

Máire Herbert
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The Life of Martin of Tours: a view from twelfth-century Ireland

MÁIRE HERBERT

The writings of Sulpicius Severus about Martin of Tours, compiled in the final decade of the fourth century, were known in Irish monastic circles at least by the close of the seventh century, when they served as an important model for Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*.¹ Indeed, the Martinian writings were also used in the composition of the Lives of two other Iona saints, Baithéne and Adomnán, author of the *Vita Columbae*.² Liturgical commemoration of Martin, attested in the *Vita Columbae*, reinforces the sense that the Columban monastic community particularly venerated Martin as an exemplar of asceticism who had privileged access to the supernatural world.³ Yet Martin's veneration in early Christian Ireland was not solely a Columban prerogative, as the evidence of surviving hymns, Mass invocations, and calendar commemorations reveals.⁴ Moreover, the beginnings of Martin's cult among the Irish may be earlier than indicated by the surviving records, if Columbanus's reported pilgrimage to Tours be deemed to reflect a devotion dating back to his monastic formation in sixth-century Ireland.⁵

What emerges significantly from all of the foregoing testimony is that in early Christian Ireland Martin was appropriated in his monastic rather than in his episcopal persona. We note, for instance, that the names of Antony and of Martin are linked together in the epilogue to *Féilire Oengusso*, composed around the beginning of the ninth century.⁶ While the works of Sulpicius Severus may have been known to Muirchú when he was compiling his Life of Patrick in the late seventh century, it is not Martin's *Vita* but apocryphal *acta* of New Testament apostles which provided the most significant literary template for the depiction of Ireland's premier bishop-apostle.⁷

¹ Reference is made to the *Vita Martini* edition by J. Fontaine, *Sulpice Sévère, Vie de Saint Martin*, 3 vols (Paris 1967–9). For the *Dialogi*, see edition by C. Halm, *CSEL* 1 (Vienna 1866). English translations in A. Roberts, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* vol. XI (repr. Edinburgh 1991) pp 1–54. On the use of Sulpicius's works, see G. Brüning, 'Adamnans Vita Columbae und ihre Ableitungen', *ZCP* 11 (1917) pp 213–304 (especially pp 247–9); J.M. Picard, 'Structural patterns in early Hiberno-Latin hagiography', *Peritia* 4 (1985) pp 67–82; id. 'Tailoring the sources: the Irish hagiographer at work', in P. Ni Chatháin and M. Richter (eds), *Irland und Europa im früheren Mittelalter: Bildung und Literatur* (Stuttgart 1996) pp 261–74. ² *Vita S. Baithini*, ed. W.W. Heist, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae ex codice olim Salmanticensi nunc Bruxellensi* (Brussels 1965) pp 379–82; *Life of Adomnán*, ed. M. Herbert and P. Ó Riain, *Betha Adamnán: The Irish life of Adamnán* (London 1988). See also M. Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry: the history and hagiography of the monastic familia of Columba* (Oxford 1988, repr. Dublin 1996) pp 148–50, 170–74. ³ *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, ed. A.O. and M.O. Anderson (revised ed. Oxford 1991) Book III. 12. See R. Sharpe, *Adomnán of Iona: Life of St Columba* (London 1995) note 379, p. 366. ⁴ On Martinian commemoration in Ireland, see, in particular, P. Grosjean, 'Gloria postuma S. Martini Iuronensis apud Scottos at Britannos', *AB* 55 (1937) pp 300–48; A. Gwynn, 'The cult of St Martin in Ireland', *IER* 5 ser. 105 (1966) pp 353–64; M. Richter, *Ireland and her neighbours in the seventh century* (Dublin and New York 1999) pp 225–31; M. Lapidge, 'A new Hiberno-Latin hymn on St Martin', *Celtica* 21 (1990) pp 240–51. ⁵ Jonas, *Vita Columbani abbatis*, I. 22 (ed. B. Krusch, *MGH. SRM* 4 (Hannover 1902) pp 61–152. ⁶ *Féilire Oengusso Céili Dé: The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*, ed. W. Stokes (London 1905) p. 276, n° 273. ⁷ For Muirchú's use of Sulpicius, see Picard, 'Structural patterns', pp 71–2. On alternative influences, see A. O'Leary, 'An Irish apocryphal apostle: Muirchú's portrayal of Saint Patrick', *Harvard Theological Review* 89 (1996) pp 287–301.

Evident promotion of Martin among Patrick's devotees in Armagh seems to be attested securely only from about the beginning of the ninth century. The most significant indication is, of course, the copy of Sulpicius Severus's *Vita* of Martin, together with two of his *Dialogues*, entered into the Book of Armagh, alongside the New Testament and the dossier of texts relating to St Patrick, around the year 807.⁸ It would seem that the ninth century was also the time when contact with Martin was first depicted in Patrician hagiography.⁹ The vernacular *Vita Tripartita* provides the most elaborated version of this contact. It represents Patrick, in the course of his studies in Gaul, visiting Tours and receiving the monastic tonsure from Martin. Moreover, the two saints are linked by kinship as well as by ecclesiastical association, since Patrick's mother is identified as a sister of Martin.¹⁰

Set in historical context, the Armagh evidence suggests that Martin receives new prominence there in a period of institutional repositioning, when *abbas* is attested as a designation of the successor of Patrick, the representative of his community in ecclesiastical and secular assemblies.¹¹ Learned activity in Armagh, documenting a special relationship with Martin, seems to reflect contemporary propaganda regarding Armagh's status within the Irish church. Martin, favoured saint of Ireland's leading monastic churches, is shown as having superior personal links with Patrick. The Book of Armagh, copied for the abbot Torbach at the beginning of the ninth century, may be seen as a collection of core documents sustaining the current ecclesiastical status of the successor of Patrick. Thus, the New Testament represented his general Christian allegiance, the Patrician dossier, his particular allegiance, while the Martinian writings linked Patrick's church and community with the well-spring of Western monasticism.¹²

There is little indication, however, that the actual text of Sulpicius Severus's writings had any more than symbolic significance in Armagh in the period after it was copied at abbot Torbach's behest. Surviving evidence indicates that Martin's veneration owed little to detailed knowledge about his life and deeds. Only a few broad brush-strokes delineated Martin's portrait, highlighting his intercessory powers and his links with Patrick.¹³ As the ninth century progressed Viking attacks disrupted ordered ecclesiastical life, and secular power encroached. From the tenth century onward, successive holders of Armagh's highest ecclesiastical office were lay members of a prominent local family, who held the temporalities of Armagh as a hereditary possession.¹⁴ The vernacular supplanted Latin as the main medium of ecclesiastical writing, and scholarship itself must have been constantly hindered. The Latin works of Sulpicius Severus evidently lay dormant during this time.

Yet some continuity seems to have been maintained in Armagh scholarly circles, and by the eleventh century signs of resurgence are in evidence. Many factors played a part – a renewal of pilgrimage to Rome, contact with Irish monastic houses established on the continent in the tenth

⁸ Diplomatic edition by J. Gwynn, *Liber Ardmachanus* (Dublin 1913). For the texts on Martin (*LA* fol. 192r–222r), see Gwynn, pp 377–438. On the status of the Armagh copy in the text tradition of Sulpicius's works, see Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin* I, p. 219; Richter, *Ireland and her neighbours*, p. 228. ⁹ The date is suggested on the grounds that reference to Martin does not form part of the common source shared by the *Vita Secunda*, *Vita Quarta* and *Vita Tripartita* of Patrick. See L. Bieler (ed.), *Four Latin Lives of St Patrick* (Dublin 1971) pp 1–13. ¹⁰ *Bethu Phátraic: The Tripartite Life of Patrick*, ed. K. Mulchrone (Dublin 1939) lines 83–84, pp 249–51. I hold that this text has a stratum of ninth-century material, but was reworked in the tenth century, and subsequently edited in its present tripartite homily form in the eleventh century. ¹¹ See, for instance, *AU* at the years 804, 811. ¹² A different view has been expressed by R. Sharpe, 'Palaeographical considerations in the study of the Patrician Documents in the Book of Armagh', *Scriptorium* 36 (1982) pp 3–28. ¹³ See anecdotes published by Grosjean, 'Gloria postuma', pp 321–2, 344–5. ¹⁴ T. Ó Fiaich, 'The Church of Armagh under lay control', *Seanchas Ardmbacha* 5 (1969) pp 75–127 (particularly 75–90).

and eleventh centuries, contact with English monastic reform, and, by the latter part of the eleventh century, contact with the nascent movement for Irish ecclesiastical reform, primarily centred on Munster.¹⁵ While hereditary succession of laymen was still in evidence in the governance of Armagh, ecclesiastical scholars like Máel Ísa Ua Brolcháin, who died in the year 1086, produced new devotional writings which witness to a revival in Latin as well as in vernacular scholarship.¹⁶ The view that renewal of intellectual and spiritual life should be accompanied by institutional reform evidently began to take root. By the beginning of the twelfth century, it had gained momentum.

Cellach, a member of the Ua Sinaich family who held hereditary rights to the headship of Armagh, took ecclesiastical orders on his accession, and subsequently received episcopal ordination in the year 1106.¹⁷ In his person, therefore, Cellach was a transitional figure between hereditary and reformed structures in the governance of Armagh. Fusion between tradition and innovation, moreover, was a feature of Armagh artistic and scholarly output in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Manuscript decoration reveals continuity with the decoration of the Book of Armagh as well as newer influences.¹⁸ Textually, a collection of homilies, apparently begun around this time, gives fresh currency to Latin exegesis and sermon material of previous centuries by setting these in new vernacular contexts.¹⁹ The library of Armagh thus provided resources from the past to be reworked in the interests of present and future.

The transition into a new era proved most difficult at the level of ecclesiastical structures of authority. After Cellach's death in the year 1129, his chosen successor, was Malachy (Máel Máedóc Ua Morgair), a monk who had received sacerdotal and episcopal orders. The latter's assumption of Armagh authority was vigorously opposed by the holders of hereditary privilege. It took about three years for Malachy's succession to be established. Then, in accordance with his wishes, once the principle that clerical orders were the *sine qua non* of Armagh headship had been established Malachy resigned from Armagh office in the year 1137.²⁰ His designated successor, Gilla Mac Liag, (Gelasius) had also begun his ecclesiastical career as a monk, and had been head of the Columban community in Derry prior to his episcopacy and accession to Armagh.²¹ During the latter's long term of office which extended until his death in 1174, Armagh participation in ecclesiastical reform was effectively consolidated.

In retrospect, then, the first half of the twelfth century was a pivotal era in the establishment of ecclesiastical reform in the north of Ireland. Intellectual and artistic endeavours both reflected and promoted the ideals of the reformers, as they sought a new synthesis between the best of the

¹⁵ See, for instance, A. Gwynn, *The twelfth-century reform* (Dublin 1968); idem, *The Irish Church in the 11th and 12th centuries*, ed. G. O'Brien (Dublin 1992); D. Bethell, 'English monks and Irish reform in the eleventh and twelfth centuries', *Historical Studies* 8 (1971) pp 111–35. ¹⁶ M. Ní Bhrolcháin, *Maol Ísa Ó Brolcháin* (Maigh Nuad 1986). ¹⁷ AU 1105, 1106; Ó Fiaich, 'Lay control', 94–5. ¹⁸ F. Henry, *Irish Art in the Romanesque Period 1020–1170 AD* (London 1973) pp 63–73. ¹⁹ F. Mac Donncha, 'Medieval Irish homilies', *Biblical Studies: the medieval Irish contribution*, ed. M. McNamara (Dublin 1976) pp 59–71; J. Rittmueller, 'The Hiberno-Latin background of the Leabhar Breac homily *In Cena Domini*', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 2 (1982) pp 1–10; eadem, *The Leabhar Breac Latin and Middle-Irish homily 'In Cena Domini': An edition and source analysis*, Harvard Ph.D. Thesis 1984. ²⁰ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Vita Sancti Malachiae*, ed. J. Leclercq and H.M. Rochais, *Sancti Bernardi Opera* III (Rome 1963) pp 197–378; Irish annal entries relating to Malachy include A1g. 1134, 1140, 1148; AFM 1132, 1134, 1135, 1136, 1147, 1148. See also A. Gwynn, 'Saint Malachy and the see of Armagh, 1121–37' *The Irish Church in the 11th and 12th Centuries*, pp 193–217. On his surname and genealogical background, see H.J. Lawlor's notes to his translation, *St Bernard of Clairvaux's life of St Malachy of Armagh* (London 1920) note 5; Gwynn, *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, p. 310. ²¹ *Annála Uladh: The Annals of Ulster* ed. W.M. Hennessy and B. MacCarthy, 4 vols (Dublin 1887–1901) vol. II, s.a. 1174.

past and the innovation of the present. Among the written works revived and recreated in this era were the writings of Sulpicius Severus on Martin. The Latin *Vita Martini* and the *Dialogi* on the saint were reintroduced into Irish public consciousness in the form of a vernacular homily.

The text of the homily now survives in three manuscript copies. The earliest, Royal Irish Academy 23 P 16, An Leabhar Breac, (hereafter B), fol. 59a16–61b21, is dated to the beginning of the fifteenth century. The other two copies are found in sixteenth-century manuscripts, British Library Egerton 91, fol. 42–44b (E) and King's Inns MS 10, ff 48d1–51a22 (K).²² While all three copies derive ultimately from a common exemplar, the version in B is distinct from that in E and K. The latter two, however, are not directly related to each other. In fact, the relationship between the textual witnesses parallels that of the B, E, and K copies of another hagiographical homily, the Middle-Irish version of the Life of Colum Cille (hereafter CC).²³ The joint evidence of language and content has been used to date the latter work around the mid-twelfth century.²⁴ Though Stokes suggested a thirteenth-century date for the homily on Martin (hereafter *Mart*),²⁵ its linguistic profile reveals evident correspondences with the language of CC. Certainly the combined manuscript testimony regarding *Mart* reveals no features characteristic of a date later than that of CC.²⁶ For instance, the proportion of infixed to independent pronouns in *Mart* is 3:2, while that in CC is 6:6.²⁷ The verbal system shows similar features in both texts, and one must be very tentative in seeking to differentiate between them. There are, however, a few instances in which the earlier verbal form occurs in *Mart*, such as *co ndessid* (§ 34) and *forémdid* (§ 17), where CC correspondingly has *ro suid* (481) and *ro fhemid* (191).²⁸ Overall, the sum of linguistic evidence indicates that *Mart* belongs generally to the same era as CC, but probably comes before CC in order of compilation. Therefore, the date of *Mart* may be placed within the first half of the twelfth century.

What was the provenance of *Mart*? The availability in the Book of Armagh of the full range of Martinian writings used in the homily is an important consideration.²⁹ Moreover, the case has long been made for Armagh as a centre of homiletic activity within the period 1050–1150.³⁰ The main source of the homiletic *exordium* of *Mart* has been identified as Bede's commentary *In Lucae Evangelium*, a text available in Armagh, and cited in exegetical commentary in an Armagh gospel-

22 The B text has been edited by W. Stokes, 'A Middle-Irish homily on S. Martin of Tours', *RC* 2 (1873–5) pp 381–402. Textual references throughout are denoted by the chapter-numbers of Stokes's edition. 23 See the edition of this homily in Herbert, *Iona*, pp 211–88. For an account of the manuscripts and text tradition, see in particular pp 211–17. 24 The arguments are set out in Herbert, *Iona*, pp 180–99. 25 'Middle-Irish homily', p. 383. 26 Dating criteria are set out in Herbert, *Iona*, pp 185–88. See also K.H. Jackson (ed.), *Aislinge Meic Conglinne* (Dublin 1990) Appendix, pp 73–140. 27 I have examined and compared all three manuscript versions of *Mart*, using microfilm and photostar copies. I base my statistics on forms common to all manuscripts. 28 Herbert, *Iona*, pp 186–8. I have compared the evidence from *Mart* with the full evidence of my study of the language of CC and have also taken account of Rittmueller's examination of the linguistic profile of the comparable *Leabhar Breac* homily *In cena Domini* (Ph.D. thesis, pp 134–74). 29 Published by Gwynn, *Liber Ardmachanus* (note 8 above). The Irish text of *Mart* is printed in parallel with the corresponding Latin text of Sulpicius from the Book of Armagh in E. Hogan, *The Latin Lives of the Saints as aids towards the translation of Irish texts and the production of an Irish dictionary* (Dublin 1894) pp 87–100. Quotations from Sulpicius in *Mart* show occasional variations from the wording of the Armagh text. However, such variation might well have arisen through scribal misunderstanding. We must be mindful that there are two centuries between the date of compilation of *Mart* and the date of its earliest surviving copy. 30 Mac Donncha, 'Medieval Irish homilies', sets out the arguments, and also links the compilation of a homily-collection with a particular scholar, Máel Ísu Ua Broilcháin, head of the school of Armagh, who died in 1086. While this identification cannot be substantiated, the independent work of Rittmueller on a specific homily confirms Armagh provenance, and supports a dating 1050–1150 for a corpus of homiletic materials. However, the largest collection of homilies in the *Leabhar Breac* includes some compositions from 1200 or later, indicating that homily writing continued beyond the upper dating limit suggested by Mac Donncha; see K. Jackson, 'The historical grammar of Irish: Some actualities and some desiderata', *Proceedings of the Sixth*

book, now British Library MS Harley 1802, dated to the year 1138.³¹ Indeed, the foregoing commentary contains one short passage paralleled in the *exordium* of *Mart*.³² The evidence is cumulative, therefore, that the scholarly resources used by the compiler of *Mart* were all available in the library of twelfth-century Armagh.

The homily's opening gospel text, *Nemo potest duobus dominis seruire* (Mt 6:24), sets the narrative tone for a sermon which stresses that worldly concerns and enslavement to wealth are incompatible with the service of God. While certain Irish hagiographical homilies reveal a lack of integration between the account of the saint's career and the sermon material which encloses it, *Mart* reveals purposeful unity between the two. Thus, the account of Martin's career may be seen to exemplify the counsel of the *exordium*, while the homiletic *peroratio* sums up the saint's virtues in phrases derived from the *Vita Martini* (*VM*) itself. The works of Sulpicius Severus provide the narrative substance of *Mart*. Following the homiletic *exordium* (§ 1–8), the narrative of § 9–34 in broad outline follows *VM* II – XXIV. There is a switch of source to the *Dialogi* at this point, so that § 35–37 of *Mart* are based successively on § 2, 4, and 9 of Sulpicius's second book of Dialogues, while *Mart* § 38–41 represent the content of § 2, 14, 8, and 15 of Sulpicius's third book of Dialogues. The closing *peroratio* reverts for its material to *VM* § 25–27.³³

At first sight, then, *Mart* appears as a skilful condensation of the works of Sulpicius, renewing access to a hagiographical classic through the vernacular. There is a concern to follow Sulpicius's lead in the ordering of events, and an avoidance of additional commentary and interpolation. Yet there is more in question than simply recreation in a new medium. There is a process of omission as well as of retention, a process of decision rather than of default. The writer of *Mart* does not take a neutral attitude to his source. He actively shapes it in accordance with his own priorities.

Shifts in emphasis are discernible throughout, when the Irish account of Martin's career is set alongside that of Sulpicius. We see, for instance, that the Martin of Sulpicius's narrative was often a controversial figure, who was vilified, and even physically attacked on occasions. The author of *Mart*, however, views his subject at greater distance, presenting him as a heroic exemplar rather than as a contemporary recalled in personal detail. The author of *Mart* generally omits any material which reveals the saint on the defensive, or subject to human fear or doubts. There is no mention of Arian opposition to Martin, for instance, nor is there a sense of the enforced nature of his withdrawal to Gallinaria.³⁴ The opposition to his episcopal consecration by bishop Defensor is not mentioned, nor are two attempts on Martin's life.³⁵ Even incidents showing the saint turning the tables on his attackers are, for the most part, avoided.³⁶ A very abbreviated account of Bricio's denunciation of Martin is used by the Irish homilist to point the lesson of the saint's scripturally-guided forbearance.³⁷

While secular nobles are among Martin's opponents in Sulpicius's narrative, they also figure among those impressed by the saint's holiness and by the divine power channelled through him.

International Congress of Celtic Studies, ed. G. Mac Eoin (Dublin 1983) pp 1–18. ³¹ *Beda: In Lucae evangelium expositio*, ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL* 120 (Turnhout 1960) pp 299–300 (= Lk 16:13). See Mac Donncha, p. 66, and Rittmueller, (Ph.D. thesis, p. 312). The homily material consists of a series of extracts from Bede's work rather than a direct transcript. On the Armagh gospel commentary, see J. Rittmueller, 'The Gospel commentary of Máelbrigte ua Máeluaig and its Hiberno-Latin background', *Peritia* 2 (1983) pp 185–214; eadem, *Peritia* 3 (1984) pp 215–18. ³² I have examined the microfilm copy of Harl. 1802. Its commentary on Mt 6:24 is very brief, but the content parallels matter in *Mart* § 6, on the definition of Mammon, and on the distinction between possession of riches and enslavement to them. ³³ The Book of Armagh contains only the Dialogues on Martin's life (Dialogues II and III). On the layout of the Martinian texts in the Book of Armagh, see Gwynn, 'The cult of St Martin', p. 355. ³⁴ *VM* VI.4–5. ³⁵ *VM* IX.4–7; XV.1–3. ³⁶ For example, *Dial.* II.3, 5; III.4. ³⁷ *Dial.* III.15, *Mart* §41.

The Irish author of *Mart*, however, is wary of depicting his subject in any relation with societal magnates. He evidently seeks to sustain the uncompromising counsel of his scriptural lesson *Nemo potest duobus dominis seruire* Martin's youthful declaration to the Caesar Julian that he was renouncing earthly for heavenly service thus takes on a heightened significance in *Mart* as does the saint's certainty that Christ would not manifest himself on earth in royal apparel.³⁸ The homilist conveys the view that Martin prevails through his own trust in God rather than through association with earthly potentates.

Martin is portrayed in the homily as a person committed to divine service, whether as soldier, monk, or bishop. The text discloses a strong partiality for the monastic life. It is that which Martin contemplates in his youth; in his military days 'he was not deemed a soldier but a monk', and when compelled from his monastery to take the bishopric of Tours, 'he relinquished not his monk's way of life'.³⁹ *Mart* does not differ from Sulpicius in any of the foregoing, but the statements are thrown into higher relief in the shorter Irish text. Martin is shown as the epitome of true monastic values in his denial of worldliness, in his humility and in his asceticism. Yet the author of *Mart* is concerned to show a pastoral aspect also. He chooses from Sulpicius incidents in which Martin's demeanour and miraculous deeds bring about conversions.⁴⁰ Accounts of the raising from the dead of an unbaptised catechumen and of a suicide are concerned with spiritual as well as bodily regeneration.⁴¹ Martin's powers to discern truth from falsehood are shown to be deployed on behalf of the whole community. He unmasks the bogus martyr who was being publicly commemorated, and exposes the demonically-inspired misinformation about an attack on the city.⁴² Martin's empathy with those in need brings about individual healings as well as the communal freeing of the Senones from yearly hailstorms.⁴³ Thus, while monastic virtues accorded the saint access to supernatural power, his use of power is clearly shown to have extended beyond monastic confines, to benefit church and community.

Indeed, in recounting miraculous deeds and signs of divine affirmation, the author of *Mart* clearly is not concerned with accumulating as many instances as possible. There are omissions in the case of all of the main categories of Martinian *virtutes* recounted by Sulpicius, nature miracles, healings, exorcisms, supernatural encounters and revelations.⁴⁴ Certainly the homily format required some abbreviation of Sulpicius's narratives, and the Irish writer evidently seeks to avoid excessive repetition of similar types of story. Beyond that, however, the homilist seems to favour incidents which have didactic or directly beneficial import over those which primarily evoke wonder. Thus, we may note that *Mart* omits nature miracles like the immobilisation of hounds to save a hare, as well as supernatural signs such as the appearance of a fiery globe above the saint's head during Mass.⁴⁵ The Irish hagiographer evidently wishes to portray a saint whose wonderworking was primarily concerned with human welfare, both spiritual and temporal.

The sum of evidence has indicated a date of compilation for *Mart* within the first half of the twelfth century. Its scholarly context fits that of contemporary Armagh, where texts from early Irish Christianity were being revived and recreated. The historical context of *Mart* coincides with the era of ecclesiastical reform in Armagh. The homily presents Martin as a saintly exemplar for this era, as a man who lived out the biblical exhortation to serve God with single-minded purpose,

³⁸ *Mart* §13, 34. ³⁹ *Mart* §9, 11, 21. The quotations are from Stokes's translation. ⁴⁰ *VM* V.4–6 = *Mart* §15; *VM* XIII = *Mart* §25. ⁴¹ *VM* VII = *Mart* §19; *VM* VIII = *Mart* §20. ⁴² *VM* XI = *Mart* §23; *VM* XVIII.1–2 = *Mart* §31. ⁴³ For example, *VM* XVI.2–8 = *Mart* §28; *VM* XVII.1–4 = *Mart* §29; *Dial.* II.2 = *Mart* §35; *Dial.* III.7 = *Mart* §38. ⁴⁴ For a valuable listing by category of Sulpician narratives, see C. Stancliffe, *St Martin and his hagiographer: history and miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford 1983) pp 363–71. ⁴⁵ *Dial.* II.9; II.2.

renouncing earthly attachments. Indeed, the Martin of the homily is even more austere removed than is Sulpicius's Martin from any circumstance that might conceivably be read as earthly distraction, such as contact with secular rulers or, indeed, with females.⁴⁶ Martin's way of life is shown to be vindicated by supernatural signs. Angels support him, and he triumphs over demons.⁴⁷ The ecclesiastical context of Martin's spiritual triumph is also important. Leaving military service for monasticism, he yielded to the entreaties of the faithful and received episcopal consecration. The ideal presented thereby in *Mart* is of a bishop whose ministry eschewed the trappings of authority and worldly privilege in favour of monastic humility and asceticism. He exemplified responsiveness to community needs, both pastoral and material, combining monastic self-effacement with episcopal commitment to preaching the Word. The homilist seeks to demonstrate that the role of bishop did not supplant the monastic role, but rather complemented it, and derived strength and benefit from it.

At a fundamental level, the Irish homily conveys the blend of tradition and innovation which characterised the intellectual and artistic world of contemporary Armagh. Implicitly it expresses the view that church reform was to be considered as renewal rather than as rejection of the past. Martin, a revered saint linked with Patrick himself, provided a prototype of transition and fusion between the monastic and the episcopal states. Thus, he served as a model for ecclesiastical authority in Armagh, a model that responded to the need for diocesan government while remaining sensitive to the importance of monastic ideals within the Irish church.⁴⁸ In addition, as reformers sought to end contemporary abuses such as secularisation and politicisation of clerical office, the subject of *Mart* set a standard of ecclesiastical conduct which rejected earthly attachments in favour of commitment to the spiritual.

Overall, the homily on Martin seeks to shape, and is shaped by, its contemporary context. It promotes renewal of ecclesiastical life while validating change with the sanction of antiquity. It revives the memory of a saint who was venerated from the early days of Irish Christianity, conveying the view that Martin's era resonated with the twelfth-century present. Indeed, the successive roles of Martin's life could be seen to harmonise with the career trajectories of successive reforming churchmen in contemporary Armagh. The saint's early involvement in secular society before becoming an ecclesiastic could find a parallel in the career of Cellach, originally a lay 'heir of Patrick' who took holy orders. Martin's reluctant elevation to the episcopacy and his continuing adherence to his monastic ideals set a paradigm which finds correspondences in Malachy's ecclesiastical career. Moreover, the pattern of monk becoming bishop also provided a precedent for the succession of Gelasius, who was a monk of Derry before he followed Malachy in the episcopacy of Armagh in the year 1137.⁴⁹

That Martin's Life did, indeed, offer an apposite model in northern Irish reform circles in the twelfth century seems to be affirmed by an apparently unlikely hagiographical source, Bernard of Clairvaux's *Vita Sancti Malachiae* (*VMal*).⁵⁰ This Life of the reformer, Malachy, was compiled soon

⁴⁶ Note the omission from *Mart* of *VM* XIX.1–3; XX; *Dial.* II.5–6, 11–12; III.3–4, 8, 11–13. ⁴⁷ Examples of angelic assistance, *Mart* §27, 32; contests with demonic presences, *Mart* §16, 30, 34. ⁴⁸ Monastic reform was, of course, many-faceted, involving change within existing structures as well as introduction of new orders. See, for instance, Gwynn, *The twelfth-century reform*; A. Gwynn and R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval religious houses: Ireland* (Dublin 1970). ⁴⁹ See above, notes 17, 20, 21. ⁵⁰ The edition used is that cited in note 20. The text is abbreviated as *VMal*, with chapters numbered in accordance with the edition. For English translations and notes to the text see also H.J. Lawlor, *St Bernard of Clairvaux's Life of St Malachy of Armagh* (London 1920); R.T. Meyer, *Bernard of Clairvaux: the life and death of Saint Malachy the Irishman* (Kalamazoo 1978); A.B. Scott, *Malachy* (Dublin 1976).

after the death of the Irish churchman in Clairvaux in the year 1148. Bernard had first-hand acquaintance with his subject through Malachy's visits to Clairvaux in 1140 and 1148.⁵¹ Yet this information would have been insufficient for a full Life, and, as his text reveals, Bernard drew on additional materials supplied by Irish informants. The correct transmission of a significant amount of historical and onomastic detail indicates, moreover, that at least some of Bernard's Irish accounts of Malachy were received in written form.⁵² Much of what historians today know of Malachy's career derives from Bernard's work, and this affirms the importance of the Irish evidence in *VMal*. However, while its contribution to the historical record of twelfth-century Ireland is rightly acknowledged, the hagiographical aspect of *VMal* has not received its due attention.

Yet like all hagiographical works, *VMal* is fundamentally concerned with demonstrating its subject's sanctity. Narratives of Irish provenance catalogue a variety of supernatural signs of the saint's favour with God. What is striking is that the mould of sanctity in which these testimonies of Malachy have been shaped seems clearly Martinian. Exorcisms and demonic encounters credited to Malachy are only attested elsewhere in Irish hagiography in works influenced by Martin's Life.⁵³ Healing miracles attributed to Malachy and reminiscent of those of Martin include cures of dumbness and of paralysis.⁵⁴ The Lives of both Martin and Malachy refer to the miraculous efficacy of the saint's bedding, and of other objects touched by him.⁵⁵ Moreover, both Lives credit their subjects with resuscitation of the dead. The narrative in *VMal* particularly recalls Martin's revival of a catechumen, for in both cases the miracle is linked with a sacramental need. Thus, the resuscitation reverses unexpected death before baptism in Martin's case, and, in the case of Malachy, it reverses the unexpected death of a woman whose anointing had been deferred.⁵⁶

Bernard's commentary on the latter narrative supports the view that he is the amanuensis rather than the contributor. Immediately after the resuscitation account in *VMal* he relates how Malachy converted a woman's anger to gentleness, and expresses the view that the latter miracle, which brought the inner person back to life, should take precedence over a miracle of reviving the body. Indeed, before proceeding to recount any of Malachy's miracles, Bernard puts on record that 'the first and greatest miracle that he presented was the man himself'.⁵⁷ Other writings by Bernard confirm his unease with a concept of sanctity primarily based on wonderworking. His sermon on the life of Martin distinguishes between the admirable and the imitable. Bernard places his main emphasis on the latter, on Martin's exemplification of virtues, especially of obedience, rather than on extraordinary signs.⁵⁸

Certainly *VMal* reflects Bernard's literary skill and rhetoric. His was a task of compilation as well as of composition, however, so that a body of Irish-derived materials fitted within his text. The content of these materials suggests that veneration of Malachy as a saint had already begun among his Irish contemporaries, who stylised their reminiscences in accordance with a prevailing model of sanctity, a model derived from Martin's Life. We must also consider the possibility that this model of sanctity had influenced Malachy himself. Biographical data such as Malachy's reluctant acceptance of the episcopacy of Armagh, his desire to return to monastic contemplation,

⁵¹ *VMal* XVI, 37; XXXI, 70. ⁵² Note, for instance, *VMal* Preface and chapters VI, 12; X, 19–20; XX, 46. ⁵³ *VMal* XX, 45, 46. See C. Stancliffe, 'The miracle stories in seventh-century Irish Saints' Lives', *The seventh century: change and continuity*, ed. J. Fontaine and J.N. Hillgarth (London 1992) pp 87–115 (especially 101–10). ⁵⁴ *VMal* XX, 46, 47; XVII, 41. ⁵⁵ *Dial.* II.8; *VMal* XXI, 46, 47. ⁵⁶ *VM* VII; *VMal* XXIV, 53. ⁵⁷ *VMal* XXV, 54; XIX, 43. ⁵⁸ *PL* 183, 489–500. Note also Bernard's comments in *VMal* XIX, 43, 44; XXIX, 66. See J. Leclercq, 'S. Martin dans l'hagiographie monastique du moyen âge', *Studia Anselmiana* 46 (1961) pp 175–87; S.L. Reames, 'Saint Martin of Tours in the *Legenda Aurea* and before', *Viator* 12 (1981) pp 131–64.

his humility and his rejection of hierarchical privilege,⁵⁹ all may witness to a complex interaction between the exemplary Life of Martin, the lived experience of a churchman familiar with Martin's Life, and the manner in which this lived experience was, in turn, recalled in hagiographical form within a shared cultural milieu.

Occasionally, indeed, we glimpse an intervention by Bernard that seeks to resolve what, in his terms, seemed anomalous. For example, Malachy's continued residence in a monastic community after his episcopal consecration is represented by Bernard as a practical convenience, being 'near the city'.⁶⁰ Yet in actual fact diocesan centre and monastery were not at all closely situated.⁶¹ Viewed within a Martinian framework, however, Malachy's remaining within a monastic community was perfectly in accord with Martin's practice, as reported by Sulpicius and by the Irish homilist. It is possible that Malachy's decision, and its subsequent retelling in *VMal* were both informed by the hagiographical precedent.

Twelfth-century evidence, therefore, reinforces the view that hagiographical accounts of Martin provided a 'lexicon of images' which could be reconstructed and adapted in accordance with changing circumstances.⁶² Martin had been a model and patron of monks in early Christian Ireland. In the era of Irish ecclesiastical reform, as the transition to a diocesan structure of ecclesiastical government was in train, Martin came to be perceived as a mediator *par excellence*, an embodiment of synthesis between monastic and episcopal roles. The recreation of the Latin writings of Sulpicius Severus in vernacular form helped to bridge past and present. Martin came to embody reform ideals, as a bishop who respected true monastic values, and as a churchman whose service of God was unmingled with earthly considerations. At the level of ideology as well as of literary representation, the narrative of Martin's Life offered a compelling medium through which change could be perceived as renewal of the custom of Christianity's foundational era.⁶³

⁵⁹ *VMal* X, 20, 21; XIX, 43, 44. ⁶⁰ *Mal* VII, 15. ⁶¹ See Lawlor, *The Life of St Malachy*, p. 35, notes 1, 2. ⁶² R. Van Dam, 'Images of Saint Martin in late Roman and early Merovingian Gaul', *Viator*, 19 (1988) pp 1–27 (2). For evidence regarding Martin's veneration in twelfth-century Derry, in a period when Derry was closely associated with Armagh, see Herbert, *Iona*, pp 190–3. ⁶³ In this regard, see G. Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge 1996, repr. 2000), pp. 160–1.