Pro Christo: Theological Motivations behind Irish *Peregrinatio*

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ABSTRACT

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Bernice F. A. Lamb-Sénéchal

To most modern-day thinkers a pilgrimage entails a journey to a sacred place. Thus, the primary purpose of the voyage is to reach a locale that holds special meaning for the pilgrim. Typically, the end destination is a place where a significant familial, historical, or religious event has occurred. In contrast to the contemporary understanding of pilgrimage, some Irish Christian monks of Late Antiquity undertook sacred journeys of an indefinite duration with no express terminus in mind and they vowed never to return to their homelands: a practice commonly known as *peregrinatio*. This thesis explores nine potential theological motivations behind the practice of permanent religious self-exile. To ascertain which religious impetuses prompted historical figures such as Saint Columba (521-597 CE) and Saint Columbanus (540-615 CE) to undertake *peregrinatio* I examine a variety of scriptural and traditional precedents, as well as early Christian treatises and contemporaneous writings associated with these two renowned *peregrini*.

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Finally, I want to dedicate this work to my family members who now reside peacefully in our heavenly home. I am fortunate to have walked alongside them during their earthly pilgrimage.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Forsaking Kith and Kin

Like many social animals, we humans rely on the care and attention of others during infancy and childhood to successfully reach adulthood. It is therefore not surprising that we build strong attachments to the people and the places associated with our formative years. Why then do we find examples throughout history of individuals permanently exiling themselves from their homeland? What drives people to eschew the support of their kinsmen and the comfort of the familiar to travel to places unknown, potentially exposing themselves to hostile forces? In many instances, deteriorating home conditions prompt a change in locale, e.g., overpopulation, diminishing resources, disease, warfare, economic instability, political turmoil, and persecution to name a few. On the other hand, more adventurous factions look to leave their native regions to explore the world beyond their own. Nor can we ignore the possibility that a combination of these factors might influence an individual's decision to quit their homeland.

Over and above existential threats and intellectual curiosity, what about religiously inspired self-exile? Indeed, the Christian faith, like other religious traditions,[1] offers concrete examples of this phenomenon as described in the Bible. For example, the Old Testament depicts Abraham departing Mesopotamia[2] and Moses leading an exodus from Egypt[3] at God's behest. Similarly, in the New Testament Jesus compels his disciples to quit their livelihoods and accompany him on his public ministry[4] and, following his death and resurrection, to spread the Gospel to all the nations. In addition to these scriptural instances of religiously motivated self-exile, Christianity also contains non-scriptural examples of this practice. For instance, Saint Anthony of Egypt (251-356 CE) sold and gave away his belongings, retreated to the desert, and lived as an eremitic monk for the remainder of his life.[5] In the fourth century CE the noblewoman Saint Paula of Rome (347-404 CE) left Italy for the Holy Land, visiting Egyptian hermits, and eventually settling in Bethlehem.[6] Similarly, Irish monks living at the edges of the Western Roman Empire during the sixth and seventh centuries banished themselves from Ireland for their faith in a practice called *peregrinatio pro Christo*;[7] a phrase frequently translated as

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[1] In the Buddhist tradition, Siddhārtha Gautama (circa 6th century BCE), who lived an opulent, sheltered life up to young adulthood, left his kingdom in Northern India to seek a solution to "universal suffering" after being exposed to mankind's plight. Walphola Rahula, "The Buddha," in *What the Buddha Taught*, 2nd ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1974): xv.

[2] God called Abraham to establish a new nation in an undisclosed location: later revealed to be Canaan (Gen 12:1).

[3] God called Moses to deliver the Israelites from slavery and lead them into the Promised Land (Ex 2:11-3:22).

[4] Jesus' mission was to reconcile people with God so that they would enjoy eternal life with him in his kingdom (Luke 4:43, 2 Cor 5:8).

[5] Athanasius of Alexandria, "Vita S. Antoni [Life of St. Anthony]," in *Select Works and Letters, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* II.4, edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, translated by H. Ellershaw. *Internet History Sourcebooks Project* created January 26, 1996. Accessed October 20, 2023. https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/vita-antony.asp.

[6] David Farmer, "Paula," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford University Press, 2011), DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780199596607.001.0001.

[7] A practice that "seems to be well attested earlier in the sixth century, and perhaps even as early as the fifth." Michelle P. Brown, *How Christianity Came to Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, England: Lion Hudson, 2006), 86.

"pilgrimage for Christ"[8] and whose adherents are known as *peregrini*. It is this latter tradition of devoutly inspired self-exile that is the primary focus of my thesis. More specifically, I am interested in the religious reasons that prompted Irish *peregrini* to expel themselves from Ireland forever in Christ's name.

According to the scriptures, Abraham as well as Moses self-exiled in obedience to God's call ostensibly out of fear, respect, and love for the divine. Similarly, the disciples' love for Jesus incited them to go on mission with him in Palestine. After his ascension into heaven, the disciples evangelized into the wider world hoping to incite a multitude to repent so that they may be saved upon the second coming of Jesus (the Parousia).[9] In the cases of both Anthony and Paula, ascetic reasons prompted them to quit their birthplaces. They renounced an indulgent lifestyle, practiced extreme self-discipline, and intensely studied the scriptures in a quest to improve their spiritual states.

What about the religious reasons for *peregrinatio pro Christo*? Were the Irish *peregrini* responding to a divine call, gathering new converts to hasten the Parousia, visiting sacred places, or honing their ascetic skills? According to modern-day academia, the Irish *peregrini* were propelled by many but not necessarily all these reasons. For instance, there is no discourse about God or Jesus directly ordering the *peregrini* to leave Ireland. Neither is there any debate about the *peregrini* quitting their homeland to visit holy sites. A survey of modern-day scholarship reveals a broad range of theological motivations behind Irish *peregrinatio* of Late Antiquity (approximately third to seventh centuries CE).[10] In no particular order, these include: (1) the imitation of holy figures, (2) to minister to the faithful, (3) to obtain and/or provide religious education, (4) for ascetic purposes, (5) for penitential reasons, (6) for proselytization, (7) for spiritual growth, (8) to facilitate encounters with the divine, and (9) to simulate the transitory nature of earthly existence as a journey towards heavenly life.[11] See figure 1 below.

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[8] Today, pilgrimage is a popular activity for people of all convictions. Since the 1980's there has been an explosion in the number of pilgrims travelling the famous 12th century *Camino de Santiago de Compostela* to the purported resting place of St. James the Great in Northern Spain. Scholars – Victor and Edith Turner, John Eade, Michael Sallnow, and Simon Coleman – published insightful findings about the form and function of modern pilgrimage. Current understandings of pilgrimage bear little resemblance to the *peregrinatio pro Christo* of Late Antiquity. T. M. Charles-Edwards quotes Kathleen Hughes when explaining that "*peregrinatio*, was not a pilgrimage in the sense of a visit to some shrine, such as to the Holy Places in Palestine, …; it was not a journey where prayers were said and the pilgrim returned home…[it] was a journey with no return…away from family and native land." This contrasts with typical contemporary Christian pilgrimage that usually ends with the pilgrim returning home from an encounter with the sacred, resuming their everyday lives albeit as a potentially transformed person. T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 7-8.

[9] 2 Peter 3:9 – "[…] not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance."

[10] Late Antiquity (late 3rd to 7th or 8th century in Europe) is commonly held to be the historical period where Europe transitions from classical antiquity to the Middle Ages.

[11] Ritari explains that the monastic community was established as an "alternative society based on heavenly model" which served as an example for how the afterlife could be with God. Katja Ritari, "Holy Souls and a Holy Community: The Meaning of Monastic Life in Adomnán's Vita Columbae," *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 37, 2 (2011): 136, https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/450804.

Figure 1: Nine Possible Theological Motivations Identified

In this thesis I study the accounts of two renowned Irish *peregrini*, namely, Saint Columba (521-597 CE)[12] and Saint Columbanus (540-615 CE),[13] to ascertain if any or all the nine religious impetuses can be observed in their cases. While other famous Irish *peregrini* – such as Saint Brendan the Navigator (484-577 CE), Saint Patrick (fl. 5th century CE),[14] and Saint Fursey (597-650 CE) – might shed light on the theological motivations behind *peregrinatio pro Christo*,

[12] David Farmer, "Columba (Colum-cille) of Iona," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford University Press, 2011), DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780199596607.001.0001. The Latin version of the name Columba (dove) is *Columbae* while a common Irish version is *Choluim Chille*.

[13] David Farmer, "Columbanus (Columban)," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford University Press, 2011), DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780199596607.001.0001. The Latin version of the name Columbanus is *Columbani* while a common Irish version is *Columbán*.

[14] Arguably the most recognizable of all Irish saints, Patrick was not Irish born. He came from a Romano-British family, but as a teenager was captured and taken to Ireland to serve as a slave. After escaping enslavement, he then permanently quit his homeland returning to Ireland to evangelize. David Farmer, "Patrick," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford University Press, 2011), DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780199596607.001.0001.

I focus on Columba and Columbanus because of the comparatively ample records available for these saints.

I contend that several religious reasons can be readily perceived from Columba's and Columbanus' actions alone.[15] Other motivations, however, are not easily discerned from their behaviour and involve a certain amount of speculation about their beliefs. For instance, both saints were seasoned ascetics having forsaken familial connections, secular concerns, and creature comforts early in their monastic careers.[16] It is easy to see how self-exile might advance their need to break with kith and kin. Additionally, by erecting a church and monastery on the isle of Iona,[17] Columba appears to have had a propensity for ministry, religious instruction, and possibly proselytization.[18] Columbanus displayed comparable proclivities by establishing monasteries on the European continent that facilitated ministry, education, and potentially conversion of its inhabitants.[19]

As for imitating holy figures, Columba and Columbanus each left Ireland accompanied by twelve monks in the fashion of Jesus and his twelve disciples.[20] Moreover, Columbanus' hagiographer Jonas of Bobbio (600-659 CE) explicitly states that the saint embarked on *peregrinatio* in imitation of Abraham.[21] Lastly, another behaviour that points to a further reason for self-exile is the *peregrini*'s propensity for communing with the divine. Columba's hagiographer, Adomnán (628-704 CE), for instance, observes that the saint had numerous interactions with the Angel of God.[22] Similarly, Jonas describes Columbanus accompanying a brother into the wilderness to learn "God's will" regarding the latter's desire for pilgrimage.[23]

The remaining three religiously based motives for *peregrinatio* – penance, spiritual growth, and simulating humanity's temporal condition – are less evident from Columba's and Columbanus' actions. To ascertain if the saints were moved by these reasons we need to look beyond their activities and delve into their mindset. A case in point is the suggestion that *peregrinatio* served a penitential function. Some sources claim, for instance, that Columba quit

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[15] The pre-eminent sources I examine for Columba's and Columbanus' endeavors are Latin hagiographies, circa 7th century, entitled *Vita Columbae* by Adomnán (Latin edited by William Reeves, English translation by Richard Sharpe) and *Vita Columbani* by Jonas of Bobbio (Latin edited by Bruno Krusch, English translation by Alexander O'Hara and Ian Wood). *Vita* meaning "the life [of]."

[16] Columba studied at a monastic school under Finnian of Movilla "presumably a well-known destination for novice monks." Tim Clarkson, *Columba* (Glasgow: Bell and Bain, 2012), 31-32. Columbanus "formally entered the monastic life at Bangor [monastery]" when he was about 20 years old. Alexander O'Hara and Ian Wood, "Introduction," in *Jonas of Bobbio: Life of Columbanus, Life of John of Réomé*, and *Life of Vedast*, vol. 64 of *Translated Texts for Historians* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1970), 19.

[17] Iona remains a popular destination for modern-day pilgrimages.

[18] His hagiographer, Adomnán, describes Columba preparing the Eucharist, baptizing converts, offering advice, and giving religious instructions. Adomnán of Iona, *Life of St. Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe (London: Penguin, 1995), 110, 111, 134, and 136.

[19] His hagiographer, Jonas, describes Columbanus spreading the faith, thwarting heathen practices, and preaching the Gospel. Jonas of Bobbio, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," in *Life of Columbanus, Life of John of Réomé,* and *Life of Vedast*, vol. 64 of *Translated Texts for Historians*, trans. Alexander O'Hara and Ian Wood (Liverpool University Press, 2017), 160.

[20] Columba originally had "twelve companions." Richard Sharpe trans., "Introduction," in *Adomnán of Iona: Life of St Columba* (London: Penguin Books,1995), 21; "Columbanus […] sets out on his journey […] with twelve companions." Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 104.

[21] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 103.

[22] Adomnán, *Life of St. Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 205-34.

[23] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood 118.

Ireland to either atone for copying the psalter of Saint Finnian[24] without permission[25] or to make amends for his involvement in the battle of *Cúl Dreimhne* [aka Cule-Drebene] (circa 561 CE).[26] While this assertion remains somewhat contentious, there is little debate that both Columba and Columbanus were concerned with rectifying offenses against God through acts of penance. They each prescribe self-exile as a means of reconciliation. Columba, for instance, exhorts a man who committed adultery with his mother to "spend twelve years among the British, repenting with tears of remorse, and never to return to Ireland as long as [he lives…]."[27] Columbanus imposes exile for murder and perjury but for limited durations.[28] It is unlikely that Columba and Columbanus committed such egregious offenses. They probably held themselves to a very high standard however and therefore felt compelled to perform extreme penance even for minor infractions.

Spiritual growth, according to John Cassian (360-435 CE), an influential figure in both Eastern and Western monasticism, was of paramount importance for monks as it led to the kingdom of God. Considered the ultimate vocational goal for monks, he says God's kingdom could only be attained "by the practice of virtue in purity of heart and spiritual knowledge."[29] Cassian contended that acquiring such sacred wisdom entailed ridding oneself of "worldly thoughts,"[30] as well as performing ascetic exercises, praying, and contemplating scriptures. Self-exile would certainly remove Columba and Columbanus from a measure of earthly distractions, facilitate ascetic practices, and allow them to focus on inner development. Perhaps their hagiographers' claims of divine encounters are evidence that the *peregrini* had reached an advanced spiritual level. This idea of personal growth was touted by Origen (circa 184-253 CE), an early Christian proponent of mystical theology, who maintained that by cultivating one's consciousness it is possible to progress to a spiritual union with Jesus and God.

Finally, could Columba and Columbanus have undertaken *peregrinatio* to model humankind's earthly situation wherein temporal life is likened to a sojourn towards a heavenly homeland? Indeed, the notion that the impermanent physical body harbors an eternal soul yearning to reside perpetually in the divine realm appears early in the Christian belief system. In his second letter to the Corinthians, for instance, the apostle Paul explains that while the "outer nature" wastes away the "inner nature" continuously rejuvenates (2 Cor 4:16-18) and longs for its "heavenly dwelling" (2 Cor 5:2). Likewise, in his seminal work *The City of God*, the

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[24] There seems to be no consensus as to whether it was the psalter of Finnian of Clonard or Finnian of Moville.

[25] Legend has it that the king ordered Columba to hand the copy over to Finnian which he refused to do. Seth Seyfried, "Introduction," in *Adamnan: Life of St. Columba*, *Medieval Sourcebook*, *Internet History Sourcebooks Project*, created January 26, 1996. Accessed May 4, 2020. https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/Columba-e.asp. Many believe this is the first recorded instance of copyright infringement.

[26] Allegedly Columba's clan went to war over the copyright incident which cost the lives of many. His spiritual advisor purportedly sent him to Scotland with instructions to save the same number of souls as were lost in the battle. Seyfried, "Introduction."

[27] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 129.

[28] Ten years of exile for a cleric who commits murder after which "he can be restored to his native land." Three years of "unarmed exile" for a layperson who commits murder or has perjured themselves out of fear. Columbanus, "3. Penitential," in *Rules*, trans. G. S. M. Walker (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), 173, 175, and 177, https://research.ucc.ie/celt/document/T201052/.

[29] John Cassian, *Conferences 1-24*, trans. C.S. Gibson, vol. 11 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1894), 1.XIV, https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3508.htm.

[30] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 14.X.

celebrated theologian Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE) contends that Christians are merely wandering the earth (not their spiritual birthplace) until death whereupon they return to their divine home to abide eternally with God.[31] Surely, by living in permanent exile away from their native land Columba and Columbanus would have been continuously reminded of this condition in a tangible manner.

1.2 The *Peregrinus* Condition

While my thesis' primary focus is theological reasons behind *peregrinatio,* a brief discussion of the genesis and evolution of the term *peregrinus* helps illuminate the ancient *peregrinus* concept, as well as demonstrate how modern-day interpretations of this Latin term do not fully capture the essence of the ancient *peregrinus* designation. A look at the classical definition of *peregrinus*, for example, provides clues as to how this term came to represent religious self-exile in Late Antiquity. The word *peregrinus* dates from at least the Roman Republic (507 BCE-27 CE).[32] Long before *peregrinatio* acquired religious connotations, ancient Romans used *peregrinus* to refer to a person without legal standing.[33] Typically, such individuals were either not native to a Roman-controlled region, or they had been stripped of their Roman citizenship for committing an offence.

This common understanding of *peregrinus* continued into the fifth century CE. For instance, in accordance with the law of the land – the Theodosian Code – when the Romans deported[34] one of their citizens they were seen "as civilly dead and as a foreigner (*peregrinus*)."[35] The designation entailed the loss of rights, privileges and protections provided by the *ius civitas* (civil law). In one specific example, upper class Roman men attempting to legitimate their children born to lower class women[36] were to "suffer the brand of infamy and […to] become foreigners in the eyes of the Roman law."[37] Thus higher-ranking fathers were barred from bequeathing wealth to such offspring effectively preventing their children born to lower-ranked mothers from rising in the social hierarchy.

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[31] "[Christians], in confident expectation of a heavenly country, know that they are pilgrims [*peregrionos*] even in their own homes." Aurelius Augustine, *The City of God: Volume I*, trans. Marcus Dods (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871), 25, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/45304/45304-h/45304-h.htm. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Liber I, Cap. XV, https://thelatinlibrary.com/augustine/civ1.shtml.

[32] H. F. Jolowicz and Barry Nicholas, "Chapter 2: The Republican Constitution," in *Historical Introduction to the Study of Roman Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 48, https://hdl-handle-net.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/2027/heb07889.0001.001.

[33] H. F. Jolowicz and Barry Nicholas, "Chapter 6: Law for Foreigners, *ius gentium* and *ius naturale*," in *Historical Introduction to the Study of Roman Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1972), 102, https://hdl-handle-net.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/2027/heb07889.0001.001.

[34] In modern Canadian society, native-born citizens who commit grievous offenses are incarcerated whilst deportation is reserved for permanent citizens who were not born on Canadian soil.

[35] Clyde Pharr, Theresa Sherrer Davidson, Mary Brown Pharr, and C. Dickerman Williams, *The Theodosian Code and Novels: And the Sirmondian Constitutions,* vol. 1 of *The Corpus of Roman Law = (Corpus Juris Romani),* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1952), 580, HeinOnline.

[36] This included slaves or their daughters, manumitted slaves or their daughters, actresses or their daughters, tavern keepers or their daughters, low and degraded women, the daughters of a procurer or gladiator, women trading wares in public. Pharr, Davidson, and Brown Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels*, 86.

[37] Pharr, Davidson, and Brown Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels*, 86.

People residing in Roman-controlled territories without access to the civil law fell under the jurisdiction of the "*ius gentium*" ("law of peoples"):[38] a set of customs that ancient societies adhered to in their interactions with one another[39] which "rested on the assumption that while some norms were particular to a specific community, others were common to all."[40] Under this law "envoys were not to be killed, treaties were to be kept in good faith, aggression was not to be rewarded, and basic restraints in warfare were to be observed."[41] While there was no official means of enforcing the *ius gentium*, such as an International Court of Justice for example, ancient peoples understood that any breach of these widely accepted practices would entail consequences. These included the loss of moral superiority[42] as well as divine favor.

Naturally, with little or no juridical standing, a *peregrinus* occupied a precarious position in the Roman world. Territorial modifications, administrative adjustments, and the changing fortunes of the state could seriously impact the *peregrinus*' condition at any moment. For instance, foreigners could be unceremoniously expelled during times of famine to safeguard the realm's food stores for citizens.[43] Likewise, those practicing unsanctioned religious customs could be fined, beaten, or executed.[44] In addition to marriage, testamentary, property, and commercial restrictions, people without access to the civil law were also disadvantaged under criminal law. Unlike full Roman citizens, they could be "questioned under torture, [did not have] the right of appeal, and if sentenced to death, [may not be] given a simple execution rather than crucifixion or death in the arena."[45]

It is easy to see how people undertaking religious self-exile within such a milieu came to be labelled *peregrini*. For all intents and purposes, by permanently banishing themselves from their homeland they assumed a state of perpetual foreignness. Thus, monks of late sixth/early seventh century Europe who heeded the call to self-exile were vulnerable to the whims of both the divine and the temporal, e.g., relying on the benevolence of God and local rulers for survival.

As for how this "label" has evolved over time, a brief look at the post-classical definition of *peregrinus* sheds light on modern-day understandings of the term. The 2020 version of the Oxford English Dictionary [OED] does not contain an entry for *peregrinus*. It does however cite this term in the etymology of the word *peregrine*[46] (perhaps best-known for a species of bird

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[38] "Definition of Roman Law," Legal Dictionary, Lawyerment, accessed October 28, 2023, https://dictionary.lawyerment.com/topic/Roman_law/.
[39] David J. Bederman, *International Law in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 7, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/lib/concordia-ebooks/detail.action?docID=202237.
[40] Tamar Herzog, "1. Roman Law: Now You See It, Now You Don't," in *A Short History of European Law: The Last Two and a Half Millennia* (Cambridge, MA; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2018), 26, eBook.
[41] The norms covered in this international law included "(1) the conduct of embassies, immunities granted to envoys, and protections afforded to foreigners; (2) the sanctity given to treaties and alliances; and (3) the constraints of a nation declaring war and the limits on the actual conduct of hostilities." Bederman, *International Law*, 278.
[42] Bederman, *International Law*, 270.
[43] David Noy, "Immigrants in Late Imperial Rome," in *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity*, ed. S. Mitchell and G. Greatrex (London: Duckworth and the Classical Press of Wales, 2000), 2.
[44] Pharr, Davidson, Brown Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels*, 441 and 472.
[45] Ralph Mathisen, "'Becoming Roman, Becoming Barbarian': Roman Citizenship and the Assimilation of Barbarians into the Late Roman World," in *Migration and Membership Regimes in Global and Historical Perspective*, ed. Ulbe Bosma, Kh Kessler, and Leo Lucassen (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013), 191, eBook.
[46] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "peregrine, adj. & n.", September 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/5805458302.

named Peregrine Falcon).[47] The OED authors trace the changing definition of *peregrinus* from classical Latin *peregrinus* (foreigner) to post-classical Latin *peregrē* (pilgrim) to Middle French[48] *peligrin* (traveler) and early English[49] (pilgrim).

I find the semantic evolution of the term *peregrinus* intriguing, e.g., foreigner, pilgrim, traveler. For instance, the term *foreigner* suggests a 'state of being' wherein a person native to a particular geographical location/cultural milieu lives in one that is different from their own. It does not indicate the reason such a person is no longer in their usual environment, religious or otherwise, nor does it denote the duration of their absence from it. Contrastingly, a common interpretation of the term *pilgrim* is that of a person who leaves home, travels to a sacred destination, oftentimes performs a ritual at a holy site, and then returns home (frequently a transformed individual). In this context, a *pilgrim* denotes someone undertaking a purposeful action for a spiritual recompense and hints at a limited interval. Likewise, the word *traveler* suggests a person in the act of journeying and hints at a temporary period. However, it provides no insight as to the purpose of the traveler's journey nor their destination. While the terms *foreigner*, *pilgrim*, and *traveler* present distinct characteristics, they are not mutually exclusive. For example, a non-native resident of a region that houses a holy site might make a lengthy trek to the sacred locale on a regular basis. In this case, the practitioner is a foreigner traveling a significant distance for religious purposes, e.g., in the capacity of a pilgrim.

I can see how Columba and Columbanus might be designated foreigners for most of their lives because, once they left the island of Ireland, they never returned to live in their native land again. I find it more difficult to qualify them as travelers however, because upon founding their monasteries in Scotland, France, and Italy they remained relatively stationary: Columba lived almost 39 years on Iona; Columbanus lived in Burgundy for over 20 years, and approximately three years in Lombardy. Of course, as a twenty first century person, I am most fascinated by the 'pilgrim' title considering the modern-day understanding of the label – persons quitting home to visit a sacred location and subsequently returning to their point of departure – and it is the main inspiration for this thesis. In the remainder of this introductory section, I explain why I believe the chosen subject merits study, describe my approach to the topic at hand, and lay out the structure of my thesis.

1.3 To What End These Queries?

You might ask of what value it is to examine a custom practiced 1300 years ago by a handful of Christian monks from a little island in the North Atlantic. Firstly, despite their small numbers, no more than 3 million[50] islanders in the seventh century CE,[51] and their insular

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[47] *Oxford English Dictionary*, "peregrine."
[48] 14th – 16th centuries.
[49] 15th – 17th centuries.
[50] Rowan McLaughlin and Emma Hannah, "Viking migration left a lasting legacy on Ireland's population," *The Conversation*, published August 22, 2019, https://theconversation.com/viking-migration-left-a-lasting-legacy-on-irelands-population-122148.
[51] The world population in 600 CE is estimated to be no more than 206 million: the Irish accounting for roughly 1.5% of its entirety. "Historical Estimates of World Population," Data and Maps, United States Census Bureau, last modified December 5, 2022, https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/international-programs/historical-est-worldpop.html. "[…] at its height, in the 2nd century AD, [the Roman empire] had a population of around 60 million people" from Hadrian's wall to the Nile. Accounting for roughly 30% of the world's estimated 200+ million inhabitants. Christopher Kelly, *Roman Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford:

origins, the Irish *peregrini* significantly impacted the development of the burgeoning Latin church and their contributions are recognized to this day. For example, not only did they promote Christianity across the British Isles; due to their fervor for higher learning and zeal for the Christian faith, they are credited with reinvigorating the religious movement on the European continent[52] during the so-called Dark Ages.[53] These actions helped propagate Christian values and traditions such as humility and private confession that Western European colonizers subsequently brought to North America from the 15th century onwards. Indeed, Christianity greatly influenced the development of Western civilization, affecting social institutions, art, culture, politics, etc. By examining the motivations of its earliest followers, we may gain further insight into early Christian beliefs, better understand the main tenets of the tradition, and, conceivably, increase modern-day discourse around its key message: love.

Secondly, not only were the passion, conviction, and courage exhibited by the Irish *peregrini* admired and imitated by their contemporaries. These same qualities stirred Christians throughout history as witnessed by their numerous namesake churches, schools, and monasteries around the globe. In fact, modern-day pilgrims continue to flock to Columba's Scottish outpost on the isle of Iona,[54] while Trinity College Dublin recently completed a lecture series to mark the 15th centenary of Columba's birth.[55] Likewise, Columbanus has been commemorated by the inauguration of a European Cultural route entitled "*Via Columbani*," which traces the saint's steps through Ireland, France, and Italy.[56] Promoting scholarly interest in the exploits of these religious heroes could make them more accessible to academics and non-academics alike.

1.4 In Another Man's *Bróga*[57]

Short of travelling back in time to Late Antiquity and inhabiting the body of an Irish *peregrinus*, there is no perfect way for a modern-day scholar to know exactly what motivated the actions of such an historical figure. Consequently, I resort to a rather imperfect method to discern the saints' inspiration for *peregrinatio pro Christo*. It entails following intimations by

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Oxford University Press, 2006), 19, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/lib/concordia-ebooks/detail.action?docID=430993.

[52] See, for example, Cahill's popular history. Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* (New York: Anchor, 1996). Lisa Bitel suggests Cahill overstates the *peregrini*'s contributions in her review. Lisa Bitel, "No Title," review of *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe*, by Thomas Cahill, *The Catholic Historical Review* 83, no. 2 (1997): 299–300, https://doi.org/10.1353/cat.1997.0114.

[53] The "Dark Ages" is now a pejorative term for a historical period immediately following the failure of the Western Roman Empire (c. 5th–11th century) that asserts a demographic, cultural, and economic deterioration occurred in Western Europe along with the empire's demise and the influx of so-called barbarians. *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Migration period," accessed October 28, 2023, https://academic-eb-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/levels/collegiate/article/Migration-period/28782.

[54] Some 130,000 visitors/year. "Home," Isle of Iona, accessed October 28, 2023, http://www.welcometoiona.com/.

[55] *Columcille in Context: Theologians and Historians in Conversation to Commemorate the 15th Centenary of the Birth of Saint Columba of Iona (521/ 2021)*, lecture series moderated by Dr. Alexander James O'Hara, Loyola Institute School of Religion, Trinity College Dublin, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5IqfIky1lWeIoMxPG3Xubw.

[56] Simon Derache, "Via columbani, la genèse d'un nouveau pèlerinage," *Carnet Parodien d'histoire, de l'art et de l'archéologie* 3 (Université Jean-Moulin Lyon 3, 2020), https://carnetparay.hypotheses.org/1289.

[57] Bróga is an Irish term for ancient footwear. https://www.teanglann.ie/en/eid/ Bróga.

modern academic works[58] and pursuing clues from ancient literature circulating before, during, and shortly after the Irish *peregrini*'s lifetimes. As regards the latter, I rely on primary sources not only contemporaneous to Columba and Columbanus – such as hymns, poems, sermons, letters, monastic rules, penitential rules, hagiographies, historical tracts, and religious treatises – but also works by Christian thinkers from the preceding six centuries.

1.4.1 Historiographical Considerations

The ancient Irish were a Celtic-speaking people.[59] Consequently, a great deal of Irish historical analyses stems from the field of Celtic studies. In fact, a considerable number of my secondary sources are from that discipline. I would be remiss therefore if I did not include an historiographical discussion of this subject area.

In a recently published anthology on the subject of early medieval Celtic cultures,[60] editor Jonathan Wooding muses that the leitmotif of the collection could be "the neglect of theological questions in [Celtic] historiography."[61] He says that twentieth century scholarship "focus[ed] on secular politics and native tradition,"[62] mirroring the nationalistic zeitgeist of that era.[63] Wooding states that, conversely, the academic works in his twenty first century compilation show a "renewed appreciation for the importance of religious ideas in the worldview of early and medieval people."[64]

Wooding credits "groundbreaking revisionist studies"[65] with significantly transforming theological interrogations over the past quarter century. He says, for instance, that scholars no longer assume that Celtic Christianity[66] "formed in isolation."[67] According to Wooding, such "older historiographical visions" speciously perpetuated the view of "Celtic nations as being largely in thrall to tradition, or having only an intermittent knowledge of a more sophisticated

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[58] In selecting articles for my research, I focus on those that are scholarly, peer-reviewed, and recent. While I aimed to use works published within the past ten years, I was not always successful.

[59] In addition to Ireland, the ancient people of Scotland, the Isle of Man, Wales, Brittany, and Cornwall also spoke Celtic languages.

[60] Jonathan Wooding, "Introduction," in *Crafted Memories and Binding Futures: Prophecy, Fate and Memory in the Early Medieval Celtic World*, ed. Jonathan Wooding and Lynette Olson (Sydney, Australia: Sydney University Press, 2020), 1-13, JSTOR.

[61] Wooding, "Introduction," 13.

[62] Wooding, "Introduction," 2.

[63] The Irish suffered for centuries from British interference and after many attempts the Republic of Ireland finally gained independence from Britain in 1949.

[64] Wooding, "Introduction," 13.

[65] Citing for instance works by Thomas O'Loughlin, Richard Sharpe, and Martin McNamara. Wooding, "Introduction," 6.

[66] The term 'Celtic Christianity' is misleading because ancient Celtic-speaking peoples from disparate regions did not see themselves as a homogenous cultural unit, e.g., despite sharing a tongue from the same family of languages they did not necessarily share the same values. In fact, they did not collectively self-identify as Celts, this being a relatively recent designation that arose from modern linguistic studies. Moreover, as Concordia University lecturer Sara Terreault points out, so-called "'Celtic Christians' never thought of themselves as a separate or even distinct 'church' but rather as part of the wider Christian world, and use of the term Celtic can imply that they were a distinct church." Sara Terreault, "1 - What are some of the difficulties arising from linking 'Celtic' and 'Christianity,'?" *Grading tips for THEO228 critical reflection paper #1* (Concordia University, Montreal: printed by author, summer 2020).

[67] Wooding, "Introduction," 6.

world."[68] Today, such allegations of *nativism* and *unsophistication* are disputable. Surrounding oceans and in-land waterways afforded ample opportunity for contact with non-natives and material evidence proves[69] such interactions occurred. It is via this watery road system that foreign merchants, slaves, and soldiers likely introduced Ireland's inhabitants to Christianity prior to the fifth century.[70] Similarly, over the next several centuries, the island's nautical thoroughfares facilitated the spread of the new religious movement, the creation of monastic institutions, exchanges with foreign religious students, as well as the self-imposed exile of the Irish *peregrini*.

As a counterpoint to past claims of nativism and unsophistication, Sara Terreault contends that despite their *insularity* the ancient Irish demonstrated *cultural openness*.[71] This view is supported by the artistic features found in artefacts like "manuscripts, high crosses,[72] and metalwork."[73] As Terreault explains, these items contain distinctly insular design elements "but also reflect the wider Christian orthodoxy (e.g., Jerome's Vulgate bible)."[74] Furthermore, they "show variously the influence of Eastern Christianity, Continental/Mediterranean cultures as well as Celtic/Germanic/Scandinavian design motifs, both Christian and pre-Christian."[75] Such evidence illustrates that early Irish Christians actively engaged with foreign concepts, and it supports my assumption that theological notions from non-native sources possibly inspired the Irish *peregrini*.

I turn, now, to the custom of *peregrinatio*. Though the topic might seem *well-worked*, Wooding says Meredith Cutrer's investigation[76] into the "Scriptural and Patristic bases" [77] of the practice has advanced our knowledge on this matter. I agree with Wooding's observation. Moreover, Cutrer's findings figure prominently in my thesis. For example, she stresses that many themes in early Irish theology "highlight the continuity of tradition from the Biblical narrative through the Egyptian Desert Fathers into the Irish context."[78] These motifs, according to Cutrer,

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[68] Wooding, "Introduction," 2.

[69] In relation to archeological evidence in Ireland, the de Paor's say "Roman objects [ ] are known from every century of the Roman occupation of Britain, and the objects indicate a heightened activity at two periods in particular: the first century and the fourth century." Máire and Liam de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland*, 3rd ed. (Norwich: Jarrold and Sons Ltd, 1961), 26. Archeological finds such as the Balline hoard "dating from the late fourth century AD to the early fifth century [ ] provide evidence for cross cultural dynamics and encounters with the Roman world." Clodagh Lynch, "Roman Silver Ingots from the Balline Hoard, Co. Limerick," *Classics Ireland*, 21-22 (2014-2015): 141-142, JSTOR.

[70] De Paor, *Early Christian Ireland*, 29. "There is evidence to suggest that there were some Christians, probably few in number, in Ireland before the start of Patrick's mission [circa 432 CE]."

[71] Sara Terreault, "2 - Consider the art of Celtic Christianity. How do they express and manifest the theology of the Celtic Christians?" *Grading tips for THEO288 critical reflection paper #2* (Concordia University, Montreal: printed by author, summer 2020).

[72] Two stone crosses in Co. Louth – the Tall Cross at Monasterboice and Muiredach's Cross – depict Saint Anthony of Egypt wrestling with demons. Extract from *Irish High Crosses Exhibition*, Museum Guide (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 2013), 40 and 43.

[73] Terreault, "2 – Consider the art of Celtic Christianity," 2020.

[74] Terreault, "2 – Consider the art of Celtic Christianity," 2020.

[75] Terreault, "2 – Consider the art of Celtic Christianity," 2020.

[76] Meredith D. Cutrer, "Early Irish Peregrinatio as Salvation History," in *Crafted Memories and Binding Futures: Prophecy, Fate and Memory in the Early Medieval Celtic World*, ed. Jonathan Wooding (Sydney University Press, 2020), 76-90, JSTOR.

[77] Wooding, "Introduction," 6.

[78] Cutrer, "Early Irish Peregrinatio as Salvation History," 79.

include pursuing a glimpse of the heavenly homeland from a temporal state, seeking interactions with God in the wilderness, and enacting the provisional state of the faithful awaiting their divine abode.[79] Cutrer's conclusions compelled me to include spiritual growth, divine encounter, and the simulation of earthly/otherworldly liminality in the list of potential theological motivations for *peregrinatio*.

1.4.2 Methodological Challenges

As stated previously, the method I chose for this thesis involves interrogating primary sources that are directly linked to Columba and Columbanus to detect the religious basis for *peregrinatio*. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these records rarely state the theological motivations behind the practice in exact terms. The authors probably thought the audience was well-versed on the topic and consequently were not compelled to provide such information. In the absence of clear explanations, and in imitation of Cutrer's approach, I rely on scriptural and traditional antecedents to infer the saints' impulses. These consist of theological works from religious authors with known connections to Columba and Columbanus.

My approach is not without shortcomings. As Wooding notes about Celtic studies in general, there is the issue of representational sampling. That is to say, the "fragmentary" nature of works about Celtic cultures on the fringes of the Western Roman Empire is problematic.[80] The degree to which patchy extant accounts accurately portray the peoples and traditions they depict is difficult to determine.[81] For that reason, I cannot claim to reveal all the religious reasons behind Irish *peregrinatio* in Late Antiquity based merely on the accounts of two *peregrini*. Firstly, the theological motivations ascribed to Columba and Columbanus may not necessarily reflect the religious impetuses that inspired other Irish *peregrini*: either those as renowned as them and/or the lesser known. Secondly, Columba and Columbanus may have espoused different views of the custom themselves. They were, after all, born a generation apart from one another and they grew up in geographically disparate regions of Ireland: Columba in the northwest; Columbanus in the southeast. It is unlikely that Columba and Columbanus were personally acquainted, though they might have heard of one another from common contacts. Lastly, their respective vocations took them to vastly different areas of Western Europe. Columba, for instance, remained in the British Isles, while Columbanus operated on the European continent. At least by choosing two historical persons for my analysis I increase the probability of encountering a broader range of theological motivations behind Irish *peregrinatio* than if I focused on one figure alone.

Another limitation in my methodology is the "snapshot" effect. Namely, the views expressed by Columba and Columbanus in surviving texts represent their perspectives at certain points in their lives. The saints' attitudes towards a specific topic likely shifted from youth to adulthood to old age and in reaction to different experiences. It would be imprudent, for instance, to assume that the opinions expressed by Columbanus in a sermon given at the start of his career remained unchanged until the end of his career. Additionally, these snapshots do not cover the entirety of the *peregrini*'s lifespans. In the case of Columba, we have only one extant written work that he is said to have produced prior to quitting Ireland, namely the psalter *An Cathach*

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[79] Cutrer, "Early Irish Peregrinatio as Salvation History," 79.
[80] Not to mention that some of the earliest written records about Celtic-speaking cultures come from Latin-speaking foreigners who may have misrepresented customs they were not familiar with.
[81] Wooding, "Introduction," 1.

(The Battler).[82] The two abecedarian[83] poems ascribed to Columba – *Adiutor Laborantium* (Help to the Laborer)[84] and *Altus Prosator* (The High Creator)[85] – appear to have been produced after he left the island. It is not clear where or when Columba penned the words to the hymn beginning with the line *Regis regum rectissimi* (King of righteous kings), neither do we have a written record of the monastic rule that Columba is said to have inspired. As for Columbanus, the undisputed[86] extant writings attributed to him include thirteen sermons, five letters, and two penitential rules.[87] The letters are the easiest to date since they often identify either the occasion and/or the recipients for which the epistle was intended, e.g., letter to Pope Boniface IV (r.608-615 CE) estimated to have been written circa 612-15 CE.

Finally – and as is the case for any text, ancient or modern – when studying the contents of such works, we must be mindful of the context in which they were produced. For example, the writings of the Irish *peregrini* often targeted certain audiences with the intention of influencing readers' opinions on specific subjects. A case in point is the divergent prescriptions for clergy and laypeople that Columbanus proffers in his penitential. It is therefore not surprising that ancient authors do not clarify the religious reasons for *peregrinatio* in communications to disparate audiences. As a result of this constraint – in addition to those cited previously – I cannot unequivocally say my thesis uncovers the entire range of theological motivations behind Columba's and Columbanus' decision to undertake *peregrinatio*.

Notwithstanding these methodological limitations, I hope that my investigation reinforces our understanding of the obvious religious reasons, sheds light on the more obscure motivations, and inspires future investigations into the theological impulses behind religiously inspired self-exile.

1.5 The Way Forward

The remainder of this thesis is comprised of four sections. In Chapter 2, I analyze the hagiographical accounts of Columba and Columbanus from Adomnán and Jonas of Bobbio to discern possible religious reasons for *peregrinatio*. Then, in Chapter 3, I examine ancient literary

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[82] This is the psalter that Columba is said to have copied from Finnian without permission. One of the oldest extant Irish manuscripts written in insular style, it contains psalms from the Latin vulgate with Old Irish section headings. The O'Donnell clan brought the psalter into battle to protect their fighters and ensure victory. "The Cathach / The Psalter of St Columba," The Royal Irish Academy, last modified April 15, 2021, https://www.ria.ie/cathach-psalter-st-columba.

[83] In an abecedarian style poem, the first initial of each line begins with a letter of the alphabet, e.g., A, B, C, etc.

[84] Columba, "Helper of Workers (Adiutor Laborantium)," in *The Triumph Tree: Scotland's Earliest Poetry, 550-1350*, vol.86 of *Canongate Classics*, ed. Thomas O. Clancy, trans. Gilbert Márkus Gilbert (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1998), 100.

[85] "Jane Stevenson rejects the attribution of *Altus Prosator* to Colum Cille, but locates it on the basis of language, metre and sources in the Iona of the late-seventh century." Patricia Kelly, "Review of Celtica 23," *Béaloideas* 68 (2000): 235, JSTOR.

[86] Robert Stanton cites J. W. Smit in saying most problematic passages are found in letters 1 and 5. The authenticity of the sermons is covered in work by Clare Stancliffe (Durham). Stanton explains that the two rules are considered original to Columbanus but with later additions. Robert Stanton, "Columbanus, 'Letter' 1: Translation and Commentary," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 3 (1993): 150, JSTOR.

[87] "The corpus of Columbanus's writings has long been a matter of dispute. Among the works that have been attributed to him are seven prose letters, a penitential, two monastic rules, seventeen sermons, the treatise *De saltu lunae*, a commentary on the Psalms, and several poems (three of them in epistolary form)." Stanton, "Columbanus 'Letter' 1," 149.

works of a non-hagiographical nature that the Irish *peregrini* might have been exposed to, and identify the tenets espoused by their authors that could have inspired religious self-exile.

In Chapter 4, I delve into the nine potential theological motivations identified in the introductory section. For each religious reason under scrutiny, I start by ascertaining the biblical and non-scriptural traditional precedence. Subsequently, I examine the primary sources associated with Columba and Columbanus to discern if that specific impetus can be detected in their cases. As mentioned previously, only in a few rare instances do the ancient texts clearly indicate the *peregrini*'s motivations, e.g., Columbanus' imitation of Abraham. For the most part I infer the *peregrini*'s motivations by analyzing *peregrinatio*-related terminology in the extant writings. More specifically, I consider the context in which the term is used, and I identify unstated references to relevant biblical passages.[88] I also defer to pertinent theological works about self-exile[89] produced by the saints' associates. I do recognize that Columba and Columbanus may not have embraced the same religious notions to a similar degree as those who Christian thinkers who purportedly influenced them. However, the latter's views on *peregrinatio* might illuminate theories regarding the saints' theological motivations for the practice.

In the concluding chapter, I assess the likelihood that each of the nine theological motivations might have inspired Columban and Columbanus to undertake *peregrinatio* given the strength of the evidence gleaned from accounts of the saints. Naturally, the evidence for each motivation is not always of the same quantity and quality; this means that the greater the amount of speculation involved, the more there is room for debate. I also make several suggestions for future avenues of investigation; among these, analyzing hagiographical accounts of other contemporaneous Irish religious figures;[90] determining which ancient works Columba and Columbanus likely had available to them; and looking for modern-day inheritors of Irish *peregrinatio* tradition. For instance, North American churches have recently turned to African and Asian clerics to address the dearth of local priests. Are these intrepid clergymen literally and figuratively following in the footsteps of Columba and Columbanus and, in so doing, perpetuating the Irish *peregrini* tradition?

[88] Like Jesus' call for the disciples to follow him (Matt 4:19).
[89] Such as those produced by the likes of Cassian, Jerome, Gildas, Finnian, etc.
[90] Saint Brendan, Saint Patrick, and Saint Fursey for instance.

Chapter 2 – Hagiographical Sources Interrogated

For insight into potential theological motives behind Columba's and Columbanus' religious self-exile this chapter provides a close reading of the hagiographical accounts of the saints written by Adomnán and Jonas of Bobbio. I focus on those passages where the authors refer to the notion of *peregrinatio* undertaken by both the main protagonists as well as other figures in the narratives. The hagiographies unfortunately do not provide as many clues about religious reasons for *peregrinatio* as I would have hoped. I therefore examined non-hagiographical works attributed to the *peregrini*, as well as those by Christian thinkers who may have influenced them, in addition to their followers – sources I explore in Chapter 3.

Along with their hagiographers, other key individuals closely associated to Columba and Columbanus likely shared their ideas about *peregrinatio* with them. Figure 2 shows how these figures were interconnected. Extant works authored by many of these individuals, that I analyze in Chapter 3, are shown in Figure 3. Note that works are not available from every individual identified on the chart in Figure 2; I include, however, their names for posterity in case their writings are eventually discovered and can be used in future analysis.

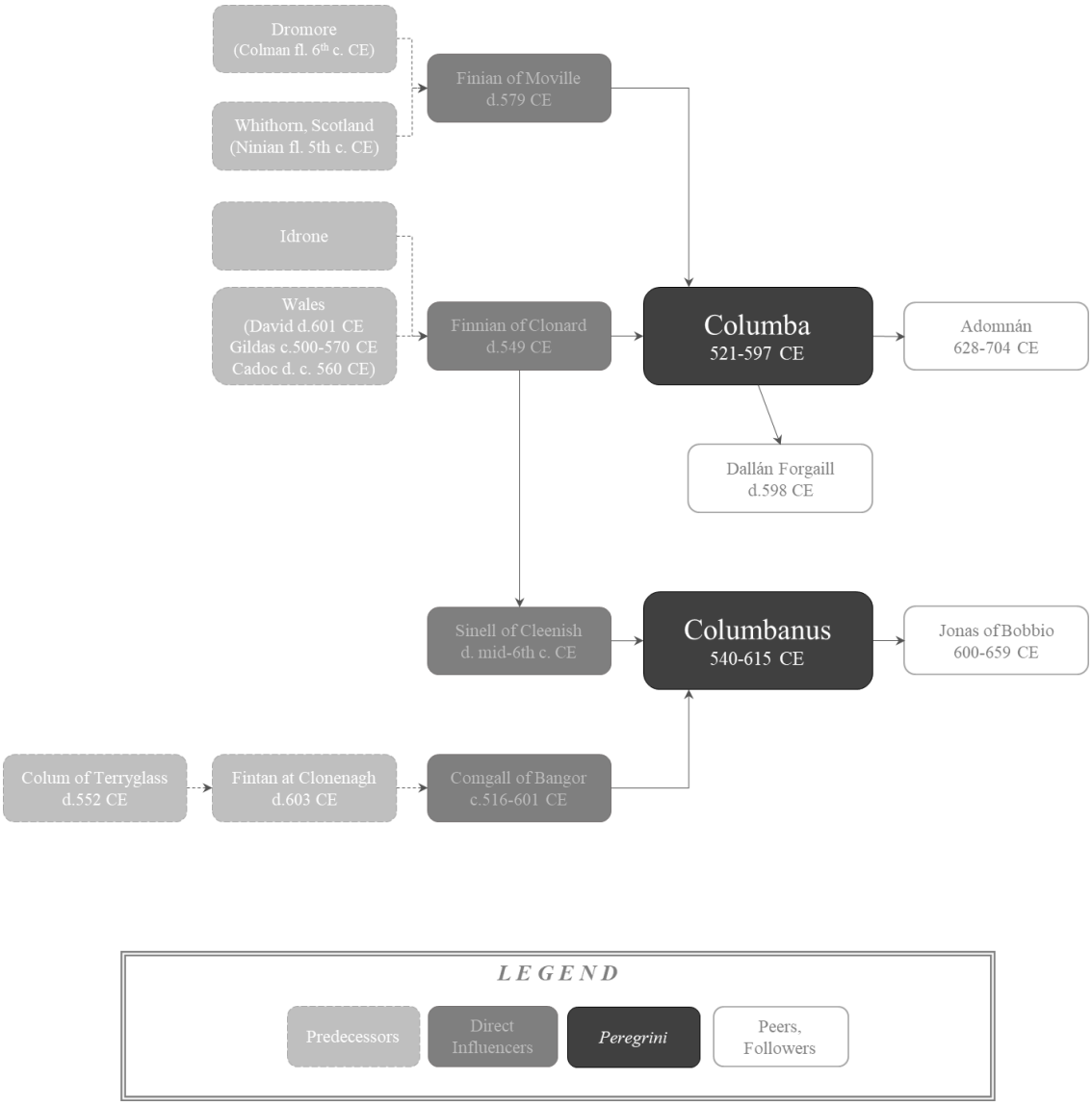

Figure 2: Close Connections[91]

While linkages between the historical characters depicted in Figure 2 points to the possibility of common theological ideas about *peregrinatio*, there is little information to determine the extent to which these concepts were shared. So, for example, I cannot say that Columba and Columbanus unequivocally held the same views about religious self-exile as their respective instructors Finnian of Clonard (d.549 CE) and Sinell of Cleenish (fl. 6th c. CE).

[91] Most biographical information used to establish linkages between these persons comes from the ODS: David Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford University Press, 2011), DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780199596607.001.0001. Except for the info about Sinell and Colum of Terryglass. John E. Hutchison-Hall, "Sinell (Sinnell) of Cleenish – Sixth Century," in *Orthodox Saints of the British Isles – Volume IV: October - December* (USA: St. Eadfrith Press, 2017), 144; and Padraig O'Riain, "Colum of Terryglass," in *A Dictionary of Irish Saints* (Dublin: Four Courts Press Ltd, 2011), 209-11, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Further complicating matters, at this time in history writers rarely cited the works of other authors whom they referenced in their own writings, making it difficult to track an idea's genesis. These conditions must be kept in mind when weighing any evidence in support of the nine potential theological motivations behind Irish *peregrinatio*.

Many materials I interrogated were originally written in Latin: namely, those authored by Adomnán, Jonas, Columba, Columbanus, their colleagues, and most of the Christian thinkers held to have influenced them. A poem by Forgaill, as well as hymns and prayers attributed to Columba, were penned in Irish while works of the earliest church fathers were likely in Greek, e.g., letters of Ignatius of Antioch (d.107 CE). Because I am not fluent in Latin, Irish, or Greek I relied on English translations to investigate the contents of these primary sources. This presents another possible issue in that the English translations might not accurately reflect the intended meaning of the original texts. I hope to mitigate this risk by using translations produced by academically recognized translators.

2.1 Literary Types Encountered

Before presenting the results of my analysis of the primary sources, I think it is important to briefly discuss the nature of the various types of literature I came across. Each work has a specific function which could arguably affect its relative value as an indicator of theological motivations behind *peregrinatio*.[92]

The hagiographies, for example, portray the *peregrini* as model holy figures. These works mainly focus on the saints' religious activities such as providing spiritual counselling, making prophecies, and performing miracles. This is typical of such accounts since their goal is to promote monastic institutions established by their founders. Consequently, the holier the founder the more deserving of support is his foundation. The flattering nature of such works does not, however, preclude their usage in historical analysis. The hagiographies also include biographical information about the saints, and in fact, they describe events that are corroborated by other sources such as chronicles and annals. More importantly, the *vitae* provide valuable insight into the behaviours and beliefs of their main subjects.

In addition to the *vitae*, I also consider devotional, pastoral, and instructional works: pointing, as they do, to important theological concepts in circulation during Late Antiquity. These I have categorized as Non-Hagiographical Sources (to be discussed in the next chapter). In many cases priests and monks were not much more educated than laypeople so these pieces had to be accessible and practical for a broad audience. Devotional works such as poems, hymns, and prayers served to focus devotees' minds on spiritual matters. Because they are meant to be memorized and recited, they tend to be short and simple. Furthermore, and given their brevity, they are less inclined to expound on theological concepts at great length. Perhaps like the seventh century stone crosses, they acted as pedagogical devices presenting the most significant theological concepts relevant to all Christians including the *peregrini*. The linking of an ascetic practice, such as fasting, for example, to the promotion of spiritual development, would elicit

[92] The "form" of the works listed under primary sources is not under consideration in this thesis. For instance, Irish pieces frequently began life as oral works that were subsequently written down. Consequently, they were formulated in such a way to make them easy for people to recite from memory, e.g., abecedarian (first letter of each stanza begins with a letter of the alphabet in sequence).

such a pedagogical device. Likewise, pastoral works (such as sermons) that targeted a wider audience needed to be comprehensible to a broad range of people.

Penitentials, monastic rules, and ascetic treatises, on the contrary, were instructional works directed at clerics, monks, and people in other religious vocations. Priests ministering the sacrament of reconciliation relied on the penitentials for determining which acts of contrition penitents should perform to expiate their sins, for example, while monastic rules expounded the regulations of communal religious life. These works tended to be succinct and practical, as opposed to verbose and theoretical. Ascetic treatises, on the other hand, were both practical *and* theoretical: serving a practical purpose, yes; but inclined to go into greater detail about theological concepts.

As for the more profound, comprehensive, and sophisticated discussions of theological ideas, they tended to be found in letters and biblical commentaries from early theologians. Many, in fact, contributed to the development of Christian doctrine. For the most part the target audience for such works were religious specialists.

2.2 The *Vitae* Interrogated

In addition to Columba and Columbanus, Adomnán and Jonas identify other figures in the *vitae* ostensibly undertaking *peregrinatio*. As mentioned previously, I examined the circumstances of these individuals, in addition to those of the saints, for further insight into potential religious impetuses for the practice. However, one difficulty I encountered while analyzing Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* is that the author does not limit the *peregrinus* notion to those who voluntarily embark on permanent self-exile for religious purposes, but also applies the concept to those on temporary and/or involuntary exile. Moreover, in some instances, certain characters are deemed *peregrinus* while others in very similar circumstances are not.

For my analysis I present the exact wording of *peregrinatio*-related phrases and terms in Adomnán's and Jonas' *vitae* as edited by William Reeves[93] and Bruno Krusch[94] respectively. In other words, I do not follow the convention of citing the nominative (thereby making grammatical alterations to the original phrasing). Likewise, I quote the English translations of the Latin phrases precisely as they are shown by the translators Richard Sharpe,[95] as well as Alexander O'Hara and Ian Wood.[96] My goal in this approach is to demonstrate how the Latin terminology around *peregrinatio* is understood by expert English translators. Any musings I have about alternative translations are merely my own speculations.

2.2.1 *Vita Columbae* by Adomnán

The *Vita Columbae* is comprised of three books in which the author, Adomnán, provides numerous examples of Columba's prophetic abilities, miraculous powers, and angelic visions. Throughout the narrative, readers are introduced to a vast array of characters who feature in various anecdotes about the saint. Many, in addition to Columba, seem to be undertaking some

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[93] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae [The Life of Columba, written by Adomnan]*, [In Latin.], ed. William Reeves (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1874), HeinOnline.

[94] Ionae [Jonas], *[] Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, *MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum*, ed. Bruno Krusch (Hanover and Leipzig: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1905), https://archive.org/details/ionaevitaesanct00jonagoog/.

[95] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe.

[96] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood.

form of *peregrinatio*.[97] The reason I say the characters in the *Vita Columbae* "seem" to be practicing *peregrinatio* is because Adomnán rarely designates anyone as a *peregrinus* directly. He frequently uses different terms with the root "*pereg*" to characterize the figures and/or those actions which point to the notion of *peregrinatio*.

In other words, and somewhat confusingly, Adomnán does not limit the idea of *peregrinatio* to permanent, voluntary, and religious self-exile. Rather, he extends the term to include short-term spiritual sojourns as well. For instance, he refers to Librán and the wayward crane as *peregrinus*[98] and *peregrinari*[99] respectively, when both are clearly only temporarily displaced from home. Furthermore, Adomnán's usage of the term *peregrinus* is inconsistent. In one case, two characters undertake a similar self-exile for penitential purposes but only one is deemed a *peregrinus* while the other is not, e.g., Librán versus the scholar Fiachnae. The penitent Fiachnae is instead designated a *proselyto*[100] (religious convert) in the same way the devout Áedán is called *proselytus,*[101] and two unnamed brothers from a distant land are called *proselyti*.[102] Perhaps with this designation Adomnán aims to highlight their recent conversion to the Christian faith. Another term that Adomnán uses to identify some religiously oriented visitors has the term "*hosp*" as its root, e.g., abbot Cainnech described as *hospitum*[103] (guest[104]). Given the spiritual dispositions of the *proselyti* and *hospites*, one would imagine that they all would qualify as *peregrini*, but curiously, this is not the case.

Regardless of how Adomnán designates these figures in the *Vita Columbae*, my analysis takes into consideration every account of religiously inclined subjects to ascertain potential impetuses for *peregrinatio*.[105]

2.2.2.1 Columba the *Peregrinus*

Although Adomnán does not directly designate Columba as *peregrinus* in the *Vita Columbae*, he does, on five occasions in the hagiography, allude to *peregrinatio* when describing Columba's time away from Ireland. In the first instance, the author contextualizes the saint's initial departure from his homeland explaining "*[p]ost bellum Cule Drebene, […] Scotia peregrinaturus primitus enavigavit*"[106] ("following the battle of *Cúl Drebene*,[107] […] Columba sailed away from Ireland to Britain, choosing to be a pilgrim for Christ"[108]). Some believe it was Columba's involvement in the conflict that prompted him to leave Ireland as a penitential act.[109] This marks the beginning of the saint's permanent religious self-exile. Next, Adomnán situates

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[97] These include non-Christian bystanders, an unfamiliar public, and foreign usurpers who are variously called *barbaris*, *plebeios*, and *extraneis*. Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 171, 190, and 198.
[98] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 181.
[99] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 145.
[100] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 132.
[101] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 129.
[102] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 133.
[103] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 118.
[104] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba,* trans. Sharpe, 117.
[105] Though outside the scope of my thesis, I propose further investigation into Adomnán's diverse characterization of figures appearing to do the same thing. Perhaps the term *peregrini* was evolving to reflect changing practices.
[106] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 120.
[107] Also named Cúl Dreimhne. Located in Connaught.
[108] Adomnán, *Life of St Coumba*, trans. Sharpe, 105.
[109] Seyfried, "Introduction."

Columba in "*Britannia peregrinantem*"[110] when a politically exiled man named Óengus comes to him. On the third occasion, Adomnán describes Columba miraculously drawing water from a rock to baptize an infant while "he was on a journey"[111] ("*cum Sanctus in sua conversaretur peregrinatione*"[112]). The fourth time that Adomnán points to Columba's *peregrinus* status is when the saint decries the poor treatment of visitors at the hands of a wealthy, stingy man named Vigen. The author quotes Columba as saying of Vigen, "*qui Christum in peregrinis hospitibus sprevit*"[113] ("[Vigen] rejected Christ in the pilgrim visitors"[114]). Finally, after completing three decades "*in Britannia peregrinationis,*"[115] ("liv[ing] in pilgrimage in Britain"[116]) Columba prays for God to release him from his earthly "dwelling."[117] Adomnán explains these were the last words of Columba as he was "crossing over from this weary pilgrimage to the heavenly home"[118] ("*tediali peregrinatione ad coelestem patriam transmeantis*"[119]).

What, if anything, do these episodes tell us about theological motivations behind Columba's decision to undertake *peregrinatio*? As mentioned previously, the reference to the battle of Cule-Drebene has been used to support the notion that Columba undertook *peregrinatio* as a penance for having caused the conflict after he illicitly copied the psalter of St. Finnian. In addition, there are claims that his spiritual advisor directed him to convert the same number of souls to Christianity, as lives lost at Cule-Drebene.[120] These point to the possibility that penance through proselytization were behind Columba's decision to undertake *peregrinatio*.

When the exiled Óengus visits Columba, the saint is said to be "living in pilgrimage in Britain"[121] ("*in Britannia peregrinantem*"[122]). We cannot tell whether Óengus' visit occurred before or after Columba founded his monastery on Iona. If it was before then it makes sense that Adomnán characterizes Columba's travel as *peregrinatio* since the saint was still moving away from his homeland of Ireland. However, if it was after Columba established a monastic settlement on Iona then it seems out of place for such travel to be classified as *peregrinatio*. After all, Columba had put down roots in Iona where he remained for some three decades. Sojourns away from the monastery – such as when Columba performed a miraculous deed for a baptism whilst "on a journey"[123] – imply temporary forays into the countryside ending with his return to Iona. Perhaps Adomnán describes Columba's actions in these two scenarios as *peregrinantem*[124] and *peregrinatione*[125] to remind us that the saint continued to be a religious self-exile all the while that he remained away from Ireland, regardless of his establishing of, and ostensibly "settling" in, a monastic community on Iona.

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[110] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 123.
[111] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 161.
[112] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 158.
[113] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 165.
[114] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 169.
[115] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 210.
[116] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 224.
[117] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 224.
[118] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 229.
[119] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 214.
[120] Seyfried, "Introduction."
[121] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 122.
[122] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 123.
[123] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 161.
[124] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 123.
[125] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 158.

In the anecdote about Vigen, Adomnán explains that the man "looked down on St Columba and would not receive him as a guest."[126] Columba attributes Vigen's behaviour to his hatred of "Christ in the pilgrim visitors."[127] It is unclear if Vigen was averse to all Christians, foreign and/or local, or only Columba. Regardless, Columba appears to count himself as a member of the "*peregrinis* [sic]*"* against whom Vigen directed his hatred.[128] Assuming Vigen lived in Scotland and Columba resided on Iona, then it appears that, the same way Adomnán does, Columba himself is reinforcing his on-going status as a religious self-exile with respect to Ireland.

As mentioned earlier, the closing chapters of the *Vita Columbae* depict an elderly Columba yearning for his heavenly home after thirty years of living abroad in Scotland. In this context, Adomnán suggests that Columba is not only a religious self-exile from his Irish birthplace but also from his soul's homeland of heaven. Consequently, while he is alive Columba is spiritually on *peregrinatio* and with his physical displacement from Ireland he simulates the condition in a temporal fashion.

2.2.2.2 Other *Peregrini*

Besides Columba, Adomnán directly and indirectly associates other characters in the *Vita Columbae* with the notion of *peregrinatio*. These include Bishop Cronan,[129] Librán,[130] and an Ulster "brother"[131] (all of whom are designated *peregrini*) as well as Columba's monk the "Briton," who is described as a *peregrin[us]*,[132] and abbot Baithéne's guests, who are, identified as "*peregrinis* [sic]*"*.[133] Additionally, Columba refers to two unnamed brothers from a distant land as *peregrinosque*[134] and he calls a wayward crane from Northern Ireland *peregrinae*.[135] Furthermore, a female Irish slave, held captive by a Scottish Druid named Broichan, is referred to as *peregrinam*.[136] I delve into the circumstances of each case below.

2.2.2.2.1 Bishop Cronan of Munster

A Munster bishop called Cronan disguises himself as a priest when he goes to see Columba. Adomnán initially refers to Cronan as *proselytus*.[137] The host priest, Columba, invites the visiting cleric Cronan to perform the consecration of the eucharist. Cronan then asks Columba to join him in the activity. When Columba recognizes that Cronan is not simply a priest but that he is in fact a bishop he suggests that Cronan perform the rite alone per the episcopal prerogative. Columba asks Cronan why he appeared under the guise of a priest since that prevented him from honoring Cronan as a bishop. We never learn why Cronan concealed his episcopal status on first meeting Columba. The point of the anecdote is to highlight Columba's clairvoyant abilities. Adomnán says both Cronan and on-lookers were amazed at Columba's feat.

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[126] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 169.
[127] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 169.
[128] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 165.
[129] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 143.
[130] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 181.
[131] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 198.
[132] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 198.
[133] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 115.
[134] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 133.
[135] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 145.
[136] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 174.
[137] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 142.

At the end of the account, after his identity is revealed, Adomnán refers to Cronan as *peregrinus*.[138]

I cannot help but wonder if Adomnán's designation of Cronan first as a *proselyte*, and later as a *peregrinus*, is related to the fact that he was originally considered a simple priest but turned out to be a bishop. There is little evidence in the *Vita Columbae* to support the idea that ecclesiastical status is pertinent in Adomnán's characterization of those undertaking *peregrinatio*. Regardless, it is puzzling that Adomnán deemed Cronan a *peregrinus* since there is no mention that the bishop remained with Columba on permanent self-exile instead of returning to fulfill his episcopal responsibilities in Munster. This appears to be an example of Adomnán considering someone on temporary religious self-exile as a *peregrinus*.

2.2.2.2.2 The Repentant Librán from Connaught

One day Columba encounters an Irish cleric from Connaught named Librán who is staying in the guest quarters of the monastery on Iona. Columba questions Librán about his origins and the purpose of his "journey."[139] Librán explains that he undertook a *peregrinatione*[140] to atone for his sins. Columba "test[s] the strength of his repentance"[141] by describing intense monastic exercises – presumably used to expiate transgressions – which Librán agrees to perform. Librán then confesses all his sins to Columba who counsels the *peregrinus*[142] to do seven years penance at a monastery in Tiree.[143]

After confessing, Librán asks Columba what he should do about an oath he broke to serve one of his "immediate kindred, who was extremely rich" and who rescued him from prison and death (for committing murder).[144] Columba tells Librán to return to Iona after the seven years in Tiree when he will be allowed to take communion at Easter. Librán does seven years at the monastery of Magh Lunge in Tiree and returns to Iona where Columba prophesizes the circumstances of Librán's return to Ireland to face ramifications of his broken oath. It is clear in this anecdote that Librán originally quit Ireland for penitential reasons. Again, Adomnán characterizes Librán as a *peregrinus* even though his self-exile is plainly temporary (unless, of course, Adomnán considered that seven years constituted permanent self-exile).

2.2.2.2.3 The Ulster "Brother"

On another occasion an Ulster "brother" identified as "*Hiberniensis peregrinus*"[145] ("an Irish pilgrim"[146]) visits Iona. Columba tells the man – whom I assume to be a monk – that a cleric from his home territory of Airthir has just died. The visitor suggests Columba might be speaking of Diarmait, the founder of a small monastery in his district. Columba confirms that Diarmait is indeed the decedent. Adomnán offers no further information about the purpose of the Ulsterman's trip to Iona, nor does he tell us if he returned to Ulster. Again, this suggests that Adomnán does not restrict the *peregrinus* designation to those who are permanently self-exiled.

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[138] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 143.
[139] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 188.
[140] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 180.
[141] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 188.
[142] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 181.
[143] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 189.
[144] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 189.
[145] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 198.
[146] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 210.

2.2.2.2.4 Columba's Briton Monk

While on Iona, one of Columba's monks known as a Briton, takes ill. Columba visits the Briton on his deathbed but the saint leaves before he expires, which the Briton does immediately after Columba departs. Then Columba looks heavenward and sees angels battling "the Adversary"[147] which they finally overcome so that they can carry the soul of the "*peregrini* […] *ad coelestis patriae gaudia evexerunt*"[148] ("to the joys of the heavenly kingdom"[149]). Columba identifies the Briton as the first "of us"[150] to have died on the island thereby indicating he is part of Columba's original retinue. He may have come from Ireland with the saint and remained permanently self-exiled from his homeland like his brethren.

When, after the Briton's death, Columba describes seeing the monk's soul being carried away to "the heavenly kingdom,"[151] the saint implies that heaven is the home of the Briton and himself (and quite likely all the Iona monks if not all humankind). This supports the notion that Columba viewed earthly life akin to a *peregrinatio* away from the divine homeland: the condition that Columba, the Briton, and the monastic community might have been simulating by quitting Ireland for Iona.

2.2.2.2.5 Abbot Baithéne's Guests

In the anecdote where Fintan goes to Iona after Columba's death, he is initially shown the same hospitality as "*quidam ignotus hospes*"[152] ("a stranger and a guest"[153]). Fintan then requests an audience with abbot Baithéne, Columba's successor, who, described as ever welcoming of *peregrinis*,[154] agrees to meet Fintan. When Fintan asks Baithéne to join his monastery the latter denies this request, and Fintan "was sorely disappointed"[155] ("*hospes*, *valde contristatus*"[156]). Baithéne explains that it is not because Fintan is unworthy that he cannot accept him into the monastery but rather, that Columba had foretold Fintan's visit and left instructions for Fintan to return to Ireland and establish his own monastery. It is interesting that Fintan is characterized as *hospes* rather than *peregrinus* given that elsewhere, Adomnán deems short-term visitors to Iona to be the latter.

According to the *Vita S. Fintani*,[157] Fintan and Columba crossed paths on different occasions before Columba departed Ireland on *peregrinatio*. One impetus for Fintan's desire to undertake *peregrinatio* could be in imitation of Columba.

2.2.2.2.6 Two Unnamed Brothers from a Distant Land

Two brothers identified as *peregrinosque* [sic][158] arrive on Iona telling Columba they have come "*anno apud te peregrinemur*"[159]("to live as pilgrims for a year in [his] monastery"[160]). We

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[147] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 210.
[148] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 198.
[149] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 210.
[150] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 210.
[151] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 210.
[152] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 115.
[153] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 113.
[154] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 115.
[155] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 114.
[156] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 115.
[157] *Life of Saint Fintán, alias Munnu, abbot of Tech Munnu (Taghmon, Co. Wexford)*, trans. Roy Flechner (Cork: CELT, 2021), https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T201046.html. Based on Latin edition of W. W. Heist.

are not told where the brothers are from and why exactly they left their homeland. Columba agrees they may remain there "*anni unius spatio peregrinari*"[161] ("as pilgrims for a year"[162]), only after the brothers immediately take monastic vows. This surprised onlookers since the brothers – whom Adomnán also refers to as *hospites*[163] – were newly arrived and, presumably, the extent of their monastic training was yet unknown. Postulants typically underwent intensive, multi-year programs studying scriptures, the monastic rule, practicing asceticism, etc., before being accepted as a monk. After the brothers finish their vows, Columba explains that these two *proselyti*[164] are "offer[ing] themselves to God as a living sacrifice."[165] I am not sure whether the sacrifice that Columba is referring to is the brothers' decision to undertake a *peregrinatio* or their decision to become monks. Columba subsequently predicts the brothers' imminent death saying they have "fulfilled the equivalent of years as soldiers of Christ and within the space of one month they will depart in peace to Christ the Lord."[166] It appears that Columba had some insight into the brothers' spiritual and temporal condition. Again, I find it curious that they might be considered *peregrini* since the brothers only planned to stay with Columba on Iona for one year. However, because they died on the island, they technically never did return to their birthplace which means they effectively undertook a permanent, religious self-exile.

2.2.2.2.7 The Wayward Crane from Northern Ireland

Columba foretells the arrival of a crane (aka heron) from Northern Ireland who will be blown off course and land on Iona. He asks a monk to wait for the *hospita*[167] which will arrive on the beach in three days' time after the ninth hour, and to nurse it back to health. Columba says after three days and three nights the crane "*nolens ultra apud nos peregrinari*"[168] ("will no longer want to stay as a pilgrim with us"[169]) and that, once refreshed it will fly back to Ireland. Later Columba thanks the monk for attending to the crane reiterating that the bird will not remain long in *peregrinatione* but return home in three days.[170] Adomnán suggests the crane's journey is akin to a religious sojourn by using terms with "*pereg*" as their root to describe the bird and its actions. But again, the crane is only temporarily displaced from his homeland as Columba himself portends its departure from Iona after a few days. This is not an exile of a permanent nature.

Some believe that the crane symbolizes Jesus in his death and resurrection because of the timeline given by Columba. For instance, in Jewish custom daily prayers and sacrifices occur at the ninth hour (3 pm) and this is the time that Jesus is believed to have died on the cross. His resurrection also occurred three days and three nights after the crucifixion. The analogy between

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[158] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 133.
[159] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 133.
[160] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 135.
[161] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 133.
[162] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 135
[163] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 133.
[164] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 133.
[165] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 136.
[166] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 136.
[167] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 145.
[168] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 145.
[169] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 150.
[170] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 145.

the crane and Jesus does not extend to the latter's ascension to heaven – Jesus' divine home – which is said to have occurred 40 days after his resurrection. On the contrary, no mention is made of the wayward crane's fate after leaving Iona.

2.2.2.2.8 The Female Irish Slave

As for the Irish maiden enslaved by Broichan the Scottish Druid, Columba's request for her liberation supports the notion that she was indeed a slave, which means she was not free to do as she pleased, e.g., undertake a permanent religious self-exile. So why would Columba describe her as "*peregrinam* [sic]"?[171] Would not the likelihood that she was kidnapped from Ireland and forced to go to Scotland make her displacement involuntary?

At first glance, her circumstances seem incongruous with those of a *peregrinus*. However, upon reflection I believe a case can be made to support this characterization. Perhaps the slavers targeted her because she was Christian and Columba saw her on-going enslavement as a sacrifice for her faith. In other words, religious persecution and the supremacy of Christianity over Druidism might be the underlaying themes of this anecdote. Adomnán paints the non-Christian Broichan in an unflattering light, saying "his heart was hard and unbending" in his refusal to release the slave girl.[172] Conversely, he depicts Columba as a benevolent figure who advocates for her liberation on humane grounds.

After Columba prophesizes the imminent demise of Broichan for persisting in keeping the slave, the saint quits Broichan and continues on his way. However, Broichan falls deathly ill, and envoys are sent to solicit Columba's help in healing the druid. Columba sends his own messengers who are instructed to treat the dying Broichan only after he promises to release the slave girl. Broichan agrees, she is given over to Columba's messengers, whereupon the druid is administered the treatment prescribed by Columba and fully recovers. Adomnán does not indicate what happens to the female Irish slave once she is liberated. I wonder if she remained in Scotland or returned to Ireland, and how she might have later been characterized with regard to her "*peregrinam* [sic]" status.

2.2.2.3 Other Potential Practitioners of *Peregrinatio*

Adomnán uses Latin words with the root "*pereg*" to describe the activities of Fintan and Áed. While these figures are not explicitly identified as *peregrini*, the terminology used to portray their actions points to the notion of *peregrinatio*.

2.2.2.3.1 Saint Fintan

As mentioned previously, Fintan and Columba appear to have met under various circumstances before Columba departed Ireland on *peregrinatio*. Adomnán explains that the devoutly religious Fintan had long harbored a desire "to leave Ireland and to join Columba in his life of pilgrimage."[173] Fintan seeks the advice of an elderly cleric named Columb Crag who feels Fintan's wish is divinely inspired and therefore counsels him to go.[174] Adomnán's depiction of Fintan's desired practice points to *peregrinatio*. While no specific motivation is given for his

[171] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 174.
[172] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 181.
[173] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 113.
[174] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 114.

wish to leave, Fintan's repeated interactions with the saint could have inspired him to imitate Columba.

2.2.2.3.2 Áed Dub the Cruthinian

In another account of Columba's prophetic gifts, a murderer from the Cruthin race named Áed Dub (aka Aid Black) traveled from Ireland to Britain accompanied by the priest Findchán. Áed, who was of noble descent and dressed as a cleric, intended to "remain for a number of years as a pilgrim"[175] ("*aliquot peregrinaretur annos*"[176]). Subsequently, "*post aliquantum in peregrinatione transactum tempus*"[177] ("[after] having spent some time in pilgrimage"[178]), Áed was ordained a priest by a visiting Bishop with Findchán's support.[179]

Columba disapproved of Áed's ordination and prophesized bad things for both Áed and Findchán (curiously the bishop who performed Áed's ordination appears exempt from Columba's scorn).[180] This could be an example of a fugitive escaping justice by running away to join a monastery.[181] Although Áed might have initially undertaken self-exile to repent for his murderous acts rather than avoid prosecution, it looks like he was unable to remain sin-free given the underhanded nature of his ensuing ordination. Under these circumstances, the motivation behind *peregrinatio* seems more practical than theological.

2.2.2.4 Proselytes

In the same way the disguised Bishop Cronan is called *proselytus*, and the two unnamed brothers are called *proselyti*, Áedán is referred to as "*proselytes* [sic]"[182] whilst the scholar Fiachnae is referred to as "*proselyte* [sic]."[183] Unlike Cronan and the two brothers, however, neither Áedán nor Fiachnae are described as *peregrinus*. The term proselyte does have religious connotations – implying a recent religious conversion – and therefore points to the idea that they were viewed as spiritual figures. In fact, Áedán is described as a "truly religious man,"[184] and Fiachnae, who immediately confesses to Columba upon arriving on Iona, has his "sins […] forgiven" because of his "contrite heart."[185] While the purpose of Áedán's visit to Iona is not revealed, in the case of Fiachnae, he is plainly performing a penitential act. This makes it somewhat surprising that Adomnán does not at least designate Fiachnae *peregrinus*.

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[175] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 138.
[176] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 135.
[177] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 135.
[178] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 138.
[179] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 139. It is possible that the "carnal love" Findchán had for Áed colored Columba's view of Áed's ordination.
[180] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 139.
[181] The opportunity to escape accountability is a common criticism of the medieval Christian pilgrimage tradition.
[182] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 129.
[183] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 132.
[184] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 131.
[185] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 134.

2.2.2.5 Strangers and Guests

On three occasions, visitors of an ostensibly religious nature are identified not as *peregrini* but rather variously as "*hospitum/hospes/hospitis/hospitem* [sic]"[186] (translated by Sharpe as guests and visitors).[187] I am curious about Adomnán's choice of words in these instances but a detailed analysis on that topic is outside the scope of the current thesis. Nonetheless, I also examine these cases for evidence of theological motivations for *peregrinatio*.

2.2.2.5.1 Abbot Cainnech

In the first instance, abbot Cainnech – whose arrival is foretold by Columba – is deemed a "chosen saint"[188] ("*sancto et electo homini*"[189]) by the latter. Columba and his monks welcomed Cainnech as an "honoured guest"[190] ("*ab eo honorifice et hospitaliter susceptus est*"[191]) and prepared the guest-chamber along with some water to wash Cainnech's feet. Adomnán refers to the abbot as "*hospitum* [sic]."[192] There is no indication as to the purpose of Cainnech's visit so we cannot discern what prompted him to go to Iona. Perhaps he was simply visiting Columba as a friend.

2.2.2.5.2 Librán at Derry Monastery

Another example of a religious figure being referred to as *hospes*[193] is Librán who, after completing several years of penance in the monastery of Tiree and celebrating Easter on Iona, finally returns to Ireland. He is "hospitably received and given lodging in the guest-house [sic]" of the monastery in Durrow where he subsequently dies and is buried amongst Columba's "elect monks."[194] It makes sense to me that Librán might be considered a guest of the Durrow monks if he was not a Columban monk and the Durrow monastery was not his home. Furthermore, because he returned to his birthplace after his penitential self-exile, I would not expect him to be called a *peregrinus* at that point.

2.2.2.5.3 Man Rescued by Abbot Comgall's Monks

The last example where Adomnán uses the root "*hosp*" in his terminology is in reference to a man who drowned along with abbot Comgall's monks in Lough Belfast. Columba has a vision of the monks "battling in the air against the powers of the Adversary who are seeking to snatch away the soul of [the] visitor."[195] He prays fervently and rejoices when "holy angels" help the monks win the battle so that the "visitor [is] delivered."[196] The man is referred to as "*hospitis*

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[186] On one occasion, Adomnán describes an elderly man as *viator* (traveler) whose purpose was to bring news of a tragic incident that occurred in Mugdorna to Columba but whose religious intentions are not stated. Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 141; Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 145.
[187] This designation resonates with terminology heard on the modern-day *Camino de Compostelle* where pilgrims are greeted by *hospitaleros* (caretakers) in the *albergues* (hostels) that shelter them on their journey.
[188] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 117.
[189] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 118.
[190] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 117.
[191] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 118.
[192] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 118.
[193] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 183.
[194] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 193.
[195] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 215.
[196] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 215.

[sic]" and "*hospitem* [sic]."[197] No further information is provided about his circumstances. While we could speculate that he was a guest at Comgall's monastery, the purpose of his visit remains unknown.

2.2.2 *Vita Columbani* by Jonas of Bobbio

The *Vita Columbani*, written by Jonas of Bobbio, is found in a larger work called the *Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*[198] which is divided into three parts. The first part is comprised of two books containing hagiographical accounts of (I) the abbot Columbanus, and (II) four of his followers while the second part describes the life of Vedastis (aka Vedastus), bishop of Artois [*Atrebatensis*], and book three describes the life of Iohannis (aka Iohannes) the abbot of Réomé [*Reomaensis*].[199]

In the *Vita Columbani*, Jonas devotes the first few chapters to Columbanus' birth, childhood, and religious vocation prior to leaving Ireland. The remaining chapters focus on his life after he arrives on the continent. We learn that Columbanus earns the favour of the Frankish monarchy, institutes three monasteries in Burgundy,[200] and is expelled nearly two decades later after he has a falling out with the royals. He spends the last three years of his life in Lombardy,[201] where he establishes the monastery of Bobbio. Throughout the hagiography, Jonas recounts instances of Columbanus receiving divine revelations, performing miraculous healings, and prophesizing future events. Though Jonas depicts far fewer figures on *peregrinatio* in the *Vita Columbani* than does Adomnán in the *Vita Columbae*, useful light is still shed on potential theological motivations behind the practice.

2.2.2.1 Columbanus the *Peregrinus*

On five occasions in the *Vita Columbani* Jonas points to the notion that Columbanus and his travel companions are on *peregrinatio*. The first instance occurs when, after spending several years in the Bangor monastery in Northern Ireland, "*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*"[202] ("Columbanus began to long for ascetic exile mindful of the Lord's command to Abraham: '*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 shew thee*'"[203]). Thus, Jonas depicts the young Columbanus imitating Abraham who answered God's call to leave his native land (Gen 12:1). This is the clearest disclosure of a religious impetus behind the practice of *peregrinatio* in the entire text. Translators O'Hara and Wood explain that "Columbanus' desire to undertake the ritual of ascetic exile was modelled on the example of Christ and his exhortation to leave everything and follow him. Columbanus' literal imitation of Christ was given added

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[197] Adomnán, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. Reeves, 202.
[198] "Source Details," Fordham University, accessed October 25, 2023, http://medievalsourcesbibliography.org/sources.php?id=1414526840. Abbot Athala of Bobbio, abbot Eustace of Luxeuil, abbess Burgundofara of Evoriac (now Faremoutiers), abbot Bertulf of Bobbio.
[199] Four followers of Columbanus: Athalae (d.635 CE) aka Athala, Eustasii (d.629 CE) aka Eustasius, Burgundofarae (d.645 CE) aka Burgundofara, and Bertulfi (d.639 CE) aka Bertulfus. Fordham University, "Source Details."
[200] Annegray, Luxeuil, and Fontaine in Eastern region of modern-day France.
[201] Northern region in modern-day Italy.
[202] Ionae [Jonas], *[] Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, ed. Krusch, 159.
[203] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 103.

weight by Comgall's entrusting him with twelve companions for his religious odyssey."[204] With this explication both the Old and New Testaments are held up as exemplars for the practice of *peregrinatio*. Upon obtaining abbot Comgall's permission to leave, Columbanus heads to the continent where he spends the remainder of his life.

The second time that Jonas infers Columbanus' *peregrinus* status is when, after spending almost twenty years in the Vosges region of modern-day France and founding three monastic institutions,[205] the saint is ordered to leave Burgundy by the Frankish King Theuderic II (r.595-613 CE).[206] Theuderic's guards tell Columbanus to return to his homeland but the saint replies that God would not be pleased if he were to "return once again to [his] native land which [he] left out of fear of Christ."[207] O'Hara and Wood explain that "[a]scetic exile outside one's country (*potior peregrinatio*) was understood by the Irish as a ritual vow. Returning would have meant breaking this sacred commitment."[208] What does Columbanus mean when he says, he "left out of fear of Christ?" The Old Testament decries those who do not fear God[209] and exalts those who fear the Lord.[210] According to Job 28:28, Psalm 111:10, Proverb 16:6, and Sirach 19:20, the "fear of the Lord" leads to knowledge, understanding and wisdom which girds the faithful against evil.[211] Sin leads away from God causing estrangement between the divine and humankind. For Christians, such alienation prevents them from attaining everlasting life in heaven with God and Jesus. They believe that having faith in Jesus will deliver them from eternal death (John 5:24). Consequently, having the "fear of Christ" leads to salvation (Acts 4:12).[212] In this instance it appears that Columbanus undertook *peregrinatio* for spiritual growth.

Once Columbanus and his entourage quit Burgundy they travel northwesterly across the Neustrian kingdom of King Clothar II (r.613-629 CE). While passing through the city of Orléans, two members of Columbanus' retinue – one named Potentinus[213] – are sent out to collect food. The foragers have no luck until they meet a Syrian couple who show them hospitality. Potentinus returns to Columbanus and explains how kindly the Syrians treated him and his compatriot. In this exchange Potentinus represents himself and his mate as "*peregrinis* [sic]."[214] If Potentinus was referring to his current situation (forced exile from Burgundy) then it appears that, like Adomnán, Jonas has expanded the definition of *peregrinatio* to include involuntary exile, e.g., their departure from Burgundy was not self-motivated. On the other hand, perhaps Columbanus and his companions continued to see themselves as *peregrini* in relation to their foreign birthplaces regardless of their location on the continent and how long they had been there. Columbanus was born in Ireland but by this time he had been away from his native land

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[204] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 104, note 91.
[205] Annegray, Luxeuil, and Fontaine.
[206] Among other issues, Theuderic and his grandmother Brunhild resented Columbanus for his refusal to baptize the king's illegitimate children.
[207] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 141.
[208] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 141, note 261.
[209] Gen 20:11, Job 15:4, Psalm 36:1, and Romans 3:18.
[210] 2 Chronicles 19:19, Isaiah 33:6.
[211] "Fear of God [is a] common Jewish conception (e.g., Prov 1.7), understood as underpinning piety." Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*: *New Revised Standard Version Bible Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 363, note 7.1.
[212] "*Salvation…saved*, Jesus is the sole agent of salvation." Levine and Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 229, note 4.12.
[213] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 145.
[214] Ionae [Jonas], *[] Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, ed. Krusch, 200.

for many decades. Likewise, his fellow travelers were not native Gauls since the king permitted only non-natives to leave with Columbanus when ordering his expulsion.[215]

A fourth instance where Jonas implies *peregrinatio* occurs following Columbanus' expulsion from Burgundy when the saint lands in the court of the Merovingian King Clothar II. Clothar asks Columbanus to remain in his kingdom, but he declines the king's offer saying "*velle vel ob suam peregrinationem augendam vel illius inimicitiarum occasionem sedandam*"[216] ("[he] wanted rather to extend his ascetic exile and to reduce the excuses for hostilities against him"[217]). Again, Columbanus reiterates his status of religious self-exile even though his sojourn through Neustria was clearly not self-motivated.

Finally, the fifth time that Jonas points to Columbanus as a practitioner of *peregrinatio* is when the saint encounters the bishop of Mainz while travelling along the Rhine River. Upon encountering Columbanus at his church the bishop asks who he is and the saint replies "*se peregrinum esse*"[218] ("he is a foreigner"[219]). Thereafter the bishop, who subsequently explained on numerous occasions "he had never before been so inspired in giving out necessities,"[220] provided Columbanus with all he required to continue his voyage. Furthermore, the bishop "testified that he went to the church that day by divine admonition on account of the merit of blessed Columbanus, and for no other reason."[221] This suggests that God instigated the bishop's church visit to facilitate his encounter with the saint and ply him with necessary provisions.

Jonas explains in the first anecdote that Columbanus' initial motivation for leaving Ireland on *peregrinatio* arose from his desire to imitate a scriptural hero. It is also possible that Columbanus aspired to an even more intense ascetic lifestyle than the one he experienced in the Irish monastery. If this were the case, then I speculate that the saint hoped for spiritual growth under these circumstances. In the subsequent four anecdotes where Jonas describes the saint living as a *peregrinus* on the continent, the hagiographer provides no further insight into the religious impetus behind Columbanus' *peregrinatio*. However, as we shall see later, other sources – including works by Columbanus himself – provide further clues as to additional motivations.

2.2.2.2 Other *Peregrini*

There are two additional cases in the *Vita Columbani* where Jonas depicts people other than Columbanus and his travel companions as *peregrini*. The first involves an Irish anchoress whom Columbanus meets early in his life before leaving Ireland. The second involves a monk named Autiernus who asks Columbanus' permission to leave the Vosges region in Burgundy so he can self-exile to Ireland.

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[215] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 142-3.
[216] Ionae [Jonas], *[] Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, ed. Krusch, 207.
[217] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 152. The hostilities that Columbanus wishes to avoid are probably linked to the fact that King Clothar II was also the enemy of King Theuderic II and Brunhild. By remaining with Clothar, Columbanus would further alienate himself from the Burgundian monarchs.
[218] Ionae [Jonas], *[] Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, ed. Krusch, 212.
[219] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 158.
[220] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 158.
[221] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 158.

2.2.2.2.1 The Irish Anchoress

Young Columbanus was struggling with lustfulness when he met an anchoress in Ireland who had renounced secular life. She explained that fifteen years prior "[she] left [her] home and [ ] sought out a place of pilgrimage"[222] ("[*e*]*n quindecim tempora volvuntur, quo et domum carui et hunc peregrinationis locum expetii*"[223]). The anchoress claims that if it were not for her gender she would have "sought out a place of superior exile across the sea"[224] ("*mare transacto, potioris peregrinationis locum petissem*"[225]). She then admonishes Columbanus for his philandering ways, saying such behaviour would lead to damnation. Finally, the anchoress entreats the young man to quit his "native soil."[226] Stirred and alarmed by the anchoress' words, Columbanus thanks her for her admonishment and decides to leave his birthplace of Leinster.[227] When his mother beseeches him not to leave Columbanus cites Matt 10:37, saying that only those who love God more than they love their parents are worthy of him.[228] The saint subsequently goes to study scripture with the pious Sinnell and later joins the monastery in Bangor (which he subsequently leaves with the abbot's permission to undertake *peregrinatio*).

We never learn exactly what prompted the anchoress to undertake *peregrinatio*. Jonas describes her as a "*cuiusdam religiosae ac Deo dicatae feminae*"[229] ("a certain religious woman dedicated to God"[230]). For O'Hara and Wood this wording suggests she might be following the "Rule for Nuns" ("*Regula cuiusdam ad virgins*").[231] If she did indeed belong to a Holy Order then she could have been inspired by the very same theological motivations that drove Columbanus himself to become a *peregrinus*, e.g., imitation, asceticism, spiritual growth.

2.2.2.2.2 The Monk Autiernus

Many years later, while abbot of a Burgundian monastery, Columbanus is petitioned by a monk called Autiernus to "travel to Ireland as an ascetic exile"[232] ("*ut peregrinandi causa in Hibernia perveniret*"[233]). O'Hara and Wood explain that "ascetic exile was not undertaken lightly. It was normally not embarked upon by monks without considerable experience of the monastic life and was dependent on the consent of the abbot."[234] In response, Columbanus suggests that Autiernus join him in retreating to the woods to learn God's wishes, e.g., withdrawing to the wilderness to facilitate communication with the divine. The rest of the anecdote describes miraculous provisioning ascribed to Columbanus' soliciting of God during their time in the wilderness.

The impetus behind Autiernus' desire for *peregrinatio* is not explicitly given. We can only speculate about the possible theological motivations. For example, he could have been aiming to

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[222] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 100.
[223] Ionae [Jonas], *[] Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, ed. Krusch, 156.
[224] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 100.
[225] Ionae [Jonas], *[] Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, ed. Krusch, 156.
[226] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 100.
[227] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 100-1.
[228] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 100.
[229] Ionae [Jonas], *[] Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, ed. Krusch, 156.
[230] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 99.
[231] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 99, note 66.
[232] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 118.
[233] Ionae [Jonas], *[] Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, ed. Krusch, 170.
[234] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 118, note 155.

imitate Columbanus, his abbot, who made the trek from Ireland to Burgundy "for the sake of Christ the saviour"[235] and in imitation of Abraham.[236] Likewise, in accordance with Columbanus' view that *peregrinationes* are one of the many hardships monks must face, Autiernus might have wished to undertake the practice to intensify his asceticism (potentially leading to spiritual growth, and/or divine encounter).

Additionally, although Ireland had a substantial Christian community by this time, Autiernus could have hoped to minister to Irish Christians or obtain more Irish converts for the faith. Maybe he was also looking for religious instruction from one of the renowned Irish monastic institutions or even hoping to study under those who had instructed Columbanus himself.

Nor can we rule out the possibility that Autiernus considered *peregrinatio* a means to expiate some undisclosed sin. In his penitential, Columbanus prescribes self-exile for those who commit murder[237] and for clerics who have "begotten a son."[238] It is worth noting, however, that Columbanus put a finite duration on such a banishment; ten years for a cleric who had killed; three years for a layman who had killed; and seven years (as a *peregrinus*) for a cleric who had fathered a son.

Finally, could Autiernus have seen *peregrinatio* as a means of simulating humankind's earthly life in relation to heavenly life, e.g., as an interim temporal condition to be endured until we attain permanent residence with the divine? In two of his sermons Columbanus likens our earthly lives to a "pilgrimage from the Lord."[239] He says "we [] live as travellers, as pilgrims, as guests of the world" and he urges listeners to be "entangled by no lusts, longing with no earthly desires, but let us fill our minds with heavenly and spiritual impressions."[240] Unfortunately, the *Vita Columbani* offers no further information about the monk's motivations. In fact, we do not even learn whether Columbanus grants Autiernus permission to leave Burgundy or not.

2.2.3 The *Vitae* Compared

It is evident from the preceding analysis of Columba's and Columbanus' hagiographical accounts that the authors, Adomnán and Jonas, differ in their application of the *peregrinus* term. In the *Vita Columbae*, Adomnán extends the notion of a *peregrinus* from someone undertaking permanent, voluntary, religious self-exile (like Columba) to include temporary and/or involuntary expulsion, such as the numerous individuals who interacted with Columba over the course of his decades-long exile from Ireland. What would Adomnán gain by doing this? Maybe by expanding the definition of *peregrinatio* to include temporary spiritual sojourns he hoped to make the experience accessible to more people, and in so doing increase the number of visitors to Iona and the Columban monastery. A local readership familiar with the renowned Saint Columba might have more readily imitated the holy man knowing the practice was not

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[235] Columbanus, *Epistulae []*, [in Latin], ed. G. S. M. Walker (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), II.5, https://celt.ucc.ie/published/L201054/.
[236] Ionae [Jonas], *[] Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, ed. Krusch, 159.
[237] Columbanus, "3. Penitential," trans. Walker, 173 and 175.
[238] Columbanus, "3. Penitential," trans. Walker, 173.
[239] Columbanus, *Sermons of [],* trans. G. S. M. Walker, IV.3 (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1956), https://research.ucc.ie/celt/document/T201053/.
[240] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, VIII.2.

permanent. This would align with the aim of a hagiography, which is to promote a particular saint and their foundations.

Unlike Adomnán, Jonas labels only a small number of individuals as *peregrini* in the *Vita Columbani*. Namely, the Irish anchoress who encouraged the young saint to undertake *peregrinatio*, the monk Autiernus who aspires to *peregrinatio* in Ireland, as well as Columbanus and his retinue who wandered across the continent after being expelled from Burgundy. These are all overtly religious figures who quit their native land without any expectation of returning. Consequently, they fit the more prevalent definition of *peregrini*. Additionally, Jonas does not extend the *peregrinatio* concept to include finite spiritual voyages. This leads me to believe that he was less interested than was Adomnán in enticing "provisional" *peregrini* to visit Columbanus' monastic foundations. In other words, only those committed to eternal self-exile need apply.

Notwithstanding the different ways in which Adomnán and Jonas present the *peregrinatio* concept in the respective hagiographies, there are a few instances where the principles behind the practice are discernible. From a close reading of the *peregrinatio*-related anecdotes I perceive imitation, penance, and possibly simulation as potential theological motivations behind the practice depicted in the hagiography of Columba. From the hagiography of Columbanus I detect imitation and asceticism. Given the dearth of information about religious impetuses for *peregrinatio* in the hagiographies themselves, I was propelled to examine non-hagiographical sources for more insight on the topic. These are presented in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 3 – Non-Hagiographical Sources Interrogated

In this chapter I situate the authors of these primary sources in the history of Christianity, and I briefly discuss the tenets they held that might have guided the Irish *peregrini* in their decision to undertake *peregrinatio*. Chapter 4 contains additional examples from these non-hagiographical works in support of the proposed religious impetuses. Figure 3 (see below) shows Columba's and Columbanus' theological lineages and details the materials associated with their respective predecessors, peers, and successors.

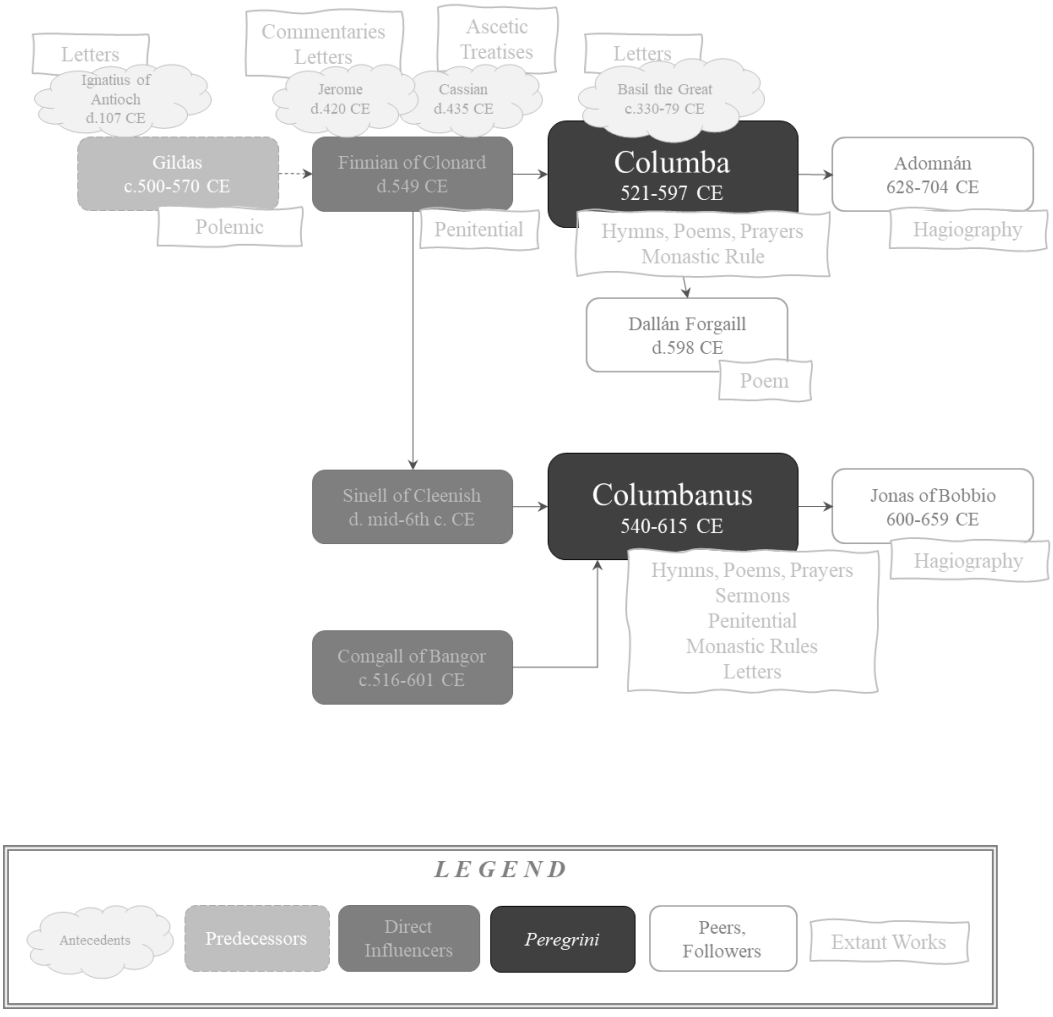

Figure 3: Extant Materials attributed to Close Connections and Antecedents of Columba and Columbanus

3.1 Devotional Works

Writings aimed at encouraging devotion amongst broad audiences tend to be more succinct and less complex than those targeting a specialized audience such as religious experts. Because

of this, I consider them valuable sources for identifying prominent theological concepts in general circulation at the time of their production. Contemporaneous devotional works that I examine for clues about Columba's and Columbanus' religious reasons for *peregrinatio* include poetry, hymns, and prayers.

3.1.1 Elegiac Verse

3.1.1.1 Forgaill's *Amra Choluim Chilli*[241]

Upon Columba's passing in 597 CE, a contemporary of the saint, Dallán Forgaill, produced an elegiac[242] poem in Old-Irish entitled the *Amra Choluim Chilli* (Elegy of Colum Cille). It is commonly held that Forgaill revered Columba for successfully defending the *fili*[243] during the convention of Druim Cetta (575 CE),[244] hence his reason for eulogizing the saint in verse. In the eight-chapter poem Forgaill pays tribute to the recently deceased Columba, describing his numerous and varied qualities, particularly those related to his religious vocation. Of most pertinence to the topic at hand, Forgaill ascribes behaviors to the saint which point to possible theological motivations behind Columba's *peregrinatio*.

For instance, the poet portrays Columba teaching the "tribes of Toi,"[245] "sew[ing] [the] word,"[246] and guarding "a hundred churches."[247] All of which suggest the saint educated, proselyted, and ministered to the people of his adopted land. Forgaill also highlights Columba's ascetic practices such as prostrating many times daily,[248] eating meager meals,[249] and abstaining from ale and meat.[250] In fact, he attributes the saint's death to abstemiousness, implying that asceticism contributed to Columba's passing.

Intriguingly, Forgaill memorializes Columba's "martyrdom" in the title of the poem's fourth chapter.[251] By most accounts, Columba died of natural causes at the ripe old age of 70, which seems at odds with him being characterized as a martyr (someone killed for their beliefs).[252] Perhaps Forgaill saw Columba as a "white martyr"[253] in light of his lifelong suffering

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[241] "Choluim Chilli" is an ancient Irish name for Columba.
[242] "[…] mournful, melancholy, plaintive." *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "elegiac, adj. & n.", July 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1496926910.
[243] *Fili* were one of six main social classes of Irish society identified in Brehon law. Monks were seen to replace pre-Christian bards [files] considered "the historians, genealogists, teachers, and literary men of the nation" who "[took] learning and teaching under their special care." Laurence Ginnell, *The Brehon Laws: A Legal Handbook*, third edition (Glasgow: P.J. O'Callaghan, 1917), 45, HeinOnline.
[244] "This was the culmination of a controversy between the high king and the poets of Ireland whom he wanted to banish abroad because they were charging too much for their praise poetry. But Colmcille won the day by hammering out a compromise whereby the king allowed the poets to remain in the country, and the poets agreed to accept smaller fees." Peter Harbison, "Durrow Monasterium Nobile," *Irish Arts Review* (2002-) 22, no. 2 (Summer, 2005): 104, JSTOR.
[245] Dallán Forgaill, *The Amra Choluim Chilli [Elegy of Columb Cille]*, trans. J. O'Beirne Crowe (Dublin: McGlashan and Gill, 1871), 29. The "Toi" is commonly considered the Tay River in modern times.
[246] Forgaill, *The Amra Choluim Chilli*, trans. O'Beirne Crowe, 41.
[247] Forgaill, *The Amra Choluim Chilli*, trans. O'Beirne Crowe, 55.
[248] Forgaill, *The Amra Choluim Chilli*, trans. O'Beirne Crowe, 31.
[249] Forgaill, *The Amra Choluim Chilli*, trans. O'Beirne Crowe, 33.
[250] Forgaill, *The Amra Choluim Chilli*, trans. O'Beirne Crowe, 49.
[251] Forgaill, *The Amra Choluim Chilli*, trans. O'Beirne Crowe, 37.
[252] *Oxford English Dictionary,* s.v. "martyr (n.), sense 1.a," September 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1867378592.

doing battle against the "Devil and [the] world."[254] Within this context Forgaill may have considered Columba a spiritual warrior who sacrificed his life in the fight of good versus evil. Then again, maybe Forgaill understood Columba to be a "martyr" in the sense of a "witness" who testifies to the faith (considering the etymology of the term).

Forgaill claims that Columba quit Ireland for Scotland to secure his salvation and avoid going to hell.[255] On the one hand this could indicate a possible penitential impetus behind the saint's decision to undertake *peregrinatio*, e.g., perhaps an act of contrition for the illegal copying of Finnian's psalter. On the other hand, Columba could have been prompted by a desire to intensify his asceticism (and quell sinful proclivities) as well as to facilitate divine encounters. The poet describes Columba as being "skillful of conversations of angels" and made privy to the "science of deity."[256] This points to the idea that Columba was aiming for spiritual growth. Forgaill does not give any indication that Columba undertook *peregrinatio* either in imitation of a holy figure or as a means of simulating humanity's earthly condition vis a vis our heavenly home.

3.1.2 Hymns, Poems, and Prayers

Hymns, poems, and prayers attributed to Columba and Columbanus mainly praise God for having created the universe and acting compassionately towards undeserving humankind. Additionally, they decry the work of the devil and urge people to reject sin so that they may enjoy a divine compensation: see for example *Altus Prosator*[257] by Columba and the *Boat Song*[258] by Columbanus. These works do not delve directly into theological concepts that might have prompted *peregrinatio*. However, they do reinforce the idea that the saints strove for a spiritual reward to be granted by God (in their heavenly home not their earthly home): a condition the *peregrini* might have been modeling in their self-exile. In one prayer attributed to Columba entitled *The Guardian Angel [An t-Aingheal Diona]*, [259] he says:

> I am tired and I a stranger,
>
> Lead thou me to the land of angels,
>
> For me it is time to go home
>
> To the court of Christ, to the peace of heaven.

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[253] The early Irish Christians called those who died for their faith "red martyrs" while those who withdrew form the world for their faith were called "white martyrs." Jesse Harrington, "A Land without Martyrs," *History Ireland* 28, no. 3 (May/June 2020): 15, JSTOR.

[254] Forgaill, *The Amra Choluim Chilli*, trans. O'Beirne Crowe, 37.

[255] Forgaill, *The Amra Choluim Chilli*, trans. O'Beirne Crowe, 61. "26. On Hell in Alba a Terror. 1. For Terror of Hell he went to Alba." Alba is a historical name for a kingdom in Scotland.

[256] Forgaill, *The Amra Choluim Chilli*, trans. O'Beirne Crowe, 39.

[257] Columba, "The Hymn Altus Prosator," in *The Irish Liber Hymnorum vol. 1*, vol. XIII of *Henry Bradshaw Society*, eds. John Henry Bernard and Robert Atkinson, trans. Robert Atkinson (London: Harrison and Sons, 1898), 66-83, https://archive.org/details/IrishLiberHymnorumV1/.

[258] "St. Columban: Boat Song c. 600," *Medieval Sourcebook*, *Internet History Sourcebooks Project*, last modified October 6, 2023, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/columban1.asp.

[259] Columba, "Invocations: The Guardian Angel," in *Carmina Gadelica: Hymns and Incantations*, vol. 1, trans. Alexander Carmichael (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1900), 49, https://archive.org/details/carminagadelica00carmgoog/.

Likewise, in a hymn entitled *A Poem on the World's Mutability* [*De Vanitate et Miseria Vitae Mortalis*],[260] Columbanus declares:

> Having passed through death,
>
> the joyful will see their joyful King:
>
> they will reign with their Ruler;
>
> they will rejoice with Him as He rejoices.

3.2 Pastoral Works

3.2.1 Columbanus' Sermons

Turning now to the thirteen sermons penned by Columbanus, we might well ask what, if anything, can be gleaned about his reasons for religious self-exile from these lectures. As mentioned previously the saint characterizes earthly life as a sojourn away from God[261] and he beseeches his audience to turn away from the temporal to focus on the spiritual.[262] The notion that humankind needs to be reconciled with their divine creator is reiterated throughout all his lectures.

The sermons appear to form a series as later ones refer to subjects addressed in previous ones with the overarching theme being human salvation. Columbanus starts by saying that redemption begins with a belief in the Trinity.[263] He describes God as "immutable"[264] and "unknowable by human senses,"[265] adding that he may "be partly seen by the pure heart."[266] Hence the saint's conclusion that "knowledge of the Godhead" requires the "perfection of a good life."[267]

Over the remaining twelve sermons Columbanus explains how one might achieve a "pure heart" and become worthy of salvation. These include adopting humility,[268] renouncing carnal lusts,[269] practicing self-discipline,[270] and being remorseful.[271] Mortal life, he says, is of a fleeting nature whereas eternal life in a heavenly homeland awaits those who prepare adequately for final judgement. Essentially, Columbanus says we need to drink from "the Fountain of life,"[272] that is Jesus himself, so that we may be edified by the "Word of God,"[273] and be redeemed. Given the central theme of his sermons it is unsurprising that Columbanus was a great proponent of ascetic

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[260] Aka "On the Vanity and Misery of Mortal Life." "Columbanus, A Poem on the World's Mutability," trans. Michael J. B. Allen and Daniel G. Calder, accessed October 30, 2023, https://drc.usask.ca/projects/seafarer/original/columbanus2.htm.
[261] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, IV.1.
[262] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, VIII.2.
[263] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, I.2.
[264] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, I.3.
[265] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, I.5.
[266] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, I.5.
[267] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, I.5.
[268] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, II.2.
[269] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, III.3.
[270] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, X.3.
[271] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, XII.
[272] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, XIII.1.
[273] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, XIII.2.

practices for spiritual development. Likewise, we can see how he might have modeled the transitoriness of mortal life (in comparison to eternal life) through religious self-exile.

3.3 Instructional Works

3.3.1 Penitential Books

Penitentials identify the appropriate actions a penitent must take to reconcile with God after having offended him in specific ways, e.g., committed a particular sin. These remedial actions are typically handed down by the priest to whom the offender has confessed their wrong doings, expressed remorse for having transgressed, and indicated a desire to atone. The penance varies according to the offense with the aim of restoring spiritual health in the same way different cures are used to treat diverse physical ailments.[274] Of greatest relevance to this thesis is the habit of prescribing exile as penance for more serious sins. This is the case in the penitential of Finnian and the penitential of Columbanus.

3.3.1.1 Finnian's Penitential (ca.525-550 CE)

The Oxford Dictionary of Saints describes the penitential of Finnian as mostly original but also based on "Welsh and Irish sources," as well as "Jerome and Cassian."[275] While there is some debate about who exactly penned the penitential of Finnian – either Finnian of Clonard (d.549 CE) or Finnian of Moville (495-579 CE) – many scholars appear to lean towards the former rather than the latter.[276] Assuming the author is Finnian of Clonard, the Welsh influence makes sense because after establishing monastic foundations in Ireland, he traveled to Wales to study the "traditional monasticism of David, Cadoc, and Gildas."[277] Since Finnian of Clonard was Columba's instructor and his influence is detected in Columbanus' penitential,[278] I was prompted to study the works of other religious thinkers known to have influenced Finnian himself, e.g., Jerome, Cassian, and Gildas (discussed in subsequent sections).

As is the case with most penitentials, Finnian ordains that the type of penance accord with the offense committed such that penitents "cure and correct contraries with contraries," replacing vices with heavenly virtues.[279] For example, he obliges the greedy to give alms, the wrathful to adopt patience, and detractors to adopt "restraint of heart and tongue."[280] Finnian also makes a distinction between clerics and laity, assigning a lighter penalty to a layman claiming that "he is a man of this world and his guilt is lighter in this world and his reward less in the world to come."[281]

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[274] "[…] spiritual doctors treat with diverse kinds of cures the wounds of souls, their sicknesses, offences, griefs, distresses, and pains." Columbanus, "3. Penitential," trans. Walker, 173.
[275] David Farmer, "Finnian (Vennianus, Vinniaus)," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford University Press, 2011), DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780199596607.001.0001.
[276] McNeill and Gamer claim Schmitz erroneously favours Finnian of Moville as the author. Finnian of Clonard, "The Penitential [] (ca. 525-50)," in *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, trans. John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 87, note 5, https://archive.org/details/MedievalHandbooksOfPenance/.
[277] Farmer, "Finnian (Vennianus, Vinniaus)."
[278] Farmer, "Finnian (Vennianus, Vinniaus)."
[279] Finnian, "The Penitential," trans. McNeill and Gamer, 92.
[280] Finnian, "The Penitential," trans. McNeill and Gamer, 92.
[281] Finnian, "The Penitential," trans. McNeill and Gamer, 88.

Most pertinent to this thesis, Finnian imposes exile for a murderous cleric who, after spending ten years in exile and obtaining the support of an abbot or priest, fails to "make satisfaction" to the family and friends of the slain man. In such a case, Finnian insists the offender "shall not be received back [in his own country] forever."[282] This appears to indicate restorative justice wherein the wrongdoer is given the opportunity to make amends for the harm done and the aggrieved parties then determine if restitution has been satisfactorily achieved. Although Columba might not have personally killed anyone in the battle of Cúl Dreimhne perhaps Finnian's advice for him to convert as many as had perished was meant to provide restitution to the Christian community and God himself.

3.3.1.2 Columbanus' Penitential

Like Finnian, Columbanus declares that the duration and the type of penance be in keeping with the seriousness of the transgression, stating "The diversity of offences makes a diversity of penances."[283] He too factors in the penitent's religious standing when determining the appropriate length of penance, assigning more severe penance to the clergy in comparison to the laity. For instance, after making restitution to the victim of a theft, a non-habitual pilfering clergyman must live on bread and water for a year,[284] whilst a non-habitual pilfering layman need only do the same for "a hundred and twenty days."[285]

Echoing Finnian, Columbanus assigns years-long exile for homicide. Clerics who commit murder for instance must exile for ten years while laypersons who commit murder must exile for three years.[286] Likewise, Columbanus declares that a murderous cleric who has not sufficiently made restitution "to the relatives of the slain man," shall "never be restored to his native land, but like Cain [shall] be a wanderer and fugitive upon the earth."[287]

3.3.2 Monastic Orders

3.3.2.1 Basil's Rule

Basil the Great (329-378 CE), a Doctor of the Church and one of the three so-called Cappadocian fathers,[288] came from a famously religious family counting many saints among his relatives as well as his friends. He too became a monk and lived some time as a hermit, but eventually Basil abandoned seclusion to battle the Arian heresy, was ordained bishop of Caesarea, and became a great proponent of cenobitic monasticism. A distinguished theologian, Basil penned doctrinal works, ascetic treatises, apologetics, and numerous letters revealing his theological stance.

There is evidence that both Columba and Columbanus had access to the writings of Basil the Great. According to the poet Forgaill, Columba "expounded Basil's judgements."[289] In the

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[282] Finnian, "The Penitential," trans. McNeill and Gamer, 91.
[283] Columbanus, "3. Penitential," trans. Walker, 173.
[284] Columbanus, "3. Penitential," trans. Walker, 175.
[285] Columbanus, "3. Penitential," trans. Walker, 177.
[286] Columbanus, "3. Penitential," trans. Walker, 173 and 175.
[287] In the Hebrew bible, Adam and Eve's eldest son Cain kills his brother Abel and God subsequently curses and banishes him (Gen 4:1–16). Columbanus, "3. Penitential," trans. Walker, 173. See reference: (cf. *Paen. Venniani 23*).
[288] Along with Gregory of Nyssa (335-395 CE) and Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390 CE).
[289] Forgaill, *The Amra Choluim Chilli*, trans. O'Beirne Crowe, 39.

translators notes about this phrase O'Beirne Crowe explains that Baithéne quoted Basil at the convention of Druim Cetta to "subdue Colum Chille's [aka Columba's] pride."[290] This could have occurred when Columba defended the *fìli* at the assembly after which Forgaill started to wax lyrical about the saint. Columba is said to have stopped the poet from continuing his tribute, perhaps after Baithéne's reminder, knowing that vainglory was unbecoming of a religious leader. This aligns with Basil's contention that "those who would lead the true life according to the Gospel of Christ" must practice humility in the same way as Jesus did,[291] avoiding pride so that they not "fall into the condemnation of the devil."[292]

The letters of Columbanus make it clear that he too was familiar with Basil. In one epistle the saint cites Basil when describing the fourth quality one must acquire to be admitted into heaven, namely, "not retaining anger in your heart."[293] He also refers to Basil in his monastic rules when obliging monks to remain obedient[294] and to abstain from owning personal property.[295] According to Basil, "obedience consists in the submission of our own wishes and desires to the will of God, after the pattern of Jesus Christ."[296] As for earthly goods, Basil exalts the monastic community which he likens to the saints described in Acts 2:44, saying "not one of [the brethren] said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had all things common."[297]

In his monastic rule, Basil champions the notions of imitation, ministration, education, asceticism, and proselytization. He proclaims, for example, "[t]he great advantage of the ascetic life of renunciation is that it makes possible the uninterrupted practice of the presence of God and of the imitation of Christ."[298] This shows Basil upholding the ideas of both imitation and asceticism. As for ministering to the faithful, E. F. Morison says that likely "Basil intended his superiors to be in priests [sic] orders, for he ordained his brother Peter and set him over the community by the [river] Iris."[299]

With regards to religious education, Basil provides detailed instructions for "the training and teaching of the young," insisting their curriculum include "the words of Scripture, […] true stories of marvellous deeds, and […] the wise sayings of the Book of Proverbs."[300] He further decries those, who under the pretense of ascetism, forsake their children and fail to "train them in the fitting habits of piety."[301] Finally, Basil implicitly endorses the idea of proselytization, urging

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[290] Forgaill, *The Amra Choluim Chilli*, trans. O'Beirne Crowe, 39 and 41.
[291] E. F. Morison, *St. Basil and his Rule: A Study in Early Monasticism*, (London: H. Frowde, 1912), 28, https://archive.org/details/basilsrule00moriuoft/page/n89/mode/2up.
[292] Morison, *St. Basil and his Rule*, 54.
[293] Columbanus, *Letters []*, trans. G. S. M Walker (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), II.7, https://research.ucc.ie/celt/document/T201054/. See references "(Hieron. In Esaiam 8. 18, In Matt. 18. 3; Basil. (transl. Rufin.) Interrog. 161 et 163)."
[294] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 1. Of Obedience," in *Rules*, trans. Walker (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), https://research.ucc.ie/celt/document/T201052/.
[295] Columbanus, "2. Communal Rule – 2. That the lamp should be blessed […]," in *Rules*, trans. G. S. M. Walker (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), https://research.ucc.ie/celt/document/T201052/.
[296] Morison, *St. Basil and his Rule*, 49-50.
[297] Morison, *St. Basil and his Rule*, 44.
[298] Morison, *St. Basil and his Rule*, 27.
[299] Morison, *St. Basil and his Rule*, 76, note 4. The Iris River is in the Annesi region (Ulukoy of modern-day Turkey).
[300] Morison, *St. Basil and his Rule*, 103.
[301] Canon 15 of the decrees of the Synod of Gangra (*ca*. 340 CE). Morison, *St. Basil and his Rule*, 148.

those who have adopted "the life of piety" to "make disciples of all the nations teaching them not to observe some things, and neglect others, but to observe all things whatsoever" that God commands.[302] He further asks for prayers so that he "may blamelessly dispense the word, and that the teaching may bear fruit,"[303] which I take to mean leads to a conversion.

3.3.2.3 Columba's Rule

Although Columba is not known to have written down a monastic rule, there is, according to the Medieval Sourcebook, Fordham University, a later work that seems to have been inspired by the saint. The introductory text on the website *Internet History Sourcebooks* contends the rule "reflects the spirit of early Irish monasticism."[304] This appears to be accurate since a perusal of the twenty-eight tenets show it promotes renunciation, obedience, asceticism, discernment, and commands monks to constantly work, pray and read. It also encourages them to prepare for "red martyrdom" and/or "white martyrdom:" to either die, or to adopt ascetic practices, for the faith.[305] Some scholars consider the practice of *peregrinatio* to be a form of white martyrdom.[306] This may be what Forgaill was alluding to in his poem about Columba (see Elegiac Verse above).

3.3.2.4 Columbanus' Rules

In his *Monks' Rules*, Columbanus provides instructions for the spiritual edification of monks. The rule obliges junior members of the monastic community to obey the directives of senior members[307] in the way that they would obey the will of God.[308] It requires all members to speak with care and prudence (though primarily to remain silent).[309] Furthermore, the monks are instructed to practice moderation in eating and drinking,[310] accumulate nothing but the necessities of life,[311] avoid vanity,[312] be chaste in body and mind,[313] and strive for discernment.[314] Columbanus describes those without discernment as intemperate, unable to distinguish between "good and evil," and ill-equipped to differentiate between "the moderate and complete."[315] He urges monks to pray continuously for God's help in attaining discernment, and in particular, to vanquish pride in times of prosperity and despair when adversity strikes.[316]

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[302] Morison, *St. Basil and his Rule*, 139.
[303] Morison, *St. Basil and his Rule*, 144.
[304] "Rule of St. Columba 6th Century," Fordham University, last modified October 6, 2023, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/columba-rule.asp.
[305] Fordham University, "Rule of St. Columba 6th Century.
[306] Westley Follett, "An Allegorical Interpretation of the Monastic Voyage Narratives in Adomnán's '*Vita Columbae*,'" *Eolas: The Journal of the American Society of Irish Medieval Studies* 2 (2007): 13, note 15, JSTOR.
[307] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 1. Of Obedience," trans. Walker.
[308] Namely, "not to disagree in mind, not to speak as one pleases with the tongue, not to go anywhere with complete freedom." Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 9. Of Mortification," trans. Walker.
[309] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rules – 2. Of Silence," trans. Walker.
[310] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 3. Of Food and Drink," trans. Walker.
[311] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 4. Of Poverty and of Overcoming Greed," trans. Walker.
[312] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 5. Of Overcoming Vanity," trans. Walker.
[313] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 6. Of Chastity," trans. Walker.
[314] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 8. Of Discretion," trans. Walker.
[315] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 8. Of Discretion," trans. Walker.
[316] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 8. Of Discretion," trans. Walker.

Columbanus' *Communal Rule* regulates the monks' behaviour, yet further, describing unacceptable conduct and prescribing penitential actions to correct offenders' comportment. Acts of atonement include physical blows, dietary restrictions, prostrations, impositions of silence, isolation, chanting psalms, and praying. The saint also focusses on how rituals are to be performed in public and during common worship, for example: properly greeting others while going about daily tasks; as well as maintaining decorum during meals and offices.

While the rules of Columbanus reveal nothing explicit about his views on *peregrinatio*, they do show him upholding some of the tenets that potentially motivated the practice: namely, imitation, ministering, penance, asceticism, and spiritual growth. For example, the saint exhorts monks to take up the cross in imitation of Christ.[317] He also shows support for ministry in asking the brethren to intercede for "priests and the other orders of the holy flock that are consecrate to God."[318] The saint further displays a strong ascetic inclination when he obliges monks to eat and drink only what is necessary to "maintain life,"[319] "rise while [their] sleep is not yet finished,"[320] and "be satisfied with the small possessions of utter need."[321] According to the saint, "a temperance that punishes the flesh" provides "the possibility of spiritual progress."[322] Finally, Columbanus emphasizes the importance of penance when he ordains confession of, and penance for, "all failings, 'not only mortal ones, but also of minor omissions'" before eating meat or going to bed,[323] arguing that "he who omits small things gradually declines."[324]

3.3.3 Ascetic Treatises

3.3.3.1 Cassian's Conferences and Institutes

John Cassian, that renowned proponent of both Eastern and Western Monasticism, is held to have inspired Finnian of Clonard[325] – Columba's religious instructor – and his influence is apparent in Columbanus' penitential.[326] Cassian produced two ascetic treatises that profoundly impacted the monastic movement: the *Conlationes XXIIII* (Conferences of the Egyptian Monks) and the *Institutis Coenobiorum* (Institutes of the Monastic Life).[327] The Conferences recount conversations with Egyptian monks regarding spirituality and asceticism whilst the Institutes "describe[ ] the eastern pattern of monastic life and the virtues required of monks."[328]

In an article examining Cassian's works in early British and Irish writings, Stephen Lake provides several examples to support his argument that the *peregrini* had knowledge of Cassian's

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[317] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 1. Of Obedience," trans. Walker.
[318] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 7. Of the Choir Office," trans. Walker.
[319] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 3. Of Food and Drink," trans. Walker.
[320] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 10. Of the Monk's Perfection," trans. Walker.
[321] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 4. Of Poverty and of Overcoming Greed," trans. Walker.
[322] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule – 3. Of Food and Drink," trans. Walker.
[323] Columbanus, "2. Communal Rule – 1. Of confession […]," trans. Walker.
[324] Columbanus, "2. Communal Rule," trans. Walker, 147.
[325] Farmer, "Finnian (Vennianus, Vinniaus)."
[326] Farmer, "Finnian (Vennianus, Vinniaus)."
[327] "Cassian's primary mission in writing his *Institutes* and *Conferences* was to establish the ideal foundation, modeled in Egypt, for the fledgling monasticism in southern Gaul." Michael G. Tsichlis, "Mining for a Nicene Christian Ethical Praxis in Gregory of Nyssa's Life of Moses and John Cassian's Conferences," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (2014): 272, https://search-ebscohost-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001995766&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
[328] https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/saints/saints-stories-for-all-ages/saint-john-cassian/.

writings.[329] He alludes to the *Elegiac Poem for Columba*, where Forgaill says Columba loved to read the books of the Law as well as those of Cassian.[330] Likewise, Lake explains that in the hymn attributed to Columba entitled *Altus Prosator* the description of the fall of Satan bears a striking resemblance to Cassian's *Conlatio 8* [Conference 8] in content and verbiage.[331]

Lake also points out Cassian-inspired notions in Columbanus's Monk's Rules. These include an analogous concept of discernment, a comparable list of vices, and a similar view that asceticism should be moderate.[332] Also noteworthy is Columbanus's letter to Pope Boniface IV in which the saint uses the same turn of phrase as Cassian when describing "[his] mind's frail bark" in reference to his limited understanding.[333]

A close reading of Cassian's treatises suggests that he adheres to all the tenets behind the nine proposed theological motivations behind *peregrinatio*: imitating the desert fathers in their ascetic practices whilst collecting their teachings on spiritual advancement; recognizing the ministry of outstanding presbyters; insisting that penance entail acts of contrition; suggesting that proselytizers can atone for their own sins in obtaining converts; recounting angelic interactions; and positioning himself as an earthly sojourner on his way to a heavenly abode. Specific examples from his works in support of these religious impetuses are presented in Chapter 4.

3.4 Doctrinal Works

3.4.1 Letters

3.4.1.1 Ignatius' Epistles

Ignatius (35-107 CE), the bishop of Antioch in Syria, was an apostolic Father of the Church who was condemned to death for being a Christian and sent to Rome for execution during the reign of emperor Trajan (r.98-117 CE). En route to the city, Ignatius wrote seven letters to various churches in modern-day Turkey, Greece, and Italy, as well as to Saint Polycarp (69-155 CE), the Greek bishop of Smyrna. He encouraged the fledgling Christian communities to remain united in their celebration of the Eucharist and to accept guidance from their local bishops.[334]

Translator J. H. Srawley explains that Ignatius was an "uncompromising champion of church order and ministry"[335] who endorsed the "threefold ministry of bishops, priests [presbyters], and deacons."[336] In a letter to the Magnesians, Ignatius acclaims their "godly bishop" Damas, the "worthy presbyters" Bassus and Apollonius, and his "fellow-servant, the deacon Zotion," whom the saint commends for being "subject unto the bishop as unto the grace

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[329] Stephen Lake, "Usage of the writings of John Cassian in some early British and Irish writings," *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 7 (2011): 95-121, https://link-gale-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/apps/doc/A275850432/LitRC?u=concordi_main&sid=bookmark-LitRC&xid=61e26b5b.
[330] Lake, "Usage of the writings of John Cassian," note 59.
[331] Lake, "Usage of the writings of John Cassian," note 61.
[332] Lake, "Usage of the writings of John Cassian," notes 12-13, 15-19, 27-28, and 32.
[333] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, V.7.
[334] David Farmer, "Ignatius of Antioch," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford University Press, 2011), DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780199596607.001.0001.
[335] J. H. Srawley, "Introduction," in *The Epistles of St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch*, trans. J. H. Srawley, *Translations of Greek Literature, Series I, Greek Texts*. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; New York: The MacMillan Company, 1919), 25, https://archive.org/details/epistlesstignat00ignagoog/mode/2up.
[336] Srawley, "Introduction," 34.

of God, and to the presbytery as unto the law of Jesus Christ."[337] According to Srawley, in addition to "external business, such as the distribution of alms," the deacons were also "engaged in teaching" – a "higher aspect" of the office which he says Ignatius emphasizes.[338]

In *De Excidio*, Gildas holds up Ignatius as an example of what priests should be: faithful unto death and humble enough to acknowledge "as he nears his noble end, [that]: 'I am but beginning[339] to be a disciple of Christ.'"[340] Gildas' sentiment leaves the reader with the impression that ministry is an honorable calling, whilst Ignatius' reflection points to the notion that spiritual growth is a never-ending quest.

In addition to ministry and spiritual growth, Ignatius also broaches the subject of imitation, conversion, and renunciation. These are demonstrated in passages from his letter to the Ephesians where he urges readers to imitate God[341] and the Lord [Jesus Christ],[342] to continuously pray for humankind to "attain unto God," and to focus on the divine over and above the temporal.[343] While Ignatius insists that conversion requires repentance the saint does not go into any more detail about penance or acts of contrition. Neither does he expound on ascetic practices aside from renouncing earthly goods.

As for divine encounters, Ignatius claims he is "able to understand heavenly things and the ordering of angels."[344] Srawley speculates this might have prompted the historian Socrates (ca. 440 CE) assertions that "Ignatius saw a vision of angels, praising the Holy Trinity in antiphonal hymns, and left the fashion of his vision as a custom to the Church at Antioch."[345] Finally, although in his letter to Polycarp, Ignatius says, "[t]he prize is incorruption and life eternal," he does not indicate whether or not this "life eternal" is to be lived in a heavenly abode.[346] Furthermore, he does not comment on whether our earthly existence is a sojourn away from that divine home, or not.

3.4.1.2 Basil's Epistles

In many of the 368 extant letters attributed to Basil,[347] the author shows concern for the spiritual well-being of individuals as well as for the Eastern church more generally. More specifically, he defends the Nicene faith against Arian heresy, urges unity between the Eastern and Western church, and sends words of encouragement to those who are suffering for the faith. J. P. Fedwick argues that "Basil, when fulfilling the episcopal office, excelled as shepherd,

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[337] Ignatius, *The Epistles of [], Bishop of Antioch,* trans. J. H. Srawley, *Translations of Greek Literature, Series I, Greek* Texts (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; New York: The MacMillan Company, 1919), 54, https://archive.org/details/epistlesstignat00ignagoog/mode/2up.
[338] The Epistle to the Trallians. Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 63, note 5.
[339] Ignatius describes himself as Jesus' neophyte devotee on two occasions: once in a letter to the Ephesians saying, "I am making a beginning of discipleship," (Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 40), and once in a letter to the Romans saying, "I am more truly learning discipleship," (Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 76).
[340] Gildas, "The Ruin of Britain [De Excidio Britanniae]," in *The ruin of Britain, Fragments from lost letters []*, trans. Hugh Williams (London: David Nutt, 1899), 189, https://archive.org/details/gildaedeexcidiob00gilduoft.
[341] Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 39.
[342] Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 45.
[343] "And for the rest of men pray unceasingly – for there is in them hope of repentance […]." "[…] love nothing pertaining to man's outward life, but God only." Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 45.
[344] The Epistle to the Trallians. Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 65.
[345] Srawley, "Introduction," 23.
[346] Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 104.
[347] There are some scholars who contend that only 366 letters can be attributed to Basil.

administrator, and teacher, and as the most coherent defender of the faith against the heresies which undermined the unity of the Church."[348]

The principles promoted by Basil in his letters that could support theological motivations behind *peregrinatio* include imitation, education, ministry, and asceticism. For instance, in a letter addressed to Amphilochius in the name of Heraclidas, he says "instruction how to lead the Christian life depends less on words, than on daily example,"[349] thus Basil advocates for imitation. In the same letter he endorses religious instruction, advising the recipient to leave his father and "[…] betake [himself] to a man who both knows much from the experience of others, as well as from his own wisdom, and can impart it to those who come to him."[350] Basil shows concern for ministry in a letter to the Italians and Gauls when he bemoans the state of the priesthood, claiming that "[c]lerical dignity is a thing of the past. There is a complete lack of men shepherding the Lord's flock with knowledge [of the true Apostolic faith]."[351] Finally, he demonstrates a propensity for asceticism, urging a disciple named Chilo not to abandon his place (presumably in the monastic community) and return to his family after having already "died to [his] kinsfolk according to the flesh."[352]

3.4.1.3 Columbanus' Epistles

Four of the extant eight letters attributed to Columbanus contain some reference to the notion of *peregrinatio*. In one letter, where he asks Pope Gregory (r.590-604 CE) to allow the Irish to continue calculating the Easter date differently than the Romans, Columbanus self-identifies as an unlearned person (a common practice for writers of antiquity), modestly referring to himself as a "*magis peregrino quam sciolo*"[353] ("a stranger rather than a savant"[354])." In further deference to the apostolic chair, Columbanus explains that he would have gone to Rome in person instead of sending a letter to plead his case had not "bodily weakness and the care of [his] fellow-pilgrims" kept him away.[355]

In another letter Columbanus petitions an unnamed group of ecclesiastics to allow him and his retinue to remain on the continent "*in has terras peregrinus processerim*"[356] ("[stating he has] entered these lands as a pilgrim"[357]) some twelve years prior "for the sake of Christ the

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[348] J. P. Fedwick, "Untitled [Editor's Preface]," in *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic: A Sixteen-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium* (2 volumes) (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1981), https://canadacommons.ca/artifacts/1875472/basil-of-caesarea-christian-humanist-ascetic/2624494/.
[349] Basil of Caesarea, "[]: Letters and Select Works," in vol. VIII of *Nicene, and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 2nd series, eds. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. Blomfield Jackson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1894), CL.4 (150.4), https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3202.htm.
[350] Basil, *[], The Letters, in The Loeb Classical Library [Greek Authors]*, eds. T. E. Page, E. Capps, and W. Rouse, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (London: W. Heinemann, 1926), CLI (151), https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.183483.
[351] Basil, *Letters*, trans. Jackson, XCII.2 (92.2).
[352] Basil, *Letters*, trans. Jackson, XLII.3 (42.3).
[353] Columbanus, *Epistulae*, ed. Walker, I.3.
[354] It is curious that Columbanus used the term "*peregrini*" as an antonym to the term "*sciolo*," e.g., a foreigner versus a scholar. Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, I.3.
[355] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, I.7.
[356] Columbanus, *Epistulae*, ed. Walker, II.5.
[357] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, II.5.

Saviour."[358] It is not clear why Columbanus and his retinue were being threatened by expulsion at that time and by whom. Perhaps his criticisms of the Frankish bishops were the cause. Nonetheless, he explains that "[their monastic] rules, [and] the commands of the Lord and the Apostles" brought them "from [their] native land," and they simply wish to maintain these *in situ* until their death.[359] Columbanus begs the addressees to consider "*istos veteranos pauperes et peregrinos senes*"[360] ("these poor veterans and aged pilgrims"[361]) in their decision saying, "it will be better for you to comfort them than to confound them"[362] – in other words, to leave them undisturbed rather than to expel them.

A third letter to the Pope, finds Columbanus requesting that the Irish be permitted to "maintain the rite of Easter as [they] have received it from generations gone before."[363] In it the saint argues that although he and his compatriots are in "*peregrinatione* [sic]"[364] they "are in [their] native land, […] dwelling in seclusion, harming no one, […] abid[ing] with the rules of [their] predecessors" and rejecting Frankish rules.[365] Columbanus points to Polycarp, Pope Anicetus, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 7:20), and the Council of Constantinople in support of the idea that Christian communities formed in pagan nations be permitted to live by their own laws, e.g., under the conditions they abided by upon conversion.

The fourth letter where Columbanus denotes his *peregrinus* condition is in correspondence with Pope Boniface III (r.607-607 CE). Using the conventions of the time, the saint exalts the pontiff in his greeting while portraying himself, the letter-writer, as inferior. He uses several comparisons to illustrate his lower station in relation to the Pope such as "the humblest to the highest, the least to the greatest, peasant to citizen, a prattler to one most eloquent, the last to the first, foreigner to native […]"[366] ("*humillimus celsissimo, minimus maximo, agrestis urbano, micrologus eloquentissimo, extremus primo, peregrinus indigenae* […]"[367]).

Columbanus maintains a self-deprecating tack throughout this latter letter. Identifying as a "*peregrinus Christianus*"[368] ("foreign Christian"[369]), he admits to daring to submit his "inelegant"[370] writings about the "evils of deadly schism [Arianism]" out of anguish for the church, not out of vainglory or impudence.[371] The saint entreats Pope Boniface IV to overlook "the character of the speaker, but [consider simply] the matter of [his] speech."[372] Finally, Columbanus reveals that it was the gentile monarch of the Lombards, King Agilulf (r.591-616

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[358] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, II.5. Assuming he arrived in Gaul in 590 CE, then twelve years later it would be 602 CE. He ends up staying in Frankish kingdom until 610 CE when King Theuderic expels him for good.
[359] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, II.5.
[360] Columbanus, *Epistulae*, ed. Walker, II.5.
[361] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, II.5.
[362] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, II.5.
[363] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, III.1.
[364] Columbanus, *Epistulae*, ed. Walker, III.1.
[365] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, III.1.
[366] Positioning foreigners as inferior to natives is a xenophobic slur in a modern-day context. Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, V (greeting).
[367] Columbanus, *Epistulae*, ed. Walker, V (greeting).
[368] Columbanus, *Epistulae*, ed. Walker, V.1.
[369] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, V.1.
[370] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, V.13.
[371] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, V.1.
[372] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, V.1.

CE), that asked him, "a dull Scots pilgrim"[373] ("*peregrinum […] Scotum hebetem*"[374]), to pen this epistle. It is clear from his language that Columbanus self-identifies as a *peregrinus* throughout his stay on the continent. Unfortunately, he gives no indication as to what prompted him to adopt such a lifestyle in the first place.

3.4.1.3 Jerome's Epistles

Jerome (347-420 CE), aka Eusebius Hieronymus Sophronius, was a "monk and Doctor of the Church" from eastern Europe.[375] He is held to have influenced Columba's religious instructor Finnian of Clonard[376] and Columbanus references Jerome's letters in his Monk's Rule[377] and Communal Rule.[378] Jerome was born into a prosperous Christian family, studied in Rome as a youth, and was baptized there as a young adult. He then visited various religious figures around the Mediterranean Sea, going as far as Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. Jerome developed an affinity for monasticism, lived in the Syrian desert as a hermit for two years, and learned Hebrew and Greek to advance his scriptural studies. Best known for translating the bible into Latin – the so-called Vulgate[379] – he also wrote numerous commentaries on scripture as well as many letters containing biblical exegesis.

Upon returning to Rome after his travels, Jerome stirred controversy with his emphasis on asceticism, derision of lax religious figures, and his Gospel corrections.[380] He was also accused of targeting wealthy Roman noblewomen for ignoble purposes while providing them religious instruction and encouraging them to undertake pilgrimage to the Holy Land.[381] He left Rome in 385 CE accompanied by Saint Paula, visited holy sites in Palestine as well as monastic centers in Egypt, and finally settled in Bethlehem. This is where Paula ultimately founded a men's monastery, a women's convent, and a pilgrim's hostel, and where Jerome spent his last years.

In Jerome's account of Paula's pilgrimage to the Holy Land, author Giselle Bader explains how the theologian appears conflicted about the practice.[382] On the one hand he supports pilgrimage for the virtuous like Paula. On the other hand he opposes the practice for the immoral and he worries that it could "foster the movement of heresies" and devolve into a "touristic, rather than spiritual practice."[383] Jerome characterizes the honorable as those who behave

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[373] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, V.13.
[374] Columbanus, *Epistulae*, ed. Walker, V.13.
[375] David Farmer, "Jerome (Hieronymus)," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford University Press, 2011), DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780199596607.001.0001.
[376] Farmer, "Finnian (Vennianus, Vinniaus)."
[377] Columbanus, "1. Monks' Rule," trans. Walker. Twice in section three about food and drink, once in section six about chastity, and once in section ten about a monk's perfection.
[378] Columbanus, "2. Communal Rule – 3. Of him who has lost anything […]," trans. Walker, 147. Once in the section about prostrating upon leaving/entering the house.
[379] Which Finnian of Moville purportedly possessed. Menzies, *Saint Columba of Iona*, 30, note 1.
[380] *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "St. Jerome," accessed October 25, 2023, https://academic-eb-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/levels/collegiate/article/St-Jerome/43550.
[381] Andrew Cain, "4 – Expulsion from Rome," in *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2009), 115-24, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199563555.003.0005.
[382] "Jerome did not wish to encourage the practice, but proposed that if one did embark on pilgrimage, encounters with the sacred were not attainable unless the pilgrim first possessed the ideal ascetic character and motivations." Giselle Bader, "Paula and Jerome: Towards a Theology of Late Antique Pilgrimage," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 18, no. 4 (2018), 344, https://doi.org/10.1080/1474225X.2018.1535869.
[383] Bader, "Paula and Jerome," 344.

chastely, humbly, and are guided by scripture, e.g., Paula.[384] According to Jerome, only the "ethically and morally worthy" could hope to access "the holiness of a [sacred place]," gain a greater comprehension of scripture, undergo mystical experiences, and ultimately deepen their faith.[385]

Another one of Jerome's acolytes, the Roman noblewoman Fabiola, undertook a pilgrimage in 394 CE to the Holy Land under his spiritual direction.[386] The saint claims that she successfully achieved her "final destination" by following his advice, more or less implying that eternal salvation could be had by those who accepted his exegesis.[387] In his interpretation of Numbers 33, Jerome views the Israelites' journey from Egypt to the Promised Land as "an allegory for the Christian's pilgrimage from earth to heaven."[388] This is a theme echoed in the hagiographies of both Columba and Columbanus. In Adomnán's narrative about the passing of the monk from Briton, his soul is seen travelling to its heavenly home by Columba. Likewise, Jonas describes Columbanus praying on his deathbed that God allow him to leave the temporal realm for his heavenly home.

While the pilgrimages of Jerome, Paula, and Fabiola align more with the modern understanding of the practice – journeying to sacred destinations – it is possible that the late sixth/early seventh century Irish *peregrini* took some inspiration from this fourth century predecessor.

3.4.2 Biblical Exegesis

3.4.2.1 Jerome's Commentary on Zechariah

Though Jerome's commentary on the Old Testament Book of Zechariah is of particular interest to this thesis, it is unclear if the Irish *peregrini* had access to this work (perhaps a topic for future study). In it he uses *peregrinus* and *peregrini* to designate stranger(s) and foreigner(s) in both philosophical and religious terms. Firstly, Jerome echoes Paul's sentiments in Eph 4:25 urging readers to recognize that all humans "are generated from one parent" and therefore we should speak the truth to our neighbor as if they were "our near relative" and not "foreigners and strangers."[389] Secondly, he draws attention to Zechariah's likening of our earthly life to a journey – "*peregrinationis* [sic]"[390] – towards an eternity residing in a "firm and stable residence" that is the "house of God."[391] With these sentiments, Jerome implies that all humankind hails from God the father from whom we are temporarily separated during our time on earth.

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[384] "Paula epitomised Jerome's ideal ascetic female who was chaste, embraced a life of poverty and shared with Jerome a rigorous love of theological scholarship." Bader, "Paula and Jerome," 351.
[385] Bader, "Paula and Jerome," 347, 349, and 351.
[386] Andrew Cain, "6 – The Exegetical Letters," in *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2009), 174, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199563555.003.0007.
[387] Cain, *Exegetical Letters*, 178.
[388] Cain, *Exegetical Letters*, 176.
[389] Jerome, *Commentary on Zechariah*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck, in Vol. 2 of *Commentaries on the Twelve Prophets*, *Ancient Christian Texts* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2021), 53, eBook.
[390] Sophronius Hieronymus, "In Zechariam [Latin]," in *Opera: Commentarii in prophetas Naum, Abacuc, Sophoniam, Aggaeum, Zachariam et Malachiam* (Brepols, 1970), Liber 2, Caput 9.
[391] In contrast to the impermanent tents and tabernacles that the Israelites constructed during their flight from Egypt. Jerome, *Commentary on Zechariah*, 111.

3.4.3 Polemic

3.4.3.1 Gildas' *De Excidio*

Born in Scotland but recognized for his significant place in Welsh monasticism, Gildas (500-570 CE) mentored celebrated Irish monks like Finnian of Clonard, lived as a hermit, and went to Brittany where he founded a monastery and spent the last years of his life.[392] He is perhaps best known for writing a scathing indictment of post-Roman British leadership in a work called *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae* (On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain). In this polemic Gildas attributes the successful Anglo-Saxon invasion of the region to the declining morality of Briton secular and religious elites.

Historian Hugh Williams notes that the Irish respected Gildas' opinion on religious matters. Columbanus' consultation of Gildas about monks quitting their monastery for a solitary life as a hermit is a case in point. In a letter to St. Gregory the Great, ca.595 CE, Columbanus complains of this trend, saying "inflamed by the desire for a more perfect life, […] and against their abbot's will, [they] flee to the deserts."[393] Gildas shows concern about the movement in response to Columbanus' letter complaining that "[some] find the desert a place for higher perfection, while others give way to laxity of discipline."[394] The Irish monk explains that his countryman Finnian asked the same question of Gildas who gave a "most polished reply,"[395] though unfortunately we have no details of the latter's response. Williams notes that Gildas longed for the hermit's life himself,[396] but warned that it deprived the adherent of the common monastic life as well as the "benefits of ministry and sacraments" provided by the Church.[397]

Although Gildas says nothing about *peregrinatio* he does hold up some of the tenets that I propose inspired the practice, specific examples of which are found in Chapter 4.

3.5 Analysis of Primary Sources

The table in Figure 4 shows the results of my analysis of the primary sources identified in Figure 3. I used a word study technique which involved searching the Latin text files for any occurrences of the term "*pereg*" and subsequently searching the English text files for any occurrences of the terms "stranger," "foreigner," and "exile." I corroborated the locations of these terms in digitized copies of the Latin and English books. For the Irish and Greek originals, I only searched the English translations for occurrences of "*pereg,*" "stranger," "foreigner," and "exile." My objective in conducting this word study was to identify the context in which these terms were used, and to see if I could discern any theological motivations from their usage.

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[392] David Farmer, "Gildas," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford University Press, 2011), DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780199596607.001.0001.
[393] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, 1.6.
[394] Gildas, "The Ruin of Britain," trans. Williams, 161, note 1(I).
[395] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, 1.6.
[396] "He avers […] [there is] a small remnant, *hardly known by the Church*, whose life he not only praised, but thirsted, some day before he died, to share; these must have been the monks or, more strictly, the eremites." Gildas, "The Ruin of Britain," trans. Williams, 153.
[397] Gildas, "Appendix A: Fragments from Lost Letters," in *The ruin of Britain, Fragments from lost letters []*, trans. Hugh Williams (London: David Nutt, 1899), 260, note 2, https://archive.org/details/gildaedeexcidiob00gilduoft.

Key Primary Sources Interrogated				Tenets Identified									
Ref	Author	Literary Type	Title	Imitate	Minister	Educate	Asceticism	Penance	Proselytize	Spiritual Growth	Divine Encounter	Simulate
1	Adomnán	Hagiographical	*Vita Sancti Columbae (The Life of Saint Columba)*					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Athanasius	Hagiographical	*Vita S. Antoni [Life of St. Anthony]*				✓					
3	Augustine	Exegesis	*Tractates on the Gospel of John 11-27*	✓								
4	Basil the Great	Instructional	*Regulum Monachorum (Monks' Rule)*	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
5	Basil the Great	Correspondence	*Epistulae*	✓		✓	✓					
6	Bede	Historical	*Ecclesiastical History of the English People*						✓			
7	Cassian	Ascetic Treatise	*Conferences (Conlationes)*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Cassian	Ascetic Treatise	*Institutes*	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Columbanus	Instructional	*Monks' Rule, Communal Rule, Pentitential*	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		
10	Columbanus	Lectures	*Sermons (Instructiones)*				✓	✓				✓
11	Finnian of Clonard	Pentitental	*Penitential of Finnian (Paenitentiale Vinnianus)*					✓				
12	Forgaill, Dallán	Devotional	*Amra Choluim Chilli (Elegy of Colum Cille)*		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
13	Gildas	Polemic	*The Ruin of Britain (De Excidio Britanniae), Lost Letter*	✓	✓	✓	✓					
14	Ignatius of Antioch	Correspondence	*Epistles*	✓	✓		✓					✓
15	Jerome	Exegesis	*Commentary on Zechariah*									✓
16	Jerome	Correspondence	*Epistulae*				✓			✓	✓	✓
17	Jonas of Bobbio	Hagiographical	*Vita Sancti Columbani (The Life of Saint Columbanus)*	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	

Figure 4: Table Summarizing Analysis of Primary Sources

3.6 Theological Motivations Indicated in Modern Scholarship

The table in Figure 5 presents those academic works that substantiate the various theological motivations identified herein. I selected these pieces because they are relatively current, peer-reviewed, and readily available.

Key Contemporary Academic Works			Theological Motivations Indicated									
Ref	Author	Subject	Imitate	Minister	Educate	Asceticism	Penance	Proselytize	Spiritual Growth	Divine Encounter	Simulate
1	Bader Giselle	*Paula and Jerome (2018)*						✓			
2	Bekkhus, Eivor	*Sea narratives from early medieval Ireland (2019)*			✓						
3	Bitton-Ashkelony,	*Encountering the Sacred. The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity (2005)*						✓	✓		
4	Brodie, Thomas L.	*The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary*						✓			
5	Cain, Andrew	*The Letters of Jerome: Late Antiquity (2009)*			✓			✓			
6	Charles-Edwards,	*The Social Background to Irish Peregrinatio (1976)*			✓						
7	Cutrer, Meredith D.	*Early Irish Peregrinatio as Salvation History (2020)*						✓	✓	✓	
8	Decock, P. B.	*Discernment in Origen of Alexandria (2013)*						✓			
9	De Paor, Máire & Liam	*Early Christian Ireland (1961)*				✓					
10	De Wet, Chris	*Human Birth and Spiritual Rebirth, John Chrysostom (2017)*						✓			
11	Fort, Gavin	*Penitents & Their Proxies: Penance for Others in Early Medieval Europe (2017)*				✓					
12	Hayes-Healey, Stephanie	*Saint Patrick's Journey into the Desert: Confessio 16-28 as Ascetic Discourse (2005)*			✓						
13	Hughes, Kathleen	*The Changing Theory and Practice of Irish Pilgrimage (1960)*			✓						
14	Louth, Andrew	*Maximus' Spiritual Theology (1996)*						✓			
15	Maddrell, A. & R. Scriven	*Celtic pilgrimage, past and present (2016)*							✓		
16	McGrath, Paul	*Early Medieval Irish Monastic Communities (2017)*		✓							
17	Menzies, Lucy	*Saint Columba of Iona (1920)*		✓							
18	Munro, D.C.	*Preface to V. Columban (1895)*	✓	✓			✓				
19	Oancea, Constantin	*Imagery and Religious Conversion (2018)*					✓				
20	Ritari, Katja	*Holy Souls and a Holy Community: Adomnán's Vita Columbae (2004)*	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		
21	Seyfried, Seth	*"Introduction," in Medieval Sourcebook: Adamnan: Life of St. Columba*		✓		✓					
22	Sheehy, Maurice	*Early Medieval Irish Monasticism (1962)*		✓							
23	Srawley, J. H.	*"Introduction" Epistles of Ignatius*		✓	✓				✓		
24	Tsichlis, Michael G.	*Nicene Christian Ethical Praxis [...] in John Cassian's Conferences (2014)*						✓			

Figure 5: Secondary Sources

Chapter 4 – Theological Motivations Considered

In this chapter I present precedents from scripture and tradition in support of each possible theological motivation for *peregrinatio* identified herein. Included are examples from the Old Testament, New Testament, works by the *peregrini* and the Christian thinkers believed to have influenced the saints (as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3), as well as observations by modern scholars whose works are listed in Figure 5.

4.1 To Imitate

The call to imitate God, goodly people, and Jesus is unmistakable in scriptures and in the writings of early Christian theologians. One author in the Hebrew bible who chronicles the history of the Israelites – believed to be the prophet Ezra – encourages readers to "walk in the ways" of Kings David and Solomon (2 Chron 11:17). Additionally, the Israelites reject those who, like the sons of the judge Samuel, "do not follow in [the] ways" of their righteous father by taking bribes and perverting justice (1 Sam 8:3). In a similar fashion, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians encourages community members to imitate Jesus (1 Cor 11:1) while John urges followers to imitate good over evil (3 John 1:11). Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE), reiterates Paul's sentiment regarding the imitation of Jesus in his tractate on John wherein he says "Why are you proud, man? The Son of God came in [the form of] a man, and became humble; you are instructed to be humble, you are not instructed to become a brute animal instead of a man."[398]

In his letters to the Ephesians, Ignatius echoes Paul's words[399] in urging readers to "be imitators of the Lord" whilst also encouraging them to "suffer the […] wrong" they most surely will face for their religious beliefs.[400] Moreover, in a letter to the Philadelphians, he exalts the Bishop of Philadelphia, for "his unruffled and quiet spirit […] [and] godly forbearance,"[401] which Srawley notes was "inspired by a living God."[402] Finally, Ignatius' letter to the Romans asks followers not to intercede in his imminent martyrdom as he wishes to imitate Jesus to the end, saying, "suffer me to be an imitator of the passion of my God."[403]

Cassian advises those who "want to imitate the apostles […] not to live according to [their] own prescriptions, but to follow their example."[404] He ostensibly imitates the Egyptian monks' "severe life" in travelling across the desert to interview these religious heroes.[405] Meanwhile, Gildas berates those who fail to imitate the apostles, when – after leading wicked lives – they manage to attain the highest ecclesiastical ranks by force or through wealth.[406] Likewise, Gildas

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[398] Augustine, "Tractate 25 on John 6:15-40," in *St. Augustine Tractates on the Gospel of John 11-27*, vol. 79 of *The Fathers of the Church*, trans. John W. Rettig (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 254.
[399] Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Eph 5:1 – "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."
[400] Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 45.
[401] Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 82.
[402] Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 82, note 6.
[403] Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 77.
[404] Cassian, *Institutes I-XII*, trans. C.S. Gibson, vol. 11 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1894), VII.XVIII, https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3507.htm.
[405] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 3.II.
[406] Gildas, "The Ruin of Britain," trans. Williams, 169.

criticizes would-be religious leaders who imitate neither "Joshua, son of Nun, in moral understanding,"[407] nor "him who is the victorious example of goodness and humility."[408]

As mentioned previously, Columba and Columbanus appear to have imitated Jesus and his twelve disciples – answering the call to quit house, family, and fields for the sake of Christ (Matt 10:29) – when they headed to Scotland and Gaul respectively, each of them accompanied by twelve monks.[409] Moreover, Columbanus' hagiographer Jonas explains that, "After spending many years in the monastery, Columbanus began to long for ascetic exile mindful of the Lord's command to Abraham" to leave his native land and travel to another location to be revealed by God (Gen 12:1).[410] With this statement Jonas unambiguously indicates that imitation of a celebrated religious figure was a key impetus for Columbanus to undertake religious self-exile.

4.2 To Minister

Another reason Columba and Columbanus might have ventured forth as *peregrini* was to attend to the spiritual needs of Christian communities outside their homeland. The Old Testament depicts God commissioning Aaron and his descendants – from the tribe of Levi – to fulfill this role for the Israelites.[411] Priests chosen from amongst the Levites were tasked to maintain the temple, perform religious rituals, and guide community members to a holy life. Likewise, the synoptic Gospels depict Jesus commissioning his disciples to go out and "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that [he] commanded [of them…] (Matt 28:19)."

Srawley explains that Ignatius held the ministry in high esteem. He "regard[ed] the bishop as the representative of the Lord, while the presbyters represent[ed] the Apostles […]" as it was "in the world when Christ went about in His ministry."[412] Moreover, in his letter to the Smyrnaeans, Ignatius holds up Burrhus as one to be imitated for the "pattern of the ministry of God."[413] Basil of Caesarea was also renowned for his pastoral care, showing concern for both the spiritual and temporal well-being of his congregation. He is said to have preached morning and night, helped the poor, fed the hungry and built a hospital to care for the sick.[414] In one letter, Basil laments the passing of Parnussus' pastor and consoles the congregation, praying that "God may assume charge over His flock, and, in accordance with His will, may supply you with a shepherd who will tend you wisely."[415] Cassian too advocates for the pastoral vocation describing the "preaching of the Gospel" as a sacred duty,[416] and revering two Egyptian

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[407] Gildas, "The Ruin of Britain," trans. Williams, 181.
[408] Gildas, "The Ruin of Britain," trans. Williams, 191.
[409] Sharpe, "Introduction," 21; Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 104, note 91.
[410] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 103.
[411] Numbers 3:9-10 – "[9] You shall give the Levites to Aaron and his descendants; they are unreservedly given to him from among the Israelites. [10] But you shall make a register of Aaron and his descendants; it is they who shall attend to the priesthood, and any outsider who comes near shall be put to death."
[412] Srawley, "Introduction," 19.
[413] Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 100.
[414] David Farmer, "Basil the Great," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford University Press, 2011), DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780199596607.001.0001.
[415] Basil, *Letters,* trans. Deferrari, LXII (62).
[416] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 24.XI.

presbyters – Abbot Pinufius[417] and Abbot Paphnutias.[418] Could Ignatius', Basil's and Cassian's regard for the priestly role have inspired the Irish *peregrini* to minister to the faithful abroad?

During Late Antiquity, many monastics took Holy Orders and attended to the burgeoning Christian population in Ireland. Abbots frequently belonged to the highest office, that of bishop, while monks were conscripted into the lower offices of priest and deacon. The responsibilities of these offices ranged from overseeing religious education and performing sacraments,[419] to holding mass and counseling lay persons. According to Adomnán, Columba was initially ordained deacon by Finnian of Moville; subsequently ordained priest by Etchen, the Bishop of Clonfard;[420] and in the *Vita Columbae*, he is depicted holding mass with Bishop Cronan of Munster.

At some point in his 25-year stay at the Bangor monastery Columbanus was ordained.[421] However, we are not told which order he attained. As a deacon he would have been permitted to "baptize, preach, and distribute Holy Communion."[422] As a priest he would also have had the power to forgive sins.[423] In Burgundy, Columbanus remarked that "everywhere people were running to the medicines of penance,"[424] which prompted him to build a third monastery at Fontaines (the first was Annegray[425] and the second Luxeuil[426]). Furthermore, we are told that King Theuderic and his grandmother Brunhilda entreated him to forgive their sins in Spissia.[427] Based on this information it appears that Columbanus was indeed a priest.

4.3 To Educate

Another possible motivation for the Irish saints to undertake *peregrinatio* is to obtain and/or provide religious instruction. The divine imperative to instruct and to learn the "ways of God" is clearly explicated in Deuteronomy 11:19. Readers of this passage are urged to "Teach [God's words] to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away…" Similarly, the author of Proverbs 18:15 states that "…the ear of the wise seeks knowledge." The Gospel of Luke depicts Jesus teaching people as he travels towards Jerusalem (Lk 13:22). Jesus' role as religious instructor is emphasized throughout the Gospels where he is frequently addressed by the title "rabbi" (Judaic term for "teacher" or "master"). The importance of religious education is also made clear by the early Christian theologian, Clement of Alexandria (150-215 CE), who likens "catechetical instruction" to nourishment for the soul.[428]

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[417] Cassian, *Institutes*, trans. Gibson, IV.XXX.
[418] Cassian, *Institutes*, trans. Gibson, V.XL.
[419] Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders.
[420] Seyfried, "Introduction."
[421] Niall Coll, "Light from the West – The Year of St. Columbanus," *The Furrow* 66, no. 9 (September 2015): 461, JSTOR.
[422] "Holy Orders: Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church," BBC Bitesize, https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zh4f3k7/revision/8.
[423] BBC Bitesize, "Holy Orders."
[424] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 116-7.
[425] Also known as *Anagrates*. Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," 108-9, note 110.
[426] Also known as *Luxovium*. Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," 115-6, note 138.
[427] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 136.
[428] Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata (Book V)*, trans. William Wilson, vol. 2 of *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), chapter 10, https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02105.htm.

Jerome credits Paula's scriptural knowledge with facilitating spiritual revelations she experienced during her visit to biblical sites in the Holy Land. In her case, an experiential exercise worked in tandem with Paula's religious learning, resulting in her acquiring a "deeper understanding of her beliefs."[429] Basil reveres "the great instruction of the Good Teacher, whose company for a single day is sufficient *viaticum* for salvation."[430]

Similarly, according to Williams, Gildas saw that "the prominent, almost the only, idea of the ministry is that of a ministry of teaching, guidance, and government."[431] Gildas proposes that ecclesiastical instructors imitate Paul, the "teacher of the gentiles," who said, "Be ye imitators of me as I also am of Christ (1 Cor 11:1)."[432] He further states that those ecclesiastics who fail to imitate the apostles are unworthy of their vocation[433] and do "not teach the people well by example and words."[434]

Cassian himself went to great lengths to visit the desert fathers, soliciting their teachings to edify himself in his quest for perfection. For instance, he sought out Abbot Moses, renowned for practical as well as "contemplative excellence,"[435] as well as Abbot Paphnutius, a "great luminary, shining with the brightness of knowledge."[436] According to Cassian, "if we wish in very deed and truth to attain to the crown of virtues, we ought to listen to those teachers and guides who, not dreaming with pompous declamations, but learning by act and experience, are able to teach us as well, and direct us likewise, and show us the road by which we may arrive at it by a most sure pathway; and who also testify that they have themselves reached it by faith rather than by any merits of their efforts."[437]

Adomnán and Jonas depict Columba and Columbanus as earnest Christians who travelled around Ireland from a young age to obtain religious instruction from various monastic teachers.[438] Indeed, as Paul McGrath explains, "[m]ost of the large monastic settlements were built around teaching schools. While these schools were initially developed for the purposes of teaching theology to monastic members, they quickly evolved into somewhat elitist centres of secular and religious education […] that were held in high regard in Britain and across Europe."[439] In their later years as *peregrini*, the saints are shown imparting their wisdom to the faithful in their adopted lands.[440] It is possible that the Irish *peregrini* envisioned that their foreign monastic foundations would fulfill the same role.

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[429] Bader, "Paula and Jerome," 348.
[430] Basil, *Letters*, trans. Deferrari, CLXVIII (168). *Viaticum* refers to the Holy Eucharist taken by someone on their deathbed.
[431] Gildas, "The Ruin of Britain," trans. Williams, 239, note 6.
[432] Gildas, "The Ruin of Britain," trans. Williams, 223.
[433] Gildas, "The Ruin of Britain," trans. Williams, 169.
[434] Gildas, "The Ruin of Britain," trans. Williams, 193.
[435] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 1.I.
[436] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 3.I.
[437] Cassian, *Institutes*, trans. Gibson, XII.XV.
[438] Seyfried, "Introduction;" Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 101.
[439] Paul McGrath, "Early Medieval Irish Monastic Communities: A Premodern Model with Post-Modern Resonances," *Culture and Organization* 8, no. 3 (2002): 196, https://doi.org/10.1080/14759550215668.
[440] Although "…Adomnán scarcely mentions [ ] teaching and study," he does refer to a foster-son "who was studying wisdom." Adomnán, *The Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 73-4; Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 106, note 99.

4.4 To Intensify Asceticism

Perhaps one of the most recognizable motivations behind *peregrinatio* is the desire to deepen the ascetic lifestyle. Indeed, some modern-day scholars equate the Latin term *peregrinatio* to the English term *ascetic exile*.[441] The idea of asceticism is that by renouncing temporal needs and wants one can focus on improving one's spiritual condition.

In the Old Testament, God insists that the Nazirites – ancient Israelites who vowed to consecrate themselves to him – abstain from drinking alcohol, cutting their hair, and becoming "ceremonially unclean."[442] Likewise, the synoptic Gospels portray Jesus exhorting the faithful to subject themselves to hardships on his behalf so they may join him in the afterlife, e.g., "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it (Luke 9:23-24)." Paul reinforces this idea in his letters to members of the burgeoning Christian communities where he urges people to forego bodily "desires" to focus on spiritual matters instead (Rom 8:7 and 1 Peter 2:11). Most germane to the notion of permanent self-exile, Matthew and Mark quote Jesus telling would-be followers who want to join him in "eternal life" to leave their "houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for [his] name's sake […] (Matt 19:20)."[443]

As for early Christian tradition, when Athanasius (293-373 CE) wrote the Greek Life of St. Antony of the Desert between 356 and 362 CE[444] – and it was subsequently translated into Latin – the central character Antony (251-356 CE) became a much-admired ascetic celebrity across Western Christendom. Proof of his appeal to early Irish Christians can be seen in the images of St. Antony of Egypt that adorn many 7th - 9th century high crosses throughout Ireland and other regions of the British Isles.[445] In imitation of Antony, several ancient texts liken the desert where he perfected the ascetic lifestyle to the "impenetrable forests"[446] of Ireland and the seas over which the Irish *peregrini* navigated away from home.[447]

Cassian advocates for asceticism when he advises those who wish to attain spiritual "perfection" to forego "money and property,"[448] forsake their families,[449] and mortify their bodies.[450] He holds up the "blessed Antony" as an exemplar who "gave up everything and

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[441] See for example: Kathleen Hughes, "The Changing Theory and Practice of Irish Pilgrimage," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 11, no. 2 (October 1960): 145, doi:10.1017/S0022046900066744; T. M. Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background of Irish Peregrinatio," 53.

[442] Num 6:1-21.

[443] Mark 10:28-30 – "[28] Peter began to say to him, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you.' [29] Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, [30] who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.'"

[444] Athanasius, "Vita S. Antoni [Life of St. Anthony]," trans. Ellershaw, website sub-title.

[445] As witnessed and photographed by author during a 2013 visit to Ireland.

[446] Stephanie Hayes-Healey, "Saint Patrick's Journey into the Desert: *Confessio* 16-28 as Ascetic Discourse," *Archivium Hibernicum* 59 (2005), 242, JSTOR.

[447] "A desert in the ocean." Eivor Bekkhus, "6. Men on pilgrimage – women adrift: thoughts on gender in sea narratives from early medieval Ireland," in *Gender in medieval places, spaces and thresholds*, ed. Victoria Blud, Diane Heath, and Einat Klafter (London: University of London Press, 2019), 94, JSTOR.

[448] Cassian, *Institutes*, trans. Gibson, VII.XIV.

[449] "Everyone that leaveth house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or field for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life." Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 21.V.

[450] "[…] submit to fastings, vigils, toils, bodily nakedness." Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 1.VII.

followed Christ."[451] According to Athanasius, after his parents died Antony divested himself of his inheritance, put his sister in a convent, and fled to the desert.[452] Cassian himself demonstrates an ascetic propensity when he abandons his homeland and traipses through the Egyptian desert seeking instruction from monastic experts. One such expert, Abbot Paphnutius, commended Cassian, and his travel companion, for their sacrifice, extolling how they "left [their] homes, and had visited so many countries out of love for the Lord, and were endeavouring with all [their] might to endure want and the trials of the desert, […]."[453]

Regardless of whether they were inspired by Jesus' call, Antony's actions, or Cassian's entreaties, Columba and Columbanus are hailed by their hagiographers as ascetic heroes. In addition to self-exile, contemporaneous sources describe the Irish *peregrini* as employing other ascetic techniques such as sleep deprivation and fasting. Columba, for example, spent sleepless nights praying for the reconciliation of an estranged husband and wife[454] and "remained awake on winter nights […] in isolated places while others rested," awaiting the angels' visits.[455] Columbanus, for his part, quit his family, entered the Bangor monastery, and "began to dedicate himself completely to prayer and fasting, and to take up the yoke of Christ […] by denying himself […] so that he, who would become a teacher to others, should, by enduring mortification in his own body, show more fully by example what he himself had learned from religious teaching […]."[456]

4.5 To Achieve Penance

With numerous scriptural and traditional precedents, penance is another potential impetus for religious self-exile. The Hebrew bible instructs offenders to approach God with shame and humility to atone for their transgressions and to outwardly demonstrate these emotions by weeping, tearing clothes, and covering themselves "in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6).[457] The synoptic gospels depict John the Baptist exhorting people to repent as well, baptizing them in the Jordan River as they confess their sins (Matt 3:1-6). Jesus himself declares that his main mission is "to call not the righteous but the sinners (Matt 9:13)" and he bemoans the fate of those who do not heed his pronouncements, e.g., "unrepentant [Galilean] cities (Matt 11:20-21)."[458] Finally, when he appears to his disciples after his resurrection, Jesus announces that "repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Luke 24:47)."

In early Christianity, people often publicly confessed grievous sins on their deathbed, beseeching divine forgiveness just prior to expiring.[459] This ensured that all their sins would be duly expiated, allowing them to die with a clean slate knowing that nothing impeded their

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[451] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 3.IV.
[452] Athanasius, "Vita S. Antoni [Life of St. Anthony]," trans. Ellershaw.
[453] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 3.II.
[454] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 195.
[455] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 218.
[456] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 102-3.
[457] 2 Kings 22:19 – "[…] because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the Lord, …and because you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the Lord."
[458] Located in Galilee (Matt 11:20-24).
[459] Gavin Fort, "Penitents and Their Proxies: Penance for Others in Early Medieval Europe," *Church History* 86, no. 1 (March 2017): 4, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009640717000038.

entrance to heaven.[460] By delaying the disclosure of serious transgressions until their last moment, they also escaped retribution, criminal prosecution and having to perform penance.

This practice changed after Late Antiquity. According to Gavin Fort, "Stemming from sixth and seventh century Irish monastic influences, private penance arose in the early Middle Ages to encourage penitential discipline throughout one's life. As a result, penance became a repeatable activity."[461] Fort contends that because of "this shift from one-time to repeatable penance, European penitential practice began to develop a judicial approach to counting and paying off sins […] this new system 'tariffed penance' […] meticulously imagined the necessary penitential acts that were required for each sin. […] Each crime had its corresponding penitential act of satisfaction: one year fasting on bread and water, seven years of hard penance, or even a lifetime of wandering. Prayer, almsgiving, and fasting were by far the most frequently assigned penances. […] Lists of these sins and penances were written down, compiled, and copied from generation to generation in an attempt to stabilize and codify penitential practice."[462]

In his letter to the Ephesians Ignatius beseeches addressees to pray unceasingly for humankind, stating "there is in them hope of repentance - that they may attain unto God."[463] Similarly, Ignatius urges the Smyrnaeans to "awake and live soberly, while [they] have opportunity to repent and turn to God."[464] Cassian encourages "great exertions […] of penitence,"[465] suggesting there are several ways "by which we can succeed in expiating our sins," e.g., charitability, almsgiving, outward demonstrations of contrition, saintly intercession, etc.[466] As noted in the preceding chapter, Finnian of Clonard and Columbanus produced penitential books that included self-exile as a penitential act in response to serious offenses such as murder. However, these were of a limited duration and therefore do not fit the conventional definition of *peregrinatio* as a permanent, voluntary, self-exile.

Did Columba and Columbanus undertake *peregrinatio* to expiate their sins? Possibly. Christians believe that nobody is free from sin for very long after they have repented (except for Jesus who is considered sinless). Consequently, members of the Christian church – including the saints – are obliged to continuously acknowledge their transgressions, beg God's forgiveness, and seek his help to refrain from reoffending. Perhaps the Irish *peregrini* believed that, like the rest of humankind, they needed to constantly perform penance by way of *peregrinatio* (regardless of the gravity of their transgressions). In the twelfth chapter of Conferences, Cassian describes a situation where "penitence will never cease. For either through ignorance, or forgetfulness, or thought, or word, or surprise, or necessity, or weakness of the flesh, […], we often fall every day either against our will or voluntarily; […]."[467]

In the case of Columba, and as mentioned earlier, his spiritual advisor purportedly directed him to go on a *peregrinatio* after copying Finnian's psalter without the owner's permission and subsequently contributing to the battle of Cúl Dreimhne (aka Cule-Drebene) where thousands of men lost their lives.[468] As for Columbanus, no specific transgression is mentioned in the primary

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[460] Conversation with Dr. Lucian Turcescu, 26 January 2021.
[461] Fort, "Penitents and Their Proxies," 4.
[462] Fort, "Penitents and Their Proxies," 5.
[463] Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 45.
[464] Ignatius, *Epistles*, trans. Srawley, 98.
[465] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 23.XV.
[466] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 20.VIII.
[467] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 20.XII.
[468] Seyfried, "Introduction."

sources as a cause for him undertaking self-exile as penance. Although, in the *Vita Columbani* the Irish anchoress does admonish the young Columbanus regarding women hinting at potential chastity issues.

4.6 To Proselytize

The divine imperative for humankind to convert to "God's way" is explicitly stated in the Old Testament as shown in the passage from Tobit 14:6: "Then the nations in the whole world will all be converted and worship God in truth. They will all abandon their idols, […]." A famous conversion story from the Hebrew bible portrays Jonah abandoning his Nineveh mission and fleeing on a boat (Jonah 1:1-16). Upon encountering a mighty storm Jonah confesses to the sailors that their misfortune is likely due to him disobeying the divine call. He then directs the seamen to throw him overboard so that they might be saved but they hesitate, since killing Jonah might thwart God's will and not improve their circumstances. The sailors pray, throw Jonah overboard, and witness calming of the seas, "Then the men feared the Lord even more, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows (Jonah 1:16)." Constantin Oceana explains that the sailors do not, however, become Israelites; rather, their conversion entails "the act of turning towards YHWH, supplication, and worship (Jonah 1:14, 16)."[469]

The New Testament depicts the resurrected Jesus directing his disciples to "make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:16-20)" in an incident that has been dubbed "The Great Commission." In the Acts of the Apostles, Paul describes to King Agrippa his own conversion on the road to Damascus. He explains that Jesus appeared to him to "appoint [Paul] to serve and to testify (Acts 26:16)" to the things he "saw/will see" through Jesus. Paul is then commissioned to enlighten people about repenting their sins so that they can become consecrated (Acts 26:18).

Cassian references conversion in both the Institutes and the Conferences. In a description of the first Pentecost, where the Holy Ghost reveals the calling of the Gentiles, he claims that, "All the nations which were formerly outside the observance of the law and reckoned as unclean now flow together through belief in the faith that they may to their salvation be turned away from the worship of idols and be serviceable for health-giving food, and are brought to Peter and cleansed by the voice of the Lord."[470] Cassian also suggests that "the conversion and salvation of those who are saved by [proselytizers'] warnings and preaching" is one of the ways in which individuals can atone for their transgressions, quoting that "he who converts a sinner from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins."[471]

Both Columba[472] and Columbanus[473] appear to have done some missionary work to gain converts for the faith. Backing up Forgaill's claim that Columba proselytized amongst the tribes of the River Tay, Bede describes Columba converting the northern Picts under the rule of King Bridei.[474] In an introduction to his translation of Jonas' *Vita Columbani*, D. C. Munro counts

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[469] Constantin Oancea, "Imagery and Religious Conversion. The Symbolic Function of Jonah 1:1," *Religions* 9, no. 3 (2018): 2, note 1, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9030073.
[470] Cassian, *Institutes*, trans. Gibson, III.III.
[471] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 20.VIII.
[472] "…preaching the word of life […]" Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 179.
[473] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 159-60.
[474] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 148. In a 19th century mural, Columba is shown converting King Bridei which was a typical approach to gaining a whole population for the faith. William Brassey Hole, *The*

Columbanus amongst "the bold missionaries from Ireland" who "not content with the flourishing state of Christianity in their own island […] passed over to the continent" to reinvigorate "nominal Christians" and bring pagans to the faith.[475]

4.7 To Nurture Spiritual Growth

A key message that the Bible conveys is that for humans to get closer to God, we need to develop ourselves spiritually: actively transforming our inner selves by constantly rejecting sin and continuously embracing good. Irish *peregrini* may have seen *peregrinatio* as an opportunity to remove themselves from earthly temptations, and in so doing, make room for focusing on spiritual development.

In the Old Testament, God promises the nation of Israel that he will "…cleanse [them] from all [their] impurities (Ez 36:25)" and fill them with his own spirit: one that will keep them on the path of righteousness. This passage is echoed in the Gospel of John when Jesus proclaims that heaven is only attained by those who are "born of water and spirit (John 3:5)." Commentators suggest that this passage refers to rebirth through baptism, a ritual that entails "moral cleansing."[476] Effectively, the baptized are made sinless during the rite as their transgressions are forgiven. Christians understand that maintaining this sinless state is virtually impossible (for everyone except Jesus, that is), unless one dies immediately upon performing the sacrament (see Penance section above). The apostle Paul encourages Christians to strive for spiritual growth by concentrating on the spirit as opposed to the body (Rom 8:5-6).

The early Christian theologian Origen (c. 184-254 CE), who considered that each person is "made up of spirit, soul and body (see 1 Thess. 5:23),"[477] contended that the spirit is responsible for guiding the soul towards God.[478] Later church fathers like John Chrysostom (347-407 CE),[479] Leo the Great (400-461 CE),[480] and Maximus the Confessor (580-662 CE)[481] also touted the importance of spiritual development.

Cassian clearly ascribed to the notion of "continuous progress or spiritual perfection."[482] In one instance, he says that "to a great extent [it is] in our power to improve the character of our

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Mission of St. Columba to the Picts A.D. 563, 1898, fresco on plaster (first floor in the Great Hall), Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/93424.

[475] D. C. Munro, "Untitled Preface," in *Life of St. Columban, by the monk Jonas*, vol. II, no. 7 of *Original Sources of European History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1895), 1, https://archive.org/details/lifeofstcolumban0207jona/mode/2up. Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 106, note 99, and 159, note 347.

[476] Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 1997), 197, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/lib/concordia-ebooks/detail.action?docID=272953.

[477] P. B. Decock, "Discernment in Origen of Alexandria," *Acta Theologica, Suppl. 17* 33 (2013): 195, https://lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fscholarly-journals%2Fdiscernment-origen-alexandria%2Fdocview%2F2183283512%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D10246.

[478] Decock, "Discernment in Origen," 195.

[479] Chris de Wet, "Human Birth and Spiritual Rebirth in the Theological Thought of John Chrysostom," *In Die Skriflig* 51, no. 3 (2017): 1-9, https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v51i3.2149.

[480] Gordon S. Wakefield ed., *A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (London: SCM Press, 1983/2003), 246-247.

[481] Andrew Louth, "3 - Maximus' Spiritual Theology," in *Maximus the Confessor* (London: Routledge, 1996), 33-46, https://doi-org.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/10.4324/9780203991275.

[482] Michael G. Tsichlis, "Mining for a Nicene Christian Ethical Praxis," 145, https://search-ebscohost-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001995766&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

thoughts and to let either holy and spiritual thoughts or earthly ones grow up in our hearts. For this purpose, frequent reading and continual meditation on the Scriptures is employed."[483] He further claims that, "as the renewal of our soul grows by means of this study, Scripture also will begin to put on a new face, and the beauty of the holier meanings will somehow grow with our growth. For their form is adapted to the capacity of man's understanding."[484] Finally, Cassian urges his readers to "scale the heights of […] perfection"[485] and "ascend from the fear of God to love."[486]

Prior to his *peregrinatio*, while visiting the monastery at Clonmacnoise, Columba encounters an "unfortunate and mischievous boy" called Erneńe mac Craséni who was "scorned" by the community.[487] He blesses the boy's tongue and prophesizes that he would "grow little by little day by day in goodness of life and greatness of spirit," increasing in "wisdom and judgement," eventually becoming an important teacher of the "doctrine of salvation."[488] Similarly, in a letter addressed to his *son*,[489] a "beloved boy and dear secretary,"[490] Columbanus urges his charge to remain "ever concerned, ever growing, ever making increase; ever aiming at the lofty, ever running to the mark; ever longing for heavenly things, ever thirsting for the things divine."[491]

Modern-day scholar Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony sees the "essence of…[pilgrimage] in late antiquity as the desire of the pilgrim – steeped mainly in monastic culture – to be in a state of alienation from the world so as to encounter the sacred."[492] She contends that "the act of pilgrimage thus served as a vehicle […] for self-transformation."[493] This observation by Bitton-Ashkelony points to the quest for spiritual growth as well as a divine encounter, the latter of which is discussed in the next sub-section.

4.8 To Facilitate Divine Encounter

Along with Bitton-Ashkelony, contemporary scholars Meredith Cutrer[494] and Katja Ritari[495] suggest that the *peregrini* may have been seeking an encounter with God by taking themselves away from other people. The Old Testament includes several instances of divine interactions occurring in uninhabited regions. For example, when Sarah mistreats her pregnant Egyptian slave Hagar, the latter flees Abraham's encampment whereupon she meets the angel of God in the wild (Gen 16:6-10). The divine messenger instructs Hagar to return and reveals that she will have many descendants. Later, when Sarah worries that Hagar's son Ishmael will be

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[483] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 1.XVII.
[484] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 14.XI.
[485] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 20.III.
[486] Cassian, *Institutes*, trans. Gibson, IV.XXXIX.
[487] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 116.
[488] Adomnán, *Life of St Columba*, trans. Sharpe, 116.
[489] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, VI.1.
[490] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, VI.3.
[491] Columbanus, *Letters*, trans. Walker, VI.3.
[492] Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering the Sacred: The Debate on Christian Pilgrimage in Late Antiquity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 10, https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520931121.
[493] Bitton-Ashkelony, *Encountering the Sacred*, 10.
[494] Cutrer, "Early Irish Peregrinatio as Salvation History," 81.
[495] "It is the remoteness of [a] place that makes it suitable for concentrating on conversing with God without any distractions." Ritari, "Holy Souls and a Holy Community," 135.

favored over her son Isaac, she gets Abraham to banish the pair to the desert. They almost expire but are saved by the intervention of the angel of God (Gen 21:9-20). Similarly, Moses encounters the divine twice on Mount Horeb:[496] initially in the burning bush when he is instructed to lead the enslaved Israelites out of Egypt (Ex 3:1-12); subsequently when he receives the ten commandments (Ex 20:1-17). Centuries later, after fleeing Jezebel, Elijah falls asleep under a broom tree in the wilderness only to be awakened by an angel who fortifies him in preparation for his journey to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:1-8). Standing upon the mountain, Elijah hears the voice of God instructing him to go to Damascus to anoint two kings and a prophet (1 Kings:19:15-17).

Two occasions where the figures in the New Testament encounter the divine are reported in the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. The first occurs when Jesus takes Peter, James, and John to a mountaintop where they witness his transfiguration and where God speaks to them through a cloud, identifying Jesus as his beloved son and telling them to heed his words (Mark 9:2,7). The second occurs when Saul, travelling to Damascus to arrest Christians, sees a heavenly flash, hears Jesus' voice, and undergoes a roadside conversion, subsequently going on to become the great apostle Paul (Acts 9:1-22).

Cassian recounts two instances of divine encounter related to Paphnutius in the Conferences. One where the monk regularly retreats to the desert and the Anchorites believe that he daily enjoys "the society of angels,"[497] and another where Paphnutius receives a visit from the angel of the Lord who provides counsel regarding chastity.[498] Likewise, in the Institutes, Cassian explains that the number of psalms to be said during Vespers and Nocturns was set to twelve in accordance with what was "brought down from heaven to the fathers by the ministry of an angel."[499] Adomnán and Forgaill claim that Columba communicated regularly with angels whilst Jonas depicts Columbanus as going into the wilderness to learn God's will.

4.9 To Simulate

Finally, it is possible that by permanently quitting their homeland the Irish *peregrini* aimed to simulate the human condition vis-à-vis heaven and earth (permanent vs temporary). Many Christian thinkers contend that our true home is with the divine and that we are simply passing through the earth on our way to that destination.

Although a heavenly afterlife is not as readily discernable in the Old Testament as it is in the New Testament, the notion of the hereafter is hinted at in the Hebrew bible. For example, Tobit, the pious Jewish exile living in Assyria, prays to God that he be "released from the face of the earth" so that he may go to "the eternal home"[500] (Tobit 3:6). The prophet Daniel speaks of "everlasting life" for the righteous (Dan 12:2-3), while Isaiah describes how God "will swallow up death forever [and] wipe away the tears from all faces" (Isa 25:8).

The apostle Paul was clear in his second letter to the Corinthians that, after "living by faith," when "the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor 5:1). Likewise, in a letter to the Hebrews, the author characterizes Abraham and his descendants' as "strangers and foreigners on the earth,

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[496] Also called Mount Sinai.
[497] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 3.I.
[498] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 15.X.
[499] Cassian, *Institutes*, trans. Gibson, II.IV.
[500] The eternal home is a place where "all must go" according to Eccl 12:5.

[…] seeking a homeland […] desir[ing] a better country, that is, a heavenly one" prepared for them by God (Heb 11:13-16).

In his translation of Basil's epistle to Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, Deferrari explains that "'a sojourn in a foreign land,' […] applied […] to groups of Christians in general, since Christians regarded themselves merely as sojourners in this world."[501] This observation aligns with Basil's entreaties to readers of his letter to Eusebius, Bishop of Somasota, where the saint says "pray for us, […] that we may be thought worthy to serve during the remaining days or hours of our sojourn as is acceptable to the Lord."[502]

Cassian uses similar language to characterize himself as a "sojourner upon the earth" and "a stranger as all my fathers were."[503] He explains that, "They are not of the world, as I am not of the world," and with regard to the Apostles, "[they] are not of this world, therefore the world hateth [them]."[504] Reiterating this notion on another occasion, Cassian describes how the monk "regards himself as a foreigner and an alien […], so that he conducts himself as a stranger and a sojourner in this world."[505]

Columba and Columbanus clearly think of earth as an impermanent residence. The former declares as much on his deathbed in Adomnán's hagiographical account as well as in the hymns, and in the prayers (as analyzed earlier). The latter also shares this view as demonstrated in his sermon about the end of our earthly existence where he cites Paul's letter to the Corinthians suggesting, "we are strangers from the Lord while we remain in the body (2 Cor. 5:6)."[506]

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[501] Letter LXVI (66). Basil, *Letters*, trans. Deferrari, 28, note 1.
[502] Letter CXXXIX (139). Basil, *Letters*, trans. Deferrari, 325.
[503] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 3.VII.
[504] Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. Gibson, 3.VII.
[505] Cassian, *Institutes*, trans. Gibson, IV.XIV.
[506] Columbanus, *Sermons*, trans. Walker, VIII.2.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

In this concluding chapter I speculate about the importance of each of the nine possible theological motivations as a driving force for Irish *peregrinatio*. I present them in order of significance from greater to lesser according to my own evaluation based on the strength of the evidence I examined. Undoubtedly, this assessment is highly dependant on the availability of extant sources and is subject to change as new evidence is brought to light. I also put forward suggestions for future avenues of investigation that could illuminate the subject further.

5.1 Evidentiary Based Observations

Why did Columba and Columbanus choose to permanently quit Ireland? By all accounts their actions were religiously motivated. What is less obvious are the precise beliefs that prompted them to take this action. In my opinion, much of the evidence suggests that Columba's and Columbanus' main interest in *peregrinatio* was to intensify their asceticism for the purpose of spiritual growth. This is credible given that they joined the monastery as youths and spent years mortifying themselves by fasting, foregoing sleep, and performing endless prayer vigils. Consequently, I can understand how "white martyrdom"[507] might be seen as the next logical step in a quest to purify their hearts and make themselves worthy of salvation. They also seemed committed to offering this possibility to people of the same mindset by establishing their own monastic foundations abroad: Columba's Ionan monastery attracted novitiates throughout the centuries and up to the present day, while Columbanus was so successful in attracting would-be monks that he was compelled to build three monasteries in Burgundy.[508]

By departing Ireland in the company of twelve monks both Columba and Columbanus seemed to imitate Jesus and his disciples. Despite appearing to be a convention of the times, imitation could very well have been a driving force behind the Irish *peregrini*'s actions. Jonas' insistence that Columbanus imitated Abraham in undertaking self-exile for his faith would be more convincing if Columbanus mentioned this motivation in either his letters or his sermons. As for Columba, none of the sources I examined cite imitation as a motivation for his religious self-exile. Nonetheless, I think further study is warranted to ascertain if he undertook *peregrinatio* to replicate the actions of a spiritual hero.

Columba's missteps around the copying of Finnian's psalter and the ensuing battle of Cule-Drebene certainly could have engendered a penitential element to his *peregrinatio*. This is believable since several ancient Irish penitentials prescribe self-exile as a means of atoning for sin. Additionally, Adomnán describes many penitents journeying to Iona to confess to Columba who, on several occasions, imposes self-exile on the penitent. There is no evidence, however, that Columbanus himself was compelled to undertake *peregrinatio* to expiate sins. Nevertheless, at the risk of propagating unsubstantiated allegations, I do wonder if the attractive young Columbanus fell prey to philandering which gave him cause to repent and permanently quit Ireland in an act of contrition.

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[507] Harrington, "A Land without Martyrs," 15.

[508] "The children of nobles everywhere strove to come there so that, by despising the trappings of the world and by scorning the pomp of present wealth, they might seize eternal rewards." Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 116.

Besides self-exile, Columba's penance for his involvement in the battle of Cule-Drebene is thought to have included proselytization (to make amends for the souls lost in the fray).[509] Whereas that might have initially been an important motivation for Columba, it does not seem to have remained a significant factor. In the *Vita Columbae*, Adomnán describes Columba converting two families but curiously the author says nothing to support Bede's contention that the saint converted Pictish King Bridei.[510] This would have been a seminal event in the Christianization of the region because populations typically followed suit, adopting the religion of their rulers. James E. Fraser proclaims that, "[t]he idea that Columba came to northern Britain as an evangelist is no less problematic than locating his 'mission'."[511] He suggests that the saint was more interested in teaching ascetic monasticism to Pictish Christians than proselytizing.

As for Columbanus, Fraser concludes that "Columbanus did some evangelising on the Continent in the immediate vicinity of some of his monastic foundations, but his enthusiasm for missionary work was never great, and soon left him entirely."[512] When he is expelled from Burgundy after living some two decades in the region, Columbanus travels to Bregenz and considers "sow[ing] faith into the hearts of the neighbouring people."[513] Jonas recounts one instance of the saint proselytizing amongst a Germanic tribe called Suevi (Alamanni). In the narrative, Columbanus interrupts a sacrifice to Woden, miraculously bursts a cask, and as a result "many [were] converted to the faith."[514] The saint then considers proselytizing amongst the Wendish Slavs but is persuaded by an angel to abandon the notion and move on to Italy where he may "enjoy the fruits of [his] labours."[515]

There is no proof suggesting that either Columba or Columbanus embarked on *peregrinatio* to augment their own education by studying under a foreign instructor. In fact, they left Ireland at a relatively mature age – probably in their forties[516] – hence it is more likely they aimed to provide rather than obtain instruction. The monasteries they founded abroad assuredly became training grounds for monks following the Columban and Columbanian rules. For instance, on Iona, monks studied scripture, memorized psalms, and learned Latin, Hebrew, and Greek.[517] At Luxeuil and Bobbio, monks were taught "both theology and secular subjects."[518] It is not clear from the primary sources that Columba and Columbanus aimed to make their monastic schools centers of learning for the wider population, as was the case in Ireland. This deserves more study.

Like the early Irish monks who took Holy Orders and provided pastoral care to local laity, we might expect Columban and Columbanian foundations to have ministered to neighboring

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[509] Seyfried, "Introduction."
[510] Sharpe, "Introduction," 31.
[511] James E. Fraser, "Chapter 4 - Word and Example: Columba in Northern Britain," in *From Caledonia to Pictland: Scotland to 795* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 103, JSTOR.
[512] Fraser, "Word and Example: Columba in Northern Britain," 97.
[513] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 157.
[514] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 159-60.
[515] Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 162.
[516] Though Jonas claims Columbanus was 20 years old when he embarked on his *peregrinatio*, O'Hara and Wood dispute this, suggesting that the hagiographer was making a parallel with Antony's life. Jonas, "The Life of Columbanus and his Disciples," trans. O'Hara and Wood, 104, note 90.
[517] Lucy Menzies, *Saint Columba of Iona: A Study of his Life, his Times, and his Influence* (London & Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1920), 70-1, https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.87672.
[518] Coll, "Light from the West," 461.

communities of faithful as well.[519] Adomnán does depict Columba preparing the eucharist and leading the liturgy, but these appear to take place primarily in the monastic church on Iona and it is unclear if laity were in attendance. On the other hand, Forgaill describes the saint "guarding" a hundred Scottish churches which were presumably not limited to monastic communities. Notwithstanding Columbanus' preaching – as witnessed by his extant sermons – as well as his endorsement of penance, Jonas does not portray Columbanus in an ecclesiastical role within the broader Christian community. That is not to say that Columbanus' Frankish and Lombardic monastic churches did not serve local laity; it just means that further investigation is required to either support or deny this claim.

According to Maddrell and Scriven, "[*p*]*erigrinatio* brought Celtic saints to remote harsh locations, such as Iona […] in order to establish their lives in exile from the world and to seek spiritual encounters and immanences [sic] in the earthly realm."[520] By banishing themselves from their homelands they envisioned removing temporal distractions that might impede their ability to commune with God. The evidence that Columba undertook religious self-exile to facilitate divine encounters is highly compelling. Adomnán recounts many instances where Columba has angelic visions in which the angels fight demons and carry souls heavenward. In the case of Columbanus, Jonas describes the saint retreating to the wilderness on many occasions; however, only once is the reason behind this retreat to hear God's instructions. Based on this evidence, the case for Columbanus seeking divine encounters through religious self-exile is not particularly strong.

Some scholars suggest that the monastic community provided a foretaste of the divine society that the monks imagined enjoying upon dying and ascending to heaven. In other words, their order modelled the harmonious relations they could expect in the heavenly realm. Could this "modelling" behaviour have extended to the notion that *peregrinatio* modelled earthly life as a sojourn away from God in heaven? Both Columba and Columbanus adhered to the principle that the temporal world represented a liminal existence for humankind. However, primary sources do not provide much evidence to support the notion that religious self-exile aimed to simulate this condition.

5.2 Takeaways

I was drawn to the thesis subject for several reasons. Firstly, in English translations of ancient narratives recounting the Irish *peregrini*'s endeavors, many protagonists were depicted as being on "pilgrimage." For me, it was difficult to reconcile the understanding of modern-day pilgrimage with the notion of ancient *peregrinatio*, the former suggesting return trips to holy sites while the latter pointed to permanent self-exile. It turns out that these are different practices, even if their respective adherents are potentially motivated by similar theological impetuses such as those elucidated in the main body of this thesis. Secondly, I was intrigued as to why modern-day academics and non-academics alike harbored an abiding interest in Saints Columba and Columbanus who flourished some fourteen centuries ago. My research revealed that, in general, the Irish *peregrini* had made important contributions to the development of Western Christianity:

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[519] Maurice Sheehy, "Concerning the Origin of Early Medieval Irish Monasticism," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (June 1962): 136-44, DOI:10.1177/002114006202900204.

[520] Avril Maddrell and Richard Scriven, "Celtic pilgrimage, past and present: from historical geography to contemporary embodied practices," *Social & Cultural Geography* 17, no.2 (2016): 309, 1, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2015.1066840.

for example, through their promotion of ascetic practices as a means of attaining salvation; and through their promotion of penitential acts as a means of reconciling with the divine. I also discovered that Columba and Columbanus so moved those with whom they interacted personally that over a millennium and a half later they continue to inspire devotees, hence their enduring relevance.

Because I chose a "survey" approach to the thesis question – namely, investigating a broad range of theological concepts that prompted Irish peregrinatio of Late Antiquity – I could not treat each of the potential impetuses behind the practice in much depth. By providing a comprehensive view of the sources, and pointing to possible avenues of investigation, however, I believe my research can facilitate future studies of individual impetuses. I am thinking specifically of those motivations that have had limited scholarly attention in the past such as, for example, the notion that Irish *peregrinatio* of Late Antiquity simulated the liminal nature of earthly existence. Moreover, my research concentrated on ancient works that were produced up until the seventh century, when Adomnán and Jonas penned Columba's and Columbanus' *vitae*. Primary sources from a later historical period could provide additional insight into the thesis topic. For instance, in the century following Columbanus' death, the Irish published the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* (circa 690-725 CE) which greatly contributed to canonical law.[521]

I assert that the extensive use of *peregrinus* to designate a temporary self-exile in the *vitae* warrants further study. Similarly, I think it would be interesting to consider how post-Roman societies received Columba and Columbanus at a time of great political and social turmoil. A closer look at other Irish religious figures such as fifth century Saints Brendan and Patrick, as well as seventh century Saint Fursey, might also reveal supplementary motivations behind the practice of religious self-exile or support the plausibility/implausibility of those studied herein. Furthermore, I think additional inquiries to ascertain which ancient works Columba and Columbanus were exposed to – for instance examining inventories of monastic libraries – could shed light on the extent to which they were influenced by past and/or contemporaneous works. Finally, for those interested in the legacy of Irish *peregrinatio* in modern Christianity, I propose further studies focused on the deployment of foreign trained clergy. More specifically, I wonder whether the *peregrini* might have inspired these intrepid ecclesiastics to quit their birthplaces and undertake permanent self-exile for theological purposes.

My hope for this thesis was that it would advance our understanding of theological stances held by those early Irish Christians of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages who undertook religious self-exile. If my research prompts further investigation of religious ideas and practices circulating at that time, and sheds light on the influence of Columba and Columbanus on contemporary Christianity, I will consider this study successful. Furthermore, if it advances theological queries that, as Jonathon Wooding noted were previously lacking in medieval Celtic studies,[522] then I believe my efforts make a useful contribution to this aspiration.

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[521] "The *Collectio Hibernensis* ("Hibernian [or Irish] Collection"), of about 700, used texts from Scripture – mainly from the Old Testament – for the first time in canonical collections, and texts from the Greek and Latin early Church Fathers […]. The *Liber ex lege Moysi* ("Book from the Law of Moses"), circa 700 CE, an Irish work, drew exclusively from the Pentateuch." *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Canon law," accessed October 25, 2023, https://academic-eb-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/levels/collegiate/article/canon-law/105947.

[522] Wooding, "Introduction," 13.

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