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ASPECTS OF THE MONASTERY AND MONASTIC LIFE IN ADOMNÁN'S LIFE OF COLUMBA

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An attempt is made in the following pages to draw some more or less tentative conclusions and to make some equally tentative suggestions with regard chiefly to the nature of the ground plan and its component buildings of a group of later seventh-century Irish monasteries.* Historically speaking, most of these monasteries form a group in that, both in Ireland and in what later became Scotland, they recognized (however loosely) the hegemony of Columba's successor as abbot of Iona and thus formed part of the *paruchia* of Iona. Archaeologically speaking, on the other hand, it cannot be assumed that the constituent houses of a given *paruchia* displayed significant physical similarities in general or particular terms; though a uniform code of observance and discipline (if it existed) might well have resulted in some semblance of physical uniformity, even when due allowance is made for differences in the natural environment of different locations and, therefore, for varying availability of building materials and for varying emphases in local subsistence economies. Furthermore, the evolving historical status and importance of individual foundations apart, it is clear from the Life itself that there were some differences of functional emphasis as between different communities (especially in Scotland), which may have affected the layout and its buildings. The picture of the monastery attempted here is, however, necessarily a composite one, since Adomnán does not supply enough information about any one foundation; though it can probably be assumed fairly safely that, where he refers incidentally to a particular building, group of buildings or other structural feature at one monastery, something the same or very similar – at least in function – existed at (perhaps all or most) other monasteries within his own and his readers' experience. Background information and reference had to be comprehensible to be credible, both for the writer and for his readers.

For it is precisely because such 'archaeological' information is conveyed incidentally that it may be accepted as reliable if severely limited evidence. Because Adomnán as hagiographer rather than biographer was so much concerned with the miraculous and the marvellous, his physical settings and material details had to be familiar enough to the circles for which he was writing to establish verisimilitude. He was concerned to convince of Columba's powers and exploits contemporaries who were perhaps disposed to reject his claims as much from professional rivalry or jealousy as from scepticism: his case could not have been strengthened had he set his subject's actions and activities in some eremitical Ultima Thule such as Cormac, Lethan's grandson, seems to have been so hopeful of finding. His locations are Iona, Durrow, Clonmacnoise, Coleraine, Terryglass, Tiree and other real and known places. If it be objected, moreover, that a late seventh-century Irishman of Ireland would usually not have been acquainted with the islands and island monasteries of the Hebrides or that a contemporary Irishman of Scottish Dal Riata would probably have had an equally hazy knowledge of the ecclesiastical geography and topography of Ireland, the Life itself shows clearly how widely and how frequently men, both clerical and lay, travelled within and between both countries. We are dealing here with an integrated cultural continuum, at both ecclesiastical and secular levels. Indeed it is noticeable how comparatively few episodes are located in the (from an Irish point of view) remoter

* This article was originally to have been published in a volume of essays dedicated to the memory of the late Tom Delaney.

and doubtless much less familiar Pictland, in the NE of modern Scotland, though Book II 9 mentions a Pictish priest apparently working in Leinster. Adomnán was himself a native Irishman, who does not convincingly display any great personal knowledge of the provinces of the Picts *ultra Britanniae dorsum*.

The whole point and purpose of the present exercise is to let the Life speak for itself, with as little reference as possible to other works, ancient or modern, save where such reference is essential or desirable for the development of argument or discussion. The edition used here is that of A.O. and M.O. Anderson (1961), the most recent and, where the text is concerned, the most authoritative. It has parallel Latin text and English translation. For convenience, individual citations or groups of citations are made by book and chapter, with the numbers supplied (in the translation, but not in the text) by Reeves (1857), not Adomnán. The Andersons refer usually to the marginal numbers and letters in their text, which indicate the pages and columns of MS A, the Schaffhausen m s that is the basis of their edition.

Adomnán, ninth abbot of Iona and of the same paternal kindred as Columba (d. 597), was born c. 628 and died in 704. He wrote his *Life of Columba* in Iona and during his own abbacy, between 688 and 704 and probably 688 X 692. It seems likely that MS A was written 704 X 713 (Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 92–98, 103–5, 57). The value of the Life, therefore, historically and archaeologically, lies both in its contemporary authority for the later seventh century and in the probably near-contemporary authority of one of the surviving MSS.

The main subjects to be reviewed are: the monastic settlement; the church and cemetery; and chief domestic buildings and overall ground plan.

The monastery

Adomnán uses several terms to denote the monastery as ecclesiastical settlement, of which the commonest is *monasterium* – having both general and particular reference.

Second Preface: *Monasteriorum pater et fundator (Columba) – Mei et ipsius duorum – fmonasteriolorum agelluiunius sepisculae intervallo disternabuntur* ‘the fields of our two monasteries ... will be separated by the width of one small hedge’ (of Maucte and Columba). I 2: *Ut... monasterium construat* (Fintenus: ?Taghmon, Co Wexford). I 3: (Columba) *monasterio[l]um ... fundans* (Durrow). *Universi undique ab agellulis monasterio vicinis, cum his qui ibidem inventi sunt congregati... egressi valum monasterii* ‘all those that were in the fields near the monastery came from every side and joined those that were within it ... they passed outside the boundary-wall of the monastery’ (Clonmacnoise, referred to in the preceding sentence immediately after the mention of Durrow and again later in this chapter as *cenubium*: see further below), I 18: *Qui in hoc meo monasterio ... bene conversabitur* ‘who will live a good life in this my monastery’ (Iona), I 29: *Laisranus habitans in monasterio* (Durrow). I 30: (Columba) *in cacumine sedens montis qui nostro huic monasterio eminens supereminet* ‘sitting on the top of the hill that at a little distance overlooks this monastery of ours’ (Iona). I 36: (Findchanus) *illius monasterii fundatore. Ut in suo apud se monasterio per aliquot perigrinaretur annos* ‘intending that he should for some years be a pilgrim with him in his monastery’ (Artchain in Tiree, otherwise unidentified, in chapter heading and in text). I 37: *Fratrespost mesionis opera vespere ad monasterium redeunt, et ad ilium pervenientes locum qui scotice nuncupatur Cuul Eilne, qui utique locus inter occidentalem Iovae insulae campulum et*

nostrum monasterium medius esse dicitur ‘the brothers, returning towards the monastery in the evening after their work on the harvest, when they came to the place that is in Irish called Cuul-Eilne (which place is said to be halfway between the little western plain of the island of Io and our monastery)’. *In hoc medio loco inter mesem et monasterium* ‘in this place half-way between the harvest-field and the monastery’. *Ab hoc loco usquequo ad monasterium perveniatur* ‘from this place until we reach the monastery’ (all Iona), I 40: (Columba) *ad quoddam devenit vicinum monasteriolum* ‘happened to come to a neighbouring small monastery’ (Trevet, Co. Meath). I 43: *Haut procul a monasterio quod dicitur Cell-rois* ‘not far from the monastery that is called Cell-rois’. *Prope fines illorum locorum ubi illud monasterium cemitur quod dicitur Cell-roiss* ‘near the boundaries of the region where the monastery that is called Cell-rois can be seen’ (Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan: Reeves 1857, 81 note c). I 45: *Ad praeposituram illius monasterii transmisit quod in Hinba insula ante plures fundaverat annos* ‘to be prior of the monastery that, many years before, he had founded in the island of Hinba’ (unidentified). I 48: *Cui ad monasterium vespere reverso* ‘when he returned to the monastery in the evening’ (from the west coast of Iona), I 49: *Qui vitam multis anchoriticam annis juxta roboretimonasterium campi inreprehensibiliter ducebat* ‘who for many years lived irreproachably the life of an anchorite beside the monastery of the plain of the oakwood’ (Durrow). *Ad monasterium sancti Comgil... reversum* ‘returning ... to the monastery of Saint Comgell’ (Cambas: Camus, a parish on the west of the Bann in the diocese of Derry: Reeves, 1857,96, note 0).

II 2: *Quaedam erat arbor... prope monasterium roboris campi in australi ejus parte* ‘near the monastery of the plain of the oak, on its southern side, there was a tree’ (Durrow). n 13: *Cainnechus in suo conversans monasterio* ‘Cainnech, being in his own monastery’ (Aghaboe). II 18: *Quipostea senex in monasterio Elenae insulae praepositus erat* ‘who afterwards, when he was an old man, was the prior of a monastery in the island of Elen’ (unidentified). II 29: *Valum egressus monasterii bovem jugulare volens* ‘went outside the rampart of the monastery, intending to kill a cow’. *Quod monadscientes experti ejusdem pugionis ferrum ignis resolutum calore per omnia monasterii ferramenta liquefactum diviserunt inlinitum* ‘when they knew of this, skilled monks softened the metal of that dagger in a hot fire, and distributed it, melted, by overlaying it upon all the iron tools of the monastery’ (presumably Iona), II 31: (Fintenus) *illius ... monasterii fundator (Cailli au finde:* unidentified), II 36: (Columba) *ad visitandos fratres qui in monasterio duum ruris commanebant rivulorum... perrexit* ‘went to visit the brothers who occupied the monastery of the land of two streams’ (Terryglass). II 39: *Ad insulanum beatimonasterium viri devenit* ‘came to the island monastery of the blessed man’ (Iona). *Ad monasterium campimisis Lunge* ‘he was sent to the monastery of the plain of Long’ (unidentified, but in Tiree). *Cum ... ad monasterium in quo prius vii. annis penitens domino serviit remitteretur* ‘when he was sent back ... to the monastery in which he had formerly served the Lord as a penitent for seven years’ (Campus Lunge, in Tiree). *In uno meorum morieris monasteriorum* ‘you will die in one of my monasteries’ (of Columba). *Cum per multos annales cyclos in monasterio campi Lunge... oboedienter domino deserviret monachus* ‘when he had served the Lord obediently as a monk in the monastery of the plain of Long for many years’ (after Columba’s death). *Ad monasterium devenit roborei campi* ‘came to the monastery of the oak plain’ (Durrow). n 41: *Aut si jubeas etiam maria transire et in aliquo puellarum monasterio permanere* ‘or, if you command it, even to cross the seas, and remain in some monastery of nuns’. *O femina, si ut hestema dicebas dieparata hodie es ad feminarum emigrare monasteriolum?* ‘Woman, are you today, as you said yesterday, ready to depart to a monastery of nuns?’ II 43: (Columbanus) *illius monasterii fundator (Snam luthir:* Slanore, parish of Kilmore, Co Cavan: Reeves, 1857, 173 note f). II 45: *Aliae no biscum roboreae ... materiae ad nostrum renovandum traherentur monasterium* ‘other oak timbers were being towed by us ... for

the restoration of our monastery' (i.e., from the mainland by curraghs. *Monasterium* here may refer to the monastery (Iona) or, as the Andersons suggest, to the *magna domus*, which has been mentioned already in this chapter, in a similar but not in the same context (see further below): this writer feels that it is just as likely that the monastery in general is meant, as the *magna domus* in particular). II 46: (Columba) *cujus monasteria intra utrorumque populorum terminus fundata ab utrisque usque ad praesens tempus valde sunt honorificata* 'whose monasteries, placed within the boundaries of both peoples, are down to the present time held in great honour by them both' (i.e. among the Picts and Scots).

III 3: *Brendenus illius monasterii fundator* (Birr), III 7: *Christiscio militonem qui sibi in eodem territorio in quo etego commanebam monasteriolum construxit, nomine Diormitium* 'I know another soldier of Christ, named Diormit, who has constructed for himself a little monastery in the same region in which I also lived' (unnamed, but in the *provincia anteriorum*: Ind Airthir). III 8: *Qui... monasterium ejus invadere et multos ex fratribus hisdem volebant jugulare sudibus* 'who ... wished to assail his monastery, and with these same spikes to slaughter many of the brothers' (Iona). *Eademque die sanctus ad monasterium post daemoniorum reversus de sua insula effugationem* 'on the same day, when the saint returned to the monastery, after the repulse of the demons from his island' (Iona: Columba has been praying in a remote place). *Ibidem saevi invasores fratrum monasteria invadent* 'will cruelly invade the monasteries of brothers there' (*monasteriola* in MS B2: in Tiree). *Cum multi in ceteris ejusdem insulae monasteriis eodem morbo morirentur* 'while many in the other monasteries of the same island died of that disease' (Tiree: Columba's monastery of Campus Lunge is referred to here as *ecclesia*: see further below), III 11: (Brendinus) *illius monasterii fundatoris* (Birr: in chapter heading), III 12: *Dum fratres ... ad diversa monasterii opera ire praepararent* 'when the brothers were ... preparing to go to the various labours of the monastery' (presumably Iona), III 16: *Beatus et ipse vir post angelicum condictum reversus ad monasterium* 'the blessed man himself, also, after his conference with the angels returned to the monastery' (Iona: Columba has been praying alone in the western plain). III 17: (Quatuor) *ad sanctum visitandum Columbam monasteriorum sancti fundatores de Scotia transmeantes* 'four holy founders of monasteries crossed over from Ireland, to visit Saint Columba' (i.e. Comgell moccu Aridi of Bangor, Cainnech moccu Dalon of Aghaboe, Brenden moccu Alti of Clonfert and Cormac grandson of Lethan). III 23: *Post ejusdem benedictionis verba sanctus ad suum revehitur monasterium* 'after the words of this blessing, the saint was carried back to his monastery' (Columba has gone in a wagon to visit his monks at work in the western part of Iona). *Post haec sanctus horreum egreditur, et ad monasterium revertens media resedet via* 'after this, the saint left the barn, and returning towards the monastery sat down midway' (Iona: Columba and his attendant Diormit have gone to bless the nearest barn 'and two heaps of grain that were there in store'). *Albus occurrit cavallus oboediens servitor, qui scilicet lactaria bocetum inter et monasterium vascula gestare consueverat* 'a white horse came to him, the obedient servant who was accustomed to carry the milk-vessels between the cow-pasture and the monastery' (Iona). *Et inde egrediens, et monticellum monasterio supereminentem ascendens, in vertice ejuspaululum stetit; et stans ambas elevans palmas suum benedixit cenubium* 'going from there, he climbed a small hill overlooking the monastery, and stood on its summit for a little while. And as he stood he raised both hands, and blessed his monastery' (Iona; for *cenubium*, see further below; *sancti aliarum ecclesiarum* follows shortly in the same context: see further below). *Post haec verba de illo descendens monticellum et ad monasterium revertens* 'after these words, he descended from that little hill, returned to the monastery' (Iona). *In illo namque monasterio ... quidam homo erat sanctus senex* 'for in that monastery ... there was an aged holy man' (*Cloni-finchoil*: Reeves draws attention to a traditional older name of Rossnarea on the Boyne – Ross Finnchuill – and to two churches: Lann Maeldubh, said

to have lain between Rossnarea and the Boyne; and a church of St Finnian reputedly founded by him before he settled at Clonard, at Escar Branain which was anciently called Ros Finchoill: 1857, 235, note a; see also the Andersons' note 5, p 530. *Sanctus Columba multarum columnarum ecclesiarum* follows in the same context: see further below).

Despite the translation 'small monastery' with reference to Trevet (I 40), there does not seem generally to be any essential difference of meaning between *monasterium* and the occasional diminutive *monasteriolum*. Presumably Adomnán was not thinking of Durrow as a 'small monastery' (I 3: if *monasteriolum* is the correct reading in MS A here: see note 7, p 214). In II 41, *monasterium* and *monasteriolum* are both used in the same (unspecific) sense and in the same context. In III 7, however, the context might suggest that a hermitage is intended, save that Adomnán's terminology with regard to eremitical activity is usually more explicit (see further below). In the second Preface, *monasteriolum* is merely one of a triad of diminutives. *Monasterium* seems to have no specialised connotations, being simply a monastery of whatever size or status.

Other terms used occasionally are *cenubium* and *cella*. Apart from the use of *cenubium* in III 23, already quoted, the word occurs three times in I 3, with reference to Clonmacnoise (cf. above). *Alio in tempore vir beatus in mediterranea Ebemiae parte monasterio[l]um quodscotice dicitur Dairmag divino fundans nutu per aliquot demoratus menses, libuit animo visitare fratres quoniam Clonoensis sancti Ceranici cenubio commanebant* 'at one time, when for some months the blessed man remained in the midland district of Ireland, while by God's will founding the monastery that is called in Irish Dairmag (Durrow), it pleased him to visit the brothers who lived in the monastery of Cloin of Saint Ceran (Ciaran)'. *Sed et multa alia hisdem diebus quibus in Clonoensi cenubio sanctus hospitabatur revelante profetavit sancto spiritu: hoc est de illa quae post dies multos ob diversitatem paschalis festi orta est inter Scotiae ecclesias discordia; et de quibusdam angelicis frequentationibus sibi manifestatis, quibus quaedam intra ejusdem cenubii septa ab angelis tunc temporis frequentabantur loca* 'during those days in which the saint was a guest in the monastery of Cloin, he prophesied also many other things, by revelation of the Holy Spirit: that is to say, concerning the great dispute that after many days arose among the churches of Ireland over the diversity in time of the Easter festival; and concerning some angelic visitations revealed to him, in which certain places within the enclosure of that monastery were frequented by angels, at that time' (For *ecclesia*, see further below). There is pretty clearly no basic difference of meaning between *monasterium* and *cenubium*. In the beginning of I 3, the *cenubium* of Clonmacnoise is immediately afterwards referred to as *monasterium* (see above); likewise in III 23, Iona is *monasterium* and then *cenubium* in the same sentence (see above).

II 20: *Multis ibidem annis cujusdam cellulae dominus permansit quae scotice Lathreg-inden dicitur* 'and for many years he continued there as the head of a small church, which in Irish is called Lathreg-inden' (identified by Professor Padraig Ó Riain, University College, Cork as Laraghirrill, a townland in the parish of Clonca, barony of Inishowen East, Co Donegal. The writer is indebted to Professor Ó Riain for permission to note this identification in advance of his own publication. Pers. comm.: 22 March 1984). I 31: *Qui eodem tempore praepositus erat in cella quae hodieque ejus fratris Diuni vocabulo vocitatur* 'who was at that time prior in the monastery that even today is called by the name of his brother, Diun.' *Qui verbo sancti obsequuti exeuntes et ad cellam-Diuni pervenientes* 'obeying the saint's word they set out, and arrived at the monastery of Diun'. I 50: *Inter multa ... xenia ... ad cellam magnam Deathrib in ejus adventu collecta* 'among many gifts that were brought to the great church of Deathrib at his (Columba's) coming'.

Again, it would probably be unwise to suggest that a quantitative difference is implied by Adomnán's use of *cellula* as opposed to *cella* – though such may have been his intention. On the other hand, it may be suggested that in at any rate two of these three instances he has used *cella* – rather than his apparently more generalised *monasterium* or *cenubium* – because Old Irish *cell* was the generic element in the name of the place. It seems fairly clear from Adomnán's words that the *cella* of Diun was known to him and his contemporaries colloquially as *Cell Diuin* (cf. note 12, p 269 and Introduction, p 136): the site has not been identified, but it was beside Loch Awe in Argyll. The *cella magna Deathrib* was *Cell-mor Deathrib* – Kilmore in northern Co Roscommon (Introduction, p 70 and note 2, p 322). It will be noticed, however, that *Cell-rois(s)* (i 43) is *monasterium*.

Adomnán uses *civitas* only of a Roman city and of Rome itself. Chapter headings of Book I: *De civitate Romaniae partis* 'of a city of part of the Roman dominion' (with reference to I 28). I 28: *De romani juris civitate* 'concerning a city of the Roman dominion'. *Super romani juris civitatem intra Italiae terminos sitam* 'upon a city of the Roman dominion within the borders of Italy'. *De civitate cum civibus* (in chapter-heading and in text), n 46: *Hoc est Italia et ipsa romana civitate* 'that is to say, of Italy and the city of Rome itself'. III 23: *Ipsam quoque romanam civitatem, quae caput est omnium civitatum* 'also the Roman city itself, which is the chief of all cities'.

For convenience of discussion, if no more, it may be suggested that Adomnán employs *ec(c)lesia* in two ways, the first of which is most appropriately treated here. I 2: *Sanctus Fintenus quipostea per universas Scotorum ecclesias valde noscibilis habet est* 'Saint Finten, who was afterwards held in high repute among all the churches of the Irish'. I 3: *Hic erat Erneneus filius Craseni, postea per omnes Scoriae ecclesias famosus et valde notissimus* 'this was Ernene, Crasen's son, famous afterwards among all the churches of Ireland, and very widely known'. *Hoc est de ilia quae post dies multos ob diversitatem paschalis festi orta est inter Scotiae ecclesias discordia* 'that is to say, concerning the great dispute that after many days arose among the churches of Ireland over the diversity in time of the Easter festival'. (In the same context, Durrow is *monasterio[l]um* and Clonmacnoise *monasterium* and *cenubiurn*: see above), I 5: *Sanctus Columba in sua commanens matrice ecclesia* 'Saint Columba, while he was living in his mother church' (Iona). I 17: *In tua quam amas patria primarius alicujus ecclesiae per multos eris annos* 'you will be for many years the head of a church within your native country that you love'. I 20: *Hisdemque diebus accedit quibus post aliqua mortuus tempora sepultus est in roboreto Calcagi, ut propter hostilitatis incursum vicina ad ejusdem loci ecclesiam plebicula cum mulieribus et paroulis confugeret. Unde contigit ut quadam die mulier depraeenderetur aliqua quae suas per ejusdem viri sepulchrum nuper sepulti oviculas minabat* 'after some seasons in the oakwood of Calcach he died and was buried there. And about the same time, it happened that because of an attack by enemies the neighbouring lay-people, with their women and children, took refuge in the church of that place. And so it came about that one day a woman was observed driving her sheep through the burial-place of that man, who had recently been buried there'. (The place is Derry and it seems reasonable to infer from the context that *ecclesia* denotes here the whole complex within a continuous enclosure or other visible and recognisable delimitation of sanctuary, including the cemetery. The Andersons point out that the monastery of Derry is not mentioned by Adomnán or Bede, though Adomnán mentions the place three times (Introduction, p 71, 106). It is true that Derry is not called by him explicitly *monasterium*, *cenubium* or the like. Nevertheless, there are indications of the existence of the monastery in his references. In the present context, a Columban monk has been buried there, presumably in a (at least partly) monastic cemetery: another Columban monastic cemetery, at 'the ridge of Toimm' (Drumhome, Co Donegal), mentioned in III 23, 'was probably beside a religious house, which was later associated with the monastery of Derry' (Introduction, p 106). Derry is clearly a harbour that Columban monks use (I 2) and where

they may be expected to be (n 39). II 24: *Eclesiarum persecutore. Alios ecclesiarum persecutores*. (In chapter-heading and in text), III 8: *Ejusdem ecclesiae cui deo auctore praeest in campo Lunge... collectio* ‘the community of the church over which, by God’s disposition, he rules, in the plain of Long’ (for *monasterium* used of Iona twice in this chapter and for *fratrum monasteria, cetera monasteria* of Tiree, see above). III 19: *De angelicae lucis claritudine quam Virgnous... quipostea deo auctore huic praefuit ecclesiae, super sanctum Columbam in ecclesia... descendere viderat: cui ego indignus licet deservio* ‘concerning the brightness of angelic light that Virgno ... (who by God’s guidance was afterwards the ruler of this church, which I, although unworthy, serve) saw descending upon Saint Columba in the church’ (in chapter-heading). III 22: *Multarum magis ecclesiarum pro me orationes exaudiens ... Quibus scilicet ecclesiis exorantibus sic a domino donatum est* ‘answering in preference the prayers of many churches for me. And it has so been granted by the Lord to the prayers of those churches’, III 23: *A sanctis quoque, etiam aliarum ecclesiarum, non mediocris veneratio conferetur* ‘also especial reverence will be bestowed by saints even of other churches’ (upon Iona, previously described in the immediate context as both *monasterium* and *cenubium*: see above). *Sanctus Columba multarum columna ecclesiarum* ‘Saint Columba, the pillar of many churches’ (the *monasterium* Cloni-finchail has previously been named in the same context: see above).

In these quotations, where *ec(c)lesia* might possibly be rendered ‘monastery’, there is nevertheless a fairly clear difference of emphasis in Adomnán’s usage between it and such terms as *monasterium* and *cenubium*. Attention has been drawn to those instances where *monasterium-cenubium* and *ec(c)lesia* occur in the same context, general or immediate, since they serve to highlight this difference. A *monasterium* is founded or built (second Preface; I 2, 3, 3 6, 4 5; II 31, 43, 46; III 3, 7, 11, 17), not an *ec(c)lesia*. People live and die in and work in and from a *monasterium* (I 3, 18, 29, 36, 37; II 13, 36, 39, 41; III 8, 12, 23), not an *ec(c)lesia*. A *monasterium* is a visible, physical entity, having both general and particular geographical location (I 30, 37, 43, 48, 49; II 2, 46; III 8, 16, 23). A *monasterium* dispenses hospitality (see further below); an *ec(c)lesia* does not. Admittedly, there is a certain amount of overlapping: both a *monasterium* etc. and an *ec(c)lesia* have superiors (*monasterium*: I 45; II 18; *cellula*: I 20; *cella*: I 31; *ec(c)lesia*: I 17; III 8, 19); and in I 5, 20 *ec(c)lesia* could be understood in a more physical sense. On the other hand, *ec(c)lesia* is used without specific reference in such broad expressions as ‘the churches of Ireland’ or ‘of the Irish’ (I 2, 3); ‘persecutor(s) of churches’ (II 24); ‘other churches’, ‘many churches’ (III 22, 23). More significantly, *ec(c)lesia* is otherwise, as might be expected, the church building: *monasterium* has also more restricted application, but to a major domestic building within the monastic settlement (see further below). It seems reasonable to suggest that, where Adomnán uses *ec(c)lesia* in a generalised sense, he is usually thinking of a spiritual community – a unit of the universal church rather than the more mundane nucleus of people and buildings.

The monastery is distinguished from its farmland: it is not the settlement and its surrounding estate, but the settlement only (second Preface; I 3, 37, 48; III 8, 16, 23). The farm buildings are apparently outside the enclosure (III 23: the barn-*horreum*; the *canaba* of I 45, translated ‘shed’ by the Andersons and discussed by them in their Introduction, p 115, seems to have stood between the monastery of Iona and the harbour). Activities such as milking (III 23 – cf. also II 16) and butchering (II 29) are carried on outside the monastery. It is not said where the metalworking described in II 29 is done, but quite possibly in workshops outside the enclosure. This is the only reference to metalworking in the Life. Laisran the gardener (*hortulanus*) is named in the chapter-heading of I 18: gardening on a limited scale might have been carried on within the enclosure – as, indeed, St Benedict recommends: *Monasterium autem, si possit fieri, ita debet constitui, ut omnia necessaria, id est, aqua, molendinum, hortum, vel artes diversas intra monasterium exerceantur, ut non sit necessitas*

monachis vagandi foris, quia omnino non expedit animabus eorum ‘the monastery should, if possible, be so arranged that all necessary things, such as water, mill, garden, and various crafts may be within the enclosure, so that the monks may not be compelled to wander outside it, for that is not at all expedient for their souls’ [Rule, chapter 66]. Milling of some kind is implied by Adomnán (III 23, twice: two heaps of grain in store; a cross fixed in a mill-stone; cf. I 28, 41; II 44 – below), but a mill and its location are not mentioned explicitly. The settlement was enclosed by the *val(l)um monasterii*, perhaps usually a stone wall or an earthwork bank and ditch, referred to explicitly in I 3 and II 29 and quite likely implied as a sanctuary boundary in I 20. In the phrase *cenubii septa* in I 3 Adomnán has apparently used the plural as singular, as is usual in classical Latin (*saeptum, septum*). Columbanus had punished a monk who left the enclosure of the monastery without a superior’s permission (Walker, 1970, 154–5, §8: *Aut extra vallum, id est extra sepem monasterii, sine interrogatione ierit, superpositione [paeniteat]* ‘or if he has gone outside the wall, that is, outside the bounds of the monastery, without asking, [let him do penance] with an imposition’): the codes of discipline in Columban houses in Adomnán’s day probably contained similar legislation (il 6).

The Columban monastery seems to have maintained itself by a mixed agricultural economy. Threshing of grain is mentioned (I 28); and ‘the plain (in Iona) that had been lately ploughed and sown’ in spring and the subsequent harvest are mentioned in II 44. Cows can be kept in stone enclosures (*maceria*: I 38): the building of stone enclosures in the western plain of Iona (*opus maceriale*: properly the building of dry-stone walls – see note 1, p 390) is referred to in II 28: we are not told their purpose, though there is a hint that they may have been for cattle. Seals are apparently farmed by Iona; wethers were killed for a man; and ‘a fat beast and six measures of grain’ sent to him (I 41).

Besides the monks themselves, there seem to be several references to laymen having some sort of client relationship with a monastery. In I 1, there is mention of ‘certain lay people of the same blessed man (Columba), though they were guilty men and bloodstained’ – *ejusdem beati viri ... quidam quamlibet scelerati laicae conversationis homines et sanguinarii* – apparently with reference to various unnamed places in Ireland and Britain: the context makes it quite clear that they are not monks, or penitents of any kind, but they could be lay tenants of Columban monastic estates. The ‘inhabitants of the place’ – *incolae loci* – at Durrow in II 2 may similarly be lay tenants rather than the monks; as also the ‘inhabitants of that dwelling-place’ (Iona) – *ejusdem commorationis incolae* – of II 28: in III 23 Columba *insulam cum insulanis benedixit habitatoribus* ‘blessed the island, with the islanders its inhabitants’ in a passage referring back to II 28. The layman (*plebeus*) at Delcrosin II 3 may also have been a lay tenant of the monastery of Iona: the wattles are taken by the monks from his field apparently as of right. The abbot’s convivial butler of I 17 is surely a layman: do we have here, in fact, a hint that the abbots of some monasteries, whether affiliated or not to the Columban *paruchia*, already maintained their own households, separate from the community and resembling those of the contemporary secular aristocracy? Reeves (1857, 46, note f) suggests however that the *pincerna* here is probably the monastic official called *cellarius* in the Lives of several Irish saints. This seems unlikely in the context of what can be inferred from the Life of later seventh-century Columban monastic discipline. Perhaps Reeves is nearer the mark in drawing attention to the *oeconomus*, the ‘steward’, the *equonimus* of numerous entries in the Annals of Ulster from 780 to 921: in Adomnán’s day, an official having overall responsibility for the management of a monastic estate as an agricultural unit to some extent distinct from the monastery which it served, in other words a bailiff, might conceivably have been a layman at times. Such an arrangement could have been seen as more than simply convenient where lay tenants formed a significant or predominant element of the agricultural population.

The church and cemetery

The church is usually *ec(c)lesia* or *oratorium*. I 3 *eclesia*; I 8 *eclesia* and *oratorium* (in the same context); I 22 *eclesia*; I 32 *oratorium*; I 37 *eclesia* (twice in the same context); I 40 *eclesia*; II 1 *eclesia*; II 5 *oratorium*; II 13 *eclesia* (thrice); *oratorium* (all in the same context); II 14 *oratorium*; II 36 *eclesia* (three times, in chapter-heading and in text), *oratorium* (occurs with *eclesia* in the same sentence), *domus (domini)* (all in the same context); II 40 *oratorium* (twice), *eclesia* (in the same context); II 42 *oratorium* (in the context of Cormac's second voyage), *oratorium* and *eclesia* (in the same sentence and in the context of Cormac's third voyage); II 45 *eclesia* (three times in the same context); III 2 *eclesia*; III 12 *eclesia*; III 17 *eclesia* (twice in the same context); III 19 *eclesia* (four times, in chapter-heading and in text; *eclesia* is also used in the chapter-heading in the more general sense discussed above), *oratorium*, *sacra domus* (all in the same context); III 20 *eclesia* (three times in the same context); III 23 *oratorium*, *eclesia* (twice; all in the same context), *eclesia* six times in the context of Columba's death). *Ec(c)lesia* is thus used thirty-seven times all told; *oratorium* is used twelve times. But the two words seem to be interchangeable. *Ec(c)lesia* most noticeably predominates in Book III.

We are not told much in detail about the church. It was big enough apparently to accommodate the whole community, or at least those members of it who were present at any given time (I 8, 22, 32; II 42 (Cormac's third voyage); III 12, 13, 23 (twice); less explicitly I 3, 44; II 36, 42 (Cormac's second voyage); III 17 (including all the companions of the four visiting abbots?)).

It had a feature that Adomnán calls *exedra* (III 19): *Virgnous... ecclesiam ... intrat, ibidemque in quadam exedra quae oratorii adhaerebat parieti devotus orabat... Columba eandem sacram ingreditur domum, simulque cum eo aurea lux de summa caeli altitudine descendens to turn illud ecclesiae spatium replens; sed et illius exedriolae separatim conclave, ubi Virgnous in quantum potuit latitare conabatur, ejusdem caelestis claritas luminis, per interiorem illius cubiculi januam quae ex minore patebat parte erumpens... repleverat* 'Virgno ... entered the church ... There, in an exedra that adjoined the oratory wall, he prayed devoutly ... Columba entered the same sacred building; and along with him there entered a golden light, descending from highest heaven and wholly filling the inside of the church. Also the enclosed space of the exedra, in which Virgno tried to conceal himself as well as he could, was filled with the brightness of that heavenly light, which streamed through the partly-open inner door of that room'. The most natural interpretation of the words *ecclesiam intrat ibidemque in quadam exedra quae oratorii adhaerebat parieti orabat* is that the exedra was entered from the church (from which it seems to be clearly distinguished), probably through one of the sidewalls: it is also called *cubiculum*, as are the sleeping-chambers of the monks in the chapter-heading of this chapter (see further below). In that case, the interior *janua* could have been thought of as 'inner' in relation to the door of the church itself, rather than as implying an outer door to the exedra. In *De locis sanctis*, Adomnán uses the word of a chapel containing the chalice of the Lord, situated between the basilica of Golgotha and the Martyrium (Meehan, 1958, 50–51 and 51 n 1). But here, as elsewhere in this work, he may be reflecting Arculf's usage rather than his own. A chamber opening off the church to N(E?) or S(E?) seems the most likely meaning of exedra in the present, not very explicit context (see Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 112, 506, n 2; Reeves, 1857, 224, note c; 358 (ecclesia) and note e).

The possibility that Adomnán had in mind here Irish *airdam* does not really throw further light on the problem, since it is not known precisely to what kind or kinds of structure *airdam* could be applied (for a detailed discussion of this term, see Petrie, 1845, 437–44; see also *Dictionary of the Irish language* (Royal Irish Academy: Dublin 1913–76) s.v. *airdam*; Radford, 1977, 4). It may be observed in passing, however, that, though comparison with Anglo-Saxon church architecture may indeed be useful in the context of later Irish church architecture in stone, it is perhaps less likely to be so in the context of Irish or other Celtic church architecture in wood. Building in wood was probably an ancient tradition among the Insular Celts by the seventh century: their Christianity was already ancient while still *tota ilia Saxonia gentilitatis et ignorantiae tenebris obscurata erat* ‘all that land of the English was shadowed by the darkness of heathenism and ignorance’ (I 1). The reference here is, specifically, to Northumbria. But the comparatively late conversion of the English generally suggests (if no more) that the architectural style or styles eventually evolved by them, had somewhat different roots from those of the Celtic west in the fifth to seventh centuries.

It does not seem possible to infer anything much of the nature of the church roof from the use in III 23 of the word *parasticia* (see index of Latin words; Introduction, p 112,161).

It is not said where the cemetery was situated in relation to the church, but quite likely it lay close to it and within the vallum. Laymen could be buried in Iona (I 16), but whether in the same cemetery with the monks or not, we are not told. A monastic cemetery at Derry is indicated in I 20 (see above). In II 39 there is reference to the monastic cemetery at Durrow; and in III 23 to a cemetery of Columban monks in the ridge of Toimm (see above). As regards special – graves or shrine – tombs, it is fairly clear from the description of Columba’s burial in III 23 (p 537) that no translation of his remains had taken place when Adomnán wrote. This impression is reinforced by the reference in the same chapter to Columba’s stone pillow, ‘which even today stands beside his grave as a kind of epitaph’ (p 527); and by the mention (p 541) of heavenly light and the frequent apparitions of angels ‘at the place in which his holy bones repose’. Indeed, there are hints that Iona may have discouraged large numbers of casual visitors in Adomnán’s day: in III 7, Columba is said to have kept secret many of his divine revelations, partly so as not ‘to invite questioning of himself by intolerable crowds of people’ and in III 23 (p 537–9), we are told that only his community attended Columba’s funeral, a great wind preventing outsiders from crossing to Iona. The cult of relics in general, furthermore, and of Columba’s in particular (whether corporeal or non-corporeal), seems not to have been significantly developed at Iona at this time: II 44, 45 (first occasion); compare II 4, 5, 6, 7, 33.

The domestic buildings

An important building is called both *monasterium* and *magna domus*. In I 24, Columba is sitting beside the hearth in the *monasterium*; near him a monk is reading a book; after a short while the monk gets up ‘to perform some task in the monastery’ – *ad aliquam consurgens in monasterio ministrationem* – and lets the book fall into a ewer of water. A domestic if rather messy scene, but it is not clear to this writer whether the second *monasterium* is the *magna domus* in particular or the monastery in general. In II 45, three miracles are related of contrary winds being turned into favourable ones through the intercession of St Columba. On the first occasion, ‘timbers were being conveyed for the great house’ – *magnae ... materiae eveherentur domus*; on the second occasion, ‘twelve curachs had been collected, and other oak timbers were being towed by us from the mouth of the river Sale, for the restoration of our monastery’ – *aliae nobiscum roboreae ab hostio fluminis Sale xii. curucis congregatis materiae ad nostrum renovandum traherentur monasterium*; the

third occasion does not concern us here. It was observed above that there is nothing in the context of the second occasion to indicate whether *monasterium* here has restricted or general reference. But in the chapter-heading of III 15 the phrase *monasterium rotundum* is used of a building at Durrow that is described in the text of the chapter as *magna domus*. (It may be noted in passing that the fact that this building is said explicitly to be ‘round’ suggests that the domestic buildings of an ecclesiastical settlement of this period could also be – perhaps usually were – rectilinear in ground plan.) The *magna domus* was very likely an unspecialised unit, accommodating many of the day-time indoor activities of a seventh century Columban monastery, including possibly teaching, reading and writing generally (for which no separate quarters are mentioned specifically: see further below). It may also have housed the kitchen and bakehouse, which are likewise not mentioned, though a baker (*pistor*) and baking at Iona are referred to incidentally in III 10 and bread at Iona similarly in III 23 (p 521 – though *panem* here, preserved in the B MSS, is omitted by A). If the kitchen was in the *magna domus*, it would be reasonable to suppose that the refectory was here also: the refectory (*refectorium*) at Aghaboe is mentioned in II 13, but it is not clear from the context whether or not it was a separate building. It seems likely, furthermore, that the *magna domus* was used for purposes of assembly, on regular or special occasions: see I 4 – *sedens in domu sanctus, et fratribus praecipiens* (at Iona, but see further below); I 26 (Iona); III 12 (probably Iona, but see further below); III 16 (Iona.). *Magna domus* would translate into Old Irish as *tech mór*: see MacDonald, 1981, 310.

The arrangement of the sleeping-quarters poses something of a problem. Basically, two kinds of sleeping-quarters may be defined for purposes of discussion: those of superiors or seniors, especially Columba’s; and those of other monks, whether they were individual or communal. The argument is probably most easily presented by treating them in that order.

II 5: Maugin, daughter of Daimen, falls at night while ‘returning after the office from the oratory to her house’ – *ab oratorio post misam domum reversa*. II 14: *Quemque* (sc. *baculum*) *domum reversus in oratoriumportat* ‘and when he had returned home, he carried it (the staff) into the oratory’. III 2: One night, the priest Cruithnechan, the boy Columba’s foster-father, *post misam ab ecclesia ad hospitolum revertens totam invenit domum suam clara inradiatam luce* ‘returning to his lodging from the church after the office, found his whole house illumined with clear light’: Columba sleeps in his foster-father’s house. II 18: On one occasion in the island of Hinba, Columba receives the grace of the Holy Spirit *ita ut per tris dies totidemque nodes intra obserratam et repletam caelesti claritudine domum manens nullum ad se accedere permetteret, neque manducans neque bibens. De qua videlicet domu immensae claritatis radii per rimulas valvarum et clavium foramina erumpentes noctu visebantur* ‘so that for three days and as many nights, remaining within a house barred, and filled with heavenly light, he allowed no one to go to him, and he neither ate nor drank. From that house beams of immeasurable brightness were visible in the night, escaping through chinks of the door-leaves, and through the keyholes’.

III 21: Columba’s sleeping-quarters are called indifferently *hospitolum* and *domus* in the one context (cf. III 2, above). ‘*Caveto, filii, ne hac sequenti node ...a d meum appropinques hospitolum*’. *Qui hoc audiens contra interdictum ad domum beati v iri... accessit* ‘beware, my son, of coming near my lodging this night...’. But he, hearing this, came to the blessed man’s house in violation of the interdict’. *Nam eadem hora beati viri illud hospitolum caelestis splendore claritudinis erat repletum* ‘for in that hour the blessed man’s lodging was filled with the glory of heavenly brightness’. *Nonne ad mei hostium hospitoli te ilia in hora appropinquantem et inde redeuntem vidi?* ‘did I not see you

in that hour coming to the door of my lodging and going away from it?' III 23: Columba's sleeping-quarters are *hospitiolum* (p 527) and *hospitium* (p 537). *Ad hospitiolum revertens in ledulo resedet pernox ubi pro stramine nudam habebat petram, et pro pulvillo lapidem qui hodieque quasi quidam juxta sepulchrum ejus titulus stat monumenti* '(Columba) returned to his lodging, and reclined on his sleeping-place, where during the night he used to have for bed, the bare rock; and for pillow, a stone, which even today stands beside his grave as a kind of epitaph'. *Sacrum corpus de ecclesia ad hospitium, unde paulo ante vivens venerat... reportatur* 'the sacred body was carried back from the church ... to the lodging from which, alive, he had come a little while before'. Both instances occur in the broad context of Columba's death. III 6: Columba in Iona visits a dying British monk. He blesses him and then 'quickly left the house, being unwilling to see him die. And immediately after the holy man had gone away from the house, the monk ended the present life' – *ocius domum egreditur nolens videre morientem; qui eodem momento post sancti de domu secession viripraesentem finnt vitam*. III 20: A monk named Colcu, praying at the door of the church one night, inadvertently witnesses a manifestation of heavenly light about Columba, 'and after this sudden apparition of light he was much afraid, and returned to his dwelling' – *postquam talemsubitam luminis apparationem valde pertimescens domum revertitur*.

Nothing in these passages affords a clear indication of the nature or arrangement of the sleeping-quarters, whether of superiors and seniors on the one hand, or of ordinary monks on the other – if they were in fact different. But if it be allowed that a perfectly natural translation of *domum reversa* in II 5 would be 'while returning home' (as in II 14, where the Andersons so translate), then *hospitium* – *hospitiolum* is more usual for a superior's or senior's sleeping-quarters (six times) than *domus* (twice): in fact, *hospitiolum* is used five times, *hospitium* only once. It is not said that the domus of III 18 was sleeping-quarters and it may not have been so: it is to be hoped, at least, that it was not Hinba's *magna domus*. In contrast, the monks' quarters are domus (*domum revertitur* in III 20 is unlikely, from the context, to have the generalised sense proposed here for the similar phrases of II 5 and 14). The guest-house (see below) is *hospitium*. The *domus* on the west coast of Iona in which the crane is lodged in I 48 is also *hospitium*: the bird is called both guest (*hospita grus*) and pilgrim guest (*peregrina hospita*) and the monk who cares for it *hospes* – the obligation of hospitality is fulfilled as for a human guest. But in the second Preface, Adomnán uses *hospitium* in a spiritual sense: *qui in se ... spiritui sancto hospitium praeibuit* 'since he (Columba) ... offered to the Holy Spirit a dwelling in himself'. *Sohospiti(ol)um* in general seems to have no highly specialised connotation, though it is possible that the diminutive form here does have significance and that Adomnán normally or frequently thought of a superior's or senior's night-quarters as *hospitiolum*: it seems quite likely, then, that these were individual apartments, whether separate small buildings or self-contained units within a larger complex. On the other hand, there are slight indications that the *domus* where the ordinary monk slept was communal. *Quadam itidem die, dum fratresse calciantes mane ad diversa monasterii opera ire praepararent, sanctus econtra ea die otuari praecipit* 'also on a certain day, when the brothers were putting on their shoes in the morning, preparing to go to the various labours of the monastery, Saint Columba on the contrary gave orders that they should not go to work on that day' (III 12): the mention of the putting on of shoes suggests that the monks were still in their sleeping-quarters; and the passage implies that they were all together. There seems to be nothing to indicate that Adomnán intended anything more by mane than the earliest part of the day (Introduction, p 121), when work commenced: compare II 15 (Baithene will set sail for Tiree *mane crastina die*), II 21 (a basically secular context), II 45 (p 459: *post eandem transactam noctem diluculo mane consurgimus* 'after that night had passed, we [Adomnán and his companions] arose in the morning twilight' and resumed their interrupted voyage). It is not clear to this writer, however, how mane related to the

canonical hours in a Columban monastery at any given season (see Introduction, p 120–22). The present suggestion assumes that the monks arose at first light and went immediately about their allotted tasks – not to the church (compare also the use of *mane* by St Benedict in the passage from his *Rule*, ch. 22, cited below). Similarly, the *domus* of I 4 might be a dormitory, rather than the *magna domus* (see above). In the chapter-heading of III 19, the brothers are said to be resting in their sleeping-chambers on a winter night – *fratribus himali node in cubiculis quiescentibus*: it was pointed out above that in the text of the same chapter, the *exedra* of the church is also called *cubiculum*. What may be implied, therefore, is that the ordinary monks slept in a large building, of rectilinear or curvilinear ground plan, called by Adomnán (and so probably in contemporary Columban usage generally) *domus*, which was partitioned internally into individual cubacula giving onto an open floor-space. The mention of the construction of a large building at Durrow in I 29 – (*in*) *alicujus majoris domus fabrica* – suggests that there could be two or more such bigger structures in a Columban monastic complex: though two would probably be the *magna domus* and the guest-house.

The *cellolae*, *cellulae* of *De locis sanctis* (Meehan, 1958, 96–97) may well have been individual cells in the monastery on Mount Tabor. Columbanus's monks, similarly, seem to have had separate living-quarters, or at least to have been housed in much smaller groups than is envisaged in the present context: *Qui visitaverit alios fratres in cellulis eorum sine interrogatione, simili modo paeniteat* 'he who has visited other brethren in their cells without asking leave, let him do penance likewise' (Walker, 1970, 154–55). St Benedict's *cella* is communal: *Si potest fieri, omnes in uno loco dormiant; si autem multitudo non sinit, deni aut viceni cum senioribus, qui super eos solliciti sint, pausent. Candela jugiter in eadem cella ardeat usque mane* 'if it be possible, let them all sleep in one place; but if their numbers do not allow of this, let them sleep by tens or twenties, with seniors to supervise them. There shall be a light burning in the dormitory throughout the night'. *Adolescentiores fratres juxta se non habeant lectos, sed permixti cum senioribus* 'the younger brethren shall not have their beds by themselves, but shall be mixed with the seniors' (*Rule*, ch. 22). Some at least of Adomnán's *hospitiola* could have been more private quarters for officers of the community within the *domus*; and there could have been more than one *domus* depending on the numbers to be housed in any given monastery.

In secular contexts, *domus* is the normal word for a house of whatever status, as might be expected: I 1 (p 203); I 10 (royal); I 15 (royal, on Dumbarton Rock); in I 34 Columba makes his lodging (*mansionem faciens*) in a hamlet (*viculus*) on the banks of a stream; a house beyond the stream is *domus*, a hut nearer at hand, *domucula*; the house in which Columba is lodged is *domus* (twice); the houses of the hamlet generally are *domus*; I 4 6; II 4 (six men in one *domus*); II 7 [*domus* and *domucula* of the one building]; II 17; II 22 (twice of the same house); in II 32, the layman's (*plebeus*) house is *domus*; the part of the house in which his dead son lies is *hospitiolum* and *habitaculum*; then the resuscitated boy is brought out of the *domus*, but the context does not make it clear whether those present are excluded from apart only or from the whole house; II 33 [*domus regia*, *aula regia*, of king Brude]; II 35 (of king Brude, apparently housing both the king and his *senatus*); II 37 (four times of the one house: in addition, *domum revertitur* is probably just 'returned home', *ad domum portare* 'to carry (it) home', as the Andersons translate); II 41; III 14 (but here *cum tota domu* really means 'with his whole household'). In I 41, *habitaculum* is translated 'dwelling' by the Andersons: the word here does not seem to mean more or less than *domus* elsewhere. In I 39, *cubiculum* is 'bed-chamber', *lectulus* 'bed'. Royal *domus* may have included large timber halls, though evidence for these in Ireland is not hitherto forthcoming. In general, such information as is provided by the references to houses in secular contexts does not appear immediately to invalidate what has been suggested above with regard to a monastic *domus*.

Adomnán has, in fact, little to say explicitly about the hierarchy of a monastic community, below abbots or other superiors. In I 2 (p 207) the priest of his own tribe, to whom Finten (Munnu) goes for advice, is called senior, but it is not certain that he is a monk; as the Andersons translate, he is rather a senior of the kindred as an old and respected man. The elders (*seniores*) of Clonmacnoise are mentioned in I 3, but in comparison with the boy Ernene. In i 37, Baithene is in charge of work (*operum dispensator*) on the harvest in the western plain of Iona and a senior among the working-party of monks acts as spokesman. In II 4, abbot Segene and other seniors are mentioned – (*coram*) *Segineo abbate et ceteris ... senioribus*. In II 44, Adomnán has some of his own elders (*aliqui ex nostris senioribus*) take steps to invoke St Columba's help in time of severe drought in Iona. In III 3, the *seniores* of the assembly at Teltown that had excommunicated Columba may have been composed wholly or largely of men of equal status with him and Brenden of Birr. In III 9, Columba in Iona reveals a vision to a few of his elders who are with him – *paucis quibusdam se circumstantibus sic profatus senioribus*. In I 29, Laisran is presumably a senior of Durrow, but his precise office or status is not given. He was later third abbot of Iona (Introduction, p 90) and may at this time have been superior of Durrow.

Columba had himself been destined for the church since boyhood (second Preface, p 187). His tutor or foster-father (*nutritor*) was a priest (Columba is his *alumnus*), apparently monastic (III 2). As a young man, he lived as a deacon with bishop Findbarr, 'acquiring knowledge of sacred scripture' (I 1, p 197; II 1), but whether in a monastic community or not is not stated. (In III 4, however, the mention of *fratres* accompanying bishop Finnio in the context of a visit (?) of the young Columba to his master, suggests that Adomnán thought of Finnio's establishment as monastic). While still a deacon, Columba studied with one Gemman in Leinster (II 25), but nothing is said of the nature of Gemman's establishment. Baithene, similarly, is called Columba's foster-son or pupil – *alumnus* – in I 2 and III 18; compare III 23 (p 525-7). Finten moccu Moie (Munnu), 'from the age of boyhood... being devoted to studies of divine wisdom', was as a youth 'being well instructed in studies of sacred literature' shortly before he asked to join the community at Iona under Baithene (I 2), though it is not clear how or where precisely he received his early training: it may not have been in a monastic milieu (cf. above). The central figure of II 3 is Ernene, Crasen's son, 'a boy of the congregation' (*puer familiaris*) at Clonmacnoise. In III 21, on the other hand, Columba's student (*alumnus*) of philosophy (*sapientia*) appears to be a layman.

There are several references to reading, writing and teaching (in addition to those just enumerated). The second Preface (p 187) mentions generally Columba's reading and writing, among other labours. Columba is, in fact, usually represented as studying in his day-hut in Iona, his *tegori(ol)um*: I 25 (his ink-horn is upset by a clumsy guest); I 35 (Colcu studies beside Columba and writes down the time of a prophecy on a tablet); II 16 (the door must have been open); II 29 (a similar episode to the preceding, though the *tegori(ol)um* is not mentioned explicitly); III 15; III 22 (though it is not said what Columba is doing); III 23 (p 525-7: Columba writes a psalter on the last day of his life; Baíthéne, his successor in teaching and writing, must resume the work after his death). It is not said where Columba is reading in Iona in I 43, but probably in his *tegori(ol)um*: compare II 40. Books written by Columba are unharmed after long immersion in water II 8, 9). The subject of I 23 is the checking of a psalter written by Baíthéne: in III 18, it is implied that Baíthéne sometimes acted as Columba's *amanuensis*. At the very end of the Life (p 543), Adomnán himself adjures his readers to copy his work carefully and to check their copies equally carefully. Apart from Columba's *tegori(ol)um*, however, there is no indication that a building or part of a building was allocated

specifically to scholastic pursuits. It was suggested above that such activities may have been accommodated in the *magna domus*: indeed, in I 24, a monk is reading a book there in Columba's presence (see above). Books were apparently stored in coffer (scriniolum, II 8; scrinium, II 9), perhaps also in the *magna domus*. This negative evidence accords with that of the Annals of Ulster in the period 650 to 850 (MacDonald 1981, 318): in 1097 (AU), the round tower (*cloicthech*) of Monasterboice was burned with its books (*co n-a lebraibh*) and many treasures.

The guest-house is *hospitium*. Columba orders the guest-house in Iona to be prepared for Cainnech and water to be drawn for washing the feet of guests (I 4). Caitan, prior of Celia Diuni, dies in the guest-house at Iona (I 31). Similarly, the two brothers of I 32 die in the guest-house at Iona, after they have taken the monastic vow. Bundles of wattles (*virgarum fasciculos*) are brought by ship to build a guest-house at Iona (II 3). Columba finds Libran alone in the guest-house at Iona, when Libran first asks to join his community (II 39, p 421); and, many years later, Libran, by now a very old man and a monk of long standing of Campus Lunge, dies in the guesthouse, while on a visit to Durrow (II 39, pp 433–5). It is to be noticed that Columban monks of other houses die in the guest-house, rather than in quarters

presumably reserved for members of the local community: but there is no mention of an infirmary as such (compare, in a much later context, MacDonald, 1981, 309; St Benedict had legislated for an infirmary and an infirmarian: 'for these sick brethren let there be assigned a special room and an attendant who is God-fearing, diligent and careful' – *quibus fratribus infirmis sit cella super se deputata, et servitor timens Deum et diligens ac sollicitus*, Rule, ch. 36).

There are also a number of references, explicit or implicit, to guests and travellers who, if they stayed in a monastery overnight or for a longer period, would doubtless have been lodged in the guest-house. Finten moccu Moie, arriving in Iona incognito, 'was at first received with the hospitality given to an unknown guest' (I 2, p 209). In I 3, Columba is a guest at Clonmacnoise. In I 5, bishop Colman moccu Sailni is sailing to Iona. In I 13, three exiled brothers come from Ireland to Columba in Britain. In I 16, two laymen with their sons visit Columba in Iona. In I 17, the sojourn of the monk Colcu, Aid Draigneche's son, with Columba in Iona, seems to be temporary. In I 26, the arrival in Iona of a clerical (?) guest of some distinction causes the relaxation of the Wednesday fast. In I 30, a penitent is kept for some days in Iona and then sent to Baithene in Campus Lunge (see also below). In I 40, Columba visits Trevet, but it is not said whether or not he stays overnight. In I 43, a traveller from Ireland brings Irish news to Iona. In I 50, Columba stays at Coleraine as the guest of bishop Conall: the phrase *beato viro hospitium praeparavit*, translated by the Andersons 'prepared a lodging for the blessed man', could also be rendered 'prepared the guest-house'. There follows in the same chapter brief mention of a similar episode at Kilmore, Co Roscommon, where Columba is presumably staying. In II 14, Cainnech has been staying with Columba in Iona (cf. I 4 above). In II 23, travellers from Islay report Feradach's crime to Columba, though it is not said where Columba is. In II 36, Columba stays at Terryglass at the invitation of the community. In II 40, travellers coming from Ireland to Iona report the woman's safe delivery. In III 12, travellers from Leinster bring to Iona(?) the news of the death of bishop Colman moccu Loigse: in III 11, conversely, no one from Ireland has yet brought to Iona the news of the death of Brendan of Birr. In III 13, the soul of a guest of Comgell's monastery (Bangor), drowned in Belfast Lough, is in temporary jeopardy. In III 17, Columba is visited in Hinba by Comgell, Cainnech, Brenden of Clonfert and Cormac grandson of Lethan, all coming from Ireland. Clearly, hospitality to visitors, both clerical and lay, was an important function of late seventh-century Columban houses. Equally clearly, the monasteries must have depended for news, both ecclesiastical and secular, as much on the reports of such guests as on the reports of returning members of their own communities.

Adomnán's references, furthermore, to pilgrims (*peregrini*) and to pilgrimage (*peregrinatio*) seem to have variously narrower and broader connotation. Columba sailed from Ireland to Britain 'wishing to be a pilgrim for Christ' – *pro Christo perigrinari volens* (second Preface, p 187; compare I 7: *de Scotia perigrinaturus ... enavigavit*; I 13: *ad sanctum in Britanniam perigrinantem ... venit*; II 10: 'at one time during the saint's life in pilgrimage' – *alio ... in tempore, cum sanctus in sua conversaretur perigrinatione* i.e. in Britain: the episode is set in Ardnamurchan; III 22: 'thirty years have been completed of my pilgrimage in Britain' – *meae in Britannia perigrinationis terdeni completisunt anni*; III 23 (p 529): Columba's last words, spoken 'when he was, as it were, crossing over to the heavenly country from this weary pilgrimage' – *quasi de hac tedialiperigrinatione ad caelestem patriam transmeantis*). Columba's *peregrinatio* was voluntary self-exile for life – *is si in banmartre du duiniu, in tain scaras ar deafrieach reet earns, ce ru-cesa aihiu nu laubirn-oco* (Thumeysen, 1949,36: the 'Cambrai Homily' is probably of seventh-century date) 'this is white martyrdom for a man, when he parts from everything that he loves for God, even though he suffer fasting or toil on account of it' – and Adomnán presumably thought of it in precisely this sense, though the pilgrimage of III 23 could perhaps be construed more loosely as 'life's pilgrimage'. Similarly, Finten moccu Moie as a young man intended to leave Ireland and go 'to our holy Columba, in order to live in pilgrimage' – *ut nostrum sanctum Columbam Heverniam deserens perigrinaturus adiret* (I 2, p 207). In II 39, 'a certain layman who had recently put on clerical dress sailed across from Ireland, and came to the island monastery (Iona) of the blessed man' – *homo quidam plebeus nuper sumpto clericatus habitu de Scotia transnavigans ad insulanum beati monasterium viri devenit*; 'to expiate his sins in pilgrimage' – *ad delenda in perigrinatione peccamina*. Columba imposes upon him seven years' penance in Tiree; and the 'pilgrim penitent' (*penitensperigrinus*) duly spent seven years at Campus Lunge (see also below). Later, having been released from his secular obligations at home in Connacht, Libran returns to Columba in Iona, where he takes the monastic vow. He is then sent back to Campus Lunge, where he lives out his life as a monk, dying eventually in great old age while visiting Durrow. In III 6, the British monk who is said to be the first of the community of Iona to die is called *perigrinus*. On the other hand, *peregrinatio* could apparently be a temporary undertaking. The two brothers *peregrini* of I 32 had intended to spend one year only in pilgrimage at Iona. In I 36, the priest Findchan brings from Ireland to Tiree 'in clerical garb' (*sub clericatus habitu*) a most unsuitable person, 'intending that he should for some years be a pilgrim with him in his monastery' – *ut in suo apud se monasterio per aliquot peregrinaretur annos*; and has him ordained priest after he has spent some time in pilgrimage – *post aliquantum in perigrinatione transactum tempus*. Needless to say, the unsuitable candidate returns to his former avocation and meets the violent end that Adomnán clearly regards as his due. The Munster bishop Cronan, who visits Columba in I 44, is described as *humilis perigrinus*. In III 7, 'an Irish pilgrim, coming to the saint, remained for some months with him in the island of Io' – *quidam everniensis perigrinus ad sanctum perveniens per aliquot apud eum menses in Iova commanebat insula*: he is called a brother (*frater*). It is of course possible that some, perhaps many, people made a profession of moving from one monastery to another in this way, staying for varying lengths of time before resuming their wanderings. Twice, furthermore, Adomnán seems to be thinking of *peregrinatio* in a metaphorical sense. In II 33 Broíchán's Irish slave-girl (*ancell(ul)a, serv(ul)a, famula*) is described as 'pilgrim captive' – *perigrina captiva*. In I 48, the crane is called *perigrina hospita* – 'not wishing to be longer in pilgrimage with us' (*nolens ultra apud nos perigrinari*); 'which will not remain in pilgrimage' (*quae in perigrinatione non demorabitur*) – though here, as was noted earlier, the bird is treated neither more nor less than as a human guest or pilgrim.

The Plate(ol)a Monasterii

Adomnán mentions twice a feature of the monastic ground plan that he calls the *platea oxplateola monasterii*. In I 50, the gifts of the local people are laid out for Columba's inspection and blessing in the *platea monasterii* at Coleraine. The phrase is in *platea monasterii strata*, which the Andersons translate 'laid out (i.e. the gifts – *xenia*) in the courtyard of the monastery'; they offer the alternative rendering (p 320 n 3) 'in the paved courtyard' – depending on whether *strata* is taken as neuter plural, agreeing with *xenia*, or as ablative singular feminine, agreeing with *platea*. In III 6, Columba, after visiting his dying British monk, walks in *plateola sui monasterii* at Iona. Greek πλατεία (f.) meant a 'street', from πλατύς 'wide, broad' (Liddell and Scott, 1864); and its Latin derivative *platea* in classical usage a 'broad way in a city, a street'; in post-classical usage, an 'open space in a house, an area, court-yard' (Lewis and Short, 1907).

In *De locis sanctis* I 6, 3, Adomnán uses *plateola* to mean, probably, 'court', quoting Arculf: 'Between Anastasis (that is the round church often mentioned above) and the basilica of Constantine, there is an open court which stretches as far as the church of Golgotha, and in this court night and day there are always lamps burning' (*Inter anastassim, hoc est illam sepe supra memoratam rotundam ecclesiam, et basilicam Constantini quaedam patet plateola usque ad ecclesiam Golgothanam; in qua uidelicet plateola die et node super lampades ardent*). In I 1, 9, describing the crowds that poured into Jerusalem for a great market in early September and the consequent fouling of the city streets by large numbers of pack-animals, he uses *platea* to mean 'street': *per Mas politanas plateas* 'throughout the city streets' (Meehan, 1958, 50–51, 40–41).

The Collectio Canonum Hibernensis XLIV, 'De locis consecratis', chapter 1 (De consecratione loci) prefacing the chapter with 'In Apocalipsin', says: *Cantabitur alleluja per civitatem et vicos ejus et plateas, et postea dicitur: Omnis immundus non transibit per eam* 'Alleluia will be sung throughout the city and its streets and squares (?)', and then it is said: no one unclean will pass through it'. The particular reference is presumably to the monastic *civitas*: the allusion may be to the heavenly city of Revelation 21:1 – 22:15 – compare especially 21:27 and 22:14–15 (Vulgate); with perhaps, elements of Ezekiel 40–48 in mind (cf. below). Chapter 2 (*De debito termino circa omnem locum sanctum*, section f) has: *Item Ezechiel: Vidi angelum habentem arundinem in manu, ut metiret civitatem in circuitu et plateas ejus foras* 'I saw an angel having a measuring-rod in his hand that he might measure the city in circuit and its courts (?) without'. The editor refers this to Revelation 21:15: *Et qui loquebatur mecum, habebat mensuram arundineam auream, ut metiretur civitatem, et portas ejus, et murum* 'And he who was speaking to me, had a golden measuring-rod, that he might measure the city, and its gates, and wall'. With this verse may be compared 11:1–2: *Et datus est mihi calamus similis virgae, et dictum est mihi: Surge, et metire templum Dei, et altare, et adorantes in eo: atrium autem, quod est foris templum, eiice foras, et ne metiaris illud* 'And a measuring-rod was given to me like a wand, and I was told: Arise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those worshipping there: but the court which is without the temple, leave it out, and do not measure it'; Ezekiel 40:3: *et ecce vir cuius erat species quasi species aeris, et funiculus lineus in manu ejus, et calamus mensurae in manu ejus; stabat autem in porta* 'and behold a man whose form was as if a form of bronze, and a flaxen cord in his hand, and a measuring-rod in his hand; and he stood in the gate'; 42:15–20: *Cumque complisset mensuras domus interioris, eduxit me per viam portae quae respiciebat ad viam orientalem; et nensus est eam undique per circuitum. Mensus est autem contra ventum orientalem calamo mensurae, quingentos calamos in calamo mensurae per circuitum. Et mensus est contra ventum aquilonis quingentos calamos in calamo mensurae per gyrum. Et ad ventum australem mensus est quingentos calamos in calamo mensurae per circuitum. Et ad ventum occidentalem mensus est quingentos calamos in calamo*

mensurae. Per quatuor ventos mensus est murum eius undique per circuitum longitudinem quingentorum cubitorum, et latitudinem quingentorum cubitorum, dividens inter sanctuarium et vulgi locum ‘And when he had completed the measurements of the interior of the house, he led me through the way of the gate that faced east; and he measured it on all sides around. And he measured towards the east quarter with the measuring-rod, five hundred rods by the measuring-rod around. And he measured towards the north quarter five hundred rods by the measuring-rod around. And he measured to the south quarter five hundred rods by the measuring-rod around. And he measured to the west quarter five hundred rods by the measuring-rod. Throughout the four quarters he measured its wall on all sides around, length five hundred cubits, and breadth five hundred cubits, dividing the sanctuary from the place of the people’.

Compare also Zechariah 2:1.

Section g of the same chapter has: *Item in apocalipsin: Venit angelus, ut metiret civitatem et plateas ejus* ‘The angel came to measure the city and its squares (?)’. This the editor refers also to Revelation 21:15.

Chapter 5 of the same work (*De numero terminorum sancti loci*) reads: *Eadem sinodus (Hibernensis, as in ch. 3, section a): Quatuor terminos circa locum sanctum posuit, primum, in quern laici et mulieres intrant, alterum, in quern clerici tantum veniunt. Primus vocatur sanctus, secundus sanctior, tertius sanctissimus* ‘It (presumably the synod) placed four boundaries around the sacred place, the first, into which laymen and women enter, the second (?), into which clerics only come. The first is called holy, the second more holy, the third most holy’. In a footnote the editor quotes a variant version from another MS (6): *Sinodus. Duo vel tres termini circa locum sanctum debent fieri, primus, in quern praeter sanctorum nullum introire permittimus omnino, quia in eum laici non accedunt, nec mulieres, nisi clerici; secundus, in cujus plateas plebium rusticorum catervas non multum nequitiae deditas intrare sinimus; tertius, in quern laicos homicidas, adulteros permissione et consuetudine intra ire non vetamus. Inde vocantur primus sanctissimus, secundus sanctior, tertius sanctus* ‘There should be two or three boundaries around the sacred place, the first, into which we allow no one to enter at all unless of the saints, because laymen do not approach it, nor women, only clerics; the second, into the courts (?) of which we let enter crowds of country people not much given to villainy; the third, into which we do not forbid lay murderers, (and) adulterers to enter by permission and custom. From this they are called, the first most holy, the second more holy, the third holy’ (see Wasserschleben, 1885, 174–5: the writer is grateful to Professor Donnchadh Ó Corrain, University College, Cork, for these references and for discussion of them).

Some of the foregoing translation is somewhat tentative, but it seems reasonable to infer, both from the *Collectio* as quoted and from the probable or possible biblical allusions, that *platea* is here used of an open space delimited by walls or buildings – a ‘court’ or ‘square’ rather than a ‘street’. Chapter 5 may envisage (ideally?) broad open spaces within concentric walls, or a series of courts or squares opening one from another in linear progression. In the Vulgate text it may be observed that *platea* does not appear in these quotations (nor in the extant corresponding verses of Sabatier’s *Vetus Latina*, for the text of which see Appendix), suggesting that it may have been an integral element of the vocabulary of the compilers of the *Collectio*. The relevance of the *Collectio* to the present discussion is that it is taken to be a compilation drawn up in the early eighth century by two scholars, Cu Chuimne of Iona and Ruben of Dairinis, possibly Dairinis on the Blackwater in Co Waterford; and that most of the constituent canons are agreed to be from seventh-century synods (Hughes, 1972, 67–8). In other words, the work and its sources belong very much to Adomnán’s own period – he is, in fact, one of the latest authorities cited (*ibid.*, 68) – and one of its two editors belonged himself to Iona.

In sum – and the meaning of *platea* in *De locis sanctis* notwithstanding – the *plate(ol)a monasterii* seems likely to have been an open space, ‘square’ or ‘court’, possibly paved (an obvious precaution in a frequently wet climate), around which some, perhaps all, of the principal buildings of the monastery were arranged. In III 23 (p 529), the angelic light that briefly shines about the dying Columba within the church is seen not only by his attendant Diormit, but by a few more of the brothers approaching for the night office ‘when they too were a little way off’. The light is presumably visible through the open door (‘as Diormit approached the doorway, the light... quickly faded’). It may be that the church stood on the east side of the *plate(ol)a*; and that the monks’ sleeping-quarters were on the west side (cf. III 6), facing the (west) door of the church (cf. Introduction, p 112). The *plate(ol)a* would, therefore, have been more conveniently square or rectangular, rather than circular. It is not possible to say whether or not a rectilinear *plate(ol)a*, centrally (?) situated, would have influenced or even dictated the outline of the enclosure overall, though it cannot have escaped the notice of Cú Chuimne, Ruben and their predecessors that the court of the Temple and the city of Ezekiel’s vision and the heavenly city of Revelation are uncompromisingly square: Ezekiel 42:15–20 (above and cf. 45:2), 48:15–16, 30–35; Revelation 21:12–13, 16 (Vulgate). But the canonists may have been thinking in ideal as much as in real terms; and we know little or nothing of the ground plan and extent of late seventh-century Iona and Coleraine – or Durrow or Clonmacnoise. Indeed, we know nothing concrete about the size of these communities, save that we are told (III 3, in translation p 471, but 107a, p 472 in text: see the Andersons’ notes as relevant) that Columba originally sailed to Britain with (the apostolic) twelve disciples.

The suggestion may be made, however, on the basis of the foregoing discussion, that two broad assumptions having at present fairly wide acceptance, could with advantage be more closely scrutinised. The first is that the ground plan within the *vallum* of an early Irish ecclesiastical settlement was generally random and haphazard: the existence of the *plate(ol)a* indicates that the focal area (at least) of some monasteries could be more regularly laid out. The second has to do with the normality of the curvilinear outline of the enclosure itself: despite the weight of currently available and mainly archaeological evidence, it may not follow that the *ideal* shape for a monastic enclosure, especially in the sixth to seventh centuries, was always and necessarily a circle (compare Thomas 1971, 29–32; though the present writer has doubts about the precise historical context of these large (and so late?) rectilinear enclosures).

Desertum and Peregrinatio

Many of the *peregrini* discussed above would have required the services of the guest-house. There is, however, another kind of *peregrinatio*, not explicitly so-called, but of much more ascetic aspect: that seeking of the desert that had been, historically, the *fons et origo* of monasticism itself. Cormac, Lethan’s grandson, figures prominently in this regard, ‘a holy man who sought with great labour not less than three times a desert in the ocean, and yet found none’ – *viro utique sancto, qui tribus non minus vicibus herimum in ociano laboriose quaesivit, nec tamen invenit*. Here (I 6) Columba prophesies of him that he will not find what he wants: ‘Today again Cormac, desiring to find a desert, begins his voyage’ – *Hodie iterum Cormac desertum reperire cupiens enavigare incipit*. The accounts of Cormac’s second and third voyages occur in II 42. ‘At another time Cormac ... attempted for the second time to seek a desert place in the ocean’ – *alio in tempore Cormacus ... etiam secunda vice conatus est herimum in ociano quaerere*. Columba in Pictland informs king Brude that ‘some of our

people have recently gone out desiring to find a desert place in the sea' – *aliqui ex nostris nuper emigraverunt, desertum in pilago ... invenire obtantes*; and by his intercession safeguards Cormac when, some months later, he reaches Orkney. On the third occasion, one summer, Cormac is driven northwards for fourteen days and nights, encountering many and dangerous prodigies in unknown waters, but without, it seems, making landfall. In I 20, a certain Baitán and others seek a desert place in the sea: *desertum marinum* (in the chapter-heading); *in mari herimum, in ociano desertum, desertum, herimum* (in text); *maritimum desertum* in the list of the chapter-headings of the first book (p 188–9).

In I 49, Adomnán cites as an informant Finan, 'who for many years lived irreproachably the life of an anchorite beside the monastery of the plain of the oakwood' (Dunrobin) – *quivitam multis anchoriticam annis juxta roboreti monasterium campi inreprehensibiliter ducebat*: he may previously have been a monk in Comgell's monastery of Cambas. In III 23 (p 533), one Virgno rows over from Ireland shortly after Columba's death and 'remained for the rest of his life in the island of Hinba' – *Hinba in insula reliquiis diebus vitae suae permanens*. 'After completing irreproachably many years in subjection among the brothers, this Virgno completed other twelve years as a victorious soldier of Christ, leading the life of an anchorite, in the place of the anchorites, in Muirbolc-mar' – *qui videlicet Virgnous, post multos in subjection in ter fratres inreprehensibiliter expletos annos, alios xii. in loco anchoritarum in Muirbulc-mar vitam ducens anchoriticam Christi victor miles explevit*. The natural interpretation here is that both a cenobitic community of some kind and a hermitage existed at some unspecified distance from each other in Hinba – whichever Hebridean island (cf. III 17) was then known by this name.

It will have been noticed that Adomnán uses both the originally Greek word *herimum* (*εἰρημῖος* (f.), 'desert'), whence ultimately English 'hermit' and the Latin *desertum*, from which was derived at some stage Old Irish *dísert*. It is interesting to observe, furthermore, though there is not enough comparative material to permit indulgence in wider speculation at the present juncture, that he uses both terms only of the object of the maritime quests, not of the hermitages attached to or dependent on a larger cenobitic monastery. It seems quite likely, in other words, that Adomnán thought of *desertum-herimum* as a spiritual rather than as a physical entity – distinct from but in a sense encapsulating the *locus anchoritarum* that could be, presumably, the physical result of such a spiritual journey. This impression gains some strength from the fact that, in I 6, Cormac's failure is attributed directly to the prior religious disobedience of one of his companions. Indeed, all these episodes relate heroic failures that are not obviously to be accounted for simply by reference to the dangers and hardships of the merely physical environment. We are apparently seeing here two rather different emphases in religious individualism. The anchorite living at greater or less remove from a cenobitic monastery probably still owed some sort of allegiance to an abbot; and may, indeed, have received some material support from the community (cf. MacDonald, 1981, 316–17). The wanderer in the desert of ocean, on the other hand, must frequently have been beyond all contact with the church at large, whether his *peregrinatio* was permanent or seasonal. It was probably he and his kind who colonized the numerous small islands of Ireland and of western and northern Scotland; and who almost certainly reached eventually – if he had not done so by Adomnán's day – the Faroes and Iceland. According to Dicuil (writing in 825), who knew some of the Scottish islands at first hand, what are most reasonably regarded as the Faroes had been known and occupied by Irish hermits, at least intermittently, for an appreciable length of time; and 'Thule' (which must be Iceland) had been visited and probably settled, at any rate on a seasonal basis, before the end of the eighth century. Dicuil does not, in fact, make it clear that either the Faroes or Iceland were continuously settled: his informants had, like Cormac,

sailed out in the spring and summer months (see Tierney 1967, 12, 17, 72–74, 74–75, 76–77, 102–3, 114–15, 115–16, 122).

Monasteries such as Iona, Durrow and Clonmacnoise were presumably unspecialised. There are, however, hints that some of the smaller Columban foundations may have included more specialised functions. Penitents coming to Columba seem normally to have been sent to Campus Lunge in Tiree (I 30; II 39, p 421–5); or, sometimes apparently, to Hinba (I 21). It has already been suggested, furthermore, that a cenobitic community in Hinba had some responsibility for the *locus anchoritarum* in Muirbolc-már: it may, indeed have trained chosen individuals for the eremitical life there. In general, however, and despite the occasional references to Columba's personal asceticism (for instance, III 16; III 23, p 527), one does not receive the impression that the regime of his monasteries was particularly severe. The encroachment of some of the monasteries and other churches on the older ceremonial centres of inauguration or assembly or both, often by direct succession at the same site, is glimpsed in the reference (III 5) to Aidan's ordination as king in Iona.

At the upshot, it has to be admitted that a clear picture of the physical appearance of a later seventh-century monastery, Columban in particular or Irish in general, does not emerge even after such lengthy (though not exhaustive) discussion as has been indulged in here. Adomnán was not concerned, after all, to describe explicitly and in detail what would have been perfectly familiar to the majority of his readers, at Iona and elsewhere. The best excuse that can be offered for the foregoing analysis of minutiae is that it will have served some useful purpose if it has demonstrated, once again, how much written material can be made to yield in this regard; and if it has cast the shadow of doubt upon certain fashionable assumptions. The writer would see the two most important areas of concern in the latter context as lying in the related matters of the existence of large communal buildings and of the element of formal planning suggested by the *plate(ol)a*. Unless or until tangible (and comprehensible) archaeological evidence is forthcoming, only such ransacking of the documents will provide more or less coherent information: it will remain a necessary complementary source of information even when the archaeological evidence is fuller and more satisfactory than it is at present. The essential function of a monastery, certainly as a whole and very likely also as to its component parts, can probably never be fully amenable to purely archaeological investigation: contemporary or at least reliable written documentation will, in this view, always be needed to breathe some semblance of life back into scattered and fragmentary bones.

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Appendix

The text of the Vetus Latina consulted and given here is that of the edition of Pierre Sabatier, *Bibliorum sacrorum Latinae versiones seu vetus Italica et ceterae quaecunque in codicibus MSS libris reperiri potuerunt* (3 vols, Rheims 1743—[49]; repr. Paris 1751). All verses corresponding to those of the Vulgate, quoted or referred to in the body of the paper, are set out below, to the extent that they are extant. The edition of the Vulgate used is *Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam*, ed. A. Colunga and L. Turrado (6th ed. Madrid 1982). The writer is especially indebted for their help with regard to the Vetus Latina to Mr N.J. Hancock (Cambridge University Library) and Dr B.C. Barker-Banfield (Bodleian Library, Oxford).

EZECHIEL 40:3: Et introduxit me illuc: et ecce vir, cujus erat species quasi species aeris splendentis, et funiculus caementariorum in manu ejus et calamus mensurae in manu ejus: stabat autem in porta. [42.15–20]: ... eduxit me per viam portae, quae respiciebat ad viam Orientalem: et mensus est similitudinem domus per circuitum in ordine. [16] Et stetit post tergum portae respicientis ad Orientem... [17–19 *not extant*: 20] ... murum ejus undique per circuitum, longitudine quingentorum cubitorum, et latitudine quingentorum cubitorum... [45:2 *not extant*], [45.15–16] Quinque millia autem quae supersunt in latitudine per viginti quinque millia, antemurale erit urbi in habitaculum, et in spatium: et erit civitas in medio ejus. [48.30–35 *not extant*].

ZECHARIAH 2:1: Et levavi oculos meos, et vidi: et ecce vir, et in manu ejus funiculus geometrae.

REVELATION 11:1–2: Dedit mihi arundinem auream similem virgae, dicens: Surge, et metire templum Dei, et aram Dei, et adorantes in eo: [2] aram autem, quae est a foris templi, ne metiaris: quoniam data est Gentibus, et civitatem sanctam calcabunt mensibus quadraginta duobus. [21:12–13]: Et habet murum magnum, et latum, qui habet portas duodecim: et in portis angulos duodecim, et nomina scripta duodecim tribuum filiorum Israel. [13] Ab Oriente portae tres, ab Aquilone portae tres, ab Austro portae tres, ab Occidente portae tres. [21:15–16] Et quimecum loquebatur, habebat arundinem auream ad mensuram, ut metiretur civitatem, et portas ejus, et muros ejus: [16] et civitas in quadrato posita est, et longitudo ejus tanta est quanta et latitudo: et mensus est civitatem arundine stadiorum duodecim millia, longitudine, et latitudine, et altitudine aequali. [21:27]: Et non intrabit in ea omne immundum, et faciens abominationem vitae, nisi qui scripti sunt in libro vitae Agni. [22:14–15] Beati, qui laverunt stolassuas: ut sit potestas eorum super lignum vitae, et per portas intrent in civitatem sanctam. [15] Foris autem remanebunt canes, et maleficii, et fomicarii, et homicidae, et servientes idolis, et venefici, et omnes, qui amant, et faciunt mendacium.

