

EX FONTE

Journal of Ecumenical Studies in Liturgy

VOLUME 2 | 2023

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How to Cite

RYAN, Fergus, Eucharistic concelebration & Adomnán's *Life of Saint Columba*, in: *Ex Fonte – Journal of Ecumenical Studies in Liturgy* 2 (2023) 37–63.

DOI 10.25365/exf-2023-2-2

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Abstract

The author considers whether the late seventh-century account by Adomnán of Saint Columba's invitation to the bishop Cronan to "break this bread alone according to the episcopal rite" serves as an indication of concelebration among presbyters and of presbyters with a bishop. He examines Roman and Gallican documents of similar time periods for traces of Eucharistic concelebration and differences in episcopal and presbyteral celebration in the rituals of breaking the consecrated loaf after the Eucharistic Prayer. He concludes that there is every reason to consider the incident described by Adomnán as a witness to concelebration both by presbyters among themselves and with a presiding bishop.

Keywords

Adamnan, Saint: *Vita Sanctae Columbae* | *Ordines Romani* | Eucharist | Concelebration

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Eucharistic concelebration & *Adomnán's Life of Saint Columba*

Fergus RYAN

In Adomnán's (c. 624–704) *Life of Saint Columba* (521–597),¹ on a particular Sunday the saint is described as preparing to confect the Body of Christ, meaning to celebrate Mass: “Nam alia die Dominica a Sancto jusus Christi corpus ex more conficere.”² Columba proceeded to invite a visiting cleric to “break the dominical bread” with him as two presbyters:

¹ The text is found in *Vitae Sanctorum Hibernicorum*, circa 1400, of Marsh's Library, Dublin, Ireland. It is also known as *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, and *Codex Kilkenniensis* (because it once belonged to the Franciscan community in the city of Kilkenny), and *Codex Armachanus*, and *Lives of the Irish Saints*. Cf. The Schaffhausen Adomnán, ed. by Damian BRACKEN – Eric GRAFF, Cork 2015; William REEVES, *The Life of St. Columba, founder of Hy*; written by Adamnan, ninth abbot of that monastery. The text printed from a manuscript of the eighth century; with the various readings of six other manuscripts preserved in different parts of Europe. To which are added, copious notes and dissertations, illustrative of the early history of the Columbian institutions in Ireland and Scotland, Dublin 1857. Cf. Adomnán († 704), *Vita Columbae* and its derivatives [n. 230] (CLH 1, 280–290; Ó CORRÁIN) and *Codex Dublinensis* al. *Kilkenniensis* [n. 240] (CLH 1, 314 f.; Ó CORRÁIN). Warren incorrectly refers to *Codex A* in Marsh's library as the *Liber Kilkenniensis* rather than calling it a *Codex*: Frederick E. WARREN, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*, Oxford 1881, 157, fn. 7 from the previous page. The second and third editions of Warren's book repeat the text verbatim from the original publication. Cf. ID., *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* (Studies in Celtic History 9), ed. by Jane STEVENSON, Suffolk 21987, 157; ID., *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church* (Gorgias Liturgical Studies 64), ed. by Neil X. O'DONOGHUE, Piscataway/NJ 2010, [199]. The French monk, Louis Gougaud, repeats Warren's error in the paper the former delivered at the International Eucharistic Congress in London, although in French “le Livre de Kilkenny”: Louis GOUGAUD, *Les Rites de la Consécration et de la Fraction dans la Liturgie Celtique de la Messe*, in: *Report of the Nineteenth Eucharistic Congress, held at Westminster from 9th to 13th September 1908*, London – Edinburgh 1909, 354, fn. 2. The *Liber primus Kilkenniensis* is an entirely different and unrelated manuscript.

² ADOMNÁN, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, 1, 44 (REEVES 85).

“Sanctum advocat, ut simul, quasi duo presbyteri, Dominicum panem frangerent.” The dominical bread is the Lord’s bread, that is the sacrament of Christ’s body. However, while approaching the altar at Mass Saint Columba suddenly realised the cleric was in fact a bishop, a certain Cronan from Munster in the southern part of Ireland: “Sanctus proinde ad altarium accedens, repente intuitus faciem ejus, sic eum compellat, Benedicat te Christus, frater; [...] nunc scimus quod sis episcopus”, and so our saint invites the visiting prelate to “break this bread alone”, and to do so according to the episcopal rite: “hunc solus, episcopali ritu, frange panem”³.

Two principal questions arise from this episode recounted by Adomnán. First, whether it was the custom for presbyters to concelebrate Mass in Saint Columba’s immediate environment, as suggested by Columba’s invitation to his guest who he understood to have been a presbyter and not a bishop. Second, whether the “breaking bread” as employed by Adomnán concerns a rite within the celebration of Mass which varied according to whether it was an episcopal celebration or a presbyteral celebration, or whether “breaking bread” referred to the whole celebration as it does in the New Testament (Luke 24:35; Acts 2:42.46, 20:7.11; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 11:24–25) and early Christianity (Didaché 9.14; Ignatius to the Philadelphians 4).⁴

To respond to these questions, we will review the various expressions for celebration of Mass in Adomnán’s text and in other Irish texts, and then review the variations between episcopal and presbyteral celebrations of the Eucharist in the Western Church about the time of Adomnán’s writing. Finally, we will return to the text at hand to review it more closely and attempt to draw some conclusions about the six Latin words attributed to Columba.

³ Ibid. (REEVES 85 f.).

⁴ O’Donoghue is reticent in regard to the significance of the breaking, allowing for several possibilities, namely that of two presbyters breaking particles for a large liturgical assembly, or Saint Columba wishing to show due honour to his episcopal guest before those participating in the Sunday celebration. Cf. Neil Xavier O’DONOGHUE, *The Eucharist in Pre-Norman Ireland*, South Bend/IN, 2011, 105.

1 *Varieties of expression for the Eucharistic celebration*

Within the Life of Saint Columba, we find, in the order given here, the following expressions referring to the Eucharistic celebration:

Liber 1, capitulum 40 – De quodam presbytero sancti viri prophetatio⁵

- eucharistiae mysteria conficientem
- missarum elegerant peragenda sollemnia
- sacrae oblationis mysteria per immundum hominem ministrata

Liber 1, capitulum 44 – De Cronano episcopo⁶

- Christi corpus ex more conficere
- Dominicum panem frangerent
- frange panem

Liber 2, capitulum 1 – De vino quod de aqua factum est⁷

- sacrificale mysterium
- sacrae Eucharistiae ministeria

Liber 2, capitulum 45 – De ventorum flatibus⁸

- celebremus missarum sollemnis
- sacra missarum sollemnia pariter celebraremus

Liber 3, capitulum 2 – De radio luminoso⁹

- post missam

Liber 3, capitulum 11 – De angelorum apparitione¹⁰

- Sacra celeriter Eucharistiae ministeria præparentur
- talia missarum sollemnia hodierna præparari præcipis

⁵ Cf. ADOMNÁN, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, 1, 40 (Reeves 76 f.).

⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 1, 44 (REEVES 85 f.).

⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 1 (REEVES 103–105).

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 45 (REEVES 176–182).

⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 3, 2 (REEVES 191 f.).

¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 3, 11 (REEVES 209 f.).

Liber 3, capitulum 12 – De angelorum visione¹¹

- sacraeque oblationis obsequia praeparari
- oportet Eucharistiae celebrare mysteria

Liber 3, capitulum 17 – De columna luminosa¹²

- sacra Eucharistiae consecraret mysteria
- dum missarum sollemnia celebrarentur

Liber 3, capitulum 23 – De transitu ad Dominum¹³

- Eucharistiae ministeria praeparantur
- missarum sollemnia hodierna praeparari

We see a trend in Adomnán’s writing to vary the expressions and avoid repetition within the same part of the text, with a single exception: “breaking bread” is employed twice and in quick succession within the passage of our immediate interest, that related to the visitor who Saint Columba only latterly recognised as a bishop (cf. Liber 1, capitulum 44). It would have been an inelegant use of the expression were “to break bread” to refer, twice within a couple of lines, to the entire celebration of Mass, and indeed immediately before in the same passage, an entirely different expression is employed for celebrating Mass (confecting the body of Christ) which initially avoids inelegant writing. The use of “break bread” in this way suggests the detail of the breaking of bread is important to Adomnán’s presentation of the event. Indeed, we see that the breaking of bread is qualified: first it is to be done by Saint Columba and his guest “as two presbyters”, then by the episcopal guest “alone.” Were the expression to have referred to the entire celebration, distinguished through its celebration by presbyter or bishop, it would have been preferable for Adomnán to have varied his expressions contained within the same couple of lines, but he chose not to. We must conclude, then, that the expression “to break bread” is significant for Adomnán’s purposes in distinguishing a celebration where a bishop was principal minister and that in which a presbyter

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 3, 12 (REEVES 210–213).

¹² Cf. *ibid.*, 3, 17 (REEVES 219–222).

¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, 3, 23 (REEVES 228–242).

presided, and the ritual or rituals of breaking varied according to the kind of celebration.

We read in the so-called “Stowe Missal”, an Irish manuscript from shortly after 792, which is really a *libellus missae*, likely a witness to some sixth-century liturgical practices in Irish territory and so possibly also on the island of Iona where our scene is set, that an initial single fraction of the loaf of consecrated bread was done over the chalice between the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer.¹⁴ After the Lord’s Prayer in the Stowe Missal we find scriptural verses which, as O’Loughlin notes, function as a *confractorium*, such as the *Agnus Dei* in the Roman Rite introduced by Pope Sergius I,¹⁵ and so indicates the latter preparation of portions of the loaf for reception by the assembly.¹⁶ The two breakings were significant moments worthy of comment in ancient Western liturgical practice and not just in Rome which may or may not be the origin of the Stowe Missal’s ritual, coming as it does after post seventh century Roman practices had begun to influence the liturgy in Ireland as seen in the presence of the *Gloria* early in our missal’s Order of Mass,¹⁷ although noticeably absent is the *Agnus Dei* chant introduced in the eternal city towards the conclusion of the seventh century.¹⁸ The latter breaking of the loaf into small portions in the Western rites has been treated extensively in the literature, with the practice of arranging the individual pieces according to one or more patterns upon the paten present clearly in the ancient Gallican rite (note also the legislation of the Council of Tours of 567 directing

¹⁴ Stowe Missal, fol. 34^r (HBS 32, 17; WARNER). See Stowe Missal [n. 25] (CLH 1, 67–70; Ó CORRÁIN).

¹⁵ Cf. LP 86, 14: “Hic statuit ut tempore confractionis dominici corporis Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis a clero et populo decantetur” (DUCHESNE 1, 376).

¹⁶ Cf. Thomas O’LOUGHLIN, The Praxis and Explanations of Eucharistic Fraction in the Ninth Century. The Insular Evidence, in: ALW 45 (2003) 1–20, here: 9 f.

¹⁷ Ó Riain observes the presence of relatively new Roman elements. Cf. Pádraig Ó RIAIN, The Stowe Missal, in: Bernadette CUNNINGHAM – Siobhán FITZPATRICK (eds.), Treasures of the Royal Irish Academy Library, Dublin 2009, 11–15.

¹⁸ Cf. Marion J. HATCHETT, The Eucharistic Rite of the *Stowe Missal*, in: J. Neil ALXANDER (ed.), Time and Community. In Honor of Thomas Julian Talley (NPM Studies in Church and Liturgy), Washington/DC 1990, 153–170, here: 159.

the fragments to be laid upon the paten in a definite pattern¹⁹), in the Celtic regions, and to this day in the Hispano–Mozarabic rite.²⁰ The arrangements upon the paten are interpreted theologically and allegorically.²¹ The early ninth-century Derrynaflan (or Derrynavlan) paten, in its size and with its raised rim, is consistent with the extensive fraction practice and the making of a pattern with the fragments.²² The aforementioned concerns around the fractions should increase our curiosity with respect to Adomnán's choice of words.

With respect to the expression “confect” used in Adomnán, we can find it also in other writings from the first millennium. In the life of Saint David of Menevia, we find the expression: “Pater verò Dauid quotidianis laboribus, ac lachrymarum fontibus exundans, & geminæ charistatis ardore flagrans, Dominici corporis hostiam puris conficiebat manibus, sicque ad Angelicum pergebat colloquium.”²³ In Saint Jerome's letter to the monk Heliodorum the saint uses the verb of interest, saying it is by words (by the mouth) that the body of Christ is confected at Mass: “Christi corpus sacro ore conficiunt”²⁴, while in his letter to Evangelum Saint Jerome expands the expression to include Christ's blood: “Ad quorum preces Christi corpus

¹⁹ “Vt corpus Domini in altari non imaginario ordine, sed sub crucis titulo componatur”: CONCILIIUM TVRONENSE, Canon 3 (CCSL 148A, 178; DE CLERCO).

²⁰ “Dum Cantus ad Confractionem in choro canitur, Sacerdos panem consecratum frangit, et partes eius collocat in forma crucis supra patenam, enuntians mysteria Christi, quae in anno liturgico commemorantur”: Missale Hispano-Mozarabicum, vol. 1, Toledo, 1991, 77; Missale Hispano-Mozarabicum, vol. 2, Toledo 1994, 53.

²¹ Cf. Enrico MAZZA, En travaillant une étude de L[ouis] Gougaud. Le rite de la fraction dans les liturgies latines non romaines, in: EO 32/2 (2015) 265–285; Louis GOUGAUD, Les Rites de la Consécration et de la Fraction dans la Liturgie Celtique de la Messe, in: Report of the Nineteenth Eucharistic Congress. Held at Westminster from 9th to 13th September 1908, London – Edinburgh 1909, 348–361; O'LOUGHLIN, The Praxis and Explanations of Eucharistic Fraction in the Ninth Century: The insular evidence, in: ALW 45 (2003) 1–20; Próinséas Ní CHATHÁIN, The Liturgical Background of the Derrynavlan Altar Service, in: The Journal of the Royal Antiquities of Ireland 110 (1980) 127–148.

²² Cf. Ní CHATHÁIN, Liturgical Background, 129.

²³ Vita Sancti David Menevensis, 13 (COLGAN 427).

²⁴ EUSEBIUS HIERONYMUS, ep. 14 ad Heliodorum monachum, 8 (CSEL 54/1, 55; HILBERG).

sanguisque conficitur.”²⁵ The so-called *Missale Francorum*, part-pontifical, part missal, from the late seventh century, includes prayers for consecrating liturgical items. The prayer for consecrating a paten also employs the verb *confect* regarding future confection of the body of Christ upon the paten: “Ad consecrandum patenam. Consecramus et sanctificamus hanc patenam ad conficiendum in ea corpus domini nostri Iesu Christi patientis crucem pro salute nostra omnium: / qui regnat in saecula.”²⁶ The verb *confect* refers to the consecration and changing of the bread (and wine) at Mass by the priest and typically reveals nothing regarding concelebration. We will see that the rather explicit case of *Ordo romanus* 3 which will be considered below employs instead the word *consecrate* when speaking of sacramental concelebration and co-consecration. *Confect* seems employed by the aforementioned old texts with respect to what we would call today the principal celebrant or president, although without necessarily excluding concelebrants.

2 Compare with the *Ordines romani*

Leaving aside the practicalities and interpretations of the second breaking activity which prepared individual portions of consecrated bread, we can note the clear distinction between the initial breaking of the loaf in two and the subsequent preparation of small pieces. Several documents representing Roman and Gallican practice at times only shortly after Adomán’s death in 597 also present these two moments, and they touch on the difference between Masses celebrated by the Roman Pontiff and those celebrated by others, which may assist us in interpreting our text.

Ordo romanus 1, as a text dated to about 750 but representing earlier practices, describes the celebration of a station Mass in Rome by the Pope.²⁷ After the *Pax Domini*, the Pontiff “rumpit oblatam ex latere dextro et particulam quam ruperit <partem> super altare relinquit”²⁸. Following this initial fraction, the Pope goes to his chair while the presbyters break

²⁵ ID., ep. 146 ad Euangelum presbyterum, 1 (CSEL 56/1, 308; HILBERG).

²⁶ GaF 62 (RED.F 2, 18; MOHLBERG).

²⁷ Cf. OR 1 (SSL 23, 65–108; ANDRIEU 2).

²⁸ OR 1, 97 (SSL 23, 98; ANDRIEU 2).

the consecrated bread into convenient portions for the communion of the assembly: “Tunc acolyti vadunt dextra leuaque per episcopos circum altare; reliqui descendunt ad presbiteros, ut confrangant hostias. Patena praecedit iuxta sedem, deferentibus eam duobus subdiaconibus regionarum diaconibus ad frangendum [ut frangant]. At illi aspiciunt ad faciem pontifices, ut eis annuat frangere; et dum <eis> annuerit, resalutato pontifice, confringunt.”²⁹ Only after the Pope’s reception of the consecrated bread in communion does he perform the commingling, placing a part of the bread he consecrated, and from the initial fragment he made, into the chalice: “Qui, dum communicaverit, ipsam particulam de qua momorderat, consignando tribus vicibus, mittit in calicem in manus archidiaconi.”³⁰ Both pontifical reception and commingling occur at the chair. Earlier in the same Eucharistic celebration the pontiff had placed a consecrated particle into the chalice, although it was a particle, taken from a number of such particles called the *sancta*, he had consecrated in a previous celebration;³¹ that ritual detail is not immediately relevant to our purpose but is

²⁹ OR 1, 102–104 (SSL 23, 100; ANDRIEU 2). Craig notes that these two fractions are in fact a single fraction rite, the Pope taking part initially, and allowing the other ministers to continue while he is at the chair. Cf. Barry M. CRAIG, *Fractio Panis. A History of the Breaking of Bread in the Roman Rite* (StAns 151/ALit 29), Rome 2011, 141 f.

³⁰ OR 1, 107 (SSL 23, 101; ANDRIEU 2). Craig clarifies that the Pope’s eating a piece from the particle he had prepared earlier which is brought to his chair does not constitute a breaking of bread, observing that Jungmann did not correct this interpretation shared by others until the fifth and final edition of his great work. Cf. CRAIG, *Fractio Panis*, 240 f. In Josef A. JUNGSMANN, *Missarum sollemnia. Eine genetische Erklärung der Römischen Messe*, vol. 2: *Opfermesse*, Vienna et al. 1948, 377 f. and ⁵1962, 385 f., we read: “[...] der zelebrierende Papst damals bei seiner Kommunion von der eigenen Hostie ein Stück abtrennte und in den Kelch gab”. The fifth German edition added, however: “Er genießt einen Teil einer Partikel und gibt den Rest in den Kelch” (*ibid.*, 389) although not removing the earlier and incorrect text. The English translation of *Missarum sollemnia* was translated from the second German edition (1949); however, in the appendix one can find the same text as in the updated fifth German edition. Cf. Joseph A. JUNGSMANN, *The Mass of the Roman Rite. Its Origins and Development*, vol. 2 [trans. by Francis A. BRUNNER], New York 1951 [reprint: Notre Dame/IN 2012], 532 f.

³¹ Cf. OR 1, 95 (SSL 23, 98; ANDRIEU 2).

worth noting here; it is the parallel act in the Papal Mass to the *fermentum* of Mass in the *tituli* basilicas which will be mentioned subsequently here.³² *Ordo romanus* 23³³ from the first part of the eighth century contains eight brief articles on the Mass of Holy Thursday celebrated by the Pope and, lacking a rite of peace, attaches the first fraction, done by the Pontiff, to the greeting *Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum*: “Et cum dixit: *Pax domini sit semper*, confringit unam oblatam in duas partes et dat eam archidiacono et ille mittit eam in patenam quam tenet minister”³⁴, while the presbyters continue with the preparation of small portions: “Reliquas vero oblationes ipse archidiaconus expendit per presbiteros et postea frangit tam ipse quam omnes presbiteri.”³⁵ Comparing these two quasi contemporaneous *ordines* – 1 and 23 – we can see clearly the typical papal *ruptio* of *Ordo romanus* 1 corresponds with the *confractio in duas partes* of the Pope’s Holy Thursday Mass of *Ordo romanus* 23 and so the latter offers some practical detail on the *ruptio* in *Ordo romanus* 1.

Ordo romanus 2,³⁶ possibly from the same hand as that which wrote *Ordo romanus* 1, directs that a bishop who presides at a station Mass in the place of the Pope was to carry out that preparation of portions of the loaf which the presbyters do at the Papal Mass: “Nam et hoc dissimiliter facit, quod apostolicus non confrangit; ipse vero super pallam, quae corporalis dicitur, in altare confrangit.”³⁷ Celiński summarises one difference between the first two *ordines* as being that in the papal Mass the distinction between *ruptio* and *confractio* is maintained also at the level of the ministers, while the non-papal Mass has the presiding minister carry out both fractions: the initial *ruptio* and the subsequent preparation of small portions via the *confractio*.³⁸ In *Ordo romanus* 2 we also note the *fermen-*

³² For “fermentum” and “sancta” see now also Uwe M. LANG, *The Roman Mass. From Early Christian Origins to Tridentine Reform*, Cambridge 2022, 194–201.

³³ Cf. OR 23 (SSL 24, 294–273; ANDRIEU 3).

³⁴ OR 23, 5 (SSL 24, 269; ANDRIEU 3).

³⁵ OR 23, 6 (SSL 24, 269; ANDRIEU 3).

³⁶ Cf. OR 2 (SSL 23, 113–116; ANDRIEU 2).

³⁷ OR 2,7 (SSL 23, 115; ANDRIEU 2). *Apostolicus* refers to the Pope. Note the expression “Apostolic Lord” used to this day in the Litany of the Saints.

³⁸ Cf. Łukasz CELIŃSKI, *I riti che seguono l’anafora nella messa in Occidente. Studio di liturgia comparata (Theologia Mundi ex Urbe 4)*, Vienna et al. 2020, 242.

tum previously consecrated (possibly elsewhere) by the Pope is placed in the chalice at the *Pax Domini* by the presiding bishop,³⁹ thus corresponding with the papal immixtio of one of the *sancta* mentioned in *Ordo romanus* 1, 95. These rubrical directives of *Ordo romanus* 2 also concerned a celebration over which a presbyter presided: “Similiter etiam et a presbitero agitur, quando in statione facit missas, preter *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, quia a presbitero non dicitur nisi in pascha.”⁴⁰

As Celiński notes, the distinction between Papal and presbyteral Masses occurs at the *Pax Domini*.⁴¹ *Ordo romanus* 2, 6 indicates that at a non-papal Mass, and so at a presbyteral Mass, the placing of the *fermentum* from a previous Papal Mass into the chalice is to occur at the *Pax Domini*, while *Ordo romanus* 1, 107 indicates that at a Papal Mass the *commixtio* (mingling) occurs much later, that is after the Pope has received Communion. At the non-papal and so also presbyteral Mass, it is entirely convenient to place the *fermentum* from a previous Papal Mass into the chalice before any fraction has occurred. Celiński notes that in cases where there is no *fermentum*, which would occur outside Rome, the initial fraction must be anticipated to provide a particle to maintain the earlier commingling at the *Pax Domini* and with time this shift in the timing of the fraction occurred.⁴²

Ordo romanus 3,⁴³ a compilation of brief texts likely united towards the conclusion of the eighth century,⁴⁴ directs that the pontiff, on the occasion of major festivities when the cardinal presbyters concelebrate with him – “Et, accedente pontifice ad altare, dextra levaque circumdant altare et simul cum illo canonem dicunt; tenentes oblatas in manibus, non super altare, ut vox pontifices valentius audiatur, et simul consecrant corpus et sanguinem domini”⁴⁵ – break the oblations (the consecrated loaves of bread) first alone, and then the other ministers join him: “Pontifex vero

³⁹ Cf. OR 2, 6 (SSL 23, 115; ANDRIEU 2).

⁴⁰ OR 2, 9 (SSL 23, 116; ANDRIEU 2).

⁴¹ Cf. CELIŃSKI, I riti che seguono l’anafora nella messa in Occidente, 243.

⁴² Cf. *ibid.*

⁴³ Cf. OR 3 (SSL 23, 129–133; ANDRIEU 2).

⁴⁴ Cf. ANDRIEU, *Les Ordines romani*, vol. 2, 127.

⁴⁵ OR 3, 1 (SSL 23, 131; ANDRIEU 2).

oblaciones, quas confrangere solus debet, ponit in patenam et confrangit. Deinde stant diaconi in parte dextera et in parte sinistra archipresbyter et secundus vel quartus vel cui voluerit pontifex et dat unicuique eorum singulas oblaciones et confrangunt cum ipso super altare in corporale.”⁴⁶ Admitting that the six articles of *Ordo romanus* 3 are of diverse origins, they can still assist us in understanding practices both in the situations for which they were each intended and (later) when they were found to be useful as an intentional collection. The first article is of Roman origin and confirms the practice of what we clearly consider to be sacramental concelebration to be today, with common recitation of the anaphora, and intentional consecration of the bread and wine by the concelebrants with the presiding celebrant.⁴⁷ The fourth article of *Ordo romanus* 3 is of Gallican origin and concerns not a celebration of the Pope in Rome, but of a bishop although also assisted by presbyters.⁴⁸ Taking the articles one and four together as intended by the compiler of the final document, they witness to an episcopal celebration, where sacramental concelebration by the presbyters is intended, and there is a distinction in roles for bishop and concelebrating presbyters in the breaking of the consecrated bread. As Celiński notes, in the following centuries various *ordines* constitute witnesses to the desire to maintain the earlier commingling in its place without, however, having a particle (*fermentum*) from a previous papal Mass and so the first fraction is brought earlier in the Mass and a particle from that first fraction placed into the chalice of consecrated wine.⁴⁹ This change comes later than our period of interest, and we pass over it.

Can we take it there are parallels between the hints offered by Adomán’s Life of Saint Columba and the Romano-Gallican texts we have examined? The fraction of the consecrated loaf varied according to whether a bishop or a priest was presiding; presbyters, or rather cardinal presbyters, did indeed concelebrate with the Pope through recitation of the anaphora and having the intention to consecrate the bread and wine. Were the dis-

⁴⁶ OR 3, 4 (SSL 23, 132; ANDRIEU 2).

⁴⁷ Andrieu indicates the Roman origin. Cf. ANDRIEU, *Les Ordines romani*, vol. 2, 125.

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 126.

⁴⁹ Cf. CELIŃSKI, *I riti che seguono l’anafora nella messa in Occidente*, 244–246.

tinctions in the fraction and the practice of sacramental concelebration followed in the context of Adomnán's Life of Saint Columba?

3 *Other concelebration practices*

In William Reeves' edition of Adomnán's text the author draws our attention to the general practice of the Western Churches for presbyters to confect the immolation of Christ with a bishop, by word and (gestures of the) hand.⁵⁰ Reeves claims to rely upon Martène, but in fact the citation he gives is from Amalarius of Metz (c. 775 – c. 850) who spent time as bishop in Trier and Lyon: "Mos est Romanae Ecclesiae ut in confectione immolationis adsint presbyteri, et simul cum pontifice verbis e manibus conficiant."⁵¹ The reference to Martène concerns, in fact, the Council of Seville which Martène, and thus Reeves, claims forbade presbyters to concelebrate Mass with a bishop. The seventh canon of the Spanish council of 619 was rather more general than either commentators mention, touching on the dedication of churches, raising of altars, ordination of deacons and presbyters, and consecration of virgins. Here is the text at the conclusion of the canon which has the element of our interest:

Sed neque coram episcopo licere presbyteris in bapstisterium introire neque praesente antestite infantes tingere / aut signare, nec poenitentes sine praecepto episcopi sui reconciliare, ne ceo praesente sacramentum corporis et sanguinis Christi conficere nec eo coram posito populum docere vel benedicere aut salutare nec plebem utique exhortare.⁵²

The concern of this part of the canon, and the entire canon, is rather broadly the relationship between bishop and presbyter, and with respect to the final part of the council's canon, the reliance of the presbyter upon the bishop for exercise of the former's ministry. To say that the canon forbids concelebration with the bishop, or rather forbids confecting the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ with the bishop in the same Eucha-

⁵⁰ Cf. REEVES, *The Life of St. Columba*, 85 f., fn. e.

⁵¹ AMALARIUS METENSIS, *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis libri quatuor*, 1,12 (PL 105, 1016).

⁵² CONCILIUM SPALENSI II, Canon 7 (*España Cristiana* 1, 168; VIVES).

ristic celebration, seems rather too broad an interpretation. The concern of the council seems that a presbyter should not celebrate as principal celebrant while a bishop was present. Isidore of Seville's *Excerpta canonum* mentions this same seventh canon of the second council of Seville but summarises it as "De his qui prohibentur presbyteris in ecclesiasticis sacramentis agere."⁵³ The question of concelebration, immediate ministerial and sacramental cooperation with the bishop during a particular liturgical celebration, seems not of interest, but rather a presbyter acting incorrectly as if he were the bishop. Edmond Martène, writing in the eighteenth century, recalls evidence for licence from a bishop to celebrate many things in first millennium legislation, and in the prelate's presence not to celebrate as principal minister, but says nothing explicitly about concelebrating with the bishop.⁵⁴ Then the pre-revolution Benedictine liturgical scholar indicates concelebration was rare. Martène does not say it was forbidden entirely.

Eucharistic concelebration existed throughout the Latin Church right up to the Second Vatican Council as a relatively rare occurrence since it was restricted to presbyters concelebrating with the bishop at the ordination of the former, and bishops with their consecrating bishop also at the Mass of ordination of the former, although concelebration among the bishops was arranged as a kind of synchronisation of Masses. In Lyon also up to the Second Vatican Council we find Eucharistic concelebration by six priests with the archbishop of the diocese at the Mass of the Lord's Supper in the cathedral on Thursday of Holy Week.⁵⁵ Concelebration among presbyters does not seem to have occurred in recent centuries.

What then of the suggestion that two presbyters would commonly concelebrate the Eucharistic sacrifice together in the first millennium? Warren states in a rather straight forward fashion:

⁵³ *Excerpta canonum Isidori Hispalensis. Titulus 30. De doctrina et regulis presbyterorum*, 3 (MHS.C 1, 71; MARTÍNEZ DÍEZ).

⁵⁴ Cf. Edmond MARTÈNE, *De antiquis ecclesiae ritibus libri*, vol. 1, cap. 3, art. 8, Antwerp 1736, col. 329.

⁵⁵ Cf. Pierre MARTIN, *Une survivance de la concélébration dans l'Église occidentale: la messe pontificale lyonnaise du jeudi saint*, in: MD 35 (1953) 72–74. What we might call ceremonial concelebration was also practiced on other occasions, but the presbyters did not recite the words of the liturgy with the presiding celebrant as they did on Holy Thursday.

A very singular custom existed at Iona of two or more priests being ordinarily united in the Eucharistic prayer and act of consecration; to consecrate singly being the prerogative of bishops, or of individual priests specially selected and empowered to consecrate on account of their sanctity or eminence. [...] This custom of joint celebrants in the case of priests, and of a single celebrant in the case of a bishop, is peculiar to the Celtic rite, no similar practice existing in any other country or at any other time.⁵⁶

However, in his translation of the story of bishop Cronan and Saint Columba, Warren translates the second usage of “frangere panem” as simply “consecrate” which betrays an insufficient attention to the details of the source text. It seems rather problematic to extend a detail in Adomnán’s text requiring interpretation to the whole Celtic tradition.

Gougaud disagrees with Warren’s conclusion where the latter extended what might have been a custom on Iona to the entire Irish church: “Rien n’autorise à généraliser cette coutume. Aucun monument liturgique ne la mentionne.”⁵⁷ The monk of Farnborough and Solesmes points to three places in the Life of Saint Columba by Adomnán, and one instance in the life of Saint Brendan, where a priest, sometimes a visitor, is chosen from among several, and he celebrates without any hint of concelebration occurring.⁵⁸ Let us examine the evidence directly.

The first instance is in book one, chapter forty, where the monks of a community in Ireland had, on a particular Sunday, chosen a priest who was considered to be deeply religious to “confect” the mystery of the Eucharist:

Alio in tempore Sanctus, cum in Scotiensium paulo superius moraretur memorata regione, casu Dominica die ad quoddam devenit vicinum monasterium quod Scotice Trioit vocitatur. Eadem proinde die quendam audiens presbyterum sacra eucharistiae mysteria conficientem, quem ideo fratres, qui ibidem commanebant, ad missarum elegerant peragenda sollemnia, quia valde religiosum aestimabant.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ WARREN, *The Ritual and Liturgy of the Celtic Church*, 128 f.

⁵⁷ GOUGAUD, *Les rites dans la liturgie celtique*, 353.

⁵⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 354.

⁵⁹ ADOMNÁN, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, 1, 40 (REEVES 76 f.).

The saint went on to recognise that the religious priest-monk had a serious sin upon his conscience.

The second occasion indicated by Gougaud does not seem to be relevant, in fact.

The third occasion was when Saint Columba's companions chose him to "consecrate the sacred mysteries of the Eucharist", and during the subsequent celebration of Mass a light was observed by Saint Brendan shining from Columba's head:

Hi uno eodemque consensu elegerunt ut sanctus Columba coram ipsis in ecclesia sacra Eucharistiae consecraret mysteria. Qui, eorum obsecundans jussioni, simul cum eis, die Dominica ex more, post Evangelii lectionem, ecclesiam ingreditur, ibidemque, dum missarum sollemnia celebrarentur, sanctus Brendenus [...] quondam crinosum igneum globum, et valde luminosum, de vertice sancti Columbæ, ante altaris stantis, et sacram oblationem consecrantis, tamdiu ardentem, et instar alicujus column sursum ascendentem, vidit, donec eadem perficerentur sacrosancta ministeria.⁶⁰

Finally, in the Life of Saint Brendan, the saint, as the elder of those present, was chosen to offer the body of Christ: "Et custos templo ex jussione Sancti Gillae dixit Sancto brendano: vir Dei, praecipit tibi sanctus senex noster ut offeras corpus Xti: ecce altare hic (et) librum graecis litteris scriptum et canta in eo sicut abbas noster."⁶¹ The verb chosen by the author of this life was *to offer*.

None of these Celtic instances rule out concelebration *per se*.

Returning to the *Ordines romani* may assist us in finding examples of overlooked concelebration. If we contrast *Ordo romanus* 1 with *Ordo romanus* 3 we find that at least on a few occasions the (cardinal) presbyters concelebrated with the Pope. Then, in *Ordo romanus* 2 which mentioned the case of a presbyter replacing the Pope at a station Mass, there is nothing to suggest other presbyters not participate in the usual concelebrating fashion, even if the occasions in which presbyters co-consecrated the

⁶⁰ Ibid., 3, 17 (REEVES, 220–222).

⁶¹ Vita Sancti Brendani, 15 (MORAN 14). There are several lives of Saint Brendan, as well as his *Navigatio*. The present life is that contained in the *Codex Kilkeniensis* of Marsh's library.

bread and wine with the Pope were few and so by extension such possible co-consecration or concelebration with a substituting presbyter would be fewer. If we then consider that *Ordo romanus* 2 also indicates the principal celebrant replacing the Pope also prepares the particles for the communion of the whole assembly, we might imagine distinctions between episcopal concelebration (admittedly with the Pope presiding) and other concelebration lying firmly in the ritual or rituals of the fraction. The episcopal rite would involve some independent breaking of the consecrated bread by the bishop, who could be described as “alone [...] breaking”, while the presbyteral rite would involve some greater collaboration of the breaking among the two concelebrating, co-consecrating presbyters.

4 “Celebrating” together and visiting clerics

Returning to Adomnán’s *Life of Saint Columba*, we read about the liturgical celebrations for the feast day of the saint during the lifetime of Adomnán. Through the saint’s intercession the weather was changed, and the monks were able to reach the island of Iona by boat in time for “celebrating Mass” together:

Tertia proinde vice, cum in aesteo tempore, post Hiberniensis synodi conductum, in plebe Generis Loerni per aliquot, venti contrarietate, retardaremur dies, ad Saineam devenimus insulam; ibidemque demoratos festiva sancti Columbae nox et solemnis dies nos invenit valde tristificatos, videlicet desiderantes eandem diem in loua facere laeticam insula. Unde sicut prius alia quarebamur vice, dicentes, Placetne tibi, Sancte, crastinam tuae festivitatis inter plebeios et non in tua ecclesia transigere diem? facile tibi est talis in exordio diei a Domino impetrare ut contrarii in secundos vertantur venti, et in tua celebremus ecclesia tui natalis missarum solemnia. Post eandem transactum noctem diluculo mane consurgimus, et videntes cessasse contrarios flatus, consensis navibus, nullo flante vento, in mare progredimur, et ecce statim post nos auster cardinalis, qui et notus, inflat. Tum proinde ovantes nautae vela subrigunt: sicque ea die talis, sine labore, nostra tam festina navigatio, et tam prospera, beato viro donante Deo, fuit, ut sicuti prius exoptavimus, post horam diei tertiam ad louae portum pervenientes insulae, postea manuum et pedum peracta lavatione, hora sexta ecclesiam cum fratribus intrantes, sacra missarum solemnia pariter celebraremus, in festo die in quam natalis sanctorum Columbae et

Baithenei: cujus diluculo, ut supradictum est, de Sainea insula, longius sita, emigravimus. Hujus ergo praemissae narrationis testes, non bini tantum vel terni secundum legem, sed centeni et amplius adhuc exstant.⁶²

There is nothing to suggest the “celebrate” in these passages excludes sacramental concelebration of presbyters, nor, admittedly, is there anything in the passage to suggest it. If we check the other usages of the verb *celebrare* within Adomnán’s Life of Saint Columba, we find it used in three passages and never for the specific action of the principal minister, but rather in a general way for the Mass and for the activity of those gathered. When Saint Columba learns of the death of Saint Colman, he says he must celebrate the sacred mysteries of the Eucharist:

Meque, ait, hodie, quamlibet indignus sim, ob venerationem illius animæ quæ hac in nocte inter sanctos angelorum choros vecta, ultra sidera cælorum spatia ad paradisum ascendit, sacra oportet Eucharistiæ celebrare mysteria.⁶³

However, Columba is not subsequently described as principal celebrant, so this case is unclear.

On a previous occasion when Saint Columba had been chosen by his companions to “consecrate”, a light was seen coming from his head while the Mass was being celebrated: “dum missarum sollempnia celebrarentur”⁶⁴. I disagree with Sharpe who entirely excludes concelebration, or breaking together, since there is no evidence for excluding the possibility.⁶⁵ Sharpe is not entirely accurate in presenting Adomnán’s text when he says Saint Columba was chosen to *celebrate*. The saint was chosen to *consecrate* the sacred mysteries of the Eucharist: “Hi uno eodemque consensus elegerunt ut sanctus Columba coram ipsis in ecclesia sacra Eucharistiæ consecraret mysteria.”⁶⁶

⁶² ADOMNÁN, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, 2, 45 (REEVES 178–182).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 3, 12 (REEVES 211).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 3, 17 (REEVES 221).

⁶⁵ Cf. SHARPE, *Life of St Columba*, London 1995, fn. 192.

⁶⁶ ADOMNÁN, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, 3, 17 (REEVES 220 f.).

Reeves correctly notes the ancient custom of the Church to invite visiting clerics to offer Mass, quoting from the Council of Arles (314) and the fourth Council of African Carthage (ca. 475).⁶⁷ Canon 19 of the council in southern Gall, convened primarily to deal with the Donatist problem, indicated a travelling or visiting bishop was to be given the place for sacrificing: “De episcopus peregrinus qui in Urbem solent uenire, placuit eis locum dari ut offerant.”⁶⁸ Tymister and Taft note that the meaning of the canon is to offer a place at a communal celebration next to the local bishop who presides and not the opportunity to celebrate apart from the community.⁶⁹ The African council, meanwhile, established that presbyters or bishops formally visiting a local church were to be received according to their ministerial grade and were also to be invited to preach and to consecrate the offering: “Episcopus uel presbyteros, si causa uisitandae ecclesiae alterius episcopi ad ecclesiam ueniant, in gradu suo suscipiantur et tam ad uerbum faciendum quam ad oblationem consecrandam inuitentur.”⁷⁰ The invitation to both bishops and presbyters to “consecrate”, is interesting in at least being inclusive of presbyters who might co-consecrate, and so concelebrate using today’s terminology, with the local bishop.

Saint Columba’s invitation to his episcopal guest is entirely within the norms established by the two aforementioned councils, although the saint is not said to have employed the technical terminology of the canons. Columba cedes the place of honour to the higher grade of holy orders. These canons from the fourth and fifth centuries do not shed light, however, upon the apparent practice of two presbyters consecrating / confecting / offering / breaking together to which our text seems to attest.

⁶⁷ Cf. REEVES, *The Life of St. Columba*, 85, fn. e.

⁶⁸ CONCILIIUM ARELATENSE, Canon 19 (CCSL 148, 13; MUNIER).

⁶⁹ Cf. Robert TAFT, *Eucharistic Concelebration Revisited. Problems of History, Practice, and Theology in East and West*, in: OCP 76 (2010) 277–313, here: 296; Markus TYMISTER, *La concelebrazione eucaristica. Storia, questioni teologiche, rito* (BEL.S 182), Rome ²2018, 64.

⁷⁰ CONCILIIUM CARTHAGENSE IV, Canon 33 (MHS.C 3, 361; MARTÍNEZ DíEZ – RODRIGUEZ). Also “Episcopi uel presbyteri, si causa uisitandae ecclesiae alterius episcopi ad ecclesiam ueniant, in gradu suo suscipiantur, et tam ad uerbum faciendum quam ad oblationem consecrandam inuitentur” (CCSL 149, 347; MUNIER).

5 Break “this” bread?

Adomnán quotes Columba as having invited the bishop Cronan to break *this* bread. The structure of the Latin phrase beginning with *hunc* and ending with the corresponding *panem* places great emphasis upon the particular (loaf of) bread, rather than on the proposed action of the bishop (break – *frange*) and the nature (episcopal) of the action.⁷¹ By the use of “*hunc [...] panem*”, “*this [...] bread*”, and their surrounding the other words, was the saint referring to the loaf of bread already consecrated during the Eucharistic Prayer and lying upon the altar? The doubly emphatic “*this – hunc*” could easily refer to the bread prepared before the Mass and not yet consecrated. Any bread before the offertory rites would likely not have been already upon the altar, however. The bread to be consecrated would be placed upon the altar only very briefly before the beginning of the anaphora. For Columba to say to Cronan “break *this* bread”, perhaps with an accompanying hand gesture, he would have had to have had the bread to hand. Bread that had not already reached the altar would surely be sufficiently far away from the two ministers of God to have required a different demonstrative pronoun: *illum*. Secondly, given the frequency with which the words *consecrate* and *confect* are used by Adomnán in his *Life of Saint Columba* with respect to the bread which becomes the Lord’s body, it would be strange in the circumstance of recognising Cronan’s episcopal grade to bypass both of those very useful verbs and employ *break* (*frangere*) instead. Might we conclude here that the bread to which our saint of Iona refers the visiting bishop is so close to them and requiring breaking that it is already upon the altar and already consecrated, transformed into the Body of the Lord?

If we also compare the *frangere* expression attributed to Columba with the Gospel accounts of the Lord’s Supper in their Latin vulgate version we may find some parallels. Here are the three Gospel accounts of the Lord taking bread and instituting the Eucharist:

⁷¹ I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Fr Kellan Scott, OP, in understanding the nuance given by Adomnán’s use of the chiasmic structure.

Cœnantibus autem eis, accepit Jesus panem, et benedixit, ac fregit, deditque discipulis suis, et ait: Accipite, et comedite: hoc est corpus meum. (Matthew 26:26)

Et manducantibus illis, accepit Jesus panem: et benedicens fregit, et dedit eis, et ait: Sumite, hoc est corpus meum. (Mark 14:22)

Et accepto pane gratias egit, et fregit, et dedit eis, dicens: Hoc est corpus meum, quod pro vobis datur: hoc facite in meam commemorationem. (Luke 22:19)

The account of Saint Paul is also helpful to include:

Ego enim accepi a Domino quod et tradidi vobis, quoniam Dominus Jesus in qua nocte tradebatur, accepit panem, et gratias agens fregit, et dixit: Accipite, et manducate: hoc est corpus meum, quod pro vobis tradetur: hoc facite in meam commemorationem. (1 Corinthians 11:23-24)

We find in each case the taking of bread, blessing or thanksgiving, breaking and giving to the disciples with accompanying words. The breaking occurs after both the taking and blessing/thanksgiving (or during the blessing for Mark), and before the giving and words of interpretation. The breaking is of the bread over which a blessing or thanksgiving has already taken place in Matthew, Luke and Paul, although during the blessing for Mark. In the context of the Mass, the breaking is after the change has occurred in the bread with the anaphora or prayer of thanksgiving and offering.

If we now focus once more upon the demonstrative pronoun “hunc” referring to the bread in Adomnán’s text we find a possible emphasis upon the bread that has already been blessed or consecrated, and which the visiting bishop Cronan is invited, by Saint Columba, to break according to the episcopal rite. This episcopal rite, according to the evidence of the *Ordines romani* of similar age to our Celtic text, differs from the presbyteral one precisely in the breaking of the consecrated loaf of bread.

Examining again the structure of the same clause, Adomnán clearly pairs *solus* with *frange*. He is emphasising that the bishop from Munster should act alone and in a unique fashion, distinct from Columba himself. The manner of acting is qualified as “by the episcopal rite”, *episcopali ritu*,

the centre of the clause at hand, and the qualification of that which the saint aims to achieve by addressing his episcopal visitor.

Adomnán has given a chiasmic structure to the invitation Saint Columba addressed to Cronan, making the unique character *episcopali ritu* of the ritual act *solus frange* at the centre and pointing to the bread at hand *hunc panem* as the most important object.

	<i>episcopali ritu,</i>	
	<i>solus,</i>	<i>frange</i>
<i>hunc</i>		<i>panem</i>

Thus, Adomnán identifies ritually the difference between himself and his guest: a bishop who, alone, should break the dominical bread.

Conclusion

Six words attributed to Saint Columba have raised many questions around how the Mass was celebrated in Iona and surrounding lands at the time of Adomnán and his saintly predecessor in the monastic community. Six apparently carefully chosen words and artistically arranged in chiasmic form to express the episcopal dignity of the guest from southern Ireland and to indicate how he should proceed to act towards “this bread” that is within the grasp of both men. The suggestive nature of the text is consonant with other texts of its period in history, the *Ordines romani*, and canons of various Western councils, permitting one to see indications of concelebration and distinctions between episcopal and presbyteral celebration even in the details of the six words. Yet, nothing has been definitively proven here, and likely nothing may be proven with the present state of research. However, in addition to the fruit of recent research, we have also used the *Ordines romani* to shed light upon the earlier Life of Saint Columba, and perhaps the time is ripe for the latter to begin to do the same upon the former.

Abbreviations

ALit	Analecta Liturgica
ALw	Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft
BEL.S	Bibliotheca "Ephemerides liturgicae". Subsidia.
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CLH	Clavis Litterarum Hibernensium
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
EO	Ecclesia Orans
GaF	Missale Francorum
HBS	Henry Bradshaw Society
LP	Liber Pontificalis
MD	La Maison-Dieu
MHS.C	Monumenta Hispaniae Sacra. Serie Canónica
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica
OR	Ordo Romanus
PL	Patrologia Latina
RED.F	Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta. Series Maior. Fontes
SSL	Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense. Études et Documents
StAns	Studia Anselmiana

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