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THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF PILGRIMAGE IN EARLY MEDIEVAL IRELAND

FROM THE FIFTH TO THE NINTH CENTURY

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Trinity College, University of Dublin

STEPHANIE HAYES-HEALY
14 JUNE 2006

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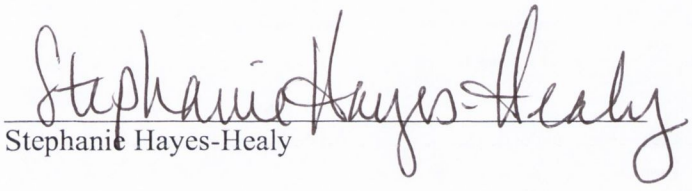

Stephanie Hayes-Healy

Summary

This dissertation focuses primarily upon the practice of pilgrimage *ex patria* ('[away] from one's country'), the act of abandoning one's homeland, usually permanently, for the sake of God, a practice that was uniquely popular among the early medieval Irish. The origins of the medieval ideal of pilgrimage *ex patria* lie in the biblical, exegetical and monastic sources of the early Christian and late antique periods, which by the beginning of the fifth century had amalgamated to form a coherent ideal, and shortly thereafter, a formulaic devotional act. This study begins with an in-depth discussion of what 'pilgrimage' meant: it is a complex and multi-layered concept. The two chapters of Part I address the development of a coherent ideal of *peregrinatio* in a Christian context: Chapter one examines the Latin terms *peregrinus*, *peregrinatio* and *peregrinari* ('pilgrim/stranger', 'pilgrimage/journey' and 'to travel/to be a stranger'); chapter two reveals how these words became attached to both a spiritual ideal of Christian alienation and an actual, physical ritual of devotion. The three chapters of Part II then explore the manifestations of *peregrinatio* in early medieval Ireland. Chapter three begins with an analysis of the scriptural and exegetical sources that were demonstrably available to the Irish, and proceeds to explore the ideological underpinnings of actual practices of devotional separation in Ireland, from the idealised Christian embodiment of spiritual alienation—ascetic monasticism—to the more problematic topic of Irish pilgrimage *ad loca sancta*. Chapter four then describes the social, legal and cultural contexts of these acts of pilgrimage—and includes a short discussion of gender—in early medieval Ireland, and the peculiarities and innovations to which these contexts contributed.

With the substrates of Christian tradition and Irish culture thus detailed, Part III then investigates the patterns of pilgrimage that emerge from these conventions, specifically in the careers of actual *peregrini*, beginning in chapter five with St Patrick, then moving on in chapter six to those figures more often associated with Irish *peregrinatio*: the saintly scholars and monastic founders, Columcille, Columbanus, and Fursa, among other less reliably-documented figures. Chapter seven explores the relationship between Christian eremiticism/anchoritism and *peregrinatio*, as we encounter several categories of eremitic renunciants who played varying roles in the culture of Irish Christianity; chapter eight examines the strong correlations and connections in Ireland between *peregrini* and penitents. The histories of all of these

pilgrims demonstrate consistently the inherently ascetic foundations of *peregrinatio ex patria*, which for some led to uninhabited 'deserts', located somewhere in foreign lands, away from all that was familiar to the pilgrim.

The time-span of this study ranges from the fifth to the early ninth century, breaking off deliberately before the age of the great Irish scholars who left Ireland and became great assets in the Carolingian court, for theirs was a different sort of *peregrinatio*. The discussion ends with a short epilogue that documents a period of change in the practices of Irish pilgrimage in the late eighth and early ninth centuries, as the Viking age began. Chapter nine first analyses impact of the Céli Dé (or Culdees), a rigorously ascetic order of monastic reformers, upon the various practices of Irish pilgrimage, and seeks to revise some accepted modern assumptions regarding the attitudes of these reformers to *peregrinatio*. The chapter ends with a discussion of an emergent literary form that reveals how ascetic *peregrinationes* had captivated the imagination of the Irish: monastic sea-adventure tales which blend the idea of pilgrimage with Odyssey-like elements to form a distinctly Irish-Christian order of heroic mythology.

Hence this dissertation traces the evolution of an ideal from its origins in late antiquity through the peak of its practice among the Irish in the sixth and seventh centuries, and then to its eventual decline—just as it was becoming increasingly mythologised in the popular imagination—in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. In discussing the origins and later manifestations of this Christian form of devotion (which is too often presented as a uniquely Irish practice), this study seeks to restore lost nuances to the meaning of Christian pilgrimage and to give a glimpse into the depth and breadth of its history.

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I continue to carry a deep sense of gratitude to my past mentors: Dr Mary Garrison, who taught me to think like a scholar, and Profs Bonnie Wheeler and Jeremy duQuesnay Adams, who made me believe that I could actually be one.

Many thanks are owed for the generous funding of Trinity College Dublin, and of course for the innumerable small acts of assistance by the staff of the Berkeley and Ussher libraries, Early Printed Books and the Manuscripts department, which made my research possible.

This thesis is dedicated to Patrick, my wonderful husband, confidante, fellow-scholar, and safe-haven when the incessant peregrinations got overwhelming.

Abbreviations

ALI	*Ancient Laws of Ireland*, ed. W. Neilson Hancock, Thaddeus O'Mahony, Alexander George Richey & Robert Atkinson, 6 vols. (Dublin: A. Thom and London: Longman, 1865–1901).
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
AP Alph	*Apophthegmata Patrum: Alphabetical series*, PG 65:71–440, supplemented by J.C. Guy in *Recherches sur la Tradition Grecque des Apophthegmata Patrum*, Subsidia hagiographica 36 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1962). Trans. Benedicta Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: the Alphabetical Collection*, rev. edn. (London and Oxford: Mowbray, 1981).
AP Nau	*Apophthegmata Patrum: Anonymous Sayings*, partially published by François Nau, *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 12–14 (1907–1909), and 17–18 (1912–13).
AP Sys	*Apophthegmata Patrum: Systematic series*, PL 73:851–1052, trans. Benedicta Ward, *The Desert Fathers: Sayings of the Early Christian Monks* (London: Penguin, 2003).
AU	*The Annals of Ulster (to AD 1131)*, ed. Sean Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983).
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaeualis (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971 –).
CCH	*Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, ed. Hermann Wasserschleben, *Die irische Kanonensammlung* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1885, repr. Aalen: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1966).
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954 –).
CIH	*Corpus iuris Hibernici ad fidem manuscriptorum*, ed. D.A. Binchy, 6 vols. (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978).
CLA 2	E.A. Lowe (ed.), *Codices Latini antiquiores: a palaeographical guide to Latin manuscripts prior to the ninth century*, Part 2: *Great Britain and Ireland*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972).
CMCS	*Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, formerly *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* (renamed in 1993, issue no. 26).
Heist, *VSH*	W.W. Heist (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae: ex codice olim Salmanticensi nunc Bruxellensi*, Subsidia hagiographica 28 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1965).
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*

JRSAI	*Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*
Kelly, Guide	Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, Early Irish Law Series 3 (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988).
L&S	Michael Lapidge and Richard Sharpe, *A Bibliography of Celtic-Latin Literature* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1985).
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LibArdm	John Gwynn (ed.), *Liber Ardmachanus: the Book of Armagh* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1913).
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
LL	Leges (in folio)
LL nat. Germ.	Leges nationum Germanicarum
SS	Scriptores (in folio)
SSRG	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi
SSRM	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
NPNF 1	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, series 1
NPNF 2	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, series 2
OBC	*The Oxford Bible Commentary*, ed. John Barton and John Muddiman, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
PG	Patrologia Graeca, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1844–1866).
PL	Patrologia Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1844–1864).
Plummer, *LIS*	Charles Plummer (ed. and trans.), *Lives of Irish saints / Bethada náem nÉrenn*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press for Sandpiper Books, 1997).
Plummer, *VSH*	Charles Plummer (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae*, 2 vols. (orig. publ. 1910; republ. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997).
PRIA	*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*
SC	Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Cerf, 1941–).
VL Beuron	*Vetus Latina: die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel*, nach Petrus Sabatier neu gesammelt und herausgegeben von der Erzabtei Beuron (Freiburg: Herder: 1949–).
VL Lugd	*Pentateuchi versio Latina antiquissima e codex Lugdunensi,* ed. Ulysse Robert (Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot, 1881).
VL Sabatier	*Bibliorum sacrorum Latinae versiones antiquae, seu Vetus Italica*, ed. Pierre Sabatier, 3 vols. (Rheims: R. Florentain, 1743–1749, repr. Paris: F. Didot, 1751).
ZCP	*Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*

General Notes to the Dissertation

Primary Source Citations:

In the interest of brevity, many full citations of primary source editions and translations have not been included in footnotes. If a full citation is not included (and if the location of the reference would be difficult to find in the source without further information), a reference to the chapter/page number/line numbers in the edition is given in brackets after the initial citation. All references are to the book and chapter divisions of the first edition cited in the bibliography. When applicable, the page number in the English translation has also been included in brackets. Thus a citation might read:

> Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.3 [Krusch, p. 155(12–14); Munro, p. 12].

when the bibliography entry reads as follows:

> Jonas of Susa, *Vita S. Columbani Abbatis*, MGH SSRG, ed. Bruno Krusch (Hannover and Leipzig, 1905), PL 87:1011B–1046A. Trans. Dana Carleton Munro, *Life of St. Columban by the Monk Jonas* (orig. pr. 1895, repr. Felinfach: Llanerch Publishers, 1993). Also ed. and trans. Adalbert de Vogüé, *Vie de S. Columban et ses disciples* (Bégrolles-en-Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1988).

On Translations:

In a number of English translations from Latin texts, I have replaced certain English words (e.g., stranger, traveller, outsider; journey, sojourning) with the original Latin *peregrinus* or *peregrinatio*, to show how these terms fit in context. Since these instances are self-evident they have not been noted in the footnotes.

On Names:

In order to avoid confusion between the two great Irish saints named 'Columba', now most often named in secondary sources as Columba of Iona and Columbanus of Bobbio, I have used the form 'Columcille' for Columba of Iona.

Shall I go, O King of Mysteries, after my fill of cushions and music, to turn my face on the shore and my back on my native land?...

Shall I cut my hand with every sort of wound on the breast of the wave which wrecks boats? Shall I leave the track of my two knees on the strand by the shore?

Shall I take my little black curragh over the broad-breasted, glorious ocean? O king of the bright kingdom, shall I go of my own choice upon the sea?

Whether I be strong or poor, or mettlesome so as to be recounted in tales, O Christ, will you help me when it comes to going upon the wild sea?[1]

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[1] From *A Golden Treasury of Irish Poetry, A.D. 600 to 1200*, ed. and trans. David Greene and Frank O'Connor (London: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 151–3; on the attribution of this poem to Cormac mac Cuilennáin, see Liam Breatnach, 'An Edition of *Amra Senáin*', in *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney*, ed. Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone, Maynooth Monographs 2 (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1989), pp. 7–31 at 20–3.

Introduction Pilgrims and *Peregrini*

Some time in the last quarter of the seventh century, a band of thirteen monks—the Irish abbot Columbanus (*c.*543–615) and twelve disciples—set sail from Ireland, never to return. They were pilgrims, though not with our modern understanding of the word. They set out not to visit the relics of martyrs or to commune with desert holy men, but to perform an extreme act of devotion by separating themselves from their homeland, their kin, and all that was familiar. They were *peregrini pro Dei amore*—'pilgrims for the love of God'. In a sermon written by the abbot Columbanus for his monks, he invoked the words of St Paul's second letter to the Corinthians to describe their lives of pilgrimage:

> Though for a time we are on pilgrimage from the Lord, that as a reward for a brief period's warfare we should be crowned for ever, we ought not to be over-sad, knowing that we shall soon go to Him, and with Him ever dwell.[1]

Columbanus, as our primary first-person witness to early medieval Irish pilgrimage, appears often in these pages. The abbot and his companions embraced a rigorous ideal of Christian alienation and lived out their lives in the mountains and forests of Gaul and Italy. These monks were not the first Irishmen to make such a journey, nor would they be the last: by the time the saint and his *comperegrini* appeared on the continent, *peregrinatio* already had become an important and increasingly formulaic practice for Irish Christians. The fifth and sixth centuries—often called the 'Age of Saints'—saw a great efflorescence of Christianity and monasticism in Ireland. It is an era of mythical monks, abbots and founders of monasteries who roamed the island of Ireland and journeyed over the sea.

These *sancti peregrini* provide a basic model for pilgrimage in early medieval Ireland, but this practice extended into many other manifestations of devotional separation. Indeed, pilgrimage in Ireland encompassed a broad variety of related devotional practices with subtly different origins and justifications, from ascetic renunciation and monastic expansion, to eremiticism, to penitential separation from homeland and kin. In Ireland as nowhere else, the act of abandoning one's own land and

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[1] Columbanus, *Sermon* 4.3 [Walker, p. 82(29–32)]: *et licet pro tempore peregrinemur a Domino ut pro brevis temporis bello in aeternum coronemur, nimium tristes esse non debemus, scientes mox esse ad eum nos ituros, et cum eo semper mansuros.* The standard critical edition of Columbanus's works remains G.S.M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae 2 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957).

people held a particular symbolic significance, and was manifested in a commensurately great breadth of religious practices that fall under the general rubric of pilgrimage.

This study explores the concept, context and practice of such pilgrimages in early medieval Ireland. We shall ask why pilgrims like Columbanus and his brethren set out: what their goals were, and what they thought they might achieve by such an extreme act of piety, for the monastic aspect of Irish pilgrimage provides a baseline of practice and justification for subsequent analyses of more problematic categories of *peregrini*. In these pages we will meet several different kinds of *peregrini* who practised devotional separation, among them monks and abbots, lay Christians seeking redemption, and hermits seeking salvation in the 'desert' of isolation.

0.1 Problems of Definition

With the multiplicity of practices associated with pilgrimage, studies of late antique and early medieval pilgrimage struggle with a fundamental difficulty: a clear definition of terms. A number of problems present themselves. First, the limitations of modern English hamper our comprehension of medieval pilgrimage. The Latin term *peregrinatio* had numerous shades of meaning, but in modern parlance we tend to use the English cognate 'pilgrimage' to refer specifically to a goal-oriented, elliptical journey to a site, person or object of importance. Modern conceptions of pilgrimage stretch from the Santiago trail to journeys to Graceland, from images of a travelling band on the road to Canterbury to the millions circling the temple of the Ka'abah in Mecca, but the form of the practice that we now label 'pilgrimage' remains quite consistent and circumscribed. Moreover, this concept of a goal-oriented pilgrimage has dominated most modern scholarly discussion. Many nuances in our understanding of Christian pilgrimage have thus been lost. The boundaries that of definition must be re-drawn before a full appreciation of medieval pilgrimage—an idea that may have achieved its broadest scope in early Christian Ireland—can be possible.[2]

Devotional practices that do not fit into the modern rubric of pilgrimage are often misinterpreted as aberrations, or idiosyncratic forms of 'regular'—that is, goal-

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[2] A similar point has also been made explicitly in a recent study by Maribel Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, 300–800* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 2005), esp. p. 6 and n. 18. This work came to my attention too late for me to consider its conculsions fully.

oriented—pilgrimage.[3] This is especially true of the form of permanent devotional separation practised by Columbanus and his brethren: this practice achieved a peak of popularity from the years of late antiquity into the early medieval period, and was undertaken often—though by no means exclusively—by Irish monks. Often labelled simply as 'Irish pilgrimage', this form of devotion did not have a concrete, physical goal nor a perceived end. These *peregrini* journeyed not to seek out relics or miracles: they left their homelands and their kin for the sake of God, never to return. This type of pilgrimage and its ideological background form a primary focus of this dissertation.

Another challenge is presented by the sheer length of time involved in the development of the vocabulary of Christian pilgrimage. By the early Middle Ages the terms *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio* already had a long history of use, but extracting exactly what these terms would have meant is difficult. Close study reveals a constantly shifting and evolving concept: the sources of the concept span from the earliest fragments of written Latin, into the formative phases of Christian theology, through the rich years of patristic creativity, and only then into the medieval Christian consciousness. Hence this study does not attempt to confine a living tradition to rigid structures and definition, but examines the themes and motivations articulated by Christian thinkers and travellers in the early Middle Ages and searches for patterns therein.

This dissertation thus seeks to restore some of the nuances and complexities to this important concept and form of devotion. To this end, a conceptual distinction between the goal-oriented practice and the broader ideals of Christian *peregrinatio* is essential. Throughout the late antique period and for most of the Middle Ages, *peregrinatio* carried multi-faceted meanings of concept and practice. Few modern studies of pilgrimage have examined the ideological background of the complex ideal of *peregrinatio* in Christian discourse, which subsequently leads to a narrowed vision of

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[3] See for example Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), pp. 130–31. I cite this work in particular because of its great influence: the impact of the Turners' study upon the modern study of pilgrimage cannot be overstated. While their models have caused more than a little controversy and have been roundly criticized since this book's first publication, they continue among the most widely recognized modern paradigms by which to analyze Christian pilgrimage. The Turners' work has remained the benchmark to which other theorists must refer, whether they seek to support or overturn it. See discussions in Bonnie Wheeler, 'Models of Pilgrimage: From *Communitas* to Confluence', *Journal of Ritual Studies* 13.2 (1999), pp. 26–41, esp. 28–30; John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow, 'Introduction', in Eade and Sallnow, eds., *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 1–29 at 4–5.

how the practices of pilgrimage were conceived and justified. In terms of practice, I follow the example of Giles Constable in labelling two distinct forms of pilgrimage that are discussed in these pages as *peregrinatio ad loca sancta* 'pilgrimage to the holy places' and *peregrinatio ex patria* 'pilgrimage from [one's] homeland'.[4] To be sure, there are innumerable shades of grey that cloud these divisions, but they provide a useful structure for the present study.

Though sometimes practised in tandem, the structures, goals and underlying ideologies of these practices were fundamentally different. Let us turn first to the phenomenon of *peregrinatio ad loca sancta*. In its structure, goal-oriented pilgrimage involves geographical movement from the profane to the sacred, and usually back again. It has a beginning, middle and end. It is elliptical in shape, and finite. It involves a physical journey, with a tangible, physical goal at its apogee. The objective of this devotional journey is to come closer to God, usually through the agency of the saints, sometimes as penance, sometimes out of simple piety, most often for healing. Peter Brown has described the physical or geographical 'goals' of these goal-oriented pilgrimages as 'privileged places, where the contrasted poles of Heaven and Earth met'.[5] The pilgrim's expectations of what they would achieve at holy sites were sensory—primarily visual[6]—and experiential: to see, touch and be in the presence of the saints.

Anthropological and sociological studies of pilgrimage have sought to explain this form of devotion in terms of the relationship of humankind to society and to the sacred. Victor and Edith Turner's pioneering work in the late 1970s gave shape to pilgrimage as a rite of passage 'marked by three phases: separation, limen or margin, and aggregation'.[7] Though later studies have deconstructed the Turnerian ideal with its emphasis upon a journey towards a 'sacred center',[8] or re-characterized the act of pilgrimage with the subtleties of 'contestatory and competitive discourses [which] are

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[4] Giles Constable, 'Opposition to Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages', in *Mélanges G. Fransen I.*, ed. Stephan Kuttner and Alfons M. Stickler, Studia Gratiana 19 (Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1976), pp. 125–46 at 126; repr. in Giles Constable, *Religious Life and Thought (11th–12th Centuries)* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1979), sec. 4.

[5] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 3.

[6] For an extensive discussion of this phenomenon see Georgia Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrims to Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), esp. pp. 102–33.

[7] Turner and Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, p. 2.

[8] Eade and Sallnow, 'Introduction', pp. 6–9.

confluent on pilgrimage', even the revisionists of Turnerian 'doctrine' have concentrated upon pilgrimage as a goal-oriented ritual. Thus the work of the Turners *and* their detractors serves to emphasize the overwhelming assumption of *peregrinatio ad loca sancta* as the dominant model.

This prevailing understanding of pilgrimage in relation to the sacred and the profane cannot be applied to *peregrinatio ex patria*, but modern attempts to define the act or phenomenon of pilgrimage almost invariably assume a goal-centred—usually place-centred, though there are some exceptions—form of devotion. The liminality of the goal—the holy site, shrine, etc.—assumes an Eliade-ian opposition between sacred and profane space which does not impact upon the *peregrinus ex patria.* The idea of journeying to reach a holy centre to be close to God is to its very core different from the concept of alienation and separation from all that is familiar to the pilgrim. The landscape of *peregrinatio ex patria* is thus quite unlike the goal-oriented pilgrim's profane world studded with multiple nodes of sacrality: for pilgrims *ex patria*, the pilgrimage landscape comprised a binary opposition of the familiar and the foreign, with the crossing of the boundary in between as the defining action. To proceed into the unfamiliar was not to proceed into sacred space, but to enter a state of existence that engendered an extreme form of devotional suffering. In addition, *peregrinatio ex patria* does not fit the pattern of progression that defines *peregrinatio ad loca sancta.* The journey is not one of linear, progressive movement from point to point, a ritual with a distinct beginning, middle and end: rather the objective is a complete physical and spiritual shift of the most basic elements of existence. Thus the most familiar model of pilgrimage is incompatible in its most basic conception and in its form with *peregrinatio ex patria.*

It should not, however, be argued that pilgrimage *ad loca sancta* and pilgrimage *ex patria* are completely unrelated. As we shall see the two patterns of *peregrinatio* developed contemporaneously and for the majority of their parallel development they have shared the same name, and a similar vocabulary of stock phrases and images eventually became common to discussions of both. But to comprehend this form of devotion as pilgrimage, as Bonnie Wheeler suggests, 'our understanding of the practices and theories of pilgrimage needs to be more capacious'.[9] Our definitions must expand to include rituals without a physical goal and sometimes without end, at least in this life.

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[9] Wheeler, 'Models of Pilgrimage', p. 27.

Only when it is considered independently of its better-known cognate can *peregrinatio ex patria* show its deep, rich and complex history.

0.2 Patterns of Pilgrimage

Christian pilgrimage, therefore, cannot be easily defined. *Peregrinatio* can be both a finite act and a permanent way of life, a concrete ritual and an ideal of existence, an allegory symbolic of both virtue and sin. It represents a complex weave of ideal and action, combining numerous and not entirely consistent elements of language, ideology and ritual.

With the ultimate goal of understanding *peregrinatio* in an early medieval Irish context, the chapters of this thesis first explore the definitions of the words *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* in Latin and then in a Christian context, and then seek to understand the nature of the rituals that these terms came to signify. The relationship between word and action is not straightforward. The actions that eventually were labelled *peregrinatio* existed well before they were named as such. Similarly, the words that came to define these acts also had a long and significant history before they were attached first to specific theological concepts, and later to devotional rituals. Part I of this thesis thus traces the history of the words, concepts and acts of *peregrinatio* to the point that they met, primarily in a period of great confluence of Christian thought and self-definition from the end of the fourth century to the beginning of the fifth.

The chapters of Part I investigate this complex concept from two separate but related approaches. Chapter one explores the meanings of the words *peregrinus*, *peregrinatio* and *peregrinari* and tracks the evolution of these terms from their classical origins to their early medieval Christian usage, in order to reveal the layers of significance that were implied when the meaning-laden terms *peregrinus* or *peregrinatio* were used in relation to devotional travellers. Chapter two follows the evolution of the persons who were labelled *peregrini* and the ritual practices that were named *peregrinationes* in the years of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Both chapters delve deeply into the works of the Latin fathers, for their voices reverberated throughout the Middle Ages, and were heard even on this island in the farthest reaches of the known world.[10]

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[10] For classical references to Ireland as the land at the end of the known world, see Philip Freeman, *Ireland and the Classical World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), esp. pp. 44–5. This

In Part II the focus shifts northward, addressing the questions of how and in what form these ideas and traditions reached the shores of early Christian Ireland. Chapter three first explores the conceptual background—the scriptural and exegetical manifestations of *peregrinatio* in medieval Irish texts—and then some of the more practical manifestations of pilgrimage in early medieval Ireland. Chapter four then describes the social and cultural environment into which these concepts and practices entered, for it is certain that the ideal of pilgrimage reverberated among the Irish in a uniquely powerful fashion. The discussion centres around the structures of society and law that made pilgrimage a particularly poignant practice for Irish Christians.

With the conceptual, contextual and practical aspects of pilgrimage in Ireland thus detailed, in Part III we finally meet the *peregrini* who left their homeland in search of salvation. Each chapter investigates a different kind of *peregrinus* who embarked upon a journey with different motivations and goals, thus demonstrating again the breadth of practice of medieval *peregrinatio*. Chapter five introduces the figure of St Patrick, without whom no study of Irish pilgrimage can be complete. Though he was not in fact Irish, he was the earliest writer in Ireland for whom we have written evidence of a concept of the *peregrinus* and a virtuous *peregrinatio*. We cannot attribute his ideas to Irish training, but he still represents the presence of these concepts in Ireland, particularly as his writings were preserved and reproduced throughout the medieval period. Chapter six then proceeds to the linchpins of this study: Columbanus, as well as several other *peregrini* of the sixth and seventh centuries, such as St Columcille of Iona and Fursa of Péronne. This group of pilgrims shared many aspects in common, most importantly their renunciation of their homes to found monasteries and schools in foreign lands. In their lives and careers we find patterns of action that help create at least one definition, albeit a limited one with strong hagiographical overtones, of Irish pilgrimage. Then in chapter seven we meet some of the less famous *monachi peregrini* who did not found monasteries, but renounced their country and kin to become hermits and anchorites. Finally in chapter eight, we turn to the additional uniquely Irish externalisation of the ideals of *peregrinatio* in the form of penance, an exceptionally important element in the Irish construction of devotional separation.

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impression lasted well into the Middle Ages; see St Patrick, *Confessio* 1, 34, 38, 58; idem, *Ep.* 6; Columbanus, *Ep.* 5.3, 5.8; Cummian, *De controversia Paschali*, ed. and tr. Maura Walsh and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, in *Cummian's letter 'De controversia Paschali'* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988), p. 72(110).

This discussion of pilgrims and pilgrimages in medieval Ireland ends at a time of great change, in the late eighth and early ninth centuries as the age of the Vikings began and the *monachi peregrini* no longer roamed the seas in such numbers. In chapter nine we explore the role of a reforming monastic movement that reached its peak in this period, the Céli Dé, who are often cited as severe critics of *peregrinatio*. This assessment is discussed in detail and is significantly narrowed, as the views of the Céli Dé towards pilgrimage are not as clear-cut as they have often been presented. In the same period that the Céli Dé movement was growing in Christian Ireland, a more secular literary genre of the voyage tale—largely based upon patterns of monastic *peregrinatio ex patria*—also emerged. Our study ends with an introduction to these tales and an analysis of their conceptual connections to *peregrinatio*.

The time period covered by this study deliberately ends at the start of the ninth century, before the *floruits* of the Irish pilgrim-scholars such as Dicuil, Sedulius Scottus and John Scottus Eriugena, because the fundamental motivations that drove these figures had changed from those of their predecessors.[11] Though they inherited the appellation of *peregrini*, their impetus was scholarly rather than ascetic; they embraced the *saeculum* rather than fleeing from it. They do not belong to a discussion of ascetic separation and devotional *peregrinatio*.

0.3 'Irish Pilgrimage', a Mis-Nomer?

One more reassessment of terminology is necessary before embarking upon our investigation of pilgrimage. As has been noted, *peregrinatio ex patria* has often been labelled specifically as 'Irish pilgrimage'. This is understandable: as early as the ninth century Walafrid Strabo commented on how *peregrinatio* had become nearly second nature to the Irish, as there were so many Irishmen who left their land to embark upon such devotional journeys.[12] This form of devotion was unquestionably popular among the Irish; however, it is a mistake to consider it a uniquely Irish practice. The scriptural and conceptual bases for this practice were entirely mainstream: they are closely connected to ideals of alienation from God and virtuous renunciation of earthly mores that have been present in Christian thought from its very beginnings.

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[11] On the scholar-*peregrini*, see ch. 9, n. 23.
[12] Walafrid Strabo, *Vita S. Galli* 2.46 [MGH SSRM 4, p. 336(5–7); PL 114:1029C].

As we shall see, however, several elements of Irish pilgrimage did in fact make it unique in its time. One was the sheer frequency of it: there were factors in the Irish social structure and the evolution of Christian practice in Ireland that made the practice of pilgrimage particularly resonant. More important, however, is the great breadth of practices that stemmed from the ideal of devotional separation in Ireland. In addition, another major factor that must be kept in mind when one considers early Irish *peregrini* was the distance that they travelled. Indeed, an Irish *peregrinus* on the continent had braved the perils of at least one overseas crossing; a certain amount of physical courage was necessary for an overseas pilgrim, which a renunciant who simply headed for the nearest isolated mountain cave did not require. Hence another difference lies in the intensity of motivation, and the expected lengths to which a *peregrinus* had to go to achieve salvation; while not every Irish *peregrinus* journeyed overseas, it is not surprising that these were the ones who largely defined 'Irish pilgrimage' in their own time and in ours.

Keeping in mind the idiosyncratic intensity of medieval Irish pilgrims and the remarkable popularity of multiple forms of devotional separation in Irish Christian society, let us turn now to the topic of pilgrimage as a scriptural and allegorical concept, which in time became one of the most important metaphors in Christian history to describe the state of humankind on earth.

PART I

THE EVOLUTION OF A CHRISTIAN IDEAL

Chapter 1 Towards a Concept of Christian *Peregrinatio*

Our first challenges in this study are to define the terms *peregrinus*, *peregrinari* and *peregrinatio* in Latin; then to uncover the Christian concepts that these terms express; and finally to trace the subtle shifts that these ideas inevitably underwent as they took form in the Latin West and more specifically in medieval Ireland. The terms themselves provide no simple answers; they are multi-faceted and can be used in numerous contexts. However, a common thread runs throughout their various definitions: a distinct sense of separation or alienation from one's land or people.

By the close of the fourth century, these words had become essential in the West to the expression of a moral and spiritual ideal of alienation, one that was intimately bound to the understanding of a Christian's life on earth. This ideal had its basis in scripture, particularly in the allegory of the epistles, and was further forged into intricate imagery and complex symbolism in the hands of Christian exegetes. The works of two towering figures dominate these discussions: St Jerome and St Augustine of Hippo. Augustine's impact upon subsequent Christian conceptions of *peregrinatio* is well-known, but to date Jerome's role has been largely overlooked. His influence stems partly from his ascetical works as we will see in chapter two, but more importantly from his translations of the bible now known to us as the Vulgate. By the late fourth century *peregrinatio* featured prominently in the works of both of these great Christian thinkers; their works in turn were the main vehicles by which an ideal of Christian *peregrinatio* disseminated throughout the West. This chapter thus follows the evolution of an ideal of Christian pilgrimage, from its basic elements of Latin vocabulary to the theological concepts to which these words were attached.

1.1 The Latin Terms

In classical Latin, the words *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* carried a sense of movement away from what is familiar. The words come from the compound of *per* + *ager*, i.e., '[who has gone] through the lands'; they thus suggest travel, which in turn implies a sense of foreignness.[1] From the earliest fragments of Roman text, *peregrinus* as an adjective

[1] For general definitions of *peregrinus*, *peregrinatio* and *peregrinari*, see *A Latin Dictionary*, ed. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1879, repr. 1998), p. 1338.

denotes 'foreign' or 'in foreign lands';[2] it can also signify 'strange', or 'unheard of', at times with a distinctly pejorative cast.[3] As a substantive noun, *peregrinus* means 'stranger' or 'foreigner', or at times 'visitor' or 'guest'; but in this form it carries a more specific legal and social significance that was central to the word's development in Christian thought. *Peregrinus* in ancient Rome was a legal designation for an alien—an outsider living among the Romans—a label to which we shall return momentarily.[4]

In most classical texts *peregrinatio* simply denotes a journey abroad (which generally meant outside of Italy); *peregrinari* is to travel in foreign lands.[5] These terms in ancient Latin did not carry consistently positive or negative connotations: *peregrinatio*, for example, sometimes represented pleasurable and leisurely travel[6]—a sense that it eventually lost in Christian usage—but it could also describe an arduous journey or even the final passage into death.[7] *Peregrinatio* also appears as a metaphor for the journey of human life,[8] another usage that presages the Christian development of this concept.[9] In classical usage a *peregrinatio* and the verb *peregrinari* are usually unrelated to the socio-legal label of the *peregrinus*; by the patristic era, however,

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[2] *Twelve Tables* X, 5b [Warmington, pp. 500–501] as reconstructed from Cicero, *De legibus* 2.23.59. On this text see below, n. 12.

[3] E.g., Juvenal, *Saturae* 6.298 [Ramsay, p. 106]; ibid., 14.187 [Ramsay, p. 278]; Martial, *Epigrammata* 4.19.4 [Ker, p. 242]; Suetonius, *Vitae Caesarum* 2.40 [Rolfe, vol. 1, p. 186.3]. Also Jerome, *Ep.* 20.6; *Ep.* 39.1; *Ep.* 73.7; *Ep.* 107.9; *Ep.* 130.16; *Adversus Jovinianum* 2.8.

[4] '*Peregrinus*', in Adolf Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law,* Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s. 43.2 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1953), pp. 626–7; J.A.C. Thomas, *Textbook of Roman Law* (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing, 1976), pp. 407–8; David Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers* (London: Duckworth and Classical Press of Wales, 2000), pp. 1–3. On citizens and non-citizens in Rome, see Barry Nicholas, *An Introduction to Roman Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 64–5; A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 173–93.

[5] The use of *peregrinatio* and *peregrinari* to denote a journey abroad is well-attested in classical texts. *Peregrinatio* appears significantly more often in this context; some representative examples are: Seneca, *Consolatio ad Marciam* 17.2 [Basore, vol. 2, p. 54]; idem, *De tranquillitate animi* 2.13 [Basore, vol. 2, p. 220]; Pliny, *Ep.* 5.19 [Melmoth, pp. 430–31]; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 7.3.31 [Butler, vol. 3, pp. 232–3]; ibid. 12.11.18 [Butler, vol. 5, pp. 332–3]; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 1.24 [Hanson, vol. 1, p. 52].

Instances of *peregrinari*: Cicero, *Brutus* 13.51 [Hendrickson, pp. 52–3]; idem, *Pro Rabirio* 10.28 [Hodge, pp. 482–3]; idem, *Tusculanae disputationes* 5.39.114 [Douglas, pp. 138–9]; Seneca, *Epistulae moralis ad Lucilium* 123.7 [Gummere, vol. 3, p. 426]; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 6.2.30 [Butler, vol. 3, pp. 60–61]; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 1.21 [Hanson, vol. 1, p. 46].

[6] Cicero, *Pro Archia poeta* 7.16 [Watts, pp. 24–5]; idem, *Laelius de amicitia* 27.103 [Falconer, pp. 210–11]; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 12.11.18 [Butler, vol. 5, pp. 332–3]; Pliny, *Ep.* 3.19 [Melmoth, vol. 1, p. 258].

[7] *Peregrinatio* as a hard journey: Seneca, *De otio* 5.2 [Basore, vol. 2, pp. 188–9]; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 1.21 [Hanson, vol. 1, p. 46]; ibid., 2.14 [Hanson, vol. 1, p. 86]. *Peregrinatio* as the journey into death: Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* 1.41.98 [Douglas, pp. 134–5]. Also see Jerome, *Ep.* 77.1 *ad Oceanum*.

[8] E.g., Seneca, *De consolatio ad Marciam* 17.2–6 [Basore, vol. 2, pp. 54–7]; idem, *De vita beata* 1.1–5 [Basore, vol. 2, p. 98–103]; also see Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 2 [Rolfe, p. 4].

[9] E.g., Jerome, *Ep.* 39.2 *ad Paulam*; idem, *Ep.* 103.2 *ad Augustinum*; *Regula Magistri*, Thema 4, 90.3; Gregory I, *Ep.* 1.7 *ad Anastasium episcopum* [PL 77:454A].

Christian writers began to blend the divergent meanings together.[10] In the texts inherited by medieval Christendom, the alienation of the *peregrinus* thus coloured the journeys of *peregrinatio* and *peregrinari*.

Who, then, was this *peregrinus*? In the rigid strata of ancient Roman society, the citizen was one of the most deeply entrenched social and political designations: the *peregrinus* was his antithesis.[11] Throughout much of Roman history, the status of citizen—*civis*—was one of protected rights and privilege. The status of alien, in contrast, was one of exclusion and disenfranchisement. From its earliest history, Rome viewed outsiders with marked distrust: it is telling that the Twelve Tables (*c.*450 BC), one of the most important foundational sources of Roman legal tradition,[12] use the word 'enemy'—*hostis*—for foreigners.[13] This stark, pejorative terminology for aliens had softened by the period of the late Republic; Cicero explains that in his lifetime the term used for the 'enemy' of the Twelve Tables was *peregrinus*.[14] But while the vocabulary of alienation might have changed from the time of the Twelve Tables, diminished rights and disenfranchisement of foreigners remained.

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[10] Some of the few classical examples of these noun and verbal forms relating to the legal status of *peregrinus* are Cicero, *De finibus bonum et malorum* 3.40(12) [Reynolds, p. 115]; idem, *Tusculanae disputationes* 5.37.107 [Douglas, pp. 74–5]; Cornelius Nepos, *De viris illustribus*, Att 2.3.

For examples of the patristic tendency to connect these forms, see e.g., Ambrose, *De bono mortis* 2 [PL 14:541D–542A]; Jerome, *Commentariorum in Zachariam* 2.12 [CCSL 76A:832–3(320–29); PL 25:1486A]; Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 1.4 [CCSL 32:8, PL 34:20] (begun in the 390s but not finished until 426); idem, *Ennar. in Psalmos* 148.4 [CCSL 40:2168(9-11), PL 37:1940]; ibid. 145.1, [CCSL 40:2105(2–4); PL 37:1884]; Fastidius, *De vita christiana* 8 [PL 50:390D].

[11] Technically, *civis* and *peregrinus* are not direct opposites: there were a number of gradations of citizenship and non-citizenship in Rome. However, they often appear in classical texts as a pair of opposing elements, e.g., Plautus, *Mercator* 3.4.635 [vol. 3, pp. 70–1]; Cicero, *In Verrem* 2.4.35, §77 [pp. 374–5]; idem, *De officiis* 1.41.149 [pp. 152–3]; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 5.10.26 [Butler, pp. 214–15]. Also cf. Plautus, *Truculentus* 5.1.955 [vol. 5, pp. 328–9]; idem, *Asinaria* 2.4.464 [vol. 1, pp. 172–3].

On the various grades of status and enfranchisement in Rome, see Thomas, *Textbook of Roman Law*, pp. 403–410; H.F. Jolowicz and Barry Nicholas, *Historical Introduction to the Study of Roman Law*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 58–74.

[12] See Nicholas, *Introduction to Roman Law*, pp. 15–16; Berger, '*Lex duodecim tabularum*', in *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law*, pp. 551–2; Thomas, *Textbook of Roman Law*, pp. 32–4; Jolowicz and Nicholas, *Historical Introduction*, pp. 108ff.

For the continued importance of the Twelve Tables through Late Antiquity, see Rudolph Sohm, *The Institutes: A Textbook of the History and System of Roman Private Law*, transl. James C. Ledlie, 3rd edn (New York, Augustus M. Kelley, 1970; first printed Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), pp. 55, 114; Jill Harries, 'Legal culture and identity in the fifth-century west', in *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity*, ed. Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex (London: Duckworth and Classical Press of Wales, 2000), pp. 45–57 at 47.

[13] *Twelve Tables* 2.2 and 3.7 [Warmington, pp. 434–5 and 440–41]; these sections of the Twelve Tables have been reconstructed from Cicero, *De officiis* 1.12.37 [Miller, pp. 38–41].

[14] Cicero, *De officiis* 1.12.37: *Hostis enim apud maiores nostros is dicebatur, quem nunc peregrinum dicimus. Indicant duodecim tabulae.* '*Hostis* meant to our ancestors what we now call *peregrinus*. This is proved by the usage in the Twelve Tables....'

Peregrini were free persons, but with severely restricted rights.[15] They had no political standing and could not vote in popular assemblies;[16] they could neither bring suit nor give testimony in the courts of the Roman citizenry.[17] *Peregrini* were barred from owning property in Rome or even conducting trade with Romans unless specifically granted that right.[18] In addition, a *peregrinus* could enter only into certain types of contracts—including a marriage—if granted the right by special concession, and their rights of inheritance were limited.[19] In criminal cases, *peregrini* had fewer rights to defence and appeal than Roman citizens enjoyed;[20] if convicted, harsh, corporal penalties could be imposed upon them. Traditionally citizens were protected from corporal punishments, such as beatings, torture and execution—particularly the more brutal forms such as crucifixion and being thrown to the beasts:[21] the Romans generally reserved these penalties for slaves, the poor, and *peregrini*. This dual standard of justice is demonstrated by the case in AD 112 when Pliny, then governor of Bithynia, arrested a group of Christians: the Roman citizens were sent back to Rome for a formal trial, but the non-citizens among them were convicted and executed on the spot.[22] In an earlier example, the Senate in AD 17 outlawed astrologers and ordered the arrest of all

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[15] Berger, '*Peregrinus*', p. 626; Thomas, *Textbook of Roman Law*, pp. 407–8; W.W. Buckland, *A Textbook of Roman Law from Augustus to Justinian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), pp. 96–100; Jolowicz and Nicholas, *Historical Introduction*, pp. 102–7; Noy, *Foreigners at Rome*, pp. 23–5.

[16] Berger, '*Peregrinus*', p. 626; Buckland, *Textbook of Roman Law*, p. 96 and n. 10.

[17] Berger, '*Peregrinus*', p. 626; Jolowicz and Nicholas, *Historical Introduction*, pp. 102–7. A special *praetor* was assigned to handle matters pertaining to *peregrini*.

[18] Berger, '*Peregrinus*', p. 626. On property ownership, Berger, '*Dominium*', in *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law,* pp. 441–2 ; Thomas, *Textbook of Roman Law*, p. 135. On contracts, Berger, '*Ius commercii*', in *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law,* p. 527.

[19] Berger, '*Peregrinus*', p. 626; on marriage, Thomas, *Textbook of Roman Law*, pp. 419–31, esp. 421; Buckland, *Textbook of Roman Law*, p. 96.

[20] The right of *provocatio* or *appellatio*. For *provocatio* see Jolowicz and Nicholas, *Historical Introduction*, pp. 306–16; Adolf Berger, '*Provocatio (provocare)*' in *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law,* Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s. 43.2 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1953), p. 660. On both *provocatio* and *appellatio* see Peter Garnsey, 'The *Lex Julia* and Appeal Under the Empire', *Journal of Roman Studies* 56 (1966), pp. 167–89.

[21] On corporal punishments generally, Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law*, pp. 172–85. On beatings, Peter Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 136–141, esp. 139 and nn. 5–8; on torture, *ibid.*, pp. 141–7, esp. 143 and n. 3; on execution, ibid., pp. 105–11; on the tradition against crucifying citizens, p. 127, and against *damnatio ad bestias* pp. 129–30, esp. 130 and nn. 1–2.

[22] Recounted in a letter from Pliny to the emperor Trajan: Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96 [Radice, vol. 2, p. 286.3–4]. See Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege*, pp. 74–5; Garnsey, 'The *Lex Iulia*', pp. 181–2; for a number of similar cases see ibid., 182 n. 6. For a thorough discussion of Roman law's dual system of penalties—which includes details of many other distinctions besides that of citizen and alien—see Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege*, pp. 103–80.

offenders. Those who were citizens were exiled; the aliens were executed.[23] In extreme circumstances, *peregrini* also could not by rights expect permanent stability in Rome: periodically, particularly in times of trouble—during food shortages, for example, or during times of civil unrest—the entire population of *peregrini* were expelled.[24] To use the words of Peter Garnsey, 'Discrimination in favour of citizens as opposed to aliens was…a permanent feature of the Roman judicial system. It was practised in all spheres of law'.[25] Thus the *peregrinus* embodies much more than a simple 'stranger'; he is a non-citizen, a person living in a land and among a people not his own, with diminished freedoms and rights.[26]

Christianity was born and grew within the boundaries of the Roman empire; throughout the early Christian and patristic eras, Christians would have had an instinctive understanding of the Roman system of enfranchisement and its distinctive vocabulary. One should also not forget that many—perhaps most—early Christians were in fact *peregrini* in the Roman empire.[27] Hence the Roman system of distinction between the *peregrinus* and the *civis* was seared into Christian discourse from its very beginnings.

By the late antique period, however, the nature of citizenship had changed, and with it the definition of the *peregrinus*. Whereas in the years of the Republic and the early Empire citizenship was a mark of distinction, its implicit elitism had steadily eroded as citizenship was offered to an increasing proportion of the Roman populace.[28]

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[23] Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege*, p. 261 and n. 3. Garnsey, p. 269, also points out that Eusebius 'confirms that the differential treatment of citizens and aliens persisted into the Antonine period'.

[24] See e.g., Cicero, *De officiis* 3.11.47, pp. 314–15, who writes of the expulsion of *peregrini* by the tribune M. Junius Pennus in 126 BC, and of a similar law passed by the consul C. Papius in 65 BC; discussed in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 9, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 76, 344–5, and 651–2. For expulsions of *peregrini* from Rome in the late empire, see Noy, 'Immigrants in Late Imperial Rome', p. 16; see also Ambrose, *De officiis* 3.7, PL 16:23–184 at 158–60.

[25] Peter Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 262.

[26] Throughout this discussion, the male pronoun has been used as a 'default' pronoun, following the scriptural and exegetical discussions in this period, which tend to be voiced in the masculine. For women and *peregrinatio* see ch. 4, §4.6.

[27] A notable exception is, of course, St Paul, who was a Roman citizen and attempted to claim his rights therefrom: Acts 16.37, 22.25–9, 25.10–11. See discussion in Garnsey, 'The *Lex Iulia*', pp. 167 n. 3, 182–5; Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law*, pp. 63–8.

[28] Nicholas, *Introduction to Roman Law*, p. 65; Sherwin-White, *Roman Citizenship*, pp. 221–63; Jolowicz and Nicholas, *Historical Introduction*, p. 62 and n. 1.

During the Republican period, citizenship had been granted to all of Italy (Jolowicz and Nicholas, *Historical Introduction*, p. 345); Julius and Augustus Caesar both extended citizenship—often using the promise of *Romanitas* as a political and diplomatic tool—to many of the provinces (Sherwin-White, *Roman Citizenship*, pp. 225–36).

This phenomenon finally culminated in the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of AD 212, an edict that conferred citizenship upon nearly all of the free inhabitants of the Roman empire.[29] The intrinsic privilege conferred by citizenship was all but lost as the status of *civis* became normative rather than exclusive: by the emperor Justinian's sixth-century law code, only 'barbarians' were considered *peregrini*.[30] Nonetheless, the restrictions of Roman law upon *peregrini* survived, some of them into the early Middle Ages:[31] even as the ratio of citizens to *peregrini* grew dramatically over the course of antiquity, the dwindling number of *peregrini* still remained disenfranchised by the terms of Roman law. It is difficult to assess how many *peregrini* there might have been or how strictly these laws were enforced in a fragmenting empire; but as we examine the patristic era when this terminology became so firmly established in latinate Christian discourse, we should think of *peregrini* as a small group among large numbers of citizens with full rights.[32]

Thus as the *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio* emerged as concepts invested with religious significance, they carried connotations of disenfranchisement, of separation from one's own people or homeland, of travel abroad, of the journey of human existence in life and into death, and of a small group of persecuted individuals among a larger fully-enfranchised populace. Paradoxically, in Christian discourse these terms became expressions both of alienation and of group identity. For Christians inherited from Old Testament tradition an intense focus upon the status of 'insider' and 'outsider' and a definition of themselves as a people whose origins lay in alienation, an identity

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[29] Studies of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* are too numerous to list here. For a short treatment, see Berger, '*Constitutio Antoniniana de civitate*', in *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law*, pp. 409–10.

[30] Berger, '*Peregrinus*', p. 626; Jolowicz and Nicholas, *Historical Introduction*, p. 438; Buckland, *Textbook of Roman Law*, pp. 99–100; Jean Gaudemet, 'L'étranger au Bas-Empire', in *L'Étranger*, Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin 9 (Brussels: Éditions de la Librairie Encyclopédique, 1958), pp. 209–35, esp. 218–229. For a more detailed discussion of Roman and barbarian identities in this period, see Geoffrey Greatrex, 'Roman identity in the sixth century', in *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity*, ed. Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex (London: Duckworth and Classical Press of Wales, 2000), pp. 267–92 at 275–6.

[31] See, e.g., the *Lex Gundobada* (the Burgundian law code, which remained a standard of law well into the medieval period) 39.1 [Drew, p. 48]; also ibid., 84.2 [Drew, p. 78]. Cf. the eighth-century *Leges Langobardorum*, Leges Ratchis regis 13 [MGH Legum 4, p. 192(19)], in which *peregrini* have become quite specifically devotional travellers to Rome.

[32] In a Christian context this small ratio of disenfranchised *peregrini* to a broader populace of citizens calls to mind the world-view put forth in the Gospels: the followers of Christ were a small, close-knit nucleus of virtue among a broader world of sin and evil. They were 'lambs among wolves' (Luke 10.3; cf. Matt. 10.16) living among an 'evil and adulterous generation' (Matt 12.39), a 'generation of vipers' (Matt 12.34; cf. Luke 11.29), alienated because of their faith so that their estrangement itself became a measure of their virtue. For New Testament assertions of alienation also see, e.g., Matt 10.22 (cf. John 15.18–19, 17.14–16); Matt 5.10–11 (cf. Luke 6.22–3).

that became ever stronger in the centuries of persecution and disenfranchisement that they suffered at the hands of the Roman empire. Thus as the fundaments of Christian alienation emerged in the Latin West, they were voiced with a Roman legal vocabulary of displacement and disenfranchisement.

1.2 *Peregrinatio* and *Peregrini* in the Vetus Latina

Though the Vulgate texts of the bible were the primary medium through which the concept of *peregrinatio* reached into the medieval period, ideals of Christian *peregrinatio* were born well before the advent of St Jerome's translations. From the earliest extant versions of the Latin bible the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* appear in pivotal passages of both the Old and New Testament.[33] The terms did not appear as often or as consistently as they would in Jerome's Vulgate editions (see §1.3); however, the prominence of these terms in Vetus Latina versions laid the foundation for the Vulgate translations and for the development of the western conception of Christian *peregrinatio*.

1.2.1 *The Gospels: Matthew 27.7 and Luke 24.18*

The Gospels give the simplest and most literal sense of the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio*. The terms appear only twice, in readings that remained largely unchanged between the Old Latin and the Vulgate. The first instance is in Matthew 27, just after the capture of

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[33] Bible editions: Vetus Latina (hereafter VL) editions are the available volumes of VL Beuron, and in all other cases VL Sabatier (full VL citations are noted on the abbreviations page). For the Vulgate I have used *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, ed. Roger Gryson and Robert Weber, with B. Fischer, H.I. Frede, I. Gribomont, H.F.D. Sparks, W. Thiele, 4th edn (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994, orig. publ. 1969).

For the Septuagint (hereafter LXX) text I have used the *Septuaginta*, ed. Alfred Rahlfs, 3rd edn (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1949), 2 vols. For the Greek New Testament I have used the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, and Kurt Aland, 26th edn (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1981) = *Greek New Testament*, ed. Kurt Aland, *et al.*, 4th rev. edn (United Bible Societies, 1993).

For the Hebrew OT text I have used the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, ed. K. Elliger, W. Rudolph *et al.* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969–77, repr. 1997), a critical edition based upon the Masoretic text from Leningrad Codex B19a, the oldest extant text of the Hebrew bible. According to H.F.D. Sparks, 'Jerome as Biblical Scholar' in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1: *From the Beginnings to Jerome*, ed. P.R. Ackroyd and C.F. Evans (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 510–41 at 532, the text which was current in Jerome's day 'was substantially the same as our own standard Massoretic text.

Chapter and verse numbering is from the Vulgate unless otherwise noted. Most English translations of scripture are from the Douay-Rheims version: *The Holy Bible, Translated from the Latin Vulgate* (repr. Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto, 2002; orig. publ. in Douay and Rheims, 1582 and 1609). The differences between the Douay-Rheims source text (the Clementine Vulgate) and the Stuttgart version were not significant in the passages used in this chapter. Translations of Vetus Latina passages that differ from the Vulgate are my own; this is noted in the footnotes.

Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. The traitor Judas, beset by remorse, threw down his thirty silver pieces—the payment for his betrayal—in the Temple, and then hanged himself. The priests and elders could not lawfully put the 'blood money' back into the temple's coffers and thus purchased a potter's field as a *sepultura peregrinorum* (LXX *xenoi*), a burial-place for strangers.[34] Then in Luke 24, Jesus had risen from his tomb, and appeared to Peter and a group of the disciples on the road to Emmaeus—incidentally, a passage that became very strongly associated with pilgrimage later in the Middle Ages.[35] Not recognising their master, one of the disciples asked, 'Do you come as a stranger (VL *peregrinaris*, LXX *paroikeis*) to Jerusalem? Have you not heard of the things that have been done there in these days?'[36] In Matthew 27, the existence of a separate graveyard for those who do not belong to the normative group—in this case, the Jews—emphasises the sense of *peregrini* as outsiders and disenfranchised aliens; the passage from Luke reiterates a similar sense using the verbal form *peregrinari* to signify one coming from a foreign land, who would not have known of the great happenings in Jerusalem. In both of these cases the terms carry the literal Roman sense of 'stranger', 'outsider', 'visitor from abroad', or 'alien'.

1.2.2 *Abraham, a* Peregrinus

The sense of the *peregrinus* as alien appears with more deliberate reference to the term's legal meaning in the stories of the patriarchs. In Old Latin renditions of Genesis, the word *peregrinus* appears twice: in Genesis 15.13 and 23.4.[37] In both cases *peregrinus* translates the Greek *paroikos*, and denotes an alien living in a foreign land.[38]

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[34] Matt 27.7. LibArdm p. 96/fol. 51v; VL Sabatier 3:170. The thirty pieces of silver and the potter's field—as so many of the images in the gospel of Matthew—refer to an Old Testament prophecy; see Zech 11:12–13, which Matthew cites as coming from Jeremiah (cf. Jer 32.9–44).

[35] The Vulgate reading of Luke 24.18 is: *tu solus peregrinus es in Hierusalem et non cognovisti quae facta sunt in illa his diebus?* helps to explain why in the later Middle Ages Christ and/or the disciples are represented as a pilgrims. Consider, e.g., the carved ivory plaque with the Journey to Emmaus and the Noli Me Tangere, ca. 1115–1120, J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.47), which depicts the disciple Cleophas with a pilgrim's satchel and drinking gourd; similarly the twelfth-century carving in the cloister of the Abbey of Santo Domingo de Silos, in which Christ himself is dressed as a Santiago pilgrim.

[36] My translation. Luke 24.18, VL Sabatier 3:375: *Tu solus peregrinaris ab Jerosolyma; non cognovisti quae facta sunt in illa in istis diebus?* Cf. LibArdm p. 172, fol. 89v, which follows the Vulgate wording: *tu solus peregrinus es in Hierusalem et non cognovisti quae facta sunt in illa his diebus?*

[37] I exclude one VL instance of *peregrinatio* that occurs in a single Jewish apocryphal text, the *Libri Jubilaeorum*, listed in VL Beuron 1/1, p. 192.

[38] 'πάροικος' in G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), p. 1042. In the Greek-speaking provinces of the eastern empire, the main term used for a resident alien to contrast with a fully-enfranchised elite was usually *paroikos*. Michael Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, 2 vols, 2nd edn, rev. P.M. Fraser (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), vol. 1: pp.

The second of these is the most significant. To contextualise this passage, we must note that Abraham's identity as an alien had been established early in the book of Genesis, when the patriarch left his own land in accordance with God's command:

> Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I shall show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and magnify thy name; and thou shalt be blessed. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; in thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed.[39]

Upon his obedient departure from his homeland, Abraham became a *peregrinus*—an outsider, a stranger among a foreign people: in Genesis 23.4 Abraham himself uses this label. He declares to the children of Heth, the natives of the land in which he lived, *peregrinus et advena sum ego vobiscum*, 'I am a stranger and a sojourner among you',[40] and he pleads for the right to bury his dead wife. In this passage the Roman legal connotations of the term *peregrinus* are clearly at play. Until this point in the narrative the patriarch did not own any land and could not bury his dead without the permission of those whose lands he inhabited. He was an alien living among a foreign people, a *peregrinus* without the full rights of the native-born. Moreover, evident in God's first words to the patriarch is that his abandonment of his own land and people represents the first constitutive act of his covenant. The formulation of God's promise to Abraham and his descendants—'Go forth out of thy country…and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee'—establishes a cause-and-effect relationship based primarily upon Abraham's renunciation of his homeland. Thus the self-identification of the father of the Israelites as *peregrinus et advena* was read not only as a practical declaration of his legal status among the children of Heth, but as an emblem of God's promise.

The continued resonance of the patriarch's declaration as an element of Hebrew and Christian identity is demonstrated in its repetition, first in the Psalms and again the Catholic epistles, where it is invoked to identify participants in the covenant of God.[41] In Psalm 38, a song of David, the psalmist prays for God's aid as was his due as one of the Chosen. To claim this right he draws a direct line between himself and the patriarch Abraham by identifying himself as a *peregrinus et advena*: 'Hear my prayer, O Lord, and my supplication', he sings, 'Give ear to my tears. Be not silent: for I am a stranger

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250, 255–7; vol. 2, 654–5, n. 4. Cf. *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930, repr. 1975), pp. 597–8.

[39] Gen 12.1–3.

[40] Gen 23.4, VL Beuron 2:243.

[41] Ps 38.13; cf. the prayer of David in 1 Chron 29, esp. 29.15.

with thee, and a sojourner as all my fathers were', *advena sum apud te et peregrinus sicut omnes patres mei.*[42] In the New Testament, 1 Peter 2.11 uses the same phrase: 'Dearly beloved, I beseech you that as strangers and pilgrims (*peregrini et advenae*) you refrain yourselves from the carnal desires which war against the soul'.[43] Here the phrase subtly alludes to Abraham as a spiritual role model and indicates a shared identity of the Christian people as *peregrini et advenae*, the inheritors of the Old Testament promise. In these repetitions the reference to Abraham is deliberate: the Latin mimics the Greek, in which all three passages contain an identical pair of terms—*paroikos kai parepidemos*[44]—which does not appear elsewhere in the canonical bible.[45] From the earliest Latin texts of the bible, therefore, the status of *peregrinus* was a claim to God's promise: first applied to Abraham, it was invoked by the psalmist, and repeated again by early Christians as a badge of belonging to the elect of God.

1.2.3 *Ephesians 2.12-22*

The epistle to the Ephesians applies the vocabulary of enfranchisement and disenfranchisement somewhat differently, in a rather extended allegory that contrasts the concepts of earthly alienation and heavenly citizenship. The epistle employs the

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[42] Ps 38.13. This is the reading from the Gallican psalter; VL Sabatier 2:80 reads: *incola ego sim apud te in terram, & peregrinus, sicut omnes patres mei.* There is no recorded VL text of Gen 23.4 that reads *incola et peregrinus* (see VL Beuron 2:243), so there may have been cases in which VL translators did not catch the repetition; alternatively, such a text may simply not have survived.

[43] 1 Pet 2.11, VL Beuron 26:110. The Vetus Latina readings vary; an early text group (K) reads *carissimi rogo ut quasi hospites et peregrini abstinete vos a carnalibus desideriis quae militant adversus animam*. Cf. Hebr 11.13 and Eph 2.19, esp. in the Old Latin (VL Beuron 24.1, pp. 75 and 97).

[44] For a discussion of the differences between *paroikos* and *parepidemos*, see H. Balz, 'παροικεω', in William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature: a translation and adaptation of the fourth revised and augmented edition of Walter Bauer's 'Griechisch-Deutsches Worterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur'*, 2nd edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979). Balz contrasts the *paroikos*, who dwells permanently in a foreign land, with the *parepidemos*, who only visits temporarily, though in practice, when *parepidemos* appears in the bible it usually used in tandem with *paroikos* to refer to the same person or persons. Also see John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, its Situation and Strategy* (London: SCM Press, 1981), pp. 24–49; Francis Wright Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), pp. 74–5, 135.

[45] Similarly in the Hebrew text, Gen 23.4 and Ps 38.13 both read *ger* (גר 'sojourner, resident alien') and *tôsab* (תושב, 'stranger'). Transliterations and short definitions are from John R. Kohlenberger, III and James Swanson, 'A Concise Dictionary of the Hebrew', in *The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible*, ed. Spiros Zodhiates (Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 1996), pp. 1897–2045. Useful concordances for *ger* are in Francis I. Andersen and A. Dean Forbes, *The Vocabulary of the Old Testament* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1989).

same terminology of the *peregrinus* to develop this ideal of a new, spiritual covenant, effected by the blood of Jesus:[46]

> You were once...*peregrini* to the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ....Therefore, you are no longer *peregrini* and *advenae*, but citizens with the saints (*cives sanctorum*), and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building having been fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you too are built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.[47]

This passage invokes the phrase *peregrini et advenae* to contrast the first covenant between God and the Jews with the Christian promise of heaven, and uses the contrast between *peregrini* and *cives* to emphasise the sense of Christian belonging in the heavenly city. It must be noted that the language of this epistle changed significantly in the versions that are now included with the Vulgate; it is a rare instance of the term *peregrinus* actually being replaced by other terms in more recent editions. (It is doubtful, however, that Jerome translated the Pauline corpus, so this change cannot be attributed to his hand.)[48]

1.2.4 *Hebrews 11.8–16*

With what may be a corrupted version of the same phrase from Genesis, the epistle to the Hebrews also employs the language of alienation and citizenship in order to explain how Old Testament figures would reach the kingdom of heaven. The epistle describes that because of their extraordinary faith, certain Old Testament figures were able to

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[46] On this letter generally, see J.D.G. Dunn, 'Ephesians', in *OBC*, pp. 1165–79. This letter is probably pseudo-Pauline; see ibid., p. 1166.

[47] Eph 2.11–22: *Eratis illo tempore...peregrini* [Gk. *xenoi*] *testamentorum promissionis, spem non habentes, et sine Deo in mundo. Nunc autem in Christo Jesu vos qui aliquando eratis longe, facti estis prope in sanguine Christi; ipse est enim pax nostra. Ergo jam non estis peregrini et advenae* [Gk. *xenoi kai paroikoi*]*: sed cives sanctorum, et domestici Dei, superaedificati super fundamentum apostolorum et prophetarum, ipso summo angulari lapide Christo Jesu. In quo omnis aedificatio compaginata, crescit in templum sanctum in Domino. In quo et vos coaedificamini in habitaculum Dei, in spiritu.* VL Beuron 24.1, pp. 75 and 97. See Dunn, 'Ephesians', pp. 1170–71; John Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (London and New York: Continuum, 2001), pp. 114–44. Also cf. Phil 3.20.

[48] On Jerome's authorship of the books of the bible now known as the Vulgate, see J.N. Birdsall, 'The New Testament Text', in *Cambridge History of the Bible* I, ed. Ackroyd and Evans, pp. 308–77 at 374; H.F.D. Sparks, 'Jerome as Biblical Scholar', in ibid, pp. 510–41 at 519–20; Martin McNamara, 'The Text of the Latin Bible in the Early Irish Church. Some Data and Desiderata', in *Irland und die Christenheit: Bibelstudien und Mission*, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), pp. 7–55 at 8–9; Raphael Loewe, 'The Medieval History of the Latin Vulgate', in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* II: *The West from the Fathers to the Reformation*, ed. G.W.H. Lampe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 102–53 at 108. See also n. 62 below.

attain God's new promise of heaven and everlasting life. Abraham is the prime example of such faith and virtue:

> By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned in the promised land as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise; for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and maker is God.[49]

God's covenant with Abraham to bring him into the Promised Land—a promise of the earth and the flesh—becomes a new covenant of the spirit with the advent of Christ.[50] The temporary nature of the promised land of the Old Testament is thus contrasted with the eternal city of God, which the epistle conveys using the socio-legal terminology of the *peregrinus*, juxtaposed with images of an eternal homeland and citizenship in heaven. The letter continues,

> All of these [Old Testament figures] died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were *peregrini* and strangers [*hospites*] on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland [*patria*]. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city [*civitas*] for them.[51]

It seems likely that the *peregrini et hospites*—the Greek *xenoi kai paroikoi*—of Hebrews 11 refer back to Genesis 23 and Psalm 38, as this text depicts a new covenant of God, ushered in by the sacrifice of Christ.[52] Abraham's status as alien in Genesis attained the covenant of God, but only his *knowledge* that the earth was alien to him achieved the new covenant and his salvation. The new children of Abraham—the Christians—must follow his model of faith and virtue to reach their homeland in heaven. By faith they must treat their lives as a temporary sojourn and know that the

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[49] Hebr 11.8–10. The Vulgate and VL readings are very similar. VL Beuron 25/2, fasc. 9:1514–17, text group I reads: *fide qui vocatur Habraham oboedivit exire in locum quem accepturus erat in hereditatem et exivit nesciens quo iret / fide moratus est* [in the Clementine Vulgate, *peregrinatus est*] *in terra repromissionis tamquam in aliena in tabernaculis habitans cum Isaac et Iacob coheredibus promissionis eiusdem / expectabat enim fundamenta habentem civitatem cuius artifex et conditor deus*. Cf. Rom 4.16–22, Gen 12.1–4, 15.7–21, Acts 7.2–8. On Hebrews 11.8–22, see Attridge, 'Hebrews', p. 1252; John Dunnill, *Covenant and Sacrifice in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 29–37; Marie E. Isaacs, *Sacred Space: an Approach to the Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), pp. 78–88.

[50] Hebr 8.7–13, Gal 3.14, 3.29.

[51] Hebr 11.13–16. The Latin readings *peregrini et hospites* (Gk. *xenoi kaí paroikoi*) are consistent across the Vetus Latina and the Vulgate versions. The only variations are in the word order. VL Beuron 25.2, fasc. 9, pp. 1525–29.

[52] It is unlikely that Hebrews refers to the instance in 1 Peter, as it probably pre-dates the latter text. On the letter to the Hebrews generally, see Harold W. Attridge, 'Hebrews', in OBC, pp. 1236–54.

world is to them a foreign country, so that they might enter the eternal kingdom of God: 'For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come.'[53] The Epistle to the Hebrews is steeped in the New Testament's sense of eschatological anticipation. A renewal in Christ of the covenant of God and Abraham was an essential element of this ideology; Abraham's status as *peregrinus et hospes* on earth, therefore, becomes central to the New Testament doctrine of salvation.

1.2.5 *2nd Corinthians 5*

The foregoing passages have expressed a sense of estrangement from the world, the abandonment of one's own land and the alienation of living among a foreign people. A final example of this terminology in scripture expresses a related aspect of Christian alienation: humankind's estrangement from God.[54] In what would become one of the most important texts to express the spiritual formulation of Christian alienation, St Paul's second letter to the Corinthians stresses the dichotomy of the flesh and the spirit using powerful imagery of the journey of human life away from God.[55]

The apostle expounds in 2 Corinthians 5 that while humans sojourn in the flesh they dwell away from the stability and permanency of their eternal homeland.[56] The body is temporary and temporal burden; we 'groan' when we are in it, and long to return to God.[57] In Greek Paul depicted the human journey of life with the term *ekdemeo*, 'to leave one's own country, to go on a long journey';[58] the Latin translators expressed this concept with *peregrinari*. 'While we are in the body we are absent from the Lord [*peregrinamur a Deo*]', the apostle explains, 'But we are confident, and have a

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[53] Hebr 13.14.

[54] The concepts of estrangement from the world and estrangement from God are explored in Gerhart B. Ladner, '*Homo Viator*: Medieval Ideas of Alienation and Order', *Speculum* 42.2 (1967), pp. 233–59, esp. 235–8.

[55] On this letter generally, see Margaret MacDonald, '2 Corinthians', in *OBC*, pp. 1134–51; cf. Hans D. Betz, 'Second Epistle to the Corinthians', in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David N. Freedman, 6 vols (New York: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 1149–52.

[56] 2 Cor 5.1.

[57] 2 Cor 5.2.

[58] 'εκδημεω', in *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 408; also See Arndt and Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 408. 'ενδημεω', in *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 262. For a similar use of these terms, also cf. Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* 4.142, trans. F.H. Colson, *Philo* VIII (London and Cambridge: William Heinemann and Harvard University Press, 1939), pp. 6–157 at 96–7.

good will to be absent rather from the body [*peregrinari a corpore*], and to be present with the Lord'.[59]

Peregrinari conveys a sense of motion and travel; and as has been noted, by the late antique period this verb also implied the sense of foreignness and disenfranchisement that *peregrinus* carried. From 2 Corinthians this term also became firmly associated with the dichotomy between flesh and spirit that is so crucial to Christian thought. This passage as a whole thus expresses a sense of a temporary and temporal journey of alienation and suffering, to be contrasted with the spiritual welcome of the soul when it returns to the heavenly *patria*.

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Already with the earliest Latin translations of scripture a general sense of the Christian *peregrinus* had begun to form. As can be seen in the Gospels, the *peregrinus* in its simplest form signified 'foreign', 'alien', 'outsider'; the expressions of the alienation of the *peregrinus* span many of the books of the bible. From an important phrase in Genesis that was repeated in Judaic and Christian tradition alike, the father of the Israelites was also branded a *peregrinus*, and his voluntary alienation, an act of complete obedience that brought about God's covenant, became a symbol of identity for the Chosen of God. For Christians this alienation took on spiritual and allegorical significance. The two articulations of the alienation of the elect—alienation as a requisite component of God's covenant and the concept of the faithful as exiles among foreign people—became inextricably bound to the new promise of a Christian Homeland. From the Roman vocabulary of *peregrinatio* and citizenship, combined with a sense of virtuous suffering in arduous journeys and alienation on earth and from God, the seeds of Christian pilgrimage were sown in the oldest versions of the Latin bible. From these scriptural foundations, alienation began to form a fundamental aspect of the Christian world-view, and to define the relationship of the faithful to God.

1.3 *Peregrinatio* and *Peregrini* in the Vulgate

But it was in the Vulgate that the concept of Christian *peregrinatio* matured: the influence of Jerome's editions of scripture upon the ideal of Christian pilgrimage can

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[59] 2 Cor 5.6–9. The entire passage in VL Sabatier, 3:738, reads: *Audientes igitur semper, & scientes quod dum sumus in corpore, peregrinamur a Deo: (per fidem enim ambulamus, non per speciem) audemus etiam voluntatem habentes magis peregrinari a corpore, & praesentes esse ad Dominum. Et contendimus, sive praesentes, sive absentes, placere illi.*

hardly be overemphasised.[60] The saint's choice to articulate the evolving ideal of Christian alienation using Roman legal terms of disenfranchisement and displacement formed over time, influenced by a number of different authorities; in his earliest translations such as the Gospels, *peregrinatio* played a less prominent role than in his later translations. This also coincides with a similar pattern in the saint's correspondence and other exegetical works.[61]

As a rule, in the progression from Vetus Latina editions to Jerome's Vulgate versions, the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* are only added, not subtracted. To date I have found no exceptions to this.[62] Moreover, in Jerome's texts, *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* appear in regularised contexts with a consistency that the Old Latin editions lacked.[63] These terms appear frequently in the Vulgate, predominantly in the books of the Old Testament.[64] Whereas in the Vetus Latina we find a fair number of instances of the term *peregrinus*, and a few uses of *peregrinari*, Jerome added the term *peregrinatio* in numerous places, and wove together a coherent sense of what these terms signified. Especially in the Pentateuch, Jerome employed this vocabulary with a new clarity of purpose.

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[60] Essential treatments of Jerome's life and works, which inevitably focus heavily upon his role as translator, are: J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: his Life, Writings and Controversies* (London: Duckworth, 1975); Stefan Rebenich, *Jerome* (London, Routledge, 2002). A study that addresses similar issues of patterns in translation and language is Jeremy duQuesnay Adams, *The 'Populus' of Augustine and Jerome: a Study in the Patristic Sense of Community* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971); also cf. Gabriel del Estal and Juan José .R. Rosado, 'Equivalencia de "civitas" en el "De civitate Dei"', in *Estudios sobre la 'Ciudad de Dios'*, vol. 2, pp. 367–454.

[61] In-depth investigations of Jerome's patterns of translation and the sources for his changes are outside the scope of the present study, as ultimately the endpoint of the present line of discussion lies in the reception of these ideas into Ireland (where Jerome's sources are not directly relevant). I plan, however, to complete detailed analyses of *peregrinatio* in Jerome's Vulgate books, titled provisionally '*Peregrinatio* and *Peregrini* in the Vulgate Pentateuch: the evolution of a Christian ideal' and 'St Jerome, the Psalter and *Peregrinatio*'. I presented preliminary findings of these studies at the Kalamazoo Medieval Congress 2006, in a paper titled 'Saint Jerome, the Vulgate and Christian *Peregrinatio*'.

[62] Though a full survey will be difficult until more critical editions of the Vetus Latina from the Beuron Institute become available, to date I have only found two instances of these terms used in widely disseminated Vetus Latina versions and not in the editions now known to us as the Vulgate: Eph 2.12 and 2.19. It should be noted, however, that modern biblical scholarship does not attribute the Vulgate versions of these letters to Jerome; in fact, Jerome in his commentary on Ephesians uses the Old Latin text where the term *peregrinus* appears. See Jerome, *Commentariorum in Epistolam ad Ephesios*, PL 26:471C–D and 475B–C. See also p. 21 above.

[63] This phenomenon is mentioned briefly in a broader discussion of *peregrinatio* by Jean Leclercq, *Aux sources de la spiritualité occidentale* (Paris: Cerf, 1964), pp. 40–90, esp. pp. 41–2.

[64] There are seventy-nine instances of *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* in the Vulgate Old Testament, and eleven in the New. Instances of *peregre* (*profectus est*) have been excluded. These numbers were reached using the Stuttgart Vulgate. The OT total was calculated using the Gallican psalter and no apocryphal books. One instance in a psalm heading (Ps 64) has been excluded, as transmission of psalm headings is highly variable; see the edited collection of these headings in Pierre Salmon, *Les 'Tituli Psalmorum' des manuscrits latins*, Collectanea Biblica Latina 12 (Rome: Abbaye de Saint-Jerôme, 1959).

1.3.1 *The Pentateuch: Alienation, Covenant and Identity*

In the Vulgate Genesis, Jerome used the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* fourteen times (versus two in most Vetus Latina versions) to express aspects of alienation, every time in relation to Abraham and his descendants. Jerome thus extended the Vetus Latina's identification of Abraham as *peregrinus* to include Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, by describing their residence in foreign lands using *peregrinatio* and *peregrinari*.[65] The children of Abraham would remain *peregrini* for many generations;[66] only after suffering as aliens (and slaves) in foreign lands would they win for themselves the land of God's promise.[67] Building upon Abraham's abandonment of his land as an aspect of God's covenant, the Promised Land itself is defined by the *peregrinatio* of Abraham in it: God declares to the patriarch,

> I will give to thee, and to thy seed, the land of thy *peregrinatio*, all the land of Canaan for a perpetual possession, and I will be their God.[68]

Similarly, when God vows to bring Moses and the Israelites out of their enslavement in Egypt, he proclaims,

> I am the Lord, that appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob…And I made a covenant with them, to give them the land of Chanaan, the land of their *peregrinatio* wherein they were strangers [*advenae*]. I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel…and I have remembered my covenant.[69]

Jerome's consistent reiterations of *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* add emphasis to the status of Abraham and the patriarchs as aliens: as a central aspect of God's covenant, of their identity as a people, and of their position as the Chosen People of God.

The alienation of the Chosen is further informed by the outsiders portrayed in the remainder of the Pentateuch. As the recitation of the Law begins in the book of Exodus, there is an abrupt shift of viewpoint and the children of Abraham become the normative group in the narrative.[70] The Law strictly regulates the interactions between

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[65] Isaac: Gen 26.1–5, 35.27, 37.1; Jacob: Gen 28.4, 32.4, cf. 36.7; Joseph: Gen 47.9, cf. 47.4.

[66] Gen 15.13: *peregrinum futurum sit semen tuum in terra non sua et subicient eos servituti et adfligent quadringentis annis.*

[67] Gen 15.18–21.

[68] Gen 17.8: *daboque tibi et semini tuo terram peregrinationis tuae omnem terram Chanaan in possessionem aeternam eroque Deus eorum.* Here *peregrinatio* translates the Hebrew *magôr*. Also see Gen 26.3, Exod 6.2–4.

[69] Exod 6.2–5: *Ego Dominus, qui apparui Abraham, Isaac et Iacob…Pepigique cum eis foedus, ut darem illis terram Chanaan, terram peregrinationis eorum, in qua fuerunt advenae. Ego audivi gemitum filiorum Israel…et recordatus sum pacti mei.*

[70] In Hebrew, usually *'ezrah* (אזרח, 'native-born') or *'ah*, (אח 'brother, kinsman, countryman')—for both terms see Anderson and Forbes, *Vocabulary of the Old Testament*, pp. 39, 271 and Kohlenberger and

the Israelites and the outsiders who live among them. In the Vulgate version, the alien among the Hebrews is often a *peregrinus*, who *est intra portas tuas*,[71] or in an alternate formulation *advena qui peregrinatur apud vos*.[72] The *peregrini* or *advenae* are evidently an underclass and are categorised along with the poor, orphans and widows as figures in need of charity.[73] From these books came the oft-repeated phrase *suscipere peregrinos*—'to care for *peregrini*'[74]—which in Christian tradition was read as a command of hospitality to these strangers.[75] These *peregrini* are outsiders, presumably non-Jews, who live among the Israelites;[76] they are presented as individuals separate and distinct among a cohesive and undoubtedly homogeneous group of the native-born.[77] Though the Law specifies that both Hebrews and aliens are subject to the same laws[78] and that aliens are not to be oppressed,[79] it still puts restrictions upon the rights of *peregrini* and rigidly defines them as outsiders in contrast to members of the community,[80] whom Jerome often labels, unsurprisingly, as *cives*.[81]

The severe contrast between aliens and the native-born and the strict regulation of *peregrini* under the Law thus add detail and intensity to Abraham's sacrifice of his own homeland. With the same vocabulary the Law also connects the status of the alien with the suffering of the Chosen when they lived outside the Promised Land, hence adding the sense of exile to the label *peregrinus*. This correlation was not accidental: the direct link between the patriarchs of the Exodus and the aliens of the Law is made manifest as the Lord commands,

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Swanson, 'Concise Hebrew Dictionary', entries 275, 278. In Greek, *adelphos* ('brother'), *autochthon* ('native, inhabitant') or *egchorios* ('countryman, dweller').

[71] Deut 5.14; Deut 14.21; Deut 14.29; Deut 15.3; Deut 26.5. Cf. other terms for outsiders living *intra portas tuas*, particularly *advena*, in Exod 20.10; Deut 14.27, 16.11, 16.14, 24.14, 26.12, 31.12.

[72] E.g., Lev 16.29, 17.8, 17.10, 17.12, 17.13, 18.26, 25.6, 25.45, cf. Exod 12.49, Num 9.14, 15.26. For classical usage of the Latin pair *advena/peregrinus*, see e.g. Cicero, *De oratore* 1.58.249 [Sutton and Rackham, vol. 1, pp. 182–3; idem, *Orationes de lege agraria*. 2.34.94–5 [Freese, pp. 470–71]; Plautus, *Poenulus* 5.2.1031 [Nixon, vol. 4, p. 102]. Also see Noy, *Foreigners at Rome*, pp. 1–3.

[73] Lev 19.10, 23.22, 25.35, Deut 10.18, 14.29, 16.11, 16.14, 24.17, 24.19–21, 26.12–13, 27.19; also Ps 93(94).6, 145(146).9, Jer 7.6, 22.3, Zech 7.10, Mal 3.5.

[74] Lev 25.35: *si adtenuatus fuerit frater tuus et infirmus manu et susceperis eum quasi advenam et peregrinum et vixerit tecum. ne accipias usuras ab eo nec amplius quam dedisti time Deum tuum ut vivere possit frater tuus apud te.*

[75] See ch. 2, §2.3.

[76] For a discussion of who the aliens—the *ger*, *nokriy*, and *tôsab*—were in Jewish legal tradition, see Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, vol. II (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), pp. 365–6.

[77] E.g., Lev 16.29, 17.10, 17.12, 17.13, 18.26, 24.16, Num 15.30, 35.13.

[78] Exod 12.49, Lev 24.22, Num 15.15, Deut 1.16..

[79] Exod 22.21, 23.9.

[80] Exod 12.43, cf. Lev 22.10; also see Exod 21.8, Lev 25.45, Deut 15.3, 17.15.

[81] Lev 24.16, 24.22, Num 15.30, Deut 1.16, 15.3.

> Thou shalt not oppress a *peregrinus*, for you know the hearts of strangers [*advenae*]: for you also were *peregrini* in the land of Egypt.[82]

The sense of the disenfranchisement of *peregrini* in the books of the Law thus superimposes an element of great hardship upon the heroic figures of the book of Genesis, which in turn emphasises Abraham's enormous sacrifice of his homeland and kin.

Jerome's coherent portrait of *peregrinatio* as alienation extends throughout the entire Pentateuch. In part his changes are simply matters of consistent translation: in Genesis, he uses *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* where the terms *ger/gûr/magôr* appear in the Hebrew and *paroikos/–eo/–esia* appear in the Greek.[83] The inconsistencies of the Vetus Latina deserve brief explanation: these versions were translated from the Septuagint and the Greek *paroikos/–eo/–esia* were flexible terms. *Paroikos* could carry a similar meaning to the Latin *peregrinus*; but the verb *paroikeo* could denote 'to live, dwell' with no connotations of alienation at all. Thus while the noun *paroikos* is translated fairly regularly as *peregrinus* or *advena* in the Vetus Latina, we often find *paroikeo* rendered as *habitare*, or *inhabitare*. Jerome changed all of this; with his frequent use of the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* he built a broad framework of idealised alienation in the book of Genesis. The remaining four books of the Vulgate Pentateuch also reveal Jerome's reliance upon the Hebrew source text rather than the Greek. In the Hebrew text, the terminology used for the aliens residing among the Israelites remains the same as that which described Abraham and his descendants—*ger/gûr/magôr*—and therefore a linguistic link is drawn between the alienation of the Hebrews themselves and that of the strangers among them. Jerome's Latin translations follow the Hebrew text in repeating the terms that described Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—*peregrinus*, *peregrinari*, and *peregrinatio*—in the Law. In the Greek texts, and correspondingly in Vetus Latina versions, the terminology changes from *paroikos/–eo/–esia* in Genesis to a variety of terms for aliens and alienation—primarily *proselytos* for the Hebrew *ger*, and only

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[82] Exod 23.9: *peregrino* [Hebr. *ger*] *molestus non eris scitis enim advenarum* [Hebr. *ger*] *animas quia et ipsi peregrini* [Hebr. *ger*] *fuistis in terra Aegypti*. Cf. Exod 22.21, Lev 19.33–4, Deut 10.19, 24.18, 24.22.

[83] There are only a few minor instances where *paroikos* and *ger* appear in the critical editions of the source texts but *peregrinus* is not Jerome's translation: Gen 19.9, 21.23, 21.34.

For the Greek terms, see entries under 'παροικ-εσία' in H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940, repr. 1958), 2 vols, 2:1341–42; also 'παροικεσία', 'παροικεω', 'παροίκησις', 'παροικία', 'πάροικος' in Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, p. 1042. For the Hebrew *ger* (גר 'sojourner, resident alien') or more rarely *tôsab* (תושב, 'stranger'), and the verbal forms *gûr* (גור, 'to sojourn, live as an alien') and *magôr* (מגור, 'a sojourning'), see Kohlenberger and Swanson, 'Concise Hebrew Dictionary', entries 1731, 9369, 1591 and 4472 respectively.

rarely *paroikos*. Hence in Septuagint versions this consistent linguistic link is not present.

In Latin, only the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* carried the multiple facets needed to translate the Hebrew *ger/gûr/magôr*: to describe Abraham and the patriarchs both as travellers through foreign lands and aliens living among foreign peoples, and to express the legalistic concepts of enfranchisement and alienation in Hebrew society. Jerome thus brought the Latin Pentateuch closer to his Hebrew source texts, but he did so with a vocabulary that had already been firmly invested with elements of Christian allegory. With this concordance of terms and coherence of theme throughout the Old and New Testaments, Jerome's Vulgate translations deeply etched the vocabulary of *peregrinatio*—already present to a lesser extent in some Vetus Latina texts—into Christian thought.

1.3.2 *The Psalms*

Jerome's coherent vision of the *peregrinus* also appears in his versions of the Psalms; moreover, the saint's multiple editions of the psalter provide the most dramatic illustration of *peregrinatio*'s increasingly important role in his thought. The Psalm passages investigated here are from the Gallican psalter, which was the dominant version throughout the early Middle Ages, particularly in Ireland,[84] and hence is the only version that will be addressed in detail in this study. But the pattern of the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* across all of Jerome's psalter translations is dramatically suggestive of a thematic shift in the saint's conception of these terms. In most Old Latin psalters, *peregrinus* appears only once.[85] In Jerome's Gallican psalter *peregrinus/–atio* appear three times.[86] In the saint's final version translated from the Hebrew, *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* appear eight times (or nine if one includes a variant listed by Migne).[87] As in the Pentateuch, many of Jerome's alterations brought the Latin translations closer to the *Hebraica veritas*; however, the underlying source text does not

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[84] Martin McNamara, 'Psalter Text and Psalter Study in the Early Irish Church', first published in *PRIA* 73C (1973), pp. 201–98, repr. in Martin McNamara, *The Psalms in the Early Irish Church*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Suppl. Ser. 165 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 19–142, at 98–104, esp. 103.

[85] Ps 38.13, VL Sabatier 2:80. On the multiple versions of the psalter and their authorship, see E.F. Sutcliffe, 'Jerome', in *Cambridge History of the Bible* II, pp. 80–101 at 84, 88.

[86] Ps 38.13; Ps 68.9; Ps 118.54.

[87] Ps 14.1; Ps 36.3; Ps 38.13; Ps 68.9; Ps 80.10; Ps 118.54; Ps 119.5. The variant is in Ps 60.5, PL 28:1172C.

account for all of the changes. The saint's modifications had a conceptual motive as well, which can be convincingly connected to a knowledge of Greek exegetical texts, particularly those of Origen and Basil.[88] To summarise, in Jerome's time well-developed explications of Christian alienation existed in Greek exegesis, and involved a fairly consistent range of scriptural texts. At some point in time, when Jerome began to articulate these Greek-based ideals of Christian alienation in Latin using his vocabulary of *peregrinatio*, the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* began to appear in his Latin translations of the same range of scriptural passages. In general, the passages that Jerome altered tend to emphasise *peregrinatio* as a state of suffering, away from God, clothed in sinful flesh, amongst the faithlessness of humankind. A close examination of the intricacies of Jerome's various psalters is outside the scope of the present study; however, it should be noted that the latest of these, the *Hebraicum*—which demonstrate Jerome's new sense of *peregrinatio*—pre-dated by a number of years the translations of the Pentateuch described in the preceding section.[89] That is, the shift in Jerome's thought occurred between the production of the Gallican and the *Hebraicum*; therefore, his articulations of *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* in his translations of Genesis and the other books of the Penateuch post-date by many years the change that we first see in his psalter versions.

Peregrinus/–ari appear in three psalms in the *Gallicanus*; Psalm 38 has already been described above in §1.2.2. The two additional instances share a common theme: virtuous alienation in God's name. In both of these psalms, the portrait of *peregrinatio* develops further, from the obedient embrace of hardship that we saw in the Law, to a paradigm of pious suffering for the sake of God. These songs lament the tribulations of the righteous in an evil world, and their persecution by sinful and faithless foes. Psalm 68 makes a long supplication to God for respite and righteous vengeance upon the psalmist's enemies. The song begins, 'Save me, O God', and then lists the torments that the psalmist has withstood in the name of God:

> ...for thy sake I have borne reproach: shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger [*extraneus*] to my brethren, and a *peregrinus* to the sons of my mother.[90]

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[88] This relationship will be explored further in the studies noted above, n. 61.

[89] Rough date ranges for the various psalters (and other translations) are discussed in the introduction to J.H.D. Scourfield, *Consoling Heliodorus: A Commentary on Jerome, Letter 60* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 9–10. According to Scourfield the Gallican is dated to 386–*c.*390; the *Hebraicum* was finished before 393; the Pentateuch after 398, and at least partly completed by 401.

[90] Ps 68.8–9: *quoniam propter te sustinui obprobrium operuit confusio faciem meam / extraneus* [Hebr. זר *zur*, 'alien, strange'; Gk. *allotriomenos*] *factus sum fratribus meis et peregrinus* [Hebr. *nokriy*; Gk. *xenos*] *filiis matris meae.*

Similarly, Psalm 118 tells of the psalmist's continued piety in spite of his persecution by the wicked; after portraying the many evils of his enemies the psalmist sings of his own steadfast faith.

> I remembered, O Lord, thy judgements of old: and I was comforted. A fainting hath taken hold of me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law. Thy justifications were the subject of my song in the place of my *peregrinatio*. In the night I have remembered thy name, O Lord: and have kept thy law.[91]

These psalms provide brief glimmers of concepts that would become essential facets of Christian alienation: that the alienation of the Chosen involves intense suffering, and continued faith in the face of these trials becomes a measure of piety. In these psalms the terms *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio* serve to dramatise the tribulations of the psalmist, and thus reflect the strong connotations of suffering that Jerome attached to these words.

1.3.3 *Exile from God as Punishment in the Prophetic Books*

While a generally positive moral valuation of alienation and *peregrinatio* was constructed in many books of the Latin bible, other articulations of estrangement retained strong overtones of sin and punishment. In the stories that recount the destruction of the First Temple and the scattering of the Jewish people, the Chosen People had once again become aliens, exiles and slaves, strangers suffering and oppressed in foreign lands. When Jerome uses *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* in these books, these words tend to refer to the expulsion and exile of the Jews.[92] Isaiah 23.7, for example, describes figuratively the destruction of Tyre and the exile of its people: 'Is not this your city, which gloried from of old in her antiquity? Her feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn [*ad peregrinandum*]'.

The faithlessness of the Chosen People had resulted in their dispersion and exile. They had broken God's covenant. The wicked suffered death and destruction and the surviving remnants of the populace were violently forced to flee, their suffering outside of their homeland the retribution of God for the sins of their people.[93] The people of

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[91] Ps 118.52–5: *memor fui iudiciorum tuorum a saeculo Domine et consolatus sum / defectio tenuit me prae peccatoribus derelinquentibus legem tuam / cantabiles mihi erant iustificationes tuae in loco peregrinationis* [Hebr. *m_gôr*; Gk. *paroikia*] *meae / memor fui in nocte nominis tui Domine et custodivi legem tuam*

[92] E.g., 2 Kings 8.2, Isa 23.7, Jer 35.7, 41.17, 44.14.

[93] This story is told and re-told throughout many of the prophetic books. See, e.g., 4 Kings 17.7–41, 21.12–15 22.16–17, Isa 24–27, Jer 34.14–22, Lam 1–2.

God endured both physical exile from their land and estrangement from their Lord.[94] Hence the connotations of *peregrinatio* in these texts are the suffering of exile and estrangement from God, but also anticipation of the restoration of the covenant and the return of the Lord's favour. While this articulation of *peregrinatio* as punitive exile is not as frequent as the sense of virtuous alienation that we find in the epistle to the Hebrews and in the Vulgate Pentateuch, it is equally important. Jerome's use of *peregrinari* binds the exile of the prophetic books to the tenets of 2 Corinthians 5. In the prophetic books the Chosen are banished from their promised land, to live, suffering, in exile. So too in 2 Corinthians 5, because of its sinful nature humankind peregrinates in the flesh away from God. Only when God chooses to call his people back to their homeland will they return. Thus the messianic expectation in the prophetic books accords with the Christian anticipation of the Last Days, when the Elect will return to God's side in heaven.

1.3.4 Peregrinatio *as Human Life*

Two final instances of *peregrinatio* in the Vulgate invite brief discussion: both of these follow a thread of classical tradition and employ *peregrinatio* as a metaphor for the journey of human existence.[95] First in Genesis, Jacob is asked by Pharao, 'How many are the days of the years of thy life?'; the patriarch answered,

> The days of my *peregrinatio* are a hundred and thirty years, few, and evil, and they are not come up to the days that my fathers lived in pilgrimage [*peregrinati sunt*].[96]

Then in the book of Ecclesiastes, a passage describing the uselessness of worldly vanities reads,

> There are many words that have much vanity in disputing. What needeth a man to seek things that are above him, whereas he knoweth not what is profitable for him in his life, in all the days of his *peregrinatio*, and the time that passeth like a shadow? Or who can tell him what shall be after him under the sun?[97]

In these two very different passages the concept of *peregrinatio* conveys the span of human life. This idea not only reflects classical traditions, but dovetails with the sense of Christian life on earth as a *peregrinatio*, alienated both on earth and from God. These

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[94] E.g., Isa 29.17–24, Jer 24.7, Lam 3.21–24, Ezek 11.14–21, 20.36–44, 36.16–38.

[95] See n. 8 above.

[96] Gen 47.8–9. The term *peregrinatio* does not appear in this passage in any extant Vetus Latina versions; Jerome's rendering follows the wording of both Greek (using *paroikeo*) and Hebrew (using *magôr*) texts.

[97] Eccl 7.1: *Quid necesse est homini maiora se quaerere, cum ignoret quid conducat sibi in vita sua, numero dierum peregrinationis suae, et tempore quod velut umbra praeterit? aut quis ei poterit indicare quid post eum futurum sub sole sit ?*

two instances of *peregrinatio*, the second of which may be a Hieronymian interpolation,[98] again demonstrate the coherent blend of images of alienation and *peregrinatio* that Jerome constructs in his translations.

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In his editions of the Old Testament books, Jerome took the basic elements of *peregrinatio* articulated in the Vetus Latina versions and amplified their complexity and thematic coherence. In his hands, the claim to the title *peregrinus* evolved from a simple emblem of cultural identity to a detailed portrait of alienation for the sake of God. Alienation on earth leads to citizenship in heaven—a sentiment that Jerome expresses using technical Roman legal terms of inclusion and exclusion.

Already in the Vetus Latina epistles, *peregrinatio* had begun to define the relationship between the Christian and the world: the Christian on earth is an alien and a stranger as all his fathers were, a *peregrinus* in the world and in the body, who eagerly awaits his Lord's call to his homeland. Jerome extended this allegory to include the origin stories and Law of the Old Testament, thereby creating a concentrated and coherent definition of the word *peregrinus* and its related forms. While alienation from God is a punishment for human faithlessness, alienation from the world is a goal to be desired, a measure of virtue: *peregrinatio* is a journey or a temporary residence in the foreignness of life in the flesh and on the earth, with the ultimate goal of humankind's return to the eternal homeland in heaven. Jerome adds to these depictions a sense of misery and torment in foreign lands, whether as resident aliens or as exiles (often, in fact, the distinction between these two types of person appears to be lost). In the Vulgate the relationship of the *peregrinus* to the *saeculum* was not only one foreign residence, but of disenfranchisement and painful separation from God on earth, where the Chosen await their return to claim citizenship in heaven.

1.4 Allegorical Alienation in Early Christian and Patristic Exegesis

Jerome's choice to use a Roman socio-legal vocabulary to express allegorical alienation was based upon themes that had already existed in Christian discourse for centuries. In early Christian and patristic exegetical texts, this scriptural rubric of identity—of the

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[98] Intriguingly, Jerome's apparent addition of *peregrinationis suae* to this verse does not appear to have any precedent in the Septuagint or Masoretic texts, nor in the available text of the Vetus Latina (though it will take more detailed research before I can assert this definitively). See VLS 2:363; *Septuaginta*, (Eccl 6.11–12), 2:250; *Biblia Hebraica,* (Qohelet 6:12) p. 1345.

Christian as a citizen of a transcendent Homeland but a sojourner or a traveller on earth—had expanded to form complex, three-dimensional images of virtue and piety.[99] The variations upon the theme of alienation are many; in the numerous iterations of these images, however, there is a surprising continuity—from East and West, and over the course of more than half a millennium. Two major Christian *topoi* are explored here: 1) the two cities; and 2) the traveller on the roadway of life.

1.4.1 *Alienation in Exegesis: the Two Cities*

Arguably the most influential articulation of Christian alienation is the allegory of the Two Cities. This metaphor involves the paradoxical use of the concept of citizenship, which declares that Christians are not citizens on earth but in heaven.[100] On earth the citizenship of the faithful is hidden, as they live among others who would not achieve salvation. This imagery was developed most famously in the writings of Augustine, but the tradition of this metaphor dates to the earliest centuries of Christian discourse.

The *Epistle to Diognetus*, written in Greek in the early second century, is one of the earliest extant Christian texts to employ this metaphor. This text succinctly describes how Christians are scattered among all of the countries of the world.

> For Christians are no different from other people in terms of their country, language, or customs. Nowhere do they inhabit cities of their own, use a strange dialect, or live life out of the ordinary....They inhabit both Greek and barbarian cities, according to the lot assigned to each. And they show forth the character of their own citizenship [*politeía*] in a marvellous and admittedly paradoxical way by following local customs in what they wear and what they eat and in the rest of their lives. *They live in their respective countries* [*patridas*], *but only as resident aliens* [*pároikoi*]; *they participate in all things as citizens* [*politai*], *and they endure all things as foreigners* [*xénoi*]. *Every foreign territory is a homeland for them, every homeland a foreign territory.*[101]

The *Shepherd* of Hermas—an apocalyptic book of the mid-second century—is another early witness.[102] Hermas has a vision in which he is commanded to keep his attention focused upon his ultimate place in the heavenly homeland; he is told that excessive attention paid to the trappings of the world will deny him entry into paradise. The apparition exhorts,

> You know that you servants of God are living in a foreign land [*epi xenos katoikeite*]. For your own city [*polis*] is a long way from this one. If, then, you know your own city, where you are about to live, why are you preparing fields,

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[99] For a comparative first-century Judaic example, see the brief discussion of Philo in appendix 1.
[100] A major source of this ideal is Eph 2.11–22; also Phil 3.20.
[101] My italics. *Epistle to Diognetus* 5.1–5 [Ehrman, pp. 138–40].
[102] On the date of the text, see Ehrmann, *Apostolic Fathers* II, pp. 165–9.

> expensive furnishings, buildings and pointless rooms for yourselves here? Anyone who prepares these things in this city, therefore, cannot return to his own city....And so what will you do, you who have a law from your own city? Will you completely renounce your own law for the sake of your fields and whatever else you own, and follow the law of the city you are in now? Take care, because renouncing your law may be against your own interests. For if you want to return to your own city, you will not be welcomed, because you have renounced its law; and you will be shut out of it. And so take care. Since you are dwelling in a foreign land [*epi xenos katoikon*], fix nothing up for yourself except what is absolutely necessary; and be ready, so that when the master of this city wants to banish you for not adhering to his law, you can leave his city and go to your own, and live according to your own law gladly, suffering no mistreatment.[103]

In both of these texts, city and law play central roles. Similarly in the Latin West, Tertullian (who knew the text of Hermas)[104] employs a legal vocabulary of citizenship and alienation to convey the concept of a heavenly Christian homeland. In Tertullian's lifetime (*c.*160–post-220)—a period of brutal persecutions of Christians by Roman authorities—these concepts must have resonated even more deeply among Christian audiences. For Tertullian, Christianity and the laws and customs of the Roman state had become incompatible.[105] In his *De Corona* Tertullian defends a soldier who had refused to wear the traditional festal wreath on his head at a formal ceremony. At the time of writing the soldier was in jail for his insubordination and his insult to Roman tradition, and was probably awaiting martyrdom. Tertullian addresses the soldier with ardent support: he writes,

> ...you are a *peregrinus* in this world, a citizen [*civis*] of Jerusalem, the city above. Our citizenship [*municipatus*], the apostle says, is in heaven. You have your own registers, your own calendar; you have nothing to do with the joys of the world; nay, you are called to the very opposite, for 'the world shall rejoice, but ye shall mourn'. And I think the Lord affirms, that those who mourn are happy, not those who are crowned.[106]

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[103] Hermas, *The Shepherd* 50 (Parables I), 1–10 [Ehrman, pp. 304–9]; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 15.1 [CCSL 48:453–4; NPNF 1.2:285]. Hermas's text was also available in Latin at an early date; see *Hermae Pastor, addita versione Latina recentiore e codice Palatino*, ed. Oscar von Gebhardt and Adolf Harnack, in *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera* 3 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1877), pp. 131–5. In this version, the exhortation 'And so take care. Since you are dwelling in a foreign land' reads *vide itaque tu, sicut peregrinus hic habitans*.

[104] Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 159–60.

[105] Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 1.1 [CCSL 1:85:1], 35 [CCSL 1:144–7], 36 [CCSL 1:147] and 38 [CCSL 1:149–50.

[106] Tertullian, *De corona militis* 13.4 [CCSL 2:1061; PL 2:95; ANF 3:101]: *Sed tu, peregrinus mundi huius et ciuis ciuitatis supernae Hierusalem,—noster, inquit, municipatus in caelis* (Phil. 3.20)*—habes tuos census, tuos fastos, nihil tibi cum gaudiis saeculi, immo contrarium debes. Saeculum enim gaudebit, uos uero lugebitis* (John 16.20). *Et, puto, felices ait lugentes, non coronatos.* Also cf. Cyprian, *De mortalitate* 26 [CCSL 3A: 31–2; PL 4:601A–602B; ANF 5:475].

Tertullian enhances the legal contrast of *peregrinus* and *civis* with technical terms of civic administration: Christians have their own *census*—the public census register—and their own *fasti*—the calendar of court dates and official events. The *peregrinus* rejects earthly and especially imperial traditions, and finds foes among the foreignness of the world. The Christian is an alien in this world and a stranger to all of its customs, but a full-fledged *civis* of the heavenly *Patria*.

Even in later centuries when the empire became increasingly Christianised, the power of this allegory did not wane. The concept of heavenly and earthly citizenship remained topical in the East among the Cappadocian fathers, and also in the West, where it was developed most extensively in the works of St Augustine (354–430). The ideals of *peregrinatio* permeate many of Augustine's works, but it is his *magnum opus*, the *De civitate Dei*, that develops the image of the earthly pilgrimage to its greatest extent.[107] Augustine uses *peregrinatio* and its related forms nearly one hundred times in this work; the concept of separation and alienation—*peregrinatio*—from God was an integral component of his conception of the heavenly city.[108] The first lines of his great treatise begin,

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[107] Scholarship on Augustine's *civitas* is enormous. Some works that require mention are: Antoine Lauras, 'Deux cités, Jérusalem et Babylone. Formation et évolution d'un thème central du «De Civitate Dei»', in *Estudios sobre la 'Ciudad de Dios': numéro extraordinario de homenaje a San Augustín en el XVI centenario de su nacimiento 354–13 Noviembre–1954*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de el Escorial, 1955–56), vol. 1, pp. 117–150; Gerhart B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 263–83; É. Boularand, 'Le Thème des deux Cités chez saint Augustin', *Les Études Philosophiques* 17 (1962), pp. 213–31; Y.M.J. Congar, '«Civitas Dei» et «Ecclesia» chez saint Augustin', *Revue des études augustiniennes* 3 (1957), pp. 1–14; Gustave Bardy, 'La formation du concept de «Cité de Dieu» dans l'œuvre de saint Augustin', *L'Année Théologique Augustinienne* 12.1 (1952), pp. 5–19; idem, 'Définition de la Cité de Dieu', *L'Année Théologique Augustinienne* 12.2–2 (1952), pp. 113–29; H.I. Marrou, '*Civitas Dei, civitas terrena: num tertium quid?*', *Studia Patristica* 2, Texte und Untersuchungen 64 (1957), pp. 342–50. For a more general but essential study of Augustinian thought, see also R.A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

[108] For *peregrinatio* in *City of God*, see Johannes Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's* City of God *and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), pp. 131–42, which includes a very useful detailed listing of the instances of *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* in the *De civitate Dei*; Claussen, '*Peregrinatio* and *Peregrini*', pp. 33–76. For the concept of *civitas*, Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, pp. 108–15; R.T. Marshall, *Studies in the Political and Socio-Religious Terminology of the* De Civitate Dei (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1952); Mazzolani, Lidia Storoni, *The Idea of the City in Roman Thought: from Walled City to Spiritual Commonwealth*, trans. by S. O'Donnell (London: Hollis & Carter, 1970). A recent essay that uses some similar primary sources to those in this chapter is Manuela Brito-Martins, 'The Concept of *peregrinatio* in Saint Augustine and its Influences', in *Exile in the Middle Ages*, ed. Laura Napran and Elisabeth van Houts, International Medieval Research 13 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 83–94; Brito-Martins's points of emphasis and conclusions generally differ from my own. Also see Gillian Clark, 'Pilgrims and Foreigners: Augustine on Travelling Home', in *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity*, ed. Linda Ellis and Frank L. Kidner (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 149–58.

> Most glorious is the City of God: whether in this passing age, where she dwells by faith as a pilgrim [*peregrinatur*] among the ungodly, or in the security of that eternal home which she now patiently awaits until 'righteousness shall return unto judgment' (Ps 94.15), but which she will then possess perfectly, in final victory and perfect peace.[109]

Peregrinatio had become the state of existence of the entire, hidden city as it sojourns—amidst the godless and away from home—on earth:

> This heavenly city, then, while it sojourns on earth [*dum peregrinatur in terra*], calls citizens out of all nations, and gathers together a society of aliens [*peregrina societas*], of all languages, not scrupling about diversities in the manners, laws, and institutions whereby earthly peace is secured and maintained, but recognizing that, however various these are, they all tend to one and the same end of earthly peace... Even the heavenly city, therefore, while in its state of *peregrinatio*, avails itself of the peace of earth, and, so far as it can without injuring faith and godliness, desires and maintains a common agreement among men regarding the acquisition of the necessaries of life, and makes this earthly peace bear upon the peace of heaven; for this alone can be truly called and esteemed the peace of the reasonable creatures, consisting as it does in the perfectly ordered and harmonious enjoyment of God and of one another in God.[110]

In contrast to Tertullian's *municipatus*, the *populus* of Augustine's City was not being steeled against the horrors of persecution and exhorted toward martyrdom. Augustine does not encourage defiance of worldly laws or the disruption of earthly peace, but warns Christians simply to know themselves as aliens, as did the patriarchs in Hebrews 11. Like his predecessors, Augustine combined the Roman legal sense of foreign disenfranchisement with the connotations of alienation that we find in Scripture, from the multi-faceted senses of estrangement to the idea of human life on earth as a *peregrinatio*. Augustine invests the idea with mystical abstraction: the City of God is unseen and unknowable to humankind. Augustine's ideas were not new or unique, but the doctrine of the Two Cities undoubtedly found its most lucid and eloquent expression in his works. Augustine is rightly credited in part for the great influence that this ideal

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[109] Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 1.Preface [CCSL 47:1; PL 41:13; Dyson, p. 3]: *Gloriosissimam ciuitatem Dei, siue in hoc temporum cursu, cum inter impios peregrinatur ex fide uiuens, siue in illa stabilitate sedis aeternae, quam nunc exspectat per patientiam, quoadusque iustitia conuertatur in iudicium, deinceps adeptura per excellentiam uictoria ultima et pace perfecta.* (I have used Dyson's English translation of this passage because it reflects the CCSL and PL wording more accurately than does Dods's in NPNF 1.2.)

[110] Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 19.17 [CCSL 48:684(47–63); PL 41:646; NPNF 1.2:412]: *Haec ergo caelestis ciuitas dum peregrinatur in terra, ex omnibus gentibus ciues euocat, atque in omnibus linguis peregrinam colligit societatem, non curans quidquid in moribus legibus institutisque diuersum est, quibus pax terrena uel conquiritur uel tenetur...Vtitur ergo etiam caelestis ciuitas in hac sua peregrinatione pace terrena et de rebus ad mortalem hominum naturam pertinentibus humanarum uoluntatum compositionem, quantum salua pietate ac religione conceditur, tuetur atque appetit eamque terrenam pacem refert ad caelestem pacem, quae uere ita pax est, ut rationalis dumtaxat creaturae sola pax habenda atque dicenda sit, ordinatissima scilicet et concordissima societas fruendi Deo, et inuicem in Deo.*

would have on medieval Christian thought. With its intense focus upon the mystical journey of the City of God, Augustine's work would have monumental impact upon the development of a theology of *peregrinatio* in the Christian West.

1.4.2 *Alienation in Exegesis: The Traveller Metaphor*

While the learned scholars and theologians of Christendom from late antiquity onward were powerfully influenced by Augustine's *ecclesia peregrinans*, with regard to the more practical aspects of *peregrinatio* addressed in the coming chapters, an equally important manifestation of allegorical alienation is the image of the traveller on a journey to God's homeland. This theme appears in many different forms; nautical metaphors, for example, depict a ship—sometimes symbolic of the Church—sailing through dangerous waters towards the safe harbour of heaven.[111] We find more land-bound articulations of this theme in the metaphor of the wayfarer who journeys upon the road of life.[112] In Latin, the similar forms of the terms for 'path' and 'life'—*via* and *vita*—give this metaphor added rhetorical flourish, as virtuous journeyers stride purposefully upon the *via vitae*. The traveller metaphor may bear some relationship to the 'strait and narrow path [*via*]' of righteousness in Matthew 7.13–14,[113] which became a touchstone of monastic ideology; the words of Jesus in John 14.6: 'I am the way [*via*] and the truth and the life [*vita*]. No man comes to the Father except through me';[114] as well as an Old Testament prophecy of Jeremiah: 'Thus saith the Lord: Behold I set before you the way of life [*via vitae*], and the way of death [*via mortis*].[115]

Christian alienation plays a prominent role in this metaphor, as the traveller by definition proceeds through lands not his own. The image evokes the models of

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[111] Some examples of this metaphor are: Jerome, *Ep.* 2 *ad Theodosium*; *Ep.* 14.6 *ad Heliodorum*; idem, *Ep.* 79.10 *ad Salvinam*; idem, 125.2–3 *ad Rusticum*; Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 9.2; idem *Ep.* 16.7–8; idem, *Ep.* 23.30; idem, *Ep.* 23.29; Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio* 18.3 [NPNF 2.7:255]; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Lectio* 17.1 [NPNF 2.7:124]; *AP Alph*, Syncletica 9–10. See discussion in Hugo Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* (London: Burns & Oates, 1963), pp. 328–86; also Johannes W. Smit, *Studies on the Language and Style of Columba the Younger (Columbanus)* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1971), pp. 174–89.

[112] For a study of the *topoi* of the *alienus*, *viator*, and *peregrinus*, see Ladner, '*Homo Viator*', pp. 233–59.

[113] For monasticism as the narrow path, see Rufinus, *Historia Monachorum*, PL 21:398C; John Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum* 4.38; idem, *Conlationes* 14.3; Caesarius of Arles, *Regula ad monachos* 19; *Regula Magistri*, Prologue 12–14; *Regula Benedicti* 5.11; also Basil, *Ep.* 42.5; Anonymous *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* 1.30 [Russell, p. 56].

[114] John 14.6: *Ego sum via, et veritas, et vita. Nemo vadit ad Patrem nisi per me.* Also see Hebr 12.13; Jam 5.20.

[115] Jer 21.8–9: *haec dicit Dominus / ecce ego do coram vobis viam vitae et viam mortis.* Also see Ps 16.11.

Abraham and his descendants as they journeyed in God's name through foreign territories to reach the land of promise, and often incorporates the theme of 2 Corinthians 5, of human life as a journey in foreign lands, away from God. This metaphor often emphasises the use of the world, rather than the enjoyment of it; excessive pleasure from earthly things causes the traveller to divert from his path. The traveller may proceed down the wrong path, or simply become too distracted by the temptations of the roadside to reach his heavenly goal.

An early version of this metaphor emanates from the Alexandrian school, famous for its espousal of allegorical exegesis. In the tradition of the epistle to the Hebrews, Clement of Alexandria († *c.*215) writes of the virtuous man who knows himself to be a foreigner on his journey through the world, and only uses the amenities of the earth—the inns and dwellings along his path—without developing any attachments to them. Thus when he is called from the world he leaves without delay:

> The elect man dwells as a sojourner [*xenos*], knowing all things to be possessed and disposed of; and he makes use of things.... The body, too, as one sent on a distant pilgrimage [*apodemia*], uses inns and dwellings by the way, having care of the things of the world, of the places where he halts; but leaving his dwelling-place and property without excessive emotion; readily following him that leads him away from life; by no means and on no occasion turning back; giving thanks for his sojourn [*paroikia*], and blessing [God] for his departure, embracing the mansion that is in heaven.[116]

In later texts this concept further evolves into colourful imagery of the traveller's path, with pleasant landscapes to tempt the senses. For Gregory of Nyssa († after 385/6) the distractions at the side of the path—the 'smiling landscapes'—represent the temptations of the flesh and the sins of the earthly; the virtuous must keep their eyes trained upon their goal at the end of the journey. He writes in his *De virginitate*,

> The clear-seeing mind which measures reality will journey on its path without turning, accomplishing its appointed time from its birth to its exit; it is neither softened by the pleasures nor beaten down by the hardships; but, as is the way with travellers, it keeps advancing always, and takes but little notice of the views presented. It is the travellers' way to press on to their journey's end, no matter whether they are passing through meadows and cultivated farms, or through wilder and more rugged spots; a smiling landscape does not detain them; nor a gloomy

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[116] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 4.26.165–6, GCS 2, pp. 321–2 [ANF 2:440]; also see ibid., 7.12. Cf. Basil, *Ep.* 5.2 [NPNF 2.8:114]; Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 19.17 [as above, n. 110]. For an intriguingly similar classical Latin precedent for the contrast of use/enjoyment, see Seneca, *Epistulae moralis ad Lucilium* 120.18 [Gummere, vol. 3, p. 392]. On continued significance of these 'inns' from their use in ancient Greek and Judaic philosophical works, see Olivia R. Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: lodging, trade, and travel in late antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 18–22, 25–9; also Ladner, '*Homo Viator*', pp. 235–6 and 238 n. 20. Also cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 6.19 [Melmoth, vol. 1, p. 488] for a classical pagan allegorical reference to inns.

> one check their speed. So, too, that lofty mind will press straight on to its self-imposed end, not turning aside to see anything on the way. It passes through life, but its gaze is fixed on heaven; it is the good steersman directing the bark to some landmark there. But the grosser mind looks down; it bends its energies to bodily pleasures as surely as the sheep stoop to their pasture; it lives for gorging and still lower pleasures; it is alienated from the life of God, and a stranger to the promise of the Covenants.[117]

As these ideals moved westward, the Latin fathers expressed them in terms of *peregrinatio*, again in contrast with being at home in the heavenly *patria*. Augustine, for example, joins this metaphor with the sense of alienation from God in 2 Corinthians 5, so that the traveller is absent from God and determined to return to him. Like Clement, Augustine stresses the detached use of the world without the enjoyment of its trappings.[118] The *De doctrina Christiana* reads,

> Suppose, then, we were *peregrini* in a strange country, and could not live happily away from our fatherland, and that we felt wretched in our *peregrinatio*, and wishing to put an end to our misery, determined to return to our homeland.... But the beauty of the country through which we pass, and the very pleasure of the motion, charm our hearts, and...we become unwilling to hasten the end of our journey; and becoming engrossed in a factitious delight, our thoughts are diverted from that homeland whose delights would make us truly happy. Such is a picture of our condition in this life of mortality. We have wandered far from God [*peregrinantes a Domino*]; and if we wish to return to our Father's homeland, this world must be used, not enjoyed.[119]

The recurring traveller metaphor represents a complex blend of Christian ideals. It combines the Old Testament awareness of the alienation of travellers when they leave their own lands, with the New Testament's focus upon the alienation of humankind on earth. The homeland where the traveller has his/her citizenship is heaven, and virtuous Christians journey along the pathway of life until they reach it.

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[117] Gregory of Nyssa, *De virginitate* 4.4–5, SC 119:316–19 [NPNF 2.5:349–50]. Cf. Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio* 18.3 [NPNF 2.7:255].

[118] This opposition of *uti* and *frui* was also central to his doctrine in the *De civitate Dei*. Discussed in R.A. Markus, '*Alienatio*. Philosophy and Eschatology in the Development of an Augustinian Idea', *Studia Patristica* 9, ed. F.L. Cross, Texte un Unterschungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 94 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966), pp. 431–50, reprinted in R.A. Markus, *Sacred and Secular: Studies on Augustine and Latin Christianity* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), sec. 15, p. 434; M.A. Claussen, '*Peregrinatio* and *Peregrini* in Augustine's *City of God*', *Traditio* 46 (1991), pp. 33–76 at 49–53.

[119] Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 1.4 [CCSL 32:8(4–15); PL 34:20–21; NPNF 1.2:523]: *Quomodo ergo, si essemus peregrini, qui beate uiuere nisi in patria non possemus, eaque peregrinatione utique miseri et miseriam finire cupientes, in patriam redire uellemus,...quod si amoenitates itineris, et ipsa gestatio uehiculorum nos delectaret,...nollemus cito uiam finire, et peruersa suauitate implicati alienaremur a patria, cujus suauitas faceret beatos: sic in huius mortalitatis uita peregrinantes a domino* (2 Cor. 5.6), *si redire in patriam uolumus, ubi beati esse possimus, utendum est hoc mundo, non fruendum*. Translation altered slightly from printed version; where *patria* is rendered as 'home' I have changed it to 'homeland'.

The metaphors discussed here are but two of many; alienation featured frequently in Christian discourse from its beginnings to the Middle Ages and beyond. These exegetes collated numerous scriptural passages on alienation and formed them into intricate filigrees of imagery and moral allegory. As these designs began to be wrought in Latin, the terminology of *peregrinatio* became ever more firmly engraved upon the Christian consciousness, as the state of pilgrimage evolved not only into a metaphor for the entirety of human existence but also a way for Christians to understand their relationship to God.

1.5 *Peregrinatio* at the Dawn of the Middle Ages

Peregrinatio continued to hold a place of great importance in Christian consciousness long after the critical period of confluence and creativity in the waning years of antiquity. The medieval descendants of the scriptural and exegetical traditions of *peregrinatio* are too many to list. But in any analysis of medieval *peregrinatio*, particularly looking ahead towards an Irish context, two writers cannot be omitted: Gregory the Great (*c.*540–604; r. 590–604) and Isidore of Seville (*c.*560–636).[120]

1.5.1 *Gregory the Great*[121]

As we have seen, by the lifetime of Gregory the Great the importance of *peregrinatio* in the Christian world-view had already been firmly established. Building upon the works of Augustine, Jerome and others, Gregory used the metaphor of Christian *peregrinatio*

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[120] On the works and importance of Gregory I in Ireland, see Martin McNamara, 'Patristic Background to Medieval Irish Ecclesiastical Sources', in *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit*, ed. Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey (Dublin: Four Courts, 1995), pp. 253–81 esp. 258; Kenney, *Sources*, p. 278, no. 106; François Kerlouégan, 'Grégoire le Grand et les pays celtiques', in *Grégoire le Grand*, ed. Jacques Fontaine, Robert Gillet and Stan Pellistrandi (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1986), pp. 589–96.

On the knowledge of Isidore in Ireland, see Michael Herren, 'On the earliest Irish acquaintance with Isidore of Seville', in *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches*, ed. Edward James (Oxford, 1980), pp. 243–50, reprinted in *Latin Letters in Early Christian Ireland* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), sec. III; J.N. Hillgarth, 'Ireland and Spain in the seventh century', *Peritia* 3 (1984), pp. 1–16; also idem, 'Visigothic Spain and Early Christian Ireland', *PRIA* 62C (1962), pp. 167–94.

[121] Scholarly works on Gregory the Great are plentiful; a concise summary of his life, works and thought with a useful thematic bibliography is in Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great*, Authors of the Middle Ages: Historical and Religious Writers of the Latin West vol. 4, no. 12 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996); for what has quickly become the standard biography on Gregory, see R.A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). In addition, see the more recent John Moorhead, *Gregory the Great* (London: Routledge, 2005); also very useful are some of the essays in *Gregory the Great: a Symposium*, ed. John C. Cavadini (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995). For a more focused look at Gregory's thought, see Gillian R. Evans, *The Thought of Gregory the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

extensively, particularly in his great *Moralia in Job*, an often mystical exegesis of the story of Job written primarily for a monastic audience.[122] The expressions of Christian *peregrinatio* in Gregory's works are not exceptional; most can be easily traced to their earlier patristic models. But their importance lies in the profound influence that this great pope's writings had upon the discourse of the medieval church.

Gregory uses the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* frequently and with nearly every possible meaning that we have found in early Christian and patristic texts. He is fond of using as an extreme element of a contrasting pair: for example, he writes, 'Abraham...was a *peregrinus* in this world, but a friend to God'.[123] Very often Gregory's *peregrini* are those needy strangers to whom Christians—especially bishops—must show charity and hospitality.[124] He also frequently conveys an Augustinian ideal of *peregrinatio*, for example when he writes,

> Through all the history of the holy church on *peregrinatio* in this world, as it suffers its wounds and grieves for those who fall away from it, it must in addition put up with the presence of enemies of Christ wearing the name of Christ.[125]

One of Gregory's favoured expressions is the *peregrinatio* of human life on earth;[126] here mankind suffers and sighs,[127] having been expelled from Paradise.[128] His version of *peregrinatio* stresses the eschatological message of the epistles with a very heavy emphasis upon the great tribulations of mankind in this earthly *peregrinatio*. He often uses imagery of light and of darkness, of sight and blindness. The *peregrinatio* is a

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[122] The terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* appear in his *Moralia in Job* fifty-three times; he also used them relatively often (eighteen times) in his *Homiliae in evangelia*. See *Thesaurus Sancti Gregorii Magni*, series A: *Formae*, Corpus Christianorum, Thesaurus Patrum Latinorum (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986), p. 244. On Gregory's intended audience for this work, see Straw, *Gregory the Great*, p. 49.

[123] Gregory I, *Moralia in Job* 4.32.63 [CCSL 143:207(18); PL 75:671D]: *Abraham...peregrinus est in saeculo, factus est amicus Deo.*

[124] Gregory I, *Dialogi* 1.10 [PL 77:201C, 204A]; ibid 3.14 [PL 77:248A]; idem, *Moralia in Job* 9.34.52 [CCSL 143:493(20–21); PL 75:888B]; idem, *Homiliae in evangelia* 23 [CCSL 141:192–5; PL 76:1182C–83C]; also see idem, *Ep.* 13.8 [PL 77:1264C]; idem, *Ep.* 5.30 [PL 77:75A–B].

[125] Gregory I, *Moralia in Job* 3.22 [CCSL 143:142(11–14); PL 75:621B]: *Sancta itaque Ecclesia omni hoc tempore peregrinationis suae in afflictione constituta, cum uulnera sustinet, cum membrorum suorum lapsus dolet, insuper alios sub Christi nomine tolerat hostes Christi.* Trans. by James J. O'Donnell, posted online at http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/gregory.html. Also see ibid. 4.20 [CCSL 143:186(2–4); PL 75:655D]; ibid. 20.5 [CCSL 143A:1010(20–21); PL 76:142A–B]; ibid. 31.7 [CCSL 143B:1556–7(39–40); PL 76:577C–D]; idem, *Homiliae in Ezekielem prophetam* 2.1.5 [CCSL 142:211(142–5); PL 76:938C–D].

[126] E.g., Gregory I, *Moralia in Job* 3.23 [CCSL 143:144(5–7); PL 75:623A]; ibid. 5.2 [CCSL 143:219(15–16); PL 75:680D]; ibid. 31.27 [CCSL 143B:1588(27–8); PL 76:603B]; idem, *Ep.* 1.7 [PL 77:454A]; idem, *Ep.* 10.35 [PL 77:1092B]; also cf. *Moralia in Job* 5.8 [CCSL 143:227(7–8); PL 75:686C].

[127] There are many references to pilgrimage as suffering: e.g., Gregory I, *Moralia in Job* 7.2–4 [CCSL 143:334–7; PL 75:768B–769B]; also ibid. 6.16.23 [CCSL 143:299–300; PL 75:741D–742A].

[128] Gregory I, *Expositio super cantica canticorum*, proemium 1 [CCSL 144:3; PL 79:471A].

place of darkness that must be tolerated, not embraced; heavenly light is the ultimate goal. Those who love the darkness are blinded by sin and will not reach their heavenly home.[129] The elect suffer deeply through the *peregrinatio* of life on earth; those who become enchanted by the *peregrinatio* will be condemned for loving the earthly and rejecting heaven.

In his *Regula Pastoralis* (which, it should be noted, was known to the Irish abbot Columbanus very soon after its publication), Gregory writes his own version of the traveller metaphor:

> For those who prosper in what they desire in temporal matters are to be admonished, when all things answer to their wishes...lest they love their *peregrinatio* instead of their country; lest they turn the supplies for their journey into hindrances to their arrival at its end; lest, delighted with the light of the moon by night, they shrink from beholding the clearness of the sun.... So may the things that are supplied to us be of service to us outwardly to such extent only as not to turn our minds away from desire of supernal delight; and thus the things that afford us succour in our state of exile may not abate the mourning of our soul's *peregrinatio*; and we, who see ourselves to be wretched in our severance from the things that are eternal, may not rejoice as though we were happy in the things that are transitory.[130]

Gregory's renditions of *peregrinatio* are suffused with apocalypticism.[131] He often employs the familiar opposition of *peregrinatio* versus *patria*, and the contrast of being a *peregrinus* on earth but a citizen of heaven (or, as he more simply expresses, one of the *electi* or *sancti*). Though his uses of the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* are not extraordinary, Gregory's version of *peregrinatio* is one of stark contrasts, which weaves into his deep-seated sense of impending doom. For Gregory, the human pilgrimage is earthly, full of sin, a place of darkness, a state of blindness and tribulation; while the *patria* is celestial, without sin, a place of the brightest light, a state of enlightenment and joy.

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[129] Gregory I, *Moralia in Job* 4.25 [CCSL 143: PL 75:660A–B]; ibid. 7.12 [CCSL 143:191–2; PL 75:774A]; ibid. 11.42.58 [CCSL 143A:618–19; PL 75:979B–C; ibid. 18.30.48 [CCSL 143A:916–17; PL 76:63C–D]; idem, *Expositio super cantica canticorum*, proemium 1 [CCSL 144:3; PL 79:471A]; idem, *Homiliae in evangelia* 2.8 [CCSL 141:17(122–32); PL 76:1085A–B].

[130] Gregory I, *Regula Pastoralis* 3.26 (Admonitio 27) [PL 77:99; Barmby, p. 55]: *Admonendi namque sunt qui in hoc quod temporaliter appetunt prosperantur...ne peregrinationem pro patria diligant, ne subsidia itineris in obstacula perventionis vertant, ne nocturno lunae lumine delectati, claritatem solis videre refugiant....Ut videlicet sic nobis quae suppetunt, exterius serviant, quatenus a supernae delectationis studio animum non inflectant, ne luctum nobis internae peregrinationis temperent eaque in exsilio positis subsidium praebent; et quasi felices in transitoriis nos gaudeamus, qui ab aeternis nos interim miseros cernimus.* Also see idem, *Moralia in Job* 8.54.92 [CCSL 143:454; PL 75:857D–858A].

[131] For a discussion of Gregory's sense of the impending apocalypse, see R.A. Markus, 'The Sacred and the Secular: from Augustine to Gregory the Great', *JTS* 36 (1985), pp. 84–96.

1.5.2 *Isidore of Seville*

As with Gregory the Great, Isidore's importance to this discussion lies not so much in his creativity as in his influence, and the broad dissemination of his works throughout western Europe in the medieval period.[132] His writings travelled far and wide, and reached Ireland at a very early stage: it has long been recognised that Isidorian texts were known in Ireland at least by the middle of the seventh century, and perhaps even earlier.[133] The *Etymologiae* were particularly esteemed in Ireland,[134] but *De ortu et obitu patrum*, *De natura rerum*, *De differentiis verborum* and *Synonyma* also appear to have been available.[135]

Isidore's conceptions of *peregrinatio* are often similar to those of Gregory, and were no doubt deeply influenced by the great pope's works; many of Isidore's renditions of *peregrinatio* like Gregory's are constructed within an Augustinian framework.[136] *Peregrini* are also once again a class of the needy whose care is the special responsibility of all Christians, but particularly the clergy.[137] For Isidore, *peregrinatio* is the condition of human life on earth,[138] and the state of exile from Paradise suffered by humanity for the sins of Adam.[139] *Peregrinus/–ari/–atio* in Isidore's works describes the state of Abraham in the Promised Land,[140] the exile of Moses and the Hebrews in Egypt,[141] the Babylonian captivity,[142]

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[132] There are few adequate works on Isidore in English. For a rather outdated but still useful account, see Ernest Brehaut, *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages: Isidore of Seville*, Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law 48.1 (New York: Columbia University Press; London: Longmans, 1912). For a more recent study, see Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville: Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000). Another outdated but useful summary is in Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, 'The position of Isidorian studies: a critical review of the literature since 1935', in *Isidoriana: colección de estudios sobre Isidoro de Sevilla*, ed. Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz (León: Centro de Estudios San Isidoro, 1961), pp. 11–74.

[133] Herren, 'On the earliest Irish acquaintance', esp. pp. 243–5.

[134] See Tomás Ó Máille, 'The Authorship of the *Culmen*', *Ériu* 9 (1921), pp. 71–6. Isidore was cited in Ireland as 'Isidore Etymologiarum'; see ibid., p. 74 and Herren, 'On the earliest Irish acquaintance', pp. 244, 250.

[135] Herren, 'On the earliest Irish acquaintance', pp. 246–7.

[136] E.g., Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.1.5, PL 82:295B; idem, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 1.24.2, PL 83:760C; idem, *Mysticorum expositiones sacramentorum* (*seu Quaestiones in vetus testamentum*), Genesis, ch. 6.20, PL 83:227B; ibid., Esdras ch. 1.1–2, PL 83:421D–3A.

[137] *De ecclisiasticis officiis* 2.5.18, PL 83:786B.

[138] Isidore, *Sententiarum* 2.12.4, PL 83:613C; idem, *Mysticorum expositiones sacramentorum*, Genesis, ch. 22.6, PL 83:255A; also cf. idem, *Differentiarum* 2.34.130, PL 83:90C.

[139] Isidore, *Differentiarum* 2.12.32, PL 83:75B.

[140] Isidore, *De ortu et obitu patrum*, Old Testament 6.13, PL 83:133A; idem, *Mysticorum expositiones sacramentorum*, Genesis, ch. 13.1, PL 83:242B; ibid., Genesis, ch. 16.2, PL 83:247A.

[141] Isidore, *Mysticorum expositiones sacramentorum*, Exodus, ch. 6.1, PL 83:289A.

[142] Isidore, *Mysticorum expositiones sacramentorum*, 4 Kings, ch. 8.1, PL 83:422B, using *peregrinari*.

and—intriguingly—also the journeys of St Paul.[143] In accordance with both Gregory and Augustine, Abel is also a *peregrinus*, for he did not build a *civitas* as Cain did.[144]

But many of Isidore's expressions of *peregrinatio* were more literal and also somewhat more varied than Gregory's, particularly in his great efforts to categorise and define words and concepts in the Latin language. Isidore's attempts to define the term *peregrinus* and to use *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* in his definitions of other terms reveal that while some of the nuances of Roman legal understanding were lost by the medieval period, the basic meanings of these terms had survived the passage of time. In the *Etymologiae*, in a chapter titled *De civibus* ('On citizens'), a section defining and differentiating various terms for 'alien'—having already addressed *inquilinus, advena, indigena, incola*—explains the word *peregrini*:

> *Peregrini* are [so] called, because their parents are not known, [or] from what origins they emerge; for they are from a faraway place.[145]

In a later book of the same work (under the letter 'P' and immediately following an entry for *profuga*) he writes, 'A *peregrinus* [is] placed far away from [his] homeland, just like an alien'.[146] Then in the *Differentiarum*, he describes,

> Between *incola* and *inquilinus*. *Incola*—and indeed *inquilinus*—signifies the loss of country; but one is called *inquilinus* while one peregrinates [*peregrinatur*], *incola* when one finds a settled place.[147]

Thus while *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* in Isidore's works alluded to scripture and to powerful exegetical imagery, his more practical writings show that the literal senses of these words also were not lost.

Interestingly, as Rome's political, social and cultural dominance faded into the medieval period, the person of the *peregrinus* retained its meaning and definition. The remaining aspect of the classical hierarchy that faded substantially was the status of *civis*, which lost much of its significance as population groups shrank and major centres of activity dissolved to form more rurally-focussed economies and cultures. To be sure, the word would have been easily understood by Latin speakers, but the rigidly-defined

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[143] Isidore, *De ortu et obitu patrum*, New Testament 82.143, PL 83:154B.

[144] Isidore, *Mysticorum expositiones sacramentorum*, Genesis, ch. 6.20, PL 83:227B. Cf. Gregory I, *Moralia in Job* 16.10.15 [CCSL 143A:807; PL 75:1128A–B]; Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 15.1 [CCSL 48:453–4].

[145] Isidore, *Etymologiae* 9.4.41, PL 82:352B: *Peregrini dicti, eo quod ignorantur eorum parentes, quibus orti existunt; sunt enim de longinqua regione.*

[146] Isidore, *Etymologiae* 10.216, PL 82:390B: *Peregrinus longe a patria positus, sicut alienigena.*

[147] Isidore, *Differentiarum* 1.1.322, PL 83:43B: *Inter incolam et inquilinum. Incola quidem et inquilinus signum est perditae patriae; sed inquilinus dicitur quandiu peregrinatur, incola cum invenerit sedem.*

and sometimes lofty status of *civis* no longer had such profound significance among these populations. In great contrast, the designation of 'stranger' and 'outsider' never lost its power in the medieval West.

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The frequency and breadth of images of pilgrimage across so much early Christian, patristic and medieval discourse demonstrate the great resonance that the ideal of alienation had among Christians. The metaphors of pilgrimage breathed life into the legends and prescriptive texts of the bible. Exegetes recalled the virtuous journeys of Abraham and the sojourns and exiles of his descendants; they invoked the language of the epistles, particularly 2 Corinthians, which express the human condition as separation from God. As the Vulgate became a dominant biblical text in the West, the imagery of *peregrinatio* became even more meaningful. In exegesis as in scripture, *peregrinatio* informed the Christian understanding of his/her relationship to the world: Christians live away from God in a place of great danger. They journey down life's pathways, tempted by the pleasures of the roadside; they hope for the end of their journey, when they will return to their homeland in God. As Christians travel through life, they dwell in the foreignness of flesh and sin. They are *peregrini*—disenfranchised, suffering in exile—and will only claim their citizenship when they return to their *patria*. The church itself becomes a foreigner, living in exile from God, waiting to be called back by God's grace.

As the Middle Ages began, the importance of *peregrinatio* as allegory had firmly solidified in the consciousness of western Christendom. Those medieval pilgrims who identified themselves as *peregrini* and their journeys as *peregrinationes* therefore depicted their form of devotion using the language of scripture and the rich traditions of Christian exegesis. Hence we now turn to the practices that these words came to convey to form a more complete representation of what *peregrinatio* meant to the medieval West.

Chapter 2 From Concept to Practice

As we have seen, themes of estrangement recur throughout Christian discourse. Christians inherited from the Old Testament a sense of alienation as a crucial aspect of their identity as the people of God; the New Testament transformed this fundament into a spiritual and allegorical ideal, as the alienation of the elect became a requisite for salvation. The works of Early Christian and patristic exegetes wove these scriptural concepts and prescriptions into complex tapestries of colourful imagery and forceful doctrine; and as these elements of scriptural and exegetical alienation emerged in the Latin West, they were framed in terms of *peregrinatio*: the great richness of history behind the words *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* and their multi-layered meanings made them particularly well-suited to express these ideals of Christian alienation. The attachment of this terminology to the ideal of Christian alienation was gradual; but by the dawn of the Middle Ages, *peregrinatio* had become firmly entrenched in Christian tradition as a powerful metaphor for human life and a defining tenet of the Christian world-view. Only after these terms were well established in theological discourse did they then take on the practical and ritualistic dimensions of pilgrimage with which we are now familiar.

Roughly in the same period that saw Augustine creating his great treatise and shortly after Jerome had translated his books of the bible, to be a *peregrinus* also became a fundamental directive of western asceticism. This, too, was after a long and gradual evolution; ultimately the ideological foundations of Christian alienation took tangible form in the principles of ascetic monasticism, as the desert fathers and their imitators incorporated ritualised and formulaic separation as a basic element of their discipline. It seems almost inevitable that the concept of *peregrinatio*, with its intrinsic sense of arduous journeys, intense suffering, and both physical and spiritual alienation, would become attached to monastic practice. Christian doctrine taught that a proper life is one lived without attachment to the flesh and to the world: the archetypal practitioner of such a life was a monk. Monasticism thus provides a critical bridge between the mythological and abstract concepts of foreign existence in Scripture and exegesis and the actual renunciation of the world and everything in it. Early monastic works that expressed the Christian ideals of alienation with a western vocabulary firmly established the role of *peregrinatio* in the moral code and daily existence of those who sought to be

perfect. Hence the first section of this discussion returns to the twilight years of the Roman empire to trace another thread of the development of pilgrimage, as concept met practice and forged a new, ritual component of *peregrinatio*.

Probably within a few decades of the firm establishment of *peregrinatio* as an aspect of ascetic renunciation, the vocabulary of *peregrinatio* also was attached to the act of *peregrinatio ad loca sancta*—the goal-oriented practice that is now most often associated with the term 'pilgrimage'. For although this ritual existed from very early in Christian history, it was only named *peregrinatio* after this term was fixed solidly into monastic discourse; indeed, this new label was not used consistently until well into the medieval period, almost at the end of the period when monastic *peregrinatio* had reached its peak and had begun to decline. Hence at some point in the development of *peregrinatio ad loca sancta* the act was consciously related to ascetic rituals of withdrawal and renunciation. From the point that both acts—ascetic *peregrinatio ex patria* and the more populist *peregrinatio ad loca sancta*—began to share the same name, they should be considered as interrelated phenomena. The second part of this chapter thus examines the articulations of *peregrinatio ad loca sancta* and the first glimpses of its developing definition in the early medieval West.

These practical definitions of *peregrini* and *peregrinationes* then end with a discussion of a recurring theme of Christian discourse that has been mentioned briefly in the foregoing pages: the *peregrinus* as a guest or as a figure in need of charity. In the numerous directives to care for *peregrini* we add further definition not only to the meaning of the word as it evolved from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages, but also a view into what sort of people these *peregrini* were.

2.1 Monastic *Peregrinatio*

The concepts that would evolve into *peregrinatio* in the West find their roots in the ascetic movement in the East. The paradigmatic ascetics were the desert monks of Egypt, and to a lesser extent those of Syria and Palestine.[1] Accounts of the lives and the

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[1] Essential accounts of Late Antique ascetic monasticism are: Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City: an Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966); Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority and the Church: In the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1978); idem, *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Susanna Elm, *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), esp. 210–447. More concise accounts can be found in R.A. Markus, *The End of*

wisdom of these desert fathers enjoyed extraordinary popularity in both East and West, as the Christian faithful looked to these holy men and women as models of Christian devotion.[2] In particular the legend of Anthony, the pre-eminent exemplar for Christian ascetics,[3] helped to fix a formulaic pattern of monastic renunciation and to establish a model of sanctity based upon ascetic practice, which would survive throughout the Middle Ages and beyond.

2.1.1 *St Anthony,* Xeniteia *and the Pattern of Ascetic Renunciation*

According to his *vita*, the young Anthony one day heard the words of Jesus to his apostles, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all thou hast and give it to the poor, and come, follow me. And you will have treasure in heaven'.[4] The saint 'applied the Lord's commandment to himself': he gave away and sold his considerable possessions, distributed the proceeds to the poor, and left his homeland.[5] 'Now released from all worldly ties', his *vita* describes, Anthony 'entered upon a harsh and arduous way of life'.[6] He proceeded further and further away from his city into the isolation of the desert. There his 'arduous way of life' involved various forms of abstention and scourging that recur throughout ascetic discourse: fasting, sleep deprivation, constant prayer, manual labour and the intentional infliction of discomfort and pain upon the body. These renunciations and devotions were designed to suppress the desires and

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Ancient Christianity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, repr. 1998), pp. 157–211; Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity AD 150–750* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971, repr. 1997), pp. 96–112. The ascetic movement embodied by the desert fathers was not the only form of Christian asceticism in the early Christian and patristic periods, but it was the most successful. It is not the intention of this study to trace the origins of different models of asceticism that did not fare as well; however, a detailed and lucid account of one of these is Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[2] For what has become the classic account of the holy man in these times, see Peter Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), pp. 80–101, re-published in Peter Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London: Faber, 1982), pp. 103–52; also see Brown's update of this topic in 'The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity', *Representations* 2 (1983), pp. 1–25.

[3] The importance of Anthony as a role model cannot be overstated. Accordingly, it is rare to find any discussion of asceticism or desert monasticism without mention of Anthony; even early Pachomian texts cited Anthony as the 'father' of monasticism (though Pachomius himself could have had some claim to the title). Samuel Rubenson, 'Christian Asceticism and the Emergence of the Monastic Tradition', in *Asceticism*, ed. Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantasis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 49–57 at 50 and p. 56, n. 5.

[4] Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 2, quoting Matt 19.21. It should not be forgotten that the end of this scriptural passage, Matt 19.29, continues, 'And every one that hath left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold and shall possess life everlasting'.

[5] Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 2–3.

[6] Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 3.

distractions that anchored the monk to the world;[7] only then could he draw closer to God. 'The world' for the ascetic embodied every impurity of the flesh, from illicit passions to the devotion to improper 'fleshly' ties such as material wealth, worldly status, or even family. By renouncing the world and all that is in it, the monk therefore sought to defeat the temptations of the devil and to achieve a purity born of the freedom from the flesh.

The formulaic nature of the renunciations of St Anthony are demonstrated in their frequent repetition in descriptions of how to achieve the perfect life; as Basil of Caesarea, for example, testifies: 'a great means of reaching perfection was the selling of one's goods, the sharing them with the poor, the giving up of all care for this life, and the refusal to allow the soul to be turned by any sympathy to things of earth'.[8] This abandonment of earthly and fleshly ties to come closer to perfection/God had origins in ancient philosophy,[9] but in a Christian milieu related directly to the scriptural ideals of virtuous alienation.

In the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Abba Nilus expresses this monastic ideal as in terms of homelessness and estrangement: 'Happy is the monk', he says, 'who thinks he is the outcast (περιψημα) of all'.[10] In many texts this idealised goal of ascetic alienation is called in Greek *xeniteia*, which denotes 'foreign-ness' or 'exile', and also carries the sense of 'living as a guest'.[11] (This terminology almost certainly has some scriptural basis, though its exact source is difficult to ascertain.[12]) In monastic terms *xeniteia* signifies the total separation from worldly attachments, as if an alien or a guest

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[7] For a concise explanation of the concept of the subjugation of the *passions*, see Norman Russell, *The Lives of the Desert Fathers: the Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* (London: Mowbray, 1981), p. 126 n. 22.

[8] Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 223.2 [NPNF 2.8:263]; also see Gregory of Nyssa, *De virginitate* 6.1 [NPNF 2.5:350]. Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 3.8 [ANF 2, p. 281].

[9] Anthony Meredith, 'Asceticism—Christian and Greek', *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 27 (1976), pp. 313–32 at 313 and n. 1; see also James Goehring, 'The Origins of Monasticism' in *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, ed. Harold W. Attridge and Gohei Hata (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 235–55 at 214. Also for early Judaic asceticism, see discussions in Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 38; Steven D. Fraade, 'Ascetical Aspects of Ancient Judaism', in *Jewish Spirituality from the Bible to the Middle Ages*, ed. Arthur Green (New York: Crossroad, 1986), pp. 253–88.

[10] *AP Alph*, Nilus 8 [Ward, p. 154].

[11] 'ξενιτεία' in Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, p. 931.

[12] In Septuagint and Greek New Testament texts the term *xenos* appears fairly often (though not as frequently as *paroikos*), perhaps most significantly in the context of the present discussion in two passages: first, in Ps 68.9: 'I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien [*xenos*] to the sons of my mother'. Secondly, Hebr 11.13 describes that the elect know themselves to be aliens and strangers—*xenoi kai parepidemoi*—on earth. Also cf. 2 Sam 15.19; Eccl 6.2; Lam 5.2; Eph 2.19–20. With the word's sense of a 'guest' or 'visitor', it could also be related to the words of Jesus in Matt 25.35: 'I was a stranger [*xenos*] and you took me in'.

of the world.[13] It encompasses the renunciation of property, family, and the needs of the body to focus the heart and mind upon God.[14] The Abba Poemen explains, 'If a monk controls his belly and his tongue and if he lives like an exile [*chratese...ten xeniteian*], be confident, he will not die'.[15] The control of the desires of the flesh and a life lived in alienation lead the monk to salvation. An even more dramatic articulation of this alienation proclaims asceticism as death, and ascetics as the successors of the martyrs.[16] Alienation and death are often intertwined: 'Hate the world and all that is in it', exhorts St Anthony in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, 'Renounce this life, so that you may be alive to God'.[17]

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[13] Hans F. von Campenhausen, 'The Ascetic Ideal of Exile in Ancient and Early Medieval Monasticism', in *Tradition and Life in the Church*, trans. A.V. Littledale (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), pp. 231–51; Giles Constable, 'Monachisme et pèlerinage au Moyen Age', *Revue Historique* 258 (1977), pp. 3–27 at 6; Antoine Guillaumont, 'Le dépaysement comme forme d'ascèse, dans le monachisme ancien', *Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes, V^e section: Sciences religieuses: Annuaire* 76 (1968–1969), p. 31–58, esp. 33–5; Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, pp. 24–5; Philip Rousseau, 'The Spiritual Authority of the "Monk-Bishop": Eastern Elements in some Western Hagiography of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries', *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 22 (1971), pp. 381–419 at 393; Bernhard Kötting, *Peregrinatio Religiosa: Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der alten Kirche*, Forschungen zur Volkskunde 33/34/35 (Münster: Regensberg, 1950), pp. 302–7; for a more recent, somewhat theoretical treatment of this topic see John McGuckin, 'Aliens and Citizens of Elsewhere: *Xeniteia* in East Christian monastic literature', in *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider*, ed. Dion C. Smythe (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 23–38.

For textual examples see e.g. *AP Alph*, Poemen 62 [PG 65:337A; Ward, p. 175]; Longinus 1 [PG 65:256C; Ward, p. 122]; Tithoes 2 [PG 65:428B; Ward, p. 236]; cf. Agathon 1 [PG 65:108D–109A; Ward, p. 20]. Also see Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 4.3 [Butler p. 20.11; Meyer, p. 36]; Macarius of Egypt (attr.), *Apophthegmata* 2.7 [PG 34:236A]; idem, *De custodia cordis* 10 [PG 34:829B–C]; Gregory of Nyssa, *De virginitate* 6.1 [NPNF 2.5:350]; John Climacus, *Ladder of Divine Ascent* 3 [PG 88:664A–B, C–D; Lubheid/Russell, pp. 85–90]. Cf. *AP Alph*, Andrew [PG 65:136B; Ward, p. 37]; Theodora 5 [PG 65:204A; Ward, p. 83].

[14] Campenhausen, 'The Ascetic Ideal of Exile', p. 236, and Guillaumont, 'Le dépaysement', pp. 33, 39–42, note the relationship between *xeniteia* and *hesychia*—best translated in English as 'stillness', or 'quietude' (also sometimes called 'repose')—the ultimate goal of peaceful contemplation that can only be achieved when the soul is truly separated from all earthly concerns. This is most clearly articulated by the theologian Evagrius, e.g. in his *Hypotyposis* (Principles of the Monastic Life) 6, PG 40:1257B; also idem, *Tractatus ad Eulogium* 2 [PG 79:1096B–D].

[15] *AP Alph*, Poemen 62 [PG 65:337A; Ward, p. 175].

[16] On asceticism as martyrdom: an early example that presents both bloody and ascetic martyrdom is the *Passio* of Apollonius, trans. Herbert Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), pp. 96–7. It is also an element in the mythos of St Anthony, Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 46–7; cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Ep.* 2, PL 20:178–80, LibArdm p. 436/fol. 221v. Also on asceticism as death, see *AP Sys*, pp. 4.8, 53.2. For 'dying to the world': *AP Alph*, Cassian 8 [Ward, p. 115]; Jerome *Ep.* 39.5. In a later example, the *Regula Magistri* 7.59, 90.56–9, monastic obedience and martyrdom are strongly linked.

Discussions in Clare Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom', in *Ireland in Early Medieaval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick and David Dumville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 21–46 esp. 29–31; Edward E. Malone, *The Monk and the Martyr: the Monk as the Successor of the Martyr*, Studies in Christian Antiquity 12 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1950), pp. 44–63; idem, 'The Monk and the Martyr', in *Antoninus Magnus Eremita 356–1956: Studia ad Antiquum Monachismum Spectantia*, ed. Basil Steidle, Studia Anselmiana 38 (Rome: Herder/Pontificium Institutum S. Anselmi, 1956), pp. 201–28.

[17] *AP Alph*, Anthony 33 [Ward, p. 8].

The basis of the monastic ideology of renunciation was in part the spiritual allegory of the epistles: the stark oppositions of flesh/spirit and earth/heaven conveyed in the epistles were intrinsic to asceticism. Like the patriarchs in Hebrews 11, virtuous Christians understood themselves to be a strangers to the flesh and to the world and acted accordingly. The scriptural lineage is evident in the words of St Basil, for example, who describes his great esteem for the desert monks by invoking the *paroikos/–eo* terminology of the Pentateuch, Psalm 38 and 1 Peter:[18]

> I admired their continence in living, and their endurance in toil; I was amazed at their persistency in prayer, and at their triumphing over sleep; subdued by no natural necessity, ever keeping their souls' purpose high and free, in hunger, in thirst, in cold, in nakedness, they never yielded to the body; they were never willing to waste attention on it; always, as though living in alien [*allotria*] flesh, *they showed in very deed what it is to sojourn* [*paroikein*] *for awhile in this life*, and what it is to have one's citizenship [*politeuma*] and home in heaven. All this moved my admiration. I called these men's lives blessed, in that they did in deed show that they 'bear about in their body the dying of Jesus' (2 Cor 4.10). And I prayed that I, too, as far as in me lay, might imitate them.[19]

For Basil, monks embodied the scriptural exhortations to live as an alien on earth: the monk was the quintessential *paroikos* and a martyr in imitation of Christ. As the monk undertook the self-imposed suffering of ascetic discipline and alienated himself from the desires, pleasures and passions of the world, he became both martyr and alien for God.

2.1.2 *From* Xeniteia *to* Peregrinatio

As monasticism migrated westward, the formulae of asceticism imitated those already firmly entrenched in the East. The basic patterns of monastic renunciation and discipline were generally maintained: monks undertook their vocation by selling all of their worldly goods and distributing the proceeds to the poor.[20] They were expected to perform some degree of fasting, prayer and usually manual labour. Though the extreme

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[18] As well as Eph 2.19–20 and Acts 7.6, 7.29, and 13.17. *Xeniteia* and the *paroikos* and *parepidemos* of the bible are connected, for example, by Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 4.26 [GCS 2:321(24–34); ANF 2, p. 440].

[19] Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 223.2 [NPNF 2.8:263; Deferrari, vol. 3, pp. 292–5]; also see idem, *Ep.* 42.

[20] See, e.g., Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 2; Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 3; idem, *Vita Malchi* 3; idem, *Ep.* 14.6 *ad Heliodorum*; idem, *Ep.* 58.2 *ad Paulinum*; idem, *Ep.* 60.10 *ad Heliodorum*; idem, *Ep.* 66.8 *ad Pammachium*; idem, *Ep.* 130.14 *ad Demetriam*; idem, *Ep.* 145 *ad Exuperantium*; Rufinus, *Historia Monachorum* 1, PL 21:396B; John Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum* 6.16, 7.27; idem, *Conlationes* 3.4, 3.7, 24.24; Palladius, *Lausiac History* 54.4; Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 2–3; *Ap Alph*, Nilus 4 [Ward, p. 153], also see ibid., Anthony 20 [Ward, p. 5], Theodore 1 [Ward, p. 73], Syncletica 5, [Ward, p. 231], Hyperichius 6, [Ward, p. 238]; *Regula Magistri* 91, 8–34. Constantius, *Vita Germani* 2. Also cf. *Regula Benedicti* 58.24; *Regula Magistri* 82.

tenor of ascetic practice softened to some degree in the West as the monastic paradigm of the coenobium subsumed the focus upon the heroic anchorite,[21] the ideal of alienation from the world as a fundamental component of ascetic monasticism remained intact.[22]

With the differences of place and language, however, the articulation of asceticism underwent subtle changes. Scholars have noted repeatedly that in Latin, *peregrinatio* renders the Greek *xeniteia*.[23] To be sure, in the West monastic regimes of renunciation and deprivation were broadly similar to those labelled *xeniteia* in the East. In the years of Late Antiquity, however, this connection was not as direct or immediate as some studies seem to imply. From the time that asceticism began to take root in western Christian thought and practice, several generations would pass before a monastic sense of the words *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* would catch on in the West. Moreover, there are critical differences between *xeniteia* and *peregrinatio*. *Xeniteia* stems from the term *xenos*—an alien, visitor or guest—thus leading to conceptions of ascetic monasticism as a life lived as an outsider or a 'guest of the world'. In Latin, however, in addition to a general sense of alienation, as we have seen *peregrinus* also carried connotations of civil disenfranchisement and hints of persecution; *peregrinatio* bore a sense of physical displacement, separation from one's homeland, and also of Christian suffering. Indeed, the definition of *peregrinatio* in the Latin West eventually was dominated by a sense of separation, movement and travel, whereas *xeniteia* was a more static concept. *Xeniteia* and *peregrinatio*, while closely connected conceptually, should not, therefore, be considered identical translations of one another. Furthermore, in the late fourth century there is little sense that a western Christian ascetic would have labelled his/her ritual renunciations as *peregrinationes*.

In Jerome's early ascetical works, for example, a marked sense of monastic alienation emerges often. He writes, for example, 'Is not every monk an exile [*exul*]

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[21] For a brief description of this development see Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (1st publ. London: Blackwell, 1987; repr. London: Phoenix Press, 2001), pp. 60–61, 67–2; for the early stages of this evolution, S.G.A. Luff, 'Transition from Solitary to Cenobitic Life (c.250–400)', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 5th ser., 84 (1955), pp. 164–84. A more general discussion of the roles of monasteries in the early medieval world can be found in Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200–1000*, 2nd edn. (London: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 221–31.

[22] On the reception—both positive and negative—of the tenets of eastern monasticism in the West, see Steven D. Driver, *John Cassian and the Reading of Egyptian Monastic Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 45–64.

[23] Guillaumont, 'Le Depaysement', p. 32 and n. 2; Campenhausen, 'Ascetic Ideal of Exile', p. 237; cf. Constable, 'Monachisme et pèlerinage', p. 6.

from his country? Is he not an exile [*exul*] from the whole world?'[24] In his *Vita Malchi monachi* the protagonist describes his vocation in typical terms of 'having despised parents, country, property, for the Lord's sake'.[25] In neither case, however, does Jerome use the terms *peregrinus*, *peregrinatio* or *peregrinari* to describe the monastic vocation. Across all of his hagiographical works Jerome never once uses *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* to describe his monastic saints—Paulus, Malchus and Hilarion—or their renunciations. In some of his letters Jerome uses the term *peregrinatio* to refer to his attempt at asceticism in the deserts of Palestine, but given the context of his other works, it seems likely that in these instances it simply denoted an arduous journey abroad.[26]

Similarly, in the Latin translation of the *Vita Antonii*—dated to the mid/late fourth century—the saint is never labelled a *peregrinus*, nor are his journeys progressively further into the desert called *peregrinationes*.[27] Furthermore, in the foundational western account of an ascetic monk-bishop also dated in the late fourth century, Sulpicius Severus's St Martin is never named a *peregrinus*; the saint's only *peregrinatio* is his *return* to his homeland to tend to the salvation of his pagan parents—a journey, to be sure, but not one in the tradition of ascetic withdrawal from *patria et parentes*.[28]

The seeds of monastic *peregrinatio*, however, had been sown.

2.1.3 *The Growing Bond between Monasticism and* Peregrinatio

In describing the eventual connection between asceticism and *peregrinatio* we return once again to the writings of St Jerome. Jerome—with his remarkable fluency that crossed the boundaries of language and culture from East to West—is arguably our best barometer for monastic discourse in this period. But more importantly, I contend that—although there are only hints of the connection in his works—elements in his writings themselves influenced the eventual naming of monastic alienation as *peregrinatio*.

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[24] Jerome, *Ep.* 82.10 *ad Theophilum*, PL 22:742: *Quis enim monachorum exul patriae, non exul est mundi?*

[25] Jerome, *Vita Malchi* 6: *parentes, patriam, rem familiarem contempsisse pro Domino.*

[26] See e.g. Jerome, *Ep.* 3.3 *ad Rufinum monachum*; *Ep.* 4.1 *ad Florentium*; *Ep.* 8 *ad Niceam Hyppodiaconum Aquileiae*; *Ep.* 14.1 *ad Heliodorum monachum*; *Ep.* 77.8 *ad Oceanum* and possibly *Epistola* 118.7 *ad Julianum*.

[27] *Peregrinus* appears only twice in the text, as an adjective meaning 'foreign, strange': Athanasius/Evagrius, *Vita Antonii*, preface, PL 73:125–169 at 126; ibid., 20 [15 in PL version], PL 73:136C.

[28] Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 5.3, PL 20:163C, LibArdm p. 381/fol. 194r [ch. 1 in this version].

The saint's influence upon this process occurred in two steps. First, Jerome was among the first western commentators to promote Abraham as an exemplar of ascetic homelessness, an image that appears particularly often in his widely-disseminated collection of epistles. Jerome was not the earliest Latin father to emphasise Abraham's role as *peregrinus*,[29] but may have been the first western commentator to relate the patriarch's abandonment of his homeland to ascetic renunciation.[30] The connection between Abraham and ascetic monasticism was uncommon in the Greek East; intriguingly, some of the few eastern examples of Abraham as an exemplar of monastic renunciation had Coptic origins.[31] But in the majority of the 'major' late antique ascetic texts, Abraham is most often presented as an exemplar of hospitality[32]—from Gen 18.1–8, when God appears to him and he entertains three angels—or of obedience.[33] In the *Vita Antonii* itself, when the saint decides to leave his homeland, he compares himself and his way of life not to Abraham but to Elijah.[34] In contrast, Jerome—one might imagine, influenced by his contact with Egyptian monks—repeatedly names Abraham as a monastic role model, for example, in his letter to the monk Lucinius (dated 397):

> To Abraham it is said: 'Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. (Gen 12.1)' He leaves

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[29] See e.g. Ambrose, *De officiis* 1.24.107.

[30] Jerome, *Ep.* 22.1 *ad Eustochium* (384); idem, *Ep.* 39.5 *ad Paulam* (389); idem, *Ep.* 58.3 *ad Paulinum* (395); idem, *Ep.* 71.2 *ad Lucinium* (398); idem, *Ep.* 108.32 *ad Eustochium* (404); idem, *Ep.* 125.20 *ad Rusticum* (411); Jerome/Paula/Eustochium *Ep.* 42.2 *ad Marcellam* (386); Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 1.10 *ad Severum* (395); Paulinus of Nola and Therasia, *Ep.* 24.2 *ad Severum* (400), PL 61:288A. (Note that the earliest surviving epistle in which Paulinus of Nola uses this *topos* in a letter to Severus—*Ep. 1*—is from the same year that Jerome employed it in a letter to him—*Ep.* 58.) Also see Cassian, *Conlationes* 3.4; also see ibid., 3.6, 3.10.

[31] See e.g. Anthony, *Epistle* 1.4–6 [Rubenson, p. 197], in which the saint writes that Abraham's abandonment of homeland 'is the model for the beginning of this way of life'; also Pachomius, *Instruction* 1.53 [Veilleux, p. 37]; ibid. 1.18 [p. 19]; according to Guillaumont, 'Le dépaysement'. p. 43 n. 4, Shenoute of Atripe did as well. Also cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 3.2 [ANF 2, p. 274].

[32] E.g. *AP Alph*, Apollo 3, Ward, p. 17; John the Persian 4, Ward p. 108; Nisterius 2, Ward, p. 154; Palladius, *Lausiac History*, Paesius and Isaias 4, p. 50 and p. 179 n. 128; *Historia Monachorum* 8.55–6, p. 78. Also see Cassian, *Conlationes* 14.4; Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 13.21.

[33] Pachomius, *Instruction* 1.1 [Veilleux, p. 13]; ibid. 1.25 [p. 24]; Basil, *Ep.* 42.5; Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum* 14.28; idem, *Conlationes* 3.12.

[34] Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 7–8. For other references to Elijah as exemplar in monastic discourse see, e.g., Pachomius, *Instruction* 1.17 [Veilleux, p. 19]; *S. Pachomii vita bohairice* 1 and 2 [Veilleux, p. 24]; *Historia Monachorum* 7.1, p. 69; ibid. 8.46, p. 77; Jerome, *Vita Pauli*, prologue, p. 75; idem, *Ep.* 58.5 *ad Paulinum*; idem, *Ep.* 130.4 *ad Demetriam*; Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum* 1.1; idem, *Conlationes* 14.4; ibid. 18.6. Also see *Lausiac History*, Paesius and Isaias 4, p. 50 and p. 179 n. 128; *Historia Monachorum* 2.9, p. 64. Some less obvious references to Elijah in the *Vita Antonii* are discussed in William Harmless, *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 70, 94 and in the *Historia Monachorum* in Benedicta Ward, 'Introduction', in *The Lives of the Desert Fathers*, ed. Russell, p. 40, 44. Also see Jerome's *Vita Pauli* 10 may make reference to the prophet (1 Kings 17.4–6) when Paul is fed by ravens in the desert.

> Chaldæa, he leaves Mesopotamia; he seeks what he knows not, not to lose Him whom he has found. He does not deem it possible to keep both his country and his Lord; even at that early day he is already fulfilling the prophet David's words: 'I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner [*peregrinus*], as all my fathers were (Ps 38.13).'...You too must leave your home as he did and must take for your parents, brothers, and relations only those who are linked to you in Christ. 'Whosoever', He says, 'shall do the will of my father...the same is my brother and sister and mother (Matt 12.50).'[35]

In this epistle the connection between the monk and the *peregrinus* is almost complete as Jerome also ties the renunciation of homeland to the *peregrinus* of Psalm 38; all of the components of monastic *peregrinatio* are present, but not yet explicitly stated.

The second step of Jerome's contribution to the development of monastic *peregrinatio* was his translation of the books of the Pentateuch. When the Vulgate version of Genesis appeared with its coherent and consistent references to Abraham's sojourn in the promised land as a *peregrinatio*, the idea of virtuous alienation and obedient, devotional journeying in the name of God solidified. With this combination of Abraham as monastic role model and the scriptural repetition of *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* in relation to the patriarch and his abandonment of homeland, monastic *peregrinatio* was only a short step away. By the second quarter of the fifth century—in Jerome's final years or perhaps soon after his death—Abraham and his *peregrinatio* became one of the dominant *topoi* to describe ascetic withdrawal in the Latin West. In sum, Jerome enunciated a strong connection between Abraham and asceticism and is responsible for the relationship of Abraham and the patriarchs to *peregrinatio*; from these elements monastic *peregrinatio* was born.

A glimmer of the growing bond between monasticism and *peregrinatio* appears in the words of John Cassian (*c.*360–*c.*433), who in his *Institutes* describes a state of monastic homelessness in the language of scripture:

> ...in order to maintain that excellent state of want and poverty which he has secured and which he strives to preserve to the very last in unbroken perfection, [the monk] regards himself as a foreigner [*extraneus*] and an alien [*alienus*] to

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[35] Jerome, *Ep.* 71.2 *ad Lucinium* [PL 22:670; NPNF 2.6:152]: *Abrahae dicitur: Egredere de terra tua, et de cognatione tua, et de domo patris tui, et vade in terram quam monstravero tibi. Relinquit Chaldeam, relinquit Mesopotamiam: Quaerit quod nescit ne perdat quem invenerat. Non enim arbitratus est simul se habere posse et patriam et Dominum; sed jam tunc illud Prophetae David opere complebat: Advena sum apud te, et peregrinus, sicut omnes patres mei...et illos putes parentes, fratres, affines, atque cognatos, qui tibi in Christo copulati sunt. Mater, inquit, mea, et fratres mei hi sunt, qui faciunt voluntatem Patris mei.* Also see idem, *Ep.* 125.20 *ad Rusticum*; idem, *Ep.* 39.5 *ad Paulam* (389). Also cf. Jerome, 58.3 *ad Paulinum.*

them all, so that he conducts himself as a stranger and a sojourner [*peregrinus...et incola*] in this world....[36]

In his *Conlationes*, Cassian also explicitly connects the call of Abraham to the monastic vocation, and specifically to St Anthony. In his conference with the abba Paphnutius on the different kinds of calls to virtue, he recounts

> A calling is from God whenever some inspiration has taken possession of our heart, and even while we are asleep stirs in us a desire for eternal life and salvation, and bids us follow God and cleave to His commandments with life-giving contrition: as we read in Holy Scripture that Abraham was called by the voice of the Lord from his native country, and all his dear relations, and his father's house; when the Lord said 'Get thee out from thy country and from thy kinsfolk and from thy father's house'. And in this way we have heard that the blessed Antony also was called, the occasion of whose conversion was received from God alone...And with heartfelt contrition he...at once gave up everything and followed Christ, without any incitement thereto from the advice and teaching of men.[37]

Soon thereafter the same conference defines Abraham's sacrifice in ascetic terms:

> We must now speak of the renunciations, of which tradition and the authority of Holy Scripture show us three, and which every one of us ought with the utmost zeal to make complete. The first is that by which as far as the body is concerned we make light of all the wealth and goods of this world; the second, that by which we reject the fashions and vices and former affections of soul and flesh; the third, that by which we detach our soul from all present and visible things, and contemplate only things to come, and set our heart on what is invisible. And we read that the Lord charged Abraham to do all these three at once, when He said to him 'Get thee out from thy country, and thy kinsfolk, and thy father's house'. First He said 'from thy country', i.e., from the goods of this world, and earthly riches: secondly, 'from thy kinsfolk', i.e., from this former life and habits and sins, which cling to us from our very birth and are joined to us as it were by ties of affinity and kinship: thirdly, 'from thy father's house', i.e., from all the recollection of this world, which the sight of the eyes can afford.[38]

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[36] Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum* 4.14 [PL 49:170A; NPNF 2.11:223]: *ad retinendam nihilominus arreptae nuditatis virtutem, quam studet ad finem usque perfecte atque inviolabiliter custodire, ita semetipsum a cunctis extraneum, et ex omnibus judicat alienum, ut tamquam peregrinum se gerat, et incolam istius mundi,* Also see Cassian, *Conlationes* 1.2–3.

On Cassian generally, see esp. Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968); and a more recent account, Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[37] John Cassian, *Conlationes* 3.4 [PL 49:561B–562B; NPNF 2.11:320]: *Ex Deo quidem* [i.e., *vocationum*] *est, quoties inspiratio quaedam immissa in cor nostrum nonnumquam etiam dormientes nos ad desiderium aeternae vitae ac salutis exsuscitat, Deumque sequi et ejus inhaerere praeceptis compunctione saluberrima cohortatur; ut in Scripturis sanctis Abraham voce Dominica, de genitali solo, et totius cognationis affectibus, patrisque domo legimus evocatum, dicente Domino: Exi de terra tua, et de cognatione tua, et de domo patris tui. Quo etiam modo beatum Antonium accitum esse cognovimus, qui occasionem suae conversionis a sola Divinitate percepit...*[*et*] *cum summa cordis compunctione...confestimque renuntians cunctis, secutus est Christum, nulla exhortatione neque doctrina hominum provocatus.*

[38] John Cassian, *Conlationes* 3.6 [PL 49:564C–565A; NPNF 2.11:321]: *Nunc de abrenuntiationibus disserendum est, quas tres esse et Patrum traditio, et Scripturarum sanctarum demonstrat auctoritas, quasque unumquemque nostrum omni studio oportet implere. Prima est qua corporaliter universas divitias mundi facultatesque contemnimus; secunda qua mores, ac vitia, affectusque pristinos animi*

These excerpts demonstrate the deep impression Jerome's work made upon Cassian—which in fact he states overtly in the preface to his *Institutes*, where he casts himself as a continuator in the tradition of both Jerome and Basil.[39] But as in the case of Jerome's writings, though all of the elements of monastic *peregrinatio* are present, in Cassian's works the monk is only *compared* to a *peregrinus* or to Abraham. The monk himself is not yet a *peregrinus*, nor is his vocation a *peregrinatio*.

The earliest use that I have found of the terms *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio* with all of these accretions of meaning, definitively referring to a monk who had renounced land and kin in God's name appears in the *Sermo de vita Honorati*, written *c.*430. Hilary of Arles wrote this hagiographical account upon the death of St Honoratus (†429)—the founder of the great centre of ascetic monasticism at Lérins. In this text, Hilary describes Honoratus and his companions using the standard *topoi* of ascetic discourse: fasting, renunciation of worldly things, the rejection of family and homeland, and the withdrawal into the solitude of the 'desert': Honoratus was an *exsul voluntarius*, a 'voluntary exile'.[40] Hilary names the saint a son of Abraham, his renunciation of his homeland a *peregrinatio*, and the saint a *peregrinus*:

> Thus [Honoratus and his companions] left their land and home and kindred, showing themselves true sons of Abraham by following his example.... They sought to hide themselves in *peregrinatio*, and fled from the renown of their virtues.... Happy the lands, blessed the harbours, made bright by the *peregrinus* thirsting for his heavenly fatherland! Others go to Eastern shores or places full of holy things, to learn from what they see there. These uplifted the places they visited by the good things seen in themselves.[41]

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carnisque respuimus; tertia qua mentem nostram de praesentibus universis ac visibilibus evocantes, futura tantummodo contemplamur, et ea quae sunt invisibilia concupiscimus. Quae tria, ut simul perficiantur, etiam Abrahae legimus Dominum praecepisse, cum dicit ad eum: Exi de terra tua, et de cognatione tua, et de domo patris tui. Primum dixit de terra tua, id est, de facultatibus mundi hujus, opibusque terrenis; secundo de cognatione tua, id est, de conversatione, et moribus, vitiisque prioribus, quae nobis a nostra nativitate cohaerentia velut affinitate quadam et consanguinitate cognata sunt; tertio de domo patris tui, id est, omni memoria mundi hujus quae oculorum occurrit obtutibus. This section in particular seems to me to be heavily influenced by Jerome; esp. Jerome, *Ep.* 22.1 *ad Eustochium*, in comparison with the entire section 3.6 of Cassian's treatise (including the remainder of the section not quoted here). Cassian certainly knew this epistle; see *De incarnatione Christi* 7.26. He also had access to Jerome's Vulgate translations, though he did not always use them; see, e.g., NPNF 2.11, p. 290 n. 1082.

[39] Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum*, praefatio, PL 49:56B–57A.

[40] Hilary of Arles, *Sermo de Vita S. Honorati Episcopi Arelatensis* 3.16 [SC 235:112; PL 50:1257].

[41] Hilary of Arles, *Sermo de Vita Honorati* 2.12 [SC 235:100–102; PL 50:1255–56; Hoare, pp. 257–8]. *Exeuntes de terra sua et de domo et de cognatione sua, exemplo pares, uere Abrahae filii demonstrantur.... Quaeritur ergo peregrinationis latebra, fugitur fama virtutis.... Felices terrae et portus beati, quos caelestem patriam sitiens peregrinus illustrat! Alii Orientis oras, et quaecumque alia plena sanctis loca accipiendi exempli gratia, accedunt; hi quicquid adeunt exemplis bonis suscitant.* I have altered Hoare's translation slightly, changing his 'made bright by pilgrims' to 'made bright by the *peregrinus*' to reflect the singular form in the Latin, and changing 'Other pilgrims' to 'Others' to translate *alii*.

Hilary presents his saint's *peregrinatio* as a virtuous act of ascetic devotion. He incorporates the two major strains of *peregrinatio*: the *peregrinus* as alien, desiring to return to his Homeland, and the *peregrinatio* as a journey of ritualised alienation. From this point forward, ascetic *peregrinationes* and *peregrini* appear more and more, and become a distinctively monastic pattern of virtue in Christian discourse.[42]

Another illustration of changes in the expression of devotional travel and the growth of the use of *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* over the course of the fifth century occurs in the works and later accounts of the fifth-century philosopher Bachiarius. Probably writing in the late fourth or early fifth century, Bachiarius—who was quite possibly a monk and became known in part for his rejection of his own country[43]—did not in fact identify his travels as *peregrinationes*, but like Hilary he does refer to himself and his companions as *filii Abrahae*:

> Although we know our country according to the flesh, even now we do not know it, and desiring to be sons of Abraham, we have abandoned our land and our kin.[44]

In the late fifth century, Gennadius of Marseille (†471) wrote of Bachiarius in his extension of Jerome's *De viris inlustribus*. He extended Bachiarius's own self-depiction, repeating the allusion to Abraham, and then added repeated references to Bachiarius's *peregrinatio*:

> Bachiarius, a Christian philosopher, prompt and ready and minded to devote his time to God, chose *peregrinatio* as a means of preserving the integrity of his

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[42] A few examples are *Vita Caesarii episcopi Arelatensis* 4; Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Radegundis* 16; Baudinovia, *Vita Radegundis* 4; Huneberc of Heidenheim, *Vita Willibaldi* 3; Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii* 4.11; Hucbald, *Vita S. Rictrudis* 16–17.

As an illustration of the resonance that this theme had in Ireland, consider the index *moralis* of John Colgan, *Acta sanctorum veteris et maioris Scotiae, seu Hiberniae sanctorum insulae* (Louvain: Everardum de Vitte, 1645, repr. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1948), pp. 900–902: under the heading *peregrinatio* Colgan lists over two hundred saints who left Ireland (as well as another seventy who travelled *in Hiberniam*).

[43] For bibliography on Bachiarius see Ursicino Dominguez del Val, *Estudios sobre Literatura Latina Hispano-Cristiana*, vol. 1: *1955–1971* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1986), pp. 86–90. On the identity of Bachiarius (and against the reliability of Gennadius), see M.H. MacInerny, 'St Mochta and Bachiarius', parts 3-4, *Irish Ecclesiastical Record,* 5th ser. 22 (1923) 153-65 and 573-91; McInerny dates the *De fide* to 400 x 412–415, in part 4, pp. 574-8. On the attribution of the *De fide* to the Irish saint Mochta, see idem, 'St Mochta and Bachiarius', parts 1-2, *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 5th ser., 21 (1923) 468-80 and 618-32; Mario Esposito, 'Bachiarius. Arator. Lathcen.' *JTS* o.s. 30 (1929), pp. 286–91 at 286–7. Bachiarius is also discussed in brief by Maribel Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, 300-800* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 2005), pp. 65–6.

[44] Bachiarius, *De fide*, PL 20:1019C–D: *Nos patriam etsi secundum carnem novimus, sed nunc jam non novimus (2 Cor 5.16), et desiderantes Abrahae filii fieri, terram nostram cognationemque reliquimus.* In *De fide*, PL 20:1024B, Bachiarius does in fact quote Ps 38.17—*Peregrinus ego sum, sicut omnes patres mei*—in the context of living outside of his native land, but does not formulate his status as *peregrinus* in terms of a devotional or ascetic act of renunciation. I.e., he uses the phrase from the bible as one would expect from a Late Antique individual familiar with Roman law.

> purpose. He is said to have published acceptable small works but I have only read one of them, a work *On faith,* in which he justified himself to the chief priest of the city, defending himself against those who complained and misrepresented his *peregrinatio*, and asserting that he undertook his *peregrinatio* not through fear of men but for the sake of God, that going forth from his land and kindred he might become a co-heir with Abraham the patriarch.[45]

While we cannot know if Bachiarius was a monk, Gennadius certainly framed his departure from his homeland in terms that were becoming increasingly associated with monastic renunciation. From this collection of texts we can thus place the beginnings of a shift in the terminology attached to devotional travel in the early to mid-fifth century.

The ascendance of *peregrinatio* as a central tenet of western monastic behaviour reflects both continuity and change as the monastic movement evolved from its primarily eastern roots. *Peregrinatio* represents the denial of worldly ties implicit in *xeniteia*, but as has been noted, the Latin variations of this term from a state of alienated existence (in *peregrinus*) to a journey to foreign lands (in *peregrinatio*) also reflected a slightly shifted focus in western models of sanctity. The monastic journey became an important aspect in many western texts; even while the coenobium—often with its implicit tenets of *stabilitas*—had become the dominant rubric of monastic life. The *peregrinatio* tended to describe the monk's abandonment and travel away from his homeland, and thus often described the journey to found a monastery in the woods or wilderness. Monastic founders and abbots rather than the superhuman ascetics of the desert became the holy figures of western Christendom, and their *peregrinationes* formed a vital early act of their sanctity.

For less illustrious monks, the *peregrinatio* could simply be the departure from the familiar to begin a lifetime vocation. It was often the journey away from home to study at the feet of an elder monk or anchorite.[46] Sulpicius Severus, for example, renders his journeys to visit St Martin as *peregrinationes*: a usage that may simply have

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[45] Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus* 24 [PL 58:1074D-1075A; NPNF 2.3:589]: *BACHIARIUS vir Christianae philosophiae, nudus et expeditus vacare Deo disponens, etiam peregrinationem propter conservandam vitae integritatem elegit. Edidisse dicitur grata opuscula; sed ego ex illis unum tantum de Fide libellum legi, in quo satisfacit pontifici urbis, adversus querulos et infamatores peregrinationis suae, et indicat se non timore hominum sed Dei peregrinationem suscepisse, ut exiens de terra sua cohaeres fieret Abrahae patriarchae.*

[46] Interestingly, this usage of the term *peregrinatio* also applied to pagans, in particular Plato, who travelled to study with the famous philosophers: Jerome, *Ep.* 53.1; Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 8.11, CCSL 47:228(16); also *peregrinari* in idem, *De diversis quaestionibus LXXXIII* 46.1, CCSL 44A:70(13), PL 40:30; idem, *Contra academicos* 3.17.37, CCSL 29:57(15), PL 32:954. Also cf. *Vita Antonii* 20. Through the end of the late antique period, students continued to travel to famous schools to study philosophy; see Edward Watts, 'Student Travel to Intellectual Centers: What was the Attraction?', in *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity*, ed. Linda Ellis and Frank L. Kidner (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

meant 'journey' but certainly presages the future uses of this term.[47] Sulpicius also labels the journey of Postumianus through the Holy Land as a *peregrinatio*.[48] Similarly, Cassian recounts (though without a vocabulary of *peregrinatio*) that he and his travelling companion Germanus had 'left our homes, and had visited so many countries out of love for the Lord [*patriam relinquentes, tot provinciis pro amore Domini perlustratis*], and...we had come for his teaching and instruction in order that we might be to some extent initiated in the customs of so great a man'.[49]

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As *peregrinatio* took hold of the monastic imagination in the Latin West, it grew into a concept at once more explicit and broader than the Greek *xeniteia*. Especially after the publication of Jerome's translation of Genesis, *peregrinatio* was strongly imbued with allusions to Abraham and the patriarchs; consequently in the West, Abraham quickly became the pre-eminent exemplar for monastic withdrawal. *Peregrinus* thus came to bear many layers of meaning: of voluntary alienation on earth, of the denial of the flesh, of the desire to live the *vita perfecta*. *Peregrinatio* implied a renunciation of home and family and unquestioning obedience, following Abraham's abandonment of homeland in Genesis 12. *Peregrinatio* was a major form of devotion for the monk. It was a goal of separation from the world, manifested physically by the departure from homeland to seek out the 'strait and narrow path' to God, and spiritually by the renunciation of all worldly and fleshly things.

The monastic *peregrinus*, then, was a traveller and an alien in God's name, a *filius Abrahae*. He sold his worldly possessions and gave the proceeds to the poor, then left his land. He probably followed an ascetic regime, a daily martyrdom for Christ; he battled to defeat the temptations of the flesh, hoping for the serenity of true detachment from the world. The monastic *peregrinatio* is the state of virtuous alienation, and also the ritualised journey that takes the monk out of his own land; the defining moment of this journey is when he crosses the boundaries of his homeland and travels away from all that is familiar, comfortable and safe.

Excursus: Peregrinatio *and* Stabilitas

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[47] Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 25.1–2, PL 20:174C–D, LibArdm p. 394/fol. 200v (ch. xxvi in this version).

[48] Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogues* 1.2, PL 20:185C, LibArdm p. 397/fol. 202r; ibid. 1.8, PL 20:189A, LibArdm p. 400/fol. 203v; ibid. 1.23, PL 20:198C, LibArdm p. 410/fol. 208v.

[49] Cassian, *Conlationes* 3.2, PL 49:560A; cf. Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 8.1.

As most of the important figures whom we will meet in the coming chapters are monks who journeyed in the name of God, the apparent contradiction of *peregrinatio* and *stabilitas* must also be explored. These two ideals are sometimes considered polar opposites, but early monastic texts demonstrate that the two concepts were not in fact mutually exclusive.[50] To be sure, excessive wandering was often discouraged;[51] but physical displacement was an essential facet of the monastic vocation, which did not necessarily end with the monk's entry into a coenobium.

Stabilitas should not be confused with cloistering (though as the Middle Ages progressed, these two concepts would be considered synonymous by some), and cannot be reduced to a simple matter of the limitation of travel. The Benedictine vow of obedience, fidelity to the monastic life, and *stabilitas* demands that the monk sustain qualities of morality and strength of character.[52] *Stabilitas* in the *Regula Benedicti* is a quality of constancy and perseverance; it is a measure of restraint, obedience and the denial of self-will. The limitation of free movement is secondary, a symptom rather than a main tenet of *stabilitas*. When the *Regula Benedicti* charges monks to warn young aspirants that, once they enter the monastery, they will 'no longer be free to leave the monastery',[53] the emphasis is on the renunciation of the freedom to choose to leave at will. The *Regula Magistri* is more specific, directing monks to 'Let him [i.e., the novice] know that he may not go outside the monastery *without orders from the superior*'.[54] The Master explains these prohibitions as the salutary suppression of self-will that will lead to a place in heaven: 'In the monastic school [God's] will is communicated to us by the superiors, and we fulfil it every day through obedience, we have a right to believe that the Lord will spare us in the time to come...because we always did his will, not ours'.[55] The fifth-century *Regula Orientalis* similarly charges the monastery's leadership only to accept an aspirant monk into their community if they have found him able to 'renounce his family and surrender his rights'; the rule then continues, 'Let no brother do anything without the consent and approval of the seniors.

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[50] A sensitive and insightful discussion of *stabilitas* is in Timothy Fry, *RB 1980: the Rule of St. Benedict* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1981), pp. 463–5.

[51] See, e.g., *Ap Alph*, Syncletica 6; cf. *Ap Alph*, Arsenius 12. For polemic against 'wandering' monks, see e.g., Cassian, *Conlationes* 18.7; *Regula Benedicti* 1.10–11; also see discussion in Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, esp. pp. 7–12.

[52] *Regula Benedicti* 58.17; cf. *Regula Magistri* 90.

[53] *Regula Benedicti* 58.15: *non liceat egredi de monasterio.*

[54] *Regula Magistri* 90.66: *Citra iussionem maioris foris se a monasterio non exire sciat.*

[55] *Regula Magistri* 90.55–7.

Let him not receive anything nor give anything nor go anywhere'.[56] While the monk's freedom of movement might well be limited by his communal vow, the main thrust of the restriction is over the individual's choice and control.[57]

In fact, monks did travel, and some may have done so often. Both the *Regula Benedicti* and the *Regula Magistri* make provisions (in the latter case, in extensive detail) for how monks ought to behave when journeying outside of the monastery,[58] and also for how visiting monks should be greeted.[59] Monastic travel was not prohibited or even specifically discouraged in these early rules, so long as it was undertaken properly with the permission of the monk's superiors. The opposition of *peregrinatio* and *stabilitas* therefore should not be overstated: assumptions that the principles of cenobitic monasticism precluded *peregrinatio* must be overturned.

2.2 *Peregrinatio ad loca sancta*

Up through the early fifth century as we have seen, the focus of *peregrinatio* was biblical, exegetical, and in the later stages of its evolution, predominantly monastic; the populist rituals of travel to holy sites that these terms eventually encompassed had not yet been named with any consistency. Their eventual amalgamation with the vocabulary and imagery of *peregrinatio* lay on the horizon, adumbrated perhaps by monastic *peregrinationes* to sit at the feet of holy men or to dwell temporarily or permanently in the Holy Land, but not yet expressed as such. The available textual evidence from the final centuries of Late Antiquity indicates that a sense of *peregrinatio* as alienation and as a component of ascetic monasticism existed well before pilgrimage *ad loca sancta* came to be labelled using identical terms.[60] But the connections between the two

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[56] *Regula Orientalis* 27.4: *renuntiare parentibus suis et propriam contemnere facultatem.* Ibid. 31.1–3: *Sine seniorum verbo et auctoritate nullus frater quicquam agat neque accipiat aliquid neque det neque usquam prorsus procedat.* On the date of the text, see Carmella V. Franklin *et al.*, *Early Monastic Rules: The Rules of the Fathers and the* Regula Orientalis (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1982), p. 12 and n. 15.

[57] On monastic obedience generally, see Adalbert de Vogüé, 'Obéissance et autorité dans le monachisme ancien jusqu'à Saint Benoît', in *«Imaginer la théologie catholique», permanence et transformations de la foi en attendant Jésus-Christ: Mélanges offerts à Ghislain Lafont*, ed. Jeremy Driscoll, Studia Anselmiana 129 (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 2000), pp. 565–600.

[58] *Regula Benedicti*, chs 50–1, 67; *Regula Magistri*, chs 56–62 and 66–7. Also cf. *Regula Macharii* 22.1–3.

[59] *Regula Benedicti*, ch. 61; *Regula Magistri*, chs 65 and 71. Also see *Regula Macharii* 40.1–2.

[60] A recent study by Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering the Sacred: The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2005), extensively studies the topic of *peregrinatio ad loca sancta*—with brief space also given to the phenomenon of ascetic *peregrinatio ex patria*—in the writings of church fathers from both East and

ritualised forms of devotion that came to share the same name should not be discounted.[61]

By the starting point of our discussion, pilgrimages *ad loca sancta* had been underway for centuries. According to Jonathan Sumption the first 'unimpeachable' evidence of an early Christian pilgrimage to venerate sacred remains can be dated to the mid-second century,[62] though in all probability Christian veneration of tombs and remains began even earlier than the historical record shows. Over the early centuries of Christian history such journeys involved venerating the relics of saints and martyrs,[63] or visiting the living, breathing holy men in the deserts of Egypt and Palestine or on top of columns in Syria,[64] or walking in the footsteps of Jesus or other biblical figures in the Holy Land.[65] Great value was placed especially upon journeys to the sites of the events described in the bible. As Origen put it, he went to the Holy Land 'to enquire as to the footsteps of Jesus and of His disciples, and the prophets'.[66] Jerome later wrote, 'The man who has seen Judaea with his own eyes...will gaze more clearly upon holy scripture'.[67] Jerome's convictions regarding the spiritual benefits of seeing these sights were also echoed by Paulinus of Nola (†431), who wrote,

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West. Unfortunately this work came to my attention too late for me to incorporate Bitton-Ashkelony's findings.

[61] Another study that uses very similar sources to those of this chapter, but which reaches different conclusions than my own is Maribel Dietz, 'Itinerant Spirituality and the Late Antique Origins of Christian Pilgrimage', in *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity*, ed. Ellis and Kidner, pp. 125–34. Dietz argues that the practice of pilgrimage to the holy places was the 'offspring' of the ascetic tradition of wandering in the late antique period, which in my opinion too rigidly defines a causal relationship and the chronological order of these two forms of devotion.

[62] Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975, repr. 2002), p. 22. Sumption notes that the first 'unimpeachable' evidence of this sort of practice is a letter, purportedly from the Church at Smyrna to the Church at Philomelium, which describes the martyrdom of Polycarp, dated *c.*156. The letter relates that Polycarp's fellow Christians 'took up his bones which are more valuable than refined gold and laid them in a suitable place where, the Lord willing...we may gather together in gladness and celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom'. For the letter (attributed to Irenaeus in this edition), see Kirsopp Lake, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers*, LCL (London: William Heinemann, 1912), vol. 2, pp. 309–11.

[63] The classic discussion of the cult of saints and relics remains Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (London: SCM, 1981).

[64] For pilgrimages to holy men see Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man', as above n. 2.

[65] For an extended discussion of Christian Holy Land pilgrimage in Late Antiquity see E.D. Hunt, *Holy Land pilgrimage in the later Roman Empire AD 312–460* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); also for the views of Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine on this phenomenon, see Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, 'The Attitudes of Church Fathers toward Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries', in *Jerusalem: its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Lee I. Levine (New York: Continuum, 1999), pp. 188–203.

[66] Origen, *Commentaria in evangelium Joannis* 6.24, PG 14:269A, ANF 9:297–408 at 370. Cf. Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 54, PL 23:665.

[67] Jerome, *Praefatio in librum paralipomenon iuxta LXX*, PL 29:401: *...ita sanctam Scripturam lucidius intuebitur, qui Judaeam oculis contemplatus est.* Trans. in Georgia Frank, *The Memory of the*

> No other sentiment draws men to Jerusalem but the desire to see and touch the places where Christ was physically present, and to be able to say from their very own experience: 'We have gone into His tabernacle, and have adored in the places where His feet stood' (Ps 132:7).... The desire is a truly religious one to see the places in which Christ walked, suffered, rose again, and ascended into heaven...[and] there is a blessing in taking and keeping a pinch of dust from these places or a mere mote from the wood of the cross.... The manger of His birth, the river of His baptism, the garden of His betrayal, the palace of His condemnation, the column of His scourging, the thorns of His crowning, the wood of His crucifixion, the stone of His burial, the places of His resurrection and ascension are famed as recalling God's former presence, and...living proofs in lifeless objects demonstrate the ancient truth for today's belief....[68]

Pilgrimage *ad loca sancta* was a deeply entrenched, popular, and well-documented form of Christian devotion from the Late Antique period through the Middle Ages, and it remains so today. Early in its history, however, this ritual was not yet articulated with a specific term or phrase.[69] Just as the attachment of the Latin terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* to monastic withdrawal was a gradual development, the description of devotional journeys to visit Rome or the Holy Land (or any other holy site or object) as *peregrinationes* and the practitioners of such an act as *peregrini* did not solidify until the years of antiquity were giving way to the Middle Ages.

A case that is representative of an early point in this evolution is that of Egeria, a Latin-speaking pilgrim who in the late fourth century embarked upon a journey to the holy sites of Palestine and Egypt.[70] We know of her travels because she composed one of the earliest surviving examples of *itineraria*—detailed accounts of journeys, often to holy sites—which she apparently sent home for her *sorores* to read and experience along with her.[71] Only a fragment from the middle of Egeria's account of her travels

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Eyes: Pilgrims to Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 104 and n. 5.

[68] Paulinus, *Ep.* 49.14 (dated after 409), Latin text not available. See P.G. Walsh, *Paulinus of Nola: Letters*, vol. 2, Ancient Christian Writers 36 (New York: Newman, 1967), p. 358 n. 1.

[69] See short note in this regard in Frank, *Memory of the Eyes*, pp. 7–8 and n19; cf. discussion of Augustine's very rare use of the term *peregrinus* to refer to goal-oriented pilgrims, in M.A. Claussen, '*Peregrinatio* and *Peregrini* in Augustine's *City of God*', *Traditio* 46 (1991), pp. 33–76 at 42 n. 47.

[70] On Egeria's possible identity and origins, see John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 3rd edn (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 1999). pp. 1–3; Éthérie, *Journal de Voyage*, ed. and trans. Hélène Pétré, SC 21, pp. 7–12. Egeria's work lacks a consistently used title in Latin, but it is commonly called her *Itinerarium*. This is the title that will be used throughout this article; the most recent critical edition is in CCSL 175, pp. 31–104. For the date of the text see Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, pp. 169–73; Éthérie, *Journal de Voyage*, pp. 14–16.

[71] Egeria, *Itinerarium* 3.8, 20.5, 46.1, 46.4. Latin version: Éthérie, *Journal de Voyage*, pp. 96–267. English translation in Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, pp. 107–64.

survives;[72] but we can nonetheless find glimpses of how Egeria conceived of her devotional journey. There are some interesting patterns.

Most notably, Egeria never once identified herself as a *peregrina*. Egeria's is not the only such example: the slightly earlier travelogue of the Bordeaux pilgrim (dated 333) similarly does not claim the title of *peregrinus* or use a vocabulary of *peregrinatio* to describe the journey to the Holy Land,[73] nor do the early Latin *itineraria* of Eucherius, Adomnán and Bede.[74] While these travelogues tend simply to be descriptions of sites and their biblical context—with few biographical details and little reference to ideological reasons for the journey—one assumes if the label '*peregrinus*' or '*peregrinatio*' were considered intrinsic to this act it would have been recorded somehow.

The term *peregrinus* appears only twice in Egeria's surviving account. In one instance it very clearly means 'foreigner;'[75] the second refers to a local bishop's hospitality.[76] In practice the second usage undoubtedly would have referred to pilgrims *ad loca sancta*, but as Egeria uses the term as a part of the formula *susicpere peregrinos*—and given an established tradition of bishops being held responsible for providing hospitality (see below, §2.3)—it is likely that here *peregrini* meant simply 'foreign visitors', 'strangers' or 'guests'. Furthermore, when Egeria refers to the act of visiting holy sites or relics—the acts we now associate with 'pilgrimage'—she simply says that she goes to a certain *martyrium* or church or site *gratia orationis*, 'for the sake of prayers' or 'in order to pray.'[77] She does not use the verb *peregrinor* or the noun *peregrinatio* to refer to her own devotions. The absence of a vocabulary of pilgrimage in this context should be noted as compelling evidence that in Egeria's time the definition of *peregrinatio* as goal-oriented pilgrimage had not yet been fully articulated.

Another factor that is absent from Egeria's account is any particular focus upon the nun's own asceticism: there is no indication that Egeria considered her journey an

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[72] Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, pp. 3–4.

[73] *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, ed. P. Geyer and O. Cuntz, CCSL 175 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1965), pp. 1–26.

[74] See *Itineraria et Alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1965). The only text in this collection that uses the verb *peregrinari* prominently is the A recension of the *Itinerarium Antonini Placentini* (see p. 129, ll. 2–3).

[75] Egeria, *Itinerarium* 2.45.4: *Si quis autem peregrinus est, nisi testimonia habuerit, qui eum nouerint, non tam facile accedet ad baptismum.*

[76] Egeria, *Itinerarium* 1.8.4, referring to the bishop of Arabia: *...nam est iam senior vir, vere satis religiosus ex monacho et affabilis, suscipiens peregrinos valde bene; nam et in scripturis Dei valde eruditus est.*

[77] Egeria, *Itinerarium* 13.2, 17.1, 17.2, 23.3, 23.9; see also Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, p. 124 n. 4.

ascetic practice. In fact, she seems to have been previously unfamiliar with asceticism—and expected that her *sorores* would be similarly so—when she refers to the desert monks she encountered as 'holy men of the kind known here as ascetics'.[78] Moreover, none of the standard tropes of ascetic discourse—excessive fasting, bodily suffering, the renunciation of family and homeland—appear in her writing. Though she describes challenging climbs up mountainsides and some rigorous travel, these acts are simply incidental details that give more thorough descriptions of her experiences and surroundings to her readers.[79]

A later counterpoint further emphasises the elements that are noticeably absent from Egeria's account. When in the late seventh century the Galician monk Valerius wrote of Egeria's journeys, he portrayed her pilgrimage within the then-familiar forms of ascetic discourse: descriptions of bodily suffering, Abraham as her exemplar, and the commonplace association of asceticism with martyrdom:

> We cannot but blush at this woman, dearest brothers—we in the full enjoyment of our bodily health and strength. Embracing the example of the holy Patriarch Abraham, [Egeria] transformed the weakness of her sex into an iron strength....[S]he refused rest, that she might with constancy attain to eternal glory and bear the palm of victory. Here she inflicted earthly burdens on her earthly body, that she might present herself irreproachable, a lover of heaven to heaven's Lord. Here, by her own will and choice she accepted the labours of pilgrimage, that she might...inherit a heavenly kingdom.[80]

The idealization and conceptualization of pilgrimage had changed in the intervening centuries between Egeria's lifetime and Valerius's letter. Egeria's narrative—which was roughly contemporary with the early works of Jerome—reveals that her form of devotion had yet to be associated with the term *peregrinatio* or with asceticism, associations that were complete at the time that Valerius wrote his encomium.

The connection between *peregrinatio* and the goal-oriented ritual of visiting holy sites appears to have begun to form in the waning years of Late Antiquity, and can

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[78] Egeria, *Itinerarium* 10.9: *monachi...sancti, quos hic ascites vocant*; also ibid. 3.4, 20.5. Cf. Dietz, *Wandering Monks*, esp. p. 64, who puts forth conclusions regarding Egeria that differ fundamentally from those reached in the present study.

[79] E.g., Egeria, *Itinerarium* 3.1–2.

[80] Valerius, *Epistola de B. Echeria*, PL 87:421–26 at 424, Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, pp. 200–204 at 203 (sec. 3 as numbered in the PL; sec. 5 in Wilkinson translation). *Ideo, fratres dilectissimi, cur non erubescimus qui viribus corporis et integritate salutis consistimus, mulierem patriarchae Abrahae sanctum complesse exemplum, quae femineum fragilem sexum propter vitae aeternae praemium sempiternum in fortitudine produxit ut ferrum.... Dum animae suae quaereret remedium, multarum animarum sequendi Deum mirabile praebuit documentum. Hic requiem noluit habere, ut ad sempiternam requiem fiducialiter cum palma victoriae perveniret. Hic terrenum corpus terreno honore maceravit, ut celesti Domino coelicolam animam innocuam praepararet. Hic se exercuit ultronea libertate peregrinam, ut...aetherea haereditaret regna.*

be found once again fully illustrated in the works and careers of Jerome and his circle. In an epistle that Jerome wrote in the name of Paula and Eustochium to Marcella—urging Marcella to come to join them in the Holy Land—the saint does not use the language of *peregrinatio* to describe such a journey, but does invoke the figure of Abraham as a role model for such an act.[81] In this letter, dated 386, the aspect of ascetic withdrawal is heavily intermixed with pilgrimage *ad loca sancta*: Marcella is urged to join the community of faithful at Bethlehem but is also enticed with detailed descriptions of the holy sites she will see.[82] (Jerome also, interestingly, touts—perhaps with a slight tinge of defensiveness—the advantages of the sites in the Holy Land over those of Rome, also a popular goal for the Christian faithful in his time.)[83] Jerome gives a lengthy listing of the sites they will see, of famous events from both the Old and New Testaments—for example, the tomb of David, the crag where the prophet Amos sounded his horn, the graves of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as well as Nazareth, Cana, the Sea of Gennesaret (where Jesus performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes) and Capernaum—and then concludes with an almost ecstatic mystical description of how experiencing these sacred places would bring the journeyers closer to God.[84] So while Jerome admits elsewhere that 'the kingdom of God is within us', that is, that a journey to the holy places alone cannot confer salvation or sanctity,[85] he still promotes the salutary spiritual effects of seeing and praying at the holy sites of biblical fame.

In the many texts from this period that discuss this form of devotion, however, any sense of this journey *ad loca sancta* as ascetic devotion or as *peregrinatio* is still inchoate, foreshadowed by the connection that Jerome draws between it and the call of Abraham, but not yet fully articulated. For what may be the earliest emergence of a conceptual connection between ascetic practice and pilgrimage *ad loca sancta*, we return once more to the lines written in *c.*430 by Hilary of Arles, in which he describes the virtuous ascetic renunciations of St Honoratus and his companions. This passage, which is quoted in full above, contrasts the ascetic *peregrini* and their *peregrinationes* with *alii*—'others'—who 'go to Eastern shores or places full of holy things, to learn

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[81] Jerome, *Ep.* 46.2 *Paulae et Eustochii ad Marcellam*, PL 22:483.

[82] Jerome, *Ep.* 46.10.

[83] Jerome, *Ep.* 46.12.

[84] Jerome, *Ep.* 46.13 [PL 22:491–2; NPNF 2.6:65]. I have changed the translator's line, 'We shall go on pilgrimage to Samaria' to 'We shall go to Samaria'; the Latin reads *Samariam pergere*. I have not included the entire Latin text here because of its length. Cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 108.12–14.

[85] Also see Jerome, *Ep.* 53 *ad Paulinum*; Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 20.21 [PL 42:384–6]; Gregory of Nyssa, *On pilgrimages* [PG 46:1009–16; NPNF 2.5:382–4].

from what they see there.'[86] Though Hilary differentiates between the *peregrini* who had renounced their own lands for the kingdom of God and the 'others' who simply go to visit holy places, he presents these acts in tandem and asserts the great superiority of the former. It is impossible to tell whether the *alii* to whom he refers were in fact named *peregrini* yet, but this text illustrates that in the early fifth century the journeys of pilgrims *ad loca sancta* were somehow related conceptually to the formulae of ascetic withdrawal.

Peregrini in the sixth century also appear to have become somehow connected to the cult of relics. In a curious—and possibly idiosyncratic—usage of the term, Gregory of Tours (539–594) repeatedly uses the label *peregrinus* for individuals charged with the transfer of bodily relics from one location to another: in his *De vita patrum* Gregory writes,

> One day *peregrini* arrived carrying the relics of saints, which they placed on the altar of St Martin's church in Tours, as they planned to leave the following day.[87]

Similar examples appear also in his *In gloria martyrum* and also *In gloria confessorum*.[88] In general, Gregory does not use the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* very often; when he does—particularly in his *Historia*—he tends to use *peregrinus* simply to indicate a stranger or foreigner, with various shades of allegory attached to the word.[89] He also uses the verb *peregrinari* and the adjective *peregrinus* very distinctly to refer to monastic renunciation.[90]

While Gregory of Tours at times *suggests* connections between *peregrini* and the cult of saints, in a roughly contemporary text by pope Gregory the Great, figures who appear to be goal-oriented pilgrims are distinctly named *peregrini*. In one of his homilies on the gospels, Gregory writes,

> In the time of the Goths there was a married woman of good family, very religious, who used to come frequently to the church of these martyrs. On a certain day, when she had come to pray as her custom was, as she was leaving the church she saw two monks clothed as *peregrini*. She believed them to be *peregrini*, and ordered that they be given alms. Before the one who performed this service for her

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[86] As above, n. 41.

[87] Gregory of Tours, *De vita patrum* 12.3 [Krush, p. 714(3–5); James, p. 84]: *Quodam autem tempore advenientes homines peregrini, reliquias sanctorum detulerunt secum, quas super altare basilicae sancti Martini Turonus locaverunt, quasi in crastinum profecturi.*

[88] Gregory of Tours, *In gloria martyrum* 89 [Krusch, p. 548(6); Van Dam, p. 113]; also idem, *In gloria confessorum* 38 [Krusch, p. 772(2); Van Dam, p. 50].

[89] Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum* 2.1 [Arndt, p. 60(17)], 2.42 [Arndt, p. 106(4)], 4.35 [Arndt, p. 170(19)], 6.6 [Arndt, p. 250(8–9)], 10.24 [Arndt, p. 436(7)]; also cf. 9.39 [Arndt, p. 394(20)].

[90] Gregory of Tours, *In gloria confessorum* 22 [Krusch, p. 761(19); Van Dam, p. 37]; idem, *De vita patrum* 9.2 [Krusch, p. 704(27); James, p. 69]. Also cf. ibid. 3.1 [Krusch, p. 672(12); James, p. 18].

> had approached to bestow the alms, they stood close to her and said: 'You are helping us now. On the day of judgment we will seek you out, and do whatever we can for you.' When they had said this, they were taken out of her sight. Frightened, she returned to her prayers, shedding more copious tears. After this she became more zealous in her prayers, as she was convinced of the promise.[91]

Here the context of the two monks in the church of the holy martyrs is suggestive. Furthermore, their designation is much more definitive than we have seen in previous texts: Gregory uses *peregrini* as a label or even a title for these individuals. They also wore some sort of distinctive dress (*habitus*) that marked them as *peregrini*. Whether they were perhaps penitents in an early form of 'sackcloth and ashes', or monks wearing a recognisable badge of renunciation, or simply foreign travellers marked by their exotic clothing, we cannot say. But implicit in Gregory's description is the duty of the 'good woman' to provide alms to them, a requirement that echoes a similar statement in Egeria's *Itinerarium*, which is explored in more detail in the section that follows. We cannot safely conclude that the good woman's charges were *peregrini ad loca sancta* in the way we now understand those terms; however, these men, dressed identifiably as monks and travellers, are named distinctly.

Both Gregorys used the term *peregrinus* to indicate a distinct and identifiable class of person: Gregory of Tours's *peregrini* were involved in the transfer of relics, while Gregory the Great's *peregrini* were monks who—when recognised in the church of the martyrs—were to be hosted by the church elite. In both of these cases we find the beginnings of a link between journeys *ad loca sancta* and *peregrinatio*.

Peregrinatio ad loca sancta involved a departure from home and an arduous devotional journey with a sacred goal at its end; its similarities in form to the increasingly ritualised structures of monastic renunciation are evident. From the fifth century onward they became increasingly linked in concept; from the late sixth century they may have begun to share the same name, though as we shall see in the coming chapters this shared terminology was not ubiquitous. Hence by the early Middle Ages the designation *peregrinus* could—but did not always—carry aspects both of the ascetic departure from home and family and the journey in search of the holy. But the ascetic

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[91] Gregory I, *Homiliae in evangelia* 32.7 [CCSL 141:285(214–24); PL 76:1237C–38A; Hurst, p. 265]: *Gothorum tempore matrona quaedam fuit ualde religiosa, quae ad horum martyrum ecclesiam crebro ueniebat. Quadam die dum ex more ad orandum uenisset, egrediens, duos stantes sub peregrino habitu monachos inuenit, peregrinos credidit, dari eis aliquid eleemosynae praecepit. Sed priusquam eius erogator eis ad largiendam eleemosynam propinquasset, astiterunt illi uicinius, et dixerunt: Tu nos modo uisitas, nos te in die iudicii requiremus et quidquid possumus praestabimus tibi. Quo dicto, ab oculis eius ablati sunt. Territa illa ad orandum rediit, seseque in lacrymis prolixius effudit. Et facta est post hoc tanto instantior in prece, quanto certior de promissione.*

characteristics of *peregrinatio* were overwhelmingly dominant in terms of devotional practice through the majority of the early medieval period, especially in Ireland.

2.3 Caring for the Traveller: *Peregrini* and Christian Hospitality

In the preceding sections we have asked what emblematic acts defined the Christian *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio*, and what various meanings composed a Christian's understanding of who a *peregrinus* was. One additional aspect must be added to this analysis. We saw in chapter one that in addition to its allegorical uses, the term *peregrinus* was used to indicate an individual to whom duties of hospitality was owed. This more literal designation of a *peregrinus* appears constantly throughout Christian discourse, though the definition of who this type of individual was seems to change somewhat depending on the context and date of a given text.

Much like the Greek term *xenos*, in many Latin texts *peregrinus* can denote a guest or a travelling stranger. The application of the term *peregrinus* to travellers comes directly from the word's meaning in classical Latin; however, the Christian directive to care for them comes at least in part from the Old Testament (where this type of individual in the Greek rendering was not, interestingly, *xenos* but *proselytos*). As mentioned briefly in chapter one, the Law demanded charity to the poor and deprived: and on this list among the widows, orphans and paupers were *peregrini*.[92] The duty to care for strangers—*suscipere peregrinos*—often springs, at least in its wording, from the book of Leviticus, which commanded,

> If thy brother be impoverished, and weak of hand, and thou receive him [*susciperis*] as an *advena* and *peregrinus*, and he live with thee, take not usury of him nor more than thou gavest: fear thy God, that thy brother may live with thee.[93]

Some late antique and medieval commentators also related the charge of hospitality to the story of Job, referring to Job 31.32, when Job stridently declares that he had always fulfilled his duties of hospitality: 'The *peregrinus* did not stay without', Job proclaims, 'my door was open to the traveller'.[94]

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[92] *Viduas, pupillos et peregrini*: Deut 10.18, 14.29; cf. Deut 16.11, 16.14, 24.17, 24.19, 24.20, 24.21, 26.12, 26.13, 27.19, Ps 94.6, 146.9, Jer 7.6, 22.3, Ezek 22.7, Zech 7.10. *Pauperes et peregrini*: Lev 19.10, 23.22; cf. Deut 24.14, Ezek 22.29, Zech 7.10. Also see ch. 1, pp. 26–7.

[93] Lev 25.35: *si adtenuatus fuerit frater tuus et infirmus manu et susceperis eum quasi advenam et peregrinum et vixerit tecum. ne accipias usuras ab eo nec amplius quam dedisti time Deum tuum ut vivere possit frater tuus apud te.* This is the Vulgate wording. Cf. esp. VL Lugd 235, also VL Sabatier 1:261.

[94] Job 31.32: *Foris non mansit peregrinus: ostium meum viatori patuit.* E.g. Gregory I, *Moralia in Job* 22.14.27 [CCSL 143A:1112; PL 76:229A–C]; ibid. 9.34.52 [CCSL 143:493(20–21); PL 75:888B]; also in Ireland, Cogitosus, *Vita Brigitae* 28 [Bollandists, ch. 6.31, p. 129; Connolly/Picard, p. 23].

Christian hospitality was also strongly connected to Genesis 18–19, when Abraham hosts the three strangers who turn out to be angels of God, and to Matthew 25.34–46.[95] In this passage Jesus famously narrated that on the day of Judgement, the Lord would say to the blessed, 'For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger [Greek *xenos*; Latin *hospes*], and you took me in', meaning that when the elect had cared for the least of all, they had cared for him. He warns that those who had not cared for the needy would suffer eternal damnation.[96] Another important passage is Romans 12.13, when the Apostle exhorts Christians that they should 'pursue hospitality'.[97] No doubt building upon pre-existing cultural traditions of hospitality, these scriptural passages were interpreted to signify that the care of strangers was the duty of all Christians. Though not all of these passages mentioned *peregrini* in the Latin texts, in time the various directives blended together, and these strangers were very consistently named *peregrini*. Jerome, for example, invokes both Genesis 18 19 and Matthew 25 in describing the duties of bishops, while using the *suscipere peregrinos* wording of Leviticus 25: 'The bishop, then, must be…hospitable, so that he imitates Abraham, and with strangers, nay rather *in* strangers, entertains Christ.'[98] Similar sentiments emerge across innumerable Christian texts; many of these like Jerome's specifically charge the clergy—and especially bishops—with the responsibility of caring for *peregrini*.[99]

Monasteries in particular were purveyors of care to strangers. From the very beginning of ascetic discourse hospitality was depicted as both duty and virtue.[100] The rule of Pachomius, for example, established a special fund for this purpose.[101] Most

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[95] For an example of a text that refers to both of these (and also uses the 'suscipere peregrinos' phrasing from Leviticus, see Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.35.

[96] Interestingly, in Jesus' rhetorical declaration, 'I was a stranger, and you took me in', *xenos* appears for 'stranger' in Greek but is translated as *hospes* in Latin. The Vulgate and VL versions are quite similar in their wording: both use *hospes*. See VL Sabatier 3:157–9. For references to this passage as a directive commanding hospitality, see e.g., Gregory I, *Homiliae in evangelia* 23 [CCSL 141:192–5; PL 76:1182C–83C].

[97] *hospitalitatem sectantes*. Apparently this passage could be invoked by a guest to demand hospitality from a monastery; see, e.g., the *Regula Magistri* 1.18, 78.17. Also see *Regula Macharii* 20.1.

[98] Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, PL 23:258C: *Oportet ergo episcopum...esse ut...sit...hospitalem, ut imitetur Abraham et cum peregrinis, immo in peregrinis, Christum suscipiat.*

[99] See ch. 1, pp. 26–7, also nn. 124 and 137.

[100] For hospitality as a duty, *AP Alph*, Macarius 4; Rufinus, *Historia Monachorum* 1, PL 21:394D–5A; ibid. 7, PL 21:418D; Cassian, *Conlationes* 19.5. For hospitality as virtue, Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 17; Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca*, 49.2, 54.2, 61.7 67.2; *AP Alph*, Eucharistus the Secular 1, Rufus 2; Jerome, *Ep.* 125.14; Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 13.21; also consider the entire sub-section titled 'Hospitality' in *AP Sys*, pp. 134–9.

[101] Harmless, *Desert Christians*, pp. 120, 125.

monasteries had quarters specifically intended to house visiting travellers. Monastic rules often dictated how visitors should be greeted and hosted, and in some cases how the daily monastic regime would change when guests arrived.[102] Benedict's rule directs that

> All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matt 25.35)'. Proper honour must be shown 'to all, especially to those who share our faith (Gal 6.10)' and to *peregrini*.[103]

and a few lines later continues,

> Great care and concern are to be shown in receiving poor people and *peregrini*, because in them more particularly Christ is received.[104]

Who the visiting 'strangers' were is not always discernable, but in some cases they appear to be monks or aspirant monks.[105] The *Regula Magistri* for example regulates the reception of 'brothers and those of the world'[106] and expresses a hope that visitors will be 'spiritual men',[107] some of whom might decide to join the monastery.[108] But the Master also charges monks to beware of fraudulent travellers who 'visit monasteries under the pretext of religion' to take advantage of the monastery's hospitality.[109] Some of these men, the Master explains, use *peregrinatio* as a ruse to demand food, drink and lodging, simply to indulge their gluttony or sloth.[110] These negative directives and warnings indicate that visiting travellers were generally expected to be men of religion, some of them performing *peregrinationes*—the meaning of which cannot be ascertained with certainty from this text—but that this expectation could be abused by the sinful. The portrayal in the *Regula Magistri* in some senses corresponds with the quotation

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[102] Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum* 5.24–5, repeated in *AP Alph,* Cassian 1; *Regula IV Patrum* 8.36–42; *Altera Regula Patrum* 3.14–16; *Regula Benedicti* 53; *Regula Magistri* 72. Jerome's *Vita Pauli* 11 indicates formal rituals of hospitality among monks; cf. Rufinus, *Historia Monachorum* 1, PL 21:394A–B.

[103] *Regula Benedicti* 53.1–2: *Omnes supervenientes hospites tamquam Christus suscipiantur, quia ipse dicturus est: Hospes fui et suscepistis me; et omnibus congruus honor exhibeatur, maxime domesticis fidei et peregrinis.*

[104] *Regula Benedicti* 53.15: *pauperum et peregrinorum maxime suceptioni cura sollicite exhibeatur, quia in ipsis magis Christus suscipitur*; also see ibid. 56.1: *Mensa abbatis cum hospitibus et peregrinis sit semper.*

[105] E.g., *Regula Benedicti* 61.1 refers to the *monachus peregrinus*, the 'visiting monk'; cf. *AP Alph*, Apollo 3.

[106] *Regula Magistri* 78 (chapter title) and 87 (chapter title).

[107] *Regula Magistri* 78.9, 78.25.

[108] *Regula Magistri* 79.23. Aspirants to join the monastery could already be monks, ibid. 87.1; cf. *Regula Benedicti*, ch. 61.5–13, which limits the community from receiving a monk 'from another known monastery, unless the monk's abbot consents'.

[109] *Regula Magistri* 78.12–13: *sub praetexto religionis visitando monasteria.*

[110] *Regula Magistri* 1.23, 1.37; 78.10–13.

from Gregory the Great's *Homiliae* noted in the above section. In Gregory's passage the two men who are thought to be *peregrini* are also monks. On the other hand, in Gregory's text 'monk' and *peregrinus* are clearly separate but not mutually exclusive categories of person. But if these two texts are representative, there is a marked relationship between monks and those *peregrini* who are owed hospitality.

Traditions of hospitality in the ancient and medieval world are complex social issues that are outside of the scope of this study, but the word *peregrinus* is so often used in this context that it must have coloured the meaning of the term as it was received by medieval audiences. While it is difficult to establish exactly what sort of individual is meant by this term—indeed, it appears to vary—the contexts are not incompatible with the meanings of the word that we have already seen. The *peregrinus* is a stranger, a traveller, and sometimes—perhaps often—a monk, a person journeying outside of his homeland and in need of the hospitality of others. It is the duty of the Christian, according to the Law of the Old Testament and the dictates of Jesus, to host this person as if he were Christ himself.

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From the allegory and legend of scripture and exegesis, practical definitions of the Christian *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio* evolved in the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries. First the terminology of alienation was applied to the burgeoning movement of ascetic monasticism, as the quintessential alien took on the title of *peregrinus*, his renunciation of home and family the label of *peregrinatio*. This development of an ascetic sense of *peregrinatio* is tightly interwoven with the conceptual evolution described in chapter one, and should also be considered an important component of the scriptural and exegetical expressions of Christian alienation which were forming contemporaneously. By the late fourth century the ascetic movement had reached a peak of popularity among the faithful and exerted great influence upon the contemporary generation of Christian thinkers; the idealisation of monastic renunciation infuses the thought and the vocabulary of Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and their contemporaries, and imbues Christian discourse for generations thereafter. Only then, as themes of ascetic withdrawal—particularly to the Holy Land—and the ritual of journeying to holy sites

became intermixed, the vocabulary of *peregrinatio* began gradually to be attached to this devotional voyage.

Paralleling this evolution was a separate but related thread of development. From a different set of scriptural references the *peregrinus* also carried the definition of an individual, an outsider of some kind, who was owed duties of hospitality. While this requirement is surely based upon pre-existing traditions of hospitality, both religious and secular, this requirement in relation to the *peregrinus* corresponds to the general, literal senses of the word from Roman tradition onward, as stranger outside of his own land, among an alien people. This person might be a monk or indeed a pilgrim to a holy place, or perhaps simply a Christian on a journey from elsewhere.

This aspect of the *peregrinus* is one that may also help to explain in part how a connection formed between *peregrinatio* and journeys *ad loca sancta*. Pilgrims *ad loca sancta* were by definition visiting Christians. As we saw in Egeria's *Itinerarium*—and later in Gregory the Great's homily—they were also individuals who were hosted by local church officials or high-ranking members. It is possible that the designation of these travellers as *peregrini* stemmed at least in part from a conflation of their literal status as visiting foreigners with the directive '*suscipere peregrinos*'. Only thereafter, then, did this form of devotion become associated with the ascetic aspects of *peregrinatio*. Thus the evolution of a conception of ascetic renunciation as *peregrinatio* finds its origins in the allegorical alienation of humankind in the epistles, while the main origins of the identification of pilgrims *ad loca sancta* as *peregrini* may well lie in a separate set of cultural practices and scriptural references, primarily from Leviticus and the gospel of Matthew.

The common themes that unite these ideas are those of travel and alienation. Consistently, the *peregrinus* is an outsider; the *peregrinatio* is a journey or an existence somewhere away from the familiar. The coherence of these articulations correspond with the more conceptual renderings discussed at length in chapter one. Taken together these form a striking portrait of a Christian *peregrinus*: a stranger—sometimes wretched, needy and suffering—who has travelled from his homeland, in search of salvation or contact with the sacred.

PART II

THE IRISH CONTEXT

Chapter 3 Articulations of Christian Pilgrimage in Ireland

As we have seen, the expressions of *peregrinatio* in Latin scripture and in the exegesis of the medieval period are points on a continuum of thought that stretches back to the earliest Christian texts; they were both products of long-standing ideals and precursors of future traditions. They embodied complex ideals of social alienation and spiritual suffering, of earthly existence and virtuous renunciation. They crossed the boundaries of allegory to practice. This chapter asks how these ideals manifested themselves in Ireland, and seeks to determine the meaning of pilgrimage in an Irish context, both as a heavily laden vocabulary of alienation and as an act of devotion. The first half of this analysis assesses the sources for the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* in Christian Ireland, for the terminology of pilgrimage was central to the self-definition of some Irishmen who journeyed in the name of Christ: the abbot Columbanus, for example, identified himself stridently as a *peregrinus*, his brethren as *comperegrini*, and their sojourn in foreign lands as a *peregrinatio*.[1] Though surviving textual evidence is meagre, it gives a sense for the context that voyaging Irish saints as well as their less illustrious counterparts would have had for this once-technical vocabulary of Roman law and Christian allegory. Thereafter we turn in the second section to the more concrete forms of Irish pilgrimage and the systemic patterns that can be found therein. Primarily in the divergences of expression between the acts of pilgrimage *ex patria* and pilgrimage *ad loca sancta*, we seek defining paradigms of Irish pilgrimage, to prepare the ground for an analysis of the broad spectrum of such acts among Irish Christians.

3.1 Terms and Concepts: *Peregrinatio* in Scripture and Exegesis

Let us begin with the most basic questions of definition: What did the concept of *peregrinatio* mean to an Irishman, and more importantly, to an Irish *peregrinus*? Since Latin was an imported language, many of the more subtle connotations of these terms would have been read primarily from context; moreover, because Christianity was the main vehicle by which the Latin language reached Ireland, the sources of this term were relatively restricted. (There has been much argument regarding the presence of classical

[1] For *peregrinus*, Columbanus, *Epp.* 1.4, 2.7, 3.2, 5.14; for *comperegrini*, Columbanus, *Ep.* 1.8, 5.17.

sources in early Ireland, but as yet little conclusive proof of their influence.[2]) Some of the nuances of classical usage were undoubtedly lost as the influence of the Roman empire contracted, especially in a far-flung region where Latin had never been a living language. But while some subtleties faded, the force of the terminology in the bible also increased, as the technical differences among the terms *peregrinus*, *peregrinatio* and *peregrinari* were obscured by the passage of time. While a classically-trained Latinist might have considered, for example, the *peregrinus* of Genesis 23, Psalm 38, 1 Peter 2 and Hebrews 11 as a completely separate concept from the verb *peregrinari* in 2 Corinthians 5, in the Middle Ages these terms had lost their antique conceptual divisions. Moreover, biblical scholarship in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages often focused upon the repetitions and patterns of words and images; thus the multiple appearances of the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio*, particularly those added in Jerome's Vulgate translations, did not go unnoticed.

The history of the bible in medieval Ireland, however, is not straightforward; few assumptions can be made regarding what scriptural versions were consistently available. The Vulgate was known in Ireland at least from the end of the sixth century,[3] but mixed texts and earlier Old Latin versions also survived alongside it for much of the medieval period.[4] In mixed texts as well as in otherwise 'pure' Vulgate manuscripts the Irish retained some key passages—particularly prayers—in their Old Latin forms.[5] Moreover, some of the more prominent centres of learning may have possessed and used multiple versions of scripture. Jean-Michel Picard has argued, for example, that

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[2] For a detailed discussion see Michael Herren, 'Classical and secular learning among the Irish before the Carolingian Renaissance', *Florilegium* 3 (1981), pp. 118–57, reprinted in *Latin Letters in Early Christian Ireland* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), sec. 1; also Johannes W. Smit, *Studies on the Language and Style of Columba the Younger (Columbanus)* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1971), pp. 167–253.

[3] Martin McNamara, 'The text of the Latin Bible in the early Irish Church. Some data and desiderata', in *Irland und die Christenheit: Bibelstudien und Mission = Ireland and Christendom: the Bible and the missions*, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin und Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), pp. 7–55 at 34–9, with a useful summary on p. 39.

[4] Peter Doyle, 'The Latin Bible in Ireland: its Origins and Growth', in *Biblical Studies: the Medieval Irish Contribution*, ed. Martin McNamara (Dublin: Dominican Publication, 1976), pp. 30–45 at 34. Also see A. Cordoliani, 'Le texte de la bible in Irlande du Ve au IXe siècle: etude sur les manuscrits', *Revue Biblique* 57.1 (1950), pp. 5–39. For a more general discussion see Raphael Loewe, 'The Medieval History of the Latin Vulgate', in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* II: *The West from the Fathers to the Reformation*, ed. G.W.H. Lampe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 102–53 at 131–3.

On Irish mixed texts in particular, see John Chapman, *Notes on the Early History of the Vulgate Gospels* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1908), pp. 178–9, who posits that they were Old Latin texts corrected to Vulgate readings; cf. John Gwynn, *Liber Ardmachanus: the Book of Armagh* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1913), pp. cxl–cxli at cxli [hereafter noted as Gwynn, *LibArdm*]: 'The Vulgate text…incurred, in successive transcriptions by Irish scribes, its admixture with the familiar Old Latin text with which their memories were saturated and their religious life bound up'. Also see Kenney, *Sources*, pp. 624–7.

[5] Doyle, 'Latin Bible in Ireland', p. 34 and n. 7.

Adomnán of Iona (†704) drew from a variety of biblical texts; at the very least he had at his disposal a collection of patristic texts with widely varying scriptural readings.[6] Furthermore, textual survival hampers our knowledge of early Christian Ireland. Apart from copies of the psalter, no Irish manuscripts survive for the majority of the books of the Old Testament.[7] This should not, however, be seen as a reflection of the role of the Old Testament in early Christian Ireland: the books of the Old Testament feature prominently in numerous early medieval Irish texts.[8] Some segments of the New Testament fared no better: only two manuscripts and one fragment survive of the Pauline epistles (which in this era included the epistle to the Hebrews),[9] and one full set and one fragment of the Catholic epistles.[10]

In spite of these difficulties, however, rough facets of *peregrinatio* gleam brightly from the available sources, revealing a predominantly mainstream—but in its nuances, decidedly Irish—understanding of this concept. For the New Testament the main biblical text consulted here is the *Liber Ardmachanus*, the Book of Armagh, written in 807 and signed by its scribe Ferdomnach.[11] One of the most important manuscripts from early medieval Ireland, it is the most complete surviving New Testament manuscript: it contains the gospels and Acts, the Pauline epistles, the epistle to the Hebrews, and Revelations. Its gospels are a mixed text of a type found in Ireland, Wales and Brittany, thus known either as the 'Celtic' gospels or identified by the major

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[6] See, e.g., Jean-Michel Picard, 'The Bible used by Adomnán', in *Irland und die Christenheit*, ed. Ní Chatháin und Richter, pp. 246–57, esp. 253; cf. Thomas O'Loughlin, 'The Library of Iona in the Late Seventh Century: the Evidence from Adomnán's *De locis sanctis*', *Ériu* 45 (1994), pp. 33–52 at 37; idem, 'The Latin Version of the Scriptures in Use on Iona in the Late Seventh Century: the Evidence from Adomnán's *De locis sanctis*', *Peritia* 8 (1994), pp. 18–26.

[7] Bonifatius Fischer, 'Bibelausgaben des frühen Mittelalters', in *La Bibbia nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo 10 (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1963), pp. 519–600 at 544ff.; McNamara, 'Text of the Latin Bible', pp. 29–30. Exceptions to this are the books of Job, Ezekiel and Daniel, of which some fragments survive.

[8] See discussion in McNamara, 'Text of the Latin Bible', pp. 34–9.

[9] In the Book of Armagh (see below n. 11) and the Würzburg manuscript, Universitätsbibliothek MS M.p.th.f.12, facsimile ed. L.C. Stern, *Epistolae Beati Pauli glosatae glosa interlineali: Irisch-lateinischer Codex der Würzburger Universitätsbibliothek* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1910). The fragment is in St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 1395, pp. 440–41. On these manuscripts see McNamara, 'Text of the Latin Bible', pp. 49–51.

[10] In the Book of Armagh (see below n. 11); the fragment is in Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale F.IV.24, last page. On these manuscripts see McNamara, 'Text of the Latin Bible', pp. 51–2.

[11] Book of Armagh (AD 807), Dublin, Trinity College MS 52, *CLA* 2:270; an excellent diplomatic edition of the codex was compiled by John Gwynn, as above, n. 4. See also L&S 526; J.J.G. Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts from the 6th to the 9th Century* (London: Harvey Miller, 1978), no. 53, pp. 76–7; Kenney, *Sources*, no. 474.

sigla of the text group, DELQR.[12] It is written in beautiful Irish miniscule script, with many textual markers to help readers to find passages easily within the text. As evidence of the relative importance of certain parts of the bible, I have reproduced some of the passages in which *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* appear, along with how they are marked out visually on the manuscript. (Other early medieval Irish bibles have also been cross-referenced, but in the interest of brevity are only discussed if their readings differ significantly from those of the Book of Armagh or if their visual cues add further insight into these passages.[13])

Another natural place to seek traces of a scriptural and/or patristic sense of *peregrinatio* is in examples of early Irish exegesis, but a problem lies in what texts can be safely identified as Irish. Bernhard Bischoff's identification of some forty texts as Irish or Irish-influenced in his 'Wendepunkte' provided a baseline of symptoms and a provisional list to which numerous scholars have since responded with their own discussions, critiques and revisions.[14] In determining which exegetical texts to consider

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[12] On the Book of Armagh's mixed text see Gwynn, LibArdm, pp. cxxxviii–cxliii. The sigla are those of John Wordsworth and Henry J. White (eds), *Novum Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi latine secundum editionem Sancti Hieronymi*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889–1898).

[13] Codex Usserianus I (early 7th c., Old Latin), Dublin, Trinity College MS 55 (A.4.15), *CLA* 2:271. See L&S 515; Patrick McGurk, *Latin Gospel Books from A.D. 400 to A.D. 800*, Scriptorium Publications 5 (Paris: Éditions 'Érasme', 1961), no. 83, p. 79; Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, no. 1, p. 1; Kenney, *Sources*, no. 453.

Book of Durrow (2nd half of 7th c., Vulgate), Dublin, Trinity College MS 57 (A.4.5), *CLA* 2:273, facs. ed. A.A. Luce, G.O. Simms, P. Meyer and L. Bieler, *Euangeliorum Quattuor Codex Durmachensis*, 2 vols. (Olten and Lausanne: Urs Graf, 1960). See L&S 516; McGurk, *Latin Gospel Books*, no. 86, pp. 79–81; Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, no. 6, pp. 30–32; Kenney, *Sources*, no. 455.

Book of Dimma (late 8th c., mixed), Dublin, Trinity College MS 59 (A.4.23), *CLA* 2:275. See L&S 517; McGurk, *Latin Gospel Books*, no. 88, pp. 82–3; Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, no. 48, p. 69; Kenney, *Sources*, no. 458.

Book of Mulling (2nd half of 8th c., mixed), Dublin, Trinity College MS 60 (A.1.15), *CLA* 2:276. See L&S 518; McGurk, *Latin Gospel Books*, no. 89, pp. 83; Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, no. 45, p. 67–8; Kenney, *Sources*, no. 456.

Book of Kells (8th/9th c., Vulgate), Dublin, Trinity College MS 58 (A.1.6), *CLA* 2:274. See L&S 520; McGurk, *Latin Gospel Books*, no. 87, pp. 81–2; Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, no. 52, p. 71–6; Kenney, *Sources*, no. 471.

[14] Bernhard Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese im Frühmittelalter', *Sacris Erudiri* 6 (1954), pp. 189–279, trans. Colm O'Grady in 'Turning-Points in the History of Latin Exegesis in the Early Irish Church: AD 650–800', in *Biblical Studies. The Medieval Irish Contribution*, ed. Martin McNamara (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1976), pp. 74–160.

For a near-complete and often emotional rejection of Bischoff's thesis see Michael Gorman, 'A Critique of Bischoff's Theory of Irish Exegesis. The Commentary on Genesis in Munich Clm 6302 (Wendepunkte 2)', *Journal of Medieval Latin* 7 (1997), pp. 178–233, esp. 190–97, 201–6; also idem, 'The Myth of Hiberno-Latin Biblical Exegesis', *Revue Bénédictine* 110 (2000), pp. 42–85. A response to Gorman's criticism is in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín. 'Bischoff's Wendepunkte Fifty Years on', *Revue Bénédictine* 110 (2000), pp. 204–37. For a nuanced discussion of some of the problems in identifying Irish exegesis, see Clare Stancliffe, 'Early "Irish" Biblical Exegesis', in *Studia Patristica* vol. 12. *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 115, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1975), pp. 361–70.

I have used as a preliminary guide Michael Herren's 'minimalist' listing in his response to both Bischoff and Bischoff's detractors,[15] along with several other texts which have more recently been assigned Irish provenance with some degree of certainty. I have also included other texts that do not strictly qualify as exegesis—such as epistles, legal texts and hagiography—but that employ the terminology of *peregrinatio* in biblical citations or allusions. The surviving material from early medieval Ireland is sparse, but nonetheless indicates a sophisticated understanding of both scriptural and patristic sources. These two groups of texts—the biblical and exegetical—reveal definitions as well as the importance of the *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio* to Irish Christians in the Middle Ages.

3.1.1 *The Gospels*[16]

In the gospel of Matthew, the passage that tells of the potter's field purchased with Judas's thirty silver pieces (Matt 27.7, see chapter one, §1.2.1) is one of particular importance. It will be recalled that the priests rejected Judas's blood money and purchased the *agrum figuli*, which they turned into a foreigners' graveyard, a *sepultura peregrinorum*. In both the Book of Armagh and the Book of Kells, this passage is marked with particular emphasis. In the Book of Armagh, the word *figulus*—the 'potter', a relatively unusual term, especially in the New Testament—appears in bold lettering noticeably larger than the surrounding script. A schematic rendering of the text, after Gwynn's diplomatic edition, follows:[17]

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[15] Michael Herren, 'Irish Biblical Commentaries before 800', in *Roma, Magistra Mundi. Itineraria Culturae Medieualis. Mélanges offerts au Père L.E. Boyle a l'occasion de son 75é anniversaire,* ed. Jacqueline Hamesse, Textes et Études du Moyen Âge 10, 1 (Louvain-la-Neuve: Fédération des Instituts d'Etudes Médiévales, 1998), pp. 391–407. I have excluded Ps.-Jerome, *Commentarius in euangelium Marci* (L&S 345; 'Wendepunkte', no. 27) due to a number of objections to the classification of this text as Irish, most notably by the text's CCSL editor: Michael Cahill, 'Is the First Commentary on Mark an Irish Work? Some New Consideration', *Peritia* 8 (1994) 35–45; idem, 'The Identification of the First Markan Commentary', *Revue Biblique* 101.2 (1994), pp. 258–68. See also Herren, 'Irish Biblical Commentaries', pp. 400 n. 43, 406 n. 71; Stancliffe, 'Early "Irish" Biblical Exegesis', pp. 365–6; Edmondo Coccia, 'La cultura irlandese precarolingia: miraculo o mito?', *Studi Medievali* 8 (1967), pp. 257–420 at 343–5.

[16] For a detailed discussion of Gospel texts in Ireland, see Martin McNamara, *Studies on Texts of Early Irish Latin Gospels*: (AD 600–1200) (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990). For a study from a codicological viewpoint, see Patrick McGurk, 'The Gospel Book in Celtic Lands before AD 850: Contents and Arrangement', in *Irland und die Christenheit*, ed. Ní Chatháin und Richter, pp. 165–88.

[17] Book of Armagh, Matt 27.7, fol. 51v [LibArdm, p. 96]. This schematic reproduction follows Gwynn's diplomatic edition and uses his numbering of folios, but descriptions of script, etc. are of the original manuscript. Also cf. Dimma, p. 27; Mulling, p. 67; Usserianus I, fol. 28v, ptd. edn. 1:176. For Kells, see below note.

mitti incorban q*uia* p*re*tium sangui

nis*est* Consilio *autem* inito emerunt

exillis agrum figuli insepult*ur*

am p*er*igrinorum p*ropter* h*oc* uocatus*est*

ager ille achel demach ager

sanguinis usq*ue* inhodiernu*m* di[em]

The bold '*figuli*' is unlike many of the visual cues in the Book of Armagh, which tend to mark the beginnings of sentences and verses, as it comes in the middle of a verse.[18] But it is a word that would have been immediately recognisable if one were searching for this passage. The Book of Kells marks out the same passage with a very large, ornately illuminated capital at the beginning of verse 27.3;[19] in the Book of Durrow the passage begins at Matt 26.6 with a large capital at the very top right of the page.[20] Evidently for the designers of these manuscripts this passage was considered to be one of importance, which a reader would want to find with ease. From the colour and graphic patterns on each of these folios, they would be easily identified; it would be a simple matter to locate this passage even if one were leafing quickly through pages.

The significance of Matthew 27 is also demonstrated in Irish exegesis, for example in Pseudo-Jerome's *Expositio quatuor euangeliorum*, a seventh-century text that was well-known and frequently cited on the continent by the mid-eighth century.[21] Both *peregrini* and *peregrinatio* appear in this text with reference to the gospel of Matthew; one instance refers to Matthew 27.7. Pseudo-Jerome writes,

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[18] From a difference in shades of grey on the microfilm it seems that the word *figuli* might be written in a different colour of ink, but this cannot be determined without access to the actual manuscript.

[19] Book of Kells, fol. 120r.

[20] Book of Durrow, fol. 79v.

[21] Ps.-Jerome, *Expositio quatuor euangeliorum* (L&S 341; 'Wendepunkte', no. 11A), Recension I edited by Anne Kavanagh, 'The *Expositio IV Evangeliorum* (Recension II): A Critical Edition and Analysis of Text', unpublished PhD dissertation, Trinity College Dublin, 1996; Recension II in PL 30:531–90, 114:861–916. On this text, see Anne Kavanagh, 'The Pseudo-Jerome's *Expositio IV euangeliorum*', in *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland*, ed. Thomas O'Loughlin (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 125–31; Joseph F. Kelly, 'The Hiberno-Latin Study of the Gospel of Luke', in *Biblical Studies: the Medieval Irish Contribution*, ed. Martin McNamara (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1976), pp. 10–29 at 12–13.

> The human race has been redeemed by the blood of Christ: through the price of his blood, the field has been purchased for the *sepultura peregrinorum*.[22]

This short sentence conveys a complex blend of biblical passages and exegetical concepts, unsurprisingly, considering the pseudonymous author's choice of names, consonant with the writings of St Jerome.[23] Here the purchase of the *sepultura peregrinorum* is a metaphor for salvation, to which the term *peregrini* gives added force due to the obvious parallels with texts such as 2 Corinthians 5.6–8 and Hebrews 11.13–16.

Another less abstract reference to the same passage from Matthew 27 appears in Adomnán's *De locis sanctis*, a travelogue that records in great detail the geography and sites of the Holy Land according to the journeys of the bishop Arculf, a Gallic bishop who had travelled through the Holy Land.[24] Adomnán uses the term *peregrinus* only once in this text, with reference to a small plot of land called Acheldemach where foreigners were buried.[25] Acheldemach, meaning 'field of blood' in Aramaic, is the name given the potter's field, the *sepultura peregrinorum*.[26] Apparently the foreigners' graveyard purchased with Judas's silver was a site frequented by Holy Land pilgrims in Adomnán's day. (Interestingly, Adomnán's account seems to indicate that the field was still in use in his time;[27] the *peregrini* buried in the potter's field in his day, therefore, might in fact have been foreigners who died on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. According to Adomnán some bodies were left unburied, which seems to indicate a certain amount of irreverence for the dead, possibly a hint that the graveyard was in fact used for strangers who had no family to care for them in death.) As Thomas O'Loughlin has

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[22] Ps.-Jerome, *Expositio quatuor euangeliorum* 1.27 [Recension II: Kavanagh, ll. 1076-7; Recension I: PL 30:560A, 114:888A]: *Per effusionem sanguinis redemptum est genus humanum; per pretium sanguinis emptus est ager in sepulturam peregrinorum.*

[23] See Jerome, *Commentariorum in evangelium Matthei*, 4.27.6–8 [CCSL 77:264(1504–9); PL 26:204C–205A]; idem, *Commentariorum in Zachariam prophetam* 3.12/13 [CCSL 76A:857(348–353), PL 25:1506A]; idem, *Tractatus de psalmo LXXVII*, Ps 77 [CCSL 78:67(91–100)]. On the latter text, printed by Migne as part of the *Breviarium in psalmos*, see below n. __. Also cf. Augustine, *De consensu evangelistarum* 3.7.31 [PL 34:1176]; Hilary of Poitiers, *In evangelium Matthaei commentarius* 32.6 [PL 9:1072A–B].

[24] Adomnán, *De locis sanctis* (L&S 304). On this text see introduction to Meehan's edition, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae 3; Thomas O'Loughlin, 'The Exegetical Purpose of Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*', *CMCS* 24 (1992), pp. 37–53; idem, 'The Latin Version of the Scriptures', pp. 18–26; idem, 'Adomnán and Arculf: The Case of an Expert Witness', *Journal of Medieval Latin* 7 (1997), pp. 127–46.

[25] Adomnán, *De locis sanctis* 1.19 [Meehan, p. 62(12–18)]: *Hunc paruum agellulum ad australem montis Sion plagam situm noster Arculfus sepe frequentans uisitabat, lapidum maceriam habentem; in quo diligentius plurimi humantur peregrini. Alii uero ex ipsis aut pannis aut pelliculis tecti neglegentius relinquuntur inhumati super terrae faciem putrefacti iacentes.*

[26] Matt 27.8.

[27] Cf. Bede, *De locis sanctis* 3.2, ed. I. Fraipont, CCSL 175:259.

pointed out, Adomnán's *itinerarium* was as much an exegetical text as it was a travel guide, which again points to the importance of this scriptural passage in Irish Christian tradition.[28] Thus for Irish Christians the *sepultura peregrinorum* was unmistakeably a real and tangible place in the Holy Land, but also represented part of the eschatological symbology of the redemption of humanity through the blood of Christ.

Returning to Pseudo-Jerome's *Expositio*, the earliest recension of the same text also gives a short commentary on Matthew 5.1–5—the beginning of Jesus' sermon on the Mount—and seeks to explain the line, *Beati qui lugent*, 'Blessed are those who mourn'. The exegete explains that there are certain types of tears that are proper on earth, particularly those shed for sins and for the love of heaven. The passage ends with the statement,

> Tears are shed for three reasons: for remembrance, for fear of the future, and for *peregrinatio*.[29]

Here the commentator shows his familiarity with the traditional Christian understanding of *peregrinatio* as the suffering of mankind on earth, separated from God. According to St Jerome, earthly existence is life in the *valle lacrymarum, in locum afflictionis et peregrinationis nostrae*, 'the valley of tears, in the place of our affliction and *peregrinatio*';[30] Augustine also wrote in one of his sermons, 'Indeed, my brothers, as long as we are in the body, we peregrinate from the Lord (2 Cor 5.6). The *peregrinatio* does not long for the homeland without tears. If you long for what you do not have, shed tears'.[31]

Even these brief citations demonstrate Irish indoctrination with mainstream patristic ideals of *peregrinatio*. They reveal the descent of their thought from the works of the Latin fathers, particularly Jerome and Augustine. In both simple and complex allegories, the *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio* in Irish texts demonstrate the same threads of separation, alienation and suffering on earth that we have encountered in scripture and in late antique exegesis.

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[28] O'Loughlin, 'Exegetical Purpose of Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*', pp. 37–53.

[29] Ps.-Jerome, *Expositio quatuor euangeliorum*, Recension I, PL 30:544B–C: *Tribus causis lacrymae funduntur: pro recordatione, pro timore futuri, pro peregrinatione.* Cf. PL 114:872D. This section does not appear in Recension II.

[30] Jerome, *Commentariorum in epistolam Ephesios* 1, Eph 1.4, PL 26:447A, paraphrasing Origen; also see idem, *Adversus Rufini* 1.22, PL 23:415B–C.

[31] Augustine, *Sermo* 31.5 [CCSL 41:394(101–104); PL 38:195]: *Etenim, fratres mei, quamdiu sumus in corpore, peregrinamur a Domino* (2 Cor 5.6). *Non desiderat patriam peregrinatio sine lacryma. Si desideras quod non habes, funde lacrymas*,

3.1.2 *1 Peter 2*

Extant commentaries on 1 Peter 2 are more laconic but also indicate special attention paid to the scriptural occurrence of the term *peregrinus*. An early Irish commentary on the Catholic epistles in Karlsruhe MS Aug. 233—dated in the mid- to late-seventh century, presently the earliest known commentary of these letters—features the standard reading of *advenae et peregrini* in 1 Peter 2.11 ('Dearly beloved, I beseech you as *advenae* and *peregrini*, to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul'), with the comment, *id est quia aduena non cogitat nisi quando ad patriam perueniat*, 'because the *advena* does not know if he might sometime reach his homeland'.[32] Another late seventh-century commentary on the Catholic epistles by a pseudonymous Hilary—in Naples MS Lat. 5—contains a similar reading of the same passage, and then explains the difference between the two terms for 'alien': 'An *advena* has recently arrived; a *peregrinus* is experienced of places'.[33] These two passages again emphasise the aspect of alienation; the latter also depicts the *peregrinus* as a wanderer outside of his homeland, reminiscent of many of the stories we will encounter in Part III of this study.[34] In the Book of Armagh this passage is marked with a very large and bold initial at its beginning, which projects far into the left margin to differentiate it from the remainder of the text:[35]

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[32] I have removed the double negative. *Commentarius in epistolas catholicas* (L&S 340; 'Wendepunkte', no. 35), 1 Pet 2.11 [McNally, p. 32(164)]. On this text, see McNally's introduction in CCSL 108B, pp. vii–x; Mario Esposito, 'A Seventh-century Commentary on the Catholic Epistles', *Journal of Theological Studies* 21 (1919–20), pp. 316–18; Aidan Breen, 'Some Seventh-century Hiberno-Latin Texts and their Relationships', *Peritia* 3 (1984), pp. 204–14 esp. 204–10. McNally (p. viii), notes that the bible text used by the anonymous author is 'fundamentally the *Vulgata Latina*, mixed with various extraneous elements'.

[33] Ps.-Hilary, *Tractatus in septem epistolas catholicas* (L&S 346; 'Wendepunkte', no. 36), 1 Pet 2.11 [McNally, pp. 83–4(271–2)]: *Obsecro uos tamqam aduenas et peregrinos. Aduena nuper advenit; peregrinus peritus locorum. Peritus locorum* is a phrase also used by Adomnán to describe Arculf in *De locis sanctis*, preface [Meehan, p. 36(5)], 2.26 [Meehan, p. 94(35)]; also see note in O'Loughlin, 'Adomnán and Arculf', p. 139 n. 70. On the *Tractatus* generally and its date (given as 690 x 708 by McNally and *c.*670–690 by Breen), see McNally, introduction to CCSL 108B, pp. x–xvii; Breen, 'Some Seventh-century Hiberno-Latin Texts', pp. 210–14.

[34] For a similar wandering aspect to *peregrinus*, see Isidore, *Differentiarum* 1.1.322, PL 83:43B.

[35] Book of Armagh, 1 Pet 2.10–12, fol. 153v [LibArdm, p. 300]. For the Irish palaeographical practice of *cenn fó eitte* ('head under wing'), in which two or three oblique stroke indicate the continuation of another line, see R.I. Best, *The Commentary on the Psalms with Glosses in Old-Irish Preserved in the Ambrosian Library (MS C 901 inf.)* (Dublin: Hodges Figgis and London: Williams and Norgate, 1936), p. 30.

diam *con*secuti /// *et* pe*r*igrinos abstine

C ar*i*ssimi obsecro tamquam aduenas

te uos´ acarnalib*us* desideriis´ q*uæ* mili

tantadu*ersus* animam *con*u*er*sationem ues

tram int*er* gentes ha*bent*es bonam utineo

This passage with its deep currents of asceticism would have reverberated deeply in a monastic setting; its prominence in the Book of Armagh version and in Irish exegetical texts demonstrates a specific interest in the meaning of these verses, in which *peregrini* played a major role. The *peregrinus* here is the homeless journeyer, the foreigner; the implicit message is for humankind to live as strangers—*peregrini*—in their bodies so they might gain entry into the true homeland in heaven.

3.1.3 *The Pauline Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews*

The verses from 2 Corinthians 5.6 to 5.9—so important to the developing ideal of earthly *peregrinatio*—resonated deeply in Christian Ireland, particularly in the monastic milieux that produced most of our surviving evidence from this period. In the Book of Armagh, itself the product of such a monastery, 2 Corinthians 5.6 begins with a very prominent letter 'g' (which changes the reading of this passage from *audentes* to the quite unusual *gaudentes*). The capital 'g' is written approximately four times larger than the regular script; it projects far into the left margin and has two smaller cues at the verse divisions of 5.7 and 5.8 (see schematic rendering on following page).[36] The same passage is also marked out in the Würzburg codex, introduced by a very large capital letter at the beginning of 2 Corinthians 5.6.[37]

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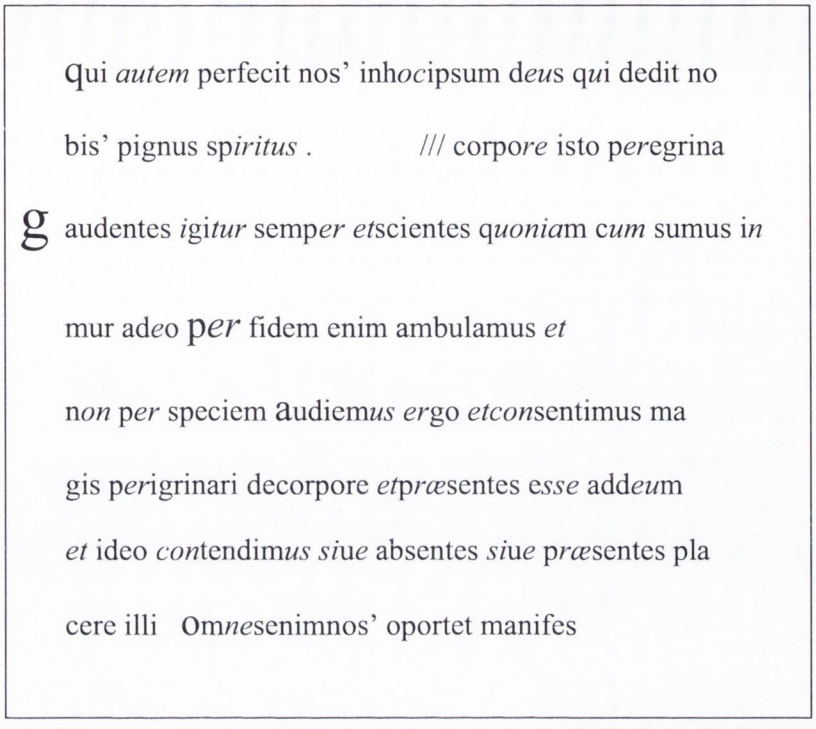
[36] Book of Armagh, 2 Cor 5.5–9, fol. 124v [LibArdm, p. 242].

[37] Würzburg Codex, Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek MS M.p.th.f.69, ed. Ludw. Chr. Stern, *Epistolae Beati Pauli glosatae glosa interlineali: Irisch-lateinischer Codex der Würzburger Universitätsbibliothek* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1910), fol. 15v. See Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, no. 55, p. 78; Kenney, *Sources*, no. 461.


qui *autem* perfecit nos' inho*c*ipsum de*u*s q*ui* dedit no

bis' pignus sp*iritus* . /// corpo*re* isto pe*re*grina

g audentes *igitur* semp*er* *et*scientes q*uoniam* c*um* sumus i*n*

mur ade*o* per fidem enim ambulamus *et*

n*on* pe*r* speciem audiem*us* *er*go *etcon*sentimus ma

gis pe*ri*grinari decorpore *et*pr*æ*sentes e*sse* adde*u*m

et ideo *con*tendim*us* *si*ue absentes *si*ue pr*æ*sentes pla

cere illi Om*ne*senimnos' oportet manifes

Again the emphasis of the manuscripts is supported by the words of Irish exegetes. Columbanus of Bobbio (*c.*543–615), for example—whose works are discussed in more detail in chapter six—exhibits an understanding of *peregrinatio* fully informed by the wording of the New Testament epistles, and he alludes directly to 2 Cor 5.6 twice in his sermons to describe the relationship between humankind and God. One of these instances, in his *Sermon* 4, reads,

> Though for a time we are on pilgrimage from the Lord [*peregrinamur a Domino*], that as a reward for a brief period's warfare we should be crowned for ever, we ought not to be over-sad, knowing that we shall soon go to Him, and with Him ever dwell.[38]

Secondly in his *Sermon* 8—which appears and is discussed in detail in chapter six—Columbanus's invocation of 2 Corinthians 5 and also of Hebrews 11 (a passage also prominently cued in the Book of Armagh[39]) are woven into a fine rendition of the traveller metaphor.[40] His exact sources are not certain but it is evident that he was influenced by some earlier version of this imagery—maybe from an author such as John

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[38] Columbanus, *Sermon* 4.3 [Walker, p. 82(29–32)]: *et licet pro tempore peregrinamur a Domino ut pro brevis temporis bello in aeternum coronemur, nimium tristes esse non debemus, scientes mox esse ad eum nos ituros, et cum eo semper mansuros.*

[39] Book of Armagh, Hebr 11.13–14 fol 148r [LibArdm, p. 289]. (The Würzburg manuscript breaks off before this point in the text.)

[40] Columbanus, *Sermon* 8.2 [Walker, pp. 96(16–25)].

Cassian, whose work Columbanus employs frequently, or Gregory the Great, whose works Columbanus also knew.[41] Much as we saw earlier in Gregory's works, Columbanus employs 2 Corinthians 5 as a part of eschatological imagery, thus emphasising the binary oppositions of *peregrinatio* versus homeland, earthly versus heavenly. It is also worth reiterating that Columbanus self-identifies as a *peregrinus*, which makes his readings of this text all the more interesting.[42]

The ninth-century Würzburg glosses repeat this stress upon the Last Days, giving a brief and not entirely clear explanation of the same passage: on the text of 2 Corinthians 5.8, which reads, 'But we are confident, and have a good will to be absent [*peregrinari*] rather from the body, and to be present with the Lord', the glossator wrote: 'i.e. it seems easier to us to separate from our body if what we have prayed for is exceeding difficult, that is, to go in our bodies to heaven'.[43] On the next passage, 2 Corinthians 5.9—'And therefore we labour, whether absent or present, to please Him'—the gloss reads, 'i.e. since it is to Him we shall go, it is better for us to please Him.'[44]

Throughout the epistles in the Book of Armagh, the passages where *peregrinus/–ari* appear are well marked: In the epistle to the Ephesians—which in the Book of Armagh follows the Old Latin text, and thus includes the repetition of the *peregrinus et advenae* as discussed in chapter one (§1.2.2)—both of the verse headings closely preceding the term *peregrini* are noticeably cued in a column with few other marks: the line reading *Ergo iam non estis aduenae et perigrini sed estis ciues sanctorum* begins with a large, bold initial 'E' that projects into the left margin.[45] Hebrews 11.13 appears in a similarly prominent section, preceded by another bold initial marking the start of an important passage.[46]

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[41] See e.g., John Cassian, *Collationes* 24.2, PL 49:1284A–B.

[42] As above, p. 77 and n. 1.

[43] Würzburg glosses 15^{c}22 [Stokes/Strachan, p. 602(27–8); Zimmer, p. 102]: .i. *is assu linn scarad friarcorp massudiing anrogadammar* .i. *techt innar corp fornem*. On this text see Próinséas Ní Chatháin, 'Notes on the Würzburg glosses', in in *Irland und die Christenheit*, ed. Ní Chatháin and Richter, pp. 190–99.

[44] Ibid. 15^{c}23:.i. *hore iscuci rigmi isferr dún* placere illi.

[45] Book of Armagh, Eph 2.12 and 2.19–22, fols 131r–v [LibArdm, p. 255–6]; cf. Würzburg MS, fols 21r–v (which carries the Vulgate text of this epistle, reading *hospites et advenae* rather than *peregrini et advenae*).

[46] Book of Armagh, Hebr 11.13–14, fol 148r, LibArdm, p. 289. The Würzburg manuscript ends before this passage.

Graphically and conceptually the verses of the New Testament in which *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* appear were often treated with particular attention in Ireland. The message of these in sum forms a moral allegory of the rejection of the earthly as a requisite for entry into paradise.

3.1.4 *Genesis, Abraham and* Peregrinatio

So far, the Irish articulations of *peregrinatio* have largely followed the patterns set by the Latin church fathers, but in the renditions of Old Testament stories Irish texts diverge somewhat from their models, not in terms of definition but rather of focus and intensity. Abraham, for example, is only rarely labelled using the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio*, which may be due in part to the relatively late and inconsistent dissemination of the Vulgate in Ireland, as well as the retention of Old Latin readings of key passages. The few examples that I have found are listed here. They are linked by a common characteristic: each of these texts interprets Abraham's status as *peregrinus* allegorically, as a symbol of his suffering or obedience to God. A work by one Aileran—possibly a lector at Clonard, Co. Meath (†665)—proclaims, 'Let us strive in holy Abraham to become fathers of holy nations, that is souls of perfect virtues…Let us be strangers also in this world and sojourners [*advenae...et peregrini*], as were all our fathers, after the manner of Abraham.'[47] This short exposition is part of a longer passage that preaches the sacrifice of the 'joy of this life', for 'Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted'.[48] In another example, the Karlsruhe *Commentarius in epistolas catholicas* already mentioned above asks, 'How does God test humankind?' and then answers,

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[47] Aileran, *Interpretatio Mystica et Moralis Progenitorum Domini Iesu Christi* 194–204 (L&S 299; 'Wendepunkte', no. 25) [Breen, pp. 23–4; 49–50]: *In sancto igitur Abraham...studeamus ut patres sanctarum gentium, hoc est perfectarum animae uirtutum, efficiamur...Aduenae etiam istius mundi in similitudinem Abrahae simus et peregrini sicut omnet patres nostri.* On the date of the text and the possible identity of Aileran, see introduction to Breen's edition, pp. 1–2.

[48] Breen, p. 23, cites as the sources for this passage Ambrose, *De Abraham* 2.9, PL 14:419–500 at 485A: *Qui enim peregrinus hic fuerit, civis in coelo est; qui autem in hac terra omnem animae suae substantiam constituendam putaverit, haereditatemque hujus terrae acquirendam exsultaverit, a Dei regno excludetur*; and Jerome, *Commentariorum in Sophoniam prophetam* 1.17.18 [CCSL 76A:676(791–9); PL 25:1356D–57A]: *Et hoc faciet* [i.e., deuorabit] *Dominus cum festinatione cunctis habitantibus terram, his qui se penitus terrae dederunt, et non fuerunt aduenae et peregrini, sicut iustus qui loquitur: Aduena sum ego in terra, et peregrinus sicut omnes patres mei* (Ps. 38.13). *Et rursum alibi nolens diutius in tabernaculo carnis habitare, lacrimabili uoce testatur, dicens: Heu mihi, quia peregrinatio mea prolongata est* (Ps. 119.5). *Etenim qui sumus in tabernaculo corporis huius, ingemiscimus conquerentes: Miser ego homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis huius* (Rom. 7.24)*?*

> Either through *peregrinatio*, as [with] Abraham; or through sorrow, as [with] Job; or through hidden mysteries, as [with] Paul.[49]

Pseudo-Hilary's slightly later commentary on the same epistles also connected Abraham with the noun form *peregrinatio*—an almost certain sign of Vulgate influence: Pseudo-Hilary cites as evidence of Abraham's remarkable obedience to God that the patriarch undertook *peregrinatio* when it was said to him, 'Go forth from your land'.[50] In these works Abraham's *peregrinatio* is a symbol of suffering, obedience and sacrifice.

A more oblique reference to the same text can also be found in Adomnán's *De locis sanctis*, a very well-known text in Ireland and beyond. Adomnán's work tells of numerous holy sites, assuming the reader's basic knowledge of the scriptural stories behind them. Adomnán lists three sites linked to the patriarch Abraham: 1) the altar where Abraham was going to sacrifice Isaac at God's command (Gen 22); 2) the oak tree under which he hosted the three angels (Gen 18); and most importantly, 3) the sepulchre where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were said to be buried.[51] This sepulchre, Adomnán recounts, is the one that the patriarch had purchased from the sons of Heth. While Adomnán does not give the story in full, the reader was certainly expected to understand the context: this was the occasion that prompted Abraham's famous declaration in Genesis 23.4: *Advena sum et peregrinus apud vos*. This passage in the book of Genesis, then, was a major point on an itinerary of the Holy Land. It is significant that the event was considered important enough to draw the faithful to the site of its occurrence. There can be little doubt that anyone visiting this site—or even simply reading Adomnán's account of it—would have known the underlying scriptural passage well, and might in turn have reflected upon his/her choice to be a *peregrinus* for God while meditating upon the events of the holy places.

While one would not claim that Abraham was unimportant in Irish Christianity, his role as an exemplar of renunciation did not elicit the same resonance in Irish

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[49] *Commentarius in epistolas catholicas*, Jam 4.4 [McNally, p. 22(776–8)]: *quibus modis interrogat Deus humanum genus? Id est, aut per peregrinationem, ut Habraham; aut per dolorem, ut Iob; aut per oculta misteria, ut Paulus.*

[50] Ps.-Hilary, *Tractatus in septem epistolas catholicas*, 1 Pet 3.6 [McNally, p. 87(412–16)]: *Ad exemplum pro omnibus bonis mulieribus Sarram ponit, sicut ad exemplum pro omnibus uiris fidelibus Abraham ponitur. Oboediebat Abraham maximae* [=*maxime*?] *in coniugio ancillarum siue in secutione* [=*executione*?] *peregrinationis quando ei dictum est: Exi de terra tua, et reliqua.*

[51] Adomnán, *De locis sanctis* 1.6.2; ibid. 2.11.2, 2.11.5; and ibid. 2.9 respectively. On this passage see O'Loughlin, 'Exegetical Purpose of Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis*', p. 51. also cf. *Itinerarium Burdigalense* 587.3, 599.3–4, 599.9 [Geyer/Cuntz, pp. 13, 20].

exegesis and monasticism as it did elsewhere in the Christian West. Though he remained a figure of great esteem, he was overshadowed somewhat by Moses in the affections of medieval Irish Christians. Nevertheless, when Abraham does appear in tandem with *peregrinatio* he is defined by conventional patristic terms of suffering and sacrifice. Thus the patriarch provides an example of Irish variations in Christian doctrine, though he represents a divergence of emphasis rather than of content.

3.1.5 *Exodus*

The enslavement of the Chosen People in Egypt was often read by both Irish and non-Irish exegetes as a *peregrinatio*—a sojourn of suffering and persecution among a foreign people. In the seventh-century Irish text *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae*, Pseudo-Augustine's concept of *peregrinatio* is informed by a combination of patristic sources and Vulgate readings of the Old Testament.[52] In every instance that *peregrinatio* appears in this text it refers to the Hebrews' exile in Egypt. For example, Pseudo-Augustine refers to Joseph's enslavement in Egypt, calling the land the *terra peregrinationis et captivitatis suae*,[53] and also uses *peregrinatio* to refer to Moses' life in Egypt.[54] Though the use of this term does not match completely with the Vulgate text, it is still a sign of Pseudo-Augustine's Vulgate usage, as *peregrinatio* is a very rare form in the Vetus Latina generally, and may not appear at all in the Old Latin Exodus.[55] Furthermore, the phrase *terra peregrinationis* appears repeatedly in the Vulgate, although it does not describe the Egyptian captivity: it is usually used to describe the

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[52] Augustinus Hibernicus, *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae* (L&S 291; 'Wendepunkte', no. 38). The long recension of this text is printed in PL 35:2149–2200; a more recent edition of both the long and short recensions is in Francis P. MacGinty (ed. and trans.), 'The Treatise *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae*: Critical Edition, with Introduction, English Translation of the Long Recension and Some Notes', 2 vols, unpublished PhD dissertation, National University of Ireland, Dublin, 1971. For a general discussion of this text and its provenance, see Gerard MacGinty, 'The Irish Augustine: *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae*', in *Irland und die Christenheit*, ed. Ní Chatháin and Richter, pp. 70–83. Also see idem, 'The Irish Augustine's Knowledge and Understanding of Scripture', in *Scriptural Interpretation in the Fathers: Letter and Spirit*, ed. Thomas Finan and Vincent Twomey (Dublin: Four Courts, 1995), pp. 283–313; Mario Esposito, 'On the Pseudo-Augustinian Treatise "De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae" Written in Ireland in the Year 655', *PRIA* 35C (1919), pp. 189–207.

[53] Augustinus Hibernicus, *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae* 15 [MacGinty (long rec.), vol. 2:46(5); PL 35:2162].

[54] Augustinus Hibernicus, *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae* 25 [MacGinty (long rec.), vol. 2:72(1–2), (short rec.) vol. 1:33(4); PL 35:2170]; also cf. ibid. 28 [MacGinty (long rec.), vol. 2:75:10–13, (short rec.) vol 1:34(10–11); PL 35:2171], which refers to Moses's temporary exile from Egypt in Midian (Exod 2.15–22) as a *peregrinatio*.

[55] See Exod 6.4, VLS 1:146, VL Lugd 173; Exod 12.48, VLS 1:160, VL Lugd 175; Exod 12.49, VLS 1:160, VL Lugd 175; Exod 23.9, VLS 1:181, VLS 1:181. It should be noted, however, that VLS and VL Lugd both have numerous lacunae in Exodus.

Promised Land.[56] The reference to Egypt as a *terra peregrinationis* probably relates to the directive in the Law that charged the Chosen People,

> Thou shalt not molest a *peregrinus*, for you know the hearts of strangers: for you also were *peregrini* in the land of Egypt.[57]

But the identification of the captivity in Egypt as *peregrinatio* can also be found in numerous patristic texts, and thus may have been influenced by Augustine, who is, naturally, pseudo-Augustine's main source.[58] The pair *peregrinatio* and *captivitas* that this text uses to describe the patriarch Joseph in Egypt is not biblical—the only other similar usage I have found is in the works of Fastidius, possibly himself an insular writer—but the pair of terms also is not unusual in patristic works.[59] St Augustine often uses these terms in tandem to describe the Babylonian captivity;[60] closer to home, St Patrick uses similar phrasing to describe his mission in his *Confessio*.[61]

In the use of *peregrinatio* to describe the Egyptian captivity the Irish Augustine alluded indirectly to his Vulgate text and showed the patristic lineage of his exegesis. This usage of *peregrinatio* links the Egyptian captivity with the later Diaspora, and again illustrates the general sense of tribulation that the term carried for the Irish. The *peregrinatio* here was not emblematic of the promise of God, but was rather a punishment for the faithlessness of humanity.

3.1.6 *Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Irish Hospitality*

Correspondingly, as we saw in Part I the *peregrinus* could be a needy and sometimes wretched individual. Again in line with early Christian and patristic tradition, when *peregrini* appear in Irish texts they are often figures who are owed hospitality as commanded in the books of the Law, and are generally classed along with invalids or other physically or legally incapacitated individuals. The *Penitential of Finnian*, for example, exhorts,

> We are obliged to serve the churches of the saints, and, within our means have pity on all who are in need; *peregrini* are to be received (*suscipiendi sunt*) into our

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[56] Gen 17.8; Gen 28.4; Gen 36.7; Exod 6.4. Also see Ruth 1.22.

[57] Exod 23.9. *peregrino molestus non eris scitis enim advenarum animas quia et ipsi peregrini fuistis in terra Aegypti.* This is the Vulgate reading; there are lacunae at this point in both of the available critical editions of Exodus [VL Sabatier 1:181; VL Lugd 176]. See ch. 1, n. 82.

[58] See, e.g., Augustine, *Sermo* 352.1.6 [PL 39:1555]; idem, *De diversis quaestionibus* 61.2 [CCSL 44A:122(36–8), PL 40:49].

[59] See ch. 5, n. 42.

[60] See, e.g., Augustine, *Ennarr. in psalmos* 64.8 [CCSL 39:830(14); PL 37:779]; ibid. 147.5 [CCSL 40:2142(13–14); PL 37:1917].

[61] Patrick, *Confessio* 59.

> houses, as the Lord has commanded; the infirm are to be visited; those who are in chains are to be ministered to; and all commandments of Christ are to be performed, from the least unto the greatest.[62]

One section of the eighth-century Irish canon law collection, the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, similarly includes the admonition from Leviticus *suscipere peregrinos* in a listing of the duties of bishops;[63] another passage citing the book of Deuteronomy groups *peregrini* with *viduae et pupillos* as classes of people to whom care is provided through other clergymen, but again ultimately the responsibility of the bishop.[64] Pseudo-Hilary also interprets the directive of 3 John 8—'We therefore ought to support (*suscipere*) such that we may be fellow helpers of the truth'—to signify the duty of *suscipere peregrinos*, and further explains, 'He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward (Matt 10.41).'[65] This usage of the term *peregrinus* to indicate the duty of hospitality was as common in Irish texts as it was in patristic works (see chapter two, §2.3).[66]

To be sure, the Christian enjoinder that the faithful should *suscipere peregrinos* or to care for the *pauperes*, *peregrini*, and others of God's needy—combined with the command to host every guest as if he were Christ himself—overlaid native traditions of hospitality in Ireland. Duties of hospitality were important facets of the Irish social

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[62] *Paenitentiale Vinniani* 33 [Bieler, p. 86(6–8)]: *Et basilicas sanctorum ministrandum est et ex facultatibus nostris omnibus qui sunt in necessitatibus constituti conpatiendum est nobis et in domibus nostris suscipiendi sunt nobis peregrini, sicut preceptum est a Domino; infirmi s[unt] uisitandi et in uinculis constitutis ministrandum est et omnia Christi mandata 'a minoribus usque ad maiora implenda sunt'* (cf. Heb 8.11).

[63] *CCH* 1.8a, citing Isidore. On this text, see Maurice Sheehy, 'The *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*—a Celtic phenomenon', in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, ed. H. Löwe (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), pp. 525–35. Idem, 'The Bible and the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*', in *Irland und die Christenheit*, ed. Ní Chatháin and Richter, pp. 277–83 at 281, notes that this text has nearly one thousand biblical citations, some two-thirds of which come from the Old Testament. Cf. *CCH*, p. xiv.

[64] *CCH* 1.10.g, probably alluding to Deuteronomy 14.29; cf. Deut 10.18. Sabatier [VLS 1:356] reads *advena & pupillus & vidua* for Deut 14.29; Deut 10.18 reads *proselytus, orphanus & vidua* at VLS 1:349. Moreover, I have found no occurrence of this trio of nouns in close succession earlier than the lifetime of Jerome. See e.g. Jerome, *Commentarii in Jeremiam* 4.22, PL 24:811C; Augustine, *Quaestionum in Heptateuchum*, bk. 5: *in Deuteronomium* 20 [CCSL 33:288(458–9); PL 34:758].

[65] Ps.-Hilary, *Tractatus in septem epistolas catholicas*, 3 John 8 [McNally, p. 120(26-34)]: *'Nos ergo debemus suscipere huiusmodi'. Qui enim spiritalia dona habentibus corporalia subsidia tribuit, in ipsis donis spiritalibus cooperator existit. Nam cum pauci sint, qui spiritalia dona percoeperint et multi qui rebus temporalibus habundant, per hoc se diuites uirtutibus pauperum inserunt quo isdem sanctis pauperibus suis diuitiis soliantur. 'Vt cooperatores simus'. Id, suscipiendo peregrinos, ut est illud: Qui recipit prophetam in nomine prophete mercedem prophetae accipiet, et qui recipit iustum in nomine iusti mercedem iusti recipiet.*

[66] A few examples are: Adomnán, *Vita Columbani* 2.20 [Andersons, p. 120(68a)]; ibid. 1.48 [Andersons, p. 86(49a)]; Cogitosus, *Vita Brigitae* 15.2 [Bollandists, ch. 3.18, p. 137; Connolly/Picard, p. 17]; *Lambeth Commentary*, [Bieler/Carney, p. 16(220–35)]; *Liber Angeli* 14 [Bieler, p. 186(15)].

structure, to the extent that a hospitaller (Ir. *briugu*) held extremely high status, equal in honour price to the king of a *túath*. Numerous rules of law and tradition governed the responsibilities of hospitality between individuals in Irish society: niggardliness on the part of a host was not only a grievous insult and a sin, but in some cases a compensable violation of law.[67] Thus as the Latinate expression *peregrinus* entered the Irish consciousness it found a common aspect of the duties toward guests and infused it with a Christian sense of obligation to the needy and the displaced.

3.1.7 *The Psalter and Biblical Scholarship in Ireland*

The importance of the psalms in early medieval Irish Christianity cannot be overstated. They were the basic text for teaching literacy;[68] their commitment to memory signified a benchmark of education.[69] They were intrinsic especially to monastic life, where the recitation of the entire psalter formed a crucial component of the daily regime.[70] The dominant psalter text in Ireland was the Gallican, which means that the standard readings of Psalm 38.13 (*advena sum apud te et peregrinus sicut omnes patres mei*), 68.9 (*extraneus factus sum fratribus meis et peregrinus filiis matris meae*), and 118.54 (*cantabiles mihi errant iustificationes tuae in loco peregrinationis meae*) carried the terms *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio*.

In terms of an Irish definition of *peregrinatio*, the psalms and their exposition also provide additional insight in several ways. The first aspect is intriguing evidence *ex silencio*. Two Irish commentaries on the psalms demonstrate no emphasis whatsoever upon the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio*: the *Glossa in psalmos* in Vatican Codex Pal. lat. 68 (*c.*700)[71] and the early ninth-century 'Milan glosses' in Codex Ambr. C. 301 inf.[72]

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[67] On *esáin*, the denial of hospitality (lit. 'driving away', also called *etech* 'refusal'), see Kelly, *Guide*, p. 139; also Catherine Marie O'Sullivan, *Hospitality in Medieval Ireland, 900–1500* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2004), pp. 31–4, 63–4. For detailed discussions of native and Christian Irish traditions of hospitality, generally focusing later than the present study but with some details of early practices, see Michael Maher, 'Hospitality in the Irish Tradition', *Milltown Studies* 40 (1997), pp. 87–118; Katharine Simms, 'Guesting and Feasting in Gaelic Ireland', *JRSAI* 108 (1978), pp. 67–100.

[68] On the Springmount Bog wax tablets apparently used for precisely this purpose, now held at the National Museum in Ireland, see McNamara, 'Psalter Text and Psalter Study', pp. 31–2.

[69] See, e.g., *Rule of Tallaght* 62 [Gwynn, pp. 82–3].

[70] On this topic see Martin McNamara, 'The Psalter in Early Irish Monastic Spirituality', 1st publ. *Monastic Studies* 14 (1983), rev. and republ. in McNamara, *Psalms in the Early Irish Church*, pp. 353–77.

[71] *Glossa in psalmos* (L&S 783; 'Wendepunkte', no. 6A), ed. Martin McNamara, *Glossa in Psalmos: The Hiberno-Latin Gloss on the Psalms of Codex Palatinus Latinus 68 (Psalms 39:11–151:7)* Studi e Testi 310 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1986). See esp. commentary on Ps 118.54.

[72] 'Milan glosses', in Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana C. 301. inf., ed. Stokes and Strachan, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus,* vol. 1, pp. 4–483. See Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, no. 62, pp. 81–2. On this work

These two commentaries have one thing in common—and also share this characteristic with 'Das Bibelwerk', another Irish text that (in the sections printed so far) shows a complete lack of attention paid to the *peregrinus* or *peregrinatio*:[73] they all follow the literal or historical exegetical method espoused by the Antiochene school and used by Theodore of Mopsuestia, upon whose works these commentaries were built. (When the remainder of the Bibelwerk and the *Eclogae tractatorum in psalterium*, another psalm commentary written in the same tradition, become available, it will be interesting to see if this pattern holds true.[74]) These commentaries tend, for example, to explain the Egyptian captivity and the Diaspora in terms of *exilium,* rather than invoking the language of the epistles to describe the lamentations in the psalter. The implication of the absence of *peregrinatio* in these contexts is that when the concepts of the *peregrinus* the *peregrinatio* or *peregrinari* are employed in Irish thought their usage is predominantly allegorical, an assertion that is supported by the texts listed in the foregoing pages.

The second insight provided by Irish psalter texts comes from the Cathach of St Columcille, a late sixth- or early seventh-century psalter now housed at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin.[75] The Cathach provides a superb example of medieval Irish biblical scholars uncovering the patterns of wording elucidated in the first chapter of this study. As Christian tradition sought a closer understanding of God in the repetition of words and imagery in scripture, the design of the bible was closely studied. Indeed, evidence of early medieval Irish scholarship demonstrates an intense focus upon the internal patterns and concordances within scriptural texts as well as an awareness of the

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(also called the 'Milan Commentary'), see McNamara, 'Psalter Text and Psalter Study', pp. 43–9; also Carole Scheppard, 'Keepers of the faith: Irish exegetes and Psalter study in the eighth century', unpubl. PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1997, pp. 56–120.

[73] I refer here only to the Pentateuch section of this work; I was unable to review the psalm section at the time of writing. Variously called the 'Reference Bible' or 'das Bibelwerk' (L&S 762; 'Wendepunkte', no. 1), the first section now edited by G. MacGinty, as *Pauca problesmata de enigmatibus ex tomis canonicis*, CCCM 173 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000). I have found in this text only a single occurrence of the term *peregrinus*, in §285, ll. 14–15 [MacGinty, p. 126], which quotes Gen 15.13 (a text that has the term *peregrinus* in the Old Latin text). On the Old Testament section of this work see Martin McNamara, 'Plan and source analysis of *Das Bibelwerk*, Old Testament', in *Irland und die Christenheit: Bibelstudien und Mission*, ed. Ní Chatháin and Richter, pp. 83–112; Gerard. MacGinty, 'The Pentateuch of the *Reference Bible*: The Problem Concerning its Sources', in *The Scriptures and Early Medieval Ireland*, ed. Thomas O'Loughlin (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 163–77. On the date of the text and its Irish character, see MacGinty's introduction to CCCM 173, pp. x–xii; Bischoff, 'Wendepunkte', no. 1.

[74] *Eclogae tractatorum in psalterium* ('Wendepunkte', no. 6B), unpublished, currently being edited for the CCSL Scriptores Celtigenae series by Carol Scheppard.

[75] Cathach of St Columcille, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS S.n., ed. H.J. Lawlor, E.C.R. Armstrong and W.M. Lindsay, 'The Cathach of St Columba', *PRIA* 33C (1916), pp. 241–443, pls xxxiii–xxxviii. See L&S 506; Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts*, no. 4, pp. 28–9.

variations between different biblical versions. Multiple scriptural texts were not only available but were also deeply studied and analysed. It stands to reason that as Irish copyists and biblical scholars compared or even corrected their Old Latin texts to Vulgate readings, certain passages in which *peregrinatio* had become newly prominent would have been immediately noticeable.

The Cathach retains palaeographical evidence of Irish biblical scholarship at work: the manuscript features a Gallican text marked with *obeli* and asterisks.[76] Jerome, who worked from Origen's critical Hexapla edition, placed these editorial marks in his original Gallican version to indicate differences with the main text(s) of the Septuagint. He wrote of the marks in his preface, charging copyists to reproduce them faithfully. This did not happen. In the Cathach, first Alfred Rahlfs and later Martin McNamara have conclusively shown that the *obeli* correspond to differences between the Gallican psalter and the Irish family of the *Hebraicum*.[77] The significance of this is twofold: first, that the *Hebraicum* psalter was known in Ireland by the early seventh century at the latest, and second, that the Irish were interested in the differences between the two psalter versions. The Cathach is not the only evidence of Irish biblical scholarship. Another sign appears in the Milan glosses: on the verse Psalm 68.9, which in the manuscript reads, *Extraneus factus sum fratribus meis* ***et hospis*** *filiis matris meae*—an Old Latin reading[78]—the gloss reads *debe tintuda*, 'a difference of rendering', indicating the spot where the Gallican reads *et peregrinus filiis matris meae* instead of *et hospis*.[79]

In terms of *peregrinatio*, the changes to the psalter were substantial. As was discussed briefly in chapter one, the Gallican had only three instances of *peregrinus/–ari/–atio*, while the *Hebraicum* had eight.[80] One revised verse of the *Hebraicum* stands out in particular: Psalm 119.5–6. This verse in the Gallican reads,

> *Heu mihi, quia* ***incolatus*** *meus prolongatus est, habitavi cum habitationibus Cedar: multum* ***incola*** *fuit anima mea...*

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[76] For and Old-Irish explanation of these marks, see *Old Irish Treatise on the Psalter* 329, ed. Kuno Meyer in *Hibernica Minora* Anecdota oxoniensia Mediaeval and modern series 8 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), p. 33, dated *c.*750 (see Meyer, p. xiii), though it should be noted that the author of this text does not appear to be aware of the *Hebraicum* psalter. A similar explanation seems to be present in the section on the psalter in 'Das Bibelwerk', as noted by McNamara, 'Psalter Text and Psalter Study', p. 54.

[77] McNamara, 'Psalter Text and Psalter Study', pp. 107–9. McNamara cites Rahlfs's earlier study, Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta-Studien*, 3 vols. (Gottingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1904–1911), vol. 2, pp. 128–33.

[78] See VL Sabatier 2:136.

[79] Milan glosses 86[a]3 [Stokes/Strachan, p. 288(29)].

[80] See ch. 1, §1.3.2. Also see ch. 1, n. 61.

The *Hebraicum* version reads,

> *Heu mihi, quia* ***peregrinatio*** *mea prolongata est habitavi cum tabernaculis Cedar: multum* ***peregrina*** *est anima mea....*

The general meaning of the text remained unchanged—both translate roughly as 'Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged! I have dwelt in the tents of Cedar: my soul hath been long a sojourner'. But Jerome's second version supplants the rather watery *incolatus/incola* with the more forceful and allegorically significant *peregrinatio/peregrinus*; among the Latin fathers 'Cedar' was believed to mean 'shadows' or 'darkness' (Lat. *tenebrae*) in Hebrew,[81] hence this passage as a whole came to represent the same sentiment expressed in 2 Corinthians 5.6–8, of humankind suffering as they peregrinate away from God on earth. (Jerome also replaced the *habitationibus* with *tabernaculis*, possibly from the 'tents of Cedar' in the Song of Solomon 1.4, but almost certainly given the context also a reference to the body as a fleshly 'tent'—versus the *aedificatio ex Deo*—in 2 Corinthians 5.4.[82])

With the Irish penchant for close critical study of scripture and also for Old-New Testament typologies, it should come as no surprise that the enhanced imagery of *peregrinatio* related to Psalm 119 was repeated in Irish exegesis. A text written by a pseudonymous Jerome now called the *Breviarium in psalmos* features an exposition of Psalm 119 which indicates an understanding of *peregrinatio* along the lines of Jerome's *Hebraicum*.[83] This text has been deemed an Irish work by no less an authority than Dom Bonifatius Fischer;[84] and Irish textual scholars such as Martin McNamara, Michael Lapidge and Richard Sharpe have with varying degrees of caution accepted Fischer's

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[81] See Augustine, *Ennarr. in Psalmos* 119.7 [CCSL 40:1783(26–7); PL 37:1603]; Jerome, *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum*, De psalterio 'C' [CCSL 72:119(13–14); PL 23:827]; ibid. De Ezechiele 'C' [CCSL 72:130(5); PL 23:836]; idem, *Ep.* 39.3 *ad Paulam*; idem, *Ep.* 108.1 *ad Eustochium*. The earliest instance I have found of this idea is from Hilary of Poitiers, *Tractatus super psalmos* 119.14 [PL 9:652B]; also in Greek see Gregory of Nyssa, *De virginitate* 4.4. For another Irish example, see *Glossa in psalmos*, Ps 119.5 [McNamara, p. 266].

[82] 2 Cor 5.1–4: *Scimus enim quoniam si terrestris domus nostra huius habitationis dissolvatur, quod aedificationem ex Deo, habeamus domum non manufactam aeternam in caelis. Nam et in hoc ingemescimus habitationem nostram quae de caelo est superindui cupientes. Si tamen vestiti non nudi inveniamur. Nam et qui sumus in tabernaculo, ingemescimus, gravati eo; quod nolumus expoliari sed supervestiri ut absorbeatur quod mortale est a vita.*

[83] Ps.-Jerome, *Breviarium in psalmos*, PL 26:1205–6. A second exposition in this text on the psalm verse at PL 26:1269–78 has been identified by Dom G. Morin as a section from one of Jerome's homilies, and appears in Jerome, *Tractatus in librum psalmorum*, Ps 119, CCSL 78:255–6.

[84] Cited by Martin McNamara, 'Psalter Text and Psalter Study in the Early Irish Church', first published in *PRIA* 73C (1973), pp. 201–98, rev. and repr. in Martin McNamara, *The Psalms in the Early Irish Church*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Suppl. Ser. 165 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 19–142 at 49 and n. 61.

assertion.[85] (Dom Germain Morin, however, identified certain segments of this work as actual homilies given by Jerome himself; though Morin's view was forcefully debated when he first introduced it, to my knowledge it has not been overturned to date.[86] As a compromise that reconciles both views, following Fischer I have included the *Breviarium* as an Irish work, but no sections that Morin included in his edition of Jerome's homilies appear in this discussion.) The *Breviarium*'s commentary on Psalm 119 reads,

> 'Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!' He whose way of life [*conversatio*] is in heaven, peregrinates [*peregrinatur*] in this body, and this *peregrinatio* seems long to him, because he perceives through faith, he does not observe by sight. Therefore like the wheat among the chaff, he says sighing, 'I have dwelt with the inhabitants of Cedar'. Cedar is interpreted 'darkness'.[87]

Though the text of the psalm is Old Latin,[88] the interpretation invokes the New Testament sense of *peregrinatio* found in 2 Corinthians, and also makes another oblique nod towards the concept of *peregrini* with an allusion to Ephesians 2; in sum it is a collage of allusions to scriptural passages in which *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* appear. While the interpretation was undoubtedly based upon extra-biblical sources such as Jerome's psalter expositions and Augustine's *Ennarrationes in psalmos*, independent knowledge of the differences among the scriptural texts should not be discounted as an influential factor. In Ireland in particular there was a tendency to value Hebrew sources as more 'pure' than subsequent translations; thus while the *Hebraicum* never outpaced the Gallican in popular usage, it would have been considered a more accurate version of this sacred poetry. It would have been typical in medieval Ireland to retain familiar readings for such a text, while demonstrating awareness of critical differences among versions of scripture. Undoubtedly this interest in divergent texts extended past the psalms: the 'enhancements' of *peregrinatio* in Jerome's Vulgate texts would have been easily observed by such careful textual scholars.

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[85] For McNamara, as above, n. 84; for Lapidge and Sharpe see L&S 343.

[86] For Dom Morin's view, see CCSL 78, pp. vii–xxi; the debate is described more fully by Sr Marie Liguori Ewald, *The Homilies of Saint Jerome*, Fathers of the Church 48 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1965), pp. xxi–xxx.

[87] Ps.-Jerome, *Breviarium in psalmos*, PL 26:1206A: *Heu mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est. Cujus conversatio in coelis est* (Eph 2.12, Phil 3.20), *peregrinatur in hoc corpore* (2 Cor 5.6), *et haec peregrinatio longa ei videtur, quia quod suscepit per spem, non contemplatur in specie* (2 Cor 5.7). *Ideoque quasi triticum inter paleas* (Matt 3.12, Luke 3.17, Jer 23.28) *gemens ait: Habitavi cum habitantibus Cedar. Cedar tenebrae interpretantur.*

[88] Note the *habitantibus* rather than *habitationibus*; see VL Sabatier 2:250.

3.1.8 *Patristic Sources*

With regards to the extra-biblical sources available to these authors, early medieval Irish texts consistently demonstrate a rich and extensive knowledge of numerous Christian writings: even a very limited survey of the sources used by Irish Christian writers from the sixth through the eight centuries reveals remarkable breadth. Whereas there has been a tendency among patristic scholars and medievalists to relegate Ireland to the periphery of western European intellectual history, during this period it in fact boasted a vibrant and prolific scholarly community. Even the short passages that have appeared in the preceding discussion demonstrate broad knowledge of patristic sources, including numerous works of Augustine and Jerome, and generally very mainstream conceptions of *peregrinatio*. Other patristic sources that communicated a strong definition of the *peregrinus* or *peregrinatio*, and which were known and used by early medieval Irish writers and exegetes, are Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*; John Cassian's *Institutes* and *Collationes*; Gregory the Great's *Homiliae* on the gospels and especially his *Moralia in Job*. From Augustine to Gregory, all of these texts can be conclusively placed in early medieval Ireland, as can early ascetic hagiography such as the *Vita Antonii* and Sulpicius Severus's *Vita Martini*; furthermore, scholarly studies on the library of Iona have demonstrated that the majority of these sources were available in one place at one time.[89] It is reasonable to assume that Iona's daughter houses in Ireland as well as the other great Irish monastic houses must also have had sizeable collections of Christian literature.[90] A detailed analysis of all of the sources available in medieval Ireland is outside the scope of the present study, but the great breadth and variety of sources known to the Irish must be kept in mind throughout this discussion.

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[89] See T.O. Clancy and Gilbert Márkus, *Iona: the Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 211–22; Thomas O'Loughlin, 'The Library of Iona in the Late Seventh Century: the Evidence from Adomnán's *De locis sanctis*', *Ériu* 45 (1994), pp. 33–52.

[90] Also see the multitude of patristic references and allusions that appear in Aileran's *Interpretatio Mystica et Moralis Progenitorum Domini Iesu Christi*, which have been meticulously listed by Aidan Breen (see pp. 174–83 of Aidan Breen's edition). Though some of these may not be direct references to the listed sources (and could have come, for example, from florilegia or other intermediaries), a number of texts have been used often enough to indicate their presence in Aileran's time. If the author is indeed the Aileran *sapiens* listed in the annals, he is representative of the knowledge base of the great monastery of Clonard.

Out of the evidence from early medieval Ireland emerges a consistent picture of a lively and active tradition of biblical and exegetical scholarship, supported by access to a rich diversity of patristic sources. Though relatively few sources survive in comparison with continental evidence, they show multiple communities engaged in deep study and analysis of scripture and exegesis. To be sure, the expressions of *peregrinatio* among the surviving Irish sources are not entirely consistent, as they come from diverse locales and span three centuries. As a group, however, they point to a highly-developed and sophisticated understanding of Christian *peregrinatio*.

The sense of *peregrinatio* that emerges from these Irish works is generally quite mainstream, but is subtly different from that discussed in chapter one. The variation does not spring from the available sources of these concepts in Ireland versus those found on the continent, as they were, for the most part, quite similar: early Christian Ireland inherited nearly every possible aspect of Christian *peregrinatio* through the medium of scripture, from patristic sources, and through the legacy of Christian culture. But there is a subtle difference of emphasis and tone. On the most literal level, the *peregrinus* in Irish renditions was a wretched, sometimes suffering individual in need of care and charity, for which all Christians were responsible. But in general the allegorical sense of *peregrinatio* put forth in the epistles overshadowed all others. Most often the *peregrinatio* is a state of great tribulation as humankind toils on earth and suffers existence in the body; it is an expression of human suffering in the darkness of earthly and fleshly life. To be a *peregrinus* is a painful and arduous experience, from which humankind can only been released by the sacrifice of Christ. Thus the virtuous *peregrinus* waits for his Lord, patiently enduring the suffering of this earthly existence, until he can return to his heavenly homeland. The definition of the *peregrinus* as a stranger, an outsider in a foreign land, and the *peregrinatio* as a journey away from one's homeland came through very clearly from the scriptural and exegetical sources that reached Ireland's shores. But the triumphant overtones of *peregrinatio* that we often find voiced by the Latin fathers—especially Jerome when he wrote on the patriarchs—shifted in Irish texts to a more sorrowful, pain-filled and sometimes apocalyptic sense, more akin in tone to *peregrinatio* in the works of Gregory the Great than to that of the Late Antique fathers. In addition, surviving references to Augustine's peregrinating city are rare, though the works in which this idea appeared were demonstrably available in early Ireland. Furthermore, though Abraham does appear as

an important figure in medieval Irish thought and is related to the idea of *peregrinatio*, this correlation was not as strongly stated as it was, for example, in the works of Jerome and as it remained on the continent. References to Abraham as a *peregrinus* do appear, as we have seen above, but they are few relatively in number, and tend simply to reinforce the allegorical readings of the New Testament. Generally the focus of *peregrinatio* emphasises the New Testament rather than the Old, and the moral and allegorical sense of scripture over the literal and historical. Narrowed somewhat from the great breadth of biblical and exegetical sources, the Irish sense of the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* focused predominantly upon the moral allegory of fleshly separation from God and the virtues of suffering on earth, as *peregrinatio* came to form a crucial expression of the eschatological beliefs of Irish Christianity.

3.2 Themes and Practices: Asceticism, Martyrdom and Journeys *ad Loca Sancta*

Hence the allegorical articulations of pilgrimage migrated relatively intact—if slightly narrowed—to medieval Ireland; from these we turn to the more concrete expressions of Irish pilgrimage and religious alienation. Unsurprisingly the most straightforward manifestations of devotional renunciation in medieval Ireland are strongly connected to monastic practice, though as we will see in Part III of this study, monastic renunciations did not by any means comprise the totality of early Irish pilgrimage. Nevertheless, the dimension of ascetic monasticism in Irish pilgrimage is critical, for in Irish discourse a *peregrinus* was nearly always a monk or had some formal connection—whether temporary or permanent—to monastic discipline. Hence here we begin to examine Irish pilgrimage as an act of devotion quite conventionally in a monastic context, which evolved in Ireland into more diverse forms of devotion. Within the parameters of asceticism we trace to Ireland the traditional Christian expression of ascetic renunciation—and thus pilgrimage among its most extreme forms—as martyrdom. Finally, this survey of acts of Irish pilgrimage and their thematic and ideological motivations ends with an investigation of pilgrimage *ad loca sancta* among the early medieval Irish.

3.2.1 *Asceticism, Monastic Renunciation and Martyrdom*

As an idealised sense of *peregrinatio* as devotion and the *peregrinus* as a voluntary alien for God first appeared in Christian Ireland, the most clearly-defined practitioners

of this form of devotion were monks. Our two earliest Irish figures who are unambiguously defined as *peregrini*—Columcille as described by Adomnán, and Columbanus in his own words—were both monks and abbots who had left their own lands, following in form and expression the ideals of renunciation and separation that we found in the ascetic discourse of the desert fathers and their western emulators. These two abbot-saints constitute a critical sub-category of *peregrinatio* in their own right—which is further examined in terms of its repetitive patterns and discernable motivations in chapter six—but they also represent a broader conception of pilgrimage in Irish discourse as a striking and extreme articulation of ascetic monasticism.

That the Irish practice of monastic *peregrinatio* was the culmination of the ascetic impulse is rarely questioned: some scholars have gone so far as to name the Irish practice of *peregrinatio ex patria* 'ascetic pilgrimage'.[91] The Irish embrace of the ideals of ascetic monasticism was enthusiastic and widespread;[92] their emulation of the desert fathers in Ireland was often deliberate. In the late seventh-century *Antiphonary of Bangor*, for example, there are nearly twenty references to Egypt; the following quatrain describes an Irish monastery as an inheritor of the virtues and traditions of early Egyptian monasticism:

> A house full of delights
> built on rock,
> indeed a vine
> transmitted from Egypt.[93]

There also can be little doubt that St Columbanus—one of Bangor's greatest *alumni*—considered himself an ideological descendant of the desert fathers and other early ascetic exemplars like St Martin of Tours. By every account the saint's own life

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[91] E.g., Hughes, 'Church in Irish Society', p. 323; Peter Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland: the monuments and the people* (U.K.: Barrie & Jenkins, 1991), pp. 33–6.

[92] See, e.g., Kathleen Hughes, 'The church in Irish society, 400–800', in *A New History of Ireland I: Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 301–30 at 318. Various ascetic practices in Ireland are discussed in Louis Gougaud, 'Fasting in Ireland', in *Devotional and Ascetic Practices in the Middle Ages* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1927), pp. 147–58; idem, 'Ascetic Immersions', in ibid., pp. 159–78. Cf. a word of caution regarding long-standing assumptions of the severity of Irish asceticism, see Colmán Etchingham, 'The Idea of Monastic Austerity in Early Ireland', *Historical Studies* 21 (1997), pp. 14–29 at 16–17.

[93] *Antiphonary of Bangor*, ed. and trans. F.E. Warren, 2 vols. Henry Bradshaw Society 4 and 10 (London: Harrison, 1893–1895), fol. 30r, vol. 2, p. 28: *Domus deliciis plena / super petram constructa / necnon vinea vera / ex Ægypto transducta.* See also the discussion of H.C. Lawlor, 'Early Irish Monasticism', in *The Church of Ireland, AD 432–1932* ed. William Bell and N.D. Emerson, pp. 58–65; while Lawlor's assertion of a direct connection between Egypt and Ireland has long since fallen out of favour, his observations of the commonalities of practice are nonetheless compelling.

and the regime that he demanded of his monks were rigorously ascetic.[94] His monastic rule expresses the familiar constants of worldly renunciation: the abbot exhorts his monks to virtue using standard terms of death to the world, rejection of material wealth, scourging of the flesh and the complete suppression of the will in the pursuit of perfection and salvation.[95] The abbot calls his monastic centre in the mountains of Gaul a 'desert place'—*locum deserti*—which he had 'sought from overseas for the sake of my Lord Jesus Christ'.[96] (Walker translated *locum deserti* as 'place of seclusion', which does not convey the evocation of the pattern of ascetic withdrawal into the desert that Columbanus certainly intended.) The saint's hagiographer Jonas also portrays his departure from Ireland as the ultimate manifestation of a progression that took Columbanus ever further from his home. This sequence begins with his departure from his home and family as a youth; it extends through his ascetic existence as a monk in Bangor, where under the tutelage of St Comgall, 'he gave himself entirely to fasting and prayer, to bearing the easy yoke of Christ, to mortifying the flesh, to taking the cross upon himself and following Christ'.[97] The series of events finally ends when the saint, who 'longed to go on *peregrinatio*', was granted his heart's desire by his abbot.[98] Hence the saint's departure from Ireland represented a final and permanent renunciation of the fleshly ties of family after the traditions of the desert monks who had preceded him, whether their 'deserts' lay in the arid lands of Egypt or in the uninhabited forests and islands of Gaul. Thus when the saint repeatedly named himself a *peregrinus* and his companion monks his *comperegrini*, he invoked the virtuous alienation of the ascetic monk for himself and for his community.[99]

The hagiographical dossier of Columcille makes the connection between ascetic monasticism and *peregrinatio* even more explicit, usually while emphasising the heroic

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[94] Some monks resisted the severity of his rule; see Columbanus, *Epistle* 4.2–4 [Walker, pp. 26–31]. After the abbot's expulsion from Luxeuil, the monks under Athala appear to have rebelled; see Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 2.1 [Krusch, p. 231]; see discussion in Clare Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus and his Disciples*', in *Saints and Scholars: Studies in Irish Hagiography*, ed. John Carey, Máire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001), pp. 189–220 at 217.

[95] E.g., Columbanus, *Regula Monachorum* 4 [Walker, p. 126(12–23)].

[96] Columbanus, *Epistle* 2.7 [Walker, p. 18(25–6)]: *loc[um] diserti, quem pro domino meo Iesu Christo de trans mare expetivi.* Also see Columbanus, *Epistle* 3.2, l. 21: *in desertis sedentes...cum nostrorum regulis manemus seniorum*; and Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.6 [Krusch, p. 163(11, 15); 1.20 [Krusch, p. 19(1–2)].

[97] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.4 [Krusch, pp. 158(22)–159(3); Munro, p. 17]: *solis orationibus et ieiuniis vacare coepit et iugum Christi, quod ferentibus leve est, super se ferre semetipsumque sibi abnegando ac crucem suam sollendo Christum sequere.*

[98] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.4 [Krusch, p. 159(8)]: *peregrinationem desiderare.*

[99] As above, n. 1.

aspect of the saint's voyage. Writing just a few generations after Jonas, Adomnán in the *Vita Columbae* first recounts that Columcille 'sailed away from Ireland to Britain, wishing to be a pilgrim for Christ'—*de Scotia ad Britanniam pro Christo peregrinari volens enavigavit*[100]—and immediately thereafter describes Columcille's ascetic regime, thus linking these acts within the same conceptual rubric. He also names the saint an 'island soldier'—the 'soldier' (*miles*) calling to mind the ancient designation of martyrs as *milites Christi*—thus combining the idea of overseas pilgrimage with asceticism, since ascetic monks were so often counted as the ideological descendents of the martyrs.[101] An earlier seventh-century poem written by one Béccan in praise of Columcille expresses this relationship with further clarity: it directly connects the saint's voyage overseas to his asceticism as well as his heroic sanctity. Béccan writes of his Columcille,

> He left Ireland, entered a pact,
> he crossed in ships the whale's shrine.
> He shattered lusts—it shone on him—
> a bold man over the sea's ridge.
>
> He fought wise battles with the flesh,
> indeed, he read pure learning,
> He stitched, he hoisted sail tops,
> a sage across seas, his prize a Kingdom.[102]

This poem weaves together Columcille's voyage across the sea, his 'pact'—his vocation—and his fleshly warfare. Another poem, probably by the same author, gives the same message in a more abstract fashion. This panegyric begins with a description of Columcille's dramatically dangerous overseas journey, as if the implicit heroism of that act was one of the formative elements of his sanctity. The poem reads,

> Connacht's candle, Britain's candle, splendid ruler;
> in scores of curraghs with an army of wretches he crossed the long-haired sea.

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[100] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae*, second preface [Andersons, p. 6(4a)]; also see ibid., 1.2 [p. 18(11a)], 1.7 [p. 30(17b)], 1.13 [p. 36(21a)], 2.10 [p. 108(60b–61a)], 3.22 [p. 216(123b)]. For a discussion of the saint's *peregrinatio*—which has concentrated upon different emphases from my own—see Cormac Bourke, '*Peregrinatio Columbae*', in *The Island of St Patrick: Church and ruling dynasties in Fingal and Meath, 500–1148*, ed. Ailbhe MacShamhráin (Dublin: Four Courts, 2004), pp. 79–88.

[101] On the designation *miles Christi* see Malone, Edward E., *The Monk and the Martyr: the Monk as the Successor of the Martyr*, Studies in Christian Antiquity 12 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1950), pp. 91–111.

[102] 'Fo réir Choluimb', 12–13, ed. and trans. T.O. Clancy and Gilbert Márkus, *Iona: the Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 136–43 at 138–9: *Do-ell Érinn, ind-ell cor, / cechaing noïb nemed mbled, / brisis tola, tindis for, / fairrge al druim dánae fer. / Fích fri colainn catha íuil, / légais la sin suithe n-óg, / úagais, brígais benna síuil, / sruith tar fairrgi, flaith a lóg.* Also ed. and trans. Fergus Kelly, 'A Poem in Praise of Columb Cille', *Ériu* 24 (1973), pp. 1–34 at 14–15; for the date of the poem see ibid., pp. 2–3. For authorship see Gilbert and Márkus, *Iona: the Earliest Poetry*, pp. 129–34; also see citations in the footnote immediately below.

He crossed the wave-strewn wild region, foam-flecked, seal-filled,
savage, bounding, seething, white-tipped, pleasing, doleful....

In the Trinity's care he sought a ship—good his leaving—
on high with God, who always watched him, morning, evening.[103]

Soon thereafter the poet details the saint's ascetic triumphs:

Beloved of God, he lived against a stringent rock,
A rough struggle, the place one could find Colum's bed.

He crucified his body, left behind sleek sides;
he chose learning, embraced stone slabs, gave up bedding.

He gave up beds, abandoned sleep—finest actions—
conquered angers, was ecstatic, sleeping little.[104]

In both of these poems as in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*, Columcille's departure from Ireland is not only closely linked to his asceticism, it is the constitutive event of his later life as abbot and as saint.

The Irish also followed conventional Christian thought in the association of asceticism—and consequently, pilgrimage—with martyrdom. The Cambrai Homily, for example—a seventh-century Irish vernacular text that is quoted more fully below—describes 'white martyrdom' as a man's separation 'for the sake of God from everything that he loves',[105] a sentiment that echoes the *Vita Antonii* and the *Vita Martini* and their renditions of saintly desires for martyrdom, which they channelled into a 'daily martyrdom' of ascetic suffering for Christ.[106] Columbanus presents similar ideas in his writings: for the abbot, monks were the ideological descendants of the martyrs, as they stripped themselves of worldliness through suffering and striving in

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[103] 'Tiughraind Bhécáin', 4–9, ed. and trans. Clancy and Márkus, *Iona: the Earliest Poetry*, pp. 146–51 at 146–7: *Caindel Connacht, caindel Alban, amrae fiadat, / fichtib curach cechaing trichait troich[-ch]ét cíabat. / Cechaing tonnaig, tresaig magain, mongaig, rónaig, / roluind, mbedcaig, mbruichrich, mbarrfind, fáilid, mbrónaig.... / ...Trínoit hi seilb siächt cobluth—cain con-úalath— / úasal la Día, díambo forderc fesccur mbúarach.* Also ed. and trans. Fergus Kelly, *Ériu* 26 (1975), pp. 66–98 at 80–82. For the date of the poem see ibid., pp. 66–9; for the possibility that this poem was written by the same author as the one cited in the above footnote, see ibid., pp. 73–9.

[104] 'Tiughraind Bhécáin', 15–17 [Clancy/Márkus, pp. 148–9; Kelly, p. 85]: *Ba cóem [la Día], díambo hadbae ail fri roluind, / ropo dorair, dú forriä imdae Coluimb. / Colainn crochsus, scuirsius for foill finda tóeba, / to-gó dánu, dénis lecca, lécciss cróeba. / Lécciss coilcthi, lécciss cotlud—caíniu bertaib— / brisiss bairnea, ba forfailid feisib tercaib.*

[105] My italics. Cambrai Homily (L&S 801), ed. and trans. Whitley Stokes and John Strachan, in *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, 2 vols., 2nd edn (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1975), vol. 2, pp. 244–7 at 246–7. For a larger exerpt of this passage see ch. 8, p. 230 and n. 48. On this text generally see Pádraig Ó Néill, 'The background to the Cambrai Homily', *Ériu* 32 (1981), pp. 137–47; Clare Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom', in *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick and David Dumville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 21–46 esp. 23; Louis Gougaud, 'Les Conceptions du martyre chez les irlandais', *Revue Bénédictine* 24 (1907), pp. 360–73; and Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, pp. 292–6.

[106] See ch. 2, n. 16.

God's name.[107] He invokes the idea of monasticism as a daily martyrdom in an exhorting sermon to his monks: he admonishes them to die to the world, and urges them to 'live as if they died daily'.[108] For Columbanus and his monks, the world was to be hated, rejected and abandoned; within the order of extreme ascetic discipline, separation from the world culminated in the total renunciation of homeland and kin, the ultimate expression of the ascetic's rejection of the fleshly comforts of family, friends and familiar surroundings. In this abandonment the monk could find his daily martyrdom, a concept that was enunciated in both vernacular and Hiberno-Latin texts.

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Descriptions of Columcille of Iona and Columbanus of Bobbio—two Irish monks who in the sixth century left their homelands to cross the sea—provide a clear sense of the underpinnings of *peregrinatio* in an Irish context. These voyaging monks were specifically named *peregrini*; their journeys from their homelands were called *peregrinationes*. The links between their devotional renunciations and the tenets of asceticism are unambiguous; hence some of the most basic articulations of Irish pilgrimage—particularly as they were expressed in Latin—referenced long-standing traditions of asceticism, which determined the rituals, imagery, language and form of Irish *peregrinatio*. This basic ascetic element lies at the foundation of every form of Irish pilgrimage discussed in this study. From the most simple and mainstream articulation practised by Columcille and Columbanus, to the various forms of eremitic withdrawal, to penitential exile, each of these acts of separation were informed by an ideology of asceticism.

3.2.2 *Irish Pilgrimage* ad Loca Sancta

In contrast to the copious evidence of a developed ideology and practice of ascetic *peregrinatio ex patria* in Ireland, consistent evidence of pilgrimage *ad loca sancta* from and within Ireland in the early Middle Ages is remarkably difficult to find.[109] This is not to say that such pilgrimages did not occur: we can catch brief glimpses of Irish pilgrims travelling to various cult sites in the medieval period. This section reviews existing evidence of Irish pilgrimages to the Holy Land, to Rome, and to other local sites, to

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[107] Columbanus, *Epistle* 2.3 [Walker, pp. 12(33)–14(2)]; idem, *Regula Monachorum* 4 [Walker, p. 126(12–23)]

[108] Columbanus, *Sermon* 3.3 [Walker, pp. 74(27)–76(3)]: *sic vivere quasi mortui cotidie.*

[109] On this topic see Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland*, pp. 29–31.

ascertain how—or if—the Irish related these practices to the ideals of *peregrinatio* as set out in the forgoing pages and chapters.

There was demonstrable interest in travel to the Holy Land in medieval Ireland, best attested by Adomnán's *De locis sanctis* and its enthusiastic reception in Ireland and elsewhere, though there are few indications that Irish Christians actually undertook such a journey. A possible instance emerges from the ninth-century account of Dicuil, who reported on the travels before the year 767 of his *frater* Fidelis—presumed also to be an Irish monk—not only through Jerusalem but Egypt as well;[110] Dicuil, however, only recounts Fidelis's wanderings through Egypt in any detail. Not only is he uninterested in the traveller's account of the Holy Land, but if Fidelis followed in the footsteps of John Cassian to meet any of the ascetics who still practised their unique form of devotion in Egypt, we hear nothing of them. Of course, admittedly Dicuil was primarily a geographer, but he was also a monk. It is intriguing to see that by the ninth century the most important points of reference in Dicuil's world-view did not include the Holy Places or the famed sites of early monasticism.

Rome represented a more proximate and realistic goal for many faithful: for the medieval Irish along with much of the West, the hub of the Christian faith had shifted to Rome. The relics of Rome were unequivocally important in Irish tradition.[111] In Irish texts, however, journeys to Rome—and there appear to have been many—do not follow a pattern that identifies them easily as pilgrimages. They tend to involve quests for learning and for determinations of 'correct' doctrine and ritual. A section of Muirchú's *Vita Patricii*, for example, describes the goals of such a visit: Muirchú writes that Patrick

> ...set out to visit and honour the apostolic see, the head, that is, of all the churches in the whole world, in order to learn and understand and practise divine wisdom and the holy mysteries to which God had called him, and in order to preach and

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[110] Dicuil, *De mensura orbis terrae* 6.12–18, ed. J.J. Tierney, *Dicuili Liber de mensura orbis terrae*, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae 6 (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967), pp. 62–3.

[111] See, e.g., Cummian, *De controversia Paschali* [Walsh/Ó Cróinín, p. 94(285–8)]; *Liber Angeli* 19 [Bieler, *Patrician Texts*, pp. 186(32–9)]; also cf. Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.24.2 [Bieler, p. 108(7–8)]. On the cult of relics in Ireland generally, see Charles Doherty, 'The use of relics in early Ireland', in *Ireland and Europe = Irland und Europa*, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), pp. 89–101; A.T. Lucas, 'The Social Role of Relics and Reliquaries in Ancient Ireland', *JRSAI* 116 (1986), pp. 5–37. On Rome's tendency to distribute such relics, see John M. McCulloh, 'The Cult of Relics in the Letters and "Dialogues" of Pope Gregory the Great: A Lexicographical Study', *Traditio* 32 (1976), pp. 145–84.

> bring divine grace to the peoples beyond the Empire, converting them to belief in Christ.[112]

Though almost certainly a fictitious account, Muirchú gives insight into the Irish conception of the seat of Christianity in his time. This pattern is repeated across numerous hagiographical texts: the late seventh or early eighth-century *Vita Prima S. Brigitae* tells of an envoy sent to Rome by the saint to ensure that Kildare's liturgy was performed properly.[113] The eighth-century *vita* of St Ailbe tells that the saint went to Rome with a large group of companions and even names these travellers *peregrini*, but the account reads more like a training mission and a claim to orthodox legitimacy than a pilgrimage *ad loca sancta*;[114] St Cainnech's brief journey to Rome has similar overtones.[115] Rome was the centre of western Christianity and—for some, though not all in Ireland—the touchstone of orthodoxy; when projecting back into the formative years of the church in Ireland these seventh- and eighth-century hagiographers depicted their saints informed and trained in Rome before they commenced their work in their own countries.

Even outside of hagiography the pattern remains: Cummian's letter to Segene, dated in the early 630s, recounts an actual journey from Ireland to Rome, where his envoys travelled to find clarity on the question of the Paschal controversy from 'the successors of the Lord's Apostles'; the company also returned with holy relics and books, which one might imagine included the newest, authoritative versions of scripture—the Vulgate.[116] In fact, beginning only a generation thereafter, the British Benedict Biscop began his series of journeys to Rome, from whence he famously returned with copies of the Vulgate, relics and extensive knowledge of the *mores Romanae*, from modes of chanting to architectural styles.[117] The journeys of Benedict

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[112] Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.5.2 [Bieler, p. 70(11–16)]: *Egressus ad sedem apostolicam uisitandam et honorandam, ad caput utique omnium ecclesiarum totius mundi, ut sapientiam diuinam sanctaque misteria ad quae uocauit illum Deus ut disceret atque intellegeret et inpleret, et ut praedicaret et donaret diuinam graciam in nationibus externis conuertens ad fidem Christi.* Cf. *Vita S. Albei* 14–18.

[113] *Vita Prima S. Brigitae* 90.5 [Bollandists, ch. 15.89].

[114] *Vita S. Albei* (L&S 393) 14–18 [Heist, *VSH*, pp. 118–31 at 119–20]. On the date of this text see Máire Herbert, 'Literary Sea-Voyages and Early Munster Hagiography', in *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, ed. Ronald Black, William Gillies and Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh (East Linton, Scotland: Tuckwell, 1999), pp. 182–9 at 182; this is one of the O'Donoghue texts noted in ch. 4 n. 93. Also cf. *Vita S. Colmani* 20 [Heist, *VSH*, pp. 209–24 at 215–16], which appears describe a *peregrinatio* to see the pope in Rome.

[115] *Vita S. Cainnechi* 6 [Heist, *VSH*, p. 183]. This is also an eighth-century text; see Herbert, 'The *Vita Columbae* and Irish hagiography: a study of the *Vita Cainnechi*', pp. 31–40.

[116] Cummian, *De controversia Paschali* [Walsh/Ó Cróinín, pp. 92–4].

[117] Bede, *Vitae sanctorum abbatum* 1, PL 94:714C–18B.

and Cummian's brethren were to hone their faith at the centre of Christendom, and to acquire knowledge and books from the authoritative repository of orthodoxy.

While it is difficult even today to imagine a visitor to Rome missing the opportunity to view the tomb of St Peter and the relics of Peter and Paul, Irish accounts of such journeys, both real and imagined, place no emphasis upon the visitation of tombs or the veneration of the illustrious Christian dead in Rome. It is a curious omission, since the cult of saints and relics was in fact extremely active and popular in early Irish Christianity. Relics from Rome were particularly valued and conferred a certain amount of authority upon the churches that held them.[118] Irish texts do feature some infrequent examples of relic and grave veneration: in Jonas's *vita* of Columbanus, for example, the saint in his wanderings around Gaul stopped in Tours to visit and pray at the grave of St Martin, and effected a miracle through his prayers at the holy site.[119] Though we must always consider hagiographical accounts with some suspicion, the idea that Columbanus might have visited Tours to pray to St Martin is supported by the overt esteem for the saint—a sentiment echoed in numerous Irish texts—in his works.[120] Jonas's account is also corroborated by Gregory of Tours, who recorded the dynamic growth of the cult of St Martin in sixth century Tours.[121] From seventh- and eighth-century Ireland a similar focus upon the cults of local saints also emerges. Kildare, for example, claimed to have the relics of St Brigit in the church that she was said to have founded; according to the hagiographer Cogitosus, these drew many pilgrims—not, it should be noted, called *peregrini*—to the monastery. He wrote,

> And who can count the different crowds and numberless peoples flocking from all the provinces—some for the abundant feasting, others for the healing of their afflictions, others to watch the pageant of the crowds, others with great gifts and offerings—to join in the solemn celebration of the feast of saint Brigit.[122]

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[118] As above, n. 111.

[119] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 42 and 44.

[120] Columbanus, *Epistle* 2.7 [Walker, p. 18(15)]. On the cult of St Martin in Ireland, see Paul Grosjean, 'Gloria postuma S. Martini Turonensis apud Scottos et Britannos', *Analecta Bollandiana* 55 (1937), pp. 300–48.

[121] Discussed in Els Rose, 'Celebrating Saint Martin in early medieval Gaul', in *Christian Feast and Festival: the Dynamics of Western Liturgy and Culture*, ed. P. Post, G. Rouwhorst, L. van Tongeren, and A. Scheer, Liturgia condenda 12 (Leuven, Paris and Sterling, VA: Peeters, 2001), pp. 267–86, esp. 273–5.

[122] Cogitosus, *Vita Brigitae* 32.10 [Bollandists, ch. 8.37, p. 141; Connolly/Picard, p. 27]: *Et quis dinumerare posit diversas turbas et innumerabiles populos de omnibus provinciis Hiberniæ confluentes? Alii enim propter epularum abundantiam, alii ad spectaculum turbarum, alii propter sanitates de suis languoribus, alii cum magnis donis et muneribus convenientes ad solemnitatem nativitatis S. Brigidæ.*

The remains of Columcille also were retained after his death by the brethren of Iona; his non-corporeal relics were used in rituals to appeal for miraculous intercession.[123] The saints remains were integral to the identity of his community: they were moved by his community when the dangers of repeated Viking raids threatened Iona, signalling the end of the monastic community there. In the eighth century Adomnán's remains were brought to Ireland, and went on a 'circuit' (Lat. *commotatio*, Ir. *cuairt*) to formally promulgate the law that bore his name.[124] There are many similar examples of the centrality of relics in Irish Christianity, but few corresponding records in the surviving Christian literature of early medieval Ireland. Nevertheless, surviving evidence does indicate an active and popular participation in the cult of saints and relics in early medieval Ireland.

The question thus becomes how the cult of relics, so intrinsic to the ideal of pilgrimage *ad loca sancta*, might have been conceptually connected to *peregrinatio* in Ireland. Irish texts do not appear to associate the two forms of devotion. In terms of revelatory names and labels, there is little evidence for the definition of travellers to holy sites as *peregrini* or their journeys as *peregrinationes*. In this regard, Adomnán's *De locis sanctis* provides a representative point of reference. In the whole of this text Adomnán never once named the journeying bishop Arculf a *peregrinus*, nor his journeys throughout the famous sites of the Holy Land *peregrinationes*; neither did Bede when he wrote a similar account.[125] Instead Adomnán uses the term *peragrator* and *peragrans* for Arculf (and sometimes *pergens* to describe other unnamed travellers), and usually *iter* for the bishop's journeys, usages that can be starkly contrasted with the heavy presence and consistency of *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* in the *Vita Columbae*.[126] Adomnán had a concise idea of what these terms meant: his definition did not include Arculf's model of a journey to the holy places.

In sum, I have found no evidence that the various goals, practices and expressions that define pilgrimage *ad loca sancta* informed the construction of *peregrinatio* in Irish texts. As we have seen, even the quintessential account of Holy Land pilgrimage lacks any definition of the journey as a *peregrinatio*. Devotional

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[123] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.44.

[124] AU 727.5 (also 730.3); for similar instances see AU 734.3, 743.11, 776.5, 784.9, 785.2, 790.5, 793.5, 794.5. The annals also record changes in the status of relics, for example when they were moved from place to place or deposited in reliquaries: see AU 789.17, 800.6, 801.1.

[125] See ch. 2, n. 74.

[126] For *peragrator*, see Adomnán, *De locis sanctis* 2.29 [Meehan, p. 98(8)]; for *peragrans*, see ibid. preface [p. 36(7)]; for *pergens* ibid. 1.11 [p. 56(14)], 2.7 [p. 78(20)]; for *iter*, ibid. 2.29 [p. 98(24)].

journeys *ad limina apostolorum* also undoubtedly took place in the early medieval period, but the Irish tended to envision these journeys as quests for enhanced knowledge, training, and often the authority of orthodoxy. These journeys blend the visit to a holy centre with the educational aspect of pilgrimage: a combination much like that found in St Jerome's descriptions of travelling to Bethlehem. (Though journeys to Rome are at times named *peregrinationes*, this almost invariably seems to refer to some renunciative aspect of the journey and not to the goal-oriented aspect.) Furthermore, although local cults had sprung up throughout Ireland, those who travelled to them receive relatively little attention in the surviving texts of this period and are not described using the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio*.

Perhaps due to the overwhelming emphasis upon the allegorical nature of *peregrinatio* and its more conceptually equivalent practice as an aspect of monasticism as well as 'paramonastic' forms of devotion (see esp. chapter eight, §8.3), the labels of *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio* are not regularly applied to pilgrims *ad loca sancta* in Ireland until later in the Middle Ages, well past the time period under consideration in this study. As will be recalled from chapter two, on the continent the terminology of *peregrinatio* began to merge with the practice of visiting holy places and people from the fifth into the sixth century, but in reality even the continental witnesses to this connection prior to the seventh century are relatively few. It took much longer for this terminology to catch on in Ireland. In the works of Adomnán in particular, the abbot's use of the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* reveals a consistency of definition that did not extend to the act of pilgrimage *ad loca sancta.* This difference in terminology and the very distinct patterns of usage for the words *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* are indicative of a broader divergence in the conception of both practices. There was a conceptual break between these two practices in early medieval Ireland that would not be fused for some time. Furthermore, whereas allegorical *peregrinatio* and its related ascetic manifestations featured prominently in numerous early medieval Irish texts—from epistles to exegesis, from poetry to hagiography—in great contrast the journey and act of relic/grave/shrine veneration appears only rarely and is not invested with 'saintly' value in hagiography, except in a single text, Jonas's *Vita Columbani*, which it must be remembered was of continental provenance. Although by Cogitosus's account, large numbers of the faithful travelled to holy sites to seek out a saint's intercession, healing or, as he observed, simply to experience the spectacle, this act in itself did not confer

virtue and does not appear to have been highly valued by the early medieval Irish. In sum, these acts of pilgrimage *ad loca sancta* undoubtedly occurred, and were in fact probably quite popular; they simply were not notable enough or invested with enough implicit virtue for Irish churchmen to record with any frequency.

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The *peregrinus* and the *peregrinatio*, therefore, had specific significance in Irish thought, which traced its lineage to the models of Latin scripture, the works of the Latin fathers, and the ascetic discourse of the fourth and fifth centuries. The ascetic component of *peregrinatio* remained a constant throughout the period under consideration in this study, and indeed for long thereafter. In this regard, the Irish expressions of *peregrinatio* that were current, for example, when Columbanus embarked upon his journey to Gaul, or when Adomnán wrote his *vita* of St Columcille, had not yet evolved in Ireland to include the aspect of *peregrinatio ad loca sancta* as they had begun to do on the continent (see chapter two, §2.2).

This chapter has illustrated one of the great problems of definition described in the introduction: pilgrimage as we understand it today, and as it appears in most scholarly studies, is only obliquely related to the concept of *peregrinatio* in early medieval Ireland. Though as we will find in Part III, Irish practices of pilgrimage comprised a broad spectrum of acts and of practitioners, this breadth somewhat surprisingly did not include *peregrinatio ad loca sancta.* Thus further discussions of the ritual of pilgrimage *ad loca sancta* rightfully belong to a separate study: the terminology and more importantly, the driving force and scriptural/exegetical justifications for these journeys were fundamentally different from the predominantly ascetic and penitential practices that more accurately merit the label 'Irish *peregrinatio*' in this period. The remainder of the present study therefore focuses specifically upon the various practices of pilgrimage *ex patria* in Irish Christian tradition.

The scriptural, exegetical, and monastic articulations of pilgrimage that we have encountered in this chapter have been, though at times subtly different in emphasis and tone, for the most part quite mainstream and conventional. As the ideal and practice of *peregrinatio* reached into the later centuries of this study, they became slightly old-fashioned and in effect distinctively Irish. But there were other inherent idiosyncrasies

in the practices of Irish pilgrimage. Many of these can be more easily understood by exposing the Irish substrate onto which the Latinate Christian concepts were layered; before meeting the *peregrini* themselves the next chapter thus explores the context for these ideals in the realms of Irish society, culture and law.

Chapter 4 Identity and Separation in Early Irish Society

To contextualise the act of pilgrimage in Ireland, we temporarily leave aside the ascetic components of pilgrimage—as these are discussed in more detail in later chapters—and ask what it meant to be a pilgrim or alien in the context of Irish society and culture. Early Irish vernacular law texts provide the primary sources for this discussion. Written down beginning in the seventh and eighth centuries, the traditions recorded in some of these documents extend further back in time, in some cases possibly to pre-Christian eras.[1] The considerable surviving corpus of native Irish laws—which address innumerable aspects of daily life as well as more uncommon events—represent a rich and invaluable resource for the reconstruction of Irish social history. In these sources we find the *recht*, 'law-abiding person, one of legal status', or *aurrad* 'person of legal standing within a *túath*',[2] as well as some of the opposites of these individuals—outsiders and outlaws—wherein we begin our pursuit of the Irish *peregrinus*. The search extends into penitential and canon law texts, as well as hagiographical stories and traditions that further illustrate the development of Christian tradition in early Ireland; in these documents a distinctly Hiberno-Christian blend of church law and native custom emerges. The 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in these texts are more difficult to define explicitly than the divisions between the *civis* and *peregrinus* in Roman law; however, they reveal a similar consciousness of normative identity in contrast to displacement and exclusion, which in turn informs Irish ideals of virtuous exile.

The first element in constructing a backdrop for the Irish devotional outsider is a brief sketch of the outlines of Irish society, to give a sense of a life lived both inside and outside the normal structures of kinship and people; for the act of severing social ties to embark upon a temporary or permanent period of renunciation held subtly different meanings in the more complex hierarchies of Irish society than it had in the ancient

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[1] D.A. Binchy, 'Distraint in Irish Law', *Celtica* 10 (1973), pp. 22–71 at 22; T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'Review of D.A. Binchy, *Corpus iuris Hibernici*', *Studia Hibernica* 20 (1980), pp. 141–62 at 153–6; cf. Liam Breatnach, 'Law', in *Progress in Medieval Irish Studies*, ed. Kim McCone and Katharine Simms (Maynooth: Department of Old Irish, St Patrick's College, 1996), pp. 107–21 at 112–13, 118–19. For a useful summary on Irish law texts, see T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'Early Irish Law', in *A New History of Ireland, vol. 1: Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 331–70.

[2] For *recht*, see Kelly, *Guide*, p. 105. The status of *recht* can be contrasted to that of outlaws, slaves and aliens. For *aurrad*, see ibid., p. 5.

Roman world. Far from the simple distribution of wealth and withdrawal into isolation or seclusion that we find in early monastic discourse, when Irish renunciants left their homeland they severed multiple bonds of duty and belonging, and re-defined themselves within the constructs of law, society and culture. Equally important is the question of where and to what position within society—or outside of it—a devotional outsider expected to proceed. Our picture of these early pilgrims is far from clear, as there were multiple levels of renunciation that varied in their primary objectives, durations, forms and severity. Nevertheless, patterns can be discerned that elucidate the requirements, mechanisms and consequences of renunciation among the early Irish.

4.1 The Ties of Kinship and Legal Obligation

We thus begin with the normative individual in Irish society—the fully-enfranchised native, living in his own land among his kin—for the place of this person in society and law gives a sense for the life that a pilgrim renounced. The class of individual that dominated the social and legal order was the free male adult: Ireland provides no exception to the general patterns of gender division in early medieval Europe. (Below in §4.6 we consider how the ideals and practices described in the pages of this study might have extended to women.) Arguably the most important bonds that defined a free individual in Irish society were those of family and *fine* 'kindred'.

An average freeman shouldered strictly-defined obligations to his immediate family, particularly to his father. While a male's father still lived, the son owed him duties of respect, obedience, and as the father aged, support; in legal terms a son was not entirely independent from his father's control. In most circumstances he could not forge contracts or agreements without his father's permission and was subordinate to his father in legal terms; his status in law was called simply *mac béoathar* 'son of a living father'.[3] In addition, a son who did not perform his filial duties could be proclaimed a *mac úar* or *mac ingor* ('cold' son),[4] a type of outlaw who was barred from receiving

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[3] For the *mac béoathar* see D.A. Binchy, 'Some Celtic Legal Terms', *Celtica* 3 (1956), pp. 221–31 at 228–9; Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, pp. 36–7; Kelly, *Guide*, pp. 80–1. The conclusions of these earlier discussions are somewhat revised and qualified by Neil McLeod, *Early Irish Contract* Law (Sydney: University of Sydney, Centre for Celtic Studies, 1992), pp. 62–80; also Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland A.D. 650 to 1000* (Maynooth: Laigin, 1999), pp. 373–4. Age-based classifications of minority and majority are a separate issue: see Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, pp. 348–9.

[4] *Mac ingor* is the more specific term, indicating a son who does not care for his father in his old age. Kelly, p. 141 and n. 127, citing *Bechbretha* §39 [Charles-Edwards/Kelly, pp. 74–5]; Heptad 51, *ALI*

hospitality or protection from anyone.[5] As T.M. Charles-Edwards has noted, 'These rules imply that, within a kindred, a father with his sons and grandsons formed a separate group with a coherence that distinguished them from their collateral kinsmen'.[6]

The 'collateral kinsmen', however, were also integral to an individual's status and identity in Irish society.[7] An Irishman was a single element of several larger kin groups, designated primarily through the agnatic—that is, patrilineal—line.[8] Though these kin groupings were essentially juridical constructs used to assess familial obligations and penalties, the practical dimensions of kinship illustrate an intricate knit of individuals, interrelated by law and tradition in terms of economic cooperation and collective obligations to each other and within society. Due to the nature of the rules governing inheritance—which divided land and goods among multiple heirs—kinsmen probably tended to live in close proximity to one another and would have maintained strong personal and economic ties.[9] Furthermore, kinsmen were considered so connected to one another that, for example, if one kinsman were illegally killed, not only would the kin group receive compensation (*díre*) for a wrongful death, but each individual kinsman would also be paid for the dishonour suffered.[10] The strong

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5.290.20; also see *Córus Béscnai*, *CIH* 534.26–8 = *ALI* 3.52.17–20. For discussion see Charles-Edwards and Kelly, *Bechbretha*, pp. 144–5.

[5] Kelly, *Guide*, p. 80; Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, pp. 36–7; D.A. Binchy, 'Some Celtic Legal Terms', pp. 228–9; Peter Schrijver, 'OIR. *Gor* "Pious, Dutiful": Meaning and Etymology', *Ériu* 47 (1996), pp. 193–204 at 193–8.

[6] Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, p. 37.

[7] Kelly, *Guide*, p. 13. On the importance of status in Irish society and law, see T.M. Charles-Edwards, '*Críth Gablach* and the Law of Status', *Peritia* 5 (1986), pp. 53–73; McLeod, 'Interpreting Irish Law', *ZCP* 41, pp. 54–7.

[8] See esp. Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, pp. 23–5, 30. The earliest law tracts delineate three systems of kinship that defined the relationship and obligation of one individual to another: the nine-member *derbfhine* ('true kin'), a kin line descended from a common great-grandfather; the thirteen-member *iarfine* ('after-kin'), descended from a common great-great-grandfather; and the seventeen-member *indfhine* ('end-kin'), descended from a common great-great-great grandfather. See Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, pp. 52–4, with a useful graphic at p. 53, table 1.11; also ibid. 486–502; Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 89–90; Neil McLeod, 'Kinship', *Ériu* 51 (2000), pp. 1–22. On a smaller classification, the *gelfhine* ('white kin'), a two-generation grouping consisting of an individual, his father, his paternal grandfather, his paternal uncle(s) and his paternal uncle(s) son(s), see Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, pp. 55–6 and table 1.13; D.A. Binchy, 'Coibnes uisci thairidne', *Ériu* 17 (1955), pp. 52–85 at 78; Charles-Edwards and Kelly, *Bechbretha*, p. 111. Cf. Rolf Baumgarten, 'The Kindred Metaphors in "Bechbretha" and "Coibnes Uisci Thairidne"', *Peritia* 4 (1985), pp. 307–27 at 315, 325; Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, p. 371 n. 2.

[9] On inheritance, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, pp. 61–73; Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship*, pp. 115–21. On neighbourhoods in early Ireland, see esp. ibid., pp. 415–23.

[10] For honour-price and the Irish form of *wergild*, see D.A. Binchy (ed.), *Críth Gablach*, Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series 11 (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1970), pp. 84–6 (glossary under *enech* and *éraic*); also discussed in Neil McLeod, 'Interpreting Irish Law: Status and Currency', *ZCP* 41 (1986), pp. 46–65 at 55.

connection among members of a kin group is illustrated by the *Cáin Aicillne*, which likens the kin group to a body: 'Every body protects its limbs if it be a healthy body, functioning well, of good habits, entire, fulfilling its duties, of full capacity. Each person's body is his kindred.'[11] This interconnected sense of kinship extended to numerous aspects of legal liability and obligation:[12] to be a member of a kin group was to participate in a tightly interwoven community that shared economic, political and legal obligations. To be outside of such a group was to live without the wealth, status, support and security that a kindred would provide.

An Irish renunciant of homeland and kin, then, denied himself these most basic reciprocal relationships that formed the majority of Irish society and conferred status and security to the individual. One finds in some Irish texts a stark awareness of the severing of social and familial ties—particularly in cases such as that of St Columcille, who left a very illustrious bloodline to found his monasteries across the sea. In a seventh-century poem written in praise of Columcille by one Béccan—possibly the hermit addressed in the famous letter of Cummian on the Paschal controversy—the poet constructs a series of contrasts between the saintly life of the learned abbot and the worldly life that Columcille renounced:

> He possessed books, renounced fully claims of kinship:
> for love of learning he gave up wars, gave up strongholds.
>
> He left chariots, he loved ships, foe to falsehood,
> sun-like exile, sailing, he left fame's steel bindings.[13]

One side of the contrast features the trappings of earthly glory, beginning first with kinship, and then wars, strongholds, chariots, and 'fame's steel bindings', perhaps a reference to the battle-glory of the warrior. Instead the saint chose books, learning, ships and exile.[14] The inclusion of kinship among these elements of renunciation thus names separation from kin among the major aspects of the saint's renunciation. Along the same lines, a much later commentary on the *Corus Béscnai* describes a monastic

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[11] *Cáin Aicillne* §§30–7, 40–7, trans. Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, p. 39.

[12] See discussion in Kelly, *Guide*, pp. 12–14; Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, pp. 39–42. Also on blood-feud and *fingal* see Kelly, *Guide*, pp. 127–8.

[13] 'Tiughraind Bhécáin', 18–19 [Clancy/Márkus, pp. 148–9; Kelly, pp. 85]: *Teachtass liubru, lécciss la slán selba aithri, / ar seirc léigind, lécciss coicthiu, lécciss caithri. / Lécciss cairptiu, carais noä, námae guë, / gríandae loingsech, lécciss la séol [seimann clue].* On this text and its author, and for lengthier excerpts, see ch. 3, pp. 104–5 and n. 103–4.

[14] Also cf. *Amra Choluimb Chille* 7.20 [Clancy/Márkus, pp. 110–11].

community as a *fine* of monks, thus illustrating the complete social realignment that a renunciant was expected to undergo.[15]

The strong ties of kinship in Irish law also suggest that an individual might not be entirely free to embark upon a devotional renunciation and leave the duties of kinship behind. Some of the potential complexities of such a renunciation in Irish culture are perhaps best illustrated by the story of the penitent Librán in Adomnán's seventh-century *Vita Columbae*.[16] Librán came to St Columcille in Iona to ask for penance to atone for his sins so that he could undertake a religious vocation. He had committed a murder, but was saved from execution by one of his kindred (Lat. *parentellae*),[17] who paid to ransom him from his victim's kin. In return, Librán swore to serve the kinsman for the rest of his life, but took flight after only a few days, wanting, he said, to serve God instead. For his sins Columcille prescribed seven years of penance—a length of time that is elsewhere attested as a penalty for homicide[18]—but the saint's commands did not end with the salvation of Librán's soul: after his penance was complete, Columcille sent Librán back to his homeland to make amends to his family.

There are several meaningful points in this story. First, a very telling detail is Adomnán's point of emphasis as he recounts Librán's confession: though Librán had committed homicide, a capital sin, his first words to Columcille were, 'What must I do with regard to a false oath that I gave?' and only then does he continue, 'For while I still lived in my native land I killed a man'.[19] The order of his confession implies that Librán's greatest concern was his violation of his obligation to his kinsman. His concern is echoed in Columcille's prescribed penalties, which dictated restitution in the context of Irish law. Even after he performed his seven years of penance Librán remained an *élúdach* ('absconder') from his kinsman, that is, a person who had fled his or her legal or familial obligations.[20] Columcille did not accept Librán into his community as a

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[15] *CIH* 1821.20–23 = *ALI* 3.78.16.

[16] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.39 (L&S 305), ed. and trans. A.O. and M.O. Anderson, *Adomnan's Life of Columba* (London: T. Nelson, 1961), pp. 420–35. Discussed in Kelly, *Guide*, p. 95; cf. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (London: Longman, 1995), esp. p. 140.

[17] On *parentellae* in Irish texts including the *Vita Columbae*, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, pp. 135, 138, 140.

[18] *Old Irish Penitential* 5.2 [Binchy, p. 271]. Seven years is generally a penalty for very serious crimes; see Charles-Edwards, 'Early Irish Law', p. 359 and n. 150.

[19] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.39 [Andersons, pp. 154(87a)–162(92b) at 154(87b–88a)]: *Quid me...agere oportet de quodam meo falso iuramento? Nam ego quondam in patria commanens trucidaui homuncionem.*

[20] Heptad 63, *CIH* 55.1–6 = *ALI* 5.318.14–15; also see *CIH* 451.23–7 = *Bechbretha* §39 [Charles-Edwards/Kelly, pp. 74–5]. Heptad 51, *CIH* 46.37–47.1 = *ALI* 5.290.21.

monk until his legal debts were settled and he reversed his status as *élúdach*, apparently following a tradition such as that stated in Heptad 63, which dictates that no *élúdach* can be protected and hosted, even by a *nemed*, 'nobleman'.[21] Librán was also an *élúdach* on another count: among his other offences, he had left his siblings to care for his elderly parents, thus defaulting upon his obligation of *goire* (literally 'warmth', i.e., filial piety).[22] He was a *mac ingor*—a 'cold son'—who had failed to fulfil his filial responsibilities. As part of his sequence of penance and recompense, Columcille required Librán to return to his home to take up these familial obligations as well. Only after he had fulfilled or was released from all of his duties to his kin did Columcille allow Librán to take up the monastic life. Hence the mandates of secular law acted directly upon the capacity of this aspirant monk to undertake an overseas renunciation.

We may also find hints of the same Irish legal tradition in two other Irish-related texts: the *vita* of St Columbanus by Jonas of Susa and the *Confessio* of St Patrick. Though Jonas was a continental writer, his biography of the saint holds numerous details that imply his knowledge of Irish culture.[23] His treatment of the saint's departure from Ireland may represent a case in point. Using a common Christian hagiographical motif, Jonas recounts that when Columbanus first left his homeland, he did so over the weeping objections of his mother: immune to her tearful entreaties, the saint literally stepped over his mother's body as she tried to block his path and departed, never to return.[24] The reader or listener must presume from the absence of a father in this scene that the saint's father was dead. Had his father been living, Columbanus would have been a *mac béoathar*, which would have made the conventional scene of a saint fulfilling his calling over his parents' objections troubling to anyone familiar with Irish tradition. If the saint disobeyed his father's wishes for his faith—as had numerous honoured saints and martyrs, most notably St Martin of Tours[25]—he would have been labelled a 'cold son' and an 'absconder', a quasi-outlaw with no honour. Thus Jonas's account, whether accurate or contrived from hagiographical models, also stays in line

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[21] Heptad 63, as above n. 20.

[22] The obligation of obedience in OI is called *goire*, literally 'warmth'. See Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Aus dem irischen Recht III', *ZCP* 15 (1925), p. 312 n. 2; Peter Schrijver, 'OIR. *Gor*', pp. 198–202; Kelly, *Guide*, p. 80 and n. 96.

[23] Ian Wood, 'A Prelude to Columbanus: the Monastic Achievement in the Burgundian Territories', in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. H.B. Clarke and Mary Brennan, BAR International Series 113 (Oxford: BAR, 1981), pp. 3–32 at 3.

[24] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.3 [Krusch, p. 157(7–18); Munro, p. 15].

[25] Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 2.

with the rules of Irish law. It is also possible that over a century earlier, St Patrick was aware of this legal tradition when he wrote his *Confessio*; it should be remembered that the saint composed this text after he had spent many years in Ireland. This knowledge may have guided his pen when he wrote of his departure from Britain: Patrick specifies that when he returned to Britain after escaping slavery in Ireland he was welcomed by his *parentes*—'relatives' as opposed to *patres* 'parents'—who had received him *ut filium* 'as a son'.[26] His word choice combined with the *ut filium* creates a clear implication that those family members who had welcomed him back to Britain were not his own parents; his readers would thus assume that his parents were no longer living. When the saint relates how he remained unmoved by his family's tearful entreaties to stay in Britain when he embarked upon his Irish mission, he therefore appears to have abandoned his kinsmen but not his parents.[27] In the seventh century the hagiographer Muirchú—who certainly understood the implications of the *mac úar/mac ingor*—repeated this account using exactly the same wording.[28] (Other seventh-century hagiographical accounts depict some characters defying their parents' wishes, but perhaps tellingly, these rebellious figures were women:[29] see discussion below, §4.6.)

Each of these texts illustrates the legal interconnectedness of Irish familial groups and the influence of Irish legal and cultural traditions upon religious practice. The example of Librán in particular demonstrates—and the other two texts similarly suggest—that a devotional renunciation did not trump obligations of kinship and the rule of law. Unlike the earlier monks of the eastern deserts, who might undertake disingenuous vocations simply to flee the responsibilities of civic law,[30] devout Irish renunciants were apparently expected to fulfil their legal duties (although a gloss on the *Senchas Már* suggests that they could in fact delay their obligations in some cases).[31] In addition the story of Librán indicates that an inappropriately-wrought vocation by an

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[26] Patrick, *Confessio* 23.
[27] Patrick, *Confessio* 37.
[28] Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.4.
[29] Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.27; *Vita Prima S. Brigitae* 19; *Bethu Brigte* 15.
[30] In early Greek texts *anachoresis* could signify equally 'monastic withdrawal' or 'tax evasion': see Harmless, *Desert Christians*, p. 64, also p. 10. Also see Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 44, which boasts of Anthony's desert monastery that 'neither perpetrator nor victim of injustice was there, nor *complaint of a tax-collector*'. My italics. (This translation by Robert C. Gregg, *Athanasius: The Life of Antony*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), p. 64, is from the Greek; cf. Evagrius's Latin version, which changed 'tax-gatherer' to *susurro* 'tale-bearer'; see PL 73:146C). Cf. Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 167–9.
[31] *Di Cetharslicht Athgabála*, *ALI* 1.197.7–8.

outlaw should not be entertained by a virtuous abbot. This sense that defiance of the secular legal obligations of kinship constituted a state in which a supplicant could not undertake a vocation—as if it were a state of sin—demonstrates a relationship between secular law and canon law that may be unique to Ireland. This also contrasts dramatically with the history of Christian renunciation in the Latin West, which so often preached not only disregard for secular law but also the earthly and thus lowly nature of blood relationships.[32]

Although the allegorical ideal of stripping oneself of all worldly ties was enthusiastically embraced in Ireland, in practice the earthly tenets of Irish law and tradition exerted a measurable influence upon how devotional renunciation was conceived. These ties dictated in part the definition of such a separation in that they shaped an individual's connections to those around him, and thus delineated the concept of renunciation in an Irish context. Moreover, in great contrast to the opposition we find elsewhere of secular law and the Christian pursuit of salvation, the parameters of Irish traditions re-framed the requisites of virtuous renunciation.

4.2 The Bonds of People and Homeland

It must be noted, however, that the legal specifics kinship and particularly of outlawry in Irish law were not particularly unique in early medieval Europe: Frankish law in particular featured strikingly similar mandates and consequences for the violation of law.[33] There must have been other aspects of Irish society and culture that contributed to the great impact of pilgrimage upon the Irish Christian consciousness. Much of the force behind the ideal of devotional renunciation sprang from the construction of Irish identity. As an Irishman left his land he undertook alienation on several levels, as he re-defined himself in terms of law and society. A pilgrim who simply left his own people severed the bond of common law and protection within his *túath*; furthermore, a pilgrim who left Ireland altogether forsook the comfort and familiarity of Ireland, a land of

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[32] For Christian rejections of secular law, see esp. ch. 1, pp. 35–6. On monks and family, see e.g. Jerome, *Ep.* 14.2; idem, *Ep.* 54.4, which follow repeated scriptural commands (Matt 10.37, Mark 10.29, Luke 14.26; cf. Matt 12.50) to forsake family to follow Christ.

[33] See Katherine Fischer Drew, *The Laws of the Salian Franks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), pp. 36–7; also see, e.g., *Lex Salica* 55.4 [MGH, pp. 206–7], ibid. 56.5–6 [MGH, pp. 212–13]. Also see discussion of Frankish outlawry in Julius Goebel, Jr., *Felony and Misdemeanor: A Study in the History of English Criminal Procedure* (New York: Commonwealth Fund; London: Oxford University Press, 1937), pp. 51–61,

many peoples but who together expressed a consistent sense of 'Irishness' from a very early stage of Irish history.

A *túath*—a 'people', 'tribe' or 'petty kingdom'[34]—was primarily defined by the rule of a *rí*, a cognate of the Latin *rex*, 'king'. (Estimates of the number of *túatha* in medieval Ireland range from eighty to 150, with proposed average populations of some 3,000 to 5,600 members; there was undoubtedly wide variation in the sizes of different *túatha*.[35]) Though the *túath* was not in essence a territorial designation, it was a geographically cohesive entity, to the extent that it is accurate to speak of its boundaries.[36] Generally a freeman stayed within the confines of his own *túath*.[37] The core of the *túath* was a bond of common law that could not be enforced outside of the *túath*, unless the king had forged a treaty with a neighbouring people.[38] Outside of his/her own *túath*, most individuals had no inherent legal rights.[39] Hence those renunciants who left their own *túatha* were potentially vulnerable as soon as they departed from their own people. While—as we shall see repeatedly in the coming pages—social and legal constructs developed in Ireland around certain classes of devotional outsider/traveller, the dramatic aspect of leaving one's own people remained. The border of an individual's home *túath* represented a boundary that, when crossed, radically altered aspects of legal rights and social identity, as a traveller changed from native to outsider.

If leaving one's own small tribe was a drastic step, departing from Ireland altogether represented an even more extreme act. The perils of sea travel aside, a departure from the shores of Ireland was a journey into the realm of the foreign. There

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[34] See most recently Michael Byrnes, '*Túath*', in *Medieval Ireland: an Encyclopedia*, ed. Seán Duffy (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 455–6; Kelly, *Guide*, p. 3; F.J. Byrne, 'Tribes and Tribalism in Early Ireland', *Ériu* 22, pp. 128–66. Byrne's essay relates some of the debate regarding the term 'tribe'; see also Eoin MacNeill, *Celtic Ireland* (Dublin: Martin Lester, 1921), pp. 152–6. (The more recent 1980 edition of MacNeill's work, with an introduction and supplementary notes by Donnchadh O Corráin, was not available at time of writing.)

[35] F.J. Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (London: Batsford, 1973), p. 7, postulates 150; cf. Eoin MacNeill, *Early Irish Laws and Institutions* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1935), p. 96, who proposes 80. Average populations are based upon a proposed total population of 450,000, as discussed in Kelly, *Guide*, pp. 3–4 and n. 15. Also see Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Nationality and kingship in pre-Norman Ireland', in *Nationality and the Pursuit of National Independence*, ed. T.W. Moody (Belfast: Irish Committee of Historical Sciences, 1978), pp. 1–35 at 10–11.

[36] See Byrnes, '*Túath*', p. 455. Also for a discussion of Irish borderlands see Pádraig Ó Riain, 'Boundary association in early Irish society', *Studia Celtica* 7 (1972), pp. 12–29. Cf. John [=Eoin] MacNeill, 'Early Irish Population Groups', *PRIA* 29C (1910–11), pp. 59–114 at 92, §98.

[37] Kelly, *Guide*, p. 4.

[38] Kelly, *Guide*, p. 5; *Críth Gablach* §36(502–9), ed. Binchy, p. 20; see also ibid., glossary entries for *cairde* (p. 80) and *aire échta* (pp. 70–72).

[39] MacNiocaill, *Ireland before the Vikings*, p. 32.

existed in medieval Ireland a shared identity among those born and reared on this island. As Dáibhí Ó Cróinín has observed, 'The most remarkable feature of early Irish society was its homogeneity'.[40] The early Irish laws portray a society which, though fragmented politically, shared strong bonds of common law and similar structures of society, authority and government.[41] Ireland also had an extraordinarily standardised vernacular language that was written with little variation of dialect across the entire island;[42] while Old Irish was an artificial literary standard whose relationship to the spoken language is impossible to ascertain, in at least one extant text there is a demonstrable consciousness of the spoken vernacular as a factor that united all of Ireland. The Old Irish *Auraicept na nÉces*, the 'Primer of the Poets' (<*c.*750) represents the shared vernacular as a characteristic of a single Irish *cenél* (one of the oldest Irish names for a kindred, meaning essentially 'race' or 'people').[43] Moreover, the Irish shared deeply-entrenched traditions of education and the preservation and transmission of culture.[44] Although Ireland was a land of many peoples, it was thus bound together by traditions of law, language and culture, and separated from the rest of the world by an often treacherous boundary of unpredictability and danger: the sea.

While 'nationality' is too strong a term and not appropriate to this period, there is a prominent and consistent sense in many medieval Irish documents of the *Scotti* as a discrete race, and Erinn or Hibernia as a geographical unit with a cohesive populace in relation to the rest of the world.[45] This broad sense of a shared Irish identity emerges,

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[40] Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, p. 110.

[41] On shared system of law, see Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, p. 112; Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, pp. 7–8.

[42] Pádraig Ó Néill, 'Languages', in *Medieval Ireland: an Encyclopedia*, ed. Duffy, pp. 261–3 at 262; Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, p. 110.

[43] See discussion of the *Auraicept na nÉces* in T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'The context and uses of literacy in early Christian Ireland', in *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, ed. Huw Pryce (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 62–82 at 76–7. For *cenél*, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship*, pp. 48 and n. 59, 139–40, 513 n. 51.

[44] For a brief discussion of early Irish conceptions of shared history and culture, see F.J. Byrne, '*Senchas*: the Nature of Gaelic Historical Tradition', in *Historical Studies* 9, ed. J.G. Barry (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1974), pp. 137–59.

[45] Examples are numerous. For Ireland as a single political entity, see e.g., Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.14 [Andersons, p. 28(21b)]. Also, for discussions of the historical problem of high-kingship see Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship*, pp. 215–18; Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland A.D. 650 to 1000* (Maynooth: Laigin, 1999), pp. 155, 164–5; Edel Bhreathnach, 'Temoria, *caput Scotorum*?' *Ériu* 47 (1996), pp. 67–88.

For Ireland as a cohesive territory in terms of religious authority (and various claims of primacy), see Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.27(26).1 [Bieler, p. 98(10–11)]; *Liber Angeli* 18 [Bieler, p. 187(30–31)]; Cogitosus, *Vita Brigitae*, Prologue 6 [Bollandists, p. 135; Connolly/Picard, p. 12].

For examples of the use of *Scotti* or *[h]iberi* as a designation of the Irish people, see e.g. Columbanus, *Ep.* 5.3 [Walker, p. 38(23)]; Columbanus, *Ep.* 5.14 [Walker, p. 52(31)]. Many text also opt to use the

for example, from the laws that differentiated between an outsider from another *túath* (an *ambue*) and a foreigner from overseas (a *cú glas*), in that the Irish recognised some closer relationship to outsiders from their own island than to those from elsewhere.[46] This also holds true in texts intended specifically for Irish audiences; that is, these texts did not refer to Ireland as a single entity due to a perceived ignorance on the part of their audiences regarding Irish geography or political boundaries.[47] Particularly with regard to the traditions of native law, medieval Irish writers were intensely conscious of their identity as Irishmen. Let one such text serve as a representative example: the *Córus Béscnai*, which has been ascribed to the seventh century or early eighth century,[48] recounts how the laws of Ireland were first written. It reads,

> The law of nature was with the men of Erin [*fir Erind*] until the coming of the faith in the time of Laeghaire, son of Niall. It was in his time Patrick came to Erin. It was after the men of Erin had believed Patrick that the other two laws were established, the law of nature, and the law of the letter....Dubhthach Mac Ua Lugair, the poet, spoke the judgments of the men of Erin according to the law of nature and to the law of the prophets, for prophecy had governed according to the law of nature, the judicature of the island of Erin, and the poets, who had the gift of prophets, foretold that the bright language of benediction would come, i.e., the law of the letter. There are many things that come into the law of nature which do not come into the written law. Dubhthach showed these to Patrick; what did not disagree with the word of God in the written law, and with the consciences of the believers, was retained in the Brehon code by the church and the poets.[49]

There is a clear awareness in this legend—which is later repeated with more narrative flair in the pseudo-historical prologue to the *Senchas Már*[50]—of native Irish customs as they blended with Christian traditions, forming a common culture of law and practice among the 'men of Erin'. There is no sense that these traditions were limited to a certain

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designations Erin, Scotia, Euernia etc. to indicate the whole of Ireland as a single geographical unit, Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 2 [Krusch, p. 152(18)]; Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.7 [Andersons, p. 30(17b)]; ibid. 1.12 [Andersons, p. 36(20b)].

[46] On these outlaws/outsiders, see esp. Kelly, *Guide*, pp. 5–6; Charles-Edwards, 'Social Background', pp. 46–53, esp. 46–8.

[47] Consider, for example, Cummian, *De controversia Paschali*, ed. and tr. Maura Walsh and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, in *Cummian's letter 'De controversia Paschali'* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988), p. 72(110), written by an Irishman to two other Irishmen, the abbot Ségéne of Iona and the hermit Béccán; in this letter Cummian refers to the *Scotti* living at the furthest edge of the earth as a single group.

[48] MacNeill, *Celtic Ireland*, p. 173, give this text a seventh-century date. Also, Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, Early Irish Law Series 5 (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 2005), p. 354, dates the Old Irish glosses on *Senchas Már*—of which *Corus Bescnai* is part (pp. 290, 310–14)—to the mid-eighth-century; hence *SM* must be earlier.

[49] *Corus Béscnai*, *CIH* 527.14–529.3 = *ALI* 3.27–33.

[50] *Senchas Már*, prologue §1, ed. and trans. John Carey, 'An Edition of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Ériu* 45 (1994), pp. 1–32 at 11, 17. On the date of this prologue—which, most recently, scholars appear to agree lies in the eighth/ninth century—see Kim McCone, 'Dubthach maccu Lugair and a Matter of Life and Death in the Pseudo-historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*', *Peritia* 5 (1986), pp. 1–35 at 18–28; Carey, 'Edition of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue', pp. 9–10.

province or region: they transcended the boundaries of *túatha* and were shared across the entire island of Ireland.

This sense of a common Irish culture helps to explain the focus upon overseas journeys in Irish Christian traditions. Sailing away from the shores of this island constituted a more extreme departure and sacrifice than did crossing from one *túath* to another, a sentiment that is clearly voiced in the *Vita Columbani* by Jonas of Susa, which—as we shall see in more detail below—classes a journey overseas as a *potior peregrinatio*, in contrast to a lesser pilgrimage that could be performed in Ireland.[51] The borders of a *túath* represented the more significant boundary by law, but the sea was the outer limit, beyond which a traveller faced unknown dangers among peoples entirely foreign to him.

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Thus as we reconstruct the Christian ideal of withdrawal from home and kin in Irish society, these idiosyncratically Irish aspects of renunciation come to bear. An Irishman in Ireland lived in the centre of a complex weave of obligations and protections of kindred and *túath*; the Irish pilgrim who left his land voluntarily sliced through these bonds. His departure from the *túath* put him outside the rule of law in his native land and severed his ties to his kindred and the status, security and identity that they provided; a departure abroad represented the ultimate renunciation as the overseas pilgrim left not only his family but a land of common customs, traditions, language and law to become a stranger in a strange land. The decision of withdrawal, however, could not always be made independently; except in the case of a free male adult with full legal rights and no debts or obligations—which must have amounted to a very small fraction of the Irish populace—the prescriptions of law and duty remained paramount even in a Christian, monastic context. We have seen in the example of Librán that the customary and legal obligations of a renunciant to his kin were expected to be fulfilled or forgiven before a vocation could be undertaken freely. The omissions by both St Patrick and Jonas of Susa of a living father in their stories of virtuous withdrawal must add up to more than mere coincidence, and suggest the authors' knowledge of Irish traditions of filial duty. Aspiring Irish monks and solitaries thus retained more secular obligations than many of their other Christian counterparts, who were apt to defy both law and their

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[51] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.3 [Krusch, p. 156(20–21)]. The idea of lesser and greater pilgrimage in Ireland and in England is discussed by T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'The Social Background to Irish *Peregrinatio*', *Celtica* 11 (1976), pp. 43–59 at 41–6.

parents wishes—which elsewhere could be counted a measure of their sanctity—to follow God's will.

The implicit elements of suffering and sacrifice in Irish pilgrimage should not be overstated, however, especially in cases of a withdrawal within Ireland, since for many renunciants these elements of identity and belonging were largely replaced by the structures of institutionalised monasticism. Nevertheless, such a move was a drastic social realignment. The extreme nature of separation from Irish society thus infuses acts of *peregrinatio* among the Irish: the rigidity of these social structures and the correspondingly rudderless and potentially dangerous existence outside of them gave power and poignancy to the concept of voluntary alienation and renunciation.

4.3 Some Legal Aspects of Exile and Renunciation

As we have seen, the ties of *túath* and of 'Irishness' infuse the idea of devotional exile in Ireland. The significance of these boundaries is demonstrated most palpably in penalties imposed by secular and ecclesiastical law, which employed ejection or exile as punishments for the most serious criminal offences. Irish secular law featured multiple mechanisms of separation: early Irish law allows for various forms of punitive exclusion from kin, *túath* and from Ireland altogether. These penalties that effectively severed the individual from the social order, particularly ejection from the *túath*, are often labelled 'exile' (especially in secondary sources). It should be noted, however, that exclusion in native Irish law was qualitatively different from the mechanism of imposed exile that can be found in other ancient societies, that is, a punishment of physical expulsion from a defined territory for a fixed period. Old Irish legal texts provide no evidence of a formal, fixed-term punishment of imposed exile.[52] Punitive exile was probably a result of Christian influence in Irish law; like capital punishment, corporeal criminal punishments were often foreign importations into the primarily tort-based system of Irish jurisprudence.[53] Nonetheless, the Christian concept of physical and social separation was one that dovetailed well with punitive aspects of Irish law.

Multiple classes of outlaws and outsiders appear in Irish legal texts, namely the *deorad*, *ambue*, *cú glas* and *murchoirthe*. These have been examined in detail elsewhere and need not detain us for too long here, except to note that the individuals who were

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[52] Kelly, *Guide*, p. 223.

[53] On capital punishment as a Christian practice, see Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, pp. 81–2; on the civil nature of Irish law, ibid., pp. 114–17.

excluded from the Irish social order had virtually no legal status, no extended bonds of kinship, and little or no recourse to the rule of law.[54] For the Irish such an outsider within the *túath* was not simply a non-citizen like the Roman *peregrinus*, but was essentially a non-person in Irish society. He could be enslaved or killed with impunity as he had no rule of law to protect him. The severe consequences of this denial of rights and status demonstrate the seriousness of living outside of the edifices of Irish society, which must be kept in mind when one considers the act of voluntary exile. To be sure, Christian devotional renunciants had some status and security in Ireland, but these stemmed from the authority and community of the Church rather than the standard ties of kinship and the laws of the *túath*. The significance of the renunciant's entry into a liminal state—in which he is divested of his worldly ties and identity—should not be underestimated.

In the conceptual relationship between the outsiders of Irish law and Christian renunciation we find a connection somewhat analogous to the *peregrinus* of the Romans. Just as Latinate Christians came to express their worldly renunciations not only using Roman legal terminology but also imitating in many respects the status that this terminology carried, Irish Christians also emulated forms of exclusion that were characteristic of their legal system. In terms of vocabulary, we find the most obvious example of this imitation in the person called *deorad Dé*. The status of *aurrad*, 'person of legal standing within the *túath*', can be contrasted with *deorad*, 'outsider', 'exile' or possibly 'outlaw'.[55] Like a *peregrinus*, a *deorad* was in a *túath* not his own. (One Irish gloss defines the Irish *deorad* as an *advena*, which as we saw in chapter one is often paired with *peregrinus*, particularly in Old Testament laws regarding strangers living among the Israelites.[56]) A *deorad* appears to have been a freeman who had lost his status in his own *túath*. He had no legal standing in his adopted *túath*; he could not enter into a contract in his own right, or act as a surety.[57] The *deorad Dé* (i.e., '*deorad* of God') was a high status renunciant and authority figure in the Irish church. This class of

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[54] As above, n. 46.

[55] Kelly, *Guide*, pp. 5–6; Patrick K. Ford, '*Lám Deoraid* Again', *ZCP* 33 (1974), pp. 87–92. For the contrast of *aurrad/deorad* see *ALI* 3.380.25–6: *cid do-gni deoraid do urrad [ocus urrad do deoraid]*, 'what makes a stranger of (i.e. deprives of citizen rights) a freeman and a freeman of a stranger?' Also see *Dictionary of the Irish Language: Compact edition*, gen. ed. E.G. Quin (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1983, repr. 1998), p. 203, cols 27–8.

[56] Whitley Stokes, *Irish Glosses: A Mediæval tract on Latin declension* (Dublin: Irish Archaeological and Celtic Society, 1860), p. 11, l. 303.

[57] For the *deorad* and contracts, *Córus Béscnai*, *CIH* 536.24 = *ALI* 3.58.8; *Berrad Airechta*, *CIH* 593.38. For the *deorad* as surety, *Bretha Nemed déidenach* 29.15–7 = *CIH* 1122.20–22.

renunciants is discussed further in chapter seven (which examines the connection between this individual and Irish eremiticism); for the present discussion simply the label given to these individuals is the point of most interest. The label *deorad* indicates his position outside the normal constructs of kinship and society and reveals a direct conceptual connection between the Irish legal terminology of outlawry and devotional renunciation. Thus in the same fashion that Hilary presented St Honoratus embracing the status of *peregrinus* as he proceeded into lands not his own,[58] Irish renunciants of homeland and kin appear in early texts described using a legal vocabulary of exclusion. This is not to say, however, that the *deorad Dé* is a directly equivalent Irish translation of the Latin *peregrinus*; the translation of words, ideas and practices into Irish vernacular language and culture was much more complicated, as we shall see throughout this chapter.

Another connection between native legal traditions and Irish acts of renunciation is revealed in an idiosyncratic method of withdrawal, which emulated the form of a particularly severe criminal punishment. For the most egregious offences—such as murder, especially *fingal* (kin-slaying, a particularly abhorrent crime in Irish law), female adultery, or the desecration of a church[59]—the Irish sometimes set criminals adrift at sea in a small hide-covered boat, a curragh or coracle, in Irish *curach*.[60] Ecclesiastical courts especially appear to have used this punishment rather than bloodying their own hands with the violence of capital punishment: a person set adrift might well die, and if he or she lived it would be seen as a sign of God's judgement. This practice also became a very commonplace *topos* for seafaring renunciants: in Irish hagiography we often find the punishment of setting adrift mimicked by monks and penitents, such as Cormac Ua Liatháin in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*, who sailed in search of a 'desert in the sea' in a skin-covered boat.[61] An entry in the Anglo-Saxon

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[58] See ch. 2, p. 58.

[59] See discussions in Mary E. Byrne, 'On the Punishment of Sending Adrift', *Ériu* 11 (1932), pp. 97–102 at 98–100; also Kelly, *Guide*, pp. 127–8, 219–20. For two of the best known instances see Adomnán, *Cáin* §45 [Meyer, p. 30; Ní Dhonnchadha, p. 66]; Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.23(22).13–15 [Bieler, p. 105]

[60] On curraghs, see A.C. Evans, 'Saints and Skinboats', in *History from the Sea: Shipwrecks and Archaeology from Homer's* Odyssey *to the* Titanic, ed. Peter Throckmorton (London: Mitchell Beazley, 1987), pp. 108–11; Jonathan M. Wooding, 'St Brendan's Boat: Dead Hides and the Living Sea in Columban and Related Hagiography', in *Studies in Irish Hagiography. Saints and Scholars*, ed. John Carey, Máire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), pp. 77–92, esp. 77–82.

[61] On the hagiographical motif generally see Wooding, 'St Brendan's Boat', pp. 77–92. For Comac Ua Liatháin see Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.42 [Andersons, p. 168(96a)]: *pellicium tectum nauis*. On this passage and the identification of the boat as a curragh, see Wooding, 'St Brendan's Boat', pp. 85–7.

Chronicle for the year 891 corroborates that this practice actually occurred outside of the literary realm; the chronicle records from a foreigner's perspective the sight of three renunciants who set to sea in just such a boat:

> And three Irishmen came to king Alfred in a boat without any oars from Ireland, which they had left secretly, because they wished for the love of God to go on pilgrimage, they cared not where. The boat was made of two-and-a-half hides and they took with them enough food for seven days.[62]

These renunciants imitated one of the most extreme forms of punishment available in Irish law. They literally embraced a death sentence for the sake of God.

Acts of pilgrimage in Ireland thus reveal a cultural context informed by the tenets of Irish law. Analogous to Jerome's initial emphasis upon the *peregrinus-civis* contrast formed from his own training and immersion in Roman law and culture, some articulations of Irish pilgrimage follow very closely certain idiosyncratically Irish terminologies and practices. The basis of this contextualisation is similar: the concept of renunciation as a form of punishment follows a theme present in Christianity—and particularly in expressions of monasticism—from its very beginnings: the more obvious penalties embraced in monastic dialogue are crucifixion and martyrdom. As such the Irish expressions of outlawry, exile and sea-based capital punishment provide a glimpse into an adapted Irish consciousness of Christian renunciation.

4.4 Poets, Pilgrims and Penitents: Crossing Boundaries in Early Ireland

In the earliest years of Christian Ireland the act of separation from one's *túath* undoubtedly involved risks to physical safety and freedom, which are reflected in some of the correlations between outlawry and renunciation as we saw above in §4.3. These dangers were clearly expressed, for example, in St Patrick's account of his years of preaching as an outsider in Ireland: in the course of his travels the saint suffered imprisonment; his possessions were seized; and he feared that he would be killed by his captors. He found it necessary to pay Irish kings, apparently to ransom himself, and also to retain the right to travel freely through their lands.[63] By the time we are allowed a more detailed view into Christian Ireland—more than a century later—many of these

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[62] Charles Plummer and John Earle, eds., *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel: with supplementary extracts from the others*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892–1899, repr. 1965), vol. 1, p. 82. Trans. based upon that of Dorothy Whitelock, *English Historical Documents 1: c. 500–1042*, 2nd edn (London: Eyre Methuen; New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 200. I have changed her translation from 'Scots' to 'Irishmen' and *elthiodignesse beon* from 'to be in foreign lands' to 'to go on pilgrimage'.

[63] Patrick, *Confessio* §52–3.

dangers had subsided. Nevertheless, the memory of these dangers appears to have lived on: the *Liber Angeli*, for example, says of Patrick's journeys, 'You were always toiling on many occasions *in many dangers from the heathen*, in cold and heat, in hunger and thirst, *wandering unwearyingly from tribe to tribe* for the benefit of many heathen'.[64] Thus the symbolism of a renunciation of homeland and people was made more poignant by the memory of a more rigid past and the basic structures of inclusion and exclusion Irish society; however, as has been noted, the aura of sacrifice, inherent suffering and danger should not be overstated in relation to every act of pilgrimage. For among the hierarchies of Irish society there were also established mechanisms of separation from the usual confines of *fine* and *túath*, which after the advent of Christianity extended to include various grades of churchmen.

Separating from the ties of kinship and the protections of the law of the *túath* did not necessarily diminish status or rights: ample evidence attests that some individuals who freely crossed the boundaries of Ireland were privileged and esteemed figures who played critical roles in the functions of Irish society. In addition, the rarity of an Irishman travelling outside of his native *túath* cannot be assumed. Fergus Kelly has carefully noted that 'Except when on military service or pilgrimage or when attending an *óenach* outside the territory, the ordinary freeman stays within his own *túath*. Beyond its borders he normally does not have rights: only the learned classes appear to be entitled to travel freely'.[65] The implications of Kelly's qualified statement are crucially significant in the context of Irish pilgrimage: while an 'ordinary' Irishman may not have crossed the borders of his *túath* with regularity, these boundaries were permeable in certain specific circumstances, one of them being pilgrimage. It is impossible to know how frequently such exceptions occurred, but they are well-documented in Irish texts. This section examines the social and legal aspects of the two elements of boundary-crossing laid out by Kelly, that is, those individuals who left their *túatha* for specific, usually short-term, goals, and those who by virtue of their learning achieved more or less unrestricted freedom to cross the political boundaries that divided the island of Ireland.

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[64] My italics. *Liber Angeli* 5 [Bieler, p. 184(18–21)]: *cum esses semper laboriossus multis temporibus in multis periculis a gentilibus per frigus et aestatem essuriens et sitiens deambulans impiger quotidie de gente in gentem ad utilitatem multarem gentium.*

[65] Kelly, *Guide*, p. 4.

4.4.1 *Poets and Scholars*

Let us begin with the learned classes, the eminent boundary-crossers in Irish society. Before examining Christian examples we turn first to a native Irish and originally secular group of highly mobile individuals. The *filid* (sing. *fili*)—the elite class of learned Irish poets[66]—provide an example of individuals who were allowed exceptional rights of mobility. They appear to have been allowed complete freedom to travel from *túath* to *túath*: one Irish legal text declares, for example, 'the right of a poet beyond a boundary'.[67] *Filid* were very high-status individuals; they were counted as *nemid*, 'nobles' in Irish society.[68] Though very early *filid* are poorly documented, some elements of their status and rights are evident. They were considered keepers of the knowledge and traditions of Ireland; they were a shared resource for all of Ireland. They acted as teachers and jurists as well as entertainers, and were believed to have some prophetic abilities.[69] (The name *fili* translates literally as 'seer'.) Though the potential to be a *fili* was inherited,[70] their status in society derived not from their bloodlines *per se* but from their training, not from their wealth but from their learning and skill. Their status was exterior to the standard legal structures of kinship and *túatha*, hence they carried it with them, which allowed mobility without the inherent insecurity that an ordinary freeman might face without rights under law and the protection of his kin group. The *filid* demonstrate a long-standing tradition in Irish society of learned individuals who by virtue of their learning and occupation were not only allowed to cross freely the boundaries of *túatha*, but retained their status no matter where they travelled.[71]

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[66] Most scholarly work on the *filid* tends to focus upon the later Middle Ages. The most useful collection of information on the early *filid* appears in the published critical edition of a legal text pertaining to the poets, Liam Breatnach, ed., *Uraicecht na Ríar: the Poetic Grades in Early Irish Law*, Early Irish Law Series 2 (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1987). Other brief discussions appear in J.E. Caerwyn Williams and Patrick Ford, *The Irish Literary Tradition* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press; Belmont, MA: Ford and Bailie, 1992), esp. pp. 22–7; J.E. Caerwyn Williams, 'The Court Poet in Medieval Ireland', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 57 (1971), pp. 85–135, esp. 117–24; Seán MacAirt, '*Filidecht* and *coimgne*', *Ériu* 18 (1958), pp. 139–52; Gerard Murphy, 'Bards and *filidh*', *Éigse* 2 (1940), pp. 200–7.

[67] *Cethairslicht Athgabálae*, *CIH* 391.28 = *ALI* 1.184.16–17: *im cert filid tar crich.*

[68] Kelly, *Guide*, pp. 46–8 esp. 46.

[69] MacAirt, '*Filidecht* and *Coimgne*', p. 140; Murphy, 'Bards and *Filidh*', p. 200; Williams and Ford, *Irish Literary Tradition*, pp. 21–2.

[70] Williams and Ford, *Irish Literary Tradition*, pp. 158–9, also 24–5.

[71] F.J. Byrne, *Irish Kings and High Kings,* p. 14.

Within systems of Irish law, the attributes common to *filid* and high-level ecclesiastics were substantial.[72] Both underwent extensive training for their respective crafts under the tutelage of a master, for which they might need to travel outside of their native *túatha*.[73] At their highest levels they were represented as crucial individuals for every *túath*: in addition to a king, the *Bretha Nemed déidenach* lists the poet, the ecclesiastical scholar (*ecnae*) and the churchman as fundamental figures in a proper *túath*.[74] Moreover, some aspects of their roles in society were markedly similar: just as the *filid* in Irish society were, to use the words of Richard Sharpe, 'custodians of law, genealogy and other traditionally important learning',[75] a fully trained holy monk or cleric was a custodian of scripture and canon law.[76] The common links between the roles, the high status and the mobility of the *fili* and the ecclesiastical scholar in Irish society can be no mere coincidence: these groups were not only similar, they were closely interconnected by the time we begin to have a view into Irish history. Indeed, as Katharine Simms notes, 'Almost every scholar of native learning recorded in the annals before 1200, whether poet (*fili*), expert in Irish traditional history (*senchae*) or judge of customary law (*brethem*), is identifiable as a cleric, or a teacher in a church school'.[77] The law tract *Uraicecht na Ríar* goes so far as to classify grades of *filid* based upon the classification system used for clerics in the earlier canon law text, *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*.[78]

In terms of the categories examined in this study, the *filid* are best compared with the high-status renunciants discussed in more detail in chapter six: abbots and holy men of great learning, scholars and teachers who travelled within Ireland and across the

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[72] For comparisons between the clergy and the *filid* in Irish law, see Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Ireland *c.*800: aspects of society', in *A New History of Ireland, vol. 1: Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 549–608 at 592–3; on the general interconnectedness of church and secular institutions and traditions, see ibis., p. 594.

[73] On the training of *filid*, see Williams and Ford, *Irish Literary Tradition*, p. 25; for later schools of poetry see ibid., pp. 159–61. On the training of monastic scholars and exegetes, see Charles-Edwards, 'The context and uses of literacy', pp. 66–8.

[74] *Bretha Nemed déidenach*, *CIH* 1123.32 = E.J. Gwynn, 'An Old-Irish Tract on the Privileges and Responsibilities of Poets', *Ériu* 13 (1942), p. 31.10.

[75] Richard Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona: Life of St Columba* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 304 n. 185; also see Williams and Ford, *Irish Literary Tradition*, pp. 38–41.

[76] See Charles-Edwards, 'The context and uses of literacy', pp. 67–8.

[77] Katharine Simms, 'Bardic Schools, Learned Families', in *Medieval Ireland: an Encyclopedia*, ed. Duffy, pp. 35–7 at 35.

[78] On this see the introduction to Liam Breatnach (ed. and trans.), *Uraicecht na Ríar: the Poetic Grades in Early Irish Law*, Early Irish Law Series 2 (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1987); also T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 128–9; idem, 'The context and uses of literacy', pp. 68–9.

seas for the sake of God. Intriguingly, an early eighth-century vernacular text draws a curious connection specifically between poets and pilgrims: traditionally called 'The Caldron of Poesy', it lists *ailithre ar Dia*, 'exile for the sake of God', as a 'sorrow' that might produce poetic inspiration, which suggests some cross-over between *filid* and *ailithri*.[79] In more general terms, just as it was for the *filid*, learning was paramount for the Irish *monachi peregrini*: they were highly trained ascetics, scholars and leaders of men who crossed the borders of their own *túatha* to dwell among foreign peoples. As we saw, for example, in the excerpt of Béccan's poem quoted above,[80] Columcille's act of ascetic renunciation and separation was related directly to his learning. In the poem Columcille turned away from the trappings of secular glory to embrace scholarship; in this text as well as others the saint's knowledge is an integral component of his sanctity and perceived virtue. While Columcille was an extraordinary example of such a figure, he represents a broad current of concern with erudition in early Irish monasticism that projected certain types of Irish renunciant into the highest levels of social status and authority.

Hence the act of withdrawing from home and kin cannot be overlaid neatly upon the binary structure of *civitas* and *peregrinatio*, for an Irish *peregrinus* might well 'withdraw' from society into a monastery but still scale the Irish hierarchy to a position of great status and power. While this aspect of privilege seems to run counter to the eastern ideal of *xeniteia* and its Latin counterpart in the allegory of *peregrinatio* made literal, it is not entirely unlike the honour and authority given to the most eminent figures of the formative years of monasticism, from Anthony in the East to Martin of Tours in the West. The difference in Ireland, however, was that this privilege was codified into the law of the land.

The rights of mobility and the retention of status in foreign *túatha* were accorded to the *filid*, almost certainly from a very early stage of Irish history.[81] Though extant law texts do not specifically grant these rights to the monks, scholars and clerics of early medieval Christian Ireland, the similarities and connections between these classes in law and in terms of their roles in Irish society, combined with abundant evidence of a highly mobile clergy, imply a *fíli*-like mobility for learned ecclesiastics. (For more correlations, see also the discussion of the *deoraid Dé* in chapter seven.) The *filid* thus

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[79] 'The Caldron of Poesy' 9 [Breatnach, p. 66(40)].
[80] See above, p. 117.
[81] On their pre-Christian past, see Williams and Dillon, *Irish Literary Tradition*, pp. 66–8.

provide an analogous class for learned ascetic abbots such as Columcille and Columbanus; they also reveal that as we approach the various categories of Irish pilgrims, we may therefore place them into context within a society in which some individuals, distinguished by their learning, were allowed a privileged mobility, exalted status and authority.

4.4.2 *Pilgrims and* Ailithri

Not every pilgrim, however, was learned. The chapters of Part III illustrate the great breadth of practices that we can brand as Irish pilgrimage, each of which involved separation and displacement from the norms of ordinary Irish life. At one time the *filid* may well have been among very few individuals who had 'rights beyond a boundary', but Christianity brought with it not only more numerous learned classes, but also more diverse reasons for travel and mobility. From monastic vocations to penitential journeys, while we cannot know how frequently such undertakings might have taken place, they are well attested in the texts of early Christian Ireland.

Ailithir and *ailithre* are the terms most often found in Irish to describe Irish renunciants who left their lands. The *ailithir* did not occupy a specific class in Irish society, but the frequency of these words in Irish texts suggests that such figures were not particularly unusual. These terms appear across numerous types of Irish literature, from annals to law tracts, from wisdom literature to hagiography; they indicate an act or state of separation, usually with religious connotations.[82] These terms describe both Irish men and women who had left their land and foreigners who had come to Ireland.[83]

Of all of the Irish expressions used for devotional renunciation *ailithir/ailithre* correspond most closely in usage to the Latin terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio*. *Ailitherdi*, for example, was an adjective simply meaning 'foreign', which appears in a gloss that explains the word *peregrinus*; hence there was a demonstrable association between *ailithir* and its related forms and *peregrinus/–ari/–atio*.[84] In the Milan Glosses the term

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[82] See *Dictionary of the Irish Language: Compact edition*, p. 16, col. 125; also Rudolf Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish*, trans. D.A. Binchy and Osborn Bergin (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946, repr. 1993) §488: '*aili-thir* "another land"'.

[83] E.g., AU 887, AU 913.

[84] From Codex Taurinensis, fol. 1d: Fragmentum primum, ed. Stokes and Strachan, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, vol. 1, pp. 484–94 at 488; also ed. Heinrich Zimmer, *Glossae Hibernicae e codicibus Wirzburgensi Carolisruhensibus aliis* (Berlin: Weidmann; London: Williams & Norgate, 1881), p. 202. On this fragment see Kenney, *Sources*, no. 511. Also cf. the Würzburg Glosses 7^{c}12 [Stokes/Strachan, p. 542(27–8)], which explain the phrase *ad fidem prosilitos* as *.i. ailithir(ge)nti in fide.*

exulamus is glossed *elithrigmi.*[85] *Ailithir/ailithre* are very often used in relation to monastic separation, as in the 'Teist Choemain Cluana meic Treioin', which describes the sixth-century school of Sinchell the Younger in Killeigh; this texts includes *ailithre* among a long listing of virtues intrinsic to monastic training. It reads:

> These are the rules and customs that were at young Sinchell's school. Devotion without weariness. Humility without murmuring. Dressing without extravagance. Fasting without violation. Exile (*ailithre*) without return. ... against frivolities. Blessing the meal. Dining without leavings. Perseverance in learning. Observance of the canonical hours. Cultivation of Heaven.[86]

That *ailithre* could represent the total separation that marked the culmination of the ascetic impulse is further attested by the late eighth-/early ninth-century Old Irish penitential, which reads, 'As for him who desires to reach the pitch of perfectness, he distributes all he has to the poor and needy and goes on pilgrimage (*i n-ailithri*) or lives in destitution in a communal church till he goes to heaven'.[87] Here the contrast between the life spent *i n-ailithri* and the communal monastic life emphasises a sense of isolation that we do not find in the previous example; hence the acts that defined *ailithre* are not consistent from text to text.

Ailithir/ailithre were broad and comprehensive terms that described a variety of practices and states. Unfortunately because of this breadth these words become difficult to define with any precision. The terms were used equally to describe a monastic renunciation within a community and into eremitic solitude, a retirement *from* the monastic community,[88] and state of penance for both laymen and churchmen.[89] At times they correspond to the concept of *peregrinatio* and devotional separation, but *ailithir/ailithre* were broader and less exact than *peregrinus/–ari/–atio*. They also did not impart any sense of social status or position, but instead appear in most texts to take

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[85] Milan Glosses 46[c]22 [Stokes/Strachan, p. 139(28)].

[86] 'Teist Choemain Cluana meic Treioin', ed. Kuno Meyer, *Hibernica Minora* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), pp. 41–2: *Ailithre cen tintudh. Bidecht fri hespaib. Beannachadh prainde. Praind cen fuidell. Fedli fri foglaim. Frithailim tratha. Sirfrecar nime.* On the date of this text, Kenney, *Sources*, no. 269, pp. 475–6.

[87] *The Old-Irish Penitential* 3.6 [Binchy, p. 267; Gwynn, p. 154]. *Mad intii adcobra rosá cléthe foirbthetad fodali huli do bochtaib 7 adilcnechaib 7 tet i n-ailithri no bith innmnochta ind eclais oentath co te dochum nime.* Discussed in Kathleen Hughes, 'The Changing Theory and Practice of Irish Pilgrimage', *JEH* 11 (1960), pp. 143–51 at 147.

[88] See *Annals of Tigernach* 758, p. 258 (cf. AU 757, *Annals of the Four Masters* 753); *Annals of the Four Masters* 834.

[89] *Bretha im Fuillema Gell, CIH* 476.27–32; *Bretha Nemed Toisech* (fragment) *CIH* 2100.21–2 = Liam Breatnach, 'The first third of the *Bretha Nemed toisech*', *Ériu* 40 (1989), pp. 1–40 at 21. On *ailithir* as a continent penitent, Máirin Ní Dhonnchadha, '*Caillech* and other terms for veiled women in medieval Irish texts', *Éigse* 28 (1994–5), pp. 71–96 at pp. 88–9. For this term as a descriptor for monastic/clerical 'retirement' in the tenth century, see, e.g. AU 953, *Annals of Tigernach* 980; also see ch. 8, pp. 231–5.

their definition from the act of departure rather than the relative status of the foreign and enfranchised. The breadth of this terminology and its application to multiple levels of Irish society suggest a crucial implication to which we have already alluded: that acts of devotional separation were not limited to certain categories of person or even to the religious classes, and did not necessarily describe a precisely delimited pattern of devotion. To be sure, both *ailithre* and *peregrinatio* were strongly joined conceptually to monastic practice, but as we encounter Irish *ailithri* (and indeed, *peregrini*) we find a more diverse group than appears using similar vocabularies of devotional separation elsewhere in western Christendom. This amplitude thus requires our understanding of pilgrimage and devotional separation in early medieval Ireland to be more capacious and less determinate. Thus as we begin to ask 'what did it mean to be a *peregrinus* in early Ireland?' and 'what constituted a *peregrinatio*?' we must explore multiple types of devotional outsider, often described without discernable consistency in Irish terms that did not directly correspond to our more specific Latin vocabulary, and who played quite widely varying roles in church and society.

Returning to the topic of the dangers of pilgrimage versus the safety and security of home, a further aspect of these various renunciations and renunciants deserves comment. As we have seen, the learned, privileged classes were not the only devotional travellers who crossed out of their own *túatha*, nor were they necessarily the most numerous. The frequent mentions of *ailithri* in Irish law tracts and various grades of *peregrini/peregrinatio* in penitentials and other Christian texts strongly suggests that these travellers must have enjoyed some level of security when they travelled outside of their own lands. Many texts as we have seen prescribe care and charity for *peregrini*, which probably signified specifically devotional travellers in many or most cases; moreover, canon law charged local kings to protect any travellers within their borders.[90] The average *ailithir* or *peregrinus*, therefore, probably cannot be easily equated to the status of an Irish outlaw; that is, we again cannot ascribe certain danger to all acts of separation from the *túath*. While a certain amount of implicit suffering and labour must have accompanied many such acts, it was not necessarily a factor in all of them.

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[90] For Irish texts prescribing care for *peregrini*, see ch. 3, §3.2.3. For kings as protectors of travellers, the tract *CCH* 25.4 reads, *Justitia vero regis justi haec est:...advenis et viduis et pupillis defensorem esse*; *De duodecim abusivis saeculi* 9 [Hellmann, p. 51(12)].

The majority of the populace in early Irish society lived lives circumscribed by relatively narrow confines of kingdom and people, but especially in the context of Christian renunciation, these boundaries were not impenetrable. On the high-status end of the spectrum, probably long before Christianity reached Ireland there had been structures in Irish society that allowed some individuals to cross the usual boundaries of *túath* and to retain status separately from their kin. The medieval Irish were accustomed to classes of protected outsider who were free to roam at will, but an important distinction emerges in relation to these figures: their protected status stems not from their social and kinship ties as did the ordinary *aurrad*, but from their professions. Hence they were defined not by the usual network of relationships that bound Irish society together, but stood outside of this complex structure.

But even those individuals whose lives were more limited by ordinary societal and legal structures had some freedom to wander, especially if that wandering achieved a devotional goal. We will meet participants from both ends of this spectrum in the chapters of Part III. As we consider these various categories of *peregrini* and *ailithri* and their respective forms of pilgrimage, we must set them into the context of a society of rigid boundaries but paradoxically accustomed to those boundaries being breached. Thus the crossing of the boundaries of medieval Ireland was invested with heavy symbolism, but was also allowed—indeed, perhaps encouraged—by its added significance in an archaised legal context, translated into the devotional milieu.

4.5 Tradition and Adaptation in Irish Pilgrimage

The unique mixture formed by imported Christian concepts as they blended with native Irish elements thus reveals both tradition and innovation in the practice of pilgrimage. The influence of Irish laws and customs upon the act of devotional renunciation is representative of a broader pattern of conceptual evolution as Christian doctrine and practice became immersed in Irish culture. The resulting blend of ideals in Christian Ireland can help to explain not only some of the more distinctive features of Irish pilgrimage but also the resonance that it attained in the consciousness of Irish Christians. Some idiosyncrasies of the Irish conception of pilgrimage—particularly its extension to other aspects of devotion such as penance—have been noted and will be further explored in Part III. But one characteristically Irish construction in the ideal of devotional separation merits particular attention here. In Ireland, a binary categorisation

impacts upon the practice of Irish pilgrimage: the division of renunciation into two levels, one within Ireland and the other overseas.

We have seen the protections and rights that Irish law afforded an individual within his *túath*, and even some of those that extended across the political boundaries of Ireland. In practice, even if he left his *túath* a renunciant who stayed within the shores of Ireland faced minimal risk to his person, and remained in a familiar land where he knew the language, customs and law, and indeed, often within reach of his own family home. Ian Wood has shown that in Gaul, many monasteries were not too far removed from civilisation; a monk might still remain in contact with family and associates, usually after an initial period of isolation.[91] The same was surely true in Ireland, where in many cases even abbacies could become familial legacies to be handed down from generation to generation.[92] Furthermore, if we can trust the patterns of saintly lives depicted in later Irish hagiography, some of those monks who departed from their homelands often returned—as did, it should be noted, Martin of Tours—sometimes to preach or to establish monasteries in their native countries.[93] Thus the most effective and permanent renunciation of all fleshly ties involved leaving one's homeland altogether, and for the Irish, the sea represented a boundary that demarcated the familiar from the foreign.

It is into this context that we may set the famous tale of the *religiosa femina* in Jonas of Susa's *Vita Columbani*. As a young adolescent St Columbanus visited this woman, a nun or possibly a female anchorite in his native *túath*. She warned the young saint to flee the carnal temptations of his land. She described to the young saint her own

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[91] Ian Wood, 'A Prelude to Columbanus: the Monastic Achievement in the Burgundian Territories', in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. H.B. Clarke and Mary Brennan, BAR International Series 113 (Oxford: BAR, 1981), pp. 3–32 at 8.

[92] For a concise discussion of some of these hereditary offices, see Ó Corráin, 'Ireland *c.*800', pp. 587–92.

[93] Columcille of course returned to Ireland multiple times: e.g., Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.3, 1.40, 1.42. Some examples from the possibly early (pre-800) O'Donoghue group of hagiographical texts are in *Vita Lugidi seu Moluae* 30 [Heist, *VSH*, p. 137]; *Vita Finani* 15 [Heist, *VSH*, p. 155]; *Vita Cainnechi* 6 [Heist, *VSH*, p. 183]; *Vita Fintani* 10 [Heist, *VSH*, p. 200].

The O'Donoghue group of Irish saint's lives have been assigned a pre-800 date by Richard Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives: an Introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), pp. 297–339. Sharpe's conclusions have been the subject of some controversy—see esp. John Carey, 'Review of *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*', *Speculum* 68 (1993), pp. 260–62. However, in recent past his theory has been tested and has gained some support from other scholars; see, e.g., Máire Herbert, 'The *Vita Columbae* and Irish hagiography: a study of the *Vita Cainnechi*', in *Studies in Irish Hagiography. Saints and Scholars*, ed. John Carey, Máire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), pp. 31–40; T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'The Northern Lectionary: a source for the *Codex Salmanticensis*?', in *Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults*, ed. Jane Cartwright (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2003), pp. 148–60.

peregrinatio, as she waged daily battles for God far from her home.[94] Then—as has been much discussed by scholars of pilgrimage—in her exhortation the woman set out a two-tiered structure of pilgrimage: her own *peregrinatio* represented a lesser form of devotion, which involved leaving home but staying in Ireland, but she urged the young saint to perform a *potior peregrinatio*, which was achieved by crossing the sea.[95]

Jonas's portrayal of these events corresponds to patterns that we have found consistently in this survey of separation in Irish law, society and culture. The division of pilgrimage into these two discrete classifications reflects, for example, the potential for relative security and comfort—and indeed, privileged status and authority—for an Irish renunciant inside his homeland, as well as the possibility of great danger and deprivation posed by overseas journeys and life among unknown foreign peoples. It illustrates one of the many binary contrasts that comprised the medieval Irish conception of pilgrimage: staying inside boundaries or crossing them; existence within or outside of a family, kin group, *túath*, or Ireland itself; living under the protections of common law or outside of them. Whereas the definitions of existence inside and outside of these structures are not as neatly defined as the Latin *civis-peregrinus* contrast was for Roman and post-Roman regions, they were just as fundamental to the construction of pilgrimage in Irish society.

4.6 Women and Pilgrimage

Jonas's account of greater and lesser pilgrimages naturally leads us to the somewhat problematic topic of women and pilgrimage in Ireland. The pages of this study are filled with the stories of male *peregrini*; indeed, the default pronoun used throughout this discussion is 'he'. For any analysis of women and Irish pilgrimage is doomed to be a short one: relatively few texts discuss women at all, and even fewer allude to women and *peregrinatio*. But small hints glimmer through the historical record; though they do not form a complete sense of the roles of women in this essential Irish practice, they merit attention nonetheless.[96]

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[94] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.3 [Krusch, p. 156(15–16); Munro, p. 8].

[95] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.3 [Krusch, p. 156(20–21)].

[96] Some scholarly discussions of the status of women in early medieval Ireland are: Fergus Kelly, *Guide*, pp. 68–79; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (London: Longman, 1995), pp. 125–34; Christina Harrington, *Women in a Celtic Church: Ireland 450–1150* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Donncha[dh] Ó Corráin, 'Marriage in early Ireland', in *Women in Irish Society: the historical dimension*, ed. Margaret Mac Curtain and Donncha[dh] Ó Corráin (Naas, Co. Kildare: Arlen House, 1978), pp. 1–13; idem, 'Women and the Law in Early Ireland', in *Chattel, Servant or Citizen:*

The idea of voluntary renunciation of kin and country for women creates immediate difficulties in the context of early Irish law. Women in general were not legally independent individuals, as is clear from the Old Irish *Díre*-tract, a vernacular law text that specifies the payment of honour-prices:[97]

> The worst of transactions are the contracts of women, for a woman is not capable of selling anything without [the permission of] one of her superiors: her father hinders her when she is a daughter, her husband hinders her when she is the wife of a husband, her sons hinder her when she is a woman with children, her kindred hinders her when she is a woman of the kindred, the church hinders her when she is a woman of the church.[98]

It follows that a woman would not have had unlimited freedom to withdraw from her *patria/túath* or renounce her *parentes/fine* by her own volition, but could be restricted by the individual who held legal control over her person. A married woman who ran away from her husband, for example, was considered an outlaw—an *éludach* 'absconder'.[99]

Furthermore, women were considered 'weak' and less capable of protecting themselves, to the extent, for example, that the *Cáin Adomnán* was promulgated specifically to protect them along with children and clerics.[100] The recognised perils of travel in the Middle Ages were believed to be especially dangerous for women; Bede illustrates this point when he names as an extraordinary sign of kingly virtue and authority that a woman could travel safely across Britain:

> There was so great a peace in Britain, wherever the dominion of King Edwin reached, that, as the proverb still runs, a woman with a new-born child could walk throughout the island from sea to sea and take no harm.[101]

Women's Status in Church, State and Society, Mary O'Dowd and Sabine Wichert (Belfast: Queen's University, Institute of Irish Studies, 1995), pp. 45–57; Bart Jaski, 'Marriage laws in Ireland and on the continent in the early middle ages', in *'The Fragility of her Sex'?: Medieval Irishwomen in their European context*, ed. in C.E. Meek and Katharine Simms (Dublin: Four Courts, 1996), pp. 16–42.

[97] On this text, see Kelly, *Guide*, Appendix 1.9, p. 267.

[98] *Bandíre-tract* §38, ed. Rudolf Thurneysen, *Irisches Recht* (Berlin: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften/Walter de Gruyter, 1931), pp. 35–6 = *CIH* 443.29–32: *Messom cundrada cuir ban. Air ni tualaing ben roria ni sech oen a cenn. Adagair a Athair imbe ingen. Adagair a cetmuinter imbi be cetmuintere. Adagairet a mmecc imbi be clainne. Adagair fine imbi be fine. Adagair eclais imbi be eclaise.* Trans. Robin Chapman Stacey, *The Road to Judgment: from Custom to Court in Medieval Ireland and Wales* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), p. 63.

[99] Heptad 63, *CIH* 55.1–6 = *ALI* 5.318.14–15; also see *CIH* 451.23–7 = *Bechbretha* §39 [Charles-Edwards/Kelly, pp. 74–5]. Discussed in Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, Early Irish Law Series 3 (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 222.

[100] On this point see Ní Dhonnchadha, 'Birr and the Law of the Innocents', pp. 17–20; also eadem, 'The *Lex Innocentium*: Adomnán's Law for Women, Clerics and Youths, 697 AD', in *Chattel, Servant or Citizen: Women's Status in Church, State and Society*, Mary O'Dowd and Sabine Wichert (Belfast: Queen's University, Institute of Irish Studies, 1995), pp. 58–69.

[101] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.16 [Colgrave/Mynors, pp. 192–3]: *Tanta autem eo tempore pax in Brittania, quaquauersum imperium regis Eduini peruenerat, fuisse perhibetur, ut, sicut usque hodie in*

Bede claims reference to an old proverb that was much used in the Middle Ages to refer to the authority of powerful kings.[102] Though it comes from a text much later than the period of this study, a tract describing the reign of Brian Boru demonstrates with certainty that this idea—and perhaps the proverb, though the new-born child had morphed into a golden ring—lived on in Ireland as well:

> From Torach to pleasant Clíodhna [i.e., two locations in the very far north and south of Ireland], / and carrying with her a ring of gold / in the time of Brian, of the bright side, fearless / a lone woman made the circuit of Erinn.[103]

Particularly in the context of a strongly patriarchal society in which paternity was of the utmost importance, the idea of a woman travelling at will without limitations would have been unthinkable. Not only were 'wandering' women denounced in the Christian bible as harlots,[104] but if we can judge from the emphasis of Irish law codes, the threat of violence towards women, particularly rape, was perceived as a constant danger.[105] While we cannot assume from legislation that such crimes occurred with the same frequency as they were legislated against, they demonstrate a point of serious concern, one that is echoed in the ninth-century Triads, which advise: 'the three darknesses into which women should not go: the darkness of mist, the darkness of a wood, the darkness of night'.[106]

Correspondingly, in the extant penitentials, exile and *peregrinatio* are rarely imposed upon women; the single extant instance is prescribed for a nun.[107] This may be due in part to the perceived decreased capacity of women in Irish law and society; as we shall see in more detail in chapter eight, those who were expected to be most virtuous were penalised more severely, while those of whom less was expected received lighter penalties. But in general the idea of a woman leaving her home was incompatible with the overall limitations over women's freedoms. While a female criminal guilty of very grave offences might be put out to sea—essentially a death sentence[108]—for an adult

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prouerbio dicitur, etiam si mulier una cum recens nato paruulo uellet totam perambulare insulam a mari ad mare, nullo se ledente valeret.

[102] Ibid., p. 192 n. 2.

[103] *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*, ed. and trans. J.H. Todd, Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores 48 (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867), pp. 138–9: *O Thoraig co Clíodna cais, / Is fail óir aice re a hais, / I ré Briain taoibgil nar tím, / Do timcil aoinben Erinn.*

[104] See e.g. Proverbs 7:7–12.

[105] Kelly, *Guide*, pp. 134–7.

[106] *Triad* 100 [Meyer, *Triads of Ireland*, pp. 12–13]: *Trí dorchæ ná dlegat mná do imthecht: dorcha ciach, dorcha aidche, dorcha feda.* On the date of this text, see ibid., p. xi.

[107] *Paenitentiale Cummeani* 2.17 [Bieler, p. p. 117(35–6)].

[108] See above, p. 128.

woman to leave her family and *túath* for a temporary term of punishment would have been problematic on many levels.

But nuns fell under a different category than most women. Christianity had a long and esteemed tradition of female renunciants. Among the first monks of the East lived the Amma Syncletica, whose *Apophthegmata* gained fame in western Europe along with those of her brethren.[109] Even better known were the figures of Paula, Eustochium, Marcella, Blesilla, and others made famous by the correspondence of Jerome, which found an enthusiastic audience among the Irish. The *Confessio* of St Patrick attests that even in his time there were *virgines*—undoubtedly referring to nuns, as the term appears in tandem with *monachi*—in Ireland.[110] The question thus becomes how a woman's renunciation of the world and the flesh compared to a man's, and to what extent the same rituals and justifications of withdrawal also held for women in early Ireland.

It appears that female monastics had markedly more freedom than did, for example, married women; interestingly—in spite of many limitations upon the rights of women that from our modern perspective would clearly be labelled anti-feminine—one of the rights that Irish women *do* appear to have enjoyed was some control over the decision to marry. In Muirchú's *Vita Patricii* we read of the young woman Monesan, the daughter of a king, who refused to marry. Her parents beat her and soaked her with water, but she remained intransigent. Finally her parents relented and took her to see St Patrick; the saint baptised the young virgin, who promptly died.[111] Three accounts of the young saint Brigit—two roughly contemporary to Muirchú's text and one somewhat later—convey a tale with a similar assumption of this female right. In the most understated of the three, Cogitosus's *Vita Brigitae* (now generally called the *Vita Secunda*) recounts that the young Brigit's parents tried to betroth her to a man 'according to the custom of the world', but the saint, 'inspired from above and wanting to devote herself as a chaste virgin to God' went to a bishop and took the veil.[112] In the *Vita Prima*, when the saint's parents tried to force her to marry, Brigit miraculously caused her own eyeball to rupture.[113] Finally in the ninth-century Old Irish/Latin *Bethu*

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[109] See esp. *AP Alph*, Syncletica [Ward, pp. 230–35].
[110] Patrick, *Confessio* 41; also see ibid. 42.
[111] Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.27 [Bieler, pp. 98–101].
[112] Cogitosus, *Vita Brigitae* 2.1 [Bollandists, ch. 1.5, pp. 135–6; Connolly/Picard, p. 14]: *more humano; cœlitus inspirata se virginem castam exhibere Deo volens.*
[113] *Vita Prima S. Brigitae* 19 [Bollandists, ch. 3.15, p. 121; Connolly, p. 19].

Brigte, to avoid betrothal the saint thrust her finger into her eye and defiantly proclaimed, 'Here is that beautiful eye for you...I deem it unlikely...that anyone will ask you for a blind girl [in marriage].'[114] The tradition gained colour—and the saint was given a more active de-feminising role—over time, but the basic inference of a woman's choice to take the veil rather than to marry remained clear.

Peregrinatio for women appears to refer simply to the undertaking of the monastic life: the seventh-century *Collectanea* of St Patrick by Tírechán, for example, reads, 'A blest maiden came to [Patrick] in *peregrinatio*, named Mathona, a sister of Benignus the successor of Patrick, and took the veil from Patrick and Rodanus; she was a nun (*monacha*) to them'.[115] In the (primarily) vernacular ninth- or tenth-century *Tripartite Life* of St Patrick, there is also mention of nine royal virgins from Lombardy who come to Patrick *día n-ailithri* 'on their pilgrimage'.[116] Women could even reach the high honour of the 'exile of God': a gloss in the *Bretha Crólige*, which on the phrase *mainech ferta* 'woman abundant in miracles' explains *.i. in banogh .i. in bandeorad dé*, 'i.e. the female virgin i.e. the female exile of God'.[117]

That nuns, especially high-status abbesses, also enjoyed some freedom of travel is evident in each of the Brigidine texts as well as the other extant Irish *vitae* of female saints, in which the abbesses and their bands of nuns wander throughout Ireland. Though we must approach these hagiographical tales with some caution, their evidence is also supported by other Irish texts. For example, in the canons of the *Synodus episcoporum* (also known as the 'First Synod of St Patrick'), one section prescribes that

> A monk and a virgin, the one from one place, the other from another, shall not take lodging in the same inn, nor travel in the same carriage from village to village, nor carry on prolonged conversations together.[118]

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[114] *Bethu Brigte* 15 [Ó hAodha, p. 5 and 23]: *Ausu duit in(t) suil n-alaind-sin.... Dóig lim...ni cunte nech cuccaib filiam cecam.*

[115] Tírechán, *Collectanea* 24.1–2 [Bieler, pp. 140–1]: *Et uenit apud se filia felix in peregrinationem nominee Mathona soror Benigni successoris Patricii, quae tenuit pallium apud Patricium et Rodanum; monacha fuit illis.*

[116] *Bethu Phátraic* = 'Tripartite Life of St Patrick', ed. Kathleen Mulchrone (Dublin: Hodges Figgis, 1939), ll. 2746–7: *Fecht and dodechatar noí n-ingena ríg Langbardd 7 ingen ríg Brettan día n-ailithri dochum Pátraic.* Also ed. and trans. Whitley Stokes, *The Tripartite Life of Patrick*, Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores 89 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1887), pp. 1–267 at 232(7–10).

[117] *Bretha Crolige* §32 and n. 4.

[118] *Synodus episcoporum* = 'First Synod of St Patrick', sec. 9 [Bieler, pp. 54–5]: *Monachus et uirgo unus abhinc et alia ab aliunde in uno hospitio non conmaneant nec in uno curru a uilla in uillam discurreant nec adsidue inuicem confabulationem exerceant.* On this text see most recently Aidan Breen, 'The Date, Provenance and Authorship of the Pseudo-Patrician Canonical Materials', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung*, Kanonistische Abteilung 81 (1995), pp. 83–129 at 84–96.

But a sense for the limits of female monastic *peregrinatio* comes from the well-known rendition of the departure of St Columbanus from his land, discussed briefly in §4.5 above. This story of the holy woman who urged the young saint to flee his own land illustrates that some form of *peregrinatio* was available to women. Jonas, the hagiographer, gives very little of her story but the details are intriguing. When the woman set out the two-tiered structure of *peregrinatio* mentioned above, she explained,

> I have gone forth to war as far as it lay in my power. Lo, fifteen years have passed by, since I have been far from my home and have sought out this place of *peregrinatio*. With the aid of Christ, never since then have I engaged in secular matters; after putting my hand to the plough, I have not turned backward. And if the fragility of my sex had not prevented me, I would have crossed the sea and chosen a place of *potior peregrinatio*.[119]

Though she herself was disallowed from finding a place of *potior peregrinatio* she urged Columbanus to embark upon the journey that she would have liked to have taken. Instead, she lived the ascetic life in Ireland as was appropriate to her 'fragile' gender. (Jonas also describes her without any mention of a monastery; although we cannot be sure that his silence indicates that she lived alone, it is possible that this *religiosa femina* was an anchorite.) Jonas's depiction of the limitations of the holy woman's *peregrinatio* are also borne out by Irish hagiographical texts: in none of the surviving *vitae* that celebrate the lives of female Irish saints, these holy women—powerful abbesses all—never leave the island of Ireland.[120]

A vignette in the *Vita Prima* of St Brigit suggests further inhibitions: on one occasion Brigit met St Patrick, who commanded,

> 'From this day on you may not travel without a priest. Your charioteer is always to be a priest.' So he ordained a priest named Nathfroích who was Brigit's charioteer all his life.[121]

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[119] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.3 [Krusch, p. 156(15–21); Munro, p. 14]: *Ego...utcumque potui, ad bellum progressa exivi. En quindecim tempora volvuntur, quo et domum carui et hunc peregrinationis locum expetii, et numquam deinceps Christo praesule, manu stipham tenens, retro respexi, et nisi fragilis sexus obstasset, mare transacto, potioris peregrinationis locum petissem.* I have changed Munro's translation of *bella* from 'strifes' to 'war' (and dropped the original plural for stylistic reasons); her 'twelve' years to read 'fifteen' per Krusch's emendation; her translation of *fragilis* from 'weakness' to 'fragility'; and her rendering of 'a better place among strangers as my home' to 'a place of *potior peregrinatio*'.

[120] Early medieval *vitae* survive for only four female saints: Brigit, Ita, Darerca/Monenna, and Samthann. See esp. the collection of maps in Christina Harrington, *Women in a Celtic Church: Ireland 450–1150* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 314–17.

[121] *Vita Prima S. Brigitae* 40.6 [Bollandists, ch. 5.37–8, p. 123; Connolly, pp. 23–4]: *Ex hoc die non licet tibi ambulare sine Sacerdote: auriga tuus sempter tuus Sacerdos fiat. Ordinavit autem Sacerdotem, nomine Natfrohic: et ipse in tota vita sua auriga S. Brigidae fuit.* Cf. Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, p. 89.

Hence even those women who were allowed in the literary renditions of their lives to violate numerous cultural gender roles did not cross the sea as did their male counterparts, and may have been limited from travelling unchaperoned. If in the literary realm—where impossibilities often became possible—these circumscriptions existed, it is likely that they were also active in the lives of ordinary Christian women. Though high-status religious women could achieve substantial independence in early Irish society, that independence did not extend to full freedom of travel. As in many other medieval societies, the boundaries of living for Irish women were much more narrow and rigid than they were for men. The idea of crossing over them even as a devotional act challenged some of the fundamental mores of Irish society.

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In Ireland perhaps more than anywhere else in western Christendom, idiosyncratic (that is, non-Roman) societal, cultural and legal determinants exerted considerable influence upon the concept and practice of pilgrimage. As we saw in Part I, latinate Christian ideals of pilgrimage—dictated primarily by the works of St Jerome—were expressed using a Roman vocabulary of inclusion and exclusion. As medieval Ireland translated these foreign, imported ideas into the context of their world, the concepts fused into a distinctly Hiberno-Christian admixture both of terminology and of practice.

Christian pilgrimage involved separation, renunciation, and deprivation; the ritualised practices of departure necessarily combined societal rules and boundaries with intricately-woven justifications from scripture and patristic models. As these concepts reached the shores of Ireland, the suffering of the *peregrinus* would have resonated greatly among a populace structured in small population groups, outside of which the standard rules of law and identity did not apply. Devotional separation thus dovetailed well with the structures of Irish society, which had deeply entrenched customs of social exclusion as well as a variety of officially recognised 'outsiders' who crossed the boundaries that divided Irish peoples from one another. The amalgamation of Christian ideals of alienation, the traditions of ascetic renunciation, and the structures and culture of Irish society formed a conducive environment for ideals of pilgrimage to flourish.

Before Christianity had ever reached the shores of Ireland, Irish society had formal structures that allowed certain individuals to traverse the borders of Irish *túatha*

without fear of danger due to lack of status of the rule of law. This aspect of Irish law expanded to accommodate the Christian clergy and learned scholars, a group that included the extraordinary abbots whom we meet in chapter six. But these high-status renunciants were not the only pilgrims who were travelling inside and outside of Ireland in this period. The numerous others who did not scale the heights of the Irish social hierarchy strongly suggest other formal protections for devotional renunciants who left their lands.

In the early years of Christian Ireland, the state of an outsider in Ireland was undoubtedly one of great risk. Before legal traditions had formed to protect Christian 'strangers'—whether they were missionaries like St Patrick or early monk/scholars like St Finnian—these early figures navigated the potentially dangerous shoals of foreign *túatha* when they traversed the regions of Ireland. Unfortunately little evidence survives from this early period, but the memory of their travails continued to reverberate long after the social realities had shifted. For by the seventh century at the latest, as our view into early Ireland broadens, the status of Christian outsiders had already altered drastically to include a spectrum of legally recognised and sometimes celebrated devotional renunciants. Thus pilgrimage early medieval Ireland provides an interesting contradiction, which may helps to explain some aspects of the unique popularity that *peregrinatio* attained among the Irish: the social structures, legal traditions and the construction of identity in Ireland made separation—especially the complete detachment achieved by departing from the island of Ireland altogether—a uniquely symbolic devotional sacrifice; at the same time, structures had evolved by the seventh century—and probably substantially earlier—to accommodate such separations. As T.M. Charles-Edwards stated some thirty years ago in his watershed study of the social background of Irish *peregrinatio*, pilgrimage in Ireland 'derived much of its power from the organization of Irish society. Because of the ideas which expressed that organization, *peregrinatio* was the most intelligible form of ascetic renunciation available to Irishmen'.[122]

In a similar light, we have also seen the uncertain role of women in pilgrimage, which also reflects the strictures of Irish society and law. Moral allegory aside, the practice involved a true separation, a step outside of the rigid structures that dominated Irish society. Our extant evidence of feminine pilgrimage is meagre indeed, but from the

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[122] Charles-Edwards, 'Social Background', p. 36.

shreds of surviving evidence we can infer that such a move was possible for some women, but only within narrowly circumscribed boundaries that did not extend past the shores of Ireland.

Both the forms and the breadth of Irish pilgrimage—the latter which has made simple definitions of this act impossible—thus reflect foundational elements of Irish Christian culture. The coming chapters set multiple categories of Irish pilgrim against this backdrop of Irish tradition; for devotional separation in Ireland encompassed diverse practices and practitioners. Though they are firmly grounded in conventional Christian doctrine and practice, these multi-faceted iterations of pilgrimage within Irish society and the great resonance that devotional separation had in Irish Christianity reveal a unique phenomenon in early medieval Europe.

PART III

IRISH PILGRIMS: PATTERNS AND THEMES

Chapter 5 St Patrick, an Early *Peregrinus* in Ireland

As concepts of *peregrinatio* reached the shores of Ireland, they arrived with intrepid travellers and missionaries. Unfortunately we have few records that illuminate this little-documented period of Irish history, but the writings of St Patrick provide a bright flash of light in the vast darkness of this era. No study of pilgrimage in Ireland can be complete without a discussion of Patrick, for the saint defines himself as a *peregrinus*, and twice reckons his mission to Ireland a *peregrinatio*.[1] He is our single early witness to the transmission of such Christian ideals into Ireland. His role in the history of Irish pilgrimage, however, is not straightforward. He was not Irish, and we may reasonably assume that his understanding of Christian concepts such as *peregrinatio* would have formed from training outside of Ireland—either in Britain or in Gaul. Furthermore, it is difficult to cite the saint's works as sources for Irish conceptions of *peregrinatio*. He is not presented as an exemplar of *peregrinatio* in later texts nor named among the many *sancti peregrini* of Ireland. Furthermore, in the hagiographical dossier that grew around the saint's legend his episcopal status overshadows most other aspects of his history, including his claims of pious *peregrinatio*. Thus it would be difficult to postulate the saint's story as a model for *peregrinatio* in Ireland, or his works as strong influences in the development of this movement among the Irish. Yet the saint's writings provide a unique snapshot of *peregrinatio*—both in concept and in practice—in early Christian Ireland.

5.1 The Saint and his Works: Facts and Historical Problems

We know little about this enigmatic saint outside of what his own texts tell us; and his surviving works are notably short on biographical detail. Thus the difficulties that Patrick presents to scholars are many, and sure answers are few. One of the most controversial issues has been the most basic historical question: the date of the saint's *floruit*. The range of dates postulated for Patrick's mission in Ireland spans more than a century, from the mid-fourth century to the end of the fifth.[2] Other problematic issues

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[1] *peregrinus*: Patrick, *Confessio* 26 (L&S 25). *peregrinatio*: Patrick, *Confessio* 37; *Epistola* 10 (L&S 26). Chapter numbering is per White's edition.

[2] On the early end of the range, Mario Esposito, 'The Patrician Problem and a Possible Solution', in *Irish Historical Studies* 10, no. 38 (1956), pp. 131–55, suggested that the saint's lifetime fell *c.*350–*c.*430 (hence his *floruit c.*390–*c.*430). This date range has been endorsed on linguistic grounds by John T. Koch,

include where and how he was trained,[3] how educated he was,[4] what sources and documents he knew,[5] and how the chronology of his life unfolded.[6]

Let us begin, then, with what details we *can* glean from the saint's extant works: Patrick was a Romano-Briton, the son of a *decurion*—hence in the upper registers of

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'**Cothairche*, Esposito's Theory, and Neo-Celtic Lenition' in *Britain 400–600: Language and History*, ed. Alfred Bammesberger and Alfred Wollman (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1990), pp. 179–202, esp. p. 197; and Kim McCone, *Towards a Relative Chronology of Ancient and Medieval Celtic Sound Change* (Maynooth: Dept of Old Irish, St Patrick's College, 1996), p. 92. Koch has recently renewed his argument with additional historical context in John T. Koch, 'The early chronology for St Patrick (c.352–c.428): some new ideas and possibilities', in *Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults*, ed. Jane Cartwright (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003, pp. 102–22. Cf. Pádraig Ó Riain, 'When and Why *Cothraige* was First Equated with *Patricius*', in *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 49–50 (1997), pp. 698–711.

The so-called 'traditionalist' dating of *c.*431/2–461 is based largely upon the tradition that St Patrick and one bishop Palladius sent to Ireland by Pope Celestine—mentioned in Prosper of Aquitaine's *Chronicon* and again (without being named as Palladius) in his *Contra Collatorem*—were either one and the same, or that Patrick immediately followed Palladius's failed mission. Articulations of the latter view begin as early as the seventh century, e.g. Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.8–9. In this century, among the proponents of this date range are Heinrich Zimmer, *The Celtic Church in Britain and Ireland*, trans. A. Meyer (London: D. Nutt, 1902), pp. 35-9; J.B. Bury, *The Life of St Patrick and his Place in History* (London: Macmillan, 1905, repr. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), pp. 331–4; Eoin MacNeill, *St Patrick, Apostle of Ireland* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1934), esp. p. 52; R.P.C. Hanson, *St Patrick, a British Missionary Bishop* (Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 1966), esp. pp. 18–19. Modern editions of Prosper's texts are as follows: Prosper of Aquitaine, *Chronicon*, ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH *Chronica Minora*, Vol. I: saec. IV–VII (Berlin, 1892, repr. 1961); idem, *Contra Collatorem*, PL 45:1801–34.

Initially a quite radical thesis, a late-fifth-century date for Patrick's mission (which is also supported by annal evidence) was first proposed by T.F. O'Rahilly, *The Two Patricks. A Lecture on the History of Christianity in Fifth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1942), whose range of *c.*462–492 was revised and narrowed by James Carney, *The Problem of St Patrick* (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1961), pp. 14–17. Most recently the documentary evidence of the disciples of Patrick, particularly St Mochteus, has been read by some historians as support for this later date range; see Richard Sharpe, 'Saint Mauchteus, *discipulus Patricii*', in *Britain 400–600*, ed. Bammesberger and Wollman, pp. 85–93, whose work has been endorsed by Michael Herren and Shirley Ann Brown, *Christ in Celtic Christianity: Britain and Ireland from the Fifth to the Tenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), p. 31; David Dumville, 'St Patrick and Fifth-century Irish Chronology: the Saints', in *St Patrick: AD 493–1993*, ed. David Dumville, *et al.* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1993), pp. 51–7, esp. 55–7. Also see discussion of Mochteus in Carney, *Problem of St Patrick*, pp. 14–15.

[3] E.g., Christine Mohrmann, *The Latin of St Patrick: Four Lectures* (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1961), p. 50, rejects the possibility of a monastic background for the saint, though she assumes significant contact with Gaul (but not Lérins). Cf. John Ryan, *Irish Monasticism* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1931), pp. 60–7; Michael Herren, 'Mission and Monasticism in the *Confessio* of Patrick', in *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic studies in honour of Professor James Carney*, ed. Donnchadh Ó Corráin *et al.* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1989), pp. 76–85, esp. 77; Herren and Brown, *Christ in Celtic Christianity*, pp. 26–7, 33; Dumville, 'The Floruit of St Patrick', pp. 16–17; Hanson, *Saint Patrick*, pp. 140–58; T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 223–5; Carney, *Problem of St Patrick*, pp. 72–3.

[4] On Patrick's latinity, see, e.g., Ludwig Bieler, 'The Place of Saint Patrick in Latin Language and Literature', *Vigiliae Christianae* 6 (1952), pp. 65–98, esp. 73–96; Mohrmann, *Latin of St Patrick*, esp. pp. 21, 53–4; Hanson, *St Patrick, a British Missionary Bishop*, pp. 14–15.

[5] On one end of the spectrum are Esposito, 'The Patrician Problem', pp. 149–50, Mohrmann, *Latin of St Patrick*, p. 44, and Hanson, *St Patrick, A British Missionary Bishop*, p. 14, among others, who adamantly declare that Patrick knew only the Bible; on the other is Daniel Conneely, *The Letters of Saint Patrick: a Study of their Theological Dimension* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1993), pp. 25–57, whose apparatus criticus includes dozens of comparanda.

[6] There are too many theories to list representative examples—virtually every one of the works cited above has its own unique chronology.

society—and the grandson of a Christian priest.[7] At the age of fifteen or sixteen, he was captured by Irish raiders and taken to Ireland as a slave.[8] He 'converted' to Christianity during his captivity:[9] though he had been born into a Christian family, as he puts it, he 'did not believe in the living God'.[10] After six years of slavery, prompted by visions, the saint escaped and returned to his home in Britain.[11] A number of years later, again directed by visions, Patrick left his homeland and returned to Ireland;[12] he lived out the rest of his life ministering to the Irish. He was made bishop at some point along the way; though we do not know exactly when, where or how this happened.[13]

Two extant texts are generally accepted to have been written by Patrick: the *Confessio* and the *Epistola ad Coroticum*.[14] Both are written in the form of open letters.[15] Patrick's *Confessio* appears to be some sort of defensive document; in it, the saint apparently refutes charges made by his elders, which may have been brought against him in formal disciplinary proceedings.[16] Though we do not know what the accusations were,[17] the tenor and content of Patrick's defence gives some clues: in the course of the work the saint repeatedly justifies and defends his mission to Ireland as an undertaking inspired directly by God. He may well have been defending his decision to abandon his homeland for Ireland, or his episcopacy in general. The circumstances of the *Epistola ad Coroticum* are quite different. Patrick wrote this letter—the earlier and shorter of the two works[18]—in response to an attack by a band of soldiers led by one Coroticus upon a group of Irish Christians, some of whom were slain and others

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[7] Patrick, *Confessio* 1; *Epistola* 10.

[8] Patrick, *Confessio* 1. White's preferred reading is 'xui', but the MS that he designates R reads *quindecim*. See White, '*Libri Sancti Patricii*', p. 235, n. 10, and 282–3; cf. Bieler, *Libri Epistolarum* 2, p. 89.

[9] Patrick, *Confessio* 16; also ibid. 2: *ut conuerterem toto corde ad Dominum Deum meum*. Cf. ibid. 19.

[10] Patrick, *Confessio* 27; also ibid., 1.

[11] Patrick, *Confessio* 17–23.

[12] Patrick, *Confessio* 23–5, 28.

[13] References to his status as bishop: Patrick, *Confessio* 26; *Epistola* 1; cf, *Confessio* 32. For a discussion of when the saint was raised to the rank of bishop see White, '*Libri Sancti Patricii*', pp. 227–8.

[14] On the titles of the works, compare White, '*Libri Sancti Patricii*', p. 280, and Bieler, *Libri Epistolarum* 2, pp. 85–6, 191.

[15] Bieler, *Libri Epistolarum* 2, p. 86.

[16] Ludwig Bieler, *The Life and Legend of St Patrick: Problems of Modern Scholarship* (Dublin: Clonmore & Reynolds, 1949), p. 67. See esp. Patrick, *Confessio* 26; also 29 and 32.

[17] There are many hypotheses of what the accusations might have been; see, e.g., Bieler, *Life and Legend*, pp. 67–71; idem, *Works of St Patrick*, p. 86 n. 68; Carney, *Problem of St Patrick*, pp. 95–102; D.S. Nerney, 'A Study of St Patrick's Sources', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, Ser. 71 (1949), pp. 497–507 at pp. 504–5; David Dumville, 'British Missionary Activity in Ireland', in *Saint Patrick*, ed. Dumville, pp. 133–46 at 136–7; Herren and Brown, *Christ in Celtic Christianity*, pp. 82–4.

[18] On the *Epistola* as the earlier work and Patrick's use of the texts as he composed the *Confessio*, see Paul Grosjean, 'Quand fut composée la Confession de S.Patrice ?', *Analecta Bollandiana* 63 (1945), 100–112 at 106.

captured and sold into slavery.[19] Patrick fiercely censures Coroticus and his men for their violence against baptised Christians, and excommunicates them.[20] These details are noted here because the circumstances in which the two works were conceived add context to how the saint employs the terms *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio*.

5.2 *Peregrinus* and *Peregrinatio* in Patrick's Writings

As noted, the terms *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio* appear in these works three times, not an insignificant number considering the limits of the saint's corpus.[21] As we would expect from a late antique Romano-British Christian, his use of these terms is multi-faceted. Patrick's texts are filled with Scriptural references and quotations, and his conception of *peregrinatio* is largely biblical.[22] The placement of these terms within his narratives, however, conveys an understanding of their meaning that extends beyond the bible to encompass a secular, legalistic significance as well as the unique sense of Christian alienation that these terms came to embody.

5.2.1 *Patrick, a* Peregrinus

In an analysis of what Patrick meant when he used the term *peregrinus*, his own perceived status as a Roman citizen must not be overlooked, as it would have coloured his expression of what a *peregrinus* is. Patrick himself was, as noted, a Romano-Briton and claimed for himself the label of *civis*.[23] He uses a number of technical Roman terms to describe his family's status and his own birthright—his father, he states, is a

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[19] Patrick, *Epistola* 3–4, 12, 14.

[20] For examples of Patrick's impassioned denunciation, see *Epistola* 9, 19. The sections that have led to the theory that this text is a letter of excommunication are *Epistola* 5, 7, 11; the forms of such an excommunication and the *Epistola*'s adherence to those conventions are discussed by Conneely, *Letters of St Patrick*, pp. 126–7, 179–82.

[21] See detailed word listings (un-lemmatised) in Kieran Devine, *A Computer-Generated Concordance to the Libri Epistolarum of Saint Patrick*, Clavis Patricii 1 (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1989). Not many nouns appear more than these, and those that do tend to be quite important in Christian writing, e.g., *pater*, *dominus*, *spiritus*, *gloria*, *fides*.

[22] Patrick's bible was primarily a *Vetus Latina* text, but with some prominent Vulgate readings. It appears to be a unique text type, but shares a few idiosyncrasies with the Book of Armagh. See White, 'Libri Sancti Patricii', pp. 230–33. Ludwig Bieler, 'Der Bibeltext des Heiligen Patrick ', *Biblica* 28 (1947), pp. 31–58, 236–63; a useful summary of Bieler's findings is in Martin McNamara, 'The Text of the Latin Bible in the early Irish Church. Some data and desiderata', in *Irland und die Christenheit: Bibelstudien und Mission*, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), pp. 7–55 at 36. For a discussion of how Patrick uses biblical passages see Mohrmann, *Latin of St Patrick*, pp. 32–44.

[23] Patrick, *Epistola* 2. See Bieler, *Libri Epistolarum* 2, p. 193 and n. 161.

decurion;[24] his own status he labels *ingenuitas* and *nobilitas*.[25] His description of himself as a *peregrinus* thus correlates to his abandonment of his homeland; in his departure from his land and kin, Patrick sacrificed his social status, familial wealth and probably his rights to inherit land.[26] (This abandonment is discussed further below, in relation to established ascetic formulae of worldly renunciations.) Thus one aspect of Patrick's identification as a *peregrinus* is the most obvious and literal: when he left his own land and people for Ireland, he committed himself to living as an alien in a foreign society. With this act he relinquished his status and birthright in his own land, and entered Ireland as a foreigner with no legal rights and no social standing.[27]

These secular denotations of *peregrinus* also complement Patrick's scriptural use of the term; as we saw in chapter one, this label in a Christian context incorporated many of its legalistic meanings, particularly among latinate, Romanised Christians. As with so many of Patrick's biblical quotations, the term *peregrinus* is also carefully placed to convey not only its own literal meaning within the text, but to carry with it the Bible passage—or passages—from which it was taken.[28] There is little accord among scholars as to what literature Patrick would have known, but his extensive knowledge and reliance upon Scripture as the primary source for his rhetoric and vocabulary is certain. Patrick produces an intricate weave of biblical references and impassioned declarations of the pious nature of his mission—his great sacrifice of his homeland for God. In the *Confessio*, *peregrinus* is one of many terms that the saint uses to convey a complex theme of his voluntary exile, his persecution by enemies and his role as a chosen vessel of God.

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[24] Patrick, *Epistola* 10. In ancient Rome a *decurion* was a member of the municipal senate, and thus held a position of great influence—see '*Decuriones*', in Adolf Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law,* Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s. 43.2 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1953), p. 426. On the *decurion* in Roman Britain, see R.P.C. Hanson, *St Patrick, his Origins and Career* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), pp. 116–18; Charles Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500* (London: Batsford, 1981), p. 311.

[25] Patrick, *Confessio* 37; *Epistola* 10. See '*Ingenuitas*' in Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law*, p. 501; and '*Nobiles, nobilitas*', in ibid., p. 596.

[26] T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'The Social Background to Irish *Peregrinatio*', *Celtica* 11 (1976), pp. 43–59 at 54–5.

[27] The status of the *peregrinus* in Roman law is discussed in ch. 1, §1.1. For the status of outsiders in Irish law, see sources noted in ch. 4, n. 46; also Charles-Edwards, 'Social Background', pp. 47–8, 49–50.

[28] Examples of Patrick's careful and pointed use of scriptural passages to convey the context of those passages, see David Howlett, '*Ex Saliva Scripturae Meae*', in *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of James Carney*, ed. Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatcnach and Kim McCone (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1989), pp. 86–101 at 96–9.

Patrick pairs *peregrinus* with the Latinised Greek term *proselitus*;[29] as Bieler and White have noted, the phrase is biblical.[30] The passage of the *Confessio* in which it appears follows immediately after Patrick's descriptions of the visions from God that commanded him to proceed to Ireland; it depicts a scene in which the saint is assailed by his elders not to embark upon his mission, but with the help of God's grace he prevails against their attack.

> And when I was tempted by not a few of my elders, who came and [urged] my sins against my laborious episcopate—certainly on that day I was sore thrust at that I might fall here and in eternity. But the Lord graciously spared the stranger and sojourner [*proselitus et peregrinus*] for His name's sake, and He helped me exceedingly when I was thus trampled on, so that I did not fall badly into disgrace and reproach. I pray God that it be not reckoned to them as sin.[31]

A similar reading appears in Leviticus 25.23 in the codex Lugdunensis (a sixth-century continental MS of the Heptateuch).[32] In this passage, the Lord speaks to Moses on Mt Sinai, dictating the terms of the covenant.

> The land [which I will give you] will not be sold...for it is mine, because you are strangers and sojourners [*proselyti et peregrini*] before me.[33]

We cannot point conclusively to this passage as the saint's source for his *proselitus et peregrinus*;[34] nonetheless this reading helps to narrow the probable origin of this phrase to the Old Testament, and more specifically, to the recitation of the Law.[35]

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[29] From *proselytos*. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), p. 1171. This word is difficult to define, as its meanings shifted as they moved from a Judaic to a Christian context. At times *proselytos* denotes a convert or a person of a differing faith, but in other instances the word seems simply to signify a stranger or outsider. Where it appears in the LXX, it is often rendered as *peregrinus* or *advena* in Jerome's Vulgate. On *proselytoi* in the Old Testament, see Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, vol. II (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), pp. 355–6, 371–4.

[30] White, '*Libri Sancti Patricii*', p. 306, and Bieler, *Libri Epistolarum* 2, p. 153. See brief discussion in Mohrmann, *Latin of St Patrick*, pp. 39–40; also see Charles-Edwards, 'Social Background', p 55. and n. 45.

[31] Patrick, *Confessio* 26: *Et quando temptatus sum ab aliquantis senioribus meis qui uenerunt et peccata mea contra laboriosum episcopatum meum—utique in illo die fortiter inpulsus sum ut caderem hic et in aeternum; sed Dominus pepercit proselyto et peregrino propter nomen suum benigne et ualde mihi subuenit in hac conculcatione, quod in labem et in obprobrium non male deueni. Deum oro, ut non illis in peccatum reputetur.*

[32] The codex Lugdunensis is Lyon, Bibliothèque de la Ville MS 403; VL Beuron MS 100.

[33] Lev 25.23–4, VL Lugd, p. 235: *Et terra non uenibit...meam est enim terra, quoniam prosyliti et peregrini uos estis ante me.*

[34] On Patrick's bible, see n. 22 above.

[35] In the Septuagint Greek, the books of the Torah employ the term *proselytos* most frequently; therefore these are the books in which a latinised version of the word is most likely to appear. In the LXX *proselytos* sometimes appears in a pair with another similar noun, e.g. *proselytos kai paroikos* in Lev 25.35 and 25.47; these passages would be the most likely origins of a Latin reading of *proselitus et peregrinus*. It is reasonable to think that some Old Latin versions may have translated *paroikos* as *peregrinus*, but simply Latinised *proselytos* to *proselitus*. Indeed, the term *proselitus* is defined by Augustine as *advena* (see below), the Latin term we would usually find as a counterpart to *peregrinus*. It

The implications of this context resonate with many of the other statements that Patrick makes in his texts. The books of the Law define those who are chosen by God—a claim that Patrick repeatedly makes for himself.[36] These books also focus intensely upon 'insiders' and 'outsiders', and define the relationship between the native-born and the alien.[37] Thus as a *peregrinus* Patrick buttresses his claims of God's provenance working directly in his life and in his mission, and moreover, invests himself with the sense of suffering and disenfranchisement of the alien living among the Israelites, bereft of familial and cultural ties and stripped of the inherent rights and privileges that these ties carried.[38] That Patrick intends this association is supported by his further self-identification as a *pupillus*—an orphan—and *pauper*[*culus*],[39] terms that often appear in conjunction with *peregrinus* in the Law as categories of persons who are so wretched that they must be cared for by the community.[40] The saint's reference to himself as an 'orphan' also leads directly back to his identification as a *peregrinus*, as the lines that immediately follow it declare that he renounced his *patria et parentes*.[41]

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follows that the combination *proselitus* + *peregrinus* rather than *advena* + *peregrinus* (which pair appears often in the regularised Vulgate translations) is not particularly surprising, but is in fact in line with mainstream Christian texts.

Consider, for example, Augustine, *Ennarationes in Psalmos* 145, *Sermo ad plebem* 18, PL 37:1896 *Dominus custodit proselytos. Proselyti, advenae sunt. Omnis Ecclesia Gentium, proselyta est. Adventitia enim est ad patres, non de carne eorum nata, sed imitando filia*; idem, *Ennarationes in Psalmos* 93.10 (verse 5.6), PL 37:1201: *...et proselytum occiderunt: id est, peregrinum, advenam, adventitium; ipsum dicit proselytum.* That the connection between the grecism *proselytus* and the Latin *advena* continued well into the Middle Ages is reflected by Isidore, *Etymologiae* 7.14.10, PL 82:294C: *Proselytus, id est, advena, et circumcisus, qui miscebatur populo Dei, Graecum est*; for a later Irish connection, also see Sedulius Scottus, *In epistolam ad Ephesios* (L&S 680) 2, PL 103:199B.

The following is a listing of the passages in which *advena* and *peregrinus* are paired in the Vulgate: Gen 23.4, *Lev 25.35*, *Lev 25.47*, *Num 9.14*, *Num 35.15*, Deut 15.3, 1 Chron 29.15, Ps 38.13, 1 Pet 2.11; also see *Deut 10.19*. The citations in italics are those in which *proselytos* appears in the LXX text: all of these come from the books of the Law.

[36] See, e.g., Patrick, *Confessio* 56.

[37] See, e.g., ch. 1, §1.3.1.

[38] For the saint's undertaking of suffering and dangers in a foreign land, also see Patrick, *Confessio* 37, 46, 55; *Epistola* 1, 6.

[39] Patrick, *Confessio* 35.

[40] See ch. 1, pp. 26–7; ch. 2, §2.3. Also see Hilary of Poitiers, *Tractatus super psalmos* 145.6, PL 9:867B–C: *Pupillus—Allisi eriguntur, justi diliguntur, advenae sive proselyti custodiuntur, pupillus et vidua suscipitur, et via peccatorum disperditur*; Augustine, *Ennarationes in Psalmos* 93.10 (verse 5.6), PL 37:1201: *Quid autem illi faciunt, qui respondent et loquentur iniquitatem, quia faciunt et parcitur eis? Populum tuum, Domine, humiliaverunt: id est, omnes qui juste vivunt, in quos volunt superbire omnes mali. Populum tuum, Domine, humiliaverunt, et haereditatem tuam vexaverunt: viduam et pupillos interfecerunt, et proselytum occiderunt: id est, peregrinum, advenam, adventitium; ipsum dicit proselytum.*

[41] Patrick, *Confessio* 36: *Unde mihi postmodum donum tam magnum tam salubre Deum agnoscere uel diligere, sed ut patriam et parentes amitterem ?* Also see *Confessio* 43; *Epistola* 1.

Finally, Patrick also appends onto his declaration of his alien status another Old Testament phrase: he is a *proselitus et peregrinus* ***propter nomen suum***.[42] His meaning is clear: Patrick is an exile who has sacrificed his own land, an alien for the sake of God. Patrick's self-definition as a *peregrinus* carries a familiar sense of painful separation from home and family, of alienation among a foreign people, and of the diminished rights and disenfranchisement implicit in such an existence. This label also marks him as one of the Chosen of God. The saint expresses this concept with a technical vocabulary both from the secular and the religious realm, and thus builds an overarching sense of his great sacrifice of country, of family, and of his birthright, all in the name of God.

5.2.2 Peregrinatio*: Exile and Mission*

In his works Patrick twice labels his mission a *peregrinatio* and uses this description to further enhance this sense of pious suffering in exile. He employs this term to convey his separation from family and homeland and to express his suffering of life among foreign peoples. In the *Epistola*, Patrick refers to his *peregrinatio* as a part of his lament for the slain and captured Christians of his flock:

> I grieve, O ye most dear to me. But again, I rejoice within myself. I have not laboured for nought, and my *peregrinatio* was not in vain. And yet, there happened a crime so horrid and unspeakable! Thank God, it was as baptized believers that ye departed from the world to paradise. I can see you. Ye have begun to remove to where there shall be no night nor sorrow nor death any more.[43]

By *peregrinatio* Patrick clearly refers to his mission to Ireland. Harmonising with so many of Patrick's expressions of his virtuous self-denial, this passage portrays Patrick's *peregrinatio* as a sacrifice, which the saint deems worthwhile because of his success in guiding his flock to heaven.

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[42] For biblical sources of *propter nomen suum*, White, 'Libri Sancti Patricii', p. 306 cites Ps 105.8; Bieler adds Ps 22.3, p. 153.

Patrick uses a similar form, *proselitus et profuga ob amorem Dei*, in *Epistola* 1. Also cf. *Confessio* 59: *proselitis et captiuis pro nomino suo*, apparently referring to martyrs. While the pair *proselitus* + *captivus* is rare, it should be noted that the pair *peregrinus* + *captivus* (and related noun forms) is not uncommon: see e.g. Augustine, *Ennarationes in Psalmos* 64.8, PL 36:779; Fastidius (a fifth-century British bishop, according to Gennadius, *De viris inlustribus* 56, PL 58:1091A), *De vita Christiana* 8 (L&S 1179), PL 50:390D (L&S 1179); *Regula Magistri* 1.23, 1.37; Gelasius I, *Epistle* 10, PL 59.57B; *Vita Caesarii Arelatensis* 2.1, PL 67:1028C. For similar Irish instances see e.g. Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.33; also cf. Augustinus Hibernicus, *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae* 1.15, PL 35:2162.

[43] Patrick, *Epistola* 15–17: *doleo, carissimi mihi; sed iterum gaudeo intra meipsum. Non gratis laboraui uel peregrinatio mea in uacuum non fuit. Et contigit scelus tam horrendum et ineffabile! Deo gratias, creduli baptizati de saeculo recessistis ad paradisum. Cerno uos. Migrare cepistis ubi nox non erit, neque luctus, neque mors amplius.* A scriptural source text for this instance of *peregrinatio* has not been identified.

In the *Confessio*, the meaning of the clause in which *peregrinatio* appears is less clear; nonetheless the general context of this passage gives a much more precise idea of what *peregrinatio* meant to Patrick. Using a theme commonly found in the passions of the martyrs and in monastic hagiography, Patrick relates the attempts of his family and his elders to dissuade him from leaving his home to return to Ireland. The passage reads,

> And many gifts were proffered me with weeping and tears. And I displeased them [i.e. his *parentes*], and also, against my wish, not a few of my elders, but, God being my guide, I did not at all consent or assent to them. It was not my grace, but God who overcometh in me, and He withstood them all, so that I came to the heathen Irish to preach the Gospel, and to endure insults from unbelievers, so as to hear the reproach of my *peregrinatio*, and suffer many persecutions even unto bonds, and that I should give my free condition for the profit of others. And if I should be worthy, I am ready [to give] even my life for His name's sake unhesitatingly and gladly, and there I desire to spend it until I die, if the Lord would grant it to me.[44]

As he did in the *Epistola*, here Patrick again uses *peregrinatio* to denote his mission to Ireland. He draws lines connecting his *peregrinatio*, his suffering, and his choice to forfeit his birthright. It is evident that he is not simply referring to a 'journey'—a common meaning of the term[45]—but relates his *peregrinatio* to the lifelong commitment of his vocation, and the pain and persecutions he endured to bring the Christian faith to the Irish. His *peregrinatio* appears in a long list of his sacrifices for God. Furthermore, Patrick's words once again evoke the context of the passage from which his quotation was taken. The words *ut audirem obprobrium peregrinationis meae* he quotes from the apocryphal book of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 29; the entire passage, which describes the difficulty of life away from one's home, reads,

> Better is a poor man's fare under a roof of boards than sumptuous cheer abroad in another man's house. Be contented with little instead of much: and thou shalt not hear the reproach of going abroad [*inproperium peregrinationis non audies*]. It is a miserable life to go as a guest from house to house.[46]

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[44] Patrick, Confessio 37: *Et munera multa mihi offerebantur cum fletu et lacrumis. Et offendi illos, necnon contra uotum, aliquantos de senioribus meis; sed, gubernante Deo, nullo modo consensi neque adquieui illis; non mea gratia, sed Deus qui uincit in me, et resistit illis omnibus ut ego ueneram ad Hibernas gentes euangelium praedicare, et ab incredulis contumelies perferre, ut aurem obprobrium peregrinationis meae et persecutiones multas usque ad uincula, et ut darem ingenuitatem meam pro utilitate aliorum ; et si dignus fuero promptus sum, ut etiam animam meam incunctanter et libentissime pro nomine eius, et ibi opto inpendere am usque ad mortem si Dominus mihi indulgeret.* I have adjusted White's translations slightly, changing 'going abroad' simply to 'pilgrimage'. The meaning of the clause with *peregrinatio* in Bieler's translation is, like White's, rather unclear.

[45] See ch. 1, p. 12 and nn. 5–7.

[46] Ecclus 29.29–31. *Melior victus pauperis sub tegimen asserum / quam epulae splendidae in peregre sine domicilio / super minimum et magnum placeat tibi / et inproperium peregrinationis non audies / vita nequa hospitandi de domo in domum*

Thus *peregrinatio* therefore represents another of the saint's many references, both direct and indirect, to his virtuous abandonment of the comforts of home and country for the sake of God.

* * *

For Patrick, his *peregrinatio* is his lifelong commitment to live as an alien in a land not his own, to minister to foreign Christians and to convert heathens. It is a form of a renunciation of his worldly ties in God's name, of redemptive suffering granted to the saint through the grace of God. Patrick was certainly aware of his status as *civis*, and thus his declaration of himself as a *peregrinus* coincides with his renunciation of his family and homeland. He used these terms, rich with significance for the audience for his *Confessio* of church elders and for his *Epistola* of fellow Christians whom he exhorted to virtue, as a part of his claims of spiritual authority and of his pious sacrifice in God's name.

5.3 The Monastic Context of Patrick's *Peregrinatio*

As we have seen, when studied closely Patrick's texts reveal carefully crafted details of word usage and of biblical allusion; as one steps back from his words a broader thematic pattern also comes into focus. The saint weaves his theme of *peregrinatio*—that is, of suffering and voluntary alienation—within a larger pattern of renunciation that is markedly ascetic.[47] The saint's departure from his land is the dénouement of a passage that includes many frequently-occurring tropes from late antique monastic literature.[48] In this passage—*Confessio* 16–28, which is by far the most detailed biographical narrative of Patrick's entire corpus—the saint recounts a story that begins with his life as a slave in Ireland and ends with his return as a missionary to the land of his captivity. He describes that he lived in isolation, performed manual labour and prayed day and night, defeated the vice of *pigritia* (known in Greek as *accedia*—the vice of torpor that afflicts solitary monks), fasted, and was rewarded for his devotions with clairvoyance.[49] Guided by visions he proceeded into a desert, where

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[47] For a more detailed discussion of ascetic themes in the *Confessio*, see Stephanie Hayes-Healy, 'Saint Patrick's Journey into the Desert: *Confessio* 16–28 as Ascetic Discourse', *Archivium Hibernicum* 59 (2005), pp. 237–59. Other discussions of Patrick's monasticism are Michael Herren, 'Mission and Monasticism in the *Confessio* of Patrick', pp. 76–85, esp. p. 81; also the sources listed in n. 3 above.

[48] Hayes-Healy, 'Saint Patrick's Journey into the Desert', p. 257. For Patrick and *peregrinatio*, see Charles-Edwards, 'Social Background', pp. 54–5.

[49] Patrick, *Confessio* 16–17. For a discussion of these themes in relation to ascetic literature, see Hayes-Healy, 'Saint Patrick's Journey into the Desert', pp. 240–49.

he battled the devil and was saved by Christ, who arrived with the rising sun.[50] Immediately following these events in Patrick's narrative, he jumps ahead many years to a point in time just before his departure to Ireland. He again has visions from God that convince him to return to Ireland.[51] Guided by God, Patrick leaves his land.[52] Thus Patrick's mission—his *peregrinatio*—is set within a network of monastic *topoi*.

5.3.1 *Themes of Renunciation: Selling Worldly Wealth*

The saint's mission itself is an exercise in the suppression of the desires of the flesh, an essential act in the abandonment of all worldly ties. Withdrawal from family and homeland was often one of the principal acts of a monk's renunciation of the world: the ascetic left his/her own land forever, to live out a life of 'daily immolation for Christ'.[53] Patrick's expressions of his abandonment of his people are infused with imagery of such a renunciation. In a chapter of the *Epistola* that describes his mission, for example, to describe his abandonment of his land Patrick depicts that he sold his birthright as a free citizen of Rome, and thus had sold himself into slavery;[54] the saint writes, 'I sold (*uendidi*) my noble rank...for the use of others', and that as a result he is a 'slave in Christ'.[55] His deliberate phrasing recalls the words of Jesus to the rich young man—'If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me'[56]—a biblical passage that was often invoked as a prescriptive text for the ascetic pattern of selling one's goods and distributing them to the poor.[57] In many monastic texts the distribution of material wealth was the first

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[50] Patrick, *Confessio* 19–20.

[51] On visions in ascetic literature, see Rudolph Arbesmann, 'Fasting and Prophecy in Pagan and Christian Antiquity', *Traditio* 7 (1949–51), pp. 1–71; on compunction, Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp 185–92; for *penthos* and *catanyxis*, Irénée Hausherr, *Penthos: The Doctrine of Compunction in the Christian East*, trans. Anselm Hufstader (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1982).

[52] Patrick, *Confessio* 28.

[53] Clare Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue martyrdom', in *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick and David Dumville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 21–46 at 21.

[54] For an intriguing parallel in ascetic literature, consider the story of the Abba Sarapion in Palladius, *Lausiac History* 37.2–4. Sarapion literally sells himself into slavery to try to convert his masters, and declares to them, 'I had compassion for your souls. I am a free man, and an Egyptian ascetic, and I sold myself for your sakes so that you might be saved'. Furthermore, the phrase *seruus Christi* or *Dei* is a sobriquet often applied to ascetics. See, e.g., Palladius, *Lausiac History* 46.4; cf. the equally frequent 'yoke of the Lord's service', e.g., Hilary of Arles, *Sermo de Vita Honorati* 1.8.

[55] Patrick, *Epistola* 10; cf. *Confessio* 37.

[56] Matt 19.21; Mark 10.21, Luke 18.22.

[57] See ch. 2, pp. 49–50.

step of the monk's withdrawal from the world. Patrick's 'sale' of his *ingenuitas* and *nobilitas* thus conforms to the stories of archetypal monks such as SS Anthony, Paul of Thebes, and many of the desert fathers, who sold their worldly possessions and abandoned their nobility and status as an initial act of monastic renunciation.

5.3.2 *Themes of Renunciation: Denial of the Flesh*

The ascetic subtext of Patrick's abandonment of his homeland is further demonstrated in the same passage, *Epistola* 10, which is worth quoting in longer form. The saint writes,

> Did I come to Ireland without God, or according to the flesh [*secundum carnem*]? Who compelled me? I am bound by the Spirit not to see any of my kinsfolk…I was freeborn according to the flesh [*secundum carnem*]. I am the son of a decurion. But I sold my noble rank—I am neither ashamed nor sorry—for the good of others. Thus I am a slave in Christ….[58]

Patrick's repetition of *secundum carnem* emphasises the fleshly nature of his ties to family and homeland, vis à vis the spiritual nature of his mission to Ireland. He thus represents his mission as a rejection of the flesh and an embrace of the spirit, a crucial theme of asceticism. According to the flesh, the saint was a son, a freeman, and a Briton; with all worldly and fleshly bonds renounced, the saint was without familial ties, a servant of God, and a humble *peregrinus*. Also of note in this passage, the phrase 'of my kinsfolk'—*de cognatione mea*—echoes God's command to Abraham to leave his homeland in Genesis 12.1 (see ch. 1, §1.2.2). With this phrase Patrick draws a parallel between his mission to Ireland and Abraham's obedient abandonment of his land, which made him the Chosen of God. As we saw in chapter two, in a monastic milieu, by the beginning of the fifth century this passage was in the process of becoming one of the main prescriptive biblical texts used to justify the renunciation of the worldly ties of country and kin.[59]

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[58] Patrick, *Epistola* 10: *Numquid sine Deo uel secundum carnem Hiberione ueni? Quis me compulit? Alligatus sum Spiritu ut non uideam aliquem de cognatione mea...Ingenuus fui secundum carnem. Docorione patre nascor. Uendidi enim nobilitatem meam—non erubesco neque me poenitet—pro utilitate aliorum. Denique seruus sum in Christo...* Latin text and English translation are Bieler's; his division and punctuation of this passage are preferable to White's. Cf. *Confessio* 37.

[59] VL Beuron 2:150: *exi de terra tua et de cognatione tua et de domo patris tui*. On the growth of the use of Gen 12.1 as a prescriptive text for monastic renunciations, see ch. 2, §2.1.3. For an Irish perspective see Louis Gougaud, *Christianity in Celtic Lands: A History of the Churches of the Celts, their origin, their development, influence and mutual relations* (orig. publ. London: Sheed & Ward, 1932, rev. edn Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1992), pp. 129–31, esp. 131 n. 5.

The flesh-spirit dichotomy found in *Epistola* 10 is also especially evident in *Confessio* 44; this passage is a declaration of the saint's resolve to stay in Ireland, and not to give in to the desires of his flesh, which tempt him to return to his family and friends.

> Now I hope that I ought to do this [i.e., not give in to the temptation to return home], but I do not trust myself as long as I am in the body of this death, because he is strong who daily endeavours to turn me away from the faith, and from that chastity of unfeigned religion that I have purposed to keep to the end of my life for Christ my Lord. But the flesh, the enemy, is ever dragging us into death, that is to allurements which end in woe.[60]

This excerpt contains two elements that are central to ascetic monasticism. The first is the weakness of the flesh that may lead to damnation; the second the emphasis upon constant, daily battles with the devil who entices the flesh to sin. Patrick's wages war against the desire to return; the renunciation of his fleshly ties in this passage, therefore, including the tie of family, fit into a conceptualisation of abandonment and withdrawal that is commonplace in monastic literature of the fourth and fifth centuries.

5.3.3 *Themes of Renunciation: The Prohibition of Returning Home*

Patrick's staunch determination not to leave his adopted land corresponds to another theme of ascetic wisdom: that to abandon his vocation and return to his own land would constitute not just failure but deadly sin. In several instances Patrick indicates that he believes his mission to be a life-long commitment to God. This is implicit in the above excerpt of *Confessio* 44, which depicts the temptation to return as a desire of the flesh, sent by the devil to trick the saint into losing his salvation. But he is bound by his mission: in Epistola 10 he writes, 'I am bound by the Spirit not to see any of my kinsfolk';[61] and similarly in *Confessio* 43, 'I am bound in the Spirit, who witnesseth to me that if I should do this [i.e., leave Ireland to visit his homeland] He would note me as guilty'.[62] In the latter passage, Patrick confesses his temptation to return to his homeland, to enjoy the company of his family and his friends, but his denial of this desire shows the vocational nature of his *peregrinatio* and his triumph against

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[60] Patrick, *Confessio* 44: *Spero autem hoc debueram; sed memetipsum non credo quamdiu fuero in hoc corpore mortis, quia fortis est qui cotidie nititur subuertere me a fide et proposita castitate religionis non fictae usque in finem uitae meae Christo Domino meo. Sed caro inimica semper trahit ad mortem, id est, ad inlecebras in infelicitate perficiendas*. Bieler, *Libri Epistolarum* 2, p. 175 asserts that *castitas* here denotes 'purity of tradition and discipline'.

[61] Patrick, *Epistola* 10: *Alligatus spiritu—ut non uideam aliquem de congnatione mea*

[62] Patrick, *Confessio* 43: *Sed alligatus Spiritu qui mihi protestatur si hoc fecero, ut futurum reum me esse designat*; also see *Confessio* 37.

temptation. To turn away from his mission, he wrote, would be to take the 'evil path' and to sin against God.[63]

Several monastic texts establish such a prohibition against quitting one's vocation. Jerome's *vita* of the monk Malchus shows the effects of God's retribution upon a monk who tried to return home. Malchus' abbot 'fell on his knees and begged me not to desert them, not to destroy myself and not to look back once I had my hand on the plough (Luke 9.62).'[64] The monk did not heed him, and was captured by a band of raiders and enslaved for many years. In the *Lausiac History* Palladius tells a similar story of wavering during his journeys. When he is tempted to return to his family, Abba John of Lycopolis scolds, 'persevere in the desert and do not wish to leave for your country on their account, for it is written: "No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God (Luke 9.62)"'.[65] John Cassian is also admonished by the Abba Abraham that a monk, once he has renounced the world, must 'continue to renounce it daily': a return to one's homeland is a triumph of the flesh and the devil.[66] With his descriptions of his constraint and obligation to persevere in his mission, Patrick thus forges another connection between himself and the ascetic fathers.

5.3.4 *Themes of Renunciation: Denial of Self-Will*

In a final monastic parallel, Patrick only renounces his homeland once his will had been 'worn away' by the grace of God. The saint recounts how he was worn down to the point that he was able to perform God's work:

> I did not proceed to Ireland of my own accord until I was nearly worn out. But this was rather well for me, for in this way I was corrected by the Lord. And He fitted me, so that I should today be something which was once far from me, that I should care for and be busy about the salvation of others, whereas then I did not even think about myself.[67]

There has been some controversy over the exact meaning of this passage and other translations besides 'worn out' have been suggested.[68] However, given the placement of

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[63] Patrick, *Confessio* 43: *uia mala*. For monastic life as the 'strait and narrow path', see ch. 1, n. 113.

[64] Jerome, *Vita Malchi* 3; cf. Jerome, *Epistle* 14.6–7 *ad Heliodorum*.

[65] Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 35.9.

[66] Cassian, *Collationes* 24.1–2.

[67] Patrick, *Confessio* 28: *Hiberione non sponte pergebam donec prope deficiebam. Sed haec potius bene mihi fuit, quia ex hoc emendatus sum a Domino; et aptauit me ut hodie essem quod aliquando longe a me erat, ut ego curas haberem aut satagerem pro salute aliorum, quando autem tunc etiam de me ipso non cogitabam.*

[68] The translation used here is White's. Cf. Bieler's translation (*Works of St Patrick,* p. 29) reads 'until I had nearly perished, but this was rather for my good, for thus was I purged by the Lord; similarly, Carney, *Problem of St Patrick*, p. 104.

this statement before Patrick states *quia ex hoc emendatus sum a Domino*—'for in this way I was corrected by the Lord'—the translation 'until I was nearly worn out' for *donec prope deficiebam* seems appropriate. Patrick conveys in essence that he was resistant to God's will, until he was 'corrected' by the Lord, his own will worn away.[69] This idea has numerous precedents in monastic literature and correlates directly with Patrick's other declarations of his virtuous renunciations as we have seen above. At their most basic level, a monk's renunciations are physical manifestations of the abandonment of self-will, which translates into the most fundamental monastic virtue: obedience.[70] In the *Vita Antonii*, for example, the monk's first goal was 'to be worthy in the sight of God: pure of heart and ready to obey God's will'. Similarly in Rufinus's *Historia Monachorum*, the Abba John of Lycopolis explains,

> The Lord wishes to teach us how to resist the devices and desires of our own heart, and so he says: 'Enter in by the narrow gate, for the way to death is broad and spacious, but the way to life is strait and narrow (Matt 7.13–14)'. The way of the soul is broad when every desire is pandered to, the narrow way means denying satisfaction to your own desires.[71]

The *Regula Magistri* distils this sentiment even further: 'self-will…is the enemy of God's will'.[72] Patrick's portrayal that he embarked upon his mission only once he had been 'nearly worn out', 'fitted' and 'corrected' by God thus demonstrates his obedience, a monastic virtue, but one with a twist. Patrick answered not to an abbot or to his elders, but directly to God. He repeats this declaration in numerous ways throughout both of his works but particularly often in the *Confessio*.[73] His claim to unhesitating obedience is hence both declaration of piety and justification for his sojourn in Ireland, which was inspired by God.

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[69] See Bieler, *Libri Epistolarum* II, pp. 155–6 and n. 128.

[70] For monastic obedience see Adalbert de Vogüé, 'Obéissance et autorité dans le monachisme ancien jusqu'à Saint Benoît', in *'Imaginer la théologie catholique': permanence et transformations de la foi en attendant Jésus Christ: mélanges offerts à Ghislain Lafont*, ed. Jeremy Driscoll, Studia Anselmiana 129 (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 2000), pp. 565–600; Graham Gould, *The Desert Fathers on Monastic Community* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), pp. 52–8; Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, p. 219, 243.

[71] Rufinus, *Historia Monachorum* 1, PL 21:398C: *Ideo denique Dominus docere volens animam desideriis et voluptatibus suis resistere, dicebat:* Intrate per angustam portam, quia lata est et spatiosa via, quae ducit ad mortem*; angusta autem et arcta via est, quae ducit ad vitam. Lata est ergo via animae, cum qualicumque desiderio suo satisfecerit: angusta vero est, cum voluptatibus suis repugnat.*

[72] *Regula Magistri* 82.19; also see 3.66; 7.47–59.

[73] Patrick's obedient submission to God's will are strewn throughout the *Confessio* and to a lesser extent the *Epistola*; see *Confessio* 15, 28, 30, 36–7, 43, 50, 55–6, 62; also *Epistola* 10.

Patrick's therefore portrays his mission to Ireland within the tropes of ascetic renunciation. He embarked upon it only when his self-will had been worn away, making him an obedient vessel of God's grace. The saint then sold his birthright for the *utilitas* of others; he embraced poverty, and a life of affliction. He sought salvation through his daily suffering and labour for God, as a *peregrinus* in a heathen land. He suppressed the desires of the flesh—especially the draw of homeland and kin—for the sake of God. While most of the ascetic or monastic aspects of his story have biblical precedents, cumulatively they suggest Patrick's detailed knowledge of monastic tradition. (We should be cautious, however, in concluding from this that the saint himself was a monk.[74]) But Patrick uses ascetic language and imagery to great effect; he portrays himself and his mission within a paradigm of virtue that would have reverberated with an audience who knew the hagiographical and monastic texts of the fourth and fifth centuries. He thus built his defence of his virtue and his mission upon models of unassailable virtue: ascetic monks and monk-bishops, exemplars of piety even on the frontiers of western Christendom.

5.4 An Uncommon Theme: Mission and Evangelism

In his embrace of *peregrinatio* as an ascetic devotion Patrick's mission presages the journeys of the later 'saints and scholars' who would leave Ireland for God's sake; however, one major aspect of the saint's sense of *peregrinatio* makes him dissimilar from many of those later *peregrini* from his adopted country: Patrick's mission is vehemently evangelistic. His voluntary exile is a tactic, a step toward his goal of converting the heathen and baptising new Christians, which he believed would hasten the Second Coming.[75] As we have seen above, in the opening paragraph of the *Epistola*, the saint writes, 'And so I dwell in the midst of barbarous heathen, a stranger and exile [*proselitus et profuga*] for the love of God'. This passage, in which the saint defines himself and his mission, then continues,

> I am compelled, roused as I am by zeal for God and for the truth of Christ; by love for my nearest friends and sons, for whom I have not regarded my fatherland and

[74] Consider, for example, *Confessio* 44, where the saint states that *vitam perfectam...non egi*. This passage and its implications are discussed in more detail in Hayes-Healy, 'St Patrick's Journey into the Desert', p. 259.

[75] Patrick, *Confessio* 34, 40; *Epistola* 11.

> parents, yea, and my life unto death. I have vowed to teach the heathen if I am worthy, though I be despised by some.[76]

Patrick's renunciation and evangelism are inextricably meshed. Patrick withdrew from his people not to live the contemplative life as an anchorite or in a monastery. His *peregrinatio* was a mission to the heathen, to convert, to baptise, and to save them.[77] He was a travelling preacher, living a *vita activa* in the name of God. Though his vocabulary and imagery were monastic, his role models were apostolic.[78] His renunciation was the active mission of an energetic bishop, who with his 'zeal for God and for the truth of Christ' travelled to bring God's word to the ends of the earth. Thus Patrick's *peregrinatio* comprises a blend of asceticism and apostolic evangelism that we do not find in the stories of his later Irish counterparts. To be sure, evangelism was an element of a number of monastic journeys, but in most later cases the primary focus of these renunciations was the impulse to ascetic virtue. The curious lack of evangelism as a major motivation for Irish *peregrinatio* is discussed in more detail in chapter six.[79]

5.5 Patrick the *Peregrinus*, and his Place in Irish History

Patrick's sense of himself as a *peregrinus* and his mission as a *peregrinatio* leads us to some intriguing conclusions. Patrick employs these terms as integral components of a declaration of virtue—a defensive claim of piety and a subtle offensive in his *Confessio*, and a claim to spiritual authority in the *Epistola*. His understanding of *peregrinus* in the terms of Roman citizenship and alienation—and his articulation of the Christian version of this relationship that stems from the books of the Law—correspond to late antique traditions that were current and topical from the beginning of the fifth century onward. His monastic allusions support a similar time frame for his *floruit*. In particular, Patrick's choice to express his *peregrinatio* within a framework of familiar monastic *topoi* suggests a direct conceptual relationship between *peregrinatio* and monasticism. The first two chapters of this study traced this relationship in the West roughly to the lifetime of John Cassian and the beginnings of organised monasticism in the West, which again reinforces a date for Patrick's training in the early fifth century or later.

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[76] Patrick, *Epistola* 1.

[77] See, e.g., *Confessio* 14, 38.

[78] See esp. *Confessio* 34, 56, *Epistola* 6, 11. His mentions of being 'bound by the Spirit' to stay in Ireland as discussed above, pp. 160–61, may also be apostolic allusions.

[79] Also see brief discussion in Charles-Edwards, 'Social Background', pp. 56–8.

With more detailed study, placing his texts in relation to late antique and early medieval monastic texts may well yield more clarity regarding the saint's dates and sources.

The importance of Patrick's conception of *peregrinatio* in the context of Patrician studies seems apparent, as this concept tells us much about the saint's background and the themes that underlie his mission; how his texts relate to the later Irish *peregrini*, whom we will meet in the following chapters, is a murkier subject. Though the saint sets both his self-identification as *peregrinus* and his *peregrinatio* within a biblical and an ascetic framework that fits easily among the examples discussed in chapters one and two (and will become even more familiar with further discussions of Irish *peregrini* in the chapters that follow), his devotional exile also figures into an ideology of evangelism and mission that is much less commonplace. Patrick is one of very few figures in the early Irish historical record who truly deserve the label of 'missionary';[80] whereas his fame as the 'apostle of Ireland' is exaggerated and inaccurate, his mission was certainly apostolic in its model and its goals. As we have noted, Patrick's *peregrinatio* to Ireland is imbued with deep currents of evangelism, more akin to figures like St Boniface or Willibrord than those from his adopted country, such as Columbanus or Fursa. Moreover, Patrick does not appear to have been an exemplar for Irish *monachi peregrini*. He is not mentioned as such in any text that I have found; in the earliest references to the saint from outside of the ambit of Armagh, he is already by the end of the seventh century named simply *sanctus Patricius episcopus*, his virtuous *peregrinatio* all but forgotten.[81]

Moreover, as the saint's cult grew in importance and his texts were enshrined by subsequent generations of Irish Christians,[82] his works were not always copied in their

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[80] G.S.M. Walker, 'St Columban: Monk or Missionary', in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith: Papers Read at the Seventh Summer Meeting and the Eighth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Geoffrey J. Cuming, Studies in church history 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 39–44.

[81] Adomnán in the *Vita S. Columbae* (L&S 305) second preface, ed. and trans. A.O. and M.O. Anderson, *Adomnan's Life of Columba* (London: T. Nelson, 1961), pp. 182–3; also see Cummian, *De controversia Paschali* (L&S 289), ed. and tr. Maura Walsh and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, in *Cummian's Letter "De controversia Paschali"* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988), p. 84(208–9). It should be noted that Columbanus does not mention Patrick at all, though we should be careful reading too much into this. See brief discussion in Walsh and Ó Cróinín, *Cummian's letter*, p. 32, which notes that Patrick is included in the Antiphonary of Bangor as *magister Scotorum*.

[82] There are numerous scholarly discussions of the growth of Patrick's cult and the eventual primacy of its centre in Armagh; see e.g. Richard Sharpe, 'St Patrick and the See of Armagh', *CMCS* 4 (1982), pp. 33–60; Liam DePaor, 'The Aggrandisement of Armagh', *Historical Studies 8* (1969), pp. 95–110; Ludwig Bieler, 'Muirchú's Life of St Patrick as a Work of Literature', *Medium Ævum* 43 (1974), pp. 219–33, repr. in Ludwig Bieler, *Studies on the Life and Legend of St Patrick* (London, 1986), ed. Richard Sharpe, sec. 9; Charles Doherty, 'The Cult of St Patrick and the Politics of Armagh in the Seventh

entirety: the oldest edition—contained in the Book of Armagh—does not include the *Epistola* at all (though the subtitle *Libri epistolarum Sancti Patricii* may in fact indicate that it was once included)[83], and omits many sections of the *Confessio*.[84] Among these lacunae are *Confessio* 26, where Patrick names himself a *peregrinus*; *Confessio* 37, where the term *peregrinatio* appears along with some monastic/hagiographical references. The words *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio* thus do not appear at all in Patrick's texts in the Book of Armagh. While a conclusion of strict thematic or propagandistic editing is difficult to sustain, it remains that these passages and their distinctive vocabulary were considered so unimportant that they were not copied.

In addition, the earliest surviving Patrician hagiographical texts, which incorporate much of the information contained in the saint's own works, also downplay this theme of voluntary alienation. In the two seventh-century works of Muirchú and Tírechán, Patrick is not a humble *peregrinus* but a powerful thaumaturge and active bishop, spreading the name of God and the influence of Armagh.[85] In both of these texts, which emanated from the burgeoning cult centre of Armagh, the saint's episcopal status generally takes precedence over his more subtle, spiritual claims to virtue. Even the hymn by (Pseudo-)Secundinus, *Audite omnes amantes*, which may be a significantly earlier text, omits any mention of *peregrinatio* in favour of more illustrious, apostolic comparisons for the saint.[86]

Patrick does, however, share one commonality with some of the later Irish *peregrini*. As we have seen above, the saint names himself a *proselitus et peregrinus propter nomen suum*, and a *proselitus et profuga ob amorem Dei*.[87] The formulation of

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Century', in *Ireland and Northern France AD 600–850*, ed. Jean-Michel Picard (Dublin: Four Courts, 1991), pp. 53–94.

[83] White, '*Libri Sancti Patricii*', p. 206.

[84] See discussion in Bieler, *Libri Epistolarum* 2, pp. 18–19; also White, '*Libri Sancti Patricii*', pp. 206–8.

[85] Muirchú. *Vita Patricii* (L&S 303), ed. and trans. Ludwig Bieler. *The Patrician Texts in the book of Armagh* (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979), pp. 61-122; and Tírechán, *Collectanea* (L&S 301), ed. and trans. Ludwig Bieler. *The Patrician Texts in the book of Armagh* (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979), pp. 122-166. (This text is also called the *Breviarum* in some secondary sources.)

[86] (Pseudo-)Secundinus, *Audite omnes amantes* (L&S 573). The most recent edition of this text is ed. and trans. Andy Orchard, ''Audite omnes amantes': a hymn in Patrick's praise', in *Saint Patrick*, ed. Dumville *et al.*, pp. 153–73. There has been much discussion regarding its date, which was once presumed to be in the fifth century; however, now a sixth or seventh-century date appears more likely.

[87] For *profuga*, consider the entries for 'P' in Isidore's *Etymologiae* 10: *de vocabulis*. It is an interesting coincidence that *profugus* is immediately followed by *peregrinus*: *Profugus proprie dicitur qui procul a sedibus suis vagatur, quasi porro fugatus. Peregrinus, longe a patria positus, sicut alienigena.*

Also cf. *Confessio* 59: *proselitis et captiuis pro nomino suo*, apparently referring to martyrs. This pair is unusual, but *peregrinus/captivus* and *peregrinatio/captivitate* are commonly paired: see above n. 35.

peregrinus/peregrinatio propter nomen suum, ob amorem Dei, ob amorem Christi, etc., may have been commonplace in Patrick's time—as Gennadius, who may have been Patrick's contemporary, uses similar wording to describe Bachiarius[88]—but in the Middle Ages it became a turn of phrase quite common in Irish texts and used in relation to Irish pilgrims.[89] From his monastery in the woodlands of Gaul, the Irish abbot Columbanus (*c.*543–*c.*615) similarly declared that *pro Christo Salvatore...in has terras peregrinus processerim*, 'for the sake of Christ the Saviour...I have entered these lands a *peregrinus*'.[90] More than a century later, Adomnán of Iona (*c.*624–704) described that his predecessor, St Columcille, *de Scotia ad Britanniam pro Christo peregrinari volens enavigavit*, 'sailed away from Ireland to Britain, wishing to be a pilgrim for Christ'.[91] Hence Patrick uses idiosyncratic wording which in time would be commonly used to describe the *sancti peregrini* from his adopted land; the saint's use of this formula is the earliest that I have found.[92] But it is unlikely that Patrick's own works were models for Columbanus and Adomnán; it is therefore difficult to conclude much more than similarity in wording. A common source—probably monastic and/or hagiographical, considering the backgrounds and characteristics shared by these three writers—seems the most likely origin of this phrasing.

Hence we return to the point with which we began this chapter. Patrick is our earliest recorded *peregrinus* in Ireland and thus essential to this discussion, but we cannot decisively connect his works nor his particular ideals to the great burgeoning movement that would be underway probably less than a century after his death. His ideas are in line with mainstream monastic literature and thought during the fourth and fifth centuries; moreover, his self-identification as a *peregrinus* may help to shed light upon the question of the dates of his mission. But with regards to the origins of

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[88] See ch. 2, pp. 59–60.

[89] See brief discussion of these phrases in Kenney, *Sources*, p. 488. Perhaps due to the influence of Adomnán, this phrase is picked up by Bede who uses similar phrases frequently to describe monks who journeyed abroad. See, e.g., Bede, *Vitae Sanctorum Abbatum* 1, PL 94:713–730 at 715C; ibid. 2 PL 94:728A; idem, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.13 (on Wilfrid) [Colgrave/Mynors, p. 252]; 3.19 (on Fursa) [Colgrave/Mynors, p. 268]; 4.23 (on Hilda) [Colgrave/Mynors, p. 406]; 5.9 (on Egbert) [Colgrave/Mynors, p. 474–6]. Also cf. idem, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* 3.4, [Colgrave/Mynors, p. 224; PL 95:122C]: *exulaverat pro Christo*; ibid. 5.10, [Colgrave/Mynors, p. 480; PL 95:243C]. Also see the later Eadmer of Canterbury, *Vita Wilfridi* 33, PL 159:730D.

[90] Columbanus, *Epistola* 2.6.

[91] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae*, second preface [Andersons, pp. 186–7].

[92] For somewhat similar wording that would also be echoed in Irish texts see Cassian, *Conlationes* 3.2, PL 49:560A: *patriam relinquentes tot prouinciis pro amore domini perlustratis*. Interestingly, in Greek ascetic texts there is also a very similar phrase: ξενιτεύειν δια τον θεόν. See e.g., *AP Nau* 110, 402; it also appears in the mid-sixth-century Latin *Verba Seniorum* 32.5, PL 73:1051C.

peregrinatio in Ireland, he is but a single flash of light in an otherwise darkened landscape.

Chapter 6 Saints, Scholars and Monastic Foundations

From the fifth-century writings of St Patrick we leap to the end of the sixth century, when we encounter the abbot Columbanus (*c.*543–615) who left Ireland to live in *peregrinatio* in the mountains of Gaul. Little textual evidence survives of the period of Irish history from the end of Patrick's life until the *floruit* of Columbanus. This poorly-documented period, however, was a time of great monastic activity among the Irish. In this era numerous monastic centres and schools both inside and outside of Ireland were established by devout Irish monk-scholars and intrepid travellers. These monks and their ideological descendants are the figures who concern us in this discussion: the faithful adventurers who left their homelands for the sake of God, and set out to found great monasteries and to withdraw from the rest of humankind.

Unfortunately we must tread carefully through many of the source materials that document this period. The majority of our information about these early monks and abbots comes from hagiography written in the seventh century or later, which looks backward in time at this era of great founders and scholars.[1] Most of this discussion revolves around the lives of only three saints—Columcille, Columbanus and to a lesser extent, Fursa—but there were numerous others, who have not been included because the documents that attest to their lives were written too long after their own lifetimes to provide usable evidence. (Some of these—most notably St Brendan—appear in chapter nine, which explores the literary renditions of the lives of these pilgrim-saints.) For this reason the career of Columbanus in particular serves as a benchmark for Irish practice and the main focus of this chapter.[2] He is a well-documented example who corroborates the patterns and stories told in less reliable sources. He is by far our best recorded early Irish *peregrinus*: his life's events are recorded in a detailed *vita*,[3] written only a few

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[1] Richard Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives: an Introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), pp. 9–10. On early Irish hagiography generally, see ibid., pp. 3–26; Kim McCone, 'An introduction to Early Irish saints' Lives', *Maynooth Review* 11 (1984), pp. 26–59; Jean-Michel Picard, 'Structural patterns in early Hiberno-Latin hagiography', *Peritia* 4 (1987), pp. 67–82; W.W. Heist, 'Irish Saints' Lives: Romance and Cultural History', *Medievalia et Humanistica* n.s. 6 (1975), pp. 24–40; Ludwig Bieler, 'The Celtic Hagiographer', *Studia Patristica* 5 (1959), pp. 243–65.

[2] For a concise review of the saint's career and some of the history and problems of Columbanian scholarship, see Donald Bullough, 'The Career of Columbanus', in *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*, ed. Michael Lapidge (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), pp. 1–28.

[3] Jonas of Susa, *Vita S. Columbani Abbatis*, MGH SSRG, ed. Bruno Krusch (Hannover and Leipzig, 1905), PL 87:1011B–1046A. The chapter numbering used for Jonas's work is from the MGH edition; the English translation of this work by Dana Carleton Munro, *Life of St. Columban by the Monk Jonas*

decades after the saint's death from the verbal accounts his contemporaries, by a monk who entered the monastery of Bobbio only a short time after Columbanus had died.[4] Moreover, a small but informative corpus of the saint's own writings have survived the centuries, giving a clear view into the ideals of the *peregrinus* himself.[5] Upon the framework of Columbanus's life and works, therefore, this chapter overlays the histories of the other Irish *monachi peregrini*, in order to reveal why these travellers sailed away from Ireland and what they expected to achieve when they landed on foreign shores.

We first explore the structures and patterns that defined *peregrinatio* among this segment of early Irish monks—the *sancti peregrini* and monastic founders of the sixth and seventh centuries—and then continue with an analysis of the underlying ideologies that compelled these men to leave all for the sake of God. The main sources for patterns and *topoi* are as noted the works of Columbanus, along with his biography by Jonas of Susa; Adomnán's *vita* of Columba of Iona (521–597);[6] the anonymous life of Fursa of Lagny († *c.*650);[7] and Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*.[8] Other Irish texts and hagiography are also brought to bear whenever possible, particularly when we have some idea of

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(Felinfach: Llanerch Publishers, orig. pr. 1895, repr. 1993) used the PL text, which has different chapter divisions.

[4] On the contemporary accounts, see Clare Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus and his Disciples*', in *Saints and Scholars: Studies in Irish Hagiography*, ed. John Carey, Máire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001), pp. 189–220 at 190. On when Jonas entered the community at Bobbio, see Adalbert De Vogüé, *Vie de S. Columban et ses disciples* (Bégrolles-en-Mauges: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1988), p. 19.

[5] There has been some debate over some of the works attributed to the saint. More recent studies have established that six letters, thirteen sermons, one penitential, and one poem (*De Mundi Transitu*) can be ascribed with reasonable confidence to Columbanus' authorship. See Neil Wright, 'Columbanus's *epistulae*', in *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*, ed. Michael Lapidge (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 1997), pp. 61–6; Clare Stancliffe, 'The Thirteen Sermons Attributed to Columbanus and the Question of their Authorship', in ibid., pp. 93–202; Thomas Charles-Edwards, 'The Penitential of Columbanus', in ibid., pp. 217–39; Dieter Schaller, '*De Mundi Transitu*: a Rhythmical poem by Columbanus?' in ibid., pp. 240–54. One monastic rule, the *Regula Monachorum*, has been ascribed to the saint with confidence; of a second rule, the *Regula Coenobialis*, it appears that at least part can be attributed to Columbanus—see Jane Stevenson, 'The Monastic Rules of Columbanus', in ibid., pp. 203–16; cf. Bullough, 'Career, of Columbanus', p. 11; Walker, pp. l–lii. Other minor writings ascribed with varying levels of confidence to Columbanus are discussed in Michael Lapidge, '*Precamur Patrem:* an Easter hymn by Columbanus?' in ibid., pp. 255–63; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 'The computistical works of Columbanus', in ibid., pp. 269–70; Michael Lapidge, 'The Oratio S. Columbani', in ibid., pp. 271–3.

[6] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae*, ed. and trans. A.O. and M.O. Anderson, *Adomnan's Life of Columba* (London: T. Nelson, 1961). On this text generally, see esp. Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry: the History and Hagiography of the Monastic* Familia *of Columba* (Dubin: Four Courts, 1996), pp. 13–26, 134–50; Richard Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona: Life of St Columba* (London and New York: Penguin, 1991), pp. 53–65; J.-M. Picard, 'The Purpose of Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*', *Peritia* 1 (1982), pp. 160–77.

[7] *Vita Fursei*, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SSRM 4, pp. 434–40; a later (early ninth century) text recording the miracles of this saint is *Virtutes Fursei*, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SSRM 4, pp. 440–49.

[8] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), PL 95:21–290.

their dates.[9] The sources for the latter goal of uncovering ideologies of pilgrimage are the writings of Columbanus, who aside from St Patrick provides our only first-person evidence of early *peregrinatio*. Like his predecessor Patrick, Columbanus claimed for himself the title of *peregrinus*,[10] but Columbanus demonstrates a much broader theological understanding of *peregrinatio* than did the 'apostle of Ireland'. Thus the chapter ends with a close study of Columbanus's own words, as they reflect some of the theological and ideological motivations that impelled the abbot and his companions to embark upon *peregrinatio*. In the lives and careers of these intrepid monks we find repetitive patterns of behaviour and common rubrics of sanctity: from these patterns emerges a distinct sense of what *peregrinatio pro Christo* meant to some early Irish monks.

6.1 *Peregrinatio* in the Structure of Monastic Life

First we turn to the more practical details of *peregrinatio* to define what this form of devotion entailed in an Irish monastic milieu. In the structure of monastic life there was a developmental progression from youth to old age; within this structure, education, monastic training and *peregrinatio* are intrinsically linked.

6.1.1 *Leaving Home: Youth and Education*

One would not generally link the concept of education with *peregrinatio*, but they are related on a number of levels. Strictly in terms of vocabulary, *peregrinatio* as a term for a journey to study under a wise and experienced master appears early in Christian history—in the writings of Jerome, and also, interestingly, in Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, in which allegorical *peregrinatio* played such a pivotal role.[11] Travelling for spiritual enrichment, knowledge and training also recalls the ascetic journeys like those of Jerome, Rufinus, John Cassian, and the Greek Palladius to reap the wisdom of the desert fathers. In monastic literature, studying with a learned master is a constant prerequisite to the undertaking of ascetic discipline. In early texts this training prepared the monk for the rigours of solitary life. Upon deciding to renounce his worldly

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[9] A resource used here with some caution is the so-called 'O'Donoghue group' of Irish saint's lives. On this group of texts see ch. 4, n. 93.

[10] Columbanus, *Epistle* 1.4 [Walker, p. 6(6)]; 2.6 [Walker, p. 16(24)]; 3.2 [Walker, p. 24(16)]; 5.1 [Walker, p. 36(19)]; 5.2 [Walker, p. 36(29)]; 5.14 [Walker, p. 52(31)].

[11] Jerome, *Ep.* 53.1; Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 8.11; Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus LXXXIII* 46, PL 40:11–100 at 30; idem, *Contra academicos* 3.17, PL 32:903–58 at 954. Also cf. *Vita Antonii* 20.

existence St Anthony, for example, first sought out wise elders to learn their wisdom; his learning from these more experienced monks strengthened him to the point that he was ready to battle the desires of the flesh on his own.

> Now there was on a neighbouring estate an old man who from his earliest youth had led a solitary life. When Antony saw him, he was keen to emulate him in goodness. At first, when he started out, Antony lived in places which were at a relatively short distance from home but later on, if he heard of anyone engaging in this disciplined life, he would go out and search for him like a wise bee. He would not return to his own dwelling until he had set eyes on the one he longed for and then when he had, so to speak, obtained the gift of honey, he would go back home. After beginning in this way, his resolve grew stronger by the day until he reached the point where he no longer thought of his family wealth or of his relations but focused all his longing and attention on what he had undertaken....[12]

With few exceptions ascetic literature relates a hierarchy of young Christians in training under the tutelage of elder monks; teaching and learning comprised a major element of monastic life. As Jerome wrote of monastic discipline, 'No art is ever learned without a master';[13] John Cassian similarly warns against attempting to embark upon the dangerous life of asceticism without learning first from the examples of those 'whom ancient tradition and industry and long experience have thoroughly instructed'.[14] Imitation of a virtuous elder was an essential directive of monastic education; and in early Christian Ireland such training was directly linked to ecclesiastical authority and to sanctity.[15]

The basic pattern of Christian education in Ireland incorporated this directive; in form it also recalled that of ancient Rome and Greece.[16] A young boy studied elementary skills of reading and writing under one teacher (or in some cases in Ireland, was fostered) approximately from the age of seven to eleven/twelve; thereafter the

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[12] Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 3 [White, p. 10]; see also Cassian, *Institutes* 5.4 for very similar imagery.

[13] Jerome, *Epistle* 125.15. Columbanus knew this letter; see *Regula Monachorum* 10 [Walker, p. 140(21–2)].

[14] Cassian, *Conlationes*, Part III, preface.

[15] For the requirement that an abbot be educated, see Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland: AD 650 to 1000* (Kildare: Laigin, 1999), p. 322.

[16] See discussion in T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'The context and uses of literacy in early Christian Ireland', in *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, ed. Huw Pryce (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 62–82 at 66–8, who notes that the structure of Columbanus's education in particular reflects a commonplace understanding of the 'ages of man'. For the structure of Roman education see H.I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956), pp. 265–91. For later Roman and early medieval Christian patterns, ibid., pp. 314–50; Pierre Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West: from the Sixth through the Eighth Century*, trans. John J. Contreni. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1976), pp. 1–13, 21–51; Michael Lapidge, 'Gildas's education and the Latin culture of sub-Roman Britain', in *Gildas: New Approaches*, ed. Michael Lapidge and David N. Dumville, Studies in Celtic History 5 (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1984), pp. 27–50 at 27–8. For Greek education, Marrou, *History of Education*, pp. 142–226.

youth progressed to higher studies with a different instructor—a Greek γραμματικός or Roman *grammaticus*—to the age of fifteen/sixteen. Thereafter a Greek or Roman youth trained under the tutelage of a *rhetor*; in Christian education, a young man would no doubt learn similar skills of persuasive speech and presentation, but with scripture rather than classical literature as the main literary model. At approximately the age of twenty-one the educational systems part ways: a talented young Greek would have gone on to study philosophy; a Roman would have delved more deeply into the law; a devout young Christian might seek out a monastery and an abbot to begin monastic training, or would perhaps begin to study for the priesthood.

Jonas's *vita* of Columbanus provides our clearest view of this pattern in Ireland. The saint studied grammar and the *liberalia littera* 'throughout his boyhood and youth', though his teachers at this stage are unnamed.[17] He left his home and sought out one Sinnell—quite possibly the famous Irish scholar of Cleenish Island (in Lough Erne, modern Co. Fermanagh)—who tutored the young saint in scripture.[18] Later he entered the monastery at Bangor to be trained by St Comgall. Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* also recounts that Columba experienced a similar progression of advancing studies under various masters: Columba was fostered as a child with a priest named Cruithnechán;[19] as a young man he studied with a master named Gemmán[20] and another named either Finnbarr, Finnio or Uinniau—possibly the famous Finnian of Clonard or Finnian of Moville.[21]

The connection between *peregrinatio* and this quest for education—which leads the young pupil ever further from home—becomes most apparent in the vignette that describes how Columbanus came to leave his homeland. As we saw in chapter four, when the young saint was entering adolescence—becoming attractive to the opposite sex and thus vulnerable to new temptations of sexuality and desire—he visited a 'holy and devout woman', who vehemently urged the youth to leave the carnal ties and temptations of his land.[22] Columbanus responded to her words with alacrity: he left

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[17] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.3 [Krusch, p. 155(12–14); Munro, p. 12].

[18] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.3 [Krusch, p. 157(19–21)].

[19] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 3.2. For a similar rendering of a three-stage educational structure, also see ibid. 1.2.

[20] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.25.

[21] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.1, 2.1, 3.4. Adomnán uses all of these names apparently to indicate the same person. On who this figure might be, see brief discussion in Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona: Life of St Columba*, p. 11 and pp. 317–18 n. 210.

[22] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.3 [Krusch, p. 157(7–18); Munro, pp. 14–15].

home immediately and sought out Sinnell to study scripture under his tutelage. Columbanus's rapid departure immediately after hearing the woman's exhortation to *peregrinatio* strongly suggests that his pilgrimage began upon his departure from home: in the space of twelve lines of text, Columbanus heard the woman's exhortation, returned home, bade farewell to his friends and mother, and then departed, never to return:

> The youth, trembling at these words...thanked [the holy woman] for her reproaches, took leave of his companions and set out. His mother in anguish begged him not to leave her, but he said: 'Hast thou not heard, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me?"' He begged his mother...to let him go. Weeping and stretched on the floor, she said she would not permit it. Then he stepped across the threshold and asked his mother not to give way to her grief; she would never see him again in this life, but wherever the way of salvation led him, there he would go.[23]

The young saint's first step across the threshold of his family home in search of his education was the first constitutive act of his *peregrinatio*; the crossing of the boundary between home and the unfamiliar carried the added significance of a monastic journey away from home and kin.

The young saint's travels began as a lesser *peregrinatio*—his quest for education in Ireland—though he would later undertake his *potior peregrinatio* overseas.[24] This short passage in Jonas's text thus gives two alternate aspects of the lesser form of *peregrinatio*: one temporary and one permanent. The holy woman discussed in previous chapters, who exhorted the saint to leave the carnal attachments of his own land, counts her own withdrawal into solitude as a *peregrinatio*; hers was a lifelong 'lesser pilgrimage'. In contrast the beginning of Columbanus's withdrawal fits into a more gradual progression of ascetic training and renunciation. This pattern places the training and education of a young saint at the formative stages of a longer continuum of *peregrinatio*, which began as the saint crossed over the threshold to leave his familial home, and culminated in his crossing of the sea as he left his homeland. Hence the beginning stages of this progression—the initial training of the young saint—are critical to the establishment of sanctity, both for dramatic purposes in the literary realm of

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[23] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.3 [Krusch, p. 157(7–18); Munro, pp. 14–15]: *Huius ergo dictis stimulatus aduliscens, et ultra quam aduliscentem terreri crederes, grates taliter increpanti refert, sodalibus vale dicens, iter arripit; materque eius dolore stimulata, precatur, ut se non relinquat. At ille: 'Non', inquid, 'audisti: Qui amat patrem aut matrem plus quam me, non est me dignus?' Obstanti matri et limitem ostii inherenti postulat, ut se ire sinat. Illa eiulans et pavimento prostrata, denegat se permissuram; ille limitem matremque transilit poscitque matri, se laetam habeat: illum numquam deinceps in hac vita visurum, sed, quocumque salutis via iter pandat, se progressurum.*

[24] See ch. 4, §4.5; also Charles-Edwards, 'Social Background to Irish *Peregrinatio*', pp. 43–59.

hagiography and also in the symbolic nature of this first rejection of the world and embrace of the contemplative life.

The identity of a talented young Christian's teachers and masters is commensurately important: in many cases the status of the master appears to confer some prestige upon a student. This element was not unique to the Irish: Augustine was a student of the great bishop Ambrose; the young St Martin immediately upon ending his army tenure travelled to study with the famous theologian Hilary of Poitiers; Jerome's Hilarion trained for his vocation under St Anthony.[25] This pattern continued in Ireland, where the convention of naming a saint's masters became particularly frequent. Columbanus as noted was first taught by Sinnell; he then undertook his monastic training under the authority of St Comgall, who was known for his rigorous asceticism.[26] Columcille's masters are all named; if Columcille's teacher was indeed Finnian of Clonard († *c.*552), he may have had claim to a distinguished pedigree. According to later tradition Finnian founded a famous monastery school in Clonard which was renowned for its scholarship, and was claimed at one stage to have taught three thousand students at once.[27] Finnian was reputed to have trained many of the next generation's great monks and *peregrini*.[28] This practice of assigning famous masters—and often equally eminent colleagues—to saints became a hagiographical commonplace, to the extent that illustrious masters began to be claimed even when these assertions were historically impossible.[29] Based no doubt upon earlier patterns of monastic hagiography, recitation of such 'lineage' became a standard element in the

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[25] Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 1; Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 5; Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 3. Also cf. texts that emphasise saints' learning and education: Constantius, *Vita Germani* 1; Jerome, *Vita Pauli* 4; idem, *Vita Hilarionis* 2.

[26] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.4 [Krusch, pp. 158–9]. Comgall's reputation for severe discipline is repeated in a number of texts; in one *vita* he was even punished for undue harshness. See discussion in A. Gwynn, 'The Irish Monastery of Bangor', in *Mélanges colombaniens: actes du Congrès international de Luxeuil, 20–23 juillet 1950* (Paris: Alsatia, 1951), pp. 47–54 at 48–50; Plummer, *VSH*, vol. 1, pp. cxvi–cxvii and n. 14.

[27] *Irish Life of Finnian* 2640–45, trans. Whitley Stokes, *Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore* (orig. publ. Oxford: Clarendon, 1890; repr. Felinfach: Llanerch, 1995), pp. 222–30 at 226. On the hagiographical traditions of this saint and this text generally, see Elizabeth Hickey, *The Irish Life of Saint Finnian of Clonard* (Dublin: Meath Archaeological and Historical Society, 1996), introduction; Kathleen Hughes, 'The Cult of St Finnian of Clonard from the Eighth to the Eleventh Century', *Irish Historical Studies* 9 (1954–55), pp. 13–27; eadem, 'The Historical Value of the Lives of St Finnian of Clonard', *English Historical Review* 69 (1954), pp. 353–72.

[28] On the dating of the tradition of Finnian as the 'Master of the Saints of Ireland', see Hughes, 'Cult of St Finnian', pp. 23–7.

[29] Particularly in the case of Finnian, to whom, according to Kathleen Hughes, 'saints who lived long after his death are sent by their hagiographers to study under him' ('Cult of St Finnian', p. 23); Columbanus's master Comgall of Bangor is another saint who is frequently claimed as master.

usual discussion of a saint's background and education in the introductory paragraphs of Irish *vitae*.[30] While this obscures the historical data to some extent, it nonetheless illustrates how important education and the master-student relationship was in the depiction of monastic sanctity.

The role of teacher also held prime importance in Irish monastic life; not only learning itself but the ability to teach others was highly valued. A section of the ninth-century *Rule of the Céli Dé* demonstrates the aura of great virtue conferred by teaching; it declares that teaching 'is the most excellent of all labours, to wit, labour in piety; for the kingdom of heaven is granted to him who directs study, and to him who studies, and to him who supports the pupil who is studying'.[31] The crucial—and potentially negative—role of teachers in the Christian faith is also expressed in the seventh-century *Apgitir Chrábaid* ('Alphabet of Piety'), which declares that there are 'three enemies of the soul: the world and the devil and an impious teacher'.[32] Another section of the *Rule of the Céli Dé* dramatises the importance of teaching with ominous intensity: it demands that the Irish clergy should press 'boys and girls to study and piety: for if the boys do not study at all seasons the whole Church will die, and there will be no belief, but black paganism in the land of Erin'.[33] Hence the act of teaching was both an act of virtue and a way to perpetuate the faith.

Just as a monk's own teachers were integral to his budding virtue, so he eventually became one who trained others to lead the *vita perfecta*. After sufficient training under the tutelage of a master, learned monks would be expected to become teachers and role models themselves; this, too, appears to be a requisite element for leading a monastic *peregrinatio* overseas. Jonas, for example, describes Columbanus's initial training in ascetic discipline in terms of its eventual utility once the saint himself became a teacher of other monks:

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[30] For 'pedigree' in early ascetic texts, see Philip Rousseau, 'The Spiritual Authority of the "Monk-Bishop": Eastern Elements in some Western Hagiography of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries', *JTS* n.s. 23.2 (October 1971), pp. 380–419 at 384.

[31] *Riagail na Céle nDé = Rule of the Céli Dé* §63, ed. Edward Gwynn, *The Rule of Tallaght*, *Hermathena* 44, 2nd suppl. vol. (Dublin: Hodges Figgis; London: Longmans, Green, 1927), pp. 64–87 at 82–3: *Is he tra doroisce do shaethraib in saethar-sa .i. saethar hi crabud. Aire doberar flithius nime donti lasa legthar 7 notlega 7 dotcossig in nech bis icon legand.*

[32] *Apgitir Chrábaid = Alphabet of Piety* §20, ed. Vernam Hull, '*Apgitir Chrabaid*: The Alphabet of Piety', *Celtica* 8 (1968), pp. 44–89 at 70–1: *Tri namait anmae: domun 7 diabul 7 forcetlaid anetail.*

[33] *Riagail na Céle nDé = Rule of the Céli Dé* §60 [Gwynn, pp. 80–3]: *...7 mac 7 ingean fria legend 7 crabud: ar mina-s-legat na meic in cech aimsir itbela in uile eclais, 7 ni bia cretim acht duib-genntligecht hi tir nErenn.*

> [In Bangor] Columbanus gave himself entirely to fasting and prayer, to bearing the easy yoke of Christ, to mortifying the flesh, to taking the cross upon himself and following Christ, in order that he who was to be a teacher of others might show the learning, which he taught, more fruitfully by his own example in mortifying his own body; and that he who was to instruct others might first instruct himself.[34]

According to Jonas the saint's skills as a teacher became valued not just by other monks and novices—who flooded to join his monastery—but also by the local nobility who sent their children to be educated by the saint. Columbanus was a capable rhetorician and had a broad knowledge of Christian literature;[35] he also must have been a charismatic and effective teacher. Similarly, some of St Columcille's most lauded qualities were his knowledge and his abilities as a teacher. One of the earliest witnesses to Columbanus's life, the vernacular *Amra Choluimb Chille*, puts great emphasis upon the learning of the holy man and casts his studies within a pattern of asceticism:

> The teacher wove the word.
> By his wisdom he made glosses clear.
> He fixed the Psalms,
> He made known the books of Law,
> Those books Cassian loved,
> He won battles with gluttony.[36]

The poet refers to the saint throughout the text in terms of his teaching: as a *suí* (wise man, savant), and also a *fithir* and *forcetlaid* (both OI words for 'teacher, master') and a *magister*.[37] Though it lacks the emphasis of the *Amra*, Adomnán's *vita* also recounts vignettes of the saint teaching and counselling his monks, sharing his wisdom and knowledge.[38]

The progression of a young monk's education thus marks the beginning point of a lifelong journey that peaks with the voyage of *peregrinatio*. The monk leaves home to seek out a holy life and to embark upon the study of sacred scripture; the progress of his education takes him further and further from his native land and kin. He trains and

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[34] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.4 [Krusch, p. 158(22)–159(6); Munro, p. 17]. *Ibi solis orationibus et ieiuniis vacare coepit et iugum Christi, quod ferentibus leve est, super se ferre, semetipsumque sibi abnegando, ac crucem suam tollendo, Christum sequere, ut qui aliorum doctor futurus erat, ipse quod doctrina didicerat in suo corpore mortificationem ferendo uberius exemplo monstraret, quid aliis implenda fore docuisset.*

[35] For a detailed discussion of his sources, see Johannes W. Smit, *Studies on the Language and Style of Columba the Younger (Columbanus)* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1971), pp. 167–253.

[36] *Amra Choluimb Chille* 5.17, ed. and trans. T.O. Clancy and Gilbert Márkus, *Iona: the Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 104–15 at 106–8: *Faig feirb fithir. / Gáis gluassa glé. / Glinnsius salmu, / sluinnsius léig libru, / libuir ut car Cassion. / Catha gulae gaelais.*

[37] *Amra Choluimb Chille* 6.10, 7.1 (*suí*); 5.2 (*fithir*); 1.15 (*forcetlaid*); 8.12 (*magister*). See discussion in Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry*, pp. 10–11 and n. 8.

[38] E.g., Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.35, 3.21.

studies and eventually becomes a teacher in his own right. In the case of our *monachi peregrini*, this takes the monk even further, perhaps across the sea, to found a new monastery and act as abbot to other monks and future saints. While this progressive and perpetuating pattern of Irish education should not be considered intrinsic to all *peregrinationes*, it is an essential aspect of the lives of the talented and ambitious young Christians who became the famous *monachi peregrini* of Ireland. Moreover, the pursuit of learning often compelled the first separation of the future saint from his homeland and kin, an immeasurably important act of faith and devotion and the defining act of the *peregrinus*.

6.1.2 *Leaving the Monastery*

After suitable training in scripture, ascetic discipline, and the tenets of communal monasticism, a monk of great promise might determine to leave his monastery in a further search for salvation. In hagiography especially, this separation results from a deeply-felt, passionate desire for isolation or self-denial, often compelled by the words of Christ or prompted by the Holy Spirit.[39] A paradigm of monastic virtue, a monk first sought his abbot's approval to fulfil this desire for *peregrinatio*. Under nearly every monastic rule a monk would have needed his abbot's permission to embark upon any journey away from the *coenobium*; no doubt only those monks who had been properly trained and prepared were allowed to leave the safety of their own monasteries.[40] Comgall, abbot of Bangor, initially denied Columbanus's request to go abroad—a common event in monastic hagiography[41]—but Jonas recounts that the abbot eventually relented, as 'the Almighty...had educated His novice for future warfare'.[42] This is probably not simply literary license: one can easily imagine that some monks' petitions to depart were rejected if their abbots did not deem them fit for such an arduous

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[39] See, e.g., Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.4 [Krusch, p. 159(11–13)], perhaps modelled upon the example of Anthony (see *Vita Antonii* 2). See also *Vita Hilarionis* 3; Eigil, *Vita Sturmi* 4; Alcuin, *Homilia de Willibrordi* 4.

[40] E.g., *Regula Benedicti* 67.7; *Regula Magistri* 90.66. Columbanus also takes up this topic in a letter to Pope Gregory I: Columbanus, *Epistle* 1.7 [Walker, p. 8]. Also see the possibly sixth-century *Synodus Episcoporum* or *Synodus I S. Patricii* 34 (L&S 599) [Bieler, p. 58]; the seventh-century *Synodus (II) S. Patricii* 21 (L&S 600) [Bieler, p. 192]; Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* 1.6; and the early eighth-century legal text, the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* 39.15–16 [Wasserschleben, p. 152], which is a compilation of many earlier traditions.

[41] See, e.g., Willibald, *Vita Bonifacii* 4; also cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 5.3; Eigil, *Vita Sturmi* 4.

[42] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.4 [Krusch, p. 159(21–2); Munro, p. 18]: *omnipotens...tyronem suum ad bella futura erudierat*. I have changed Munro's translation of *bella* from 'strifes' to 'warfare'.

challenge. To embark upon a *peregrinatio* was a serious undertaking, full of danger both spiritual and physical.[43] The physical courage and sheer strength of will a monk needed to travel overseas and to establish himself and his monks in a foreign land cannot have been common attributes. Wise abbots who sent their own abroad must have done so with care.

This recalls the tenets of Cassian and other early fathers that a monk should first build up the strength of his faith and monastic virtue within the safety and security of a community before, for example, becoming an anchorite, which was considered a challenging and dangerous practice that only the strongest and most perfect of monks should attempt.[44] No doubt this sort of injunction was at play; overseas *peregrinatio* was not an act that every monk could or would undertake. As a form of devotion it is markedly consonant with the anchoritism of the desert fathers. Among the desert monks, an anchorite—from *anachoresis*, 'withdrawal'—withdrew into the desert, a final, extreme ritual of renunciation; there the monk lived a life of austerity, grappled with the devil and battled the demons of his physical needs and desires. Among the cenobitic monks of Ireland, this ultimate stage of *potior peregrinatio* represented the culmination of a successful and virtuous career as a monk in a community; like *anachoresis*, *peregrinatio* represented the complete and permanent renunciation of family and homeland for the sake of God. (The relationship between anchoritism and *peregrinatio* in Ireland is addressed further in chapter seven.) It was the ultimate act of self-denial and rejection of the world. Only the strongest and most virtuous monks could sustain such a venture.

It comes as no surprise, then, that the Irish *peregrini* who embarked upon these extreme renunciations had reached a relatively advanced age prior to departing from Ireland—Columba was forty-one;[45] Columbanus possibly thirty;[46] as were Patrick (according to Muirchú),[47] and both Finnian and Brendan, albeit according to later, somewhat unreliable texts.[48] In Britain and on the continent we find a similar pattern:

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[43] On the difficulties and dangers of medieval sea travel see Norbert Ohler, *The Medieval Traveller* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1989), esp. pp. 42–50.

[44] See, e.g., Jerome, *Epistle* 125.9 *ad Rusticum* (which Columbanus echoes in his *Regula Monachorum* 10 [Walker, p. 140]); Cassian, *Institutes* 5.36; *Conlationes* 18.4, 18.6; *Regula Benedicti*, 1.3–5; *Regula Magistri* 1.3–5.

[45] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae*, second preface.

[46] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.4 [Krusch, p. 160 and n. 1]. Some MSs read 'twenty'; see discussion of Jonas's miscalculations of the saint's age in Krusch, p. 54.

[47] Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.5.1 [Bieler, p. 70(9–11)].

[48] *Irish Life of Finnian* 2527 [Stokes, p. 222]; *Irish Life of Brendan* 153 [Plummer, *LIS*, 1:79, 2:76].

Benedict Biscop was twenty-five when he left England for the continent, and he wandered for a number of years before he was tonsured and took vows at the monastery at Lérins.[49] Willibrord was thirty-three when he embarked upon his mission to Frisia.[50] According to his hagiographer, Boniface took his priestly orders at 'thirty or more'.[51] Going back further in time, Augustine of Hippo was *annis major triginta* when he established his short-lived monastic community; and St Anthony was thirty-five when he defeated the devil in the desert.[52] These numbers convey a multiplicity of meanings. The age of thirty or the early thirties may have carried Christological symbolism: thirty-three was the age of Christ at the time of his passion and death. Thirty was the age of Christ at the time of his baptism;[53] it was also in his thirtieth year that Jesus began to teach—which would have been an appropriate point for a monk to be eligible to become an abbot in his own right—and so began the sequence that ended with his passion and death. Thirty also appears in various councils as the required age for priestly ordination, in others, for ascendancy to the episcopate.[54] The so-called 'Second Synod of Patrick' records that monks 'ought to be drawn to the perfect life at the perfect age, that is, of thirty years, not in witnessing to, but in fulfilling, his vow';[55] Muirchú's *Vita Patricii* makes a more clear Christological connection, stating that Patrick left his land when 'he was already approaching the age of thirty, reaching, according to the Apostle, perfect manhood, the full maturity of the age of Christ'.[56] From a more secular viewpoint, by ancient tradition twenty-five was the age of majority;[57] in the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville—which were well known in medieval Ireland—the age of twenty-eight marked the end of adolescence.[58] These saints by their ages are therefore marked as fully-fledged adults. Though the symbolic nature of some of these recorded ages may well indicate that they are hagiographical *topoi*, the consistent underlying theme is that these

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[49] According to Bede, *Vitae Sanctorum Abbatum* 1, PL 94:713C; also see Eric Fletcher, 'Benedict Biscop', Jarrow Lecture 1981, reprinted in *Bede and his World: The Jarrow Lectures*, 2 vols. (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), pp. 539–54 at 541–2.

[50] Alcuin, *Homilia de S. Willibrordi Archiepiscopi* 5.

[51] Willibald, *Vita Bonifacii* 3.

[52] Also see Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 2; Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 10.

[53] Luke 3.23. Also cf. Gen 41.46; 2 Kings 5.4; Ezek 1.1; 2 Chron 21.

[54] P.M.J. Rock, 'Age, Canonical', in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Charles G. Herbermann *et al.* (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1913), vol. 1, pp. 206–9 at 207; the ordination requirement is probably based at least in part upon Num 4.3: see e.g. Jerome, *Ep.* 82.8.

[55] *Synodus (II) S. Patricii* 17 [Bieler, p. 190(16–18)].

[56] Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.5 [Bieler, p. 71], which refers to Eph 4.13.

[57] In Roman law a man was still a *minor* or *adulescens* until the age of twenty-five; see 'Adulescens' and 'Minores' in Adolf Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law,* Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s. 43.2 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1953), pp. 352, 583.

[58] Isidore, *Etymologiae* 11.2.1–8.

saints were in their adult years when they set out on their journeys. In short, an undertaking of *peregrinatio* was not meant for the young and untried. (Interestingly, thirty years was also a frequently-occurring length for a mission or ascetic withdrawal, perhaps because of the symmetry with the first thirty years spent before such an undertaking.[59])

Another notably repetitive *topos* is the practice of embarking upon a *peregrinatio* with a group of companions, often twelve in number: both Columba and Columbanus set off from Ireland with twelve fellow monks.[60] The biblical precedent for these numbers is clearly Christ and his twelve apostles. The leader of the *peregrinatio* is not one of the twelve, which puts him in the place of Christ; this is consistent with monastic tradition, which ordains that the abbot—as this leader was destined to become in lands unknown—must embody Christ in the monastery.[61] An Irish illustration of this connection appears in an eighth-century poem written by Blathmac as an ode to the Virgin Mary, extolling the virtues of herself and her son; it reads,

> The grace that was upon him [i.e., Jesus] was indescribable (he was a fair, bright, miracle-working lord) so that his name, with bright fame, resounded all over the lands around Galilee. He called to him a stout band of people whose warrior qualities were renowned: *twelve apostles to whom he was abbot,* seventy-two disciples.[62]

The apostolic symbolism of the number also suggests that evangelism must have played a major role in the *peregrinatio*; however, as will be discussed in more detail in the coming pages, Irish saints and evangelism have a questionable connection. Even so, choosing a number of companions so laden with religious meaning illustrates a ritualistic and symbolic element in Irish *peregrinatio*.

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[59] See, e.g., Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.7(6); Tírechán, *Collectanea* 2.3.4; ibid., 3.1.6 and 3.3.53; Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 3.22. See also the *Irish Life of Finnian* 2550 [Stokes, p. 223]; *Irish Life of Patrick* 214 [Stokes, p. 155] and the *Irish Life of Brendan* 153 [Plummer, *LIS*, 1:79, 2:76–7]. Also, thirty years as the length of ascetic practice also appears in late antique texts: Rufinus, *Historia Monachorum* 6 [PL 21:409C], 16 [PL 21:437C]; Jerome, *Vita Pauli* 6.

[60] See Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.4 [Krusch, p. 160(7)]; *Vita Columbae* 3.3 [Andersons, p. 186(106b)]. Similarly, e.g., the mission of Willibrord, as recounted by Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.10. St. Brendan was said to have gathered fourteen of his brethren [*Vita Brendani* 39; Plummer, *LIS,* 1:51, 2:50], but one was left on an island [*Vita Brendani* 134–9; Plummer, *LIS*, 1:74–5, 2:72–3] and another drowned [*Vita Brendani* 161; Plummer, *LIS*, 1:81, 2:78]; also see the story of the twelve 'men of Erin' told by an elder *peregrinus* in the *Vita Brendani* 147 [Plummer, *LIS*, 1:77 2:75]. Also see the account of Benedict's monastic foundations, each of which he manned with twelve monks and an abbot, in his *vita*: Gregory I, *Dialogos* 2.3.13.

[61] *Regula Benedicti*, ch. 2.1–2; *Regula Magistri* 2.2–3.

[62] My italics. Blathmac, son of Cú Brettan, *Poems* 26–7 [Carney, pp. 10–11]: *Níbu thairdeirc fair a rrath, ba flaithem findgel fertach, cur son a ainm co clú gil sanchán crícha im Galail. Con-gart cuci popul mbras, ba hairdairc a óclachas: da apstal déc diambu ab, da descipul sechtmogat.*

Cloaked in traditional symbols and language, the departure from the monastery and the journey across the sea represents the culminating, essential act that defines the *peregrinus*. The crossing of the ocean functions symbolically in the same way that Columbanus's step over the threshold of his home did. The crossing of the boundary from the familiar to the foreign creates the *peregrinus*—the alien in a foreign land. The dangers of the journey, from stormy seas to worldly temptations, could only be undertaken with obedience to his abbot and his rule, by a senior and fully trained monk, preferably with a group of loyal and obedient companions. With these elements, the monk could set out for foreign lands, a *potior peregrinus* at last.

6.1.3 *Monastic Foundations*

Upon crossing the sea, if we may judge from the examples of Columcille, Columbanus and Fursa, the main objective of these *peregrini* was to build a new monastic foundation and to establish functioning communities of monks living under a governing rule. The number of companions mentioned above suggests another implication in this regard: although the voyages of the *sancti peregrini* share many aspects in common with anchoritic renunciation, their goals were in fact to establish *coenobia* in their adopted lands. The most tangible and lasting evidence of the broad reach of Irish *peregrini* lies in such foundations both in Ireland and abroad that were established by these travelling monks.[63] This is not without precedent in mainstream continental lives: some late antique saints' lives record similar foundations by early saints. As Philip Rousseau has

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[63] In the seventh century, the number of monasteries in Gaul more than doubled, driven by natives and *peregrini* alike: see Hillgarth, 'Modes of evangelization', p. 322 and n. 56, who cites the work of Helmut Atsma, 'Les monastères urbains du Nord de la Gaule', *Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France* 62 (1976), pp. 163–87 at 168. Also see Ian Wood, 'A Prelude to Columbanus: the Monastic Achievement in the Burgundian Territories', in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. H.B. Clarke and Mary Brennan, BAR International Series 113 (Oxford: BAR, 1981), pp. 3–32; while this is not the focus of Wood's article, his analysis demonstrates the rapid expansion of monasticism in Burgundian Gaul in this period. Cf. Friedrich Prinz, 'Columbanus, the Frankish Nobility and the Territories East of the Rhine', in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. H.B. Clarke and Mary Brennan, BAR International Series 113 (Oxford: BAR, 1981), pp. 73–87 at 77 and 82, who argues that the Irish foundations of Columbanus actually fuelled this expansion by acting as catalysts to the shift from urban to rural development.

For Irish-continental contact, see Jean-Michel Picard, 'Early contacts between Ireland and Normandy: the cult of Irish saints in Normandy before the conquest', *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin*, ed. Michael Richter and Jean-Michel Picard (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), pp. 85–93; idem, 'Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* and the cult of Colum Cille in continental Europe', *PRIA* 98.1C, (1998), 1–23. Pierre Riché, 'Les monastères hiberno-francs en Gaule du Nord – VIIe–VIIIe siècles,' in *Ireland and Northern France AD 600–850*, ed. Jean-Michel Picard (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1991), pp. 21–6; Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, 'Ireland and Spain in the seventh century', *Peritia* 3, (1984), 1–16; Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel, 'Aspects of the promotion of Irish saints' cults in medieval Germany', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 39, (1982), pp. 220–34.

noted, the first acts of Sts Martin and Augustine after their ordinations were to establish monastic communities; Rousseau links this pattern to the established eastern traditions of ascetic and monastic sanctity.[64] Furthermore, it is a commonplace in monastic hagiography to make reference to the rule followed by a particular monastery;[65] the composition of the rule itself conferred inestimable esteem.

A medieval monastery was a privileged place, a centre filled with those who sought perfection, a house that resounded with abundant prayer, a population of eager faithful awaiting the return of paradise. The monastery provided safe haven from danger, both human and diabolical. We should expect the charismatic founder of such a site to be invested with sanctity. Moreover, monastic houses generally were small, self-contained and often self-supporting economic centres that could provide food, clothing and shelter to the poor and needy; eventually the rural economic model of the monastery came to eclipse the urban-dominated system of late antiquity.[66] Hence a founder of such a site was not only a holy man but a patron, with both spiritual and temporal authority. The foundation of a monastery fulfilled both general Christian and specifically monastic virtues.

In Gaul, Columbanus first established a hermitage in the ruins of a castle in Annegray, and there lived with the small nucleus of companions who had come with him from Ireland.[67] The fame of the saint and his monastery soon spread and more monks joined the small community; the abbot sought out another location and established a more sizeable foundation a short distance away in Luxeuil, and then a third again at Fontaine, where he established a written *regula* for his monks.[68] After he was expelled from Luxeuil, Columbanus went on to found a small, short-lived community in Bregenz, and finally settled in Bobbio, where he died. St Columcille's monastic *familia* stretched even further than Columbanus's small cluster of foundations, and spanned from Derry to Durrow in Ireland and across the Irish Sea to Iona. Before leaving Ireland Columba appears to have been active in ecclesiastical politics and may

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[64] Rousseau, 'Spiritual Authority of the "Monk-Bishop"', pp. 406–7.

[65] Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani*', pp. 65–6.

[66] Prinz, 'Columbanus, the Frankish Nobility and the Territories', pp. 75–7. See also a broader discussion of the role of the monastery in Carolingian Frankia in Rosamond McKitterick, 'Town and monastery in the Carolingian period', in *The Church in Town and Countryside*, Studies in Church History 16 (Oxford: Blackwell for the Ecclesiastical History Society), pp. 93–102; see see p. 98 and n. 20 for a brief comment regarding Prinz's views (as articulated in a previous presentation).

[67] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.6.

[68] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.10.

have established some of his monasteries during this period; he then crossed the sea to found the monastery at Iona where he remained abbot until his death.[69] There are also a number of other smaller foundations that may have been founded by the saint himself, and certainly were a part of Iona's network of authority and influence.[70] Likewise, Fursa first founded a monastery in Cong, Co. Galway, then another in Cnobheresburgh in East Anglia, and after some years passed, at least one more in northern France at Lagny-sur-Marne.[71] The histories of these three well-attested saints track the movement of the saints progressively further from their native lands, all the while creating new monastic communities to do the work of God.

* * *

The tropes of Irish monastic journeys thus reveal in their design both the practicalities that promoted safe and successful ventures as well as strong traditions of religious symbolism. The *peregrinationes* of these devout and undoubtedly ambitious monks embodied both personal and communal acts. As young men they left home to seek training that would lead to their ventures across the sea; they learned the scripture, along with ascetic discipline and monastic virtues of humility and obedience. These elements and God's will enkindled a fierce desire to reject their own lands—to cross the sea permanently. As scholars, teachers and leaders of men, with their own renunciations the *peregrini* strove for self-denial, mortification, rejection of the world, and ultimately, salvation; with their active and dynamic expansion of monastic life they spread the practice of seeking perfection to new lands and populaces.

6.2 Models and Motivations: Asceticism, Monasticism, Evangelism?

From patterns of practice we turn to the role models and rubrics of behaviour that motivated these *peregrini* to leave their homeland. In terms of ideology or theology, we have already seen that Irish monks had access to the great breadth of scriptural and exegetical allegory and ideals of *peregrinatio*.[72] But more direct and practical influences and models of behaviour were also at play. To ascertain further how Irish monks envisioned *peregrinatio*, we shall explore first the exemplars to whom they looked as

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[69] See discussions of the saint's foundations in Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry*, pp. 31–2, and Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona: Life of St Columba*, pp. 28–9. He also founded Durrow (Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.3) when he was already abbot of Iona.

[70] Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry*, p. 33. On Columban churches see ibid., p. 31 and n. 76. The *Amra Choluimb Chille* 7.3 refers to Columba as the guardian of a hundred churches.

[71] *Vita Fursei*, 5–9 [Krusch, pp. 436–9]; Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.19.

[72] See chapter three.

authorities of virtue, faith and practice; the ascetic and monastic traditions of renunciation and withdrawal and how they relate to *peregrinatio*; and finally, the relationship between *peregrinatio* and evangelism.

6.2.1 *Exemplars of* Peregrinatio

Conventions and patterns of hagiography unfortunately cloud somewhat the analysis of exemplars of *peregrinatio*: as the brethren of Columbanus's monastic community at Bobbio looked back upon his life, for example, they cloaked the departure of the abbot and his twelve companions from Ireland in standard hagiographical tropes. Jonas wrote of the saint's *peregrinatio*:

> After he had been many years in the monastery he longed to go into strange lands [*peregrinationem desiderare*], in obedience to the command which the Lord gave Abraham: 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will show thee'.[73]

For Jonas, Columbanus was an imitator of Abraham, much as St Honoratus had been in the *vita* of Hilary of Arles, published over a century earlier.[74] In Jonas's time, this characterisation was becoming a commonplace in continental monastic hagiography.

Nowhere in the saint's own writings, however, does the departure of Abraham from his homeland appear as a motivating factor for the saint's *peregrinatio*; in fact, there is no reference at all in his surviving works to Genesis 12.1 or to Abraham himself. It is a curious omission, which is repeated in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*, and Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* as well—both of which depict numerous *peregrini*. For Columbanus and Adomnán especially, this may be related to the version of the Bible that circulated in early medieval Ireland; in the mixed Old Latin/Vulgate text the coherent ideal of Abraham's *peregrinatio* in the Promised Land may not yet have been so strongly stated.[75] Bede, however, had a Vulgate text.[76] Moreover, Columbanus—as well as Adomnán and certainly Bede—must have known this tradition. Columbanus

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[73] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.4 [Krusch, p. 159(7–11); Munro, p. 17]: *Peractis itaque annorum multorum in monasterio circulis, coepit peregrinationem desiderare memor illius Domini imperii ad Abraham*: '*Exi de terra tua et de cognatione tua et de domo patris tui et vade in terram, quam monstrabo tibi'*. I have changed Munro's translations slightly, replacing her 'cloister' with 'monastery' for *monasterium*.

[74] Hilary of Arles, *Sermo de Vita Honorati* 2.12. See ch. 2, p. 58.

[75] Columbanus used a mixed text with both Vulgate and Old Latin readings; his Bible text has not survived. See Walker, pp. lxvii–lxix, and 216–22.

[76] Bede's beloved abbot Ceolfrid famously had multiple pandect copies of the Vulgate made for the monasteries at Wearmouth and Jarrow, one of which survives: the Codex Amiatinus, considered by biblical scholars to be one of the more 'pure' editions of Jerome's text that may well have been compiled and edited by Bede himself. See account in Bede, *Vitae Sanctorum Abbatum* 2, PL 94:713–30 at 725A.

relied heavily upon the writings of Jerome, where the connection between Abraham and the renunciation of home and kin was explicitly and repeatedly stated—particularly in the selection of texts that Columbanus used.[77]

But we cannot consider Abraham as a figure of inspiration for Columbanus: instead, a different but equally familiar set of exemplars emerges from the abbot's works. The role models and authorities that he called upon were almost invariably archetypes of ascetic and monastic virtue. For Columbanus, monks were the embodiments of faith and the pursuit of perfection on earth. As the abbot battled over authority and tradition with the bishops of Burgundian Gaul, for example, he derided the tepid devotion of bishops and proclaimed in contrast the ardent virtue of his monks, whose exemplars of virtue were meant to put the bishops to shame. In his letter of defence to the Gallic synod of 603, Columbanus's calls upon the authority of St Jerome himself: Jerome, he writes, 'taught monks to follow the fathers who were perfect'.[78] Jerome's *Epistle* 58, to which Columbanus refers, reveals these *patres* to be the paradigmatic desert ascetics: Saints Paul, Anthony, Hilarion, and Macarius, as well as their biblical exemplars Elijah and Elisha.[79] These—along with Jerome—are the figures in whose footsteps Columbanus expected to walk.

In the introduction to the *Vita Columbani abbatis* Jonas invokes a similar group of model monks when he portrays Columbanus as the ideological descendent of St Anthony, Jerome's SS Paul and Hilarion, and St Martin, and counts himself in the tradition of these saints' hagiographers.[80] He also makes a point of mentioning that Columbanus upon arriving in Gaul visited St Martin's tomb; the importance of St Martin especially in Ireland should not be underestimated.[81] These fathers of ascetic monasticism must have held a prominent place in the Irish Christian consciousness: Martin of Tours, Paul the hermit, Anthony, and Jerome are some of the rare non-Irish individuals who appear in the pre-Patrician years of the so-called 'Dublin fragment' of

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[77] See e.g., Jerome, *Epistle* 125.20 *ad Rusticum*, *Epistle* 22.1 *ad Eustochium*, and *Epistle* 58.3 *ad Paulinam*. Columbanus appears to have known all of these letters; see citations in Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, p. 221. The saint echoes and cites a selection of Jerome's letters which specifically address monastic renunciation and practise.

[78] Columbanus, *Epistle* 2.8 [Walker, p. 20(27–8)].

[79] Jerome, *Epistle* 58.5 *ad Paulinum*.

[80] Jonas *Vita Columbani*, Praefatio 1.1 [Krusch, p. 151(13–17)]. On this reference, see Ian Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography', *Peritia* 1 (1982), pp. 63–80 at 64–5.

[81] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.22 [Krusch, pp. 200–201]. See Paul Grosjean, 'Gloria postuma S. Martini Turonensis apud Scottos et Britannos', *Analecta Bollandiana* 55 (1937), pp. 300–48; also see Sharpe, *Adomnán: Life of St Columba*, pp. 266–7 n. 379.

the Annals of Inisfallen.[82] The prominence of these particular figures as models of the monastic life has great relevance to our understanding of *peregrinatio*; for all of them left their countries and kindred to live out their lives as ascetic monks.

In terms of intellectual ancestry, Columbanus greatly admired Jerome. He cites him as an authority on orthodoxy and overall Christian and monastic behaviour, and describes him often in reverent terms.[83] He also speaks of St Martin and Pope Gregory the Great with lofty words of esteem, and also mentions Basil as an authority on salvation;[84] that his definitively stated inspirations were all monks should be considered no accident. Columbanus also used the writings of John Cassian extensively, though he never mentions him by name.[85] The focus in the abbot's own words thus is more narrowly upon the ascetic aspect of monasticism rather than the more abstract concept of a renewed Abrahamic covenant that we find in his hagiography. This emphasis upon Abraham as the archetypal *peregrinus* appears began with Jerome and spreads first on the continent;[86] it did not start to appear in Irish hagiography until some time later.[87] The role models for Columbanus himself echoes the tepid reception of Abraham as a monastic exemplar that characterised early Ireland; instead the animus of his thought lies among the great founders and leaders of monastic tradition.

6.2.2 *Irish Evangelism?*

The overwhelmingly ascetic nature of monastic *peregrinatio* leads to a final question of motivation: was evangelism a major factor in the initiation of these *peregrinationes*? The solitude and worldly renunciation that is implicit in rigorous ascetic practice might seem to make evangelism and true asceticism mutually exclusive; however, a short

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[82] The Dublin fragment was printed in MacAirt/MacNiocaill's edition of the Annals of Ulster, which is why the citations all read 'AU'. Martin of Tours: AU 4329, 4466; Paul the hermit: AU 4186, 4371; Anthony: AU 4412 (also see 531); Jerome: AU 4509. Interestingly, AU 4176 also mentions Origen. See discussion of this text in Gearóid MacNiocaill, *The Medieval Irish Annals*, Medieval Irish History Society 3 (Dublin: Dublin Historical Association, 1975); Daniel McCarthy, 'The Chronology and Sources of the Early Irish Annals', *Early Medieval Europe* 10.3 (2001), pp. 323–41.

[83] Columbanus, *Epistle* 1.5–6; 1.9; 2.7; 2.8. As did, for example, Cummian, *De controversia Paschali*, ed. and tr. Maura Walsh and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, in *Cummian's letter "De controversia Paschali"* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988), pp. 55–97; see index, pp. 255–6.

[84] Of Jerome: Columbanus, *Epistle* 1.3 [Walker, p. 2(20)], 1.5 [p. 8(8)], 1.8 [p. 10(6)]; *Epistle* 2.7 [p. 18(15)], 2.8 [p. 20(27)]. Of Martin: Columbanus, *Epistle* 2.7 [p. 18(15)]. Of Gregory: Columbanus, *Epistle* 2.8 [p. 20(26)]; *Epistle* 3.2 [p. 22(32)]. Of Basil, Columbanus, *Epistle* 2.8 [p. 20(18)].

[85] On his frequent use of Cassian, see Walker, p. xliv, xlvii, xlviii, lxii, lxviii. Columbanus may have avoided using Cassian's name—as many later writers did—due to the controversies over heresy in his works.

[86] See ch. 2, §2.1.3.

[87] E.g., the *Irish Life of Finnian* 2740 [Stokes, p. 229]; this is a ninth-century vernacular text.

statement in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* illustrates that simply living as an alien in a foreign land constituted a suitably isolated environment for a monk:

> Three thoughts occupy me, either, should I wander in the deserts, or *should I go to a foreign land where no-one knows me*, or should I shut myself up in a cell without opening the door to anyone, eating only every second day.[88]

Although living among foreigners might constitute a form of ascetic solitude, the differences between active engagement with other humans and the monastic goal of contemplative dettachment still create some difficulties.

There has been some dissent among scholars with regard to Irish evangelism. G.S.M. Walker threw down the gauntlet in his work—which has remained the standard edition for Columbanian studies—when he wrote that Columbanus was 'a missionary through circumstance, a monk by vocation'.[89] According to Walker, Columbanus was a monk first, living a life of intense focus upon renunciation and monastic discipline; his missionary activities were secondary, guided by situation rather than by vocation. Others have disagreed.[90] The debate among scholars reflects the conflicting messages in the saint's own words. In his twelfth sermon, for example, the saint appears to express an evangelistic goal; it reads,

> Lord grant me, I pray thee in the name of Jesus Christ Thy Son my God, that love which knows no fall, so that my lamp may feel the kindling touch and not be quenched, may burn for me and for others may give light.[91]

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[88] My italics. *AP Alph*, Ammonas 4 [Ward, p. 22].

[89] Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, p. xxxii. According to Walker, this was an alteration of his original wording, that Columbanus was 'a monk, not a missionary', for which he was taken to task. Recounted in G.S.M. Walker, 'St Columban: Monk or Missionary?', in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 39–44, in which Walker reaffirms his original thesis. It should be noted that this thesis had already been explored by German and French scholars, but Walker was one of the first—and certainly the most influential, given his role as editor of the saint's corpus—to do so in English. For a short but nuanced discussion of the relationship between *peregrinatio* and evangelisation see Charles-Edwards, 'Social Background', pp. 57–8 and n. 53.

[90] For some of the dissenting voices, see Prinz, 'Columbanus, the Frankish Nobility and the Territories', pp. 80–1, and Pierre Riché, 'Columbanus, his Followers and the Merovingian Church', in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. H.B. Clarke and Mary Brennan, BAR International Series 113 (Oxford: BAR, 1981), pp. 59–72 at 65: both credit Columbanian foundations with bringing missionary monasticism to Merovingian Gaul. Prinz relates this missionary zeal to Columbanus's relationship with Gregory the Great; Riché also highlights this relationship but does not connect it with a missionary impulse. Also see J.N. Hillgarth, 'Modes of evangelization of Western Europe in the seventh century', in Irland und die Christenheit: Bibelstudien und Mission, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987), pp. 308–31 at 318–21. Cf. Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani*', p. 75.

[91] Columbanus, *Sermon* 12.3 [Walker, p. 115(8–11)]: *Domine, da mihi, rogo te, in nomine Iesu Christi Filii Tui, Dei mei, illam quae nescit cadere caritatem, ut mea lucerna accendi sciat, exstingui nesciat, mihi ardeat, aliis luceat.*

But one wonders if the saint's lantern burning bright implies an active goal of turning back the darkness of paganism, or whether he is expressing a more passive objective of acting as an example of virtue and holiness. We are reminded here of Hilary of Arles's narration of the *peregrinatio* of St Honoratus, which described,

> Happy the lands, blessed the harbours, made bright by the *peregrinus* thirsting for his heavenly fatherland! ...The [*peregrini*] *uplifted the places they visited by the good things seen in themselves.*[92]

as well as Adomnán's declaration after a show of Columba of Iona's miraculous deeds:

> Let the reader reflect how great and of what nature was the venerable man, in whom almighty God made manifest to the heathen people the glory of his name through those signs of miraculous power.[93]

Columbanus's clearest words on the subject read, 'I wanted to visit the heathen in order to preach the gospel to them, but Fedolius's telling me about their lukewarmness almost drove the thought from my mind.'[94] As Ian Wood has cogently observed, 'this is not the attitude of a born missionary'.[95]

Jonas's *vita* presents a similarly conflicted sense of mission. On one hand, according to Jonas Columbanus embarked upon his first order of *peregrinatio* to flee sin and temptation; as we have seen above, his subsequent desire to peregrinate overseas appears to have been a natural consequence of a pattern of progressively increasing renunciation and monastic authority. Moreover, in his *vita* the saint was compelled not by an apostolic impulse, but by God's command to Abraham to leave his lands. The implication is one of obedience and of devotional alienation, not of evangelisation. On the other hand, the number of Columbanus's companions—twelve—implies an apostolic model for their journey; and upon their arrival in Gaul, finding a land where Columbanus and his companions could 'sow the seeds of salvation' was their first objective.[96] But even Jonas's portrayal again suggests a somewhat half-hearted ambition

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[92] My italics. Hilary of Arles, *Sermo de Vita Honorati* 2.12. For full citation and Latin text see ch. 2, n. 41.

[93] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.34 [Andersons, p. 146(82a–b)]: *Perpendat itaque lector quantus et quails idem uir uenerandus in quo deus omnipotens talibus...miraculorum uirtutibus coram plebe gentilica inlustre suum manifestauit nomen.* Adomnán also depicts St Columba preaching and converting pagans on several occasions, but even these instances are constructed somewhat passively, as if the conversions were incidental results of the saint's preaching the word of God. See e.g. Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.32; cf. ibid. 3.14.

[94] Columbanus, *Epistle* 3.5 [Walker, p. 30(10–12)]: *Mei voti fuit gentes visitare, et evangelium eis a nobis praedicari, sed Fedolio modo referente eorum teporem pene meum tulit inde animum.* On the name Fedolius, see p. 30 n. 3; Walker's hypothesis of this name has not been widely accepted.

[95] Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani*', p. 75. See also, idem, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400–1050* (London and New York: Longman, 2001), pp. 31–5.

[96] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.4 [Krusch, p. 160(18); Munro, p. 19].

to evangelise and convert. He relates that the travelling band of monks would leave any land with an obdurate populace; upon arriving in a new place, they wanted 'to inquire into the disposition of the inhabitants in order to remain longer if they found they could sow the seeds of salvation; or in case they found the hearts of the people in darkness, go on to the nearest nations'.[97] Later in Jonas's account the saint did actively evangelise at times; and there is no good reason to doubt that these episodes occurred. During his short-lived tenure in Bregenz, for example, king Theudebert promised to find an appropriate spot for Columbanus and his monks to settle, from which he intended that they could preach to neighbouring communities.[98] After the abbot and his monks had settled into their new location, Columbanus proceeded to preach and to baptize the heathens and heretics of his newly-adopted land:

> Many were converted then by the preaching of the holy man, and turning to the learning and faith of Christ, were baptized by him. Others, who were already baptized but still lived in the heathenish error, like a good shepherd, he again led by his words to the faith and into the bosom of the church.[99]

Hence the saint did engage in evangelising activities, but even in this instance he only did so at the request of the local king. In fact, up to the point of Columbanus's evangelizing in Bregenz, Jonas makes little reference to actual missionary activities, in spite of his initial, suggestive introduction of the saint's missionary goals.

The apparent contradictions of Columbanus's own tepid stance on evangelizing with the portrait that Jonas rendered are thus not irreconcilable. I would tend to agree with Walker that Columbanus was a missionary when dictated by circumstance, and not out of any particular zeal for converting the heathen. This also corresponds to episodes that we find in other saints' lives—like the excerpt from Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* noted above—in which the saints convert pagans and bring sinners back into the fold through their miraculous powers or extraordinary virtue, not through a specific intention

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[97] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.4 [Krusch, p. 160(17–20); Munro, p. 19]: *mores hominum ferventi aestu sciscitare, ut, si salus ibi serenda sit, quantisper commorare; si obduratas caligine arrogantiae mentes repperiant, ad vicinas nationes pertransire.*

[98] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.27 [Krusch, p. 211(5–15); Munro's translation of this passage, p. 86, is inexact].

[99] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.27 [Krusch, p. 214(7–12); Munro, pp. 89–90]: *Multique eorum tunc per beati viri suasum vel doctrinam ad Christi fidem conuersi, baptismum sunt consecuti; aliosque, quos iam lavacro ablutus error detinebat profanus, ad cultum euangelicae doctrinae monitis suis ut bonus pastor ecclesiae sinibus reducebat.* I have changed Munro's translation of *error* from 'unbelief' to 'error'. Also see ibid., 1.30 [Krusch, pp. 220–21; Munro, p. 98].

to evangelise.[100] The miracle is the overt act, the awe-struck conversion a secondary consequence.

The mild tenor of Irish evangelism is also echoed in the stories told by Bede of the Irish monk-bishop Aidan of Lindisfarne (†642). Initially called by king Oswald to 'establish and extend the Church of Christ throughout his kingdom',[101] Bede portrays the saint's deeds in more subdued terms. He recounts,

> Aidan taught the clergy many lessons about the conduct of their lives but above all he left them a most salutary example of abstinence and self-control; and *the best recommendation of his teaching to all was that he taught them no other way of life than that which he himself practised among his fellows.* He used to travel everywhere, in town and country, not on horseback but on foot, unless compelled by urgent necessity to do otherwise, in order that, as he walked along, whenever he saw people whether rich or poor, he might at once approach them and, if they were unbelievers, invite them to accept the mystery of the faith; or if they were believers, that he might strengthen them in faith, *urging them by word and deed* to practice almsgiving and good works.[102]

Bede paints a portrait of a gentle, charismatic holy man, who inspired others by his own example and urged people towards faith with his virtue, kindness and generosity of spirit. Bede also portrays the Irishman Fursa in a similar light:

> When he came to the kingdom of the East Angles, he was honourably received by the king and followed his usual task of preaching the gospel. Thus he converted many *both by the example of his virtues and the persuasiveness of his teaching,* turning unbelievers to Christ and confirming believers in His faith and love.[103]

From the sum of these many portraits it appears that there are two major elements that achieve evangelisation: preaching, and teaching by example.[104] The former is an active and deliberate act, though, as in the case of Fursa it often appears to be a part of the saint's regular activities and not a specific attempt to convert others to the faith; the

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[100] E.g., Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 14; Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 5.3, 13.9, 14.7; also cf. Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.17–19 esp. 1.19.

[101] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.5, 5.22.

[102] My italics. Bede, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.5 [Colgrave/Mynors, p. 227]: *Unde inter alia uiuendi documenta saluberrimum abstinentiae uel continentiae clericis exemplum reliquit; cuius doctrinam id maxime commendabat omnibus, quod non aliter quam uiuebat cum suis ipse docebat. Nihil enim huius mundi quaerere, nil amare curabat. Cuncta quae sibi a regibus uel diuitibus saeculi donabantur, mox pauperibus qui occurrerent erogare gaudebat. Discurrere per cuncta et urbana et rustica loca non equorum dorso sed pedum incessu uectus, nisi si maior forte necessitas conpulisset, solebat; quatinus, ubicumque aliquos uel diuites uel pauperes incedens aspexisset, confestim ad hos diuertens uel ad fidei suscipiendae sacramentum, si infideles essent, inuitaret uel, si fideles, in ipsa eos fide confortaret, atque ad elimosynas operumque bonorum exsecutionem et uerbis excitaret et factis.*

[103] My italics. Bede, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.19: *Qui cum ad prouinciam Orientalium peruenisset Anglorum, susceptus est honorifice a rege praefato, et solitum sibi opus euangelizandi exsequens, multos et exemplo uirtutis et incitamento sermonis uel incredulos ad Christum conuertit uel iam credentes amplius in fide atque amore Christi confirmauit.* Cf. ibid., 3.4

[104] See esp. the story of Wictbert in Bede, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.9; there is also a brief but similar description of Columba in ibid., 3.4.

latter is in effect a by-product of a holy life. In the writings of Columbanus and the lives of Irish *peregrini*, this more passive form of evangelism is a recurring theme. All of these Irish *peregrini* left their homeland, some at the request of kings, to settle and practice their lives of devotion in foreign lands. They were preachers, but more importantly they were disciplined monks and devout holy men. Much of their effect upon those around them was by their own examples of piety and spirituality. In none of these lives do we find the eschatological missionary zeal of St Patrick, for example, nor the weighty emphasis upon evangelism would impel Anglo-Saxon *peregrini* such as Willibrord (658–739)—who, interestingly, received his monastic training as a student-*peregrinus* in Ireland—to Frisia,[105] or Boniface (†754) to Germany.[106] Irish *peregrinatio* may have involved mission, but the drive to evangelise was not a primary motivator for crossing the sea in God's name.

6.3 Columbanus and an Ideology of *Peregrinatio*

Finally, let us turn to the self-definition and ideologies of a *peregrinus* himself. The writings of Columbanus provide rare examples of documents safely ascribed to an early Irish *peregrinus*. The combination of his words and his life history create our earliest three-dimensional view of the burgeoning movement of *peregrinatio ex patria* in early Ireland: Columbanus was a *peregrinus*, and also gave *peregrinatio* theological dimension in his extant works.

We proceed with the same question that we posed for St Patrick in chapter five: what did the status of *peregrinus* and the act of *peregrinatio* mean to Columbanus? The label—or title—of *peregrinus* is an important designation for the abbot; he identifies himself using this term in four of his six surviving epistles. In his letter to Pope Gregory the great, *peregrinus* is an assertion of humility;[107] in his letter to a French synod that defends his monastic practises and reckoning of Easter, it is a declaration of his spiritual authority as a monk, a subtly accusing contrast to a council of corrupt and worldly

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[105] On Willibrord, see W. Levison, 'St. Willibrord and his place in history', *Durham University Journal* (1940), pp. 23–41; Eugène Honée, 'Willibrord in recent historiography', in *Missions and Missionaries*, ed. Pieter N. Holtrop and Hugh McLeod, Studies in Church History 13 (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000), pp. 16–31.

[106] On Boniface see C.H. Talbot, 'St. Boniface and the German Mission', in *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith*, ed. G.J. Cuming, Studies in Church History 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 45–57; Christopher J. Holdsworth, 'Saint Boniface the monk', in *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on St. Boniface and the Church at Crediton*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1980), pp. 47–67; Timothy Reuter, 'Saint Boniface and Europe', in ibid., pp. 69–94.

[107] Columbanus, *Epistle* 1.4 [Walker, p. 6(6)].

bishops.[108] In a later letter to an unnamed pope, it is a label of foreign-ness, with his role as monk and ascetic implicit;[109] finally in a less-than-deferential letter addressed to Pope Boniface IV, generally addressing the Three Chapters controversy, *peregrinus* is again a rhetorical declaration of his status as an alien and an irony-filled pretence of humble ignorance.[110]

Thus when Columbanus identifies himself as *peregrinus*, he most often uses the title to claim for himself the monastic virtues and spiritual authority of an ascetic monk. As a monk, he asserts himself as one of those who in order to be perfect take up the cross and follow Christ, and like Christ, are crucified to the world.[111] But the saint's ideal of *peregrinatio* extends further than the implicit ascetic connotations that the word carried. Columbanus's ideas were also shaped by a concept of Christian alienation similar to that voiced by the fathers of the Church: Jerome, Augustine, John Cassian, and also the saint's own contemporary, Gregory the Great.[112] His sermons in particular show the lineage of his thought. In his fourth sermon, the Columbanus writes,

> Observe the sorrow of our training, understand that we do not pass from joy to joy nor from security to security, but from grief to joy and from trial to security. Thus we must patiently bear brief sorrow, that we may obtain eternal joy; and the light measure of our trial must be endured with readiness, that we may attain the eternal life of great glory.... For though we are filled with the sorrows of the present woes, though we are saddened by the repetition of our sins, yet victory over both is free rejoicing and a sterling joy; and though for a time we are on pilgrimage from the Lord [*pro tempore peregrinamur a Domino*], that as reward for a brief period's warfare we should be crowned for ever, we ought not to be over-sad, knowing that we shall soon go to Him, and with Him ever dwell.[113]

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[108] Columbanus, *Epistle* 2.6 [Walker, p. 16(27)].

[109] Columbanus, *Epistle* 3.2 [Walker, p. 24(16)].

[110] Columbanus, *Epistle* 5.1 [Walker, p. 36(19)]; 5.2 [Walker, p. 36(29)]; 5.14, [Walker, p. 52(31)].

[111] Columbanus, *Regula Monachorum* 4 [Walker, p. 126(12–16)].

[112] Columbanus certainly knew a broad range of Jerome's works. It is also probable that Columbanus knew the writings of both Augustine and Gregory. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, p. lxviii, notes 'slight touches' of Augustine in his works; Columbanus certainly knew Gregory's *Regula Pastoralis*, as he refers to it in his *Epistle* 1. Since Columbanus outlived Gregory by over a decade, it would be reasonable to assume that he knew an even larger corpus of Gregory's works than just the *Regula Pastoralis*. On Jerome's influence on Columbanus's writings, see Walker, p. lxviii.

[113] Columbanus, *Sermon* 4.3 [Walker, p. 82(8–32)]: *Vide merorem disciplinae nostra, intellege quod non de laetitia ad laetitiam neque de securitate ad securitatem, sed de luctu ad laetitiam ac de tribulatione ad securitatem transitur. Patienter ergo tolerandus est brevis meror, ut aeterna acquiratur laetitia; et 'leve tribulationis nostrae cum alacritate sustinendum est, ut aeternam immensae gloriae vitam apprehendamus'.... Licet enim praesentium miseriarum meroribus repleamur, licet peccatorum nostrorum frequentia tristificemur, victoria tamen utrorumque liberalis laetitia et nobile gaudium est; et licet pro tempore 'peregrinemur a Domino' ut pro brevis temporis bello in aeternum coronemur, nimium tristes esse non debemus, scientes mox esse ad eum nos ituros, et cum eo semper mansuros.* Also see Columbanus, *Sermon* 8.2 [Walker, p. 96(15–18)].

For Columbanus, the monastic vocation embraces the suffering of human life; the period of *peregrinatio* away from the Lord is a time of great woe, and of spiritual warfare against sin and the devil. To express the sorrowful existence of his monks on earth as they await entry into Heaven, the saint crafts his ideal around the same passage from 2 Corinthians 5 invoked so often by the Latin fathers.[114]

The image of the arduous journey of life—the 'traveller metaphor' that we encountered in chapter one—also held a great deal of significance for Columbanus; he uses it frequently, especially in his sermons that exhort his monks to virtue.[115] In his *Sermon* 8 the metaphor is most fully explored; it is worth quoting this text *in extenso*:

> Now, you see, we must speak of the end of the way; for we have already said that human life is a roadway.... It is for travellers to hasten to their homeland, likewise their part is anxiety upon the roadway, and in their homeland, peace. Then let us, who are on the way, hasten home.... Our first duty is to love nothing here; but let us place our affections above, our desires above, our wisdom above, and above let us seek our home; for the fatherland is there where our Father is. Thus we have no home on earth, since our Father is in heaven.... Then, lest we be concerned with human things, let us concern ourselves with things divine, and as pilgrims [*peregrini*] ever sigh for and desire our homeland; for the end of the road is ever the object of travellers' hopes and desires, and thus, since we are travellers and pilgrims in the world [*sumus mundi viatores et peregrini*], let us ever ponder on the end of the road, that is of our life, for the end of our roadway is our home.... Let us not love the roadway rather than the homeland, lest we lose our eternal home, for we have such a home that we ought to love it. Therefore let this principle abide with us, that on the road we so live as travellers, as pilgrims, as guests of the world [*ut sic vivamus in via ut viatores, ut peregrini, ut hospites mundi*], entangled by no lusts, longing with no earthly desires, but let us fill our minds with heavenly and spiritual impressions.... Let us know that though we are strangers from the Lord while we remain in the body [*peregrinos a Domino quam sumus in corpore*], yet we are present to the eyes of God. Hence spurning all wickedness, and laying aside all sloth, let us strive to please Him Who is everywhere present, that with a good conscience we may happily pass over from the roadway of this age to the blessed and eternal homeland of our eternal Father, from present things to things absent, from mournful things to things of joy, from transitory things to things eternal, from earthly things to heavenly, from the sphere of death to that of the living, where we shall see heavenly things face to face, and the Ruler of rulers...our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is glory unto ages of ages. Amen.[116]

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[114] On Augustine's use of this passage, see M.A. Claussen, '*Peregrinatio* and *Peregrini* in Augustine's *City of God*', *Traditio* 46 (1991), pp. 33–76 at 41; for Jerome, see e.g. *Epistle* 39.3 *ad Paulam*; *Epistle* 108.1 *ad Eustochium*; cf. *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.37; for Gregory, see *Moralia in Job* 18.30.48 (PL 76:63B), 23.20.41 (PL 76:276B). See discussion in ch. 1, §1.2.5.

[115] See Columbanus, *Sermon* 9.1 [Walker, pp. 96(30)–98(8)]; 5.1 [Walker, p. 84(12–23)]; 5.2 [Walker, pp. 84(28)–86(3)]; 6.1 [Walker, p. 86(19–22)]; *Epistle* 4.6 [Walker, p. 32 (30–35)]. On the foreignness of world see Columbanus, *Sermon* 3.4 [Walker, p. 78(8–9)]; 6.1 [Walker, p. 86(22)]; 10.3 [Walker, p. 102(33–4)].

[116] Columbanus, *Sermon* 8.1–2 [Walker, pp. 94(1)–96(25)]: *Ecce nunc de fine viae dicendum est; iam enim diximus viam esse humanam vitam.... Viatorum est festinare ad patriam, eorum similiter est in via sollicitudo, in patria securitas. Festinemus ergo ad patriam, qui in via sumus.... Primum nobis est nihil hic amare; sed susum amemus, susum desideremus, susum sapiamus, susum quaeramus patriam; ibi enim*

The concepts of Christian homelessness and the journey of human life deeply imbue the abbot's words to his monks. The sense of alienation and separation was for Columbanus an intrinsic element of the monastic vocation; he interweaves the images of the human life as a peregrination from the Lord and of the dangerous journey upon the roadway of life with specifically monastic themes of ascetic virtue and the renunciation of earthly vices.

The saint's articulations of these abstract ideals of *peregrinatio* demonstrate the influence of late antique representations of this complex concept among Irish *peregrini* of the sixth century. But Columbanus's scriptural ideals and homiletic imagery do not fully explain the saint's concept of *peregrinatio*. For Columbanus and so many other Irish *peregrini*, the scriptural and exegetical metaphors of earthly alienation were not sufficient; just as it had for the ascetic monks of the East and their counterparts in the West whom we met in chapter two, the ideal of earthly renunciation took literal form in the actual abandonment of kin and country. Given the broader context of his repeated self-identification as a *peregrinus* and his descriptions of his brethren as his *comperegrini*, when the saint employs the image of the *peregrinus* travelling upon the *via vitae*, there can be little doubt that the *peregrinus* was invested with a dual meaning. With a repeating vocabulary of words and images the saint relates his own and his monks' *peregrinationes*—that is, their actual, physical abandonment of their homelands—to the allegorical imagery of 2 Corinthians 5 and the metaphorical image of the traveller. As Columbanus preached to his brethren about their journey down the roadway of this world's existence, their status as *peregrini* expresses both their standing as devotional exiles in Gaul, and their existence as aliens on earth and in the flesh.

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patria ubi Pater noster est. Patriam ergo non habemus in terra, quia 'Pater noster in caelis' est.... Occupemus itaque nos divinis, ne forte humanis, et quasi peregrini semper patriam suspiremus, semper patriam desideremus; finis enim viae semper viatoribus optabilis et desiderabilis est, et ideo quia sumus mundi viatores et peregrini, de fine viae, id est, vitae nostrae semper cogitemus, viae enim finis nostrae patria nostra est.... Non plus viam nos quam patriam diligamus, ne aeternam patriam perdamus; talem enim habemus patriam, quam amare debemus. Duret igitur apud nos ista definitio, ut sic vivamus in via ut viatores, ut peregrini, ut hospites mundi, nullis haerentes cupiditatibus, nullis terrenis inhiantes desideriis.... [S]ciamus nos licet 'peregrinos a Domino quamdiu sumus in corpore', praesentes tamen esse oculis Dei. Quapropter omni ignavia calcata, et omni deposito tepore, nitamur ei qui ubique praesens est placere, ut cum bona conscientia de via huius saeculi ad beatam patriam nostri Patris aeternam aeterni transire feliciter possimus, de praesentibus ad absentia, de tristibus ad laeta, de caducis ad aeterna, de terrenis ad caelestia, de regione mortis ad regionem vivorum, ubi facie ad faciem caelestia videbimus, et Regem regum recto regimine regna regentem Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, cui gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen. Also cf. *Antiphonary of Bangor*, fol. 10r: *Inluminare hiis qui in tenebris et umbra mortis sedent ad dirigendos pedes nostros in uiam pacis.*

For Columbanus and his *comperegrini*, the renunciation of their homeland was an outward manifestation of a spiritual ideal; these intrepid monks embraced the metaphor of earthly alienation and made it real. Declarations such as that of Jerome in his famous letter to Paulinus of Nola must have resonated with Columbanus—who knew this epistle—and other Irish monks who wished to undertake a true and complete renunciation of fleshly ties. 'As for you', Jerome wrote to Paulinus,

> when you hear the Saviour's counsel: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come follow me,' *you translate his words into action*....[117]

It was as an ascetic and as a monk that Paulinus forged the words of the Gospel into concrete reality. Perhaps an even more important model of a monk literally following the mandates of Christ, St Anthony, upon hearing the words of Matt 19.21 read out in church—'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all thou hast and give it to the poor, and come, follow me. And you will have treasure in heaven'—he 'applied the Lord's commandment to himself'.[118]

Columbanus, too, saw his and his monks' *peregrinationes* as a fulfilment of the commands of scripture. In an epistle directed to a Gallic synod of local bishops who wished to expel the often troublesome abbot—generally agreed to have been the council of Chalon (603)[119]—the abbot defends himself, his brethren and their Irish traditions and practises. After a long description of the sober virtues and traditions of his community, in which he names himself a *peregrinus*, Columbanus declares,

> *For these are our canons, the commands of the Lord and the apostles,* in these our confidence is placed; these are our weapons, shield and sword, these are our defence; *these brought us from our native land*....[120]

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[117] My italics. Jerome, *Epistle* 58.2 *ad Paulinum*: *Denique et tu, audita sententia Salvatoris: 'Si vis perfectus esse, vade, et vende omnia quae habes, et da pauperibus, et veni sequere me' (Matth. 19. 21); verba vertis in opera.* Columbanus quotes this letter in his *Epistle* 2, and also echoes it in his *Regula Monachorum* 2 [Walker, p. 124(21)]. Also cf. *Regula Monachorum* 4 [Walker, p. 126(12–16)].

[118] Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 2.

[119] Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, p. xxxvi and n. 3. On this incident see Stancliffe, 'Jonas's *Life of Columbanus*', pp. 201–2. Also see Krusch, pp. 11–12.

[120] My italics. Columbanus, *Epistle* 2.6 [Walker, pp. 16(36)–17(1)]: *Hi sunt enim nostri canones, dominica et apostolica mandata, in his fides nostra est; haec arma, scutum et gladius, haec apologia;* haec nos moverunt de patria. I have altered Walker's translation slightly, replacing 'rules' with 'canons' for *canones*. 'Rules' can easily be misunderstood to mean monastic *regulae*. For a similar use of *canones* for scripture, see *Paenitentialis Cummeani*, prologue 14 [Bieler, p. 110(15)]; cf. *Bethu Phátraic* (= Tripartite Life) [Mulchrone, p. 16].

For *canones* as Scripture, see also Columbanus, *Epistle* 5.3 [Walker, p. 38(22)]; idem, *Epistle* 2.5 [p. 14(26–8)]; idem, *Sermon* 10.1 [p. 100(21)]. Cf. some of his uses of *regula*, which more specifically refers to the monastic rule: *Epistle* 3.2 [Walker, p. 24(20)]; *Epistle* 4.3 [p. 28(4)], 4.4 [p. 28(36)]; *Penitential* 11 [p. 170(23)]; *Regula Monachorum* 9 [p. 138(5)].

The abbot goes on to depict monks (rather than bishops) as the consummate executors of the Bible's mandates.[121] The rule of scripture as manifested in monastic devotion compelled the abbot and his *comperegrini* to leave Ireland. They like Paulinus and Anthony had translated God's words into action: their adherence to the commands of the Bible was *peregrinatio*.

Thus as we envision the ideological underpinnings of a *peregrinatio* from Ireland, it is not simply an act born of extreme devotion; it is a complex mixture of Christian scripture, allegory and exegesis blended with monastic/ascetic traditions, and supported and encouraged—as we saw in Part II—by many elements of Irish social structure and culture. As has been noted, there is some agreement among scholars that Columbanus was well-educated in Ireland and would have encountered the majority of the sources of his thought there,[122] this strongly suggests that such rhetoric would have influenced and motivated the separation from country and kin that defined Irish *peregrini* in the early Middle Ages. With Columbanus as our model, we can reasonably presume that the learned Irish monks who set off on *peregrinationes* were fully aware of the rich history of the concept of *peregrinatio*, and that this comprised an distinct ideology that supported and compelled acts of Irish pilgrimage.

6.7 Patterns and Themes of Irish *Peregrinatio*

From the careers of three fairly well-documented saints, the contours of one prominent form of *peregrinatio* have emerged. There are standard hagiographical tropes that were undoubtedly grounded in fact: a young, talented Christian seeks out advancing levels of education in scripture and exegetical thought—preferably from a famous scholar and theologian—while progressing ever further from home. After sufficient training and the development of monastic virtue, the young saint is consumed by a desire to abandon his country permanently. He obtains the permission of his abbot, gathers a group of companions—perhaps twelve of them—and embarks upon his lifelong journey. (He is thirty years old, possibly thirty-three, definitely a grown adult.) He crosses the sea just as he had first crossed over the threshold of his parental home, and departs for lands

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[121] Columbanus, *Epistle* 2.8 [Walker, pp. 20–21].

[122] Bullough, 'Career of Columbanus', pp. 6–7; also see Ian Wood, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography', *Peritia* 1 (1982), pp. 63–80 at 72; Christine Mohrmann, 'The earliest continental Irish Latin', *Vigiliae Christianae* 16 (1962), pp. 216–33, esp. 227–8; Friedrich Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich: Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung (4. bis 8. Jahrhundert)* (Munich and Vienna: R. Oldenbourg, 1965), pp. 485–7.

unknown. When he reaches a foreign land, he establishes a monastic community, or perhaps multiple *coenobia*, and a defined rule.

Pilgrimage as Columbanus and his fellow Irish *peregrini* practised it was not only ascetic, but decidedly monastic, that is, an integral part of the increasingly defined structures and patterns of communal monasticism. By Columbanus' era *peregrinatio* was already well-defined and structured as a devotional practise, and the *peregrinus* had become a part of the complex hierarchy of early Irish Christianity. It was not particularly infused with missionary fervour, though evangelism was often an ancillary element of life in *peregrinatio*. The *peregrinus* sought his own salvation and that of his monastic charges in foreign lands through the rigours of ascetic self-denial and the structures of communal monastic life. Columbanus also understood *peregrinatio* to be the state of existence and an allegorical understanding of human life on earth. The stories of Columbanus, Columcille, Fursa, as well as other *peregrini* both named and unnamed, reflects this synergistic combination of elements—the biblical and allegorical concepts of *peregrinatio*, an impulse to asceticism, the tenets of communal monasticism, the growing institutionalisation of penitential exile in a Christian context, and the evolution of social structures to accommodate such a devotional act—which gave rise to the popularity of *peregrinatio*, especially in Ireland. As we have seen, *peregrinatio* was not simply an abstract way of interpreting the relationship of humankind to God; it was also an extreme form of devotion—a physical exile from a monk's native land—and a tangible part of life on earth.

But this paradigm of *peregrinatio*—of a monastic trajectory that culminated in the foundation of new monasteries—belonged to a finite period of time. Columbanus was a fairly late example of the practise; we are fortunate to have his evidence, as it sheds light upon the greatly romanticised 'Age of the Saints' and confirms some of the patterns given in otherwise unreliable sources. The patterns of pilgrimage underwent certain changes, however, as the 'Age of Saints' gave way to a period with far fewer heroic founders and more rank-and-file renunciants who the followed paths already cut through the wildernesses of Ireland and the continent.[123] The act inevitably lost some of its implicit heroism and sense of the unknown; correspondingly, the stories of later *peregrini* have not been recorded, though their presence in continental and British monasteries is well-attested through the dissemination of Irish script and texts

[123] In AU, for example, no new monastic foundations are recorded between the years of 673 and 810.

throughout a good deal of western Europe. We can only postulate that esteem for the adventurer-saints mythologised in Irish and continental hagiography—and the records and stories of them preserved in their own foundations—still impelled this form of Irish *peregrinatio* throughout the early Middle Ages.

Chapter 7 Hermits, Anchorites and *Deoraid Dé*

Not all of the *monachi* who journeyed in the name of Christ were the eminent saints and founders of monasteries whom we met in chapter six. Other less illustrious monks also renounced their homelands and went overseas, but did not have biographers and hagiographers to write about their lives. Many of these were Irish hermits and anchorites who sought salvation in the separation from their earthly bonds and the isolation of remote locales. We meet them as incidental figures in saints' lives and in chronicles, often nameless, at various stages of their journeys; we encounter them briefly recorded in annals, or invoked in the liturgy or prayers of those who stayed at home; and we find the physical signs of their presence in numerous sites in Ireland and on countless islands both small and large, nearby and far away, in the seas surrounding Ireland and Britain.

These figures create some difficulty in an analysis of *peregrinatio*. In modern studies of Celtic pilgrimage and spirituality they are unhesitatingly labelled *peregrini*; indeed, from our modern perspective a holy anchorite fits seamlessly into the pattern of ascetic *peregrinatio*. But a pattern of references throughout Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* adds an interesting slant to this discussion: the reader meets numerous travelling monks in the pages of this *vita*, among them pious would-be anchorites and hermits such as Cormac Ua Liatháin, who landed on Iona in the course of his voyages 'to seek a desert in the ocean'.[1] These monks, interestingly, are never named *peregrini*, nor are their voyages labelled *peregrinationes*, although their form and expression are decidedly ascetic. If Adomnán, one of our main commentators for this period, does not refer to these figures or their renunciations using a vocabulary of *peregrinatio*, we must ask whether they would have in fact considered themselves—or called themselves—*peregrini*. This chapter surveys the existing evidence of these devotional travellers to ascertain to the extent that is possible the motivations of these monks, their expectations and goals for their journeys, and how they might have defined themselves in relation to the traditions of penance and *peregrinatio* that had evolved in early Christian Ireland. We will consider several types of solitary—those attached to

[1] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.42 [Andersons, p. 440(94b)]: *herimum in ociano quaerere*.

monasteries as well as those in search of a place of retreat in 'the limitless ocean'[2]—and will explore how the Irish envisioned the 'desert', the uninhabited places where one could find true isolation.

7.1 'Island Soldiers'

Adomnán is our chief early textual witness to this form of devotional renunciation. As has been noted, he does not name the solitaries who appear in his works *peregrini*, but he does give some idea of the shape and pattern of their quests. In the *Vita Columbae* we read of Cormac Ua Liatháin, who three times sought a *heremus in ociano*, 'a desert in the ocean',[3] and one Báitán who also set out for a *heremus in mari*.[4] Adomnán's portrayal of Cormac's and Báitán's quests for a *heremus* is a clear reference to the monastic retreats of the early ascetic desert fathers. 'Desert' in ancient texts was not the climatic and geographical distinction that it represents today, but instead described an uninhabited land; the Latin *(h)eremus* comes from the Greek *eremos*, the opposite of the *oikoumene*, or the known and inhabited world. The early desert monks withdrew from their cities into the solitude of deserted lands, where demons were believed to live. On the continent the 'deserts' were the thickly-forested mountain regions, such as the one where Columbanus founded his monasteries; among many devout Irish, the place to seek an ascetic retreat lay in the middle of the sea.

Adomnán mentions Cormac repeatedly: he appears to have been a figure of some importance, and is fairly well-attested in other sources.[5] In the first instance we read that Cormac was 'a holy man who sought with great labour not less than three times a desert in the ocean, and yet found none'. The account of his first attempt is brief and gives little detail, only recording that his failure to find his desert retreat was due to the presence of a monk who had left his monastery without his abbot's consent.[6] This prohibition of a monk departing without his abbot's permission can be found in continental and Irish texts from a very early date;[7] implicit in this vignette is the idea

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[2] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.42 [Andersons, p. 166(94b–95a)]: *per infinitum ocianum*.

[3] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.6 [Andersons, pp. 28–9(17a–b)]; also see ibid., 2.42.

[4] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.20 [Andersons, p. 46(25b–26a)].

[5] For a brief listing see Sharpe, *Life of St Columba*, pp. 341–2, n. 323.

[6] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.6 [Andersons, pp. 28–30(17a–b)]: *Uir[us] utique sanct[us], qui tribus non minus uicibus herimum in ociano laboriosae quaesiuit, nec tamen inuenit...; et non ob aliam eius culpam nisi quod alicuius relegiosi abbatis monacum ipso non permittente discessorem secum non recte comitari nauigio susciperit.*

[7] See, e.g., *Synodus epicoporum* 34 [Bieler, p. 58(34)].

that the voyagers who would reach such a destination must be unblemished by sin. In Adomnan's account of Cormac's second and third attempts he switches to a more dramatic narrative style to relate the difficulties and dangers of the monk's journey, both from the sea and from those inhabitants whom the monks might come across in the course of their quest. On his second attempt, Cormac 'sailed away from the land, with full sails, over the limitless ocean' but to his misfortune tried 'to find a desert place in the sea that cannot be crossed'.[8] His party landed in the Orkneys, where they would have been killed by the local king if not for the intervention of St Columcille. Then on Cormac's third attempt, he faced even more dire perils. He sailed on a straight course away from land for fourteen days: as Adomnán recounts, 'such a voyage appeared to be beyond the range of human exploration, and one from which there could be no return'.[9] On the fourteenth day, the tale continues, out of the sea arose monstrous and terrifying creatures. The sea monsters attacked the boat and damaged the oars; the voyagers were only saved once again by the prayers of Columcille, who clairvoyantly knew of their plight and instructed his monks to pray for the safety of the seafarers. Though dramatised for effect, the stories of Cormac reveal the pattern of a devotional voyage of a *Christi miles* 'soldier of Christ', who set off into the unknown to face the dangers of the perilous and unpredictable seas. Less detailed and dramatic is Adomnán's account of Báitán:

> A man Báitán, by family a descendant of nia Taloirc, asked to be blessed by the saint upon going to seek with the others a desert place in the sea.... This same Báitán, after long circuitous voyaging through windy seas, having found no desert place, returned to his country....[10]

Though both of these are characters set in the context of fictionalised miracle stories, the practice that Adomnán describes is corroborated by multiple sources of textual evidence as well as material culture, as is discussed below.

A rather unique aspect of Irish eremiticism becomes clear from these tales: though a monk might set out in search of a solitary retreat, he was not sure to find one. These unsuccessful quests became a frequent motif in Irish literary and hagiographical renditions of monastic voyages; outside of hagiography the possibility of such an

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[8] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.42 [Andersons, p. 166(94b–95a)]: *a terries per infinitum ocianum plenis enauigauit uelis...; desertum in pilago intransmeabili inuenire obtantes.*

[9] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.42 [Andersons, p. 168(96a–b)]: *eiusmodi nauigatio ultra humani excursus modum et inremeabilis uidebatur.*

[10] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.20 [Andersons, p. 46(25b–26a)]: *quidam Baitanus, gente nepos niath Taloirc, benedici á sancto petiuit, cum ceteris in mari herimum quaesiturus.... Idem itaque Baitanus post longos per uentosa cicuitus equora herimo non reperta ad patriam reuersus....*

eventuality also rings true. The exigencies of navigation and sea-travel altered the model of monastic retreat to include the possibility of failure, one that sometimes reflected upon the perceived virtue of the undertaking itself. That is, if a monk set out for a retreat in the sea and failed to find an appropriate site, the mission itself may have been flawed through sin, as was Cormac's first journey with a disobedient monk. In addition, by setting their goals in the middle of the sea, would-be Irish solitaries gave a new dimension to their monastic *anachoresis*. The voyage to find a retreat was dangerous and uncertain, with no guarantee of reaching the sought-after 'desert'. Commensurately the focal point of such a withdrawal shifts to the perilous journey itself rather than the battles in the desert: for Irish monks the battle was not so much with the demons and devils who resided in empty, uninhabited landscapes as it had been for the desert fathers, but with the dangers of the voyage to arrive there. Adomnán repeatedly highlights the mysterious and perilous nature of the sea—calling it *ocianus infinitus*, *pilagus intransmeabilus*, *ultra humani excursus modum*—and dramatises the lonely journey of the monks into the unknown, as they sailed on a straight course away from land and safety. Indeed, the crossing of the sea itself, already a cultural and linguistic boundary, became the test for the virtue of aspiring solitaries.

As island-dwellers, the Irish romanticised the sea in numerous ways; it symbolised unknown dangers, an uncontrollable and potentially deadly force of nature. We have seen in earlier chapters that the crossing of the sea was the defining act of a *potior peregrinatio*, a more extreme and thus virtuous form of renunciation than a similar act within the island of Ireland. Aside from the religious symbolism that was clearly at work in these stories, the sea was quite literally a place of great danger; this element of physical peril infuses Irish depictions of sea-travel. For example, in the very early poem *Audiutor laborantium*, plausibly attributed to St Columba himself, the poet uses a seafaring version of the traveller metaphor in his praise of God and pleads for the strength to endure the tribulations of life and to reach Paradise. He portrays the dangers of earthly existence as a sea journey, emphasising the threatening nature of the sea:

> I beg that me, a little man
> trembling and most wretched,
> rowing through the infinite storm of this age,
> Christ may draw after Him to the lofty
> most beautiful haven of life.[11]

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[11] 'Adiutor laborantium' 16–22, ed. and trans. T.O. Clancy and Gilbert Márkus, *Iona: the Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), pp. 72–3: *Precor ut me*

Another seventh-century poem, quoted in part in previous chapters, also captures the wildness of the sea-crossing that St Columba undertook to found his monastery in Iona:

> In scores of curraghs with an army of wretches he crossed the long-haired sea.
> He crossed the wave-strewn wild region, foam-flecked, seal-filled,
> Savage, bounding, seething, white-tipped, pleasing, doleful.[12]

Such imagery is commonplace across nearly every genre of Irish literature. The dangers of the protean sea, though dramatically embellished, appear particularly often in the tales of seafaring saints.[13] In spite of literary exaggeration it remains that the sea formed a physical boundary around Ireland, which, when crossed, exposed the voyager to certain danger. The quest for 'deserts in the ocean' was one that required a great deal of physical courage.

This additional aspect of the many challenges involved in an overseas renunciation imbued Irish eremiticism with elements of death-defying bravery as well as unshakeable faith in God to carry the traveller through peril. This may help to explain some of the tendency to romanticise such figures in Christian Ireland; they were not only extraordinary figures of faith but also fit a model of mythological heroism that must have appealed to the Irish imagination. Unlike the desert fathers whose requisite qualities were self-discipline, strength of character, and great faith in God, the Irish experience of overseas eremitic withdrawal added a large measure of danger and adventure.

7.2 The Desert in the Sea

Many aspiring hermits and *Christi milites* of Ireland set out with a clear goal: to find an island retreat in the middle of the ocean. The conceptual affinities of such an island with eremitic monasticism are obvious: it would provide isolation and separation from civilisation with its fleshly comforts and conveniences. Moreover, as we have seen, the journey to reach such a place was filled with danger; the successful attainment of an island retreat would have been seen as a measure of God's approval over the renunciants and their voyage. The Irish predilection for islands as the sites for monastic retreats is not without precedent: St Honoratus, whom we met briefly in Part I, first

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homunculum / Quassatum ac miserrimum / Remigantem per tumultum / Saeculi istius infinitum / Trahat post se ad supernum / Vitae portum pulcherrimum / Xristus.

[12] 'Tiughraind Bhécáin', 4–5: ed. and trans. Clancy and Márkus, *Iona: the Earliest Poetry*, pp. 146–7: *fichtib curach cechaing trichait troich[-ch]ét ciabat / Cechaing tonnaig, tresaig magain, mongaig, rónaig, / roluind mbedcaig, mbruichrich, mbarrfind, failed, mbrónaig.*

[13] The most colourful example is the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, discussed in more detail in ch. 9, §9.2.

intending to find solitude after the model of the desert fathers, established one of the most important late antique/early medieval ascetic centres on the island of Lérins off the coast of southern France (now called Île Saint-Honorat). Eucherius of Lyons, a sometime resident and monk of Lérins also sought further eremitic isolation on the smaller nearby island of Sainte-Marguerite. But nowhere do we find the same intensity of focus upon island monastic retreats as we do in Ireland. Moreover, the journey over the calm waters of the Mediterranean to easily navigable—indeed, probably clearly visible—islands cannot have posed the same sort of challenge as the sea-journeys northward from Ireland out into unknown, previously unnavigated icy waters, such as those of Cormac Ua Liatháin.[14]

The perceived claim that Irish hermits and anchorites had over islands is implicit in a vignette in the *Vita Prima S. Brigitae*. In this story an anchorite settled on an island, and soon a layman and his family moved onto the island as well. The anchorite asked the layman to leave, but to no avail: the layman had inherited land on the island and thus had a rightful legal claim to be there. But in close succession two miracles happened, helped by the intercession of St Brigit: first the couple's baby was stolen by an eagle, who deposited it on a beach (somewhere off the island, one must suppose); and second, the layman himself was carried off the island by a violent wind. Pierced by compunction after these miracles, the layman vowed never to come to the island again without the holy man's permission. In essence, though the island might have been owned legally by the layman, God's signs made clear that it should belong to the holy anchorite.

Islands appear constantly in early Irish monastic discourse, populated with monks, teachers and solitaries. St Ailbe in a *vita* roughly contemporary with Adomnán's desired to sail to an island called Tele—possibly identified with the island of Thule mentioned by Dicuil—but was forbidden by the local king; in his stead he sent a company of his best monks.[15] On some of the islands visited by St Brendan and his crew in the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, he finds Irish and other solitaries who had been

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[14] Jonathan M. Wooding, 'Monastic Voyaging in the *Nauigatio*', in *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature*, ed. Jonathan M. Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), pp. 226–45 at 232–7, notes the tendency of hagiographical voyages to be into the Atlantic and to the north and north-west of Ireland.

[15] *Vita S. Albei* 29 [Heist, *VSH*, p. 129]. On the date of this *vita* see ch. 3, n. 114. On Thule, see a brief account in Wooding, 'Monastic Voyaging and the *Navigatio*', pp. 241–4; Dicuil, *De mensura orbis terrae* 7–13 [Tierney, pp. 74–5].

living lives of ascetic withdrawal for many years.[16] The *vita* of St Énda, a relatively late text that is certainly based upon earlier traditions, tells of a great monastery school founded by the saint in the Arran Islands; while there are no reliable records corroborating the existence of the saint, there are early monastic ruins on Arranmore.[17]

That the literary motif of the island retreat reflected actual practice is demonstrated in numerous corroborating textual and material sources. It should be considered no accident that Columcille's primary foundation was on the island of Iona; Adomnán's testimony also mentions daughter houses on other surrounding islands.[18] On many of the small islands surrounding Ireland or even in large inland lakes, archaeological remains of monastic activity can be found. Unfortunately, few of these sites have been subject to full archaeological analyses, but the many early medieval textual references to island monasteries and hermitages on the islands of Ireland and Britain suggest that early dates will be assigned to many of these sites once they are fully investigated. One must only survey the many entries in Gwynn and Hadcock's magisterial study of medieval religious houses to find a listing of numerous early monastic sites situated on islands.[19] A fine example of an isolated and uninviting island landscape colonised by medieval monks is the small wind-swept monastery and hermitage on Skellig Michéal, off the coast of the Dingle peninsula on the southwest coast of Ireland. A craggy and jagged pyramidal rock juts out of the ocean; on a tiny sheltered flat lie the ruins of a small medieval monastery that has been roughly dated to the ninth century.[20] The island is not particularly far from land, and is visible from the coast in good weather; but the seas in between are rough and uncrossable for much of the year. Such a site would have been an apposite retreat for devout ascetics. Furthermore, as we might imagine from the stories of Cormac Ua Liatháin, many island retreats lay much further away from the Ireland than Skellig Michael or the other Irish

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[16] *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, chs. 13, 26.

[17] *Vita Endei*, ed. Plummer, *VSH* 2:60–75. On this text see Plummer, *VSH* 1:lxii–lxiv; Kenney, *Sources*, no. 164, p. 374. The legend of Enda was known as early as the eighth century: St Brendan visits Enda on an unnamed island in *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, ch. 3.

[18] See esp. references to Hinba, which is specifically called an island, e.g., Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.21, 1.45; also Tiree in ibid. 1.19, 2.15, 2.39.

[19] Aubrey Gwynn and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: Ireland* (London: Longman, 1970), pp. 386–8, list thirty-one early sites with the prefix *Inis-*, *Inish-*, *Innis-*, *Inch-*; also see pp. 37–8, 433–5. This is the largest block of sites in the listing, but there are numerous others, e.g., St. Patrick's Island, Scattery Island, Dair-inis, the various Church Islands, etc.

[20] On the date of the monastic site see Walter Horn, Jenny White Marshall, and Grellan D. Rourke, *The Forgotten Hermitage of Skellig Michael* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 71–83.

sites. Dicuil, writing in the early ninth century, for example, wrote of hermitages apparently in the Faroe Islands that had been settled by Irishmen for almost a century:

> There is another small set of islands, nearly all separated by narrow stretches of water; in these for nearly a hundred years hermits sailing from our country, Ireland, have lived; but just as they were always deserted from the beginning of the world, so now because of the Northmen pirates they are emptied of anchorites and filled with countless sheep and very many different kinds of seabirds.[21]

Irish renunciants travelled far and wide to find desert retreats in the ocean; they sought to perform their devotions and achieve redemption and salvation in the solitude of deserted islands.

Islands thus provided an environment that fostered a combination of ascetic spiritual goals. To reach them one must leave the mainland and cross the sea, the boundary that divided Ireland from the rest of the world, with all of the implicit dangers and arduous labours of such a journey. An island provided isolation from other humans, and often an inhospitable landscape that in itself imposed the challenges of ascetic existence. These environments of trials and toil appealed deeply to many devout Irish Christians. Hence the 'island soldiers' of Ireland were not merely literary heroes who appeared in the pages of hagiography and later adventure tales. Physical and textual evidence reveal the presence of these elusive figures across many of the islands in the seas surrounding Ireland. Though much of the archaeological evidence remains to be studied in detail and safely dated, we can be certain that unlike Cormac Ua Liatháin and his fellow voyagers, some—perhaps many—adventurous Irish monks did indeed find a desert in the ocean.

7.3 Solitaries inside Monasteries

Another milder and more institutionalised form of Irish anchoritism occurred in close association with established monastic centres. An Irish solitary did not necessarily have to leave the shores of Ireland, and some were often in fact connected—apparently physically as well as spiritually—to monastic communities. There is abundant textual evidence for this pattern of anchoritism. It is implied in the Irish annals, which often name celebrated anchorites in relation to monasteries, to which they were undoubtedly

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[21] Dicuil, *De mensura orbis terrae* 7.15 [Tierney, pp. 76–7]: *Illae insulae sunt aliae paruulae, fere cunctae simul angustis distantes fretis; in quibus in centum ferme annis heremitae ex nostra Scottia nauigantes habitauerunt. Sed sicut a principio mundi desertae semper fuerunt ita nunc causa latronum Normannorum uacuae anchoritis plenae innumerabilibus ouibus ac diuersis generibus multis nimis marinarum auium.*

attached: the earliest of these entries, in the year 610, records the death of 'Aedán, anchorite of Bangor', and a number of other entries link anchorites to many of the major Irish monastic centres, such as Armagh, Iona, Clonard and Lismore.[22] Adomnán similarly wrote in the *Vita Columbae* of a 'soldier of Christ, Finán by name, who for many years lived irreproachably the life of an anchorite beside the monastery (*iuxta monasterium*) of the plane of the oakwood [i.e., Durrow]'.[23] An anonymous ninth-century poem even tells of a solitary's cell *within* the walls of the monastery:

> All alone in my little cell, without a single human being along with me: such a pilgrimage (*ailethrán*) would be dear to my heart before going to meet death.
>
> A hidden secluded little hut for forgiveness of all evil; a conscience unperverted and untroubled directed towards holy Heaven...
>
> Let the place which shelters me amid monastic enclosures be a delightful hermit's plot hallowed by religious stones, with me alone therein.[24]

Similarly, the first lines of a rule for anchorites called the *Rule of Choluimb Cille* (but which appears to have no connection to the saint) prescribes life in isolation from others; but the lines that immediately follow command obedience to an elder, which indicates that the solitary remained part of a monastic community.[25]

This close connection between anchoritism and established cenobitic monasteries is not unusual. Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* illustrates that the Irish followed the belief—articulated in the writings of Cassian as well as other early monastic rules—that anchoritism was a more challenging form of monasticism, only to be undertaken after years of cenobitic life; he wrote of the monk Virgno:

> After completing irreproachably many years in subjection among the brothers, this Virgno completed another twelve years as a victorious soldier of Christ, leading the life of an anchorite, in the place of the anchorites, in Muirbolc már.[26]

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[22] AU 610.2. Also see AU 731.10 (Armagh), 733.10 (Armagh), 748.5 (Clonard), 752.1 (Iona), 796.7 (Clonard), 783.2 (Lismore). Also see Gwynn and Purton, 'Monastery of Tallaght', §67, p. 155. There are numerous other examples naming both large a small monasteries.

[23] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.49 [Andersons, pp. 90–2(50a)]: *Christi miles Finanus nomine, qui uitam multís anchoriticam annís iuxta roboreti monasterium campi inrepraehensibiliter ducebat.*

[24] 'M'óenurán im airclán' = 'All alone in my little cell', ed. and trans. Gerard Murphy, in *Early Irish Lyrics: Eighth to Twelfth Century* (orig. publ. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956; republ. Dublin: Four Courts, 1998), pp. 18–19: *M'óenurán im aireclán / cen duinén im gnáis: / robad inmuin ailethrán / ré ndul I ndáil mbáis. / Bothnat deirrit diamair / do dílgud cach cloín; / cubus d'riuch diamain / dochum dime noíb... / Ba sí in chrích fom-themadar / eter lissu lann / locan álainn eladglan, / os mé m'óenur ann.*

[25] *Regula Choluimb Chille*, ed. Kuno Meyer in 'Mitteilungen aus Irischen Handschriften', *ZCP* 3 (1901), pp. 28–30; also ed. and trans. in A.W. Haddan and William Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1873), vol. 2, pp. 119–21.

[26] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 3.23 [Andersons, p. 228(131b)]: *Qui videlicet Virgnous, post multos in subiectione inter fratres inreprehensibiliter expletos annos, alios xii. in loco anchoritarum in Muirbulc mar uitam ducens anchoriticam Christi uictor miles expleuit.*

The *Muirbolc mar* was on the island of Hinba, a monastic site that was a part of the Columban *familia*. This narrative indicates not only that there was a certain established site for anchorites, but also that multiple 'soldiers of Christ' might have lived there. This also would not have been unusual in the context of Christian monastic tradition: though we tend to associate anchoritism with isolation and solitude, from the earliest tales of the desert fathers it is evident that anchorites or hermits often lived in small groups.[27] The *Liber Angeli* also indicates the anchorites of Armagh participated in Sunday offices: hence even their seclusion was not complete, but they in fact participated in the communal and ecclesiastical functions of the monastery.[28] Anchoritism in the Irish church was therefore a formalised and structured form of renunciation that did not necessarily involve permanent and complete isolation: anchorites sometimes functioned as an integral part of monastic life.

In Ireland the dividing line between anchoritism and cenobitic monasticism was a fine one indeed. There are, for example, strong overtones of anchoritism in the accounts of saints such as Columbanus leaving their country and crossing the sea to live in foreign lands. When Columbanus arrived in Gaul, according to Jonas he and his twelve companions sought out 'the quiet of the desert' and chose to settle in 'the loneliness, the wilderness and the rocks'.[29] They lived the common life of cenobitic monasticism, but also embraced an extreme ascetic regime. It is difficult to know whether the ranks of monks would themselves have been considered hermits; indeed the differences between rigorously ascetic cenobitic life and the eremitic monasticism that was undertaken in groups are sometimes negligible.

The abbot himself might even be an anchorite. The Irish annals repeatedly record the *obiits* of individuals who were both, for example an entry in the year 748, which reads: *Do-Dímóc anchoritæ, abbatis Cluana Irairdd* 'Do-Dímmoc the anchorite, abbot of Clonard'.[30] Moreover, holy abbots themselves are often portrayed withdrawing into contemplative seclusion. A passage in Jonas's *Vita Columbani* gives a thorough

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[27] Consider, for example, the communities of Cellia or Nitria in Egypt, where the anchorites numbered in the thousands in the late fourth century. See descriptions in Derwas Chitty, *The Desert a City: an Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), pp. 29–33.

[28] *Liber Angeli* 16 [Bieler, p. 186(21–5].

[29] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.6 [Krusch, p. 163(11–19); Munro, pp. 22–3]: *heremi quietem.... aspera vastitate solitudinis et scopulorum interpositione loca*

[30] AU 748; also cf. AU 840; *Addimenta* 7 [Bieler, p. 172(4–5)].

description of such a withdrawal from the monastic community for deep prayer and contemplation, something the saint appears to have done periodically:

> At one time [Columbanus] was living alone in that hollow rock [a cave from which he had expelled a bear], separated from the society of others and, as was his custom, dwelling in hidden places or more remotely in the desert, so that when the feasts of the Lord or saints' days came, he might, with his mind wholly free from disquieting cares, devote himself to prayer, and might be ready for every religious thought.[31]

There he fasted so extremely that 'he scarcely seemed alive' and drank only water. Similarly, Adomnán wrote that on Iona the abbot Columba 'sought in wild places a spot more remote from mankind, and suitable for prayer'.[32] There—in accord with accounts of the desert fathers—he battled demons who wished to attack his monastery, though in this case the story recounts a miraculous battle rather than a triumph over temptation and sin. These passages highlight the contemplative aspect of anchoritism, and also show that in some cases it could be a temporary state of solitude, interspersed among more active and engaged ecclesiastical duties. Though we cannot be certain that Columbanus and Columba would have been considered anchorites *per se*, their status as abbots apparently would not have precluded them from also being hermits.

7.4.1 *Anchorites and* Deoraid Dé

A discussion of solitaries within monasteries cannot be complete without reference to the enigmatic but important figures mentioned in chapter four: the *deoraid Dé*. But who were these high-status individuals? A full answer to that question may no longer be possible within the limits of surviving evidence, but some intriguing patterns and comparisons can lead to some partial conclusions.

Let us begin with the most basic evidence. Translated most often as 'exiles of God' or 'hermits of God', because of their appellation it is reasonable to assume that the *deoraid Dé* lived outside of their own *túatha*, and possibly in some manner of seclusion. A *deorad Dé* was a learned individual[33] who was accorded very high status: his honour-

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[31] Jonas, *Vita Columbani* 1.9 [Krusch, p. 167(17–24); Munro, p. 30]: *Quo in tempore cum in eadem concava scopuli solitariam vitam duceret, sicut eius erat consuetudinis, ut cum dominicis festis vel quorumlibet sanctorum sacratae sollemnitatis adpropinquaret adventus, ab aliorum societate segregatus et abditis locis receptus, vel longioris spatii heremi secreta tutabatur, ut solida mentae et absque curarum inquietudine solius orationis vacaret et religioni omni conatu intenderet.* I have changed Munro's translation of *heremus* from 'wilderness' to 'desert'.

[32] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 3.8 [Andersons, pp. 192–194(110a–111a)]: *remotiorum ab hominibus locum aptumque ad orationem in saltibus quaesiuit.* Also cf. *Vita Cainnechi* 37 [Heist, pp. 191–2].

[33] *CIH* 686.35–8. See Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, p. 331.

price was equal to that of a king or a bishop.[34] Along with a *suí* ('learned scholar') and a bishop, the evidence given by a *deorad Dé* could not be overturned, even by a king; in other words, in a justice system in which status conferred authority of testimony, he was outranked by no-one.[35] A *deorad Dé* was called upon to act as surety for contracts sealed upon the Gospels or sworn upon the Holy Spirit;[36] he was also believed to have thaumaturgic powers.[37] The title also became invested with connotations of the contemplative life,[38] which again suggests monastic and more specifically, anchoritic status. There were apparently female counterparts as well—*bandeoraid Dé*—though they are mentioned very rarely.[39]

In truth we know very little about these shadowy figures apart from their suggestive title and their esteemed position and responsibilities in Irish society. Thomas Charles-Edwards in his analysis of the Irish manifestations of *peregrinatio* identifies the *deorad Dé* with our Latin *peregrinus*.[40] As we saw in chapter four, the designation *deorad* translates roughly as 'exile' and indicates an outlaw or person without rights within a *túath*; as a result this class of individual has been quite logically connected to monastic practice and thus to *peregrinatio*. To this conclusion, however, I would add one caveat: while a *deorad Dé* appears to have been a *peregrinus* of some kind, it is doubtful that every *peregrinus* was a *deorad Dé*. Their very high status and important society roles suggest that they were not numerous, or at least no more so, one imagines, than their counterparts in law: kings, bishops and learned scholars. Furthermore, while their name implies that they lived as outsiders, their place in law texts shows that they lived inside Ireland and participated actively in Irish society. This holy 'stranger' thus embodied a legal and official outsider who, by virtue of his other-ness, paradoxically held an active position of esteem and authority.

Although the exact identity of the *deorad Dé* remains obscured by the passage of time, his unique significance lies in his deeply-entrenched, high-status position in Irish society. Like a *fili*, a *deorad Dé*'s status was tied to the privileges of an overarching

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[34] *Bretha Crólige* §12 = *CIH* 2287.8.
[35] *Cethairslicht Athgabálae*, *CIH* 357.25–7 = *ALI* 1.78.20–1.
[36] *Coibnes Uisci Thairidne*, *CIH* 460.1–2.
[37] *Bretha Crólige* §12 = *CIH* 2289.8, 13.
[38] Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, p. 329.
[39] The *bandeorad Dé* appears in a gloss on the phrase *maínech ferta* 'a woman abundant in miracles' in *Bretha Crólige* §32.
[40] Charles-Edwards, 'Social Background', p. 53; cf. a more detailed discussion of the source texts in Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, pp. 329–32.

institution—the Christian church, which itself transcended political boundaries and bloodlines in its reach and authority—and almost certainly to his extensive training in religious 'lore'. A useful clue into who these personages might have been lies in their responsibility to act as *naidm*, a type of guarantor, over contracts sworn on the bible or in the name of God.[41] The position of *deorad Dé* as a *naidm* shows his fundamental participation in the fabric of Irish society, which operated on the basis of numerous levels of contractual and reciprocal arrangements. A *naidm* was an enforcing surety, a guarantor who was expected to be able to force a defaulting individual into compliance, as opposed to a *ráth* who would be expected to compensate a defaulted contract.[42] If the *naidm* was unable to force a principal to uphold his/her contract, the *naidm* would lose his own honour price.[43] When a secular nobleman acted as *naidm*, he could enforce compliance with military might; but clerics were unsurprisingly forbidden from enforcing contracts by the use of arms or violence.[44]

A *deorad Dé* must therefore have had some other perceived ability that could threaten a defaulting party. We may find a clue to what this power might have been in much later Irish texts, which cite stories of clerics and poets using the force of malediction to enforce just legal behaviour.[45] There is little early evidence of churchmen acting in this capacity, but here the many correlations between the *filid* and high-ranking Christian clergy that we saw in chapter four become particularly useful.[46] The *filid* were also involved in the enforcement of customary law; their method of enforcement was satire, which when applied, at the very least could cause the victim loss of honour.[47] Poetic malediction was also invested with supernatural capabilities; Irish texts portray a poet's satire causing physical wounds and even death.[48] With this threat behind them, the *filid* were said to have maintained a *cáin enech*, 'rule of honour'

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[41] This may have been quite commonplace in medieval Ireland, though most of the evidence for the practice is relatively late; for swearing oaths and sealing contracts on relics—which included holy books—see A.T. Lucas, 'The Social Role of Relics and Reliquaries in Ancient Ireland', *JRSAI* 116 (1986), pp. 5–37 at 21–8.

[42] On the *ráth* and *naidm*, see Kelly, *Guide*, pp. 168–72.

[43] Kelly, *Guide*, pp. 171–2.

[44] *Synodus Episcoporum* 8 [Bieler, p. 54(26–7)].

[45] On the potential threat of malediction by churchmen and *filid*—though based upon substantially later evidence than that of this study—see Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, 'Curse and Satire', *Eigse* 21 (1986), pp. 10–15.

[46] See ch. 4, §4.4.1.

[47] On satire, Kelly, *Guide*, pp. 43–4; J.E. Caerwyn Williams, 'The Court Poet in Medieval Ireland', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 57 (1971), pp. 85–135 at 115–117, esp. 116 n. 2.

[48] Ibid., p. 44 and nn. 43 and 44.

throughout Ireland.[49] It may be that a malediction by a *deorad Dé* carried the force of anathema; undoubtedly—considering that they like the *filid* were also believed to have supernatural powers—a curse would have wielded the power of fear. One may assume as society had become Christianised, that whether the *deorad Dé*'s threat involved a simple curse of a more formal state of excommunication, like a poet's satire it would adversely affect a defaulter's honour-price; moreover, as holy men enforcing oaths on God's behalf, their maledictions would have been invested with great power. If these comparisons are accurate, the *deorad Dé* wielded great authority indeed.

This also leads to another potentially useful comparison between the *filid* and the *deoraid Dé*. According to a gloss on the 'Caldron of Poesy', a *fili* was called upon specifically to enforce contracts on behalf of members of his own *túath* outside of the *túath*, a role undoubtedly related to his ability to retain status and authority outside of his own land.[50] The *deorad Dé*—as a high-ranking, learned individual, who based upon his title almost certainly held status that transcended the boundaries of his own *túath*—must have played a similar role.

Potentially even more valuable in our quest for the 'exile of God' are numerous similarities between the *deorad Dé* and the holy anchorite. We have seen that the *deorad Dé*, who appears in vernacular texts, held a position of great importance in Irish society. Latin texts indicate that anchorites enjoyed a similarly high status in Irish society: like the *deorad Dé*, on equal footing in some texts with bishops, kings and other nobles.[51] The high status of anchorites is further demonstrated in the inclusion of their *obiits* in the Irish annals, along with abbots, bishops, kings and other notables.[52] The *deorad Dé* was also charged with social and legal responsibilities; similarly, we find numerous anchorites in attendance at a legislative synod, which illustrates both their participation in ecclesiastical leadership and their role in governance, which apparently

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[49] *Bretha nemed déidenach*, *CIH* 1111.12–18. Discussed in T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'Early Irish Law', in *A New History of Ireland, vol. 1: Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 331–70 at 353.

[50] See gloss in 'The Caldron of Poesy' §15, gloss 8, and correction and note in Liam Breatnach, 'Addenda and Corrigenda to "The Caldron of Poesy" (*Ériu* xxxii 45–93)', *Ériu* 35 (1984), pp. 189–91 at 189.

[51] *Canones Hibernensis* 5.11 [Bieler, p. 175(14–17)]; ibid. 1.29 [Bieler, p. 162(22–3)]; also *Paenitentiale Bigotianum* 4.6.5 [Bieler, p. 230(21–2)]. On the dates of these texts (<*c.*750), see Bieler, *Irish Penitentials*, p. 9.

[52] AU 610.2, 700.2, 731.10, 733.10, 745.2, 748.5, 748.9, 752.1, 752.11, 756.2, 757.1, 757.7, 774.5, 776.1, 780.12, 783.2, 787.1, 791.6, 796.1, 796.7, 807.5, 811.4, 812.1, 812.2, 812.4, 814.1, 815.6, 817.1, 821.4, 822.9, 825.2. See discussion in Robin Flower, 'The Two Eyes of Ireland', in *The Church of Ireland, AD 432–1932* ed. William Bell and N.D. Emerson, pp. 66–75 at 68; also Peter O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé: spiritual reform in Ireland 750–900*, 2nd edn. (Dublin: Editions Tailliura, 1981), pp. 10–11.

drew them out of their seclusion.[53] In short, both the *deoraid Dé* and the *anchoritae* were actively involved in the functions and authority structures of early the Irish church and society. Neither were wild ascetic solitaries or holy men of the hills, but were attached to monasteries and participated in Irish life in an influential, official capacity.

The *deoraid Dé* were also learned: in addition to the many responsibilities that were given to this individual, which imply that he would have had great wisdom, a late commentary on the *Uraicecht Becc* defines the *deorad Dé* as an educated religious.[54] Again like the *deoraid Dé*, anchorites were highly educated: of some thirty entries concerning anchorites from the early seventh to the early ninth century, nearly half indicate that the anchorite also acted in other capacities which reveal his learning, as abbot, bishop, and most commonly, scribe (which in this period in Ireland signified a teacher of Latin learning).[55] In the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis,* we also read that an anchorite must have completed thirty years of monastic training before undertaking the solitary life, another probable sign of extensive learning and training.[56] Both the *deorad Dé* and the anchorite are also similarly distinguished by the contemplative natures of their vocations.[57]

It seems very likely that these individuals were one and the same. Not only should the *deoraid Dé* and the *anchoritae* of Ireland be equated with one another, their designations should be viewed as titles of official standing within a monastery and within the broader community. They may have been solitaries of a sort, living in relatively secluded cells either within a monastic site or close by, but they participated actively in the functions and indeed the administration of Irish life. This particular paradigm of Irish anchoritism was not modelled directly upon a figure such as Jerome's

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[53] AU 780.12. On a possible reason for this synod see Robin Flower, '"The Two Eyes of Ireland." Religion and Literature in Ireland in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries', in *The Church of Ireland, AD 432–1932* ed. William Bell and N.D. Emerson (Dublin: Church of Ireland, 1932), p. 69.

[54] See below, n. 67.

[55] AU 748.5, 752.11, 796.1, 796.7, 807.5, 812.1, 812.2, 812.4, 814.1, 817.1, 821.4, 822.9, 825.2; also see AU 780.12. For the *scriba*, the director of monastic learning at a monastery, see Ludwig Bieler, 'The Island of Scholars', *Revue du Moyen Age Latin* 8 (1952), pp. 213–34 at 215; also idem, *Irish Penitentials*, p. 251 n. 10; McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, p. 122 n. 33; and more recently, Michael Richter, 'The personnel of learning in early medieval Ireland', in *Irland und Europa im früheren Mittelalter: Bildung und Literatur = Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Learning and Literature*, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1996), pp. 275–308 at 279–82.

[56] *CIH* 686.35–8. See discussion in Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, pp. 331–32.

[57] On the contemplative nature of the *deorad Dé,* see, Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, p. 330. For the anchorite, see the Stowe Missal, fol. 37v, p. 19, in a part of the mass that invokes among the faithful supporting pillars of the Irish church the *teorica vita anchoritarum*; also cf. Gwynn and Purton, 'The Monastery of Tallaght' §77, pp. 159–60.

St Paul, who lived alone in the desert and did not see another human for decades, but perhaps upon someone like St Anthony, who interacted—albeit reluctantly—with his fellow monks as well as other supplicants, but periodically withdrew so far into the desert that he could not be found.

One wonders if some *deoraid Dé* might have been retired abbots who had withdrawn into a state of pilgrimage, thus completing eminent lives with a state of devotional separation from their homelands.[58] The hermit Béccán to whom Cummian famously wrote regarding the Paschal controversy also might have been such a figure: Cummian addressed Béccán regarding this deeply troubling but critically important difficulty of ecclesiastical practice, along with the powerful abbot of Iona, Ségéne.[59] Whoever Béccán was, he was definitely a solitary (*solitarius*) and, we may infer, a person of great authority. Whether or not Béccán was in fact a *deorad Dé*, far from being an isolated monk who had withdrawn to parts unknown, he demonstrates the authoritative roles that solitaries could have in the Irish church.

Whoever the *deoraid Dé* were, they were individuals of great power and authority in Irish society. As we have seen, there is compelling circumstantial evidence to identify the *deoraid Dé* whom we find in vernacular Irish law texts with the *anchoritae* whom we find in the annals, hagiographical texts and canon law. They share numerous characteristics in common: they held similarly exalted status in Irish law, they were highly educated, they participated actively in the life of their communities, yet they were both also characterised as contemplatives.

Excursus: the Status of the Deorad Dé *and Columbanus*

The high status of the *deorad Dé* in Irish tradition may help to explain some of the fiery interactions between the abbot Columbanus and the native churchmen and nobles of his adopted lands. Columbanus's tone in his dealings with others is self-assured in the extreme, often to the point of insolence. His letters in particular reveal a man with a high opinion of his own station in relation to bishops and even to the pope; according to his biographer, in the abbot's interactions with local nobles he exhibited a similar lack of deference, which eventually led to his expulsion from Burgundian Gaul. In his own

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[58] Consider, for example, the abbots Gormán and his grandson Áeducán, both abbots of Louth, both of whom died *a n-ailithri i Cluain* 'on pilgrimage in Clonmacnoise', in 758 (AT, p. 258; cf. AU 757, AFM 753) and 835 respectively (AFM 834). (Gormán was Torbach of Louth's father, Áeducán his son.)

[59] Cummian, *De controversia Paschali* [Walsh/Ó Cróinín, p. 56(2–3)].

land, simply due to the extent of his learning and his position as a teacher of scripture, Columbanus would have enjoyed very high standing: well attested in Irish legal texts is the fact that the *suí litre*, 'expert in ecclesiastical learning', ranked on an equal footing with kings, bishops and master poets. Fergus Kelly notes, 'a *suí litre* is doubtless the head of a monastic school, and to be identified with the *fer légind* "learned man" often referred to in the annals. He is the highest-ranking *ecnae* "ecclesiastical scholar (not in orders)"'.[60] In addition, Columbanus would have had held extremely high rank in Ireland both as the abbot of an important monastery and school and the head of a network of such sites.[61] Finally, as a learned and high-status renunciant of his homeland, particularly considering his anchoritic activity, he may have considered himself a *deorad Dé*. The lack of deference that colours Columbanus's interactions with other Christian authorities in Gaul might be in part a measure of his own self-regard, but it may also reflect a peculiarly Irish perception of his status in the social hierarchy.

7.4 Hermits or Anchorites?

We have seen above that the designation of *anchorita* probably had a specific meaning in Irish Christian society; not all solitaries, apparently, were anchorites. But we tend in modern parlance to describe solitary ascetic withdrawal using two interchangeable terms: we call these religious solitaries both hermits (from the Greek *eremos* 'desert') and anchorites (from *anachoresis* 'withdrawal') and do not usually differentiate between these two designations. The preceding sections have described two distinct forms of solitary withdrawal, one of which involved a more extreme journey of renunciation and the other a more active participation in society: there is compelling evidence that in medieval Ireland the two discrete groups of renunciants who undertook these vocations were also called by different names.

The early eighth-century canon law text mentioned above, the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, divides solitaries into two groups: *heremitae* and *anchoritae*. The *Hibernensis* explains, based upon a misreading of Isidore of Seville, that there are six kinds of monk, of which three are the best: cenobites, hermits and anchorites.[62] The hermits, the text declares, are those monks who withdraw *procul ab hominibus*, 'far

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[60] Kelly, *Guide*, p. 41 n. 21.

[61] See e.g., the comparison of heads of churches of Emly or Cork with the over-king of Cashel, *Uraicecht Becc*, *CIH* 2334 = *ALI* 5.112.1–3.

[62] Cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae* 7.13.3–4, PL 82:293C–294A; in the PL version Isidore himself does not make a strict distinction between hermits and anchorites.

away from men', into *deserta loca*; they are characterised by their remarkable contempt for the world and their love of solitude. They either eat wild herbs from the land, or might also have food and water brought to them periodically, though the text does not specify by whom. (But the *Córus Béscnai* includes under the definition of a *dán déoda* 'godly gift'—apparently some form of alms—the duty of *bíathad dísertaig* 'feeding desert-dwellers'.[63]) These *heremitae* focus their efforts upon the contemplation of God and avoid any communication with other humans.[64] The *anchoritae* in the *Hibernensis* as we have seen are also concerned with contemplation, but they were trained and appear to live within an active monastery, secluded in their own cells. It is telling that the *anchoritae* are said to keep themselves *procul a conspectu hominum* 'away from the *gaze* of man[kind]' rather than the more extreme *procul ab hominibus* prescribed for the *heremitae*.[65]

If we can equate the *deorad Dé* and the anchorite, we may also be able to connect the hermit to the less commonly mentioned *oíbelteóir*, literally 'spark of the contemplative life'. The *oíbelteóir* usually appears in tandem with the *deorad Dé*: both seem to be religious solitaries and contemplatives, hold high status, and are credited with miraculous powers.[66] A late commentary on the *Uraicecht Bec* defines the major difference between these two individuals: the *deorad Dé* is learned, while the *oíbelteóir* is not.[67] This echoes the differences between the *heremitae* and *anchoritae* in the *Hibernensis*, in that the hermit seems to be a less formally-indoctrinated renunciant, while the anchorite is required to have undergone many years of monastic training before undertaking his ascetic withdrawal. The hermit thus seems to represent a more independent form of asceticism; in the Stowe missal, for example, a litany of various Christian saints includes *heremi* grouped with *sciti*, that is, the monks of Scete in Egypt, who withdrew into a life of 'natural' monasticism with no ties to formal cenobitic communities.[68] There must have been members of the Irish faithful who like the desert fathers simply withdrew into solitude without any monastic training. Perhaps the most illustrious of these became the *oíbelteóir*, the uneducated and untrained holy man,

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[63] *Córus Bescnai*, *CIH* 524.22–5 = *ALI* 3.18.16–17, trans. and discussed in Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Aidan Breen, 'Laws of the Irish', *Peritia* 3 (1984), pp. 382–438 at 407.

[64] *CCH* 39.3 [Wasserschleben, pp. 148–9].

[65] *CCH* 39.3 [Wasserschleben, p. 148].

[66] See Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, pp. 329–30.

[67] *CIH* 686.35–8. See discussion in Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, pp. 330–31.

[68] *The Stowe Missal: MS D.II.3 in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin*, ed. George F. Warner, Henry Bradshaw Society 31–2, 2 vols. (London: Harrison and Sons, 1906), fol. 32v, vol. 2, p. 15.

whom we might also identify with the additional description in the *Hibernensis* of the *rusticus sanctus*, a holy man who could act as a judge.[69]

While one can find exceptions to the hermit/anchorite division described here, the majority of references that I have found to these two types of solitary support the distinction of the *Hibernensis*. The designation of 'hermit' thus appears to refer to a solitary who undertook a more independent renunciation—and usually one of more extreme isolation—rather than following the more structured route to anchoritism within a monastic setting. Perhaps these uneducated and untrained *heremitae* produced at their highest levels the *oibelteóir* or *rusticus sanctu*s, while those solitaries who were educated and trained in monastic discipline were the *anchoritae*, and from whose ranks came those who acted in more official capacities as *deoraid Dé*. Thus the translation of *deorad Dé* might more accurately be rendered according to Irish usage as 'anchorite of God', while the hermit embodied a less cultivated and structured form of devotional renunciation.

7.5 Solitaries and *Peregrinatio*

Let us now return to the question of how anchoritism related to *peregrinatio*. The form of eremitic withdrawal was fundamentally similar to the ascetic models of separation, and thus to the practice of *peregrinatio* performed by St Columba and Columbanus. Though Adomnán is a crucial witness to so many of the practices discussed in this thesis, in this case the evidence *ex silencio* from three short chapters of his writings alone is not sufficient to conclude a conceptual difference between eremitic retreat and *peregrinatio*. Adomnán does not name aspiring hermits like Cormac Ua Liatháin and Báitán *peregrini*, but there can be little doubt that he considered Columcille's act of renunciation in a similar light to theirs. The differences in terminology are, however, significant: Adomnán used the terms *peregrinus/–ari/–atio* in very specific circumstances. He uses these terms consistently to signify an individual living among a foreign people. They do not always carry inherently virtuous connotations, but when used in relation to monastic or penitential life overseas—as they often are—they convey the suffering of life as a foreigner. A desert hermit by definition lived away from others altogether, and thus perhaps did not fit Adomnán's definition of a *peregrinus*. This is quite correct according to basic Latin usage as we saw in chapter one, as the technical

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[69] *CCH* 21.2 [Wasserschleben, p. 63].

label of *peregrinus* signifies a stranger or resident alien not only displaced but living among a people not his own. Nevertheless, Adomnán calls Columba an *insulanus miles* 'island soldier' and tends to name hermits and anchorites such as Cormac Ua Liatháin *Christi miles* as if this were a specific title.[70] As he also applies this label to a besmirched priest, it is not simply a label of Adomnán's esteem:[71] it is probably a label for a dedicated ascetic, as it had been used for centuries in the Latin West. It is also the phrase used to describe the hermit Paul of Thebes in the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*.[72] The *miles* is a direct allusion to martyrdom, which we have seen was a driving conceptual element of *peregrinatio*; the reference to an *insula* as we saw at the beginning of this chapter carries overtones of eremitic renunciation. Although he used different labels, then, Adomnán presented the monastic retreats of Cormac Ua Liatháin and Báetán in the same pattern as that of St Columcille. He prefers the term *peregrinus* for St Columba and for penitents, but he there is a great deal of conceptual connection between the saint's devotional act and those of the other anchorites who appear in Adomnán's works.

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Irish hermits and anchorites were ascetic monks who renounced their homelands for God, whether they chose to cross the sea or to live in a foreign land within Ireland; in this sense to label them *peregrini* is fitting. By their embrace of the ascetic tenets of renunciation of homeland and kin they followed in the footsteps of other *monachi peregrini* like St Honoratus of Arles and Columbanus of Bobbio.

The solitaries of Ireland who set out to find desert places undertook a much more challenging physical task than did, for example, St Anthony, who simply withdrew further and further away from the cities of Egypt to find solitude. They faced the possibility of grave peril and even death on the seas; they might not ever find a suitable 'desert' in the middle of uncharted seas. In their goals they emulated the extraordinary ascetics of the East, but the difficulties for these island-dwellers to finding

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[70] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae*, second preface [Andersons, p. 6(4b)]. For *Christi miles* see e.g. Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.43 [Andersons, p. 78(44a)]; 1.49 [Andersons, p. 88(50a); 2.4 [Andersons, p. 100(57a)]; 2.42 [Andersons, p. 166(94b)]; 3.23 [Andersons, p. 226(131a), 229(131b) and 229(132a)]; Adomnán, *De locis sanctis* 26.4 [Meehan, p. 94(35)]; cf. *Vita Columbae* 1.20 [Andersons, p. 46(26b)]. Also see AU 729.1, 738.2, 792.1.

[71] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.36 [Andersons, p. 64(36a)].

[72] *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* 26 [Selmer, p. 71(25); O'Meara, p. 59].

a deserted and lonely landscape built their renunciations into something entirely different. Their journeys were heroic seafaring adventures, which in time captivated the imaginations of medieval Irish Christians. That they were much more than romanticised literary constructs is evident from the textual and archaeological remains that document the presence of Irish monks on numerous islands throughout the icy waters at the edge of the known world.

Other accounts also demonstrate that even a withdrawal into the anchoritic solitude was not expected to be undertaken in complete isolation. Bands of would-be hermits sailed away for lands unknown in groups; closer to home the anchorites whom we meet in Irish texts are most often connected to an established monastery. In Irish texts, the anchorite is not as distinctly separated from the cenobite, but in some cases represents the endpoint of a virtuous monastic trajectory.

The exceptionally high status of solitaries in Irish law is unique, as is their active and apparently formalised participation in church and society, though the origins of such ideals are recognisable in some early monastic tales. The descent of elements of practice and ideology from the traditions of the desert fathers and the origins of western monasticism are thus apparent, but in Ireland the structuring of monastic solitary renunciation and the recognition of unstructured withdrawal within the leadership of church and society represent a marked divergence of practice.

In the form and conceptualisation of a solitary withdrawal, in the status of such renunciants in society, and in the various structured practices of *anachoresis*, an analysis of eremiticism thus reveals once again multiple examples of Irish Christian practice founded upon mainstream Christian principles and traditions but subtly changed due to the influences of geography and native culture.

Chapter 8 Penitents as *Peregrini*

Although cenobitic and eremitic/anchoritic monasticism provide the dominant rubrics of behaviour associated with *peregrinatio* throughout the early medieval West, in Ireland pilgrimage encompassed more varied grades of devotional practice. Undoubtedly in connection with its conception as monastic renunciation, *peregrinatio* also became firmly linked to the practice of penance in Ireland. A penitential or redemptive component had long comprised a part of ascetic 'conversion' and discipline, but the correlation between the quotidian austerities of monastic discipline and the purgative act of penance was particularly strong in Christian Ireland. Though the formation of these interconnected practices and ideals is shrouded in the darkness of the fifth and sixth centuries, a time from which we have only brief glimpses of Irish history, as they emerge in the historical record their close relationship to one another is apparent.

This connection was not simply one of practice but was of concept and vocabulary as well. As we have seen, Adomnán of Iona very succinctly defines his patron saint Columcille as a *peregrinus* and his lifetime spent as abbot across the Irish Sea in Iona as a *peregrinatio*, using these terms as elements of an ascetic portrait of the saint's life and works. Adomnán also applies these terms to another group of travellers: penitents who journey to Iona in search of redemption.[1] Columcille's *peregrinatio*, it should be noted, could in fact have been a penitential act or even an officially compelled exile,[2] but this is not an aspect of Adomnán's eulogising portrayal of the saint's pilgrimage. Adomnán's multiple senses of *peregrinatio* simply include this additional aspect of the ritualised act. Hence for Adomnán, *peregrinatio* is on one hand an act of monastic renunciation and on the other a ritual of penance.

A more detailed view into the penitential sense of *peregrinatio* can be found in the group of texts known collectively as the 'Irish penitentials'.[3] The penitentials—exhaustive listings of penalties for innumerable sins—were guide-books

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[1] See, e.g., Adomnán, *Vita Columbae*, esp. 1.36, 2.39, also 1.32, in which the *peregrini* are laymen.

[2] See discussion in Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona: Life of St Columba*, pp. 12–15.

[3] The standard edition of these texts remains Ludwig Bieler, (ed.), *The Irish Penitentials*, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae 5 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1963, repr. 1975). For a rather outdated but still useful study of the Irish penitentials and their impact upon western Europe, see John T. McNeill, *The Celtic Penitentials and their Influence on Continental Christianity* (Paris: Édouard Champion, 1923); also John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938, repr. 1990).

for confessors. This practice of codifying penances, along with private confessions and the potential for private penance developed very early among the Irish, and appear to have spread to other parts of western Christendom from Ireland and Britain.[4] John McNeill and Helena Gamer depict the development of traditions of penance in the ancient world, which declined as the influence of Rome—and Roman law—contracted; the structures of penance were then regenerated in Celtic societies in the early Middle Ages, where the written penitentials then evolved.[5] Early medieval penitential texts are thus characteristically Irish or Celtic; our earliest extant examples emanate from Ireland and Wales.[6] The body of texts range from as early as the sixth century to the ninth; most are in Latin, as are the majority of Irish canon law texts, but one late eighth-century text is in the vernacular.[7]

Particularly for very serious crimes, an imposition of penance functioned very similarly to a criminal sentence. As a rule penances would be demanded in response to confessed crimes as opposed to those revealed in a court setting, but in practical terms a differentiation between criminal penalty and penance may be an artificial one. Exile/*peregrinatio* as a criminal punishment has been briefly mentioned in chapter four; the main determinant of such a division for the purposes of this discussion is the source document, i.e., penitential rather than legal texts.

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[4] McNeill, *The Celtic Penitentials*, pp. 142–72.

[5] McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, pp. 3–50; also Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 9–12. For an extensive discussion of some of the ancient Christian origins of private penance, see R.C. Mortimer, *The Origins of Private Penance in the Western Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939). For the innovations of the Irish, see ibid., esp. p. 189.

[6] McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, pp. 23–4. It is not the intention of this study to address the details of origin of all of these texts, but they should be prefaced by some problems of origin. As noted, some of the cited texts are of sure Welsh provenance, but I have only cited non-Irish texts if there is a similar Irish example. A possible exception to this is the *Paenitentiale Vinniani*: it has been argued that Vinnian/Finnian may have been a Welsh Briton. However, the text itself was known in Ireland and strongly influenced other Irish penitential texts, particularly that of Columbanus. For two sides of the debate on Vinnian/Finnian/etc., see, e.g., David Dumville, 'Gildas and Uinniau', in *Gildas: New Approaches*, ed. Michael Lapidge and David N. Dumville, Studies in Celtic History 5 (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1984), pp 207–14; and Pádraig Ó Riain, 'Finnian or Winniau?', in *Irland und Europa. Die Kirche im Frühmittelalter/Ireland and Europe: the Early Church*, ed. Próinséas Ní Chathain and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), pp. 52–7, updated in idem, 'Finnio and Winniau: A Return to the Subject', in *Ildánach Ildírech: A Festschrift for Proinsias MacCana*, ed. John Carey, John T. Koch and Pierre-Yves Lambert (Andover and Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 1999), pp. 187–202.

[7] See discussion in Ludwig Bieler (ed.), *The Irish Penitentials*, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae 5 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1963, repr. 1975), pp. 1–12.

8.1 Exile or *Peregrinatio* as Penance

The penitentials assign penalties that vary based upon the status of the sinner and the seriousness of the misdeed: in most of these texts the major division among sinners was drawn between lay people and clergymen or monks. The punishments upon churchmen exceed those imposed upon lay people; as the *Penitential of Finnian* explains, 'since [a layman] is a man of this world, his guilt is lighter in this world and his reward less in the world to come'.[8] Hence we find exile—a severe penance for very serious misdeeds—most often imposed upon sinful clerics or monks, though one text applies it to a wicked king (*tirannus*).[9] In these texts also appears a close association between *peregrinatio* and exile; in some documents the terms for 'exile'—*exul paenitere*, *(a)exilium*—and *peregrinatio* are employed interchangeably.[10] I have been able to ascertain no consistently articulated differences between these terms.

The Irish penitentials prescribe exile or *peregrinatio* as penance for murder,[11] fornication,[12] the desecration or robbery of a church or sacred site,[13] incestuous unions,[14] and perjury.[15] It might also be imposed upon intransigent, unrepentant sinners, or offenders who had repeatedly committed the same crime.[16] For each crime a fixed term of exile was usually applied, but for the worst crimes, or for remorseless

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[8] *Paenitentiale Vinniani* 7 [Bieler, p. 76(7–8)]. See also *Paenitentiale S. Columbani*, B 1 [pp. 98(26–32)]; ibid., B 13 [p. 102(4–7)]; *Paenitentiale Cummeani* 2.1–5 [pp. 112(19–31)–114(1–14)]; ibid., 4.5–6 [pp. 118(29)–120(1)]; *Paenitentiale Bigotianum* (4).3.1 [p. 228(20–24)]; *Excerpta quedam de libro Dauidis* 10 [Bieler, p. 70(23–5)]; *The Old-Irish Table of Commutations* 7 [Binchy, pp. 278–9].

[9] *Tres Canones Hibernici* 3 [Bieler, p. 182(13–26)].

[10] See esp. *Tres Canones Hibernici* 1 [Bieler, p. 182(1–5)]; *Paenitentiale S. Columbani*, B 1–2 [Bieler, p. 98(26–35)].

[11] *Paenitentiale Vinniani* 12 [Bieler, p. 78(4–6)], 23 [p. 80(24–6)], 24 [p. 82(7–9)]; *Paenitentiale Cummeani* 4.6 [p. 118(31)–120(1)]; *Paenitentiale Bigotianum* 4.3.4 [p. 228(29–30)]; *Paenitentiale S. Columbani*, B 1 [Bieler, p. 98(26–32)]; ibid., B 13 [p. 102(4–7)]; *Old Irish Penitential* 5.2 [Binchy, p. 271]; ibid., 5.11 [Binchy, p. 272]. Also *CCH* 25.5.b, 44.8.

[12] *Paenitentiale Vinniani* 12 [Bieler, p. 78(4–6)]; *Paenitentiale Cummeani* 2.5 [p. 114(11–14)], 2.17 [p. 114(35–6)]; *Paenitentiale S. Columbani*, B 2 [p. 98(33–5)].

[13] *Tres Canones Hibernici* 1 [Bieler, p. 182(1–6)]; ibid., 2 [p. 182(7–12)]. Also see *Paenitentiale Vinniani* 30–31 [p. 84(18–32)]; *Synodus Aquilonaris Britaniae* (a Welsh text) 3 [p. 66(11–12)]. Also *CCH* 29.7, ibid. 42.3.b.

[14] *Paenitentiale Cummeani* 2.7 [Bieler, p. 114(16–17)]; *Sinodus Luci Victorie* (probably a Welsh text) 6 [Bieler, pp. 68(15)]]; *Old Irish Penitential* 2.21 [Binchy, p. 264].

[15] *Paenitentiale S. Columbani* B 20 [Bieler, p. 104(6–14)]. Also *CCH* 16.13.d.

[16] Unrepentant sinners: *Paenitentiale Vinniani* 30–31 [Bieler, p. 84(18–32)]; *Paenitentiale S. Columbani*, B 1 [Bieler, p. 98(26–32)]; *Tres Canones Hibernici* 1 [Bieler, p. 182(1–5)]; *Old Irish Penitential* 3.10 [Binchy, p. 267]. Also *CCH* 25.5.b. Repeat offenders: *Paenitentiale Cummeani* 1.12 [Bieler, p. 112(13–14)] = *Paenitentiale Bigotianum*, 1.4.1 [p. 214(31–2)] = *Synodus Aquilonaris Britaniae* 4 [p. 66(13–14)] = *Old Irish Penitential* 1.9. Also *Synodus Aquilonaris Britaniae* 3 [p. 66(11–12)]. See also discussion in Bieler, *Irish Penitentials*, p. 45. Also cf. Gwynn and Purton, 'The Monastery of Tallaght' §54, pp. 148–9.

individuals, the penitentials prescribe permanent exile. The seventh-century *Tres Canones Hibernici*, for example, dictate:

> If anyone in any way breaks into the place of keeping of the chrismal of any saint, or a place of keeping for staves or cymbals, or takes away anything by robbery, or in any way injures a man, he shall make seven-fold restitution and remain through five years in hard penance in *peregrinatio* abroad. And if his penance is commendable [*laudabilis*], let him afterwards come to his own country; but if not, let him remain permanently in exile [*in aexilio semper permaneat*].[17]

Similarly, the *Penitential of Columbanus* commands,

> If any cleric has committed murder and killed his neighbour, let him do penance for ten years in exile [*exul paeniteat*]; after these, let him be restored to his native land, if he has performed his penance well on bread and water, being approved by the testimonial of the bishop or priest with whom he did penance and to whose care he was entrusted, on condition that he make satisfaction to the relatives of the slain, taking the place of a son, and saying: 'Whatever you wish I will do for you'. But if he does not make satisfaction to his relatives, let him never be restored to his native land, but like Cain let him be a wanderer and fugitive [*uagus et profugus*] on the earth.[18]

Both of these texts reflect a blend of native Irish and Christian law. Columbanus's text not only demands true repentance but restitution to the family of a slain man; the murderer must fulfil the filial obligations of the man whom he killed. (This text, and the section of the *Penitential of Finnian* from which it derived, are the only recorded instances of such a regulation.[19]) In both cases, if the penance was not considered genuine, or efficacious enough, the penitent suffered permanent expulsion from his land.

What, then, did this expulsion entail? Unfortunately, the confessor's knowledge of general penance was assumed in many of these texts: a number of entries simply prescribe that the sinner 'do penance' or sometimes 'hard penance' abroad for a specified length of time.[20] No doubt these phrases carried more specific meanings than

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[17] *Tres Canones Hibernici* 1 [Bieler, p. 182(1–6)]: *Si quis refugium crismalis alicuius sancti aut refugium baculis aut cimbalis fregerit aliquomodo uel per rapinam predam abstraxerit, uel homini aliqua ratione nocuerit, septempliciter restituet et in dura penitentia in peregrinatione extranea per .u. annos permaneat. Et si laudabilis penitentia eius fuerit, postea ad solum patrium perueniat. Sin uero, in aexilio semper permaneat.*

[18] *Paenitentiale S. Columbani* B 1 [Bieler, pp. 98(26–32)]: *Si quis clericus homicidium fecerit et proximum suum occiderit, x annis exul paeniteat; post hos recipiatur in patriam, si bene egerit paenitentiam in pane et aqua testimonio conprobatus episcopi uel sacerdotis cum quo paenituit et cui conmissus fuit, ut satis faciat parentibus eius quem occidit uicem filii reddens et dicens 'quacunque uultis faciam uobis'. Si autem non satis fecerit parentibus illius nunquam recipiatur in patriam, sed more Cain uagus et profugus sit super terram.* Also cf. ibid., B 13 [pp. 102(3–7)].

[19] *Paenitentiale Vinniani* 23 [Bieler, pp. 80(24)–82(6)]; for discussion see Bieler, *Irish Penitentials*, p. 243 n. 10.

[20] *Tres Canones Hibernici* 1 [Bieler, p. 182(3–4)]; ibid. 2 [p. 182(9–10)]; ibid. 3 [p. 182(15–16)]. Cf. *pennaide moire* in *Teagasg Maoil Ruain = Teaching of Mael Ruain* 24 [Gwynn, pp. 40–1].

we can now ascertain. But special circumstances tend to be enumerated, thus revealing some practical elements of what a penitent was expected to endure as an exile. Several penitentials dictate a regime of fasting, often abstaining from wine and meat or living on a diet of bread and water,[21] and constant prayer.[22] The *Tres Canones Hibernici* give our most detailed view of penitential exile: this text demands an austere existence for a king who kills a man 'attached to a bishop' (*iuxta episcopum*, perhaps a client). The sinner 'shall render to God all his inheritance and all his substance' and must live 'without flesh and wife and horse, on dry bread, and with meagre clothing and not stay for two nights in one house save only in the principal festivals or if sickness lays hold of him'.[23] For other non-clerical exiles, penance might require that the penitent lay down his arms, and proceed into 'unarmed exile',[24] or to give up material wealth.[25]

An interesting detail of a penitential journey overseas is included in the story of Maccuil, the cruel tyrant in Muirchú's *Vita Patricii*. After first defying and planning to kill Patrick, Maccuil is won over by the saint's miraculous powers, and converts to Christianity. He begs the saint for forgiveness. Patrick specifies that the repentant man must

> go down to the seashore unarmed...and tak[e] none of your property with you except one paltry short garment which just barely covers your body....

In one of the earliest surviving examples of the punishment of setting adrift discussed in chapter four, Patrick orders the tyrant to chain himself in a small oarless boat and set out to sea. Maccuil obeys Patrick's commands; the winds then take him to the shores of Euonia, where the two bishops Conindrus and Rumilus find him. The narrative continues:

> When they saw the man in his single garment they were surprised and took pity on him; they lifted him from the sea and received him hospitably.[26]

The bishops' recognition of Maccuil's 'single garment' implies that he was thus marked recognisably, perhaps in the distinctive clothing of a penitent, an early Irish equivalent

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[21] *Paenitentiale Vinniani* 12 [Bieler, p. 76(31), 78(2–3), 78(4)]; ibid., 23 [p. 80(26)–82(1)]; ibid., 24 [p. 82(8–9); ibid., 30 [p. 84(20–25, 28–9)]; *Tres Canones Hibernici* 3 [p. 182(21–2)]; *Paenitentiale S. Columbani*, B 1 [p. 98(28)]; ibid., B 2 [p. 98(34)]; ibid., B 13 [p. 102(5)]; ibid., 20 [p. 104(10–11)].

[22] *Paenitentiale Vinniani* 12 [Bieler, p. 76(31)].

[23] *Tres Canones Hibernici* 3 [Bieler, p. 182(20–6)].

[24] *Paenitentiale S. Columbani* B 13 [Bieler, p. 102(5)]; ibid., B 20 [p. 104(10)].

[25] *Tres Canones Hibernici* 1–3 [Bieler, p. 182(1–26)].

[26] Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.24(23).13–21 [Bieler, pp. 104–6]. *Tunc tamen egredire nunc inermis ad mare...nihil tollens tecum de tua substantia praeter uile et paruum indumentum quo possit corpus tantum contegi...habens hoc insigne peccati tui in capite tuo... Hii uero uidentes uirum unius habitus mirati sunt et miserti sunt illius eliuaueruntque de mari suscipientes cum gaudio.*

of 'sackcloth and ashes'. (One would think that the fetters and the oarless boat would have been more obvious clues, but they are not mentioned in relation to the bishops' observations.) Their response of immediately receiving Maccuil also reinforces the idea that he would have been considered a *peregrinus*, for whom bishops were required to show hospitality.

Several penitentials dictate specifically that a penitent proceed to a foreign land; the word most often used for the native land is *patria*, which could equally mean a *túath* or the island of Ireland.[27] An overseas *peregrinatio* was considered more virtuous—and therefore undoubtedly a more efficacious penance—than one that did not involve crossing the sea.[28] In some cases in the *Vita Columbae*, when a penitent arrived in the abbot's presence to confess and be assigned penance, the abbot absolved the sinner immediately, as if the fortitude and repentance shown by journeying across the sea was judged to be penance enough.[29]

As we have seen, for an Irishman to leave his land was a severe and danger-filled penalty. In addition to the hazards of sea travel, in Ireland to venture outside of one's own people could carry many dangers. The imposition of exile therefore must be viewed as a potential death-sentence; an individual embracing such a penalty voluntarily was invested with commensurate esteem.

8.2 Penitential Centres

The Irish penitentials also reveal that the penance of exile/*peregrinatio* was not an individual exercise, but took place under the guidance of a senior churchman; the mechanisms that grew around the idea of supervised penance are of particular interest. The *Penitential of Finnian*, for example, only allows a penitential exile to return only 'if he has done well and is approved by the testimonial of the abbot or priest to whom he was committed'.[30] Abbots in particular are placed in charge of penance, an aspect that is borne out in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae.* Adomnán makes numerous references to penitents who come to the great abbot of Iona to expiate their sins; throughout this work penitents arrive in boats from abroad, some of them asking to do penance with St

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[27] E.g. *Paenitentiale S. Columbani*, B 1 [Bieler, pp. 98(27, 32)]; *Paenitentiale Vinniani* 12 [Bieler, p. 78(4)], 23 [p. 80(25)], 24 [p. 82(9)].

[28] Charles-Edwards, 'Social Background', pp. 44–5; also see ch. 4, §4.5.

[29] See, e.g., Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.30, 1.32.

[30] *Paenitentiale S. Columbani* B 1 [Bieler, pp. 98(26–32)]. Also see *Paenitentiale Vinniani* 23; also cf. ibid., 12; *Paenitentiale Cummeani* 2.5; ibid., 1.12 = *Paenitentiale Bigotianum*, 1.4.1 = *Synodus Aquilonaris Britaniae* (a Welsh text) 4 = *Old Irish Penitential* 1.9.

Columcille and his monks on Iona.[31] These travelling penitents sought to live under the authority and discipline of a monastery for a fixed term as a penitential act. The penitents were not monks, though once through with their assigned penance virtuous *peregrini* might end up joining the monastery. Some petitioned the abbot as confessor;[32] others appear to have been assigned penance elsewhere, as they knew the term of their penance when they arrived.[33] Often the saint sent the penitents to another associated monastic site to perform their penance:[34] partly based upon Adomnán's *vita*, Richard Sharpe has asserted the existence of special penitential communities attached to Iona, connected to the monastery but enforcing the particular diets and prayer regimes demanded by the penitentials.[35] Adomnán's tales indicate that such centres operated in close association with the main monastery and under the authority of the abbot.[36]

Adomnán's text thus illustrates a more practical aspect of the redemptive exile that appears so often in the Irish penitentials. Iona, which apparently had regular transport and possibly commercial shipping from Ireland,[37] would have been one of the more celebrated sites for a penitent who had been ordered to do penance away from his own country to go. Surely not everyone, however, could afford for various reasons to perform a penitential *peregrinatio* overseas: such centres also appear to have been attached to most other major monasteries in Ireland.[38] But crossing the sea invested a penitential act with bodily risk and more perceived suffering far away from the sinner's homeland; in addition, for a Christian to perform penance under the auspices of such an esteemed monastery probably conferred additional merit.

8.3 Penance, Monasticism and *Peregrinatio*

The existence of penitential communities attached to Irish monasteries leads back to another peculiar and important aspect of Irish *peregrinatio* discussed briefly above: the

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[31] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.21; 1.22; 1.30; 1.32; 1.36; 2.39. Also see ibid., 1.48: the story of the pilgrim heron, possibly an allegory for a penitent, who came from Ireland to be healed on Iona and then returned home. (For penance as healing, see Bieler, *Irish Penitentials*, pp. 46–7; Sharpe, *Adomnán: Life of Columba*, p. 288 n. 132.)

[32] E.g., Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.30, 2.39.

[33] E.g., Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.32.

[34] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.21, 1.30, 2.39.

[35] Sharpe, *Adomnán: Life of St Columba*, p. 282 n. 115, pp. 306–8 n. 194. Also see Gwynn and Purton, 'Monastery of Tallaght', §52, pp. 146–7; ibid. §73, pp. 157–8.

[36] See esp. Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 1.21. This passage describes a community on Hinba; for further information on Hinba, see ibid., pp. 306–8 n. 194.

[37] See Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.39.

[38] See e.g., the *Liber Angeli* 15 [Bieler, p. 186(20–21)] on penitents in Armagh; also cf. Gwynn and Purton, 'Monastery of Tallaght', as above, n. 35.

close ties linking penance, monasticism and pilgrimage. The life of a penitent mimicked monastic life: fasting, prayer, limitations upon personal freedoms, isolation, etc. In the vignette from Muirchú's *Vita Patricii* already mentioned above, Patrick's commands to the repentant Maccuil to leave Ireland both *inermis* 'unarmed' and without any of his wealth—directives that we find in a number of penitentials—also parallel monastic existence:[39] in Ireland churchmen were assumed to be unarmed, and the renunciation of wealth is one of the oldest and most fundamental monastic sacrifices.[40] Colmán Etchingham has coined the term 'paramonastic' for such penances, that is, in imitation of a monastic/ascetic existence.[41] Indeed, some penances were *specifically* monastic. The *Penitential of Columbanus*, for example, requires a perjurer who lied out of greed to become a monk: to 'sell all his property and give it to the poor, and devote himself wholly to the Lord, and receive the tonsure, bidding farewell to the entire world, and until death let him serve God in a monastery'.[42]

Penitents might be categorised as *athlaích* (sg. *athláech*), or 'ex-laymen', implying that they occupied a position somewhere between a layperson and clergyman or monk. A gloss on the Irish legal text *Bretha im Fuillema Gell* explains 'a man who promises his perpetual chastity' as 'ex-laymen who renounce their sins i.e. going on pilgrimage'.[43] The story of the penitent Librán told by Adomnán in the *Vita Columbae* provides another example of the strong connections between penance, monasticism and monasteries. When he came to Iona, he was questioned by Columcille as to his origins and the reason for his journey. Adomnán recounts,

> The man replied that he had made the effort of the long journey in order to wipe out his sins on a *peregrinatio*. St Columcille then set out for him how strict and burdensome were the demands of monastic life, for he wanted to test the strength of his penitence.[44]

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[39] Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.24(23).13–21 [Bieler, pp. 104–6].

[40] On the Irish clergy as non-combatants, see Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, 'Birr and the Law of the Innocents', in *Adomnán at Birr, AD 697: Essays in Commemoration of the Law of the Innocents*, ed. Thomas O'Loughlin (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001), pp. 13–32 at 17; also see Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, p. 296. On the renunciation of wealth, see ch. 2, §2.1.1.

[41] E.g., Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, pp. 290–97. Also see Etchingham, 'The Idea of Monastic Austerity', p. 25.

[42] *Paenitentiale S. Columbani* B 20 [Bieler, p. 104(6–9)].

[43] *Bretha im Fuillema Gell*, *CIH* 476.32: *athlaich fris-tongat dia pecthaib .i. dul in n-ailithre*, trans. Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, p. 296. On the *athláech* see ibid., pp. 296–8. Also cf. *Bretha Nemed Toísech*, *CIH* 2100.21–2 = Liam Breatnach, 'The first third of *Bretha nemed toísech*', *Ériu* 40 (1989), pp. 1–40 at sec. 3, p. 21.

[44] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.39 [Andersons, p. 154(87b); Sharpe, p. 188]: *professus est...ad delenda in peregrinatione peccamina longo fatigatum itinere. Cui cum sanctus, ut de suae penitudinis exploraret*

The assumption in this excerpt is that the sinner would need to endure the trials of the 'monastic life', hence the form of monastic discipline and the sinner's penance are one and the same. Librán confessed his sins and asked the abbot to assign an appropriate penance; at the saint's command, Librán went to live for seven years on Tiree, where a penitential centre apparently operated.[45] After fulfilling his penance, he returned to Ireland to honour his legal duties, and then proceeded back to Iona finally to join Columba's community. This order of events is also echoed in a canon of the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, which dictates as a possible penance for stealing from a church that the thief should go on *peregrinatio* and then, when the penance is complete, become a monk.[46] Similarly, Muirchú's *Vita Patricii* relates that the repentant Maccuil when he landed on the island of Euonia and was received by the two bishops there, 'Having found spiritual fathers in the place given him by God, *he trained his body and soul according to their rule*'.[47] Muirchú's description of a *regula* indicates that, having suffered and survived his penitential journey, Maccuil also had become a monk.

In Ireland penance—like ascetic renunciation—was also envisioned as a form of martyrdom. A section of the Cambrai Homily describes not only red (bloody) martyrdom and white (ascetic) martyrdom, but also another form that it designates as *glas*, meaning blue or green. The Homily distinguishes among these three types of martyrdom, stating,

> Now there are three kinds of martyrdom which are counted as a cross to man, that is to say, white martyrdom, and green martyrdom, and red martyrdom. This is the white martyrdom to man, when he separates for sake of God from everything he loves, although he suffer fasting or labour thereat. This is the green martyrdom to him, when by means of them (fasting and labour) he separates from his desires, or suffers toil in penance and repentance. This is the red martyrdom to him, endurance of a cross or destruction for Christ's sake, as has happened to the apostles in the persecution of the wicked and in teaching the law of God. These three kinds of martyrdom are comprised in the carnal ones who resort to good repentance, who separate from their desires, who suffer tribulations, who pour forth their blood in fasting and in labour for Christ's sake.[48]

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qualitate, dura et laboriosa ante oculos monasterialia propossuisset imperia.... For clarity I have replaced the Andersons' 'Columba' with 'Columcille'.

[45] Adomnán, *Vita Columbae* 2.39; also see ibid., 1.30 (both of these passages specify the church of Mag Luinge, which was in Tiree; see Sharpe's discussion in ibid., p. 282 n. 115).

[46] *CCH* 29.7.

[47] My italics. Muirchú, *Vita Patricii* 1.24(23).21 [Bieler, p. 106]: *ille igitur ubi inuenti sunt spiritales patres in regione a Deo sibi credita ad regulam eorum corpus et animam exercuit.*

[48] Cambrai Homily, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, pp. 246–7: *Filus trechenélæ martre daneu adrímiter ar chruich du duiniu, madesgre báanmartre ocus glasmartre ocus dercmartre. Issí in bánmartre du duiniu intain scaras ar Dea fri cach réet caris, cé rucésa áini nú laubir n-oco. issí ind glasmartre dó intain scaras fria thola leó ‡ céssas sáithor i ppennit ocus aithrigi. issí in dercmartre dó foditu chruche*

The blue/green martyrdom, a number of scholars have agreed, represents a penitential regime.[49] While giving discrete definition to the three kinds of martyrdom, this text also illustrates their interconnectedness. Just as the ascetic was a less perfect inheritor of the legacy of the true martyrs, the 'blue/green martyr' was a more moderate upholder of similar principles of self-denial. These three forms of martyrdom were linked but with varying degrees of severity, virtue and, no doubt, reward in heaven.

Repeatedly we have seen the close connections between penance and the monastic vocation in Ireland. Conceptually the division between these two states was a fine one indeed. True penance, as Bieler observed in his critical notes to the text of the Irish penitentials, is a life of perfection:[50] the life of virtue sought by monks. Penitents undertook lives of deprivation and prayer in order to cleanse themselves of sin and thus seek the 'perfection' of a sinless state; monasticism was the most perfect form of penance, a lifelong commitment essentially to a permanent state of penitential suffering. Just as penitents imitated monastic life, monastic life also imitated penance: even the forms of penitential and indeed criminal punishments—such as being set adrift in a small boat made of hide—were taken up by monks voluntarily as dramatic expressions of their renunciations.[51] Hence the penitential state of exile—of *peregrinatio*—represented not only a purgative penance but a perfective monastic practice.

Excursus: *Retirement* in Clericatu

Another layperson's blend of penance and devotional separation leads to a somewhat problematic topic in relation to Irish pilgrimage. A repeating Irish custom that has sometimes been equated with *peregrinatio* is the practice of nobles withdrawing into monastic or clerical retirement.[52] This practice appears in numerous annal entries

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ocus diorcne ar Chríst amail tondeccomnuccuir dundaib abstolaib oc ingrimmim inna clóen ocuis oc forcetul recto Dée. congaibetar inna trechenél martre so issnib colnidib tuthégot dagathrigi, scarde fria tola, céste sáithu, tuesmot a fuil i n-áini ocuis i laubair ar Chríst. Translation corrected per Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, p. 292, n. 2. On this text see ch. 3, n. 105.

[49] Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom', pp. 38–44; Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, p. 292 and n. 2; *contra* John Ryan, *Irish Monasticism: Origins and Early Development* (Dublin: Talbot, 1931), pp. 198–9.

[50] Bieler, *Irish Penitentials*, p. 245 n. 1.

[51] See ch. 4, pp. 128–9.

[52] Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, pp. 360-1. See also Edel Bhreathnach, 'Abbesses, minor dynasties and kings *in clericatu*', in *Mercia*, ed. M.P. Brown and C.A. Farr (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2001), pp. 113–25 at 121–4; Clare Stancliffe, 'Kings who opted out', in *Ideal*

extending throughout the early Middle Ages; in the earliest instances it is usually expressed using the term *clericatus* or *in clericatu*; for example, an entry for the year 705 in the *Annals of Ulster* reads, *Ceallach m. Rogallnigh, rex Conacht, post clericatum obiit* 'Cellach son of Ragallach, king of Connachta, died after [entering] clerical life'.[53] There are numerous similar entries.[54] An apparently similar but sparsely recorded state for women is *in* or *post poenitentiam*; it appears only twice, both times in relation to noble females. In an entry for the year 768 we read, *Eithne ingen Bresail Bregh, regina regum Temhoriæ, regnum celeste adipisci meruit post poenitentiam* 'Eithne daughter of Bresal of Brega, the queen of kings of Temair, deserved to obtain the heavenly kingdom, having done penance'.[55] In later Irish vernacular annals—beginning in the ninth century, hence outside of the scope of this study—this practice would be phrased using the terms *ailithre/ailithir*.[56] This section asks whether this practice should indeed be considered a form of *peregrinatio*.

Given the laconic nature of annalistic evidence, it is difficult to ascertain exactly what this state of retirement entailed. Judging by the name it was a withdrawal from public life into some sort of semi-clerical existence. If the state of *clericatus* can be compared directly to the feminine version, it was a penitential state. This chain of associations leads back to a connection with monastic life. Most of the mentions of this act specify that a certain individual died in this state of clerical life; the spiritual benefits of dying in a penitential state rather than in a state of sinful secular activity are obvious. Interestingly, however, in a few instances this clerical retirement was not permanent. The *Annals of Ulster* record, for example, that in 688, *Finsnechta clericatum suscepit* 'Fínnechta assumed clerical life', then in 689, *Finsnechta reuertitur ad regnum* 'Fínnechta returns to kingship'.[57] Finnechta died in battle two years later, clearly no

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and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, ed. Patrick Wormald, Donald Bullough and Roger Collins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), pp. 154–76 at 161–5.

[53] AU 705.3.

[54] AU 688.3, 723.4, 731.2, 740.1, 744.2, 765.2, 783.2, 789.4, 826.7.

[55] AU 768.5; also see AU 861.2.

[56] For these terms see ch. 4, §4.4.2.

[57] AU 688.3, 689.2. See John Carey, 'On the Interrelationships of Some *Cín Dromma Snechtai* Texts', *Ériu* 46 (1995), pp. 71–92 at 89 on the reversal of Finnechta's life *in clericatu* as the occasion for the writing of *Echtrae Chonlai*; also see Edel Bhreathnach, '*Níell cáich úa Néill nasctar géill:* The Political Context of *Bail Chuinn Chétchathaig*', in *The Kingship and Landscape of Tara*, ed. Edel Bhreathnach (Dublin: Four Courts, 2005), pp. 49–72 at 61. Bhreathnach suggests that Fínnechta went to Iona (based on the Annals of Clonmacnoise) on the occasion of Adomnán's return in 687 of the captives from the Anglo-Saxon's raid on Brega in 685.

longer living a clerical life.[58] *Clericatus* must not, therefore, have involved monastic vows, although there can be little doubt that churchmen would have frowned upon such a noble re-entering secular life in any circumstances.

To the extent that such retirements incorporated a (usually) permanent penitential existence and/or involved actual withdrawals into seclusion or into monasteries, it might be reasonable to consider it a form, though somewhat secularised and watered-down, of monastic exile. It must be noted, however, that instances of our more standard form of pilgrimage are phrased with a noticeably different vocabulary: in the year 782, *Bachall Artgaile m. Cathail regis Connact 7 peregrinatio eius in sequenti anno ad insolam Iæ.* 'Artgal son of Cathal, king of Connacht, took the pilgrim's staff and [made] his pilgrimage in the following year to the island of Í [i.e., Iona].'[59] We later read that Artgal died in Iona in 791.[60] Similarly, the *Chronicum Scottorum* records that in the year 610, Aedh, son of Colcan, king of the Airthera, died *in peregrinatione* at Clonmacnoise.[61] Another such instance among the English is recorded by Bede, who tells of Ine, a king of the West Saxons, who lived out the end of his life in *peregrinatio* in Rome:

> After he had ruled over the West Saxons for thirty-seven years, [Ine]...left his kingdom to younger men and went to the threshold of the apostles, when Gregory was pope, to spend some of his time upon earth as a pilgrim [*peregrinari in terris*] in the neighbourhood of the holy places, so that he might be thought worthy to receive a greater welcome from the saints in heaven. At this time many Englishmen, nobles and commons, layfolk and clergy, men and women, were eager to do the same thing.[62]

The *peregrinationes* of Cathal, Aed and Ine seem to carry a more explicit meaning than the *clericatus* that we find in the Irish annals; in each case, the place of *peregrinatio* is named specifically, while the designation of *clericatus* usually stands alone. *Peregrinatio*, incidentally, is also quite rare in comparison to *clericatus*. Another passage from Bede may help to shed light upon the difference between these terms: Bede writes,

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[58] AU 695.1. For a listing of other examples of kings returning to secular life, see Carey, 'On the Interrelationships', p. 89 n. 86.

[59] AU 782.2; also see AU 707.6, 784.5.

[60] AU 791.1.

[61] *Chronicum Scottorum* 610; cf. AU 610.1, which does not mention pilgrimage; AT 610, which does.

[62] Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.7 [Colgrave/Mynors, p. 472]: *Qui cum XXXVII annis imperium tenuisset gentis illius, et ipse, relicto regno ac iuuenioribus commendato, ad limina beatorum apostolorum Gregorio pontificatum tenente profectus est, cupiens in uicinia sanctorum locorum ad tempus peregrinari in terris, quo familiarius a sanctis recipi mereretur in caelis. Quod his temporibus plures de gente Anglorum, nobiles ignobiles, laici clerici, uiri ac feminae certatim facere consuerunt.*

> At this time [i.e., AD 664] there were many in England, both nobles and commons, who, in the days of Bishops Finan and Colman, had left their own country and retired to Ireland either for the sake of religious studies *or to live a more ascetic life*. In course of time *some of these devoted themselves faithfully to the monastic life*....[63]

Admittedly in this passage Bede is recounting stories primarily of younger noblemen who went to Ireland to be educated; however, if his account mirrors similar practices by the Irish, it would seem that some nobles took on a semi-monastic way of life, often temporarily, after which they might or might not take the additional step of taking monastic vows. This practice may parallel the Irish idea of *clericatus*; whereas the more specifically-stated cases of Cathal in Iona, Aed in Clonmacnoise and Ine in Rome seem to imply a more extreme and permanent undertaking that specifically involved a journey outside of their homeland. Only the latter are named *peregrinationes*. In addition, the *bachall* (staff) may be connected to *peregrinatio*, as we saw in the entry from AU 782 noted above. More research across a broader selection of texts would be needed to draw any firm conclusions regarding the precise significance of the *bachall*, but it should be noted that in the early annals the term does not appear in conjunction with the designation of a noble *in clericatu*.[64]

Even given the limitations of the economical prose of the Irish annals, there appears to have been a qualitative difference between the act of *peregrinatio* and retirement *in clericatu*. While the penitential form and purpose of noble retirement fits some general patterns of *peregrinatio*, the different terminologies for these states of withdrawal from public life point to different conceptualisations of the two acts. I suggest that the form of *clericatus* might be more akin to the 'paramonastic', penitential regime that one might find at a penitential centre, from which one could return, whereas a *peregrinatio* involved actually joining a monastic community, a permanent

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[63] My italics. Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.27 [Colgrave/Mynors, pp. 312–13]: *Erant ibidem eo tempore multi nobilium simul et mediocrium de gente Anglorum, qui tempore Finani et Colmani episcoporum, relicta insula patria, uel diuinae lectionis uel continentioris uitae gratia illo secesserant. Et quidam quidem mox se monasticae conuersationi fideliter mancipauerunt; alii magis circueundo per cellas magistrorum lectioni operam dare gaudebant. Quos omnes Scotti libentissime suscipientes, uictum eis cotidianum sine pretio, libros quoque ad legendum et magisterium gratuitum praebere curabant.* It is clear in the section just following this passage that Egbert's training in Ireland, as described here, was not considered a *peregrinatio*, as Bede relates that he later undertook a *peregrinatio* away from his own land. This again was partly in Ireland, but its motivations were entirely different. Also see ibid. 4.3 [Colgrave/Mynors, p. 344].

[64] See Stancliffe, 'Kings who Opted Out', p. On staff-bearing generally, see Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, pp. 296, 388; Bhreathnach, 'Abbesses, Minor Dynasties', p. 121.

undertaking surely not open to all secular nobles. We should therefore relate the state of *clericatus* to monasticism and to penance, but perhaps not equate it with *peregrinatio*.

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In the analysis of the articulations of pilgrimage in early medieval Ireland, two major factors have thus been brought to the fore: monasticism and penance. *Peregrinatio* both as concept and practice is closely interlaced with both of these elements: the doctrine of allegorical alienation dovetailed with a monastic rubric of behaviour as the acts of ritualised *peregrinatio* ultimately became the real expression of the conceptual tenets. The Irish linked this idea closely to the practice of penitential discipline, which cannot be separated completely from monastic life, since monks essentially embodied the most perfect form of penance.

The earliest text to call for *peregrinatio* as a penitential act was the sixth-century Penitential of Finnian; this penalty subsequently appears in texts that span the entire early medieval period. The state of existence prescribed as penance incorporated the same senses of separation, deprivation, renunciation and suffering that we have seen throughout these pages as our definitions of *peregrinatio*. The manifestations of this penitential practice, particularly in relation to the growth of formalised monastic institutions to administer it, demonstrate the strength of the tradition of devotional exile in Ireland. That the penitential aspect of *peregrinatio*/exile informed both the forms and expressions of voluntary monastic withdrawal is unquestionable; in turn, monasticism provided the behavioural rubric—and indeed the institutional means—for penitential suffering. The moral aspect—that is, the allegory of *peregrinatio*—imbues both penance and monasticism. It is no mere coincidence that the two acts that were labelled most definitively with a vocabulary of *peregrinatio* mimic the state of separation and suffering implicit in the allegorical concept.

This chapter has illustrated another element to add to the multiplicity of practices and of institutional developments in Ireland surrounding the practice of devotional withdrawal. Although the redemptive nature of pilgrimage and asceticism had been present in Christian discourse from a very early stage, the close intertwining of penance and monasticism was an innovation of the Irish in the early Middle Ages. Penitential exile therefore provides a typical conflation of mainstream currents of

Christian practice with idiosyncratically Irish developments: it is another example of the unique blend of traditionalism and innovation in the Irish ecclesiastical circles which produced the *peregrini* whom we have met in this study.

PART IV

EPILOGUE

Chapter 9 'The Changing Theory and Practice'

In the pages of this study we have encountered a spectrum of Irish pilgrimages as they were conceptualised and practised from the dawn of the Middle Ages. The darkness of the fifth century gave way to a well-remembered peak of *peregrinatio* during the 'Age of Saints' in the sixth and early seventh centuries, followed by a less trail-blazing—but probably no less active in terms of pilgrimage—period into the eighth century. But as the eighth century drew to a close, monasticism in Ireland, and concepts of pilgrimage along with it, had entered a state of flux. A great contributor to these changes was the growth of a group of monastic reformers now known as the Céli Dé, or 'culdees', who set out to renew the increasingly secularised monastic institutions of Ireland. Moreover, a serious threat to overseas voyagers had arisen as Viking raiders took to the seas; the first recorded attack on Irish soil occurred in 795.[1] As these violent assaults by Norse sea-warriors became more frequent, the waters around Ireland were no longer as safe for devotional travellers to journey at will. Hence both the conception and the landscape of devotional travel changed radically in a very short period of time. Meanwhile, just as overseas *peregrinationes* became more difficult, the pattern of the overseas quest for salvation became increasingly romanticised and began to appear in more popular literary forms, both hagiographical and semi-secular.

This chapter explores as an epilogue two aspects of this time period, just as the great age of Irish pilgrimages drew to a close. First the Céli Dé movement is closely examined, as we question their role in the ultimate shift away from the forms of overseas ascetic renunciation investigated here. Second, the efflorescence of the voyage tale as a genre of Irish literature is described and analysed, to illustrate the continued grasp that *peregrini* retained upon the Irish imagination for many centuries after the practice itself had become sporadic and diluted.

9.1 The Céli Dé and Pilgrimage

In mid-eighth-century Ireland, a new breed of monks had emerged: the Céli Dé, or 'clients of God'.[2] 'Client' in an Irish context signifies a servile contractual relationship

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[1] AU 795.3.

[2] On the Céli Dé generally, see Michael Byrnes, 'Céli Dé', in *Medieval Ireland: Encyclopedia*, ed. Seán Duffy (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 70–71; Peter O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé: spiritual*

between a common person and a noble, akin to a vassal: the phrase is a rough rendering of the Latin *servus Dei*.[3] This Latin phrase had long been used as a designation for monks; in its Irish form from the mid-eighth century it appears to have been applied to a distinct group of reformist monks, though details of what constituted a Céle Dé and how they related to one another are not entirely clear. The father of this movement was the abbot and founder of the monastery of Tallaght, Mael Ruain (†792). The movement is surprisingly well-documented for an early medieval phenomenon: surviving documents linked to the Céli De are the Martyrology of Tallaght, the *Félire Óengusso céli dé* ('Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee'), a calendar in Old Irish verse, the Stowe Missal, a monastic rule in two discrete sections, a penitential, a table of commutations, and an account of some of the teachings and practices of Mael Ruain and his fellow reformers, which is closely related to the monastic rule.[4] Scholars have generally agreed that the Céli Dé were a response to a perceived laxity and secularisation among the monks and clergy in Ireland.[5] Most of the tenets of their rule revolved around strict regulation of food and drink, but among their most notable practices was a re-invigoration of the anchoritic ideal. As the Céli Dé movement grew, commensurately more mentions of anchorites appear in the Irish annals, many of them attached to Céli Dé monastic foundations or sites with demonstrable ties to the reformers.[6]

In the context of the present study their role involves a curious contradiction. The Céli Dé have long been considered by modern scholars to have preached vehemently against pilgrimage. Indeed, the words of Mael Ruain, repeated in two separate texts, relate a strident and severe denunciation of leaving one's land:

> This is what Mael Ruain heard said by venerable persons about deserting the country. Any one who deserts his country (save by removing from the east of it to

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reform in Ireland 750–900, 2nd edn. (Dublin: Editions Tailliura, 1981); idem, *The Spirituality of the Céli Dé Reform Movement in Ireland*, 750–900 (Dublin: Carmelite publications, 1977); Robin Flower, '"The Two Eyes of Ireland." Religion and Literature in Ireland in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries', in *The Church of Ireland, AD 432–1932* ed. William Bell and N.D. Emerson (Dublin: Church of Ireland, 1932), pp. 66–75; William Reeves, *The Culdees of the British Islands* (orig. publ. Dublin: M.H. Gill, 1864, repr. Felinfach: Llanerch, 1994).

[3] On the name, see Reeves, *Culdees of the British Islands*, pp. 1–5; for an extensive discussion of its numerous appearances in Irish texts, see O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé*, pp. 16–28. Cf. Flower, 'Two Eyes of Ireland', pp. 67–70.

[4] Bieler, *Irish Penitentials*, pp. 47–8.

[5] Kenney, *Sources*, p. 468; O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé*, p. x and pp. 4–9.

[6] See O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé*, pp. 12–15.

the west and from the north of it to the south) is a denier of Patrick in heaven and of the faith he brought to Erin.[7]

A less intense but equally direct censure of pilgrimage appears in a well-known short poem written in the vernacular, which counsels that a Christian cannot simply perform physical feats and change his/her geographical location for spiritual growth:

> To go to Rome
> Is much of trouble, little of profit:
> The King whom thou seekest here,
> Unless thou bring him with thee,
> thou wilt not find.[8]

This poem—usually called by its first line, 'Teicht do Róim'—has been linked to the Céli Dé, based largely upon its date (approx. ninth century) and the idea that it expresses; though this creates a circular argument, its attribution is a reasonable one. Another similar sentiment is expressed in the *vita* of St Samthann of Clonbroney, which has been tentatively dated from internal evidence to the late eighth century.[9] Though the early dating of this text is by no means secure,[10] a connection between Samthann and Mael Ruain was articulated as early as the ninth century,[11] and she is honoured in the Pentecost litany in the Stowe missal, in the recorded teachings of Mael Ruain and Maeldithruib, the *Félire Oengusso*, and the *Martyrology of Tallaght*, all products of the Céli Dé movement.[12] In the very last chapter of the *vita* that describes the events of the

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[7] *Rule of the Celi De = Riagail na Céle nDé* §44, ed. Edward Gwynn, in *The Rule of Tallaght*, *Hermathena* 44, 2nd suppl. vol. (Dublin: Hodges Figgis; London: Longmans, Green, 1927), pp. 64–87 at 74–7: *Is ead roscualai Moelruain la sruthi di dergu in tire, is diultadach Patraic hi nim 7 na hirsi tuc i nErinn nach oen deraig a thír acht assa hoirthiur ina hiarthar 7 asa tuaiscert ina descert.* Also in the document in Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS 3.B.23 (which does not have a standard title), edited by E.J. Gwynn and W.J. Purton in 'The Monastery of Tallaght', §17, *PRIA* 29C (1911), pp. 115–79 at 133.

[8] 'Teicht do Róim' = 'To go to Rome': *Teicht do Róim / mór saído, becc torbai. / In rí chon-daigi hi foss / manim-bera latt, ní fogbai.* Irish text ed. James Carney, *Medieval Irish Lyrics* (Portlaoise: Dolmen Press, orig. publ. 1967, republ. 1985), p. 80; trans. Kuno Meyer, *Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry*, 2nd edn (London: Constable, 1913), p. 100.

[9] Dorothy Africa, 'Life of the Holy Virgin Samthann', in *Medieval Hagiography: an Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head (New York and London: Garland, 2000), pp. 97–110 at 101–2; also Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), pp. 232–3.

[10] E.g. Richard Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, p. 266; Kenney, *Sources*, p. 465.

[11] See Gwynn and Purton, 'The Monastery of Tallaght', *PRIA* 29C (1911), pp. 115–79 at 151. Based upon their *obiits*, this connection is unlikely; see Dorothy Ann Bray, 'Motival Derivations in the *Life of St Samthann*', *Studia Celtica* 20–21 (1985–6), pp. 78–86 at 84.

[12] *The Stowe Missal: MS D.II.3 in the library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin*, ed. George F. Warner, Henry Bradshaw Society 31–2, 2 vols. (London: Harrison and Sons, 1906), fol. 30r, vol. 2, p. 14. Gwynn and Purton, 'The Monastery of Tallaght', §61, pp. 149–51. *Félire Óengusso Céli Dé: The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*, ed. Whitley Stokes, Henry Bradshaw Society 29 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1905), December 19, p. 252. *Martyrology of Tallaght*, December 19, p. 87 and marginal poem on pp. 124–5 of edition; also ibid., another marginal poem on pp. 108–9 of edition. On these texts and their connection to the Céli Dé, see Bieler, *Irish Penitentials*, pp. 47–8; Warner, *Stowe Missal*, p. 32; T.F.

saint's life—and thus inhabiting a position of emphasis in the text—a short vignette tells of one Daircellach, a teacher who came to Samthann to ask her advice. He wished to defer his studies and prayer to go on pilgrimage overseas (*ad peregrinandum transfretare*). The saint responds, 'If God is not to be found on this side of the sea, certainly we may go abroad. For since God is near all who summon him, no need of voyaging besets us. One can reach heaven from any place on earth'.[13] The idea that external pilgrimage was not in itself an adequate form of devotion if interior virtue was not present has appeared in Christian discourse at least from Late Antiquity.[14] Its re-emergence in the circle of the Céli Dé along with Mael Ruain's recorded censure have combined to form a portrait of the Céli Dé as anti-pilgrimage zealots.[15]

This portrait, however, is incomplete: these quotations and commentaries must be placed into a broader context of the entire corpus of Céli Dé texts. While the above texts unambiguously illustrate objections to certain types of devotional travel, others provide contrasting views. In the Stowe Missal, for example, among the numerous saints whose names are invoked for their intercessory aid in the same Pentecost litany where we meet St Samthann are Sts Columcille and Brendan, and also Cormac Ua Liatháin, all figures well known for their overseas *peregrinationes*.[16] St Columcille in particular was a major figure of veneration and monastic authority in the writings of the Céli Dé.[17] The Céli Dé, therefore, did not eschew pilgrimage altogether, nor did they even downplay the great Irish past filled with saintly and heroic *peregrinationes*. Moreover, in the *Félire Oengusso*, several readings reveal the esteem in which overseas pilgrimages were still held. The feast-day of St Kevin of Glendalough, who was known for having gone to Rome, reads,

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O'Rahilly, 'The History of the Stowe Missal', *Ériu* 10 (1926–8), pp. 95–109 at 95; O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé*, pp. 152–3; cf. Kenney, *Sources*, p. 699.

[13] *Vita Samthanne* §24 (L&S 459), ed. Plummer *VSH*, 2:253–61 at 260: *Si citra mare Deus inueniri non posset, utique nos transfretaremus. Cum ergo prope est Deus omnibus inuocantibus eum, nulla nobis transfretandi necessitas incumbit. Ab omni enim terra perueniri potest ad regnum celorum*; trans. Africa 'Life of the Holy Virgin Samthann', p. 108.

[14] See ch. 2, n. 85.

[15] See, e.g., O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé*, pp. 111–13.

[16] *Stowe Missal*, fol. 30r, vol. 2, p. 14; also ibid., fol. 33, vol. 2, p. 16. Also *Martyrology of Tallaght*, ed. R.I. Best and H.L. Lawlor, Henry Bradshaw Society 68 (London: Harrison, 1931), 16 May, p. 43 (Brendan); 8 June, p. 48 (Cormac Ua Liatháin); 9 June, p. 49 (Columba).

[17] See esp. Gwynn and Purton, 'The Monastery of Tallaght', §66, pp. 153–4; *Félire Óengusso,* June 9, p. 139. Also Gwynn and Purton, 'The Monastery of Tallaght', §§68–9, pp. 155–6; §80, p. 161.

> A soldier of Christ into the border of Erin, a high name over the sea's wave:
> Coemgen the chaste, fair warrior, in the Glen of two broad loughs.[18]

Another sea-faring saint is recorded as 'Torannán lasting, deedful, over the wide ship-abounding sea'.[19] There a number of similar entries that depict saintly overseas journeys in dramatic and heroic terms, including, interestingly, the Briton Egbert whom Bede also records coming to Ireland as a *peregrinus* for the sake of God.[20]

Even more suggestive is a section of the Stowe missal inviting prayers for the Church, the apostles, martyrs and various prelates, in which the following prayer appears:

> *Pro perigrinantibus et iter agentibus ac nauigantibus pro poenitentibus et catacominis: oramus.*
>
> For those living in *peregrinatio* and undertaking journeys and sailing, for penitents and catechumens, we pray.[21]

The present-participial form implies that this prayer aims to aid those of the faithful *currently* undertaking journeys, whether they are physical/geographical voyages of the *peregrini* and voyagers (and possibly penitents) or the spiritual quests of repentant and aspirant Christians. *Peregrinationes* and *navigationes*, therefore, were not simply aspects of a heroic past to be venerated but not emulated: they were acts that were occurring in the present tense.

Across the broad range of evidence of the Céli Dé, an inconsistent picture thus emerges. It is difficult to reconcile Mael Ruain's well-attested denunciation against leaving Ireland with the broader (and more numerous) celebrations of seafaring saints and devotional travellers, but some possibilities suggest themselves. The vignette from the *Life of Samthann* may provide the most useful clue. In this story the would-be pilgrim intended to 'defer study, and leave off prayer' in order to perform a pilgrimage.[22] This implies that he would have ceased his monastic discipline in order to go overseas: this characterisation does not seem to describe an ascetic *peregrinatio ex patria*, for an ascetic *peregrinus* did not abandon his vocation. Daircellach's

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[18] *Félire Óengusso Céle Dé: The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*, ed. Whitley Stokes, Henry Bradshaw Society 29 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1905), 3 June, p. 138: *Mil Críst i crích nÉrenn, ard n-ainm tar tuind trethan, Cóemgen cáid cáin cathar, i nGlinn dá lind lethan.*

[19] *Félire Óengusso*, 12 June, p. 140: *Torannán buan bannach tar ler lethan longach.*

[20] For Egbert, see *Félire Óengusso*, December 8, p. 250. Cf. Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.9 [Colgrave/Mynors, p. 474–6]. For other sea-faring references in the *Félire Óengusso*, see e.g. 11 December, p. 251, 14 August, p. 176, 21 June, p. 141.

[21] *Stowe Missal,* fol. 17r, vol. 2, p. 6.

[22] *Vita Samthanne* §24 [Plummer, *VSH* 2:260; Africa, p. 108]: *Studium postponere propono, et orationi uacare.*

characterisation as a teacher—*magister*—as well as the emphasis in the story upon his abandonment of his *studium* ***spirituale*** (as opposed to more secular studies), may provide a clue as to the nature of his proposed journey. For contemporary with the mid to late Céli Dé movement was the beginning of shift in the nature of voyaging scholars. No longer do we find saintly ascetics and intrepid abbots forging new paths through the wildernesses of Gaul, but instead we see professional Irish scholars—some of them demonstrably monks—dispensing their erudition in the royal courts and palace schools of Carolingian Europe.[23] Daircellach as an Irish-trained, learned monastic would have been an attractive acquisition for such a court. A ninth-century monk of St-Gall wrote an account of two such scholars, which sheds an interesting light upon this practice: he wrote,

> Two *Scotti* from Ireland arrived in Gaul together with British merchants. They were incomparably well trained in secular as well as sacred literature. As they had nothing to offer to the crowds of purchasers that gathered, they cried out: 'If anyone craves wisdom, let him come to us and get it, we have it for sale'.[24]

In time these *Scotti*, according to the author, ended up in the court of Charlemagne; there they hoped to *transigi peregrinatio*, 'to complete [their] pilgrimage'.[25] Hence at least from a continental perspective, the courtly scholars from Ireland inherited the legacy and label of *peregrini*. Back in Ireland, for a conservative movement that eschewed secularity in monasticism, desertions from the monastery schools of Ireland and the perceived 'sale' of sacred wisdom must have been particularly shameful: perhaps this was the sort of journey Daircellach meant to undertake when he proposed to peregrinate across the sea, and the sort of sinful abandonment of Ireland that Mael Ruain denounced.

This does not, however, explain the sentiments of the poem 'Teicht do Róim' ('To go to Rome'). But this poem also does not appear to refer to *peregrinatio ex patria*. Instead 'Teicht do Róim' depicts a pilgrim who seeks Christ in a certain location, which suggests more the idea of a quest or a goal-oriented pilgrimage than one of worldly

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[23] On these scholars, see esp. Gerard Murphy, '*Scotti Peregrini*', *Studies* 17 (1928), pp. 39–50, 229–44; Pierre Riché, 'Les irlandais et les princes carolingiens aux VIIIe et IXe siecles', in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, ed. Heinz Löwe, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), vol. 2, pp. 735–45.

[24] Notker Balbulus, *Gesta Karoli Magni* 1.1 [Haefele, p. 1(8–14)], trans. Ludwig Bieler, 'The Island of Scholars', *Revue du Moyen Age Latin* 8 (1952), pp. 213–34 at 217: *contigit duos Scottos de Hibernia cum mercatoribus Brittanis ad litus Galliae devenire, viros et in saecularibus et in sacris scripturis incomparabiliter eruditos. Qui cum nihil ostenderent venale, ad convenientes emendi gratia turbas clamare solebant: 'Si quis sapientiae cupidus est, veniat ad nos et accipiat eam; nam venalis est apud nos'.*

[25] Notker Balbulus, *Gesta Karoli Magni* 1.1 [Haefele, p. 2(12–13)].

renunciation. The poet's words may, therefore, be a reference to Irish pilgrimage *ad loca sancta*. From a cynical viewpoint one might hypothesise that the Céli Dé denounced leaving Ireland in order to foster the budding pilgrimage cult of Mael Ruain.[26] Just as plausible, however, is the possibility that pilgrimages to Rome and to other foreign shrines had become secularised and had thus lost much of their implicit devotional value. Paths had long been established from Ireland to Rome; the journey itself was undoubtedly more comfortable, with resting points at Irish foundations along the way, than it had been in the more heroic age of trail-blazing travellers. Furthermore, within the shores of Ireland relics of saints—including those that might be found in Rome—could be found by the faithful.[27] A pilgrimage overseas might be an exciting journey for a Christian, but it was at best an unnecessary gesture and at worst a wrongly-motivated act.

There is no clear evidence, therefore, that the Céli Dé considered overseas ascetic pilgrimage *ex patria* in a negative light. From a purely practical standpoint their membership may have begun to concentrate upon more local sites due to the great dangers posed by marauding Vikings. But those Christians already abroad do not receive particular comment: abbots of Iona feature prominently in the teachings of Mael Ruain and Maeldithruib, as well as the *Félire Oengusso*.[28] In addition, as we have seen, the *sancti peregrini* of centuries past continued to be revered within this reform movement. Thus our understanding of the Céli Dé's condemnation of pilgrimage must be narrowed, as it does not appear to address the type of pilgrimage that has dominated this study. This movement of reforming ascetic monks embraced and revitalised the anchoritic ideal and continued to promote the renunciations that sometimes took very devout Christians across the sea. What they do appear to criticise is the practice of abandoning the monastery to live more secular lives in foreign lands, and the act of overseas pilgrimage *ad loca sancta* for its empty promise of salvation. The idea of the Céli Dé as anti-pilgrimage zealots must therefore be revised.

Nonetheless, their conception of *peregrinatio* within their monastic discipline also deserves comment. A section of the *Martyrology of Tallaght* that enunciates the

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[26] The beginnings of such a cult are mentioned in the *Félire Oengusso*, Prologue §225, p. 26.

[27] See discussion of Roman relics in Ireland in Charles Doherty, 'The use of relics in early Ireland', in *Ireland and Europe = Irland und Europa*, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), pp. 89–101 at 91–3.

[28] See, e.g., Gwynn and Purton, 'The Monastery of Tallaght', §47, p. 144; also §65, p. 153.

tenets of monastic virtue illustrates that among the Céli Dé the renunciation of home and kindred remained an integral aspect of the monastic vocation and of the ascetic life.

> If he be a cleric, let him not be wrathful.
> Let not his voice be raised. Let him not swear falsely.
> Let him not be greedy. Let him not be treasure loving.
> Let him not be niggardly, lying.
> Let him not be fault-finding at meals.
> Do not slander thy fellow.
> Thy side half-bare, thy bed half-cold
> From Christ, God's Son, mayest thou have thy reward.
> *Absence from thy bodily family until the day of thy death.*
> Grassless earth over thee at the end of thy journeying.
> Knowledge, steadfastness, patience,
> Silence without muteness.
> Humility, purity, patience.
> Take not the world, O cleric.[29]

Here the renunciant left his family forever: under the Céli Dé the basic tenets of renunciation remained the same as we have seen throughout the foregoing chapters.

But as we saw in chapter four, the Old Irish penitential—another text attributed to the circle of the Céli Dé—demonstrates a subtle shift in attitude towards the different forms of monastic renunciation: it prescribes, 'As for him who desires to reach the pitch of perfectness, he distributes all he has to the poor and needy and goes on pilgrimage (*i n-ailithri*) or lives in destitution in a communal church till he goes to heaven'.[30] This tract gives two choices to one seeking salvation: pilgrimage, *or* living a communal life of poverty, i.e. cenobitic monasticism. But the balance between these two options is one that we have not encountered in earlier texts. This penitential *equates* pilgrimage with communal monasticism: pilgrimage here is not invested with any more value, perceived effort, or most importantly, opportunity for salvation, than life in an established community. Hence we may place during the active period of the Céli Dé a distinct shift

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[29] My italics. The edited Irish text (with *Leabhar Breac* variants noted) is printed in *The Martyrology of Tallaght, from the Book of Leinster and MS.511–4 in the Royal Library, Brussels*, ed. R.I. Best and H.L. Lawlor, Henry Bradshaw Society 68 (London: Harrison, 1931), pp. 110–12: *Diamba cleirech níba írach / nib ard a guth. Ni thoe eithech. / niba santach. niba setach. / nib neóit brécach / Nib airbirech fri séire. / ní ecnaige do cheile. / Do thaeb lethfas. do lige lethfuar / o Crist mac Dé rotbé a luag. / Ingnais do cheneoil collaide / co llaith th' éca / Uir anfeóir thorut / i forciund do seta / fis. fos . feidle / toa cen amble / umla . idna ainmne. / Nir gaba doman a bachlaig.* A variant version of this poem that further emphasises the foreign aspect of ascetic monasticism can be found in English in Robin Flower, *The Irish Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1947), p. 57, which is taken from the *Leabhar Breac*, Dublin, Royal Irish Academy MS 23.P.16 (RIA Catalogue no. 1230), p. 101; the variant readings also appear in the notes of Best and Lawlor's edition. The *Leabhar Breac* version is not Old Irish and thus falls outside of the time period of this study.

[30] *The Old-Irish Penitential* 3.6 [Binchy, p. 267; Gwynn, p. 154]. *Mad intii adcobra rosá cléthe foirbthetad fodali huli do bochtaib 7 adilcnechaib 7 tet i n-ailithri no bith innmnochta ind eclais oentath co te dochum nime.* For the relationship of this document to the Céli Dé, see Bieler, *Irish Penitentials*, pp. 47–8. On the phrase *eclais oentath*, see O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé*, p. 9 and 35–6.

in the relative value of pilgrimage in relation to the more standard cenobitic existence. No longer was the former perceived as the most extreme and most heroic form of devotion, but was simply one of several choices of vocation.

The years of the Céli Dé movement were a time of change in Christian Ireland. During this period the Vikings had begun their violent forays into Ireland; the seas had suddenly become much more dangerous. Hence we find a great increase in the number of anchoritic foundations within Ireland rather than outside of it, and it is very likely that the number of overseas ascetic *peregrini* shrank commensurately. As they relate to the present discussion of *peregrinatio ex patria*, therefore, the philosophy and spirituality of the Céli Dé themselves did not effect any great change upon the *conception* of pilgrimage, though they did subtly reassign its devotional value. But the coincidence of their return to extreme ascetic ideals and their focus upon strict asceticism *within* the rubric of cenobitic monasticism, combined with a new outlook toward overseas travel from Ireland, must have contributed to a decline of overseas monastic *peregrinatio*, as Ireland began to look inward to her own wildernesses—rather than outward into the boundless seas—for her desert places.[31]

9.2 Voyagers and Voyage Tales

As we have seen, even among the sober and serious Céli Dé, the heroic adventurer-monks of centuries past inspired the Irish imagination. This fascination is revealed in a number of texts that venerated and even mythologised the 'pilgrim-saints' of Ireland. Some of these revered figures have been conspicuously absent from the preceding discussions of Irish pilgrimage; though many of these—Brendan being the most obvious example—no doubt existed and should be included in the 'monastic founders' category explored in chapter six, the texts that record their careers provide little useful detail of their lives or their pilgrimages. Thus it is in the present context of literary and mythological sources that they appear, already fully-formed as holy seafarers. These texts cannot tell us much about the saints themselves, but give insight into the continued importance of such figures in Irish Christian culture long after the 'Age of the Saints' had drawn to a close.

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[31] On the many *disert* and *Dysart* place-names in Ireland from this period, see Deirdre Flanagan, 'The Christian impact on early Ireland: place-names evidence', in *Irland und Europa. Die Kirche im Frühmittelalter = Ireland and Europe: the Early Church*, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), pp. 25–51 at 35–6. For listings of these placenames see Aubrey Gwynn and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: Ireland* (London: Longman, 1970).

Several manifestations of the enduring influence of these monastic seafarers are investigated in this section. The first and arguably the most famous is the dossier of St Brendan of Clonfert, dubbed 'the Navigator', whose hagiography and adventure tales depict an elaborate Odyssey-like voyage in search of a land of promise. At least in part from such origins also arose the vernacular literary genre of the *immrama*, a uniquely Irish group of voyage tales that tell of similar seafaring quests that lead the voyager towards redemption, even when that is not his initial goal.

9.2.1 *St Brendan the Navigator*

As we have seen repeatedly in these pages, the saints who sailed away from the shores of Ireland were mythical heroes in the Irish Christian consciousness. This evolution began very early in the Middle Ages, undoubtedly even before it first started to emerge in the seventh century in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*. Adomnán's text features one section, already discussed in multiple chapters of this thesis, which is a precursor to the Irish genre of the 'voyage tale'. This is, of course, the story of Cormac Ua Liatháin's voyages to find a 'desert in the ocean'. In this chapter of the *Vita Columbae*, Adomnán gives an uncharacteristically detailed account of one of Cormac's sea journeys, surely based upon earlier traditions telling of Cormac as an intrepid sea voyager. It will be remembered that Cormac set out with a company of monks three times to find his island retreat, and failed each time. He faced monstrous perils from the depths of the sea and survived only through faith and prayer.[32] Adomnán's was a very brief and simple version of the tales that were yet to come.

St Brendan flourished some time in the sixth century; the annals record his death in the year 577.[33] He was the founder of the great monastic centre of Clonfert and is also credited with the foundation of other daughter-sites,[34] but his greatest fame was in his role as a voyaging saint. The earliest extant story of Brendan appears to be the extraordinarily popular *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, an elaborately embroidered, odyssey-like sea adventure, in which the saint sails through numerous islands searching for the Land of Promise where he would await the end of time. This work has been

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[32] See ch. 7, pp. 202–3.
[33] AU 577.3.
[34] Foundation recorded in AU 558.3, also 564.3.

dated to the late eighth century.[35] To summarise the basic plot elements, St Brendan receives a visitor one day in his monastery in Clonfert, one Barrfind, who tells him of his own journey to the Promised Land of Saints, which he saw but was not able to reach.[36] Inspired by this story to search the seas for Paradise, Brendan set sail with a company of fourteen monks. They encountered numerous islands with fantastic and miraculous inhabitants: one with herds of giant sheep; another that was really a gigantic fish; another filled with innumerable birds who could speak and chant the monastic offices. They met St Ailbe and his community living in silence on their own island of promise, apparently ageless and awaiting the end of time.[37] Though the voyagers often struggled with hunger and thirst, they were invariably provided—usually through miraculous means—with food and water along the way. Like Barrfind before them, the saint and his monks got very close to the Land of Promise, but could not enter. Brendan was told there that the time of his death was near, when he would be allowed to enter the hallowed land. He is told by a steward of that land: 'The final day of your *peregrinatio* draws near so that you may sleep with your fathers'.[38] The double meaning of *peregrinatio* as his sea journey and as his life was undoubtedly deliberate. Brendan is commanded to return to his home, where he obediently awaited the end of his earthly pilgrimage.

Elements of *peregrinatio* that we have encountered in previous chapters abound in these stories; for example, when they lost wind and were exhausted by rowing, Brendan orders his company pull in their rudder and oars and allow God to take their boat where he would, thus emulating those monks who cast themselves to the sea in a small boat, not knowing where they might land.[39] (One wonders how much the famous Irishmen of the year 891 in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle might have been influenced by

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[35] David Dumville, 'Two Approaches to the Dating of the *Nauigatio Sancti Brendani*', *Studi Medievali*, 3rd ser., 29 (1988), pp. 87–102; Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, p. 17; Jonathan Wooding, 'Introduction to the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*', in *The Voyage of St Brendan*, ed. W.R.J. Barron and Glyn S. Burgess (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), pp. 13–25 at 18–19.

[36] *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*, ed. Carl Selmer, Publications in Mediaeval Studies 16 (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959; repr. Dublin: Four Courts, 1989); trans. John O'Meara, *The Voyage of St Brendan*, ed. Barron and Burgess, pp. 26–64.

[37] On St Ailbe's voyage tales, see Máire Herbert, 'Literary Sea-Voyages and Early Munster Hagiography', in *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Celtic Studies*, Vol. I: Language, Literature, History, Culture, ed. Ronald Black, William Gillies and Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh (East Linton, Scotland: Tuckwell, 1999), pp. 182–9.

[38] *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* 28 [Selmer, p. 80(29–30); O'Meara, p. 63]: *Appropinquant enim dies peregrinacionis tue, ut dormias cum patribus tuis.*

[39] *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* 6 [Selmer, p. 12(8–9); O'Meara, p. 30]; 14 [Selmer, p. 39(2–3); O'Meara, p. 44].

tales such as this.[40]) The plot-line, which takes the company to different islands to celebrate the major feast-days of the year, repeatedly concentrates upon moralising stories, often contrasting the virtue and wisdom of the saint with his less capable disciples. Its usefulness as a teaching tool particularly in a monastic setting is evident, as the standard monastic virtues are repeatedly highlighted: obedience, discipline, and especially faith.[41] The legend of Brendan was fantastically popular in the Middle Ages.

9.2.2 *Immrama*[42]

The *immrama* ('voyages', lit. 'rowing about') are a genre of literature closely connected to hagiographical voyage tales such as those of St Brendan: James Carney and Séamus MacMathúna have asserted that at least two of the surviving *immram* texts used the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* as a source.[43] The extant *immrama* are the prose *Immram curaig Máel Dúin*, possibly the earliest text dated roughly to the eighth or ninth century,[44] the verse *Immram Snédgusa ocus Maic Riagla* and the prose *Immram curaig Húa Corra*, both of which are substantially later texts of the tenth and eleventh centuries respectively.[45] Somewhat problematic is the *Immram Brain*, the earliest of these texts, which contains elements of both *immrama* and *echtrai* and is thus difficult to categorise.[46]

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[40] See ch. 4, pp. 128–9.

[41] See discussion of the allegorical functions of the text in Dorothy Ann Bray, 'Allegory in the *Navigatio sancti Brendani*', *Viator* 26 (1995), pp. 1–10, repr. in *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature*, ed. Jonathan M. Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), pp. 175–86.

[42] For a general discussion of the *immrama*, see William Flint Thrall, 'Clerical Sea Pilgrimages and the *Imrama*', in in *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature*, ed. Jonathan M. Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), pp. 15–21; more recently, Thomas Owen Clancy, 'Subversion at Sea: Structure, Style and Intent in the *Immrama*', in *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature*, ed. Jonathan M. Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), pp. 194–225.

The *echtrai* 'outing' or 'adventure', a genre of stories often associated with the *immrama*, are not considered here. Though these too are voyage tales with moral underpinnings, they are primarily secular and too far divorced from the pattern of monastic pilgrimage to enter into the present discussion. For an in-depth discussion of the context and relationships between these texts, see Kim McCone, *Echtrae Chonnlai and the Beginnings of Vernacular Narrative Writing in Ireland: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Notes, Bibliography and Vocabulary*, Maynooth Medieval Irish Texts 1 (Maynooth: NUI Maynooth Department of Old and Middle Irish, 2000), pp. 47–119; cf. David N. Dumville, '*Echtrae* and *Immram*: Some Problems of Definition', *Ériu* 27 (1976), pp. 73–94.

[43] James Carney, 'Review of Selmer's edition of the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*', *Medium Ævum* 32 (1963), pp. 37–44, esp. 40–43; Séamus MacMathúna, 'The Structure and Transmission of Early Irish Voyage Literature', in *Text und Zeittiefe*, ed. H.L.C. Tristram (Tubingen: Gunter Narr, 1994), pp. 313–57.

[44] *Immram curaig Máel Dúin*, ed. and trans. H.P.A. Oskamp, *The Voyage of Máel Dúin: a study in early Irish voyage literature* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1970).

[45] For a recent account of the dates of these texts, see Clancy, 'Subversion at Sea', p. 198; for short summaries of the plots see ibid. pp. 209–17.

[46] See Dumville, '*Echtrae* and *Immram*', pp. 83–8, argues that it has been incorrectly named and subsequently mis-categorised as an *immram*. Cf. Kim McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in*

These tales follow a repetitive pattern that we first encountered in Adomnán's account of Cormac Ua Liatháin, and have seen again in the *Navigatio* of St Brendan. A voyager sets out in search of an otherworldly land; the voyage proceeds through a series of islands, each of which brings its own adventure, discovery and usually, a moral allegory. After experiencing many dangers and dramatic events along the way, the voyager eventually returns home, unable to find the sacred land that he sought. The main difference posed by the *immrama* is that the voyagers themselves are not saintly men of God. These were not devotional tales in which the saint's virtues might be meditated upon by the Christian faithful. Their protagonists are flawed and fallible, and only survive through the favour of God. They were still Christian adventure tales with heavy-handed moral allegory, but without the element of unimpeachable sanctity.

The *Immram curaig Máel Dúin* will serve as a representative example of the genre. The tale begins with an introduction to its protagonist, the son of a warrior and a nun—hence the product of a sinful union—who is being fostered by the queen of his region. His parentage is initially unknown to him, but he eventually finds out the identity of his parents, and that his father has been murdered. He sets out on a journey to take revenge upon the murderers, who live on an island that he must find in the ocean. Like Brendan and his company, Máel Dúin journeys through numerous small islands with magical and miraculous beings, sharing some motifs with the *Navigatio*. He also crosses paths with various *ailithri* and other Christian faithful who live on the islands of the unknown seas. After more than a year of travelling, Máel Dúin reaches the island of murderers, but after his journey and his contact with saintly characters along the way, he forgives them their sin.

Máel Dúin's tale shares numerous plot details with the *Navigatio*.[47] Furthermore, in effect the basic shape of Máel Dúin's quest is also similar to the earlier hagiographical tales. The protagonist might be a layman and profoundly sinful, but he sets out on an odyssey that tested his faith and character, with the ultimate outcome of finding redemption. Hence the basic framework of the tale harks back to patterns discussed throughout this study, while the purpose and audience of the text had evidently shifted. While it may well be the product of a monastic environment, the

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Early Irish Literature, Maynooth Monographs 3 (Maynooth: NUI Maynooth Department of Old Irish, 1990, repr. 2000), pp. 79–81, who labels this theory as a 'classificatory straitjacket'; also idem, *Echtrae Chonnlai*, pp. 76–80.

[47] See discussion of commonalities with the *Navigatio* as well as other voyage tales in Oskamp, *Voyage of Máel Dúin*, pp. 53–66.

Immram curaig Máel Dúin fits just as easily against a secular backdrop. The intense and colourful events of this story make it an entertaining drama, while it still conveyed an underlying moral and markedly Christian message.

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These voyage stories of the eighth and ninth centuries are in effect teaching tales, illustrating the path to redemption. That the moral of each tale is set within a sea-voyage—seemingly modelled upon the older tales of saints and scholars—illustrates both commonalities and contrasts between the two genres and their intended audiences. From a thematic viewpoint, the elements of the monstrous and the supernatural give these tales a unique allegorical aspect. Particularly in the *Navigatio* a new kind of saint emerges. In his voyages the saint journeys through a chaotic and fantastical world of supernatural wonders; he is not the masterful authority sent by God as are most early saints in their hagiography. Brendan does not impose his will upon this world through his own thaumaturgic abilities: the order in these magical places is a mystery to the humans undertaking the adventure and comes only from God. Perhaps the best illustration of this aspect of the story lies in the saint's directions to his monks when they were lost at sea and their rowing became useless against the current; as we have mentioned above, rather than effecting a miraculous change in weather—as no doubt Columcille would have—Brendan instructs his monks to pull in their oars and to let the boat take them wherever God willed.[48] Brendan in the *Navigatio* thus embodies a new type of saint, faithful and obedient to God's will in the face of otherworldly perils and mysterious events. His unquestioning faith and obedience make him not only an apposite exemplar for a monastic audience; the saint's unshakeable acceptance of the chaos and unpredictability of his voyages may also reflect a moral message and prompting towards courage to a Christian population facing brutal and violent surprise attacks from the sea. The widely accepted dating of this text fixes it some time before the years 786 x 803;[49] the very close correlation with the first recorded Viking incursions into Britain and Ireland may be no mere coincidence.[50] While the seas had always symbolised danger and the unknown among the Irish, one wonders if this text reflects an era when they had become places of uncontrollable chaos and peril, and the source of unpredictable bursts of violence and death. The saint's own ability to perform

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[48] As above, p. 248, n. 39.
[49] Dumville, 'Two Approaches', p. 102.
[50] The first recorded incursions were in 787; the monastery of Lindisfarne was sacked in 793.

miracles and resolve misfortunes is not a major aspect of these tales; his immovable faith in God's overarching plan is what finally leads him to paradise. This seafaring saint was not depicted in control of the elements of nature, but instead his sanctity came from his ability to face the mysteries of God's order—unknowable to a human who could only perceive disorder—with equanimity, faith and acceptance. This pattern is repeated in the *immrama*, in which the ultimate outcomes of the voyages are fated to happen: common to all of these voyage tales is the aspect of mystery and unexplainable events, but these strange, magical and sometimes dangerous events lead to an outcome designed by God. Only through following God's plan undeterred through magical and fantastic worlds where the rules of nature do not apply can they finally achieve redemption.

Returning to the more specific topic of *peregrini*, the significance of these voyage tales in the context of the present study lies in the romanticising of the redemptive sea voyage in the Irish imagination. Monastic *peregrini* were not only protagonists of adventures themselves, but were assumed to be easily found on remote islands in the unknown waters of distant seaways. Already saints and heroes, they became characters in a literary—and undoubtedly entertaining—world of the supernatural and magical. In the *immrama*, we also find that the voyage towards salvation could also be adapted to secular main characters born into lives of terrible sin. Thus the Christian message of such tales had become more complex; while the role models of centuries past were blemishless in their sanctity, the protagonists of these new genres were perhaps better designed for audiences of fallible but faithful Christians seeking to understand the upheaval of their time.

9.3 Pilgrim Saints

Let us conclude our epilogue upon a text that embodies the great diversity of elements in Irish pilgrimage in the late eighth and early ninth centuries in Ireland: the vernacular 'Litany of Pilgrim Saints' dated *c.*800–*c.*900, a remarkable work that invokes the intercessory aid of those heroic figures who had renounced all for the sake of God.[51]

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[51] Kathleen Hughes, 'On an Irish Litany of Pilgrim Saints compiled *c.*800', *Analecta Bollandiana* 77 (1959), pp. 303–31, which also includes an annotated English translation of the text. The critical edition of the text can be found as no. 8—called the 'Litany of Irish Saints II'—in Charles Plummer, ed. and trans., *Irish Litanies, Text and Translation*, Henry Bradshaw Society 62 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1925). Hughes revised some of her conclusions regarding the provenance of the text in Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction*, p. 209, in response to E.G. Bowen, 'The Irish Sea in the Age of the

The litany represents a complex weave of real and fictional figures. A short excerpt will serve to give a sense of the text:

> Thrice fifty true pilgrims across the sea with Buite the bishop, and ten holy virgins with the grace of God;
> *Per Iesum.*
> The twelve pilgrims who went with Maedoc of Ferns across the sea;
> *Per Iesum.*
> Twelve youths who went to heaven with Molasse without sickness, the reward of their obedience;
> *Per Iesum.*
> Twelve youths who went with Columcille on pilgrimage to Alba;
> *Per Iesum*
> The twelve pilgrims of whom Brendan found one man alive in the Cat's Island;
> *Per Iesum.*
> Three score men who went with Brendan to seek the land of promise;
> *Per Iesum.*[52]

The litany names numerous saints: from Ireland and abroad; from hagiography and the more fanciful voyage tales; *peregrini* whose fates were known and some that were not; both anchorites and cenobites; abbots and monks; renunciants who are well attested in other sources and others who are only known from their inclusion in this text. Most of the saints are those who went overseas, but some are simply monks who lived under the 'yoke' of an abbot in an esteemed monastery. What unites these saints is their renunciation of their own lands for the sake of God, hence Kathleen Hughes's appropriate title for the litany.

This list of saints as a part of a personal, devotional prayer demonstrates that such figures—some simply by virtue of having departed from Ireland, as some of their ultimate fates were unknown—were venerated as saints and thought to be invested with intercessory power. The *sancti peregrini* of Ireland, well after the age when they reached the peak of their practice, continued to hold a place of great authority in the minds of Irish Christians. Another ninth-century poem confirms this view: beginning with the line *Día lim fri cach snim* 'God be with me against all trouble', the poet invokes protection from the saints and the virtuous, and then, 'Every glorious pilgrim

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Saints', *Studia Celtica* 4 (1969), pp. 56–71 at 68–71. Also see Sarah Sanderlin, 'The date and provenance of the "Litany of Irish Saints II" (The Irish Litany of Pilgrim Saints)', *PRIA* 75C (1975), pp. 251–62, who dates the litany to *c.*900. Also cf. O'Dwyer, *Céli Dé*, p. 176.

[52] 'Litany of Pilgrim Saints', pp. 62–3: *Tri choicait fir-ailither dar muir la Buti nepscop, 7 deich naeb-oga co rrath Dé, Per Iesum. / In da ailither déc dollotar la Moedóc Ferna dar muir, Per Iesum. Da óclach déc dochotar for nem la Molasse, cen galar, log a narlettad, Per Iesum. Da oclach déc lotar la Colum cille i nailithri i nAlbain, Per Iesum. / In da ailither déc dia narnaic Brenaind inn oen fher i ninis in chaitt i mbethu, Per Iesum. / Tri fichit fer lotar la Brenaind do chungid tiri tarngiri, Per Iesum.*

(*ailithir*), every rich person of goodly power, every destitute person, every saint who has abandoned the land.'[53]

The voyaging saints and scholars of early medieval Ireland not only earned renown in their adopted countries and among their own communities; they were deemed heroic and saintly among the peoples of Ireland. Even through the reforms of the Céli Dé reform and the inward focus of monasticism as the Viking age began, *monachi peregrini* retained their positions of sanctity and authority. Their journeys were recorded as great feats of godliness, and eventually mythologised as otherworldly adventures. For *peregrinatio* was not simply a monastic act that held import only in monastic circles: it was an act of faith and courage, danger and adventure. It also surely was valued purely upon its merit as the basis for a great story: in the very first scene of the *Navigatio*, the voyager Barrfind lands and is implored by St Brendan to 'Show us the word of God and nourish our souls with the wonders that you saw in the ocean'.[54] One can easily imagine that upon the return of a *peregrinus* from overseas, this would have been a natural and frequent request. The act of pilgrimage *ex patria* reverberated among the Irish with a romanticism and esteem that is otherwise unparalleled in this period.

But by the late eighth century, while this esteem had not lessened, the nature of monastic voyaging had changed dramatically. The perils of weather and the monsters of the deep were no longer the most dangerous foes of such a voyage, as Viking raiders had few qualms about robbing and killing monks. Closer to home, monasticism itself was in the process of redefining itself under a new structure of ascetic practice. In these times of upheaval the era of the *monachi peregrini* finally drew to a close. Those voyagers who were honoured and venerated were figures of a distant age, and had become part of the literary and mythological fabric of medieval Ireland.

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[53] *Día lim fri cach sním* = 'God be with me against all trouble', ed. and trans. Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Lyrics: Eighth to Twelfth Century* (orig. publ. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956; republ. Dublin: Four Courts, 1998), pp. 23–7 at 25: *Cech ailithir án, / cech soim (sochla brig), / cech denocht, cech nóeb / do réracht a tír.*

[54] *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* 1 [Selmer, p. 4(12–13); O'Meara, p. 26].

Conclusion

Pilgrimage in Early Medieval Ireland

Peregrinatio is a word suffused with significance: for more than a millennium Christians have used this term to express an ideal of human existence and to describe rituals of intense devotion. A *peregrinus* is a wayfarer and a foreigner, separated from his homeland and estranged from his people. As these terms and concepts were received into the Middle Ages from scripture and exegesis, *peregrinatio* became the state of existence suffered by Abraham and his descendants as they lived as aliens in foreign lands; it is travel in a foreign land, and the journey of a human life on earth, estranged from God. The path that one takes on this journey may lead to paradise or to eternal damnation: to veer off of the correct path or to become enchanted by the landscape or the inns at the side of the road is to forfeit the heavenly homeland that lies at the end of the journey. This sojourn is also the experience of the entire church, the City of God as it roams the earth, hidden and unknowable, awaiting God's call to heaven.

The primary conceptual and motivational bridge linking these scriptural and exegetical ideals on one hand and the concrete act of *peregrinatio* on the other is ascetic monasticism. In a monastic milieu, the status of the *peregrinus* embodies the renunciation of home, family and wealth, the complete abandonment of worldly concerns that comprises ascetic homelessness and denial of the flesh. For some, *peregrinatio* was the physical journey into foreign lands, to detach from the ties of family and homeland, to learn from spiritual masters, and often to found monasteries away from civilisation. For others, it was a devotional journey to a sacred place, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus or to venerate the remains of the saints. When medieval monks and pilgrims embarked upon their *peregrinationes*, these layers of significance imbued their sacrifices of homeland for the sake of God: alienation, virtuous suffering, and the journey of life with heaven as its goal. In the early Middle Ages the idea of alienation or renunciation thus dominated the definition of *peregrinatio*.

The scriptural, exegetical and monastic expressions of *peregrinatio* reached Ireland virtually intact, but with some subtle shifts of emphasis. By the dawn of the Middle Ages, *peregrinatio* had become firmly entrenched in Christian tradition as a powerful metaphor for human life and a defining tenet of the Christian world-view. In Ireland, allegorical expressions of *peregrinatio* stressed the aspects of suffering and

eschatological anticipation, following mainstream late antique and early medieval discourse but also undoubtedly reflecting the realities of pilgrimage in an Irish context.

In its earliest Christian forms, the act of *peregrinatio* can be directly equated with ascetic withdrawal; the assignment of the same terms to the ritualised journey *ad loca sancta* was secondary. In early medieval Ireland the definition of pilgrimage was also primarily voiced in ascetic terms. While the cult of saints played a central role in Irish Christianity, journeys undertaken by Irishmen with the specific goal of relic veneration only rarely appear in surviving Irish texts. When they do appear they are usually incidental details in a larger plot-line, and are almost never expressed in terms of *peregrinatio* during the time period under consideration here. Hence in medieval Ireland as elsewhere, early acts of pilgrimage were directly connected in nearly every articulation to institutionalised monasticism. The origins of Irish *peregrinatio*, therefore, were entirely conventional; but the eventual expressions of these ideals, both conceptual and actual were in many ways uniquely Irish.

The single most notable idiosyncrasy was the very popularity of pilgrimage among the Irish, for the act of pilgrimage held a certain fascination in medieval Ireland. There can be little doubt that certain structures and traditions in Irish society made the idea of exile, of perpetual foreign-ness, resonate. These structures were both secular and religious, social as well as political. An ordinary Irishman had strong legal, social and economic ties to kin and *túath* that made the act of abandonment a particularly poignant and symbolic act. Moreover, the existence of a shared sense of Irish-ness—an identity built upon a common history, culture, vernacular, rule of law, educational tradition, and in this period, religion—that transcended the boundaries of *túatha* and united the peoples of Ireland made the natural boundary of the sea even more significant. An Irishman who left his own land could thus expect graduated levels of alienation as he crossed multiple perceived boundaries: as he left his family, proceeded outside of his own *túath* and then crossed the sea. Furthermore, by the time we have a relatively detailed view into medieval Ireland, already social and legal constructs had arisen to accommodate devotional travel. Categories of protective status grew around those who abandoned their lands in God's name, but the strength of the social fabric that the *peregrinus* rent as he left his homeland and kin was never forgotten. The synergy of this combination, of profound symbolism with cultural facilitation of such acts, helps to

explain the unique popularity and deep significance of pilgrimage in early Christian Ireland.

But the more subtle facets of traditionalism and innovation in Irish pilgrimage are best observed in the lives, careers and writings of the pilgrims themselves. Our discussion began with a brief review of the writings of St Patrick, who represents one of the first recorded instances of a medieval man who identifies himself as a *peregrinus*. Though Patrick was not in fact Irish or Irish-trained, his writings provide an early example of an actual—not a figurative—*peregrinus* who had left his homeland for God. Though the pilgrimages of later Irish monks cannot be considered legacies of Patrick's thought or influence, the strong biblical and ascetic overtones of his mission give a sense for the form of these concepts as they first arrived in Christian Ireland.

But the monks who followed in the centuries after Patrick reflect a great efflorescence of the ideals of alienation in Irish monasticism. *Peregrinationes* like those of Columba, Fursa and Columbanus were examples of the ultimate *anachoresis*—the withdrawal away from the familiar and the renunciation of all fleshly attachments. For these abbot-saints, *peregrinatio* was not simply a spiritual or moral abstraction: the saints themselves were *peregrini*, their travelling companions *comperegrini.* They left their homelands, families, and all that was familiar; they ventured into foreign lands, and lived out their lives as travellers, strangers, aliens among foreign peoples.

These abbot-saints are by far the most famous early Irish *peregrini*; they are also the most misunderstood. As has been discussed in detail in the introduction, due to misreadings of ancient and early medieval pilgrimage, their form of devotion is often labelled an aberration from more 'normal' acts of pilgrimage. In fact, their form of *peregrinatio* more closely relates to the Christian ideals of alienation and its manifestations in monastic withdrawal that were current in their time than did *peregrinationes ad loca sancta* in this period. Furthermore, these pilgrims have often been called somewhat romantically—and misleadingly—'Celtic wanderers' or 'wandering monks'. In fact, wandering—a term with extremely negative connotations in a medieval monastic context—had little to do with their form of devotion; moreover, the designation of these abbots as wanderers leads inevitably to the question of their relationship to the reviled *monachi vagi* or gyrovagues. These false monks, defined variously by Jerome, John Cassian, and most importantly in the *Rule of Benedict* and the *Rule of the Master*, have little in common with the Irish *sancti peregrini.*

Gyrovagues and their variously-named counterparts were monks without discipline and without masters, self-indulgent slaves to their own will rather than to God's, greedy and gluttonous. In contrast, the Irish abbot-saints were conventional, even conservative, rigorously ascetic monks, who followed firmly established patterns of monastic education and discipline within the structures of their land's ecclesiastical authority, which in turn led to their departures from their lands. Their withdrawal into foreign lands was not perceived by their own people nor by those peoples among whom they settled in terms of inconstancy and wandering. (Even those who were quite hostile to Irish *peregrini* never to my knowledge used the loaded terms *monachi vagi* or *gyrovagi* to deride them, which would have been obvious and powerful accusations to use against them had it been remotely applicable.)

The acts of pilgrimage undertaken by the abbot-saints were entirely mainstream, but they reached back in time to the prominent ideologies of earlier centuries. Their form of pilgrimage was not idiosyncratic in itself, but it emulated the ascetic ideals and practices that were current in the Mediterranean basin of the fourth- and fifth-centuries, but which appears to have become dilute in the more quickly-evolving, less controlled environment of continental Christianity. This archaising tendency also helps to explain the relative frequency of Irish *peregrinatio* in comparison to similar acts of piety among continental peoples. Columba, Columbanus and Fursa would not have been out of place in the fourth-century deserts of Egypt or in fifth-century Palestine, but in sixth- and seventh-century continental Europe they were monastic anomalies. Their outlandishness may well have contributed to their mystical hold upon their adopted lands, for figures of this kind blazed trails throughout western Europe to establish numerous foundations and to spread their austere and rigorous form of monasticism among countless communities. The great reach of Irish monastic foundations in the early Middle Ages is well known, and can be attributed primarily to these travelling—but emphatically not 'wandering'—monks and abbots.

Ireland also produced many other ascetic oddities, some of them in the form of hermits and anchorites who embraced a less active and more contemplative form of monasticism. These solitaries brought a problematic element to this discussion of pilgrimage which pitted terminology against concept. As we saw in chapter seven, Adomnán, so often our authority on topics of pilgrimage, does not name solitaries *peregrini*, though he does strongly relate their form of devotion to that of the main

peregrinus, Columba. Adomnán in fact uses the term *peregrinus* in various capacities, but the consistent thread running through them is the idea of an outsider living not so much in a foreign land but among a foreign people. Hence a solitary seeking a deserted island was a *Christi miles* rather than a *peregrinus*. By classical Roman terms, Adomnán's usage is startlingly correct. But in terms of the Christian practices explored in this thesis, the eremitic retreats of Cormac Ua Liatháin, for example, or other solitaries seeking or dwelling on their 'deserts in the sea' conform to a pattern of separation from one's homeland as a form of devotion that has characterised all of the *peregrinationes* discussed herein.

The *anchoritae* and *deoraid Dé*, on the other hand, represent an entirely different phenomenon. These monastic officials—who may well have been one and the same—were firmly attached to established monasteries, participated actively in their communities, and indeed held positions of great status and authority in Irish society. These figures are defined by their contemplative vocations and their learning; the anchorite is also implicitly a solitary but seems to have been secluded inside or near a monastery that provided him with food and essentials. There is some sense based upon his appellation that a *deorad Dé* lived outside of his *túath*, which again conforms to the idea of separation; *anchoritae*, whether they lived outside of their homelands or not, were undoubtedly separated from their peoples as well, if only by the walls of a monastery. While the relationship of these figures to acts of *peregrinatio* is not definable without further study, they appear to embody some form of monastic separation in Ireland that led to extremely high status and an active role in Irish society.

Finally we have explored an aspect of Irish *peregrinatio* that underpins every act of pilgrimage in early medieval Ireland: penance. Just as pilgrimage cannot be considered independently of monasticism, so monasticism and penance are inextricably linked. In turn, pilgrimage must be considered in terms of penance as well as asceticism in order to understand it fully. The suffering implicit in ascetic withdrawal was embraced as purgative and redemptive by early Irish monastics; we thus find equivalent acts of separation codified as penalties for sin in the Irish penitentials. More importantly, the act of separation as penance was facilitated by Irish monasteries at home and abroad. Penitential exile or *peregrinatio* was only imposed for the most serious offences; commensurately, we must consider that separation from one's homeland was one of the most extreme aspects of monastic renunciation, one that

received far more emphasis among early Irish writers than, for example, the distribution of wealth or undertaking the 'yoke' of obedience. Thus *peregrinatio* as penance not only provides yet another idiosyncratically Irish evolution of institutions and structures around the departure from one's homeland, but also allows a window into the conception of monasticism as the most perfect embrace of penitential suffering.

As the period of this study drew to a close, great changes were shifting the landscape of medieval Ireland. A movement of reforming monks had arisen, who eschewed the increasing secularity of Irish monasticism and preached a return to the more rigorous values of the past. The Céli Dé, who have long been considered to have preached vehemently against pilgrimage, here have been subject to some revisionism. The timing of the peak of their movement does correspond to certain changes in the concept and act of overseas pilgrimage, but much of this cannot be placed upon the shoulders of these reformers, who revered the *sancti peregrini* of the past *and the present* in their surviving texts. The Céli Dé do appear responsible for a more local ideal of ascetic withdrawal that took some of the emphasis away from crossing the sea. But many of these great changes in medieval Ireland also corresponded to the beginning of the Viking Age.

Also concurrent with the first Viking incursions into Britain and Ireland is the birth of a new genre of voyage tales. These popular stories that soon spread across Europe combine religious *peregrinationes* and *navigationes* with fanciful locales and dramatic characters. Thus as we leave off this discussion, the voyaging saints of Ireland had become mythical and legendary figures, giving as much entertainment as instruction. The nature of overseas *peregrinatio* had also changed. The Irish, once distinguished most by their ascetic rigour, were imported as scholars and teachers for the royalty of western Europe. Rarely after the start of the ninth century do we find intrepid monks and dedicated ascetics hoping to find deserts in the sea or quiet retreats in the mountains and forests of the continent: for the age of the *sancti peregrini* was long since over, and the era of the great scholar-*peregrini* of Ireland had begun.

Appendix

Appendix 1 Philo of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Allegorical Alienation

The allegorical understanding of citizenship and alienation that we find in the New Testament is not unique to Christian thought, though it is among Christian writers that the concept would flourish. In the Hellenic synagogue—a group, it should be recalled, to which St. Paul himself, and perhaps some of the other authors of the canonical epistles, belonged—these concepts were current in the first century. We find them in the works of the Platonist exegete Philo of Alexandria (*c.*25 BC–AD 50),[1] whose lifetime overlapped that of both Jesus and Paul. (He does not appear to have been acquainted with Jesus' budding breakaway sect; his surviving works make no mention of Christians or the events of the New Testament, though he does mention Pontius Pilate once, in a negative light.[2])

Philo's importance in relation to this study is twofold: first, his allegorical methods reflect ideas and approaches that were current as the books of the New Testament were written down and thus provide insight into Jewish and Christian thought during the time that the Christian canon was in its formative stages. Second, his works were known and used, with varying degrees of approval, by Christian writers such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Ambrose, and possibly Jerome and Augustine:[3] his great influence upon Christian thought led some later commentators to mistake Philo for a Christian himself.[4] His works as sources for the New Testament have also been the subject of animated debate; though most scholars have dismissed a direct relationship, the similarities between his works and New Testament thought show that Hellenic Jews

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[1] For a general introduction to Philo and his works see Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). For his importance to Christian thought, see David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993); Henry Chadwick, 'Philo and the Beginnings of Christian Thought', in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A.H. Armstrong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 137–57.

All of the primary source citations in this appendix refer to the ten-volume Loeb Classical Library editions of Philo's works edited and translated by F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press and London: William Heinemann, 1929–53).

[2] Sandmel, *Philo*, p. 3 and n. 2. On Pilate, Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* 38.299–305 [Colson/Whitaker, vol. X, pp. 150–53].

[3] Chadwick, 'Philo and the Beginnings of Christian Thought', p. 137, goes so far as to state, 'The history of Christian philosophy begins not with a Christian, but with a Jew, Philo of Alexandria.' On Clement, see Runia, *Philo*, pp. 132–56; on Origen, ibid., pp. 157–83; on Ambrose, ibid., pp. 291–311; on Jerome, ibid., pp. 312–19; on Augustine, ibid., pp. 320–30.

[4] See Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, pp. 3–33, esp. 3–7. In fact, Philo's works survive for the most part thanks to their reproduction by Christians, not Jews; see ibid. pp. 17–31.

and Hellenic Christians in the first century, to use the words of Henry Chadwick, often 'fished in the same pool'.[5]

Philo was an early proponent of allegorical exegesis, for which Alexandria would become a well-known centre in the Christian era. In his symbolic and typological analyses of the Old Testament, Philo expressed a metaphorical understanding of alienation on earth, one that has much in common with the second epistle to the Corinthians, the epistle to the Hebrews, the Gospel of John, and numerous exegeses from East and West.[6] For Philo as for the earliest Christians, Abraham was the archetype of virtuous obedience and sacrifice for God.

> Abraham, then, filled with zeal for piety, the highest and greatest of virtues, was eager to follow God and to be obedient to His commands.... But the clearest proofs of his (Abraham's) piety are those which the holy scriptures contain, and the first which should be mentioned is that which comes first in order. Under the force of an oracle which bade him leave his country and kinsfolk and seek a new home, thinking that quickness in executing the command was as good as full accomplishment, he hastened eagerly to obey, not as though he were leaving home for a strange land but rather as returning from amid strangers to his home. Yet who else would be likely to be so firm and unmoved of purpose as not to yield and succumb to the charms of kinsfolk and country? The desire of these may be said to be born and grow with each of us and is a part of our nature as much as or even more than the parts which unite to make the whole. And this is attested by the legislators who have appointed banishment as the penalty second only to death for those who have been convicted of the greatest crimes, though indeed, in my opinion, it is not second to death, if truth gives its verdict, but rather a far heavier punishment, since death ends our troubles but banishment is not the end but the beginning of other new misfortunes and entails in place of the one death which puts an end to pains a thousand deaths in which we do not lose sensation. Some men go on voyages for trading purposes in their desire for making money or on embassies or in their love of culture to see the sights of a foreign land. These are subject to influences driving them to stay abroad, in some cases financial gains, in others the chance of benefiting their country...in others acquiring knowledge of things which they did not know before and thus providing at once pleasure and profit to the soul, for the stay-at-home is to the travelled as the blind are to the keen-sighted. Yet all these are eager to see and salute their native soil, and to greet their familiars and to have the sweet and most desired enjoyment of beholding their kinsfolk and friends. And often when they find the business for which they left home protracting itself they abandon it, drawn by the constraining desire for their own belongings.

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[5] Quoted from Henry Chadwick, 'St. Paul and Philo of Alexandria', *Bulletin of the John Rylands* Library 48 (1965–66), pp. 286–307 at 292. This kinship is most pronounced in the gospel of John, the epistle to the Hebrews, and, somewhat less dramatically, in the Pauline epistles. For summaries of the debate on these topics see Sandmel, *Philo*, pp. 148–163; Runia, *Philo*, pp. 63–86.

[6] On Philo and the epistle to the Hebrews, see C. Spicq, 'Le philonisme de l'Epître aux Hébreux', *Revue Biblique* 56 (1949), pp. 542–72 and 57 (1950), pp. 212–42; and the critical response of Ronald Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 1970). On the Pauline epistles, see Henry Chadwick, 'St. Paul and Philo of Alexandria', pp. 286–307. On the Gospel of John, see Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, pp. 78–83.

> But Abraham, the moment he was bidden, departed with a few or even alone, and his emigration was one of soul rather than body, for the heavenly love overpowered his desire for mortal things. And so taking no thought for anything, either for his fellow-clansmen, or wardsmen, or schoolmates, or comrades, or blood relations on father's or mother's side, or country, or ancestral customs, or community of nurture or home life, all of them ties possessing a power to allure and attract which it is hard to throw off, he followed a free and unfettered impulse and departed with all speed....[7]

Philo employs the contrast of the earthly and mortal with the heavenly. He also uses the image of life on earth—or in the body—as a temporary sojourn, to be contrasted with life in the homeland, heaven. He asserts, following the model of the Patriarch, that the virtuous live on earth only as sojourners [*paroikoi*], 'ever seeking removal and return to the land of [their] fathers'.[8] Philo warns that this earthly sojourn must never be preferred over heaven:

> for in reality a wise man's soul ever finds heaven to be his fatherland [*patrida*] and earth a foreign [*xenos*] country, and regards as his own the dwelling-place of wisdom, and that of the body as outlandish, and looks on himself as a stranger [*paroikos*] and sojourner [*parepidemos*] in it.[9]

Philo also calls upon the examples of the Old Testament patriarchs to illustrate his concept of life as a sojourn on earth, and introduces another concept that would become crucial among Christians: heavenly citizenship.

> This is why all whom Moses calls wise are represented as sojourners [*paroikoi*]. Their souls are never colonists leaving heaven for a new home. Their way is to visit earthly nature as men who travel abroad to see and learn. So when they have stayed awhile in their bodies, and beheld through them all that sense and mortality has to shew, they make their way back to the place from which they set out at first. *To them the heavenly region, where their citizenship lies, is their native land [patrida]; the earthly region in which they became sojourners is a foreign country.* For surely, when men found a colony, the land which receives them becomes their native land, instead of the mother city, but to the traveller abroad the land which sent him forth is still the mother to whom he yearns to return. We shall not be surprised then, to find Abraham...saying...'I am a stranger [*paroikos*] and sojourner [*parepidemos*] with you.' (Gen. 23.4)[10]

Philo writes in the language of the Septuagint Old Testament—using the pair *paroikos kai parepidemos* and emphasising the contrast of the home and the foreign land, as would his contemporary Jews who would draft the early epistles of the New Testament.

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[7] Philo, *De Abrahamo*, 60–67 [Colson/Whitaker VI, pp. 4–137 at 35–9].

[8] Philo, *De Somniis* I, 45–46 [Colson/Whitaker V, pp. 294–432 at 319–20].

[9] Philo, *De Agricultura* 65 [Colson/Whitaker III, pp. 108–206 at 141–2]. Cf. Philo, *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres* 267 [Colson/Whitaker IV, pp. 284–450 at 419–22]: '...God does not grant as a gift to the lover of virtue that he should dwell in the body as in homeland, but only permits him to sojourn there, as in a foreign country....But every fool takes the body for the place of his nativity and studies to dwell [*katoke_*], not to sojourn [*paroike_*].'

[10] My italics. Philo, *De Confusione Linguarum* 77–8 [Colson/Whitaker IV, pp. 8–122 at 51–2].

Philo's evocation of the sojourning of Old Testament figures, such as Abraham and Moses, in the solitude of the desert also foreshadows the wisdom of the desert fathers and the construction of ascetic exegesis, a development that is addressed in detail in chapter one.[11] The importance of this ideal of alienation on earth is evident in Philo's works, and further demonstrates how deeply rooted this concept was during the earliest stages of thought in the Christian era.

[11] See, eg., Philo, *De Abrahamo* 85–7 [Colson/Whitaker VI, pp. 46–9].

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