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RHYTHM, SACRED TIME, AND HIS MISSION TO NORTHERN SCOTLAND

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband Steve. You have supported me in this endeavor from the very beginning. Most of all, you point me to Jesus and encourage me in my walk with him. I love you more than you'll ever know.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the rhythm and sacred time in the life of Saint Columba of Iona and his mission to Northern Scotland. It begins by establishing the existence of rhythm and sacred time in the Pentateuch, the life of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels, and Paul and the early Church in the book of Acts. Rhythm and sacred time of early Christian monasticism in general and then specifically in the Celtic church are explored to provide context into which Columba and his monasticism and ministry are situated. The study concludes by demonstrating that Columba's influence was felt well into the centuries that followed him. This dissertation shows that rhythm and sacred time were not unique to early Christian monasticism. The rhythms of prayer, Scripture memorization, study and reading, humility and obedience are all characteristic of lives being lived in submission to God. The goal of every believer (monk or modern Christian) is to grow closer to God and increasingly reflect the person of Jesus Christ. This is achieved in part through the rhythm and sacred times explored in this dissertation.

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Soli Deo Gloria.

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Chapter One - Introduction

Rhythm is all around. Seasons display the rhythm of creation. Birth, maturation, reproduction, and death demonstrate the rhythm found in living organisms. The church finds rhythm in the church year, including the annual observance of Christmas and Easter, the weekly Sunday service, and regularly occurring participation in the Lord's Supper. The follower of Jesus might find daily rhythm in Bible reading, devotions, and prayer. God established rhythm in the lives of the Israelites as they exited Egypt and wandered in the desert for forty years. This rhythm, found in the regular, repeated sacrifices, weekly Shabbat or Sabbath, and the annual feasts and festivals, remains a significant current in the Jewish faith. Rhythm is all around and is not something new. Rhythm was a substantial part of the early church and the lives of those who called themselves Christians. The regular, repeated gathering was for teaching, prayer, hymns, and participation in the Lord's Supper. One of the significant events in early Christian history was the rise of monasticism. The monastic movement was marked by these kinds of sacred times and rhythms.

Coenobitic (or communal) monastic life was often structured by a "rule" written by the founder or other monastic leader. The term rule is better understood as the plan for living monastic life instead of a set of hard and fast rules to be administered as law. An Egyptian monk wrote the first monastic rule in the third century. St. Pachomius (292-346) is the father of cenobitic monasticism and crafted the first written guidance for those living in these communities. The next couple of centuries brought several more rules, composed by the likes of St. Augustine (354-430), St. Basil (ca. 330-379), and St. Benedict (ca. 480-ca. 547). While sacred time and rhythms might be most evident in the life of the coenobitic monasteries, those

that were called to an anchoritic or solitary monastic life were not without these same times and rhythms.

Monastic rules provided structure in three different areas of monastic life. The monastic rules established a rhythm of worship. Each rule was different, but most included a schedule that guided the monks through daily prayer, scripture, and the singing of Psalms and hymns. Most monastic rules structured community membership. There was a rhythm for joining the community and exiting the community. There were rules for how the monastery members would work, eat, and sleep, and most rules determined dress. There was guidance for how members of the monastery would engage with the outside community. Monastic rules provided daily, weekly, and annual rhythms that fostered the worship and mission of those communities and their members.

This dissertation will explore the notion of spiritual rhythms and sacred time in the monastic and mission journey of St. Columba (ca. 521-597). While the approach is historical and theological, the application is toward the recovery of spiritual rhythms for the modern evangelical church. Columba was a sixth-century monk from Ireland. He established the monastery on the island of Iona, off Scotland's coast. It was from Iona that Columba launched his mission to the people of Scotland.

Rationale and Need

Why bother studying and researching monastic rhythm and sacred time in early Christian monasticism with a particular focus on Columba? Rhythm (routine, regularly occurring cycles) plays a significant role in human existence. As noted earlier, creation finds rhythm through life cycles, seasons, and the twenty-four-hour day. It is notable throughout the history of Israel in the feasts and festivals that occurred at regular intervals. The book of Acts attests to the rhythm that

developed in the Church–fasting, Sunday study times, prayer, and celebration of the Lord's Supper. There were lifetime rhythms found in the baptism of new believers and annual celebrations of Easter and Christmas. For believers and non-believers alike, regular life has rhythm in everyday life, education, work, and civic events. Rhythm is significant and, therefore, valuable to research and explore.

While a lack of dissertation work is dedicated to this topic, a fair amount of scholarship exists, which finds similarities to various parts of this project. Several of these can be found in the literature review below. Patricia Rumsey, for example, has researched and written about sacred time in Ireland, specifically looking at two groups of monks and their approach to the Liturgy of the Hours. Marilyn Dunn, Greg Peters, and Edward Smither all have books on the history of early Christian monasticism. Others focus on a specific geographical group, such as William Harmless and the Desert Fathers. Many have addressed the particular Rules, other writings, or sayings of specific monks, monastic movement founders, or groups of monks. Each of these has contributed significantly to the body of scholarship available for early Christian monasticism. The research for this dissertation has yet to yield any that address the combination of rhythm, sacred time, and the life and mission of Columba. This combination suggests that this dissertation is unique and will contribute to the existing scholarship.

There has been a growing interest in Celtic spirituality. A variety of work has been published on this topic, ranging from scholastic to works of a more popular nature. Upon beginning research for this project, it was also discovered that there is an emerging interest in monasticism by those in the Protestant tradition, particularly traditions that have not typically embraced the ideas often associated with Roman Catholicism.

These two points (interest in Celtic spirituality and monasticism within the Protestant tradition) also contribute to the need and rationale for this dissertation. This project seeks to provide a historically accurate context within which to situate Columba and his mission to Scotland. Beyond a list of dates, places, and names, this dissertation explores the life rhythms and sacred times within monastic life that were foundational to Columba's work and mission.

The interest in monasticism by those within the Protestant church is notable as there are traditions within Protestantism in which knowledge of church history, in general, is severely lacking. The hope is that this dissertation, as researched and written by one who is part of this tradition, will broaden the understanding of and highlight the importance of church history for all believers. Church history, early Christian monasticism, life rhythm, and sacred time need not be relegated as Roman Catholic and thus disregarded by those of different traditions. This early history is the history of all believers. This dissertation seeks to explore the past that is pertinent to the entire body of Christ's followers.

Research Problems, Sub-questions, Limitations, and Terms

This dissertation explores the notion of rhythm and sacred time in Columba's monastic journey and mission. It will examine the daily, weekly, annual, and lifetime rhythm of monastic life and how that might serve as a foundation or in connection with Columba's evangelistic mission to Scotland.

To provide context for this primary research goal, it will explore the centrality of rhythm and sacred time in early Christian monasticism before the life and work of Columba. What were the life rhythms of various monks and monastic communities in different geographic locales in this period of history? What kind of guidance did the various rules provide? What are the rules, and who authored them? How did these rules determine times of prayer, singing, and Bible

teaching? In addition to these sacred times, how do the rhythms of work, community living (eating, sleeping, recreation, joining, and leaving), and interaction with those outside the monastery, find their direction in the rules and become central to monasticism?

It will then focus on Celtic monasticism's rhythms and sacred time. How do the writings of St. Patrick (ca. 385-ca. 461), other Celtic monks, and works such as *The Voyage of Saint Brendan* inform the understanding of the rhythms of life and mission in Celtic monasticism? The *Life of Columba* will be considered as inquiry is made into the rhythms of life in the monastic community he founded at Iona. This dissertation will conclude with a look into the legacy left by Columba upon subsequent monastic movements. What kinds of rhythms were evident at Iona and in Columba's life that continued in the later community at Iona and the life and work of St. Columbanus (d. 615) and St. Aiden (d. 651)?

Having just enumerated the questions that will be asked during the following chapters, it is essential to establish the boundaries or limitations of this dissertation. This project is designed to begin with a broad look at early Christian monastic rhythm and increasingly narrow in its focus until rhythm, sacred time, and the mission of Columba are in view. However, it would be impossible to adequately explore every monastic rule, monk, and community. Thomas O'Loughlin employs a snapshot approach in his book *Journeys on the Edges.* This same technique will be utilized here. The benefit of a snapshot, in line with O'Loughlin's use, will provide a look at a particular monk, community, and rule. A glimpse will be given into a specific time or region instead of a comprehensive look into every community. In this dissertation, particular rules (The *Rule of Pachomius*, the *Rule of Benedict*, the *Rule of Basil, The Rule of the Master*, and the *Rule of Augustine)* will be selected, considering their widespread familiarity in

monastic history. This acknowledges there may be other rules suggesting alternate rhythms and differing sacred times.

Second, any discussion of Daily Office and other liturgical traditions is strictly for exploring life rhythm and sacred time within early Christian monasticism. Any discussion of soteriological effectiveness, later Roman Catholic traditions and doctrines, liturgical developments, and roles within the church are beyond this project's scope.

Third, issues or discussions related to the reliability of hagiography will not be delved into in great depth. Writings such as *The Voyage of Saint Brendan* will be utilized for their inherent value and contribution to understanding early Celtic monasticism. It is acknowledged here that there are differences between what is today (traditionally) expected of factual, historical records and hagiography of old. However, the position of this dissertation is that there is still value and insight to be gained.

Fourth, while there is much included in the study of Celtic monasticism, this dissertation will limit its exploration to those documents and writings that will inform the inquiring into the rhythms of life and sacred times of the Celtic monks.

Lastly, there is a growing scholastic interest in women's role in early Christian monasticism. There is much to learn, acknowledge and celebrate along these lines. This project explores life rhythms and sacred time in Columba's monastic journey and mission. Therefore, any detailed exploration of the specific rules for communities and contributions of female monastics will fall outside the primary goals of this project.

A few terms will be helpful to clarify and define as they will be used in this dissertation. The first is rhythm. This project seeks to explore the rhythm of early Christian monastic life. Rhythm will be understood as the daily routines, the weekly cadence of work, study, Scripture,

and prayer, the annual celebrations (Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost), and life events that occur–joining, for some – leaving, and death.

Sacred time is popularly thought of as time devoted to "church" things: prayer, singing hymns, and studying scripture. While time dedicated to each of these is undoubtedly sacred, its use in this dissertation will include any activity done with the intent purpose of service to God. Patricia Rumsey has written extensively about the subject of sacred time. Her work will assist in the following chapters as it explores sacred time in conjunction with rhythm in early Christian monastic life.

A related term is worship. This dissertation will intentionally avoid using the term worship as its modern definition is somewhat fluid, and its everyday use among Christians is more limiting and confusing than is necessary. Worship today is often used in reference to singing and the music portion of a church service. A broader understanding of worship is any action or thought that ascribes worth, honor, or reverence. Another word that rounds out the concept in this dissertation is "liturgy." *Leitourgia* (λειτουργία) is the Greek word meaning service to the Lord.[1] This word comes from two Greek words: *ergon* (ἔργον), meaning work, and *laos* (λαός), meaning people. Given this definition, any word, deed, act, work, task, job, study, chore, attitude, response, and more can be considered *leitourgia* or worship. There will not be much in the rhythm of monastic life that will fall outside of worship.

The monastic rule is one of the most significant influences on the rhythm and sacred time in monastic life. The rule, written by a founder or essential leader, often provided direction for all aspects of monastic life. Within these rules, one finds structure for times often referred to as the Hours or the Divine Office. These were gathering times, usually as a community, to recite

[1] https://biblehub.com/greek/3009.htm. Accessed January 20, 2022.

Psalms or other passages, pray and sing. Today, this time would commonly be called a time of "worship." This dissertation will avoid limiting the term worship to strictly times of singing and scripture reading.

Early Christian monasticism, as used in this dissertation, will span from the time of St. Antony (ca. 254-356) to the seventh century. This is important for those within the Protestant traditions, especially those denominations which have moved furthest from any sense of liturgy, routine, ritual, or spiritual formality – monastic history belongs to Christians of all traditions. The hope is that this project will encourage a renewed interest in the study of church history. When it comes to church history, too often, the baby has been thrown out with the bath water to use a less scholarly choice of words.

The Divine Office, canonical hours, Daily Office, and Liturgy of the Hours are all related terms. One's familiarity or understanding of each usually depends on one's church tradition. Research for this dissertation has encountered all the terms used at various times by various scholars. Essentially, they refer to a structured prayer observed throughout a particular scheduled time.

Literature Review

Donald Fairbairn's *The Global Church: The First Eight Centuries* relates to this dissertation in as much as he has authored a solid book of early church history which includes chapters related to worship in the early church, the beginnings of monasticism as seen in the Egyptian desert, and a chapter on monastic missions.[2] Chapter 2 of this dissertation will examine the centrality of sacred time and spiritual rhythm in early Christian monasticism. Fairbairn's

[2] Fairbairn, Donald. *The Global Church: The First Eight Centuries*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2021.

chapters on early church worship and the rise of monasticism will inform this portion of the study. Because he seeks to look at the early global church, he briefly covers each geographic area examined in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 of this dissertation will narrow its focus to the role of sacred time and rhythm in Celtic monasticism. Fairbairn's book is a source of introduction to the prominent individuals who led this movement. The chapters that follow will differ in several ways from Fairbairn's book. His book seeks to be comprehensive regarding early church history. This dissertation is focused on sacred time in early Christian monasticism. Fairbairn's history is informative, but this dissertation will expand upon what he offers minimally. This project will ultimately focus on sacred time and rhythm and the work of Columba in particular, combining the two items (sacred time/rhythm and Columba's work and mission), which Fairbairn's book does not.

Many books examine the history of monasticism in general or monks or monasteries. Edward Smither's *Missionary Monks* goes beyond simply the historical examination and unites history with the mission central to many of these men and women.[3] Smither's book includes a wide range of people and places. Four chapters are of specific help to this project. Chapter 2 explains the early beginnings of monasticism, including the who and the what in terms of monastic mission. Chapters 3 and 5 because they focus on two prominent figures in any discussion of early Christian monasticism – Basil of Caesarea and Patrick of Ireland. Finally, Chapter 6, dedicated to Celtic monks, will inform the research for this project that centers upon Columba and his mission to Scotland.

[3] Smither, Edward L. *Missionary Monks: An Introduction to the History and Theology of Missionary Monasticism*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2016.

The differences between *Missionary Monks* and this project lie in the focus of each. Smither's book is intent on mission as a purpose and drive among the monks of early church history. This dissertation primarily focuses on the sacred time and rhythm within early Christian monasticism, examining how this rhythm drove Columba's mission and work.

Marilyn Dunn's *The Emergence of Monasticism* offers her reader a look into the early centuries of monasticism.[4] She intends to offer a book that approaches the subject of monasticism in "light of the great variety of relevant approaches."[5] She notes the variety of ways one can approach the study of early monasticism and argues that a variety will be the best. Dunn's work contributes context and basic information regarding monasticism of the same period (fourth – seventh centuries) as this dissertation. Her book explicitly investigates various monastic settings – the desert, the West, Celtic lands, Italy, and England. This diversity informs most of the geography discussed in the following chapters. Dunn dedicates Chapter 2 to the rise of communal monasticism, Chapter 6 to the *Rule of Benedict*, and seven and eight to monasticism in Ireland and the *peregrini,* all of which will be important components of this work.

This dissertation will differ from Dunn's work in that she looks at the historical context of monasticism's development. In contrast, this project will be focused on sacred time and rhythm within the different contexts she mentions.

Greg Peters' *The Story of Monasticism* is precisely what the title indicates.[6] Peters has written a book that bridges a variety of intellectual abilities with the history of monasticism. The

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[4] Dunn, Marilyn. *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.

[5] Ibid., vi.

[6] Peters, Greg. *The Story of Monasticism: Retrieving an Ancient Tradition for Contemporary Spirituality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015.

history is broad as opposed to deep. Peters manages to cover monasticism from its earliest beginnings in the desert with Antony to Thomas Merton, a monk who lived in the middle of the twentieth century.

The material in Peters' book that is of help to the project at hand is found in his second through fifth chapters. In Chapter 2, Peters discusses the early monks in the Egyptian desert, Antony and Pachomius. The rhythm of Antony's life as an anchoritic monk and the early "rule" that Pachomius develops for his monastic communities are helpful to the following discussion. The more established *Rule of Basil*, the *Rule of Augustine*, *The Rule of the Master,* and the *Rule of Benedict* are the subject of the third and fourth chapters. These rules are very informative to this dissertation, as they provide significant structure to the rhythm of monastic life and context for the following discussion of Columba. Chapter 5 includes insight into Celtic monasticism through Peters' inclusion of Columbanus.

While being informed by several parts of Peters' discussion, this dissertation will differ in many ways. Peters' primary objective is to provide "a book on the history of Christian monasticism geared toward a *ressourcement* of the tradition for the twenty-first century."[7] This dissertation seeks to examine sacred time and rhythm in monastic life, particularly of the early church period and ultimately in the life and work of Columba.

William Harmless's *Desert Christians* is a book that delves deep into early Christian monasticism found in the desert of Egypt.[8] Parts two and four are helpful to this dissertation. It is in these sections that Harmless discusses the biographies, monastic style, and communities of

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[7] Ibid., 2.

[8] Harmless, William. *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Antony, Pachomius, Evagrius (ca. 345-399), and John Cassian (ca. 360-ca. 435). Everything from the governing community rules and the authority hierarchy to the architectural design of the various monasteries or living environments inform the quest to examine rhythm and sacred time central to monasticism.

Harmless's book differs from this project because it is limited to early monasticism in the Egyptian desert. He includes material about the Desert Father's theology and a comprehensive survey of literature written by them or about them. This dissertation will look at early Christian monasticism in various geographic areas and ultimately focus its research on Celtic monasticism and the life and mission of Columba.

The Lives of the Desert Fathers, edited by Norman Russell, is a writing that originates with a group of monks who traveled from a community located on the Mount of Olives.[9] The introduction, which encompasses the first five chapters, is written by Benedicta Ward. It is Ward's introduction that is informative to this dissertation. These chapters offer context for the material included in the section portion of the book, which is the record of the traveling monks, documenting whom they met and what they observed. The second chapter of this dissertation seeks to explore the rhythm and sacred time of early Christian monasticism. This includes those known as the Desert Fathers, like Antony and Pachomius. The first four chapters of the introduction will serve as a solid source for exploring these monks and communities. Ward offers insight into texts and sources that inform any well-rounded study of this time and place in Chapter 1. The following chapters describe monastic life as it interacted with the community at large and the habits of the monks and within their communities. It is precisely these habits or

[9] Russell, Norman, ed. *The Lives of the Desert Fathers*. Cistercian Studies Series, no. 34. London: Kalamazoo, MI: Mowbray; Cistercian, 1981.

rhythms that this dissertation is researching. The material in the second section, attributed to the monks themselves, will inform this dissertation to the extent that it describes and discusses the habits and rhythms of monastic life.

The scope of this dissertation is larger than *The Lives of the Desert Fathers*. Chapter 2 goes beyond the exploration of the desert monks and communities to monastic life, as described by the *Rule of Basil,* the *Rule of Augustine,* and *The Rule of the Master*. Chapters 3 through 5 move north geographically to explore Celtic monasticism and, pointedly, the life and mission of Columba.

Robert Taft's *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West* is dedicated to exploring the history of the Divine Office, its liturgy, and how it applies to the church today.[10] It is the first section of his book that is helpful to this dissertation. Chapters 4 – 7 examine the monastic office history of the early Christian Era. Taft proceeds geographically, looking at the tradition in the Egyptian desert, urban settings, Ireland, and Italy. The combination of history and his work in examining the various monastic rules (found in Chapters 7, 10, and 11) are valuable to this dissertation's intent to explore the centrality of sacred time and rhythm in monastic life.

Journeys on the Edges by Thomas O'Loughlin describes the Celtic spirituality and offers insight into what it is and what it is not. 11 His efforts lie in establishing who the Celtic people were at a given time in history (roughly 1000+ years beginning in the mid-fifth century).[11] O'Loughlin's second chapter investigates what he calls "a walk in two worlds."[12] Here, he makes the connection between the environment typically envisioned as Celtic (north, island, sea,

[10] Taft, Robert F. *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1986.

[11] Ibid., 15.

[12] Ibid., 38.

remoteness) and their understanding of creation as a tool to understand the creator and points to all that exists beyond.[13] It is here O'Loughlin's work begins to serve as a source for this dissertation. There is a rhythm that is established in creation. This rhythm is observed and woven into the life and the worship of Celtic monastics. The remainder of O'Loughlin's book is significant to this dissertation because of its use of Columba's and Patrick's life and writings, its discussion around the journey motif (pointing to the Irish *peregrini*), and the concept of time found in Chapter 8.

This dissertation will differ from O'Loughlin's work, expanding beyond the Celtic world. It will begin with a look at sacred time and rhythm in the monasticism of North Africa, the East, and the continent of Europe, with an ultimate focus on Celtic monasticism and Columba. O'Loughlin's purpose focuses on Celtic spirituality, whereas this work intends to examine the centrality of sacred time and rhythm and how it served as context for Columba's mission.

Thomas O'Loughlin's *Discovering Saint Patrick* is divided into two parts.[14] Part one seeks to build an accurate picture of the real Patrick of Ireland. O'Loughlin attempts to identify and explain the legends and myths that have grown around the person of Patrick. A handful of chapters in this first section are dedicated to examining Patrick through his writings. How Patrick understood his mission to Ireland and his understanding of space and time occupy two chapters. This section will inform this dissertation, as Patrick is discussed in Chapter 3. Chapters 1 and 7 will help this project discern between legend and truth regarding one of the most significant people in early Irish Christian history. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 will help inform the picture of the real Patrick.

[13] Ibid., 35.

[14] O'Loughlin, Thomas. *Discovering Saint Patrick*. New York: Paulist Press, 2005.

The second part of O'Loughlin's book includes two of Patrick's writings (*Confessio* and *Epistola militibus Corotici*) and three others about Patrick. O'Loughlin offers commentary and extensive footnotes to each of these. Patrick's two writings will be part of the discussion in Chapter 3 of this work, and O'Loughlin's material will be of value there.

This dissertation differs from O'Loughlin's work in both scope and focus. The following chapters seek to provide context to the rhythm and sacred time in Columba's monastic life and mission. Early Christian monasticism from beyond the confines of Ireland will be explored, and figures in addition to Patrick will be discussed. However, a part of building that context is a discussion of rhythm and sacred time in Celtic monasticism, of which Patrick is a significant figure. Herein lies the values of O'Loughlin's work for this dissertation.

Life of St. Columba, written by St. Adomnán (ca. 628-ca. 704), translated into English by Richard Sharpe, will be a valuable source for several reasons.[15] Columba is the subject of Adomnán's work. There are necessary issues of legend versus historical facts that need to be dealt with. However, Sharpe and others agree that the material can provide helpful information about Columba.[16] Sharpe's lengthy introduction covers various topics that add to the discussion of this dissertation. He provides valuable insight as one attempts to differentiate between legendary material and accurate information about the history of Columba, his monastery at Iona, and his mission. In addition, Sharpe's introduction includes sections specific to the Picts of Scotland (to whom Columba went as a missionary), the monastery of Iona itself, Adomnán as

[15] Adomnán. *Life of St. Columba*. Translated by Richard Sharpe. Penguin Classics. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England; New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

[16] Ibid., 7-8.

both author of *Life of Columba* and abbot at Iona generations after Columba, and material that touches upon the legacy of Columba which informs the final chapter of this dissertation.

This dissertation will expand beyond the boundaries of Adomnán's *Life of St Columba. It* will discuss the rhythm and sacred time central to monastic life in other geographic locations and times, specifically before Columba. The main argument of this dissertation is the centrality of the rhythm of monastic life and, ultimately, how that served Columba's mission, thus its focus will be narrower than Sharpe's introduction and of a different primary focus that Adomnán's *Life* as he purposed to describe the actions of Columba.[17]

John O'Meara has translated from Latin, *The Voyage of Saint Brendan.*[18] His introduction offers valuable commentary and insight into this dissertation. In the first part of his book, O'Meara commentates on the value of writings known as voyages or *Immrama*.[19] What O'Meara has translated is supposedly the story of St. Brendan (ca. 484-ca. 577), who became known as 'the traveler'. O'Meara says *The Voyage of Saint Brendan* is a "Christian allegory."[20] While allegorical in nature, O'Meara offers the following assessment: "it is certain that it is predominantly monastic in outlook and inculcates the doctrines and practices of the ascetic life as understood in an Irish environment."[21] The search for the rhythm of Celtic monastic life is a

[17] Ibid., 4.

[18] O'Meara, John Joseph, ed. *The Voyage of Saint Brendan: Journey to the Promised Land*. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1991.

[19] Ibid., x.

[20] John Joseph O'Meara, ed., *The Voyage of Saint Brendan: Journey to the Promised Land* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1991), xi.

[21] Ibid.

good bit satisfied by what is described in this work. Dr. Ed Smither looks at these exact features in his paper "Pilgrimage and Spiritual Rhythms in the Voyage of St. Brendan."[22]

The following dissertation will differ in that it will use *The Voyage of Saint Brendan* as descriptive material of the kinds of rhythms and sacred times within Irish monasticism. Elements within the story of Brendan will be incorporated into the larger task of moving the discussion from the rhythms of early Christian monasticism to the more specific rhythms of the Irish monks, of which Columba was, and how these rhythms and sacred times fed into his mission.

Patricia Rumsey's book, *Sacred Time in Early Christian Ireland*, compares two groups of Irish monks and their understanding of time.[23] Her work applies to this dissertation in that it investigates two groups of Irish monks, key writings that speak to sacred time, and how they observe the Liturgy of the Hours. The *Nauigatio sancti Brendani* and *The Rule of the Céli Dé* are two primary sources used by Rumsey, and both will find purpose in this dissertation. Of help to this dissertation are Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 10. In these chapters, Rumsey discusses the monastic rhythm established for the community, obedience, day, and year.

This project will differ from Rumsey's in several ways. First is the period. Rumsey's work is focused on the eighth and ninth centuries, whereas the project at hand will be located earlier. Rumsey also focuses on these two groups of monks and the Liturgy of the Hours. This dissertation, as mentioned above, will examine a broader group of monks, and expand the idea of sacred time to the overall rhythm of life within the monastery or group of monks.

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[22] Ed Smither, "Pilgrimage and Spiritual Rhythms in the Voyage of St. Brendan," accessed September 13, 2021. http://www.edsmither.com/2/post/2021/08/pilgrimage-and-spiritual-rhythms-in-the-voyage-of-st-brendan.html.

[23] Rumsey, Patricia M. *Sacred Time in Early Christian Ireland*. T & T Clark Theology. London; New York: T & T Clark, 2007.

Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker are the editors of *The Oxford History of Christian Worship.*[24] A book of articles whose topics span the globe and the centuries of Christian worship. Three chapters relate to this dissertation. The focus here is the sacred time and rhythm of life that is central to early Christian monasticism, in particular Celtic monasticism, and Columba specifically. Chapter 2 speaks to the rhythms of very early Christianity, some of which find central roles in the life of the monastic communities – prayer and celebration of the Eucharist in particular. The third chapter discusses the worship history of the time of Constantine. This time corresponds to the rapid growth of monasticism. The *Rule of Basil*, the offices, and other rites and rhythms are discussed in this chapter and relate to the primary argument of this dissertation. The fourth chapter delves into Eastern church traditions and patterns. The material here will help inform the second chapter of this work.

Most of this book, however, lies outside the scope of this dissertation. It will differ in that *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* looks explicitly at the traditions, rhythms, and rites found within the church and does not specifically look at monastic life. Here it will also be argued that worship is not limited to the time the monastic communities spent "in church" but encompasses the entirety of their daily, weekly, annual, and lifelong rhythms.

The book *Iona: The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery*, by Thomas Owen Clancy and Gilbert Markus, primarily focuses on poetry from Columba's monastery on the island of Iona.[25] The first section of this book provides contextual material which informs the discussion relevant to this dissertation. Chapter 2, "The Life and Work of the Monastery," assists in describing the

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[24] Wainwright, Geoffrey, and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, eds. *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

[25] Clancy, Thomas Owen, and Gilbert Markus. *Iona - The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995, accessed December 9, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxcrp6p.5.

rhythm of life found at Iona. A variety of categories are included in Clancy's and Markus's description: agriculture, eating habits, mission activity, prayer time, architecture, and the writing work of the monks that resided there. Chapter 3 may prove helpful as it discusses the written work produced by the monks of Iona. One aspect of exploring the rhythms of monastic life will include delving into the kind and structure of the monk's work.

The difference between *Iona* and this dissertation is easily observable. *Iona* is primarily focused on the poetry of Iona. This dissertation focuses on the rhythm and sacred time of Columba's life and mission. Much of the contextual groundwork here will explore the rhythms and sacred time of early Christian monasticism broadly, beyond the confines of the Island of Iona, and begins earlier than Columba.

Patricia Rumsey's article "The Different Concepts of Sacred Time Underlying the Liturgy of the Hours" digs deeply into different understandings of time as it relates to or explains one's approach to praying the liturgy of the hours.[26] Rumsey will look at four perspectives: time is sacred, time needs sanctification, time is neutral, and its connectedness with eternity through the liturgy.[27] Besides explaining how sacred time was understood, Rumsey discusses the difference between cathedral and monastic hours. The explanation of the monastic hours is beneficial for this dissertation. The content, schedule, and rhythm of it all are highly pertinent to this study.

Rumsey's article and this dissertation will differ in scope. Rumsey focuses on sacred time, the differences between the two hours, and what understanding lies behind the liturgy. The

[26] Rumsey, Patricia M. "The Different Concepts of Sacred Time Underlying the Liturgy of the Hours." *Worship* 78, no. 4 (July 2004): 290–309.

[27] Ibid., 290.

project in the chapters that follow will address the hours as part of the monastic rhythm. Still, it will expand to include other areas such as community membership and life, work, interaction with the outside community, and mission.

Henry Chadwick's article "The Calendar – Sanctification of Time" was utilized by Rumsey in the article discussed above.[28] Chadwick offers the history of how significant dates for Christians – Easter and Christmas were determined as well as explaining the tradition of recording the date of martyr's deaths. The thrust of his thesis gets at the "specialness" of some dates compared to those considered ordinary.

Chadwick's article ventures into more detail surrounding the establishment of Easter and Christmas dates than this dissertation will. However, it provides helpful background to two dates that hold significant anchor points on the Christian calendar. These dates, no doubt, will be just as significant in the rhythm and sacred time of the monastic communities of early Christianity. This dissertation will not specifically address the practice and tradition of marking the dates of saints and martyrs beyond the occasion in which their observance is significant to understanding the rhythm of monastic life and, ultimately, Columba's mission to the Picts in Scotland.

J. William Harmless is the author of chapter 24, "Monasticism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christianity* edited by Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter.[29] His chapter has three main sections. The first examines several leading figures in early Christian monasticism, enumerating sources available to garner further information about these individuals. The second section of Harmless's article discusses Antony and Evagrius Ponticus. Scholarship has continued

[28] Chadwick, Henry. "The Calendar: Sanctification of Time." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (June 1, 2001): 99–107, accessed December 20, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1177/002114000106600201.

[29] Harvey, Susan Ashbrook, and David G. Hunter, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*. Oxford Handbooks. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Harmless writes chapter 24, pages 493-517.

to expand and grow around monasticism. As a result, Harmless notes there is a "rethinking" of what was once claimed about Antony, and others, like Evagrius, have emerged as important figures to consider.[30] This middle section informs the research done for the second chapter of this dissertation. The fourth section of his article gives the reader a view of the current (as of the book's publication date) status of early Christian monastic scholarship. There are new figures to study, growing scholarship of women and monasticism, and much more. Harmless's chapter is of value to this dissertation on a couple of levels. First, throughout his discussion, he includes information and names that will inform the discussion in the following chapter. He identifies individuals, writings, and rhythms that will benefit this work.

This dissertation will expand beyond Harmless's chapter as the two works have differing objectives. Harmless seeks to discuss early Christian monastic scholarship. This dissertation explores rhythm and sacred time within early Christian monasticism, explicitly focusing on Columba, his life, and his work.

Philip Rousseau's *Basil of Caesarea* offers a book dedicated to the life and work of Basil of Caesarea.[31] It is Chapter 6 that is of importance to this dissertation. The writings of Basil will be an important component to the chapter that follows this one. Basil is credited with developing guidance or a set of rules for monastic life in the Cappadocian region. Rousseau's work offers discussion regarding the development of Basil's writings, what he believes about the final version of the rules, and Rousseau's struggle with the word "rules" as it applies to Basil's writings.[32]

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[30] Ibid., 498-504.

[31] Rousseau, Philip. *Basil of Caesarea*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2008.

[32] Ibid., 191 (n1).

Basil and his writings will find their most significant contribution to this work in the second chapter. Here, rhythm and sacred time of early Christian monastic communities throughout North Africa, the Cappadocian region, and continental Europe will be discussed. The goal here will be to explore the context into which Columba emerges and then lives and executes his mission to Scotland. The remainder of this dissertation will shift focus to Celtic monasticism, Ireland, and ultimately Columba, a scope that will move beyond Rousseau's book about Basil.

Much of Christopher Hall's book *Worshiping with the Church Fathers* is informative to this project.[33] The first section addresses two significant events in the church – the Lord's Supper or Eucharist and baptism. Hall provides a discussion that gets into the theology of both, which goes beyond the scope of this dissertation; however, he offers insight into the traditions of various groups in early Christian history as well as guidance that multiple leaders in early church history provided. It is these points that will be of value to this research. His second section is dedicated to prayer. Chapter 6, especially, helps establish the rhythm of prayer within monastic life. Lastly, Chapters 7 and 8 address desert monasticism. Both chapters address topics beyond this work, but portions in each will inform the research for this dissertation.

Unlike Hall's book, this project will focus on the rhythms and sacred time instead of the theology behind the rhythms. Hall's book focuses more on early Christian sources from North Africa and the European continent than on Columba. Hall's book will be most helpful in this work's early chapters, which will develop some context for Columba's life and work.

William M. Johnston's *Encyclopedia of Monasticism* is a treasure trove of reference material for all subjects related to monasticism.[34] The work consists of two volumes and over

[33] Hall, Christopher A. *Worshiping with the Church Fathers*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009.

[34] William M. Johnston, ed., *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1 & 2* (Chicago & London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000).

1500 pages of articles. There are no boundaries to the information included in this encyclopedia except the criteria that it must be monastic-related. The beginnings of monasticism, Twentieth-century monastic issues, Christian, Buddhist, and other types of monasticism, archaeological information, resources related to founders, writings, practices, and faith, and many more topics make up the material included in these two volumes.

The relationship to and the difference from this dissertation are easy to define. The *Encyclopedia of Monasticism* will inform the topics covered in this project. It will be a resource for information about various topics that will be explored. Specifically, articles related to rules, Christian monastic communities, various monastic leaders (Antony, Pachomius, Basil, Augustine, Benedict, Columba, and others), and practices within these communities will be utilized. This dissertation, however, will diverge in that its purpose is not simply to provide articles of information but to explore the centrality of rhythm and sacred time in monasticism. Johnston's volumes go far beyond the scope of this dissertation, as they address monasticism outside the confines of Christianity and include topics related to Christian monasticism that expand beyond the period of interest to this dissertation.

This list of sources is evidence of solid scholarship that exists in the field of early Christian monasticism. There is work that has been done dedicated to the history of the time, the mission of the monks in these communities, the writings of the individuals themselves, and the notion of sacred time. This dissertation will contribute new scholarship in that it will utilize sources from each of these areas of specialty to build a picture that focuses upon the rhythms (routines and habits) of life and sacred time in early Christian monasticism to give context to a discussion of the life and mission of Columba.

Statement of Methodology

The research conducted for this dissertation will be bibliographic in nature. Relevant primary sources such as the *Rule of Pachomius, Rule of Basil, Rule of Augustine,* and Adomnán's *Life of St. Columba* will be explored for their insight into the rhythms of early Christian monasticism. The research will also include secondary scholarly sources offering insight and expertise into early Christian monastic life. The methodological approach of this dissertation will be primarily historical and secondarily theological. Historically, it is the daily, weekly, annual, and lifetime rhythms of the early Christian monastics. Specifically, Columba and his mission to the Picts in Scotland will be explored. Theologically, these rhythms are intricately tied to the early Christian understanding of worship.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 1 (the present chapter) introduces the dissertation's ultimate objective – an exploration of the notion of rhythm and sacred time in Columba's monastic journey and mission. Included here has been the rationale and need for the project, a set of research questions, definitions, and a list of dissertation limitations. Much of this chapter has been dedicated to the literature review that will serve as a foundation for this dissertation; these items can also be found in the bibliography that follows.

The point of Chapter 2 will be to develop a picture of the rhythm (daily, weekly, annual, community and individual, and lifetime) and sacred time in early Christian monasticism. There will be various times and places, monks, and monastic communities here. This chapter will consist of five sections. First will be evidence of rhythm and sacred time as observed before the rise of monasticism. The Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) and New Testament references will be incorporated here. The second section will address rhythm and sacred time before the inception

of the monastic rules. *The Didache* and writings related to the life of Antony will be source material here. Section three will explore various monastic rules (Pachomius, Basil, Augustine, and *The Rule of the Master*) and the rhythm and sacred time guidance they offer. The writings of Cassian (*Institutes* and *Conferences*) and others that provide a description of this rhythm and time found in early Christian monasticism will be included in the fourth section.

Chapter 3 narrows the focus of this dissertation to Celtic monasticism. The writings from the Celtic world will be included in this chapter. Some of the works include the writings of Patrick (*Confessio* and *Epistola*), *The Voyage of Saint Brendan*, and Columbanus's Rule and writings. The *peregrini,* or Irish monks on pilgrimage, will be included in this chapter as significant to exploring the mission of Columba in Chapter 4. Who were the *peregrini,* and what was their mission? What led to this pilgrimage, and what role did the rhythm and sacred time observed in Celtic monasticism play? These are just a couple of the questions addressed in this section. This chapter will also look to any archaeological or architectural testimony to rhythm or sacred life specific to Celtic monasticism. One item to explore will be the Tall Crosses of Ireland and the material inscribed upon them.

The fourth chapter will finally focus on the primary figure of this dissertation, Columba. The chapter will include Columba's biographical information. Next will be a section dedicated to exploring the monastery at Iona, founded by Columba. Specifically, what rhythms and sacred time can be observed in the material that remains? This will be followed by an inquiry into Columba's mission to the Picts of Scotland. The concluding portion of this chapter will seek to blend and assimilate the rhythms and sacred times with Columba's lifelong monastic journey and, ultimately, his mission to Scotland.

The final chapter will seek to show Columba's legacy upon other monastic movements and those that followed him. Adomnán, a relative of Columba's from several generations later, finds himself the abbot of Columba's monastery and the author of *Life of Saint Columba.* What is the legacy of Columba upon those that followed him at Iona or launched their own pilgrimage from there?

Chapter Two - Rhythm and Sacred Time in Early Christian Monastic Life

Introduction

The heart of monasticism is a desire to move spiritually from where one is to where one should be in relation to God. The journey involves growth, maturity, single-minded devotion, and increasing perfection or Christlikeness. This development serves as a foundation for the monastic's mission in life. Monastic life is replete with rhythms and sacred time that create a structure through which the monk's spiritual growth occurs. The life of Columba and the community he founded on Iona are no different. But rhythm and sacred time did not find their genesis in Columba. Instead, they are found in some of the very first paragraphs of scripture detailing the account of creation and the beginning of time and mankind.

Because any discussion of Columba must begin with the context from which his ministry emerged, what follows is an exploration of the observable rhythms and sacred time found from the first pages of scripture through the lives and writings of various early monastic leaders of church history. As referenced in the previous chapter, this "snapshot" approach imitates Thomas O'Loughlin in *Journeys on the Edge*. A comprehensive examination would be beyond this chapter's scope and unnecessary for sketching the context for the remaining discussion. Instead, this research intends to provide a broad picture of early Christian monastic rhythm and sacred time further to explore the life and mission of St. Columba.

The creation account in the first pages of Genesis offers the earliest depictions of rhythms and sacred times. They appear again in the feasts and festivals established by God for the nation of Israel as it emerged from captivity in Egypt and eventually settled in the land promised by God. Rhythm and sacred time can also be observed in the *Shema*, a central guiding passage

found in Deut 6:4-9, 11:13-21, and Num 15:37-41 and which is still foundational today.[35] Rhythm and sacred time are also seen in the life of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels and the Apostle Paul in the book of Acts. Acts 2 and the pages of the *Didache* also offer a glimpse of the rhythms established in the early church.

From there, the discussion will transition to the rhythms Antony established in the desert of Egypt. Then to Pachomius, Basil, and Augustine—three monastic leaders representing different geographic areas and times in early Christianity. Each provided their communities guidance through their rules and writings. The focus will turn to John Cassian and his two works (*Institutes* and *Conferences*). He established rhythms for the monastic communities he founded in Marseille through these works. Finally, St. Benedict and his Rule will be discussed.

Rhythm and Sacred Time Before the Rise of Early Christian Monasticism

Pentateuch/Torah

Genesis – In the Beginning

Rhythm is first established in the account of creation found in Genesis Chapter 1. Six times, the passage says, "there was evening, and there was morning the (first - sixth) day."[36] With creation complete, God rested (*vay-yishbot*) on day seven. The Hebrew word used for rest does not indicate God needing to stop because He was tired but instead indicates a cessation of the activity of the previous six days (Gen 2:1).[37] The next verse introduces the sacredness or set-apartness that God assigns to this seventh day: "God blessed the seventh day and made it holy"

[35] All references are from the Christian Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

[36] Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31.

[37] Michael Rydelnik and Michael G. Vanlaningham, eds., *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014), 39.

(Gen 2:2). These passages provide us with the earliest example of rhythm and sacred time, a model that both becomes foundational for the Israelites and provides context for the Christians that follow.

Feasts and Festivals of the Israelites

Four hundred years had passed since Jacob and his family first settled in the land of Egypt (Gen 46). Slavery and suffering at the hands of the Pharoah were about to end as God poured out the tenth and final plague upon the land of Egypt (Exod 11-12). God, through Moses, gave specific instructions to His people. Each family was to select a perfect male sheep or goat to be sacrificed at an appointed time. The animal's blood was placed on the frame of the home's door, and the animal's meat was prepared and consumed according to God's direction. The presence of blood on the doorframe shielded the family inside from the last plague. This was Passover—the night the Lord God passed over the homes of His people.

The Passover (Pesach) became the first of several feasts God instituted for the Israelites. These feasts, scattered throughout the annual calendar, provided a rhythm to the lives of the Israelites that continues in the Jewish faith today. In his book, *The Feasts of Israel – Seasons of the Messiah*, Bruce Scott examines these feasts.[38] Five feasts begin in the early books of the Old Testament: Shabbat, Pesach, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot.

Shabbat (or Sabbath) means rest.[39] Shabbat is most well-known for the weekly rhythm it establishes. This rhythm finds its roots in the creation account: God created everything in six days, and scripture says He rested on the seventh day. Scott demonstrates that the rhythm of Shabbat goes beyond weekly cessation of work and regular activity. According to scripture, a

[38] Bruce Scott, *The Feasts of Israel: Seasons of the Messiah* (Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1997).

[39] Ibid., 18. Scott's definition for Shabbat includes "desist, cease, or rest."

special Shabbat occurs on the first day of the seventh month, creating an annual rhythm in the lives of the Jewish people. In addition, God establishes a Shabbat for the land. The people were to cultivate the land for six years and then let it rest in the seventh year. The rhythm of this seven-year cycle was part of a greater cadence of seven seven-year cycles (forty-nine years). The following year, number 50, was called a Jubilee year, another year of rest for the land.[40] Shabbat established rhythm (weekly, annually, every seventh year, and twice a century) in the life of the Israelites. For Scott, the purposes for the rhythm of Shabbat include rest and remembrance—a stoppage of work or cultivation (in the case of land) to refresh and reflect on God.[41]

Both Pesach—or the festival of Passover (mentioned above)—and the Feast of Unleavened Bread serve as remembrance holidays. God commanded the Israelites to observe both on an annual basis to remember when He liberated them from slavery in Egypt.[42] The yearly rhythm of both Pesach and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, established in the Exodus, were marked by specific food and house preparation and cessation of work on the days of the sacred assembly (Exod 12:14-16).

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is one of the three pilgrim feasts. Shavuot (The Feast of Weeks) and Sukkot (The Feast of Tabernacles) are the other two (Exod 23:14-16). These pilgrim feasts were the three times during the year that God required all males to appear before Him (Exod 23:17). As a result of the feasts, travel also became part of the regular rhythm of Jewish life. These and the other feasts were filled with different patterns of sacrifices and offerings

[40] Ibid., 18-19. Scott points to the following passage of scripture to ground his material: Exodus 20:8-11 (weekly observance of Shabbat), Leviticus 25:3-4 (Shabbat first day of seventh month) and Leviticus 25:8-11 (Jubilee year).

[41] Ibid., 19-20.

[42] Ibid., 38-39. Scott states "there was only one Passover…only one time when the children of Israel had to apply the blood of the Passover lamb to their homes."

(before the destruction of the Temple in AD 70), prayers and sacred assemblies, preparations, and times of ceased work, all of which give distinct rhythm to these annual holy times. After the Exodus from Egypt, God instituted these feasts, and special days have dictated the rhythm of sacred time for the Jewish people down through history to today. Though the specific practices have changed and have been added to through rabbinic tradition, the heart behind them remains the same: to worship the Lord and honor Him as He prescribed.

Each feast God instituted for the Israelites created a rhythm (weekly, annually, every seven years, every half-century) of specific activities or cessation of activities intended to situate the person's heart, mind, and life in a particular position in relation to God. Shabbat brings about a quiet or stillness in which one can "reflect upon their relationship with God, putting aside their desires and putting God's desires first."[43] The rhythm of Pesach and the Feast of Unleavened Bread remind the participant of the night of the tenth plague and deliverance from Egypt by the hand of God.[44] Shavuot and Sukkot seek to praise God for His provision (specifically in the harvest) and remind the Israelites of how He provided for them during their wilderness wanderings.[45] The rhythm of travel to Jerusalem (before AD 70), annually bringing an offering of the first fruits—and, as in the case of Sukkot, building a temporary tent to remember the wilderness—all contribute to creating a context in which God is given praise and thanksgiving. The annual rhythm of Yom Kippur includes sacrifice for atonement. Because God is holy and His people needed forgiveness, Yom Kippur was instituted by God as an "everlasting statue,

[43] Ibid., 20.

[44] Ibid., 39.

[45] Ibid., 58, 106 (respectively).

…once-a-year, awe-inspiring zero hour for an impure nation…that was required to stand clean before its holy God."[46]

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 *The Shema*

The book of Deuteronomy records commands God gave Moses to teach the people of Israel. The specific teaching in Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is known as the *Shema*.[47] *Shema* is the Hebrew word for "hear." This passage begins: "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." The instructions in verses seven through nine give rise to a "way of life" rhythm instituted for the Israelites. Moses commands that these words be taught to the next generation when they sat, walked, lay down, and rose. The words (and the truth behind them) were to be held at the forefront of all their activities and written in prominent places. Later, rabbinical teaching would formalize the rhythm of this passage into daily prayers and fixtures upon doorposts.[48] The original passage creates a daily, moment-by-moment rhythm of teaching the truth about God and the correct response to Him. This rhythm and the formalized rabbinical tradition help inform the context of rhythm and sacred time from which early Christian monasticism emerged.

Jesus in the Gospels

[46] Ibid., 88. Yom Kippur is replete with rhythms dictated by God of sacrifice, sprinkling blood to the east and front of the mercy seat inside the Holy of Holies, the High Priest making atonement for himself, the assembly, the tent of meeting, the altar by sprinkling blood upon it. (cf. Lev 16)

[47] The *Shema* itself is technically verses 4-5 although, verses 6-9 complete the teaching of this command by Moses. See also Deut 11:13-21 and Num 15:37-41.

[48] David H. Stern and Barry A Rubin, *The Complete Jewish Study Bible: Insights for Jews & Christians: Illuminating the Jewishness of God's Word*, 2021, 234.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John record the life and ministry of Jesus here on earth. Jesus' life included rhythm and sacred time. These included the festivals and feasts discussed above and personal rhythms of ministry, prayer, and time alone with his Father. Like many Jewish families, Joseph, Mary, and the infant Jesus followed the rhythm of circumcision, infant naming, purification, firstborn dedication, and sacrifice (Luke 2:21-24). Rhythm in this Jewish family's life included Passover trips to Jerusalem "*every year* his parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival" (Luke 2:41). Every twelve months, Joseph, Mary, and their children marked their calendar by observing Passover, as instructed by God in the Egyptian desert thousands of years earlier.

Most of the content in the four gospels records the final three years of Jesus's life. Here it is evident Jesus led a life that included the rhythm of annual Jewish festivals and feasts, as well as personal rhythms of ministry and prayer. The Gospel of John locates some of his testimony in the yearly events of Passover and the Feast of Shelters (Tabernacles/Booths). "The Jewish Passover was near, and so Jesus went up to Jerusalem" (John 2:13). Following Jesus' first two miracles, John says, "after this, a Jewish festival took place, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem" (John 5:1). Jesus' earthly life was marked by the rhythm of feasts and festivals that were characteristic of any Jewish person.

Interesting questions arise when considering Jesus and his observation of the Jewish feasts and festivals. What is Jesus' relationship to the Jewish feasts and festivals? How does that work if God established them in the Old Testament for Israel and Jesus is God? Some of the feasts and festivals (Passover and the Day of Atonement) culminate in Jesus as Savior, so what is the purpose behind Jesus' observation of them? These questions are beyond the scope of this dissertation but would prove to be interesting topics for further research.

Rhythm dominated Jesus' ministry. Jesus did not stay in one geographic location during his three years of public ministry. Matthew testifies: "Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee…" (Matt 4:23a). "Jesus continued going around to all the towns and villages…" (Matt 9:35a). Luke agrees with Matthew: "Afterward he was traveling from one town and village to another…" (Luke 8:1).

The rhythm in Jesus' ministry isn't limited to travel but is also observable in his message. In each one of the Gospels, it is evident Jesus usually went to the local synagogue, taught about the Kingdom of God, and tended to peoples' needs. "…teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people" (Matt 4:23b). Matthew described the same pattern five chapters later (Matt 9:35). Mark says Jesus crossed to the other side of the Jordan River "and as was his custom he taught them again" (Mark 10:1b). According to Luke, Jesus was in the synagogue teaching "as usual" (Luke 4:16b). Jesus, himself, said it was his purpose to "proclaim the good news about the kingdom of God to the other towns also" (Luke 4:43-44).

Jesus also established a personal rhythm in his life. There are many times Jesus withdrew from the crowds and even his disciples to be alone with his Father, often in a remote place in the quiet of the night hours. Jesus withdrew alone after receiving news that John was beheaded, after feeding the 5000, and in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest. The degree of "aloneness" varies amongst Matthew's accounts, but nonetheless, Jesus made a habit of being by himself with his Heavenly Father (Matt 14:13a, 23; 26:26b, 42a, 44a). The other Gospel writers testify to this same rhythm. In her book *Spiritual Practices of Jesus*, Catherine Wright examines Jesus' rhythm of solitary prayer as found in Luke. Jesus goes away at daybreak to be alone with God (Luke 4:42). He spends all night praying alone with the Father (Luke 6:12). Jesus has a regular

habit (or rhythm) of praying by himself (Luke 9:18). These are just three examples Wright cites to demonstrate Jesus' well-established and observed rhythm of time alone, praying.[49]

Apostle Paul

Like Jesus, the Apostle Paul (Saul) established rhythm in his ministry. Acts Nine records the encounter between Jesus and Saul, which changed the direction of his life forever. Following Chapter 9, Saul, now primarily referred to as Paul, becomes the chief of all evangelists. He was sold out to the cause of Christ, committed to spreading the truth and hope of Jesus' identity and his finished work on the cross. This new ministry broadly occurs over three missionary journeys and a trip to Rome.

Paul taught in the synagogue first. Paul's reason is that God's word was to be preached to the Jews first, and when the message was rejected, Paul turned to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46). Luke's account of Paul's first mission trip provides evidence of this rhythm. "Arriving in Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues" (Acts 13:5). Later, "in Iconium, they entered the Jewish synagogue, *as usual*, and spoke" (Acts 14:1 emphasis mine). Mission trips two and three also give credence to the rhythm of Paul's ministry. "…they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. *As usual*, Paul went (in) and…reasoned with them from the Scriptures" (Acts 17:1-2 emphasis mine). "Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly…some became hardened…he withdrew from them…and conducted discussions every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:8-9). Paul's ministry operated with a predictable rhythm in each new city.

[49] Catherine J. Wright, *Spiritual Practices of Jesus: Learning Simplicity, Humility, and Prayer with Luke's Earliest Readers*, Kindle (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), 125.

Before the "Rules"

The Didache

The Didache is a short document written for some of the earliest generations of the church.[50] Despite the unknown author's identity, scholars tend to agree that *The Didache* provides a reliable testimony of the teaching in the early Christian church. Its content provides a look at the rhythm and sacred time that was a part of early Christianity. *The Didache* includes material taught to catechumens (new Christians preparing for baptism). These were some essentials one needed to know before becoming part of the community. The author(s) or editor(s) also included direction and patterns for many other aspects of early church life.

The Didache is valuable in terms of insight into the teaching content of the early Church.[51] It will be argued here that its value also lies in the ability to discern rhythms and patterns in early Christianity from its content. The first six chapters of *The Didache* address the instruction of new believers before they were baptized and considered a part of the fellowship of believers.[52] The existence of this material testifies to consistent content that was repeatedly taught to all catechumens, a system that created rhythm around the process of entering the community. Chapter 7 begins the rhythmic structure related to the baptism of a new believer.

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[50] The exact date is unknown. Charles Kannengiesser, ed., *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis Volume 1* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2006), 213. Johannes Quasten, *Patrology Vol 1: The Beginnings of Patristic Literature*, vol. 1 (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 1992), 36-37. Kannengiesser and Quasten agree on a date between AD 100-150 and Syria as the time and provenance for *The Didache*. O'Loughlin argues for a first-century date, although doesn't narrow his date any further. He says it is most important "to see this as a reflection of the earliest churches." Thomas O'Loughlin, ed., *The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 26. Aaron Milavec argues that *The Didache* was contemporary to Paul's ministry (mid-first century). Aaron Milavec, *The Didache: Text, Translation, Analysis, and Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), loc 35 (Kindle).

[51] Quasten, *Patrology*, 30. Quasten considers *The Didache* to be the "most important document of the subapostolic period…in existence."

[52] R. Joseph Owles, *The Didache: The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (Published by R. Joseph Owles via CreateSpace: CreateSpace, 2014), 1-13.

First, the catechumen was taught, as mentioned above. Then the catechumen was baptized following specific steps, including which water to use (running and cold were preferred). The teaching outlined acceptable alternatives if available water didn't meet these criteria. This teaching created a consistent rhythm or pattern from one baptism to the next, even in the case of inconsistent conditions.

The early Christians developed a rhythm around fasting. *The Didache* not only provides structure and pattern by establishing a one or two-day pre-baptism fast for both the catechumen and the one who did the baptizing but also adds that any others involved should consider fasting, too. Teaching, fasting, and baptism contributed to the rhythm of the lives of the early Church.[53] Fasting was also a part of the weekly rhythm, with Wednesday and Friday established as days of fasting.

Moving on from baptism, both Chapters 8 and 9 address prayer.[54] *The Didache* begins with The Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). The words and instructions to pray this prayer three times a day are included.[55] Rhythm is created three times a day, praying Jesus' words.

Chapters 9 and 10 provide patterns and rhythm to prayer in and around the Eucharist.[56] The Eucharist (The Lord's Supper or Communion) was established by Jesus the night before He was crucified.[57] *The Didache* provides a pattern of offering a prayer of thanksgiving first for the cup, then the bread. In this way, each element of the Lord's Supper is accompanied by prayer.

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[53] Ibid., 14.

[54] Ibid., 15-19.

[55] Ibid., 15.

[56] Ibid., 16-19.

[57] Matt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; see also Paul's teaching in 1 Cor 11:23-29.

This was a rhythm that Jesus established. Chapter 10 guides prayer at the end of the Eucharist.[58] This continues the pattern of thanksgiving—not only for the Eucharist but also for all God has provided—and includes a petition for Jesus's return.

The Didache establishes sacred time rhythm that continues in the gathering together of the community of believers on the Lord's Day. Chapter 14 provides direction for which day to meet, what to include (the breaking of bread and giving thanks), and parameters for who would be excluded.[59] The intent of this time is to gather before the Lord in a manner that honors Him– reconciled and repentant. The once-a-week rhythm of gathering, reflecting, evaluating, repenting, reconciling, breaking bread, and offering thanks was to worship the Lord.

St. Antony

Early Christian monasticism often anchors its beginning in the life of St. Antony.[60] Antony was born into a wealthy Egyptian family in the middle of the third century. Antony was orphaned and responsible for his younger sister as a young adult.[61] Motivated by the teaching in Matt 19 and Matt 6:34, Antony sold all his possessions, gave the proceeds to the poor, placed his sister in the care of a convent, and began to live the isolated life of a hermit.[62] So Antony began

[58] Ibid., 18-19.

[59] Ibid., 24.

[60] While often referred to as the father of monasticism, many scholars point out Antony was not the first but most often referenced because of the popularity of Athanasius's *Life of Antony.* This fact is noted by Chitty, Peters and Smither. Derwas J. Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism Under the Christian Empire* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 2. Greg Peters, *The Story of Monasticism: Retrieving an Ancient Tradition for Contemporary Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 38. Edward L. Smither, *Missionary Monks: An Introduction to the History and Theology of Missionary Monasticism* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2016), 18.

[61] Athanasius, "*Life of Antony*," 1, accessed July 19, 2021. https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf204.xvi.ii.i.html.

[62] Ibid., 2 & 3.

his "journey in the way of virtue."[63] In this sense, virtue is seen as a state of perfection characterized by the love of Christ and obedience to His word.[64]

Athanasius of Alexandria's (ca. 296-373) *Life of Antony,* published shortly after Antony's death, is a valuable document in studying the early monk's life and ministry. Harmless considers the *Life of Antony* to be the first of a new genre and speaks of its value:

> The *Life of Antony* purports to be a biography but is not one in any modern sense. Its fantastical worldview and anecdotal flavor are too far removed from modern biography's concern with sober facts, strict chronology, and critical evaluation of sources. On the other hand, it should not lead one to underestimate the verifiable history gleaned from its pages. The *Life* is much closer to a biography in the ancient sense of the genre.[65]

For those seeking to live a monastic life, the *Life of Antony* was a guide to be imitated. Others had requested that Athanasius provide an account of Antony's life, including the discipline he undertook and a description of his way of life, to provide a model to be imitated.[66] While *Life of Antony* is not officially considered a monastic rule, Harmless agrees with Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390) in considering it a "rule of life."[67] Given these assessments, *Life of Antony* is thus valuable for studying rhythm and sacred time in Antony's life and ministry.

Antony lived in the early days of formalized monastic rules. As seen later, the monastic rules guide the rhythms that make up monastic life. Nevertheless, the rhythms existed. Antony learned them from his mentors and passed them on to those who dedicated their lives to imitating

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[63] "Life of Antony," 3.

[64] Chitty, *The Desert a City*, 11 & 5 respectively.

[65] William Harmless, *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 69.

[66] *"Life of Antony,"* prologue.

[67] *Desert Christians,* 69. Harmless assesses Gregory of Nazianzus's description of *Life of Antony* as found in his *Oratio* 21.5. (see Harmless's footnote 48).

him. The rhythms found in Antony's life include the ascetic practices of solitude, learning and teaching, worship (prayer and scripture), and work. Certain identifiable rhythms prove foundational to this kind of life. Antony established particular eating and sleeping rhythms as a part of this discipline or "training."[68] Antony either limited or eliminated sleep to remain watchful for the Lord's promised return. The rhythm of his diet was characterized by what it included (bread and water) and the amount.[69]

Antony's life was also marked by periods of withdrawal from society. Those who chose this lifestyle became known as anchorites or eremites. This pattern of living alone, at times wholly isolated, was occasionally interrupted by interacting with others for learning and mentoring them to follow the anchoritic life.[70] The rhythm of solitude and the pattern of learning and mentoring served to move Antony toward his intended goal. William Harmless describes Antony's life goals in three ways. Antony sought to rid himself of personal desires for the benefit of his soul, to achieve a life of virtue, and to resist wallowing in memories. Instead, he remained intent upon a forward-focused life based on Paul's words in Phil 3:14 "I press on toward the goal…heavenward in Christ Jesus."[71] Derwas Chitty adds simply that Antony's goal was purity of heart.[72]

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[68] *"Life of Antony,"* 12.

[69] Ibid., 7.

[70] 4 and 15. Antony learned the practice of anchoritic living from others, and throughout *Life of Antony,* the reader sees Antony emerging for the purpose of teaching. As mentioned before, the whole purpose behind Athanasius's writing was to document Antony's life so others could imitate him. Chitty also discusses this rhythm of mentorship – Antony learning from those before him and then serving as a model for others to emulate. *The Desert a City* 3. As opposed to an interruption, Donald Fairbairn identifies the alternation between isolation and contact with others as a pattern that would be imitated by those that followed. Donald Fairbairn, *The Global Church: The First Eight Centuries: From Pentecost Through the Rise of Islam* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2021), 188.

[71] *Desert Christians,* 66. (Phil 4:14 NIV)

[72] *The Desert a City,* 3.

A significant part of Antony's solitary life involved a spiritual struggle to rid himself of personal desire.[73] In addition to fighting these battles, described by Athanasius as physical attacks by demons, Antony established rhythms of quiet discipline intended to focus on his goal.[74]

The *Life of Antony* documents patterns of work, prayer, and meditation upon scripture.[75] Chitty categorizes this practice as a rhythm of worship foundational in Antony's life.[76] Antony incorporated repetitive, monotonous, manual labor to accomplish two things. First, Antony was compelled to obey scripture. 2 Thess 3:10 taught Antony he must work if he intended to eat; his work also provided food for others in need. Second, the rhythm of working with his hands—making baskets, sandals, mats, and rope—created a mental environment that allowed him to pray without ceasing and recall memorized scripture.[77] For Antony, the manual work rhythm established a worship rhythm that included prayer, scripture meditation, and obedience.

The Rules

Pachomius the Great

Pachomius and Antony were Egyptian contemporaries. Both dedicated their lives to focusing on the Lord and obeying the commands of the Bible. But there many of the similarities end. Antony, as discussed above, was significantly associated with the anchorites, or hermits.

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[73] Ibid.

[74] *Life of Antony* for passages related to demonic attack see sections 5, 6, 8-10.

[75] Ibid., 3.

[76] *The Desert a City,* 3.

[77] Ibid., In addition to Chitty's comments about Antony's work, *Life of Antony* provides scripture reference 2 Thess 3:10 (work to eat) and 1 Thess 5:17 (pray continually) that served as Antony's motivation for the rhythm of work that facilitated his worship, see section 3.

Pachomius received his early monastic training along these lines; however, he eventually became one of the early foundational figures in the cenobitic or communal monastic movement.

Pachomius converted to Christianity following his service in the Roman military. Varying accounts of his military experience survive. Some say he was forced into duty and treated more like a prisoner than a soldier, only to be ultimately released before seeing any active-duty time.[78] His exposure to Christians during this time drew him to the faith.

Pachomius began his faith journey as an apprentice of an anchorite named Palamon. Harmless describes his early training in asceticism: nightly prayer vigils that kept him awake either half or whole nights, single daily meals of bread and salt, and the repetitive manual work of weaving.[79] These early rhythms were incorporated into Pachomius's life as an anchoritic monk.

Pachomius's historical significance begins with a vision. He believed God told him to build a monastery at Tabennesi, which would house a community of monks.[80] What began in Tabennesi grew into a network of monastic communities along the Nile River, from Latopolis, located in the south or Upper Nile, to Panopolis in the north or Lower Nile region. Some of these communities are in proximity to Nag Hammadi, the location which became famous in the 1940s

[78] Fairbairn, *The Global Church*, 189. For other accounts of Pachomius's life, see Terrence Kardong, *Pillars of Community: Four Rules of Pre-Benedictine Monastic Life* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 64. William M. Johnston, ed., *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 2*, vol. 2 (Chicago; London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), 985. Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 118.

[79] Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 118.

[80] James I. Goehring, "Monasticism," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, eds. Everett Ferguson, Michael P McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris, (New York, London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 616. Harmless adds that people would come to be monks. William Harmless, *Desert Christians: An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 118-119.

upon discovering several early Gnostic texts.[81] According to James Goehring, it is estimated that by the end of Pachomius's life, more than 3000 monks lived and worked under his leadership.[82]

Pachomius's community (*koinonia*) approach became the distinctive characteristic of his ministry and established his place in early Christian monasticism.[83] Pachomius is often remembered as the innovator of cenobitic or communal monasticism. While Pachomius was not the first to ascribe to cenobitic monasticism, he was a "pioneer and organizational genius," according to Harmless.[84] Smither considers him one of the innovators in monastic history and notes that Pachomius's approach dominates monasticism going forward.[85] Harmless traces Pachomius's influence upon Basil (and ultimately the Eastern church) and Benedict (and thereby the church in the West).[86]

One of the keys to the operation of cenobitic communities like Pachomius's was the monastic rule, which offered guidance and direction for nearly all aspects of life. Pachomius established what was probably the earliest monastic rule.

Marilyn Dunn highlights several areas in which rhythm is established through the rule's guidance. The rule establishes rhythm in leadership. The clear hierarchy of authority provides

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[81] Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 123. See also the map in figure 5.1, same page. Issues related to the relationship between Pachomius's monastic communities, and the Gnostic literature found at Nag Hammadi are beyond the scope of this project but would make for an interesting research project, for those interested specifically in Pachomius, his monastic network, and their texts/literature.

[82] Goehring, "Monasticism" in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 616. According to Fairbairn, this number was spread amongst nine different monastic communities, seven for men and two for women. Fairbairn, *The Global Church*, 189.

[83] Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 25, 27. See also Harmless's comments on Pachomian *koinonia*, Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 116.

[84] Harmless *Desert Christians*, 115.

[85] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 17-19.

[86] Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 115.

structure: superiors, housemasters, and deputies. Seniority within the community is established by one's date of admission to the monastery. In this way, the rule establishes objective, constant, and reliable patterns in the lives of the monks. These rhythms replace the energy and effort required of more subjective systems. The process of admission into the monastery is orderly and rhythmic also. When one first expresses interest in joining the community, there is a pattern followed for admission. Specific questions are asked: is the candidate a runaway slave, criminal, or genuinely motivated to join? There is a time of exposure to life in the monastery and an opportunity to evaluate one's readiness to embrace those patterns, rhythms, and purposes. The final step demonstrates the candidate's willingness and ability to renounce personal belongings, family, and all aspects of his previous life.[87]

Harmless's analysis of Pachomius's Rule supports the view that a monastic rule helps identify the rhythms and sacred time inherent in monastic life. While he characterizes the text as "dry reading (and) long lists of dos and don'ts," it also addresses the everyday issues of communal life, thus revealing its rhythm.[88] Pachomius's Rule establishes guidance for the monastic community's daily, weekly, annual, and life events, focusing on the community versus the individual. Peters points to the singular purpose behind Pachomius's Rule: develop a "single-minded devotion to God."[89] His rule intended to create an environment that structured life in the community around prayer and meditation upon and memorizing Scripture.[90]

At the same time, the rule's guidance rejects certain aspects of the ascetic life of Antony and the anchorites. Fairbairn notes Pachomius's concept of community, which is given its pattern

[87] Ibid., 30.

[88] Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 124.

[89] Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 46.

[90] Ibid.

through the rule, reduces competition, and moderates the demands and rigors of asceticism, making community—not the individual—the priority.[91] According to Goehring, all communal monastic movements rejected asceticism in general.[92] Pachomius's personal experience in monasticism was grounded in asceticism. To some extent, he continued this throughout his life while at the same time choosing not to impose it upon those that joined his community.

According to Smither, it is through the rule that the community value system is expressed.[93] More than simply a list of what to do and what not to do, the rule delineates what is valued, protected, and cherished by the community. Second, the rule guides everyday living as a part of the unified community.[94]

Like Antony, those who joined Pachomius's community withdrew from society at large. But in contrast to the solitary, isolated life of the anchorites, the cenobitic monks were drawn to the community with a common purpose. For Pachomius, this community was crucial for the spiritual growth required to live wholly for the Lord and serve others.[95] Observable in this rule are the rhythms and sacred time that provide a foundation for their goal and mission.

Direct interaction with the rule helps when observing the rhythms and patterns of Pachomius.[96] In particular, part two of the rule provides guidance and rhythm for moving about

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[91] Fairbairn, *The Global Church*, 189.

[92] Goehring, "Asceticism" found in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, eds. Ferguson, McHugh & Norris, 106.

[93] Smither *Missionary Monks*, 19.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., 17.

[96] *The Rules of Pachomius* as translated by G. H. Schodde from the Ethiopic into English and found on the e-Catholic 2000 website will be the source for the discussion in this dissertation, access July 1, 2021. https://www.ecatholic2000.com/pachomius/untitled-07.shtml

the monastery, eating, joining the community, sleeping, maintaining personal hygiene, interacting among community members, and placing boundaries or limits upon one's activities.

Part two begins by addressing the start of the day. The monks would rise after being called to an assembly of Psalm-singing or communal prayer.[97] When the call went out, the monks would get up "quickly" and make their way silently to the designated assembly area. While silent, they were not unoccupied: each monk was to read or pray while en route. Even though movement and activity ensued as the monks were summoned and there was purpose in their step, silence reigned amongst the moving bodies. While their mouths were disengaged, their minds and hearts were to focus on God through the silent recitation of memorized scripture or prayer.

This gathering included different patterns and rhythms. A reader would read the passage from the Bible. He would then clap his hands once, prompting the monks to rise to their feet, make the sign of the cross, and pray the Lord's Prayer. The reader would clap his hands two times, and the monks would be seated.[98]

Pachomius's rule also established a pattern for eating. Each monk was to arrive at the designated time and keep to himself once seated at the table. This meant keeping one's eyes on his own plate, as there was to be no looking around at what others were doing. If a monk wanted something, he was to whisper his request. There was to be no "wrangling, conversing or laughing."[99]

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[97] Ibid., 2.1. *The Rules of Pachomius* call this "psalm-singing," and Wilken refers to it as the early morning communal prayer. Robert Louis Wilken, *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 103.

[98] Wilken describes the order created by assigned seats and reading scripture. Wilken, *The First Thousand Years*, 103. Harmless also describes the pattern of seat assignments. Each monk sat according to the date he joined the monastery. This pattern of social leveling eventually influenced Benedict's Rule. *Desert Christians*, 126.

[99] *The Rule of Pachomius*, 2.2.

If someone presented himself to the monastery and expressed an interest in joining the community, he would follow a methodical preparation pattern established by Pachomius. Part one of the rule indicates that there was to be a period of three years before anyone could join the other monks.[100] Part two doesn't include this condition but does establish a rhythm to become a member. The interested party must first be taught the "prayer of the Gospel."[101] Prospective monks memorized Psalms and expressed willingness to leave their previous life behind completely. The next step in the transition to monk included surrendering of one's belongings and clothes and donning a monk's attire. This wardrobe, consistent from monk to monk, had "two undergarments, a covering, a shaggy cloak, shoes, two hoods, a girdle, and a staff."[102]

The fourth section of this second part of the rule is worded in the negative. Elsewhere, rhythm is created via a command to do something, but here, rhythm in the community is established through boundaries. A limit was placed upon a monk's ability to leave the monastery without permission. The rule includes guidance for sleeping, talking with others in the sleeping quarters (none was allowed), and what could be placed upon the monk's bed (only a mat). Further, Pachomius established patterns of distance between monks while they sat and walked. Emphasis is seen here, as in earlier sections, upon reading and contemplating scripture instead of conversing. When a monk died, his body was to be accompanied by the community to his burial place, further reinforcing the priority of community versus isolation.[103]

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[100] Ibid., 1.3.

[101] Ibid., 2.3. Harmless identified this as the Lord's Prayer. Harmless *Desert Christians,* 126.

[102] Ibid., 2.3. Harmless further explains the Pachomian monk's attire was in accordance with the Gospel, "necessary but not ostentatious" which demonstrated the ultimate authority of scripture in these communities. *Desert Christians,* 127.

[103] Ibid., 2.4.

Many have observed and commentated upon the patterns and rhythms Pachomius established. Marilyn Dunn connects the guidance in the rule with Pachomius's desire to promote modesty and sexual purity as scripture teaches.[104] She also observes that the rhythm and sacred times established by *The Rule of Pachomius* influenced others later. She points to the Jura Fathers, whose writings prescribe a daily reading of Pachomius's Rule.[105] Peters points to Pachomius's goal in all this: being single-minded in devotion to the Lord. Peters observes that this goal is achieved through the rhythm of continual prayer and recitation of and meditation upon scripture. The mind is never truly empty; therefore, single-minded devotion is the "result of intentionality and (a) thoughtfully constructed monastic regimen."[106]

In his book *Desert Christians,* Harmless extensively describes the patterns established by Pachomius. These patterns resulted in the rhythms of life that became characteristic of the communities he founded. This includes rhythms related to sacred time. Daily life was guided by the rule, as it established both morning and evening communal times of prayer. *Synaxis* (or the assembly for prayer) consisted of methodical entry/exit, seating, prayer, scripture reading, and confession of sin. Despite the overarching expectation of silence, Harmless suggests that evening *synaxis* included discussions of the day's teaching.[107] There were patterns for both weekly and annual sacred times as well. Harmless describes the observance of the Eucharist on Saturday and Sunday and a regular teaching schedule alternating between the monastery's superior and the housemasters.[108] Annually, the monastic community observed Easter and the baptism of

[104] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 32.

[105] Ibid., 85.

[106] Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 47.

[107] Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 128-129.

[108] Ibid., 129.

catechumens as a whole community.[109] In these communities, manual labor was sacred work. The monks often wove reed baskets and mats while listening to teaching or scripture reading during the morning and evening assemblies.[110] What on the surface seems a distraction was a tool by which the rhythm and pattern of hand work facilitated focus.

Basil of Caesarea

Basil of Caesarea was just a teenager when Pachomius and Antony passed away. Exploration of Basil's monasticism and ministry moves the discussion further in history and geographically to the northeast, specifically to Cappadocia (modern Turkey). Basil was born to a well-to-do Christian family in Pontus. He was not the first in his family to become well-known in Christian circles. His grandmother Macrina the Elder (ca. 270-ca. 340), was a believer, as were Basil's father and mother. Two of his brothers, Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 335-ca. 395) and Peter of Sebaste (ca. 340-391), were bishops, as Basil would also become.[111] Another brother—Naucratius (d. 357)—would live as an ascetic until his death. Their sister Macrina the Younger (ca. 327-379) would serve as a driving force and influence in the monastic direction of Basil's life.

[109] Ibid., 127.

[110] Harmless notes this discipline of "no idleness" finds its roots in Egyptian practice and thus carried into Pachomius's communities. *Desert Christians*, 128. Wilken *The First Thousand Years*, 103.

[111] There are various amounts for the number of siblings in Basil's family. Frederick Norris, in his article, says there are nine siblings, with the five mentioned above being the most well-known. Frederick W. Norris's "Basil of Caesarea" article found in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, edited by: Everett Ferguson, Michael P McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris. (New York, London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 139. Wilkin says there were ten siblings. Robert Louis Wilken, *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 105. Demetrios J. Constantelos cites five siblings (possibly only noting the most well-known) in his article "St. Basil the Great" found in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism* Vol 1, edited by William M. Johnston, (Chicago & London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), 116.

Along with the rest of his family, Basil was well-educated. His father was his first teacher, and upon his death, Basil was sent to Cappadocia to study. It was in Cappadocia that Basil cultivated a friendship with Gregory of Nazianzus. Along with his brother, Gregory of Nyssa, this threesome would become known as the Cappadocian Fathers. From Cappadocia, Basil's studies took him to Constantinople and, ultimately, Athens.[112] Despite Basil attending law school in Athens, his professional path would follow a different route.[113]

Following his schooling, Basil embarked upon a tour of monastic communities. This journey took him to Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia and provided exposure to some of the great monastic communities and traditions in early Christianity.[114] While in Egypt, Basil met Athanasius, author of *Life of Antony*, and Eustathios of Sebasteia (ca. 300-ca. 388), the founder of a monastic community in Basil's hometown of Pontus. Constantelos considers these two relationships significant in forming Basil as a monastic leader.[115] Basil's advanced education, the influence of family members who lead ascetic communities, and experiencing a variety of monastic approaches in various countries all contributed to the rhythms and patterns that eventually emerged in Basilian monasticism.

Unlike Antony and Pachomius, Basil also held different ecclesiastical positions (priest, presbyter, and bishop), which were integrated into his monastic life. Scholarship held sway in

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[112] As the number of siblings differed from scholar to scholar, the detail of where Basil met Gregory of Nazianzus varies as well. Some say Cappadocia (Frederick Norris) and others say Athens (Terrence Kardong). Norris, "Basil of Caesarea" in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 139. Kardong, *Pillars of Community*, 2.

[113] Constantelos, "St. Basil the Great" found in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol. 1*, 116. Kardong agrees as to the importance of Macrina's leadership in the family which influenced basil, *Pillars of Community*, 2.

[114] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 35. Constantelos "St. Basil the Great," 116. Norris "Basil of Caesarea," 139. All three agree upon Basil's purpose for these travels – to explore and understand the various monastic movements of his time.

[115] Constantelos, "St. Basil the Great," 116.

what Basil considered necessary and how he approached his work. Basil spent time teaching rhetoric and proved himself a prolific writer, penning his Long and Short Rules and several other texts during this time. These four roles—monk, bishop, writer, and academic—contribute to the rhythms and patterns one can identify in Basil's monastic movement.

Basil combined the roles of monk and bishop in ways no one had ever done before.[116] Because of this unique approach, Philip Rousseau suggests that one should not look at Basil's writings without considering both his ascetic and pastoral roles.[117] It is unfortunate, says Rousseau, that so many of Basil's writings have automatically been categorized as monastic. He advises investigation into Basil's intended audience to determine whether his purpose was exclusively monastic or pastoral.[118] The exploration of Basil's Rule in the following section will heed this advice.

There is general agreement among scholars that Basil did not set out to write a specific set of rules for monastic life.[119] Instead, the rules developed over time, influenced by the various facets of Basil's many roles and dictated by the needs of either the monastic community or the church community.[120] Basil struggled with disunity and tension within and around the church, church leadership, ascetic communities, and society as bishop.[121] The principles of life, answers

[116] Andrea Sterk, "Basil of Caesarea and the Rise of the Monastic Episcopate: Ascetic Ideals and Episcopal Authority in Fourth-Century Asia Minor" (Ph.D., United States -- New Jersey, Princeton Theological Seminary), accessed May 10, 2022. https://www.proquest.com/docview/304118635/abstract/E27FD5338745468EPQ/1.

[117] Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2008), 190.

[118] Ibid., 191.

[119] Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 36. Also, Rousseau *Basil of Caesarea*, 191.

[120] Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, 191. Fairbairn considers "life guides" a better term than rules, *The Global Church*, 197.

to questions, direction, and boundaries were just as applicable to the Christian population outside the monastery as they were to those who had dedicated their lives as monks.[122] Basil's unique blending of the offices of bishop and monk helps explain why the intended audience of his rule broadened.

As one of the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil is often remembered for his defense of the Nicene Creed and its contribution to the Arian debate.[123] Theologically, Basil and the other Cappadocian Fathers (Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus) notably contributed to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity—three persons in the Godhead but united as one.[124] While the details of these issues are beyond the scope of this discussion, they are significant here because of the primacy of Jesus' commands in Scripture found in Basil's rule. Jesus' divine identity rendered his commands worthy of the obedience Basil promoted in his rule.

While Basil is well known as a bishop, he was, first and foremost, a monk. As noted, heavy influence from family members and travels to study other monastic communities influenced his development in this area. Basil, the monk, is noteworthy in several ways. As was the goal of many monks before him, Basil desired to conquer passions within his life that were inconsistent with scripture.[125] Basil's monastic movement focused on obedience to the commands of Jesus. Every command was to be obeyed, but his rule was centered upon the

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[121] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 34. Fairbairn, *The Global Church*, 196. Kardong cites the general theological turmoil over Christology as the basis for much of the tension, Kardong, *Pillars of Community*, 20.

[122] Ibid., 36. Fairbairn and Constantelos agree, Fairbairn *The Global Church*, 197 and Constantelos "St. Basil the Great" in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism* edited by Johnston, 116.

[123] Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 54.

[124] Norris, "Basil of Caesarea" as found in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, edited by Ferguson et al., 140.

[125] Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism*, 34.

command in Matt 22:36-39, in which Jesus said, "love God and love your neighbor."[126] Upon these two commands, Basil based his guidance and direction throughout his rule.

Basil established a rhythm for communal living that included steps specific to joining the community.[127] One of the rhythms to joining Basil's monastic community involved selling all one's worldly goods. After the items were sold, the proceeds were given to benefit the poor.[128] The renunciation of possessions is consistent with earlier communities Basil would have observed, and providing care for those in need was in step with his ministry as bishop. In accordance with his blended role of monk and bishop, whoever was bishop would be the holder of any funds before they are dispersed to the poor. This move reflected Basil's desire to create unity between monastic communities and the church via a unified leader in the bishop's role.[129] To investigate specific rhythms and patterns established by Basil for his monastic communities, the discussion will turn to his rules.

Basil was a prolific author. His surviving work includes letters, homilies, and what have become known as his rules. The term "rule" is not something Basil chose.[130] Given that the contents of this document guided the monastic communities founded by Basil, the title "rule" settled logically upon it. His work is comparable to the material from Pachomius examined above and what was produced by Augustine (next section) and others in similar roles of

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[126] Ibid., 37.

[127] Ibid., 36.

[128] Ibid., 37.

[129] Dunn mentions the bishop as the holder of the monies, and Fairbairn suggests the intent to bring the monastic community under the bishop's authority. Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 37. Fairbairn, *The Global Church*, 197.

[130] Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea*, 192-195.

leadership who were responsible for guiding the communal and spiritual lives of others. For this research, a discussion of Basil's Rule or Asketikon will create a context in which to situate Columba and his ministry eventually.[131]

Easy access to Basil's Rule is available thanks to translators. Silvas offers an English translation of the Latin text by Rufinus (ca. 344-411). Rufinus translated Basil's work into Latin to make it available to monasteries in the West.[132] Basil chose a structure for his text highlighting the teacher/student or superior/monk relationship. This text is made up of a series of 203 questions and responses. Quickly, the reader senses the rhythm created in the back-and-forth approach.

Furthermore, this series of questions and responses highlights the daily rhythms of work, prayer, functioning within a community, and caring for the sick. Basil establishes the foundation for his answers in the Prologue. Basil offers the commands of the Lord found in Scripture to guide and direct the lives of those learning from him. Life in Basil's monastic communities is to be lived in obedience to what the Lord commands and with readiness and expectation of His return.[133] Once Basil establishes his foundation, he dives into the questions.

A sampling of the questions intended to offer insight into his monastic communities' rhythm and sacred times follows. The discussion is far from a comprehensive study of Basil's Rule but helps build the context for Columba's community, ministry, and mission.

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[131] Anna Silvas, trans., *The Rule of St Basil in Latin and English: A Revised Critical Edition.* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013). (Kindle eBook)

[132] Ibid., 219-220. Rufinus indicates Basil's Institutes (as Rufinus calls them) are worthy of study and imitation to bring continuity between monasteries in the west and those of Cappadocia under Basil's leadership.

[133] Ibid., 220-221.

Question 1 asks if any single command in Scripture is more important than another. Basil answers, using Jesus' word in Matt 22:36-39 and Mark 12:28-3: the most important is to love God, and the second is to love your neighbor.[134] The primacy of these two commands establishes Basil's monasticism's outward, other-focused rhythm of life.

When asked in Question 3 whether it was better for monastics to live in isolation as Antony did or in community as the Pachomian monks did, Basil embraces the cenobitic (communal) approach. This pattern of life not only sought to serve others but would also reap the benefits of the influence of others. Smither cites spiritual growth as a reason Basil encouraged community versus solitary living. This was intended to shift one's natural inclination toward self to an outward and other-centered ministry and lifestyle.[135] Basil lists the following benefits of communal monasticism: working for others' benefit, holding each other accountable for sin and pointing out areas one might be blind to, and praying together as one.[136] This other-focused environment created a pattern and rhythm of self-denial— not in the same way the ascetics practiced self-denial but in an obedient posture to the commands of Christ.

Like what was seen in Pachomius's Rule, Basil establishes a rhythm or pattern to follow when one expresses interest in joining the monastic community. Questions 4 through 6 address the renunciation of property and whether one should be tested before admission. Basil's scripture-based responses create the pattern to be followed. Basil points out that the disciples immediately left what they had (boats, nets, fishing businesses, tax collector booths, family) when invited to follow Jesus. This should also be the experience and rhythm in the monk's life:

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[134] Ibid., 222.

[135] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 21.

[136] Silva, *The Rule of St. Basil*, 234.

when called, leave everything. Basil combines the disciples' experiences with Jesus' command to the rich young ruler in Matt 19:21. Here, Jesus tells the man to sell all his possessions and give the proceeds to the poor. Those wishing to join Basil's community must not only renounce everything but also sell everything to benefit the poor (as opposed to the monastic community keeping the money).[137] Should there be a test for the one interested in joining? Basil says it is prudent to test motive and willingness to work as a part of the community and explore one's honesty and response to instruction and humility.[138] As with Pachomius, Basil establishes a consistent rhythm for those who desire to join the community.

Question 10 speaks to the daily rhythm of life and addresses the issue of who sits where within the monastery. Basil exhorts his audience to remember the importance of humility in Jesus's teaching. As one seeking to obey all of Jesus' commands, Basil says it will be preferable for each monk to seek the lowest place to sit. However, he cautions against letting seating become the source of competition.[139] The rhythms of order and humility facilitate successful communal living and help each member seek to obey all Jesus commanded.

Like Pachomius before him, Basil provides direction and a pattern for the clothing worn by those in the monastic community. Question 11 and its response give insight into this topic. Basil begins by reminding the audience of the rhythms guiding the community: humility, simplicity, and moderation about cost. Pointing again to scripture, Basil shows that monastic dress should not be extravagant but sufficient for modesty and protection from the weather. The monk's habit (clothing) should identify him as Christian, and thus one should conduct oneself as

[137] Ibid., 241.

[138] Ibid., 242-243.

[139] Ibid., 252.

such to give a good testimony.[140] The daily rhythm of a particular pattern of dress adopted by the monastic community overlaps with the mission and purpose of those who wear it.

In Question 12, Basil is asked about a monk's speech. The pattern established by Jesus in scripture provides direction for the rhythm that settles upon the monastic community. Basil reminds the questioner of what Jesus said in John (16:13; 5:19, 12:49): neither he nor the Holy Spirit spoke of their own accord but only what the Father commanded. He then asks who (in the monastery) would think they have the right to do differently.[141] Offering further guidance on a monk's approach to speech is Paul's exhortation, "all things might be permissible, but not all things are expedient…" (1 Cor 10:23).[142] Basil offers these biblical commands and the reminder that the community is dedicated to loving God (first) and loving neighbor as foundations for why monks must always consider how their speech affects others. With these guidelines in place, it's easy for one to imagine the daily rhythm that pervaded the life of the community, one marked by thoughtful and likely minimal words, as monks evaluated their words in light of scripture and an other-focused concern.

Question 134 addresses the rhythm of the Eucharist in the community. Specifically, Basil is asked what one's disposition should be when participating in this sacrament. Citing much scripture to support his response, Basil says there is a rhythm that involved preparation, self-examination, and faith that accompanies the taking of the Lord's Supper.[143]

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[140] Ibid., 252-255.

[141] Ibid., 257.

[142] Ibid., 258.

[143] Ibid., 324-325. In addition to quoting from the Old and New Testaments, Basil also quotes Wisdom 2:20, found in the Apocrypha, when giving reasons why one's soul should be stirred to love Jesus.

As the monks gather for times or prayer, they are to practice the rhythm of silence. According to Basil, there is to be no speaking except for those who have responsibilities that require it; and during those times, speaking is to be quiet and only when necessary. This discipline of silence is rooted in the warning Basil finds in 1 Cor 14:30, in which he understands Paul to be cautioning even those who are teaching.[144]

Unlike Pachomius's Rule, most of Basil's text reads more like a theological Q&A session than an operational handbook for life in the monastery. The discussion above points to the few areas in which Basil gives some of these specific directions.

Augustine

St. Augustine was born in 354 in the city of Thagaste, located in the northeast corner of modern Algeria. Augustine was born to a family of average means. Like Basil before him, he experienced a strong female Christian influence in his life. His mother, Monica, was a Christian and frequently prayed for her son to pursue the same faith. Augustine's father was a pagan who, according to Marilyn Dunn, became a Christian later in his life.[145] Education was essential to better Augustine's economic position in society. Because his family was not wealthy, Augustine's education was provided through the generous gift of another.[146]

Augustine's education and early years working as a teacher of rhetoric took him from Carthage to Rome to Milan. While in Carthage for his education, Augustine began a nine-year

[144] Ibid., 326.

[145] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 64.

[146] Wilkin, *The First Thousand Years*, 185.

journey into Manichaeism. Eventually, Augustine split from the Manichees over the relationship between evil and original sin.[147]

Following his foray into Manichaeism, Augustine explored Neoplatonic philosophy, searching for answers to satisfy his quest for truth and questions about evil.[148] While in Milan, Augustine met a bishop named Ambrose (ca. 339-ca. 397). Before meeting Ambrose, Augustine felt the Christian scriptures were intellectually inferior and beneath his level of thinking. The ensuing conversation with Ambrose demonstrated that Christianity offered satisfying answers to the questions that had dogged Augustine for years.[149] During this time, Augustine struggled with his desire for physical relationships that were contrary to the teachings of Christianity; however, in 386, while reading Romans 13:13-14, he was convicted of the need to give up this lifestyle and become a follower of Jesus.[150]

Once baptized, Augustine returned home to North Africa, intent on establishing a monastery.[151] On a trip to Hippo, Augustine was ordained as a priest in 391. He began to take over some responsibilities from Bishop Valerius (d. 396/97) and ultimately replaced him as

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[147] For additional discussion on Augustine, his nine-year association, and ultimate split with Manichaeism, the resources are helpful: Margaret R. Miles, "Augustine" article found in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* edited by Everett Ferguson et al., 122., and Wilkin *The First Thousand Years*, 186.

[148] Fairbairn, *The Global Church*, 176-177.

[149] Ibid., 177.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Miles, "Augustine" article found in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, edited by Ferguson et al., 122. Wilkin also mentions this intent. Wilkin *The First Thousand Years*, 185.

bishop in 395.[152] After becoming bishop, Augustine penned what has become known as the Rule of Augustine, which served as guidance for the monastic communities he established.[153]

Many consider Augustine one of early Western church history's greatest (if not the greatest) theological thinkers.[154] As Augustine led, wrestled, argued, thought, and wrote, he became known for several key issues. These issues (theory of hierarchy, infallibility of scripture, sacred work, and labor) weave through Augustine's writing and leading, including his rule for monastic life.[155]

Interaction with Augustine's Rule itself will reveal the rhythms he established. Augustine did not produce a finished rule from the start. He wrote *Ordo Monasterii* (Monastic Order or Regulations for Monastery), *Praeceptum* (the Rule), *Obiurgatio* (Reprimand for Quarreling Nuns – Letter 211), and *Regularis Informatio* (Rules for Nuns).[156] These documents are related and combine and influence the others as Augustine's monasticism developed. The first two contribute to the version of Augustine's Rule that is most common today. As the English titles indicate, Augustine wrote the last two with a female monastic audience in mind. *Obiurgatio* addresses a rebellious spirit among the community at the monastery formerly led by Augustine's

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[152] Wilkin, *The First Thousand Years*, 186. Fairbairn agrees with this timeline, *The Global Church*, 176, and Miles "Augustine" in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* edited by Ferguson, et al., 122.

[153] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 64.

[154] Fairbairn *The Global Church*, 176 makes this claim, and Smither notes Augustine's monastery was more intellectual when compared to others *Missionary Monks*, 21.

[155] Theory of hierarchy – Miles, "Augustine" in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 126. Infallibility of scripture – Fairbairn, *The Global Church*, 176. Monastic work, as consistent with other communities but included sacred work: "preaching, teaching, and writing theology for the church" – Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 21.

[156] For further discussion regarding these four different monastic writings of Augustine, accessed October 6, 2022. https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/augustine-rule-st Edward Smither, "Pastoral Lessons From Augustine's Theological Correspondence with Women," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 72, no. 4 (August 19, 2016), accessed October 6, 2022. https://hts.org.za/index.php/hts/article/view/3288/7713

sister. *Regularis Informatio* is commonly understood to be the feminine version of the *Praeceptum.*

Augustine's Rule is ordered more topically than by schedule. There are rhythms of community, prayer, fasting/eating, dress, work, conduct outside the monastery, obedience, and monastic hierarchy. Augustine drafted this rule to guide the community's life, which was united in its focus on loving God and loving one's neighbor. In this opening section of his rule, the reader can identify the first rhythm—community ownership. Amidst detailing the purpose of his community, Augustine clearly orders that nothing be held individually by any member: everything was to be distributed based on need, not desire.[157] This command was based upon Acts 4:32-35, in which the disciples in the early church held everything in common and distributed according to need. Life in the Augustinian community was void of individual possessions and assured each would have what he needed.

Chapter 2 (of eight) speaks to the rhythm of prayer. Here Augustine alludes to appointed times the monks were to gather for prayer; however, he does not include the specific schedule. Nevertheless, a pattern and a rhythm of regular prayer in which each community member was expected to participate.[158] Augustine establishes guidance for using the space called the "Oratory." This is where the community would gather for prayer, and it was to be available for monks to pray at other times during the day; there were to be no other activities planned for this space.[159]

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[157] Augustine, "The Rule of St. Augustine," trans. Robert Russell, O.S.A., accessed July 1, 2021. https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/ruleaug.asp. 1.3

[158] Ibid., 2.1.

[159] Ibid., 2.2.

Augustine guides fasting and mealtime in Chapter 3. Rather than offering a fasting schedule, Augustine assumes at least some fasting times when he provides a modified accommodation for those that can't quite fast like the rest. Augustine acknowledges that some might have health issues requiring regular eating. Those with this need may still participate in the rhythm of fasting by eating only at mealtimes and abstaining from other food between meals.[160]

When the community gathers for a meal, both body and mind are engaged. Augustine establishes the rhythm of reading scripture aloud during mealtime. Monks are to eat to satisfy the needs of their bodies and listen to scripture being read aloud to meet the needs of the mind for hearing the word of God.[161] According to Augustine, each monk will be given just what he needs (not equal portions), pointing back to the Acts passage used as the template for the community. Each monk could rest, knowing what he needed would be provided, not looking to another's provision with any pride or envy.[162]

Purity of life was the goal of all who joined this community. The admonition to avoid pride or envy is part of achieving that goal. Augustine's fourth chapter addresses other ways to journey toward purity. Augustine provided direction for the rhythm of behavior and conduct when his monks left the confines of the monastery and were amongst the community at large. The monks' behavior was not to draw attention or offend, and monks were to traverse together, not solo.[163]

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[160] Ibid., 3.1.

[161] Ibid., 3.2.

[162] Ibid., 3.3-3.5.

[163] Ibid., 4.1-4.2.

When out and about, a monk must not "fix (his) gaze upon any woman."[164] Augustine dedicates six paragraphs to this issue, guiding the monks as they establish a rhythm of behavior that seeks a life of purity and encourages it in others. Augustine is clear that a monk must establish a rhythm of self-control as he is watched by others and ultimately known by God. There is also a pattern for confronting another who fails to control his eyes.[165]

The fifth chapter in Augustine's Rule reinforces the "as needed" principle of the community. Here Augustine establishes a rhythm of provision based on need instead of want or desire. Food and clothing were both held in common within the community. Each monk was given according to his need. Augustine assures the community they will be given clothes as needed for a particular work assignment or seasonal change. However, he reminds them that they might not get the same garment they previously turned in because everything is held in common.[166] Besides, clothes, food, and gifts from family outside the monastery would be held and distributed according to need—even the monastery's library operated by this principle. The rhythm of community and contentment with provision that meets one's needs is reinforced in all areas.

Life within the community required its members to adopt a rhythm of unity and peace. This was achieved by a spirit of repentance and a willingness to pardon another. This is the subject of Chapter 6. Augustine charges his audience to "avoid quarrels altogether."[167] The ultimate concern is for the heart of the monk. They are not to let anything grow to become hatred

[164] Ibid., 4.4.

[165] Ibid., 4.5.

[166] Ibid., 5.1.

[167] Ibid., 6.1.

toward another. The offender and the offended are encouraged to act quickly to make the situation right.

While most of Augustine's Rule lacks the formal schedule one looks for when determining rhythm, his rule is replete with rhythm and pattern for those chosen to be a part of his community. The final chapter of the rule does, however, provide a prescribed repetition lacking elsewhere. Here, Augustine commands his community to read the rule once a week.[168] Each week, the monks were to listen, examine themselves, and adjust accordingly.

John Cassian

The subject of the next snapshot to establish context for rhythm and sacred time in early Christian monasticism is John Cassian. Cassian was born in the middle of the fourth century in what is now Romania. His monastic biography begins in Bethlehem. While in Bethlehem, Cassian longed to understand the monastic traditions of the Egyptian desert. Some scholars record that Cassian made more than one trip between Bethlehem and Egypt.[169] The number of trips to Egypt isn't as significant as the fact that Cassian's time in Egypt provided content for his two most famous and influential works: *The Institutes* and *The Conferences*.[170]

Cassian's travels took him beyond Egypt and Bethlehem to Constantinople, Rome, possibly Antioch, and finally, Marseille.[171] The extent of his travels brought Cassian in contact

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[168] Ibid., 8.2.

[169] Boniface Ramsey, "John Cassian" article found in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1,* edited by Johnston, 248. Ramsey mentions two trips between Bethlehem and Egypt. Others simply mention travel to Egypt as the number of trips isn't significant to the point they are making - Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 73; Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 21; and Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 18.

[170] Russell, *The Lives of the Desert Fathers*, 10.

[171] While Dunn seems to agree with most of Cassian's travel locales, she suggests he never made the trip to Constantinople. While she disbelieves Cassian traveled here, she does acknowledge his connection to John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407). Chrysostom was responsible for Cassian's ordination, and Dunn considers Cassian a

with several individuals whom Ramsey (in particular) suggests exerted influence upon Cassian, his thought, and the monasticism he encouraged. This list includes Evagrius, Basil, Jerome (ca. 342-420), and the Desert Fathers.[172] The list of those who influenced Cassian is broad, as is the company of people Cassian influenced. Ramsey states it was the fact that Cassian wrote in Latin that made his works widely accessible.[173] He suggests that those influenced by Cassian's works include Benedict, who made *Institutes* and *Conferences* required reading for those in his monastic communities, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), and a multitude of monks and nuns in both the East and West.[174] Dunn expands the list of those Cassian influenced to include Cassiodorus (ca. 485-ca. 585), Gregory of Tours (583-ca. 593), Pope Gregory the Great (ca. 540-604), and—most importantly for this discussion—Columba of Iona.[175]

Eventually, Cassian settled in Marseille. There, he established two monasteries, one for men and one for women, and compiled both *The Conferences* and *The Institutes*.[176] According to Harmless, Cassian made some observational comparisons between what he found in the monastic communities of Egypt, Cappadocia, and Bethlehem and the church traditions in the West. One such observation was the five daily offices.[177] The tradition Cassian observed in the

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defender of Chrysostom, possibly before the Pope. Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 73. See also Paul C. Burns, C.S.B., "John Cassian" article found in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, Ferguson, et al., editors, 180, and Andrew Hanson's "Introduction" to *Conferences* by John Cassian, loc 14 (Kindle).

[172] Boniface Ramsey, O.P. "John Cassian" article found in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, Johnston, editor, 249. Smither includes Pachomius in his list of influences upon Cassian, notably his monastic rule. Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 21.

[173] Ramsey, "John Cassian", 249.

[174] Ibid. Harmless also discusses Cassian's influence upon Benedict, *Desert Christians*, 18.

[175] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 81.

[176] Ibid., 73.

[177] Daily Offices were sacred times sets aside specifically for prayer, Psalms, and hymns.

West included five such times each day: Prime, Terce, Sect, None, and Compline. By comparison, the monasteries in Egypt were praying, reciting scripture, and meditating upon it throughout the day. In addition to the times of corporate gathering to pray, sing, and hear scripture, the monks went about their work and daily tasks instructed to pray and recite/meditate upon scripture as they did so.[178] He also noted a difference in reverence between the two traditions. The Eastern monastic communities conducted themselves with a "silent dignity" during the communal gatherings for prayer and scripture reading. In contrast, Cassian observed that the behaviors in the West included throat-clearing, coughing, sighing, groaning, and spitting.[179] Dunn also notes Cassian was critical of the number of Psalms used during their sacred times. In this case, he was critical that they droned on, using too many. By contrast, the monastic communities in Egypt used twelve.[180] In response to these observations, Cassian incorporated what he had learned in Egypt, Cappadocia, and Bethlehem into his monastic communities at Marseille. In this way, Cassian served as a bridge between the monastic traditions in the East and the West.[181]

As with the other individuals discussed above, the best way to sense the rhythm and sacred time Cassian established is through the two major works he crafted to guide his communities. These works are *The Institutes* and *The Conferences*. *The Institutes* are twelve chapters divided into two sections. In Cassian's words, Chapter 1 through 4 are "the institutes of

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[178] Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 177. Ramsay specifically says it was the monasticism led by Martin of Tours, that Cassian disagreed with. Ramsey "John Cassian" article found in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, Johnston, editor, 248.

[179] Ibid., 180.

[180] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 79-80.

[181] Both Smither and Ward call Cassian a "bridge." Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 21. Ward in the introductory chapters of *Lives of the Desert Fathers*, Norman Russell (translator), 10.

the monasteries."[182] They establish the rhythm for the monk's dress, day and nighttime prayers, and various instructions for those chosen to join the monastic community. Chapter 5 through 12 include Cassian's take on Evagrius's eight evil thoughts. He explores one topic per chapter: gluttony, fornication, avarice (love of money), anger, sadness, acedia (anxiety), vainglory, and pride. Cassian intends to "investigate their natures…lay bare their causes…propose cures and remedies for them."[183]

According to Cassian, there each monk should dress according to a standard. Cassian points to biblical figures as models and the foundations for a monk's attire. This description establishes a rhythm and pattern. The monk's attire originates in Elijah and Elisha and is likewise modeled by John the Baptist and Paul. Cassian instructs his Western audience as to the Egyptian monastic dress—hoods, *colobia* (linen garment), cords, a short cape or *mafortes*, *melotis* (goatskin), sandals (removed during sacred times), and a staff.[184] As with all rhythms and patterns found in the monastery, everything has meaning and purpose. The clothing provides cover (modesty) and is sufficient for the body's needs. The design of the garments is such that a monk's hands and arms are free for the work they must do. The material (linen and goatskin) signifies that they have renounced what the world offers and their desires. These dress standards create a consistency from monk to monk that communicates a shared monastic identity to those outside the community and is a constant reminder of what they have left and turned to by becoming a monk. The monk is a soldier of Christ and is dressed as such.[185]

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[182] John Cassian, *John Cassian, The Institutes*, trans. Boniface Ramsey, Ancient Christian Writers, no. 58 (New York: Newman Press, 2000), 117.

[183] Ibid.

[184] Ibid., 21-26.

[185] Ibid., 21, 26.

Cassian introduces the rhythm of nighttime prayer and Psalms as he learned in the East. In Chapter 4 of *The Institutes,* Cassian testifies to twelve Psalms and two scripture readings—one Old Testament and one from the New Testament. He traces the history of this rhythm and takes the opportunity to critique what he has found in the West. A prayer and kneeling follow the rhythm of the twelve Psalms. Cassian adds that this rhythm is to be done thoughtfully and not hastily ("do not rush" commands Cassian) or to simply finish. The purpose is to "pursu(e) the profit and the benefit of prayer."[186] The time of prayer is led by one monk, and the others are to follow the movements and timing of the leader carefully.[187] In Chapter 10, Cassian compares the atmosphere of the sacred time in the East to the West. Cassian points to silence as characteristic of the Egyptian way: "Then there is no spitting, no annoying clearing of throats, no noisy coughing, no sleepy yawning emitted from gaping and wide-open mouth, no groans and not even any sighs to disturb…"[188] Clearly, Cassian felt the need to institute the rhythm of sacred time accompanied by silence as compared to the distractions that were prevalent in his observation. This rhythm brought focus, discipline, and reverence and created an atmosphere conducive to single-mindedness toward God and His word.

Book Three of *The Institutes* handles daytime prayers and Psalms. Here Cassian points to the monastic routines in Palestine and Mesopotamia. The hours of terce, sext, and none as they imitated the Egyptian monasteries.[189] In Chapter 2, Cassian explains that while some observe a rhythm of dedicating certain hours to God, the rhythm in Egypt is one of continuous prayer,

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[186] Ibid., 41.

[187] Ibid., 42.

[188] Ibid., 43.

[189] Ibid., 59.

meditation, and recitation of God's word. This rhythm overlaps with the routine of manual labor established in the monastery. Cassian points out that "they are constantly doing manual labor alone in their cells in such a way that they rarely omit meditating on the psalms and other parts of Scripture…add entreaties and prayers…"[190] Other rhythms found in book three include the number of Psalms (three) that should be at the third, sixth, and ninth hours, according to the example in the East. This pattern of three was established so the rhythm of work within the monastery would continue.[191] Work, prayer, Psalms, silence—all aspects of the rhythm Cassian introduces to the west from the eastern monastic traditions.

Comparing Cassian's other prominent work, *The Conferences*, to *The Institutes* uncovers certain affinities between the two. However, whereas *The Institutes* serves as an instruction manual to explain how Egyptian monasticism works, *The Conferences* is the record of a series of conversations with Egyptian monastics, which get at the heart of a monk or the "inner man."[192] While the first few chapters of *The Institutes* provide the most detailed list of monastic life rhythms, one can still discern rhythm in *The Conferences*. Within the text, readers encounter twenty-four separate "conferences." These take the form of a question and answer with an Egyptian monastic capable of being a mentor or wise advisor. There is a similar feel between Cassian's *The Conferences* and Basil's Rule which was discussed above. The Q & A format creates a natural rhythm and cadence. The book also references aspects of monastic life with the intent of helping a monk achieve his goal.

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[190] Ibid.

[191] Ibid., 59-60.

[192] John Cassian, *Conferences of John Cassian - Enhanced Version (Kindle)*, trans. Edgar Gibson (Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2009), loc 62.

Saint Benedict

The final snapshot to establish context for rhythm and sacred time in early Christian monasticism is the life and Rule of Saint Benedict. Biographical information on Benedict is somewhat limited. What is available is found in book two of the *Dialogues* authored by Gregory the Great.[193] Benedict was born in Nursia—a town northeast of Rome, nearly fifty years after Cassian died. For at least part of his education, Benedict spent time in Rome. While there, Benedict was repelled by the city's culture and "sinfulness."[194]

He responded by abandoning his life as he knew it and set out to embrace a life focused upon "pleasing God alone."[195] This new life took Benedict some 40 miles outside of Rome to a cave in Subiaco. Along the way, he met a monk named Romanus (d. ca. 550), who supplied him with a proper monastic habit to wear and food during three years of isolation.[196] Benedict became known to other monastics around him despite his isolated existence. His holiness and virtue were why a group of monks asked him to become their superior. Peters suggests Benedict had doubts about the success of this proposition but decided to accept their invitation.[197] The arrangement did not have a positive outcome. The monks that had asked Benedict to become their superior resisted his leadership and eventually attempted to poison him.[198]

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[193] Peters wisely reminds the reader Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* is a hagiography. The challenges and benefits of this type of literature was reviewed in the previous chapter. Peters' offers some wise counsel for using *Dialogues* as a source for Benedict's biography. See: Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 72.

[194] Bernard Greed O.S.B., "St. Benedict of Nursia" found in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, Johnston (editor), 129. Peters also speaks of Benedict disgust with Rome, Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 73.

[195] Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 73.

[196] Ibid. See also, Greed, "St. Benedict of Nursia" in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, 129.

[197] Ibid.

[198] Ibid. See also, Greed, "St. Benedict of Nursia," 129.

Benedict left this monastery and founded twelve other groups of monks in the area, but rather than serve as their leader; he appointed a dean over each of the twelve.[199] Subiaco was not to be Benedict's permanent home. From here, he traveled south to Monte Cassino. This was the location of the monastery Benedict is most well-known for founding. It is here that he died while praying in the monastery's church.[200]

Each of the men mentioned in the sections above influenced Benedict's monasticism, and incorporating items from each, he developed the most influential monastic rule in the West.[201] It is to the Rule of Benedict that the discussion now turns to observe the rhythms associated with his monasticism.

The Rule of Benedict is rather lengthy compared to some previously discussed. There are seventy-three different chapters or sections. Most chapters provide a glimpse into some rhythm observed in Benedict's monastic communities. Chapter 6— "Restraint of Speech" clearly outlines the silence pattern that dominated the monastery's life.[202] Humility is one of the key characteristics a Benedictine monk is to try to achieve, and Benedict dedicates Chapter 7 to that topic. He employs a ladder motif, patterned after Jacob's ladder found in Genesis 28, to describe the twelve steps of humility, achieved as a monk matures spiritually.[203] Benedict establishes a

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[199] Greed notes the title "dean" for the leaders of the twelve groups. Greed, "St. Benedict of Nursia," 129. Peters also speaks of these other monasteries (communities) Benedict founded in Subiaco. Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 73.

[200] Greed, "St. Benedict of Nursia" in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, 129.

[201] Edward L. Smither, *Missionary Monks: An Introduction to the History and Theology of Missionary Monasticism* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2016), 22. Smither includes Benedict in his list of monastic innovators and direct mentions Antony, Pachomius, Basil, Augustine, Cassian, and their influence upon Benedict. Among the many who contend Benedict's Rule was the most significant among western monasticism are Peters, *The Story of Monasticism*, 72 and Bernard Greed O.S.B. "St. Benedict of Nursia" found in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, 128.

[202] Georg Holzherr, *The Rule of Benedict: An Invitation to the Christian Life*, ed. Benedict and Benedict, Cistercian Studies Series 256 (Collegeville, MN: Cistercian Publications/Liturgical Press, 2016), 125-126.

pattern for welcoming guests into the monastery in Chapter 57. There is pattern and rhythm in who may interact with the guest—the abbot. Rhythm when it comes to where the guest will eat—in a separate dining area, away from the brothers, who may not speak with the guest.[204] Chapter 57 guides the rhythm of having an artisan in the community and activity around making and selling his goods.[205] These are just a sample of the various rhythms established in Benedict's Rule.

The scope of this dissertation limits the current discussion to rhythms of sacred times in the Benedictine monastic communities. These, too, are numerous, but to establish context, a few samples will be taken from Chapter 8 through 20, which focus on prayer. Chapter 8— "The Divine Office at Night," details a schedule for prayer during the night that differs depending on the time of year. Benedict establishes a winter and summer schedule. From November 1st to Easter, the community will "arise at the eighth hour of the night."[206] Following Vigils, if a monk needed to study—Psalms or other readings, he had the time to do so. The other half of the year, when the dark hours of the night are shorter, Benedict adjusts the time of Vigils, which eliminates any study time. Morning praise or Lauds would occur immediately following daybreak.

Chapter 9— "How Many Psalms Are to Be Sung at Night Prayer," gives insight into the Vigils' content, order, and rhythm. The time begins with "Lord, open my lips, and my mouth

[203] Ibid., 138-142.

[204] Ibid., 406-407.

[205] Ibid., 432-433.

[206] Ibid., 172.

shall proclaim your praise (Ps 50[51]:17)" repeated three times.[207] The Vigils continues as follows:

> Psalm 3 with 'Glory be to the Father'
> Psalm 94 with a refrain
> An Ambrosian hymn
> Six psalms with a refrain
> The abbot speaks and everyone sits
> Three readings (scripture and the fathers) with a response[208]
> Everyone stands again
> Six psalms are sung with an 'alleluia' refrain
> Recitation by memory from the Apostle by the monks
> A short word and "Lord, have mercy" concludes the Vigils[209]

Benedict created rhythm in the number of psalms, the responses or endings to them, the order of them, the scripture read, and the instruction provided. The same pattern would be followed each night, facilitating a predictable rhythm that sought to worship God and mature the monk.

A weekly rhythm is found in Chapter 18.[210] Here, Benedict prescribes a pattern for the community to say or sing all the Psalms in seven days. This rhythm begins on Sunday. During four different hours of prayer (Prime, Terce, Sext, and None), specific portions of Psalm 118 are said.[211] The remaining parts of Psalm 118 are said during Terce, Sext, and None on Monday. Daily during Vespers, four Psalms are to be sung. Benedict directs which ones. There is guidance for dividing the longer Psalms and which ones (115-116) to combine due to their brevity. Three

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[207] Ibid., 179.

[208] Ibid., 182. Holzherr says the Rule of Benedict was the first to notes reading the fathers.

[209] Ibid., 179-180.

[210] Ibid., 212-213.

[211] The eight hours of the daily office are: Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Vigils.

Psalms are said each day during Compline. Each night during Vigils, the remaining Psalms are sung—twelve each night, to have done the entire Psalter by week's end. Each hour, day, and week provide rhythm and sacred time that contribute to the larger week-long rhythm covering the whole Psalms collection. The Rule of Benedict includes such a rich collection of rhythms and sacred time, but for this dissertation, a simple snapshot will have to do.

Conclusion

Rhythm and sacred time are at the core of the monastic communities. Monastic leaders wrote and guided their communities and followers uniquely, although not all were genuinely innovative. There is a sense in which those that went before influenced many who followed, and the earliest Christian monastics stood on the foundations established before them in the *Didache* and the rhythms of the church in Acts. These found roots in the history of Israel and the rhythms and sacred times God gave them as they left Egyptian captivity and settled in the land he promised. But rhythm did not originate with Israel either: the earliest rhythms are identifiable in the first pages of Genesis, as God created the Heavens and the Earth. This is the broad context (the people and the rules) into which the life and mission of Columba will be located.

Chapter Three – Celtic Christianity

Introduction

This chapter continues to create the context to discuss Columba and his ministry. The focus narrows to early Celtic Christian monasticism specifically. The discussion begins by looking at Celtic Christianity itself. It is a term that has become popular in recent decades, and it is essential to define what it means. No discussion of Celtic Christianity is complete without reference to Saint Patrick. He does not leave a monastic rule. However, two surviving documents penned by him provide insight into the rhythm and sacred time of his world.

Next, the discussion will turn to *The Voyage of Saint Brendan.* This was written a couple of hundred years after its main character–Saint Brendan, lived. It is best described as a Christian allegory. The story is fantastical, full of animals that appear as islands, birds that talk, and choir groups that move in well-choreographed patterns. Despite the genre, *The Voyage of Saint Brendan* is a solid source to describe monastic rhythm and sacred time in Celtic monasticism.

Because monastic rules are an excellent source for examining the rhythms of the monastic communities they guided, two additional rules will be discussed. St. Columbanus wrote his rule for the monasteries he founded on the European continent, and St. Máelrúain (d. 792) authored the *Rule of the Céli Dé* monks at Tallaght monastery in Ireland.

Finally, this chapter will discuss the *peregrini* (pilgrims). These monks are unique to Celtic Christianity and will be important when looking at Columba and his mission to the Scottish Picts.

Celtic Christianity

The Celtic people were a loosely knit people group structured around the family or clan. Smither calls it a “network of tribal people” united by their common language and pagan

religion.[212] As the Roman Empire expanded, the Celtic peoples moved further west into modern-day England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland.

Celtic Christianity is a nebulous term that became popular in the later part of the 20th century.[213] In general, when scholars discuss Celtic Christianity, they speak of a people who lived in the second half of the first millennium, occupying the lands of modern-day Ireland, Scotland, western England, Wales, and the westernmost point of France.[214]

Several characteristics distinctly flavor the Christianity of the Celtic lands. Joseph F. Kelly notes three reasons for the uniqueness of Celtic Christianity. First, these lands–Ireland especially, were never part of the Roman Empire. Kelly calls them "fringe" territory.[215] The early part of the fifth century brought about the withdrawal of Rome from Britain. This created an environment in which Celtic culture experienced a resurgence.[216] Third, according to Kelly, Celtic Christianity was unique because of monasticism. He argues that monasticism arrived in the early growth of Celtic Christianity and therefore became a part of the fabric of its being.[217]

Everett Ferguson delineates five characteristics of Celtic Christianity. These five are true for Celtic Christianity in general but true of Ireland specifically. First, the monastic life is cultivated within Celtic Christianity. Ferguson refers to the network of six monasteries founded

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[212] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 52. Smither notes this common language was comprised of two different dialects: P-Celtic (spoken by the Welsh and Cornish) and Q-Celtic spoken in Ireland and Scotland. The pagan religion was one which worshipped many different gods and various places, dates and animals were sacred.

[213] Thomas O'Loughlin, *Journeys on the Edges: The Celtic Tradition*, Traditions of Christian Spirituality Series (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2000), 15.

[214] Ibid., 20. See also Joseph F. Kelly's article "Celtic Christianity" in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity,* edited by Everett Ferguson, Michael P McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris, (New York, London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 189.

[215] Kelly "Celtic Christianity" in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity,* Ferguson, et al. editors, 189.

[216] Ibid.

[217] Ibid.

in the sixth century: Derry, Clonard, Durrow, Bangor, Clonmacnoise, and Clonfert. Clan life was a foundation structure in the Celtic lands. Celtic Christianity took on this same flavor. Third, Celtic Christianity meant wandering or pilgrimages to spread the Gospel. Fourth, Celtic Christianity was characterized as a penitential way of life. Finally, it was unique in its method of figuring out the date of Easter.[218]

O'Loughlin, in his book *Journeys on the Edges*, notes the unique characteristics of remoteness and connection to nature (creation) so prevalent in Celtic Christianity.[219] The connection to nature is often misunderstood in modern times.[220] The importance of nature comes from a sacramentalist view held by these early Christians and those that influenced them. Three important influences were Augustine, Eucherius (ca. 380- ca. 449), and Cassian. Augustine believed nature/creation were signs that pointed to something greater.[221] He used spiritual weightiness to describe two separate levels of appreciation and understanding. Firstly, nature is appreciated for the thing it is, for its beauty and magnificence. Second, nature is to point mankind to God, the creator of all and the one who gives life and being to all things. God, then is to be the object of man's awe and worship.[222] This love and appreciation of nature as a means of ultimately seeing God and worshiping him is evident in later Celtic Christianity.

Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons, taught a two-tiered understanding of scripture. He authored *Formula Spiritualis Intellegentiae* as an exegetical help that church leaders in Ireland used.

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[218] Everett Ferguson, *Church History: From Christ to the Pre-Reformation*, Second edition, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 356.

[219] O'Loughlin, *Journeys*, 34.

[220] Ibid., O'Loughlin argues the modern interpretation of the importance of nature to Celtic Christianity has its roots in pre-Christian pagan religion. This, he explains this is untrue.

[221] Ibid., 36.

[222] Ibid., 37.

According to Eucherius, there was both a surface and higher meaning to the passages in scripture. For Eucherius, when natural items like water, earth, trees, the sun, and moon were understood metaphorically in some parts of Scripture, there was freedom to apply that higher meaning to any passages that included them.[223] Nature and natural items then pointed to greater things. Thus, one can see the importance of nature. Eucherius also believed in the benefit of withdrawal from society, a key characteristic of monasticism. He thought this would be a withdrawal from distractions which would heighten one's ability to focus on nature and ultimately upon God, to whom nature pointed.[224] Eucherius' embrace of withdrawal and his understanding that creation/nature points to God is easy to see in Celtic Christianity.

Cassian also influences Celtic Christianity with a two-tiered system. His influence is not so much nature as seen in the previous two but the necessity of withdrawing. The contemplative life, seen in Eastern monasticism (specifically the desert monks of Egypt), requires withdrawing, according to Cassian.[225] As a bridge between west and east, Cassian blends the Celtic practice of appreciating the natural or actual and the contemplative from the east.[226] Both of these qualities are seen in Celtic Christian monasticism.

O'Loughlin summarizes the influence of these three in his description of early Celtic Christianity. There are two worlds–the literal, physical, and natural one, and the one identified by the higher or more profound meaning of the first.[227] O'Loughlin describes the first as where

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[223] Ibid., 39-40. O'Loughlin points to Eucherius' use of passages in which Jesus refers to a natural item and gives it greater meaning through metaphor.

[224] Ibid., 38-39.

[225] Ibid., 41.

[226] Ibid.

[227] Ibid., 44.

one's journey takes place, and the second is the destination and the impetus for the journey.[228] The first is the anticipation of the second, which is the fulfillment of the first.[229] Too often, O'Loughlin says, modern interpretation of Celtic Christian love for nature is misunderstood. The two are identified as opposing–bad versus good or damaged versus perfect, instead of connected. Often this results in a wrong assumption that a love of nature is rooted in pagan religion.[230] It does not, as assumed today, express worship of creation for creation's sake. The Apostle Paul says one can be aware of God's presence and power by looking at creation (Romans 1:19-20).[231]

For O'Loughlin, though, the fact that there are unique characteristics is not only found in Celtic Christianity. Local culture will always provide color and flavor to how Christians walk daily in their faith.[232] The following discussion will examine the rhythms and sacred times of monastic life in the Celtic lands within the context of these unique characteristics of Celtic Christianity.

Saint Patrick

Saint Patrick is arguably the most familiar figure of the Celtic church. This is due in part to the myths and legends that surround him. Some scholars have sought to uncover the real Patrick, and it is to them that this project will look for biographical information. Patrick himself left very little in terms of original writings. His only surviving works are *Confessio* and *Epistola*

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[228] Ibid.

[229] Ibid.

[230] Ibid., 35.

[231] Ibid., 35. O'Loughlin points to this for evidence of early Christian thinking about creation/nature and the general revelation that is available through it.

[232] Ibid., 15. It is not the core tenants of the faith (the 'what') that changes but the 'how' and maybe 'when' and 'where' that are influenced by culture.

(Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus). Thomas O'Loughlin sets low expectations for determining much about the life and times of Patrick.[233] While many agree with this, Smither acknowledges Patrick's works "offer us a window of understanding into Patrick's world and his work as a bishop, missionary, and monk."[234]

While acknowledging the details of Patrick's life and ministry are not firm, what follows is the general story that scholars accept. Patrick lived in the fifth century. He was not, as is popularly assumed, Irish but was born in Britain. His family, by all accounts, was comfortable, and his father was a deacon in the Roman church.[235] Patrick's arrival in Ireland was as a teenage slave kidnapped from his homeland. While tending sheep in Ireland, Patrick had time to both consider his faith and gain an understanding of the Celtic culture.[236] An opportunity to escape allowed Patrick to return home to Britain. Sometime later, he was given a vision calling him back as a missionary to those who once held him captive.[237]

Unlike many previously mentioned, Patrick did not establish any monasteries.[238] In his book, Smither asks whether Patrick was a monk at all. He offers four points of evidence that suggest he was. First, one can identify monastic values–regular prayer, ascetic practices, and

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[233] Thomas O'Loughlin, *St. Patrick: The Man and His Works* (London: SPCK, 1999), 14. O'Loughlin also discusses this issue in chapter one "Man, Myth, and History" in *Discovering Saint Patrick* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005).

[234] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 51.

[235] Donald Fairbairn, *The Global Church: The First Eight Centuries: From Pentecost Through the Rise of Islam* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2021), 287.

[236] Ibid.

[237] Ibid. Dunn agrees with these general facts about Patrick's life – noting his mission to Ireland was mostly concentrated in the Northern parts of the island. Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 143.

[238] Richard Woods, O.P., "Ireland: History," in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, ed. William M. Johnston (Chicago & London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), 657.

work–in Patrick's life. References to chastity in both of Patrick's writings suggest his embrace of the monastic life. Third and most important, according to Smither, is the fruit of his mission work. The results were those who embraced ascetic lives and were called monks. Finally, Patrick's influence on the Irish church with a leadership structure led by abbots supports the claim that Patrick was a monk.[239]

Neither of Patrick's surviving works were a monastic rule. The first work is *Confessio*.[240] Patrick opens with some brief autobiographical information. The reader learns that Patrick's family owned a "small estate" near Bannavem Taburnaiae. His father and grandfather are both named: Calpornius and Potitus, respectively. It is evident Patrick is from a family with a Christian heritage–his father is a deacon, and his grandfather a priest. Patrick acknowledges that despite being exposed to Christianity and having family who served the church, he did not know the one, true God.[241]

> Taken captive around the age of sixteen, Patrick attributes this to divine punishment.[242] This was our punishment for departing from God, abandoning his commandments, and ignoring our priests who kept on warning us about our salvation. And "so" the Lord "poured upon" us "the heat of his anger" and dispersed us among many peoples right "out to the very ends of the earth."[243]

Like many monastic leaders before him, Patrick's extensive use of scripture throughout his writing reflects a vast knowledge of God's word.[244] Patrick has matured in his faith and

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[239] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 61-63.

[240] O'Loughlin, *Saint Patrick*, 52-89. O'Loughlin includes an English translation of Patrick's *Confessio* along with a commentary. This is the translation used here.

[241] Ibid., 52.

[242] Ibid.

[243] Ibid., 52-53.

[244] O'Loughlin provides an exhaustive list of passages–including passages from the Apocrypha, throughout his translation of Patrick's *Confessio*. This use of scripture is reminiscent of Basil and others before Patrick.

grown in his desire to obey the Lord. It is in his old age that he now writes this confession of faith and admits he now "desires what (he) missed in his youth when (his) sins stopped (him) from grasping what he was reading."[245] There are no rules or guidelines in Patrick's *Confessio.* However, it is possible to discern rhythms and sacred time in Patrick's life. His use of scripture—and evident diligent study of it—is one. In his opening sentence, Patrick declares he is "a sinner…the least among Christians and…the most contemptible." These confessions sound much like the words of Paul in 1 Tim 1:15 and 1 Cor 15:9.[246] While recounting his story of escape from Ireland, he tells of his hope that God's Spirit will speak through him "in the day of his distress." Patrick seems to be referencing Matt 10:19-20. Here, Jesus tells his disciples not to be concerned about what to say because the Holy Spirit would speak through them.[247] Prayer is another. When recounting his time as a slave in Ireland, Patrick says he "prayed frequently each day" as many as "a hundred times in the day and almost as often at night."[248] Ascetic qualities began to emerge as Patrick would begin praying before dawn and pray "in the wood and on the mountain . . . come hail, rain or snow."[249]

Unlike the struggles with demons told by Antony a couple of centuries earlier, Patrick has his own story of being tried by Satan during the night. While sleeping, a large rock fell upon

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[245] Ibid., 57.

[246] Ibid., 143. See O'Loughlin's footnote number 6. Here he cites 1 Tim 1:15; 1 Tim 1;9; 1 Cor 15:9 and Eph 3:8 as passages from which Patrick would have followed the confession modeled by Paul to Timothy and the churches in Corinth and Ephesus.

[247] Ibid., 152.

[248] Ibid., 61.

[249] Ibid.

him, trapping him to the ground. When freed from the weight of the stone, he credits "Christ, my Lord" for assisting him, testifying that God's Spirit cried out on his behalf.[250]

A good portion of Patrick's *Confessio* is spent defending his ministry to those who criticize him or accuse him of being unqualified. The details of that situation are outside of the scope of this project. However, as part of his defense, Patrick describes himself as unworthy of the call God has placed upon his life, living a life of "poverty and woe" and carrying on all while expecting death, slavery, or some other injury because of his call. While not instituting a monastic rule as such, Patrick describes a life committed to the monastic values of poverty, humility, and sacrifice for the gospel message. Given Patrick's influence in Ireland, it is reasonable to assume others followed the example he set, thus suggesting his life served as a kind of rule of life.

Patrick's other surviving work, *Epistola,* is a short letter it occupies less than fifteen pages within O'Loughlin's text. However, O'Loughlin suggests it is "one of the most elegant moral instructions to new converts to Christianity that we possess."[251] He acknowledges there are issues regarding this text among academics but suggests they do not understand precisely what Patrick is doing.[252] Accepting O'Loughlin's position allows this document to help examine the teaching of a monastic leader in the Celtic (Irish, specifically) church. It served as a "rule-like" instruction for those choosing Christianity.

The historical context for this letter is the political upheaval that occurred in the fifth century. The Roman Empire was withdrawing. Places like Ireland on the outer fringe of the

[250] 64. See footnote 111, 112 and 113 for scripture passages identified by O'Loughlin. These are further evidence of Patrick's dependence upon God's word for the content of his *Confessio*.

[251] Ibid., 92.

[252] Ibid.

Empire's borders would likely feel its impact first. O'Loughlin tells of an environment dominated by those who sought to take power. Violence, raids, kidnapping, ransom demands, and general chaos seemed to reign.[253]

While lacking the instruction for daily prayer, prescribed Psalms and hymns for times of worship, and specifics for living within the walls of a monastery, Patrick's *Epistola* arguably teaches a standard for Christian living. O'Loughlin rightly reminds his reader that there was no distinction between living a moral life and being spiritual for Patrick.[254] "The means of communion with (the) perfect sacrifice of the Son to the Father is by belief in Christ AND (emphasis mine) adherence to a moral code: the rejection of either is rebellion."[255] It is with this understanding that the following points of discussion from *Epistola* become relevant to a project focused on rhythm and sacred time.

Patrick begins by testifying, the words written, "I have composed and written with 'my own hand,' are to be sent, given and proclaimed to the soldiers of Coroticus."[256] O'Loughlin parallels Patrick's claim to have written the letter himself to the way the Apostle Paul also concludes some of his letters. This, according to O'Loughlin, is an indication of "special authority."[257] This point reinforces the validity of finding a "rule of life" within the writings of Patrick.

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[253] Ibid., 90. O'Loughlin describes the fifth century on the edges of the former Roman Empire and suggests Patrick speaks in this context as a former slave and one who understands these circumstances from the victim's perspective.

[254] Ibid., 91-92.

[255] Ibid., 92.

[256] Ibid., 93-94.

[257] Ibid., 93. See footnote 8.

Patrick condemns the actions of "Christians" who have attacked and injured or killed fellow Christians to gain power. Their actions render them "strangers to me (Patrick) and to Christ, my God."[258] Patrick offers a list of "rules" recognizable from the scripture pages.[259] He writes: Avarice is a deadly crime, "you shall not covet your neighbour's goods, 'you shall not kill,' a murderer cannot be with Christ, 'he who hates his brother is a murderer,' or 'He who does not love his brother remains in death.'"[260] Any of these actions to a fellow follower of Christ is even worse, according to Patrick, as he continues to address the issues of his time.[261] Patrick's moral instruction, grounded in God's word, provides a rule of life for Christians and condemnation for those who call themselves Christian but live contrary to this.

As Patrick brings his letter to a close, he makes mention of "how many of the sons and daughters of the rulers of the Irish (that) had become *monks* and *virgins* (emphasis mine) of Christ."[262] Reference to monks and virgins supports the claim that Patrick was a monastic leader despite no real tie to a particular monastic community. His teaching and guidance therein can be considered a kind of monastic rule, encouraging the rhythms and sacred time seen previously in others. Those who are faithful, despite having been victims of the evil and crimes occurring in the fifth century, would be rewarded with the goal–eternal life with God.[263]

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[258] Ibid., 95.

[259] Ibid., 97. Patrick says this list is not comprehensive but serves to make his point. As evidence in O'Loughlin's footnotes throughout – Patrick relies heavily upon both the Old and New Testament, as well as some Apocryphal books.

[260] Ibid., 98.

[261] Ibid.

[262] Ibid., 100.

[263] 103. Patrick reassures those he is teaching of this biblical promise, comforts himself in the fruit of his mission and expresses the eschatology of these believers.

The Voyage of Saint Brendan

St. Brendan was an Irish monk from County Kerry, Ireland. His name is known in association with monasteries in County Kerry, County Clare, and County Galway. He earned his nickname, "the navigator," as he traveled to Iona, the Orkney and Shetland Islands, Britain, and Brittany.[264] He was a contemporary of fellow Irish pilgrimage monks St. Columba and St. Columbanus. Brendan, also known as St. Brendan of Clonfert, is the historical person at the center of *The Voyage of Saint Brendan.*

The Voyage of Saint Brendan was written several hundred years after Brendan's death.[265] It is a voyage tale or *immram*, a literary genre established before the introduction of Christianity in Ireland. As Lawyer describes it, the voyage tale tells the story of a sea-going hero who ventures into unknown parts, searching for the perfect world. The journey is marked by adventure, trial, and encounters with others who can encourage and help along the way.[266] *The Voyage of Saint Brendan* is a Christian allegory. It is the tale of Brendan and his men searching for the Promised Land of the Saints.[267] Though it is an allegory, one can observe the rhythm and patterns of sacred time characteristic of Brendan's time.

The story begins with a visitor telling Brendan and others about his trip to the Promised Land of the Saints. Brendan and fourteen others seek council and the will of God before deciding

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[264] John Joseph O'Meara, trans., *The Voyage of Saint Brendan: Journey to the Promised Land* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1991), ix.

[265] Smither, Ed, "Pilgrimage and Spiritual Rhythms in the Voyage of St. Brendan," Ed Smither, accessed September 13, 2021. http://www.edsmither.com/2/post/2021/08/pilgrimage-and-spiritual-rhythms-in-the-voyage-of-st-brendan.html. Smither favors an eighth-century date. O'Meara prefers a date a part of a century earlier in *The Voyage of Saint Brendan*, x. John E. (John Elder) Lawyer, "Three Celtic Voyages: Brendan, Lewis, and Buechner," *Anglican Theological Review* 84, no. 2 (2002), 320, suggests A.D. 800.

[266] Lawyer, "Three Celtic Voyages: Brendan, Lewis, and Buechner", 319.

[267] O'Meara, *The Voyage of Saint Brendan*, 7.

the head out. The journey ultimately takes seven years. Within these seven years, one can identify rhythms and sacred times that would have been familiar during the latter part of the first millennium and common to Celtic monastic life.

The most apparent and overarching rhythm is found in the seven one-year cycles that are the scaffolding or structure for *The Voyage.* Brendan and his men travel a circular path, observing different events on the annual church calendar in other locations, repeating this seven times. The men find themselves on the Island of Sheep in Chapter 9.[268] This is the place where they will celebrate Maundy Thursday through Holy Saturday. The reader is introduced to Jasconius, which appears to be another island. After celebrating Mass, the men discover it is a fish.[269] It was on to Paradise (or Island) of Birds for Easter. Here Brendan talks with one of the birds, who informs him they have completed their journey's first year. The men will complete six more years, celebrating Maundy Thursday, Easter, and Christmas (with the Community of Ailbe) following the same rhythm and rotation.[270] "God has ordained for you four points of call for four periods of the year until seven years of your pilgrimage are over."[271]

There are examples of daily rhythm within the larger framework of the annual church calendar. While on the Island of the Birds, Brendan and those with him observed the various hours of the Daily Office. The bird who had spoken to Brendan and the others on the island began to chant at the hour of vespers. Brendan and his men agreed, "the chant and the sound of their wings seemed in its sweetness like a rhythmical song."[272] Following a break for dinner and

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[268] Ibid., 15-17.

[269] Ibid., 18-19.

[270] Ibid., 21.

[271] Ibid., 38-39.

a couple of hours of sleep, Brendan woke the men, and they said vigil. Again, the birds all chanted in response. This was repeated at dawn, matins, lauds, terce, sext, and nones.[273] The Office of the Hours rhythm was repeated daily to praise the Lord.

Brendan and his men left the Island of the Birds and spent months sailing toward their next destination–the Community of Ailbe. Upon landing, they discovered a monastery with twenty-four members who observed a discipline of silence.[274] According to the island elder, a human voice was only heard when it was used to praise God.[275] In addition to the rhythm of silence, the older monk washed the feet of Brendan and his men as a means of welcome to the community. Mass, vigils, vespers, and compline were all observed by the singing of Psalms and the sound of human voices breaking through the rhythm of silence.

Later in their journey, Brendan and his men arrived at the Island of the Three Choirs or Anchorites. Here they were greeted by three choirs. The first was all boys dressed in white garments. Youth dressed in blue made up the second one. The third one consisted of elders in purple dalmatics–a special liturgical vestiture.[276] Each choir moved about in a rotation while chanting, creating multifaceted rhythm in ensembles of similar age, dress, movement, and sound. Like Brendan and those with him experienced in the Community of Ailbe and the Island of the Birds, the three choirs here observed the hours of the Daily Office. They gathered and chanted

[272] Ibid., 22.

[273] Ibid., 22-23.

[274] Ibid., 26-27.

[275] Ibid., 31.

[276] Ibid., 44.

Psalms according to a given schedule. Following terce, they gathered for communion–a celebration of the "holy body of our Lord and blood of the Savior for everlasting life."[277]

Each of these three stories offers evidence of the Benedictine influence of the Daily Office upon the rhythm found in Celtic Christianity. *The Voyage of St. Brendan* demonstrates this daily rhythm within the larger rhythm of a repeated annual cycle. The daily liturgical rhythm provides spiritually and is tied closely to the provision for Brendan and his men's physical need for food and drink. Each stop involves sharing this daily routine with the island inhabitants and providing just enough supplies to get the travelers to their next stop.

There are similarities between the rhythms found here and those established by God, in the Old Testament, for Israel. The details of this were discussed in Chapter 2. Brendan and his men follow a repeated calendar cycle of Good Friday-Holy Sunday, Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas. Whereas Israel observes an annual calendar of feasts: the Feast of Pesach (Passover), the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. In both cases, the annual rhythm is situated within a larger seven-year cycle. For Israel, every seventh year was a year of Shabbat, or rest, for the land. Brendan and his men repeated their one-year journey seven times. The seventh and final year resulted in their arrival at the Promised Land.[278] Both of these rhythms find parallels in the rhythms of the *peregrini*, which will be discussed below.

Saint Columbanus

[277] Ibid., 45.

[278] O'Meara *The Voyage of Saint Brendan*", 67-69.

Columbanus was born in Leinster, Ireland, in the mid-sixth century.[279] In his youth, Columbanus entered monastic style by joining Comgall's monastery in Bangor, Ireland.[280] Following nearly a quarter of a century at Bangor, Columbanus embarked on a journey as a *peregrinus*. Just as Antony and Augustine were motivated by specific scripture passages, Columbanus found his directive to go in Genesis 12:1-3. God called Abram to leave his home country and go to a place he would show him. Columbanus applied these words to his own life.[281] He sought permission from his superiors at Bangor and, along with twelve others, left Ireland for the European continent. The group landed in Brittany, located on the western edge of the territory known as Francia.[282] Here, Columbanus established monasteries at Annegray, Luxeuil, and Fontaines–the three located within ten-twelve miles of each other.[283] Establishing monasteries became a significant hallmark of Columbanus' legacy, ultimately founding more than sixty such communities.[284]

Columbanus' time in Burgundy was not without conflict. The local Frankish bishops and Columbanus clashed. One of their issues was about correctly establishing the date of Easter. Some suggest the bishops were threatened by Columbanus and saw him as competition for ecclesiastical power.[285] Columbanus was ultimately exiled because he refused to baptize the

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[279] Columbanus–also known as Columban.

[280] Richard Woods O.P., *St. Columban* article in Encyclopedia of Monasticism edited by Johnston, 321.

[281] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 77.

[282] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 158.

[283] Ibid., 159. See also Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 78.

[284] Smither, *Missionary Monks, 78.*

[285] Richard Woods O.P., *St. Columban* article in "Encyclopedia of Monasticism" edited by Johnston, 321. Others also note these same two issues. Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 159-160. Ferguson (editor)

illegitimate children of the King of Burgundy. Columbanus moved south and eventually established his last monastery at Bobbio.

Columbanus' monastic rule is the oldest Irish surviving monastic rule.[286] While relatively short, it provides a glimpse into the rhythm characteristic of Columbanus and his monastic communities. The opening statement of the rule is reminiscent of Basil with its command to love God with one's whole heart and mind and, second, to love one's neighbor. Everything one does must be infused with this love, instructs Columbanus.[287] The remaining nine sections speak to obedience, the discipline of silence, ascetic practices related to eating, chastity of thoughts and mortification, poverty, the danger of vanity, humility, and the importance of discretion.

Columbanus grounds his rule of life in Scripture. The goal is for the monk to gain perfection–a life lived by God's commands and the example provided by Christ Jesus. Each monk is to obey their superior as they would Jesus. They are to obey and do so quickly and with a cheerful heart. They are deemed disobedient if the monk disobeys or does so with grumbling or hesitation.[288] In case a monk had a question about how far one needed to take the vow of obedience, Columbanus pointed to Philippians 2:5-8 and Jesus' obedience unto death.[289]

The rhythm of obedience was accompanied by observance of the discipline of silence. Silence will protect the monk from falling into sin rooted in pride. Silence is justified by

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Encyclopedia of Early Christianity, 221. Smither notes the Easter date conflict and issues with the ruling royalty over his refusal to bless illegitimate children in *Missionary Monks*, 78.

[286] Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 170.

[287] Columbanus, *Columbanus: Monastic Rule.* Scroll Publishing Co., accessed September 20, 2021. https://www.scrollpublishing.com/store/Columbanus.html

[288] Ibid., 1.1.

[289] Ibid., 1.2.

reference to both the Old and New Testaments.[290] Isaiah, the author of Proverbs, and Jesus speak to the danger of excess words and the value of choosing silence. Benedict also highlights the importance of listening over speaking and obedience. He quotes both Psalms and Proverbs in Chapter 6. A monk is encouraged to forgo speaking even good words considering the value of silence.[291] Obedience is significant enough for Benedict that he begins (Chapter 6) and ends (Chapter 71) his rule by reminding his monks of its importance.[292]

The monks fasted for a portion of each day. The ascetic practice of limiting food is extreme in Columbanus' Rule. For spiritual growth, monks were to abstain from food intake except one meal per day, tending to their body's needs and not its desires. The meal consisted of "cabbage, vegetables, flour mixed with water, and a biscuit."[293] The community would observe a rhythm of fasting until almost evening. The only reason a monk would eat is "that he may be able to make daily progress in virtue, pray daily, work daily, and read daily."[294] Here, too, the rhythm of daily prayer, work, and study observed in Columbanus' communities is evident.

Consistent with many other monastic rules, Columbanus includes a call to poverty. But the guidance goes beyond insisting on a vow of poverty; the focus is a heart of contentment. Columbanus suggests three levels of perfection concerning possessions. The first level of perfection is "contempt of earthly goods." The second is ridding the heart of every vice. The

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[290] *Monk's Rules*. G.S.M. Walter (editor), accessed November 18, 2022. https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T201052.html Columbanus' guidance is grounded in Isaiah 32:17, Proverbs 12:19, and Matthew 12:37.

[291] Holzherr, *The Rule of Benedict*, 125-126.

[292] Ibid., 112, 553.

[293] *Columbanus: Monastic Rule,* 3.1. Despite seeming extreme in his guidance, Columbanus does advise balance by pointing out anyone who abstains in excess no longer achieves the goal of virtue but turns fasting into a vice, which defeats the whole purpose.

[294] Ibid., 3.1.

third is a perfect love of God and all things divine–the goal of one who consistently renounces the things of this world.[295] The monk who lives a life with a rhythm of rejecting the things of this world will progress toward the ultimate monastic goal of virtue. Just as Columbanus directs the monks to conquer any desire for possessions, he also addresses lust and adultery. He reminds the community that Jesus said if one so much as looks at a woman and lusts after her, that one has already committed adultery. (Matt 5:28) The Holy Spirit indwells one who has decided to follow the Lord. (1 Cor 6:19) Columbanus closes this section with the reminder, "God is a spirit and makes our spirit His dwelling place if He finds it undefiled, free from adulterous thoughts and all stain of sin."[296] The rhythm of training or conquering one's spirit to live by God's word was a dominant theme in Columbanus' Rule.

The final and most crucial point, according to Columbanus, is mortification.[297] This sums up the core of Columbanus' monastic rule. The pattern or rhythm of constantly putting to death one's desires. He instructs the monk to live a life that always seeks another's counsel, which puts self aside.[298] The rhythm of mortification "is threefold: (the monk) must never think what he pleases, never speak what he pleases, never go where he pleases." This aligns the monk's life with Jesus when he says he didn't come to do his own will but that of his Father.[299] (John 6:38)

The Céli Dé

[295] Ibid., 4.1.

[296] Ibid., 6.1.

[297] Ibid., 8.1.

[298] Ibid., 8.2.

[299] Ibid., 8.4.

The Céli Dé were a group of eighth and ninth-century Celtic monks who were not as well-known as the more popular Irish monks, Patrick, Columbanus, and Columba. Residing in various locations, these monks were distinguished from other monks because of their dedication to a rigorous ascetic lifestyle. Some scholars consider them monastic reformers because they focused on reviving the example set by the likes of Columba and others who came before them.[300] They wanted to refocus monastic life on practices of the past which helped them achieve their goal–holiness.[301] Patricia Rumsey argues that the Céli Dé would have described themselves as "spiritual elite" instead of reformers.[302] The Céli Dé adhered to a monastic rule which survives today. It will be included here to continue to examine the rhythms and sacred time of early Celtic monasticism and create context for Columba.

The Rule of the Céli Dé reveals a community that "understood sanctity (holiness) in terms of great personal effort and rigorous penitential practices."[303] Their goal was to enter the Kingdom of God.[304] This discussion will now turn to the rhythms and sacred time within this rule. The opening sections guide food and drink consumption in relation to the festivals of Easter and Christmas, Sundays in Lent, and St. Patrick's feast day. There is a rhythm of avoiding beer and large amounts of food on the evenings before Easter and Christmas because the Eucharist would be celebrated.[305] There were allowances for "a draught of milk" and guidance for butter

[300] "Céli Dé," accessed July 14, 2022. https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/celi-de

[301] Ibid.

[302] Patricia M. Rumsey, "Céli Dé--Ascetics or Mystics? Máelrúain of Tallaght and Óengus Céle Dé as Case Studies," *Perichoresis* 15, no. 3 (October 2017), 50, accessed July 12, 2022. https://doi.org/10.1515/perc-2017-0015

[303] Ibid., 50.

[304] Edward Gwynn (editor), "The Rule of Tallaght/The Rule of Céli De," 1927, no. 65, accessed December 1, 2022. http://diglib.uibk.ac.at/ulbtirol/413612

[305] Ibid., no. 2.

on and around St. Patrick's feast day and the Lent season.[306] Section nine addresses drinking beverages when the major feast days fall on a Tuesday or Thursday. If the monk is thirsty, he must "sip" the drink, as that will quench his thirst without allowing him to indulge in any pleasure.[307] The Céli Dé honored the rhythm of the annual feast calendar through these ascetic food practices.

Like many other monastic rules, the Rule of the Céli Dé includes a rhythm for new community members to follow. Section thirteen describes this seven-year process for a new monk to participate in midnight mass. The monk follows a detailed schedule of which evening he attends and what part of the Eucharist (bread alone or bread and cup) he receives. The frequency of his participation increases from one time in the first year to every Sunday once he has completed the seven years.[308] This section demonstrates the sacred time of midnight mass in conjunction with the annual feast calendar and the rhythm of participating in the Eucharist.

Members of the Céli Dé community were expected to confess their sins. According to the rule, as soon as a monk became aware of their "evil thoughts and faults of idleness and bitter words and anger," they were to confess.[309] The monk was not to wait until Sunday. The rhythm of confession on a particular day of the week shifted within the Céli Dé. The rhythm was dictated by an immediate need to confess to restore one's holiness through penance.[310]

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[306] Ibid., No. 3.

[307] Ibid., No. 9.

[308] Ibid., No. 13.

[309] Ibid., No. 16.

[310] Ibid., No. 17. Rumsey provides a more extensive discussion about confession within the Céli Dé community in her article "Céli Dé–Ascetics or Mystics?", 53-54.

The Eucharist was celebrated every Sunday–a weekly rhythm among the Céli Dé. If a monk missed a Sunday, he would not wait until the following week. The rule stipulates it was too important, and he must go on Thursday.[311]

Each monastic community discussed above had a rhythm of Psalm recitation. There were various schedules and regular rhythms of reciting some or eventually all the Psalms over a period of time. The Céli Dé recited all one hundred and fifty Psalms daily.[312] This is something known as the "Three Fifties."[313] Section 22 explains that the monks stood while reciting one portion of the Psalter and then sat for the next one. The rationale was that if a monk stood for all the Psalms, he would become weary, and if he sat for the entire thing, he would likely fall asleep.[314] More scripture was read during meals. The purpose was to focus their minds on God, not what they ate. One of the monks would eat their meal earlier and then read from "the Gospels and the Rule and miracles of Saints."[315]

Three things are considered "profitable" for a monk to do daily: pray, work, and study. Monks could also teach, write, sew, or do some other productive work. The point was that a monk should avoid idleness.[316] The rhythm of these daily practices, in conjunction with Psalm recitation and the denial of excess and pleasure, were intended to achieve the monk's goal of a

[311] Ibid., No. 15.

[312] Ibid., No. 22 & 30.

[313] Rumsey, *Sacred Time in Early Christian Ireland*, 66.

[314] "The Rule of Tallaght/The Rule of Céli De," No. 22.

[315] Ibid., No. 31.

[316] Ibid., No. 55.

place in the Kingdom of God. While these practices are not unusual in monastic communities, among the Céli Dé, there is a different level of zealousness.[317]

Peregrini

Lastly, this discussion will include the *peregrini,* monastic wanderers, or pilgrims. They are not associated with a particular monastery or a group, and there is no *peregrini* monastic rule that would contribute to a discussion about rhythms and sacred time. However, any discussion about Celtic monasticism must acknowledge the *peregrini*. They are pilgrims who have trained and matured in monasteries and then embark upon travels to other lands. Dunn describes the *peregrini* as "distinctively Celtic…somewhere between hermits and pilgrims."[318] She consistently argues that the *peregrinis'* purpose was "self-mortification and (a) desire to draw closer to God."[319] According to her line of argument, this remained the main goal for each of them. Any recorded missional activity only testified to their Christian conscience, requiring they share the Gospel message with those who needed to hear it.[320]

Smither offers a bit of a different position. According to Smither, a pilgrimage was initially "considered to be the highest form of penance and self-renunciation," but things changed.[321] At the start, many of these monks were "accidental missionaries," according to

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[317] O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 179.

[318] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 140.

[319] Ibid., 140.

[320] Dunn refers to the primacy of the ascetic and penitential aspect of the *peregrini* life choice in *The Emergence of Monasticism*, see 140, 148, and 159.

[321] Edward L. Smither, *Missionary Monks: An Introduction to the History and Theology of Missionary Monasticism* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2016), 25. See also: Smither notes there are differing views among scholars about the core *peregrini* mission motive. Some argue the *peregrini* went out specifically to spread the Gospel. Others say the *peregrini* did not leave their home country for the purpose of sharing the Gospel but did so when they met those who had not heard it. Edward L. Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 76-77.

Smither. Over time, monks like Columbanus and Columba set out with a more determined missional intent.[322] They were committed to sharing the Gospel with the people they encountered. According to Smither, their monastic habits–the rhythms and patterns of "prayer, discipline, and redemptive labor"–serve to confirm the substance of their message.[323]

Whether pilgrimage is for pilgrimage's sake or the purpose of mission, the concept is significant in Celtic monasticism. Dunn argues that the contemplative nature of Irish monasticism is closely tied to the influence of Cassian. It was not uncommon for monks living in a communal setting to temporarily withdraw for a time of solitary contemplation. She points to Columba, Kevin of Glendalough (ca. 498-618), and Columbanus as examples.[324] This was intended as a time of spiritual refreshment involving study, prayer, and contemplation. Dunn connects this practice of withdrawal to the *peregrini*.

Dunn explains that there were three different kinds of martyrdom according to the Irish. Red martyrdom was the physical death of a Christian, exile was white martyrdom, and green martyrdom was expressed through acts of penance.[325] To be a pilgrim, according to O'Loughlin, is to be on "a quest for holiness, as part of a desire to know and do the divine will…"[326] How does a green martyrdom and pilgrimage connect? Penance involves a prescribed action in response to a sin committed. Acts of penance are the things a person does to deal with the sin that they committed. O'Loughlin clarifies the difference between the penitential system developing in the Latin church, the view of sin, and the need for penance within the Irish

[322] Ibid., 81.

[323] Ibid.

[324] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 145.

[325] Ibid., 146.

[326] O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 44.

monastic communities. Here, sin was understood to be whatever impeded one's progress toward perfection.[327] Penance was an "integral part of (one's) conversion and discipleship."[328] A central goal for every monk was to grow in holiness and perfection–this was achieved by embracing a life that strove to overcome sin. This explains the green martyrdom of the *peregrini* in Irish monasticism. One decides to leave behind everything and begin a pilgrimage or wandering to grow in holiness.

The *peregrini* are significant to this discussion because while on mission or pilgrimage, the rhythms and sacred time from their experiences are taken and spread among the new peoples and lands they traveled to. The next chapter will focus on Columba. He is also an Irish monk who left the monastery he founded on Iona to take on a mission to Scotland–reaching the people there with the Gospel.

Conclusion

Celtic Christian monasticism's rhythms and sacred time are evident in the representative Rules of St. Columbanus and the Céli Dé, monastic leaders such as St. Patrick, and writings such as *The Voyage of St. Brendan.* The rhythms are both similar and different from those seen in Chapter 2. This is due to cultural influences that were unique to the Celtic lands. Examining these have further described the context into which Columba and his ministry emerge. Discussing the *peregrini*, while lacking specific insight into rhythm, is also key to rounding out the foundation upon which Columba's monasticism, and mission will emerge.

[327] Ibid., 53.

[328] Ibid.

Chapter Four – Saint Columba of Iona

Introduction

The story of St Columba of Iona situates in the context created in the previous chapters. This project focuses on the rhythms and sacred time of Columba's monasticism and mission to the Pictish people of Scotland. This chapter will introduce Columba, the monk, abbot, and missionary. There will be a specific discussion about Adomnán's the *Life of Columba* and how it contributes to what is known and understood about the monasticism and ministry of Columba. Previous chapters have created some threads of influence between various monastic leaders. This chapter will point to three influences upon Columba–Patrick, Basil, and Cassian. Columba developed a monasticism that combined cenobitic and hermitic characteristics into one, also known as semi-hermetic monasticism. His hybrid monasticism, if you will, embraced what he felt were the best qualities of each.

Part of this chapter will examine the actual setup of the community in Iona. The island where the monks lived, worked, and hosted visitors all provide insight into Columba's monasticism. There are several rhythms in the lives of the monks that inhabited this island. Some of them are familiar, some are similar but differ slightly from what other communities have adopted, and some are strong enough that they outlived Columba and ended up characterizing the lives of the monks that followed Columba. The rhythm of work specifically will provide an important transition in the discussion from Columba's monasticism to his mission. Lastly, this chapter will end with a section that explores Columba's mission to the Pictish King and the people of northern Scotland. This mission continues to build upon of the rhythms in Columba's monasticism.

Columba's Story

Columba was born into a well-to-do royal family early in the sixth century.[329] While many details are lacking, scholars agree that Columba received a monastic education that prepared him for his ultimate path in life, studying under the likes of Finnian at Clonard (470-549).[330] His training and journey took him from monk to ordained priest to founder and abbot in his own monastic network to pilgrim missionary spreading the gospel to the Pictish people of Scotland.[331]

Columba is most remembered for being the founder of an influential monastic network. The monasteries spread from Ireland to the northern part of Britain to northern Scotland.[332] The spiritual center was at Iona, Columba's most famous monastery. In addition to Iona, Columba founded monasteries at Ulter, Durrow, Kells, the Island of Hinba, Bledach, Elena, and others.[333]

The stories vary as to how Columba transitioned from monk under the tutelage of Finnian to monastery founder and pilgrim. Joyce says Columba set out for the island of Iona, intent on finding a contemplative setting.[334] This is consistent with the Irish *peregrini* or pilgrims. According to Wilkin, Adomnán's claim that Columba sailed to Iona as a pilgrim of Christ is untrue. Wilkin argues that Columba was exiled following a military loss suffered by his clan.[335]

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[329] Edward L. Smither, *Missionary Monks: An Introduction to the History and Theology of Missionary Monasticism* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016), 64. See also Robert Louis Wilken, *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2012), 271.

[330] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 64. Timothy J. Joyce agrees Columba's education was monastic based and likens the lack of biographical information for Columba to that of many other early Irish Christian figures in "Columba," in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, ed. William M. Johnston (Chicago & London: Fitzroy Dearborn, n.d.), 319.

[331] Joyce, "Columba" *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, 319.

[332] Thomas O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology: Humanity, World, and God in Early Irish Writings* (London; New York: Continuum, 2000), 73.

[333] This list is a combination of monasteries mentioned by both Smither in *Missionary Monks*, 64, and Joyce in "Columba" *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1,* 320.

[334] Joyce, "Columba" *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 320.

Smither tells two possible reasons for Columba's journey to Iona. One possibility is an issue between Columba and Finnian over manuscript copying. Others claim Columba killed over 3000 of King Diarmont's men. He was ordered out and told to convert the same number of men to Christianity as penance for his deed.[336]

The reason behind Columba's departure is not significant for this project. What is important is that Columba left, became either a white or green martyr, and established the monastery at Iona, from which he launched his mission to the Pictish people.[337] O'Loughlin agrees. He says Columba's inspiration was taken from Isaiah 61:1 "The Spirit of the Lord God is on me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners" (CSB).[338] Regardless of whether this motivated him before he was forced to leave or chose to go, this seems the most appropriate place to launch the discussion of Columba and his monastery at Iona, ministry to the Picts, and the rhythms and sacred times found therein.

Life of Columba

Adomnán wrote the *Life of St. Columba* about a hundred years after Columba's death.[339] Like many before him, Admonán composed this hagiography to honor the life of his predecessor and role model. While understanding the limitations of hagiography as a historical biographical

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[335] Wilkin, *The First Thousand Years*, 271.

[336] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 65.

[337] Ibid., This is Smither's conclusion for his argument in *Missionary Monks,* and it applies here too. See footnote three as Smither quotes John McNeill's *The Celtic Churches: A History A.D. 200-1200*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 90.

[338] O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 74.

[339] Adomnán, *Life of St. Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England; New York: Penguin Books, 1991).

source, many scholars find it the most valuable document about Columba. Joyce argues it is the primary source of information about him and reliable because it was written within reasonable proximity to his lifetime.[340] Ritari agrees and goes as far to say the *Life of St. Columba* is "often considered to be the most reliable historical portrait of an Irish saint by an Irish author."[341] In addition to the proximity to Columba's life, Ritari appreciates the inclusion of testimonies (both written and oral) from the monastery.[342]

Life of St. Columba includes two prefaces by Adomnán, and a main body of text divided into three books. He divines the book according to the subject matter. Book one contains accounts of prophecy by Columba, book two has miracle accounts, and book three includes visions.[343] It attributes the founding of many monasteries to Columba and deems him an influential figure in Irish and English churches.[344] According to Daryl McCarthy, Columba established at least forty monasteries in Ireland, his center at Iona, and over fifty missions between Scotland and England.[345]

O'Loughlin says the *Life of Columba* reveals Adomnán to be "time-aware." [346] As he writes about Columba and recounts testimony from others, the rhythms and sacred times of the

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[340] Joyce, "Columba" *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, 319.

[341] Katja Ritari, "Holy Souls and a Holy Community: The Meaning of Monastic Life in Adomnán's 'Vita Columbae,'" *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 37, no. 2 (2011): 130, accessed December 9, 2022 https://doi.org/10.5325/jmedirelicult.37.2.0129

[342] Ibid.

[343] Joyce, "Columba", 319.

[344] Ibid., 320.

[345] Daryl McCarthy, "Hearts and Minds Aflame for Christ: Irish Monks–A Model for Making All Things New in the 21st Century," *In Pursuit of Truth - A Journal of Christian Scholarship*, September 28, 2007, accessed February 15, 2023. https://www.cslewis.org/journal/hearts-and-minds-aflame-for-christ-irish-monks–model-for-making-all-things-new-in-the-21st-century/view-all/

[346] Thomas O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology: Humanity, World, and God in Early Irish Writings* (London; New York: Continuum, 2000), 176.

monastery become apparent. This is done in such a way that one understands O'Loughlin's assessment. For Adomnán, the rhythms of the community have replaced, time on the clock. Each day included rhythms of sleeping, eating, working, and prayer. The boundaries between these activities were marked by the Daily Office– matins (midnight), lauds, prime, terce, sext, nones, and vespers. The regular daily cycle of rhythm at Iona expands to include a weekly and annual cycle of prayer and hymns.[347] Adomnán was not alone. The picture of the monastic community that he portrays has monks that are "sensitive to the time-rules of the monastery, and prompt and exacting in their observance; the bell was a holy sound."[348] While the rhythm was ingrained and the sound of the bell was holy, it was not without occasional disruption. O'Loughlin points to three things that could interrupt Iona's rhythm and sacred time. Guests, a crisis, or death were all things that could alter the established rhythm of the community.[349] Adomnán testified at the end of his last book to the rhythm shift that occurred when Columba died.[350] This "interruption" was full of its own rhythms and sacred time, spanning three full days filled with prayer and ritual.[351]

Influences Upon Columba

The previous two chapters introduced many throughout history who influenced Columba's monasticism. The desert fathers (Antony and Pachomius), the Cappadocian fathers (especially Basil), monastic leaders on the continent (Augustine, Benedict, and Cassian), and

[347] Ibid. 176-177.

[348] Ibid.

[349] Ibid., 177.

[350] Adomnán, *Life of Columba*, 225-234.

[351] O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology*, 177.

those before him in the Celtic church (Patrick) in some way have all contributed to Columba's vision.

Smither constructs a thread of influence from Basil and Pachomius to Cassian, the monastic communities of Gaul, and the early Celtic Christians to Columba and then to Columbanus.[352] Columba's vision and approach developed and matured as he was exposed to the writings of these men. Cassian covered cenobitic and anchoritic monasticism in his works, the *Institutes* and *Conferences*. These provided Columba with the vision for his hybrid style of monasticism that would emerge at Iona.[353]

Dunn finds evidence of Basil and Cassian's influence upon Columba in the poem *Amra*. *Amra* is a poem written at the time of Columba's death in commemoration of him. The poem's author is aware of Columba's appreciation for and application of the writings of Basil and Cassian, specifically. A line in the poem says, "he applied the judgements [sic] of Basil…he made know the book of Law, those books Cassian loved."[354]

The influence of Patrick upon Columba's monastic approach is rooted in what he established as an early Christian influence in Ireland. Wilken credits Patrick with laying "foundations for the institutional structures that would allow the new faith to put down roots and flourish."[355] The foundations he laid included teaching Latin within the monastic communities. Ireland and the Celtic world existed on the edge of the Roman Empire and thus never adopted Latin as an official language. One needed to understand Latin to read scripture, communicate

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[352] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 21.

[353] Ibid. Ritari agrees with the Cassian influence of Columba's hybrid monasticism. See Ritari, Ritari, "Holy Souls and a Holy Community: The Meaning of Monastic Life in Adomnán's 'Vita Columbae,'" 130.

[354] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 146.

[355] Wilken, *The First Thousand Years*, 270.

with the church on the continent, and understand and participate in the liturgy.[356] The monastic communities became the center of life–religious and social. They cultivated activities that would be seen at Iona and be central to Columba's monastic vision. The activities included the art and skill of writing, copying books, decorating books, woodworking, and stone carving.[357] These activities became part of the rhythm and order of life in Columba's monastery and connections he cultivated in his mission to the Picts of Scotland.

Columba's Monasticism

Many have influenced the flavor and feel of Columba's monasticism. What resulted is a monastic vision that is both communal and individual. Semi-hermitic is the term used for communities such as Columba's that embrace a blending of communal and solitary lifestyles. Monks were called from their individual sleeping cells to gather as a community for prayer, hymns, and psalms.[358] As a community, they joined together in the rhythms of liturgy that had been present in monastic culture before them. Columba also integrated a contemplative element. He would withdraw from the community to a solitary place and meditate, write, or spend time copying the Scriptures.[359] In doing so, Columba would model this for the other monks to follow. Dunn points to others in Celtic monasticism who observed the same practice. Kevin of Glendalough would retreat as Columba did. Columbanus would step away from his monasteries

[356] Ibid.

[357] Ibid., 171.

[358] Joyce, "Columba" in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism,* 320.

[359] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 145. Ritari makes this same claim. By pointing to portions of Adomnán's *Life of Columba* that testify to this action by both monks and Columba. See Ritari "Holy Souls and a Holy Community: The Meaning of Monastic Life in Adomnán's 'Vita Columbae", 135.

to a wooded place nearby. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (634-687) also retreated for occasional solitude on the edges of his monastery.[360]

Columba's monasticism was missional. Smither identified five approaches to mission in Columba's monasticism, three of which testify to the rhythm of Columba's monasticism. First Columba ventured into a new land, he would first go to the leader and then present the gospel to the people. This is a strategy and rhythm that he learned from Patrick. Second, Columba's verbal message was supported by the example of his life. The consistency between his life and message was a pattern that proved effective in his mission to Scotland. His life reinforced the truth and validity of he taught. Third, Columba invested in the training of other missionary monks. As others before Columba had shared the gospel beyond their walls, so did Columba. He continued this pattern by training other monks who would travel beyond the shores of Iona and other communities to share the gospel with pagan people they encountered.[361]

Part of Columba's vision for monastic life includes his understanding of the monastery's purpose and reason for existing. In an article on Adomnán's *Life of Columba*, Ritari postulates that it is possible to know what Adomnán understood about Columba's monasticism through his hagiography of his predecessor. It is reasonable from this to reach conclusions about Columba's vision and, consequently, what he established, particularly at Iona.[362]

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[360] Ibid., 145.

[361] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 67-69. Smither's book serves to identify a missional purpose for the monks of early Christian monasticism. This section identifies Columba as one of the time's missionary-minded monks/abbots. At the same time, note a rhythm like the Daily Office, part of his monastic vision and the happenings at his monastery included mission preparation and activity. This training and sending is a valid rhythm and component of how Columba envisioned monastic life.

[362] Ritari, "Holy Souls and a Holy Community: The Meaning of Monastic Life in Adomnán's 'Vita Columbae,'" 129.

The monastery existed as a community of people with one unified goal. The goal for every monk is to see God. All the activity at the monastery was intended to aid in achieving that goal. Columba established a balance between community and solitude, as seen earlier. Adomnán understood this important balance on a larger scale. Columba's communities understood the importance of "turning one's back on the world" in withdrawal from it when they joined the monastery. However, Adomnán saw this combined with interaction with the community around them.[363] This balance of withdrawal and participation is consistent with Columba's mission to take the gospel to the people around him. His participation with this community outside will be discussed later.

Adomnán presented Columba as an ideal monk, a monk who dedicated his whole life to God. He was a monk, an abbot, spiritual shepherd, and teacher focused upon the training of the monks entrusted to his care.[364] This modeling is part of the teaching essential to Columba's vision for monastic life. Adomnán expanded this teaching to those outside the monastery. Columba, in his opinion, should be a model for those in the secular community around them as well.

The *Life of Columba* describes the ideal monk and, in so doing, reveals some of the rhythms and sacred time within Columba's monasticism. Columba trained, studied, and kept his mind, body, words, and deeds pure as the ideal monk. He was an "island soldier for 34 years." He did not allow laziness to enter his being, keeping busy with reading, work, or prayer at all times, and he observed the fasts and vigils day and night, often without sleep. He did all of this, while still loving each one he encountered.[365]

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[363] Ibid., 130.

[364] Ibid., 133-134.

Iona

The Monastery

The center of Columba's monastic network was a monastery located on the island of Iona. Iona is a small–approximately three miles by one mile, piece of land just off the western coast of Scotland and to the north of Ireland. Columba arrived here in the year 563 and, from this island, launched his mission to share the gospel with the Picts of Scotland.

The stories vary about how Columba came to Iona. One version, from Venerable Bede, says the island was given to Columba by Pictish King Brute.[366] Mark Dilworth disagrees with Bede's interpretation.[367] Dunn says there are two stories. In the first, Columba leaves Ireland as a pilgrim and makes his way to Iona. The second story says Columba was sent to Iona as an exile following a military interaction.[368] While the details of Columba's arrival at Iona are interesting, solving this issue is outside the scope of the current project.

This tiny island situated further north than the continental United States, with its western coastline exposed to the Atlantic Ocean and its eastern shore nestled next to some of the other islands in the Inner Hebrides archipelago, became both a flourishing monastic center and the Celtic version of the desert. Ritari likens Iona's physical isolation to that of the Egyptian desert that attracted Antony and the eremitic monks of early Christian monasticism.[369]

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[365] This description of Columba, the ideal monk is found in Adomnán, *Life of Columba*, translated by Richard Sharpe, 105-106.

[366] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 64. Smither cites Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, McClure, and Collins, 386, in his footnote number 115.

[367] Mark Dilworth, O.S.B., "Iona, Scotland," in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, ed. William M. Johnston (Chicago & London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), 655.

[368] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 146.

[369] Ritari, "Holy Souls and a Holy Community: The Meaning of Monastic Life in Adomnán's 'Vita Columbae,'" 136.

Joyce describes the monastic community on Iona as a small village with several wooden buildings.[370] The facilities included a guesthouse, library, scriptorium, church, individual sleeping cells, dormitory, refectory, sheds, and barns.[371] The buildings testify to the hybrid nature of Columba's monasticism. The church, scriptorium, library, refectory, sheds, and barns are all places monks would gather to participate in worship, hymns, Psalms, work, and study together. The individual sleeping cells point to the eremitic aspect of the community.[372] Monks would withdraw in solitude for a part of each day. Columba had his own small, private hut to which he would go to work, study alone, and spend time with God.[373]

Clancy and Markus offer archaeological evidence that suggests the monastery buildings were constructed on the eastern shore. This cluster was surrounded by a barrier that formed a semi-circle on the western side and opened to the sea on the east. Beyond the barrier and to the west, the land is used for agriculture, animals, and buildings needed to maintain livestock. On the furthest point to the west was a building(s) used to offer hospitality to guests visiting the island.[374] Boundaries were important in Irish monasticism.[375] The sea served as a boundary between the island and the world around it.[376] The holy places within the community were set

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[370] Joyce, "Columba" in *Encyclopedia of* Monasticism, 320.

[371] The list varies from scholar to scholar. This list is a combination of things listed by Joyce in his article "Columba" in *Encyclopedia of* Monasticism, 320, Smither in "*Missionary Monks,"* 66, and Thomas Owen Clancy and Gilbert Markus, "The Life and Work of the Monastery," in *Iona - The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 20, accessed December 9, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxcrp6p.5

[372] Clancy & Markus, "The Life and Work of the Monastery," in *Iona – The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery*, 19.

[373] Ibid., 20.

[374] Ibid., 19-20.

[375] Ibid.

[376] Ritari, "Holy Souls and a Holy Community: The Meaning of Monastic Life in Adomnán's 'Vita Columbae,'" 136.

apart by boundaries from common activity areas. Boundaries separated the monastic community from the visitors to the island. Ritari notes the boundaries, could have been more imperviable. Visitors traversed the sea and arrived at Iona as pilgrims, penitents, and those seeking spiritual guidance. Monks would cross over the boundaries of their monastic settlement to the fields and pastures to grow food and raise cattle for the community. They would go further to the facilities established for the visitors to provide hospitality for their visit. Columba and his monks would regather within the boundaries on the eastern side to participate in the daily rhythms of communal prayer, hymns, and liturgy.[377]

The Rhythms

Previous chapters have demonstrated the prevalence of rhythms and sacred time in monastic communities. Columba's monastery at Iona is no different. Withdrawing or removing oneself from society is a familiar rhythm in monastic life. The monks at Iona practice this on two levels. Like others who joined a monastic community, they withdrew from society at large. This separation was facilitated by the geographic isolation of Iona. They left families, homes, and ways of life that made them a part of society. They joined themselves with a group of people dedicated to a specific way of life with God at the center. In addition to leaving their pre-monastic life, the monks at Iona also practiced withdrawing from one another for periods of solitary time to pray, study, and sleep.[378] This is the rhythm of withdrawal as it is practiced within Columba's monastery.

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[377] Both Ritari, Clancy, and Markus discussed this idea of boundaries familiar to Irish monasticism as a whole and demonstrated here at Iona. See Ritari, "Holy Souls and a Holy Community: The Meaning of Monastic Life in Adomnán's 'Vita Columbae,'" 136, and Clancy & Markus, "The Life and Work of the Monastery," in *Iona – The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery*, 19-21.

[378] This hybrid approach to monasticism was discussed above. Smither calls it "semi-hermitic" tendencies. See Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 66. See also Joyce, "Columba" in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 320. Joyce calls it

Adomnán is clear about the importance of obedience within the monastic community.[379] There was a clear expectation that monks would obey God's commands and their elders within the community. For Adomnán, imitating Columba's model as the ideal monk/abbot was how a monk obeyed.[380] The rhythm of obedience was intended to help a monk gain eternal rewards by following God's commands and developing the virtue of humility and imitating Columba. Adomnán has Cassian in mind when he reminds his reader that obedience leads to humility. Humility is the last in Cassian's list of sins to conquer.[381]

Fasting was another part of the rhythm at the monastery. Each Wednesday and Friday, the monks would practice this familiar monastic discipline and rhythm.[382] Their purpose behind fasting was twofold: for purification and to empower their prayers.[383] Each typical week brought additional rhythms. Every Saturday was a day set aside for rest.[384] The other days in the week were filled with the rhythms of work, study, praying, and eating. For Columba, the essential rhythms were "reading, labor, and prayer."[385] Clancy and Markus highlight the following rhythms of Columba's monastery. Mass was celebrated on Sundays and feast days. The

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a synthesis of cenobitic and eremitic monasticism. The monks live (have their sleeping quarters) alone but participate in other activities such as prayer as a whole group.

[379] Ritari, "Holy Souls and a Holy Community: The Meaning of Monastic Life in Adomnán's 'Vita Columbae,'" 140. Ritari cites the *Life of Columba* by Adomnán, i.19 and i.31.

[380] Ibid., 140-141.

[381] Ibid. Adomnán argues that Columba did not want anyone to know about the miracle he performed. It is reasonable to conclude that Columba was disinterested in personal attention and wanted the focus on God. See the *Life of Columba* by Adomnán, iii,7.

[382] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 66.

[383] Ritari, "Holy Souls and a Holy Community: The Meaning of Monastic Life in Adomnán's 'Vita Columbae,'" 136.

[384] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 66.

[385] Joyce, "Columba" in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 320.

community met at dawn each of these days to participate in this powerful rhythm. A regular pattern of prayer "governed the life of the monastery," expressing the importance of this sacred time both corporately and in solitude. The monastery bell provided rhythm to each day in the community's life. This bell would signal the shift from one activity to another. It established the rhythm for the community by creating starting and stopping points. Monks gathered for prayer, move from prayer to mealtime, and so on, all determined by the sound of the bell.[386] Ritari describes the centrality of the rhythm created by the Daily Office in Columba's community. Adomnán understood his day by the Daily Office, not any clock time.[387] His daily life was ordered by the rhythm of this sacred time of prayer, singing psalms and hymns.

The Work of Iona

The monastery's work at Iona can be broken into five categories. First and foremost, it was a monastic community. Like all monasteries, it was a place to withdraw from the world. Those who joined the community shared the goal of drawing closer to God.[388] It was a center where spiritual discipline–prayer, worship, and scripture memorization--was practiced and taught.[389] In addition to the spiritual disciplines there were everyday tasks of working to support the community. This work included growing food and tending to animals.

In addition to spiritual discipline training, Iona was a pedagogical center offering "studies in theology and other disciplines."[390] According to Joyce, one of Columba's priorities was

[386] Clancy & Markus, "The Life and Work of the Monastery," in *Iona – The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery*, 22.

[387] Ritari, "Holy Souls and a Holy Community: The Meaning of Monastic Life in Adomnán's 'Vita Columbae,'" 138.

[388] Ibid., 141.

[389] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 69.

copying Psalms and manuscripts. The skill of those who copied these documents was enhanced by the artistry that accompanied it. Columba is credited with developing "the particular calligraphic style of the Irish majuscule." An example of the beauty of this ornate writing style can be seen in the Book of Kells.[391]

Iona was also known as a sanctuary and cultural center. The community at Iona welcomed exiles, penitents, and pilgrims to its shores.[392] As was mentioned above, facilities to host them were constructed on the western side of the island, outside the boundary of the monastery itself. Often many of those who came would launch from Iona to another community.

While the monks who joined the monastery on Iona withdrew from the world they once knew, Ritari notes they did not sever all ties with the world.[393] This is most evident as Iona became a base for monastery planting and missions. It was from Iona that Columba and his monks planted monasteries in Britain, Ireland, and Scotland. The monks from Columba's communities were sent to Northumbria and the Pictish kingdom in Scotland as missionaries, carrying the gospel message to those around them.[394] While not every monk traveled to the land of the Picts or other areas touched by the mission work of Iona, Smither argues that ultimately all of the members of the Iona community were "involved in the work of evangelism and catechesis

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[390] Ibid., 69. Dilworth specifically designated Iona a teaching center in his article "Iona, Scotland," in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, 655.

[391] Joyce, "Columba" in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 320.

[392] Dilworth, "Iona, Scotland," in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, 655. Dilworth categorizes the work of Iona into three areas: a learning center, a sanctuary, and a cultural center. The specific divisions differ from scholar to scholar.

[393] Ritari, "Holy Souls and a Holy Community: The Meaning of Monastic Life in Adomnán's 'Vita Columbae,'" 141.

[394] Frederick W. Norris, "Iona," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York, London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 469.

among the Pictish people."[395] This conclusion is the launching pad for the next section, which will look at Columba's mission to the Pictish King and his people.

Columba's Mission to Scotland

Bede considered Columba a missionary and pastor. Adomnán said he was a pastor and a monk. Clancy and Markus quote both men and conclude regardless of official titles, Columba did both pastoral and missionary work.[396] As a monk, Columba followed the daily rhythms and routing of prayer, reading, writing, and other work necessary to the operation of the monastic community. Abbot Columba was responsible for leading the monks at Iona and overseeing the interactions with those that visited the island. As an ordained pastor, Columba baptized, preached, and visited the ill.[397] Columba the missionary, would intentionally share the gospel with those who had not heard. Clancy and Markus observe a tension existing in the story of Columba. "A monastery is not primarily a pastoral mission to the world, but a place of withdrawal for prayer and contemplation."[398] Nevertheless, Iona became the home base for Columba–monk, abbot, pastor, and missionary to Scotland. Despite what Irish monasteries had typically been, they "did nevertheless, become centres of missionary growth" both at Iona and on the continent of Europe as well.[399] So it was that Iona became the center from which Columba and his monks based their mission to the Pictish people of Scotland.

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[395] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 66.

[396] Clancy & Markus, "The Life and Work of the Monastery," in *Iona – The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery*, 23. It would be difficult not to add abbot to Columba's titles too.

[397] Ibid.

[398] Ibid.

[399] Ibid.

There is nothing to indicate Columba changed the patterns and rhythms of his life while on mission in northern Scotland. The message–the good news of Jesus Christ, that he sought to share with the King and people of the Picts was the same gospel he sought to focus his own life upon. This would reasonably include following the daily, weekly, and annual practices he had followed elsewhere. The rhythms of prayer in the Daily Office, fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, observing a weekly day of rest and time spent reading, copying, and memorizing scripture would continue as he traveled.

As he made his way through the Pictish kingdom, expanding his monastic network, it would seem strange to think these new monasteries would follow a different set of rhythms. Part of the characteristics that made them a part of the Columban network would be the consistency of the rhythms and sacred time that Columba personally practiced on a regular basis.

As will be seen below, one of the key factors in successfully convincing the Pictish King and his people of the gospel's truth lay in the consistency between his message and his actions. These actions include the rhythms that became synonymous with the life of Columba.

The People and the Mission

The Picts of Scotland were a pagan people group located in the north and central parts of Scotland. They were geographically isolated by rugged mountains and had divided into two groups within themselves–one settling to the north and one to the south.[400] Columba's mission to the Picts centered upon those in the north, ruled by King Brute (also known as Bridei and Brude

[400] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 67. Sharpe, in his introduction to Adomnán's *Life of Columba*, notes the natural boundaries created by the terrain in the area. He also concludes there is very little know about the religion of the Picts prior to the introduction and acceptance of Christianity, see footnote 287, Adomnán, *Life of St. Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England; New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 334.

son of Melcho). King Brute ruled the Pictish people from 558-584/586.[401] Columba's arrival on Iona in 563 falls shortly after the beginning of Brute's reign. The Picts were known for their artistry in metal and stonework, and decorative book art. This will play a significant role in Columba's method for sharing the Gospel and providing a means by which the Picts could share it with others.[402]

Scholars agree Columba began his mission to the Picts with the King. Early, it was shown, Columba followed the method of Patrick who sought out leadership before reaching out to the people. Wilken says Columba's approach was common. "In most regions the initiative came from enterprising monks and bishops in alliance with local kings."[403] While the method was similar, missions operated on fairly independently at this time. Wilkin argues there was no systematic plan to spread the gospel until the 8th century.[404]

According to Dilworth, Columba sought permission from the King to preach to his people and baptize the converts.[405] Smither dates Columba and King Brute's meeting to 565. Columba won the King's favor by two specific things: his preaching and his way of life or example.[406] As has been shown, others thought Columba was a model monk. He was revered by many long after his death. King Brute was able to watch Columba–the ideal monk and found

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[401] Adomnán, *Life of St. Columba*, 32.

[402] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 67.

[403] Wilkin, *The First Thousand Years*, 269.

[404] Ibid.

[405] Dilworth, "Iona, Scotland," in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, 655. Dilworth's position assumes Columba's central intent was missional.

[406] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 65. Sharpe includes Bede's argument for these two points, too. Adomnán, *Life of St. Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England; New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 30.

consistency between how he lived and the message he taught. As the ideal monk, it would be reasonable to assume the rhythms and patterns Columba had embraced as a monk and would teach to his community would be things he would continue in Scotland. He was fasting and holding certain days as sacred time devoted to focusing upon the Lord and his word and partaking in the Eucharist. The times of prayer and singing of hymns as he participated in the rhythm of the Daily Office for worship, praise, learning, and growth all would have reinforced the gospel he preached.

Sharpe approaches Columba's mission to the Picts by discussing and comparing what he finds in Bede's writing and Admonán's *Life of Columba*. What he finds in Bede is direct. Columba traveled to the Pictish kingdom for the expressed purpose of sharing the gospel. This was the primary intent of his journey. His success was rooted in the consistency between his message and the example he lived out before them.[407] When he looks at Admonán's writing, he notes that when he discusses Columba's travel to the Pictish kingdom, he makes almost no mention of "missionary preaching."[408] Sharpe suggests two possible reasons why. First, Admonán was not interested in "how" the Pictish peoples were converted to Christianity. The second possible reason is that by the time Admonán wrote Life of Columba, the Picts had embraced Christianity, and it did not seem as crucial by then.[409]

Columba's mission was not a solo one. Monks from Iona followed to assist in the ongoing task of reaching the Pictish people with the gospel.[410] Following Columba's death,

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[407] Adomnán, *Life of St. Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England; New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 30.

[408] Ibid., 32.

[409] Ibid. There are two places Admonán does refer to Columba's preaching in Scotland, see i.33 and ii.32.

[410] Dilworth, "Iona, Scotland," in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, 655.

Dilworth argues that Iona's importance and position of authority in the area was confirmed by the fact that Columba's mission continued to grow.[411]

Pictish Art

As seen above, the art of writing, decorating books, woodworking, and stone carving were important activities in Iona's monastic community. They were part of the regular rhythms of life for the monks who lived there. Columba used these skills and crafts as a connection with the Pictish people. The Picts were also known for their work with silver, stone, and decorative books.[412] Stone carving became a crucial connection point between the two groups. Smither discusses this connection. Art is communication. The Picts' art was used to recount their history–remember military significant military events and such.[413] It would have served a similar purpose for the community at Iona, but the focus would reflect what was central to them–the gospel.

According to Smither, Columba and his monks took advantage of this thing they had in common and used it to aid their mission. They employed stone crosses and other Pictish art forms to communicate the gospel message of Christ.[414] The stone crosses became a means of contextualizing the gospel for the Picts.[415] When Columba first arrived, pagan symbols dominated the stone carvings done by the Picts.[416]

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[411] Ibid.

[412] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 67.

[413] Ibid., 70.

[414] Ibid.

[415] Ibid., 73.

[416] Ibid., 70. Smither identified three stages of Pictish stone cross art. First, the "pre-conversion" stage–all pagan symbols. His second stage is the "cross stage" which he says was the result of the Picts embracing Christianity. The third stage has no pagan references at all. These three are a clear transition within Pictish art culture that shows the displacement of pagan ideals with the truth of the gospel.

The Picts understood that stone art would have meaning and tell a story. Columba and his monks communicated the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus through art on the stone crosses. Ultimately, they became teaching tools for the Pictish church to share the gospel with others.[417] Teaching disciples to make other disciples in a very early form. Through this art form, it is possible to discern a shared rhythm between Iona and the Picts. The content taught the gospel and focused the minds and hearts of those who observed it upon the sacred truth of God's word. Both the artisans who created it and those who looked at it would participate.

Art not only became a tool to aid Columba's mission to the Picts, but it will also become an expression of Columba's lasting influence. The next chapter will discuss two of the most famous stone crosses at Iona and the Book of Kells. In these art forms, the rhythms of monastic life and its focus on the sacred merge with stone carving and decorative writing to produce beautiful items that point the observer to the goal of the monastic community, a virtuous life ultimately lived forever with God.

Conclusion

According to his hagiographer, Adomnán, St. Columba of Iona was the ideal monk. Some consider him both a monk and missionary. Others would say he's a monk and pastor. Still, others might focus on his ability to envision and establish a monastic community at the far edges of the known world. It was a community that was removed enough to allow its monks to withdraw from the world and practice the solitude desired by the monks in the Egyptian desert. As a part of his vision, Columba combined the ideals of cenobitic monasticism with the isolation of the eremitic communities.

[417] Ibid. 71.

Columba founded a community that observed the rhythms and sacred times of prayer, work, studying, the Daily Office, fasting, and celebrating the Eucharist. As abbot, he led his monks in a discipline of monasticism which seeks to live a virtuous life with eternity with God as its end goal. While withdrawn from society, his community embraced serving those who came to the island as pilgrims or penitents. Iona became Columba's base for the network of other communities he founded and, most notably, his mission to share the gospel with the people of the Pictish kingdom in northern Scotland.

Columba, the missionary, sought King Brute's favor before preaching to the people. Here he follows a method used by Patrick before him. He discovered a point of common interest with the Pictish people when it became apparent they were artisans. Columba and his monks shared the gospel with the Picts through an ordinary art skill of stone carving. What was a part of the rhythm of work and artistry on Iona now became a tool to reach and transform a people group. It also provided them with a means by which they could share the gospel with others.

Columba not only impacted those of his time–his monks, the island visitors, his monastic network, and the Pictish kingdom- but would also influence generations after him. He is training them in the rhythms and sacred times of monastic life and doing the work of missions to those around him. The beauty of the artistry that continued to develop after his death continues to impact those who see it today. Columba's continuing influence is where this project now turns.

Chapter Five – The Legacy of Saint Columba

Introduction

Thirty-four years after coming to Iona, Columba died there. The island synonymous with his name would now embark on a new century without its well-known leader. His legacy continued through the monasteries he founded and those he led. His "reputation for holiness… was known through much of Ireland and Scotland," and it was from "the monastic tradition of Columba, from which much of successive Celtic monasticism (was) derived."[418]

This chapter will examine the legacy of Columba by looking at a small sampling of people, places, and objects, found in the wake of Columba's life. His influence is seen in the leaders that followed in his footsteps in Iona's monastery. Some monks lived and trained there, launching into other parts of the world, and founding and leading their own monasteries. Columba established other monastic communities that continued to carry on his rhythms, ways, methods, work, and goals. It is also possible to see the influence of Columba and his mission in the stonework and decorative books made in the centuries after his death. The chapter will conclude with a brief look at the attacks Iona and her inhabitants suffered at the hands of the Vikings, which brought her dominance to an end.

Columba's Death

A legacy is generally thought of after a person dies. It is the impact and lasting effect they have had upon those that come after them. Adomnán ends his *Life of Columba* with the story of Columba's death.[419] The risks and benefits of using hagiography have already been discussed.

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[418] Adomnán, *Life of St. Columba*, trans. Richard Sharpe, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England; New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 1. The first quote is from Adomnán. The second quote is from Timothy J. Joyce, O.S.B., "Columba," in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, 320.

[419] Ibid., 225-234. "How our patron St Columba passed to the Lord."

For this project, the closing chapter of book three provides a beautiful account of the death of a well-loved, respected, and admired monk and abbot. Like the *Voyage of Saint Brendan,* it gives insight into the rhythms and sacred time of Columba and his monastic community. It also provides a launching point for the legacy of Columba to be seen.

The twenty-third chapter of book three tells the story of Columba's death. On the day of his death, Adomnán describes Columba as old. Due to his age, he was riding in a cart as he made his way around the monastic community. He tells the servant that just as God has instructed weekly sabbath, there was another sabbath, rest from this life, that Columba would soon observe.[420] Columba understood his earthly life was about to end and looked forward to the eternal rest that eternity with God would provide compared to the work, toil, and trouble of this life—the rhythm of the sabbath that Columba held significant in his monasticism roots itself in God's words. Here is evidence of the rhythms of obedience to God's commands, weekly rest to focus upon the Lord paired with the cessation of other activities, and the last sabbath for those who followed the Lord. Columba not only taught these things, but they were a part of his life.

Later that day, he spent time in his hut copying scripture. This rhythm of withdrawing into his solitary hut has been discussed prior. Columba was copying Psalm 34. According to Adomnán, the last verse he copied was verse ten "They that seek the Lord shall not want for anything that is good."[421] Supposedly, Columba felt it appropriate for the abbot who would follow him to pick up the task by beginning to copy verse eleven "Come, my sons, hear me; I

[420] Ibid., 227.

[421] Ibid., 228.

shall teach you the fear of the Lord." Beithéne, Columba's successor, followed in his footsteps as a teacher and scribe.[422]

Adomnán continues to recount the story noting the bell sounded at Iona, signaling it was time to gather for the midnight office. This is a reminder of the importance of the bell for Adomnán as he navigated each day. The rhythm of the day was marked by its sound. Adomnán and the other monks would transition from work, liturgical activities, and studies at the sound of the bell. It is also possible to see the rhythm observed by Columba as he responded to the call to gather for prayer and worship. The bell sounded, and Columba arrived at the church before the others. He made his way to the altar and kneeled before it in prayer. Those who recounted the details of the night passed down through the generations said a servant approached the church, and it was filled with divine light.[423] The light had disappeared when the servant reached the church. He entered and found Columba lying on the floor before the altar. He had died while praying.[424]

Because the monks were all arriving at the church for the midnight office, the whole community was quickly aware of the abbot's death. They lamented corporately. The community sang the morning hymns, as was their pattern. Columba's body was carried from the church to his room. The monks accompanied it, chanting as they went.[425]

The three days following Columba's death were filled with funeral rituals and rhythms. Adomnán notes that "learned men" passed on the details of this time to him.[426] The patterns,

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[422] Ibid.

[423] Ibid., 229.

[424] Ibid.

[425] Ibid., 231.

[426] Ibid., 232.

rhythms, and customs observed to honor Columba were consistent with what had been established within the community of faith.[427] After these three days, the monks of Iona offered praise to God and buried the body of Columba.[428]

In his concluding words, written 100 years after Columba's death, Adomnán says the Columban legacy that continued to that point was God's favor bestowed upon a faithful servant. The exaggeration that often accompanies hagiography takes over as Adomnán lists Cities and regions not as much associated with Columba but as found in Evagrius's *Life of Antony*.[429] These details aside, Columba's legacy continued through people, places, and things after his death.

People

Aiden

Information is scarce regarding the early part of Aiden's life. It is known that he was a monk at Iona. Eventually, Aiden made his way from Iona to Lindisfarne. King Oswald (604-642) of Northumbria was in Ireland. Stories vary as to why he was there. One version says Oswald had been exiled to Ireland and found himself on Iona. While there, he was so "impressed by the Christianity of Columba and the monks" there he chose Aiden as his bishop.[430] Another claim is that he came specifically looking for a bishop. Oswald chose another monk and quickly decided he was not the right one, so he chose Aiden instead.[431] Regardless of which details are accurate,

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[427] Ibid.

[428] Ibid., 231.

[429] Ibid., 378. Sharpe makes this comment in footnote number 378. He points to Evagrius's *Life of St Antony*, c. 61 as the source of the list of cities and regions mentioned by Adomnán. Exaggeration aside, Adomnán's *Life of Columba* still rightly points to the legacy that followed Columba's life here on Earth.

[430] Nicholas Sagovsky, "Aidan," in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, ed. William M. Johnston (Chicago & London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), 17.

[431] Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 196.

both demonstrate the influence of Columba's legacy. Oswald, whether at Iona by accident or intention, sought a monk who had been trained and steeped in the monasticism of Columba to become the bishop in his region. Aiden traveled to the east coast of Britain and established a monastery at Lindisfarne in Northumberland. Sagovsky describes the community founded by Aiden at Lindisfarne as a typical Irish monastery.[432] It would be reasonable to conclude it was a community resembling Iona who trained him. There will be further discussion about Lindisfarne later in this chapter.

Like Columba, who established Iona as a center from which he launched his mission to the Pictish people of Scotland, Lindisfarne became the center from which Aiden was based.[433] These activities include pastoral and missional work. Christianity spread from Lindisfarne into the northern parts of England.[434] The similarities between Aiden and Columba continue as Dunn describes Aiden's ministry as the blend of pastoral, evangelistic, and contemplative monasticism.[435] One area Aiden and Columba differed is in the role of bishop. Columba functioned in the role of abbot but never bishop.

Dunn and Sagovsky describe Aiden's monastic example using the words of Bede. Many of the qualities and practices are consistent with Columba's. Aiden was a preacher whose message was consistent with how he lived his life.[436] These characteristics won King Brute over to Columba's message to the Picts.

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[432] Sagovsky, "Aidan," 17.

[433] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism,"* 196. Other scholas agree with this designation for Lindisfarne. See Mark Dilworth, "Iona, Scotland," in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism Vol 1*, 655. Sagovsky "Aidan," 17.

[434] Sagovsky, "Aidan," 17. Sagovsky says Aidan went out from Lindisfarne preaching and baptizing–a similar description as was given to Columba as he traveled to the Picts.

[435] Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism,"* 196.

Aiden, like a rabbi, instructed those who were learning from him to imitate what he modeled for them. He wanted them to learn to meditate on Scripture as he did. As they went along, he modeled the importance of learning Psalms.[437] Columba taught those who followed him in a similar manner. The Psalms were a significant part of the rhythm of the sacred time of liturgy in Columba's monasticism, and this same importance is seen in Aiden.

Like Columba, Aiden would occasionally withdraw for solitary prayer. Aiden would go to Inner Farne Island to find this solitude.[438] Columba had his hut on the island of Iona, which he would withdraw for the same purpose. This continues the semi-hermitic approach to monastic life. Consistent with some of Columba's other practices include embracing a rejection of possessions and striving for personal holiness through the rhythms of monastic life. Any gifts Aiden received he refused to keep personally but would pass them on to those in need or use them to benefit others in some way.[439] Aiden was remembered for his holiness, good character, and piety, resulting in his ability to perform miracles.[440] Each of these qualities points to the legacy of Columba and his monasticism.

Adomnán

Adomnán was a monk, a priest, and the ninth abbot of the monastery at Iona (679-704). He was following in the footsteps of his distant relative, Columba–the founder of the community

[436] Ibid. See also Sagovsky, "Aiden," 18.

[437] Sagovsky, "Aiden," 18.

[438] Ibid.

[439] Ibid., 17. Dunn also points to Bede's description of Aiden regarding this. Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 196.

[440] Ibid., 18.

of Iona.[441] He was born in Ireland and, by his testimony, had heard a Columban monk tell of a miracle. This monk was Ernéne, "who was buried in the burial ground of the monks of St. Columba at Druim Tuamma."[442] Sharpe argues that this information provides a tie to either Adomnán's hometown or a place of education.[443]

While details are lacking, it is reasonable to assume Adomnán was educated in Columban communities because of his familial ties. Due to his royal status, Adomnán would not have had any barriers regarding connections he would establish with monastic leaders and where he would receive his training. The opportunities to study Latin, Scripture, and the works of early Irish Christians would also be open to him.[444]

Later in life, Adomnán became a part of the ongoing tension over figuring out the date of Easter. The rhythm of Easter and the celebration surrounding the resurrection of Christ is important to this project. How the church calculated that date is not. Suffice it to say that the issue was between Roman Catholicism and the Celtic church. Rome had adopted one way of establishing the date the church would officially celebrate Easter, and the Celtic church was generally resistant to change its tradition. Research into the details, history, documentation, and involved parties would make for an interesting project.

Adomnán authored the *Life of Columba*. What can be learned about Columba from this was discussed in the previous chapter. *Life of Columba* can also testify to the legacy of Columba, as seen in the life of Adomnán. There is no certain origin date for Adomnán's *Life*. Sharpe

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[441] Adomnán, *Life of St. Columba*, 44.

[442] Ibid., 376-377.

[443] Ibid., 231.

[444] Ibid., 45. Sharpe reaches these conclusions based on his study of Adomnán's *Life of Columba* and the pieces of biographical information that exists.

proposes a late seventh-century date. He justifies this position by associating the *Life* with the 100th anniversary of Columba's death.[445] By Adomnán's testimony, he wrote the *Life of Columba* because the community of Iona asked him to tell them about their founder.[446] Adomnán answered their request by producing a work that sought to use reliable sources and highlight the fact that Columba was a man of God.[447] Sharpe suggests Adomnán utilized both the testimonies of those in the community who had learned of Columba through their oral traditions and to a lesser extent he used written sources. Many oral testimonies came from Iona. However, Sharpe notes Adomnán was keenly aware of Scotland's oral tradition surrounding Columba.[448] The Irish legal context of Adomnán's time supports his choice of a majority oral testimony, which was more important than written.[449]

Adomnán appears to be more than happy to oblige the request of the community to know more about their founder and first abbot. In addition to supplying this purpose, Adomnán wants to give Ireland its own "Life of." Sharpe rightly notes that the European continent had several, and they were widely read.[450] Through Adomnán's writing of the *Life of Columba*, Columba's legacy is evident in him. O'Loughlin suggests there is a second intended audience for Adomnán's *Life.* In addition to those within the Columban monastic network, Adomnán wanted

[445] Ibid., 55.

[446] Ibid., 60, 103.

[447] Ibid., 56, 58.

[448] Ibid., 56-57, 60.

[449] Ibid., 56.

[450] Ibid., 57.

to introduce Columba to those outside it. Columba, in Adomnán's opinion, was worth imitating.[451] Besides telling Iona about him, Adomnán sought to spread his legacy.

Through the *Life of Columba*, Adomnán also communicates what is most important to him about Columba—these characteristics of Adomnán values and how Columba's legacy lives on through him. Ritari names four things. *Life of Columba* is a hagiography. It portrays an idealization of Columba and his life. Ritari suggests, for Adomnán, Columba is the perfect monk and worth emulating. Second and third are Columba's monasticism and mission. Finally, Adomnán believed life here was a pilgrimage to heaven, and Columba was the perfect pilgrim.[452] These are the things Adomnán held in high esteem, and in these ways, Columba's legacy was spread in Iona and to those Adomnán encountered.

Places

Scotland

Columba used his monastery at Iona as a base for his mission to the Pict King and people in northern Scotland. Therefore, this is a place one would expect to see remnants of Columba's legacy as much as any other. Adomnán in *Life of Columba* does not say much. He notes that the Columban monks were expelled from the Pictish kingdom in 717. It would be reasonable to conclude that from their presence until that year, they carried on the legacy of Columba.[453] Other scholars, as will be shown, indicated Columba's legacy was influential long after 717.

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[451] Thomas O'Loughlin, *Celtic Theology: Humanity, World, and God in Early Irish Writings* (London; New York: Continuum, 2000), 78.

[452] Katja Ritari, "Holy Souls and a Holy Community: The Meaning of Monastic Life in Adomnán's 'Vita Columbae,'" *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 37, no. 2 (2011), 129, 141, accessed December 9, 2022. https://doi.org/10.5325/jmedirelicult.37.2.0129

[453] Adomnán, *Life of Columba*, 31.

Sharpe, in his introduction to *Life of Columba*, says the Picts credited their conversion to the ministry and mission of Columba. While not a specific witness to an ongoing legacy, the fact that they pointed to Columba when they testified to the beginnings of their faith indicates the continuing importance he held in their memory.

J.M. Mackinlay discusses sites throughout Scotland that have Columban connections. Dunkeld was the site of a Columban monastery founded in the mid-eighth century by Constantin, King of the Picts.[454] Dunkeld is north of modern Edinburgh and inland from Scotland's east coast. Because of this location, Mackinlay suggests the Dunkeld community may have become a prominent center of monasticism after several attacks on Iona. As a result, they "inherited to a large extent its ecclesiastical influence."[455] He argues it would have provided a haven because of its distance from the coastline and thus would stand a greater chance of avoiding attack by Vikings arriving by sea.[456] Regardless of where this community stood in prominence compared to the others, Mackinlay demonstrates the legacy of Columba continuing here for a significant amount of time. Beyond the years of early Christian monasticism, a church was built dedicated to Columba. Well into the second millennium, artwork was dedicated to the miracles of Columba as recorded in Adomnán's *Life of Columba.* Near the end of the fifteenth century, a set of bells were crafted for the cathedral at Dunkeld and dedicated to St. Columba.[457] Columba's continued presence in the artistry at Dunkeld testified to the ongoing respect and regard for him and his legacy.

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[454] J. M. Mackinlay, "Four Columban Sites in Scotland," *The Celtic Review* 4, no. 14 (1907), 98.

[455] Ibid.

[456] Ibid.

[457] Ibid., 99.

Inchcolm is, according to Mackinlay, the furthest east location of the Columban monastic network.[458] It is an island located just north, across the bay from the modern city of Edinburgh, and almost straight south of Dunkeld. There is debate over whether Columba ever visited this monastery. Mackinlay argues that he did not.[459] It is interesting that the island is named for Columba–Inchcolm means Island of Columba. Two men lived well after Columba but were instrumental in perpetuating Columba's legacy here. A hermit dedicated to following Columba lived on the island in the early twelfth century. According to Mackinlay, the remains of his solitary cell existed into the early twentieth century. This hermit hosted Alexander I, who later founded a monastery–dedicated to Columba on Inchcolm for Augustinian canons.[460]

Lindisfarne was mentioned earlier in connection with Aiden–an Ionian monk who became bishop. This monastic community, led by Aiden, was undoubtedly a location that fostered the legacy of Columba. Aiden had been trained at Iona and continued to foster a similar environment dedicated to "spiritual discipline and learning centered on prayer, worship, and scripture memory, as well as studies in theology."[461]

David Hunter Blair examined the influence monastic communities had on Scottish history, and a portion of his discussion centers around Columba's and his monks' influence and legacy.[462] Columba was not the first missionary monk that arrived in Scotland. Still, when

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[458] Ibid., 102.

[459] Ibid.

[460] Ibid.

[461] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 69. It was these characteristics, established by Columba that would spread through those who trained at Iona and then left to found and lead other monasteries or regions–such as Aiden who became a bishop based at Lindisfarne.

[462] David Hunter Blair, "The Contributions of the Monasteries to Scottish History," *The Scottish Historical Review* 25, no. 99 (April 1928): 195.

looking specifically at the people of the Pictish kingdom in the north and discussing the church established in Scotland, Blair points to Columba as significant in its early stages.[463] Columba brought the people of Scotland not only the gospel message an entire lifestyle that reinforced their message. They brought "preaching and manual labor supplemented by the important work of education."[464] Blair highlights Columba's ministry to the children of the Pictish people. Columba's monks became teachers that introduced the younger generation to a way of life much different than the pagan culture they had.[465] Columba used the artistry already in their culture to teach them the art and the gospel.

Blair deems the Pictish culture as "uncivilized" before Columba's arrival.[466] This utilizes terms and perspectives that reveal his preference for the Roman Catholic approach of the time. His assessment of Columba's contribution to converting the Picts to Christianity, the Scottish culture, and history is helpful. He credits Columba and his monks with establishing the most profound foundation upon which Scotland eventually transitioned from a region of warring tribes to a united people.[467]

In the eighth century, Blair saw the monastic period of Scotland ending. The monks who had continued the work of Columba in northern Scotland were now replaced by "the anchorite or hermit-clerics known as the Culdees."[468] However, despite this change, Columba and his monks

[463] Ibid., 195.

[464] Ibid.

[465] Ibid., 196.

[466] Ibid.

[467] Ibid.

[468] Ibid.

from Iona laid foundations and continued to live and influence the church.[469] This is a testimony to the ongoing legacy of Columba in the region in which he conducted his primary mission. This influence was recognized, according to Blair, in the eleventh century by Margaret, the Saxon queen of Malcolm Canmore and her sons. While their approach to the church ecclesiology was different, they acknowledged the continued benefit from the work of Columba and his continued influence.[470]

Things

Columba's legacy was continued through people and places. His legacy continues through a couple of important items as well. The stone crosses in Ireland and Scotland testify to his mission to the Picts, and the Book of Kells, speaks to the importance of Scripture and the art of copying and decoratively preserving God's word.

Stone Crosses

Columba found common ground with the Pictish people in artistic stonework. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Pictish people had a history of carving their military achievements and pagan symbols onto stone. Stone crosses with carvings that communicated the Christian gospel became a tool that Columba and his monks used to teach the Picts the gospel. Those who became Christians could then use them to teach others about Christ. Stone crosses at Iona and in Scotland became fixtures in continuing the legacy of Columba.

There are crosses at Iona and found throughout the area of the Picts that utilize animal imagery. This is a nod to the subject matter of pagan Pictish times. Smither notes that the

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[469] Ibid.

[470] Ibid., 197.

animals are used to tell the Gospel. Columba used images familiar to the Pictish people tied to a new message which helped them understand. A calf representing Jesus at his death, a snake in the process of shedding his skin used to communicate Jesus' resurrection, and a fish used to tell Jesus' baptism are all examples of how this was accomplished.[471] This was Columba's method of contextualizing the Gospel for the Pict people.

The stone crosses serve as another testimony to the legacy of Columba. Several of them and other crosses perpetuate his legacy as they testify to those who followed Columba. The crosses of St. Martin and St. John are just two examples located at Iona. These crosses were made in the early eighth century.[472] The crosses are granite, and three are displayed in the Abbey Museum on Iona. The St. Martin Cross is still in its place outside. The St. Martin Cross stands 14 feet high, and the St. John Cross is 17 feet tall. They are constructed as typical crosses; the horizontal beam is between a quarter and a third of the length of the vertical shaft. They both bear a circle surrounding the intersection point of the two beams, characteristic of the Celtic Crosses.

The St. Martin Cross is decorative on one side and has Biblical scenes carved into the other side. The St. John's Cross is done in the snake and boss (stud) design.[473] This uses the image of a snake attacking lizard-like creatures to tell of Jesus' triumph over Satan.[474] The

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[471] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 72.

[472] Frederick W. Norris, "Iona," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York, London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 470. See Thomas Owen Clancy and Gilbert Markus, "The Life and Work of the Monastery," in *Iona - The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 21, accessed December 9, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxcrp6p.5. See https://the-past.com/feature/ionas-archetype-a-concrete-replica-of-the-cross-of-st-john-speaks/ (accessed 2/23/2023), for suggested origin dates.

[473] https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/archives-and-collections/properties-in-care-collections/object/st-johns-cross-8th-century-early-medieval-iona-abbey-18287 (accessed 2/13/2023).

[474] Ibid.

crosses perpetuate Columba's legacy arguably by their location and Iona and the role they played in his mission to the Picts. Adomnán testifies to this fact nearly 100 years after Columba's death. "Adomnán mentions three (of the seven monumental free-standing crosses) of these, stating they were erected to commemorate incidents in the life of Columba and served as places for prayer and reflection both for the monks undertaking their daily tasks around the monastic precinct and for pilgrims visiting St Columba's shrine."[475]

The Book of Kells

As some of the stone crosses in both Iona and Scotland continue the legacy of Columba, so does the Book of Kells. The Book of Kells is a spectacular example of the artistry and love of Scripture in Columba's community at Iona. Trinity College Dublin is where one can see the Book of Kells today. It is a grand book, an "illustrated gospel book" originating from the early ninth century.[476] The book consists of the four gospels, written in Latin and decorated in ornate calligraphy, colors, and illustrations.[477]

How does the Book of Kells serve to perpetuate the legacy of Columba? Smither points out that the context of the book's creation is essential. The Book of Kells originated in a community and monastic culture that valued sacred time, teaching, and learning. Whereas now, it sits preserved and protected from human hands, when the Book of Kells was created, Smither suggests it was used during assemblies at the monastery. The illustrations and the words it contained partnered to teach about and inspire focus upon the life and work of Christ Jesus.[478]

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[475] Ibid.

[476] Mark Dilworth, "Iona, Scotland," 655. See also Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 72. Clancy and Markus "The Life and Work of the Monastery," 26, agree with this dating.

[477] Smither, *Missionary Monks,* 72.

[478] Ibid.

The illustrations are more than just pretty pictures. The Book of Kells is a "subtle interlacing of countless scriptural and liturgical themes (in which) a wonderfully creative theological imagination is at play."[479]

Its reach went beyond Iona's shores, as Smither suggests visitors to Iona would have the opportunity to see the book and learn from its contents. Like how the gospel spread in the book of Acts, as the people returned home or continued their journey, they would share what they had learned with those they encountered.[480] This is the culture and community Columba had established more than 200 years prior. Adomnán lived 100 years after Columba and 100 years before the Book of Kells, and as Columba's hagiographer, he was instrumental in continuing his legacy.

Was the Book of Kells written at Iona? This is a valid question, especially when making a case for the Book of Kells as a part of Columba's legacy. Meyvaert offers three arguments in favor of Iona as the place of origin for the Book of Kells. The first point argues for Iona over Northumbria. There is a genealogy in the gospel of Luke. Within this list, the name of Columba is artistically interwoven within the historical family tree. It is more probable that this would happen in Iona than Northumbria because "the veneration of Saint Columba was dominant." Northumbria, in his opinion, was too tied to the Roman church to honor Columba in the creation of the Book of Kells.[481]

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[479] Clancy and Markus, "The Life and Work of the Monastery," 26.

[480] Smither, *Missionary Monks,* 72.

[481] Paul Meyvaert, "The Book of Kells and Iona," *The Art Bulletin* 71, no. 1 (1989), 9, accessed December 9, 2021. https://doi.org/10.2307/3051211 Sharpe surmises Iona is the likely place or origin because "the book was written and illuminated at an Irish centre open to the artistic influence of both Northumbria and Pictland in the middle years of the eighth century." Adomnán, *Life of St. Columba*, 79.

Argument number two does not offer solid proof but is information that would tip the odds in favor of an Iona origin. A tradition within the Kells community in the early eleventh century linked the Book of Kells to Columba. This association was related to the connection between the relics of Columba that made their way to the community at Kells. Meyvaert argues that no such association would have ever been made if the Book of Kells had originated at Kells.[482]

Meyvaert's third argument for Iona as the place of origin for the Book of Kells finds its locus in Adomnán and a decorative feature in his writing. Adomnán is best known for his *Life of Columba*. He also wrote *De locis sanctis*. The material in *De locis sanctis* is rooted in the stories told to Adomnán by a Frankish bishop about his travels to North Africa and the Middle East. Meyvaert reveals that a vine in one of the illustrations in the Book of Kells is also found in Coptic manuscript illustrations from some of the same areas the Frankish bishop traveled.[483] The conclusion is then based on the uniqueness of the vine. Meyvaert argues that the only way this illustration would have made it into the Book of Kells is if it originated at Iona, created by people who were associated with the writings of Adomnán.[484]

Suppose the three arguments of Meyvaert prove accurate, and Iona is the place of origin for the Book of Kells. In that case, it becomes ever the more reason to understand it as a means by which the legacy of Columba was not only spread in the centuries following his death but continues today.

[482] Ibid., 11.

[483] Ibid., 13-14.

[484] Ibid., 13.

Iona and the Vikings

Nearly one hundred years after Abbot Adomnán died and two hundred years following the death of Columba, Iona was raided by the Vikings. They first arrived on the island in 794/795.[485] This set off a series of raids that resulted in destruction, death, and almost complete abandonment of the monastic site. A subsequent raid in 802 and the monastery was burned down.[486] A raid in 806 resulted in the deaths of 68 monks on Iona. Sources indicate that just before or because of this raid, most of the monastic community left Iona and settled at the monastery in Kells. While Iona was not wholly abandoned, the move marked a shift away from Iona's dominance as a monastic center. The fact that the monks took Columba's relics with them and the partially completed Book of Kells indicated they not only wanted to protect these important items but were unlikely to return.[487]

While further details of the Viking raids and their impact on monastic communities would make for interesting research topics, they are outside the scope of this one. The importance of discussing it here is that two hundred years after Columba's death, those in the monastic community of Iona sought to protect and carry the items that kept Columba's legacy central to them. The move to Kells communicates a desire to protect not only the "things"

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[485] Smither, *Missionary Monks*, 72. Dilworth and Meyvaert date the Viking's arrival to 795. Meyvaert, "The Book of Kells and Iona," *The Art Bulletin* 71, no. 1 (1989), 10, accessed December 9, 2021. https://doi.org/10.2307/3051211. Mackinlay and The Past.com date the first raid to 794. J. M. Mackinlay, "Four Columban Sites in Scotland," *The Celtic Review* 4, no. 14 (1907): 97, accessed December 9, 2021. https://doi.org/10.2307/30069927. See also https://the-past.com/feature/ionas-archetype-a-concrete-replica-of-the-cross-of-st-john-speaks/ (Accessed 2/23/2023).

[486] Mackinlay "Four Columban Sites in Scotland," 97.

[487] Ibid., 98. See also https://the-past.com/feature/ionas-archetype-a-concrete-replica-of-the-cross-of-st-john-speaks/ (Accessed 2/23/2023). Meyvaert argues this explanation of the move to Iona is too simplified. He argues for a much longer process, Columba's relics visiting other locations but still centered in Iona. According to him, the move from Iona to Kells was not complete until 878 when there was documented evidence of Columba's shrine and *minna* being moved to Ireland. Meyvaert, "The Book of Kells and Iona," 10-11.

(bodily remains and relics) associated with Columba but also the work important to him–copying Scripture.

Conclusion

Columba's life touched many, especially at Iona and in the Pictish kingdom. His influence and model did not end at the time of his death. His legacy continued in the centuries to come and continues today. This chapter began with a look at Adomnán's telling of Columba's death. While the genre of the *Life of Columba* differs from modern biographical works, it demonstrates the effect Columba continued to have on his community at Iona. Adomnán held Columba in high esteem and, one hundred years after his death, sought to honor him and keep him as a model to those who continued in the monastic tradition. The description of Columba's death and the funeral events give a glimpse into the steady rhythms and sacred times established by Columba and continued into Adomnán's day.

Following a look at Columba's legacy within his community 100 years after his death, this chapter sought to show evidence of Columba's legacy that continued after Adomnán. One can observe Columba's legacy in the people who followed him. Individuals like Adomnán and Aiden are just two examples that testify to Columba's impact. Columba's example, discipline, devotion to the Lord and scripture, and a blend of cenobitic monasticism and times of solitary work, study, and prayer can be seen in those who followed him.

In addition to people, his influence and legacy can be seen in the places he founded or were established by those who followed him. There were locations in northern Scotland, the land of the Pictish people, to whom he brought the gospel's good news. His legacy was evident in places like Lindisfarne, where Aiden, a monk trained at Iona, centered his work as bishop.

The legacy of Columba is also evident in things that exist even today. This study looked at the stone crosses at Iona and the Book of Kells–found today at Trinity College in Dublin. Some of these items were crafted to honor and remember Columba, his life, and his ministry. Other things continue the artistry he used to find common ground with the Pictish people while preaching the gospel. The Book of Kells continues Columba's legacy in the beautifully illustrated pages of copied scripture. Copying scripture was supposedly one of the tasks Columba was about on the very last day of his life. The rhythms and sacred time that filled Columba's day and provided structure to his mission to the Picts were evident to the end of his life. The things he held important as a monk seeking to grow closer to God and obey his word continue to influence those who learn about Columba's people, visit the places, or see the things that testify to his legacy.

Final Summary

This study has sought to answer the questions proposed in the opening chapter. It proceeded to establish a context within which to situate Columba's life, work, and mission in Northern Scotland. Chapter 2 established the roots of rhythm and sacred time in the early pages of the book of Genesis. It traced the daily, weekly, and annual rhythms and the sacred time of the Israelites as they wandered through the wilderness. The same rhythms of worship were seen in the life of Jesus and along with the practice of withdrawal for personal prayer. Rhythms and sacred time were seen in the life of Paul and the early Church, as found in Acts and the *Didache*. Monasticism began to emerge, and the rules written by various monastic leaders and the example they modeled provided guidance for lives built upon daily, weekly, and annual rhythms. Chapter 3 sought to examine these same rhythms and sacred times but focused on Celtic Christianity specifically. Based on the research done for this study, this comprehensive look at rhythms and sacred time from the time of creation leading up to Columba is unique. It establishes an existing set of rhythms that Columba built his version of monasticism upon and took with him as he launched his mission to Scotland.

Chapter 4 looked at the life of Columba, the monastic community he founded at Iona, and the mission he led to the Pictish people in Scotland. This chapter argued that there were well-established rhythms of prayer, worship, work, study, and rest. These rhythms did not originate with Columba but were practices that were well ingrained in the lives of others, as seen in Chapters 2 and 3.

Columba's monasticism was semi-hermitic. He blended what he found to be the best qualities of cenobitic and hermitic monasticism. Again, Columba was not the first to do this. Here again, he stood on the shoulders of those before him. Those like Antony from the desert of

Egypt, who lived a life that blended community with times of solitary withdrawal, and Basil, whose cenobitic communities were at the core of his monasticism, likely both served to influence Columba's approach.

Chapter 4 included a look into Columba's mission to the Pictish people. His approach–connecting with the king first, was modeled for him by missionary monks before. His intent to share the gospel with a pagan nation was also not unique but built upon those like Patrick, who lived a monastic life and sought to spread the Gospel message. While building upon what those before him had established, he also adapted his mission to those he was trying to reach. Chapter 4 explored the common ground Columba found between the artistry of the Picts and that found at Iona. Columba used stone carving, a familiar means of communication in Scotland, and substituted images that told of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus–as opposed to the military conquests of Pictish history.

The final chapter in this study provides a snapshot glimpse into the legacy of Columba. Like those before him, Columba influenced the monks and people he reached with the rhythms and sacred time practices of his own life. The rhythm of the monastic life was intended to provide discipline and continually point one to God. A monk regularly sang hymns and Psalms, read and memorized Scripture, and served God. The objective was to grow closer to him and rid one's life of sin and things that worked against a virtuous life. Columba shared these rhythms and sacred times, and those he influenced continued his patterns.

The importance of situating Columba in the context of rhythm and sacred time is the most significant contribution of this study. The rhythms and sacred time did not originate with him or the other monastics, for that matter. Each one provided their own influence upon the system they developed, but the roots of rhythm and sacred time of worship intended to focus the

believer upon the Lord and live a life that determines to obey, honor, and mature in him finds its roots in the early pages of the Bible. These rhythms and sacred times became the foundation from which and often how Columba and others like him sought to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

This dissertation has provided an abundance of historical information about many of the early Christian monastics. What difference does it make to the church today? The Western evangelical church has broadly abandoned the rhythms and routines as they are described here. There are some–monthly communion, weekly church service, daily quiet time, and prayer before meals and at bedtime. However, it could be argued that these look very different from the rhythms and sacred times seen in scripture, the early church, and early Christian monasticism.

An exact duplication of the rhythms of any particular monastery's rhythm is not being suggested here. Instead what is being argued is that there is value in considering the recovery of the rhythms and spiritual time discussed in this study for two reasons. First, as is seen in the Pentateuch when the Israelites were wandering the wilderness, humans are forgetful people. We quickly forget what God has done on our behalf. His provision, salvation, rescue, and commands are forgotten faster than one cares to admit. Frequently God told his people to write things down, build something or mark a spot in a significant way. The feasts and festivals he gave the Israelites were to regularly remember and worship him. If the people of Israel did not celebrate the Passover feast every year–an annual rhythm, they would likely forget the details of God's rescue from Egypt. Rhythms and sacred times allow believers to regularly be reminded of who God is and what he has done.

Second, Christians are to live lives that reflect their new life in Christ. Scripture tells us to pray continually, love God and love our neighbors, work as if we are working for the Lord, and

meditate on his Word are just a few of the directions for living that are found in the Bible. The rhythms and sacred times, as discussed in this study, facilitate lives that were lived wholly devoted to obeying God's word. Each part of the day and night in the early Christian monastery was intended to help the monk grow closer to God. Whether it was serving the monastic community (farming and other tasks), reaching the unbelieving community around them (missions, hospitality), teaching or studying, eating, copying scriptures, or praying and reciting Psalms, everything was undertaken with the same end goal in mind. Everything was done to obey God, love God, and grow closer to him. The rhythms that are found in this study all point to this end. A recovery of rhythm and sacred time in the Western evangelical church could serve the same purpose. The disjointedness of Sunday morning's service, a weekly hour of Bible study, and a short, daily "personal quiet time" interspersed among all the other things that occupy our time could be transformed into a whole way of life that seeks to live lives wholly devoted to God.

Suggestions for Future Study

While original questions have been explored, new questions have emerged, some because of the research and some due to the limitations of the project. There is a growing interest in the role of women in monasticism. Some monastic leaders founded communities specifically for women. There are monastic rules written which provide guidance and structure for these communities. This study did not explore the role of women within Columba's monasticism. It would be a worthy endeavor to research women and their role (if any) in Columba's community at Iona and his mission to the Pictish people of Northern Scotland.

In previous chapters, Iona was known as a scholastic center. This topic was not expanded on in this study. Research on the pedagogy of Iona would be an interesting project. Exploring who, what, how, and its impact beyond the shores of Iona would prove interesting and valuable.

Adomnán followed in Columba's footsteps as abbot of Iona. His *Life of Columba* was frequently used in this study. But little was explored about his role as abbot or any other abbot at Iona. How did each of these men reflect Columba's influence upon them and display their unique approach to the position of the abbot, and how did this influence the community at Iona? Like Columba, who was influenced by those who trained him in the monastery and other monastic leaders whose writings he read, these men were likely impacted by more than just Columba. Who else influenced them, and how was that revealed during their tenure as abbot?

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