The origins of the iconography of the crosses

The sculpture on the crosses is almost the only examples of stone sculpture in western Europe and is compared closely with earlier and roughly contemporary examples in Continental manuscripts, ivory carvings, and inlaid and painted panels such as those from St Peter’s in Trier, which are no longer extant but are known from medieval manuscript miniatures. The immediate inspiration for the High crosses of the early ninth century was the imperial Roman tradition, which was harked back to Roman and Frankish prototypes. While the general flow of such iconographic influences is clear, the manner in which they travelled and were crossed dat of the crosses are still matters that are hotly debated. As a result, we cannot be certain of the date of the crosses at Monasterboice except to say that they are likely to have been carved sometime between 850 and 920.

In 1747, only a year before the National Monuments Service was established as part of the Office of Public Works (OPW), a group of interested people in County Louth collected funds and carried out work at Monasterboice. These works included building a new wall around the graveyard a short distance out from the old wall, thus allowing a path to be laid all around the old wall, making a new walled access to the graveyard; and inserting a timber and glass viewing structure within the broken top of the tower. Work in progress on the round tower in about 1874, showing the glass and timber construction within the broken top of the tower.


The conservation of Monasterboice

The conservation of the crosses is being monitored on an ongoing basis. Monasterboice, which is on the World Heritage Tentative List, needs major investment to provide a permanent solution that will ensure the preservation of the crosses into the future and improve visitor facilities. Before the conservation work, the crosses were left in their natural state, which had been preserved for a long time. Following the conservation work, the crosses were brought into a more stable状态, allowing them to be protected for future generations. The conservation work involved cleaning, repair, and stabilization of the crosses, as well as the creation of a viewing structure to protect them.

Among the remarkable and eighteenth-century crossheads in the graveyard there are some very fine examples of folk art, as well as two headstones with inscription partly in Irish.

The glass and timber viewing structure at Monasterboice, which is on the World Heritage Tentative List.
Introduction

The rich histories have been described by Peter Hamilton as a ‘cycle’. The early medieval Irish world was an integrative whole, and the same prayerbook was used at monasteries throughout Ireland. Monasterboice, known from a medieval manuscript, was one of the monastic houses in the early centuries of Ireland. It was a centre for Christianity and a place of pilgrimage. The church buildings of the early monastery were later replaced by a larger church in the twelfth century. The monastery was then abandoned and the site was used as a graveyard for many centuries. The graveyard still exists and is a place of pilgrimage and devotion.

History

Monasterboice was founded in the sixth century by St Mainistriuchus, who is believed to have been a missionary from Ireland. The site was later used as a graveyard, and the church buildings were later replaced by a larger church in the twelfth century. The monastery was then abandoned and the site was used as a graveyard for many centuries. The graveyard still exists and is a place of pilgrimage and devotion.

The ecclesiastical settlement

The present-day church, standing in the South Church. It is a small rectangular building with a lintelled west doorway and a bell-tower. It was originally built in the twelfth century and later extended in the fifteenth century.

The North Church is a simple rectangular church of about 6 by 10m, with a west doorway and a north window. It has been adapted for use as a church and is now used as a museum. The church is also used as a place of worship and a place of pilgrimage.

The South Church is a smaller rectangular church with a west doorway and a south window. It is also used as a place of worship and a place of pilgrimage.

The churches

The South Church is the larger of the two and was church for the parochial church in late medieval times. The church was the subject of a significant study by Joseph O’Donnell, which showed that it was one of the finest examples of early medieval ecclesiastical architecture in Ireland.

The Crosses and the other carved stones

There are three high crosses at the site: the two highly sculpted crosses and the three other crosses. The tallest of the crosses is the south cross, which is about 5.2m tall and 2.14m wide. It is composed of sandstone and has a fine spiral base. It is estimated that it was built around the year 1100. The other two crosses are smaller and are located on the east side of the church.

The round tower

This is a fine example of a typical Irish round tower standing in a graveyard. It is about 7m high and was built in the eighteenth century. It has a circular base and a conical top, and is made of stone. It is a fine example of the type of tower that was built in many parts of Ireland.

The graveyard

The graveyard is a large area of land that has been used as a graveyard for many centuries. It is a place of pilgrimage and devotion, and is visited by many people each year.

The ruins

The ruins of the church are still visible. The church was built in the twelfth century and was later extended in the fifteenth century. The church still stands, although it is in a state of disrepair.

The site

The site of Monasterboice is a large area of land that has been used as a graveyard for many centuries. It is a place of pilgrimage and devotion, and is visited by many people each year.

The tall church

There is a tall church on the site, which is part of a larger complex of buildings. The church was built in the twelfth century and was later extended in the fifteenth century. It is a fine example of the type of church that was built in many parts of Ireland.