

Symbols of the Passion, Crucifixion and Day of Judgement on Gravestones in Co. Limerick

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A survey, with detailed descriptions and analyses, of a selection of gravestones in Co. Limerick with particular reference to the depiction of the instruments associated with the Passion of Christ and symbols of the Last Judgment.

'The Mass of St. Gregory' refers to a vision of Christ, surrounded by various instruments of the Passion which Pope St Gregory the Great (540-604 AD) had while saying Mass after his election to the papacy in 590 AD. The vision was understood to confirm for doubters the Real Presence of Christ upon the altar at Mass, and that the sacrifice of Calvary and that of the Mass were one and the same. This led to representations of the Passion upon gravestones and tombs becoming very popular all over Europe and the practice spread to Ireland. By the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Crucifixion scenes began to feature more prominently on the end slabs of tombs, particularly in the Pale, and devotional scenes such as Christ displaying the Five Wounds or the Mass of St. Gregory are also depicted.¹ While the instruments of the Passion are represented upon a tomb slab of 1626, in Lorrha, County Tipperary,² the use of representations of the instruments of the Passion, and Christ crucified upon surviving gravestones in County Limerick seem to date only from the late eighteenth to the first half of the nineteenth century. If there were earlier examples they are now lost.

Three such gravestones were found in Kilkeedy graveyard attached to the now ruined church of Ireland church in the barony of Pubblebrian, each of which displays names of the stonemasons. The earliest one was erected to the memory of Margaret Roberts and is signed by Batt McN, presumably McNamara and possibly related to the Mary McNamara who had the stone erected (Fig. 1). The carving is of a simple even primitive nature. There is no effort to portray upper body anatomy in Christ, such as ribs, while two ridges are used to convey a picture of a loincloth. The right foot is nailed by one nail on to the left foot. The facial features have no personal attributes and the nose, eyes and mouth are displayed in a basic, even childlike, manner. On his right there are the thirty pieces of silver, the dice used by the soldiers to gamble for his clothes, a spear pointing to his side, a chalice and a cock which does not seem to be standing on a pot or a tomb. This is probably a reference to the cock which crowed to remind Peter of the words of Christ 'before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times' (Mark 14.30). On his left there is the flail of the scourging, a hammer, a pair of pincers holding a nail, the three nails of the crucifixion and what looks like a small tree. This may be a representation of the reeds used by the Roman soldiers as a sceptre to mock Christ's claim to be King (Matthew 27.29). Here it could be the common Irish reed *phragmites australis*. Over the

¹ Rachel Moss, 'Permanent expressions of piety: the secular and the sacred in later medieval stone sculpture,' in Rachel Moss, Colman O Clabaigh OSB & Salvador Ryan (eds), *Art and Devotion in Late Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 2006) p. 87.

² Fergus O'Farrell, 'Tombslab (1626) at Lorrha, Co. Tipperary,' *NMAJ*, vol. 12 (1980) pp 63-4.

head of Christ there is what seems to be a small perpendicular rectangle. It may be an attempt to represent God the Father and God the Holy Spirit but it is very unclear.

Er^d by Mary McNama^a
 In Mem^y of her Aunt
 Marg^t Roberts who
 • Dep^d life March 17th 1815
 Ag^d 63 y^{rs}
 May she rest in peace amen
 Batt McN

The Kiely gravestone, by P. O'Donohue, is a much more competent work (Fig. 2). It is skilful in its representation of Christ crucified, a more realistic figure than that produced by Batt McNamara. The crown of thorns is defined clearly. On Christ's right there are the thirty pieces of silver, a chalice, three spears, a banner and a cock rising out of a three-legged cooking pot. This latter is usually understood to refer to the certainty of the Resurrection. On Christ's left there is a ladder, a flail, what seems like a large pillar, a hammer, a spear and three dice. A band of carved diamonds divides the Crucifixion scene from the inscriptions.

Er^d by John Kiely in
 memory of his wife
 Margaret Kiely alias
 M^cNamara who dep^d
 This life Jany 1st 1822 aged
 60 Y^{rs} May She rest in
 Peace Amen
 Mary Kiely died 9 April 1962
 Michael Kiely died 10 Jan 1963.
 P. O'Donohue

The 1827 O'Dea stone has been broken and the carvings on Christ's right have disappeared (Fig. 3). The representation of Christ is quite realistic and he seems to be crowned with thorns. On his left-hand side there are the thirty pieces of silver, a pillar, a banner and three spears.

Erec[broken] by Mich^l O'Dea
 in memory of his brother
 Pat^k who dep^d this life
 Aug^t 7 1827 aged 45
 R I P Amen

While this gravestone has not been signed it seems clear that it was also produced by the firm of O'Donohue because of its similarity to the stone signed by O'Donohue and erected around the 1850s (Fig. 4).

Ered by Mich^l O'Dea
 In mem^y of his Fat [broken]
 Edward O'Dea who dep^d
 this Life Dec^r 19th 1850
 aged 74 Y^{rs} RIP
 O'Donohue

There is a deep crack running diagonally from right to left through the Crucifixion scene on this stone and unless cared for it could also be destroyed. Christ is crowned with thorns and the carving is competent but not exceptional. Upon his right there are pincers, a cock rising out of a pot, a banner, two spears a chalice and a hammer. Upon Christ's left there are thirty pieces of silver, a pillar, three dice, a banner and what looks like the blades of three spears. The carving seems very similar to that on the other O'Dea stone. While the deaths recorded are twenty-three years apart, the date of erection of the earlier stone might be later but even if the years 1827 and 1850 are accurate for the erection of the stones, twenty-three years is not necessarily a very long time in the life of a family business.

Clonkeen graveyard in Murroe contains two gravestones by a stonemason named W. P. Cragg, both were erected for the McCormick family.

Er^d by David M^cCormick
of Made Boy in memory of
his Father Ja^s M^cCormick
who died 1822 aged 84
Y^{ts} May he Rest in Peace
Amen
W. P. Cragg

The quality of the carving on this stone (Fig. 5) is very primitive, particularly in relation to the figure of Christ. His upper body is unrealistically portrayed. Five incisions on each side of his stomach seem to be ribs. The stomach itself is shaped like a coffin, while two holes indicate nipples. His legs are short and out of proportion. On Christ's right there are two spears or nails, a cock rising from a three-legged pot, a very large chalice, three dice, and a pincers holding a nail. On the left there is a ladder, a pillar, probably relating to the scourging of Christ, thirty pieces of silver, a hammer, again spears or nails and a banner. There is also a long object with three small arches at the top. This could possibly be a representation of a torch, which can symbolize immortality.

Ere^d by Mary M^cCor
mick alias MEALY
in memory of her Hus
band Tho^s. M^cCormick
of Madeboy who died
1832 aged 66 Y^{ts} May
he Rest in Peace amen
W. P. Cragg

The carving on this stone (Fig. 6), while very similar in style to the previous one is more competent and confident. The incisions which indicate Christ's ribs are straight, however, the nipples seem very large but the arms are short and child-like. The folds in his loin-cloth are conveyed by six incisions but his legs are in proportion to his body. On Christ's right there is the cock and his three-legged pot, a chalice, a hammer, three dice, a pincers with a nail, three nails or spears at the right-hand margin and two at the top margin. On the left there is the ladder, a pillar, thirty pieces of silver, again the mysterious long object with three points, which could be a torch with the points representing flames, three spears and a banner.

W.P. Cragg also carved a gravestone in Kilmurry cemetery in Castletroy (Fig. 7). Unfortunately, it is now very weathered and difficult to identify some of the instruments.

Ereced by John Turner
 in mem^y of his Father
 Tho^s Turner who dep^d
 life aug^t the 27th 1810 age
 51 Y^{rs}

• W. P. Cragg

However, Christ is clearly delineated within a recessed rectangle. His figure is simple and primitive, almost identical to that on one of the Cragg stone in Clonkeen Fig. 5). On his right there is a chalice, a hammer, and a pincers with nail, while on his left there is a ladder, a pillar, which has the faint remains of interesting details of its construction, thirty pieces of silver, and again what could be interpreted as a torch, with flames.

While no address is given for the W. P. Cragg gravestones, the location of the business of two other stonemasons, whose work is to be found in Kilmurry, is known. Both were from Ballysimon, which is only about one mile distant. It has limestone quarries and still has a tradition of making and repairing gravestones.

Erected
 By
 Charles O'Connor in
 mem^y of his [worn]
 Mother Ellen O'Connor
 [worn] dep this life
 29th April 1832 A.D.
 Keane Ballysimon.

Christ is a well carved three dimensional figure with long hair (Fig. 8). However, the instruments carved on either side of him, which are not three dimensional, are difficult to see. Those on Christ's left have lasted in a better state than those on his right; these are thirty pieces of silver, a ladder, a pincers and nail, a hammer, dice and a cock on top of his pot. The right displays the remains of what could be a very long spear or a sword, a flail, a chalice and what appears to be some sort of flower or plant.

Erected by Dennis
 Degidan in memry
 of his Belovd wife Anna
 Degidan alias Kerby
 who dep^d this life Nov^r
 20th 1825 aged 33 Y^{rs}
 Cain Ballysimon

The central figure of Christ which is realistic has a quality of dignity, conveyed particularly by his outstretched arms (Fig. 9). On his right-hand side there is the ladder, a chalice, a pincers with the nail in its mouth, a hammer and an instrument of seven strands, which could represent the reeds given to Christ by the soldiers as a mock sceptre when they crowned him with thorns. It is also recounted in the Gospel of St. Matthew that they struck him on the head with the reeds. (Chap. 27 verse 30). On the left there are the thirty pieces of silver, and the cock rising out of his pot.

The medieval parish church of Rathkeale probably stood upon the hill where the present Church of Ireland church dating from 1825 and attached graveyard now stand. Here there is a very interesting late-eighteenth-century gravestone.

Here lies the Bodies of
Dennis Brick & his wife
Christiana Brick alias Bar
ry she dep^d this life Jan
5th A.D, 1767 aged 56 Years
He dep^d Dec^r 2 1788 Ag^d 76
Scanlon Sculpe^r

Unusually there is a triangular apex to the stone (Fig. 10). Christ's hair is long and his head is surrounded by a halo. On either side of the arms of the cross there is the head of an angel, with wings, a ladder, a skull and what appears to be a decaying body of perhaps a sheep, being eaten by a worm. The effect of this latter image is a very powerful, even horrific reminder of the mortality of the body, as the worm seems very close to the empty eye sockets. This emphasis on decay as a reminder of the shortness of life appears to be unique among County Limerick graveyards. On the left side of the stone there is a spear, the bundle of seven strands and a serpent representing the Devil.

Kilmallock is named after a monastery founded by Saint Mo-Cheallóg in the 7th century, on the hill to the north of the present town. It later moved to the site where the ruins of the medieval church of the Apostles Peter and Paul now stand with a round tower incorporated in it. A very interesting stone, carved by Joseph Bolster, can found in the graveyard attached to the ruin of this church.

The Rev. Wm Lynch in
Memory of his Grand
Father Tho^s Lynch who
Dep^d life Jan 4th 1800
Aged 88 Y^{rs}
Also his Brother Tho^s
Lynch Dep^d life April
30th 1830 Aged 18 Y^{rs}
Joseph Bolster Fecit

The carving upon the stone is what could be described as line-drawing (Fig. 11). None of the figures are raised out from its background. GLORIA IN EXCELIS DEO is inscribed around the top of the stone. A figure, probably that of God the Father, extends wings over the Cross; the very large halo over the head would indicate that it is God the Father and not just an angel. On the right-hand side of the Cross there are three nails, a ladder, a chalice and a somewhat primitive rendering of a soldier, with a spear and dressed in a cutaway coat and knee-britches. Upon the left-hand side there are the thirty pieces of silver, a hammer, what could be a different rendering of the reed sceptre and another soldier. A very large and very ornate IHS is carved at the bottom of the scene.

In the graveyard of Anhid, near Croom, there is a stone signed by Joseph Bolster, while another displays the style and workmanship of this stonemason (Fig. 12).

This Mark of Gratitude
Was Erected by
Dan^l & Mich^l Costiloe
In Memory of their Father
John Costiloe
• Who Dep^d life Aug^t 28th
1812 Aged 46 Y^{rs}
May his Soul rest in peace Amen
Joseph Bolste^r
FECIT

The date when this stone was carved is unknown. While John Costiloe died in 1812 there is no indication when his sons had the memorial erected. A Celtic cross with no figure upon it occupies the central place upon the stone. The use of the Celtic cross was growing in popularity from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. In 1853 casts of several of Ireland's most famous high crosses were exhibited at the Dublin Industrial Exhibition, while in 1857 Henry O'Neill published *Illustrations of the Most Interesting of the Sculptured Crosses of Ancient Ireland*. However, it seems unlikely that the brothers waited for over forty years to erect a memorial for their father. But if the Celtic cross was carved in the 1850s or even earlier it must be one of the first representations of this revival in County Limerick. A scroll over the cross carries the prayer that Bolster also used in Kilmallock: *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*. The head of an angel is placed underneath each arm of the cross, which rises out of a very large IHS. The cross is framed by a decorated circle which rests on leaves. St. Paul, holding the Bible, is on the right-hand side while St. Peter with the keys is on the left. Underneath the saints, rays symbolizing the sun, or the grace of God, radiate outwards. The name of the deceased is surrounded by a border of leaves. Two large chalice-like images have been carved at the bottom of the slab with a heart on each of the lids. The standard of the decoration is very high and very attractive.

An unusual feature of this slab is the fact that on the back there is a graceful line drawing of Christ on a Celtic cross. INRI is carved over the head of Christ while the heads of two angels, with outspread wings, rest on each side of the broad ring which surrounds the point of intersection. From the upper corners of the stone the spreading rays echo this image on the front. Standing at each side of Christ at the foot of the cross, two stylized figures probably represent Our Lady and St. John. They have very unusual sharply pointed halos and are surrounded by gracefully carved flowers.

There is another stone in Anhid graveyard also erected by the Costillo family, and probably carved by Joseph Bolster, although it is not signed (Fig. 13). However, while the style is very similar the images are not identical to the Costiloe gravestone which has been discussed.

ERECTED
By
Pat^k Costillo in
Memory of his Father
Edm^d Costillo
Who Dep^d life Nov^r 6th 1831
Ag^{'d} 49 Yrs.
Also his Grandfather

Only
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John Costillo
 Dep^d life March 22nd 1831
 Ag^d 88 Yrs.
 May their Souls rest in peace Amen

Only a few letters of the 'Gloria' prayer have survived; 'GLOR – [broken] LS [broken] DEO'. The head of an angel, with wings is at the top of the Latin cross, which does not display a figure of Christ. At the intersection of the two 'beams' there is a heart and at the extremity of the arm 'beams' and the head 'beam', small flowers have been carved. Beneath the arms of the cross decorated circles with internal spirals, provide an interesting decoration and possibly symbolize eternity. Two columns of diamonds enclose the cross which rises from the large IHS. On the right-hand side of the cross there is the figure of death holding a book and a scythe. This figure is very damaged and broken. On the left-hand side St. Gabriel stands with his trumpet to call the dead to judgement, and weighing scales to weigh all souls in the balance of good and evil. There are two very severe cracks in this stone.

A gravestone in the ruin of the church of St Nicholas in Glenogra, Fedamore seems in both style, and execution to also be a product of the Bolster workshop (Fig. 14).

ERECTED BY
 Cor Hourigan
 Memory of his beloved
 Wife Ellen Hourigan
 Ali^s Fitzgerald who
 Dep^d life June 5th 1832
 Aged 69 Y^{rs}

Unfortunately, this stone is very weathered but the graceful line-drawing of Christ upon the cross and the symbols of the Passion can only be identified with some effort. This line-drawing is very similar to that carved on the back of the Costiloe slab in Anhid graveyard and to that upon the slab in Kilmallock erected for the Lynch family. It is more conventional in that as well as the Crucifixion it also has some symbols of the Passion, which were absent from the slabs in Anhid. Over the head of Christ are the letters INRI. The word *Deo* is all that can be read from the prayer, *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*. On the right-hand side of Christ there is a hammer, a pinchers, a chalice and three spears pointing towards his body. On his left-hand side there is a ladder and the thirty pieces of silver, while at the bottom of the scene two urn-like objects have been carved, which could be interpreted as covered chalices.

In St David's graveyard at Churchtown, Newcastle West, an unusual, but certainly not unique, iconography is evident upon the gravestone erected by Roger Kelly in memory of his wife, and daughter (Fig. 15). On a prone cross there is a lamb rather than the figure of Christ. The lamb is a symbol of sacrifice in both the Old and New Testament, and because his daughter was only sixteen years old, the lamb, rather than the body of Christ, may have seemed more appropriate. Over the lamb and cross there are the words *ECCE AGNUS DEI*. A six-petal flower is carved on each side of the cross. Flowers can have different interpretations. It is possible that a six-petal flower could represent the six days of creation or it might represent the Resurrection. Overhead the lamb and cross, another cross rises from the letter H of IHS, the abbreviation for the name of Jesus in the Greek

alphabet. On each side of the cross there is a figure, with conspicuously curly hair. The angel Gabriel carries his trumpet with which he will call all of the dead from their graves on the Day of Judgement. He also carries a set of scales to symbolize the weighing-up of good and evil deeds. St. Peter carries the keys of the kingdom of heaven and a book, within which is written all good and evil deeds. On each side of the figures there is an urn-like image.

The inscription is raised out from its background and is surrounded by an oval stone frame, with an angel on each side. The angels have wings and again the extremely obvious curly hair. On each side there are two classical pilasters which are however, topped with an outline of what seems to be a seven-petal flower. The stone is signed by J. o Callaghan.

ERECTED BY
BY
ROGER KELLY
IN MEMORY OF
HIS BELOVED WIFE
ANNE KELLY ALIAS
McKENRY WHO DEPRD
LIFE APR^L 27th 1847
Ag^d 49Y^{rs} and his
DAUGHTER ANNE
DEPRD LIFE APR^L 5TH
1847 AG^d 16Y^{rs} May
THEIR SOULS
REST IN PEACE
AMEN
J. o CALLAGHAN

There is another stone signed by J o Callaghan, [the 'o' is smaller than the capital 'C'] in this graveyard (Fig. 16). This time, Christ is upon the cross and he also has very curly hair. On his right there is a figure of either Father Time or the Devil whose hair is sleek and long and he carries an hourglass and scythe. Upon Christ's left there is the angel Gabriel, with wings, a trumpet and the Doomsday Book.

ERECTED BY CATHERINE
AMBROSE ALIAS KEAN^e
IN MEMORY OF HER
HUSBAND JOHN AMBROSE
OF ARDAGH WHO DIED
NOV^R 7TH 1834 AG^D 56
Y^{rs} REQUIESCAT IN PACE
AMEN
J o CALLAGHAN

In the old graveyard at Cloncagh in West Limerick there is a gravestone for Maurice Nunan which has a carving of the Crucifixion (Fig. 17). On Christ's right there is the angel Gabriel blowing his trumpet to call the dead to life and St Michael the Archangel is on the left-hand side with his scales at the ready. Unusually, there are words put into

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³ Charlotte

the mouth of Gabriel and a request for prayers. The name of the stonemason, Patrick O'Rahilly, is at the bottom.

This Last Trump which I am Sounding
Thro Graves and Regions you'll hear Resounding
Your Deeds in Dooms day Book are Fulgent
So Arise you Dead and Come to Judgment
Maurice Nunan Departed
This life Decem^r the 23rd 1802
in the 60th year of his Age
Wandering Travellers that pass this way
Who now Think not on Judgment day
A Pater and Ave for me now say
For the love of God I humbly pray.
Pat^k O'Rahilly

In Cappagh parish cemetery there is a primitive depiction of Christ crucified and various instruments of the Passion upon a gravestone (Fig. 18). Over Christ's head the letters INRI are very clear. On his right-hand side the cock rises from a stone edifice which may represent Christ rising from his tomb, and the pincers with a nail in its mouth is very realistic. On Christ's left there is a ladder, three dice a hammer, thirty pieces of silver, two spears and a flail. While the instruments are clear and obvious in their representation, the body of Christ is very simple, even childlike. A band of carved diamonds separates the iconography from the following inscription:

Erected by
John Dwyer in me
mory of his Father
Michael Dwyer who
Dep^d Y^s life Oct^r 27th
1822 Aged 67.
Dennis Sullivan Faceet ¹⁶ [sic]

While the name and 'Faceet' are executed in a beautiful copperplate script it is possible that the word 'faceet' has not been read correctly. There is a further inscription on this stone but it is in lightly incised script and very difficult to read. A gravestone carved by the above Dennis Sullivan in the graveyard of the church of St. Nicholas, Adare, was discussed in a previous article by the author³ but the name of the stonemason had not then been found. The stone was erected by John Connelly in memory of his son James who died in 1826 and his daughter Mary who died in 1808. The style is very similar to that of the stone in Cappagh (Fig. 19). Some recent work by the author uncovered the name of Dennis Sullivan almost hidden in the earth at the bottom of this stone in Adare. Examples of his work can also be seen in Kilmoylan and Mount Pleasant graveyards.

In the eighteen gravestones looked at, thirteen deal with the Crucifixion and Passion of Our Lord while five are dedicated to representing the Crucifixion and the Day of Judgement. The thirty pieces of silver are used on every stone which deals with the

³ Charlotte Murphy, 'Instruments of the Passion on Gravestones in County Limerick', *NMAJ*, vol. 51 (2011) p. 86.

Passion. This motif is easy to create, fills a lot of space and has become part of the vocabulary of betrayal in everyday use. The hammer appears on eleven of the gravestones; it is also easy to represent. The chalice and the ladder are on ten each of the stones; these are more complex in their execution. The chalice is seen as a very significant means of indicating the unity of the sacrifice of the Crucifixion, the Mass and the Eucharist. The ladder was used in Christ's removal from the cross. Spears usually in groups of three but sometimes only two or even one are carved on ten of the stones. They probably represent the general violence of Good Friday; however, they may also be put in place to remind people of the spear of Longinus which pierced the side of Christ. The pincers, with a nail in its mouth are carved on nine stones. These, like the ladder, are associated with the removal of Christ's body from the cross as the nails had to be extracted before his body could be freed for its burial. The cock rising from its tomb/cooking pot also appears on nine of the stones. It can be difficult to carve successfully, especially the cock with his tail feathers and crest or crown, but it was considered important because of its reflection upon the Resurrection. The tomb/cooking pot could also present difficulties for the carver: it may be for this reason that Batt McNamara omitted it from the Roberts stone in Kilkeedy. The three dice used by the soldiers to gamble for the clothes of Christ appear on seven of the gravestones. This is a relatively easy and small motif but it was obviously not considered of great importance or it would have been used more often.

IHS, the first three letters in the Greek alphabet for the name of Jesus, appears on five of the gravestones. Four of these are on stones carved by Bolster, while the fifth is found in St. David's, Newcastle West, and carved by J. o'Callaghan. A pillar, probably that which is associated with the scourging of Christ, is on five of the stones while banners decorating the edges of the stones are also found on five stones. The banner may refer to the banner which Christ carries after his Resurrection, according to various sculptures and artists; it possibly symbolizes victory. Christ carrying a banner is found on the McMahon tomb in the ruined friary of the Franciscans in Ennis. Also on four occasions the prayer *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, is carved and Bolster is again the stonemason. The flail used in the scourging of Christ is depicted on four stones as is what may be the sceptre of reeds. This may indicate that they were not considered very important or attractive pictures. The three nails of the Crucifixion were used on only three of the stones. As the Crucifixion was carved on all of the stones, it may have seemed unimportant to carve the three nails as a separate icon.

INRI [Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews] is found over the head of Christ on only four crosses which may seem unusual as it is an integral part of the story of the Passion as recounted by the four evangelists. There are four representations of what seems like a torch; while it could refer to the soldiers who, according to St. John's gospel, came by torch-light to arrest Christ, the torch can sometimes be used as a symbol of eternity. *Ecce Agnus Dei* [Behold the Lamb of God], is a prayer or an exhortation to the faithful which appears on only one of the stones. It is found on the Kelly grave in St. David's Newcastle West and has a reference to the fact that on the cross there is a lamb and not the body of Christ.

The stone in Rathkeale was carved in the late-eighteenth century and apart from the ladder, a spear, the reed sceptre, the Crucifixion and two angels it has a carving of a serpent, which is usually understood to represent the Devil. The serpent does not appear on any of the nineteenth-century stones discussed here. It also has a carving of a decaying animal being eaten by a worm in a very startling reminder of the mortality of all things. Again such a representation does not appear on any of the stones of the nineteenth century.

Five of the eighteen stones looked at have references to the Day of Judgement carved around the central icon of the cross or the crucifix. In Anhid, one of the Costillo/Costiloe gravestones has St. Paul carved on one side of the cross and St. Peter on the other. St. Paul is carrying a book, which is usually understood to be the Bible, the acceptance or rejection of which would have an enormous influence on a person's future on Judgement Day. The fact that St. Peter carries the keys of the kingdom, with which he can either lock people out or allow them to enter heaven also indicates that this stone refers to the Last Day. The second stone in Anhid displays some of the usual symbols of the Day of Judgement. It has a carving of St. Gabriel blowing his horn and carrying scales but it also has a figure which is more difficult to interpret. It could be St. Michael the Archangel because it has wings, indicating its heavenly origin. It also has a book; in Catholic tradition St. Michael keeps an account of good and evil deeds but the figure also carries a scythe which is more usually put into the hands of Death. The Kelly stone in St. David's, Newcastle West, has St. Gabriel blowing his horn to call all from their graves but he also carries the scales, an indication that here he was given the task of judging the good and evil; however, as stated earlier, in tradition this is usually done by St. Michael. Here again St. Peter is shown with the keys of heaven.

On the Ambrose stone in St. David's, St. Gabriel is portrayed blowing his horn and he carries a book which is clearly marked as the Doomsday Book; significantly he has very curly hair. However, the figure on the other side of Christ has an hourglass and a scythe; he has no wings and his hair is sleek and close to his head indicating that his origins are not heavenly because as with St. Gabriel, Christ on the cross has strikingly curled hair. On the gravestone in Cloncagh it appears to be St. Michael who is holding the scales in his right hand; it is usually St. Gabriel who carries the scales on the stones discussed here. In his left hand there is an implement which is difficult to interpret; it could be a chain because one of the attributes of St. Michael is his power to chain Satan. St. Gabriel is the other angel on the stone because he is shown blowing his horn but it is he who here carries the book of recorded deeds just as he does on the Ambrose stone in St. David's. It appears from these gravestones that representations of the Day of Judgement were not rigid and various angels and devils could be given many and varied tasks.

All gravestones discussed here face east, towards Jerusalem, the place of Christ's Resurrection. Limestone is the material used for all stones and the average height above the ground is approximately five feet. One clear exception is the Roberts stone carved by Batt McNamara in Kilkeedy graveyard; it is approximately three feet in height.

Most of the stonemasons mentioned above cannot be identified. The Keane and Cain who did work in Kilmurry give their address as Ballysimon and this at least places them in the County. In *Ferrar's Directory of Limerick* (1769) there is no mention of stonemasons. In *Lucas's Directory* (1788) one stonemason is listed but he does not feature on any of the stones discussed. *Holden's Limerick Directory* (1809) has no mention of stonemasons. In *The New Triennial Commercial Directory* (Limerick, 1840) of the cities of Limerick, Waterford and Kilkenny, eight stone and marble masons are listed but again unfortunately they do not feature in this discussion. In Kilmallock, Anhid, and possibly Glenogra, a stonemason is finally found whose trade is acknowledged in *Slater's Commercial Directory of Ireland* (1846)⁴ Joseph Bolster is listed as a stonemason and his address is given as The Turrets, Charleville, County Cork. It is also probable that Bolster carved the

⁴ *Slater's Commercial Directory of Ireland, 1846 - Munster*, p. 172.

Quish stone in Knockainy cemetery discussed by the author in an earlier article.⁵ The historic graves website lists 59 examples of his work in Counties Limerick and Cork.⁶ The almost impossible task of learning about the stonemasons who signed their work is frustrating. It would be very interesting to know more about these men but because most of them seemed to be local stonemasons who did not advertise their work in print, research runs into a dead end. However, time and persistence may yield answers eventually.

• **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I wish to thank Mr. James Lavan for all of his help in finding relevant gravestones and interpreting symbols and scripts. All photographs are by the author.

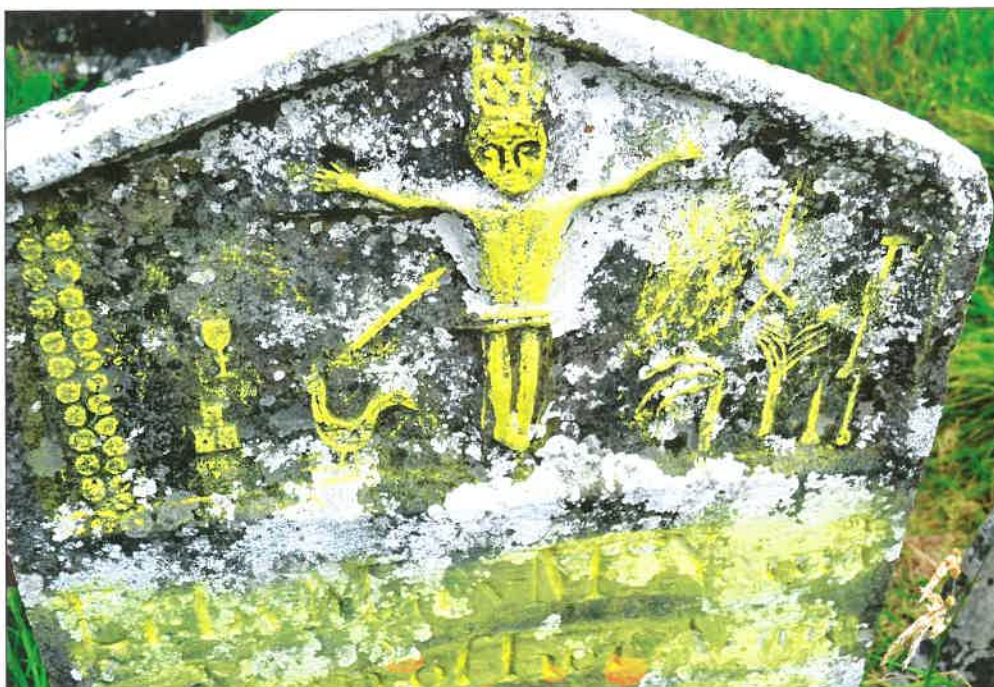


Fig. 1

⁵ Murphy, 'Instruments of the Passion', *NMAJ*, vol. 51 (2011) pp 82-3.

⁶ historicgraves.com.

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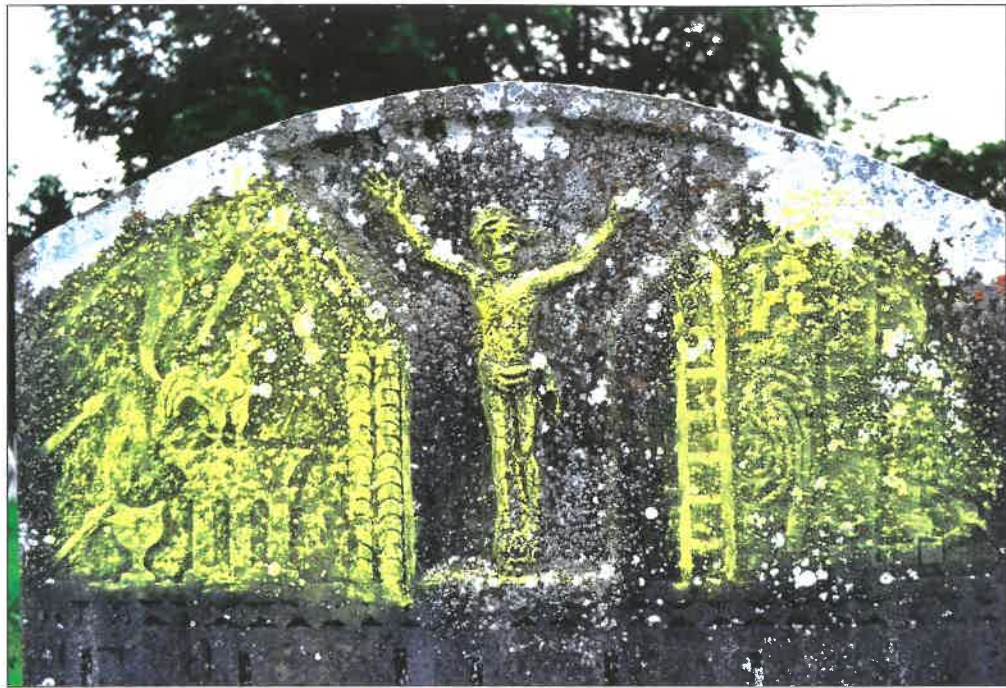


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

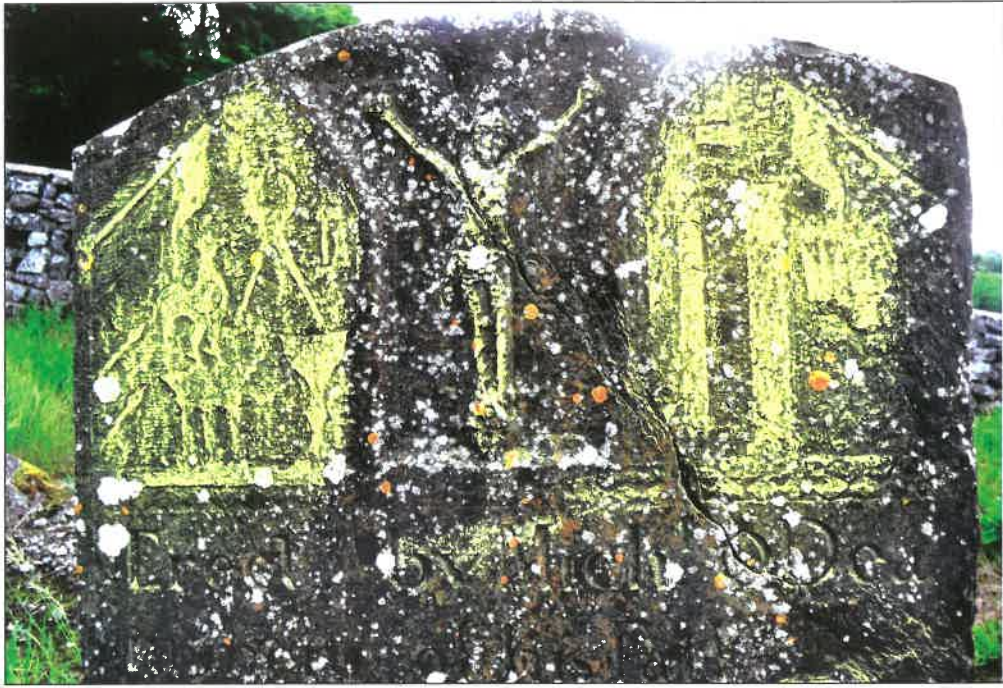


Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

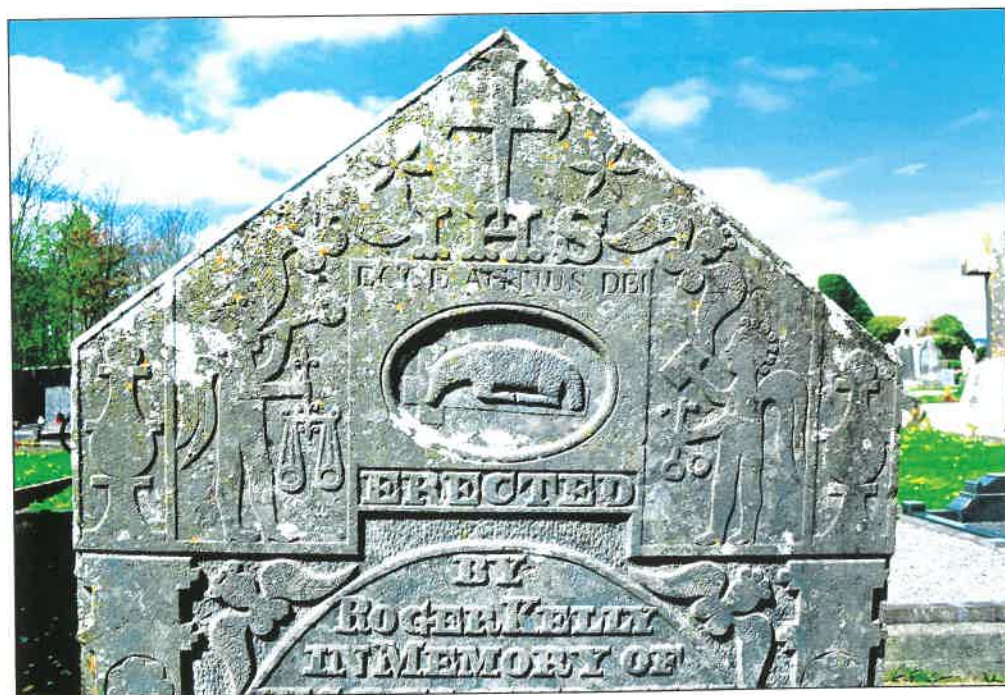


Fig. 15

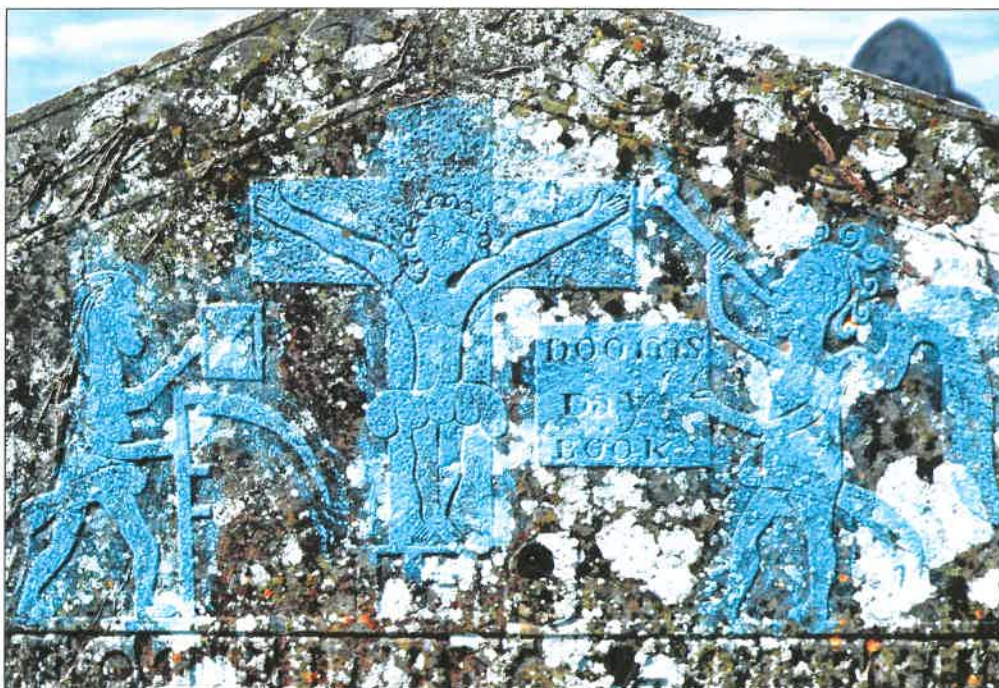


Fig. 16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18



Fig. 19