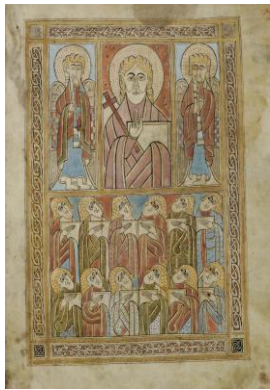


ARCH – *ARMARIUM CODICUM HIBERNENSIIUM*

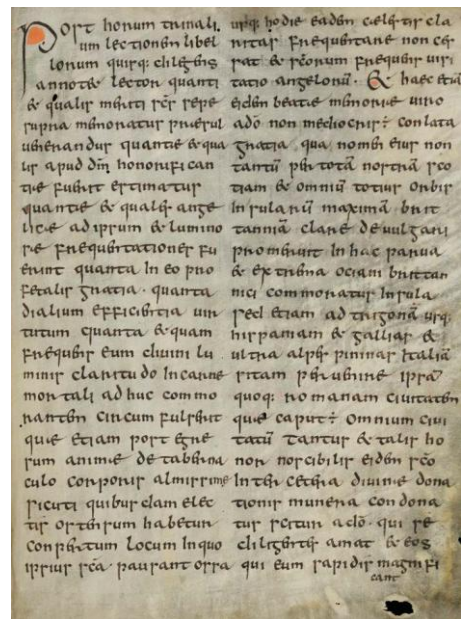


Christ in majesty, from the Irish Gospel book preserved in the Stiftsbibliothek Sankt Gallen, Switzerland (Cod. sang. 51, p 267

ARCH – an acronym for *Armarium codicum hibernensium* ‘the Bookcase of Irish Manuscripts’ – is a flagship research project of University College Cork. Established in the School of History and funded by the Irish Government and by private sponsorship, it aims to foster an appreciation of Ireland’s rich cultural patrimony by making precise, facsimile copies the major Irish historical manuscripts. Each facsimile is accompanied by a companion volume of studies of the manuscript’s history, contents, art, and unique place in Ireland’s past.

In medieval times, Ireland’s missionaries and scholars made a decisive contribution to the development of Western civilisation at its formative stage. Yet the precious witnesses to the achievements of these scholars – the great manuscripts of early Ireland – are preserved for the most part outside of Ireland in libraries across Europe. Working in collaboration with these libraries, the mission of ARCH is to repatriate these manuscripts by making a series of facsimile editions.

The first facsimiles to be published by the project include the ‘Schaffhausen Adomnán’ (Schaffhausen, Stadtbibliothek, Generalia 1) from about the year AD 700. It contains one of the greatest works of literature written in early Ireland: the Life of St Columba, one of the founding figures of Ireland’s literary tradition. The forthcoming publication is a print facsimile of the illuminated Gospel book preserved in the Stiftsbibliothek Sankt Gallen, also in Switzerland (Cod. sang. 51). The city of Sankt Gallen is named for Gallus who, by tradition, followed St Columbanus from Ireland at the end of the sixth century on his



A page from the end of the Life of St Columba by Adomnán of Iona (Schaffhausen, Stadtbibliothek, Generalia 1, p. 135



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mission to continental Europe. Genetic analysis shows that the vellum used in the St Gall Gospels is from Ireland.