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FORTS AND FIELDS: A STUDY OF 'MONASTIC TOWNS' IN SEVENTH AND EIGHTH CENTURY IRELAND¹

CATHERINE SWIFT

Due to the work of Charles Doherty, the phrase 'monastic town' is now part of the common parlance of medieval Irish archaeology and settlement studies. This was a phrase which had earlier been used by Ó Corráin² to characterise major eighth- and ninth-century churches. Doherty popularised the expression in three articles written in the first half of the 1980s. In these, it was argued that, after ecclesiastical sites adopted a standard format in the seventh and eighth centuries, they became 'urban' from the tenth century.³ His model has been accepted by medieval archaeologists such as Bradley, Edwards and, to some extent, by Ryan.⁴ In contrast, Mallory and McNeill have drawn a distinction between early church sites as major centres of resources (which they see as plausible) and the same sites as large centres of population (with which they disagree). Graham has pointed out that there is no known parallel for a theory of urbanisation founded almost entirely on monasticism and argues that the lack of a precise definition of the 'monastic town' compromises Doherty's concept. Elsewhere, Graham has suggested that such 'proto-towns' should be viewed in the context of mixed secular and ecclesiastical settlements which he postulates as the norm in early medieval Ireland from the seventh century.⁵ More recently, Valante has queried the whole concept of an Irish monastic town on the grounds that she sees no evidence for early ecclesiastical sites being the 'hub of a redistributive system', nor for their 'urban' status. She defines urban as 'distinct from a rural settlement where the majority of denizens rely on agricultural production...' and suggests that in a pre-industrial society, commerce, manufacturing and provision of services are obvious possibilities for a non-farming economic base.⁶

Up until recently, the concept of the Irish monastic town was based almost entirely on documentary material with relatively little archaeological evidence being deployed. Recently, however, Bradley has published a definition of an Irish monastic town in which the criteria for inclusion are as much archaeological as historical, namely settlement complexity with a central core where major church buildings are located, domestic houses and workshops, streets, fairs and trade, enclosure and defence and an important political role for the site.⁷ On the other hand, the case study of Clonmacnoise which he provides is still largely dependent on documentary references and for the most part refers to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Archaeological investigation by King and others at Clonmacnoise has produced evidence of settlement at that ecclesiastical centre but evidence of density and date have yet to be published in detail.

In Doherty's work, the possibility of a seventh-

century 'monastic town' at Kildare is raised in his analysis of an extract from Cogitosus's *Life of Brigit*⁸

And what words are capable of setting forth the very great beauty of this church and the countless wonders of that monastery which we may call city (*civitas*) if it is possible to call city that which is enclosed by no circle of walls. However, since innumerable people come together within it and acquiring the name city because of its throngs this is a very great metropolitan city (*civitas et metropolitana*); in its suburbs (*suburbana*), the clear boundaries of which holy Brigit marked out herself, no human foe or charge of enemies is feared. But it is a city of refuge (*civitas refugii*), the safest among the external suburbs (*suburbana*) with all their fugitives in all the lands of the Irish.⁹

The specifically 'urban' language here is supported in Doherty's model by analysis of eighth-century canons which he interprets as referring to the presence of a lay population living on the periphery of major monasteries.¹⁰ The ceremonial complex at the centre of the settlement is left relatively free from habitation while the *suburbana*, known as the *ferann fognama* in Irish, were service lands, inhabited by monastic tenants.¹¹ Doherty leaves the question of density of population on these settlements open; pointing out that 'in the course of time' major monasteries had a population reflecting all grades of society from serf to noble and that not all who lived within monastic settlements or on monastic property could be classed as 'religious'.¹² Despite the reference to service lands, the over-all emphasis of Doherty's work on the urban associations of early ecclesiastical settlements has resulted in his model being interpreted by subsequent commentators such as Ó Corráin, Mytum, Bitel, Stout and, by inference, Bradley¹³ as indicating the existence of large nucleated and 'urban' or 'proto-urban' settlements from the seventh or eighth century.

My purpose in this paper is to examine a number of the words and phrases used to describe ecclesiastical settlement in the eighth-century collection of Irish canon law, the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*.¹⁴ I believe that since our current archaeological interpretation of larger ecclesiastical sites is so heavily influenced by Doherty's model, it is important for archaeologists to discuss these documentary sources in detail. A detailed investigation of the words in the *Hibernensis*, with due regard for their biblical and vernacular counterparts, has led me to three

general conclusions which I would like to contribute to the debate. Firstly, I do not believe that the textual sources support the suggestion that Irish ecclesiastical settlements were 'urban' in the sense that they housed large concentrated populations in the late seventh or eighth centuries. Rather, they appear to reflect a dispersed pattern with little or no evidence for nucleation. The church buildings are surrounded by fields and pasture and the people associated with the settlement lived in dwellings spread across the local landscape. Secondly, there is no single precise translation for the many Latin words used to describe church-settlements and these were frequently viewed as synonyms by the Hiberno-Latin writers. Thirdly, I would argue that the language used to describe ecclesiastical settlement does not differ from that pertaining to secular sites and that, in over-all organisation, the layout of both were probably comparable.

WORDS AS ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

A major problem in any such enquiry concerns the difficulties imposed by the various languages involved. The *Hibernensis* was written in Latin, a language in common use throughout Western Europe during the early Middle Ages as a sacred or cult language.¹⁵ It presented an amalgam of Christian and indeed of Roman tradition to its medieval Irish audience and as such, it does not and cannot reflect a single material culture. The reality which lies behind the use of specific words in such a 'cultic' language thus becomes difficult, if not impossible to discern. The primary text in early medieval European culture was the Vulgate Bible; a Latin translation of Hebrew and Greek sources by St Jerome, who wrote in the last years of the fourth century. For the archaeologist, this text concentrates on a Near Eastern culture of the last millennium before Christ but includes as well a number of shorter texts written in the Hellenicised world of Asia Minor in the first century of our era. Jerome himself came from the Roman province of Dalmatia in the western Balkans. He spent some years as a hermit in Syria and others as a radical proselytiser among wealthy females in Rome. Finally, after a scandal caused by the death of a young noblewoman under the severe ascetic regime which he had imposed, he retired to Bethlehem. As a translator, his vocabulary might be presumed to reflect his diverse experiences. Furthermore, both Jerome himself, as well as subsequent producers of Latin biblical texts, were influenced to varying degrees by older translations of Hebrew texts into Greek and of Greek texts into Latin. Some of the older biblical texts were produced in North Africa, others in the huge urban centres of Antioch and Alexandria.¹⁶ In short, the first step of an archaeologist or historian who seeks to identify a material reality behind the use of Latin vocabulary in Hiberno-Latin texts must be to acknowledge the lack of a uniform usage in Biblical Latin.

Unlike other countries in north-western Europe, however, students of medieval Irish documentation have

a great advantage in the huge number and variety of surviving texts in the vernacular. To an extent unparalleled in other northern cultures, it is possible to test the meaning of Latin words and phrases used by medieval Irish writers by looking at their Old and Middle Irish counterparts. This is a vitally important resource for Irish archaeologists, eager to identify the monuments and settlement types described in our documents. On the other hand, it is important that we acknowledge certain features in this data base, as presently constituted, which limits any attempt to use Irish language sources in this way.

The number of scholars working in the field of Old Irish is historically very small and the production of the *Dictionary of the Irish Language* has involved the energies of many of the key figures working in the field between 1913 and 1976. Such men and women were linguists, interested in the grammatical complexities of the Irish language and, for the most part, particularly concerned to elucidate the connections between Irish and its ancestor Common Celtic and, further back, Indo-European. As archaeologists, we tend to imagine that the primary focus of a dictionary is translation, but as least as important to the *Dictionary* compilers was the identification of specific stem classes (for nouns) and the ancestral pre-verbs which made up the verbal complexes in Old Irish. English translations were often not their primary interest and they tended to be taken verbatim from editions extant at the time the particular section was being compiled. Many of the translations for material objects, for example, are drawn from the nineteenth-century translations of *Ancient Irish Laws* or the sagas translated by language scholars at the turn of the century, men such as Whitley Stokes or Kuno Meyer.¹⁷ Such translations, one need hardly add, were produced at a time when the study of Irish medieval archaeology was in its infancy.

In short, simply adopting the translation of a given Irish word as listed in the *Dictionary* is often too minimalist an approach. Given the tiny numbers of individuals involved and the very different structure and aims of Old Irish as an academic discipline, we cannot assume that Old Irish scholars are going to automatically provide us with texts which provide a clear cultural context for the phenomena we see in the field. As Irish archaeologists wishing to use documentary sources to illustrate cultural realities, it is our responsibility to produce our own definitions of words, based on our understanding of the archaeological record, as well as on the texts themselves. For the results to be meaningful, it requires the investigation of all the given instances of a particular word - in the same way that identifying a bead or a brooch involves a general overview of an entire corpus. In settlement terms, this process has begun with the work by Mallory on the various vernacular terms for forts¹⁸ but comparative studies of Hiberno-Latin and Old Irish vocabulary for specific monument types have yet to be undertaken.

CHURCH LAW COURTS AT THE ENTRANCEWAYS TO ECCLESIASTICAL SETTLEMENTS

For the early Irish, the consequences of the cultural diversity that lay behind their use of Latin as a sacred language was the existence of many words which they interpreted as synonyms. One such word was *tabernaculum* which in the Vulgate meant either a tent, a dwelling or the specific monument which covered the Ark of the Covenant and was an area of communal worship.¹⁹ In Irish sources, this last meaning appears to have been extended so that the word could be used to describe either a church building or the church-settlement as a whole.²⁰ A canon from the *Hibernensis* lists *tabernaculum* and *templum* in parallel; in both cases, these are said to be structures which go through a ceremony of dedication.²¹ Its vernacular derivation, the Old Irish word *tabernacul*, is specified in the Milan glosses as a place in which the faithful would gather and further that it was a consecrated building, comparable with a *tempul*.²² Even more specifically, the late tenth-century *Saltair na Rann* identifies a *tabernacul* as a *tegdais Dé* or house of God and as a place where every hour, cries should be raised to God in morning and evening offerings.²³ Such references would seem to imply that many Irish scholars interpreted the word *tabernaculum* as referring to an actual church building.

Other references in the canons may indicate a definition of *tabernaculum* as the universal Church or to an ecclesiastical settlement as a whole. Like the priesthood, the *tabernaculum* was said to be one and indivisible, it should never be despoiled of its property and goods could be placed in the *tabernaculum* for safe-keeping.²⁴ Elsewhere, deacons are said to be ordained and to serve in a *tabernaculum*.²⁵ In the Penitential of Finnian in which a penitent is told of his fate: 'punishment will not depart from his *tabernaculum*'.²⁶ Such rules seem more likely to relate to a settlement than to a specific church building.

Thus, in Hiberno-Latin texts, *tabernaculum* appears to have both a general meaning of community and a more specific one, referring to a building designed for Christian worship, something akin to the current connotations of the English word, 'church'. Armed with this knowledge, we can interpret a number of the statements in the *Hibernensis* in a more precise fashion than has hitherto been the case. An extract dealing with ecclesiastical courts of appeal, for example, specifies that such appeals took place at the *porta* (gate) or the *ostium* (door, entranceway) of a *tabernaculum* or *templum*:

Moses used to give judgement in the *porta* of the *tabernaculum* in order that he might call together a crowd of people and the older men of Israel to the *ostium* of the *tabernaculum*.
Solomon used to give judgement in the *ostium* of the *tabernaculum*. The boy Jesus was found in the *templum*, arguing within a circle of old men, as we have said above: 'Rise and go up to the

place which the Lord will have chosen.'²⁷

Although this has the appearance of a mere summary of biblical citations, this canon is in fact significant for our purposes for these details about the *porta* of the *tabernaculum* do not, in fact, occur in the Vulgate text at all. There is no reference to Solomon judging 'in the *ostium* of the *tabernaculum*'. Similarly, there is no reference in the Vulgate to Moses making a judgement in the *porta* of a *tabernaculum* although there is a description of Moses going into the *tabernaculum* in order to speak to the Lord, whose presence was indicated to the watching Israelites by a cloud of white smoke in the *ostio tabernaculi*.²⁸ Finally, the phrase 'the place which the Lord God will have chosen' derives from Deuteronomy²⁹ rather than the New Testament and there is no mention of any such specification in the account of Jesus consulting with the elders in the temple.

The canon in the *Hibernensis* thus represents a digest of biblical material which is not an accurate reflection of the Vulgate text but instead an interpretation of that source. The compilers of this collection of biblical citations appear to be reflecting a specific social custom, apparently unknown in Old Testament times, that of making judgements in the entranceways of *tabernacula*. Since the authors of the *Hibernensis* claim that they themselves produced the summaries of biblical citations³⁰ it seems likely that this custom is an Irish one and indeed, seventh-century hagiography as well as the *Hibernensis* itself indicates that, for the Irish, two places which 'the Lord will have chosen' were Armagh and Rome.³¹ In short, the canonists appear to be demanding that church court cases should be brought to judgement at the entranceways of the larger ecclesiastical settlements, such as Armagh.

THE BROAD DIVISIONS IN THE LAYOUT OF IRISH ECCLESIASTICAL SETTLEMENTS

One further reference to *tabernaculum* in the *Hibernensis* provides some evidence as to the exact layout of an early Irish ecclesiastical settlement. In the section entitled *De oblationibus* [On offerings], it is stated that four types of food were to be given to ecclesiastical settlements:

In the law, there were four types of food for the priests; firstly those that Aaron and his sons used to consume in the *tabernaculum*; secondly, those that the sons of Aaron used to consume in the *ostium* of the *tabernaculum*; thirdly, those that either sex used to eat in the *atrium* and fourthly, those that the whole household used to eat in the *ostium* with the servants and the purchased people.³²

As with previous examples, this canon represents an interpretation of the biblical sources rather than a simple paraphrase of information in the Bible. The Old Testament provides us with two descriptions of the

offerings which Aaron and his offspring were to eat are found in Leviticus:

Moses spoke to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons who were left ... And you shall eat (the sacrifice) in the holy place because it is given to you and to your sons from the offerings of the Lord just as I have also commanded ... You shall eat (it) in the cleanest place, you and your sons and your daughters with you for they are given from the sacrificial animals to you and to your children for the well-being of the children of Israel.³³

The remaining share of the flour, Aaron will eat it without yeast, together with his sons and he shall eat it in the *atrium* of a *tabernaculum* ... So will the males of the seed of Aaron eat that lawful offering and it is an eternal offering (laid) on your generations from the sacrifices to the Lord....³⁴

Both biblical accounts provide for the eating of offerings by Aaron and his sons but in the first, this takes place in the holy place or the cleanest place and in the second, the ceremony takes place in the *atrium* of a *tabernaculum*. There seems to be no biblical prototype for a four-fold division into *tabernaculum*, *ostio tabernaculi* (gateway of a tabernaculum) *atrium* and *ostio (atrii ? - gateway of an atrium?)* as indicated in the *Hibernensis* canon. This is despite the fact that the canonist specifically cites *Lex* or the Bible as his source.³⁵ One possible way of resolving this discrepancy is to suggest that the canonist is using biblical imagery to refer to a layout which is specifically Irish, in much the same way as he implies a biblical ancestry for what appears to have been the Irish practice of holding church law courts at the entrance-ways of ecclesiastical settlements.³⁶

That this medieval re-casting does indeed reflect a specific settlement pattern is indicated in yet another canon from *Hibernensis* which describes the events purported to have taken place when the Lord gave Moses the Ten Commandments and God is said have placed boundaries between the various groups of people who were present:

In the Law it states: at Mount Sinai, where the law was given, it was ordered (by God) that all the population and the animals should not touch it and He put a boundary between him and Moses and between Moses and Joshua and between Joshua and the elders and between the elders and the general population. In the same place it states: between the *tabernaculum* and the people of the Levites there was a gap and in the *atria* there was the household of priests and also between the *tabernaculum* and the Holy of Holies.³⁷

Yet again, this information does not exist in the Vulgate. These hierarchical divisions were not drawn at Mount Sinai by the compiler of the Book of Exodus who merely states that both priests and people were kept outside the boundaries which the Lord laid around the mountain.³⁸ The final sentence implies the explanation this description of the holy mountain paralleled the normal layout of an Irish ecclesiastical site of the day beyond the *tabernaculum* in whichever meaning this is used, lay some form of barrier, dividing it from the Levites. Archaeologically, this would seem to indicate either some form of enclosure around a church-building or, alternatively, an enclosure around the settlement as a whole. Hamlin has drawn attention to an incident in Cogitosus' *Life of Brigit* where it is stated explicitly that the church at Kildare (*ecclesia*) was surrounded by an enclosure (*castellum*) with a millstone functioning as a relic being placed in the entranceway (*portus*) of this enclosure.³⁹ The settlement as a whole is termed a *monasterium* or *civitas* and, as indicated in the quotation at the beginning of this paper, Cogitosus stresses that, in this case, there were no walls or enclosure surrounding the entire area. The example of Kildare, then, would imply that the barrier between the *tabernaculum* and the Levites is a barrier around the church building or buildings rather than around a settlement.

In 1964 Kottje pointed out that Jerome, in his commentary on Malachi, had drawn analogies between contemporary churchmen and Levites, particularly with reference to the levying of church tithes.⁴⁰ In more recent years, Kottje's point has been extended to Irish material. According to the Old Testament, Aaron and his sons formed a sub-group of the Levites and more specifically they acted as priests for the entire population of Israel.⁴¹ Other Levites were identified by the Old Testament writers as servants of those that 'shall stand before the *tabernaculum* of the testimony'; in other words, people who would fetch and carry on behalf of the priests.⁴² This identification of priests as but one group amongst the Levites is mirrored by the careful distinction in Old Irish vernacular law between three different types of ecclesiastic, each with its own hierarchy. These include the professional clerics (*gráda ecalsa*) from bishop to door-keeper; the scholars of the church (*gráda ecnai*) from master to pupil; and finally, the grades of those who served the church in an administrative capacity (*gráda uird ecalsa*), from the temporal administrator of the settlement's lands (*airchinnech*) down to men such as cooks, millers or gardeners.⁴³

In addition to these three broad categories of clerics, scholars and administrators, twentieth-century investigators have used hagiographical and annalistic sources to identify other groups of inhabitants who are thought to have lived on or close by seventh- and early eighth-century ecclesiastical settlements. Hughes, for example, pointed to the reference to married couples and penitents in the seventh-century text *Liber Angeli* and she suggested that ecclesiastical sites were also the sites of

schools to which local boys would be sent for their education before returning home to settle down on the family farm and raise children of their own.⁴⁴ In a detailed analysis of one of the earliest texts in Old Irish, the Cambrai Homily, Stancliffe has pointed to the evidence for a large population of lay penitents who underwent 'blue martyrdom' by becoming residents for a period in an ecclesiastical settlement.⁴⁵ Using archaeological material, Ryan has outlined the evidence for craftsmen in fine metalwork on such sites.⁴⁶ Glosses to the law-tract *Gúbretha Caratmiad* refer to sons who were placed in bondage to the church implying that at least a proportion of the population attached to ecclesiastical communities were in some sense servile. Doherty has drawn attention to hagiographical references to the same phenomenon.⁴⁷

There is also the vexed question of the identification of the *manaig*: a group who were subordinate to the leaders of the ecclesiastical settlement but whose exact status remains a question for debate.⁴⁸ In the most recent discussion of the term, Etchingham identifies these individuals as having contractual relationships to the church similar to the legal obligations of rent-paying retainers to their secular lords. The church to which *manaig* were attached were considered the ultimate owner and supplier of land and livestock with which they farmed. Some of these *manaig* had wives and their sons could inherit property.⁴⁹ Etchingham has also drawn attention to the extent to which the Irish *manach* mirrors the use of Hiberno-Latin *monachus*. Both words can be used to describe either a regular monk or a legal socio/economic and pastoral dependant of the church. He suggests that this dual-meaning bespeaks more than terminological imprecision and follows Charles-Edwards in inferring that the distinction between monk and abbot on the one hand, and monastic tenant and *aírchinnech* on the other, was often a subjective one.

It would appear, therefore, that the population attached to an ecclesiastical settlement, whom some Irish commentators referred to as Levites, belonged to a variety of social classes in the seventh and early eighth centuries. The debate on monastic towns is not over whether these people existed but the exact nature of the physical relationship between their dwellings and the central focus represented by the church buildings and associated monuments.

Through an identification of Aaron and his sons as priests and the other Levites as the non-clerical administrative personnel of a church site, the two canons discussed in this section can also provide pertinent information on this problem. Canon XVII:4 states that there were four types of food, the first consumed by the priest and his sons in the *tabernaculum*, the second by the sons of the priests in the entrance-way of the same structure, the third eaten by both sexes in the *atrium* and the fourth which was shared out by all members of the extended household including the slaves. The implication behind the canon is that there is a hierarchy of location, composed of church building, *atrium* and area open to all

inhabitants of the settlement, with the church building itself as a focal point.

The specifications of the arrangements at Mount Sinai corroborate this explanation. Godly *termini* or boundaries differentiated between the most sacred place where God himself was situated and the least sacred, which was the place of the *vulgus populi* (general population); in between there were Moses, Joshua and the elders. In the sentence following this, the *tabernaculum* is divided from all members of the settlement by an *intervallum* and in the *atria* (plural), there was the household of priests. (I cannot make up my mind whether the final phrase in this extract means that there are further priests' houses between the *tabernaculum* and the Holy of Holies or whether there is another *intervallum* between these two areas; the text is ambiguous.) Doherty has drawn attention to other canons which identify areas of ecclesiastical settlement as *sanctus*, *sanctior* or *sanctissimus* (holy, holier, holiest) which again appears to divide the settlement into three. Priests are allowed into the most holy area, crowds of common people into the middle section and even murderers, adulterers and prostitutes are allowed into the outer perimeter.⁵⁰ (This last may provide further indication that church law courts, who passed judgement on these categories of sinners, were located on the outer perimeter of the ecclesiastical settlement.)

Sources apparently contemporary with this canon suggest that the boundaries between the various locations were visible on the ground. The word *terminus* is identified in the *Hibernensis* as a structure which could be demarcated by crosses or other *signa* and which was marked out by a king, a bishop and the *populus* acting in unison.⁵¹ Alternatively, Adomnán refers in the *Vita Columbae* to a monument known as a *vallum* which he indicates divided a *monasterium* from its surrounding agricultural buildings and fields and this has generally been interpreted as a boundary ditch or wall.⁵²

From the texts, it would seem that the monuments delimiting the area of church-buildings from the *atrium* or *atria* and the people of the Levites could be of a variety of different forms. There is little or no reason, therefore, to assume that such boundaries are automatically the standing enclosures visible around many church sites today.⁵³ On the other hand, the canons concur in locating the priests in the intermediate area between the most prestigious and the least prestigious zones of the settlement.⁵⁴ It is thus worth considering in greater detail the nature of the *atrium* or *atria* in which the *familia* (household/community) of the priests were located.

ATRIUM AS DESCRIBED IN THE BIBLE AND IN SOURCES FROM OUTSIDE IRELAND

In the *Book of Exodus*, the *atrium* around a *tabernaculum* is given specific measurements: 100 cubits by 50. At later stages, there could be more than one *atrium*; in Ezechiel, the outer *atrium* has treasuries (*gazofilacia*) and

pavements and kitchens for those who minister in the *tabernaculum*.⁵⁵ In Chronicles, the outer *atrium* holds storehouses (*thesauri*) and in Revelations it was reserved for Gentiles while the inner *atrium* was the place of the Lord.⁵⁶ *Atria* are also associated with offerings made to the Lord and in I Kings, a ceremony of dedication of a *templum* takes place in an *atrium*.⁵⁷ The biblical references to *atria* thus visualise this location as a public area where the ancillary tasks associated with the running of the *tabernaculum* took place. It was also an area in which outhouses of various kinds were located. These references were widely interpreted by church architects in the late Roman and early medieval worlds. The great churches of the Near East in the fourth to sixth centuries had large *atria*, surrounding the main church-buildings and divided from the street by rows of ornate columns.⁵⁸

Something similar was built at Lyons in the fifth century and is described by Sidonius Apollinaris as a stone forest, rising proudly on columns of Aquitanian marble.⁵⁹ In the church of Aphrodisias in Asia Minor, at around the same date, the *atrium* was a medieval addition, part of the reconstructions which helped to convert a temple to Aphrodite into a Christian basilica.⁶⁰ In this early period (and in the Eastern rites at a later date), the *atrium* appears to have had an integral role in the liturgy and was used, for example, as an assembly area for catechumens where they remained apart during the celebration of the Eucharist inside the main church building.⁶¹ In Jerusalem, in a part of the complex at Golgotha variously termed an *atrium*, a *platea*, a *paradisus* or a *hortus*, corpses were laid out before the final rites in the church.⁶² The biblical descriptions of the Hebraic atrium served as an inspiration for all and each society interpreted the Vulgate evidence in the light of its own cultural milieu.

In western Europe, there appears to be more emphasis on the *atrium* as a place which was open to the public at large. *Atria* could be used to shelter long-term guests such as pilgrims; in fifth-century Rome, Pope Symmachus built them complete with fountains and toilets at both St Peter's and St Paul's for precisely this reason.⁶³ In Merovingian Gaul, the main purpose of the *atrium* was as a place of sanctuary.⁶⁴ At the Synod of Mâcon, in 585, a canon forbids clerics to be present in the *atrium sauciolum* [*atrium* of wounding ?] when criminals are being killed and at Chalon-sur-Seine in the mid seventh century, the *atrium* is said to be a place where people might assemble on the days of church festivals and where rowdy songs were wont to be sung.⁶⁵

In short, the biblical evidence is for the *atrium* as a place where the ancillary activities and particularly the economic activities of the *tabernaculum* took place. The late Roman and immediate post-Roman sources indicate that an *atrium* was a place associated with certain liturgical rituals of the church, while texts from western Europe indicate its role as a domicile for passing visitors to an ecclesiastical settlement. The usage in the *Hibernensis*, which identifies an *atrium* as a place of habitation, surrounding the *tabernaculum* is, therefore, in

accordance with the general European trend. Further specification of such an *atrium* comes from examining a word which is used by a number of Irish authors as its synonym.

SYNONYMS FOR *ATRIUM* IN IRISH SOURCES: *PLATEA* AND *FAITHCHE*

In his account of the holy places of Jerusalem, Adomnán uses the word *platea* to describe what other sources term the *atrium* of Golgotha. Many of the contexts in which *platea* is used in Hiberno-Latin documents appear to be directly comparable to the use of *atrium* in other texts. One such example is Adomnán's description of offerings made to Columba by the bishop and people of Cúl Rathin:

At the same time, Conall, bishop of Cúl Rathin collected from the people of the plain of Eilne almost innumerable gifts and prepared a lodging for the blessed man when, with a large crowd accompanying him, he was returning after the conference of the above-named kings. So when the holy man arrived, the many gifts of the people were presented to him for benediction, laid out in the *platea* of the *monasterium*.⁶⁶

Reeves, analysing Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* in 1857, identified the *platea* of Iona as being within the monastic *vallum* and suggested that it either surrounded or lay beside the lodgings of the community as well as being in the vicinity of the kitchen, the dining area and the church.⁶⁷ Herity, quoting the same passage as above, has argued for its definition as a courtyard and suggested that the word *strata* used here implies that it was paved. MacDonald has argued for a similar definition.⁶⁸ Given the usage of *platea* in other Hiberno-Latin texts (and in particular, the lack of any other reference to the possibility of paving), I would prefer to follow the primary translation of the Andersons and that of Richard Sharpe and see *strata* as qualifying *xenia*. In other words, this text simply refers to the fact that the gifts were laid out and provides no evidence for paving.⁶⁹

The notion of gifts laid out for the man of God in a *platea* would appear to have resonances of the description of offerings made to the *tabernaculum* authorities in the *Hibernensis* as well as of the description in Leviticus of the offerings made to Aaron and his sons in the *atrium tabernaculi* discussed above. In his study, MacDonald⁷⁰ has also drawn attention to its usage in a variant canon, belonging to one recension of the *Hibernensis*, which divides the sacred place into two or three separate areas with *plateae* occupying the intermediate zone:

There should be two or three boundaries around the sacred place, the first, into which we allow no one to enter at all unless of the saints, because laymen do not approach it, nor women, only clerics; the second, into the *plateae* of which, we

let enter crowds of country people not much given to villainy; the third, into which we do not forbid lay murderers (and) adulterers to enter by permission and custom. From this they are called, the first most holy, the second, more holy and the third holy.⁷¹

The specification that murderers and adulterers were allowed to enter the outermost area reminds us of the specifications for the Gaulish *atrium* as a place of sanctuary as well as the Irish evidence that church law courts were held at the entrance-ways to ecclesiastical settlement. The tripartite division of occupation parallels the description of ecclesiastical settlement in the canon referring to Mount Sinai and indicates an intermediate area between the holiest part of the settlement and that open to public access. In the Mount Sinai canon, this area is termed an *atrium* in which priests live; here it is a number of *plateae* into which rural folk are allowed enter. Yet another canon in the *Hibernensis* refers to the right of a cleric to wander freely among the *plateae* and the *andronae*, the latter a word deriving from the Greek and meaning 'the houses of the men'. This indicates that for the Irish canonist, *platea*, like *atrium*, could be an area in which people lived.⁷²

Although the Hiberno-Latin authors would seem to use *platea* and *atrium* as synonyms, Jerome appears to make a distinction between the two words in the Vulgate. Whereas a biblical *atrium* is a yard attached to a holy sanctuary, a biblical *platea* is a place within an area of habitation where the populace in general could assemble in public fora.

In the Bible, *plateae* are frequently associated with *civitates*.⁷³ Public assemblies meeting in *plateae* could be addressed by figures in authority such as the king Hezekiah or the scribe Ezra and in times of war, chariots could rush through the area.⁷⁴ It appears that it was an area of open ground, which was not paved, for there is frequent mention of the mud of the *platea*, while in the 'Heavenly City' of Revelations, the *platea* was miraculously clean, 'like clear glass'.⁷⁵ The plunder from a defeated city could be piled up and burnt in her *plateae*, the bones of dead enemies could be hung there and public mourning could take place there.⁷⁶ In more peaceful times, travellers arriving in a strange town would join the old men and women sitting in the *platea* in the hopes that someone would offer them hospitality; children could play there, a man honoured by the king might parade there, a righteous man might pray there and a young man might be accosted by the local prostitute.⁷⁷ It could also be the scene of public jurisprudence: Ezra, for example, gathered men, women and children into the *platea* before the Gate of Waters and read to them from the law of Moses.⁷⁸

It is possible that these two words - *atrium* and *platea* - became synonymous in Hiberno-Latin because the land surrounding an Irish church settlement fulfilled both functions; it was both a site where outbuildings

could be located and it was also an area of open access which formed a focus for communal activities. Certainly, the evidence of the Irish vernacular term for *platea*, translated in Cormac's glossary as *faithche*, would tend to corroborate such an hypothesis.⁷⁹ This is a word which is translated 'green' or 'lawn' in the *Dictionary*, drawing on the English translation provided in the *Ancient Laws*,⁸⁰ though this translation appears to owe more to English village layout than to an early Irish context. The editors of *Bechbretha* point out that the *faithche* was owned more exclusively than areas which were *sechtar faithchi* [beyond the *faithche*]. They draw attention to the fact that it apparently included areas for both grazing and tillage: for example, a commentary to *Bretha Comaithchesa* suggests that if pigs or hens got into the cultivated area of a *faithche* they could cause damage.⁸¹ In addition, Fergus Kelly has pointed to evidence that the *faithche* could be the location of a pound in which animals could be kept in distraint if there was a dispute as to their ownership.⁸² In an eleventh-century account of the sons of Eochaid Muigmedón, the water-supply for the community was located on the *faithche*.⁸³ The vernacular texts thus supply us with good evidence for assuming that the *faithche* probably contained the ancillary out-houses and economic units of production which would allow it to be confused with the term *atrium* by Irish canonists.

Another reference indicates that the *faithche* could act as a habitation area for inhabitants of the settlement. In the late Old Irish text, *Longes Mac nUislenm*, the sons of Uisliu were said to have joined the household following of the king of Scotland and as a consequence, they 'assumed mercenary service with him and placed their houses on the *faithche*' [*coro-gabsat amsaini acca ocus ro-suidigsitar a tige issind faithchi*].⁸⁴ In the second canto of *Saltair na Rann*, there are allusions to the multitudes of the seeds of Adam who live in the *faithche*.⁸⁵ These references parallel the canon in the *Hibernensis* which refers to the *atrium* or *atria* as the place of habitation for the priests of the settlement.

Finally, *faithche* is also used of an open space which could be used for communal activities as in the word *platea*. In the sagas, the *faithche* is depicted as an area on which visitors would congregate before being admitted to the inner buildings of a settlement.⁸⁶ Warriors or visiting dignitaries might leave their chariots there, troops might camp there and battles might take place, youths might play their games there and the ruler of a settlement might leave his dog to defend it while he was entertaining guests inside.⁸⁷ In a late Middle Irish tale, a youth is said to have drunk mead from a green goblet in a building on the *faithche*.⁸⁸ In addition to the buildings, the fields and the animal pens, one might also find features such as open grass-land, trees, pillar-stones, stone crosses and pools of water while there are legal references to the possibility of finding deer within its confines.⁸⁹ It was also an area in which some form of legal activity took place: in his comments on *Cain saerraiith*, Thurneysen cites an early eleventh-century description of legal fasting

against an opponent which took place on the opponent's *faithche*.⁹⁰

The *faithche* thus fulfills the criteria of being both a place of ancillary buildings attached to the main settlement as established for the Hiberno-Latin *atrium* and a place of communal activity as in *platea*. If this is so, one should perhaps envisage this feature as a relatively large area and possibly one which did not always possess clear man-made boundaries. A reference in the text of *Bechbretha* states that:

the extent of a lawful *faithche* in Irish law is as far as the sound of a bell or the crowing of a cock reaches.⁹¹

An alternative is a gloss which occurs at least twice and which states: *faithche .i. na ceithri guirt is nesa don baili* [*faithche*, that is the four fields nearest the settlement].⁹² References in Adomnán's late seventh-century *Vita Columbae* indicate that though the focus of Columba's early community was located on Iona, the place of the penitents attached to this community was at Muirbolc Már, on the island of Hinba.⁹³ Since we have already seen that penitents represented a distinctive group among the population of an ecclesiastical centre, the implication of these references would appear to be that the buildings located in a settlement's *faithche* could be quite widely dispersed.

The contexts in which *faithche* is used raise another question in regard to early Irish church settlements. The vast majority of the references to *faithche* associate this feature with secular fortresses, while the law-tract *Di Cetharslicht Athgabála* makes it clear that a *faithche* was found around all settlements of prestige, be they secular or ecclesiastical:

He who has taken distraint from the *faithche* of a privileged dignitary - if he did not know it was the *faithche* of a privileged dignitary and did not find a competent person from whom he could ask - it is not recoverable from him.⁹⁴

Privileged dignitaries or *nemed* persons around whose houses a *faithche* could be found included kings, lords, clerics and poets.⁹⁵ The important implication of this for our purposes is that an ecclesiastical settlement was organised on the same basis as a secular one. It has already been noted that the description of the houses of royal mercenaries located on the *faithche* of a king in *Longes mac nUislenn* appears to parallel the description of priests' households in an *atrium tabernaculi* in the canons. If this inference is correct, it implies that we should be thinking of both ecclesiastical and secular settlements as being made up of a central focus, surrounded by an ill-defined area in which one might find agricultural buildings, domestic animals and fields of cereal crops, as well as trees, grass or pools of water. Not surprisingly, given what it contained, there are also

implications that this area could be relatively large. In it was found the place of occupation of what might be called the professional classes attached to the settlement: clerics in the case of ecclesiastical settlements, warriors in the case of royal sites. This area was open to the public with the exception that, in the case of church settlements, the criminals who had sought sanctuary at the site were excluded. Legal cases were also heard in this general area and offerings were made to rulers here.

CIVITAS AS A TERM FOR EARLY IRISH ECCLESIASTICAL SITES

These conclusions are strongly supported if we examine one final Hiberno-Latin term, *civitas*. This is a word which occurs relatively infrequently in the *Hibernensis* but which MacDonald has identified as a term that was fashionable among the compilers of the *Annals of Ulster* between the eighth and tenth centuries, as a term meaning the ecclesiastical settlement as a whole.⁹⁶ *Civitas* is one of the most common words for a settlement unit in both classical and vulgar Latin and as such, the connotations of this word vary widely. In its pre-Christian meaning, it is identified in dictionaries of classical Latin as an assembly of citizens, governed by their own laws and including the surrounding area under their control. As the Roman empire spread into new areas, the territorial boundaries of such *civitates*, the types of settlement found within them and the degree of independence which they enjoyed were all subject to diverse interpretations: Jones has pointed out, for example, that a Swiss mountain valley with scattered dwellings could qualify as a Roman *civitas* provided that people met periodically to elect magistrates and vote laws.⁹⁷

In the Vulgate, Jerome appears to have distinguished a number of different types of *civitates*. At the lower end of scale, there was the simple *civitas* such as Bethlehem as described in the Book of Ruth. Köhler has defined this as a *Bauerndorf* or farming village, limited in size by the need of every inhabitant to have access to the fields.⁹⁸ Then there were the *civitates regales*, such as Gabaon which McClure has identified as a royal centre, 'which had an undefined authority over a substantial area.'⁹⁹ A third category were the *civitates* of the Levites *cum suburbanis suis* and the apparently associated *civitates refugii*. Ó Corráin has argued that ecclesiastical writers in Ireland identified many of the major church sites with the levitical cities of the Old Testament but treated them as *civitates refugii*.¹⁰⁰

The usage of *civitas* in the *Hibernensis* in general makes it relatively certain that, in an Irish context, the word was thought to refer to the same type of settlement as those already depicted. The commentary to *Bretha Comaithchesa* about hens escaping into the *faithche* is paralleled in the *Hibernensis* by a canon explaining that if hens escaped from a *civitas* into the surrounding *fora*, payment was due to the owners of the land.¹⁰¹ In the *Hibernensis*, *plateae* are also found associated with *civitates* as well as with *tabernaculum*,

templum, atrium and suburbana:

Every *civitas* of refuge is laid out with its *suburbana*. (b) In like manner, every *civitas* was given to the priests with its *suburbana* 15,000 of length and 10,000 of width, for feeding the flocks of the priests. (c) In like manner, Ezechiel, measuring the *civitas* at a certain time, measures 1000 paces but at another time, 1000 paces to the east, (or so it says) and so forth. (d) In like manner, the temple of Solomon had an enclosure around it in which he who would do wrong would perish. (e) In like manner, the *tabernaculum* of Moses had an *atrium* around it. (f) In like manner, Ezechiel: I see an angel having a reed in [his] hand in order that he might measure the *civitas* in its circumference and its *plateae* outside. (g) In like manner in Revelations, The angel came in order to measure the *civitas* and its *plateae*. (h) In like manner in Zacharia: When they had returned from Babylon, they built a *templum* and its enclosure around [it] and so forth.¹⁰²

In this extract, it is implied not only that the *tabernaculum* corresponds to a *templum*, a link which has been noted above (in the section on church law-courts), but that it also parallels the *civitas* which is here associated with *plateae* and with *suburbana* belonging to the priests. The reference to a thousand paces can be linked to a statement in the Old Irish 'Monastery of Tallaght' in which a cleric 'made much of going the thousand paces or more to visit the tenantry' and to the suggestion in the later tract on *maigen digona* (area around a house under a householder's protection) that a thousand paces was the normal precinct of a bishop or a hermit.¹⁰³ Whatever about a bishop's residence, it is difficult to believe that Middle Irish lawyers envisaged a hermit residing at the centre of a nucleated settlement of at least a kilometre's diameter. Elsewhere, indeed, when discussing secular dwellings, the authors of this text specifies that the *maigen digona* can be measured with spear-casts: from one spear-cast for an ordinary *bóaire* (strong farmer) to sixty-four spear-casts for an over-king.¹⁰⁴ Again, this hardly seems a useful method of measurement in a built-up environment.

A flowery description of what appears to be a *civitas* is found in the *Hisperica Famina*, dated to the mid seventh century by Herren. Here again, the *civitas* is surrounded by pastures, enclosures and the houses of peasants rather than the streets, fortified defences and the semi-industrialised craftsmen favoured by proponents of the early 'monastic town':

Innumerable flocks of cattle wander along sandy paths and the kine press into their enclosures. Throngs of sheep ascend the square folds, the hairy swine go to their familiar

swineherds, the hostlers fasten iron hobbles to the horses' legs. Countless numbers of peasants cast off the accustomed bond of labour from their limbs and rest in their comfortable houses of dry covering; therefore let us approach the protective walls of the *civitas* to request suitable hospitality from its kind inhabitants.¹⁰⁵

Finally, one should also note a canon in the *Hibernensis* which identifies a *civitas* with the type of legal assembly which was held outside the ecclesiastical settlements elsewhere known as *tabernacula*: 'every accused man shall be brought to the door of the *civitas* and he shall be punished in the presence of witnesses.'¹⁰⁶ In other words, legal activities took place at the *ianum* of the *civitas*, just as they did at the *porta* or the *ostium* of the *tabernaculum*.

To summarize, a *civitas* and its *suburbana* can, in some Hiberno-Latin sources, provide an exact parallel for the type of settlement identified by the words *tabernaculum* and *atrium/platea* as outlined above. When Cogitosus described Kildare as a *civitas*, he was describing a location in which the church building was surrounded by dwellings of the resident clergy and, at a further remove, by the other, subordinate, members of the settlement. These houses were, however, all located within an area of agricultural buildings, fields, trees, ponds and pastures and there is no evidence of a more clustered environment of the type envisaged for the tenth and eleventh-century 'monastic towns'.

SECULAR CIVITATES IN EARLY IRELAND

Just as the words *platea* and *atrium* appear to represent the area of open ground and dwelling areas surrounding all high-status settlements, both ecclesiastical and secular, the use of the word *civitas* in non-legal sources also indicates that this word was not confined to church sites. In seventh-century Patrician hagiography, the word could refer to such diverse settlements as Tara, Armagh, Slane and Sletty.¹⁰⁷ In the *Vita Prima* of Saint Brigit, the saint went to plead for her father at the gateway (*porta*) of the *civitas* in which the king of the Laigin lived.¹⁰⁸ In what appears to be an early genealogical tract describing the kings of Leinster, it is stated that the royal Leinster site of Dún Ailinne was a *civitas regalis*:

Art Mess Talmann, his family without issue - it is by him the rampart of Ailenn was constructed which afterwards was a royal *civitas*.¹⁰⁹

In the *Annals of Ulster*, *civitas* is used to describe a number of ecclesiastical sites such as Ard Breccan, Slane, Finndubrach Abe, Cell Delca and Cell Dumai Glinn, but it is also used to describe the site of the royal assembly at Tailtiu or Teltown.¹¹⁰ A particularly interesting reference to *civitas* in both royal and ecclesiastical contexts is also to be found in the *Vita Tertia*, a Latin life of Patrick written by an Irishman at

some point prior to 1135:

Then Patrick came to Conall son of Niall and Conall received him with great joy and he baptised him. And he offered him his home (*domus*) and the whole dwelling-place (*habitaculum*) and he said to him: 'Make for yourself a *civitas* from this *habitaculum* and I will make for myself another habitaculum in front of the gates of your *civitas*'. And [thus] Patrick made there the *civitas* which is today called *Domnach Pátraic* and Patrick sketched with his staff the *habitaculum* for Conall; this is *Ráth Airthir*.¹¹¹

It is clear that the author of this text sees *civitas* not only as a suitable description for the ecclesiastical site of Domnach Pátraic but also for the dwelling associated with a royal ancestor, Conall mac Néill. This dwelling could also be known as a *ráth*. Interestingly, if the most commonly accepted identifications for *Domnach Pátraic* and *Ráth Airthir* are accepted¹¹² these two separate *civitates* lie barely one field apart with little room between them for even one urban conurbation, let alone two.

It is also worth pointing out that in his *Collectanea*, the seventh-century hagiographer Tírechán makes a direct translation of *civitas* as a placename element, in which he equates it with a *les*.¹¹³ Once again, this is a word which can be used in relation to both ecclesiastical and secular sites. An early eighth-century Patrician text lists a *les* as one element in an estate given to Patrick, together with a wood, a plain, meadow and a herb-garden and a bishop is said to have lived and received offerings in a *les* in the late Old Irish text, *Bethu Brigte*.¹¹⁴ In what may be the vernacular equivalent of the dictum by Columbanus that no-one should pass the *vallum* of the monastery, the late Old Irish rule of Ailbe of Emly states that a monk is not allowed go beyond the *les* without the permission of his abbot.¹¹⁵ The *Annals of Ulster* in an entry for 916 refers to the *les* of the abbot which was burnt along with other parts of the settlement at Armagh.¹¹⁶

Most commonly, however, the word *les* is used to describe secular sites. Many of the most diagnostic references have recently been collected together by Mallory.¹¹⁷ From the saga material adduced in his article, a *les* is an enclosed area surrounding the most important house and its immediate domestic appurtenances; one of the most specific citations from Mallory's catalogue is the account in *Fled Bricrend* which tells how Bricriu and his wife fell from their house into the domestic refuse-heap in the middle of the *les*.¹¹⁸ Bricriu's house is a *rígtech* (royal house) and his wife is a *rigan* or queen but although a *les* also surrounds a royal house in *Táin Bó Dartrada*, in the eighth-century legal text, *Críth Gablach* a *les* is one of the possessions of the *bóaire*, (a strong farmer without noble status) and in *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*, it is associated

with the *bríugu* or hosteller.¹¹⁹ Like *faithche*, therefore, a *les* is a settlement form which might be inhabited by a variety of social classes.

Other references to the *les* indicate that while only a few might be resident within it, it was normally a place in which one might meet a wide variety of people,¹²⁰ it was the focus of many military attacks¹²¹, it had an entrance which could be shut,¹²² its entrance-way was a place in which one might meet guests¹²³ and trees might grow by its entrance.¹²⁴

These last three references indicate that the area surrounding a *les* was comparable in both form and function with a *faithche*. Unfortunately I have not, as yet, managed to trace examples where both *faithche* and *les* are used in conjunction but there are at least two cases where a *faithche* is said in one text to surround a site which is identified as a *les* in another.¹²⁵ In the Irish translation of Nennius' *Historia Brittonum*, *Lebor Bretnach*, the Irish author translated the phrase *in pavimento... civitatis* by *faithche osin chathraig*.¹²⁶ For what it is worth, there is also a reference in the Irish Gospel of Thomas where *do-chenél* or subordinate folk are said to live around a *ráth* in which lived a king's family; *ráth* is often taken to be a synonym of *les* and is used in the *Vita Tertia* extract quoted above as a vernacular equivalent to *civitas*.¹²⁷ It may be that this reference to the surrounding *do-chenél* should be seen as a parallel to the houses of priests in the *atrium* of an ecclesiastical settlement and those of warriors in the *faithche* of a royal site.

If a *les* with its surrounding area is a vernacular equivalent of *civitas*, as Tírechán's seventh-century text suggests, the implication is that the core of a *civitas* at this time could be viewed as being essentially the home of a single household. The exact numbers dwelling within such a homestead are unclear; as yet we know little of the living arrangements for such social categories as slaves, cottiers, fosterlings and so forth. It does appear, however, that we should be thinking of a population of a *civitas* in terms of multiples of ten rather than multiples of a hundred. Subordinates of the settlement's owner might live in the vicinity of his *les/ráth/civitas* but there is no evidence that they live in a densely clustered or 'urban' environment. Since the Latin word *civitas* is one of the key elements in the development of the theory of the early Irish 'monastic town' it is useful to see the non-urban associations of at least one of its vernacular equivalents.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

This paper has been limited to examining the textual evidence and in particular the semantic ranges of words which can be shown to exist in seventh and early eighth-century documentation. Some of the conclusions, however, are comparable with observations which have already been made by scholars in other fields and, in particular, by archaeologists. For example, Hamlin and Lynn have argued strongly for viewing secular and ecclesiastical settlements as being essentially similar in

overall appearance during the seventh and eighth centuries.¹²⁸ Mallory and McNeill believe that ring-forts could only have provided homes for a minority of the population and that we must see them rather as nuclei of a greater number of buildings, both for agricultural and domestic use. Pollen evidence from Iona suggests that corn was grown on the island which is in agreement both with Reeve's analysis of the topographical evidence of Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*, and with the suggestion made here that the settlement was surrounded by an open-plan area containing domestic outbuildings, animal pens and fields under tillage.¹²⁹

In his article on the 'monastic town' Doherty states clearly that his aim is to identify the structure of Irish ecclesiastical sites from documentary evidence but he does make occasional reference to archaeological material. Since at least some of this material has been dated to the seventh and eighth centuries, it is worth outlining this matter in detail. He begins by suggesting that some early churches took over pagan cult centres or lands possessed by such cult centres whilst others were established on virgin territory and still others in secular settlements. The evidence for this is almost entirely non-archaeological, being based on hagiographical references and *cluain*-placenames, but he refers to Hughes' statements about the existence of some early church sites within two miles or more of large hill-top enclosures which she interprets as pagan sanctuaries. He also makes the point that the evidence of archaeological survey has not produced any observable difference between what might be presumed to be diocesan churches and monasteries.¹³⁰

He then goes on to state that on the basis of archaeological and literary evidence the seventh and eighth centuries were a period of reorganisation within Irish churches when a standard plan was imposed on such sites. These changes consisted of the development of sites where wooden churches and domestic buildings might be replaced by stone, special graves might be elaborated, enclosure walls would be either built or elaborated and substantial areas of paving would be laid down to provide working surfaces or streets or courtyards. As evidence of this, he cites O'Kelly's excavation of Church Island, Fanning's excavation of Reask, the investigations of the RCAHMS at Iona and Thomas' overview of developments within the early church in Britain and Ireland.¹³¹

At Reask, the excavator admitted frankly that the oratory, enclosure wall and paving (the items relevant to the standard plan) could not be closely dated to any period between the seventh century and the twelfth. At Church Island, the only clear-cut dating evidence cited by O'Kelly for either the initial or later phase was the existence of a slab (without context) inscribed with ogam. O'Kelly suggested this slab might be as late as the eighth century but subsequent analysis of the language of the inscription suggests a late sixth or early seventh-century date.¹³² A section of one of the outer enclosure walls at

Iona has been identified as of probable seventh-century date (see discussion below) but while some material from within the enclosure is of a similar period, the Royal Commission authors summarised their conclusions with the sentence 'the general arrangement appears to have been a random one with working areas and hearths interspersed among the buildings'.¹³³

The pages of Thomas' work cited by Doherty are entitled 'Cemeteries and chapels' and distinguish enclosed cemeteries, sometimes including pre-Christian burials, from what Thomas terms 'developed cemeteries' with oratories, internal divisions and associated huts. Thomas was writing in an era prior to the wide-spread application of absolute dating techniques based on physical data and his dating categories are consequently extremely broad. In his discussion of cemeteries and chapels, for example, special graves are accorded potential dates from the Iron Age to the seventh century. He argues for the existence of early wooden churches in Ireland largely from literary sources of varying date, together with the evidence from Church Island and an unpublished excavation which identified a potential wooden precursor beneath the stone church at Ardagh in Co. Longford though neither provided clear dating evidence. His third piece of evidence was another wooden structure beneath the south church at Derry in Co. Down which may or may not have been ecclesiastical. The limited nature of the excavations at both Ardagh and Derry could not be expected to have provided evidence for the layout of an Irish ecclesiastical site in its entirety and Thomas makes no such claim. Furthermore, Hamlin suggested in 1976 that the evidence for timber-bonding in the ruins of the south church at Derry might suggest, on parallels with England, a late eleventh-century date for that building. This would have obvious implications for the date of the earlier material.¹³⁴ Thomas did conclude that the Irish material, together with that from other parts of the British Isles, indicated the replacement of wooden churches by stone ones in the late seventh and eighth centuries and that small dwellings for the isolated brethren who manned them were probably added at the same time but such conclusions represent a theoretical model rather than a factual assessment of the evidence.¹³⁵ The archaeological evidence cited by Doherty does not, therefore, substantiate his identification of a standard plan which was imposed on all Irish ecclesiastical sites in the course of the seventh or eighth centuries.

The existence of 'streets' on these sites might imply a degree of urbanisation but examining the references in detail, such a description would appear to be exaggerated. At Reask, only fragments of a path linking the inner enclosure wall to the oratory door were found. Similarly, the cobbling at Iona, cited by Doherty, which is associated with a sherd of E-ware, was apparently a working area rather than a 'street' or 'courtyard' for three clay-moulds were found upon it. At Church Island, some paving was identified leading from the northern entranceway to the enclosure through to the doorway of

the oratory along the inner side of the enclosure wall. This enclosure wall was apparently a later development on the site, built of water-rolled stones of all sizes and dimensions - 'whatever came to hand' in the excavator's words. It seems reasonable to infer that the flagged pathway was of similar standard.¹³⁶ It does not appear, therefore, that one can reasonably interpret the evidence from these three sites as implying the existence of 'streets' or 'courtyards' in Irish ecclesiastical settlements of the seventh or eighth centuries.

Doherty then goes on to discuss the evidence of the *Hibernensis* and argues that one can detect in it :

the creation of an idealized form, a schema, which allowed a monastic site to have a holy of holies at the core, around which were areas of sanctuary that decreased in importance the further they were from the centre... This schema allowed for a priestly élite at the centre with the laity on the periphery. It also imposed a pattern up on church sites in Ireland that is evident, at least superficially, in the surviving remains.¹³⁷

The nature of these surviving remains is not specified. Doherty subsequently suggests that by c.900, a qualitative change had been introduced into the elaboration of the ceremonial complex. Purely sacred areas had been clearly defined before this but the beginning of the tenth century marks the point at which:

public buildings and monuments - stone churches, round towers, high crosses, public open spaces and the abbot's residence - dominate the rest of the settlement. It is not just a matter of scale - there had been a very large wooden church at Kildare in the seventh century and no doubt such churches existed elsewhere at all periods - it is the appearance of the complete repertoire of public monuments and buildings. On the outskirts of the complex lay the defined market-place, testimony of the commercial growth of the settlement. It is from this point that one might, with confidence, begin to use the word 'urban'.

This description opens with a reference to Herity's article on the physical development of Irish monastic sites prior to the year 1000 and would seem to refer in particular to Herity's analysis of the site of Clonmacnoise. (In that article, Clonmacnoise is the only site where a firm chronological date for the layout of a particular settlement is given.) Herity suggests that the erection of the Cross of the Scriptures in 908 introduced a new canon of siting in that the cross was sited at the centre of a new open space to the west of the cathedral. To the southwest of this open space, the round tower was later built and this was '...probably close to the monks' cells'...¹³⁸ These suggestions have now been superseded

by King's excavation which produced evidence for an earlier wooden structure, possibly a cross, at the same location as the later Cross of the Scriptures. Six medieval burials were found in the immediate vicinity and above these, an occupation layer with hearths, stake-holes, charcoal and animal bones.¹³⁹ In any event, even without taking King's excavation into account, the postulated layout of a single site seems a fragile basis on which to assert that a qualitative change took place on all Irish sites around the beginning of the tenth century.

Though the existence of 'defined market-places' are seen here as part of the tenth-century development of ecclesiastical sites, elsewhere Doherty refers to the existence of market-places at monasteries from the late eighth century onwards. This conclusion derives from the entry in the *Annals of Ulster* in AD 800 which records the death of a local king *in circio ferie* of Mac Cuilinn at Lusk in Co. Dublin.¹⁴⁰ This reference appears to be to an *óenach* (and is understood as such by Doherty) but it is clear that an *óenach* is not, of itself, evidence for urbanism. A detailed analysis of the best-documented early *óenach*, that of Tailtiu or Teltown in Co. Meath, makes it quite clear that the site used for the *óenach* was open ground, probably demarcated by prehistoric monuments. The legal and hagiographical references indicate that the Teltown *óenach* was celebrated on royal land and on the outer reaches of an area surrounding the twin foci of the royal site of *Ráth Airthir* and the ecclesiastical site of Donaghpatrick.¹⁴¹ Thus, the existence of a 'defined market-place' in the tenth-century 'urban' phase in Doherty's interpretation of the development of 'monastic towns' derives primarily from literary rather than archaeological evidence while analysis of textual material from other sites indicate that even where an *óenach* may have been held under ecclesiastical patronage in the seventh or eighth centuries, there is no reason to suppose that this implies a heavily built-up environment.

Apart from Doherty's own references to archaeological material, the most influential archaeological contribution to the model of the 'monastic town' has been that of Swan. From an analysis of early Ordnance Survey maps, supplemented by aerial photography and field-work, Swan has identified over six hundred enclosures surrounding ecclesiastical sites. These frequently consist of a double enclosure: a large outer enclosure and a smaller inner enclosure. The identifiably ecclesiastical features, such as round towers, high crosses, burial grounds and church ruins, are normally found within the inner enclosure. In dimensions, the vast majority of inner enclosures fall between 100 and 200m in diameter while in the majority of cases, the diameter of the outer enclosures are between 300 and 500m. Where the boundaries to these enclosures have been examined on the ground, Swan has described them as massive in both width and height and in the size of the stones which form the lower courses of the enclosure walls. Within or just outside the outer enclosures, to the

east, at the sites of Armagh, Downpatrick, Glendalough and Kells can be found crosses which are associated with market activity. The earliest of these crosses appear to be ninth century in date but the identification of the area around the cross as a market in each case is based on considerably later sources.¹⁴²

The dating of these enclosures has not been clearly established though some may date to the seventh or eighth centuries. Swan refers to the fact that the majority are associated with saints thought to have been active in the fifth and early sixth centuries. He also makes the point that where a cross has been identified on a boundary, one can assume that the boundary must have been present when the cross was erected. (This would presumably mean that an inner enclosure at Armagh and an outer enclosure at Kells were both in existence at some point in the ninth century.) Elsewhere he points to the fact that the most common place-name elements associated with these structures are pre-Norman in date.¹⁴³

Excavation, much of it published after both Doherty and Swan had written, provides some evidence for the layout of some of the larger Irish ecclesiastical settlements in the seventh and eighth centuries. At Armagh, twigs and branches at the base of a massive ditch encircling the hill gave a calibrated radiocarbon date (at two standard deviations) of AD 130-600 but there is evidence that this ditch had been filled in by the end of the eighth century at the latest and, once filled, had had two non-Christian burials inserted within it. Lynn and McDowell have suggested that it is likely the hill was enclosed by a series of earthworks of varying ages and that it would be wrong to assume that this enclosure necessarily represents that surrounding the early medieval ecclesiastical centre. At Tullylish, Co. Down, a massive ditch of 5m width and 3.6m depth was dated to the seventh century through radiocarbon dating while another was dug in the ninth century to replace the first after it had silted up. Either or both of these ditches may represent part of the boundary of an early ecclesiastical enclosure. On Iona, a complex series of earthworks enclosing the ecclesiastical site has been identified through field and geophysical survey. These have been interpreted as two successive enclosures with overlapping periods of use. One section of the earlier enclosure was excavated and produced a V-shaped ditch in which peat and brushwood provided radiocarbon dates focusing on the late sixth and early seventh centuries.¹⁴⁴ On the basis of this excavated evidence, it would seem reasonable to infer that larger outer enclosures were an identifiable feature of Irish ecclesiastical sites in the seventh and eighth century though as yet we have only one clear-cut example and that is from the Scottish site of Iona. The contemporary existence of inner enclosures also appears probable though this has not yet been demonstrated conclusively.

The early excavation of the ecclesiastical site at Nendrum appears to show a tripartite division of an ecclesiastical site sub-divided by substantial enclosure walls. On a terrace on the west side of the middle

enclosure, a number of rectangular house platforms were found, one of which was interpreted as bronze-worker's workshop. A rectangular building in the same area was interpreted as a school-house on the basis of approximately thirty stone tablets with inscribed designs. Three of these stones have traces of lettering and four iron styluses were also found. Other artefacts from the same area included discs of slate interpreted as gaming counters and bone beads. In and around these platforms and the so-called 'school-house', large amounts of midden material were found but much of this was interpreted as building material brought in to level the terrace. Piled up against the outer wall of the middle terrace was a large heap of refuse made up of animal bone, shells, slag and other debris.¹⁴⁵

Interpreting this material according to the model derived from the documentary sources, the possibility is raised that the middle terrace represents part or all of the *atrium* which has been identified as including the area where the priests and other ecclesiastics lived.¹⁴⁶ If so, Nendrum would add a new dimension to that model in the indications that metal-working and stone-working both took place in this same area. The evidence for dating this material is extremely exiguous but the existence of what appears to be a botched attempt at ring-chain ornament, together with other features of the stones from the 'school-house', tends to suggest that much of this occupation may have post-dated the seventh to eighth-century horizon which is of interest here. The widespread occurrence of souterrain ware, a stone-fragment with Norse runes, and a coin dated to c.AD 930 from other parts of the site would also lead one to infer a relatively late date for much of this occupation.¹⁴⁷ One should note, however, that subsequent work has also identified a single sherd of E-ware from the settlement.¹⁴⁸

There is excavated material indicating habitation as well as early burials outside the presumed inner enclosure at Armagh in Scotch Street. This occupational phase is represented by hundreds of chips of amber, waste from the manufacture of glass beads, crucible fragments for bronze-melting and hundreds of pieces of cut lignite as well as many post-holes, gullies, stake-holes and pits. This evidence has been subdivided into two phases: ninth century for the amber, glass and metal-working and a tenth to eleventh-century phase for the lignite and jet-working. The amount of material might suggest a heavily industrialised site in some part of Armagh but other areas close to the presumed inner enclosure, imply that open ground continued to exist until the end of the Middle Ages.¹⁴⁹ At Kilpatrick, Co. Meath, limited excavation within the area of an outer enclosure measuring some 88m x 100m, produced evidence for the foundation trench of at least one circular hut, as well as grain seeds, rotary querns, animal bone, charcoal and, in the general area of the hut, a fragment of a penannular brooch. Other structures within the larger enclosure included evidence for grain-drying kilns and iron-working and some sherds of E-ware were also found. On Iona at least one building

within the larger enclosure was identified as standing within its own fenced enclosure but there was also scattered evidence for post-holes and other occupational debris.¹⁵⁰ While little of this excavated material has a clear seventh to eighth-century date, the suggestion that scattered habitation, interspersed with outhouses and areas of open ground, occurred in the area between the postulated inner core and an outer enclosure wall would appear to accord with the limited evidence outlined here.

At Clonmacnoise, the excavations in the new graveyard have produced evidence for an eighth to tenth-century layer with remains of a round-house, a rectangular structure surrounded by a gravelled yard with a wooden gate and a large hearth to the north of the structure. Below this were found stake-holes, burnt spreads and pits containing habitational refuse.¹⁵¹ Evidence for craft activities, including bronze-working, iron-working, leather-working and the manufacture of jet ornaments, is cited by Bradley and E-ware has been found amongst the excavated finds. There is no clear evidence of an inner enclosure but Bradley suggests that this waterfront material must lie outside the ecclesiastical core, possibly in an eastern *trian* corresponding to the AFM reference of 1082.¹⁵² It may be that at Clonmacnoise, the physical confines of the site produced a greater degree of nucleation than has so far been identified on other sites but this is, as yet, impossible to state categorically. Clearly, when the evidence from the new graveyard is published in detail, it will add crucial information to the debate on the existence and date of the 'monastic town'.

A major problem in identifying the reality or otherwise of seventh or eighth century 'monastic towns' is the lack of large-scale modern excavation covering a substantial percentage of the area encapsulated by the outer enclosures. To date, however, and without detailing the many small-scale excavations which have occurred on ecclesiastical sites in the last ten years, there does not appear to be good evidence for postulating a densely built-up environment within large, outer ecclesiastical enclosures in the seventh and eighth centuries. The existence of such large outer enclosure boundaries has been identified almost entirely through survey and we have little firm archaeological evidence for the internal layout of Irish ecclesiastical settlements in the seventh and eighth centuries or even for the ninth and tenth. *Pace* Doherty, there seems no good reason to describe such paving as exists, particularly that found on the small western sites, as either 'streets' or 'courtyards'. Trade and craft activity are both observable but there is no evidence, apart, perhaps, from Clonmacnoise, that such material dominates the archaeological record of large sections of the area demarcated by the outer enclosure walls. On the whole, the limited evidence of the archaeological record would appear to correspond reasonably well with the documentary evidence for individual central foci in the seventh and eighth centuries, each surrounded by an open-plan area of mixed agriculture and scattered

dwellings. To this one should add that archaeology would also indicate that the outer perimeter of this open-plan area was probably demarcated on many sites by a large enclosure wall and that craft-working in various media probably took place between the (postulated) inner ecclesiastical core of the settlement and the outer enclosure boundaries.¹⁵³

CONCLUSIONS

In a review of Doherty's work on the 'monastic town', Graham once wrote that only the reference to *civitas* in the documentation has allowed people to speak of bustling towns in Ireland prior to the tenth century.¹⁵⁴ Belief in the existence of somewhat ill-defined pre-tenth century towns, however, has been a feature of much of the discussion of seventh and eighth-century ecclesiastical settlement since Doherty's work was published. This is despite the fact, as mentioned above, that Doherty's model explicitly refers to the development of 'urban' settlement only from the tenth century. This confusion has arisen from Doherty's use of seventh and eighth-century texts which are laced with what appears to be 'urban' terminology at various key points in his work.

The current study, based on seventh and eighth-century Hiberno-Latin sources, concludes that a number of Latin words which had distinct and separate meanings in other cultures were used as synonyms by the Irish writers. One such word was *civitas* which in both its Latin form and in its vernacular equivalent, *les*, can be used to describe both secular and ecclesiastical sites. *Civitas* also parallels the word *tabernaculum* on those occasions when *tabernaculum* is used in its wider sense of church settlement rather than simply church-building.

These settlements appear to have been organised, at least on a conceptual level, with the most prestigious sector at the centre. On ecclesiastical sites, this central focus included the church-building; on secular sites, it was the location for the domestic dwelling of the most important inhabitant. The divisions between the various areas were generally marked by physical monuments but these boundaries were not inevitably enclosing walls: Cogitosus refers to the open nature of the site at Kildare and there are references to crosses and other signs which could mark the different zones of settlement. Those scholars who seek to clarify the physical reality of a 'monastic town' have tended to interpret these facts as implying nucleated settlements based around a central core, with evidence for domestic houses, workshops, defensive enclosures and substantial trading activity.

I would agree that outside the central focus of both ecclesiastical and secular sites was an area in which were located the dwellings of the subordinate members of the settlement: priests' dwellings on ecclesiastical sites and the houses of professional warriors on secular sites. This area was termed an *atrium*, a *platea* or *suburbana* in Hiberno-Latin sources and a *faithche* in Old Irish. I suggest that, in the case of church sites, other social

classes associated with churches as well as their respective families, also lived in this area. I am here referring to groups such as the *gráda ecnai* (scholars of the church), the penitents, the *gráda uird ecalsa* (the administrators of the church's lands and those concerned with the provisioning of the settlement) and the *manaig* (monks and/or legal dependants).

In addition to the houses of such subordinates, the area around the central focus could also include agricultural outbuildings, pens for animals, fields for both cereal crops and pasture, grass, pools and trees. It was also the arena for a number of public ceremonies, including the holding of judicial assemblies, which could involve both the inhabitants of the settlement and visitors to the site. Despite the use on occasion of words such as *suburbana* to describe this area, there seems to be no evidence for nucleated settlement within it and the buildings appear to be relatively widely scattered. In a penumbra, beyond the dwellings of the priests and at a further remove from the prestigious core of the

settlement, appear to have been the houses of lowest status. In religious communities these people on the outskirts were claimed to be part of the wider grouping known as Levites or churchmen despite the fact that they included slaves and other such subordinate members of society. In this paper, I have concentrated on evidence for such people on the ecclesiastical sites but the reference to the king's bonded servants in the *civitas* of the Laigin king in the *Vita Prima S. Brigidae* and the *do-chenél* of the Irish Gospel of St Thomas, both imply that subordinate social groups also lived on the perimeter of royal sites. One of the major conclusions of this paper is thus that an approach which sees ecclesiastical sites as being organised in a fundamentally different way from secular sites of equal prestige appears flawed. The other would be that the use of the word *civitas* does not appear to have urban connotations in Hiberno-Latin documents of the seventh and eighth centuries and that instead of 'monastic towns', we should be talking of the forts and fields of the early Irish church.

NOTES

¹ Preliminary drafts of this paper were given at the Ninth Irish Conference of Medievalists (Dublin June 1995), the Postgraduate History Seminar, Trinity College (March 1996) and the Medieval History Seminar, UCD (February 1996). To all those who commented on those occasions, I would like to express my thanks. In particular, I would also like to thank Dr Colmán Etchingham of N.U.I. Maynooth and the editor for their kindness in reading and commenting on previous drafts.

² D. Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin 1972), 87; 'Nationality and kingship in pre-Norman Ireland' in *Nationality and the pursuit of national independence* ed. T.W. Moody (Historical Studies xi, Belfast 1978), 1-36, 22 fn.e. Kathleen Hughes had earlier used the term 'monastic city' to describe large ecclesiastical settlements of eighth-century date: *The church in early Irish society* (London 1966), 148-9.

³ C. Doherty, 'Exchange and trade in early medieval Ireland', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, cx (1980), 67-89, 71, 81-4; 'Some aspects of hagiography as a source for Irish economic history', *Peritia* i (1982), 300-328, 303; 'The monastic town in early medieval Ireland' in *The comparative history of urban origins in non-Roman Europe*, eds. H.B. Clarke & A. Simms, 2 vols (BAR International series, 255, Oxford 1985), i 45-75, 54, 60, 68.

⁴ See J. Bradley, 'Recent archaeological research on the Irish town' in *Stadtkernforschung*, ed. H. Jäger (Köln 1987), 321-370, 323, 325-6; N. Edwards, *The archaeology of early medieval Ireland* (London 1990), 100, 106-114; M. Ryan, 'Fine metalworking and early Irish monasteries: the archaeological evidence' in *Settlement and society in medieval Ireland*, ed. J. Bradley (Kilkenny 1988), 33-48; F. Mitchell & M. Ryan, *Reading the Irish landscape* (Dublin 1997), 288-296; M. Ryan, 'Early medieval Ireland: some archaeological issues' in *Progress in medieval Irish studies* ed. K. McCone & K. Simms (Maynooth 1996), 162.

⁵ J. P. Mallory & T.E. McNeill, *The archaeology of Ulster from colonisation to plantation* (Belfast 1991), 205; B.J. Graham,

'Urban genesis in early medieval Ireland', *Journal of Historical Geography* xiii (1) (1987), 3-16, 13-14; 'Early Medieval Ireland: settlement as an indicator of economic and social transformation c.500-1000' in *An historical geography of Ireland*, ed. B.J. Graham & L.J. Proudfoot (London 1993), 19-57; 23, 26-36.

⁶ M. Valante, 'Reassessing the Irish "monastic town"', *Irish historical studies* xxxi (1998), 1-18, 5, 18.

⁷ J. Bradley, 'The monastic town of Clonmacnoise' in *Clonmacnoise Studies Vol I: seminar papers* 1994 ed. H. King (Dublin (1998), 42-56, 45. For a study of ecclesiastical settlement in this period without reference to 'monastic towns', see also A. Hamlin, 'The archaeology of the Irish church in the eighth century', *Peritia* iv (1985), 279-99 and, for a rather different view, M. Herity 'The High Island hermitage', *Irish University Review* vii (1977), 52-69, reprinted in M. Herity, *Studies in the layout, buildings and art in stone of early Irish monasteries* (London 1995), 1-18.

⁸ Doherty, 'Monastic town', 54-7.

⁹ *Et quis sermone explicare potest maximum decorem huius aeclesiae et innumera illius monasterii civitatis quam dicimus miracula si fies est dici civitas dum nullo murorum ambitu circumdatur? Convenientibus tamen in ea populis innumerabilibus, dum civitas de conventu in se multorum nomen accipit, maxima haec civitas et metropolitana est: in cuius suburbanis quae sancto certo limite designavit Brigida nullus carnalis adversarius nec concursus timetur hostium sed civitas est refugii tutissima de foris suburbanis in tota Scottorum terra cum suis omnibus fugitivis.* This paragraph has been edited by Jean-Michel Picard from the pre eleventh-century manuscripts of Cogitosus' Life, together with the translation above, and it is this which is printed in Doherty, 'Monastic town', 55-56.

¹⁰ Doherty, 'Monastic town', 57.

¹¹ *Idem*, 59.

¹² *Idem* 55-6.

¹³ D. Ó Corráin, 'The historical and cultural background of the Book of Kells', *The Book of Kells: proceedings of a conference*

at Trinity College Dublin, 6-9th September 1992 ed. F. O'Mahony (Dublin 1994), 1-32, 31-2; H. Mytum, *The origins of early Christian Ireland* (London & New York 1992), 80-83; L. Bitel, *Isle of the Saints* (Ithaca 1990), 58-9, 74, 80; M. Stout, *The Irish ringfort* (Dublin 1997), 128-9; J. Bradley, 'Monastic town of Clonmacnoise', 50.

¹⁴ Edited by H. Wasserscheben, *Die irische Kanonensammlung* (Leipzig 1885), hereafter *Hibernensis*.

¹⁵ 'Sacred and hieratic languages' in C. Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin: its origins and character* (London 1959), 1-26.

¹⁶ For discussions of the history of biblical Latin and the methodologies used by early translators, see C. Mohrmann, 'L'étude de la latinité chrétienne: état de la question, méthodes, résultats' in *Latin Vulgaire, Latin des Chrétiens, Latin médiéval*, ed. id. (Paris 1955), 17-35; G. Bardy, 'Saint Jérôme et ses maîtres hebreux' *Revue bénédictine* xlvii (1934), 145-164; G. Bardy, 'Traducteurs et adapteurs au quatrième siècle', *Recherches de science religieuse* xxx (1940), 237-306, esp. 281-87; G.Q.A. Meershoek, *Le Latin biblique d'après Saint Jérôme: aspects linguistiques de la rencontre entre le Bible et le monde classique* (Utrecht 1966), esp. 4-46. For a discussion of the Vulgate in Ireland, see M. McNamara, 'The text of the Latin Bible in the early Irish church: some data and desiderata' in *Irland und die Christenheit*, ed. P. Ní Chatháin & M. Richter (Stuttgart 1987), 7-55, 7-15, 39.

¹⁷ See L. Breatnach, 'Law' in *Progress in Medieval Irish Studies* ed. K. McCone & K. Simms (Maynooth 1996), 107-121, esp. 120-21.

¹⁸ J.P. Mallory, 'The fort of the Ulster Tales', *Emania* xii (1994), 28-38, 30.

¹⁹ The word developed other meanings in later medieval Latin, including that part of the altar in which the Eucharist was stored in its pyx, a place where relics were kept or the seat of an abbot in the choir; see Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis*, 10 vols (Graz 1954), viii 3.

²⁰ For examples of references in the *Hibernensis* to the word in its biblical meanings see: *Hibernensis* 38 (XII:16), quoting 1er 35:6-10; *Hibernensis* 100 (XXIX:5), quoting 1os.7:24-25; *Hibernensis* 194 (XLVI:37), based on Nm 5:17; *Hibernensis* 42 (XIV:6) based on Ex 27:21, 40:32, Nm 17:7, Apc 15:5; *Hibernensis* 174 (XLIV:1), based on Hbr 9:6-8; *Hibernensis* 174 (XLIV:2) based on Ex 27:12-18; *Hibernensis* 175 (XLIV:4) based on Ex 27:12-18, Ez 41:13; *Hibernensis* 176 (XLIV:6) based on Nm 1:50-53.

²¹ *Hibernensis* 230 (LXIII:2) for Biblical parallels see Ex 40:9-10, 1 Ezr 6:16-17 (*domus Dei*), III Rg 8:62-64.

²² *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus: a collection of old-Irish glosses, scholia, prose and verse*, 2 vols, ed. W. Stokes & J. Strachan (Cambridge 1901, repr. Dublin 1987), I 89 (MI 36a 19), 109 (MI 40c15), 120 (MI 43b12-14), 277 (MI 82d1) & 147 (MI 48b11). The dating of the Milan glosses to c. mid ninth-century is given in *ibid.* I xiv-xxi.

²³ *The Saltair na Rann: a collection of early Middle Irish Poems*, ed. W. Stokes (Oxford 1883), 61 (I.4206), 64 (II. 4402-3). A reference to Noah in his *tabernacul* in *Sex aetates mundi* is a mere translation of the Old Testament text: *Lebor na hUidre: Book of the Dun Cow*, ed. R.I. Best & O. Bergin (Dublin 1929), 4:114. *Tempul* denotes specific church buildings within a named

ecclesiastical settlement from the mid-eleventh century and a sizeable number of placenames incorporating this word appear to denote the principal church of Anglo-Norman parishes; see D. Flanagan, 'The Christian impact on early Ireland: place-names evidence' in *Irland und Europa: Die Kirche im Frühmittelalter (Ireland and Europe: The early Church)* eds. P. Ní Chatháin & M. Richter (Dublin 1984), 25-51, 40. One should also note that the word *tabernaculum* is used on at least two occasions by Adomnán to describe the body of Columba of Iona, see M.O. Anderson, *Adomnán's Life of Columba* (Oxford 1991), 226, 232 (III 23).

²⁴ *Hibernensis* 136 (XXXVII:21), 168 (XLII:21), 102 (XXX:1). Canon XXX:1 is discussed in D. Ó Corráin, L. Breatnach & A. Breen, 'The laws of the Irish', *Peritia* iii (1984), 382-420, 415-6. There is a saying quoted in the *Hibernensis* 157 (XL:14) and attributed to Isidore to the effect that just as the church is made up of both saints and sinners, so *variis speciebus constituitur tabernaculum*. This is excluded from the following discussion as it cannot be shown to belong either to the Vulgate or to specifically Irish sources.

²⁵ *Hibernensis* 20 (III:2)

²⁶ L. Bieler, *The Irish penitentials* (Scriptores Latini Hiberniae v, Dublin 1963); 80-81, (§22). Bieler suggests, *id.* 3-4, that the text must have been compiled prior to AD 591 on the grounds that the *Penitential of Columbanus* was strongly influenced by Finnian's work although Columbanus does not acknowledge it. Bieler's interpretation presupposes that the provisions in the two texts were not widespread in early Ireland.

²⁷ *Moyses iudicabat in porta tabernaculi, ut convocaret multitudinem populi et seniores Israel ad ostium tabernaculi. Salomon in ostio tabernaculi iudicabat: Puer Jesus in templo inter chorum senum disputans inventus est ut supra scripsimus: Surge et ascende ad locum quem elegerit Dominus: Hibernensis* 63 (XXI:4).

²⁸ Ex 33:8-10. Moses is identified as someone who judged the Israelites in Ex 18:13-26; see also Ó Corráin *et al.*, 'Laws of the Irish', 392.

²⁹ Dt. 17:8-9 in R. Weber (ed.), *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, 2 vols (Stuttgart 1969).

³⁰ *...breve[m] plenamque ac consonam de ingenti silva scriptorum in unius voluminis textum expositionem degessi* [out of an enormous mass of *scripturae* I have brought into the compass of a single volume, an exposition of them which is brief, clear and harmonious] in *Hibernensis* I (Praef.); trans. from M. Sheehy, 'The Bible and the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*' in *Irland und die Christenheit*, ed. P. Ní Chatháin & M. Richter (Stuttgart 1987), 277-283, 277

³¹ L. Bieler, *The Patrician texts in the Book of Armagh* (Scriptores Latini Hiberniae x, Dublin 1979), 188-80 (B28-9); *Hibernensis* 61 (XX:5). See R. Sharpe, 'Armagh and Rome in the seventh century' in *Irland und Europa: Die Kirche im Frühmittelalter* ed. P. Ní Chatháin & M. Richter (Stuttgart 1984), 58-72 esp. 66-69.

³² *In lege quatuor cibi sacerdotum erant: primum Aaron tantum et filii ejus comedebant in tabernaculo, secundum filii Aaron tantum manducabant in ostio tabernaculi, tertium uterque sexus manducabat in atrio, quartum enim in ostio familia tota manducabat cum vernaculis et empticis.* In *Hibernensis* 51

(XVII:4).

³³ *Locutusque est Moses ad Aaron et ad Eleazar atque Ithamar filios eius qui residui erant ... comedetis autem in loco sancto quod datum est tibi et filiis tuis de oblationibus Domini sicut praeceptum est mihi... edetis in loco mundissimo tu et filii tui ac filiae tuae tecum tibi enim ac liberis tuis reposita sunt de hostiis salutaribus filiorum Israhel in Lv 10:12-14.*

³⁴ *Reliquam autem partem similiae comedet Aaron cum filiis suis absque fermento et comedet in loco sancto atrii tabernaculii ... mares tantum stirpis Aaron comedent illud legitimum ac sempiternum est in generationibus vestris de sacrificiis Domini ... in Lv 6:14-16, 18.*

³⁵ Sheehy, 'Bible and Collectio', 278 identifies the normal meaning of *Lex* in the canons as 'mostly the Old Testament and more particularly the Pentateuch but also the New Testament at times'.

³⁶ An alternative possibility lies in the suggestion, made by D. Ó Corráin, that discrepancies between the Vulgate and the Irish canons are due to the use, by the latter, of lost talmudic or exegetical texts; D. Ó Corráin, 'Irish vernacular law and the Old Testament' in *Irland und die Christenheit*, ed. P. Ni Chatháin & M. Richter (Stuttgart 1987), 284-307, 301.

³⁷ *Lex: Mons Sina. in quo lex dabatur. jubetur, ne tangere illum omnis populis et pecora, et posuit terminum inter se et Moysen et inter Moysen et Jesum et inter Jesum et seniores et inter seniores et vulgus populi. Item: Inter tabernaculum et populum tribus Levi intervallum fuit et in atrii familia sacerdotum et inter tabernaculum et sancta sanctorum.* In *Hibernensis* 176 (XLIV:6).

³⁸ Ex 19:23-24. I would like to thank Thomas Charles-Edwards who pointed out this discrepancy to me.

³⁹ Hamlin, 'Archaeology of the Irish church', 297; S. Connolly and J-M Picard (eds.), 'Cogitosus: Life of Saint Brigit', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* cxvii (1987), 11-27, 25 §31.12; *Acta Sanctorum Bollandiani: Vita II S. Brigidae Virginiae*, Feb. I, 129-41, 140 B34.

⁴⁰ R. Kottje, *Studien zum Einfluß des Alten Testaments auf Recht und Liturgie des Frühen Mittelalters (6.-8. Jahrhundert)* (Bonn Historische Forschungen xxiii, 1964), 60-61.

⁴¹ For evidence of the priestly role of Aaron and his sons see Nm 3:3, 3:7-25, 8:19, 22, 10:8, 18:6-7 and in the *Hibernensis*, 3-4 (I:3), 12-13 (II 2), 14 (II:6), 15 (II:11), 16 (II:14), 17-18 (II:18); see also discussion in Ó Corráin *et al.*, 'Laws of the Irish', 394-397.

⁴² See Nm 18:3, Ps 135:1-2.

⁴³ See L. Breatnach, *Uraicecht na Riar: the poetic grades in early Irish law* (Early Irish Law series ii, Dublin 1987), 85-6.

⁴⁴ K. Hughes, 'The church and the world in early Christian Ireland' *Irish Historical Studies* xiii (1962), 99-113, 109-111. Hughes does not cite evidence for her views about the role of the school but on this, see Ó Corráin, 'Early Irish churches', 334. The dating of the *Liber Angeli* to the seventh century is dependent on the work of R. Sharpe, 'Armagh and Rome', 58-72.

⁴⁵ C. Stancliffe, 'Red, white and blue martyrdom' in *Ireland in early medieval Europe: studies in memory of Kathleen Hughes*, ed. D. Whitelock, R. McKitterick & D. Dumville (Cambridge 1982), 21-46, 34-44.

⁴⁶ Ryan, 'Fine metalworking' *passim*.

⁴⁷ R. Thurneysen, 'Aus dem Irischen Recht III: 4. Die falschen Urteilssprüche Caratnia's', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* xv (1925), 302-376, 339-40 (§30); Doherty, 'Some aspects', 313-5.

⁴⁸ See K. Hughes, *The church in early Irish society* (London 1966), 136-42 esp.138-40; Doherty, 'Hagiography as a source', 313-321; T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'The church and settlement' *Irland und Europa: Die Kirche im Frühmittelalter*, ed. P. Ni Chatháin & M. Richter (Stuttgart 1984), 167-175, 171-5; F. Kelly, *A guide to early Irish law* (Early Irish law series iii, Dublin 1988), 39, 170; T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'The pastoral role of the church in the early Irish laws' in *Pastoral care before the parish*, ed. J. Blair & R. Sharpe (Leicester 1992), 63-80, 67, R. Sharpe, 'Churches and communities in early medieval Ireland' in *ibid.*, 81-109, 102; C. Etchingham, 'The early Irish church: some observations on pastoral care and dues', *Ériu* 42 (1991), 99-118, 115-6.

⁴⁹ C. Etchingham, 'The idea of monastic austerity in early Ireland', in *Luxury and austerity*, ed. J. Hill and C. Lennon (Historical Studies xxi, Dublin 1999), 14-29.

⁵⁰ Doherty, 'Monastic town', 58-9. See also Hughes, *Early church*, 148-9.

⁵¹ *Hibernensis*, 175 (XLIV:3).

⁵² Anderson, *Adomnán's life*, 136 (II 29), 220 (III 23); A.D.S. Macdonald, 'Aspects of the monastery and monastic life in Adomnán's life of Columba', *Peritia* iii (1984), 271-302, 280. In addition, Adomnán also refers to certain places within the *septum monasterii* (enclosure of the monastery) which are frequented by angels (I 3), which is interpreted by MacDonal as a reference to sanctuary, *ibid.*, 281. The importance of a *vallum* in dividing holy places from agricultural land has been mooted by a number of recent authorities, using the evidence of archaeological field work: L. Swan, 'Enclosed ecclesiastical sites and their relevance to settlement patterns of the first millennium', in T. Reeves-Smyth and F. Hammond (eds.), *Landscape archaeology in Ireland* (Britain Archaeological Reports, British series, (cxvi), 1983), 264-94; L. Swan, 'Monastic proto-towns in early medieval Ireland: the evidence of aerial photography and plan analysis' in *The comparative history of urban origins in non-Roman Europe*, ed. H.B. Clarke & A. Simms, 2 vols (BAR International series, 255, Oxford 1985), i 77-102; Edwards, *Archaeology of early medieval Ireland*, 106-110; Graham, 'Early medieval settlement', 33.

⁵³ C. Swift, 'Celtic monasticism - a discipline's search for romance?', *Trowel* v (1994), 21-26 and see discussion in penultimate section of this paper.

⁵⁴ Bitel, *Isle of saints*, 74-8, 81 refers to the 'huts of lay dependants clustering outside the *vallum* of the ecclesiastical enclosure' but cites no evidence for this view. Doherty, 'Some aspects', 302 refers to the outlying areas known as *suburbana* in which the subordinate members of the settlement lived.

⁵⁵ Ez 40:17, Ez 46:20-21. For translation of *gazophylacium* as treasury, see Cabrol & Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne*, VII (1924), 721-2.

⁵⁶ I Par 28:12, Apc 11:2, Ez 10:3, 43:5.

⁵⁷ Ps 95:8, 99:4, 115:19, 134:2; Is 1:2, III Rg 8:63-4.

⁵⁸ See descriptions in Cabrol & Leclercq, *Dictionnaire*

d'archéologie chrétienne, Ili (1910), 588-590 (under heading Basilique); R. Krauthheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (Harmondsworth 1965), 19, 359 and individual descriptions of churches, *passim*. For an over-view of the theological and classical architectural background to these developments, see F.W. Deichmann, 'Vom Tempel zur Kirche', and 'Entstehung der christlichen Basilika und Entstehung des Kirchengebäudes: zum Verhältnis von Zweck und Form in der frühchristlichen Architektur' in *id.*, *Rom, Ravenna, Konstantinopel, Naher Osten: Gesammelte Studien zur spätantiken Architektur, Kunst und Geschichte* (Wiesbaden 1982), 27-46.

⁵⁹ *Huic est porticus applicta triplex / fulmentis Aquitancicis superba ad cuius specimen remotiora / claudunt atria porticus secundae et campum procul locatus / vestit saxea silva per columnas* in *Epistolae* II, x 4, ed W.B. Anderson in *Sidonius: Poems and Letters*, 2 vols (Loeb Classical Library, cccxvi, cccxx, 1963, 1965), i 466-7.

⁶⁰ R. Cormack, 'The temple as cathedral' in *Aphrodisias Papers: recent work on architecture and sculpture*, ed. C. Rouché & K.T. Erim (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series i, Ann Arbor 1990), 75-88, 80.

⁶¹ See Cabrol & Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne*, Ili 589; L. Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien: Étude sur la liturgie latine avant Charlemagne* (Paris 1908), 205-6; R. Taft, 'The liturgy of the great church: an initial synthesis of structure and interpretation on the eve of Iconoclasm', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* xxxiv-xxxv (1980-81), 45-75; 49-50.

⁶² See H. Vincent & F.M. Abel, *Jérusalem: recherches de topographie d'archéologie et d'histoire*, 2 vols in 4 (Paris 1914), Ili (*Jérusalem Nouvelle*), 224-6, 238. The reference to corpses stems from Adomnán's *De locis sanctis*, ed. D. Meehan (Scriptores Latini Hiberniae iii, Dublin 1958), 48 (V 2) although Adomnán himself calls the area a *platea*. See discussion below.

⁶³ *Le liber pontificalis: text, introduction et commentaire, tome I*, ed. L. Duchesne (Paris 1955), 262:4-7. English translation is available in *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber pontificalis)*, ed. R. Davis (Translated texts for historians, Latin series v, Liverpool 1989), 45 (53).

⁶⁴ *Concilia Galliae* A. 511 - A. 695, ed. C. de Clercq (Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina cxlviii, Turnholt 1963), 4:18-19 (Concilium Aurelianense AD 511 §1); 137:134 (Concilium Aurelianense AD 541 §21); 243:184 (Concilium Matisconense AD 585 §9). Doherty, 'Some aspects', 302, has argued that *valla* divided an Irish site into areas of sanctuary and it is worth noting that the *Hibernensis* quotes a version of the first of these Gaulish canons under the heading *Sinodus Aurelianensis: Hibernensis* 97 (XXVIII:11).

⁶⁵ De Clercq, *Concilia Galliae*, 247:304 (Concilium Matisconense AD 585 §19); 307:119 (Concilium Cabilonense AD 647-53 §19).

⁶⁶ *Eodem in tempore Conallus episcopus Cule Rathin collectis a populo campi Eilni pene innumerabilibus xenis, beato uiro hospitium praeparauit post conductum supra memoratorum regum turba prosequente multa reuertenti. Proinde sancto aduenienti uiro xenia populi multa in platea monasterii strata benedicenda adsignantur*. In Anderson, *Adomnán's Life*, 90-91 (I 50).

⁶⁷ W. Reeves, *The life of St Columba, founder of Hy* (Dublin 1957), 357, 360.

⁶⁸ M. Herity, 'The layout of Irish early Christian monasteries', in *Irland und Europa: Die Kirche im Frühmittelalter* (Stuttgart 1984), 105-116, 108-9; A.D.S. MacDonald, 'Aspects of the monastery and monastic life in Adomnán's life of Columba', in *Peritia* iii (1984), 271-302, 293-7.

⁶⁹ Anderson, *Adomnán's Life*, 91; R. Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona: life of St Columba* (Harmondsworth 1995), 152.

⁷⁰ For attempts to identify ecclesiastical *plateae* through survey of visible monuments, see Herity, 'High Island', 14-17; *id.*, 'The layout of Irish monasteries', 108-9; *id.*, 'The buildings and layout of early Irish monasteries before the year 1000', *Monastic Studies* xiv (1983), 247-279, 260-270. Bitel, *Isle of the saints*, 76 defines *platea* as 'a transitional area between the most sacred space of church and the rest of the enclosure' which was similar to a square or courtyard in appearance but cites no evidence for this view.

⁷¹ *Duo vel tres termini circa locum sanctum debent fieri, primus, in quem praeter sanctorum nullum introire permittimus omnino, quia in eum laici non accedunt, nec mulieres, nisi clerici; secundus, in cuius plateas plebium rusticorum catervas non multum nequitiae deditas intrare sinimus; tertius, in quem laicos homicidas, adulteros permissione et consuetudine intrare non vetamus. Inde vocatur primus sanctissimus, secundus sanctor, tertius sanctus*. In *Hibernensis* 175 (XLIV:5, fn.e); trans. from MacDonald, 'Aspects of the monastery', 296. An alternative version of this same canon merely draws the distinction between those areas into which laymen and women can enter versus those which are limited to the priests: *Quatuor terminos circa locum sanctum posuit, primum in quem laici et mulieres intrant, alterum, in quem clerici tantum veniunt. Primum vocatur sanctus, secundus sanctor, tertius sanctissimus*, see *id.*

⁷² *Hibernensis* 28 (X:c).

⁷³ II Esr 8:16; Dn 9:25; Ier 5:1, 7:17,34, 44:6, Mc 6:56

⁷⁴ II Par 29:4, 32:6; I Ezr 10:9; II Esr 8:1-3; Na 2:4

⁷⁵ II Sm 22:43; Is 10:6; Mi 7:10; Za 9:3; Apc 21:21

⁷⁶ Dt 13:16; II Sm 21:12; Is 15:3; Am 5:16. For references to corpses (which may or may not have been ritually exposed) in the *plateae*, see also Is 5:25; Apc 11:8.

⁷⁷ Idc 19:15; Za 8:4; Est 6:9; Mt 6:5; Prv 7:8

⁷⁸ II Ezr 8:1-3

⁷⁹ *Sanas Cormaic* ed. K. Meyer in *Anecdota from Irish manuscripts* ed. O. Bergin, R.I. Best, K. Meyer & J. O'Keefe, iv (Dublin 1912), 628. See also J. Carey, 'The heavenly city in Saltair na Rann', *Celtica* 18 (1986), 87-104 fn.7 where he instances a number of translations of *faithche* by *platea* in the hagiographical texts. See also *Dictionary of the Irish Language*, F 33:65-34:34 and Bitel, *Isle of the Saints*, 76. Ó Corráin suggests that *faithche* is a possible translation of *suburbana*, 'Vernacular law', 305.

⁸⁰ F. Kelly, *Early Irish Farming* (Early Irish law series iv, Dublin 1997), 369-70 and *Dictionary* as in above reference.

⁸¹ T.E. Charles-Edwards & F. Kelly, *Bechbretha* (Early Irish law series i, Dublin 1983), 154-5, drawing on evidence from *Crith Gablach*, ed. D.A. Binchy (Medieval and Modern Irish series xi, Dublin 1941, repr. 1979), 8:198 and from CIH 72:18. See also

N. Patterson, *Cattle lords and clansmen: the social structure of early Ireland* (Notre Dame & London 1994), 109-111.

⁸² F. Kelly, *A guide to early Irish law* (Early Irish laws series iii, Dublin 1988), 178 quoting *Di Chetharslicht Athgabála*, CIH 422:15-35; 185, quoting CIH 1727:34-5.

⁸³ 'The death of Crimthann son of Fidach and the adventures of the sons of Eochaid Muigmedón', ed. W. Stokes, *Revue Celtique* xxiv (1903), 172-207, 190 (§2). The text is dated through the reference to Brian Bóruma in §16 and to Máelsechlainn mac Domnaill in §19, see *ibid.*, 173.

⁸⁴ *Longes mac nUislen: the exile of the sons of Uisliu*, ed. & trans. V. Hull (New York 1949), 46:139-42 (§11), trans. 64.

⁸⁵ Carey, 'The heavenly city', 88 quoting W. Stokes (ed.), *The Saltair na Rann: a collection of early middle Irish poems* (Oxford 1883), 7 ll.429-40.

⁸⁶ *Mesca Ulad*, ed. J. Carmichael Watson (Medieval & Modern Irish series xiii, Dublin 1967), 3:53-56; 11-12:254-6, 37:831-2; *Togail Bruidne da Derga*, ed. E. Knott, (Medieval and Modern Irish series viii, Dublin 1936, rep. 1975), 15:507-8 (§56), *Tochmarc Ferbe*, ed. E. Windisch in *Irische texte mit übersetzungen und Wörterbuch*, ed. E. Windisch & W. Stokes, 3ii (Leipzig 1897), 462-529, 508:627-8; *Aided Con Culainn*, ed. A.G. Van Hamel in *Compert Con Culainn and other stories* (Medieval and Modern Irish series iii, Dublin 1933), 69-133, 78 (§9).

⁸⁷ *Bethu Brigte*, ed. D. Ó hAodha (Dublin 1978), 4:115-7; *Mesca Ulad*, 22:506-7, 35:784-5; *Longes mac nUislen*, 47-8:180-8 (B15); *The Annals of Ulster (to AD 1131)* ed. S. MacAirt & G. MacNiocaill (Dublin 1983) 102 (*sub annis* 604, 777); *Tochmarc Treblainne*, ed. K. Meyer, in 'Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften' in *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* xiii (1921), 166-75; *Cocad Fergusa*, ed. M. Dobbs, 'La guerre entre Fergus et Conchobar', *Revue Celtique* xl (1923), 404-23, 408 (§3); *Táin Bó Cuáilnge from the Book of Leinster*, ed. C. O'Rahilly (Dublin 1967), 21-2:768-9, 24:875-7.

⁸⁸ E. Knott, 'Why Mongán was deprived of noble issue' *Ériu* viii (1916), 155-9, 157:10-12.

⁸⁹ *Mesca Ulaid*, 11:246-7, 36:813-6, *Togail Bruidne da Derga* 26:861 (§89); *Táin Bó Cuáilnge from Book of Leinster*, 29:1068-74 43:1581-2; *Chronicon Scottorum* ed. W.M. Hennessy (London 1866), *sub anno* 859; Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, 274.

⁹⁰ R. Thurneysen, 'Aus dem irischen Recht II: 2. Das Frei-Leben; 3. Das Fasten beim Pfändungsverfahren', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* xv (1925), 238-76, 265. The relevant quotation is *Trialsat troscud trén in smacht / fer fuídche Cruachna Connacht*, drawn from a poem by Caibre Mac Liac detailing the expulsion of Picts by Caibre Nia Fer in *The Book of Leinster: formerly Lebor na Niachongbála* III, ed. R.I. Best & M.A. O'Brien (Dublin 1957), 648:19763-4.

⁹¹ *Is sí ind fhaithche théchtæ la Féniu ní ro-saig guth cluice no gairm cailig cercc*. In Charles-Edwards & Kelly, *Bechbretha*, 82-3 (§46).

⁹² CIH 55:22-3, 57:15.

⁹³ See Anderson, *Adomnán's life*, I 21 & III 23.

⁹⁴ *In duine ruc in athgabail a faichi nemid. muna fiter cur faichi nemid ocus ní fuair codnach dian fíarfaigh is slan do*. CIH 1439:36-7; 1673:17-19. I would like to thank Colmán

Etchingham for correcting my translation of this passage.

⁹⁵ See F. Kelly, *A guide*, 9-10, and references on 318.

⁹⁶ A.D.S. MacDonald, 'Notes on terminology in the Annals of Ulster', *Peritia* i (1982), 329-33.

⁹⁷ See A.H.M. Jones, 'The cities of the Roman empire: political administrative and judicial functions' in *The Roman economy* ed. P. Brunt (Oxford 1974), 1-34, esp. p.4.

⁹⁸ L. Köhler, 'Die Hebräische Rechtsgemeinde' in *Der Hebräische Mensch: eine Skizze* (Tübingen 1953, rep. Darmstadt 1980), 143-71.

⁹⁹ J. McClure, 'Bede's Old Testament kings' in *Ideal and reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon society: studies presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. P. Wormald, D. Bullough & R. Collins (Oxford 1983), 76-98, 84.

¹⁰⁰ D. Ó Corráin, 'Vernacular law', 296-7.

¹⁰¹ *Hibernensis* 215 (LIII:9)

¹⁰² *Omnis civitas refugii cum suburbanis suis posita est. b. Item: Omnis civitas sacerdotibus data cum suburbanis suis XV milia longitudinis et latitudinis X milia alendis pecoribus sacerdotum fuit. c. Item: Ezechial metiens civitatem aliquando metitur mille passus, aliquando milia passuum in orientem sic. et reliq. d. Item: Templum Salomonis habuit septum circa se in quo qui malum feceret periret. e. Item Tabernaculum Moysi circa se atrium habuit. f. Item Ezechiel: Vidi angelum habentem arundinem in manu, ut metiret civitatem in circuitu et plateas ejus foras. g. Item in apocalipsin: Venit angelus ut metiret civitatem et plateas ejus. h. Item in Zacharia: Quando reversi sunt a Babilone, aedificaverunt templum et circumseptum ejus et reliqua. Hibernensis 175 (XLIV:2)*

¹⁰³ Gwynn & Purton, 'The monastery of Tallaght', 156-7 (§71), CIH 1432:3-10, Ó Corráin, 'Vernacular law', 296-9, 304-5; Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, 569.

¹⁰⁴ Kelly, *Early Irish Farming*, 568.

¹⁰⁵ M. Herren, *The Hispanica Famina I: the A text* (Toronto 1974), 86:310 - 88:322 (trans. 87-89): *Incalcate precodum turmae castreas meant a[r]geas septaque irrunt bouella quadiganas <oi> idium concilia scandunt aulas ad hirti lustrant suistas porci ferreos sonipedum fulcris nectunt aurigae sigillos. Innumerae agrestium turmae solitum laborandi eruunt de c<r>uribus nexum ac solitis aprici tegminis quiescunt in aulis. Ob hoc alma civilis globi adeamus moenia aptam benignus filoxinia<m> colonis. The date of the text is discussed in *ibid.*, 32-39.*

¹⁰⁶ *Omnis reus ad ianum civitatis adducetur et coram testibus punietur in Hibernensis* 85 (XXVII:2).

¹⁰⁷ Bieler, *Patrician texts*, 66:16, 86:16, 88:17, 110:22. Pace Valante, 'Reassessing the monastic town', 8 where she states that *civitas* is used only of a monastery with resident bishop.

¹⁰⁸ *Acta Sanctorum Bollandiani: Vita I.S. Brigidae Virginæ*, Feb. I, 118-129 131 (§88); S. Connolly, 'Vita Prima Sanctae Brigidae: background and historical value' *Journal of Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* cxix (1989), 5-49, 40 (§88).

¹⁰⁹ *Art Mess Talmann díbad a chlann is lais con-rótacht Múr nAilinne* licet antea* civitas regalis fuit. * = quae postea fuit. See *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, ed. M.A. O'Brien (Dublin 1961), 20 (quoting Rawl. B 502 118a 29ff and between stars (*..*), a variant in the Book of Leinster: 311 b 27ff). I would like to thank Colmán Etchingham for giving me this*

reference.

¹¹⁰ *Annals of Ulster, sub annis 782, 784, 825, 835, 838, 887*. See also *Annals of Tigernach sub anno 716* where Iona is described as a *ciuitas*.

¹¹¹ L. Bieler, *Four Latin lives of St. Patrick* (Scriptores Latini Hiberniae viii, Dublin 1971), 149-50. *Deinde uenit Patricius ad Conallum filium Neil et suscepit eum Conal cum gaudio magno et baptizauit eum; et obtulit Patricio domum suam et omne habitaculum et dixit ei: 'Fac tibi ciuitatem de hoc habitaculo et ego faciam michi aliud habitaculum prae foribus ciuitatis tuae'. Et ita fecit ibi Patricius ciuitatem quae nunc dicitur Domnach Patraic. Et depinxit Patricius habitaculum Conallo de baculo suo, hic est Rath Airthir*. Dating of the text is discussed on pages 25-6.

¹¹² C. Swift, 'The local context of Óenach Tailten', *Ríocht na Midhe* x.2 (2000), 1-27, 23-4, fn.9.

¹¹³ Bieler, *Patrician texts*, 134:2 (§13.3) I use here the spelling of the head-word in the *Dictionary* but in later Middle Irish it can also be spelt *lios*, *lis* and *leas*.

¹¹⁴ Bieler, *Patrician texts* 174:6-7 (§11.2); Ó hAodha, *Bethu Brigte*, 7:210-215 (§22).

¹¹⁵ J. O'Neill, 'The rule of Ailbe of Emly', *Ériu* iii (1907), 92-115, 104 (§33)

¹¹⁶ MacAirt & MacNiocaill, 364: *Ard Macha do loscadh di ait i quint kl. Mai. .i. a leith deiscertach cosin Toi 7 cosint Saball 7 cusin chucin 7 cosind lius abad huile* [Ard Macha was burned by lightning on the fifth of the Kalends of May (27 April), i.e. the southern part of it with the Toi (?) and the barn and the kitchen and the whole of the abbot's les].

¹¹⁷ Mallory, 'The fort', 28-38, 31, 34-7.

¹¹⁸ Best & Bergin, *Lebor na hUidre*, 255:8370-8380.

¹¹⁹ D.A. Binchy, *Crith Gablach*, (Medieval and Modern Irish series xi, Dublin 1941, rep. 1979), 8:209-210 (§16), 77-8; E. Windisch, *Táin Bó Dartrada in Irische Texte*, II.2 (Leipzig 1887), 185-205, 192:75-6 (§5); R. Thurneysen, *Scéla Mucce meic Dathó* (Medieval and Modern Irish series vi, Dublin 1935), 6:6-7 (§5). See also references to *bóaire*, *mruigfer* and *briugiu* cited in Kelly, *A guide*, 304, 305, 317.

¹²⁰ Hull, *Longes mac nUislenn*, 45:86-9, O'Rahilly, *Táin: First Recension*, 17:530-1, 19:588-9, 72:2372-5, Best & Bergin, *Táin Bó Flidais*, 55:1569-71

¹²¹ Best & Bergin, *Mesca Ulad*, 51:1478-80, Meid, *Táin Bó Fraích*, 15:372, Thurneysen, *Scéla Mucce*, 17:10 - 18:4 (§18)

¹²² Ó hAodha, *Bethu Brigte*, 4:141-2, O'Rahilly, *Táin: First Recension*, 18:573-4, Best & Bergin, *Mesca Ulad*, 51:1478-80, Meid, *Táin Bó Fraích*, 15:372, Thurneysen, *Scéla Mucce*, 17:10 -18:4 (§18)

¹²³ O'Rahilly, *Táin: First Recension*, 16:487-8; Knott, *Togail Bruidne da Derga*, 45:1513-4 (§165); *Táin Bó Flidais in Lebor na hUidre*, 56:1606-8; *Fled Bricrend in Lebor na hUidre*, 264:8713-20

¹²⁴ M. Dillon, *Serglige Con Culainn* (Medieval & Modern Irish series xiv, Dublin 1953), 17:498 (§33).

¹²⁵ See O'Rahilly, *Táin: Book of Leinster*, 21:768 - 22:709 & O'Rahilly, *Táin: First Recension* 17:530-1 (on Emain Macha); *Tochmarc Treblainne*, ed. K. Meyer, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* xiii (1921), 168:7-9 & Meid, *Táin Bó Fraích*, 3:63-4.

¹²⁶ *Lebor Bretnach: the Irish version of the Historia Brittonum*

ascribed to Nennius ed. A.G. Van Hamel (Dublin 1932), 33, quoted by Carey, 'The heavenly city', 89.

¹²⁷ J. Carney, *The poems of Blathmac son of Cú Brettan* (Dublin 1964), 92-4 (§10, §13). The *Irish Gospel of Thomas* is dated by Carney to the seventh or eighth centuries, *ibid.*, xviii.

¹²⁸ A. Hamlin & C. Lynn, 'Zur Archäologie früher kirchlicher und profaner Siedlungen in Irland' in *Kilian - Mönch aus Irland - aller Franken Patron*, ed. J. Erichsen & E. Brockhoff (München 1989), 57-73, esp. 60-62.

¹²⁹ J. Barber, 'Excavations on Iona 1979', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* cxi (1981), 282-381, 346-8; Reeves, *Columba, founder of Hy*, 361-3.

¹³⁰ Doherty, 'Monastic town', 59, 47, 52-3; see also K. Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: introduction to the sources* (London, 74-5).

¹³¹ Doherty, 'Monastic town', 54 quoting M.J. O'Kelly, 'Church Island near Valencia, Co. Kerry', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* lixC (1958), 57-136, 127-8; T. Fanning, 'Excavation of an early Christian cemetery and settlement at Reask, County Kerry', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* lxxxiC (1981), 3-172, 150; Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, *Argyll Volume 4: Iona* (Edinburgh 1982), 12-13, 36-41; A.C. Thomas, *The early Christian archaeology of north Britain* (London, Glasgow and New York 1971), 48-90.

¹³² Fanning, 'Reask', 150; O'Kelly, 'Church Island', 77-87, 127-8; C. Swift, *Ogam stones and the earliest Irish Christians* (Maynooth 1997), 76-8.

¹³³ Royal Commission, *Iona*, 13.

¹³⁴ Thomas, *North Britain*, 62, 68-9, 74; A. Hamlin, *The archaeology of early Christianity in the north of Ireland*, unpublished Ph.D thesis, (Queen's University Belfast), 134.

¹³⁵ Thomas, *North Britain*, 68; for further criticism of Thomas' model see Swift, 'Celtic monasticism', 21-2.

¹³⁶ Fanning, 'Reask', 76-9; Royal Commission, *Iona*, 41; O'Kelly, 'Church Island', 76.

¹³⁷ Doherty, 'Monastic town', 57.

¹³⁸ Doherty, 'Monastic town', 60, referring to Herity 'The buildings and lay-out of early Irish monasteries'. The page dealing with Clonmacnoise is Herity, 'The buildings', 278.

¹³⁹ H. King, 'Clonmacnoise: high crosses', *Excavations 1994* ed. I. Bennett (Bray 1995), 74.

¹⁴⁰ Doherty, 'Monastic town', 67; C. Doherty, 'Exchange and trade in early medieval Ireland', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* cx (1980), 67-89, 81.

¹⁴¹ Swift, 'Óenach Tailten', 5-12.

¹⁴² Swan, 'Enclosed ecclesiastical site', 270; Swan, 'Monastic proto-town', 77-8, 97-9. Note, however, that on the plans of Armagh and Downpatrick provided on page 98 in this last article, the market cross appears at the gateway of the inner enclosure.

¹⁴³ Swan, 'Monastic proto-town', 100; 'Enclosed ecclesiastical sites', 274-7.

¹⁴⁴ C. Gaskell Brown and A. Harper, 'Excavations on Cathedral Hill, Armagh 1968', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, xlvii (1984), 109-61, 112-17, 158; C. Lynn and J. A. McDowell, 'Armagh: the oldest city in Ireland', in *Pieces of the past* ed. A. Hamlin and C. Lynn (Belfast 1988), 57-61, 58; R. Ivens,

'Tullylish: around an early church' in *ibid.* 55-6; Royal Commission, *Iona*, 12, 36-9.

¹⁴⁵ H.C. Lawlor, *The monastery of Saint Machaoi of Nendrum* (Belfast 1925), 106-9, 141-148.

¹⁴⁶ See Mallory and MacNeill, 206 who suggest this independently.

¹⁴⁷ Lawlor, *Nendrum*, 70-1, 160-2, Pl. II, XII.

¹⁴⁸ Edwards, *Archaeology*, 107.

¹⁴⁹ Lynn and McDowell, 'Armagh', 60; C. Lynn, 'Excavations at 46-48 Scotch Street, Armagh, 1979-80', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* li (1988), 69-84; C. Lynn, 'Recent archaeological excavations in Armagh city: an interim summary', *Seanchas Ard Mhacha* viii.2 (1977), 275-80, 278.

¹⁵⁰ L. Swan, 'Excavations at Kilpatrick churchyard, Killucan, Co. Westmeath, July-August 1973 and 1975', *Riocht na Midhe*

vi.2 (1976), 89-96; L. Swan, 'Excavations at Kilpatrick, Killucan, Co. Westmeath: evidence for bone, antler and iron working', *Riocht na Midhe* ix.1 (1994/5), 1-21; Royal Commission, *Iona*, 13.

¹⁵¹ H. King, 'New graveyard, Clonmacnoise: early Christian settlement', *Excavations 1996*, ed. I. Bennett, 92-3.

¹⁵² Bradley, 'Clonmacnoise', 46-7.

¹⁵³ The reconstruction drawings by Hamlin of an eighth-century Irish ecclesiastical settlement and by Mallory and MacNeill of Nendrum indicate that some archaeologists already interpret the larger ecclesiastical enclosures as areas of agricultural exploitation; Hamlin, 'The archaeology of the Irish church', 298; Mallory and MacNeill, 206. To my knowledge, however, the case has not yet been argued in print.

¹⁵⁴ Graham, 'Urban genesis', 7-8.