Illuminating Skellig Michael Spirituality
A Study of the 7th-Century Monastic Site Utilizing Analogous Sources

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Abstract

This research illuminates the spirituality of the 7th-century monastic site known as Skellig Michael. Very few scholarly works have been published about the island. This research, therefore, utilizes analogous sources to contextualize and make inferences about the settlement spirituality. In doing so, a dynamic spirituality emerges.

It is argued that Ireland had a somewhat insular development which allowed native culture to comfortably integrate with Christianity. Biblical narrative, an Irish sensibility to nature, and an innate sense of belonging and kinship resulted in a nuanced spiritualty for the monastics on Skellig. This research historically contextualizes the settlement, critically analyses the archaeology via a post-processual methodology, explores the concept of pilgrimage or *peregrinatio*, establishes this practice firmly in the secular law tracts, and applies the insights to writings of analogous *peregrini*. In assessing each of these components a restorative and developed theology emerges.

In short, it is argued that "the transformation that occurred [on Skellig] was experienced in a God that had enough fortitude and love to bring about and sustain personal growth. Through lived experience and practice [the monastics] embraced a form of exile and came to view life as a roadway leading to their true heavenly homeland. This path was one of continual restoration that resulted in honour and an extraordinary relationship in Christ."

For Carol Grizzard-Browning who taught me the value of perseverance, intellect, and humour. Oh my.

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The completion of this dissertation could not have been possible without incredible people encouraging me at every step. For that, I am eternally grateful. The personal growth that has occurred during this project has been overwhelming and I thank God for the formative experience.

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Norah de Barra I owe you a special thanks for introducing me to Skellig. In 2015 you encouraged me to lead my students to the site and you said "it will change your life!" You were right. The first time I laid eyes on the island I remember praying that I would never forget how I felt in that moment. When the work load of this dissertation and a full-time teaching job became too much I would simply close my eyes and remember that feeling. Thank you for the journey.

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Author's Declaration:

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:  DATE: September 15, 2017

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Introduction

An ancient holy site with ambiguous beginnings lies 11.6 km off the Iveragh peninsula on coast of County Kerry, Ireland. Skellig Michael is an early medieval monastic site that is isolated, breathtakingly beautiful, and remarkably well-preserved. Embracing the extremes of Christian monasticism this island and its nearby counterpart, Little Skellig or Bird Island, are hotbeds for burgeoning scholarship. With archaeology ongoing since 1986 there has been limitless potential for discovery. Exploration surrounding the island is taking place in a variety of academic disciplines.[1] Individuals attempt, in their respective fields, to dispel the elusiveness of Skellig Michael Island and gain some understanding of this sacred space.

Surrounded by the Atlantic in every direction, the rocky crag of Skellig Michael rises at two peaks to the East and West. The eastern peak houses a monastic site and rises to 185m while the western peak (commonly referred to as the South Peak) rises to 218m and is home to a daring hermitage.[2] A major depression in the middle of island, known as Christ's Saddle, sits at 130m and connects the two peaks.[3] The old red sandstone which forms the island is also found in the Caha Mountains of County Kerry and provides a stark contrast to the surrounding sea.[4]

The impressive rock jutting up from the depths of the Atlantic seems uninhabitable at first glance. Gannets, puffins, and storm petrel soar the sky while the occasional minke whale makes a

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[1] Some examples include: Cathy Daly, "Climate change and the conservation of archaeological sites: a review of impacts theory." *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 13, no. 4 (2011): 293-310.; M. Nic Craith, "Heritage Politics and Neglected Traditions: a Case-Study of Skellig Michael." *Heritage Regimes and the State: Nomination, Implementation, Regulation* (2012): 157-76.; Adam Nicolson. "The islands." *Geographical Review* 97, no. 2 (2007): 153-164.; P. Mohr, 2001. A Medieval Neapolitan Pilgrimage to Skellig Michael?. *Irish Journal of Earth Sciences* (2001): 1-4.

[2] Edward Bourke, Alan R. Hayden, Ann Lynch, et al. *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry: The Monastery and South Peak – Archaeological stratigraphic report: excavations 1986-2010* (Dublin: Government of Ireland, 2011), 171.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., 3.

subtle appearance in the ocean. The isolation, striking rock face, and teeming life in this unexpected location leave many visitors feeling as if they have entered another world. George Bernard Shaw once described Skellig as "an incredible, impossible mad place." He said, "I tell you, the thing does not belong to any world that you and I have lived and worked in: it is part of our dream world."[5]

In this "incredible, impossible, mad place" 7th-century monks built one of the most impressive holy sites in all of Ireland. Chet Raymo notes that there is a "stubborn peculiarity" about the island and the site is often called unique.[6] Replete with beehive cells, oratories, *leactha,* burial grounds, and cross slabs, the monastery and hermitage provide a wealth of archaeological information and insight into early medieval Irish monasticism. Despite this fascination and archaeological material, scholarship has not yet plumbed the depths of Skellig Michael.

The difficulty in studying Skellig lies in the lack of written sources surrounding the settlement. The archaeology is remarkably well-preserved but the written voices of the monastics who lived there have long been lost to history and the harsh conditions of the island. Scholars wishing to study the monastic settlement are left with the tedious task of piecing together scant mainland references and analysing the archaeological reports. With so few primary resources available, studying Skellig is a complex endeavour.

Skellig makes an appearance in most works regarding early medieval Irish Christianity but in-depth analysis which focuses specifically on the island is rare. Edward Bourke, Alan Hayden,

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[5] A.M. Gibbs, *A Bernard Shaw Chronology,* edited by Norman Page, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 189.
[6] Chet Raymo, *Honey From Stone: A Naturalist's Search for God* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, Inc., 1987) 107; Grellan D. Rourke, "Preserving the monuments on Skellig Michael for the future." *Antiquity* 76, no. 292 (2002): 542-552.

Ann Lynch and a team of researchers produced an archaeological and stratigraphic report on Skellig Michael and the South Peak Hermitage in 2011. Excavations spanned from 1986 to 2010.[7] Des Lavelle, a veteran diver, ornithologist, and lecturer, has spent his life studying the Skelligs. He produced *The Skellig Story: Ancient Monastic Outpost* which provides a concise overview of the island.[8] Ann O'Sullivan and John Sheehan compiled an archaeological survey of the Iveragh peninsula which includes Skellig Michael.[9] Historical documents such as the Annals of Ulster, Annals of Inisfallen, and the Martyrology of Tallaght have brief one-line entries about the island, usually in reference to the death of an abbot or monk.[10] In addition to these few direct sources, there are a host of fictional and poetic works which attempt to capture its mystery.[11]

The lack of research surrounding Skellig has recently been noticed. The Skellig Centre for Research and Innovation (Skellig CRI) was recently formed to cultivate collaboration in higher education and encourage a spirit of entrepreneurship in County Kerry. Numerous seminars, undergraduate, and postgraduate research projects are being developed which span various academic disciplines.[12] The 2015 *Star Wars: Episode 7* movie was filmed on Skellig which resulted in an increase of tourism and focus on the island. Academic articles exploring the relationship between Skellig, Irish heritage, and film now exist alongside the sparse list of

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[7] Bourke et al, *Skellig Michael, Co: Kerry*.
[8] Des Lavelle, *Skellig: Island Outpost of Europe* (Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 1976), 8.
[9] Ann O'Sullivan and John Sheehan, *The Iveragh Peninsula: An Archaeological Survey of South Kerry* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996).
[10] *Annals of Ulster (to AD 1131),* edited by Sean Mac Airt and Gearoid Mac Niocaill, (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983); *Martyrology of Tallaght,* R. I. Best & H. J. Lawlor (eds), *The Martyrology of Tallaght from the Book of Leinster and MS. 5100-4 in the Royal Library Brussels* (London 1931), p. 37.
[11] Geoffrey Moorhouse, *Sun Dancing: Life in a Medieval Irish Monastery and How Celtic Spirituality Influenced the World* (United States: Harvest Books, 1999); David Rory O'Neill, *Skellig Testament* (Newport: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014); Paddy Bushe, *Voices at the World's Edge: Irish Poets on Skellig Michael* (Dublin: Dedalus Press, 2011); Michael Kirby, *Skelligs Calling* (Dublin: Lilliput Press Ltd, 2004)
[12] "Skellig Centre for Research and Innovation," last modified 2017, https://www.ucc.ie/en/aboutscri/.

publications which directly relate to the island.[13] Despite this surge in popularity, the island still holds an elusive quality.

This research will use analogous sources and archaeological finds to contextualize the religious practices and illuminate the spirituality of the 7th-10th century Skellig monastics. The first chapter will discuss the nature of Irish Christianity in both a global and insular setting. Irish social, political, and religious structure will be considered in a pre-Christian and Christian context. This will be examined alongside developments within the first ten centuries of greater Christendom.

Chapter Two will look specifically at Skellig Michael archaeology. This chapter will utilize a post-processual methodology to further contextualize and interpret the monastic site. Site location, accessibility, and the relationship between topographical features and spirituality will be discussed at length. It will be argued that the island and its structures represent sacred zones or spaces in which the individuals encountered God.

It became common practice in early medieval Ireland to leave behind one's comfortable life and enter a form of exile for the love of Christ. Chapter Three will argue that Skellig Michael is an ideal example of this practice which is known as *peregrinatio.* The term will be defined and its many nuances explored. Specifically, Chapter Three will look at the Biblical implications of *peregrinatio,* the many ways that this practice was carried out, and how Skellig can accurately be placed within this framework.

[13] Clare Flynn, "Heritage film set: the protection and care of historic filming locations" (MSc diss., University of Edinburgh, 2016); Roddy Flynn and Tony Tracy. "The Irish are coming: Irish Film and Television in 2015." *Estudios Irlandeses-Journal of Irish Studies* 11 (2016): 276-282.; Steve-Gronert Ellerhoff, "Luke Skywalker's individuation." *Jung Journal* 9, no. 3 (2015): 44-54.

Chapter Four will evaluate the deep cultural implications of *peregrinatio* by exploring ancient Irish legal tracts. These tracts provide significant insight into Irish social structure and identity. Throughout the early medieval period the Irish appropriated Christian language and developed a religious identity suited to their place and time. The vernacular Irish laws reflect that transition. The sense of honour, status, belonging, and identity on Skellig can all be gleaned from close analysis of the legal tracts.

Finally, Chapter Five will consider the theology of monastics who actively engaged in *peregrinatio* by looking at their lives and writings. Saints Patrick, Brendan, and Columbanus are all well-researched figures that left their homelands for the sake of Christ. Common themes found within their writings will be woven together with insights from the previous chapters to present a likely picture of Skellig spirituality.

Chapter One: Historical Context

Skellig Michael was born from the whirlpool of Irish Christianity. In order to fully understand the spirituality of this settlement it must be contextualized. This chapter will first provide a brief introduction to the pre-Christian social and political structure while emphasizing the importance of belonging. Next, the arrival of Christianity in Ireland will be explored with a specific emphasis on the development of monasticism. Finally, this chapter will explore the Irish connection with greater Christendom and Rome and argue for a middle ground in insular development. By contextualizing Irish Christianity this research will begin to build the framework through which Skellig Michael can be understood critically.

1.1 – Pre-Christian Ireland

Kinship, belonging, and status were intricately linked to identity in pre-Christian Ireland. The early Irish legal tracts, commonly referred to as the Brehon Laws, and the mythological texts known as the *Lebor Gabála Érenn,* contain passages which outline or illustrate the intricate ways in which individuals of this society were bonded together.[14]

Ancient Ireland was divided into five provinces: Ulster, Leinster, Mide, Munster, and Connaught. Each of these territories were further divided into a series of petty kingdoms known as *tuatha.* Each *tuath* would have had a king chosen based on societal status and rank. [15] More powerful kings ruled over groups of *tuatha* and major ruling families, such as the Uí Néill from Connaught or the Eóganacht Locha Léin from Munster, ruled over even larger sections of

[14] Chapter Four will discuss this at more length.
[15] David Willis McCullough, *Wars of the Irish Kings: A Thousand Years of Struggle from the Age of Myth through the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I,* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2002), xix.

territory.[16] At any given time there would have been approximately 150 kings between the 5th and 12th -centuries.[17] Despite popular belief and later references in mythological texts and contemporary medieval chronicles, the legal tracts never refer to a high king, or *ard ri*, that ruled over all of Ireland. If territories faced a significant outside threat then smaller *tuatha* would rally together under the more powerful kings and fight to protect one another.[18]

Tuatha were based on a kinship structure and one's territory represented a sense of belonging and family.[19] Brehon Laws protected water, land, and food and ensured that neighbours provided for one another.[20] The security associated with one's own kingdom was significant. This sense of belonging was not readily found if one ventured outside of one's native *tuath.*[21]

All individuals had an honour price that was based upon their status in society, a concept which is frequently referred to in the Brehon Laws.[22] Rank was established by an individual's skillset and craft. In a manner not so different from modern society, the better one was at their craft, the higher their honour price. Social mobility was therefore a distinct possibility.[23] Kings (*rí),* judges (*brehons),* religious leaders (*druids),* and poets (*filid),* had the highest honour prices and were well-respected members of society.[24] The kings provided physical protection. Judges memorized and upheld the law. Religious leaders may have performed rituals associated with

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[16] Kuno Meyer, 'The Laud Genealogies and Tribal Histories" in *Zeitschrift Für Celtische Philologie* 8, (1912): 315-316. David Thornton, *Kings, Chronologies, and Genealogies: Studies in the Political History of Early Medieval Ireland and Wales* (Oxford: Prosopographica et Genealogica, 2003).
[17] Mary Byrne, "On the Punishment of Setting Adrift," *Ériu* 11 (1932): 97-102.
[18] Ibid., xx. McCullough, *Wars of the Irish Kings…* xix; Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources* (London: The Camelot Press Ltd., 1972), 53-55.
[19] Catherine Duggan, *The Lost Laws of Ireland: How the Brehon Shaped Early Irish Society* (Dublin: Glasnevin Publishing, 2013) 40-41.
[20] M. J. Gorman, "The Ancient Brehon Laws of Ireland," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review and American Law Register* 61, no. 4 (1913): 230.
[21] Duggan, *The Lost Laws*, 41; This concept will be expanded upon more fully in Chapter 4: Brehon Laws.
[22] Ibid, 48.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Laurence Ginnell, *The Brehon Laws: A Legal Handbook* (1894)**,** 70-92.

burials and festivals. Language was well-respected and the poets, whose words were believed to hold power and magic, were consulted and utilized frequently by the other groups.[25] Every king would have held a *brehon, druid,* and *filidh* at their side.[26]

Little is known about religion in Ireland prior to the arrival of Christianity and the written language. Significant sites such as Newgrange, the Hill of Tara, and Neolithic grave mounds provide evidence for nature-based pagan practices.[27] Stone circles appear to have been like local churches and existed in many communities peppered across the land.[28] Architecture aligned with the sun on solstice days and evidence of fires at major sites signify religious rituals.[29]

The *Lebor Gabála Érenn,* a pseudo-history of Ireland, tells of battles which took place between the natives of Ireland and the Celts who migrated up from Europe.[30] In one of the most famous stories, the Milesians battled the *tuatha dé Danaan,* the children of the goddess Danu, and won. The Milesians then agreed to inhabit Ireland and the *tuatha dé Danaan* inhabited the Earth itself. During this war and transition period the Milesians married some of the native people, making them the ancestors of the Irish.[31] Since the *tuatha dé Danaan* inhabited the land itself, it is

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[25] It was believed that poets could literally "rhyme a person to death" with their language. In 1024 the poet Cuan hua Cothchain was murdered. As he recited his poetry his murderers began to rot. Kings would also keep a poet nearby to protect them from sorcery. Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Mount Salus Press, 1988), 44.
[26] Ibid.; Duggan, *The Lost Laws,* 23-31.
[27] Michael J. O'Kelly, Rose M. Cleary, Daragh Lehane, and Claire O'Kelly. *Newgrange, Co. Meath, Ireland: the late Neolithic/beaker period settlement,* 190. BAR, (1983); Geraldine Stout, *Newgrange,* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2008); Conor Newman, "Reflections on the making of a 'royal site'in early Ireland." *World Archaeology* 30, no. 1 (1998): 127-141; Seán Ó. Nualláin, "The stone circle complex of Cork and Kerry." *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 105 (1975): 83-131.
[28] Nualláin, "The stone circle complex,"; Carmel McCaffrey and Leo Eaton, *In Search of Ancient Ireland: The Origins of the Irish from Neolithic Times to the Coming of the English,* (Chicago: New Amsterdam Books, 2002) 32-34.
[29] McCaffrey and Eaton, In Search of Ancient Ireland, 49.
[30] Robert Alexander Steward Macalister and Pádraig Ó Riain, *Lebor gabála Érenn: the book of the taking of Ireland,* (Dublin: Published for the Irish Texts Society by the Educational Co. of Ireland, 1938).
[31] Ibid.; T.W. Rolleston, *Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2009) 130-132.

likely that kinship was also intricately linked to place. [32] While the text was placed into its final form during the Christian era and compiled via a variety of sources, it cannot be viewed as a window for pre-Christian religious practice. It does, however, demonstrate the importance of land, kinship, and belonging. It is not unreasonable to assume that ideas surrounding the importance of land and kinship were held prior to the advent of Christianity.

1.2 - Introduction of Christianity to Ireland

This once predominately pagan land made a religious shift in the early 5th-century. Christianity arrived with the written language and was quickly adapted to the Irish social structure. Likely arriving via trade, this new religion moved from the diocesan structure that was common in mainland Europe to a more interwoven monastic structure known as a *paruchia.* The island's location at the edge of the known world allowed for a somewhat insular development of the religion and Biblical models of practice were appropriated as the religion and culture learned to coexist.

The first mention of Christianity in Ireland occurs in 431 CE in the *Chronicle of Prosper*. The passage reads: "To the Irish believing in Christ, Palladius having been ordained by Pope Celestine, is sent as first Bishop."[33] Palladius was sent as a bishop to support those who already believed in Christ. From this was can infer that Christianity existed in the region prior to his arrival.

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[32] The Lebor Gabála Érenn has undergone several redactions and was not placed into its final form until the 11th century. Limited research has been conducted on the Lebor Gabála Érenn due to the complex nature of the redactions. Mark Scowcroft and Mary Low explore these more fully: Mark R. Scowcroft, "Medieval recensions of the *Lebor Gabala,"* in John Carey (ed.), *Lebor Gabala Erenn: Textual History and Pseudohistory,* Irish Texts Society, Subsidiary Series 20, (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 2009), 1-20; Mary Low, *Celtic Christianity and Nature: Early Irish and Hebridean Traditions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997).

[33] Mark Humphries, "Chronicle and Chronology: Prosper of Aquitaine, his methods and the development of early medieval chronography," *Early Medieval Europe* 5 (1996): 155-175.; *Ad Scottos in Christum credentes a papa Caelestino Palladius primus episcopus mittitur.*

It is probable that the religion entered Ireland via trade. For many years it was accepted that Saint Patrick introduced Christianity to Ireland. The *Annals of Ulster* (AU) list Patrick's arrival at 432 CE but it is possible that the date was altered to over-emphasize his impact. We know from his writings that it was common practice for the Irish to sail to Britain, capture slaves, and return to their homeland.[34] The slave trade provided consistent exposure to Christianity. Patrick, no doubt alongside other slaves, held strongly to his Christian roots and integrated these into his community.

The Irish were quite advanced in sea travel and evidence points to a rich trade relationship between Ireland and Europe. Tacitus, as early as the 1st and 2nd-centuries, notes that British merchants had knowledge of Irish harbours.[35] There is evidence of wine trade between the Southwest of Ireland and France and copper and tin were traded as early as the Bronze Age.[36] Late Roman pottery has also been found in the province of Munster on both the Iveragh and Dingle peninsulas, very close to the location of Skellig.[37] There is strong evidence, therefore, that the Irish were both skilled seafarers and were exposed to European culture from an early date. [38]

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[34] AU 432; Patrick, *A Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus*, translated by John Skinner, (New York: DoubleDay Publishing, 1998). Patrick makes reference to women who have been taken and abused by Coroticus and his men. §19: You gave away girls like prizes: not yet women, but baptized.; §21: My God inspire these men sometime to come to their senses in regard to God again, so that they may repent, however latter the day, of their grave crimes, namely homicide against the brothers of the Lord, and that they free these baptized women whom they have taken…; Patrick, *The Confession of Saint Patrick*, translated by John Skinner, (New York: DoubleDay Publishing, 1998). §1: At that time, I did not recognize the True God: that was why I was taken as a captive to Ireland, along with many thousands of others with me.

[35] Tacitus, *Cornelii Tacitii, De vita Agricolae*, eds. R.M. Ogilvie and I. Richmond (Oxford, 1967); John R. Walsh and Thomas Bradley, *A History of the Irish Church: 400-700 AD*, (Dublin: The Columba Press, 1991), 11.

[36] Walsh and Bradley, A History of the Irish Church, 12.

[37] Aidan O'Sullivan, Finbar McCormick, Thomas Kerr, Lorcan Harney, "Early Medieval Trade and Exchange" in *Early Medieval Ireland, AD 400-1100: The evidence from archaeological excavations*, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2013) 251

[38] McCaffrey and Eaton, *In Search of Ancient Ireland…* 10-12, 27-28; Jacqueline Cahill Wilson, "Et tu, Hibernia? Frontier Zones and Culture Contact – Ireland in a Roman World" in *Romans and Barbarians Beyond the Frontiers: Archaeology, Ideology, and Identities in the North*, eds. Sergio González Sánchez and Alexandra Guglielmi (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2017) 62-63.

Both Palladius and Patrick were named bishops and appear to have operated under the diocesan structure. Soon after their arrival monastic sites began to appear and quickly became the predominant model for Irish Christendom. Kathleen Hughes has argued that the transition from the diocesan to monastic model was a slow and ambiguous process that occurred between the 5th and 8th-centuries.[39] By the time of Saint Colum Cille abbots appear to take primacy over bishops indicating a deviation from the accepted top-down diocesan model in Europe.[40]

The pre-existing social structure of kinship within *tuatha* became integrated with Irish monasticism. The stone circles of the pre-Christian period were supplanted by monasteries and druids faded as abbots rose to the forefront.[41] The honour price and status of these new religious leaders could surpass that of kings.[42] It was not uncommon for monasteries to be intricately connected with kin. Families often founded the monasteries, donated portions of land, and understood that their local kin may adopt the religious lifestyle.[43] The adaptation of the diocesan model to a structure more suited for the *tuatha* and Irish social network was likely a process of organic and ambiguous growth.[44]

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[39] Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society,* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966) 65-78.; Richard Sharpe and Donnchadh Ó Corráin have challenged Hughes and argue for a more nuanced development of the Irish monastic structure. Despite how this structure may have developed, it is apparent that the monastic model had primacy in early Irish Christianity. See Richard Sharpe, "Some problems concerning the organisation of the Church in early medieval Ireland," *Peritia* 3, (1984): 230-270; Michael W. Herren and Shirley Ann Brown, *Christ in Celtic Christianity,* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002).; Richard Sharpe, "Churches and Communities in Early Medieval Ireland," in *Pastoral Care before the Parish,* edited by John Blair and Richard Sharpe, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992).; Cólman Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland AD 650 to 1000,* (Maynooth: Laigin Publications, 1999).

[40] Adomnán of Iona, *Life of St. Columba,* translated by Richard Sharpe (London: Penguin Books, 1995) 12-15

[41] Duggan, *The Lost Laws of Ireland*, 24-25, 27.

[42] Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law,* 9.

[43] Walsh and Bradley, A History of the Irish Church… 73.

[44] Ibid. 71-72; Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 241-263; Hughes, as summarized by Walsh and Bradley, discusses, at length, three possible reasons for this shift. First, Ireland was able to evolve outside of the Roman sphere and develop its own unique structure. Secondly, the kin and kingship institutions influenced the organizational growth of the church. Land was kept within the family, abbots were often related, and families/monasteries could gain significant power within a

There is no indication that Irish monasticism functioned within a centralized organizational system. It was also not as independent as some scholars have presumed. In Adomnán's hagiography of Colum Cille he refers to a synod which gathered to discuss the exile of the saint during the mid-6th century after his involvement in a local war.[45] If we are to take Adomnán at his word then it appears that some type of structure existed which held individuals accountable. Ó Cróinín argues that *paruchia,* a system in which a web of monasteries answered to their founder's abbey, became the predominant model. Although unique expressions of Christianity existed throughout the land, there is also indication that the Church sought some unification among practice and belief.[46] The *paruchia*, therefore, allowed for both individual growth and a move towards unification. It is under this organizational structure that the synod for Colum Cille operated.[47]

Due to the kin and kingship structure of early Ireland, monasteries naturally became oriented to the *tuatha* out of which they developed. This generated a web of monasteries centralized around a founding Abbey. But not all abbeys developed this web and smaller sites continued to exist. Within these two possibilities there existed both structure and fluidity, uniform practice and diversity. This would explain both the rapid expansion and varied expressions of monastic life in Ireland.

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tuath. Some abbots and monasteries could become politically dominant and influential. Thirdly, entire families could join monastic institutions and donate their lands and money to the institution.

[45] Adomnán, *Life of St. Columba*, 13.

[46] *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis,* edited and translated by Roy Flechner, (Oxford: University of Oxford, 2006), 25-27.

[47] Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland: 400-1200*. (Edinburgh: Longman Group Ltd, 1995) 151.; See Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society,* 125-133, for a more detailed discussion of the development of *paruchiae;*

1.3 - Connection with Rome

During the early medieval period Ireland existed outside of the Roman Empire and at the literal edge of the known world. At the height of its expansion Rome reached into Britain (see fig. 1) and was considered the capital of the world.[48] The notion of Rome as the capital was originally grounded in warfare but came to encompass a profound appreciation for Roman culture. As this section will discuss, Ireland's location just beyond the reaches of Rome was significant to its historical development and identity.

Early medieval people adopted a biblical view of geography. Isidore of Seville, a 6th-7th century scholar popularised a T-O diagram in which the T portion of the map consists of three rivers, the Mediterranean, the Nile, and the Don, which divided the three continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa. The O is the ocean that encircles the world. Jerusalem was believed to be at the centre of the map. His understanding of the world was widely circulated among people of his time. Thomas O'Loughlin points out that individuals such as Adomnán and Colum Cille would have viewed the world in this way. [49]

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[48] Titus Livy, History of Rome, translated by Rev. Canon Roberts, (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1912), 1.16. Abi, nuntia romanis, caelestes ita velle, ut mea Roma caput orbis terrarum sit, proinde rem militarem colant, sciantque et ita posteris tradant nullas opes humanas armis Romanis resistere posse: Go,' said he, 'tell the Romans that it is the will of heaven that my Rome should be the head of all the world. Let them henceforth cultivate the arts of war, and let them know assuredly, and hand down the knowledge to posterity, that no human might can withstand the arms of Rome; For a brief discussion on cultural implications and classical comparisons of this passage see George Converse Fiske, "Augustus and the Religion of Reconstruction," Classical Studies Volume 2, (University of Wisconsin, 1922), 128-129; Figure 1 from Tim Dowley, Introduction to the History of Christiainity: Second Edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 25.

[49] Thomas O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology: Humanity, World, and God in Early Irish Writings* (London: Continuum, 2000) 84.

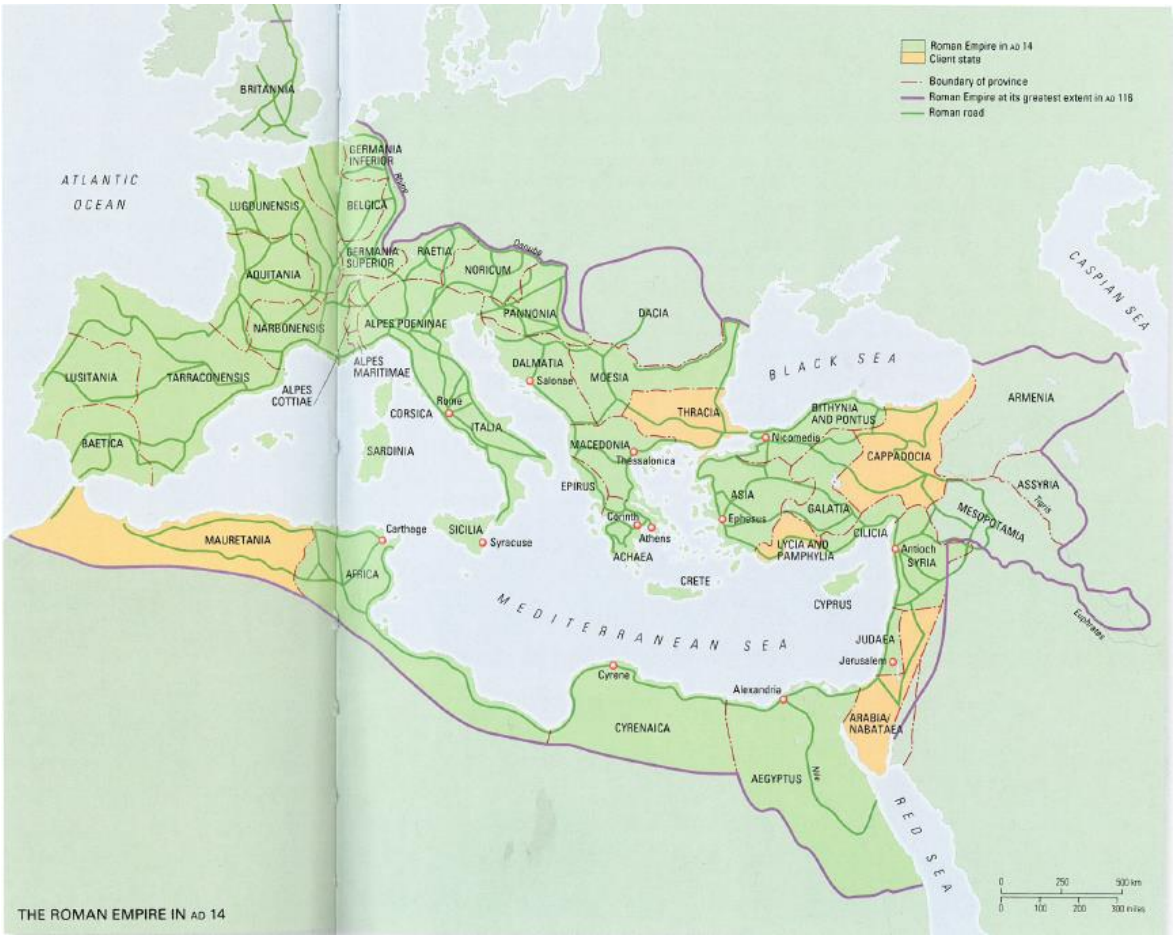

Fig. 1

Ireland was located outside the reach of Rome, at the very edge of Europe, and on the rim of Isidore's rendition of the disc-shaped world. This geographic location enabled a somewhat insular development of Christianity and allowed the Irish to retain their unique culture.[50] Their trade connections and proclivity for sea travel kept them connected to Rome but they were, ultimately, living in a very different world. This separation allowed them to develop without the baggage of Roman ideas and problems.

[50] Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland,* 194.

Many significant changes took place during the first 1000 years of Christianity. After the struggles of the early church, the new religion received protection from persecution via Constantine and the Edict of Milan in 313 CE.[51] With strong Roman support, Christian theology and practice spread like wildfire. By 325 CE the relationship between Christ and the Father was being explored at the Council of Nicea and Christianity gained its foothold as the official religion of Rome by 380 CE.[52]

During this same time period John Chrysostom began preaching against the greed of the empire and advocating for a more austere lifestyle.[53] Meanwhile, while Christianity was being introduced to Ireland, Rome began to disintegrate.[54] By 395 CE the empire divided and the Franks, Visigoths, and other Germanic tribes moved into the west. Roman legions left Britain in 410 CE, a mere 20 years before Palladius and Patrick arrived in Ireland.[55]

During and immediately after the fall of Rome, the Nestorians argued for two natures in Christ, both divine and human, while the Monophysites argued for one fully divine nature.[56] While Saint Patrick was evangelizing Ireland, the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE put this particular controversy to an end. It was decided that Christ was both fully divine and fully human.[57] Meanwhile, Augustine of Hippo, no doubt impacted by the fall of Rome, wrote *City of God* in 426

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[51] Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation, Volume 1* (New York: HarperOne, 2010) 131-148.
[52] *Encyclopedia of Early Christian History,* 2nd ed., s.v. "Nicea, Council of; Nicene Creed."
[53] Mark Ellingsen, *Reclaiming our Roots: An Inclusive Introduction to Church History, Volume 1 – The Late First Century to the Eve of the Reformation* (Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1999) 157-161.
[54] Dowley, Introduction to the History of Christianity, 160-168.
[55] Ibid.
[56] *Encyclopedia of Early Christian History,* s.v. "Nestorianism."; Ibid., s.v. "Monophysitism."
[57] Ibid., s.v. "Chalcedon, Chalcedonian Creed."

CE. He presented a linear view of history in which God's city of love would triumph over the selfish earthly love of man.[58]

The centre of Christianity became situated at Constantinople in the Eastern Byzantine Empire. The Western Roman territory still had the papacy but the political power had disintegrated.[59] Monasteries, influenced by the desert fathers in Egypt and Saint John Cassian, began to develop rules and orders.[60] Saint Benedict lived from 480 – 540 CE.[61] At roughly the same time period, Saint Brendan was voyaging in Ireland and Saint Colum Cille was heading to Iona.[62] The Church became the centralized structure of power around which the people were unified. As politics became increasingly fragmented the Church grew in strength.

By 527 – 565 CE Emperor Justinian I expanded into the Eastern Byzantine territory and attempted to rebuild and unify Rome. The Hagia Sophia was built in 532 – 537 CE but the land was weakened so severely that attempts at reunification were futile. The situation worsened when Justinian's plague arrived. [63] The plague heavily impacted the Byzantine area, territories along the Mediterranean Sea, and stretched all the way to Ireland. Its impact is noted in the year 541 CE in the Annals of Ulster.[64]

Irish pilgrimage, or *peregrinatio,* was strongly developed by this point in history. Saint Columbanus (543 – 615 CE) left his homeland, travelled to Europe, and was engaged in political

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[58] Augustine, *City of God,* translated by Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin Books, 1972). Helen Buss Mitchell, *Readings from the Roots of Wisdom: A Multicultural Reader,* 3rd edition (Canada: Wadsworth, 2002), 99.
[59] Dowley, Introduction to the History of Christianity, 202.
[60] Ibid., 169-182., See O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology,* 52-56 for a detailed discussion on Cassian's influence on Irish penitential texts.
[61] Dowley, Introduction to the History of Christianity, 177-178.
[62] Walsh and Bradley, *A History of the Irish Church,* 94-105; Adomnán, *Life of St. Columba; The Voyage of Saint Brendan*, translated by John J. O'Meara, (Buckinghamshire: Colin Smyth Limited, 1991).

[63] *Encyclopedia of Early Christian History,* s.v. "Justinian I (482-565)"; Ibid., s.v. "Hagia Sophia."
[64] AU, 541.

and theological conversations. He wrote religious leaders about the Paschal Controversy and emphasized the separateness of Irish tradition and identity.[65] Shortly after, Muhammad recited the Quran and Islam moved into Europe c.634-732 CE and pushed against the Byzantine Empire.[66] Also in the 7th century, Skellig Michael Island was being established in Ireland.

In response to the flurry of *peregrinatio* occurring in Ireland at this time, the *Celi Dé* movement developed and emphasized a more settled and austere religious life.[67] Irish monasteries became strong centres for scholarship in the 8th-century.[68] The Gospel of Kells was created and showcased phenomenally intricate artwork.[69] Fosterage practices became commonplace as individuals wanted their children educated and dedicated to God.[70]

In the 8th century in Europe, the iconoclastic controversy of 726 CE caused a schism within the Church which ultimately led to a formal split in 1054 CE between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Church.[71] In the midst of this controversy, the Venerable Bede wrote *Historia Ecclesiastica* in 731 CE, thus providing a helpful account of English history and insight into the Irish practice of *peregrinatio.* [72]

For the Irish, these European events likely seemed distant. They were not part of Rome and were therefore not subject to the stress associated with political disintegration and invading groups.

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[65] Alexander O'Hara, "Patria, Peregrinatio, and Paenitentia: Identities of Alienation in the Seventh Century" In *Post-Roman Transitions*: *Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West,* eds. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Belgium: Brepols Publishing, 2013) 96-102.
[66] David Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History,* (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 2000) 170-177; Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Prophet For Our Time,* (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 2006),
[67] Westley Follett, "Towards a Reassessment of the Céli Dé," in *Céli Dé: Monastic Writing and Identity in the Early Middle Ages,* (New York: Boydell Press, 2006).
[68] Máire and Liam de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland,* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1958) 64-67.
[69] Ibid., 127-128.
[70] Kelly, *Early Irish Law,* 86-90.
[71] Ellingson, *Reclaiming our Roots,* 185-187.
[72] Bede, *A History of the English Church and People,* translated by Leo Sherley-Price (Maryland: Penguin Books, 1955)

It hardly mattered that Constantinople became a central point of Christendom or that the use of icons were a cause for controversy. The fragmentation of the Roman Empire likely did not impact one's local *tuatha* or the *paruchia.* Simple crosses could be carved into slabs of stone and beehive cells could be built on Atlantic outcrops while the Hagia Sophia rose to the height of its glory. The Irish were outside of it all and they encountered God in a very different world.

Both Rome and Ireland were in the midst of a theological churn. The major difference is that the Church was trying to disentangle and unify their ideas to produce a strong Orthodox view. The Irish had a looser structure. Places like Skellig did not answer to an organized Church authority and the *paruchia* provided patchy, albeit growing, oversight. Monasticism grew, *peregrinatio* flourished, and the Irish situated themselves within the Judeo-Christian landscape. They did not view themselves as existing outside of the universal Church. They embraced Christian tradition fully and were part of the body of Christ. [73]

The Irish were unique. Christianity had its own flavour in each *tuatha.* Penitential texts, rules, and community structures varied but commonalities were shared across the land in the realms of learning and practice. Everything was mixing about.[74] While Colum Cille was in Iona, Brendan was voyaging the seas. Columbanus was moving into Burgundy and defending the date of Easter at approximately the same time that Skellig was settled. While *peregrini* were travelling to the mainland young Irish lads were being educated at monasteries and intricate artwork was being created at Kells. All of this occurs against the backdrop of the Roman saga, the development of Arthurian legends, and in the midst of theological change. Sampson states it perfectly when she

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[73] O'Hara, "Patria, Peregrinatio, and Paenitentia," 99. Fay Sampson, *Visions and Voyages: The Story of Celtic Spirituality* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 1998) 13.
[74] Sampson, *Visions and Voyages,* 14.

notes that “these people, places, ideas, were strands weaving in and out of each other, like Celtic knot work.”[75]

[75] Ibid.

Chapter Two: Skellig Archaeology

Skellig Michael is both a unique and remarkably well-preserved early medieval Irish monastic site. Born from the context outlined in Chapter One, the spirituality of this location is illusive. There are no surviving written texts from the island and only scant mainland references. In order to view the site with clarity the archaeology must be assessed and interpreted. Edward Bourke, Alan Hayden, Ann Lynch, and a team of researchers published an archaeological report on the monastery and south peak in 2011.[76] As of this writing, subsequent research analysing the archaeological data has not been produced.[77] It is primarily through this data that the voice of Skellig will be heard.

This chapter will utilize a post-processual methodology. In the first section this methodology will be explained and outlined. Next, this chapter will consider the political and geographic location of Skellig Michael. The potential impact of the local *tuath* will be discussed. Third, the difficulties in accessing Skellig will be explored along with the impact this may have had on the spiritual practices of the monks. Then, this chapter will analyse the nature and aesthetics of the island. It will be argued that the sea and stone served as the primary visual elements. The ways in which biblical writers and early medieval Irish *peregrini*, or pilgrims, encountered these elements will be discussed. Next, the structures on the island and their specific uses will be analysed and interpreted. Monastic zoning and sacred space will be considered as the oratories, *leactha*, burials grounds, and beehive cells are explored. By considering the location, access,

[76] Bourke, et al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry.*
[77] Ibid., 1.

aesthetics, and structures through a post-processual methodology, this chapter will allow Skellig to "speak" and further illuminate the spiritualty of the monastics who settled here.

2.1 - Methodology

Roberta Gilchrist argues that medieval archaeology must be interpreted through both empirical and theoretical means.[78] This chapter will use a contextual and interdisciplinary approach to the archaeology and offer an interpretation that emphasizes the meaning of the material culture on Skellig. This approach is commonly referred to as post-processualism.[79]

In the past empirical methods such as the positivist approach have emphasized raw scientific data and focused on purely objective knowledge as the only means to truly understand archaeological finds.[80] Gilchrist notes that medieval archaeology still favours the empirical approach and processual methodologies (not to be confused with later post-processual methods) draw a hard line between data and theory.[81] Processual methodologies have been critiqued for making cross-cultural generalizations and for being too passive in the understanding of material objects.[82] Processual and positivist approaches focus on explanation drawn from empirical data rather than theories developed via contextualized interpretation.[83]

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[78] Roberta Gilchrist, "Medieval Archaeology and Theory: A Disciplinary Leap of Faith," in *Reflections: 50 Years of Medieval Archaeology 1957-2007,* Society for Medieval Archaeology Monographs, no. 30 (Leeds: Maney, 2009) 399.
[79] Ibid, 388.
[80] Ibid., 386.; C. Gerrard, Medieval Archaeology. Understanding Traditions and Contemporary Approaches, (London: Routledge, 2003), 174.
[81] Gilchrist, "Medieval Archaeology and Theory," 400; Michael Tierney, "Theory and Politics in Early Medieval Irish Archaeology," in *Early Medieval Munster: Archaeology, History, and Society,* eds. Michael A. Monk and John Sheehan (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998) 192.
[82] Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, eds., *Archaeology: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2005) 155-156.
[83] Ibid., 157.; Ian Hodder, *Reading the Past,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Medievalists operate within a variety of academic disciplines. The post-processual approach is grounded in both theory and empirical evidence and posits that the two must be utilized together in order to formulate a more complete understanding of historical sites.[84] Renfrew and Bahn call this to-and-fro between data and theory a hermeneutic.[85] Essentially, the material culture can be read as a book. Post-processualism seeks to read the material with the awareness that people practically engaged with their world.[86] This phenomenological and experiential approach brings to life the empirical findings and places them within the context of history and social structures.[87]

Skellig Michael Island holds no surviving textual sources. It does, however, have a plethora of archaeological material and developed out of the history presented in Chapter One. Using this post-processual methodology, the empirical evidence will be presented and contextualized via a variety of disciplines. The political situation, spatial theory, social identity, and theological ideologies will all be considered. By contextually mapping the empirical evidence in this way, this chapter will illuminate monastic life and spirituality on Skellig. The material culture on the island is a window into the experiences of these early medieval monastics.

2.2 - Location

Skellig Michael is geographically located just off the coast of the West Munster territory in a subkingdom known as Áes Irruis Desicert (see Fig. 1).[88] During the early medieval period, the

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[84] Gilchrist, "Medieval Archaeology and Theory," 400-401.
[85] Renfrew and Bahn, *Archaeology: The Key Concepts,* 157.; Ian Hodder, *The Archaeological Process: An Introduction,* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999) 85-87.
[86] Renfrew and Bahn, *Archaeology: The Key Concepts,* 157.; Christopher Tilley, *The Phenomenology of Landscape*, (Oxford: Berg, 1994)
[87] Renfrew and Bahn, Archaeology: The Key Concepts, 157.
[88] Bourke, et al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 18-19; Bourke, et al. notes that during the medieval period, Munster was divided into the Eastern and Western territories known as Aurmumu and Íarmumu. Íarmumu was divided into several subkingdoms, one of which was the Corcu Duibne which encapsulated the Iveragh peninsula and South and West portions of the Dingle peninsula. The Corcu Duibne was further divided into three territories known as the

Eóganacht ruled Munster and their control spanned across the South, from Dublin to Clare.[89] Comparable to the Uí Néill's in the North, the Eóganacht in the South were incredibly powerful and ruled by a confederacy of kingdoms.[90] Three kingdoms were considered to be part of the inner circle: Eóganacht Chaisil, Eóganacht Áine, and Eóganacht Glendamnach. They ruled from Cashel, Knockainy, and the Galty Mountains.[91] The other kingdoms were Eóganacht Arann (Arann Islands), Eóganacht Raithlind (Cork), and Eóganacht Locha Léin (Kerry).[92]

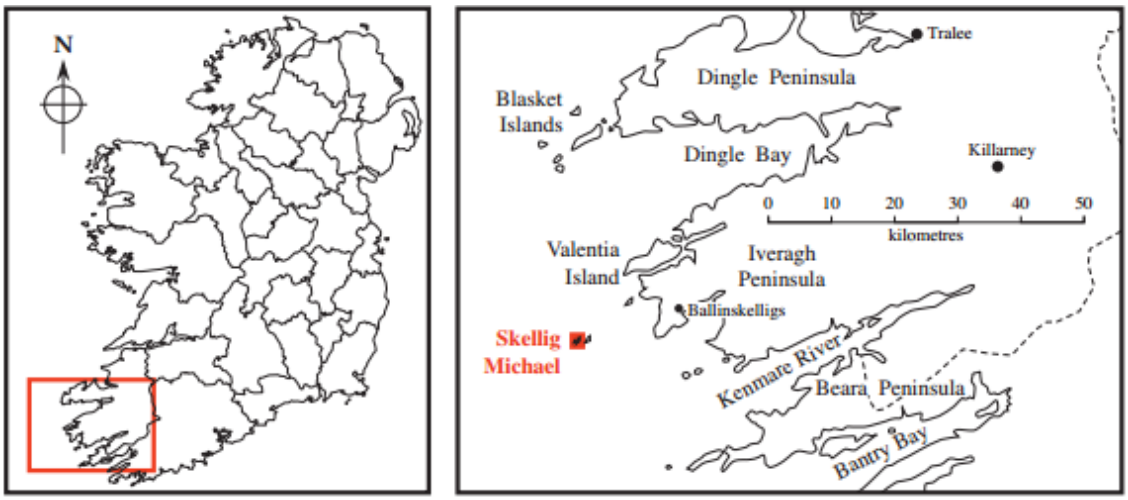

Fig. 2

The Eóganacht Locha Léin controlled the territory of West Munster or Íarmumu in which Skellig resided. Predominantly, only the 'inner circle' of the Eóganacht held kingship positions at Chaisil.[93] Despite this, the Eóganacht Locha Léin still held significant, if contentious, power in the

Irrus Tuascirt, Áed Conchinn, and Áes Irruis Deiscert. The Áes Irruis Deiscert terrtitory occupied most of the Iveragh peninsula.

[89] Meyer, 'The Laud Genealogies and Tribal Histories," 315-316.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Bourke, et al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 18.

region. Some members of this *tuath* were even named kings of Munster, the last of which was Ólchubur mac Cináed in 851 CE.[94]

In the few texts that exist which reference the Eóganacht Locha Léin, they are presented as antagonists against the Eóganacht Chaisil. These texts must be read with caution. The *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* contains a collection of medieval genealogies that were likely recorded by major rulers, such as those at Chaisil and the West Munster Synod is believed to have been written in the 10th century, many years after the 6th century events it records.[95]

The Founder of the Eóganacht Locha Léin was named Coirpre Luachra, son of Conall Corc (the founder of Eóganacht Chaisil) and a Pict woman.[96] In the *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* a dream by Conall Corc's wife is depicted. While sleeping at the rock of Cashel she dreamed of four puppies. The first was bathed in wine, the second in ale, the third in new milk, and the fourth in water. A fifth puppy came to her covered in blood and gnawed at her breast. Each puppy was representative of the various chiefdoms while the fifth puppy was to represent the Eóganacht Locha Léin.[97] Coirpre Luachra, it is recorded, later murdered his father's steward and was exiled to the West.[98] This early depiction of the Eóganacht Locha Léin underpins their reputation as antagonists in the region.

In the West Munster Synod the rights of the Eóganacht Locha Léin were restricted. The text, partially royal and partially ecclesiastical, justified a rebellion by a group of West Munster

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[94] Ibid., 18-19.; For further discussion on Munster politics and population groups see Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland,* 57-59.
[95] *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, edited by Michael A. O'Brien, (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1962). Meyer, "The Laud Genealogies," 315-316.; Donnchadh O Corrain, "Creating the Past: Early Irish Genealogical Tradition," *Carroll Lecture,* 1992.
[96] Meyer, "The Laud Genealogies," 315-316.
[97] Ibid.; *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae,* 195-196.
[98] Ibid.

kingdoms against the Eóganacht Locha Léin.[99] In its earliest phases the Eóganacht Locha Léin were likely independent from greater Eóganacht. The synod discusses the tensions between this group and the larger territories in Munster. As was so often the case in early medieval Ireland, warfare occurred between *tuatha* and political powers began to shift. Eóganacht Locha Léin and Eóganacht Chaisil knew that a direct clash would have been destructive for both of them. Rather than all out warfare they attacked one another's petty kingdoms. It is these kingdoms that attempted to restrict and diminish the power of the Eóganacht Locha Léin in the West Munster Synod.[100]

It is impossible to know what impact the Eóganacht Locha Léin had on the inhabitants at Skellig Michael. The sources are limited and those that do exist are likely skewed in favour of greater Eóganacht *tuatha*. It is possible, however, to infer a few significant points. First of all, the political situation of Munster was similar to much of Ireland. There were shifting powers and skirmishes between *tuatha.* Rulers did not have the organized government and bureaucratic approach that we are familiar with today. The rule of a given king would have been based on social contracts and honour.[101] Thomas Charles-Edwards notes that edicts and laws were enforced upon society by society itself.[102] The Eóganacht Locha Léin began in the 5th century and dissolved by the 10th, dates which very nearly coincide with the settlement at Skellig. This contentious relationship between Eóganacht Locha Léin and the inner circle of the greater Eóganacht rulers formed the mainland backdrop to Skellig.

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[99] Thomas Charles Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 522.; *Dál Caladbuig*, §§ 1-7 of 'Dál Caladbuig and Reciprocal Services between the Kings of Cashel and Various Munster States,' edited by J. G. O'Keefe, in J. Fraser, P. Grosjean and J. G. O'Keefe (eds), *Irish Texts,* (London: 1931) 19-21.
[100] Meyer, "The Laud Genealogies," 315-316.
[101] This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four: Brehon Laws
[102] Charles Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* 524.

Second, it is difficult to know the extent to which this backdrop and rule influenced the monks on Skellig Michael Island. The sources are too scant and the ones that do exist are too skewed in favour of the Eóganacht inner circle. Certainly those choosing to enter into religious life on Skellig would have been familiar with some Eóganacht happenings. Saint Brendan, a contemporary source, was born "among the Eóganacht of Loch Léin in the land of the men of Munster."[103] The same is likely true of the monastics that settled on Skellig. It would be a stretch, therefore, to say that the monastics at Skellig were completely unaware of any mainland politics. From archaeological finds we do know that they exercised some dependency on the mainland and information from the legal tracts indicate a symbiotic relationship between monastics and laity.[104]

Third, the Eóganacht Locha Léin were geographically removed from the inner circle of the Eóganachta and greater Munster territories. Not only was Skellig at the edge of the known world, they were also situated within a *tuath* that was on the outermost reaches of Munster. The founding ruler of the Eóganacht Locha Léin was exiled after having murdered his father's steward.[105] As noted in Chapter One, separation from one's *tuath* could be devastating socially and legally. Still, this individual managed to develop one of the strongest territories of the Eóganacht outer circle. If this story holds true then it is possible that tension between the Eóganacht Locha Léin and Eóganacht Chaisil has roots in this exile. The loss of honour after the perceived betrayal of the *tuath* would not have been met lightly. As will be explored more fully in Chapters Three and Four, separation from society and exile was central to Skellig spirituality. The very foundations of the Eóganacht Locha Léin were rooted in these concepts. This lack of belonging, coupled with being

[103] *The Voyage of Saint Brendan,* translated by John O'Meara, (Buckinghamshire: Colin Smyth Limited, 1991), §1.
[104] The relationship between monastics and laity will be discussed in Chapter Four: Brehon Laws.
[105] *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, 195-196.; Meyer, "The Laud Genealogies," 315-316.

located at the edge of the known world, certainly contributed to the intensity of the ascetic experience.

2.3 - Accessibility

Skellig Michael is located 11.6 km off the westernmost tip of the Iveragh peninsula. Because of its distance from the mainland, Skellig is only accessible via boat.[106] It can take modern travellers up to 1.5 hours to reach the island on a clear day. Today, travel is heavily dependent upon the weather. The Atlantic wind and choppy seas can make travel to the island and docking a difficult task.

The monks of Skellig would have travelled to the island in small boats known as currachs that were made of wood and animal hide.[107] The Irish were skilled sailors and the waterways connected the people rather than separated them. This comfort with sailing was coupled with mild weather prior to the 10th-11th centuries.[108] Despite this, however, accessing Skellig Michael would still have been a precarious task. The Atlantic seas and jagged rocks of the island made docking a challenge.

As individuals approach the striking rock face which juts from the depths of the sea, they are met with three sets of steps. These stairways served as landing points around the island (see

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[106] McCafferey and Eaton, *In Search of Ancient Ireland*, 10-12.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Bourke, et al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry*, 24.; The settlement at Skellig dissolved around the 12th century. Climate change was likely a contributing factor. For more information see the following sources: Neville Brown, *History and Climate Change: A Eurocentric Perspective*, (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2014), 175.; M. McCormick, P. E. Dutton, et al. Volcanoes and the Climate Forcing of Carolingian Europe, A.D. 750– 950. *Speculum* 82 (2007): 865–895.; Gerard Kiely, Paul Leahy, Francis Ludlow, Bettina Stefanini, Eileen Reilly, Michael Monk and Jason Harris, *Climate Change Research Programme (CCRP) 2007-2013 Report Series No. 5: Extreme Weather, Climate, and Natural Disasters in Ireland*, (Wexford, Ireland: Environmental Protection Agency, 2010): 22, <https://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/research/climate/CCRP_5_Kiely_ExtremeWeather_syn_web.pdf.pdf>

fig. 3).[109] If the sea was too rough then one could simply circle the island and dock at a safer location. The base of each set of steps were cut directly from the rock. Once out of reach of the sea, however, slabs of sandstone and slate were heaved into place to form the stairways (see fig. 4).[110] The stone for the steps was quarried from the island itself with much of it coming from sloped areas above the monastic site.[111] The east and north steps are no longer accessible to the public. The base of the east steps was blasted out in the 1820's while portions of the north steps have eroded and collapsed. The south steps are used by visitors today and are accessed by a road that leads to a 19th century lighthouse.[112] The south and north steps join together at a depression in the island known as Christ's Saddle and continue as one flight to the monastery.

There are nine monastic sites dating to the medieval and early medieval period located on offshore islands in the Dingle and Iveragh peninsulas.[113] While their structures and layouts are comparable to Skellig Michael, none of them come close to the dramatic isolation and difficult accessibility of the island. For example, Illaunloughan is located in the Portmagee Channel between Valencia Island and the Kerry mainland. It is so low-lying that it can be accessed on foot during low tide.[114] Church Island Monastery is located in Valencia Harbour and today can be accessed via ferry. Modern travellers are even able to rent canoes and paddle around the island.[115] Begenish Island is part of the Blasket Islands and is located off the coast of Valencia. It is

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[109] Bourke, et al, *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 2.
[110] Ibid., 5.; Photo by Sumer Bingham, 2015.
[111] Bourke, Hayden, Lynch, et al., *Skellig Michael,* 13.
[112] Ibid., 5.
[113] Judith Cuppage, Archaeological survey of the Dingle peninsula, (Dublin: Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne, 1986) 344-345.; O'Sullivan and Sheehan, *The Iveragh Peninsula.*
[114] Jenny White Marshall and Claire Walsh, "Illaunloughan, Co. Kerry: An Island Hermitage" in *Early Medieval Munster: Archaeology, History, and Society* edited by Michael A. Monk and John Sheehan, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998) 102-103.
[115] P.J. Lynch, "Church Island, Valentia Harbour, Co. Kerry" in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries in Ireland,* 5th series, 10, no. 2, (1990): 155-160.

accessible via boat, although it doesn't rise as high as Skellig and is somewhat protected from the harsh Atlantic winds due to its geographic location.[116]

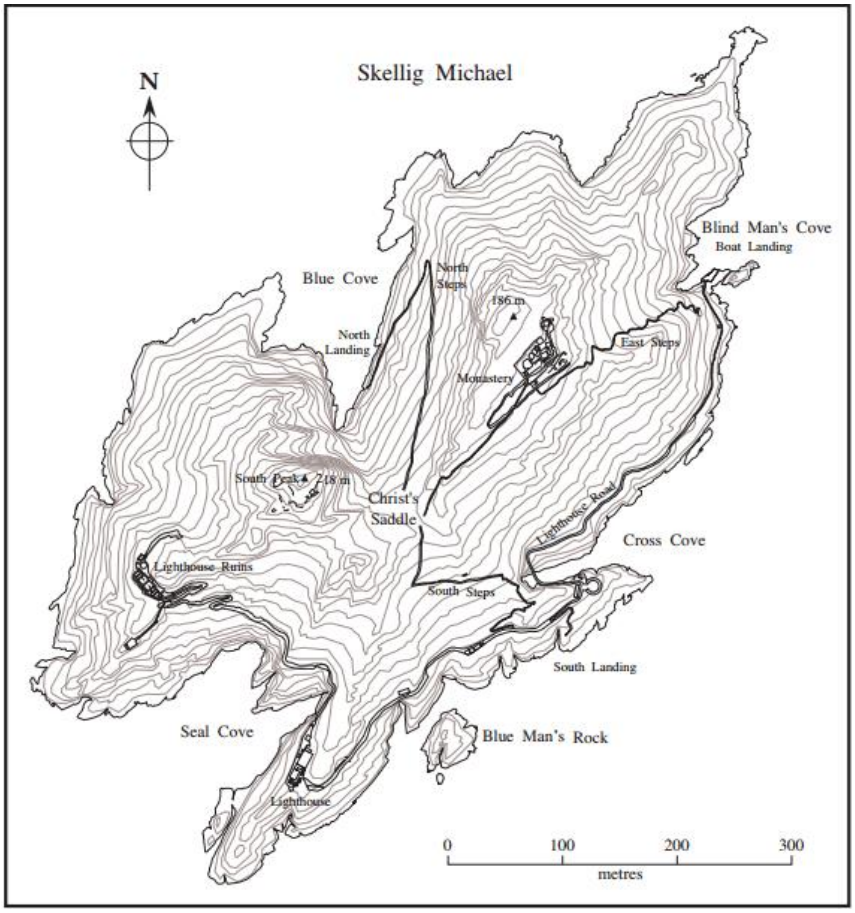

Fig. 3

[116] J.D. Richards, *The Vikings: A Very Short Introduction,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 81.

Fig. 4

Island monasteries in the early medieval period were common.[117] The locations provided distance from the day-to-day demands of the mainland and also allowed monastics to focus more

[117] Elizabeth Rees, *Celtic Sites and Their Saints: A Guidebook,* (Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd, 2003), 31.; A number of mainland monasteries were also built on islands in the middle of lakes. Inisfallen Monastery was built in Lough Lein, one of the three lakes of Killarney. The Annals of Inisfallen were written here and the monastery was known as a centre of learning and scholarship. Another site, also named Church Island, is located in Lough Currane is said

resolutely on their spiritual life. In leaving their ordinary lives and comfort of their *tuatha* the monastics, to varying degrees, engaged in asceticism and scholarship.[118] Skellig, however, remains unique. No other site is so far from the mainland and so difficult to access. The boat ride would have been long and potentially rough with docking even more precarious. The rugged terrain of the island meant physical labour and hardship in the face of the wild Atlantic weather. The island stretches into the sky leaving no shelter from the wind as individuals climbed higher and higher above sea level. The monastics at Skellig may have mimicked the trend of island monasteries in West Munster but they certainly stood out in comparison.

2.4 - Place, Space, and Nature as a Theophany

Given its location and proximity to creation, it is reasonable to assume that nature played a significant role in the spirituality of Skellig monks. In an effort to understand this relationship, the importance of nature among *peregrini* will be established. Skellig Michael is, essentially, a rugged rock rising up out of the sea. The sea and elevated landscape form the most significant visual attributes of the island and, as the monks trekked across the ocean and up the stairs, it is of these features that they were most spatially aware. Understanding the biblical importance of the sea and elevated landscapes, as well as how other Irish Christians from this time period understood these spaces, will provide some context for the space and place of Skellig spirituality.

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to be the burial site of Saint Finan of Lindisfarne. Saint Finbarr's Oratory is located in Lough Gougana Barra. The oratory dates to the 1700's but the remains of a 7th century site reportedly founded by Saint Finbarr can also be found here. Additional information on these sites can be found in O'Sullivan and Sheehan, *The Iveragh Peninsula.*

[118] John T. McNeil, *The Celtic Churches: A History, A.D. 200 to 1200,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 120-134.

John MacQuarrie argues that Irish Christianity maintained its intimate relationship with nature that was prevalent in its pre-Christian history.[119] John Scotus Eriugena, a 9th-century theologian, notes that nature includes both God and all of God's creatures.[120] Although heavily influenced by Neoplatonic thought, the Irish influence on Eriugena's writings should not be discounted. He emphasizes both the immanence and transcendence of God that is so readily reflected in the writings of Irish saints. MacQuarrie notes that Eruigena talks frequently of theophanies and argues that "…for him it would not be going too far to say that the world is a theophany."[121]

It is true that during the early medieval period the saints commonly encountered God in nature. In Saint Patrick's *Confession* he writes:

> "…After I had come to Ireland, it was then that I was made to shepherd the flocks day after day, and, as I did so, I would pray all the time, right through the day. More and more the love of God and fear of him grew strong within me, and as my faith grew so the Spirit became more and more active, so that in a single day I would say as many as a hundred prayers, and at night only slightly less. Although I would stay in forests and on the mountainside, it would be the same; even before dawn broke I would be aroused to pray. In snow, in frost, in rain."[122]

This is true of Saint Colum Cille as well. In Adomnán's hagiography of the saint he notes that Colum Cille was visited by angels as he prayed in a valley.[123] This saint is also well known for his affinity for nature and animals. His name itself means "dove of the church" and there are stories

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[119] Since there are a lack of pre-Christian written sources, any inferences made on the pre-Christian relationship with nature must be based on later sources and inferred with extreme care. John MacQuarrie, *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality,* edited by Gordon S. Wakefield, s.v. "Celtic Spirituality," (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983).
[120] Ibid.; Eriugena Periphyseon, *De Divisione Naturae,* translated and edited by I.P. Sheldon-Williams and Ludwig Bieler, (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1981).
[121] MacQuarrie, *Dictionary,* s.v. "Celtic Spirituality."
[122] Patrick, *The Confession,* § 16.
[123] Adomnán of Iona, *Life of St. Columba,* 3.16.

in his hagiography which depict his compassion for all living beings.[124] Saint Colum Cille is also depicted engaging in prayer outside.[125] Saint Brendan climbs to the top of a mountain before setting off in search of the Island Paradise of Saints.[126] At various points through his story he encounters islands full of trees that grow grapes as large as apples, [127] says Mass on the back of a whale,[128] and visits an island of birds.[129] Each of these experiences bring him closer to God during his *peregrinatio.*

Individuals on Skellig would have been readily exposed to nature on all sides. The jagged red sandstone that reaches toward the heavens on this U-shaped island stands in direct contrast to the sea below (see fig. 5).[130] Thirty-eight species of plants are scattered across the rocky terrain, each of them clinging daringly to the cliff face.[131] Plant life must be able to survive the thin soil, sea spray, and harsh wind. This rugged location is teeming with life. Rabbits, house mice, and grey seals have been seen on the island and Little Skellig was (and still is) home to the world's largest gannet population.[132] Beneath the rock and peeking from behind tufts of sea spurrey, puffins build their nests and growl at anyone who dares to venture too close to their eggs.[133]

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[124] Ibid., 1.48, 3.23.
[125] Ibid., 3.8.
[126] *The Voyage of Saint Brendan*, §4.
[127] Ibid., § 18.
[128] Ibid., § 10.
[129] Ibid., § 11.
[130] Photo by Sumer Bingham, 2015.
[131] Lavelle, *Skellig*, 84-86.
[132] Ibid., 68-83, 90-98.
[133] Ibid., 74.


Fig. 5

No fresh water source exists on the island. The monastics built cisterns to collect rainwater which are older than the living quarters. Three cisterns were found near the monastic area with a fourth basin located at the South Peak Hermitage. Storage of water was vital for survival even in the earliest days of the settlement and the main cisterns could hold up to 450 litres of water.[134]

The ocean is the most evident aesthetic on Skellig Michael. Located in the middle of the Atlantic, this island is surrounded by the sea in every direction. The smell of the salt-water permeates the air, the waves crash against the rocks, and the water casts a fine mist on the stairways leading to the monastic enclosure. In order to even step foot on Skellig Michael one would have needed to trek across the sea in a currach. To reside on Skellig, then, one becomes acutely aware of the sea.

[134] Bourke, et al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 13, 456.

The ocean is a prevalent image in both biblical and Irish writings. In all of Christendom it is a symbol of both creation and destruction.[135] In Genesis 1 the "face of the deep" is a source of mystery and, as God's breath blows over the face of the water, new life is formed.[136] Meanwhile, in Genesis 7 the "fountains of the deep burst forth" and flood the earth, bringing about destruction and chaos.[137] In Mark 4:35-41 Jesus calms a stormy and terrifying sea. With just a stretch of his hand the elements obey his command and peace is brought forth.[138]

This paradoxical biblical understanding of the ocean as a symbol of both creation and destruction is also presented in Irish literature. The Book of Lismore, a 12th-century compilation of saints' lives depicts the story of Saint Brendan's climb to the top of a mountain to reflect on his upcoming *peregrinatio.*[139] Searching for the island Paradise of Saints he sees his destination surrounded by "intolerable ocean." His *peregrinatio* will take him through many challenges as he crosses the water and arrives in paradise. The ocean, for Brendan, is comparable to a biblical journey in the desert.[140]

The ocean also holds a quality of re-creation among the Irish. Mary Byrne discusses an early medieval practice of punishment and penance found in Muirchu's *Life of Patrick.*[141] After attempting to murder Patrick, Macc Cuill seeks forgiveness and requests baptism and penance. Patrick prescribes the following penitential act:

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[135] Keith Egan, *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality,* edited by Gordon S. Wakefield, s.v. "Water," (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983)..
[136] Genesis 1:1-2; All biblical references are from Douay-Rheims.
[137] Genesis 7:11.
[138] Mark 4:35-41.
[139] This concept will be explored in greater details in Chapter Three. Low, *Celtic Christianity and Nature,* 54.; "Life of Brenainn, Son of Finnlugh," edited and translated by Whitley Stokes in *Live of Saints from the Book of Lismore,* (Oxford: 1890), 20-33 (ed) and 247-261 (translated).
[140] Low, *Celtic Christianity and Nature,* 55.
[141] Byrne, "On the Punishment," 97-102.

> "…Go away unarmed to the sea and cross quickly from this land of Ireland taking nothing of your possessions with you except some poor little garment with which to cover your body, and tasting nothing and eating nothing of the produce of this island, and with the mark of your sin on your head; and when you reach the sea, shackle your feet together with iron fetters and throw the key into the sea, and put yourself into a boat made of one skin, without rudder and without oar, and be ready to go wherever wind and sea may take you; and whatever land Divine Providence may bring you to, to dwell in it and carry out God's command."[142]

Macc Cuill lands upon the Isle of Man and lives out his life as a holy man. Saint Colum Cille himself left Ireland and settled at Iona after his involvement in an Irish war.[143] Colum Cille later prescribes the same penitential act for the people of Ross after they have murdered their king. These individuals, Mary Low notes, were later found with the prophets Elijah and Enoch having eradicated sin from their lives.[144]

The ocean, therefore, holds a dangerous and redemptive quality. Being surrounded by the face of the deep on all sides has the potential to bring about re-creation and renewal. In this isolated location the monks at Skellig were immersed in asceticism and the penitential act of wandering in their desert-like ocean.[145] The journey was not easy, but just as Jesus calmed the chaos of the stormy sea, so too did the Skellig monks seek a calmness within their own dangerous journey. The endless expanse of the sea, the smell of salt-water in the air, the crash of waves against the rock, and the mist that continually lay upon the stairs all served as a reminder of the transformation that God could bring about at this unique place.

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[142] Low, *Celtic Christianity and Nature,* 168.; Byrne, "On the Punishment," 97-102.; *Muirchu, Life of St. Patrick,* translated by L. Bieler, (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies), accessed www.confessio.ie, § 23.
[143] Adomnan of Iona, *Life of St. Columba,* 12-13.
[144] Low, *Celtic Christianity and Nature,* 168.; *Voyage of Snedgus and MacRiagla,* edited by Whitley Stokes, *RC* 9, 1888, 14-25, § 7-10, 21-23.
[145] This notion of asceticism will be expanded upon in Chapter Three.

Monastics were faced with the beauty and toughness of this landscape every day. As they carried out their daily chores of gathering food, collecting water, and maintaining the island, they would have become intimately familiar with their rock in the Atlantic. They were surrounded daily by rugged stone that rose towards the heavens. This solid rock face, in direct juxtaposition to the continually moving sea below, makes up the other significant aesthetic of Skellig.

In the biblical tradition places of raised elevation, such as mountains, hills, and mounds, are often locations in which God is readily encountered. There is a significant theophany at Mount Sinai when Moses receives the law in Exodus 19. God is characterized by thunder, lightning, a thick cloud, and a trumpet blast as the people stand at the base of the mountain in awe.[146] In 1 Kings 19 Elijah spends the night in a cave on Mount Horeb where he hears the voice of the Lord. This experience is accompanied with a fierce wind, earthquake, and fire.[147] Mount Zion, the highest point in Jerusalem, is a spiritual centre for the Israelite people and is described frequently as the dwelling place and mountain of God.[148]

In the New Testament, Jesus frequently seeks refuge and prays on mountains and hills. In Matthew 14:23, after he walks on water, Jesus "…went up the mountain by himself to pray."[149] Luke 22 notes that he prayed frequently at the Mount of Olives and even spent his last night there.[150] He was later crucified at Golgotha, or the place of the skull, so called because of its mound-like shape. It is more commonly known, thanks to its Latin translation, as the Hill of Calvary. During the crucifixion this hill is, in its own way, a location of yet another theophany.[151]

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[146] Exodus 19:16-20.
[147] 1 Kings 19:11-13.
[148] Joel 3:16-17; Psalm 76:2; Psalm 135:21; Psalm 132:13-16; Micah 4:6-7; Isaiah 2:2-4.
[149] Matthew 14:23; Luke 6:12.
[150] Luke 22:39-44.
[151] Luke 23:33.

For the Irish, mountains and hills were of equal importance. The Hill of Tara was the location ascribed to the *ard ri* or high king, a title often reserved for God. This location was situated both above the common people and close enough to be an active part of their life.[152] Patrick battled the Druids here in his hagiography written by Muirchu, thus establishing the impressive might of the Judeo-Christian God. As previously noted, Patrick, Colum Cille, and Brendan all prayed on mountainsides and actively sought God in this natural landscape. The mentions of such landscape features imply a consistency of nature in the word of the saints. For example, after a brethren situated on a hill spies Colum Cille praying and being visited by an angel in the valley below, Adamnan invites the reader to imagine how often such an event took place.[153] Just as Jesus frequently visited the Mount of Olives, the Irish saints of the early medieval period visited their respective mountains to talk with God.

It is no accident that the monastery at Skellig Michael is situated near the top of this rocky crag. Mountains represent power and the presence of God in both the biblical and early medieval Irish tradition. With a cluster of beehive huts at the top and space dedicated to prayer, it is reasonable to infer that this mountain-like landscape was associated with the presence of God. Understanding the biblical tradition it is not difficult to imagine monks encountering God here in equally powerful ways.

Landscape is critically important to spirituality. For the monks at Skellig, the sea and stone which surrounded them likely served as a daily reminder of their relationship with God. *Peregrinatio,* as will be discussed in the next chapter, was an act of asceticism that could actively be carried out by living on this island. The oratories, beehive cells, and *leactha* erected on this

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[152] MacQuarrie, *Dictionary,* s.v. "Celtic Spirituality."
[153] Adomnan of Iona, *Life of St. Columba,* 3.16.

island were sacred, but ultimately the landscape would have been at the forefront of their awareness. Based on biblical tradition and analogous sources, it is reasonable to infer that the hardship and renewal of the sea, as well as the power and presence of God on the mountain, played an active part in their spirituality. These monks sailed to the end of the world and climbed towards heaven in an effort to become transformed for the sake of God.

2.5 - Monastic Zoning: Asceticism, Power, and Sacred Identity

In 1957 François Henry coined the term "eremitic monastery" to refer to the unique Irish blend of anchorite and cenobitic spirituality.[154] She notes common features of early medieval Irish monastic sites, including oratories, beehive huts, *leachta,* and burial grounds, and comments on their frequent proximity to one another.[155] These core features that are present at "eremitic monasteries" are often enclosed or walled off in some way. [156] Archaeologist Tomás Ó Carragáin supports Henry's supposition in a study conducted over sixty-six ecclesiastical sites in the Iveragh and Dingle peninsulas.[157] Together they provide strong support for the probability of monastic zoning, or separation of the main site from its surrounding landscape and other features. While some scholars, such as Maire and Liam de Paor, Ann Hamlin, and Kathleen Hughes, have made an argument for random or irregular monastic structure across Ireland, they have conceded that

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[154] François Henry, "Early Monasteries, Beehive Huts, and Dry-stone Houses in the Neigbourhood of Cahirciveen and Waterville (Co. Kerry)," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 58C (1957): 154-158; David Jenkins, *'Holy, Holier, Holiest': The Sacred Topography of the Early Medieval Irish Church,* (Belgium: Brepols Publishing, 2010), 4.
[155] Ibid.; Jenkins, *'Holy, Holier, Holiest,'* 4-6.; These features will be defined and explained in detail later in the chapter.
[156] Jenkins, 'Holy, Holier, Holiest,' 5.
[157] Tomás Ó Carragáin, "A Landscape Converted: Archaeology and Early Church Organisation on Iveragh and Dingle, Ireland", in *The Cross Goes North*, edited by M. Carver, (Woodbridge: 2005), 129, 147.

zoning was prevalent.[158] Jenkins presents the argument that this zoning signifies an ascetic ideal, power, and sacred identity.[159]

Skellig Michael is a shining example of the eremitic monastery model that is presented by Henry.[160] The inhabitants of Skellig built a series of structures to protect them from the elements and aid in their worship. In the monastic enclosure there are seven beehive huts, two oratories, a mortared church, two *leachta,* a burial ground, and several cross slabs (see fig. 6, 7, and 8).[161] This monastic enclosure may have supported up to twelve monks or more at a time and was, as Jenkins notes, uncharacteristically large when compared to other island eremitic monasteries.[162]

There is a hermitage on the South Peak which contains an oratory, a hut, a *leacht,* and cross slabs alongside two terraces.[163] It is difficult to access and has room enough for only one person. This site, Jenkins notes, is "visible only to God."[164] While the majority of the community lived and worked at the monastic enclosure, the hermitage site may have been reserved for individuals pursuing advanced spiritual discipline or penance.

The monastic enclosure is walled, likely for both practical and religious purposes. The retaining walls provide extra support due to its location but the full enclosure and entryway suggest a more deliberate and theological purpose. The *leacht* and oratory at the South Peak is separate from the other features, also suggesting a religious purpose.[165]

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[158] de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland,* 64; Kathleen Hughes and Ann Hamlin, *Celtic Monasticism: The Modern Traveler to the Irish Church,* (London: 1977), 73.
[159] Jenkins, '*Holy, Holier, Holiest,'* 4-14, 25-32, 33-39.
[160] Jenkins, '*Holy, Holier, Holiest,'* 8-9.
[161] Bourke, et al, *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 6-7, 12.
[162] Ibid., 5-9
[163] Bourke, Hayden, Lynch, et al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 8, 14-16.
[164] Jenkins, '*Holy, Holier, Holiest,'* 9.
[165] Ibid., 9. Also see pages 4-56 of Jenkins for a lengthier archaeological discussion on the importance of monastic enclosures.

Fig. 6

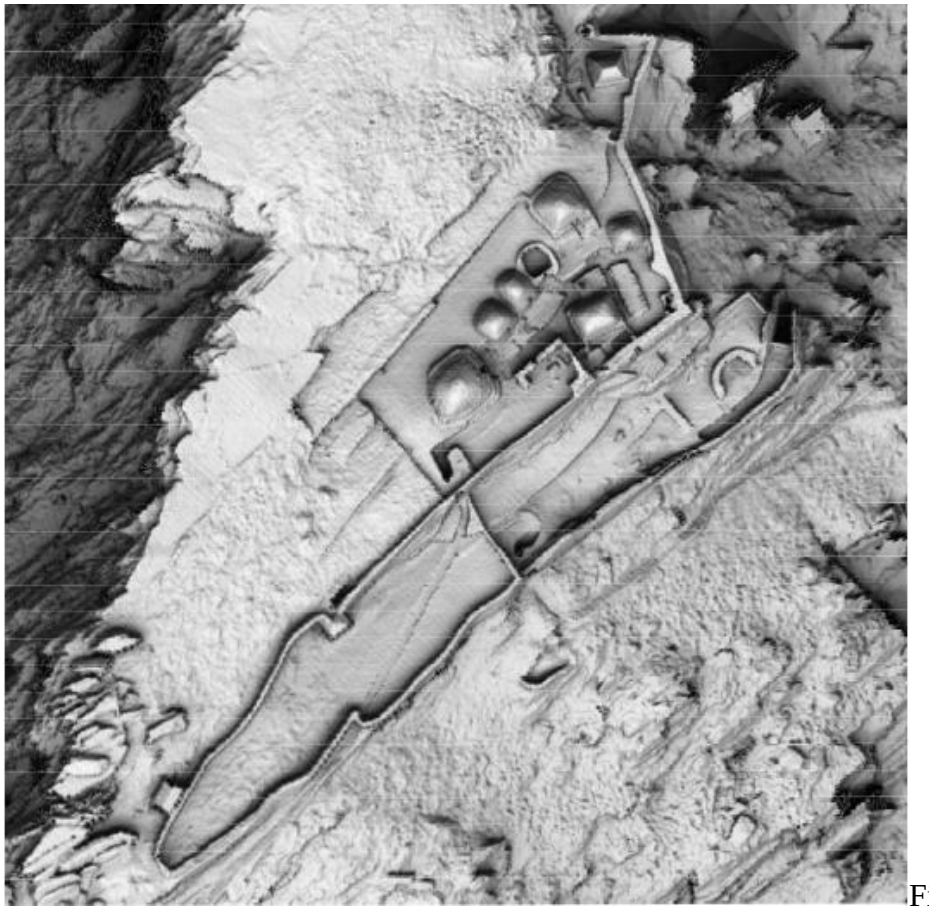
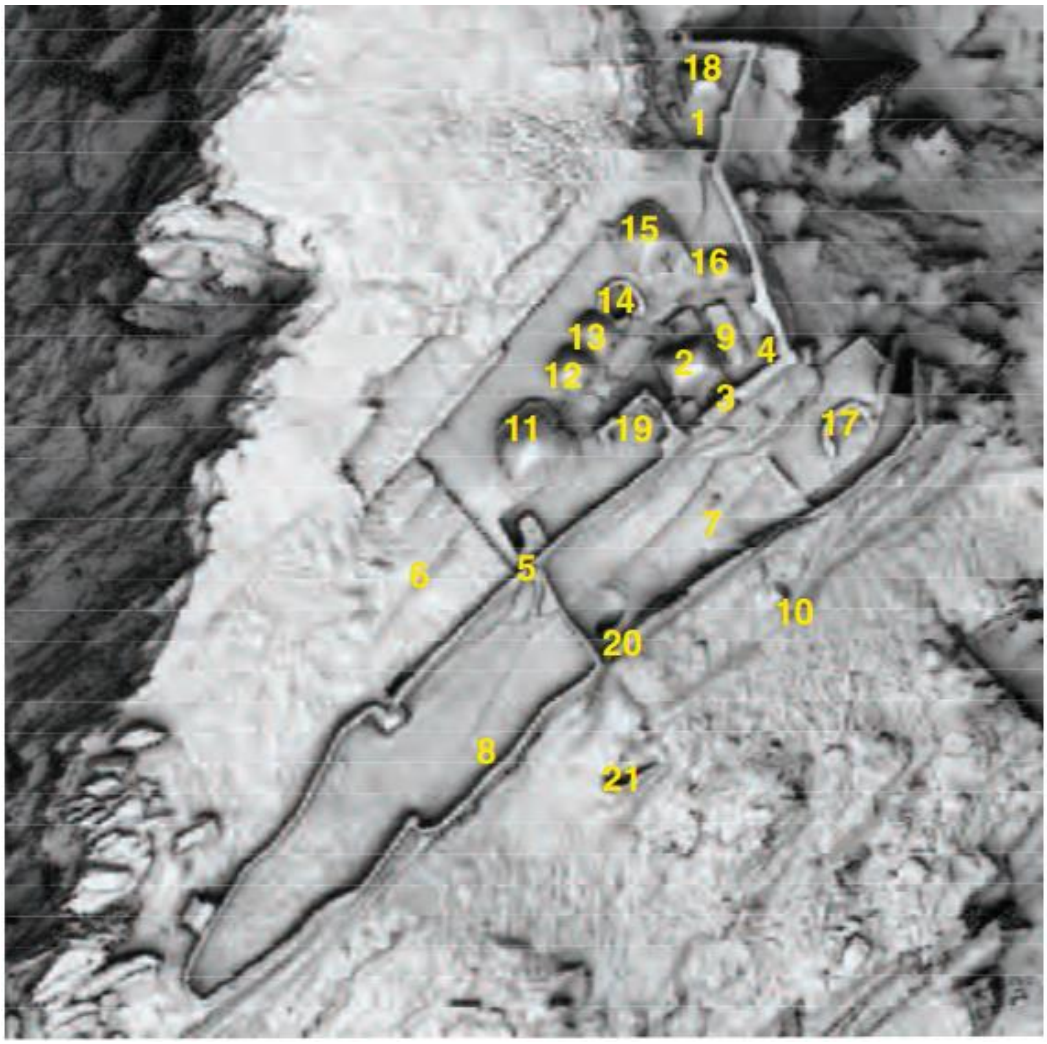


Fig. 7



1. Small oratory terrace
2. Large oratory
3. South entrance 1, inner enclosure and *Leacht* area
4. East entrance, inner enclosure
5. South entrance 2, inner enclosure
6. Cistern 3
7. Lower monks' garden
8. Upper monks' garden
9. Monks' graveyard
10. East steps
11. Cell A
12. Cell B
13. Cell C
14. Cell D
15. Cell E
16. Cell F
17. Cell G
18. Small oratory
19. Saint Michael's Church
20. South entrance, outer enclosure
21. Guesthouse

Fig. 8

This research aligns closely with Jenkins' ideas that zoning helps monastic sites establish an ascetic ideal, power, and sacred identity. For the monks at Skellig the very location of the island firmly establishes ascetic practice.[166] Walling of the monastic enclosure provides yet another layer of asceticism, power, and sacred space. To sail across the Atlantic, climb over six hundred steps, and live the hard life of asceticism at the top already helps move individuals into a space more acutely attuned to God. As previously established in this chapter, nature can be viewed as a theophany in the early medieval Irish context.[167] To enter a walled enclosure is yet another way to set this community apart from even the island itself.

As one leaves the mainland one travels through gradations of holy landscapes. First the transformative and redemptive ocean must be crossed. Next, the high-reaching presence of God is encountered on the mountain-like stones as one climbs to toward the top of the island. Then, the separateness of the monastic enclosure at the top promotes a powerful ascetic practice and sacred identity. Through this physical movement and practice the monastics leave everything behind, humble themselves before God, and obtain great power.

2.6 - Oratories as the Sacred Core or Sanctuary

If the ocean, island, and enclosure can be viewed as zones of holiness, then the oratories are the "sacred core" or "sanctuary."[168] François Henry, Michael Herity, and T. Fanning all argue for the existence of this "sacred core" in early medieval Irish monastic sites on the west coast.[169]

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[166] This concept will be expanded upon in Chapter Three.
[167] MacQuarrie, *Dictionary,* s.v. "Celtic Christianity."
[168] Jenkins, *'Holy, Holier, Holiest,'* 62-63; Henry, 'Early Monasteries,' 45-46.; Michael Herity, *Studies in the Layout, Buildings and Art in Stone of Early Irish Monasteries,* (London: Pindar Press, 1995), 57-65.; T. Fanning, "Excavation of an Early Christian Cemetery and Settlement at Reask, Co. Kerry," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 81C, (1981): 150.
[169] Jenkins, '*Holy, Holier, Holiest,"* 62.; Henry, "Early Monasteries," 45-46, 154-155.; Fanning, "Excavation of," 150.

The significance of the oratory on sites such as Skellig is reflected in both biblical literature and Irish hagiographical material.

There are three oratories on Skellig Michael Island: two in the main monastic enclosure and one on the South Peak. The large oratory is located just in front of the beehive huts and looks out upon Little Skellig or Bird Island. It opens to the west and has an east facing window. Like the famous Gallarus oratory, it is constructed in an inverted boat shape. A white quartz cross was later added on the outside of the oratory above the doorway (See fig. 9). [170] The small oratory was built on a terrace to the east of the main monastic enclosure. It is located on the east end of the terrace and also has an east-facing window. It was built later than the large oratory and is described by Bourke as being constructed in a superior manner.[171] It was also built in a dry stone corbelling pattern and rises to a dome shape. The small oratory sits upon a paved surface. There is a beehive hut nearby which is largely interpreted as a latrine. There is also a *leacht* and burial ground (see fig. 10).[172]

The South Peak oratory is located on a terrace above and to the east of the garden and dwelling terrace. Only ruins remain but it was built in a dry stone corbelling pattern. There is an altar on the internal east wall and a *leacht* and bench on the west of the terrace facing the oratory. Channels were carved into the vertical rock face above the oratory to direct water into basins located beside of the church. Similar to the small oratory, the ground was also paved. Bourke notes that the pavement was constructed in a way that allows for circumnavigation of the oratory and

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[170] Bourke, et al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 9.; O'Sullivan and Sheehan, *The Iveragh Peninsula,* 283; Ann Lynch, "Sceillig Mhichil, Skellig Rock Great: Early Christian Monastic Site," in *Excavations 1987. Summary Accounts of Archaeological Excavations in Ireland,* edited by I. Bennett, (Dublin, 1988), 17-18.; Photo by Sumer Bingham 2015.

[171] Bourke, et al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 9.

[172] Ibid.; Photo from Bourke, et. al, *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 9. O'Sullivan and Sheehan, *The Iveragh Peninsula,* 283-284.; Lynch, "Sceilig Mhichil," 21.

may have had an important liturgical component. Just beyond the oratory, in a separate enclosure, there is a reliquary shrine accompanied by cross slabs. [173]

Fig. 9

[173] Bourke, et al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 15; O'sullivan and Sheehan, *The Iveragh Peninsula*, 288.

Fig. 10

The three oratories on Skellig Michael date to the early medieval period. The ruins of a later structure, known as St. Michael's Church, stands in the main monastic enclosure just behind the large oratory to the west. The church was mortared, rectangular, and likely had a wooden roof. It has an east-facing window and northern entryway. The stone for the church was quarried on Valencia Island. Experts date St. Michael's church to the late 10th-early 11th century. It is believed that the dedication of the island to Saint Michael occurred sometime around the construction of this church. The earliest reference in the Annals of Ulster is 1044.[174]

The entrance to the oratories on Skellig Michael, prior to the construction of St. Michael's Church, were surrounded by open space. The beehive huts were kept somewhat separate, thus

[174] Peter Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland: The Monuments and the People,* (London: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 151.; AU 1044.

implying that the oratory itself was a holy sanctuary to be approached with intention. *Leachta* and burial grounds were nearly always found close by oratories on both Skellig and other sites. The word *leactha* stems from the Latin word *lectus* and the Old Irish word *lecht,* both of which mean "bed," thus establishing the connection of these small rectangular structures to gravesites.[175] The precise function of them is debated and they may have served as altars or shrines for important figures that were buried nearby.[176] There is a *leacht* near each oratory on Skellig. Graves accompany the oratories and *leactha* on the main monastic enclosure.

The pathway from the oratory to the *leacht* is paved on both the South Peak and monastic enclosure. The monk's graveyard on Skellig, although not fully excavated, contains the remains of a juvenile aged 9-11 and two adults aged 25-30 and 50-60.[177] The presence of the graveyard and *leachta* near the oratory is yet a further indication of the holiness of this space.[178]

Worship spaces across the Judeo-Christian tradition function as a sacred space in which to encounter God. The oratories in early medieval Irish Christianity, therefore, are not so different from the Temple and tabernacle presented in biblical literature. Jenkins convincingly argues that these Irish monastic enclosures reflect the theological ideals of the Jerusalem Temple.[179] Based on

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[175] Tadhg O'Keefe, "Architectural Traditions of the Early Medieval Church in Munster," in *Early Medieval Munster: Archaeology, History, and Society,* edited by Michael Monk and John Sheehan, 116. (Dublin: Cork University Press, 1998); See also "*Lecht,"* online Old Irish Dictionary, accessed 22 December, 2017. http://www.dil.ie/29705.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Bourke, et. al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 373-390, 455-456.
[178] Aidan O'Sullivan, Finbar McCormick, Thomas R. Kerr, and Lorcan Harney, "Death and Burial in Early Medieval Ireland," in *Early Medieval Ireland, AD 400-1100: The Evidence from Archaeological Excavations,* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2013): 283-317.
[179] In *Holy, Holier, Holiest,* Jenkins provides a detailed argument on the ideological similarities between early medieval Irish monasteries and the Jerusalem Temple. Specifically, he compares space, topography, and supporting literature to make his argument.

both biblical and hagiographical Irish literature it is apparent that oratories were a common place in which to encounter God.

There is significant biblical support highlighting God's presence in the Temple and tabernacle. In Numbers 7:89 Moses enters the tabernacle to speak with God and hears His voice radiate from the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant.[180] Exodus 40:34 depicts a theophany in which a cloud covered the tent and "the glory of God filled the tabernacle."[181] The text notes that the "cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, before the eyes of all the house of Israel at each stage of their journey."[182] In 1 Chronicles 17, prior to the construction of the Temple, God tells Nathan, " …I have not lived in a house since the day I brought out Israel to this very day, but I have lived in a tent and a tabernacle." [183] These passages firmly establish the presence of God in Israelite worship space.

Hebrews 9:1-12 presents Jesus as the high priest who has made the ultimate sacrifice within the Holy of Holies on behalf of God's people: "….when Christ came as a high priest…he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption."[184] The Temple at Jerusalem, referred to as the "House of the Lord"[185] acts as a sacred worship space, is on Mount Zion, and is enclosed. The oratories at Skellig Michael served as sacred prayer space, were located on the top of the island, and were also enclosed.

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[180] Numbers 7:89.
[181] Exodus 40:34.
[182] Exodus 40:38.
[183] 1 Chronicles 17:5.
[184] Hebrews 9:11-12.
[185] Psalm 122: 1-12.

In Adomnan's *Vita Columbani* the saint frequently visits oratories and prays on bended knee. In one instance, Colum Cille visits a nearby monastery and his brethren are crying because the key to the oratory door has been lost. The saint told his friends not to lament. He said, "The Lord is able, without a key, to open his own house for his servants." Colum Cille entered the oratory and began to pray with his friends as the doors miraculously swung open.[186] In another instance Colum Cille hastens to the oratory to pray for a distraught woman who was suffering great pain during childbirth. The text says "….the saint, being touched with pity for the poor woman, hastened to the church, and, on his bended knees, earnestly prayed for her to Christ, who was Himself by birth a partaker of humanity."[187]

Colum Cille's most well-known prayer experience in an oratory occurs alongside his friend Virgnous:

> One winter's night…Virgnous, burning with the love of God, entered the oratory alone to pray, while the others were asleep; and he prayed fervently in a little side chamber attached to the walls of the oratory. After a considerable interval, as it were of an hour, the venerable Colum Cille entered the same sacred house, and along with him, at the same time, a golden light, that came down from the highest heavens and filled that part of the church. Even the separate recess of the side chamber, where Virgnous was striving to hide himself as much as he could, was also filled, to his great alarm, with some of the brilliance of that heavenly light which burst through the inner door of the chamber that was a little open. And as no one can look directly at, or gaze with steady eye on, the summer sun in his mid-day splendor, so Virgnous could not at all bear this heavenly brightness which he saw because of the brilliant and unspeakable radiance which overpowered his sight. The brother spoken of was so much terrified by the splendor, almost as dreadful as lightning, that no strength remained in him. But, after a short prayer, St. Colum Cille left the church.[188]

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[186] Adomnan, *Life of St. Columba,* 2.36.
[187] Ibid., 2.40.

[188] Ibid., 3.20.

The presence of heavenly light is a hagiographical feature highlighting the venerability of Colum Cille. It is also significant, however, that it appears within the oratory as the saint prays at night and connects with God. Colum Cille, alongside of and on behalf of the members of his community, visits the oratory for prayer. While all of Iona was considered sacred, as Jenkins and O'Loughlin point out, the oratory is specific space set aside for spiritual encounters.[189]

The Jerusalem Temple became the centre for spirituality, a symbol of God's presence on Earth, and represented an intimate relationship between God and his people. The native Irish architectural developments outlined reflect biblical ideas of sacred space to provide an ideal area in which the monastics could encounter God. It is not difficult to imagine these monastics sailing across the ocean, climbing to the top of the island, entering the monastic enclosure, and praying, like Saint Colum Cille, upon bended knee to God in their sanctuary.

2.7 - Beehive Cells

While the oratories provided a specific sacred space for prayer and connection with God, the monastics practiced asceticism and dwelled in beehive huts within the enclosure. Constructed in a drystone corbelling pattern, this simple architectural design emphasized ascetic practice and provided no room for extravagance. This building technique allowed the stones to be stacked in such a way that they form a dome-like shape. The walls were thick and the huts grow narrow as they rise, thus looking like a beehive. Rainwater was easily shed so the cells remained dry.[190] This

[189] Jenkins, *Holy, Holier, Holiest,* 36.; Thomas O'Loughlin, "The View from Iona: Adomnan's Mental Maps", *Peritia* 10, (1996): 114-16.
[190] Bourke, et al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 10-11.

design was used elsewhere in the Dingle and Iveragh peninsulas during the 6th-7th centuries. [191] Sites such as Illaunloughan, Church Island, Long Island and Beginish all serve as examples.[192]

The Skellig huts, titled Cells A-G, would have likely housed no more than 12 monks at a time (see fig. 11 and 12).[193] Cell A is the largest of the group and, as Bourke states, it had a communal function.[194] Pegs can be found inside of the cell which likely served as a place to hang robes and satchels. Two windows look in opposite directions in Cell A. One faces Little Skellig in the distance and the other faces the South Peak hermitage.

Cells B and C are both structured in a rectangular corbelling pattern and are similar in their simplicity. There are no projecting stones in either of them and they are close in size. Cell D is one of the older standing cells in the enclosure and is no longer fully intact. It was likely already ruined at the time that Cell C was built and some original paving remains by the entrance.

[191] Peter Harbison, "Early Irish Pilgrimage Archaeology in the Dingle Peninsula," in *World Archaeology*, 26, 1, (1994): 90-103.; Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland,* 181-183.
[192] Marshall and Walsh, "Illaunlouhan, Co. Kerry," 109-110.; O'sullivan and Sheehan, *The Iveragh Peninsula,* 309.
[193] Bourke, et. al. *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 10.
[194] Ibid.

Fig. 11

Fig. 12

Cell E is situated higher than the others and may have contained a loft area. Holes in the interior walls indicate space for wooden beams and it is comparable to Cells A and F in size. While the base is nearly square it turns into a circular dome shape as it rises. This cell also contains several stone pegs for possible storage. Cell F contains three cupboards and is surrounded by upraised stone slabs which may have been a sleeping area.[195] There is little information available on Cell G. It sits outside of the main monastic enclosure near the south wall. A collapse in this area demolished the cell in the early 19th century. This cell follows a simple circular plan and was also constructed in the drystone corbelling pattern.[196]

Skellig Michael was atypically large.[197] With seven huts, Skellig certainly had room to accommodate a fair number of people. Comparable sites such as Illaunloughan and Church Island only housed one to three cells. While it is difficult to know the precise number of individuals that lived on Skellig at any given time, it is evident that the community could have sustained a greater number of people than was typical.

Beehive cells are traditionally located away from the main oratory entrances. As has already been established, it was likely that oratory spaces were cordoned off except for holy times due to their sacred nature. The living quarters may have been situated opposite the oratories in an effort to honour the holiest spaces on the island. Prayer in the oratories would take place facing the sunrise. At night the monastics would retreat to their westward dwelling places as the sun began to set.

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[195] All information regarding the structure of the cells can be found in Bourke, et. al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 10.; See also O'Sullivan and Sheehan, *The Iveragh Peninsula,* 284-285.
[196] Bourke, et al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 119.
[197] Jenkins, *Holy, Holier, Holiest,* 62.

Harbison notes that beehive cells were found at places of pilgrimage and suggests that they may have served as monastic hostels.[198] If his assertion is correct then it raises the question of length of residency for the Skellig monastics. Based on the burial finds it is reasonable to assume that several monastics lived their lives on the island. It is possible, however, given the number of beehive cells, that it also served as a shorter pilgrimage site for those wishing to establish more austere religious practices but not separate themselves entirely from their lives and communities. While some monastics stayed for life, it is probable that others stayed only temporarily.

The dry-stone corbelled huts were common in this place and time. The structures do not require mortar of any sort and the stacking of flat stones in a circular pattern was ingenious in many ways. The shape of these cells allowed them to easily shed rainwater. For a place like Skellig with no fresh water source, this was invaluable. Because the stones were stacked in dome-like pattern, they were strengthened over time. As the cells reach their dome shape the stones wedge tighter resulting in a strong structure which can protect one from the weather. The structure also highlighted the importance of the ascetic life.[199] The dry-stone corbelling pattern left no room for embellishments. Some huts had built in pegs or cupboard areas for the storage of small items, but the overall structure was simplistic and austere in design.

The existence of these cells in a cluster supports the notion of cenobitic community while the hermitage supports the eremitic lifestyle. Skellig, therefore, fits perfectly into the Henry's paradigm of the "eremitic monastery."[200] Living on this island would not have been easy. To

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[198] Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland,* 86-90.
[199] Deirdre O'Sullivan, "Space, Silence, and Shortage on Lindisfarne: The Archaeology of Asceticism," in *Image and Power in the Archaeology of Early Medieval Britain: Essays in Honour of Rosemary Cramp,* edited by Helena Hamerow and Arthur MacGregor, (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001), 33-50.
[200] Henry, "Early Monasteries," 45.

survive on Skellig the ascetic would have needed a firm sense of discipline. Collecting water, catching and preparing food, and maintaining the huts and stairways would have been a reality alongside any religious and spiritual duties. Just as Saint Colum Cille prayed for his brethren and as Saint Brendan voyaged across the sea with his crew, the monastics at Skellig shared in their spiritual discipline and practice. The proximity of their living quarters is proof of this. Together they survived on the island, prayed in the oratories, and practiced asceticism.

2.8 - Conclusion

Skellig Michael was situated at the edge of the known world. For Adomnan, Iona was the *ultimum terrae,* or located the every ends of the Earth.[201] Saint Patrick also sought to extend the gospel to Ireland, to the end of the Earth.[202] To sail to Skellig Michael was to go beyond the Emerald Isle and depart from the known world. This journey across the Atlantic served as a means of re-creation in Christ and renewal. While *tuatha* clashed on the mainland, these monastics encountered God in nature and sacred space. As the monastics moved across these sacred zones they journeyed ever closer to God. They sailed across the ocean, climbed the island, built the monastic site, prayed in oratories, and lived ascetically in their beehive huts. God was prevalent in their landscape and lifestyle. By analysing the archaeological evidence and location of the island via a post-processual methodology, the monastic spirituality of Skellig Michael is given a voice. This remarkable site is, as will be noted in Chapter Three, a shining example of *peregrinatio.*

[201] Jenkins, *Holy, Holier, Holiest*, 37.
[202] Patrick, *The Confession,* §38.

Chapter Three: Understanding *Peregrinatio*

Peregrinatio has been defined in scholarship as a pilgrimage or journey.[203] The concept can be found in a number of historical writings, from Augustine's *City of God* to sermons by Saint Columbanus. It is a term that was broadly used during and before the early medieval period and holds a number of nuanced expressions. Elva Johnston notes that "among the Irish, *peregrinatio* described a life-long exile for the sake of God." [204] This chapter will briefly discuss the ways that the word *peregrinatio* has been used and thus provide a nuanced meaning of the term as it was understood in the early medieval Irish context. It will be argued that Skellig Michael is a prime example of this pilgrimage practice.

In the Irish context *peregrinatio* refers to a physical movement or journey. This understanding of the word must be layered with the legal and metaphorical implications of the term as they are presented by earlier Christian leaders such as Tertullian and Augustine. This chapter will first, then, provide a brief history of the utilization of the word *peregrinatio.*

Secondly, this chapter will provide a Biblical framework through which this concept can be understood. The physical journey of Abraham and Jesus mirrors the inward metaphorical journey toward Christ. This movement is met with both rewards and difficulties which will be discussed and compared to the Irish understanding honour and status.

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[203] Esther de Waal, *Celtic Way of Prayer,* (New York: DoubleDay Books, 1997), ix, 1-5.; Stephanie Hayes-Healy, ed., "Patterns of Peregrinatio in the Early Middles Ages," in *Medieval Paradigms: Essays in Honor of Jeremy duQuesnay Adams, Vol. 2,* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 4.
[204] Elva Johnston, "Exiles from the Edge? The Irish Contexts of Peregrinatio," in *The Irish in Early Medieval Europe: Identity, Culture, and Religion,* edited by Roy Flechner and Sven Meeder (England: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 38.

Finally, this chapter will argue that Skellig Michael is a prime example of *peregrinatio.* The Irish understanding of social location, honour price, status, and belonging in one's *tuath* give *peregrinatio* a firm place in early medieval religious expression. The monastic settlement at Skellig Michael demonstrates all of these qualities. It will be argued that the historical, biblical, and early Christian understandings of *peregrinatio* and martyrdom were central to Skellig spirituality.

3.1 - Historical use of *Peregrinatio*

An entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles dating to 891 CE tells the story of three Irishmen who landed in Cornwall after having been adrift in currachs. They chose to "live in a state of pilgrimage, for the love of God, they reckoned not where."[205] Although this entry is brief it provides context for the Irish practice of *peregrinatio.* These individuals willingly left their homeland, set themselves adrift at sea, and relied on the mercy and love of God to bring about personal transformation.[206] For the Irish this *peregrinatio,* or "perpetual travel" as it is called by Stephanie Hayes-Healy, carries with it a host of connotations from both European and Irish cultures.[207]

Often translated as stranger, traveller, or foreigner, the term was used in its earliest days to denote a lack of legal status. The Law of the Twelve Tables, a codification of Roman law in the mid-5th century BCE, amalgamated earlier legal traditions with a 5th-century BCE understanding

[205] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* translated by Rev. James Ingram (London: Everyman Press Edition, 1912), §891.
[206] This concept of setting adrift is also known as *murchoirthe* and is discussed by T.M. Charles-Edwards in "The Social Background," 46-49. It can also be found in Mary Byrne, "On the Punishment," 97-102. Chapter Four of this work will discuss this concept further.
[207] Hayes-Healy, "Patterns of Peregrinatio," 4.

of the world.[208] Cicero (c.106-43 BCE) contributed to the Twelve Tables and notes that the comparable term for *peregrinus* was *hostis* or enemy.[209] This was presented in contrast to a *civis* or citizen that had full rights.[210] The *peregrinus* or *hostis* had limited rights to marriage, contracts, and property ownership. In short, a *peregrinus* was alienated and somewhat exiled within society.[211]

Hayes-Healy notes that this connotation was carried into Christianity as individuals faced persecution in the earliest phases of religious development. To be alienated and viewed as an enemy, to be a *peregrinus* or *hostis,* set early Christians apart from their Roman world as they were not viewed as true *civium.* Tertullian, a lawyer and priest, presents a contrast between heavenly and earthly citizenship. He uses *peregrinatio* to mean an alien or foreigner in this world. A *peregrinus,* he argues, is a "citizen of Jerusalem" and of heaven. This is presented in contrast to a *civis* or citizen of the Earth:

> "You are a resident alien in this world, a citizen of Jerusalem, the city above. Our citizenship, the apostle says, is in heaven. You have your own registers, your own calendar; you have nothing to do with the joys of the world; nay, you are called to the very opposite, for "the world shall rejoice, but ye shall mourn." And I think the Lord affirms, that those who mourn are happy, not those who are crowned. [212]

Augustine of Hippo adds a third layer of connotation. Like Cicero he acknowledges the alienation of the *peregrinus* and like Tertullian he emphasizes a separation from earthly

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[208] Gary Forsythe, "Rome of the Twelve Tables," in *A Critical History of Early Rome: From Prehistory to the First Punic War, (*California: University of California Press, 2005), 201-233; P.R. Coleman-Norton, "Cicero's Contribution to the Text of the Twelve Tables," in *The Classical Journal* 46(3): 1950, 127-134.
[209] Hayes-Healy, "Patterns of Peregrinatio," 6.
[210] Ibid. 6-7.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Tertullian, *De Corona Militis Liber* 13 (The Chaplet), PL 2:73-102 at 95, quoted in Hayes-Healy, "Patterns of Peregrinatio," 7.

citizenship. Augustine places *peregrinatio* within the biblical context and argues that earthly and bodily attachment creates distance from God. He continually refers to 2 Corinthians 5:6-8:

> …therefore having confidence, knowing that while we are in the body we are absent [*peregrinamur*] from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. But we are confident and have a good will to be absent [*peregrinari]* rather from the body and to be present with the Lord.[213]

He notes that the heavenly realm, or *patria,* is our true home and we are merely *peregrini,* or aliens, in this world.[214]

Augustine also emphasizes the importance of the journey inward. In *The Happy Life*, a text written soon after his conversion, he presents the cognitive journey inward as a means to reach God.[215] Similar to ideas later presented by Descartes, Augustine posits that this inward journey must first begin with the knowledge of one's own existence. Since God underlies all things, the mind begins to see itself as a soul and part of a higher order. By emphasizing the rational dimension of self-awareness one turns inward and begins the *peregrinatio* towards God. Augustine frames this awareness as the immutable truth of God. Stanley Gretz states it succinctly when he says that "…for Augustine the presence of truth in the mind is surest sign of the presence of God, who is immutable Truth, in the soul."[216]

The inward *peregrinatio* is expanded and enriched in the physical movement of the Irish monks. This alienation and movement towards God gains yet another layer of connotation in the

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[213] 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; *Audentes igitur semper et scientes quoniam dum sumus in corpore peregrinamur a Domino. Per fidem enim ambuluamus et non per speciem. Audemus autem et bonam voluntatem habemus magis peregrinari a corpore et praesentes esse ad Deum.*

[214] Augustine, *City of God,* translated by Marcus Dods, (New York: Random House Publishing, 1950).
[215] Augustine, *The Happy Life,* translated by Michael Russo in *Ancient Wisdom for Modern Minds*, 1st Edition, (New York: SophiaOmni Press, 2011), 2.11.; Stanley Grenz, *The Social God and the Relation Self: A Trinitarian Theology of Imago Dei*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 61.
[216] Grenz, *The Social God,* 62.

Vita Columbani written by Jonas of Bobbio. In the text there is a distinction between two different types of *peregrinatio.* Saint Columbanus is tempted by *lascivae puellae* and seeks the advice of an anchorite woman. She tells him that the lesser *peregrinatio* refers to leaving one's local territory but staying within Ireland to seek God. The greater *peregrinatio* is defined as crossing the sea and leaving one's homeland entirely.[217]

Columbanus initially engages in the lesser *peregrinatio* before deciding to live out this life of a pilgrim in Europe. He travelled to Gaul, Germany, and Italy throughout his lifetime and established several monastic sites along the way. He never returned home to Ireland.[218] He calls himself a *peregrinus*[219] and notes that we should all "…live as travellers, as pilgrims, as guests of the world, entangled by no lusts, longing with no earthly desires, but let us fill our minds with heavenly and spiritual impressions…"[220]

While it would be difficult to state with certainty that Columbanus was directly influenced by Augustine, it is apparent that the word *peregrinatio* holds a familiar connotation. One's true

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[217] Jonas, *Vita S. Columbani,* edited by Bruno Krusch in *Jonoa Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannia*, *MGH SRG* (Hanover and Leipzig, 1905) 1.3.; Charles-Edwards, "Social Background," 43.
[218] O'Hara, "Patria, Peregrinatio, and Paenitentia,: 96-102.

[219] Ibid., 100. Columbanus, "Letter Three" in *Sancti Columbani Opera,* ed. By G.S. Murdoch Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T201054/index.html (accessed on 20, Sept 2017); Ut nobis peregrinis laborantibus tuae pium sententiae solatium praestes, quo si non contra fidem est nostrorum traditionem robores seniorum, quo ritum Paschae sicut accepimus a maioribus observare per tuum possimus iudicuim in nostra peregrinatione / that you would grant to us pilgrims in our travail the godly consolation of your judgment, thus confirming, if it is not contrary to the faith, the tradition of our predecessors, so that by your approval we may in our pilgrimage maintain the rite of Easter as we have received it from generations gone before.

[220] For discussion regarding authorship of the sermons see Clare Stancliffe, 'The thirteen sermons attributed to Columbanus and the question of their authorship', in: Michael Lapidge (ed.), Columbanus: studies on the Latin writings,93–202; Columbanus, "Sermon Seven," in *Sancti Columbani Opera,* ed. By G.S. Murdoch Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957), http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T201053/index.html (accessed on 20, Sept. 2017);…ut sic vivamus in via ut viatores, ut peregrini, ut hospites mundi, nullis haerentes cupiditatibus, nullis terrenis inhiantes desideriis, sed caelestibus et spiritalibus formis animos nostros repleamus…

patria is the heavenly realm and rather than being true *civium* of the earth, one is *un hospites mundi.*[221] This intentional movement towards God is made possible not merely by the physical journey, but also by the dedication to asceticism as one seeks to be "entangled by no lusts, longing with no earthly desires."[222]

The Venerable Bede was an English writer who provides some insight into this Irish ascetic life and practice of *peregrinatio.*[223] In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* the Bishop Egbert is referenced as an ideal *peregrinus.*[224] Bede praises Egbert for his "life of great humility, gentleness, purity, simplicity, and perfection of justice."[225] These traits are ascribed to Egbert after he becomes a *peregrinus*: "he made a vow that he would remain an exile and never return to his native island of Britain."[226] For Bede, living one's life away from home, never to return, is the mark of a true *peregrinus.*

Scholarship has long viewed the Cambrai Homily, a 7th-century Hiberno-Latin text, as a reference to *peregrinatio.* It states that "…white martyrdom for someone is when they part for the sake of God from everything that they love, although they may suffer fasting and hard work thereby."[227] In the text, white martyrdom is compared to the red martyrdom experienced by the apostles. This life of asceticism includes "parting for the sake of God from everything that they

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[221] Columbanus, "Sermon Eight" in *Sancti Columbani Opera,* edited by G.S. Murdoch Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957) htttp:celt.ucc.ie/published/T201053/index.html (accessed on 20, Sept. 2017).
[222] Columbanus, "Sermon Seven."; *nullis haerentes cupiditatibus, nullis terrenis inhiantes desideriis.*
[223] Westley Follettt, "Irish Asceticism before Celi De," in *Celi De in Ireland: Monastic Writing and Identity in the Early Middle Ages,* (New York: Boydell Press, 2006) 27.
[224] Bede, *The History of the English Church,* 3.4, 3.27.
[225] Ibid., 3.27; duxit autem vitam in magna humilitatis, mansuetudinis, continentae, simplicitatis, et justitae perfectione
[226] Ibid.; vovit etiam votum, quia adeo peregrinu vivere vellet, ut nunquam in insulam, in qua natus est, id est, Britania, reditus
[227] "Cambrai Homily", in *Celtic Spirituality* translated by Oliver Davies (New York: Paulist Press,1999), 369-370.

love."[228] A *peregrinus* would leave everything for Christ as they truly embraced Jesus's teaching to "… go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. ."[229]

This ascetic connection to white martyrdom was first noted by Bishop Cyprian. He contrasts it to the bloody red martyrdom of those who died for Christ and calls this sacrifice a "product of labours."[230] This willingness to suffer daily for the love of Christ replaced the ideal experience of red martyrdom that was prevalent during early Christian persecution. Sebastian Brock argues that ascetics were viewed as successors to the martyrs by the late 6th-century.[231] White martyrdom allowed one to give up their life for Christ and, in a sense, carry their own cross.[232] Ascetic practice, Isabelle Kinnard argues, became seamlessly associated with martyrdom.[233]

Translating *peregrinatio* as pilgrimage without understanding the broader implications may lead to a misunderstanding of the experience. Engaging on this journey represented both an inner spiritual desire to be closer to God and an outer physical transition as well. Esther de Waal notes that a pilgrimage, in our typical sense of the word, implies that there is an "end of the

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[228] Ibid.
[229] Matthew 19:21; In Chapter Four the social and legal implications that this self-imposed martyrdom had for the native Irish will be explored more fully.
[230] Isabelle Kinnard, "*Imitatio Christi* in Christian Martyrdom and Asceticism: A Critical Dialogue," in *Asceticism and its Critics: Historical Accounts and Comparative Perspectives* edited by Oilver Freiberger, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 131.
[231] Sebastian P. Brock, "Early Syrian Asceticism," *Numen* 20 (1973): 2.; L. Stephanie Cobb, "Memories of Martyrs" in *Melania: Early Christianity through the Life of One Family* edited by Catherine M. Chin and Carolyn T. Schroeder (California: University of California Press, 2017), 112.
[232] Derek Cooper, *20 Questions That Shaped World Christian History*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 98-99.; Clare Stancliffe, "Red, White, and Blue Martyrdom," in *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes,* edited by Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick, and David Dumville, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 37.
[233] Kinnard, "*Imitatio Christi,"* 137.

journey" and that one will "return home with a sense of a mission accomplished."[234] *Peregrinatio,* however, implies a sought-after transformation.

The numerous layers of meaning presented here existed within the Irish social and political structure. The *peregrinus* as a *hostis* or outsider, as presented by Cicero, would have added meaning in the Irish context. To willingly leave behind one's *tuath* was to give up rights and *civitas.* For Tertullian this meant seeking *civitas* within the heavenly realm and being separate from God in this earthly world. This concept is reflected in the writings of the Irish Saint Columbanus who notes that one's true home is the kingdom of God. Augustine further emphasizes this idea and notes the importance of the inner journey towards Christ. As the Irish monk takes up the greater or lesser *peregrinatio* he willingly embraces ascetic practices. It is through this ascetic discipline, as noted by Augustine, Columbanus, and Bede, that one takes up the mantle of white martyrdom and journeys ever closer to God. For the Irish this included physical movement and separation from one's *tuath*.

3.2 - Biblical Understanding of *Peregrinatio*

While the word *peregrinatio* has been employed by a number of authors throughout history, it is perhaps most widely recognized in the Vulgate and Vetus Latina. While no surviving written texts survive from Skellig Michael it can be reasonably assumed that the Vulgate was readily accessed and utilized during worship. *Peregrinatio* came to be associated with a host of cultural implications but a biblical archetype lies at its core. Readings mediated through the

[234] De Waal, *Celtic Way of Prayer*, 2.

Vulgate would have been one of the main avenues of biblical understanding and assisted the development of spiritual identity.

Abraham is the earliest and most primary example of a *peregrinus* in the Judeo-Christian tradition. This pilgrim left his homeland at the behest of God with no certainty of where he would end up or what he would encounter along the way. Midway through Genesis Abraham is rewarded for his faith with the covenant and his people eventually inhabit the Promised Land.[235]

Jerome translated Abraham's journey across the desert and stay in Egypt as a *peregrinatio* and later, after the death of Sarah, Abraham refers to himself as a *peregrinus.*[236] When God makes his covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15 he tells him: "Know thou beforehand that thy seed shall be a stranger *[peregrinum]* in a land not their own, and they shall bring them under bondage, and afflict them four hundred years."[237] God continues to develop covenant ideas and says to Abraham, "…I will give to thee, and to thy seed, the land of thy sojournment [*peregrinationis*], all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual possession, and I will be their God."[238] As a *peregrinus*, Abraham accepts the mantle of a *hostis* or outsider and searches for his own city of God which is the Promised Land. As a white martyr, Abraham "part[ed] for the sake of God from everything that [he] love[d]."[239]

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[235] Abraham's story can be found in Genesis 11:27-25:11.

[236] Genesis 12:10.; *facta est autem fames in terra descenditque Abram in Aegyptum ut peregrinaretur ibi fames in terra.*; 23:4.; *advena sum et peregrinus apud vos date mihi ius sepulchri vobiscum ut sepaliam mortuum meum.*

[237] Genesis 15:13.; *dictumque est ad eum scito praenoscens quod peregrinum futurum sit semen tuum in terra non sua et subicient eos servituti et adfligent quadringentis annis*

[238] Gen 17:8.; daboque tibi et semini tuo terram peregrinationis tuae omnem terram Chanaan in possessionem aeternam eroque Deus eorum.

[239] "Cambrai Homily" in *Celtic Spirituality*, 369-370.

While Abraham and his people suffered and wandered in the desert for forty years, so must the *peregrinus.* The usage of the term in the Vulgate highlights some of the challenges one encounters on this path. In Matthew 27:7 Judas gives the money he received for betraying Jesus to the Temple. Rather than accept the money the Temple priests used it to purchase a burial ground for foreigners: "And after they had consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field, to be a burying place for strangers [*peregrinorum*]."[240] To be a *peregrinus* is to forsake ones comfort and homeland. Upon death the *peregrinus* is buried far away from their home, family, and social comforts.

In Luke 24:18 after the death and resurrection of Jesus the disciples do not recognize Jesus as he walks with them. When he asks why they are sad they answer, "Art thou only a stranger [*peregrinus*] in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done here in these days?"[241] Later in the passage the disciples encourage Jesus, whom they think is a *peregrinus,* to stay with them because it is late, thus sheltering him from harm. Once they demonstrate hospitality to the *peregrinus* he becomes known to them. Lack of safety for travellers in foreign lands is demonstrated repeatedly throughout the Bible[242] and hospitality naturally becomes part of Jewish law and Christian practice.[243] The dangers of becoming a *peregrinus* are highlighted in Luke but the honour obtained from the pilgrimage is also present. Jesus himself becomes a *peregrinus* in this moment.

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[240] Matthew 27:7.; consilio autem inito emerunt ex illis agrum figuli in sepulturam peregrinorum

[241] Luke 24:18.; ei tu solus peregrinus es in Hierusalem et non cognovisti quae facta sunt in illa his diebus?

[242] Luke 10:25-37, Genesis 4: 13-14, Genesis 19:1-11.

[243] Deuteronomy 10:19, Exodus 22:21, Luke 10:25-37.

The dramatic lifestyle change that Abraham, the disciples of Christ, and the Irish willingly chose to undertake allowed them to develop an intimate relationship with God. The very act of moving to a different geographic location mirrors the inward personal journey that the *peregrini* encountered. What Abraham's people found in the Promised Land and what Augustine discussed in the City of God, early medieval Irish monastics found in their *peregrinatio.* In suffering they emulated Christ and moved ever closer to God.

3.3 - Skellig Michael and *Peregrinatio*

The monastic settlement at Skellig Michael is a prime example of *peregrinatio.* Once again, as Johnston notes, *peregrinatio* can be defined by the Irish as a "life-long exile for the sake of God."[244] This movement found its beginnings and its peak in the early medieval period with saints such as Patrick, Brendan, Columbanus, and Colum Cille. While their theology will be discussed at length in Chapter Five, for now it is important to note the various ways that they lived the experience of *peregrinatio.* The practice of *peregrinatio* at Skellig Michael can be understood not only by the historical and biblical use of the term, but also by the lives of these saints.

Saint Patrick's life was also modelled after *peregrinatio.* This young Briton was captured as a boy and sold into slavery in Ireland. He was separated from his family, home, and all of his comforts for the earliest years of his life. He escaped one night and returned home only to feel called by God to return to Ireland, the land of his exile, and spend his life introducing Christianity to the Irish. This path did not prove easy for him and was full of challenges. His choice to "…part for the sake of God from everything that [he] love[d], although [he] may suffer fasting and hard

[244] Johnston, "Exiles from the Edge?," 39.

work…"[245] allows him to be later conceptualised as a *peregrinus.* The transformation that occurred in Patrick is outlined in his *Confession* and *Letter to Coroticus* when he reflects on his own captivity.[246]

Saint Brendan of Clonfert is known for his voyage into the sea as depicted in the *Nauigatio Sancti Brendani.* This 9th-century Hiberno-Latin text depicts the life and travels of the 5th-century saint. While very little is known about the historical Brendan, his voyage provides a plethora of insight into 9th-century perceptions of Irish monasticism.[247] Brendan ventures into the unknown ocean with his companions in search of the Paradise of Saints. His seven-year travel is presented in three story cycles with a strong emphasis on liturgy and holy days. At various points throughout the story he lands upon an island of sheep, says Mass on the back of a whale named Jasconius, visits an island of birds, and encounters the silent monastic community of Ailbe. At the end of his journey he finally encounters the island Paradise of Saints before returning to Ireland.[248]

As Brendan ventures through the ocean with his companions they embrace a beautiful and dangerous path. At this point in history to sail into the Atlantic is perceived as sailing to the ends of the Earth. It is in this departure from society that he finds an ocean comparable to Abraham's journey through the desert. His *peregrinatio* is temporary and he returns to Ireland having embraced a true inner journey as well as an outward physical one.[249]

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[245] "Cambrai Homily" in *Celtic Spirituality,* 369-370.
[246] Patrick, *The Confession,* §1; Patrick, *A Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus,* translated by John Skinner (New York: DoubleDay Books, 1998), §1.
[247] Much scholarly discussion surrounds the dating of the *Nauigatio.* Some date the text to the 8th century which places it near the beginning of the Celi De movement. For more information see D.N. Dumville, 'Two Approaches to the Dating of the 'Navigatio Sancti Brendani'", *Studi Medievali* 29 (1988), 95-9; Also see J. Carney, "Review of *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis* by Carl Selmer," *Medium Aevum,* 32 (1963), 37-44.
[248] *The Voyage of Saint Brendan.*
[249] This concept will be discussed at length in Chapter 5. For more information see Fedor D. Prokofiev, *Peregrinatio in the Ocean: Allegory and Reality in the Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, (Austria: Medium Aevum Quotidianum, 2009).

Saint Columbanus calls himself a *peregrinus* frequently in his writings and notes the importance of one's journey towards Christ. Having engaged in the greater *peregrinatio* he travelled through Europe establishing monasteries and devoting himself to an ascetic lifestyle. Having left behind all of the comforts of home he readily identified as a *peregrinus* and emphasized the importance of keeping one's gaze on heaven.[250]

Saint Colum Cille is called a *peregrinus* by his hagiographer, Adomnán of Iona. He notes that "two years after the battle of Cule Drebene, the holy man first set sail from Ireland to be a pilgrim."[251] In the Old Irish poem, *Amra Choluim Chille,* his asceticism is frequently highlighted:

> By longing he is stretched, he sold his eye's desire. A sound, austere sage of Christ: no stain of drink nor stain of delicacy – he avoided the fill of his mouth. He was holy, he was chaste, he was charitable, a famous stone in victory.[252]

In the Second Preface of the *Vita Columba* Adomnán says that "with God's help, he had kept his body chaste and his mind pure and shown himself, though placed on earth, fit for the life of heaven."[253] Colum Cille was thus noted for the hallmarks of the *peregrinatio:* his journey to Iona and away from his homeland, his ascetic practice, and his relationship with God.

Skellig Michael monastics can comfortably be compared to each of these *peregrini.* Like Patrick, Brendan, Columbanus, and Colum Cille they left their local *tuath* and all of the comforts of a regular life. Their location on an island in the throes of the Atlantic required strict asceticism and hardship. As noted in Chapter Two, the isolation and spiritual landscape of Skellig Michael lends itself to an intimacy with God. At the edge of the known world, in stern conditions,

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[250] Columbanus, *"*Sermon Eight".
[251] Adomnan, *Life of St. Columba, 1.7.;* bellum Cule Drebene, sicut nobis traditum est, duobus transactis annis, quo tempore vir beatus de Scotia pereginaturus primitus enavigavit
[252] "Amra Cholium Chille", in *Iona: The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery*, edited and translated by Thomas Owen Clancy and Gilbert Markus (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995) 108-109.
[253] Adomnan, *Life of St. Columba*, 105.

surrounded by inescapable beauty, the Skellig monks did, just as the Cambrai Homily states, "part for the sake of God from everything that they love[d] and suffer[ed] fasting and hard work thereby."[254]

Cicero's early understanding of the *peregrinus* as a *hostis* coincides neatly with the early Irish understanding of kinship and belonging. While this idea will be explored more fully in Chapter Four, for now it is sufficient to present a reminder that separation from one's *tuath* meant a loss of legal status and safety.

The sermons of Columbanus align with the earlier ideas of Tertullian and Augustine that individuals are merely *un hospites mundi* and the heavenly *patria* is our true home. The settlement at Skellig Michael can been described as otherworldly. Its location and the edge of the known world and topography reaching into the sky is indicative of a group of individuals reaching towards God. By settling at Skellig Michael they were, quite literally, separating themselves as much as possible from their earthly *civitas* and seeking their true state of belonging in the heavenly *patria.*

Just like Abraham's journey through the desert, the monastics at Skellig journeyed through the ocean. The challenges and rewards associated with this biblical journey were reflected, as we will see in Chapter Four, in the honour price and status of *peregrini* as the Skellig monastics sought to emulate Jesus. By leaving everything behind and embarking on a difficult journey they effectively took up their cross, suffered for the love of Christ, and were transformed and brought into closer union with God.

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[254] "Cambrai Homily" in *Celtic Spirituality*, 369-370.

Chapter Four: Vernacular Irish Law

It has been said that the ethos and structure of a society can be understood through the study of its legal system.[255] This research has established that Skellig Michael falls under the multi-layered and nuanced practice of *peregrinatio.* The legal system of ancient Ireland, commonly referred to as the Brehon Laws, can provide yet another layer of understanding in regards to Skellig spirituality. Building upon the historical framework, archaeology, and nuanced understanding of *peregrinatio,* this chapter will discuss the social and legal implications of the practice among the Irish.

First, this chapter will introduce the vernacular Irish laws and note their importance in understanding *peregrinatio* and Skellig spirituality. The structure of the laws will be explained along with barriers to the study. Second, this chapter will discuss the appropriation of Biblical stories to the legal tracts. Stories which have been integrated into the Irish framework, such as Moses and the reception of the law, will be discussed as well as monastic involvement in the expansion of legal materials. The Irish impact on the development of theology and practice will be introduced here. Third, language within the Brehon Laws which surround concepts of exile and pilgrimage will be analysed. It will be argued that *peregrinatio* demonstrated a move from a negative punishment to a positive spiritual experience. By embracing this form of exile individuals emulated the crucifixion of Christ. Fourth, the legal tracts practically encapsulated the spiritual experience of *peregrinatio.* Portions of the law describing the interaction between *peregrini* and lay people, as well as the practical lived experience, will be analysed. Finally, this chapter will

[255] Duggan, *The Lost Laws of Ireland*, 1.

discuss Skellig Michael and note how the monastics embodied this social and legal understanding of *peregrinatio.*

4.1 - Vernacular Irish laws: Translation and Importance

While one must be careful not to overstate the importance of any given legal code, it is true that laws may provide keen insight into a society. One need look no further than legal tracts to ascertain the values and character of a culture. Legal material must be weighed alongside lived experiences but a reasonable degree of inference can be accepted. Statements regarding the general structure and ethos or society are oft repeated in the Irish legal tracts and their influence has been carried through history. The early Irish laws specifically discuss exile, honour price, status, and pilgrimage. While the relationship between these ideas can be inferred from monastic writings, these concepts are laid bare in the legal tracts. Since it has been established that Skellig Michael is a strong example of *peregrinatio,* it seems only natural to develop an understanding of pilgrimage as it is presented in the early Irish laws.

There are, however, barriers to analysing the legal tracts. As this legal material has looped through history it successfully adapted from an oral culture, evolved into a suitable companion for Christianity, traversed 3 different language dialects, survived the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, and existed squandered away in the homes of descendants of ancient judges. In the 21st century the laws are fragmented, complicated, and difficult to translate.[256]

John O'Donovan and Eugene O'Curry were commissioned by the government in the 1800's to compile, organize, transcribe, and translate the texts.[257] The completed work, a six-

[256] Michael Slavin, "Recalling the Ancient Tradition: Books of the Brehon Laws," in *The Ancient Books of Ireland,* 140-153. (Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).
[257] Ibid. 148-149.

volume set published in 1868, is known as the Ancient Laws of Ireland (AL).[258] The AL is still the only comprehensive English translation of the Vernacular Irish laws. It is, however, less than perfect. Commentaries and glosses were added to the original law tracts throughout history. The AL attempts to distinguish between original text and later commentary via the use of font size. Unfortunately, the type set is not always correct, possibly due to the limited knowledge of Old Irish at the time of publication. [259] Today, even skilled and highly trained scholars struggle with the ancient dialect.[260]

D.A. Binchy has produced a six-volume set known as the Corpus Iuris Hibernici (CIH).[261] The text is in Irish, has not been translated, and is widely used by scholars pursuing research on the Early Irish laws. Binchy's text allows researchers to translate the manuscripts themselves. With a working knowledge of Old Irish individuals are able to side-step the problematic translations available in the AL and critically analyse the texts more accurately. The majority of scholarship currently surrounds philology, dating, and legal studies. Publications by historians appear to be limited.[262]

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[258] Ibid, 149-152; *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Ireland, 6 Volumes,* edited by John O'Donovan and Eugene O'Curry, (Dublin: 1865-1901); Volumes I-III are considered to be part of the Senchus Mor. Volume I contains laws regarding rights and vindicating wrongdoings. Volume II deals primarily with social connections. Volume III contains customary laws, bits of pseudo-history, and tracts on criminal law. Volume IV contains law specifically regarding relationship within the *tuath* including family and land laws. Volume V is similar to a teaching manual for brehons. It is a collection of miscellaneous laws. Volume VI is a glossary of terms and index.

[259] Slavin, "Recalling Ancient Tradition: Books of the Brehon Laws," 148.; Robin Chapman Stacey, "Learning Law in Medieval Ireland", in *Tome: Studies in Medieval Celtic History and Law in Honour of Thomas Charles-Edwards,* ed. By Fiona Edmonds and Paul Russell (Boydell Press: 2011) 135.

[260] Katherine Simms, *Medieval Gaelic Sources,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), 13-14.

[261] *Corpus iuris hibernici*, edited by D.A. Binchy (Bhaile Átha Cliathe: Instituid Ard-Léinn, 1978).

[262] Thomas Charles-Edwards, Fergus Kelly, D.A. Binchy, and Rudolf Thurneysen have explored the historical implications of the legal tracts in a number of publications. In particular, Charles-Edwards' work on the social context Irish pilgrimage and its relationship to key legal terms is frequently utilized. For more information see the following publications: Rudolf Thurneysen, *Studies in Early Irish Law,* (Dublin: 1936); Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breathnach, and Aidan Breen, "The Laws of the Irish," *Peritia* 3 (1984): 382-438.; Thomas Charles-Edwards, "Kinship, Status, and the Origins of the Hide" *Past & Present* 56 (1972): 3-33.

The CIH is not without its problems. [263] While it does provide references to O'Donovan's and O'Curry's work, it is still very difficult to navigate as it does not include a table of contents, notes, or indices and it does not distinguish between original texts and later commentaries.[264] There is also no universal naming system for the tracts. [265] Fergus Kelly's *Guide to Early Irish Law* has become an essential manual for those interested in further study. He discusses origins and dating, breaks down key terms and ideas, and provides some discussion on major points of the law. He also provides a list of the legal tracts, the date and language in which they were written (Old, Middle, Early Modern Irish), and notes whether or not they have been translated. Although he notes that it is not an exhaustive list and it is certainly somewhat dated by now, it is still a useful place to start.[266] Nevertheless, students and researchers wishing to pursue study of the laws are left grimacing at the laborious effort needed to decipher the legal tracts.[267]

Mastery of Old Irish can take many years. This research will therefore rely on the AL translation while being acutely aware of the problems associated with it. In an attempt to compensate for any shortcomings in the translation, secondary sources explaining and expanding upon key concepts will be heavily utilized. When possible, CIH references will be provided in the footnotes.

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[263] Simms, *Medieval Gaelic Sources,* 91.
[264] Ibid, 91-93.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, 283.
[267] Simms, *Medieval Gaelic Sources,* 14-15; Janet Sinder, "Irish Legal History: An Overview and Guide to the Sources," *Law Library Journal* 93, no 2 (2001): 260. A few annotated bibliographies exist but they are far from comprehensive. Janet Sinder notes that a comprehensive guide is a "sorely needed" resource.

4.2 - The Christian and Irish Relationship in the Vernacular Irish Laws

The vernacular Irish laws, commonly called the Brehon Laws, get their popular name from the term *brithem* which means jurist or judge.[268] The innumerable legal tracts that have been analysed by scholars are placed under this umbrella term for the sake of simplicity. Judges, or brehons, were similar to lawyers. They studied the legal tracts for years, presided over misdeeds, and passed their knowledge to students in the field. Ancient Ireland did not have a policing system like Rome. The brehons and their knowledge of the legal system were well respected and, as noted in Chapter One, the structure of society itself upheld enforcement and respect for the law.[269]

Pre-Christian Ireland was predominantly an oral culture. The law was passed by word of mouth. The Senchus Mór, arguably the most important and well-known legal tract, provides information regarding their transmission:

> The Senchus (history) of the men of Erin: What has preserved it? The joint memory of two seniors, the tradition from one ear to another, the composition of poets, the addition from the law of the letter, strength from the law of nature; for these are the three rocks by which judgments of the world are supported.[270]

Brehons likely spent their lives studying and memorizing the legal tracts and bits of history which would ultimately provide order for their societies. Duggan postulates that a lifetime of intense learning would have been required to adequately preserve this knowledge.[271] Recording of this

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[268] Sinder, "Irish Legal History," 327.
[269] Duggan, *The Lost Laws of Ireland,* 27-29; Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 524.
[270] AL, vol. 1, 31.; Daniel A. Binchy, "The Pseudo-historical Prologue to the *Senchus Már*", *Studia Celtica* 10–11 (1975–1976): 15–28.; Kim McCone, "Dubthach Maccu Lugair and a matter of Life and Death in the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Sencha Mar*," *Peritia* 5 (1986): 1-39; John Carey, "An edition of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Mar," Eriu* 45 (1994): 1-32.
[271] Duggan, *The Lost Laws of Ireland,* 27.

oral tradition began close to the time of Skellig settlement, at approximately 650 CE.[272] Thanks to linguistic evidence, however, we do know that some features of the legal tracts date as far back as the Early Celtic period (c.1000 BCE).[273]

As noted in Chapter One, there were three major classes in society: religious leaders (druids), poets (filid), and judges (brehons).[274] Filid created poems of praise and satire as they helped ensure the history of their land was remembered. As in most oral societies, language was powerful and so the poets played a critically important role. Kings kept poets nearby to protect them from sorcery and their words were imbued with power. The earliest written sections of the law were poetic in nature and thus imbued with the power of the poetic tradition.[275] It is likely that filid and brehons may have overlapped. [276]

During the early medieval period travel across the land was limited due to frequent skirmishes between *tuatha.* It is likely that druids, filid, and brehons would have been able to travel throughout Ireland in relative safety. Their status was known throughout the island so, along with kings, they enjoyed the freedom of movement that was granted to those in the highest classes.[277] This status would later apply to *peregrini* who travelled for the sake of God.

As Christianity moved into the region the Senchus Mór notes that the laws were recorded and aligned with Christianity. Saint Patrick is given some credit for fostering this change. The text retells the creation story and closely links Ireland to key biblical figures. In the SM we see the first

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[272] Three different language dialects are present within the Brehon Laws. Old Irish texts written from approximately 650 – 900 CE, Middle Irish texts written from approximately 900-1200 CE, and Early Modern Irish texts written from approximately 1200-1650 CE. For more information see Simms, *Medieval Gaelic Sources,* 12.
[273] Duggan, *The Lost Laws of Ireland,* 6.; Charles-Edwards, "Kinship, Status," 5.
[274] Duggan, *The Lost Laws of Ireland,* 23-31.
[275] Ibid., 27.
[276] Sinder, "Irish Legal History," 327.
[277] Ibid., 31.; Elva Johnston, "Exiles From the Edge?" 38-52.

Irish Brehon, Cai Cainbrethach, travel to Egypt at the behest of the school of Fenius Farsaidh. Fenius sent seventy-two disciples throughout the world to learn various languages. Cai travelled to Egypt as Moses was liberating the Hebrew people from slavery and was with Moses when he received the law on Mt. Sinai. Rather than wander in the wilderness and inhabit the Promised Land, however, he travelled to Greece and met other disciples of the school of Fenius Farsaidh.[278] He then brought the laws of Moses back to the island and became the first Brehon of the Irish people. His foster-son, Amergin Glungeal, was the poet that recorded the laws.[279] When Patrick arrived on the island he determined that while the laws were not perfectly aligned with the Christian teachings he was familiar with, they were nevertheless inherently good.[280]

Beginning in the 7th century ecclesiastics met with kings and leaders to produce legal tracts for the land. One of the most notable of these occurred at the Synod of Birr in 697 in County Offaly.[281] Cáin Adomnáin, also known as Lex Innocentium or the Law of the Innocents, was approved at this time. Cáin Adomnáin, expanded upon the use of fines and, although patriarchal, has largely been credited with its favourability toward women. Also prevalent in Cáin Adomnáin, is the punishment of setting adrift which leaves ones fate to God.[282]

As Christian religious leaders recorded and influenced existing legal material and developed new tracts such as the CA, more room was naturally made for Christianity. Druids faded into the background and ecclesiastics rose to the forefront.[283] Bishops, abbots, ecclesiastical

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[278] AL, vol. 1, 21.
[279] Duggan, *The Lost Laws of Ireland*, 14.
[280] AL, vol. 1, 21.
[281] Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 280.
[282] *Cáin Admonáin*: *An Old Irish Treatise on the Law of Adomnan*, edited by Kuno Meyer, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905).; Gilbert Márkus, *Adomnán's 'Law of the Innocents' — Cáin Adomnáin: a seventh-century law for the protection of non-combatants*, 2nd ed., (Kilmartin, Argyll: Kilmartion House Trust, 2008).
[283] Duggan, *Lost Laws of Ireland*, 14-15.

scholars, pilgrims, and other religious figures were noted in the legal tracts and laws regarding their honour price, status, and social responsibilities were recorded. High ranking Christian religious figures, just like the druids before them, were often considered to have the ranking equivalent to or higher than a king.[284]

Law and religion evolved with one another. The restorative rather than punitive approach to punishment found in the Vernacular Irish laws became reflected in Irish theology. Punishment for crimes was based on an elaborate system of fines and the goal was to restore social harmony. All individuals had an honour price that was intricately linked to their social location and status. Kings, religious leaders, brehons, and filid were among those with the highest honour price.[285] If a crime was committed against anyone in society then the honour price determined the fine. For example, if one assaulted a poet then the fine would be greater than if one assaulted a farmer.[286] If physical harm was done then sick-maintenance laws dictated that, in addition to the fine, the perpetrator would nurse the injured party back to health, thus righting the wrong and restoring social harmony.[287] Under this system one's entire family shouldered responsibility if a culprit was unable to make amends for their crimes.[288] Identity was closely linked to one's *tuath* and support was provided among the people.[289]

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[284] Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law,* 234.
[285] Ibid., 39-67.
[286] See the following Brehon legal tracts for more information on rank: Críth Gablach, Uraicecht Becc, and Míadslectha. Excerpts of these texts can be found in Appendix 1 of Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law.;* AL, vol. 1, 57.
[287] D.A. Binchy, "Sick Maintenance in Early Irish Law" *Ériu* 12 (1938): 78-134.
[288] Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law,* 5-6, 216-217.
[289] Marilyn Gerriets, "Money in Early Christian Ireland according to the Irish Laws," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 27, no. 2 (1985): 323-339.; Charles-Edwards, "Kinship, Status,"; Again, see the following Brehon legal tracts for more information on rank: Críth Gablach, Uraicecht Becc, and Míadslectha.

Thomas O'Loughlin notes that laws form the foundation for a society's concept of divine justice.[290] For example, Roman law was punitive in form and their God was one of decisive justice and punishment.[291] The reparative approach to vernacular Irish law was extended into the sacred realm. This concept was reflected in Irish penitential texts and in the writings of *peregrini* like Columbanus. He viewed monastics as *spiritales medici,* or spiritual doctors, who prescribed a type of religious medicine which helped individuals heal their relationship with God and restore harmony.[292]

Although the specifics of Irish penitential texts varied, a harmonious and restorative approach was consistent throughout. Patristic notions of one-time-only public penance did not exist in Ireland. Instead, one's life was viewed as a continual movement toward God. Human weakness and sin presented a deeper spiritual issue and penance, similar to that found in the Vernacular laws, sought to exact a type of therapy which helped one grow into a more harmonious relationship, whether it be with God or society at large.[293]

4.3 - Exile as Punishment

All individuals had an honour price that was based upon their status in society. Social mobility was a distinct possibility. One was not simply born into a position to stay there for the entirety of their lives. Rank was established by an individual's skillset and craft. In a manner not so different from modern society, the better you were at your craft the higher your honour price.

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[290] Thomas O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology: Humanity, World, and God in Early Irish Writings,* (New York: Continuum, 2000) 56.
[291] George Mousourakis, *The historical and institutional context of Roman law*. (New York: Routledge, 2017)
[292] O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology,* 58.
[293] O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology,* 65-66 provides a helpful discussion on the comparisons between Irish and patristic ideas of penance.

Not all people were considered equal. Distinguishing between those of higher and lower rank was critical to the implementation of this legal system.[294]

Ireland was a culture focused on kinship and location. The land was sacred and the relationship with that locale was often described in intimate terms.[295] So important was the connection, in fact, that ones rights were limited to non-existent if they did not belong to a *tuath.* Outsiders of varying degrees are noted in the legal tracts and Fergus Kelly notes that the terms used for them often overlap.[296]

Having no status in society would leave an individual unprotected and disconnected from everything of importance. It is not clear if loss of status denotes exile but one can reasonably assume that exile was a distinct possibility if such a loss occurred. While exile was not meant to be a way to regain status, it was possible for exiled individuals who branched out into other territories to regain their legal standing. Some key terms which note this limitation of rights are *cu glas, ambue, deorad,* and *murchoirthe.*[297]

Cu glas may be translated as 'grey hound' or 'wolf'.[298] It denotes a person who is an outsider from overseas. In other words, a *cu glas* is someone that has arrived from a land outside of Ireland. Patrick, for example, would have been a *cu glas.* Members of this category had no legal standing and no honour price. More often than not, the *cu glas* is mentioned in regards to marriage. If a *cu glas* marries then he will receive half of his wife's honour price and will need to consult

[294] Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law,* 7-9.
[295] Ibid., 18.
[296] Ibid., 5.
[297] Ibid., 5-6.
[298] AL, vol. 6.

her before making any legal contracts.[299] His wife would also agree to pay for his crimes. His status and sense of belonging, therefore, is dependent upon the family that he marries. In the case of Patrick, however, he noted that he left his home and encountered great persecution during his journey.[300] Until gaining the status of bishop he would have existed in Ireland as a *cu glas* with no legal standing.[301]

Ambue may be translated as 'non-person' or exile.[302] This term refers to an individual that is an outsider from another kingdom within Ireland.[303] If an individual travels from one *tuath* to another with which there is no treaty or agreement, then they would have no legal standing. The *ambue* is excluded from legal agreements and may be killed or injured with no consequences.[304] The status of the *ambue* highlights how critical belonging to one's *tuath* was. Not only was it an issue of being protected by the law, but one's worth and status was also outlined by their location and relationship to other members of society.

Deorad may be translated as exile or outsider. It is placed in contrast to the *aurrad* or 'person of legal standing.'[305] Atkinson notes that "the word is usually translated 'stranger,' which is sometimes misleading: a more suitable rendering would be 'outlaw'."[306] Kelly notes that it stems from the term *de-fo-rath* meaning "one excluded from receiving a fief, a personal without legal

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[299] Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law,* 6.; Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background," 47.; CIH 917.18; CIH 427.4-18.
[300] Patrick, *The Confession,* §28.
[301] Thomas Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background," 55.
[302] AL, vol. 6; Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law,* 5.
[303] Ibid.
[304] CIH 17.1, CIH 28.11, and CIH 29.2.; Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law,* 4-5.
[305] Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law,* 5.
[306] AL, vol. 6

standing."[307] Both Atkinson and Charles-Edwards note the relationship between *deorad* and *ambue.*[308] These people are social outcastes and their tribes or *tuatha* could refuse responsibility for them. The *deorad* was not a status that an individual would accept lightly. The separation it caused would be crippling in this society.[309]

Murchoirthe may be translated as 'one tossed up by the sea.' Kelly uses the word 'castaway' to describe this type of person.[310] A *murchoirthe* may be a *cu glas* or *ambue* depending on the circumstances. This individual would have no legal standing unless accepted into someone's service.[311] If accepted then he would receive 1/3 the honour price of his master. Mary Byrne talks at length about *murchoirthe* being tossed up by the sea as a form of punishment.[312] This idea is recorded in both legal and non-legal texts.

Obtaining the unfortunate status of a *cu glas, ambue, deorad,* or *murchoirthe* could be achieved a number of ways. The legal tracts make note of several criminal offenses that could bring about a loss of status. Betrayal, theft, and kin-slaying are noted in the SM as crimes that are punished most severely.[313] In the case of repeat offenders families who were unwilling to pay for the wrongdoers fines could publicly denounce them. If this happened then they agreed to provide no assistance. The person then became a *deorad frecair,* or an outlawed stranger.[314] Atkinson

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[307] Fergus Kelly, "Recovery of Stolen Property: Notes on Legal Procedure in Gaelic Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man," in *Tome: Studies in Medieval Celtic History and Law in Honour of Thomas Charles-Edwards,* eds. F. Edmonds and P. Russell (Rochester: Boydell Press, Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 168.
[308] Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background," 55.
[309] Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background," 53.
[310] Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law,* 6, 219.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Byrne, "On the Punishment," 97-102.
[313] Rudolf Thurneysen, *Ancient Laws of Ireland: Senchas Mar, Facsimile of the Oldest Fragments from ms. H.2.15 in the Library of Trinity College Dublin.* (Dublin: Stationary Office of Saorstat Eireann, 1931), 28.
[314] AL, vol. 3, 381-383.

defines this term as "a man whom his relations utterly put away, reject, will not answer for."[315] The nature of these crimes denotes a betrayal of one's *tuath* and thus loss of legal standing is a possibility. If one is publicly announced as an outlaw then their choices are limited and they may choose to become a *cu glas* or *ambue* in another land or another Irish territory.[316]

Charles-Edwards notes the comparison between these terms for exile and, in alignment with Kelly, notes the difficulties in neatly separating them. He equates *ambue* to *deorad* and *cu glas* to *murchoirthe.*[317] "The natural assumption," he notes, "is that the *cu glas* has a lower status than the *ambue,* the *murchoirthe* than the *deorad* from within Ireland."[318] In other words, exiles who come from outside of Ireland are assumed to have lower status than the exiles from within Ireland. The glosses and commentaries support this assumption. Because lower status is acquired by those from outside of Ireland it can also be assumed that establishing a life in a new *tuath,* while not impossible, would have been difficult.

Taking on the status of an outsider or exile was certainly a difficult punishment to endure. It was possible, however, for a person to increase their standing in society by becoming a servant, owning land, or getting married.[319] The path to regain standing was not easy. These were all difficult options as laws were in place which typically prevented known criminals from receiving assistance.[320] For example, even if accepted into the service of someone then their honour price was only a fraction of their masters. Wives would agree to take on the fines of their partner's

[315] AL, vol. 6
[316] CIH 1631.1
[317] Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background," 47-48.
[318] Ibid., 49.
[319] AL, vol. 5, 229.
[320] AL, vol. 6; AL vol. 5, 205.

offences but the *cu glas* was not responsible for rearing a child.[321] In many cases assisting an outlaw meant accepting responsibility for him.

This recovery of status can be seen clearly in legal tracts relating to the concept of *murchoirthe.* This punishment is described in the CA as a judgment that is left to God: "*la Dia brithimnacht firu isin.*"[322] While CA reserves this for women who have broken into the church or committed murder, this punishment is also reserved for kin-slaying, negligence, and carelessness.[323] This banishment will take place until "the end of the law" which presumably means until the end of life.[324] Other legal tracts note that if an individual is washed back ashore into his own territory then he is known as an offense from the sea, or *fuidir cinad o muir.*[325] A kin-slayer washed back ashore would be a servant.[326] If the person was set adrift due to carelessness or negligence and washed back ashore they would be considered a lawful person or *duine dligthech.*[327]

4.4 - From Exile to Pilgrim

Thomas Charles-Edwards argues that the terms for exile correspond the greater and lesser *peregrinatio* outlined in the *Vita S. Columbani* by Jonas of Bobbio.[328] *Cu glas,* he says, corresponds to the greater *peregrinatio* and *ambue* corresponds to the lesser peregrinatio.[329] If the terms are used interchangeably or as glosses for one another, then we may also connect

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[321] Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law,* 5-6, 70-73.
[322] CA §30.45.
[323] Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law,* 220.; CIH 109.8-16, 744.32-6, and 1301.39-1302.
[324] Ibid.;
[325] Ibid., 221.; CIH 1302.1
[326] Ibid.; CIH 1302.1
[327] Ibid.; CIH 109.13
[328] Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background," 43.
[329] Ibid., 47.

murchoirthre to the greater *peregrinatio* and a *deorad* from within the land to the lesser peregrinatio.[330]

Whether undertaken as a punishment or a pilgrimage, the sacrifice associated with the act of exile is significant. Separating from the *tuath* to journey within the land or abroad isolated an individual from their sense of security and comfort. Legal status, belonging, and protection were all lost in this act of separation. Restoration of status was, however, possible. Where the outlaw was capable of marrying someone or becoming a servant in order to regain their status, the *peregrinus* chose to marry and serve God.[331]

Peregrini embraced a form of exile as they journeyed for God. Saint Patrick discussed the hardship he encountered when he arrived in Ireland. His grandfather was a priest and so he himself was in a position of honour. When he chose to return to Ireland it was via a form of self-imposed exile. He chose to leave his family and his homeland so that he could return to Ireland as a missionary.[332] Patrick was considered a *cu glas,* a grey wolf or outsider and a *murchoirthe,* or one cast up by the sea.[333] Columbanus set out upon the greater *peregrinatio* for the sake of Christ and willingly left his comfortable life behind. In his sermons he highlighted the importance of not being attached to this earthly road and emphasized a path of asceticism. By leaving Ireland he embraced a form of self-imposed exile.[334] Colum Cille left for Iona after his potential involvement in a war between neighbouring *tuatha.* While already holding an ecclesiastical position, his journey

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[330] Ibid.
[331] Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background," 49-53.
[332] Patrick, *The Confession,* §1.
[333] Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background," 54-55.
[334] Jonas, *Vita S. Columbani* 144-294.

to Iona served as both a sacrifice and, if the assumption regarding his involvement in the war is correct, a redemptive punishment.[335] He thus embraced the label of an *ambue.*

Saint Brendan the navigator is one of the most notable figures associated with seafaring. He set sail in search of the Promised Land of Saints after consulting with Saint Barrind.[336] He explores the sea with his followers, records fantastic stories, and returns to Ireland just before his death.[337] Brendan willingly set sail for God with no assurance of a safe passage or final destination. Like the *murchoirthe* he was "tossed up by the sea."

Deorad De is another term commonly found within the legal tracts. It may be translated as hermit or, more specifically, an exile for God.[338] The term *deorad De* demonstrates the intentional shift from a negative punishment to an honourable journey. These individuals are assigned an honour price equivalent to a king and were considered capable of performing miracles.[339] The use of the term *deorad* serves as a reminder of what this holy person has given up in order to dedicate their life to God. This self-professed outcast has chosen to walk the lonely path which eliminates their sense of comfort and security so that they may encounter God along their journey. The aforementioned saints, having embraced the sacrifices associated with *cu glas*, *ambue*, *deorad,* and/or *murchoirthe,* could thus be considered *deorad De.*

The transformation of exile from a punishment to a badge of honour may have taken place gradually over 150-200 years.[340] By the 7th-century the attitude surrounding this act was wholly

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[335] Adomnán of Iona, *Life of St. Columba,* 13-15.

[336] Clara Strijbosch, *The Seafaring Saint: Sources and Analogues of the 12th century voyage of Saint Brendan, (*Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000) 1-3.
[337] *The Voyage of Saint Brendan*.
[338] AL, vol. 6.
[339] Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law,* 5-6, 41.; Fergus Kelly, "Recovery of Stolen Property," 168.; CIH 11.686.31-7.
[340] Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background," 59.

embraced by Christian monastics. The Cambrai Homily, as discussed in Chapter Three, was written in the 7th-century and provides a good example of the positive and negative aspects of *peregrinatio*. The text highlights the sacrifice but also emphasizes the honour and purity of white martyrdom. In addition to defining white martyrdom as "part[ing] for the sake of God from everything that they love, although they may suffer fasting and hard work thereby," the texts discusses the importance of taking up one's cross.[341]

> To deny ourselves means not giving in to our desires and turning our back on our sins. To take our Cross upon ourselves means to accept loss and martyrdom and to suffer for Christ's sake, as has been said: The name of the Cross comes from the word for torture, and we bear the cross of the Lord in two ways, either when we afflict abstinence upon the body or when we believe through compassion that the need of our neighbour is our own need.[342]

For the Irish, "to accept loss and martyrdom and to suffer for Christ's sake" meant losing the protection and safety of one's *tuath.* Upon this path of pilgrimage, and especially for the monastics at Skellig, "bear[ing] the cross of the Lord" meant taking up an ascetic lifestyle and journeying closer to God.[343]

In the legal texts the Old Irish words *ailithir and ailithre* are commonly translated as pilgrim and pilgrimage.[344] They are the semantic equivalents to the Latin words *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio.*[345] The practice of *ailithre* or *peregrinatio* becomes held in such high regard that special amends are made for it in the legal tracts. Abandonment ordinarily accrues fines. For the *ailithir,* however, the following is noted:

> There are seven separations that are perpetual in the law of marriage which do not deserve debts, nor fines, nor sick-maintenance: a departure from disease; a

[341] "Cambrai Homily", 370.
[342] Ibid., 369.
[343] Ibid.
[344] AL, vol. 6.
[345] Charles-Edwards, "Social Background," 46-47.

> departure from illness; coming into a ship; starting upon a pilgrimage; going in death; taking a staff; departure from a blemish that is not cured in the opinion of a judge, a doctor, or a chief; to seek a friend beyond the border; setting out to avenge an aggression; to seek children if either of the parties be barren; damage of a sane person.[346]

In this case, pilgrimage or *ailithre* can be embarked upon without debt or fine. Other items on the list note particular instances that are not within an individual's control (death, illness, or disease) or relate in some way to other members of the *tuath* (seeking a friend, avenging a death, or finding a foster-child). The *ailithre* relates to one's relationship to God. "Taking a staff" and "coming into a ship" are also references to journeying and pilgrimage.[347] Pilgrimage was not only acceptable but was exempt from fines that could normally be accrued through abandonment. Those wishing to partake in this journey were protected by the law.

Patrick, Columbanus, Colum Cille, Brendan, and the monks at Skellig all embraced "labour for Christ's sake."[348] They parted from "everything that they love[d]" and accepted that the path would be difficult.[349] Suffering for Christ and partaking in the white martyrdom fulfilled Christ's message of "leave everything you have and follow me."[350] For the Irish this sacrifice meant leaving their *tuath*, their kin, and their ancestors. While the concept of pilgrimage became an honourable experience, it was still grounded in the etymological roots of exile. They accepted the physical act of a *cu glas, ambue, deorad,* or *murchoirthe.* In their sacrifice they were transformed into *deorad De, ailithir,* and *peregrini.* Much like the crucifixion, individuals willingly accepted a practice reserved for horrendous crimes and, through their sacrifice, obtained great honour and closeness with God.

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[346] AL, vol. 5, 297.
[347] AL, vol. 5, 125.
[348] "Cambrai Homily," 369.
[349] Ibid.
[350] Matthew 19:21.

4.5 - Social Expectations of *Peregrini*

Embracing a life of asceticism, fasting, and hard-work for the sake of Christ did not solely define the path of the *peregrini*. Spirituality not only encompassed one's inner life but also lived practice and relationships. These individuals were held to high standards. Misdeeds were met with penitential acts, ascetic values were expected to be strictly upheld, and service to the community was necessary.

Hermitage and pilgrimage became an acceptable avenue of punishment for the holy person. In the SM it states, "If wounding, or theft, or lying, or adultery be committed by a bishop, or by a Herenach to whom marriage is not allowed, they shall not resume the same dignities, even though they do penance and pay 'eric' fine."[351] A commentary immediately following this passage says "…this is the change, the lector shall be installed in the bishopric, and the bishop shall become a hermit or a pilgrim; and if they commit trespass, they shall never have honour-price, even though he should do penance and pay 'eric'-fine."[352] Embracing hermitage practices after a misdeed was yet another layer of sacrifice and separation for the sake of Christ. Misdeeds exposed within the community were thus met with reparative hermitage and pilgrimage practices. Through this isolation reparations could be made between one's self and God.

In some cases a *deorad De* would embark upon their journey as penance for a crime. For example a Middle Irish commentary states:

> If a souls' friend has enjoined upon him to go on a pilgrimage after his having committed the murder of a tribesman or murder with concealment of the body, if it be after consulting his own church that he has gone on a pilgrimage, whether he has left ceannaithe-goods or not, whatever he leaves to the church to which he goes, be

[351] AL, vol. 1, 59-60.
[352] Ibid.

> it ever so much, is due to it. If, however, he has not consulted with his own church, his ceannaithe-goods, if he has any, are due to his original church.[353]

This passage notes the acceptance of pilgrimage as an appropriate punishment for murder of a kinsman by the time the commentary was written. Not only does the individual pay for their crime via exile, but they are also encouraged to search for God during their pilgrimage. It was therefore a legal expectation that holy men embraced pilgrimage and hermitage as a form of correction.

The legal tracts also held ascetic expectations of the pilgrim in high regard. Verbal contracts were made and upheld. In the AL it states that "the world would be in a state of confusion if verbal contracts were not binding,"[354] Because of the seriousness with which contractual obligations were considered, some agreements were very difficult to dissolve. In reference to this, the law tracts list seven such noble contracts:

> …a gift to a king, a gift to a bishop, an offering for one's soul, a gift to a poet, the reciprocal gifts of a father and his son, the mutual gifts of each husband and wife, the thing which a chief gives his tenant, i.e. the returnable 'sed' or the overplus food stock, or the proportionate stock for which he is supplied with provisions.
>
> The men of heaven and the gospel of Christ are not excepted, for every pilgrim is bound to oppose them [the contracts].[355]

The *deorad De* here is expected to oppose gifts and contractual obligations by virtue of their ascetic path. Their path is to be one of commitment to white martyrdom and one that truly steps away from the comforts and security afforded to the typical *aurrad* or person of legal standing. The legal tract provides a framework which enables the *deorad De* to adhere to asceticism in a very practical

[353] AL, vol. 3, 73-74; Ceannaithe – meaning goods that are to be given at last will.
[354] SM; AL vol. 1, 41
[355] AL, vol. 4, 211.

way.[356] Interaction with community members would not have been based upon contractual obligations but rather upon a support and service.

The *deorad De* and the church thus played an important role in the community and their relationship was mutually beneficial. The church would provide people with baptism, communion, and guidance in God's message. The people in return would make gifts appropriate to each church's order. These included first fruits, tithes, and inheritances.[357] In this way the religious and lay community supported each other. The asceticism of the *deorad De* would have been supported by their community. In the case of Skellig, we know that the monastic site relied on the mainland for assistance. Candles, large animal remains, and tools all indicate some level of dependency on the mainland.[358] Legendary sources indicate notable baptisms on the island indicating that their religious services may have been utilized.[359]

To embrace the title of a *deorad De, ailithir,* or *peregrinus* meant to willingly accept a form of exile. The journey did not, however, end at leaving behind one's *tuath.* These individuals truly lived dynamic lives for the sake of Christ. Their position in society naturally meant higher expectations. Misdeeds were met with restorative punishment aimed at cultivating a more harmonious relationship with both God and community. Ascetic values were held in high regard. Not only is this concept supported by the Cambrai Homily and writings from *peregrini,* it is also noted in the legal tracts. The Vernacular Irish laws provided a practical framework which reinforced ascetic ideals. These tracts safeguarded against abandonment of ascetic values when

[356] Application of these ascetic ideals is demonstrated in the writings of Columbanus and Colum Cille, as outlined in Chapter Three.
[357] AL, vol. 3, 35.
[358] Bourke, et. al., *Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry,* 339- 368.
[359] Lavelle, *Skellig,* 14.

interacting with communities. Despite this, or perhaps in light of it, pilgrims and monastic communities had a responsibility to support their local *tuath*. While individuals often donated land or goods to holy men, these individuals in turn provided religious and educational support when needed.

For those embracing *peregrinatio* this community support did not always, as in the case of Brendan, mean reintegration back into one's *tuath.* Colum Cille left his homeland and provided support for the individuals at Iona while maintaining his commitment to asceticism. Columbanus left Ireland, travelled all the way to Bobbio, and provided religious support for the people he encountered along the way. Still yet, he was separated from his homeland. The monks at Skellig, situated on an island outcrop in the middle of the Atlantic, performed baptisms when needed and, based on burial excavations, may have engaged in fosterage practices. This support and connection to the laity was not at the expense of the sacrificial practice of exile. It was simply one more component of *peregrini* spirituality.

4.6 – Vernacular Irish Law Conclusions

The Early Irish laws were imbued with the power of the Irish tradition. Adapted from its pre-Christian oral form they were recorded and grounded in a strong biblical identity. The legal tracts included an endorsement from Saint Patrick and a connection Mosaic Law, thus firmly establishing the importance of this literature. This system included a reparative form of justice that reflected distinctly Irish ideas of belonging, honour price, and social status. For the *peregrini, ailithir,* or *deroad De* the law tracts provided a well-respected practical framework which supported their spiritual endeavours.

There were frequent skirmishes between *tuatha* and no fully unified political system existed during the early medieval period. Despite this, there still existed a cultural understanding of social structure and kinship and some legal continuity existed across the land. Brehons, with their elevated societal position, were free to travel throughout Ireland and exact justice. A lifetime of learning prepared them for this significant task. No matter where one travelled in Ireland a respect existed for this system and society itself sought to uphold these laws.[360]

The *peregrini* at Skellig would therefore have been familiar with the early Irish law, be it in oral or written form. Their enthralling search for God may be understood, in part, through these legal tracts. Separate from Rome and accompanied by their own sense of culture, they journeyed to the edge of the known world. Crossing the ocean they embraced both chaos and renewal. As they climbed the island, entered the monastic enclosure, and prayed upon bended knee in the oratories, they encountered God in sacred space. To become a *peregrinus* was to identify with the biblical narrative but also to seek one's true *patria* in God. The Law provides yet another layer to the dynamic spiritual experience of Skellig *peregrini.*

Exile and separation from one's *tuath* was reserved for the most horrendous of crimes. While Chapter Three discusses notions of *civium* as a precursor to the word *peregrini,* the Vernacular Irish laws provide a uniquely Irish understanding. This can be compared to Roman law but should not be viewed as synchronous or identical as the Irish still had a somewhat insular identity and development. Vernacular Irish law infused exile with kinship, belonging, and status. To be exiled was to lose everything in this society. Family, connection to ancestors, safety, rights, and honour were all eradicated. In early medieval Ireland this would have been crippling.

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[360] Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 524; Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland,* 46-47.

O'Loughlin, however, argues that one's legal system is reflective of God's approach to justice.[361] The Vernacular Irish laws were thus extended into the sacred realm. The laws made room for reparation and were not punitive. Fines and punishments were put in place in an effort to restore harmony. Sick-maintenance laws, at least until the 8th-century, required one to nurse an injured party back to health. Likewise, if a *peregrini* or *deorad De* sinned then a hermitage or pilgrimage was prescribed as their medicine. As the monastics at Skellig lived out their lives it is probable that this restorative approach found within the law was reflected in their daily practice. It is likely that the South Peak hermitage existed for this very purpose. It is not hard to imagine a chastised monk making his way to the highest peak on the island in an attempt to heal and foster a more harmonious relationship with God.

In this reparative spirituality the act of exile was transformed into an experience and linked the Irish, yet again, to the biblical narrative. Crucifixion, like exile, was reserved for horrendous crimes. Yet through his death Christ embraced humility, sacrificed everything, and ultimately rose to a place of honour. Setting sail for Skellig Michael was to embrace humility, sacrifice everything, and rise to a place of honour. *Deorad De* or *peregrini* were ascribed an honour price comparable to or greater than kings. It is because of this white martyrdom and emulation of Christ's crucifixion that they were among the most honoured in society.

The spirituality of Skellig Michael can be further illuminated through an understanding of vernacular Irish law. The *peregrini* on this site embodied exile and physically left Ireland. In their currachs they crossed the ocean and, in a sense, became like *murchoirthe.* These *deorad De,* exiles for God, understood what it meant to leave behind one's *tuath* and live an ascetic life. The

[361] O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology,* 56.

peregrinatio itself was a reparative journey towards Christ. On this craggy rock in the middle of the sea the Skellig monastics embraced a sacrificial and transformative spirituality.[362]

[362] For further information on the Brehon Laws see the following sources: Edel Bhreathnach, *Ireland in the Medieval World, AD 400-1000: Landscape, kingship, and religion.* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1914).; D.A. Binchy, "Irish History and Irish Law: II." *Studia Hibernica*, no. 16 (1976): 7-45.; D.A. Binchy, "Irish Law Tracts Re-Edited." *Ériu* 17 (1955): 52-85.; D.A. Binchy, "Sick-Maintenance in Irish Law." *Ériu* 12 (1938): 78-134.; D.A. Binchy, "The Old-Irish Table of Penitential Commutations." *Ériu*19 (1962): 47-72; D.A. Binchy, "Some Celtic Legal Terms." *Celtica* 3 (1958): 221-31.; M.J. Gorman, "The Ancient Brehon Laws of Ireland." *University of Pennsylvania Law Review and American Law Register* 61, no. 4 (1913): 217-233.; Noelle Higgins, "The Lost Legal System: Pre-Common Law in Ireland and Brehon Law" in *Legal Theory, Practice, and Education*, edited by David Frenkel, 193-205. (Athens: ATINER, 2011).; Herbert Francis Hore, "Irish Brehons and Their Laws." *Ulster Journal of Archaeology,* First series, vol. 5 (1857): 36-52.; Eion MacNeill, *Early Irish Laws and Institutions.* (Dublin: Parkgate Printing Works).; Paul O'Higgins, "A Select Bibliography of Irish Legal History." *The American Journal of Legal History,* vol. 4, no. 2 (April 1960): 173-180.

Chapter Five: Theology

Peregrini in early medieval Ireland encountered God in dynamic ways. This research has sought to illuminate the spirituality of Skellig Michael by contextualizing and analysing the history, archaeology, the nature of *peregrinatio,* and legal tracts. This final chapter will integrate insights made throughout this dissertation with analogous writings from *peregrini.* It has been established that Saints Patrick, Brendan, and Columbanus all embodied the practice of *peregrinatio* in some way. This chapter will first discuss key elements in their theology and build a reasonable picture of early medieval Irish theology. These insights will then be applied to the settlement at Skellig Michael and woven together with major arguments from previous chapters.

5.1 - Saint Patrick

The story of Patrick comes to us from two major sources which Patrick penned himself: a letter to Coroticus and his soldiers who were persecuting Irish Christians and a Confession in which he discusses his call to be a missionary in Ireland. A close reading of his sources displays an intimate relationship with God that reflects his lived experience.[363] Patrick presents himself as a pilgrim that has been called by God to spread the gospel to the edge of the world. Throughout the hardship that he encounters in life he speaks of a God that is tough, caring, ever-present, and just.[364]

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[363] This research utilizes primary sources to critically engage the concept of *peregrinatio.* There are, however, a number of academic works written about Patrick. For further information see the following sources: R.P.C. Hanson, *Saint Patrick: His Origins and Career,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).; Philip Freeman, *Saint Patrick: A Biography,* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004).; David N. Dumville, *Saint Patrick, Vol. 13,* (New York: Boydell & Brewer, 1999); Thomas O'Loughlin, *Discovering Saint Patrick,* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2005).
[364] O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology…*32-44.

Patrick was taken from his homeland of Britain and enslaved in Ireland before the age of sixteen.[365] He arrived from outside of Ireland and had no legal standing. His status, as noted in Chapter Two, aligns with the definition of a *cu glas.*[366] At the outset of his enslavement he said "I did not recognize the True God: that was why I was taken as a captive to Ireland along with thousands of others with me. We fully deserved to suffer like this for we had all turned our backs upon God…"[367] Patrick was thus forced into this difficult situation by God along with "many thousands of others."[368]

In the opening lines of his letter to the soldiers of Coroticus he said, "I live among barbarous tribes, a stranger and exile for the love of God."[369] While the concept of *deorad De* came to fruition later in Irish history, the actions of Patrick indicate that he was like a *peregrini pro amore Christi* or *deorad De* (exile for the love of Christ). As he continued to describe his mission and purpose he told of his escape from Ireland and his journey back to his homeland. He later had a miraculous moment and realized that he should return to the land of his captivity.[370] He devoted himself to religious life, returned to Ireland as a missionary, and became a bishop. Much like the *deorad De* discussed in Chapter Two, Patrick obtained a high honour price later in his life as a result of this exile and loss of status.

Throughout his ministry he found meaning in his experience. He stated that he "…was able to hand over the freedom of [his] birth for the benefit of others."[371] Through his experiences he

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[365] Patrick, *The Confession,* §1.
[366] Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background," 55.
[367] Ibid., §1.

[368] Ibid.
[369] Patrick, *Letter to Coroticus,* §1.
[370] Patrick, *The Confession,* §23.
[371] Ibid., §38.

shared the gospel with "…those whom the Lord has chosen from the ends of the earth."[372] He spoke longingly of returning to his family in Britain but firmly established his call as a *peregrini* ministering among the Irish.[373] Patrick's life took him to the edge of the known world and thus enabled him to fulfil the biblical call outlined in the gospels.[374]

When considering the idea of a transformative pilgrimage or journey it is tempting to romanticize the experience as a heroic venture. While there is certainly honour obtained both socially and spiritually, there can be no denying that the journey itself is rigorous and challenging. Patrick's path was not an easy one. He lived through many challenges and had a view of God that coincided closely with his experiences. His theology reflected established ideas of what it meant to be a *peregrini*. He loved an ever-present God that was both stern and caring. His God was tough enough to reflect the difficult and harsh realities of life, but loving enough to care for Patrick and transform him throughout his journey.

Patrick's God pushed him into slavery. He recalls Jeremiah when he says "…the Lord let down his anger upon us and scattered us among the heathen tribes even unto the farthest land."[375] It is through this experience that God opened his eyes, took pity on his ignorance, and made him aware of his many sins.[376] This same God "knows all things even before they are done" and would "frequently forewarn" Patrick of troublesome experiences.[377] This God was ever-present and stayed with Patrick through his many challenges, including slavery,[378] a treacherous journey back

[372] Ibid., § 37.
[373] Ibid., § 43.
[374] Ibid., §38.; Acts 13:47, quoted by Patrick.
[375] Patrick, *The Confession*, §1.
[376] Ibid., § 2.
[377] Ibid., § 35.
[378] Ibid., § 1-2.

to Britain,[379] betrayal by a friend,[380] Christian persecution,[381] and unfriendly encounters with Irish tribes upon his return.[382] Patrick noted that God placed these trials upon him so that he could be transformed "and be busily engaged in saving others."[383] As a follower of Christ he "felt within [him]self a formidable strength" and notes that his faith was "forged before God and in the presence of [his] fellow men."[384]

Patrick did not wallow in his difficulties. He gave thanks to God and readily accepted his challenges. He noted that while God placed him in turbulent situations, he also kept him safe and cared for him. He said "I am never weary of giving thanks to my God, who has kept me safe in the day of my trial. In such a way that today I may in full confidence offer him a sacrifice of my soul."[385] He stated that God strengthened him along the way,[386] came to his aid in times of powerlessness,[387] and helped him despite his ignorance.[388] Patrick's God was both challenging and loving. He viewed his experiences through the lens of punishment but strongly believed that God protected and guided him during his life.

This stern but loving God is closely connected to the *peregrinatio* motif. When individuals leave everything for the sake of Christ they willingly step into that difficult life. Patrick's God was formidable enough to fit into these experiences. He guided Patrick throughout his journey with tribulation, strength, and love. It is through his dynamic view of God that we see the transformation

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[379] Ibid., § 18-22.
[380] Ibid., § 32.
[381] Patrick, *Letter to Coroticus*, § 2-4
[382] Patrick, *The Confession*, § 51.
[383] Ibid., § 28.
[384] Ibid., § 30.
[385] Ibid., § 34.
[386] Ibid., § 30.
[387] Ibid., § 20.
[388] Ibid., § 34.

that occurs during *peregrinatio.* Patrick travelled to the ends of the earth, accepted the sacrifices associated with white martyrdom, and thus may be labelled as a *deorad De.* For Patrick, the difficulties of his journey transformed him into a bishop and a religious leader of the highest honour.

5.2 - Saint Brendan

Very little is known about the life of Saint Brendan the Navigator. His story has been recounted several times but the earliest rendition comes to us from an 8th-century text known as the *Nauigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis.*[389] The historical Brendan lived in the late 5th to early 6th-centuries, founded abbeys at Clonfert and Ardfert, and is well-known for his sea voyage. His journey reflects a theology richly immersed in the *peregrinatio* motif and a reliance on the will of God is presented at the outset. After hearing about the Promised Land of Saints from Saint Barrind he assembled fourteen members of his community, built a boat, fasted for forty days, and set sail in the Atlantic. [390] The journey that commenced moved him from an ordinary world to an extraordinary experience of God.[391]

Brendan and his companions experienced hardship soon after they set sail. The wind dropped and they were left stranded in the ocean. Brendan said, "Brothers, do not fear. God is our

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[389] *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis,* edited by Carl Selmer (University of Notre Dame Press, 1959).; *The Voyage of Saint Brendan*, translated by John J. O'Meara, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smyth Limited, 1991.; Cynthia Bourgeault, "The Monastic Archeytpe in the *Nauigatio* of St. Brendan," *Monastic Studies* 14 (1983), 109-122.

[390] *The Voyage,* §1.

[391] While this research relies heavily on the primary text, a number of secondary sources are available for reference. Brendan's voyage has been extensively explored and analysed in scholarship. For more information, see the following sources: William Raymond Johnston Barron and Glyn Sheridan Burgess, editors. *The Voyage of Saint Brendan: Representative Versions of the Legend in English Translation with Indexes of Themes and Motifs from the Stories,* (England: Liverpool University Press, 2005).; Jude S. Mackley, *The Legend of St. Brendan: A Comparative Study of the Latin and Anglo-Norman Version,* 39, (Leiden, Brill: 2008).; David Adam, *A Desert in the Ocean: The Spiritual Journey According to St. Brendan the Navigator,* (London: Paulist Press, 2000).

helper, sailor, and helmsman, and he guides us. Ship all the oars and the rudder. Just leave the sail spread and God will do as he wishes with his servants and their ship."[392] A similar event occurred later in the story cycle and Brendan responded by saying, "Wherever God wants to direct the boat, let him direct it!"[393] This reliance on God to guide their ship where he may is strikingly similar to the concept of *murchoirthe* (one tossed up by the sea). These individuals set sail in the ocean and relied entirely on God.

As they journeyed through the sea at the will of God, their experiences aligned with important biblical stories. In §16 they encounter a beast of the sea that rocked the boat. Brendan calmed the fears of his companions and a reference to Jonah is made as the people prayed for deliverance.[394] Comparable to the Gospel of John, Brendan and his monks had their feet washed by holy men when they encountered the monastic community of Ailbe.[395] The community is described as having twenty-four seats arranged in a circle, altars made of crystal, and an abbot that seated himself between two choirs. All of this is reminiscent of Revelation. The lamps in the community are lit by a fiery arrow that is described as a spiritual light and compared to the burning bush on Sinai.[396] This connection to the biblical narrative, also prevalent in the legal tracts and writings of analogous *peregrini*, demonstrates the importance of the textual tradition and highlights the strong appropriation of biblical language.

Brendan's journey is presented in three story cycles and is advanced by liturgy and worship.[397] During each cycle Brendan and his companions celebrated holy days at specific places

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[392] Ibid., § 6.
[393] Ibid., § 14.
[394] Ibid., § 16.
[395] John 13:1-17
[396] Ibid., § 12
[397] Prokofiev, *Peregrinatio in the Ocean,* 12.

and in particular ways. Lent was always spent replenishing their goods. Easter was always celebrated on the back of a whale named Jasconius. The Island of Birds was visited from Easter until Pentecost. The monks were clearly moving through space and time and they had profound experiences connecting them to biblical myths. No matter the difficulties encountered on their journey, they always returned to a strong and stable sense of worship with a reliance on holy days. It is through this order and commitment that they were able to reach Paradise and the Divine world.[398]

Brendan's journey straddles the world of reality and fantasy.[399] In the beginning the reader is connected to a saint and a known location. The currach is painstakingly constructed with animal hide and sticks. The challenges of maritime travel are presented with uncooperative wind, the open expanse of the sea, and worries regarding food. Woven throughout the story, however, are miraculous experiences. Grand beasts threatened to devour them, grapes grew larger than apples, and a pillar of crystal rose from the sea to provide shelter from the heat. Brendan and his companions encountered these fantastic sites as they journeyed ever closer to paradise.

With one foot in reality and the other in fantastic imagery, the story brings the reader ever closer to a Divine experience. In this *peregrinatio* Brendan understood that to seek paradise and embrace God's will meant deviating from normal activity and reality. The journey is challenging. It is one founded in biblical understanding and achieved through liturgical practice. Religious dedication, faith in God's will, and commitment to the journey carried this saint to paradise by the end of the journey. Just as the monastics at Skellig moved ever-closer to God through sacred zones,

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[398] Prokofiev, *Peregrinatio in the Ocean,* 10.
[399] Prokofiev, *Peregrinatio in the Ocean,* 16-20.

Brendan and his companions moved closer to paradise through each story cycle. It is thus through living an ideal monastic life and placing oneself at the will of God that one encounters paradise.

5.3 - Saint Columbanus

Columbanus is one of the most prolific saints in early medieval Ireland. Knowledge of him comes from thirteen sermons, six letters, and a monastic rule. His vita was written by a follower, Jonas of Bobbio, soon after his death. When these writings are considered, particularly the ones penned by Columbanus himself, a rich theology emerges. The importance of his Irish identity, the lived experience of *peregrinatio* and asceticism, and an awareness of nature were all critical to his relationship with God.[400]

As a young man, Columbanus embarked upon the greater *peregrinatio* after being confronted with lustful temptations.[401] His journeys took him through Bangor in Northern Ireland, Luxeuil in Burgundy, Bregenz in Austria, and finally to Bobbio in Italy. Columbanus was outspoken and engaged in political life. He wrote letters to bishops and popes regarding the Paschal controversy as well as to his own disciples and monks regarding living an austere religious life. Throughout his life he wrote sermons and a monastic rule which reflect the intimacy he felt with his lived practice of *peregrinatio.*

Alexander O'Hara discusses the dual identity that Columbanus adopted.[402] Despite having left Ireland he still readily identified as Irishman. As issues surrounding the date of Easter arose

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[400] For additional readings about Columbanus see the following sources: Donald Bullough, "The career of Columbanus," *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings,* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1997): 1-28.; Patrick T.R. Gary, and Michael W. Herren, "Columbanus and the Three Chapters Controversy: A New Approach," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 45, 1 (1994): 160-170.; Kate Tristram, *Columbanus: The earliest voice of Christian Ireland,* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2010).; Burnam Reynolds, *Columbanus: Light on the Early Middle Ages, (London: Pearson, 2011).*

[401] See Chapter Three.

[402] O'Hara, "Patria, Peregrinatio, and Paenitenti," 96-102.

Columbanus wrote to religious leaders of the day to defend the Irish stance. He noted that "…these are our rules…. Brought to us from our native land."[403] He apologized for his audacity to speak out on this matter and said that it was common practice in his homeland. He identified as both a *peregrini* and Irishman in his plea for understanding:

> …that you may grant to us pilgrims in our travail the godly consolation of your judgment, thus confirming, if it is not contrary to the faith, the tradition of our predecessors, so that by your approval we may in our pilgrimage maintain the rite of Easter as we have received it from generations gone before. For it is admitted that we are in our native land, while we accept no rules of the Gauls, but dwelling in seclusion, harming no one, we abide by the rules of our predecessors.[404]

Columbanus had been gone from his homeland for several years at this point yet the traditions of his people held significant importance. He specifically highlighted his status of a *peregrini* in his plea, thus emphasizing the importance that this role held.

His sermons present a similar picture. He stated that "human life is a roadway" and one must "hasten to [one's] homeland" in God.[405] He went on to note that "our whole life is like the journey of a single day."[406] In Sermon Five he stated the futility and dangers of human life. He said that individuals should all "journey through [human life] so anxiously, so carefully, so hastily, that all men of understanding should hurry like pilgrims to their true homeland."[407] One should travel willingly upon this roadway of life, accept that "toil and weariness are appointed on the journey [but] rest and peace are made ready in the homeland."[408]

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[403] Columbanus, "Letter Two" in *Sancti Columbani Opera,* edited by G.S. Murdoch Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957) http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T201054/index.html (accessed on 20, Sept 2017).
[404] Columbanus, "Letter Three" in *Sancti Columbani Opera,* edited by G.S. Murdoch Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957) http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T201054/index.html (accessed on 20, Sept. 2017).
[405] Columbanus, "Sermon Eight" in *Sancti Columbani Opera,* edited by G.S. Murdoch Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957) http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T201053/index.html (accessed on 20, Sept. 2017).
[406] Ibid.
[407] Columbanus, "Sermon Five" in *Sancti Columbani Opera,* edited by G.S. Murdoch Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957) http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T201053/index.html (accessed on 20, Sept. 2017).
[408] Ibid.

Given his experiences, these images of life as a roadway certainly carried importance to Columbanus. He left his life of comfort and security to encounter God on the road. In his own life he experienced "toil and weariness" as he departed from his social norms, struggled with religious powers in Europe, and sought a place of belonging. His search for "rest and peace" in God was found by willingly partaking in this journey. The notion of *peregrinatio* for Columbanus was a lived experience which readily made its way into his sermons. Similar to Augustine and Tertullian before him, Columbanus saw the heavenly *patria* as the Christian's true home.

Concerning God, Columbanus said that the natural world must first be reviewed. Even then, however, understanding is not readily grasped. He said to "understand the creation if you wish to know the creator."[409] In an earlier sermon he stated that "knowledge of the Trinity is properly likened to the depths of the sea."[410] When it is realized that one cannot understand the creatures that "lurk beneath the waves" then it will also become apparent that one "can know less of the depths of its Creator."[411] In other words, it is through the natural world that an individual can first encounter the mystery and extravagance of God.

Although Irish monastics were noted for their scholarship, Columbanus highlighted the limitations of knowledge:

> Knowledge of the Godhead will recede farther when he seeks it than it was. Therefore seek the supreme wisdom, not by verbal debate, but by the perfection of a good life, not with the tongue but with the faith which issues from singleness of heart, not that which is gathered from the guess of [the] learned.[412]

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[409] Ibid.
[410] Columbanus, "Sermon One" in *Sancti Columbani Opera,* edited by G.S. Murdoch Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957) http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T201053/index.html (accessed on 20, Sept. 2017).
[411] Ibid.
[412] Ibid.

God is thus found in practice and via a life lived correctly. If life is like a day's journey and peace and rest are sought in the land of God then one's *peregrinatio* can be accelerated by living appropriately. In Sermon Three he stated that it is possible to please God by living a life full of duty, justice, and understanding.[413] His theology, then, was one actively lived out.

As one seeks to live this life of duty, justice, and understanding, one will inevitably falter. Columbanus wrote a monastic rule which encompassed a wide variety of ideas. Underlying specific rules he presented a theology of renewal and healing. He referred to religious leaders as *spiritales medici* or spiritual doctors.[414] He stated that a doctor of the body had a wide range of medicines and approaches when healing an ailment. The same, he argued, must be true of *spiritales medici:* "…so also should spiritual doctors treat with diverse kinds of cures the wounds of the souls, their sicknesses, offences, griefs, distresses, and pains."[415] The goal was to "restore the weak to a complete state of health."[416] Many of the penitential practices outlined by Columbanus focused on "restoring" an individual's relationship to both God and their community.[417] This restorative justice, reflected in the Vernacular Irish laws and expanded upon in Chapter Two, was a significant component to the early medieval relationship to God.

Columbanus journeyed closer to God in his lived experience. Along the road he saw the mystery and extravagance of God in creation. He understood the limits of knowledge and sought to please God through a life lived justly. As he moved from Bangor to Bobbio he embraced

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[413] Columbanus, "Sermon Three" in *Sancti Columbani Opera*, edited by G.S. Murdoch Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957) http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T201053/index.html (accessed on 20, Sept. 2017).
[414] Columbanus, "Monks' Rule" in *Sancti Columbani Opera*, edited by G.S. Murdoch Walker (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957) http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T201052/index.html (accessed on 20 Sept, 2017), § B
[415] Ibid.
[416] Ibid.
[417] Ibid., §B.1, §B.6, §B.13, §B.15, §B.18, §B.19, §B.21, §B.25

monastic life. The rule that he developed echoed this understanding that we are continually being restored and healed of our spiritual ailments throughout our journey. For Columbanus, human life was challenging and God was ever-present in our difficulties. Similar to Augustine's inner journey, Columbanus sought God in the outward journey of *peregrinatio.* Despite sacrificing everything by leaving Ireland, the traditions and theological beliefs of his homeland were still critical to his spiritual growth.

5.4 - Theology at Skellig: A Summary of Themes

The theology of these saints can comfortably be applied to the monastics at Skellig Michael. The *peregrini* discussed in this chapter moved through their own internal zones of sacred transformation as they embarked upon their *peregrinatio.* They each started with a strong understanding of their Irish identity, located at the edge of the world, and grounded in biblical stories. The transformation that occurred was experienced in a God that had enough fortitude and love to bring about and sustain personal spiritual growth. Through lived experience and practice they each embraced a form of exile and saw life as a roadway leading to their true heavenly *patria.* This transformation was one which held both continual restoration and honour. They encountered God through liturgy, worship, and nature. Their *peregrinatio* led them from an ordinary world to an extraordinary relationship with God. This movement through sacred zones of personal transformation is readily apparent among Skellig monastics.

5.5 - Summary of Themes: Identity

In Chapter One the somewhat insular identity of the Irish people was discussed. Situated at the edge of the known world they developed outside of Roman politics and change. Patrick was acutely aware of this distance as he lived among "barbarous tribes" and ministered in a strange

land. Brendan's journey began in the known Irish world. His boat, his brothers, and the landscape that surrounded him solidified his Irish identity. By setting sail in the Atlantic he left the known world behind and ventured towards God. Columbanus did not travel into the sea, but instead ventured into Europe. While he embraced his self-imposed exile and the comforts of Ireland, he still carried the traditions of his homeland with him. All of these *peregrini* had a keen awareness of their own Irish identity.

This connection to the Irish identity was infused with a strong biblical identity. Chapter Three of this dissertation argued that the idea of *peregrinatio* was filled with a connection to biblical narratives. The appropriation of biblical language to the Irish understanding of self and society was also demonstrated in the Vernacular Irish laws as the legal tracts were also connected to sacred Mosaic Law. Biblical references are strewn throughout the writings of *peregrini* such as Patrick, Brendan, and Columbanus, thus providing another layer of support for this Irish-biblical identity.

With an innate Irishness and strong connection to biblical stories wound so intricately throughout the early medieval Irish landscape, it is reasonable to state that Skellig monastics upheld the same identity. This jagged rock in the Atlantic was situated at the edge of the known world. Beyond the reach of the Roman saga and on the outermost edges of the Eóganacht Locha Léin territory, the Skellig monastics would have carried their Irish identity with them across the ocean. They would have been accompanied by a strong sense of kinship, connectivity with their local *tuath,* and a nuanced understanding of belonging and honour price. Like Abraham they left their first zone of identity, familiarity, and comfort. They began their journey for the love of Christ.

5.6 - Summary of Themes: Transformation

The transformation that occurred on Skellig is reflected in the writings of the *peregrini* discussed in this chapter. The God of Patrick, Brendan, and Columbanus was stern and loving enough to bring about continual and sustained spiritual growth. Patrick viewed his enslavement as an event brought about by God. Brendan expressed a continual reliance on the will of God as he drifted through the sea. Columbanus emphasized the need for discipline in duty, justice, and understanding throughout one's *peregrinatio.* In this lived experience the *peregrini* not only made room for a formidable and compassionate God, they also stepped out onto a path of spiritual transformation and journeyed closer to their true heavenly *patria.* In their pilgrimage they were continually restored and bolstered to a space of honour in their society and in their religious life.

The monastics at Skellig would have been all too familiar with this concept of God. The settlement was unique. Those residing on Skellig did not merely leave their homeland. They dared to journey ever-closer to God on an island that promised an experience shrouded in both fortitude and beauty. The landscape itself is indicative of this tough and loving God encountered by Patrick. The definitive reliance on the will of God so acutely expressed in Brendan's journey would have been all too familiar for those attempting life on Skellig. This particular *peregrinatio* also required a commitment to the discipline and duty found in the writings of Columbanus. It is in this lived experience that the monastics climbed to the top of Skellig and closer to their heavenly *patria.*

The topography and location of the island itself supports this transformative theology apparent in the writings of analogous *peregrini.* The Vernacular Irish laws also indicate the importance of the lived experience, restoration, and honour. The legal tracts reiterate, in a very practical way, the spirit of Columbanus' teachings. Duty, justice, and understanding are part of the lived experience that draws one closer to God. Contractual obligations and social duties in the

Vernacular Irish laws give one a framework within which to operate. Restorative ideas in the Laws are also prevalent in Columbanus' understanding of *spiritales medici.* A concept yet again woven throughout early medieval Irish Christendom, it is not a stretch to state that Skellig monastics would have also understood their relationship to God in both a practical and restorative manner.

The ocean, as noted in Chapter Two, was a symbol of re-creation and renewal. In order to arrive at Skellig Michael the monastics would have needed to cross this ocean of change. The journey itself could have been, depending on the weather, harrowing at times. Once upon the island one need only look out across the ocean to be reminded of this powerful symbolic force. The journey across the water was accompanied by a climb up the island. Life on Skellig required discipline, determination, and asceticism. Their spiritual restoration was thus cultivated via physical movement and discipline.

5.7 - Summary of Themes: Experience of God

Patrick, Brendan, and Columbanus experienced God in worship and nature. As noted in Chapter Two, Patrick frequently prayed outside and devoted his life to continually spreading the gospel. Brendan's voyage was advanced via liturgy and adherence to important holy days. A central part of Columbanus' identity and tradition became intertwined with Easter and observance of worship. Patrick, Brendan, and Columbanus all shared their experience of God with others. Patrick found great meaning in his missionary activity, Brendan journeyed with his brothers in Christ, and Columbanus founded monasteries throughout his lifetime. Nothing different should be expected from the monastics on Skellig. In their beehive cells they lived, worshipped, and experienced spiritual transformation in both community and isolation.

As noted in Chapter Two, the monastic site is best viewed as zones. Across the ocean, up the island, and into the walled enclosure, the monastics moved closer to a central experience of God. The oratories, much like the tabernacle and Temple, were a place in which the individuals could readily encounter God. Skellig monastics encountered God on bended knee just like other *peregrini.* Worship in a holy space would have been central to the Skellig spirituality.

Columbanus noted that creation was an avenue in which one could develop an understanding of the vast mystery of God. Knowledge, he argued, went beyond study and filtered into one's lived experience. The landscape at Skellig Michael, full of beauty and awe, reinforces this notion. Eruigena, as noted in Chapter Two, understood God's intimacy with creation. The *peregrini* discussed in this chapter and the monastics on Skellig encountered the vastness of God in their daily landscape.

By leaving their homeland the monastics at Skellig embarked upon a remarkable journey. They willingly took up the mantle of an exile and separated themselves from their *tauth.* This inevitably meant a loss of legal status, protection, and belonging. They ventured to the edge of the world with their Irish-biblical identity in tow. The landscape of Skellig Michael and their lived experience introduced them to a formidable God that loved them enough to shape them through hardship. The asceticism that they embraced, accompanied by their lived experience of duty and justice, helped them express their inner spiritual journey as an outward physical reality. This self-imposed exile or white martyrdom was a continually restorative process that resulted in the highest of honours. Through worship, nature, and a dedication to the monastic life, the individuals living on Skellig moved from an ordinary world to an extraordinary relationship with God.

Conclusion

The monastic site that sits atop Skellig Michael Island holds an elusive quality. This sacred space has served as a pilgrimage site for centuries. Many *peregrini*, early medieval and modern alike, have sought God on this wild Atlantic outcrop. This research has taken a closer look at the island in an effort to illuminate the spirituality of these 7th-century monastics.

The settlement at Skellig Michael was firmly situated in the landscape of early medieval Irish Christendom. Christianity likely arrived on the island via trade with mainland Europe in the early 5th-century. The Irish traversed the seas with relative confidence and were certainly influenced by Roman ideas. The Irish church, however, was unique. The *paruchia* structure was widespread but there was no unified system of worship. Skellig, located off the shores of West Munster, was but one unique expression of Irish monasticism during the early medieval period.

The best and most assured way to understand the settlement as Skellig is to closely analyze the archaeology of their sacred space. This research has utilized a post-processual methodology to contextualize and interpret the empirical data. The location, accessibility, aesthetics of the place and space, and utilization of structures were all contextualized and interpreted. This research has argued that landscape and space were critically important to the Skellig spirituality and daily life. As individuals traversed the ocean and scaled the island they entered increasingly sacred zones. The enclosure and oratories provided a holy sanctuary in which to encounter God. Their surroundings emphasized the ascetic lifestyle and continually connected them to their biblical and Irish heritage.

This research has firmly established that Skellig Michael is a prime example of *peregrinatio.* This common Irish practice had its roots in Biblical narratives and superseded the simple act of temporary pilgrimage. Following the traditions of Abraham and Jesus the *peregrini*

of the early medieval period left their *tuatha* for the love of Christ. This self-imposed exile was also a form of martyrdom. The monastics at Skellig endured suffering and hardship along their journey. As they climbed the steps of Skellig and embraced this exile and white martyrdom they climbed ever-closer towards God.

This appropriation of the Biblical narrative and theology of restoration is clearly reflected in their secular laws. This research has explored the Old and Middle Irish terminology and compared it to *peregrinatio.* The *deorad De* found significant honour and status in their suffering. In many instances individuals who willingly stepped onto this path ranked higher than kings. Just as the crucifixion became emblematic of great suffering and reward, so did the path of the *peregrini.* To live and seek God at Skellig Michael Island was to humbly rise both in society and closer to God.

Because there are no written sources available at Skellig this research relied on analogous monastic writings. The writings of peregrini such as Saints Patrick, Brendan, and Columbanus, have been read closely with a theological lens and common themes were extracted. A sense of belonging and emphasis on the importance of journeying is prevalent in all of their writings. Encountering God in creation, in both a tough and loving manner, allowed the *peregrini* to transcend this ordinary reality and encounter God in an extraordinary way. For each of them, the *peregrinatio* was a process of becoming and their theology was restorative. This research has reasonably inferred that the monastics at Skellig held similar views.

This research has taken a close look at the context, archaeology, landscape, and the Irish understanding of *peregrinatio* and belonging. Skellig Michael has been shrouded in mystery for centuries and this work has attempted to lift but a corner of that veil. Essentially, 7th-century Skellig monastics likely had a complex spiritual life. Located beyond the edge of the known world their

spiritual lives were surrounded by an intense landscape which sustained them, encouraged asceticism, and brought them closer to God. Their act of *peregrinatio* harkened back to foundational Biblical narratives. It completed and challenged their Irish social structure and sense of belonging. As they appropriated Biblical language into their secular law and practice they became *deorad De, potioris peregrini,* and white martyrs for the sake of Christ. In all of this they encountered a tough but restorative theology that enabled them, as *hospites mundi*, to journey closer to the Kingdom of God.

In light of these conclusions there is much work to be done. This research has only just begun to illuminate the elusive settlement at Skellig Michael. The archaeological report produced by Edward Bourke and his colleagues notes that publications which further analyze the site are forthcoming. There is certainly room for exploration in virtually every related academic discipline. Art, archaeology, geography, history, and theology are all faced with an empty book that is waiting to be written. This research in particular opens the door for more exploration on nature and spirituality, aesthetics, and comparative archaeological sites.

Woven throughout this dissertation is the argument that landscape was critical to the spirituality of Skellig monastics. In popular culture Ireland is often hailed for its intimacy with nature to the point of idealization. Much of this, of course, is falsified and grounded in a romanticized understanding of landscape. It is often difficult to ascertain the extent of indigenous religious influence on the development of Christianity in a given area and conclusions must be drawn carefully and not overstated.

With that in mind, Irish Christianity did develop in a somewhat insular fashion and particular indigenous practices were adopted in later Christian worship. The *Lebor Gabála Érenn* contains a mythological history of Ireland and has yet to be fully explored academically. This text

was placed into its final form during the 11th-century and thus must be read with an awareness of heavy Christian influence. Despite this, many of the stories embedded within it likely have their roots in pre-Christian history and religion.

The *Lebor Gabála Érenn* and its mythological view of the world needs to be explored in relation to sites like Skellig Michael whose spirituality was heavily influenced by landscape. Often in indigenous religions, deities are encountered through the land and the earth takes on a sacred component. In addition to this, location and belonging are often critically important. For the Irish the *tuath* linked them to their ancestors and, based on the *Lebor Gabála Érenn,* possibly to their deities.

This text has many volumes and several redactions making it incredibly complicated to study. In order to further illuminate Skellig spirituality and the Irish-Christian relationship with nature during the early medieval period, this text needs to be explored critically. Scholarship must move beyond convenient summaries of excerpts from the *Lebor Gabála Érenn* and other mythological stories and provide an in-depth analysis of this key primary text.

Building on the notion that landscape was an important part of Skellig spirituality, this research provides an opportunity for more in-depth exploration in that field. A brief introductory overview of the aesthetics has been provided here but new, cutting edge research has explored aesthetics and spirituality at great depth. In the last decade scholars have explored medieval soundscape and used technology to recreate the auditory experiences of cathedrals and monastic sites.

Skellig Michael could greatly be illuminated by this type of research. Auditory experiences are central to many religious practices, both ancient and modern. Chanting, chimes, singing, gongs,

and other instruments have been used for centuries in worship practices around the world. One's auditory experiences help them actively engage in the world. For Skellig, the sea, birds, and isolated silence of the location would have made up their soundscape. Through these sounds they listened for and spoke to God. Utilizing this cutting-edge soundscape technology could enhance academe's understanding of Skellig spirituality and aesthetics.

This research utilized analogous sources to better understand Skellig Michael. A comparative archaeological study would greatly enhance scholarly understanding of how sacred space was utilized during this time period. Analysis of structure and building is readily available in a number of archaeological reports and surveys. A document which provides a dynamic understanding rather than an atomistic analysis of each space would significantly streamline research on sites such as Skellig Michael.

This remote island monastic site is a hotbed for burgeoning scholarship. The conclusions drawn in this research provide a window into Skellig spirituality. As this space has grown in popularity the lens of scholarship will no doubt continue to pivot in that direction and there are many discoveries to be made. The importance of landscape and mythology, aesthetics and sound, and the utilization of sacred space are but a few areas that need to be explored at greater depth.

This remote 7th-century monastic site is, as George Bernard Shaw claimed, "an incredible, impossible, mad place" which has captivated the minds and spirits of countless pilgrims over the centuries. This research has made a targeted effort to illuminate the spirituality of the monastics who settled this island by providing insight into their spiritual and cultural motivations. *Peregrinatio* was commonly practiced among the Irish but the monastics at Skellig embodied, perhaps more wholly than any other early medieval monastic, the concept of exile for the love of Christ.

Appendix One: Glossary of Terms

Latin:

- *Civium* – Citizen
- *Hostis* - Enemy
- *Patria* – Fatherland
- *Peregrinatio* – Pilgrimage
- *Peregrini* – Pilgrim
- *Spiritales medici* – Spiritual doctor

Irish:

- *Ailithir* – pilgrim
- *Ailithre* – pilgrimage
- *Ambue* – non-person or exile; an outsider from another kingdom within Ireland
- *Ard ri* – high king
- *Brehons* – judges or lawyers
- *Celi de* – Clients of God
- *Cu glas* – grey wolf; a person who is an outsider from overseas
- *Currach* -- a boat made of animal hide and sticks
- *Deorad* – exile or outsider
- *Deorad de* – exile or outsider for God
- *Druid* – religious leader
- *Filidh* – poet
- *Leachta* – a stone rectangular structure commonly found near gravesites. These structures were multi-functional but are commonly interpreted as altars.
- *Murchoirthe* – one tossed up by the sea; a castaway.
- *Ri* – king
- *Tuatha* - kingdom, clan, or territory

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