> (Lk. 22:8)	Pasch	
274r	T	Minor turn-in-the-path brhc.	<i>Et ait illis desiderio desiderauit hoc pascha manducare uobis cum antequam patiar.</i> (Lk.22:15)	Pasch	
276v	T	Turn-in-the-path: Bird that looks to feint, red chalice with abbreviated vine. Bird and chalice at end of Lk. 22:40: <i>orate nemtretis in temptationem.</i>	<i>Et ipse auulsus est ab eis quantum iactus est lapidis; et positus genibus orabat dicens.</i> (Lk. 22:41)	Jesus prays at Gethsemane.	
277r	D	Large, brightly colored bird with crown forms initial.	<i>Ad huc illo loquente ecce turba et qui uocabatur iudas unus de xii antecedebat eos.</i> (Lk. 22:47)	Beginning of the betrayal.	C
278r	I	Bird over "eum."	<i>Conprehendentes autem eum duxeunt ad domum principis sacerdotum.</i> (Lk. 22:54)	Christ captured and led away.	C
278r	I	Same as above, also over "eum."	<i>Petrus uero sequebatur eum a longe accenso autem igne. . . .</i> (Lk. 22:54-55)	Peter denies Christ.	C
309r	T	Large, colored turn-in-the-path over "de caelo" and next to omission: "uoluntatem meum."	<i>Quia discendi de caelo non ut faciam uoluntatem meam sed uoluntatem eius qui me misit.</i> (Jn. 6:38)	Jesus tells disciples who he is and why he has come.	C
309v	I	Bird with foliage in mouth looking upward. Directly beneath initial.	<i>Hic est panis de caelo discens ut si quis ex ipso manducauerit non moriatur.</i> (Jn 6:50)	Bread of life.	R
310r	T	The bird looks to beast on the same line on the opposite folio (Jn. 6:50-51, "I am the living	<i>Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanquinem in me manet.</i>	Reference to the Eucharist.	

		read. . .if any one eats this bread he will live for ever.”). It, in turn, looks to the bird.	(Jn. 6:56.)		
310v	T	Bird over “ego locutus” turn-in-the-path; looks to omission “et uita sunt sed.”	<i>Uerba quae ego locutus sum uobis sps et uita sunt sed quidam ex uobis qui non credunt.</i> (Jn. 6:64-65)	Some disciples do not believe Jesus.	C
311v	I	Independent bird over “non dum” appears to look to 312r. Verse ends with fish.	<i>. . . Dico ergo eis ihs tempus meum non dum aduenit tempus autem uestrum semper est paratum. . . .</i> (Jn. 7:6-8)	Jesus goes to the feast of the tabernacles.	C
314r	I	Delicately drawn but highly colored bird, with foliage in mouth. Attached to terminal.	<i>Ex illa ergo turba cum audissent nos sermones eius dicebant hic est uere propheta alii dicebant hic est xps.</i> (Jn. 7:40-41)	Crowds debate whether or not Jesus is the Christ.	C
314r	I	Brightly colored bird. XPS colored and decorated, as is the “eum” in verse below.	<i>Quidam autem dicebant numquid a galilea xps uenit nonne scriptura dicit quia ex semine david et de bethlem castello ubi erat david uenit xps.</i> (Jn. 7:41-42)	Crowds debate whether Jesus is Christ.	C
315v	I	Small bird looking away from text. Beast head, with open mouth, faces bird.	<i>Respondit ihs et dixit eis et si ego testimonium per hibeo de me ipso uerum est testimonium meum. . .</i> (Jn. 8:14)	Jesus tells crowd that he was sent by God.	C
320r	I	Small bird at terminal.	<i>Dicebant ergo ex phariseais quidam non est hic homo a do. . .</i> (Jn. 9:16)	Pharisees dispute Christ’s identity.	C
322r	I	Large initial, brightly colored in red and blue. Bird within the initial, biting it. Beast-head with bright red tongue facing bird.	<i>Amen amen dico uobis qui non intrat per ostium in ouile ouim sed ascendit illi unde ille fur est et latro.</i> (Jn. 10:1-4)	Discourse on the good shepherd.	
326r	I	Bird is above Jn. 11:23 and next to last line of Jn. 11:22.	<i>Dicit ei ihs resurget frater tuus.</i> (Jn. 11:23)	Lazarus.	R
328v	I	Large initial. Beast that forms the initial looks to bird perched on forelegs, its tongue loops around neck. Ihs above extended and colored in same red blue. Very faded.	<i>Fecerunt autem ei caenam ibi et martha ministrabat lazarus uero erat unus ex discumbentibus cum eo.</i> (Jn 12:2)	Lazarus.	R
329v	I	Bird interwoven with initial terminating in beast head.	<i>Et inuenit ihs assellum et sedit super eum sic scriptum est noli timere filia sion ecce rextuus uenit sedens super pullum asinae.</i> (Jn 12:14-15)	Entry into Jerusalem.	
330v	I	Damaged	<i>Ihs autem respondit eis dicens uenit hora ut clarificetur filius hominis pater clarifica tuum nomen.</i> (John 13:31-32)	Hour approaches when Christ will be glorified.	L C
331v	I	Large bird stands next to verse, looking to initial above. Knotted serpent within.	<i>Filioli ad huc modicum sum quae eritisme et sicut dixi iudaeis quo ego uado uos non potestis uenire et obis dicomodo mandatam</i>	New commandment.	

			<i>nouum do uobis ut diligatis inuicem sicut dilexi uos ut et uos diligatis inuicem.</i> (Jn 13:33-34)		
334r	I	Small bird attached to initial.	<i>Paracletus autem sps scs quem mittet pater in nomine meo ille uos docebit omnia et suggeret uobis omnia quaecumque dixerit uobis. . . .</i> (Jn 14:26-28)	Christ predicts the paraclete who will "bring all things to your mind."	O
335r	T	Bird stands beside large walking quadruped (relatively naturalistic), both are above "Sinon unissem." The words "nomen meum," directly above, are centered and decorated.	<i>Si non uenissem et locutus eis non fuissem peccatum non haberent nunc autem excussationem non habent de peccato suo.</i> (Jn. 15:22)	Purpose of the incarnation.	

Appendix : E Serpents decorating the pages of text.

Key to Table:			
<i>T</i>	=Turn in the Path	<i>S</i>	=Passage describes influence of Satan and the actions and disbelief of sinful men.
<i>D</i>	=Decorated Initial	<i>R</i>	=Passage describes the resurrection of the body.
<i>I</i>	= Relatively independent serpent (next to the initial or appears above line of text).	<i>L</i>	=Passage describes the Last Days and Judgement.
<i>Quad</i>	= Quadruped.	<i>E</i>	=Reference to the Eucharist, usually the chalice.
<i>brhc</i>	=occurs at bottom right hand corner.	<i>P</i>	=Passion, usually Christ on the cross.

	Folio	Description	Gospel Text	Context	
D	25r	Small serpent head.	<i>Vid regitis me.</i>	Prefatory material.	
D	26r	Three serpent heads emerge from separate terminals.	Beginning of Hebrew names	Prefatory material.	
D	36r*	Geometric, black initial with key design interior, terminating in serpent head.	<i>Defuncto autem herode ecce apparuit angelus dni insomnis ioseph in aegypto dicens surge et accipe puerum et matrem eius et uade in terram israhel.</i> (Mt. 2:19)	Flight into Egypt.	
D	38v	Small, serpent head at top bar of T.	<i>Tunc reliquit eum zabulus et ecce angeli accesserunt et ministrabant ei.</i> (Matthew 4:11)	Devil leaves Christ.	S
I	41v	Serpent twisted around letter.	<i>Si quis ergo soluerit unum de man minimis et docuerit sic homines minimus uocabitur in regno caelorum.</i> (Mt. 5:19)	The fulfillment of the law.	L
D	43r	Serpent with bright, yellow tri-knot tongue. Above verse is the centered text, "adulterat" and below, "iuramentatua."	<i>Iterum audistis quia dictum est antiquis non periurabis reddes autem dn iuramenta tua.</i> (Mt. 5:33)	Adultery and divorce.	S
T	52v	Brightly colored serpent curls around "transfretauit" and inserted letter T	<i>Et ascendens in nauicula transfretauit, et uenit in ciuitatem suam. . . .</i> (Mt. 9:1-5)	Christ heals the paralyzed man and forgives his sin. Pharisees accuse Christ.	S
D	54v	Small, knotted serpent in initial. Passage ends with centered and decorated text, "rexit	<i>At ihs conuersus et uidens eam dixit confide filia fides tua te saluam fecit</i> (Mt. 9:22)	Resurrection of the girl.	R

	Folio	Description	Gospel Text	Context	
		puella.”			
T	56v	Serpent alongside gutter margin, bent over “uestri” to insert S.	. . . neque uirgam in manibus uestris. . . (Mt. 10:10)	Jesus sends out the twelve.	
T	57r	Large serpent forms wish-bone shape. Head and tail point to inserted line “nt enim uosm,” written above. Feint quadruped drawn underneath.	<i>Cauete autem ab hominibus tradent enim uos in consilis et in synagogis suis flagellabunt uos et ad praesides et ad reges ducemini propterea, in testimonium illis et gentibus.</i> (Mt. 10:17-18)	Christ warns the twelve against the wicked.	S
D	60r	Fighting, entangled serpent and beast form initial. Large, easily perceived bird trapped within. Initial above echoes form and size.	<i>A diebus autem iohannis baptistae usque nunc regnum caelorum uim patitur et uiolenti rapiunt illud.</i> (Mt. 11:12)	Kingdom of heaven is advancing since days of John the Baptist.	
D	66r	Geometric black initial, terminating in serpent head.	<i>Ideo in parabolis loquor eis quia ui non uident et audientes non audiunt nec intellegunt ut adimpleretur eis profetia essaiae dicentis auditu audietis et non intellegetis et uidentes uidebitis et non uidebitis. . . .</i> (Mt. 13:13)	Parable of the Sower (those who do not understand).	S
T	72r	Lizard (?) inserts “ontem” on line above. The verse above (Matthew 14:22) has an almost identical, complex initial.	<i>Et dimissa turba ascendit in montem solus orare.</i> (Mt. 14:23)	Jesus questioned by the priest.	S
I	91v	Large knotted serpents emerging from initial.	<i>Uidentes autem pharissaei et scribae mirabilia quae fecit ihs et pueros clamantes in templo ossanna filii dauid indignati sunt et dixerunt ei audis quid isti dicunt.</i> (Mt. 21:15-16)		
D	104v	Serpent forms letter S, looping around next letter, T.	<i>Statim autem post tribulationem dierum illorum sol obscurabitur et luna non dabit lunem suum.</i> (Mt. 24:29)	Signs of the end.	L
D	107v	Thin, black, knotted serpent with barbed tail. Its neck weaves under the verse and looks up to verses above, “you know not the day or hour.” (Mt. 25:13)	<i>Sicut enim homo peregre proficiscens uocauit seruos suos et tradidit illis bona sua.</i> (Mt. 25:14)	Parable of the talents.	L
D	110r	Knotted serpent within initial.	<i>Et respondens rex dicit illis amen dico uobis quandiu fecistis uni ex hiis minimis fratribus meis mihi fecistis.</i> (Mt. 25:40)	Sheep and the goats.	L
D	112r	Serpent twists round to	<i>Tunc abiit unus de duodecim ad</i>	Judas betrays	S

	Folio	Description	Gospel Text	Context	
		form letter; its tail curls around fish.	<i>principes sacerdotum qui dicitur iudas scarioth.</i> (Mt.26:14)	Christ.	
D	113v	Two large serpents, their tails terminating in tri-knots. Brightly colored.	<i>Et accipens calicem gratias aegit et dedit illis dicens bibite ex hoc omnes hic est enim sanguis meus noui testamenti quieffundetur prouobis et pro multis in remisionem peccatorum.</i> (Mt. 26:28)	Institution of the Eucharist.	E
D	116r	Large serpent looped into figure eight shape. Fish above as abbreviation mark. Tongue of quad. initial below interlaced with serpent.	<i>Sps quidem prumptus est caro uero infirma.</i> (Mt. 26:41)	Garden of Gethsemane.	S
D	117r	N formed by double-headed serpent and a single-headed serpent. Barbed tail curls around the interwoven body of the first serpent.	<i>In illa hora dixit ihs turbistam quam ad latronem uenistis cum gladis et fustibus conpraehendere me cotidie autem apud uos sedebam in templo docens et non me tenuistis.</i> (Mt. 26:55)	Jesus condemns crowds.	S
D	122v	Initial terminates in beast head with a knotted tongue. Serpent within initial.	<i>Et expuentes in eum acciperunt harundinem et percutiebant caput eius.</i> (Mt. 27:30)	Mocking of Christ.	P S
D	125r	Two, large serpents, one drawn over the other.	<i>A sexta hora tenebrae factae sunt super uniuersam terram usque ad horam nonam.</i> (Mt. 27:45)	Death of Jesus.	P
D	127v	Two, large serpents, interwoven in decorative design; lappets form three tri-knots.	<i>Uespera h sabbati quae lucescit in prima sabbati uenit maria magdalene et altera maria uidere sepulchrum . . .</i> (Mt. 28:1)	Visit to the tomb.	R
D	128r	Delicate serpent forms top bar of T.	<i>Tunc ait illis ihs nolite timere sed ite nuntiate fratribus meis in galileam, ubi me uidebunt.</i> (Mt. 28:10)	Resurrection	R
D	140v	Small, knotted serpent in bow.	<i>Qui enim habet et dabitur ei et qui non habet etiam quod habet auferetur ab illo.</i> (Mk.4:25)	He who has will be given more.	L
D	158v	Geometrical initial with serpent head. Fish abbreviation.	<i>Et uenerunt cafarnauum qui cum domi essent interrogabat eos quid in uia tractabis.</i> (Mark 9:32)	Christ must suffer at the hands of man. Disciples do not understand.	S
I	163r	Thin, black serpent twists around to form <i>et</i> monogram. Quite large and distinctive on page.	<i>Et accidunt ad eum iacobus iohannis filii zebedei. Dicentes magister uolumus utquodcumq; petierimus facias nobis. At ille dixit eis quid uultis ut faciam uobis et dixerunt da nobis utunus ad dexteram tuam et alius ad</i>	Ambition of James and John.	S

	Folio	Description	Gospel Text	Context	
			<i>senistram sedeamus in gloria tua.</i> (Mk. 10:35-37)		
D	170v	Human head looking away from text. Serpent/fish acts as abbreviation mark.	<i>Et nemo iam audebat eum interrogare.</i> (Mk. 12:34)	Christ's commandment	
D	171r	Small, knotted serpent in bow.	<i>Et sedens ihs contra gazophilacium aspiciebat quomodo turba iactaret aes in gazafilacium.</i> (Mk. 12:41)	Widow's offering.	
D	171v	Geometric, black letter terminating in serpent with decorative lappets.	<i>Et cum egrediretur de templo ait illi unus ex discipulis suis magister aspice quales lapides et quales structurae. . . .</i> (Mk. 13:1-2)	Signs of the end.	L
D	171v	Geometric, black letter terminating in serpent with decorative lappets.	<i>Et cum sederent in montem oleuarum contra templum interrogabant eum separatim petrus et iacobus iohannis et andreas dic nobis quando ista fient. . . .</i> (Mk. 13:3)	Signs of the end.	L
D	177r	Black, angular initial with interlace infill terminating in serpent's head.	<i>Et manducantibus illis accipit ihs panem et benedixit et fregit et dedit eis et ait sumite hoc est corpus meum.</i> (Mk. 14:22)	Institution of the Eucharist.	E
D	177r	Black, angular initial with abstract infill terminating in serpent's head.	<i>Et accepto calice gratias agens dedit eis et biberunt ex illo omnes. . . .</i> (Mk 14:23-25)	Institution of the Eucharist.	E
D	177r	Knotted serpent in bow.	<i>Et ymno dicto exierunt in montem oliuarum.</i> (Mk. 14:26)	The disciples go to the Mount of Olives.	
D	177v	Short serpent acts as abbreviation to <i>et</i> monogram. <i>Et</i> monogram formed by beast with bird within initial. Beast's lappets encircle serpent.	<i>Et ait illis ihs omnes uos scandalum patiemini in me ista nocte.</i> (Mk. 14:27)	Jesus predicts his betrayal.	S
D	177v	Same as above, but larger.	<i>Et ait illis ihs amen dico tibi, quia tu hodie in nocte hac, priusquam gallus uocem bis dederit, ter me es negaturus.</i> (Mk. 14:30)	Jesus predicts Peter's denial.	
D	179r	Unusual entanglement of quadruped, serpent and beast. Large, brightly colored bird bites ear of quad that is entangled with a serpent that bites the bird.	<i>Petrus autem secutus est eum a longe usque in atrium summi sacerdotis et sedibat cum ministris et calefaciebat se ad ignem.</i> (Mark14:54)	Peter denies Christ.	S
D	184r	Two large serpents, lappets forming three tri-knots	<i>Et qui cum eo crucifixi erant conuiciebantur ei.</i> (Mk 15:32)	Mocking of Christ on the cross.	P S

	Folio	Description	Gospel Text	Context	
D	184r	Large, knotted serpent	<i>Et facta hora sexta tenebre factae sunt super totam terram usque ad horam nonam.</i> (Mk. 15:33)	Death of Christ.	P
D	184r	Two, large, interwoven serpents.	<i>Et hora nona exclamauit ihs uoce magna dicens. . . . dsds meus ut quid me direliquisti. . . .</i> (Mk. 15:34-35)	Death of Christ.	P
D	205r	Black, angular, interlace initial, in the middle of page with a serpent head.	<i>Et ait illis utique dicitis mihi hanc similitudinem medice cura teipsum quanta audiimus facta in cafarnaum fac hic et in patria tua.</i> (Lk.4:23)	Physician heal thyself.	
D	214v	Bright yellow serpent, lappets forming tri-knots.	<i>Bonus homo de bono thesauro cordis sui profert bonum malus homo de malo thesauro profert malum ex abundantia enim cordis os loquitur.</i> (Lk. 6:45)	The tree and its fruit.	S
I	236v	Two knotted serpents in bowl of C.	<i>Cum inmundus sps exierit de homine perambulat per loca inaquosa quarens requiem.</i> (Lk.11:24-26)	Evil spirits.	S
D	241v	Large, peculiar initial with a serpent head, and the lower torso of a quadruped. Serpent looks back away from verse it decorates towards the words "aperiant ei".	<i>Beati sunt serui illi quos cum uenerit dns inuenerit uigelantes amen dico uobis quod praecinget se et factiet illos discumbere et transiens ministrabit illis et si uenerit insecunda uigilia uenerit et si intertia uigilia uenerit et ita inuenerit beati sunt serui illi.</i> (Lk. 12:37-38)	Servant must be ready for the master's return.	L
I	250v	Complex interaction between creatures of two separate monograms, <i>ita</i> , marking Lk. 15:10, and the letters AI, marking Lk. 15:11. A serpent, between the legs of the quad., marks the latter verse. It bites the wings of the bird-initial above, which carries a fish in its talons. It in turn is bitten by another quad. below, while a bird bites the tail of the serpent.	<i>Ita dico uobis gadium erit coram angelis di super uno peccatore penitentiam agente.</i> (Lk. 15:10) <i>Ait autem homo quidam habuit duos filios. . . .</i> (Lk. 15:11)	Angels rejoice at the return of a sinner and parable of the prodigal son.	L
D	254v	Difficult to distinguish whether serpent's head or that of a quad, as this is the only quad to be drawn from this angle. Large, unusual	<i>Mortuus est et diues et sepultus est in inferno eleuans oculos suos cum esset in tormentis uidebat abraham a longe et lazarus in sinu eius.</i> (Lk.16:22-26)	Rich man in hell.	S

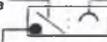
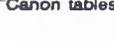
	Folio	Description	Gospel Text	Context	
		initial.			
D	255r	Similar creature as a on folio 254v, its legs tied together by its tail.	<i>Et ad discipulos suos ait impossibile est ut non ueniant scadala. . .</i> (Lk.17:1-2)	Better for man to be thrown into sea with a millstone around his neck than to sin.	S
D	257v	Quadruped with serpent's body bites another quadruped, which in turn bites it, forming the letter Q. Quad. with serpent's body leaps through initial above (Lk 17:32), which contains human head.	<i>Quicumque quaesierit animam suam saluare perdet illam et quicumque perdiderit illam propterme uiuificabit eam.</i> (Lk. 17:33)	Coming of the kingdom of God.	L R
D	260r	Large, colorful beast with long tongue, which, like its tail and limbs, knots around the creature. Large, serpent drawn over its legs and tail. This initial looks to opposite folio to Lk. 18:17 (Jesus tells disciples to be like children or they will not enter heaven).	<i>His ille auditis contristatus est quia diues erat ualde uidens autem illum ihs tristem factum dixit quam dificile qui pecunias habent in regnum di intrabunt. . .</i> (Lk. 18:23)	Rich man cannot enter heaven.	L
D	262v	Large, colorful beast with lolling tongue. Serpent between its legs. Looks to lines of text above: <i>quod confestim regnum di manifestaretur.</i>	<i>Dixit homo quidam nobilis abiit in regionem longinquam accipere sibi regnum et reuerti.</i> (Lk.19:12)	Parable of the ten minas.	
D	264v	Black, angular initial with five heads and serpent tails	<i>Et cum adpropinquaret iam ad discensum montis oliueti. . .</i> (Lk. 17:37-38)	Entry into Jerusalem.	
D	265r	Large, dark serpent knotted around and in initial terminating with a beast-head. Its tongue also knots around letter.	<i>Et quidam farisaeorum de turbis dixerunt ad illum magister increpa discipulos tuos quibus ipse ait dico uobis quia si hii tacuerunt lapides clamabunt.</i> (Lk.19:39-40)	Pharisees castigate Christ.	S
D	271v	Extremely knotted serpent forms initial. Text centered above and beneath with decorative calligraphy and color.	<i>Cum autem uideritis circumdari ab exercitu hierusalem tunc scitote qui adpropinquauit desolatio eius.</i> (Lk.21:20)	Signs of the end.	L
D	273v	Double-headed serpent, interwoven body. Cross in disk between. One serpent's tail forms tri knot. Excessive decoration.	<i>Intrauit autem satanas in iudam qui congnominabatur scarioth unum de duodecim.</i> (Lk. 22:2)	Satan enters Judas.	S

	Folio	Description	Gospel Text	Context	
D	274v	Thin, black serpent forms letter.	<i>Similiter et calicem post quam cerauit dicens hic est calix nouum testamentum in sanguine meo quod pro uobis effundetur.</i> (Lk. 22:20)	Institution of the Eucharist.	E
D	275v	Serpent/quadruped forms letter.	<i>Ait autem dns simoni simon ecce satanas expetit uos ut cribraret sicut triticum ego autem rogauit pro te ut non deficiat fides tua.</i> (Lk. 22:31)	Christ warns Simon that Satan wishes to lead him astray.	S
D	276v	Serpent curls several times around letter I to form SI initial.	<i>Dico enim uobis quoniam adhuc hoc quod scriptum est oportet impleri in me et quod cum iniustus de potatus est etenim ea quae sunt de me finem habent.</i> (Lk. 22:37)	Christ must suffer at the hands of man.	S
D	278r	Knotted serpent.	<i>Petros uero ait si omnes scandalizati fuerint sed non ego et ait illi ihs amen dico tibi quia tu hodie in nocte hac prius quam gallus uocem dederit terme es negatus.</i> (Lk. 22:34)	Peter's denial.	S
D	278v	Knotted quadruped with serpent tail.	<i>Et conuersus dns respexit petrus et recordatus est petrus uerbi dni sicut dixit quia prius quam gallus cantet ter me negabis osse.</i> (Lk. 22:62)	Peter remembered Christ's prediction of his denial.	S
D	278v	Knotted serpent within initial.	<i>Et uiri qui tenbant illum inuidebant ei cedentes. . . .</i> (Lk. 22:63-65)	Mocking of Christ.	S
D	282r	Curled serpent forms letter.	<i>Susciperunt ergo ihm et portans crucem ducebatur.</i> (Lk. 23:25-26)	Passion	P
D	282v	Two large, entangled serpents, brightly patterned.	<i>Et postquam uenerunt in locum qui uocatur caluariae ubi crucifixerunt eum.</i> (Lk. 23:33)	Passion	P
D	282v	Large, blue serpent. Head touches similarly colored fish below, which forms the abbreviation over the IHS monogram.	<i>Latrones duos unum ad extris et alterum a sinistris.</i> (Lk. 23:33)		
D	285v	Two knotted serpents in bowl of large C.	<i>Cum timerent autem et declinarent uultuum in terram dixerunt ad eas quid quaeritis uiuentem cum mortuis. . . .</i> (Lk. 24:5-8)	Visitation of the tomb.	R
I	287r	Serpent inserted mid-line, between "Et ipse dixit adeos" and "O stulti et tradi corde" Unlikely that it is meant to indicate confused spelling (<i>tradi</i> rather than <i>tardi</i>), as	<i>Et ipse dixit ad eos: O stulti, et tardi corde ad credendum, in omnibus quae locuti sunt prophetae. . . .</i> (Lk. 24:25-26)	Jesus condemns the disciples for their disbelief.	R S

	Folio	Description	Gospel Text	Context	
		the word is at the margin rather than mid-line. Head points to verse above "uero nonuiderunt" (Lk. 24:14).			
T	288r	Lizard (?)	<i>Conturbati uero e conterriti existimabant se spm uidere.</i> (Lk. 24:37)	Jesus appears to the disciples, who doubt.	R S
D	325r	Knotted serpent in bowl of E.	<i>Erat autem quidam languiens lazarus abethania de castello marie et marthae sororum eius. . .</i> (John 11:1-3)	Lazarus	R
D	331r	Serpent head.	<i>Et cum intinexisset panem dedit iudae simoni scariot et pof[st] eum bucellam tunc introiuit in illum satanas.</i> (John 13:26-27)	Satan enters Judas.	S
D	331v	Serpent knotted within letters FI. Large, independent bird below.	<i>Filioli, adhuc modicum sum quaeritis me et sicut dixi iudaeis quo ego uado uos non potestis uenire et uobis dico modo mandatum. . .</i> (John 13:33-34)	Christ predicts his death and resurrection.	S

Figure 1:
**Reproduced from Eisenlohr, Erika. "The Puzzle of the Scribes:
 Some Paleographical Observations." In O'Mahony, Fig. 1.**

DIAGRAM OF HANDS AND COLLATION

Legend: empty page  Canon tables   single leaf  leaf missing  hair side  flesh side  fold

Quire	r 1 v	r 2 v	r 3 v	r 4 v	r 5 v	r 6 v	r 7 v	r 8 v	r 9 v	r 10 v	r 11 v	r 12 v	r 13
1	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
2	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
3	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
4	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
5	LIBER C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7	C7
6	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
7	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
8	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
9	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
10	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
11	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
12	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
13	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
14	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
15	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
16	INT CA	CA	CA	CA	CA								
17	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
18	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
19	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
20	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
21	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
22	QUON B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
23	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
24	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
25	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
26	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
27	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
28	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
29	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
30	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
31	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
32	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
33	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD	CD
34	ION in PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR
35	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
36	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
37	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
38	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A

Order of

Quinions

Figure 2:
Reproduced from Meyer, P. "Notes on the Art and Ornament."
In Alton and Meyer, 51.

LIST OF ANIMALS

Quadrupeds

Cats: 34R, bottom (Pl. X), with mice; the cats seem to be holding the mice between them by their tails, but without any active relationship to them. On 48R a disproportionately small cat behind a huge rat, equally inert. 67R over one of the shafts of the U initial, a bird, over the other a cat, unrelated. Single cats also on 50V, 83R, 92V, 183V (or lion?), 272R, 280R (Pl. X).

Seated cats are also to be seen on the pedestal of Muirdeach's Cross, Monasterboice [Henry, Sculpture, Pl. 76].

Dogs (unmistakable): 19V, 41V, 48R, 71R, 87V, 169V, 335R; on 48R the dog is pursuing a little hare, cf. sup. Wolf. Cf. "Indefinable quadrupeds" below.

Goats: 41V (Pl. IX), a standing goat with udder, one of the least conventionalized animals in the whole MS.

Hares: 48R (Pl. IX), 131R, 316R, on each a very small, very dainty and lifelike hare, pursued by a greyhound on 48R. Further a number of initials with delicately drawn hares' heads, e.g. 84V, 86V, 165V, 180R, 259V, 288V.

Horses: 89R (Pl. IX), 255V, in each a rider seen in profile. The horses of the same short-headed type as is to be seen in a number of Irish crosses [e.g. Henry, Sculpture, Pl. 18, 5, 32-34, 37, 38].

Lions: (unmistakable) 66R, 72V, 180V, 183V (?), 277R, 309V. Cf. "Indefinable quadrupeds" below.

Mice: 34R, with cats, v. sup.

Otter: 34R, with fish (Pl. X).

Rats: 48R, a large, finely drawn rat, seated behind it a disproportionately small cat.

Weasel: 44V (Pl. X).

Wolf: 76V.

Indefinable Quadrupeds: By far the largest number of beasts are heraldic rather than natural creatures, midway between the lion, dog and ornamental dragon. That does not prevent the structure of the body being rendered at times with a surprising insight into its coherence, with vigorous and supple movement, even where the general pose is unnatural and ornamental. The extreme of naturalism is to be seen in animals such as those on 41V, 48R, 67R, and the moths, cats, mice and otter on 34R.

The poses of the Quadrupeds

Standing in the normal position, running, galloping: 19V, 48R, 66R, 72V, 76V, 87V, 89R, 111R, 182R, 240R, 309V, 327R, 329R, 335R. Standing or sitting with upraised front paw: 40V, 48R, 71R, 77V, 92V, 216V, 230V, 277R. — Standing with inturned joints, as if kneeling or in a curious crawling position—utterly unnatural pose of obscure origin: 64V, 68R, 75R, 145V, 212R, 277R. — Standing or running vertically, upwards 201V, downwards 206V, 309V.

Leaping: 40R, 44V, 61R.

Squatting on the haunches, both forepaws raised (not always clearly distinguishable from the leaping pose): 41V, 48R, 71V, 83R, 131R, 159V, 163R, 180V, 241R, 293V, 316R, 323R, 335R.

Sitting or lying: 34R, 69R, 165V, 171V, 183V, 302R. — Lying on the back, or coiled in a semicircle, or bent C-shape at the end of a line (a pose which occurs elsewhere only in the birds in Coptic manuscripts): 41V, 51V, 55R, 81R, 169V, 178V, 181R, 245R, 249R, 257R, 278R, 283V, 325V, 330V.

Extremely contorted and ornamental (quadrupeds and birds), e.g. 255R, 263V, 302R.

Animal ornament, fitted as fillings in the bows of initials (important examples only): 66V, 70R, 70V, 133R, 156V, 157R, 158V, 171R, 207V, 225V, 227R, 284R, 313V, 314R, 316R, 324V, 331R.

The Poses of the Birds

Flying with outstretched wings, or seen from above: 69R, 111R, 174V, 181R, 212V, 213R, 273V, 276V, 310R.

Upright; standing, sitting or running: 55R, 55V, 67R, 72R, 76V, 86V, 87V, 104R, 124V, 182V, 184R, 186R, 201R, 234R, 242R, 256R, 260V, 264R, 268R, 268V, 270V, 274R, 277R, 278R, 309R, 310V, 311V, 326R, 335R.

Recumbent: 120R, 191R, 273R.

The Birds in Initials form an intermediate stage between the isolated representational and the purely ornamental animal. — Actual bird initials, i.e. the body of the bird is the initial: 64R, 95R, 115V, 118V, 121V, 174R. — Birds interwoven in the initials, neck, wings and legs woven into the letter: 39V, 40V, 47V, 62V, 72R, 79V, 84V, 91R, 91V, 108R, 177V, 178V, 179R, 182V, 185R, 185V, 191V, 200R, 200V, 203V, 257R, 276V, 329V. Cf. also 19V. — Birds added from the outside and interwoven: 8R, 57V, 82R, 96R, 173V, 250V, 271R, 271V. Cf. also 13R. — Birds added from the outside, loosely hanging: 47V, 50R, 77V, 78R, 78V, 80V, 94V, 111R, 186R, 260V, 309V, 314R, 315V, 322R, 328V, 330V, 331V, 334R.

Birds perching on the top of the stem: 54R, 67R, 92V, 152V, 175V, 187R, 199R, 320R.

Birds fitted as fillings in the bows of initials, or intermediate spaces without interweaving (of the nearly 60 examples only the most important are quoted): e.g. 80V, 81R, 104V, 137V, 141V, 148R, 152V, 153V, 159R, 162R, 181R, 199V, 219V, 267R, 310V, 328R. Cf. also 12R, 15R, 16V, 18R, 285R, 292R.

The Snake-Dragon

Free snakes in the text: 52V, 56V, 57R, 188V, 287R, a snake with two legs ("lizard") 72R, 288R.

Actual snake-dragon initials: 25R, 26R, 41V, 60R, 104V, 107V, 112R, 113V, 116R, 117R, 125R, 127V, 128R, 179R, 184R, 188V, 214V, 241V, 250V, 260R, 262V, 271V, 273V, 274V, 275V, 276V, 282R, 282V. — Snake-dragons, loosely added: 158V, 163R, "snake-fish": 170V, 177V.

Snake-heads only added to the initial: 36R, 66R, 171V, 177R, 205R. — Snake-heads, added to the body of a quadruped: 241V, 254V, 255R, 275V; the counterpart, snake bodies with a quadruped's head: 38V, 43R, 46R, 257V, 264V, 278V; a quadruped with a fish-tail: 279V. Cf. also 302V.

Snake dragons, fitted as fillings in the bows of initials, etc.: 54V, 91V, 110R, 122V, 140V, 171R, 177R, 236V, 265R, 285V, 325R, 331R, 331V.

Fish

Straight, in connection with the abbreviation lhS: 70V, 87R, 98V, 120V, 161V, 167R, 179V, 282R, 284V. — Straight, as a cross-stroke leading from the Et ligature to the following letter: 87R, 90R, 95R, 138V, 158V, 159R, 173V, 177V, 182R, 183R, 183V, 272R, 282V, 296R; black: 299V. Idem, but slightly curved: 73R (Pl. IV). — Straight, forming the cross-stroke of a F initial: 188V, 254R, 261R, others 71R, 250V, 311V and—unusually large—243V, and holding a snake in its mouth on 188V. Fish with snake's heads (seen from above): 170V, 177V.

Moths (or butterflies)

34R top left next to the X; 63R as filling of an F initial.

List of Illustrations

Details of sources for illustrations of the Book of Kells (Dublin Trinity College Library A. I. 6) are given at the end of this list. Because the interaction between facing folios is so significant to the manuscript, illustrations that face one another have been grouped together as "a" and "b."

- 1a Virgin and Child. Book of Kells (Dublin Trinity College Library A.I.6), folio 7v.¹
- 1b *Breues causae*. Book of Kells, folio 8r.
Crucifixion. Durham Cathedral Library A. II.17, folio 38v. From Carl Nordenfalk, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1977), Ills.14.
- 3 Display script, Matthew 27:38. Book of Kells, folio 124r.
- 4 Initials at Matthew 27:26 and 27:27. Book of Kells, folio 122r.
- 5 Initials at Matthew 27:26 and 27:27, color detail. Book of Kells, folio 122r.
- 6 Lucan Genealogy. Book of Kells, folio 200r.
- 7a Lucan Genealogy (Abraham with Chalice). Book of Kells, folio 201v.
- 7b Christ at the end of Lucan Genealogy. Book of Kells, folio 202r.
- 8 Matthew Beatitudes. Book of Kells, folio 40v.
- 9 Matthew 23:12-15 (Seven Woes). Book of Kells, folio 99v.
- 10 Display script, Matthew 26:31. Book of Kells, folio 114v.
- 11 Example of initials types. Lindisfarne Gospels, folio 82r (London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero D.IV). From Carol Farr, *The Book of Kells: Its Function and Audience* (London: British Library, 1997), Fig. 17.
- 12a Initial. Trier Gospels (Trier, Domschatz, Codex 61), folio 180v.
From Nancy Netzer, *Cultural Interplay in the Eighth Century: The Trier Gospels and the Making of the Scriptorium at Echternach*

¹ Because of the number of illustrations from the Book of Kells (Dublin Trinity College Library A.I.6) after the initial entry, it is referred to simply as the "Book of Kells."

- Cistercian Studies in Paleography and Codicology 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.), Pl. 47.
- 12b Initial. Trier Gospels (Trier, Domschatz, Codex 61), folio 186r.
From Netzer, Pl. 48.
- 12c Initial. Trier Gospels (Trier, Domschatz, Codex 61), folio 187v.
From Netzer, Pl. 49.
13. Initials. St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex 904, p.2. J. J. G. Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts: 6th to 9th Centuries* A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, vol. 1 (London: Harvey-Miller, 1978), Ills. 318.
- 14a Matthew 20:34-21:5 (Entry into Jerusalem). Book of Kells, folio 90v.
- 14b Matthew 21:5-10 (Entry into Jerusalem). Book of Kells, folio 91r.
- 15 Bird entangled in initial that terminates in beast-head. Book of Kells, folio 82r.
- 16 Man biting initial that terminates in a beast-head, which bites the man. Book of Kells, folio 44r.
- 17 Turn-in-the-Path. Book of Kells, folio 40r.
- 18 Turn-in-the-Path. Book of Kells, folio 71r.
- 19 Turn-in-the-Path. Book of Kells, folio 71v.
20. Matthew 7:7-11. Book of Kells, folio 48r.
- 21 Initial at Matthew 6:22. Book of Kells, folio 46r.
- 22 Detail, the Logos from the John Incipit page. Book of Kells, 292r.
- 23 Matthew 24:6-12 (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 103r.
- 24a Matthew 24:12-18 (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 103v.
- 24b Matthew 24:19-24 (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 104r.
- 25 Initial at Matthew 18:23 (Parable of the Unmerciful Servant). Book of Kells, folio 83v.
- 26a Matthew 23:31-35. Book of Kells, folio 101v.
- 26b Matthew 23:35-24:1. Book of Kells, folio 102r.
- 27 *Pater Noster* initial. Book of Kells, folio 45r.

- 28 Luke 21:34-22:2 (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 273r.
- 29 Initials at Luke 15:10 and Luke 15:11. Book of Kells, folio 250v.
- 30 Initial at Luke 14:11 and 14:12. Book of Kells, folio 247v.
- 31 Initials marking Eusebian sections 64 and 63. Book of Kells, folio 50r.
- 32 Mark 15:7-14 (Passion). Book of Kells, folio 181v.
- 33 Mark 15:14-20 (Passion). Book of Kells, folio 182r.
- 34 Luke 23:20-25 (Passion). Book of Kells, folio 281v.
- 35 Mark 12:43-13:3 (Beginning of the Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 171v.
- 36 Initials at Mark 13:20 and 13:26 (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 173v.
- 37a Mark 13:10-13:11 (Beginning of the Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 172v.
- 37b Mark 13:14-20 (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 173r.
- 38a Luke 21:7-11 (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 270v.
- 38b Luke 21:11-17 (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 271r.
- 39 Initials at Matthew 11:11 and 11:12. Book of Kells, folio 60r.
- 40 Initials at Mathew 10:11 and 10:12. Book of Kells, folio 56v.
- 41 Mark 6:10-14. Book of Kells, folio 146r.
- 42a Head and foot of Christ at Matthew 10:33. Book of Kells, folio 58v.
- 42b Matthew 10:39-41. Book of Kells, folio 59r.
- 43 Luke 16:10-20. Book of Kells, folio 253v.
- 44 Luke 19:28-32 (Entry into Jerusalem). Book of Kells, folio 264r.
- 45 Luke 19:32-38 (Entry into Jerusalem). Book of Kells, folio 264v.
- 46 Human figure beneath initial at Entry into Jerusalem, John 12:12. Book of Kells 329v.
- 47 Matthew Portrait. Lindisfarne Gospels (London, British Library, Cotton Nero D. IV), folio 25v. From Nordenfalk, Ills. 17.

- 48 Christ in Majesty. Codex Amiatinus (Florence, Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana, Amiatinus I), folio 796v. From J. J. G. Alexander. Ills. 26.
- 49 Ascension and Second Coming. Turin Gospels (Bibl. Nazionale, Cod. O. IV.20), folio 1a verso and 2a recto. E. Heinrich Zimmermann, *Vorkarolingische Miniaturen*, (Berlin: Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft, 1917), vol. 2, *Tafel* 144.
- 50 Ezekiel's Vision of God combined with the Ascension of Christ. Rabbula Gospels (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Syriac Ms. Plut. I, 56), folio 13b. From André Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), Ills. I.
- 51 Second Coming and Crucifixion. St. Gall Gospels (St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex 51) p. 266-67. From Johannes Duft, *The Irish Miniatures in the Abbey Library of St. Gall*, (Olten: Urs Graf, 1954), Pl. 13-14.
- 52 Laon 137, fol. 1b From Zimmermann, *Band IV, Tafel* 144.
- 53 Incipit. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica. Reg. lat. 316, folio 131b. From Zimmermann, *Band IV, Tafel* 137.
- 54 Cross. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale., lat. 12168, frontispiece. From Jean Hubert, Jean Porcher, and W.F. Volbach, *Europe in the Dark Ages*, trans. Stuart Gilbert and James Emmons (London, Thames and Hudson, 1969), Ills. 188.
- 55a Cross. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, Reg. lat. 316, folio 3v. From Hubert, Porcher and Volbach, Ills. 175.
- 55b Cross. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, Reg. lat. 316 folio 4r. From Hubert, Porcher and Volbach, Ills. 188.
- 56a *Te Igitur*. Gellone Sacramentary (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 12048), folio 143v. From Hubert, Porcher and Volbach, Ills. 203.
- 56b Human head and upper torso. Gellone Sacramentary (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 12048), folio 144r. The Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
- 57 Christ in Majesty. Book of Kells, folio 32v.

- 58 Cross Carpet page. Book of Kells, folio 33r.
- 59 Chi Rho page and detail of cats and mice. Book of Kells, folio 34r.
- 60 Chi Rho page detail (Angels holding flabella and book). Book of Kells, folio 34r.
- 61 Initial beginning the Parable of the Wedding Feast. Book of Kells, folio 95r.
- 62 Matthew 5:15-19. Book of Kells, folio 41v.
- 63 Mark 14:59-64. Book of Kells, folio 179v.
- 64 Head of Christ initial at John 15:13, Book of Kells, folio 336r.
- 65a Text containing John 1:20, "I am not the Christ." Book of Kells, folio 293v.
- 65b Head of John the Baptist initial at John 1:29-29. Book of Kells, folio 294r.
- 66a John 6:29-36. Book of Kells, folio 308v.
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- 67 Head of Christ initial at John 16:5-10. Book of Kells, folio 336r.
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- 75 Heading of Psalm 109. "Psalter of Charlemagne" (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat 13159), folio 118v. From Hubert, Porcher and Volbach, Ills. 214.
- 76 Ninth-century ivory, Carolingian (Frankfurt Stadtbibliothek). From Otto Pächt, *Book Illumination in the Middle Ages: an Introduction*, (London: Harvey Miller, 1986), Ills. 32.
- 77a Matthew 16:2-6. Book of Kells, folio 76v.

- 77b Matthew 16:6-12. Book of Kells, folio 77r.
- 78 Christ is mocked on the cross. Matthew 27:39-43. Book of Kells, folio 124v.
- 79 Bird initial at Matthew 26:63. Book of Kells, folio 118v.
- 80a Bird beside initial at Matthew 16:27. Book of Kells, folio 78v.
- 80b Head of Christ initial at Matthew 16:28. Book of Kells, folio 79r.
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- 81b Bird initial at Matthew 16:20. Book of Kells, folio 78r.
- 82 East Face, Muiredach's Cross, Monasterboice. From Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland: An Iconographical and Photographic Survey*, vol. 2. Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Forschungsinstitut für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Monographien 17. Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GMBH, 1992), vol. 2., Fig. 472.
- 83 West face, Tall Cross, Monasterboice. From Harbison, Ills. 496.
- 84 West face (shaft), Tall Cross, Monasterboice, From Harbison, Fig. 494-5.
- 85 South Face, Market Cross, Kells. From Harbison, Fig. 336.
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- 88 Serpents within initial at Matthew 21:15. Book of Kells, folio 91v.
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- 92 Quadruped initial bites head of bird at Matthew 26:3. Book of Kells, folio 111r.
- 93 Initials at Matthew 12:14 and 12:15, Book of Kells, folio 62v.
- 94 David as Christ attacked by beast. Psalm 108. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 92v. From Christian de Mérimod, "Du Livre de Kells et du Psautier de Corbie à l'art roman: origine, diffusion et signification du thème des personnages se saisissant à la barbe." In *The Book of Kells: Proceedings of a Conference at Trinity*

College Dublin, 6-9 September 1992, ed. Felicity O'Mahony
(Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1994), Pl. 112.

- 95 Bird entangled by beast initial at Luke 17:24. Book of Kells, folio 257r.
- 96 Man holding bird. Matthew 26:14. Book of Kells, folio 96r.
- 97 Angel with whip standing on man entangled in his own beard. Psalm 72. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 101r. The Bibliothèque Municipale, Amiens.
- 98 Man with knotted tail, entangled in his beard. Psalm 9. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 7v. The Bibliothèque Municipale, Amiens.
- 99 Two winged beasts in knots. Psalm 31. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 26v. The Bibliothèque Municipale, Amiens.
- 100 Two beasts in knots. Psalm 57. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 50v. The Bibliothèque Municipale, Amiens.
- 101 Two beasts entangled in their tongues. Psalm 55. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 49r. The Bibliothèque Municipale, Amiens.
- 102 Beast initial at Luke 20:45-47. Book of Kells, folio 269v.
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- 104 Parable of the Sower initial at Matthew 13:18, Book of Kells, folio 67r.
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- 107 Two entangled figures, initial at Matthew 22:34. Book of Kells, folio 97v.
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- 109 Figure entangled by tongue and hair, initial at Matthew 13:34. Book of Kells, 68v.
- 110 Entangled quadruped initial at Luke 16:23. Book of Kells, 254v.
- 111 Entangled beast initial at Luke 17:1. Book of Kells, 255r.

- 112 Entangled man, beast and bird initial. Monk rides across line of text. Luke 17:3. Book of Kells, folio 255v.
- 113 Entangled man and beast, above another man at prayer, initial. Psalm 35. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 31r. From Jean Desobry, "Le Manuscrit 18 de Bibliothèque Municipale d'Amiens," In *Techniques narratives au Moyen-Age*, (Amiens: n.p., 1974), p. 98.
- 114 Hell page. (Luke Incipit). Book of Kells, folio 188r.
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- 119 Two clerics look at book, Christ and angels standing behind them. Cross at Durrow, East Face. From Harbison, Fig. 922.
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- 123a Canon Tables. Book of Kells, folio 2v.
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- 124a Canon Tables. Book of Kells, folio, 3v.
- 124b Canon Tables. Book of Kells, folio 4r.
- 125 Cross at Arboe, East face. From Harbison, Fig. 32.
- 126 Cross at Monasterboice, East face. From Harbison, Fig. 490.
- 127 Crucifixion and Christ as Pilot of the Church. Würzburg Universitätsbibliothek Cod. M. p.th.f.69, folio 7v. From George Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells: The Insular Gospel-books: 650-800* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), Ills. 126.
- 128 John 6:42-50. Book of Kells, folio 309v.

The following illustrations are from *Evangeliorum Quattuor Codex Cennanensis*, ed. E. H. Alton, and P. Meyer (Berne: Urs Graf, 1950-51).

4, 23, 24a, 25, 26, 26b, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37a, 37b, 38a, 39, 40, 41, 42a, 42, 44, 45, 64, 65a, 68a, 68b, 69, 78, 79, 80a, 80b, 81a, 81b, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 103, 105, 106, 108, 109, 110, 111.

The following illustrations are from Françoise Henry, *Book of Kells* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974).²

1a:10, 1b:11, 5:47, 6:63, 7a:66, 7b:67, 8:30, 9:40, 10:46, 14a:38, 14b:39, 22:110, 24b:41, 27:45, 27:45, 28:81, 38b:79, 42b:33, 43:74, 57:26, 58:27, 59:29, 59(detail):29, 60:106, 61:121, 71:89, 72a:94, 72b:95, 73:68, 77a:36, 77b:37, 92:43, 93:34, 95:77, 102:78, 107:121, 112:74, 114:61, 115:51, 116:114, 117:1, 123a:5, 124b:7.

The following illustrations are from. *The Book of Kells: MS 58 Trinity College Library Dublin: facsimile*, ed. Peter Fox (Luzern: Fine Art Facsimile Publishers of Switzerland/Facsimile, 1990).

21, 33, 62, 63, 66a, 67, 128.

The following illustrations are from Bernard Meehan, *Book of Kells: An Illustrated Introduction to the Manuscript in Trinity College Dublin* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994).

65b:86, 66b:108, 70:91, 96:81, 104:82, 109(detail):83.

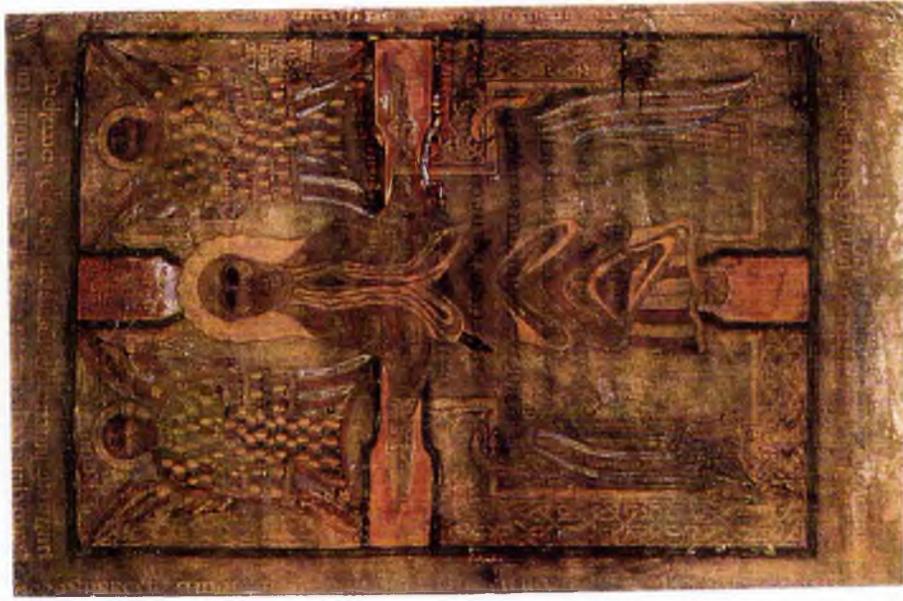
² The source's illustration and/or plate numbers correspond to numbers following colons.



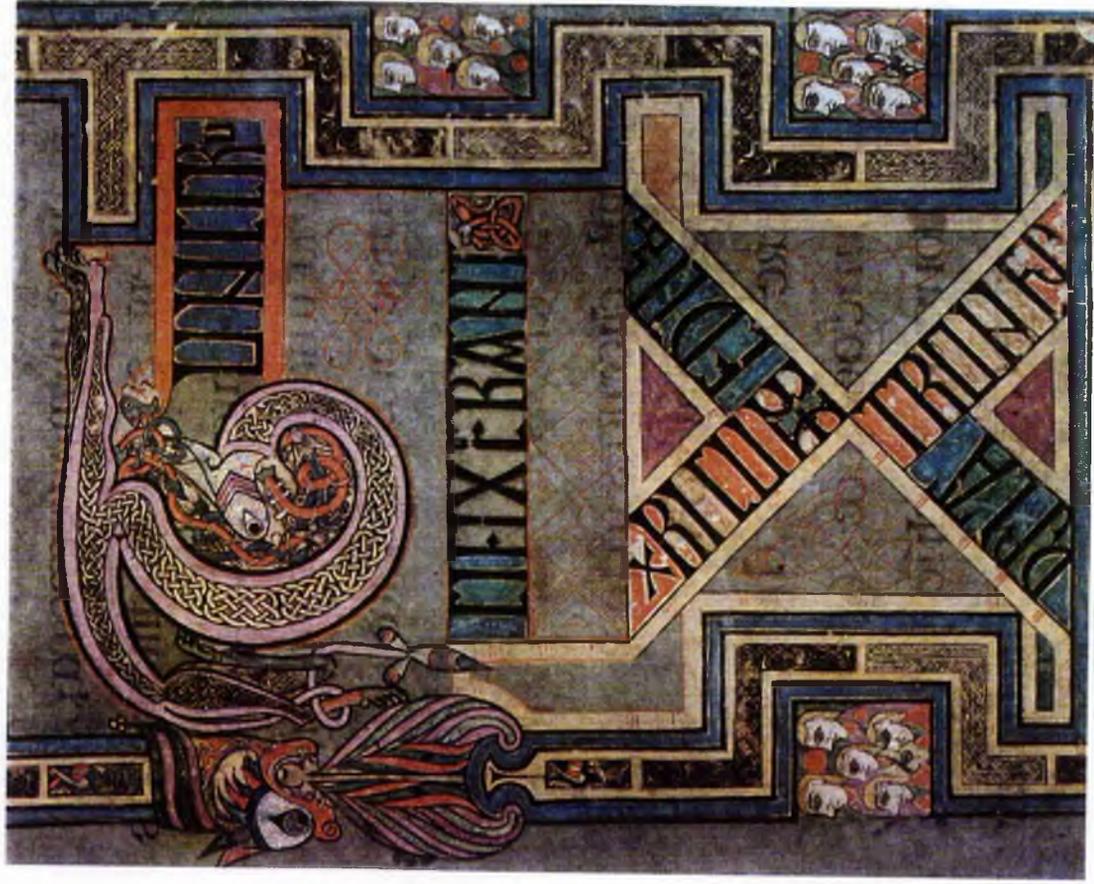
Ills. 1a Virgin and Child. Book of Kells, folio 7v.



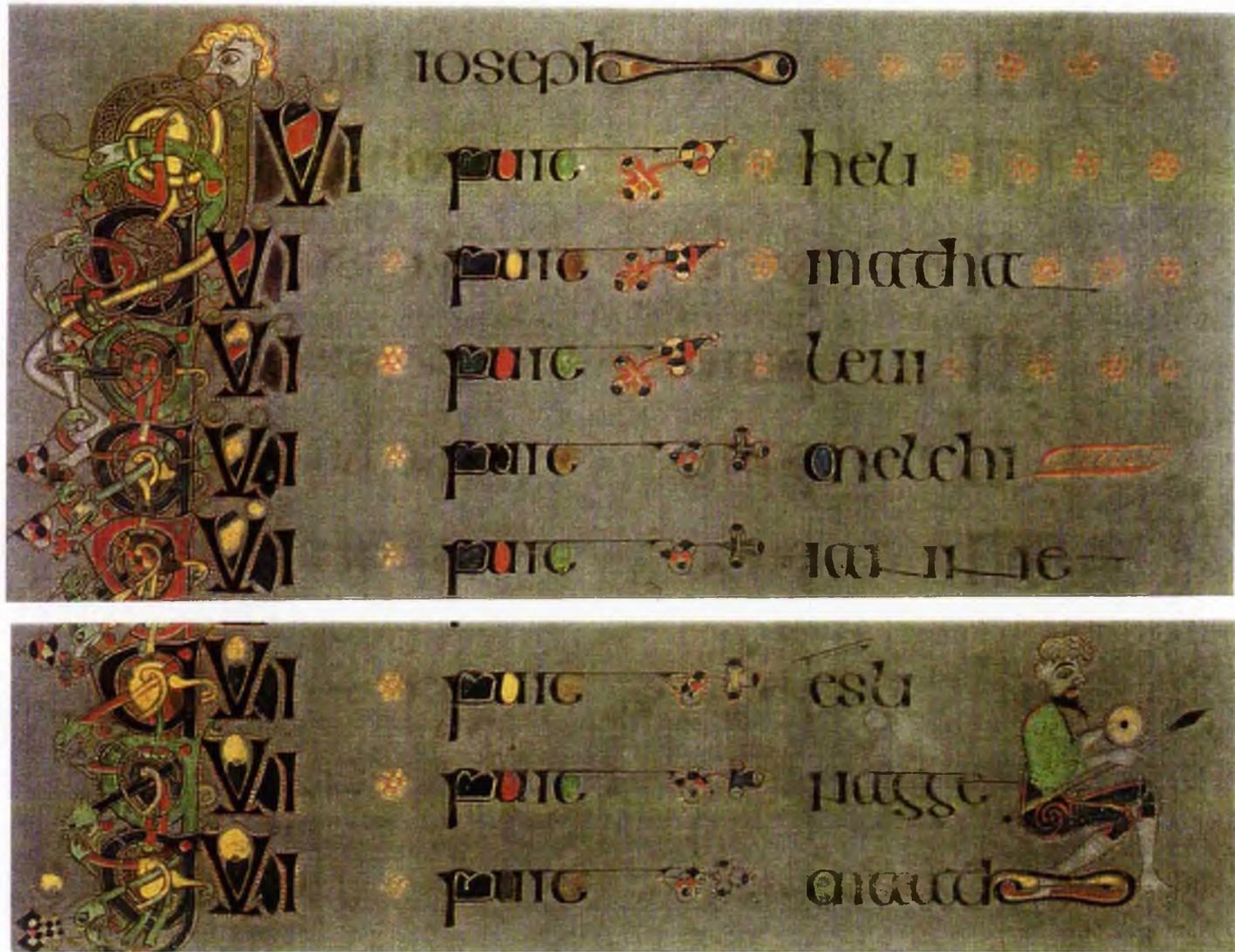
Ills. 1b *Breues causae*. Book of Kells, folio 8r.



Ills. 2 Crucifixion. Durham Cathedral Library A. II.17, folio 38v.



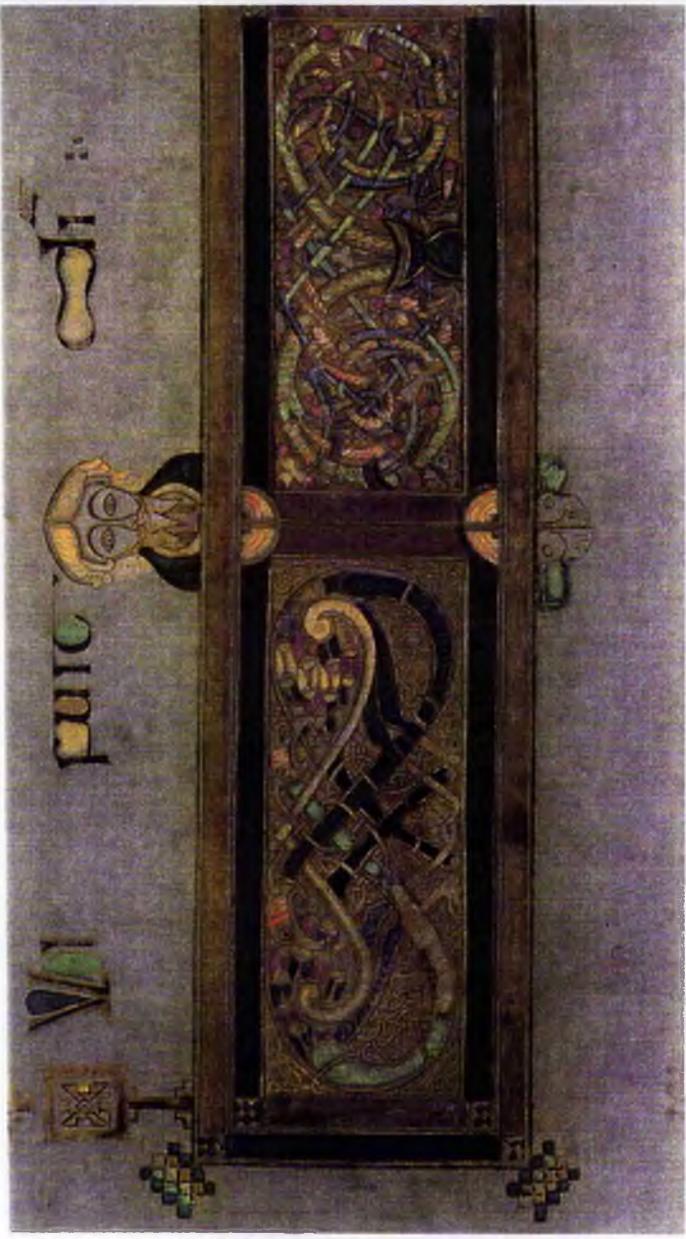
Ills. 3 Display script. Matthew 27:38. Book of Kells, folio 124r.



Ills. 6 Genealogy. Book of Kells, folio 200r.



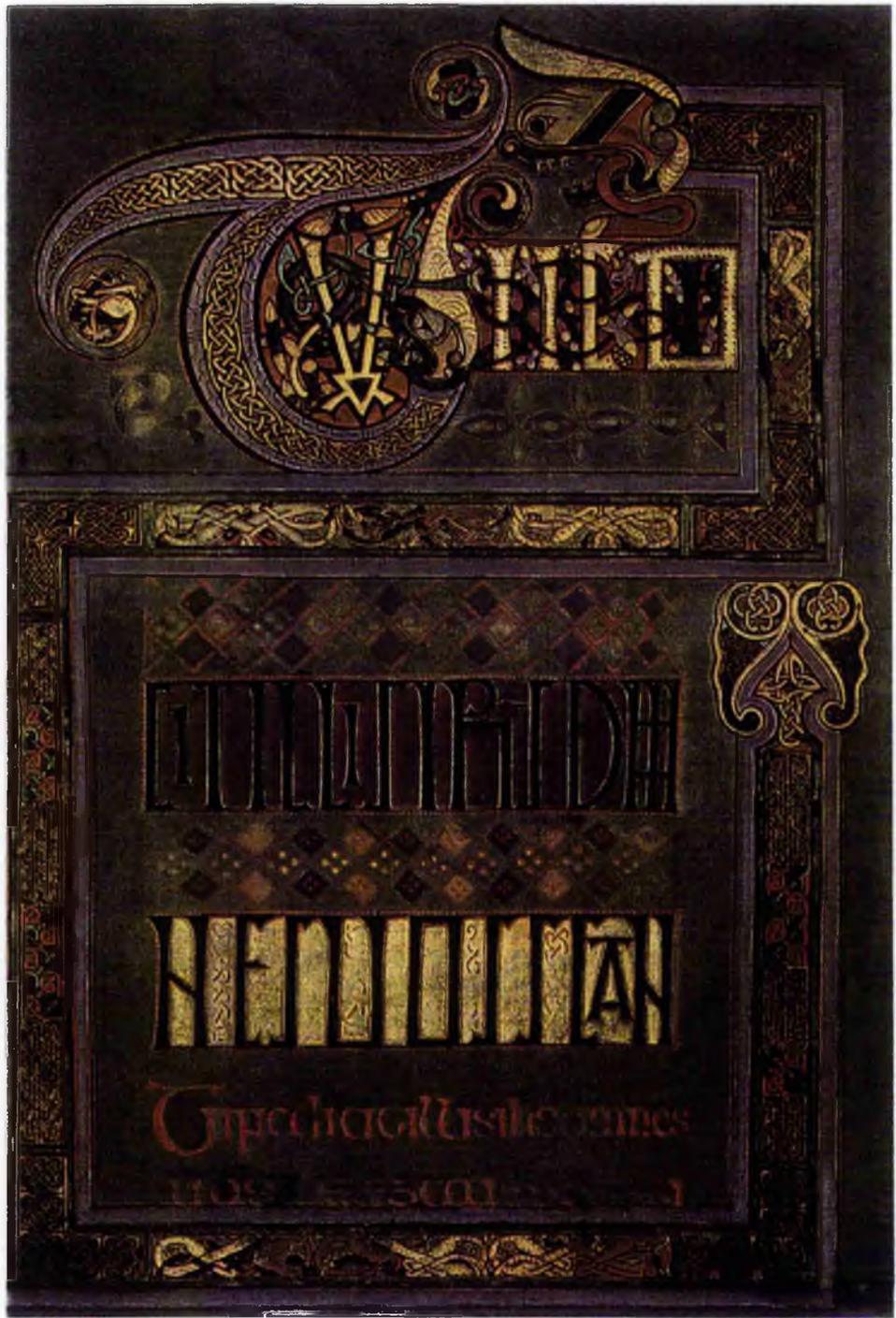
Ills. 7a Genealogy. Book of Kells, folio 201v.



Ills. 7b Genealogy. Book of Kells, folio 202r.



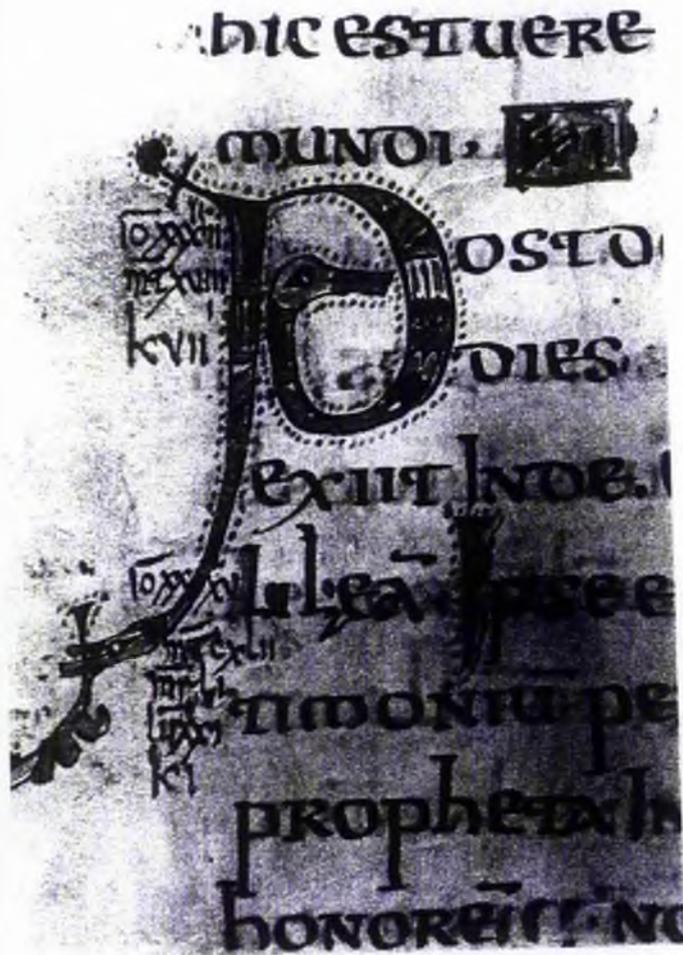
Ills. 8 Matthew Beatitudes. Book of Kells, folio 40v.



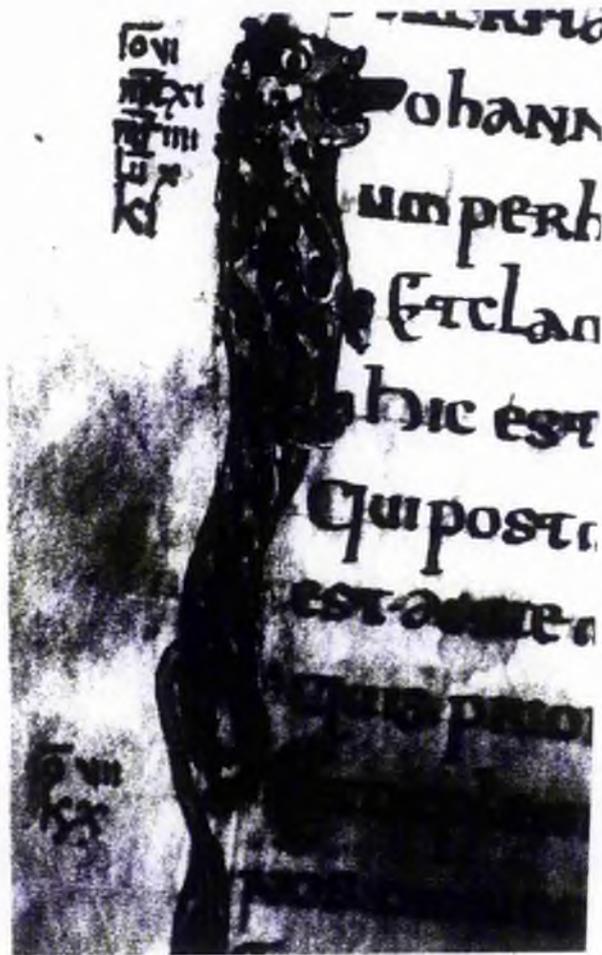
Ills. 10 Display script, Matthew 26:31. Book of Kells, folio 114v.



Ills. 11 Lindisfarne Gospels, folio 82r.



Ills. 12a Trier Gospels (Trier, Domschatz, Codex 61), folio 180v.



Ills. 12b Trier Gospels

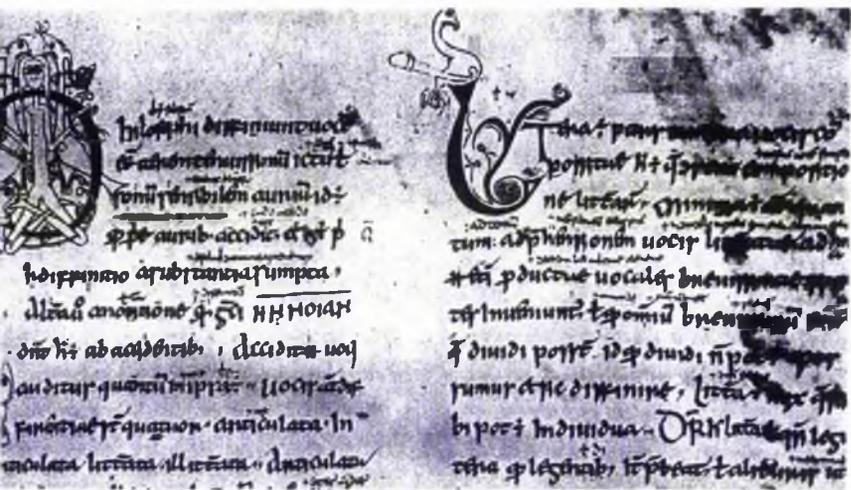
folio 186r.



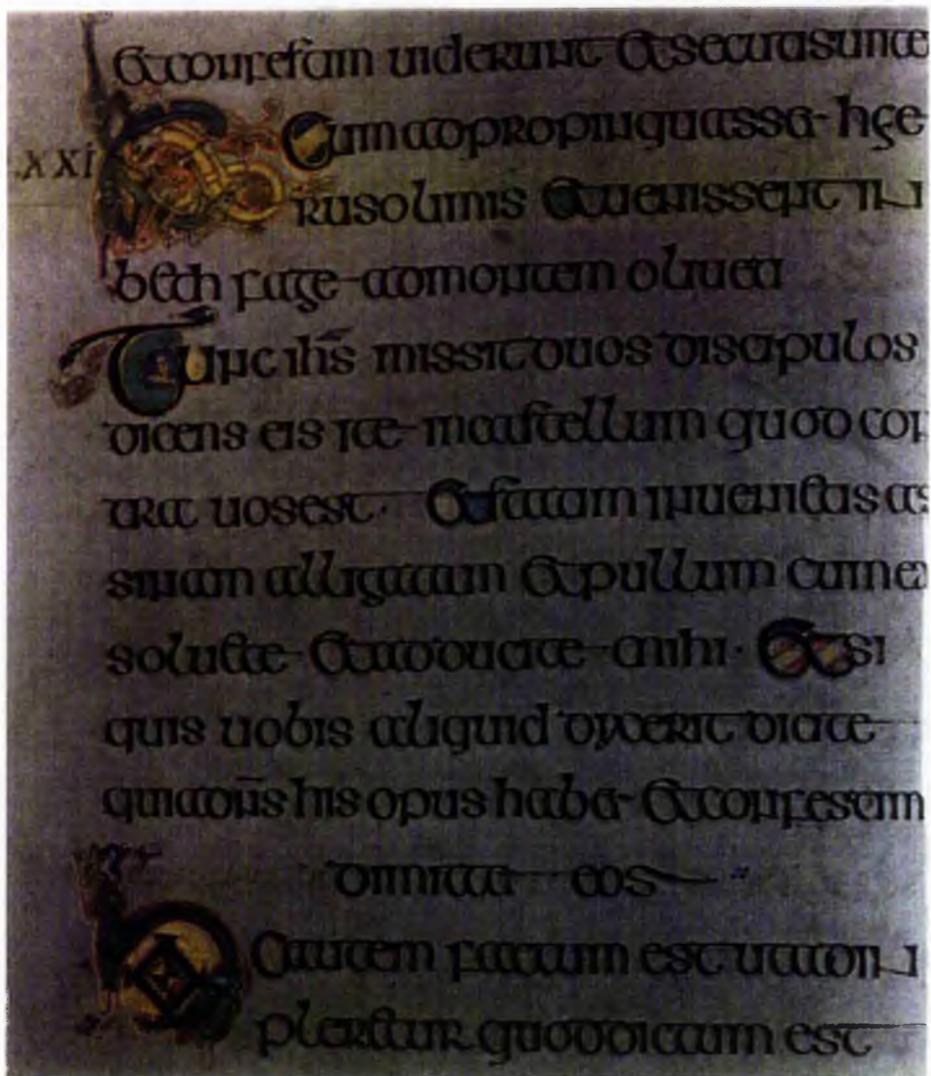
Ills. 12c Trier Gospels

folio 187v.





Ills. 13. St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex 904, p.2.



Ills. 14a Matthew 20:34-21:5 (Entry into Jerusalem). Book of Kells, folio 90v.

assiam **Q**pullum subiugatis

Ques autem discipuli peccatum

sicut praecepit illis ih̄s **Q**uo

modo **Q**uerunt assiam **Q**pullum **Q**

uossuerunt **Q**upereum uertunt

uessa **Q**uam desuper sedere pe

trunt **P**lurimae autem arbor

fraxerunt **U**estimenta sua iungit

Qui autem cedebant ramos de

arboribus **Q**sternebant iumenta

Quare autem quare praecepit

Quare quare cedebantur

Quam abant dicentes **Q**uam pla

uidia **Q**uare dicitur quia iungit

ne dñi **Q**uare dicitur quare dicitur

Quare dicitur quare dicitur

Ills. 14b Matthew 21:5-10 (Entry into Jerusalem). Book of Kells, folio 91r.



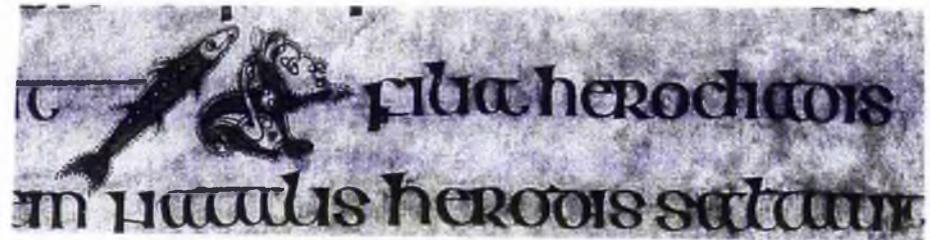
Ills. 15 Book of Kells, folio 82r.



Ills. 16 Book of Kells, folio 44r.



Ills. 17 Turn-in-the-Path. Book of Kells, folio 40r.



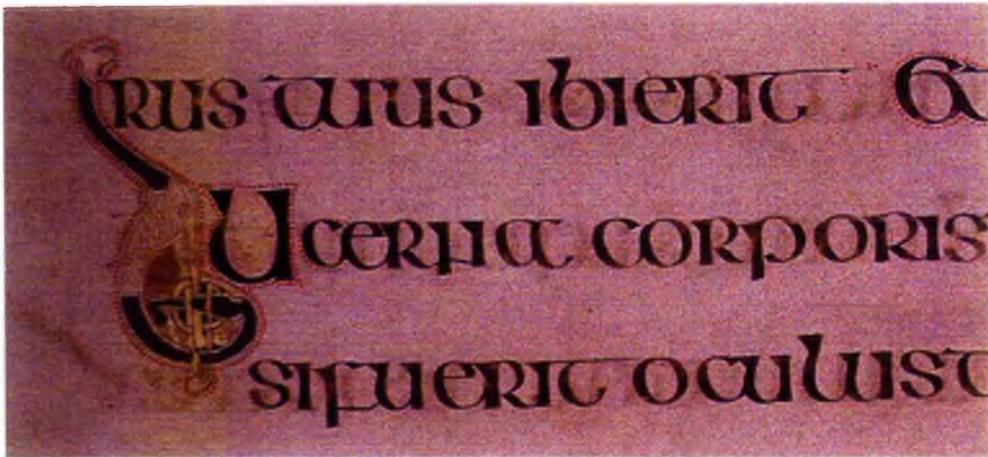
Ills. 18 Turn-in-the-Path. Book of Kells, folio 71r.



Ills. 19 Turn-in-the-Path. Book of Kells, folio 71v.

mactas margaritas uestras ante por-
 tate conuoluentas pedibus suis &
 conuersi dirumpant uos -
Pate & dicitur uobis querite &
 inuenietis & uultate & ueritate uo-
 bis omnis terra quae uult & ueritate
 & quae ueritate inuenit & ueritate
 ritur -
Quis est ex uobis homo qui uult
 petere plus uisus panem uinum quid
 lapidem porrigat ei - **A**ut si quis
 uult petere plus uisus serpente porri-
 git ei - **S**i ergo uos cum uisus manu potus
 bono uult plus ueritas - **Q**uam ueritas
 pater ueritate quae ueritas est & ueritas
 bono petentibus se -
Quam ueritas quae ueritas uult ueritas

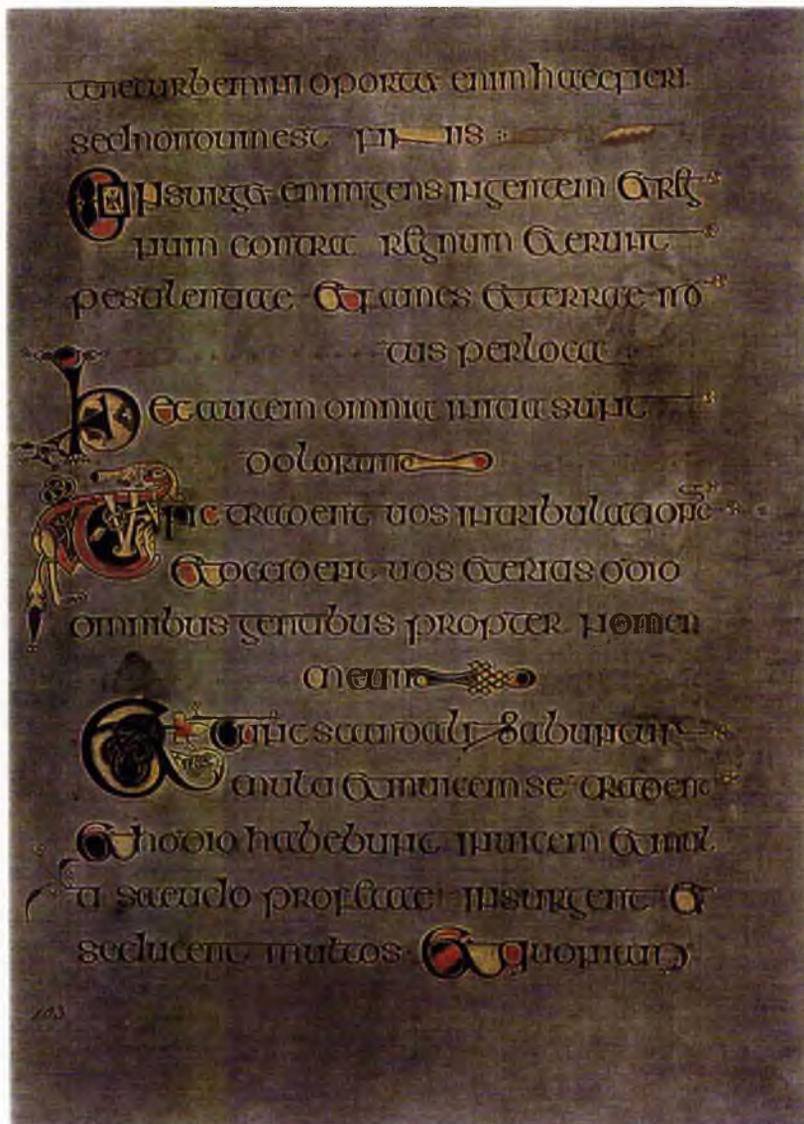
Ills. 20 Matthew 7:7-11. Book of Kells, folio 48r.



Ills. 21 Initial at Matthew 6:22. Book of Kells, folio 46r



Ills. 22 Detail, the Logos from the John Incipit page. Book of Kells, 292r.



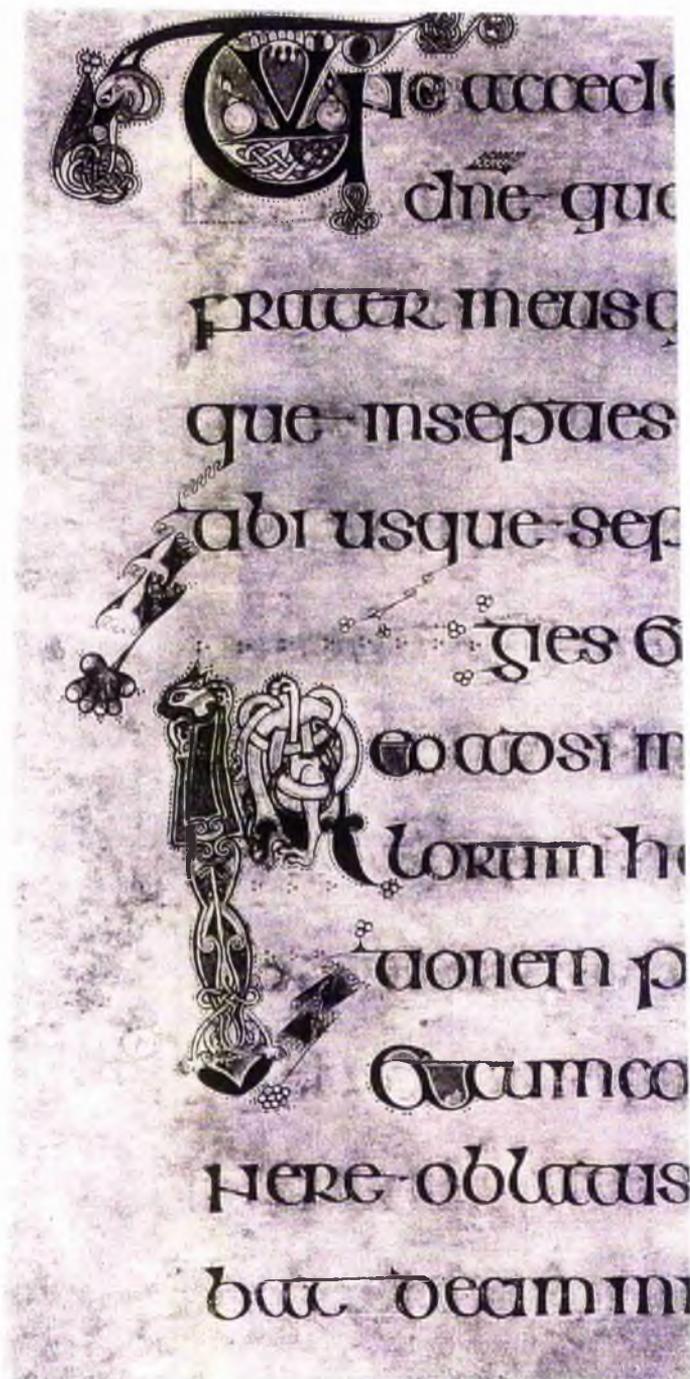
Ills. 23 Matthew 24:6-12. (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 103r.

habundabit iniquitas reprobos
 caritas multorum. **Q**uam tempore
 manserit usque in uem in esalibus
Praedictabitur hoc euangelium
 in uniuerso orbe. **N**
 tunc in omnibus gentibus. **C**
 uenit consummatio. **E**
Ergo uideritis ad hominum
 desolationis quae dicitur
 et in celo profeta factum in loco
 suo quae legit intellegat
Tunc cum uideritis fugite
 ad montes. **C**um uideritis non
 discite aut tollere aliquid de domo
 sua. **C**um uideritis non reuertamini
 tollere conuenientiam

Ills. 24a Matthew 24:12-18 (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 103v.

Et autem praegnantibus &
 parturientibus nullis diebus
 & autem ut non fiat fuga
 uel fera hinc uel sabbato
 & enim ambulatio magna
 quales non sunt terminatio mai
 di usque modo neque fia
 nisi breuiter fuissent dies
 illi non fieret salua om
 nis caro sed propter electos bre
 uiantur dies illi
Tunc signis uobis dixerit ecce
 hic opus auallic nolite creofre
 & enim seudo xpi
 & seudo profite & adunt
 signa magna & prodigia in uero

Ills. 24b Matthew 24:19-24 (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells,
 folio 104r.



Ills. 25 Initial at Matthew 18:23 (Parable of the Unmerciful Servant). Book of Kells, folio 83v.

mercedem suam tuam
inter cubiculum tuum
tuo oratore tuum in
pater tuus qui uideat in

et **P**ater tuus qui uideat in
tuo oratore tuum in
pater tuus qui uideat in

muta loquio suo exau
te ergo ad simulari eris
ter uester qui duobis o

quam pater tuus ab eo sice
tur in



Aternoster quies
conueniat regnum
unitas tu sicut in

Ills. 27 Pater Noster initial. Book of Kells, folio 45r.

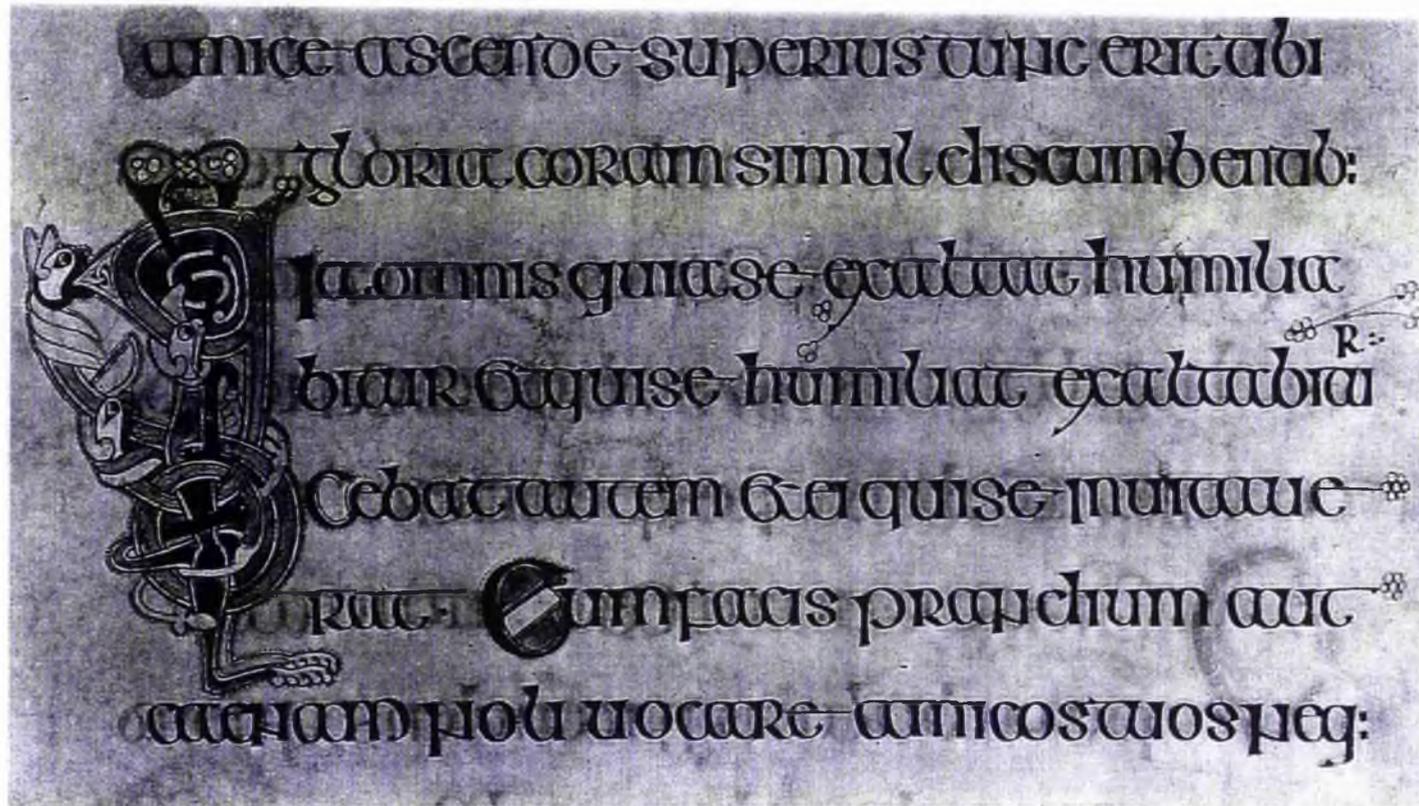
repentana dies illa tanquam latro
us enim superueniet in omnes qui se de
nt superbiem orbis terrae uigilate
itaque omni tempore orantes ut
vostri habeamini fugere ista omnia
quae futura sunt & scire ante
filium hominis

Quam in iherosolymis doceratis
in templo iherosolymis uero exiens
in iherosolymis in iherosolymis
in iherosolymis in iherosolymis

Quam in iherosolymis in iherosolymis
in iherosolymis in iherosolymis



Ills. 29 Initials at Luke 15:10 and Luke 15:11. Book of Kells, folio 250v.



Ills. 30 Initial at Luke 14:11 and 14:12. Book of Kells, folio 247v.

sicut scribitur corinthi 6. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

Cum autem dicitur deus deus
 sanctus sunt cum caritate in
 corde leprosus quoniam uelut
 rabatam dicens ostendit pice
 mundare. **E**rgo dicitur in
 gicum ihs dicens uolo mittere
 festam mundata est lepra eius. **E**
 ihs uideuimini episcopus seductor
 oete sacerdoti coppeaninus. **E**
 praecepit moyses in esum moluit
Schateccatem. **C**um in quo
 captiuatum ab eum accessit
 cum centurio rogans eum. **E**chica
 puer meus iace in domo parat
E male torquetur. **C**um uis
 ueniam. **E** curabo eum.

Ills. 31 Initials marking Eusebian sections 63 and 64. Book of Kells, folio 50r.

erat unicus qui fecerat insidraone
homicidium. Cum autem esset discursus tur-
ba coepit rogare sicut semper fa-
ciebat illis per diem sollemniens
ut dimitteret unum unicum petentem
autem respondit eis. Quid vultis
omnem vobis regem iudeorum sa-
ciat enim quod permittam cruce-
derunt enim summi sacerdotes *

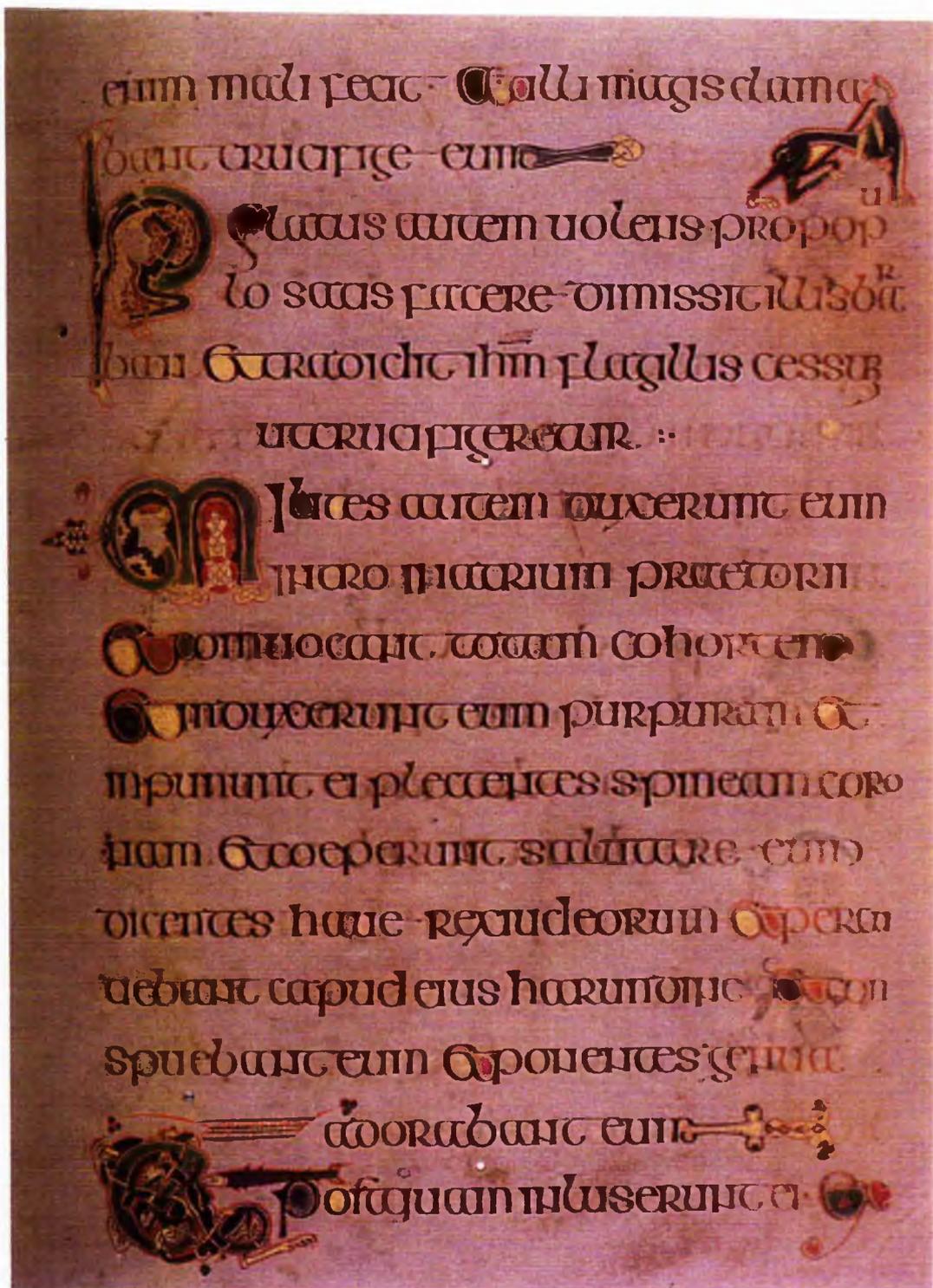
Quoniam autem coniecit
verbum turbam ut magis *

verbum dimitteret eis

Petrus autem iterum respon-
dit illis quid ergo vultis
ut mittam regi iudeorum cuius dicit *

machabe iterum dicentes crucipite *

etiam pilatus vero dicebat eis quid



Ills. 33 Mark 15:14-20 (Passion). Book of Kells, folio 182r.

Terum autem pylatus locutus est
ad illos uolens omittere eis ih̄m ac
illi succedebant dicentes cruci-
ge crucige illum
Ue autem terra dixit ad illos quid
enim mali fecistis nullam causam
in ore inuenio in eo corripiam ergo
illum et omittam
Ulli intabant uocibus magnis
postulantes ut crucigeretur
aut. et ualescebant uoces eorum
Pylatus adiuuauit fieri pe-
titionem eorum et dimisit h̄
illis eum qui propter homicidium
et seditionem missus fuerat in car-
cerem quem petebant ih̄m uero

omnibus missis commisserunt in aeternum
 philatum. Omnes enim ex eo quod in
 buclabaculis misserunt. Nuncue-
 ro deperunt sua omnia quae habuerunt
 missa totum in aeternum sunt.

Quam egredietur de templo
 vallatus ex discipulis suis
 magister aspiciet quales lapides et
 quales struuntur. Tempus tunc
 potens in saecula videt has omnes
 magnas et duplices in ore
 quae lapis super lapem lapidem
 quomodo feruntur.

Et cum sederent in montem ole-
 uarum contra templum in
 iherosolymis tunc separatum per
 iacobus et iohannis et andreas.

Ills. 35 Mark 12:43-13:3 (Beginning of the Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 171v.

propter electos quos elegit tibi
 abire dies.

Ecce hic signus tibi obis dixerit
 ecce hic est spiritus sanctus
 incredulitas.

Resurget enim pseudo christi et
 seudo profetae. Et dabit
 signa et prodigia. Et ad seducendos
 si potest per suam electos uos au-
 tem uideat eorum ad huc uobis omni-
 bus in illis diebus post tribulationem
 illam sol conturbabitur et
 luna non erit splendorem suum
 et stellae caedi erunt decedentes
 et uentures quae sunt in caelis erunt
 motu et uenturae.

Tunc uidebitur filius
 hominis.

Ills. 36 Mark 13:20-26 (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 173v.

IN CESUM ORBIS ILLUS
QUONIAM OMNES QUAE PRIMUM OPOR
TE PRADICARI EUANGELIUM
QUAE CHICERUNT UOS PRADICANTES
NOLITE PRADICARE QUID LO
QUAMINI SED QUODCUMQUE UOBIS PA
ERIT IN ILLO HORA ILLO QUAE IN HO
MINI ERITIS UOS LOQUENTES SED SPESSES
QUI LOQUITUR IN UOBIS ERITIS UOBIS
PRATER PRATEREM IN MORTEM ET PRATER
PLURIMU QUI CONSURGENT IN IMPURENTE
IN MORTE ADPICENTEOS ET ERITIS ODI
OMNIBUS PROPTER NOME MEUM QUI
UICEM SUSCEPERIT USQUE IN FINEM
HIC SALUS ERIT
EOMNEM UIDE ERIS AD HOMINUM
ONEM DESOLATIONIS FIRMAM UBI

Ills. 37a Mark 13:10-13:11 (Beginning of the Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 172v.

non debet quilibet intelligat
Ne qui nuda sunt fugaverit
montes. **Q**uis propter vestram
discerit in hominum nec prodeat
tollat aliquid de domo sua. **Q**ui in
agro erit non revertatur tollere ves
timentum suum.
Ventem primum ab oriente
millis diebus.
Nate autem tunc non fiat
fuga vespera vel sabbato.
Ruic enim dies illi tribulationes
tales quales non fuerunt ab in
itio creature quam condidit deus
que nunquam erit.
Nisi brevis esset dies non
fuisse salva omnis caro sed

Ills. 37b Mark 13:14-20 (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 173r.

Nterrogauerunt autem illum dice-
 tes preceptor quando haec
 erunt. Et quos signum compere ma-
 pient quid dicit videte. Reseduo anni
 muta tunc uentur in nomine in eo
 ceteros quoniam eos sumptus. Quam-
 pus adpropinquauit nolite exire
 post illos cum autem euertatis pro-
 elia. Quae sectiones nolite terre opo-
 ta enim primum haec fieri sectione
 am. pms tunc dicebat illis.

Illis diebus surge terra contra-
 gentem. Quae signa aduersum p-
 tum. Quae terra motus in aqni erum.
 perloa. Quae pesalenciae. Quae fames
 terrores. Quae dolo. Quae signa magna.

Ills. 38a Luke 21:7-11 (Signs of the End of the Age). Book of Kells, folio 270v.

erunt & in pestates.

Forte ante haec omnia iniecit in vobis
manus suas & persequentur om-
nes vos tradentes in synagogis & in
curiis & in aedibus & in domibus
propter nomen meum copiar-
e autem vobis ¶ — — — — —



Nunc ergo in corpore vestro non
praemedicari quem ad modum
respondeatis ego enim dabo vo-
bis os & sapientiam quam non poterunt
resistere & copiarum dicere omnes
adversarii vestri tradent enim autem
vobis & fratres & cognatos
& amicos & in morte confitentur vo-
bis & erunt odio omnibus hominibus.

REGUM SUNT SED QUID CAUSAS UI
 TAM CAUSAM DICO UOBIS & PLUS Q
HIC ESTEM DE QUO SCRIPTUM
 EST MIHI ANGELUM MEUM CA
 QUI PRÆPARABIT MIAM TUAM
QUAE DICIT UOBIS NON SE
 RUIATOS MULIERUM IN
 NE BEATISSA QUIAUCUM IN
 REGNO CAELORUM IN
DIEBUS AUTEM IOHAN
 NIS USQUE NUNC REGNA
 UIM PATIAR & UTI UOLENT RE
OMNES ENIM PROFITUR
 A IOHAN NEM PROFITUR
 & STUPIDUS PERCIPERE IPSE
 QUI UENTURUS EST QUI HABA
 BIT DIEI AUDIAT

Ills. 39 Initials at Matthew 11:11 and 11:12. Book of Kells, folio 60r.

Leprosus mundate tota
Quod gratis accepistis gra
possidere aurum neq
que pecuniam in zonis
milia neque chalcas comica
mentia neque cum gram m
otius est enim operari
Quicumque uiderit
aliter ueritas interro
otius sit sub manuete
Hic rantes autem ino
cum dicentes pax ha
dem fuerit digna dom
pax uestra super eam
erit digna pax uestrata
Quicumque nomi
neque uerit sermo

INDUERENTUR QUI ABUSUM CIS :

Quocumque uero
as in domum illuc manite donec ex

in idem :

Quicumque non receperit
hanc ueritatem uos excutestis
excute puluerem de pedibus uestris

in testimonium illis :

Quocumque illi praedicauerint
poenitentiam agerent. Et de
his multa ieriebant. Et uisgebant
multos agros. Et sanabantur :

Quod uero herodis rex iuda
iam enim factum est homo
enim dicebat quia iohannis bap
surrexit a mortuis. Et propterea
percutitur uirtutes in illo ab iuda



Umuuent amnam suam peros

illam. Qui perdidit amnam

suam propter me inuenit eam ::

Qui recipit uos in recipit Qui

in recipit recipit qui in me misit

Qui recipit propheta in nomine

prophete in eadem prophete

recipit. Qui recipit iustum in nomine

iusti in eadem iusti recipit



Quicumque pocum dederit uni

ex minimis istis calicem aquae fra

gidat. Quicumque in nomine discipuli amen

dicouobis non perdet in eadem suam



factum est. Qui conseruauerit

istis uerba haec praecipiens uo

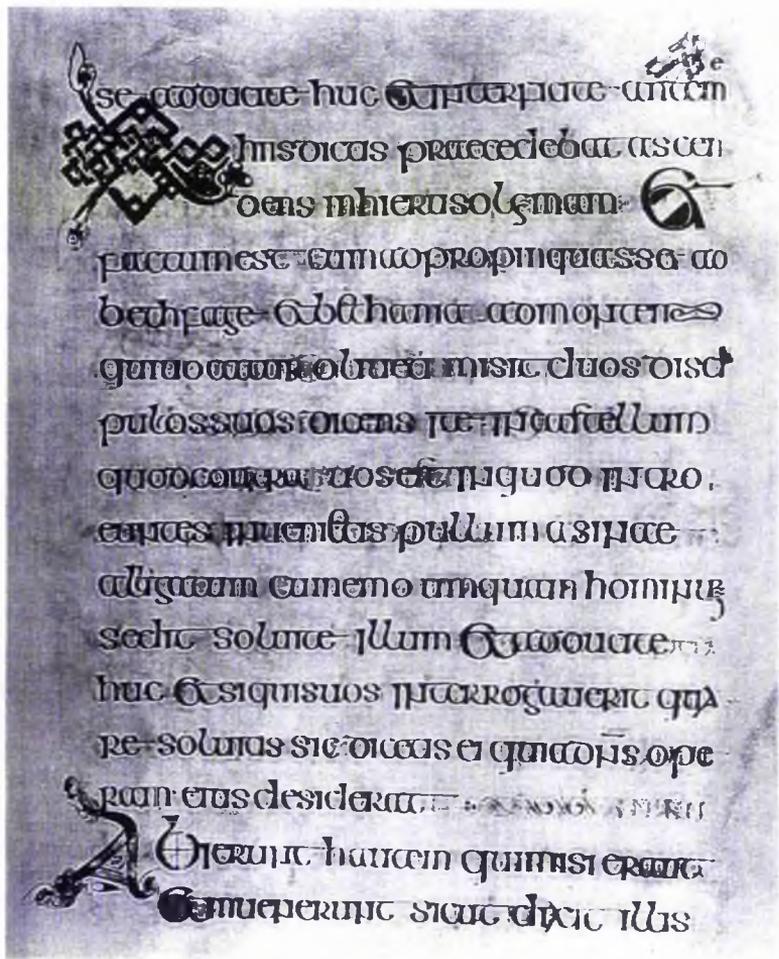
Qui in odio iniquus est. Qui in odio
iniquus est si ergo in iniquo in animo
ne fideles non putatis quod uerum sit
quis credat uobis. **S**i in alieno fide-
les non putatis quod uerum quod dabit uo-
bis.

Nemo seruus potest duobus do-
minis seruire. aut enim unum odit
aut alterum diligat aut unum adhaerebit.
Mat. **N**emo enim potest adhaerere
duo dominis. et unum odit

Non debent habere complicitatem qui
erant uari. **N**on debent illi
aut illis uos esse qui in fide uos

uos coram hominibus. **N**on autem moue
coram uera quia quod hominibus. **N**on
est ab omni est. **N**on omni.

Non propterea usque ad iohannem
nem. **N**on regnum dei euangeli-



Ills. 44 Luke 19:28-32 (Entry into Jerusalem). Book of Kells, folio 264r.

pullam faciem soluentibus autem illis
pullam dixerunt domini et ad illas
quid solentes pullam et illi dixerunt
quod non est in necessarium habere. Certe
runt illam et in Ceteros ueritate
et sua super pullam. Impossue-
runt in illis. Certe et in illis subter-
nebant ueritate et sua. In illis.



Cum itaque propinquasset ierusalem
et uisens eam in uentibus
cepit exultare et dicere
in uentibus laudare omnia
et magnam super omnibus
quas uiderunt in uentibus
dicentes benedictus qui
uenit in nomine domini. **P**ost modum

Cecropia in excelsis

exiudicatis **Q**uerebant in hunc

H

crastinum autem turba multa

quae venerat ad diem festum cum

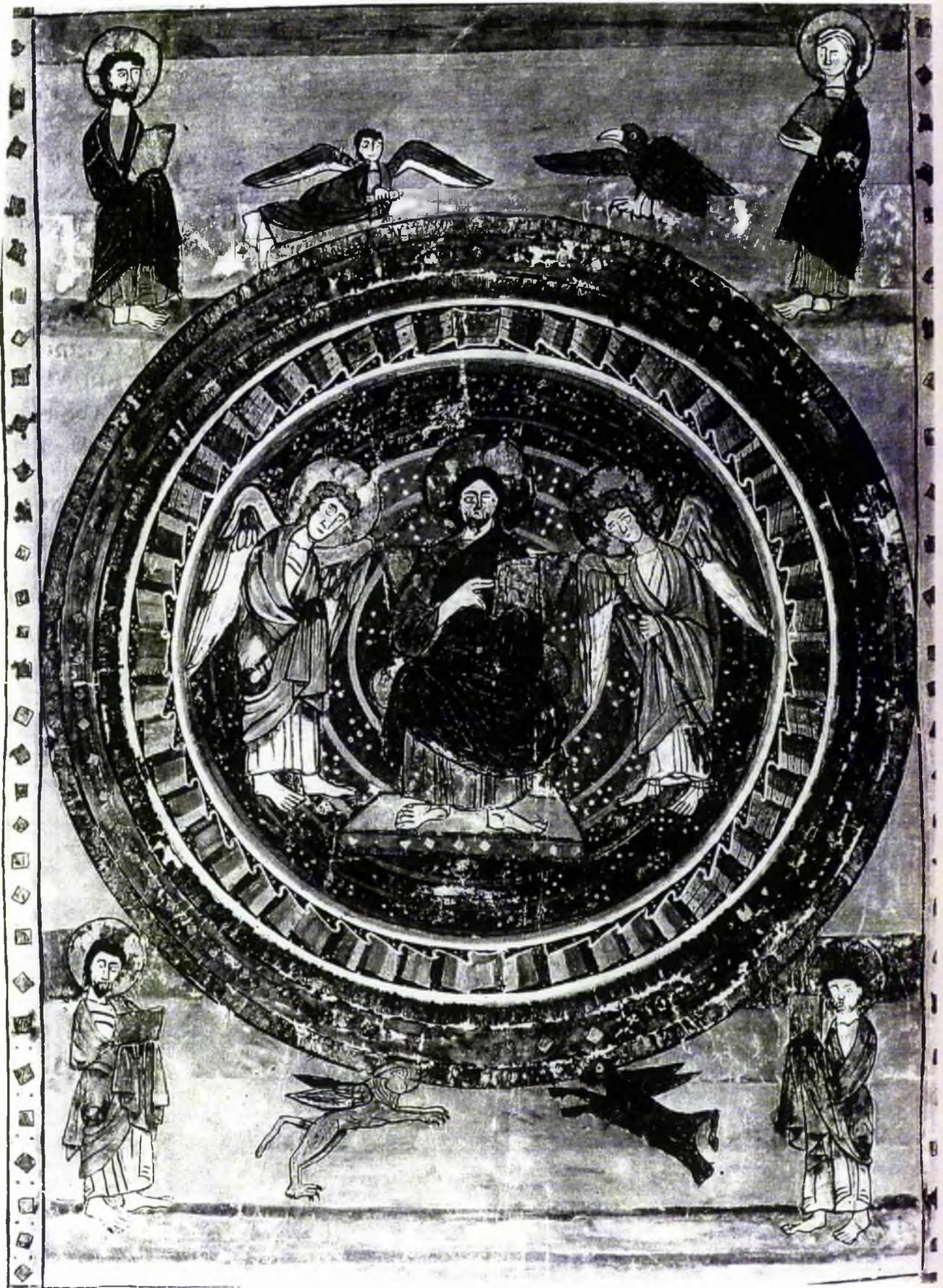
audisset quod venisset in hier

solyma acceperunt ramos palmarum

Ills. 46 John 12:12 (Entry into Jerusalem). Book of Kells 329v.



Ills. 47 Matthew Portrait. Lindisfarne Gospels (London, British Library, Cotton Nero D. IV), folio 25v.



Ills. 48 Christ in Majesty. Codex Amiatinus (Florence, Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana, Amiatinus I), folio 796v.



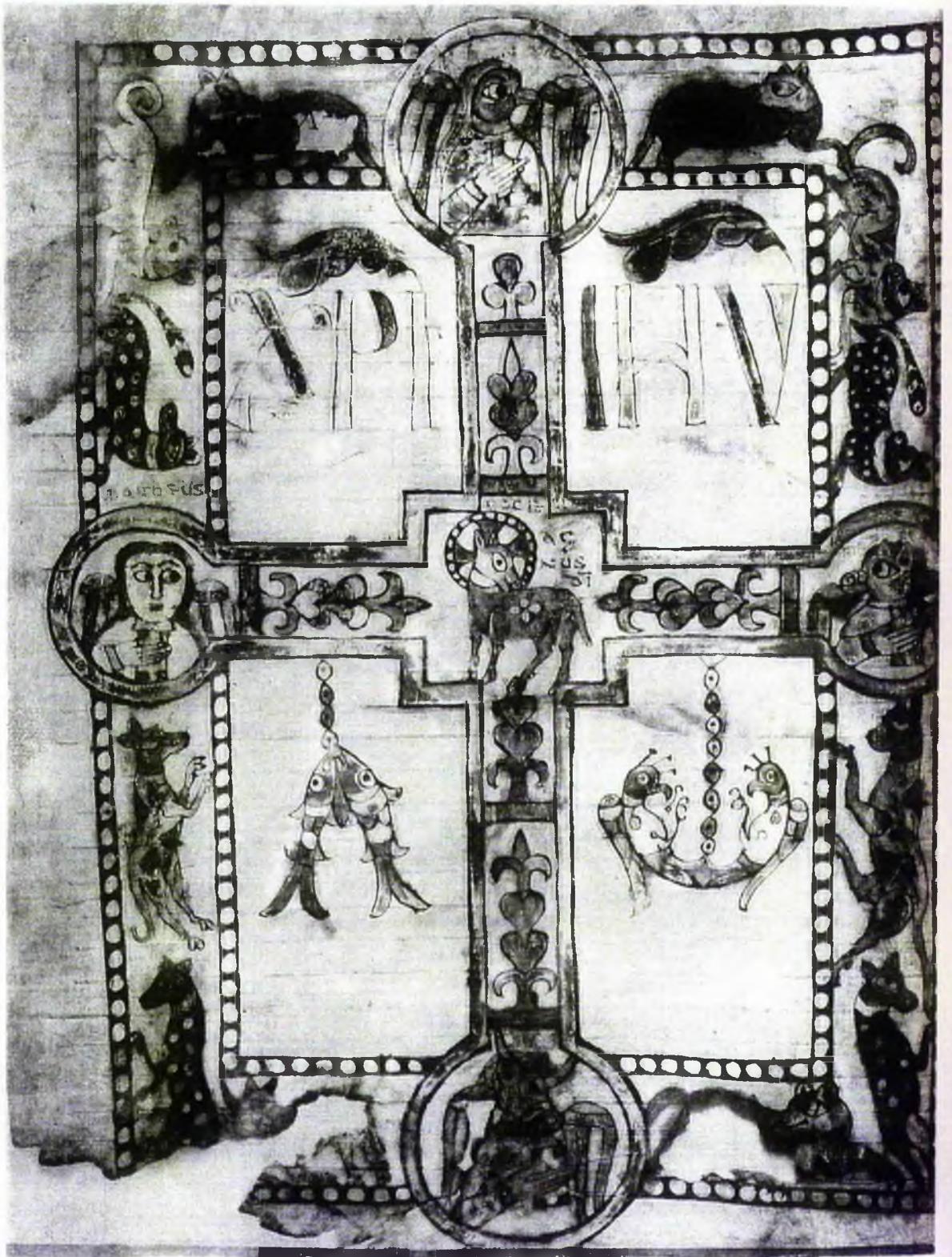
Ills. 49 Ascension and Second Coming. Turin Gospels (Bibl. Nazionale, Cod. O. IV.20) folio 1a verso and 2a recto.



Ills. 50 Ezekiel's Vision of God combined with the Ascension of Christ.
Rabbula Gospels (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Syriac Ms. Plut. I, 56), folio 13b.



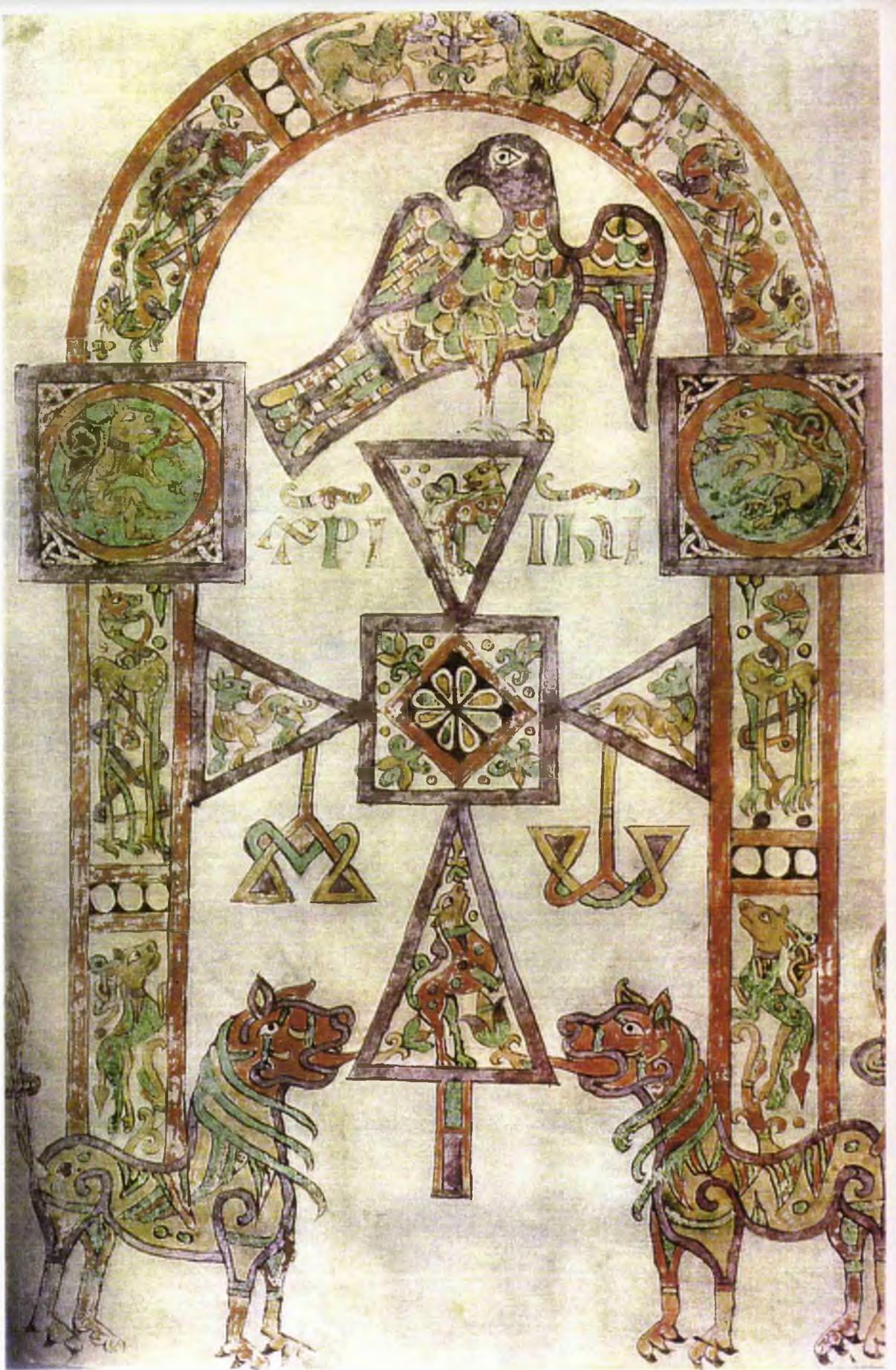
Ills. 51 Second Coming and Crucifixion. St. Gall Gospels (St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex 51) p. 266-67.



Ills. 52 Evangelist page. Laon 137, folio 1b.



Ills. 53 Incipit. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, Reg. lat. 316, folio 131b.



Ills. 54 Cross. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale., lat. 12168, frontispiece.



Ills. 55a Cross. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica, Reg. lat. 316 folio 3v.



Ills. 55b Cross. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica,
Reg. lat. 316, folio 4r.

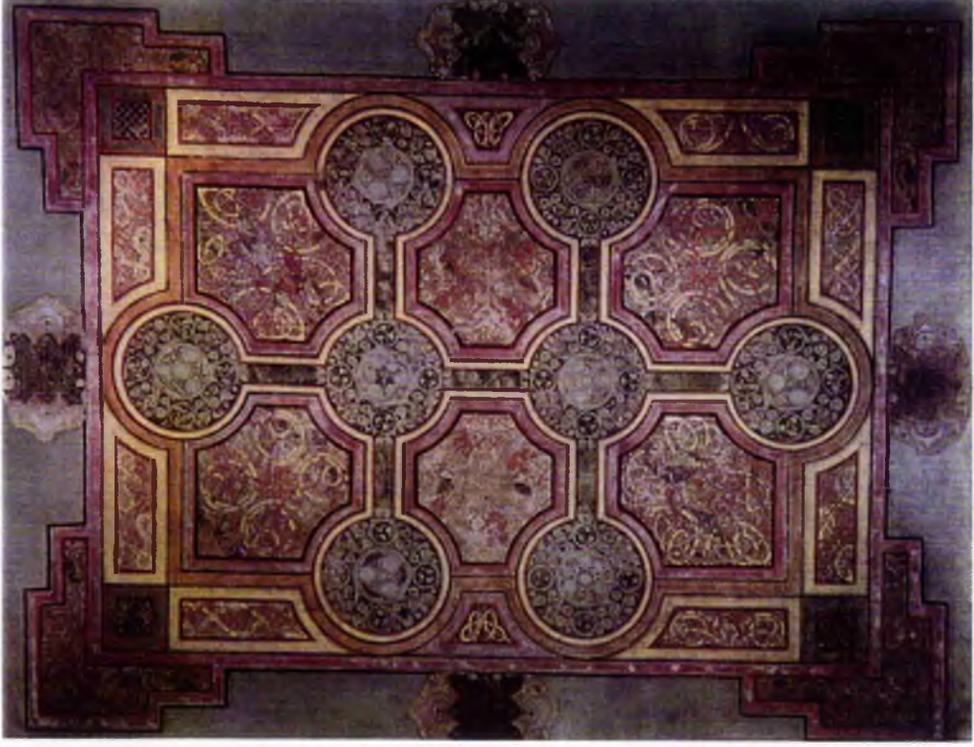


llls.

Ills. 56a *Te igitur* Gellone Sacramentary (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 12048), folio 143v.



Ills. 57 Christ in Majesty Book of Kells, folio 32v.



Ills. 58 Cross Carpet page. Book of Kells, folio 33r.

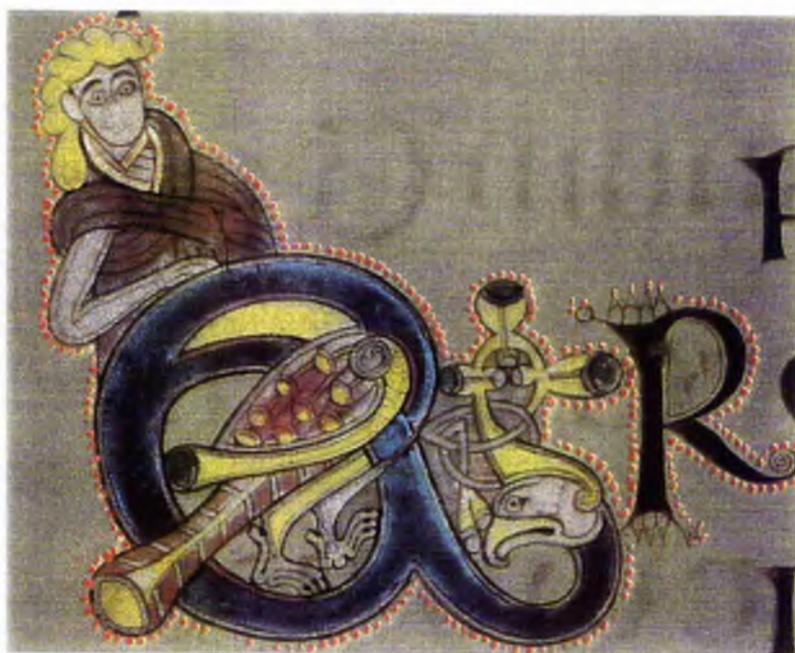




Ills. 59 Chi Rho page and detail of cats and mice. Book of Kells, folio 34r.



Ills. 60 Chi Rho page detail (Angels holding flabella and book). Book of Kells, folio 34r.



Ills. 61 Initial beginning the Parable of the Wedding Feast. Book of Kells, folio 95r.

acchiuabo & non erat conueniens
timonium illorum exurgens sum
mus sacerdos & in medium & interro
gauit ihm dicens non respondeis que
quam ad ea que tibi obiunguntur ab
his ille autem tacebat & nihil re
spondit rursum summus sacerdos
interrogabat eum & dicit etas

Xps plus di ~~be~~ ~~ie~~ ~~dia~~ :
Mos autem dixit & osum & ui
debas plus in hominis seden
tem ad exaris uirtutis & uenientem
in nubibus caeli :

Inimus autem sacerdos scilicet
uestimenta sua & ait :

Uidit adhuc desideramus testes
audis blasphemiam eius quid

tem sicut dilectuos
Quorem hanc dilectionem nemo
habet ut animam suam quis
ponat pro amicis suis : precipio vobis
Quoniam si feceritis quae ego

Ills. 64 Head of Christ initial at John 15:13, Book of Kells, folio 336r.

ad eum uenire interrogarent eum tu quies & con-
 fessus est. **Q**uoniam uenit & confessus est
 quia non sum ego xps. **Q**uoniam interrogauerunt
 eum quid ergo helias es tu. **R**edit non sum
 propheta es tu & respondit non. **D**ixeru-
 nit ergo ei quises uerespondsum tamen hinc
 qui miserunt nos quid tuis dicit ipso
Ait ergo uocatum tuus in deserto tunc regre-
 dit in iordanem. **Q**uoniam exphorasas & inter-
Sicut dicit es tuus propheta. **Q**uoniam misit que-
 rogauerunt eum & dixerunt ei quid ergo
 baptizas si tu non es xps neque helias
 neque propheta. **R**edit in iordanem
Respondit eis iohannis dicens ego baptizo
 uestrum sicut quoniam uos nescitis ipse est
 qui post me uenturus est quoniam tunc me-
 tus est cuius ego non sum dignus uelolum
 eius corrigiam calceamine. **14**

Ills 65a Text containing John 1:20, "I am not the Christ." Book of Kells, folio 293v.



Ills. 65b Head of John the Baptist initial at John 1:28-29
Book of Kells, folio 294r.

di. Respondit illis & dixerunt hoc est opus
dñi ut credatis in eum quem misit ille.

Operunt ergo ei quod ergo tu facissis
num ut credamus & credamus tibi
quid operaris.

Pateres nosse in manu manducare
sicut scriptum est panem caeli dedit
eis manducare. Dixit ergo eis ih̄s amen
amen dico vobis non moyses dedit vobis
panem de caelo sed pater meus datus
panem de caelo vivum panis cum dicitur
quid sciat de caelo. Quia utam ma-
do dixerunt ergo ad eum dñe semper
nobis da panem.

Dixit autem eis ih̄s ego sum panis
qui vivit ad me non esuris. Qui credit
in me non sitiet unquam sed dixi vobis
quia. Quia dicitur & non creditis.

Quod dicitur mihi pater dicitur
uenia. Et inquit dicitur ueniam
foras.  **Q**uoluntatem meam

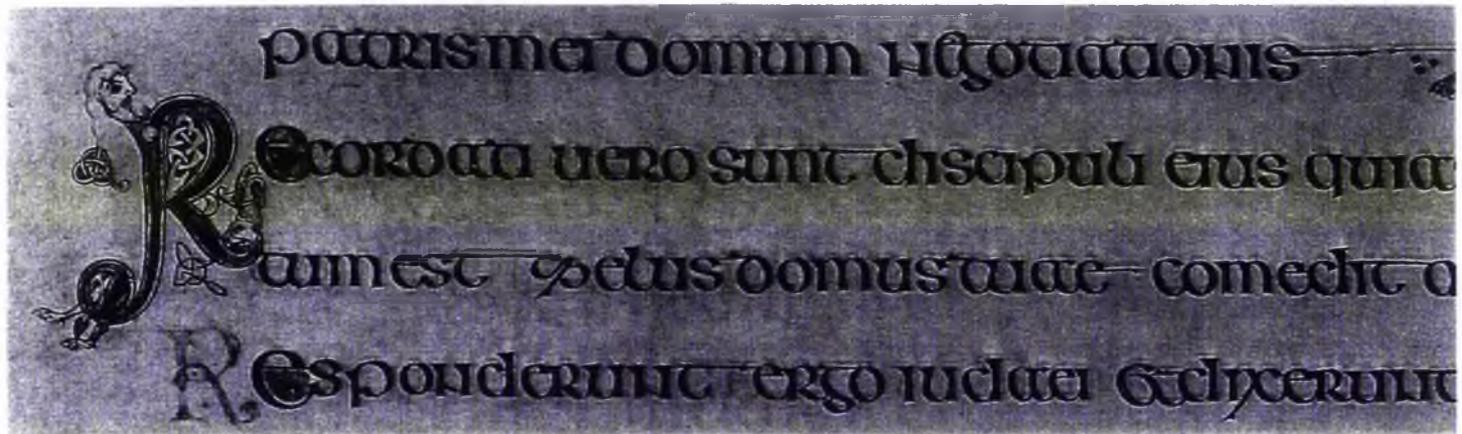
Quod dicitur de celo ueniam
sed uoluntatem eius quae in
miseris.

Haec est autem uoluntas eius quae
sit in patris ut dicitur quod dicit
mihi non perdoam ex eo sed resuscitem
illum in nouissimo die. **H**aec est enim
uoluntas patris mei quae in
miseris quae dicitur filium et credit meum ha
beat uitam aeternam et resuscitabo
eum in nouissimo die. 

Murmurabant ergo iudaei de illo
quia dixisset. Et sumptis quidem
de celo discendi. Et dicebant ueniam hic
est ihs filius ioseph cuius nos nouimus
patrem et matrem quomodo ergo dicitur

habuerunt in gratis. **C**um uero para-
clitis quem somnauit uobis captare sp-
iritus qui captare proccent ille celo
in omni perhibe dieme. **Q**uostetumou-
um perhibetis quia ad omnia in uobis
h. xvi **H**ec locutus sum uobis ut non sciam
datis semini absque significatione
uent uos. Sed uent horu uo omni
quid erit nos quod uerit obsequi
se praesentia. **Q**uod uent qui
non mouerunt per amicum me sed ha-
ec locutus sum uobis ut amicum ho-
ra coram remanentia quia potest
ex amicum uobis non hori
qui uobis cum erant. **Q**uod uo
uocum qui uent. **Q**uod ex uobis in
roget in uobis sed qui haec locutus
sum uobis quia impleuit cor uobis

Ills. 67 Head of Christ initial at John 16:5-10. Book of Kells, folio 336r.

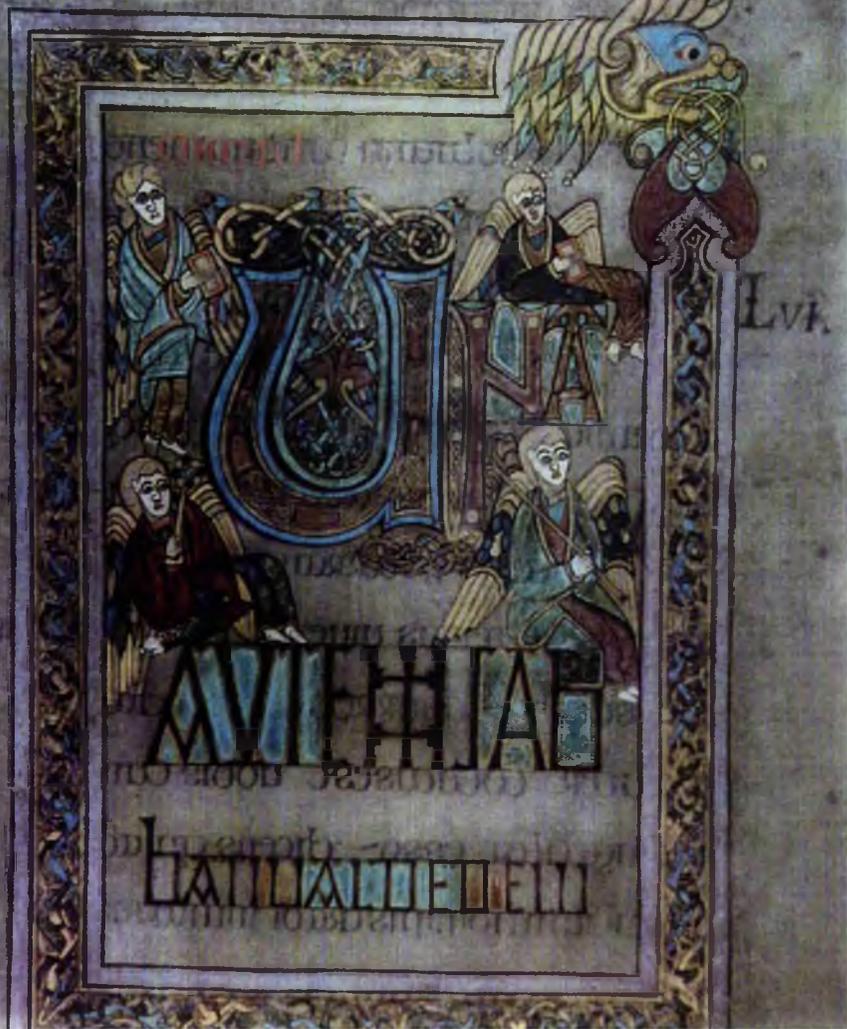


Ills. 69 Head of Christ initial at John 2:17. Book of Kells, folio 296v.



Ills. 70 Head of Woman initial at Luke 24:9. Book of Kells, folio 286r.

subbia o quicunq saluerit sicum dca



Ills. 71 Visitation to the Tomb. Luke 24:1. Book of Kells, folio 285r.



Ills. 72a John Portrait. Book of Kells, folio 291v.



Ills. 72b John Incipit page. Book of Kells, folio 292r.



Ills. 73 Temptation page. Book of Kells, folio 202v.

MERIS SENTENTIA MUL
 NICI FILII REDOPONED
 TIONE SCIFICATA OMNIA
 SIT VOTUM HOSTIS ANTIQ
 DUS SALUBRIT EXHUIS
 TE DEUNIVERSIS TRE
 IUS
 VTHI QUI VTUNTUR
 BENEDICTIO ARBORIS
 ISSIONE: ET PUIDENTIA
 NA SANDE BENEDICERE
 IT QUI CUG: EXEASUSERIT
 AD OMNIA QUOLUETAS
 ET REMEDIU SALUTARI
 INUOCATIONE NOMINIS
 CORPORIS SANITATEM
 ANI DATUR GRATIA
 NE EMITTE SPNTUUM STM
 TUITATE CELESTIS DEPEN
 DINA SALUTEM

OMNIBENEDICTIONE CELESTI ET
 ANTUR INNOBIS PQUEM HEC OMNIA
 ORATIONIS AD CARITATE

QUOD DELICIE NOS MUTUA DOCIS
 NOXIARIU ET FIGMENTA DEPELLE PP
 ANIBUS PURITATEM PDNI

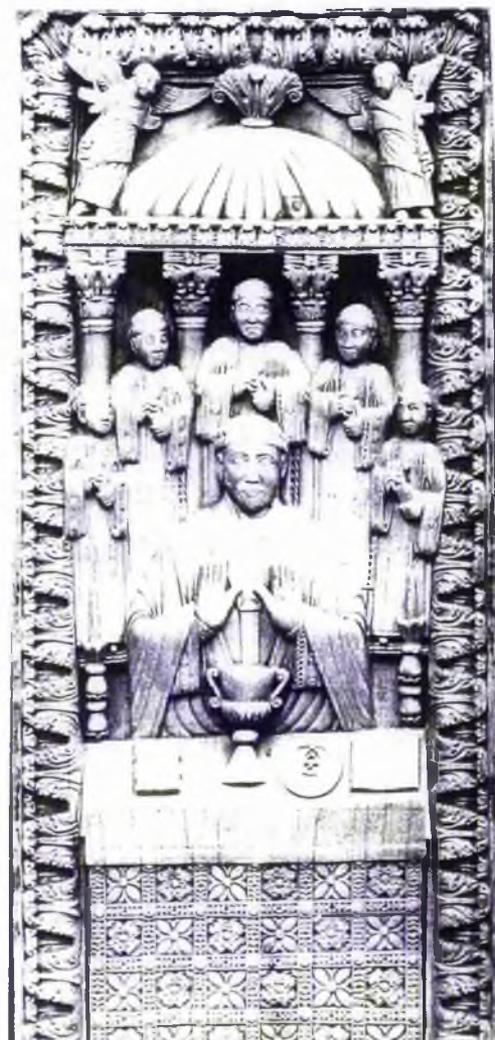
BENEDICITE CREATURAM ISTAM PANIS
 PANIS INDISERTO VRSIT DNE CU
 ANNU ALIMENTUM GUSTANTES Q:G
 PORIS QUAM ANIME SANITATEM P
 NE OMNE XPI QUI EX QUING PANIB
 MILIA HOMINU SATIATI INCAN
 FERUATI QUIES VITIS UERA; M
 TUIS MISERICORDIA PIETATIS
 TICUPRIB; NIS INTUA MISERICOR
 NEDICERE ET SCIFICARE DIGNEMIS
 QUAM AD SUBSTANTIAM SERUORU
 UBI CUG IN HAC CREATURA FUSU FU
 POCATU DIVINE BENEDITIONIS TUE
 ACCIPITIB; EXE CUGRATIA KU
 INUS CELESTIUM SALUAT MUNDI QU



Ills. 74 Hand holding Chalice. Gellone Sacramentary (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 12048), folio 237r.



Ills. 75 Heading of Psalm 109. "Psalter of Charlemagne" (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 13159), folio 118v.



Ills. 76 Ninth-century ivory, Carolingian (Frankfurt Stadtbibliothek).

gauerunt. cum uos signum dederit uobis
ra- eis uallerespondens ut

Ado uespere dicitur serenum erit
In cras rubicundum est caelum
cum nubibus. Omne dicitur hodie
pescus ruat. et in cras caelum

Hopodriate faciem ergo caeli iudica
re. nos signatorem temporum non
potestas.

Serua uamula et contere signum
quaerit. et signum non dabitur. et
nisi signum uerit. profite. et relicis
illis abit. Omnes uenissent disci
puli eius trans fretum obuiasunt
papas accipere.

Qui dicit uos uenite uobis ca
ute a perimento phariseorum

Ills. 77a Matthew 16:2-6. Book of Kells, folio 76v.

desuorum. *de illis dicitur*

Qui cogitabant inter se dicentes
quia panes non accipimus. **S**ic
autem ih̄s cogitationes eorum dixit
quid cogitatis inter vos modice panis
quid panes non habetis non tamen intel
ligas neque recordamini de quinque
panibus & quinque milibus hominum
& quomodo copiosius sumpsistis neque
septem panes & quatuor milia ho
minum & quomodo sporas sumpsistis
quare non intelligas quia non opa
re dixi vobis. **Caute aperimento sa
crae eorum & pharissaeorum.**

Cipientes autem quia non de pan
ibus dixit caute aperimento pan
um pharissaeorum & desuorum

Ills. 77b Matthew 16:6-12. Book of Kells, folio 77r.

unius coebris & unius a sinifris

Raster eantes autem blasphemant eum mouentes capita sua & dicentes. uia. quid ifortuebas templum dei & in triduo reuadipies illud salua autem te ipsum si plus dei es discende hunc de cruce

Soniter & principes sacerdotuꝝ inuidebant eum cum scribis

& seniorib: dicentes alios saluos fecit. Se ipsum non potest saluum facere si rex israel est discendat hunc de cruce & credemus ei. Conspicit iudicio & iunclū berg eum si uult dicit enim quia dōi
filius sum

Verum aumen dico vobis Amo
videbitis filium hominis se-
dente ad dexteris in throno at assis
in clementem in nubibus caeli :

Hic princeps sacerdotum
sedit in throno suo dicens
blasphemavit quidam huc argens
tesabus

Ecce nunc audistis blasphemiam
eius quid vobis videatur :

Illi respondentes dixerunt reus
est mortis

Ills. 79 Bird initial at Matthew 26:63.

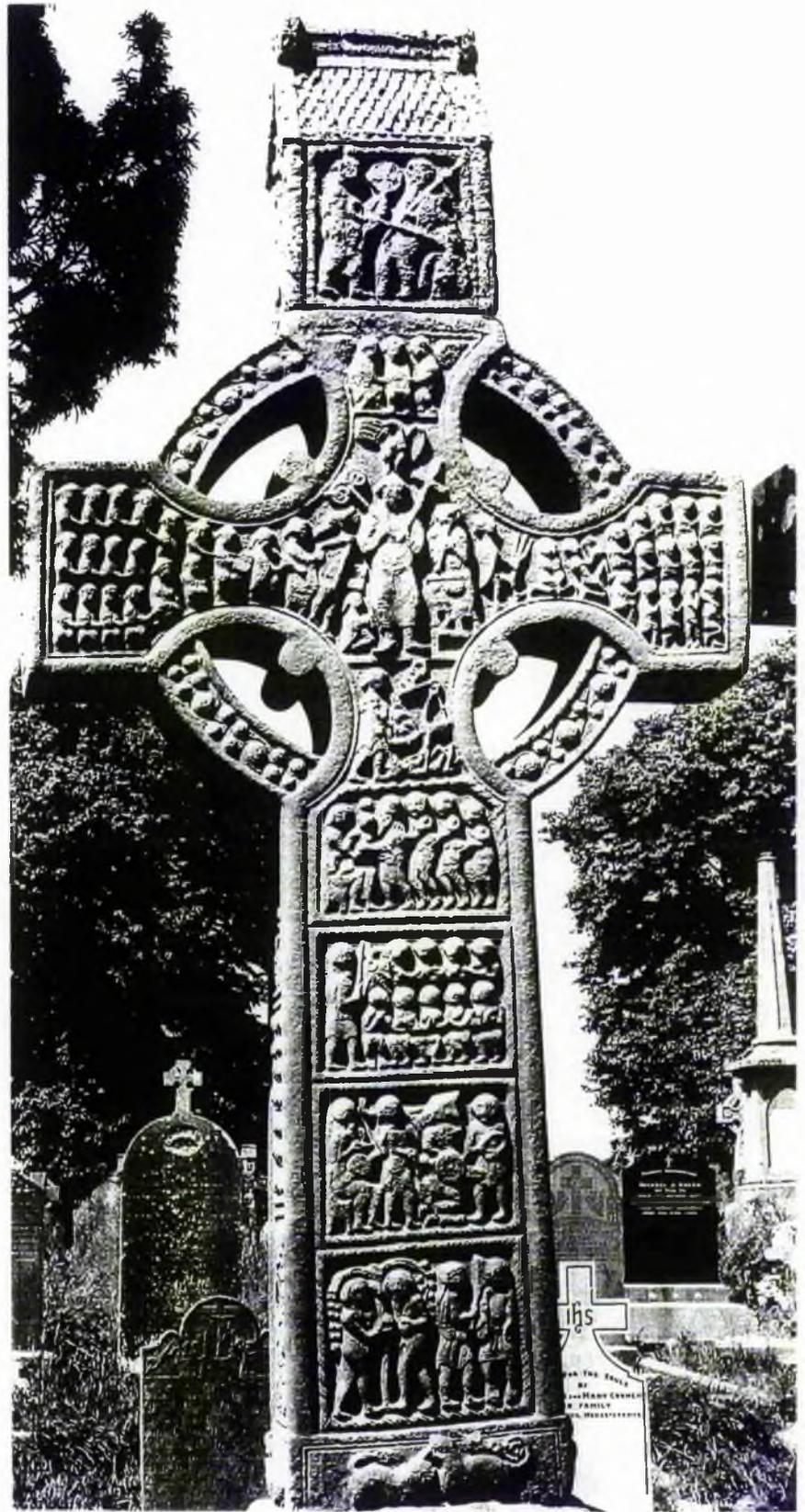
Book of Kells, folio 118v.

IN REPARARE ILLUM TITENS ABSIT UTE DICE-
NON ERIT TIBI HOC QUI CONVERSUS OYAT PE-
TERO UADE POSIT ME SANNAS SCANTO ALI
ES MIHI QUI ANON SAPIS EA QUAE SUNT
TIBI SED EA QUAE SUNT HOMINIBUS

QUAE IHS DIXIT DISCIPULIS SUIS. SI
QUIS UADE POSIT ME UERE ABIPIT
SE IPSUM SIBI UOLUAT QUAE SUNT
SE QUAE SUNT ME. QUI ENIM UOLUERIT
ANIMAM SUAM SALUAM FACERE PER-
DIT EAM. QUI UERTEM PERDIDERIT ANIMAM
SUAM PROPTER ME PERDIT EAM

QUID UERTEM PRODEST HOMINI SI UERTEM
SUM ANIMAM SUAM PERDIT. ANIMAE UE-
RO SUAE DILIGENTIAM PERDIT QUAE
QUAE DABIT HOMINO COMMUNICANDO
PRO ANIMA SUA

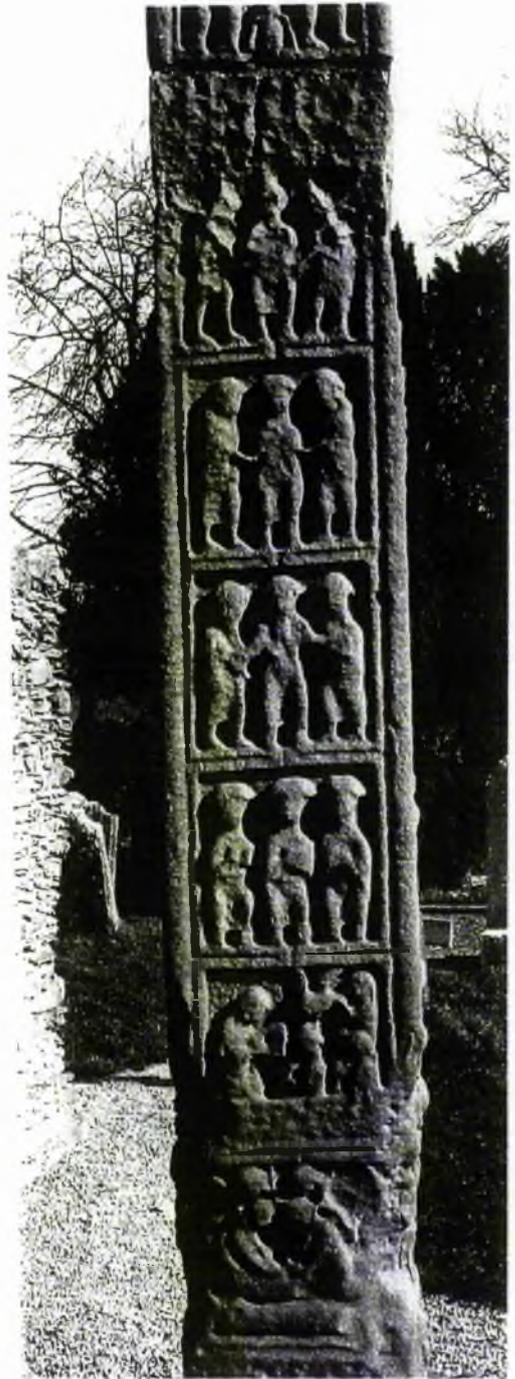
FILII SEQUUNTUR HOMO



Ills. 82 East Face, Muiredach's Cross, Monasterboice.



Ills. 83 West face, Tall Cross, Monasterboice.



Ills. 84 West face (shaft), Tall Cross, Monasterboice.



Ills. 85 South Face (shaft), Market Cross, Kells.



Ils. 86 East Side, Market Cross, Kells.

Tertius autem secutus
a longe usque ma-
ni sacerdotas & s-
imilifris & caele facieb
Sonni uero sacerdot
consilium quereba
ihm testimonium ut eum
derent sic inueniebant
testimonium falsum o-
uersus eum & cum uepnen-
tia ¶ ——— IO ¶ ——— JER ¶
Quidam surgentes
testimonium fere-
sus eum dicentes quomodo
olimus eum dicentem ¶
templum hoc manu fa-

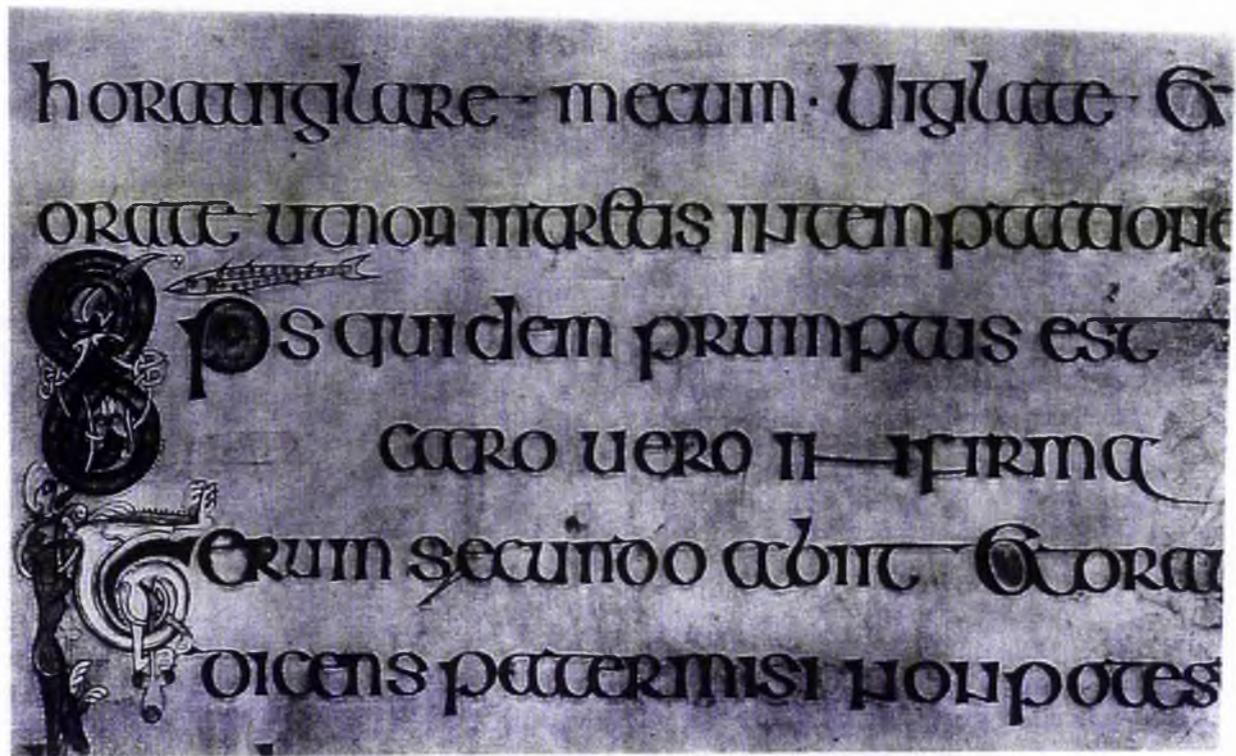
Tertius autem secutus
a longe usque ma-
ni sacerdotas &
inimicis & aale facieb
Sonni uero sacerdot
consilium querebat
ihm testimonium ut eum
derent nec inueniebant
testimonium falsum
uersus eum & cum uener
hic | ————— | ioh | ————— | ier
Quidam surgentes
testimonium fere
sus eum dicentes quomodo
diximus eum dicentem
templum hoc manu fac

tas eam speloniceam uacros iuncte
Quæcesserunt uocem eorum &
cloro in templo & sanctis
Quæntes autem pharisei &
scribæ mirabilia quæ fecit
ih̄s. Quæros clamantes in templo
ossamenta p̄bi claud̄ indignantur

Ills. 88 Serpents within initial at Matthew 21:15. Book of Kells, folio 91v.

Gratia autem satanas iudae
qui cognominabatur scarioth
unum de duodecim
hinc & locutus est cum principi
bus sacerdotum & magistratu
bus quemadmodum illum tradere
es & auertere & pullare sunt

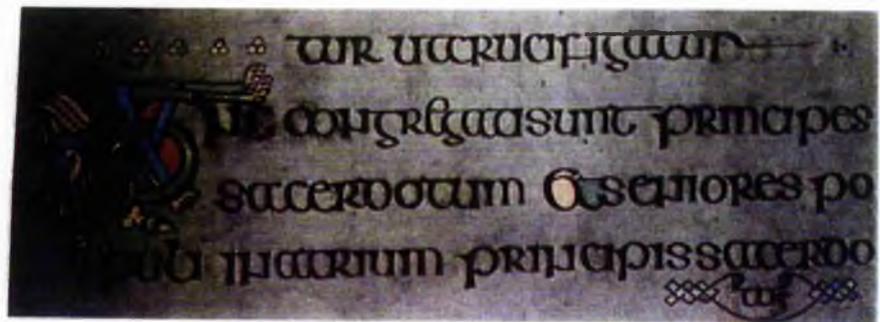
Ills. 89 Double-headed serpent and serpent initial at Luke 22:3, Book of Kells, folio 273v.



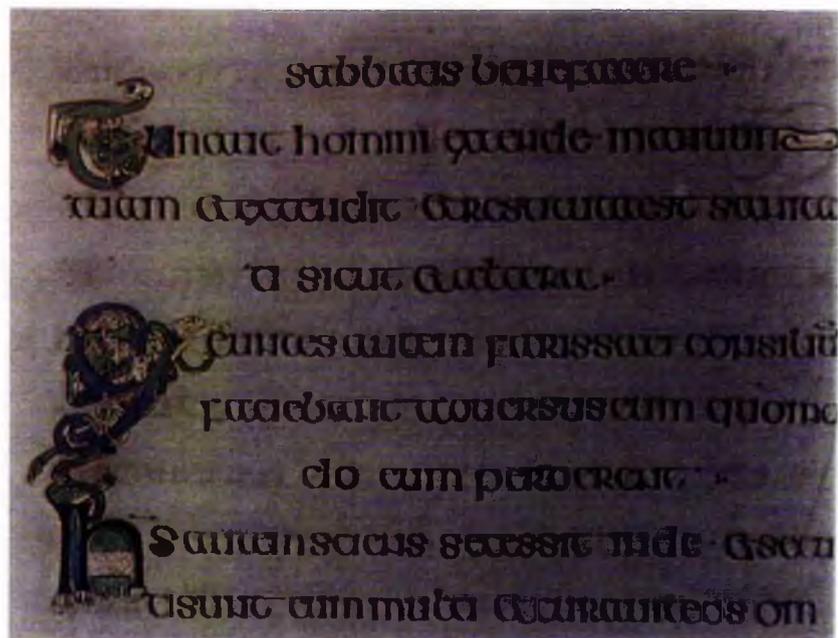
Ills. 90 Serpent and fish monogram at Matthew 26:41, Book of Kells, folio 116r.

... quod dicitur quod in memoriam
... ipse
Quia dicitur in evangelio
... principes sacerdotum
... quidam iudas sacerdos

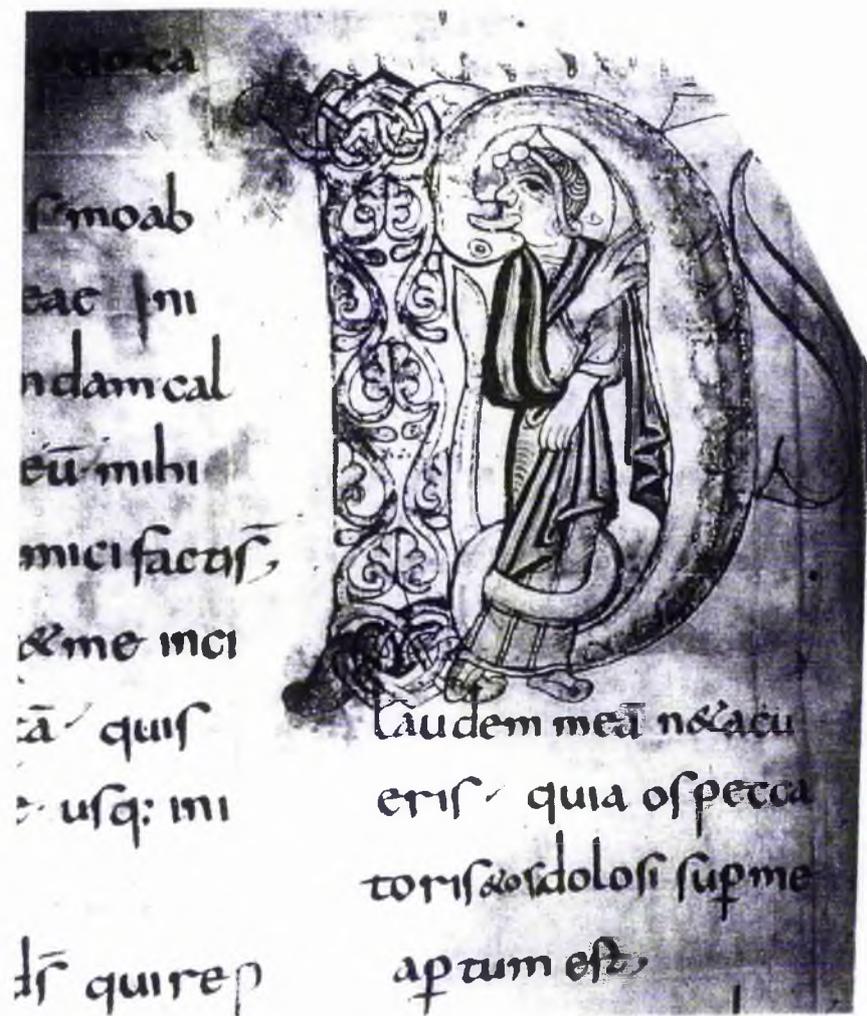
Ills. 91 Serpent catches fish at Matthew 26:14. Book of Kells, folio 112r.



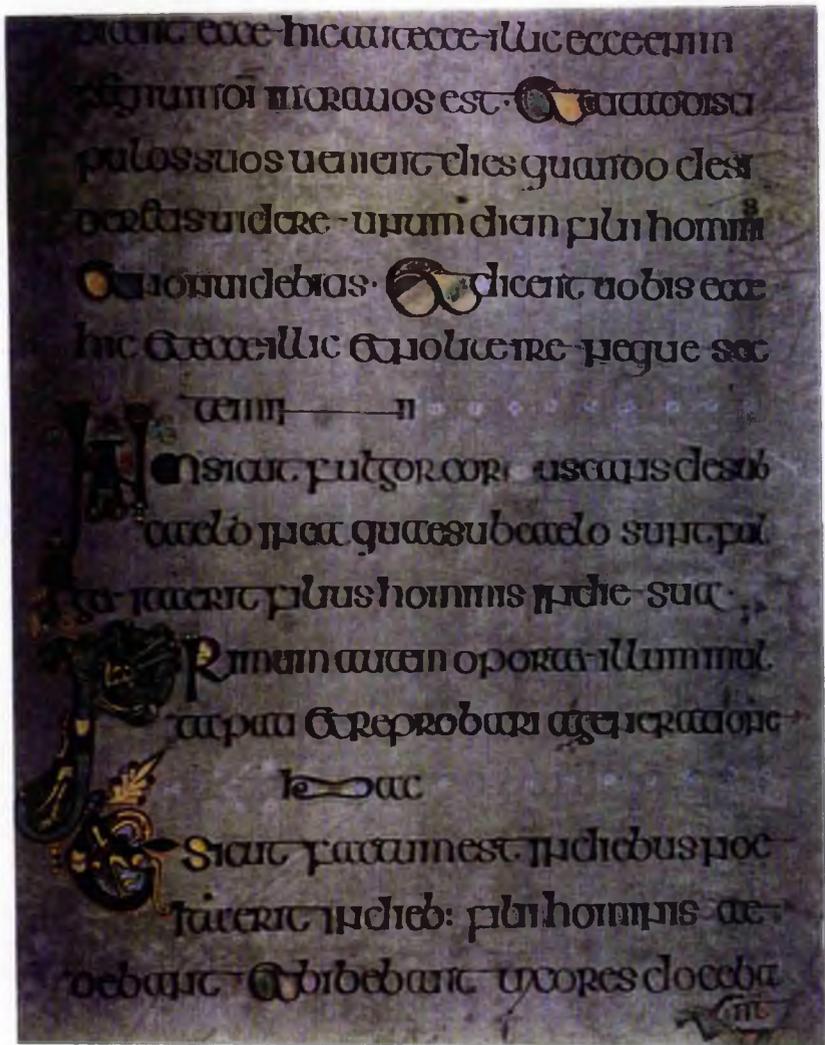
Ills. 92 Quadruped initial bites head of bird at Matthew 26:3. Book of Kells, folio 111r.



Ills. 93 Initials at Matthew 12:14 and 12:15, Book of Kells, folio 62v.



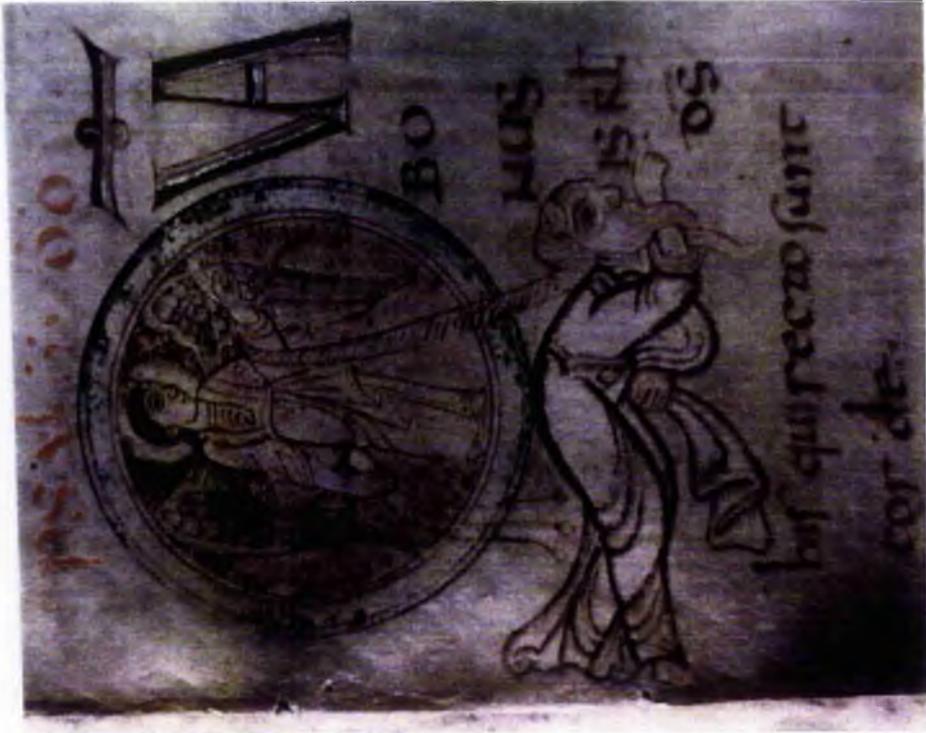
Ills. 94 David as Christ attacked by beast. Psalm 108. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 92v.



Ills. 95 Bird entangled by beast initial at Luke 17:24. Book of Kells, folio 257r.



Ills. 96 Man holding bird. Matthew 26:14. Book of Kells, folio 96r.



Ills. 97 Angel with whip standing on man entangled in his own beard. Psalm 72. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 101r.



Ills. 98 Man with knotted tail, entangled in his beard. Psalm 9. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 7v.



Ills. 99 Two winged beasts in knots. Psalm 31. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 26v.



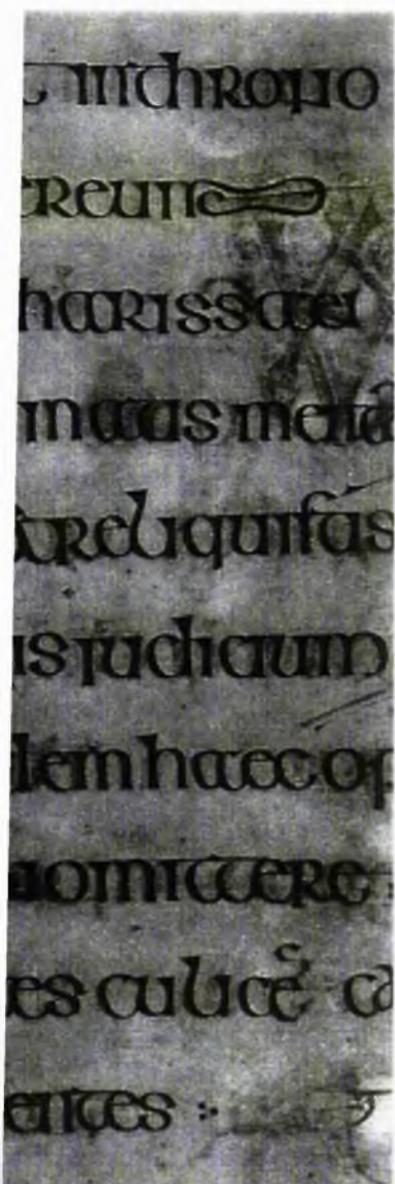
Ills. 100 Two beasts in knots. Psalm 57. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 50v.



Ills. 101 Two beasts entangled in their tongues. Psalm 55. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 49r.



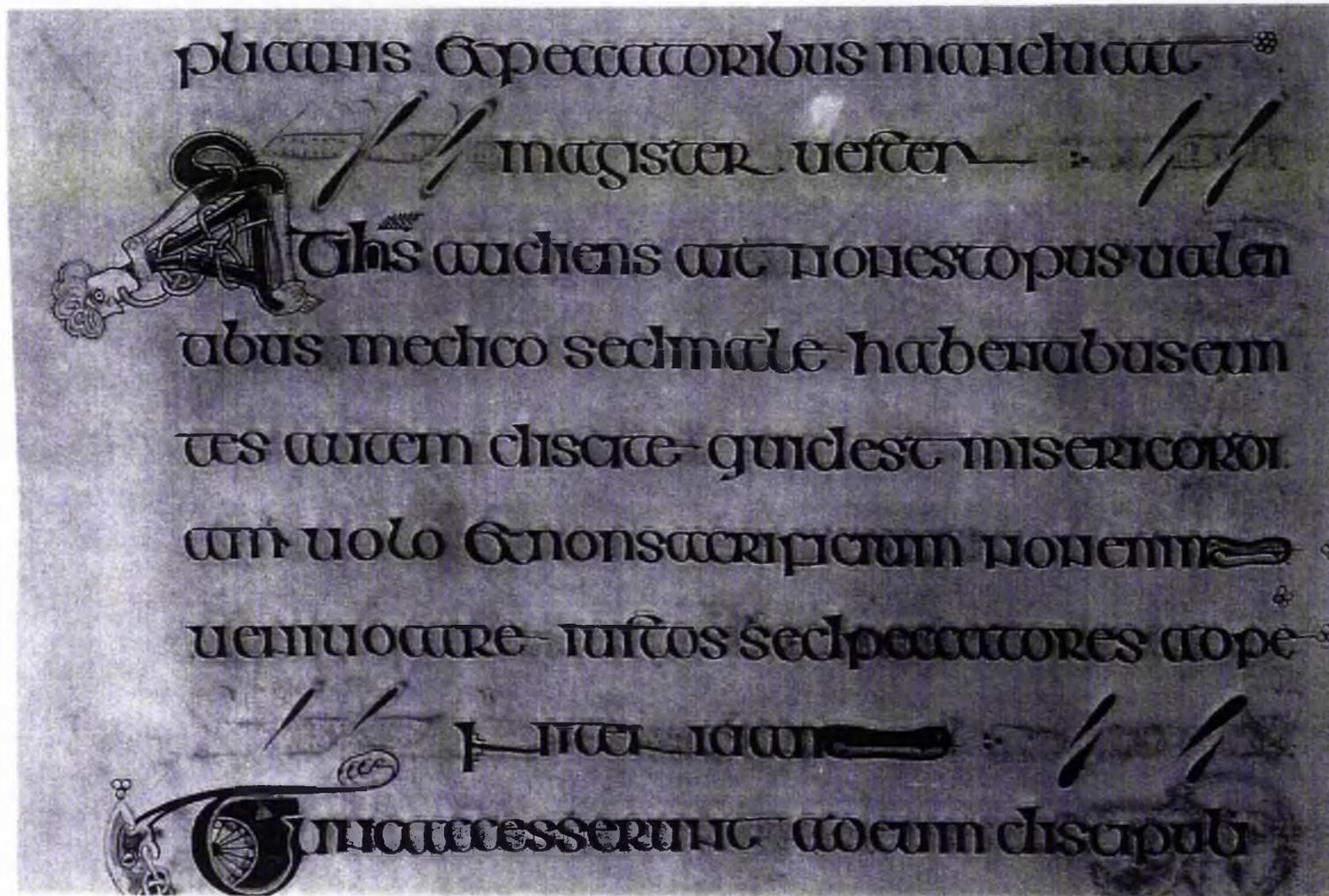
Ills. 102 Initials at Luke 20:45-47. Book of Kells, folio 269v.



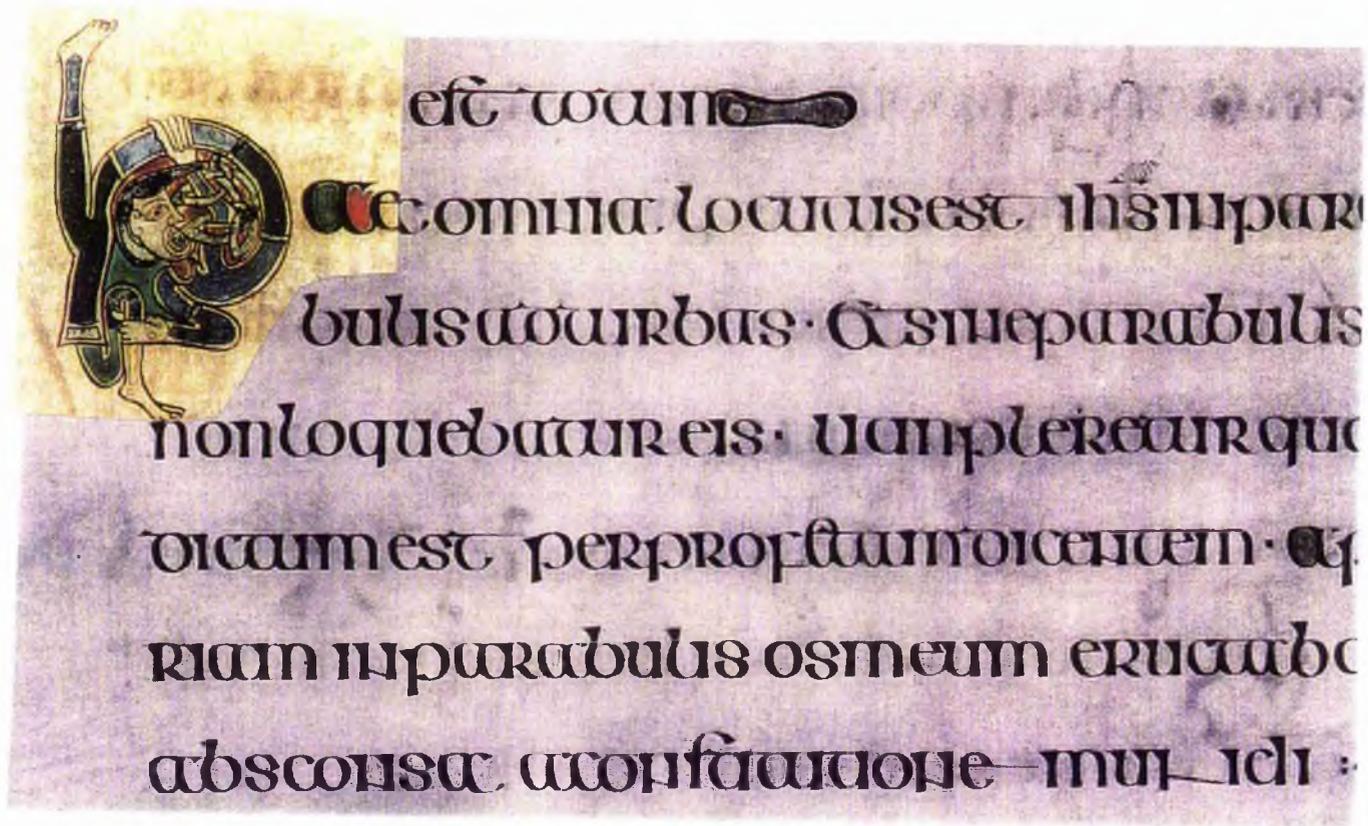
Ills. 106 Entangled figure eating hair,
initial at Matthew 23:24,
Book of Kells, folio 100v.



Ills. 107 Two entangled figures, initial at Matthew 22:34. Book of Kells, folio 97v.



Ills. 108 Figure entangled by his tongue, initial at Matthew 9:12. Book of Kells, folio 53v.



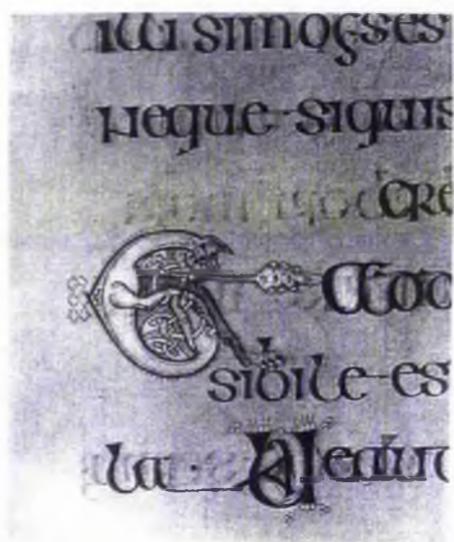
Ills. 109 Figure entangled by tongue and hair, initial at Matthew 13:34. Book of Kells, 68v.

Opportetur ab angelis in sinu

abraham



Optatus est ut huius & sepul-
cus est in inferno eleuansou
los suos cum esse & tormentis inde
bat abraham a longe. Et Lazarus
in sinu eius. Cuius & clamans dicit
pater abraham miserere me. &
mitte Lazarum ut annuntiet ecce
munus dignum sui in aqua ut refrigeret
linguam meam quia cruciatu
flamma. Et dicit illi abraham pater
recondere. Quia recipis bonum in
aqua. Et Lazarus similiter mala
punit autem hic consulari tu uero
cruciaris. Cum his omnibus. Interius &
nos chaos in aqua primatum est.



Ills. 111 Entangled beast initial at Luke 17:1. Book of Kells, 255r.



Ills. 112 Entangled man, beast and bird initial. Monk rides across line of text. Luke 17:3. Book of Kells, folio 255v.



Ills. 113 Entangled man and beast, above another man at prayer, Psalm 35. Corbie Psalter (Amiens, Bibliothèque Municipale 18), folio 31r.



Ills. 114 Hell page. Book of Kells, folio 188r.



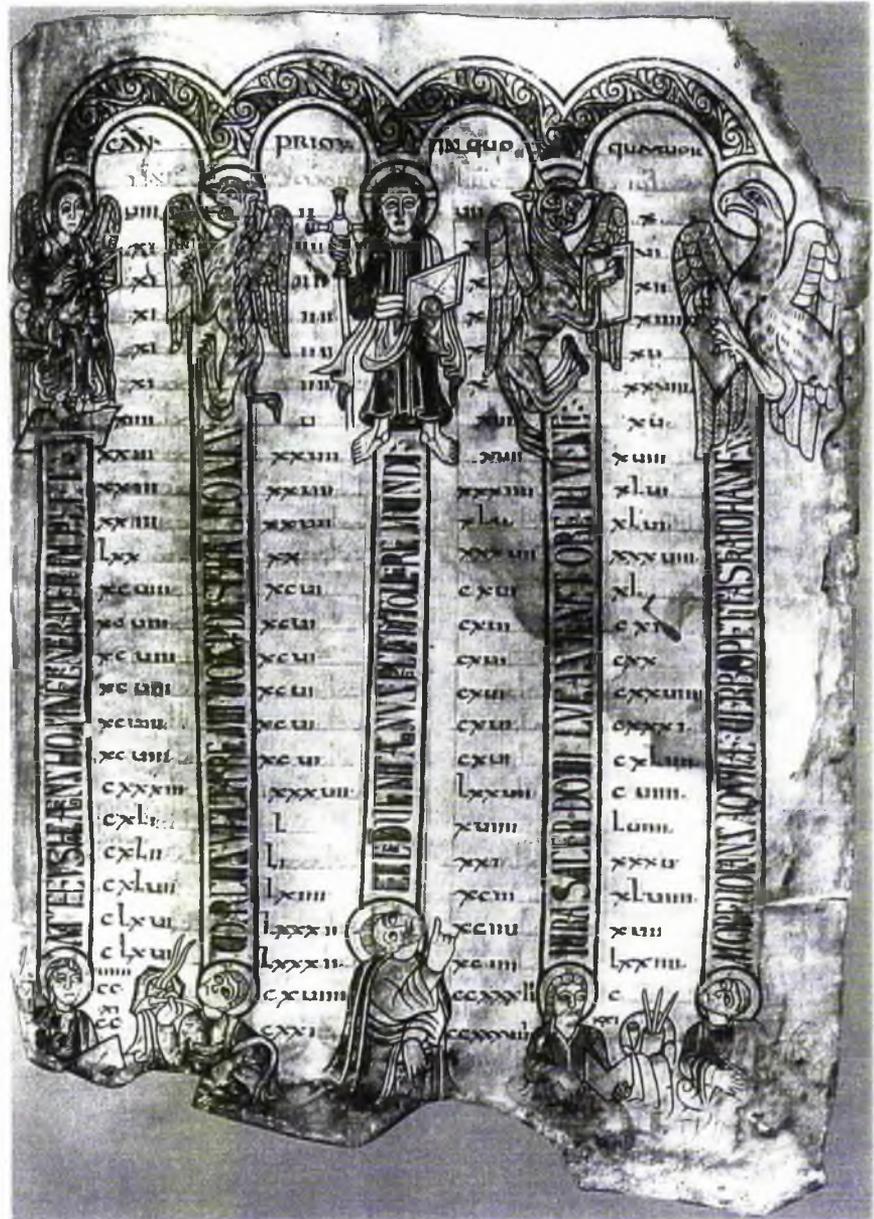
Ills. 115 Mark Incipit. Book of Kells, folio 130r.



Ills. 116 Detail, Hell page. Book of Kells, folio 188r.



Ills. 117 Hebrew Names. Book of Kells, folio 1r.



Ills. 118 Canon Tables. Flaviyng Gospels (Autun, Bibliothèque Municipale, 4),

folio 8r.



Ils. 119 Two clerics look at book, Christ and angels standing behind them.

Cross at Durrow, East Face.



Ills. 120 Cross at Durrow, East Face, shaft.



Ills. 121 Cross at Durrow, East Face, Head.



Ills. 122 Cross at Durrow, West face, shaft and head.



Ills. 123b Canon Tables. Book of Kells, folio 3r.



Ills. 123a Canon Tables. Book of Kells, folio 2v.



Ills. 124a Canon Tables. Book of Kells, folio, 3v.



Ills. 124b Canon Tables. Book of Kells, folio 4r.



Ills. 125 Cross at Arboe, East face.



Ills. 126 Cross at Monasterboice, East face.



Ills. 127 Crucifixion and Christ as Pilot of the Church.
Würzburg Universitätsbibliothek Codex M. p.th.f.69, folio 7v.

hic quid caelo discedi : MURINUR
Respondit ergo ih̄s et dixit eis uobis
in uicem meo potest uenire et me
si pater qui misit me traxerit eum et
resuscitabo eum in nouissimo die. **S**
cimus enim in profetis et scriuit omnes uer-
bales diuinitatis qui audiuit a patre et
dicit ueritatem : **N**isi is qui est
Non quia patrem uidit quisquam
uero hinc dicit patrem : :
Quia enim dico uobis qui credidit
in me habet uitam aeternam
Et osum panis uitae patres uestri
manducauerunt manna in deserto
et mortui sunt : **E**t ex ipso in manu
Dicit panis de caelo discedis ut si quis
cruerit non moriatur : **E**t
osum panis uiuus qui de caelo dis-