The making of the Book of Kells:
two Masters and two Campaigns

Vol. I - Text and Illustrations

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Declaration:

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at any other university, and that it is entirely my own work.

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Donncha MacGabhann

Abstract

This thesis investigates the number of individuals involved in the making of the Book of Kells. It demonstrates that only two individuals, identified as the Scribe-Artist and the Master-Artist, were involved in its creation. It also demonstrates that the script is the work of a single individual - the Scribe-Artist. More specific questions are answered regarding the working relationships between the book's creators and the sequence of production. This thesis also demonstrates that the manuscript was created over two separate campaigns of work. The comprehensive nature of this study focuses on all aspects of the manuscript including, script, initials, display-lettering, decoration and illumination.

The first part of chapter one outlines the main questions addressed in this thesis. This is followed by a summary of the main conclusions and ends with a summary of the chapter-structure. The second part of chapter one presents a literature review and the final section outlines the methodologies used in the research.

Chapter two is devoted to the script and illumination of the canon tables. The resolution of a number of problematic issues within this series of tables in Kells is essential to an understanding of the creation of the manuscript and the roles played by the individuals involved. These issues include the scribal and artistic attribution of these pages, the iconography, the impracticality of the layout of some tables and also their completion over two separate campaigns of work. Within the limitations of this study it is not possible to include a comprehensive analysis of all the illuminated pages. Instead, the discussion of the illumination in the canon tables in chapter two serves as a case-study which is representative of the collaborative working patterns of the creators of the manuscript.

Chapter three is a detailed analysis entirely dedicated to the script. This demonstrates conclusively that it is the work of a single individual - the Scribe-Artist.

Chapter four continues this investigation addressing script-related issues, both textual and decorative. It is argued that analysis of these issues also clearly identify the work as that of the Scribe-Artist.

The fifth chapter deals with the initials and the display-lettering. This makes the case that, with a small number of exceptions attributed to the Master-Artist, these are also the work of the Scribe-Artist. The artistic skill of this latter individual is also identified in chapter five. This is clearly demonstrated through analysis of the links between the initials and the script and also the relationship between the initals and the illumination.

Chapter six deals with aspects of the second campaign, and in particular, argues that some of this may be understood as a later and final phase of work.

The seventh chapter examines the outcomes of this research within the specific cultural and historical contexts of the period. Conclusions are presented in chapter eight.

include Kristin Lindfield-Ott and James MacPherson, Donnel and Janet O'Flynn, Rev. Seán Fennelly, Michael Quinlan (*cara a spreag*) and his son Micheál (for IT advice). Others to provide invaluable technical help include Diarmuid O'Sullivan and Philip Coleman. Thank you to Peter Furniss and his calligraphy colleagues and to Tony Storan at the Limerick Studies Archive. Thanks also to my many kind neighbours and loyal friends for keeping me grounded throughout this time.

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While acknowledging the support, assistance and advice of those I have mentioned above, I must claim full responsibility for any errors that persist.

I would like to thank The Board of Trinity College Dublin and Bertelsmann Publishing for permission to reproduce images from the Faksimile Verlag facsimile

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to two remarkable individuals with whom, to some extent at least, I have become acquainted. It has been an immense privilege to have had this opportunity to explore the work of the Scribe-Artist and the Master-Artist. I can only hope that I have helped to reveal something of the remarkable story of your creation of the Book of Kells - a masterpiece that continues to inspire after more than twelve hundred years.

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Chapter 1

THESIS OUTLINE, LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The first part of this chapter begins **(i)** by outlining the main questions addressed in this thesis. This is followed by a summary of the main conclusions and ends with a summary of the chapter-structure of the thesis. The second part **(ii)** presents a literature review and the final section **(iii)** outlines the methodologies used in the research.

(i) Thesis outline

This thesis investigates the number of individuals involved in the making of the Book of Kells.[1]It demonstrates that only two individuals were involved in its creation and that the script is the work of a single scribe. This research led to an intimate understanding of the scribal and artistic practice evident in the manuscript. More specific questions are answered regarding the working relationships between the book's creators, the sequence of production and also regarding the two separate campaigns of work in which the manuscript was created. The comprehensive nature of this study focuses on all aspects of the manuscript including, script, initials, display-lettering, decoration and illumination. The attribution of the minor decoration has been comprehensively addressed. However, due to the limitations of this study, it has not been possible to do this for all of the major

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[1] Dublin, Trinity College, MS 58 (The Book of Kells).

illumination. This has been fully addressed in the canon tables, and this analysis stands as a case-study for the rest of this work in the manuscript.

Summary of thesis conclusions

To facilitate the narrative flow of the text, and for the reader's convenience, the main conclusions of the thesis are presented here. The evidence in this research reveals that the manuscript is entirely the creation of two individuals who worked in close collaboration. These are identified here as the Master-Artist and the Scribe-Artist, names which reflect their respective contributions in the making of the manuscript.

The Master-Artist is responsible for such finely wrought and precisely executed illuminations as the eight-circle cross page (f.33r) and the *Chi-Rho* page (f.34r). The minute detail and precision of his work is also evident in a small number of zoomorphic initials and some display-lettering. With the exception of those just mentioned, the Scribe-Artist is responsible for all of the initials, the display-lettering, a significant amount of illumination and the script in its entirety. The Scribe-Artist's work is identified by the following defining characteristics:

- a constant predilection for variation

- the presence throughout the book of unique variant motifs/features and letterforms

- the merging of variant motifs/features and letterforms

- the consistently random distribution of any variant letterform or motif/feature

- the consistent lack of a systematic approach to distribution and also to variation

- clustering of particular variant letterforms or motifs/features (may occur on the same page or over a number of neighbouring pages)

- consistency of 'calligraphic imagination' (the signature style evident throughout the constant variation

- consistency in stroke-making: ductus, aspect, weight and pen-angle

The manuscript was created in two distinct campaigns of work separated by an indeterminate interval of time. However, only the Scribe-Artist worked in the second of these campaigns. It is also possible to identify a later, and final phase of work by the Scribe-Artist at the end of the second campaign.

Chapter-structure of the thesis

Chapter two is devoted to the script and illumination of the canon tables. The resolution of a number of problematic issues within this series of tables in Kells is essential to an understanding of the creation of the manuscript and the roles played by the individuals involved. These issues include the scribal and artistic attribution of these pages, the iconography, the impracticality of the layout of some tables and also their completion over two separate campaigns of work. Within the limitations of this study it is not possible to include a comprehensive analysis of all the illuminated pages. Instead, the discussion of the illumination in the canon tables in chapter two serves as a case-study which is representative of the collaborative working patterns of the creators of the manuscript.

Chapter three is a detailed analysis entirely dedicated to the script. This demonstrates conclusively that it is the work of a single scribe - the Scribe-Artist. Chapter four continues this investigation addressing script-related issues, both textual and decorative. It is argued that analysis of these issues also clearly identify the work as that of the Scribe-Artist. The fifth chapter deals with the initials and the display-lettering. This

makes the case that, with a small number of exceptions, these are also the work of the Scribe-Artist. The artistic skill of this individual is also identified in chapter five. This is clearly demonstrated through analysis of the links between the initials and the script and also the relationship between the initals and the illumination. Chapter six deals with aspects of the second campaign, and in particular, argues that some of this may be understood as a later and final phase of work. The seventh chapter examines the outcomes of this research within the specific cultural and historical contexts of the period. The thesis conclusions are presented in the eighth and final chapter.

(ii) Literature review

This review of literature is presented in four separate parts. The first part addresses literature that deals with Insular art generally, particularly that which includes Kells, and also that which attempts a graphic analysis of this work. The second part looks at literature relating to the analysis of script while part three examines the literature which deals with scribal and artistic attribution in the Book of Kells. Finally, part four examines the world of digital technologies for developments that may be applied to the analysis of script and illumination.

Insular art and its graphic analysis

The nineteenth century witnessed a great upsurge in antiquarianism and this included interest in early manuscripts. Although new technologies and further scholarship have greatly enhanced our knowledge and understanding in the meantime, the pioneering work

of these individuals is still worthy of respect and attention. Among these are John

Obidiah Westwood, Margaret Stokes, John Gilbert, Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, Rev.

Stanford Robinson, John Romilly Allen and Edward Sullivan. Following the ground-

breaking work of these individuals are more recent studies such as those by George Bain,

Mark van Stone, Robert Stevick and Derek Hull. The work of Rupert Bruce-Mitford and

Michelle Brown in relation to the Lindisfarne Gospels is also very significant for our

understanding of the art in Kells.

Westwood's early publication, *Palaeographia Sacra Pictoria*, was intended as

'the historical investigation of the Sacred Text of the Bible through the darkness of the

middle ages'.[2] This wide-ranging volume included two chromo-lithographic colour plates

showing his own illustrations of aspects of the script and the illumination from the Book

of Kells. While his account of Kells is necessarily brief in this survey volume he does

briefly touch on the issue of scribal attribution by noting that part of the *argumenta* and

breves causae in Kells are 'beautifully written in a narrower and more recent hand'.[3]

Also relevant here is Westwood's slightly later publication, again, mainly of chromo-

lithographic colour reproductions of his drawings and tracings from Insular manuscripts:

Fac-similes of the miniatures and ornaments of Anglo-Saxon and Irish manuscripts.[4] This

has four pages devoted to Kells.

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[2] J. O. Westwood, *Palaeographia Sacra Pictoria* (Wm. Smith, London, 1843). This publication is available online: https://archive.org/details/palaeographiasac00west [accessed 9th August, 2015].

[3] Ibid., on the third page in his account of Kells (p. 79 online).

[4] Westwood, *Fac-similes of the miniatures and ornaments of Anglo-Saxon and Irish manuscripts* (B. Quaritch, London, 1868), repr. by Dover Publications, New York, 2007). However, in pl.51 note his 'correction' to one of the hands gripping Christ's forearm from f.114r.

Stokes, like Westwood, an accomplished artist, published *Early Christian Art in Ireland* in which she created many of its beautiful illustrations.[5] The one hundred and six black-and-white woodcuts include some details from the Book of Kells. In the context of the present study her 'restored' chromo-lithographic version of Kells' *Chi-Rho* page in another publication is also of interest.[6] In Volume I of the *National Manuscripts of Ireland*, Gilbert included twelve pages of photozincographed images from Kells.[7] Although not colour-photography as such, these images have some added colour. Another series of photographic images from Kells, fifty black-and-white collotype plates, was published by Abbott with a preface by the author.[8] A further photographic publication is Robinson's *Celtic Illuminative Art*. This consists of four pages of black-and-white images from the Book of Durrow, six from the Lindisfarne Gospels and a total of forty-one pages of images from the Book of Kells.[9] In the context of the present study it is interesting to note Robinson's observation that in the 'more elaborately decorated pages [...] there were at least two artists engaged in the work of embellishment'.[10]

Among a number of important scholarly publications on early medieval art, Romilly Allen produced a general survey in his *Celtic Art in Pagan and Christian Times*.[11] This book is profusely illustrated with photographs, drawings and diagrams although it does not include illustrations from the manuscripts. 'On account of the

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[5] M. Stokes, *Early Christian Art in Ireland* (Chapman and Hall Ltd., London, 1894). This publication is available online: https://archive.org/texts/flipbook/flippy.php?id=earlychristianar017079mbp [accessed 9th August, 2015].

[6] *Vetusta Monumenta*, *Vol. 6* (The Society of Antiquaries of London, 1868).

[7] J. Gilbert, *The National Manuscripts of Ireland*, vol. I (Public Record Office of Ireland, Dublin, 1874). The images were selected and edited by Edward Sullivan.

[8] T. K. Abbott, *Celtic Ornaments from the Book of Kells* (Hodges, Figgis and Co. Ltd., Dublin, 1895).

[9] Rev. S. F. H. Robinson, *Celtic Illuminative art in the Gospel Books of Durrow, Lindisfarne and Kells* (Hodges, Figgis and Co., Ltd., Dublin, 1908). This publication is available online: https://archive.org/stream/celticilluminati00robi#page/n7/mode/2up [accessed 9th August, 2015].

[10] Ibid., p. xxviii introduction.

[11] J. Romilly Allen, *Celtic Art in Pagan and Christian Times* (Metheun and Co., London, 1904).

difficulty of making satisfactory reproductions of them on a small scale' the author

considered it better to refer his readers to publications such as those by Westwood

mentioned above.[12] Romilly Allen's final chapters deal with some of the artistic and

design processes involved in creating various interlace motifs, key-patterns and spiral

designs. Sullivan's *The Book of Kells* marks another development in reproducing

nineteen pages of the manuscript in full-colour photography.[13] The author's scholarly

introduction runs to forty-eight pages and includes references to the work of all the other

publications mentioned above. While Sullivan does not address the issue of scribal and

artistic attribution in a comprehensive manner he makes a number of references to his

identification of a number of different scribes (for example, pages 9, 10, 17 and 32). He

also suggests the identification of different artists on a number of occasions (for example,

pages 14, 21 and 28-29).

It is most likely that the final chapters in Romilly Allen's book were the formative

influence in developing Bain's interest in Insular art.[14] In the mid-twentieth century

Bain's enthusiasm for researching and promoting interest in the art of this period

culminated in his work on methods of artistic construction. He was actively involved in

promoting the revival of the arts of the Insular period among contemporary craft-workers

and also introducing them as part of the art curriculum within the school system. To these

ends his *Celtic Art, the methods of construction* was primarily intended as an instruction

manual. In addition to being inspired by Romilly Allen's book, Bain makes much

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[12] Ibid., p. xvii preface.

[13] E. Sullivan, *The Book of Kells* ('The Studio', London, 1914 and subsequent editions). Introduction available online: http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/bok/bok04.htm [accessed 14th August, 2015].

[14] G. Bain, *Celtic Art, the methods of construction* (Glasgow, 1951; repr. London, 2004). In the dedication at the front of the book Bain acknowledges the influence of Romilly Allen.

practical use of the illustrations in the publications mentioned above by Robinson and Sullivan.

Hull, whose background is in materials science and materials engineering, has also unravelled many of the layouts and formats used by Insular artists and craftsmen.[15] As Bain was inspired by his introduction to the work of Romilly Allen, Hull's interest in this subject was, in turn, inspired by encountering Bain's book.[16] An interesting feature of Hull's work is the incorporation of computer generated images to assist in the reconstruction of damaged or otherwise incomplete motifs. Nancy Edwards has written extensively on Insular ornament and also addresses issues relating to interlace.[17] Another scholar, coming from a background in mathematics, Michael Brennan, has recently completed research which analyses the mathematical principlals underlying the structure of interlace.[18]

Van Stone also cites the influence of Bain and Romilly Allen on the development of his own ideas regarding the ways in which Insular art and ornament were created.[19] He is a professional graphic artist and he has sought to explain and demonstrate some of the ornamental techniques used in early medieval times. In his art-practice Van Stone has created his own full-page illuminations which have allowed him to speculate on the time required to create such work.[20]

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[15] D. Hull, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Art, Geometric Aspects* (Liverpool University Press, 2003).
[16] Ibid., pp. 13-14.
[17] N. Edwards, 'Some observations on the layout and construction of abstract ornament in early Christian Irish sculpture', in F. H. Thompson ed., *Studies in Medieval Sculpture* (Society of Antiquaries, London, 1983), pp. 3–17.
[18] M. Brennan, 'The structure of interlace in Insular art c.400-1200' (unpubl. PhD thesis, University of Bangor, 2011).
[19] M. Van Stone, 'Ornamental techniques in Kells and its kin', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 234-42 (p. 241).
[20] Ibid., p. 241 and pls.79-80.

Stevick has focused on the ways in which Insular art was composed/designed and produced. Unlike Romilly Allen, Bain, Hull or Van Stone he does not concentrate on the analysis and creation of individual motifs, but rather investigates the methods underlying the overall layout and structure of the complete designs. The focus of his work as a professor of English, and in particular his analysis of early medieval narrative poems, led him initially to identify underlying mathematical proportions in this literature. He subsequently identifed similar patterns in the art of the period. This geometry of proportion rather than measurement, he refers to as 'coherent geometry'. His analysis of works created by Insular stone-carvers, metal-workers and illuminators provides a fascinating insight into how the overall composition/design of these works may have been realised.[21] In her study on interlace Mildred Budny also attempts to understand this work, not just in terms of individual motifs, but within the context of larger schemes of illumination.[22] Bruce-Mitford's detailed study of the illumination in the Lindisfarne Gospels is very important for our understanding of Kells due to the close relationships between the two manuscripts.[23] In Brown's lengthy chapter, 'The Art of the Lindisfarne Gospels', her analysis builds on, and extends, Bruce-Mitford's work, and also broadens our understanding of the extensive, and often distant, influences apparent in this art.[24]

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[21] R. Stevick, *The Earliest Irish and English Bookarts. Visual and Poetic Forms Before AD 1000* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). 'Page design of some illuminations in the Book of Kells,' in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 243–56.

[22] M. Budny, 'Deciphering the Art of Interlace,' in *From Ireland Coming - Irish Art from the Early Christian to the Late Gothic Period and Its European Context*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 183-210).

[23] R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, 'The Canon Tables', 'The Canon Tables: Discussion', 'The Insular Ornament', 'The Methods of Construction of Insular Ornament', 'Carpet-pages, Elaborate Ornamental Text Pages and Initials', 'The Insular Decoration: Discussion', 'The Pigments and Medium of the Lindisfarne Gospels', 'Comparisons with some related Manuscripts', chapters v-x, *Cod. Lind.*, pp. 174-274.

[24] M. P. Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels – Society, Spirituality and the Scribe* (The British Library in association with Faksimile Verlag, Luzern, 2003), pp. 272-394.

Meehan notes that the script and the decorated initials have not, to date, been the subject of any detailed and sustained study.[25] Similarly, Alexander suggests that our understanding of Kells' artists and scribes, and its artistic elements in general, would benefit from further investigation.[26] There are also a number of areas in the manuscript where both types of work directly interface, and these provide specific opportunities to bridge the gap between the art-historical and the palaeographical approaches. This study's examination of both script and illumination together will hopefully lead to a more complete understanding of the manuscript.

Literature relating to the analysis of script

The survey volumes produced by E. A. Lowe are a significant reference point in any palaeographical research of this kind.[27] Volume two is a comprehensive catalogue of manuscripts in Great Britain and Ireland written before the ninth century. This facilitates the study of script transmission and development in the Insular period. Similarly, the survey volume on Insular manuscripts from 600-900 by J. J. G. Alexander is another important reference point for investigations such as this.[28] This complements Lowe's book by also including illumination. Both of these publications, however, only allow for brief accounts in relation to individual manuscripts. More detailed studies such as Brown's commentary volume on the Lindisfarne Gospels provide useful exemplars for

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[25] Meehan, 'The Script', in P. Fox, *et al*., ed., *The Book of Kells, MS 58, Trinity College Library Dublin,* 2 vols., facsimile and commentary (Faksimile Verlag, Luzern, 1990), pp. 245-56 (p. 245). This book will subsequently be identified as *Kells Commentary*.

[26] J. J. G. Alexander, 'The Illumination', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 265-89 (p. 287).

[27] E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, 11 vols. and Supplement (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1934-72). *Part 2: Great Britain and Ireland*. A database of the manuscripts in Lowe's work is available online at: http://www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Lowe_1935a [accessed 14th August, 2015].

[28] Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts 6th to the 9th Century* (London, 1978).

undertaking a more sustained investigation.[29] In particular, the methodology outlined in

her study on the Book of Cerne has been helpful in framing the present palaeographical

analysis.[30] Julian Brown made significant contributions in his work on Insular

palaeography including a classification for the Insular system of scripts.[31] More

specifically, his comprehensive description of the script in the Lindisfarne Gospels has

helped to provide a template for many of these aspects of the research in the present

study.[32] Other important studies on the development of Insular script include those by

Dumville,[33] Ó Cróinín,[34] O'Sullivan,[35] and Schaumann.[36]

Other books of relevance to this investigation are the facsimiles and

commentaries on The Book of Durrow and the Durham Gospels.[37] George Henderson's

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[29] M. P. Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels – Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*.

[30] M. P. Brown, *The Book of Cerne – Prayer, Patronage and Power in Ninth-Century England* (The British Library and University of Toronto Press, 1996), especially pp. 24-27. See also M. P. Brown, 'From Columba to Cormac: the contribution of Irish scribes to the Insular system of scripts', in *Settimana di studio L'irlanda e gli irlandesi nell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 2010), pp. 623-46, and M. P. Brown, 'Writing in the Insular World', in *A History of the Book in Britain Volume 1: From the Romans to the Normans*, ed. R. G. Gameson (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012), pp. 121-66. More generally, this author's other publications on scripts and manuscripts were also particularly useful: *A Guide to Western Historical Scripts from Antiquity to 1600* (British Library, London, 1990), *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts - a guide to technical terms* (British Library, London, 1994) and *The British Library Guide to Writing and Scripts - history and techniques* (British Library, London, 1998).

[31] T. J. Brown, 'Tradition, Imitation and Invention in Insular Handwriting of the Seventh and Eighth Centuries' (unpubl. Chambers Memorial Lecture, University College, London, 1978-9), in J. Bately, M. P. Brown, J. Roberts eds., *A Palaeographer's View – Selected Writings of Julian Brown* (Harvey Miller Publications, 1993), pp.179-200. 'The Irish Element in the Insular System of Scripts to circa A.D.850', in H. Loewe ed., *Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1982, 1), pp.101-19. See also B. Schauman, 'Early Irish Manuscripts, The Art of the Scribes', in *Expedition Magazine*, vol.21, no.3 (Penn Museum, Spring 1979).

[32] T. J. Brown, 'Description, First Part', in *Cod. Lind.*, pp. 61-74.

[33] D. Dumville, *A Palaeographer's Review* (Institute of Oriental and Occidental Studies, Kansai University, Suita, Osaka, 1999).

[34] D. Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland* (Longman, Harlow, 1995), pp. 169-73 and , 'Augsburg Gospel Codex ', in *St. Cuthbert, his cult and his community* pp.189-201.

[35] W. O'Sullivan, 'The palaeographical background to the Book of Kells', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 175-82.

[36] B. Schauman, 'Early Irish manuscripts – the art of the scribes', Expedition Magazine, vol.21, no.3, spring 1979 (Penn Museum), pp. 33-47.

[37] A. A. Luce, G. O. Simms, P. Meyer and L. Bieler, *Evangeliorum Quattuor Codex Durmachensis,* 2 vols. (Olten and Lausanne, 1960). C. D. Verey, T. J. Brown, E. Coatsworth, *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile,* vol. XX (Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1980). See also T. O'Neill, *The Irish Hand, scribes and their manuscripts from the earliest times* (Cork University Press, 2014).

account of the Insular Gospel books from the years 650-800 is also particularly important as it traces the development of Insular manuscript art and script in the period of most signifcance for the present study.[38] Françoise Henry proposes the identification of a number of different artists involved in the making of Kells in her *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period*,[39] however she does not discuss scribal attribution until her later monograph on Kells.[40]

Literature relating to scribal practices, scriptoria and individual scribes for the Insular Art period is very limited. This is largely due to a dearth of contemporary information either, for example, in the Annals or in the manuscripts themselves. When evidence of this kind is present in manuscripts, it cannot be assumed that it is either accurate or contemporary. The later addition of spurious colophons, for example the erased and rewritten lines on f.247v in the Book of Durrow, illustrates this.[41]

Literature relating to scribal and artistic attribution

in the Book of Kells

The antiquarian studies mentioned above tend to be general in scope and do not discuss at any length issues such as artistic and scribal attribution. In addition, these publications are more focused on the art in the manuscripts and rarely address issues relating to script. A few notable, if brief, exceptions were noted above in the work of Westwood and

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[38] G. Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells, The Insular Gospel-books 650-800* (Thames and Hudson, London, 1987).

[39] F. Henry, *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period* (Methuen & Co., London, 1940, repr. 1947), pp. 144-49 (1947 edn.).

[40] Henry, *The Book of Kells* (Thames and Hudson, 1974), pp. 154-57.

[41] Meehan, *The Book of Durrow* (Town House, Dublin, 1996), pp. 26-28.

Robinson.[42] However, apart from occasional comments such as these none of the earlier

literature addresses issues of scribal or artistic attribution in any detail.

Since the middle of the last century the attribution of work in Kells, in particular

scribal work, has been addressed by many scholars including E. A. Lowe (via

Bischoff),[43] Peter Meyer,[44] Julian Brown,[45] Françoise Henry,[46] J. J. G. Alexander,[47] and

most recently Bernard Meehan.[48] Their opinions vary on the number of contributors,

from Julian Brown's one 'great scribe', to Lowe's several, to Henry's three and to

Meehan's proposal of four (or possibly more) different scribal hands.[49] Meehan's

identification of different scripts, variations in script size and letterforms leads him to the

conclusion that there are different hands. Conversely, Brown's observation of

'consistency in the minor details' inclines him to believe that there may be fewer than

this and possibly only one scribe.[50] In her paper delivered at the 1992 conference on the

book at Trinity College Dublin, palaeographer Erika Eisenlohr applied methods of

quantitative analysis to substantiate Meehan's four-scribe theory. Eisenlohr's limited

analysis failed to yield satisfactory findings although she concluded by supporting

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[42] See footnotes 3 and 10 above.

[43] E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1935), no.274 (p. 43). In a *pers. comm.* (May, 2014) Prof. David Ganz noted that in his capacity as Lowe's assistant Bernhard Bischoff dealt with the manuscripts located in Ireland. He cites his reading of Bischoff's corespondence with Lowe (in the Morgan Library and Museum, New York), stating that this makes it clear how much of *CLA* was largely Bischoff's own work.

[44] P. Meyer, 'Notes on the art and ornament of the Book of Kells,' in E. H. Alton and P. Meyer eds., *Evangeliorum quattuor codex Cenannensis,* vol. III (Berne, Urs Graf, 1950-1), pp. 25-52.

[45] T. J. Brown, 'Northumbria and the Book of Kells', in *Anglo-Saxon England* 1 (1972), pp. 219-46.

[46] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, pp. 154-57.

[47] Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, pp. 71-76.

[48] Meehan, 'The Division of Hands in the Book of Kells', in *The Book of Kells. Proceedings of a Conference at Trinity College Dublin, 6-9 September 1992,* F. O'Mahony, ed. (Aldershot, Scolar Press, 1994), pp. 183-95. This book will subsequently be identified as *Conference Proceedings*.

[49] Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (Thames and Hudson, London, 2012), p. 212. Here Meehan suggests that perhaps a fifth hand, Scribe E, 'awaits identification'.

[50] T. J. Brown, 'Northumbria and the Book of Kells', in *Anglo-Saxon England* 1 (1972), pp. 219-46, (pp. 231 and 236).

Meehan's scheme. However, in her concluding remarks she states that the 'the puzzle of the scribes remains unsolved'.[51] Meehan's four-scribe scheme has become generally accepted as is reflected in the more recent scholarship on the Book of Kells.[52]

Similarly there is no clear agreement regarding the number of artists and their contributions or whether in fact these artists are also scribes. Surprisingly little has been written on the issue of artistic attribution in Kells. Meehan states that 'it is remarkable that so few scholars have committed themselves, however tentatively, to the question of the artists, and to the allied problem of the number of scribes who worked on the manuscript'.[53] Henry, Meehan and Alexander offer differing schemes but none of these studies attempt to address the issue in a comprehensive manner.[54] A number of the illuminated pages are not attributed to a specific artist by any of the commentators.[55]

Digital technologies relating to the
analysis of script and illumination

The digital technologies used for manuscript analysis are in an early stage of development. The nature of the variation, for example, in the script in Kells, would probably complicate any such analysis of the manuscript. Software programmes

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[51] E. Eisenlohr, 'The Puzzle of the Scribes: some palaeographical observations', in *Conference Proceedings,* pp.196-208.

[52] Meehan, 'The division of hands'', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 183. Meehan notes that 'there has been no published disagreement [...] with Henry's division of hands'. For instances of recent scholarship referring to the four-scribe scheme, see, for example, R. Stalley, 'Iona, the Vikings and the making of the Book of Kells', *History Ireland*, Issue 3 May/June 2013, vol.21, pp. 14-17 (p. 14) and Timothy O'Neill, *The Irish Hand* (Cork University Press, 2014), pp. 22 and 83.

[53] Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (Thames and Hudson, 1994), p.78. He reiterates this in his most recent publication by stating that 'clearly further study is needed', Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (Thames and Hudson, 2012), p. 218. See also footnote 25 above.

[54] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 183-95 (see list on p. 195), Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 212 and Alexander, 'The Illumination', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 285-87.

[55] These include the canon tables ff.1v-4v, ff.29v-31r, f.114v, f.124r, 183r, 187v, 203r and f.285r.

predicated on finding a high degree of consistency in the work of an individual might find the scribal performance in Kells an unsuitable subject for such analysis. This will be discussed further below. However, while these technologies are in their infancy, they are undoubtedly adding to the diagnostic toolbox for research in relation to many aspects of Insular art generally and manuscripts in particular. Optical Character Recognition, Automated Layout and Character Analysis, and various methods of digital image enhancement were among the cutting-edge analytical technologies on which papers were presented at a recent conference on Digital Palaeography at the University of Würzburg in Germany in July 2011.[56] The ongoing research projects and new developments in these areas form an exciting chapter in the literature of palaeographic analysis. The Genizah Project is one such initiative attempting to deal with over 250,000 manuscript fragments scattered worldwide in over seventy-five libraries and private collections. Harnessing the potential of digital palaeographical technologies, this project aims to 'join' widely scattered parts of individual manuscripts.[57]

To the forefront in recent years has been the work of the Department of Digital Humanities at King's College London and in particular the contribution of Peter Stokes.[58] Stokes is the principal investigator with the *Digital Resource and Database for Palaeography, Manuscripts and Diplomatic (DigiPal)* at King's College and is also

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[56] D. Ó Cróinín, summary of the workshop: http://lists.digitalhumanities.org/pipermail/humanist/2011-August/002383.html [accessed on August 4th 2015].

[57] L. Wolf, N. Dershowitz, L. Potikha, T. German, R. Shweka, and Y. Choueka. Kodikologie und Paläographie im digitalen Zeitalter 2 - Codicology and Palaeography in the Digital Age 2: Schriften des Instituts für Dokumentologie und Editorik 3, chapter Automatic Palaeographic Exploration of Genizah Manuscripts, pages 157–179. Norderstedt: Books on Demand, Germany, 2011, https://www.academia.edu/572010/Automatic_Paleographic_Exploration_of_Genizah_Manuscripts [accessed August 10th, 2015].

[58] P. Stokes, 'Palaeography and Image Processing: Some Solutions and some Problems', *Digital Medievalist* 3 (2007/8). www.digitalmedievalist.org/journal/3/stokes/ [accessed May 12th 2012].

involved in developing software tools for the analysis of hands and viewing images.[59]

This quantitative research involves processes described as 'feature extraction' and 'data mining'. This data is used to build extensive databases of script samples and individual letters from a corpus of manuscripts which can then be used in attempting to establish their attribution to different hands.[60] The visual evidence in the illustrations which accompany the present research constitute an analogous form of 'data mining', more 'manual' than 'digital', which mirrors that described above to some extent, although here it is largely confined to gathering evidence from a single source, the Book of Kells.

Much of the research in this study has been predicated on practical approaches including drawing and tracing letters, decorative motifs and details of illumination.[61] This process has generated an intimate knowledge and understanding of the script and decoration in the manuscript. While this work has been aided by the use of digital enhancements and enlargements it is beyond the scope of the present research to engage with the more recent developments in the application of digital technologies in scribal and artistic identification. However, technologies involving aspects of Optical Character Recognition, for example, if applied to the evidence in the present research, might provide an interesting comparative study. Another research programme of particular interest in this respect is *Quill*, which is a product of the Artificial Intelligence

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[59] Stokes, Sole analyst and developer: *HandAnalyser* and *ImageViewer* software (first 'alpha' release 30th September 2009) [Java software for quantitative palaeographical analysis and for enhancing images of damaged manuscripts]. See P. Stokes, 'Computer-Aided Palaeography, present and future', in *Kodikologie und Paläographie im Digitalen Zeitalter – Codicology and Palaeography in the Digital Age*, eds. M. Rehbein, P. Sahle and T. Schassan in collaboration with B. Assmann, F. Fischer and C. Fritze. Schriften des Instituts für Dokumentologie und Editorik 2. Nordestedt: Books on Demand, 2009. 309-338 [all accessed May 12th 2012].
[60] The digital technologies in this research are still in development and are presently focused on eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon script.
[61] See methodology below.

Department at the University of Groningen.[62] This measures the difference of width between the thinnest and the thickest ink traces in writing strokes and uses this information to identify the work of particular scribes. It would be of great interest if the evidence presented in this study of the script in Kells was subjected to such analysis. However, these are all major funded projects, and it will take some time before their outcomes and methodologies can be exported and interfaced with individual academic projects.

The more recent developments in the field of digital technologies, briefly discussed above, are largely based on strategies of quantitative analyses. These build on and extend the work of scholars such as Gilbert Ouy in the nineteen-seventies and eighties, who pioneered the application of quantitative approaches to palaeographical research.[63] The present study can perhaps be identified more with the qualitative approach in the tradition developed by scholars such as Ludwig Traube, E. A. Lowe and T. J. Brown.[64] These emphasise more traditional art-historical approaches which are based on visual and aesthetic appreciation and favour the intuitive response of the dedicated observer. However, these methodologies are never entirely mutually exclusive and the present study incorporates significant elements of quantitative analysis. As mentioned above, it is the present author's opinion that the particular nature of much of the scribal work in Kells could not easily be subjected to digital analysis. Attempts in this

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[62] A. A. Brink *et al*., Writer identification using directional ink-trace width measurements, Pattern Recognition (2011), doi:10.1016/patcog.2011.07.005 [accessed May 12th 2012].

[63] G. Ouy and C. M. Reno, 'Identification des autographes de Christine de Pizan', in *Scriptorium* 34 (1980), pp. 221-38.

[64] L. Traube, *Vorlesungen und Abhandlungen*, 1-3 (Munich, 1909-20). E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, 11 vols. and Supplement (Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1934-72). T. J. Brown, 'Latin Palaeography since Traube', The inaugural address, Chair of Palaeography in the University of London, 1962 - in eds., J. Bately, M. Brown and J. Roberts, *A Palaeographer's View, selected writings of Julian Brown* (Harvey Miller, London, 1993), pp. 17-37.

study to categorize features were never entirely successful as there is usually an abundance of variants and their distribution is random. There is also much overlap between variants, and boundaries are often blurred. In addition, there is the identification of two distinct campaigns of work, in the later of which there is a deterioration in quality (damage and the effects of ageing on the manuscript would also need to taken into consideration). Factors such as these, which undermine attempts at simple categorization, would probably complicate or frustrate contemporary analyses that are digitally based. However, as mentioned above, a future study based on some of these digital technologies may prove to complement the methodologies used here.

Of interest to the present study is Sayandeep Purkayasth's project on the Book of Kells begun in 2011. This is a cross-disciplinary collaboration between the School of Computer Science and Statistics in association with the School of Histories and Humanities at T.C.D.[65] The project investigates the application of a number of analytical tools and uses samples of script and illumination from Kells as case-studies. However, these technologies and their application to manuscript analysis are very much in their infancy. The conclusions drawn from this research are more immediately useful to the refinement of these technologies rather than contributing to our understanding of Kells.[66] Harnessing and developing the potential of digital technologies in cross-disciplinary studies such as these will, in future, hopefully add significantly to the ways in which Insular art and script may be investigated and understood.

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[65] S. Purkayasth, 'A hierarchical image processing approach to analysis of early medieval manuscript art' (unpubl. thesis, T.C.D., 2015).
[66] Ibid., 106-11.

(iii) Methodology

To understand a work of art, you must look at it.[67]

To date the scholarship dealing with the creators of the Book of Kells has for the most part been based on general impressions.[68] Typically, these have been brief accounts in wide-ranging monographs on the book and also one other slightly longer account presented by Meehan at the 1992 T.C.D. conference which was devoted entirely to the Book of Kells. To make further progress in understanding the making of the book it was considered essential to undertake a sustained and detailed analysis of the script, the initials, the display-lettering and the illumination. The methodology employed in this thesis was refined over a number of years by continuous recursive analysis of the manuscript. The principal methodology underlying the investigation involved a comprehensive, fine-grained close-reading of the entire manuscript. The evidence gained in the course of this process was then evaluated and compared with the existing scholarship relating to scribal and artistic attribution. The comprehensive nature of the research in this thesis is unprecedented in the study of the Book of Kells.

In relation to the script some of the more traditional differentiators for hand identification as devised by scholars such as Jean Mallon, for example, that of *modulus* - the dimensions of letters – were not particularly useful, as frequently, in Kells, letters of different size occur on the same page.[69] Indeed, as will become apparent in this study, certain aspects of the scribal work in the manuscript appear to confound or frustrate just such traditional palaeographic approaches. Léon Gilissen's modification of Mallon's

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[67]This paraphrases the advice of a most influential tutor (Paul O'Reilly M.A.) during the present author's time as a student at Limerick School of Art and Design (1978-82).

[68] Eisenlohr, 'The puzzle of the scribes', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 196-208 (p. 196).

[69] J. Mallon, *Paléographie romaine* (Madrid: Instituto Antonio de Nebrija, 1952).

scheme to include *style*, perhaps more closely approximates the approaches used here.[70]

Aspects of the various palaeographic approaches mentioned above have, of course,

informed the present research. However, ultimately the unique nature of the scribal

performance in Kells dictated the 'customised' terms in which it could be analysed. This

methodology used Meehan's four-scribe scheme as a benchmark.[71] Searches were

conducted across the widest possible range of features. The evidence from these searches

was categorized and analysed to determine whether it could be considered to support the

four-scribe scheme or whether it suggested alternative interpretations.

The approaches taken in the present study are grounded in the experiences gained

from the present author's career as an artist and art-teacher. As an art-teacher one is

constantly attuned to the idiosyncrasies of each student's work. This art-teaching post

typically involved engagement with up to one hundred pupils at any one time. However,

familiarity and constant engagement with their artistic output as it developed over their

years of schooling enabled one to recognise the characteristic traits in their work. The

development of this sensibility to the signature marks of students' work has proved to be

one of the 'apprenticeship requirements' essential to undertaking this research. For

example, this practised sensibility was invaluable in identifying often concealed and

disparate elements as the work of the same individual.

Prior to this formal academic project, the present author gained a significant

degree of familiarity with the work of one of the individuals involved in the creation of

the book of Kells - the Master-Artist. This intimate knowledge was acquired through

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[70] L. Gilissen, *L'expertise des écritures médiévales: recherche d'une méthode avec application à un manuscript du XIème siècle: le lectionnaire de Lobbes (Codex Bruxellensis 18018)* (Ghent: Story-Scientia, 1973).

[71] B. Meehan, 'The Script', in *Kells Commentary,* pp. 249-56. See also Meehan, 'The Division of Hands in the Book of Kells', in *Conference Proceedings,* pp. 183-95. See footnote 49 above.

many hours spent working on a 'restoration' of the damaged and missing areas of his *Chi-Rho* page. Working on this 'restoration' necessitated analysis of other aspects of the manuscript which in turn led to the recognition of recurring features throughout the book. This prompted the undertaking of a series of scans which involved methodically combing each of the 680 pages, usually for several of these features at a time. During these searches, others features became apparent and demanded similar attention.[72] These were noted and another scan was initiated and the cycle continued as further recurring features were revealed. Initially the more prominent and the most frequently used features were identified such as, for example, the letter *m* with extended curved-concave elaborations. However, as the process continued, less obvious and less common details came to light. In this way a more specifically detailed categorization was built-up. For example, the instances of the letter *m* with extended curved-concave elaborations were usefully sub-divided into twenty-two groups (figs.3.259-80). Ultimately the whole process produced a comprehensive close visual-reading of the scribal and artistic work. An increasingly more intimate knowledge and understanding was built up of both the script and the illumination and their extensive repertoire of calligraphic and decorative effects.

It is instructive to describe a particular instance of how 'hidden' aspects of the scribal performance were revealed. Analysis of the script initially identified four variant forms of the *et*-ligature. However, similar analyses of the initial letters (chapter five) revealed a much more extensive attitude to the variation of these ligatures. This prompted a re-analysis of the *et*-ligature in the script, as a result of which over sixty variations were identified (figs.3.149-212). Such discoveries were particularly instructive in gaining a

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[72] This method of analysis, used throughout this research, was begun prior to commencing this formal study.

more complete understanding of the Scribe-Artist's idiosyncratic approach to writing the text. Studies based on samples of work from those parts of the manuscript that seem most distinctively different, however, miss much vital evidence.[73] The large number of illustrations is essential in understanding the work of the Scribe-Artist and the Master-Artist and also the nature of their collaboration in creating the book.

Once the various features had been mapped and identified throughout the manuscript, they were then digitally 'cropped' from images taken from the facsimile.[74] Prints of these images were individually cut out by hand, examined and analysed in a variety of configurations. These processes of experimentation and exploration facilitated the assessment of this evidence in novel arrangements which would be almost impossible to apprehend otherwise. The most informative of these arrangements, in terms of understanding the scribal and artistic performance, were selected and these, for the most part, constitute the illustrations which accompany this study.

The presence of certain recurring features are also usefully documented in a series of diagrams which map their distribution throughout the manuscript. These complement the photographic illustrations and facilitate the identification of patterns of distribution of the various features throughout the book. As the research progressed the methodology was refined to take into account the significance of these patterns. This is as important as the identification of the individual graphic features of script or decoration themselves and was again revealed through the process of closely focused visual analysis. Previous examinations, based on general impressions of the manuscript, have failed to pick up these patterns.

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[73] See above footnote 46 (Henry), footnotes 48-9 (Meehan) and footnote 51 (Eisenlohr).

[74] Prior to the launch of the online facsimile by Trinity College Dublin in March 2013, the present author created a digital facsimile by photographing the Faksimile Verlag facsimile in its entirety.

Important new research has also been done in this study on aspects of the layout. Some of these features, such as the number of lines per page, had previously been recorded,[75] but others relating to the overall layout and mise-en-page had not been commented on in any detail. Features, for example, such as the alignment of decorated initials, the use of indented lines and also the use of different inks, add significantly to our understanding of the scribal practice in the manuscript.

It is important that this study attempts a comprehensive investigation of the manuscript that includes both script and illumination. Such an approach also facilitates the development of a more complete theory that incorporates all aspects of the Book of Kells. Thus, for example, problematic issues surrounding the canon tables can be considered in the context of a theory that encompasses the entire book rather than being discussed as an isolated issue.[76]

In a significant number of respects the Book of Kells is distinctive among the manuscripts that survive from the Insular period. The approaches used in this research reflect this uniqueness. This distinctiveness in Kells is most obvious when compared with studies of other contemporary manuscripts, where the script also does not appear to be the work of a single scribe. For example, there is a general consensus in relation to scribal attribution in such manuscripts as the Book of Armagh or Corpus Christi College Cambridge 197B.[77] Samples of script taken from different parts of these books are relatively easily matched with the work attributed to the various scribes (figs.5.354-58). Such consistency is not apparent in the Book of Kells and is exemplified in the competing claims of various commentators in their schemes for the division of hands. It

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[75] Meehan, 'The Division of Hands', in *Conference Proceedings,* pp. 183-95.
[76] See summary of thesis conclusions above.
[77] The Book of Armagh, T.C.D. MS. 52.

is further evident in the occasional tentative attributions within, for example, Meehan's scheme.[78] Perhaps the most significant outcome from the present research, for the study of the book in general, may be to suggest caution in reaching conclusions based on small samples of evidence.

The original manuscript itself is not readily accessible and this is understandable given its age and its relative fragility, and of course its prominent cultural value. The publication of various facsimiles, full or partial, over the past sixty years has made it more feasible to undertake studies that span the entire manuscript. The limitations of any facsimile must be kept in mind, however, and the use of these reproductions is of more benefit to certain types of investigation than others. The most successful of these facsimilies is that produced by Faksimile Verlag.[79] The present investigation has benefitted from having unrestricted access to one of these facsimiles. The integrity of the graphic marks of script, decoration and illumination, which are a primary focus of attention in this study, are well preserved in the reproduction. However, on the other hand, qualities such as for example, the texture of the vellum, the paint laid on its surface, and the particularities of colour and colour relationships are not easily reproduced in a photographic facsimile.[80] In addition, the gestalt of the actual, physical reality of any artwork is also, by definition, absent even in the most sophisticated photographic reproduction. This, it must be conceded, is a major limitation in attempting to comprehensively study all aspects of the book, in particular the illumination. Nonetheless, while bearing this important caveat in mind, it is possible to make

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[78] Meehan, 'The Division of Hands', in *Conference Proceedings,* pp. 183-95, (p. 191).
[79] *The Book of Kells* (Faksimile Verlag, Luzern, 1990).
[80] Repeated applications by the present author, the supervisor of this thesis and the head of the Institute of English Studies, to view the original manuscript for the purposes of verifying observations made from the facsimile have to date been refused.

significant progress through examination of the available facsimiles. However, it is to be

hoped that the investigations in this thesis, and further planned study of the book of Kells,

may, at some point in the future be verified by having sight of the original manuscript.

Chapter 2

THE CANON TABLES IN THE BOOK OF KELLS

Introduction

The first part of this chapter **(i)** presents a brief overview of canon tables in Insular manuscripts and is followed by a review of the literature relating to these tables in the Book of Kells. The second part **(ii)** addresses the first four openings of the Kells' canon tables which are illuminated. The simpler grid layout of the final two pages in the series will be considered together with all of the canon tables and the script of the numerals in part three **(iii)**. Part four **(iv)** presents two hypotheses, the first of which proposes a rationale for the present state of the canon tables. The second hypothesis proposes a possible layout for the canon tables as originally planned. Finally, in part five **(v)** the only instances of canon table reference numbers accompanying the Gospel text in Kells, on ff.292v-293r, are examined in some detail. Following the conclusions to this chapter there is an addendum which addresses some significant iconographic issues that do not quite fit within the narrative of the thesis.

(i) An overview of canon tables in Insular manuscripts

Canon tables in Bibles or Gospel books consist of columns of numbers referring to episodes in the four texts of the evangelists.[1] Rows of numbers in the first nine tables are typically aligned across the page to facilitate the identification and location of similar episodes occurring in two,

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[1] Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, p. 25. The numbers in the tables correspond to those usually written in the margins beside the relevant passages throughout the Gospel texts.

three or all four Gospels. The last of the ten tables lists all those passages that occur in only one

Gospel and do not have direct counterparts elsewhere. The longest table is canon two, which

shows the one hundred and nine correspondences for the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark

and Luke. The second largest table, numbering ninety-six, refers to those passages which only

occur in the Gospel of John, one of the four parts of canon ten.

The tables were devised by Eusebius of Caesarea in the fourth century and are thought to

be based on divisions of the Gospels originally proposed by Ammonius of Alexandria.[2] Carl

Nordenfalk has identified variations in these tables, the most significant of which he described as

the larger and smaller Greek series, with ten and seven pages respectively, and also the Syrian

and Latin versions with nineteen and twelve pages respectively.[3] St. Jerome is credited with

distributing the Latin canon tables over twelve pages at the end of the fourth century. Their

presentation within an architectural framework, with a simple arcade linking pillars that separate

the columns of numbers, is also dated to this time.[4] This basic form with arches, termed '*m*'

arches by Nordenfalk, was further developed in sixth-century Italy with the addition of a large

single embracing-arch over the smaller ones in the arcade, creating what he termed the '*mn*'

version.[5] This '*mn*' form is that most frequently found in Insular manuscripts and the first eight

pages of canon tables in the Book of Kells are of this type (figs.2.1-8).

There is significant variation in the formats and decoration used for these tables within

the Insular tradition. These range from those in the Books of Mulling and Armagh which lack

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[2] Ibid., p. 25.

[3] C. Nordenfalk, *Die Spätantike Kanontafeln;Kunstgeschichtliche Studien über die eusebianische Evangelien-konkordanz in den vier ersten Jahrhunderten ihrer Geschichte* (Göteborg: O. Isacsons boktryckeri a-b, 1938).

[4] The word 'pillar' will be used here in referring to the architectural members, the word 'column' in referring to the numerals and the word 'intercolumnation' in referring to the space between the pillars.

The earliest extant examples of these canon tables are Vatican Biblioteca Apostolica, lat.3806 an Italian (probably Roman) manuscript from the sixth century and BL, Add. 5111, a Byzantine manuscript dated to the sixth or seventh century.

[5] Nordenfalk, *Die Spätantike Kanontafeln*.

frames, through the simple grid layouts of the Echternach Gospels and the Book of Durrow (fig.2.11) and finally to the decorative and figurative elaboration such as found in the Book of Kells.[6] Within each of these forms there is quite an extensive variation in the number of pages used for the tables. The entire set in the Codex Amiatinus is contained within just seven pages,[7] while the Echternach Gospels are spread over a total of twenty three. The Lindisfarne Gospels, the earliest extant Insular example of arcaded canon tables, perhaps one of the clearest and easiest to use, has sixteen pages.[8] Some, otherwise well-decorated Gospel books, lack any tables at all, for example the Lichfield and Macregol Gospels.[9] This lack may represent losses rather than omissions. In general, the outermost parts of manuscripts were those most vulnerable to damage or loss, and the canon tables invariably appeared at the front, prefacing the Gospel texts. The Book of Kells is an example of this kind of loss. It does retain its canon tables but some of its other prefatory material is missing. The first page of the book, f.1r, is all that remains of an alphabetical list of Hebrew names, often found as part of the prefatory material especially in Insular Gospel books.[10] The preceding pages of this list are missing as are perhaps some pages containing other prefatory material.[11]

Review of the literature associated with the Kells canon tables

The canon tables in the Book of Kells have been dealt with in a significant number of studies by some of the most eminent scholars in the field. The 1990 commentary volume, which accompanied the publication of the Faksimile Verlag facsimile, brought together a significant

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[6] The Book of Mulling, T.C.D. MS 60. The Echternach Gospels, Paris, Bib. Nat. MS lat. 9389 and the Book of Durrow, T.C.D. MS 57.
[7] The Codex Amiatinus, Florence, Bibl. Med. Laur. MS Amiatino 1
[8] The Lindisfarne Gospels, BL, Cotton MS Nero D.iv.
[9] The Lichfield Gospels, Cath. Lib. MS 1; The Macregol Gospels, Oxford, Bodl. Lib., MS Auct. D.2.19.
[10] P. McGurk, 'The texts at the opening of the book', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 37–58.
[11] Ibid., p. 38. Here McGurk suggests that, as both manuscripts are so closely related in their prefatory texts, it could be assumed that the missing section of Kells would, like Durrow, have had the *Novum Opus* at the head of the book.

body of scholarship on the Book of Kells, including Patrick McGurk's examination of the texts at the beginning of the book.[12] These texts include the canon tables, the *argumenta* and *capitula* for each Gospel and lists of Hebrew names. He describes the close correspondence between Kells and the Book of Durrow, detailing the ways in which they agree, even with regard to the 'odd order' in which these texts appear in both. McGurk details how these similarities continue in the 'identical *incipit*s and *explicits*, in the countless readings'.[13] There is obviously no parallel in Durrow for the elaborate architectural frameworks and their accompanying beast-symbols, such as is found in the Kells canon tables, ff.1v–5r (figs.2.1–8). There is, however, a precise relationship in terms of the textual disposition, in that each of the five pages in Durrow corresponds directly to two in Kells. This can be more precisely stated: that vertically divided, each half of a canon page in Durrow corresponds exactly with one of the pages in Kells. Thus, for example, f.3v in Kells exactly matches the left-hand side of f.9r in Durrow which contains the last nine numbers in canon two and all twenty-two numbers of canon three (figs.2.5 and 2.11). Folio 4r in Kells and the right-hand side of f.9r in Durrow each contain the twenty-six numbers of canon four (fig.2.6 and 2.11). This correspondence extends further to include some of the errors in the canon numbers and also, as previously mentioned, to the *incipits* and *explicits*, where they are legible, which are exactly the same in both books.[14] However, some discrepancies in the canon tables and also in the other prefatory material preclude McGurk from reaching the conclusion that the relationship is the result of direct copying and leads him rather to suggest that 'a common exemplar lay behind both manuscripts'.[15] Finally, mention should be

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[12] Ibid., pp. 37–58.
[13] Ibid., p. 57.
[14] These may be compared in f. 9r in Durrow and f. 4r in Kells (figs.2.6 and 2.11). *Incipits* here refer to the rubrics which are written as headings at the beginning of the canon tables. Similarly, *explicits* are written to mark the end of a particular canon table.
[15] Ibid., p. 58.

made of the last two pages of canon tables in Kells which are presented in a grid format

(figs.2.9–10). While they differ in detail somewhat from those in Durrow, this shared format is

yet another significant correspondence between the two books.

Such was the impact of A.M. Friend's paper on the Kells' canon tables in 1939,[16] that

Georg Swarzenski of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, wrote the following review:

> the result of his meticulous, penetrating and dramatic research, is nothing less than
>
> the evidence that the Irish master work is based on a sumptuous lost product of the
>
> Continent, and by reconstruction of a model of the Ada school its origin in the
>
> Carolingian period is confirmed.[17]

Friend's investigation traced a series of significant correspondences between a number of

Carolingian manuscripts and listed a number of distinctive elements that, according to his

analysis, must have been present in the exemplars on which they were modelled.[18] He identified

several similarities, including the use of beast symbols, spandrels to square off the embracing

arches, and shared format-changes at similar points in both Kells and the Harley Golden

Gospels.[19] On the basis of this evidence he asserted the certainty of his conclusions, for example

stating that 'we can only come to one conclusion. The model of Harley and the model of Kells

were the same manuscript.'[20] Subsequent scholarship has questioned the significance of some of

these hypotheses, as I shall discuss below. However, Friend's basic argument about the

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[16] A. M. Friend, 'The Canon Tables of the Book of Kells', in *Medieval Studies in Memory of Arthur Kingsley Porter,* ed. William R.W. Koehler (Harvard-Radcliffe, 1939), pp. 611-40.
[17] G. Swarzenski, review in *Speculum. A journal of Medieval Studies.* Vol. xvii April (1942, No. 2), pp. 297-302 (p. 302).
[18] These include BL, Harley MS 2788, Bib. Nat. Paris, lat. 8850 (the Soissons Gospels), and the Lorsch Gospels – the first part of which is in Alba Iulia (Romania) and the Gospels of Luke and John which are in the Vatican, Pal. lat. 50.
[19] Friend, 'The Canon Tables', in *Medieval Studies in Memory of Arthur Kingsley Porter,* p. 614. He suggests that the beast symbols changes on f.5r are significantly different from the others used and that this change is due to its model, defective after the third canon.
[20] Ibid., p. 628.

importance of considering Kells in the context of Carolingian manuscripts remains a valuable point of departure for scholarship.

Patrick McGurk's observation in 1955 that a change from arcaded architectural canons to plain columns of numbers occurred in a pre-Carolingian manuscript, BL, Royal MS 7. C. xii, questions one of the conclusions derived from the arguments advanced by Friend regarding continental influence in Kells.[21] This discovery identified an offset where marks were inadvertently transferred from one page of the manuscript onto its opposite facing page. This printed a clearly discernible reverse image of an architectural framework onto the tenth table which itself was presented on a page that had no such framework.[22] McGurk pointed out that this correspondence, at the point where there is a major change in the format of the canon tables, indicated a much closer relationship between Kells and Royal MS 7. C.xii than Friend had noticed between Kells and Harley 2788. Following from this, George Henderson in 1987 made the argument concerning the source of the Kells canon tables, that they were possibly, 'copied from C. C. C. C. MS 197B/Brit. Lib. Cotton MS Otho C.V. or [it] shared the defective model employed to draw up the latter's canon tables'.[23] In this context he indicated that the fragments of BL, Royal MS 7. C.xii probably belong with two other fragments considered to originally form part of one book - C. C. C. C. MS 197B and BL, Cotton MS Otho C.V.[24]

Nancy Netzer, in 1994,[25] highlighted a poem in Irish by the ecclesiastic Ailerán, found in the Augsburg Gospels, which gave a detailed account of the beast symbols associated with the

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[21] McGurk, 'Two Notes on the Book of Kells and its relation to other Insular Gospel Books', in *Scriptorium* 9, 1955, pp. 105–07.
[22] BL, Royal MS 7.Cxii, f.3.
[23] G. Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells, the Insular Gospel-books 650-800* (Thames and Hudson, London, 1987), p. 71.
[24] Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, No. 125, p. 3 and also No. 217, p. 28.
[25] N. Netzer, 'The origin of the beast canon tables reconsidered', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 322 – 31 (pp. 326-27).

various evangelists in each of the canons.[26] From this Netzer concluded that tables with beast

symbols were probably known in Ireland in the seventh century as Ailerán's death is recorded

for the year 655. This, and other evidence of similarities between Kells and the Augsburg

Gospels in part of canon two, led her to question the requirement for a Carolingian model in

Friend's analysis. Netzer's work also repositioned the significance of the two sets of canon tables

in the Maeseyck Gospels, the relevance of which was dismissed by Friend in 1939. Netzer also

suggested that the primary flow of influence may have been from an Insular source to the

Carolingian court scriptorium rather than the other way around.[27]

In her monograph on the Book of Kells, Françoise Henry noted that 'the treatment of the

canon tables is unbelieveably irresponsible'.[28] Such is the confusion in the tables that a few lines

further on she stated that, 'it looks 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'.[29] Perhaps it is this lack of order and sense, and general confusion that led to her

avoidance of any definite scribal attribution for these pages. The one exception to this, in her

work on the attribution of hands in the canon tables, is her proposal that the artist whom she

refers to as the 'Goldsmith' was probably responsible for the upper part of f.5r (fig.2.122).[30]

Bernard Meehan's contribution to the Trinity College Dublin 1992 conference on the

book is, to date, the most complete examination of the scribal works in Kells.[31] In relation to the

canon tables Meehan has concentrated on the priority of decoration over script in the sequence of

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[26] Netzer, *Cultural Interplay in the Eighth Century, the Trier Gospels and the Making of a Scriptorium at Echternach* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), for the text of Ailerán's poem see appendix Q, pp. 205 -06.
[27] Netzer, 'The origin of the beast canon tables reconsidered', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 322-31 (p. 328).
[28] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 153.
[29] Ibid., p. 153.
[30] Ibid., p. 212.
[31] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 183 –95.

production, with regard to which he stated that they 'display no overall uniformity'.[32] He

continued by observing that there is 'no doubt that script followed decoration [...] in the first

column on folio 1v.' Following this point he suggested that 'at the foot of the first column of

folio 2r on the other hand script seems to come first judging by a break in the ornament'.[33] In

focusing on incidental details he has highlighted that 'a certain lack of coordination in the

execution of the canon tables is indicated by peculiarities in their ruling and pricking'.[34] He does

not attempt to attribute the decoration of these pages, but for the script opts for his Scribe B.[35]

This attribution is for the most part based on the palette of colours used for the script and some

elements of similarity with script in 'the resemblance of the *incipits* and *explicits* of the canon

tables to the minuscule of 20r – 26v'.[36] However, in his concluding remarks on the entire

manuscript, Meehan stated that 'much work remains to be done on the decoration as well as on

the script and on the relation of one to the other'.[37]

Erika Eisenlohr examined palaeographical issues in Kells and based her analysis on

Henry and Meehan's attribution of the script to three or four different scribes.[38] She did not,

however, deal specifically with the canon tables. Some of the significant issues raised in her

paper will be discussed in later chapters.

In more recent studies relating to exegetical issues, Carol Neuman de Vegvar, in 2007,

investigated the possibility of a visual link between the openings and entrances in buildings, and

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[32] Ibid., p. 187.
[33] Ibid., p. 187.
[34] Meehan, 'The Script', in *Kells Commentary*, p. 248.
[35] Henry was responsible for naming the different scribes she identified as A, B and C, Henry, *The Book of Kells,* p. 155. Meehan later added Scribe D, Meehan, 'The division of hands', *Conference Proceedings*, p. 191.
[36] Ibid., p. 188.
[37] Ibid., p. 194. Alexander echoes this by stating that 'a more extensive and detailed examination of the question of the division of hands is undoubtedly needed to produce better founded conclusions,' Alexander, 'The Illumination', in *Kells Commentary,* pp. 265-89 (p. 287).
[38] Eisenlohr, 'The puzzle of the scribes', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 196 – 208.

their graphic counterparts at the beginnings of texts.[39] In the course of this paper Neuman de Vegvar examines the sequence of arcaded architectural frameworks in Insular canon tables, and compares them with the actual arcades forming part of the Aedicule of Christ and the Anastasis Rotunda which surrounds it in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Recalling the injunction in the Book of Wisdom (11:21) that 'Thou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight,' she proposes that the artists, scribes and exegetes of the period did not engage in the decoration of their most revered texts for its own sake.[40] Neuman de Vegvar observes that in the architectural frameworks of some canon arcades, there are sequences of intercolumnations of four, three and four in manuscripts such as the Lindisfarne Gospels, the Stockholm Codex Aureus, as well as in the Book of Kells. She points out that:

> It is striking that the system of arcades that frame canon tables in Insular manuscripts often reiterate the numbers of inter- columnations that are found in the sacred core of the Holy Sepulchre complex, the three of the facade of the Aedicule and the four of the Anastasis Rotunda system.[41]

In her concluding remarks she references the work of Michelle Brown who drew similar parallels between these arcades and chancel arcades in churches.[42] In the course of these remarks Brown in turn referenced Carl Nordenfalk's conception of them 'as an architectural atrium through which the mystery of the Scripture could be accessed'.[43]

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[39] C. Neuman de Vegvar, 'Remembering Jerusalem: architecture and meaning in Insular canon table arcades', in *Making and Meaning in Insular Art. Proceedings of the fifth international conference on Insular art held at Trinity College Dublin, 25 – 28 August 2005,* R. Moss, ed. (Four Courts Press, 2007), pp. 242–56.

[40] Ibid., p. 242.

[41] Ibid., p. 251. For relevant images and an architectural history of the tomb see M. Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1999).

[42] M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe* (2003), p. 304.

[43] Ibid., p. 304, referring to Nordenfalk, *Die Spätantike Kanontafeln*.

(ii) The illuminated pages of the Kells canon tables

- the first four openings ff.1v-5r

The illumination of the Kells canon tables was never completed. This is clear, for example, from the unfinished state of the *m*-arcade tympana on f.1v (fig.2.12a-c), the undecorated spandrels on f.2v (fig.2.32) and the empty panels in the large tympana on ff.3v and 4v (figs.2.5 and 2.7). In addition, the graphic quality of some elements of the decoration on the canon pages appears to be incompatible with the majority of their illumination. The more obvious examples include the spandrels on ff.3r and 4v (figs.2.40 and 2.85), the ribbon-like pillars on f.2v and their associated bases on f.3r (figs.2.3-4). These pillars and bases appear linked to the unusual doubled columns of numerals on ff.2v and 3r. As will be shown, these, and the disposition of all of the other numerals, appear incompatible with the illumination and also with the layout of the pages for the entire series. In the present study this evidence is understood as part of a second campaign of work undertaken to complete the unfinished illumination and script, which included the addition of the canon numerals. The evidence of the final two pages of the canon tables also agrees with this hypothesis. The quality of all of the work on these pages, ff.5v and 6r, suggests that they were entirely executed as part of the proposed second campaign (figs.2.9-10). Unlike the preceding pages there does not appear to be any disparity between the quality of the writing of the numerals and the drawing and decoration, albeit limited, of the frameworks which surround them.

The following descriptions of the four illuminated openings of the canon tables will attempt to separate what may have been completed in the two proposed campaigns of work. While this separation is primarily based on the graphic quality of the illumination it also derives

from an interpretation of the way in which these pages may originally have been intended to accommodate the numerals of the canon tables. The apparent collaboration of two illuminators in the proposed original campaign will also be addressed.

The first eight pages of the canon tables in the Book of Kells were conceived as a series of architectural frameworks. The facing pages in each of the four openings show matching outlines of bases, capitals, *m*-arcades, spandrels, large-arches and tympana.

The first opening ff.1v-2r

The first opening, ff.1v-2r (figs.2.1-2), appears to have been planned to contain the numerals for canon one in which correspondences between all four Gospels are shown. The symbols of the four evangelists suitably provide the main focus of attention in the large tympanum in each case (figs.2.13-14). The sequence of man, lion, bull and eagle on each page corresponds with numeral columns referencing the Gospels for each of the four evangelists – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The arrangement of the symbols is different on each page as the central pair face each other on f.1v and are opposed on f.2r. This complementarity appears to be deliberate and is entirely appropriate in the context of canon tables which express the harmony of the four Gospels and the interrelationships between them. This is also reflected in Ailerán's poem, mentioned above, in which the various creatures are described as conversing with one another.[44]

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[44]See footnotes 26-7 above. For detailed discussion of the interpretation of the iconography and exegesis associated with Evangelist beast symbols (including those in canon tables), see J. O'Reilly, 'Patristic and Insular traditions of the Evangelists: Exegesis and Iconography of the four-symbols page', in eds., A. M. Luiselli-Fadda and E. Ó Carragáin, *Le Isole Brianniche e Roma in età Romanobarbarica* (Rome, 1998), pp. 49-93. See also, E. Mullins, 'The Insular Reception of the Eusebian canon tables, Exegesis and Iconography' (unpublished PhD thesis, University College Cork, 2001), chapter five, pp. 79-102 (detailed discussion of Ailerán's poem), and chapter nine pp. 170-210 (the iconography of the Eusebian Canon Tables in Insular Gospel Books).

The graphic qualities of these images on ff.1v and 2r are different and appear to be the work of two illuminators. The graceful and precise drawing style on f.1v is exemplified in its fine detail, including the naturalistic rendering of the man with a long-fingered hand presenting a book. The confronted heads of the lion and the bull are linked by the delicate kiss of the lion's tongue and their extremities elegantly respond to the edges of the frame. The noble-headed eagle is also exquisitely drafted and his wings are hinged on a fine double-spiralled breastplate. Although closely grouped, the composition is not overcrowded and the creatures are set off against a balanced pattern of negative spaces. This illumination, and work of similar quality throughout the book, is here attributed to an individual who, as noted in chapter one, will be identified as the Master-Artist.

In contrast to this, the composition on f.2r is densely packed into its more tightly framed tympanum. The only significant space not filled by the symbols is above the crossed wings of the lion and the bull. Here, a semi-circular flabellum-type motif creates a form of halo over the *x* or *chi* form of the overlapping wings. The graphic quality of these creatures is less sophisticated than those on f.1v, both in their overall form and also in their detail. Comparing the eagle on f.1v described above with that on f.2r highlights this. The latter bird appears caricatured and is somewhat awkwardly squashed into the available space with the bull's head and the lion's tail pressed close. This illumination, and work of similar quality throughout the book, is here attributed to an individual who, as noted in chapter one will be identified as the Scribe-Artist, the Master-Artist's collaborating partner.

The spandrel panels on f.1v are damaged but enough detail remains to reconstruct their intricate design (fig.2.15a and 15d). Each panel is composed of a densely packed interlace of six birds. The four larger birds have lappets which form a secondary fine interlace which fills any

otherwise empty spaces.[45] The quality of this work suggests that it can be attributed to the Master-Artist. The spandrel panels on f.2r are also composed of birds (fig.2.16). These motifs, while accomplished, are less complex than those on f.1v, with two birds in each panel and here only the lappets are interlaced. The finials outside the spandrels are also of similar quality and all of this work can be attributed to the Scribe-Artist.

This pattern of superior graphic quality on f.1v is further evident in a comparison of the large arches (fig.2.17a-b), the decorative motifs in the capitals (fig.2.18a-b), the interlaced-bird panels in the central pillars (fig.2.19), the 'penny-farthing' trumpet-spiral designs in the outer pillars (fig.2.20) and in the bases (fig.2.21a-b). Exceptions may be the second and fourth capitals and the fifth base on f.1v which are not quite as finely detailed as their companions and are more similar in quality to the work on f.2r. This appears to indicate an instance of collaboration where some details on f.1v are completed by the Scribe-Artist. A reciprocal instance of collaboration may be evident in the double arch at the centre of the *m*-arcade on f.2r (fig.2.23a-b). In contrast to the other decorative panels on this page, the intricate and densely packed zoomorphic interlace here seems to be more similar in quality to that in the large-arch on f.1v (figs.2.13 and 17a). On f.2r the 'penny-farthing' trumpet-spiral motifs in the outer pillars (fig.2.20) and those in the second and fourth bases (fig.2.21b), which are unfinished, may also have been begun by the Master-Artist, perhaps as a demonstration. The finials on f.1v are very damaged but the traces of interlace remaining are not as fine for instance as that inside the adjacent spandrels and perhaps are attributable to the Scribe-Artist, again suggesting an instance of collaboration (fig.2.1). Fig.2.22a-b shows a reconstruction of the central base on f.1v and a similar panel of interlace on f.34r by the Master-Artist which highlight the precision and fineness of his work.

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[45] There is a close relationship between the design in these panels and two of similar shape on f.94v, the Mark cross-carpet page in the Lindisfarne Gospels (fig.2.15c)

The attribution of the figures in the second and fourth pillars on each page is less easily determined, in part due to their damaged state (figs.2.24a-b and 2.1-2). However, the quality of the interlacing in the beards is not typical of the Master-Artist's work. The 'crowning-figure' at the top of f.1v is also somewhat damaged which again complicates the assessment of its quality and also its attribution (fig.2.25).[46] The poor anatomy of the book-bearing arm is inferior to the Matthew symbol below and this perhaps indicates that it is not the work of the main illuminator of the page. However, as described above, there is significant evidence here which suggests that the two illuminators have worked in concert to create this complementary pair of pages.

The superior quality of his work would also suggest that the Master-Artist is responsible for designing the outline architectural framework. He is here also proposed as the author of the frameworks for each of the other three openings in the illuminated pages of the canon tables.

Although much damaged, the framework on f.1r appears to be similar in quality to its verso and both sides seem to share the same layout marks. Similarly, the quality of work on the verso of f.2 is equal to that on its recto. The main layout marks again appear to be shared with the other side of the page, including the odd tilt at the bottom of the frames on both sides of the page. This evidence, in addition to the fact that both are singletons would suggest that the Master-Artist was primarily responsible for both sides of f.1 and his partner, the Scribe-Artist, was primarily responsible for both sides of f.2.

Later additions to ff.1v-2r

There are a number of additional minor red marks on both pages that do not appear to be consistent with the work of either of the illuminators as discussed above in the first campaign.

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[46] E. Mullins, 'The Insular Reception of the Eusebian canon tables, Exegesis and Iconography' (unpubl. PhD thesis, University College Cork, 2001) pp. 203-8. The term 'crowning-figure' is borrowed from its use here.

These are most noticeable in the ribbon-borders. A series of hatched lines is clearly visible around the first pillar on f.1v (fig.2.26) and around the large arch on f.2r (fig.2.14). A stepped-pattern is also added to the spandrel ribbon-borders on f.2r (fig.2.16). Faint traces of this are also visible in the yellow intercolumnar ribbon-borders on f.2r. Other similar marks are less visible on both pages and are generally more difficult to identify on f.1v due to its damaged state. These, and similar additions throughout the manuscript, are discussed further in chapter six.

The zoomorphic interlace in the outer capitals on f.2r is not precisely executed and these may also be later additions (fig.2.18b). The central capital on this page is clearly inferior in quality to the work of the Master-Artist and seems also inferior to that of his partner the Scribe-Artist. However, it is argued throughout this study that this, and other similar work is attributable to the Scribe-Artist, executed during his second campaign of work. On f.1v the intercolumnar ribbon-borders, some with zoomorphic terminals (figs.2.1 and 2.116), and the numerals on both pages are similarly inconsistent with the quality of the main illumination on these pages. Both of these, and the probably related mushroom-shaped tympana of the *m*-arcade on f.2r will be discussed below. Other possible later additions that will also be discussed below include the sitting figure in the first intercolumnation (fig.2.119), the pair of semi-circular designs in the third intercolumnation (fig.2.120), the first panel of the *m*-arcade tympana (fig.2.12a-c) and the 'crowning figure' (fig.2.25), all on f.1v.

The second opening ff.2v-3r

The second opening, ff.2v-3r, presents another pair of similarly outlined frameworks with unusual 'doubled' capital shapes and also medallions in place of the more typical *m*-arcade (figs.2.3 and 2.4). This layout, shared by both pages, and a comparison of some of the details

across the opening, suggest that the collaboration of the two illuminators evident in the first opening is continued in the second. As mentioned above, the graphic quality of both recto and verso of f.2 are of a similar standard and this is true of both its figural and decorative motifs. The three symbols appropriate to this page, the beginning of canon two, are not as tightly composed as those on the recto but their graphic quality is reasonably comparable (fig.2.27). However, the difference in the style of composition between the two pages undermines the certainty of any attribution. It may have been added as part of the later campaign to complete the unfinished manuscript. Another possibility is that the difference between the panels on both pages is due to the composition on the recto of f.2 being completed under the Master-Artist's direction to complement his own design while that on the verso was completed without his guidance.

Otherwise there is a general consistency in the quality of the work on f.2v. The interlaced birds, for example, in the large-arch (fig.2.28) and in the outer pillars (fig.2.29), are comparable to the interlaced birds and vine scroll in the large arch on f.2r (fig.2.17b). Of similar quality also are the birds in all four lower capital elements, the birds in the central pair of trapezoidal capital elements and those in the bases directly below, and also the quadrupeds in the outer trapezoidal capital elements (figs.2.30 and 2.31). On f.2v the interlacing in the spandrel panel borders (fig.2.32) and also in the border of the central *m*-arcade medallion, and the fretwork patterns in the borders of the outer *m*-arcade medallions (fig.2.33) are of equal quality to similar work on f.2r (the interlace in the outer bases on f.2v is not as well formed as those in the panels at the top of the page). However, in spite of the general consistency of the work on the page, there are a number of areas which might suggest further instances where work was completed by the Master-Artist. Firstly, the trumpet-spiral motifs in the two outer *m*-arcade medallions appear to be of the highest quality (fig.2.33). Secondly, the rendering of the 'crowning-figure' (fig.2.34)

seems superior to the Matthew symbol below or that on the previous page. This is noticeable, for example, in the accuracy of the gesture of the gripping hands (even if they each appear to be lacking one finger). In contrast, the work of the Scribe-Artist is evident in the Matthew symbol below where this figure's lower right arm appears doubled in length and its anatomy is further undermined as this right arm ends in a left hand.[47]

The framework on f.3r has a more regular appearance especially when compared with the odd tilt of the baseline on both sides of f.2 (figs.2.2-4). Also on f.2v a similar, if less obvious discrepancy occurs at the top of the spandrel borders, where the lion-headed section on the left-hand side is not aligned with its counterpart on the opposite side. On f.3r the fine outline of the architectural elements is also superior to that on f.2v. This precision again indicates the hand of the Master-Artist and, as with the first opening, also suggests that he is the author of the layout for the framework on f.3r which is subsequently copied by his partner on f.2v.

Further work on f.3r attributable to the Master-Artist is evident in the zoomorphic interlace in the central pair of pillars and also in their trumpet-spiral bases (figs.2.35-36). The damage to the birds in the outer bases complicates their attribution although they do not appear to be of superior quality. Also somewhat damaged are the circular panels containing trumpet-spiral motifs in the lower elements of the outer capitals (fig.2.37). These however, appear to be fine work, and of a standard attributable to the Master-Artist. The interlaced procession of birds in the large-arch (fig.2.38) and in the border of the central *m*-arcade medallion (fig.2.39) are also drafted to a similarly high quality. The interlaced zoomorphic creatures in the trapezoidal upper capital elements are more intricate than their counterparts on f.2v (fig.2.37). However, damage to these panels again complicates any attempted attribution. There is also the possibility that fine

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[47] The rendering of the incorrect hand for an arm occurs on the following illuminated pages: ff.1r, 2v, 3r, 4r, 7v, 29r, 183r, 187v and 202v. With the exception of f.7v all of these anatomical inaccuracies are right arms with left hands attached and each of these is presenting a book.

work begun by the Master-Artist may have been added to or completed by his partner. This is perhaps the case regarding the lion heads terminating the spandrel borders on both pages (figs.2.32 and 2.40). In purely graphic terms they are quite sophisticated but their patterning and colour schemes are somewhat at odds with their linear qualities. This reading could also be applied to the birds whose beaks firmly grasp the lions' tongues on f.3r (fig.2.41). Their feet hold the chalice from which the tendrils of a vine interlace with their legs.

Some of the other decorative panels on f.3r do not appear to be executed by the Master-Artist and rather seem to be of a standard comparable with the work of the Scribe-Artist on both sides of f.2. These include the outer bases (fig.2.36) and the interlace in the outer pillars (fig.2.35) and in the spandrel borders the fretwork in the square upper corners of the framework (fig.2.40 and see enlarged details in fig.2.42) and also the borders of the two outer *m*-arcade medallions (fig.2.39). The flabellum-like finials on f.3r are damaged but are consistent with the Scribe-Artist's work and are similar in quality to those on f.2v (figs.2.40 and 2.32). The completion of some work by this artist on the Master-Artist's page in the first opening was also noted above.

Later additions to ff.2v-3r

An inferior standard of work to either that of the Master-Artist, or the Scribe-Artist's in the first campaign, is evident in a number of panels. On f.3r these include the circular decorative motifs in the outer *m*-arcade medallions and the lower elements in the central capitals (the motif on the right hand capital of this pair lacks a border element and is consequently bigger) (figs.2.39 and 2.37). The fretwork in the spandrel panels (fig.2.40) on this page is also poorly realised and traces of similar motifs are also visible in the second, fourth and sixth bases (fig.2.48). All of

these panels also share a similar blue background. The beast symbols on f.3r are also poorly rendered (fig.2.43). There may be indications that they are copied or adapted from the images on the page opposite or those on the previous opening. The hindquarters and underbelly of the lion appear as if they could have been taken from f.1v, including the path of the tail, interlaced between the legs, which is mirrored here. The lion's head appears to copy that on f.2v although the tongue here is lifeless as is the rendering of the mane. His front legs do not appear to follow any model, at least from within the manuscript, and they are graphically weak. The bull may be based on his counterpart on f.2r, however, the double shoulder joint motif does not occur on f.2r.[48] The heads of these beasts also appear to be inferior renderings of the images on the previous pages. The book holding hand and arm of the Matthew symbol seem to be adapted from the page opposite. The anatomical inaccuracy of this detail on f.2v, noted above, is further compounded here as the forearm, in its triangular cloak covering, appears superimposed on the body rather than connected to it.

The winged man in the central medallion of the *m*-arcade on f.3r, similarly posed presenting a book, seems to be another version of the same figure and is also graphically poor (fig.2.39). If it too represents St. Matthew it is incongruously positioned over the doubled columns of numerals for Mark's Gospel. The poor graphic quality of the 'crowning figure' at the top of f.3r is similar to that of the other two figures depicted on the page (fig.2.41). As with the figure in the central medallion it is difficult to determine who he may represent or what he may symbolise as he appears to lack any defining attributes.

The curved red lines behind this figure and the various hatched lines on the beast symbols on this page may link them with the somewhat similar lines in the ribbon-border of the large-arch

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[48] These joint-scrolls are rare on the larger creatures in the Book of Kells and are more frequently found in simplified versions on the interlinear animals (approximately 20) and zoomorphic initials (approximately 100). See for example figs.4.146-no.12 and 5.121.

(fig.2.38).[49] These latter are comparable to similar lines found on the first opening and are equally limited in quality. The stepped-pattern noted on the spandrel ribbon-borders on f.2r also occurs on f.3r, most noticeably on the ribbon-borders of the medallion on the left hand side and on those of the trapezoidal capital elements (fig.2.44). The stepped-pattern is also visible on f.2v in the orange-brown ribbon-border of the trapezoidal element of the first capital and also in the green ribbon-border of the third medallion (fig.2.45). The horizontal element at the bottom of the motif in the first base on f.3r also has a stepped pattern which appears like an angular interlaced rope-twist (fig.2.46). In this instance the stepped-pattern is an integral part of the motif unlike most of the other instances which seem to be later additions.

Other lines of similar quality that appear to be later additions on f.2v include the red marks on the larger trumpets in the disks of the two outer medallions (fig.2.45) and also those on the torso, hair and arms of the crowning figure (fig.2.47).[50] The black beard on this figure also appears somewhat superimposed and this may also be a second campaign addition.[51] The relatively simple pattern and the uneven quality of the motifs in the two central pillars on f.2v might suggest that these are also later additions (fig.2.29).[52] Red dots are added in the background to the evangelists' symbols, to the lion heads, and dots and other marks are added to some of the birds in the outer pillars. Some of these birds also have triangles added (fig.2.29) as do some of those in the large-arch (fig.2.28). One of these black triangles is included in one of the circle segments attached to the capitals on f.2v (fig.2.30) which were also probably added at

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[49] There are similar hatched or stepped red lines, usually added to the ribbon-borders, on most of the fully illuminated pages (ff.1v, 2r, 2v, 3r, 3v, 4r, 4v, 7v, 8r, 27v, 28v, 29r, 32v, 114v, 124r, 130r, 188r, 202v, 203r, 290v and 292r). These and other related marks are discussed more fully in chapter six (see fig.6.74).
[50] These marks will be discussed further in chapter six (fig.6.73-no.1).
[51] The dark beards on the flanking figures on f.114r may also have been added in the second campaign.
[52] See p. 63 below for further discussion of these motifs.

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this time. Two rectilinear interlace motifs are added outside the fourth capital on f.3r and may also be later additions (fig.2.4).

Finally, the brown lines dividing the intercolumnations on f.2v (subsequently referred to as ribbon-pillars), and the similarly coloured bases on f.3r (fig.2.48) do not appear compatible with the design of the frameworks and appear to be later additions.[53] These are most likely linked to the script which was also probably added later and both will be discussed further below.[54]

The third opening ff.3v-4r

The rectilinear consistency of the framework outline on f.3v is not perfect but it is reasonably square and it is more precise than that on f.4r (figs.2.5 and 2.6). This, and its close agreement with the layout on f.3r, its recto, suggest that it is the work of the Master-Artist and also that the framework on f.4r is the work of his collaborating partner, the Scribe-Artist.

A number of panels on f.3v can reasonably be attributed to the Master-Artist. His intricate, detailed and fine work is evident in the trumpet-spiral panels in the bases (fig.2.49), the zoomorphic interlace in the outer pillars (fig.2.50) and the capitals (fig.2.51), in the interlace and the fretwork borders of the *m*-arcade and the fretwork in the upper border of the large-arch (fig.2.52). However, perhaps the example of his work that stands out most strikingly here is in the spandrel panels with their pairs of interlaced birds (fig.2.53). These motifs exemplify the fineness and precision so typical of his work.

The interlace in the lower border of the larger-arch is somewhat unevenly executed with broader strands to the left of the centre (fig.2.52) and this may indicate that it is the work of the

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[53] These ribbon-pillars, with distinctive stepped capitals, recall the narrower pillars on ff.4v-6r, the canon tables in B.L.Royal 1.E.vi.

[54] An addendum at the end of this chapter will also discuss the possible referencing of a number of Columban relics in this opening.

Scribe-Artist, or possibly some collaboration or later completion by him. The figures in the

central pillars are not so easily attributable (fig.2.50), however, the interlacing of their beards is

not of a comparable standard to that in the capitals directly above. This suggests that they are the

work of the Scribe-Artist and would be a further instance of collaboration between the two

illuminators. Linking these figures to the Scribe-Artist suggests that the pillar figures on ff.1v

and 2r are also his work (fig.2.24a-b). As mentioned above, the interlace associated with those

figures is also not of the Master-Artist's standard and may further strengthen their attribution to

his partner.

The fretwork and interlace around the large-arch and the *m*-arcade on f.4r are somewhat

damaged and this complicates their attribution (fig.2.54). However, at least some of what is

clearly visible is of a high standard suggesting the work of the Master-Artist and would therefore

be another instance of collaboration. The capitals on f.4r appear similar in design to those on f.3v

and may have been begun by the Master-Artist (fig.2.55). However, their finish seems to lack the

fineness and precision of his hand and they may have been completed by the Scribe-Artist. Some

elements of the fine secondary interlace in the central capitals are uneven in quality. The outer

capitals seem to lack this fine interlace detail and instead there is evidence of some painting, the

quality of which suggests it is a later addition.

The interlaced birds in the outer pillars on f.4r (fig.2.56) are similar in both design and

quality to those in the central pillar on f.2r (fig.2.19) which has been attributed to the Scribe-

Artist above. As with many of the panels of decoration on the pages of this opening, those in the

central pillars on f.4r appear unfinished. These interlaced vine scroll motifs, with three birds at

the bottom of the second pillar and three more at the top of the third pillar, appear equal in

quality to a similar design in the large-arch on f.2r (fig.2.17b). These are also attributed to the Scribe-Artist above.

Later additions to ff.3v-4r

The poor quality red hatched lines again appear here on f.3v, most prominently in the yellow ribbon-border surrounding the empty upper panel in the tympanum (fig.2.57). These borders terminate in unusual pairs of triangles and a similar motif is added to the ends of the ribbon-border of the lower tympanum panel. On f.4r these triangles occur in the ribbon-borders of the upper tympanum panel which also show the red hatched lines (fig.2.58). The ribbon-border at the top of f.4r has these lines arranged diagonally in opposed groups of three (fig.2.59). Triangular shapes of similar quality are found on f.1v in the corners of the panels in all five bases (fig.2.21a and 2.22a), in the ribbon-border beside the blank mushroom-shaped panels in the *m*-arcade on f.2r, (fig.2.23a) in the bird-processions in the large-arch and the outer pillars on f.2v, as mentioned above (figs.2.28 and 2.29), and in the corners of the tympanum ribbon-border on f.5r (fig.2.122).[55]

Similar triangular shapes also terminate both ends of the stepped pattern in the spandrel ribbon-borders on f.3v (fig.2.53). The stepped pattern is also found in the ribbon-border of the two central bases on f.3v and also around these borders in the first two arches of the *m*-arcade (fig.2.60). Similar stepped patterns are added to the borders in the *m*-arcade arches on f.4r. These additions will be discussed further in chapter six.

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[55] These triangular shapes occur on the following illuminated pages in Kells, ff.1v, 2r, 2v, 3v, 4r, 5r, 7v, 8r, 13r, 15v, 16v, 18r, 19v, 29r, 32v, 34r, 40v, 114r, 114v, 124r, 130r, 188r, 200r, 200v, 201v, 202r, 203r, 290v,291v and 292r. They also occur on approximately 114 decorated initials throughout the manuscript (see figs.6.50-53). These motifs also feature in the Book of Durrow, for example, on the illuminated pages ff.3v, 21v and 191v and they are also added to its large illuminated letters.

The ribbon-borders around the torsos of the six evangelist symbols on ff.3v and 4r are unusual in that they are connected to the figures (figs.2.60 and 2.61). This close connection also suggests that both figures and borders may have been drawn at the same time. Evidence for this on f.3v includes the relationship between the borders and the extremities of the symbols, as for example, the wings of the man, the head, ears and left wing of the lion, and the ears, right wing and clawed feet of the bull. Similarly, on f.4r the man's head, the lion's paws and the eagle's wings all appear to respond directly to these frames. The frames do not continue below the level of the capitals and, unusually, there is no ribbon-border at the bottom of these panels. Only a line separates them from the text area below and this does not occur elsewhere in the Kells' canon tables. Throughout the manuscript decorative panels such as these are typically separated by at least one such ribbon-border. A significant exception to this occurs in the canon tables on f.5r where a border is not drawn around the Matthew and John symbols. However, in that instance it is an external rather than an internal border that is missing (figs.2.8 and 2.122).

On f.3v the spaces between the symbols and the linear border are filled with semi-circular, triangular and lozenge patterning. The occurrence of such motifs in the decoration of some initials will be discussed in chapter five (see figs.5.63-9 and pp. 287-88). These are not added on f.4r where some otherwise empty spaces around the man and the eagle are filled with flowering vases. Both the vessels and the sprouting spotted leaves of the plants are graphically weak and are not typical of those elsewhere in the manuscript. They are compatible in quality with work completed in the later phase of the second campaign.

The rendering of the Evangelist symbols on ff.3v and 4r raise a number of issues. Firstly, they are not graphically consistent with the work of the Master-Artist or the earlier phase of the Scribe-Artist's work, although there may be some details copied or borrowed from these.

Secondly, while the unusual frames noted above are similar on both pages, and while they also appear closely linked to the drawing of the symbols, again on both pages, there is no graphic correspondence between the figures on the two pages. The two symbols common to both pages, Matthew and Mark are drawn quite differently on each page, with the man on f.4r shown in profile for the first time. The lion on f.3v, unusually, appears to lack any forelegs while his counterpart on f.4r is shown frontally and spreadeagled in a somewhat ungainly pose. However, the intention may have been to continue Ailerán's theme of conversation between the symbols and this may also explain the unusual drawing of the head and the eyes in particular.

As shown in figs.2.62-3 the lion symbol's head on f.4r seems to be formed of two conjoined profile views of typical bull heads. There is marked correspondence in the features of these heads, in particular the ears, eyes, eyebrows and the nostrils. The spiralled nostrils of the double head on f.4r are similar to those on two other bull heads (fig.2.64-nos.2 and 5). These perspectival facial distortions are somewhat Picassoesque recalling the liberties often taken by that artist in his depictions of both human and animal heads.[56] Thus the 'bull-headed' lion is simultaneously able to face left and right and 'converse' with the man and the eagle who are both turned to face him. This may also explain the peculiar line dividing his torso which further emphasises his dual aspect and in general provides a rationale for the creature's odd pose.

The book-holding hand and arm of the man on f.4r is similar to those on ff.2v and 3r but he does not appear to bear any relationship to his counterpart on f.3v (figs.2.27, 2.43 and 2.60-1). The unusual sitting posture of this latter figure may be the result of an adaptation of another more typical pose. The upper legs and the knees of this figure, which, anatomically, are too high on the torso, closely resemble the bolster-type cushion that rests behind many such Insular

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[56] This may also recall aspects of multi-valence and ambiguity in some Salin I type zoomorphic motifs.

figures including the three full-page portrait figures in Kells on ff.28v, 32v and 291v.[57] It is possible that the Scribe-Artist modified the cushion in his model and developed the legs to match this new pose. It is interesting to note how the figure's unusual position accommodates the concave shapes of the neighbouring capitals which is also a feature of the lion on f.4r. It is also interesting to note the similarity of the shoes with those on f.40v (fig.6.75-no.2).

One final detail on the Matthew figure on f.3v that may be of significance is the angular fold at the bottom of his cloak. The only other instance of this feature in the manuscript is on the previous page, again on the bottom of the cloak of the figure in the central *m*-arcade medallion (fig.2.39). However, while they exhibit many significant differences this evidence may link the authorship of the two figures. Having previously noted the similar framing devices that link the images on ff.3v and 4r, and also having noted the graphic dissimilarities between these images, the variation in style and form of these figures may not necessarily be evidence of different hands. They may have been copied from various sources by the same individual and their variety, may be a deliberate attempt to avoid repetition. This concept appears to have been important to Insular artists and included their reluctance to exactly repeat motifs or interlace and to avoid exact symmetry or precise mirror imaging. Henry describes it as follows: 'It is as if one of these "geasa" or magical taboos [...] acted constantly in forbidding the Irish artist to balance two exactly similar designs.'[58] While her discussion does not primarily focus on figural art it could be expected that the same attitude would also inform these artists' image-making. As will be shown throughout this study, the Scribe-Artist displays just such a predilection for variation and avoidance of repetition. It is then suggested here that the evangelist symbols on ff.3v and 4r

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[57] These also recall the broad cushions in portraits such as those of John in the Lindisfarne Gospels (f.209v) and David in the Vespasian Psalter (Cotton MS Vespasian A.i) f.30v, while the Luke portrait in the Corpus Christi Gospels (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 197B) f.129v, would point to the classical origin of such cushions.
[58] Henry, *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period to 800 A.D.* (New York, Cornell University Press, 1965) pp. 210-24 (p. 213). See also p. 321 in chapter five.

and also those on the previous page, f.3r, are by the same hand, the Scribe-Artist and are part of a second campaign by him to complete the unfinished manuscript.

Further figural work on f.4r including the warriors engaged with birds in the spandrels (fig.2.65), and the 'crowning figure' (fig.2.66) are also not of the finest quality. These appear to be somewhat hastily executed and are typical of the work in the second campaign. The 'crowning figure', unusually presenting two books, to some extent seems to echo the symmetrical pose of the lion directly below.

Other, non-figural, elements on these pages that are of inferior quality include the stepped designs in the lower tympanum panel on f.3v (fig.2.67) and the cross forms at the top of this page (fig.2.68). The damaged cross on the right hand side appears to have a stepped design while that on the left shows interlace of inferior quality. Similar interlace also occurs in the ribbon-borders behind the warriors in each of the spandrel panels on f.4r (fig.2.65). The interlace in the two central bases on f.4r is damaged and difficult to attribute but it is not of the highest quality (fig.2.69). However, the stepped patterns in the outer bases are clearly similar in quality to the other later additions.

The motifs in the circular finials on f.4r can also be included here (fig.2.65) as can the motifs added beneath the bases on both pages (figs.2.49 and 2.69), which are composed mainly of triangles and circles. Most of these circles contain equal-armed crosses which are of similar quality to those in the central pillars on f.2v (fig.2.29). The circles with equal-armed crosses added to the concave spaces on the outer capitals on f.4r are also consistent with this work (fig.2.55). Their addition to the capitals here may further suggest that the somewhat similar large segments of circles added to the lower capital elements on f.2v are also by the same hand (fig.2.30). As mentioned above the relatively simple additions to the outside of the fourth capital

on f.3r may also be included here (fig.2.4). The inverted *t*-shaped panels connecting the *m*-arcade to the border of the upper tympanum panel on f.3v are also of similar inferior quality (fig.2.70). The florets in the corresponding panels on f.4r (fig.2.71) recur on two panels in the great *chi* on f.34r and may be part of the original campaign. While these motifs are relatively simple they are consistent in form and well executed.

The lower tympanum panel on f.4r is bare except for the pattern of red triple dots (fig.2.6). Similar red dots are added to the background of the symbols' tympanum panel on f.2v and white ones feature in the same place on f.5r. These are similar to many other such marks, also typically in red, and which have the appearance of being later additions to the main scribal and artistic work in the manuscript. Such is the ubiquity of these and other markings, usually in red, that graphic artist Mark Van Stone refers to 'the clumsy later artist with a fat red pen who went through Kells to "finish it" – I call him the "Master of the Felt Marker"'. [59] These additions will be discussed further in chapter six.

The names of the evangelists, Matheus on f.3v and Matheus, Marcus and Iohannis on f.4r, in red ink, appear similar to the text of the numerals which also appear to be later additions and will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

The fourth opening ff.4v-5r

The matching frameworks on ff.4v and 5r (figs.2.7 and 2.8) again seem to repeat the pattern noted in the previous openings where the Master-Artist appears to have created the design on f.5r which was copied, with some loss of precision, by his collaborating partner on f.4v. However, the Master-Artist seems to have a greater presence on f.4v than on the Scribe-Artist's 'copied' pages of the previous openings. These frameworks return to the five-pillar and four-

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[59] M. Van Stone, 'Ornamental techniques in Kells and its kin', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 234-42 (p. 239).

intercolumnation format of the first opening, suitably accommodating the tables on these pages which show correspondences between pairs of evangelists. The square capitals of ff.1v and 2r are also repeated here but the circular bases are different. The two large arches of the *m*-arcade visually emphasise that the canons on these pages show correspondence between two Gospels.[60] On both pages these arches are 'bitten' by leonine heads.[61] The creatures' 'necks,' which appear as extensions of the second and fourth pillars, divide the *m*-arcade tympana creating quadrants of slightly uneven size.

On f.5r these quadrant panels are filled with anthropomorphic and zoomorphic interlace (fig.2.72). The high quality of these intricate and detailed panels suggest they may be attributed to the Master-Artist. The panel on the extreme right lacks the black ground of its fellows lending it a different appearance and its larger shapes also contribute to this effect. When this black ground is added it becomes easier to appreciate its precision and fine execution - qualities which it shares with the other panels (fig.2.73).

On f.4v these quadrants again appear to be attributable to the Master-Artist although the third one is somewhat broader and might again suggest some collaboration (fig.2.74). A few other instances of this variation in quality occur on the pages of this opening. The interlace in the large-arch and the *m*-arcades is of high quality on both pages. The first set of corners above the first capital on each page, appears to be of similarly high quality (2.75 and 2.76)). However, the second and third sets, again on both pages, do not appear to be completed with quite the same

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[60] Architectural frameworks with two arches occur in many Insular Gospel books including St Petersburg (Codex F.v.I.8), Maeseyck (Church of St Catherine, Treasury s.n.), Cutbercht (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex 1224) , B.L. Royal 7C.xii, B.L. Royal 1.E.iv and B.L. Royal 1.B.vii. However, these are not always restricted to pages showing correspondence between two Gospels. The earliest surviving occurrence of these pairs of arches is probably in B.L. Add. MS 5111. See also footnote 116 in this chapter.

[61] These are closely paralleled in B.L. Royal 1.E.vi on f.4r. Similar or closely related features also occur on f.18r in the Cutbercht Gospels the St. Petersburg Gospels at f.16v, the St. Gall Gospels on p.5, the Macregol Gospels on f.1r, the Cologne Collectio Canonem also on f.1r, the Stowe Missal (R.I.A. D.II.13) on f.12r, the Book of Deer (C.U.L. MS Ii.6.32) on ff.2r, 5r and 30r and the Hereford Gospels (Cath. Lib. MS P.I.2) at the opening page to John, f.102.

assurance. While these may merely reflect attempts to vary these motifs by the Master-Artist they may also indicate instances of collaboration or completion by the Scribe-Artist. The quality of the interlace in the central pillars on both pages is also somewhat inconsistent and may indicate further instances of the same practice (fig.2.77a-b).

The outer pillars on both ff.4v and 5r appear not to be the work of the primary artist on either page (fig.2.78a-b). Those on f.4v are precise and finely detailed while those on f.5r are less so and the interlace is broader and not so exact. One instance of fine lappet interlace occurs on the first pillar on f.5r and appears to be of the quality associated with the Master-Artist - perhaps an intervention and demonstration by the artistic master for his partner (fig.2.79). The 'penny-farthing' trumpet-spiral designs on the second and fourth pillars on both pages have fine spirals and would again suggest the hand of the Master-Artist (fig.2.80a-b).

This quality of work is also found in the first, third and fifth bases on f.4v (fig.2.81). The interlaced motifs in the bases on f.5r on the other hand, are broader and are more consistent with the work of the Scribe-Artist (fig.2.82). These all have 'embedded' crosses which may reflect a copying exercise based on the large arch/*m*-arcade border on f.4v which contains eighty-five fine examples of these motifs (fig.2.75). Another possible instance of such copying may be the unusual interlace in a section of the right-hand pillar on f.5r which is a broader version of that in the large-arch/*m*-arcade border above (figs.2.78b and 2.76). On f.4v the interlace in the panels between the lion-heads and the capitals on f.4v are similar in quality to the bases on f.5r and would also be attributable to the Scribe-Artist (fig.2.74). The three fretwork capitals are not of the finest variety and the other two with panels of zoomorphic interlace on f.4v lack the precision of the Master-Artist and all are most likely by the Scribe-Artist (fig.2.83). The second and fourth capitals on f.5r are also of similar quality (fig.2.84).

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The quality of the illumination at the top of f.5r has been much praised, including Henry's assessment that it 'is by far one of the most impressive compositions in the whole book'.[62] Henry credits this illumination to the artist she calls the Goldsmith. The work she attributes to him overlaps significantly with that of the individual here identified as the Master-Artist.[63] The imagery of the four evangelists in this composition will be addressed below in 'Hypothesis B'.

Later additions to ff.4v-5r

The most incongruous features on these pages are the spandrel panels on f.4v (fig.2.85).[64] These pairs of uneven triangles in red are formed of a stepped-pattern, both features typical of work in the proposed second campaign, and these seem to belong to its later phase.[65] However, there is no trace in this opening of the stepped-patterns and hatched lines in the ribbon-borders noted on all the previous pages. This random, and somewhat unexpected, absence of what we might have begun to consider a typical feature here is characteristic of the attitude to variation in the work of the Scribe-Artist.

Minor features on these pages that might be attributed to the second campaign include the lentoids in the corners of the central capital on f.4v and the triangles in the ribbon-border of the tympanum on f.5r (figs.2.83 and 2.72). The quality of execution of the triple white dots added variously to the tympanum background, the lion heads and the second and fourth bases, all on f.5r, would also link these with the second campaign (figs.2.72, 2.82 and fig.2.122). The first, third and fifth capitals on f.5r are also of similar quality as is the inferior interlace in the border

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[62] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 171.
[63] Ibid., p. 212.
[64] The text in the tympanum panel on f.4v has been attributed to a Gerald Plunket in the sixteenth-century (see Meehan, 'Other marginalia and additions', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 167-72 (p. 167).
[65] See fig.6.34.

of the central base on the same page (figs.2.84 and 2.82). On f.4v the second and fourth bases are decorated with simple crosses which are similar to those on ff.2v-4r. As with the previous openings, the numbers appear to be later additions as do the evangelist names at the top of f.4v. These will be discussed further below and other second campaign additions will be addressed in chapter six.

(iii) The grid framework pages, the canon tables and the script of the numerals

The fifth opening ff.5v-6r

There has been much speculation regarding the dramatic change from the architectural frameworks of the previous pages to the simple grids on ff.5v and 6r (figs.2.9 and 2.10). Friend proposes that they were finished 'by another painter after many pages of splendour by the first artist'.[66] McGurk, noting similarities with BL Royal 7.C.xii proposed that Kells shared a defective exemplar with this manuscript and that the change was deliberate.[67] Henderson agrees with McGurk,[68] as does Henry, who suggests that 'the painter of Kells gave up the architectural system at the point where the painter of Royal MS 7.C.xii had abandoned it'.[69] Guilmain disagrees with McGurk arguing that the deterioration in quality on ff.5v-6r cannot simply be attributed to a defective exemplar.[70] Guilmain also states that 'one thing however, seems almost certain. What little decoration there is on fol. 5v could not have been done by one of the original

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[66] Friend, 'The Canon Tables', in *Medieval Studies in Memory of Arthur Kingsley Porter*, p. 617.
[67] McGurk, 'Two Notes on the Book of Kells', *Scriptorium,* 9, (1955), pp. 105–07.
[68] Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells*, p. 138
[69] Henry, *Irish Art during the Viking Invasions* (1967), p. 88.
[70] Jacques Guilmain, 'The Forgotten Early Medieval Artist', in *Art Journal*, Vol. 25, No.1 (Autumn , 1965) pp. 33-42.

illuminators'.[71] Alexander discusses these possibilities and concludes that 'no hypothesis so far offered seems to deal with all the known facts in a completely satisfactory and convincing way'.[72]

On f.5v a simple grid, not unlike those in the canon tables of the Echternach Gospels and the Book of Durrow (fig.2.11), was drawn and subsequently painted in a distinctive stepped pattern. The use of stepped-patterns has been identified as one of the regular features of the work added in the proposed second campaign. Two of these grid 'ribbons' terminate outside the frame in rudimentary leonine heads which perhaps acknowledge those on the previous opening (fig.2.86). The graphic style of these heads is similar to those described by Henry when she suggests the 'possibility that Hand B may be associated with a certain type of initial with unusually large animals and wide coloured ribbons (fig.2.87)'.[73] This is also the scribe which Meehan proposes for the canon numerals on ff.1v-5r 'and which effected both script and decoration of 5v-6r'.[74] The consistency of the colours used, and the homogenous quality and appearance of both the grid and the script, would tend to confirm that both are by the same individual.

The internal crossings of the 'ribbons' on f.5v have saltire-cross motifs added (fig.2.88). Many of these are similar to those directly below the lion heads on f.5r (fig.2.72) while others recall those in the second and fourth bases on f.4v and below the bases on ff.3v and 4r (figs.2.81, 2.49 and 2.69). The linear interlaced motifs that form bases on f.5v are also of inferior quality as

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[71] Ibid., p. 36.
[72] Alexander, 'The Illumination', in *Kells Commentary*, p. 271.
[73] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 211. Note the stepped pattern in fig.2.87 which is similar to those in the spandrel panels on f.4v in fig.2.85.
[74] Meehan, 'The Division of Hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 188.

are the other features mentioned and which consequently link these pages to the proposed second campaign.[75]

There are five intercolumnations on f.5v but the final one is narrower than the others and only contains double *incipits* for Mark and Luke in canon ten. There are only four intercolumnations on f.6r and the scribe writes the last sixteen numbers for John outside the frame. It may be possible that the Scribe-Artist calculated an adequate amount of space for these numbers but subsequently discovered that this would change the half-page-of-Durrow-to-the-full-page-in-Kells format that he had used on all the previous pages. The grids on ff.5v and 6r do not replicate those on Durrow and do not allow for the duplication of the arrangement of the numbers as they appear in the older book.

The framework on f.6r is less elaborate than f.5v with horizontal divisions separating only the first three groups of five. There are no embellishments or bases and, as mentioned, the final numbers and the *explicit* for John, canon ten, are written to the right of the frame. The stepped pattern colour-scheme of f.5v is not repeated and these differences further indicate the dedication to variation that is typical of the Scribe-Artist's work.

The canon tables - ff.1v-6r

Layout

As mentioned above the numerals strictly follow a plan whereby exactly one half of a page of the Durrow canon tables corresponds to a full page in Kells. This relationship is more closely followed on the fourth opening, ff.4v and 5r, where the arrangement of the columns of numerals on Durrow is copied resulting in some of the numerals being written below the framework.

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[75] These bases recall those on other manuscripts such as f.17r in the St Petersburg Gospels, f.10v in B.L. Royal MS 1.B.vii, f.15v in the Trier Gospels (Trier, Domschatz, Codex 61) and also several in the Maeseyck Gospels.

However, the unusual solutions devised by the Scribe-Artist to enable him to follow the Durrow-based plan had already forced him to write outside the framework on earlier pages. The first instance occurs on f.3r where he has availed of a space below the *m*-arcade medallion in the third intercolumnation (fig.2.4). His use of larger letters in the first intercolumnation did not allow him to use the corresponding space there and the medallion in the centre is too large. Writing in this space at the top of the third intercolumnation enabled him to fit all of the subsequent numerals within the framework. At the bottom of the first and second intercolumnations he was forced to write the final row of numbers for Matthew and Mark outside the framework. However, this creates a misalignment of the three columns of numbers and compromises the most basic function of the tables.

Another unusual feature of the Scribe-Artist's work on f.3r, and on f.2v opposite, is his doubling of the columns of numbers. This Matthew-Matthew, Mark-Mark and Luke-Luke arrangement also compromises the use of the tables as the reader must skip alternate columns to find the correct sequence for any particular canon. This appears to have been a direct consequence of his requirement to fit fifty canons on each page thus matching the hundred on f.8v in Durrow. This doubling of columns of numerals is not continued for the final 9 rows of canon two on f.3v.

Diminuendo[76]

Further features untypical of other canon tables are also noticeable throughout the canon tables in Kells. The Scribe-Artist's use of diminuendo is evident on all pages of the Kells' canon tables. On f.1v the large numerals at the top of each column become slightly smaller across the row. The

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[76] Meehan describes diminuendo as occurring where 'the letters of words are formed in decreasing sizes,' Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (1994), p. 17. However, there are very limited instances where diminuendo thus described actually occurs in Kells. For further discussion see chapter five pp. 310-11 and figs.5.337-40.

Scribe-Artist also makes most of the numerals in the first column larger than the others. This particular diminuendo variation is not a feature of the other canon pages and perhaps was done to give extra emphasis to the beginning of the tables.[77] These enlarged numerals in the first column leave little interlinear space and reduces their clarity and legibility. The diminuendo on f.2r is not as pronounced as that on f.1v as the scribe is restricted in the narrow space at the top of the columns (fig.2.2). The tables on f.2v begin with a calligraphic link between the first two rows in the first column (fig.2.3). Here, the Scribe-Artist also appears to create numerals of diminishing size across the first row of the doubled sets of numbers. Those at the top of the first, third and fifth columns are larger while those at the top of the fourth and sixth columns appear to continue the diminuendo. However, this sequence is interrupted as the numeral at the top of the second column was perhaps considered too long to incorporate a large letter.

The first two letters of the first numeral on f.3r are large and also calligraphically combined (fig.2.4). The diminuendo across the alternating columns noted on f.2v also appears to be continued here, however, the ink loss makes this difficult to confirm. Apart from the first row of numbers on f.3r, several letters at the beginning of the groups of five have also been enlarged throughout the page. This attitude to variation here in the additional use of larger letters is typical of the Scribe-Artist's work.

Further evidence of the Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation is found on the next opening, ff.3v and 4r, where the first five letters *c* across the row in f.3v are similarly sized (figs.2.5 and 2.6). The only trace of diminuendo appears here in the third column as the second and third *c*'s are slightly smaller and the rest of the numeral is finished in diminuendo. Further

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[77] Nordenfalk, *Die Spätantike Kanontafeln*, p. 188. Nordenfalk observed that the first page or 'Eingangsseite' of many late antique series of canon tables were often given more elaborate treatment. The Scribe-Artist here may be reflecting this practice. In the Stockholm Codex Aureus the canon tables begin with large numerals in the first row but not in diminuendo.

variation again occurs in the first row of numbers on f.4r. Here the first letters of each numeral at the top of each column are similarly sized and the subsequent letters of each of the three numerals is rendered in diminuendo. The two large letters *x* in the first row on f.4r are flourished and the *x* in the first numeral on f.3v is calligraphically linked with the middle *c*.

The manner in which diminuendo is used at the top of f.4v relates to the correspondence of the two Gospels in canon five (fig.2.7). Two separate instances of diminuendo are featured between columns one and two and between columns three and four. This is repeated for the beginning of canon six at the top of the first two columns on f.5r (fig.2.8). Further variation occurs at the beginnings of the other two tables, seven and eight, on f.5r. The first letters of these numerals, again, are similarly sized rather than being rendered in diminuendo. They are given slightly different calligraphic flourishes, and the distinctive *x* in the third column is linked with another in the row directly below. The only calligraphic flourish on f.4v occurs in the word *explicit* at the bottom of the second column.

On f.5v (fig.2.9), canon nine, again, begins with diminuendo in the opening numerals in the first two columns. Below these, towards the bottom of the first column, Matthew in canon ten begins without diminuendo. The scribe writes the *explicit* for Matthew after three groups of five numbers, perhaps misreading the significance of three isolated groups of five in the first column on f.10r in Durrow.[78] The Scribe-Artist may have believed he was beginning a new canon at the top of the third column as the first row commences with diminuendo which matches the first numerals in the two previous columns. These letters, which begin the fourth group of five in Matthew canon ten, are also calligraphically combined with the first letter of the numeral directly below (fig.2.90-no.3). Halfway down the fourth column a large *x* and a smaller *u* show the Scribe-Artist reverting to a simpler diminuendo for the beginning of Mark in canon ten (fig.2.90-

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[78] Or, as McGurk suggests in the exemplar shared with Durrow, see footnote 15 above.

no.4). His fondness for variation continues on f.6r (fig.2.10) with a vertical diminuendo

beginning Luke and a more typical horizontal version for John. While diminuendo and

calligraphic features are commonly used in Insular manuscripts they are typically avoided in

canon tables in favour of order and legibility.

Justification

The canon tables in Kells are generally justified to the left which is typical for those in Insular

manuscripts.[79] However, typically, the Scribe-Artist deviates from this when the opportunity

arises. Triangular groups of numerals are shown in fig.2.89 while centered arrangements feature

in fig.2.90-nos.1-5. Fig.2.90-no.6 shows a group of numerals where each one is split into two

parts. While it is not uncommon in Insular manuscripts to see numerals split in two in this way,

the diagonal alignment of the rows of halves here is perhaps unique.[80] Another unusual

arrangement of numbers occurs on f.1v where a group of five is shifted to the left to

accommodate the 'sitting figure' in the first column (fig.2.119). The outer numbers in the final

row of canon one on f.2r are linked with decorative motifs in what might be another unique

arrangement and these will be discussed further below (fig.2.112).[81]

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[79] Occasional deviations from this justification to the left occur for example on f.18r of the Cutbercht Gospels and f.6v of the Stockholm Codex Aureus.

[80] This splitting of numerals was probably done to aid legibility. Examples of these in the Book of Durrow are in figs.2.11. These are evident in other Insular manuscripts such as the St Petersburg Gospels (f.12v) and BL Royal MS 1.E.vi (f.4r).

[81] Decorative motifs in the text space do not feature in surviving Insular or indeed most other canon tables. The Carolingian Harley MS 2788 does have a pattern between its bases on f. 6v, and Autun MS 4 (Bibliothèque Municipale) f.8r shows some graphic elements at the bottom of the intercolumnar space. However, neither of these is in any way connected to the script.

Alignment

As mentioned above, the layout of the numerals occasionally had unfortunate results for the required alignment of the rows. Other instances of poor alignment also occur. The larger numerals in the first column on f.1v appear to affect the alignment of the rows and this is most obvious in row sixteen where the first three numbers sit on a slightly rising line, and the number in the fourth column sits in the middle of it (fig.2.1). Another instance occurs on f.2r at the beginning of the fourth group of five numbers in the second column (fig.2.2). The first number in the group seems somewhat isolated from the other four and this throws the remaining numbers below out of line with those in the other columns. These features again impair the use of the tables. However, these imperfections are consistent with the diminished quality of the work done in the second campaign.

Groups of five numerals

Grouping canon numerals in fives was the most common practice amongst Insular scribes although variations do occur. Patrick McGurk states that 'most Latin canon tables group their numbers in fives', while 'Greek canons were quite often divided in fours', and 'Armenian and Syriac books seem to have different systems'.[82]

A prominent feature in the first column of numbers on f.1v is the use of extended tails in the downstroke on the left of a series of *x*'s. These are used to help define the first three groups of five (figs.2.93-4 and 2.119). The following groups of five are emphasised by one long *x*-tail

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[82] McGurk, 'The disposition of numbers in latin Eusebian canon tables', in *Philologia Sacra: Biblische und Praktische Studien für Hermann J. Frede und Walter Thiele dü ihrem siebzigsten Geburtstag,* ed. Roger Gryson (Herder, 1993), pp. 242-58 (p. 245).

which is alternately plain and zig-zag.[83] Often separated by ruled lines in other manuscripts (fig.2.11) the groups of numbers in Kells are primarily separated by the use of an alternating colour pattern.[84] McGurk suggests that the scribe 'may have decided that he could not afford the space for separating these quintets and instead distinguished the groups by different coloured inks'.[85] This use of colour for the numerals does not occur in any other surviving Insular manuscript and may be attributed to the Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation.[86]

Some of these colours are now badly faded and the red and black on ff.4v and 5r are perhaps the best preserved. A chequer-board pattern across the rows and down the columns is evident on the first two openings. The Scribe-Artist's desire for variation shows a different pattern of alternation on f.3v where rows of five across the page are alternately written in red and purple. The chequer-board pattern is resumed on f.4r. However, this is interrupted by a group of five in the middle which is subdivided into two and three numbers again alternately coloured. On f.4v the first two columns resume the alternately coloured rows of f.3v with the third and fourth columns again returning to the chequer-board pattern. This is continued on f.5r although the alternation in the first two columns is not aligned with the second two.

For further variation the Scribe-Artist may have intended to have alternating colours for what he thought were different canon tables in the final two pages. Thus, canon nine is in red while the first three groups of five for Matthew canon ten are in black. The last five of these numbers share a grid compartment with the *explicit* for Matthew. As mentioned above, in

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[83] Similar zig-zag motifs occur in the Book of Durrow (f.124r), the Augsburg Gospels (Maihingen, Schloss Harburg, Codex I.2.4°.2) f.128v and the Calendar of Willibrord (Paris Bibl. Nat., MS lat. 10837) ff.34v and 38v. See D. Ó'Cróinín, 'Is the Augsburg Gospel Codex a Northumbrian Manuscript?', in Bonner *et al* eds. *St. Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community* (Rochester, Boydell Press, 1995), pp. 198-99 and pl. 26.

[84] An interesting variation on the separation of the groups of five numbers occurs in the Royal Bible, BL Royal MS 1.E.vi where a large 'comma' is used.

[85] McGurk, 'The texts at the opening of the book', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 37-58 (p. 55).

[86] For another instance of the use of colour to define groups of canon numbers as found in the Rabbula Gospels, see K. Weitzman, *Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination*, pls. 34-35 (London, Chatto and Windus, 1977).

following his model the Scribe-Artist may have thought the three isolated groups of five on f.10r of Durrow was a complete table. The rest of Matthew resumes in red in the third column. However, the sequence of alternating colours for different tables is not continued for Mark as this is also rendered in red.

On f.6r the numbers for Luke, canon ten, are all in red for the first four rows in both columns and then alternating rows in red and black. Yet further variation occurs in John canon ten. The first four groups of five in the third column are black while those in the fourth column are red. The remainder of the groups return to the chequer-board pattern, thus ending the tables as they began.

Another use of colour alternation occurs in the extensions added to the downstroke on the left of the letter *x*. These occur on some letters on some pages and are particularly evident on the red blocks of numerals on f.2r. This constant variation is typical of the Scribe-Artist's work throughout the manuscript.

The script of the canon numerals - ff.1v-6r

The letters used in most sets of canon tables are typically regular and unvaried and apart sometimes from extensions to the left downstroke of *x* they are usually plain.[87] However, the script of the numerals in the Kells' tables shows significant variation and embellishment. The use of diminuendo and calligraphic effects, mainly in the first rows on a page or at the beginning of a new table, has been noted above. The use of some larger letters for some numerals was also noted on f.3r above. In addition to these instances there is further script variation throughout the

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[87] These *x*-extensions were probably used to clarify letters especially in adjacent sequences of the letter *c* and *x*. Examples of these occur in other Insular manuscripts and these are evident in the Book of Durrow in fig.2.11. The canon tables in the Barberini Gospels (Barb. lat. 570) also show some variation in these extensions.

text of the numerals. This is most obvious in the letters *x*, *l* and *i*. While there is some variation in the letters *c* and *u* this is mainly limited to size and will not be included in this discussion. The numerous letter variations examined in the following paragraphs highlight the Scribe-Artist's approach.

<div style="text-align:center">**The letter *X***</div>

The greatest number of variations in the letters of the canon numerals in Kells are applied to the letter *x.* This may be due to its Christological symbolism and is also reflected in the many variations to this letter throughout the main text of the manuscript. The Scribe-Artist uses both the 'dislocated' and the 'two-stroke' forms of the letter (figs.3.139-40). Variations of the extended downstroke to the left on f.1v are shown in fig.2.91. These are straight or variously curved and some are terminated in wedges, while others end in florets. Instances in the illustration show one of these florets is shared by two letters and one of the wedges is larger than the others. Similar floret endings are applied to the two, slightly different, *x*-extensions on f.2r (fig.2.92).

Variations to the long *x*-extensions in the first column on f.1v are shown in fig.2.93. The first two end in differently oriented wedges, while the third has an elegant calligraphic link with another *x* at the bottom of the quintet (see also fig.5.282). The fourth shows the beginning of the last of these extensions which extends over twenty-two rows of numbers. The last letter in fig.2.93 is reconstructed from the *x*, now faded, at the top of the fourth column on f.1v.

Fig.2.94 shows further variations to these extensions. Those on the left of this illustration are in f.1v and show the extension curved to the left and linked with the preceding letter. Those on the right of fig.2.94 show two variations in f.2v where these extensions are curved to the right

and are variously linked with the letters directly below. The first of these two groups of the letter *x* is accompanied by another at the top which has its extension sweeping to the left while that at the end of the group curves downwards and to the right.

Fig.2.95 begins with another long downwards curving extension, the end of which moves to the right, while the others show extensions which variously curve to the left. Fig.2.96 shows further extensions curving to the left which end in a variety of wedges. The last of these is the final number of all the tables at the end of John canon ten. These letters with long extensions are similar to those on the canon table reference numbers on ff.292v and 293r which are the only instances of these numbers in Kells (fig.2.139).[88] Fig.2.97 shows a number of these extensions which are straight and these vary significantly in length. All except the last of these have wedged endings. The size, shape and gesture of these wedges show much variation also.

Each instance of the letter *x* in the vertical group of four at the top of fig.2.98 is not followed by any other letter and these are terminated on the right by wedges also.[89] The next two numerals in this illustration are also finished in wedges on the right. While all of these letters are similarly terminated, none of the wedges or the curved strokes to which they are attached are exactly the same. Apart from this vertical group of the letter *x* the other numerals in this illustration each has at least one *x* with a distinctive long curving diagonal stroke from top left to bottom right. Figs.2.99 and 2.100 show numerals with sequences of the letter *x* in threes and twos respectively. The extensions to these letters vary in their thickness and length, and also in their wedged endings.

The left side of fig.2.101 shows a column of the letter *x* compressed and others which have a somewhat upright stroke from top left to bottom right. The last two instances in this

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[88] These will be discussed in detail below, pp. 97-100.
[89] See fig.3.214 for similarly wedged terminals to uncial *a*, half-uncial *a*, *c*, *e*, *l*, *r*, *t* and *x* in the main text script. Instances of these wedged endings to *c* and *l* also occur in the canon tables (see, for example, fig.2.108).

illustration also show different extensions and wedges. Fig.2.102 contains individual instances of the letter *x* that show a further range of variations which highlight the Scribe-Artist's unique approach to the script of canon numerals. In common with the other examples discussed, these letters show differences in all their various elements. The last letter in this illustration, which has an elaborately flourished extension, is the final letter from the *explicit* for John canon ten. Although not one of the canon numerals as such, it is a fitting finale to the catalogue of variations on this letter in the tables.[90] All of the instances discussed are typical of the Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation. This is also evident in his treatment of the letters *l* and *i* as discussed in the following paragraphs.

The letter *L*

Figs.2.103 and 2.104 show instances of the letter *l* with significant variations in the size, height and weight of the letterform. As with *x* they are varied in their different parts, in the shape of the upright and also the curved lower element. There is also much variation in the wedges at the tops of the letters. Fig.2.105 shows further variation where the ascending element tends to be rather straight. The second and third last examples in this illustration lean somewhat to the left while the final one leans to the right.

Fig.2.106 shows compressed versions of the letter, again, with much variation in the details and especially the wedges. Fig.2.107 shows further variation where the *l*'s are calligraphically linked to their neighbours, beside or directly below them.[91] Finally, fig.2.108 shows a series of *l*'s with elongated double curved ends (with the exception of the first one which has a single curve). There is also one instance where the letter *u* is similarly elaborated.

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[90] Variations in the letter *x* are also highlighted in chapter three especially in figs.3.239 and 3.242-45.
[91] The instance in fig.2.107 with a pointed break in the curve of the letter recalls similar letters in the main text (figs.3.335-36).

This occurs in the tenth row in the third column on f.2r. Most of these are part of, or related to a family of letters with extended curved-concave elaborations in the main text of the manuscript which will be discussed in chapter three (figs.3.306 and 3.310). In fig.2.108 there is much obvious variation in the size, shape and length of the *l*, however, perhaps the subtlest and most interesting of these varied elements is evident in the treatment of the wedges at both ends of these letters.

The letter *I*

The simple stroke of the letter *i* is also subject to significant variation. Fig.2.109 shows the largest of the letters and within these are differences in the form of the letters and also in their details. As noted above in relation to *x* and *l*, there are variations in the wedges, with some being blunt and thick while others are narrower and more pointed. The bottoms of some of these letters are finished with a 'foot' or serif-like mark.[92]

Figs.2.110 and 2.111 show instances where the final letter of a numeral ending in *i* is extended downwards.[93] The last row in fig.2.111 shows the only instance where these occur in consecutive lines and the only instance where two *i*'s are equally extended in one numeral. Fig.2.112 shows a series of these elongated *i*'s in a 'reverse diminuendo' at the bottom of f.2r. This is part of the elaborate conclusion to the first canon table and creates a neat counterpart to the diminuendo at the beginning of this canon table on f.1v (as discussed above).

The first two numerals in fig.2.113 show elongated *i*'s that are directly opposite, or equally extended above and below, the other letters. The next two instances in this illustration show the letter extended above rather than below the rest of the numeral letters. The bottom row

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[92] The occurrence of this feature in the main text script is discussed on pp. 134-35 in chapter three (figs.3.247-51).
[93] See fig.3.32 for examples of these in the main text script.

in this illustration shows the only instances where the extended *i*'s are written both above and below the rest of the letters in each numeral.

The letter *i* is superscripted and subscripted within the text of the canon tables on a number of occasions. It is not surprising that these occur on parts of the first two openings where the writing space has been limited. On ff.1v and 2r the limitations of the already narrow space beside the architectural capitals is compounded by the addition of the intercolumnar ribbon-borders and by the doubling of the columns of numbers on ff.2v and 3r. Fig.2.114 shows the instances of superscript *i*'s and even the diagonal strokes which mark these additional letters are subject to some variation.[94]

Fig.2.115 shows the instances of subscript *i*'s in the tables.[95] The first example in the top row of this illustration is straight while the second shows an angled version. The remaining examples are variously curved and also show variations in their wedges.[96] The pair of subscript letters in the last instance in this illustration exemplify these differences.

Similar variations in superscript and subscript letters will be shown throughout the main text of the manuscript. These, and similar variations to all those discussed above in relation to *x*, *l* and *i*, and indeed to all the letters, will also be shown throughout the book. This, perhaps unique approach to script variation by the Scribe-Artist in the Book of Kells, will be discussed further in chapter three.

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[94] These strokes marking superscripted letters in the Gospel texts are discussed in chapter four (pp. 242-44 and figs.4.147-74.

[95] The completion of long numerals on a second line occurs occasionally in the canon tables of other manuscripts. One example of this occurs in the St. Petersburg Gospels for the long number 289 at the bottom of the first column on f.12r. Two other examples are evident at the foot of Harley MS 2788 f.9v.

[96] See figs.3.32-33 and 4.271 for examples of these in the main text script.

(iv) Two Hypotheses

This section begins with a brief description of the frameworks and their intercolumnar spaces and then shows the disposition of the numerals on the various pages of the canon tables. This is followed by Hypothesis A which outlines a rationale for this arrangement of the numerals in their present state, and as completed by the Scribe-Artist in the second campaign. Hypothesis B proposes a rationale for the layout of the canon table frameworks and the disposition of the canon numerals as possibly intended at the outset of the original campaign. In this study it is proposed that this plan was devised by the Master-Artist who did not survive to complete or oversee this work.

The frameworks of the Kells' canon tables
and the disposition of their numerals

The architectural frameworks in the Kells' canon tables begin with five pillars and four intercolumnations (figs.2.1-2). This arrangement in the first opening, ff.1v and 2r, suits canon one which shows correspondences between all four Gospels. The frameworks on the following four pages, ff.2v-4r, each have four pillars and three intercolumnations (figs.2.3-6). These would suit the second, third and fourth canons, each of which show correspondences between three Gospels.[97] The architectural frameworks return to five pillars and four intercolumnations on the final illuminated opening, ff.4v-5r (figs.2.7-8). These would suit the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth canons, each of which show correspondences between two Gospels.[98]

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[97] In Kells table two (Matthew, Mark and Luke) has 109 canons, table three (Matthew, Luke and John) has 22 and table four (Matthew, Mark and John) has 26.

[98] In Kells table five (Matthew and Luke) has 83 canons, table six (Matthew and Mark) has 48, table seven (Matthew and John) has 7, table eight (Mark and Luke) has 13 and table nine (Luke and John) has 21.

The Kells' canon numerals are disposed as follows:

- F.1v – 40 rows for **Canon i**

- F.2r – 31 rows for **Canon i**

- F.2v – 50 rows for **Canon ii**

- F.3r – 50 rows for **Canon ii**

- F.3v – 9 rows for **Canon ii** and 22 for **Canon iii**

- F.4r – 26 rows for **Canon iv**

- F.4v – 83 rows for **Canon v**

- F.5r – 47 rows for **Canon vi**,[99] 7 for **Canon vii** and 13 for **Canon viii**

- F.5v – 21 rows for **Canon ix** and 81 single numerals for **Canon x**

- F.6r – 169 single numerals for **Canon x**

Hypothesis A – a rationale for the arrangement
of the numerals as they occur in the Book of Kells

In this hypothetical interpretation of the evidence, the Master-Artist, responsible for the layout of the overall scheme, was unable to complete his work as planned on the Kells canon tables perhaps having suffered some illness, injury or more likely, death. After some hiatus, and some period of time, with his master and mentor no longer able participate in, or even direct, the work, the Scribe-Artist attempted to complete the unfinished manuscript. This undertaking included the completion of the illumination of the canon pages and the addition of the numerals. Although there is much evidence of their collaboration on the illumination of the tables, the Scribe-Artist

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[99] The second last row has a double set of numerals giving the table a total of 48 canons (see also footnote 109 below).

appears to be unaware of the Master-Artist's plan for the disposition of the numerals within the frameworks and also for the format to be used for canon ten.

Following the pattern already established in the manuscript, where Kells closely follows its Columban predecessor in the arrangement of its prefatory matter, the Scribe-Artist (during the second campaign) decided, or perhaps was instructed, to base his copying of the numerals directly on their arrangement in the Book of Durrow. McGurk, who documents how 'the scribe closely followed the disposition of the Canon numbers in the Book of Durrow',[100] also notes some variations between the two books, and he suggests that Kells' numerals may have been copied from a shared intermediary rather than directly from Durrow.[101] Thus, the numerals on the five pages of the 'Durrow' canon tables were to be simply divided and each vertically divided half-page would be entered on one full page in the Book of Kells.

The eight illuminated pages, although incomplete, would be used for this purpose in addition to two of the blank pages which followed f.5r. This worked reasonably well for the pages of the first opening, ff.1v and 2r (figs.2.1 and 2.2), which accommodated the two halves of f.8r in Durrow. However the Scribe-Artist possibly misinterpreted lines ruled in the intercolumnations which were probably intended to assist with the justification of the numerals. These are developed and painted as ribbon-borders with those in the two central intercolumnations on f.1v having animal heads and legs as terminals (figs.2.1 and 2.116-7). These additional ribbon-borders contrive to make the already limited space for the numerals even tighter. Those written at the bottom are particularly reduced in size (fig.2.117 and 2.118).[102]

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[100] McGurk, 'The texts at the opening of the book', in *Kells Commentary*, (p. 55).
[101] Ibid., p. 58.
[102] Other Insular examples of this reduction in letter size can be found at the bottom of some of the canon tables for example on f.12r of the Trier Gospels, f.8r of Stockholm Codex Aureus and f.16r of the St. Petersburg Gospels. In these cases however the numerals are still quite legible.

Two further details also appear to have been added at the same time as the numbers – the 'sitting figure' in the first intercolumnation and the two semi-circular motifs in the third (figs.2.119 and 2.120). Neither of these features are compatible with the main illumination on the pages of this opening. The figure appears to sit on numerals perhaps deliberately arranged for the purpose, the group of five to his rear seeming to have been pushed back to provide him with a seat. He has an ambiguous pose with an oversized left hand on a right arm in front of his face. The number on which he sits is *xcuiii* (98) and this is repeated five more times directly below. It refers to Matthew 10.40: 'He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him who sent me.' The pair of semi-circular motifs in the third intercolumnation are opposite *cxui* (116). This is the corresponding canon entry for Luke opposite Matthew *xcuiii* (98) noted above. This, like the numeral under the figure is also repeated six times, here directly opposite the pair of semi-circular motifs. This refers to Luke 10.16: 'He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him who sent me.' These references may suggest a more meaningful interpretation of the figure's pose. Could it be that his hand at ear level is encouraging the Gospel reader to 'receive' and 'hear' the word of God? Highlighting these Gospel references to hearing and receiving would be appropriate as part of a preface to the Gospel texts. This would also suggest that the scribe had an understanding of the canon tables and the specific episodes to which they referred. Perhaps the figure is a portrayal of Eusebius, or, as Alexander speculates, he may be intended to represent one of the scribes or illuminators.[103]

As mentioned above, the Scribe-Artist separated the groups of five numerals on this opening by alternately using red and black ink. This appears to have forced him to change two of

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[103] Alexander, 'Descriptions of illuminated pages', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 305-14 (p. 305). However, he notes that his beard 'rules out his being a monk.'

the numbers in the last row of canon one on f.2r. This row of numerals may have been written

when the surrounding, opposed bird, motifs were drawn as part of the original campaign. This

was no doubt planned to act as decorative tailpiece with the concluding letters *i* of each numeral

written in reverse diminuendo as mentioned above (fig.2.112). The quality of these bird motifs is

typical of the Scribe-Artist's work in the original campaign. However, perhaps in erasing the two

black numerals that now needed to be written in red, he unavoidably interfered with the heads of

the birds in the fourth intercolumnation forcing him to redraw these details. The deterioration of

his faculties in the interim between the two campaigns may explain the poorer graphic quality of

these heads when compared with their counterparts in the first intercolumnation. Other additions

made on f.1v during the second campaign have been identified above (pp. 50-51).

Fitting one hundred rows of the second canon table on the pages of the second opening

however, created a significant problem (figs.2.3 and 2.4). The Scribe-Artist devised a solution by

dividing each of the relatively wide intercolumnations in two and this enabled him to double the

number of rows entered. The first two columns both show entries for Matthew, the second two

columns entries for Mark and the final two columns entries for Luke. He ruled, and later, painted

'ribbon-pillars' to separate these doubled columns of numerals.[104] However, as the canon

progressed and some of the numerals became quite large, he had to accept that he would not be

able to paint his ribbon pillars on f.3r, as Alexander observes, 'there would have been several

places where the numbers would have interrupted them'.[105] An example of these long numerals

occurs at the top of the first intercolumnation on f.3r where the first two require a total of

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[104] This later application of paint is clear from the way *xxuiiii* in row 18 in the third column of numerals is carefully avoided. The suggested ruling is not always emphasised in ink or visible (at least in the Faksimile Verlag facsimile) but is implied, for example, by the justification to the left of the numerals on f.3r. The scale of these ribbon-pillars in relation to the main pillars is similar to those on four of the five pages of canon tables in BL Royal 1.E vi. The three stepped capitals on these pillars are also similar in both manuscripts.
[105] Alexander, 'Descriptions of illuminated pages', in *Kells Commentary*, p. 306

seventeen letters. He had, however, already drawn and painted the bases on f.3r as Meehan notes that 'script can be seen over decoration at the foot of columns one and three'.[106] It would also appear that these ribbon-pillars were intended to be read as beginning on f.2v and ending on f.3r as no bases are shown at the bottom of the first page. This would presumably emphasise the continuity of canon two between the two pages. The similarity of the graphic quality of these ribbon-pillars and the mushroom-shaped tympana on f.2r would suggest that they are also part of the second campaign.

The arrangement of doubled columns of numerals make the tables difficult to use as columns must be skipped in order to get the correct sequence of numbers. For example the first canon on the page begins in column one, continues in column three and ends in column five. This difficulty is compounded on f.3r as the scribe availed of the extra space left by the smaller medallion in the third intercolumnation and wrote his first number there in the line above its fellows. While this enabled him to complete the numbers inside the framework in this third intercolumnation, he had to add a row below the bases in the first two. As a result, all of the numbers for Luke are out of line with those for Matthew and Mark.

The attribution of the decoration of the central pillars on f.2v to the scribe of the numerals may be strengthened by noting the relationship between the dark blue double triangles in the decorative panel of the first of these pillars and the adjacent groups of five numbers. However, in the second of these pillars the inclusion of extra motifs in the next panel seems to have frustrated his attempt to continue this link with the groups of numbers or perhaps he was indulging his predilection for variation. Other additions made on ff.2v and 3r during the second campaign have been identified above (pp. 54-57).

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[106] Meehan, 'The script', in *Kells Commentary*, p. 251.

The third opening, ff.3v and 4r (figs.2.5 and 2.6) contain exactly the two halves of f.9r in Durrow (fig.2.11). Thus, the Scribe-Artist only had to accommodate the last 9 rows of canon two and all 22 rows of canon three on f.3v. However, the decision to include the *incipits* and *explicits* for the two canons, again directly following Durrow, forced him to write some numbers below the level of the bases. Perhaps the fact that he had already written some numerals outside the framework on the previous page made this seem less unusual and lent some uniformity to the work. However, perhaps to minimise this disorderly writing outside the framework, he extended it by adding rows of cross-inscribed circles below the bases and writes the last of the rubrics in triangles extended from these sub-basal designs (fig.2.49).

The 26 rows of numbers in canon four and the additional rubrics could easily have been accommodated within the framework on f.4r. However, the scribe chose to spread the numbers over the entire space and to add the *explicit* for canon four and the *incipit* for canon five below the bases. This again lends uniformity as it matches his work on the page opposite. The addition again of circles and triangles below the bases, with some typical variations, also tallies with similar work on f.3v (fig.2.69). Other additions made on ff.3v and 4r during the second campaign have been identified above (pp. 59-64).

The 83 pairs of numbers in canon five are written on f.4v (fig.2.7). These could perhaps have been more evenly spread between the two pairs of intercolumnations, but the Scribe-Artist followed the arrangement for the half-page in Durrow exactly, 50 pairs of numbers in its first two columns and thirty-three in the next two. These latter are followed by the *explicit* for canon five and the *incipit* for canon six in both manuscripts.[107]

The arrangement of the columns on the right hand side of f.9v in Durrow again is copied exactly in Kells. Thus, the 48 pairs of numbers in canon six, written in the first two

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[107] The *u* in the explicit for canon five appears to have been ommitted.

intercolumnations on f.5r, extend below the framework (fig.2.8). There was space left over in the two other intercolumnations after the scribe had written the short canons seven and eight and also included their rubrics. The left over space is filled with two dotted lines and two pairs of flourishes. As on the previous page, the numbers could have been more evenly divided and could have been kept within the framework had the scribe not chosen to follow the Durrow arrangement so closely.[108]

There is one particularly odd entry among these numbers on f.5r. In Durrow there are nine groups of five numbers and three more rows at the end. In Kells there are also nine groups of five but only two additional rows. Close examination of the second last row in Kells reveals that the Scribe-Artist has doubled up the second and third last pairs of numbers (fig.2.121). This recalls his somewhat similar doubling of numbers on ff.2v and 3r.[109] However, unlike the numbers on ff.2v and 3r, there is no apparent reason for this double entry and it also does not follow Durrow. It may simply be another example of the Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation. Another oddity is his addition of the names Marcus and Lucas after the *incipit* for canon eight and before he begins the numerals. Other additions made on ff.4v and 5r during the second campaign have been identified above (pp. 67-68).

The Scribe-Artist proceeded to create a simple grid framework on ff.5v and 6r (figs.2.9 and 2.10) in which he entered the numerals for both halves of f.10r in Durrow. It is suggested here that this did not occur because the exemplar he used was defective but simply because the

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[108] In other manuscripts numerals are occasionally written below the framework. Examples of these include f.9v of the Maeseyck Gospels, f.14v of the Trier Gospels and f.10v of the Soissons Gospels (Paris, Bibl. Nat. lat. 8850).
[109] This may explain why table six in Kells is listed by Netzer as having 47 canons when in fact it has the more standard 48. See Netzer, *Cultural Interplay in the Eighth Century*, Appendix P, p. 203.

illuminated pages came to an end on f.5r and this was the solution he devised in order to complete the canons on the following blank pages.[110]

It is interesting to note that he did not choose to continue the exact disposition of numbers in Durrow as he had done on some of the previous pages. He created a different grid frame from that on Durrow and consequently had to change the arrangement of the numbers on the page. On earlier pages he had written numbers below the frame whereas here he concluded canon ten to the right of his grid frame on f.6r. This again seems rather odd as there was ample space for the framework to be extended (see p. 70). However, such deviations and odd choices can be understood in the context of the scribe-Artist's predilection for variation. The last number for John in canon ten, the last of all the canon numbers, is finished with three long flourished *x*'s and these recall similarly flourished *x*'s at the end of the first column on f.2v (fig.2.96).

Hypothesis B – a rationale for the arrangement of the numerals
as intended by the Master-Artist in the original campaign

In this hypothetical interpretation of the evidence, the planning and the layout for the pages that would contain the canon tables in Kells is attributed to the Master-Artist. He also created the design of the frameworks that would be used in pairs on each of the first four openings. This overall scheme, and the frameworks, was designed to accommodate the canon numbers in a specific planned arrangement. This arrangement was not based on the disposition of the tables in the Book of Durrow. However, this does not exclude the possibility that there may have been an intention in the planning for Kells to copy the text of the canon numerals from the older manuscript in homage to its revered Columban ancestor.

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[110] Theories attempting to explain that the anomalies in the Kells canon pages were caused by defective models have been proposed by several scholars. See pp. 41-42 and footnotes 16-23 above.

The Master-Artist worked on the canon tables in close collaboration with the Scribe-Artist and shared the work of illuminating these pages. The Master-Artist took primary responsibility for ff.1v, 3r and 3v and f.5r. The Scribe-Artist, following the overall plan of his senior partner, took primary responsibility for both sides of ff.2 and 4. Within this division of work there is evidence that some 'handing-over' occurred between the two artists with each making contributions to the other's pages. This may have been done for the purpose of providing exemplary work, as the Master-Artist mentored his collaborating partner. The artists may also have worked in this manner to lend a more homogenous and harmonious appearance to the sequence of pages. In this context Henry suggests that 'there even have been a deliberate effort to use the work of the various painters in rotation so that the different styles would be more or less evenly spread through the Book'.[111]

Figs.2.123-130 show the eight illuminated pages of the canon tables with all the proposed additions of the second campaign, including the numerals, digitally removed. These illustrations are of course speculative but they may approximate the state of the unfinished pages before the Scribe-Artist commenced his second campaign to complete the manuscript. Figs.2.131-138 show these pages with the canon numerals added in a manner that attempts to be more sympathetic to their layout, decoration and iconography. This again is of course necessarily speculative but it creates an ordered series of canon tables, and no doubt some such arrangement was an integral part of the overall scheme when the tables were conceived and work was begun on them in the original campaign.

The first opening, f.1v and f.2r (figs.2.1 and 2.2) was designed to contain the numbers for canon one as indeed it does. However, the ribbon-borders which constrict the space available for the numbers were not part of the original plan. As mentioned above, these lines were probably

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[111] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 212.

ruled to justify the columns of numbers and were later misinterpreted during the second campaign (figs.2.116-8). It does appear that the Scribe-Artist has designed an elaborate endpiece for this canon. Pairs of birds with their necks entwined occupy the bottom of the first and fourth intercolumnations. This was probably intended to act as a visual *explicit* for the first canon. The birds in these motifis, if interpreted as peacocks, would be particularly appropriate here as their resurrection symbolism would match the canons in the last row which reference the accounts of the women at the tomb.[112]

The heads of the birds in the fourth intercolumnation appear to have been modified. As mentioned above, it is suggested that this may have occurred during the second campaign when the rest of the canon numbers were added. The Scribe-Artist has written all of these numbers in groups of five with alternating colours and has changed those in the final row in the second and fourth intercolumnations accordingly. This has left the last number in the second intercolumnation out of line and has resulted in the modification to the heads of the birds in the fourth intercolumnation. Figs.2.123-4 show these pages with the additions of the second campaign digitally erased while figs.2.131-32 show them with the hypothetical arrangement of numerals added.

The tables which shared correspondences for three Gospels, canons two, three and four, were intended to be accommodated on the pages with three intercolumnations, ff.2v, 3r, 3v and 4r (figs.2.3-6). These pages do contain these numbers but it is suggested here that they were not written as planned at the outset of the original campaign. The total of 157 rows of numbers could easily be accommodated over the four pages and there should have been no need to double up the columns of numbers on ff.2v and 3r, and also no need to write below the bases on ff.3r, f3v

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[112] For discussion of this resurrection symbolism see Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (1994), pp. 55-63 and Meehan , *The Book of Kells* (2012), pp. 150-53.

and 4r. Figs.2.125-8 show these pages with the additions of the second campaign digitally erased while figs.2.133-6 show them with the hypothetical arrangement of numerals added.

Having established the concept of the harmony of the four Gospels on the pages of the first opening, and also highlighting the fact that correspondences between three Gospels were shown in the second opening, it may be that the Master-Artist did not plan to include any evangelist symbols on ff.3v and 4r.[113] The large tympanum space which accommodated these images on the first two openings is divided into two narrow panels on ff.3v and 4r. These would more suitably accommodate perhaps the names of the evangelists and also possibly rubrics.[114] What was originally intended for these panels is a matter of speculation as no traces of the original plan is visible, at least not in any of the available facsimiles.

It is suggested here that the images under the *m*-arcades on ff.3v and 4r were not part of the original plan. These were added later to the unfinished pages in a misguided effort to continue a pattern of showing evangelist symbols as are found on the first four canon pages.[115] If these images are removed then it becomes more feasible to accommodate the 157 rows of numerals (figs.2.127-8). Thus, possibly 32 rows were intended for each of ff.2v and 3r and 93 rows were then to be divided between the longer intercolumnations (with the symbols removed) on ff.3v and 4r (figs.2.135-136).

On ff.4v and 5r (figs.2.7 and 2.8), two prominent arches of the *m*-arcades each cap two intercolumnations. Henderson suggests that this 'single embracing arch above, expresses the

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[113] The possibility that this second opening of the canon tables may have referenced a number of Columban relics is discussed in the addendum at the end of this chapter.

[114] The names of the Evangelists and/or rubrics for the tables are often found in such spaces in other sets of canon tables including those of Insular and non-Insular origin.

[115] Images were also added at this time to f.3r, in the large tympanum, in the central medallion and in the circular frame at the top of the page. The crowning figures on ff.1v and 4r were also probably added at this time. Other additions at this time most like likely included the spandrel panels on ff.4r and 4v, the crosses on f.3v, the finials on f.4r, the circle and triangle motifs below the bases on ff.3v and 4r. These would also include various smaller additions such as the 'sitting' figure in the intercolumnation on f.1v.

"two-ness"' of the tables on these pages.[116] The 83 pairs of numbers of canon five were planned

to fit on f.4v.[117] While these are the numbers on the page, it is suggested here that the original

plan was different. This would have spread the numbers more evenly over the page and avoided

the need to write some numbers below the bases and outside the framework in the first two

intercolumnations. Figs.2.129-30 show these pages with the additions of the second campaign

digitally erased, while figs.2.137-8 show them with the hypothetical arrangement of numerals

added.

On f.5r there is an additional feature embedded in the iconography that suggests this page

was designed for canons showing correspondences between two Gospels. This evidence, in the

arrangement of the evangelist symbols at the top of the page (fig.2.122), suggests that all the

remaining canons showing correspondences between two Gospels were to be written on this

page. Thus, in addition to canons six, seven and eight, which are on f.5r, canon nine was planned

to be entered here also. The total of 88 pairs of numbers for these canons could easily be

accommodated within the four intercolumnations. It is acknowledged that including the three

explicits and the two *incipits* that are on the page might have proved challenging. However, as

occurs in other manuscripts, these could have been omitted, or, some shorter format could have

been employed. It may be that the Master-Artist planned 'visual *explicits*' for these canons to

match the 'visual *incipit*s' of the symbols composition at the top of the page which will be

discussed in the following paragraph.[118]

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[116] Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells*, p. 137. Possibly the earliest surviving use of such an arch embracing two columns of numerals for these canons is found in BL Add. MS 5111 which is 'conventionally dated to the sixth or sixth-seventh century' - John Lowden 'The Beginnings of Biblical Illustration', in *Imaging the early Medieval Bible,* ed. John Williams (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), pp. 9-59 (p. 25).
[117] All four of these tables, under a pair of arches, are on f.5v of BL Royal 1.E vi.
[118] A 'visual *explicit'* for the end of canon one has been suggested above (see p. 93).

In relation to the imagery at the top of f.5r, Henry suggests that 'as the text includes the sixth, seventh and eighth canons, the symbols are not connected definitely to any of the lists',[119] The proposal here is that the subtle 'dialogue' between the symbols has been overlooked.[120] As noted earlier, the Master-Artist's intentions were most likely not understood by the Scribe-Artist as he entered the numbers during the second campaign. In the spandrel areas the man and the eagle look across at each other and would appropriately symbolise canon seven (Matthew and John). The lion and the bull in the tympanum panel are paired in the centre of the image just as they are paired in canon eight (Mark and Luke). The man is beside the lion and these symbols also face each other which would reflect the pairing in canon six (Matthew and Mark). Similarly, the bull and the eagle are also beside each other and, again, face each other which is the appropriate pairing for canon nine (Luke and John). This composition bears the hallmarks of the Master-Artist's work and it has been credited to the 'Goldsmith' in Henry's division of hands.[121] As noted earlier, much of the Master-Artist's work overlaps with that attributed to the artist named the Goldsmith by Henry.

If as suggested this image at the top of f.5r is intended to visually represent these four tables then it would make a perfect 'bookend' for those nine canons which show correspondences between the different Gospels. It also works as a reprise of the four evangelist symbols in the other superb composition by the Master-Artist on f.1v, which could be seen as another 'bookend' at the beginning. Whether the original plan involved the creation of elaborate frameworks for the tables in canon ten is a matter of speculation. Alexander notes that perhaps 'the column divisions under the arches designed to emphasize the parallel texts of the different

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[119] Henry, *Irish Art during the Viking invasions* (1967), p. 87.
[120] This 'dialogue' between the symbols is a visual manifestation of their discourse as described in Ailerán's poem (see footnote 26 above).
[121] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 212.

Gospels were considered unnecessary on these last two pages'.[122] It is also possible, if not

probable, that the four remaining pages between ff.5v -7r were intended to display the numbers

relevant to each one of the four separate elements of canon ten.

As mentioned above, Henry describes the Kells canon tables as 'unbelievably

irresponsible' and this cannot have been the intention at the outset as the book was originally

planned.[123] The proposal here includes a precise ordering of the numbers which would be

compatible with the excellence of the illumination of artists such as the Master-Artist

(figs.2.131-138). Such a plan would have provided this masterpiece of illumination and

calligraphy with a fitting and usable set of canon tables.

(v) Canon table reference numbers

In the Book of Kells canon table reference numbers appear only on two text pages, the opening

ff.292v-293r at the beginning of John's Gospel (fig.2.139). These are in red and appear to be part

of the work done in the second campaign. The first entry in line 9 below the initial *F* on f.292v

has small triple red dots between *IŌ* (John) and the numeral *II* (fig.2.139-no.1).[124] It also has

small triple red dots between *LŪ* (Luke) and the numeral *UI* while there is a single dot between

MĀ (Matthew) and the numeral *UII*. These numerals refer to the relevant Eusebian sections for

each of the three Gospels in which they occur. The numeral *III* written in the margin indicates

that these occur in canon table three which shows the correspondences between the Gospels of

Matthew, Luke and John. The Eusebian numerals are framed by elements of stepped-patterning

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[122] Alexander, 'The illumination', in *Kells Commentary,* p. 270.
[123] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 153.
[124] The first Eusebian section in John begins on the *Incipit* page f.292r.

and with rectilinear motifs in three corners (see also fig.6.65-no.6). These appear to be linked

together by the addition of a yellow line. The poor quality of the execution of this frame suggests

that it belongs to the later phase of the second campaign. The sets of red triple dots also seem

more compatible with this work. Elements of the stepped-pattern appear to have been added

above and below the lower horizontal stroke of the initial *F* at the same time.

The second entry occurs in line 13 on f.292v and has small triple red dots between *IŌ* and

the numeral *III* and between the *MĀ* and the numeral *I* (fig.2.139-no.2). There are no dots

between *LŪ* and the longer numeral *XIII*.[125] The elongation of this *X* and the final *I* recall similar

elaborations in the canon tables (see figs.2.93 and 2.96). This entry is written in the margin and

is not accompanied by the numeral *III* which would indicate the relevant canon table. However,

the Scribe-Artist may have intended that the *III* in the margin above, for the first entry, would

serve both. It is also possible that this number may have been lost when the pages were cropped

in the nineteenth century.[126] Beside this entry there is an unusual pattern of red dots which are

broadly symmetrical in arrangement and which may have been the basis for some intended but

unfinished decoration. As with the previous entry some stepped patterning is added as a framing

device.

The final entry on this page is in line 17 and is again written in the margin (fig.2.139-

no.3). This shows the *IO*, without any apparent abbreviation mark, and the numeral *IIII*

indicating the fourth Eusebian section. Beneath this is an *X*, again with an elaborate extension,

indicating that this occurs in ten, the final canon table which shows episodes only occurring in a

single Gospel. Line 17 is continued in the line above as a turn-in-path and the Scribe-Artist may

have been unsure as to how he should resolve this dilemma. The thin black diagonal stroke

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[125] This should be *XIIII* which is the number entered on f.3v in the corresponding reference in the canon tables.
[126] Meehan, 'Bindings: documentary evidence', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 193-95 (p. 193) relates an account which describes how the pages of the manuscript were significantly cropped during the 1821 rebinding.

indicating the turn-in-path is 'doubled' by the addition, in red, of an elaborate flower motif and the canon table reference numbers are repeated around this marker. The *IO*, again without an abbreviation mark, is followed by the numeral *IIII* and both of these elements are to the left of the 'doubled' turn-in-path marker. The *X* indicating canon table ten elegantly follows the diagonal of the turn-in-path marker and this is completed with a scrolled elaboration which seems to be linked to the original black turn-in-path marker. There is no attempt to add any framing devices to this or the remaining entries.

A number of variations are evident in the execution of the fourth canon table reference number at the top of f.293r (fig.2.139-no.4). This somewhat incongruously appears at the end of the previous section in the right-hand margin in line 3 rather than at the beginning of the next section in the left-hand margin in line 4. The *IŌ* is followed by the numeral *U*, below this the *MĀ* is followed by the numeral *I* and below this *LŪ* is followed by *XIIII*. Each of the abbreviated names is accompanied by the usual horizontal stroke. At the bottom the numeral *III* indicates that this again is from the third canon table.

The next Eusebian section in John begins on line 8 and the text is continued in the line above in another instance of the turn-in-path. In typical fashion the Scribe-Artist does not repeat his formula from the page opposite. Here the reference numbers are not written in the margin but are placed above and below an extension to the letter *s* and around an elaborate 'doubled' turn-in-path marker (fig.2.139-no.5). The *IŌ*, with an abbreviation mark, and the numeral *UI* are written above the *s*-extension while the *MA*, without an abbreviation stroke, and the numeral *XI* are written below it. Perhaps the Scribe-Artist felt the *s*-extension could double for Matthew's abbreviation stroke. *MR̂*, with an abbreviation stroke and followed by the numeral *IIII*, is contained within a curved floret spray of the 'doubled' turn-in-path marker. The *LŪ*, with an

abbreviation stroke over a triple punctuation mark is also on the left while the accompanying numeral *X* is written to the right of the turn-in-path marker. A curved extension to this letter seems to be linked to the original black turn-in-path marker while a further 'doubling' stroke, underneath and in red, is elaborated with scrolling. The large *I* in the margin at the beginning of the Eusebian section in line 8 indicates that this entry is part of the first canon table which shows correspondences between all four Gospels.

The entry for the seventh Eusebian section in John, on line 11, is marked only by an *X* which indicates that this is in the tenth canon table (fig.2.139-no.6). Similarly, the eighth section in line 15 is only marked by the numeral *III* and the ninth section in line 17 is marked by the numeral *X*, respectively indicating canon tables three and ten (figs.2.139-no.7). These *X*'s have extended strokes terminated in varying spiral motifs. While these last two entries in lines 15 and 17 both have their text continued in the lines above in further instances of turn-in-path they are not accompanied by the relevant Eusebian section numbers as were the previous ones.

The attitude to variation employed in adding these reference numbers is typical of the Scribe-Artist's approach throughout the scribal work in the manuscript. There also appears to be a sense of experimentation as if he was trying to figure out how to approach the task and how to deal with anomalies such as those created by the instances of turn-in-path. It has been suggested that these reference numbers were not added throughout the rest of the manuscript for aesthetic reasons.[127] However, it is more likely that they were simply part of the work which remains unfinished in the book.

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[127] H. Pulliam, *Word and Image in the Book of Kells* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2006), p. 45.

Conclusions

The conclusions to this chapter on the division of hands in the Kells' canon tables are to a large extent contained in the two hypotheses above. These interpret the script and graphic evidence of the canon pages as presented in the earlier sections of the chapter. While it is particularly challenging to unravel the contributions of the two artists from this graphic evidence, some conclusions may be proposed. While it may not be possible to conclusively attribute all the constituent parts of each page to the particular individuals, some areas can be clearly identified with certain hands. Issues that seem to involve shared work or 'handing-over', the possible evidence of mentoring, and also the evidence for work completed as part of a second campaign, all combine to complicate the possibility of establishing a completely satisfactory scheme of attribution. However, there is no evidence for contributions by any other hand outside of the Scribe-Artist and the Master-Artist.

The exquisitely fine and precise work of the Master-Artist is most prominent but he does appear to work in collaboration another artist, identified in this study as the Scribe-Artist. This seems particularly evident for example, in the relationship between the pages of the first opening. Further evidence for this partnership has been traced through the eight illuminated pages, including a pattern of 'handing-over' between the two on all of these pages. The evidence also clearly suggests the seniority of the Master-Artist in this aspect of their partnership and he is proposed as the principal planner for the series of pages and also as the author of the designs for the paired architectural frameworks on each of the first four openings.

Analysis of the graphic evidence also reveals work that is inferior to both that of the Master-Artist and that of the Scribe-Artist during the first campaign. This work is also not always satisfactorily integrated with that of the proposed first campaign. An example of this

would be the insertion of the evangelist symbols under the *m*-arcades on ff.3v and 4r. This apparent lack of coordination would suggest that this work has been added in a second campaign and without the required direction of the individual responsible for the original overall plan. Some of this work is of particularly poor quality and seems to belong to a later or final phase of the second campaign. Further additions of this kind, and their attribution to the Scribe-Artist, will be discussed in chapter six.

The evidence also links the hand responsible for these graphic contributions in the second campaign with the addition of the numerals. Examples of this evidence would include the 'sitting figure' on f.1v and the 'ribbon-pillars' on f.2v. These make most sense if considered as being the work of the individual who wrote the numerals. This would also appear to be the case on the last two pages of the canon tables, ff.5v and 6r, as the graphic quality of the grid frames appears to be consistent with the script on these pages.

The script of the canon tables is particularly unusual in layout, justification, use of diminuendo, occurrence of calligraphic features and in the variations of the letterforms. These features are consistent with those in the main text of the manuscript and will be discussed further in chapter three. This leads to the conclusion that the Scribe-Artist, in collaboration with the Master-Artist, are the individuals responsible for the planning and execution of all of the work in the pages of the Kells' canon tables. The poor integration of some of the Scribe-Artist's graphic contributions and his distribution of the numerals, both in the proposed second campaign, however, might suggest that he did not properly or fully understand the Master-Artist's intended plan for adding the numerals within the frames. Another possibility is that he was instructed, perhaps by a monastic superior, to disregard the original plan and add the numerals in a manner that reflected those in Durrow. Finally, close examination of the canon table reference numbers

added on ff.292v-293r reveals the idiosyncratic predilection for variation that is the most prominent defining characteristic of the Scribe-Artist and identifies these as his work.

Addendum

In the course of analysing the pages of the canon tables in the Book of Kells some interesting iconographic issues became apparent. As these were not quite compatible with the narrative of the thesis and its focus on scribal attribution, they are included here as an addendum.

A number of features on the second opening, ff.2v-3r, are without parallel among the surviving sets of canon tables from the period. It will be argued here that these features are not merely incidental decorative additions but rather may be understood as deliberate references to relics and reliquaries associated with Columba. It is not intended to offer a detailed account of the various relics associated with the saint nor to confirm the genuineness of particular objects.[128] The intention is to attempt to identify some reasonable logic for the presence of these unusual features in the context of this opening in the Kells' canon tables.

Considering the architectural framework, which is similar on both f.2v and f.3r, there are a number of remarkable features unique to these pages. The first of these is the presence of three medallions within each of these frameworks, above, and between, the capitals (figs.2.33 and 2.39).[129] These medallions replace the *m*-arcades which are a typical feature of architectural

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[128] The relics and reliquaries associated with Saint Columba are comprehensively dealt with by Ó Floinn, 'Insignia Columbae I', Bourke, 'Insignia Columbae II', and Bourke, 'A Note on the Delg Aidechta', all in *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba*, ed. C. Bourke (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 1997), pp. 136-61, 162-83 and 184-92 respectively.

[129] These are quite distinct from the medallions in the Trier Gospels and the Stockholm Codex Aureus which follow a Latin model. See Netzer, *Cultural Interplay in the Eighth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 59-62.

frameworks in canon tables from their earliest instances.[130] Such *m-arcades* are also a typical

feature of canon tables in the Insular period and beyond. The Kells' medallions have broad

borders variously filled with key-pattern and plain or zoomorphic interlace. The inner discs of

those medallions with decoration completed in the first campaign, the first and third medallions

on f.2v, are filled with finely executed triple trumpet-spiral motifs. As mentioned above, these

medallions are unique in canon tables but a combination of three similarly decorated medallions

(circular mounts) is typical of the decoration on the so-called 'house-shaped' shrines of this

period.[131] Of these, the closest parallel to the Kells' medallions is found in those on the back of

the Bologna house-shaped shrine (fig.2.140).[132] Here the broad borders with interlace are

repeated and the inner discs are also filled with fine triple trumpet-spiral motifs. It is significant

that both the house-shaped shrines and the canon table frameworks are architectural in form. The

upper sections of the canon table frameworks in this context can also be seen as analogous to the

roofs of the house-shaped shrines. The upright hinged handles on the Bologna shrine add a

further level of visual correspondence between the overall appearance of the shrine and the upper

sections of the architectural frameworks on ff.2v-3r.

This comparative analysis of the house-shaped shrines and the architectural frameworks

on ff.2v-3r also reveals another significant shared feature. The broad interlace-filled spandrel

borders with lion-head terminals on both ff.2v and 3r (figs.2.32 and 2.40) are further features on

this opening which are unique among surviving sets of canon tables.[133] Within the other pages of

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[130] See, for example, Vatican Fragment (Vatican Biblioteca Apostolica lat. 3806), f.1v and Codex Beneventanus (London, British Library Add. 5463), f.3v (pls. 61 and 62) in Netzer, *Cultural Interplay in the Eighth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[131] See, for example, S. Youngs, ed., *The Work of Angels* (British Museum, London, 1989), nos.128 (Abbadia, San Salvatore, Siena), 129 (Monymusk), 130b (Lower Lough Erne), 131 (Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen) and 132 (Bologna). See also Cone, ed., *Treasures of Early Irish Art 1500 B.C.-1500 A.D.* (Met. Mus. of Art, ex. cat., New York, 1977), no.31 (Emly shrine).

[132] Youngs, *The Work of Angels*, no.132 (Bologna).

[133] See also the zoomorphic finials on the temple on f.202v in Kells (fig.6.78).

canon tables in Kells the spandrels are bounded by simple ribbon-borders (figs.2.15a, 2.15d, 2.16, 2.53, 2.65 and 2.85). The broad interlace-filled borders with zoomorphic terminals on ff.2v-3r have parallels in a number of the house-shaped shrines where the ridge finials also terminate in zoomorphic heads.[134] In contrast to those on ff.2v-3r, the zoomorphic heads are at the outside of the shrines, however in each case they are facing inwards. The closest parallel to the Kells' motifs is again found on the Bologna house-shaped shrine. (fig.2.140-41). In this instance the finer interlace on the roof-ridge at the front of the shrine is closely paralleled with that on the borders in f.2v in the manuscript (fig.2.32). The intention here is not to claim a specific connection between this shrine and this opening in Kells' canon pages, but rather to establish more general iconographic and morphological links between house-shaped shrines and the unique and unusual features found on this opening in Kells.[135]

The basis for interpreting the unique features in the architectural frameworks on ff.2v-3r as referencing a house-shaped shrine(s) that would have been associated with Columba is strengthened by the presence of a number of other features. The finials on both of these pages are also unique and unusual. The motifs decorating these discs exactly parallel those which appear to depict flabella (liturgical fans) which occur on a number of Kells' illuminated pages (fig.2.142).[136] Their presence on f.2v-3r may reference another relic associated with the saint, that is, his flabellum (C*uilebad Coluim Cille*). This object is first mentioned in 1034 when it was recorded as having been lost at sea.[137] While this is significantly later than the creation of the manuscript it may indicate that this relic was associated with Columba from the earlier period.

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[134] Ibid., nos.128 (Abbadia, San Salvatore, Siena), 129 (Monymusk), and 132 (Bologna) and also Cone, *Treasures of Early Irish Art*, no.31 (Emly shrine).
[135] Ó Floinn, 'Insignia Columbae I', pp. 146-47. Here he discusses the possible links between the *Breccbennach* and the Monymusk shrine.
[136] Ibid., fig.9.
[137] Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, *The Annals of Ulster*, AU 1034.9 (p. 473). See Ó Floinn, 'Insignia Columbae I', pp. 155-58. On p. 157 he notes that the earliest occurrence of the word *flabellum* (glossed *culebath*) in an Irish context dates to the mid-ninth century.

The prominence of these objects in the book itself suggests, at least, that the artists were quite familiar with these items. The enigmatic 'crowning figure' at the top of the page who grapples with the extended tongues of the lion-head terminals may also be interpreted as referencing another relic associated with Columba (figs.2.34 and 2.47). This figure is clearly clad in a white robe and this may refer to the *tunica candida* worn by the saint on his deathbed.[138] This relic of the saint is used on two occasions by the community on Iona to invoke his assistance.[139]

Finally, there may be yet another relic referenced in the trapezoidal shape of the upper part of the unusual double-capitals on ff.2v-3r (figs.2.30 and 2.37). The *Delg Aidechta*, the stylus of Columba, is referred to in a text which is linguistically dated to the eleventh or twelfth century.[140] As with the C*uilebad* mentioned above, this is not a contemporary reference, but it would be a particularly appropriate relic-object considering Columba's reputation as a scribe (see pp. 370-73). The stylus is a pen-sized shaft with one end pointed for writing on a wax tablet and a flattened head at the top for use as a 'wax-eraser' (fig.2.143). Adomnán refers to wax tablets on a number of occasions,[141] and possibly to a writing stylus when describing books written by Columba as '*stilo ipsius descriptis*'.[142] There is a parallel between the double-capitals on ff.2v-3r and the Dublin stylus,[143] which has a circular element directly below the flattened head (fig.2.143). Curiously the lower part of this circular element, which is broader, has 'a ring

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[138] Sharpe, ed., *Adomnán of Iona, Life of Columba* (London, 1995), p. 200, (*VC II 44*). The possible identification of this figure as Columba is raised by D. McCarthy, 'On the shape of the Insular Tonsure', in *Celtica*, xxiv (Dublin, Institute of Advanced Studies, 2003), pp. 140-67 (pp. 158-59).

[139] Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona, Life of Columba* (London, 1995), pp. 200- 201, (*VC II 44* and *45*).

[140] Bourke, 'A Note on the Delg Aidechta', p. 184.

[141] Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona, Life of Columba* (London, 1995), p. 138, (*VC I 35*) and Meehan, ed., *Adamnan's De Locis Sanctis* (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, Dublin, 1958), pp. 42-43.

[142] Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona, Life of Columba* (London, 1995), p. 200, (*VC II 44*).

[143] E. C. R. Armstrong, 'Note on a bronze Ring-pin', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 39 (1909), p. 297.

modelled on the hoop of a brooch.'[144] Reading the form in this way allows the pin, and in

particular the pinhead, of many of these brooches to be understood as referencing a stylus.[145]

There is a further intriguing correspondence in this context if the pinhead of the so-called 'Tara'

brooch is compared with the double-capitals on ff.2v-3r (fig.2.144). In addition to sharing a

similar trapezoidal form the interlaced zoomorphs, both framed by double borders, are also

strikingly similar. The lower element of the double-capitals can be seen as analogous to the

shape of a brooch.[146] While the relative scale of a pinhead to a brooch is not retained in the

double-capitals the overall morphology is similar (fig.2.145). It should be stressed that, as with

the house-shaped shrines, there is no intention here to link the double-capitals to any particular

brooch. I am not aware of any previous discussion where brooch pinheads may be considered to

represent a stylus. However, this possibility may merit future investigation or discussion.[147] It

should be noted that some scholars have suggested that brooches such as Hunterston and 'Tara'

may incorporate Christian symbolism.[148] The presence of similar brooches which fasten the

clothing of the Virgin in contemporary and near-contemporary Irish and Irish-related Christ and

the Virgin carvings is also significant in this context.[149]

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[144] Bourke, 'A Note on the Delg Aidechta', p. 185. See, for example, Youngs, *The Work of Angels*, nos.16-19 and nos.69-89.

[145] See, for example those with trapezoidal pinheads, Youngs, *The Work of Angels*, nos.69 (Hunterston), 71 ('Londesborough'), 76 (Ardagh), 78 (Loughmoe) and 79 (Roscrea).

[146] See, for example those brooches with expanded terminals which correspond more closely to the shape of the upper secions of the double-capitals on ff.2v-3r, Youngs, *The Work of Angels*, nos.74 (Kilmainham), 106 (St Ninian's Isle) and 109 (Clunie Castle).

[147] Bourke, 'A Note on the Delg Aidechta', pp. 189-92 (figs.2-3), makes a case for suggesting the kite brooch form as a possible embodiment of the *Delg Aidechta*.

[148] See, for example, R. B. K. Stevenson, 'The Hunterston Brooch and its Significance', in *Medieval Archaeology 18* (1974), pp. 16-42 (pp. 39-40).

[149] P. Harbison, *The High-Crosses of Ireland; an iconographical and photographic survey*, 3 vols. (Bonn, 1992), fig.691 (Cross of the Scriptures, Clonmacnoise, fig.823 (Broken Cross, Kells), fig.875 (Muiredach's Cross, Monasterboice) and 947 (North Cross, Kells). M. R. Nieke, 'Penannular and Related Brooches: Secular Ornament or Symbol in Action', in eds., J. Higgitt and R. M. Spearman, *The Age of Migrating Ideas* (National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1993), pp. 128-34 (pp. 132-33). R. Trench-Jellicoe, 'A missing figure on slab fragment no.2 from Monifieth, Angus, the a'Chill Cross, Canna, and some implications of the development of a variant form of the Virgin's hairstyle and dress in early medieval Scotland', in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. 129 (1999), pp. 597-647, figs.3-5.

The coincidence on ff.2v-3r of such a significant number of iconographic elements that may be interpreted as referring to relics and reliquaries associated with Columba strenghtens the case for this proposal.[150] This reading also provides a rationale within which these otherwise incongruous elements may be reasonably understood. Previously in this chapter Kells' homage to Durrow, an earlier, and no doubt revered, Columban book was noted. In such a context it need hardly be surprising if a number of similarly revered relics associated with the saint might also be referenced here on the second opening of the canon tables in the Book of Kells.

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[150] It is also possible that other relics/reliquaries are also subtly referenced on the pages of this opening.

Chapter 3

THE SCRIPT IN THE BOOK OF KELLS

Introduction

Chapter three will deal with the script in the Book of Kells. It is divided into two sections.

Section I begins **(i)** by briefly addressing codicological issues, although lack of access to the original manuscript limits the extent of any material and codicological analyses. This is followed with **(ii)** a review of the scholarship on scribal attribution in Kells. The main focus of the chapter **(iii)** is the analysis of the script. This provides a detailed analysis, dealing with the basic alphabet of individual letters and their many variant forms. This is concluded by analysis of the letter *x* which exemplifies the Scribe-Artist's approach to the script in Kells. This is followed by **(iv)** a discussion of the script which examines the pen-strokes used, the occurrence of short serif-like marks on some letters, variations in the size of the script, and it also briefly addresses the occurrence of some calligraphic end-lines. This concludes with **(v)** a description of the distinctive characteristics of the script in zones attributed to each of the hands in Meehan's four-scribe scheme.

Section II includes **(vi)** analyses of the numerous letters throughout the manuscript which are subject to extended curved-concave elaborations. The next part **(vii)** addresses the occurrence of letters with pointed elaborations and finally **(viii)** analyses which focus on the use of uncial-*a* at line-ends. Next **(ix)**, the application and disribution of each of these features is discussed as is their occurrence in other manuscripts. This is followed by further discussion of the script which addresses the possible circumstances that led to the variations that are found in the work of the second campaign.

Section I

(i) Codicology and Materials

Before addressing the script in this chapter it is necessary to make some remarks on the

codicology of the manuscript. As already mentioned in chapter one, the analysis of features in

the Book of Kells for this thesis is largely based upon close, unrestricted study of the Faksimile

Verlag facsimile and as such it is not within the scope of this study to add much to the existing

knowledge of the codicological features or to that of the materials used. The surface marks on

the vellum would require directional lighting to make them more visible and this would have

been incompatible with the priority of photographically recording the colour and the graphic

details of the manuscript pages in their entirety. While the prickmarks are at least occasionally

visible, the ruling, even when 'forceful' as in the case of an example described by Meehan, is for

the most part not evident.[1]

One analysis undertaken here is the examination of the occurrence of the oval shaped

holes in the vellum, most of which are physically reproduced in the Faksimile Verlag facsimile

(diag.3.1). These defects are most likely due to the condition of the skin and the processes of its

preparation.[2] It is interesting to note that the beginning pages of each Gospel tended to have few

if any of these holes. The opening quire of each Gospel generally has relatively few of these

perforations and perhaps it is not surprising that the vellum chosen for these pages would be

relatively flawless. Another point that emerged from this analysis was that in the last four quires

of Matthew's Gospel there were few of these holes in the vellum. Only f.123 had a significant

number, with eight small perforations, and many of these were centrally located. It is generally

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[1] Meehan, 'The script', in *Kells Commentary*, p. 247.
[2] A. Cains, 'The vellum', in *Kells Commentary,* pp. 178-81 (p. 178).

thought that 'a crucifixion scene was probably intended for the blank page 123v'.[3] However, it would have been unusual to select a sheet of vellum flawed in this way for any page of illumination and most surprising given the significance of such subject matter. Further analysis of these perforations may be worthwhile. It may be possible to speculate that a cross or perhaps something like a crucifixion plaque was laid on the page when this opening might be displayed, for example, as part of a Good Friday liturgy.

The most comprehensive source of codicological information to date was published in conjunction with the Faksimile Verlag facsimile in a section of the accompanying commentary volume.[4] In a series of chapters, Meehan and Cains describe the vellum, the pigments used and the evidence of its various bindings. They describe the number of leaves, their dimensions and their collation which is also presented in a detailed diagram. An elaboration of this diagram of the gatherings was produced by Erika Eisenlohr and this particular format is used as the basis for the series of diagrams produced in the course of the present investigation.[5]

Meehan, in his study of the script, notes that the codicological features of the manuscript do not appear to correspond to the divisions of sections of work which he attributes to the Scribes A, B, C and D. For example, while tendencies may be noted with regard to pricking and ruling, he cannot discern a distinctive pattern of preparatory layout which might assist in making decisive scribal identifications. In addition he notes that 'hands do not customarily change at the beginnings of new gatherings'.[6] This appears to be in marked contrast, for example, to the Book of Armagh (TCD MS 52), in which Michelle Brown notes that each of the four artist-scribes was 'responsible for every activity in their allotted pieces of work – laying out the script, decorating

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[3] Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (1994), p. 24, and Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 173.
[4] Meehan and Cains, 'Physical description,' in *Kells Commentary,* pp. 175-227.
[5] Eisenlohr, 'The puzzle of the scribes: some palaeographical observations,' *Conference Proceedings,* pp. 198-99.
[6] Meehan, 'The script', in *Kells Commentary,* p. 250.

it with zoomorphic initials and sewing their gatherings with preliminary tacket sewing prior to binding, as if each were working independently but in planned concert'.[7] Brown notes a different type of collaboration in the Barberini Gospels where the master scribe-artist leads 'a team of four artist-scribes who attempt to blend their styles at the places where they handed over to one another'.[8] Elsewhere Brown notes that this work was allocated 'in a most distinctive manner' with each of the first three Gospels written by two scribes and John's Gospel exclusively by the master-scribe.[9] In this paper Brown cautions that 'we know very little concerning the structure and working methods of the early scriptorium' and it would seem to be foolhardy to rush to general conclusions based on these instances in the books of Armagh and Kells or from the limited number of manuscripts that have survived from the period.

As this study is conducted without access to the original manuscript, it is not possible to research or add comment on the materials used. As far as can be ascertained from examining the facsimile, patterns of ink use are not sufficiently specific to decisively support the identification of the individual hands A, C and D in the four-scribe scheme. The various colours used in those zones attributed to Scribe B will be discussed below, and ink-use is also discussed in relation to the initials in chapter five.

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[7] M. P. Brown, *The Book and the Transformation of Britain c.550-1050* (London, British Library, 2011), p. 54.
[8] Ibid., p. 54.
[9] M. P. Brown, 'The Barberini Gospels: Context and Intertextuality', in A. Minnis and J. Roberts, eds., *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in honour of Eamonn Ó Carragáin* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2007), pp. 89-116.

(ii) Review of the literature on the script in the

Book of Kells and the division of hands

The division of hands in relation to the script of the Book of Kells has been addressed by many

scholars. They vary in their opinions on the number of contributors from T. J. Brown's 'one

great scribe',[10] to E. A. Lowe's assessment, via Bischoff, that there were several,[11] to Henry's

three and to Meehan's proposal of four, or possibly more, scribal hands.[12] Brown's observation

of 'consistency in minor details' leads him to the conclusion that it is the work of an individual

and he lists a sample of these features.[13] However, Meehan, in agreement with Henry, suggests

that these consistencies are attributable to scriptorium practice. Meehan's identification of scripts

of different sizes and other variations in execution, leads him to the conclusion that there are at

least four scribes.[14] The varied opinions of these scholars share the fact that they appear to be

largely based on general impressions of the manuscript rather than sustained investigation.[15]

Meehan also states that 'no detailed study of the palaeography of the Book of Kells has been

published comparable to Julian Brown's exhaustive study of the Lindisfarne Gospels'.[16] While

hoping to some extent to begin to fill this lack in respect of the Book of Kells, the nature of the

analysis here is somewhat different to that employed by Brown for his study of the more regular

script of Lindisfarne.[17] The approach here is largely dictated by the nature of the scribal work

itself. This process involves the analysis of a range of minor decorative and calligraphic

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[10] See footnote 45 in chapter one (see also Meyer, footnote 44 in chapter one) .
[11] See footnote 43 in chapter one.
[12] See footnotes 46 and 48-49 in chapter one. In his most recent study on Kells Meehan tentatively suggests that there may be a fifth hand, Scribe E, Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (2012), p. 212.
[13] T. J. Brown, 'Northumbria and the Book of Kells', in *Anglo-Saxon England* 1, p. 231.
[14] Meehan, 'The Division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 183-195.
[15] Eisenlohr, 'The Puzzle of the Scribes', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 196.
[16] Meehan, 'The Script', in *Kells Commentary*, p. 245.
[17] T. J. Brown, 'Description; first part', in *Cod. Lind.*, pp. 61-74.

variations of the letters throughout the manuscript. The list of features examined here adds

significantly to the sample mentioned by Brown. These are illustrated and discussed in an

attempt to provide a more comprehensive account of these particular features and of the script in

general. This in turn provides a greater insight into the scribal processes involved in the creation

of the entire manuscript.

Meehan's Division of Hands

Meehan's division of hands in the Book of Kells is close to that of Henry. The most significant

difference is that Meehan divides the work of Henry's Scribe C in two, crediting part of this

work to a further hand, Scribe D. Unlike Henry, Meehan suggests that Scribe B is responsible for

f.34 and he also attributes ff.130v-140v to Scribe A. As Meehan's scheme of attribution appears

to be widely accepted it is presented here as a benchmark for discussion throughout this study.

The following diagram reproduces Meehan's four-scribe scheme:[18]

Folio	Hand
1r:	A
1v-6r:	B
7v, 8r:	?
8v-19v:	A

(11v, 13r, 15v, 16v, 18r rubrics by B,
end-lines on f.11v and f.12v by B)

20r-26v:	B
27v, 28v:	?
29r:	B?

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[18] The letters A, B, C and D are used throughout this study to reference Meehan's scribal attributions.

29v-31v:	C?
32v:	?
33r:	B?
34r:	B?
34v:	B?
35r-87v:	C
88r-125v:	D

(114v, addition by B)

125v-129r:	B
130r:	B?
130v-140v:	A
141r-163v:	C
164r-187v:	D

(166v, 167r, 183r, additions by B)

188r:	B?
188v:	B
189r-202r:	C
202v, 203r	?
203v-243v[?]:	C
243v[?]-289r:	D
290r:	B
292v-339v:	A

(327v, addition by B)[19]

The scheme above shows Meehan's division of hands and it should be noted that it is prefaced with the following qualification:

> There is, however, little that is certain about the Book of Kells, and the following breakdown of hands is presented as a provisional and incomplete one only.[20]

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[19] Meehan, in 'The Script', in *Kells Commentary,* p. 256 (this is repeated in 'The Division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings,* p. 195).

The following diagram reproduces Meehan's scheme with additional information indicating the quires and zones in which they occur and also specifying the text written:

Zone	Quire	Folio	Text	Hand(Meehan)
Zone 1	1	1r:	Hebrew Names	A
Zone 2	1-2	1v-6r:	Canon tables	B
Zone 3	2-3	8v-19v:	*Capitula/Argumenta*	A
Zone 4	3-4	20r-26v:	*Capitula/Argumenta*/Hebrew Names	B
Zone 5	5	29v-31v:	Matthean genealogy	C?
Zone 6	5	34v:	Matt. 1.18-22	B?
Zone 7	5-10	35r-87v:	Matt. 1.19-20.1-5	C
Zone 8	11-15	88r-125v:	Matt. 20.6-27.51	D
Zone 9	15	125v-129r:	Matt. 27.52-28.20	B
Zone 10	16	130v-140v:	Mk. 1.2-4.26	A
Zone 11	17-19	141r-163v:	Mk. 4.27-10.44	C
Zone 12	19-21	164r-187v:	Mk. 10.45-16.20	D
Zone 13	22	188v:	Lk. 1.1-5	B
Zone 14	22-28	189r-243v[?]	Lk. 1.6-13.6	C
		(excluding 202v, 203r?)		
Zone 15	28-33	243v[?]-289r:	Lk.13.7-44.53	D
Zone 16	33	290r:	*Incipit-Explicit*	B
Zone 17	34-38	292v-339v:	Jn. 1.1-17.12	A
Zone 18		Miscellaneous additions		B

(Zone 18 consists of the rubrics – ff.11v, 13r, 15v, 16v and 18r, end-lines on ff.11v and 12v, and also additions to 114v, 166v, ff 167r, 183r, 292v-293r and 327v).[21]

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[20] Ibid., p. 256.
[21] Although not included in his diagram Meehan tentatively attributes the marginal canon numerals on ff.292v-293r to Scribe B (see fig.2.139). See Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 189.

It is important to note that four of these zones in Meehan's scheme (1, 6, 13 and 16) consist of a single page, and only two of these (ff.34v and 188v) are pages of Gospel text. Zone 2 is not a typical text area as this contains the canon tables and the five pages of zone 5 are similarly untypical. Although part of a Gospel, these pages list the names of the Matthean genealogy.

(iii) The normal letters of the script

This section begins with a review of the literature on the script in the Book of Kells. This is followed by descriptions of the various letters of the alphabet in the manuscript. The accompanying illustrations show the most frequently occurring variations of these letters. The first of these, the letter *a*, is described in some detail.[22] This shows the consistency of the letterform throughout the manuscript, across the zones attributed to different hands in the four-scribe scheme, and its identification as the work of a single hand - the Scribe-Artist. The predilection for constant variation in his work is also highlighted. In the following section the other normal letters of the script are addressed. While these are not discussed to the same extent as the letter *a*, similar patterns of consistency in the form of the letters and also in the Scribe-Artist's attitude to their variation are evident throughout.

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[22] The choice of this letter is particularly useful as it is also subject to detailed analysis in chapter five which deals with initials.

Review of the literature on the script in the Book of Kells

The script in Kells is generally described as an Insular half-uncial. This, and similar scripts in manuscripts such as the Lindisfarne Gospels were termed 'Insular majuscule' by Lowe.[23] Julian Brown referred to this script as 'reformed Phase II Insular half-uncial' suggesting that the earlier Insular half-uncial had been subject to influence, in the Lindisfarne scriptorium, by the Wearmouth/Jarrow uncial script and the Italian exemplars from those joint monasteries.[24] Michelle Brown does not agree that changes to the script were the result of 'reform' at Lindisfarne or any other specific centre, suggesting instead that the differences between Julian Brown's phase I and II were part of 'a more gradual, organic process'.[25] In addition to these scholars, others who have made significant contributions in addressing the origins and development of Irish and Insular scripts include David Dumville, Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, William O'Sullivan and Bella Schauman.[26] Although writing from a variety of perspectives there is reasonable concensus among these authors regarding the broader palaeographical context in which Insular manuscripts, including Kells, were created. It is not necessary here to discuss the, often subtle, differences of opinion that inevitably occur in their work. As Schauman observes, the exceptional, sumptuously decorated books such as Kells 'inevitably [...] stand outside the main line of development for the history of Irish script as a whole'.[27]

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[23] Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, vol. 2

[24] T. J. Brown, 'The Irish Element in the Insular System of Scripts to circa A. D. 850', in J.Bately, M. Brown and J. Roberts eds. *A Palaeographer's View* (Harvey Miller, 1993) p. 208. Article originally published in H. Loewe ed., *Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1982), vol. I, pp. 101-19.

[25] M. P. Brown, 'Writing in the Insular World', in *A History of the Book in Britain Volume 1: From the Romans to the Normans*, ed. R. G. Gameson (2012), pp. 121-66 (p. 149).

[26] See footnotes 33-36 in chapter one.

[27] Ibid., pp. 44-45.

The letter *a*

In Kells the letter *a* is most commonly written in the half-uncial *oc* form typical of similar large Insular codices (fig.3.2).[28] It appears to be formed by a pair of curved strokes which closely resemble the letter *c*. The use of uncial-*a* will be discussed at the end of this chapter. The following discussion focuses on the basic half-uncial letter.

Fig.3.1 shows instances of *a* coupled with the following letter at the bottom and with the upper hairline curved and ending in a wedge (fig.3.1-no.19 from f.290r, and no.23 from f.18r, are the only exceptions where in each case the following *n* does not allow space for the wedge). These show single instances taken from across the full range of zones attributed to the different hands in the four-scribe scheme. There are significant variations in the script within some zones and in these cases more than one example is illustrated. For example, one instance from f.125v in zone nine is shown (fig.3.1-no.11), while a second from f.126v in the same zone is also included (fig.3.1-no.12). Altogether there are three examples from zone 8 with that on f.107r (fig.3.1-no.9) taken from an area which shows some of the largest script in the manuscript. Similarly there are two examples shown from zone 17 – one at the beginning where the script is more compact, and one further on where the script is larger (fig.3.1-nos.20 and 21). There is a remarkable consistency throughout all of these instances in both the stroke formation and in the letterforms.

Fig.3.2 shows instances of half-uncial *a* as it occurs in a range of related Insular manuscripts and these are contrasted with a typical example from Kells. This shows the similarities as well as the differences in this *oc* letterform in these manuscripts and highlights the distinctive work of the various scribes.

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[28] Meehan, 'The Script', in *Kells Commentary*, p. 246.

Fig.3.3a shows five lines of text from f.14v (lines 13-17) and provides an opportunity to examine the Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation in his use of the letter *a*. This text is from a section credited in the four-scribe scheme to A, who, according to Meehan, produces 'in general, a more sober and conservative quality of script and decoration'.[29] The four instances in line 13 show some of this variation, each having slightly different proportions from the others (fig.3.3b). The second last instance, *–bae* is the largest while that in *cla-* is the most compressed. Those in *asinae* in line 14 also show subtle differences as do the two in *ossanna* in line 15 (the middle letters in 3.3b row 4). The five letters in the final row of fig.3.3b also show subtle variation. As can be seen in fig.3.1, the negative space inside the letter is consistent in its shape but can be varied in its proportions. It is also interesting to compare the three letters with extended tails in lines 13, 15 and 17, and in particular the different gesture of the upper wedge in the letter at the end of the first row. These highlight the range of variation that can occur within a typical passage of text and draw attention to the fact that these letters, while maintaining consistency in their basic form, are not without subtle differences even within a single page. Here it may be quite broad, there slightly more upright and elsewhere, somewhat compressed, perhaps to save space and complete a word. As will be shown, throughout the book there is a pattern where basic letterforms are consistently subject to subtle variation. Indeed, this tendency is integral and fundamental to all the scribal work in the entire manuscript. Its occurrence across a range of decorative features and the initials will be addressed in chapters four and five respectively.

Although the proportions of the letter may vary slightly within different scribal-zones, its ductus remains constant throughout. Figs.3.4-5 show four instances of half-uncial *a* as they appear one above the other in fig.3.1-nos.4, 7, 10 and 13. These occur in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme and each one is followed by the letter *c*. Each element is

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[29] Ibid., p. 250.

precisely repeated and it is interesting to compare the three major strokes in these letters. The first curved stroke of the *a* always leans slightly to the left and the second stroke, is also always curved although not quite as much as the first. The yellow dotting in fig.3.4-no.2 shows the subtle difference between these strokes with the main strokes of the *c* letters more completely curved. The yellow dots in fig.3.4-no.3 indicate the discrepancy between the second straighter strokes in *a* and the more curved *c*. The slightly higher shoulder of the *c* letters is highlighted in fig.3.5-no.1 while fig.3.5-no.2 shows the subtle differences between the upper wedges in each of the letters. Those completing the letter *c* are slightly larger and inclined downwards to a greater degree. The yellow dotting in figs.3.5-nos.3-4 highlight the consistency of the 'negative' spaces inside the bowl of the letters *a* and also those between the two letters.

The elegantly drawn strokes of each example are consistent throughout and do not appear to be affected by any factors including changes in the tone or colour of the ink. This uniformity and consistency in stroke formation and ductus is not limited to *a,* but is evident across all the standard Insular letterforms in the manuscript, notwithstanding the Scribe-Artist's constant predilection for variation.[30]

This letterform of *a* is also frequently used as a decorative initial and fig.3.6 shows instances taken from the scribal-zones where it occurs. These include examples from zones attributed to each of the hands in the four-scribe scheme. This again illustrates the consistency with which the letterform is used throughout the manuscript. As mentioned above, its use as a decorative initial will be discussed further in chapter five (figs.5.31-83).

Returning to *a* in the script, these letters may tend to be slightly more compact in zones 1, 3, 10 and 17, all attributed to Scribe A, somewhat bigger in zones, 5, 7, 11 and 14, attributed to C, large and somewhat less tightly formed in zones 8, 12 and 15, attributed to D, and finally with

[30] See also, for example, the *et*-ligatures in fig.5.353.

a tendency to be taller and composed of thinner strokes in zones 4, 6, 9, 13, 16 and 18, attributed

to B. The canon tables in zone 2 are not typical text pages and the letters are generally much

smaller, however, even in the very small *a* of *propriae*, which is significantly enlarged in fig.3.1-

no.2, the form of the letter is unchanged.[31] Similar variants occur throughout the different zones

in the manuscript as for example those in fig.3.3a-b. Figs.3.7 and 8 show instances of half-uncial

a with horizontal and curved hairline extensions occurring in zones attributed to each of the

hands in the four-scribe scheme. Similarly extended hairline strokes occur on *e*, half-uncial *r*,

uncial-*s* and *t* (figs.3.18, 3.117, 3.121 and 3.127). Half-uncial *a* and uncial-*a* also feature hairline

tails that are ended with wedges in a manner similar to *e*, *l*, *r, t* and *x* when they are not coupled

with a following letter (fig.3.214). Fig.3.9 shows all eleven instances of the *æ* ligature in the

manuscript, in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. This somewhat

undermines Eisenlohr's statement that 'only one scribe seems to specialize in the rare ligatured

ae'.[32] This highlights the fact that previous examinations of the script in Kells have not been

adequately comprehensive. The close-reading of the script evidence in this study, as that for the

letter *a* above, reveals the consistently recurring defining characteristics that identify the script in

Kells as the work of a single individual, the Scribe-Artist (see pp. 13-14 in chapter one). As will

be shown in the following paragraphs, these defining characteristics are consistently evident

throughout all the letters of the script.

The other letters of the normal script (excluding *a*)

Figs.3.10-222 are laid out in rows of four, showing examples of letters and their more frequently

occurring variant forms as they are found in zones attributed to each of the hands in the four-

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[31] This is in line 25 in the second column on f.5v (fig.2.9).
[32] Eisenlohr, 'The puzzle of the scribes', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 207.

scribe scheme. That almost all variants occur in the zones attributed to the different hands, without any features that might distinguish them, points to their attribution to a single scribe. The regularity and uniformity of these letter-forms, in both aspect and ductus, again highlights the consistency of the Scribe-Artist's work throughout the manuscript. These are followed by a series of illustrations (figs.3.223-241) which show unusual, and often unique, variations on each of the letters. These again occur across the zones attributed to each of the hands in the four-scribe scheme, and, again, highlight the Scribe-Artist's attitude to variation. The illustrations show all of these letters while some of the more interesting instances are discussed in the following paragraphs.[33]

S-shaped superscripted *m* and vertical-*m*

Some letters or variants are particularly numerous and there are a total of one hundred and twenty-four instances of *s*-shaped superscripted *m* in the manuscript.[34] It is possible to identify a significant number of categories, the most prominent of which are shown in figs.3.49-60. While the basic letterform is consistent, it is subject to constant variation in its details and also in the manner of its attachment to the 'parent' letters below. Another form of this letter, vertical-*m*, occurs on a total of four hundred and thirty-two instances throughout the manuscript. These are typically formed of three bows but again are subject to an extensive range of variations. The most prominent of these are shown in the thirty-three illustrations figs.3.61-93. In addition to the occurrence of different letterforms, the size and shape of their various elements, including terminal features are also varied, as are the ways in which they are linked to the preceding letters. The letters in these illustrations constitute a core-sample of the scribal work and show the

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[33] Details relating to the various letters are included in the captions which accompany the illustrations.

[34] Far more than any other letter, *m* is subject to significant variation throughout the manuscript - figs.3.35-97. In addition there are a great number of instances of *m* with extended curved-concave elaborations (figs.3.259-80).

constant predilection for variation that is such a distinctive feature of the manuscript. This is also

particularly noticeable on pages where two, or occasionally three instances of vertical-*m* occur

together (figs.3.89-93).[35] They do not occur in patterns that can be identified with any of the

hands in the four-scribe scheme but are, rather, varied with a consistency that suggests the work

of an individual. While Eisenlohr suggests that the variety of these forms 'speak in favour of

several scribes', she notes that the 'the forms cannot be strictly separated' and that the variations

of the letterform are not specific to any of the individuals in the four-scribe scheme.[36]

This idiosyncratic approach to variation is also evident in figs.3.94-97 which collectively

show the instances of vertical-*m* in the preceding illustrations as attributed to the various hands

in the four-scribe scheme. In addition to their constant variation, these illustrations include

clusters of particular variants which usually include further, more subtle, modifications.

Clustering of letterforms and also of decorative motifs is a recurring and distinctive feature of the

Scribe-Artist's work throughout the manuscript. Unique instances are also found (fig.3.88) which

is another characteristic feature of his work.[37]

The letter *s*

Fig.3.118 shows instances of uncial-*s* in pairs with the upper terminals close to the main stem.

These occur in zones attributed to each of the hands in the four-scribe scheme. The letter is

formed with a double curved stem to which are added short strokes at the head and the base. The

short stroke at the head varies in its proximity to the stem and may also have a hairline serif

added. Such serifs may also be added to the short stroke at the base. Meehan notes that his Scribe

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[35] Multiple occurrences on single pages do not feature in zones attributed to Scribe B but the predilection for variation is nonetheless constantly evident.

[36] Eisenlohr, 'The puzzle of the scribes', in *Kells Commentary*, p. 206.

[37] Instances of these letterforms also occur with uncial-*a* (figs.3.381-84).

D 'often had a distinctive flick or serif at the beginning of *s*, meeting or coming close to the diagonal downstroke of the letter'.[38] However, citing this as a characteristic of Scribe D's hand is undermined by the fact that fig.3.118-nos.1 and 2 show this occurring in zones attributed to Scribes A and B while fig.3.120-no.3 shows it in a zone attributed to Scribe C. This does not support the four-scribe scheme but is rather further evidence for attributing the script to a single individual.

Letters in ligature, *c*-shaped superscripted *u*

and the letter *x*

Fig.3.129 shows instances of *u* in ligature with the following letters *m*, *n*, *N*, *r*, *R* and minuscule *s*. These occur in zones attributed to three of the hands, A, C and D, in the four-scribe scheme. This feature which is common in the Lindisfarne Gospels, and is also present in other Insular manuscripts, occurs on only forty-two occasions in the Book of Kells.[39] Seventeen of these occur in zones attributed to Scribe A, sixteen to Scribe C and nine in zones attributed to Scribe D.[40] The letter *u* also features significantly in its *c*-shaped superscripted form. This resembles a vertically compressed *c* with a hairline extension drawn upwards and ending in a wedge. These occur on ninety instances throughout the manuscript and are usually found at line-ends although eleven instances occur mid-line. At least some of these are possible corrections as, for example, the instance in line 10 on f.310r. It is possible to identify a significant number of variations of this letterform and the most prominent of these are shown in figs.3.130-38. Most of these variations are found across the different zones and do not support any division of hands.

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[38] Meehan, 'The Division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings,* p. 191.
[39] This number includes two other instances of ligatures – *ui* on f.253v and *um* on f.180v.
[40] See also the eleven *æ* ligatures in fig.3.9 attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme and the two *ag* ligatures in fig.3.227 – attributed to Scribes A and D. See also the uncial-*an* ligature on f.112v (fig.3.361-no.155) and the *r*-uncial-*a* ligature on f.113r (fig.3.361-no.157).

Similarly, variations of the letter *x* also feature prominently, and their occurrence throughout the manuscript is consistent with the Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation (figs.3.139-45).[41]

The *et*-ligature

The ubiquitous *et*-ligature is most commonly used for the Latin 'and' but is also frequently found completing words ending in *et*. They occur in a range of sizes in the script which is continued in the *litterae notabiliores* and also the larger decorated initials (figs.4.251-2, 5.17-30, 5.123-246 and 5.345-352). In addition to differences in size they are also subject to an extensive range of variations which are evident in the sixty-five illustrations (figs.3.149-213).[42] These variations occur in the form of the letter (figs.3.149-61) and also in its component elements, in particular the horizontal stroke (figs.3.162-86), amongst which perhaps the most distinctive variants are those which are 'fish-shaped' (figs.3.183-6). Many of these illustrations show the varying relationships between the horizontal stroke and the following letter as specifically identified in the instances in figs.3.187-199. Some of the variations in the *et*-ligatures are quite subtle and a range of these occur in the headstroke (figs.3.200-7), the straight or curved connection between the diagonal stroke and the left hand stroke (figs.208-9), or the relationship between the headstroke wedge and the horizontal stroke wedge (figs.3.169-174). It is at this minute level of scrutiny that one might reasonably expect to find the unique characteristics that would definitively identify the contributions of different hands. However, no such traits are evident and the most striking feature of these illustrations is the consistent repetition of the variations throughout zones attributed to the different individuals in the four-scribe scheme.[43] It

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[41] Consecutive sequences of the letter *x* in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme are shown in figs.3.242-45. See also variant forms of the letter in the canon tables (figs.2.91-102).
[42] See pp. 32-33 in chapter one.
[43] Not all variations are found in the relatively small number of pages attributed to Scribe B.

is also significant to note that some of the variants are quite rare, as for example, those in figs.3.168, 3.186, 3.195, 3.196, 3.197, 3.199, 3.210 and 3.211. This wide range of variations cannot be traced to a canon of letterforms which might conceivably be used in a scriptorium. The manner in which the various elements are constantly modified in different combinations, rather, suggests the 'calligraphic imagination' of a single individual. Clusters of the similar variants feature throughout the manuscript and fig.3.212 shows some of the Scribe-Artist's characteristic unique instances. The consistency of the Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation is highlighted in the similar patterns found in consecutive lines in zones attributed to each of the hands in four-scribe scheme (fig.3.213).[44] There are three instances of the *7*-shaped Tironian *et*. One of these is in the text (fig.3.212-no.6), the second occurs as a correction added in red (fig.3.212-no.7), while the third occurs in the display lettering on f.292r (fig.5.365-no.38). Finally, again, in keeping with his predilection for variation, the Scribe-Artist creates a few instances where the usual ligature is not used and *et* is formed of a tall-*e* ligatured with half-uncial *t* (fig.3.212-no.5).

Wedge-endings

Fig.3.214 shows instances of half-uncial *a*, uncial-*a, c, e, l, r, t* and *x* with tails which are not coupled with a following letter and are finished with wedges, in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. Again, there are no patterns evident here that could be linked to any of the hands in the four-scribe scheme.

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[44] The variations, unique instances and clusters are evident in the sequences of the *et*-ligature in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme shown in figs.5.345-52.

Subscripted *t*

The most frequently subscripted letter in Kells is *t* which occurs on sixty-two occasions. These small letters constitute an interesting family with a significant number of variations and these are found across zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D. Fig.3.216 shows over half of these subscripted letters which usually feature a curved headstroke.[45] Fig.3.216-nos.1-3 shows the letter in its simplest form, nos.4-6 show the headstroke extended on the left-hand side, nos.7-9 show the headstroke extended on both sides, nos.10-12 show these with additional florets, nos.13-14 have added spirals, nos.15-16 occur in conjunction with *c*-shaped superscripted *u* on the following line, nos.17-18 show a straight headstroke, and nos.19-20 show these letters preceded by *n*. Fig.3.216-nos.21-23 show some unique variants. Fig.3.216-nos.24-27 show four instances of *dixit* attributed to Scribe C with three of these occurring in a cluster between ff.189v-191v. Fig.3.216-nos.29-31 show four instances of *dixit* attributed to Scribe D with two of these occurring in a cluster between ff.260r-261v. Fig.3.216-nos.32-35 show a cluster of these letters attributed to Scribe A where the subscript *t* is directly linked to the script on the main text line. The clustering, variation and the overall consistency of these letterforms do not support their attribution to different hands.

Miscellaneous features

Figs.3.217-22 show some unusual script related features which are found in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. These include instances of letters in calligraphic combinations which are found throughout the manuscript and usually occur at line-ends (fig.3.217). Fig.3.218 shows letters compressed at line-ends and to facilitate comparison

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[45] Instances of this small *t* with a curved headstroke also occur as superscripted letters (fig.4.147-nos.95, 147, 171, 176, 186 and 203).

across the scribal zones, *s* is shown in these instances. Fig.3.219 shows instances of vertical pairs

of curved suspension marks which stand for *us*. These only occur on twenty occasions – two in

zones attributed to Scribe A, thirteen to Scribe B, three to Scribe C and two to Scribe D.

Fig.3.220 shows instances of vertical pairs of rectangular suspension marks - *us* (ABCD). These

occur on one hundred and sixty-six occasions, mainly in zones attributed to Scribes C and D. It is

interesting to note that both the curved and rectangular suspension marks occur on the same page

on two occasions – f.21r attributed to Scribe B and f.167v attributed to Scribe D. They also both

occur on the recto and verso of f.205r which is attributed to Scribe C. Fig.3.221 shows instances

of triple rectangular and curved suspension marks which stand for *uae*. These only occur on a

total of eleven occasions – four in zones attributed to Scribe A, one to Scribe B, and three each to

Scribes C and D. Fig.3.222 shows instances of *Tironian notae* contractions for *autem*. These only

occur on a total of twenty-nine ocasions – eight in zones attributed to Scribe A, two to Scribe B,

seventeen to Scribe C and two to Scribe D.

Unique letter variations

Figs.3.223-241 show extraordinary, and usually unique, variations on most of the letters,

with the exception of *b*, *d* and *u*, which occur across zones attributed to each of the hands in the

four-scribe scheme. Among these are occasional instances that show particularly close

correspondence between those attributed to different scribes as for example in fig.3.225-nos.2-4,

fig.3.227-nos.1 and 4 and fig.3.233-nos.1 and 2. It is perhaps fitting that the final letter illustrated

here is the only instance of *omega* in the text of the manuscript (fig.3.241-no.5).[46] Variation is

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[46] Another *w*-shaped *omega* occurs on f.188r. A similarly *w*-shaped *omega* also occurs on f.110r in the Echternach Gospels.

identified as an over-arching characteristic defining the work of the Scribe-Artist and these unique letters exemplify his idiosyncratic approach.

The Letter *x*

Having examined the extensive variations of the individual letterforms it is also instructive so see how the Scribe-Artist incorporates them into his writing from one instance to the next. Figs.3.242-5 show every instance of the letter *x* over a sequence of twelve pages in zones attributed to each of the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. This continuous examination of a single letter parallels the analysis of other scribal features such as the marginal arabesques which will be addressed in chapter four (figs.4.40-68), or those relating to the script, such as the letters with extended curved-concave elaborations which will be addressed below (figs.3.259-315), or the uncial-*a* letters at line-ends which will also be addressed below (figs.3.357-92). This analysis could have been applied to other letters such as *m* - a somewhat similar collection of vertical-*m* letters is shown in figs.3.94-7 - or the *et*-ligature for which there is a comparable series of illustrations in chapter five (figs.5.345-52). However, *x* is among the more distinctively varied letters and its selection for analysis here also facilitates comparison with variations in the letter found in the canon tables (figs.2.91-102).

  While the ductus and the strokes used in the formation of the letter are consistent throughout the manuscript, a range of variations is evident both in the overall form of the letter and in its constituent elements.[47] The hook at the top right-hand side is the most consistent element in the letter although this is still subject to subtle variation, for example, in its length and in the size and gesture of its wedge. The main stroke, from top left to bottom right, is also

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[47] The letter *x* randomly occurs in its two-stroke (fig.3.139) and disclocated forms (fig.3.140).

generally consistent although it varies in its diagonal slope, which at times may be quite

compressed giving a more upright appearance to the letter.

The most varied element is the diagonal stroke to the bottom left. These may be short or

long, variously curved or straight, and instances are often linked to the preceding letter with a

loop (figs.3.141-2). The size and gesture of the wedges on these strokes are also constantly

varied. These features occur in various combinations and occasionally elements may be

exaggerated. As with the scribal features discussed throughout this study, a particular form may

appear in a cluster, although these are also typically subject to further, often subtle, variation.

Such clusters may come to an abrupt end or may be randomly interrupted by another form of the

letter. Distinctively unique variants, another characteristic of the scribal features in the

manuscript, may also occur from time to time (see fig.3.239). These include, for example, those

with spirals or other added decorative elements. As with the instances in fig.3.214-nos.29-32,

when it is not followed by another letter, the tail of *x* is curved upwards and finished with a

wedge.

The variations are repeated throughout the manuscript and are evident in the sequences of

pages in the zones attributed to the different hands (figs.3.242-5). These do not merely constitute

a set group of variants, a canon of letters that might be copied and used by the members of a

scriptorium. They rather show a series of letters constantly subject to subtle modification and this

coherent and consistent attitude to variation is more easily understood as the work of a single

individual, an individual with a very distinctive and playful 'calligraphic imagination'. The

evidence in these sequences of the letter *x* also show no apparent graphic characteristics that

might identify different individuals. The random use of orange-red and purple inks, in addition to

black, on ff.20r-25v can be understood as further evidence of the Scribe-Artist's predilection for

variation as incorporated into the second campaign. The random patterns in which the variations occur are also repeated in the various zones and it is also difficult to reconcile such idiosyncratic patterns as being written by different members of a scriptorium.

Typical clustering is also very much in evidence throughout these illustrations. All of these characteristics are typical of the Scribe-Artist's work and do not support a division of hands.

(iv) Discussion of some aspects relating to the script

This section addresses a number of aspects that apply more generally to all of the script. These include analysis of the pen-strokes used to form the letters, the occasional occurrence of short serif-like marks and also variations in the size of the script. This section concludes with a description of the scribal zones attributed to each of the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. Discussion of these issues facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of the palaeographic evidence in the manuscript. This also shows their consistency with the defining characteristics of the Scribe-Artist and does not reveal any evidence in support of a division of hands.

The pen-strokes used to form the letters

As is noted above, and throughout the descriptions accompanying the illustrations, the letterforms are composed of a small number of strokes. All scripts, calligraphic or otherwise are created in this way. In the Book of Kells there is a regularity in the formation of these strokes, and this is found across the zones in the four-scribe scheme. These strokes are marked by their consistently fluent elegance. This consistency is evident whether in the more compact and

generally smaller letters in the zones attributed to Scribe A or, in the, at times, quite large letters sometimes found in zones attributed to Scribe D. This consistency is also present whether the size of the nib is varied such as may be seen in the often thinner strokes in zones attributed to Scribe B. Fig.3.246 shows such an instance on f.73r, in zone seven attributed to Scribe C, where lines nine and ten are broader than the following lines. This may have simply resulted from the use of a recut or a new quill and may also possibly indicate a resumption of work following a break.

One of the more characteristic features of the constituent elements in the formation of the script is the *c*-shape which occurs in the letters *a*, *e*, half-uncial *d*, *o*, *q*, *t* and the *et*-ligature as well as in *c*.[48] This has been discussed above in relation to half-uncial *a* (pp. 120-21 and figs.3.4-5). The curve of this elegant stroke is consistent throughout the manuscript. It is consistent in the dynamic of its modulation from its hairline endings to its broader body and it is almost always leaning slightly to the left. Another distinctive stroke is the diagonal double-curved tail of uncial *r* (figs.3.113-15 and 3.311). The body of this stroke is also elegantly modulated between its hairline endings. This type of stroke is also evident in the main stem of *x* (figs.2.91-102 and 3.139-43), in the baseline stroke of *z* (fig.3.148-nos.1-4) and in the second stroke of the *et*-ligature (figs.3.149-213, except those where the stroke is straight as for example in figs.3.158-161). The calligraphic sweep of this stroke also informs many of the letterforms with extended curved-concave elaborations and is particularly evident in many instances of *s* (fig.3.283 and 290-2). This stroke is also an integral part of the letters with pointed elaborations and is evident throughout these in figs.3.316-56.[49] It is particularly evident in instances of the letters *c*

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[48] This curved stroke is also found when the first minim of *m* is curved (figs.3.36 and 3.47).

[49] Letters with extended curved-concave and pointed elaborations will be addressed later in this chapter.

(fig3.327), *d* (figs.3.328-31), *l* (figs.3.335-6), *q* (fig.3.345), *t* (fig.3.347) and especially some instances of the *et*-ligature (fig.3.354). The consistency of these strokes throughout the manuscript and the absence of any features that might distinguish different scribes does not support a division of hands.

Occasional short serif-like marks

One further feature is the occasional appearance of a very short hairline stroke, usually to the right at the foot of a minim on the baseline. Its appearance in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D is occasional. It appears to be somewhat incompatible with the precise elegance of the stroke formation typical of these zones. This might suggest that it is not an intended feature and perhaps its occurrence is more likely accidental rather than deliberate. This may occur as the pen is lifted from the vellum at the completion of a vertical stroke. It might be the result of an occasional slight lapse due to fatigue or a drop in concentration. The vast majority of these minims are perfectly formed without any of these additional short hairlines and examples from zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D are shown in fig.3.247. Minims with these small marks in various zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D are shown in figs.3.248-250. These marks do not often occur in the carefully written zones attributed to Scribe A and they are also not common in zones attributed to Scribe C. In zones attributed to Scribe D they occur most frequently in those areas where the script is largest, as for example in part of the Matthew Passion text from ff.89r-117r. Their more frequent occurrence on these pages may be due to the writing of a slightly larger and less compact version of the script. These letters are not as evenly formed and they are not as tightly confined to the head and base-lines. In addition the greater length of ascenders and

descenders, and the occurrence of minims extended below the baseline, especially those of *N* and *R*, add to their more animated appearance.[50]

These small marks at the end of minims, which appear to be more accidental rather than deliberate, occur much more frequently in zones attributed to Scribe B.[51] Instances of these are shown in fig.3.251 and are also in evidence throughout the illustrations for letters with pointed elaborations which occur mainly in zones attributed to Scribe B (figs.3.316-56). These zones are understood here as being part of the second campaign in which there is a marked deterioration in the quality of the scribal work. As mentioned above, the occurrence of these marks might be the result of an occasional slight lapse due to fatigue or a drop in concentration, and this would be consistent with the drop in quality evident in the Scribe-Artist's work during this campaign.

Script size

(and some calligraphic end-lines)

Variation in the size of the script is one of the features suggested by Meehan as an indication that it was written by a team of different scribes.[52] However, in addition to the script evidence presented above, close analysis shows that the script is not consistently sized within the various zones attributed to any of the hands in the four-scribe scheme. Such variation in size is also evident within individual zones. Fig.3.252a-b shows examples of script of different sizes attributed to three of the hands in the four-scribe scheme, A, C and D arranged in pairs. To preserve the relationship in size between the different examples as accurately as possible these were traced directly from the Verlag Faksimile facsimile onto a single sheet. The differences are significant and it is of interest to note the similarity in size of the three examples on the right

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[50] These extended minims also occur in zones attributed to the other hands.
[51] Similar marks are also occasionally found extended from the wedges at the tops of minims.
[52] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 183-95.

hand side. This undermines the evidence of script size as an indicator of different hands. These differences in script size throughout the manuscript may perhaps be more satisfactorily understood as part of the evidence that shows the predilection for variation which appears to be such a hallmark of the scribal work throughout the manuscript.

The examples just examined occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D, however, this attitude to variation in size is perhaps even more apparent in those zones attributed by Meehan to Scribe B (fig.3.253).[53] The first three examples of script in red are followed by a range of examples in both the brown oak-gall ink and in the blacker carbon-based ink. The Scribe-Artist's critical signature-marker of constant variation is again evident in these instances. There is no evidence of other idiosyncratic characteristic traits, graphic or otherwise, that might identify these zones as the work of another hand. It is argued throughout this study that the nature of some variations in the script in zones attributed to Scribe B is consistent with a decline in performance and also possibly by some pressure to complete the work speedily. As previously noted, this may have been due to injury, ill-health or aging, or a combination of these factors. The additional pressure of haste may have been personally motivated, or may have been dictated, perhaps by a deadline imposed by secular or ecclesiastical patrons. The more obvious differences that are apparent in the various zones in Kells such as colour, script size, compactness, regularity and so on can be understood as manifestations of the Scribe-Artist's attitude to constant variation. In the context of the evidence presented here these differences are relatively superficial and their attribution to different hands is not substantiated by the more detailed analysis undertaken in this study. When the script variations of Scribes A, C and D from fig.3.252b are added to fig.3.253a, these sit comfortably within that context as merely further examples of the same scribe's work (fig.3.253b). There appear to be greater similarities between some of the

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[53] Henry does not attribute f.34v to Scribe B.

instances attributed to the supposedly different hands, and it is interesting to compare for example, nos.5 and 18 (B and D), nos.7 and 16 (B and C) and nos.9 and 17 (B and D).

Fig.3.354-nos.1-5 show instances of calligraphic end-lines added to the script variations in fig.3.353b. While there are some similarities between the script in the different lines there is also significant variation evident in the calligraphic exuberance of their more minuscule letterforms. The addition of these calligraphic end-lines to fig.3.253b completes the picture of the Scribe-Artist's attitiude to script variation.

One further illustration of variation of script size is evident in the instances of a rare feature shown in fig.3.255. In three of these the first two letters of *arbores/arborem* are written larger than the rest (fig.3.255-nos.1, 3 and 4). This is also the case in the fourth example which combines two words *ad annam* and the difference is particulary apparent when the three instances of the letter *a* in the words are compared (fig.3.255-no.2).

Eisenlohr, in her analysis of script size in the various scribal zones was able to find tendencies in the use of different letter sizes.[54] However, these tendencies were not entirely consistent throughout any zones and she had to conclude that her, albeit limited, analysis could not provide evidence in support of the four-scribe scheme. Her other analyses of various palaeographical features yielded similarly unsatisfactory results in terms of scribal attribution. While generally agreeing with Meehan's four-scribe theory she concluded by stating that 'the puzzle of the scribes remains unsolved'.[55] Henry's analysis of the script concludes that 'there are no fundamentally different features, either in treatment of letters or in punctuation, simply a slightly different handling of the same type of writing'.[56] Thus, she does not perceive any reason to differentiate the areas with slightly larger script within her Scribe C zones (Meehan's Scribe D

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[54] Eisenlohr, 'The puzzle of the scribes', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 196-208.
[55] Ibid., p. 208.
[56] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 154.

zones) and she also counts ff.130v-140v as part of his work (attributed by Meehan to Scribe A). This analysis by Henry, which only proposes a division of hands in areas with more obvious differences is thus closer to the conclusions proposed here.[57]

(v) Brief description of the distinctive characteristics of the script
in zones attributed to each of the Scribes A, B, C and D

The Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation, his tendency towards clustering, his avoidance of a systematic approach and the fact that the work was done in two distinct campaigns leaves us with a palaeograhically complex manuscript. In this context the identification of zones that might give the impression of being the work of different hands need not be that surprising. There are differences evident in the zones proposed by those who advocate multi-scribe theories. However, these zones are not simple homogenous entities and are extensively varied in themselves. The following paragraphs describe these different zones in an attempt to make this aspect of the Scribe-Artist's work comprehensible. Those discussed first are attributed to Scribe A, followed by those attributed to Scribe C and then the zones attributed to Scribe D. The zones produced during the second campaign show the greatest differences. These zones, attributed to hand B in the four-scribe scheme, are addressed last. These would ideally be read in conjunction with access to a Verlag Faksimile facsimile of the Book of Kells.

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[57] These issues are further developed in chapter five (see pp. 319-22).

Scribe A – zones 1, 3, 10 and 17

The first page of the manuscript as it now exists, f.1r (zone 1), contains the end of a list of Hebrew names. This is written in a double columnar format and is framed by an elaborate border. This arrangement is similar to the Matthean genealogy (ff.29v-31v) including the fact that f.1r and f.29v each has fourteen lines of script. They differ in that f.1r has relatively large decorated initials at the beginning of each name (fig.5.1) and these are followed by script that is not as large as that on ff.29v-31v. This difference perhaps reflects the nature of the list of Hebrew names which is a glossary, whereas the Matthean genealogy is a continuous text and also part of Matthew's Gospel.

The decorated initials and the script in zone 3 (ff.8v-19v) are related in a manner similar to those in zone 1. Zone 3 contains some of the most compact script in the manuscript. However, the script in this zone is not entirely homogenous. On ff.10v-11r it appears to be written with a slightly broader nib than that on ff.8v-9r. The compact script on f.15v appears to be continued at the top of f.16r, however, further down this page it appears to be less confined to the head and baselines. In this regard it is interesting to compare '*expulsionem*' in line 11 on f.16r with '*exclamationis*' in line 15 on f.15v. A more direct comparison can be made between '*dni in omnia*' and '*pollicem dicitur*' across the gutter margin at the bottom of the same opening. The lower half of the final page, f.19v, shows perhaps the least consistently sized script in this zone.

The script in zone 10 (ff.130v-140v) is generally consistent but larger than that in zone 3. This disparity in size between the zones is evident if, for example, '*ut praedicans*' in line 16 on f.15v is compared with '*praedicare*' in line 2 on f.137v. However, variations in size are also evident within zone 10. '*Processit*', the first word on f.132v appears to be more compactly

written than '*pore habent*', the first words on f.135v (see fig.3.252a-b). The script in the final

pages of this zone appear to be a little smaller than some of those in the middle.

The script in zone 17 (ff.292v-239v), the fourth section attributed to Scribe A, begins

with a compact script in its first pages. A broader nib appears to have been used at times and an

example of this may be seen by comparing '*locutus est*' in line 6 on f.314v and '*factum est*' in

line 3 on f.292v. This gradually increases in size on the following pages and between ff.310-320

a slightly larger script is noticeable on many pages. The differences in size within this zone can

be appreciated by comparing, for example, '*conpraehenderunt*' in line 6 on f.292v with

praehendit in line 2 on f.316v.[58] It is a matter of speculation whether the missing Passion of

Christ in John's Gospel would also have included sections of larger script as is the case in the

first three Gospels. While the examples in fig.3.252 highlight the extremes, the often subtle

differences in script size are perhaps best appreciated by simultaneously viewing these pages in a

facsimile. Meehan's division of hands attributes line 11 on f.11v (fig.3.356-no.1) and lines 18

and 19 on f.12v (fig.3.356-no.2) to Scribe B. Within his scheme, these are the only instances in

the book where individual lines of text, as opposed to rubrics, are credited to a different hand

from those attributed to the main scribe proposed for a particular zone. These lines attributed to

Scribe B occur in zone 3 which is attributed to Scribe A.

Scribe C – zones 5, 7, 11 and 14

Zone 5 (ff.29v-31v) is untypical of the Gospel text in Kells as it is written in double columns.[59]

This text of the Matthean genealogy is written with great regularity and is comparable with much

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[58] It is also interesting to compare these words with '*ut praedicans*' in line 16 on f.15v and '*praedicare*' in line 2 on
f.137v.
[59] The lists of Hebrew names on ff.1r, 26r and 26v are also written in double columns. However, these are glossaries
rather than Gospel texts.

of the script ascribed to hand C. The care with which it is written is perhaps influenced by the border that was planned to surround it. That this framework, if completed, was intended to be of suberb quality is suggested by the fragmentary drawing in two corners of the border f.30v.[60] The final lines of this text on f.31v abandon the double column format and it does not appear as if any border was planned to surround it. The Scribe-Artist's characterisitc predilection for variation is evident between '*Babilonis*' in lines one and two and is particularly noticable in the letters *ba*.

Most of the script in zone 7 (ff.35r-87v) is reasonably consistent until perhaps the lower half of f.74v-75r. The script on these pages is slightly larger and more animated, as is the lower half of f.76r. This pattern continues on the following pages with some larger more animated script areas. These gradually increase as the end of this zone approaches the beginning of zone 8. The variation between these pages and the earlier part of the zone is apparent when for example ff.61v is compared with f.83v. The variation in nib width on f.73r was noted above (see fig.3.246). Fig.3.257 shows eight instances of *zeza* and *ziza* (from *zezania* and *zizania*) from ff.67v-69r. These highlight the Scribe-Artist's interest in variation in particular in relation to the letter *z* here. The final illustration in fig.3.257 shows the same attitude to the variation of this letter in the same word, although the script is slightly smaller, when it occurs on f.10r in zone 3 (attributed to Scribe A). The use of the alternative spellings, *zezania* and *zizania*, appears to be a further indication of the Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation.

As noted above, the script at the end of zone 10 (attributed to Scribe A) appears somewhat smaller than some of its other pages. This has the effect of making the beginning of zone 11 (ff.141r-163v) seem somewhat larger. However, most of the text here is similar to that in

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[60] This finely and precisely executed work is consistent with that of the Master-Artist as discussed in chapter two. B. Tilghman, 'The symbolic use of ornament and calligraphy in the Book of Kells and Insular Art' (unpubl. PhD thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 2009), pp. 25-70. Here, Tilghman argues that ff.29v-31r were intentionally left uncompleted.

zone 10 and this is evident if for example '*praedicarent*' in the second line on f.137v (A) is compared with '*praedicare*' also in the second line on f.143v (C) or with '*adpraehenderit*' in line 14 on f.157r (C). This continues with occasional variations in size (see fig.3.252) until the beginning of zone 12.

Zone 14 (ff.189r-243v) is the longest and also the plainest of all the script areas in the manuscript. It is generally regular in its script with much of it closely adhering to the head and base-lines. Many of its pages are also completed as full text blocks. This regularity is interrupted occasionally, as for example on ff.203v-204r where Jesus deals with Satan's temptations, or on ff.211v-213v at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. It is interesting to note that the script on f.219r is very slightly larger than that on f.218v (fig.5.364). It is most likely that scribal error led to f.219r repeating the text of the page opposite.[61] The difference in script size between the two is noticeable when, for example, the second line on both pages is compared. Meehan found it difficult to pinpoint the change of hands between zones 14 and 15 in his scheme. He tentatively suggests f.243v as the changeover and this may have been influenced by the presence of some larger and more animated lines on ff.243v-244r.[62] However, as noted above, many of the subsequent pages of the script in zone 15 do not seem different to much of zone 14.

Scribe D – zones 8, 12 and 15

The script in zone 8 (ff.88r-125v) is fairly consistent and is slightly larger than that in zone 7. There are, however, words, lines and sections that are closer to the script in the preceding zone.

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[61] The repetition of text on f.218v on f.219r has never been explained. It may be that it was a simple error of duplication as f.219r is a singleton. As such, it would have been a separate sheet until the book was bound and this might have led to the repetition of the text. Not counting those with illumination, such single folios of text are inserted into fifteen of the thirty-eight quires. This was done presumably to maximise the use of available vellum resources. The slight difference in script size might also suggest that f.219r was completed after a break in writing which may also have contributed to the error. The duplication of text may not have been noticed until after the book was bound.

[62] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 191.

Compare, for example, the first lines on ff.77v (C) and 98v (D), or the first five lines on ff.76v (C) and 122v (D). In lines 4-6 on f.106r, '*Vigilate itaque quia nescitis qua die vel qua hora dominus vester venturus est*' appears to be emphasised by a larger script than that in the earlier part of this zone.[63] Similarly the text on ff.115v-116r appears larger and this may be partly due to the letters and words being afforded more space. On these pages, and also on ff.111r-125r, there are many indented lines.[64] These often emphasise particular moments in the Passion, as for example, '*ut crucifigeretur*' on ff.122r and 122v, '*crucem suam*' on f.122v, '*calvariae locus*' and '*hic est rex iudeorum*' on f.123r. It is interesting to note that the script on these pages, ff.122v-123r appears to revert to a size more typical of that in zone 7 (C).

It is not difficult to understand the reasons for Meehan's identification of the beginning of zone 12 (ff.164r-187v). The darker ink and the large script in some of the lines in the lower half of f.164r stand out to some extent from the preceding pages. However, it should be noted that occasionally larger words or lines occur in zone 11. Examples of these include line 10 on f.159v and '*flagillabunt*' in line 7 on f.163r. Returning to zone 12 the script on ff.165r and 166r appears large and these also have indented lines. The script on the pages of ff.168v-169r does not appear large and it completely fills the text block. The script is large again in the lower half of f.171r. It is of varied size on f.173r, which also has two indented lines and this pattern continues for much of the Passion. As with the final pages of Matthew's Gospel, the script on ff.186v-187r, the end of Mark, does not seem as large or as animated as that on the preceding pages.

While there are some larger words and lines in the early pages of zone 15 (ff.243v-289r), much of the script does not appear to be different from that in the preceding zone 14. For example ff.212v-213r (C) seem quite similar to ff.258v-259r (D). On some pages the script

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[63] 'Watch ye therefore, for ye know not what day your master cometh' – Mt.24.42.
[64] The use of indented lines will also be addressed in chapter four (pp. 205-14).

appears to get bigger as for example the lower halves of ff.263v and 269r. The script also seems slightly larger on ff.272v-273r and this pattern of varied script size continues to f.284v. As with the Passion sequences in the first two Gospels, indentations are quite frequent, again often emphasizing significant phrases such as '*salvum te fac*' and '*rex iudeorum*', both on f.283r. The script in the concluding pages of Luke's Gospel again follows those of Matthew and Mark, appearing less large and less animated than some of those at the height of the Passion. Folios 286v-287r (D) do not appear to be significantly different, for example, from ff.209v-210r (C).

Meehan describes Scribe D as writing a 'slightly more angular hand than C'.[65] While this description does apply to the sections with larger letters within the zones attributed to Scribe D, it is not applicable to much of the script in these zones. The use of angular detailing in the script is also not entirely exclusive to Scribe D. Fig.3.256 shows instances of script, albeit rare, with similar detailing in zones attributed to the other three scribes. Angular detailing is a significant element in much of the script in the zones attributed to Scribe B and is even evident in the canon tables. In these the angularity is perhaps most evident on f.2v (see fig.2.3).

Scribe B – zones 2, 4, 6, 9, 13, 16 and 18

Zone 2 constitutes the canon tables (ff.1v-6r). These have been discussed in chapter two, in particular addressing the great variety of letterforms and the use of such features as diminuendo.

The script on f.20r in zone 4 (ff.20r-26v) appears to be written with a narrower nib than that on the page opposite. However, the number of lines and the length of the lines is similar to those on f.19v as is the relationship of the larger initials to the text. The script on f.20r is not consistently sized, this is most apparent in the second last line, and the end-line is written in a more minuscule script. Alternate blocks of script written in red and black ink occur on many

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[65] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 191.

pages of this zone but the number of lines in these blocks is constantly varied. A purple ink is also used for some of these blocks which adds to the variation and this colour predominates on both sides of f.23.[66] Further variation is evident in these blocks as some of the script is written in majuscule and some in minuscule. Perhaps the most distinctive areas are those blocks in which the pointed elaborations occur most frequently, and which lend the script in those sections a more angular appearance. On f.20v the blocks of script in alternating colours are further differentiated by the narrower nib which seems to be used for the black areas.[67] Letters with the pointed elaboration are introduced on f.20v but are absent from both sides of f.21r. Most of the script on these pages (ff.20r-21v) is majuscule apart from the end-lines. The script on ff.22r-26v tends to be more compressed and is written mainly in a more minuscule script. This is occasionally interrupted by words or lines written in majuscule. These include for example '*discipulis suis*' in line 5 on f.24r and lines 5-8 on f.25v. On some pages the minuscule script is less compact and the black script on the final page is quite varied.

The minuscule script appears to be written with a slanted pen, evident for example, from the sloped and often pointed wedges at the tops of the letters. This slope is echoed in the ends of all the vertical strokes. These features, in addition to the frequent use of letters with pointed elaborations, lend a distinctively angular appearance to some of these blocks of script. This is apparent for example in lines 7-12 on f.24v (fig.3.258). Most of the pages in this zone have minuscule end lines, often with elegant calligraphically elaborated letters (figs.3.356-nos.3, 4, 5, 6 and 8). While some of these features are shared across these lines there is a strong sense that the Scribe-Artist is striving to make each one distinctive, at least in some of its details. It is possible that the use of a distinctive display minuscule script for the prefatory matter on these

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[66] These random colour blocks of script recall similar variations in the canon tables as discussed in chapter two (pp. 75-77).

[67] For other discussion of the use of a narrow nib see p. 132-33 above and p. 148 below (see also fig.3.246).

pages may have been deliberate and part of a strategy of using different scripts to distinguish Gospel texts from other material.[68] However, this interpretation may be undermined by the fact that it is not used consistently throughout the prefatory material on ff.20r-26v, and also by the fact that the Gospel text on f.128r could also be described as being written in a minuscule display script.

Zone 6 comprises a single page of script, f.34v and also includes the words *autem generatio* on its recto. The script evidence for Meehan's attribution of this page to Scribe B is based on his tentative attribution of the recto, f.34r to that hand and his observation that:

the hand which wrote *autem generatio* on 34r was surely that responsible for the rest

of the page. There is a resemblance here to the hand of B, especially in the shape of

the *g* of *generatio*, which is close to the *g* of f.126v line 10 (*magda*[*linae*]).[69]

The analysis of the script in this chapter would not suggest that the letter *g* is written in any particular manner that would help to identify different individuals in the four-scribe scheme (see figs.3.27-28 and 3.227).

The first five pages, ff.125v-127v, of zone 9 (ff.125v-129r) are written in majuscule, with a single minuscule end-line on f.125v. The only significant difference between the script on these pages, and the same script in other zones, is the frequency of the short serifs discussed above.[70] Both sides of f.128 show a return to minuscule script written with a slanted pen. The pointed elaborations on f.128r lend it more of an angular appearance not unlike that noted on some pages in zone 4. This, and the exaggeration of some ascenders, gives it the appearance, to some extent,

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[68] M. P. Brown, 'Writing in the Insular World', in *A History of the Book in Britain*, p. 131.
[69] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 189-90. This is in addition to evidence in relation to the palette of colours used on the page. Henry attributes this page to the artist she calls the Goldsmith.
[70] The rows of fleurons at the end of f.127r and the unusual decorated initial at the top of f.127v will be discussed in the following chapters four and five respectively.

of a display minuscule which is not the case for f.128v.[71] There are some calligraphically flourished letters in the end-line and this is also a feature of the endline on f.129r. The last two lines on f.129r appear to be written with a slanted pen in minuscule, however, the first four lines show a return to majuscule script and seem to be written with a straight pen. Meehan suggests that completing Matthew's Gospel here, on the recto of an illuminated page, was the result of a miscalculation by the scribe.[72] Such a miscalculation could be seen as commensurate with the decline in the quality of the Scribe-Artist's work in the second campaign.

Zone 13 is a single page (f.188v) and the first three lines are written in a relatively compact script although somewhat higher than that used at the beginnings of the other Gospels. This difference in script size is obvious when compared with f.189r opposite. The script is of a size more typically found in areas attributed to Scribe D in the Passion sequences (compare fig.3.253b-nos.12 and 17). The script is the majuscule used throughout most of the manuscript and appears to be written with a straight pen. The end-line is slightly lower in height, is more laterally compressed, and for the most part, uses minuscule letters and appears to have been written with a slanted pen. While the minuscule end-line links the script with similar features in other zones attributed to Scribe B, as does the graphic quality of the lion head in the zoomorphic *f*, the rest of the script on the page does not. Within Meehan's scheme, as suggested above, it is closest perhaps to those areas attributed to Scribe D (see for example, fig.3.254-nos.17 and 22).

Zone 16 is another single page, f.290r. '*Explicit evangelium secundum lucam*' is written twice, the first time over three lines, and the second time over two lines. This is perhaps another instance of the Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation.[73] All five of these lines are linked in the somewhat columnar arrangement of the words but the last two lines on the page do

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[71] See footnote 50 above.
[72] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 189.
[73] This recalls a repetition of *incipits* in the canon tables on f.5v.

not quite follow this layout. The small amount of text is written in large script with many letters calligraphically flourished, and it is spread over the entire page. The script is majuscule and appears to have been written with a straight pen.

Zone 18 comprises relatively short passages of script found on ff.11v, 12v, 13r, 15v, 16v, 18r, 114v, 166v, 167r, 183r, 292v-293r and 327v. Most of these are in orange-red with the exception of four instances in black. The first two of these instances in black occur at end-lines on f.11v (the 'shivered' line) and f.12v. Both of these appear to be written in the brownish iron-gall ink of the rest of the script on these pages. The other two instances in black occur on the opening of ff.166v-167r. Here the darker carbon black ink, more typically associated with that used in areas attributed to Scribe B in the four-scribe scheme, is used in lines 3-5 on f.166v and in line 2 on f.167r. As with other areas attributed to Scribe B, where script similar to that used throughout the book occurs, the serif-type marks, discussed above, are apparent on some of the letters. It is suggested here that these marks, in addition to the other evidence, link this script, not to a particular individual but rather to the proposed second campaign. The *explicits* and *incipits* in faded red on ff.13v, 15v, 16v and 18r share similarities in the relatively low height and compact appearance of their script.[74] Apart perhaps from being written with a slightly narrower nib, these appear to be compatible with the rest of the majuscule script on these pages.[75] The *explicit* and *incipit* on f.11v is different in that it is written in a higher script than that on the rest of the page. It also has more calligraphically elaborated letters and its orange-red ink is not faded.

The somewhat strange repetition of text on f.114v may possibly be explained by suggesting that it clarifies the somewhat stylized display-lettering on the page. However, no

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[74] This description would also seem to fit the first six lines on f.20r.
[75] For other references to the use of a narrower nib see pp. 132-33 and 145 above and fig.3.246.

simple explanation is apparent for the script on f.183r which repeats a line of text directly

opposite on f.182v. It is also difficult to find any explanation for the addition of '*initium*' on

f.327v, although the use of orange-red pigment may link it to the whiplash line-filler a few lines

below and another on the page opposite.[76] The small marginal canon number references, which

appear only on ff.292v and 293r, are also in this red ink and are attributed by Meehan to Scribe

B. This apparently aborted effort to add these numbers to the text also appears to belong to the

proposed second campaign, during which the Scribe-Artist attempted to complete the

manuscript.[77]

It is only when the manuscript is analysed in its entirety that the differences in various

zones can properly be understood. When examined in this way, in conjunction with a

comprehensive palaeographic analysis, the idiosyncratic nature of the work becomes apparent. If

these zones are sampled in isolation it is understandable that they can mistakenly be attributed to

a number of hands. These descriptions of the zones attributed to the hands in the four-scribe

scheme do not provide evidence which support their identification as the work of different

individuals. They highlight the constant predilection for variation which is such a consistent

hallmark of the Scribe-Artist's work throughout the manuscript.

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[76] These whiplash line-fillers will be discussed in the following chapter.
[77] These canon table reference numbers are discussed in detail in chapter two (pp. 97-100)

Section II

The scribal features discussed in this section are two 'families' of letters - those with extended curved-concave elaborations and those with pointed elaborations, and also the use of uncial-*a* at line-ends. The first of these to be examined are the letters with extended curved-concave elaborations **(vi)**. This examines their variant forms as they are found on different letters and the frequency with which they occur. The words emphasised with these elaborations, including the *nomina sacra*, are also examined for any significant patterns of distribution, as are the pages which lack any instances of these letterforms. Their occurrence at end of first lines and page-ends is also examined. The occurrence of these features in other manuscripts is also addressed.

The second feature to be addressed is the occurrence of letters with pointed elaborations **(vii)**. As with those having extended curved-concave elaborations, variations of these letters are shown in categories and the relationship between these two 'families' of elaborated letters is also addressed. Issues relating to the distribution of letters with pointed elaborations are also discussed.

The last scribal feature addressed here is **(viii)** uncial-*a* at line-ends. All instances of these letters are illustrated and this provides a unique insight into the Scribe-Artist's approach. As with the other features in this section, issues relating to distribution are also discussed.

These scribal features are particularly prominent in the manuscript and **(ix)** the following accounts reveal the Scribe-Artist's 'calligraphic imagination' which consistently informs their constant variation. The evidence from these analyses does not support any of the proposed schemes for the division of hands. Finally, some further discussion of the script concludes the

section. This includes a discussion of the possible circumstances that led to creating the differences in the work of the second campaign.

(vi) Letters with extended curved-concave elaborations

The first of the features to be examined is the elaboration of letters described here as having curved-concave extensions. This is one of the most frequently occurring features throughout the manuscript, appearing on over seven hundred and forty occasions (diag.3.2). Its 'cushion-like' appearance is distinctive and it is variously applied to parts of letters, to complete individual letters, to several letters at word endings, to complete words and also to lines of script. However, it is most frequently used to complete letters on the right-hand side and in particular the final minim of the letter *m*. In the list of line-end features mentioned in the previous chapter, this may be what Julian Brown referred to as 'the curled final stroke of **m**'(however, he may also have been referring to the occurrence of simple curves to a standard *m* (figs.3.37-47).[78] Meyer refers to these as 'flowing letters',[79] while Meehan's description of many letter forms in Kells having an 'expressive elasticity' no doubt also refers to those elaborated in this way.[80]

The letter *m* - extended curved-concave elaborations

M is treated in this manner on approximately four hundred and thirty occasions making it the letter most frequently elaborated in this way. Typically the curved ending to the third minim of *m* is realised in the form of an extended double concave. It appears in a number of variant forms,

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[78]T. J. Brown, 'Northumbria and the Book of Kells', in *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 109.
[79] Meyer, 'Notes on the art and ornament of the Book of Kells,' in *Codex Cenannensis,* p. 32.
[80] Meehan, 'The Script', in *Kells Commentary*, p. 246.

the most common of which is shown in fig.3.259. The second arch at the top of the letter is extended across the headline and has a gentle concave in the middle. This is curved back on the baseline and is drawn towards the central minim, again with a gentle concave, mirroring the one above it. This line then curves tightly into the centre of the letter and is straightened as it goes across this interior space, ending in a wedge. This pointed wedge is typical of those frequently used to terminate letters and other features throughout the manuscript. While these *m*s with extended curved-concave elaborations are generally similar, close examination shows subtle differences between them. Perhaps the most significant observation however, is that those letters with the closest affinities are not necessarily attributed to the same hand in the four-scribe scheme. For example, the lower concave element is almost flat in fig.3.259-nos.1, 7 and 8 which are attributed to Scribes C and D. Similarly, those with the longest extensions and with the deepest concaves above and below, fig.3.259-nos.2 and 6, are attributed to Scribes C and A. Neither is there any consistent pattern to the examples attributed to any one hand as can be seen in the first four letters, all ascribed to hand C (fig.3.259-nos.1-4).

Other variations to the basic form of this elaboration can be seen in the final straight stroke in the centre. This is extended slightly to the left in fig.3.259-no.3, it is finished with a spiral to the left in no.4 and in no.6 it is shorter but its wedge is further elaborated with a fine contour line. There are one hundred and sixty-three instances of this particular basic form of extended curved-concave ending to the right-hand side of *m* on one hundred and forty-three pages of the manuscript. These occur in most of the scribal-zones (3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 17), with the first on f.12v and the last on f.335r. While none of this particular variation

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seems to occur in the zones attributed to Scribe B (2, 4, 6, 9, 13, 16 and 18), there are many

closely related features on those pages (see figs.3.261-265, 3.268, 3.270, 3.276 and 3.279).[81]

As discussed in this chapter, the Scribe-Artist's attitude to script variation is found

throughout the book and ranges from the relatively subtle modifications just noted to the more

obvious variations in the extended curved-concave elaborations to *m* which will be seen in the

following illustrations. These are presented as separate categories in over twenty illustrations

(figs.3.260-80). However, as identifed in the defining characteristics of the Scribe-Artist's work,

this attempt at categorization in Kells is never quite satisfactory as variant forms merge with

each other creating further sub-categories and occasionally rare or unique mutants. These

variations may occur in the overall form of the letter, or to its constitiuent elements, including the

smallest parts such as the terminal wedges. They may be simple or complex and they may occur

with angular and zig-zag elements, with interlace or in figures-of-eight. They may have added

spirals or appear with lobed elements and they also occur as unique erratics or in clusters. Very

rare instances occur with zoo- or anthropomorphic elements.

The last instance in fig.3.268 (no.24), is unique among these letters as it terminates in a

creature's head, and what can be interpreted as its body is filled with fine interlace. The unusual

and fine quality of these details might suggest the possibility that the Master-Artist, has added

these elements. The equally unusual and, again, very fine interlace on fig.3.260-no.3, might

suggest a similar collaboration. The precision and high quality of these details is not typical of

the vast majority of these letter-endings and is perhaps closer to the minute work, typical of the

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[81] The sections attributed to Scribe B are limited to 5.5% of the text pages in the book (35.5 out of a total of 656). This contrasts with 21% (139 pages) for Scribe A, 40% (265 pages for Scribe C and 33% (216.5 pages) for Scribe D.

Master-Artist as discussed in chapter two. A similar pattern of occasional collaboration between these individuals will be discussed in relation to the initials in chapter five.[82]

Fig.3.273 is unique as it terminates in a human head, iconically located at the top of a cruciform interlace design, most likely a representation of Christ. The further identification of this golden-haired man as Christ is more probable, coming as it does at the end of a verse in which we read, '*Et omnis populus manicabat ad eum in templo audire eum*'.[83] The artistic elaboration of this letter is not executed with the fineness and precision of those on ff.34v and 48v discussed above (figs.3.260-no.3 and 3.268-no.24). In this instance the quality of the work is comparable to that of the Scribe-Artist's decorated initials which will be addressed in chapter five.

Many of the more complex motifs in these letters with extended curved-concave elaborations occur in zones 8, 12 and 15 attributed to D in the four-scribe scheme (figs.3.271-5, 277, 289, 294, 302 and 305-no.22). However, these do not occur exclusively in zones attributed to this hand, and many of these illustrations also show instances attributed to the other hands (see also for example, fig.3.309-nos.1-2). The more frequent occurrence of these more elaborate letters in the zones attributed to Scribe D does not provide evidence in support of the division of hands but rather indicates the greater decorative emphasis given to these climactic episodes in the Gospels. As discussed above, this is also observable in the size of the script which is often slightly larger in these areas.

Fig.3.276 shows a series of relatively large instances which are categorized here by the presence of lobed elaborations. Again, the predominance of their occurrence in zones attributed to Scribe D is not surprising. One might expect such a distinctive feature to provide evidence for

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[82] See, for example, pp. 305-06 in chapter five and see also chapter two for much discussion of collaboration between the Master-Artist and the Scribe-Artist in the canon tables.
[83] 'The whole people would come unto him early in the temple to hear him' (Lk.21.38).

the identification of different individuals, but their occurrence in eight zones, which include those attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme A, B and C, as well as D, does not support the case for this division of hands. It is easy to see the relationship between fig.3.276-nos.1-4, a cluster in zone 7 attributed to Scribe C (ff.79v-87r). However, the next eight instances, fig.3.276-nos.5-12, are similar and their location on ff.99v-125r could be interpreted as a continuation of the cluster in zone 7. There is nothing in their style or formation to suggest that they are the work of different hands. Further examples, fig.3.276-nos.16 and 17 are similar to those just mentioned, but are attributed to Scribes B and A respectively. Fig.3.277 shows more complex modifications to these lobed endings. Fig.3.277-no.1 is the only instance occurring in a zone not attributed to Scribe D but it does not appear to be significantly different from its counterparts.

Fig.3.278 shows a cluster of related elaborations (ff.176v-177r), where the individual lobes are less pronounced and separate from the letter-ending. These could be viewed in the context of a cluster in zone 12 (ff.171-182r), fig.3.276-no.12 and fig.3.277-nos.2 and 3, all attributed to Scribe D. In addition, however, fig.3.277-no.1 (f.161r), attributed to Scribe C could also be considered as part of the same cluster as it bears many similarities to the others. The tendency to cluster particular variant letterforms has been noted and evidence has also been shown that these clusters overlap different zones. The sequencing of features in these ways is more characteristic of the working process of an individual rather than something that could be produced by the combined efforts of the various members of a scriptorium (see also fig.4.253).

Extended curved-concave elaborations to *m* in other manuscripts

Occasional instances of these extended curved-concave endings to the letter *m* are found in

C.C.C.C. 197b and the Durham, Lindisfarne, Lichfield, Echternach and Trier Gospels

(fig.3.281).[84] The relationships between these books and the Book of Kells has often been

noted.[85] While there are obvious parallels between the examples in the different books, those in

the earlier manuscripts are far less varied and elaborate than their counterparts in Kells. They are

also far less numerous, as for example, the occurrence of only two instances in the Echternach

Gospels. Fig.3.282 shows the three extensions to the letter *m* in the Book of Durrow which is

considered to predate the other manuscripts. These relatively simple elaborations of the basic

letter can be seen as possible precursors for the later examples and is hardly surprising given the

shared Columban heritage, at least of Durrow and Kells.

The letter *s* - extended curved-concave elaborations

The modification to *m* occurs predominantly on the right hand side but the complete letterform

of *s* is more frequently affected as the shape of the letter easily lends itself to this elaboration.

Following *m* this is the second most frequently occurring letter with extended curved-concave

elaborations, found in a total of one hundred and fifty-three instances (figs.3.283-96). These

letterforms and their constituent parts are again subject to the Scribe-Artist's constant variation

throughout the book. The letter itself may be more or less compact, the proportions of its upper

and lower curves may be varied, and the thickness, length, curve and gesture of the extension

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[84] The illustrations in figs.3.281-2 are uneven in quality as they have been acquired from a variety of sources. Some have been enlarged from book illustrations, some enlarged from online reproductions, some traced from microfilm facsimiles and others have been made as drawings when library restrictions did not allow other methods of copying. My research of these individual manuscripts has not been exhaustive in every case and I have not had the opportunity to consult all potentially relevant sources.
[85] See for example M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe,* pp. 253-66.

may differ. The smallest element, the wedge, may be large or small, it may be faced up, down or

forwards and it may be pointed or blunt, or, in some instances, absent. Instances also occur with

a range of additional features most notably spirals and flowers/florets and also occasional

instances with lobed elements and with interlace (figs3.285-9).

A form of this elaboration occurs in the extended headstroke of a more normal *s* in

another series of variations (fig.3.290-4). The gesture and length of the stroke and its terminal

wedge in these instances are again constantly varied or modified throughout the manuscript.

These letters are also subject to further additions most notably of flowers/florets, spirals and

interlace. Fig.3.290-no.16 (Scribe B), fig.3.290-no.17 (Scribe D) and the four examples between

fig.3.290-nos.19-22 (Scribes C and D) are the only ones not from the three zones attributed to

Scribe A, yet there are no particular characteristics that may be attributed to any individual hand.

There is a further significant series where the letter *s* is elaborated with zig-zag elements

(figs.3.295). Many of the instances in fig.3.295 do not have extended curved-concave

elaborations as such, but they are related to, or evolved from, these letterforms. In particular they

are linked to those *m*-endings that have zig-zag elements (figs.3.261-4). Twenty of the twenty-

three instances are from four of the seven zones (2, 4, 9 and 18) attributed to Scribe B and eleven

are in zone 4. This concentration, and the fact that most are written in red or purple ink, might

suggest evidence for the identification of an individual scribe. However, close examination

reveals the same patterns of graphic variation found elsewhere as discussed above in relation to

m and the other *s* examples. As has been argued throughout this study, it is proposed that these

are part of the second campaign. These concentrations are perhaps better understood here as

clusters such as those discussed above. There are also a small number of instances where tall-*s*

has its headstroke extended with variations of the curved-concave strokes (fig.3.296).

Extended curved-concave elaborations to *s*

in other manuscripts

Fig.3.297 shows examples of some of these elaborated *s* variations in a variety of Insular manuscripts, many of which are closely linked to the Book of Kells.[86] The instances from the Echternach Gospels include the basic uncial letter with an added extension and also versions where the whole letterform is elaborated. These are the only instances in this manuscript and they occur in the canon tables. The two examples shown from the St Petersburg Gospels also occur in the canon tables as do those from Royal 1.E vi.[87] The instance from the Lindisfarne Gospels occurs on f.136v in the prefatory matter preceding St Luke's Gospel. The only instances from the Calendar of Willibrord occur together in what appears to be a line-filler.[88] Those that occur in Gospel texts are the two examples in C.C.C.C. 197b, which are in the 'Luke scribe' section, and the instances from the Barberini Gospels are from sections attributed to its Scribe D.[89] The instance on page 3 of the Lichfield Gospels is in the Matthean genealogy, while that on page 217 occurs in an additional *Pater Noster* added after the end of St. Mark's Gospel. These elaborations to *s* in fig.3.297 do not occur frequently in these manuscripts. They are not usually included in the normal Gospel texts and are comparable only with the simpler versions in Kells. Comparison with these instances in other manuscripts highlights the Scribe-Artist's unique approach in the Book of Kells.

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[86] As with figs.3.281-82 (see footnote 84), they are uneven in quality as they have been acquired from a variety of sources.

[87] I have not yet had the opportunity to examine these manuscripts in full.

[88] Similar forms used as line-fillers in Kells will be discussed in chapter four (see, for example, fig.4.108-no.2).

[89] I have not yet examined the Barberini manuscript in full.

The letters *t* and *n* - extended curved-concave elaborations

The *t*-shape could accommodate the double form of the curved-concave elaboration but it is usually applied only to the baseline part of the letter – the crossbar is straight in most of the fifty-eight instances that occur in the manuscript. This is the third most numerous letter to be elaborated in this way and it is also subject to constant variation across the zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme (figs.3.298-302). Additions to these letters again include spiral, flowers/florets and occasionally some interlace.

The next letter most frequently treated in this way is *N*, where only its diagonal stroke lends itself to this particular elaboration (fig.3.303). In the manuscript the twenty-two instances of uncial-*N* and the four instances of minuscule-*n* (fig.3.304) are widely distributed in thirteen of the eighteen scribal zones. A number of instances are included that do not have the double curves to the diagonal stroke but are elaborated with related features. These features, from the repertoire already seen in *m*, *s*, and *t*, include zig-zag lines, spirals and interlacing. Perhaps the most distinctive variant is that where the diagonal stroke is interrupted with a spiral, which occurs on only two occasions (fig.3.303-nos.15-16). Significantly, these occur in zones attributed to two different hands in the four-scribe scheme. There are only four instances of minuscule-*n* with these elaborations and again, significantly, these occur in zones attributed to three different hands and the best match among these is not the pair attributed to the same individual (fig.3.304-nos.2 and 4).

The letters *h*, *u* and *d* - extended curved-concave elaborations

The form of the letter *h* lends itself to this elaboration in much the same way as *m*, and the twenty-four instances in which it occurs are subject to much variation (fig.3.305). These occur in

zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme, but again, many of the closest matches occur across this division of hands. Only the lower part of the letter *u* has the extended curved-concave elaboration (fig.3.306), and this limits the scope for variation, although one instance has a zig-zag element at the bottom (fig.3.306-no.8)). These occur on sixteen occasions across the scribal zones, including one instance of the *c*-shaped superscripted form of the letter. There is also limited variation in the ten instances where half-uncial *d* is elaborated in this way (fig.3.307).

<p style="text-align:center">The letters <i>e</i>, <i>o</i>, <i>l</i>, <i>a</i>, <i>b</i>, <i>c</i>, <i>p</i> and <i>q</i> -</p>

<p style="text-align:center">extended curved-concave elaborations</p>

While there are only six instances of the letter *e* with extended curved-concave elaborations they are of particular interest as they occur in zones attributed to each of the hands in the four-scribe scheme (fig.3.308). As with some of the previous letters the best matches occur between instances attributed to different hands. The six instances of *o* with these elaborations are also found in zones attributed to each of the hands in the four-scribe scheme (fig.3.309). The six instances of *l* and the five instances of *r* occur in zones attributed to three of these different hands (figs.3.310-11). There are only three instances of *a*, two of *b* and one each of *c*, *p* and *q* with these elaborations (figs.3.312-13) while they do not occur on the letters *f*, *g*, *i*, *y*, *z* or the *et*-ligature.[90] None of this evidence supports a division of hands.

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[90] Some instances of the *et*–ligature and the letter *q* with pointed elaborations share elements of the extended curved-concave elaboration (fig.3.316).

Words with several letters incorporating

extended curved-concave elaborations

Fig.3.314 shows all fifty-six instances in the manuscript of words with two or more letters having extended curved-concave elaborations. These occur across twelve of the eighteen zones and include examples by the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. The only significant section of Gospel text without any is zone 14 (Scribe C), which is the beginning of Luke's Gospel. Apart from the Genealogy (ff.200r-202r) and the Beatitudes (f.212r) this is perhaps the least decorated text area in the manuscript. The second half of this Gospel is in zone 15 which is attributed to Scribe D. This includes the account of the Passion and receives much decorative emphasis.[91] This zone also has the greatest concentration of these words with multiple instances of the curved-concave elaborations occurring on fifteen occasions.

Nomina Sacra - extended curved-concave elaborations

Fig.3.315 shows all twenty-five instances of abbreviations of the _nomina sacra_ with letters having extended curved-concave elaborations.[92] These occur in twelve of the eighteen zones and include instances attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. Fig.3.315-nos.4 and 22, both _xps_, provide perhaps the closest match among these illustrations although they are attributed to different hands (Scribes A and C). The only other occurrence of _xps_, fig.3.315-no.8 is attributed to Scribe D. The three instances of _dni_ (fig.3.315-nos.9, 11 and 16) are also similar and these occur in zones attributed to Scribes D, A and C respectively. The evidence in both figs.3.314 and 315 again, does not support the division of hands.

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[91] The Passion also receives much decoration in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark in the Book of Kells. Due to the loss of a number of pages at the end of the manuscript it no longer contains the Passion in John's Gospel.

[92] As there are well over over fourteen hundred _nomina sacra_ in Kells this is not a very large proportion of the total. These are more fully addressed in chapter four (pp. 262-66).

The words selected for emphasis with

extended curved-concave elaborations

Analysis of the words emphasised with extended curved-concave elaborations also provides significant evidence in relation to scribal attribution. These are here divided into a number of categories. The first category includes approximately two hundred and ninety words that can be identified as significantly rich in meaning within the context of the Bible text. These words range across fifteen of the eighteen zones and include the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. The most common of these refer to speaking, hearing and seeing and occur on twenty-five occasions. On seventeen occasions there are words relating to sickness, healing and death and there are nine for heaven. In each case these words range across many zones and include each of the hands in the four-scribe scheme.

The second category contains biblical names, excluding the *nomina sacra* and including the Evangelists. These forty-five instances in the manuscript which include extended curved-concave elaborations, are spread over fourteen of the eighteen zones and include the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. The third category is composed of biblical place-names and the twenty-one instances in the manuscript are spread over ten zones and again include all the hands in the four-scribe scheme.

The *nomina sacra* (fig.3.315) have been discussed above but there are also seventy occasions in the manuscript where personal pronouns referring to Christ, and occasionally God, feature extended curved-concave elaborations. These occur in nine of the zones and again include the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. Personal pronouns referring to other biblical characters feature these elaborations on over one hundred occasions. These are spread over eleven of the zones and again include the various hands in the four-scribe scheme.

The last category comprises words that are not loaded with meaning in a biblical context. These words feature the extended curved-concave elaboration on one hundred and sixty occasions throughout the manuscript. These range across twelve of the eighteen zones and include each of the hands in four-scribe scheme. One frequent example, *autem*, occurs on eighteen occasions across seven of the zones and again includes the four scribes in Meehan's scheme. Small clusters of these occur between ff.96v-102r (zone 8, D), ff.268v-269v (zone 15, D), ff.295v-299r (zone 17, A) and ff.314-315r (zone 17, A). None of this evidence in relation to the words which feature the curved-concave elaboration appears to be linked to any of the individual hands in the four-scribe scheme and does not support the division of hands.

Pages that lack letters with

extended curved-concave elaborations

Analysis of the pages that lack any letters with curved-concave elaborations reveals further significant patterns (diag.3.2). The extended curved-concave elaboration is absent on approximately two hundred and forty text pages. Again, these do not occur in any way that can be linked to any particular hand in the four-scribe scheme, as their absence ranges across the thirteen largest zones. As with the clusters of features sharing similar details discussed above, there are also sequences of pages that lack any of these extended curved-concave letter-elaborations. These absences also occur throughout most of the scribal zones and again provide no evidence in support of the division of hands. Examples include ff.65r-67v (zone 7, C), ff.110r-111v (zone 8, Scribe D), ff.135r-136r (zone 10, Scribe A), ff.150r-151r (zone 11, Scribe C), ff.168r-169v (zone 12, Scribe D), ff.190v-196r (zone 14, Scribe C), ff.247r-249r (zone 15,

Scribe D) and ff.300v-301r (zone 17, Scribe A). Writing about the distribution and formation of these letters with extended curved-concave elaborations Meyer states that:

> these endings which suddenly appear on a pair of pages, then disappear again or are scattered over a number of pages are among the special beauties of the Book of Kells. Though they vary in size they are often exquisitely small and always full of surprises.[93]

Particular variant forms within the overall family of curved-concave elaborated letters appear and disappear without any apparent link to the division of hands. Analysis of the two most frequently occurring of all these letterforms illustrate this. The most common of these features on the letter *m* (fig.3.259) occurs on one hundred and sixty three occasions, but is absent from the following sequences of pages – ff.65r-67v (zone 7, Scribe C), ff.117v-122r (zone 8, Scribe D), ff.182r-186r (zone 12, Scribe D), ff.190v-197v (zone 14, Scribe C), ff.217r-227r (zone 14, Scribe C), ff.245v-255v (zone 15, Scribe D) and ff.256v-274r (zone 15, Scribe D).

The second most common of these features, also on the letter *m* (fig.3.260), and which occurs on seventy-nine occasions, is absent from the following sequences of pages – ff.50r-67v (zone 7, Scribe C), ff.70r-78r (zone 7, Scribe C), ff.94v-102r (zone 8, Scribe D), ff.109r-117r (zone 8, D), ff.121r-151r (zones 8, 9, 10 and 11, D, B, A and C), ff.185r-199v (zones 11 and 12, Scribes C and D), ff.209r-216r (zone 14, Scribe C), ff.217r-225v (zone 14, Scribe C), ff.288r-302v (zones 15, 16 and 17, Scribes D, B and A), ff.303v- 313v (zone 17, Scribe A) and ff.316r-325r (zone 17, Scribe A). Again, this evidence does not show patterns that can be linked to any of the hands in the four-scribe scheme and does not support the division of hands.

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[93] Meyer, 'Notes on the art and ornament', in *Codex Cenannensis*, p. 32.

Extended curved-concave letter elaborations

at page-ends and at the end of first lines

Letters with extended curved-concave elaborations sometimes occur as the last word at the end of a page. These constitute a particular subset within the overall family of these letters. This occurs on seventy-six occasions across fourteen of the eighteen scribal zones and again includes the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. Somewhat similarly, the twenty occurrences of these features at the end of the first line of a page are spread over nine zones and again includes all four of these proposed scribes. Neither of these patterns provides evidence in support of any scheme for the division of hands.[94]

(vii) Letters with pointed elaborations

The second feature to be addressed in this section is another family of calligraphic elaborations.[95] The letters with these pointed elaborations do not occur as frequently as those with extended curved-concave elaborations. While they occur in zones attributed to each of the hands in the four-scribe scheme they are most frequently found in one zone. This zone, four, is attributed to Scribe B in the four-scribe scheme and is understood here, along with the other 'Scribe B' zones, as belonging to a second campaign of work. As demonstrated here this does not provide evidence that might differentiate the work of various hands. These elaborations are subject to the Scribe-

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[94] Other features which occur at the end of the last line on a page are discussed in chapter four (pp. 270-71).

[95] These letters with pointed features are not uncommon in other Insular manuscripts. These may occur in the script, initials or in the display-lettering. Many instances occur, for example, in the Echternach, Durham and St Petersburg Gospels. They are also found in abundance in the initials in the Barberini Gospels, particularly in the Gospel of Matthew. They also occur in the pages of the manuscript with lacertine display-lettering such as ff.80r and 125r.

Artist's predilection for variation and they are calligraphically linked to other aspects of his work. Their concentration in one section of the manuscript can be understood as part of the Scribe-Artist's tendency to cluster scribal features.

Discussion of letters with pointed elaborations

The pointed elaborations are almost exclusively applied to letters that typically have curved elements on the left-hand side, although the first minim of *m* also features this elaboration on over twenty occasions. This is characterised by the curved left-hand element of the letters being formed of two distinct parts. The upper half is not significantly modified, while the lower part is almost always formed by a double-curved stroke. The junction of these two parts forms a point facing to the left. The double-curved stroke varies significantly from one instance to the next and in a few cases this element is more or less straight (fig.3.327-no.3). On occasions this element is almost upright and the depth of the double-curve can be minimal (for example, fig.3.350-no.1). In most instances this double-curved element is more or less diagonal, but on occasions it tends towards the horizontal. In these instances it is elongated and the curves are deeper (for example, fig.3.330-no.5). The relationship between the pointed and the extended curved-concave families of elaborations is most clearly seen in these instances. Both families feature a double curved element and calligraphic correspondences between the two are evident in fig.3.316. The fine horizontal double curve of the *d* in fig.3.316-no.1 is paralleled in the *s* in fig.3.316-nos.2 and 3, and in the baseline stroke of the *d* in fig.3.316-no.4. The graphic fluency and elegance of the letterforms in fig.3.316-nos.1, 5, 6 and 7 are also evident in the many double-curved strokes in fig.3.316-no.8 - *uestras*. For convenience this second family will be described as having 'pointed elaborations'.

This family of pointed elaborations is also associated with the extended curved-concave family as they are sometimes found in the same text area and occasionally in the same word. Fig.3.317 shows the twenty instances where both families occur together. Further evidence of correspondence between the two families will be discussed below.

Most of the pointed elaborations occur in zones 2, 4 and 9, all attributed to Scribe B, with the greatest concentration in zone 4. All of the letters in line 11 on f.11v in zone 18, the so-called 'shivered' line, also attributed to Scribe B (fig.3.356-no.1), show a distinctive variation of the pointed elaboration. This is also somewhat unusual as it is the last line of the *breves causae* of Matthew, the rest of which is attributed by Meehan to Scribe A.

Other unusual instances are the *et*-ligatures in the middle of two calligraphic lines,18 and 19, at the end of f.12v (figs.3.354-no.2 and 3.356-no.2). These are also attributed to hand B (zone 18) in the four-scribe scheme, and again occur within zone 3, the rest of which is attributed to Scribe A. Fig.3.322 shows other instances in the manuscript where letters with similar features occur which are attributed to scribes other than B. These are all uncial-*a* and will be discussed when these letters are addressed below. While these instances have the pointed feature on the left-hand side, the double curve in the lower element is not always present or prominent. Three other instances of letters with the pointed elaborations not in zones attributed to Scribe B, are *o* on f.262r (fig.3.343-no.3, Scribe D), and *m* on ff.326v and 331r (fig.3.337-nos.9 and 10, Scribe A).

In excess of two hundred and fifty of these pointed elaborations are spread over twenty-five pages of the manuscript.[96] As mentioned above, most of these are in zone 4 with only nine instances in zone 2 (canon tables), twelve in zone 9 and two in zone 18, all of which are

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[96] Ff.3r, 3v, 4v, 5r, 5v in zone 2, ff.11v and 12v in zone 18, ff.20r, 20v, 22r- 26v in zone 4 and ff.125v, 126v, 127v-129r in zone 9.

attributed to Scribe B. Within zone 4 the greatest concentration is between ff.22r and 25v where the pointed elaboration occurs on almost one hundred and eighty occasions. Their concentrated occurrence no doubt contributes to the description of the script on these pages as being 'display minuscule'.[97] The pointed elaboration occurs most frequently on the *et*-ligature (39), and the letters *o* (35) and *a* (34).

Half-uncial *a* features the pointed elaboration on twenty-six occasions and the letterform is subject to much variation. Examples of this include fig.3.318 which are broad, fig.3.319 which are more compressed and look taller, and fig.3.320-nos.1-3 where the pointed feature is extended. Fig.3.321-no.1 shows the only instance where this occurs on a standard uncial-*a* with the elongated ascender curving over the letter. Fig.3.321-nos.2-5 show the four instances where the ascender is curved to the right. Fig.3.321-nos.6-7 show two instances of these letters where the ascender is more or less straight. Fig.3.321-no.8 shows another variation where the tail of the letter is extended in a sweeping curve.

Line 11 on f.11v, described by Meehan as the 'shivered' line shows a variation on the theme of the pointed elaboration as most of the letters are additionally modified by having elements on the right-hand side of letters also formed of two separate parts (fig.3.356-no.1).[98] Most of these also have a slight double curve in the lower parts of the right-hand elements and the junction of the lower and upper parts are also pointed and face to the left. The right-hand side of *a* is perhaps the least affected element among these letters. The *a* at the end of '*doctrina*' is the only instance showing a trace of this particular feature (fig.3.320-no.4). Folio 24v has the greatest concentration of *a* with the pointed elaboration occuring on ten of the forty-eight of these letters on the page.

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[97] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 188.
[98] Ibid., p. 189.

In Kells the pointed elaboration does not feature on *f*, *g*, *h*, *x*, *y* or *z* and occurs with varying frequency on the other letters; *b* (22), *c* (7), *d* (25), *e* (14), *i* (4), *l* (15), *m* (22), *n* (2), *o* (35), *q* (18), *s* (5), *t* (11) and *u* (2) with only single instances on *p* and *r*. These are subject to the Scribe-Artist's constant variation - in the shape of the letterform, in their constituent elements and details and in their relationships with neighbouring letters (figs.3.323-49). As mentioned above the pointed elaboration is most frequently found on the *et*-ligature, occurring on thirty-nine occasions in the manuscript (figs.3.350-4).

Fig.3.356 shows the various calligraphically enhanced end-lines that occur on these pages which feature the pointed elaborations (although not end-lines, line 11 on f.11v and line 14 on f.25v are also included). These include elaborated examples of *f*, *p*, *r* and in particular, *s* (these letters rarely or never feature the pointed elaboration). Many of these calligraphic letters are formed of vertical double-curves which relate to their counterparts in the letters with extended curved-concave elaborations. It is also interesting to consider, for example, the elaborate stroke on the letter *p* in the lines of calligraphic script on f.12v (fig.3.356-no.2). This letter is also shown in the context of similar elaborations to *p* in zones attributed to other hands (fig.3.109). Related elaborations are also found on the letter *d* (fig.3.13) in zones attributed to each of the hands in the four-scribe scheme (see also the *q* in fig.3.345-no.8). These corresponding features have all been identifed as characteristics of the Scribe-Artist's work and contribute to the identification of the pointed elaborations as his work.

It is also possible to identify significant differences in the calligraphic styles evident in each of the end-lines discussed above. This is further evidence of the determination to create variation in the script, which is identified as one of the defining characteristics of the Scribe-Artist's work. While certain features, such as the vertical double-curves of the flamboyant *s*, may

occur in many of these lines, other elements are varied, as is the overall appearance of these letters. These lines can be understood as evidence of a virtuoso calligrapher, to some extent giving more free-rein to his masterful graphic fluency and his prodigious calligraphic imagination. This is consistent with similar evidence of the Scribe-Artist's constant predilection for variations in size, style, calligraphic effects and elaborations that are found throughout the manuscript.

The words selected for emphasis
with the pointed elaborations

Further shared patterns between the extended curved-concave and the pointed families are evident in the words selected for elaboration. As with the extended curved-concave family, the largest category again are words significantly rich in meaning within the context of the Bible. Within this first category the most common words refer to speaking/hearing/seeing (21). There are also words relating to sickness/healing/death (7), heaven (2), Biblical names (10) and Biblical placenames (4), and *nomina sacra* (8). Personal pronouns for Christ (10) also feature as do personal pronouns referring to other Biblical characters (7). Words not charged with significant meaning in a Biblical context also feature the pointed elaboration on 64 occasions (total 250). This pattern of selected words is similar to that noted above in relation to those with extended curved-concave elaborations (pp. 162-63).

Pages that lack letters with pointed elaborations

It is also significant to note that sequences of pages where the pointed elaborations do not occur is a feature, again, common to both families of elaborated letters (pp. 163-64). Within the zones

that most frequently have instances of the pointed elaborations, 2, 4 and 9, this feature is absent

on ff.1v, 2r, 2v, 4r and 6r in zone 2, ff.21r and 21v in zone 4, and ff.126r and 127r in zone 9.

This pattern, and all those noted as common to both families are further evidence that does not

support the division of hands. Similar patterns are identifiable in many other scribal features

throughout the manuscript. It is difficult to imagine that such patterns of distribution could be

produced by the various members of a scriptorium and more likely that these patterns reflect the

idiosyncratic choices of an individual. Such patterns of distribution have been identifed among

the defining characteristics of the Scribe-Artist's work throughout this study.

(viii) Uncial-a at line-ends

This section shows the use of uncial-*a* at line-ends and includes illustration of every instance of

the feature (diag.3.3 and figs.3.357-92). This provides a unique insight into the Scribe-Artist's

'calligraphic imagination'. It also reveals the randomness of his distribution of such scribal

features, and also his use of clustering. Uncial-*a* appears most frequently at line-ends, where it

occurs on four hundred and twenty-three occasions throughout the manuscript. This closely

parallels the four hundred and thirty instances where *m* features the extended curved-concave

elaboration.[99] The uncial-*a* at line-ends occurs on approximately three hundred pages of the

manuscript in all zones with the exception of zones 1, 2, 6, 13, 16 and 18. Four of these zones (1,

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[99] A few instances are not strictly uncials and are more accurately described as minuscule letterforms but they seem to belong with this feature at line-ends (see, for example, fig.3.377). Also a number of these may not exactly be at the the end of lines but are also included. Uncial-*a* at line-ends also occurs in the Lindisfarne Gospels and other Insular manuscripts as does the occasional use of minuscule *a* (fig.3.392).

6, 13 and 16) are single pages and the twenty-one lines in zone 18 is also equivalent to a single page. Zone 2 contains the canon tables and are not normal text pages.

Discussion of uncial-*a* at line-ends

Figs.3.357-68 show all of these letters in sequence as they occur throughout the book.[100] Presenting them in this way facilitates a sequential reading of the feature as it occurs and provides something of a 'core-sample' or 'cross-section' of the scribal work and the Scribe-Artist's attitude to variation. Thus, it is possible to see this extensive range of variations as they occur throughout the pages of the book and it provides an example of how the varied instances of a scribal feature are woven through the entire manuscript. The sequential presentation here also affords an opportunity to see clusters of particular motifs or elements and also how these are subject to further subtle variation when they occur in such clusters. The consistency of this attitude to variation is apparent throughout the zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme and is one of the principal characteristics that suggest it is the work of an individual rather than being the work of a number of different scribes.

The variations of uncial-*a* include a range of normally sized letters and also include some capitalised versions. These uncial-*a* letters, or various parts of them, may be rounded, angled or slanted. In further variations they may be compressed and appear tall, they may also be small, enlarged or extended. Individual component parts of the letters may also be subject to further variation, such as, for example, ascenders, bows, wedges, and tails and they may also include additional spirals or florets. They may be linked or ligatured to neighbouring letters in a range of ways, including some combinations which perhaps can best be described as calligraphic. The letters may be subscripted or superscripted or linked to vertical versions of *m* or *n*. As with the

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[100] This contrasts with the format used for illustrating the extended curved-concave and pointed elaborations.

other minor decorative features they may occur in clusters over neighbouring pages or in pairs on single pages.

As each of the figs.3.357-68 shows script from the different scribal zones it should be relatively easy to identify characteristics or details that might be linked to individuals in the four-scribe scheme. However, such features are not apparent and the evidence suggests rather, the identification of a single scribe. The seemingly endless variation is characterised by a prodigious, yet consistent, inventiveness. The evidence does not support the idea of a group of scribes working from a canon of letters and decorative features. The evidence suggests the work of a single virtuoso whose '*DNA*' is consistent with that encountered in relation to the extended curved-concave and pointed elaborations. In common with those features, uncial-*a* at line-ends is absent from approximately three-hundred and forty of the approximately six-hundred and forty text pages. These pages occur throughout the relevant scribal zones and is further evidence of the consistency of both the presence, and the absence, of these different scribal features. It should be noted that the predominance of instances from zones attributed to hands C and D reflects the amount of text ascribed to them.[101]

The illustrations in figs.3.369-86 attempt to categorize the most outstanding variants of uncial-*a* and these are often found in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. Some variants occur in zones attributed to three of the four hands in varying combinations of these scribes A, B, C and D. Other variants only appear in zones attributed to two of the four hands and sometimes they occur as clusters attributed to a single individual.[102]

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[101] Uncial-*a* occurs on 48 occasions in zones attributed to Scribe A (139 pages in total), on 13 occasions in zones attributed to Scribe B (35.5 pages in total), on 176 occasions in zones attributed to Scribe C (265 pages in total) and on 180 occasions in zones attributed to Scribe D (216.5 pages in total).
[102] Specific details of these various categories are included in the captions which accompany the illustrations.

Fig.3.374 shows all instances of a distinctive form of uncial-*a* which is calligraphically

enclosed by *h*, and in two of these instances it is enclosed by *m*. The first of these two letters,

fig.3.374-no.14, is cited by Meehan as an indication of 'the greater verve' of Scribe B.[103]

However, the more frequent occurrence of similarly combined letters in zones attributed to

Scribe D undermines this observation, as does the similarity between fig.3.374-no.14 (Scribe B)

and figs.3.374-nos 9 and 11 (Scribe D).

Figs.3.387-90 show unusual instances of uncial-*a* from zones attributed to each of the

hands in the four-scribe scheme. These do not easily fit into the categories of these letters used in

the present analysis and they highlight the particular attitude to variation that pervades the script

throughout the manuscript. Fig.3.391 shows a series of instances of uncial-*a* each of which

shares some of a range of features. This highlights the challenges in attempting to categorize

scribal features in Kells, as particular elements are interchangeable between variations of the

letters. This exemplifies the fluid nature of the calligraphic imagination that inspired the script

and this can also be noted in the extended curved-concave and pointed elaborations. This

difficulty in satisfactorily categorizing letters, motifs or particular elaborations is common across

all of the scribal features in the manuscript and is identified as one of the defining characteristics

of the Scribe-Artist's work. In contrast to the constant variation in Kells, fig.3.392 shows three

consecutive instances on f.5v in the Lindisfarne Gospels. While some incidental differences may

be noted, primarily at both the ends of the right-hand stroke, this is the only uncial-*a* letterform

used at line-ends throughout the manuscript.

As with the families of letters with extended curved-concave and pointed elaborations a

large proportion of the words with uncial-*a* at line-ends are loaded with Biblical significance

including names and placenames, and these occur in zones attributed to the various hands in the

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[103] Ibid., p. 189.

four-scribe scheme. Examples of these include '*Herodis*' f.70v (Scribe C), '*Barraban*' f.121r (Scribe D), '*Magdalinae*' f.126v (Scribe B) and '*Lazarus*' f.325r (Scribe A). The clustering of similar versions of uncial-*a* has been noted, however, this tendency can also apply to the words with these letters. Examples where two of these words with uncial-*a* appear on adjacent pages include '*bona*' ff.48r and 48v (Scribe C), '*talenta*' ff.108r and 108v (Scribe D) and '*Nathaniel*' both on ff.295r (Scribe A). Instances of this feature are not found in the small number of pages attributed to Scribe B (proposed second campaign). Uncial-*a* is also randomly located at the ends of the last lines of pages in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D. These include, for example *caelorum* f.85 (Scribe C), '*multa*' f.121r (Scribe D) and '*opera*' which features at the ends of both ff.308r and 332v (Scribe A). In zones attributed to Scribes C and D these also occur at the ends of first lines, for example '*navicula*' f.72v (Scribe C) and '*adversarii*' f.245r (Scribe D). Such occurrences correspond with similar patterns as discussed in relation to various scribal features in Kells and are typical of the Scribe-Artist's approach.

Analysis of the pages that lack any instances of uncial *a* at line-ends reveals patterns similar to those for the extended curved-concave and pointed elaborations (diag.3.4). Uncial-*a* at line-ends is absent on approximately three-hundred and forty-seven pages, just over half of the total of six-hundred and forty text pages in the manuscript. Again, these do not occur in any way that can be linked to any particular hand in the four-scribe scheme as these absences range across most of the largest zones. As with the clusters of features sharing similar details discussed above, there are also sequences of pages that lack any of these uncial-*a* letters at line-ends. These absences also occur throughout most of the scribal zones and again provide no evidence in support of the division of hands.

(ix) Discussion of the script (continued)

As mentioned in the review of the scholarship at the beginning of this chapter, Julian Brown noted a 'background of impressive consistency in minor details' and cited some examples.[104] Meehan notes Brown's 'small sample' of 'conventions used at line ends' but agrees with Henry's view that these 'pointed not to an identity of scribe but rather to training and practice in the same scriptorium'.[105] Brown's sample of features has been more comprehensively developed, categorized and illustrated in the present study. The illustrations for normal script, the letters with extended curved-concave and pointed elaborations, uncial-*a* at line-ends and the script in the canon table numerals show between two and three hundred different categories of letters and their variant forms.[106] It is also significant to note that most of the instances within these categories show further subtle variation. The vast majority of this multitude of categories occurs across zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. They also occur across these zones with great consistency and without any marks or characteristic features that could help to distinguish different hands. In addition, many of these features occur on only a few instances throughout the manuscript and this also does not support the suggestion that they would have formed part of a canon of letters, letter variants and decorative elaborations that could have been shared by a number of different scribes in a scriptorium.[107] In addition to the hundreds of letter-categories, there are many unique letterforms also, and again, these occur

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[104] T. J. Brown, 'Northumbria and the Book of Kells', in *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 109.

[105] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings,* p. 184.

[106] This number does not include the letters with pointed elaborations which occur mainly, but not exclusively, in zones attributed to Scribe B.

[107] Letterforms that only occur on six occasions, or less, in zones attributed to three or all four hands include figs.3.275(Scribes A, C and D), 3.289(Scribes A, C and D), 3.304(Scribes A, B and C), 3.308(Scribes A, B, C and D), 3.309(Scribes A, B, C and D), 3.310(Scribes A, B and C), 3.311(Scribes A, B and D) and 3.129(Scribes A, C and D).

across the zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme.[108] If indeed it were possible that such a vast number of features were shared within a scriptorium, again, one could reasonably expect to find some characteristic traits that could be associated with different individuals. As has been noted, no such evidence is apparent.[109]

Possible circumstances that led to creating differences in the script in the work of the second campaign (zones attributed to Scribe B)

While there are some differences between the zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D (the first campaign), the differences between these and the zones attributed to Scribe B (the second campaign) are far greater. The most obvious of these is the use of colour and there is no simple or apparent reason that can easily explain this change. Another difference, especially notable in ff.20r-26v, is the use of a script described by Meehan as 'a highly decorative script with strong elements of display minuscule'.[110] Brown also suggests that the 'highly decorative script' on these pages is 'best described as minuscule'.[111] This chapter has also documented the letters with pointed elaborations which are concentrated in Scribe B's zone 4. One possibility may be that these differences, and perhaps the use of colour, are simply further manifestations of the Scribe Artist's predilection for variation.

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[108] Letterforms that are unique include figs.3.264(Scribes A and B), 3.268(Scribes A, B, C and D), 3.277(Scribes C and D), 3.313(Scribes A, B and D), 3.387-90(Scribes A, B, C and D) and 3.223-41(Scribes A, B, C and D).
[109] Line length which Meehan cites as a distinguishing feature in his division of hands will be discussed in chapter four (see Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings,* p. 186) and the rounded form of the letter *n* which he cites as a feature of Scribe A (ibid., p. 186) will be discussed in chapter five.
[110] Ibid., p. 188.
[111] T. J. Brown, 'Northumbria and the Book of Kells', in *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 108.

The overall appearance of the script in these zones attributed to Scribe B suggests that it is not as high in quality as those in the rest of the manuscript.[112] This may be simply a fact of diminshed ability due to age. Other possibilities may be that the scribe has suffered some injury or illness that has somewhat impaired his ability. In Hypothesis A proposed in chapter two, it was noted that the artistic work of the Master-Artist appears to come to an abrupt end, and it may be that he was the victim of an illness or an attack. In such a scenario, the Scribe-Artist alone survives and attempts to complete the unfinished work. However, to judge by the incompatibility of the canon table frameworks and the canon numerals, it would appear that the Scribe-Artist sorely lacked the direction of the Master-Artist to complete them as had originally been intended. These suggestions of course are speculative, however, it is not possible to avoid such speculation in attempting to understand the evidence. What circumstances and events could possibly have led to the creation of the evidence which has been documented here?

The evidence presented throughout this study suggests that the script in the manuscript was written by a single scribe. In the scenario suggested here, this single scribe, the Scribe-Artist, would appear to have outlived his artist colleague, the Master-Artist, and, as discussed in chapter two in relation to the canon numerals, he attempts to complete the unfinished manuscript. However, and for whatever reason, the quality of his work is diminished and the more frequent occurrence of the 'accidental' serif-like marks at the ends of the minims may be evidence of this (figs.3.247-51). The sloped appearance of these marks on the mainly, slanted pen, minuscule-type script on ff.20r-26v is evident in the example shown in fig.3.251-no.6 and also throughout figs.3.316-3.356 which show the pointed elaborations.

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[112] Similar discrepancies in relation to the quality of the decorated initials in these zones will be discussed in chapter five (see, for example, pp. 282-85 and 302-03).

Another factor, or possible cause, of the diminished quality in the second campaign (Scribe B zones) may be an increase in the speed of writing. There is a sense that the script and other features in these areas are created in a more hurried manner.[113] The use of the minuscule-type script on ff.20r-26v may also support this possibility. This possible increase in the speed of the work may have been motivated by the Scribe Artist's awareness of his diminishing abilities and perhaps accompanied with a sense of urgency to complete his task. Alternatively, this urgency may have been at the insistence of a patron, secular or religious, who may have demanded the completion of the manuscript, perhaps for some important deadline.[114] In spite of this, possibly hurried, attempt to complete the manuscript, some unfinished sections remain, particularly in the illumination.[115] Other aspects of inferior work in this proposed second campaign will be discussed in chapter four on the use of textual accessories and mise-en-page, in chapter five on decorated initials, and in chapter six on the work added in the final phase of the second campaign.

There is also a general unevenness in the quality of the work in these zones attributed to Scribe B and this is evident in the letters with pointed elaborations (figs.3.316-56). The calligraphic elegance of the instances of *d* in fig.3.330, for example, appear to be superior to many of the instances of *e* in fig.3.332. This variation in quality is not localised to particular areas within these zones but appears to occur throughout the work attributed to Scribe B. This is difficult to explain, and it may be that the scribe could work well for periods while at other times

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[113] Many of these features will be discussed in the following chapter.

[114] The production of the Book of Kells required significant resources and these could only have been made available with the support of wealthy patrons. This patronage may have been secular or religious or more likely a combination of both.

[115] These include some panels in the canon tables, the list of Hebrew names on f.26, some sections at the bottom of the *Liber* page (f.29r), the Matthean genealogy on ff.29v-31v (see footnote 60 above), and the illuminated f.203r. The marginal canon numerals, found only on ff.292v and 293r, which appear to have been begun as part of the second campaign, are perhaps another illustration of the breakdown of the scribe's attempt to complete the manuscript.

he may have been fatigued or suffering the affects of injury or illness. Or, it may be that, as suggested, he worked at a faster pace and slowed only to allow for occasional calligraphic flourishes. As mentioned above such factors may also have influenced the Scribe-Artist's decision to write much of the text within these zones in the less demanding minuscule-type script. This could be written more quickly and, again, the ubiquity of the short serif-like strokes at the bottom of the minims may be an indicator in support of this possibility. In these zones they almost assume the quality of hairline links such as occur in cursive scripts.

In support of this proposed second campaign of completion, it is significant to note that the major Scribe B text areas occur at the end of their relevant sections.[116] Thus ff.20r-26v complete the prefatory matter and ff.125v-129r complete the Gospel of Matthew. The mainly red script on the various pages that constitute zone 18 may also be understood in this context, as can, for example, the script on f.290r (zone 16) which fills an otherwise empty page. As noted in chapter two, a similar quality of work is evident in the addition of the numerals and the completion of the canon tables on ff.1v-6r. A further noticeable deterioration in the quality of some additions leads to the conclusion that there may have been a later phase at the end of the second campaign. This possibility is discussed further in chapter six.

Conclusions

The research undertaken here is based on a fine-grained study and detailed analysis. It is comprehensive in scope as it addresses the script throughout the manuscript. The evidence from this study raises issues which question the schemes for the division of hands as proposed by different authors. In particular, this evidence appears to challenge or complicate the theories put

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[116] Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (1994), p. 80. Here, for the same reason Meehan suggests that 'Scribe B seems to have been the latest of the scribes'.

forward by Henry and Meehan. The evidence used in support of their schemes appears less tenable and this became apparent relatively quickly in relation to their proposed hands A, C and D.[117] The evidence in the present research revealed recurring patterns which suggested that the script in zones attributed to these three hands in the four-scribe scheme could be understood as the work of a single individual, the Scribe-Artist.

The characterisitcs defining those zones attributed to Scribe B, by both Meehan and Henry, were more complex. The coloured inks, the use of minuscule script, the concentration of letters with pointed elaborations, the calligraphic endlines, the slightly inferior quality and some unevenness in execution, continued to suggest that these areas at least must be the work of another individual, as distinct from the Scribe-Artist. However, closer analysis of the script in these zones revealed that the distinctive patterns in the rest of the manuscript were also evident here. The idiosyncratic nature of these patterns in the evidence is such that it suggests that the script in the book, across all the zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme, is the work of a single individual. The evidence does not appear to support the theory of a division of hands. As noted in chapter one, the defining characteristics of the Scribe-Artist's work may be summarised as follows:

- a constant predilection for variation

- the presence throughout the manuscript of unique variant letterforms

- the merging of variant features and letterforms

- the consistently random distribution of any variant letterform or feature

- the consistent lack of a systematic approach to distribution and also to variation

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[117] Henry's scheme identified three scribes, A, B and C. Meehan added a fourth, Scribe D, by sub-dividing those sections attributed to Henry's Scribe C.

- clustering of particular variant letterforms or other features (which may occur on the same page or over a number of neighbouring pages)

- consistency of 'calligraphic imagination'

- consistency in stroke-making: ductus, aspect, weight and pen-angle

It is proposed here that the letters, and their variant forms in Kells, do not constitute a simple canon of letters and decorative motifs that could conceivably be shared within a scriptorium. Even if a complex canon of letters and decorative features were used, it could reasonably be expected that a sustained and detailed analysis of the script would reveal at least some characteristic traits or distinguishing marks that could be linked to different hands. The sustained close-reading of the script undertaken in the present research consistently reveals that the evidence of sameness is far greater than the evidence of difference. The evidence continuously reveals further facets of the same accomplished and fluent graphic hand and similar, seemingly endless, expressions of a singular calligraphic imagination.

There are, however, differences in the script and these can be easily identified in the zones attributed to the different scribes in Henry and Meehan's schemes for the division of hands. These differences, however, in the context of the present study, are more reasonably understood as elements within a programmatic scheme of variation and the evidence presented here suggests that this is entirely the work of one individual. The most obvious of these differences are perhaps the colours, the letters with pointed-elaborations and the minuscule script used in parts of the zones attributed to Scribe B. As mentioned above, the evidence, as interpreted in this study suggests that these zones are also the work of the Scribe-Artist. It is further suggested here that the differences in these zones derive most significantly from the fact that they appear to have been written as part of a second campaign undertaken to complete the

unfinished manuscript. The fact that most of these zones occur at the ends of their respective texts is compatible with this theory regarding the completion of the book. Similarly, the probable later (second campaign) addition of the numerals, to complete the canon tables, one of those scribal zones attributed to Scribe B, is discussed in chapter two.

While the evidence suggests that the Scribe-Artist is also responsible for this proposed second campaign, it is acknowledged that it is not entirely equal in quality to his work in the first campaign. This deterioration may simply be due to ageing and the degenerative effects this may have had on the scribe's ability. His diminished faculties may also have been the result of illness or injury. Alternatively, the poorer quality of these areas may, at least in part, be also due to external pressures or imposed deadlines. While the scenarios suggested are speculative, they are to some extent plausible or at least possible, in the context of the evidence.

This chapter includes analysis of the letters with extended curved-concave elaborations. While such elaborated letters occur occasionally in other Insular manuscripts, in Kells they are developed as a major part of an overall programme of decorative script-elaboration. Instances of these letters are found throughout the manuscript, and, for the purposes of analysis, these have been arranged into categories. The attempted categorization of these, and other features in the book, however, is never satisfactorily precise. This is due to the nature of this programme of variation which is such a consistent feature throughout the manuscript. It seems impossible to find any two of the variously elaborated letters that are alike in all of their details. At the same time they are all similar in the consistency of their graphic qualities, and also the calligraphic imagination which has inspired their formation. Similar patterns of calligraphic inventiveness and graphic fluency are also evident in the instances of uncial-*a* at line-ends.

As quoted above, Meyer's description of the letters with extended curved-concave elaborations could equally apply to uncial-*a* at line-ends and also to the letters with pointed elaborations.[118] All of these features are subject to constant variation and are also randomly distributed throughout the pages of the manuscript. This random distribution of features is a constant presence in the book, and its idiosyncratic nature is such that it also reinforces the suggestion that this is the work of a single individual. As argued above, these scribal patterns, while random, are also consistent, and they reveal characteristic traits that cannot reasonably be attributed to scriptorium practice.

The family of letters with pointed elaborations, which occurs mainly in zones attributed to Scribe B, initially appeared as if it might provide some evidence for the presence of at least a second scribe. However, close analysis of these letterforms, the strokes used in their creation, their elaboration, their patterns of variation, the patterns of their distribution, and also their close relationship with the family of letters with extended curved-concave elaborations, all suggest their origination in the same calligraphic imagination and their execution by the same hand. While they sometimes do appear to be slightly inferior in quality, the consistency of the evidence, graphic and otherwise, links them to the work of the first campaign and the individual here identified as the Scribe-Artist.

Meyer's statement could again be applied to the regular script in the manuscript as this too is often subject to variation. Although not usually as obvious as the families of elaborated letters, the ordinary script of the manuscript is also constantly modified and varied. This is usually subtle and is often most evident in the terminals, the tails and wedges, or in their relationships with neighbouring letters. This is particularly obvious in the numerous variations of the *et*–ligature and the sequences of the letter *x*, vertical-*m* and the subscripted-*t*. However, this

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[118] See footnote 93 above.

programme of variation does not significantly interfere with the consistency of the basic forms of the letters. Analysis of the strokes used to form the letters show them to be consistent throughout. This consistency was observable at even the minutest level in the occasional 'accidental' serif-like marks. It is important to stress that throughout these analyses no traits or distinguishing marks could be identified that might link areas of script with different scribes. In a contemporary manuscript such as C.C.C. C. 197B such characteristic traits, and the use of distinctive letterforms, easily distinguishes the work of its two scribes.[119]

As mentioned above there are differences observable in all of the zones in the Book of Kells. However, the evidence here suggests that these differences are not attributable to different hands. The evidence suggests rather, that they are more accurately understood as elements within a scribal master plan and that this was both planned and executed by a single individual. In the broadest outline of this plan the beginning of each Gospel is written in a precise and compact script. This is followed by a gradual shift away from the relatively small and compact script of the opening pages, through a gradual modulation in script size until it reaches its climax in the text of the Passion sequences. In these passages the script is often at its largest, is inclined to be more angular and is generally more animated than the earlier sections. Finally there is a return to a more compact form of script for the closing pages of each Gospel. However, while the broad patterns described are adhered to in a general way they are never systematically applied. Meyer's comments regarding distribution and formation again perhaps reflect something of its unpredictable nature. For example the occurrence of larger script on a particular page in part of a Passion sequence may be followed by pages of smaller script. This fluidity in the Scribe-Artist's

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[119] Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores* (Oxford, 1935), no.125. M. P. Brown has identified a third scribe in the other section of this split manuscript – Cotton Otho C. v. See 'House Style in the Scriptorium, Scribal Reality and Scholarly Myth', in G. Brown & C. Karkov, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Styles* (New York, 2003), pp. 131-50.

approach to his task ultimately frustrates any attempts at simple description or categorization. This complexity in the patterns of scribal work also frustrates any analysis of the script that is based on sample areas within the text. To understand these patterns it is necessary to analyse the script in its entirety. This comprehensive approach has been essential to the methodology of this study.

The distribution of the various scribal features over several pages, in openings or on individual pages, is subject to the same unpredictability. Meyer's comments may also be applied to the position of the various scribal features on a page, and his observations, to a large extent, may also be understood in the context of the words that are chosen to contain elaborated letters. These words may be rich in Biblical significance or they may be the more ordinary linguistic elements. For example, within this scribal scheme, the evocative *galileae* or the mundane *quia* may appear several times on the same page or over a sequence of several pages. This unpredictability is observable across the various features and through all the scribal zones in the book. While descriptions of these patterns as 'consistently random' or 'randomly consistent' may be oxymoronic, they do reflect this distinctive feature of the script.

In her paper for the 1992 TCD conference on the Book of Kells, Eisenlohr stated that the 'similarity or dissimilarity of hands has so far mainly been based on more general impressions of the scripts'.[120] Her own analyses attempted to provide more precise evidence. However, the limited nature of these investigations, in specific parts of the book, were not sufficient to reveal the consistent patterns underlying the script throughout the manuscript. The evidence in the present study was revealed only in the process of analyses of the script throughout the entire manuscript that were both comprehensive and detailed.

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[120] Eisenlohr, 'The puzzle of the scribes', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 196.

The conceptualisation of the script in Kells as the work of a single scribe is not new. It was first proposed by Meyer in the commentary volume accompanying the 1950-51 Urs Graf-Verlag facsimile (see footnote 44 in chapter one). Julian Brown agreed with this theory of a single scribe in his 1972 paper in which he outlined a sample of the evidence supporting his proposal.[121] The evidence presented in this study comprehensively develops and extends the sample mentioned by Brown. It is also interesting to note that following her scribal attributions, and having discussed the variations, Henry concludes 'that there is in the script of the Book of Kells taken as a whole something very individual'.[122] In the course of this research, as familiarity with these various scribal patterns grew, the imperative to interrogate the manuscript for evidence of different hands diminshed as the defining characteristics of the script were revealed. Instead it seemed to become increasingly possible to enjoy the ingenuity and virtuosity of the Scribe-Artist.

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[121] T.J. Brown, 'Northumbria and the Book of Kells', in *A Palaeographer's View*, p. 108.
[122] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 155.

Chapter 4

SCRIPT-RELATED FEATURES IN THE BOOK OF KELLS - TEXTUAL AND DECORATIVE

Introduction

Chapter four is divided into two sections. **Section I** deals with a number of textual issues including **(i)** orthographical variations, **(ii)** writing numbers/numerals, **(iii)** errors and corrections, **(iv)** syllabification, and finally **(v)** punctuation and punctuation marks. **Section II** deals with a numer of issues relating to decoration and mise-en-page including **(vi)** marginal arabesques and **(vii)** other marginal decoration, **(viii)** line-filling decoration, **(ix)** superscripted and subscripted letters, instances of turn-in-path and the markers which accompany each of these features, accents, **(x)** abbreviation marks, **(xi)** mise-en-page and a number of other miscellaneous features which include the occurrence of some unusually positioned initials at the beginning of John, the treatment of page-ends, word-breaks, justification, line-length, the number of lines per page and the interaction of zoomorphs across openings. All of the issues in both **Section I** and **Section II** of this chapter are examined for evidence that might support a division of hands. However, as will be shown throughout these analyses, the evidence suggests rather that they are the work of a single individual.

Section I – Textual Issues

(i) Orthographical Variations

This examination of the orthographical (spelling) variations in Kells is not intended to be a comprehensive or exhaustive study and is focused rather on ascertaining whether it reveals any evidence that may contribute to understanding the division of hands.[1] This can be extrememly difficult to assess, as the role of textual exemplars and intermediaries has to be taken fully into account, as does the possible misunderstanding of certain letterforms during the process of copying and transmission. Patrick McGurk has written a brief account of the typical scribal errors, orthographic confusions and corrections that occur in Kells and which are common in other Insular manuscripts.[2] He also includes an appendix of Gospel readings which collates Kells' orthographical variants with other contemporary Insular manuscripts.[3] This appendix also identifies those variants that are 'independent' and which only occur in Kells.

The use of *propheta* and *profeta* is a typical example that may occur in Insular manuscripts and features regularly in McGurks's appendix. *Profeta* is the preferred option in most instances in Kells.[4] However, it is interesting to note that on f.59r '*prophetam*' in line 7 is followed by '*profetae*' in the next line. This occurs in a zone attributed to Scribe C and a similar combination occurs on f.293v, attributed to Scribe A, where '*propheta*' on line 5 is followed by '*profeta*' on both lines 10 and 13. These are the only two instances where the two occur on the same page of the manuscript and may echo the predilection for variation repeatedly discussed

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[1] Neither does this analysis attempt to engage in the use of biblical collations to determine text family relationships such as undertaken for example in the work of McGurk, Wordsworth and White and Fischer.

[2] McGurk, 'The Gospel Text', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 59-152, (pp. 69-70).

[3] Ibid., pp. 71-152.

[4] *Profeta* is used in 64 of the 73 occurrences.

throughout this study. That both versions are combined on f.145v in the confused '*profepheta*' on lines 4-5 might indicate that these variations are the scribe's choice rather than being dictated by an exemplar.[5]

Somewhat similarly, *pharisaei* and *farisaei* is another example of the variant spellings that typically occur in many Insular manuscripts.[6] Both feature throughout the Book of Kells. As with *propheta*/*profeta* there are only two instances where both variants occur on the same page. On f.100v, attributed to Scribe D, '*pharissaei*' occurs on lines 3 and 11, followed by '*farisse*' on line 15. On f.135r, attributed to Scribe A, *pharisei* on line 2 is followed by *farissaei* on line 12 and '*farisseorum*' on line 14. On ff.73v-74r, attributed to Scribe C, '*farissei*' occurs on line 1 of f.73v while '*pharisaei*' is on line 10 on f.74r. Within any particular zone, one spelling tends to occur with a greater frequency. However, this is not necessarily the dominant spelling in the other zones attributed to any particular hand in the four-scribe scheme. The following lists the variations as they occur in the zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme:

Scribe A: In zone 3 there are only two instances, both begin with *f*, have a single *s*

and *a* in the ending.

In zone 10 four begin with *f* and one with *ph*, all have double *s* and

only one has *a* in the ending.

In zone 17 all begin with *ph*, all have single *s* and all have *a* in the

ending.

Scribe B: There are only two instances, one each in zones 4 and 9:

- that on f.21v begins with *f*, has single *s* and *a* in the ending.

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[5] The letters *fe* are expunctuated.
[6] Further variants with double *s* and *ei* instead of *aei* are also commonplace in Insular manuscripts and in Kells – see McGurk, ibid., p. 69.

- that on f.126v begins with *ph*, has double *s* and no *a* in the ending.

Scribe C: In zone 7 there are eight beginning with *ph* and three of these have a single *s* and five have *a* in the ending. Seven begin with *f*, one has a single *s* while four have *a* in the ending (another ends in *ai*).

In zone 11 all eight instances begin with *f*, two have a single *s* and none have *a* in the ending.

In zone 14 all twenty-one instances begin with *f*, only one instance has double *s* and eighteen have *a* in the ending (there is a sequence of three without *a* on ff.235v-237v).

Scribe D: In zone 8 thirteen instances begin with *ph* and one begins with *f*, all have double *s* and thirteen have *a* in the ending.

In zone 12 there is only one instance – '*farisseis*'.

In zone 15 all nine begin with *f*, all have single *s* and eight have *a* in the ending.

There are no patterns relating to the orthography that can be attributed to any of the individual hands in the four-scribe scheme. The random nature of their distribution is not likely to have been due to an exemplar and rather suggest that these show further evidence of the idiosyncratic choices of a single individual with a predilection for variation.

Hyerusalem and *hierusalem* is another example of spelling variation found throughout the manuscript. The first occurrence of the word in Kells shows both used together on line 15 of f.11r, which is attributed to Scribe A. This is the only instance where both occur on the same page although both variants are found on the recto and verso of f.286 attributed to Scribe D. Forty-seven of the seventy-three instances of this placename begin with *hi*. A further anomaly in

its spelling occurs on both 300v (lines 7 and 10), and 303r (lines 1 and 2) where both '*hierusolimis*' and '*hierusolymis*' are found together on the same page.[7]

Sinagoga* and *synagoga* are found throughout the manuscript although those beginning with *sin* occur more frequently, on thirty-two of the forty-one instances. Both versions do not appear on the same page although they occur on neighbouring pages in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D. '*Synagoga*' occurs on line 1 of f.205r, while '*sinagoga*' occurs on line 15 of f.206r (Scribe C). '*Sinagoga*' occurs on line 11 of f.269v while '*synagoga*' occurs on line 4 of f.271r (Scribe D). Two of three instances in zone 17 (Scribe A) are '*synagoga*' in line 5 of f.310v and line 7 of f.325v, while '*sinagogam*' occurs between these on line 2 of f.321r. A further scribal variation occurs on lines 1 and 6 of f.204v where the two forms of *y* are used.[8] The only two instances of the word in zones attributed to Scribe B both occur on f.20r, on lines 9 and 17. While the spelling is similar, the form of *s* used at the beginning is different in each case.

In what appears to be a conflation of the *Tironian nota* (in the form of *h* with a hook at its shoulder – fig.3.222) and the usual spelling - *autem*, the word *hautem* appears on eight occasions.[9] This may be a feature unique to Kells.[10] These instances are widely separated with the first on f.17r and the last on f.324v. These occur in six different zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D. If such a variant was attributable to scriptorium practice it might be expected to occur more regularly. Their randomness is more understandable as the idiosyncratic choice of an individual and this would seem consistent with the proposed Scribe-Artist's predilection for such whim and constant variation.

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[7] The use of *zizania* and *zezania* was noted on p. 141 in chapter three (fig.3.257).
[8] See fig.3.147.
[9] Christopher Verey agrees with this possible interpretation of the hooked-*h* and the word *hautem* (pers. comm. 2013).
[10] All are recorded as independent readings in the appendix, McGurk, 'The Gospel text', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 71-152.

The names of biblical characters are also subject to spelling variations. The first of these is *Abraham/Abracham*. While the latter occurs more frequently, an instance of both forms on the same page occurs on lines 7 and 17 of f.317v (Scribe A). *Magdalenae* is the spelling used on eight of its nine occurrences in the manuscript. However, f.126v shows the only variant – '*Magdalinae*' on lines 10-11 – on the recto of which page is '*Magdalenae*'. This is in a zone attributed to Scribe B. '*Semion*' and '*Symeon*' occur on both sides of f.195, attributed to Scribe C, '*Zacche*' and '*Saccheus*' occur on f.262r, attributed to Scribe D and '*Nicodimus*' and '*Nicodemus*' occur on f.297v. '*Simon*' and '*Symon*' occur on forty-five occasions with two-thirds of these beginning with *Sim*. Both variants occur on lines 3 and 8 of f.56r, attributed to Scribe C and also on lines 4 and 6 of f.132v attributed to Scribe A. Only six instances of the name are found in zones attributed to Scribe D. While most of these begin with *Sim*, both variants occur, for example, *Symonis* on line 7 of f.175r and *Simonis* on line 7 of f.111v.

The characters in the last paragraph all belong to the 'righteous' side of the biblical divide, however some of the more interesting spelling variations are reserved for those with less wholesome reputations. On line 12 of f.35r '*Herodis*' is followed on line 17 by '*Hyeruodis*' which appears to be a variant unique to Kells. '*Erodem*' occurs on line 12 of f.280r, however, this variant is also found in the Book of Armagh.[11] '*Belzebul*' first appears on line 2 of f.21v while variants occur between ff.56r-63v. '*Belsebud*' on line 2 of f.56r is followed by '*Belzebud*' on both f.57v (line17) and f.63r (line 11) and a further variation occurs in its final appearance - '*Beelzebul*' on line 2 of f.63v. The closest match is perhaps between the latter, attributed to Scribe C, and that on f.21v, attributed to Scribe B.

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[11] Ibid., p. 140.

Pylatus and *Pilatus* feature mainly in the passion sequences and are found in zones 8, 12 and 15 attributed to Scribe D and zone 9 attributed to Scribe B.[12] The three instances in the *breves causae* in zone 4 attributed to Scribe B show '*Pilatum*' on line 11 of f.25v with '*Pylatus*' and '*Pylato*' on line 14 of f.22r and line 12 of f.23v respectively. The two instances with *y* show different versions of that letter (fig.3.147). Two each of these letterforms occur in the four instances of the name that occur in zone 9 also attributed to Scribe B. The '*f*-shaped' version occurs twice on f.126v (lines 2 and 16), while the other version also occurs on f.126v (line 1) and again on f.127r (line 8). The zones attributed to Scribe D show similar combinations with the two *y* forms also found among the four instances on f.181r (lines 1, 2, 7 and 12). '*Pilatus*' also occurs on line 17 of f.181v. Both forms are also found on f.281v (lines 1 and 12), while a few pages earlier on both sides of f.280 a sequence of five instances occurs beginning with *Pil*. Two larger versions are also found on these pages – one with *y* on line 15 of f.279v and one with *i* on line 13 of f.280v. In zone 8 there are four instances of '*Pylatus*' between ff.120v and 121v. These, however, are preceded by '*Pilato*' on line 16 of f.119v.

The three instances of *Barbas*/*Barban* in zone 12 attributed to Scribe D are similar, but the four instances in zone 8, also attributed to Scribe D, are all subject to variation. '*Barabas*' and '*Barraban*' occur on f.121r (lines 9 and 11) while on the following page '*Barban*' and '*Baraban*' occur on lines 5 and 9. Is it possible that the scribe is here using his predilection for variation as a way of showing contempt for this unsavoury character by not dignifying his name with a consistent spelling? The variations for *hypocrite* seem to indicate an even more extreme

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[12] One instance, '*Pylato*' occurs on line 1 of f.198r in zone 14 attributed to Scribe C. The Passion sequence in John is missing at the end of Kells.

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instance of this phenomenon. This is perhaps best appreciated by listing all of the instances in the text (these only occur in zones attributed to Scribes C and D).

Zone 7 - C	Zone 8 – D	Zone 11 - C
Hypochritae - f.44v line 7	*Hypuchritae* – f.96v line 6	*Hypocritis* – f.150r line 14
Hipocritae - f.44v line 16	*Chypuchritae* – f.99v line 5	
Hypocritae - f.45v line 12	*Cypuchritae* – f.99v line 10	Zone 12 – D
Hypocrita - f.47v line14	*Cypuchritae* – f.99v line 15	*Chipocritae* –f.168v line 14
Hypucritae - f.73v line 16	*Hypucritae* – f.100v line 4	
Hipochritae - f.76v line 7	*Hypuchritae*–f.100v line 11	Zone 14 – C
	Hypuchritae – f.101r line 3	*Hypocrita* – f.214r line 12
	Hypochrite – f.101r line 8	*Chipocritae* – f.238v line 1
	Hypuchrisi – f.101r line 10	*Hippocrisis* – f.239v line 4
	Hypochritis –f.106v line 14	*Hypocrite* - f.243r line 6
		Zone 15 – D
		Hyppocrite – f.244v line 11

These variations include beginnings with *hi*, *hy*, *chy* and *cy*, second syllables with *o* or *u,* and third syllables with or without *h*, and two instances with double *p*. These latter occur on neighbouring pages but in zones attributed to different scribes (f.239v and 244v). The two versions spelt *chipocritae* also occur in zones attributed to different hands. It is also not untypical that the same spelling occurs twice on neighbouring pages as on ff.100v and 101r or on the same page as on f.99v. The instances with syllable variations in spelling occur in different

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combinations and there are no patterns that could be ascribed to a particular hand in the four-scribe scheme. Many of the variants occur on the same, or neighbouring pages, and fourteen of these are independent readings, at least some of which may be unique to Kells.[13]

A similar pattern of variant spellings, which may also be unique to Kells, indicate the unholiest of places:

Zone 7 - C	Zone 8 – D
*Ge*hennae – f.42r line 11	*Ge*chennae – f.100r line 1
*Gy*hennam – f.42v line 16	*Gy*chennae – f.101v line 7
*Gye*hennam – f.43r line 4	Zone 11 – C
*Gy*chennam – f.58r line 11	*Gy*chennam – f.159v line 6
*Gy*chennam – f.82r line 17	*Gi*chennam – f.159v line 13
	*Gy*chennam – f.160r line 2

These occur in zones attributed to Scribes C and D, and, as with the previous word, different versions occur on the same or neighbouring pages. While *gychennam* occurs on five occasions, four are in zones attributed to Scribe C and one in zone 8 attributed to Scribe D. Even if the Scribe-Artist did not intend any disparaging inference in these spellings, their variation creates a distinctive pattern which is difficult to accommodate within a concept of 'scriptorium practice'.

Attempting to correlate the variant spellings of these words in Kells with Bonafatius Fischer's study of all known surviving Latin Gospel texts up to the tenth century was

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[13] Ibid., p. 68. Here McGurk states that 'some 'independent' readings could have been made as the scribe wrote: this independence would account for some of the errors and perhaps for some of the distinctive variants'.

unsatisfactory as many instances occur outside of his selected extracts.[14] Nonetheless it is interesting to note the great number of variant spellings found in some cases in his study as, for example, *hierosolymam* in Matthew 16.21 which is listed with over thirty alternatives.[15] As part of this study, to provide a context for this phenomenon in Kells, a comparative analysis was undertaken with all of the instances of *gehennam* and *hypocritae* in the Lindisfarne Gospels. In Lindisfarne the ten instances of *gehenna(m)* all share the same *gehenn-* root. The eighteen instances of *hypocritae* show some slight variation with ten having a *hypocri-* root, while five others have an additional *h* and begin with *hypochri*. Two instances begin with *hipoch-* while one begins with *ypoc-*. This shows far greater orthographic consistency than the multitude of variants for both words found in Kells. This may be prove to be an interesting subject for future research but is beyond the scope of the present study.

(ii) Numerals and Written Numbers

Numbers are written as words rather than numerals on over four hundred occasions throughout the manuscript. Apart from those in the canon tables, and the few instances where Eusebian sections are marked at the beginning of John, Roman numerals are used on over sixty occasions within the main text. The use of numerals and written numbers are both spread throughout all of the major scribal zones in the manuscript.[16] It is also significant that in each of these zones both

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[14] B. Fischer, *Die lateinischen Evangelien bis zum 10.Jahrhundert* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1988-1991), (*Aus der Geschichte der lateinischen Bibel*, 13, 15, 17, 18, Matthew 1988, Mark 1989, Luke 1990, John 1991).
[15] Ibid., pp. 296-7.
[16] Only one number, *undecim*, occurs in zone 9 (Scribe B) on line 13 of f.128v.

forms are found together on the same page, and occasionally even on the same line (fig.4.1).

These variations also occur in the rubrics that accompany the Canon Tables.

Pages with numbers written both as words and as numerals

Zone 2 – (Attributed to Scribe B)[17] – ff.3v, 4r, 4v and 5r (all in rubrics).

Zone 3 - (A) – ff.14r (lines 5, 8 and 16).

Zone 4 – (B) – f.24v (lines 3 and 4).

Zone 7 – (C) – f.71v (both in line 16).

Zone 8 – (D) – f.89v (lines 7 and 8), f.108r lines 1, 5, 8, 15, 16 and 17, f.112r (lines 12

and 17) and f.117r (lines 2 and 13).

Zone 10 – (A) – f.139v (lines 2, 3 and 6).

Zone 11 – (C) – f.154r (lines 9, 11, 12 and 14).

Zone 12 – (D) – 176v (lines 4, 6 and 12)

Zone 14 – (C) – f.220r (lines 3 and 8) and f.226v (lines 3, 6, 8, 10-11 and 16).

Zone 15 – (D) – f.277r (both in line 16).

Zone 17 – (A) – f.306v (lines 12, 13, 14, 16 and 17), f.307r (lines 3, 10 and 11)

and f.311r (lines 7, 12, 13 and 15).

This consistent pattern of variation throughout the manuscript is echoed in the random use of

rectangular dots flanking the numerals (see figs.4.2-4).[18] Numerals are marked by the presence of

dots on either side on thirty-six occasions, while they are not used on twenty-one occasions. Both

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[17] The attribution of the various hands in the four-scribe scheme in the rest of this list is indicated by A, B, C or D.
[18] T. J. Brown, 'Description, First Part', in *Cod. Lind.*, p. 67. Numerals in the text proper of the Lindisfarne Gospels usually have a median point at either side although they are very occasionally omitted. In Lindisfarne all of the Gospel texts, corresponding to those listed above in Kells, are consistently written as words. In the Lindisfarne canon tables a few rubrics between ff.16r-17v contain some numerals. Otherwise, the only one of the listed instances rendered as a numeral is *hominem ·xxxuiii· annos* on f.205r which occurs in the *breves causae* of John.

forms occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D. The following show examples of these on neighbouring pages:

Zone 7 - (C) – f. 71v (line 16) two dots and f.87r (lines 14 and 15) no dots.

Zone 12 - (D) – f.176v (line 4) two dots and f.178r (line 3) no dots.

Zone 17 - (A) – f.303r (line 3) two dots and f.303r (line 13) no dots.

On four occasions the numerals are accompanied by a single dot and these occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D (fig.4.5). Both numerals and written numbers may be used in referring to similar entities as for example on f.165v where '*duodecim*' is written on line 5 and XII on line 7, both of which refer to the twelve Apostles (fig.4.1-no.7). Fig.4.6 shows the only two instances where words that are not numbers appear to be emphasised by flanking dots in a manner somewhat similar to those accompanying numerals. All of these patterns relating to numbers do not appear to support any scheme for the division of hands and their idiosyncratic nature rather suggests the work of an individual.

(iii) Errors and Corrections

While many corrections have been made to the text in the Book of Kells, the number of obvious errors that have not been rectified suggest that it was never thoroughly edited by a corrector. Henry states that 'it looks as if no corrector had gone systematically through the text'.[19] These uncorrected errors occur throughout the manuscript and the following list presents a brief representative sample of these:

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[19]Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 157.

Prncipes (*principes*) – f.35v (line 2) zone 7 – Scribe C

Incare (*incarcere*) – f.111r (line 1) zone 8 – Scribe D

Nacula (*navicula*) – f.137r (line 3) zone 10 – Scribe A

In regnum (repeated) – f.160r (line 1) zone 11 – Scribe C

Lapis super laper (*lapis super lapidem*) – f.171v (line 12) zone 12 – Scribe D

Apparuit (repetition) – f.189r (line 13) zone 14 – Scribe C

Pepes (*pedes*) – f.251v (line 10) zone 15 – Scribe D

IIX (*XII*) – f.307r (line 10) zone 17 – Scribe A

McGurk's appendix of readings includes most of the errors in the Kells text and also indicates where many of these have been corrected.[20] His note which precedes the appendix suggests that most corrections are discreet.[21] This fact, in conjunction with the observation above, that the text has not been subjected to a campaign of correction, might indicate that these corrections were made by the scribe as work progressed or at the end of a stint of writing. There is no apparent difference in the mark making used in most of these corrections, although with time, what is perhaps a thinner ink, has sometimes faded slightly in comparison to the surrounding text. Letters may be added outside the text-block or minute expunctuating dots may indicate 'deleted' letters. Subscript letters, which form an integral part of the calligraphic programme, usually at line-ends, occasionally appear in unusual places (for example, fig.4.7-no.4). Letters missing from words, are sometimes added in minute form with a very fine nib (fig.4.7).

Many of these minute letters are obviously corrections/part of corrections (fig.4.7-no.7/fig.4.9-no.1), sometimes in conjunction with expunctuating dots (fig.4.7-nos.4, 9, 22, 23 and 25). Other instances are so minute they do not appear as if they could have been planned as

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[20] McGurk., 'The Gospel text', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 71-152.
[21] Ibid., p. 70.

part of the script (fig.4.7-nos.1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 24, 25, 29 and 30). There are some

instances which appear somewhat more deliberate and are larger. Some of these could

conceivably have been intended as part of the original script (fig.4.7-nos.3, 7, 11, 12, 15, 16, 20,

27, 28 and 31). However, the *i* in fig.4.7-no.7, which forms part of the correction of *estis iderate*

to *estis considerate*, would undermine their being considered as part of the calligraphic

programme. The fact that they are so few would also lend weight to the suggestion that they are

all most likely corrections. It is interesting to note that the most consistent feature among these

minute letters, the instances where *i* is boldly written, occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C

and D - Scribe A (fig.4.7-no.28), Scribe C (fig.4.7-nos.7, 11, 18 and 20) and Scribe D (fig.4.7-

no.12). The *a* in fig.4.7-no.3 (Scribe C) and fig.4.7-no.23 (Scribe A), which also appear boldly

written, recall some of the uncial-*a* variants discussed in chapter three. Fig.4.7-no.3 is close in

form to a series at the beginning of fig.3.360 (for example nos.22-29) while fig.4.7-no.23 closely

resembles those in fig.3.365-no.209 or perhaps fig.3.368-nos.396-7. These minute letters do not

occur in patterns that could be linked with any of the hands in the four-scribe scheme but rather

seem to be consistent with the predilection for variation that has here been identified as typical of

the Scribe-Artist.

     Further corrections include a long addition in the bottom margin of f.146v and another

section of missing text which is added on f.60v. The latter is in red and may be part of the

proposed second campaign where the use of coloured ink, orange-red in particular, is prominent.

Other corrections in this red ink occur for the most part between ff.31r and 68r and appear not to

have been continued beyond this point.[22] As with the incomplete state of the first campaign, the

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[22] There are also corrections on ff.22v and 25r – the text on these pages is proposed here as part of the second
campaign.

work undertaken in the second campaign also was not always completed.[23] The corrections in red appear to have been added in conjunction with much red decoration and in particular line-fillers which will be discussed further below. There is a somewhat faded red right-angled mark between lines 5 and 6 on f.34v and this appears to be a *7-shaped Tironian et* which is missing from between the words '*iustus*' and '*nolet*' below (fig.3.212-no.7). The marks of cancellation added to f.218v (figs.5.364 and 6.65-66) would also seem to be consistent with the somewhat diminished quality of the work in this campaign. These will be discussed further in chapter six.

The corrections in red appear to stop at f.68r although there are a few exceptions – the *in* expunctuated with a red stroke above it in line 11 on f.270v and the *Tironian* '*est*' added on line 5 of f.253v (fig.4.8-no.4).[24] There are four other instances in the manuscript where this ÷ sign is used (fig.4.8). While fig.4.8-no.2 also has the appearance of an inserted correction, the others seem to be more deliberate, and perhaps were used for convenience in completing lines of text. Two of these, fig.4.8-nos.1 and 5 are followed by small triple punctuation marks (attributed to Scribes D and A). What is perhaps most remarkable is the consistent form of the horizontal stroke in all five instances even though they occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D (see also figs.4.214-42). This consistency would suggest that all of these, including the instance in red (fig.4.8-no.4), which is most likely from the second campaign, are all the work of the same hand.

Another correction in red is the reversed '*c*' - *Tironian nota* for *con* - accompanied by a pair of red dots on line 3 of f.47r (fig.4.9 -no.1). The use of red would appear to link this with the second campaign, however, it is interesting to note that part of this correction has been effected by the insertion of *i* within the *t* in black ink as are the vertical pair of dots indicating the

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[23] For example, the Eusebian reference numbers in red which were added at the beginning of John's Gospel on ff.292v-293r.

[24] The '*initium*' added on line 8 of f.327v could also be considered here although it is not a correction (fig.4.142-no.4).

superscript addition. Perhaps this is an unfinished correction from the first campaign completed in the second.[25] The *Tironian nota* for *con*, just described, is its only occurrence in the manuscript. Similarly, another of these *Tironian* signs, the crossed double-vertical for *enim*, occurs only once on f.146v (fig.4.9-no.2). This is part of an omission written in the lower margin, as mentioned above. The *p* with an additional curved stroke from the bow indicating a contraction for *per* is also the only instance of this sign in the manuscript (fig.4.9-no.3). This does not appear to be a correction, but, as with the division-sign *est* discussed above, seems to be used for its convenience at the end of the line. Another rare occurrence of a similar feature is the contraction for *sunt* which, again, seems to be used for convenience at a line-end (fig.4.10-nos.1 and 5). This occurs on only two occasions but is attributed to different hands.[26] The horizontal stroke over *n* indicating a contraction for *non* features as part of the marginal addition on f.146v and here seems to be deliberate and used to save space (fig.4.10-no.2). Three further instances of horizontal strokes indicating suspensions occur in mid-line and would appear to be added as corrections - another instance for *non* and two for *in* (fig.4.10-nos.3-5).

Patterns relating to errors and corrections do not occur in ways that could help to identify the presence of different scribes. There is, for example, no concentration of errors, or of particular kinds of errors, that could possibly be associated with any of the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. The corrections that occur are randomly distributed throughout the manuscript and are calligraphically consistent with the script. This evidence suggests that the Scribe-Artist is responsible for both the errors and any accompanying corrections.

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[25] '*Seor_um*' on line 13 of f.147 also looks like an incomplete correction, where a letter has been erased but its replacement seems not to have been written.
[26] The hatched elaboration above the abbreviation mark is unusual in these two instances as it is otherwise only associated with such marks emphasising *nomina sacra* (see figs.4.220-41).

(iv) Syllabification

McGurk notes that in Kells the 'syllabification is often extremely poor'.[27] In relation to the division of hands it is interesting that these aberrations occur throughout the manuscript in almost all of the major scribal zones.[28] Although possible, it seems unlikely that these could be attributed to the exemplar(s) used, especially as the pattern of poor syllabification seems consistent with those for other errors as addressed above. The following list shows examples from all the major scribal zones with the exception of the short zone 9:

Zone 3 (A) – f.9r (line 13) *dete loneo* (*de teloneo*)

Zone 4 (B) – f.24v (line 17) *anati vitate* (*a nativitate*)

Zone 7 (C) – f.86v (line 8) *venise quaere* (*veni sequaere*)

Zone 8 (D) – f.115v (line 2/3) *illu cora –rem* (*illuc orare*)

Zone 10 (A) – f.137v (line5/6) *nomina –bo arnergis* (*nomina boarnergis*)

Zone 11 (C) – f.143v (line 7) *archis sinagogis* (*archisinagogis*)

Zone 12 (D) – f.184r (line 13) *lamasa baethani* (*lama sabaethani*)

Zone 14 (C) – f.237r (line 7) *nine vetis* (*ninevetis*)

Zone 15 (D) – f.244v (line 5) *archi sinagogus* (*archisinagogus*)

Zone 17 (A) – f.338r (line 15) *nonpetis tis* (*non petistis*)

This evidence does not support any scheme for a division of hands and it is difficult to attribute its consistency across the various scribal zones to scriptorium practice alone.

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[27] Ibid., p. 69.
[28] There are none on ff.125v-129r, zone 9, attributed to Scribe B.

(v) Punctuation

Punctuation is dealt with under a series of different headings beginning with an analysis and discussion of Eusebian section endings and how they are used to articulate the Gospel texts. This is followed by a similar analysis and discussion of the treatment of verse endings. The next section discusses all other aspects of punctuation, and this is followed by an examination of the punctuation in the prefatory material. The final section deals with the punctuation marks used throughout the manuscript.

Eusebian section endings

The Gospel text in Kells is laid out in a continuous text-block. The punctuation in Kells occurs within the text-block unlike the other principal Gospel format of *per cola et commata*. This latter system proved influential in certain Insular scriptoria such as Wearmouth/Jarrow and was also used, for example, in the Lindisfarne Gospels.[29] Text laid out in this way is usually arranged in two columns per page and does not require punctuation marks instead relying on the length of line to help determine *sense* and *sententia*.[30]

In his summary of the punctuation in the Book of Kells, McGurk notes that the Eusebian sections 'dictated the layout of the text'.[31] The decorated initials that usually mark the beginning of a Eusebian section will be discussed in chapter five. The manner in which their endings are treated will be addressed here, and the primary focus is to investigate if any evidence may be found that could indicate the identity of different scribes. McGurk states that,

[29] M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, p. 264.
[30] M. B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect* (Aldershot, Scolar, 1992) pp. 15-16, and M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, p. 186.
[31] McGurk, 'The Gospel Text', in *Kells Commentary,* p. 60.

large parts of later Matthew, of Mark and of Luke place the last words of a paragraph in the middle of a line [...] whereas, in a great part of John, the last words always start on the left of a line.[32]

In Matthew, Mark and Luke these 'later' sections are the passion sequences and correspond with zones attributed by Meehan to his Scribe D. These contain large numbers of Eusebian sections and their dramatic importance is emphasised by their slightly larger script.[33] They are also marked by the number, size and animation of many of their decorated initials.[34] Thus, it is not perhaps unusual to find that many of these Eusebian section endings are made to stand out in this way as the scribe places particular emphasis upon elements of the Passion. The great number of Eusebian sections in these areas, however, may have influenced McGurk's observation as a statistical analysis does not reveal such differences as might be inferred from his comments. The following table shows the Eusebian sections with endings which do not begin at the left-hand margin, as a fraction of the total (and percentage) attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme in each Gospel.

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Scribe A	–	12/42 28.5%	–	26/140 19%
Scribe B	3/12 25%	–	–	–
Scribe C	60/198 30%	31/71 43.5%	7/159 4.5%	–
Scribe D	59/145 41%	46/112 41%	37/179 21%	–

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[32] Ibid., p. 61
[33] See chapter three pp. 142-44.
[34] This is the subject of much discussion in Pulliam, *Word and Image*.

In Matthew's Gospel, sixty of the one-hundred and ninety-eight Eusebian section endings attributed to Scribe C, zones 5 and 7, feature indentations on the left-hand side of the line. This represents 30% of the total and is not so different to the 41% attributed to Scribe D in zone 8 (fifty-nine of the one-hundred and forty-five Eusebian section endings). In Mark's Gospel, thirty-one of the seventy-one Eusebian section endings attributed to Scribe C feature indentations on the left. This represents 43.5% of the total and is greater than the 41%, which, again, represents the percentage of these particular endings attributed to Scribe D (forty-six of the one-hundred and twelve Eusebian section endings). Luke's Gospel is treated somewhat differently with only 4.5% of the endings attributed to Scribe C indented on the left-hand side (seven of the one-hundred and fifty-nine Eusebian section endings). A significant reduction is also found in those endings attributed to Scribe D in Luke's Gospel where only 21% of the Eusebian sections are finished in this way. That this is larger than the 4.5% attributed to Scribe C can be understood in the context of the significance of the passion episodes in the later part of the Gospel attributed to Scribe D.

The Gospel texts attributed to Scribe A are ff.130v-140v in Mark and the surviving part of John. As quoted above, McGurk states that these Eusebian section endings 'in a great part of John, the last word always starts on the left of a line.'[35] This is indeed the case, especially for the beginning of John, as only one of the indented endings is found in the first nineteen pages (f.296r, line 14 – end of Eusebian section 19). However, of the total of one-hundred and forty Eusebian section endings in John, twenty-six of them, or 19%, are indented on the left-hand side. This is not so different to their occurrence in areas attributed to the other scribes, and indeed almost matches the 21% attributed to Scribe D in Luke's Gospel as mentioned above. It should also be noted again that the passion sequences are missing from John's Gospel in Kells.

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[35] McGurk, 'The Gospel Text', in *Kells Commentary,* p. 61.

In the other Gospel text attributed to Scribe A, ff.130v-140v in Mark, there are forty-two Eusebian section endings. Twelve of these are indented on the left-hand side which is 28.5% of the total. While this is somewhat less than the 43.5% attributed to Scribe C in the following zone, it almost exactly matches the 30% of those endings attributed to Scribe C in Matthew. This, in the context of his scheme for the division of hands, undermines Meehan's comment that 'there is a tendency in folios 130v-140v for the last lines of sections to begin at the left margin as is the practice in St. John's Gospel, rather than near the middle of the line'.[36]

Returning briefly to Luke's Gospel, it is important to understand that there is a relatively small number of Eusebian sections at its beginning. This provides fewer opportunities in which the text may be indented for the endings of these Eusebian sections. McGurk notes this and suggests that the scribe's 'habit of laying out a page in a block carried over on to pages where these sections were more frequent'.[37] To continue working with this format of full text-blocks the scribe places many Eusebian section endings in the middle of lines. These are immediately followed in mid-line by the decorative initials that begin the next Eusebian section. This unusual layout occasionally occurs in the other Gospels, but it is a significant feature only in Luke. Throughout the various scribal zones the mid-line endings may be accompanied by either single or triple points.[38] It cannot be described as a defining characteristic of the work of a particular scribe, but rather may possibly be interpreted as further evidence of the predilection for variation noted throughout the scribal features in the manuscript. That it is not a characteristic feature of

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[36] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 186.
[37] McGurk, 'The Gospel Text', in *Kells Commentary,* p. 61.
[38] Scribe C – zone 7, Matthew, has four mid-line Eusebian endings (two each with single and triple points).
   Scribe C – zone 11, Mark, has none.
   Scribe C – zone 14, Luke, has seventy-three (forty with single points and thirty-three with triple points).
   Scribe D – zone 8, Matthew, has two (both with triple points).
   Scribe D – zone 12, Mark, has none.
   Scribe D – zone 15, Luke, has twelve (nine with single points and three with triple points).
   Scribe A – zone 10, Mark, has one with a triple point.
   Scribe A – zone 17, John, has one with a single point.

work attributed only to Scribe C is evident as this pattern in the early part of Luke's Gospel is continued into the later part which is attributed to Scribe D. The greatest concentration of the indented endings in this later Luke section, attributed to Scribe D, occurs between the accounts of the last supper and the crucifixion – ff.273r-283r. Thus, apart from the additional emphasis given to those endings in the key parts of the Passion, there seems to be a reasonably consistent continuity between the zones attributed to the two scribes. It should be noted that the longer Eusebian section three in Luke, which is spread over fourteen pages (ff.191r-197v) is matched by section eighty-nine in John, which also covers fourteen pages (ff.316v-323r). The latter, which is attributed to Scribe A, also appears primarily as a full text-block and has few indented lines. Throughout the manuscript such full blocks of text are typical where single Eusebian sections are spread over a number of pages.

Returning to the Eusebian endings which do not begin at the left-hand margin, the punctuation of these lines may be completed with a great variety of features. They may end with single or triple points or they may have none. On a few occasions they have two or three triple points (ff.36v, 37v attributed to Scribe C and ff.309v, 314r and 316v attributed to Scribe A – see figs.4.28-29). They may be terminated with an extended curved-concave elaborated letter or with a zoomorph. They may be followed by a turn-in-path which may or may not be accompanied by a zoomorph. The script may end without any of these features, or it may have these in any of a number of combinations. Most of these combinations are found throughout the zones attributed to the different hands and without any patterns of occurrence which could be linked to any individual scribe. An interesting subset of these endings which do not begin at the left-hand margin are those which are completed at the margin on the right-hand side. A cluster of seven of these occur between ff.35r-56r with another on f.81v attributed to Scribe C, while three each

occur in zones attributed to Scribes A (ff.135v, 140v and 325r) and D (ff.95v, 105r and 245r). The occurrence of these occasional features across zones attributed to different scribes, again, does not tend to support any scheme for the division of hands.

There are a total of one-hundred and eighty-two endings to Eusebian sections attributed to Scribe A, four-hundred and twenty-eight to Scribe C, and four-hundred and thirty-six to Scribe D. The end of Matthew, ff.125v-129r is the main Gospel text attributed to Scribe B which contains only twelve Eusebian sections and one other occurs on f.34v.[39] However, even in this small sample attributed to Scribe B, three are indented on the left-hand side. Seven others are emphasised with another scribal feature where the Eusebian section ends on a shortened line which does not finish at the right-hand margin. These short lines which do not end on the right-hand margin, and which also serve to emphasise some Eusebian endings, occur throughout the manuscript. As with those indented on the left, these lines may also be completed with a great variety of features. They may end with single or triple points, or they may have none. Occasionally they may have two or three triple points (for example ff.153v and 237r attributed to Scribe C, and a cluster of these occurs between ff.309r-316r attributed to Scribe A). They may be terminated with an extended curved-concave elaborated letter or with a zoomorph. They may be followed by a turn-in-path, which may or may not be accompanied by a zoomorph. The script may end without any of these features, or it may have these in any of a number of combinations. Most of these combinations are found throughout the zones attributed to the different hands and without any patterns of occurrence which could be linked to any of the hands in the four-scribe scheme.

In addition to the Eusebian sections ending in short lines and those indented on the left, almost one third occur on full text lines which extend to both margins of the text-block. The

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[39] F.188v which is also attributed to Scribe B is a continuation of section one which begins on the *incipit* page.

frequency with which these endings occur is similar among the three main scribes in the four-scribe scheme: Scribe A - 28% (39/140), Scribe C - 31.5% (135/428) and D - 30% (131/436). As with the other endings, these lines may also be completed with a great variety of features. Triple points are frequently used at the end of these lines, and single points to a lesser extent. They may be terminated with an extended curved-concave elaborated letter, usually *m*. They may incorporate calligraphic combinations, or may end in subscripted or superscripted letters. Superscript *s*-shaped *m* occasionally occurs, as does vertical-*m*, and on a few occasions uncial-*a* may feature. Figs.4.11-26 show all instances of the rarest of these features. Figs.4.11-13 show all Eusebian sections ending in subscripted letters attributed to Scribes A, C and D. As noted throughout chapter three, many of the closest parallels here also occur across the zones attributed to different hands, and these include the presence of *a* in figs.4.11-no.1, 4.12-no.3 and 4.13-no.2. The combined *it* in fig.4.11-no.2 echoes the *ia* in fig.4.12-no.3. Those with zoomorphs are also similar, especially figs.4.11-no.3 and 4.13-no.1, with both also having an extended stroke on the final *s*, and both also ending with triple points.

Figs.4.14-16 show all Eusebian sections ending in superscripted letters – attributed to Scribes A, C and D, and which show great variety throughout. With the exception of the zoomorph in fig.4.16-no.2, these are marked by diagonal strokes, and there is an interesting parallel in their more elaborate shapes as found in fig.4.14-no.3 attributed to Scribe A, and fig.4.16-no.4 attributed to Scribe D. Fig.4.17 shows all Eusebian sections ending in *s*-shaped superscripted-*m* – attributed to Scribes C and A. Three of these attributed to Scribe C (fig.4.17-nos.1, 4 and 5), end in *rum*, but do not appear to be any different from no.6 which is attributed to Scribe A. Figs.4.18-20 show all Eusebian Sections ending in vertical-*m* attributed to Scribes A, C

and D, and again these show great variety throughout.[40] One of the closest parallels occurs between fig.4.18-no.1 attributed to Scribe A and fig.4.19-no.5 attributed to Scribe C.

Figs.4.21-23 show all Eusebian sections ending in calligraphic letter combinations attributed to Scribes A, C and D. These include ligatures, and it is interesting to note that *ur* in ligature occurs twice in zones attributed to Scribe C (fig.4.22-nos.3 and 10) and Scribe D (fig.4.23-nos.6 and 16). Another interesting parallel occurs between fig.4.22-no.11, attributed to Scribe C and fig.4.23-no.9, attributed to Scribe D, where each has a pair of smaller letters underneath the headstroke of the previous letter, and are also coupled with a pair of superscripted letters. A number of these endings also feature a smaller letter. Fig.4.21-no.1, attributed to Scribe A, fig.4.22-no.7 attributed to Scribe C, and fig.4.23-no.14 attributed to Scribe D, each has a smaller *o*, with the *meo* of the latter pair being particularly similar. There is a close parallel also between fig.4.22-no.2 attributed to Scribe C and fig.4.23-no.7 attributed to Scribe D, where *est* in each case has a tall-*e* followed by a minuscule-*s*, and is completed with a small-*t*. Fig.4.23-nos.12 and 13, attributed to Scribe D, show two variations of *illi*, while the latter, with its extended *i*, appears to have a close parallel in fig.4.22-no.1 attributed to Scribe C.

Figs.4.24 and 25 show all Eusebian section endings which include uncial-*a*, in zones attributed to Scribes C and D. These again show great variety throughout, with perhaps the subscript versions attributed to each of the scribes providing the closest parallel (fig.4.24-no.5 and fig.4.25-no.3). Fig.4.25-no.4 shows a Eusebian section ending with a *7*-shaped *Tironian et*. This is the only occurrence of this feature in the text, although one other occurs in the display-lettering on f.292r (fig.5.365-no.38).[41] Finally, there is the rare occurrence of Eusebian sections

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[40] Although not featuring on Eusebian endings, vertical-*m* does occur in zones attributed to Scribe B (see fig.3.95).
[41] The insertion of one as a correction was mentioned above (see fig.3.212-no.7).

which are terminated on a turn-in-path. Of these six instances in the manuscript, four are accompanied by zoomorphs, two attributed to Scribe C and two to Scribe A (fig.4.26).

All of these instances illustrate the lack of evidence showing any characteristic traits that might assist in identifying different hands. Throughout, these various Eusebian section endings regularly show the closest parallels occurring across the zones attributed to different individuals which does not support the four-scribe scheme for the division of hands.

The predilection for variation is further evident throughout the manuscript, and across the zones attributed to different hands, in the different Eusebian section endings that may occur on a single page. There are some pages where the layout of all the Eusebian endings may be the same while on others they may all be different:

Eusebian endings, all with similar layout-f.62v (Scribe C), f.103r (Scribe D) and f.139v (Scribe A).

Eusebian endings with three different layouts- f.41r (Scribe C), f.104v (Scribe D) and f.137v (Scribe A).

There are two different layouts on f.128r (Scribe B).

A further aspect of this predilection for variation may be noted, for example, where several endings on a single page share the same layout, they may be similar or they may differ in their detail:

Lines indented on left with the same detail at the end –

f.64r (Scribe C), f.119v (Scribe D) and f.140v (Scribe A).

Lines indented on left with different details at the end –

 f.53v (Scribe C), f.123r (Scribe D) and f.314r (Scribe A).

Short lines with the same detail at the end –

f.57v (Scribe C), f.126v (Scribe B), f.166v (Scribe D) and f.132v (Scribe A).

Short lines with different details at the end -

f.83r (Scribe C), f.126r (Scribe B), f.132r (Scribe A) and f.173r (Scribe D).

Full lines with the same detail at the end –

f.45v (Scribe C), f.140v (Scribe A) and f.275v (Scribe D).

Full lines with different details at the end –

f.59r (Scribe C), f.115r (Scribe D) and f.302r (Scribe A).

In conclusion, the layout and punctuation of the Eusebian endings appears to be subject to the same programme of variation noted in the other scribal features in the manuscript. Again, as with those features, it is difficult to understand how this particular programme of variation, which is not in any way systematic, could be produced by a team of scribes. The randomness of distribution of the variations occurs with a consistency and an idiosyncrasy that is more satisfactorily understood as the work of a single individual. This appears to be a scribe who is dedicated to continuously incorporating variation in all aspects of his work.

Verse endings

Having identified the pre-eminence given to Eusebian sections in the Book of Kells, McGurk

notes that 'verses are also indicated but not always'.[42] He continues by noting that 'very

occasionally they are like Eusebian sections in being announced by new lines and a decorated

initial'. It is interesting to note that these occur across the zones attributed to the different hands

in the four-scribe scheme - eleven to Scribe A, two to Scribe B, twenty-two to Scribe C and

twelve to Scribe D. These also end in varying details and combinations of details, again without

patterns that could be linked with any of the hands in the four-scribe scheme. This also applies to

verses which end in short lines, and these also occur across the zones attributed to the different

hands – thrity-seven to Scribe A, one to Scribe B, forty-seven to Scribe C, and twenty-one to

Scribe D.

Verses which terminate at the end of, or in the middle of, full text lines, are also marked

with a great variety of features. Those most frequently occurring are single and triple punctuation

points and the *et*-ligature. These latter are found in varying sizes and may also have colour

added. Mid-line verse-endings are also frequently marked by an extended headstroke on the final

letter, most commonly that of *t*, linking it with its fellow at the beginning of the following verse.

Initial letters, also of varying sizes, and some also with added colour, may occasionally mark the

beginning of verses. This, of course, also indirectly marks the end of the previous verse even if it

lacks any other punctuation. Letters with extended curved-concave elaborations, calligraphic

letter combinations, vertical-*m* and uncial-*a* are also occasionally used. These features are also

sometimes found in varying combinations. Finally a significant number of verses are not marked

by any of these features. In addition to the overwhelming emphasis on variation throughout, the

scribal predilection for occasionally clustering features also occurs. All of these variations are

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[42] Ibid., p. 61.

found across the zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme without any apparent features that might help to distinguish their work.

Other punctuation

All the features just discussed in relation to verse-endings are also occasionally found punctuating lesser pauses in mid-verse.[43] The most prominent are those lines which are indented on the left. These, again, also occur across zones attributed to different hands in the four-scribe scheme – three to Scribe A, ten to Scribe C, and five to Scribe D. Short lines are also found in various scribal zones with sixteen attributed to Scribe A, ten to Scribe C, and nineteen to Scribe D. Without knowing what exemplar(s) was used it is impossible to speculate as to why certain phrases were singled out for particular emphasis. However, in the course of this investigation, it was possible to sense the consistent presence of a single scribe and this individuality is also evident in such apparently arbitrary choices that are made throughout the book.

Punctuation of the prefatory material

The punctuation of the endings of the *breves causae* for each of the four Gospels are variously marked by most of the features discussed above. The nature of these brief chapter headings lead to many short line endings. These are frequently filled with the turn-in-path feature which allows the scribe to begin the next chapter heading at the beginning of a line, usually with a modest decorated initial. These patterns of punctuation apply to both zone 3 which is attributed to Scribe A and zone 4 which is attributed to Scribe B. The *argumenta* for each of the four evangelists are remarkable for their almost total lack of punctuation points in each case.

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[43] See figs.5.341-42.

The punctuation marks most commonly used throughout the manuscript are the single or triple

points mentioned above (fig.4.27).[45] On just over twenty pages these triple points occur in pairs

(fig.4.28). The greatest number of these appear as a cluster between ff.293v and 319v in zone 17

attributed to Scribe A. Three occur in zones attributed to Scribe C, and one on f.284r attributed to

Scribe D. The triple points occur in threes on thirteen pages, with a cluster also featuring

between ff.293v and 320r (fig.4.29). Two other instances occur which are attributed to Scribe A,

one on f.13r in zone 3 and one on f.133r in zone 10. A single instance occurs on f.153v which is

attributed to Scribe C. The spread of these variations across the zones does not indicate any

pattern that might assist in identifying the work of different scribes.

Some unusual punctuation marks occur on a few instances and these are attributed to

each of the Scribes A, C and D (fig.4.30). Fig.4.30-nos.1 and 2 show instances where there are

four points. The triangle of points is faced downwards in fig.4.30-no.3, while those in fig.4.30-

no.4 are reversed, with the triangle facing backwards (see also fig.6.13-no.3). The motifs in

fig.4.30-nos.5-8 are not points but appear to serve as punctuation. Fig.4.31 shows all five

instances where the punctuation points are not rectangular. These occur in zones 4 and 7

attributed to Scribes B and C and appear to be related to the suspension marks in figs.3.219 and

3.221-no.2. The three instances on f.20v could be seen as a cluster. These more gestural marks

are also evident in the third set of points in fig.4.39-no.9, which is attributed to a different hand,

Scribe A. Fig.4.32 shows all instances of punctuation marks composed of two points, whether

vertical or horizontal. These occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, B and C. Fig.4.33 shows two

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[44] For discussion of the origin and development of punctuation in Insular manuscripts see Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, pp. 20-29.

[45] These triple points arranged in triangular format are also identified in an Anglo-Saxon manuscript, National Library of Russia, St Peterburg, MS Lat. Q.v.XIV 1, ibid., p. 28.

instances, one in red and one in black, of horizontal triple punctuation marks, and these occur in zone 4 attributed to Scribe B. Variants of these sequences of dots also occur in red, purple and black between ff.22r-25r. These appear closely related to another feature which has a series of two or three points followed by a 'comma'.

These latter are typically in red and for the most part seem to belong to the proposed second scribal campaign (diag.6.5).[46] Although somewhat similar in appearance, these do not fulfill the same function as the modern ellipsis, seeming rather to function as punctuation marks or 'doubling' existing punctuation marks.[47] These occur on about thirty pages and are found in significant clusters between ff.253v-255r (Scribe D), 289r-294v (Scribes D, B and A) and ff.20v-25v (Scribe B), where they are variously coloured in red, purple, yellow and black ink (figs.4.34-5). While the majority of these appear to have been added in the second campaign, a small number of instances belong to the first campaign, on f.11v, 292v and 294v, all attributed to Scribe A (fig.4.36). The distinctive tail at the end of the latter instances have parallels with two of those, in red, from the second campaign, on the opening ff.253v-254r (fig.4.35-nos.1-2). The instance on line 4 of f.254r is completed with a unique flourish (fig.4.35-no.3).

Another cluster of unusual marks occurs between ff.34v-41r (fig.4.37). Most of these encircled dots occur in zone 7 attributed to Scribe C, while fig.4.37-no.8 is in zone 11, also attributed to Scribe C. Only fig.4.37-no.1, which is on f.34v, is attributed to a different hand, Scribe B although it is within the main cluster on ff.34v-41r. Another variant, also with dots, but here outlined with lozenge shapes, also occurs in a cluster on more or less the same pages in zone 7 (fig.4.38). A single instance of these outlined lozenge shapes occurs on f.133r where three

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[46] These occur in abundance in the Cathach and also feature in the Book of Durrow (for example, f.191r) and the Lindisfarne Gospels (for example, ff.19r and 95r).
[47] 'Doubling' punctuation, and other marks, is not uncommon in Insular manuscripts (see also pp. 244-45, 252-55, 261-62 and 266)

occur together. These instances lack the dots and are attributed to Scribe A. A further variant of these lozenge-shaped marks is shown in fig.4.39 where they are solid rather than outlined. These mainly occur in a cluster between ff.293v-299r in zone 17 attributed to Scribe A. A further instance occurs later in the same zone on f.317r. Some of these triple points occur in pairs and threes while fig.4.39-no.1 shows an instance of a pair in red. These latter seem to be part of the proposed second scribal campaign during which many points appear to have been added.[48] Some of these marks are evident, for example, in fig.4.39-nos.1, 3, 4, 6 and 7.[49] The presence of a number of these unusual instances of punctuation is entirely consistent with such unusual occurrences across many scribal features as have been noted throughout this study. This evidence exemplifies the Scribe-Artist's typical approach and does not support any division of hands.

Conclusion

There is a remarkable catalogue of variation used throughout the punctuation of the manuscript. This predilection for variation is entirely consistent with similar patterns that have been discussed throughout this chapter and throughout the entire investigation. The most significant feature of these variations, with regard to the focus of this study, is the fact that none are identifiable with particular zones in a way that might support a division of hands. The random consistency with which they appear and disappear throughout the book suggests rather the idiosyncratic choices of an individual.

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[48] These red punctuation marks are discussed further in chapter six, pp.348-49.

[49] Where the triple point punctuation marks occur in multiples these overlap somewhat with their use as line-filling motifs (figs.4.28-9 and 4.38-9). Such overlapping has been identified as a characteristic trait of the Scribe-Artist's work and the use of these as line-fillers will be discussed further in chapter six (pp. 350-51).

Section II – Decoration and Mise-en-page

Marginal Decoration

Throughout the pages of the manuscript a range of decorative motifs occurs in the margins.

These are usually added to the standard script although they also occur as additions and

extensions to some of the decorated initials. These motifs are usually found in the margins of the

pages, both left and right. However, they may also occur within the text-block added to letters or

occuring as line-fillers. These motifs include arabesques, flowers, florets, floret-sprays, leaves,

spirals, trumpet-spirals, zoomorphs, knots, and dots which usually occur as triplets in triangular

form. These motifs also occur in various combinations and they may also be found in

conjunction with the families of elaborated letters as can be observed in many of the illustrations

accompanying chapter three. Other kinds of motifs, which only occur as line-fillers, will be

discussed below. Instances of many of these motifs occur in other Insular manuscripts although

usually on much fewer occasions than in Kells. All of these features occur in instances that are

coloured, partially coloured or uncoloured (only appearing in outline).

(vi) Marginal Arabesques

The most prominent of the marginal decorative motifs in Kells are those here described as

marginal arabesques.[50] These, usually triangular, motifs are typically appended to letters with

headstrokes and extend into the margin of the page on the left-hand side. They look somewhat

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[50] These are described as 'marginal pen-flourishes or arabesques' by R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, 'The Insular Ornament', chapter vii, *Cod. Lind.* pp. 197-220 (p.218). In Bruce-Mitford, 'The Insular Decoration: Discussion', chapter x, *Cod. Lind.*, pp. 244-60 (p. 260). He notes their absence from early manuscripts such as the Cathach, Durham A. II. 10 (Durham Cathedral Library) and Durrow, and suggests a Mediterranean origin for the feature based on a rudimentary form in the Codex Amiatinus.

like streams of flags or 'bunting' and appear to serve a mainly decorative function. Instances of these motifs occur in other Insular manuscripts such as the Durham Gospels, the Book of Armagh, C.C.C.C. 197B, the Book of Deer and the Lindisfarne Gospels. There are only six instances in the Lindisfarne Gospels and these occur on just two pages. In Kells, however, as with many of its scribal features, they occur much more frequently and are subject to significant elaboration and variation. There are almost two-hundred and fifty of these motifs on one hundred and fifty-eight pages of the manuscript. They occur in all the main zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D and the diagram shows them appearing in thirty-five of the thirty-eight gatherings (diag.4.1).

There are none of these marginal arabesques in gatherings with pages attributed to Scribe B (quires 1, 4 and 16). The differences in the script in the zones attributed to Scribe B have been discussed in chapters two and three as being part of a later campaign to complete the manuscript. While it is proposed here that it is the work of the Scribe-Artist, who wrote the entire book, this work appears to be somewhat inferior in quality. It has been suggested that this may have been due to age or infirmity, and that the work may have been produced under some time pressure as it appears somewhat rushed. A combination of these factors may have contributed to the fact that the script in these areas lacks much of the added and marginal decoration that feature elsewhere throughout the manuscript. There are, however, a few instances where these triangular-shaped motifs occur as part of line-filling scrolls. These are in orange-red and appear consistent with much of the work attributed to Scribe B. These occur on ff.76r and 118r and are not specifically identified with Scribe B's work in Meehan's scheme (figs.4.41-no.20 and 4.42-nos.8-12). The occurrence of five of these features on f.118r is typical of the clustering that occurs throughout the book across a range of scribal features. A number of these motifs from the original campaign

appear to have had elements added in the proposed second campaign including those on f.15v (fig.4.40-no.3), f.64v (fig.4.41-no.15) and f.262r (fig.4.47-no.16).

The marginal arabesques which occur throughout the main zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D, share with the families of elaborated letters and uncial *a* at line-ends, similar patterns of occurrence and a similar attitude to variation. All instances of the marginal arabesques are shown in figs.4.40-48. An examination of these illustrations does not reveal any characteristic patterns that could be linked to any of the different hands in the four-scribe scheme. Their calligraphic and imaginative consistency rather suggest the work of a single scribe intent on avoiding repetition and constantly creating thematic variations. Elements, of course, are repeated and the repetition or clustering of motifs with similar features on the same or neighbouring pages, is also noticable.

These motifs are most frequently extended from the head-stroke of the letter *t* on the left-hand side (on one-hundred and thirty-four instances). These letters are most often part of a word-ending which occurs at the beginning of a line. Almost hyphen-like the marginal arabesques are added, for example, to endings for *fac-* (*-tum*, *-tus* and *-ta*) on eight occasions at the beginning of lines, and these are in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D, on ff.79r, 131r, 143r, 156r, 228r, 256r, 256v and 293v (figs.4.41-no.21, 4.43-no.2, 4.44-no.3, 4.44-no.20, 4.46-no.30, 4.47-no.7, 4.47-no.8 and 4.48-no.1). Similarly they are added to *t*-endings such as *opor-* (*-tet* and *-tuit*), again in words broken between lines, on only four occasions. Two of these are in zones attributed to scribe D and one each in zones attributed to Scribes C and A, on ff.84v, 270v, 285v and 323r (figs.4.41-no.28, 4.47-no.23, 4.47-no.35 and 4.48-no.30).

The head-stroke of uncial-*d* features the addition of marginal arabesques on over thirty occasions. Almost half of these are parts of the verb *dico*. The word *dico* itself featuring the

motif on only three occasions, one each in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D, on ff.235r, 253r and 331r (figs.4.46-no.35, 4.47-no.5 and 4.48-no.37). The letter *g* features these motifs on fifteen occasions. and, again, is found in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D, as does the letter *x* which features the motif on seven occasions. Five of the latter occur as the second letter in the line and occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D (fig.4.49).

There are further parallels in the patterns of variation found in the marginal arabesques. These echo similar patterns of variation in the different scribal features discussed throughout this study. Motifs with varying numbers of triangular elements occur in zones attributed to each of the Scribes A, C and D (figs.4.50-56). As noted above most of these motifs are composed of triangular modules, usually with a fine scrolled edge at the base. This feature also occurs in a number of circular modules, of which there are approximately twenty, although some of the instances included here lack the fine scrolled element. These occur in zones attributed to each of the Scribes A, C and D (fig.4.57). A cluster of these circular variants, attributed to Scribe C, occurs on ff.84r -87r (fig.4.41-nos.27-30). That on f.90r in the following zone, attributed to Scribe D (fig.4.42-no.1), could be seen as part of the same cluster. Another cluster with circular elements is found on both sides of f.251 attributed to Scribe D (fig.4.47-nos.2-4). The distinctive shapes, and the added black triangular motifs, of the three instances on f.253r (fig.4.47-nos.5 and 6), and the unusual character of those on ff.260r-262r (fig.4.47-nos.13-17), could be seen as further clusters attributed to Scribe D. Similarly the pairs on ff.12v (fig.4.40-nos.1 and 2), 131r (fig.4.43-no.2), and 325r (fig.4.48-nos.31 and 32), could be seen as clusters attributed to Scribe A. As noted above the five instances on f.118r could be seen as a cluster in the proposed second campaign. Clusters of another kind also occur in the words to which the motifs are attached. The word *tibi* has an arabesque added on four occasions between ff.83v-84v (fig.4.41-nos.24, 26, 27

and 28). Most of the marginal arabesques occur on the left-hand side of the pages and it is significant to note that on a few occasions they are found at the beginning of the first and the last lines. These are found in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D and examples of those in first lines are found on ff.222v (C), 287r (D) and 316r (A).

A significant number of the words which have marginal arabesques added could be described as biblically significant.[51] These include '*galileae*' on f.152r (fig.4.44-no.15) attributed to Scribe C, '*deo*' on f.256v (fig.4.47-no.10) attributed to Scribe D and '*novissimo die*' on f.326r (fig.4.48-no.34) attributed to Scribe A. These motifs occur in pairs and in threes on many pages across the zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D. Pairs also occur in consecutive lines in zones attributed to these three scribes (fig.4.58). Other variants occur across these zones, including those with added florets (fig.4.59), with added spirals (fig.4.60), with zig-zag elements (fig.4.61), with diagonals and central motifs (fig.4.62), linking two lines of text on the left-hand side (fig.4.63), and linking two lines of text on the right-hand side (fig.4.64). In total there are twenty-five instances where the arabesques occur on the right-hand side. Fig.4.65 shows instances added to *e* in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D. As noted with many letters and features in chapter three, there are also a number of distinctively unique examples of these motifs. Figs.4.66-68 show examples of these attributed to each of the Scribes A, C and D.

Finally, it should be noted that the absence of these motifs from many pages, including some lengthy sections, again echoes the patterns of distribution of the features discussed in chapter three (diags.3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 4.1). Examples of these absences include ff.133r-140v (Scribe A), ff.189v-205r (Scribe C) and ff.90v-98v (Scribe D).

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[51] A similar pattern was noted in chapter three in relation to the letters with extended curved-concave and with pointed elaborations, and also uncial-*a* at line-ends (pp. 162-63, 170 and 174-75).

In all of these illustrations there are no apparent characteristic features that can be associated with any of the Scribes A, C or D. There is rather further evidence of the scribal variation and random distribution repeatedly noted in chapter three. The consistent quality, as well as the variation of these motifs, also supports the proposal in chapter three that this is the work of a single individual. The presence of the Scribe-Artist is constantly suggested in the consistency both of the graphic mark making, and the imagination that informs the design of the motifs. These qualities in the scribal performance and its idiosyncratic nature could not easily be attributed to scriptorium practice.

(vii) Other Marginal Decorations

The patterns described in the previous paragraph equally apply to a range of other marginal decorations. These flowers, florets, floret-sprays, leaves, spirals, trumpet-spirals, zoomorphs, knots and dots (the latter usually occuring as triplets in triangular form), appear and disappear throughout the manuscript. They vary in size, often occur in clusters and also appear in multiple combinations. They may also be found in combination with the features discussed in chapter three and it is useful to re-examine those illustrations.[52] The illustrations accompanying chapter two may also usefully be re-examined as some of these features also occur in the canon tables. As with the marginal arabesques, these other marginal decorations usually occur as extensions to the normal letters of the script, however, they are also often found as additions and extensions to

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[52] As noted in chapter three the interrelationship of these features is perhaps best appreciated by examining the pages of a complete facsimile.

the decorated initials. They may be found within the text-block, or on either side of it, and some may occur independently of the letters as line-fillers.

<p align="center">**Flowers**</p>

One of the more commonly occurring motifs are here described as flowers (figs.4.69-74). These are usually composed of seven similarly sized small circles – one in the centre surrounded by six others. They frequently occur as line-fillers but are also often attached to the script. They may also be attached to scribal features, as noted in the letters with extended curved-concave elaborations, uncial-*a* at line ends, and as discussed above, in the marginal arabesques. Typically they are approximately minim-height, but smaller, and slightly larger, versions occur occasionally. Some instances, usually in orange-red, appear to have much in common with the script attributed to Scribe B, and which are here proposed as having been added as part of a second campaign (fig.4.69-no.2). These motifs feature on three-hundred and forty of the six-hundred and eighty pages and occur throughout the manuscript. They may occur in combination with other motifs, such as superscript markers (fig.4.70-no.1), flourishes (fig.4.70-no.2), marginal arabesques (fig.4.71), or they may have triple dots added (fig.4.74). These all occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D, while some occur in zones attributed to Scribe B (usually orange-red). As with the marginal arabesques, and many of the features discussed in chapter three, there are some distinctively unusual and sometimes unique instances of these flowers (fig.4.72). The addition of dots within the circular components of these flowers occurs on a few pages and fig.4.73 shows instances of these in zones attributed to Scribes C and D. The circular components occur in linear arrangements on a few pages (fig.4.76) and triangular-shaped versions (fig.4.77) also occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D. Fig.4.78 shows cone-

shaped variants, again attributed to these three scribes. These triangular and cone-shaped versions do not occur very frequently, but, as with many scribal features, may be found in clusters such as those seen in fig.4.78-no.2.

Small triple dots

The addition of triple dots occurs throughout the manuscript, but those specifically referred to here are generally quite small additions to the script and script-related decorative motifs.[53] Fig.4.74 shows these added to the flower motifs and fig.4.75 shows them added to wedges. These occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D and also in the orange-red associated with the proposed second campaign attributed by Meehan to Scribe B (fig.4.75-no.2).[54]

Florets

Smaller flowers, usually composed of three (sometimes four) circular elements are here described as florets. These are the most frequently occurring marginal decorative motifs, appreaing on almost four-hundred and seventy pages of the manuscript. Their number on any given page can vary quite significantly. They may be added to the wedges of letters (fig.4.79), or decorated initials (see illustrations chapter 5), they may feature as line-fillers (fig.4.80), they may be large or small, and, as with the flowers, they may have additional triple dots (fig.4.82-no.4). They may be found in combination with other marginal decorations, as can be seen, for example, with the arabesques (fig.4.81). They may also appear in sprays (fig.4.82), and sometimes these sprays may occur without the florets (fig.4.83). These sprays may have leaves attached (fig.4.84). Sometimes these leaves occur independently of the florets (fig.4.84-no.1), and they

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[53] Often larger versions of these triple dots occur throughout the manuscript as line-fillers and as decorative patterning on the illumination. These are discussed more fully in chapter six on the second campaign.
[54] These will be addressed in more detail in chapter six, pp. 345-47.

also sometimes occur in pairs (fig.4.85). All of these features occur in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. A further variant, with tulip-shaped flowers, occurs on a few occasions, and fig.4.86 shows instances of these in zones attributed to Scribes B and C. As with the other scribal features in the book, floret motifs occurring in distinctively unique or unusual instances are also found in zones attributed to Scribes A, B, C and D (fig.4.87).

Zoomorphs

The marginal decoration also features zoomorphic additions. Although these occur on only thirteen pages of the manuscript, they appear in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme (fig.4.88).[55] These are attached to letters and the graphic quality of these motifs is largely consistent, apart from the broader style of that attributed to Scribe B. This is consistent with the deterioration in the fineness and precision, noted throughout this study, in the proposed second campaign.

Knots, spirals and trumpet-spirals

A further feature of the marginal decoration are knots, and these occur in a variety of forms on over two-hundred and forty pages of the manuscript across most of the zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme (fig.4.89). Spirals also feature on over two-hundred and ten pages, again across most of these zones. The four instances shown in fig.4.90 all feature as extensions of the letter *x*. Trumpet-spiral motifs are added as marginal decorations to the script on less than ten occasions, yet these occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D (fig.4.91).

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[55] There are three in zones attributed to Scribe A, one attributed to Scribe B, four attributed to Scribe C, and five attributed to Scribe D.

There are four instances in the manuscript of a rectangular spiral motif and these occur as clusters on neighbouring pages in zones attributed to Scribes C and D (fig.4.92).

Conclusions - mariginal decoration

The patterns that emerge in the analysis of the marginal decorative motifs appear to echo the other features discussed above, and in relation to the script in chapter three. While there is significant repetition of motifs and their constituent elements, the outstanding feature is that of variation. This variation appears consistently across the zones and there appear to be no characteristic traits that can be linked to any of the hands in the four-scribe scheme. The characteristic features associated with Scribe B, understood here as the second campaign, such as the slightly broader nature of the work and the use of coloured inks, in particular, orange-red, have been discussed above and in chapter three. The absence of some of these features from the Scribe B zones has also been discussed. Whatever evidence of difference that appears in these areas would seem to be outweighed by the evidence of sameness. In general terms Meyer's descriptive account of the letters with extended curved-concave elaborations (see footnote 93 in chapter three) could again be applied to the distribution of the marginal decorative motifs. In this context, many pages may have very few, or perhaps even just a single feature, and there are over fifty pages where all of these features are completely absent. These absences occur in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. However, perhaps the most consistent features are those relating to the graphic qualities of the work and also the calligraphic imagination that informs the constant variation. As concluded in relation to the script in chapter three, the idiosyncratic nature of this evidence would suggest that it is the work of an individual rather than the combined efforts of the members of a scriptorium.

(viii) Line-filling Decoration

The range of line-filling motifs in Kells include flowers and florets, whiplash motifs, scrolls, wave-scrolls, miscellaneous motifs as well as zoomorphs and anthropomorphs. These are remarkable for the range of variations that are wrought from the different motifs. This reveals further evidence of the Scribe-Artist's unique approach to the scribal work and its accompanying decoration.

Flowers and florets

The Insular tradition of filling incomplete text lines with decoration has been identified in manuscripts as early as the Cathach.[56] The layout of the script in the pages of the Book of Kells, as discussed above in relation to the endings of Eusebian sections, highlights the significant number of lines which do not reach the edges of the text-block. These indents occur on both the left and right-hand sides. Many, but by no means all, of these spaces are decorated with a variety of line-filling devices. These appear to belong to both of the scribal campaigns as proposed in this study, although a far greater number of variants appear to belong to the second campaign. It may be the case that such decorations were always intended to be added in the final stages of completing the manuscript. There is a wide range of motifs including flowers, florets, whiplash flourishes, scrolls, wave-scrolls, other miscellaneous decorative motifs and also zoomorphs which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

In a number of instances line-filling flowers and florets (fig.4.93-96), similar to those discussed above as part of the marginal decoration (see figs.4.69-87), and elsewhere, appear to

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[56] Parkes, *Pause and Effect* (Aldershot, 1992), p. 25. The Cathach has been variously dated to the late sixth-early seventh century.

be graphically consistent with the main script in the manuscript. As mentioned above, the flowers usually consist of six small circles tightly drawn around a seventh at the centre (figs.4.93 and 94). However, less frequently, smaller variants, florets, with four and sometimes three circles also occur (fig.4.95). The majority of the larger line-filling flowers are variously coloured, although some remain unpainted as are most of the smaller florets (figs.4.93-96). The flowers occur in zones attributed to the Scribes A, C and D. While none appear in the zones attributed to Scribe B, a number of them are rendered in the orange-red, and also purple, both of which are associated with this scribe in the Henry-Meehan schemes for the division of hands (figs.4.96-102 and diag.6.5). In this study these flower motifs, and the other text and decoration rendered in this orange-red ink are considered as part of the proposed second scribal campaign undertaken by the Scribe-Artist.

On a number of occasions the flowers and florets from both campaigns occur together, such as those in fig.4.96. Unique variants of these motifs are found in both of the proposed campaigns (fig.4.98). This recurring phenomenon of unique variants is one of the defining characteristics of the Scribe-Artist. Other defining characteristics of the Scribe-Artist's work, also consistent throughout the line-filling motifs in the book, include their random distribution and also their occasional appearance in clusters. Extended clusters of line-filling flowers/florets occur between ff.35r-49r and ff.130v-140r attributed to Scribes C and A respectively. Other clusters occur in John's Gospel which is also attributed to Scribe A. Smaller clusters occur in other areas attributed to these two scribes, and also on a few occasions in zones attributed to Scribe D. Instances of these clusters attributed to Scribe D occur on both sides of ff.98 and 184. Clusters of flowers/florets in the orange-red associated with Scribe B in the Henry-Meehan schemes also occur, as for example, on f.200r in zone 14 attributed to Scribe C (fig.4.99), and

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another unusually coloured cluster, in purple, occurs between ff.256r-257v in zone 15 attributed to Scribe D (fig.4.100). On one of these pages, f.257r, they occur in conjunction with a flower/floret spray line-filler (fig.4.101) and on f.305r (fig.4.102) variously sized flowers/florets occur in conjunction with a whiplash line-filler (both of these other line-filling motifs will be discussed in the following paragraphs). All of this evidence supports the attribution of these line-filling flowers and florets to the Scribe-Artist.

Whiplash motifs

While some of the flowers/florets discussed above are among the principal line-fillers associated with the first scribal campaign, there is a range of other motifs which appear to be predominantly, if not entirely, part of the second campaign. In Kells these are usually orange-red and are somewhat uneven in quality, and sometimes rendered with less precision. These are all features typically associated with the second scribal campaign. The most numerous of these are the whiplash flourishes, many of which occur in a relatively simple form, as shown in fig.4.103. It is most likely that these are ultimately derived from colophon label decorations on the outside of antique scrolls.[57] The internal element of these *s*-shaped flourishes is a simple scroll device. The three line-filling *s* forms which appear as line-fillers in the Calendar of St. Willibrord show the close relationship between the whiplash flourishes and that letter (fig.3.297). The first of these three line-fillers is rendered simply as an *s* while the following pair each has a single scroll interrupting the middle stroke of the letter.

What is perhaps of most significance in relation to these whiplash flourishes in the Book of Kells is the number of variant forms that occur. The various categories of these motifs, and also the further unique variants, recall similar patterns relating to other features discussed above.

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[57] M. P. Brown, *pers. comm.*, 2012.

These patterns are also evident in the script and the elaborated letters as discussed throughout chapter three. In this context, the calligraphic form of the whiplash motifs also echoes those letters with extended curved-concave elaborations (figs.3.259-315), and in particular recalls the letter *s* (figs.3.283-86). Similar whiplash motifs are occasionally found in other Insular manuscripts but it is their variation and the frequency with which they occur that distinguishes their appearance in Kells.

Figs.4.103-28 show a full range of variants of the whiplash motifs, some of which are briefly discussed in this paragraph.[58] The whiplash motifs are occasionally rendered in colours other than red – yellow (fig.4.104-no.1), purple (fig.4.104-no.2), and black (fig.4.122-no.7), in more than one colour (fig.4.104-no.4), or with added colours (fig.4.104-no.5). These motifs may appear with additional flowers/florets (fig.4.104-nos.2, 5 and 6 and fig.4.105), and occasionally with leaves (fig.4.105-no.3). Many of these whiplash flourishes are 'broken' or interrupted by enlarged elements in the internal scrolling, and fig.4.106 shows a number of these variants. The last of these illustrations (fig.4.128) shows the whiplash motif in conjunction with scrolling motifs which are the next feature to be addressed.

Scrolls, wave-scrolls and miscellaneous motifs

The scrolling, which is the internal element in the whiplash motifs, also occurs independently as a line-filler. Figs.4.129-37 shows a range of variant forms which include many incorporating 'breaks' similar to those in the whiplash motifs. Fig.4.138 shows a range of variants of line-filling motifs incorporating wave-scrolls, while those in fig.4.139 all have some varied angular motifs, and fig.4.140 shows a number of miscellaneous curvilinear line-filling motifs. The arabesques discussed above, usually occur as marginal features but fig.4.141 shows three

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[58] Specific details of these are included in the captions which accompany the illustrations.

horizontal instances that are effectively line-fillers. This is another instance exemplifying the merging and blending of motifs that complicates any attempt at a simple categorization of Kells' features. Fig.4.142 shows another set of unique line-filling motifs. Fig.4.143 shows all of the instances, and the many variations, which occur where dotted line-fillers link script with decorated initials.[59]

Fig.4.144 shows line-fillers of flowers/florets and leaf-sprays incorporating a range of variations around a simple theme. These are typically shown sprouting from simple 'hour-glass' vases. Folio 218v, which has its text repeated on the following page, appears to have been cancelled by surrounding marginal marks which, in addition to crosses, include variants of these leaf and flower/floret motifs in vases, which are angled at each of the four corners (figs.5.364 and 6.65-nos.1-4).[60] Further variants of these sprays feature as turn-in-path markers (fig.4.189), and a few occur as superscript markers (fig.4.166-nos.6, 23 and 24). While these are simple and less precise than many of the other decorative motifs in the manuscript, they are not simplistic, and they are also rendered with the flowing and assured gestural confidence of an accomplished draughtsman. They are also comparable to some more carefully wrought motifs from the first scribal campaign, where their constant variation appears to be inspired by the same distinctive calligraphic imagination. In particular they can be compared with the varied flower/floret and leaf sprays in figs.4.82-87. Fig.4.145 also shows a selection of these features from the first campaign which facilitates the comparison of these motifs from both campaigns. Fig.4.145-no.15 appears to show traces of work from both campaigns, while no.16 shows motifs from both campaigns in consecutive lines. In addition, their occasional occurrence in clusters, as for example those between ff.21v-22r, is another aspect shared in common with all the scribal work

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[59] Dotting is similarly used in the Book of Durrow, for example, on f.86r. See also chapter six p. 343.
[60] Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (1994), p. 84. Meehan suggests that the cancellation marking may be the work of his Scribe B.

in the manuscript and also reinforces the reading of this work as part of a second campaign by the same individual. As mentioned at the end of the discussion of punctuation marks above, the use of larger triple points as line-fillers, or as additions to other line-filling motifs, will be discussed further in chapter six.[61]

Zoomorphic and anthropomorphic line-fillers

The occasional clustering of motifs has been identified as a recurring feature throughout the discussion of the scribal work in the Book of Kells, and this also applies to the zoomorphs used as line-fillers. The pairs of creatures on f.48r (fig.4.146-nos.1 and 2) are differently composed yet seem to share a similar theme of hunting. This theme appears consistent with the Gospel text on the page which includes the passage 'Ask , and it shall be given to you; seek and ye shall find'.[62] However, not all of these creatures are so easily linked to the adjacent Gospel text, or at least not in ways that may be understood by a modern audience. Other clusters of zoomorphic line-fillers occur in the birds on f.201r (fig.4.146-nos.30 and 31), and on f.278r (fig.4.146-nos.48-9). Further clusters of these zoomorphs, less specific in their appearance and detail, occur between ff.72r-77v, 180v-184r, 212v-213r and 270v-280r. This apparent randomness is yet another consistent feature noted throughout the Scribe-Artist's work in the manuscript.

These zoomorphic line-fillers are also wrought with a predilection for variation comparable to that which pervades the scribal work throughout the manuscript. The animals are varied in genus and species, in pose and posture.[63] A scan of the birds or lions in fig.4.146

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[61] Instances of these in various combinations occur randomly throughout the line-filling illustrations as for example in figs.4.95-no.3, 4.100-no.5, 4.106-no.1, 4.120-no.2, 4.122-nos.2-4, 4.123-nos.1-2, 4.124-nos.2-3, 4.126-nos.3-5, 4.127-no.1, 4.130-no.3, 4.131-nos.5-6, 4.132-no.7 (in blue), 4.133-nos.2-3 and 5, 4.134-nos.1-2, 4.138-nos.1-3, 7-8 and 12, 4.139-nos.1, 3-4, 13 and 15-16, 4.140-no.1, 4.143-nos.1-13 and 4.144-no.7.

[62] Matthew 7.7

[63] Occasionally the same pose may be repeated as for example in the lions on ff.66r (fig.4.146-no.5) and 182r (fig.4.146-no.24)

reveals the extent of this variety. The zoomorphs are also varied in their locations on the page and in their interactions with the script. There is further variation in their distribution, in both their presence and absence, and also, as noted above, in the clusters that occasionally occur. These all echo similar idiosyncratic patterns with regard to the scribal features discussed throughout this study and indicate that they are the work of the Scribe-Artist. Generally their interaction with the text on the page appears consistent with, and contemporary with, the script. The zoomorphs appear to be seamlessly integrated with all the elements on a page and do not suggest to the viewer that they are intrusions or the work of another hand.

These zoomorphs also appear to be reasonably consistent in their graphic quality, with perhaps occasional instances seeming to be somewhat less precise in their rendering. These latter may possibly reflect the general reduction in precision that has been identified as a feature of the proposed second campaign. Instances of these may include the bird on f.55v (fig.4.146-no.3) and the anthropomorphic warrior on f.99v (fig.4.146-no.15).

The zoomorphic and anthropomorphic line-fillers also need to be considered in conjunction with other creatures, such as those used as markers for superscript and subscript letters, and also those used as turn-in-path markers. These will be discussed in more detail below. In addition, the zoomorphic and anthropomorphic line-fillers also need to be considered in conjunction with the multitude of those creatures that form or inhabit many of the decorated initials. These will be examined in the following chapter.

Conclusions - line-filling decoration

Collectively, as well as individually, the entire range of line-filling devices and motifs – the florets, whiplash flourishes, scrolls, wave-scrolls, miscellaneous motifs and zoomorphs present yet another manifestation of the apparent scribal predilection for variation. These variations do not appear to have any characteristics that could indicate different hands. Instead there appears rather to be a consistency and coherence in the variations that suggest the idiosyncratic imagination and work of an individual. This idiosyncrasy is also reflected in the randomness of their distribution - their presence and absence, and also their occasional appearance in clusters. These traits have consistently been noted across all the scribal work in the Book of Kells which have been examined throughout this study. Most significantly, these characteristics and traits are unchanging whether they occur in the first or the second of the proposed campaigns of work. This is particularly relevant in relation to the line-filling motifs as the majority of these are rendered in the orange-red associated with Scribe B from the Henry-Meehan scheme, and which are here seen as a later campaign of work by the Scribe-Artist. These features receive relatively little comment from the scholars who have discussed the script and script-related decorative features in the Book of Kells. Perhaps this is understandable as these are relatively insignificant in comparison with the more prominent decorative features in the manuscript.[64] Meehan mentions that 'the minor decoration of the text pages has not yet been classified fully and evaluated.'[65] Meyer suggests that the 'fleurons' are not the work of the scribe and his observation is no doubt influenced by the diminished quality and the different colour used.[66] However, in

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[64] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings,* p. 189. Meehan mentions the lines of whiplash line-fillers on f.127r as being the work of Scribe B. This is his only reference regarding the attribution of the line-filling motifs although it may perhaps be inferred that the use of orange-red and other colours would be taken by him, and also Henry, to indicate the work of their Scribe B.

[65] Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (1994), p. 89.

[66] Meyer, 'Notes on the art and ornament', in *Codex Cenannensis*, p. 33.

attempting to gain a more complete understanding of the scribal work in the book it is essential that these lesser features must also be subject to detailed examination. This is central to the comprehensive approach adopted throughout this study.

(ix) Superscripts, turn-in-path and subscripts[67]

This examination of superscripted letters in Kells looks at the frequency with which they occur, their use and their distribution, including the presence of clusters. This is followed by analysis of the various markers which usually accompany superscripts, including motifs which may be added to them, the 'doubling' of some instances and also the occurrence of zoomorphic markers.

Superscript letters

The practice of completing a word by placing its final letter, or letters, in the interlinear space directly above it, is a common feature in Insular manuscripts. In Kells these are usually accompanied by a marker, and these range from simple decorative strokes to zoomorphs. The superscripted letterforms, *s*-shaped *m* and *c*-shaped *u*, are not usually accompanied by a marker, and they are largely excluded from the discussion here.[68] Excluding these letters *m* and *u*, fig.4.147 shows all two-hundred and twenty-one instances of superscripted letters in the manuscript (see also diag.4.2).

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[67] In this study the 'turn-in-path' is used to describe those instances where letters or words are written on the right-hand side of the line directly above that of its preceding text. Superscripted and subscripted letters, which are written in the interlinear spaces, are treated separately and are not considered as instances of the turn-in-path feature.
[68] See figs.3.49-60 and 3.130-38.

The incorporation of superscripted letters is one of several 'space-saving' methods used by scribes to incorporate letters particularly at the end of a line.[69] However, as with the the use of subscripted letters and the 'turn-in-path' device,[70] in Kells the use of superscripted letters does not seem to be employed out of the necessity to save space. The decorative potential of superscripted letters is sometimes used to emphasise a particular phrase or word. These features also seem to be arbitrarily used as one of a range of calligraphic features to embellish line-ends. As stated elsewhere, these are incorporated perhaps to balance the decorative impact of the initials, which are predominantly located on, or close to, the left-hand margins. For example, the superscript *i*, completing '*regni*' on f.67r (fig.4.148-no.1), appears to complement the linked letters *e*, *g* and *n*. '*Regnum*' the last word on f.159v (fig.4.148-no.2) is completed with the calligraphic combination of superscript versions of *u* and *m*.[71] The vertical form of this superscription would have been somewhat unbalanced unless the marker, a lion, had not been planned to complete the motif. This suggests that the scribe is also the artist, and the manner in which the beast's claws are rendered, and also the way they respond to the adjacent letters, strengthens this probability.[72] A similar construction is repeated in '*calicem*', the last word on f.163r (fig.4.148-no.3). While these three instances are in zones attributed to Scribe C, '*regnum*' on f.165r, again the last word on the page, which is similarly completed with the linked letters *e*, *g* and *n*, and a superscripted letter, is attributed to Scribe D (fig.4.148-no.4).

Other significant words also appear to be highlighted by the incorporation of superscript letters. These include the words for speaking and responding, which occur on seven and four

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[69] Superscripting is also one of the methods of correction used in Kells to add missing letters or to replace expunctuated ones (see above pp. 199-203).

[70] The turn-in-path will be discussed below (pp. 246-51).

[71] This vertical form of *m* is usually attached to the side of the preceding letter and is uniquely superscripted here in fig.4.148-nos.2 and 3. See also fig.3.383 which shows instances of vertical-*m* subscripted in conjunction with uncial-*a*.

[72] This will be discussed further in chapter five, pp. 295-97 (figs.5.247-78).

occasions respectively. These are almost evenly divided between zones attributed to Scribes C and D (fig.4.149 and 150). Another word redolent of communication, teaching, is highlighted in this way on three occasions, one each in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D (fig.4.151). Parts of the noun *homo* also feature superscripts on three occasions, again with one each in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D (fig.4.152). Names and placenames with superscripted letters (figs.4.153 and 154), also occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D. '*Israhel*' appears on both pages of the opening ff.195v-196r attributed to Scribe C, but is similarly treated on f.170r attributed to Scribe D (fig.4.154-nos.2-4).

Quod with superscript-*d* occurs on nine occasions (fig.4.155), and *opportuit* (or *opportet*) on six occasions (fig.4.156). These occur in zones attributed to Scribes C and D. These do not appear to be the work of different individuals, and in fig.4.155, perhaps nos.3 and 7, attributed to Scribes C and D respectively, are the closest match. While many of the words discussed above might be described as having particular significace in the Gospels, many others with superscript letters are not, and this reflects similar patterns in relation to the occurrence of other scribal features as discussed above in chapter three. Matthew's account of the camel's relatively easy passage through the eye of the needle in comparison to the rich man's difficulties in entering heaven, is highlighted by a superscript *e* on '*intrare*' at the end of f.86v. The parable is graphically reinforced by the high position of the superscripted letter, which is marked by a bird squeezed between it and the *n* above it (fig.4.157-no.1). This is in zone 7 attributed to Scribe C, but is paralleled in a similar way at the top of f.260v, attributed to Scribe D, in Luke's account of the same parable (fig.4.157-no.2). Here, another bird marking the superscript letters *ns*, appears to inspect the narrow gap between them and the first three letters of the word ('*transire*') below.

Another instance of similar emphasis in zones attributed to different hands occurs on ff.116v (Scribe D) and f.158r (Scribe C). At the top of f.116v in Matthew (Matt.26.45) the phrase '*et filius hominis tradetur in manus hominum peccatorum*', has the final letters *rum* superscripted (fig.4.158-no.1). This is mirrored at the bottom of 158r, where, in Mark's (Mk.9.30) version of the same phrase, the final three letters of '*hominum*' are subscripted (fig.4.158-no.2). Both instances end with the distinctive extended curved-concave *m*, and their overall similarity would suggest that they are the work of the same individual.

As can be seen throughout fig.4.147 and in diag.4.2, superscript letters with markers occur randomly throughout the manuscript in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. This distribution of superscripts echoes the similarly random patterns that apply to all of the scribal features in the book. As with all the other scribal features discussed above, and in chapter three, there are also notable gaps in their distribution. This shows 'clustered' instances of such absences:

Scribe A – ff.137r-140v, ff.304r-307v and ff.311r-314v

Scribe B - ff.125v-129r

Scribe C – ff.144v-149v, ff.150v-154v, ff.199r-203v and ff.206r-212v

Scribe D – ff.93v-98r, ff.106v-116r, ff.121r-125v and ff.166r-169r

Clustering of scribal features is identified as one of the defining characteristics of the Scribe-Artist's work, and clusters of superscripted letters are found in zones attributed to each of the hands in the four-scribe scheme. These include six instances between ff.334r-335v (Scribe A), four instances on f.3r (Scribe B), six instances between ff.47v-49v (Scribe C), and seven between ff.244r-246r (Scribe D). There are twenty-five pages with more than a single instance of superscripted letters, and small clusters of these occur between ff.14r-14v (Scribe A), 245r-245v

(Scribe D), 283r and 284r, and 334v-335r (diag.4.2). A further recurring scribal pattern, and another kind of clustering, are the pairs of superscripts that occur in successive lines or in close proximity, which also occur in zones attributed to each of the four Scribes (fig.4.159).

The instances of uncial-*a* which are superscripted (fig.3.379), in zones attributed to Scribes C and D, also do not provide evidence for a division of hands. Two further categories which reveal no evidence in support of a division of hands are those in fig.4.160, where more than one letter is superscripted (Scribes A, B, C and D), and those in fig.4.161 with added punctuation marks (Scribes A, C and D). The frequency with which superscripts occur in zones attributed to Scribes A (40-18.5%), B (8-4%), C (98-45%) and D (70-32.5%) matches, almost exactly, the number of pages attributed to each scribe – A (139-21%), B (35.5-5%), C (265-40%) and D (216.5-33%). This distribution does not suggest a division of hands, but rather a consistent pattern of usage more likely attributable to an individual.

As mentioned above, almost all instances of *s*-shaped *m* and *c*-shaped *u* are not accompanied by markers. There are two exceptions on ff.175r and 302r attributed to Scribes C and A respectively (fig.4.147-nos.110 and 197). A single instance of a regular *u* superscripted occurs on f.182r (fig.4.147-no.117). Apart from the ten superscripts that have none (fig.4.162), which occur in zones attributed to Scribes C and D, all others are accompanied by markers. This absence of any marker in a small number of instances is typical of the variation in the scribal work in Kells, and again cannot be linked to any of the hands in the different scribal zones.

Superscript markers

The enlarged illustrations in fig.4.163 show instances of the most basic and most frequently used superscript marker across thirteen of the eighteen scribal zones. These are fine diagonal strokes

with one or two wedges, similar to those used beside the turn-in-path devices and also the slightly smaller accent marks.[73] The consistency of this stroke marking superscripts, in all of its details, is remarkable throughout the manuscript. The angle at which it is drawn, the wedges and the fineness of the stroke are generally unvaried. The length of the stroke is occasionally varied, but this variation is just as likely to occur in instances attributed to the same hand, as for example, the pair on f.278v (fig.4.163-no.13). On a few occasions these strokes have larger wedges and these occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D, and some of these also appear to have been added as part of the second campaign (fig.4.164). Outlined or 'open' wedges occur on a few occasions but these again are not linked to any one hand (fig.4.165).

As noted above there are also ten instances which lack any markers on ff.89v, 116v, 170v, 173v, 177v, 273v, 278r, 283r (all Scribe D), 64r and 230r (both Scribe C).[74] While most of these are attributed to Scribe D, the randomness of their distribution, and the attribution of two to Scribe C does not support the division of hands.

As mentioned above, superscripts are usually accompanied by a simple diagonal stroke, but, typically these are also subject to much variation in the way they are elaborated. Fig.4.166 shows all twenty-five instances of the basic markers with added florets. These occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D with clusters occurring between ff.74v-75r and ff.226v-227v attributed to Scribe C, and between ff.240-247v which straddles zones 14 and 15, attributed respectively to Scribes C and D. The occurrence of unusual variants is a recurring pattern throughout the scribal features in the manuscript, and fig.4.167 shows instances of unusual superscript markers. These occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D, and some which appear to be 'doubled' are discussed next.

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[73] These turn-in-path markers and accents will be discussed below (pp. 252-56 and 258-62)   .
[74] These instances of superscripted letters without markers are identified with an X in diag.4.2.

Superscript markers 'doubled' in the first campaign

In the first campaign a single superscript marker appears to be 'doubled' by the simple repetition of the diagonal stroke on f.319r (fig.4.147-no.205). These are added in the black ink used for the script and do not appear to be later additions. A number of other instances appear to be 'doubled' by the addition of elements which give some of them something of the appearance of simple 'french-curves', although no two are quite the same (fig.4.167-nos.6-12).

Superscript markers 'doubled' in the second campaign

Some superscript markers are also 'doubled' in the red typical of the second campaign (diag.4.2). These often simply repeat the original black diagonal stroke with one or two wedges, if somewhat slightly larger (fig.4.168). However, much variation is again evident, and among these are five instances with added sets of red triple dots, including a cluster between ff.44v-46r (fig.4.169-nos.1-3). Other rare or unique instances scattered throughout the manuscript include one with a pair of red 'doubling' strokes, two with the red stroke drawn beneath the original and one terminated with circles (fig.4.169). A further two instances are 'doubled' in yellow with one 'doubled' in green (fig.4.170). There are two instances in which the red markers occur where they are not 'doubling' earlier ones drawn in the first campaign. One instance of these red markers appears with two wedges on f.12v (fig.4.147-no.10), and a large instance with terminating flowers is found on f.165r (fig.4.147-no.103). This large marker with florets at either end on f.165r could also be understood as another instance of the graphic illustration of the text as discussed above. This distinctive marker on the *t* of '*sternabant*' (spread/strewn) could be interpreted as indicating the branches strewn on the road in the text describing Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Matt.11.8).

There are also a number of instances of superscripts added to the Canon Tables on ff.2v, 3r, 5r, 5v and 6r. Among these are a cluster on f.3r, including one curved variant and another with a pair of purple strokes (fig.4.147-nos.2-6). One further instance in purple occurs on f.23r, the text of which is written in purple ink (fig.4.170-no.3). A further series of 'doubling' marks, again with typical variety, appear somewhat diminished in quality and seem to belong to the later phase of the second campaign (fig.4.171).

Zoomorphic superscript markers

Zoomorphs (marked 'zoo' in diag.4.2) are used as superscript markers on twenty-seven pages with small clusters between ff.84v-87v (Scribe C), 226r-227r (Scribe C), and 260v-264r (Scribe D) (fig.4.147-nos.67-69, 142 and 145, 169 and 173-74). As with the line-filling zoomorphs (fig.4.146), the zoomorphic superscript markers are drawn with a similar predilection for variation and this has also been noted as a characteristic of all the scribal features. The creatures marking superscript letters are also much varied in genus and species, in pose and in posture (fig.4.172).[75] There are nine lions which can be identified by their manes (fig.4.172-nos.3, 5, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19 and 30). Beasts broadly similar to the lions, but lacking the distinctive mane, can perhaps best be described as hounds (fig.4.172-nos.1, 2, 7, 13, 15, 20, 21, 23, 26, 28 and 29). The creatures in figs.4.173-74 share certain similarities but they are not all in zones attributed to the same same hands. The frequency with which zoomorphic markers are employed in zones attributed to the different scribes is not too dissimilar from the overall pattern of distribution for superscript letters, as noted above – Scribe A (4–13%), Scribe C (16-53%) and Scribe D (10-33%). None of these occur in the small number of pages attributed to Scribe B. The evidence in

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[75] It is interesting to note that a number of the zoomorphic markers also feature the fine diagonal stroke (fig.4.172-nos.3, 4, 6, 17, 19, 25 and 29). These occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D.

relation to superscripted letters does not support any division of hands, and continues to reveal the idiosyncratic patterns and defining characteristics of the Scribe-Artist's work.

Turn-in-path

Following a brief introduction, these paragraphs examine the use of the turn-in-path device in the prefatory material. The use of the device to emphasise particular Gospel texts is then addressed. The distribution of this feature throughout the manuscript is also discussed. The markers which accompany the instances of turn-in-path are discussed in some detail, including the fact that many of these appear to have been 'doubled' during the second campaign. This is concluded with some further remarks on the zoomorphs used as turn-in-path markers.

The practice of writing outside the normal linear sequence by adding text into vacant spaces in the lines above or below the line of writing is evident in some of the earliest Insular manuscripts.[76] This most likely evolved as a space-saving strategy to conserve valuable vellum resources.[77] It may also have been used to balance the appearance of the text-block by filling otherwise empty spaces. It was particularly useful in making use of the often significant line spaces left in writing psalms with their poetic verse form. In the Cathach there are over sixty clear instances of this device on the fifty-eight remaining folios of the manuscript.

In Kells the turn-in-path is typically marked with a simple diagonal stroke, similar to those marking superscriptions (figs.4.179 and 4.163). This marking stroke, with some simple variations, is found in manuscripts throughout the Insular period. Brown suggests that the development of more elaborate marking devices, in particular the use of zoomorphs, occurred in

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[76] See, for example, f.40v in the Barberini Gospels where line 8 is completed on the right-hand side of line 9, facilitating the placing of an initial at the beginning of this line which signals a new Eusebian section and also a new chapter.

[77] M.P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts - A guide to technical terms* (The J. Paul Getty Museum in assoc. with the British Library, 1994), p. 112.

the context of the Southumbrian 'Tiberius' group of manuscripts, and are evident, for example,

in the Barberini Gospels and the Book of Cerne, with an earlier example occurring in the Codex

Bigotianus.[78] In Kells, as with many of its scribal features, these are evolved to a level of

sophistication that surpasses any surviving contemporaries. These markers will be discussed in

more detail below.

In Kells there are one hundred and fifty-five instances of turn-in-path, all of which are

added above the line of text to which they belong (fig.4.175 and diag.4.3). The first eighty-four

of these, over half the total, occur in the prefatory material at the beginning of the book. Apart

from four, which are in the list of Hebrew names on both sides of f.26, these all occur in the

breves causae. The short sentences used for these headings for the various Gospel episodes are

usually begun with a minor initial at the left-hand side. This arrangement leaves quite a number

of short lines and the turn-in-path was frequently employed in these instances. As mentioned

above, this scribal feature may originally have been devised to save space and valuable vellum,

however, as with the use of superscripted letters, and as mentioned earlier, it may also have been

used either for emphasis or for aesthetic reasons. For example the scribe may have felt that a

page of text lacked balance if it had too many vacant spaces on the right-hand side, and the turn-

in-path may have been used to offset this and consequently present a more complete text-block.

While this may have been part of the programme of layout, however, as with all the other scribal

features in Kells, this is not applied systematically. It is interesting to note the similar frequency

with which the device is used in the *breves causae* attributed to both scribes A and B.

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[78] M. P. Brown, *The Book of Cerne*, pp. 120-1. Codex Bigotianus – Paris BNF, Ms. Lat. 281, 298.

Attributed to Scribe A	Attributed to Scribe B
f.8v – 3 (fig.4.175-nos.1-3)	f.20r – 2 (fig.4.175-nos.48-49)
f.9r – 5 (fig.4.175-nos.4-8)	f.20v – 3 (fig.4.175-nos.50-52)
f.9v – 4 (fig.4.175-nos.9-12)	f.21r – 2 (fig.4.175-nos.53-54)
f.10r – 3 (fig.4.175-nos.13-15)	f.21v – 5 (fig.4.175-nos.55-59)
f.10v – 5 (fig.4.175-nos.16-20)	f.22r – 3 (fig.4.175-nos.60-62)
f.11r – 4 (fig.4.175-nos.21-24)	f.22v – 7 (fig.4.175-nos.63-69)
f.11v – 1 (fig.4.175-no.25)	f.23r – 2 (fig.4.175-nos.70-71)
f.13r – 1 (fig.4.175-no.26)	f.23v – 0
f.13v – 3 (fig.4.175-nos.27-29)	f.24r – 1 (fig.4.175-no.72)
f.14r – 5 (fig.4.175-nos.30-34)	f.24v – 2 (fig.4.175-nos.73-75)
f.14v – 6 (fig.4.175-nos.35-40)	f.25r – 2 (fig.4.175-nos.76-77)
f.15r – 4 (fig.4.175-nos.41-44)	f.25v – 3 (fig.4.175-nos.78-80)
f.19r – 3 (fig.4.175-nos.45-47)	

It is also interesting to note on these pages that, for example, in line 4 on f.14r the text is indented on the left-hand side and then followed by a turn-in-path (fig.4.176-no.1). This is attributed to Scribe A, but the same arrangement, for example, also occurs in line 9 on f.22r attributed to Scribe B (fig.4.176-no.2). Both also have occasional instances, unusual on these pages, where lines are typically filled with a small amount of text centered in the middle of a line. These are without the addition of a turn-in-path, as in line 1 on f.11v attributed to Scribe A (fig.4.177-no.1), and in line 6 on f.20r attributed to Scribe B (fig.4.177-no.2). The consistency of these recurring patterns does not support the division of hands but rather suggests the work of an individual.

Other instances of turn-in-path seem to be used for simple layout purposes such as the completion of the text-block or to facilitate the positioning of an initial. These are usually marked by simple diagonal strokes and also occur randomly throughout the manuscript. A cluster of these occurs between ff.65r and 68v (fig.4.175-nos.94-97) attributed to Scribe C, while two instances occur on ff.110v and 118v (fig.4.175-nos.103-104) attributed to Scribe D. Similar clusters occur in zones attributed to Scribe A between ff.130v-132v (fig.4.175-nos.106-111) and ff.292v-299r (fig.4.175-nos.119-134).

Some of the instances of turn-in-path appear to have been more contrived to highlight a particular passage of text. This occurs, for example, on f.309v in the text describing the power of the bread of life. This text is given further emphasis by the lion marking the turn-in-path (fig.4.175-no.142). The lion also appears to communicate with a bird on the opposite page (fig.4.175-no.145) which also marks a turn-in-path in the middle of a related text '*qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem in me manet et ego in illo*'.[79] Above the bird on this page, f.310r, is further related text, also emphasised by a turn-in-path, and which is marked by a double sided vessel(?) sprouting foliage/fruit (fig.4.175-no.144). The bird and the lions also appear with sprays of foliage/fruit. On f.323r the turn-in-path marked by a zoomorph which is located between the accounts of the bad and the good shepherd in John 10.13-14 (fig.4.175-no.151), again appears not to have been used to save space or to accommodate an initial, but rather appears contrived to emphasise the text. At the end of '*ego sum pastor bonus et cognosco meas*',[80] the zoomorphic turn-in-path marker faces back to look at the end of '*qui mercennarius est et non pertinet ad eum de ovibus*' in the previous line.[81]

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[79] 'Whoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him' (Jn. 6.56).
[80] 'I am the good shepherd and I know mine' (Jn.10.14).
[81] 'He is a hireling and hath no care for the sheep' (Jn.10.13).

The instance just discussed occurs in zone 17 attributed to Scribe A, but this use of turn-in-path also occurs in zones attributed to Scribes C and D. On f.61r the turn-in-path may possibly have been arranged to link the words '*patrem*' and '*filium*' in lines sixteen and seventeen with '*patrem*' also in line fifteen (fig.4.175-no.93). This instance is marked by a regal lion. On f.69r the turn-in-path in line 16 may be similarly arranged to link two passages of text (fig.4.175-no.98). Its location allows the pair of zoomorphic markers to interact with the text in complementary ways. While the lion passively contemplates the fates of the good and the evil, the bird appears to be actively searching for the hidden treasure ('*thesauro abscondito*'), mentioned in the text, under the last two letters of the first word. This use of the turn-in-path, and the accompanying markers, is one of several scribal strategies used to emphasise particular passages, phrases or words within the Gospel text. The turn-in-path at the end of f.72r appears to merely shift the empty space from line 15 to line 17 (fig.4.175-no.101). However, the scribe may have done this to link the two passages of text. Having fed the multitiude and dismissed the crowd (Matt.14.22) Jesus ascends the mountain to pray alone (Matt.14.23). Meehan notes that the words '*solus orare*' (to pray alone) are fittingly isolated at the bottom of the page.[82]

There is hardly room for the turn-in-path on f.120r, but it allows the scribe to link the word '*tradens*' (betray) and '*iustum*' (just) with the inverted bird perhaps suggesting Judas' horror as he contemplates his betrayal of Jesus who has just been condemned (fig.4.175-no.105). The bird rests on '*videris*' which completes the response of the high priests and elders who dismiss Judas' remorse and pleadings by saying '*quid ad nos tu videris*'.[83]

The occurrence of these different uses of turn-in-path in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D suggests that they are the work of a single scribe, rather than providing evidence for any

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[82] Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (2012), p. 214.
[83] 'What is it to us, look thou to it' (Mt.27.4).

division of hands. As noted above the turn-in-path is used frequently in zone 4 attributed to Scribe B although there are none in the nine pages of Gospel text attributed to him.[84] Their absence from this small sample of pages is not unusual in the manuscript where they are randomly distributed, often with significant gaps between instances. It is also notable in the zones attributed to Scribe B, which are here understood as the second campaign by the Scribe-Artist, that some features are either absent or occur less frequently.

The distribution of the turn-in-path in the Gospel text appears to be quite random (diag.4.3). In the early part of Matthew there are eighteen instances distributed relatively evenly between ff.40r-72r (fig.4.175-nos.85-101). In the second half of this Gospel there are only four further instances (fig.4.175-nos.102-105). The first six pages of Mark have seven instances, while there are only two in the following ninety-nine pages (fig.4.175-nos.106-114). There are only four instances in the whole of Luke's Gospel (fig.4.175-nos.115-118). In the first quire of John, ff.292r-301v, there are 16 instances (fig.4.175-nos.119-134) and this is continued with eleven instances in the next quire, ff.302r-311v, where there are twelve (fig.4.175-nos.135-146). The number decreases to five in the next quire, ff.312r-323v (fig.4.175-nos.147-151). There are only four instances in the last two quires, ff.324r-239v. This much smaller number cannot simply be accounted for by the missing pages from these quires. This distribution does not follow any pattern that could be linked to any of the scribes in Meehan's division of hands, and is perhaps further evidence of the Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation as noted throughout the scribal features. Some aspects of this evidence will be discussed below in relation to possibly identifying a sequence of production for the manuscript (see footnote 86 below).

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[84] These are f.34v, ff.125v-129r and f.188v.

Turn-in-path markers

As noted above instances of turn-in-path in Kells may be marked with the thin diagonal stroke typically used in Insular manuscripts. These strokes typically have two wedges and these occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, B and C (fig.4.178) , but on a few occasions there is only one, and these occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, B and D (fig.4.179). These markers on a few occasions may have larger wedges and these occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, B and C (fig.4.180).

Turn-in-path markers 'doubled' and 'trebled'

The graphic markers used to emphasise instances of turn-in-path often appear to have been 'doubled', and in some cases those already 'doubled' seem to be given further added emphasis or 'trebled'. It often appears that a series of marks or motifs are laid one over the other with three distinct layers evident at times. In the first campaign, where instances of turn-in-path are not marked by zoomorphs or other more elaborate graphic devices, these features are marked by the simple fine diagonal stroke. These strokes are similar to, if usually slightly longer than, those used to mark superscripts and also those used as accents (figs.4.163 and 4.201). In keeping with the random distribution of all scribal features in the book some of these first campaign markers remain as the only ones in some instances (figs.4.179-80). Typical also are the occasional clusters of these features, four on f.11r and two on f.296r (fig.4.175-nos.21-4 and 129-30).

Turn-in-path markers 'doubled' in the first campaign

The more common re-emphasis of these markers in the second campaign however, finds precedent in the first where the Scribe-Artist sometimes appears to have 'doubled' the diagonal stroke. The first of these is found in line 14 on f.8v, with another in line 12 on f.292v, two in

lines 4 and 7 on f.298v, and one in line 10 on f.305v (fig.4.181). Somewhat more complex additions are made on other occasions such as the trumpet-spiral elaborations made to the simple diagonals in lines 8 and 13 on f.13v, and in line 13 on f.293v (fig.4.182-nos.1-2). Others include the 'doubled' line with spiral terminals in line 16 on f.132v, and in line 17 on f.294r, and the unique cross-shaped instance in line 15 on f.299r, further emphasised with an outline (fig.4.182-nos.3-5).[85] The occurrence of both features only in zones attributed to Scribe A may point to their being a cluster executed at the same time although in different parts of the book.[86]

Turn-in-path markers 'doubled' in the second campaign

In a number of instances the simple black diagonal markers are 'doubled' by the addition of similar lines in red, and these appear to be consistent with a range of similarly coloured additions which are part of the second campaign. These 'doubling' markers occur as single red strokes above the original black one, such as those in line 7 on f.14r, and in line 3 on f.65r (fig.4.183). Occasionally the red stroke may be added below the black one, as in line 16 on f.66r, and in line 2 on f.132v (fig.4.184). The red strokes may be added in pairs, as for example, in line 10 on f.14r, and in line 13 on f.14v (fig.4.185), in triples as in line 9 on f.15r, and in line 5 on f.294r (fig.4.186), in double pairs as in line 4 on f.14r, and in line 7 on f.14v (fig.4.187), and in one instance in double triples in line 12 on f.15r (fig.4.188).

Fig.4.189 shows all instances of turn-in-path markers with flower/floret and foliate sprays. Most of these appear to have been added as part of the second campaign, with a few exceptions, fig.4.189-nos.53, 54, 56 and 59, which seem to belong to the first campaign. The motifs used are constantly subject to simple variation and often appear as clusters on pages or

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[85] See a similar unique superscript marker on f.175r (fig.4.167-no.2)
[86] The sequence of production will be discussed below in chapter eight (see also, for example, pp. 84-91, 177-80, 268-70, 305-07 and chapter six.

openings. Some of the additions seem particularly lacking in precision and may be linked with the latest phase of the second campaign, which will be discussed further below, and also in chapter six. Among these are instances sometimes linked to clusters of floret motifs used as line-fillers (fig.4.144), as for example, those on f.21v (figs.4.190 and 4.144-nos.2-3). This randomness of distribution is particularly evident in fig.4.190-no.5, which lacks any additional floret motif. There are also occasional sequences where the markers have no additions, such as the four instances on f.11r (fig.4.175-nos.21-4), the three on f.26v (fig.4.175-nos.82-4), and the four on ff.296r and 298v (fig.4.175-nos.129-32). Throughout these instances the Scribe-Artist reinterprets his familiar repertoire of forms with the constant clustering, variation and randomness that are such consistent hallmarks of his work throughout the manuscript.

Fig.4.191 shows all instances of turn-in-path markers with variation of trumpet-spiral motifs while fig.4.192 shows instances with added scolling. These show the Scribe-Artist's typical predilection for variation, and those with added scrolling correspond with similar variations in the instances where this feature is used as a line-filler (figs.4.129-137). This merging of features is a characteristic feature of the Scribe-Artist's work, and also recalls the line-filling whiplash motif linked to turn-in-path markers in fig.4.114 discussed earlier.

Second campaign 'doubled' turn-in-path markers
given further emphasis

However, on top of the 'doubled' markers there sometimes appears to be a further layer of additions. While the second campaign additions are identified by their typical use of red, and they also show a perceptible loss of sharpness in their execution, this third layer of additions shows a further deterioration in quality and often have the appearance of possibly being applied

with a brush. On f.14r instances of a series of foliate motifs appear to have been brushed on in green and purple paint (fig.4.175-nos.31-34). While applied with more apparent freedom and haste than is typical of the decoration in Kells, they nonetheless exemplify the Scribe-Artist's continuing predilection for variation. Further variants are found in a cluster on the following page, f.14v where the turn-in-path features are re-emphasisied with colourful lozenge-shaped motifs over earlier red, and original black, diagonal strokes (fig.4.175-nos.36-40). Three further variants of these motifs occur as another cluster on f.19v (fig.4.175-nos.45-7 and fig.4.193). The apparent haste with which much of the colour in these motifs is added also suggests that they are attributable to the latest phase of the second campaign. There may be further evidence of this haste in some offset painted marks which will be discussed in chapter six (p. 364).

Zoomorphic turn-in-path markers

The zoomorphic turn-in-path markers have been discussed above to some extent, and these are also notable for their constant variation (fig.4.194). As with the other marking motifs these may occur in clusters as for example the lions on f.309v (fig.4.194-nos.26-27) and the birds on both sides of f.310r (fig.4.194-nos.28-29). The anthropomorphic motifs of 'high-kicking' figures on ff.41v and 44r (fig.4.195) can be viewed as a similar cluster. The same motif may also be repeated, as for example, the beasts with their heads turned back to the left on ff.41v, 71v, 180v, 323r and 335r (fig.4.196- nos.1-5), and turned to the right on ff.131r and 309v (fig.4.196-nos.6-7). These are in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D. Creatures with their heads turned are particularly appropriate turn-in-path markers, and birds also have their heads turned on ff.276v, 309v and 310r, which are in zones attributed to Scribes A and D (fig.4.197). These zoomorphs also have links with those marking superscripts, subscripts and also the interlinear creatures such

as those, for example, with their heads turned back (fig.4.174). These will be discussed further in chapter five (figs.5.247-278 and pp.295-97). It is also interesting to note that most of the zoomorphs used to mark the various scribal features have a diagonal aspect which echoes that of the basic marking stroke.

The close links between the script and the zoomorphic markers, discussed above, suggest that scribe and artist are the same. Similar connections were noted in relation to the superscript markers, and as we shall see, these connections also occur in relation to the zoomorphic markers for subscripted letters which will be discussed next.

Subscripted letters and subscript markers

The zoomorphs marking subscripted letters would also seem to indicate that they were drawn by the scribe of the text. The location of the added letters is quite varied, and on occasion this seems to have been done to accommodate the often contorted creatures marking them. For example '*vobis*' at the bottom of f.337r is written well below the line of script, and the 'seahorse-like' serpent is closely linked to the word (fig.4.198-no.18). '*Sunt*' on f.70r is similarly written far below the last line of script, allowing space for the marking creature's claws (fig.4.198-no.2). In fig.4.198-no.8 the long-necked 'lion', with his mane somewhat on his back rather than his neck, interacts in a variety of ways with the *et*-ligature at the end of '*habet*' and both parts of '*quentum*'. These three instances occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D respectively. While this does not entirely rule out the possibility that they could have been drawn by someone other than the scribe, these examples, and all the other zoomorphic markers, appear to be consistent with the script. They do not convey the sense or feeling that they have been added by a different individual. The subscripted letters marked with zoomorphs also include clusters, as

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for example, those on ff.256r and 257r and on both sides of f.268 (fig.4.198-nos.9-12). The birds on ff.273r, 273v and 274r (fig.4.198-nos.13-15) can also be understood as a cluster.

This discussion does not address instances of subscripted letters *i*, *t* and uncial-*a* which have been discussed in chapter three and which are not accompanied by markers. In Kells there are eighteen instances of subscripts with zoomorphic markers and only twenty other instances of subscripted letters. It is interesting to note that thirty-three of these occur at the ends of pages and the pattern of their distribution is not linked to any of the Scribes A, C or D. While most of the subscript letters are marked, there are instances where these markers are absent, and this recalls a similar pattern for the superscripted letters discussed above. Again the eleven instances without accompanying markers are not linked to any individual hand as they occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D (fig.4.199).

Fig.4.200 shows the miscellaneous markers on the remaining nine instances. Four of these markers, in red and purple, seem to belong to the second campaign, with that on f.253v (fig.4.200-no.5) marking the addition of an apparent textual omission. The other three share some similarities and could be seen as a cluster (fig.4.200-nos.6-8). The other four are unique, with that on f.14v having the diagonal stroke used for marking superscript letters (fig.4.200-no.1). While this marker might appear to have been misplaced, it may have been deliberate as the subscription here completes a turn-in-path. Thus, while the letters are below the word they complete, they are above the text-line to which they belong, and, in a manner of speaking, are simultaneously subscripted and superscripted.

As with several other scribal features, the subscript letters sometimes occur in significant words or highlight important elements of the Gospel text (figs.4.198-200). These include proper nouns such as *Hierusalem*, *Levitas and Salamon* and also words such as *resurrectione*, *scribae et*

seniores and *sacerdotum*. '*Filius hominum*' on f.158r, with its links to f.116v, has been discussed above, as has the '*Amen*' concluding Luke's Gospel. '*Pascha*' occurs twice, on both sides of f.273, and this cluster is completed with another on f.274r which ends a phrase also containing the word '*pascha*'. As noted above, each of these is marked by a bird. While these are similarly posed, as they appear to 'peck' at the letters, the form of the three birds varies significantly. As has been discussed throughout this study, variation of this kind is typical in the Book of Kells. As with the superscripted letters and the turn-in-path, the evidence presented here in relation to subscripted letters and their accompanying markers does not support any division of hands and is consistent with the defining characteristics which identify the work of the Scribe-Artist.

(x) Accent marks and abbreviation marks

The following paragraphs deal with the application, variation, and also the 'doubling' of two features in the Book of Kells - accent marks and abreviation marks. The occasional coloured additions that sometimes appear on the abbreviation marks are also addressed.

Accent marks (apices)

The use of marks accenting vowels, sometimes referred to as apices, is widespread throughout the manuscript, although typically they are not applied with any consistency (diag.4.4). They are used extensively in some areas, sparsely in others and are absent from about ninety text pages. Eisenlohr states that 'diagonal strokes or apices over certain words seem to appear in clusters on

some pages, are absent in others, and return at irregular intervals without apparent reason'.[87] This seems to echo Meyer's comments on the letters with extended curved-concave elaborations, and is also consistent with the random distribution of all scribal features as discussed throughout the present study.[88] These diagonal marks are typically very fine and are usually terminated with a small wedge at the upper end (fig.4.201), although they may also have a wedge at the lower end, and these occasionally occur in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme (fig.4.202). They can vary in length and sometimes such variants occur even in neighbouring words (fig.4.203). It is also interesting to note the similarity between the accents and the strokes used to mark instances of turn-in-path (fig.4.204) and superscripts (fig.4.205). These illustrations show the consistentcy of these marks throughout the zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme.

It is interesting to compare the consistency of the marks in the zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme with two attributed to different hands in the Lindisfarne Gospels (fig.4.206). As described by Julian Brown:

> those made by the first hand are distinguishable by the blackness of the ink and
> by their clean angular formation (an oblique hairline with a square downward
> pointing serif at the right-hand end). The rest are for the most part in brownish
> ink and are much less sharply angular.[89]

The accent made by the text scribe in the last line shown in the illustration is consistent with the text and with the abbreviation marks over the *nomina sacra* in the other lines, while the other accent in the top line is quite different.

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[87] Eisenlohr, 'The puzzle of the scribes', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 207.
[88] See footnote 93 in chapter three.
[89] T. J. Brown, 'Description; first part', in *Cod. Lind.*, p. 72.

The accents can be difficult to identify particularly on abraded pages such as those which are often found at quire ends, and such pages are identified with a question mark in the diagram.[90] Instances of these barely visible accents occur, for example on ff.124v, 250r and 252r and on occasions only the tiny wedge remains to indicate the presence of the mark (fig.4.207). No doubt more of these faded or abraded accents could be identified by examining the original manuscript.

These accents are most commonly found on words such as *nobís*, *vobís*, *vestrís*, *tú*, *té*, *sé*, *suís*, *hís*, *híc*, *á*, *sinagogís*, *discipulís* and some other words with –*lís* endings. They are largely absent from the prefatory texts with none on 16 of these pages, although clusters occur on ff.9r and 19r. In Matthew's Gospel, clusters with significant concentrations occur between ff.35v-36v, 42r-44v, 73v-90r (with a few gaps), and 109r-111r (diag.4.4). These patterns are not related to any scribal zones and this is also the case with the other Gospels. In Mark, concentrated clusters occur between ff.131r-134r, 143v-146r, 155r-156v and on f.176r and 178r. In Luke, a significant cluster between ff.241r-244v straddles zones 14 and 15 attributed to scribes C and D, with other clusters between ff.252r-253r and 269v-271r. The greatest concentration is in the first three quires of John, with twelve instances on f.311r, thirteen on f.306r and fourteen on f.308v. However, from f.319r the frequency with which they occur diminishes significantly.

Although small, this scribal feature, in common with all the others, shows some unique and unusual instances, and these occur in zones attributed to several hands in the four-scribe scheme (fig.4.208). As mentioned above the lower end of the diagonal stroke may sometimes have a hint of a wedge, and a unique cluster occurs on f.109v where these occur as 'open' wedges (fig.4.208-nos 1-3). These recall similar wedges in a small number of superscript

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[90] At times during its 1200 year history if the cords had deteriorated and book became disbound, the outermost pages of the quires would be subject to abrasion in the event of any movement.

markers (fig.4.165), and also a 'doubled' turn-in-path marker on f.110v (fig.4.175-no.103). This open-wedged variation is also found in single instances on ff.217v and 226v, with the latter being further elaborated with an added floret.[91] Other unusual variations occur on ff.34v, 109v, 143r, 231r and 239r (fig.4.208-nos.4-8). The latter three, although differing in detail, each have flowers/florets added. The unusual instance on f.178r, which has larger wedges at both ends, is further embellished with four sets of triple red dots (fig.4.208-no.6), as is the unusual instance on f.143r mentioned above. As suggested, these were most likely part of the second campaign when this and the other work in red was added.

Accent marks 'doubled'

Another feature of the work in this campaign is the 'doubling' of the accent marks in red. For a number of reasons these can be attributed to the Scribe-Artist. As with the black accent marks in the first campaign, these are also typically thin and slightly wedged, usually at the upper end, but sometimes at both ends (fig.4.209). Again, as with the earlier black instances, these are easily damaged and many are lost or only partially visible with some traces remaining. Their random distribution continues the typical working patterns with a mixture of scattered instances, and the Scribe-Artist's typical clusters (diag.4.4). These clusters are prominent on both sides of ff.36, 75, and 243, ff.163r, 165v and between ff.41r-42r, 44r-45r, 82r-83v, 130v-139v (with some gaps), 282v-283v, 285v-289r, 293r-294r, 308v-309v and 317r-319r.

There are also occasional variants, with some having larger wedges or prominent wedges at both ends (fig.4.209-nos.1, 2 and 4-6). These include those on f.75r and this cluster has added sets of triple red dots also (fig.4.209-no.2). Other clusters with added red dots occur on both

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[91] See also two superscript markers on the same page, f.226v, which are similarly decorated and can be understood as forming a cluster (fig.4.147-nos.143-44).

sides of f.41r and on ff.163r and 165v where much variation is evident (fig.4.209-nos.4-6). As with those in black from the first campaign, there are also some unique instances with added florets on ff.45r and 225r (fig.4.210). The diagonal strokes are unusually curved in instances on ff.119v, 126v an 336v (fig.4.211). There are two instances 'doubled' in green on ff.81r and 237r (fig.4.212). On two occasions the 'doubling' mark is added beneath the original on ff.40r and 255r (fig.4.213-nos.1-2). Uniquely, a single initial, the monogram *SI*, has a red accent added in line 12 on f.279r(D) (fig.4.213-no.3).

Red accent marks are also added which are not 'doubling' earlier ones and these again are randomly distributed (diag.4.4). It is perhaps not surprising to find some of these between ff.20v-25r, much of which is written in red ink, and a single instance occurs in line 17 on f.23r which is written in purple ink (fig.4.209-no.8). Random instances occur on ff.9v, 19r, 41r, 74r, 97v, 110r, 208r, 254v, 260r and f.268v, and between ff.266r-267r, while significant clusters occur in the last two quires of Luke, especially between ff.285v-289r (diag.4.4).

Abbreviation marks

The final scribal marks to be addressed are those indicating abbreviations, and these most frequently occur above the *nomina sacra*.[92] These include the various parts of *iesus* (*ihs*, *ihm*, *ihu*), *christus* transliterated in its Greek form (*xps*, *xpm*, *xpi*, *xpo*) *deus* (*ds*, *di*, *dm*, *do*) and *dominus* (*dns*, *dnm*, *dne*, *dni*) (see fig.3.315).[93] Although not always referring to the third person of the Trinity, *spiritus*, in its various parts (*sps*, *spm*, *spu*, *spui*), is also usually abbreviated and

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[92] These marks are used almost exclusively for *nomina sacra*. A few exceptions occur as in fig.4.10, some of which appear to be corrections. The numeral *u* is uniquely marked at the top and bottom of f.108r. The use of abbreviations for the *nomina sacra* by some early Christians, including Insular scribes, may ultimately derive from the Jewish tradition of the *tetragrammaton* (see Wolfgang Traube *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der Christlichen Kürzung*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Lateinschen Philologie des Mittelalters, II, Munich, 1907.

[93] For discussion of the origin and use of these abbreviations see B. Bischoff, 1990 *Latin Palaeography. Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, English transl. and ed. by D. Ó Cróinín and D. Ganz (Cambridge University Press, 1990) of *Paläographie des römischen Altertums und des abendländischen Mittelalters* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 152.

accompanied by a mark. The mark is absent on only two instances, '*spu*' on f.331r and '*dei*' on f.222v (fig.4.241-nos.2-3). This horizontal mark in Kells is not unlike those commonly found in Insular manuscripts. However, the version in Kells is distinctive, having a horizontal stroke with a wedge to its upper side on the left, and to its lower side on the right (fig.4.214). This is similar to the horizontal element in the *Tironian* '*est*' (÷) (fig.4.8) and also to the horizontal stroke sometimes used in the ubiquitous *et*-ligature (figs.3.162-3 and fig.4.215). While there is a notable consistency in the form of these abbreviation marks throughout Kells, they are subject to similar patterns of variation as have been noted in all the scribal features. On occasions, when accompanying larger letters, the marks may be proportionally larger (fig.4.216), and these are found in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. The marks may also be of varied length, and this is often in response to the length of the abbreviation (fig.4.217). Curved abbreviation marks occur occasionally (fig.4.218), and some of these recall the fish-shaped horizontal strokes on the *et*-ligature (fig.3.183-6). In zone 4 attributed to Scribe B, there are a few instances of abbreviation marks that are calligraphically enhanced with extended double curves. This cluster of marks relates to similar flourishes on some neighbouring letters (figs.3.345 and 347-8). As can be seen in Fig.3.355 (nos.1-3), these curved abbreviation marks are also subject to variation. Many of these have additional wedges which give them a fish-shaped appearance and are similar to some horizontal strokes on the *et* ligature (figs.3.183-6, and 5.197-no.1, 5.28 and 5.237-no.4).

The occasional 'doubling' of scribal marks has been discussed above in relation to those used for superscripted letters, instances of turn-in-path and accents. These additions are also sometimes found on the abbreviation marks. 'Doubling' of these marks, usually in red, is not an uncommon feature in Insular manuscripts. In Kells they are also usually in red and appear to

have been added as part of the second campaign. These marks are similar to those of the first campaign, with wedges to the upper side on the left and the lower side on the right, and suggest that they are the work of the same scribe (fig.4.219).

There are over fourteen hundred and forty of these abbreviation marks in Kells and the vast majority of these are elaborated with the addition of a cross-hatched motif (figs.4.220-41). These are added with a frequency of 72% in zones attributed to Scribe A, 77% to Scribe C and 76% to Scribe D. This consistency is not found in zones attributed to Scribe B where they are added with a frequency of 41%. As mentioned above, it must be remembered that the number of pages attributed to this hand constitute a much smaller sample than the others. It has also been consistently noted in this study that there is a notable fall-off in the use decorative motifs and other features in these zones, which are here understood as being part of the second campaign. In common with all other scribal features, these elaborations are subject to much variation throughout the manuscript, and the most prominent of these are shown in figs.4.220-41. Most likely due to the small sample of pages, these variants are not always found in zones attributed to Scribe B. These variations are often found in clusters and also different variants may occur in close proximity (fig.4.233).

The distribution of abbreviation marks with the cross-hatched additions is random and instances occur with, and without, these additions, sometimes in close proximity (fig.4.234). There are also occasional sequences of pages where these cross-hatched additions are absent in zones attributed to the various hands in the four scribe scheme ff.295-296r (Scribe A), ff.127r-129r (Scribe B), ff.61v-63v (Scribe C), and ff.244v-245r (Scribe D).

Red and other coloured additions

to abbreviation marks

Various additions, usually in red, have been added to the hatched elaborations above the strokes marking the abbreviated *nomina sacra*, and the random distribution and constant variation of these additions is consistent with all the other scribal features in the manuscript (figs.4.235-8 and diag.4.5). The most common of these are the forty-two instances, on twenty-nine pages, where dots of red have been applied to compartments within the mesh of the elaboration. These elaborations seem to be unique to Kells, and it is possible to speculate that it was intended that these fine grids were to be filled with colour in a manner that would resemble similar metalwork decoration such as millefiori.

These additions are randomly scattered throughout the manuscript, with pairs occurring on nine pages ff.53v, 77v, 108v, 317r, 318r, 321v, 325r, 332r and 334r, and clusters of three on two ff.222v and 300v. The other most prominent cluster of these additions occurs between ff.317r-319r. The position, size, and number of the added coloured marks is constantly varied. The additions in the first of the two instances on f.53v show the marks at the top of the motif while those in the second are lower down (fig.4.235). While four is the most common number of these added marks in colour, there are only two in the instance on f.36v, three in that on f.39r, varied amounts in the four instances on f.222v, and sixteen in that on f.199r (fig.4.236). This latter most closely echoes the appearance of millefiori decoration.

In other variations, there are four instances with yellow marks, two on f.50r and one each on ff.125r and 293r (fig.4.237), and three instances with blue marks, two on f.261v and one on f.179v (fig.4.238-nos.1-3). The instance in line 2 on f.282r seems to have seven black marks

although its original colour may at some stage have been altered by moisture, traces of which are clearly visible in the surrounding damp stain (fig.4.238-no.4).

'Doubling' of abbreviation marks

The 'doubling' red mark which is often added above the standard abbreviation mark is also added to those with mesh elaborations on nineteen occasions (diag.4.5). Eighteen of these occur in the first half of the book between ff.17r-163r (fig.4.239-nos.1-2) with only one further instance on f.285v (fig.4.239-nos.1-2). Clusters of these occur on f.17r which has four, f.90r which has three, and ff.61r and 131r both of which have two. The 'doubled' mark is added underneath the original elaborated abbreviation mark on two pages, f.12v which has two and f.98r which has one (fig.4.239-nos.3-4). The elaborations to the abbreviation marks also have various groupings of small triple red dots added on twelve occasions (fig.4.239-nos.5-7). Further unique or rare variants are shown in figs.4.240-41. A cluster of abbreviation marks with unusual circular additions occurs between ff.331v-333r (fig.4.242). Finally, images of fish are used as abbreviation marks on a total of nine occasions (fig.4.243). Their occurence in zones attributed to three of the individuals in the four-scribe scheme and does not support this division of hands. This conclusion applies to all aspects relating to the abbreviation marks as discussed in the preceding paragraphs.

Conclusions

Both the accent marks and the abbreviation marks show remarkable consistency in their basic form. There is also a remarkable consistency in their constant variation throughout the manuscript. It is significant to note that this predilection for variation, and indeed the variants themselves, are also evident in what appears to be the second scribal campaign. This attitude to

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variation, and also the other patterns relating to the scribal work, that recur throughout the manuscript – random distribution, occasional clusters, sequences of pages without features, occasional unique variants, the absence of systematic application and the consistency of the stroke formation – all seem to point to this being the work of a single individual - the Scribe-Artist. The interrogation of even the minutest evidence does not reveal any distinguishing characteristics that would indicate the identity of different hands.

(xi) Mise-en-page and miscellaneous features

The following paragraphs address issues relating to mise-en-page in both the prefatory material and in the Gospel texts. The relationship between the initials and the text is also examined. The presence of decorative features at page-ends is discussed, as is the consistency of word-separation, and the occurrence of word-breaks. Other issues addressed include the justification of text, consistency of line-length, and also the number of lines per page. This is concluded by discussion of zoomorphic interaction across openings.

Mise-en-page

As noted above in the discussion on punctuation, the mise-en-page or layout and appearance of the pages of the Gospel texts are largely determined by the treatment of the Eusebian sections. However, there are a number of other related aspects that merit discussion. The layout of the prefatory material also merits attention and this is addressed separately. In support of his division of hands, Meehan states that 'folios 67r and 89r do not impress on examination as the work of

the same scribe'.[94] While there are indeed differences between these pages, such differences may also be found within the zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme (fig.4.244). This illustration highlights the extent of the variation that is found within the zones attributed to the different hands, and somewhat undermines the evidential value of these comparisons made by Meehan in support of his scheme. These differences are understood here as part of the programme of variation of scribal features that has been noted throughout the manuscript. The following illustrations, figs.4.245-253, highlight some of the mise-en-page variations that are found in the manuscript and their occurrence in zones attributed to each of the hands in the four-scribe scheme does not support such a division of hands. Figs.4.255-6 show further features which occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D, while fig.4.257 shows another feature in zones attributed to Scribes C and D.

A range of distinctive features relating to mise-en-page is also found in the prefatory material which is attributed to Scribes A and B, and these occur in zones attributed to both hands. Fig.4.258-nos.1-2 show some pages of text justified to the left, while nos.3-4 show text indented from the initials in the left margin.[95] Fig.4.259-nos.1-2 show pages with initials at both the middle and the left-hand margin while nos.3-4 show pages where these only occur at the left-hand side.

Initials in the margins (ff.293v-296v)

The location of the decorated initials on ff.293v-296v in the left-hand margin is

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[94] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 191.
[95] A similar arrangement occurs on f.41r at the end of the Beatitudes attributed to Scribe C.

unique in the manuscript and not easily explained. The following speculation on this unusual occurrence is based on the identification of certain patterns, and also based on the intuitions gained by intensive study of the manuscript.

Most of the illuminated pages do not appear to have been completed, and it also appears that two significant text sections were incomplete when the first campaign came to a possibly abrupt halt. This implies that different sections of the work were undertaken at the same time, rather than one section of text or illumination being fully completed before proceeding to the next. Regarding the sections attributed by Meehan to his Scribe A, this study has shown that while they are not the work of a separate individual, they do have certain similarities, and it may be that these similarities originate in their being worked on simultaneously. The compact nature of the script in zones 3, 10 and at the beginning of zone 17, is certainly evident and the decoration as described by Meehan is 'more sober and conservative'.[96] There is also a distinctive concentration of the turn-in-path feature common to these zones. There are twenty-five instances in the first seven pages of the *breves causa* in zone 2, seven of these in the first six pages of zone 10, and ten in the first four pages pages of zone 17. Is it possible that these are the first texts undertaken by the Scribe-Artist and that perhaps his frequent use of turn-in-path in the prefatory material inspires the others and these can cumulatively be considered as a cluster? The marginal location of the initials on f.9r may also parallel this feature on ff.293v-296v. It may be that at the outset, the Scribe-Artist was unsure as to how he should integrate the initials with the text. In a possible scenario, ff.8 and 292 may have been unavailable to the Scribe-Artist while they were illuminated by the Master-Artist. The Scribe-Artist may have begun work on f.9r, beginning all the text lines, with the exception of line 9, to the right of the initials (fig.4.258-no.3). However, another possibility must be considered here, as the beginnings of the text lines may have been

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[96] Ibid., p. 186 (see also footnote 86 above).

adjusted to compensate for the large hole in the vellum on the left of lines 11-12. Considering the beginning of John, awaiting the availability of f.292 (which was possibly being illuminated by the Master-Artist), the Scribe-Artist may have decided to leave both sides of the first opening in John blank and began writing on the verso of f.293. His practice was to place all the larger initials in the margin to the left of the text-block and he continued in this way until f.296v, and he may have continued in this way until f.298r. Due to the length of Eusebian section 24, which extends over several pages, the text on ff.297r-298r did not necessitate any large initials until the beginning of section 25 on f.298v. At this point, possibly in consultation with the Master-Artist, a decision is taken to incorporate all further initials, large and small, within the main text-block, and this practice is then adopted as standard practice throughout the rest of the manuscript. However, the disruption of the continuity of the work, and the subsequent change of plan may have led to the omission of two initial letters on f.296v (fig.5.300-no.4).[97] Meehan has suggested that the slightly more generous justification of the text on the verso of illuminated *incipit* pages may indicate that they were written at a later stage when the artist had finished with the folio.[98] This is certainly a plausible interpretation of the script on these pages.

Page-ends

The bottom right-hand corner is a distinctive point on a page, and in Kells this is often marked by the use of a scribal feature.[99] These occur on the last words or letters on four-hundred and forty-four pages, and are absent on one-hundred and ninety-three pages in the manuscript. As with all the other scribal features these are randomly distributed and there are no identifiable

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[97] The rudimentary initials inserted here seem to be the work of a much later hand. Meehan in discussing the additions made to the manuscript by Gerald Plunket in the sixteenth century suggests that he may be responsible for adding these initials, Meehan, 'Other marginalia and additions', in *Kells* C*ommentary*, pp. 167-68.
[98] Meehan, 'The Script', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 247-48
[99] Pages ending with extended curved-concave elaborations were discussed in chapter three (p. 165).

patterns that could be linked to any of the hands in the four-scribe scheme. For example, a sequence of these features at page-ends occurs on ff.130v-133r and is immediately followed by a sequence of pages with none on ff.133v-136r, all of these occurring in zone 10 attributed to Scribe A. A similar pattern is found in zone 7 attributed to Scribe C, where none occur between ff.65r-67v, which is shortly followed by a lengthy sequence of these features between ff.78v-84v. Shorter breaks occur in the presence and absence of these features at page-ends in zones attributed to Scribes B and D. Figs.4.261-285 show a range of these features, and while they are not all found in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme, there is a remarkable consistency throughout. Fig.5.343 shows the 12 instances of *et*-ligatures which occur at page-ends.

Similar features also occur on the ends of the first lines of pages, and as with those at the ends of pages, they do not occur in patterns that could be linked with any particular hand in the four-scribe scheme. These are found on three hundred and nineteen pages, which is less than those at the ends of pages. There are also significantly fewer large features such as zoomorphs at the ends of the first lines on the pages of the manuscript.

Word-separation

In general, word-separation is prominent and fairly consistently applied throughout the manuscript, but occasionally lines occur that are written almost as *scriptura continua*. These are most likely due to the scribe's organisation of text and page layout. Fig.4.286 shows instances of these in zones attributed to each of the hands in the four-scribe scheme. These are the last lines on each of the pages as this is where these lines most frequently occur.[100] The occasional writing

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[100] These lines with little word-separation may also occur within the text-block or at the top of a page.

of script in such lines may also be a further manifestation of the Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation as discussed throughout this study.

Word-breaks

Word-breaks between lines are a common feature in Insular manuscripts and occur throughout the Book of Kells.[101] Of particular interest in Kells is the occurrence of such breaks between pages. They seem to be incorporated as one of the many other scribal features at page ends as discussed above. As such, they would appear to complement the instances where scribal features such as superscripts, subscripts and turn-in-path are used to ensure that a word is completed at the end of a page. These page-breaks are randomly distributed throughout the manuscript (diag.4.6), and occasionally occur across openings as well as on both sides of a single folio. It is of further interest to note that these word-breaks may occur between quires. These quire-breaks occur on ff.69v-70r (quires 8-9 attributed to Scribe C), ff.140v-141r (quires 16-17 attributed to Scribes A and C), ff.168v-169r (quires 19-20 attributed to Scribe D), ff.177v-178r (quires 20-21 attributed to Scribe D) and ff.216v-217r (quires 24-25 attributed to Scribe C). It is of particular interest to note that one of these breaks occurs between quires attributed to different hands (ff.140v-141r). Another page-break attributed to different hands is that between ff.19v-20r, which occurs between zones 3 and 4 attributed to Scribes A and B respectively. These patterns of occurrence cannot be linked to any individual hand in the four-scribe scheme and are rather, consistent with the work of the Scribe-Artist.

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[101] These occur without hyphenation, which first came into use in the eleventh century; see Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 171.

Justification

Within the Book of Kells, lines in the text-block are usually justified on the left-hand side.[102]

This justification applies more particularly to the normal text as decorated initials often extend slightly into the margin. On the right-hand side, the line-ends are typically uneven across all the scribal zones (fig.4.287). However, in some instances the right-hand edge may be reasonably justified. This is particularly noticeable in the pages containing the *argumenta* on ff.12, 15v, 16, 17, 18 and 19r, but also occur from time to time in zones attributed to each of the various hands in the four-scribe scheme (fig.4.288).[103] Variations in the relationship of the initials to the text in the prefatory material were discussed above (fig.4.258). This again exemplifies the Scribe-Artist's predilection for using variations such as these, and their random distribution is also characteristic of the patterns found across the range of the various scribal features throughout the manuscript.

Line-length

The typical lack of justification on the right-hand side makes it difficult to accurately determine variations in line-length throughout the manuscript. The most useful method found in the present study was to identify the text line which extended furthest into the right-hand margin on each page (diag.4.7).[104] This is a useful indicator of the line-length on the page as they are usually no more than a few millimeters longer than the rest.[105] There are two exceptions to this on ff.220r and 253v, both of which show longest lines in the order of 180mm, whereas lines of 170mm are

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[102] See also chapter two p. 74 and figs.2.89-90.
[103] In C.C.C.C. 197B the John scribe tends towards a justification of the text on the right-hand side while the Luke scribe does not.
[104] These are measured from the left and right edges of the text, excluding extensions to letters, punctuation and line-fillers. The canon tables and pages written in double columns are not included.
[105] Several lines on a page may share this longest length.

typical. However, on closer examination, both of these appear to have been extended in the course of adjustments or corrections to the text.[106] As the lines generally tend to share similar measurements across large sections of the manuscript, apart from the two pages just mentioned, it was possible to make this information more usefully communicable by calculating averages for each quire, or parts of a quire where these are attributed to different hands (diag.4.7).

In support of his attribution of ff.130v-140v to his Scribe A, Meehan suggests that 'the lines of text are, like the preliminaries and John, slightly longer than those of the other scribes'.[107] The diagram does show the longest lines in zone 3 (preliminaries, quires 2-3) averaging approximately 183mm and 184mm, in zone 10 (beginning of Mark, quire 16) and quire 34 at the beginning of zone 17 (John), with an average of almost 185mm. However, this figure for the beginning of John gets smaller in the subsequent quires – 184.5mm in quire 35, 181.5mm in quire 36 and 179mm in quires 37-38. This pattern of reduction closely parallels the figures in the first four quires of Mark, only one of which is attributed to Scribe A. As with the five remaining quires of John, all six quires of Mark's Gospel show a continuous gradual reduction in the length of the longest lines.

The figures in the diagram for Luke's Gospel show this pattern occurring twice. Quires 22-28 show a gradual reduction from 176.3-168.86mm. While the first six of these quires are attributed to Scribe C, quire 28 is attributed to Scribe D. The figure jumps to 176mm on quire 29 and from quire 30 the pattern begins again, gradually reducing to 171.6mm in the final quire of Luke. The pattern in Matthew shows a further variation with the first eight quires, 5-12, attributed to Scribes C and D showing longest lines averaging in the mid to low 170mms. The final three quires again show the pattern of reduction with quire 13 just below 170mm, quire 14

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[106] It is interesting to note that on some, but not all, single folios, the line-length may be slightly less than on neighbouring pages as for example on ff.172, 243-45 and 325-26.
[107] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 186.

at 164.75mm and quire 15, attributed to Scribes D and B, dropping to the lowest average of 161.5mm.

Meehan's assertion that longer line-length may be used to identify hand A is not borne out by the figures in the diagram. Quire 17 for example, which is attributed to Scribe C shows longer lines than the final three in John, quires 36-38, which are attributed to Scribe A. The consistency of line-length in the preliminaries, at the beginning of Mark and in quires 34-35 at the beginning of John, may be further evidence that these were worked on contemporaneously.[108] Rather than supporting a division of hands, analysis of line-length shows further evidence for the attribution of this work to the Scribe-Artist whose predilection for variation is a consistent hallmark throughout the manuscript.

The number of lines per page

In characterising the work of hand B in his four-scribe scheme, Meehan states that he 'has no consistency in the number of lines to the page, using sometimes seventeen, sometimes eighteen and sometimes nineteen lines'.[109] While the zones attributed to Scribe C consistently use seventeen lines, those attributed to Scribes A and D also show significant variation in this regard. In the zones attributed to Scribe A, there are pages with seventeen lines (zone 10), eighteen lines (zone 17 – with the exception of f.312 which has nineteen) and zone 3 where the pages have nineteen lines. In the zones attributed to Meehan's Scribe D, there are seventeen lines in zones 8 and 12 (except for ff.123r and 124v), and while zone 15 begins with seventeen lines per page, this changes to sixteen over the last four quires (ff.260r-289r). This is further evidence of the

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[108] This will be discussed in the final conclusions to the thesis (see also footnote 86 above).
[109] Ibid., p. 185.

scribal predilection for variation noted throughout this study and does not point to the identification of different hands.

Zoomorphic interaction across openings

In her discussion of zoomorphs, of both the interlinear variety and those which are part of initials, Pulliam notes that 'as with so many instances within the manuscript, the decoration of the verso is modified by that on the opposite page'.[110] As an example of this she describes the interaction between zoomorphs on ff.78v-79r (fig.4.289-no.3). She interprets these as emphasising the link between Christ's foretelling of the reckoning that will occur on Judgement Day on f.78v (Mt.16.27) and another reference to this time when 'the Son of Man coming in his kingdom' will be seen (Mt.16.28). These occur on ff.78v-79r which is in zone 7 attributed to Scribe C. Pulliam follows this by noting a similar interaction across the opening ff.311v-312r.[111] This occurs in zone 17 attributed to Scribe A. Fig.4.289-no.1 shows another instance from the same zone on ff.309v-310r. Here, we see a leonine initial *h*, at the beginning of the passage which describes the Eucharistic 'bread come down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die' (Jn.6.50). This leonine zoomorphic initial is joined by an interlinear lion, who marks a turn-in-path in the middle of the same verse, as both look across the gutter-margin. Their gaze is returned on f.310r by a bird (peacock?), also marking a turn-in-path in the middle of John 6.57, which reiterates a similar point in the bread of life discourse, and which states, 'he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him'.

Pulliam also notes a similar interaction between two interlinear birds across the opening ff.270v-271r (fig.4.289-no.4). Here, the reciprocated gaze of the birds' links the passage on

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[110] Pulliam, *Word and Image*, p. 128.
[111] Ibid., p. 129 (see also discussion of turn-in-path markers on p. 249 above).

f.270v, which foretells destruction 'as nation shall rise against nation' (Lk.21.10), with that on

f.271r, which holds out the promise of salvation for the just (Lk.21.14-15). This opening occurs

in zone 15 attributed to Scribe D.[112] The division of hands is not the subject of investigation in

Pulliam's book yet it is interesting that her findings reveal instances of these interactions which

occur across openings in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D.[113] Although not discussed by

Pulliam, fig.4.289-no.2 shows a further instance of zoomorphic interaction across an opening in

the short zone 9 attributed to Scribe B. At the beginning of the last line on f.127v there are two

heads on the large *R*. In this verse the angel at the tomb begins by saying to the women '*nolite*

timere' (be not afraid) and he continues by announcing that Christ is risen (Mt.28.5). One of the

heads on the *R* looks across at f.128r where his gaze is returned by a zoomorphic head at the

beginning of '*Tunc ait illis ihs*' (then Jesus said - Mt.28.10). Here Jesus is speaking to the

disciples after the resurrection and His first words are also '*nolite timere*'. The occurrence of this

distinctive feature of zoomorphic interactions across openings in zones attributed to each of the

hands in the four-scribe scheme is further evidence that supports the conclusion that Kells is the

work of a single individual.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined a range of features to ascertain if any evidence may be found which

would assist in the identification of different hands. The textual issues of spelling variants, the

use of words or numerals to represent numbers, and patterns relating to the correction of errors,

do not show any features that can be linked to any zones attributed to the various hands in the

four-scribe scheme. Similarly, the various features which are used to punctuate the Eusebian

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[112] Ibid., on pp. 71-2. On p. 135 Pulliam describes another instance attributed to scribe D between ff.178v-179r in zone 12.
[113] Ibid., p. 15.

sections and the verses have been shown to range across the zones attributed to the various

hands. These consistencies are found even in the smallest features such as the dots used as

punctuation marks.

The decorative features also reveal similar patterns throughout the manuscript including

the identification of the marginal arabesques as a 'family' of motifs. These are extensively varied

in ways that recall, for example the 'family' of letters with extended curved-concave elaborations

discussed in chapter three. Similarly, other decorative features such as flowers, florets, spirals

and trumpet-spirals do not occur in patterns that support a division of hands. Certain features, as

for example zoomorphs, occur less frequently, or are absent in zones attributed to Scribe B.

However, throughout this study, these zones have been identified as a second campaign by the

same individual and the absence of some features is understood as being symptomatic of

pressures of time or failing faculties. The evidence of sameness - the consistent presence of the

same scribal '*DNA*' - far outweighs the differences. These differences, including the use of

coloured inks, can be understood as further manifestations of the predilection for variation which

pervades the various features in the book. Just as elsewhere in the manuscript there is a complete

absence of any graphic signature markers in the various scribal zones that might link them with

the four-scribe scheme or alternative scribal divisions as proposed by other authors.

While some of the line-fillers appear to belong to the proposed first campaign, a further

extensive range of motifs appear to have been added in the proposed second campaign. It may

always have been intended that many of these were to be added after the script was completed.[114]

These whiplash flourishes, scrolls, wave-scrolls, flower/floret and leaf sprays, all exemplify the

characteristics that pervade the work of the first campaign including their random distribution,

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[114] One may wonder if the many red line-filling wave-scrolls in the Book of Durrow, for example, were also added
after the writing was completed.

their occurrence in clusters, and their constant variation. In addition, the calligraphic quality of the whiplash flourishes recall, for example, similarly calligraphic script elaborations. Even when they are not as precisely rendered, as for example many of the floret and leaf sprays used as line fillers and markers for instances of turn-in-path and superscripts, they still exhibit the same accomplished graphic fluency, and the same imaginitive tendencies in the manner of their variation. The '*DNA*' of the Scribe-Artist seems to be consistent throughout.

The patterns relating to the use of superscripts and subscripts, and also turn-in-path do not suggest a division of hands. Apart from the use of zoomorphic markers which do not appear in the second campaign, the strokes used to mark these features, and also the accents, all show a remarkable consistency throughout the manuscript. In these minutest of marks we might expect to find some trace of scribal difference, if indeed there were different hands. This recalls Eisenlohr's comments on the usefulness for hand identification of similar small graphic marks such as the 'almost insignificant flick of the pen' used to form the *e*-caudata.[115] The consistency in these minor graphic details is also evident in the marks which identify the abbreviations used for the *nomina sacra*, and their varied elaborations, regardless of whether they seem to belong to the first or the second campaigns.

The patterns relating to mise-en-page in both the prefatory texts and the Gospels, again, are not specifically linked to zones attributed to particular scribes. The fact that these zones do not conform to quire divisions has been noted by Meehan.[116] Attention has also been drawn to the pairing and other arrangements of decorated initials, the use of features at the ends of first and last lines, the occasional lack of word-separation, and also to the occurrence of word-breaks between pages, sometimes even between quires, justification and line-length. None of these

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[115] Eisenlohr, 'The puzzle of the scribes', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 207.
[116] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 186.

features occur in ways that might support the identification of different hands. The coherence of the evidence presented throughout this chapter cannot easily be attributed to scriptorium practice and further enhances the proposal of a single 'great' scribe.

Chapter 5

INITIALS AND DISPLAY-LETTERING

Introduction

Chapter five is divided into two sections. **Section I** deals with the initials and **Section II** deals

with the display-lettering in the Book of Kells. **Section I** begins **(i)** by dealing with the initials,

mainly undecorated, which occur in the prefatory texts. These texts include the *breves causa*, the

argumenta and the lists of Hebrew names on f.1r and between ff.8v and 26v. This analysis is

focused on instances of the initial *d* and the *et*-ligature. This is followed by **(ii)** analysis of of

initial-*a* throughout the manuscript. Half-uncial *a* initials are addressed first and this includes a

digression on the presence of a decorative motif in Kells which is possibly inspired by the

Cathach manuscript. The uncial-*a* initial letterform is then discussed. This is followed by **(iii)** an

examination of the *et*-ligature throughout the manuscript, which occurs with great frequency as

an initial. These analyses of both *a* and the *et*-ligature proceed from the smaller, largely

undecorated instances through to those formed of elaborate zoomorphs.

The next part of this chapter is **(iv)** a 'visual essay' which highlights the correspondences

between the zoomorphic initials and the interlinear creatures. This is followed by analysis of

various links between the initials and the script. **(v)** Initials and additions to initials made during

the proposed second campaign are then discussed. This is followed by **(vi)** analysis of spirals,

and linked with this is a discussion regarding the Master-Artist's possible contribution of a

number of initials in the manuscript. The next part **(vii)** examines the occurrence of an unusual *n*.

This part also discusses the use of ink in initials and the letters immediately following them and

also the use of 'diminuendo' in the manuscript. Then **(viii)** the distribution of initials on the pages of the manuscript is addressed. This is concluded by analysis of the sequences of the *et-*ligature *litterae notabiliores* in Kells, and these are compared with similar sequences in other manuscripts. This is concluded by examining ff.218v-219r for evidence relating to the arbitrary nature of the distribution of the initials in the manuscript. **Section I** is concluded by **(ix)** a discussion of issues relating to the scribal work. These include discussion of the attitude to variation in Kells' script which is compared with the practices of contemporary metalworkers. This leads, finally, to a brief note on the scribe Ultán.

Section II addresses the display-lettering, usually in panels, which follow some of the larger initials, and also which follow the major initials on the Gospel *incipit* pages. Angular display-letters are discussed separately from the curvilinear instances. The first part **(x)** includes analysis of the angular display-letterforms, their decoration and also the many correspondences between these and some initials in the text. This is followed **(xi)** by discussion of the curvilinear display-lettering. The final part of **Section II (xii)** addresses the issue of decoration added in and around the display-lettering, and also the occurrence of borders framing the panels of these display-letters.

Section I - Initials

(i) Initials in the prefatory material

These paragraphs primarily deal with the letter *d* and the *et*-ligature in the *breves causae*, but before addressing these it is interesting to briefly consider the first page of the manuscript. The end of the alphabetical list of Hebrew names on f.1r, shows an initial on each of these names. Most striking are the three variant forms of *z* (fig.5.1) and significantly these recall the variant forms of the letter in the normal script of the manuscript (figs.3.148 and 3.241). The form of the letters and their variation suggests that these are the work of the Scribe-Artist. There is no evidence to suggest that the initials have been added by another hand. These initials are relatively modest in terms of scale and additional decoration. This may reflect their status as prefatory material and may deliberately contribute to distinguishing these texts from the Gospels.[1]

Fig.5.2 shows all instances of the initial-*d* in the prefatory material. These are in the *breves causa*, where initials are used with great frequency to mark each *capitula* or chapter heading of the various Gospel episodes. In contrast, the *argumenta*, a type of biographical note on the Evangelists, which were used as prefaces to authenticate their authorship of the Gospels, have few initials. The initial-*d* appears often in the *breves causa* texts. Only the *et*-ligature, which will be addressed in the following section, occurs with greater frequency. Of all the initial letters here these two are also subject to the greatest variation. The initial-*d* occurs on thirty-four instances in zone three attributed to Scribe A, and on twenty-three instances in zone four attributed to Scribe B. Seeing these letters together, one is struck by the attitude to variation

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[1] M.P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, p. 246.

which is a constant feature in both zones. This ranges from obvious differences in form to more subtle variations in detail. The use of coloured inks, associated with the second campaign, in many of the instances in zone 4 is one of the main reasons for its attribution to hand B in the four-scribe scheme, while those in zone 3, completely in black ink are attributed to Scribe A. Similar to the analysis of the script in chapter three, closer examination of these initials, in both zones, reveals significant patterns of similarity. Figs.5.3-16 show a range of variations of these initials, including clusters and unique variants in both zones 3 and 4 attributed to Scribes A and B.

In Kells the treatment of the *et*-ligature is one of the most prominent features throughout both the regular script and the initials.[2] Fig.5.17 shows all instances of these in the prefatory material and while most of them are in the *breves causa*, some also occur in the *argumenta*. Forty-seven are found in zone 3 and thirty-four in zone 4. Their analysis here looks beyond the obvious use of coloured inks in zone 4, and, as with the *d* initials above, focuses instead on the similarities in form and detail. A brief inspection might suggest that they are all similar and they share one of two basic forms. However, a closer examination reveals further evidence of a pattern of constant variation, and, as is shown in the illustrations, these are similar in both zones. This also parallels the evidence of its treatment in the script (figs.3.149-213). Figs.5.18-30 show a range of variations of these *et*-ligature initials, including clusters and unique variants in both zones 3 and 4 attributed to Scribes A and B. These recall many of the variations occurring in the script, including some with lentoid strokes which are subtly animated and terminated in wedges which create the appearance of a 'fish-shape'. It may be possible that the use of these 'fish-shaped' horizontal strokes is referencing a similar motif in the earlier Columban manuscript, the

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[2] In addition to the examination of the *et*–ligature initials in the prefatory material those occurring in the main Gospel texts will be addressed later in this chapter (figs.5.123-245 and figs.5.345-53) See also extensive variations of this letterform in the script (figs.3.149-213).

Cathach. These occur on six of its initials as the middle horizontal bar in the initial *e* (fig.5.63-no.4).[3] This is discussed further below in the context of another possible reference to the earlier manuscript (pp. 287-88).

These illustrations for both *d* and the *et*-ligature initials highlight the more obvious variations which can reasonably be grouped or categorized. They abound in further subtle modifications, and the more closely they are examined the more apparent it becomes that it is this predilection for variation that is their most dominant characteristic. These variants cannot satisfactorily be traced back to a simple canon of letters that might have been used by a number of scribes in a scriptorium. Rather they show a distinctive attitude where the size, shape and various details of any given instance are subject to random variation. This is consistent with the evidence relating to the script in chapter three, and suggests that the initials, as well as the script, in both zones 3 and 4 are by the same individual. While no obvious rationale is apparent for the use of coloured inks in zone four, this may simply be a further manifestation of the Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation. In addition, it may be an attempt to compensate for his diminishing faculties as the work of the proposed second campaign lacks the precision of the first.

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[3] These are on ff.13r, 22r, 23v, 25r, 27r and 41r in the Cathach. This fish motif is also used for the diagonal stroke on *N* on five other initials on ff.6r, 7v, 30v, 35r and 43v. This may have been used to recall the early Christian use of *ICHTUS*, the Greek word for fish, as a symbol. *I-CH-T-U-S* is an acronym for *Iesus Christus Theou Uios Soter* which translates as 'Jesus Christ, God's Son - Saviour'. More directly it may be graphically linked to the simple drawing of a fish made of two intersecting arcs thought to have been used as a symbol of identification and recognition among the earliest Christians. See also initial *N* in Milan, Ambrosian Library, MS S.45.sup. from Bobbio (Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 151). The diagonal stroke in this *N* is formed of two fish.

(ii) The letter *a* - initials

The following paragraphs deal with the letter a as it occurs in the initial letters in the Book of Kells. The first part deals with half-uncial *a* and uncial-*a* is addressed in the second part.

Half-uncial *a* - initial letters

It is not practical to deal with instances of all initials in the mansucript, and *a* is chosen here as a representative example. It is particularly suitable as it occurs in both uncial and half-uncial forms which parallels their occurrence in the script.[4] The two main text zones attributed to Scribe B do not provide an extensive sample of any individual initial, apart from the *et*-ligature and *d* in zone 4, as discussed above, and there are only a few instances of *a*. There are thirteen pages in the prefatory material in zone four and there are only six full pages of text in zone 9 at the end of Matthew's Gospel. However, when seen together, there is no significant difference between the only initial half-uncial *a* in zone 9 attributed to Scribe B (fig.5.31-no.55) and those nearby in zones attributed to Scribes D (see, for example, figs.5.31-nos.48 and 50) and A (e.g. fig.5.31-nos.61 and 62).

Fig.5.31 shows all instances of half-uncial *a* initials in the manuscript. There is a remarkable consistency in its basic form throughout, and this is similar to the script version (figs.3.1 and 3.4-5). While the initials adhere to this basic form, the letter is subject to a consistent and constant pattern of subtle variation and these features are also paralleled in the script (figs.3.3a-b, 3.7-9 and 3.223). This consistency of form is evident throughout the graduated range of sizes which are found in zones attributed to scribes A, C and D (figs.5.32-

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[4] The fact that both uncial-*a* and half-uncial *a* in the script were subject to in-depth analysis in chapter three, and the fact that it is also given particular emphasis in the analysis of the display-lettering (figs.5.367-8) contributed to the selection of the letter *a* as a suitable subject for investigation here.

34).[5] As with the initials *d* and the *et*–ligature, discussed above, variations abound. Figs.5.35-62

show a range of these variations and includes further variation in their additional decoration.

This predilection for variation is typical of the Scribe-Artist's approach throughout the

manuscript.

A possible 'Cathach-motif'

This paragraph digresses to some extent from this analysis of these letters and explores the

Scribe-Artist's possible reuse of a motif from the Cathach. There are about sixty instances in

Kells where the bowl of a letter contains a distinctive pointed motif. This typically has a semi-

circular base topped with a narrow triangle and is finished with a dot. These unusual motifs

recall a similar decorative device added to the bowls of three of the surviving initials in the

Cathach (fig.5.63-nos.1-3).[6] In contrast to the finesse that characterises most of Kells'

decoration, these motifs, at least the smaller instances, appear to be rendered with a somewhat

deliberate simplicity, and it should be noted that these do not appear to be later additions but

seem consistent with the drawing of the letter (fig.5.64). It also appears with an even greater

frequency, on over two hundred pages, on the wedges which terminate the strokes, usually

uprights, of initials (fig.5.65). Is it possible that the more 'primitive' appearance of these motifs

is a deliberate attempt to reference, and replicate its archaic form in the ultimate ancestral

Columban book – that which was believed to have been written by saint himself?[7] If so, it may

be seen in tandem with the 'fish-shaped' horizontal stroke discussed above. Similarly, it may be

considered in the context of the close relationship that has been noted between the prefatory

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[5] As noted above half-uncial *a* only occurs once as an initial letter in the zones atttributed to Scribe B.
[6] These are described as '*v*-shaped ornamentation' by M. Herity and A. Breen in *The Cathach of Colum Cille, An introduction* (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 2002), p. 19.
[7] Ibid., pp. 2-4.

material and the canon tables in Kells and those in another celebrated ancestral Columban

manuscript, the Book of Durrow. In Kells, this motif, like all the other scribal and decorative

features, is distributed randomly, appearing several times on a single page or on a number of

consecutive pages, only to disappear again and return a few pages further on. It is also subject to

extensive variation, occurring in a range of sizes (figs.5.66-68), occasionally occurring in

clusters and also in some unusual and unique instances (fig.5.69). It should be noted that the

larger versions are not rendered with the simplicity of the smaller ones and are usually more

stylized and elaborate. Further instances of these motifs are evident throughout the illustrations

in this chapter, and it also randomly occurs on the outside of the panel of display-lettering on

f.16v (fig.5.365-no.11) and below the Evangelist symbols on f.3v (fig.2.60). All of this evidence

is consistent with the defining characteristics of the Scribe-Artist's work throughout the

manuscript.

Half-uncial *a* - initial letters (contd.)

Returning to the half-uncial *a* initials, figs.5.70-80 show further instances of the variation in the

decoration that may be added to these letters, and also includes evidence of some clustering.

There are over 2,660 initials in the manuscript and no two are exactly alike. This exemplifies the

Scribe-Artist's predilection for variation, and figs.5.81-3 show some of the more particularly

distinctive instances of the half-uncial *a* initials. It may be that this predilection for variation,

which is such a constant feature throughout Kells, is yet another homage to the ancestral Cathach

whose scribe, possibly Columba, 'wished each ornamented initial to be an original and unique

creation'.[8]

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[8] Ibid., p. 14.

Uncial-a - initial letters

There are one hundred and forty-five uncial-*a* initials in the manuscript (fig.5.84). These are almost all capitalised versions of the letter, and are usually formed of two straight diagonal strokes to the left and right, with a more or less horizontal cross-bar. This creates an enclosed triangular space instead of the curved bowl which is more typical of uncial-*a*. This more angular form of the letter, being less like the usual script letterform, is perhaps more imposing and better suited to its use as an initial. However, the predilection for variation in these initials is similar to that noted in their script counterparts. The closest parallel between the two is found perhaps between those that are linked and ligatured to *h* (figs.3.374 and 5.105).

Examining fig.5.84, which shows all instances of uncial-*a* initials, one is struck by the continuous and seemingly endless variations (figs.5.85-115). The triangular enclosed part of the letter does not easily accommodate the 'Cathach-style' pointed motif, and this only occurs inside one rounded uncial-*a* initial (fig.5.84-no.16). However, this motif is also added to a few of the wedged terminals (fig.5.100). Figs.5.101-5 show uncial-*a* linked or ligatured with the letters *m*, *u*, *f*, *c* and *h* and these are combined with great variety, and particular variants frequently occur across the zones attributed to different hands. The manner in which the right-hand side of the uncial-*a* is developed as a continuation of the second stroke of *h* in fig.5.105-nos.6-7 is closely paralleled in many of the script instances in fig.3.374. The only instance fully ligatured with *h* is attributed to Scribe D (fig.5.105-no.4) and recalls two similar script instances attributed to Scribes C and D (fig.3.374-nos.12-13). These may also usefully be compared with other uncial ligatures in fig.5.101-nos.2, 4, 5 and 6.

A more upright, capitalised version of uncial-*a* also occurs, usually capped with a double wedged horizontal stroke, and these may have straight, angular, or curved crossbars (figs.5.106-

8). Two pairs of these letters, with more elaborate crossbars, may be seen as clusters in zones attributed to scribes C and D (fig.5.109). Further clusters in zones attributed to the different scribes are shown in figs.5.110-113.Another form of uncial-*a*, significantly elongated, and formed of opposed *s*-shaped strokes, occurs occasionally (fig.5.114). Even within the great variety of these letterforms some particularly distinctive and unique instances are also found (fig.5.115).

There are thirty-two instances where *a* is formed largely of zoomorphic, and, occasionally anthropomorphic, elements as opposed to merely having added features such as heads or tails (fig.5.116). The letterform embedded within the zoo/anthropomorphic elaboration may be half-uncial *a*, uncial-*a*, or the elongated version formed of opposed *s*-shapes (figs.5.117-9). These echo the same letterforms in the non-zoo/anthropomorphic instances (figs.5.75, 5.96 and 5.114). The consistency, from the simpler letterforms through to the more complex zoo/anthropomorphic letterforms, and their patterns of variation, suggest that these, albeit more highly elaborated letters, are the work of the same individual, the Scribe-Artist. These, indeed, may seen as part of a continuum extending to the simplest instances of these letterforms in the script. Particularly notable among these *a* initials are the clusters shown in figs.5.121-122. The absence of these zoo/anthropomorphic initials in zones attributed to Scribe B is consistent with the reduction in complexity and elaboration which characterises these zones, and which in this study are understood as a second campaign of work by a single scribe.

(iii) The *et*-ligature

The *et*-ligature is also chosen as a representative example of the initials in Kells. As mentioned above, this selection is particularly suitable as the letterform has been subject to extensive examination in the script (chapter three), and as an initial in the prefatory material at the beginning of this chapter. As part of the research undertaken in this study all the initial letters in Kells, over 2,660, were digitally cut and pasted onto one-hundred and seventy-six pages of illustrations. Almost one third of the initials are *et*-ligatures, which makes these letterforms a particularly suitable choice for examination. This 'database' of images facilitated analysis of the *et*-ligature. Figs.5.123-6 show single page sequences, taken from this 'database' of initials, from zones attributed to each of the hands in the four-scribe scheme.[9] In each case these illustrations reveal the predilection for variation that has been noted as a constant feature of the scribal work. There is a remarkable variety of sizes and letterforms, and close analysis reveals constant variation of the different elements of the *et*-ligature, which is continued into even the smallest details. The smaller instances of the *et*-ligature will be examined first, followed by the larger ones, and finally, the most complex instances formed of zoomorphic elements.

      The patterns of variation in the smaller *et*-ligature initials closely follow many of those identified in the script (figs.3.149-213), and the correspondences are referenced in figs.5.127-143. There are instances with both the straight and the curved tail-stroke, and they also include instances with the fish-shaped horizontal stroke (figs.5.142-3). Fig.5.140 shows pairs of *et*-ligatures closely aligned in consecutive lines, with each pair subject to subtle modification.[10] All

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[9] The ten instances in the short zone 9 attributed to Scribe B are augmented by four further instances from ff.183r and 188v. Compare these sequences of the *et*-ligature with those in figs.5.345-52).
[10] See also figs.4.251-52.

of this evidence suggests that these are the work of the hand that wrote the script - the Scribe-Artist.

The larger initial *et*-ligatures exhibit similar patterns of variation as discussed above (figs.5.144-236), and these are particularly evident if the basic black letterforms are examined on their own, leaving aside consideration of any added decorative features. Their continuation of many of the variations in the script and the smaller initials, also supports the attribution of these to the Scribe-Artist. The larger scale of these letters allows further scope for the Scribe-Artist to indulge his predilection for variation, as for example, in those instances with pointed left-hand strokes (figs.5.146-7). These recall script versions of the *et*–ligature with similarly pointed elements examined in chapter three (figs.3.350-54).[11]

The presence of zoomorphic heads on the initials (figs.5.2-no.31, 5.17-no.14, 5.56, 5.93-4 and 5.196-98), is also paralleled in the occurrence of a few similar, if proportionally smaller heads, on some script letters (figs.3.145-46). Such correspondences as these support the conclusion that the initials and the script are the work of the same individual. Similarly, the presence of a number of 'Cathach-style' motifs in the script (fig.3.144) echoes those on the initials (figs.5.2-no.26, 5.64-9, 5.84-no.16, 5.100 and 5.224-26).

While the range of variants shown in the illustrations (figs.5.127-236) do not always occur in zones attributed to the all of the hands in the four-scribe scheme, particularly in the small sample of pages attributed to Scribe B, their random distribution across the various zones suggests that they are the work of the same individual. Fig.5.202 shows the only three instances where the tail-stroke of the larger *et*-ligature initial is linked to a letter beyond that which immediately follows it. It is interesting to note that one of these occurs in zone 9 attributed to

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[11] As noted elsewhere many categories of variants are not found in the small number of pages attributed to Scribe B. To a lesser extent this is also the case with the relatively small number of pages in zones attributed to Scribe A.

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Scribe B. As can be seen in fig.5.124 there are only three of these larger initials attributed to this hand. However, it is significant that these appear to fit naturally into the random patterns of variation found throughout these letters (see figs.5.144, 5.150, 5.152, 5.187 and 5.189). The instances attributed to this hand B also fit the patterns of variation associated with the decoration added to these initials (figs.5.205, 5.207 and 5.216). This comprehensive analysis of the initial *et*–ligature does not provide any evidence of particular characteristics or traits that one would expect to find if indeed they were the work of different hands.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Zoomorphic et-ligatures</h3>

The most imaginitive elaborations are found on those initials that may be described as zoomorphic. These are formed of more fully developed zoomorphs in contrast to those initials that merely have added zoomorphic features, as for example, in figs.5.196-8. These fantastic zoomorphic creations allow scope for the Scribe-Artist to fully indulge the impulses of his imaginitive virtuosity. The fact that most of these occur in zones attributed to Scribe D is not indicative of a characteristic that may be associated with this particular hand. As will be demonstrated, the variations in these initials are found across the zones attributed to the scribes A, C and D. Henry has shown how the increased animation of the initials in the zones attributed to Scribe D, reflects their content, as these are the Passion sequences of the first three Gospels (that of John being lost at the end of the manuscript).[12] As argued throughout this study, the absence of these zoomorphic initials in the six pages of Gospel text attributed to scribe B can be understood as a feature of the somewhat diminished quality of the scribe's second campaign.

While each of the seventy-seven instances of the zoomorphic *et*-ligature initials in fig.5.237 is distinctively unique, some recurring patterns may be identified which allow for some

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[12] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 175. See also Pulliam, *Word and Image*.

categorization (figs.5.238-44). These patterns are all found in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D, and there are no patterns that can be linked to any individual. Fig.5.245 shows all instances of the zoomorphic *et*-ligatures with fish as horizontal strokes. While most, but not all, of these occur in zones attributed to Scribe D, their variations in size and detail are not specific to zones attributed to this hand. These varied fish are also not different from their fellows on other *et*-ligatures (figs.5.181 and 5.232-nos.1-2), those which occur as abbreviation marks (fig.4.243), or as interlinear creatures (figs.4.146-nos.41 and 55). It will be argued below that the interlinear creatures and the zoomorphic initials (with the exception of a few attributed to the Master-Artist-figs.5.325-27), are the work of the same individual. The bird in fig.5.237-no.24 is not really typical of the letters with zoomorphic features and can be understood as an instance of the Scribe-Artist's unique variants. This relatively naturalistic bird merely poses as the letter and is not significantly different from its fellows throughout the manuscript (see for example fig.5.252). Its accompanying horizontal stroke recalls those in fig.5.180 (see also *R* in fig.5.255-no.2).

Although the *et*-ligatures are sometimes obscured by the contortions of the various zoomorphs, the underlying letterforms are often quite clear, and are similar to the corresponding non-zoomorphic initials and also the same letters in the script. While most of these *et*-ligatures have the curved tailstroke, a few instances with the straight tailstroke also occur (figs.5.237-nos.34, 47, 70). The constant variation of the elements of the *et*-ligature, such as the headstroke, the diagonal stroke and the horizontal stroke, echoes the similar treatment of these in the other initials and also in the script. Clusters may also be identified such as the pair on f.72r (figs.237-nos.5-6), and the three on f.184r (figs.5.237-nos.43-5) attributed to scribes C and D respectively. These correspondences, in addition to the other evidence noted throughout this discussion, supports the proposition that these are all the work of the same individual – the Scribe-Artist.

(iv) Visual essay

(Interlinear creatures and zoomorphic initials)

The correspondence between the zoomorphic initial and the interlinear animal shown in fig.5.246 prompted a more comprehensive investigation of the links between these creatures. Figs.5.247-78 create a visual essay, with accompanying text in the captions, which emphasises the graphic consistency of the interlinear creatures and those whose contorted bodies and limbs form the zoomorphic initials. This evidence suggests that the individual responsible for the interlinear creatures also created the zoomorphic initials. Henry suggested that:

> Many painters probably worked on these initials and interlinear
>
> decorations, but one personality seems to stand out, that of the man who added
>
> between the lines and around the 'turns' a host of little wandering animals.[13]

The direct comparisons of both sets of creatures in the illustrations would support Henry's premise that these are largely the work of the same individual. While the interpretation of the evidence in this study suggests that these, with a few exceptions, are the work of a single individual, this does not accord with Henry's suggestion that 'many painters probably worked' on them. Henry did not publish any specific evidence in support of this attribution to 'many' artists and her comment perhaps is more the result of a general impression influenced by the constant variation of these creatures. As has been argued throughout the present study, this predilection for variation is directly paralleled throughout the scribal work which has consistently been identified as the work of the same hand.

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[13] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 212.

The visual essay begins by looking at some felines and these, or other closely related cat-like creatures, reappear throughout the illustrations. Some creatures, such as the 'lizard' in figs.5.252-nos.1 and 3, may be rendered in isolation or sometimes as part of a complex initial composition. It is also perhaps significant that these relatively rare creatures occur in zones attributed to different hands. The relative complexity, or indeed the nature of that complexity, of the zoomorphic initials also cannot be linked with any of the hands in Meehan's scheme, as can be seen for example in figs.5.256 and 5.273-4. Similarly, in fig.5.271-no.1 a zoomorphic initial is juxtaposed beside another more normal initial. Initials with similar zoomorphic combinations attributed to the same hand may be varied in their appearance as for example in the *fa* initials in figs.5.257-nos.2-3, and the initials *t* in fig.5.262. In fig.5.257 the closer correspondence in the *f* letters is between nos.1 and 2 which are attributed to different hands. Similarly, there are instances of rarely occurring zoomorphic initials which are found in zones attributed to different hands in the four-scribe scheme (figs.5.254, 5.261-nos.1-2 and 5.264).

The visual essay is concluded by direct comparisons of interlinear creatures and zoomorphic initials which occur in close proximity on the same page (figs.5.276-78). These instances are in zones attributed Scribes A, C and D and emphasise the close correspondence between both sets of creatures.

In light of this evidence it is proposed here that all of these, both interlinear and initial zoomorphs, with the few exceptions attributed to the Master-Artist, which will be discussed below, are the work of the same hand, and that this hand is the proposed scribe of the text. The constant variation of both sets of creatures, parallels a similar attitude to the script. Earlier, parallels were drawn between the variant forms of the initials and the script, which suggested that they are the work of the same hand. In figs.5.196-98 and 5.267 we can see the relatively

simple addition of zoomorphic features to these letters (see also figs.3.145-46). When there is an increase in the number of these features, or an intensification in their complexity, this does not necessarily indicate the involvement of a different hand. Rather, the evidence would suggest that this is part of a continuum of complexity which merely reflects the calligraphic, and the graphic, virtuosity of the scribe. The close links identified between the interlinear creatures and the script when they mark a turn-in-path, superscript or subscript has been discussed in chapter four. This evidence contributes to the conclusion that this individual is both scribe and artist and led to his being identified as the Scribe-Artist.

Fig.5.279 shows further evidence in support of these conclusions, where a number of letters are terminated with anthropomorphic heads. These are remarkable throughout for their constant variation of facial features, beards, hairstyles and hair-colour. These occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D, although there do not appear to be any graphic characteristics which could be associated with any individual hands. These heads display the same idiosyncratic, and consistent, predilection for variation that has been noted throughout this study. The conclusion that these are the work of the same individual, the proposed Scribe-Artist, is supported by the similarly contorted figures in fig.5.280. The following section looks at further evidence in support of this conclusion.

Connections between the initials and the text

The often intimate integration of the initials with the text throughout the manuscript provides further evidence that the proposed Scribe-Artist is responsible for creating both. Apart from their general homogeneity of appearance, there are specific instances where the text and the initials are physically linked in ways which further support this conclusion (figs.5.281-95). While these

links are relatively rare, their occurrence in zones attributed to the different hands in Meehan's scheme also supports the conclusion that a single individual is responsible for almost all the scribal and scribal-related work in the book. The constant variation of these links corresponds with similar patterns of variation throughout the scribal work and also supports the conclusion that this work had a single author.

Figs.5.281-84 show instances where terminals of both script letters and initials are linked through shared decorative features. Figs.5.285-86 show various other links between the initials and the script. In some instances elements of the script seem to overlap parts of the decorated initials (figs.5.287-89). In others, the graphic elaboration of the initial appears to overlap the script (fig.5.290). Their occurrence in zones attributed to the three main hands A, C and D does not suggest that they are the work of different scribes. They are rather further manifestations of the scribe-artist's constant predilection for variation – in these instances suggesting variations in the sequence in which script and decorated initials were created or completed. Occasionally, subtle connections are made between the feet of zoomorphic initials and script serif-wedges (fig.5.291), or these feet may be intruded into the script (fig.5.292). Sometimes, other decorative extensions may interrupt a line of script, or even disrupt the sequence of letters in a single word (figs.5.293-95). Occasionally the gap between an initial and following letters in the word may be larger than usual (fig.5.296). Finally, fig.5.297 shows pairs of similar initials occurring on the same page. Such pairs have also been noted in the script and the smaller initials (see figs.4.250-53 and 5.140). Although these pairs share many similarities, each letter has distinguishing features. Of particular interest is the fact that these, relatively rare pairings, are found in zones attributed to the four hands in Meehan's scheme.

While most of the initials, and certainly the larger ones, are completed with added decoration, the occurrence of a few instances which seem to lack this also provide some insight into the working methods of the Scribe-Artist (fig.5.298). Somewhat similarly there is a cluster of initials that, while fully drawn, have largely been left unpainted (fig.5.299). There are five instances where the scribe appears to have forgotten to insert initials into a space which he had left for that purpose (fig.5.300).[14] It is interesting to note that these occur in zones attributed to three different hands in the four-scribe scheme. It is suggested here that all of these omissions reflect the Scribe-Artist's varied working patterns. It would appear that at times (a) the initials were drawn as the writing of the script progressed, at other times (b) the initial was created first and the script was added later, while at yet other times, as seen in fig.5.300, (c) the script was completed with space left for the initial to be added. The first of these scenarios, would probably have been the modus operandi for most of the smaller initials. The form of these initials are typically no more than enlarged versions of the script letters. They are also subject to the same patterns of variation as the script and there is no evidence to suggest that they are later additions.[15] More complex instances, such as those in fig.5.301, must certainly have been planned, and at least partly drafted, before the script was written. Fig.5.302-no.1 on f.64r may have been another instance where an initial was omitted. This lacks the usual outline and appears to have been painted, and perhaps this departure from the more standard practice might suggest that it was done somewhat hastily. In fig.5.302-no.2 the horizontal stroke on the zoomorphic *et*–ligature on the nearby f.62r also seems to have been added in the same manner, again without any apparent preliminary drawing. In the context of this and other related evidence, it is

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[14] The two instances in fig.5.300-no.4 occur on f.296v. The marginal location of the initials between ff.293v-296v are discussed in chapter four (pp. 268-70).

[15] See, for example, the sequences of script and *littera notabilior et*-ligatures in figs.5.345-52. See also discussion of ink use below on pp. 308-10.

suggested here that these were added as part of the Scribe-Artist's second campaign. It is also significant that both the letter *t* on f.64r and the horizontal stroke on f.62r are both rendered in the same green paint.[16]

(v) Initials and additions to initials

during the second campaign

Additions, such as the green paint just mentioned, that seem to have been made to the initials in the proposed second campaign, including those made in the later phase of that campaign, will be discussed further in chapter six. However, one 'case-study' which examines such additions to the Lucan genealogy will be addressed in the following paragraphs. This text, on ff.200r-202r presents a significant amount of work which appears to have been added at this time, especially on the final pages ff.201v-202r (figs.5.303-8). The beginning of the genealogy seems to have been completed in the first campaign - the black ink used, and the quality of the execution, are consistent with the work of this campaign. The most obvious later additions on the first page, f.200r, are the red flowers and the whiplash line-fillers (fig.5.305-no.1). There are also some red marks added to the hair of the figure at the beginning of the genealogical list (fig.6.71-no.5), the hair and legs of the warrior at the bottom of the page (fig.6.72-no.2), and some double lines to a number of birds (fig.6.67). The second page of the genealogy, f.200v, also appears to have been largely created in the first campaign, and the proposed second campaign additions to the initials include some red hatching, circles and a cross (figs.5.305-no.2 and 6.75-nos.5-8). The third page, f.201r, also seems to have been completed in the first campaign, and the principal later additions there appear to be the red markings on the 'merman' figure, some of which appear to model his

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[16] See also discussion on painting in chapter six, pp. 361-64.

arms (fig.5.306-no.1 and 6.72-no.3).[17] The groups of white triple dots added inside some of the

initials on this page may also be later (fig.6.20). The drawing of the anthropomorphic initials at

the top of f.201v (fig.5.306-no.2) seems consistent with the work of the original campaign, but it

does not appear to be as complete as those on the previous pages (fig.5.305-no.2). The painting,

and the presence of some red contours in fig.5.306-no.2, also appear to have more in common

with the second campaign. Examining the entire column with '*qui*' beginning each line, the

quality of the drawn elements seems consistent with the first campaign, whereas the paint seems

to be less precisely applied, and has more in common with the work of the second campaign

(figs.5.303, 5.306-no.2 and 5.307). The black added to the each letter *q* lacks some of the usual

fine contouring. They also contain some additional, mainly red, decoration typical of this

proposed second campaign.[18] The zoomorphic heads in fig.5.307-nos.1 and 3 also have parallels

with others from the proposed second campaign one of which occurs in the display-lettering.[19]

The column with '*qui*' beginning each line on the final page, f.202r, (figs.5.304 and 5.308) also

seems to have been completed as part of the proposed second campaign and their simple

rectangular forms may also have been drawn at this time.[20] Apart from the columns with '*qui*'

beginning each line on ff.201v and 202r, the ordinary script on these pages seems consistent with

that of the first campaign. Throughout the manuscript there are other occasional initials, or small

clusters of initials, where there is some evidence of additional decoration or paint which may

have been added during the proposed second campaign. As noted above, these will addressed

further in chapter six.

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[17] Compare with similar details added to the 'crowning-figure' on f.2v (figs.2.47 and 6.73-no.1).
[18] See also figs.6.60 and 6.86-87 for other instances of similar additions to initials in black and red.
[19] The zoomorphic heads in fig.5.307-no.2 and fig.5.365-no.22 on f.127v, attributed to Scribe B (proposed second campaign), share a number of similarities and both are rather abruptly added to their respective initials.
[20] The decorated panels at the bottom of f.202r (figs.5.304) and the hair of the figure behind these panels (fig.6.73-no.22) also have some red marks.

Further analysis of initials added in the second campaign

(in zones attributed to Scribe B)

At the beginning of this chapter the smaller initials in the prefatory material were discussed. These include zone 4 which is attributed to Scribe B. There are some larger initials in the other text zone, 9, attributed to this hand and these are subject to further discussion here. Fig.5.309 shows instances of the initial letter *C* with the following letter contained within its bowl. These share many features, with nos.2-4 particularly closely matched. These relatively rare initial combinations occur in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. Similarly fig.5.310, *er*, and figs.5.311-12, *ex*, again, share many common features and also occur in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. That fig.5.310-no.2 (Scribe B) is not as elaborately decorated as no.4 reflects the difference in quality between the proposed first and second campaigns. The *x* letters in figs.5.311-12 are not initials, but they are slightly larger than the letters of the normal script and occur beside such initials.

Many of these *x*s have terminal spirals including fig.5.311-no.2 attributed to Scribe B. All other instances of initials with terminal spirals attributed to this hand are shown in fig.5.313. Such initials, which are terminated with spirals, are relatively common in different scribal zones throughout the manuscript. They are usually formed of two or three spiral turns and often end with a small circular knob, similar to those which frequently terminate interlace strands (figs.5.313-15). However, those in fig.5.313, which are here understood as part of the proposed second campaign, exhibit the slightly diminished quality identified here as typical of this phase of work. These differences are highlighted when the clearest examples in fig.5.313, nos.1 and 4, are compared with those attributed to the other hands in fig.5.314. When closely examined, all of these spirals appear to be drawn free-hand, without any technical aids or templates and

sometimes show slight unevenness. Occasional variations in the density of ink, or the thickness of the line, probably indicate the breaks and restarts made as the scribe carefully works his way around the spiral (fig.5.314-no.4, and see also fig.5.324). Fig.5.316 shows instances of initials with spirals of different sizes and a close examination of these would also support the conclusion that all are drawn free-hand (see also fig.5.298-no.2). The evidence also highlights the loss in quality between the first and second campaigns. The following paragraphs address the presence of some spirals in the manuscript that do not appear to have been hand-drawn.

(vi) Further analysis of spiral decoration

and some untypical initials

It was noted above that the spirals are often terminated in a circle but other endings are also found. Figs.5.317-18 show instances where two or three of these circles are used. Fig.5.319 shows instances with double spiral ends, while fig.5.320 shows a number of floret terminals. Fig.5.321 shows a range of other terminals to these spirals, and all of these are further evidence of the scribe's predilection for variation which is such a consistent feature throughout the manuscript.

Fig.5.322 shows instances of initials with complete spirals. These occur as a cluster between ff.109r-115v and appear to be executed with a greater degree of precision than the others in this zone, or indeed throughout the manuscript. The possibility that some of the spirals in the illuminated pages may have have been stamped or in some way printed, has been proposed

by Barcelona-based calligrapher Josep Batlle.[21] It may be that the spirals on these initials were created in this way. However, the ink in fig.5.322-nos.1-2 appears quite dark and these seem perhaps to have been hand drawn. Are these exceptional instances where the scribe has chosen to invest more time and care with their completion, or is it an intervention by another hand? The main spiral in fig.5.322-no.3 seems lighter and is so tightly spiralled that it is difficult to imagine how it could have been hand drawn. Is this evidence of the use, perhaps, of a coiled-metal stamp of some sort? Or is it possible that both are contributions made by a more skilful hand? The collaboration of two artists in the canon tables has been discussed in chapter two and it may be that the more skilful of those artists, the Master-Artist, is again involved here. Fig.5.323 shows an initial having spirals executed with varied precision. It is impossible to know what led to the difference in quality in these spirals, but it may be an instance of collaboration. Is it possible that the Master-Artist created the more precise spiral on the right as an exemplar or demonstration for the Scribe-Artist of the text? Alternatively, the poorer quality of the spiral on the left-hand side may suggest that it was added during the second campaign. Fig.5.322-no.4 has a blank space in a trumpet-and-spiral design at the top of the *R*, and may be another such instance, however, these are purely speculative suggestions.

Fig.5.324 shows instances of spirals from the Book of Durrow and the Lindisfarne Gospels. The spirals in these earlier manuscripts share many similarities with each other and with many of those in Kells. Close examination of these spirals reveals unevenness in the lines which suggests that, as with the majority of those in Kells, they have been hand drawn. Such

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[21] J. Batlle, 'The Tools of Angels, Unfurling the secrets of the Spirals in the Book of Kells', in *The Edge* - Journal of the Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society (London, 2007-Summer), pp. 14-17. The present writer also discussed this further with Josep Batlle in *pers. comm.* The very light ink-tone in many of the finest spirals also supports this hypothesis, while the accuracy and precision of these spirals also suggests that they were not hand-drawn. The present writer's art college experience in intaglio printmaking techniques had led to the conception of a similar conclusion and it was of particular interest to see the results of Batlle's experiments.

spirals are common features throughout the corpus of Insular manuscripts and may be traced

back to simpler versions such as those in the Cathach (fig.5.63).

Some untypical initials

As mentioned earlier, there appears to be some evidence that on a few occasions a different, and

also more skilful, hand is responsible for creating some initials. Fig.5.325 shows a number of

these initials, although the manner in which they differ from the majority of the initials is more

apparent when seen in the context of the other initials in the manuscript pages (figs.5.326 and

5.327). A number of these occur as a cluster between ff.156v-160v. The first three of these,

fig.5.325-nos.1-3, occur on the opening ff.156v-157r, and these are distinguished by the minute

detail of the interlaced zoomorphs and by the precision of their execution. It is possible that these

were decorative additions to initial letterforms which had been drawn by the Scribe-Artist. The

pair of zoomorphic initials on f.160v, fig.5.325-nos 4-5, also appear to be rendered with a level

of detail and precision not typical of the majority of the initials in the manuscript. These

characteristics are also present in figs.5.325-nos.6-8, and these instances also share the use of a

rarely found black ground behind some of the interlaced details. The final three initials,

figs.5.325-nos.9-11 are also untypically detailed and precisely rendered. Other features shared by

many of these initials include distinctive black claws and heads that appear somewhat different

to those typically found throughout the manuscript. While much variation has been noted

throughout the scribal work, it is the level of minute detail and the precision of their execution

that suggests these may be interventions by someone other than the Scribe-Artist. The

contributions of the Master-Artist are of similar finely detailed and precise quality and this

supports the suggestion that he was responsible for this small group of initials. A number of

other initials show some evidence of this kind of work but they are not as clearly identifiable. These may suggest partial interventions by the Master-Artist and include for example, the fine circular trumpet-and-spiral motif in fig.5.153-no.1, or the unusual and finely detailed fish-shaped horizontal stroke in fig.5.197-no.1. The latter occurs in zone 17 and there is a greater concentration of such fine and precise additions to initials scattered throughout these pages. These all may be the work of the Master-Artist.[22] It is also possible that some are the work of the Scribe-Artist under the guidance of the Master-Artist. The possibility of a somewhat similar collaboration was discussed in chapter two in relation to the canon tables. It has been suggested above, that zone 17 may have been the first text written in the manuscript and it is possible that such mentoring may have been part of the work at the outset.[23] The script in this zone has been described as the work of 'an extremely sedate and careful person',[24] and it is also possible that these more precise details may be a reflection of a relaxed, unhurried atmosphere, where a greater amount of time and effort could be expended by the Scribe-Artist on these pages. However, while such conclusions or interpretations are speculative they are nonetheless evidentially based.

Occasionally, graphic detail added to the initials has to some extent been obscured by paint which is not applied with equivalent precision.[25] Such painting may have been undertaken, perhaps somewhat hastily, as part of the proposed second campaign. This will be discussed further in chapter six.

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[22] Henry also suggests that the artist she calls the Goldsmith, may 'take part in some of the text decoration'. Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 212.

[23] M. Budny, 'British Library MS Royal 1.E.vi: The anatomy of an Anglo-Saxon Bible fragment' (unpubl. doctoral thesis, University of London, 1985), pp. 636-44. Here Budny describes the evidence which suggests the mentoring of a lesser hand by the main scribe of the text in BL MS Royal 1.E.vi..

[24] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 154.

[25] Pulliam, *Word and Image*, p. 15. She suggests that some of the paint was applied with 'a marked disregard for some of the finer details in the manuscript'.

Fig.5.328-no.1 shows a unique and untypical zoomorphic head with distinctive curved and pointed jaws, terminating an *et*–ligature initial. Fig.5.328-nos.2-3 show two zoomorphic heads from the Cathach with similarly curved and pointed jaws. Fig.5.328-nos.4-6 show these heads enlarged and rotated for the purposes of comparison. This may be another instance where Kells pays homage to its Columban ancestor, but while there are many similarities evident, this suggestion, again, is speculative.

(vii) An unusual *n*, ink-use and diminuendo

An unusual *n*

Meehan cites the 'distinctive use of a rounded form of initial N' as a characteristic of those zones attributed to Scribe A in both his and Henry's schemes.[26] Fig.5.329 shows all of these letters in the manuscript, and twelve of the thirteen are found in zones 3 and 17 attributed to this hand. It is interesting that none occur in zone 10 which is also attributed to Scribe A. These letters are related to the distinctive *m* which has its first minim similarly curved (figs.3.36 and 47, which show these occurring in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme). The occurrence of a small number of such distinctive letters is quite typical of the scribal work in the manuscript, as is the fact that some of them occur in clusters (e.g. fig.5.329-nos.1-5). As with all the scribal work, these letters are also subject to variation. Some are formed of thicker strokes, some are more laterally compressed and the end of the straight minim is also varied. The single instance on f.79v, which is not attributed to Scribe A, but occurs in a zone attributed to Scribe C,

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[26] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 186.

(fig.5.329-no.5), fits this pattern of subtle variation and is not distinguishable from those attributed to Scribe A. As discussed in chapter four (pp. 268-70), it may be that these zones (3 and 17) attributed to Scribe A, share common features as a result of being worked on at the same time.

The use of ink in initials
and the letters immediately following them[27]

Throughout the Book of Kells the initials and the *litterae notabiliores* are typically rendered in a darker ink than that used for the text. Whatever its original colour the script now primarily appears in varying tones of brown. This presumably is an iron-gall ink, and, while its appearance is predominantly quite dark, it also sometimes appears in a lighter tone.[28] Occasionally, the ink on a page, or a few neighbouring pages, may appear as a tone derived from black rather than brown (fig.5.330). While it is beyond the scope of this study to engage in the required scientific analysis, it would appear that the ink recipe used was not consistent throughout. The darker ink used for the initials most often appears as a black, although occasionally it is a dark brown (fig.5.331). While this could possibly indicate that the initials were the work of a different hand to that of the script, the presence of many smaller initials and *litterae nobiliores* rendered in the same black, or darker ink, would suggest that they are the work of the text scribe (fig.5.332). This use of different inks can be added to the other evidence, discussed above, supporting the proposal that both are the work of the same hand. It would appear therefore that the proposed Scribe-Artist worked with two different inks and that he was intent on emphasising the initials and certain letters, often the *et*-ligature, by making them darker.

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[27] These observations on ink tone and colour, and the accompanying illustrations, have been made from the Faksimile Verlag facsimile and the TCD online facsimile.
[28] Meehan, 'Writing Materials', in *Kells Commentary*, p. 209.

It is impossible to know how significant this difference in colour or tone was originally, as no doubt these have faded with the passage of time. However, regardless of the extent to which they may have faded, the initials are still predominantly darker by comparison with the surrounding text and this seems to have been a deliberate strategy. The *litterae notabiliores* are not as consistently rendered in the darker ink as are the initials. However, these inconsistencies in ink application, and in the varying ink recipes/tones are not incompatible with the work of the Scribe-Artist whose constant predilection for variation has been noted throughout this study. What is of particular interest is that these variations occur in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. Further variations also occur in these zones, as for example, when occasionally the ink used for the initials and larger letters is not significantly different from the text (figs.5.333-4). Whether in the lighter instances (fig.5.333) or the darker ones (fig.5.334), it would appear that occasionally the scribe is not using different inks, or at least the difference between the two is not as evident as usual. Fig.5.335 shows some of the rare instances where it would appear the scribe has continued using the darker ink for several letters immediately following the initial. Whether accidental or deliberate, the occurrence of this phenomenon in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme again suggests these were the work of the same individual.

The difference in the ink tones on the pages of the manuscript evident today may have resulted from a variety of causes over its long and eventful history. For example ink loss or damage through abrasion is evident on a number of pages, and this is frequently found on the outsides of the gatherings. The outsides of the gatherings are effectively small 'book-covers' within the manuscript, and if it was unbound for a significant period the potential for movement between these 'booklets' would make their outside surfaces susceptible to damage by abrasion

(see for example ff.331v-332r, ff.208v-209r and ff.267v-268r attributed to Scribes A, C and D respectively). Fig.5.336 shows the clearest instance where lighter and darker inks have been used for the text on the same page. These differences, of course, originally may not have been so apparent.

Meehan notes that carbon black is most frequently, but not exclusively, used in the zones attributed to Scribe B, and also notes their use of red, purple and orpiment.[29] As discussed elsewhere, the use of this palette of colours by the Scribe-Artist during the proposed second campaign may have been prompted by his constant predilection for variation. The use of these colours may also have been something of a compensatory strategy for his failing faculties and the apparent haste with which he may be attempting to complete the manuscript. In this way he may be replacing the use of time-consuming decorative detail, which adds variety to the scribal work elsewhere, with work that is varied more simply by the use of colour. The more frequent use of carbon black rather than iron-gall ink, may also simply have been due to available resources, if for example, materials had been destroyed in a raid or work had to completed at a different location.

Diminuendo

The gradual reduction in height in the letters immediately following an initial, the feature known as diminuendo, is not frequently used in Kells as such.[30] There are a few instances where the letters following an initial approach this arrangement, where they gradually diminish in size and are diagonally aligned. Instances of these occur in zones attributed to the various hands in the

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[29] Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 189.
[30] Diminuendo is a prominent feature in earlier Insular manuscripts such as the Cathach.

four-scribe scheme (fig.5.337).[31] More typically in Kells there is a somewhat modified version of the device, where the letter immediately following the initial is usually smaller than it, but larger than the subsequent text, thus creating a transition between the two (fig.5.338). There are also some instances where the third letter is smaller than the second, yet larger than the text, although these may not always be diagonally aligned (fig.5.339).[32] This arrangement often occurs when the second letter is contained within the initial. However, true to the spirit of constant variation throughout the manuscript, these modified versions of diminuendo are not always used, and frequently, the letter immediately following the initial is no different to the text (fig.5.340).[33]

(viii) The distribution of initials

McGurk's comment that Eusebian sections dictated the layout of the text in Kells was noted in relation to punctuation in chapter four (p. 205).[34] This emphasis is even more apparent in the, usually large, decorative initials which are invariably used to mark the beginning of these sections. The thirteen instances that do not begin with a decorative initial occur in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. These include John, section 128 on f.333r (Scribe A), Matthew, section 345 on f.125v (Scribe B), Luke, section 2 on f.191r (Scribe C) and Matthew, section 303 on f.117r (Scribe D). These are instances that do not concur with the Eusebian sections as identified in the Stuttgart Biblia Sacra Vulgata. The presence of initials nearby probably reflect the exemplar(s) used. These are most likely instances in the exemplar

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[31] Some elements of diminuendo are noted in Kells'canon tables – see chapter 2 pp. 71-74 and p. 81.
[32] A cluster of these occurs on f.106r.
[33] Clusters of these occur on ff.65v-66r and 110r.
[34] See also Pulliam, *Word and Image*, pp. 42-45.

where some Eusebian sections begin on different verses. The very first Eusebian section in Kells is marked by the major initials of the *Liber* page. Within the text, the large lozenge-shaped *O* on f.31r marks the beginning of the second Eusebian section which occurs in the Matthean genealogy (fig.6.8-no.2).[35]

In the synoptic Gospels, chapter beginnings usually coincide with Eusebian sections and are thus marked with large initials. Most of those that do not coincide with the Eusebian sections are also usually marked with large initials.[36] However, a few instances do not and these occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D.[37] These include Mark, chapter 3 on f.136r (Scribe A), Mark, chapter 5 on f.142r (Scribe C) and Luke, chapter 21 on f.269v (Scribe D). The absence of initials on these beginnings, again, probably reflects the exemplar(s) used. Of the fifteen extant chapter beginnings in John, twelve do not coincide with Eusebian sections. Four of these are not marked with initials – chapters 8 on f.315r, 9 on f.319r, 15 on f.334v and 17 on f.339r and these, again, probably reflect the exemplar(s) used.

As noted in chapter four (p. 215), initials may also mark the beginnings of verses. There are two-hundred and thirty-three in zones attributed to Scribe A, twelve in zones attributed to Scribe B, two-hundred and three in zones attributed to Scribe C and two-hundred and forty-four in zones attributed to Scribe D. Of more interest perhaps is the occurrence of initials in the middle of verses, with ninety-seven in zones attributed to Scribe A, five in zones attributed to Scribe B, ninety-two in zones attributed to Scribe C, and one-hundred and fifty-eight in zones attributed to Scribe D. These do not occur in patterns that might help to distinguish different

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[35] The first Eusebian sections in each Gospel begin on the *incipit* pages.
[36] McGurk, 'The Gospel text', in *Kells Commentary*, p. 60, footnote 7. Here he notes that 'it has not been possible to suggest to which chapter family Kells' exemplar may have belonged'.
[37] Only one chapter begins in zone 9 attributed to Scribe B.

hands, and the greater frequency in zones attributed to Scribe D reflect the more extensive decoration typically found in these passages which describe the Passion sequences.

On a few occasions the emphasis appears to have been shifted from the beginning of the verse to a more significant word. Instances of these occur in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. The large *P* beginning the *pater noster* on f.45r marks the fifth word in the verse and is in zone 7 attributed to Scribe C. The large *P*, also for '*pater*', barely visible on the last surviving page in the manuscript, f.339v, also occurs in the middle of the verse and this is attributed to Scribe A. On the lower half of f.125v, attributed to Scribe B, the *P* beginning '*post resurrectionem eius*' (after his resurrection), is larger than the *et*-ligature at the beginning of the verse. On f.98r, attributed to Scribe D, the *D* beginning '*dileges Dominum Deum*' (thou shalt love the Lord thy God), the first of the two great commandments, is emphasised while the '*ait illi Iesus*' (Jesus said to them), at the beginning of the verse is not. Such a shift in emphasis from the words prefacing Christ's speech at the beginning of a verse occurs on eight instances in zones attributed to Scribe A, seventeen in zones attributed to Scribe C, and eleven in zones attributed to Scribe D.[38] These mid-verse initials include those marking Christ's invocation *Amen*, in zones attributed to each of these hands, f.322v (Scribe A), f.80v (Scribe C) and f.176v (Scribe D), and clusters occur between ff.322v-333r (Scribe A) and ff.102v-111r (Scribe D).

Conversely, on other occasions, the words prefacing or announcing speech, usually that of Christ, may also be emphasised with initials in the middle of verses. These occur in zones attributed to Scribe A on ten occasions, Scribe C on three occasions, and Scribe D on thirteen occasions, with clusters occurring between ff.327r-327v (A) in exchanges between Jesus, Martha and the crowd at the raising of Lazarus, and between ff.120r-121v (D) in exchanges between

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[38] For other discussion of decorative initials relating to speech see Pulliam, *Word and Image*, p.61 and Meehan, 'The Book of Kells and the Corbie Psalter', in B.Cassidy and R. Muir Wright, eds., *Studies in the illustration of the Psalter* (Stamford, 2000), pp. 16-17.

Jesus, Pilate and the crowd during the Passion. While these, or at least some of them, may reflect the exemplar(s) used, a similar use of decorative emphasis on text relating to speech was noted in chapters three and four.[39] Further, in the context of speech, *ecce* (behold), when it occurs in mid-verse, is emphasised with initials on 8 occasions – three each in zones attributed to Scribe C (a cluster on ff.55r, 59v and 65v), Scribe D (a cluster on ff.104v, 108v and 116r) and twice in zones attributed to Scribe A (ff.130v and 330r).

It is also of interest to note that many of the so-called 'additional readings' in Kells are emphasised by initials with instances occurring in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D including '*Angelus autem*' on f.303r (A), '*Et iterum*' on f.66v (C) and '*Erat autem*' on f.186r (D).[40] The inclusion of these additional readings no doubt also reflects the exemplar(s) used.

Initials occurring as the first word on a page are also of interest and these occasionally occur throughout the manuscript and across the zones attributed to different hands. The majority of these mark Eusebian sections with seven instances occurring in zones attributed to Scribe A, one to Scribe B, twenty to Scribe C and twenty-eight to Scribe D. Clusters occur between ff.330v-337v (Scribe A), ff.37v-42v and 236v-238v (Scribe C) and ff.90r-96r, 104r-108r, 113v-120r, 175r-179r and 265r-270v (Scribe D). The greater occurrence of these initials in zones attributed to Scribe D again reflects the decorative emphasis in the Passion sequences. Some of the initials beginning a page, mark verses, and two occur in zones attributed to Scribe A, one to B, eleven to C, and three to D. It is also interesting to note that a number of verses that begin on the first word of a page are not emphasised in any way and these occur in zones attributed to three of the hands – five to Scribe A, seven to Scribe C, and three to Scribe D. Some of these

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[39] Chapter three, see pp. 162-63 in relation to letters with extended curved-concave elaborations and p. 170 in relation to letters with pointed elaborations. Chapter four, see pp. 239-40 in relation to the use of superscripted letters.

[40] McGurk, 'The Gospel text', in *Kells Commentary*, p. 65. Here he describes how 'some readings in Q [Kells] echo or repeat phrases earlier or later in the Gospels' and also that 'Q sometimes places two readings side by side'.

also occur in clusters – ff.333r-337r (Scribe A), ff.214v-216v (Scribe C), and ff.252v-255 (Scribe D). A few initials mark words in the middle of verses which also occur at the beginning of pages and these feature in zones attributed to the Scribes A, C and D (fig.5.341). As with the Eusebian sections, the beginnings of verses which are not marked by initials may simply reflect a different verse structure in Kells' exemplar(s).

A number of verses beginning on the first word of a page are marked with *litterae notabiliores*. These are all *et*-ligatures, with five occurring in zones attributed to Scribe C (ff.36*v, 149r, 191r, 228v and 231v), and one to Scribe D (f.92r). Perhaps of greater interest is the occurrence of a number of *litterae notabiliores et*-ligatures at the beginnings of pages which mark words in the middle of verses (fig.5.342). These occur in zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D, with clusters between ff.147r-150v and 225r-230r (Scribe C), and ff.88r-95v and 253v-257v (Scribe D). Features at the end of pages are discussed in chapter four (pp. 270-71 and figs.4.261-85), and *littera notabilior et*-ligatures occur as the last word on a page on twelve occasions (fig.5.343). Five of these occur in zones attributed to both Scribes C and D, while two occur in zones attributed to Scribe A. These show no distinguishing features which might help to identify different hands.

Numbers of *littera notabioior et*-ligatures of varying sizes are found on almost every text page in Kells (fig.5.344). These range from normal text-sized instances with added colour, through a continuum of variously sized *litterae notabiliores*, to small initials. These perhaps constitute one of the most consistent scribal features, and are invariably in evidence as one turns the pages of the entire manuscript.[41] This continuum of variously sized *et*-ligatures is continued through the multitude of instances of larger initials and decorated initials discussed above.

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[41] The extensive range of variations in the letterforms are examined in detail in chapter 3 (figs.3.149-213).

The final illustration showing the multitude of variant forms of the *et*-ligature in chapter three, fig.3.213, showed some of these in adjacent lines of text. These are more comprehensively illustrated in figs.5.345-52, which show the constant variation of this letterform over fifteen consecutive instances from zones attributed to each of the hands in the four-scribe scheme. Two sequences are shown for each of these hands.[42] The sequences are taken from different zones attributed to each of the hands and these also complement the pages shown in fig.5.344 which are taken from further different zones.[43] These parallel similar illustrations in chapter three, which showed consecutive instances of the letter *x* (figs.3.242-45).[44] These illustrations all highlight the predilection for variation which is perhaps the most prominent characteristic of the scribal work throughout the manuscript. Figs.5.345-52 are followed by another illustration which emphasises the graphic consistency of the strokes which are used to form these *et*-ligatures (fig.5.353). These letters are not significantly different whether compared horizontally, in the rows attributed to the different Scribes, or vertically, in the columns which are attributed to each individual Scribe. Some of these instances have been adjusted slightly to equalize their size to facilitate comparison. However, when one examines these using the traditional measures of palaeographic analysis, such as ductus, aspect, weight, pen-angle and stroke-formation there is a remarkable consistency in evidence. This consistency, and also the idiosyncratic nature and consistency of the calligraphic imagination that pervades their constant variation, strongly suggests that this work is attributable to a single scribe.

Finally, it should be noted that the distribution of initials in Kells is in marked contrast for example, to the graded system of initials in the Lindisfarne Gospels which systematically

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[42] Compare these sequences of *et*-ligatures with those in figs.5.123-26.
[43] There are only two significant text zones attributed to Scribe B, therefore zone 9 is shown in both figs.5.344 and 5.350.
[44] See also the instances of vertical-*m* in figs.3.94-7.

mark Eusebian sections, chapters and some lections.[45] The following paragraphs examine the *et*-ligature as found in other Insular manuscripts.

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Comparisons with other manuscripts -

the *et*-ligature

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Fig.5.354 shows instances of the *et*-ligature from a range of Insular manuscripts. With the exception of that from Usserianus Primus (fig.5.354-no.1) and, to a lesser extent, that from the Cathach (fig.5.354-no.2), the earliest instances, there is high degree of correspondence between the basic form of these letters. There are also distinctive differences between those in the different manuscripts and such differences help to identify the different hands. Figs.5.355-6 show short sections from C.C.C.C. 197B attributed to its two scribes, identified as the 'Luke Scribe' and the 'John Scribe'.[46] Figs.5.357-8 show the *et*-ligatures as they appear consecutively in these sections of text. This highlights the differences between the two hands, the most immediately obvious difference being the greater height of the John Scribe's hand. The Luke Scribe's hand is more compact overall, and this is reflected when the *et*-ligatures are compared. The Luke Scribe's headstrokes are distinctively higher on the right, with the wedge pointing forwards. This contrasts with those of the John Scribe, which are curved to follow the diagonal stroke below, and these terminate with the wedge pointing downwards.

Fig.5.359 shows pages from other Insular Gospel books Durrow, Lindisfarne, Durham and Lichfield which are closely related to Kells. The closest parallel with the distinctive emphasis on the distribution of the *et*-ligature on pages in Kells in fig.5.344, is perhaps found in

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[45] M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, pp. 299-300.
[46] A third scribe is identified in British Library MS Cotton Otho C.V. The partly burnt fragmentary remains of this manuscript are thought to belong to C.C.C.C. 197B (see footnote 119 in chapter three).

the Lichfield Gospels (fig.5.359-no.4).[47] Figs.5.360-63 show consecutive instances of the *et*-ligature from these pages of the four manuscripts. While instances may vary slightly in size, there is a remarkable consistency throughout. Indeed, each of these illustrations to some extent, recalls the consistency evident in fig.5.353 which shows the commonest form of the *et*-ligature in Kells, in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme. This consistency in the *et*-ligature illustrations in the other manuscripts is in marked contrast to the eight consecutive sequences from the various zones in Kells (figs.5.345-52). This highlights the unique approach of the Scribe-Artist in Kells which is found across the various scribal zones throughout the manuscript.

The arbitrary nature of the distribution of initials

It may be that the use of initials and *litterae notabiliores* throughout the Book of Kells was influenced by the exemplar(s) used. However, there is one possibly significant piece of evidence that might suggest a more arbitrary nature for their distribution. When the page of text on f.218v is compared with f.219r, where it is unintentionally repeated, the *litterae notabiliores*, the only decorated letters in this text,[48] are not exactly repeated on both pages (fig.5.364). The letters emphasised on both pages are all *et*-ligatures. The first word '*et*' ('*osculabator*'), '*et*' ('*alius*') in the middle of the page, and '*et*' ('*conversus*') in the second last lines, are similarly treated on both pages.[49] However, on f.219r '*et*' ('*unguento*') on line 1 and '*et*' ('*respondens*') on line 6 are larger, and also have added colour. This suggests that the Scribe-Artist's decisions as to which letters would be emphasised were not entirely dependent on the exemplar(s) used. The distinctive

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[47] It is interesting to note the diagonal sequence of these *et*-ligatures between lines 11-13 on f.150v in the Lichfield Gospels which recalls fig.4.247.

[48] There is no beginning of a Eusebian section on this page of text (section 74 begins on f.218r and ends on f.219v).

[49] The colour on these letters on f.218v appears to have been diminished (washed-out or partly erased) perhaps as part of the effort to cancel the page.

arrangement of initials such as those in figs.4.247-57, would also suggest that these can be attributed to the Scribe-Artist. Through the course of this investigation, the intimate knowledge gained of Kells' scribal work, with its particularly distinctive and idiosyncratic and imaginitive qualities, would suggest that any decisions regarding emphasis were also predominantly the product of the same coherent and consistent vision.

(ix) The puzzle of the scribe(s)

In palaeography, as in forensic handwriting analysis, the attribution of authorship is typically based on identifying recurring letterforms and stroke-patterns which incorporate signature-markers that might indicate or suggest the work of a particular individual. Such analyses typically use sample areas of script. However, the simple application of such analyses to the Book of Kells is inadequate to deal with the script which is subject to such constant variation. This extensive variation is not typical of surviving contemporary scribal work, and indeed, may be unique to Kells. While in a book of this size most of the multitude of variant forms do recur, as is particularly evident, for example, in figs.3.1 and 5.353, however, these are often subject to further subtle modification. This attitude to variation is clearly evident in the illustrations throughout this chapter and are also evident in the consecutive sequences of *x* (figs.3.242-45), in the sequences of *et*-ligatures in (figs.5.345-52) both mentioned above, in the illustration showing instances of uncial *a* throughout the mansucript (fig.3.357-68), in the sequences of vertical-*m* (figs.3.94-7) and in the variations of the letters *x*, *l* and *i* in the canon tables (figs.2.91-115). This attitude to variation is also found throughout the illustrations showing various other aspects

relating to script, decoration, punctuation and mise-en-page in chapter four, and in the plain and decorated initials examined in this chapter. It is the recognition of this programmatic, consistent pattern of variation that is one of the most significant keys to solving the 'puzzle of the scribes'.

A number of other factors have also been identified which corroborate these conclusions. There are recurring patterns relating to the frequency of use and also the distribution of any given variation of a letterform or graphic motif. These may typically appear on a sequence of pages and then disappear only to reappear again.[50] As with the letterform variations, these patterns of distribution are not systematic and occur randomly throughout the book. Particular variant forms also frequently occur in clusters, although inevitably with their own distinctive modifications. These, again, do not occur in systematic patterns, and such clusters may be on a single page, on consecutive pages, or be spread over a number of neighbouring pages. There is also a discernible pattern throughout the book of occasionally creating unique or distinctive variants of motifs or letterforms. Finally, familiarity with the scribal work on a level of intensity such as that gained through the present study, reveals a consistent quality that is here identified as 'calligraphic imagination'. Although somewhat intangible, it is nonetheless a recognizable quality evident throughout the manuscript. This quality perhaps parallels those traits which are recognized through connoisseurship in other art forms.

It has been proposed by Meehan that features, for example, such as 'the consistency in line endings [...] throughout the manuscript, can be attributed simply to scriptorium practice' and that the work is attributable to a number of hands.[51] It is certainly possible that such a scenario could be envisaged where a number of scribes could be provided with a canon of letters which could also include a further number of variant forms. Scribes could also be instructed to subject

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[50] See footnote 93 in chapter three.
[51] Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (1994), p. 185.

these letters, and their variant forms, to further constant variation. However, while the ensuing written products would no doubt share certain canonical features in common, it is reasonable to assume that they would also bear the characteristic traits or tell-tale marks that would identify the contributions of different individuals. Such evidence is apparent in the work of the different scribes in C.C.C.C. 197B (figs.5.355-58) or indeed in the hands that produced the other manuscripts illustrated (figs.5.359-63). If there were different scribes in Kells, the signature-markers that would reveal the calligraphic '*DNA*' of these different individuals should become apparent, particularly as the evidence is more closely examined. In attempting to understand the inspiration for the unusual approach to the scribal work in Kells it may be useful to consider Henry's description of the Irish decorative metalworkers of the eighth century.[52] In his useful summary of this account Michael Brennan states that:

> Henry defined the hall-marks of a Celtic goldsmith to be an obsessive fear of
>
> repeating any part of his creation, the need to be unpredictable from one register to
>
> the next and the need to hide his cleverness in a semblance of regularity.[53]

This could be a perfectly apt description of the scribal work in Kells, and it is perhaps by referring to the cultural and artistic milieu cited by Henry that it may become possible to understand this unique scribal performance and to trace its origins. The patterns of repetition of the multitude of scribal variations, whether letterforms or other motifs, are indeed well hidden. In fact they only become apparent when they are identified and extracted from the text as is done in this study. They may then be collated and analysed, and it is only at this stage that their

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[52] Henry, *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period to 800 A.D.* (1965), pp. 210-16.
[53] M. Brennan, 'The Structure of Interlace in Insular Art c.AD 400-1200' (unpubl. doctoral thesis, Bangor University, 2011), p. 213. See also N. Whitfield, 'Filigree animal ornament from Ireland and Scotland of the late seventh to ninth centuries: its origins and development', in eds., C. Karkov, M. Ryan and R. T. Farrell, *The Insular Tradition* (State University of New York Press, New York, 1997), pp. 221-43 (pp. 235-37).

significance can be recognized. It is as if the scribal 'fabric' of the manuscript is woven with somewhat 'liquid' threads. A whole range of these strands continually appear and disappear, they randomly merge with each other in unpredictable combinations, mutate into unique variants and occasionally occur in clusters.[54] This intensive study was initially dedicated to revealing evidence of any signature-markers that might identify different hands but none were apparent. Rather, in addition to the consistency of the variations, this analysis also revealed the consistency of the graphic mark making and stroke-formation, as can be seen for example in figs.3.1, 3.4-5 and 5.353. While all of the variations constantly recur throughout the manuscript as part of an idiosyncratic decorative programme they are never systematically applied. The analyses which are based on 'general impressions', or on sampling instances from the various scribal zones are not capable of revealing these consistent patterns which underlie the entire scribal project.[55] These only became apparent as the 'fabric' is comprehensively and thoroughly unpicked. The traditional methods of palaeographic analysis are not adequate tools for this, possibly, unique case and it is only through the patient and painstaking approach undertaken in this study that the knot is unravelled and the puzzle of the Scribe-Artist can begin to be resolved. When the puzzle is unravelled it becomes possible to begin to enjoy the virtuosity of this masterful calligraphic performance.

A brief note on Ultán the scribe

The constant predilection for variation that has been noted throughout this study of the script and the initials suggest that the Scribe-Artist was striving to make almost every letter unique in some way. This recalls Athelwulf's *De abbatibus* in which he praises the Irish scribe Ultán's ability to

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[54] This recalls Meyer's comments as quoted in chapter three, footnote 93.
[55] Eisenlohr, 'The puzzle of the scribes', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 196-208.

'ornament books with fair marking and by this art he accordingly made the shape of letters beautiful one by one, so that no modern scribe could equal him'.[56] The intent and precise meaning of Athelwulf's remarks is of course open to interpretation, however, it does at least raise the possibility of an interesting parallel in the approach to the scribal work in Kells, an approach which appears to be unique among the surviving corpus of Insular manuscripts. Is it possible that the calligraphic lineage of the proposed Scribe-Artist of Kells could be traced to such an apparently rare tradition of scribal practice? The description of Ultán's scribal practice could conceivably be applied to that in Kells. However, it would also leave us with a similar level of inconclusivity as surrounds Giraldus Cambrensis' account of the 'Book of Kildare'.[57] Taken on its own, however, Athelwulf's account is hardly sufficient evidence to even begin considering that Ultán might be the proposed scribe of Kells.

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[56] A. Campbell (ed.), *Aethelwulf's 'De abbatibus'* (Oxford, 1967) pp.48-9. See L. Nees, 'Ultán the scribe', in M. Lapidge *et al*, *Anglo-Saxon England,* vol.22 (Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 127- 46 at p. 136.
[57] Alexander, 'The Illumination', in *Kells Commentary*, p. 265.

Section II - Display-lettering[58]

> The display script in the Book of Kells shows the same inventive variety as do the
> decoration and the script of the text. Within the variety it is nevertheless possible to
> see some consistency, if not uniformity.[59]

These opening remarks by John Higgitt in his paper on display-lettering in Kells echo the observations made above (pp. 319-22) regarding the 'puzzle of the scribe(s)'. Similarly relevant are his comments that 'the lettering is so fluid and inventive that it is not always easy to decide when minor variations should be classified as separate letterforms'.[60] This characteristic, typical of all the scribal work in Kells, created a constant challenge throughout this study, as it frustrated attempts to categorise script, decorated initials and other features. Higgitt's aim is to analyse the style of the display-lettering in Kells, and to show how these relate to those in other manuscripts and Insular inscriptions. He includes an appendix of corresponding occurrences in other manuscripts.[61] He does not address scribal attribution, although he observes that 'most could be the work of a single scribe or artist.'[62]

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[58] These are variously referred to as display capitals or display-lettering. For consistency the latter term will be used in this study.

[59] J. Higgitt, 'The display script of the Book of Kells and the tradition of insular decorative capitals', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 209-33 (p. 209).

[60] Ibid., p. 211. It is interesting to note how closely Higgitt's remarks quoted here, in the previous foonote and in footnote 54 above, parallel the conclusions reached in this study.

[61] Ibid., appendix on pp. 221-33. This highlights the close relationship between Kells and the Lindisfarne Gospels which share twenty-four letterforms. C.C.C. 197B shares eighteen while the Echternach and Durham Gospels (MS A.II.17) each share thirteen as does the inscription on the Ardagh chalice.

[62] Ibid., p. 212.

(x) Angular display-lettering

There are two main types of display-letters in Kells, the first are freely curvilinear and coloured, and the second are usually angular capitals, and in black.[63] The latter will be addressed first. Fig.5.365 shows all forty panels of display-lettering which are found on eighteen pages in the Book of Kells. Apart from nos.1, 13 and 37 (fig.5.391), these are all of the angular variety, although it should be noted that no.1 also includes an angular *U/V*. In his paper Higgitt includes an illustration of the 'principal forms' of the display-lettering in Kells.[64] This shows two forms of the letter *E*, variants of which can be seen recurring throughout fig.5.366. The two forms of *E* in Higgitt's scheme can be identified in Kells in fig.5.366-nos.3-4. As mentioned in the previous parargraph, the 'fluid and inventive' nature of these letters indicates constant modification, and these are evident in fig.5.366, which shows all instances of the display capital *E*. Fig.5.367 shows all instances of the display capital *A*, and as with *E* in the previous illustration, these show the same predilection for variation as has been noted throughout this study. Apart from the obvious differences in size, there are also constant changes in the details. The subtlety of many of these modifications can be seen, for example, in the two instances of *E* on f.15v which have the triangular middle-bar alternately facing up and down (fig.5.366-nos.15-16 and fig.5.365-no.10). The complexity of attempting to describe the variations of even this single detail is apparent, as is the consequent resistance of the letterforms to any satisfactory categorization (see caption, fig.5.366). This evidence would suggest that they are consistent with the work of the proposed Scribe-Artist of the text, as discussed throughout this study. When compared to one of

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[63] For accounts of the origins of display lettering see M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, pp. 227-44 and G. Charles-Edwards, 'Insular display capitals and their origins', in *Making and Meaning in Insular Art*, R. Moss, ed. (Dublin, 2007), pp. 228-41. See also Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 79.
[64] Higgitt, 'The display script', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 219-20.

its closest relatives, the Lindisfarne Gospels, the constant predilection for variation in Kells is not as evident in the earlier book. For example, Lindisfarne's f.27r shows significant variation in the four instances of uncial-a in its final panel, but on f.3r seven of the eight *E*'s are similar. This *E* letterform is also found on most of its pages which contain display-lettering. In Kells a few instances are of diminished quality and appear to be more consistent with the proposed second campaign of work by the same individual. These include the panel containing '*generationis*' on f.29r (fig.5.365-no.15) and that containing '(*V*)*espereautem*' on f.127v (fig.5.365-no.22).[65]

There is further evidence which links the display-lettering with the rest of the manuscript and which strengthens the argument that they are all the work of the Scribe-Artist. Where Higgitt's appendix shows correspondences with other books and also inscriptions on objects, figs.5.368-385 in this study show the correspondences that are found between the display-lettering and initials on some of Kells' other pages.[66] In fig.5.368 twenty-four of the twenty-eight instances of display-letter *A* (fig.5.367) are shown vertically paired with initials (these initials are rare in the manuscript and each instance is more or less unique). The many shared features and corespondences evident between these pairs would suggest that they are all the work of the Scribe-Artist.

The captions to the initials in figs.369-85 indicate the various correspondences with the display-lettering in Higgitt's coded diagrams. There are occasional clusters of these initials in Kells, such as the only two instances of *G* in fig.5.372 (these are monogrammed combinations incorporating Higgitt's *G*), and two small clusters of *R* with a vertical right leg (Higgitt's *R*2) in fig.5.378. These latter initials are similarly monogrammed within the curve of a large initial *e*, and, while sharing a number of common elements, each instance has unique features. These all

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[65] The Tironian abbreviation used on f.127v for *autem* also occurs in the script (fig.3.222).
[66] These variants are not always found in the short zones attributed to Scribe B but almost always occur in the larger zones attributed to Scribes C and D.

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occur in zone 15 attributed to Scribe D, but similar monograms, *V* within the curve of a large *C*, are found in zones attributed to each of the various hands in the four-scribe scheme (fig.5.383). The single instance of *Z* in the display-lettering on f.13r (in the centre of fig.5.365-no.9), which has a spiral final-stroke, occurs once as an initial, on f.1r (fig.5.1). This letter frequently occurs in the script (fig.3.148-nos.5-8). Fig.5.373 shows instances of *M* with the first minim curved (Higgitt *M*1). These letters also occur in the script (figs.3.36 and 3.47). Fig.5.373-nos.3-4 are both complex monograms, each containing several initials that correspond with display-letters. These two monograms occur in zones attributed to Scribes C and D. This illustration also includes the only instance of initial *L* which corresponds with the display-lettering (fig.5.373-no.3).

Higgitt notes the correspondence between the interlace in the display-lettering on f.183r (fig.5.365-nos.29-30) and similarly elaborated initials on ff.244v-246v, 261v and 263v-265v (figs.5.228-no.2, 5.230-no.2, 5.231-no.2, 5.389-no.8, 6.87-nos.1-4 and no.6, and 6.88-no.2).[67] He has, perhaps inadvertently, limited these examples to instances in zone 15 attributed to Scribe D. There are a number of these initials in zones attributed to Scribe C (e.g. figs.5.227-231 – where they are matched with instances in zones attributed to Scribe D). There is one instance in zone 17 attributed to Scribe A (fig.5.387-no.2). However, the display-letter *T* with interlace (fig.5.365-no.30 - '*hora **t**er-*') has an almost perfect match on f.68v, which is attributed to Scribe C (fig.5.380-no.1). Rectangular *et*-ligatures, corresponding to those in the display-lettering on ff.8r and 13r (fig.5.365-nos.4 - last letter, and no.9 - third last letter) are shown in fig.5.232. Related lozenge-shaped instances are shown in figs.5.233-4. Higgitt's interpretation of the garbled text on in the final panel of display-lettering on f.292r (fig.5.365-no.38) seems reasonable. He suggests that the text '*verbum et verbum*' is incorrectly written in Kells as '*veruu 7 veruu*', with a

[67] Higgitt 'The display script', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 212.

7-shaped *Tironian et* in the middle.[68] He does not note that a single instance of this letterform

occurs in Kells' text in line 8 on f.302r (fig.3.212-no.6 - and see also no.7 for an instance added

as a correction). Neither rectangular-*Q*, or lozenge-shaped *O*, occur in the display-lettering, but

these are shown in the illustrations as they share familial correspondences with the angular

display-lettering (figs.5.376-77). The unusual display capital in Higgitt *U/V*5, with rectangular

indentation, which occurs only once on f.124r (fig.5.365–no.21), does not have a corresponding

U/V initial in the text, but fig.5.385 shows other initials with similar indentations. In Kells there

are a number of other display-letters which do not have corresponding initials. These include

Higgitt *B*1 and 2, *F*1and 2, *h*1-3, *M*2 and 3 (gated versions), *N*3 (the Runic-style *N*4 has some

correspondence with an elaborated *N* in fig.3.303-no.11), *P*, *S*2, *X* and the distinctive *Y*. Higgitt

suggests that some of the display-letters in Kells are unique to it, and these include the *D*-shaped

O and the *G*.[69] The use of display-letterforms as initials is also perhaps unique to Kells. Finally,

figs.5.387-89 show further unique variant instances of initial letters which share familial features

with the angular display-lettering, in zones attributed to the various hands in the four-scribe

scheme. The greater proportion of these in zones attributed to Scribe D is perhaps due to the

greater decorative emphasis employed in the Passion sequences.

(xi) Curvilinear and coloured display-letters

The second type of display-lettering used in Kells are those of the more free-flowing curvilinear

type. The three instances on ff.8r, 19v and 292r are grouped together to facilitate comparison in

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[68] Ibid., p. 213 - his diagram (fig.1a and b) suggests how this error may have occurred. On p. 216 he suggests this *7*-shaped *Tironian et* 'seems to be the only example amongst surviving Insular decorated capitals'.
[69] Ibid., p. 214.

fig.5.391. This appears to be a feature unique to Kells although some parallels occur, for example, on ff.80r and 125r in the Barberini Gospels. These display-letters are not discussed in any detail by Higgitt. They are closely paralleled with the more elaborate zoomorphic initials in the manuscript, and fig.5.390 shows instances of these from zones attributed to Scribes A, C and D.[70] Many of these initials, and also most of the curvilinear display-lettering, show little concern for the legibility of the letterforms, and appear to be more absorbed in the imaginitive play of their design. In the display-lettering on f.8r, the elaborate zoomorphic letters '*at*', with the addition of a simple '*i*' on the left-hand side of the panel are balanced on the right by a similarly elaborate pair of zoomorphs for '*ta*', which incorporate a softly rounded '*s*' (fig.5.391-no.1). These creatures bite each other, or themselves, and are further elaborated by secondary, fine strands of interlace, originating in lappets and tails and which also wind around the recticlinear *U/V-I* monogram in the centre. The arrangement of the letters on f.19v echoes that on f.8r, as the zoomorphic letters '*ac*' and the final '*a*', writhe on either side of a plainer '*h*' which occupies the centre of the panel (fig.5.391-no.2). These are, again, elaborated by secondary, finer strands of lappet and tail interlace. Rather than biting each other, these creatures, with the exception of the first *a*, gorge themselves, in the company of a bird who sits within the first *a*. They dine on the fruits of a vine which sprouts from a simple vase, turned sideways, on the right-hand side of the panel. This is a variation and differs from the design on f.8r. However, there are two other panels on f.8r with similar vine-scrolls, one of which is directly below the panel of curvilinear display-

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[70] As discussed above, it is understood here that none of these complex zoomorphic initials were added in the second campaign and consequently do not occur in the zones attributed to Scribe B.

lettering.[71] These inhabited vine-scrolls, and in particular that on f.19v, are similar to another in the angled section of the panel at the bottom right on f.34r.[72]

The '*RINCI*' in the panel of curvilinear display-lettering on f.292r is also divided, in this instance by the elaborate ornament attached to the second vertical of the large '*N*' and the also the vertical of '*P*' (fig.5.391-no.3). In the section on the left, another vine is inhabited by zoomorphic letters, and these bite each other or themselves. The whole panel is packed with the interlacing of creatures and vines, and by secondary strands of very fine lappet and tail interlace.[73] The '*CI*' on the right is composed of a zoomorphic '*C*' which is interlaced, and also grapples with, a seated man who represents the '*I*'. An inverted bird also struggles with the '*C*'. This panel is, again, densely packed and also finished with very fine strands of lappet, tail and beard interlacing. These accounts show that compositionally all three panels share similarities but analysis of their graphic quality reveals some important differences.

In the panels on ff.8r and 19v the relative complexity of the designs and the quality of their linear execution is similar. However, the panel on f.292r differs from these, both in the greater complexity and intensity of its design, and also in the greater precision and fineness of its linear execution. This disparity in quality is similar to that addressed in chapter two regarding the canon tables. A similar discrepancy in quality is also discussed above in relation to the initials (fig.5.325). The individual to whom this is attributed here, is identified in this study as the Master-Artist. The work attributed to the Master-Artist overlaps with that attributed by Henry to the artist she identified as the Goldsmith. Henry describes this individual as 'certainly the

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[71] The first panel of display-lettering on f.114v is also interlaced with a vine-scroll which emanates from the mouth of the zoomorphic *T* (fig.5.365-no.16 and 6.77).

[72] For a discussion of these and other vine-scrolls in Kells see Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (1994), pp. 60-63.

[73] The presence of a vine on this page attributed by Henry to the Goldsmith, perhaps undermines her assertion that this artist 'never uses any vegetal ornament' Henry, *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period* (London, Methuen, 1940 and 1947), p. 145, a view restated in Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p.212.

greatest draughtsman in the book', and is credited by her as the creator of f.292r.[74] The 'RINCI'

curvilinear panel of display-lettering is compatible with most of the design and decoration on the

page. However, the panels of lettering below this on f.292r share features more typical of the

other instances of angular display-lettering in the manuscript (fig.5.365-no.38). The letters used

in these panels are typical of the variants discussed above. The ligatured and monogrammed

'VER', in the lower panel, recalls the 'MEMO' on f.257v (fig.5.373-no.4). The characteristics of

the angular display-lettering have been shown to have much in common with the work of the

Scribe-Artist, and this is therefore another possible instance of collaboration between him and

the Master-Artist.[75] If, as suggested in relation to the canon tables in chapter two, the Master-

Artist is the senior artist-designer, then it is not unreasonable to speculate that the panel of

curvilinear display-letters on f.292r may have been the model upon which the Scribe-Artist based

those on ff.8r and 19v.[76]

The 'IAM' on f.188r, and the 'AUTEM' and the pairs of double-s on f.203r, combine

elements of both the angular and the curvilinear display-lettering (fig.5.365-nos.31 and 33-34).

The *ER* within the bowl of the major *B* on f.29r could also be included with these (fig.5.365-

no.14). However, this is typical of the blurred boundaries encountered throughout this study

when attempting to categorise scribal features. This further strengthens the argument for

identifying the display-lettering, with the single exception of the 'RINCI' on f.292r, as the work

of the proposed Scribe-Artist.

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[74] Ibid., p. 212.

[75] Or, alternatively it may be that the Scribe-Artist has completed these lower panels during the second campaign. This may be the more likely scenario, as the display-lettering is not particularly complex, and, as has been noted above (footnote 68), the text is not accurately transcribed.

[76] Douglas Mac Lean attributes all three instances on ff.8r, 19v and 292r to the same artist. D. Mac Lean, 'Northumbrian Vinescroll Ornament and the Book of Kells', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, eds. J. Hawkes and S. Mills (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 1999), pp. 178-90.

(xii) Decoration and framing-borders

associated with display-lettering

 The decoration in and around the display-lettering may include plain or zoomorphic interlace, key or stepped-patterns, or they may have single or multi-coloured backgrounds. They may be accompanied by zoomorphs or anthropomorphs, as in the case of the warrior on f.8r. These are all consistent with the style and quality of creatures and decorative motifs elsewhere in the manuscript. On the letters themselves, Higgitt notes the presence of 'boxed' motifs (see figs.5.365-nos.2, 4-7, 10, 21, 32 and 35 and also figs.5.386, 5.374, 5.193-nos.1-2, 5.106-nos.1 and 3, 3.23-26, 3.100-101 and 3.145-no.8).[77] These 'boxes' are usually open but closed or solid variants occur on *F* on f.8r, *E* on f.124r and *M* on f.285r (figs.5.365-nos.4, 21 and 35 and also fig.5.366-no.24). Higgitt also mentions the occurrence of trumpet-motif inner-contours (see fig.5.365-nos.5, 10, 33 and 34 and also figs.5.383, 5.12, 5.29, 5.59, 5.215-16 and 5.309).[78] The 'Cathach-style' features discussed earlier in this chapter (figs.5.63-9), uniquely occur on the outside of the ribbon-border on f.16v (fig.5.365-no.11), as noted above, and are also uniquely added to the wedged end of the distinctive *Y* within this panel. All of these features are also randomly found on initials, and again, are subject to constant variation in both these and the display-lettering.

A further variation is evident in the presence or absence of framing borders around the panels of display-lettering. When these occur they vary from relatively plain ribbons to those which terminate in animal or human heads and also sometimes bodies. The panel on f.13r has both, in its unique double border (fig.5.365-no.8). The anthropomorphic instance on f.16v has

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[77] In the text these usually only occur on *F* and *N* and once on *x,* whereas in the display-lettering they are also found on *B*, *E*, *G*, *H*, *M*, *S*, *U*, *V* and *X*.

[78] Higgitt 'The display lettering', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 211, refers to these as 'trumpet linings'.

legs as well as a head (fig.5.365-no.11).[79] This instance is also unique in having several colours

along the length of the ribbon. On some of the fully illuminated pages, the borders more

accurately belong to adjacent panels, as for example, on ff.8r, 130r and 292r (fig.5.365-nos.1-8,

23-27 and 37-38). The ribbons of all these borders often have some simple decoration added,

which is consistent with those identified elsewhere as belonging to the proposed second

campaign.[80] These may be dots which emphasise the outline or, for example, step or cross

patterns which may be within the border. Occasionally, these decorations, or interlace, may be

added within the letters or in the inter-letter spaces, as for example, on ff.114v and 188v

(fig.5.365-no.18 and 32). These correspondences, and the constant predilection for often subtle

modification constitute further significant evidence to suggest that the proposed Scribe-Artist of

the text is also responsible for the display-lettering. Also, in support of this conclusion is

Higgitt's observation that the textual accuracy in the display-lettering is similar to the main

text.[81] One might indeed wonder if the textual inaccuracies, so often commented on in Kells, are

not inversely proportional to the proposed Scribe-Artist's concentration on the decorative

programme of constant variation.

Conclusions

The analyses in this chapter continue to reveal further evidence in support of the conclusion that

the scribal work appears to be that of a single individual, the Scribe-Artist. These analyses range

over *d* and *et*-ligature initials in the prefatory material, uncial and half-uncial *a* and the *et*-ligature

throughout the rest of the manuscript. All of these show patterns of clustering, of distinctively

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[79] This echoes a similar arrangement in the border surrounding three of the four sides of the full-page of illumination on f.8r.
[80] These will be discussed further in chapter six.
[81] Ibid., p.212.

unique variants, of random and arbitrary distribution, and especially patterns of constant variation and modification, whether of the letterform, its details, or its decoration. All of these patterns consistently parallel those identified in chapters two, three and four. The display-letters, whether curvilinear, or the more frequently used angular versions, also show all of these patterns of variation in both form and decoration. The angular versions are also shown to have remarkable parallels with similarly angular initials.

Zoomorphic, and occasionally anthropomorphic, initials or those with such features added, also follow similar patterns in zones attributed to the different scribes, as does the occasional interaction of these creatures across openings. A 'visual essay' also identifies consistency between these zoomorphic initials and their interlinear fellows, which strengthens the suggestion that these creatures are all the work of the proposed Scribe-Artist.

The arbitrary nature of the distribution, and size of initials, is demonstrated in the comparison of ff.218v-219r. This is shown through the example of *et*-ligature *litterae notabiliores*, the smallest in the continuum of initial letter sizes. These ubiquitous letterforms are also shown to be distributed with a random consistency on almost every text page of the manuscript.

The initials are usually executed in a darker ink, and this is also generally used for the letter or letters immediately following them, although variations in this practice also occur. These following-letters, may differ in size and number, and are consistently found in variant forms which occur throughout the manuscript, as does the occasional use of a limited form of diminuendo. Other links between initial letters and the text also reveal consistently varied patterns throughout.

The initials in zones attributed to Scribe B, here identified as part of a second campaign, follow patterns similar to those discussed in previous chapters, as are some additions to initials which also seem to belong to the second campaign. While these often bear the distinctive features associated with the proposed second campaign, the scribal '*DNA*' that links them to the rest of the script is clearly identifiable throughout.

A small number of initials, and one instance of display-lettering, show a distinctive fineness and precision that is not typical of the work of the Scribe-Artist. It is however, consistent with the work of the Master-Artist as discussed in relation to the canon tables in chapter two. This also strengthens the identification of a pattern of collaboration between this exquisite artist and the Scribe-Artist, as was also discussed in chapter two. A brief analysis of spirals, and the occasional presence of fine and precise examples, also supports this conclusion of collaboration between the two individuals. The identification of the somewhat inferior quality of some spirals, in zones attributed to Scribe B, is consistent with the decline in quality identified in the work of the proposed second campaign.

Comparisons are drawn with other Insular manuscripts, including C.C.C.C.197B, in which the work of its two scribes is clearly distinguishable. Consecutive sequences of *et*-ligatures, extracted from sections of text in Kells and shown together, crucially identify a constant pattern of often subtle variation, and this is consistent throughout the zones attributed to the different hands in the four-scribe scheme. This is corroborated by the illustration of an extensive range of script variations attributed to one of these hands in the four-scribe scheme, and is further corroborated by an illustration which identifies a remarkable consistency in ductus, aspect, weight, pen-angle, stroke-formation and letter formation across the different scribal zones.

These conclusions consistently identify patterns that are difficult to reconcile with Henry or Meehan's divisions of hands. In particular the constant variation appears so consistently throughout that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to imagine how it could be produced by different members of a scriptorium. Neither, in a hand where the stroke-formation is so precisely and deliberately rendered, does it seem possible that the patterns of variation could be the result of whim or carelessness. These rather appear to be the product of a deliberate campaign, relentlessly pursued through all aspects of the scribal work, which includes the initials and the display-lettering. It is suggested that this programme of subtle and 'hidden' variation may have been inspired by similar practices as employed by contemporary fine metalsmiths.

Chapter 6

SOME FURTHER ASPECTS OF THE SECOND CAMPAIGN AND ITS LATER PHASE

Introduction

This study proposes that the Book of Kells was created by two individuals during two separate campaigns of work. While the Master-Artist and the Scribe-Artist worked together during the first campaign, only the Scribe-Artist survived to attempt the completion of the manuscript in the second campaign. There is a deterioration in the quality of the work done during the second campaign. A later and final phase of this campaign shows further deterioration in quality.

Throughout the analyses of the script, initials and various other scribal features undertaken in this study, a significant amount of work has been identified as belonging to the second campaign. This chapter examines some further minor features which are part of that second campaign. These are typically in the red ink associated with that campaign. The fact that many of the additional marks discussed throughout this chapter can probably be attributed to a later or final phase of this second campaign is also addressed.

The first issue to be examined is **(i)** the use of dotted outlines to a number of features including initials, the letters immediately following initials, zoomorphs, other miscellaneous features and also to illumination. This is concluded by discussing the attribution of these dotted outlines to the second campaign. The next issue addressed is **(ii)** the use of triple dots of various sizes and in various applications. The use of flowers and florets for emphasis is discussed here as are some unusual groupings of dots. The 'doubling' of some minor features not dealt with in earlier chapters is also addressed as are the occurrence of triple dots inside initials, *litterae*

notabiliores and marginal arabesques. The occurrence of these triple dots on some illuminated pages is discussed, and some other instances of red dotting are also examined. Following this **(iii)** a further range of miscellaneous features is addressed. These include cross-motifs, stepped-patterns, various groupings of straight and curved short lines, triangles, lentoids, lozenges, fretwork, interlacing, internal contours, spray, leaf and floret motifs. Instances of various marks added to zoomorphs are also discussed as is the fact that these may occasionally be found in different combinations. The occurrence of many of the red marks added over yellow paint is also addressed, as is the application of paint in the second campaign. The likelihood is that at least some of this was added in the later phase of this campaign. In this context also, the identification of traces of offset paint are also discussed.

(i) Red dotted outlines to initials and to other features

Red dotted outlines to initials
and the letters which follow them

The addition of red dots outlining initials has a long history in the Irish manuscript tradition occurring even in what is considered to be the earliest extant book of the Insular period, Usserianus Primus (TCD MS 55).[1] In Kells this might appear to be a constant and consistently applied feature throughout the manuscript. However, close examination shows that its use is subject to the distinctive patterns of distribution and variation found throughout the scribal features in the book in both the first and second campaigns of work as proposed in this study.

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[1] See Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (1994) p. 17 (see the staurogram on f.149v).

While these dotted outlines to initials are present on five hundred and fifty-eight text pages they are completely absent from another eighty-three, which is thirteen percent of the total (diag.6.1). These absences are randomly spread throughout the manuscript, sometimes on isolated pages, of which there are twenty-five, as for example ff.37r, 70v, 107r, 139r, 181v, 204r, 230r and 316v. They may be absent from two consecutive pages, in one instance on both pages of opening ff.98v-99r or more frequently on both sides of a folio as on ff.70, 111, 244, 249 and 285. Larger clusters of consecutive pages without this outline dotting to initials also occur. Clusters of three pages are found between ff.10r-11r, 29v-30v and 39r-40r while clusters of four occur between ff.73r-74v, 200v-202r and 238r-239v. A single cluster of five pages occurs between ff.240v-242v and a single cluster of six between ff.233r-235v. Cumulatively this feature is absent from thirteen of the eighteen pages in quire twenty-seven, ff.234r-242v. However, the largest cluster occurs in quire thirty-four, where only the first three pages have any dotting around the initials and it is absent between ff.294r-301v, a total of sixteen pages. This pattern of distribution, of presence and absence recalls those described throughout this study and suggest that this is the work of the Scribe-Artist.[2].

Of the five hundred and fifty-eight pages with this feature, one hundred and fifty-five pages have the dotting around the initial letters only. It is much more typical to see it also applied to the letters which follow the initials and more than one of these letters may be outlined in this way. The dotting is often extended to a third and there are twenty-six instances where the dotting is extended to a fourth letter (figs.6.1 and 6.2-nos.1-2). It is interesting to note that most of these instances where four letters are surrounded by dotting are found as part of clusters that are widely scattered in the manuscript: there are six between ff.75r-79v (fig.6.1-nos.3-8), three

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[2] The reader may find it useful to scan the large illustrations with groups of initials to observe the presence, absence and variation of these dotted outlines: figs.5.1, 5.2, 5.17, 5.31, 5.84 and 5.123-6.

between ff.83r-85v (fig.6.1-nos.9-11), four between ff.120r-125v (fig.6.1-nos.13-16), two

between ff.226r-227v (fig.6.1-nos.17-18) and four between ff.271v-272v (figs.6.1-nos.19-22).[3]

Uniquely, in one instance the dotting surrounds six letters and in another instance seven letters

(fig.6.2-nos.3 and 6).[4] These latter are part of a rare category, of which there are six instances,

where the dotting continuously surrounds a group of letters rather than around each individual

letter (fig.6.2). There is also the relatively rare occurrence where some of the initials on a page

are left without this addition.[5] The first instance where this occurs is on f.1r where the final *Z* is

lacking the dotted outline (fig.5.1). Other pages with some absences include ff.12r, 24r, 99v,

203v, 306v, 319r and 324v. Folios 290r, 292v and 293r each having only a single initial outlined

in dots with that on f.290r rendered in purple (fig.6.8-no.3). This latter page is written in red and

other pages mainly written in red, between ff.20r-25v, also have some purple dotting with

perhaps the most obvious instance in line ten on f.25v (fig.5.313-no.4**).** Fig 6.3 shows some other

instances of red letters with purple dotted outlines, including one purple letter with dotted outline

in purple and also variations where purple letters have red dotted outlines. In this illustration the

consistency and the application of the dotting often appears to be somewhat diminished in

quality and may suggest that it was added as part of the later phase of the second campaign. This

will be discussed further below.

On many pages this dotting may be subject to significant loss and it is sometimes difficult

to ascertain the reason for this.[6] It is possible that in some cases this may be the result of an

attempted 'restoration' in the nineteenth century when pages were dampened in an effort to

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[3] The clustering of features is identified as one of the defining characteristics of the Scribe-Artist's work throughout this study.

[4] On the illuminated page f.34r the ten letters of '*autem genertatio*' are outlined with dots (fig.6.6).

[5] Such random distribution of features is identified as one of the defining characteristics of the Scribe-Artist's work throughout this study.

[6] There are also a few rare instances where the dotting seems to have been left incomplete as for example that surrounding the large *A* in fig.5.84-no.5.

flatten them. Conservator Roger Powell, who rebound Kells in 1953, commenting on this

described it as 'a disaster. It was then that some of the leaves were wiped over with a wet cloth;

this was followed by pressing while they were still damp'.[7] It may also be that the loss is due to

the occasional use of a less stable variation in the ink recipe. This speculation is suggested by the

fact that such loss of pigment is sometimes found on consecutive pages. This is most noticeable

on ff.50r-60r, 64r-70r, 99v-119v, 153r-160v, 210r-212v, 263r-268v, 329r-331v and 333v-339v.

On some of these pages, such as f.113r, the evidence for the presence of the dotting remains

merely as a white stain on the vellum (see fig.5.322).[8]

A further phenomenon is the very occasional blackish appearance of some of the dotting.

Without scientific analysis it is perhaps impossible to ascertain whether this is due to some

degradation in the pigment or to some other cause. It may have been the result of accidental, or

deliberate(?) mixing of inks, where the scribe may have dipped his quill in black ink, during

what must have been a monotonous process. Pages with some of this blackish dotting include

ff.20r, 62r, 109r, 119r, 125r, 133v, 186r, 324r, 325r and 328r (these occur in zones are attributed

to the various hands in the four-scribe scheme).[9] Without knowing the reason for the blackish

appearance of these dots it cannot be ascertained if they can be associated with the Scribe-

Artist's predilection for variation. However, the occasional presence of red dotted outlines on

some of the letters with extended curved-concave elaborations is consistent with his predilection

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[7] Meehan, 'Bindings: documentary evidence', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 193-95 (p. 193). In footnote 10 on this page Meehan notes that Powell guessed that this occurred during the 1821 binding by George Mullen.

[8] The enlarged images in fig.5.322 show instances where some of the dotting is apparently lost (no.2), and two where white traces remain (nos.3-4). In a *pers. comm.* (August, 2015), M. P. Brown suggests that this may be due to the oxidisation of red lead. For discussion see M. P. Brown, 'Pigments and their uses in Insular manuscripts', in J.Sharpe, ed., *The Compleat Binder: Studies in Book-making and Conservation in Honour of Roger Powell* (Brepols, Turnhout, 1996), pp. 136-45.

[9] See for example, figs.6.3-no.2, 5.31-no.22, 5.116-no.31, 5.123-nos.11-13, 5.149-no.3, 5.262-no.3, 5.302-no.2 and 5.322-no.1.

for variation.[10] At the end of f.75r all four such letters ('*hora*') are uniquely outlined with these dots (fig.6.1-no.4).

Fig.6.4 shows occasional instances where dotted 'outlines' are added inside a letterform. These dots are less precisely executed than those which suround the outside of the letters (in fig.6.4-no.3 all of the dotted additions are poorly executed). The inferior quality of these dots suggest that they have been added in the later phase of the second campaign. As is evident in the illustrations they are often accompanied by triple red dots which again are varied in their location which also seem to belong to the later phase of the second campaign. These will be discussed further below.

Red dotted outlines to zoomorphs

The use of red dotted outlines to the various zoomorphs and anthropomorphs which inhabit the text pages of the manuscript also occurs with the Scribe-Artist's typical predilection for randomness in their presence, absence and variation.[11] Of a total of one hundred and forty-five instances, sixty-nine have dotted outlines while seventy-six do not.[12] Sequences also occur such as those between ff.55r-57r (figs.4.146-no.3, 4.172-nos.5-6 and 4.194-nos.6-7) where the creatures do not have dotted outlines and ff.61r-68r which do (figs.4.146-nos.4-7 and 4.194-no.8). It is also the case that on pages with more than one creature they will not all necessarily be treated in the same way. Such variation is found for example, on ff.41v, 92v and 311v. This is also found on the facing pages of openings such as ff.183v-184r, 255v-256r, 276v-277r and

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[10] See for example figs.3.270-nos.2 and 4, 3.271-nos 17-18, 3.273, 3.275-no.6, 3.276-no.14, 3.289-no.1, 3.300-no.8 and 3.302-no.3.

[11] As with the initials, the reader may find it useful to scan the large illustrations with groups of zoomorphs to observe the presence, absence and variation of these dotted outlines: figs.4.146, 4.172, 4.194-95, 4.198 and 5.247-78.

[12] Some instances have more than one zoomorph so the total number of creatures is greater than 145.

325v-326r. In fig.4.194-no.16 the zoomorphic turn-in-path marker has a dotted outline but uniquely, the adjacent diagonal stroke marker is also surrounded by a dotted outline. The inclusion of such unique features is typical of the Scribe-Artist's work.

Red dotted outlines to miscellaneous features

The occurrence of other unique or rare instances of these red dotted outlines is also consistent with similar patterns identified throughout the various features of the scribal work in the manuscript. They are added to elaborate letter extensions on ff.78r, 87v, 187r, 200r, 273r and 325r,[13] to some flowers and florets on ff.61v, 72r, 147r, 158r, 248r and 251v (fig.6.5), to line-fillers on ff.48r, 128r, 283r while the double row on f.277r forms part of an unusual line-filler itself.[14] One turn-in-path marker which is itself unique also has a red dotted outline on f.71v (fig.4.167-no.6). Marginal arabesques have dotted outlines with one instance on f.147r (partially) and two on f.325r (figs.4.44-no.13 and 4.48-nos.31-32).[15] Omitted text on ff.146v and 253v is surrounded by dotting as is the subscripted '*amen*' at the end of Luke on f.289r (figs.4.10-no.2 and 4.200-nos.5 and 8). The panel of display-lettering on f.127v is surrounded by a double row of dotting while a single row seems to have been begun around a similar panel on f.12r (fig.5.365-nos.22 and 7).

Red dotted outlines to illumination

The occurrence of red dotted outline decoration on the illuminated pages also appears to be quite random with most of these pages having none. There is however, a significant amount of this

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[13] See figs.4.92-no.1, 4.89-no.3, 3.302-no.3, 5.305-no.1, 3.273 and 3.271-no.18.
[14] See figs.4.146-nos.1-2, 4.140-no.5, 4.140-nos.12-14 and 4.146-no.46.
[15] The dotted outline around both marginal arabesques on f.325r is blackish as is that around the adjacent initial letter a (fig.5.31-no.129), see footnote 9 above.

decoration on ff.34r (fig.6.6), 114v (fig.6.77), 124r (5.365-no.21), f.203r (fig.6.80) - this page also has two panels with dotted outlines (fig.6.81-2) and on one side-wall of the temple on f.202v (fig.6.79). The occurrence of a number of instances where dotted lines are variously used to link initials to the text has been mentioned in chapter four (fig.4.143).

Attribution to the second campaign

There are a number of reasons for attributing all of these dotted decorations to the second campaign of work by the Scribe-Artist. They are predominantly in the red ink which features so prominently in this phase of work. There is also no obvious difference between those added to the initials in the sections completed in the first campaign and those added to the initials in the two main sections of script completed in the second campaign, ff.20r-26v and 125v-129r. In addition the application of the dotting is not always precisely applied with some instances appearing to be less regular and less evenly applied suggesting that they are from the latest or final phase of this campaign. In lines 6-12 on f.253v it is possible to see the earlier dotted outlines on the zoo- and anthropomorphic initials in lines 6 and 10 while that surrounding, and inside, the smaller *et*-ligatures on lines 8 and 9, and above the smaller *A* in line 10, is poorer in quality and is here attributed to the later part of the second campaign (fig.6.7-no.1). Other instances where these dots are less regularly formed and less precisely applied are occasionally found throughout the manuscript as for example on f.139v (fig.6.7-nos.4-5), f.23r (fig.6.8-no.1) and f.31r around the lozenge-shaped *O* in line 10 (fig.6.8-no.2). As mentioned above, occasionally dotting is added inside initials and *litterae notabiliores* (fig.6.7-no.1). Typically the uneven form and poor application of this internal dotting suggests that it is also attributable to the later phase of the second campaign. The dotting surrounding all six letters of '*euntes*' on f.129r is

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also uneven and poorly applied (fig.6.2-no.3). It is interesting to note that this is one of the rare

instances, discussed above, which are scattered throughout the manuscript, where a large number

of letters are surrounded by a dotted outline. This is consistent with the Scribe-Artist's use of

variation and supports the conclusion that all of this work is attributable to him.[16]

(ii) Triple Red Dots and other features

Like dotted outlines the use of triple dots is also prominent in Insular art and instances are found

in manuscripts as early as the Cathach.[17] Their use has been identified as a prominent feature in

the decoration of the Book of Kells.[18] The smallest instances of this feature will be examined

first followed by those which more closely approximate the size of the punctuation marks. This

research shows that these triple dots, predominantly in red, are also attributable to the second

campaign.

Small triple red dots

The occurrence of small triple red dots was briefly addressed in chapter four as part of the

discussion of script-related decorative additions.[19] The following is a more detailed account of

this feature in the manuscript.

The small triple dots are not always consistent in size - some are quite small while others

are larger. The smallest instances often occur on the pointed ends of wedges which terminate

letters (fig.4.75). Very small instances are also occasionally added to punctuation (fig.4.38-no.7).

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[16] The random occurrence of the various forms of dotting associated with the initials in Kells does not correspond or relate to the use of dotting and other decorative elements to articulate the text such as occurs in the Lindisfarne Gospels (see M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, pp. 299-300).

[17] In the Cathach see for, example, the instance beside the initial on f.30v). For an instance in the Book of Durrow see fig.5.324-no.2. This feature is also evident in the Lindisfarne Gospels.

[18] See e.g. Pulliam, *Word and Image*, p. 107.

[19] See chapter four p. 227.

Other instances are found added to florets (figs.4.82-no.4 and 4.145-nos.2-4, 8-9 and 11), flowers (fig.4.74), floret-sprays (figs.3.112-no.1 and 4.83-no.1 and 3), spirals (figs.3.286-no.8, 4.30-no.2 and 4.90-no.3) and marginal arabesques, often in clusters (figs.4.40-nos.3-9, 4.41-nos.21-30, 4.47-nos.37-39 and 4.48-nos.13-19).[20] Clusters are also found for example on the letter *x* on both sides of f.79 (fig.3.244-nos.17-20) and on lobed variants of the letters with extended curved-concave elaborations between ff.79v-87r (fig.3.276-nos.1-4). Fig.6.9 shows a range of variations in the addition of these dots to letters with extended curved-concave elaborations. Fig.3.360-nos.26-27 shows a small cluster of two where the triple red dots are added to vertical-*m*. Occasionally these dots are added to numerals (fig.4.2-nos.1 and 6). These dots are also found around initial letters (fig.4.255-nos.2-3).[21] They are also frequently added to those initials that are connected to the script with lines of dotting (fig.4.143). They are occasionally added to zoomorphs as for example the lion-heads in the canon tables on ff.2v and 5r (figs.2.34 and 2.54), inside a turn-in-path marker on f.293v (fig.5.278-no.2) and outside a subscript marker on f.273v (fig.4.198-no.14). The randomness of distribution, the variation and the clustering of these small triple red dots are all consistent with the work of the Scribe-Artist.

Small triple red dots also occur as line-filling motifs. These may appear between the florets (figs.4.80-no.3, 4.95-no.3 and 4.100-no.5 – between purple four-petalled variants) and between flowers (fig.4.93-no.1). They are added in various ways to whiplash line-filling motifs (figs.4.112-no.5, 4.133-nos.2-3, 4.122-no.8, 4.120-no.2 and 4.126-no.5), to scrolling motifs (figs.4.134-nos.1-2) and to wave-scroll motifs (fig.4.138-nos.1, 3, 7, 8 and 12). Angular line-filling motifs also occasionally occur with added triple dots (fig.4.139-nos.3, 4 and 8).

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[20] One of these clusters (where triple red dots are added to marginal arabesques) shows them added to accompanying floret-sprays (figs.4.46-nos.27-30). Compare these with figs.3.112-no.1 and 4.83-nos.1 and 3.

[21] Fig.4.255-no.1 shows some of these triple red dots added to *N* the quality of which seems more consistent with the later phase of the second campaign.

Small triple red dots are occasionally added to accent marks (fig.4.208-nos.3, 5 and 6) and to 'doubled' accent marks (fig.4.209-nos.1-2 and 4-6). They are also sometimes found on abbreviation markers, including 'doubled' markers (figs.4.239-nos.5-7 and 4.242-no.3), superscript markers, including 'doubled' instances (fig.4.169-nos.1-4) and only rarely on turn-in-path markers (fig.4.189-no.52). Another variation occurs when these triple dots are rendered in yellow (figs.5.209-no.2, 5.227-no.2, 5.249-no.3, 5.268-no.2 and 5.283-no.1). In one instance the triple dots are green (fig.4.47-no.7) and fig.6.10 which shows a further range of red triple dot variations.

Small triple red dots are first encountered on f.1r where a few of these appear under the headstroke of the 'Z' of '*Zorobabel*' in line 7 (fig.5.1-no.1) with some slightly larger versions occurring as line-fillers in the lines above it. As with all other scribal features these are randomly distributed throughout the manuscript and are found on 349 pages, almost exactly half of the total (diag.6.2). This randomness is evident in the distribution of pages where there is just a single set of these small triple dots as occurs on ff.47r, 52r, 60v, 136v, 138r, 161v, 194v, 204v, 261r, 282v, 312r and 330r. On 65 pages these small triple red dots occur on only one part of a page and may, for example accompany a single floret (f.257r line 13), or a single initial (f.55v line 11). All of this evidence strongly supports the attribution of this feature to the Scribe-Artist.

Single and quadruple dot variants

There are a few rare instances where a single dot rather than a triple set occurs and these can be seen as variations of the triple dot feature (fig.6.11-nos.1-2). Two of these occur on f.254r lines 11-12, with another small cluster of three on f.318r between lines 15-17. Apart from one instance on the letter *z* these occur on the letter *q* as does one further variant where four rather than three

dots are added in line 18 on f.323v (fig.6.11-no.3). A single cluster of these rare quadruple dots, (in blue), is added to four letters at line-ends on f.182v (fig.6.11-no.4) while a similar cluster is found on f.222r (fig.6.11-no.5). The single dots added to one flower on f.273r line 4 can be understood as instances of the Scribe-Artist's unique variants of a scribal feature (fig.6.11-no.6).

Black triple dots added in the first campaign

While the addition of most of these triple dots are shown to be attributable to the second campaign, there are a few instances, in black ink, where they appear to have been added as part of the first campaign (diag.6.2). A single set in black occurs as a detail to the fish-shaped horizontal stroke of the *et*-ligature on f.299v (fig.5.197-no.1). These are echoed in a detail beside the eyes of the large lion-heads on f.4v in the canon tables (fig.2.74), on a zoomorphic initial on f.45r (fig.5.269-no.1) and on the three letters *q* with leaf terminals on f.49r, two of which have sets of small triple black dots (fig.6.12-no.1). In what appear to be second campaign additions, some blackish instances occur as on f.45r in line 7 (fig.6.12-no.2). This continues as a cluster on the following pages ff.45v-46v in what might appear to be a deliberate mixing of black and red ink (fig.6.12-nos.3-4).

Clustering, which is a recurring feature of the Scribe-Artist's work in Kells is also evident between ff.222r-223v and ff.270r-274r where small triple red dots occur in large numbers. A further cluster, where some of these dots are rendered in yellow ink occurs between ff.195r-196r (fig.6.64-nos.2-4). As noted above, this use of yellow is rare, occurring only on a total of eight pages (diag.6.2) and there is a unique instance of blue coloured small triple dots in the last line on f.233r (fig.6.11-no.7 and see also no.4).

Larger triple red dots – punctuation

and 'doubling' punctuation

The larger triple dots in red occur throughout the manuscript but are randomly absent from three hundred and eighty-seven pages and the randomness of their application can be appreciated by examining their distribution (diag.6.3). While these are often as large as the punctuation marks in the first campaign they are also varied in size. Most frequently these occur as additions which 'double' the original punctuation marks (diag.6.4). They sometimes appear as punctuation marks in their own right and the earliest instances in the manuscript are those added to the last numeral in each column of numerals on f.3r in the canon tables.

One or several punctuation marks on a page may be 'doubled' and any given instance may have one or several added sets of triple red dots (diag.6.4). In some cases, as mentioned above, these merge with the use of these triple dots as line-fillers. On f.327r. for instance, a great variety of these is evident as some are added as additional punctuation (fig.6.13-nos.1-3). This additional punctuation may also appear as double sets, as for example on f.115v (fig. 6.13-nos.4-5). These punctuation marks may be small at times, as for example on f.327r (fig.6.13-nos.1-2). The red triple dots are also occasionally added to the marks which are sometimes used to emphasise numerals as on ff.75v, 89v and 139v (figs.4.1-nos.3-4 and 4.5-no.1. However, the smallest of these is added to the dots surrounding the *U* in line 6 on f.226v (fig.4.3-no.5).

The group of triple dots in two lines on f.182v (fig.3.285-no.4) is somewhat unique as are the three added to a single punctuation mark on f.77v (fig.6.14-no.1). Other rare or unique variants are those in purple on f.54v (fig.5.150-no.3) and those in blue on ff.106r (fig.6.14-no.2), 282v (fig.3.291-no.13) and the large instance on f.309v (fig.4.196-no.6). A further set of triple

dots, in purple, on f.119r is accompanied by a unique lozenge-shaped motif (fig.3.301-no.4).

These variations are all typical of the Scribe-Artist's work.

Large triple red dots as line-fillers
and accompanying other features[22]

As mentioned above the larger triple red dots also occur as line-fillers or as additional emphasis

to earlier line-filling motifs such as scrolling, florets or flowers.[23] These are randomly distributed

with clusters occurring on individual pages such as ff.36*r, 110r, 127r and 322r (diag.6.5). There

is also an obvious cluster between ff.41v-43r. As with those 'doubling' punctuation these line-

filling triple red dots are usually found in multiples.[24] A single set occurs on f.3v, while f.36*r

not only has multiples of two, four, seven and even twelve sets but also shows these in varying

sizes. In addition, the first line on this page has two quadruple sets. Occasional variants are

rendered in purple as on ff.118r and 127r (fig.4.127-no.1) or in yellow as on the opening ff.117v-

118r. These yellow instances randomly occur on forty-seven pages. In keeping with the Scribe-

Artist's typical random distribution, there are none of these yellow instances between ff.164v-

257r.

Sets of larger dots are also added to other features. The most unusual variants are the

quadruple sets in blue on f.90v (fig.6.14-no.3) and in green on f.62r (fig.6.14-no.4). Two sets of

green triple dots are added outside of the marginal arabesque on f.256r (fig.4.47-no.7) while that

on f.73r has some sets of red dots similarly added (fig.4.41-no.19). The latter instance also has

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[22] See chapter four p. 227.
[23] These occur randomly with much variation throughout the manuscript and may be seen between figs.4.93-144 (intermittently).
[24] See chapter four, pp. 217-19.

some sets of triple dots added within the motif. This and other similar instances will be discussed

below. These randomly distributed variations are typical of the Scribe-Artist's work patterns.

Red flowers and florets[25]

Red flowers, similar to those which were added as line-fillers in the first campaign, are

sometimes added as another form of emphasis or 'doubling' in the second campaign (diag.6.5).

These occur on approximately 23 pages with clusters between ff.99r-104r (fig.6.15) and 317r-

318v. These occur with typical variations such as those with yellow added on ff.99r, 100r, 145r

(fig.4.97-no.2), 293v and 305r. They may appear singly, sometimes overlapping the punctuation

marks, in pairs or other multiples and perhaps the most unusual variant is that with added leaves

on f.318v (fig.4.98-no.1). These are usually 'flowers' formed of seven circles but 'florets'

formed of four or three circles also occur such as those on f.305r (fig.4.102). They also occur as

line-fillers which this research shows as having been added in the second campaign. These

include those added, uniquely in purple and forming a cluster, between ff.256v-257v (fig.4.100

and see also fig.4.99). A unique instance is also added inside an *et*-ligature initial on f.207v

(fig.5.214-no.2). All of these patterns of variation and distribution are consistent with the work of

the Scribe-Artist as are the following unusual groupings of dots.

Unusual groupings of dots

Unusual groupings of dots are another rare feature found on only seven pages. These occur as

punctuation or additions to punctuation, to scrolls and to line-fillers. These are usually in red but

a variation in purple occurs on on f.119r (fig.3.361-no.168). They are added to scrolling and to

punctuation on f.141r (fig.4.122-no.8). An even greater variety occurs on f.309r with three black

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[25] See chapter four pp. 226-28.

sets added to punctuation in line 3 (fig.4.140-no.2) and seven red sets added to vine-scrolling in

line 13 (fig.4.138-no.5). This illustration also shows a unique red dotted lozenge under an

extended *e* which recalls another unique lozenge-shaped motif on f.119r mentioned above

(fig.3.301-no.4).

‘Doubling’ of markers and other motifs

The presence of ‘doubled’ markers on instances of punctuation, turn-in-path, superscriptions,

abbreviations, accents, line-fillers and other motifs has been noted from time to time in this

study.[26] Some instances, in black ink, are probably contemporary with the first campaign of

work. However, the majority of these are in red and are here attributed to the second campaign.

Some of these have been addressed in chapter four,[27] and others in the previous paragraphs.

Further instances will be discussed in the following paragraph.

‘Doubled’ suspension marks
and other miscellaneous ‘doubled’ markings

‘Doubling’ in red occurs to the suspension marks on just twelve pages of the manuscript.[28] These

black pairs of vertical marks sometimes have ‘doubling’ dots added in red. Clusters occur

between ff.163r-167r and ff.269r-272r with three instances on f.271r (fig.6.16). There are three

other unusual instances of ‘doubling’ which appear to be unique (fig.6.17-nos.1-3). These are the

red curved line added to the *c*-shaped superscript *u* in line 9 on f.253v, the addition of two red

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[26] ‘Doubling’ motifs in this way is not unique to the Book of Kells and also occurs in other Insular manuscripts. See for example, f.86r, the *incipit* page for Mark in the Book of Durrow, where abbreviation marks over *xpi* and *dni* are ‘doubled’ in this manner. As noted in chapter four (pp. 218 and 266) ‘doubling’ of puntuation and abbreviation marks is not uncommon in Insular manuscripts.

[27] See chapter four, p. 244 for ‘doubling’ of superscript markers, pp. 252-55 for ‘doubling’ of instances of turn-in-path markers, pp. 261-62 for ‘doubling’ of accent marks and p. 266 for ‘doubling’ of abbreviation marks.

[28] Instances of these suspension marks are shown in figs.3.219-220. Fig.3.219-no.1 shows the only ‘doubled’ set among these illustrations.

dots to an already expunctuated '*N*' in line 1 on f.75v and a long red line drawn above the superfluous '*intrare*' which repeats that drawn through the word in line 2 on f.260v. There are traces of a second 'doubling' red line beneath the word also. The occurrence of such unique instances is typical of the Scribe-Artist's work.

Groups of red circles

Very occasionally groups of three or four separate red circles are added to punctuation marks, to line-fillers, to initials and to the illuminated pages. A cluster of these occurs between ff.200v-203r with quadruple sets in four initials on f.200v (figs.6.75-nos.5-6). In the Temptation illumination on f.202v triples occur in Christ's halo (fig.6.78) while triple and quadruple sets are found in the decoration on f.203r (figs.6.80-1). Another cluster occurs between ff.267v-270r, including a *t* with extended curved-concave elaboration on f.267v (fig.3.298-no.22), an initial *M* on f.269v (fig.5.84-no.123) and *litterae notabiliores* between ff.267v-270r (fig.6.18). On a few occasions these small red circles are added to punctuation marks as on ff.54r and 65r (fig.6.19), and to line-filling decoration on f.102v (fig.4.123-no.3). They are also found on other illuminated pages – f.29r (figs.6.19-no.3 and 6.73-no.11), f.114v (fig.6.77), f.124r (fig.6.54-no.8) and f.130r (figs.6.59-no.3). The uneven formation and poor application of these groups of circles suggest that they be attributed to the later phase of the second campaign. The randomness of their distribution and their variation are typical of the defining characterisitcs of the Scribe-Artist's work.

Triple dots added inside initials, *litterae notabiliores*

and marginal arabesques

Larger triple dots, predominantly in red are also added inside initials, *litterae notabiliores* and letters with extended curved-concave elaborations (diag.6.6). These are randomly distributed and significant clusters are evident, for example, between ff.115r-119r (e.g. figs.5.317-no.3 and 5.321-no.9), 135v-141r (e.g. figs.5.153-no.1 and 6.7-no.5), 185v-187v (e.g. figs.3.305-no.12 and 5.390-no.9) and 293r-295v (e.g. figs.5.186-no.1, 5.160-no.1 and 5.325-no.7).[29] These may occur as a single set to a single letter as occurs on twenty-four pages (diag.6.6). Variations with quadruple dots also occur and single sets of these occur on a further eight pages. Various numbers of letters may have these additions with the most numerous on ff.16v, 89v, 104v, 117v, 183v and 325v. There is also significant variation in the number of sets that may be added to any one initial with nine on one instance in f.54r (fig.5.84-no.7) and ten on another in 288v (fig.5.140-no.4). There are seven and eight respectively on ff.305v (fig.5.271-no.1) and 309r.

Yellow variants occur on twenty-eight pages with both sides of f.216 having six and seven sets to initials. The greatest number of these unusually coloured triple dots are on f.119r where seven yellow and seven green dots are added to the *P* of Petrus (fig.5.321-no.9). In the space outside this letter there are a further six sets in red. What seem to be white variants occur on two pages, f.201r (lines 3, 11, 13, 15 and 17) (fig.6.20) and in line 15 on f.206r (fig.6.21-no.1), with the latter having some added into the black of the letterform itself. The only other instance of this white variation occurs in line five on f.214v (fig.6.21-no.2). Triple yellow dots are also found within the panels of display-lettering on ff.15v, 16v and 188v and 204r (fig.5.365-nos. 10, 11 and 32).

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[29] Note the unusual diagonal alignment of the sets of triple red dots in fig.5.160-no.1.

Instances of initials containing triple and quadruple dots may occur on the same page. Occasionally variants are found with both triple and quadruple sets occurring within the same initial. Such variants all occur on f.137v with the *et*-ligature initial in line 17 additionally containing two sets of double dots (fig.5.153-no.1). These latter are rare and the collection of variants in this letter is only surpassed by those within the *A* on f.304v which has one quadruple, three triples, one double and one single dot (fig.5.32-no.14). The colour of these dots is unclear although they may be blue which would add further to their variety.

The addition of triple red dots surrounding marginal arabesques was mentioned above. Triple red dots of varying sizes are also added inside these motifs from time to time (fig.4.41-nos.6, 19 (in red and yellow), 24 and 30, fig.4.42-nos.4 and 12, fig.4.44-no.6 and fig.4.48-nos.1, 4, 17, 25 and 33). These are varied in number and colour with four sets on f.319r (fig.4.48-no.25) and six sets on f.144r (fig.4.44-no.6). Red and yellow instances are added on both f.73r (fig.4.41-no.19) and f.101r (fig.4.42-no.4).

Relative to most of the other dotted decoration these additions to initials, *litterae notabiliores* and marginal arabesques are usually inferior in their execution. As with some of the outline dotting discussed above these are typically uneven in their formation and lack precision in their application, sometimes overlapping linear boundaries. The random patterns of their distribution, their constant variation and the occurrence of clusters and also rare or unique variants all suggest that this continues to be the work of the Scribe-Artist.

Triple dots added to illumination

Triple dots, usually in red are found on most of the illuminated pages and this research shows that these are all attributable to the second campaign. While some are evenly proportioned and

well executed, such as those in the dotted decoration surrounding the pair of angels on f.34r (fig.6.6), others are not. For example, the uneven quality of the yellow dots within the kite shape at the upper right of the same page places them in the later phase of the second campaign (fig.6.21-no.3). This also applies to the quadruple and triple dots added to f.292r (fig.6.83).

Other additional red dotting

In addition to the instances discussed above, red dotting is also variously applied inside zoomorphs and anthropomorphs. Most typically these occur as lines of dots inside the various creatures but other arrangements are also found. These may be inside the 'bodies' of zoomorphic initials (fig.6.22), interlinear zoomorphs (fig.6.23), zoomorphs, zoomorphic interlace and figures in the illuminated pages (figs.6.24-25). Very occasionally similar lines of dots are added to initial letters (fig.6.26). These patterns are all typical of the Scribe-Artist's work.

(iii) Miscellaneous additional features

Figs.6.27-83 illustrate a range of miscellaneous features in red which have been added as part of the second campaign. These include cross motifs, stepped-patterns, groupings of short lines which may be straight or curved, triangles, lentoids, lozenges, fretwork, contour-lines, sprays, floret and foliate motifs. The poor quality of many of these additions would suggest that they are part of the later phase of that campaign. The variety of these motifs and their random distribution suggest that, in spite of the deterioration in quality, these continue to be identifiable as the work of the Scribe-Artist.

Cross-motifs

These features include a number of cross-motifs which range from very simple instances (fig.6.27), some with additional dots (fig.6.28), some asterisk-like variants and some with rectilinear additions (fig.6.29), outlined equal-armed crosses within circles (fig.6.30), outlined equal-armed crosses with further rectilinear additions (fig.6.31) and outlined stepped-crosses, some again, with further additions (fig.6.32).

Various stepped-patterns

Motifs that can be described as halved stepped-crosses also occur. A number of these are found in ribbon-borders (fig.6.33), various other locations, including their occurrence as decoration within initials (fig.6.34-5) and on two occasions within discs (fig.6.36). A linear stepped-pattern also occurs and these are sometimes added to ribbon-borders (fig.6.37) and to initials (fig.6.38).

Various groupings of short lines

Various groupings of short lines are sometimes added to ribbon-borders (figs.6.39-40). Diagonal variants also occur (fig.6.41) and these are occasionally rendered in opposed groupings (fig.6.42). Various groupings of these short lines are sometimes added to the 'bodies' of zoomorphic initials (fig.6.43). Continuous sequences of short hatched lines are added to ribbon-borders, zoomorphic interlace (on f.27v), a single initial and also to a single zoomorph (fig.6.44). Various other groupings of straight red lines, mainly diagonal, are also added to a number of initials (fig.6.45) and a number of these are added in diagonal pairs (fig.6.46) that recall similar decorative additions from the first campaign (see figs.5.204-08). Groupings of short curved red

lines also occur. These appear to be added with the intention of 'modelling' the heads, crests, tongues, tails and 'bodies' of zoomorphic initials (figs.6.48-49).

Miscellaneous additions

Figs.6.50-74 show a range of other motifs that are consistent with the work of the second campaign. These are added with the Scribe-Artist's typical attitude to variation and randomness of distribution. Triangles are variously added to ribbon-borders (fig.6.50, to initials (fig.6.51), to marginal arabesques (fig.6.52) and are occasionally found on the illuminated pages (fig.6.53). Lentoids are also occasionally used, most often in forming various cross-shapes (fig.6.54) and a small number of lozenge-shaped motifs are also added (fig.6.55).

Fretwork patterns are among the finest work found in Kells' illumination (figs.2.18a, 2.33, 2.52-54 and 2.61-62), while some broader instances occasionally occur as decoration in the initials (fig.5.206). These are all consistent with the work of the first campaign, however, some instances of fretwork patterns also seem to have been added as part of the second campaign. These instances from the second campaign show a noticeable decline in the quality of their execution. A further decline in quality suggests that some instances belong to the later phase of this campaign (fig.6.56).

Various simple interlace motifs are also randomly added to ribbon-borders, display-lettering, marginal arabsesques and to the pages of illumination (figs.6.57-59). These are typically in the red associated with the second campaign. Again, the poor execution of some instances places them in the later phase of that campaign, especially, for example, those in fig.6.58. It is interesting to note the red interlace and other motifs in fig.6.59-no.2 where these seem to have been added in the context of some damage to the surrounding panels of fine

interlace in revealed vellum against a black ground. The specific, isolated, internal location of this damage is unusual and it may be possible to speculate that it was abraded in this way by the action of worshippers in the act of kissing or touching the surface of the Christ-headed '*rho*' (the similarly decorated equal-armed stepped-cross at the foot of this letter has also been almost completely worn away). This might indicate that even before the manuscript was completed this page, possibly with the page of the eight-circled cross facing it,[30] was offered for veneration.[31] As the red second campaign additions do not appear to have suffered any wear it may be possible that this practice was subsequently discontinued.

Fig.6.60 shows the occasional addition of some internal contour lines in red. These are randomly added to some letters, to some display-lettering, to a single marginal arabesque, a single decorated initial and a single anthropomorphic initial. The lack of precision with which they are applied suggests that they are part of the later phase of the second campaign as do some unique additions in fig.6.61. Fig.6.62 shows what appear to be completions or additions of lattice motifs to a couple of finials and to some initials. The lack of precision in this work suggests that it also belongs to the second campaign and possibly to its later phase.

Fig.6.63 shows what appear to be some later additions to linear 'vegetal' sprays added to some letters and to one marginal arabesque. Fig.6.64 shows a range of leaf, spray and floret additions. These seem to be somewhat hastily added, probably with a brush, and their poor execution places them in the later phase of the second campaign. Fig.6.65 shows a number of

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[30] Meehan, *The Book of* Kells (1994), p. 24 note 15. Westwood, notes that these pages were facing each other when he examined the manuscript in the 1840's - J. O. Westwood, *Palaeographia Sacra Pictoria* (Wm. Smith, London, 1843-45), p. 4 on the Book of Kells. Available online: https://archive.org/details/palaeographiasac00west [accessed 15th August, 2015].

[31] M. Werner, 'Crucifixi, Sepulti, Suscitati: Remarks on the decoration of the book of Kells', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 455 and 462. Werner suggests that the double-barred cross on f.33r may have been incorporated into the *Adoratio crucis* ceremony on Good Friday.

outlining devices. Their relative lack of precision, again, is consistent with the later phase of the second campaign. This also applies to the subtly varied series of crosses from f.218v (fig.6.66).

Instances of some of the red marks discussed above occasionally occur on interlinear and other zoomorphs (figs.6.67-70) and are also found on a number of anthropomorphic initials, interlinear figures and other figures on the illuminated pages (figs.6.71-73). Fig.6.74 shows a range of red marks added to the background of a few sections of the illuminated pages.

The additional marks discussed in this chapter (figs.6.27-74) are often found in various combinations and some of these are shown in figs.6.75-83. The variety of these combinations and the randomness of their distribution are typical of the Scribe-Artist's work as is the occasional clustering of motifs.

Red-over-yellow

As noted throughout the discussion in this chapter the vast majority of the additional markings are in red. However, closer examination of these shows a remarkable predominance of these red marks being added over a yellow ground (fig.6.18, most of figs.6.22-51, figs.6.54-61, figs.6.67-78 and figs.6.80-83).[32] Diag.6.7 attempts to reflect the extent of such instances on any given page by showing a smaller or larger red indicator. It is not possible to represent this information precisely, however, the diagram does provide a general indication of the extent of their presence throughout the manuscript. As with all the scribal features discussed throughout this study, the diagram highlights the varied and random application, concentration and distribution of these red-over-yellow additions. It is not possible to ascertain if there was a specific reason for the use of this colour combination. However, the strength of the contrast

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[32] The use of red over yellow is not exclusive to Kells. In Kells also the presence of this colour combination is not restricted to these marks attributed to the later phase of the second campaign. However, those discussed here form a distinct set of occurrences.

between the red and the yellow possibly indicates that their use may have been motivated by the Scribe-Artist's failing eyesight. Such a speculation would also be consistent with the deterioration in quality evident in most of these instances and in the other work attributed here to the later phase of the second campaign.

The application of painted additions
made during the second campaign

In chapter five mention was made of an initial which seems to have been created with a brush and the addition of a similarly painted detail to another initial (fig.5.302). Both of these are part of a cluster of initials between ff.62r-65v having some green paint added (fig.6.84). The paint on all of these instances is somewhat unevenly applied and is consistent in decline in quality evident in the work added in the course of the proposed second campaign. The instances in fig.6.84 are the beginning of a longer sequence which extends over a total of one hundred and one pages. The occurrence of a particular colour applied on this sequence of pages can be understood as another manifestation of the clustering that has been noted throughout this study. Fig.6.85 shows another cluster of initials with a range of additions in purple paint. These include panels added below the cross-stroke of the letter *N* (fig.6.85-nos.1 and 4) and the semi-circular additions on the lozenge-shaped *o* (fig.6.85-no.6). The line-filling sprouting-vases in nos.1 and 3 are also rendered in the same colour and appear to have been added at the same time. The somewhat diminished precision of this work is evident, for example, in the way the purple heart-shaped *IN* terminals in fig.6.85-no.1 overlap the headstroke of the *d* in the line below. The initials in this illustration with purple additions occur between ff.48v-51v, a few pages before the sequence with green additions discussed above.

Fig.6.86 shows a cluster of initials between ff.57v-60r. These bear many of the characteristics of the work done in the proposed second campaign and are not completed with the precision that is more typical of the work in the manuscript. For example the terminal decorations in fig.6.86-no.2 recall those at the bottom of f.5v in the canon tables (fig.2.9) and the unevenly applied green paint, mentioned above, is similar to that in the neighbouring pages in fig.6.84. Two further initials within this cluster were discussed above (fig.6.62-nos.3-4). These are also painted with somewhat less precision than is usual and lack some of the more typical fine contour lines at the edges, especially in the interlaced areas. In a further cluster of initials between ff.244v-245v (fig.6.87) the handling of the lattice interlace is similar to that in fig.6.62 and the application of paint is often similar to that in figs.6.84-85. The initials with additional red and blue letters in fig.6.88 also seem to belong to this proposed later phase of work and appear to have been added as corrections where letters had been omitted.

The paint and its application in these additions is consistent with similarly painted features discussed earlier. These may be compared, for example, with the flower and floret motifs added as line-fillers and turn-in-path markers in figs.4.144 and 4.190. These motifs are attributed to the Scribe-Artist's work in the second campaign. The painted additions can also be attributed to the Scribe-Artist in this phase of his work.

Application of paint

Fig.6.89 shows a number of initials in which the painting is incomplete and not executed with the greatest precision. These instances are widely scattered throughout the manuscript although small clusters are evident. This suggests that the application of paint was, at least to some extent, planned to be completed in the final stages of work on the manuscript. Incomplete painting is

also evident on sections of the illuminated pages.[33] In light of the poor quality of paint

application discussed above it would appear that much of this work was done as part of the

second campaign and at least some of it in the later phase of that campaign. Close examination of

the various illustrations in this study often reveals evidence of poorly applied paint. Pulliam

draws attention to this and notes that the artist (or artists) responsible for the application of

colour 'especially the blue and green pigment, had a marked disregard for some of the finer

details of the manuscript'.[34] Perhaps one of the most obvious instances of this poor application of

paint is evident in some of the display-lettering on f.29r (fig.5.365-no.14). Here the yellow paint

obscures some very fine detail within the bowl of the large *b*. Although a complete study of the

illuminated pages was beyond the scope of the present study, the illumination of this page is

attributed to the Master-Artist. It would appear that he was unable to complete his work, and it is

also proposed here that as part of his attempt to complete the unfinished manuscript in the second

campaign, the Scribe-Artist added the yellow paint as he worked on the display-lettering to finish

the word '*Liber*' by adding the letters '*er*'. The display-lettering '*generationis*' (fig.5.365-no.15)

was also probably added at this time, and, to judge from its relatively poor execution, this was

during the later phase of the second campaign.

However, it is beyond the scope of this study to undertake a comprehensive study of the

painting in the Book of Kells. A minimum requirement for such study would necessitate access

to the original manuscript which to date, has been denied to the present author. A more

comprehensive study would also probably require further scientific analysis.[35] It is possible to

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[33] See for example, figs.2.12a-b in chapter two on the canon tables.
[34] Pulliam, *Word and Image*, p. 15. See also M. P. Brown, 'Pigments and their uses in Insular manuscripts', in *The Compleat Binder* (1996), pp. 136-45.
[35] Colour analysis of the Book of Kells has been done by H. Roosen-Runge and A. E. A. Werner, 'Pigments and medium in the Lindisfarne Gospels' and 'Comparisons with some related manuscripts' in *Cod. Lind.*, pp. 263-77; Anthony Cains, 'The pigment and organic colours', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 211-27; Robert Fuchs and Doris Oltrogge, 'Colour material and painting technique in the Book of Kells'. in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 134-71;

comment on one other aspect of paint application and this is the presence of a number of instances where paint is offset.

Offset traces of paint

Close analysis of the Faksimile Verlag facsimile shows a number of pages where small traces of paint are found offset onto the page opposite.[36] Fig.6.90 shows the twenty-nine instances which are found on twenty-six openings throughout the manuscript. The instance across the opening ff.87v-88r (fig.6.90-no.7) may be the result of some moisture, traces of which seem evident on f.87v.[37] This may also be related to the fact that these pages are the outer leaves of quires ten and eleven and as such may have been more exposed at some time when these quires were unbound (see footnote 90 in chapter four). However, most of the other instances of offset paint appear to have the character of being accidental transfers of pigment when the paint was freshly applied. Apart from a few instances (e.g. fig.6.90-nos.3, 5, 7, 21, 22 and 27) these are in the red which has been closely identified with the second campaign throughout this study. Most of these marks are offset from areas of paint that appear to have been applied with little precision and may be associated with the later phase of the second campaign. It is possible to speculate that this may indicate an increase in haste as the Scribe-Artist attempts to complete his work. Alternatively it may reflect his failing faculties which are all too evident in the deterioration of the quality of his work.

Susan Bioletti, Rory Leahy, John Fields, Bernard Meehan and Werner Blau, 'The examination of the Book of Kells using micro-Raman spectroscopy', in *Journal of Raman Spectroscopy*, vol. 40, issue 8 (2009), pp. 1043-49, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jrs.2231/abstract;jsessionid=98FAAB963BF1E1582A595C6FE473660A.f03t04 [accessed August 23rd, 2015]. See also M. P. Brown (with Katherine Brown and David Jacobs), *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, Appendix 1, 'Analysis of the pigments used in the Lindisfarne Gospels', pp. 430-51; and Bruce-Mitford, 'The pigments and medium of the Lindisfarne Gospels' and 'Comparisons with some related manuscripts', both in *Cod. Lind.*, pp. 263-77.
[36] Examination of the original manuscript may reveal further instances of paint offset in this way.
[37] Some instances may be the result of the 1821 'conservation' (see footnote 7 above).

Conclusions

There are significant variations in the quality of the work in the Book of Kells. It has consistently been argued throughout this study that most of the illumination, decoration and script were completed collaboratively in an initial campaign by the Master-Artist and the Scribe-Artist. It has also consistently been argued that the least precisely executed work (predominantly those areas attributed to Scribe B in the Henry-Meehan scheme) may be understood as a second campaign of work by the Scribe-Artist in an attempt to complete the unfinished manuscript. However, relative even to the quality of the work typical of the second campaign much of the work addressed in this chapter is of very poor quality. Some scholars, such as Van Stone suggest that this work 'clearly dates from an age when standards were not so high'.[38] Considering the disparity in quality between the first campaign and, in particular, these later additions, it is entirely understandable that such a conclusion would be reached. However, a more comprehensive analysis suggests an alternative interpretation of the evidence. That these additions are later is not in dispute but as has been argued throughout this study this later work can be understood as a second campaign by the Scribe-Artist.

It is useful to ask if the evidence of this later work is consistent with its being added by someone other than those involved from the beginning. In a scenario where, at some later time, for example, it was decided to complete the unfinished manuscript, it might be supposed that reasonably talented individuals, or a single individual, would be entrusted with this task. It might also be supposed that this work would proceed systematically, at least to some extent. This is evident, for example, in Kells, in the manner in which the texts unfinished at the end of the first campaign are completed in the second. Thus the canon table numerals are added, the prefatory

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[38] Van Stone, 'Ornamental techniques in Kells and its kin', in *Conference Proceedings*, p.239 (see also footnote 59 in chapter two). See also, for example, Guilmain, in footnotes 70-71 in chapter two.

material is finished and the final section of Matthew's Gospel is completed. Similarly, one might also consider the corrections, canon numerals and rubrics added to the Lindisfarne Gospels by the hand identified as the Rubricator.[39] While these additons in Lindisfarne are considered to be more or less contemporary with the creation of the manuscript, one might also consider the much later additions of the gloss added by Aldred around the middle of the tenth century.[40] These are all executed with reasonable skill and considerable care and are added to fulfill a specific purpose in each case. However, this assessment does not apply to many of the additions in Kells discussed in this chapter.

Most of the motifs discussed in this chapter are not well executed and they do not appear to be part of a systematic attempt to complete the manuscript. They are, however, remarkable for the extent of their variation and their random distribution. Although predominantly red, these marks are occasionally varied in colour. They are also varied in size, in number and in their application, and they also randomly occur in different combinations. Many of the motifs are variants, albeit of poorer quality, of those from the first campaign and the early stages of the second campaign. Rare or unique instances also occur and there is also a tendency to cluster motifs. These characteristics, and as mentioned above, the lack of a systematic approach, are the signature markers of the Scribe-Artist's work throughout the book and consequently these additions are here attributed to this individual. Although not dealt with as comprehensively as the graphic motifs, many of the painted additions in Kells discussed in this chapter are subject to the same defining characteristics and are of similarly poor quality. For these reasons this work is also attributable to the same later phase of the second campaign by the same individual.

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[39] Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, pp. 226, 244 and 253.
[40] Ibid., p. 4 *et al*.

Having earlier identified a significant decline in the quality of the work between the first and the second campaigns, it should not perhaps be surprising to discover that a further deterioration might also be found. For the reasons outlined here these additions are identified as belonging to a later phase of the second campaign, and the decline in the quality of the work is attributed to the increasing failure of the Scribe-Artist's faculties. One can only speculate that perhaps it was not only his physical faculties that were in decline as many of these later additions seem to some extent ill-judged and not always essential. Nonetheless, these additions stand as testament to the Scribe-Artist's perseverance and determination and also presumably his desire to complete the *magnum opus* of his life's work and also that of his collaborator the Master-Artist.

The manuscript was left unfinished and remains so. Apart from the original creators of the book, the Master-Artist and the Scribe-Artist, this study has found no trace of any other hands in its planning, design, production or completion (as noted in chapter four there is no evidence of a correcting hand).[41] The fact that no further attempt to complete the manuscript appears to have been made will be discussed in the following chapter.

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[41] Excluding much later additions such as the eleventh and twelfth century charters (see G. Mac Niocaill, 'The Irish 'charters'', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 153-65) and the marginalia added in the sixteenth century by such as Gerald Plunket (see Meehan, 'Other marginalia and additions', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 167-72).

Chapter 7

SETTING THIS STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CONTEMPORARY
CULTURAL, HISTORICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL BACKGROUND

The aim of this chapter is to examine the evidence revealed in this study in the context of the period in which the Book of Kells was created (c.800). This will focus on issues related to the contemporary cultural, historical and ecclesiastical background. The chapter is divided into two sections. **Section I** looks at the creation of the Book of Kells while **Section II** examines how the book may have been used and what its intended function(s) may have been.

Section I

The creation of the Book of Kells

Introduction

The evidence reviewed in this study indicates that the Book of Kells is the work of two individuals identified as the Master-Artist and the Scribe-Artist. The status and the roles of both individuals are addressed in this section. The work of the Kells' Scribe-Artist is examined in the context of a number of other biblical manuscripts closely associated with the Columban *paruchia*. Several of these books would appear to be distinctively the work of single individuals and the contribution of the Kells' Scribe-Artist can be understood as yet another instance which continues what Brown has pointed to as this Columban tradition.[1] As discussed throughout this study, the Scribe-Artist's single-handed writing of the Gospel texts in Kells is augmented by the work of the Master-Artist. In the context of the Columban

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[1] M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, p. 402.

scribal tradition, the contribution of an artist may have been viewed as separate from, if complementary to, that of scriptural transmission. The involvement of the Master-Artist in the making of Kells is examined and the possibility that he may not necessarily have been in clerical orders is also addressed.

This section also raises questions regarding issues of seniority and leadership within the two-man team. To whom can we attribute the overall vision for the content, layout and artistic programme for the Book of Kells? Is it possible that this role may have been shared by both the Master-Artist and the Scribe-Artist?

Another question raised here is the poor latinity often evident in the Gospel text in the manuscript. Is it possible that the frequency of textual errors might be due to the Scribe-Artist's determined focus on his programme of constantly creating difference? Is it also possible that some of the deficiencies may have arisen as a result of the added 'doubled' readings? The inclusion of these 'doubled' readings may reflect a particular priority in the creation of the manuscript. In this context, the possibility arises that the Book of Kells may have been conceived as part of a revival of pre-Whitby Columban traditions which would be directly opposed to those promoting conformity with Roman practice.[2] This possibility of its creation as an object celebrating non-Roman traditions is also discussed in more detail in **Section II**.

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[2] M. P. Brown, 'Reading the Lindisfarne Gospels: Text, Image, Context', in R. G. Gameson, ed., *The Lindisfarne Gospels* (Brill, forthcoming). Here, Brown presents a more nuanced interpretation of this context. She demonstrates that the key issue is not about conformity to Roman practices *per se*, but to the international ecumenical orthodoxy of Chalcedon, focused on Constantinople and represented in the West by Rome.

The Columban scribal context

'Here at the end of the page I must stop. Let Baithéne write what follows.'[3] Columba's

deathbed declaration encapsulates the central importance of scribal work for the most senior

members of this monastic community. It is important that the great saint's final act shows

him copying a psalter but its pivotal role in confirming his abbatial successor gives this even

greater significance. Baithéne's first task as the second abbot of Iona, is to continue the

scribal work of its revered founder. Adomnán, in his *Vita Columbae*, acknowledges that it is

indeed fitting that Baithéne 'followed him not only as a teacher but also as a scribe'.[4] The

scribal achievements of both abbots are frequently mentioned in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*

as are a number of miracles directly associated with Columba's writing.[5] These include the

miraculous power of The Cathach, attributed to Columba himself and which, on

palaeographical grounds may conceivably have been written by his own hand.[6] In the *Vita*

Columbae there are episodes which highlight the importance to Columba of his *tegorium*, or

writing-hut, in his role as abbot.[7] It is also significant that Columba's writing stylus, the *Delg*

Aidechta, is numbered among his relics.[8] This evidence highlights the distinctive prominence

accorded to scribal work within the Columban tradition. The many unique and distinguishing

features of the Book of Kells can be understood in the context of this tradition.

Columba's practice of '*writing* as a holy task' differentiates him from saints such as

Antony, Benedict and Martin.[9] This is also in stark contrast with Cassiodorus' description in

his *Institutiones* of the relatively low ranking of those entrusted with copying scriptural texts

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[3] R. Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona, Life of Columba* (London, 1995), p. 228, (*VC III 23*).
[4] Ibid., p. 228, (*VC III 23*).
[5] Ibid., p. 160, (*VC II 8,*), p. 160-61, (*VC II 9*), pp.199-200, (*VC II 44*) and pp.200-03, (*VC II 45*).
[6] Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, (no.4), pp. 28-9. For discussion of the various opinions on the dating and provenance of the Cathach see M. McNamara, 'Psalter Text and Psalter Study in the Early Irish Church (A.D. 600-1200)', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, C 73 (Dublin, 1973), pp. 201-98 (pp. 210-13).
[7] J. O'Reilly, 'The wisdom of the scribe and the fear of the Lord in the *Life of Columba*', in *Spes Scottorum, Hope of Scots*, eds., D. Broun and T. O. Clancy (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1999), pp. 159-211 (pp. 172-74).
[8] See chapter two pp. 106-07).
[9] Ibid., p. 170.

at the Vivarium.[10] Their role was perhaps largely modelled on the *scribae* of the classical

period where 'reflection on what they were writing was neither expected or encouraged'.[11]

Their work was not considered as part of the monastic *lectio divina* where the sacred texts

were to be prayed over (*oratio*), ruminated over (*ruminatio*), then contemplated and

meditated on (*contemplatio* and *meditatio*) with a view to achieving the revelation of deeper

meaning (*revelatio*). The 'solitary working patterns' evident in the creation of the Insular

illuminated manuscripts might represent or recall 'injunctions to *meditatio/contemplatio*.'[12]

Brown notes that the scribal activites of such as Columba and his friend Canice won for them

acclaim as hero-scribes.[13] The relatively low status of scribal copyists is also differentiated

from the more exalted role of those whose superior learning qualified them to act as

correctors.[14] Bede writes that 'I was myself at once dictator, notary and scribe'.[15] Here, Bede

identifies his understanding of these as distinct and separate roles. His willingness to assume

even the humblest of these roles is acknowledged as part of his monastic humility. However,

within the Columban tradition, the lowliest of these roles, that of scribe, is valued as an

important and integral element in the work of the senior members of the community. In this

way it provided them with an opportunity for exegetical expression. Columba's own depth of

scriptural knowledge and understanding is revealed more in Dallán Forgaill's *Amra Choluim*

Chille (the Wonders of Columba) than in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*.[16] Adomnán's own

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[10] M. Stansbury, *Iona Scribes and the Rhetoric of Legibility* (E. C. Quiggin Memorial Lectures 16, Cambridge, 2014), pp. 9-10.

[11] Ibid., p. 11.

[12] M. P. Brown, Jarrow Lecture, *In the beginning was the Word: books and faith in the age of Bede* (Newcastle, J. & P. Bealls Ltd., 2000), p. 12.

[13] M. P. Brown, 'From Columba to Cormac: the contribution of Irish scribes to the Insular system of scripts', in *L'irlanda e gli irlandesi nell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 2010), pp. 623-46 (p. 627).

[14] M. P. Brown, Jarrow Lecture, p. 9.

[15] D. Hurst, ed., *Bede, Expositio in Lucam*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 120, (Turnhout, 1960), prol. 93-115; M. Stansbury, 'Early Medieval Biblical Commentaries, Their Writers and Readers', in K. Hauck, ed., *Frümittelalterliche Studien, Herausgegeben von H. Keller und C. Meier* (Berlin and New York, 1999), pp. 50-82 (p. 72).

[16] T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, University Press, 2000), pp. 285-89. While there is no reliable date for the poem, Charles-Edwards suggests that it can hardly be later than the early seventh century', ibid., p. 285.

scriptural expertise, 'in the manner of the monastic tradition of *lectio divina*' is 'often expounded through his narrative' in the *Vita*.[17] O'Reilly states that modern scholarship is beginning to document 'the degree of learning Adomnán was able to bring both to the explication of the literal text of Scripture and to its interpretation'.[18] The work of the Scribe-Artist can be easily understood as part of this tradition. He can, therefore, plausibly be identified as a senior member of the Columban Community.[19]

Returning to Baithéne, the *Vita Columbae* (*1.23*) recounts the episode where Baithéne tells Columba that he needs one of the brothers to examine and correct a psalter he has written.[20] Without having looked at the manuscript Columba responds that it is faultless except for one missing letter *i*. This recalls Matt.5.18, '*amen quippe dico vobis donec transeat caelum et terra iota unum aut unus apex non praeteribit a lege donec omnia fiant*' ('amen I say to you, til heaven and earth pass away, not one jot [iota] or one tittle shall pass away from the law til all things be accomplished'). In Kells (f.41v) this verse is given particular emphasis, 'bookmarked' as it were between two zoomorphic turn-in-path markers (fig.4.194-nos.3-4). However, more interestingly, three large red apices have been added in and around these lines perhaps to emphasise the apex mentioned in the text (see diag.4.4). This may be a direct reference to an episode in Columba's life and may provide further evidence identifying Kells as a Columban manuscript.

In discussing the Echternach, Durham and Lindisfarne Gospels and also the Book of Durrow, Brown sees their similarities in style as 'stemming from their ultimately Columban background'.[21] She further observes that 'the pattern of work' in these manuscripts 'suggests

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[17] O'Reilly, 'Reading the Scriptures in the Life of Columba', in *Studies in the Cult of St Columba*, ed. Cormac Bourke (Dublin, 1997), pp. 80-106 (p. 80).
[18] Ibid., p. 106.
[19] See footnote 1 above.
[20] Sharpe, *Life of Columba*, pp. 129-30.
[21] Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, p. 401.

that the labour of copying scripture was a solitary eremitic exercise'.[22] The Lindisfarne

Gospels were created by Eadfrith working within an originally Columban monastery founded

by Aidan from Iona in 635. Discussing Eadfrith's work Brown notes that the senior

Columban community members who were entrusted with the transmission of the sacred

scriptures 'effectively approached their labours as anchorites, the highest monastic calling'.

She continues by suggesting that the creation of 'their Gospelbook thus became their scribal

desert'. She concludes that in such a context 'it is not surprising that each book should be an

intensely personal work'.[23] While, in this study Kells has been shown to be the work of two

individuals, the Gospel text is solely the work of the Scribe-Artist and accords with this

model of Columban practice. This again adds to the evidence identifying it as being produced

within the Columban monastic tradition.

The implications of this research

As this research has shown the Book of Kells is the work of two individuals. This contradicts

the long and widely held concept of its being produced in an extensively staffed

scriptorium.[24] In its stead, the theory, proposed by palaeographer Julian Brown and art-

historian Peter Meyer, that the script is the work of a single 'great scribe' is endorsed.[25] This

study also identifies a second individual, the Master-Artist, working in close collaboration

with the Scribe-Artist. While it has not been possible to establish the particular identity of

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[22] Ibid., p. 402.

[23] Ibid., p. 402.

[24] For example, Guilmain, 'The forgotten early medieval artist', in *Art Journal*, p. 36; Henry, *Irish Art during the Viking Invasions*, pp. 68-95; Henry, *The Book of Kells*, pp. 154-57 and 211-12; Meehan, 'The division of hands', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 183-95; Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (2012), pp.187-219; R. Stalley, 'Iona, the Vikings and the making of the Book of Kells', *History Ireland* (May-June, 2013), pp. 14-17 (p. 14).

[25] T. J. Brown, 'Northumbria and the Book of Kells', in *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 236. Meyer, 'Notes on the art and ornament,' in *Codex Cenannensis*, p. 28.

these individuals, it may be possible to situate their work more clearly within the contemporary cultural and historical context.

The Scribe-Artist

The first of these individuals, the Scribe-Artist, is responsible for all of the script, all of the initials, with a few exceptions (fig.5.325), all of the display-lettering, again with an exception (fig.5.391), the script related decoration and a significant amount of the illumination. The distinctively idiosyncratic nature of his work does not accord with contemporary initiatives to promote conformity and standardisation. In this context of such initiatives one may consider the Carolingian *Admonitio Generalis* of 789 (this *capitulary* included legislation which aimed to reform and standardise all aspects of religious practice).[26] Neither does the work in the Book of Kells accord with earlier initiatives to promote conformity such as is evident in the work of Wilfrid at Hexham and Ripon, and Ceolfrith at Wearmouth-Jarrow in Northumbria.[27] These occurred within the context of the Paschal controversy and Charles-Edwards suggests that the response of Wilfrid's opponents 'took the form of the great age of Insular book art'.[28] If a book such as the Codex Amiatinus, brought to Rome by Ceolfrith as a gift for the Pope,[29] reflects the epitome of *Romanitas*, the Book of Kells, in contrast, seems very far removed from this ideal. At the heart of the Scribe-Artist's remarkable programme of variation is a very deliberate desire to avoid a systematic approach. This appears antithetical to the ideals of those who would promote conformity and standardisation. It is possible that this may proclaim, to some extent, the non-Roman allegiance of the makers of the Book of Kells. This,

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[26] John J. Contreni, 'The Carolingian Renaissance: education and literary culture', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II, c.700-900, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 709-57.
[27] T. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 326-43.
[28] Ibid., p. 332.
[29] Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, pp. 61, 63 and 153-56.

combined with other evidence which will be discussed below, suggests that the manuscript may have been created as part of a revival of the original Columban traditions vigorously defended at the Synod of Whitby (664) and in the decades that followed. The eventual formal acceptance of the Roman Easter dating at Iona in 716 does not preclude the persistence of these deep-rooted affiliations among at least some members of the Columban community, whether in Iona or elsewhere.[30] A possible instance of such persistence may be identified in Lichfield, a daughter house of Lindisfarne and part of the Columban *paruchia*. From the apparent influence of the Lindisfarne Gospels on some aspects of the Lichfield Gospels, Brown suggests that the later book was created in the mid-eighth century. However, unlike Lindisfarne it is not laid out *per cola et commata*, and it is also copied from a text featuring Old Latin as well as Vulgate readings, such as that favoured by Columban monasteries. The incorporation of such features may indicate a determination to honour and maintain the older traditions of the Columban federation.[31]

As mentioned in the introduction, the single-handed creation of a personally distinctive scriptural manuscript is a phenomenon apparent in a number of books closely associated with the Columban *paruchia*. This is evident from The Cathach, possibly by the hand of the founder himself, through the Book of Durrow, the Durham Gospels and to Eadfrith's Lindisfarne Gospels. The latter, although produced in a monastery which was no longer Columban (but rather 'reformed Columban' or Cuthbertine), retains strong elements which can be traced directly to Lindisfarne's original foundation as daughter- house of the Columban headquarters on Iona. The work of the Scribe-Artist in the Book of Kells can be understood as fitting within this pattern of manuscript-making. Citing Adomnán's *Vita*

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[30] Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (book v, chapt. 22), eds., J. McClure and R. Collins (Oxford, 1994), p. 286.

[31] M. P. Brown, 'The Lichfield Angel and the Manuscript Context: Lichfield as a Centre of Insular Art', in *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 160 (2007), pp. 8-19; and 'The Lichfield/Llandeilo Gospels Reinterpreted', in *Authority and Subjugation in Writing of Medieval Wales* (Palgrave Macmillan, New York and Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 57-70.

Columbae, Brown notes that of three categories within the Columban organisation only the seniors were entrusted with copying scripture.[32] This includes Columba himself and his immediate abbatial successor Baithéne. Elsewhere Brown suggests that these practices may have their origins in the Christian Orient.[33] The work of the Scribe-Artist can be understood in this context. One may ask why the Scribe-Artist did not undertake all of the work himself. He was not an unaccomplished artist and could conceivably have created a fine illuminated copy of the Gospels on his own. The involvement of a second individual in the creation of the book will be discussed further below. It is only possible to speculate as to whether the opportunity of involving such a brilliantly talented individual as the Master-Artist, was the Scribe-Artist's choice or the decision, perhaps of a clerical or secular patron. The circumstances of their collaboration may just be one of those fateful coincidences that occur from time to time and produce results that could never have been foreseen. The particular creative chemistry of these different, but complementary talents, appears to have been mutually beneficial. Their collaboration may have inspired both individuals to levels of ambition and performance far beyond what each could achieve or aspire to working on their own. It is also possible to speculate that the Master-Artist's talents may have been nurtured in the milieu of metalworking. If such were the case, it may be that elements of his training inspired the Scribe-Artist's unique and remarkable scribal performance.

The status of the Scribe-Artist

Is it possible to discern more detail of the Scribe-Artist's status from his work? The distinctive idiosyncrasy of his work makes it difficult to imagine that he is a mere functionary fulfilling demands set out by another. Throughout the manuscript there is abundant evidence

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[32] M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, p. 40.
[33] M. P. Brown, 'From Columba to Cormac', in *L'irlanda e gli irlandesi*, pp. 4-5.

of the Scribe-Artist's familiarity with, and deep understanding of, the Gospel texts. This is clear, for instance, in the textual articulation where pages are frequently arranged to begin or end on particular words. This may be done to emphasise meaning or for the purpose of arranging the beginning of a new Eusebian section or verse. His knowledge of scripture is evident in the use made of the turn-in-path device and also their accompanying markers. These marks, many zoomorphic, are often used in a manner that is instrumental in his 'illumination' of the text. There is further evidence of his erudition in the countless initials that highlight particular sections or verses, and in the menagerie of creatures, that often, if not always, can be understood as emphasising particular episodes or words. These creatures may also meaningfully be found communicating with their fellows on the same page or occasionally interacting across an opening. As discussed above, scholars such as Farr and O'Reilly, among others, have unravelled deep veins of exegetical understanding that inform the illumination. Pulliam has devoted an entire book to an examination of the potential for meaning in the initials and the minor imagery in Kells.[34] In the present study the analysis of script and decoration has primarily been undertaken for the purpose of identifying the contributions of different individuals rather than for interpreting meaning. Nonetheless, in the course of such an intensive study one is constantly reminded of the depth and range of textual understanding of the Scribe-Artist. Such erudition is manifest in the humorous quality of some of his additions,[35] and is also evident in is his calligraphic ingenuity and remarkable capacity for imaginative variation.

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[34] Pulliam, *Word and Image*.
[35] E. Rynne, 'Drolleries in the Book of Kells', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 311-21.

Latinity

The Scribe-Artist's latinity has often been described as poor.[36] Henry states that 'the copying has a more than normal share of errors',[37] while Alton comments on the sometimes erratic syllabification within the text.[38] The project was never fully completed and consequently there was no opportunity for a correcting campaign - an editorial sweep to identify and emend errors. Nonetheless, the Scribe-Artist has made a significant number of corrections both as part of the first and second campaigns which does emphasise his linguistic competence. Is it possible that the frequency of textual errors might be due to the Scribe-Artist's determined focus on his programme of constantly creating difference? Do these deficiencies occur in inverse proportion to his preoccupation with variation as revealed throughout this study? Some of the confusion also seems to have arisen as a result of the added 'doubled' readings. Their inclusion may have been dictated by the decision to incorporate certain archaic elements within the text. If this was the case, the Scribe-Artist may have found it grammatically challenging to integrate these additions with his main textual exemplar. Such considerations may be worthy of further investigation in future research.

The project leader

Having established the manuscript as the work of two individuals also raises the question as to who was the project leader. To whom can we attribute the overall vision for the content, layout and artistic programme for the Book of Kells? The extensive theological expertise of the Scribe-Artist, as discussed in the preceding paragraphs, suggest that he must have had a

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[36] Pulliam, *Word and Image*, p. 32.
[37] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 153.
[38] E. H. Alton, 'Introduction', in *Codex Cennanensis*, vol. III, pp. (p. 22).

very significant input into any decisions taken at all stages of the book's planning and creation. His scriptural expertise is matched by his unparalleled calligraphic performance and his not inconsiderable skills as an artist-illuminator. However, appreciation of his artistic talents perhaps suffer to some extent as a result of his work being overshadowed by the precision and finesse of his collaborating partner, the Master-Artist.

In discussing the layout of the canon tables it was the Master-Artist who was clearly identified as the designer-in-chief. There can be no doubt that he was also the principal author of those other pages that clearly bear the stamp of his exceedingly fine work (for example, ff.29r, 33r, 34r, 130r, 188r and 292r). In the light of these considerations the evidence would appear to suggest that the role of 'master' may have been shared in a way that recognized their particular spheres of expertise. This complementarity and shared purpose also possibly extended to their acting as mutual mentors. The Master-Artist's lead-role and mentoring of the Scribe-Artist was discussed in relation to the illumination of the canon tables and also in relation to the initials. This relationship may have been inverted in terms of the planning of the overall scheme of illumination and also perhaps in the selection of the particular elements to be included in the various pages of illumination. While the limited scale of this study could not extend to include a comprehensive analysis of the illumination, Pulliam, for example, explores the occurrence of similar themes in both the minor decoration and also in the full-page illuminations.[39] On balance, however, given the ecclesiastical nature of the undertaking, it is probably reasonable to attribute the ultimate responsibilty for planning and decision-making to the authority of the individual with greater religious expertise. Such expertise is more obviously apparent in the work of the Scribe-Artist.

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[39] Pulliam, *Word and Image*.

The status of the Master-Artist

In the context of the Columban tradition of scriptural transmission, as discussed above, the Scribe-Artist's evident exegetical expertise would suggest that he is a senior cleric within the community. However, turning to the Master-Artist. it may be possible to propose a different conclusion. There are undoubtedly significant elements of exegetical and symbolic importance embedded in the work attributed to him. However, as noted in the previous paragraph, it may be that the Scribe-Artist's scriptural expertise informs these aspects of his partner's work. Such an arrangement would see the reciprocation of the artistic mentoring between the pair, as mentioned above.

In his study of Ailerán, an early medieval Irish scholar, Mac Lean reflects on the titles by which this individual was known and referred to.[40] Mac Lean notes that, in relation to Ailerán, the use of the Latin *sapiens* and the Irish *ecnae* suggest 'that he was both headmaster of the monastic school at Clonard and in charge of the monastery's scriptorium'.[41] Despite Ailerán's obvious scholarly status, Mac Lean notes that he is never identified as a priest or as a monk in any of the sources and thus concludes that he may have been a lay man. While such a conclusion may not be drawn with certainty in relation to the status of the Master-Artist it does raise an interesting possibility of lay participation in a monastic work.

Conclusions - Section I

The evidence in this study adds to the conclusion that the Book of Kells is the product of a Columban foundation. In addition, aspects of the Scribe-Artist's work seem to reflect its possible production as part of a revival of earlier Columban practices which would have been

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[40] D. Mac Lean, 'Scribe as Artist, not Monk: the Canon Tables of Ailerán 'the Wise' and the Book of Kells', in *Peritia* 17-18 (2003-4), pp. 433-70.
[41] Ibid., p. 468.

in conflict with those espousing Rome-centered conformity (see **Section II** below).[42] It also

seems possible to conclude that the two-man team who created Kells collaborated, and to a

large extent shared the 'leadership' of the project, in a way that respected their

complementary spheres of expertise. However, while the Master-Artist was deferred to in

artistic matters, the superior ecclesiastical status and knowledge of the Scribe-Artist most

likely marks him out as the ultimate arbiter and dominant decision-maker.

Section II - The function of the Book of Kells

Introduction

This begins by examining the work of those scholars who have analysed the manuscript in

the context of contemporary liturgical and exegetical concerns. The possibility that the

primary objectives of its creators were not liturgical is also considered. Rather than making a

book for public worship or as the focal point of a saint's shrine and a goal of pilgrimage, it may

have been designed primarily as a high-status object. This leads to a brief analysis of the

historical context focused on the period between the middle of the eighth century and the first

decades of the ninth century and raises questions relating to the context in which the Book of

Kells was created. These include the battle for ecclesiastical supremacy in Ireland and the,

possibly related, presence of archaic features in the book. Other questions raised include the

controversies surrounding conformity to Roman practice in the dating of Easter and the form

of tonsure used. The growing 'imperial' ambitions of rival overkings in Ireland is also

examined. In this context the possibility that the high production values evident in the

manuscript may reflect royal patronage is also considered. This is followed by discussion of

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[42] See footnote 2 above.

the possibility that the manuscript was created as a shrine/relic as part of a renewed focus on the cult of St Columba.

Historical and cultural context of the Book of Kells

Many scholars have sought to understand the Book of Kells within the context of its time and place. While no definite date or location has been established for its creation there is a broad consensus that it was made around the year 800 within the context of an Irish monastic foundation, and most are agreed that this was probably Columban.[43] The evidence in this study does not establish a precise date and provenance for the manuscript. However, it does provide additional support for situating its creation within the Columban federation. The evidence relating to the book being produced in two campaigns, with an unspecified intervening time period, somewhat complicates the challenge of dating it accurately. However, a date close to the year 800 seems compatible with the conclusions reached here.

Jennifer O'Reilly teases out the ways in which the manuscript reflects contemporary aspects of exegesis.[44] Her detailed analysis suggests that it was 'produced in a culture where the use and production of exegesis was well established and sophisticated'.[45] Éamonn Ó Carragáin has examined the manuscript in relation to liturgical ceremonies. He considers, for example, the frequent appearance of the evangelist symbols in the context of the *traditio evangeliorum* which was part of the *Apertio aurium* ceremony for catechumens as they prepared for baptism.[46] However, he suggests that Kells is not designed to be actually used in

[43] D. Dumville, *A Palaeographer's Review* (Osaka, 1999), p. 62. P. Harbison, 'High Crosses and the Book of Kells', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 266-69 (p. 269 - postscript).
[44] O'Reilly, 'Exegesis and the Book of Kells: the Lucan genealogy', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 344-97.
[45] Ibid., p. 344.
[46] É. Ó Carragáin, '*Traditio evangeliorum* ' and '*sustentatio*': the relevance of liturgical ceremonies to the Book of Kells', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 398-436.

this ceremony as it lacks the required full-page images of the evangelists.[47] Martin Werner, in

his analysis of the potential for liturgical use, concludes that the decoration in Kells 'gave

greatest emphasis to a celebration of the meaning of Easter rites'.[48] However, he states that it

is not possible to link Kells with any single known lection system.[49] Among her extensive

studies of the manuscript, Carol Farr considers Kells' potential use as a lectionary.[50] It is of

particular interest that many of the scriptural texts given prominence in Kells are identified by

Farr as typically part of non-Roman lection systems.[51] The significance of this non-

conformity with Roman practice may be understood in the context of other related issues

discussed below. Farr also considers that aspects of the book 'may also present references to

the deacon, for whose use it was probably made'.[52] In a later article Farr explores the

possibility that the manuscript was created in the historical context of 'the late eighth and

early ninth century when the Columban community was continuing its competition with the

familia of Patrick'.[53] Lection, liturgical and exegetical considerations on the one hand, and

the possibility of political motivations on the other, need not be mutually exclusive. Writing

of Kells, Farr states that 'large format gospel manuscripts like this were made for public

reading during the liturgy'. However, she immediately qualifies this by noting that we have

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[47] Ibid., p.406.

[48] M. Werner, 'Crucifixi, Sepulti, Suscitati', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 450-88 (p. 485-86).

[49] Ibid., p. 454.

[50] C. Farr, 'Liturgical Influences On The Decoration Of The Book Of Kells', in *Studies in Insular Art and Archaeology*, eds. C. Karkhov and R. Farrell (American Early Medieval Studies and the Miami University of Fine Arts, Oxford, Ohio, 1991), pp.127-43. Farr, 'Textual structure, decoration, and interpretive images in the Book of Kells', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 437-49. Farr, *The Book of Kells, Its Function and Audience* (British Library and University of Toronto Press, 1997).

[51] For example, Farr, 'Liturgical Influences', in *Studies in Insular art*, pp. 128-31.

[52] Ibid., p.136. See also M. P. Brown, 'The Barberini Gospels: Context and Intertextuality' (2007), in which she suggests that Wigbald, the master scribe commemorated in the colophon, was probably the archdeacon of Peterborough.

[53] Farr, 'Commas and Columba, Power and Patrick: Restating the Archaic in the Book of Kells', in *Omnia Disce - Medieval Studies in Memory of Leonard Boyle, O.P.*, eds. J. Duggan, J. Greatrex and B. Bolton (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 129-54 (p. 129).

no evidence to prove that this was the case with regard to Kells.[54] While the manuscript may have been used at public worship this may not have been the primary objective of its creators.

Writing about the Lindisfarne Gospels, Brown discusses the immediate historical context that might have influenced the making of that manuscript. She considers its genesis and creation as a product of a time when individuals such as Bede and Eadfrith were shaping the focus 'of the cult of St Cuthbert as part of a broader religious and political agenda for both northern Britain and England in general'.[55] This interpretation by Brown identifies the Lindisfarne Gospels as primarily a cult object designed with the specific intention of bridging the cultural differences within the nascent English Church. She also notes that marginal drypoint crosses indicate that it may have been read from during the liturgies for Easter, Christmas and the Feasts of St Cuthbert, and that it symbolically enshrined several different lection systems within its decorative articulation as part of a strategy of signalling the harmonisation of multiple 'voices'/Christian traditions. She also discusses its role as a cultic focus and as a 'book of the high altar' – a place of public assembly and of collective devotion and even legal performative process. She interprets the incorporation and blending of an eclectic mix of cultural influences in its illumination as a strategy deliberately designed to create a Gospelbook capable of appealing to the various traditons of the British, Celtic and Anglo-Saxon peoples. Kells may also have been created with a very specific objective within the context of the Columban *paruchia* and the secular powers with whom they shared allegiance. Such considerations suggest that the book's primary role may have been something other than as a lectionary or a liturgical accessory. To explore this and the other issues raised in the previous paragraphs it is necessary to briefly sketch some of the Irish and Irish-related historical background in the decades around the year 800.

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[54] Farr, 'Textual Structure', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 438.
[55] M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, p. 58.

Historical context

Farr states that 'secular and ecclesiastical wars were ongoing' during these decades.[56] In this context one may recall the battles between Clonmacnoise and the rival monasteries of Birr and Durrow in the 760s,[57] and the 'dishonouring of the staff of Jesus and relics of Patrick by Donnchad mac Domnaill' in 789.[58] The latter incident will be discussed further below. It is also important to bear in mind the close relationships between the aristocratic secular power-brokers and their learned kinfolk who controlled the monastic foundations.[59] The closeness of this relationship was quickly realised by the Vikings who recognized that monasteries might also function as royal treasuries.[60] However, it is necessary to look further back to the preceding century to discover the roots of the later disputes.

Earlier controversies

A number of sometimes bitter controversies were the source of much division in the Irish church during the seventh century. These included disputes over tonsure and other issues relating to discipline, and also the dating of Easter.[61] The judgement against the Columban position at the Synod of Whitby (664) did not imply its universal acceptance. Although formally adopted on Iona in 716, it was over one hundred years later, in 772, that the Roman Easter was finally adopted by the remaining Columban foundations.[62] Brown notes that even as late as 810 at the Council of Celchyth (Chelsea), it was 'still considered necessary to deny

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[56] Farr, 'The *incipit* pages of the Macregol Gospels', in *Making and Meaning in Insular Art*, ed. Rachel Moss (Dublin, 2007), pp.275-87 (p. 287).

[57] T. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 594. S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Niocaill (eds.) *The Annals of Ulster, Part I, Text and Translation* (Dublin, 1983), AU 760.8 (p. 215), AU 764.6 (p. 217).

[58] Ibid., AU 789.17 (p. 247). Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland* (Harlow, 1995), p. 233.

[59] D. Ó Corráin, 'The historical context of the Book of Kells', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 1-32 (p. 28).

[60] Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, p. 235.

[61] Ó Corráin, 'The historical context', in *Conference Proceedings*, p. 17.

[62] M. P. Brown, *How Christianity Came to Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2006), p.156.

Irish clergy the right to exercise any spiritual authority in England'.[63] If this is an indicator of the persistence of non-conformist practices by Irish clergy in England it may be that in Ireland itself, and certainly within the Columban community, older, and revered traditions of tonsure and the dating of Easter might be observed, at least in some quarters. The possibility that evidence revealed in this study might reflect such attitudes will be discussed further below.

Armagh and the battle for ecclesiastical primacy

The seventh and eighth centuries see much jostling among various rivals for ecclesiastical primacy in Ireland. Numbered among these contenders are Clonmacnoise, Kildare, Armagh and the Columban community, with its headquarters at Iona. Towards the end of the seventh century Cogitosis asserts that Brigit's Kildare is 'the head of almost all the Irish churches and the pinnacle, excelling all the monasteries of the Irish, whose *paruchia* extends throughout the whole of Ireland and stretches from sea to sea'.[64] In support of Armagh's claims the *Liber Angeli*, also dated to the seventh century (c.640),[65] conveniently states that an angel declared 'the whole of Ireland had been given to Patrick as his *paruchia*'.[66]

In the context of this study, the most significant struggle is 'the competition for the primacy between Armagh with its patron St Patrick striving to become the Irish St Peter and the Columban *familia* centered at Iona'.[67] In the second half of the eighth century, to judge from their close association with the dominant Clann Cholmáin kings of Tara, Iona's

[63] Ibid., p.161. Charles D. Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* (Cambridge, University Press, 1993), p. 46.

[64] S. Connolly and J-M. Picard, 'Cogitosus's *Life of St Brigit*, content and value', in *JRSAI*, *cxvii* (1987), pp. 5-27.

[65] C. Doherty, 'The Problem of Patrick', *History Ireland* (1995, vol 3), http://www.historyireland.com/pre-norman-history/the-problem-of-patrick-31/[accessed 24 May 2015].

[66] L. Bieler, *The Patrician texts in the Book of Armagh* (Dublin, Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979), p. 188.

[67] Farr, 'Commas and Columba', in *Omnia Disce*, p. 141.

influence was in the ascendant.[68] However, the subsequent succession of a Cenél nEógain

rival to the kingship of Tara was a major step towards the realization of Armagh's claims to

ecclesiastical primacy at the turn of the ninth century.[69]

Earlier, in the seventh century, Armagh had become the focus of the cult of St Patrick

and in the process outmaneuvered the more legitimate claims of neighbouring Downpatrick

or more especially of Saul.[70] The Book of Armagh, in addition to its scriptural texts, contains

the only extant writings attributed to St Patrick and also the 'heavenly inspired' authority of

the *Liber Angeli* as mentioned above.[71] Among these texts is Tírechán's *Collectanea* (c.690),

a fabrication which 'documents' the extensive list of churches which, because of their links

with Patrick, were reckoned to belong within the territorial authority of Armagh.[72]

To bolster its credentials, Armagh, in the seventh century, following contact with

Rome regarding the issue of the correct dating of Easter, acquired relics of the principal

martyrs of the early Church including those of the Apostles Peter and Paul.[73] These were

particularly significant as links to Peter and Paul, the *principes Apostolorum*, whose

foundation of Rome as the *civitas apostolica* was 'the basis of its claim to universal

authority'.[74] These relics were also particularly important as, in contrast to Iona, Armagh did

not possess the body of her patron saint. In this context it is interesting to note that it was in

seventh century England that the notion developed whereby the metropolitan functions

exercised by an archbishop were not validated 'until he had received a pallium from Rome'.[75]

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[68] M. Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry* (Oxford, University Press, 1988), p. 67.
[69] Ibid., p. 71.
[70] Doherty, 'The Problem of Patrick'.
[71] Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, p. 76.
[72] Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 9-67.
[73] Doherty, 'The Problem of Patrick'.
[74] D. Bracken, 'Rome and the Isles: Ireland, England and the Rhetoric of Orthodoxy', in *Anglo-Saxon/Irish Relations before the Vikings*, J. Graham-Campbell and M. Ryan, eds. (Oxford, 2009), pp. 75-97 (p. 83).
[75] R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Middlesex, Penguin, 1970), p. 97.

The pallium which would have been laid on St Peter's tomb 'brought with it the touch of the Apostle himself'.[76]

With regard to ecclesio-political rivalry in Northumbria, Brown suggests that the Lindisfarne Gospels were possibly created (at least to some extent) as a response to the Gospel book produced as part of the cult of Wilfrid at Ripon around 710.[77] Armagh's strong affiliation with Rome was central to its claims to primacy and the Book of Armagh can be understood as providing the necessary supporting documentary evidence. Is it possible that the Book of Kells was produced as a Columban, codicological counter-punch in the battle between these rivals, the two principal contestants in the battle for ecclesiastical primacy? Further evidence supporting this possibility is discussed in the following paragraph which examines the presence of archaic elements in the manuscript.

Archaic features in Kells' Gospel text

Farr investigates the presence, or absence, of emphasis between verses thirty and thirty-one in chapter twenty-six of Matthew's Gospel in a number of contemporary manuscripts. In Kells this is very significantly marked by the so-called 'Arrest of Christ' illumination on f.114r. Farr concludes that similar emphasis in earlier manuscripts 'strongly suggests the relationship between the Book of Kells to archaic, pre-Vulgate traditions'.[78] The promotion of the new Vulgate text was a prominent pillar in the Romanising efforts of Wilfrid, Ceolfrith, Biscop and others in post-Whitby Northumbria and beyond.[79] McGurk notes that 'Durrow has a different but good Vulgate text' and this may reflect its creation at a period when the divisive effects of the controversies were not manifest in the particular Gospel texts used in the

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[76] Ibid., p. 96.
[77] M. P. Brown, Jarrow Lecture, p. 8. Brown also notes that this phenomenon of producing Gospel books to bolster rival cult claims does not occur outside of centres with Insular connections.
[78] Farr, 'Commas and Columba', in *Omnia Disce*, p. 136.
[79] M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, pp. 151-61.

manuscripts produced.[80] While it has been noted that Kells, in both content and arrangement, closely follows Durrow in its prefaces and its canon numerals,[81] it reverts to an older textual tradition for its Gospels.[82] In light of the significant emphasis of full-page illuminations such as that on f.114r, this use of a more archaic text must have been a very deliberate choice and one which possibly represents the adoption of a non-Roman position.

Tonsure and the dating of Easter

In addition to the archaic textual features identified by Farr, Daniel McCarthy argues that there is evidence in the images in the Book of Kells, and a number of other related manuscripts, which illustrates the 'Irish' tonsure traditionally favoured by the Columban community.[83] It is significant that those promoting a Romanising agenda, sought to discredit this particular form of tonsure by suggesting that it was associated with that worn by Simon Magus. In his comments, for example, Aldhelm sought to establish that the offending tonsure was not only worn by Simon Magus but was indeed 'invented by no less a villain than St Peter's arch-enemy'.[84] Aldhelm states that 'we have learned that the author of (this mode of) tonsure, in the opinion of many, was Simon, the founder of the magical art'.[85] In this context it is interesting to note Southern's observation regarding the prominence of the Roman-Petrine tradition between the seventh and the eleventh century, that the presence of St Peter's

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[80] McGurk, 'The Gospel Text', in *Kells Commentary*, p.62. The Book of Durrow is 'most commonly dated to the late seventh century' - Meehan, *The Book of Durrow* (Dublin, Town House, 1996), p. 9.
[81] See chapter two, pp. 40-41.
[82] McGurk, 'The Gospel Text', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 61-69.
[83] D. McCarthy, 'On the shape of the Insular tonsure', in *Celtica*, xxiv (Dublin, Institute of Advanced Studies, 2003), pp. 140-67.
[84] Higgitt, 'The Iconography of St Peter in Anglo-Saxon England, and St Cuthbert's Coffin', in *St Cuthbert, His Cult and his Community*, pp. 267-85 (p. 274).
[85] Aldhelm, *Letter to Geraint*, in *Aldhelm, The Prose Works*, trans. by Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 155-60 (at p. 157).

tomb in Rome 'was the most significant fact in Christendom'.[86] This was also signifcantly noted at Whitby, where the perception of St Peter as the heavenly gate-keeper was decisive.[87]

As noted above, the authority of Peter was also critical at Whitby in deciding the outcome of the controversy over the dating of Easter. In Colmán's defence of the Columban position, he argues that this method of celebrating Easter is worthy as this was how it was observed by 'the blessed evangelist John, the disciple whom the Lord specially loved'.[88] The figures of Peter and John 'represented the different traditions in the conflicts about Easter' which date back to the second century.[89] In discussing Cummian's letter Walsh and Ó Cróinín also suggest that the Irish and the English appear to identify with different 'champions' - Peter for the Romani and John for the 'Celtic' side. They also note the tradition by which the Irish often referred to John as *Eoin Bruinne* (John of the Breast) as he was the beloved disciple who alone is recorded as having rested his head on Christ's breast.[90] As will be discussed in the following paragraphs, the revival of the Columban traditions relating to tonsure and the dating of Easter may also have been linked with the contest for overkingship in Ireland.

'Imperial' ambition

Another aspect of the historical context to be considered around the turn of the ninth century is the emerging practice of anointing kings on their accession.[91] This has parallels, for example, in contemporary Mercia (Offa's reign, 757-96) and also in Charlemagne's coronation and anointing by Pope Leo on Christmas day in 800. The first recorded ordination

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[86] Southern, *Western Society and the Church*, p. 94.
[87] Ibid., p. 95.
[88] Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (book III, chapt. 25), p. 155.
[89] Bracken, 'Rome and the Isles', in *Anglo-Saxon/Irish Relations before the Vikings*, p. 94.
[90] M. Walsh and D. Ó Cróinín, eds., *Cummian's Letter 'De controversia paschali' and the 'De ratione computandi'* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute, 1988), pp. 69-70.
[91] Ó Corráin, 'The historical context', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 27-28.

of an Irish king is that of Artrí mac Cathail as the new king of Munster in 793.[92] Not long

after this, in 797, Áed mac Néill, better known as Áed Oirdnide (lit. Áed the anointed), was

anointed king of Tara.[93] Such developments perhaps indicate how these ambitious overkings

sought to promote themselves as embodying divinely ordained authority. It is also possible

that the particularly elaborate emphasis given to the Matthean and Lucan genealogies in Kells

might also reflect such tendencies. The production of extensive genealogical material was

one of the traditional tasks taken over by churchmen and this was integral to legitimizing the

claims of both ecclesiastical as well as political leaders. In the Christian period, earlier

genealogies were modified so that ancestry was traced back to Adam. This material was to a

large extent modelled on the Old Testament genealogies, in particular those in Genesis and

those relating to the tribes in the first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles.[94]

It is not difficult to imagine that Kells could have been created in such a context as

part of the ambitious campaign of a royal aspirant. The Scribe-Artist's approach to the

incorporation of initials and also to the decorative additions to its script, does not suggest that

Kells was designed to be a 'working' lectionary. It is more likely that it was as Henry states,

'intended to be displayed open as a sumptuous ornament when pomp was especially

required'.[95] It is possible that display at important gatherings such as the *oenach* might have

been one of the ways in which the manuscript was displayed and utilised.[96] The dishonouring

of Patrick's relics and the staff of Jesus, as mentioned above, took place at such an *oenach*.

The aggression of the perpetrator, Donnchad mac Domnaill, can be understood in the context

of his hostility towards Armagh. which was allied to his Cenél nEógain rivals, and his own

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[92] Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, p. 233.
[93] Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry*, p.67.
[94] Ó Corráin, Carroll Lecture, 'Creating the past: The early Irish genealogical tradition' (1992).
http://www.ucc.ie/chronicon/ocorrfra.htm /[accessed 25 May 2015].
[95] Henry, *The Book of Kells*, p. 153.
[96] Farr, 'Commas and Columba', in *Omnia Disce*, p.141. In modern Irish, *oenach* is translated as 'fair'.
However, in the early medieval period these were multi-purposed gatehrings often of cultural, religious and
political importance (op. cit. p. 141).

links with the Columban Church.[97] While there is no evidence that Donnchad himself was anointed, his ambitious reign can be understood, to some extent, as 'leading-in' to this development. The ongoing battle for overkingship between Clann Cholmáin and Cenél nEógain continued into the ninth century. While the opposing Áed Oirdnide succeeded Donnchad on his death in 797, Donnchad's son Conchobor continued the struggle until his death in 833. For example, the Annals of Ulster state that 'Colum Cille's community went to Temair (Tara) to excommunicate Aed (Áed Oirdnide)'.[98] The Annals of Ulster also recall another episode at an *oenach* (Tailtiu), where bloodshed occured in a dispute over the relics of St Patrick. This recalls the earlier incident in 789 mentioned above.[99]

The dynastic battles in the period following Conchobor's death become complicated with the involvement of the expanding influence in Ireland of the Norsemen and also the Danes. Charles-Edwards states that it is difficult to evaluate the influence of the Vikings on Ireland at this time but concludes that it was a 'considerably less favourable environment for scholarship and art'.[100] In such circumstances, with new demands on resources, it seems unlikely that an ambitious project such as Kells would have been undertaken at this time. The 'history' of this period is built primarily on the annals but their precise meaning is not always entirely clear. On balance, it might seem more probable that a project such as the creation of the Book of Kells may have been initiated during Donnchad's reign (778-797 - Henderson states that 'by the early 770s he was king of Tara in all but name'[101]). O'Flynn describes Donnchad as 'an unusually aggressive ruler' and his reign as important 'not only for the

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[97] E. O'Flynn, 'The organization and operation of Uí Néill kingship in the Irish midlands: Clann Cholmáin c.550-916' (unpubl. PhD thesis, TCD, 2011), p. 193.

[98] Ibid., p. 200. Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, *The Annals of Ulster*, AU 817.7 (p. 273).

[99] Ibid., AU 831.5 (p. 287). O'Flynn, 'Uí Néill kingship', p. 204.

[100] Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 598.

[101] Henderson, *Durrow to Kells*, p. 184. Mac Airt and G. Mac Niocaill, *The Annals of Ulster*, AU 769.5 (p. 223), AU 770.8 (p. 223), AU 771.10 (p. 225), AU 774.7 (p. 227), AU 775.5 (p. 229), AU 776.11 (p. 229), AU 777.3 and 777.6 (p. 231), AU 778.1 and 778.4 (p. 231).

history of Clann Cholmáin but as evidence for the growing power and ambition of the Uí Néill overkings'.[102]

It is not possible to state with any certainty in what circumstances and when the Book of Kells was created. However, there is some evidence to suggest that it may have been commissioned to promote the ambitions of the Cenél Conaill in their quest for overkingship. This may have been linked with a Columban bid for primatial supremacy which was based to significant degree on a revival of their original traditions.[103]

Kells as shrine/relic

Such political concerns do not, of course, preclude the spiritual. Copies of sacred scripture would always have been treated with due reverence among believers and certainly within monastic communities.[104] Raising such books to the status of icons by enshrining them in treasure bindings is a practice that seems to have spread to the West from the eastern Mediterranean.[105] The presence of a carrying-strap on the book-shrine from Lough Kinale indicates that they were carried, perhaps on circuit with other relics.[106] The alternating circuits of relics by those promoting the competing cults of Patrick and Columba throughout the eighth century may provide a context in which the Book of Kells was conceived.[107] The first likely historical mention of the Book of Kells in 1007 describes the theft of 'the chief

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[102] O'Flynn, 'Uí Néill kingship', p.194.

[103] Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (2012), p. 22. Here Meehan notes that 'Bede asserted that Iona and its subject monasteries abandoned the Insular tonsure in 716', however, he continues by stating that it was unlikely 'that the issue was resolved for monks on Iona as readily as Bede indicates'.

[104] M. P. Brown, 'Images to be read and words to be seen: the iconic role of the early medieval book', in J. W. Watts, ed., *Iconic Books and Texts* (CT: Equinox, Sheffield and Bristol, 2012), pp. 86-109 and 'Concealed and revealed: Insular visualisations of the Word', in D. Ganz and B. Schellewald, eds., *Clothing Sacred Scripture* (forthcoming).

[105] M. P. Brown, 'From Columba to Cormac: The contribution of Irish scribes to the Insular system of scripts', in *Settimana di studio L'Irlanda e gli irlandesi nell'alto medioevo* (2010), pp. 623-46 (pp. 628-29). M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, fig.80, p. 212.

[106] M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, p. 68; Eamonn P. Kelly, 'The Lough Kinale book-shrine: the implications for the manuscripts', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 280-89 (p. 280).

[107] Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry*, pp. 62-67.

relic of the western world.'[108] While some uncertainty surrounds the precise translation of the

entry as to whether it was bound within a jewelled cover or contained within a shrine,

Meehan proposes that it seems 'best to suggest that the manuscript was in a box shrine of

such outstanding value as to attract the attention of robbers'.[109] Henderson concludes by

stating that Kells like Durrow reflects 'royal taste and patronage'. He further suggests that

Kells 'makes most sense if we regard it as the Book of the Shrine'.[110] Brown, in discussing

Kells and Lindisfarne, also concludes that 'both books are likely to have been made as major

cult items'.[111]

Conclusions - Section II

The Book of Kells seems to have been created as a high-status object rather than as a

'working' book. As such, it may have been conceived as a shrine/relic celebrating a renewal

or revival of the original traditions associated with the cult of St Columba. This may have

included the promotion of pre-Whitby attitiudes to tonsure and the dating of the celebration

of Easter. The book may also have been conceived in conjunction with the overkingship

ambitions of the Cenél Conaill, whose patronage may have provided material support for

creating the manuscript. The ambitious reign of Donnchad mac Domnaill may identify him as

a potential patron for such a project as Kells.[112] In this study it is only possible to briefly

explore some of these possibilities that may shed light on the background and context in

which the book was conceived and created. These conclusions are thus speculative and it is

beyond the scope of this study to pursue them in greater detail.

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[108] Meehan, 'The history of the manuscript', in *Kells Commentary*, pp. 317-29 (p. 318).
[109] Ibid., pp. 317-19.
[110] Henderson, *Durrow to Kells*, p. 194. See also O'Reilly, 'Exegesis and the book of Kells', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 395-97. See also the Addendum in chapter two pp. 103-08.
[111] M. P. Brown, 'Writing in the Insular World', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, p. 155.
[112] R. Ó Floinn, *Irish Shrines and Reliquaries of the Middle Ages* (Town House and Country House, Dublin, in assoc. with the National Museum of Ireland, 1994). Here, Ó Floinn discusses aspects of royal patronage and references to particular individuals in inscriptions on book-shrines and other reliquaries. Such inscriptions also occur on the high-crosses of the ninth to the twelfth centuries.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

Rather than repeat the conclusions as presented at the end of each chapter, this summarises

the conclusions reached in this study.

The most significant outcomes of this research are the attribution of the entire manuscript to

two individuals and that the work of one of these individuals is spread over two distinct

campaigns. In contradiction of the long-held view, this is not the work of a large team of

scribes and artists but is, rather, the work of two individuals, identified here as the Scribe-

Artist and the Master-Artist. This two-man team worked in close collaboration. The close

reading of the evidence, based on the data assembled herein, has enabled the identification of

two distinct creative personalities. To a large extent, this has been achieved through a

disciplined, sustained and intensive act of looking. This recalls Pulliam's injunction, in the

context of her research, that 'the primary source for studies in the Book of Kells must be the

Book of Kells'.[1] While it has not yet been possible for the author to gain access to the

manuscript other than as a tourist, this 'looking' has largely been facilitated by having had

privileged and unrestricted access to a copy of the 1990 Faksimile Verlag facsimile. During

the course of this study Trinity College Dublin has made available an online facsimile of the

entire manuscript and this has been a wonderful additional resource for the purpose of

examining the manuscript.[2] It remains to be seen whether the methodologies used in this

study, which seek to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches, may be applied to

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[1] Pulliam, *Word and Image*, p. 21.
[2] http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/index.php?DRIS_ID=MS58_003v (accessed on 6th June 2015).

other palaeographical investigations. Such a close reading may usefully be applied, for example, to examine the Barberini Gospels which exhibits evidence of a complex collaboration between a number of different individuals. The demarcation of sections of work attributed to different hands in Barberini is not always entirely clear, due Brown suggests to a conscious effort on the part of the four scribes to 'morph' their hands into one another at transition points, and this recalls somewhat similar challenges in unravelling this puzzle of the division of hands in Kells.[3]

The Master-Artist

The Master-Artist's contributions are characterised by the fineness and precision of his work. This is clearly evident in some pages of the canon tables and on many of the full-page illuminations including, for example, the eight-circle cross page (f.33r), the *chi-rho* page (f.34r) and the *incipit* pages to each of the four Gospels (ff.29r, 130r, 188r and 292r). It was not possible to include a comprehensive study of the illumination within the limitations of this study and this is one of the principal areas for future research. The distinctive work of the Master-Artist is also evident in a limited number of zoomorphic initials. While some of these are clearly identifiable, he may have partly-executed a number of others, perhaps in his role as artistic mentor to his collaborating partner, the Scribe-Artist. Evidence for this mentoring relationship is clearly established in their shared work on the canon tables.

The Master-Artist is also responsible for some of the display-lettering on f.292r. There is evidence to suggest that this work also served as a model for some of the Scribe-Artist's display lettering. This relationship would suggest that in matters of artistic importance the Master-Artist was the senior partner. While he may have done some painting,

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[3] M. P. Brown, 'The Barberini Gospels: Context and Intertextuality' (2007), pp. 89-116 and
N. Bishop, 'The Barberini Gospels' (unpubl. PhD thesis, University of Iowa, 2004), pp. 142-48.

much, if not most of this work has not been executed with his typical precision. The nature of this kind of illumination is primarily graphic and linear, and the application of paint would have been the final stage of its completion. However, for whatever reason, the Master-Artist's contribution to the project comes to an abrupt end and this may be the main reason why he was unable to complete the addition of colour to his designs. Two distinct campaigns of work are identifiable in the work of his partner but the Master-Artist's contributions only occur during the first campaign. It is possible that whatever hiatus caused the end of his involvement may have precipitated the end of that campaign entirely. There is some interval of time before the Scribe-Artist is able to resume his work. It is difficult to quantify this period of time, but, as discussed throughout this study, there is a distinct deterioration in the work of the Scribe-Artist when he resumes his work.

The Master-Artist's work on the canon tables was never completed and other instances of work that he was unable to complete are also clearly evident, for example, on ff.29r-31r and on f.292r. The fact that his work remains incomplete on a number of pages indicates a significant aspect of his work practice, namely, that he worked on a number of pages simultaneously rather than completing one before commencing the next. In creating a book, it would, of course, have been necessary, right from the beginning, to determine the location of all the significant pages of illumination that were to be included within the iconographic scheme. The designs for each page may have been drafted as part of this preliminary process of laying out the manuscript. The Master-Artist may then have continued in this way, working on all of the pages (unbound) simultaneously. Such a deliberate strategy would be beneficial in maintaining the consistency of this work throughout the book.

Although not dealt with comprehensively in the present study, his artistic talents, his ability to compose and structure his designs, is of the highest order. While the most readily discernible hallmark of his work may be the precision and fineness of the most minute

details, the virtuosity of his overall designs is equally powerful. One need only consider the monumental presence of full-page compositions such as f.292r or the sweeping elegance and dynamic energy of f.34r. He is undoubtedly *primus inter pares* of those artists whose work in illumination has survived from the Insular period. Indeed the excellence of his work stands comparison with that produced at any age throughout the history of art.

The Scribe-Artist

The Scribe-Artist is responsible for all of the text in the manuscript. With a few exceptions he is also responsible for all of the initials and also the display-lettering. He is also responsible for all of the script related decoration and a significant amount of the illumination. This single-handed completion of the writing of an elaborate Gospel book is a feature associated with the work of senior members of the Columban community and firmly identifies the Book of Kells as a product of a Columban institution. However, even within this tradition, the scribal performance of the Scribe-Artist is unique among the extant manuscripts surviving from this period, or indeed any period. As mentioned in chapter one, this may be primarily characterised as an idiosyncratic predilection for variation:

- The variant forms of different scribal features are distributed throughout the manuscript with a consistent randomness.
- As part of this programme of variation there are always unique or rare variants of letters or other scribal features.
- There is also a tendency to cluster particular variant letterforms or other features. These clusters may occur on the same page, on an opening, on neighbouring pages or over a number of pages.

- There is never any systematic application of any of these variants or in any of the scribal work.

- All of this is further complicated by the fact that variant features are merged and blended with each other in ways that confound any attempt at simple categorization.

Throughout this constant predilection for variation and randomness there is a remarkable consistency of stroke-formation and also evidence of a consistent 'calligraphic imagination.' The consistent occurrence of these signature markers are the defining characteristics which identify the work as that of a single individual. This evidence would not have been revealed by means of traditional palaeographic approaches where analysis would typically be based on samples of work taken from areas of most obvious difference. The coherence of this work as that of a single individual only became apparent in the course of a comprehensive series of analyses of the entire book. This included a thorough examination of even the minutest dots and marks. The signature markers and defining characteristics found in the text are also evident in the Scribe-Artist's work on the initials and also in the display-lettering. This is also manifest in the significant overlap evident in the recurrence of distinctive motifs in the text, initials and display-lettering.

This sustained predilection for variation does create the impression that particular sections of text appear to be the work of different individuals. However, these differences in particular sections occur for a number of reasons. The most compact areas of script which occur, at the beginnings of a number of texts - the prefatory texts, Mark's Gospel and John's Gospel show the earliest of the Scribe-Artist's work. It is significant that these all occur at the beginning of each of these texts. These sections are also linked by the shared frequency of the use of the turn-in-path device, significant clusters of *s* with its final stroke extended in a double-curve, an abundance of single and triple-point punctuation marks and also similar patterns of line-length. There are also noticeably fewer instances of superscripted letters in

these sections. In addition, the odd positioning of initials in the margin at the beginning of John's Gospel suggests some indecisiveness in the earliest stages of the book's production. This indecision indicates that the opening pages of John was the first of the Gospel texts to be written. It is also of interest to note that this working practice of beginning a number of different sections simultaneously corresponds with that of the Master-Artist as mentioned above. The broadest sections of script occur in the episodes of the Passion in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke (the Passion is missing at the end of John's Gospel in Kells). In these passages, which also feature a greater proliferation of elaborate initials, the script becomes more animated and agitated in response to the climactic episodes of the Passion. However, these variations are never adhered to with any systematic consistency (one of the defining chracteristics of the Scribe-Artist's work). This, and the other defining characteristics, helped to create the impression that the manuscript was the work of a number of different scribes.

The second campaign

A number of sections, which complete earlier work of the first campaign, are of a somewhat inferior quality and are identified in this study as part of a second campaign. It is significant that the majority of these occur at the end of each of the relevant texts. As mentioned above, there appears to have been some interval of time between the two campaigns. This is manifest in a deterioration in the Scribe-Artist's work on resuming his task. However, it is not possible to ascertain the extent to which this loss in quality may be due to ageing, illness or injury, or a combination of these factors. There is also a sense in this work that the Scribe-Artist is attempting to complete the manuscript in some haste. As part of this campaign of work he

also attempts to complete the illumination left unfinished by the Master-Artist.[4] The extensive focus in this study on the canon tables was crucial in unraveling the puzzles surrounding both the illumination and the scribal work. Finally, this study has also identified a final phase in this second campaign where there is a further discernible decline in the Scribe-Artist's work. Despite the poor quality of these, mainly decorative additions, the signature markers, which are the defining characteristics of the Scribe-Artist's idiosyncratic work, are still clearly evident. There is no evidence to suggest the involvement of any other individual in the work.

The loss of some decorative detail is evident on f.34r (fig.6.59-no.2) and this damage has been mitigated by some second campaign additions. However, the location of the damage and 'repair', which is not at the more obviously exposed outer edges of the page, suggest that this occurred in specific circumstances. This may have been the result of repeated contact, perhaps as worshipers touched or kissed the page in an area showing a cross and an image of the face of Christ. This 'ritual' of devotion may have taken place in a liturgical context or possibly at a communal gathering such as an *oenach*. The identification of these additions as a contemporary attempt to 'repair' damage is significant and is an aspect to which the present author would hope to research further in the future. The fact that these 'repairs' do not appear to be subject to further wear or damage suggests that the practice may have been discontinued or perhaps that the book was enshrined.

As mentioned above, the Master-Artist does not add paint to most of his work and indeed much painting remains unfinished. The poor quality of much of the painting, often overlapping fine linear work, suggests that it was added by the Scribe-Artist during the second campaign. To comment further on this aspect of the work would require access to the original manuscript. The surface qualities of the pigment on the vellum are among those

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[4] See pp. 84-91 in chapter two.

features that are not well represented in the photographically based facsimiles. It will hopefully be possible to continue this particular strand of research into the manuscript in the future.

Despite the apparent efforts of the Scribe-Artist to finish the work, the manuscript remains incomplete. To judge from the loss of quality in his work between the first and second campaigns and the further deterioration evident in the later phase of the second campaign, it is most likely that he simply reached a stage where he could no longer work. It is a matter of conjecture whether this was due to some incapacity, illness and finally perhaps his demise. The unfinished work includes such elements as the Eusebian references which should accompany the text but which are only added on two pages of John's Gospel. The manuscript remains unfinished and there is no evidence that any further attempt was made to complete it. This recalls Brown's observation that a few elements in the Lindisfarne Gospels were left unfinished by Eadfrith. She suggests that these were subsequently left untouched as a mark of respect for its creator, but that although some colouristic artwork and gilding remained incomplete, the Eusebian numbers and some rubrics were added by the Rubricator in order to make the text fully functional.[5] It seems possible to suggest that a similar respect was accorded to the makers of the Book of Kells. Such a prohibition however, does not seem to have applied to the Scribe-Artist who completed aspects of the Master-Artist's work. This may have been acceptable as he was completing the work of his collaborating partner. However, this restriction may only have applied to artistic work. In a Columban context, one might presume that any unfinished text in a manuscript would be completed by a monastic colleague in remembrance of the founding saint's deathbed exhortation to his successor to complete the text of his unfinished psalter. However, there are no surviving manuscripts that show evidence of such a practice.

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[5] M. P. Brown, *Society, Spirituality and the Scribe*, pp. 246 and 305.

Theories sugesting that Kells was begun on Iona and later finished in Kells may seem to be supported by the break between the first and second campaigns.[6] However, lacking more specific evidence, the particular location and circumstances of the hiatus that led to the end of the first campaign, and the execution of work in the second campaign, must remain a matter of speculation.

The Columban context and the political background

This study has revealed further significant evidence which firmly places its creation within a Columban context. This includes the use of decorative elements which recall similar motifs in the Cathach. The Scribe-Artist's creation of a highly decorated Gospel text can also be understood as following a line of Columban antecedents. In addition, there is the possible referencing of a number of relics associated with the founder as identified on the second opening of the canon tables. The presence of these references to the relics of St Columba also add to the probability that the manuscript was conceived and created as a shrine/relic commemorating the founding saint. This adds further to the idea that Kells was never intended to function as a 'working' Gospelbook for liturgical use, but was more likely created as an object of symbolic, and perhaps cultic, importance.

As discussed in chapter seven, its creation as a prestigious and symbolic shrine/relic may also be linked to the regal ambitions of the Cenél Conaill dynasty, who were traditionally affiliated with the monastic community of their kinsman Columba. Such a scenario would fit with the related struggle for ecclesiastical supremacy which was ongoing in the decades before and after the year 800. It is tentatively suggested that a likely sponsor for such a project may have been Donnchad mac Domnaill who aggressively dominated

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[6] Meehan, *The Book of Kells* (1994), Appendix I: Historical Background, pp. 90-92.

much of the final three decades of the eighth century. While the Columban community had officially conformed to the Roman tonsure and dating of Easter early in the eighth century, there is evidence in the iconographic programme of the manuscript to suggest that at least some members within the community may have been involved in promoting a revival of the traditional practices favoured by their revered founder. It is beyond the scope of this study to investigate this possibility more thoroughly. However, it is another strand within the scholarship of the manuscript that is worthy of further examination. Such study may reveal further evidence and perhaps also lead to more precise conclusions as to the provenance and dating of the manuscript. As noted in chapter seven, the appraisal of the Scribe-Artist's latinity may also benefit from further study.

A number of other issues are also worthy of further research. For example, while Friend's conclusions regarding the Kells' canon tables are refuted, both in this study and elsewhere (especially by Netzer), some of his observations regarding the possibilty of Carolingian influence on other pages of illumination merit further investigation.[7] Any study of Kells also inevitably raises questions regarding its relationship to a range of other contemporary works. It is difficult to imagine that the creators of Kells were not directly familiar with the Lindisfarne Gospels, to take one obvious example. Brown comments on this particularly enigmatic aspect of the book. She notes how elements within Kells seem to mirror those in other manuscripts and objects, creating 'tantalising elusive reflections, only fleetingly reminiscent of well-known forms'.[8] Future exploration of this kind may lead to the further clarification of the 'fossilised' complex of underlying iconographic, iconologic, liturgical, spiritual, cultural or political impulses which appear to have dictated the particular selection and arrangement of the imagery and decoration as occur in the pages of the

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[7] Friend, 'The canon tables of the Book of Kells', in *Medieval Studies in Memory of Arthur Kingsley Porter,* pp. 636-37.
[8] M. P. Brown, 'Echoes: the Book of Kells and southern English manuscript production', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 333-43 (p. 333).

manuscript.[9] However, regardless of whatever motives may underlie its creation, the book is a glorious celebration of scripture, an artefact conceived with profound reverence and keen theological insight. The Book of Kells was produced with a scribal and artistic excellence that remains without parallel.

Postscript

Varying interpretations of evidence lie at the heart of academic discourse and debate, and no doubt the conclusions reached here will be contested by other scholars. However, I hope that dissenting opinions, and any future discussion of the issues addressed, will take account of the data assembled in this study.

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[9] Werner, 'Crucifixi, Sepulti, Suscitati', in *Conference Proceedings*, pp. 450-88 (p. 450).

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