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Imag(in)ing the Holy Places: A Comparison between the Diagrams in Adomnán’s and Bede’s *De locis sanctis*

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IN THE FINAL DECADE of the seventh century, Abbot Adomnán of Iona compiled the work known as *De locis sanctis* (*DLS*), a treatise on places in the near East which in the eyes of Christians had been sanctified by the physical presence of Christ, or were in some way associated with him and his disciples. What made the work special was that Adomnán incorporated into his account the eyewitness testimony of Arculf, a Gaulish bishop, who had recently visited the Holy Land and whom he was able to question personally at Iona.¹ Soon after the work was completed, perhaps ca. 683–6,² Adomnán presented a copy to King Aldfrith of Northumbria, probably on the occasion of one of his two known visits to that kingdom, ca. 688–90. Aldfrith was so impressed by the work that he ordered copies to be distributed to the young scholars (*minoribus*) of his kingdom for study (*ad legendum*).³ Among those Northumbrians who keenly read Adomnán’s work was Bede, a monk-deacon at the monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow during the last decade of the seventh century and a great scholar in the making.⁴ We know of Bede’s enthusiasm for the work not only because he cried it up in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (*EH* V.15-17), but also because he made his own abridgement of it (with the same title) ca. 702-03.⁵ This work, according to Bede himself, “contain[s] the sense of his words but put more briefly and concisely” (*ad sensum quidem uerborum illius, sed breuioribus strictisque comprehensa sermonibus*) (Colgrave and Mynors, 1969, 512-13). In fact, Bede’s modifications went much further than mere abbreviating, resulting in a work that has the feel of a textbook, in marked contrast to the discursive quality of the original. In this respect it resembles another work composed by Bede about this time, his *De natura rerum* which, while drawing heavily on the content of Isidore’s work of the same title, recast it as a pedagogical treatise.

Another dimension of Bede’s alterations of his source, and the subject of the present paper, is his treatment of Adomnán’s diagrams. Adomnán’s *DLS* contains four diagrams embedded in the text to illustrate certain buildings associated with the holy places visited by Arculf. They are as follows:⁶

I The Church of the Holy Sepulcher and its environs (I.ii);
II The Basilica of Mount Zion (I.xviii);
III The Church of the Ascension (I.xxiv);
IV The Church at Jacob’s Well (II.xxi).

¹ Meehan (1958, 11) would date Arculf’s visit to the Holy Land ca. 679-82. For recent scholarship on Arculf, whose very identity has been questioned, see Wooding (2010).
² See Meehan (1958).
³ The translation offered by Colgrave and Mynors (1969, 509) and repeated by McClure and Collins (1999, 263), “it was circulated for lesser folk to read,” is unsatisfactory, since *ad legendum* here probably means “for study,” and thus *minoribus* likely refers in this context to those in the early stages of that activity.
⁴ Bede was ordained deacon at the age of 19, thus in 691/692; he became a priest in 703.
⁵ According to Laistner (1943, 85).
⁶ Here and throughout references to *DLS* are from the edition of Bieler (1965, 175-234), identified by book, chapter, section, page and line(s). Unfortunately, Bieler not only omitted the diagrams but even made no mention of them in the apparatus criticus.
O’Neill

Of the four ninth-century manuscripts used by Bieler for his critical edition of DLS, namely Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Vindobonensis 458 (siglum Y; originally from Salzburg); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fonds lat. 13048 (siglum P; from Corbie); Zurich Zentralbibliothek, Rheinau 73 (siglum Z; originally from Reichenau); and Brussels, KBR 3921-22 (siglum B; originally from Stavelot), all but the final one have the four diagrams. And just as each manuscript has its own textual peculiarities, so too for the diagrams they contain. For example, in diagram I, which pictorializes the three crosses of Mount Calvary discovered by Helena, the one associated with Christ is made prominent in Z (and K) by putting it in the middle and by making it much larger than the other two, whereas in Y and P all three crosses have the same dimensions, with the result that the viewer cannot tell which one represents the True Cross—perhaps to suggest the initial quandary faced by Helena. Conversely, in the same diagram, Y marks the walls of Jerusalem to the south of the Holy Sepulcher with the legend “murus,” a detail absent from the other three witnesses. Overall, Y has the fullest and most finely executed diagrams, followed by Z, and then P, though it should be stressed that all three witnesses essentially agree in contents, shapes and accompanying legends.

Adomnán by his own admission was acutely aware of the limitations of these diagrams; no doubt he realized that as simple dessins au trait, they merely represented the contours of an object and thus were fundamentally one-dimensional. Indeed, it appears that he attempted by way of compensation to provide where possible a two-dimensional effect; thus, the diagrams in several manuscripts of DLS have double lines supplied (or meant to be supplied) with color or with slanting lines to indicate depth. In any case the diagrams are integral to the text, as shown not only by their physical location within the manuscript(s) precisely at the point where the text discusses what they portray, but also by statements in the text which formally introduce them or refer the reader to them. Thus, in discussing the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Adomnán mentions the “drawing sub-joined below” (subiecta…pictura) (DLS Lii.14; Bieler, 189, 75-6); and at the end of his description of the Church of the Ascension, he refers to “the admittedly indifferent diagram” (nihil quannis pictura, Lxxiii.19; Bieler, p. 201, line 88) which he appends. Likewise, the reader is introduced to the church at Jacob’s Well with “a plan of it depicted below” (cuinis figura inferius describatur) (DLS II.xxi.2; Bieler, 216, 8-9). The complementary relationship between text and diagram is most explicit in diagram II, where Adomnán, instead of following his normal custom of

7 All four images from this manuscript can be found in Meehan’s edition.
8 The images from this manuscript are provided in the Appendix, Plates 1-4, downloaded from http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark12148/brt1b9066696s.
9 The images from this manuscript are reproduced in Gorman (2006, 16-19).
10 There is also a fragment of DLS containing diagram I in Karlsruhe, Codex Augiensis 129 (K), which is very similar to the one in Z. It is reproduced in Wilkinson (2002, 381) as “aK”; Wilkinson’s Appendix 1 (pp. 371-83) provides a valuable analysis (with images) of both Adomnán’s and Bede’s diagrams from the several manuscripts. However, caution is in order, as some of the images are misidentified: in Appendix, Plate 1, for “aY” read “aP,” for “aP” read “aZ,” and for “aZ” read “aY”; in Appendix, Plate 2, for “aP” read “aY.”
11 Wilkinson (2002, 383) suggests that Y “has been deliberately corrected by some one who had visited the places.” For Y’s diagram of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, see Appendix, Plate 1a, of the present paper. (I am grateful to the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, which retains copyright, for permission to reproduce this image.)
12 He writes “not that it is possible to replicate them [the four churches] pictorially” (non quad possit earum similitudo formari in pictura) (DLS Lii.15; Bieler, 1965, p. 189, l. 80).
13 Wilkinson (2002, 378), thinks that the plans “delineate buildings by foundation lines.”
14 As in Y’s delineation of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (see Appendix, Plate 1a) and the basilica of Mount Zion. In Z the double lines were entered but never colored.
describing the buildings/places in his text while also repeating the same information in the accompanying diagram (in this instance the basilica on Mount Zion), simply refers the reader to the “magnificent basilica depicted above which contains within such sacred places as these” (…supra discriptam grandem basilicam, quae intrinsecus talia sancta conplectitur loca) (DLS I.xviii; Bieler, 197, 7-9). Note in this instance that the reader is directed to a diagram above (supra), or immediately preceding, the text, which implies not only that the diagram has already been entered, but also that it was integral to understanding the text.\footnote{The reason for Adomnán’s departure from his normal procedure is discussed below at pp. 49-50.}

Adomnán says that he expressly requested the four diagrams from Arculf: “We have reproduced the diagrams of these four churches from the exemplar which…the venerable Arculf sketched for me on a small wax tablet” (Has itaque quaternarium figuram aedicularum iuxta exemplar quod mihi…sanctus Arculfus in paginola figuravit cerata depinximus) (DLS I.ii.15; Bieler, 189, 77-9). Adomnán’s paginola cerata probably refers to the single plate of a wax tablet, one each for the four diagrams, a circumstance that may help explain their simple spatial layout in the manuscripts, bound either by rectangles or circles. Indeed, given this highly accommodating medium, one eminently suited to sketching (and correcting) simple diagrams, it seems odd that Adomnán did not take more advantage of it by requesting further sketches from his Gallican informant. After all, the text of \textit{DLS} contains accounts of numerous other churches and ecclesiastical buildings, yet not one of them was furnished with a diagram; for example, the church near Bethany (I.xxvii), the Church of the Holy Mary (IIii), the basilica at Mount Mambre (II.xi), the Church of Galgal (II.xiiii), two churches on the site of Christ’s baptism at the River Jordan (II.xvi), two very large churches at Nazareth (II.xxvi), and perhaps most strikingly, the Church of Hagia Sophia at Constantinople (III.iii). What then made the four diagrams in \textit{DLS} so special?\footnote{O’Loughlin (2007, 57-63), argues that Adomnán called on the authority of Arculf as an eyewitness whenever he was confronted by contradictory evidence in his sources. This explanation has some validity for diagrams I and II, but hardly so for III and IV.}

In the case of nos. I and II, one could offer the plausible explanation that they directly concern \textit{loca sanctissima}, the places which medieval Christians deemed the most holy, described by Adomnán as “the venerated places of [Christ’s] holy cross and resurrection,” located within the compass of Jerusalem’s walls (qui intra murorum eius ambitum sanctae crucis et resurrectionis ipsius loca habet honorifica) (DLS I.i.13; Bieler, 186, 58-9). Furthermore, they were complex sites involving multiple biblical events. Thus, diagram I covers the sites of Christ’s crucifixion, burial and resurrection, as well as the place where the True Cross was discovered; while diagram II contains sites dealing with the Last Supper, the flagellation of Christ, Pentecost, the Virgin Mary’s death, and the martyrdom of Stephen. Neither of these criteria, however, applies very well to diagrams III and IV. In contrast to nos. I and II, these latter are single-event sites, located outside Jerusalem. Certainly, they relate to events of the Gospel narrative, namely Christ’s Ascension from Mount Olivet into heaven, and his encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s Well. But neither diagram directly concerns Christ’s passion and death.\footnote{This space has within it a fourth concentric circle, marking a bronze circular structure, which can be distinguished visually by the presence on its left (western) side of an opening, on which see below, p. 46.} Arguably, what made nos. III and IV worthy, from Adomnán’s perspective, of a diagram was the architectural peculiarity of their structures. In the case of diagram III the fact that it was not only a round church circumscribed by three layers of porticos but, most strikingly, that its central area, where one would have expected a dome, was open to the sky, in order that “there should always be an open passage leading to the ethereal regions visually obvious to those who pray there” (via semper aperta et ad ethera caelorum directa oculis in eodem loco exorantium patet) (DLS I.xxxiii.3; Bieler, 199, 10-14). Hence the attempt in the diagram to represent (by default) the exposed central area as a blank circular space defined by the third portico.\footnote{As for diagram IV, the peculiarity lay in}
its cruciform shape with arms radiating from the well at its center to the four points of the compass.

Turning to Bede’s abridgement of DLS, it has been aptly characterized by Jean-Michel Picard (2005, 48) as “un remarquable travail de contraction de texte” (“a remarkable work of abridgment”), one which reduced Adomnán’s version to one quarter of its original size. It also enjoyed a richer tradition of transmission than its original, thanks no doubt to the fame of its compiler; at least forty-seven manuscripts have survived, seven of which were employed by its most recent editor.18 These agree in containing just three diagrams, corresponding to nos. I–III of Adomnán’s DLS. That the latter work was the source of Bede’s diagrams is evident from fundamental similarities between the two in layout and the wording of their legends, and from the fact that Bede does not contain any diagram not also found in Adomnán. Yet there are a number of small but significant differences which cumulatively indicate that Bede followed an agenda quite different from that of his model. The evidence will be examined below in a sequence that reflects the rising level of complexity in the diagrams.

But first there is the matter of Bede’s omission of Adomnán’s diagram IV, the cruciform church at Shechem.19 This Byzantine church was built on the reputed site of Jacob’s Well, which also happened to be the place where Jesus met the Samaritan woman, as related in John 4:1–42. Since Bede followed Adomnán’s text in devoting a chapter to Shechem, the question naturally arises of why he did not also include the latter’s accompanying diagram, which in the surviving manuscript witnesses is embedded in the text and therefore unlikely to have fallen out in the course of transmission. As argued above, diagram IV likely owed its presence in Adomnán to the peculiarity of its architecture as a church, since it was neither circular nor rectangular but cruciform with four equal arms or naves. In the words of Adomnán, it was “constructed so that it consisted of four parts extending towards the four cardinal points of the earth, in the likeness of a cross” (constructam ecleisiam quae quadrifida in .ii. mundi cardines formata extenditur quasi in similitudinem cruce) (DLS II.xxi.2; Bieler, 216, 7–9). This comment suggests that Adomnán wished to exploit the allegorical potential inherent in the very shape of the building: like Christ’s Cross with its four extended arms, the building symbolically reached to the four corners of the earth, signifying an outreach not just to the chosen people of the Old Testament but also the gentiles of the New. At the same time the equally-sized arms could be read as a sign that no one quarter of the earth was favored over another.20 In all three surviving representations of the diagram, at the extremity of each of the four arms, where a marker of a cardinal point of the compass might have been expected (as was provided for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in diagram I), one finds instead a prominent opening that gives access to Jacob’s Well, as if to emphasize that Christianity welcomes all comers to the “living water” (John 4:10), as Christ did the Samaritan woman and her people. Furthermore, the area at the very center of the cross, where perpendicular and transverse intersect, is identified not, as one might expect, by an altar, but by Jacob’s Well. This privileging of an Old Testament site, in effect making it the exact center of a Christian church, could be read as a not-so-subtle message about the prophetic role played by the patriarchal dispensation in the eventual emergence of the New Testament. Christians such as Adomnán who were anxious to make this point could adduce the words of Christ to the Samaritan woman about how the new dispensation was built on the old (Jn 4:13).

Why then did Bede, the consummate biblical scholar, omit a diagram that seemed to offer such potential for edifying exegesis? A clue to his thinking emerges from the treatment of Shechem

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18 See Fraipont (1965, 247–80); this work is referred to by chapter, section, page and line(s). For an English translation, see Foley and Holder (1999, 1–26).
19 See Appendix, Plate 4.
20 This is clear in Y, though P has a slightly longer transverse and Z a noticeably longer perpendicular. Note that the diagrams in Wilkinson (2002, 372), are mislabeled as “aY,” “aP” and “aZ” (in that order), when they should actually be read as “aP,” “aZ” and “aY.”
in his text. Whereas Adomnán had devoted three paragraphs to the site, amounting to twenty-three lines of printed text (DLS II.xxi; Bieler, 216–7, 2–24), Bede, by contrast, compressed this account into a single sentence of five lines (Ch. xiv; Fraipont, 275, 2–6). True, he noted the church’s remarkable shape—“it consists of four parts…at the center of which is Jacob’s Well” (quadrifera est…in cuius medio fons Iacob) (Fraipont 275, 3–4)—but he entirely eschewed any comment on what that might signify. And whereas Adomnán spoke of the well’s centrality in touching all four arms of the church—“At the center of the church is Jacob’s Well…looking towards its four arms” (In cuius mediateate fons Iacob…ad eius .iiii. respiciens partes…) (DLS II.xxi; Bieler, 216, 10–11), Bede chose simply (and most literally) to record its depth. Nor did he juxtapose (as Adomnán did) Shechem’s New Testament fame as a site of Christian conversion (Christ and the Samaritan woman) with its Old Testament record as a sacred place, a city of refuge (Jos 21:21) and the burial place of Joseph (Jos 24:32). And where Adomnán recorded that Shechem had the earlier name “Sicima,” harking back to Genesis,21 Bede instead supplied its contemporary name, Neapolis.22 Once again we are reminded that Bede’s focus was factual and geographical, and that his aim was to produce a guidebook about the holy places, so it is hardly surprising that Adomnán’s diagram (and text), with its prompting to allegorize, did not serve that pedagogical purpose.

Diagram III, which represents the Church of the Ascension on Mount Olivet, is shared by Adomnán (I.xxiii) and Bede (Ch. vi) and thus allows for direct comparison. Adomnán’s sketch of the church is basically similar in all three extant witnesses: a structure represented by four concentric circles,23 of which the outer three correspond to three layers of roofed circular porticos,24 with the space inside the third circle presumably representing the central area of the church. Remarkably, that area had no roof because (as Adomnán informs us) it was the sanctified space through which Christ passed as he ascended to heaven and, as such, it miraculously resisted all human efforts to enclose it. It did have, however, on its east (right) side a covered altar. A fourth circle is visible at the very center of the diagram, representing what Adomnán describes as “a circular object of bronze” (aerea rota) (DLS I.xxiii.6; Bieler, 200, 25), a cylindrical railing of roughly human height constructed around the footprints of Christ, no doubt to protect them;25 the circle had a lacuna on its west (right) side, marking an aperture that allowed worshippers manual access to the footprints. Between this aperture and the inner western wall of the third portico are eight windows which, although not depicted as such, are suggested in the diagram by the individual lamp that hangs before each one, represented by a tear- (P, Z) or arrow-shaped (Y) form. Finally, on the south side of the building three adjacent entrances to the church are marked.

Bede’s diagram27 has the same four concentric circles, the lacuna on the west side to allow worshippers manual access to Christ’s footprints,28 and the altar on the east side of the church,
though now positioned between the bronze railing and the inner wall of the third portico. But it deviates from Adomnán’s diagram with several omissions and one highly significant addition. Thus, it omits the eight lamps overlooking the west side of the inner church and the three entrances on the south side. Nor does Bede’s diagram have any written legend, such as the words “ROTA AEREA,” which one finds in Z. Most striking is the addition at the heart of Bede’s diagram, within the bronze railing, of a pair of parallel, shoe-shaped forms. As suggested by Wilkinson (2002, 378), these “must surely represent Christ’s footprints,” to which one might add that they lie on a west-to-east axis, and have pointed heads (presumably to represent toe marks) that are oriented due east, the liturgically correct position for Christ’s ascension into Heaven—as implied by the position of the altar. Although Adomnán adverts in his text to the footprints, remarking that they are still visible, his corresponding diagram does not represent them—only Bede’s diagram has them. Moreover, one could argue that the addition of the footprints is skillfully highlighted by the omission of the three entrances and the eight lamps, since the effect is to reduce the plan of the church to a series of concentric circles which imparts visual focus to the footprints at their very center.

These alterations to Adomnán’s diagram raise two related questions: do they represent Bede’s own work and, if so, what was his intention? On the first question Wilkinson (2002, 378) suggests that Bede used a copy of DLS “in which some of the plans had already begun to develop characteristics not present in Arculf’s original,” implying that Bede himself did not make the changes but copied them, presumably from a Northumbrian copy of Adomnán’s work. In principle the suggestion seems to make sense: one could imagine some Northumbrian scribe wishing to embellish Adomnán’s diagram of the place where the Ascension took place with a detail that had been mentioned in the latter’s text, “the footprints of the Lord” (nestigia pedum Domini) (DLS Lxxiii.6; Bieler, 200, 29-30). But given the complementarity of function between this addition and the omissions, it seems likely that whoever added the footprints to Adomnán’s diagram was also the same person responsible for the omissions. As will be seen from diagrams III and IV, this type of activity points to Bede himself. Furthermore, there is strong evidence to suggest that Bede had a particular interest in these footprints. In his text of DLS he changed Adomnán’s nestigia pedum Domini (“the footprints of the Lord”) to ultima Domini nestigia “the last traces of the Lord” (Ch vi.1; Fraipont, 263, 11-12), where the addition of the defining adjective ultima (“last”) serves to emphasize the finality of the Ascension. We know from his other writings that Bede attached great importance to the Ascension. Thus, not only did he include it in the list of central biblical events about which the Anglo-Saxon poet Cædmon composed, he also authored a special Latin hymn of thirty-two stanzas to commemorate the feast-day. Even more telling is the evidence of his biblical commentaries, which reveal an unusual interest in a single physical aspect of the Ascension, the mark left by Christ in the shape of his footprints. Admittedly, Adomnán also makes much of Christ’s footprints, but where his interest lies in their perdurance, Bede’s is focused on their finality—they are the last tangible remains of Christ’s time on earth. Nor was Bede’s addition of

having a rather similar arrangement which allowed devotees to access the dust within his tomb; see HE IV.3.

29 Wilkinson’s speculation (2002, 378) that the entry doors were originally marked in Bede’s diagram “by black squares breaking a coloured line,” only to be ignored by later copyists, is not borne out by any of the surviving manuscript witnesses and goes against the evidence of Bede’s other diagrams.

30 The footprints are found in only two manuscripts of Bede’s DLS, Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France, fonds lat. 2321 (see Appendix, Plate 5) and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Vindobonensis 580, the latter reproduced in Wilkinson (2002, 373) as “bV”.

31 On Cædmon, see HE IV.28; the hymn for Ascension Day is edited by Fraipont (1955, 419-23).

32 Bede describes them as “the last traces of the Lord” (ultima Domini nestigia) (Ch. vi.1; Fraipont, 263, 11-12). Note that Bede repeated these words in an excerpt from his DLS which he inserted into HE IV.17
ultima to Adomnán’s 

merek adhocery; he repeats the idea in at least two other of his works. In 


Jerusalem with great joy,” with the following comment: “After the Lord had ascended into Heaven, 

the disciples worshipped at the spot where his feet had very recently stood and quickly returned to 

Jerusalem” (Ascendente in caelum domino discipuli adorantes in loco ubi steterunt nouissime pedes eius confestim 

Hierosolima redeunt) (Hurst, 1960, 424, ll. 2430-32). Likewise, in a homily on the Ascension, he 

remarks of the Apostles who had just witnessed Christ’s Ascension, that “having worshipped at the 

spot where his feet stood, after they watered with abundant tears the footsteps he had very recently 

imprinted, they quickly returned to Jerusalem” (…postquam adorauerunt in loco ubi steterunt pedes eius 

postquam uestigia qua nonissime fescit lacrimis rigauere profusis confestim rediere Hierosolimam) (Hurst, 1955, 

284, ll.169-72). In both instances Bede’s focus is on the footprints, with the implication that they 

were accorded special veneration by the Apostles because they marked Christ’s final moment of 

physical presence on earth. Bede’s emphasis on this particular aspect of the Ascension in his 

commentaries surely accords with the centrality of the footprint image in his diagram.

Diagram II represents the basilica on Mount Zion, otherwise known as the Cenacle (from the 

meeting-room where the Last Supper was held and the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles). In 

all three witnesses to Adomnán’s DLS, it is presented as a rectangle (though almost square in 

Y), with four legends written on the inside, one at each corner, marking the locations, respectively, 
of the Last Supper (north-west), the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (north-east), the 

Dormition of Mary (south-east) and the entrance to the basilica (south-west). A fifth legend 

identifies at the very center of the basilica, the place where the marble column stands at which 

Christ was scourged—the site of the actual scourging is marked by a square with accompanying 

legend outside the basilica on the west side.

Bede’s diagram supplies much the same data, though characteristically it omits the entrance 
to the building, presenting the latter as a closed rectangle. It also adds (in manuscript N), a slightly 
protruding rectangle centered on the south side of the basilica, directly below the base of the vertical 
post representing the column at which Christ was scourged. A potentially comparable building is 
marked in Adomnán’s diagram in the shape of a small square attached to the south wall in 
approximately the same position, but since it lacks a legend it is difficult to be sure about what it 
represents, perhaps a sacrarium (“a sanctuary or shrine”). No such ambiguity clouds Bede’s diagram 
thanks to the prominent legend, “PETRA MARMOREA SUPRA QUAM LAPIDATUR 
PROTHOMARTYR STEPHANUS” (“The marble stone on which Stephen, the proto-martyr, is 
stoned”), written in Romanesque capitals around the rectangle. The legend is obviously based on
Adomnán’s comment in his text, “In this place is pointed out the rock on which Stephen was stoned to death outside the city” (Hic petra monstratur super quam Stephanus lapidatus extra ciuitatem obdormiuit) (DLS L.xviii.2; Bieler 197, 6-7), but the difference in wording merits comment. Adomnán’s past participle lapidatus (“stoned”) is replaced by the present indicative lapidatur (“is stoned”). The latter could be the result of the misreading of an Insular ‘s’ as ‘r,’ but assuming such is not the case, one could read it as a historical present, perhaps a conscious attempt to convey the enduring relevance of Stephen’s death and to dispel the notion that it was merely a historical event, as Adomnán’s lapidatus…obdormiuit, with its necrological formula, might suggest.

The impression that the legend was intended for contemporary application is strengthened by a second alteration, the addition to Stephen’s name of the epithet protomartyr (“proto-martyr”). In Christian usage the title was commonly attached to Stephen, to the point where it had almost become a pious cliché, but in Bede’s diagram it seems to carry real meaning. For Bede the biblical scholar with his broad perspective on Salvation History, Abel was the protomartyr of the Old Testament, and correspondingly Stephen of the New Testament. So much is evident from his biblical commentaries, which emphasize that Stephen was not merely the first martyr (in time) of the New Testament but also the model for all subsequent Christian martyrs. Bede’s other change to the accompanying legend, the characterization of the rock on which he was stoned as made of marble (marmorea), seems to be a deliberate attempt to associate his martyrdom with that of Christ, who was scourged at a marble pillar. As already noted, the association between these two events is visually emphasized in the diagram by the positioning of this pillar directly above the rectangle marking Stephen’s place of martyrdom.

Another noteworthy difference of treatment between Adomnán and Bede on the subject of the basilica of Mount Zion concerns the relationship between diagram and corresponding main text. In Adomnán, the legends supplied in the diagrams typically have their counterparts in the text, with the latter often providing more detail. But in the present instance Adomnán’s diagram II contains legends of five (six in Y) locations within or adjacent to the basilica on Mount Zion, whereas the text mentions only two, both of them outside that building, namely, the stone on which Stephen was stoned and another at which Christ was scourged. Adomnán was clearly aware of this departure from his normal practice, as evident from an oblique reference in the text to the “missing” items as “such holy places on the inside of the building” (quae intrinsecus talia sancta conplectitur loca) (DLS L.xviii.2; Bieler, 197, 8-9). So, why did he not list them? A possible explanation is that he had already discussed at least two of them, but in other sections of DLS. Thus, in a previous chapter he identified the Church of the Holy Mary in the Valley of Josaphat as the site of the tomb (now empty) where her body at one time reposed (DLS L.xii.2; Bieler, 195, 7-10). Presumably, he felt that

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39 See his Libri quatuor in principium Genesis (Migne, 1850, 38C) and his In Ezram et Neemiam (Hurst, 1969, 271, 1204; also in Migne, Patrologia Latina, 1850, 831D).
40 See, for example, his Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, 6:8-10: Hebraice autem interpretatur norma nostra; quorum uidelicet martyrum nisi sequentium quibus primo patiendo forma factus est moriendo pro Christo? (“[Stephen’s name] in Hebrew translates as ‘your standard’—and indeed for which martyrs but those who came after him?; by being the first to have suffered martyrdom he became for them the model of dying for Christ’s sake”); and dignum enim fuit ut in protomartyre confirmaret quod cunctis pro suo nomine traditis est promittere (“it was appropriate that God should confirm in the person of the first martyr [sc. Stephen] what he thought fit to promise to all those delivered to death in his name”) (Laistner, 1983, 32-33, ll. 18-20 and 24-25).
41 Significantly, in his Retractatio in Actus Apostolorum, a supplementary commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, Bede (quoting Eusebius) links the deaths of Christ and Stephen by stating that the same people were responsible for both: “after his [sc. Stephen’s] ordination, he is stoned by those who also killed our Lord” (post ordinationem quam lapidatur ab his qui et dominum occiderunt) (Laistner, 1983, 130, ll. 23-24).
to bring up the subject of Mary’s burial place again in his description of Mount Zion would have exposed him to the charge of contradictory evidence about this delicate subject. Likewise, in a previous chapter he had mentioned the table at which Christ used to recline at meals with his apostles as being located in a grotto on the slope of Mount Olivet (DLŠ I.v.2; Bieler, 196, 11-16), a claim which would surely have prompted careful readers to question why the meal of the Last Supper took place at a different table located on Mount Zion. Adomnán’s solution to both conundrums was to refer vaguely in his text to “holy places” within the church, while at the same time supplying the potentially controversial information as legends in the accompanying diagram. This would not be the first time that he fudged conflicting evidence by means of the diagrams.\(^{42}\)

Whether by accident or (more likely) design, Bede circumvented this problem by omitting any reference to Christ’s table at Mount Olivet and by distancing himself from Adomnán’s statement that the resting place of Mary was located in the church of the Holy Mary with the qualifiers *dicìtur*, “it is said,” and *nescìtur*, “it is not known” (Ch. v; Fraipont, 262, 26 and 27). In this way he was able not only to incorporate the legends into his diagram (as Adomnán did) but also to discuss them individually in the accompanying main text (as Adomnán did not).

In one detail at least, Bede’s diagram II (N) may bring us closer to Adomnán’s archetype than the surviving manuscripts of his work (Y, P, and Z). As already noted, Adomnán states in his text that Stephen was stoned on a rock located outside the city, yet not one of these three manuscript witnesses has a legend giving the precise location for this event. A small square marked in all three on the south wall of the basilica, to the right of the entrance (*porta*), may be a candidate for the place in question,\(^{43}\) as suggested by the fact that in Bede’s diagram (N) the legend about “PROTHOMARTYR STEPHANUS” is entered in a narrow rectangle located in the same position. If this surmise is correct, how does one explain the absence of the legend in the surviving copies of Adomnán’s diagram—assuming that the original contained it? The answer may well lie in scribal haplography. What makes this possibility worth considering is a combination of contextual circumstances, the first two plausible, the third almost certain. First, the anonymous square building is extramural, thus making it likely that any putative legend accompanying it in Adomnán’s original would have been written outside the large rectangle representing the church and arranged transversely because of its considerable length. Secondly, in accordance with Adomnán’s normal habit, it would probably have closely matched in wording the corresponding main text (DLŠ I.xviii.2; Bieler 197, 6-7), *Hic petra monstratur super quam Stefanus lapidatus extra ciuitatem obdormiuit* (“In this place is pointed out the rock on which Stephen was stoned to death outside the city”), whose first clause would provide a suitable legend. Thirdly, since the main text (just quoted) that is posited as the source of the legend begins in the manuscripts immediately below the diagram (and so, arguably, just below the putative legend) the possibility of haplography, with consequent loss of the legend, would be high.

Diagram I, the most important and complex of Adomnán’s four, deals with the most sacred of all the sites, comprising the area on Mount Calvary within which Christ was crucified, died, and rose from the dead, as well as an adjacent site where several centuries later the True Cross was discovered by the Empress Helena.\(^{44}\)

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\(^{42}\) As pointed out by O’Loughlin (2012a, 31), who argues, with reference to diagram I, that it provided “an ideal solution to Adomnán’s problem of texts that threaten him with contradictions.”

\(^{43}\) O’Loughlin (2012a, 37), proposes tying this place to the legend written inside the basilica’s south-east corner that records Mary’s Dormition, but this is unlikely, not only because they are physically (and visually) separated, but also because legends that belong with extramural buildings are themselves normally entered outside the walls. For example, the stone outside the basilica, where Christ was scourged, has a legend which is also written outside the diagram on the western side.

\(^{44}\) See Appendix, Plates 1 (P) and 1a (Y).
that of Bede is the clutter of the former in contrast to the visual austerity of the latter.\(^45\) In Adomnán (especially as represented by \(Y\)) sites with their concomitant legends occupy so much of the diagram that any sense of open space is lost, notably in the courtyard (\textit{plateola}) between the two main structures, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (the Anastasis) on the west (left) side, and the basilica of Constantine (the Martirium) on the east (right). Within that intermediate area Adomnán’s diagram supplies three legends (with two accompanying images) that are not represented in Bede’s diagram: the site of Abraham’s altar (marked with a wooden table where food is now left for the indigent), a chapel (\textit{exedra}) containing the chalice used at the Last Supper, and a legend about the lamps that burn continually (no image). Adomnán also marked two gateways in the Anastasis, one providing ingress from outside the walls of the complex, the other opening on to the space within the complex facing eastwards towards the courtyard. His diagram also shows a dedicated entrance to Christ’s tomb (the \textit{monumentum}) at the very heart of the Anastasis. Thus, according to the disposition of buildings in Adomnán, one could access the complex (including Christ’s tomb) only by coming through the Anastasis. Bede’s diagram, by contrast, has no way in or out, though it does mark a single entry each for the three buildings within the compound, as well as a particular entrance for the \textit{monumentum}.

Since Bede adverts in his text to all of this omitted matter, the question naturally arises of why he did not include it in his diagram. The omission of the chapel containing the chalice used at the Last Supper could be reasonably explained as an attempt to avoid visual clutter that would detract from the adjoining Golgothan Church; likewise, for the legend explaining the lamps. For the omission of Abraham’s altar a different rationale may have been at work. By physically juxtaposing Abraham’s altar, on which the patriarch was willing to sacrifice his only son, Isaac (traditionally interpreted as a type of Christ), with the Church of Golgotha, Adomnán obviously intended readers to draw a parallel with God’s sacrifice of his son, Jesus, on Mount Calvary.\(^46\) This juxtaposing of events and places of the Old Testament with typologically related ones in the New Testament, while characteristic of Adomnán’s \textit{modus operandi}, is generally passed over by Bede whose interests lay elsewhere, as seen in his summary treatment of Jacob’s Well at Shechem.

Even when Bede adopts legends from Adomnán’s diagram I, he tends to alter them significantly. For example, that for the Martirium reads, “the Church of Constantine where the Lord’s cross was discovered” (\textit{Constantiniana ecclesia, ubi cruc Domini inuenta est} (Ch. ii.2; Fraipon, 256),\(^47\) as against Adomnán’s much fuller wording, “The Church of Constantine, in that place where the Lord’s cross was found buried, along with the two crosses of the thieves” (\textit{Constantiniana basilica in quo loco ubi cruc dominica cum binis latronum crucibus sub terra reperta est} (I.vi.1; Bieler, 190-91, 8-11).\(^48\) Adomnán’s reference to three crosses calls to mind the legend of Helena’s miraculous Finding of the True Cross, in marked contrast to Bede’s legend which keeps the focus on Christ’s cross only, the one that mattered from a soteriological point of view. Note also Bede’s replacement of Adomnán’s \textit{reperta} with \textit{inuenta}, a perfectly acceptable synonym for “found/discovered,” but in this instance probably a deliberate lexical choice to echo the cognate noun, \textit{inuentio} which, in the specialized liturgical meaning of “discovering” a relic, gave its name to the feast commemorating Helena’s discovery of the True Cross, the \textit{Inuentio Sanctae Crucis}. Also changed is the name of the church adjacent to Anastasis, which Adomnán called \textit{Sanctae Mariae Ecclesia}, but in Bede’s diagram

\(^{45}\) See Appendix, Plate 7. I am indebted to Brepols Publishers, Turnhout, Belgium, for permission to use this image from \textbf{N} as printed in Fraipont (1965, 256).

\(^{46}\) As does the \textit{Breuiarius de Hierosolyma}, a work probably used by Adomnán; thus, \textit{Vbi obtulit Abraham Ysaac filium suum in sacrificium in ipso loco, ubi crucifixus est Dominus} (“where Abraham offered his son Isaac in sacrifice, in the very place where the Lord was crucified”) (Weber, 1965, 110, ll. 55-58 [version “a”]).

\(^{47}\) See Appendix, Plate 7.

\(^{48}\) See Appendix, Plate 1a.
becomes *Ecclesia sanctae Dei genetricis* ("the Church of the Holy Mother of God"). Dedications to Mary with this title would have been familiar to Bede; in his *Ecclesiastical History* he mentions three churches so named at Canterbury, Lastingham, and Barking.\(^{49}\) Yet the fact that Bede went to the trouble of substituting *sancta Dei genetrix* for *Sancta Maria* in his diagram,\(^{50}\) suggests a deliberate Marian emphasis. This sobriquet for Mary, which was used in the West as a practical translation of the theologically-loaded Greek term *Theotokos* ("the one who gave birth to God"), would serve to remind Bede’s readers of her role in the salvific events commemorated in the immediate vicinity of the church dedicated to her.

Predictably, Bede’s diagram, like that of Adomnán, highlights the centrality of the Anastasis by means of its disproportionate size (in relation to the other buildings), while defining its architecture by means of four concentric circles (compare the Church of the Ascension, diagram II). The outer three circles represent walls, the innermost (fourth) marks “a round shelter” (originally carved out of a cave), which Adomnán calls *tegorium rotundum*, equating it with the *monumentum* mentioned in the Gospels, in the northern part of which lies the actual tomb of Christ (the *sepulchrum*). Adomnán went to great pains in his text to distinguish in meaning between the *monumentum* and the *sepulchrum*, a distinction evident in his diagram where *tegorium rotundum* is clearly located in the very center so as to command the whole inner circle of the Anastasis,\(^{51}\) while *sepulchrum Domini* is marked within a rectangle located in the upper part of the same circle to represent the actual resting place for Christ’s body. Bede’s diagram not only replaces Adomnán’s legend, *tegorium rotundum*, with *Anastasis* but, more significantly, replaces his *sepulchrum Domini* with *monumentum Domini*, entering the words around the rectangle copied from Adomnán. This change was made despite the fact that in the main text Bede repeated Adomnán’s rather pedantic distinction between the *sepulchrum* and the *monumentum* (Ch. ii.2; Fraipont, 255, 38-39 and 36-37).\(^{52}\) We can only speculate that Bede’s change of terminology in the legend was intended to remove any potential confusion about Christ’s place of burial (and resurrection) by adhering to the general usage of the Gospels in favor of *monumentum*.

Another difference between the two diagrams is that whereas Adomnán (in Y) has a legend on the inner (courtyard) side of the Anastasis marking the direction of East (Oriens), Bede marks West (Occidens) on the opposite side of the circular church. This directional divergence probably has to do with perspective: Adomnán begins his account with the Anastasis and from there gradually moves eastwards, ending with Constantine’s Martirium. It is as if he were standing at the site of Christ’s tomb and looking towards the east, an entirely appropriate position from a Christian perspective. This perspective also explains why he refers to the Church of Holy Mary as situated “on the right-hand (or south)\(^{53}\) side” of the Anastasis (a dextera…parte) (*DLS* Liv; Bieler, 190, 6). Bede, by contrast, begins with the Martirium and from there guides the reader westwards—“Next, to the west” (Debinc ab occasi) (Ch. ii.1; Fraipont, 254, 6-7)—first to the Golgothan Church and “again to the west of that church the Anastasis” (Huius quoque ad occasum ecclesiae Anastasis) (Ch. ii.1; Fraipont, 254, 13-14). While this distinction makes no difference with regard to the accuracy of Bede’s representations of Adomnán’s buildings, it does compromise a statement in his text (taken verbatim from Adomnán) that the Church of Holy Mary was located to the right of the Anastasis.

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\(^{49}\) See *HE* II.4, III.23 and IV.10, respectively.

\(^{50}\) Note that he also made the same change to Adomnán’s title in the main text (Ch. ii.2; Fraipont, 256, 38), while leaving unchanged the title *Sancta Mariae ecclesia* for another church dedicated to Mary mentioned elsewhere in *DLS* (Ch. V.3; Fraipont, 262, 22).

\(^{51}\) Found in Y, Z and K, though absent from P.

\(^{52}\) O’Loughlin (2012a, 28) would explain Adomnán’s insistence on the distinction as occasioned by the occurrence of both *monumentum* (3x) and *sepulchrum* (4x) in Matthew’s Gospel.

\(^{53}\) Hiberno-Latin *dextera* (under the influence of Old Irish *deisi*) can denote the south.
Given the westward perspective adopted by Bede, he should have described Mary's Church as on the left, rather than the right, side of the Anastasis. The mistake probably reflects the fact that while drawing almost exclusively on Adomnán for the contents of his account, Bede derived his general orientation for Jerusalem and its environs from Eucherius of Lyons’ *De Situ Hierosolimae*, a work which begins its account of the city at the northern gate leading directly to Constantine’s Martirium, and thence moves westwards to Golgotha and the Anastasis.\(^{54}\)

These changes to Adomnán’s diagram cannot be dismissed as resulting from textual deterioration induced by careless transmission over three or four centuries; the general agreement in the texts of the legends among the surviving manuscript witnesses to Bede’s *DLS* tells against it. That they were not only deliberate but also the work of Bede can be inferred from his own words in the main text. After describing in detail the most holy sites where Christ suffered, was buried, and rose from the dead, Bede supplied diagram I immediately below, which he introduced with the following note: “Each of the details that I have described, I took care to represent pictorially before you, so that you may better understand them” (*Sed singula, quae dixi, ut manifestius agnosceres, etiam prae oculis depingere curaui*) (Ch. ii.2; Fraipont, 256, 46-7). Bede’s *singula* (“the individual details”) would seem to imply that his diagram promises to represent all the matter he has just been describing; in reality, as shown above, much of the information given in his text is not found in the diagrams. Or to put it another way: whereas in Adomnán the diagrams reflect the main text reasonably well and their legends repeat the wording of the latter,\(^{55}\) in Bede main text and diagrams quite often diverge, so that items described in the first frequently do not appear in the second, while the legends of the latter take on a textual life of their own.

Since no one was more likely to have been aware of this discrepancy than Bede himself, we must ask what impelled him to deviate in the diagrams from what he promised in the text. One possible answer is that he envisaged a different function for each. In the case of the text, it seems to be generally agreed that Bede designed it as a handy guide to the history and geography of the holy places, a goal he sought to achieve by severely pruning Adomnán’s work and converting its discursive style into a descriptive one. But for the diagrams (including legends) Bede seems to have been driven by a different agenda.

The nature of that agenda can only be surmised from the changes effected in Bede’s diagrams compared to those of Adomnán. One such category is the various omissions. Some involve non-essential details; for example, in diagram I, where Adomnán’s legend to the Martirium mentions the discovery of three crosses, that of Bede focuses exclusively on Christ’s Cross. Others concern references to people and places of the Old Testament. For example, in diagram I Bede ignores Adomnán’s legend about Abraham’s altar (intended for the sacrificing of Isaac) with its potential typological significance. The most obvious example is the total omission of Adomnán’s diagram IV, presumably because it did not directly relate to a crucial event in Salvation History.

Another type of change evident in Bede’s diagrams is the subtle re-wording of the legends. For example, in diagram I Adomnán’s *reperta* (“found by searching”) is changed to *inuenta* (“discovered”) to provide a verbal cue to the feast-day known as the Finding of the True Cross (*Inuentio Sanctae Crucis*). In the same diagram the church immediately below the Anastatis dedicated to Mary, which Adomnán calls *Ecclesia Sanctae Mariae*, in Bede becomes *Ecclesia Sanctae Dei Genetrix*; in this way the reader/viewer is reminded of Mary’s central role in salvation as the Mother of Jesus.

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54 Note how Bede, having completed his account of the holy places around Golgotha, resumes his tour (Fraipont, 257, 51-4) by again drawing directly on Eucherius (Fraipont, 238, 32-5). For Eucherius’s authorship of this work, see Gorman (2006, 39-41).

55 Though not always; see Aist (2010, 166), who notes that Adomnán’s reference in the text to a rock on Mount Zion is contradicted by the diagram which portrays (or describes) a marble column in the middle of the basilica.
Most importantly, Bede’s diagram identifies the Church of the Holy Sepulcher as the *Anastasis*—Adomnán marks it with the purely descriptive term *ecclesia* rotunda (“a circular church”)—while also changing the latter’s nomenclature for Christ’s tomb from *sepulchrum* to *monumentum*. Both changes serve to move the focus away from Christ’s death and burial to his resurrection, the first by playing on the etymology of the Greek-derived name *Anastasis* (“rising from the dead”), the second, by preferring the term *monumentum*, the one employed in the Gospel narratives of the resurrection. In diagram II the addition of the epithet *protomartyr* to Stephen’s name highlights his unique status as the first (and archetypal) Christian martyr, while the mention of the marble (*marmorea*) stone where he died connects him with the marble column at which Christ was scourged. This cumulative evidence suggests that what mattered for Bede in the legends was their potential for Christian instruction and edification. Buildings and their accompanying legends were included only in so far as they had immediate relevance for pious readers of his own time; hence the references to the cult of the Cross, the mediating role of Mary, and the portrayal of Stephen as a role model.

Finally, there is the evidence of Bede’s re-designed diagrams. As already noted, the interesting architectural details that pervade Adomnán’s diagrams, such as entrances, exits, and lighting, are noticeably missing in Bede. The absence of these features, which humanize a great building, makes Bede’s diagrams self-contained, as if to signify that they represent the sites of sacred events that of their nature exclude human interaction since they relate exclusively to Christ in his redemptive role. At the same time on a visual level these omissions help create a starkly geometric effect of circles, squares, and rectangles, so that in a single glance one can readily capture a building’s most salient feature, the one bearing on its soteriological meaning. Thus, in diagrams I (Church of the Holy Sepulcher) and III (Church of the Ascension) the three/four concentric circles, like the bull’s eye of a target, draw one’s focus to the very center where the main actions, Christ’s resurrection and Ascension, are represented by images of a tomb and footprints, respectively. Likewise, diagram II’s shape (especially in N) as a closed, elongated rectangle serves to highlight the presence of the vertical column at the very center and its rectangular base, the first associated with Christ’s scourging, the second with Stephen’s stoning.

Cumulatively, this evidence suggests that Bede envisaged his diagrams not so much as illustrations ancillary to the main text, but as highlights in their own right of the central events of Christ’s salvific mission. While his three diagrams can hardly be said to offer a comprehensive overview of Salvation History, they nevertheless prompt the reader to view the facts of the main text from a soteriological perspective. It is surely significant that in the final sentences of his *DLS*, Bede referred to Adomnán’s work (from which he derived most of the facts in his own) as a *historia*, a factual account, while in the same breath presenting his own version as a prompt to scriptural interpretation and prayer. It is as if he were inviting readers to approach his work in the spirit of biblical exegesis: first ascertaining the literal and historical meaning of the text and from that proceeding to investigate its hidden, spiritual meaning.

Appendix

This section contains images referred to by plate number in the main text and footnotes.

56 Cf. Mt 28:8; Mc 16:5; Lc 24:9; Io 20:1.
57 Bede writes: *Pulcherrimae…historiae…scriptorum* (“the author of a very elegant narrative”) (Ch. xviii.5; Fraipont, 280, 48-49).
58 Bede adds, “…obscurant...ut praesenti saeculi laborem non otiu lasciavi torporis, sed lectionis orationisque studio tibi temperare satagias (“entreating...that you will try to make bearable for yourself the burden of this life, not with the comfort of undisciplined sluggishness but with enthusiasm for reading and prayer”) (Ch. xviii.5, Fraipont 280, 51-53).
Plate 2

Plate 3
References


