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Early Medieval Sculpture in Southeast Ireland: Identities, Landscape and Memory

Volume 1 of 2

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this submission is of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree/qualification at the National University of Ireland, Cork, or elsewhere.

Signed:

Margaret Kathleen Colbert

Date:

05 May 2020

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Abstract

This project investigates early medieval (*c.* AD 400–1200) sculpted stones as commemorative technologies and agents of cultural transmission, instilled with an array of meanings that varied between individuals and over time. Using the southeast of Ireland as a case study, it considers the sculpture in five modern counties – Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, and South Tipperary – within which were a range of ecclesiastical sites, including some of 'national' importance such as Lismore and Ferns. The core aim of this study is to expand our understanding of carved stones and their role in early medieval society by examining why these monuments were created and how people interacted with them, as well as the meanings and values with which they imbued their surrounding landscape. Some of the questions explored in this thesis are why some sites invest in sculpture while others do not, why sculpture is produced at certain times during the life of a site and not others, and what these carved stones can tell us about the priorities and social identities of their communities. Analyses were often augmented by computational imaging tools – primarily photogrammetry, though reflectance transformation imaging (RTI), and geographic information systems (GIS) were also selectively applied – as a means to enhance the examination and interpretation of pieces with particularly worn or weathered carvings. By utilising a synthesis of recording techniques and theoretical approaches, it is hoped that a more fully comprehensive study of the early medieval sculpture of this region has been achieved.

High crosses and otherwise undecorated ogham stones were not surveyed, as several studies on these monuments have already been done, or are ongoing. Instead, this project focused on other stone monuments with sculpture, e.g. grave-markers, boundary markers, portable stone objects, etc. Altogether, 260 carved stones were analysed for this study, distributed across 53 sites. A wide variety of monument-types are represented in this region, including some for which there are only a handful of examples in Ireland, e.g. sundials, tau crosses, gable finials, etc. The distribution of sculpture shows that major ecclesiastical sites in the southeast, particularly Emly, the premier church of Munster, did not invest heavily in stone sculpture, and, instead, chose to invest most of their resources elsewhere. This is in stark contrast to several other major ecclesiastical sites in Ireland, e.g. Clonmacnoise, Glendalough, and Iniscealtra, which produced hundreds of pieces of stone sculpture. Additionally, some of the more significant findings to come out of this thesis are the subjects of stand-alone chapters.

A reassessment of the large assemblage of sculpture at St Berrihert's Kyle, Co. Tipperary was undertaken due to the reorganisation of several carved stones at the site since this collection was last published. Sculpture appears to have been a specialty of St Berrihert's Kyle, especially in the 8th century. This site, and the nearby Toureen Peakaun, together contain one of the highest concentrations of 7th–8th century grave-markers in Ireland, and yet, stylistically, the sculpture at these two sites are markedly different. This seems to suggest that 'house styles', as well as preferred monument forms, reflect the development of separate ecclesiastical identities, even between communities with close links. A group of four 'marigold' stones were identified in Co. Wexford with shared hagiographical, socio-political and ecclesiastical links, both with each other and with several Welsh churches, particularly St David's. More importantly, this group of stones present us with physical evidence for ties between specific religious foundations around and across the Irish Sea, which have been hitherto difficult to identify. At the ecclesiastical site of Clonmore in Co. Carlow, components of at least one, possibly two, composite stone shrines were discovered. This new archaeological evidence, together with its already considerable assemblage of early medieval sculpture, supports a number of textual sources of the period that claim Clonmore housed a significant collection of corporeal saints' relics. Moreover, the cult of relics which had been built around this collection differed markedly in its expression from most other relic cults across Ireland and, to an extent, elsewhere in Western Europe — indicating that the cult of relics in Ireland was perhaps more diverse in its character and material manifestations than previously assumed.

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1

Introduction and State of the Art

1.1 Introduction

Stone has long been perceived as a permanent medium, upon which text, ornamentation, and symbols can survive and endure. Carved stones constitute a substantial proportion of the extant material culture from the early medieval period in Ireland, here defined as *c*. AD 400–1200, and are an essential source of archaeological and historical information for the development of early medieval kingdoms and societies prior, throughout, and subsequent to their conversion to Christianity (Gondek 2006). As such, their potential to provide new insights into early medieval communities and polities cannot be overstated. Yet, the significance of these monuments has not always been recognised, or else, not fully explored. This is exemplified in the large body of literature that focuses on stylistic analysis and motif comparisons to establish chronology, without any consideration given to context. Indeed, even more recent contributions to the field have studied sculpture primarily as an index of political power and patronage (see section 1.2). To fully understand the value of sculpture, however, it is vital to also examine their role in shaping social memory, and the connections between sculpture, their audiences, and the landscape. However, these relationships are often complex, and constantly changing, both in the past as well as the present. Stone monuments do not 'hold' memories – rather, they are *imbued* with them, through their text and ornamentation, the way in which their materials were chosen and conveyed, and the way in which they are positioned and experienced (Williams, Kirton and Gondek 2015a, 8). These integral practices can, in part, be excavated, surveyed, and analysed through archaeological means, as well as through historical sources (*ibid*). Thus, by undertaking a detailed and interdisciplinary analysis of these monuments, one that considers their mnemonic, as well as art-historical and socio-political value, we can gain a deeper understanding of the social and ideological world in which they were created.

This thesis aims to achieve such a study by approaching these monuments in a nuanced and theoretically-focused manner, to explore the research themes identified above. Using the southeast of Ireland, i.e. Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford, and Wexford, as a case study – an area rich in stone monuments yet relatively ignored until now –

this project investigates early medieval sculpture as commemorative technologies and agents of cultural transmission, instilled with an array of meanings that varied between individuals and over time. This thesis also explores carved stones as components of sacred complexes and landscapes, and the theoretical connections between sculpture form and function, as they pertain to acts of commemoration, ritual practices, and mnemonic boundaries. It also considers the use and reuse of early medieval sculpted stones as *spolia*, and their incorporation into newer structures as apotropaic devices, and relics of a 'legendary past' (Chapter 5). In some cases, analyses have been enhanced using computational imaging software, i.e. photogrammetry and reflectance transformation imaging (see Chapter 2). These digital tools have great potential to significantly improve our ability to examine and interpret these pieces, as well as to provide permanent and highly accurate records, which can then be used for future research – particularly when a stone subsequently goes missing, or becomes inaccessible. Indeed, this is the first project in Ireland to apply this particular combination of methodological and theoretical techniques to an in-depth exploration of the carved stones of a specific region. Furthermore, it is intended that this project be seen as a pilot study that, in the medium term, may be incorporated into a national survey of early medieval sculpture (see Chapter 9).

1.2 Literature review

Antiquarian publications that describe or illustrate the early medieval sculpture of Ireland date back to at least the late 18th century, with Edward Ledwich illustrating a sculpted stone at Monaincha, Co. Tipperary in *Antiquities of Ireland* (1790); however, this was one of only four known works relating to Irish early medieval sculpture before 1850 (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 3). The latter half of the 19th century, and first two decades of the 20th, saw a marked increase in the recording of stone monuments and the output of publications. The *Ordnance Survey Letters*, written between 1839 and 1841, are an invaluable resource, in particular, for some of the earliest recorded landscape contexts of many of the carved stones being investigated here (O'Flanagan, 1929; 1930a; 1930b; 1933; 1934). In 1858, William F. Wakeman published *Hand-book of Irish Antiquities, pagan and Christian*, which describes and illustrates a handful of early medieval monuments, mostly high crosses. Many other antiquarian publications on early medieval sculpture were journal papers pertaining to individual monuments, or to select sculpture in a collection, that were deemed 'interesting' (e.g. Kinahan 1873). These papers most often appeared in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, and *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* (and their several previous iterations). Fortunately, in one

regard, antiquarian and archaeology societies were very active in organising excursions to heritage sites (especially the Kilkenny Archaeological Society), and their members were enthusiastic in recording the early medieval monuments they visited across much of the southeast – providing some of the earliest sketches, photographs, and descriptions of many of the stones in this corpus. *Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language,* edited by Margaret Stokes from the records and drawings done previously by George Petrie, was the first major body of work to record and illustrate a large number of Irish inscribed stones (Petrie 1872; 1878). It primarily consisted of drawings, descriptions, and inscription translations from Clomacnoise, Co. Offaly, though there were some stones included from several nearby localities as well (Petrie 1872, 8). Wakeman produced two lengthy publications on the stone monuments of Inishmurray, Co. Sligo (1885; 1893). In addition, he wrote a small article on two slabs from Clonmacnoise, as well as a discussion of cross-forms found on early medieval monuments in Ireland (1890, 1891a); he then followed these with *Archæologia Hibernica: Hand-book of Irish Antiquities, pagan and Christian* (1891b), an updated version of his 1858 work.

Henry Crawford was a prolific scholar of early medieval sculpture, producing several catalogues of stone crosses, slabs, and pillars during the opening decades of the 20th century (Crawford 1907, 1912; 1913; 1916; 1918). Though by no means a complete list, this represents the first attempt to create a survey of early medieval sculpture across Ireland. Crawford also collaborated with R. A. S. Macalister on a study of the early monuments in the Glen of Aherlow, Co. Tipperary (1909). This included partial catalogues of the sculpture from St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun – two sites of major sculpture production in early medieval southeast Ireland (see Chapter 6). Several site-wide surveys of sculpture at major ecclesiastical sites were produced in the early 20th century, e.g. Gallen, Co. Offaly (Armstrong 1908; Kendrick 1939), Iniscealtra, Co. Clare (Macalister 1916), and Clonmacnoise, in which Macalister states that 59 of the 166 cross-slabs previously recorded by Petrie had since gone missing (1909, viii). These early works are helpful in identifying stones that are lost, or badly deteriorated; however, not all of the drawings and sketches are accurate or to scale, and so are not always useful for comparative analyses (Edwards 1987, 111).

Beyond the cross-slabs of Clonmacnoise, much of Macalister's work focused on the epigraphy of ogham stones, culminating in his *magnum opus*, *Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum,* published in two volumes (1945; 1949). In them, Macalister records and illustrates over a thousand ogham-inscribed slabs and pillars, though again, not always accurately (*cf.* WA-16, this volume). However, this is still a valuable source of information on ogham stones,

and includes carvings from both Ireland and Britain. Françoise Henry was a French art-historian and archaeologist whose seminal works contributed greatly to advancing the study of Irish early medieval sculpture during the mid-20th century. Henry's first major English-language book on sculpture was *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period* (1940), in which she explores the relation between metalwork, manuscripts, and stonework in the creation of early medieval Irish art. Her approach centres around analysing monuments in terms of design and motif comparison – both between different media, and between sculpture produced across Ireland, and Europe, at this time. In so doing, she revealed the considerable influence Ireland had on the art of early medieval Europe. This approach informed most of her subsequent publications, including her most important, three-volume work, *Irish Art* (1965–70), which covers the beginning of the early medieval period until AD 800, Viking Age art (AD 800–1020), and the Irish Romanesque (AD 1020–1170), respectively. Furthermore, her earlier excavations in the west of Ireland – particularly on the Iveragh Peninsula of Co. Kerry, and in Co. Mayo – significantly increased the number of early (i.e. 6th–8th century) cross-slabs and pillars that had been documented (Henry 1937; 1945; 1947; 1948; 1951; 1952; 1956–7).

Françoise Henry was also instrumental in editing an important paper by Pádraig Lionard (1961), which attempted to provide a general classification of the entire range of Irish recumbent slabs. Lionard organises his analysis into four main sections: shape of the slab, form of the cross, presentation of the cross, and accompanying inscriptions. He places the greatest emphasis on the form of the cross, and further divides this section into seven sub-groups, primarily using annalistic references to date slabs with inscriptions and, through stylistic comparisons, slabs with similar cross-forms (*ibid*). Lionard's work is an important contribution to Irish sculpture studies, allowing for quick stylistic comparisons between the sculpture from several major early ecclesiastical sites across Ireland. However, using iconography alone to date monuments – as exemplified by this paper, when no inscriptions are present – does not take into account that several cross-forms were used over a long period of time, some over the entirety of the early medieval period, and that variations in monument morphology provide additional clues to a stone's chronology (see Chapter 4). Moreover, using purely art-historical methods (i.e. stylistic analysis and motif comparisons) to establish chronology ignores the socio-political and landscape contexts of these monuments, and this led to revisions in the analytical approach to stone sculpture in the last few decades (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 6). Though by no means the first to question art-historical dating methods (e.g. Harbison 1979), Raghnall Ó Floinn (1995) suggested that socio-political factors often played a key role in the production of sculpture, and could more precisely indicate the date of a

monument than style alone. He demonstrated that three distinct stylistic groups of cross-slabs at Clonmacnoise each coincided with a period of increased royal patronage at the site, and postulated that large collections of stylistically homogenous cross-slabs at other sites (e.g. Iniscealtra, St Berrihert's Kyle, Toureen Peakaun, etc.), were likewise the results of brief spikes in sculpture production, owing to increased (probably royal) patronage (*ibid*, 258). However, other studies have shown that royal patronage, while undoubtedly important, was not the only factor driving periods of increased sculpture production at these, and other, ecclesiastical sites (e.g. O'Leary 2015; this volume, Chapter 8). Ó Floinn's landmark 2001 paper also suggests that the 8th century art-historical date previously assigned to the 'Ossory' group of crosses in Cos. Tipperary and Kilkenny was too simplistic, and that the socio-political motivations of the 9th-century Ossory king, Cerball mac Dúnlainge (†888), offer stronger dating evidence for the erection of these crosses. Roger Stalley (1997, 118) has also cautioned against forcing material into the old framework of 'Darwinian evolution', where they clearly do not fit – namely, the model whereby free-standing high crosses were thought to have 'evolved' from cross-slabs. Furthermore, the over-reliance on annalistic records to date inscribed stones has also been criticised, as many of the names inscribed are too common to be definitively attributed to a specific person mentioned in the annals (Swift 1995; 2003; see also Chapter 4). Nevertheless, this does not negate the value of art-historical analysis in the study of early medieval sculpture, especially when combined with other strands of evidence (e.g. Hamlin 1982; 1987a; Edwards 1985; 1987; Kelly 1991). Indeed, it still forms the basis for establishing the chronology of a stone, along with monument morphology, when other data are lacking (Chapter 4).

Several archaeological excavations, undertaken at ecclesiastical sites known to have invested in sculpture during the early medieval period, have uncovered new stones, as well as revealed more information on the dates, provenances, and functions of existing monuments, e.g. Toureen Peakaun, Co. Tipperary (Duignan 1944; Ó Carragáin 2007b), Church Island (Valentia Harbour), Reask, and Caherlehillan, Co. Kerry (O'Kelly 1957–9; Fanning 1981; Sheehan 2009; 2014), Inishmurray, Co. Sligo (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008), and High Island, Co. Galway (Maddern 2014). Furthermore, the *Archaeological Inventory* surveys that have been compiled for several counties by The Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI), as well as three additional inventories – one created for Co. Donegal and two for specific regions in Co. Kerry (Lacy 1983; Cuppage 1986; O'Sullivan and Sheehan 1996) – contain catalogue entries of all early medieval sculpture known at the time of their publication. However, these were not sculpture surveys in themselves; rather, they are inventories of all archaeological monuments in each region.

An attempt at a national survey of early medieval sculpture was begun by Michael Herity, Dorothy Kelly, and Ursula Mattenberger from 1994 to 1998, but only the northwest region was ever published (1997), and no further work has been undertaken on this project. Moreover, the catalogue that was produced from this survey was primarily a descriptive list of stones, with few illustrations or photographs, and, like much of the antiquarian material that came before, does not allow for comparative analyses. More detailed regional studies of early medieval sculpture have been produced in the past few decades (e.g. Sheehan 1982; 1990; Higgins 1987; Okasha and Forsyth 2001; Thounhurst 2007; Healy 2009), and a three-volume, national corpus of Irish high crosses was published by Peter Harbison in 1992. However, creating a comprehensive survey of *all* the sculpture in a region was not necessarily the intent of every study – some focused on a single monument-type, or only those with inscriptions (i.e. Harbison 1992a; Okasha and Forsyth 2001). In addition, several of the regional surveys from Britain, many of which also feed into national sculpture surveys, were consulted for this thesis, both for comparative analyses, and as models for structuring the layout of the catalogue (see Chapter 2). These include *Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands* (Fisher 2001), *Manx Crosses* (Kermode 1907), *A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales* (Redknap and Lewis, 2007; Edwards 2007a; 2013), and the ongoing *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, the most recent volume of which was published by Jane Hawkes and Philip Sidebottom in 2018.

Returning to the state of the art in Ireland, while all of the aforementioned surveys are indeed significant milestones, and important contributions to Irish sculpture studies, they do not fully explore the deeper questions raised by these monuments and, in this regard, do not do as much to progress our understanding of the values and ideologies of early medieval people. More recently, however, scholarship has moved towards addressing the role of carved stones in creating social memory, identity, and commemoration (e.g. Hall, Forsyth, Henderson, Scot, Trench-Jellicoe, and Watson 2000; Hawkes 2003; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003; Williams 2003; 2006; 2011; Driscoll, O'Grady, and Forsyth 2005; Gondek 2006; 2010; Devlin 2007; 2011; Jones 2007; 2012; Edwards 2009; Hall 2012; Ó Carragáin 2007a; 2009a; 2017a; Ó Carragáin and Turner 2016). In particular, *Early Medieval Stone Monuments: Materiality, Biography, Landscape* thoroughly examines these concepts (Williams, Kirton, and Gondek 2015b), and includes important Irish papers on the commemorative practices surrounding the cross-slabs in the 'Saints' Graveyard' at Iniscealtra (O'Leary 2015), as well as the use of carved stones as *spolia* at Clonmacnoise, and their perception as relics connected with the site's founding saint, Ciarán (Ní Ghrádaigh 2015). Many of the research themes explored in that volume, and the

works cited above, likewise informed the development of the theoretical framework for this thesis (detailed below).

In addition to the shift in the analytical approach to stone sculpture, digital techniques, such as laser scanning, photogrammetry, and reflectance transformation imaging (RTI), are now increasingly being applied in recording these monuments (see Chapter 2). In Ireland, this has resulted in several new surveys of sculpture, the two largest being *Ogham in 3D* (2019) and the *Irish Inscribed Stones Project* (2018), based in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS) and the National University of Ireland (NUI), Galway respectively. The low cost and easy accessibility of photogrammetry in particular has also prompted the organisation of community-based projects, such as *Corca Dhuibhne 3D* (2019) and *Roscommon 3D* (nd). These surveys have produced a large number of digital, 3D models of Irish early medieval sculpture, and their corpora have been published online. Yet, while these projects are beneficial, enhancing the carved details of these pieces, as well as making access to these stones (albeit digital) more widely available to scholars, they do not contain an interpretive component, and so, are not explicitly sculpture studies in themselves.

Each of the theoretical approaches and methods outlined above provide valuable data on stone sculpture, and when used together, they produce a more complete interpretative analysis of a monument. However, they have yet to be applied, in conjunction with one another, to a regional survey of early medieval sculpture in Ireland, and the southeast proved to be an ideal case study in which to implement this interdisciplinary synthesis of theoretical perspectives and methodological techniques. Most of the sculpture in this region has been recorded in its respective county's *Archaeological Inventory* (Brindley and Kilfeather 1993; Moore 1996; 1999; Farrelly and O'Brien 2002), except for Co. Kilkenny, for which no inventory yet exists, and one had to be created for this study (see Chapter 2). These inventories have also been uploaded to the ASI's Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) online database, and monuments are added to the SMR database as they are discovered, though several previously unrecorded pieces of sculpture were also found during fieldwork for this thesis (Chapter 2). Additionally, a corpus of the 'minor' sculpture of Cos. Tipperary and Waterford was compiled by Kim Thounhurst for her master's thesis in 2007 (see Chapter 2). Yet, apart from Thounhurst's work, and the studies undertaken of the larger sculpture collections, i.e. St Berrihert's Kyle (Ó hÉailidhe 1967), Lismore (Okasha and Forsyth 2001), Toureen Peakaun (*ibid*; Waddell and Holland 1990), and Clonmore (Harbison 1991), the few sculpture surveys that include monuments from this region have been of a single monument-type, i.e. high crosses and ogham stones (Macalister 1945; Kelly 1986; Harbison 1992a; *Ogham in 3D* 2019).

Otherwise, the monuments in the southeast have been studied piecemeal, especially in Cos. Carlow, Kilkenny, and Wexford (e.g. Ranson 1945, 1948; Raferty 1966; Harbison 1988; Higgins 1989; Corlett 2011) – many pieces had not been studied at all prior to this project. Furthermore, many of the works cited above were undertaken a long time ago, and the material has not been analysed since. Thus, much of the sculpture in this region was in need of a thorough and systematic reassessment.

1.3 Theoretical framework

As mentioned in the previous section, there has been a theoretical shift in the study of early medieval stone monuments over the past two decades, in Ireland and abroad. Prior to this, major sculpture studies, many of which were also mentioned in the previous section, have adhered to long-standing research traditions. Essentially, they have been little more than catalogues, identifying typological characteristics, locations, and probable date ranges for individual sculpted stones, and any further analysis centred around one or more of the following elements: their epigraphic and linguistic value, their value as works of art, and comparisons of their typological characteristics with contemporaneous artistic forms and styles, or else as a means to contextualise and independently verify the historical record (Longden 2003, 173). These approaches, however, do not take into consideration what role these monuments played in early medieval society, as well as how that role changed over time. Though occasionally, studies made attempts to include the context of a stone's production, usage, and distribution, for the most part, questions regarding the wider roles that these stones served within their contemporary early medieval landscapes, as well as in later periods, were largely ignored (*ibid*, 174; Petts 2003).

The focus on functionalism in the study of material culture, i.e. purely practical use, that dominated archaeological theory in the early 20th century, and, to a degree, in the 'New Archaeology' of the 1960s and 1970s (e.g. Clarke 1968; Renfrew 1973; 1979), gave way to a more contextual and interpretive approach to archaeology in the 1980s and 1990s (Jones 2012, 6). Some of the key tenets of this approach are interpreting objects in terms of their relationships to others, endeavouring to understand the meanings of objects by placing them more fully into their various contexts (e.g. cultural, temporal, etc.), and seeing artefacts as symbols, texts, or metaphors (Hodder 1986; 1992, 15; Tilley 1990; 1999). The underlying assumption of this theory is that material culture embodies, and creates, values and ideas – rather than simply reflecting them – and it is through this that objects are imbued with meaning

(Jones 2012, 6). This shift in focus also incorporated anthropological and sociological theories, to make sense of the material culture of past societies (e.g. Shanks and Tilley 1988). A core concept of this approach is that the social system *itself* is the object of knowledge, while still emphasising that artefacts are intrinsic to it, and that the system would not exist without them (Henare, Holbraad, and Wastell 2007, 3). Mnemonic theory – how the relationship between people and objects produce memory, and the role of memory in cultural transmission (Halbwachs 1950; Rowlands 1993) – has been particularly influential on recent studies of early medieval stone monuments, in attempting to understand the role of carved and inscribed stones as commemorative agents in past societies – namely, how those societies remember (Connerton 1989).

Theories on memory, and memory work itself, have been increasingly applied to archaeological studies; the concepts that took root in the late 1980s bore fruit by the early 2000s, with an increasing number of scholarly works being produced on stone sculpture and its role in social memory (e.g. Hall, Forsyth, Henderson, Scot, Trench-Jellicoe, and Watson 2000; Williams 2001; 2003; 2006; Alcock 2002; Bradley 2002; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003). Exploring the mnemonic qualities of stone, and the ways in which stone monuments are installed and experienced, places an emphasis on commemorative practices, rather than the perpetuation of static models of belief. This theory also suggests that the mnemonic value of sculpture can be gleaned from archaeological data, through the theorised and contextual investigation of how ritual performances and activities are incorporated into the creation (and recreation) of social memory (Jones 2003; Williams *et al*. 2015a). There is also an understanding of the mutability of social memory – that it involves not only acts of commemoration but also of forgetting, as a means to create and support a sense of both individual and communal identity (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003, 3). These theoretical ideas, essentially, 'memory work', focus upon the processes by which social memory is generated through the creation, use, and subsequent alterations of stone monuments (Jones 2007, 21), as well as through the relationships between people, the monuments they create, and their landscape – not only '*how* societies remember,' but also 'how *things* help societies remember' (*ibid*, 5; emphasis mine).

The specialised study of early medieval stone sculpture has, in the past, lagged behind the main body of archaeological research somewhat in terms of theoretical innovation. However, this has changed in the last twenty years, leading to a growth of scholarship exploring memory work as it pertains to carved stones (see above, also section 1.2). Andrew Jones suggests that 'memories are shaped and created by active technological production', and that

the construction of monuments, as well as the series of creative and ritual activities associated with the technical acts of production, allow specific memories to be evoked in the viewer (2003, 69). Howard Williams has further suggested that a more interpretive typology of early medieval sculpture can be created, both through new research as well as a re-analysis of existing data, by examining the relationships between 'instruments of communication' on stone sculpture, e.g. text, ornamentation, materiality, location, etc., and their variation between monuments, and over time (2011, 26). These new perspectives encourage exploration, not only of the motivations behind the creation of stone sculpture, but also of their use and reuse, as well as their spatial contexts in early medieval society. Drawing upon these perspectives on social memory, identity, and commemoration, the theoretical framework of this thesis focuses on three interconnected themes, which likewise feature centrally in many of the recent academic narratives, outlined above in section 1.2, on early medieval sculpture: materiality, biography, and landscape.

1.3.1 Materiality

Andrew Jones states, 'the materiality of objects is best seen as impinging on people, sensually and physically, at a fundamental level. It is this aspect of material culture which helps us consider how artefacts act as aids to remembrance' (2007, 19). What Jones is emphasising is that the physical qualities and attributes of the monument itself – such as size, shape, and type of stone used, as well as the existence (and orientation) of any text or decoration – serve to engage the viewer and impress upon their memory. Williams *et al*. (2015a, 12) elaborate on this, describing the theoretical analysis of materiality not so much as a concise methodology, but more as the prioritisation of the physicality of a stone monument, as a way to explore the relationships between stones and the people who interact with them. Moreover, in a broad sense, these interactions also highlight the interrelationship of people and objects as a defining characteristic of human history and culture, and how it perpetuates the maintenance of the material world (Hodder 2012).

The type of stone used to create a monument, and its origin, can be meaningful. For example, the stone used to create a cross at Llanbadarn Fawr, in southwest Wales, was quarried *c*. 37 km away from the place where it was erected – demonstrating a significant investment of human labour, as it had to be moved a great distance, over both land and water (Edwards 2007a, CD4). Williams *et al*. (2015a, 13) suggest that it was the quality of the stone, as well as its source near the mountain of Cadair Idris, that enhanced the cross's importance. Moreover, the journey itself, from the place of a stone's origin to where it is sculpted and ultimately raised,

would undoubtedly have been memorable for the people involved. Thus, it may have likewise contributed another layer of memory to the finished monument, particularly if the journey was exceptional in some way (*cf*. the Clulow Cross; Kirton 2015). Tomás Ó Carragáin (2005, 132) has noted the deliberate selection of non-local stone in the masonry of some early Irish stone churches, chosen for aesthetic qualities and, possibly, the prestige associated with using an 'exotic' material. Moreover, he emphasises the importance of the making process as a social act – watching an experienced carver work was potentially an act of social power, as the knowledge and skills that the mason imparted, through observation and repeated imitation, was not disseminated in wider society; hence, forming a select communal identity (*ibid*, 135–6). Furthermore, the experiences that surrounded quarrying, transporting, and carving a stone undoubtedly imbued the finished monument with mnemonic qualities, as much as its location, final form, and decoration (Williams *et al*. 2015a, 13). For example, the Pillar of Eliseg is made of local Cefn-y-fedw sandstone, and while this may have been a practical choice, its selection may have also been symbolic, as it reuses Roman worked stone as well (Williams 2011, 20–1). Williams suggests that its creators used this dual materiality to establish a deliberately selective connection to their past, as well as exploit their Roman links, as a means to distinguish themselves from rival kingdoms (*ibid*). Some pre-existing carved stones may have also been incorporated into the fabric of newer buildings or structures, as they were perceived of as relics of a 'legendary past', as well as 'special' stones, perhaps with apotropaic or magical qualities (Ó Carragáin 2007a).

Natural rock outcrops or boulders were also used as commemorative objects. In Uppland, Sweden, the shape of the stone and the runic design inscribed upon it are interrelated – either an appropriately shaped stone is chosen to match a preconceived design, or the design of the inscription is created to match the shape of the chosen stone (Back Danielsson 2015, 79). The shape of the design was also a way to encourage viewers to interact with the stone and its message (Fig. 1.1). Runic inscriptions in particular require the viewer to contort the body in order to follow and read the inscription; thus, prolonging the viewer's interaction with the monument, and assisting the memory process (*ibid*, 74). This physical interaction between monument and viewer is also evidenced by the design of large, recumbent cross-slabs found at Irish sites such as Clonmacnoise, Lismore, Killamery (Co. Kilkenny), and Iniscealtra. As O'Leary points out, 'all of Iniscealtra's stone inscriptions…are most conveniently read while kneeling, encouraging a deliberate expression of humble veneration before the monuments' (2015, 149).



Fig. 1.1: Rock outcrop in Uppland, Sweden, carved with a sinuous runic inscription (Photo: Ing-Marie Back Danielsson)

It is not just the materiality of stone that concerns us here; there is also quite a bit of evidence for paint, metal, and paste-glass ornamentation being used on early medieval stone monuments. The effect of colour goes beyond the material itself, and the way in which these monuments would have been experienced by an early medieval viewer is quite different than how they are experienced today, after the paint has long worn away (Jones 2012, 76). Rune stones for example, were most commonly painted red or black (Back Danielsson 2015, 82). On a practical level, this made the inscription more striking and easier to read. However, these colours would have also evoked very specific and powerful meanings for the early medieval Norse. Red was associated with blood, and, by extension, family, as well as being symbolic of struggle and sacrifice (*ibid*, 83). Black would have been associated with travel, night, knowledge, and prophesy (*ibid*). Colour may have been seen as intrinsic to the design of these, and other monuments – like the Sandbach crosses in Cheshire – with their high visibility and 'large-scale glorious technicolour' (Hawkes 2003, 26). The 8th/9th-century Sandbach crosses also have decoration and carved 'rivets' that closely imitate those found on Insular metalwork (*ibid*, 26–7). Skeuomorphic representations of bosses and roll-moulding, typical of metal plaques and crosses, also feature on Irish high crosses, such as those at Ahenny, Co. Tipperary, and at Kilkieran, Kilree, and Killamery, in Co. Kilkenny, all of which are part of the Ossory group of high crosses (Fig. 1.2). The frequency of skeuomorphism – i.e. representations of the form or ornamentation of objects, typically made from other materials like wood or metal – on stone sculpture in Ireland and Britain demonstrates the prevalence of this concept across the Insular world. The depictions of spiked wooden crosses on stone slabs, as well as the practice

of modelling free-standing stone crosses after a wooden predecessor, are common skeuomorphs (e.g. Edwards 1985; Kelly 1991; Wood 2006, 3–4). Reproducing these objects in stone (for example, the wooden cross of St Oswald at Heavenfield in Northumbria) is thought to have been a 'key mnemonic strategy' for invoking their inherent power (Williams *et al*. 2015a, 14; Maddern 2013, 250–2).



Fig. 1.2: One of the Ossory crosses at Killamery, Co. Kilkenny, with a central boss and rope-moulding framing the decorative panels

1.3.2 Biography

The study of cultural biography is human-centric – it seeks to explain how objects were used, re-used, and altered by people. In an archaeological context, cultural biography is a record of changes in the meaning of objects, either by physical alteration or social influences, through which they amass their own history (Hoskins 1998; Gosden and Marshall 1999). Furthermore, the biographical approach also reveals how complex these relationships can potentially be, by looking at time as a continuous flow, rather than strictly segmented periods. This breaks down traditional temporal demarcations, and 'disrupts cohesive, generalized definitions of function and meaning' (Hall 2015, 184). In exploring the theme of materiality above, some aspects regarding the biography of early medieval stone monuments have already been outlined, e.g.

quarrying, carving, reuse from earlier sites (*spolia*), and the significance attached to their production; however, they will be elaborated below. In describing the biography of an object, terminology such as 'lives' or 'life-history', 'episodes', and 'chapters' are often employed to refer to the various periods of its use or reuse. A stone monument, by the nature of its material, has the potential for a long life-history, and to accumulate numerous cycles of use and reuse over the course of its existence. It can also potentially be infused with the history and memories associated with another monument, if built with its components (Jones 2007, 22). Yet, whether its 'life' is long or brief, a stone's biography is a reflection of how people have engaged with it over time, and that knowledge can be embedded in the memory of individuals or groups that come into contact with it (Longden 2003, 172). Moreover, its meaning is not limited to the original intentions of the 'author' or creator – audiences, which change over time, are equally important. Analysing the entirety of a stone's chronology, not just the moment of its artistic conception, offers a more thorough engagement with the connections between object and community, as well as a better understanding of how interactions with, and alterations to, the monument in the past can impact the present (Ní Ghrádaigh 2015; Crouwers 2015).

Stone monuments frequently garner greater significance over time, beyond their original intent, as many of their biographies continue for centuries, and often into the present. Since the knowledge of a stone's purpose decays fairly rapidly in the years following its erection, it is important to consider its meaning within a much longer time frame than its conception and original use (Hall 2015, 183). The biographies of stone monuments are very often fluid, connecting them in some way to the (perceived) past. Most sites and landscapes would not have been a blank canvas in the early medieval period; they would have contained pre-existing archaeology, with complex biographies and memories already in place, which a community could then modify to suit their agenda, through 'sacred re-purposing' of pagan stones or mounds (*ibid*, 194; Gondek 2015, 188). Then, as the original meanings are lost, new stories are created for them, extending their biographies, and actively engaging their audience with each new generation (Crouwers 2015).

Similarly, Jones (2003, 65) notes that most monuments have extensive periods of reuse, with their meanings reinterpreted over generations. Furthermore, recognition of reuse, as an act of remembrance, is vital to understanding the role of carved stones in the generation of memory (*ibid*). The reuse of inscribed and carved stones during the early medieval period is considered to be a deliberate act, albeit also a practical one (Driscoll 1998; Williams 1998; Kinney 2006; Ó Carragáin 2007a). Meggen Gondek goes further, positing that reusing carved stones within a new structure goes beyond the functional aspect, and can be viewed as a

'purposeful votive action' (2015, 98). This is supported by Tim Eaton's work (2000, 119), which suggests that reusing Roman worked stone in churches held religious and socio-political meaning, both in the act of incorporation, as well as its position within the building. This is echoed in later architecture, in which early medieval stones are broken up and reused as *spolia* in the construction of buildings (e.g. Gallen Priory; Kendrick 1939). However, rather than an act of indifference or deliberate destruction, this behaviour can be interpreted as an effort to preserve and incorporate the earlier material into the newer building – essentially, treating the stone as a form of relic (Ó Carragáin 2007a; Ní Ghrádaigh 2015).

A related concept is the temporality of stone monuments, and how habitual interaction forms another integral part of its biography. Beyond simply reusing carved stones in a different context, there were subtle ritualistic practices that likewise sustained and adapted monuments within the early medieval period (Williams *et* al. 2015a, 17). For example, cross-slabs bearing various incisions that could have been made by a sword or blade, e.g. the 10th-century cross-slab found in the Tower of Lethendy (Fig. 1.3), could be indicative of rituals performed in connection with oath-swearing (Hall 2015, 195). As mentioned above, many stone monuments would probably have been covered in gesso and paint. The temporality of these media is addressed by Jane Hawkes in her interpretive analysis of the Sandbach crosses, and how the reading of their iconography would have been affected by their deterioration, and subsequent re-painting (2003, 27–30). Yet, while visually striking, these media gave the iconography a short lifespan, particularly if outdoors, and would have needed to be maintained periodically (Williams *et al*. 2015a, 17). These acts of renewal, perhaps involving washing, painting, and (sometimes) re-erecting, can be considered commemorative rituals in themselves, as, without them, the mnemonic efficacy of these monuments would rapidly dissolve (*ibid*). Furthermore, repeated acts of maintenance and repair also presented opportunities to renew the significance of certain monuments, while obscuring the meaning of others, either deliberately or otherwise (*ibid*). Graffiti can also be seen as a ritualistic practice and part of a monument's biography, and has received some recent scholarly attention. It has been suggested that its social value can be found both in its expression of nonconformist views, as well as in using a mainstream outlet (in this case, early medieval sculpture), to articulate those views (Fleming 2001b; Oliver and Neal 2010). However, not all later inscriptions can (or should) be classified as graffiti. Many are commemorative in nature, with the carved stone often being reused as a headstone, or other memorial to the dead (Fig. 1.4). Though on occasion, these later inscriptions impinge upon the earlier carvings, they are nevertheless a valid 'episode' in the life of that stone, full of memories and meanings in themselves, and should not be considered 'barbarous disfigurement'

(*cf*. Harbison 1988, 59; 1991, 191, 193; Chapter 8). Indeed, Mark Hall has made a similar comment regarding the modern inscriptions on several slabs at Govan, in Glasgow, Scotland, that such reworking of monuments should not be ignored, or regarded as 'unwanted interference' (2015, 206).



Fig. 1.3: The 10th-century Lethendy cross-slab, being reused as a lintel in a tower house (Photo: Mark Hall)



Fig. 1.4: Early medieval cross-slab at Clonmore, Co. Carlow (CW-29), showing multiple episodes of reuse as a commemorative monument in the 19th century

When taking a biographical approach to the study of early medieval stone monuments, it becomes clear that they are imbued with a multitude of meanings, spanning many episodes of use in their life-histories. Furthermore, dismissing the concept of mutually exclusive time periods in relation to these episodes allows for a greater range of analysis in

terms of monument use and perception, and produces a larger variety of comparative material to be considered (Hall 2012, 97). As exemplified above, approaching the study of stone sculpture from a long-term perspective is a vital component in its interpretation, and key to achieving a fuller understanding of its varied meanings and functions over time. Mark Hall (2015, 187) puts it well: 'The biographies of monumental sculptures have the potential to reveal how people related to and understood the generations that preceded them, through their use of their memory and imagination… The meaning of such monuments may fluctuate over time, but they seem to remain a vital component in the performative strategy of a community's construction of its social memory. Such memory is always important to a community's self-understanding in the present.'

1.3.3 Landscape

The idea that monumental sculpture is inherently connected to the landscape it inhabits is not a new concept in archaeology. However, approaching landscape from the theoretical perspective of memory explores those ties from a different angle, investigating how people viewed monuments within the landscape, and how the landscape affected their perception of those monuments. As such, the mnemonic qualities of the landscape itself are intrinsically tied to the commemorative function of early medieval sculpture. 'Commemorative places are spaces that have been inscribed with meaning, usually as a result of some past event attachment (e.g. monuments). A sense of place rests upon, and reconstructs, a history of social engagement with the landscape, inextricably bound up with remembrance and with time' (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003, 5). As people engage with the world around them, the landscape is constantly shaped and reshaped by human action, rendering it a temporal concept (Bender 2002, 103). Thus, landscapes incite memory, in that they are created out of people's historic and spatial understanding of their surroundings. In this way, a landscape can be tied to local myths and legends, as well as to significant events. Together, these are woven into, and embodied by, stone monuments, to provide a narrative evidence of the past (see Chapter 5). These are usually places of prominence and power in the minds of medieval people, e.g. the locations of past events (historical or mythological), cemeteries, socio-political or sacred boundaries, and places where people commonly traversed, i.e. route-ways.

There are also patterns in how sculpture collectively helps to create places of memory within major religious and sacred sites in the early medieval period. Stone monuments were frequently erected on ecclesiastical boundaries, or in locations in the landscape associated with that site's founding saint (Chapter 5). Engagement with these monuments was often a key part

of ritual practices, e.g. pilgrimage and liturgical processions, in the early medieval period (as it still is today). This phenomenon has been extensively studied at sites like Inishmurray and Iniscealtra (Ó Carragáin 2009a; O'Leary 2015). Furthermore, monuments can also reflect – as well as create – wider, regional landscapes of sacred territory. Catherine Swift (2003) argues that stylistic similarities between cross-slabs produced at Clonmacnoise and those found at churches in its hinterland are evidence of ecclesiastical landholding, and demonstrate the movement of skilled carvers (or the slabs themselves) between Clonmacnoise and its subsidiary churches. Anne Connon (2016) has suggested that the distribution of minor church sites and monumental sculpture – in particular, the Ossory high crosses – along the territorial borders of the kingdom of Osraige not only reflect the geographic span of the cult of St Ciarán of Saigir, but that their arrangement was also a colonisation strategy employed by the Corcu Loídge in their conquest of Osraige. Incidentally, this interpretation also weakens Ó Floinn's argument that the Ossory crosses were erected in the 9th century by Cerball mac Dúnlainge (Connon 2016, 126–8; see also section 2.1).

Carved stones are most effective when erected in well-travelled areas (i.e. route-ways), particularly at junctions or cross-roads, where people typically slowed down or rested during their journey (for examples, see Chapters 5 and 7). Sculpture also played a role in monumentalising royal landscapes and assembly sites (*óenach*), such as at Greatconnell and Kilcullen, in the royal 'heartland' of the Uí Dúnlainge in Leinster (Gleeson and Ó Carragáin 2016). In placing them in such highly visible locations, they would have maximum impact – being seen by people of different classes and genders, not just the elites of society (Van Dyke 2011, 43). While these factors would have influenced how individuals experienced a monument, e.g. from what distance and direction they are expected (or allowed) to see it, the monuments themselves also had an impact on the viewer's interaction with the terrain. For example, many of the rune-stones in Uppland, Sweden are carved onto boulders or rock outcrops near junctions or busy pathways, demanding engagement from their audience. Back Danielsson has suggested this could be aided by the natural narrowing of a path, bringing the individual in closer contact with the stone, and thus, inviting further contemplation (2015, 80–2). Alternately, a close arrangement of monuments could transform a landscape by acting as a focal point – for instance, the act of passing over Jarlebanke's Bridge, flanked by rune-stones, arguably made travelling that landscape a memorial performance (Fig. 1.5). The daily and seasonal movements of early medieval people, particularly in regard to stone monuments, landmarks, routes, and topography, were primarily how they experienced the world around them (Kirton 2015, 52). As such, the landscape context of a monument is integral to how it is

intended to be experienced, though these experiences do change over time. In acknowledging and exploring this relationship, we can gain a better understanding of the motivations behind the creation and design of a monument, how the landscape influences interaction with it, and how they functioned together mnemonically (*ibid*, 35; Gondek 2015, 88).



Fig. 1.5: Jarlebanke's Bridge, flanked by rune-stones, in Täby, Uppland, Sweden (Photo: Howard Williams)

1.3.4 Conclusion

It may be argued that past approaches to sculpture studies were short-sighted, in that, by focusing only on formative design and construction, or socio-political factors (see section 1.2), they missed the more subtle clues that can impart information regarding communal values and societal changes in the early medieval period. Certainly, without also acknowledging a carved stone's capacity to both embody and invoke social memory – as evidenced through its materiality, long-term use, continued importance into later time periods, and its role in shaping both its surrounding landscape and the viewer's experience of it – we only get a glimpse of its significance in terms of reflecting, and impacting, early medieval society. However, each of the approaches discussed above, in this and the previous section, are important facets of the overall narrative, and each enriches our understanding of early medieval carved and inscribed stones. Thus, by taking a holistic approach to sculpture studies, and engaging with all the strands of evidence – archaeological, historical, and art-historical – through the prism of mnemonic theory and the closely intertwined themes of materiality, biography, and landscape, we can reveal a more nuanced and comprehensive picture of the early medieval psyche.

1.4 Aims, objectives, and research questions

The core aims of this project are to expand our understanding of carved stones, as well as their role in early medieval society, through a systematic survey and analysis of the early medieval sculpture in southeast Ireland. It considers the sculpture in five modern counties – Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford, and Wexford – and investigates why these monuments were created, how people perceived and interacted with them, and the meanings and values that they imparted onto their surrounding landscape. Some of the questions addressed over the course of this thesis are why some sites invest in sculpture while others do not, why sculpture is produced at certain times during the life of a site (and not others), and what these carved stones can tell us about the priorities and social identities of their communities.

Currently, there is no published corpus for my study area; so, before I could begin to address my aims and research questions, my first objective was to create a sculpture catalogue for the southeast. Once this was achieved, I combined the various strands of archaeological, historical, and art-historical evidence, using the interdisciplinary approach described above (sections 1.2 and 1.3), to examine the roles and functions of early medieval stone monuments in this region, and explore the connections between collections of sculpture within the study area, as well as their links further afield. The outputs of these interpretive analyses formed the chapters of this thesis, as follows: a general overview of the geological and socio-political background of southeast Ireland during the early medieval period (Chapter 3), a chronological framework for the corpus (Chapter 4), a detailed interpretive discussion of the various monuments surveyed (Chapter 5), three in-depth case studies (i.e. St Berrihert's Kyle, the 'Marigold' stones of Wexford, and Clonmore, Co. Carlow), highlighting some of the more significant findings of this research (Chapters 6–8), and a final discussion of the results and conclusions of this project, as well as recommendations for future work (Chapter 9).

The research design for this study (see Chapter 2) blends established archaeological recording techniques with digital tools when necessary (e.g. photogrammetry, reflectance transformation imaging, and geographic information systems), and art-historical analysis with a theoretical framework originally developed in the related disciplines of anthropology and sociology. These theories focus upon the processes by which social memory is generated through the creation, use and reuse of stone monuments, as well as the relationships between people, the monuments they erected, and the landscape. By taking a multi-faceted approach to its design and execution, it is hoped that this project has produced a fully integrated and more comprehensive analysis of the early medieval sculpture in southeast Ireland.

2
Research Design

2.1 Research parameters and methodology

As stated in the introduction, carved stones are an essential source of information for early medieval kingdoms and communities, documenting their shifting socio-political identities and world views over the course of the early medieval period. By combining as many strands of evidence as are available (e.g. archaeological, historical, stylistic, landscape, etc.), a deeper understanding of those identities can be achieved. This approach holds a wealth of potential to provide new insights into the functions of these monuments, and their significance to the communities who created them. This project consists of a survey and analysis of the early medieval sculpture in southeast Ireland, encompassing the modern counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford, and Wexford. Previously, much of the sculpture in this region had been studied in a piecemeal fashion, if studied at all (see Chapter 1, section 1.2), despite the fact that the southeast is known to have had many sites of ecclesiastical and socio-political importance during the early medieval period (e.g. Ferns, Lismore, Ardmore, Emly, etc.). Moreover, the lack of a systematic survey for the whole of Irish sculpture has made wider comparisons more difficult (Edwards 2007b, 187), and such a project is long overdue.

The scope of this research focused on a variety of monuments, including funerary sculpture, boundary markers, and portable stone objects. High crosses and plain ogham stones were not surveyed systematically, as comprehensive corpora of these two monument-types, as well as detailed studies, have already been done, or are ongoing (i.e. Macalister 1945; 1949; Harbison 1992a; McManus 1997; Swift 1997; *Ogham in 3D* 2019; Stalley forthcoming). However, ogham stones that are carved with additional decoration *were* considered within the parameters of this study, as this ornamentation was treated as a separate (albeit not necessarily mutually exclusive) carving episode to that of the inscription. Additionally, pre-Romanesque architectural sculpture was also included in this survey, on the basis that decorative carving on pre-Romanesque churches is relatively unusual (Ó Carragáin 2010, 93). Indeed, only two examples were recorded, and, thus, these pieces warranted further investigation. Research was undertaken systemically in five main stages: desk-based survey, field survey and recording,

data processing using computational imaging software, creation of a sculpture catalogue, and, finally, interpretive analyses, culminating in the compilation of a written thesis.

2.1.1 Methodology

Work on this project began with a desk-based survey of sculpture in the southeast, primarily using the Archaeological Survey of Ireland's online Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) database, and the *Archaeological Inventory* for counties Carlow, Wexford, Waterford, and South Tipperary (Brindley and Kilfeather 1993; Moore 1996; 1999; Farrelly and O'Brien 2002). At the time this survey was being compiled, an archaeological inventory of Co. Kilkenny was not yet available; so one was created for this project using sources such as the *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* (particularly, the section on Co. Kilkenny in Crawford's 1913, 'A descriptive list of early cross-slabs and pillars'), its predecessor, the *Journal of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society*, *The Kilkenny Review*, and the four volume *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory* (Carrigan 1905). When available, the last known coordinates of stones were recorded from the online SMR database in advance of fieldwork. Additionally, Kim Thounhurst had surveyed much of the early medieval sculpture in Waterford and South Tipperary for her MA thesis in 2007, and this was another valuable resource in compiling the preliminary surveys for those counties.

Beyond the desk-based survey, fieldwork formed an essential cornerstone of this project. Once a working inventory was created for the region, every known site with sculpture was visited, and all early medieval carved stones at those sites were recorded in detail, paying particular note to the landscape context of those still *in situ*. When a stone had been removed from its original context, both its present location and initial find site (when possible) were visited. In each case, data was collected by established archaeological methods, using context sheets to record measurements, location, sketches of the stone, its material, monument-type and condition, descriptions of its morphology, carving (including any inscriptions), initial impressions, interpretations, etc. High resolution photographs were taken of every carved surface on each stone using a 24-megapixel Nikon D3300 digital camera. Sculpture in a particularly poor state of preservation, i.e. with very worn or subtle carvings and/or inscriptions, as well as any pieces that were not easily accessible (e.g. heavily overgrown or on private land), were selected for enhanced digital imaging analysis, and subjected to photogrammetry and/or RTI recording techniques (for details of these techniques, see section 2.3). Of the 196 pieces of sculpture that were ultimately surveyed as part of this study, 14 have

been lost since the time they were last recorded; however, a further 13 previously unrecorded stones were discovered during the fieldwork phase of this project.

A massive amount of data, analogue as well as digital, was generated as part of this research, and processing this incoming data in tandem with fieldwork was essential to avoiding computational backlogs, and consequent delays in interpretive analyses. These tasks included editing and colour-correcting photographs for photogrammetry and RTI analysis, processing these photographs using the appropriate computational imaging software, and interpreting the subsequent output. Once the raw data of an individual county was processed, its corresponding sculpture catalogue was created, starting with an introductory section on the historical and archaeological background of each site, and followed by detailed descriptions and discussions for each carved stone, high-resolution colour photographs and, when appropriate, screen-captures of digital models, and GIS-based maps (more below). As previously stated, Thounhurst's research was a valuable resource in compiling the preliminary sculpture surveys for counties Waterford and South Tipperary; however, her project was conducted under strict time constraints, which consequently limited the depth to which the sculpture could feasibly be surveyed and analysed. So, while this present study was certainly informed by Thounhurst's previous work, a significant amount of supplementary research and recording was needed to develop the catalogues for those counties.

It should also be noted that the original scope of this project excluded surveys of St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun, as these sites had already been comprehensively catalogued to a high standard (i.e. Ó hÉailidhe 1967; Waddell and Holland 1990; Okasha and Forsyth 2001). However, St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun were sites of major sculpture production and ecclesiastical activity during the early medieval period, and, together, account for roughly half of the entire sculpture corpus in the study region. As such, they are integral to understanding the socio-political climate of the region during that time. Thus, in Year 2, it was decided that they could not be justifiably omitted from this project. Moreover, as one of the core aims was to produce a systematic regional study of early medieval Irish sculpture, without building a truly comprehensive catalogue of the region, this aim could not have been fully achieved. To this end, a complete site survey was undertaken of the large sculpture collection at St Berrihert's Kyle, as, despite the quality of Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967), more than half a century has passed since the sculpture was last recorded, and a re-evaluation of that material was arguably needed (see Chapter 6). Furthermore, though the sculpture at Toureen Peakaun has been catalogued and analysed fairly recently by Okasha and Forsyth (2001, 224–329) – and thus, a catalogue of this material need not be replicated here –

seven new slab fragments were uncovered during recent excavations at the site (Ó Carragáin 2007b), and its sculpture record needed to be updated to reflect this. Thus, the seven new stones from Toureen Peakaun, as well as the entire collection of carved stones at St Berrihert's Kyle, were catalogued. Ó hÉailidhe's original numbers are recorded in the catalogue entries; however, each stone had to be assigned a new number to reflect the reorganisation of the site that had been subsequently undertaken since Ó hÉailidhe's publication, rendering his numbering system obsolete. As already mentioned, it was not deemed necessary to re-catalogue the Toureen Peakaun sculpture that has already been published (i.e. Okasha and Forsyth 2001; Waddell and Holland 1990). Nevertheless, this material was essential to the analysis of the entire corpus, and greatly informed the interpretive chapters of this thesis.

As stated above, a large amount of data was generated during fieldwork. Photogrammetry was included in the recording procedure for the majority of sculpture, and in two instances, RTI was applied as well. However, processing this data was not always necessary, as many pieces were still legible without computational imaging enhancement, and therefore, producing a 3D model or polynomial texture map (PTM) of these stones would not have added to their analysis. Moreover, due to the time-consuming nature of processing this data, the selection criteria for photogrammetry and RTI analysis was necessarily rigorous, both to maximise the potential impact that utilising these tools would have on the interpretive outputs of this project, as well as to ensure that this study was completed in the time allotted. However, the raw data to create 3D models for much of this corpus has already been collected, and can be processed at a future date (see Chapter 9).

The information contained within the catalogue was coupled with the archaeological, historical, and landscape evidence for each piece, and theories relating to commemoration, ritual practices, and the transmission of cultural identity were then applied to these strands of evidence to become the interpretive chapters of this study, culminating in the first fully comprehensive regional survey of early medieval sculpture to take into account all the themes raised above. Furthermore, all the data generated during this study has been collected into a multimedia digital database, including a copy of the sculpture catalogue, 3D photogrammetry models, and GIS-based maps. The file sizes of the original models are too large for online viewing, so decimated versions were uploaded with the project material, and a link was provided for users who wish to download the original files for further analysis. This corpus is being disseminated online through open-source data repositories, so that it is freely accessible to other researchers (see section 2.4).

2.2 Catalogue

As no comparable corpus yet exists for Ireland, for ease of comparison, the organisation of the catalogue is loosely modelled after *A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculptures in Wales*, as well as the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, albeit with some changes to the format necessitated by the parameters of this project.

2.2.1 Overall organisation

The catalogue is ordered alphabetically by county; stones within each county are grouped by site, which is listed alphabetically within each county according to their closest identifiable affiliation (i.e. church, town, parish, or townland). Sites are listed under their modern place-name, but the original, and any alternative place-names, are also given. Each stone is assigned a number according to its order in the catalogue of its respective county, and where a site contains multiple pieces of sculpture, it is also sub-divided numerically by its position on the site, from southeast to northwest. For example, the ecclesiastical site of Clonmore, Co. Carlow contains 29 pieces of sculpture; the most north-westerly stone on site is labelled as 'Clonmore 29' and, as it is the 30th entry for County Carlow, it is also designated as catalogue number 'CW-30'. For clarity and ease of reference, only the catalogue number of a stone is cited within the main body of the thesis. A brief summary of the historical and archaeological background of each site precedes its associated catalogue entries.

2.2.2 Catalogue entries

Entries begin with the catalogue number and site name (as well as the site number of the stone if applicable), followed by a full-colour photograph of every carved surface of the monument. All photographs were taken during the course of fieldwork for this project, except in the case of lost, or otherwise inaccessible, stones; in those cases, the most recent known photograph or sketch is provided. Each entry lists the county, barony, civil parish, townland, and site name of where the stone was first discovered. If a stone's closest identifiable site affiliation is with a townland, then the townland and site names are the same. Irish Transverse Mercator (ITM) coordinates are given for the position of each stone within the landscape, as well as that of its present location if it has been moved. In cases where the stone has been lost, ITM coordinates of its last known location are provided when possible. ITM, first proposed in 1999, is a more accurate geo-referencing system than its predecessor, Irish Grid (IG), and is fully compatible with GPS and international geo-referencing systems (Bray 2007). Consequently, the national mapping agency, Ordnance Survey *Ireland* (OSi), has transitioned from IG to ITM, which in

turn is utilised by the National Monuments Service and Archaeology Survey of Ireland in creating its 'Historic Environment Viewer', a GIS-based application which houses the online SMR database. Thus, including ITM coordinates for each stone allows for easy cross-referencing with the SMR database.

2.2.2.1 OS Map and RMP

If a stone has been previously recorded, the number of the ordnance survey map in which it appears, and its Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) number, are included. Where this data does not exist, i.e. in the case of previously unrecorded sculpture, 'None' is entered. Like the aforementioned ITM coordinates, this data is included for ease of cross-referencing with the SMR database.

2.2.2.2 Type

Each stone is categorised according to its morphology or particular function. Those with ogham inscriptions are labelled as 'Ogham stone'; cruciform stones are grouped under 'Cross'; any smooth, rounded stones less than ten centimetres in diameter are designated as 'Pebble'; stones carved with figural ornament are considered 'Figural sculpture'. Following the example of Okasha and Forsyth (2001, 6), pillars are defined as tall (usually around a metre or more, but at least *c*. 75 cm in height), un- or minimally shaped stones with a thickness-to-width ratio of 1:3 or lower. Those with a thickness-to-width ratio above 1:3 are classified as a slab, regardless of whether or not they are shaped, as 'thinness is their defining quality' (*ibid*, 7). Stones which are irregular in shape or otherwise do not fit the above criteria are labelled as 'Carved stone'. 'Shrine post/component', 'Gable finial', 'Lintel', 'Lamp', 'Sundial', and 'Quern stone' refer to monument-types whose morphologies are more specifically informed by their respective functions (for more detailed descriptions of these monument-types, see Chapter 4).

2.2.2.3 Material

The geology of each stone was assessed visually in the field. When the geology was difficult to identify, its previously identified geological material (if any) was entered. When the material could not be identified, such as with lost stones, any previously recorded geological information is noted and its source cited, or else the material is entered as 'Unknown'.

2.2.2.4 Dimensions

Measurements of height, width, diameter (when appropriate), and thickness are in centimetres. The full height of the stone is recorded unless otherwise noted, such as when a stone is partially

buried or attached to a base. When there is noticeable variation within a particular dimension, the minimum and maximum are recorded, though if variation was by three centimetres or less, only the maximum dimension is entered.

2.2.2.5 First Recorded and Present Location

The first known mention of the carved stone in a publication is cited, and its present location is noted if different than its original location – otherwise, this is entered as 'Same'. It should be noted that the location of each stone was confirmed during fieldwork undertaken in the summers of 2016–2018, but has not been checked since. For stones that had been moved or lost, the site at which it was originally found was also visited when possible.

2.2.2.6 Condition

General comments on the state of preservation (e.g. erosion, any damage or repairs, etc.) are listed for the stone itself, as well as for the carving, and any inscriptions. This assessment formed the basis of selection for further recording with photogrammetry and/or RTI techniques and, hopefully, will also inform any future measures taken to preserve the stone, either digitally or physically (see Chapter 9).

2.2.2.7 Description

A brief description of monument morphology is followed by more detailed descriptions of each carved surface. Where a stone has more than one, the broad sides are described first, starting with the east or north face, depending on the stone's orientation, and then moves clockwise, ending with the top of the stone, if decorated. Carved elements are described as they appear from the top to the bottom of the stone, and from the viewer's left to right. Inscriptions are likewise listed in order from top to bottom, then from left to right. Descriptions and chronologies of the various cross-types and monument morphologies are discussed in Chapter 4.

2.2.2.8 Discussion

The discussion section contains information on the archaeological, historic, and landscape contexts of the monument, as well as an interpretive analysis of all these elements, through the lens of the theoretical framework laid out in Chapter 1, section 1.3. For sites with numerous pieces of nearly identical sculpture in terms of form and function, the majority of contextual information for that collection of stones will be contained in the discussion section of the first relevant catalogue entry for that site, or within their respective case studies contained in the main body of thesis (i.e. St Berrihert's Kyle and Clonmore). Non-English words are in italics,

and ogham inscriptions are shown with all letters capitalised. Ogham readings that are uncertain are contained within square brackets, and sections of an inscription which are missing or illegible are indicated by '[…]'.

2.2.2.9 Dubia

Stones of possible, albeit doubtful, early medieval date are recorded at the back of their respective county catalogue, and accorded a catalogue number; however, they were not included in the analyses, nor within the discussions in the main body of the thesis.

2.3 Digital tools

As already discussed, this project employs photogrammetry, reflectance transformation imaging (RTI), and geographic information systems (GIS) to aid in the analysis, presentation, and dissemination of the data generated. The concepts behind these techniques are not new, nor is their adoption for archaeological purposes. However, rapid developments in digital technologies over the last twenty years have made these tools more readily accessible, as the equipment has become increasingly portable and cost-effective. They are utilised for a variety of purposes in many fields of study and, especially, have a multitude of applications within archaeology and cultural heritage management. The outputs of these digital techniques (i.e. 3D models, maps, and PTMs) were not considered aims or objectives of this project in themselves, though they are integral components of the corpus, and its online database. However, photogrammetry in particular proved to be a valuable tool in enhancing the analysis and interpretation of certain carved stones in this study, and in so doing, provided fresh insights into their role within their respective communities and polities during the early medieval period – a key aim of this project.

The degree to which specialist equipment and expertise are required to harness these tools has been drastically reduced in recent years, largely due to the availability of affordable, high-quality digital cameras. Nevertheless, additional training was necessary to gain proficiency in the technologies and skills needed to implement this project to the highest possible standards. Training in RTI and photogrammetry recording methods was acquired through tutorials given by Nick Hogan of the UCC Archaeology Department, and supplemented with a computational imaging workshop hosted by Virtual Heritage Network Ireland, which introduced the fundamental concepts, theories, and capabilities of Structure from Motion (SfM), a close-range digital photogrammetry technique, and Polynomial Texture

Mapping (PTM; i.e. reflectance transformation imaging). A graduate-level module offered through UCC's Geography Department, 'GG6501 – Introduction to Geographic Information Systems', provided the requisite knowledge of GIS theories and instruction in the use of related software.

2.3.1 Photogrammetry

Photogrammetry is a mathematical technique from which reliable measurements from photographic images are obtained. The origins of photogrammetric theory can be traced back to the 15th century, though the technique itself was developed in tandem with the availability of more reliable photographic cameras, *c*. 1850. The first instance of photogrammetric recording for archaeological purposes was in 1885, when it was used to record the ruins of Persepolis (Carbonnell 1968, 5). However, it has long been considered by many archaeologists to be an expensive and largely impractical tool (Fussell 1982, 169; Micheletti, Chandler and Lane 2015, 1). Yet, with the advent of digital photogrammetry and, specifically, 'Structure from Motion' (SfM), it is now one of the most efficient, accurate, and cost-effective means of recording archaeological sites and artefacts. There are two types of photogrammetry, aerial and close-range (or terrestrial), and though many of their principles are the same, it is close-range digital photogrammetry which concerns us here.

Traditional close-range photogrammetry is based on camera parameters, measured photo coordinates, and ground control points (GCPs) – clearly identifiable locations with known coordinates. It consists of capturing two photographs of an object from different albeit overlapping angles, which would appear three-dimensional when viewed together under a stereoscope. Photogrammetric measurements are then calculated from the photographs using a mechanised analytical plotter or, more recently, by computer. However, obtaining accurate measurements, even with a digital camera, requires precise knowledge of the internal geometry of that camera. This means a photographer must either use an expensive metric camera, which has a stable calibration and low lens distortion, or re-calibrate the camera after every exposure (Fussell 1982, 159; Micheletti *et al*. 2015). However, Structure from Motion (SfM) photogrammetry software calculates camera position, orientation, and internal geometry automatically, and without the need for pre-determined GCPs (Micheletti *et al*. 2015, 1–2). Structure from Motion, like traditional photogrammetry, involves capturing overlapping images from multiple angles; however, a high degree of overlap is required to record the full geometry of the object, which results in a significantly larger dataset. During processing, SfM software identifies common feature points within the overlapping images, and determines their

spatial relationships within an arbitrary 3D coordinate system (*ibid*). This is represented in the form of a sparse point cloud, which is then iteratively expanded to match nearby points, while simultaneously filtering out false matches, to create a dense point cloud. The surface of the object is reconstructed from this dense point cloud using a triangular mesh, and finally, texture is laid over the mesh to create a digital, 3D representation of the object. Because of the relative ease with which SfM photogrammetry accounts for camera distortions, most consumer-grade digital cameras can now capture reliable geometric data (*ibid*). Furthermore, as opposed to traditional photogrammetry, SfM processing is almost fully automated, allowing users with minimal specialist knowledge to utilise the software to generate accurate, high-resolution 3D models. This made SfM the most logical photogrammetry method for this project, as it is easily the most cost-effective, both in terms of time and resources invested.

The selection strategy for monument recording using photogrammetry has already been outlined in section 2.1. However, the recording and processing procedures will be detailed further here. Photographs were taken with a 24-megapixel Nikon D3300 DSLR camera and 18-55 mm kit lens, shot in manual mode to allow for maximum control over exposure and focus. A full 360-degree rotation, or as much of the stone as could be accessed, was made around each piece of sculpture to capture as many angles as possible. Stones under a meter in height were usually covered in two passes, one on the horizontal plane, and one vertically to capture the top. Larger stones were captured in three passes or more, dividing the surface of the stone into manageable segments on the horizontal plane, with one pass from above proving sufficient to capture the top of each stone. The distance from which a piece of sculpture was photographed varied, depending on the size of the stone and how much room there was to manoeuvre, but was consistent between each shot during the recording process of individual stones. Images were captured in RAW format, as it preserves most of the data from the camera's sensor with minimum loss of information. The resulting datasets for stones less than a meter in height ranged between 40 and 60 images, while those for larger pieces ranged from 70 to 120 images. Photographs were checked before leaving the field; most blurry or overexposed images were deleted at this point, and the angle recaptured if necessary. Any remaining outliers were removed during the first stage of processing using ViewNX 2, Nikon's proprietary photo-editing software. Next, the white balance of each photograph was calibrated in ViewNX 2 to ensure colour accuracy before being converted from RAW to JPEG file format for export (Figs. 2.1 and 2.2). The calibrated JPEG images were then processed through Agisoft PhotoScan, a popular and widely-used commercial photogrammetry software package. Alternately, there are several freely-distributed SfM software programs available that could

have been used for this project. However, Agisoft Photoscan is more intuitive, versatile, and user-friendly, and access to the software package, as well as a powerful computer dedicated to high-level data processing, was provided by the UCC Archaeology Department. Each set of images was first imported into the photogrammetry software program; then, the background was individually masked out of each photograph so that only the stone itself was modelled. This step removed superfluous data, and ensured that the resulting 3D model was of the highest resolution possible, as well as visually 'clean' for presentation purposes. The dataset was then run through an automated workflow which aligned the matching data points, optimised that alignment (sparse point cloud), created the dense point cloud, then subsequently reconstructed the surface of the stone using a triangular mesh, which was overlaid with the texture of the stone, taken from the photographs provided (Fig. 2.3). Finally, finished models were scaled using known points collected during fieldwork.

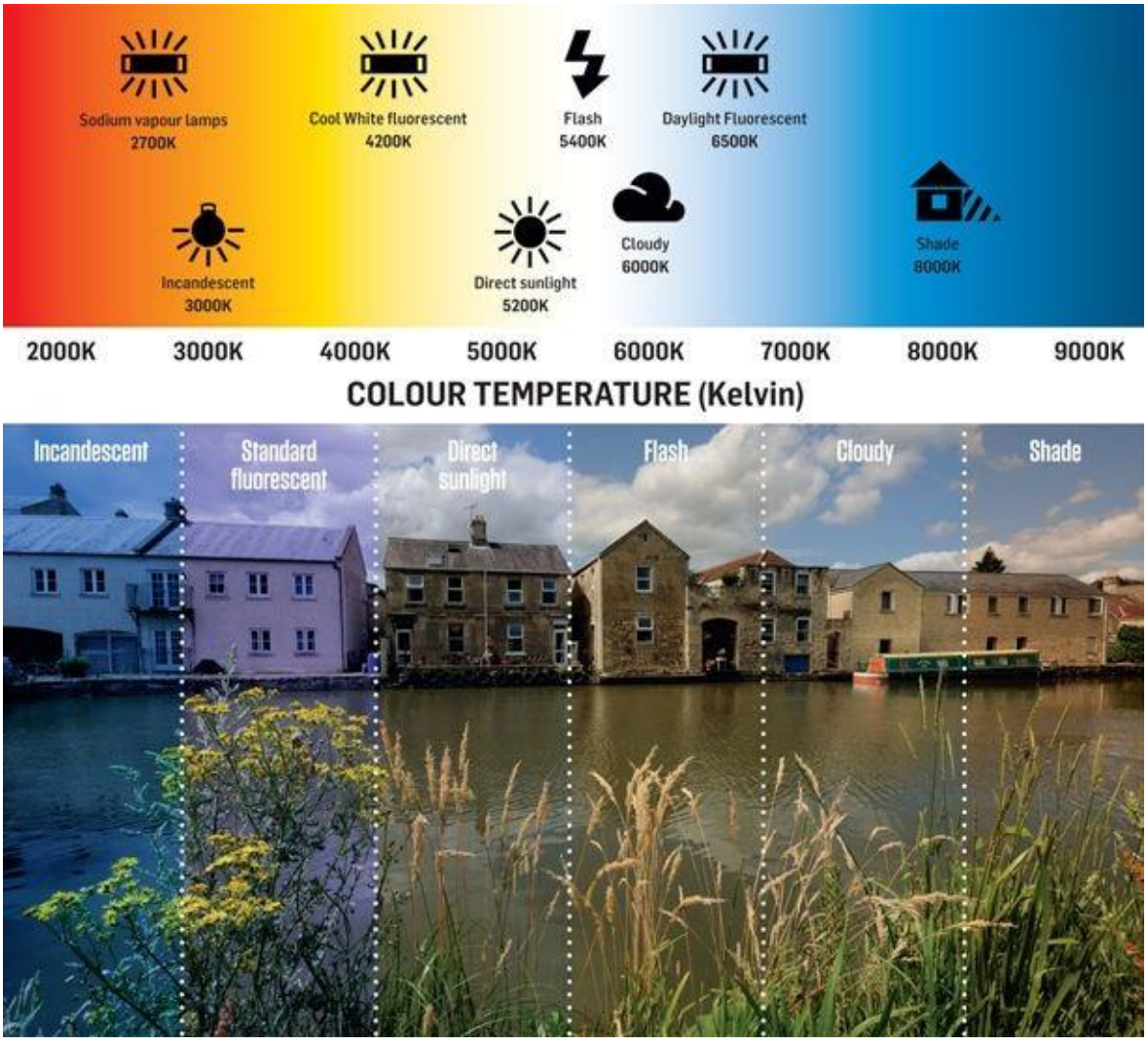


Fig. 2.1: Diagram of white balance

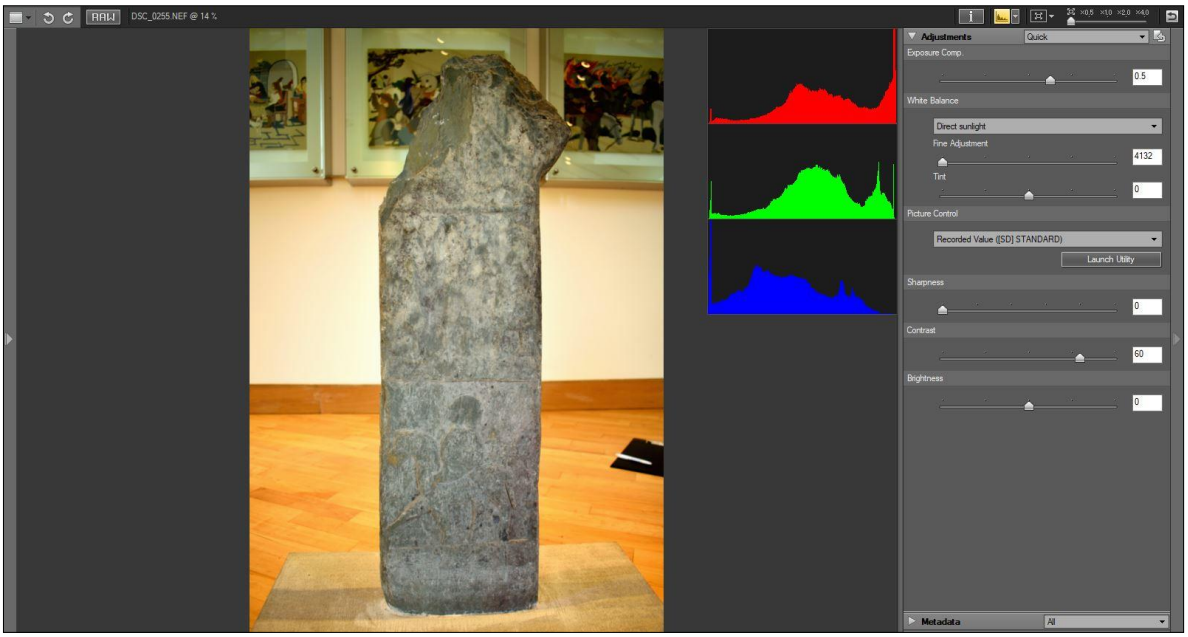


Fig. 2.2: Colour calibration, using ViewNX 2

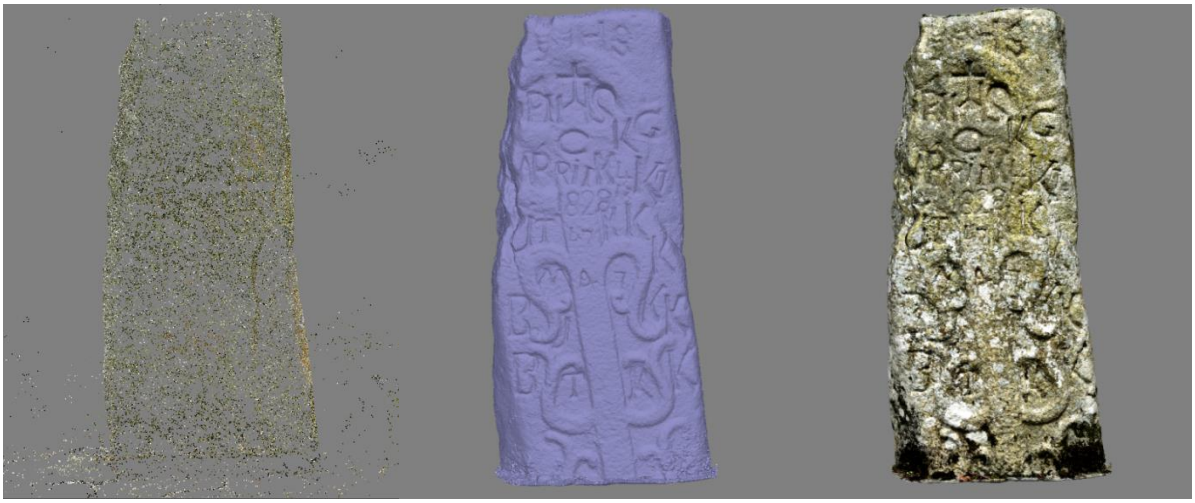


Fig. 2.3: Stages of a photogrammetry model – point cloud, mesh reconstruction and textured model

2.3.2 Reflectance transformation imaging (RTI)

Reflectance transformation imaging (RTI) was developed at Hewlett Packard Laboratories, and first described in a landmark paper by Tom Malzbender, Dan Gelb, and Hans Wolters in 2001. RTI, also sometimes referred to as Polynomial Texture Mapping (PTM), is a computational imaging tool that is based on the principles of raking light, in which an object is illuminated from an oblique angle to accentuate its surface texture. To create a polynomial texture map, or PTM, multiple photographs of an object are taken from a single, stationary position, while the surface of the object is illuminated from different angles in each image. The RTI software then mathematically synthesises the data from all of the images, and compiles that information into one file, after which the object can be interactively re-lit from any angle, revealing faint details

and enhancing the legibility of surface relief (Duffy 2013, 3). There are several other recording methods for RTI, most notably, prefabricated dome-based RTI; however, the highlight-RTI (H-RTI) approach was used for this project. This method, as well as the processing software, was developed by Mark Mudge, Carla Schroer, and Marlin Lum of Cultural Heritage Imaging (CHI), in collaboration with Tom Malzbender of Hewlett Packard Labs (Mudge, Malzbender, Schroer, and Lum 2006). This is a lower-tech approach, in which each light-position is recovered from the highlight it creates on a reflective sphere that has been included in each photograph (*ibid;* Duffy 2013, 3). The tool kit for H-RTI is similar to that of photogrammetry, though it also requires some extra equipment and low ambient lighting (ideally, little to none). In addition to a digital camera, all that is needed is a tripod, light source, reflective spherical targets, and string, as well as a second person to assist in the recording. Moreover, the processing software is freely available, which makes using H-RTI, like SfM photogrammetry, cost-effective.

The parameters for RTI recording were more selective than for photogrammetry. This was due to the simplicity of most carvings in the study area, for which photogrammetry was sufficient to capture the required data. Moreover, photogrammetry was less time-consuming, and did not require night-time recording. Consequently, RTI analysis was reserved for inscriptions and more complex iconography, and ultimately, only 2 monuments (CW-29 and WX-19) were recorded with this technique. Due to the nature of RTI's guiding principle (i.e. raking light photography), ambient light must be eliminated, or at least kept to a minimum, which is difficult to control in the case of outdoor monuments; so recording was undertaken at night to optimise results. Moreover, the camera must remain motionless once recording has begun, so a weighted tripod was employed to minimise camera shake. Once again, a 24-megapixel Nikon D3300 DSLR camera and 18-55 mm kit lens were used in recording, with photos shot in manual mode for maximum control over exposure and focus. The camera, mounted on a tripod, was placed directly in front of the carved surface being recorded, just far enough away to ensure that the light source, a cordless LED spotlight, could be separated from the object by the recommended distance of 3 to 4 times the diameter of the stone (Duffy 2013, 8). To record CW-29, two glossy black spheres, *c*. 5 cm in diameter, were used as reflective targets. In the case of WX-19, two spheres *c*. 3 cm in diameter were used, due to its relatively diminutive height (56 cm). In both instances, the spheres were attached to a mounting assembly and placed on either side of the stone, in a conspicuous albeit non-obstructive position. A piece of pre-measured string, ranging in length between 3 and 4 times the diameter of the stone, depending on individual circumstances, was used to ensure that the LED spotlight maintained

a consistent distance from the stone during recording. The stone was then illuminated and photographed in a radial pattern, with a minimum of three different angles captured for each radial spoke, ranging between 15 and 65 degrees above the surface of the object (Fig. 2.4). This resulted in two datasets, one for WX-19 and one for CW-29, containing roughly 60 RAW images each. As with SfM photogrammetry, processing began with eliminating blurry and overexposed photos, then colour calibrating the remaining images in the dataset, using Nikon's ViewNX 2. The RAW files were then converted to JPEG format and imported into Cultural Heritage Imaging's RTIBuilder. The software identified the position of the light source in each image from the reflections it cast on the targets, though the sequence was also manually checked to ensure accurate identification. Then, it generated a highlight file (.txt) for each image, which were subsequently synthesized into one light-position file. Finally, the reflective targets were cropped from the images before the dataset and light position files were processed together to produce a PTM.

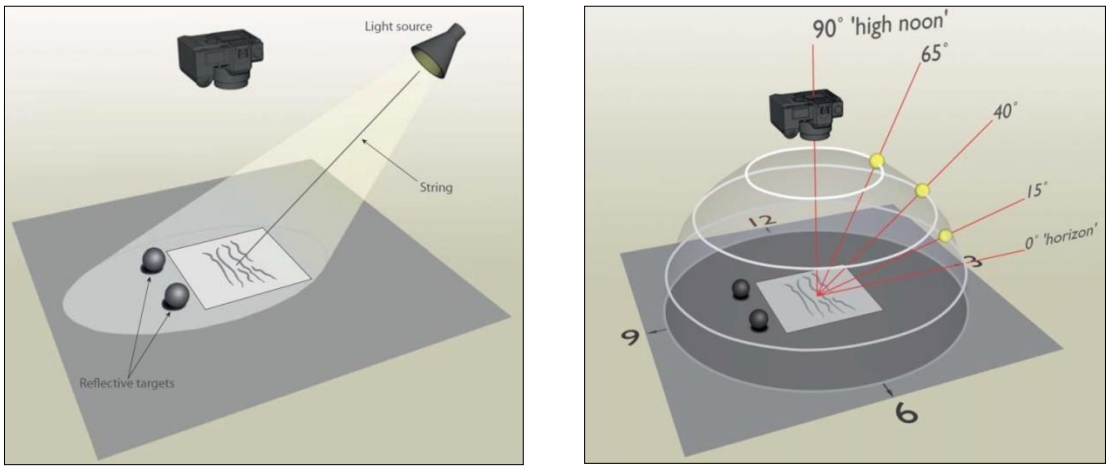


Fig. 2.4: Illustration of H-RTI recording technique

2.3.3 Geographic information systems (GIS)

A geographic information system (GIS) is a tool for gathering, managing, and analysing data within a spatial or geographic framework, which then presents the data visually in the form of a map or three-dimensional scene. Essentially, it is a spatial database that enables its user to generate new data from existing data, either through comparison or interrogation, revealing patterns and relationships between the different layers of information (Chapman 2006, 68). The first true GIS was created by Roger Tomlinson in 1962, and it has continued to develop in response to the growth in computer technology and digital mapping, enabling users to address the increasingly complex issues generated by modern infrastructure and development (*ibid*, 16). GIS was first applied to archaeological data in the mid-1980s, and has been used in

archaeology as an analytical tool and system for data management since the early 1990s (*ibid*, 17; Conolly and Lake 2006, 7). Today, GIS and its software have progressed to the point where non-specialists can apply GIS to their own research, leading to its widespread adoption in recent years by archaeologists at all levels, and within many sub-disciplines (Chapman 2006, 17; Conolly and Lake 2006, 1). GIS has applications for all stages of archaeological research, including data acquisition, analysis and interpretation, data visualisation, and data management (Conolly and Lake 2006, 12). In interpretation and analysis, it can be used to answer a variety of questions concerning location, condition, trends, distribution patterns, and predictive modelling (*ibid*, 2). Moreover, the capability of GIS to display multiple, separate layers of data at once allows the user to remove or hide layers with more recent temporal data and reveal earlier ones, enabling the digital reconstruction of past landscapes (Chapman 2006, 21); this is sometimes referred to as historical GIS, or HGIS.

In this study, GIS was primarily used for landscape analysis – to identify the locations of sites and monuments in relation to surrounding topography, key geographic features (e.g. rivers and route-ways), and other landmarks (e.g. ringforts, other church sites and carved stones, etc.), as well as to investigate their relation to early medieval territorial boundaries, both political and ecclesiastical. The results of these analyses were exported as maps, and represent key supporting evidence for many of the arguments made in the interpretive chapters of this thesis (Chapters 5–8). To create a GIS for the study area, the spatial data (i.e. ITM coordinates), recorded in the catalogue for every stone, were compiled into a Microsoft spreadsheet before being imported as a single geodatabase into ArcGIS. The software was then used to examine the sculpture in its geographical context, using both modern boundaries, parish boundaries from the first-edition ordnance survey maps (OSi), and early medieval political boundaries, as reconstructed by Paul MacCotter (2008). The information gleaned from these analyses was then presented visually, in both the main body of the thesis and catalogue entries, through the creation of various regional distribution maps, topographic maps, and site maps, showing the spatial relationships of sites and monuments relative to early medieval territorial divisions, various route-ways, and other nearby sites and monuments, as well as the spatial relationships between individual monuments within a particular site.

2.3.4 Conclusions

While there were certainly limitations to what these techniques could accomplish, incorporating digital tools, particularly photogrammetry and GIS, into the research design of this project proved to be immensely beneficial, both in terms of aiding analyses and presenting

the data. The tools were cost-effective in that they required only a minimal amount of specialist training, the equipment was relatively inexpensive, and the methods were efficient. More importantly, the recording techniques are non-invasive, so did not damage the monuments in any way, and all three tools contributed valuable new information about the material, which, in turn, allowed for more comprehensive and accurate interpretations.

Photogrammetric recording was simply not feasible for every piece of sculpture, due to the time constraints inherent in this degree, nor was it always necessary in terms of enhancing analyses. However, photogrammetry was used more frequently than initially anticipated. In the case of Clonmore, the entire assemblage of sculpture was recorded using photogrammetric techniques as, overall, this collection was in a significantly poor state of preservation, and 3D modelling could serve as a means of digital conservation for these rapidly deteriorating monuments (see Chapter 8). Indeed, some pieces are so heavily worn, the existence of carvings could only be confirmed on the photogrammetric model itself (Fig. 2.5). For others, photogrammetry was useful in resolving questions about design, or in revealing new details about the carving that had previously gone unnoticed (Fig. 2.6). Moreover, one of the key advantages of photogrammetry is the ability to record volumetric data, which can be used to study the rate of deterioration and weathering on carved stone surfaces over time. This has important implications for cultural heritage management, since this data can inform any potential decisions or measures taken to protect at-risk monuments in the future. Additionally, carved stones that were difficult to access, such as those on private land or, particularly, those in danger of becoming completely overgrown, were photogrammetrically recorded so that models of these stones can be created and consulted if the actual stone becomes inaccessible.



Fig. 2.5: *CW-13 (Clonmore 12); photogrammetry model confirms the presence of a carved cross*

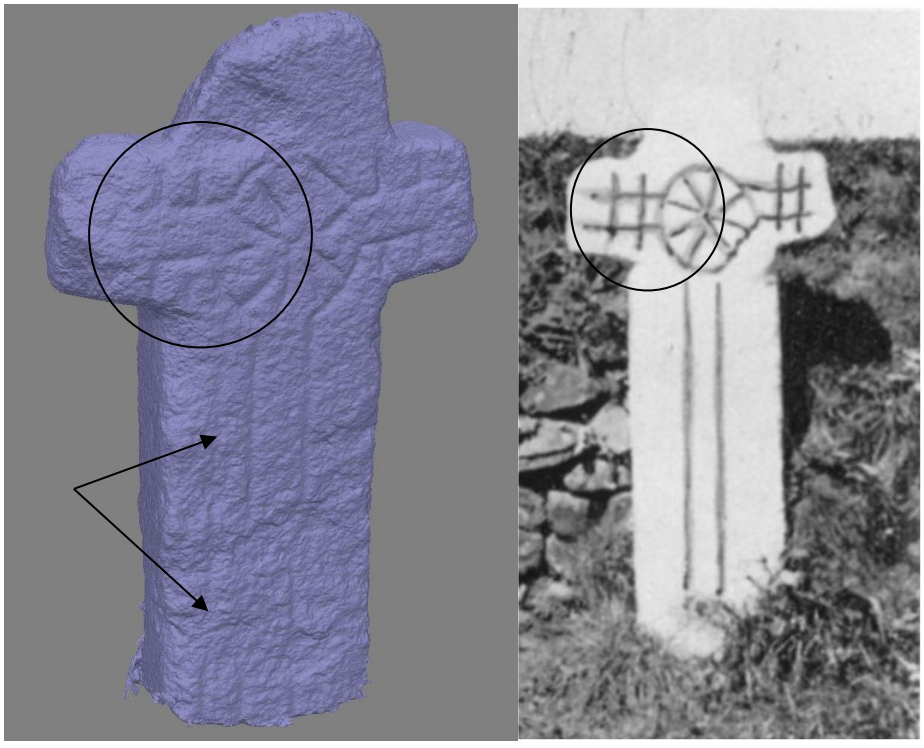


Fig. 2.6: *Kilmuckridge cross (WX-24); the model reveals a third vertical line on the stem, and more accurately shows the design details on the cross arms*

Since RTI is used primarily for the study of fine surface texture and detail, it can detect previously unseen patterns and inscriptions on heavily worn pieces of sculpture. However, RTI proved to be of limited application for this project. Firstly, the vast majority of sculpture in the study region is carved with relatively simple iconography, and few inscriptions, and photogrammetry already provided ample additional detail, when needed. RTI was only deemed necessary in three cases, for CW-29, WX-3, and WX-19; however, RTI could not be performed on WX-3, due to its permanent location on display in the Ferns Visitor Centre, and insurance issues surrounding the admittance of non-OPW staff outside of opening hours. Furthermore, while trial runs of RTI recording techniques were successful, these were conducted in a controlled, indoor environment – the quality of RTI data collected in the field was lower. Though all of the photographs were reviewed prior to leaving the site, and blatantly blurry or otherwise poor-quality photographs were deleted (and the light-angles recaptured as necessary), there were some images for which blurring was very subtle – only noticeable on a larger screen, at a magnification of x0.5 – and these were not detected until the post-processing stage. This was mostly (albeit not entirely) corrected in the case of CW-29, through a detailed re-examination of the dataset in RTIBuilder, and an improved PTM was created. However, upon further assessment of the photographs taken of WX-19, too many blurred images were identified, which created gaps in the dataset; consequently, a PTM could not be produced for this stone. That said, some valuable information was still gleaned from using RTI techniques to record both stones – the PTM of CW-29 did reveal the full details of the stone's numerous inscriptions, though admittedly, only one area of carving was still in question after producing a photogrammetric model (Fig. 2.7). Careful examination of the raking-light photographs taken of WX-19, the Kilmokea 'high' cross, revealed that the inscription on the top of the south face is longer than previously thought. It was presumed to have spanned just the top of the cross-stem, with a suggested partial reading of 'NDMNA' (Harbison 1992a vol. 1, 131, 363). Yet, while the inscription itself is now too worn to read (even with computational imaging enhancement), the photographs taken during RTI recording did show that the inscription actually starts just above the cross-ring on the dexter side, and follows its shape for a short time before extending up, wrapping around the top of the stem, and then moving down again to stop just above the sinister side of the cross-ring (Fig. 2.8). This (illegible) inscription is almost certainly too long to be a single personal name, and thus, we can now infer that it could instead be a prayer formula, or perhaps an additional patronym, which was usually reserved for high-ranking ecclesiastics, such as scholars or heads of household (Swift 1999, 113–4, 117; see also Chapter 4). These differences may seem negligible; however, it goes without saying that the

most accurate record will in turn yield the most well-informed interpretations. Yet, for the purposes of this project – given the limited applicability of RTI (compared to photogrammetry) for this corpus, as well as the sheer volume of data that had to be processed to produce such a large catalogue of sculpture in the time allowed – recapturing the RTI data for CW-29 and WX-19 was unrealistic, and would have yielded little or no additional data.



Fig. 2.7: PTM and 3D model of CW-29; while the details revealed by both methods were almost identical, the PTM of CW-29 was able to confirm that the number on the lower sinister quadrant of the cross-ring was a '13', not '17'



Fig. 2.8: WX-19 lit from an oblique angle at night, showing the inscription running down both sides of the cross

ArcGIS is an efficient map-making tool; once the geodatabase was imported into the software, maps displaying the desired information could be generated quickly by turning the various data layers on or off. Beyond the map-making capabilities of GIS, its ability to visually manipulate datasets made more complex landscape analyses possible. Theories regarding the location of Clonmore, in relation to its role in the 7th-century socio-political ambitions of its founding dynasty, the Uí Dúnlainge, were derived in part by analysing the data through ArcGIS (Chapter 8). Similarly, GIS analysis also identified a potential ancient route-way running through the ecclesiastic lands of Cill Mucrois (Kilmuckridge) in Co. Wexford, and pinpointed the northern-most extent of its borders (Chapter 7).

2.4 Digital database and future plans

Recently, digital accessibility of information on carved stones was cited as crucial to increasing available resources, and to avoiding duplication of effort (Forsyth 2015). Thus, planning for the long-term sustainability of the data generated from this project was essential, and the material is being stored in the Cork Open Resource Archive (CORA), in consultation with the Head of Research and Digital Services at UCC, as well as in the Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI). The DRI belongs, or else contributes, to several leading international data-sharing

organisations, including the Digital Preservation Coalition, Europeana, and the Research Data Alliance, which connects this database to a host of repositories around the world that are committed to the preservation of knowledge, and responsible digital curatorship. In this regard, the catalogue produced from this project, including high resolution 3D models, represents a further legacy of this study, to be made freely available to other researchers online. Furthermore, this database is intended to complement a number of other projects, based in academic institutions across Ireland and Britain, that seek to record, preserve, and disseminate archaeological heritage online, including the *ACCORD Project* (Maxwell 2015; Glasgow School of Art, University of Manchester, Archaeology Scotland, and RCAHMS), the *Irish Inscribed Stones Project* (2018; NUI Galway), the *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture* (2019; Durham University), and *Ogham in 3D* (2019; Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies). Thus, it is intended that, in addition to its core aims (Chapter 1, section 1.4), this project act as a model for good practice in terms of both digital data capture and curation, ensuring that its outputs can easily be adapted to suit new online platforms and advance future research agendas.

3

Southeast Ireland and its Sculpture

3.1 Introduction to the study region and sculpture distribution

As already stated, the study area for this project included the modern counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, and Wexford, as well as the southern half of County Tipperary. The northern half of Tipperary was not included as, geographically, it is not in the southeast of Ireland. Within this region, 196 carved stones, distributed across 53 sites, were surveyed and catalogued (Fig. 3.1). Broken down by county, there are 35 carved stones in Co. Carlow distributed across 6 sites, 18 in Co. Kilkenny across 10 sites, 29 in Co. Waterford across 17 sites, 24 in Co. Wexford across 11 sites, and 90 in south Co. Tipperary across 9 sites. In addition, the 60 slabs that have already been catalogued by Okasha and Forsyth (2001, 224–329), as well as the four shrine components recorded from Toureen Peakaun (*ibid*; Waddell and Holland 1990), are also considered part of this corpus, and were included in the analyses and discussions of the interpretive chapters, as they are integral to the core aims and objectives of this project. However, they were not surveyed or catalogued here, as these works on the sculpture at Toureen Peakaun are both comprehensive and relatively recent, and, thus, to do so would be redundant. Of course, this study does not include the 37 high crosses and 78 'plain' ogham stones recorded from this region (see Chapter 2), but, combined with this corpus, they bring the total of known early medieval sculpture in southeast Ireland to 375 (Fig. 3.2).

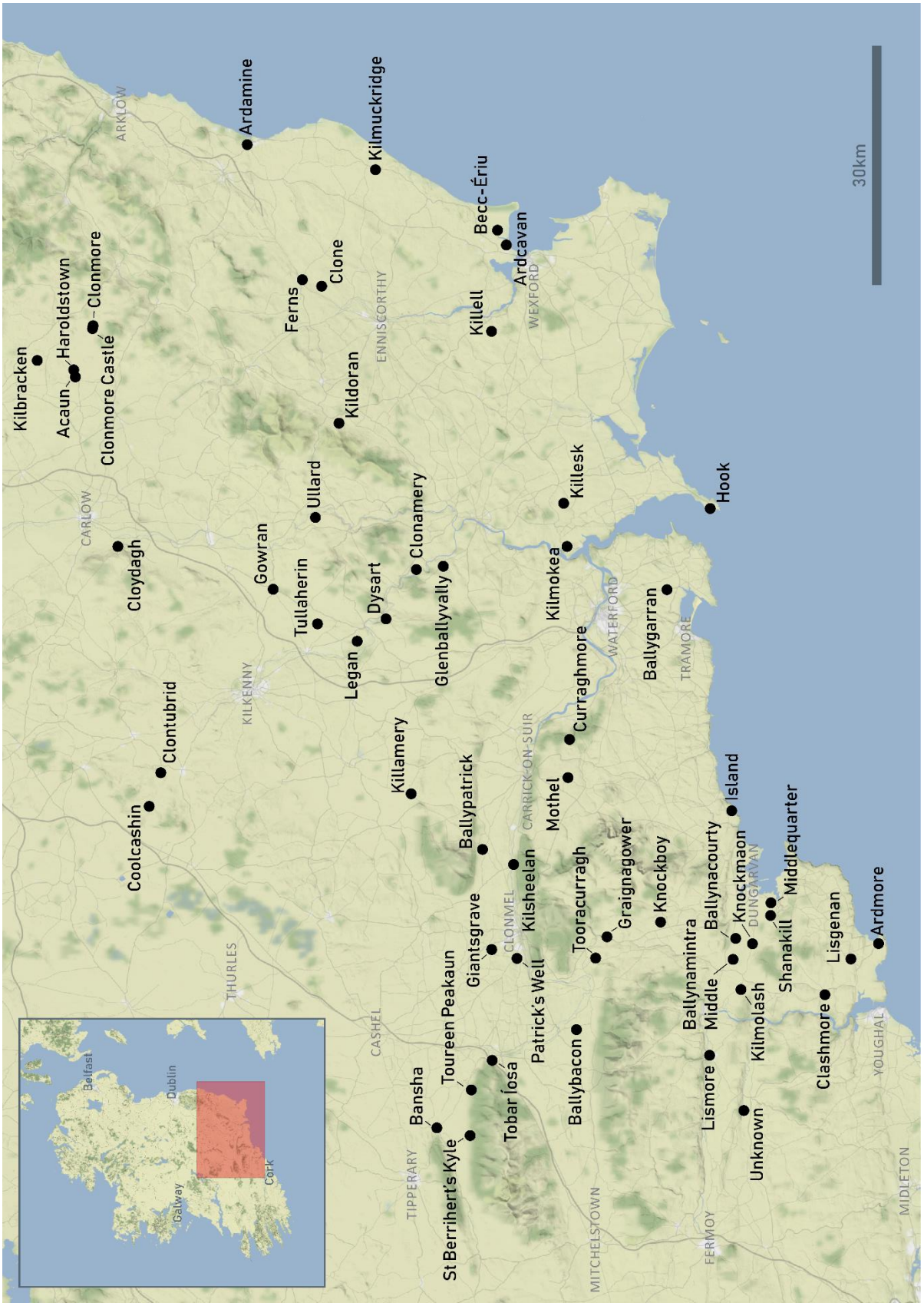


Fig. 3.1: Map of sites surveyed during this study

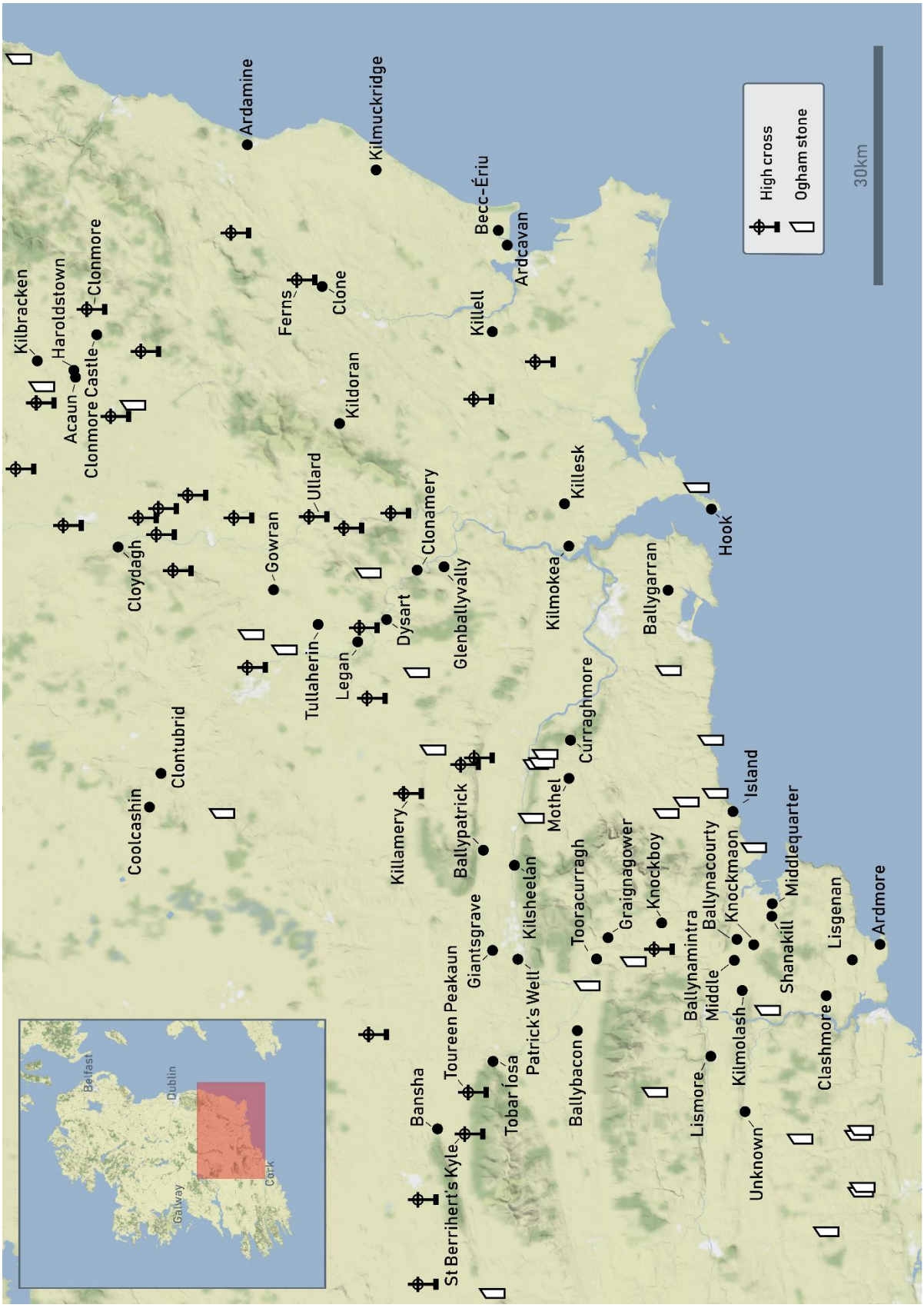


Fig. 3.2: Map of all sites in the southeast that have produced early medieval sculpture, including high crosses and 'plain' ogham stones (note: sites not surveyed have not been labelled)

Notably, two-thirds of the 260 carved stones that were analysed as part of this study come from only three sites: St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun in Co. Tipperary, which house 73 and 72 carved stones respectively, and Clonmore in Co. Carlow, which has 30 carved stones (including CW-31, which is now in Clonmore Castle). These large and significant collections are the focus of case studies in Chapters 6 and 8. Most carved stones occurred singly or in pairs, though there were a few sites with small groups of early medieval sculpture, such as Lismore, Co. Waterford, Clone, and Becc-Ériu, both Co. Wexford (Fig. 3.3). Divided into monument-types, and including all of the Toureen Peakaun material, there are 183 slabs, 22 carved stones, 17 crosses, 10 pillars, 7 cross-carved ogham stones, 8 (possible) shrine components, 3 figural sculptures, 2 sundials, 2 pebbles, 2 lamps, 2 pre-Romanesque architectural sculptures (a gable finial and a lintel) and 2 quern stones (Figs. 3.4 and 3.5). A large proportion of these were interpreted as funerary monuments, though there is a good variety of monument types represented in the study region, including a number of termon/boundary markers, non-funerary commemorative monuments, and devotional foci. Monument morphologies, cross-forms, and functions are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

The rest of this chapter is intended to provide a very brief introduction to the study area, including its geology and topography, as well as a broad overview of the some of the major polities and churches in the region during the early medieval period. As Patrick Gleeson (2014, 693) has pointed out, early medieval kingdoms were in a state of near-constant flux, as the polities and dynasties which controlled them 'waxed and waned'. They were continually evolving, with 'no period in which the political landscape was not undergoing significant changes (*ibid*, 694). Moreover, an in-depth analysis of these complex and dynamic relationships is beyond the scope of this present study, so the socio-political climate of early medieval southeast Ireland will only be discussed here in more general terms (for a comprehensive study of these 'inter- and intra-polity relationships', see Gleeson 2014). Yet, while the broad-brush discussion offered in this chapter will impart a general overview of the geopolitical milieu in which these stones were produced, more detailed examinations are undertaken in subsequent chapters of the specific socio-political factors, when evident, involved in the production of carved stones at certain sites, to which this chapter is intended to be a companion.

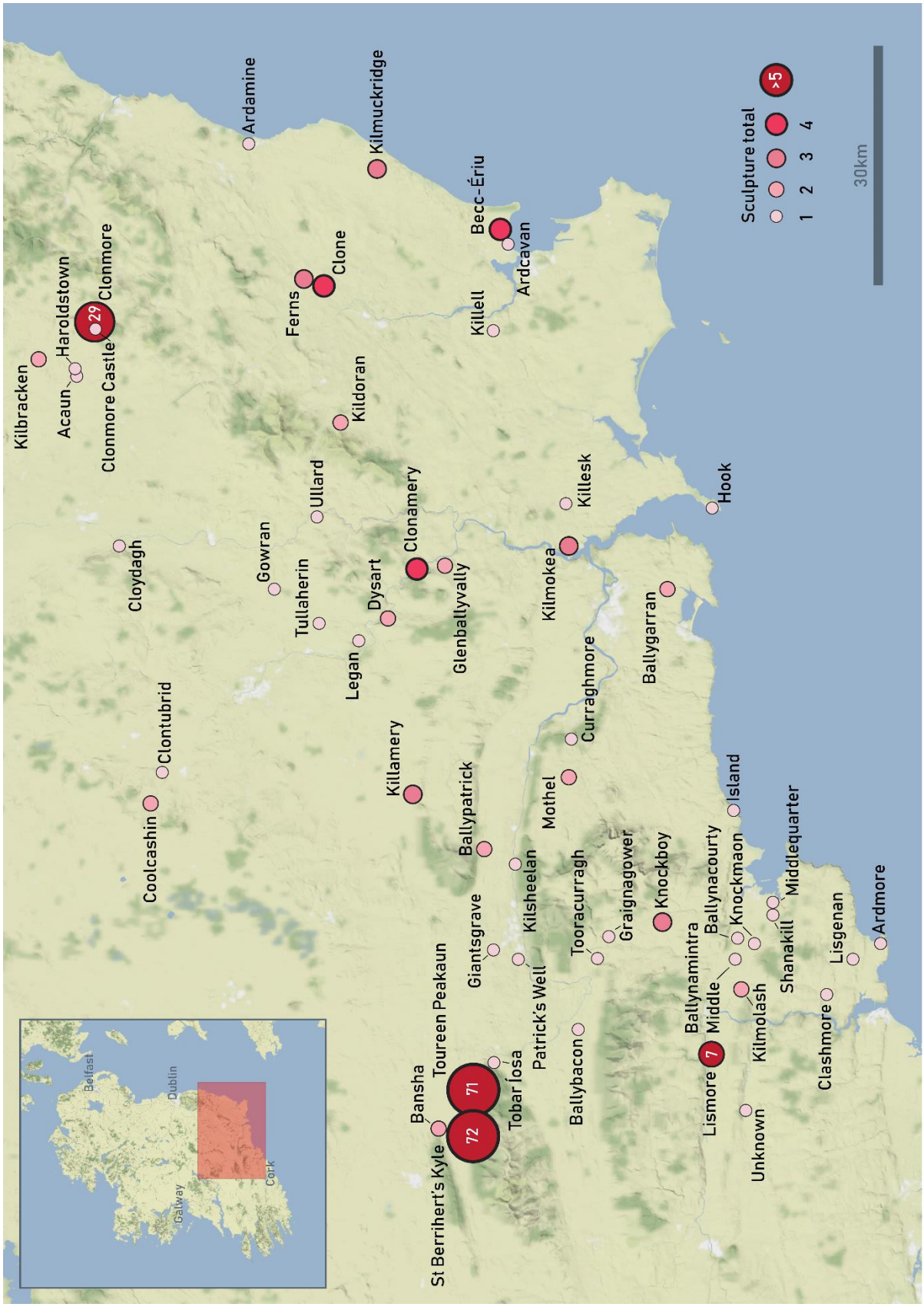


Fig. 3.3: Map of sculpture distribution, showing the various concentrations of carved stones at sites within the study region

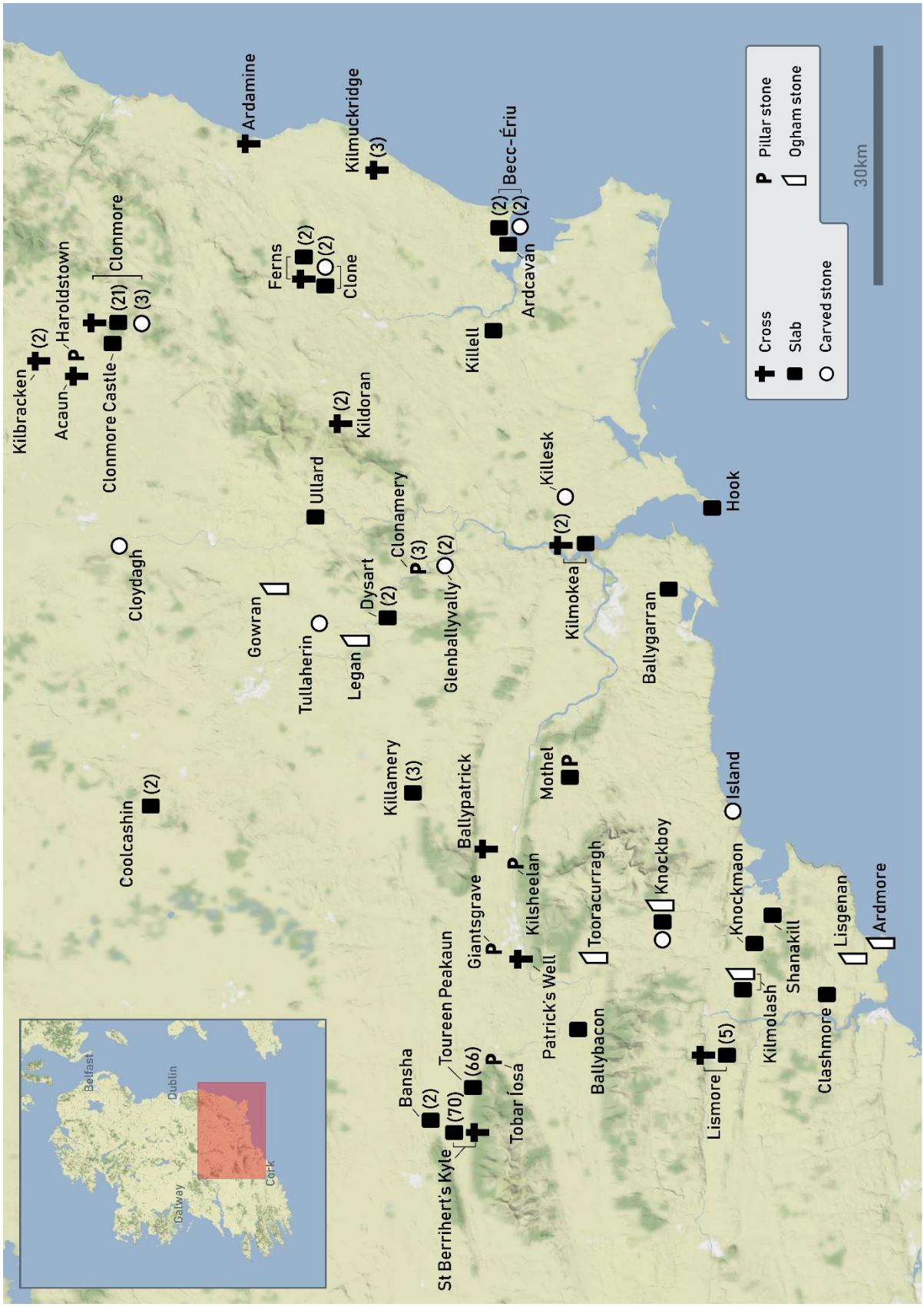


Fig. 3.4: Distribution map of the most prevalent monument-types – crosses, slabs, pillars, carved stones, and cross-carved ogham stones

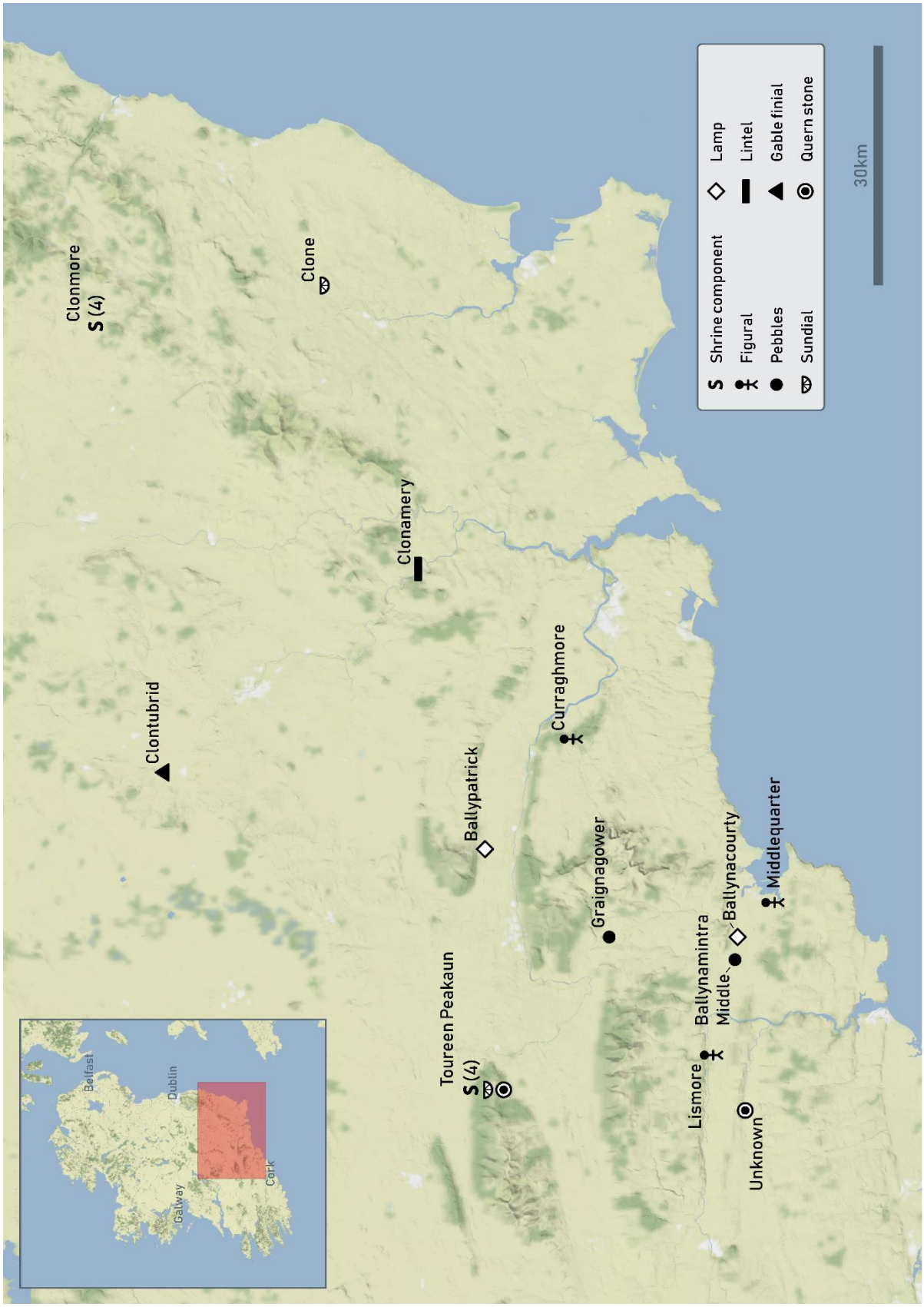


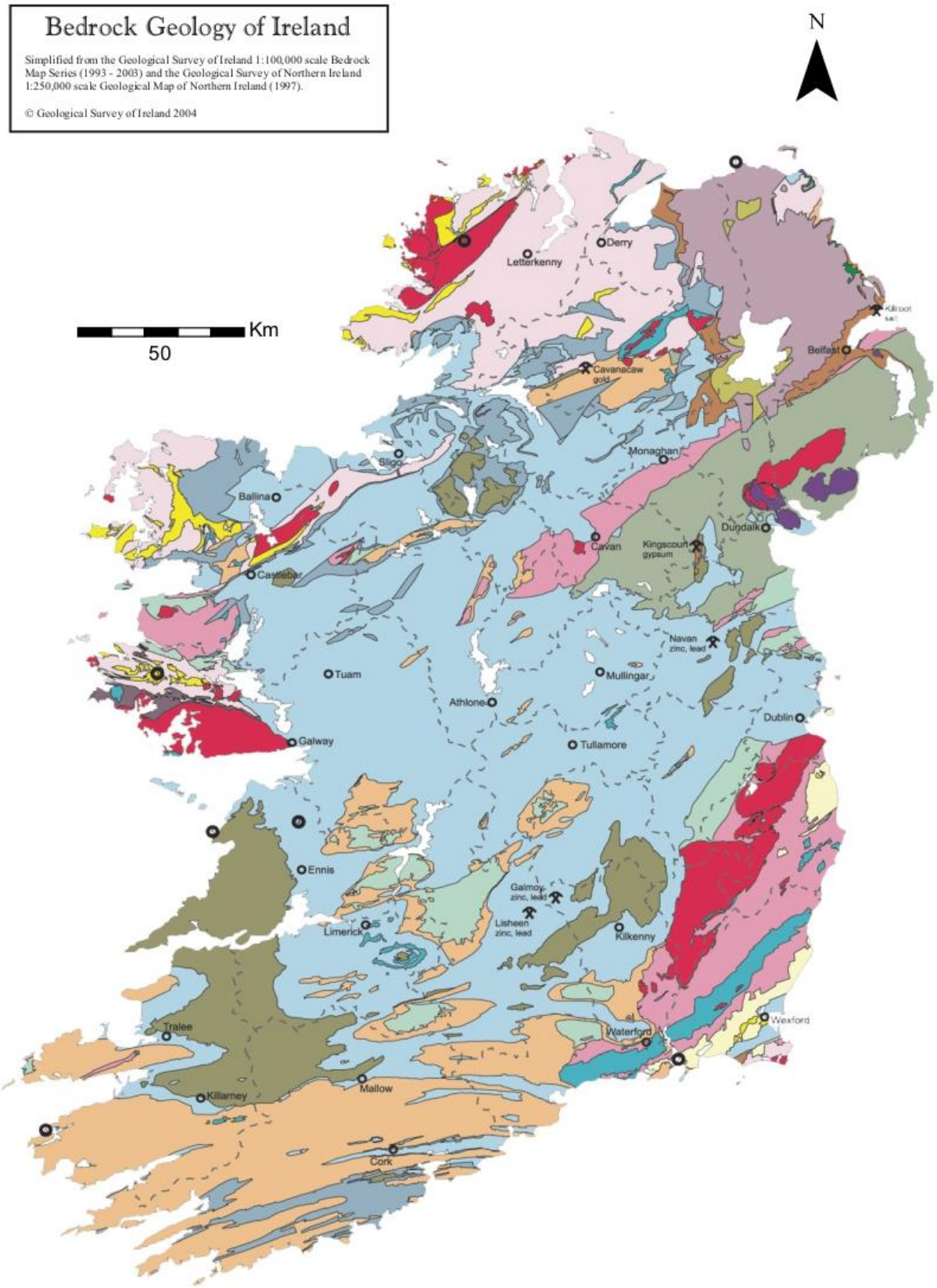
Fig. 3.5: Distribution map of the rarer monument-types – shrine components, figural sculpture, pebbles, sundials, lamps, pre-Romanesque architectural fragments, and cross-carved quern stones

3.2 Geology and topography of the southeast

South Tipperary, Kilkenny, and the western half of Waterford are predominately comprised of mountain ridges of Devonian 'Old Red Sandstone' and river valleys of Carboniferous limestone that run in an east-west direction, though a wide plateau of raised Carboniferous sandstone and shale also runs through the north of Kilkenny, and into the southeast of Co. Tipperary (Fig. 3.6). A channel of Carboniferous limestone forms the bedrock of a small part of the northwest portion of Carlow as well; however, the rest of the county is Ordovician-Devonian granite, which rises up to form the Wicklow mountains to the northeast. Wexford, and the eastern half of Co. Waterford, are composed mostly of bands of Ordovician sandstone, shale, and basalt that run southwest-northeast (Fig. 3.7). However, the south and much of the east coast of Co. Wexford is much older, comprised mostly of Cambrian sandstone, slate, and quartzite, but with a small band of Precambrian schist, gneiss, and quartzite around the southeast tip of Wexford that are the oldest rocks in the southeast region ('Geology of Ireland' 2019). Additionally, Ireland was glaciated during the Ice Age, and so, like the rest of the island, the topography of the southeast was shaped by ice, and contains glacial deposits of sand, gravel, and clay (*ibid*).



Fig. 3.6: Coloured satellite image of the topography of southeast Ireland, showing the raised, mountainous areas of sandstone in light green, and the limestone river valleys in dark green (Source: NASA)


Bedrock Geology of Ireland
Simplified from the Geological Survey of Ireland 1:100,000 scale Bedrock Map Series (1993 - 2003) and the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland 1:250,000 scale Geological Map of Northern Ireland (1997).
© Geological Survey of Ireland 2004
N
Km
50
Letterkenny
Derry
Belfast
Cavanacaw gold
Monaghan
Sligo
Ballina
Dundalk
Cavan
Kingscourt gypsum
Castlebar
Navan zinc, lead
Tuam
Mullingar
Athlone
Dublin
Galway
Tullamore
Ennis
Galmoy zinc, lead
Lisheen zinc, lead
Limerick
Kilkenny
Tralee
Waterford
Wexford
Killarney
Mallow
Cork

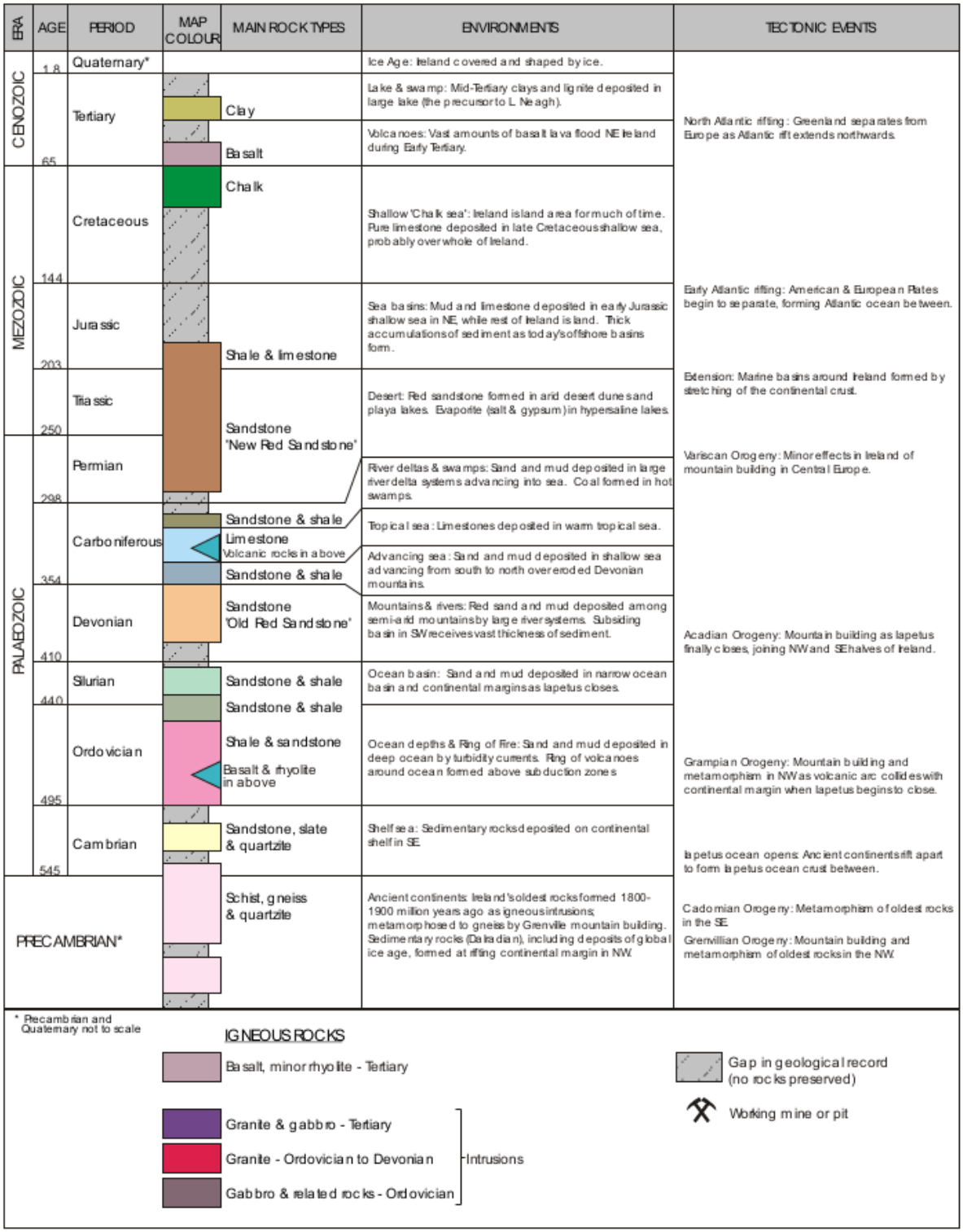


Fig. 3.7: Map showing the bedrock geology of Ireland (previous page), with legend and timeline of rock formations (source: GSI)

There are four, arguably five, main mountain ranges in southeast Ireland. The Blackstairs Mountains are oriented northeast-southwest and form part of the border between Cos. Carlow and Wexford. The remainder are clustered relatively close together in the

westernmost part of the study area (Fig. 3.8). The Galtee Mountains run between east Co. Limerick, and the southwest region of Co. Tipperary; just to the north of the Galtees is a narrow ridge called the Slievenamuck Hills. Between the two is a river valley known as the Glen of Aherlow, which varies from 2.5 to 3.5 km in width, and acts as a natural corridor for travel through the area; two important ecclesiastical sites are situated on the east side – St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun (see Chapter 6). The Knockmealdown Mountains are *c*. 7–11 km south and southeast of the Galtees, and run east-west, forming part of the border between Cos. Tipperary and Waterford. The Comeragh Mountains are cluster of ridges that constitute a large portion of west Co. Waterford, starting *c*. 3 km east of the Knockmealdown Mountains, and running from just south of Clonmel, and the River Suir, to *c*. 5.6 km northeast of Dungarvan. Though this cluster of mountains are usually referred to as the Comeraghs, there are technically two ranges – the Monavullagh Mountains immediately flank the Comeraghs to the southeast, though the distinction between them is not entirely clear.

There are five major rivers which run through the study area – the Rivers Slaney, Barrow, Nore, Suir, and Blackwater. The Rivers Barrow, Nore, and Suir are collectively known as 'The Three Sisters', and formed part of some of the territorial divisions in the region in the early medieval period, as well as today. The River Barrow is the second-longest river in Ireland, originating in the Slieve Bloom Mountains in Co. Laois, and flowing south to Waterford Harbour, forming part of the border between Carlow and Kilkenny, as well as between Kilkenny and Wexford. The River Nore, which originates from Devil's Bit Mountain in northeast Co. Tipperary, and also flows north-south through the centre of Kilkenny, joins the River Barrow just north of New Ross, Co. Wexford, *c*. 17 km from Waterford Harbour. The River Suir likewise originates from Devil's Bit Mountain, and flows south through Tipperary, then turns east at the Comeragh Mountains to form part of the border between Tipperary and Waterford. It then joins the River Barrow, and their confluence forms the estuary of Waterford Harbour before flowing out to sea between Dunmore East, Co. Waterford and the Hook Peninsula, Co. Wexford. The Blackwater flows east through a valley, south of the Knockmealdown Mountains in Co. Cork, and continues into west Co Waterford, likewise along the southern base of the Comeragh and Monavullagh mountain ranges, before making a sharp southerly turn, and draining into Youghal Harbour. Finally, the River Slaney originates in the Wicklow Mountains and flows south through Wicklow, Carlow, and Wexford before forming an estuary at Wexford Harbour before flowing out to sea.

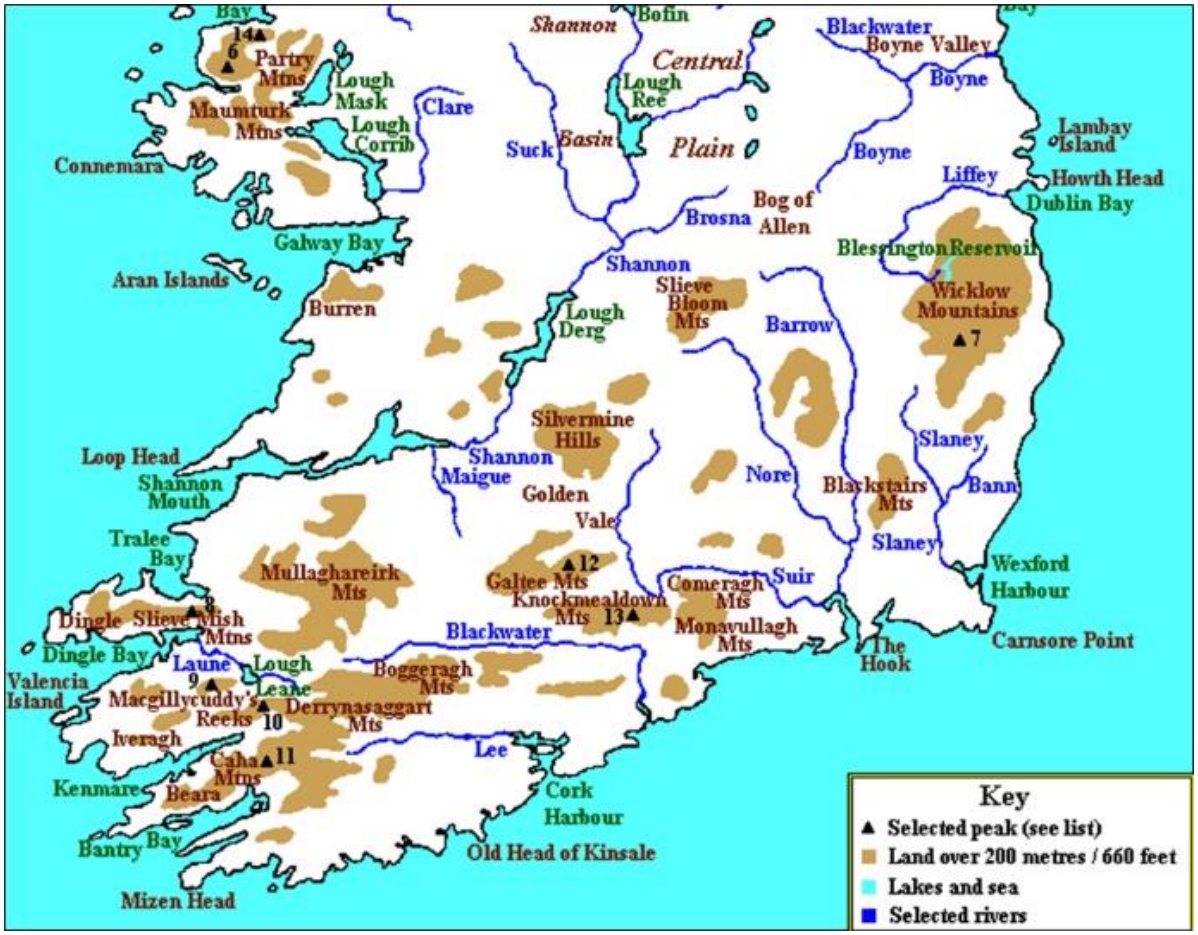


Fig. 3.8: Map of the mountain ranges and rivers in southeast Ireland (source: Irelandstory.com)

3.3 Socio-political landscape

The study area for this project is comprised of the eastern, and southern regions, respectively, of the modern provinces of Munster and Leinster, which roughly coincide with the early medieval over-kingdoms of Mumu and Laigin. However, to speak of 'provincial kingdoms' before the 8th century is a misnomer, as these regions were not politically unified prior to this (Gleeson 2014). Nevertheless, it is the 5th–7th centuries that were most formative in the evolution of the basic structure of territorial divisions in this region – often delineated by ogham stones and burials (*ibid*, 694; see also Chapter 5) – which developed in the latter part of the early medieval period. This is also the time period when the major dynasties, which ultimately dominated, and shaped, this political landscape in the 8th–12th centuries, emerged (Gleeson 2014, 694).

3.3.1 Munster

As already stated, Munster was not, in any sense, a unified province before AD 700 (*ibid*, 791). By the late 5th or early 6th century, there appears to have been three key regional polities: Osraige, Corcu Loígde, and Uí Maic Láire (Fig. 3.9). However, by *c*. 550-600, the Osraige were conquered by an alliance of Corcu Loígde and Uí Maic Láire, after which what is now Co. Kilkenny, as well as some of Co. Tipperary, and much of west Munster became part of a Corcu Loígde over-kingdom (Fig. 3.10), though the next century or so was characterised by endemic warfare between the two victorious polities (*ibid*). At this time, Cashel was considered a border stronghold of the Uí Maic Láire, and it was from here that they extended their control over most of Munster, pushing the Corcu Loígde west (*ibid*). By *c*. 600, the Uí Maic Láire had driven the Corcu Loígde out of east Munster, including north Cork and south Tipperary, and by *c*. 680 had finally defeated them at Mag Fuithirbe – an event which precipitated the supra-regional ascendance of the Uí Maic Láire, and the emergence of 'a concept of the Éoganachta' (*ibid*, 300–1; Sproule 1984, 31). By its association with Uí Maic Láire ascendency, Cashel became the seat of their over-kingship, as well as synonymous with that of Munster's, after the creation of the Éoganachta federation *c*. 700 (Gleeson 2014, 207 791). The Uí Maic Láire were the forebears of the eastern Éoganachta, a group of four dynasties that were collectively regarded as the Éoganacht Caisil until about the mid-8th century, and whose territory spanned central and eastern Limerick, and into south Tipperary and north Cork (*ibid*, 203–4). The west Munster Éoganachta originated from branches of the disaffected Corcu Loígde, as well as other leading non-related groups within Munster, weaving them into 'a complex web of fictive kinship, through the creation of the Éoganachta confederacy in the late 7th century' (Gleeson, forthcoming).

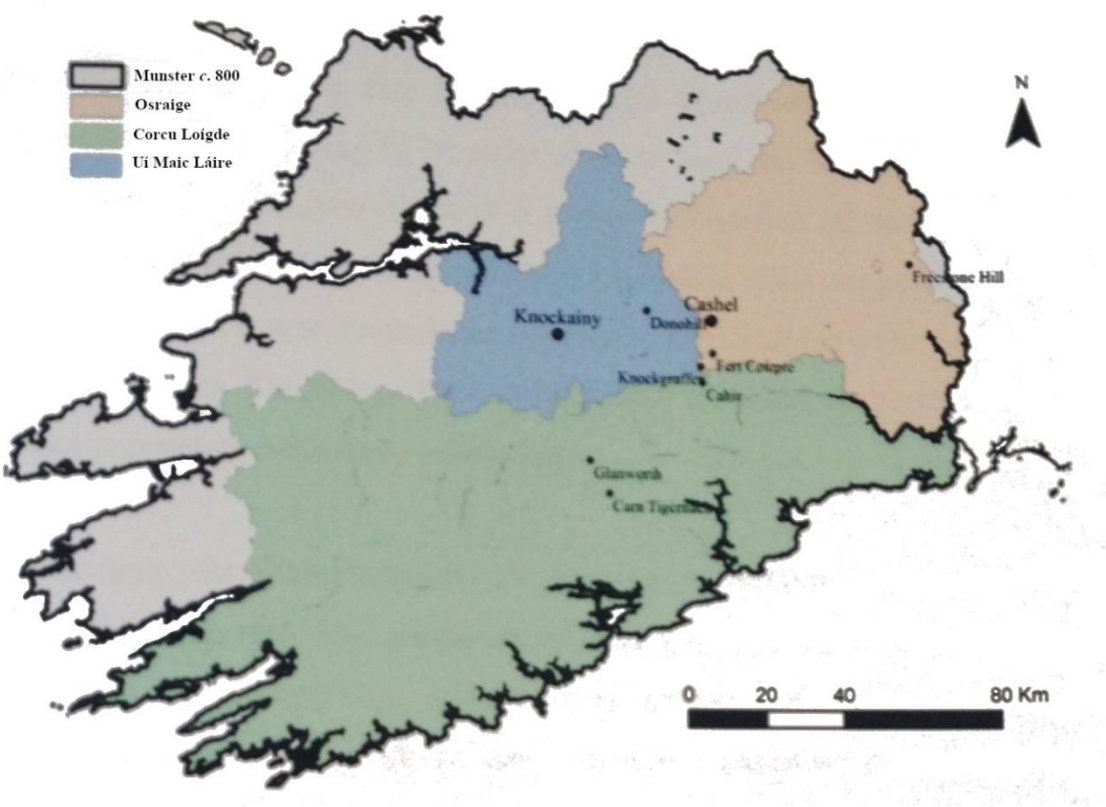


Fig. 3.9: Map showing the three main polities in Munster c. 500 (after Gleeson 2014)

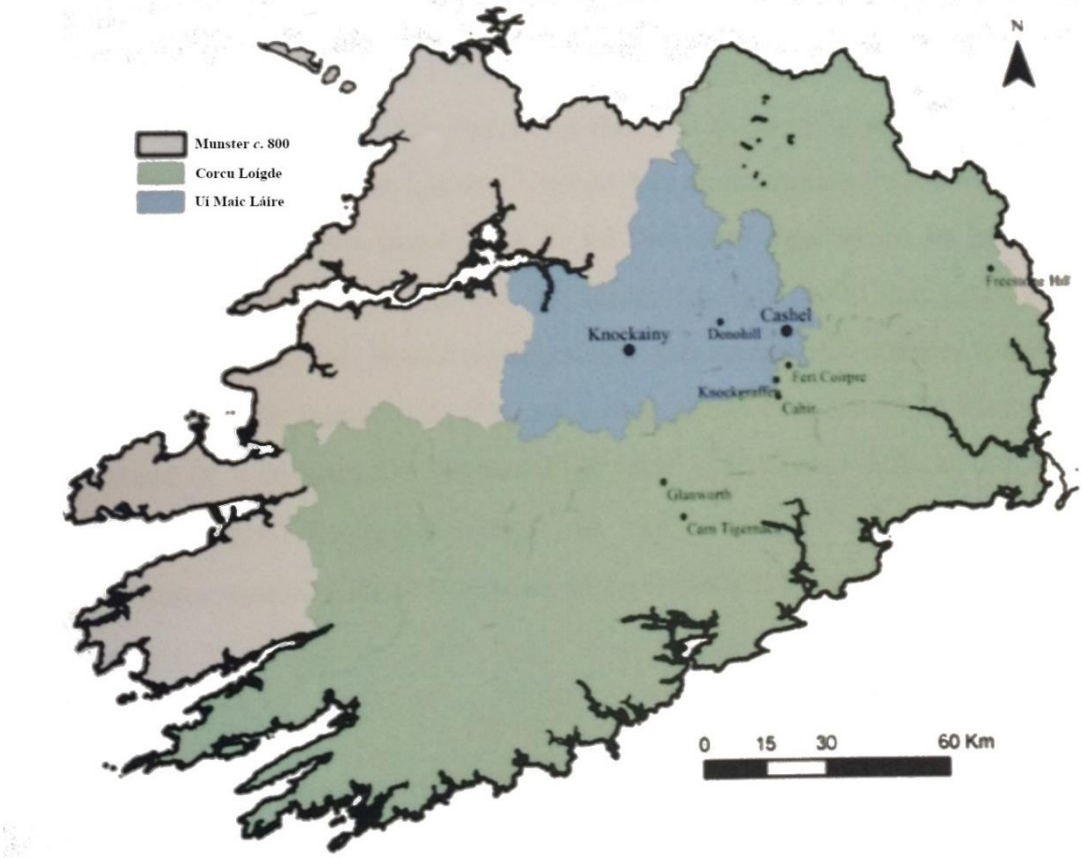


Fig. 3.10: Map of Munster c. 550-600 (after Gleeson 2014)

As the Uí Maic Láire expanded their control over parts of Munster in the 6th and 7th centuries, loyal vassal tribes, or *Déisi* (eDIL s.v. Déisi), were placed in conquered territories (Gleeson forthcoming). The most well-known of these subordinate kingdoms, and the one most pertinent to this study, is Déisi Muman, which spanned most of Cos. Waterford and south Tipperary (*ibid*). This regional kingdom was ruled by the Dál Fiachach Suidge, a polity which had earlier, possibly 5th-century, origins in the area, as ogham inscriptions from this region record the names of some of their early kings (MacCotter 2008, 245; Gleeson 2014, 215). The mid- to late 8th-century *The expulsion of the Déisi* (for the dating of this text, see Ó Cathasáigh 1976; 1984; 2006) champions the claims of the Dál Fhiachach, as overlords of the Déisi, to rule the south Tipperary plains – specifically, the local kingdom of *Mag Femen*, from Cashel, south to the Suir, by virtue of their role in the expulsion of the Osraige (Meyer 1901).

It is clear from several sources that the Osraige, or 'deer people', were an important non-Éoganacht group in early Munster (Gleeson 2014, 212). They ruled over most of Co. Kilkenny, south Tipperary, and south Laois at the very beginning of the early medieval period, but were driven out of their territory by an alliance of the Uí Maic Láire and Corcu Loígde in the early to mid-6th century (see above). Subsequently, the Osraige ruled over a territory that is approximate to the modern diocese of Ossory, which includes all but the easternmost part of Co. Kilkenny, and much of northwest Co. Laois, as well as a few detached portions of south Co. Offaly (Connon 2016, 111). The kingdom of Osraige was an important buffer between the over-kingdoms of Munster and Leinster; prior to the mid-9th century, Osraige was considered part of the over-kingdom of Munster (*ibid*, 128). In 859, however, Osraige became part of Leinster (*ibid*), and subsequently, the Osraige exercised a significant amount of political influence in Leinster during the mid-9th–10th centuries (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 78–9). Osraige power declined after that, and in the 12th century, it was again taken by a king of Munster, Cormac Mac Carthaig (Connon 2016, 111).

Returning to Munster, after Éoganacht ascendency in the late 7th century, the polity of Munster – and the strength of the kings of Cashel – weakened in the mid-8th century, with the death of Cathal mac Finguine (†742; Gleeson 2014, 394). The political power of the Éoganacht was then renewed, first in the reign of Artrí mac Cathail, then by Fedlimid Mac Chrimthann, which, combined, lasted from 793 to 847 (*ibid*, 394–5). It was the reigns of Artrí and Fedlimid that 'essentially rebuilt the Munster-wide authority vested in the Rock of Cashel' (*ibid*). However, the control of the Éoganacht over Munster was again diminished after the death of Fedlimid (Kelleher 1967, 230–1; Byrne 1987a, 264–5). Munster was attacked by Máel Sechnaill in 854, 856, and 858, and in 859, was forced to relinquish the kingdom of Osraige

(see above), though by this time, its control of Osraige was already in name only (*ibid*). The kingship of Munster remained relatively weak for much of the mid-9th–10th centuries (Kelleher 1967, 230–1, 235–6), and it was *c*. 941 that the Dál Cais, who controlled the territory of Thomond ('North Munster'), began to ascend (*ibid*, 236–7). In 978, Brian Bóruma mac Cennétig (i.e. Brian Boru) claimed the kingship of Munster, and in 1002, he took the high-kingship of Ireland from Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill (Byrne 1987a, 257). Brian was killed in the Battle of Clontarf in 1014, after which a struggle for succession broke out in Munster (Kelleher 1967, 240), though two of the sons of Brian Bóruma, Donnchad and Tadg, were successful in maintaining political control, and the Uí Briain (O'Briens) ruled Munster for roughly the next hundred years (*ibid*). At the synod of Cashel in 1101, Muirchertach Ua Briain, king of Munster and high-king of Ireland 'with opposition', gifted the Rock of Cashel to the Church (Byrne 1987a, 191), shortly before control of Munster was returned to the Éoganacht Caisil with the ascendancy of Cormac mac Carthaig, who was king of Munster from 1123 to 1138 (O'Keeffe 1994, 119).

3.3.2 Leinster

The early medieval polities that controlled Leinster prior to the 7th century were primarily the Dál Messin Corb, Uí Bairrche, and Uí Enechglais, which dominated the kingships of Leinster in the 5th and 6th centuries (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 45–7; Gleeson and Ó Carragáin 2016, 79). These dynasties, along with other important groups such as the Uí Máil, Uí Chennselaig, Uí Failge, Fothairt, and Dál Cormaic Loisc, were primarily situated within Cos. Meath, Kildare, Laois, Offaly, east and south Wicklow, and north Carlow (Gleeson 2014, 735; Gleeson and Ó Carragáin 2016, 79–80). Patrick Gleeson (2014, 693) has suggested that the concept of Leinster as a unified kingdom was developed by a newer dynasty, the Uí Dunlainge, who had begun to consolidate their power in north Co. Kildare, which was part of Mag Liphi ('the Liffey Plain'), by the mid-7th century. This region, which was already a centre of regional power, and included important royal and ecclesiastical sites such as Naas, Dún Ailinne, Carmain Liphi, the Hill of Allen, Kildare, Kilcullen, Oldconnell, Donaghmore, and Killashee, became the 'royal heartland' of the Uí Dúnlainge (Gleeson and Ó Carragáin 2016, 77–9). From here, their hegemony spread across Leinster, through expansion and intermarriage, at the expense of many of the earlier polities mentioned above (*ibid*; Mac Shamhráin 1996, 70–2; Gleeson 2014, 738). The beginnings of the Uí Dúnlainge rise to power also facilitated the brief ascendancy of the Uí Máil in north Leinster (i.e. south Dublin, north Kildare, and north Wicklow) in the 7th and 8th centuries (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 71–3; Gleeson 2014, 736). The Uí Máil, however, were

thereafter superseded by the Uí Dúnlainge, who more or less dominated the political and ecclesiastical affairs of Leinster for the next few hundred years (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 74–5; Boazman 2016, 42–3).

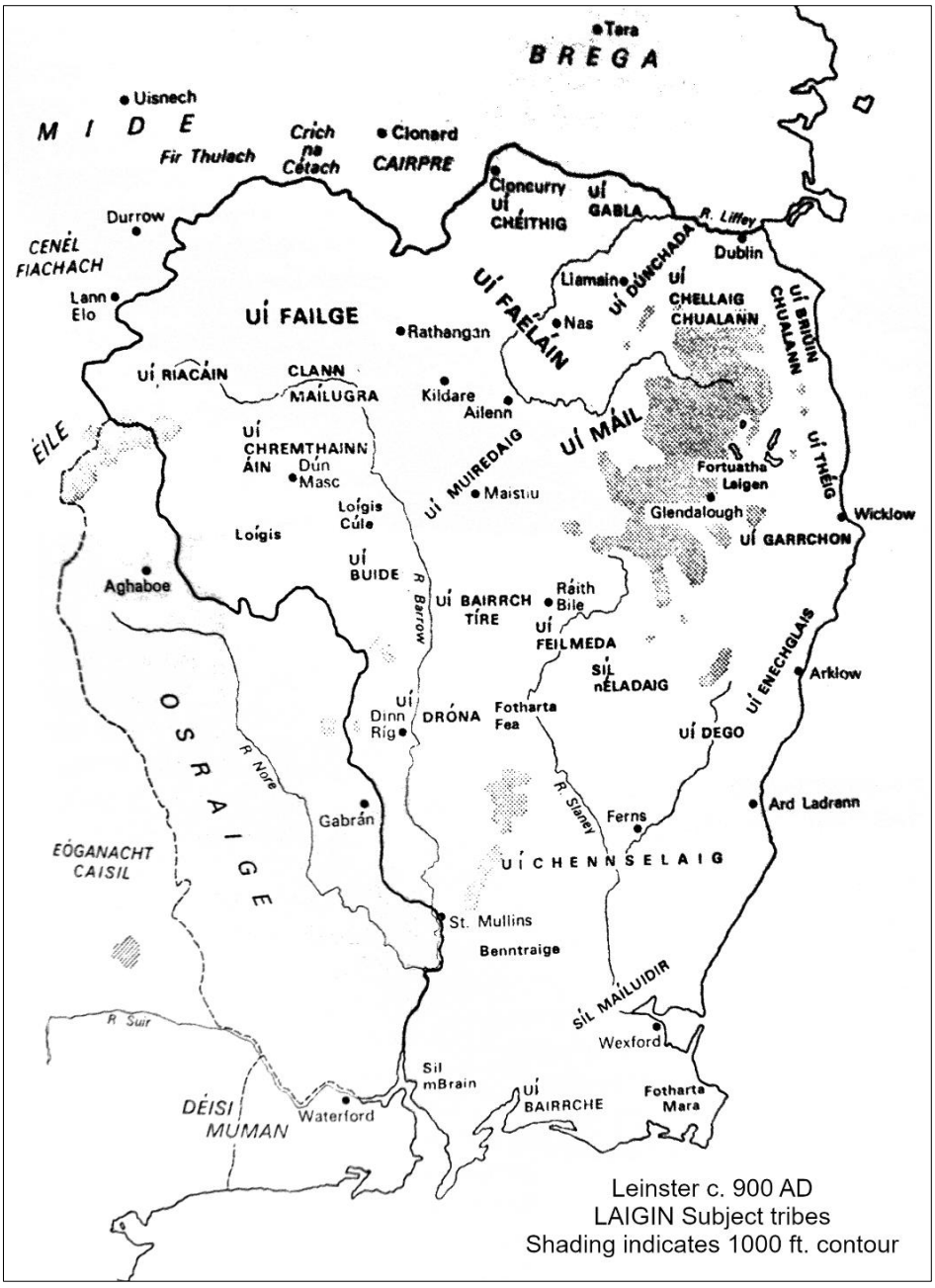


Fig. 3.11: Leinster c. 900, showing approximate territories of the various polities (after Byrne 1987a)

This period was not without competition and conflict, however. Territorial conflicts within the Uí Dúnlainge during the 8th century led to a splintering of the dynasty into three, main segments by the beginning of the 9th – Uí Dunchadha, Uí Fáeláin, and Uí Muiredaig (Gleeson 2014, 739). Uí Muiredaig territory corresponded roughly with southern Kildare, and some of western Wicklow, while Uí Fáeláin were centred in the Uí Dúnlainge 'heartland' of

north Kildare, and the Uí Dunchadha controlled much of Wicklow and south Co. Dublin (*ibid*; Mac Shamhráin 1996, 74–5). In the 9th–10th centuries, Uí Dúnlainge supremacy was under constant threat – from the Osraige to the west, as well as the Southern Uí Néill and Dublin Norse to the north (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 76–9; Fig. 3.11). Ultimately, this led to a weakened Uí Dúnlainge hold on the kingship of Leinster by the end of the 10th century (*ibid*), and, though the Uí Dúnlainge had a brief resurgence of power in the first half of the 11th century, one of their old political rivals, the Uí Chennselaig – now based at Ferns, Co. Wexford – took the kingship of Leinster in 1042 (*ibid*, 94, 96). It was Diarmait mac Máel-na-mBó that ascended to the kingship, and it was held at Ferns until Diarmait mac Murchada, the great-grandson of Diarmait mac Máel-na-mBó, briefly lost the kingship of Leinster in 1167 (*ibid*, 104). He regained the kingship in 1169, with the aid of Norman mercenaries – in particular, Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare, i.e. Strongbow (*ibid*). Upon Diarmait's death at Ferns in 1171, Strongbow inherited control of Leinster, having been granted the kingship by Diarmait, as well as the hand of his daughter, Aoife, in exchange for Strongbow's aid in retaking Leinster (*ibid*, 104–5).

3.4 Major ecclesiastical sites

There were, arguably, four major ecclesiastical sites which developed within the study region during the early medieval period. Three of these are in Munster, namely Emly, which was the chief church of Munster throughout the early medieval period, Ardmore, and Lismore. By contrast, only one, Ferns, was in southern Leinster; however, Kildare and Glendalough, in north Leinster (not part of this study), were of 'national' importance during the early medieval period.

3.4.1 Emly

Emly (*Imlech Ibair*) was reputedly founded in the 5th century by Ailbe, who supposedly died in the 6th century, *c.* 527 or 541 (Byrne 1987a, 210; Ó Riain 2009; AFM M541.2). He is considered to be one of Ireland's four pre-Patrician saints, as well as Munster's premier saint, sometimes referred to as a 'second St Patrick' (Ó Riain 2009). However, the origins of St Ailbe are murky, and Ó Riain has suggested that they may be pre-Christian, with Ailbe being counted among the 'so-called' pre-Patrician saints 'due to Munster pretensions to ecclesiastical primacy' (2011, 58). As mentioned above, Emly was considered the pre-eminent church of Munster; specifically, it was the principle church of the Éoganacht Caisil, until it was surpassed by Cashel in the early 12th century (*ibid*; Ó Carragáin 2010, 129). In the 7th century, Emly, like Toureen Peakaun, was at the forefront of the Easter debate, and, like most of the southern

Irish churches, was aligned with the *Romani*, who followed the Roman tradition of calculating Easter (Moloney 1964, 102–6; Ó Carragáin 2017b, 70; see also Chapter 6). In the 8th century, the *Ríagol Ailbi Imlecha*, or 'Rule of Ailbe of Emly', a poem that listed rules for monastic living, was composed here (see also Chapter 5). According to the *Annals of Inisfallen*, Munster king Cathal mac Finguine (see above) was buried at Emly in 742 (AI742.1). Obituaries for abbots, and other ecclesiastics, of Emly feature prolifically in the annalistic records from the 7th–12th centuries (*AFM* M763.4; M769.7; M782.11; M817.1; M856.4; M870.7, M933.3, M939.2, M979.2, M988.5, M1001.2, M1003.3, M1058.3, M1058.5, M1073.1, M1078.2, M1088.2, M1089.3, M1095.4, M1147.4; *AU* U661.1; U781.3; U1002.6; U1004.9; U1025.1; U1048.3; U1058.3; U1058.5; U1088.1; U1114.1). The 'first plundering' of Emly by Vikings was recorded in 845 (*AFM* M845.13), and it was burned, again by Vikings, *c*. 873 or 879 (*Monasticon Hibernicum*; *Cogadh gaeghel re gallaibh*, §25, in Todd). Emily was also later burned five more times in the 11th and 12th centuries (*AFM* M1058.4; M1089.12; M1152.5; M1154.4; *AU* U1058.1; U1116.3). From the two entries for 1058, we know that there was a stone church and round tower at Emly by this time; however, they do not survive (Ó Carragáin 2010, 129). Emly became incorporated into the archdiocese of Cashel and Emly during the formation of diocesan boundaries in the early 12th century (Ó Riain 2011, 58).

3.4.2 Lismore

Lismore (*Lis Mór*) was founded by St Carthach, or Mochuda (†636), sometime in the early 7th century, or, possibly, the late 6th. The first annalistic obituary for an abbot of Lis Mór is in 610, though a Lughaidh of Lis Mór died in 588 (*AFM* M588.3; M610.2). St Eochaidh, the second abbot recorded in the *Annals of the Four Masters* for Lismore, died in 634 (*AFM* M634.2). St Mochuda himself followed two years later, styled 'Bishop of Lis Mór and Abbot of Raithin (Rahen), though he is thought to have been expelled from the monastery of Rahan, in Co. Offaly, prior to founding Lismore (*AFM* M636.2; Byrne 1987a, 171). Lismore continued to be referenced frequently in the annals throughout the rest of the early medieval period, with a long list of obituaries for abbots and other ecclesiastics recorded (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 350). Lismore is also referenced as being plundered or burned three times (*AFM* M831.4: *AU* U1116.3; U1121.5). From an early date, Lismore was an important monastery, and housed a school and scriptorium (O'Keeffe 1994, 120; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 350). It produced seven early medieval carved stones, dating mostly to the 9th century. Six of these are finely inscribed and well-executed, and stand as testament to Lismore's 'high intellectual profile' (O'Keeffe 1994, 120). Lismore became the seat of a diocese after the Synod of Ráith

Bressail in 1111, and was at the forefront church reforms and the development of a 'native Romanesque' style in early 12th-century Munster (*ibid*, 118–9).

3.4.3 Ardmore

Ardmore (*Ard Mór*) was reputedly founded by another 'pre-Patrician' saint, Declan, whose floruit is thought to be the 5th–early 6th century (Breen 2009a). St Declan was supposedly a bishop, having travelled to Rome to receive episcopal orders from the Pope, according to his 12th-century Latin *Life* (Ó Riain 2011, 259). He is considered the patron saint of the Déisi, and a sincere devotion to St Declan still survives in Waterford, though the oldest version of his pedigree places him among the Fothairt, in Cos. Carlow and Wexford, along with Brigit of Kildare, and Fiontan of Clonenagh (*ibid*, 258). Ardmore itself does not feature prominently in the annals; however, Ó Riain has pointed out that the 12th-century *Life of Declan* was composed around the same time as the church was being rebuilt at Ardmore (*ibid*, 259). Significantly, he states that the biographer was 'setting out the case of his church for cathedral status at a time when it was actively seeking Diocesan standing' (*ibid*). Among the extant remains at Ardmore are St Declan's Cathedral, which includes the side walls of a pre-Romanesque church (Ó Carragáin 2010, 305), St Declan's House – an early shrine chapel that is thought to contain the saint's grave (*ibid*, 305–6), and a 12th-century round tower.

3.4.4 Ferns

Ferns (*Ferna*) was supposedly founded in the late 6th century by Aedán mac Sétna, more commonly referred to by the hypocoristic name, Maedóc, born on Inis Brechmaighe in Magh Slécht, now in Co. Cavan (Breen 2009b). Maedóc is also the patron saint of Drumlane, Co. Cavan, and Rossinver, Co. Leitrim. According to the varying accounts in his 11th- and 12th-century *Lives*, Maedóc was granted the lands upon which he founded Ferns by Becc mac Eogan, a member of the Uí Felmeda line of the Uí Chennselaig, or Brandub mac Eochu (†605/8), king of the Uí Chennselaig, and also of the Uí Felmeda line, respectively (Plummer 1910 ii, 151, §26; 302, §26; 303, §29; Ó Riain 2011, 432–6). Ferns was an important ecclesiastical site from its establishment, and the deaths of its abbots and bishops are regularly recorded in the annals from 624 onward, starting with St Maedóc (*AFM* M624.3; *AU* U625.3; *Chron. Scot.* CS625; *Ann. Tig.* T627.8); it was burned, raided or plundered at least 6 times (AU U835.5; U839.10, U1042.1; AFM M834.8, M838.11, M917.9, M919.18, M1041.14, M1166.14; *Chron. Scot*. CS834, CS839, CS1041; *Ann. Tig*. T1041.5, T1166.1). Ferns also had close affiliations with Kildare, Tech Moling, and Tamhlacht – Lachtnán mac Mochtigern was bishop of Kildare as well as superior/abbot of Ferns (*AU* U875.1, *AFM* M873.3); Laighnen

was *comharba* of Ferns and Tamhlacht (*AFM* M937.5); Cairbre mac Laidcnéin was abbot, and then his descendant (presumably), Cairpre/Conchobhar Ua Laidcnéin, were each *airchinneach* of both Ferns and Tech Moling at the time of their deaths in 965 and 1043 respectively (*AFM* M965.5, M1043.2; *AU* U1043.4). Additionally, three battles or skirmishes were fought at Ferns, at least two of which were fought by the monastic community itself (*AFM* M764.6; *AU* U769.2, U783.6, U817.5). Notably, Cathal mac Dúnlang, who led the monastic community of Tech Munnu against Ferns in 817, is named king of Uí Chennselaig and prior of Ferns in his obituary two years later (*AU* U819.5).

Ferns was the seat of Uí Chennselaig ecclesiastical and political power for much of the early medieval period. Its power and influenced peaked in the mid-11th–12th centuries with the rise of Diarmait mac Máel-na-mBó, and his restoration of Uí Chennselaig kingship over Leinster in 1042. During this time, Ferns cultivated ties with St Davids, in Pembrokeshire, Wales. It is thought that the Welsh ecclesiastic, Sulien (later bishop of St Davids) took a copy of the *Life of St Maedóc of Ferns* back with him to Wales sometime in the late 11th century, after studying in Ireland for ten years, possibly at the invitation of Diarmait mac Máel-na-mBó (Chapter 7). Sulien is credited with translating the *Life* into Latin, which is now the earliest surviving copy, as well as the passages which place Maedóc in Wales as a student of St David (*ibid*). There is also evidence for an intense rivalry between the saints' cults at Ferns and Clonmore in the 11th and 12th centuries, which is reflected in hagiographical material of the period (Chapter 8). The diocese of Ferns was established after the Synod of Ráth Breasail in 1111; Diarmait mac Murchadha (†1171) aspired to make Ferns the episcopal see of Leinster, though this did not come to fruition, as it was given to Dublin (Doherty 2002).

3.5 Discussion

There is a notable concentration of early medieval sculpture on the western side of the study region. While three sites, St Berrihert's Kyle, Toureen Peakaun, and Clonmore, house large collections of carved stones, the widest distrubution of sites that invested in sculpture is in Co. Waterford. By contrast, the two counties that produced the most sculpture – Carlow and south Tipperary – each had a relatively small number of sites that invested in stone sculpture (including the three above, which invested heavily). The socio-political background outlined in this chapter is, admittedly, broad, but some additional comments can be made regarding the distribution, and lacunae, of this corpus. Perhaps the most obvious is the absence of a stone tradition at Emly, apart from one plainly carved, solid-ringed high cross that was not included

in this study (see previous chapter). Yet, Emly was the most important church in Munster throughout most of the early medieval period, patronised by the kings of Cashel. Furthermore, the other three major churches in the region, Lismore, Ardmore, and Ferns, likewise produced comparatively little sculpture. Admore has three ogham stones, and though it is unclear if any were originally associated with the site, the presence of a cross-carving on one (WA-1) suggests it may be possible, especially considering Ardmore is, potentially, a 5th-century site (see Chapters 4 and 5). Lismore has produced seven stones, six of which are finely inscribed and well executed, but no major pieces of sculpture (e.g. high crosses). Ferns, the church of the Uí Chennselaig kings of Leinster in the 11th and 12th centuries, has likewise produced seven pieces of sculpture, though four are high crosses – three of which are plainly carved, like the cross at Emly. However, the remaining high cross fragment, reputed to mark the resting place of Diarmait mac Murchadha (†1171), is decorated with fret patterns, and geometric ornament. By contrast, other major ecclesastical sites in Ireland, such as Iniscealtra, Glendalough, and, particularly, Clonmacnoise, have produced hundreds of pieces of stone sculpture.

Gleeson's study of kingship in early medieval Ireland demonstrates that kings sought to direct their resources towards church patronage (2014). In the earliest centuries of the period, this was primarily through land grants and timber churches, though from roughly the 8th century onward, church patronage was becoming increasingly important to kings, 'such that sculpture, masonry churches and round towers, as well as high-quality metalworking in shrines, reliquaries and so on, are by far the most tangible expressions of kingship and lordship in this period' (*ibid*, 724). Certainly, this sort of high-profile patronage was being invested at Emly – evidenced by its stone church and round tower, and, in particular, its exquisitely wrought house-shaped reliquary (see above; also Chapter 8, Fig. 8.35) – just not through stone sculpture. This lack of abundant, and/or elaborately carved, stone monuments at Munster's premier church, as well as at other major churches in the southeast, is noteworthy, as it does not fit with patterns seen elsewhere in Ireland and Britian – such as at sites mentioned above – in which stone sculpture plays a key role, in tandem with other manifestations of symbolic wealth (e.g. fine metalworking), in the expression of heirarchies of power (*cf.* Gondek 2006). Indeed, such lacunae seem counterintitive, especially at Emly, considering stone crosses and sculpture, as both highly visible and enduring monuments, are particularly 'tangible expressions of secular and ecclesiastical authority intertwined, and…it was precisely that tangibility which made such mediums of expression desirable in the first place' (Gleeson 2014, 784). Yet, the overall distribution of monuments, as well as the wide variety of monument-

types represented in this corpus demonstrate a rich sculptural heritage across the southeast region of early medieval Ireland that will be explored in the following chapters.

4

Chronological Framework

4.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 1, Pádraig Lionard's 1961 paper attempted to provide a general classification and chronological framework of the whole range of Irish recumbent slabs. This was a landmark paper, and is frequently held up as an example of the art-historical approach to Irish sculpture studies (as is being done here). Quite often, however, it has been to point out the flaws in art-historical dating methods, and in particular, Lionard's over-reliance on stylistic analysis and annalistic references to date cross-slabs (e.g. Higgins 1987, 3; Ó Floinn 1995, 2001; Swift 1995; 2003; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 6). Certainly, these are valid criticisms, and identify the shortcomings of relying solely on such methods to establish the chronology of sculpture. Yet, while much of Lionard's annalistic justification for ascribing particular dates to certain stones may be unfounded, many of the date ranges he proposed are still viable based on the art-historical evidence, which demonstrates just how little the methods for dating stone sculpture have progressed since its publication, almost 60 years ago.

Very few carved stones can be reliably dated through excavation evidence, as few early ecclesiastical sites have been excavated, though this is changing somewhat (e.g. High Island; Toureen Peakaun). Yet, even at sites that *have* been excavated, very few pieces of sculpture are in their original context. At both excavated and non-excavated church sites, most stones have been moved, either through conservation efforts (e.g. Clonmacnoise, St Berrihert's Kyle, Toureen Peakaun, Inishmurray, Clonmore, etc.), or through reuse in other contexts (e.g. Gallen). Nancy Edwards has pointed out similar challenges in dating the early medieval sculpture of Wales. She writes, 'typology and art-historical comparison, however subjective and imprecise, remain crucial tools in trying to build up a relative chronology for the sculpture' (2007a, 116). Indeed, typological markers, stylistic parallels, and, when applicable, inscriptions, were key tools in developing the chronological framework for this study. They were not, however, the only criteria used to date the sculpture in this corpus – monument morphology and, when available, historical evidence, as well as evidence from excavations (i.e. Toureen Peakaun), also contributed to assigning date ranges to these monuments. I have combined as many strands of evidence as are available to arrive at the

most probable date range for each stone, but in many cases, only a broad relative chronology could, at best, be determined. The majority of the corpus has been organised according to cross-form. This gives priority to cross typology, not only as this is the defining characteristic of most of the dataset, but also because, in many cases, it provides the primary evidence for chronology. However, monument morphology was also taken into consideration when assigning probable date ranges. Monuments with specialised morphologies (e.g. lamps, lintels, sundials, etc.), or complex iconography, are considered in a separate section. Also, note that the dates suggested for the ogham stones refer to the cross-carving or carvings, not to the inscription (though they are not necessarily mutually exclusive). Furthermore, the sculpture from St Berrihert's Kyle is not chronologically itemised here, as the collection is so large, it would make the length of this chapter unnecessarily cumbersome. Instead, it is discussed in the case study for this site, Chapter 6. Finally, for ease of reference, a table of the chronological framework for this corpus is provided in the Appendix.

4.2 Dating Evidence

Some of the main criteria used to date the sculpture here are cross typology, monument morphology, and, in some cases, inscriptions. In general, crosses of simple form and execution are thought to be the earliest, evolving into more complex forms over time. As McManus puts it, 'the more complicated the design, and accomplished the execution, the more likely a cross is to be late' (1997, 80) – namely, plain linear crosses are usually considered to be chronologically earlier than outline crosses carved in relief. However, this is not always the case, as simple cross-forms continued to be used throughout the early medieval period, and are found on monuments of later date as well (Sheehan 1990, 158). Indeed, it is nearly impossible to date simple cross-forms with any accuracy based on their typology alone. Consequently, many such cross-forms are assigned broad date ranges, sometimes spanning most, or the entirety, of the early medieval period.

However, monument morphology can provide further clues to chronology. Broad patterns, evident in the forms of certain monuments over time, may allow the date range of an individual stone to be refined, in combination with its cross-form. The earliest datable monuments are unshaped stones, slabs, and pillars, usually large in size. These are often dated to between the 5th and 7th centuries, though some may be 8th-century (Sheehan 1990; 2012; McManus 1997; Swift 1997; Okasha and Forysth 2001, 6). This monument-type is

particularly abundant in the west of Ireland, especially Co. Kerry, represented by the many ogham stones and tall cross-pillars that still dot the landscape. In Britain, crosses were likewise incised onto unshaped slabs and pillars, until the development of relief carving in the 8th century, and with it, the careful dressing and shaping of the stones themselves (e.g. Fisher 2001, 12–14; Edwards 2007a, 116–7), a pattern that is also broadly reflected in Ireland (*ibid*; Sheehan 2012, 104). From the 7th–9th centuries, most incised stones continued to be unshaped, or else only minimally so, though many became smaller in size, with the longest dimension usually less than 75 cm (Ó Floinn 1995, 252–4; Okasha and Forysth 2001, 7–9). Some of these slabs were dressed, albeit nominally, and usually only on the surface it is carved upon, leaving the rest of the stone unworked (*ibid*). However, by the 9th and 10th centuries, slabs were becoming larger, though still usually dressed on only one surface, with average maximum length of *c*. 1 metre (*ibid*). It is during the 8th–10th centuries that stone carvers were producing some of their most intricately crafted works, exemplified by the many highly ornamented free-standing stone crosses still extant in Ireland. This heightened skill and competence can also be applied broadly to many of the cross-slabs and other sculpture likewise produced in this period, most clearly exemplified in the cross-slabs at Clonmacnoise. Furthermore, stone monuments were increasingly being shaped and dressed, and, by the 10th century (but especially by the 11th and 12th centuries), cross-slabs had predominantly become large and rectangular in shape, as they were meant to be placed recumbently over a grave, covering it entirely. Clusters of this monument-type have been found at sites like Church Island (*Inis Úasal)* and Glendalough, and singly in places like Hook Church, Co. Wexford (WX-14), but are found in large numbers at Iniscealtra and Clonmore, Co. Carlow (see below; also Chapter 8). However, some of these large cross-slabs taper slightly towards the bottom, which is more characteristic of the late 12th century (Maher 1992; Ó Floinn 1995, 258; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 9, 103).

Additionally, 21 pieces of sculpture from this corpus – excluding the pieces from Toureen Peakaun that were not surveyed for this study (see Chapter 2) – bear an inscription, either in ogham or Latin script. The majority of ogham stones in Ireland date to the 5th and 6th centuries, with use of the script falling into decline sometime during in the 7th century (McManus 1997, 60, 83). Damian McManus has created a relative chronology of ogham inscriptions, by tracking linguistic progressions between the Primitive, Archaic, and Early Old Irish periods (*ibid*, 81). However, linguistic changes are often gradual, creating an overlap between periods. Consequently, the date ranges for ogham inscriptions are fairly broad, and the cut-off points for transitions between one period and the next are largely

arbitrary (*ibid*, 83). In McManus's chronology, ogham inscriptions fall into three main categories: pre-apocope, apocope, and syncope. These classifications refer to the loss of certain syllables and vowels, roughly correlating to the three early periods in the Irish language mentioned above. Apocope changes include vowel affection, or mutation, as well as the loss of final consonants or syllables (i.e. 'AS', '-I', and '-S'), and is dated to the turn of the 6th century (*ibid*, 88). Syncope denotes the loss of internal syllables whereby the length of words was reduced, sometimes in half, and is thought to date to the mid-6th century (*ibid*, 84, 89).

While it cannot be presumed that all ogham stones in Ireland commemorate Christians, roughly ten percent of the ogham stones in Ireland are also carved with at least one cross, though in many cases, the chronological relationship between the inscription and cross cannot be unequivocally established (*ibid*, 54, 60). However, crosses of plain form and simple execution could indicate contemporaneity – such crosses have been found on very early monuments across Ireland and Britain; several examples from Co. Kerry have been dated to the 5th–7th centuries (Sheehan 2012, 88). Moreover, there is no reason a cross and ogham inscription cannot be presumed to be contemporaneous, unless evidence indicates otherwise (Hamlin 1982, 285; McManus 1997, 80; Swift 2001, 52). A notable example is the well-documented Church Island (Valentia Harbour) ogham stone, where the inscription has been carved over the cross (O'Kelly 1957–9, 115, fig. 5). However, in most instances where the cross and ogham are clearly not contemporaneous, it is more often the cross-carving that is later than the inscription, usually associated with reuse of the monument, such as at Kilfountain, Co. Kerry (Swift 2001, 52; see also Chapter 5). There are seven cross-incised ogham stones in the study region, five of which are carved with the plain, linear cross-forms mentioned above. The readings on the ogham inscriptions are taken from Macalister's *Corpus* (1945) and verified by McManus, unless otherwise noted (1997, 67–8).

Latin script on early medieval stone sculpture dates from the 7th–12th centuries, with Old Irish used from the 7th–9th century, and Middle Irish from the 10th–12th century (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 36). Text formulae and orthography can be useful linguistic markers; the earliest inscriptions, thought to be 7th–8th century, are simply personal names. Requests for prayers or blessings are mostly 9th-century or later, with texts becoming longer and more developed in the 11th and 12th centuries (*ibid*, 37). For example, the formula *or(óit) ar*, and its more common variation *or(óit) do*, has a wide distribution across Ireland. Its introduction is generally dated to the 9th century or later, though its abbreviated form of '*ór ar*' was most frequently used before the 11th century (*ibid*, 27–8, 37). Changes in

spelling can signify the transition between Old and Middle Irish, such as the adoption of *–nn* in place of *–nd* (*ibid*, 36). However, as with ogham inscriptions, these methods can only be applied broadly to the chronology of carved stones, due to considerable overlap in formulae and orthography between linguistic periods, of which the aforementioned spelling change is an example (*ibid*, 37).

For the majority of early medieval sculpture, there are very few fixed points in history to which particular stones can be attributed (Hughes and Hamlin 1977, 91; Edwards 2007a, 116). With few exceptions, even stones with inscriptions can rarely be ascribed to a particular date (see above). Thus, placing the iconography of a monument within the wider contexts of early medieval artistic development can be helpful in identifying the chronology of that carved stone (*ibid*). However, dating evidence can also come from historical sources. Though Lionard's indiscriminate use of annalistic obituaries to date sculpture has been justifiably questioned, critical examination of the annals by other scholars have resulted in more reliable dating evidence for some inscribed stones (e.g. Ó Floinn 1995; Swift 1995; 2003; Okasha and Forsyth 2001). Phases of major sculpture production at ecclesiastical sites have also been convincingly linked to periods of stability and wealth, under the patronage of powerful elites, both in Ireland and Britain (Ó Floinn 1995; Edwards 2007a 116–7; Ó Carragáin 2017b). Since these periods tend to be short-lived, relatively concise date ranges have been suggested for some of the larger groups of typologically related cross-slabs that are found at those sites (*ibid*). Furthermore, Swift has suggested firmer dates for a few of the cross-slabs at Clonmacnoise, using a combination of law tracts, Old Irish poems, and the Irish annals (1995; 2003). However, she is more cautious than Ó Floinn in assigning dates to slabs based on references to royal burials (*ibid*). Furthermore, Elizabeth O'Brien's work on early Irish burial practices, which utilises a combination of historical and excavation evidence, has also shed light on the development of some monument forms (1992; 2003), and is particularly useful in relation to sites, like Clonmore, that have produced a broad chronological range of mortuary sculpture (see Chapter 8).

4.3 Cross-forms

4.3.1 Linear crosses

Linear crosses are here defined as those formed by the intersection of two incised lines. This includes both equal-armed (Greek) and Latin crosses, with terminals that may be plain or elaborated (e.g. crosslets, barred, wedged, bifurcated terminals, etc.). This category

represents one of the broadest and most common cross-types found across Ireland and Britain, and many variations were in use throughout the early medieval period. Its prevalence is likewise reflected in its wide distribution among the sculpture of this corpus, which has been broken down further into three subgroups: linear crosses without a ring or frame, framed linear crosses, and encircled linear crosses.

4.3.1.1 Unframed/unringed linear crosses

Altogether, there are 29 examples in this subgroup, from Clonmore (CW-5, CW-7, CW-15, CW-24), Haroldstown (CW-33), Clonamery (KK-3, KK-4), Glenballyvally (KK-11), Killamery (KK-14), Legan (KK-16), Bansha (TS-4, TS-5), Ballybacon (TS-1), Kilsheelan (TS-7), Tobar Íosa (TS-82), Ardmore (WA-1), Ballygarran (WA-2, WA-3), Ballynamintra Middle (WA-5), Graignagower (WA-8), Island (WA-9), Kilmolash (WA-10), Knockboy (WA-12, WA-13), Lisgenan (WA-16), Lismore (WA-19), Shanakill (WA-27), Tooracurragh (WA-28), and Killell (WX-17). Seventeen crosses have plain, unelaborated terminals – CW-33, KK-3, KK-4, KK-16, TS-4, TS-7, TS-82(a), WA-1, WA-2, WA-3, WA-5, WA-8(b), WA-9, WA-10, WA-12, WA-16, and WX-17. Without any other characteristics to help determine chronology, e.g. inscription or monument morphology, such a simple and widely-used cross-form would be impossible to date. However, CW-33, KK-3, KK-4, TS-82, and WA-2 are unshaped, upright pillars, which may suggest they are of an early date (Fig. 4.1). TS-7 is likewise an upright pillar, though this stone has been lightly shaped, indicating it may be later. As mentioned above, a significant number of cross-pillars in Co. Kerry, particularly from the Dingle Peninsula, have been dated to the 5th–7th centuries (Fanning 1971, 27–8; Swift 1997, 96; Sheehan 2012, 88), and many other examples within Ireland and Britain are thought to date between the 7th and 9th centuries (Hamlin 1987a, 138; Edwards 2007a, 116; Maddern 2014, 178). Nevertheless, simplicity of style and form alone does not necessarily preclude production beyond the 9th century, and the morphology of TS-7 would suggest it may date from the 8th century or later (see section 4.2). The excavation evidence from Ballygarran, where WA-2 was found, indicates that its church may have fallen out of use sometime before the 10th century, though occupation of the site continued into the later medieval period (Power 1941; Ó Carragáin 2010, 137). The date ranges for KK-3 and KK-4 may be refined to some extent. Though Clonamery appears to have had its floruit in the 10th–12th centuries (Ó Carragáin 2010, 87), the simplicity of their cross-forms and morphology, as well as the roughness of their execution, is in stark contrast to the quality of the other sculpture at this site, particularly KK-1 (see below, 'Other sculpture'), suggesting

KK-3 and KK-4 were carved prior to the 10th century, when the stone church was probably built. Morphologically and stylistically, both CW-33 and TS-82 appear to be early as well, though there has been some doubt cast upon the antiquity of cross 'A' on TS-82 (see catalogue entry for TS-82). However, though the provenance of TS-82 is murky, there is still little reason to doubt that the monument itself is not early medieval, and may date to the 6th or 7th century (see below, section 4.3.1.3). Yet, while CW-33 may likewise be early, little is known about the history of its church site, though there was certainly ecclesiastical activity in the area during the early medieval period (see catalogue entry, 'Haroldstown'). Thus, CW-33 is assigned a more cautious, general early medieval date.



Fig. 4.1: Clockwise from top left – examples of unframed/ringed linear crosses (Sheehan 2012), CW-33, TS-7, WA-2

Four stones, TS-4, WA-3, WA-9, and WX-17, are also carved with plain linear crosses (Fig. 4.2). All four are small, unshaped stones that were probably funerary monuments. While ogham stones and cross-pillars also served this function, it was in the 7th century that smaller slabs and carved stones, marking individual graves, began to appear (see Chapter 5). The practice of placing some small cross-slabs, like WX-17, within graves is slightly earlier, though, dating to the 6th–7th centuries (Kelly 1988, 98–9; see also Chapter 5). Many small, unshaped recumbent slabs, incised with simple linear or outline crosses, have been dated to the 7th–8th centuries, and this is supported by recent excavations at Toureen Peakaun, from which six new slab fragments, TS-83, TS-84, and TS-86–9, were recently recovered (Ó Carragáin 2006; 2007b; 2017b). However, on the Toureen slabs, and those similar to them, the size of the cross is relatively small. Moreover, many other small, unshaped cross-carved stones within Ireland and Britain, particularly those that were intended to sit upright, have a slightly broader date range, to between the 7th and 9th centuries (Hamlin 1987a, 138; Fisher 2001, 12–14; Edwards 2007a, 116; Maddern 2014, 178; KK-14, below). As TS-4 and WA-9 were intended to sit upright, a 7th–9th century date range is suggested. Furthermore, since the information on WA-3 is scant, it is likewise assigned to the 7th–9th centuries. A photograph or sketch of the stone is not provided by Patrick Power in his paper on the excavation of Ballygarran, nor could one be located elsewhere. Power describes WA-3 as a small, irregularly shaped slab, incised with an equal-armed cross, *c.* 15.24 cm long, which apparently had later been lengthened into a Latin cross (Power 1941, 64). However, the dimensions of the stone are not given, nor is it clear how the cross was positioned on the stone, or if the stone was meant to be upright or recumbent.

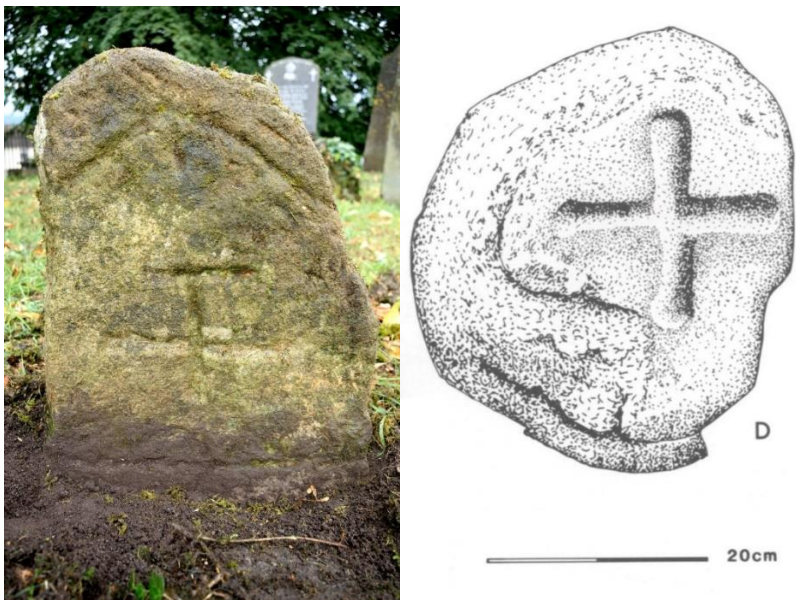


Fig. 4.2: Small, unshaped slabs, incised with plain linear crosses (TS-4 and WX-17; sketch after Kelly 1988)

WA-5 and WA-8 are cross-incised pebbles that might have functioned as portable blessings or cures, or else, as ritualistic instruments for oath-taking or curses. There is Irish hagiographic evidence for 7th-century cursing (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 338), though similar examples from Inishmurray (*ibid*, fig. 22, 001.13) and High Island (Maddern 2014, nos. 24, 31 and 35) may have coincided with a formalisation of liturgical cursing in the 10th and 11th centuries (*ibid*, 198; O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 339). A smooth, rounded cross-incised stone, now on display at the National Museum of Ireland, was found in a grave at Temple Breccan, Co. Galway. It has been dated to the 8th–10th centuries and its inscription translates to 'pray for Bran the pilgrim'. WA-5 was recovered during excavations of a rath at Carrigmurish (Ussher 1886). Some of the other finds from this excavation may date from the 10th–12th centuries, such as several fragments of carved bone combs that are similar to those found in Norse Dublin (*cf.* Ó hÉailidhe 1973). WA-5 was found in a midden, mixed in with domestic waste, though this does not preclude it from functioning as a token of protection, blessing or curse. However, it was found among a multitude of uncarved pebbles, which Ussher interpreted as sling-stones (Ussher 1886, 364). This could suggest that this stone was not of great antiquity when it was deposited, and thus, may be roughly contemporary with the other finds from this site (Fig. 4.3). WA-8, on the other hand, was found while digging a grave at Bennett's Church, *c.* 1 m below ground surface (Lucas 1972, 198). As no further detail is known about Bennett's church other than that it dates to the early medieval period, and, given all the above evidence for cross-carved pebbles at Inishmurray, High Island, and Temple Breccan, an 8th–11th century date is posited for WA-8 (Fig. 4.4).

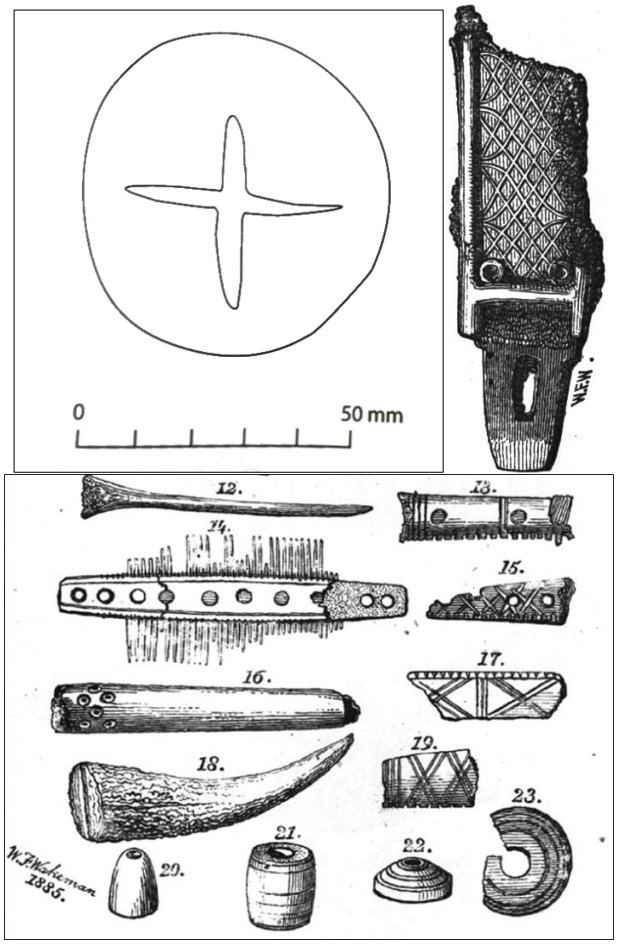


Fig. 4.3: Sketch of WA-5 (left), and illustrations of various other finds from Carrigmurish (Ussher 1886)

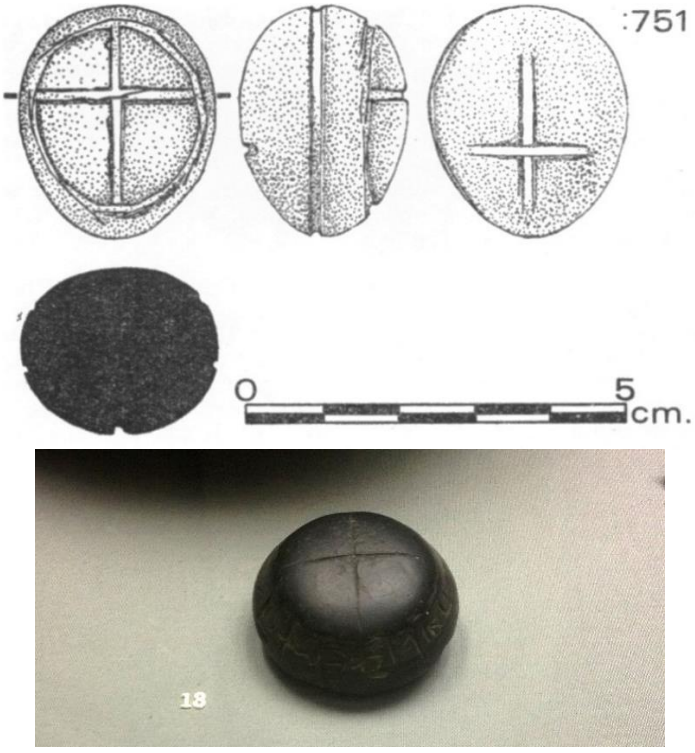


Fig. 4.4: WA-8 (after Lucas 1972), and a similar 8–10th-century stone from Temple Breccan

Inscriptions are present on 6 stones with plain linear crosses, which narrows their date range. The cross-carved ogham stone from Ardmore (WA-1) features an ogham inscription with the Latin name 'AMADU', and a small cross incised on the opposite face (Fig. 4.5). Macalister illustrates the cross as having expanded, wedge-like terminals (1945, 260); however, a laser-scanned 3D model of WA-1, created for the *Ogham in 3D* project, shows that it is actually a simple, equal-armed cross with plain terminals ('CIIC 265. Ardmore III, Co. Waterford' 2019). The inscription itself is thought to date to the 5th century (McManus 1997, 117; Swift 1997, 91), and, though a physical relationship between the inscription and cross on the Ardmore stone cannot be conclusively established, there is no evidence that would preclude contemporaneity. Moreover, the (presumed) 5th-century date for the foundation of Ardmore (Chapter 3) may support the suggestion of a 5th-century date for the monument as a whole (see also Chapter 5).

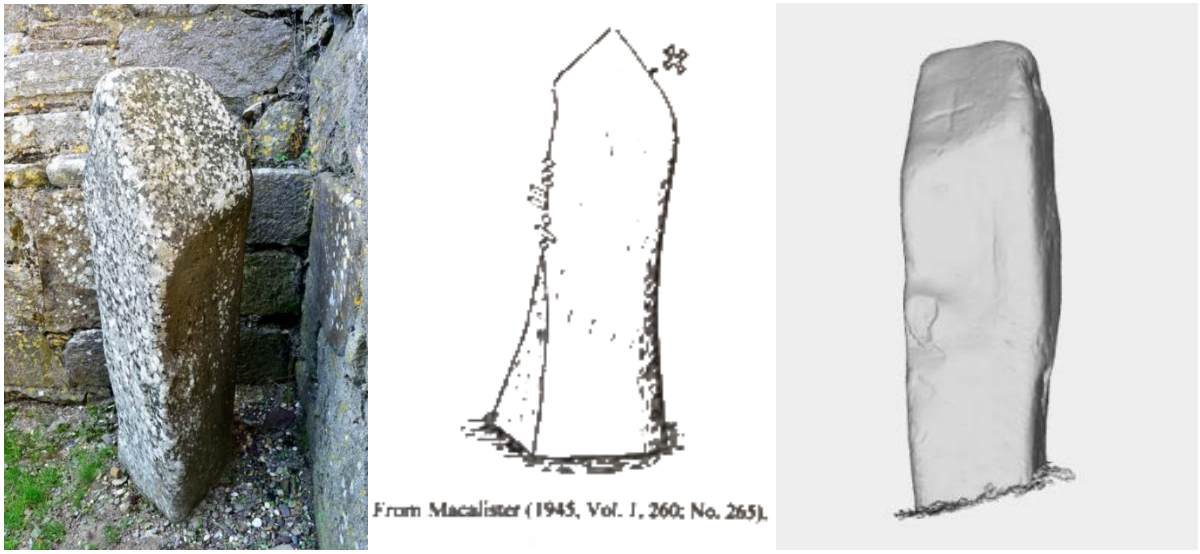
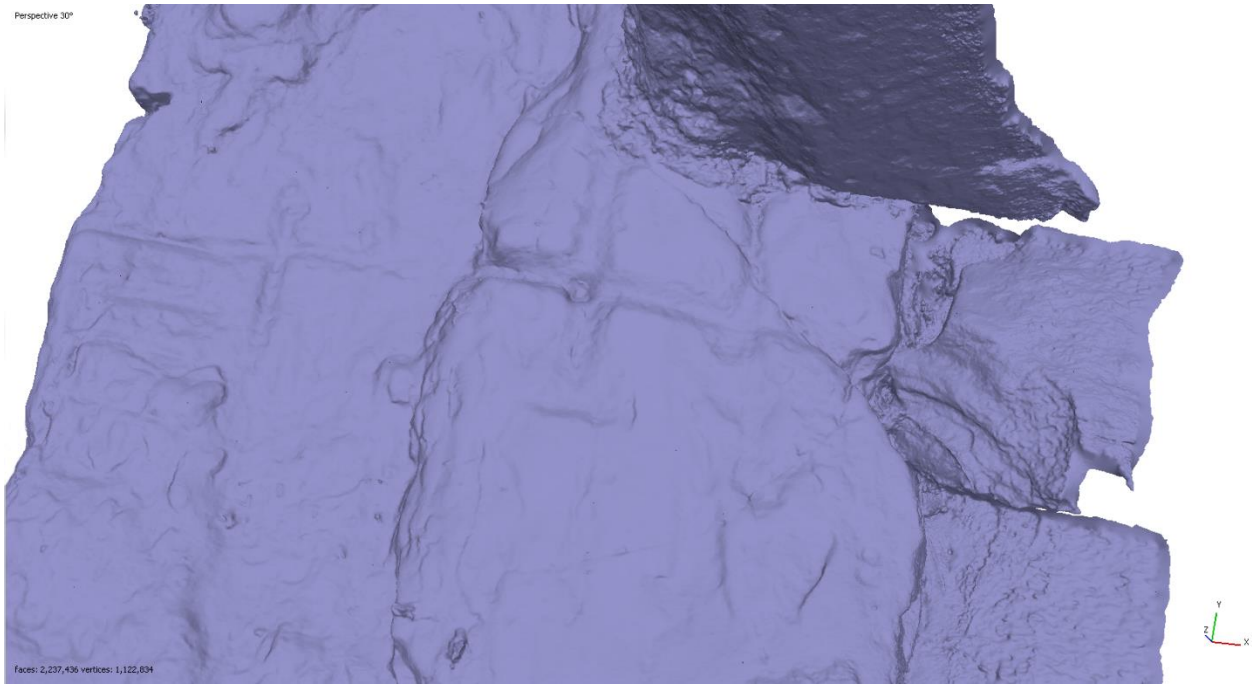


Fig. 4.5: WA-1, at Ardmore, with Macalister's sketch and the laser scanned 3D model, created by Ogham in 3D

The ogham stone at Kilmolash Church (WA-10) is being reused as part of the threshold, separating the 15th-century nave and chancel. It is incised on one end with two linear crosses – one with plain terminals, and one a cross-potent (Fig. 4.6). Like the Ardmore ogham stone, Macalister has misrepresented the cross-carving on the one at Kilmolash, though perhaps it is understandable, considering its very poor state of preservation. More importantly, Thounhurst had suggested that the ogham inscription might overlay part of the dexter cross (2007, 240), indicating that at least one cross, but possibly both, are earlier than the inscription. Significantly, this was confirmed by photogrammetry. Moreover, photogrammetry revealed that the central cross is not plain, as suggested by Thounhurst

(*ibid*), but is a cross-potent, with a very deep circular depression at its crux. Unfortunately, the stone is deeply fissured, and all that survives of the ogham is the last two letters, '..NN' (Macalister 1945, no. 291), which makes dating the inscription impossible, apart from a general 5th–7th-century date range for ogham inscriptions (see above, section 4.2). This date range can be extended to the crosses as well, since we now know that at least one cross, but likely both, dates to the 7th century or earlier.





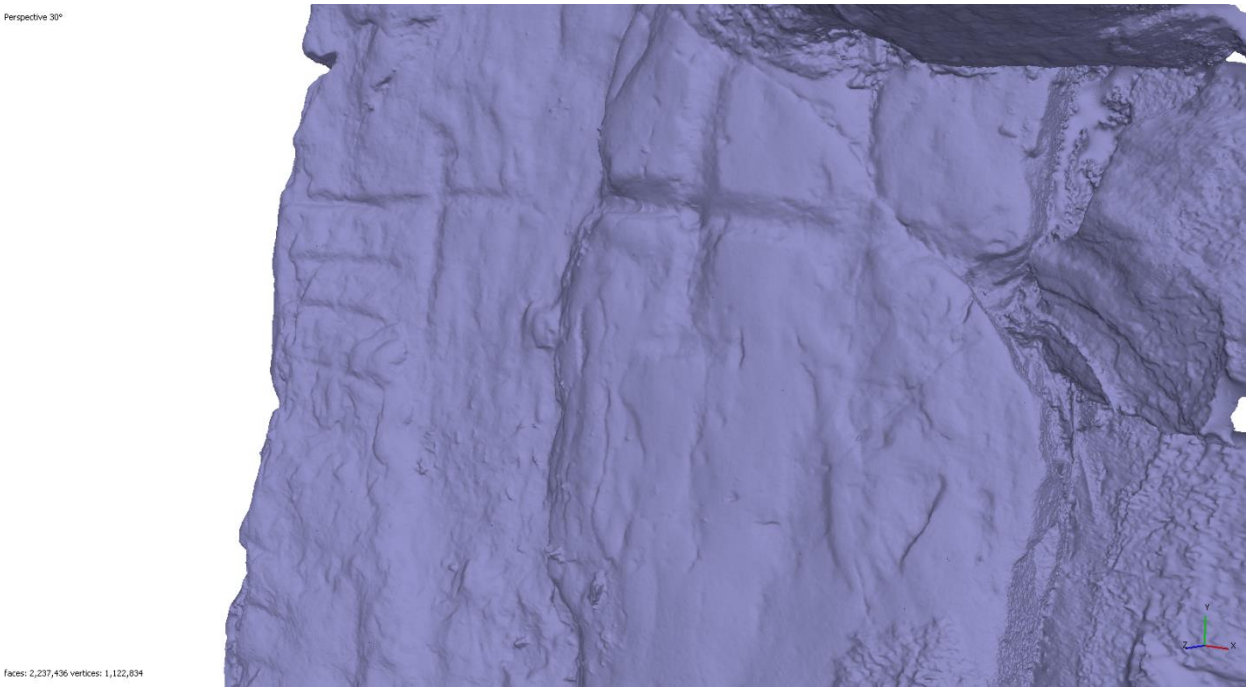


Fig. 4.6: WA-10 – Macalister's sketch, a photograph of the crosses and ogham inscription, and two screen captures of the photogrammetry model, showing the top score of the ogham inscription overcutting the dexter cross (left), and the cross-potent with deep roundel (right)

WA-12, from Knockboy, is one of several ogham stones that were found at this church site, though it is the only one that is carved with a cross. From Macalister's reading of 'VEDABAR M[A]Q[…..]LSM (sic) MOCOI ODR[…..]REA' (1945, No. 298), the inscription can be attributed to the apocope, or Archaic Irish, period which was in use throughout the 6th century (see section 4.2). Though the missing portion after 'MAQ' could have contained 'QI' which would make the word indicative of the pre-apocope period, vowel affection is evidenced in the 'MOCOI', so the transition apocope had already begun when this stone was inscribed (McManus 1997, 94). Yet, while the cross on the stone is simply executed, and could be relatively early, it is on the lower half of the stone – i.e. it would have been roughly ground-level (and thus poorly visible) as the monument originally stood (Fig. 4.7). This strongly indicates that the ogham stone had been unearthed sometime after it was first erected, and the cross added some point after. As it is not known when this was done, a 7th–12th-century date is suggested for the cross.



Fig. 4.7: WA-12, with cross inverted to inscription (photo; illustration, after Macalister 1945; 3D model

Like the stones at Ardmore and Legan (below), the definition of the cross on the ogham stone at Lisgenan (WA-16) has been exaggerated by Macalister (1945, no. 269).

Thounhurst accurately describes it as an irregularly carved linear cross with plain terminals (2007, 274). However, the cross was no longer visible as of 2018, and, indeed, its presence could only be confirmed (albeit barely) from its photogrammetric model (Fig. 4.8). Macalister's reading of the inscription, '…DI MAQI MUCOI IVODACCA' (1945, No. 269) would suggest it belongs to the pre-apocope period, or the 5th century, though a 5th–6th century date is proposed, to allow for conservatism, or overlap in regard to spelling (McManus 1997, 81). Given the cross's simplicity of form and execution, its position on the upper half of the ogham stone, and considering that there is no evidence to the contrary, it may be roughly contemporary with the inscription.

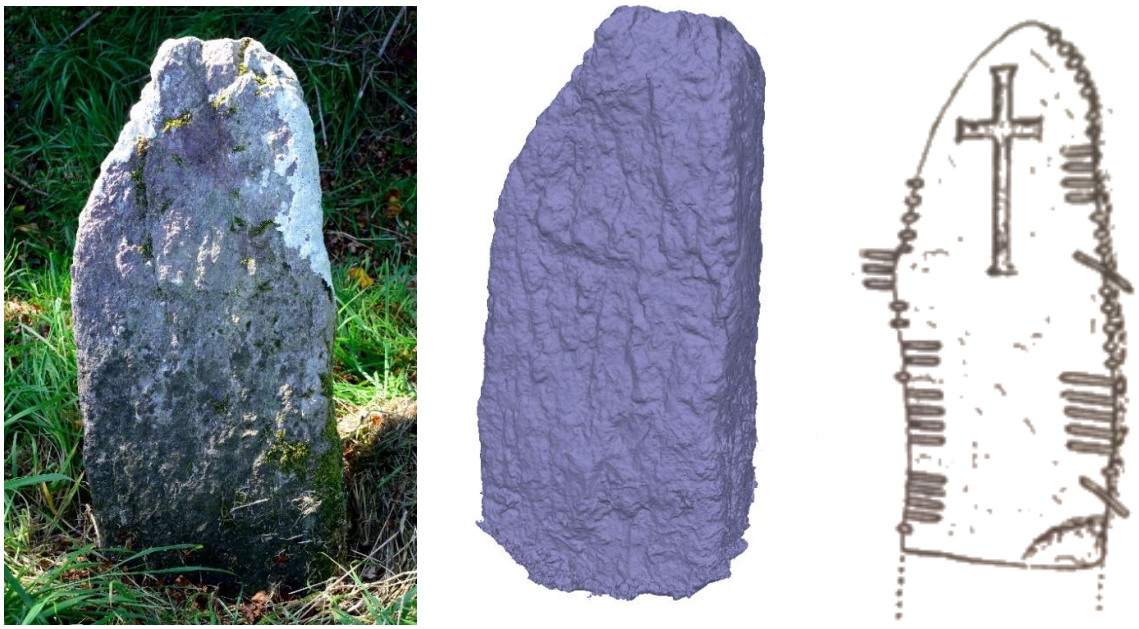


Fig. 4.8: WA-16, from Lisgenan – the photograph and photogrammetry model show the faint traces of a plain linear cross, inaccurately represented by Macalister (right)

The illustration of the Legan ogham stone (KK-16) provided by Macalister (1945, 39) shows its cross distinctly drawn, belying the uneven execution of the actual cross. Indeed, the execution of the cross is so rudimentary, and the surface of the stone so coarse, a question has been raised as to whether it is actually an incised cross, or a just the result of natural fissures in the surface of the stone (Swift 2001, 52). There does indeed appear to be pocking along the vertical line of the cross in the photogrammetry model, and possibly some pocking or incising along the horizontal score as well (Fig. 4.9). The inscription itself, if one goes by Macalister's reading of LOBB[I] K[OI] MAQQI MUC[COI] [RI]N[I] (Macalister 1945, 39), uses the fourth most common formula (McManus 1997, 51–2) and belongs to the pre-apocope period, which means the inscription is likely 5th century. However, conservatism on the part of some sculptors, particularly in the use of MAQQI (*ibid*, 81), does not preclude a

later date. Moreover, the stone was so worn by McManus's reading that he could only be certain of '[..]LL[..][…]MAQQ[..]m[..]C[…], which renders Macalister's date more tentative (*ibid*, 67). Like most cross-incised ogham stones, the chronological relationship between the cross and inscription cannot be conclusively ascertained on KK-16, but, as with WA-16, the simplicity of the cross-form and its execution suggests that it could be early, perhaps 5th or 6th century; thus, it may have been carved contemporaneously with the inscription, or else a relatively short time after.

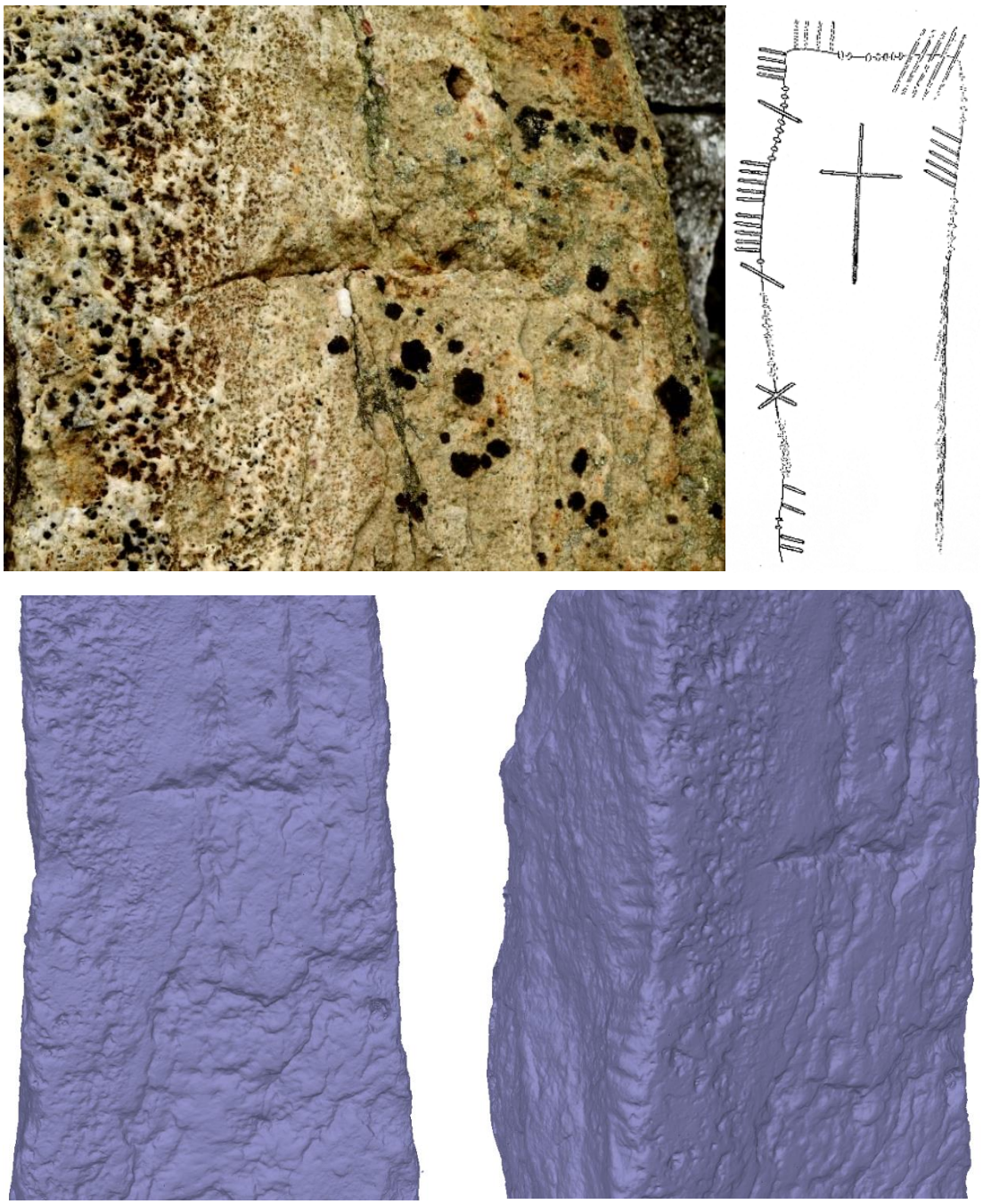


Fig. 4.9: The Legan ogham stone (KK-16), Macalister's sketch, and the photogrammetry model, confirming the cross-carving

The remaining stones in this subgroup display four varieties of elaborated terminals. One stone from Clonmore, CW-5, is incised with a cross ending in short bars perpendicular to its terminals, also referred to as a cross-potent (Fig. 4.10). Such crosses are fairly widespread; numerous parallels can be found on pillars and slabs from Co. Kerry, e.g. on the Iveragh and Dingle Peninsulas, and at sites like Innisfallen (O'Sullivan and Sheehan 1996, figs. 149b, 166; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 157–8; Sheehan 2012, figs. 10a, 14, 17), Inishkea North and Lankill, Co. Mayo (Henry 1951, pl. XI, no. 1; 1952, pl. IX, no. 3; Herity *et al.* 1997, no. 42), Inishmore, Co. Galway (Higgins 1987, fig. 24), and Kilcashel, Co. Donegal (Herity *et al*. 1997, fig.27c). The examples from Cos. Kerry and Mayo have been variously dated between the 6th and 8th centuries (Henry 1945, 152; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 159; Sheehan 2012, 95, 99). A Welsh parallel from Llanlleonfel has been dated epigraphically by its Latin inscription to the 9th century (Redknap and Lewis 2007, B34), though most other Welsh and Scottish examples have been dated to the 7th–9th centuries (Fisher 2001, 12–14; Edwards 2007a, CD17, P46; 2013, D4). The back of the slab is quite convex, so CW-5 could not have stood upright – based on the parallels for its cross form, as well as its morphology (i.e., small, unshaped, and recumbent), a 7th–9th century date is suggested.



Fig. 4.10: CW-5, and cross from Garfinny, Co. Kerry (Sheehan 2012)

Crosses with crosslet terminals, where an intersecting bar is placed near, but not on, the end of a terminal, are found on TS-1 and on the lower stem of WA-13 (Fig. 4.11). In Ireland, similar crosses have been found on monuments at High Island (Maddern 2014, nos.

18, 22C), Inishmurray (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, No. 001.12A), and Kilcashel, Co. Donegal (Herity *et al*. 1997, fig. 27b). Recent excavations on High Island support Maddern's suggestion that slabs with simple linear cross forms at High Island likely date from an initial phase of sculpture production in the 7th century (2014, table 5.1, 188, 199). As with the other variations on this cross-form, in Britain, unshaped pillars and stones that feature linear crosses with crosslet terminals are mostly dated to the 7th–9th centuries (Fisher 2001, 12–14; Edwards 2007a, fig. 7.2; 2013, CN27). Likewise, considering the morphology of TS-1 and WA-13 (i.e. small and unshaped) a 7th–9th-century date is posited. Additionally, a 7th–9th-century date is suggested for WA-14, which is situated immediately adjacent to WA-13. Though this date is necessarily tentative – WA-14 is not cross-carved, and very little of its face is expose above ground – WA-14 and WA-13 are made of the same stone, and are of a somewhat similar morphology; moreover, both are deeply incised with a circular decoration, which may indicate they are roughly contemporary.

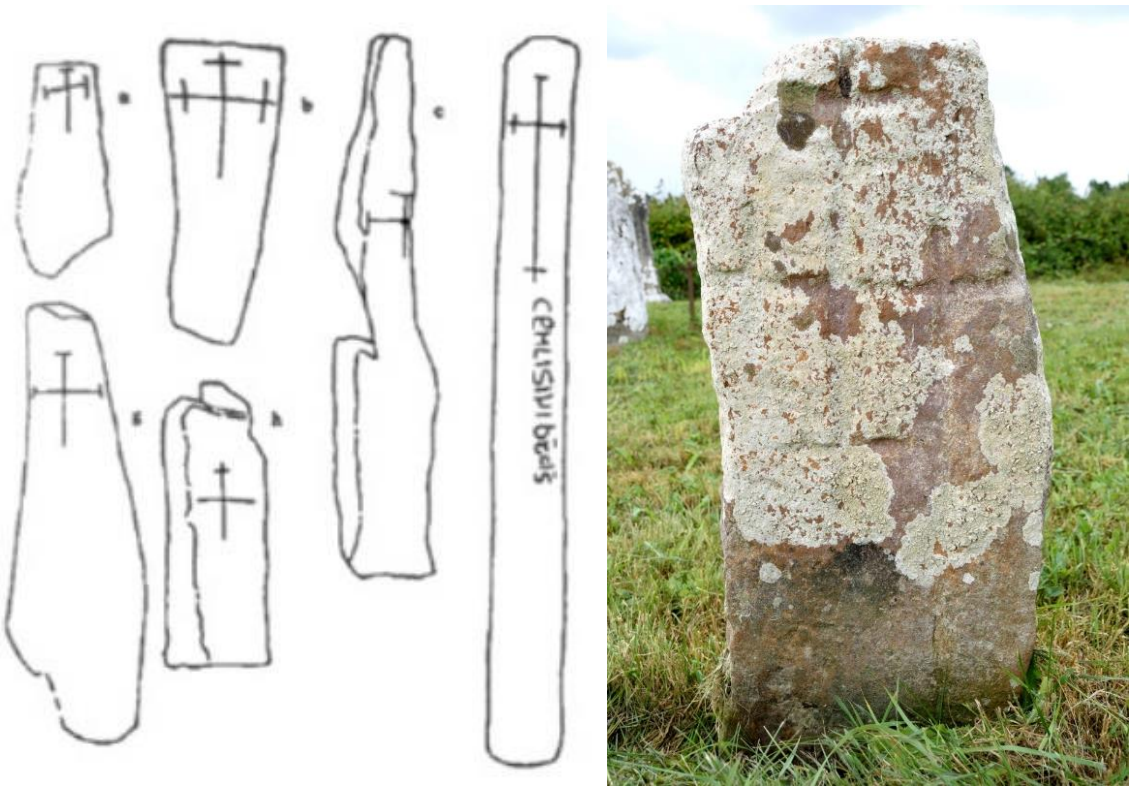
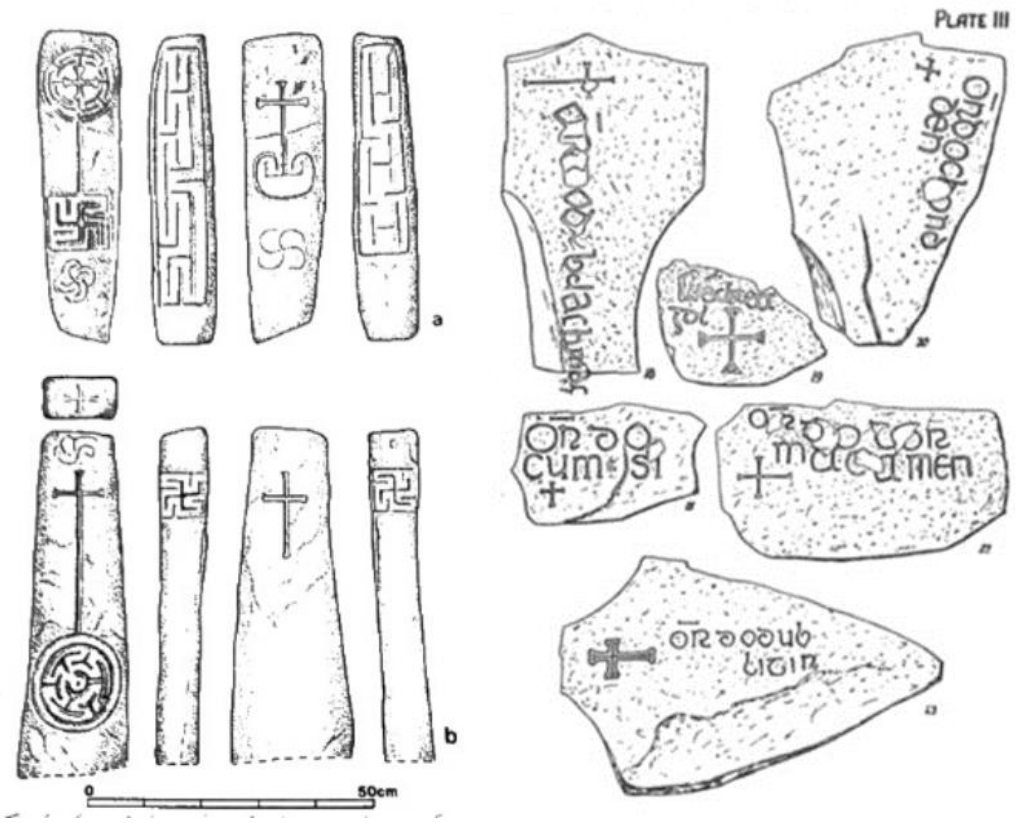




Fig. 4.11: Clockwise from top left of previous page – examples of linear crosses with crosslet terminals from southwest Wales (Edwards 2007a); TS-1; WA-13, photographed in 1912 and again in 2018

Crosses with slightly expanded terminals that form a triangular or wedged shape, are common on early medieval monuments across Ireland and Britain (Fig. 4.12). There are at least 29 examples from peninsular Kerry alone, most of which are thought to date between the 6th and 8th centuries (Fanning 1981, 152–3; Sheehan 2012, 95), though pillars from Kilfountain and Kilmakedar have been more closely dated to the 7th century (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 161, 170). This cross-type is also found on a number of small slabs from Toureen Peakaun (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, nos. 10, 15, 16, 18, 19, 29, 31, 60) which have been dated to the 7th–8th centuries (*ibid*, 323, 325; Ó Carragáin 2017b, 70). A small slab from Cloghinch, in north Co. Tipperary, has been dated to the 7th century (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 191), and a small inscribed slab from Clonmacnoise may similarly date from the 7th–8th centuries, though the other examples appear to be perhaps 9th century (Macalister 1909, no. 19, pl. III). However, the majority of the cross-slabs from Clonmacnoise that feature this cross-form have formulaic inscriptions more indicative of a 9th–10th century date (*ibid*, pls. II, III and IV; also, see discussion above on dating formulae, section 4.2). An early Welsh example of a small cross-slab bearing an incised cross with expanded terminals, and an inscription commemorating King Cadfan, has been historically and epigraphically dated to *c*. 625 (Edwards 2013, AN26, 182), though many similar, uninscribed cross-slabs in Scotland and Wales have been dated to 7th–9th centuries (Fisher 2001, 12–14; Edwards 2007a, CD1, CM28, P53). There are six stones in the study area which bear this cross type, from

Clonmore (CW-7, CW-15, CW-24), Killamery (KK-14), Lismore (WA-19), and Bansha (TS-5). While a 6th–8th century date range has been suggested for several similar examples in Co. Kerry, this is due largely to the concurrence of other Christian motifs on the stones which are considered very early, e.g. swastikas on the Cloon pillars, as well as the morphologies of the monuments themselves, which tend to be early. The evidence from slabs in other parts of Ireland, and in Britain, indicates this cross-type was more prolific in the 7th–9th centuries, and this date range seems appropriate for CW-7, CW-15, CW-24, and TS-5 as well.



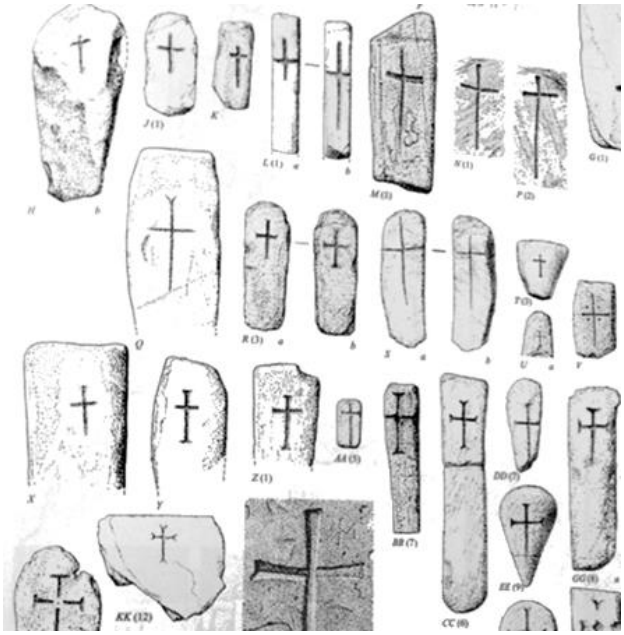




Fig. 4.12: Left to right, from previous page – examples of linear crosses with expanded terminals on early cross-pillars from Cloon, Co. Kerry (Sheehan 1990), Clonmacnoise (Macalister 1909), southwestern Scotland (Fisher 2001, WA-19, KK-14, and CW-15

The two slabs with inscriptions, WA-19 and KK-14 (Fig. 4.12), may be more closely dated to the 9th century. The small, unshaped slab from Lismore (WA-19) is incised with a well-executed cross with expanded terminals, and the inscription *BENDACHT FOR AN̄ MARTAN*. The text formula and conservative spelling of *BENDACHT* indicate a 9th-century date is most likely for this stone (see section 4.2). Furthermore, Oskasha and Forsyth (2001, 340) have arguably identified this slab as commemorating Martan Ua Roichligh, abbot of Lismore, who is recorded as having died in 878 (*AFM*, M878.7). A familial connection has also been suggested between Martan, and the Suibne commemorated on WA-18 (Oskasha and Forsyth 2001, 340), as this slab may likewise correlate with another abbot of Lismore who died between 854 (*AFM*, M854.4) and 856 (*AU*, U856.7), and is styled in the annals as 'Ua Roichligh' and 'grandson of Roichlech' respectively (more below). This suggestion is strengthened by the slabs' close similarity in form and style, which was also noted by Okasha and Forysth (Oskasha and Forsyth 2001, 340). Moreover, a Martan is mentioned in the *Annals of Inisfallen* in connection with Lismore for the year 867 – 'Amlaíb committed treachery against Les Mór, and Martan was liberated from him' (*AI*, AI867.1). KK-14, now lost, is a small unshaped slab, inscribed with *ÓR AR THUATHAL* across the lower half of the stone, and an incised linear cross with slightly expanded, wedge-like terminals, oriented diagonally to the inscription in the top dexter corner. The *ór ar/do* formula is generally dated 9th–10th century (section 4.2); however, a 9th-century date is put forth for KK-14, based on

its simple execution as well as its morphology (i.e. small and unshaped; stylistically and morphologically similar to the 7th–8th-century inscribed cross-slabs exemplified at Toureen Peakaun).

In contrast to the other elaborated terminals discussed above, rounded terminals, like those on KK-11 (Glenballyvally), WA-27 (Shanakill), and WA-28 (Tooracurragh), are less common, though not rare. There are three parallels from St Berrihert's Kyle (TS-22, TS-36, and TS-65), probably dating to the 8th century (see Chapter 6; also catalogue entries). However, the largest concentration of this cross-type is in peninsular Co. Kerry, with examples from Beenbane and Church Island (Valentia Harbour) in Iveragh (O'Kelly 1957–9, fig. 8.1; O'Sullivan and Sheehan 1996, fig. 158), and eight more from Dingle – two which appear on ogham stones (Sheehan 2012, 92). Crosses with rounded terminals are also found on an incised pebble at Drumacoo, and a pillar in Knockaunaman, Inis Mór, Co. Galway (Higgins 1987, nos. 3 and 14). The examples from Kerry and Galway have variously been dated to between the 5th and 9th centuries (*ibid*, 178; O'Kelly 1957–9, 128; Sheehan 2012, 92), and another example of this cross-type, from Castlemartin, in Pembrokeshire, Wales, has been dated 7th–9th century (Edwards 2007a, P10C). KK-11 may likewise be 7th–9th-century in date (Fig. 4.13).



Fig. 4.13: Rounded terminals at St Berrihert's Kyle (TS-22 and TS-36), and Glenballyvally KK-11

A small, recumbent slab from Shanakill (WA-27), now lost, has *AEDUIE* inscribed in Latin script, below two linear crosses (Fig. 4.14). This slab has already been the subject of in-depth analysis by Okasha and Forsyth (*ibid*, 351–3). It seems to have been carved in two phases, with the cross in the centre being first, and the dexter cross and inscription being

contemporaneously added later (*ibid*, 353). The inscription is probably incomplete, and may have continued below the surviving portion (Power 1910, 103–6; Macalister 1949, 109–10). Power interpreted the inscription as *Áed Uí* (1910, 104), though some doubt has been cast on this interpretation (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 354–5). Regardless, it is stylistically similar to many of the small 7th–8th century slabs from Toureen Peakaun, and most likely contemporary (*ibid*).



Fig. 4.14: WA-27, with two linear crosses and AEDUIE *inscribed across the bottom*

The ogham stone at Tooracurragh (WA-28) features two crosses – an incised cross with rounded terminals and semi-circular base, centred on one face (Fig. 4.15), and a Maltese cross carved in false relief above it (discussed under 'Marigolds, crosses-of-arcs, and Maltese crosses'). The reading of 'DOMOKI' by Macalister (1945, no. 301) suggests the inscription is pre-apocope, and thus, probably 5th century, based on McManus's chronology (1997, 79, 82, 88; Swift 1997, 50), though this particular inscription is not explicitly dated by McManus or Swift. As mentioned above, linear crosses with rounded terminals have been found on two other ogham stones, both from the Dingle Peninsula in Co. Kerry. Significantly, one of the strokes on the 5th-century ogham stone from Emlagh East is shortened to avoid the cross, indicating that it is at least contemporary with the inscription, if not earlier (Sheehan 2012, 92). The anchor motif, which is represented on the base of the lower Tooracurragh cross (WA-28b), was an important symbol to early Christians (Higgins 1987, 116). It has been found on 3rd–4th century Roman slabs and sarcophagi (*ibid*), as well as Merovingian coins (Sheehan 1990, 170). So while chronology cannot be unequivocally established between this cross and the inscription, there is strong precedent for an early date for this cross type (e.g.

Higgins 1987, 116, fig. 41; Sheehan 1990, 170), and a 5th–7th century date is suggested for WA-28b.

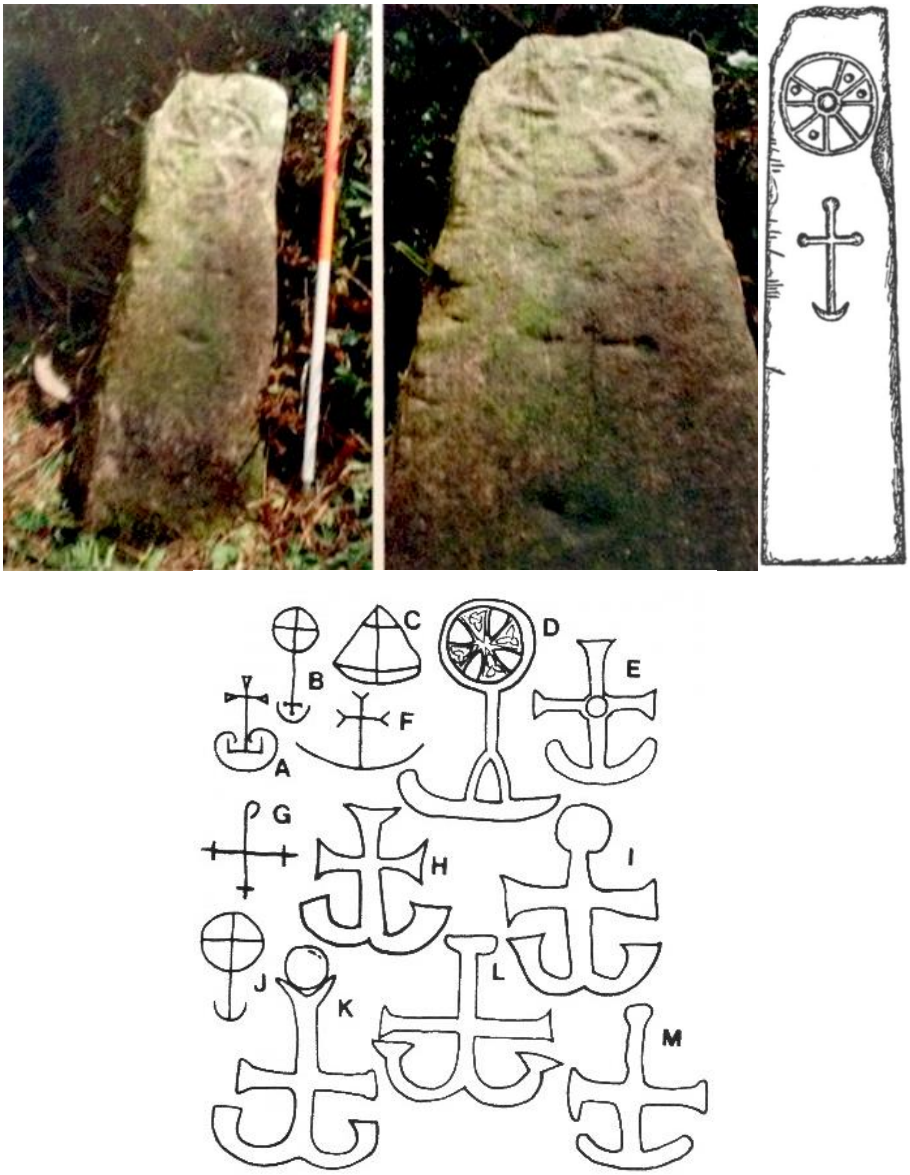


Fig. 4.15: The lower cross of WA-28, featuring a linear cross with rounded terminals and anchor-motif base (after Thounhurst 2007 and Power 1923); examples of the anchor-motif (after Higgins 1987)

4.3.1.2 Framed linear crosses

The only example of this subgroup in the study area is an unshaped stone from Becc-Ériu, Co. Wexford (WX-5). It features a linear Latin cross within a rectilinear frame, deeply pocked onto its surface (Fig. 4.16). Crosses in rectilinear frames occur on a large number of 8th–10th century cross-slabs at sites such as Clonmacnoise and Iniscealtra (Ó Floinn 1995, 254; O'Leary 2015, fig. 5.3, 117); however, they are not stylistically comparable otherwise. A simple linear cross in a rectangular frame, similar to WX-5, is carved on a 5th-century

ogham stone at Kinard, Co. Kerry (McManus 1997, 55), and another similar monument from High Island has been assigned a 7th-century date on typological and archaeological grounds (Maddern 2014, table 5.1, no. 40 188, 199). Additionally, another parallel found on a small, unshaped pillar from Pembrokeshire, Wales has been assigned a 7th–9th century date range (Edwards 2007a, P39). In the case of WX-5, its cross-form and morphology would suggest a 5th–7th-century date range, especially in light of the reputed pre-Patrician date for the foundation of Becc-Ériu, and the production of iconographically complex sculpture at the site in the 9th–10th centuries (see below; also catalogue entry, 'Becc-Ériu').

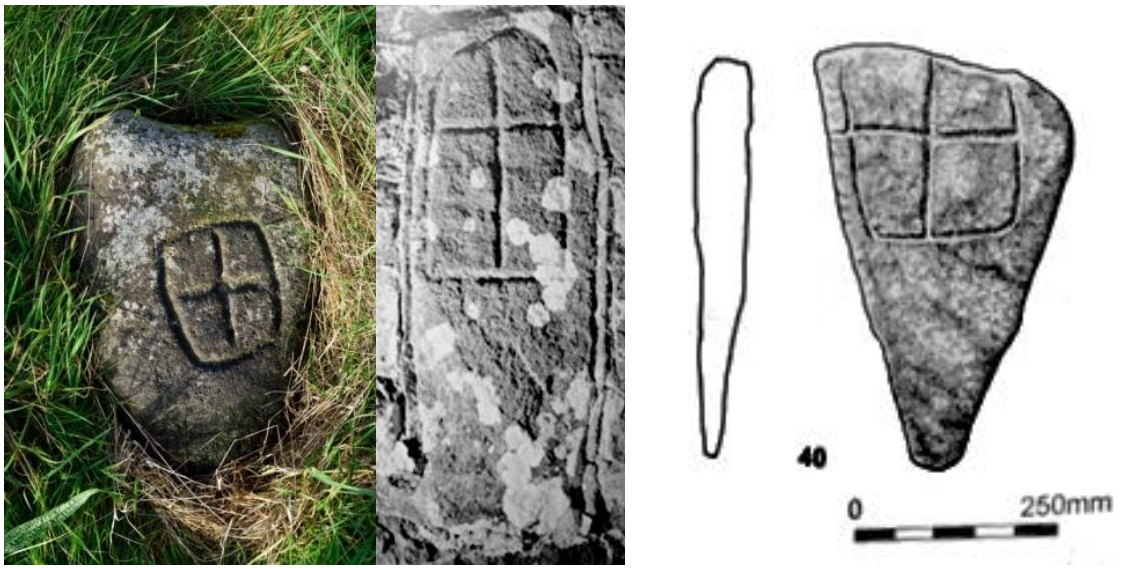


Fig. 4.16: Left to right – framed linear crosses from Becc-Ériu, Co. Wexford (WX-5), Pembrokshire, Wales (P39), and High Island, Co. Galway (No. 40)

4.3.1.3 Encircled linear crosses

This subgroup has six examples, from Cloydagh (CW-32), Tobar Íosa (TS-82b), Graignagower (WA-8), Lismore (WA-18), Ardamine (WX-1), and Becc-Ériu (WX-6). This subgroup includes crosses that are entirely enclosed within a circular frame, often referred to as a cross-in-circle, as well as ringed crosses, in which one or more terminals extend beyond the circle (Fig. 4.17). This motif is thought to be derived from early Christian symbols from the Mediterranean, i.e. the *chi-rho* monogram and victory wreath (Sheehan 1990, 166; Edwards 2007a, 63). It is a common motif across Ireland and Britain, with notable concentrations in peninsular Kerry and southwest Wales (Sheehan 2012, 101; Edwards 2007a, figs. 7.3 and 7.4). There are 37 examples of this cross-type just on the Dingle Peninsula, many of which have been dated, either stylistically or by inscription, to the 6th and 7th centuries (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 147, 161, 170; Sheehan 2012, 101–2). This motif

also dominates several small cross-slabs from Innisfallen, also in Co. Kerry, and at Iniscealtra (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 94–5, 157). Eight examples from north Co. Tipperary, at Toomevara, Cloghinch, and Latteragh, were also recorded by Thounhurst (2007, TN-2, TN-4, TN-10–5), each of which were dated, albeit tentatively in some cases, to the 7th century (*ibid*; Kelly 1988, 100). Furthermore, there are four, unevenly incised ringed linear crosses from High Island (Maddern 2014, nos. 10, 12A, 13 and 22B). Other examples have been found at Aighan and Kilcashel, both in Co. Donegal (Herity *et al*. 1997, figs. 23b and 27b), and at Inishmurray (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 001.61A). There are also three fine examples of encircled *chi-rho* crosses from Kirkmadrine, Scotland that have been dated by inscription to the 6th century (Craig 1992 vol. 3, 117–34). In Wales, encircled linear crosses are generally dated to the 7th–9th centuries (Redknap and Lewis 2007, B20; Edwards 2007a, figs. 7.3–4), though one example, on the bilingual stone of Voteporix at Castell Dwyran, has been dated by inscription to the late 5th or early 6th century (Edwards 2007a, CM3).

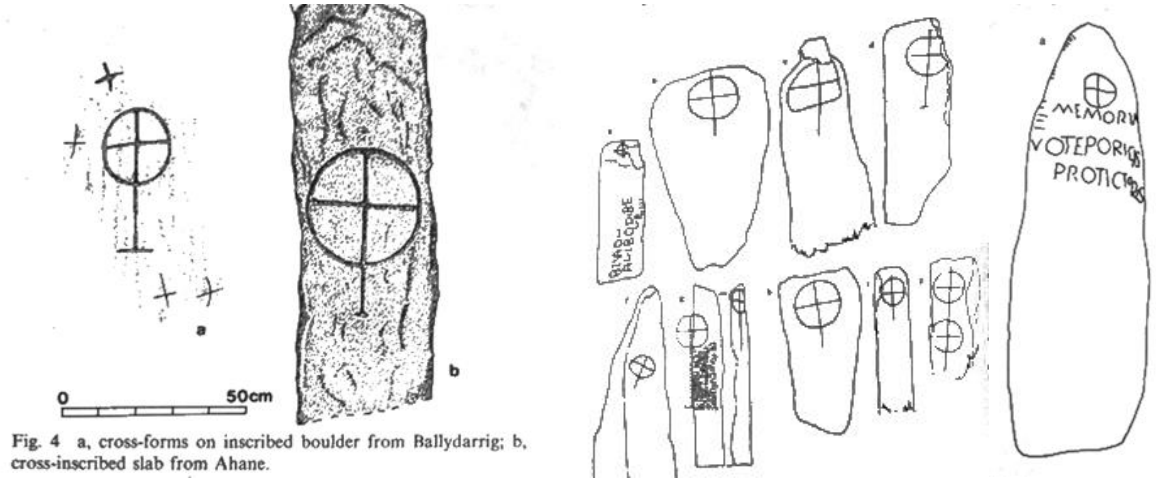


Fig. 4.17: Examples of ringed linear crosses from Co. Kerry (Sheehan 1990) and southwest Wales, including the Voteporix stone (Edwards 2007a)

Four of these crosses, TS-82b, WA-8a, WX-1, and WX-6, are completely encircled. A well-executed, equal-armed, cross-in-circle with expanded terminals is carved into the upper portion of the pillar stone from Tobar Íosa (TS-82). Stylistically, it is very similar to the 6th-century Kirkmadrine pillars (albeit without a *chi-rho*), as well as the multitude of crosses crowded onto the northwest side of the Kilnasaggart pillar (Co. Armagh), and the group of 7th-century crosses recorded by Thounhurst, in north Co. Tipperary (see above). Above this it is a smaller, plain equal-armed cross, TS-82a, discussed in the previous section, 4.3.1.1. The differing methods of execution between the two would suggest they were not carved at the same time, though that is not to say they could not have occurred in close

succession, if indeed TS-82a is of medieval date (see catalogue, TS-82). Regardless, the cross discussed here is still indicative of an early, 6th- or 7th-century date (Fig. 4.18). An encircled cross is also carved on 'side A' of the Graignagower (WA-8) pebble, which may have dated from the 8th–11th centuries (see above, section 4.3.1.1). WX-6, now lost, is a small, unshaped boulder, carved with a cross-in-circle. The only known sketch of the stone was published by Macalister in his 1920 paper on Becc-Ériu (Fig. 4.18), though he did not actually describe this stone in the paper. However, WX-6 *was* mentioned in a paper almost 50 years earlier by George Kinahan, who describes it as 'an oblong granite stone, on which is a plain cross; this stone is 18 inches by 11, perfectly flat on the back, and convex on the cross-inscribed face' (1873, 436). From Macalister's sketch, the circle appears to be sunken into the stone, though it is unclear if the cross is raised within this circle, or more deeply carved into it. Based on its morphology, and what little information can be gleaned from these entries regarding its cross-form, a 6th–7th century date is suggested for WX-6.



Fig. 4.18: TS-82; Kirkmadrine 3, dated to the 6th century (photo: Historic Environment Scotland); the northwest face of the Kilnasaggart pillar, Co. Armagh (photo: Megalithic Ireland); WX-6 (after Macalister 1920)

The cross-in-circle from Ardamine, Co. Wexford (WX-1) is carved on a large cruciform stone overlooking the Owenavorragh River (Fig. 4.19). Harbison suggested WX-1 was modelled on a wooden prototype, and proposed a 9th-century date for this monument (1992a vol. 1, 345, 377). There are three similarly large, albeit plain, crosses from the Dingle Peninsula (Sheehan 2012, 121, figs. 30, 31), and three cruciform stones from Skellig Michael that are incised with a cross-in-circle, though they are only about half the height of the Ardamine cross (O'Sullivan and Sheehan 1996, fig. 181). Like most cruciform stones, their

simplicity makes them difficult to date, and they have been broadly assigned to the early medieval period (Sheehan 2012, 121). Nonetheless, many dateable monuments from ecclesiastical sites in the Kerry region have been dated to the 8th century or earlier, as many of these sites have not produced evidence of later sculpture production – and thus, can offer a *terminus ante quem* to some otherwise undatable pieces, based on their occupation activity (*ibid*, 122). However, most large stone crosses in Ireland are thought to be *c*. 800 or later, though there is an 8th-century example from Toureen Peakaun, and possibly one from St Berrihert's Kyle as well (Chapter 6), as well as more from Iona and Northumbria (Harbison 1992a, 150–1, 367–84; 1999, 150; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 294–5). Typologically, there is nothing to indicate that the Ardamine cross could not likewise be 8th-century, and indeed, there is some historical evidence to support the suggestion. The Owenavorragh River forms a natural boundary between the parishes of Ardamine. and Kiltennel to the north, and WX-1 was almost certainly erected to mark that border (see catalogue, 'Ardamine'; also Chapter 5). Ardamine may have been a seat of Uí Cheinnselaig kingship, at least during the first few decades of the 8th century. Colcu mac Bresail, of the Síl Chormaic branch of the Uí Cheinnselaig (Byrne 1987a, 148; Culleton 1999, 52), is referred to as the king of *Ard Ladrann* (i.e. Ardamine) in the *Annals of Ulster* (U722.2). Subsequently, his son, Áed, is titled king of Leinster (*AU* U738.4). He fell in the battle of *Áth Senaig* against Áed Allán and the Uí Néill in 738 (*ibid*) and was the last Uí Chennselaig king of Leinster, until the revival of their power in the 11th century (Byrne 1987a, 148). Alternately, it could also be argued that WX-1 may have been erected under the patronage of the Uí Chennselaig after they regained the kingship of Leinster in the 11th century. This seems less likely, however, as by this time, their seat of kingship was at Ferns, 18 km to the southwest. Moreover, Ferns was producing more ornate sculpture than WX-1 during this period (see catalogue entry, 'Ferns'; also Chapters 5 and 7). This possibility cannot entirely be ruled out, though, as Ardamine was thought to have been founded by Maedóc, the patron saint of the Uí Chennselaig, and of Ferns (*ibid*).



Fig. 4.19: The south and north faces of WX-1 respectively

A small, unshaped slab from Lismore (WA-18), and a small carved stone from Cloydagh, Co. Carlow (CW-32) feature ringed crosses with elaborated terminals that extend beyond the ring. Linear ringed crosses enjoyed a relatively long period of use during the early medieval period (see above); however, the inscription on the Lismore stone, *SUIBNE* $\bar{M}$ *CONHUIDIR*, narrows its date considerably (Fig. 4.20). Though the lack of a formulaic inscription would suggest a 7th–8th century date range (see section 4.2), this slab is more likely 9th-century. Swift has argued that the edition of a patronym is indicative of important ecclesiastical status, and is usually only mentioned in the annals for heads of a household, or those of scholarly ranks (1999, 113–4, 117). Okasha and Forsyth (2001, 338) have identified WA-18 with Suibne – scribe, anchorite, and abbot of Lismore, who died between 854 (*AFM*) and 856 (*AU*). Though the name Suibne was not rare in the annals, and one cannot always assume the name on a slab is associated with an annalistic obituary (Swift 2003, 108), the evidence for a correlation is stronger here (see above, WA-19, section 4.3.1.1).



Fig. 4.20: WA-18 and WA-19, which may commemorate two blood-related 9th-century ecclesiastics at Lismore

The cross on the Cloydagh stone (CW-32), while simple, is well-executed, and is similar to crosses from Teaghlach Éinne, Inishmore, Co. Galway (Higgins 1987, figs. 85, 119), Ballydarrig and Ahane, Co, Kerry (Sheehan 1990, fig. 4), Kilcoo, Co. Fermanagh (Lionard 1961, fig. 13, no. 5), Raholp, Co. Down (*ibid*, no. 12), Inishmurray (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 001.43A and 001.51A), and, of course, WA-18 from Lismore. Linear crosses with roundels in each of its four cantons (albeit unringed) are found on early slabs in the Dingle and Iveragh peninsulas (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 180), as well as one from Reask, which has been tentatively dated to the late 6th- or early 7th-century (Fanning 1971, 27–8). There are also examples from Inchagoill, Lough Corrib, Co. Galway (Higgins 1987, no. 6), and Inishmurray (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, Figs. 26, 28, 29, 001.68. 016.02C, 003.02A). There is also a manuscript parallel of a Latin cross with a roundel in each canton, within the 'P' of the 'XPI' monogram in the 8th-century *Book of Dimma* (Fig. 4.21). Two examples from Argyll, Scotland, at Luss and Cladh a' Bhile respectively, have been recorded by Fisher (2001, 29, figs. 4g, 4h). Redknap and Lewis have suggested that in Wales, the introduction of roundels in the cantons of linear crosses represents a progression of the form (2007, 147), and four 9th-century Welsh examples are very similar to CW-32, though one is unringed (*ibid*, B19 and B28; Edwards 2007a, CD1, P31, P51). Considering the evidence outlined above, an 8th–9th century date range is suggested for CW-32.



Fig. 4.21: CW-32, and parallels in the Book of Dimma, Gospel of Matthew (MS 59), and P51 and CD1, in Wales

4.3.2 Marigolds, crosses-of-arcs, and Maltese crosses

There are nine stones carved with either a marigold, cross-of-arcs, or the related Maltese cross, from Tullaherin (KK-17), Tooracurragh (WA-28a), Clone (WX-8, WX-9, WX-10), Ferns (WX-11), and Kilmuckridge (WX-22, WX-23, WX-24). The marigold, also called a hexafoil, is a design from classical art which was also frequently utilised in Christian iconography, created using a compass to produce a six-petalled design. Its derivative, the cross-of-arcs, is similarly created using a compass, but by dividing a circle into quarters. While the marigold and cross-of-arcs were used throughout the early medieval period in a variety of media, i.e. manuscripts, metalwork, architecture, and sculpture (Redknap and Lewis 2007, 148), they may have first arrived in Ireland and Britain via Christian contacts along the western seaways, probably by the late 6th century (Swift 1997, 70–1, 73–4; Edwards 2007b, 190). They are found at a number of ecclesiastical sites in Ireland and Britain, mainly concentrated in areas that are easily accessible by sea, such as on the Isle of Man, and across the west coasts of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales (*ibid*; Fig. 4.22).

However, this is not to say that they did not find their way inland, as they are also found on Irish ecclesiastical sites along navigable waterways. This is exemplified by Gallen, which is noted for housing the largest concentration of marigold- and cross-of-arc-carved stones in Ireland (Lionard 1961, 110; Redknap and Lewis 2007, 148), and is situated on a tributary river just off of the well-travelled River Shannon. In addition to Gallen, marigolds and crosses-of-arcs are also a distinguishing characteristic on a number of stones found at Kirk Maughold, on the Isle of Man (Kermode 1907, pl. X), Whithorn, in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland (Oram, Martin, McKean and Neighbour 2010, 22–3), and St Dogmael's, in southwest Wales (Edwards 2007a, fig. 7.7). In a Christian context, marigolds are often

interpreted as a stylized *chi-rho* monogram (Newman and Walsh 2007, 176), and the hook of the *-rho* is likewise found on some of the earliest monuments carved with a cross-of-arcs, or Maltese cross, such the ogham stone at Arraglen, Co. Kerry (Sheehan 2012, 117). The majority of sculpture in Ireland and Britain that feature these motifs seem to be relatively early, ranging in date between the late 6th to the 8th century (Kermode 1907, 19; Craig 1992 vol. 3, 117–34; Swift 1997, 77; Fisher 2001, 12; Edwards 2007a, 87; Sheehan 2012, 117), though the motif does continue to be used throughout the early medieval period – roughly half of the Welsh examples are thought to belong to the 12th century (*cf*. Redknap and Lewis 2007, 148; Edwards 2013, 148).

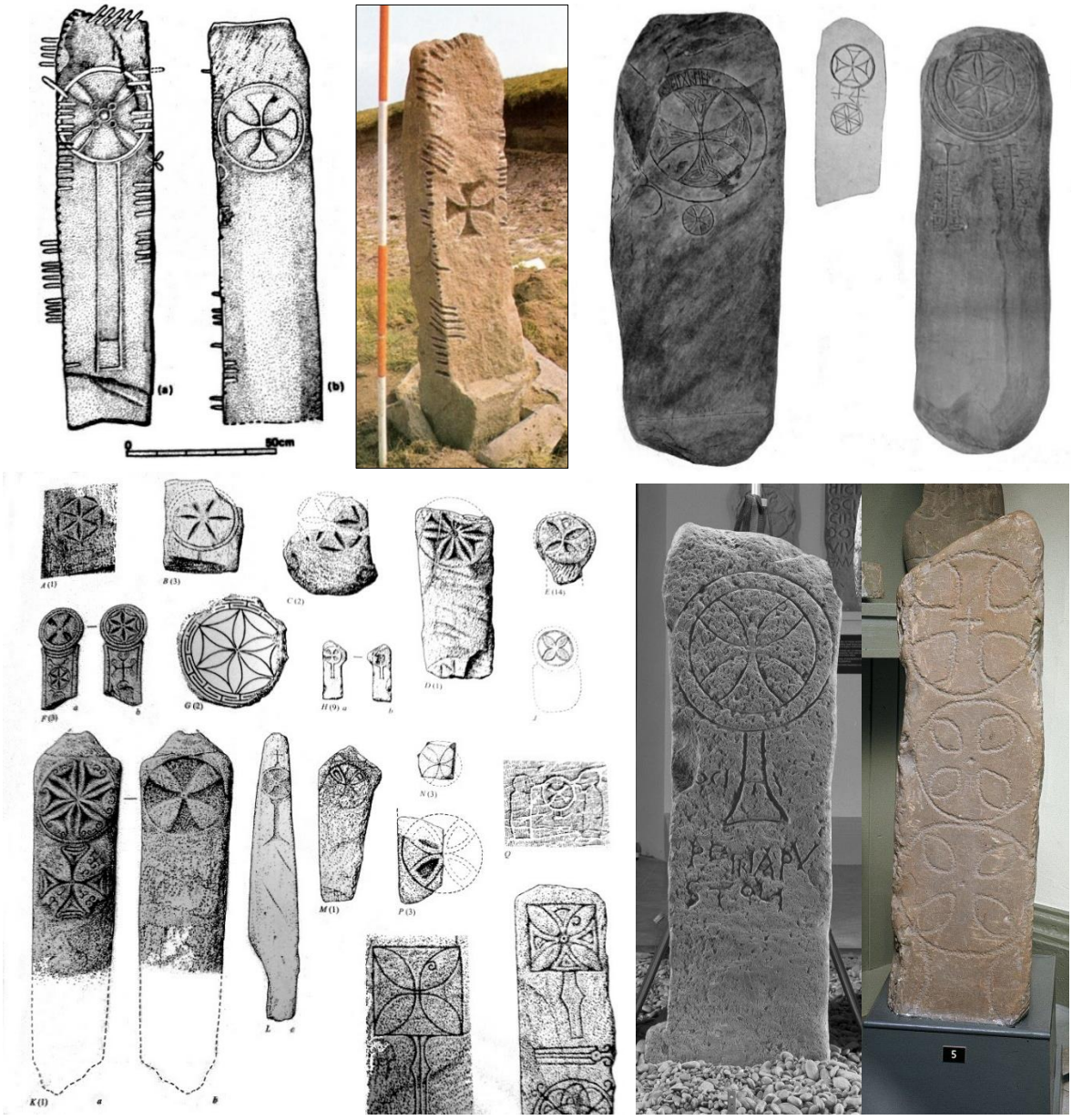


Fig. 4.22: Clockwise from top left – examples of marigolds, cross-of-arcs, and Maltese crosses from Church Island (Valentia Harbour) and Arraglen, Co. Kerry (after Sheehan 1990; 2012), the Isle of Man (after Kermode

1907), Whithorn (photos: Historic Environment Scotland) and the southern Hebrides, Scotland (after Fisher 2001)

Two of the stones in this study, from Tullaherin (KK-17) and Clone (WX-10), may belong to this earliest, 6th–8th-century tradition (Fig. 4.23). The iconography on the Ferns slab (WX-11) and Kilmuckridge crosses (WX-22, WX-23, WX-24) is stylistically related and more complex, dating to the late 11th–12th centuries. These four stones are the focus of a stand-alone case study, and are discussed at length in Chapter 7. The two remaining stones from Clone, WX-8 and WX-9, are carved with Maltese crosses in false relief, which indicates they are no earlier than the 8th century (see section 4.2). Furthermore, the stones themselves are relatively small, 33 cm and 58 cm respectively, and very minimally shaped, similar to many of the stones from St Berrihert's Kyle, which may suggest they are perhaps 8th–9th-century in date (Fig. 4.23; see also Chapter 6). The upper cross on the Tooracurragh ogham stone (WA-28a) is likewise carved with a Maltese cross in false relief, though the interiors of its cross-arms have been hollowed out, so that the cross stands out in raised outline (Fig. 4.24). While the lower cross, WA-28b, may potentially be contemporary with the ogham (see above), the execution of this cross marks it as undoubtedly later. Two late 10th–11th-century pillars in Glamorgan, Wales (Redknap and Lewis 2007, G85, G102) feature very close parallels for WA-28a, and considered with the evidence discussed above, an 8th–11th-century date is suggested.



Fig. 4.23: Clockwise from top left – early examples in the study region of a marigold (KK-17; after Murphy and Cassin 1987) and cross-of-arcs (WX-10); 8th–9th-century Maltese crosses from Clone, WX-8 and WX-9 (photo credit WX-8–10: NMS)



Fig. 4.24: Sketch of WA-28 (after Power 1923); Maltese crosses on two 10th–11th-century Welsh slabs from Margam (G85) and St Teilo's Church (G102; Redknap and Lewis 2007)

4.3.3 Outline crosses

An outline cross is created either by a series of incised lines forming a cruciform shape, or else the surface of a stone is carved back, so that the shape of a cross stands out in relief (or false relief). This category encompasses a wide variety of cross styles, from plainly incised crosses to complex forms that require a skilled carver. Moreover, it has been suggested that the development of more complex outline cross-forms may mirror, in tandem, the chronological development of more ambitious sculpture across Ireland (Edwards 2007a, 116). In Ireland, plain outline crosses may date from as early as the 7th century; yet, like many of the linear cross-forms discussed above, they experienced a longevity of use that spanned most of the early medieval period. Other types, such as ringed and expansional outline crosses, have a slightly shorter chronological span, dating from the 8th century onward.

4.3.3.1 Plain outline crosses

As mentioned above, plain outline crosses were in use throughout most of the early medieval period. Relatively small crosses, usually equal-armed, tend to be the earliest datable examples of this type – particularly those incised onto smaller, unshaped slabs (see section 4.2). They form the largest group of cross-types from Toureen Peakaun, which have been dated by inscription, carving technique, and excavation evidence to the 7th and 8th centuries (see above). However, six similar examples are also found at Gallen, Co. Offaly, including a small one inscribed with *LEC COEMGUSA* (A85), as well as one from Clonmacnoise, which

may be similarly early (Kendrick 1939, pl. V fig. 2, 15; Macalister 1909, pl. IV, no. 26; Lionard 1961, 147). Apart from the collection at Toureen Peakaun, there are three other small, unshaped recumbent slabs in the study area, from Clonmore (CW-4), Lismore (WA-23), and Shanakill (WA-27a; also discussed above), which may likewise date to the 7th–8th centuries (Fig. 4.25).

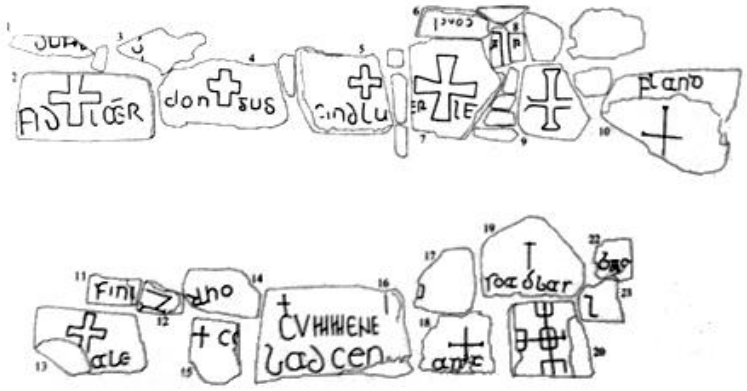








Fig. 4.25: Left to right, from the previous page – plain outline crosses on small, recumbent slabs from Toureen Peakaun, illustrated by Okasha and Forsyth (2001), slab A85 from Gallen (Kendrick 1939), newly recovered fragments from Toureen Peakaun, TS-87 and TS-89, CW-3 (Clonmore), and WA-23 (Lismore)

Plain outline crosses are common on many other monument-forms as well; various examples on ogham stones, cross-slabs, and stone crosses from County Kerry have been dated as from early as the 7th, to as late as the 10th; however, most have been dated to the 8th and 9th centuries (Sheehan 1990, 171–2; 2012, 105–7). On the ogham stone from Gowran (KK-12), a large cross-potent, incised in outline, spans the width of one face. The cross is inverted in relation to the inscription, and clearly later. Yet, while it may stylistically date anywhere from the 7th to 10th century, perhaps an 8th–9th century date range may be suggested, as a similar date has been given to the majority of later cross-carvings on ogham stones in Co. Kerry, and moreover, this coincides with the annalistic references to *Belat Gabráin* (see Chapter 5; also catalogue entry, 'Gowran'). There are also a large number of small, un- or minimally shaped, upright stones from St Berrihert's Kyle that are carved with plain outline crosses (both incised and in relief), dating to between the late 7th–8th centuries (Chapter 6). A similarly small, minimally shaped, upright slab from Glenballyvally (KK-10) may likewise date to the late 7th–8th centuries, though a broader late 7th–9th-century date range is suggested. This is to coincide with the date ranges of wider comparanda, as well as KK-11, considering very little information is known about the church site at Glenballyvally. Additionally, three cruciform stones, from Clonmore (CW-12) and Kildoran (WX-15, WX-16), each feature an outline cross carved onto one face (Fig. 4.26). The Kildoran crosses are

small and simply incised, suggesting they may be as early as the 8th century (see below 'Plain cruciform stones'). However, the production of cruciform stones had a long chronological span, and, as little information is known about the site of Kildoran itself, a conservative 8th–12th century date range is suggested for WX-15 and WX-16. By contrast, CW-12 is the lower half of a well-executed, solid-disked cross, with the stem of a Latin cross carved in relief, extending the length of its face. Based on its relatively modest size and solid ring, CW-12 can be compared to a group of morphologically similar Carlow crosses at Killogan, Nurney, Orchard, and Tullow, as well as crosses at Taghmon, Co. Wexford, and Kilquiggin, Co. Wicklow, all of which have been dated by Dorothy Kelly to the late 9th–10th centuries (1986, pls. 6–8, 66; see also Chapter 8).



Fig. 4.26: KK-12, WX15, and WX-16, each incised with outline crosses

Plain outline crosses are also prolific, along with hollow-angled crosses, on recumbent cross-slabs dating to the last few centuries of the early medieval period (more below). These slabs are typically characterised by their rectangular, well-shaped form, and very large size, averaging 96–177 cm in length, and 38–61 in width (Ó Floinn 1995, 258; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 103). Most are straight-sided, though some late examples, like WA-6, may taper somewhat towards the bottom (*ibid*; Lionard 1961, 148). Roughly 60 such slabs have been recorded at Iniscealtra, which is by far the largest grouping of this monument-type, though several similarly large and well-shaped cross-slabs have been recorded at Glendalough as well (Leask 1974, 39; O'Leary 2015, 125). Some of these slabs may be 10th-century, though most are thought to date from the 11th and 12th centuries (*ibid*, 116; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 103). Plain outline crosses on large slabs of this type are

found on 14 monuments in the study region (Fig. 4.27). Nine of these are from Clonmore (CW-6, CW-8, CW-9, CW-16, CW-18, CW-20, CW-22, CW-28, CW-31), and are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8. The remaining five are from Lismore (WA-20), Dysart (KK-8), Killamery (KK-15), Clashmore (WA-6), and Hook (WX-14). Oskasha and Forsyth have suggested a probable 9th-century date for WA-20 (2001, 333), but perhaps this range may be extended to include the 10th century, considering its size and morphology, as well as the fact that the abbreviated *ór do* formula continued to be used after the 9th century (*ibid*, 28, 37). Given its morphology, a large, mostly unshaped slab from Dysart (KK-8) may likewise date from the 9th–10th century. However, the other 12 slabs, including the 9 from Clonmore, are all stylistically and morphologically typical of the 11th and 12th centuries. In particular, WX-6 tapers slightly towards its base, indicating that it probably dates to the 12th century (*ibid*, 103).

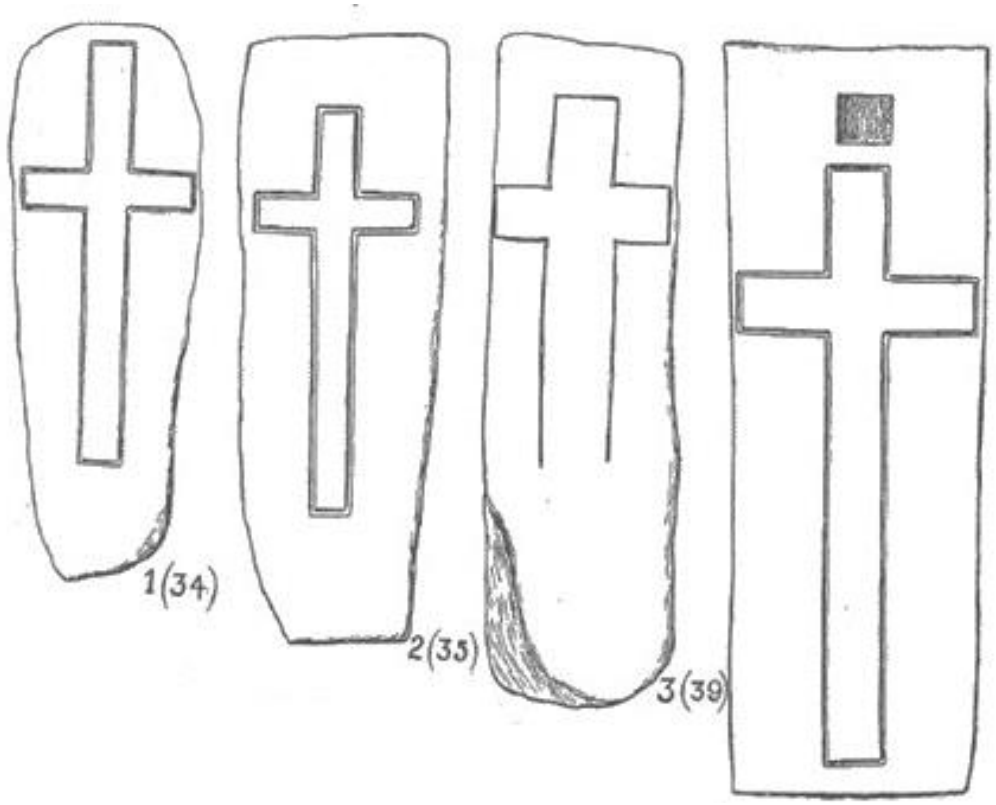




Fig. 4.27: Previous page – plain outline crosses on large, recumbed slabs at Iniscealtra (Macalister 1916); above, from left to right – Lismore (WA-20), Hook (WX-14), and Clashmore (WA-6)

4.3.3.2 Hollow-angled crosses

This cross-form differs from the plain outline crosses discussed above, in that they are hollowed at the junctions between their cross-arms and stem (Fig. 4.28). The hollows are usually rounded or semi-circular, though square-angled hollows feature on several slabs from St Berrihert's Kyle. Most examples are thought to date from the 8th century onward; however, some are almost certainly earlier. Hollow-angled crosses appeared in Northumbria by the late 7th century, such as on the inner lid of St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne's coffin (†687; Bailey 1989, 241–2, fig. 14). Hollow- and square-angled crosses are something of a 'house style' at St Berrihert's Kyle, and it is likely that sculpture production began here by the late 7th century (Chapter 6). Additionally, there are two hollow-angled crosses incised on the *c.* 700 East Cross at the nearby monastic site of Toureen Peakaun (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 295; Charles-Edwards 2002, 117–18). The 'thistle crosses' of Gallen, Co. Offaly likewise feature hollow-angled crosses, albeit in circular frames, on small unshaped slabs (Kendrick 1939, fig. 9), which could suggest they are also among some of the earliest Irish examples of this cross-form, perhaps 8th century. Four fairly early examples from Clonmacnoise, incised within linear fames (part of Ó Floinn's 'Type A'), are dated from the mid-8th to mid-9th century (Macalister 1909, nos. 53, 56-7, 73; Ó Floinn, 1995, 252-3). Hollow-angled crosses remained a popular motif throughout the rest of the early medieval period, however, and are also frequently found on many of the large, recumbent slabs of the 10th–12th centuries.

A small, minimally shaped upright slab from Glenballyvally (KK-10), carved with a plain outline cross on the south face (discussed above), and one with slightly hollow-angled arm-pits on the north face may date to the late 7th–9th centuries. A minimally shaped, recumbent slab from Ardcavan (WX-2) may date to the 8th–9th centuries; it features an equal-armed, hollow-angled cross within a rectilinear frame, and can be closely compared to the 'Type A' slabs from Clonmacnoise (see above). Another minimally shaped, albeit longer recumbent slab from Kilmokea (WX-20), incised with a hollow-angled Latin cross (albeit not within a frame), may date to the 9th–10th centuries, based on its morphology. A large, upright slab from Clonmore (CW-2), carved in relief with a slightly hollow-angled cross on one side, and a plain outline cross on the other, may likewise date to the 9th–10th centuries. Its large size might indicate it dates from the latter half of this range, but the minimal shaping of the slab itself probably precludes a date from the 11th-century or later, particularly considering the quality of the 11th–12th-century slabs being produced at Clonmore (see also Chapter 8). By contrast, a pillar from Mothel (WA-26) is carefully shaped, and carved in low relief with a well-executed hollow-angled Latin cross. An 11th–12th century date range is suggested for WA-26, based on its morphology; moreover, this would make the pillar roughly contemporary with a stylistically related cross-slab at Mothel, WA-25 (see below). Another late example is an altar slab from Kilmolash (WA-11), as in Ireland, stone altar slabs date from the end of the 11th century onward (Ó Carragáin 2010, 196; Murray 2010).

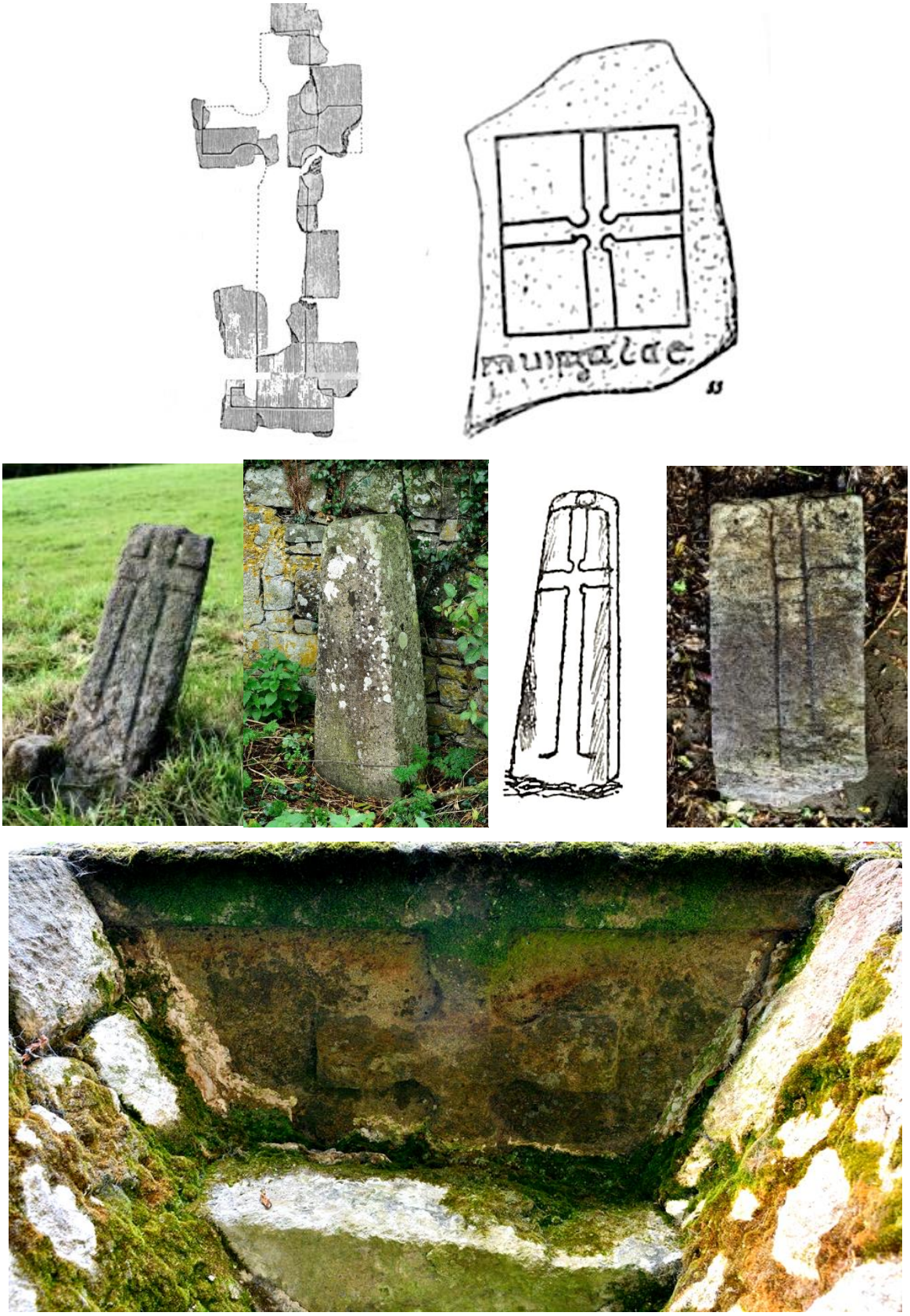


Fig. 4.28: Hollow-angled crosses – St Cuthbert's cross (Baily 1989), Clonmacnoise no. 53 (Macalister 1909), Glenballyvally (KK-10), Mothel (WA-26), Kilmokea (WX-20), and Kilmolash (WA-11)

The impressive pillar at Giant's Grave (TS-6) features a hollow-angled Latin cross, carved in relief, on its south face. The top of the stem is pointed, and capped with a roundel; a plain, sunken Latin cross is carved onto the opposite face. The carving on the pillar is well-executed, though the stone itself has only been shaped around the hollow-angled cross, no doubt to provide a flat surface for the carving. The pointed top of the south cross may be suggestive of the house- or, more specifically, church-shaped finials seen on many 9th–10th century high crosses, though it has been speculated that the pointed top and roundel could be modelled specifically after the capstone on the Killamery high cross (Thounhurst 2007, 161). This cross may date to the 8th or 9th century (*cf*. Ó Floinn 2001; Connon 2016, 126–8), and indeed, the similarity is striking (Fig. 4.29). However, as mentioned above, hollow-angled crosses were widely used through the end of the early medieval period, particularly at sites like Iniscealtra, which contains numerous 11th–12th century cross-slabs, as well as two hollow-angled free-standing crosses, featuring this motif. Though most of the hollow-angled cross-slabs at Iniscealtra are otherwise plainly carved, five also have pointed tops similar to TS-6 (Macalister 1916, pl. XXXIII, nos. 70–2, 75–6). Their tapering form, particularly that of nos. 71 and 72, indicate that they may date to the 12th century (see above, 'plain outline crosses'). The free-standing crosses are also 12th century; the more ornamented of the two, Cathasach's Cross, has been dated by inscription to 1111 (O'Leary 2015, 139) and the other, plainer cross is thought to be roughly contemporary (*ibid*; Macalister 1916, 147). It may also be worth noting there is a tall, pointed pillar in Pembrokeshire, Wales, very reminiscent of the Giant's Grave pillar, which Edwards has dated 9th–11th century (2007a, P87). Thus, in light of the broad chronological range of its parallels, a 9th–12th century date is assigned to TS-6.



Fig. 4.29: The high cross at Killamery, the hollow-angled cross on the Giant's Grave pillar (TS-6), and cross-pillar P87 in Pembrokeshire, Wales. Note similarities between the capstone of the Killamery cross, and the top of TS-6

As mentioned above, hollow-angled crosses feature prominently on many of the large recumbent slabs dating to the 11th–12th centuries. While the vast majority of these are found at Iniscealtra (see above), there are also examples from Mainistir Chiaráin, Inis Mór, Co. Galway (Higgins 1987, No. 110), Nendrum, Co. Down (Lionard 1961, fig. 11, nos. 16, 18), and Clonmacnoise (Macalister 1909, pl. V, no. 30). Five large slabs, from Clonmore (CW-11, CW-21, CW-23), Killamery (KK-13) and Mothel (WA-25), can likewise be dated to the 11th–12th centuries (Fig. 4.30). Additionally, the Killamery slab (KK-13) is elaborately decorated, incised with a double-lined, hollow-angled Latin cross with a triquetra in its base. Beneath the cross, and extending beyond the double-lined frame, is another triquetra within a pointed spike, below the cross-base. At the top of the cross, the inner lines of the frame end in spirals – one near the head of the cross, and the other in the corner. An outline or frame with curling terminals is also seen on an 11th–12th century slab from Church Island (*Inis Úasal*; Sheehan 2012, fig. 24), the North Cross at Kilfenora, Co. Clare, a cross slab from Inishmurray (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, fig. 29 no. 014.02A), and a cross slab fragment from Clonmacnoise (Macalister 1909, pl. IV, no. 29). This last example from Clonmacnoise also features a spiked stem with a triquetra carved in the tip, as does no. 97, though this cross is ringed (*ibid*, pl. XV). Along the bottom and sinister side of KK-13 are inscribed variations of the formulaic phrase 'A prayer for the soul of Aedhán' – *ÓR AR*

ANMAINN AEDAIN, and *ÓR AR ANMIN AEDAEN*, respectively. Its additional ornamentation, and lengthier text formulae (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 28, 37), offer further supporting evidence for an 11th–12th century date for KK-13. Furthermore, the sinister inscription is accompanied by an initial cross, and their continued use into the 12th century has been confirmed by datable examples on stone crosses and metalwork (Lionard 1961, 102).



Fig. 4.30: Large, recumbent slabs with hollow-angled crosses from Killamery (KK-13), Clonmore (CW-11, CW-23), and Mothel (WA-25)

4.3.3.3 Ringed outline crosses

Ringed outline crosses are widespread across Ireland and Britain, and are generally thought to date from the 9th century onward, though some may date to the 8th century as well (Fig. 4.31). They occur on a significant subset of slabs from Clonmacnoise (Macalister 1909, pls. XVII-XIX), which Ó Floinn (1995) has identified as the third most common cross-form from the site, labelling them 'Type C'. Though they cannot all be dated with certainty, 26 cross-slabs have been assigned to the 9th–10th centuries, based on their formulaic inscriptions (*ibid*, 254–5; Sheehan 2012, 110). However, there are also 12 examples of ringed outline crosses, inscribed with a single name, that fall into the 'Type A' category, which has been dated to the mid-8th–mid-9th century (see above). An outline cross-in-circle, incised onto a small unshaped slab from Cloon Church in Castleconnell, Co. Limerick, may be another early example of this cross-form. While formulaic requests for prayers or blessings is typically considered 9th century or later (see section 4.2), an 8th-century date has been suggested for the Castleconnell slab, based on its conservative orthography, and parallels with similarly small slabs from Clonmacnoise and Gallen (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 187). Furthermore, a date range similar to the majority of the 'Type C' slabs may be suggested for the ringed outline crosses at Gallen, given its close association with Clonmacnoise during this time (Kendrick 1939, 13, fig. 5; Ó Floinn 1995, 255). Additionally, this cross-form occurs on five 11–12th century slabs from Church Island (*Inis Úasal*; Sheehan 1990, 171, fig. 7). Four ringed outline crosses occur at Iniscealtra, at least three of which are 11th–12th century (Macalister 1916). Ringed outline crosses are also prevalent in southwestern Scotland, particularly Iona, and most Welsh and Scottish parallels have been dated to the 9th–11th centuries (Fisher 2001, 12–14, 36–8, figs. 2–13; Henderson and Henderson 2004, 158–66; Edwards 2007a, 72, CD33, CM26, P36, P-59, P-94–6, P-103, P-117, P-124, P-130, P-138–9).

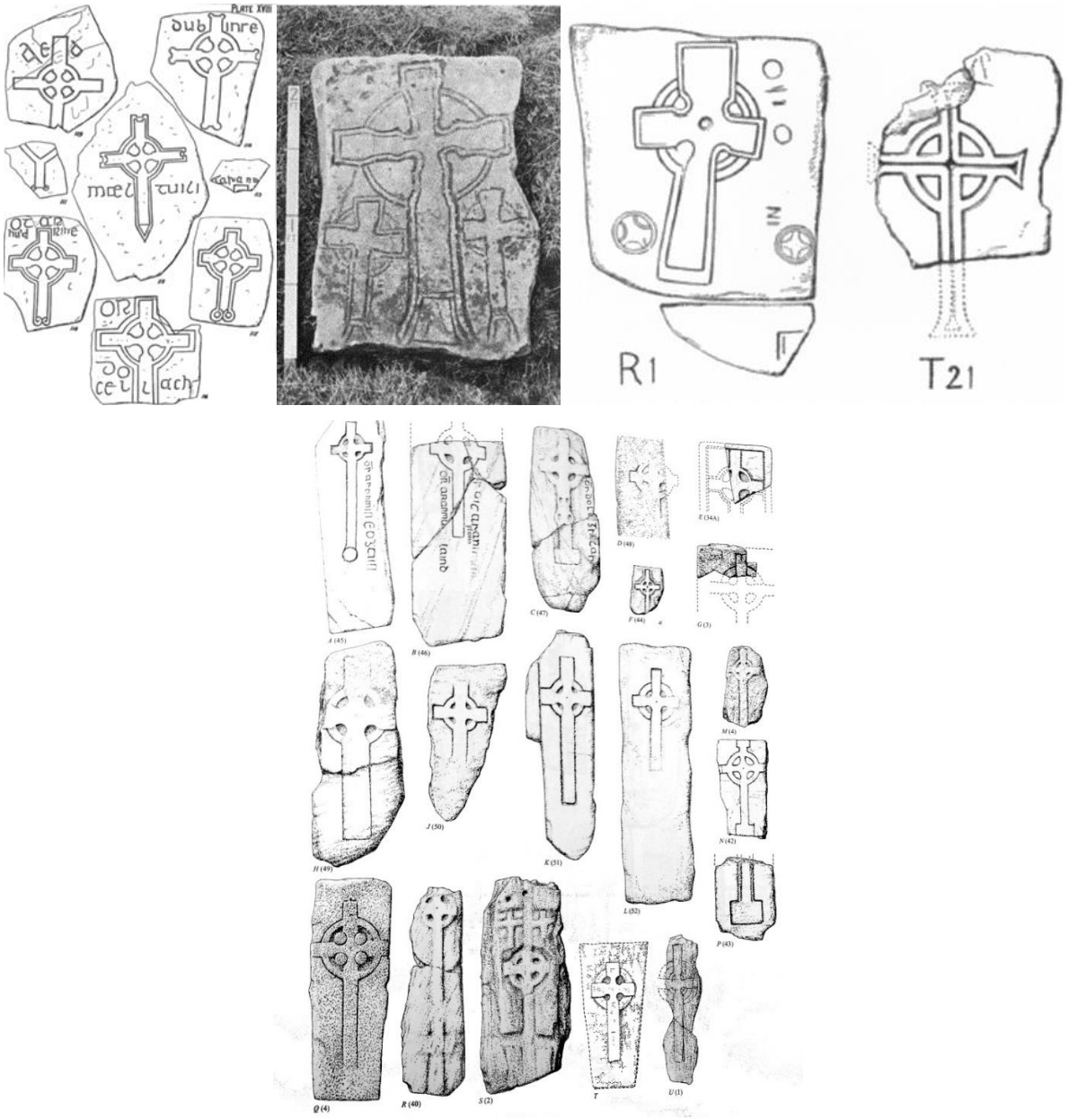


Fig. 4.31: Clockwise from top left – examples of ringed outline crosses from Clonmacnoise (Macalister 1909), Gallen (Kendrick 1939), and southwestern Scotland, a number of which are from Iona (Fisher 2001)

There are 12 examples of this cross-form within the study area, from Clonmore (CW-10, CW-13, CW-14, CW-25, CW-26, CW-27, CW-29), Dysart (KK-9), Ullard (KK-18), Knockmaon (WA-15), Lismore (WA-17), and Ferns (WX-12). CW-13 is a small, sub-rectangular recumbent slab that is so heavily worn, its cross-ring is only visible in low raking light (see Chapter 2, Fig. 2.5). Based on its morphology and cross-form, an 8th–9th-century date range is suggested. CW-27 is slightly larger than CW-13, albeit still relatively small, and very irregularly shaped, suggesting it may likewise date to between the 8th and 9th centuries. Another small cross-slab with this motif is the one from Ullard (KK-18; Fig. 4.32). It may have functioned as a grave-marker, and while its cross motif cannot be precisely

paralleled here, KK-18 may be generally compared with the relief-carved slabs at St Berrihert's Kyle, Co. Tipperary, which probably date to the 8th century (see Chapter 6). The V-shaped 'arms' are unusual; this feature is found on several 13th-century slabs (*cf*. Hunt 1974, pls. 94, 98, 104, 107, nos. 13a, 135, 159, 260; Maher 1994, fig. 1). However, that is the only similarity to these later specimens, as they are more elaborate, and carved in the floriated post-Norman style. The cross motif on the Ullard slab is most closely paralleled by a slab from Inishmurray, Co. Sligo (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, fig. 28, no. 002.12A), as well as with two slabs from Glamorgan, and Breconshire, Wales which have been dated to the 8th–9th centuries (Redknap and Lewis 2007, G93, B28). Taken altogether, an 8th–9th-century date is suggested for KK-18.

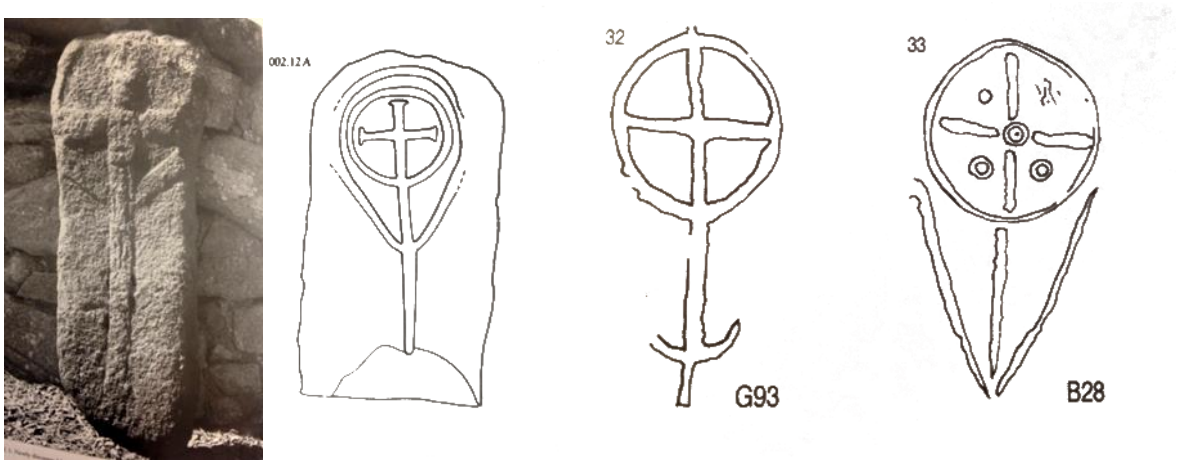


Fig. 4.32: Left to right – Ullard, Co Kilkenny (KK-18); Inishmurray, Co. Sligo; Glamorgan and Breconshire, Wales

A long, but unshaped slab from Lismore (WA-17) is incised on its lower end with a ringed, equal-armed cross, decorated with expanded and bifurcating terminals (Fig. 4.33). Just above is the inscription, *BENDACHT FOR ANMAIN COLGEN*; WA-17 has been dated by its cross-form and inscription to the 9th century (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 333–5). The slab from Dysart (KK-9) is a relatively large, minimally shaped slab, and incised with a simple ringed outline cross, similar to slabs from Galway (Higgins 1987 no. 82, 83, 94, 95) and Clonmacnoise (Macalister 1909, pl. XVI, no. 100), as well as two from St Cyngar's Church in Wales (Edwards 2013, F6–7), and one from Sgor nam Bàn-Naomha, Canna, Scotland (Fisher 2001, No. 29C). Like its comparanda, and most ringed outline crosses, KK-9 probably falls somewhere within the 9th–11th-century date range (Fig. 4.34). Two ringed outline crosses from Clonmore, CW-10 and CW-29, are stylistically unusual. They likely date to the 9th–10th, and the 9th–11th centuries respectively, and are discussed in detail later,

in Chapter 8. Additionally, CW-26 appears to be modelled after CW-29, and may likewise date to the 9th–11th centuries. The other two slabs from Clonmore (CW-14, CW-25) are large and well-shaped, indicating that they may later, perhaps 10th–12th century. A second altar slab (WA-15), originally from Knockmaon Church, probably dates from the late 11th–12th centuries (see above, WA-11). Finally, a well-executed slab from Ferns (WX-12) features a ringed, hollow-angled cross, carved in relief within a rectilinear frame (Fig. 4.34). The slab was almost certainly not a grave-marker; it may have been part of a composite monument, though its precise function is unclear (see Chapter 5). However, its well-shaped and tapering form might suggest a 12th-century date for its creation.



Fig. 4.33: Clockwise from top left – cross-slab from Castleconnell (Okasha and Forsyth 2001), Clonmacnoise no. 75 (Macalister 1909), WA-17



Fig. 4.34: Ringed outline crosses from Dysart (KK-9) and Ferns (WX-12)

4.3.3.4 Expansional crosses

Lionard defines expansional crosses as those with circular, or D-shaped, expansions at their centre and terminals (1961, 128). While he also includes more unusual examples with diamond and triangular expansions in his definition (*ibid*), only the former is relevant to this dataset. This type of cross-form is most often associated with Clonmacnoise – Macalister records 80 examples, which is almost a third of his total corpus from the site (1909; Ó Floinn 1995, 254). These examples are almost invariably inscribed, and almost all with the *or(oit) ar/do* formula (*ibid*). Ó Floinn categorises this cross-form as 'Type B', and dates the Clonmacnoise examples to the late 9th–10th centuries (*ibid*). Similarly assigned to this date range are singular examples of expansional crosses from Iniscealtra (Macalister 1916, pl. XVI, no. 17), Inchagoill and Clonfert, Co. Galway (Higgins 1987, figs. 60, 64) and Innisfallen (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 160). Beyond Clonmacnoise, expansional crosses with D-shaped terminals are also a popular motif at High Island, Co. Galway – so much so that Christine Maddern has suggest it constitutes 'the nearest thing to a house style' (2014, 187). Fourteen examples are recorded from this site, many of which are likewise contemporary with many of the aforementioned examples, including one *in situ* slab associated with a radiocarbon-dated burial, ranging from the late 9th–10th centuries (Scally 2014, 73). However, two large recumbent slabs carved with expansional crosses (nos. 3 and 6) were found *in situ* over stone-lined graves dating to Phase 2 of the site, which spanned from the mid-11th to late 12th/early 13th century (*ibid*, fig. 5.22). Radiocarbon analysis of

human remains underneath no. 6 returned a date range of late 10th–early 11th century (Maddern 2014, 203). This may also suggest a similar date range for some of the equally large slabs with expansional crosses from Glendalough (Leask 1974, figs. 4b, 8b, 18c, 18d).

However, there are only one or two expansional crosses within the study area, both from Coolcashin – one is a small, unshaped recumbent slab (KK-6), and the second is a fragment (KK-7), which looks to have just the very end of a D-shaped terminal incised upon it. Furthermore, KK-6 is carved with plain D-shaped terminals in a rectilinear frame, and is also incised with the beginning of the formulaic inscription, *ÓR DO C...* The rest of the slab has been broken off, so it is impossible to determine if the cross was equal-armed or Latin. Typologically, KK-6 is a blend of the Types 'A' and 'B' – it features an expansional cross, but unlike the 'Type B' designs, it is carved onto a small, unshaped slab, and the cross is within a rectilinear frame (Fig. 4.35). The closest parallel for KK-6 is a slab from Clonfert, Co. Galway, which also features an expansional cross, as they are both within a rectilinear frame (Higgins 1987, no. 64). The presence of the abbreviated *ór do* formula, and the style and morphology of KK-6, suggest it is probably 9th century, a date which may be extended to include KK-7 as well. This suggestion may be supported by an annalistic reference to Coolcashin, stating it was 'plundered and burned by the foreigners' in 844 (*AFM* M844.13), indicating it was wealthy enough to warrant the attention of raiders, and thus, wealthy enough to produce quality sculpture, in the 9th century.

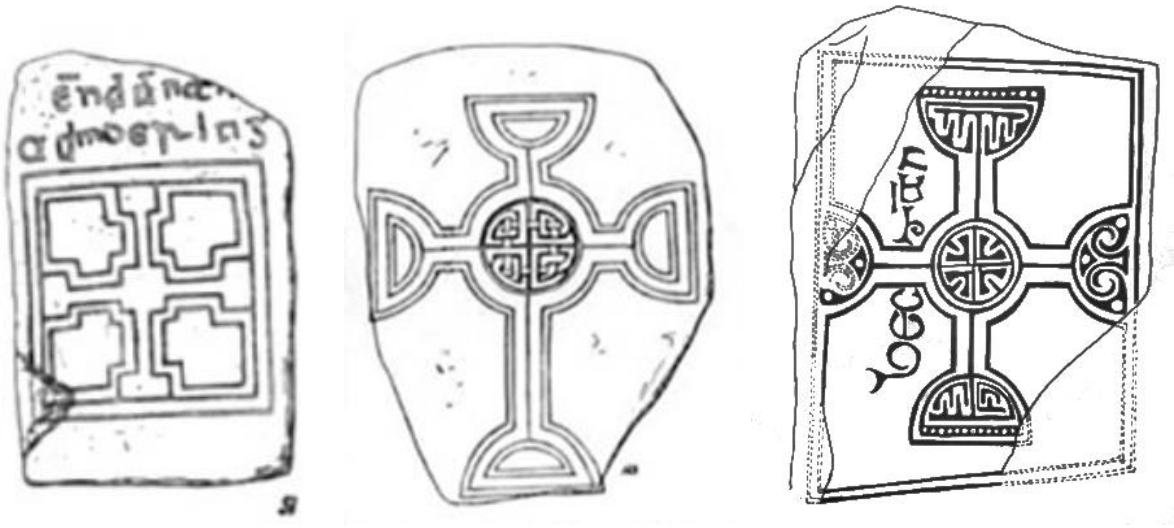




Fig. 4.35: Left to right from previous page – 'Type A' and 'Type B' slabs from Clonmacnoise (Macalister 1909), expansional cross on Clonfert slab (Higgins 1987); above – KK-6, from Coolcashin

While not an expansional cross, a large granite boulder in Killesk, Co. Wexford (WX-18) is also included in this section, as crosses with bifurcating or subtriangular terminals are thought to be a predecessor to the expansional cross (Higgins 1987; Madden 2014, 182, 187). It is incised with a cross in outline, featuring three bifurcating terminals and a triangular base. Within it is an incised linear cross with the same bifurcating terminals and triangular base, and a smaller triangle carved within the base of the cross stem (Fig. 4.36). Crosses with bifurcated and sub-triangular terminals are particularly prevalent on early sculpture in the west of Ireland, and like expansional crosses, this cross-type is found on a large proportion of the slabs and pillars from High Island (Maddern 2014). The simplest examples are tentatively dated to an initial 7th-century phase of sculpture production, though one parallel, no. 40, is carved on a cruciform stone thought to date from the 9th–11th century phase (Maddern 2014, 199). This cross-type is also recorded on 11 monuments from Co. Kerry, including three from Reask, which have been dated to the 6th–8th centuries (Fanning 1981, fig. 32, 152–3; Sheehan 2012, 92), though the majority are thought to date to the 7th and 8th centuries (Sheehan 2012, 94). A number of crosses with bifurcating terminals have been also been recorded from Inishmore, Omey Island, and Inchagoill, Co. Galway (Higgins 1987, nos. 26–8, 31, 32) – nos. 28 and 32 each have a cross-base like WX-18, albeit D- and teardrop-shaped respectively. A cross-pillar with bifurcating terminals and a crescent-shaped base in found at Ballyloskey, Co. Donegal (Herity *et al*. 1997, fig. 24a), and a slab from Kilcummin, Co. Mayo is carved with a plain outline cross, within which is a linear cross with bifurcating terminals (*ibid*, fig. 31). In Scotland, crosses with splayed terminals are found at Iona, A'Chill, Canna, and in St Ninian's Cave, on the Isle of Whithorn (Fisher 2001, Fig. 6;

'WHP.C.02'), though none are also in outline, or with a triangular base. A similar cross, which is very reminiscent of WX-18, was found on a farm in Pembrokeshire, Wales, but has since been moved to St David's Cathedral (Edwards 2007a, P106). Another similar cross, incised onto a local outcrop from Llys-Y-Frân, Pembrokeshire (*ibid*, P57), also features a triangular base carved in outline. These two latter examples have been dated as 7th–9th century (*ibid*, 457). The image of a cross on a triangular base may be skeuomorphic of an altar cross, set in a stand. Edwards goes on to say, 'crosses on stands, though not uncommon, have a long history in Insular arts, being found in the early 7th-century *Cathach* of St Columba and on Irish cross-carved stones' (*ibid*). In Ireland, altar crosses had become common by the 8th or 9th century, and a flat-topped boulder from Drom West, Co. Kerry (which is thought to have functioned as an outdoor altar) is carved with a ringed altar cross that may date to this period (Ó Carragáin 2010, 175). Another example, from Ballydarrig, also in Co. Kerry, features an altar cross on a triangular stand (Fig. 4.36). Considering its context, and in particular the parallels from Kerry, an 8th–9th-century date range is suggested for WX-18.



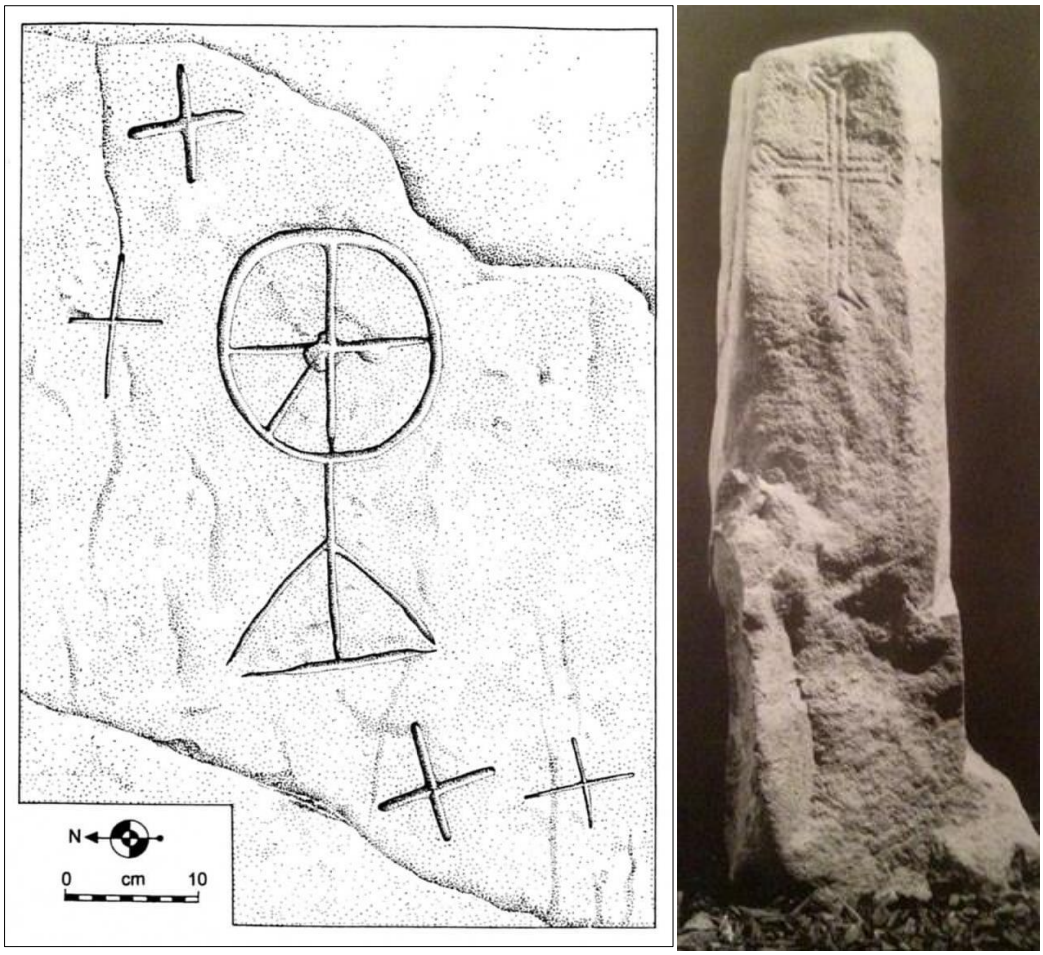


Fig. 4.36: Previous page – Killesk (WX-18); above – Ballydarrig, Co. Kerry and P106, Pembrokeshire

4.3.4 Plain cruciform stones

In general, plain cruciform stones are difficult to date with any accuracy, as they were widely in use throughout most of the early medieval period. High Island, Co. Galway contains a large concentration of cruciform stones, 12 out of 29 of which are undecorated (Maddern 2014, nos. 43–50, 54, 55, 59, 62). Further examples from Galway include ones from Inishmore, Tuam, and Carrigean East (Higgins 1987, nos. 104–106). Cruciform stones (both plain and incised) are also abundant in Co. Kerry, including several from Skellig Michael (O'Sullivan and Sheehan 1996, fig. 181), Church Island (Valentia Harbour), Co. Kerry (O'Kelly 1957–9, fig. 10J), and the Dingle Peninsula (Sheehan 2012, 118–21); several are found at Glendalough, Co. Wicklow as well (Leask 1974, fig. 22.21). Plain cruciform stones are also prolific on the Hebrides islands, Scotland, including Iona (Fisher 2001, A4, fig. 31B–D), North Rona (*ibid*, W55, fig. 31A, J, W–Y), North Uist (*ibid*, W45, fig. 31H), and Islay (*ibid*, A5, fig. 31K). At Iona, the earliest of the high crosses date to the mid-8th century (Fisher 2001, 15), though the earliest cross-slab, the 'lapis echodi' slab, is dated by palaeographical evidence to the 7th century (*ibid*). While most plain cruciform stones in

Ireland are thought to date from the 8th-century onward (Higgins 1987, 72; Edwards 2007a, 51), many of the High Island examples have been given a slightly broader, 7th–12th-century date range, based on the minimalistic effort exerted in their creation (Maddern 2014, 187). Furthermore, one other example, from Caherlehillian, Co. Kerry, was notably found in a 6th-century grave (Sheehan 2012, 121).

There are seven plain cruciform stones in the study area, from Acaun (CW-1), Kilbracken (CW-34, CW-35), Ballypatrick (TS-2), Patrick's Well (TS-8), Ferns (WX-13), and Kilmokea (WX-21; the inscription on this cross is modern). Five of the crosses (CW-1, CW-34, CW-35, TS-2, WX-21) cannot otherwise be more closely dated, so an 8th–12th century date range is suggested (Fig. 4.37). The date ranges for two of the crosses, however, TS-8 and WX-13, can be narrowed somewhat. Both are solid-ringed; little information is known about Patrick's Well during the early medieval period, other than that a stone church had been built at the site by the 12th century, and the well itself was said to be 'dear' to St Patrick (see Chapter 5). WX-13 may be part of a composite monument, rather than a free-standing cross in itself, and its function or role is unclear (see Chapter 5). Nevertheless, the form and execution of the ringed cross-head is nearly identical to that of three of the high crosses at Ferns, indicating it may have been carved around the same time, perhaps by the same hand. Both TS-8 and WX-13 are very similar to many of the solid-disked, late 9th–10th-century, free-standing crosses that are stylistically typical of the southeast (Kelly 1986, 66), and are probably contemporary (Fig. 4.38).

Finally, while the small cross-head from Lismore (WA-21) is technically not a plain cruciform stone, it is not carved with any additional iconography, and so is included here. It is solid-ringed and well-executed, and its inscription, *ŌR DO CORMAC P…*, indicates it functioned as an upright grave-marker (Fig. 4.39). While Okasha and Forsyth did not explicitly suggest a date for this monument (2001, 334, 344–6), they did point out that two famous Cormacs were associated with Lismore – Cormac mac Cuilennan, in the 10th century, and Cormac, son of Mac Carthaig, *c*. 1127 (*ibid*, 346). Both its morphology and abbreviated formula would that suggest a 9th–10th century date is more likely for WA-21; however, though the cross may not necessarily be associated with either of the aforementioned Cormacs (*ibid*), given those possible associations, perhaps a 9th–12th-century date should be assigned to WA-21.



Fig. 4.37: Plain cruciform stones, CW-34 and CW-35, TS-2, and WX-21



Fig. 4.38: Solid-ringed plain cruciform stones at Patrick's Well (TS-8) and Ferns (WX-13), as well as one of four high crosses, also from Ferns. The similarities between it and WX-13 may suggest contemporaneity



Fig. 4.39: WA-21 – the head of a small, ringed cross with 'ór do Cormac p…' inscribed on one face

4.4 Other sculpture

Below are pieces of sculpture that, while not unique to the overall corpora of early medieval sculpture, warrant a separate discussion from the main typological categorisations.

4.4.1 Shrine components

There were four shrine components, all from Clonmore (CW-3, CW-17, CW-19, CW-30), surveyed and catalogued for this project. The corner-posts of a stone shrine have also been recorded from Toureen Peakaun (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 288; Ó Carragáin 2017b). However, these were not surveyed for this study, and so are omitted here (see Chapter 2), but they are included as part of the interpretive analysis in the following chapter. Simple shrine posts, such as CW-17, CW-19, and CW-30, are thought to generally date from the 8th century, though recent excavation evidence from Caherlehillan, Co. Kerry indicates they may have originated earlier, perhaps in the 7th century (Chapter 8). The Clonmore posts are plain, and minimally shaped; they were most likely situated outdoors, perhaps marking an important grave. Indeed, they may be the earliest physical evidence for a cult of relics at Clonmore (*ibid*). A late 7th–8th-century date is suggested for CW-17, CW-19, and CW-30, based on their morphology, as well as possible evidence for the early establishment of a relic cult at Clonmore (*ibid*). By contrast, CW-3 is well-shaped, and instead, may be the end panel of a composite stone shrine. The difference between the quality of carving for CW-3, and the above shrine posts, indicates that they likely came from separate monuments. Though undecorated, CW-3 may be morphologically compared to the end panels of late 8th-century St Andrew's Sarcophagus. However, given the considerable prominence of Clonmore's cult

of relics in the 11th and (especially) 12th centuries (*ibid*), a later date cannot be ruled out, and an 8th–12th-century range is suggested for CW-3.

4.4.2 Figural sculpture

Though there is some stylistic continuity between figural carvings of the Iron Age and the early medieval period (Ní Ghabhláin 1988, 137), 'passive' or 'peaceful' stone faces, like the one at Curraghmore (WA-7), usually have an ecclesiastical association, and have been dated to the 8th and 9th centuries (*ibid*). There are a few Irish examples of carved stone heads similar to WA-7, e.g. Durrow, Co. Offaly, and Glencolumbkille, Co. Clare. The 'passive/peaceful' figure is also used in metalwork as well, e.g. the Tully Lough Cross, from Co. Roscommon (Fig. 4.40). The stone face on WA-24 is carved at the top of a thick slab of otherwise unshaped stone. The carving is on one of the narrow, rather than broad, faces, and may be paralleled with the six 8th–11th-cenutry sculpted figures on White Island, Co. Fermanagh, though WA-24 is not nearly so detailed, and lacks the rectangular socket which may be suggestive of a function as part of a composite structure (Lanigan Wood 2004, 50; Ó Carragáin 2010, 338, n. 198). Likewise, WA-24 may also be paralleled with the Killadeas 'Bishop' stone, also in Co. Fermanagh, though again, it is not as detailed (Fig. 4.41).

A third figural sculpture, WA-22, is a well-known piece from Lismore that has already been discussed in detail elsewhere (O'Keeffe 1994, 121–4; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 347–9). WA-22 is a seated figure, carved in relief, holding an open, inscribed book. The inscription is heavily worn, and all that can still be read is '..NN..RUSAU….UM…P NN…URN' (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 348). The figure may be that of an elderly man (*cf.* O'Keeffe 1994 121–3), though it is unknown whether or not it represents a specific person. Moreover, its purpose is not entirely clear; it may have served a structural function as a corbel or caryatid, or else be simply decorative (*ibid*, 121–4; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 347–9). Regardless, WA-22 is thought to date from the early 12th century (O'Keeffe 1994, 123).

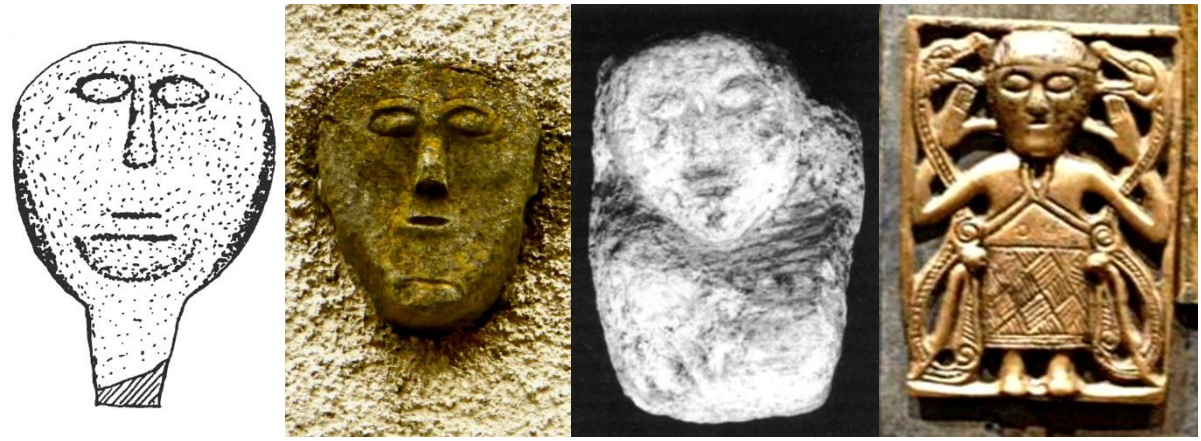


Fig. 4.40: Stone faces from Curraghmore (WA-7), Durrow, Co. Offaly, Glencolumbkille, Co. Clare, and on the Tully Lough Cross



Fig. 4.41: WA-24, the White Island figures, and the Killedeas 'bishop' stone (centre and right photos: Megalithicireland.com)

4.4.3 Clontubrid gable finial

Though it has been suggested that KK-5 could have originated from an early medieval church that stood at Clontubrid (Farrelly 2018a), it seems more likely to have come from the nearby St Lachtáin's Church in Freshford, given the site's relative importance in the early medieval period (see catalogue entry, 'Clontubrid/Freshford'**)**, and the scarcity of such finials. Of the other eight extant early medieval examples, the one from Church Island (Valentia Harbour) is the closest parallel. It is thought to date to the 11th century, and features a figure between two animal heads, with arms raised in the *orans* prayer position (O'Kelly 1957–9, fig. 7). Though the Clontubrid figure does not have its hands outstretched (Fig. 4.42), the indeterminate carvings on either side might be zoomorphic figures, which could suggest that

KK-5 depicts a similar scene. If so, then perhaps the Clontubrid finial may potentially date from the earliest, 10th–11th century, phase of St Lachtáin's Church (Quinlan and Foley 2004, 16, 22). However, because of its poor state of preservation, and particularly, as the arms of the Christ-figure are not raised, it is equally possible that the Clontubrid finial displays iconography that is similar to the Romanesque doorway of Roscrea Cathedral, with Christ flanked by rosettes (*cf*. Ó Carragáin 2010, 43). If so, then KK-5 may instead be contemporary with the 12th-century renovations to the church.



Fig. 4.42: Clontubrid finial (KK-5), Church Island (Valentia Harbour) finial, with hands in orans *prayer position, and doorway of Roscrea Cathedral, showing Christ flanked by rosettes*

4.4.4 Clonamery lintel

The doorway of Clonamery Church displays one of only eight pre-Romanesque cross-carved lintels (KK-1; Fig. 4.43), four of which are in combination with a relief architrave like Clonamery, i.e. Britway and Killeenemer, in Co. Cork, Fore, Co. Westmeath, and St Mary's Church, Glendalough, Co. Wicklow (Ó Carragáin 2010, 93). The initial phase of construction for the stone church, including its lintel, is likely to be in the period *c*. 900–1130 (*ibid*, 87).



Fig. 4.43: Cross-carved lintel (KK-1) of Clonamery Church; cross-carved lintel at Fore, Co. Westmeath (photo: 'A Wandering Woman')

4.4.5 Clonamery pillar

KK-2 is a unique pillar with an unusual cup and cross pattern. It bears three crosses – one incised, linear Greek cross-in-circle, and two Latin crosses carved in high relief. The pillar also has two circular hollows, or cups, at the top and centre of the stone. They are almost perfectly circular, evenly hollowed, and bowl-like. While its combination of cross and cup-marks can be compared to the 11th–12th-century Rathdown group of slabs in County Dublin (e.g. Healy 2009; Corlett 2015), there are no close parallels for KK-2. The cup-marks on the Clonamery pillar are both deeper and wider than nearly all of those on the Rathdown slabs; furthermore, unlike the Rathdown slabs, the cups on KK-2 are bowl-shaped rather than flat-bottomed, indicating that they may have been created through a repeated circular grinding motion (Fig. 4.44). Of the four Rathdown slabs that display a vertical cup and cross pattern (Healy 2009, nos. 21, 40, 43, 47), the Kiltiernan slab (no. 47) is the only one in which the cup

alternates with the cross, like on KK-2. There are also some early medieval slabs featuring cup-marks in Gleann Cholm Cille, Co. Donegal, that mark a series of penitential stations (Healy 2009, figs. 26a–c; Lacy 1983, figs. 140c, 140d, 158a). However, these cup-marks are significantly smaller than those on the Clonamery pillar, and, moreover, the carvings on the slabs are otherwise stylistically different. The very high relief of the Latin crosses on KK-2 indicate the pillar must have been time consuming to carve, and the depth and roundness of the cup-marks suggest the pillar may have had a ritual function (see Chapter 5). However, as stated above, there are no close stylistic parallels for KK-2 in Ireland or Britain, making this pillar difficult to date. Going by its morphology, and quality of execution, KK-2 may pre-date the stone church at Clonamery (see above), though an 8th–10th-century date is suggested, to overlap with the probable construction of the stone church (see above).



Fig. 4.44: Clonamery pillar, and Rathdown-type slabs from Killegar (top) and Kiltiernan (bottom), Co. Dublin

4.4.6 Sundials

There were three sundials recorded in the region – one at Toureen Peakuan (TS-90), one at Clone, Co. Wexford (WX-7), and the third was a previously unrecorded sundial at Lismore (WA-31, *dubia*). However, WA-31 is almost certainly later medieval (*cf.* Hamlin 1987b), and so is not included in the chapters of this thesis (see Chapter 2). The twelve divisions on the dial of WX-7 are reflective of 12th-century reforms to the practice of keeping canonical hours (Moss 2015a), making it roughly contemporary with the construction of the Romanesque church (see catalogue entry, 'Clone Church'). Moreover, Hamlin states that the duodecimal division of the day was probably brought into Ireland with the Anglo-Normans

(Hamlin 1987b, 39). If so, perhaps the sundial was carved in the late 12th century, shortly after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Wexford (Fig. 4.45). While the head of the Toureen sundial, TS-90, is almost circular, the radial divisions of the dial form the D-shape typical of early Irish sundials (*cf.* Hamlin 1987b). Its face is now worn almost completely smooth; however, the photogrammetry model picked up at least seven, possibly eight, of the radially incised lines that divide the face of TS-90 into the eight 'tides', into which the day was partitioned under the 'octaval' system, followed by Irish and Anglo-Saxon churches in the early medieval period (*ibid*, 36). Sundials are difficult to date with any certainty (*ibid*, 38). However, Ann Hamlin has suggested that many of the eight-fold sundials may roughly date to between 750 and 900, when Céilí Dé religious reforms were being enacted (*ibid*, 39; Chapter 5). Moreover, she has (albeit tentatively) suggested an 8th–9th-century date range for the Clogher, Co. Tyrone sundial, based on possible Northumbrian and Pictish contacts during those centuries (*ibid*). Considering Toureen Peakaun's own Northumbrian connections, and its swift decline after the 9th century (Chapter 6), an 8th–9th century date is likewise suggested for TS-90.



Fig. 4.45: 12th-century sundial at Clone Church (WX-7; photo: NMS); photograph and photogrammetry model of the sundial at Toureen Peakaun, showing faintly the extant divisions of its face (left)

4.4.7 Quern stones

Two cross-carved quern stones, TS-85 and WA-29, were recorded within the study area. TS-85, discovered during recent excavations at Toureen Peakaun, can be dated by contextual association to the 7th–8th centuries (*cf.* Ó Carragáin 2006, 2007b). WA-29 is of unknown provenance, found near the border of Cork and Waterford (Fig. 4.46). However, Patrick Power suggested Lismore as a possible place of origin (1939–40, 25). While this suggestion is speculative, such a finely executed carving would have almost certainly been commissioned by an ecclesiastical site of considerable means. The use of small squares, laid out in a geometric pattern, might suggest the influence of metalwork on the design of WA-29. It can be paralleled with the cross-potent incised onto the East Cross at Toureen Peakaun, which has been stylistically linked (albeit tentatively) with the early 8th-century Ardagh Chalice, based on their shared use of insular decorative capitals (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 295), and indeed, the enamelwork on the Ardagh Chalice provides another possible parallel for WA-29. Additionally, the design appears on the 8th or 9th century North Cross at Ahenny. Given these comparanda, an 8th–9th-century date range is suggested for WA-29.



Fig. 4.46: Clockwise from top left – WA-29 (after Power 1939–40); enamel detail of geometric design on the Ardagh Chalice; East Cross, Toureen Peakaun (Okasha and Forysth 2001); North Cross at Ahenny

4.4.8 Lamps

Two lamps (Fig. 4.47) were recorded in the study region, one from Ballypatrick (TS-3), and one from Ballynacourty (WA-4). The Ballypatrick lamp is undecorated, and likely purely functional. Michael Moore, in his comparative analysis of this artefact-type (also called a cresset), suggested a mid-10th–mid-12th-century date range for TS-3 (1984, 109–10). WA-4 is a fragment of a highly decorated stone hanging bowl that was used as a lamp. The top of the rim is flat, and incised with a small Latin cross with bifurcating terminals on its stem. The outside of the bowl is decorated with rope-moulding just underneath the rim, and has a handle that was used to suspend it 'by means of brass or bronze' (Raferty 1966, 35). The handle is decorated with a herringbone pattern that flows into a slightly raised triangular platform, carved with a design (perhaps a triquetra) on the underside of the bowl. WA-4 is an unusual piece – the hanging-bowls that have found in Ireland, Britain, and Scandinavia are almost ubiquitously made of bronze (Bruce-Mitford 2005), though the Cuillard bowl from Co. Roscommon is made of wood (Raferty 1966, 29–30). Bowl-shaped stone lamps, albeit neither hanging-bowls, nor so skilfully carved as WA-4, have been found in Co. Louth, and at Skerries, Co. Dublin. Ó Floinn has suggested an 8th or 9th century date for WA-4 (Dowd 2015), and there is no reason to contest this.

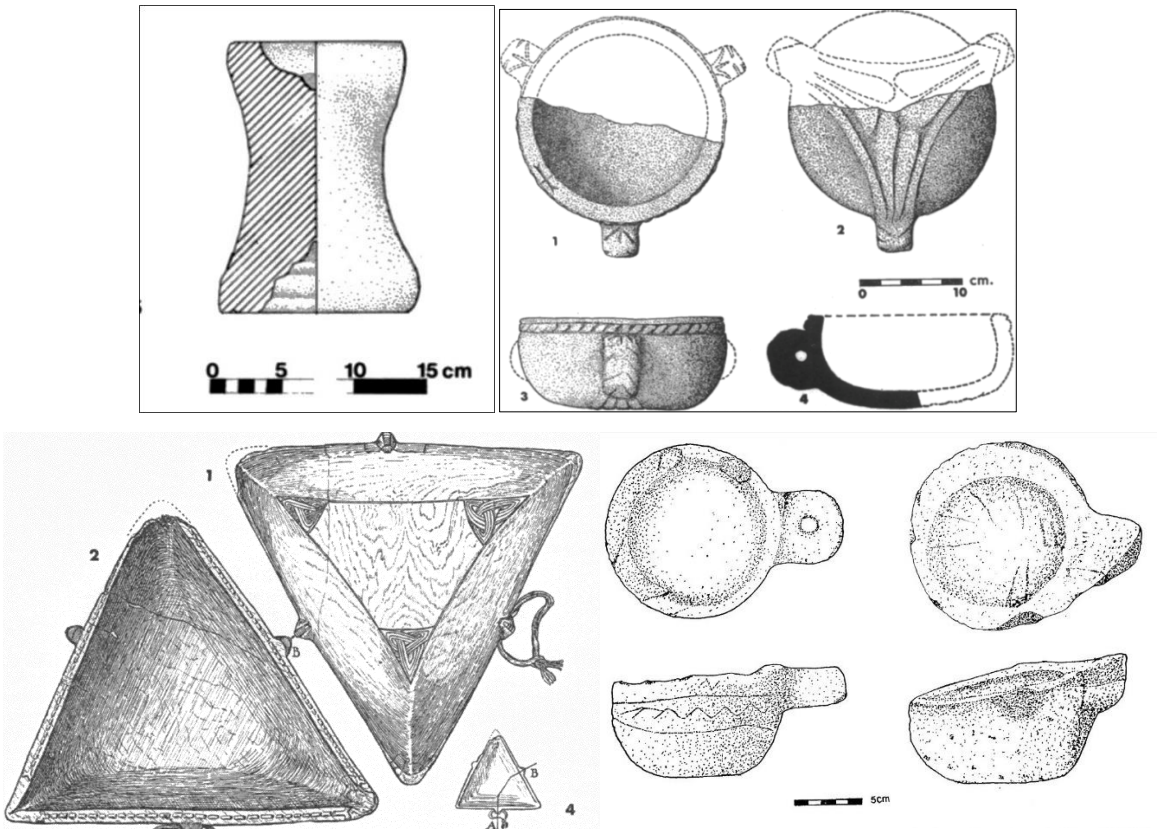


Fig. 4.47: Clockwise from top – two stone lamps from the study region, TS-3 and WA-4; Bowl-shaped stone lamps, from Co. Louth and at Skerries, Co. Dublin; wooden hanging-bowl from Cuillard

4.4.9 Kilmokea 'high' cross

Sometimes categorised as a high cross based on the quality and detail of its ornamentation (e.g. Kelly 1986; Harbison 1992a), this small cruciform stone (WX-19) was probably a grave maker. Yet, despite its small stature, it is easily the most ornately carved piece of sculpture at Kilmokea, and certainly one of the most (if not the most) ornately decorated grave-markers in the southeast, suggesting it must have marked the grave of an important member of the Kilmokea community. WX-19 is heavily decorated on all surfaces with crosses, geometric ornament, and rope-moulding, and the resources (and skilled craftsmanship) necessary for its creation indicate that Kilmokea was a site of some wealth, particularly in the 8th–10th centuries, given the frequency with which the site is referenced in the annals during this period (see catalogue entry, 'Kilmokea'). WX-19 is also inscribed – Peter Harbison suggested a possible partial reading of 'NDMNA' (1992a vol. 1, 131, 363), though the inscription is now too worn to decipher, even with RTI analysis (see Chapter 2). Yet, raking-light photography did reveal that the inscription is longer than previously thought (see Fig. 2.8), and if the inscription were formulaic, then WX-19 may date to the 9th century or later. However, the inscription could just as easily include a patronym, and so, it cannot offer any additional information as to the date of the monument. Its geometric ornament is reminiscent of the 8th- or 9th-century Ossory crosses, particularly the rope moulding decorating the North Cross at Ahenny, Co. Tipperary (Fig. 4.48). Considering the evidence outlined above, an 8th–10th-century date is suggested for WX-19.



Fig. 4.48: Kilmokea 'high' cross (WX-19), decorated with rope moulding, similar to the North Cross at Ahenny

4.4.10 Becc-Ériu slabs

WX-3 and WX-4 (Fig. 4.49) are two of the more elaborately carved examples of disc-headed cross-slabs, though several others (of varying levels of intricacy) are known from Stroove, Donegal (Herity *et al*. 1997, fig. 30b), Kilmashogue, Co. Dublin (Healy 2009, no. 16), Islay, Iona, and Whithorn, in Scotland (Fisher 2001, fig. 17; Oram *et al.* 2010, 22–3), and Llangan and St Edrins, in Wales (Redknap and Lewis 2007, G43; Edwards 2007a, P122). Another disc-headed cross-slab occurs at Fassaroe, Co. Wicklow, but its chamfered edges and figural style indicate it probably dates to the end of the 12th century or later (Ó hÉailidhe 1958, fig. 1). Additionally, disc-headed crosses and cross-slabs dominate the corpus in Cornwall (*cf.* Preston-Jones and Okasha 2014), and indeed, a disc-headed slab at Sennen, with a large Latin cross carved in relief on both faces, provides the closest parallel for the north face of WX-3 (Harbison 1988, pl. 9). This led Harbison to suggest that the monument-form, and north face cross, of WX-3 is based on a Cornish model (*ibid*, 64); however, the Sennen stone has since been dated to the later medieval period, as part of a revival of that monument-form (Langdon 2014, 101). Of course, there are numerous examples of disc-headed cross-slabs in Cornwall

which date to the early medieval period (*ibid*), but other than the shapes of the monument themselves, there are no other close parallels for the iconography on WX-3.

Regarding the south face of WX-3, parallels for the single-rider motif are primarily found in Scotland, Wales, northern England, and the Isle of Man, though a solitary horse and rider also appears on the west cross shaft at Old Kilcullen, Co. Kildare (Harbison 1992a, 160, fig. 534). Several close examples are found in Scotland, e.g. on two cross-shaft fragments from St Blane's Church in Kingarth, Bute (Fisher 2001, 74, nos. 6 and 7), a Pictish stone from Rossie Priory that shows a rider underneath a cross decorated with knotwork (Harbison 1988, pl. 11), on the Jordanhill Cross at Govan, and on the 9th-century Dupplin Cross, which commemorates the Pictish king Causantín mac Fergusa (†820; Forsyth 1995, 237; Alcock and Alcock 1996; Hall 2011, 154). In Glamorgan, Wales, Face 'C' of the base of the Llandough cross displays a single rider facing to the left, and has been dated late 10th–early 11th century (Redknap and Lewis 2007, 337, G42h). In England, a cross shaft from Chester-le-Street, County Durham (Cramp 1984 vol. 2, pl. 20.102) shows a horse with front hoof raised, and its helmeted rider carrying a round shield. Cramp dates the Chester-le-Street cross shaft to the late 9th century (*ibid* vol. 1, 53–4), and states this particular horse and rider motif is distinctively Anglo-Scandinavian, comparing it to a nearby cross shaft from Hart, and a hogback stone from Sockburn (*ibid* vol. 2, pls. 79.394 and 139.745). Another Anglo-Scandinavian-style cross shaft, dated to the early 10th-century, is recorded at Baldersby, in northern Yorkshire, and displays a similar rider, though conclusively without a shield, and wearing a kirtle (Lang 2001, 58, ills. 4–7). Finally, a Manx example from Santon, on the Isle of Man, features a combination of a horseman under a Maltese cross, similar to WX-3 (Harbison 1988, pl. 12; Kermode 1907, 139, no. 68, fig. 50).

The three-figured panel above the rider is too heavily worn to draw anything more than general comparisons, and tentative interpretive suggestions. Harbison suggested the central figure might be facing forward, and the other two turned with hands outstretched towards him, likening the figural panel on this slab with iconography frequently found on Irish high crosses (1988, 65). Though the panel is too worn to pick up much detail, the photogrammetry model indicates that Harbison is probably correct regarding the orientation of the figures, and perhaps the outstretched hands as well, but this is less certain (Fig. 4.49). There is also a Pictish cross-slab from the Tarbat peninsula in Scotland that shares some similarities to the upper panel on WX-3 (Meyer 2011, TR20, fig. 4.6; see Chapter 5). The figural panel on the Tarbat slab is likewise separated from the one above it by a horizontal band in relief, and features three robed figures, though it also contains a fragment of a fourth,

albeit slightly larger in scale than the others (*ibid*, 187). Based on stylistic grounds, WX-3 probably dates to the 9th or 10th century, which would make it roughly contemporary with WX-4.

Turning to WX-4, according to Nessa O'Connor, the interlace pattern on WX-4 is unusual in an Irish context, but can be compared to examples from Scotland, Wales, and the Isle of Man, and in particular, a Manx cross from Braddan (1983, 142–3, no. 60). The bifurcation of strands in the interlace pattern is suggestive of early Scandinavian influence, which would date the stone from the mid-9th to the 10th century (*ibid*; Harbison 1988, 63).



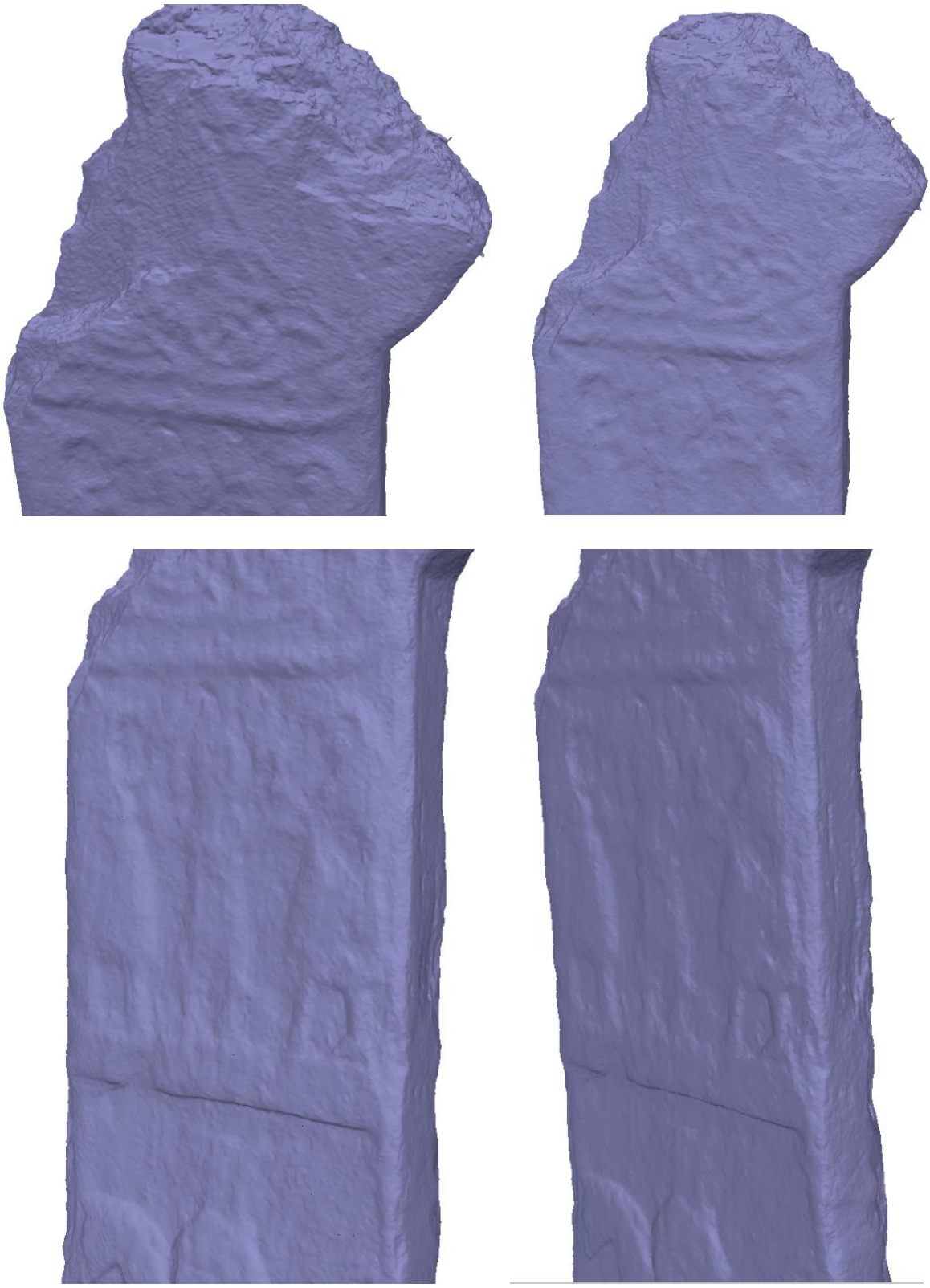












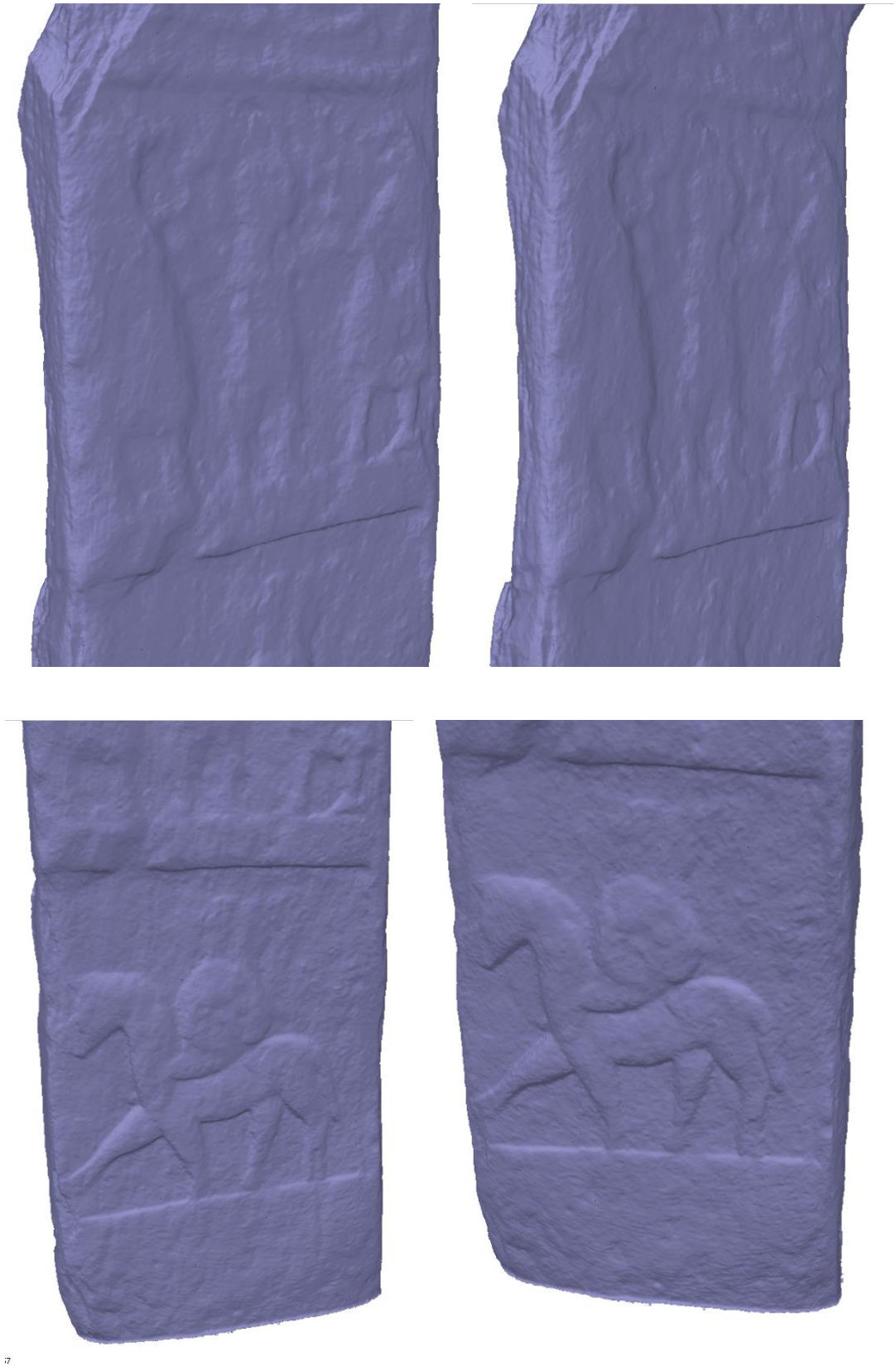


Fig. 4.49: WX-4; south face of WX-3; Chester-le-Street, Durham (source: CASC); Santon, Isle of Man (after Harbison 1988); Dupplin Cross; photogrammetry model of WX-4, showing close-ups of sculptural features

4.5 Summary and conclusions

The sculpture corpus of southeast Ireland is comprised of a wide variety of monument-types and cross-forms, and runs the chronological span of the early medieval period (Table 1). Unfortunately, it also typifies the difficulties in dating stone sculpture, in that it is 'bedevilled by the lack of chronologically fixed points' (Hughes and Hamlin 1977, 91). Most of the evidence discussed in this chapter could only suggest broad date ranges, some of which span three hundred years or more – none spanned less than one hundred years, expect perhaps WA-18 and WA-19, if they do indeed commemorate the Martan and Suibne who died in the years 878 and 854, respectively (see above). As expected, the earliest group was comprised of ogham stones and unshaped pillars, with nine pieces potentially dating to as early as the 5th century, though five of the seven ogham stones, from Legan (KK-16), Ardmore (WA-1), Kilmolash (WA-10), Lisgenan (WA-16), and Tooracurragh (WA-28), are the most likely to be earliest in the corpus. Three other fairly early stones (TS-82, WX-6, WX-17) that may date to the 6th–7th centuries could be roughly contemporary with at least some of the nine stones above. Ninety-nine stones, including 71 slabs from St Berrihert's Kyle (see Chapter 6 for discussion), may be considered relatively early, dating to sometime between the 6th and 9th centuries; forty, including two from St Berrihert's Kyle, date to the middle of the period, sometime between the 8th and 11th centuries; thirty-three stones date between the 10th and 12th centuries. An additional eleven stones had very broad date ranges of four centuries or more, dating from either the 8th or 9th century, through the 12th. However, one stone, WA-12, had a 7th–12-century date range, and CW-33 could only be dated to the medieval period in general.

Date Range	Number of Stones
5th–7th century (most likely to be early)	6 (incl. WA-28b)
5th–9th century (potentially early)	3
6th–7th century (fairly early)	3
6th–9th century (relatively early)	99
8th–11th century (middle of the period)	40 (incl. WA-28a)
10th–12th century (late)	33
8th–12th century	11
7th–12th century	1
Early medieval period	1
Total	197

Table 4.1: showing date ranges of all stones surveyed, including two separate episodes of carving on WA-28 in the 5th–7th centuries and again in the 8th–11th centuries. See also Appendix, for full detail of chronology

5

Interpreting the Sculpture

5.1 Introduction

While art historical analysis, socio-political factors, and archaeological evidence largely informed the chronological framework of the previous chapter, it is here, in the interpretation of the corpus, that the theoretical framework for this study comes to the fore (see Chapter 1, section 1.3). By applying it to these strands of evidence, we may shed further light on some of the reasons why certain stones may have been created (or modified), why certain iconographical themes were chosen, and whether they signify particular ecclesiastical or cultural links, and how these pieces of sculpture reflect ideologies, confraternal/communal relationships, and the perceptions of the landscape by early medieval people. The development of the various morphologies and cross-types, as well as the chronologies of this corpus, have already been laid out in the previous chapter, and will only be mentioned here as they relate to the themes explored below. Every attempt has been made to ensure the classification of monument-types and their various functions is as accurate as possible, and reflects the current state of knowledge at the time of writing. Some suggestions and interpretations were necessarily tentative, and a handful of stones for which a clear function could not be identified are discussed in more than one section. Additionally, some stones with multiple functions were likewise discussed in more than one section. As with the chronological framework, a breakdown of the monument-types and functions of the stones in this corpus is provided in the Appendix for quick reference.

5.2 Commemorating the dead in southeast Ireland

Monuments created in commemoration of the dead make up the vast majority of sculpture in this corpus. There are 222 pieces of carved stone, distributed across 35 sites, that can be considered funerary monuments; almost all of them, with a few notable exceptions (see below), are grave-markers. This is no surprise, given the 'intense Insular interest in eschatology' (Ní Ghrádaigh 2015, 231). Yet, a number of recent archaeological excavations – largely undertaken ahead of infrastructure and development schemes – have revealed that graves at early medieval burial grounds without a church, as well as those at some minor church sites,

often produce little to no evidence of accompanying grave-markers (e.g. Corlett and Potterton 2010; Ó Carragáin 2009b). However, it should also be noted that at many of these sites, at least in their earlier phases, burials clearly respect one another (*ibid*), which would suggest that the surface of each grave was presumably marked in some way. Of course, there were probably some burials that were not marked at all; others may have used materials that would go unrecognised as grave-markers within a generation or two (e.g. an uncarved stone or boulder), or else not survive (i.e. wood). Even in regions of Ireland with an unusually high density of sculpture, such as Corcu Duibne, Co. Kerry, there is typically just a few pieces at lesser churches. This often includes one relatively large monument, to signify that the site is sacred space, and, occasionally, a few smaller pieces of sculpture to mark the graves of founders, or other revered individuals (Fanning 1981, 86, 151–2; Swift 1997, 40–1; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 161–3). Excavations of a well-known example, at Kilnasaggart in Co. Armagh, found both dug and stone-lined graves grouped around its single cross-carved pillar (Hamlin 1982, 291; Fanning 1981, 151). The inscription on the Kilnasaggart pillar also references its function as a boundary marker – a dual role that was likewise fulfilled by ogham stones (more below).

Funerary rituals and practices are universal in human societies; yet, most of the material culture surrounding death, and the ways in which the dead are commemorated, does not survive. There is ample evidence that many early medieval monuments, including grave-markers, were made of wood rather than stone (Edwards 1985; Kelly 1991; Maddern 2013; Manning 2015, 128). However, while the materiality of wooden monuments lends to them their own set of socially significant ritual and performative practices (e.g, Bede's description of relics created from slivers taken from Oswald's cross at Heavenfield, Northumbria, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III.2, in Plummer), stone is especially suited to the creation of monumental sculpture. Its materiality evokes a sense of permanence and timelessness that fits in well with Christian beliefs regarding death and the resurrection of the body, and carving in stone can, perhaps, be seen as an expression of the desire on the part of the carver, or patron, to create something enduring. Moreover, the choice to carve in stone (as opposed to wood) is revealing in itself, in terms of the value placed on such monuments within early medieval society. Furthermore, their longevity enables us to explore 'contemporary ideas of memory through time' (Ní Ghrádaigh 2015, 231).

5.2.1 Grave-markers and other funerary sculpture

Almost all of the funerary monuments surveyed for this study were probably grave-markers, and, as already mentioned, constitute the largest proportion of the corpus. By their nature,

grave-markers are intrinsically commemorative, though they are by no means the only commemorative sculpture represented (see below). There are 99 upright grave-markers, distributed across 20 sites, including seven ogham stones, and two cross-carved boulders, from Tullaherin (KK-17) and Clone (WX-10). The remainder are predominantly recumbent grave-markers, though eight shrine posts, as monuments for the 'very special dead', are also discussed below.

5.2.1.1 Ogham stones

As stated in Chapter 2, large-scale studies of ogham stones have already been undertaken, or are ongoing (i.e. *Ogham in 3D*), and thus, they are largely excluded from this corpus. However, any additional carving, beyond the ogham inscription, *is* considered within the scope of this project, and cross-carvings were recorded on seven ogham stones in the region, from Gowran and Legan, in Co. Kilkenny (KK-12, KK-16), and from Ardmore, Kilmolash, Knockboy, Lisgenan, and Tooracurragh, in Co. Waterford (WA-1, WA-10, WA-12, WA-16, WA-28). These stones are discussed primarily in sections 5.3 and 5.4; however, as one of the earliest types of stone grave-markers from the early medieval period, they will also be touched upon briefly here. As Catherine Swift states (1997, 42), ogham stones fulfilled three purposes, according to early medieval Irish writers, the same three roles that are specified for stone pillars in the Bible – they acted as memorials for the dead, boundary markers, and proclamations of land ownership. While ogham stones certainly did serve as memorials for the dead, their commemorative functions in relation to actual burials is still an ongoing area of study ('Ogham' 2018). However, boundaries were considered liminal places in the early medieval period, and perceived of as appropriate settings for communion between worlds, as well as between communities (Ó Riain 1972; McCarthy 2013, 188–9). This concept is quite appropriate in terms of the placement of *ferta*, or 'grave mounds' along the boundaries of estates, which were also often marked with an ogham stone, inscribed with the name of its owner and his kin (Swift 1997, 42–3; on *ferta*, see also Chapter 8, section 8.4). Regarding the ogham stones under discussion here, it is impossible to say for certain whether the crosses on KK-16, WA-1, WA-16, and the lower cross on WA-28 (Fig. 5.1) were carved at the same time as the ogham – and, thus, are likewise commemorative of the named individual – since the chronological relationship between the inscriptions and crosses on these stones could not be conclusively established. However, all four feature potentially early cross-types, which suggests they could be roughly contemporaneous, and indeed, there is no evidence to the contrary (Chapter 4). We know at least one, though probably both crosses on the Kilmolash ogham stone are earlier than

the inscription (WA-10), but while the Knockboy ogham stone (WA-12) also features a potentially early cross-form, the ogham and cross are not contemporaneous (Chapter 4). So, like the Gowran cross (KK-12) and the upper cross on the Tooracurragh stone (WA-28), which are definitely later than their respective inscriptions, the cross on WA-12 probably relates to a period of reuse (see section 5.3.2).

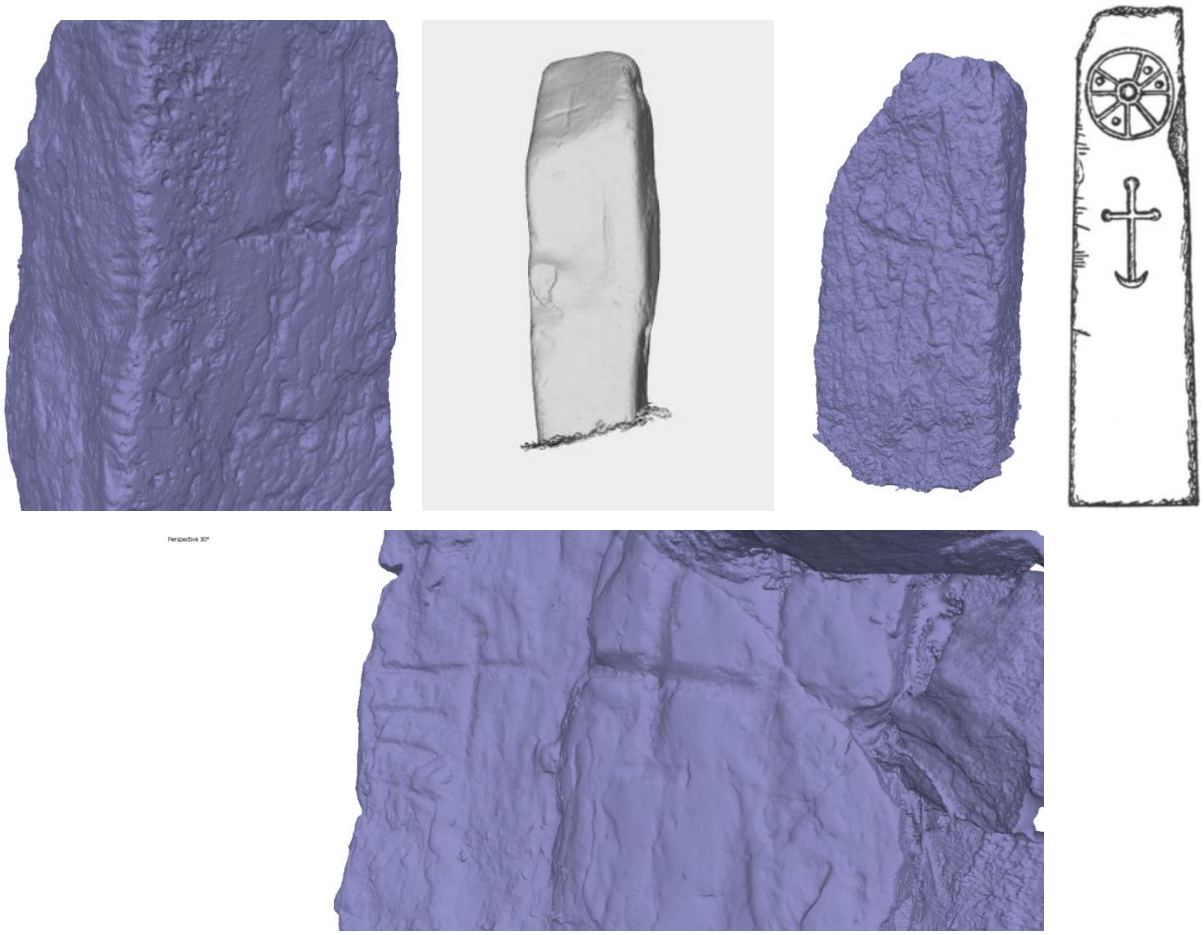


Fig. 5.1: Five (potentially) originally Christian ogham stones – KK-16, WA-1, WA-16, WA-28, and WA-10

5.2.1.2 Other upright grave-markers

Seventy-one of the remaining 92 upright grave-markers come from St Berrihert's Kyle, which was an early, and precocious, centre of sculpture production (Chapter 6). Most of the upright grave-markers (Fig. 5.2), including the aforementioned boulders, are (relatively) early, likely dating to before the 9th century – an interpretation that is supported by their morphologies, frequently in conjunction with (typically) early motifs, e.g. incised linear crosses, marigolds, crosses-of-arcs, etc. (Chapters 4 and 6). However, there are probably some exceptions to this, e.g. the Kilmokea 'high' cross (WX-19). Additionally, six crosses, from Kilbracken (CW-34, CW-35), Lismore (WA-21), Kildoran (WX-15, WX-16), and Kilmokea (WX-21), could possibly be later. While there are 6th and 7th century examples, most cruciform stones

(including these six) are thought to date from the 8th century or later, and without additional evidence, these can only be dated very broadly (Chapter 4). However, the presence of upright grave-markers at sites where there is no evidence for a stone church, or any other stylistically later stone monuments (e.g. large, recumbent slabs), would suggest that the site may have fallen out of use by the 10th century or earlier (e.g. Caherlehillan, Co. Kerry; Sheehan 2009). This probably occurred at St Berrihert's Kyle (Chapter 6), and may have also been the case at Island, Co. Waterford, which contains only a small upright grave-marker (WA-9), and an otherwise undecorated ogham stone, within a large earth and stone circular enclosure.



Fig. 5.2: Examples of upright grave-markers – CW-24, KK-10, TS-1, TS-4, WX-8, and WX-19

5.2.1.3 Recumbent grave-markers

At present, there may be as many as 114 recumbent early medieval grave-markers still extant in southeast Ireland, though owing to the frequent fragmentation of cross-slabs, the actual number of individual monuments represented is almost certainly less. Like the upright grave-markers, a substantial proportion of recumbent slabs are concentrated, in this case, at just two sites – 66 are from Toureen Peakaun, only 6 km east of St Berrihert's Kyle, and 23 are from Clonmore (including CW-31, which is now in Clonmore Castle), with the remaining 25 stones distributed across 16 sites, including one from St Berrihert's Kyle (TS-80). Most recumbent grave-markers were placed over a burial; however, there is evidence that some small cross-

slabs, like the one found at Killell, Co. Wexford (WX-17), were instead placed inside the grave, either somewhere on the body or underneath the head, in a similar fashion to the 7th-century 'pillow stones' found at Hartlepool, Monkwearmouth, and Jarrow in Northumbria, as well as more recently at Tarbat, Portmahomack, Scotland (*cf.* Kelly 1988; Maddern 2013, 18–25). Additionally, excavations at Toureen Peakaun indicate that, as at High Island and Gallen, earlier cross-slabs (i.e. TS-83) were sometimes incorporated into later burials, either to line the edges of the grave, usually as the head- or footstone, or placed somewhere on the body (e.g. Kendrick 1939; Ó Carragáin 2007b; 2017b, 71; Maddern 2014). Of these 114 recumbent grave-markers, 87 could be relatively early, predominately dating to the 9th century or earlier – most of these are small, portable, and un-, or else minimally, shaped slabs that may be roughly contemporary with many of the aforementioned upright grave-markers (Fig. 5.3). Moreover, there is a broad association between the production of stone sculpture to mark individual graves, and the development of certain concepts surrounding burial and the afterlife, as well as with the rise in the practice of praying for the dead (O'Leary 2015, 177).



Fig. 5.3: Examples of early, and relatively early, recumbent grave-markers – TS-80, WX-17, TS-83, and WX-2

5.2.1.4 Commemoration and inscriptions

Beyond simply declaring the Christian identity of the person commemorated, facilitating prayer was one of the key functions of funerary monuments. The ideology surrounding the concept of purgatory was already being developed by the 7th century, and the underlying anxiety which accompanied the rise of this concept was soothed by encouraging the belief that the living could ease the interim suffering of souls in purgatory, and 'ensure their resurrection to paradise' through prayer (Maddern 2013, 248–9; O'Leary 2015, 118). Prayers were thought to influence the fate of the soul, and penitence, expressed through prayers and psalms, was believed to be effective in both atoning for sins committed in life as well as procuring divine assistance or intercession for the dead (*ibid*). Yet the act of offering prayers to aid the souls of the dead would have benefited the prayer-givers as well, serving to reassure them in their own

apprehensions regarding the afterlife. The iconography of these monuments is invariably focused around the cross in some form or another, which, as Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh suggested (2015, 232), could be described as a visual representation of the prayers requested. As the eyes of the viewer trace the outline of the cross on the stone, they reinforce the sign of the cross made by the priest at the liturgical blessing of the tomb – in a sense, blessing the body again (*ibid*). Moreover, the carved cross itself could be seen as an immutable reminder of that original blessing, offered during internment. In this regard, even cross-slabs without an inscription would invoke a blessing, from anyone who viewed it, for the individual underneath, 'forging an essential relationship between the living and the dead' (O'Leary 2015, 118).

However, with regard to preserving the long-term memory of a particular individual, inscribing their name on a stone, especially in conjunction with the solicitation of a prayer-request, would surely have been perceived as one of the most effective, and enduring, forms of commemoration. The earliest inscriptions were simply personal names (Chapter 4). The prayer-request was implicit, and perhaps the recitation of the name itself also constituted a prayer, either to, or for, that individual (or both). Yet, comparatively few of the carved stones in the southeast are inscribed, and even less are still intact. Given the emphasis that the early liturgy placed on praying for the souls of the dead, the paucity of inscribed stones at most ecclesiastical sites seems counterintuitive, especially considering that 'every possible means was…employed by the faithful to ensure they were remembered by the sainted dead and the surviving community in their prayers' (Maddern 2013, 249). However, this 'quest for regular prayers' was satisfied in several ways, both as part of the liturgy, and in private prayer grave-side, 'all of which were intended to perpetuate monastic memories and seek salvation for souls through prayer' (*ibid*, 250). One of these ways were diptychs, which are tablets of wood, ivory, or metal, inscribed with the names of those whom a community regularly remembered in their prayers (*ibid*, 207). Another was the compilation of manuscript memorials such as necrologies, confraternity books, scribal colophons, and *libri vitae* ('books of life'), which contained lists of the dead to be remembered and recited aloud, usually during the Mass (*ibid*, 206–7, 249; O'Leary 2015, 120). In this way, the dead were formally remembered by their community, and confraternal communities (see below), through the regular liturgical recitation of their names. Cross-carved stones should be considered alongside these mnemonic aids, as a complementary 'tool of remembrance', in facilitating private grave-side prayer and meditation, as well as communal prayer via liturgical processions and circumambulatory rituals (e.g. 'The Saints' Graveyard' at Inishcealtra, O'Leary 2015). As mentioned above, uninscribed stones, which represent the vast majority of early medieval grave-markers, both in the study area

(except Toureen Peakaun) and elsewhere, would still have facilitated prayer for the deceased, even though their name may often have been unknown to the prayer-giver. Thus, the minority of stones that were also inscribed with names may have been memorials for the 'special' dead, made up of important members of a particular community such as abbots, coarbs, scribes, wealthy patrons, etc., to which prayers could be offered – both *to*, as well as *for*, on behalf of the living and the 'ordinary' dead (O'Leary 2015, 119). This practice persisted throughout the early medieval period; in his *De Statu Ecclesiae* (*c*. 1111), Gille, Bishop of Limerick wrote, 'the purification of the dead should be done *here* in prayer and almsgiving. These advance them to purification, since the sweat of the living is the rest of the dead' (Fleming 2001a, 159).

5.2.1.5 Saintly graves

Additionally, the increase in praying to the 'special' dead, and the belief in their power as intermediaries with the divine, developed in tandem with (or perhaps because of?) the 7th-century rise of relic cults. By this time, the corporeal remains of saints, and other particularly holy individuals, were thought to contain the primary locus of their power (Wycherly 2015), and prayers said while at the shrines built to these 'very special dead' could be considered especially potent. Such shrines, often made of stone, were erected over a 'special' grave, usually that of a site's founding saint, at some point after the person was initially buried (sometimes within a generation or two, sometimes centuries). Most stone shrines are categorised as either 'gable' or 'composite' (for discussions on different forms and configurations, see Thomas 1971; 1998; also Chapter 8), and though the survival rate of stone shrines in Ireland skews their distribution predominately towards the west, more easterly examples have come to light in recent years. While at present there is one known example of an intact gable shrine at Slane, Co. Meath, four posts from a composite stone shrine are built into the walls of the south church at Monasterboice, Co. Louth (Ó Carragáin 2003, 143, n. 25).

Eight shrine components were also identified in the study area – four composite posts from Toureen Peakaun have been recorded (Waddell and Holland 1990, 179, fig. 9, pl. 6; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, no. 39, 286–9), and four previously unrecorded shrine components (CW-3, CW-17, CW-19, CW-30) were identified at Clonmore, Co. Carlow during the course of fieldwork for this project (Fig. 5.4). A detailed discussion of composite stone shrines, the Clonmore posts in particular, can be found in Chapter 8. However, some of the most important functions of stone shrines, at least in terms of this study, will be highlighted here. Regardless of whether the body of the enshrined individual remained undisturbed, or had been translated elsewhere for the purposes of veneration, stone shrines fulfilled several key roles within the

ecclesiastical landscape. Firstly, by enshrining, and therefore emphasising, the original burial place of a site's (founding) saint, these monuments were intended to express the ecclesiastical identity of a church, and, perhaps, a degree of autonomy (Ó Carragáin 2003, 143–6). Moreover, recent work by Niamh Wycherly (2015) has demonstrated that a significant proportion of a church's socio-political and spiritual authority was derived from possessing the corporeal relics of saints. Sometimes, as in the case of Clonmore, a church's relics were a key component of its identity (Chapter 8), and the promotion of saints' cults, through the enshrinement of relics, was a driving factor in the increased demand for burial, since burial 'near the bones of the saint' was encouraged as a substitute for burial 'near the bones of the ancestors' (O'Brien 1992, 136). Due to the popularity of relic veneration, stone shrines at founders' graves were also often linked to pilgrimage activity (Herity 1993, 194; Crook 2011, 19–23). As such, they were often placed at 'the centre of a hierarchy of sacred space', and were the focus of ritual practices designed to convey 'a sense of the sacredness of their shrine and the exemplary life of its patron saint' (*cf*. Inishmurray, Co. Sligo; Ó Carragáin 2009a).

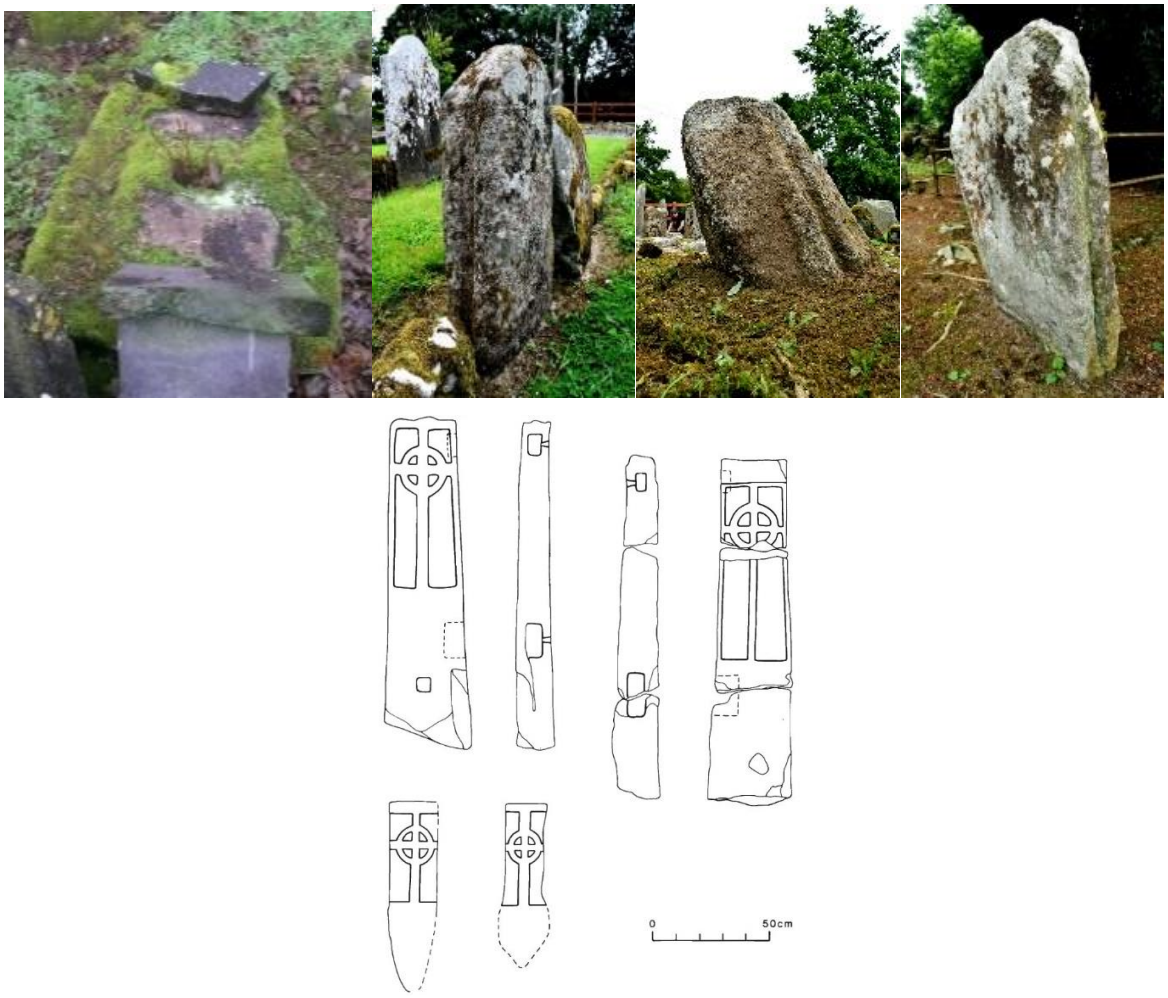


Fig. 5.4: Shrine components in the study region, from Clonmore (above; CW-3, CW-17, CW-19, and CW-30), and Toureen Peakaun (not catalogued; after Waddell and Holland 1990)

5.2.1.6 Commemorative monuments for clerics buried elsewhere

Yet, as previously stated, not all commemorative monuments were associated with graves. It has been suggested that at least some of the inscribed slabs at Toureen Peakaun commemorate prominent ecclesiastics that had a connection to the monastery, but were not actually buried there (Moloney 1964, 105–6; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 325–6). These small, portable slabs may instead be linked to the practice of commemorating the dead during the Mass with inscribed diptychs, a practice which has also been suggested for the particular group of book-like inscribed slabs found at Lindisfarne and Hartlepool, in Northumbria (Cramp 1984, vol. 1, 7). It had also been postulated that these stones would have been placed on ledges, or another such area for display, against interior walls of churches (*ibid*; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 326). However, recent excavation reports from these sites have shown that the evidence is thin for this interpretation of their use (e.g. Maddern 2013, 57–8). This has led Maddern to instead suggest that these slabs may have been displayed elsewhere, or perhaps moved around, and, on some occasions, may have been used grave-side (albeit not necessarily as grave-markers), as part of outdoor processional liturgies (*ibid*, 58–60, 248). Given this, perhaps caution should be assumed in attributing all of the inscribed slabs at Toureen Peakaun to this practice, particularly as there are also numerous uninscribed cross-slabs here, as well. However, it is tempting to interpret at least some of the Toureen slabs as commemorative monuments for certain ecclesiastics *in absentia* – perhaps, as first suggested by Moloney (1964, 102–6), the two slabs inscribed with Cummene (Fada, of Cashel?) and Ladcen (of Clonfert Molua), and Domnic (of Tibberaghny; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, nos. 16, 31). Certainly, confraternities between ecclesiastical communities, for mutual spiritual support through the exchange of prayers, had been established across Europe by the 7th century, and this would include the exchange of manuscript lists (i.e. confraternity books or *libri vitae*) between participating monastic communities (Maddern 2013, 206; O'Leary 2015, 120). A related practice is described in the (albeit much later) 12th-century *Life* of Colmán of Lynn – the cemetery at Lynn was subdivided to facilitate veneration and burial associated with several saints from different churches (Meyer 1911, §42). A proxy tomb or monument, dedicated to a particular saint, would be erected in a designated area, and followers or devotees of that particular saint might choose to be buried around it. Ó Carragáin (2017a) uses this example to emphasise how sharing burial space between members of multiple ecclesiastical communities amplified its sanctity, as well as fostered a sense of fraternity among those communities and, as he has also pointed out (*ibid*), it is not difficult to see something similar occurring here with the collection of slabs at Toureen Peakaun. The use of inscribed stone as both a proxy, and permanent

monument for the dead, possibly as part of a confraternity between two or more ecclesiastical communities, could certainly be seen as an appealing (and reciprocal) way to increase the amount of people praying for one's soul at any given time, perhaps to act as an additional 'boost' to speed the soul to heaven.

5.2.1.7 Tenth–twelfth-century grave-markers

Cross-slabs of the 7th–10th centuries were generally small and portable, though by the 10th (and maybe even by the 9th) century this was beginning to change. As early as the late 7th century, and certainly by the 8th century, the Church had begun to introduce legislation regarding acceptable burial practices for Christians, encouraging them to be interred in church, rather than ancestral, cemeteries (O'Brien 2009, 148–50). Though the transition from burial grounds to churches was much more gradual than suggested by O'Brien and indeed, was still ongoing at the end of our period (O'Leary 2015, 121), as churchyard burial nevertheless became increasingly common, church cemeteries became more crowded, and burial space progressively limited. The cutting of later graves into earlier ones became an increasing concern, and by the 11th century, recumbent grave-markers had become quite large, with cross-slabs often exceeding 1.5 m in length (Fig. 5.5). This was seen as a means of protecting the body from damage, in anticipation of that individual's physical resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ, by demonstrating that a piece of ground was already occupied (*ibid*, 133–4). Perhaps more importantly, O'Leary has suggested that an 'increased awareness of the ineffectiveness of smaller stones in perpetuating the long-term memory of a particular grave or individual' may have been an incentive for the more monumental nature of grave-markers towards the end of the early medieval period (*ibid*, 133). Smaller slabs became overgrown, buried, or otherwise lost within a relatively short period; increasing the size of the slabs thus increased their visibility, and in turn, their perceived permanence (*ibid*). This practice is particularly well-evidenced at ecclesiastical sites like Iniscealtra, Co. Clare (e.g. O'Leary 2015), and Clonmore, Co. Carlow (Chapter 8), both of which contain a significant number of large cross-slabs, and were highly desired places of burial in the 11th and 12th centuries – and undoubtedly earlier, as well.

However, the creation of large stone cross-slabs, as with inscribed or heavily ornamented sculpture, represents a significant investment of wealth and resources, and so may be a valuable means of distinguishing the internments of important individuals at ecclesiastical sites where only one or two large cross-slabs occur. This is perhaps best exemplified at the parish church of Hook, Co. Wexford, where there is a single large, recumbent 11th–12th-

century cross-slab (WX-14), still *in situ* next to the north wall of the nave, which would support the suggestion that this marked the grave of someone important within the community. Although they are not *in situ*, a similar suggestion could also be made regarding cross-slabs at Ferns, Co. Wexford (WX-11), Killamery (KK-13, KK-15) and, possibly, Dysart (KK-8, KK-9), in Co. Kilkenny, as well as at Clashmore (WA-6) and Mothel, in Co. Waterford (WA-25). The aforementioned slab at Killamery, KK-13, is also notable because it is carved with two variations of the same formulaic prayer, *ÓR AR ANMIN/ANMAINN AEDAEN/AEDAIN* ('a prayer for the soul of Aedáin'), though not by the same hand, which would indicate that one was carved later than the other. O'Leary (2015, 134–41) has demonstrated a heighted concern with praying for the dead at Iniscealtra in the 11th and 12th centuries, characterised by repetitive commemoration through organised processionals and circumambulatory rituals. One explanation, albeit speculative, for this double inscription on the Killamery stone is that perhaps similar liturgical processions or circumambulatory rituals occurred at Killamery, which were at some point modified in a way that required a change in movement around the stone during formal prayer-giving, and, subsequently, the orientation of the inscription.



Fig. 5.5: Examples of large, recumbent grave-markers – CW-23, WA-6, WA-20, WA-25, and WX-14

5.2.2 Production and artistic influences

In addition to their individual functions as grave-markers and commemorative monuments, it is also important to consider the broader socio-political factors in the production of funerary sculpture. In particular, large collections of cross-slabs can, at times, give us insight into the socio-political climate of a site at the time of their creation. As already discussed in previous chapters, Ó Floinn has suggested that at Clonmacnoise, its three stylistically related groups of cross-slabs represent periods of brief but prolific spikes in sculpture production, each related to an increase in royal patronage. A spike in sculpture production was likewise suggested for the large collections of cross-slabs at St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun (*ibid*); such a

phenomenon seems to have occurred at Clonmore as well, though an increased desire for burial *ad sanctos* may have been one of the primary catalysts here (Chapter 8).

In another study of the Clonmacnoise slabs, Swift indicates that the distribution of stylistically related cross-slabs (in this case, those identified as 'Clonmacnoise-type') at certain churches within its hinterlands may be evidence of ecclesiastical landholding (2003, 117). As the 'centre of grave-slab production' in the region, she suggests that such cross-slabs were either produced at Clonmacnoise, or else at these subsidiary churches by travelling craftsmen who had trained at Clonmacnoise (*ibid*, 118–9) – an artistic relationship she demonstrates between subsidiary churches in the Hebrides and Iona, as well (*ibid*). Such evidence is more difficult to extrapolate at sites with only one or two carved stones, especially as the iconography of most grave-markers (i.e. plain linear or outline crosses) might be considered stylistically ubiquitous in an early Christian context. However, it can certainly be suggested that an existing (or desired) affiliation between ecclesiastical communities could be expressed artistically through sculpture. This is evidenced with the unique 'marigold' motif shared between a cross-slab at Ferns (WX-11) and three crosses from Kilmuckridge (see below), which suggests links between the two sites, southwestern Wales (St David's in particular) and, perhaps, Gallen in Co. Offaly (Chapter 7). Returning to Clonmacnoise, there is at least one, but probably two, cross-slabs of 'Clonmacnoise-type' (KK-6, KK-7) at Coolcashin, Co. Kilkenny, which raises the possibility of an association between these ecclesiastical sites not before considered. It seems unlikely (though not impossible) that the slabs were made at Clonmacnoise and then brought *c*. 75 km southeast to Coolcashin; future geological analysis might be able to determine this (Chapter 9). However, Clonmacnoise was a very large and influential ecclesiastical community, and the Coolcashin slabs (or at least KK-6, as KK-7 is too small a fragment to make such stylistic comparisons) could have been modelled after the ones at Clonmacnoise, perhaps even created by a travelling craftsman who had trained there (Fig. 5.6). *Cúil Chaisín* was 'burned by foreigners' in 844 and 1157 (*AFM*), and aerial photographs reveal an extensive series of earthworks and trackways around, and to the north, of the ruined church that are indicative of medieval settlement (Farrelly 2018b). This would suggest that Coolcashin was a sizable ecclesiastical complex in the early medieval period, wealthy enough to attract raiders, and capable of producing, or soliciting the services of, skilled craftsmanship.

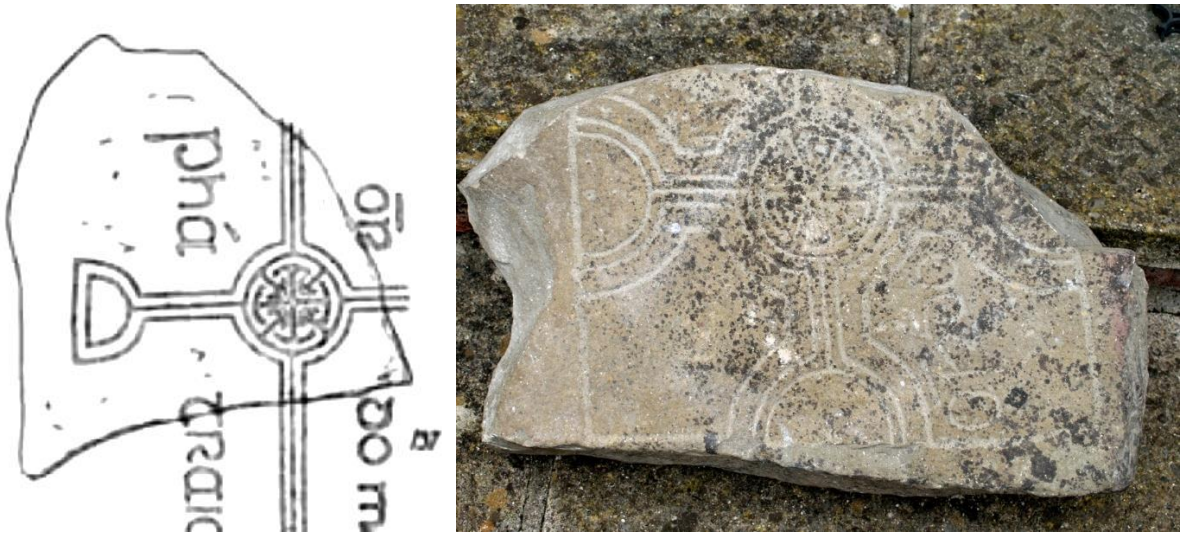


Fig. 5.6: Clonmacnoise slab no. 137 (after Macalister 1909) and KK-6 from Coolcashin Co. Kilkenny, showing the similar central and terminal decorations of the two expansional crosses

5.3 Boundary markers, non-funerary commemorative monuments, and devotional foci

This constitutes the second-largest group of sculpture under discussion, and is a necessarily broad category, as the majority of these stones are multivalent creations – many commemorative monuments were the focus of devotional practices; termon or boundary markers may be carved with iconography that also served as mnemonic devices, in aid of contemplation and prayer. In particular, the spatial setting of the monuments in this group would have been a key element of their function and perception. However, the landscape context is preserved for only a small portion of the sculpture in this corpus; most of the stones here have since been moved, and the knowledge of their original location lost, an issue that continues to challenge early medieval sculpture studies (Williams, Kirton and Gondek 2015a; Kirton 2015, 37). Yet, when the original context of a carved stone *does* survive, it provides us with valuable information regarding some of the motivations and intentions of their creators in erecting them, as well as how viewers might have engaged with, and experienced, these monuments in the early medieval period. In turn, interpretations may also be cautiously suggested for morphologically and/or iconographically similar monuments that are out of their original landscape contexts. As already mentioned, the sculpture in this section spans a broad range of functions. Most can be interpreted as boundary markers, either of the limits of an ecclesiastical territory, or areas of sanctity within that territory, with some also serving as way- or route-markers in the landscape; some are raised in commemoration of an important person (usually a founding saint), or event; others are the focus of devotional practices such as prayer,

penitence, or pilgrimage (e.g. relic veneration). Yet, stone monuments, and their various functions, are interconnected in terms of shaping 'the experience of people within the landscape…and intrinsic to our understanding of space in the early medieval world as both socially constructing and constructed' (McCarthy 2013, 28).

5.3.1 Boundary and termon markers

Crosses or cross-carved stones were often used to delineate the extent of a church's lands (termon) as well as create various 'zones' of sacred space within an ecclesiastical estate. They were situated in highly visible locations, such as prominent points in the landscape (e.g. on a rise or hilltop), or along routeways into church lands (Swift 1998, 109, 118). Regarding internal divisions within monastic and ecclesiastical complexes, stone monuments were usually positioned at the entrance into an area of particular sanctity, often (though not always) accompanied by an enclosing wall or ditch (*ibid*). The use of crosses and cross-carved stones to mark out church lands is attested in documentary sources of the early medieval period, most notably in the early 8th-century legislative text *Collectio canonum Hibernensis*, which provides for the marking of termons with crosses, both to demarcate ecclesiastical land, and to bestow protection upon it (Hamlin 1987a, 139; Hughes 1966, 148–9). Yet, this can be a difficult monument-type to recognise, as they are not all necessarily large or imposing, and thus, smaller monuments can be particularly susceptible to destruction and relocation. Indeed, this is evidenced by the poor survival rates of *in situ* termon markers outside of the west of Ireland, which led Bernadette McCarthy to suggest that using sculpture to mark the boundaries of church sites, and their wider ecclesiastical estates, without an accompanying enclosure, was a regional feature (2013, 648). However, Gillian Boazman has more recently noted this phenomenon at Tully, Co. Dublin (2016, 38–9), and significantly, the results of this present study would also indicate that this pattern was more widespread than the data has previously suggested.

Surviving termon markers are noted from Killinaboy and Temple Cronan, Co. Clare, Cool West and Arraglen, Co. Kerry, and Annaghdown, Co. Galway (Sheehan 1982, 37; Ó Carragáin 2003, 138–9, ns. 15–6; McCarthy 2013, 603). Additionally, some later medieval crosses, such as one at Killeenavarra, Co. Galway, may indicate where earlier termon crosses once stood (McCarthy 2013, 544). The existence of an earlier termon can also be preserved as a placename, usually that of a townland, which may have once been part of an ecclesiastical estate ('Termon(s)', logaimn.ie). This designation is also sometimes accompanied by crosses or cross-carved stones, like the several examples from Church Island (*Inis Úasal*), Co. Kerry,

and the cross from Kilmacduagh, Co. Galway (Ó Carragáin 2003, 138–41; McCarthy 2013, 510). Termon markers can sometimes be identified by their close proximity to modern parish boundaries, which, albeit an approximation, often coincide with the early medieval territorial boundaries reconstructed by Paul MacCotter (2008). However, these monuments were not placed at regular intervals to mark out the full extent of a church's land. Rather, they were instead positioned along key routeways, running in and out of ecclesiastical estates (Ó Carragáin 2014, 291; forthcoming), where they could be easily seen and interacted with. The prevalence of stone monuments along important routeways is extensively evidenced from recent studies of ecclesiastical estates and landholding within the early medieval kingdom of Fir Maige, Co. Cork (*ibid*). Likewise, though excavations of St Kevin's Road at Glendalough did not provide a date of construction, the significance of this routeway during the early medieval period is attested by the number of monuments that were erected along it during the period (Price 1940, 256–63; McCarthy 2013, 189). Furthermore, this distribution pattern is widely paralleled in Britain and beyond (e.g. Trench-Jellicoe 1998; Edwards 1999; 2009; Back Danielsson 2015).

Six, though possibly as many as eight, *in situ* termon markers were identified in the study area, as well as five additional monuments, which, though they are definitely out of context, were probably also termon/boundary markers. The three for which we have the most evidence are associated with the early church site of *Cill Mucrois* (Kilmuckridge), Co. Wexford (Fig. 5.7), and are key components of a detailed case study in Chapter 7. They are modestly sized crosses of similar iconography and morphology, indicating that they are likely to be the product of a single carving 'project'. Two of these crosses, WX-22 and WX-23, which have since been moved, were originally discovered close to the parish boundary between Kilmuckridge and Donaghmore (Ranson 1945). Notably, they also straddled the R742, a major regional road running N-S along the coast of Co. Wexford. The third cross, WX-24, presumably still *in situ*, is situated *c*. 120 m south of the modern church of Kilmuckridge, and on the immediate west side of the R742. While this cross was likely erected along what was, presumably, the main routeway through the ecclesiastical estate of *Cill Mucrois*, its position relative to the present church indicates that it may have marked an inner enclosure, perhaps that containing the core ecclesiastical buildings, rather than the border of the estate (see Chapter 7). Altogether, the relative homogeneity of the three crosses, as well as their positions along the main road, and, in the case of WX-22 and WX-23, the parish border, indicate that this was a stylistically cohesive and contemporaneous group of monuments. Together, they served to mark key points of ingress and egress to the ecclesiastical estate of *Cill Mucrois*, both at the

northernmost extent of its lands, and, perhaps, the entrance to an inner enclosure. Moreover, their modest size and carved iconography suggest that they were meant to be encountered at close range, and, given that they were placed along a well-travelled route, it is likely that these crosses also served as mnemonic devices (see below; also Chapter 7).

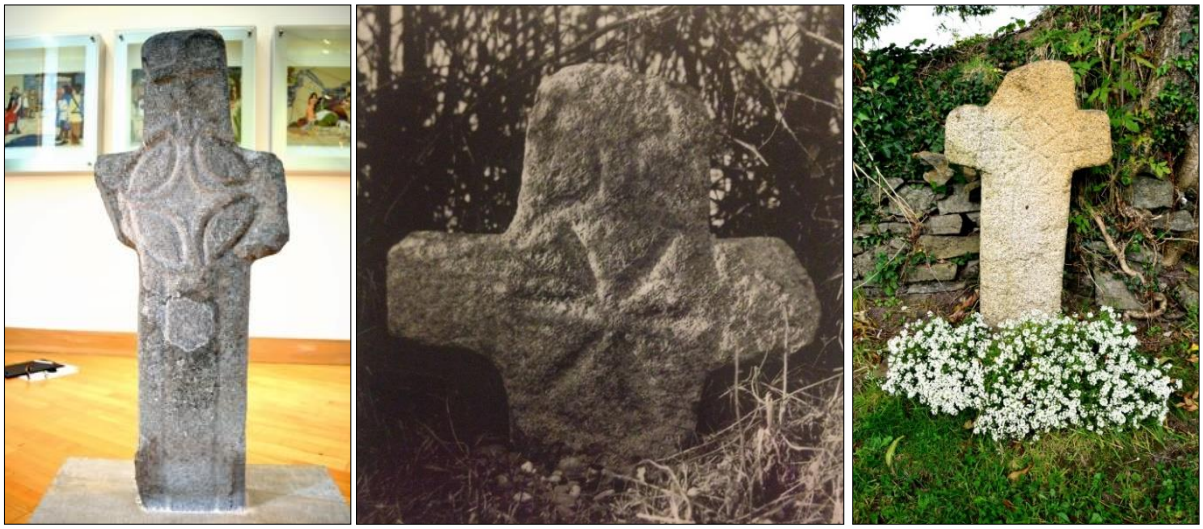


Fig. 5.7: The Cill Mucrois crosses – WX-22, WX-23, and WX-24

The fourth termon marker, WX-1, is less than 20 km north of *Cill Mucrois*, on the northern edge of the modern parish of Ardamine, Co. Wexford (Fig. 5.8). In the various *Lives* of Maedóc of Ferns, the saint is closely connected with *Ard Ladrann* (i.e. Ardamine), having supposedly landed here on his return to Ireland after studying in Wales, under St David of Menevia, for many years. Two minor miracles reputedly occurred here, and Maedóc of Ferns was thought to have established his first church in the southeast region at *Ard Ladrann*, on lands granted him by a local chief, Dimma mac Finntan (*Vita sancti Maedoc I*, §xx, §xxx, 148, 152, in Plummer; *Vita sancti Maedoc II*, §xx–i, §xxx, 300, 303, in Plummer; *Life of Maedoc of Ferns II*, §xxix–x, §xli, 205–6, 215, in Plummer). It is also worth noting that *Ard Ladrann* was closely associated with the Uí Chennselaig (*ibid*), and was perhaps a seat of minor Uí Chennselaig kingship in the early decades of the 8th century (see Chapter 4). This very tall carved cross overlooks the Owenavorragh River, which forms a natural border between the parishes of Ardamine and Kiltinnell. The cross is situated just 30 m north of the junction between the R742 regional road and two local roads, and is strategically positioned on a high ridge above the Owenavorragh River. From here, it could easily be seen by anyone navigating the river below, as well as those travelling overland – if we can presume that the R742 continues to follow the course (albeit approximately) of an early medieval routeway (see above). The ridge upon which the cross is situated is quite high, and falls away steeply. The cross was

almost certainly intended to be viewed from the river, as well as the road, and thus, needed to be large enough to be visible from below. However, practicalities aside, the cross's materiality, as expressed by its imposing size, as well as its dominating position in the landscape, would have undoubtedly had a significant impact upon viewers gazing up at it from base of the ridge. Such a large cross, while it would indeed be an impressive statement of ecclesiastical (Uí Chennselaig?) ownership, can also be considered a powerful visual metaphor. One can easily imagine an early medieval traveller on the river looking up, perhaps towards heaven, and seeing that cross high overhead – the symbol of Christ's victory over death, perhaps reminding the viewer of the promise of resurrection. When viewed from this angle, the cross would, indeed, have been an awe-inspiring sight.



Fig. 5.8: South and north faces of the Ardamine cross, WX-1

The fifth termon marker is a pillar at Giant's Grave, Co. Tipperary (TS-6; Fig. 5.9), located on 'the summit of a hill, at the highest point in the vicinity', where it was 'visible in every direction for miles' (Farrelly 2011a; Power 1952). Like the Ardamine cross, it is a tall and impressive monument; however, its massive size, and surface irregularity (apart from where it had been carved back to form a cross in relief), indicate that TS-6 may have originally been a prehistoric monument that was repurposed, or, perhaps, 'reactivated' with the addition of carved crosses during the early medieval period – as may be the case with four standing

stones on the estate of Inch Labhrainne, Co. Kerry (Ó Carragáin, forthcoming). Moreover, the townland derives its name from this pillar, and, despite its prominently carved crosses, the social memory attached to this monument is secular in nature, suggesting TS-6 continued to accumulate additional meanings throughout later periods. In Irish, the townland is *An Chloch Fhada*, or 'The Long Stone' ('An Chloch Fhada', logainm.ie). One tradition associated with the pillar is that it landed in its current location after being flung from the peak of Slievenamon by the mythical Irish hero, Fionn mac Cumhaill, and in the *Ordnance Survey Letters*, the hill upon which the pillar is erected is referred to as '*An Cnoc Air a bhFuair Fionn Fios*, i.e. the hill on which Finn (mac Cumhaill) received his (prophetic) knowledge' (Power 1952, 283; O'Flanagan 1930b, vol. 1, 51–2). Other versions of this legend claim that it was a giant that flung the pillar from Slievenamon, and, along with a large recumbent (albeit uncarved) stone *c*. 100 m south, forms what is known as 'The Giant's Grave', from which the English townland name is obviously derived (Killanin and Duignan 1967, 174).

As with the four termon markers discussed above, the Giant's Grave pillar is positioned close to a road, as well as a parish boundary, and while it has yet to be conclusively connected to any particular ecclesiastical site, the suggestion that it came to be associated with an early church at Rathronan certainly has merit (for a detailed discussion, see Thounhurst 2007, 164–6). The pillar stands 500 m west of the north-south regional road (R688), and 53 m north of a local road running east-west which, though its present course is almost certainly modern, as it makes a sharp bend to skirt both a private home and the monument, the existence of an ancient routeway along (or very near) to this modern road seems highly likely. As Ó Carragáin (forthcoming) points out, proximity to a routeway was certainly a factor when choosing to inscribe a pre-existing monument, and, indeed, the section of the modern road directly south of the Giant's Grave pillar also acts as the boundary of the townland of Giantsgrave, as well as the parish of Rathronan. Moreover, this could be interpreted as an attempt, presumably on the part of the church of Rathronan, to harness the 'power' of this earlier monument (*ibid*). However, this would not have been the only factor (*ibid*) in choosing to 'Christianize' the Giant's Grave pillar. It is also close to the southern border of the early medieval territory of Mag Femin (MacCotter 2008, 216), and, though speculative, there is evidence to indicate that the pillar may have been a site of assembly during the early medieval period, if not earlier as well (see Chapter 9). Furthermore, the association with Mag Femin is important – the Giant's Grave pillar is positioned on a routeway through royal land (Gleeson 2014, 67, 284). Similar to, perhaps, the Ossory crosses, which are on the borders of royal territory, the carvings on TS-6 could be an example of kings using crosses as statements of dominion (*cf*. Connon 2016).

The evidence regarding the early medieval use of this pillar is nuanced and complex, and further work on this stone is needed (Chapter 9).



Fig. 5.9: The pillar (TS-6) at Giant's Grave, Co. Tipperary

The sixth *in situ* termon marker is a simply incised cross-pillar at Ballygarran, Co. Waterford (WA-2) that stands at the eastern entrance of what was most likely an ecclesiastical enclosure (Fig. 5.10). The enclosure was excavated in the summer of 1940 by Michael Bowman, and the archaeological evidence, as reassessed by Curtin (2015), indicates a multiphase site with long-term occupation, and (some) burial activity, including a 7th- to 8th-century cross-slab, WA-3 (see Chapter 4). Moreover, a series of postholes, and paving, were discovered within the southeast quadrant of the enclosure, representing the remains of a wooden structure that may have been an early church (Power 1941, 64; Ó Carragáin 2010, 137). Though this interpretation is by no means certain (*ibid*), a geophysical survey in 2007 also revealed that this enclosure is within a larger, sub-circular trivallate enclosure (Bonsall and Gimson 2007; Moore and Walsh 2015). At 27 m in diameter, this enclosure is fairly small, compared to the average diameter of 100–200 m (Swift 1998, 116), though it should be noted that the size of these areas varied quite widely, as much as between 30 m to 300 m (Ó Carragáin 2003, 137). However, the layout of these two enclosures is consistent with archaeological and documentary evidence for the concentric design typical of ecclesiastical complexes in the 7th and 8th centuries (Swift 1998, 118) – with its innermost enclosure sometimes delineated by a

cross or cross-carved stone (like WA-2), and housing the core ecclesiastical buildings (*ibid*, 109, 118; Ó Carragáin 2009a, 217–8).

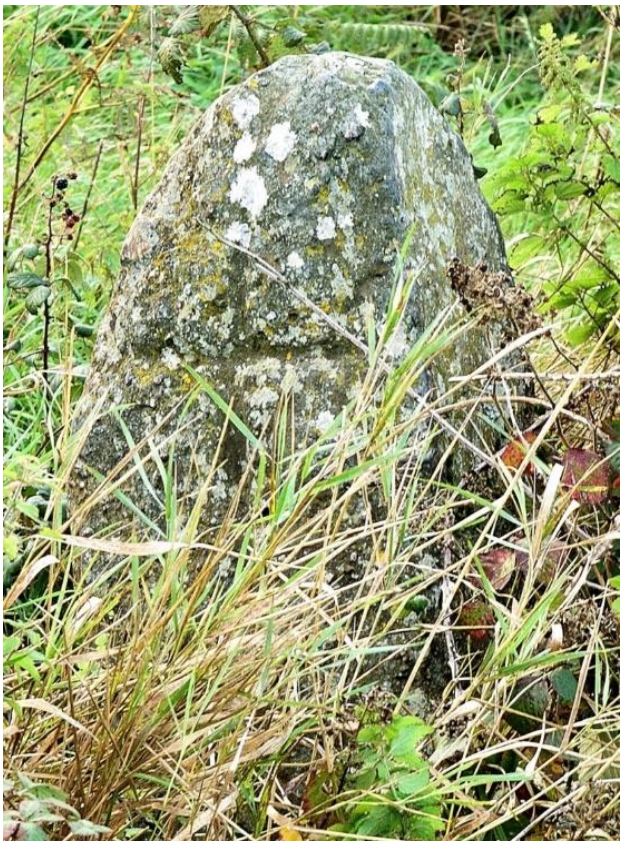


Fig. 5.10: Cross-incised pillar (WA-2), now much overgrown, standing at the entrance to a probable ecclesiastical enclosure

A seventh, probably *in situ*, termon marker was found at Mothel, Co. Waterford (WA-26). Caution should, perhaps, be taken in presuming that it is in its original context, as it stands directly at the junction of the modern road and the entrance to a farm (Fig. 5.11). The first four stones already mentioned here are likewise close to roads, albeit at a small (i.e. safe) distance back – thus, it seems more likely (albeit not certain) that the Mothel pillar could have potentially been moved at some point, if only to protect the monument or prevent damage. However, there is otherwise no evidence to indicate that it has ever been moved. If we do presume that it is indeed *in situ*, then its roadside location, only 50 m from the graveyard of the church itself, strongly indicates that this tapering pillar may have been erected along an earlier north-south routeway leading into Mothel, and as already suggested of the third *Cill Mucrois* cross (WX-24) and Ballygarran pillar (WA-2), perhaps marked the entrance to its ecclesiastical nucleus. Moreover, if the pillar *had* been moved, it would have almost certainly been from somewhere in the immediate vicinity, so arguably, such an interpretation might be suggested regardless. Furthermore, like the routeway termon crosses of *Cill Mucrois*, this monument

would have been meant to be encountered at close range, and indeed, there may be evidence of ritualistic engagement with the pillar (see below).



Fig. 5.11: Cross-pillar (WA-26), possibly marking a boundary, at Mothel, Co. Waterford

There are six other carved stones in the study region that were probably boundary/termon markers, including one more may be *in situ*. There are also three additional stones that may have functioned thusly, though these are more doubtful, and are just as likely to have been grave-markers. Five of these, from Acaun (CW-1), Haroldstown, Co. Carlow (CW-33), Clonamery, Co. Kilkenny (KK-3, KK-4), and Tobar Íosa (TS-82), Co. Tipperary, are simple crosses or cross-incised pillars, comparable to the aforementioned *in situ* termon marker at Ballygarran (WA-2), and may have fulfilled a similar function. However, this interpretation is necessarily speculative, as they are all out of context, albeit with the possible exception of the Haroldstown pillar (CW-33). This stone is immediately southeast of the later medieval church ruins (dedication unknown), but with so much later medieval, and modern activity at the site (see catalogue entry, 'Haroldstown'), it is not clear whether this was the original location of the pillar, or if, like the probable termon marker at Clonmore (CW-2; discussed directly), it was later re-erected out of context. If this were indeed the pillar's original location, it might strengthen the suggestion that it may have been a termon or boundary marker for an inner enclosure, or, perhaps, another area of sacred ecclesiastical space. Additionally, a

large, mostly unshaped slab from Dysart (KK-8) may have been a termon or boundary marker, perhaps standing at the entrance to an enclosure. However, its function is not entirely clear, and it could just as easily have been a recumbent grave-marker (see above; also catalogue entry, KK-8). Finally, CW-2 is the only cross-slab at Clonmore, Co. Carlow to be carved on both sides, and while the possibility that it was commemorative in nature cannot be entirely ruled out, its height and broad surface, as well as its identical crosses carved on opposing sides, all suggest that it was meant to be encountered from either side equally, and that it may have functioned as a way- or boundary marker. Though the slab is now set up amongst the headstones in the graveyard at Clonmore, it would make an ideal and highly visible landmark when positioned along a routeway, presumably through the ecclesiastical estate of Clonmore. Similarly broad-faced cross-carved stone monuments have been found at Emlagh and Ballynacourty, within the territory of Inch Labhrainne – a principal church of the regional kingdom of Corcu Duibne, in Co. Kerry (Ó Carragáin, forthcoming). Notably, they line both sides of the main routeway running through the estate, which is also probably the most important east-west road on the Dingle peninsula (*ibid*).

Additionally, there are two carved crosses, WX-15 and WX-16, at the ecclesiastical site of Kildoran, in the townland of Askinvillar Upper, Co. Wexford, that could have possibly served as termon markers. Very little information is known about the site, though it has been suggested that it may have been a church belonging to the Ó Doráin family, hereditary lawyers of the Uí Cheinnselaig (Culleton 1999, 150, 159, 192, 207). The two crosses are very similarly decorated with cross-carving and, like WX-22 and WX-23, may have perhaps been created as a complementary pair (see Chapter 7). If so, this may support the suggestion that they might have flanked a routeway or, instead, perhaps the entrance to an enclosure, as they were found inside the church ruins. Yet, at 70 cm tall, they are significantly shorter than all of the aforementioned stones in this section, and are more comparable in height to several of the upright grave-markers discussed above, particularly that of the elaborately decorated Kilmokea cross (WX-18). However, the survival of a tenon at the lower end of WX-15 would suggest that they were originally inserted into a base, and this may have raised them up to a height similar to that of many of the termon markers already discussed in this section, so neither possibility can be ruled out at present.

Beyond the practical functions of boundary and termon markers, their iconography, and position in the landscape, was often carefully arranged to affect what the viewer experienced, by controlling both what they see, and how they see it, and, indeed, *when* they see it (Kirton 2015, 36). When these factors are combined, it becomes clear that carved stones were more

than just way-markers, or declarations of territorial rights – they served as visual aids to invoke a specific response in the viewer, and, perhaps, knowledge of a place (or memory related to it), as well (*ibid*). For example, the three *Cill Mucrois* crosses are not only boundary and route-markers for the church. If not to artistically represent hagiographic and cultural ties to Gallen (Co. Offaly), which was supposedly founded by the same saint, then the crosses, probably erected in the early 12th century, may have been produced to visually express *Cill Mucrois's* newly-created affiliation with the diocese of Ferns, as well as satisfy the desire (or perhaps necessity) to clearly mark out the extent of their territory at this time (see Chapter 7). The overarching motif of the crosses, which may be interpreted as a *labarum*, has protective connotations that suggests they may have been perceived as both sanctifying, and guarding, ecclesiastical space from the outside world. Moreover, their roadside position would have been a natural stopping point for travellers to offer up a prayer, as they crossed the boundary between the 'sacred' and 'profane'.

5.3.2 Ogham stones

This leads us to further discussion of the seven cross-carved ogham stones found within the study area (for their commemorative functions, see previous section). It is doubtful whether any of them were recorded *in situ*, though according to tradition, the Legan ogham stone might be (see catalogue entry, KK-16). Additionally, this is the only ogham stone not currently associated with a church site, though it is very likely that the creation of some of these ogham stones (if not their crosses as well) pre-date the foundation of the respective churches at which they were found. Four (KK-12, KK-16, WA-1, WA-10) were found incorporated into later structures (both ecclesiastical and secular) when first discovered, and so will be discussed primarily in section 5.4. Regarding the other three (Fig. 5.12), one, from Knockboy (WA-12), was found among the neatly ordered rows of headstones (Macalister 1907, 210–1), which would indeed suggest it had been reused as a grave-marker in modern times. Another, from Lisgenan (WA-16), was also presumed to have been reused as a headstone (Atkinson 1884, 308; White 2016). While this may certainly be true (and in any case, it is probably not its original position), WA-16 is not actually in amongst the headstones – it is embedded in the western embankment of the *lios* ('circular earthwork') for which the site ('Lios Géibheannáin', logainm.ie) was named. So, while speculative, an alternative suggestion could be that its reuse was instead associated with the enclosing element, perhaps during the early medieval period (more below). Lastly, the ogham stone from Tooracurragh (WA-28) is one of the more decorated of the seven, carved in false relief on its upper face with a Maltese cross, with raised

pellets within its cantons, below which is an incised Latin cross with rounded terminals, and semi-circular base, resembling the hull of a ship or an anchor. The stone was said to have been taken from the centre of an ecclesiastical enclosure, where it stood either within, or next to, the ruins of a small rectangular mound, presumed to be the traces of a church (Lyons 1946, 86; Moore 2010). As with the others, it is doubtful that the stone was in its original location. The lower cross may be contemporary with the ogham (Chapter 4), suggesting may have always been a Christian monument. However, its position within what was the ecclesiastical core of this church site might account for its second cross, perhaps carved to commemorate its move to this location.

As stated in section 5.2, ogham stones fulfilled three functions in the early medieval period – memorials for the dead, boundary markers, and proclamations of land ownership. Here, it is primarily their functions as boundary markers, and proclamations of ownership, that are the focus of this discussion, especially as it is the crosses, and not the inscriptions, with which we are concerned. As ogham stones usually marked ancestral burial grounds, situated on, or near, a territorial boundary of familial land (see above), they were also instrumental in *tellach* – the legal procedure for claiming disputed land – as a means by which an individual or kin-group could claim ownership rights (Swift 1997, 42–3). In Irish law-tracts of the late-6th to 8th centuries, ogham stones, as boundary markers, could override the testimony of living witnesses (*ibid*); thus, ogham inscriptions seem to have been considered an embodiment of social memory, etched in stone. For example, *Int ogam isin gollan* ('the ogham in the stone') is used to gloss the phrase *comcuimne da crich*, 'the mutual memory of two (adjoining) lands', in the law-tract *Gúbretha Caratniad* (*ibid*, 43, n. 18; Binchy 1978, 748.18–9; Stacey 1986, 210–33). In the *Berrad Airechta*, the question, 'how is truth with regard to land ownership found in Irish law?' is answered with, 'Do heirs have memories without ogam on stones?...' (*ibid*). By the 7th century onward, there is evidence that this claim of ownership was sometimes later 'overwritten' by the edition of a cross to these ogham stones, sometimes going so far as to deface the inscription itself (e.g. the ogham stone at Ballintermon, Co. Cork), to 'erase' the earlier claim on lands that had hence come under ecclesiastical control (Ó Carragáin forthcoming). This may have been seen a means of harnessing the legal authority represented by the ogham stone, while at the same time subverting the power of the earlier claim. Such an interpretation of the cross-carvings on the ogham stones discussed here is necessarily speculative, as well as tentative, but for some, could offer a possible motive for their carving.

This is not the only explanation for the presence of the crosses on these ogham stones, however. As mentioned in Chapter 4, sometimes a cross is carved onto a stone prior to the

inscription, and this appears to be the case with the Kilmolash ogham stone (WA-10). The inscriptions on WA-16 and WA-28 have not been dated by McManus, so it is less clear whether either monument was originally associated with their respective churches, though from their cross-carvings, it is possible that one or both may have been. They were probably both moved at some point, however, regardless of whether they were originally associated with their churches (see above; also Chapter 4). The ogham stones at Ardmore (WA-1) and Knockboy (WA-12) have been dated by McManus to the 5th and 6th centuries, respectively (*ibid*). The cross on WA-12 is probably later than the inscription (*ibid*); thus, the creation of the ogham stone likely pre-dates church, with the cross being added later, presumably to 'Christianise' the monument, and/or claim ecclesiastical ownership rights to the land, sometime after the founding of the church. In contrast, the cross on WA-1 may be contemporary (*ibid*), and thus, the monument, as a whole, could have been created in an ecclesiastical context, especially considering Ardmore's reputed pre-Patrician, or else, 5th-century foundation (Chapter 3).

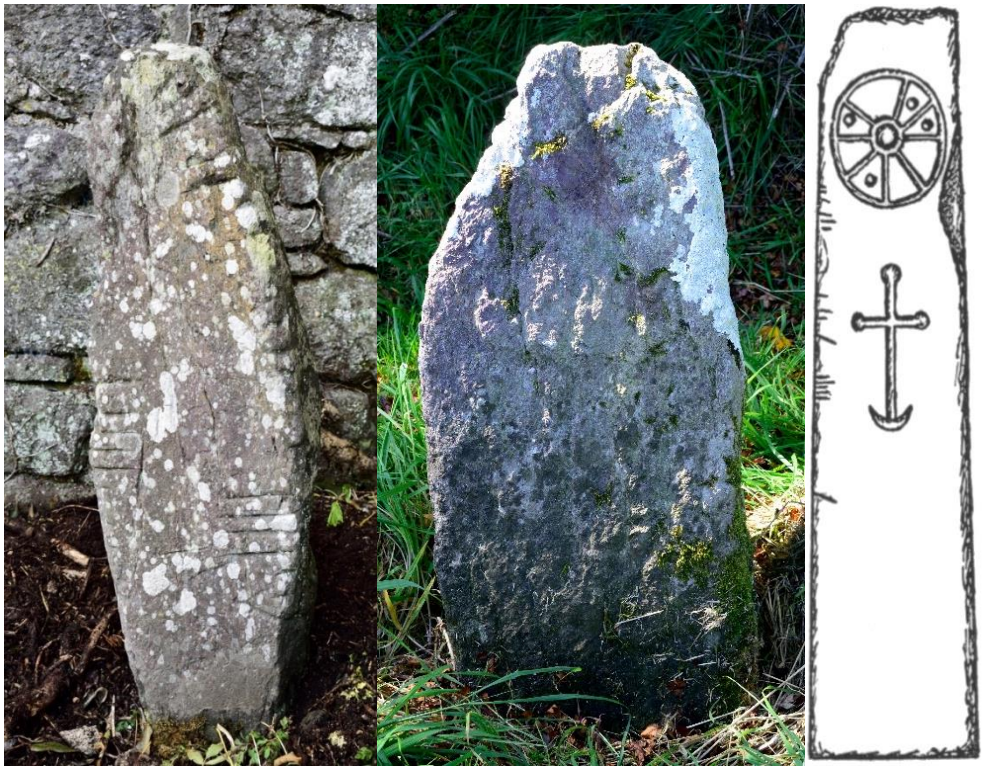


Fig. 5.12: Cross-carved ogham stones at Knockboy (WA-12), Lisgenan (WA-16), and Tooracurragh (WA-28)

5.3.3 Non-funerary commemorative and devotional foci

Of course, not all commemorative monuments were funerary in nature; crosses and carved stones were also erected in certain locations to commemorate an important event, usually in the life of a saint. In the late-7th-century *Vita Columbae,* a cross was said to have been raised at the place where the saint's uncle, Ernán, died, as well as where Columba was standing when

he witnessed the death (Adomnán, I.47, in Sharpe, 148). In a later passage, a cross was also erected on the spot where Columba rested on his way between the barn and monastery of Iona on the final day of his life (*ibid*, III.23, 227). Another 7th-century example, from the *Vita sancti Patricii*, states that a cross stands to mark the spot 'on the right flank of Slíab Miss' where, upon his return, Patrick first beheld 'the district where he had lived as a slave' (Muirchú, I.12, in Bieler, 80–1). In the 12th-century version of the Latin *Life of Maedóc of Ferns* (for dating of the various *Lives* of Maedóc, see Doherty 2002, 269–72), which was also recounted in a later Irish version of the *Life*, Maedóc was carried by angels over Slieve Beagh, located on the border of counties Monaghan and Fermanagh, to the royal fort (of Aird Sinnaidh?). He then erected 'a noble cross on the spot (*lit*. hill) to make known the miracle', which was called the *crux sancti Moedhog* (*Vita sancti Maedoc (I)*, ix, in Plummer vol. 2, 143; *Life of Maedoc of Ferns (I)*, §8, in Plummer, 178). Additionally, in this 12th-century *Life* as well as in an earlier, 11th-century version, a cross was raised (presumably somewhere within the ecclesiastical estate of Menevia, in Wales) to mark the place of a 'mutual covenant and union' between Maedóc and St David (*Vita sancti Maedoc (I)*, xiii, in Plummer vol. 2, 145; *Vita sancti Maedoc (II)*, xiii, in Plummer vol. 2, 299; *Life of Maedoc of Ferns (II)*, xxiii, §66, in Plummer, 203).

In many cases, the association of a saint (or saints) with a particular location may have originated from earlier oral traditions, and, in this regard, the landscape itself may perhaps be seen as the primary 'locus of social memory' (Ó Carragáin 2009a, 216). Traditions, memories, and legends 'tended to lend themselves to the physical contours of the landscape' – thus, permeating a place over time, and becoming incarnate in the shape of the terrain itself (Geary 1994, 124), and, arguably, embodied by the stone monuments subsequently erected therein. Moreover, the performative practices and ritualised movements associated with these monuments may have served to reinforce, and preserve, these traditions over a long period of time (Ó Carragáin 2009a, 216–7). When such ritualised acts are cumulatively applied to assemblages of carved stones, as well as other subsidiary monuments (e.g. those at Clonmacnoise, Iniscealtra, St Davids, etc.), the monuments themselves could, perhaps, be collectively considered 'cumulative landscapes of memory', that reflect the evolution of commemorative practices at church sites (*cf*. Williams, Kirton and Gondek 2015a). This phenomenon is arguably best preserved at Inishmurray, Co. Sligo. Its assemblage of *leachta*, surmounted by cross-slabs, collectively form a 'landscape of memory' that was used during eucharistic celebrations and penitential processions in the early medieval period (Ó Carragáin 2009a). The locations of some monuments, as well as the movements of the participants during

these processions, may have commemorating miracles, or events, in the life of St Molaise – in particular, the founding of the monastery (*ibid*).

As stated earlier, early medieval carved stones were multivalent creations; in addition to commemorative functions, crosses and cross-carved stones may have also served as foci for devotional practices such as prayers, penitence, and confession. Hagiographical texts make frequent reference to saints and ecclesiastics praying at, or else proceeding around, crosses. In the 7th century, Muirchú wrote that Patrick would 'go out of his way' to pray before every cross he encountered (II.1, II.2, in Bieler, 114–5); Maedóc of Ferns reputedly spent 'many hours going round crosses…a while thus at the monument, (engaged) in psalms and genuflections' (*Life of Maedóc of Ferns (II)*, §266, in Plummer, 274); St Beccán sang the whole of the psalters every morning in front of the stone cross at Cluain Aird, now Toureen Peakaun (*Vita Sancti Abbani*, §xxii, in Plummer vol. 1, 17); Comgall prayed 'with tears' at the cross in the western part of the monastery of Cluain Eidnech, after being freed from a demon by St Fintan (*Vita Sancti Comgalli*, §iv, in Plummer vol. 2, 4). The *c*. 8th-century *Ríagol Ailbi Imlecha*, or 'The Rule of Ailbe of Emly' (for dating evidence, see Oxenham 2016, 39, n. 247), describes ritualistic processionals of monks 'to the cross', with 'gentle choirings' and 'vehement streams of tears from righteous haggard cheeks' (§25c; §29, in O'Neill, 100–3). The *Ríagol Ailbi Imlecha* also references acts of confession, 'at the cross in the presence of the head of the monks, that demons may not utter pæans; with humility, without disputes, let each confess his faults there' (*ibid*). There is an obvious penitential nature to these 'rounds' and processions, and this was not limited to just ecclesiastics – the laity participated in such devotional rituals as well, which are a common theme of pilgrimages (e.g. Ó Carragáin 2009a, 216).

As with boundary markers, and, indeed, large collections of funerary sculpture (see section 5.2), the presence of commemorative and devotional foci within an ecclesiastical landscape would have been considered a measure of the relative wealth and power, and thus, jurisdiction, of their respective church, patron(s), and, perhaps, of the cult of their saint, as well (Williams, Kirton and Gondek 2015a). Allowing for the exclusion of high crosses, there are eleven monuments within the study region that may be classified as non-funerary commemorative and/or devotional foci. The two most notable are also two of the most finely carved and elaborately decorated monuments in this corpus, found on the island monastery of Becc-Ériu, in Co. Wexford (now Begerin Island), which was reputedly founded by the pre-Patrician saint, Ibar. These disc-, or wheel-headed, cross-slabs (WX-3 and WX-4), now in the Ferns Visitor Centre in Co. Wexford, and the National Museum of Ireland, respectively, were

first recorded in the graveyard on Begerin Island, a short distance southeast of the ruins of the later medieval church (Kinahan 1873). There is no evidence to suggest that the slabs had been moved prior to this, and the quality of their carving, as well as the possible association of WX-3 with the grave of St Ibar – traditionally thought to be marked by a monumental 'disc-shaped' boulder, *c*. 2.13 m in diameter, immediately south of the church (*ibid*, 436; Flood 1916) – would indicate that these slabs were probably erected within the core ecclesiastical complex (*cf*. Caherlehillan, Co. Kerry; Sheehan 2009, 200). Additionally, the slabs are likely 9th–10th century in date (see Chapter 4), which is contemporary with annalistic references to Becc-Ériu, including a Viking raid in the early 9th century, suggesting this was a time of particular prosperity for the site (*AFM* M819.4; M884.6; M964.4).

WX-4 is carved in relief, with a ringed Latin cross ornamented with intricate interlace, albeit only on one face; this could suggest that it was only meant to be seen from one side, perhaps standing at the entrance to what can be presumed to be an inner enclosure of the monastery. This suggestion is speculative, however, as the precise original location of the stone in relation to the enclosing embankment is unknown. Regarding WX-3, its iconography is the most complex in this corpus, displaying two figural panels, similar to many found on high crosses across Ireland and Britain. There has been some debate recently as to whether some high cross panels represent local saints or kings, rather than just strictly biblical figures (e.g. Stalley 2014). Roger Stalley has cogently argued that some panels, like some on the early 10th-century Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise, record events from Irish history (*ibid*, 157–63). This suggestion may also be relevant to WX-3, as the lower panel on the south face may depict a king or warrior, or, perhaps, Ibar himself (more below).

Though most of the circular head of WX-3 was broken off sometime in the 20th century, some of the lost detail can be extrapolated from what remains, as well as from sketches published by Macalister (1920, 8–9). One face, presumably, depicts a free-standing wooden cross, probably the predecessor to this slab. It is generally accepted that in many instances, stone crosses and cross-slabs are thought to have replaced earlier wooden monuments (*cf*. Edwards 1985; Kelly 1991), and that, furthermore, these earlier wooden crosses are often skeuomorphically represented on the stone slab that proceeds them (Edwards 1985, 399–400). This face could depict an earlier cross, erected to commemorate an event (perhaps associated with Ibar), or instead, to mark an important grave, which tradition holds to be St Ibar's.

However, it is the opposite face which warrants a particularly detailed investigation. It is highly decorated, albeit so heavily weathered, photogrammetric recording of the stone could reveal very little additional information. What could be determined with relative certainty was

that the disc-head is carved with a Maltese cross, decorated with interlace. Just below this is a panel containing three figures, wearing calf-length robes. Harbison suggested that the central figure might be facing forward, and the other two turned with hands outstretched towards him, likening the figural panel on this slab with iconography frequently found on Irish high crosses (1988, 65). Though the panel is too worn to pick up much detail, the photogrammetry model indicates that Harbison is probably correct regarding the orientation of the figures, and perhaps the outstretched hands as well, but this is less certain (Fig. 5.13). He theorised the central figure could represent Christ, or alternately, the panel could be a scene of the temptation of St Anthony in the Egyptian desert (*ibid*). There is a Pictish cross-slab from the Tarbat peninsula in Scotland (Meyer 2011, TR20, fig. 4.6) that shares some similarities to this panel on WX-3. The panel of the figural scene on the Tarbat slab is likewise separated from the one above it by a horizontal band in relief and features three robed figures, though it also contains a fragment of a fourth figure, albeit slightly larger in scale that the others. Kellie Meyer interprets this figure as Christ, and the three figures facing him as apostles or high-ranking ecclesiastics (*ibid*, 187).

Meyer also suggests an alternative interpretation, that the Tarbat carving could be depicting specific liturgical practices – either a priest and his attendants celebrating the Mass, or an anthropomorphised representation of the four Gospels, used in the *Apertio aurium* ceremony (*ibid*, 188–9). This symbolism is also an integral motif on the Ruthwell cross, with St John and his eagle sitting in a place of prominence at the apex of the north face of the cross-head, serving as a continual reminder of this ceremony to the congregation (E. Ó Carragáin 2005, 144). As mentioned above, the 'hawk-like head' of the sinister figure led Harbison to speculate it could represent one of the animals in the Temptation of St Anthony (1988, 65). Alternately, perhaps the figure could instead be interpreted as that of an anthropomorphised eagle, symbolizing the Gospel of St John. This is doubtful, however; firstly, because there are only three figures on WX-3, not four. Also, the shape of the sinister figure's head may very likely be the result of natural wear. Returning to Meyer's other conjecture regarding the Tarbat slab, the suggestion that WX-3 could, likewise, depict a priest and his attendants celebrating Mass is tempting. Though speculative, and, on balance, probably doubtful, perhaps this or both panels on the south face of WX-3 depict scenes from St Ibar's life, variously portraying him in the roles of teacher and/or bishop (e.g. Mac Shamhráin 2009d; more below).

The lower panel on WX-3 shows a figure astride a horse, with one hoof raised as if in motion. The single rider motif is unusual in Ireland; it is primarily found on sculpture from Scotland, Wales, northern England, and the Isle of Man, though it does appear on the West Cross shaft at Old Kilcullen, Co. Kildare. (for comparanda, see Chapter 4). Its presence here,

at a church located in the mouth of Wexford Harbour, is significant in that, like the four 'marigold' stones (see Chapter 7), it illustrates the continuum of artistic exchange that existed around and across the Irish Sea throughout the early medieval period, both in general, and at Becc-Ériu. The image of a single rider, rather than a group of mounted horsemen (which usually represented huntsmen or a cavalry), was often intended to invoke a sense of permanence and authority (Alcock and Alcock 1992, 240; Redknap and Lewis 2007, 336). In reference to the Dupplin Cross, which commemorates the Pictish king Causantín mac Fergusa (†820), Hall suggests the single rider motif may symbolise a 'God-endorsed model of Christian kingship' (2011, 154). Its presence on WX-3 could thus, perhaps, indicate a royal patron of Becc-Ériu, at least in the 9th or 10th century (see also Chapters 6 and 8). Another noteworthy comparison, first highlighted by Harbison, is the similarities between the rider on this stone and a solitary, mounted monk illustrated on folio 255v in the *Book of Kells*, which is a departure from the typical warrior-/king-like overtones of this motif. Perhaps this mounted figure, carrying a staff, could show St Ibar of Becc-Ériu in the role of *peregrinus* ('pilgrim'). However, this comparison might not fit here, as the rider on WX-3 may also be carrying a shield (Fig. 5.13).



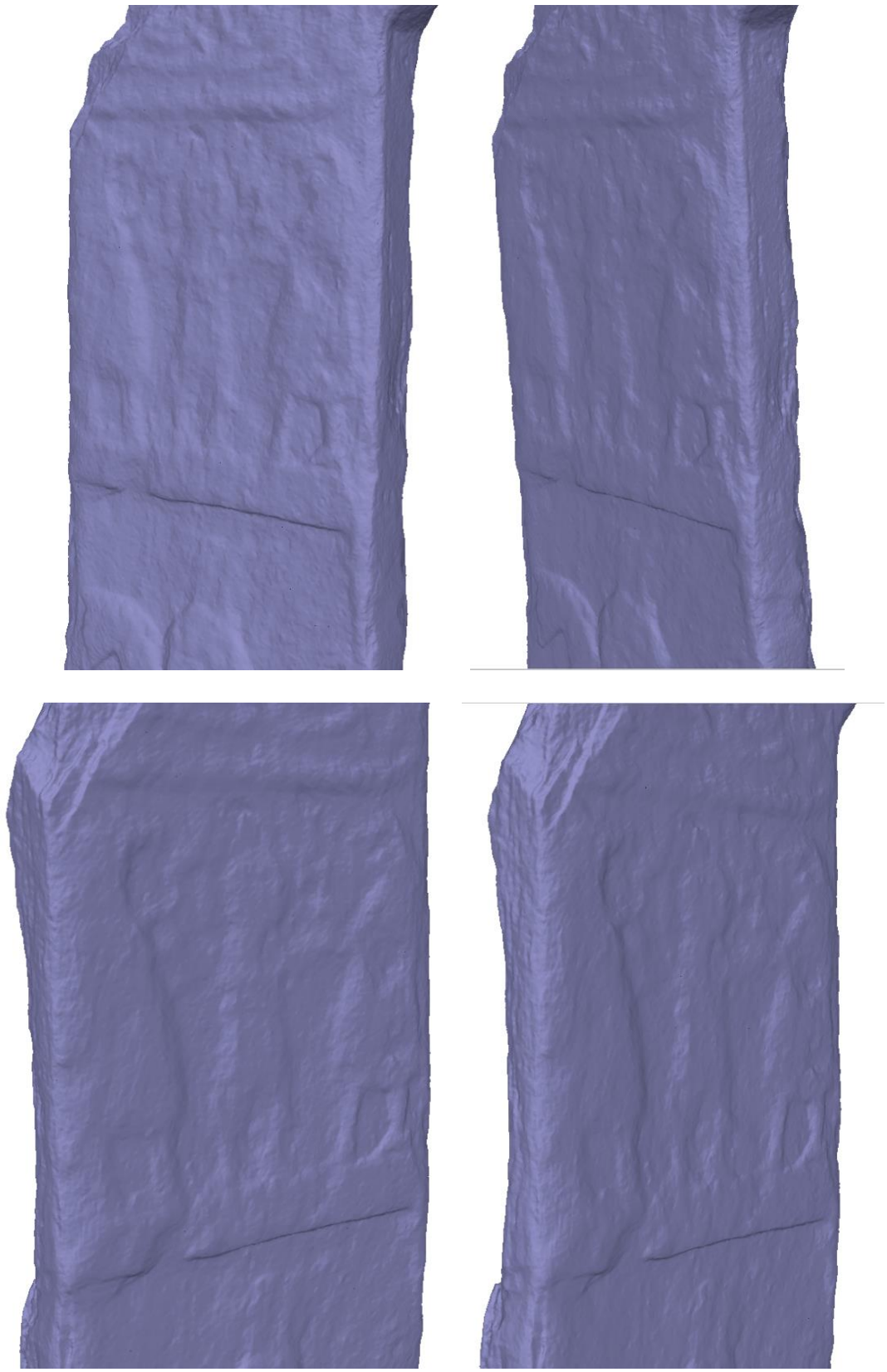




Fig. 5.13: Left to right, from top – North and south faces of elaborately decorated cross-slab from Begerin, Co. Wexford (WX-3); Close-ups of figural panel, showing two larger figures turned towards the smaller, central figure; close-ups of solitary rider, and mounted monk from the Book of Kells *(folio 255v)*

While there is no documentary evidence for devotional practices specifically associated with these two stones, it should be noted that in the late 17th century, Becc-Ériu was a well-established pilgrimage destination (Hore 1900, 364). According to a report written in 1682, by Colonel Solomon Richards, the main object of veneration at the site was a wooden statue of St

Ibar, located inside the church, which was also used for oath-swearing (*ibid*). Ó Carragáin has pointed out that during the 17th century, pilgrimages and communal ritual practices at sites such as this have been shown to be 'a rejuvenation or reinvention of earlier practices' (2009a, 211), and it is interesting to note that Macalister (1920, 14) likened the wooden statue of St Ibar to the one of St Molaise at Inishmurray. So, while veneration of St Ibar in the 17th century should not necessarily be taken as conclusive evidence for a continuation of devotional practices originating in the early medieval period, the hagiographical material regarding St Ibar – in particular his status as one of the four main (reputedly) pre-Patrician saints, along with Declan of Ardmore, Ciarán of Saigir, and Ailbe of Emly *(Vita Sancti Declani*, 21, in Power) – as well as Becc-Ériu's renown as a place of learning (Mac Shamhráin 2009d), suggest that pilgrimage to Becc-Ériu, and the development of a saint's cult around Ibar, during the early medieval period may be likely. Significantly, the creation of these two elaborately carved cross-slabs, and, particularly, the complex iconography of WX-3, seems to indicate that a monumentalisation (or re-monumentalisation in stone) of the landscape was occurring in the 9th or 10th century, and could be evidence of devotional practices at Becc-Ériu, perhaps in commemoration of its founding saint.

Such a skilfully carved and detailed cross-slab would have undoubtedly been a focal point in the monastic landscape, and may have also served as a focus for devotional practices such prayer, penitence or pilgrimage, both private and public. The iconographic panels are similar to those found on high crosses that have been commissioned for, or by, kings (e.g. the Cross of the Scriptures and the Dupplin Cross). So perhaps WX-3 was commissioned by an important patron, rather than an ecclesiastic, considering the 'rider' panel on the south face may depict a warrior or king. Alternately, if WX-3 *was* erected to commemorate St Ibar, perhaps it was intended to serve as a 'permanent reminder' of Ibar's status as an important pre-Patrician saint (*cf*. Stalley 2014, 157–63). This would have been of particular significance in the 9th or 10th century, considering Armagh may have been attempting to exert its authority over Becc-Ériu, and other pre-Patrician churches, at this time (Culleton 1999, 66–7; Ó Riain 2011, 529; see also catalogue entry, 'Becc-Ériu').

There is an imperforate ringed cross (TS-8) at Patrick's Well, Co. Tipperary which has been the focus of devotional practices in modern times, and indeed, may have been a devotional cross in the early medieval period as well. Though now built up on an artificial island, it has been situated within the marshy grounds of the well since at least the 19th century (see Morrissey 1909; Bagwell 1909), though it is uncertain if this is its original location. Both the holy well, and the cross, were popular pilgrimage destinations in the 19th and early 20th

centuries, with pilgrims approaching the cross 'on their knees…as an act of penance or devotion' (Bagwell 1909, 268). However, a Papal bull from 1619, which granted an indulgence in connection to visiting this site, may suggest that devotional practices here may have originated much earlier (Morrissey 1909, 265). Ó Carragáin has written extensively on the subject of subsidiary monuments and memory work within a landscape context, particularly on how carved stones, holy wells, and lesser churches 'were often intended to preserve particular memories about the exemplary life of the founding saint' (Ó Carragáin forthcoming; e.g. Ó Carragáin 2009a; 2010, 72–7, 156–8, 210–1, 215–25, 268–70; 2014). Though the cross is not mentioned specifically in the surviving 12th century version of the *Vita Sancti Declani* ('The Life of St Declan'), it is perhaps not insignificant that, according to this text, this land was given to Patrick by St Declan, and Feargal mac Cormac, king of the Deisi (41, in Power). Moreover, the 'very clear fountain there which is called Patrick's Well…was dear to Patrick' (*ibid*). The cross itself may date to the late 9th or 10th century (see Chapter 4), and, considering the above passages, it would not be surprising if TS-8 had become a focus for devotional practices by the 12th century (and possibly moved to the well then?), if not originally erected at the well to explicitly mark it as 'sacred' to Patrick.

Three other crosses, as well as a thick cross-slab, from Clonmore (CW-12), St Berrihert's Kyle (TS-60), and Ferns (WX-12, WX-13), may have also acted as devotional foci (Fig. 5.14). As they are now entirely out of context, suggestions regarding the motivations behind their creation must remain tentative. However, given the evidence presented in the sections above, it stands to reason that they may have also been erected to commemorate an important event, or serve a devotional function. Alternately, in the cases of CW-12, TS-60, and WX-12, given that they are carved on only one side, these could have stood on an inner boundary, or entrance to an ecclesiastical enclosure. Additionally, WX-12 and WX-13 appear to be components of two separate composite monuments, though what these structures looked like, what other materials might have been used, or what their functions may have been, is left to speculation.



Fig. 5.14: Possible devotional foci at Patrick's Well (TS-8), Clonmore (CW-12), St Berrihert's Kyle (TS-60), and Ferns (WX-12, WX-13)

Beyond being foci for prayers and penitence, crosses and cross sculpture were also used in procession rituals, both through, and around, an ecclesiastical estate. Moreover, the use of route-way monuments in liturgical processions through a church's lands may have been seen as a means of ritualistically purifying, redefining, or re-consecrating its territory in lieu of following the entire boundary line of an ecclesiastical estate, for, as Ó Carragáin has pointed out, such a procession would not always be feasible, given the distance involved, and, sometimes, difficult terrain (forthcoming). It may be suggested that some of the route-way markers in this corpus, particularly the *Cill Mucrois* crosses (see above), may have been used in such processions. However, there is stronger evidence for circumambulatory processions performing these functions *within* estates – rings (or partial rings) of monuments, were intended

to facilitate such processions, conveying to both 'residents and visitors alike the idea of the site as a sacred centre' (*ibid*). These monuments were often located around the periphery of an ecclesiastical complex, sometimes along the line of its enclosures. They were not always positioned on a boundary, however, and the presence of additional rings/partial rings of monuments at a further distance removed from the centre of the site (i.e. somewhere between the inner and outer enclosures), may have served to further emphasise the sacredness of the core ecclesiastical complex as one progresses inward (*ibid*). In addition to the well-documented example of Inishmurray (see above), such monuments are also found dotted around major church sites, such as Clonmacnoise and Armagh, and at smaller sites, like High Island, Co. Galway, Church Island (*Inis Úasal*), Co. Kerry, and Brigown, Co. Cork (e.g. Ó Carragáin 2010; 2014; Maddern 2014). In particular, these circuits have been associated with the foundation rituals of a church (albeit likely invented), usually connected with its patron saint, that were periodically re-enacted 'to reaffirm the sanctity of a site and its legal status as a sanctuary' (Ó Carragáin 2009a, 218; Aitchison 1994 265–81). These rituals were characterised by *deiseal* movement, which was oriented towards the rising sun, and followed the right hand (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 331–2; McCarthy 2013, 261). Moreover, the right hand was also sometimes referred to as *lám bennachtan*, the 'blessing-hand' (Stokes 1907, 11–2). It was considered more powerful than the left hand, called the *lám soscéli*, or 'gospel-hand', in both maledictions, as well as benedictions (*ibid*). For example, in the 12th-century glosses to the *Félire Óengusso*, using his left hand, Ultán of Ard-Breccáin 'wrecked, destroyed, stranded thrice fifty ships' of an invading foreign fleet (200–1, in Stokes). He then says, 'that is a shame…that ye did not leave me alone until my right hand was free…if it were my right hand no foreigner would ever invade Ireland' (*ibid*). In the context of processions, and pilgrimage rituals, *deisal* movement (i.e. following the sun) was considered inherently Christian (Ó Carragáin 2009a, 218), and, consequently, one's left side would be always facing 'the side of evil…representing the outer darkness of heathenism' (*ibid*; Stokes 1907, 12).

Perhaps rituals involving benedictions and/or maledictions, as protection against the 'outer darkness of heathenism', may have been performed at some of the monuments here. A unique pillar from Clonamery, Co. Kilkenny (KK-2) is quite striking in its design, and has no close parallels (see Chapter 4). The circular depressions on its long face are deep, wide, and bowl-shaped – indeed, they look to be hollows formed by something being repeatedly ground against the pillar in a circular motion, perhaps a special stone used in rituals of cursing, blessing, or oath-taking. Evidence for the ritualised turning of special stones has been found at High Island and Inishmurray, and may coincide with a formalisation of liturgical cursing in

the 10th and 11th centuries at these sites (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 339; Maddern 2014, 198). In Scotland, cursing stones may have been ritually turned on the bases of high crosses, or else special slabs, grinding hemispherical hollows into them over time (Forsyth 2016). The function of such rituals is clearly reflected in the name of one such stone from Iona, known as the *clach bráth* – the 'Judgement or Doomsday stone'. Though this stone has since been destroyed, a circular hollow, ground into a cross-base at Iona (no. 99), stands as testimony of its ritual use (*ibid*). Additionally, evidence from Glendalough and St Berrihert's Kyle suggest that bullauns may have likewise been the focus of 'stone-turning' rituals in the devotional practices of later pilgrims (Chapter 6). The Clonamery pillar was found 'half buried' in the graveyard (Crawford 1923, 198), though, as it may have already been broken when it was found (*ibid*), it is not clear whether it had broken *in situ*, or else this fragment of the pillar had been moved into the graveyard at some point (Fig. 5.15). However, its deep, well-worn circular hollows would strongly indicate that this pillar was used in ritual practices, presumably associated with formal processionals, such as foundation rituals and liturgical benedictions and/or maledictions, or, perhaps, in pilgrimage devotions. A similarly deep hollow was also noted on the cross-pillar at Mothel (WA-26). The pillar, which may have stood along a route-way leading north, and, perhaps, marked the entrance to an inner enclosure, likewise has a deep circular depression (albeit on the top of the pillar), which could be taken as evidence of similar practices at Mothel.



Fig. 5.15: Cross-pillars from Clonamery, Co. Kilkenny (KK-2) and Mothel, Co. Waterford (WA-26) respectively, showing possible evidence of ritual practice

A small stone tau cross (TS-2) was found in the townland of Ballypatrick, sitting upside down on top of a bullaun, abutting a field boundary *c*. 43 m west of a small stream (Fig. 5.16). According to Power (1908, 9–10), the field in which the cross is situated was locally known as the 'Field of the Early Church Site' and was thought to be sacred to St Bearachan, though there are no visible traces of a church at ground level, and the location of any such church remains unknown (Farrelly 2011b). The cross is quite small, with both arms and stem 13 cm in width. There is no evidence of a tenon, and it could not have stood upright on its own (though it could have perhaps been propped up in some sort of stand or base); it would likewise have been impractical for use as a recumbent grave-marker. However, it is easily portable and, while highly speculative, it could be suggested that the stone cross was, perhaps, used during liturgical processions, or else eucharistic celebrations outdoors. Interestingly, both the cross and bullaun are 62 cm east of what is thought to have been a mass rock (Farrelly 2011c). WX-18, a cross-carved boulder in the townland of Killesk, Co. Wexford, may have functioned as an altar for outdoor Masses or liturgical processions, and its cross may be skeuomorphic of an altar cross on a stand, similar to two outdoor altars from Co. Kerry (see Chapter 4).



Fig. 5.16: Small tau cross (TS-2), possibly used in processionals, at Ballypatrick, Co. Tipperary

5.4 *Spolia*

Setting aside other forms of reuse (i.e. the repurposing of early medieval sculpture as modern headstones, as they, essentially, are fulfilling the same function), there are twelve stones in the

study area that may be considered *spolia*. Spolia is an architectural and art historic term for material (in this case, carved stone) which is removed from its original context and is reused in a new one (for detailed discussions of *spolia* in the strictest sense of the term, see Kinney 2006; Greenhalgh 2011, 78–81). Going against the grain of current theories, Michael Greenhalgh has questioned the validity of applying memory work, as well as the concept of social memory in general, to the analysis of *spolia*, citing it as, more often than not, 'a substitute for history' and 'a handy way of compensating for a non-existent rationale for why antiquities were reused' (2011, 90). Certainly, it is wise to be cautious in attributing meaning to reuse in cases where evidence is generally lacking, and, indeed, Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh has also commented on our frustrating inability to accurately gauge how closely our interpretations and responses correspond to those of medieval viewers (2015, 216). However, she also cautions against the dehumanisation of the artistic narrative, lest, by eliminating the human actors, such artworks become 'stranded in a depersonalized vacuum', perceived as incomprehensible, and, thus, irrelevant (*ibid*). In exploring the various contexts of the spoliation and reuse of stone sculpture, both in the early medieval period and beyond, we are endeavoring to reveal 'a more nuanced picture of medieval responses to these existing works', as well as to more fully understand the ongoing biography of a carved stone after its creation and its reception, if not by its contemporary, then at least by its later viewers (*ibid*, 217).

Despite Greenhalgh's healthy scepticism of attaching meaning to *spolia*, there is considerable evidence for the symbolic use of *spolia* in Ireland during the early and later medieval periods. In the hagiographies, there is an emphasis placed on reusing the material of a previous church, perceived of as being built by its founding saint, in the later 'version' of that church (e.g. Ó Carragáin 2010, 156–7). However this was usually organic material, such as wooden beams or doors, and with the exception of the pre-Romanesque cathedral at Glendalough (Manning 2002), there is little (surviving) archaeological evidence for the reuse of building material in stone churches during the early medieval period, primarily because they were rarely replaced until the later medieval period (Ó Carragáin 2010, 157). There is, however, more archaeological evidence for the reuse of stone monuments, such as cross-slabs and ogham stones, in structures during the early medieval period and beyond. The reuse of sculpture, whether in churches or secular buildings, undoubtedly held religious and/or socio-political meaning, both in the act of incorporating the stone, as well as in relation to their position and orientation within the new structure. Rather than an act of indifference, or the deliberate destruction of an older structure or monument, this behaviour can often be

interpreted as a purposeful effort to preserve and incorporate the earlier material into the newer building – essentially, treating the stone as a type of relic (see Chapter 1, section 1.3).

As mentioned above, there are twelve monuments that have been reused as *spolia*, mostly built into later or post medieval structures. However, one of these, a cross-slab from Dysart, Co. Kilkenny (KK-8), can be said with reasonable certainty to have been used as *spolia* during the early medieval period. It was recovered in 1991, in a pile of masonry rubble from the collapsed north wall of the 12th-century church, indicating that it had been incorporated into the fabric of the church wall (Murtagh 1991). A previous excavation revealed inhumations running underneath the foundations (Murtagh 1989), which would have been associated with an earlier (perhaps timber?) church, and, perhaps, this cross-slab may have been associated with this phase of burials. In the form of early Irish churches, conservatism and authenticity were valued over innovation (Ó Carragáin, 2007a, 101), and, as evidenced at major sites like Glendalough, Clonmacnoise, and Kildare, the use of *spolia* in the construction of early medieval churches may have reflected the desire to maintain (or perhaps create) 'continuity…with the age of saints' (*ibid*; 2010, 157). Dysart was originally known as *Dísert Mo-Cholmóc*, and was thought to be associated with either a St Colmóc or, perhaps, Colmán – though, if so, it is unclear which of the many St Colmáns this may have been (*Monasticon Hibernicum*; Ó Riain 2011, 189). While the cross-carving was unlikely to have been visible when KK-8 was built into the wall, and though Dysart would certainly have been a minor church site, the reuse of KK-8 as *spolia* may, nevertheless, reflect the same desire to maintain or create continuity with its past.

A desire for continuity and connection with a 'legendary past' may have also motivated the prominent placement of an earlier cross-carved stone, CW-32, into the west gable of Cloydagh Church, Co. Carlow (Fig. 5.17). Though the present structure is later medieval, there is evidence to suggest that it incorporates some material from an earlier church (Farrelly 2009); however, CW-32 is built into the later medieval fabric. The written evidence for an early medieval church at Cloydagh is scant; however, a charter dated *c*. 1200, contained in the record of knights' fees for County Carlow, states that the Archbishop of Dublin appointed a cleric named Thurstin to 'the church of St Brigid of Clodahc (Cloydagh)' (Brooks 1950, 56–7). This would indicate that there was a church at Cloydagh by at least the end of the early medieval period, if not earlier, which is supported by the presence of CW-32, as it likely dates to the 8th or 9th century (see Chapter 4). Moreover, from this text, we know that the church was dedicated to St Brigid, if not conceived of as being founded by her outright (which would certainly be considered a connection to the legendary 'age of saints'). CW-32 was most likely

to have originally been a grave-marker (see above), though it is possible that it may have been reshaped at some point. The lower portion of the cross is missing, so it is clear that the stone was once longer than it is now, which rules out the possibility that the cross is a later addition, carved onto the stone *after* it had been reused (*cf.* 'Consecration crosses at Castlemartyr', Manning 2013). However, this stone may have been used for the consecration of the later parish church (*cf.* Redknap and Lewis 2007, 556), particularly if perceived to be a relic of Cloydagh's past (founded, or, perhaps, built by St Brigid?). It has been suggested that the western gable of early medieval churches was metaphorically associated with Christ, in his role as the cornerstone of the Church (Ó Carragáin 2010, 41–2). Though this reuse occurred in the later medieval period, placing a cross-carved stone here may have been seen as representing Christ as the 'chief cornerstone' of Cloydagh church, as well as, perhaps, a relic of its early medieval past.



Fig. 5.17: Cross-carved stone (CW-32) on the outer wall of Cloydagh Church, Co. Carlow

Two of the cross-carved ogham stones, from Gowran, Co. Kilkenny (KK-12), and Kilmolash, Co. Waterford (WA-10), were likewise built into churches, though there is not enough evidence to suggest that they were used as *spolia* during the early medieval period (Fig. 5.18). Their incorporation into the foundation, and floor, of their respective churches may suggest a practical aspect to their selection, particularly given their monumental size; yet, their

cross-carvings indicate there was a symbolic element to their reuse as well. The Gowran stone was discovered in the foundation of the chancel of the 13th-century St Mary's Church, during renovations in the early 19th century, though its ogham inscription was first noticed decades later by du Noyer (Macalister 1945, 38). Significantly, its cross is inverted to the inscription, which indicates that had already been reused at least once as a cross-carved pillar (*cf.* Sheehan 2012, 105). Moreover, the name on the inscription had been spalled away some time ago (Macalister 1945, 38), and, given the 'quite good condition' of the rest of the ogham (*ibid*), this appears to have been deliberate. It has been suggested that St Mary's Church was built on an earlier (albeit unrelated) ecclesiastical site, identified tentatively as (*Belat*) *Gabráin* (for discussion, see catalogue entry 'Gowran'). *Belat* translates to 'place where several roads meet', or sometimes 'frontier' (eDIL, sv 'belat'), suggesting that this (minor) church was established at a crossroads or junction, probably at the boundary between two or more territories. The placement of lesser churches on boundaries, sometimes referred to as 'frontier churches', is well-documented (*cf.* Ó Riain 1972; Ó Carragáin 2014; forthcoming; McCarthy 2013), and it would be unsurprising if the ogham stone was erected on this boundary first, and then later, ritualistically appropriated by *Gabráin*. This would have been done through the addition of the cross (inverted so that the inscription would have been inserted into the ground), and by the act of spalling the personal name off of the ogham inscription – symbolically claiming new, ecclesiastical ownership (see above).

By the time KK-12 was being laid in the foundation of St Mary's Church in the 13th century, it would have already been considered ancient. As a monument of a distant Christian past (perceived of as a 'golden age'?), this alone could be considered sufficient motivation for its spoliation. However, unlike most examples of *spolia*, where the decoration or inscription is prominently displayed, this stone, its cross, and its ogham were entirely hidden away from view, built into the foundations of the new structure. Yet, a purely functional reuse seems unlikely, as such a prominently carved cross would hardly have been ignored, especially in the construction of a 13th-century church. Indeed, it could be argued that the ogham stone, consecrated as it was by the presence of that cross, could not simply be discarded. Instead, incorporating a 'hidden monument' into the structure of a new building can be interpreted to be, as Meggen Gondek puts it, a 'purposeful votive action…that articulates a sense of place and identity' (2015, 98). While Gondek is referencing mostly early Pictish symbol stones that have no clear Christian iconography, Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh notes that an 8th-century slab fragment from Clonmacnoise, despite the richness of its carving, was incorporated into the late-9th-century Temple Ciarán in such a way that the slab's striking iconography was largely

obscured, and only the interlace on one narrow edge 'remained to be seen' (2015, 220–3). It is a matter of speculation as to whether or not this concept of 'hidden monuments' represents (private?) votive acts, or, perhaps, the selective curation of memory; however, it may serve to highlight the complexity of relationships between later viewers and earlier objects, as exemplified by the Gowran ogham stone.



Fig. 5.18: (a) Gowran ogham stone: note the deliberate spalling on top sinister side; (b) Ogham stone at Kilmolash, now reused as a raised threshold between the nave and chancel

By contrast, the cross-carved ogham stone at Kilmolash (WA-10) was highly visible. The church retains its 12th-century chancel (Murray 2010, 105), though the ogham stone may have been incorporated into the church in the 15th century, when it was expanded westward (Buckley 1896, 217). It is partially inserted underneath the north wall of the chancel arch, forming a raised threshold between the chancel and nave. Kim Thounhurst (2007, 240) had suggested that the ogham inscription might overlay part of the dexter cross, and this suggestion has been confirmed with photogrammetry (see Chapter 4). A second piece of *spolia* at Kilmolash is being used as a lintel in the north window of the chancel. This cross-slab (WA-11) was likely a late 11th- or 12th-century altar frontal, presumably incorporated into the window when the church was later expanded (see above). The evidence for altar frontals from the end of the early medieval period indicates that they were placed at the eastern end of the chancel, and 'always lit by an adjacent window or windows…positioned specifically for that purpose' (Murray 2010, 106). It is interesting to note that the slab was placed into what was likely to be the very window that used to cast light upon it. Moreover, its selection for reuse in the chancel window could certainly be seen as a deliberate choice, rather than simply a matter

of convenience, because the slab was carefully reshaped to fit perfectly into the window. While there are other examples of cross-slabs being reused as lintels in the doorways of later structures, both ecclesiastical (e.g. Clonmacnoise, Skellig Michael, and High Island) and secular (see below), this is the only known example, at present, of a cross-slab being reused as a window lintel (though there is an ogham stone, *sans* cross, that was reused as a window sill in Clara Church, Co. Kilkenny). Furthermore, there are no examples of cross-decorated windows that can be confidently dated to the early medieval period (Ó Carragáin 2010, 93, 327 n. 28). It has been argued that the concept of movement between planes (i.e. inside and outside, sacred and profane), and, in particular, the juxtaposition between them, is emphasised and enhanced by the presence of carved stones at entryways and thresholds – to buildings, as well as sites (Gondek 2015, 97, 104–6). Though this concept does not apply to windows in quite the same way (people generally do not enter or exit via a window!), it can still be considered a point of entry between the church and outside, and incorporating the earlier altar frontal into the chancel window could certainly be seen as marking, blessing, or, indeed, protecting, a threshold into the church's most sacred space. Though perhaps not to the same degree, this might be said of the cross-carved ogham stone (WA-10) as well, considering it is, literally, the threshold between the chancel and nave.

This concept of movement between planes, and the juxtaposition of cross-slabs at such thresholds, can, however, be more readily applied to CW-31 and KK-9, which were installed as lintels over doorways in Clonmore Castle, and the 15th-century tower house at Dysart, respectively (Fig. 5.19). It is possible that this second cross-slab from Dysart was reused as the lintel to the main entrance of the tower house when it was first built, as the church and tower house may not have been in use contemporaneously (Murtagh 1991; also, see above). The cross-slab at Clonmore Castle, however, was unlikely to have been used in the castle's initial construction in the 13th century, since it came from the neighbouring ecclesiastical site of Clonmore, which was undoubtedly still active at that time (Chapter 8). It is being reused as a lintel within the entryway of a passage leading to the southeast tower, and was probably added during the early part of the 16th century by Gerald FitzGerald, Earl of Kildare, who is credited with renovating, extending, and enlarging Clonmore Castle (Hadden 1994, 53). While both CW-31 and KK-9 are oriented with their carved surface facing downward, so that the cross is clearly visible as you walk underneath them, it cannot necessarily be presumed that either one was intended to be exposed in this way at the time of their use. It is entirely possible that they could have been plastered over, hiding the crosses. This suggestion may be supported by the fact that neither cross is visible in its entirety – the cross-head of the slab in Clonmore Castle

is partially obscured by the wall into which the stone is inserted, and, while the cross head at Dysart is fully visible, its stem is likewise partly concealed. Yet, the fact that a motif is hidden does not necessarily lessen its value or meaning to those who knew it was there. Expanding on the suggestions put forth by Gondek (above), hiding the crosses could be interpreted as turning their reuse into a private, rather than public, act, to which only a select few were privy, yet in no way diminished their apotropaic properties.



Fig. 5.19: Clockwise from top left: Cross-slab KK-9 in tower house at Dysart; entryway to southeast tower of Clonmore castle; close-up of cross-slab CW-31

Two other pieces of *spolia* were found in a secular context – one is a cross-carved ogham stone from Legan Castle, Co. Kilkenny (KK-16), and the other, a late 11th–12th-century altar frontal from Knockmaon Church, Co. Waterford (WA-15). KK-16 was only discovered to be an ogham stone when the wall into which it was built collapsed *c*. 1891 (Barry 1896; Hewson 1896). However, the late re-discovery of this ogham inscription might be credited to the stone's heavily worn state, rather than a deliberate intent to hide the carving (see catalogue entry, KK-16). Prior to collapse, the ogham stone was said to have been outset from the rest of the wall, which might suggest that the inscription was intentionally left visible, as with the ogham stone built into the window at Clara Church (see above) – perhaps, to be likewise reinterpreted as suited its audience (*cf.* Ó Carragáin 2010, 158). Though this point is not mentioned in any of the accounts, the cross would have also been visible, if the ogham was indeed set on display. According to tradition, KK-16 may have been *in situ* on the site, forming a cornerstone of the 15th- or 16th-century tower house, without ever having been moved (see catalogue entries, 'Legan' and KK-16). While caution should be taken in ascribing too much weight to the historical accuracy of folklore and oral traditions, they can, nevertheless, provide us with valuable insights into the collective memory regarding a monument, and, in any case, KK-16 presumably originated from somewhere in the vicinity. The stone was probably cross-incised around the same time it was inscribed (see Chapter 4), and reusing it in the tower house could have been seen as incorporating a relic of the 'early Christian past'.

The altar frontal from Knockmaon (WA-15) was first recorded in the graveyard of the church in the 18th century (Smith 1746), and was marked as a tombstone on the Ordnance Survey map of 1840, *c*. 45m north of the church ruins. Though little is known about Knockmaon, like Kilmolash, it was under the jurisdiction of Lismore in the 12th century (Ó Carragáin 2010, 196). Moreover, apart from its cross-ring, WA-15 is almost identical to the altar front at Kilmolash (WA-11), which may indicate that they were carved around the same time, and, perhaps, by the same hand. Additionally, the (relative) importance of Knockmaon may also be indicated by the discovery of a 14-coin hoard – Anglo-Saxon, Carolingian, and Hiberno-Norse in origin – on the north side of the adjacent tower house (Jennings 1912; Murray 2010, 104). The altar frontal now stands on the outer east wall of the bawn of the ruinous Cappagh tower house, *c*. 3.5 km northwest of Knockmaon, moved here sometime between 1840 and 1898, when it was mentioned by Power (1898, 94). Unlike the other *spolia* in this corpus, however, there is little evidence to suggest that its reuse at Cappagh was motivated by anything other than decorative purposes, albeit, perhaps, coupled with the prestige of privately owning such a large and stately 'ancient Christian' monument.

The last three pieces of *spolia* were each found in an ecclesiastical setting, albeit not built into churches. A case could, perhaps, be made for the purely functional reuse of a small fragment of a second cross-slab (KK-7), only recently discovered at Coolcashin, Co. Kilkenny. Traces of mortar were found on its underside, indicating it had been incorporated into a modern stone wall, presumably that of the graveyard there (Farrelly 2018c). What might support this suggestion is that the fragment is carved with only a few straight, incised lines, and what is probably the end of a D-shaped cross terminal. Casual observers may not be able to identify this stone as part of a cross-slab, so its artistic relevance may not have been recognised, and, thus, not have been a factor in its selection for reuse. The same could also be argued for the reuse of a cross-carved ogham stone at Ardmore (WA-1). Its reuse in a modern graveyard wall, rather than in an ecclesiastical structure, like the other two spoliated ogham stones at Ardmore (e.g. Fitzgerald 1855), could suggest that its carvings went unnoticed, or unrecognised, and its selection was merely a matter of convenience. Yet, on balance, a purposeful curation of this monument cannot be entirely ruled out. The ogham inscription must have been exposed, because the man who found it was specifically searching for stones with ogham inscriptions, and WA-1 was discovered 'lying on a low wall at the side of the grave' (Fitzgerald 1856, 44). If so, then the cross was almost certainly hidden. It is possible that this represents some sort of purposeful curation, with the 'votive' deposition of 'hidden motifs' (see above), or that there was some perceived prior association with the area, or grave, by which it was found. Perhaps WA-1 had originally stood very near to where it was built into the cemetery wall. All of these suggestions, however, are purely speculative in the absence of further evidence.

The final piece of *spolia* is a gable finial (KK-5), which most likely originated from the nearby church of Freshford, but was subsequently moved *c*. 2.8 km to the holy well at Clontubrid, Co. Kilkenny (Hughes and Hamlin 1997, 66; Ó Carragáin 2010, 308). The finial may have been brought to its current location sometime in the early to mid-18th century, perhaps around the time when the parish church of Freshford was converted to a Church of Ireland (see catalogue entry, KK-5). Holy wells had developed a greater significance by this time, and Rachel Moss cites Clontubrid specifically when she states, 'deprived of the right to worship in their ancient churches, the Catholic community repaired or constructed new well-houses, sometimes incorporating stone from the medieval ruins of their former places of worship…' (2015b, 180). The predecessor to the modern well-house was built no later than 1700, based on graffiti found on the plaster inside (O'Flanagan 1934 vol. 1, 30–1); however, it is unclear if the gable finial ever topped this earlier structure. Locals claimed it was occupied as a hermit's cell only 60 years prior to the ordnance survey in 1839, at which time the finial

was recorded as leaning against the south wall of the well-house (*ibid*). It was photographed in this same position by Lord Dunraven in 1875 (pl. 64) and again by Carrigan in 1905 (vol. 2, 329). Significantly, in a time span of at least 66 years, but what may have been well over a century, the finial remained in the same position – despite most of the stones from the well-house being carried away by a Mr Caulfield (O'Flanagan 1934 vol. 1, 30–1). Perhaps more significantly, the few stones that remained, including the gable finial, were only kept in place by the 'veneration of the neighbouring peasants' (*ibid*). What was left of the old well-house was still standing in 1905, but must have been removed, and a new well-house built (presumably the current one), before Leask's publication, as he records the finial on top of the well-house (1955, 46; Fig. 5.20).

As already mentioned above, many early medieval churches were perceived as being built by their founding saint; thus, the church itself could be considered a relic of that saint. Freshford Church is thought to have been built on the ecclesiastical site of Achadour, reputedly founded by St Lachtáin († 672; Quinlan and Foley 2004, 13), and the finial was likely considered an important mnemonic connection to this early Christian past. Yet, it is also worth noting that Fiachra is the patron saint of Clontubrid, and it was *his* feast day that was traditionally celebrated there, not Lachtáin's (Carrigan 1905 vol. 2, 330). This could be evidence of some sort of 'selective curation' of folk memory (*cf*. Gondek 2015, 97–8), though this suggestion is speculative. Regardless, it seems clear that the finial has always been conceived of as sacred. It was taken from Freshford Church (probably during renovations; see catalogue entry, KK-5), and brought to the holy well of the nearby Catholic Church at Clontubrid, where, for at least the better part of a century, it lay prone against the well-house – vulnerable, yet guarded from theft and damage, apparently by the reverence of the local community alone. Ultimately, it has survived to be re-erected atop the east gable, over the doorway of the modern well-house, emphasising the sanctity of an already holy place, and standing as testimony to the influence (or power?) of social memory.



Fig. 5.20: Gable finial (KK-5) on Clontubrid holy well

5.5 Miscellany

5.5.1 Figural sculpture

It is not entirely clear what sort of function(s) the sculptural figures found in the study area, WA-7, WA-24, and WA-22, may have fulfilled, though there certainly would have been a decorative aspect to their creation (Fig. 5.21). WA-7, the stone face from Curraghmore, was first recorded on the 1841 Ordnance Survey map as 'Mother Brown'. It is in the far end of a field on the grounds of Curraghmore House and Gardens, *c*. 497 m south of the parish church of Clonagam, though it cannot be attributed conclusively to any particular ecclesiastical site (see catalogue entry, WA-7). WA-7 has been cemented into a conglomerate boulder, perhaps 'to add picturesque antiquity to the grounds' (Veale 1992, 2). However, there is a tenon below the face, suggesting that it may have originally been inserted into something, possibly as part of a composite monument. While it may be speculated that stone figures and faces may have had an apotropaic element to their creation, perhaps watching over a church or site (somewhat akin to the sheela-na-gigs of the later medieval period), it is unclear what sort of monument or structure to which WA-7 belonged, or what its purpose may have been. However, the origin of its modern moniker, 'Mother Brown', undoubtedly stems from its resemblance, at a distance,

of ‘an old woman standing on the hillside, wrapped in her shawl’ (*ibid*). The head must have been in its present position well before its inclusion on the Ordnance Survey map of 1841, as it had already made its way into the collective folk memory by that time, though it is not referenced in any of the contemporary scholarly literature (*ibid*, 2, 4).

As discussed in Chapter 4, the stone face at Middlequarter (WA-24) may be loosely compared to the White Island figures, and the Killadeas ‘Bishop’ stone, both in Co. Fermanagh, though WA-24 lacks the rectangular sockets found on the White Island figures, which would have been suggestive of a function as part of a composite structure (Lanigan Wood 2004, 50; Ó Carragáin 2010, 338, n. 198). It was only recently recorded (Farrelly 2017a), being used as a garden ornament on the southern side of a farmhouse, immediately east of the field containing the remnants of Cill Lasrach. There are several saints named Lasair in the written sources (Ó Riain 2011, 392), though none that can be ascribed to this church. The closest recorded Lasair is a female saint of Killasseragh, albeit of Kilmeen, Co. Cork (*ibid*). While the function of WA-24 is unclear, it may have been architectural, perhaps with an apotropaic element; Farrelly has suggested it may have been a caryatid (2017a), which might have some merit, considering Cill Lasrach may have been dedicated to a female saint.

As with the previous two pieces, the function of WA-22, from Lismore, Co. Waterford, is not clear (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 349). It may have had a structural role, though not necessarily, as WA-22 could have been displayed as a wall panel, similar to, as Tadhg O’Keeffe suggests, the mid-11th-century figural panels from St Emmeran’s Church in Regensburg, Bavaria (1994, 123–4). It was first suggested that the figure may have represented St John (Westropp 1897), though this interpretation is not supported by the extant remains of the inscription (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 348–9), and it may instead represent Christ (O’Keeffe 1994, 123). It is notable that, though there are other Irish examples of inscribed architectural pieces, it is the only one with the primary purpose of carrying an inscription (O’Keeffe 1994, 123; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 349), which may favour the suggestion that WA-22 was a wall panel. However, the text is now illegible, and Macalister’s reading of *in me(n)sam domini ierusalem det arma et coronas aur(i)* is at odds with the letter-forms that are still visible (*cf.* Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 348–9; Macalister 1938).

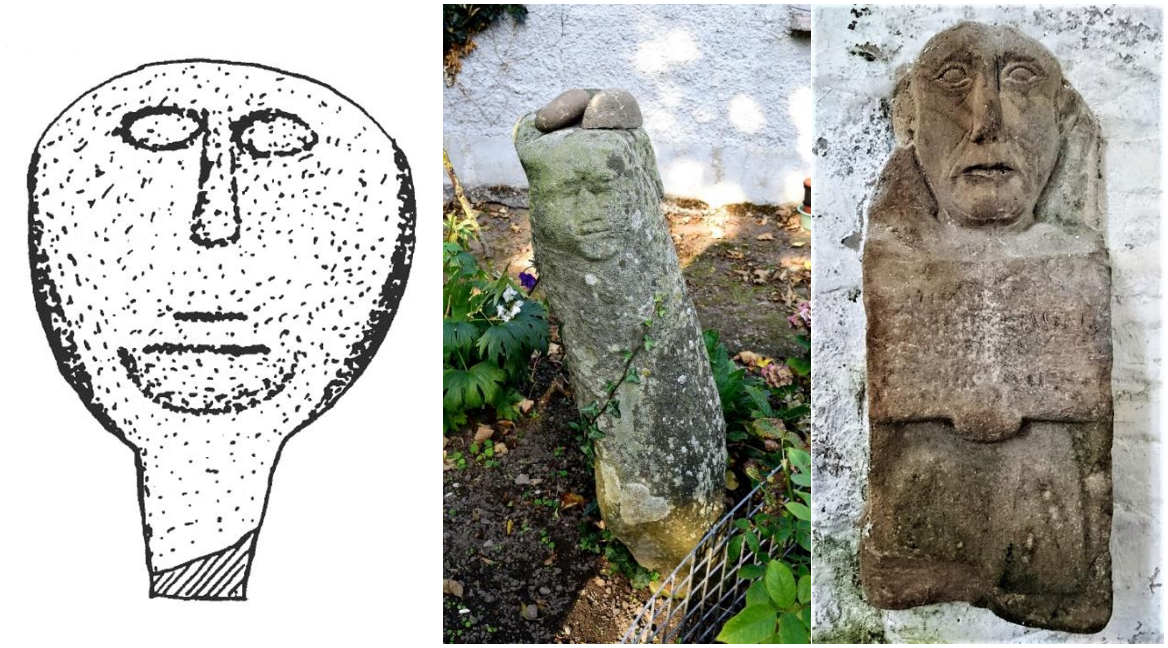


Fig. 5.21: Figural sculptures WA-7 (after Veale 1992), WA-24, and WA-22

5.5.2 Clonamery Lintel

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the cross-carved lintel (KK-1) over the western doorway of Clonamery Church, Co. Kilkenny is one of only a handful of pre-Romanesque cross-carved lintels in Ireland. The design is that of a Maltese cross on a stem, with thin base, carved in low relief. The image is reminiscent of an altar cross set in a stand, for which there is documentary evidence in Europe since the 6th century (Ó Carragáin 2010, 175). In Ireland, the use of altar crosses had become common by the 8th or 9th century, and the presence of large altar crosses, 'through which the whole community would direct their prayers, would also indicate eastward celebration' (*ibid*). This symbolism may be visually emphasised by the Clonamery lintel, foreshadowing what the congregation would see as they moved eastward into the church, on the altar at the far end. Moreover, it is worth noting that the few instances of sculptural embellishment on Irish pre-Romanesque doorways are, invariably, a carved cross (*ibid*, 42). Metaphorically, this could not have been lost on the congregation of Clonamery – Ó Carragáin made a particularly relevant point on this matter in quoting John 10:9: 'Jesus…said "I am the door. If anyone enter by me, he shall be saved"' (*ibid*).

5.5.3 Sundials

Though not necessarily the objects of devotional practices in themselves, early medieval sundials, of which there are two in the study area – one from Clone, Co. Wexford (WX-7), and one from Toureen Peakaun (TS-90), were key tools (along with bells) in regulating the activities, and rituals, of monastic life (Fig. 5.22). The monastic day centred around the

canonical hours, and the observance of prayers, as described in the *Ríagol Ailbi Imlecha* ('The Rule of Ailbe of Emly'; e.g. §16, §24, §28, 99–103, in O'Neill). As sundials could only be counted upon on a sunny day, the canonical hours were primarily marked by the tolling of bells. However, stone sundials may have also been erected as a visual reminder to correctly observe the canonical hours, particularly during the Céilí Dé reform movement of the mid-8th–10th centuries, at a time when the 'proper keeping of the round of services clearly emerges as one of the reformers' major concerns' (Hamlin 1987b, 39). This concern re-emerges in the ecclesiastical reforms of the 12th century, when the correct observance of canonical hours may have again been emphasised (*ibid*). Furthermore, though sundials may have served as reminders of the hours during reform periods, as well as keeping time 'when the weather allowed' (*ibid*), the Christological symbolism of marking the hours of the day by the movement of the sun would certainly not have been lost on the monks (Ó Carragáin 2009a, 218; also, see above, section 5.3).



Fig. 5.22: The heads of the sundials from Toureen Peakaun (TS-90), and Clone (WX-7; photo: NMS)

5.5.4 Cross-carved pebbles

As suggested in the previous chapter, the two cross-carved pebbles, from Ballynamintra Middle (WA-5) and Graignagower (WA-8), Co. Waterford, may have acted as portable blessings or cures, or else, as ritualistic instruments for oath-taking or curses (Fig. 5.23). This could, perhaps, apply in a general sense to WA-5, and it might have been used to bless or protect. On balance, considering it was discovered in a midden, among many other discarded (uncarved) pebbles, it may not have been intended to be used, or carried around as such, long-term. A stronger case might be made for the Graignagower pebble, however. It is carved with a cross on both broad faces, and separated by an incised band, which spans the circumference of the pebble. Notably, the two crosses are different – one is plain, and one in ringed; moreover, the

two are inverted to each other. The way WA-8 is carved could suggest that one side may have been used to bless or protect, and the other side to curse. The idea is similar to the early medieval concept of using the right hand for benedictions, and the left for maledictions (see above), and may also be compared to the act of ritualistically turning blessing/cursing stones clockwise or anti-clockwise, depending on whether a benediction or malediction is intended (*cf.* O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 339). Additionally, the pebble was found buried on church grounds, and it may be speculated that, if it was buried deliberately, perhaps some sort of performative ritual deposition took place. Though not a funerary deposition, purposefully burying the stone may likewise demonstrate how memories (perhaps associated with the owner of the stone) were selectively curated or forgotten, through acts of display, and then consignment (Williams 2003, 92–3; Gondek 2015, 191).

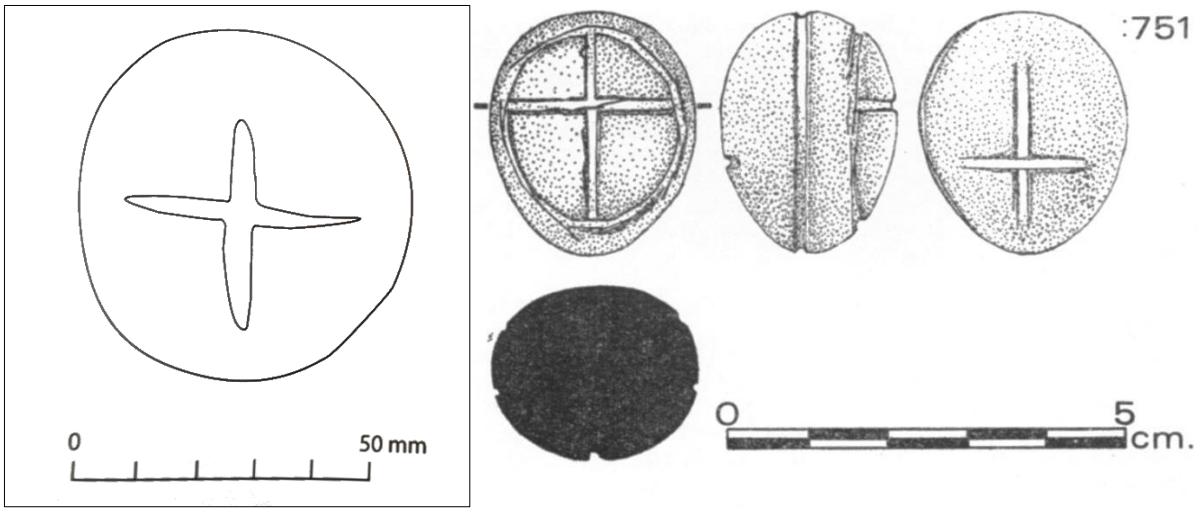


Fig. 5.23: Cross-carved pebbles WA-5 and WA-8 (after Thounhurst 2007; Lucas 1972)

5.5.5 Quern stones

Ewan Campbell has remarked that cross-carved quern stones, such as the examples from Dunadd, in Argyll, Scotland, and at Clonmacnoise, are notable for the difference in the quality of their execution, as compared to 'utilitarian' quern stones (1987, 112). WA-29 certainly exemplifies this point, as it is, arguably, one of the finest-executed cross-carved quern stones in Ireland or Britain. Power attributes a Eucharistic symbolism to the geometric divisions of the cross, suggesting each square represents a piece of the Eucharist, laid out in the form of a cross, as directed in the Stowe Missal for the distribution of Communion on feast days (1939–40). Such an interpretation is interesting, particularly since, given its high level of decoration, this quern stone may have been used to mill the grain for the Eucharistic bread. However, Power's argument is weakened (though, perhaps, not entirely negated), considering that the

quern stone is roughly 20 squares short of the 65 Eucharistic pieces – as required for the high feast days of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost – that he claims it must have once had (*cf*. Power 1939–40, 26–9). In any case, cross-carved quern stones, as with WA-29 and TS-85, can undoubtedly be interpreted as both blessing and protecting the grains (Fig. 5.24). Though speculative, perhaps cross-carved querns were used especially for milling the flour used to create Eucharistic bread, though maybe not necessarily exclusively for milling Eucharistic flour. Additionally, there are hagiographical accounts of miraculous deeds being attributed to quern stones in the early medieval period – chapter 31, 'Of the millstone', in Cogitosus's *Life of St Brigit* immediately springs to mind (24–5, in Connolly and Picard).



Fig. 5.24: Quern stones WA-29 (after Power 1939–40) and TS-85

5.5.6 Lamps

The stone lamp, or cresset, from Ballypatrick (TS-3) most likely served a purely functional purpose in its original context (Fig. 5.25). However, the knowledge of its original function had, at least locally, become lost in the intervening centuries. Upon its discovery in the mid-19th century, until it was removed to the Waterford Museum *c*. 1906, it was both venerated and used as a chalice, no doubt due to its resemblance to one: 'Since its discovery this vessel…has been used extensively in seasons of cattle disease as a charm, to place in running water where the cattle drank. For this and allied purposes our 'chalice' was in fact in much demand, and was sometimes carried miles away – even into the County of Waterford' (Power 1906, 145; 1907, 294).

The stone hanging-bowl from Ballinacourty, Co. Waterford (WA-4), may be unique, at least in an Irish context – other bowl-shaped stone lamps do not hang, and other hanging bowls, usually made of bronze (though the Cuillard hanging-bowl from Co. Roscommon is wooden), would not have been used as lamps (*cf*. Bruce-Mitford 2005, 31–2; Raferty 1966, 35). Joseph

Raferty has suggested that the triangular design on the bottom of WA-4 may have also doubled as a stand, upon which the bowl could rest (1966, 29–30). Thus, WA-4 may have been able to function similarly to other bowl-shaped lamps, as well as be suspended, though the style and high-quality decoration of the Ballynacourty bowl is more in keeping with that of other hanging-bowls. WA-4, now in the National Museum (reg. no. 1926:3), was discovered in 1924, within what had been referred to as a 'cave' (but may also have been either a souterrain or natural hollow), along with some human and animal bone (*ibid*, 33–4). Certainly, hanging-bowls and lamps were not the exclusive prerogative of churches, and a cross-carved object does not necessarily imply an ecclesiastical context. However, the cross carved onto the rim may signify, given the proliferation of documentary and archaeological evidence indicating that caves were popular habitation sites for anchorites and hermits (Dowd 2015), that perhaps a (tentative) case could be made that this 'cave' was used as a hermitage.

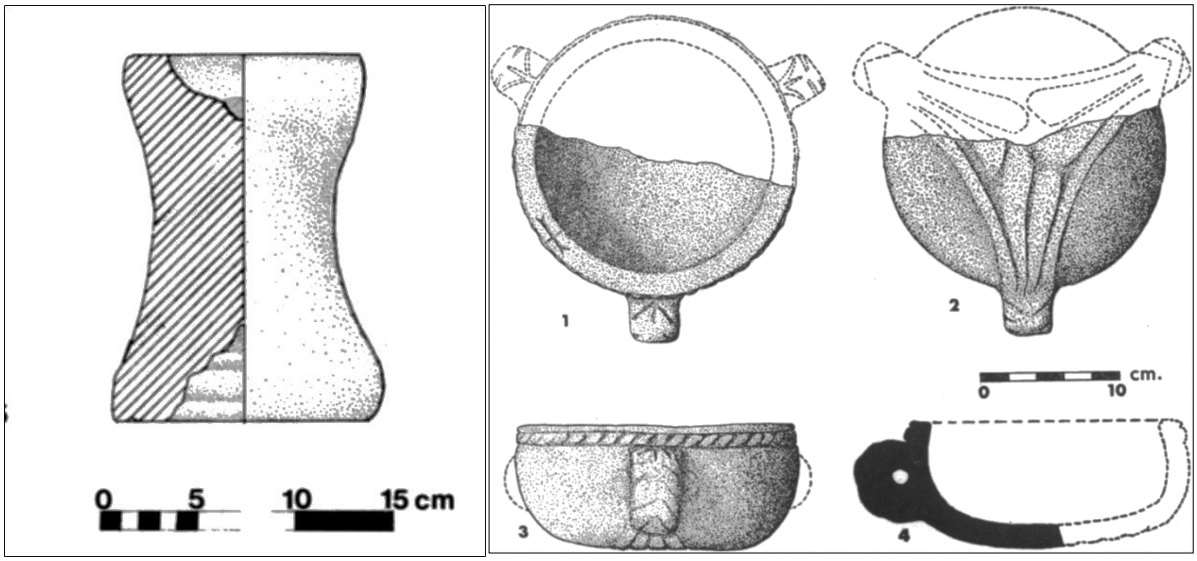


Fig. 5.25: Stone lamps TS-3 and WA-4 (after Moore 1984; Raferty 1966)

5.6 Summary and conclusions

The southeast of Ireland has a rich and varied sculpture tradition. While the majority of carved stones are grave-markers, there are also a significant number of boundary/termon markers, as well as devotional foci, that survive, including some that were almost certainly still *in situ*. Moreover, several rare monument-types are represented here, e.g. gable finials, lamps, cross-carved quern stones, and sundials. Most of the carvings are crosses, of various levels of complexity. On grave-markers, crosses both served to denote the Christian identity of the person buried, as well as facilitate prayers and blessings for that individual. On boundary

markers, crosses were often used to signify sacred space, and may have offered travellers a place to stop and offer up prayers. Occasionally, earlier monuments were later carved with crosses for a variety of reasons, including, perhaps, to claim new, ecclesastical ownership, or as a declaration of royal dominion.

Stone monuments were, however, multivalent creations, and served multiple funtions in the landscape. Many grave- and boundary markers may have also been the focus of devotional practices, such as liturgical or circumabulatory rituals, as well as pilgrimage. Others may have had a more specific ritual function, such as KK-2 and WA-26, which have deep hollows ground into their surfaces. The icononography of some sculpture, such as some pieces from St Berrihert's Kyle (see Chapter 6), Kilmokea (WX-19), Becc-Ériu (WX-3 and WX-4), and four 'marigold' stones in Co. Wexford (Chapter 7) is more complex, and reflects the presence of both a well-educated Christian elite, as well as the networks of artistic exchange that existed in and between Ireland and Britiain, as well as with the wider early medieval world. In particular, this is exemplified at St Berrihert's Kyle, and in the group of stylistically linked 'marigold' stones in Co. Wexford mentioned above, as well as at Clonmore (Co. Carlow). These groups of stones required more in-depth analyses, and are each the focus of the subsequent three chapters.

6

A Reassessment of St Berrihert's Kyle

6.1 Introduction

The most enigmatic site in this study is undoubtedly St Berrihert's Kyle, Co. Tipperary. Its sculpture collection alone accounts for almost a quarter of this project's entire corpus; yet, very little is known about the site itself – its foundation, development, and decline – to explain the presence of such a large assemblage of carved stones. There have been a few scholarly papers written on the archaeology of St Berrihert's Kyle, the most comprehensive of which was published by Pádraig Ó hÉailidhe in 1967. However, given that over fifty years have passed since Ó hÉaildhe's publication, and that new digital methods of analysis are now widely available to scholars of early medieval sculpture, a reassessment of the material was long overdue. Moreover, since the publication of his catalogue, twelve slabs that were lying loose around the enclosure were subsequently cemented to the wall (presumably by the OPW), negating Ó hÉilidhe's numbering system. Additionally, a few other stones that had either been set into the wall, or into a 'station', in Ó hÉilidhe's time have been rearranged. Furthermore, two of the slabs have since gone missing, and, altogether, this necessitated the creation of a revised and updated sculpture catalogue to reflect these changes (Fig. 6.1).



Fig. 6.1: Interior of the stone enclosure at St Berrihert's Kyle, looking east

St Berrihert's Kyle is in the Glen of Aherlow, Co. Tipperary, a valley between the Galtee Mountains and the Slievenamuck Hills (Fig. 6.2). It is located on the eastern side of the Glen, just south of the main road, and is *c*. 6 km west of Toureen Peakaun (more below). The site itself originally consisted of an ovoid earth and stone enclosure, *c*. 36 m N-S x 27 m E-W, rising variously from 1–2 m above the surrounding fields, and overgrown by trees and bushes (Crawford 1909, 61; Ó hÉailidhe 1967, 103). In 1946, the Office of Public Works (OPW) facilitated a clean-up, and built an oval-shaped enclosure of imported stone on the southern side of the site, within which is displayed the vast majority of carved stones (Fig. 6.3). Eleven early medieval slabs, plus two others that are uncarved, are set up into 'stations' along the northern perimeter. In the centre of the earthen enclosure, within an area delimited by paving stones set on edge, is a modern burial ground for unbaptised infants, marked by small uncarved stones. The earth taken from the centre of the enclosure, after it was levelled to build the stone wall, was used to create a causeway through the adjacent marshy fields (Ó hÉailidhe 1967, n. 7). A planked wooden walkway through these fields leads *c*. 170 m east from the main enclosure to a natural spring known as St Berrihert's Well.



Fig. 6.2: Location of St Berrihert's Kyle



Fig. 6.3: The western approach to the enclosure, showing the rise of the land

Henry Crawford included brief descriptions of some of the carved stones at St Berrihert's Kyle in his lists of early Irish crosses and cross-slabs (1907, 208; 1912, 241–2). In 1909, he published a more detailed discussion of the site, and the 21 stones that were known at the time, namely the two cross-heads, 18 cross-slabs, and a bullaun, which had been gathered together into a single 'station' (61–2; Figs. 6.4 and 6.5). In 1967, Pádraig Ó hÉailidhe published a paper on St Berrihert's Kyle, and what was now (after the OPW's clean-up) its 72 cross-slabs, two cross-heads, bullaun, quern stone fragment, and several spherical stones, which may have had a ritual function (see below). More recently, an epigraphic analysis of the single inscribed stone at the site was undertaken by Okasha and Forsyth (2001, 220–3). However, though St Berrihert's Kyle has also been briefly mentioned in various discussions on the broader trends in early medieval sculpture – most notably, Raghnall Ó Floinn's paper on the relationship between sculpture production and royal patronage (1995, 258), and, more recently, on the practicalities of communication between Northumbrian and Irish churches

(Edmonds 2009) – Ó hÉailidhe's seminal work remains the most comprehensive study of St Berrihert's Kyle to date. This is due in large part to the high standard of Ó hÉailidhe's work, but also because there are no surviving textual references to St Berrihert's Kyle from the early medieval period, and there have never been any excavation-led archaeological investigations of the site, which could potentially bring new information to light. Yet, despite the lack of written sources and excavation evidence, with a more nuanced approach to the material, it *is* possible to enhance our understanding of St Berrihert's Kyle and its sculpture – in particular, the conditions under which the site was founded and flourished, as well as the potential of its sculpture to impart new data regarding the social and ecclesiastical identities of those that created them. Finally, it should be noted that though this chapter primarily deals with St Berrihert's Kyle, it is impossible to discuss this site without discussing Toureen Peakaun as well. However, while many of the theories and suggestions put forth here regarding St Berrihert's Kyle may, in some cases, also apply to Toureen Peakaun, its sculpture has already been dealt with at length by expert scholars (Waddell and Holland 1990; Manning 1991; Okasha and Forsyth 2001; Charles-Edwards 2002; Ó Carragáin 2006; 2007b; 2008; 2017b; forthcoming). So though it is discussed here, and included in the overall sculpture analyses of this project (i.e. Chapters 4 and 5), it will not be the focus of a separate case study.



Fig. 6.4: St Berrihert's Kyle in 1909 (after Crawford)

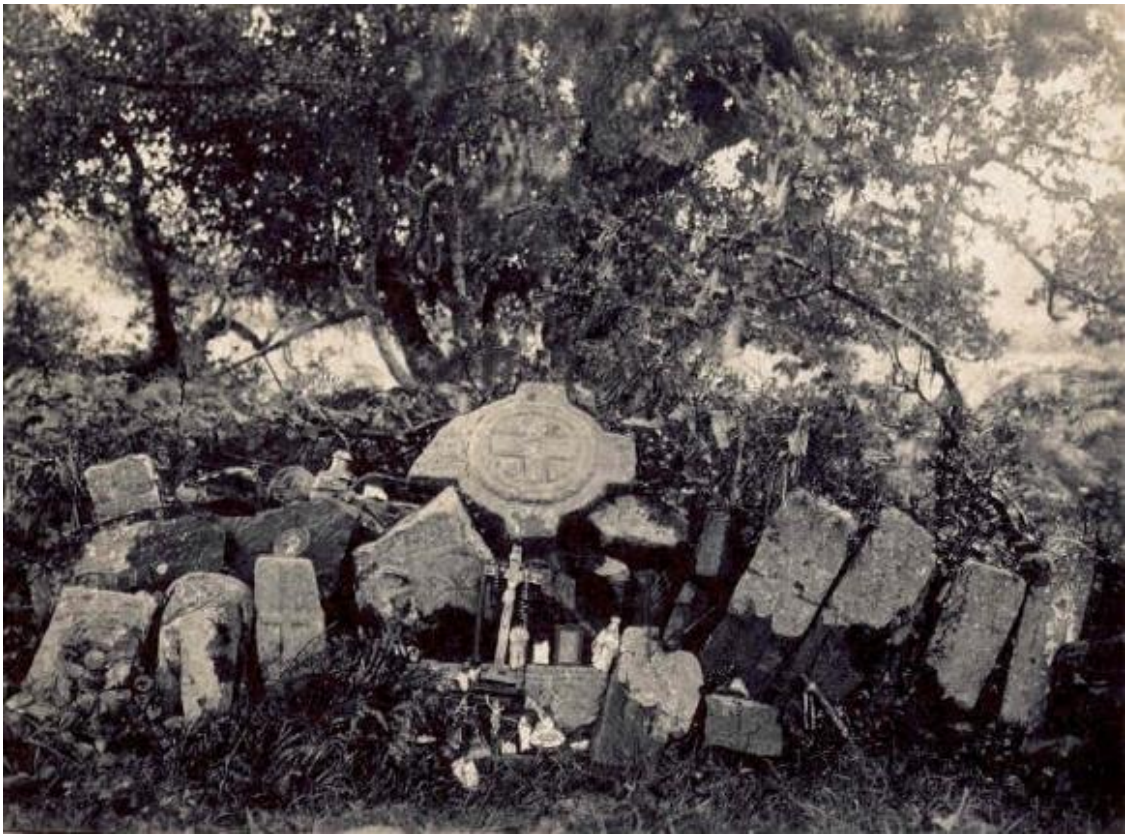


Fig. 6.5: Photograph of St Berrihert's Kyle, taken by François Henry in 1936 (photo credit: Limerick Museum)

6.2 Historical and Hagiographical Evidence

While there are no extant early medieval records of St Berrihert's Kyle, it was presumedly founded by (or else dedicated to) an Anglo-Saxon saint, Bercheirt. In scholarly literature, Bercheirt is generally thought to be the founder of Tullylease, Co. Cork, and is often identified as Berikertus, one of the brothers of Gerald of Mayo, all of whom left Northumbria for Ireland with Colmán of Lindisfarne, after the synod of Whitby in 664 (*Vita Sancti Geraldi*, in Plummer 1910, 107 §ii). While neither Gerald or Bercheirt are mentioned in Bede's account (Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 4.4, in Plummer 1896, 213–4), Gerald's connection with Mayo is first mentioned in the 9th-century *Martyrology of Tallaght*, under 12 March (in Best and Lawlor 1931). Moreover, Gerald's obituary in the *Annals of Ulster* in the year 732, naming him as pontiff/bishop of 'Mayo of the Saxons', is thought to be genuine (*AU*, U732.5; Ní Mhaonaigh 2009, 418, n. 49). However, Bercheirt, as Berikertus, is not mentioned in the written sources until the later Latin *Life* of Gerald of Mayo, which Richard Sharpe has suggested to be a 13th-century composition (1991, 7).

According to the *Vita Sancti Geraldi*, Bercheirt was the son of a Saxon king and queen, Cusperius and Bernicia (in Plummer 1910, 107 §ii), though both Nora Chadwick and Máire Ní Mhaonaigh suggest that the name of his mother was instead a reference to the kingdom of Bernicia, from which Bercheirt and his three brothers set forth to follow their teacher, Colmán, along with 'three thousand men of goodwill' into exile in Ireland (*ibid*, 108 §iii; Chadwick 1963, 198; Ní Mhaonaigh 2009, 420). After arriving in Connacht, Bercheirt disappears from the narrative, but is presumed to have made his way south, as there is a concentration of 'Kilberrihert' placenames in north Co. Cork, as well as one in Co. Kerry (Coleman 1895; Ryan 1938; Lionard 1953; Ó hÉailidhe 1967, 104; Henderson and Okasha 1992, 10–2; Ó Riain 2011, 102–3). More importantly, he is considered the patron of Tullylease, as well as St Berrihert's Kyle (*ibid*), both of which have produced high-quality and stylistically complex stone sculpture. There is an obituary in the Annals of the Four Masters for a Berichtir of Tulach Léis in the year 839 (*AFM*, M839.8), and some have suggested that he was also the 'Berechtuine' commemorated on the well-known Tullylease cross-slab (Leask 1938). This caused some controversy over its date (*cf*. Lionard 1953; Ó hÉailidhe 1967, 104), but it is now generally accepted that the slab is most likely from the mid-8th century, and that 'Berichtir' and Berechtuine' are not the same person (Lionard 1961, 155; Henderson and Okasha 1992, 32). While it is often presumed that 'Bercheirt' and Berichtuine' are variations on the same name, Fiona Edmonds has pointed out that they are actually two different names entirely: 'the first features the elements *be(o)rht-* and *-heard*; the second *be(o)rht-* and *-wine*' (2009 144). Sharing a common name element between relatives was typical of Anglo-Saxon nobles, and, moreover, there were several Anglo-Saxons in Ireland with the element *be(o)rht-* in their name (*ibid*, n. 95; Ó Cróinín 2007, 16–9). If the founder of Tullylease was indeed an Anglo-Saxon named Bercheirt that made his way to Ireland sometime in the late 7th century, then perhaps the 'Berichtuine' commemorated on the Tullylease slab considered himself, or was considered by others, to be a spiritual 'son', or 'descendant', of Bercheirt.

As mentioned above, there is no refence to St Berrihert's Kyle in the early medieval sources. Curiously, the site was also not mentioned in the *Ordnance Survey Letters* (O'Donovan 1840, §32–3, 12–3, in O'Flanagan vol. 1), though it was recorded on the first edition OS map of 1840 as 'St Berrahert's Church', and at least one of the stone crosses (probably the larger one) is noted here as well (Fig. 6.6). According to Ó hÉailidhe, 'throughout the Glen of Aherlow there is to be found a sincere devotion to St Berrihert' (1967, 105), a tradition that continues strongly to the present. I have observed several pilgrims over the course of my fieldwork at this site, bringing with them empty bottles with which they collect

water from St Berrihert's Well; one local gentleman said that he made this trip daily, as he only drank water drawn from this source. Local tradition states that Bercheirt is one of several brothers born to an Irish chief, all of whom founded churches nearby (*ibid*). Most notably, this includes Beccán of Toureen Peakaun, but a St Naovan of Barnlough was also mentioned (*ibid*). The townland of Barnlough (*Bearna na Loch*) is situated roughly halfway between Bansha and the Glen of Aherlow, though there is no information on such a saint, and, indeed, it is doubtful a 'St Naovan' ever existed. There is a well on the southern end of the townland of Barnlough, dug into the southwest bank of a small stream just off the River Aherlow, referred to locally as *Tobar Naomhsín*, or 'Well of the Little Saint' (*The Schools' Collection*, vol. 0575, 314). However, in the *OS Namebook* of 1840, O'Donovan calls it *Tobar an eich bhain*, 'Well of the white steed' (Farrelly 2011d). Returning to St Berrihert's Kyle, a pattern, described by Ó Riain as 'a large affair', is held here every 18th of February (2011, 102). There has been a suggestion that this observance may stem from an association with Colmán of Lindisfarne, albeit arising presumably from an erroneous equation with a different Colmán (of Ard Bó), whose feast day *is* the 18th of February (*ibid*; Stokes 1905, 61, 76–7). While Ó Riain rejects the suggestion outright (2011, 102), the possibility of such an association being remembered at St Berrihert's Kyle is interesting, and perhaps should not be dismissed so quickly. At Tullylease, a pattern is held on the 18th of February in honour of Bercheirt as well, and either on, or near, this day at four other 'Kilberrihert' sites (Lionard 1953, 12; 1961, 155; Henderson and Okasha 1992, 10–2), indicating that there may be some substance to the suggestion, even if this connection is 'preserved only in folklore, and the memory of the people' (Ó hÉailidhe 1967, 104).

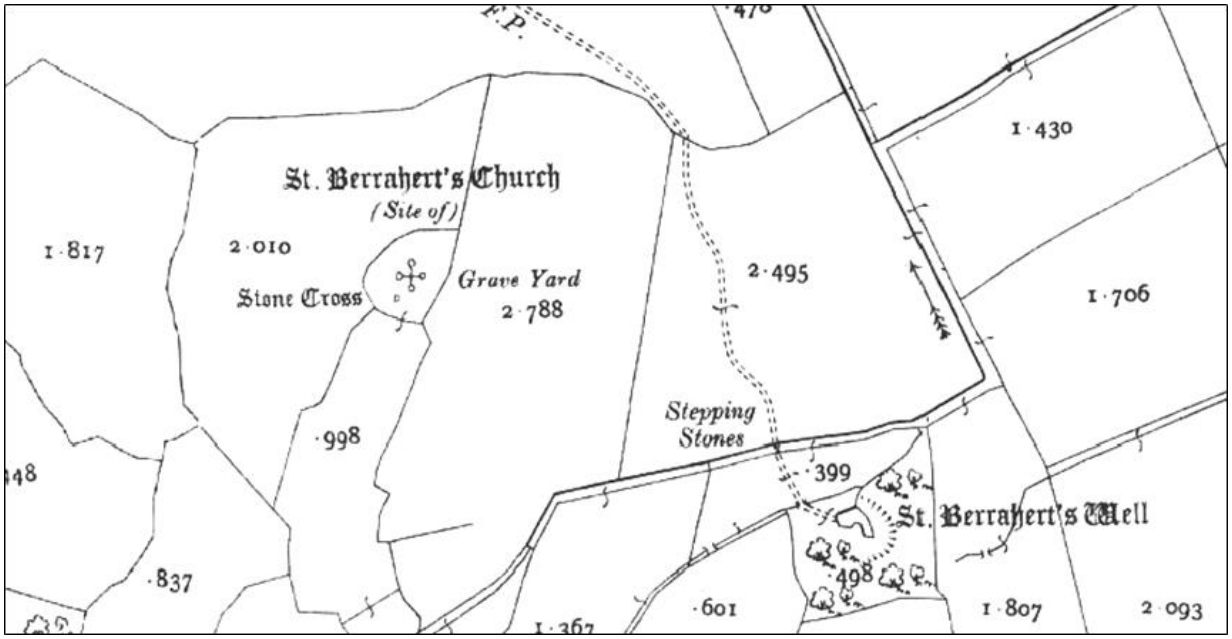


Fig. 6.6: First edition OS map, showing St Berrihert's Kyle

6.3 The sculpture

As already stated in the introduction, Ó hÉilidhe's 1967 paper, which included a catalogue of all the existing carved stones at St Berrihert's Kyle, still stands as the most comprehensive piece of work on the site to date. However, several changes made to the positions of the slabs in the interim prompted the creation of a revised and updated sculpture catalogue. Additionally, photogrammetric recording methods were used on all 70 of the extant cross-slabs, as well as the two cross-heads, during fieldwork for this project. Though only a select few photogrammetric models have been produced for this project, a full, 3D corpus of this important collection can be created sometime in the future (see Chapters 2 and 9).

6.3.1 Cross-heads

There are two cross-heads surviving at St Berrihert's Kyle, the remnants of free-standing crosses, both of which are included in Harbison's high cross corpus (1992a). These, along with a cross-base that probably belonged to the larger cross, have been permanently attached to the enclosing wall, with the larger, more ornate cross-head displayed in such a way that both sides are visible. However, the smaller cross has been affixed to the inner wall of the enclosure, so that only the carved side is now visible. The smaller cross-head is made of sandstone, with a solid, circular disc at the centre, from which the arms and top of the stem protrude. It is only decorated on one side (Ó hÉailidhe 1967, 108, n. 19), carved in relief with an incised, equal-armed outline cross with a sunken rectangular hollow at its centre, framed by two concentric circles (Fig. 6.7). It is significantly smaller than most 'high crosses', and, while that alone does not necessarily preclude it from being categorised as such (e.g. Kelly 1986), its one-sided design suggests this cross would not have functioned in the same manner. Rather, it is of very similar dimensions and morphology to the cross at St Patrick's Well (TS-8), *c*. 23 km east-southeast of St Berrihert's Kyle, and a few kilometres west of Clonmel, as well as (to a lesser extent) the solid-ringed cross fragment at Clonmore (CW-12). Like other free-standing crosses of similar size and style, the smaller St Berrihert's cross may date to the 9th or 10th century (Chapter 4), though, considering the evidence for the site's early decline (see below), perhaps a 9th-century date is appropriate for this piece. Moreover, as it is only carved on one side, may have been a boundary or termon marker (see Chapters 4 and 5).



Fig. 6.7: Smaller cross-head at St Berrihert's Kyle (TS-60); Cross at St Patrick's Well (TS-8)

The larger sandstone cross-head is skilfully executed, carved in relief, and decorated with interlace on both sides. On one face, it is also carved with a Maltese cross, decorated with interlace, and encircled with stepped ornament. At its centre is a six-petalled marigold, also encircled, and figural scenes are carved on its arms and top stem (Fig. 6.8). This was undoubtedly the head of a high cross, and as such, an in-depth analysis of its design and iconography is beyond the scope of this project (see Chapter 2). However, it is also the most iconographically complex piece of sculpture at St Berrihert's Kyle, and, therefore, even a brief examination of its figural panels can offer us valuable information regarding the context of its creation. There are three panels that have been interpreted as various biblical scenes from the Old Testament, or else scenes from the Passion. While Ó hÉailidhe interpreted the left-, right-hand, and top panels as 'Jacob's struggle with the angel', 'Cain slaying Abel' or 'David and Goliath', and 'Moses on the Mount', respectively (1967, 119–20), Harbison interpreted these panels as 'The Kiss of Judas', 'The Mocking or Flagellation of Christ', and either 'The Ascension', or 'Second Mocking of Christ' (1992a vol. 1, 19). The exact interpretation of the panels is not pertinent to the discussion here; what *is* relevant is that the figural panels on the St Berrihert's Kyle high cross are thematically related to multiple scenes found on the mostly 9th- and 10th-century scriptural crosses at several important Irish ecclesiastical sites – in particular, Clonmacnoise, Monasterboice, and Kells, though similar panels have also been found on crosses at Castledermot, Co. Kildare, Drumcliffe, Co. Sligo and Ardboe Co. Tyrone

(for a full and detailed breakdown of each of these scenes and on which high crosses they are found, see Harbison 1992a vol. I, 217, 263, 265, 270, 290–1). While this cross certainly cannot be compared to the craftsmanship of the 'Muiredach Master' (e.g. the Cross of the Scriptures at Clonmacnoise, and Muiredach's Cross at Monasterboice), it is still a finely sculpted cross, and demonstrates that St Berrihert's Kyle had access to highly skilled craftsmen, and the wealth to pay them. Based on the above comparanda, the high cross at St Berrihert's Kyle probably also dates to the 9th or 10th century. However, it is tempting to suggest that this cross could, potentially, be relatively early. Its close neighbour, Toureen Peakaun, has one of the earliest high crosses in Ireland or Britain, dated to *c.* 700, albeit without figural panels (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 295; Charles-Edwards 2002, 117–18). Considering the close association which must have existed between St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun, especially in the late 7th–8th centuries (see below), it stands to reason that St Berrihert's Kyle was likewise an early innovator, and perhaps an 8th–9th-century date range may be suggested for its high cross. The presence of a marigold, as well as the lack of a true ring, might support an early date. Moreover, this suggestion is reinforced by the site's links to Northumbria, which was already producing exceptionally sculpted crosses in the 8th century (e.g. the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses). Regardless, the iconography of the high cross indicates that the community at St Berrihert's Kyle were active participants in the continuum of artistic and intellectual exchange that existed both within and between Ireland and Britain, and were familiar with the symbology of, as well as actively exploring, the various paradigms of Christian iconography (see also Newman and Walsh 2007; Chapter 7).



Fig. 6.8: High cross-head at St Berrihert's Kyle

6.3.2 Inscribed stone

Lionard does not specifically mention the presence of an inscribed slab in his discussion of St Berrihert's Kyle (1961, 154), though Ó hÉailidhe's account seems to imply that the stone was found during the OPW clean-up of 1946 (1967, 106; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 220). The stone was originally recorded lying loose inside the walled enclosure, but was subsequently cemented to the top of the wall (Ó hÉailidhe 1967, 108; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 220). It is a fragment of a small unshaped slab, broken along its short axis, measuring 26 cm x 23 cm x 6.5 cm. Ó hÉailidhe was able to read […]RGUSSAN, […]AIT DO on the slab, but when examined again by Okasha and Forsyth, the edge of the stone was obscured by concrete and, consequently, only […]GUSSAN, […] DO could be read (1967, 108, 121; 2001, 222). It has been interpreted as reading [FUR]GUSSAN, [OR]AIT DO ('a prayer for Furgussán'), though the use of *orait* is rare, and considered quite late; thus, is somewhat less plausible than the reconstruction of the personal name (*ibid*).

The lettering itself is pecked into the stone in an insular miniscule script (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 221; Fig. 6.9). The personal name is carefully centred on the slab, and, as already observed, clearly demonstrates a calligraphic quality, and the influence of manuscript writing, with its 'easy flow of the long curves…indicative of the brush-work of a skilled sign-writer' (Ó hÉilidhe 1967, 122; see also Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 222–3). The various letter forms (in particular, the point-topped 'A'), as well as the use of open triangular finials, are not particularly common in Ireland, but they do occur on the 7th-century 'Alphabet Stone' from Kilmalkedar, Co. Kerry, the early 8th-century pillar at Kilnasaggart Co. Armagh, and on eight cross-slabs from Clonmacnoise, variously dating from the mid-8th through the 9th centuries (Ó hÉilidhe 1967 121–2; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 168; Ó Floinn 1995, 253). Various dates from the 6th through the early 9th century have been proposed for the FERGUSSÁN slab (Ó hÉailidhe 1967, 121–2; Fanning 1976, 36); however, if we accept Okasha and Forsyth's suggestion that the second line ('[OR]AIT DO') was a later addition, then the slab would have originally been very similar to the small inscribed slabs found at nearby Toureen Peakaun (2001, 222) and a 7th- or 8th-century date might be suggested (see Chapter 4).

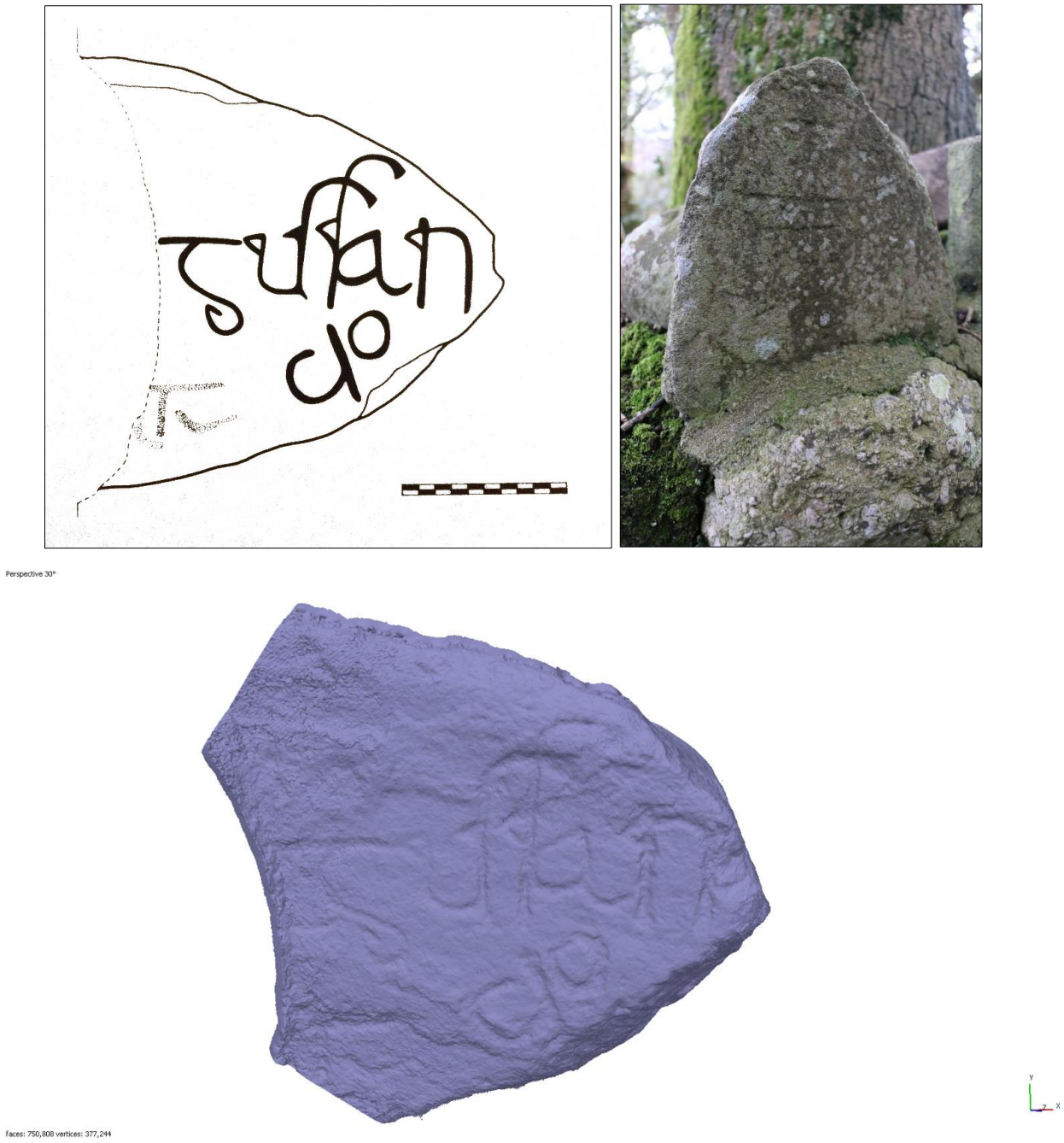


Fig. 6.9: The FURGUSSÁN slab, illustrated in Okasha and Forsyth 2001; photograph and 3D model of slab in 2018

6.3.3 Cross-slabs

The remaining 71 carved stones are mostly upright grave-markers, 28 of which are carved on both faces. In general, the slabs are small, most are 50 cm or less in height (albeit with a few exceptions), and several are quite narrow. Many of them have been shaped in some way, even if only to smooth out the worst irregularities, though twelve of the slabs have been more carefully shaped, either to squared or rounded edges. The designs have been mostly pocked into the surfaces, and are a mix of linear and outline crosses either incised into the stone, or

carved in low or false relief. There are 19 cross variations (for a full breakdown and description, see Ó hÉailidhe 1967, 125), and though the majority of these cross-forms are fairly ubiquitous across early medieval Christian sites, there are two key features worth examining in greater detail.

Thirty-five stones, roughly half of the collection, are carved with at least one square- or hollow-angled cross. While this alone may, arguably, be enough to indicate a 'house style', seven of these 35 crosses have double-rounded hollows, six have double-squared hollows, and one has triple-rounded hollows. At present, double- and triple-hollow-angled crosses appear to be largely unique to St Berrihert's Kyle, though a double-hollowed cross is also carved on a Pictish slab in Glamis, Scotland (Laing 2001). This would certainly indicate that the slabs of St Berrihert's Kyle possess their 'own distinctive style and form' (Ó Floinn 1995, 258). Yet, what may be more significant about its prolific presence on the St Berrihert slabs is that the hollow-angled cross-form is thought to have entered Ireland, sometime around the beginning of the 8th century, through contacts with Northumbria (Chapter 4). The earliest known example dates from the late 7th-century wooden coffin lid of St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (Fig. 6.10), and in Ireland, two of possibly the earliest examples of hollow-armed crosses are on the *c*. 700 East Cross at Toureen Peakaun (see above). While it should also be noted that Iniscealtra is widely known for its collection of hollow-angled crosses, these are on very large and well-shaped slabs that date from the 10th to 12th centuries (Chapter 4), and are considerably later than the cross-slabs at St Berrihert's Kyle; thus, they are unlikely to have been a source of artistic inspiration. Instead, given the morphology of the slabs, the likelihood of a very short period of sculpture production, and the site's affiliations with Toureen Peakaun, Northumbria, and Lindisfarne specifically (more below), it might be suggested that the incised cross-slabs may be the earliest produced at St Berrihert's Kyle, perhaps dating to late 7th- or early 8th-century, shortly after the site may have been founded (see below). Those carved in relief might be slightly later, primarily dating to the 8th century, as suggested by Ó hÉilidhe (1967, 126).

Additionally, Ó hÉailidhe records six slabs (four of which are among the aforementioned 28 cross-slabs that are carved on both faces) with a design on their narrow top surface – four with raised bosses (TS-9, TS-10, TS-26, and TS-34), and two with Latin crosses carved in low false relief (TS-64 and TS-66). Significantly, a photogrammetric model of one of these six slabs, TS-9, shows that its raised boss is at the centre of a Latin cross, carved in very low relief, like TS-64 and TS-66 (Fig. 6.11). This is a previously unrecorded design element, and may also have been present on TS-10 (Fig. 6.12), though it does not appear to be present on TS-26, which is lined with four raised bosses. A carved cross may potentially have

been carved on TS-34 as well; however, at the time of writing, a complete photogrammetric model could not be produced due to insufficient data. The presence of raised bosses suggests the influence of metalwork in their design (see Chapter 1, section 1.3.1), and notably, it has been suggested that the bosses on some Northumbrian crosses may have been derived from a knob on the top of St Cuthbert's pectoral cross (Ó hÉailidhe 1967, 123). Carving the top, or other narrow surfaces of cross-slabs is unusual; the only other two examples that could be found in Ireland are from High Island, Co. Galway – nos. 9 and 22 are carved with crosses on their top and side respectively (Maddern 2014, figs. 7.2 and 7.5). However, the High Island examples are markedly different, much simpler in design and execution, than the six under discussion here. Regardless, while this motif is only on a minority of sculpture, it may, perhaps, be considered a second example of the 'distinctive style and form', that characterises the sculpture of St Berrihert's Kyle.

Though the presence of a carved design on both faces of a slab is usually taken as indicative of other possible functions (see Chapter 5), the majority of the 28 double-sided slabs were, like the remaining cross-slabs, probably upright grave-markers. Harbison had suggested that the slabs at St Berrihert's Kyle are the products of pilgrimage (1992b, 203); however, this theory has long been dismissed as unlikely (see Chapter 8). The morphology of most of the slabs here is indicative of a funerary function (Chapter 4), and, furthermore, their small size would make them impractical as devotional foci in the landscape. The presence of bosses, crosses, and bossed crosses, on the tops of six of these stones is an interesting and unusual feature, and perhaps it could be suggested that they may have added a tactile element during liturgical processions and/or circumambulatory rituals, or in facilitating private prayer for the persons commemorated (see Chapter 5). Furthermore, an alternative function might be suggested for one of the cross-slabs, TS-28, as it is not only one of the tallest slabs, but also the most ornately carved piece of sculpture on site, apart from the high cross. While the quality of its execution is more akin to that of the other cross-slabs than to the high cross, TS-28 is nonetheless elaborately decorated (Fig. 6.13). One face features a Latin outline cross with twisted plait ornamentation down the stem, and a saltire cross incised inside each cross arm. The space on either side of the cross is decorated with a chevron pattern, and delineated by a double-rectilinear frame. The reverse of the slab is covered in incised lattice-work, also within a double-rectilinear frame. Such an ornate design, particularly when compared to the other cross-slabs, would suggest this slab was meant to draw a viewer's attention. So perhaps, this monument commemorated an event, or served as a devotional focus within the site. Yet, at 76 cm high, it is still quite small to have functioned thusly (even if set into a base), so on balance,

it is more probable that TS-28 was a grave-marker, like the other cross-slabs here. However, it may be suggested that it was commissioned for an important member of the ecclesiastical community, as its decoration is clearly intended to set it apart.

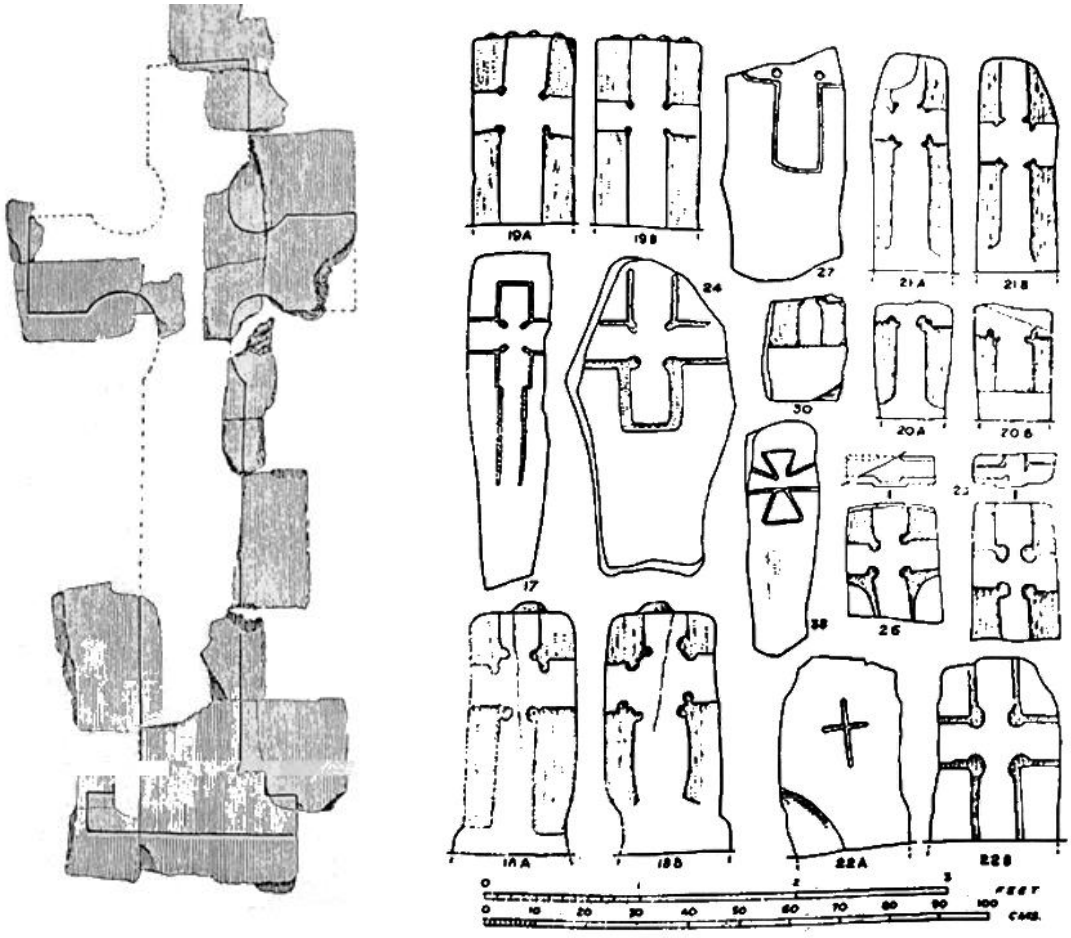


Fig. 6.10: The late-7th-century cross-inscribed boards of St Cuthbert's coffin (after Baily 1989); Examples of hollow-angled crosses from St Berrihert's Kyle, including double- and triple-hollow-angled crosses (after Ó hÉilidhe 1967)



Fig. 6.11: TS-9 – Cross in relief with central boss on the top of the slab, now turned on its side facing south; photogrammetry model showing Latin cross in relief with central raised boss



Fig. 6.12: TS-10, showing an incised line (circled), which might be the remnants of a carved cross



Fig. 6.13: TS-28 – devotional focus or elaborate grave-marker?

6.3.4 Cursing Stones

Two stones, presumably among the 'several rounded stones' mentioned in passing by Ó hÉilidhe, may be of additional interest. Both are very smooth; one is sub-hemispherical, and resting within the hollowed-out surface of a thin slab on top of the enclosing wall, and the other is an egg-shaped stone, nestled in the bullaun situated in front of the high cross-head. While they are uncarved, and so excluded from this study for the most part (see Chapter 2), they are worth commenting on briefly here, for what they can add to our understanding of the later use and perceptions of St Berrihert's Kyle. The bullaun has obviously been incorporated into the devotional practices of visiting pilgrims, functioning as a sort of makeshift altar, though Ó hÉilidhe does not mention it (nor either of the two stones) in his account of the annual pattern rounds (1967, 105–6). Within a hollow is one of the aforementioned stones, with banded abrasions indicative of repeated rotation (Figs. 6.14 and 6.15). The other well-rounded stone,

and its slab, are prominently placed upon the top of the wall, just next to the entrance to the enclosure (Fig. 6.16). A recent case study by Katherine Forsyth on bullauns in Scotland provides precedence for their use in the practice of liturgical cursing, and in particular, the ritual turning of special stones upon them (2016). This was in part facilitated by the work of David McGuiness (2013), who highlighted the role of bullaun stones at Glendalough in the devotional rituals of pilgrims. There is Irish hagiographical evidence for cursing as early as the 7th century; however, formal liturgical cursing in the Irish church dates from the 10th or 11th century, and archaeological evidence for this largely comes from Inishmurray and High Island (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 339; Maddern 2014, 198). Similar, secondary devotional activity has been noted in Scotland (e.g. at Iona; see Chapter 5), and the evidence suggests cursing stones may have been ritually turned on the bases of high crosses, over time grinding hemispherical hollows into them – 'the cross-base of Kilcholman, Islay, retains a pear-shaped 'turning-stone' which fits snuggly in its circular hollow and a cross-decorated turning-stone discovered on Canna fits perfectly into the hollow of a special slab in the churchyard' (Forsyth 2016). While further study is needed, similar secondary devotional practices seem to have occurred at St Berrihert's Kyle as well.



Fig. 6.14: One of two 'cursing stones' in 2014 showing banded abrasions (photo: Louise Nugent)



Fig. 6.15: The same 'cursing stone' in 2018, showing signs of disuse



Fig. 6.16: Second 'cursing stone' located on the top of the wall next to the oak tree on the western side, possibly nestled into a 'special slab' (photo: Tomás Ó Carragáin)

6.4 Discussion

Though there are no (surviving) textual sources relating to St Berrihert's Kyle, a rich collection of sculpture has been left behind, which speaks for itself. From what scarce evidence we have, a late 7th-century date for the foundation of the site seems likely (see below). Moreover, the form, execution, and homogeneity of the sculpture at St Berrihert's Kyle indicates that this was a precocious centre of sculpture production – both relatively early, and relatively brief (albeit prolific). Moreover, the level of craftmanship exhibited on the larger cross-head suggests that they had access to a skilled carver, perhaps in the 8th or 9th century (see above), and the means to employ one. This makes the absence of St Berrihert's Kyle from the written records of the early medieval period all the more puzzling as, though it is by no means the only ecclesiastical site not represented in historical sources that also possesses symbolically complex sculpture (for instance, Caherlehillan and Reask, Co. Kerry), it is atypical of other ecclesiastical sites in Ireland which have produced a large amount of carved stones (i.e. Clonmacnoise, Iniscealtra, and Clonmore, Co. Carlow). Not only were these sites well-documented, they also survived until at least the end of the early medieval period, if not longer. St Berrihert's Kyle is perhaps more similar to Toureen Peakaun, as, though it did produce documentary evidence, as well as survive until the end of the early medieval period, Toureen Peakaun also had a brief, early floruit, followed by a steep decline after the 9th century, though archaeological evidence suggests this decline had begun by the early 8th century (Ó Carragáin 2017b, 70, 75). Shifts in political power may have been a factor in this decline. It was around this time that the kings of Cashel, who were probably patrons of Toureen Peakaun during its 7th–8th-century floruit, granted the lands on which it was situated, (including that of St Berrihert's Kyle) to the Múscraige Breogain (*ibid*, 70, 76; Gleeson, forthcoming). While there is no written evidence regarding royal patronage at St Berrihert's Kyle, there seems little reason to doubt that it likewise benefited from the patronage of the kings of Cashel, and, thus, suffered the same steep decline as Toureen Peakaun after the lands were granted to the Múscraige. Examining the early medieval landscape around St Berrihert's Kyle, in conjunction with the wider ecclesiastical milieu in which it may have been founded, might offer some possible explanations surrounding its development and decline.

We know that Irish monasteries were a centre of learning for both ecclesiastics and nobility in the 7th century, and that many Anglo-Saxon kings, nobles, and clerics were educated in Ireland (Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 3.13, 3.26–7, 5.9–10, in Plummer 1896, 152–4, 189–94, 296–301; Ó Cróinín 1984, 22, n. 36; Ryan 1938, 109–10). One of the main hubs for

travelling between Britain and Ireland at this time is thought to be Iona (Edmonds 2009, 141; Chadwick 1963, 193). Indeed, it was supposedly from here that Colmán of Lindisfarne set out on his journey to Mayo (Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 4.4, in Plummer 1896, 213). However, an Anglo-Saxon presence was already well-established in the southern half of Ireland by the late 7th century. The other Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical site in Ireland mentioned by Bede is *Rath Melsigi*, which has been identified with Clonmelsh, Co. Carlow, where St Ecgberht was supposedly based for much of the late 7th century (Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 3.27, in Plummer 1896, 192; Ó Cróinín 1984, 22–3; Fanning 1984, 43–9). Prior to the change in paschal observance throughout Northumbria in 664, many southern Northumbrians who followed the customs of Rome (rather than those of the Columban churches) went to the southern half of Ireland to be educated, as many of the scholarly centres there likewise followed Roman practices (Edmonds 2009, 138–9). However, after the synod of Whitby, many of the Northumbrian churches that had originally been founded on Ionan missions, such as Ripon, severed their Columban connections entirely after Iona refused to accept the ruling on paschal observances (*ibid*, 145). Moreover, the formal relationship between Lindisfarne and Iona, as well as between Lindisfarne and the Columban churches in Ireland, ceased at this time as well.

Though informal links may have persisted (*ibid*, 147), all of this undoubtedly served to increase ecclesiastical traffic between Northumbria and in the south of Ireland, with Ecgberht's church providing 'a particular draw' (*ibid*, 139). Ceadda was a companion of Ecgberht while in Ireland and Willibrord, who first trained in Ripon, joined Ecgberht's community at *Rath Melsigi* before journeying on to Frisia (Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 4.3, 5.9–10, in Plummer 1896, 211, 296–299; Ó Cróinín 1984, 30, 32). Indeed, by the late 7th century, Ripon had begun to actively encourage and promote the cults of Ecgberht and his pupil, Wihtberht (Edmonds 2009, 145; Ó Cróinín 1984, 24–5). Moreover, while many Irish and British churches had access to a port, they were not necessarily under ecclesiastical control, and it has been instead suggested that kings played a larger role in controlling the influx of goods and people into their territories during the 7th and 8th centuries (Edmonds 2009, 132–3). Given that most of the scholars and ecclesiastics travelling between churches would have predominately been from the upper classes, it seems natural that movement between Northumbria and Ireland was, at least in part, governed by political and ecclesiastical alliances (*ibid*, 147). Thus, it stands to reason that, without particular business to conduct at Iona, Northumbrian ecclesiastics travelling to southern Ireland would have taken a different route to get there – both before and after 664 – and, given the lateness of the source associating Bercheirt explicitly with Colmán of Lindisfarne and Gerald of Mayo, it is worth exploring the

possibility that, though Bercheirt may have likewise set out from Northumbria, he might have entered Ireland via different route, and was bound directly for southern Ireland.

Edmonds has argued that there were far more convenient routes for Northumbrian churchmen travelling to southern Ireland, or for those avoiding territories affiliated with the Columban church, than via Iona (Fig. 6.17). The Irish Sea is more easily reached overland through western Northumbria, and formerly Brittonic territories that had fallen under Northumbrian control (including estates that were given to Ripon), and harbours at Workington, Ravenglass, Urswick, Whithorn, and Soloway have all been suggested as possibly hubs for travel between Northumbria and Ireland (*ibid*, 145–7. Edmonds 2007, 29–30; Dickinson 2002; Campbell 2009, fig. 11.1, 259). Possible ports of arrival in Ireland for south-bound Northumbrians, however, have been largely left unexplored by Edmonds. Continuing with what would be the most convenient and direct routes from northern England, the most logical point of entry into Ireland for most Northumbrians would be somewhere along the northeast coast of Ireland. Both archaeological and documentary evidence indicate there were already well-established trade routes between the northeast of Ireland, Scotland, and northern England by the last century BC, or first century AD (Doherty 1980, 76). E-ware pottery from the 6th and 7th centuries has been found in large concentrations around several harbours along the northeast coast of Ireland, including Dundalk, Drogheda, Dublin, and, most notably, around the harbour leading to Downpatrick, which was a royal centre of the Dál Fiatach, kings of Ulaid, until the 9th century (Thomas 1990; Byrne 1987a, 108, 119, 285). Michelle Comber has suggested that this type of pottery came to Ireland as space-fillers in large containers of cargo, indicating that these harbours were the main ports of entry for foreign trade (2001, 83; Fig. 6.18) and, by extension, foreign travellers. Moreover, Ewan Campbell has tracked the supply of glass vessels from Britain into Ireland (Fig. 6.19), and the harbour at Downpatrick is suggested as a key link in their supply route from southern Northumbria in the 6th to 8th centuries (2009, fig. 11.1, 257). So while there are several probable candidates along the northeast coast of Ireland, if Bercheirt was indeed part of this late 7th-century influx of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastics and scholars, bound for southern Ireland, it may be speculated that Downpatrick – perhaps with a stop on the Isle of Man – would be a good candidate (albeit one of several) for a port at which they arrived. More to the point, while the connection between Bercheirt's churches and Lindisfarne is clear from the sculpture that was being produced at both Tullylease and St Berrihert's Kyle by the 8th century, considering we know practically nothing about the activities or proclivities of Bercheirt himself, it is worth entertaining the idea that, like most Northumbrian ecclesiastics of the late 7th century, Bercheirt agreed with the

ruling at Whitby on paschal observances, and his journey to Ireland was not made in solidarity with the position of the Columban church (i.e. entering Ireland via Iona). Instead, perhaps Bercheirt (of Lindisfarne? Or, perhaps, Ripon?) was himself was an observer of the Roman practices, thus southern Ireland probably would have always been his intended destination, either in pursuit of further education or perhaps, like Ecgbert, out of a desire to live a life of exile (*cf.* Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5.9, in Plummer 1896, 296).

Support for the suggestion that St Berrihert's Kyle observed Roman practices may be found in the FURGUSSÁN slab, if it is accepted that it is contemporary with the small, 7th–8th-century inscribed slabs at Toureen Peakaun, and that, like some of those slabs, it served a commemorative function during the Mass, rather than as a grave-marker (Moloney 1964, 105–6; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 325–6; see also Chapter 5). The practice of commemorating the dead during Mass with inscribed diptychs, which has been also suggested for the particular group of book-like inscribed slabs found at Lindisfarne and Hartlepool, may have reached Ireland in the 7th century by means of 'well-established routes of intellectual contact', most likely from Spain (Moloney 1964, 106; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 326). This, and related practices, had been adopted by the Romanized churches of southern Ireland before the synod of Whitby, and by the prominent Munster churches in particular (*ibid*). So perhaps St Berrihert's Kyle (and, thus, Bercheirt, if he indeed existed) was aligned to the practices of Rome and the southern Irish churches from its very foundation. Following this, it then seems unlikely that Bercheirt would have travelled north though Iona before heading south to Munster, and he certainly would not have followed Colmán into exile. However, with Northumbrian-Ionan relations warming again by the early 8th century (Edmonds 2009, 146), perhaps the anachronistic association with Colmán and Gerald in the *Vita Sancti Geraldi* reflects a later 'reconciliation' of Bercheirt and his churches with their 'Columban roots'. If so, perhaps this may also account for the folk association of Colmán of Linisfarne with the feast day observed for St Berrihert (see above).

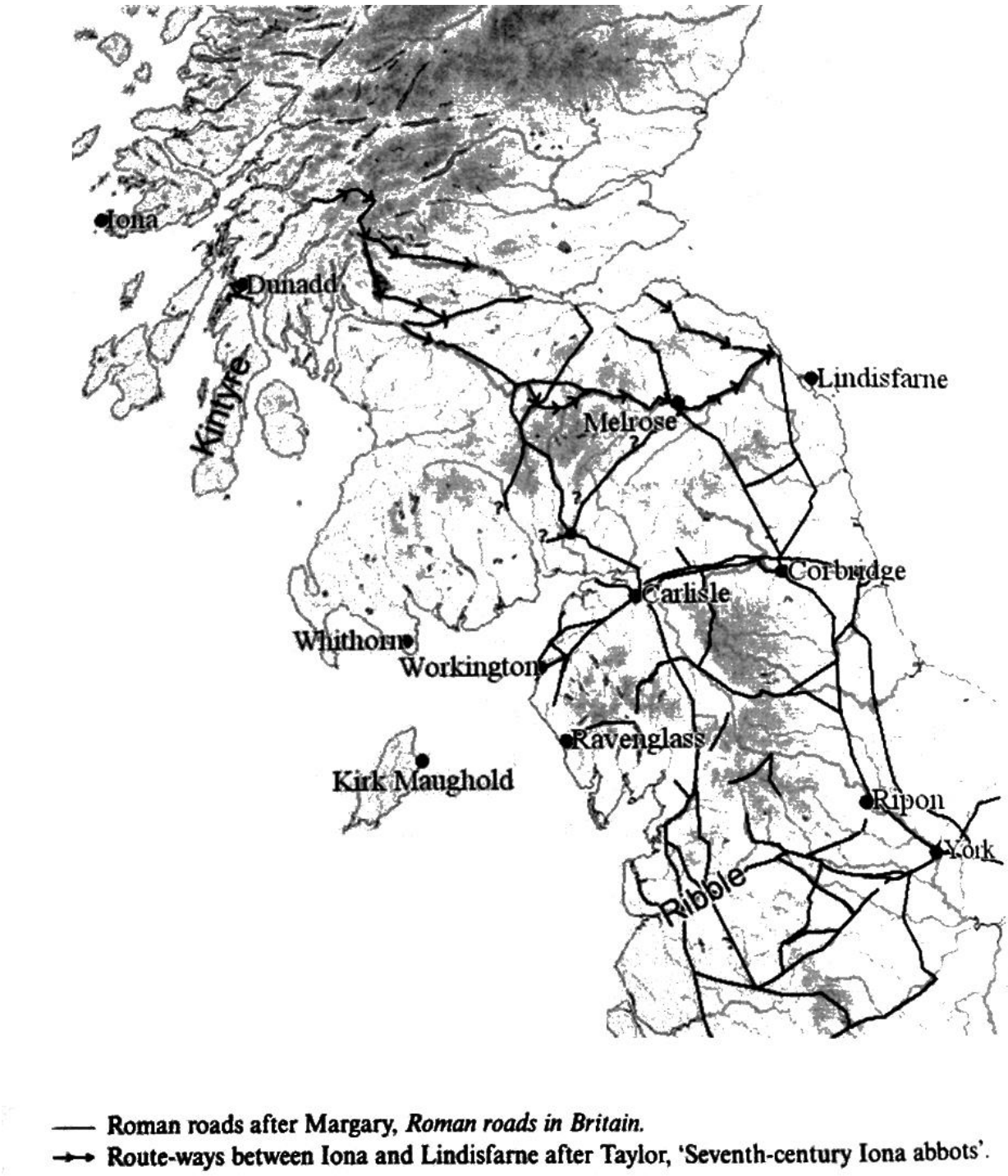


Fig. 6.17: British route-ways and ports used by Northumbrian ecclesiastics travelling to Ireland (after Edmonds 2009)

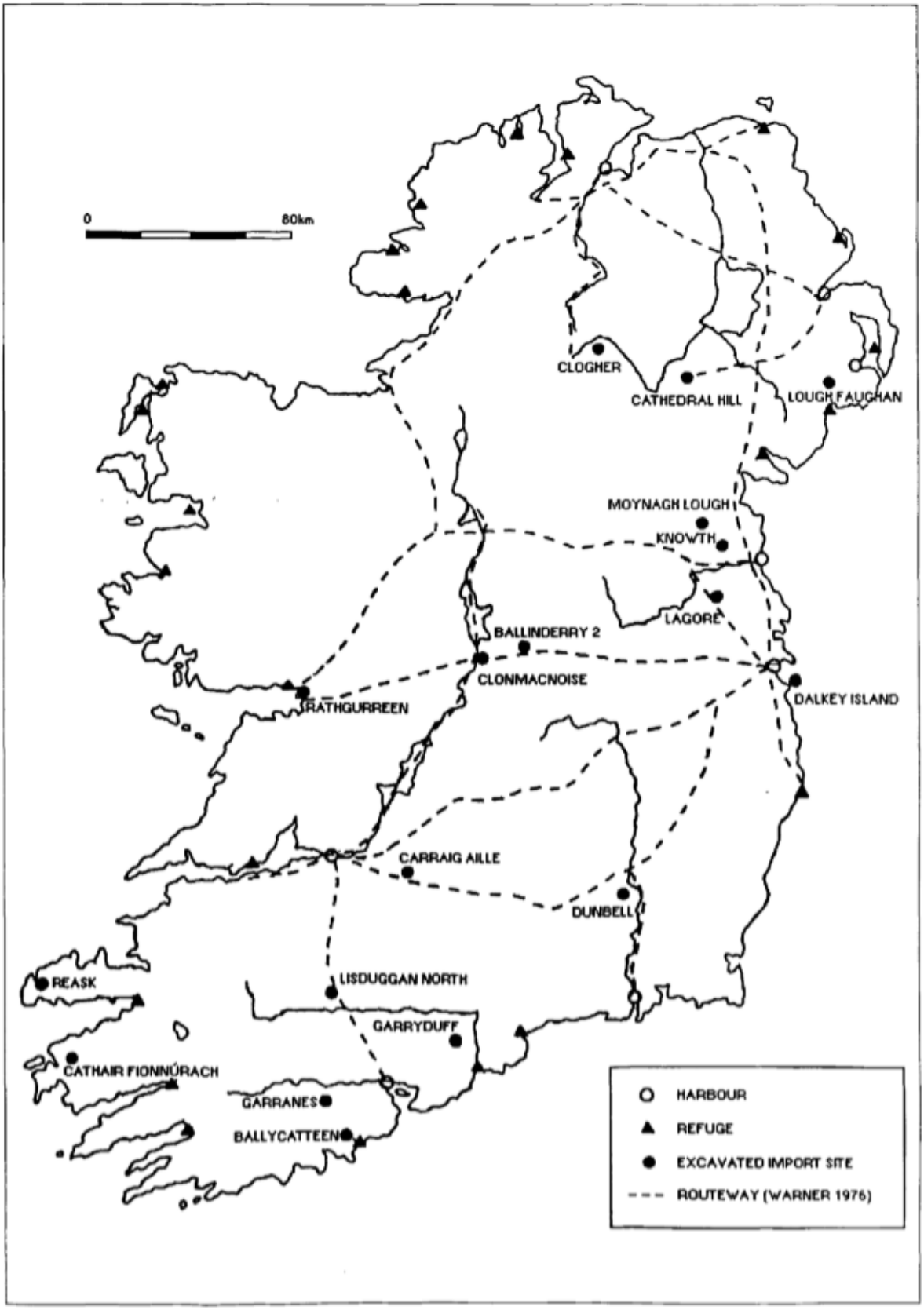


Fig. 6.18: Sites producing average/extensive evidence of foreign trade (after Comber 2001)

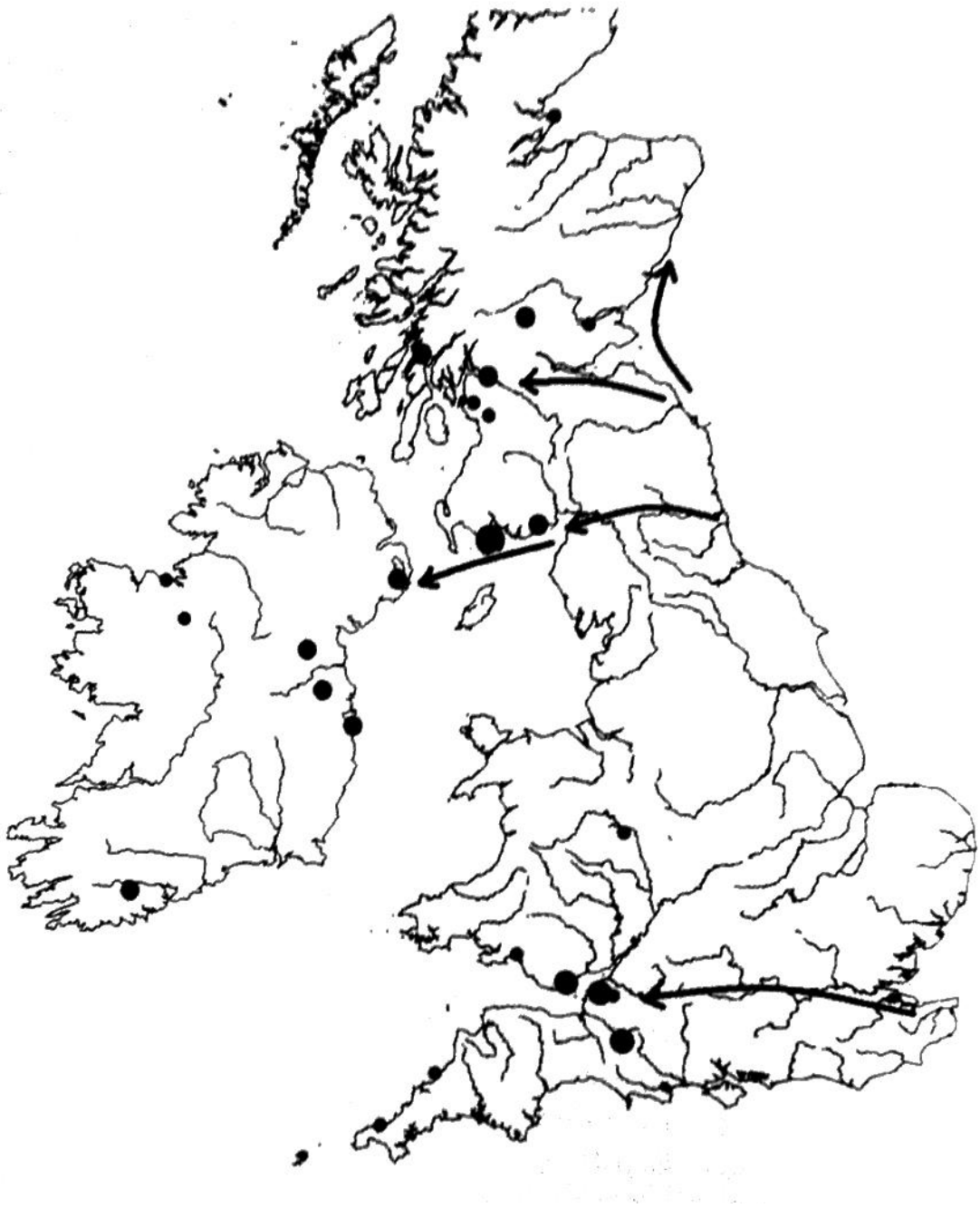


Fig. 6.19: Finds of Germanic glass, showing probable routes of supply (after Campbell 2009)

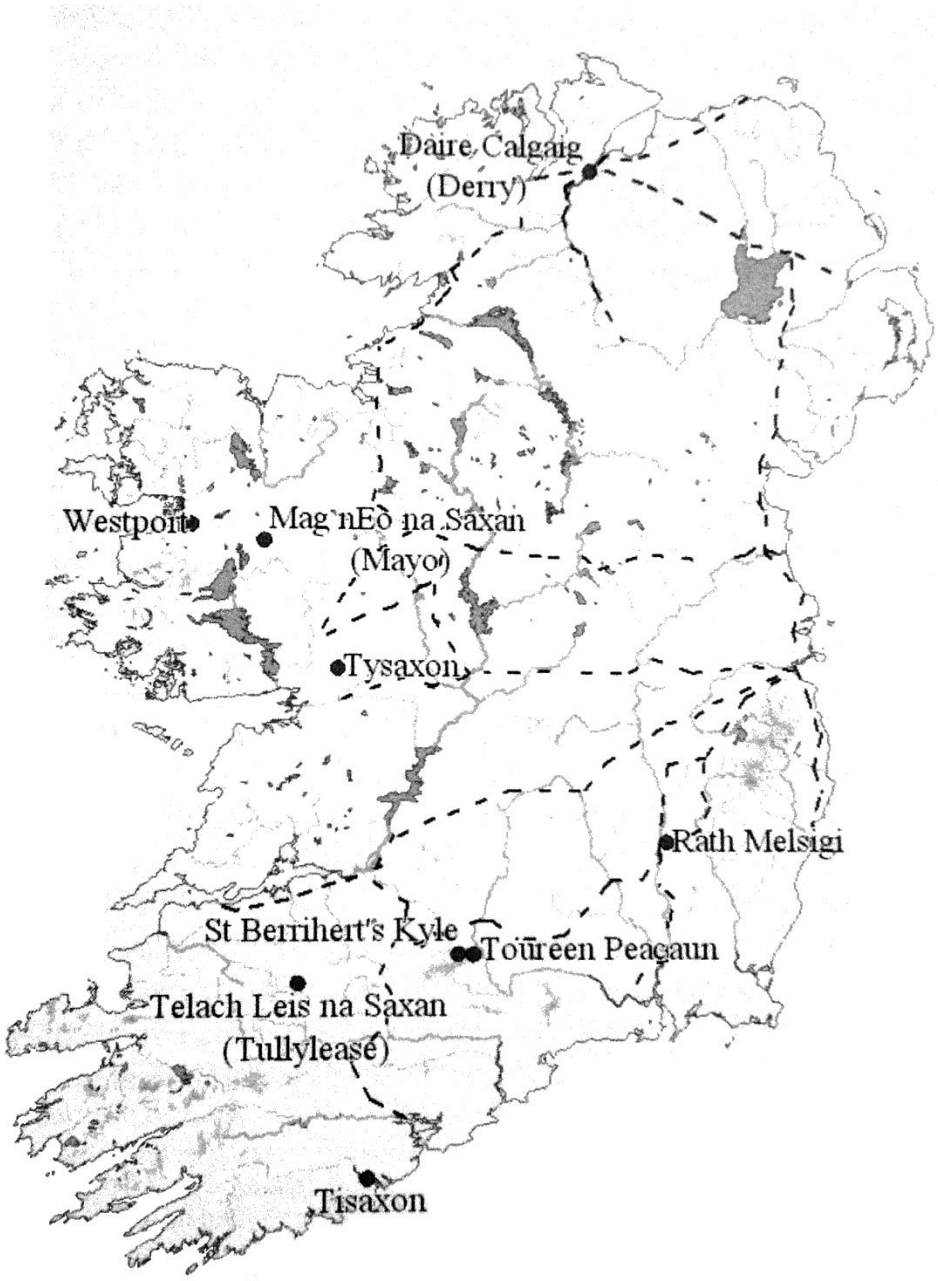


Fig. 6.20: Irish route-ways and sites mentioned in the discussion (after Edmonds 2009)

Yet, regardless of the particular port from which Bercheirt entered, both literary sources and archaeological investigations indicate that there was an extensive network of roads that he could have travelled once in Ireland (Fig. 6.20). Colm Ó Lochlainn used historical and hagiographical sources, combined with place-name analysis, to produce a map of probable Irish roads in the early medieval period (1940). Though the dates of his sources vary, and, thus, the existence of some of these route-ways in the 7th and 8th centuries may be open to question,

'the frequent mention of certain nodal points on the various routes [proves] that, in the minds of the storyteller and chroniclers, from the 6th to the 10th centuries, the idea of a great road system existed quite clearly' (*ibid*, 470). Several sites along or near some of the roads proposed by Ó Lochlainn have produced early medieval finds indicative of foreign trade (Comber 2001, fig. 5), supporting the suggestion that at least some, if not all, of these route-ways did exist (see above, Figs. 6.18 and 6.20). While not one of the 'Five Great Roads', Ó Lochlainn's map shows a major east-west route through the south of Ireland, branching off from the *Slíghe Chualann* ('Road of Cuala') just south of *Rath Melsigi*, and heading west until it joins a north-south route linking Cork Harbour with Limerick, and the *Slíghe Dhála*. It is this road, running roughly parallel with the *Slíghe Dhála* to the north, that would have gone through Cashel, and as Ó Lochlainn pointed out, 'it is obvious that such important seats of government as Caiseal and Durlas must have had good road connections with the furthermost part of their realms' (1940, 471). Furthermore, as roads were vital to everyday commerce and travel, they were of strategic political and military importance (sometimes with legal or traditional status), and increased the value of the lands they traversed (Doran 2004, 68–9; Comber 2001, 74; Kelly 1997, 390–1).

Both St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun are situated less than 10 km from this major artery through Munster territory – one which also eventually leads to *Rath Melsigi* further east, on the *Slíghe Chualann*. *Rath Melsigi* in particular was a hub for Anglo-Saxon scholars and ecclesiastics at this time, and several prominent Anglo-Saxon saints of the late 7th century, including Ecgberht, Wihtberht, Ceadda, and Willibrord, spent many years here (see above). Furthermore, there is evidence that, along with Iona and Lindisfarne, *Rath Melsigi* played a key role in the transmission of written material between Ireland and Britain in the late 7th and early 8th centuries, most notably a breviate edition of the *Hieronymian Martyrology* (Ní Mhaonaigh 2009, 413; Ó Riain 1993). Clearly, *Rath Melsigi* was a centre of Anglo-Saxon scholarship and learning in southern Ireland; consequently, it is no wonder that it proved a 'particular draw'. In addition to being a popular destination for Anglo-Saxon scholars, *Rath Melsigi* was undoubtedly a focal point for travellers passing through the area, both in terms of its general obligation of hospitality for all wayfarers, but also in particular for those from affiliated churches (e.g. Lindisfarne, and perhaps Ripon as well), as they would have had a special duty to cater to ecclesiastics travelling from those communities (Edmonds 2009, 131, 136–7). Thus, it may be speculated that if Bercheirt was indeed one of the many Anglo-Saxons that travelled to southern Ireland in the late 7th century, he almost certainly stopped at *Rath Melsigi* on his journey. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that St Berrihert's Kyle is situated just

off of what would have been one of the main roads through Munster, leading straight to *Rath Melsigi.*

Yet, more important to the discussion here is the location of St Berrihert's Kyle, and Toureen Peakaun, within the royal landscape of Munster. As mentioned above, they were established on land that belonged to the kings of Cashel in the 7th and 8th centuries. However, they are situated at a remove from core royal lands, in a remote and heavily wooden environment (Ó Carragáin 2017b, 70–1). Moreover, they are both situated at the foot of Galtees and shielded on the north side by the Slievenamuck Hills, undoubtedly adding to their sense of isolation, which would have been ideally suited to a lifestyle of ascetic monasticism (*ibid*). As Ó Carragáin has already pointed out, woodlands were highly valued by both kings and ascetic monks (*ibid*, 71); thus, in choosing this particular location – a secluded, wooded mountain glen, yet on royal lands that were situated relatively close to a major routeway – the founder (presumably Bercheirt) and patrons may have 'sought to strike a balance between ascetic seclusion in a sylvan setting on the one hand, and royal associations and wider ecclesiastical links on the other (*ibid*). While Ó Carragáin made this suggestion in reference to Toureen Peakaun, the same could also be said of St Berrihert's Kyle, considering the close link between the two sites, and that St Berrihert's Kyle was likely patronised by the kings of Cashel as well. Indeed, it may be speculated that the site of St Berrihert's Kyle was chosen in large part because it was intended to work in tandem with Toureen Peakaun (more below).

Considering that Toureen Peakaun, whose foundation probably involved the kings of Munster, was at the forefront of the Easter debate in the late 7th century (*ibid*, 67), it may be notable that an Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical site was established (also probably involving the kings of Munster), essentially, in a neighbouring glen. Though speculative, perhaps Toureen Peakaun's contacts with Anglo-Saxon England (*ibid*) were primarily through St Berrihert's Kyle. Certainly, southern Ireland was already a popular destination in the late 7th century for many Northumbrians in pursuit of an Irish education, or the ascetic life, especially for those who were aligned with the practices of the Roman, rather than Columban, church. Significantly, Gifford Charles-Edwards's reading of the last line on the East Cross at Toureen Peakaun suggests that it may have been erected in Beccán's lifetime (d. 690), but that the inscription, which has also been compared to the script in the Lindisfarne Gospels (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 295), was commission by a female Anglo-Saxon named 'Osgyd', sometime later in the late 7th or early 8th century (Charles-Edwards 2002, 117). She then implies that perhaps Osgyd was a nun from St Berrihert's Kyle (*ibid*, 118), which raises some interesting possibilities. Firstly, that St Berrihert's Kyle might have been an all-female community. If so, then perhaps

St Berrihert's Kyle was a nunnery associated with Toureen Peakaun; nunneries were usually established near to, but still at a distance from, a male ecclesiastical site. However, this suggestion is highly speculative and, indeed, there is no evidence at present to support this. Perhaps Osgyd was a visiting nun, or noblewoman, staying for a time near Toureen Peakaun (at, or near, St Berrihert's Kyle?), and commissioned the inscription either as a token of respect for Beccán and his community, or else as a reciprocal gift for hospitality received. While it is certainly tempting to speculate on a myriad of possible connections between this late 7th-/early 8th-century Anglo-Saxon woman, St Berrihert's Kyle, and Toureen Peakaun, there is no further information available on which to theorise. Yet, the suggestion that the inscription on the East Cross at Toureen Peakaun is associated with St Berrihert's Kyle is a tantalising one. Bernadette McCarthy has speculated that the inscribed stone at St Berrihert's Kyle may indicate that the site was, like Toureen Peakaun, engaged in manuscript production (2013, 479). Moreover, that the writing process occurred at Toureen Peakaun, while the manuscripts were illuminated and decorated at St Berrihert's Kyle (*ibid*). Regardless, sculpture was, indeed, a specialty of this community (*ibid*), and if the inscription on the East Cross at Toureen Peakaun was commissioned, and/or, perhaps, carved by someone at St Berrihert's Kyle, this not only re-enforces the suggestion of a close relationship between the two sites, but also that sculpture production was likewise at its peak at St Berrihert's Kyle in the late 7th–8th centuries. Moreover, this would offer one possible explanation for the presence of the distinctive Lindisfarne-style script on the East Cross.

As mentioned above, St Berrihert's Kyle was established in territory belonging to the kings of Cashel, but was given to the Múscraige Breogainn in the 9th century, who may have come to prominence *c.* 800 (Gleeson forthcoming); four of their kings are recorded in annals in the years 853, 904, 1043, and 1100 (MacCotter 2008, 214–5), and they were deemed important enough (at least in the 9th century) to have warranted a mention in the *Tripartite Life* (196–99, in Stokes). Ó Carragáin has suggested that this shift in political power may have been a factor in the decline of Toureen Peakaun (2017b, 76). Considering how closely linked St Berrihert's Kyle was with Toureen Peakaun, this may also account, at least partly, for the swift decline of St Berrihert's Kyle after the 9th century. These two sites, strongly patronised, presumably, by the kings of Cashel in the 7th and 8th centuries, produced a prolific amount of sculpture dating to this time period, including, potentially, the skilfully executed figural high cross at St Berrihert's Kyle (see above). While some sculpture may have been produced later, e.g. the smaller cross at St Berrihert's Kyle (TS-60) and, possibly, the sundial at Toureen Peakaun (TS-90; see Chapter 4), this sharp decline in sculpture production after the 8th century

would indicate that patronage of these sites may have shifted shortly thereafter, perhaps to nearby Killardry ('Church of the High King'), which became the parish centre (see Ó Carragáin 2017b, 70).

Okasha and Forsyth have expressed doubts about the existence of a church at St Berrihert's Kyle (2001, 223), and while they were correct in that we cannot know for certain without excavating the site, the presence of a church here is highly probable. Ó hÉilidhe had already suggested the possibility of a wooden church (1967, 126), which seems likely. Irish churches were predominantly constructive of timber before the 11th and 12th centuries, and if St Berrihert's Kyle was in decline, perhaps even falling out of use entirely, by the beginning of the 10th century, then the lack of standing church remains would be unsurprising. It goes without saying that wooden structures generally do not leave traces above ground; ecclesiastical sites with exclusively wooden churches are usually first identified by the presence of other elements such as stone sculpture, the 'Cill/Kill' element in a place-name, or a concentration of burials, though the latter could also be indicative of a secular cemetery (Ó Carragáin 2009, 335–6, 339). Ó hÉilidhe had also speculated that St Berrihert's Kyle may have fallen victim to Viking raiders, and perhaps never recovered (1967, 126). This is certainly possible; we know that Toureen Peakaun was said to have been sacked by Vikings sometime between 824 and 834 (*Cogadh gaeghel re gallaibh*, 6–7, in Todd), and it would be a short trek over to St Berrihert's Kyle. However, we might expect that if both sites had been attacked, it would garner at least *some* mention of St Berrihert's Kyle in the sources, as well. Regardless, Ó Carragáin has noted that there was a high density of churches in the landscape of pre-Viking Ireland, in many places averaging one church for every 9–12 km^2 (2009b, 349). Yet, St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun are atypical of this trend – they are in a relatively remote location, with few ringforts or other settlements nearby. As Ó Carragáin suggests, it seems that Toureen Peakaun was not intended to be major centre of socio-political or economic power (2017b, 75–6). Rather, it was primarily a spiritual and intellectual centre (*ibid*), and this conclusion may be extended to St Berrihert's Kyle as well.

6.4.1 Summary and Conclusions

The carved stones at St Berrihert's Kyle, as a collection, have been dated by Ó hÉailidhe to the 8th–10th centuries. However, based on the evidence discussed above, this date range should probably be shifted to late 7th–9th century. More specifically, perhaps a *c*. 670–900 date range might be suggested, to coincide, approximately, with the probable timeframe for the foundation of St Berrihert's Kyle, and its rapid decline after control of the area shifted to the Múscraige

Breogainn in the 9th century. All of this builds up a picture of St Berrihert's Kyle as a site that was an early and innovative centre of sculpture production in Munster, well-connected and thriving for almost the entirety of its brief lifespan. Its founder, Bercheirt (if he existed), may have been one of the many Northumbrian ecclesiastics travelling to Ireland in the late 7th century to study, or more likely, considering the site's location, follow an ascetic lifestyle. Once in Ireland, we might speculate that he visited *Rath Melsigi* for a time before journeying westward into Munster, and ultimately founding at least two churches, i.e. St Berrihert's Kyle and Tullylease, if not more (see above). As Ó hÉilidhe remarked, the presence of such a large number of cross-slabs indicates St Berrihert's Kyle was an ecclesiastical site 'of considerable size' (1967, 126), and so must have had a flourishing community for much of its brief existence. In particular, the iconographically complex high cross, and the inscribed slab, indicate that, like Toureen Peakaun, this was a community of well-educated ecclesiastics, with the resources to invest in high-quality sculpture during the 7th and 8th centuries, perhaps though the patronage of the kings of Cashel. St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun, only 6 km apart, have among the highest concentrations of 7th–8th century grave-markers in Ireland, and yet, stylistically, are markedly different. This seems to suggest that 'house styles', as well as preferred monument forms, reflect the development of separate ecclesiastical identities, even between communities with close links. However, we are still left with far more questions than we can answer with the present state of knowledge, and it is hoped that in the future, new information will be produced that can shed additional light on this site.

7

The ‘Marigold’ Stones of Wexford

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 was concerned with addressing the functions of carved stones, and exploring questions of their meaning, as well as placing the early medieval sculpture of this region within its broader context. However, there are several monuments, or groups of monuments, such as the four that are the focus of this chapter, for which a deeper analysis of the archaeological and historical evidence is necessary to more fully understand the specific motivations for their creation, their relationship to one another, and how they may have been perceived by an early medieval audience. There are four stones in Wexford which display an unusual combination of decorative elements, and are similar enough to each other to suggest that they are stylistically linked. The carvings on the stones are characterised by either an encircled marigold, or cross-of-arcs, set atop a relatively narrow stem or shaft. The encircled design dominates the upper third of each face, and, in all but one, a smaller outline Latin cross emanates from the ring or frame surrounding it. While the principle cross-and-stem motif is found on a number of early medieval monuments across Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, the addition of the smaller cross is rare and, within Ireland, appears to be unique to these stones; however, it has been identified on three other carved stones from Britain. Three of the four stones under discussion are carved crosses from the early monastic site of Cill Mucrois (now Kilmuckridge), which was reputedly founded by a Welsh saint, Mochonóc. Stylistic similarity between these is not unexpected, as they were found near to one another, and indeed, two of them seem to have been intended to complement each other. Notably, the largest concentration of marigold stones in Ireland occurs at the prominent ecclesiastical site of Gallen, in County Offaly, which was also thought to have been founded by Mochonóc, under the alternate name of Colmán *Brit*, or ‘Briton’ (Ó Riain 2011, 464). Initially, it was perplexing as to why the only other occurrence of this unusual combination of motifs is on a cross-slab at Ferns because, other than geographic proximity, there is little direct evidence for a relationship between these two monastic foundations. However, with deeper analysis, their relationship becomes more apparent, and its appearance at both sites makes sense in light of their shared hagiographical, socio-political, and ecclesiastical links across the Irish Sea.

7.2 Historical and Hagiographical Background

Cill Mucrois, while not entirely obscure, is certainly the lesser known of the two sites. Its foundation is attributed to the Welsh saint Conóc (In Welsh, Cynog), though in Ireland he is more commonly referred to by the hypocoristic name Mochonóc. He is also considered the founder of 'Gailinne na mBretan' (Gallen of the Britons) in Co. Offaly, though usually as Colmán *Brit* (Ó Riain 1985, 707.257.626, 722.89; 2011, 264; Mac Shamhráin 2009b, 538). Mochonóc is invariably recorded as the first-born son of Brachan/Brychan, for which the kingdom of Brycheiniog in south Wales was named (*ibid*; Fig. 7.1); however, his maternal parentage varies between the Irish and Welsh hagiographies. According to the *Do mháithribh na náomh* ('on the mothers of saints') he is said to be the son of Dína, a Saxon princess (Colgan 1645, 311-2; Ó Riain 1985, 722.89) but in the late 10th–late 11th century Welsh tract *De Situ Brecheniauc*, he is the son of Banadylued, the daughter of Banhadle, king of Powys (Rees 1853, 604; Baring-Gould and Fisher 1908 vol. 2, 264; Petts 2007, 167). He has been appropriately styled *ailithir* (pilgrim) in the Irish tradition (Ó Riain 1985, 722.89), for Mochonóc is also credited with founding churches at Kilmacanogue in County Wicklow, and St Pinnock and Boconnoc in Cornwall, as well as being the patron saint (if not founder) of a number of churches in his home territory of Brycheiniog (Redmond, 1898, 97; Baring-Gould and Fisher 1908 vol. 2, 269–70; Mac Shamhráin 2009b vol. 6, 538). Mochonóc is depicted as a close relation to St David of Wales (†589), though textual sources do not agree on the degree of their familial connection. In British hagiographies and genealogies dating from the 10th century onward, Mochonóc has been claimed to be either an uncle, or great uncle, of St David; in folk stories originating near his church of Kilmacanogue, Co. Wicklow, he is said to be David's nephew (Rees 1853, 265, 604-5; Baring-Gould and Fisher 1908, 270; Price 1942–67, 323–4; Bartrum 1966, 22–34). Mochonóc is also included in a list of Irish bishops (Ó Riain 1985, 704.122).

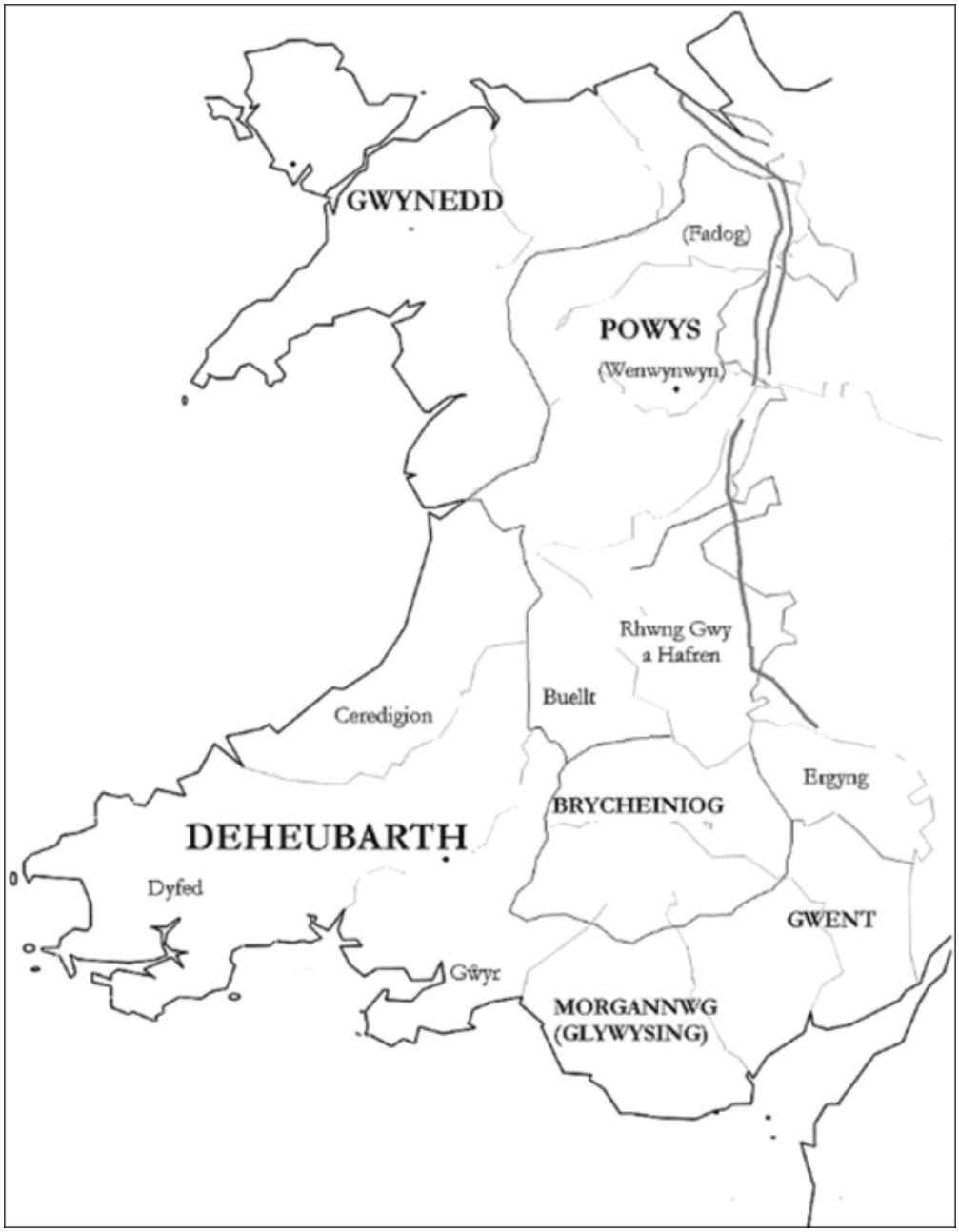


Fig. 7.1: Map showing the early medieval kingdoms of Wales

The date of Mochonóc's death is unknown but his *floruit*, including the founding of Kilmuckridge and Gallen, is usually assigned to the latter half of the 5th century (*AFM*, M448.2; Colgan 1645, 311-2; Stokes 1887, 193; Armstrong 1908, 61; Baring-Gould and Fisher 1908 vol. 2, 265, 270; Kendrick 1939, 1; Ranson 1945, 53; 1948, 101; O'Brien and Sweetman 1997, 98). However, some scholars have argued for a 6th-century date on genealogical grounds (Lanigan 1822 vol. I, 279, 425; Thomas 1994, 160; Culleton 1999, 129; Petts 2007, 169). Mac Shamhráin places his floruit in the early 7th century (2009b vol. 6, 538), but his supporting evidence is not particularly strong. He argues this on the basis of the saint's associations with Glendalough, which mostly date from the 9th and 10th centuries (see

below), late folk traditions collected within the parish of Kilmacanogue, and an *obit* for Do-Chuma Conóc, abbot of Glendalough (†687, *AU*) (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 113, 123–4, 142 n.1, 187). 'Do-Chuma Conóc', a soubriquet which roughly translates as 'of thee', 'representing', 'resembling', or 'with the appearance/form of' Conóc (*eDIL*, s.v. 2 'do' and s.v. 'cummae' no. 3), suggests that this abbot was considered similar to, or else was compared with, Mochonóc in his manner, appearance, or perhaps spirituality. Yet in the absence of any additional information, it might be too presumptuous to interpret this to mean that he was actually a student of Mochonóc, as Mac Shamhráin suggests (1996, 113), particularly since he then uses this interpretation as the basis upon which to speculate that Mochonóc himself may have held office at Glendalough (*ibid*). Moreover, he later contradicts this by saying these traditions 'need not imply that historical personal connections are attested…; it is not essential that the great figures of the "age of the saints" resided at each of the ecclesiastical centres with which they are associated' (*ibid*, 123), and indeed, 'Do-Chuma Conóc' need not have met, or even been contemporary with, Mochonóc to consider himself his disciple or 'spiritual son'. Nevertheless, this can be taken as evidence that a connection or association existed between the churches of Mochonóc and Glendalough, perhaps as early as the 7th century, but certainly by the 9th and 10th.

In the Irish tradition, Mochonóc is never himself the subject of a *Life,* though some of his *acta* (as St Cynog) have been preserved in various British hagiographies, martyrologies, and old Welsh poems (Baring-Gould and Fisher 1908 vol. 2, 264–71). However, he does make notable appearances in the hagiographies of two other major Irish saints – Cóemgen (Kevin) and Patrick. Mochonóc is portrayed as a comrade of Cóemgen of Glendalough (†618) in that saint's Latin *Life*, and plays an important role, in which he predicts the rise of the Uí Dúnlainge in Leinster, through the personage of an early Uí Dúnlainge king, Faelán mac Colmáin (†665/6, *AFM/Chron. Scot.;* Plummer 1910 vol. i, 252). Mochonóc also prophesises that this will only be achieved through the council and blessing of both Cóemgen and himself, and with the caveat that Faelán's descendants will retain the kingship only so long as they honour Cóemgen (*ibid*). Mac Shamhráin has suggested that the earliest version of this *Life* may have been composed *c*. 800 (2009a), and a nod to the Uí Dúnlainge kingship would have been in keeping with the political climate of the time (see Chapter 8). Mochonóc is also incorporated into other 9th/10th century hagiographical tracts associated with Glendalough, in which he is listed among the *familia Coemgeni* (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 124). Additionally, Mochonóc is explicitly counted among the *familia Patricii* in a poetic entry from the *Annals of the Four Masters* (M448.2), and features in the 9th/10th century *Tripartite*

Life of Patrick, in which it is noted that one of the church sites in Uí Chennselaig territory, given to Patrick by the king Crimthann mac Censelach (†465), belonged to Mochonóc (Stokes 1887 vol. 1, 193). This was most certainly a reference to Cill Mucrois, as it is the only foundation attributed to Mochonóc in Uí Chennselaig territory. While this episode should not be taken at face value, it does record that there was a later relationship (or claimed relationship) between Armagh and Cill Mucrois, which was part of a wider pattern whereby Armagh attempted to exert its authority over many of the churches in the region (Culleton 1999, 66–7; Ó Riain 2011, 529). Mochonóc is not mentioned in the 7th-century Patrician texts of Muirchú or Tírechán, but this passage in the *Tripartite Life* would imply that, at least by the 9th or 10th century, Cill Mucrois was an important enough church that Armagh considered it to be worth claiming.

Unfortunately, very little is known about Cill Mucrois itself during the early medieval period, and virtually nothing is known of its ecclesiastics (apart from its founding saint). Documentary sources mentioning the site are scant; Cill Mucrois is referenced only in passing, and only in passages and entries relating specifically to Mochonóc (see above). On the basis of the aforementioned Patrician references to Mochonóc, it might be inferred that Cill Mucrois was founded before Gailinne (Gallen), particularly as it is also the first of his foundations listed in the genealogies: 'Mochonóc *ailithir* (pilgrim) from Cill Mucrois and from Gailinne' (Ó Riain 1985, 722.89). However, this suggestion is merely speculative. Cill Mucrois roughly translates to 'Church of the Pig's (wooded) Height/Promontory' (*eDIL*, s.v. 'muc(c)' and s.v. 1 'ros'). 'Ros', or its variant, 'rois', refers to a 'wooded height, or a promontory on the shore of a lake or a river' (*ibid*). Though we cannot ascertain if the site was once wooded, it is indeed situated on a low rise of land that is skirted by a small river to its west and south (Fig. 7.2). Both 'muc' and 'ro(i)s' occur frequently in placenames throughout Ireland (Fig. 7.3). There are ten other Irish placenames with 'mucro(i)s' (Logaimn.ie, 'mucros', 'mucrois', 'muckros'), and though the only 'Cill Mucrois' is the one under discussion here, there are possibly as many as thirteen other churches in Ireland whose names include the word 'muc' (*Monasticon Hibernicum* 2017), though four of these may postdate the 12th century (*ibid*). Moreover, it is uncertain if 'cill' and 'muc' were actually part of the original meaning of one of these four (see Logaimn.ie, explanatory note for 'Cill na Muchóige'). 'Mochras' occurs twice in the placenames of Gwynedd in northwest Wales as well.

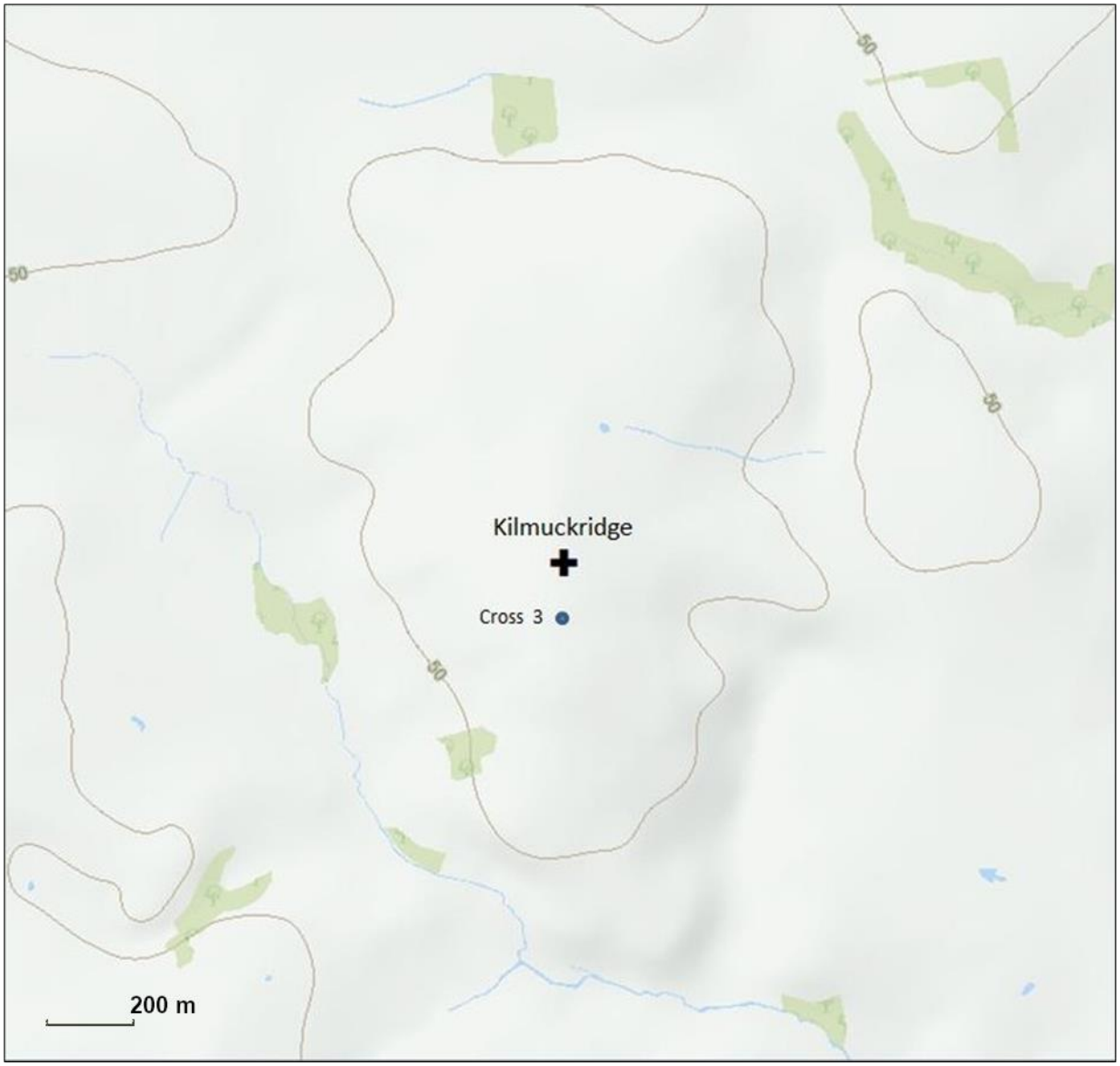


Fig. 7.2: Topographic map showing Kilmuckridge, with a small stream to the west and south

Animals feature regularly in the foundation myths of churches in Ireland (Ó Riain 1972, 17), and pigs, in particular, feature in foundation myths from the *Lives* of four Welsh saints (Baring-Gould and Fisher 1908 vol. 2, 366), so 'Cill Mucrois' would probably not have been considered an unusual ecclesiastical name. There is a church named Mochros, meaning 'the swine-moor', in southeast Wales (*ibid*) which had developed into a major ecclesiastical site in the kingdom of Ergyng by the 7th century (Charles-Edwards 2013, 612–3, 779). While there is no direct affiliation between Dyfrig (in Latin, Dubricius), who was the founder of Mochros, and Mochonóc, it is worth noting that the kingdom of Ergyng bordered Brycheiniog to the east, and there is some evidence to suggest Dyfrig may have had a connection to a few of the ecclesiastical sites in Brycheiniog associated with Brychan, or some of Mochonóc's siblings (Baring-Gould and Fisher 1908 vol. 2, 364). Interestingly, he

is also thought to have founded a monastery on Caldey Island, Penally, Pembrokeshire (*ibid*, 370); an incomplete ogham inscription on the island reading 'MAGL DUBR' could be interpreted as meaning 'servant of Dubricius' (*ibid*).

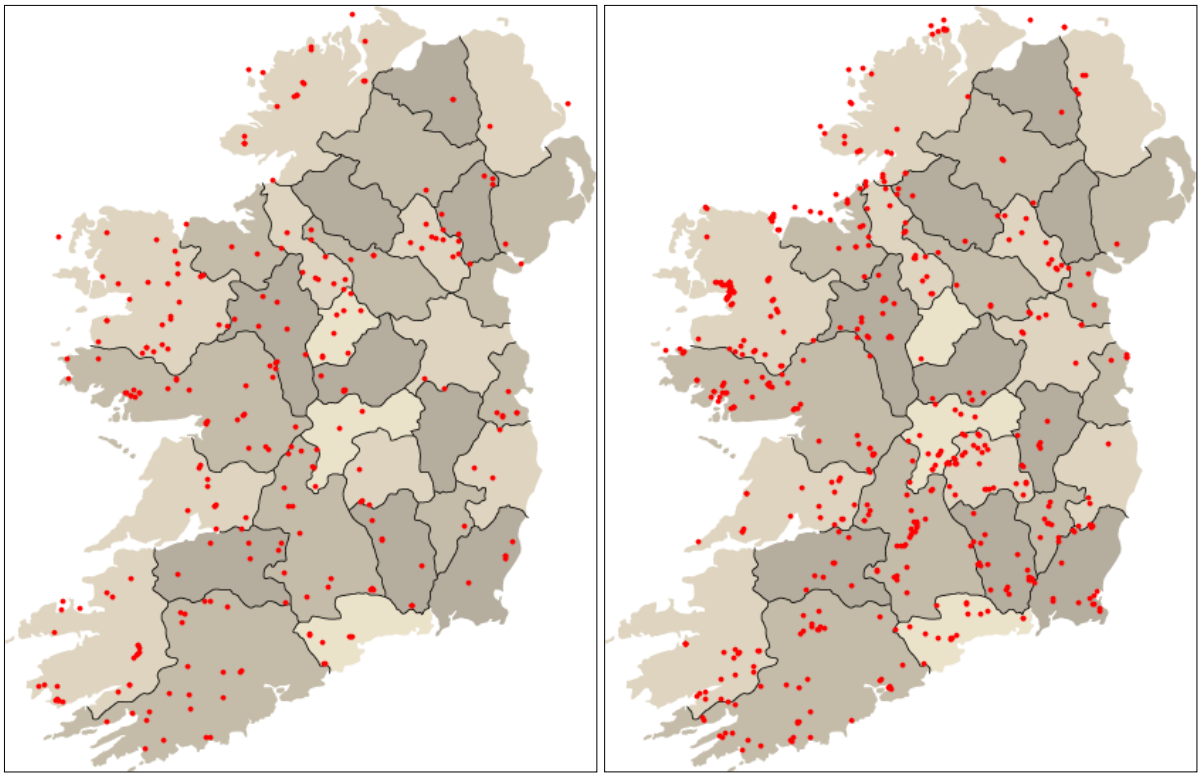


Fig. 7.3: Left to right: Maps showing the distribution of placenames with 'muc' and 'ro(i)s' (source: Logainm.ie)

By 1840, when the ordnance survey was being undertaken in this part of County Wexford, the association of Mochonóc with the church at Kilmuckridge was lost to folk memory (O'Flanagan 1933 vol. 2, 224), so John O'Donovan postulated that the second element of the name to be a corruption of Mochuaróg (*ibid*). Perhaps this was what led Moore to conclude that the parish church in the nearby townland of Killincooly, rather than Kilmuckridge, was the site founded by St Mochonóc (2012/13). It has also been suggested elsewhere that Mochonóc was more closely associated with Killincooly than Kilmuckridge (Ó Riain 2011, 464). However, the reasoning behind these assertions is unclear, as there is no apparent evidence to support them. Though Killincooly may indeed have had a dedication to Mochonóc at some point (Ranson 1945, 53; Culleton 1999, 209; *Monasticon Hibernicum* 2017), this dedication has not been confirmed, and is still considered speculative (*Monasticon Hibernicum* 2017). Furthermore, it is doubtful that a site named 'Cillín Cúile', or 'Little Church of the Corner/Nook/Recess' (Logaimn.ie, 'cúil'; eDIL, s.v. cúil) would have served

as Mochonóc's primary ecclesiastical foundation in Wexford. More importantly, Mochonóc is explicitly associated with Cill Mucrois in Irish genealogies, in the glosses of the 12th-century *Martyrology of Gorman* (Stokes 1895, 220, 242), as well as in the 14th-century *Vita Sanctae Keynae*, which is thought to be based on an earlier text, and details the *Actae* of another of Brychan's many children, St Keyne (Redmond 1898, 97; Thurston and Attwater 1956 vol. 4, 64). Finally, Killincooly Church is situated in a valley, not on a rise, so the landscape is not an appropriate fit for the placename 'Mucrois'. The only extant early medieval remains from Cill Mucrois are the three crosses under discussion here. All above-ground traces of the later medieval church of Kilmuckridge were demolished, and replaced with a newly built Church of Ireland on the same site *c*. 1820, except for a fragment of a late medieval mullioned window that is now being reused as a grave-marker in the cemetery (O'Flanagan 1933 vol. 2, 224; Moore 2012/13).

Turning now to Ferns, the majority of evidence for socio-political and ecclesiastical connections between this site and southwest Wales, particularly St David's, dates from the 11th and 12th centuries (Fig. 7.4). The Welsh ecclesiastic Sulien (†1091), originally of Llanbadarn Fawr, and later elevated to bishop of St David's, is credited with bringing a copy of the *Life of St Maedoc of Ferns* to Wales in the late 11th century, which Doherty has suggested as the reason it was translated into Latin from a lost Irish original (2002, 270). It should also be noted that Ó Riain has argued that the earliest surviving version of this text, while based on the model brought to Wales by Sulien, displays Augustinian overtones, indicating it was written in the late 12th century, rather than the late 11th or early 12th century (2011, 433). This assertion, however, is a less likely scenario (Tomás Ó Carragáin, pers. comm.). If Sulien did bring a copy of this text to Wales in the late 11th century, this would also indicate that he is probably the one responsible for the additions to the *Life* that place a young Maedóc in Wales for a number of years, as a student of St David (Plummer 1910, 297–300, §11–20). Passages from this text were then used by Rhigyfarch, the son of Sulien, in his composition of a *Life* of St David, which was written at Llanbadarn Fawr sometime between 1081 and 1095 (Doherty 2002, 270). Returning to Sulien, he was educated in Ireland for ten years, and, though it is not known precisely when, Edwards has suggested it might have been between 1045 and 1055 (1995, 147). Moreover, it is not known where he was educated, but Glendalough has been postulated as a likely contender (Byrne 1987b, 40; Doherty 2002, 271). It has been further speculated that this was at the invitation of Diarmait mac Máel-na-mBó, the Uí Chennselaig king of Leinster, whose seat of power was at Ferns (Byrne 1987b, n. 21, 40; Mac Shamhráin 1996, 151). Though this latter

suggestion is quite speculative, it would certainly provide us with plausible socio-political motivations behind a relationship between Sts Maedóc and David. Moreover, the idea that Sulien studied at least somewhere in Leinster has some weight when one considers that it was a copy of the *Life* of Maedóc, the patron saint of the ruling Uí Chennselaig (Ó Riain 2011, 435), that he took back with him to Wales. Yet, regardless of where Sulien was educated, the circumstances surrounding the composition of the 'Lives' of Maedóc of Ferns and David of Wales, and the intermingling of their content, offer concrete evidence to support the suggestion that a close relationship had been established between the ecclesiastical foundations of Ferns, Llanbadarn Fawr, and St David's during the 11th century.

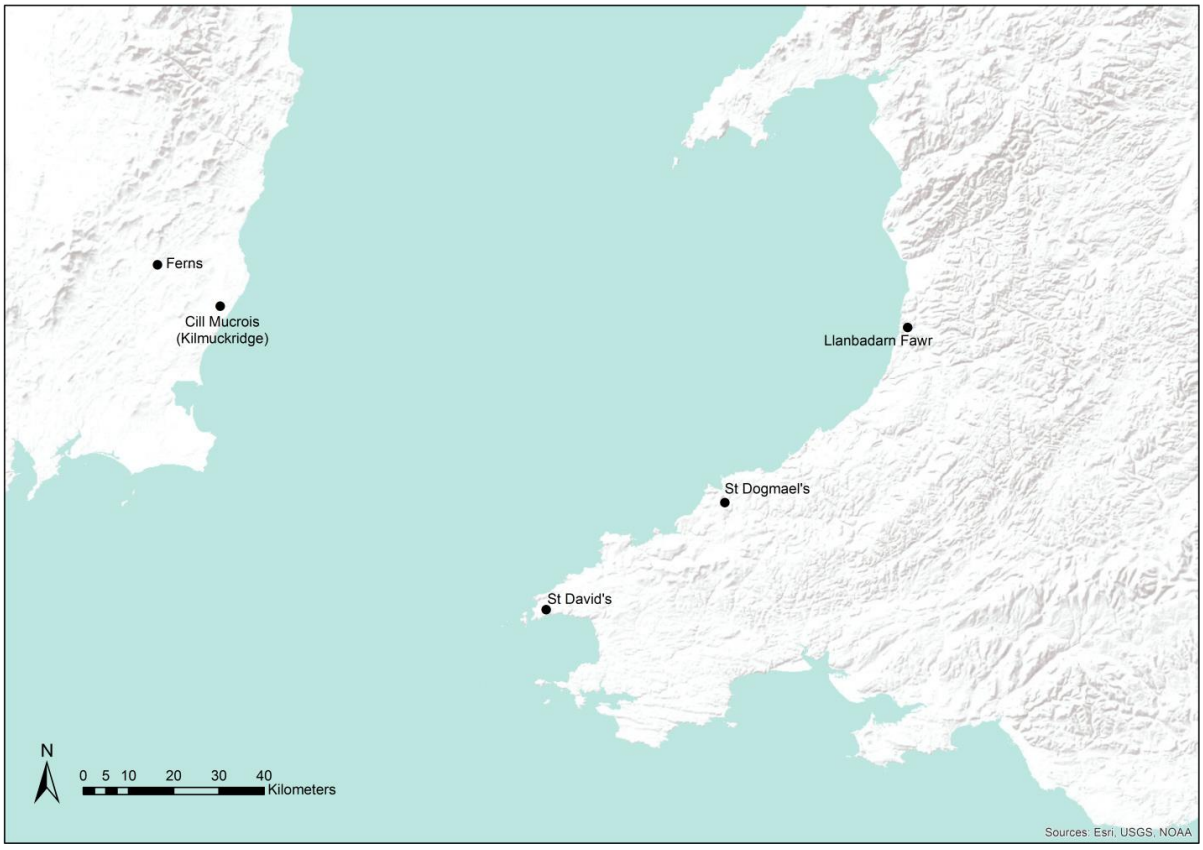


Fig. 7.4: Map showing the main ecclesiastical sites under discussion

7.3 The sculpture

The three crosses associated with Cill Mucrois, before being included in the archaeological inventory for County Wexford (Moore 1996), were the subject of two short papers published by Rev. Joseph Ranson (1945; 1948). Two of the crosses were found 200 m apart; Cross 1 (WX-22) was located right on the border between the townlands of Raheenlusk and

Killannaduff, and Cross 2 (WX-23) was just over the border, in the townland of Killannaduff. Cross 3 (WX-24) is situated immediately back from the west side of the regional road, *c*. 120 m south of the modern Kilmuckridge Church. Cross 1 was found buried at the foot of a fence by Ranson in 1945, after which he re-erected it next to the fence (Ranson 1948, 102). At some point after 1948, it was moved to the Wexford County Museum at Enniscorthy Castle, where it resided until the castle's refurbishment in 2006, when a significant portion of the collection housed there was redistributed to various other sites. Presently, it is on loan to the Office of Public Works, and is on display inside the Ferns Visitor Centre (Fig. 7.5). The carving is in fairly good condition, especially considering the arms and top of the cross have suffered considerable damage. Approximately 25–30 cm of the lower portion of the north face has also been broken off, but this is hidden by the concrete base in which the cross now stands. According to Ranson (1945, 53), the cross originally stood between 1.07 m and 1.23 m high, though only the upper 92 cm is now visible. The cross arms now span 36 cm, but it is clear that this is due to damage, and that they were once longer. The north face is incised with an encircled, six-petalled marigold, atop a stem that extends down the length of the cross-shaft. Beginning just below the encircled marigold, and continuing to the base of the cross-shaft, diagonal ribs are carved in false relief along both sides of the incised stem. On the south face is a variation on the cross-of-arcs, carved in false relief, with a lozenge-shaped recess at its centre. The cross is in a circular frame made by a deeply incised line with well-rounded edges. Like the marigold on the north face, is similarly atop a stem formed by two incised parallel lines; however, attached to the apex of the cross's frame is a small Latin cross carved in very low relief.



Fig. 7.5: Cross 1 (WX-22): north and south faces respectively

Cross 2 (WX-23) was found in a fence, just on the west side of the regional road, between the towns of Kilmuckridge and Ballygarret (Ranson 1945, 53), approximately 4 km northeast of Cross 3 (WX-24). It was also moved to the Wexford County Museum with Cross 1, but has since been lost, presumably during the aforementioned redistribution of its collection. Consequently, we must rely on the information provided by Ranson's papers, and the most recent known photograph of the cross, published by Edward Culleton in 1999 (Fig. 7.6). The lower half was broken off before the cross was recorded, but its head, and what little remained of the shaft, measured 58.5 cm high, with cross arms that span 52 cm (Ranson 1945, 53). One side of the cross is incised with a simple, six-petalled marigold in a circular frame. It has a smaller Latin cross at its apex, though unlike Cross 1, it surmounts a marigold rather than a cross-of-arcs and is incised in outline, forming part of the frame itself rather than simply being attached to it. Moore described the design as 'an inscribed circle, possibly with a *chi-rho*, at the crux' (2012a). However, deeper symbolic interpretations of the marigold motif aside (see below, *Iconography*), there is no visible 'hook' indicative of a *chi-rho* apparent in the photographs of this carving (*cf.* Fig. 7.6; Ranson 1945, pl. V Fig. 1; 1948,

no. IV). The opposite face has a lozenge-shape carved in relief at its centre, the corners of which extend outward to form a saltire cross. Like the carving on the south face of Cross 1, it looks to have been created using arcs to form the shape. Additionally, there appears to be a slightly darker, circular area framing the carving, but the design is difficult to discern from the extant photographs and gives the impression of being unfinished, particularly when compared to its opposite side. On balance, this side could just be heavily worn, or carved with a relatively simple, less elaborate design.

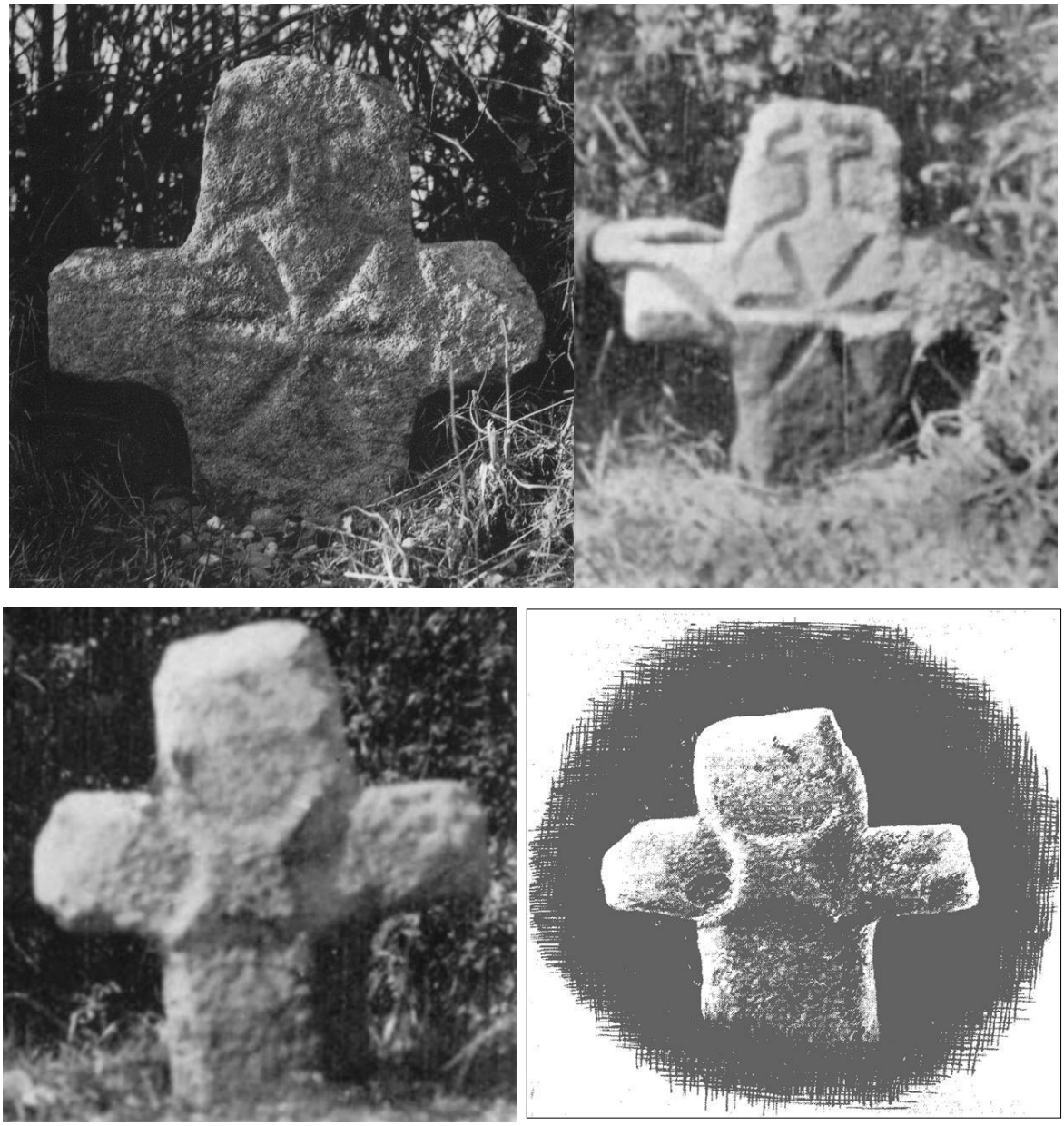


Fig. 7.6: Both sides of Cross 2 (WX-23), now lost (after Culleton 1999 and Ranson 1945; 1948)

Cross 3 is *c*. 120 m south of the modern church of Kilmuckridge, and immediately situated on the west side of the regional road. The carving is very weathered, and, in some

places, details are difficult to discern with the eye alone (Fig. 7.7). The motif is a slight deviation from that on the other three stones in this group, but it can nevertheless be included on the basis of its provenance (discussed below) as well as the similarity of its overall design. The dimensions of the cross closely resemble those of the previous two; it stands 94 cm above ground (1.17 m in Ranson's day), with arms that span 54 cm. It is carved only on its east face, with an encircled cross-of-arcs set on a thin stem that extends down the full length of the stone. The photogrammetric model of Cross 3 (Fig. 7.8) reveals that it is unlikely there is any carving above the cross-of-arcs, though the surface is so heavily worn that the possibility cannot be fully ruled out. On either side of the carved cross-head, two sets of incised horizontal lines extend the length of each cross arm. Short, vertical lines emanate from these – four on either cross arm, with two extending above, and two below the horizontal lines. These vertical lines do not intersect the horizontal ones, as depicted by Ranson (1945, pl. V Fig. 1; 1948, no. II), though to his credit, he did acknowledge that the design was not clearly visible at the time of his recording because the cross was kept continually whitewashed by the local community (1945, 53). There is also a very faint, third line running the length of the cross stem on the dexter side that is only visible when the texture is removed from the photogrammetric model of the stone, and could perhaps represent a mistake on the part of the carver that was not fully smoothed away. This last suggestion, however, is speculative. Though no longer whitewashed, the cross is still obviously cared for by the local community – the area around the cross is well maintained, with small, white flowering plants at the foot of the cross and a 'fairy door' on the tree next to it.



Fig. 7.7: Cross 3 (WX-24), on the west side of the road c. 120 m south of Kilmuckridge Church

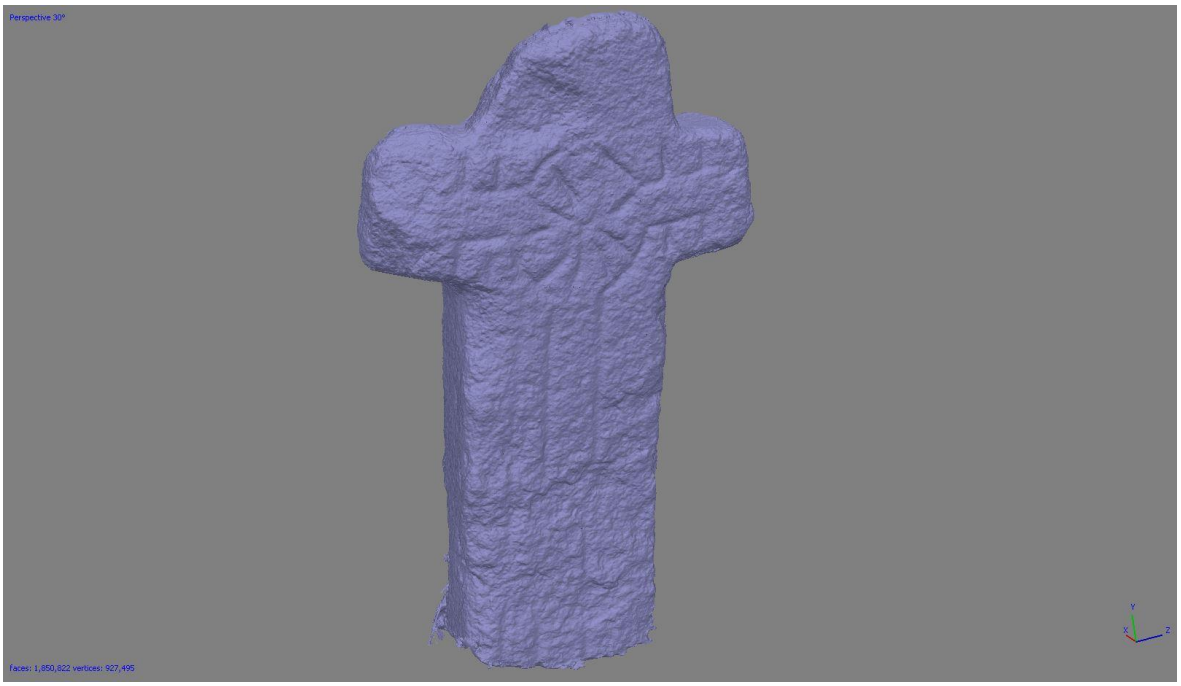


Fig. 7.8: Photogrammetric model of Cross 3 showing no traces of carving above the cross-of-arcs, as well as a vestigial third vertical line running the length of the cross stem

Though Crosses 1 and 2 were discovered in the civil parish of Donaghmore, they were found only *c*. 200 m from the border with the parish of Kilmuckridge, and *c*. 3.8 km northeast of the modern church, which is presumed to be in approximately the same location

as the early medieval settlement. Their iconography is quite similar, and while they do not precisely mirror one another, they may have been created to be a complementary pair. Alternatively, one could have been carved at a later date by a different hand, perhaps in imitation of the other, as the craftsmanship is not of equal quality, and the crosses are of different types of stone (Ranson 1945, 53). However, this seems less likely when these crosses are considered alongside Cross 3 – though the iconography and execution of this latter cross differs somewhat from the other two, it nevertheless displays the same overall motif (Fig. 7.9). More importantly, the form and dimensions of all three crosses are almost identical, if one makes allowances for erosion and the damages they have sustained, suggesting all three could be the result of a single project or episode (perhaps, however, carved by different hands).

The positions of these three crosses are highly significant in that not only are they almost certainly marking the early medieval boundaries of Cill Mucrois, but they are also situated on the main north-south regional road through County Wexford, which indicates that this was a route-way in the early medieval period as well. The archaeological and hagiographical evidence for the 'zoning' of ecclesiastical or monastic land is well documented by scholars (Swift 1998; Ó Carragáin 2003; McCarthy 2013). These internal divisions of monastic and ecclesiastical complexes were sometimes delineated by a cross or cross-carved stone (Swift 1998, 109, 118), often (but not always) accompanied by an enclosing wall or ditch (*ibid*; Fig. 7.10). The *termon* or limit of the area marked by these crosses could vary as much as between 30 m to 300 m (Ó Carragáin 2003, 137), though the majority of inner enclosures, which usually housed most of the core ecclesiastical buildings, averaged approximately 100–200 m in diameter (Swift 1998, 116). The proximity (*c*. 120 m) of Cross 3 to the present church of Kilmuckridge indicates that it may have marked an inner enclosure of the ecclesiastical estate, perhaps at the southern point of entry. However, the word *termon* was also sometimes used to refer to lands over which a church had direct jurisdiction, and this could extend across a few kilometres, such as the *termons* postulated for St Molaga, Co. Cork and St Fínán (*Inis Úasal)*, Co. Kerry (Ó Carragáin 2003, 137). Crosses 1 and 2 were located *c*. 3.8 km northeast of the church, suggesting they may have stood on the northern boundary of the *termon* of Cill Mucrois. Moreover, their orientation in relation to each other would indicate that they straddled a road or route-way at that boundary into church lands – after all, what would be the point of marking a territorial boundary where very few people would ever see it? After the Synod of Ráth Breasail in 1111, Cill Mucrois became part of the diocese of Ferns, and it can reasonably be assumed that its parish

boundaries developed soon after. The position of Crosses 1 and 2 near the border between the parishes of Kilmuckridge and Donaghmore also suggests that the approximate extent of the *termon* lands of Cill Mucrois may roughly correspond to that of the parish boundary, which in turn may have developed out of this ecclesiastical estate (*cf*. MacCotter 2008, 85; Ó Carragáin 2010, 12, 233; 2014; McCarthy 2013, 510–1). Moreover, Cross 1 was located in a field known as 'Stone Cross Field' (Ranson 1948, 102), a moniker that was well known to Ranson, long before he recorded the cross (*ibid*); however, it is unclear if the field has retained that name in recent decades, after the cross was moved to its present location. Similarly, the name Gortnagross, or 'field of the cross', may likewise indicate an ecclesiastical boundary in the territory of the Fir Maige (Ó Carragáin 2014, 288–9). For a discussion on the survival of termons and termon markers elsewhere, see Chapter 5.

While the Cill Mucrois crosses can be stylistically dated between the late 11th and 12th centuries, in light of a similar cross-slab at Ferns (WX-11), perhaps it can be suggested that their erection coincided with the development of diocesan boundaries in the early 12th century (more below). In this capacity, they may have served multiple purposes. Notably, their iconography suggests they may have been perceived as both sanctifying, and guarding, ecclesiastical space (McCarthy 2013, 256–7, 602) from the 'evils' of the outside world, in addition to declaring ownership. While there is no evidence to suggest pilgrimage activity at Cill Mucrois, they may nevertheless have acted as foci for prayers, perhaps linked to rituals of purification – either of monastic space, or of an individual – that were associated with movement within, and around the site (e.g. O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 331-2; Ó Carragáin 2009a; McCarthy 2013, 261). Their position next to what is, and presumably has been for centuries, a major regional road (Fig. 7.11) certainly suggests the crosses may have been way-markers on a primary route through the estate, as well as marking the boundary of ecclesiastical lands on the approach (*cf*. Trench-Jellicoe 1998, 507). Thus, in addition to the more practical function of declaring land ownership and diocesan affiliation, they could have also been a natural stopping point for travellers to offer up a prayer as they crossed the boundary between the sacred and profane.

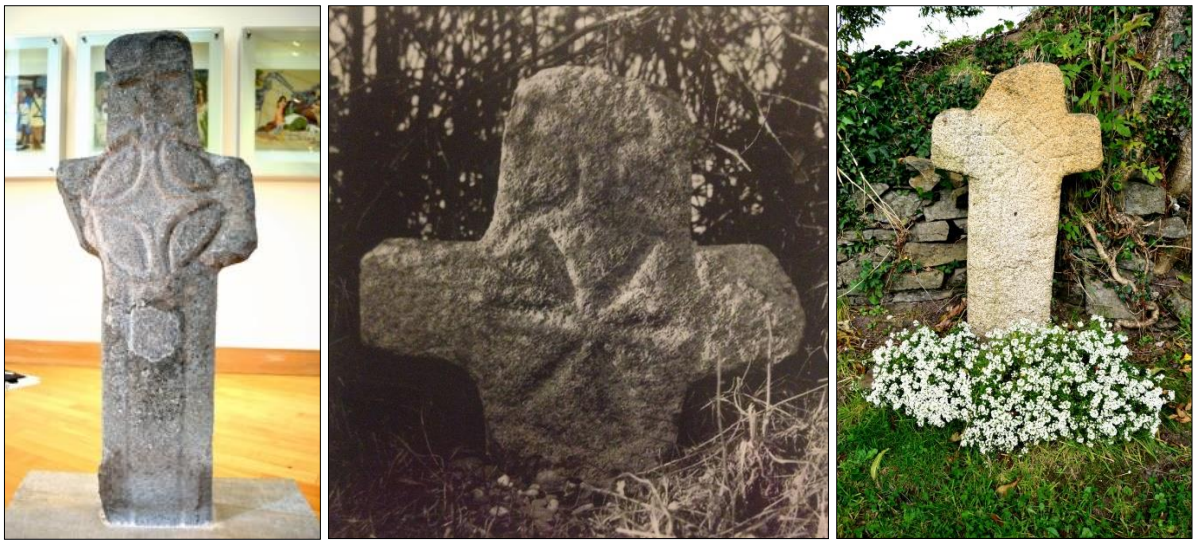


Fig. 7.9: Carved together? Left to right: Cross 1 (WX-22), Cross 2 (WX-23) and Cross 3 (WX-24)



Fig. 7.10: Boundary cross, similar to the Cill Mucrois crosses, associated with Kilmacduagh, Co. Galway (after McCarthy 2013)

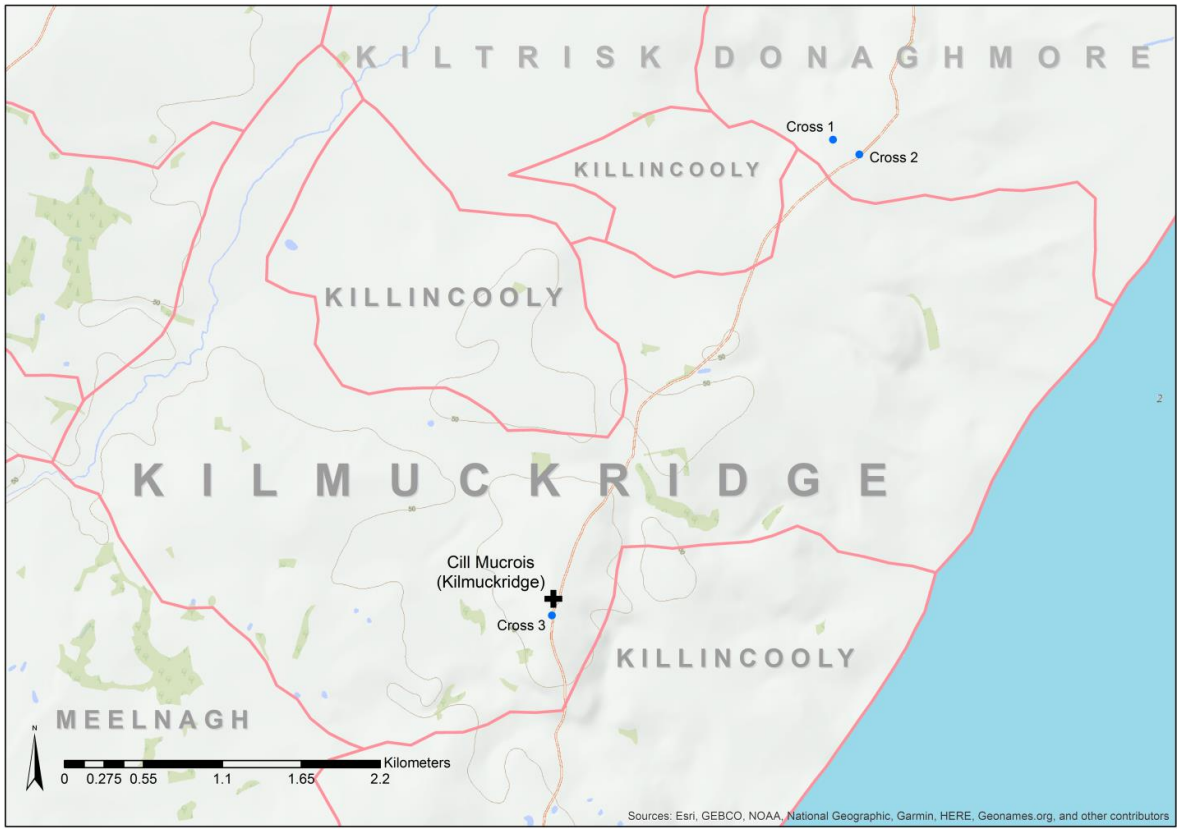


Fig. 7.11: The parish boundaries of Kilmuckridge and Donaghmore, showing the location of the three Cill Mucrois crosses in relation to the parish borders and a major regional road, the R742, which runs north-south along the coast

The fourth monument in this group is a cross-slab, rather than a cruciform stone, only recently discovered in the graveyard at Ferns by Christian Corlett (2011; Fig. 7.12). Its western face was left unworked, suggesting the stone was originally intended to lie recumbently (for more on monument morphology, see Chapter 4). On the east face is a marigold, carved in false relief on the upper third of its surface. The marigold is framed within an incised ring, and below this, the lines of that ring continue down the face of the slab as a stem. Above the marigold, the lines form a small outline Latin cross at its apex, as with Cross 2. The design on this slab is well executed; by contrast, the stone itself has been roughly shaped. It tapers sharply from top to bottom, nearly clipping the sides of the cross-frame, indicating the edges of the slab must have been trimmed at a later date. Corlett posits that the marigold was carved during the early medieval period, while the stem, frame, and Latin cross were added during its reuse sometime during the later medieval period (2011, 200). Though it may indeed have been recut later, the design on the slab appears to be one, cohesive motif – there is not enough evidence to suggest that any element was carved

separately from any other, particularly when one considers the iconographic parallels for this slab, which are discussed below.



Fig. 7.12: Recently discovered cross-slab at Ferns (WX-11); note how the stem is off-centre, indicating it existed before the slab was reshaped (right photo source: Christiaan Corlett)

7.4 Iconography

Marigolds, and crosses-of-arcs, have already been discussed in detail in Chapter 4 (section 4.3.2). However, the 'cross-of-arcs' on the south face of Cross 1, as well as the saltire-like 'cross' on Cross 2, should be discussed further here. These crosses may have been created in a similar fashion to the 'typical' cross-of-arcs (though without the aid of a compass), albeit with the radius reduced, so that the lines of the arcs do not intersect, forming a lozenge. There are not many close parallels for these crosses, and, indeed, one could argue that some of the examples of lozenge-shaped cross-forms cited below should not be included, as they form part of the larger designs of round- or hollow-angled crosses (Fig. 7.13). Despite this, it may be significant that some of the more distinctively similar of its few comparanda occur at Gallen (Kendrick 1939, fig. 4 and fig. 5, R1). Other lozenge-type crosses, albeit less defined

examples, are also found on seven of the small 8th–9th century slabs from Clonmacnoise (Macalister 1909, pl. VIII-X, nos. 58–9, 61, 65, 68, 70 and 72). Kendrick suggested a 10th–11th-century date for the Gallen slabs shown below (1939, 7), but given that they are stylistically very similar to the Clonmacnoise examples, and considering the association that existed between the two sites by the 10th century (Ó Floinn 1995, 254), a slightly earlier, 9th–10th-century date for the Gallen slabs may be more probable. Lone parallels for this cross type are also found at Kildreelig, Co. Kerry (Henry 1956–7; O'Sullivan and Sheehan 1996, no. 951, 292-5), and on one face of a disc-headed grave-marker from Kirkton, Great Cumbrae, Scotland (Fisher 2001, W5, no. 11b). This latter example is a saltire cross, and so is not an exact parallel for the south face of Cross 1, though it does share several similarities in its design. It could, however, also serve as a parallel for the arguably saltire-like 'cross' on one face of Cross 2 (Fig. 7.14).

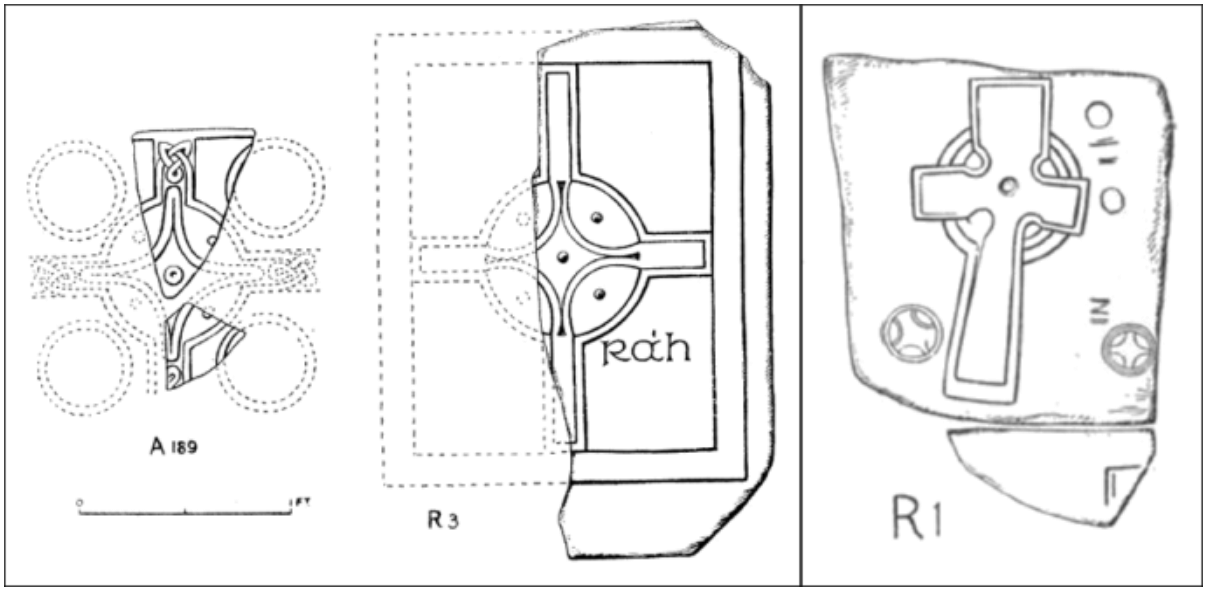


Fig. 7.13: 'Lozenge' crosses at Gallen – note in particular the central lozenge-shaped cross on A189 and the two small thieves' crosses on R1

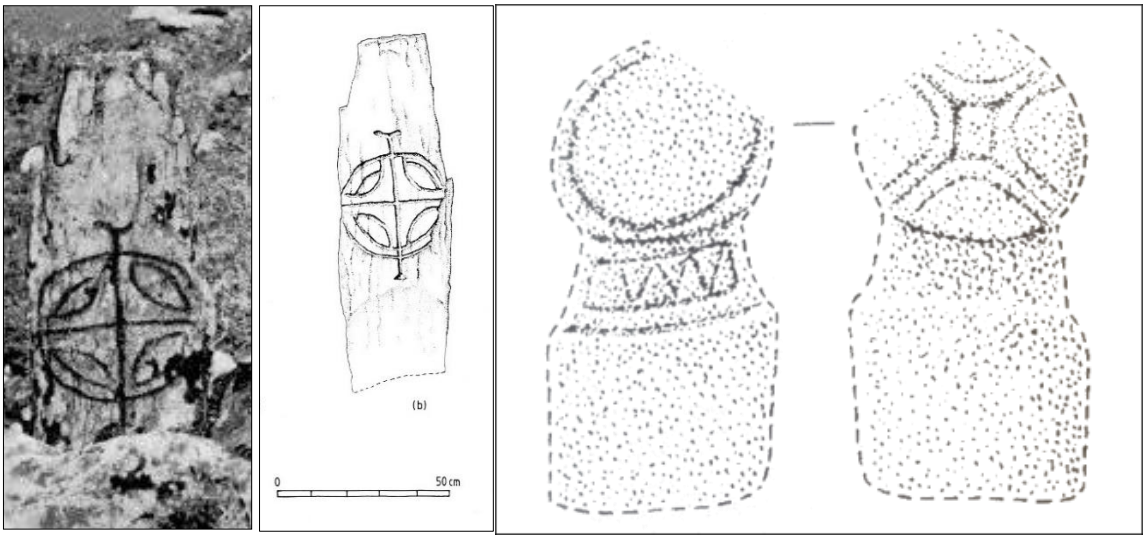


Fig. 7.14: Photo and drawing of slab at Kildreelig, Co Kerry; Face 'b' of grave-marker at Kirkton, Great Cumbrae

Lozenges in and of themselves are thought to have Christological symbolism, representing cosmological harmony with 'Christ the Creator-Logos', or the Word of God, at its centre (O'Reilly 1998, 55, 77–94; Richardson 2002, 208). Lozenges feature centrally in several illustrations in the Book of Kells, notably the Chi-Rho page, and evangelist page, of St John's Gospel (folios 34r, 290v), and are formed from the text itself in two passages in the Book of Armagh (folios 103r and 159v). Lozenges are also found on some early Christian lamps (though not on the Ballynacourty lamp; WA-4, this volume), which has led Richardson to suggest they may also symbolise the Light of the World (2002, 208). The meaning behind the lozenge was clearly not lost when translated into stone, for it is integral to the design of many of these slabs (Fig. 7.15). Several appear to depict a simplified version of the symbolism on folio 290v, with a roundel in each of the four cantons representing one of the four Evangelists and the central lozenge as Christ.

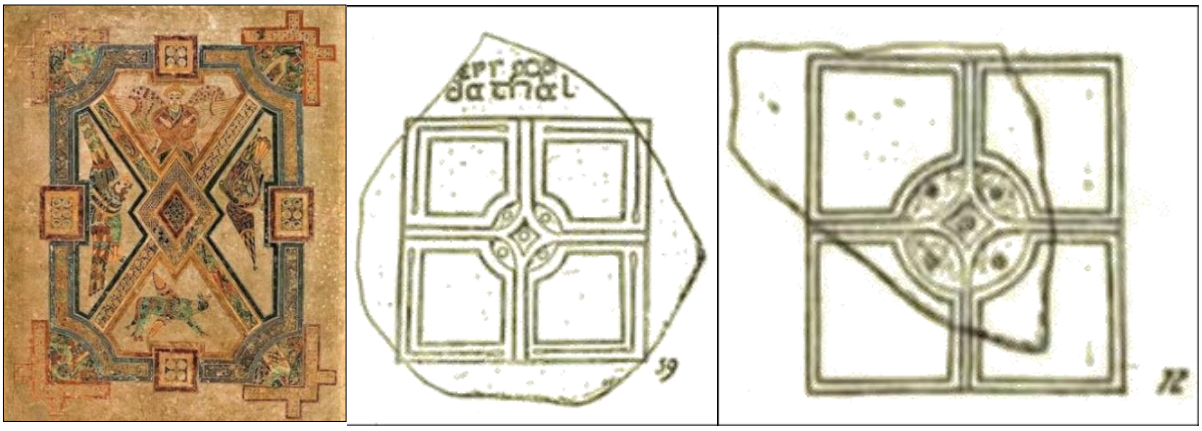


Fig. 7.15: Folio 290v from the Book of Kells, Cross 1 and Nos. 59 and 72 from Clonmacnoise; also see above illustrations of A189 and R3 from Gallen

The addition of a stem to a marigold or cross-of-arcs is typical of a number of early monuments in Ireland, particularly at ecclesiastical sites in the west, mainly those dotted around the coast of Kerry (Swift 1997, 81; Sheehan 2012, 115), but also at Inishkea North, Co. Mayo, Carndonagh, Co. Donegal, and Killedeas, Co. Fermanagh. This combination is less common in Britain, though some, mostly singular, examples have been found at Raasay, A'Chill (Canna), Daltote Cottage, Whithorn, and St Ninian's Cave in Scotland (Fisher 2001, 27; Oram, Martin, McKean and Neighbour 2010, 22–3). However, a number of slabs featuring this motif are concentrated in Pembrokeshire, Wales, mainly at St Dogmael's and related sites (Edwards 2007b, 87). This cross-and-stem combination is generally treated as a single motif, and has often been interpreted as the handle and fan plate of a *flabellum*. The use of *flabella* in a liturgical context dates from at least the 4th century, originally, in churches where a warm climate made protecting the altar and Host from dust and insects an issue, though eventually they made their way to western churches, where this function was less of a necessity (Richardson 1993, 27). *Flabella* were first made of materials such as peacock feathers, to which were attributed the qualities of Christian fidelity and vigilance; they were also associated with immortality, and so, likewise, with the Resurrection (*ibid*). The fan itself was usually circular, so when the form was translated into stone and metal, it was often represented as a disc attached to a rod (Higgins 1987, 110; Richardson 1993, 27). Practicalities aside, the action of using a *flabellum* could also imply ritualistically driving away impurities, and, by extension, evil forces (*ibid*, 30). Coupled with the quality of Christian vigilance, or watchfulness, this would suggest that *flabella* may also have been a symbol of protection. Such iconography would be metaphorically appropriate for a boundary marker, which could be seen as a means of separating the sanctified, harmonious space of ecclesiastical land from the chaos and 'perpetual menace of evil' that lay just outside (Hertz 1973, 13; O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 332).

Some monuments, like the slab at Caherlehillan in Co. Kerry, are carved with additional iconography that is explicitly associated with *flabella* (Fig. 7.16). The iconography, however, is more ambiguous on many stones that are also thought to depict *flabella* specifically. This has lead Newman and Walsh to point out that when some of these additional design elements have been omitted, the object may not have been expressly intended to be a *flabellum* (2007, 177). Rather, it may represent a liturgical *labarum* (*ibid*) – a banner or standard usually displaying a cross- or marigold-decorated disc mounted on a metal pole, and, perhaps, this may be what the carvings on the Wexford stones are intended to signify (Figs. 7.17–20). Moreover, the *chi-rho* monogram, and, by extension, the marigold,

was adopted by Constantine as the *labarum* of Christian Rome (*ibid*, 176). This may provide an explanation as to why many of these carvings, hitherto thought to be *flabella*, are shown with a base or feet (*ibid*, 177). However, the lack of a base does not preclude this interpretation as some *labara* are depicted without one, or perhaps it can be speculated that some had a removable base so they could be carried during processions. Furthermore, it could be suggested that metal *flabella*, divorced from their original function, and taking on a more symbolic meaning in the Western church, served much the same ceremonial purpose as *labara*, if not considered *labara* in themselves. Certainly, multiple interpretations of the iconography on the Wexford stones would not be incompatible, and, indeed, the symbolism of such objects is undoubtedly multivalent.



Fig. 7.16: Close-up of tasselled flabella in the Book of Kells, folio 129v (copyright: Trinity College Library, Dublin); Slab at Caherlehillan, showing the tassels and peacock associated with flabella (after Sheehan 2015)

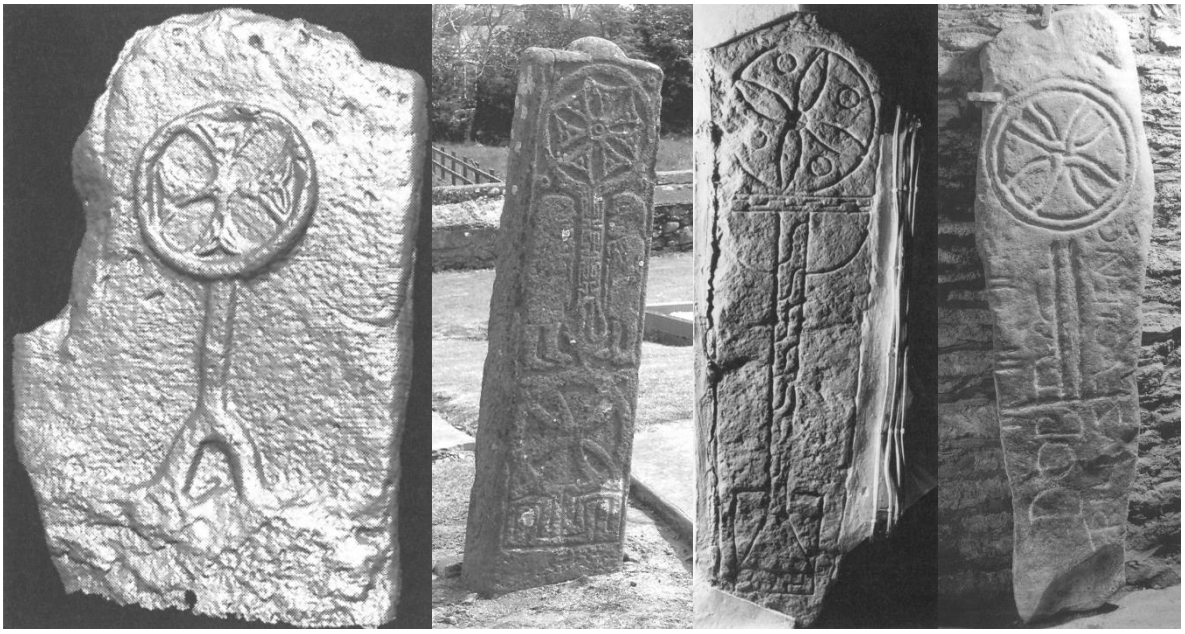


Fig. 7.17: Possible depictions of a labarum, left to right: laser scan of a slab from Killedeas, Co. Fermanagh; the west face of the 'Marigold Stone' at Cardonagh, Co. Donegal; Cerrig Ceinwen and St Clydai's Church in Wales



Fig. 7.18: Labara on 8th-century altar front, Ferentillo, Umbria, Italy (after Peroni 1984)

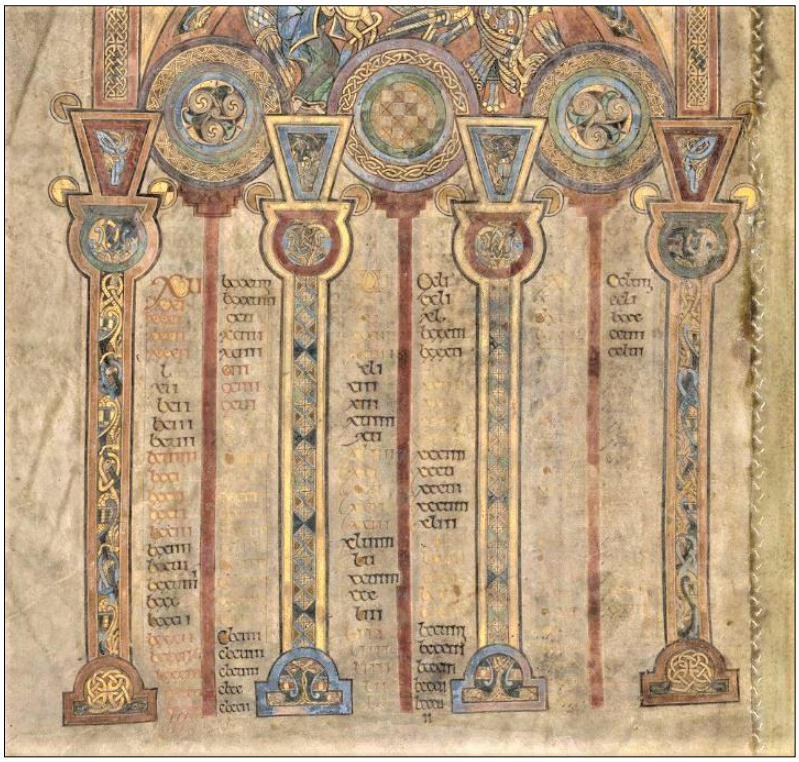


Fig. 7.19: Labara without a base in the Book of Kells, folio 2v



Fig. 7.20: Possible labara in the Book of Kells, folio 7v

The most enigmatic motif on the Wexford stones is that of a smaller Latin cross, fixed atop the frame of a larger marigold, or cross-of-arcs. It is a key feature on all but Cross 3 (WX-24), and in Ireland, close comparanda are lacking. However, the Wexford stones can arguably be more closely compared with two stones from the west of Scotland, one from Kilmory on the Isle of Rum (Fisher 2001, W27), and one from Clenamacrie in Argyll (*ibid*,

A2 No. 238), both of which feature a cross or disc atop a stem, and a smaller Latin cross just above. Fisher infers a general 7th- to 8th-century date range for these monuments on art historical grounds, based mostly on comparanda from the west of Ireland (*ibid*, 12). By far the closest parallel, however, is a cross-slab at St David's Cathedral in Pembrokeshire, Wales. The St David's slab is, unfortunately, incomplete but what remains is well-shaped, carved with an encircled equal-armed cross decorated with interlace; a small Latin cross is attached to the top of the circular frame (Fig. 7.21). Its inscription gives it a *terminus post quem* of 1078, and stylistically it has been dated between the late 11th and early 12th century (*ibid*, 441). Edwards originally interpreted the design as a cross and stem (2001, 65), but has more recently suggested that the decoration on the lower portion of the face may be the remnants of another ringed cross, with circular bosses in its cantons (2007a, 441). Newman and Walsh (2007, 178, 182) have suggested that the addition of a small Latin cross atop the *labarum* or *flabellum* depicted on the Kilmory pillar may have served to emphasise, or reinforce, the metaphors for the Resurrection represented by these motifs, and this interpretation could certainly be extended to the sculpture here.

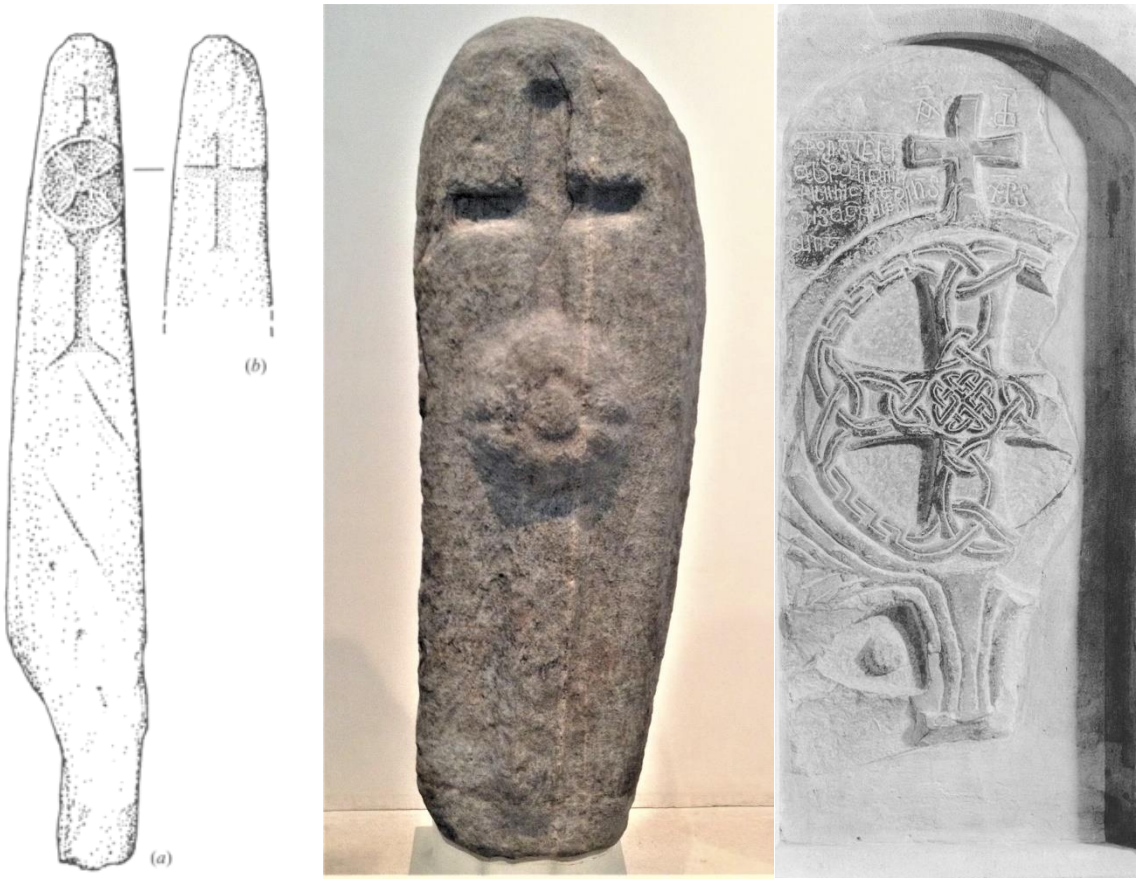


Fig. 7.21: Left to right – slabs from Kilmory (after Fisher 2001) and Clenamacrie, Scotland; Slab at St David's Cathedral, Wales (Crown copyright: RCAHMW)

It is also worth noting the similarities between the form of *ostensoria* – vessels used to display holy objects (usually the Host) in liturgical processions – and the iconography of the carvings discussed here (Fig. 7.22). Significantly, this similarity is also noted by Newman and Walsh on the Carndonagh and Killedeas slabs (2007, 177–8). In more recent times, it has been stated that the 'most appropriate form of the *ostensorium* is that of the sun emitting its rays to all sides' and that it 'must be surmounted by a cross' (Clement XI 1705, V, no. 13, 734; Gardellini 1826 vol 7, 484). Though there is no evidence that *ostensoria* came into use before the 12th century (Thurston 1911), it is tempting to see a correlation between its form and that of the *labara/flabella* depicted on the Wexford stones, especially considering that the marigold motif was sometimes interpreted as a symbol of the sun as well as of the *chi-rho* monogram (Newman and Walsh 2007, 176).



Fig. 7.22: Left to right – Ferns cross-slab with labarum; two *modern* ostensoria*; liturgical processional with* ostensorium

There are two other design elements in the Wexford group which warrant discussion, though each occurs singly. There is a ribbed pattern on the cross-shaft of the north face of Cross 1, indicating Hiberno-Scandinavian influences (Figs. 7.23 and 7.24). It is typical of the bone combs of Hiberno-Scandinavian Dublin, and of several of the Rathdown-type slabs that have been linked to Scandinavian settlers in the wider Dublin region during the 11th and 12th centuries (Boazman 2014 vol. 2, 630, 670–2; Corlett 2015, 445). A slab from Laughanstown, Co. Dublin (Healy 2009, No. 42) features a cross with the same pattern of diagonal ribs on both sides of its stem as on Cross 1, and several bone antler combs from excavations of Norse Dublin dated between the mid-10th to 12th centuries feature the same motif (Ó hÉailidhe 1973, fig.4). Moreoever, Hiberno-Scandinavian influences from the Dublin region have also been found on some of the 9th to 11th century sculpture of St David's, and Llanbadarn Fawr

in southwest Wales (Edwards 2007b, 197), though the ribbing seen here is more similar to the aforementioned parallels from the Dublin region.



Fig. 7.23: Diagonal ribbing, like that on Cross 1 (far left); on Rathdown slabs from Rathmicheal and Laughanstown, Tully, Co. Dublin (right and centre photos after Corlett 2015)

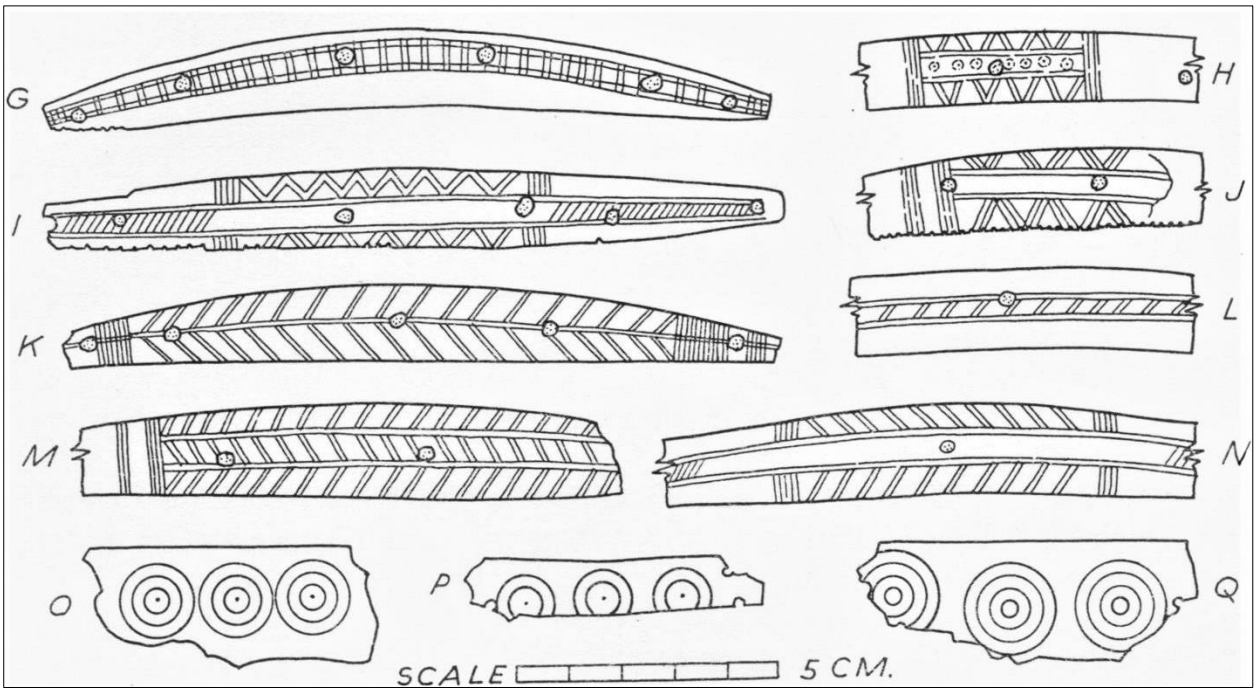


Fig. 7.24: 10th- to 12th-century Norse Dublin bone combs; in particular note K and N (after Ó hÉailidhe 1973)

As previously mentioned, the design on Cross 3 (WX-24) deviates slightly from the others in that it has an additional design on the cross arms, though it still features the principle *labarum* motif. Overall, it is markedly similar to a cross from the church of

Killevin, Argyll in Scotland (Fisher 2001, fig. 32A; 148 63.2), though the arms of the latter do not appear to be carved (Fig. 7.25). However, the decorations on the arms of Cross 3 are unusual, and have no close parallels (or rather, none that have yet been found). A carved stone dated to the late 7th or 8th century at Chapel Colman in Pembrokeshire, Wales features an incised cross with a triangular head, and a vertical line intersecting either cross arm, which could be interpreted as a variation on the thieves' crosses motif (*cf*. Higgins 1987 i, fig. 45, 125). Furthermore, the opposite face is incised with a compass-drawn cross-of-arcs, in a double-lined circular frame (Edwards 2007, P8).

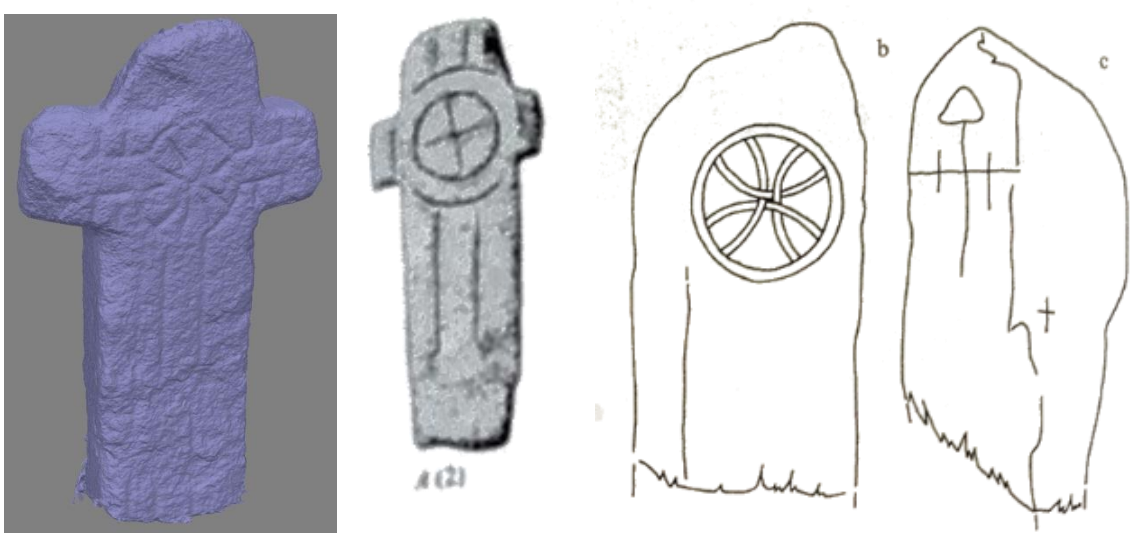


Fig. 7.25: Cross 3 (WX-24); cross from Killevin, Scotland; carved stone near St Colman's Church, Wales

7.5 Discussion

Much of the information that has been put forth by scholars regarding Mochonóc, the founding of Gailinne, and of Cill Mucrois, has been in part extrapolated from the 9th–10th-century *Tripartite Life*, and Irish genealogies, but is mostly based on Colgan's hagiographical work, *Acta sanctorum Hiberniae* (1645). Unfortunately, there is no surviving documentary evidence relating to Mochonóc, either Irish or British, prior to the 9th century, and there is no radiocarbon-dated material from the archaeological excavations at Gallen (Kendrick 1939, 7; Delany 2003). The sculpture at Gallen has been dated on art historical grounds to the 7th century or later (*ibid*), though one could argue its significant collection of marigold stones might push that date range back, to include the end of the 6th century (see previous section; also Chapter 4). If so, then at least some of the carved stones at Gallen, particularly those

carved with marigolds or crosses-of-arcs, could potentially date from the first or second generation of its establishment (see section 7.2).

As for Cill Mucrois, its precise location is unknown, though it may reasonably be presumed that it was at, or near, the site of the later medieval church of Kilmuckridge. The only remaining physical testament to its early medieval origins are the three carved crosses under discussion here, which are likely to be late 11th or early 12th century in date. What can be said with relative certainty is that Mochonóc was a Welsh saint (or at least was later conceived of as Welsh), primarily venerated at churches around what is now Breconshire in south Wales, and at Gallen. His foundation of Cill Mucrois is part of a wider distribution of Welsh ecclesiastical settlements along the Wexford coast, several of which have been attributed to other members of his family (see catalogue entry, 'Hook Church'). From the annalistic reference to Do-Chuma Conóc of Glendalough (†687), we can also infer that by the mid-7th century Mochonóc was considered a saint of some repute. By the 9th and 10th centuries, Cill Mucrois must have risen to a position of some prominence within southeast Leinster, as both Glendalough and Armagh were pressing claims to Mochonóc's *paruchia* at this time, and counted him as among their founding saints' *familiae*. It is also worth noting that by the 12th century, his church of Kilmacanogue in County Wicklow was among Glendalough's possessions (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 194–5). Ranson states that the ecclesiastical estates along this part of the Wexford coast, including Cill Mucrois, had belonged to Glendalough prior to the 12th century (1948, 103); however, this is doubtful, as the suggestion seems to have been the result of a misinterpretation of the textual sources (*cf.* Mac Erlean 1914, 23–4), and indeed, Mac Shamhráin makes no mention of it (1996). After the Synod of Ráth Breasail in 1111, Cill Mucrois became part of the diocese of Ferns, and it stands to reason that its parish boundaries developed soon after. 'Kilmucres' was recorded in the Knights' Fees in 1247, and again as 'Kilmerys (Kilmacrys)' in 1307 (Brooks 1950, 42). Its rectory and lands were impropriate to the Priory of Glasscarrig from at least the late 14th century, until its dissolution in 1560 (Hore 1911, 145). However, this appropriation likely occurred much earlier, perhaps as early as the late 12th century (MacCotter 2008, 253, n.10).

Regarding the iconography of the Wexford monuments, it is reflective of the general distribution of the marigold and cross-of-arc motifs across Ireland and Britain, which is mainly along the west coast of Ireland and those parts of Britain with Irish cultural influences, namely the Isle of Man, the Scottish West Highlands and Islands, and southwest Wales (Edwards 2007b, 187, 190). However, they also found their way inland along navigable waterways to places like Gallen, which has the largest concentration of stones

carved with a marigold or cross-of-arcs in Ireland. Stones depicting *flabella* and *labara* largely follow a similar distribution pattern, though they are not found on the Isle of Man, or at Gallen. Most examples in Ireland and Britain are thought to date no later than the 9th century (Richardson 1993, 33; Fisher 2001, 12; Edwards 2007a, 87; 2007b, 190; Newman and Walsh 2007, 169; Sheehan 2012, 115-6), though some date from the 10th, 11th, and 12th centuries as well (Newman and Walsh 2007, 169; Redknap and Lewis 2007, 148; Sheehan 2012, 116; Edwards 2013, 148), and the Wexford stones would fall into this latter group. Stylistically, the Wexford group can be dated between the late 11th and 12th centuries. The addition of a small Latin cross perched atop the apex of a larger, encircled one is rare, and was almost certainly inspired by the cross-slab from St David's, which has a *terminus post quem* of 1078. Moreover, the addition of ribbing along the shaft of Cross 1 is strongly reminiscent of the 11th–12th century Rathdown-type cross-slabs, and bone combs typical of Hiberno-Scandinavian Dublin and its hinterland at the time. Significantly, Edwards has also noted artistic influences from Hiberno-Scandinavian Dublin in some of the 9th- to 11th-century sculpture from Llanbadarn Fawr, and church sites associated with St David's (2007b, 193–4, 196), as well as Viking influences on an 11th- or 12th-century slab carved with a *labarum* from Cerrig Ceinwen, Anglesey in northwest Wales (2013, AN3, 148). However, the similarity between the ribbing on Cross 1, and those on the Rathdown slabs and bone combs of Dublin, would suggest that artistic influences regarding this particular decorative element are more likely to have come from the Dublin region than from Wales. Nevertheless, the presence of these influences in all three regions does illustrate nicely the continuum of artistic exchange that existed around and across the Irish Sea throughout the early medieval period.

Overall, the motifs on the Wexford stones appear to have been influenced largely by sculpture found along the southwest coast of Wales, where, in addition to the aforementioned cross-slab at St David's, there is a high concentration of the *labarum* or *flabellum* motif, characteristic of sculpture from St Dogmael's and related sites. This region would be the most likely source of artistic inspiration, not just because of its strong hagiographic and socio-political links Ferns and Cill Mucrois (see above), but also by the virtue of being the most conveniently located comparanda for this motif geographically – the coasts of Wexford and Pembrokeshire are only 80 km apart. More importantly, this group of stones presents us with physical evidence for closer ties between specific religious foundations around and across the Irish Sea—ties which, as Edwards has pointed out, have been hitherto difficult to identify (2007b, 197). Yet, this is not to say that the Wexford 'marigold' stones are merely

copies of Welsh sculpture; marigolds are not found on any of the stones and slabs in southwest Wales, and though there are marigold stones in the northwest, none of those feature a *labarum/flabellum*. It is therefore tempting to suggest that there was yet another key source of inspiration for the Wexford stones—Gallen—and that using the marigold in particular was an artistic, visual expression of an affiliation with that ecclesiastical site. It would make sense that the motif so often associated with Gallen, which houses the largest collection of marigold stones in Ireland, and is the pre-eminent ecclesiastical site associated with Mochonóc, would be repeated on the sculpture of his other main Irish foundation – one that had clearly achieved some measure of importance in its own right during the early medieval period. Moreover, the Gallen marigolds are almost certainly a few centuries older than the Wexford stones (Lionard 1961, 112; Redknap and Lewis 2007, 148), and so would have been perceived as already ancient by the time of the latters' creation in the 11th or 12th century. If this scenario were indeed the case, the appropriation of this motif in Wexford, from what was by then the ancient monuments of 'Gailinne na mBretan', could be taken as evidence that stone sculpture endures as source of identity and inspiration long after it is erected. Other studies have also demonstrated that subsidiary monuments on ecclesiastical lands were often intended to evoke particular memories of a founding saint (Ó Carragáin, forthcoming). Emulation of iconography from Gallen on the crosses at Cill Mucrois could suggest an attempt to associate the latter with the 'golden age' of its founding saint, Mochonóc, as well as, perhaps, re-enforce its identity as a primarily Welsh establishment.

However, this would also imply that the primary, overarching motif of the Wexford 'marigold' stones originated at Cill Mucrois, and was then subsequently transferred to Ferns. Yet, Ferns was the ecclesiastical and political caput of the powerful Uí Chennselaig dynasty, which held the kingship of Leinster for much of the 11th and 12th centuries, so Ferns undoubtedly had the resources to invest more heavily in stone sculpture, and of a higher quality. It seems likely, therefore, that a new (or reinterpreted) iconographic design would have originated here, rather than at a comparatively less important ecclesiastical site like Cill Mucrois, particularly as it has already been established that Ferns had connections of its own to the major ecclesiastical sites of southwest Wales in the 11th and 12th centuries. It stands to reason that artistic exchange between these ecclesiastical sites would naturally result, and therefore follows that, rather than emulating Gallen specifically, the overarching motif of the Wexford 'marigold' stones could instead be taken as a variation on a broader class of sculpture, indicative of cultural and religious exchange along major sea routes (Edwards 2007a, 190, 197), although the potential link to Gallen should not be dismissed out of hand.

The iconography of the Wexford group, while not particularly complex, is undoubtedly meaningful in a wider Christian context, and would have been recognised by viewers that were 'familiar with the motifs used to symbolise and explore the core paradigms of the Christian canon' (Newman and Walsh 2007, 169). Moreover, the addition of a small Latin cross atop the *labara*, albeit rare, is not altogether unique to the Wexford group as, in addition to the St David's slab already mentioned, variations of this device also exist on two other carved stones from the coastal regions of south-western Scotland (Fig. 7.26). There is nothing to suggest that the Scottish stones directly influenced this group, though their existence does indicate that the themes and underlying meaning of this iconography would have been widely understood by educated religious minds of the day (*ibid*), beyond the Irish Sea region itself.

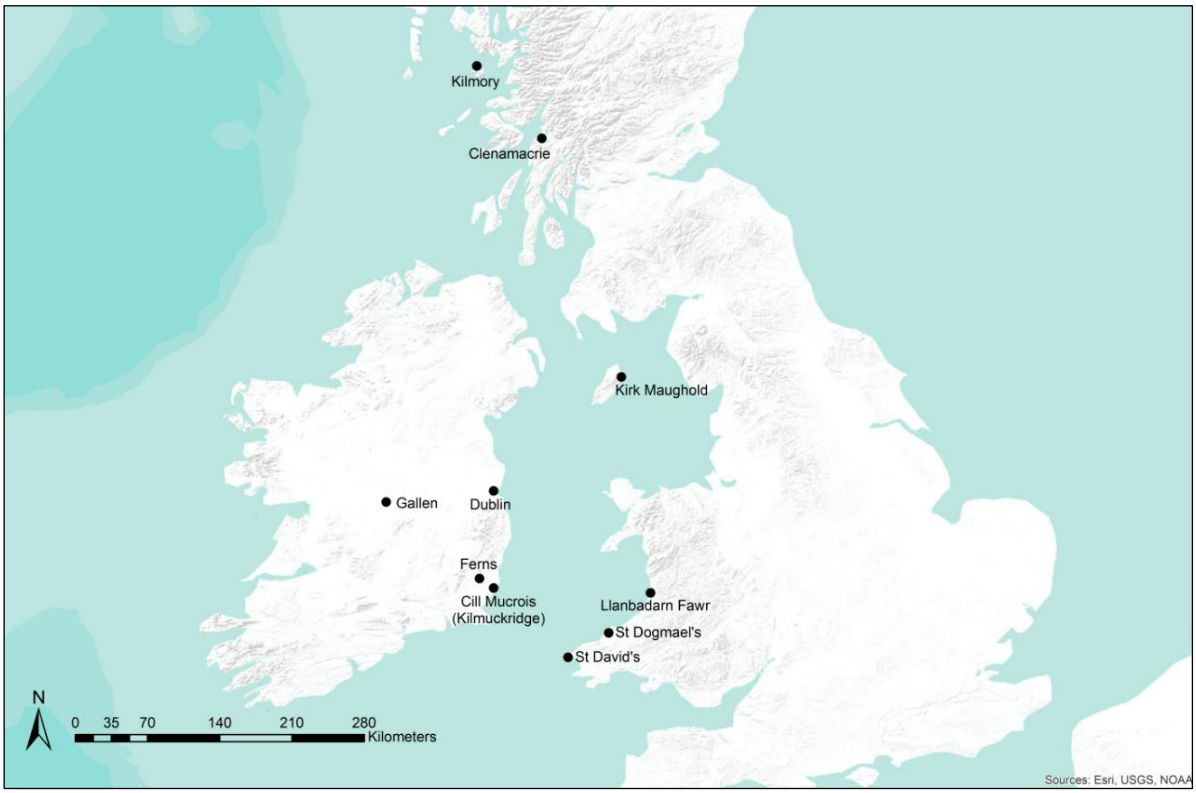


Fig. 7.26: Locations of the Wexford 'marigold' stones and their primary comparanda

To conclude with the three crosses from Cill Mucrois, it is clear from the varied quality of their execution that this site probably did not have the same resources (or perhaps more precisely, level of artistic patronage) to invest in sculpture as Ferns, though Cross 1 is the most elaborately ornamented monument in this group. Considering their limited resources, it would stand to reason that the development of diocesan boundaries, and the reorganisation of ecclesiastical hierarchies in the opening decades of the 12th century (*cf.* Flanagan 2010, 33–6) would have provided a strong impetus for their creation, and the

iconography on these crosses has been combined in a way that has created a unified style that specifically reflects the motivations, functions, and meanings behind their creation. If not to represent, artistically, hagiographic and cultural ties to Gallen, then the crosses at Cill Mucrois may have been produced to visually express its newly-created affiliation with the diocese of Ferns (which, again, could support the suggestion that they may have been modelled after the Ferns cross-slab, rather than the other way around) as well as satisfy the desire, or perhaps necessity, to clearly mark out the extent of their territory. In this capacity, the crosses may have served multiple purposes. Their iconography suggests they may have been perceived as both sanctifying and guarding ecclesiastical space (*cf*. McCarthy 2013, 256–7, 602) from the 'evils' of the outside world, in addition to declaring ownership. While there is no evidence to suggest pilgrimage activity, they may have acted as foci for prayers, perhaps linked to rituals of purification, either of monastic space or of an individual, associated with movement within and around the site (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 331–2; McCarthy 2013, 261). In addition to the more practical function of declaring land ownership and diocesan association, their roadside position would have also been a natural stopping point for travellers to offer up a prayer as they crossed the boundary between the 'sacred' and 'profane'.

While the study of sculpture should not be driven primarily by historical evidence for links, as was sometimes the case in the past (Swift 1995; 2003, 108), striking correlations are sometimes evident, as they are here. The four 'marigold' stones of Co. Wexford, and in particular, the Cill Mucrois crosses, have both stylistic and hagiographic connections to southwest Wales as well as to 'Gallen of the Britons' that very nicely mirror what little historical evidence we have regarding these affiliations. In any case, while a relationship can be presumed to have existed between Ferns, Cill Mucrois, and southwest Wales purely on the basis of geographic proximity, it can also be inferred from their shared hagiographic links. However, the existence of the 'marigold' stones gives us the most solid evidence for that connection.

8

The resting place of the saints – Clonmore, Co. Carlow

8.1 Introduction

The ecclesiastical site of Clonmore, Co. Carlow contains a relatively large collection of early medieval sculpture, and within Leinster the size of its collection is second only to that of Glendalough. The remains of what was likely a composite stone shrine, and possibly the remains of a second, were identified in the graveyard of Clonmore during the course of fieldwork for this project – an important discovery in light of unparalleled textual evidence for a prominent relic cult at Clonmore. Moreover, the prolific references to Clonmore in historical sources, particularly in the 11th and 12th centuries, highlight its prominent socio-political status within early medieval Leinster. Significantly, this is corroborated by the archaeology, and in light of some previous misinterpretations of the data (more below), an in-depth case study of Clonmore was vital. Using a combination of historical sources and archaeological evidence, this chapter provides an alternative view of the materiality of corporeal relic-cults in Ireland.

Clonmore is located in the northeast tip of Co. Carlow, approximately 2.5 km from the border of Co. Wicklow (Fig. 8.1). The site is divided by the local road that runs through it; the main graveyard, which houses the majority of the early medieval remains, is a sub-rectilinear enclosure on the south side (Fig. 8.2). A Church of Ireland, built in 1809, as well as one of the two high crosses, known as 'St Mogue's Cross', stand on the north side. Just a few metres west of St Mogue's Cross is a holy well dedicated to that saint. There are no extant early medieval structures at the site; however in 1839 it was noted that the foundations of an old church had stood on the north side of the site many years prior, near to where the modern church now stands (O'Flanagan 1934, 372–89). It was described as having two battered openings, one under each gable, and Patrick O'Keeffe interpreted this as the remains of an early medieval church (*ibid*). The graveyard at Clonmore is still an active burial ground, and is regularly maintained by the local community, though the most recent graves are now on the northern side of the road. In 1975, the county engineer facilitated a clean-up of the graveyard, and the building of a stone patio in its northwest corner to display 19 carved

stones that had, presumably, been lying loose prior to its construction, though three of these are relatively modern (Harbison 1991, 179).

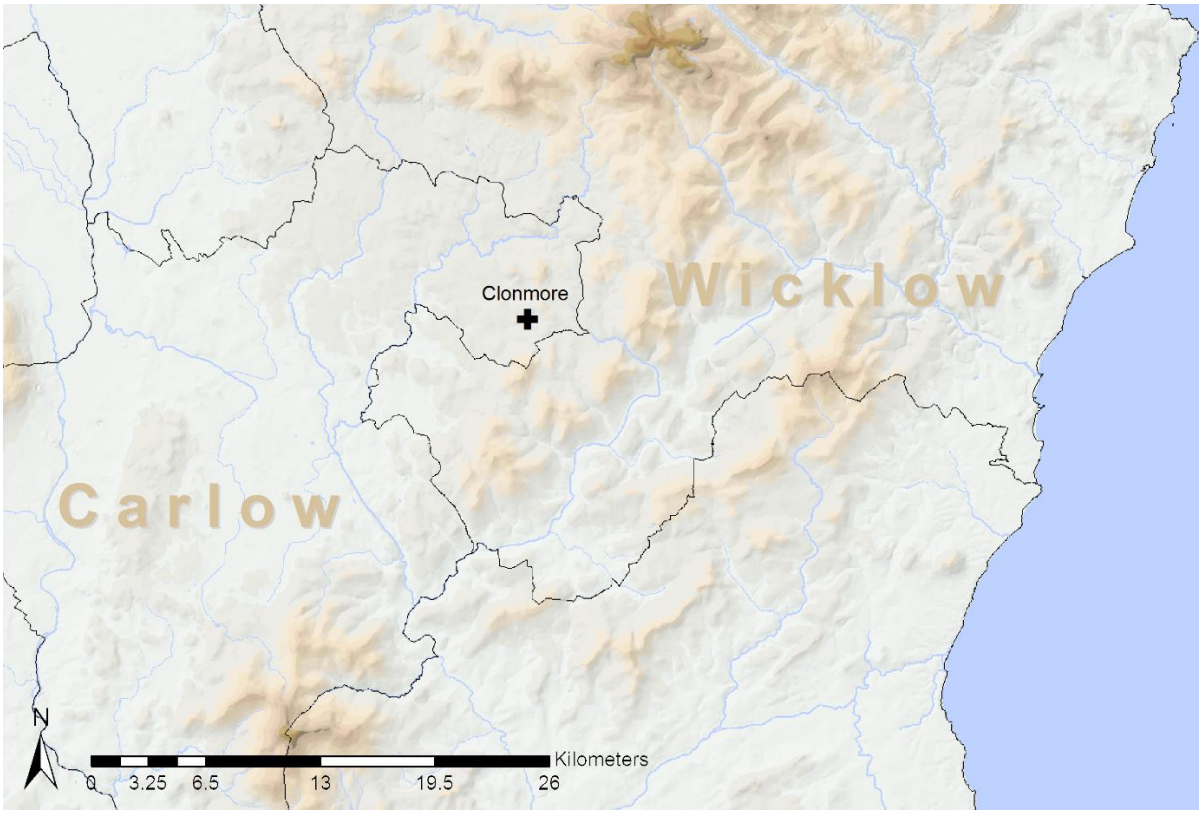


Fig. 8.1: Location of Clonmore



Fig. 8.2: Aerial view of Clonmore, with graveyard and modern church to the north circled

Both documentary sources, and the archaeological evidence, indicate Clonmore was an important ecclesiastical centre within early medieval Leinster; however, the site has not been the subject of much modern scholarly attention apart from Peter Harbison's work, which has, thus far, stood as the principal record of the site (1988; 1991). Histories of the parish were published by M'Call (1862) and Fitzgerald (1912–4; 1915), though they only provided a brief overview of antiquities in the area, and recorded only headstones with what they considered 'interesting' inscriptions, none of which predate the 17th century. The two high crosses were recorded by Henry Crawford, but, strangely, he ignored the cross-slabs altogether (1907; 1913). It was not until 1991, when Peter Harbison published an analysis of Clonmore and its archaeological remains, that a catalogue of this sculpture was finally produced. Prior to this, Harbison had also published a short analysis of one particular cross-slab of 'exotic' design at Clonmore (i.e. CW-29; 1988), and later, the free-standing crosses were included in his three-volume corpus of Irish high crosses (1992a). However, several previously unrecorded carved stones were identified in the course of this study — most importantly, three or four probable shrine posts — and this necessitated a reassessment, of not only Clonmore's archaeological remains, but also its history, many aspects of which have been hitherto obscure.

8.2 Historical background

Clonmore is thought to have been founded by Áed mac Éogan of the Uí Dúnlainge, more commonly known by the hypocoristic name, Maedóc. The date of Maedóc's death is unknown, but there are two annalistic obituaries for another saint, Maedóc of Ferns – 624/5/7 (*AFM; Chron. Scot*.; *AU*; *Ann. Tig*.) and 659/60 (*Chron. Scot.*, *Ann. Tig*.) – and it has been suggested that the latter may actually be for Maedóc of Clonmore (Doherty 2002, 268; Mac Shamhráin 2009c). Unlike his namesake at Ferns, Maedóc of Clonmore was never the subject of a *Life* (or at least none that have survived); however, his prominence among the pantheon of Leinster saints is well-attested in textual sources of the early medieval period. His importance is indicated in the 9th-century *Martyrology of Oengus*, attributed to Oengus *celí dé*, who invokes Maedóc's protection, and praises him as the 'war-like kinsman…save that he had been hallowed'…grandson of 'Dunlang the firm' (Stokes 1905, 106). His protection is again invoked, along with several other prominent saints, including Brigit of Kildare and Comgall of Bangor, by St Moling (†696) in the 11th-century *Bóroma* saga, in a passage detailing his flight from the men of Fínnachta Fledach, after successfully gaining the

remission ‘until doomsday’ of a centuries-old debt of tribute, exacted by the Uí Néill from the Laigin (O’Grady 1892 vol. i, 389). Maedóc himself also makes an appearance earlier in this text, when he visits the Uí Chennselaig king of Leinster, Brandub mac Eochu (†605/8), and presents him with gifts of four magical objects to aid him against Cummascach (†597), son of Áed mac Ainmerech (†598), king of the Uí Néill (*ibid*, 370-1; Stokes 1892, 78–9). Maedóc’s reputation for prophecy and minor miracles is reinforced in an account relating to the origin of Clonmore’s collection of relics in the 12th-century glosses to the *Martyrology of Oengus* (Stokes 1905, 70-1). Additionally, Maedóc of Clonmore makes an appearance in the 12th-century Latin *Life of St Comgall* (†600/2, *AFM*; *AU, Chron. Scot.*) as a young student under St Sinell, one of Ireland’s ‘twelve apostles’ (Plummer 1910 ii, 19; Heist 1965, 83 §5, 101 §19; Ó Riain 2011, 565). After contracting leprosy, he is encouraged by Sinell to visit the elderly Comgall, who heals him (Plummer 1910 ii, 19).

Two other saints are strongly associated with Clonmore, namely, Onchú *mac ind éicis* (‘son of the poet’) and Finán *Lobhar* (‘Leper’). The early 9th-century *Martyrology of Tallaght* describes Onchú as ‘grandson/descendant of the poet who collected the relics of the saints’ (Best and Lawlor 1931, 15). In a separate entry, under 5 October, it heralds 'the arrival of the relics of the saints of Ireland which Mac *ind éicis* (‘Son of the poet’, i.e. Onchú) had collected’ (*ibid*, 77). While the martyrology does not specify where these relics were housed, Niamh Wycherley has pointed out that the term *adventus* was often used to refer to a rite or ceremony ‘associated with the translation of a saint into a new shrine’ (Wycherley 2015, 85). This was considered quite a significant event, and the arrival of relics would have been celebrated by both the religious and lay members of a community (*ibid*). Thus, at the time of the text’s composition, the location of Onchú’s relic collection may have been considered common knowledge, with no need for further clarification. It is a 12-century gloss for the *Martyrology of Oengus* that expands upon these entries, with a story relating how Onchú and his collection of saints’ relics came to be interred at Clonmore (Stokes 1905, 70–1). This origin story anachronistically identifies Onchú as a contemporary of Maedóc, though the date of his death is unknown. Moreover, some have suggested that Onchú may not have actually existed (Butler 1970, 635–7; Harbison 1991, 178), and though the question of whether Onchú was actually a historical figure is irrelevant here, it should be noted that more recent scholarship has cast doubt on the evidence that had been used to support the supposition that he was not (*cf*. MacCotter 2008 252–4, 261).

Regardless, a late 7th-century date for the establishment of a relic collection at Clonmore is well within the realm of possibility. Wycherley has recently demonstrated the

importance of corporeal relics in the early Irish Church and, in particular, their role in establishing the ecclesiastical authority and spiritual legitimacy of particular churches (2015, 37–57). She has also pointed out that, prior to the 8th century, documentary sources stressed the value of corporeal relics, over secondary relics, as the primary vessels for the power of a saint (*ibid*, 38). Moreover, a significant portion of a church's socio-political and spiritual authority was derived from possessing the corporeal relics of saints, usually that of its founder or founders (*ibid*, 42, 46–7). Veneration at the tombs of St Brigit and Bishop Conláed at Kildare, explicitly described by Cogitosus in his *c*. 675 *Vita Sanctae Brigitae*, provides one of the earliest documented examples of the enshrinement of saintly remains in the Irish Church (*ibid*). This was a source of great prestige, as well as revenue for the monastery during the late 7th century (*ibid*); given Uí Dúnlainge involvement in the ecclesiastical affairs of Kildare, and subsequent promotion of its ecclesiastical authority around this time (Gleeson and Ó Carragáin 2016, 94), encouraging the tomb/relic-cult at Kildare would have undoubtedly benefited the Uí Dúnlainge as well. While contemporary evidence is lacking, it is, therefore, plausible – given its success at Kildare – that the Uí Dúnlainge would have also sought to utilise the growing popularity of corporeal relic, and tomb, veneration as a means to assert the spiritual legitimacy and authority of their own recently founded church at Clonmore, particularly as it was located in a territorial 'buffer zone' with the Uí Chennselaig (see below). However, speculation aside, we can at least be reasonably certain from the aforementioned entries in the *Martyrology of Tallaght* that a substantial collection of corporeal saints' relics must have existed at Clonmore by the early 9th century at the latest.

Finán Lobhar, albeit also closely associated with the monasteries of Swords and Inisfallen (Stokes 1905, 98) – though this latter affiliation may have stemmed from confusion with Finán Cam (Ó Carragáin 2003, 134, n.9; Ó Riain 2011, 327–30) – is the third saint supposedly buried at Clonmore. Like Maedóc and Onchú, the date of Finán's death is unknown, though several dates towards the end of the 7th century have been suggested (M'Call 1862, 19). According to the *Acta sanctorum…Hiberniae*, he governed Clonmore from roughly the mid-7th century until his death, approximately 30 years later (Colgan 1645, 276; Comerford 1886, 179), which would raise the possibly that Finán may have been Maedóc's direct successor, though the lateness of this source should be emphasised. According to the 12th-century glosses of the *Martyrology of Oengus*, Finán was placed with Onchú in 'uno sepulcro' at Clonmore, 'by the cross at the shrine (*mbemro*) in the south' (Stokes 1905, 168–9), and according to Colgan's *Acta Ssanctorum…Hiberniae*, Maedóc was

buried in the same sepulchre as well (1645; M'Call 1862, 16). 'Famous' Finán also makes a brief appearance at the end of both the Latin and Irish versions of the *Life of St Moedoc of Ferns* (Plummer 1910 ii, 162; 1922 i, 274–5, 277–8; ii, 266–7, 269–70), which describe his leprosy and its miraculous cure. This is a prevalent theme in many *vitae* (Bray 2001, 273), and while some scholars have remarked that the degree of the miraculous in Irish hagiographies borders on ridiculous, Bray counters that these stories serve to catalogue the measure of a saint's virtue in a manner that would have appealed to the early medieval Irish taste for the fantastic (2003, 146). The proliferation of 9th–12th-century poems, martyrologies, hagiographies, genealogies, and sagas involving Maedóc and his church, or otherwise extolling the virtues of Clonmore, its saints, and its clergy (see above, as well as section 8.4), must have served to increase Clonmore's renown. In this light, it is no wonder that many of the episodes from the *vitae* of Maedóc of Ferns, which also appropriated the *acta* that had been attributed to Maedóc of Clonmore in the *Bóroma*, were 'written as a means of subsuming a rival cult' (Doherty 2002, 269).

From its creation until the diocesan reforms of the 12th century, Clonmore's fortunes appear to be linked with those of its founding dynasty, the Uí Dúnlainge. Their political and ecclesiastical authority in north Leinster was on the rise by the mid-7th century (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 70-2; MacCotter 2008, 176; Gleeson 2014, 738; Gleeson and Ó Carragáin 2016, 77, 79) and by the end of it, they had extended their control over most of modern-day Co. Kildare (*ibid*). This is reflected in both their genealogies, and in the annalistic records, which not only claimed several abbots of Kildare, but also boasted of their familial connection to Maedóc of Clonmore (see below). However, while the Uí Dúnlainge more or less dominated the political and ecclesiastical affairs of Leinster for the next three hundred years (Boazman 2016, 42–3; Wycherley 2015, 49, n.72), this period was not without competition and conflict, particularly with the Uí Máil, Osraige, and Uí Chennselaig (see Chapter 3). Moreover, as stated in Chapter 3, territorial conflicts within the Uí Dúnlainge led to a splintering of the dynasty into three main branches in the 9th century – Uí Dunchadha, Uí Fáeláin, and Uí Muiredaig. Uí Muiredaig territory corresponded roughly with southern Kildare and some of western Wicklow (Fig. 8.3), and it was the ecclesiastical and political aspirations of this branch of the Uí Dúnlainge which was to play a pivotal role in the affairs of Clonmore in the 11th century (more below). Yet, Clonmore is located in what was the ancient local kingdom of the Uí Felmeda, from which the Uí Chennselaig dynasty originated (MacCotter 2008, 131). Prior to their establishment at Ferns, this region may have been the early caput of the Uí Chennselaig, a group that had achieved a measure of power by the late

6th century. Several of its early kings were of Uí Felmeda stock, most notably Brandub mac Eochu (see above; *ibid*; Ó Riain 2011, 431; Gleeson 2014, 735–6). However, their hegemony was short-lived, as this region came to be dominated by the Uí Dúnlainge, through political expansion and intermarriage, from the 7th century onward (MacShamhráin 1996, 70-2; Gleeson 2014, 735–6). Clonmore, no doubt, played a strategic role in establishing Uí Dúnlainge ascendency over the Uí Felmeda, as founding a church on, or near, a territorial boundary was not only a politically expedient way of providing a neutral 'buffer zone' between two kingdoms, but also as a method for asserting authority over a whole region (McCarthy 2013, 187). Perhaps, Clonmore served to mark the south-eastern limit of Uí Dúnlainge hegemony at the time of its founding. As Ó Riain has pointed out, the placement of important ecclesiastical sites in boundary areas was quite common, usually as a means to delineate the furthest extent of a dynasty's territory (1972, 18). As an Uí Dúnlainge church located in a region that had, until very recently, been controlled by a formidable branch of the Uí Chennselaig, it would have been essential for Clonmore to solidify its socio-political position quickly. This may have been aided by the presence of relics, and the development of a relic cult early at Clonmore, perhaps within the first generation or two of its history, as it has already been established that the possession of corporeal saints' relics was often used as proof of a church's spiritual authority and legitimacy (see above; Wycherley 2015, 39). Moreover, for the Uí Dúnlainge, cultivating a connection between Clonmore, in their territorial 'buffer zone' with the Uí Chennselaig, and the most important church in their 'royal heartland', Kildare, would have been an effective means of strengthening both Clonmore's ecclesiastical status, and consolidating their own political power in the region. This suggestion is supported by written evidence from the early medieval period, which indicates a long-standing relationship between the two ecclesiastical sites (below).

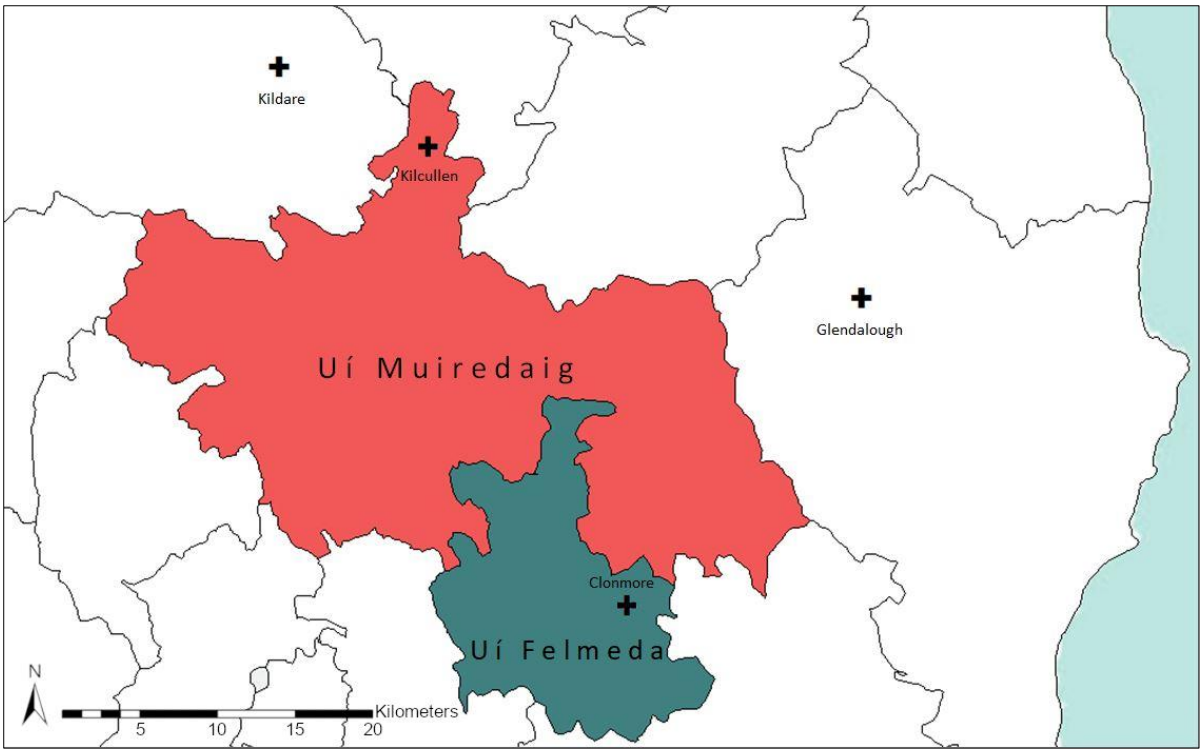


Fig. 8.3: Map of Uí Muiredaig and Uí Felmeda territories, as well as some church sites mentioned

The Uí Dúnlainge were firmly entrenched in the abbacy and bishopric of Kildare in the 7th century (Wycherley 2015, 49), facilitated, at least in part, through a marriage alliance of the Uí Dúnlainge king, Fáelán mac Colmáin (†665), with the Fothairt, who claimed Brigit of Kildare among their lineage (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 72). Maedóc Ua Dúnlaing was reputedly a member of the Clann Bruidge branch, which, though it did not produce any of the Uí Dúnlainge kings (Mac Shamhráin 2009c), was influential enough by the 7th century to have also produced an abbot of Kildare, Brandub mac Fíachrach (Ó Riain 1985, 272.2; Bhreathnach 2001, 265). Moreover, Brandub and Maedóc were reputedly second cousins (Mac Shamhráin 2009c), perhaps also contemporaries, and, if so, this would suggest Clann Bruidge may have been in a position of some prominence and strength within the ecclesiastical sphere within Leinster during the 7th century.

It was also around this time that St Broccán Clóen (†650), abbot of Ros Tuirc in Ossory (Stokes 194, 208), supposedly composed his *Ní car Brigit búadach bíth* ('a hymn in praise of St Brigit'). According to its preface, the hymn was reputedly written at the request of his mentor, Ultán of Ardbreccan, and completed at one of two places – Slieve Bloom (presumably at his own monastery of Ros Tuirc) or Cluain Mór Maedóc (Stokes and Strachan 1901, 327). However, the preface was written later by an anonymous author, and, at present, cannot be ascribed a date earlier than the two late 11th-/early 12th-century manuscripts in

which it appears (*CODECS*). Yet, that Clonmore was even offered as a place of origin for this 7th-century composition establishes that the monastery was an important ecclesiastical foundation, as well as a place of scholarship and learning, fairly early in its history (if not within the first generation of its establishment, as the preface would suggest). While it would be significant if it could be confirmed that *Ní car Brigit* was written at Clonmore, or that Broccán Clóen had indeed been in residence at the monastery (which would have been during the lifetime of Maedóc), its preface is nevertheless noteworthy in that it reinforces the suggestion of a close affiliation between Clonmore and Kildare. Moreover, regardless of whether or not the *Ní car Brigit* was indeed produced at Clonmore, the preface suggests that it *could have been*, raising the possibility that perhaps a scriptorium might have existed at Clonmore at some point in its history. According to a prophetic poem in the 11th-century *Bóroma* saga, there was supposedly a school at Clonmore by the late 6th or early 7th century (Stokes 1892, 78–9). However, this reference is anachronistic, so it cannot be taken as solid evidence that a school existed at Clonmore so early, and, indeed, the monastery may not have yet been founded at the time it is claimed to have had a school in the *Bóroma* (see above). Nevertheless, this line in the poem indicates that a school at Clonmore must have existed prior to (if not contemporary with) the *Bóroma's* composition. However, in the absence of further evidence, these latter suggestions are purely speculative. The affiliation between Clonmore and Kildare continues in later manuscripts of the early medieval period, e.g. in the aforementioned section of the *Bóroma* saga (*ibid*), as well as another prophetic poem from the 14th-century *Book of Uí Mhaine*, which may be 11th- or 12th-century in origin (Knott 1958, §6).

The annals indicate that Clonmore was a prominent ecclesiastical centre throughout most of the early medieval period. Indeed, but for two references to overlapping events at *Cluain Mór Arda* in the years 828 and 826 (*AU*/*AFM*) and an obituary for Flaithbertach mac Muirechertach, abbot of *Cluain Mór* (*AFM* 919; *AU* 921), which will be discussed below, all other annalistic references to a *Cluain Mór* are specifically identified as *Cluain Mór Maedóc* (*AFM*; *AU*; *Chron. Scot*.). The monastery is referenced 15 times in the annals, from the 8th–11th centuries. Seven obituaries are recorded in connection with *Cluain Mór Maedóc* (771, 877, 886, 918, 920, 972, 1052 *AFM*), and the monastery was cited as burned or plundered five times (774, 779, 834/5, 835/6, 1040 *AFM*; *AU*; *Chron. Scot*.). A more detailed obituary, accompanied by a few lines of verse, is provided for Flaithbertach mac Muirechertach, abbot of *Cluain Mór* (*AFM* 919; *AU* 921). The annals do not specify with which Clonmore he was associated, *Cluain Mór Maedóc* or *Cluain Mór Arda* (Co. Louth), so this entry cannot be

conclusively attributed to *Cluain Mór Maedóc*. However, Flaithbertach is styled as 'the sacred ornament', a man of poetic prowess, wealthy and respected among scholars (U921.10 *AU*; M919.10 AFM), parted from the 'honours of Cluain-mor' (*ibid*). While there are five other ecclesiastical sites called *Cluain Mór* that existed sometime during the early medieval period (*Monasticon Hibernicum* 2019), only the aforementioned two churches are named in the annals, and, considering the elaborate nature of Flaithbertach's obit, it is unlikely that he held the abbacy of one of the more relatively obscure Clonmore sites scattered across Ireland. Perhaps the author of the poem felt no further clarification was needed, as we have already established from documentary sources that *Cluain Mór Maedóc* would have undoubtedly been renowned as a place of learning, and probably a very wealthy monastery as well, with pilgrimage revenue coming from its collection of saints' relics (see above; also section 8.4).

Significantly, Mac Shamhráin (1996) has suggested that the appointment of Artúr mac Muiredaig to the abbacy of Clonmore in the early 11th century may have been part of the Uí Muiredaig dynasty's larger political and ecclesiastical ambitions. The Uí Muiredaig, descended from Muiredach mac Murchad (†760), had risen to dominance within the Uí Dúnlainge in the late 8th century (MacCotter 2008, 178–9), and after a period of uncertain succession, once again began making increasingly successful claims to the over-kingship of Leinster from the latter part of the 10th century (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 81–2). Artúr (†1052), a member of the ruling Uí Muiredaig dynasty, and styled 'the glory of Leinster' (M1052.1 *AFM*), had been appointed to the abbacy of Clonmore sometime during the first half of the 11th century. However, the Uí Muiredaig had even greater ambitions to gain control of Glendalough, as part of their designs to secure the over-kingship of Leinster (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 93, 145–6). This led the Uí Muiredaig king, Domnall mac Dúnlainge, to directly (and violently) interfere in its abbatial succession in 1031 (*ibid*). The Uí Muiredaig nominee who succeeded to the abbacy of Glendalough, Cináed mac Muiredach (†1068), may have been the brother of Artúr of Clonmore (*ibid*, 146), and from their annalistic obituaries, it seems both men retained their ecclesiastical posts long after their lineage lost the kingship of Leinster in 1042. The last recorded attack on Clonmore, in 1040 (M1040.10 *AFM*), was directly related to the changing political fortunes of the Uí Muiredaig. It was carried out by Diarmait mac Máel-na-mBó, king of the Ferns branch of the Uí Chennselaig, and was not an isolated incident – Diarmait sacked three other Uí Muiredaig churches that same year in what were likely calculated strikes, conducted with the intention of weakening Uí Muiredaig power in northern Leinster, and consolidating his own within the province (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 94, 96).

Contrary to Harbison's claim that this event precipitated a 'total eclipse' of the monastery, and that it was 'never heard from again' (1991, 179), Clonmore seems to have recovered quickly from Diarmait's attack, as well as the change in its political fortunes. This is attested by the wealth of 11th- and 12th-century documentary references to the monastery's large collection of corporeal relics, and the miraculous deeds of its saints, in the glosses to the *Martyrology of Oengus*, the *Book of Leinster*, and various *Lives* (see above), as well as by the prolificacy of archaeological remains which date from the 11th and 12th centuries (Chapter 4; also, see section 8.3). Nevertheless, direct Uí Muiredaig control over Clonmore in the first half of the 11th century may – after their loss of power – have at least partially facilitated an undermining of its importance as a monastic centre within Leinster, ultimately leading to its later decline. In their ambitions to control Glendalough, which continued after they lost the struggle for the kingship of Leinster (Mac Shamhráin 1996, 150), it may well have been the Uí Muiredaig who were responsible for the incorporation of Clonmore, and other ecclesiastical centres under their authority, into the *paruchia* of Glendalough (*ibid*, 148), for there are some hagiographical grounds to indicate Glendalough may have acquired these properties in the 11th century (*ibid*, 211). Regardless, by the diocesan reforms of the 12th century, Clonmore is indeed listed among Glendalough's properties (Mac Shamhráin 2009c). Now subjugated to Glendalough, Clonmore also increasingly faced competition from the rival cult of Maedóc of Ferns, whose rise to prominence coincided with that of its Uí Chennselaig kings of the mid-11th to 12th centuries (Doherty 2002). A significant portion of the *Lives* of Maedóc of Ferns was taken up with usurping much of the 'glory' attributed to Clonmore and its founding saint, as well as promoting a noticeably similar collection of saints' relics at Ferns (Plummer 1922 vol. I, 266; vol. 2, 258; Ó Floinn 1997, 148). The hagiographers at Ferns must have been aggressive (and increasingly successful) in their attempts to overshadow Maedóc Ua Dúnlaing and Clonmore, so much so that the compiler of the glosses in the *Martyrology of Oengus* felt it necessary to specify that Onchú and his large collection of saints' relics 'went to Cluain Mór Maedóc – i.e Maedóc Ua Dúnlaing of Leinster, and not Maedóc of Ferns' (Stokes 1905, 70–1). Though the evidence suggests that Clonmore continued to be an important centre of pilgrimage right up to the end of the early medieval period (see below), there is no information as to the fate of its relics after the 12th century, and Clonmore was relegated to a parish church by the time the Anglo-Normans arrived. Taxation lists from the 14th and 16th centuries show that it continued on as a parish church under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Leighlin throughout the later medieval period (O'Neill 2008, 122; Fig. 5.3), and it is again documented in the regal visitation records of

1615 (*ibid*, Table 1). The current church of Clonmore was built in 1809 (*ibid*, 133), and is still in use; so it seems likely that the site continuously functioned as an ecclesiastical centre, in some form or other, from its foundation until the present day.

8.3 The sculpture

Clonmore has produced a wide array of early medieval sculpture, mostly cross-slabs, spanning the majority of the early medieval period. The assemblage, apart from one cross-slab (CW-2) which is schist, is carved from granite. Altogether, there are 27 cross-carved stones (four of which were discovered during the course of this present study), three crosses (two of which are considered high crosses), an ogham stone (previously recorded by *Ogham in 3D*), a lintel, three architectural fragments, two bullauns and three, possibly four, shrine components. The two bullauns associated with the site are nearby, one of which is attached to the modern wall of St Mogue's Well, and is thought to have curative powers. The other is a large, triple-basined stone immediately on the south side of the road, on the western bank of a small stream between the south side of the graveyard and the castle. Additionally a possible font, presumably overgrown now as it was positioned close to the boundary wall, was noted on the north side of the site by Fitzgerald (1912/14, 138).

8.3.1 Ogham stone

The earliest carved stone at Clonmore is most likely the ogham stone that stands less than two metres from the South Cross in the main graveyard. The existence of a second ogham stone, presumably now lost, was recalled on the site as late as the 1940s (Harbison 1991, 185). Most of the inscription disappeared long ago; the surviving scores may read RENI, but even that much is now illegible (Macalister 1945, 18; 'CIIC 15. Clonmore, Co. Carlow' 2018). Given the site's probable 7th-century foundation, it seems unlikely (though not impossible) that the ogham stone was originally connected with Clonmore (see Chapter 4). The ogham stone might have instead marked a burial pre-dating the church, raising the possibility that Clonmore was established at, or near, an existing burial ground. Significantly, the only other evidence for any prior settlement activity within 2 km in any direction of Clonmore is ecclesiastical (Fig. 8.4), and significantly, McCarthy has noted an 'exclusion zone' around important monasteries, in which there is a lack of other settlements in the immediate vicinity (MacCarthy 2013). There is a possible 6th-century church, Cell Cróine, *c*. 1.9 km south of

Clonmore, though very little information exists about this site, or its associated saint (McDonald, E. 1981, 13; Farrelly 2011e; Ó Riain 2011, 231–2).

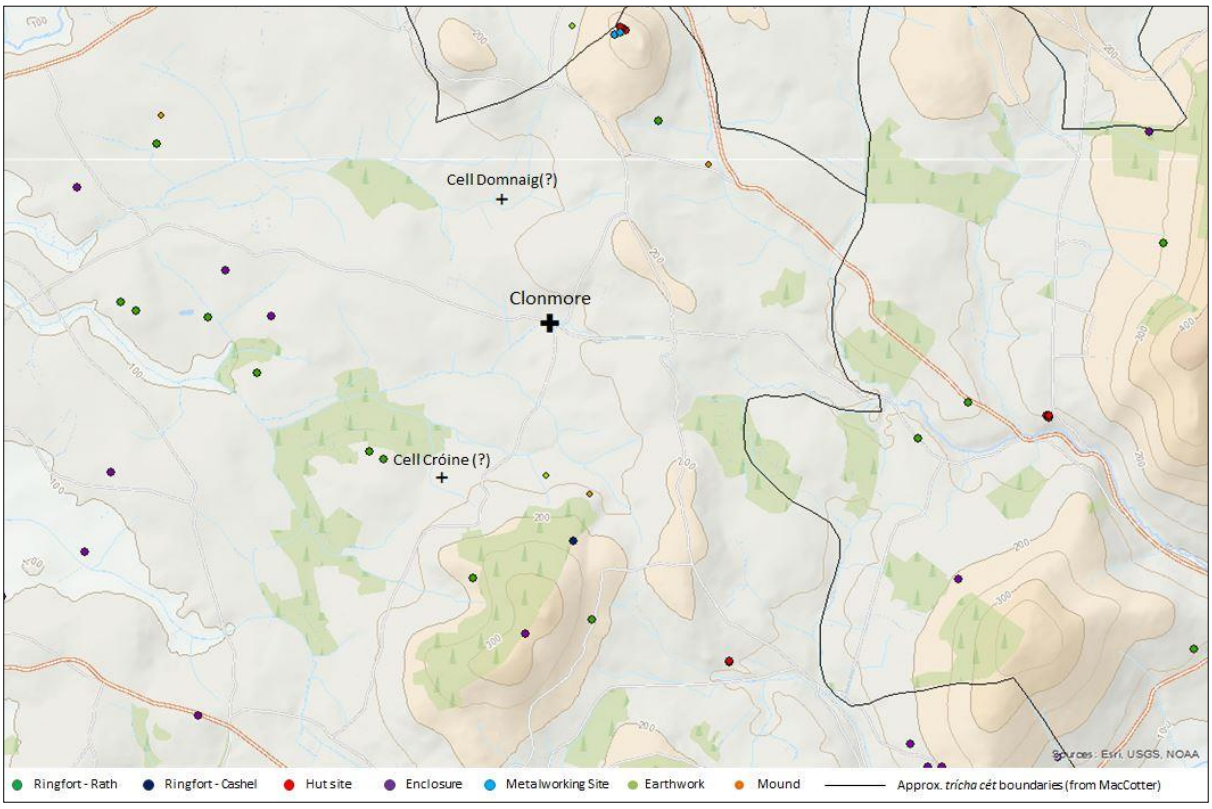


Fig. 8.4: Map of the landscape surrounding Clonmore, showing trícha cét boundaries

8.3.2 Architectural fragments

One of the architectural fragments in the graveyard is of later medieval date (see *dubia* catalogue entry, CW-40), and currently represents the only evidence for post-early medieval building activity on the site, prior to the erection of the modern church (Harbison 1991, 189). The only architectural fragments that may potentially be from an early medieval stone church are a small slab of hollowed granite, locally known as 'the Chalice Stone' (*ibid*, 179, fig. 2), and a roll-moulded lintel (Figs. 8.5 and 8.6). A local tradition relates how the 'Chalice Stone' would mysteriously appear every morning in the centre of new road, as it was being constructed (McDonald 1978/9). The stone's neatly rounded depression may have originally held the upright wooden hinge of a door (Harbison 1991, 186). The lintel could be a unique pre-Romanesque example; however, pre-Romanesque lintels were usually as thick as the church wall (Ó Carragáin 2010, 89), which would not be the case with this one. If the lintel is indeed from an early medieval structure, it is likely to be of late 11th- or 12th-century date. Most pre-Romanesque lintels lacked decorative embellishment – roll-moulding of the type found on this stone was rare on European architectural sculpture before the latter half of the

11th century, and there are no clear parallels for it in Ireland before the 12th century (*ibid*, 92). The lintel might have rested on its edge so that the entirety of the moulding was visible, which is paralleled in 12-century lintels from Cardonagh, Raphoe and Clonca in Co. Donegal, and Maghera, Co. Derry (Figs. 8.7–9), though these examples are carved with figure sculpture (Harbison 1995, 271–5; *CRSBI*). Instead, perhaps this lintel might have originally been painted, as the moulding frames an area which is devoid of any decoration. Alternatively, though much less likely, the lintel may have lain flat, with its decorated surface facing down over the doorway. This orientation, which included a tympanum, can be paralleled on the south doorway at Ballysadare, Co. Sligo (*CRSBI*). However, the tympanum does not appear to be original, and the doorway may have been rebuilt in the later medieval period (*ibid*). It is more likely that the Ballysadare lintel (Fig. 8.10) was reoriented at this time, and, originally, may have rested on its edge as well.



Fig. 8.5: 'The Chapel Stone'



Fig. 8.6: Stone lintel with roll moulding



Fig. 8.7: Left to right: Romanesque lintels at Cardonagh, Co. Donegal and Maghera, Co. Derry



Fig. 8.8: Lintel fragments from Raphoe, Co. Donegal



Fig. 8.9: Lintel from Clonca, Co. Donegal



Fig. 8.10: Thin, flat lintel with tympanum at Ballysadare, Co. Sligo (photo: CRSBI)

8.3.3 Free-standing crosses

The three crosses at Clonmore are of the solid-wheeled variety, typical of free-standing crosses in the southeast. Aside from one exception at Old Leighlin, they are the only type of ringed cross found in Cos. Wicklow, Wexford, and Carlow (Kelly 1986, 66), though solid-ringed crosses are also found elsewhere (*ibid*). The Clonmore crosses are, for the most part, undecorated but for a cross-in-circle carved in relief on both sides of the South Cross, and what is presumably the stem of a Latin cross in relief on the east face of the small cross (CW-12). The head of the South Cross is considerably larger than that of the North Cross, also

known as ‘St Mogue’s Cross’, and was broken off some time in antiquity (Fig. 8.11). The cross head is now set up on a small stone patio in the northwest corner of the graveyard, but the base and stem of the cross are still presumably *in situ*, marking the resting place of Sts Onchú and Finán, according to the 12th-century glosses of the *Martyrology of Oengus* (Stokes 1905, 71, 169). M’Call’s translation of Colgan’s *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae* states that Maedóc is also interred underneath the South Cross (1645; 1862, 15); however, the location of his grave is not specified in the earlier texts. It may be worth noting that some of closest parallels for the two high crosses, particularly the North Cross, are the three high crosses at Ferns, arguably Clonmore’s biggest ecclesiastical rival, as well as three at Glendalough (Fig. 8.12), to which Clonmore had become subjugated by the 11th or 12th century (Leask 1974, fig. 20.3; also, see above). They are also similar to a cross from Burgage More, Co. Kildare (Kelly 1986, pl. 5b). Kelly suggests that the chronology of solid-ringed crosses developed contemporaneously with perforated-ringed crosses in other parts of the country, and has suggested a late 9th–10th-century date range for similar crosses in the region (*ibid*, 66). The head of the small cross, CW-12, has been broken off and lost, but from the relief carving, and what is left of its ring, we can infer that it was meant to be viewed from the eastern face, as its ring-disc is only recessed on this side (Fig. 8.13). When whole, CW-12 might have looked similar to three solid-disked crosses at Glendalough (Leask 1974, figs. 19g, 22.11 and 22.12). Harbison speculated that a large, well-dressed slab with a small rectangular perforation (CW-3), located in the southeast of the graveyard, could have been its base (1991, fig. 2.2; 192), but the slab is far too large in proportion to the cross to make that likely. Furthermore, Kelly points out that many solid-ringed crosses lacked a base altogether (1986, 59), and as this cross is relatively small and thin, a base may not have been necessary. The cross could have erected for a variety of purposes; it could have been used to commemorate an event, serve as a focus for prayer and devotions, or as a termon cross (Chapter 5).



Fig. 8.11: North Cross; Stem and head of South Cross

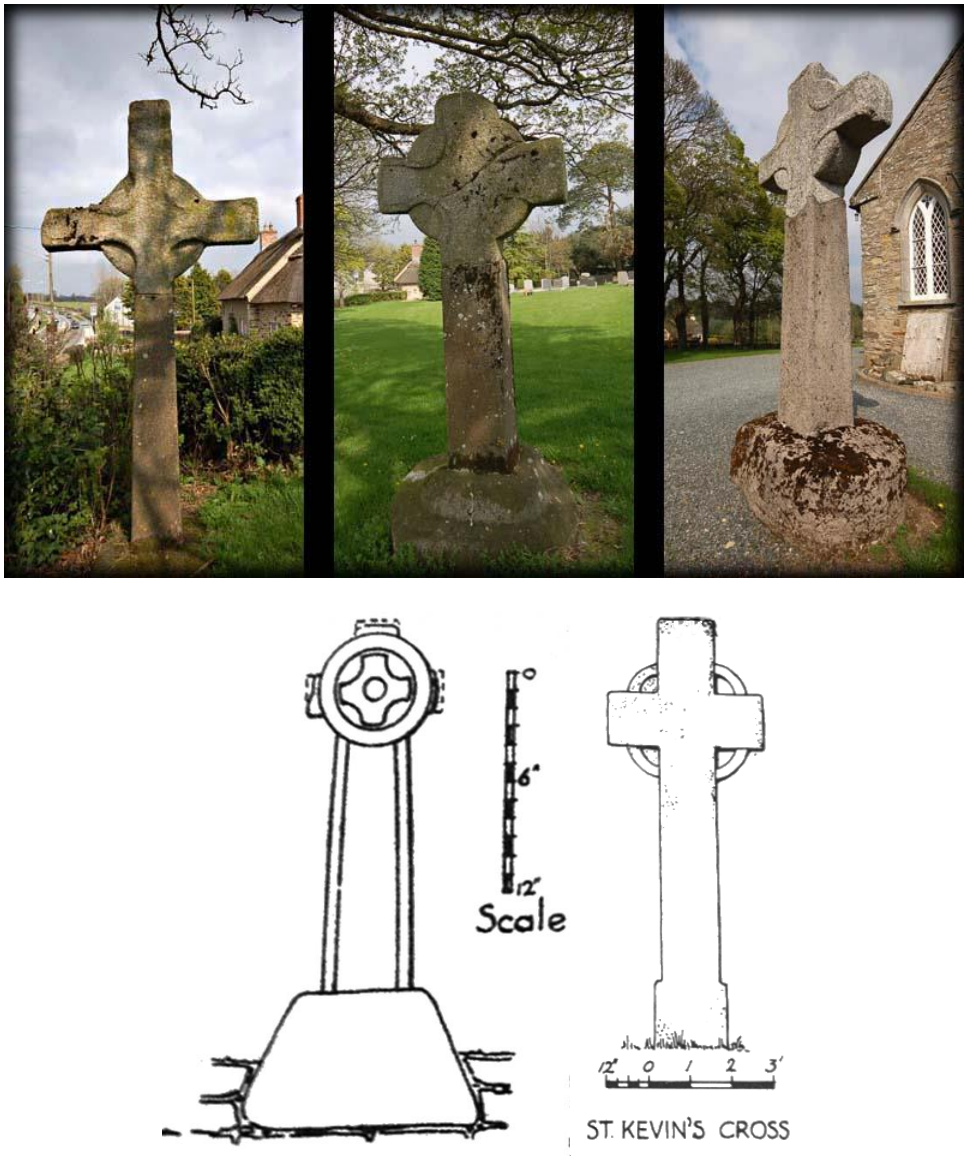


Fig. 8.12: Crosses from Ferns (above), and Glendalough – Cross at Refeert Church, and St Kevin's Cross (after Leask 1974)

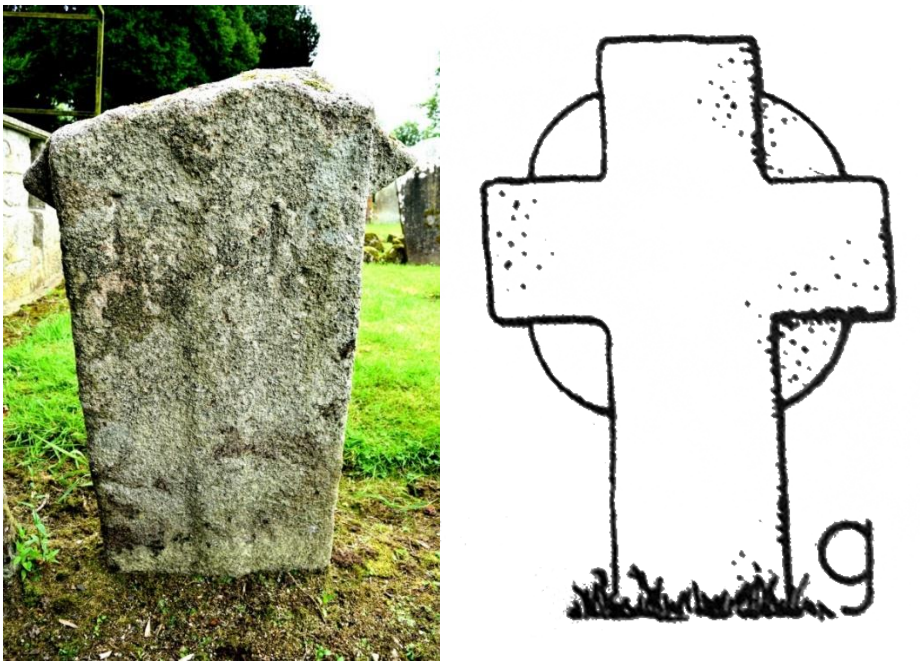


Fig. 8.13: Small cross CW-12; graveyard cross, Glendalough (after Leask 1974)

8.3.4 Cross-slabs and cross-carved stones

Almost all of the early medieval sculpture at Clonmore is cross-carved stones that likely functioned as grave markers, the majority of which would probably have lain recumbent. Most are decorated on one face with a simple Latin or equal-armed cross, with the opposite face left unshaped. However one slab, CW-2, has a cross carved in relief on both sides, so it would have stood upright, and perhaps served a similar function to the small free-standing cross, CW-12 (see Chapter 5). Five of the stones (CW-4, CW-5, CW-7, CW-15, CW-24) are small in size and unshaped, carved with simple incised or outline crosses, and may variously date to between the 7th and 9th centuries (Chapter 4). Six slabs are carved with ringed crosses, two of which, CW-26 and CW-29, will be discussed separately below. CW-13 and CW-27 feature simple ringed crosses in false relief, carved onto un- or minimally shaped slabs; the cross on CW-27 is well-executed and still clearly visible, but CW-13 is so heavily weathered, it is unsurprising that it was hitherto undiscovered (see Chapter 2, Fig. 2.5). The crosses on CW-14 and CW-25 (Fig. 8.14) are particularly well-executed, and the sides of the slabs appear to have been shaped, suggesting they are later in date, probably 10–12th-century (Chapter 4).

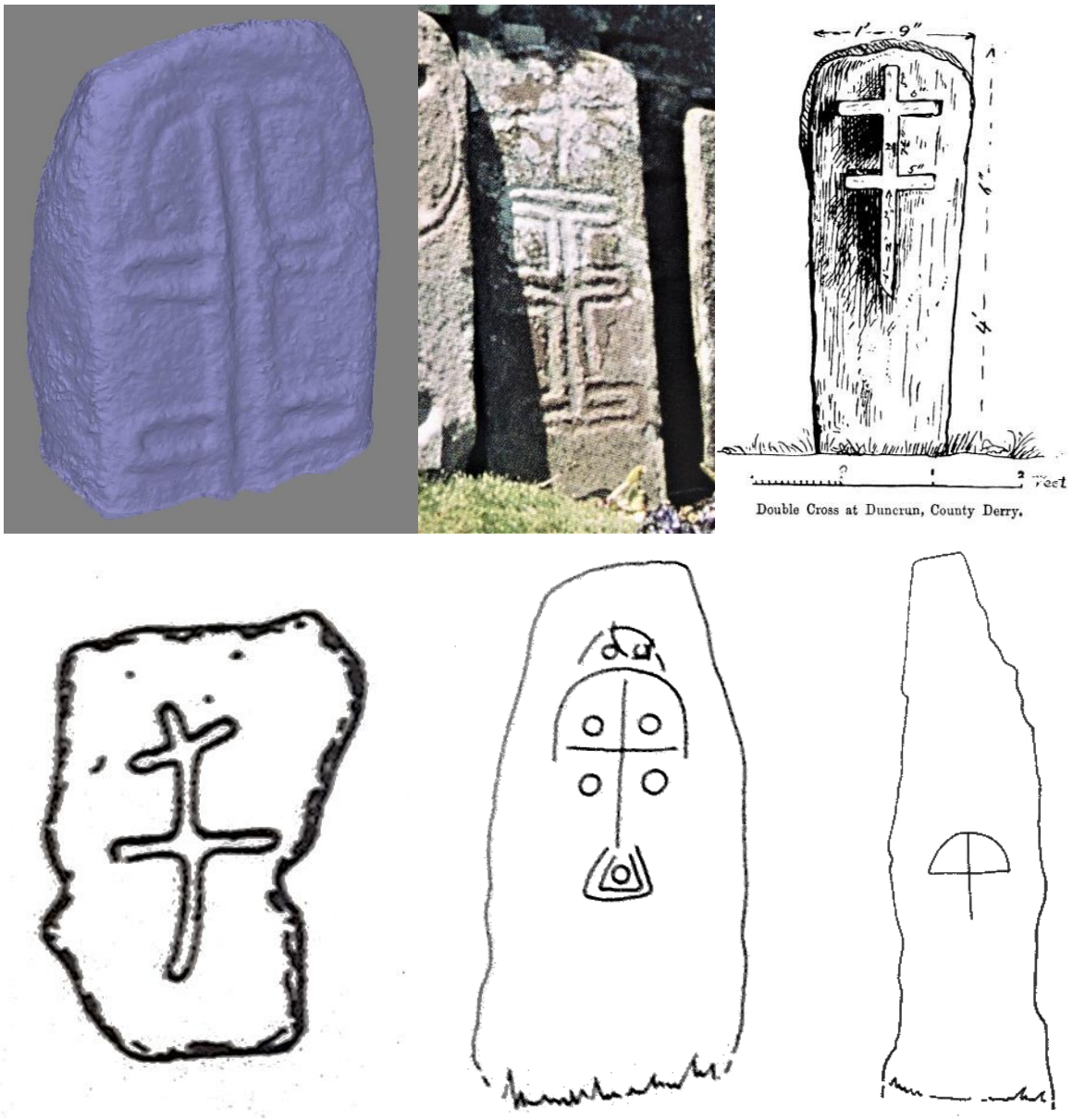


Fig. 8.14: CW-14 and CW-25

The remaining twelve cross-slabs (CW-6, CW-8, CW-9, CW-11, CW-16, CW-18, CW-20–23, CW-28, and CW-31), which represent almost half of the collection, are rectangular and well-shaped, carved with plain or hollow-armed outline crosses in relief that span most of the slab's surface. They are similar in style to many of the large, recumbent slabs of Iniscealtra, that are mostly dated to the 11th and 12th centuries (Chapter 4). The presence of large clusters of stylistically similar cross-slabs at ecclesiastical sites is significant, and has been linked to periods of increased sculpture production at other sites such as St Berrihert's Kyle, Toureen Peakaun, Iniscealtra, and Clonmacnoise (Ó Floinn 1995, 258), and such a phenomenon can reasonably be suggested to have occurred at Clonmore as well (more below).

Two cross-slabs in particular, CW-10 and CW-29, stand out within this collection, and warrant separate discussions. CW-10 features a double-armed cross carved in relief; the top of the stem and the ends of the arms are composed of parallel ribs that round out into U-shaped terminals, and an arc in false relief curves behind the stem from one of the cross arms to the other, though it does not make a complete ring. This cross is unusual, especially its arc, for which I have yet to find close Irish parallels (Fig. 8.15). There are two 7th–9th-century cross-incised stones from southwest Wales that feature an arc, rather than a full ring (Edwards 2007a), and presumably the symbolism is much the same (Chapter 4, section 4.3.1.3). However, the overall design is most closely reminiscent of a stone from Teach Molaise, at Inishmurray (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, Fig. 25; Pl. 94) that is carved with a 'hammerhead' cross in false relief (*ibid*, No. 001.63). To a lesser extent, this stone can also be compared to another slab at Inishmurray, an upright stone with the arms and stem each comprised of three incised parallel ribs, creating a Latin cross attached to a horizontal

base (*ibid*, Fig. 23; No. 001.49). A large slab carved with plain double-armed cross in relief has been found at Duncrun, Co. Derry (Buick 1903), and another, albeit small and plainly incised, at Glendalough, (Leask 1974, fig. 22.15). Harbison points out that double-armed crosses were associated with relics of the True Cross in the later medieval period, which could suggest that this slab might have likewise been associated with the cult of relics at Clonmore (1991, 194).



Fig, 8.15: Clockwise from top left – CW-10; Teach Molaise cross-slab (after O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008); Duncrun double cross (after Buick 1903); incised stones from from Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire, Wales (right and centre), and from Glendalough (after Edwards 2007a; Leask 1974)

One of the largest cross-slabs, CW-29, is described by Harbison as 'exotic', as it appears to be stylistically unique in Ireland (1988, 60). It features a ringed cross carved in relief, and from its stem protrudes three sets of floriated vines; the top set of tendrils curl

downward, and the other two curl upward (Fig. 8.16). Plant-scroll motifs such as this seem to have developed first in manuscripts, and to some extent metalwork, before being transcribed into stone. Harbison cites a close parallel for the shape of the tendrils on the cross-stem incised onto a Carolingian bronze mount, found in Sweden (*ibid*, pl. 3). He also notes similar leaf-scroll decorations on folio 124v of the Barberini Gospels, and folio 188v of the Book of Kells (*ibid*, pls. 4 and 5). Its closest parallels in stone, however, are Anglo-Saxon, and Rosemary Cramp has dated similar acanthus-type vine ornament to the 10th century (2006, 48). However, Harbison has suggested a 9th-century date for CW-29, based on the above metalwork and manuscript parallels (1988, 61). However, Cramp's evidence, as well as its large size and minimal shaping, would suggest CW-29 may be later, and perhaps a 9th–11th century date should be suggested. A very large slab fragment, CW-26, is carved with a ringed cross and curved protrusions, just visible above ground level on the stem, that look to be in imitation of the vines on CW-29, and may also be of similar date.



Fig. 8.16: CW-29 and comparanda (after Harbison, 1991)

8.3.5 Possible shrine components

Three undecorated granite stones, carved with deep U-shaped grooves, were discovered in the graveyard at Clonmore during the course of the present study, and may represent the remains

of a composite shrine. Charles Thomas has outlined four main configurations of this monument type (Fig. 8.17) – grooved, single-corner, double-corner, and corner-block shrines (Thomas 1971, 1998), though only the latter three types are of concern here. A further distinction between corner-post and corner-block shrines is made, in that corner-posts are minimally or only roughly dressed, and are square (or somewhat square) in section, whereas corner-blocks are usually well-dressed and rectangular, and often ornamented (Thomas 1998, 94). Composite stone shrines are constructed of at least four posts (though more can be used), into which the 'tongues' of panels are slotted into the corresponding grooves of the posts. This forms a container into which translated corporeal relics, and on occasion secondary relics, are placed for the purpose of veneration (*ibid*, 84–6). Though there are not many examples, corner-post shrines seem to be more prevalent in the west of Ireland, as well as at sites in Britain with strong Irish influence (e.g. Iona), and many have dated to around the 8th century (*ibid*, 94–5; Ó Carragáin 2003, 143-4; Sheehan 2015, 132-3). By contrast, corner-block shrines have a higher distribution in north Britain, and stylistically may be dated to the mid-8th to 9th century (*ibid*). However, the date range for composite stone shrines could, perhaps, be extended to include the late 7th-century, on the basis of contemporary documentary evidence for both enshrinement – e.g. the works of Cogitosus (see above, section 8.2) and Bede (below) – and chancel screens in Ireland and Britain (Thomas 1971, 161), as well as archaeological and art historical evidence from an early church site at Caherlehillan, Co. Kerry, which features a simple corner-post shrine, and flourished in the 6th and 7th centuries, before ceasing to function as a formal ecclesiastical entity in the 8th century (Sheehan 2015, 133).

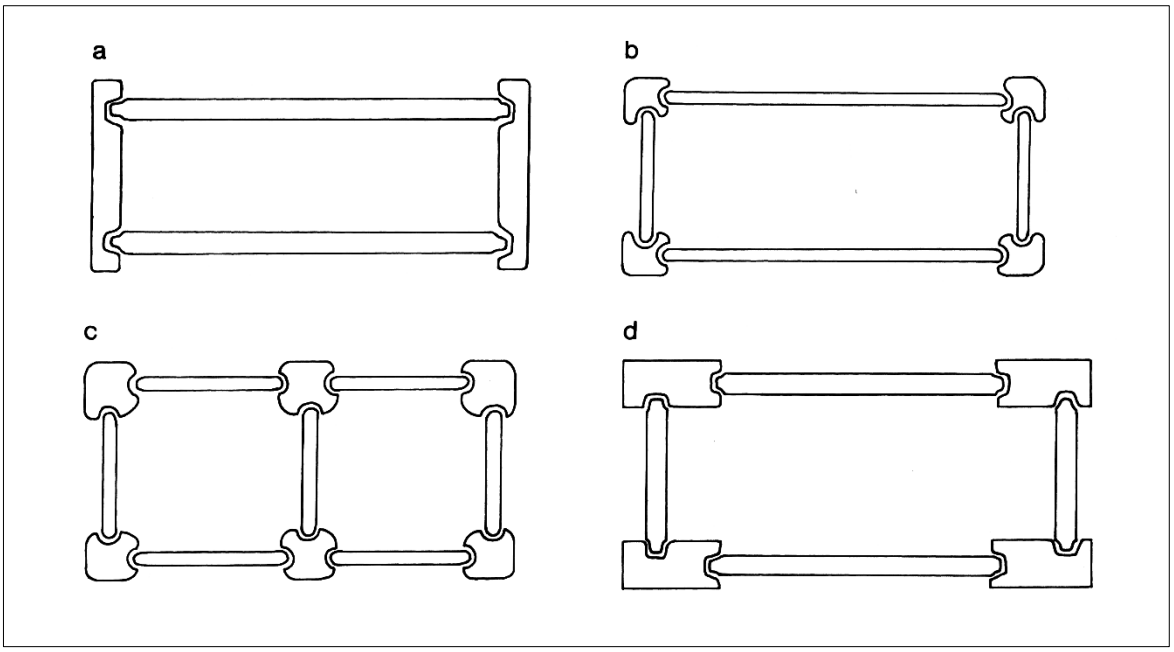


Fig. 8.17: Various arrangements of composite stone shrines, or tombs (after Thomas 1998)

One pillar-like stone (CW-19) on the northern edge of the graveyard, just south of the patio, stands isolated (Fig. 8.18). While it is tempting to suggest its separation from the main body of slabs indicates that it has remained *in situ*, this is far from certain and, on balance, unlikely (see below). This stone, hereafter Post 1, is arguably a 'classic' corner-post, which features either one slot, or two slots on adjacent faces, into which side panels are inserted, though the corner posts from a composite shrine at Caherlehillan, Co. Kerry has no slots at all (Sheehan 2015). Post 1 has at least one slot which is clear and well-defined; parallels for single-slot corner posts are found at Church Island (Valentia Harbour), Kilnaruane, Co. Cork, and Iona (Fig. 8.19; O'Kelly 1957–9, pl. XIVb; Herity 1993, fig. 23.5; Fisher 2001, 59). Additionally, there is an indentation on the adjacent side of Post 1 that could possibly be a very shallow second slot, which is similar to two-slot arrangement on posts like the ones at Kildreenagh, Co. Kerry, Kiltartan, Co. Galway, another set of posts from Iona, and the majority of composite shrines from north Britain (Thomas 1971, 151–8; Ó Carragáin 2003, 143 n. 25). However, photogrammetry casts doubt on this suggestion, and moreover, this configuration of slots would have been problematic in light of the shape of the post. In any case, panels did not necessarily have to fit tightly into the post slots, as they were held in place both by the depth the posts anchored into the ground, and the weight of the lid (Thomas 1998, 90). Thus, a corner post need not have two slots of uniform depth, or indeed, two slots at all. Another feature of particular interest is a recess on what must have been its inner face. While purely speculative, an argument could be made that this may have been a shelf, or lip,

upon which the lid was intended to rest. This would help support the weight of the lid, and lessen the load carried by the much thinner side panels. This particular feature has not yet been noted on other shrine-posts, but would not be incongruent with some current models, in which the protrusion of the corner elements above the lid is accommodated (Fig. 8.20; *ibid*, 84). While a small recess has been illustrated on the posts of the Kilnaruane shrine, it would not have functioned in the manner suggested here, and so is not considered a parallel for the 'shelf' on Post 1; however, the evidence for such a feature on Post 1 is not, at present, very strong.

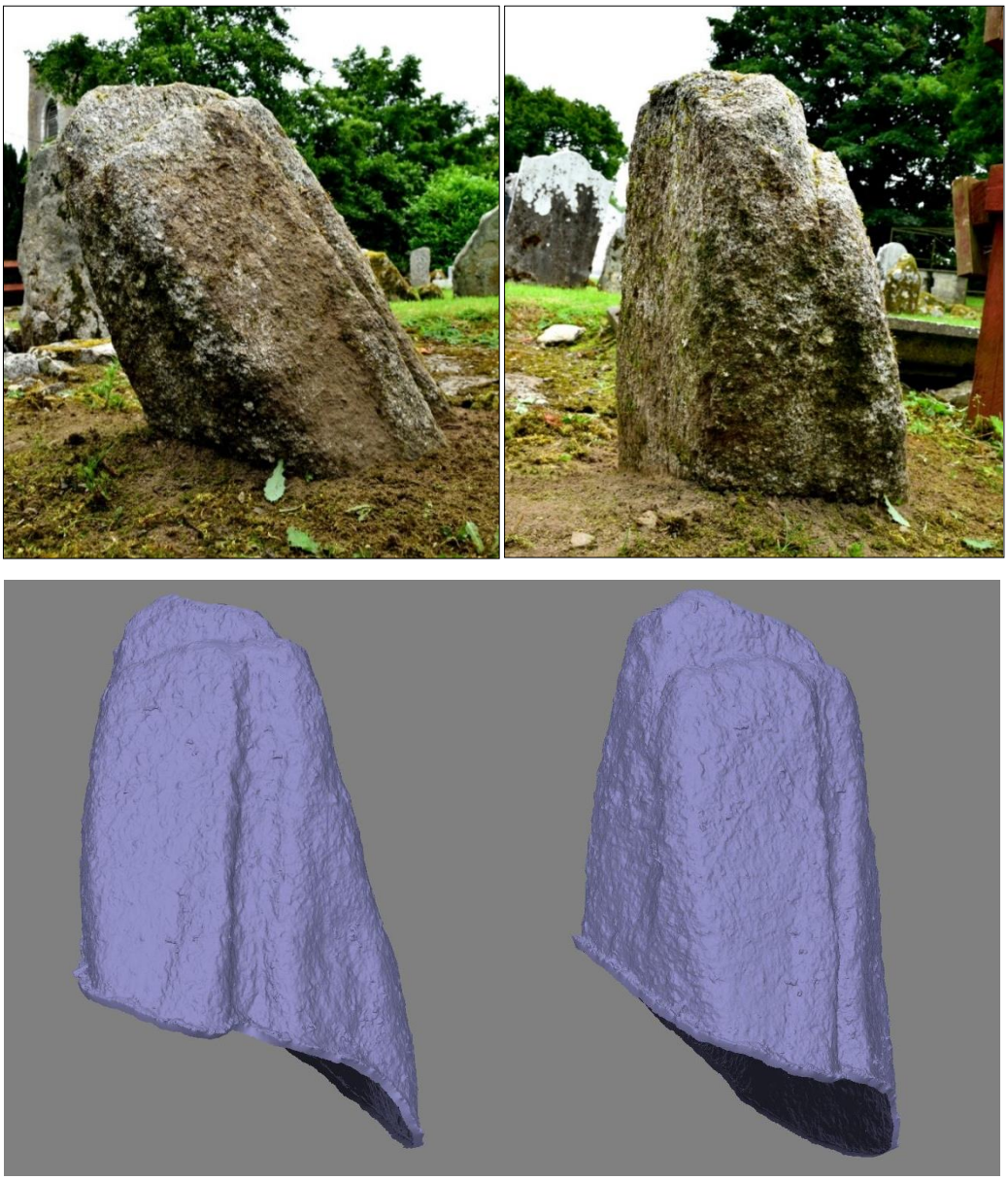


Fig. 8.18: Post 1 – facing north; facing east. Note slot on the east face and possible 'shelf'

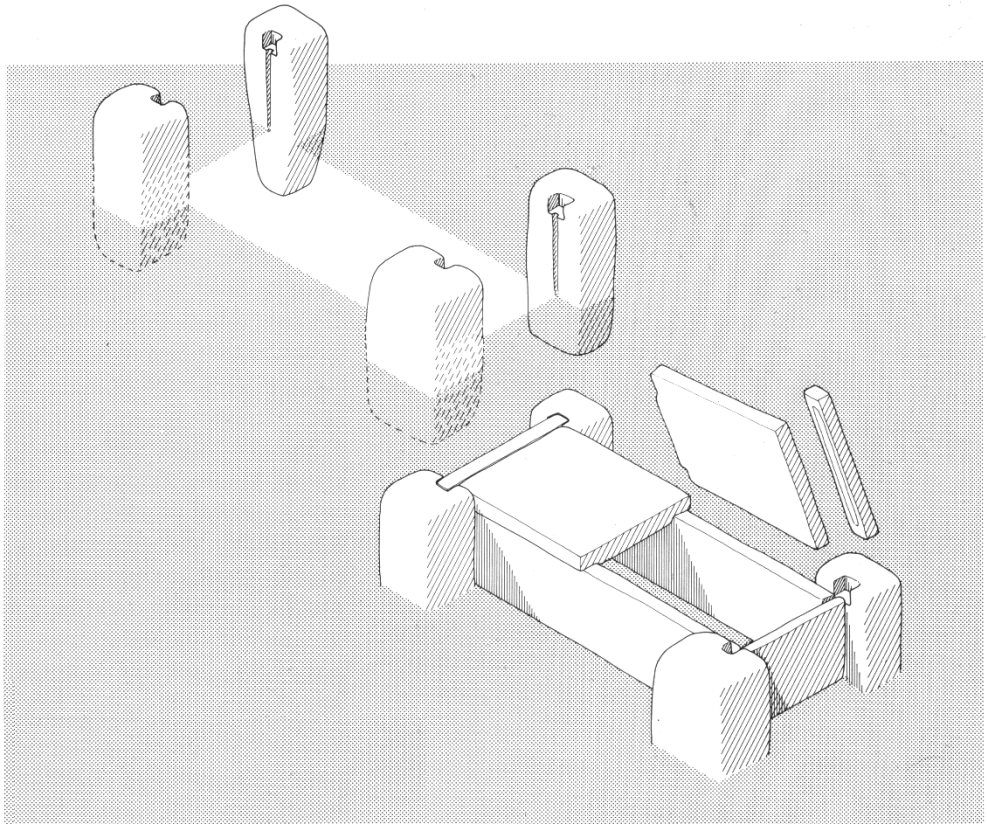


Fig. 8.19: Kilnaruane, Co. Cork – a possible model for how single-slot shrines might have been constructed

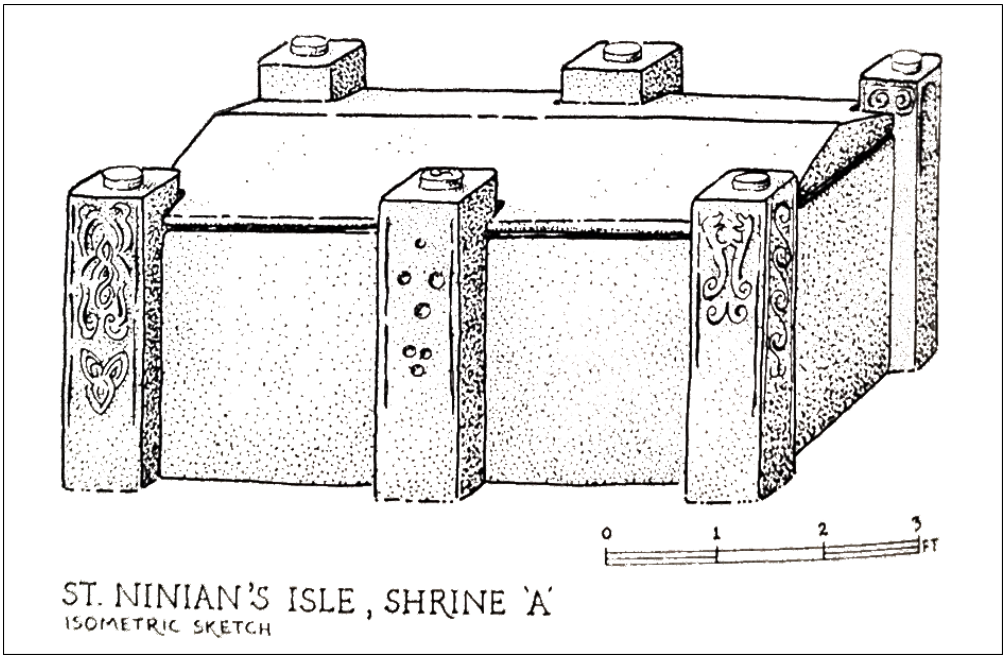


Fig. 8.20: Double corner-post shrine from Shetland – note the corner posts rising above the lid, which is notched to fit around them. Note also the presence of central posts between two short panels

Two other stones, Posts 2 and 3 (CW-17, CW-30), which are slabs rather than pillars, are also probably shrine posts, but the arrangement of slots on opposing sides is very unusual (Figs. 8.21 and 8.22). This is not to say, however, that they necessarily represent something

new or unique; instead, they may be central posts to a composite shrine which, while unusual, is not an unknown variation. Central posts would have provided additional strength or support for the panels, and/or allowed for the construction of a longer shrine, if the panels used were relatively short (perhaps central posts were also a means of extending the length an existing structure?). It is similar to the double corner-post shrines that have been found in Papil and St Ninians in the Shetlands (Thomas 1971; 1998; see also Figs. 8.17 and 8.20), though these examples are ornamented, and have three, not two, slots. However, a direct parallel may come from one of four posts built into the walls of the south church at Monasterboice, Co. Louth (Figs. 8.23 and 8.24). Ó Carragáin has identified these as corner-block shrine posts (2003, 143, n. 25), but one slab has two slots on opposing edges, and so may more specifically be identified as a central post to such a shrine. This slot arrangement can also be compared with Mediterranean stone chancel screens (Fig. 8.25), which Thomas has cogently argued may have been the model upon which composite stone shrines were based (1971, 159–63; 1998, 90–2). Some examples of stone chancel screens from the continent date from the 6th and, possibly, 5th centuries (*ibid*, 163; 1998, 91), and though there seems to be a lack of evidence for these screens in late 7th- or 8th-century Ireland and Britain (*ibid*), Thomas has suggested that an awareness of their form and construction technique may have contributed to the development of a similar format for composite stone shrines around this time (*ibid*).



Fig. 8.21: Left to right – west face of Post 2; model showing south and north edges with slots respectively; note also undressed east face



Fig. 8.22: Left to right – east face of Post 3; model showing (damaged) south and north edges with slots respectively



Fig. 8.23: Shrine posts incorporated into the church wall at Monasterboice



Fig. 8.24: Profile of lower stone, showing same slot configuration as Posts 2 and 3

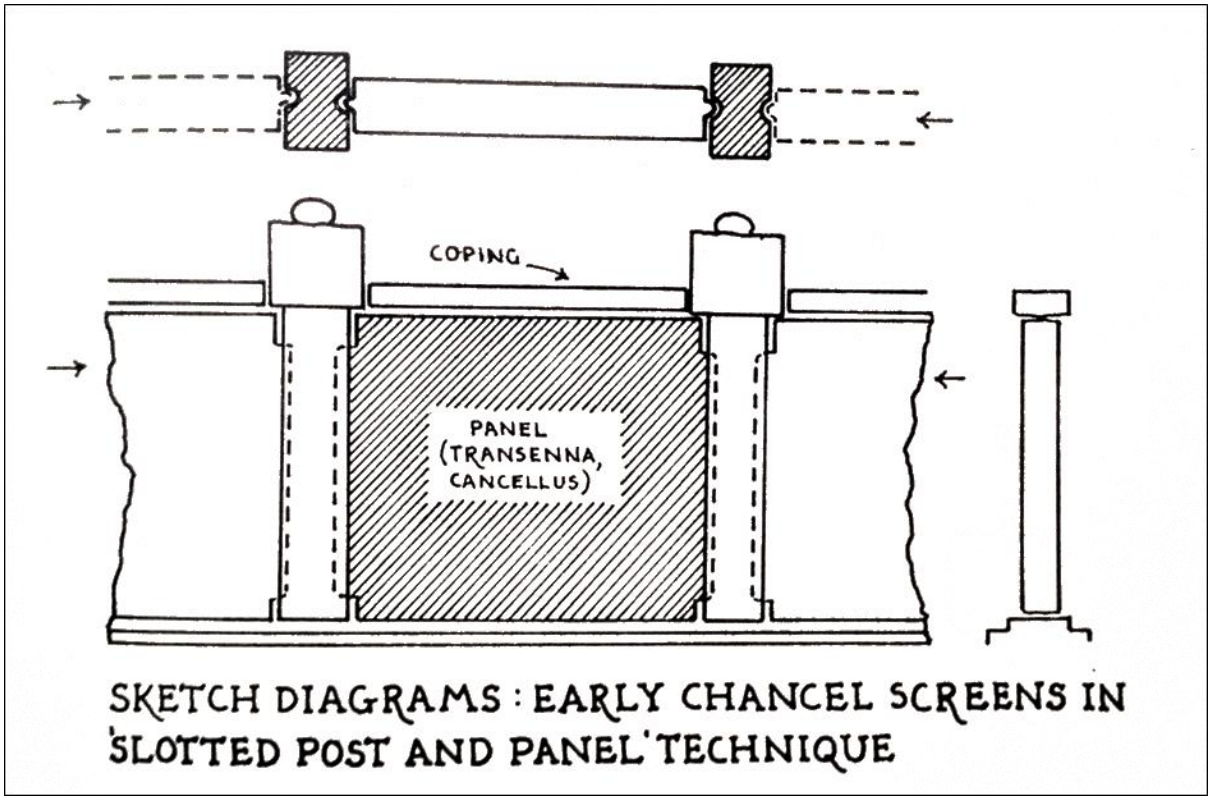


Fig. 8.25: Schematic diagram of stone chancel screens (after Thomas 1971)

While all three posts (Fig. 8.26) are undoubtedly shrine components, it should be highlighted that their shapes are quite irregular, both in relation to each other, and to shrine posts elsewhere, and it is difficult to determine just how they would come together to form a whole. The posts do appear to be shaped, albeit minimally, and not on every side, which may suggest that the undressed faces could have been turned to the interior of the shrine, where they could not be seen. Post 3 is particularly jagged and irregular, but much of this appears to be the result of damage to its southern side (Fig. 8.27). Yet, even without the damage to the lower half of its southern edge, the upper third of the slab is much wider than Post 2; however, the difference may have originally been less significant, if one considers that Post 3 might be re-erected upside down. The lower portion of the slab looks to be a bit more shaped than the top half, and, indeed, the width of Post 3 at its base is comparable to that of Post 2. So perhaps what is now the top of the slab had originally been inserted in the ground, and, therefore, careful shaping of this section of slab would have been unnecessary. Additionally, the rounded top of Post 2 may be the product of re-shaping much later, perhaps when the slab was repurposed as a headstone. Like Post 3, Post 1 also tapers in width from one end to the other. As a consequence, when viewed in section, the post has an obtuse trapezoid shape, rather than the (generally) square shape of most other corner-posts. This is unusual when compared to other corner-posts, which have fairly straight profiles. When the post is realigned upright so that its slot is positioned vertically (Fig. 8.28), the east side appears to be unshaped (or perhaps only minimally so) and has retained a protrusion of stone that the carver(s) must have neglected to remove, though it appears that this protrusion would not have interfered with the fitting of the panel. The other three sides are relatively straight and well-shaped in an upright position, though the Post 1 does seem to taper slightly at the very top. This is a puzzling feature, which, again, raises questions as to how the pieces of this shrine would have fit together.



Fig. 8.26: Corner-post, and two center posts to a composite stone shrine at Clonmore (Posts 1, 2 and 3)



Fig. 8.27: The damaged southern edge of Post 3



Fig. 8.28: Left to right – Post 1, reoriented in an upright position; well-shaped north face; showing slight tapering near the top of south face

One other possible shrine component (CW-3), perhaps a side panel or lid, is located on the eastern side of the graveyard (Fig. 8.29). It is included in Harbison's catalogue as a slab of unknown function, though he later speculates that it could have been the base of a small free-standing cross (CW-12), situated near the southern end of the graveyard (1991, 181, 192). However, this interpretation is unlikely, as the slab is of similar dimensions to the cross, and, so, would have been disproportionately large for use as its base. Additionally, its rectangular opening is too small to have effectively acted as a mortise for the tenon of a cross that size. Furthermore, Dorothy Kelly has pointed out that many solid-ringed crosses lacked a base altogether, and as this cross is relatively small and thin, a base may not have been necessary (see section 8.3.3). While equally speculative, perhaps this was a fenestella – an aperture that allowed (limited) access to the relics inside – which have been found on Mediterranean martyrial graves (though these are much more elaborate examples), and on Irish gable shrines such as the one at Killabuonia, Co. Kerry (Thomas 1971, 143; 1998, 89; Herity 1993, Fig. 23.5; Ó Carragáin 2003, Pl. 9.2). The opening is the ideal size for a hand to fit through, and calls to mind Bede's description of the relic cult surrounding St Ceadda (Chad) in the late 7th century, his shrine 'having a hole in a wall, through which those who come thither out of devotion are accustomed to insert their hands, and to take thence some of the dust' (as translated by Thomas 1998, 89). This would suggest that CW-3 was perhaps an end panel of the shrine and, indeed, though plain, this slab may be morphologically compared to the end panels of late 8th-century St Andrew's Sarcophagus (*cf*. Foster 1998). Notably, Fitzgerald described the slab as 'sunk in the earth on its side' during his visit to Clonmore

(1912/14, 138), though the slab has long since fallen over or been moved. However, it is unclear how this arrangement would have worked, as the slab is too thick to have slotted into any of the aforementioned posts. Perhaps its recessed periphery and raised centre might have somehow served some purpose in fitting the panel in with the posts, but again, it is unclear how this might have been accomplished. Alternatively, perhaps this slab was the lid to the shrine. Its thickness would certainly be suitable for anchoring the side panels in place (see above), and its recessed periphery might have served some purpose in fitting the lid over the posts and panels of a shrine. Perhaps the shape of the slab was dressed in this way to add a decorative element, similar to the ridged lids mentioned by Thomas (1998, 84; see also Fig. 8.20). In this capacity, the fenestella may have been there to provide visibility rather than direct access to the relics, or, perhaps, it instead allowed access to select relics that were exhibited on an inner lid, or tray, just above the main body of relics, similar to the 7th-century reliquary coffin of St Cuthbert at Lindisfarne (*ibid* 1971, 146). However, there is a key point to be made against these suggestions, and that is the difference in the quality of carving between this slab, and the shrine posts. While it could be postulated that more care was taken in carving the lid to achieve a close fit over the posts, or that this piece replaced an earlier lid or panel that had been damaged, it seems more likely that CW-3 may represent a different monument entirely, perhaps a later, or else higher quality shrine, than is represented by the three posts. Yet, without further evidence, interpretations of this slab remain tentative.

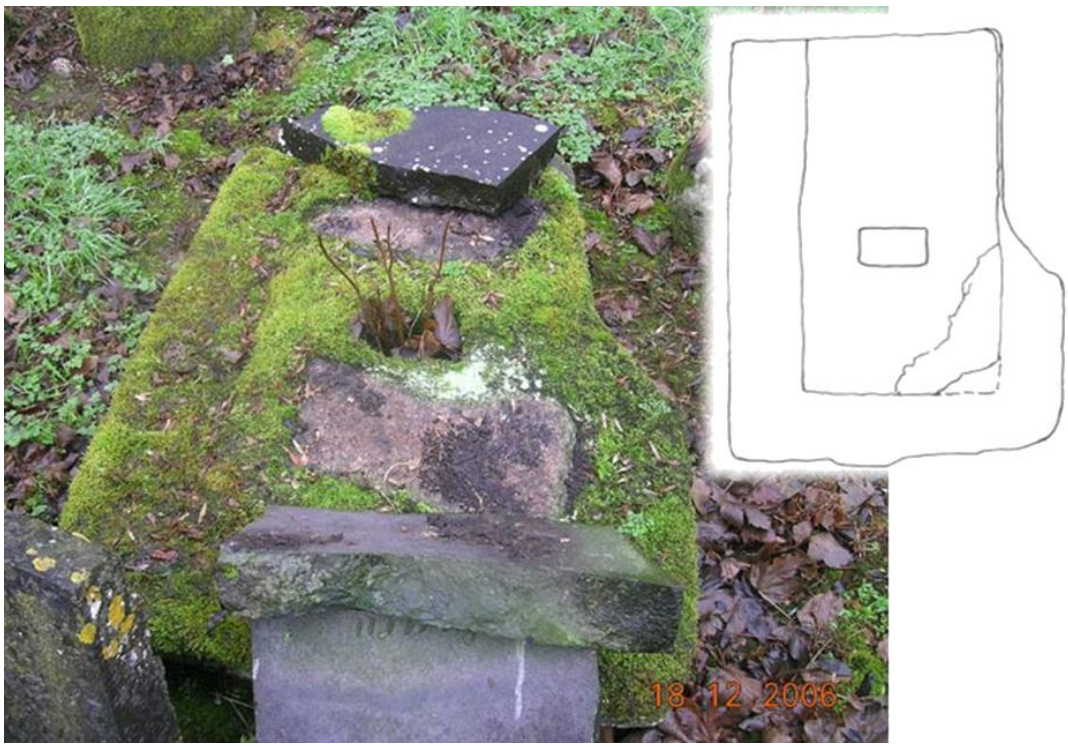


Fig. 8.29: Possible shrine component with fenestella? (photo: NMS)

8.3.6 Modern reuse of sculpture

As previously mentioned, the graveyard of Clonmore was used extensively throughout the modern period, though with the major reorganisation of the graveyard in 1975 (Harbison 1991, 179; *Wicklow People* 2015), it is impossible to know when, and how, many of the early medieval slabs were repurposed during that time. Five stones of early medieval date do bear definitive evidence of reuse from their relatively recent inscriptions, all likely done during the 19th century. CW-29, the most elaborately carved monument at Clonmore, was also the most heavily inscribed, and provides a firm date of 1828 for at least one commemorative episode of reuse. A similar date range for its other inscriptions, as well as for those on CW-12, CW-15, CW-20, and CW-24, could reasonably be inferred on epigraphic grounds (Harbison 1991). Very little information can be gleaned from CW-12 and CW-24 on this 'chapter' in their biographies, other than the readings of the inscriptions themselves, which are 'J' 'K' and 'I' 'T' respectively, presumably sets of initials (Figs. 8.30 and 8.31). However, the other three possess further clues as to the state of the stones at the time of inscribing, and, perhaps, we may speculate upon the circumstances surrounding them.

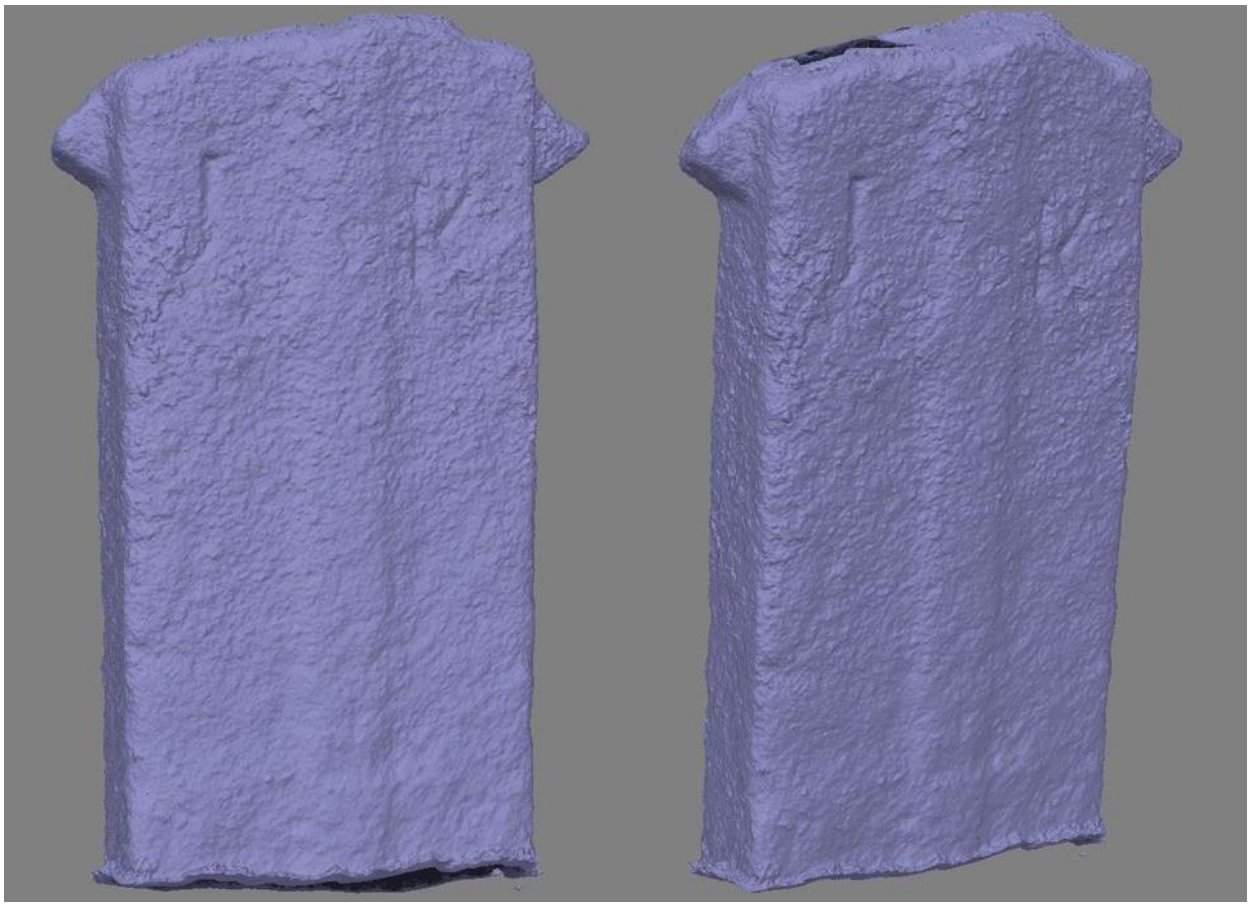


Fig. 8.30: CW-12, inscribed in the 19th century with the initials 'J.K.'

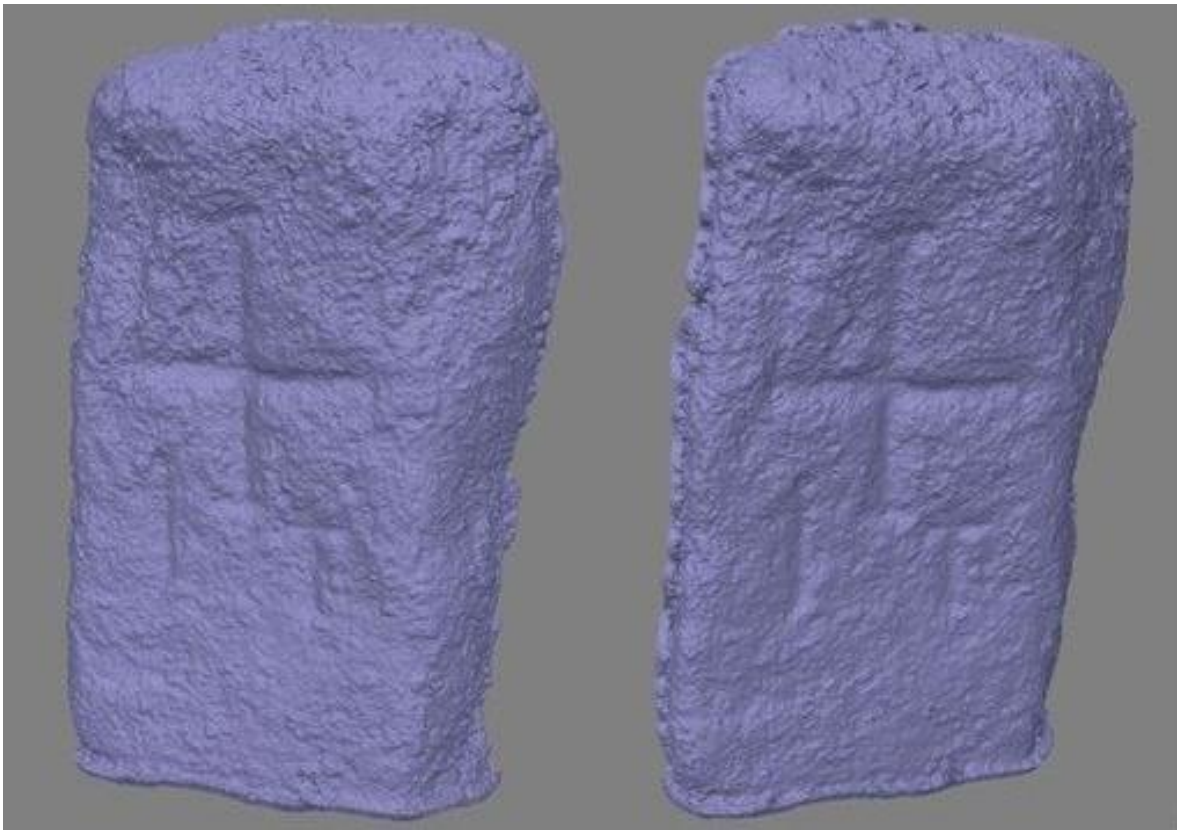


Fig. 8.31: CW-24, inscribed in the 19th century with the initials 'I.T.'

Like CW-12 and CW-24, CW-15 is not heavily inscribed, but from the orientation of the letters, the stone would have been recumbent at the time of its inscription, as it could not have stood upright on either of what are now its dexter or sinister edges without obscuring both the inscription and the cross (Fig. 8.32). Based on the extra length of the sinister cross arm, Harbison suggested that this was originally the stem of the cross, and that the stone was later inscribed with the initials 'H. I.', indicating both inscription and cross were intended to be viewed facing what is now its sinister edge (*ibid*, 186). This may certainly be true of the cross, and its design, as the 'spike' extending from the base of the cross stem could be skeuomorphic of a metal reliquary cross, the pointed tip of which was meant to be inserted into a leather belt during processionals (Lionard 1961, 139). If such an interpretation is accepted, then significantly, both CW-10 and CW-15 display iconography associated with the possession of relics and reliquaries (see above). However, returning to the inscriptions, it seems more probable that the 'H' and 'I' are, instead, two of the three letters that form the popular Christogram 'I. H. S.', and, therefore, we could expect to see an 'S' on the slab were the rest of it unearthed. If so, this would mean that the inscription should be read from the opposite orientation to that of the cross, confirming that it is a later addition. The carvings on the dexter side are a bit more enigmatic. The inscription appears to continue below ground

level but, without unearthing the rest of the slab, we cannot be sure to what extent it continues, though it is likewise presumed to be commemorative in nature.

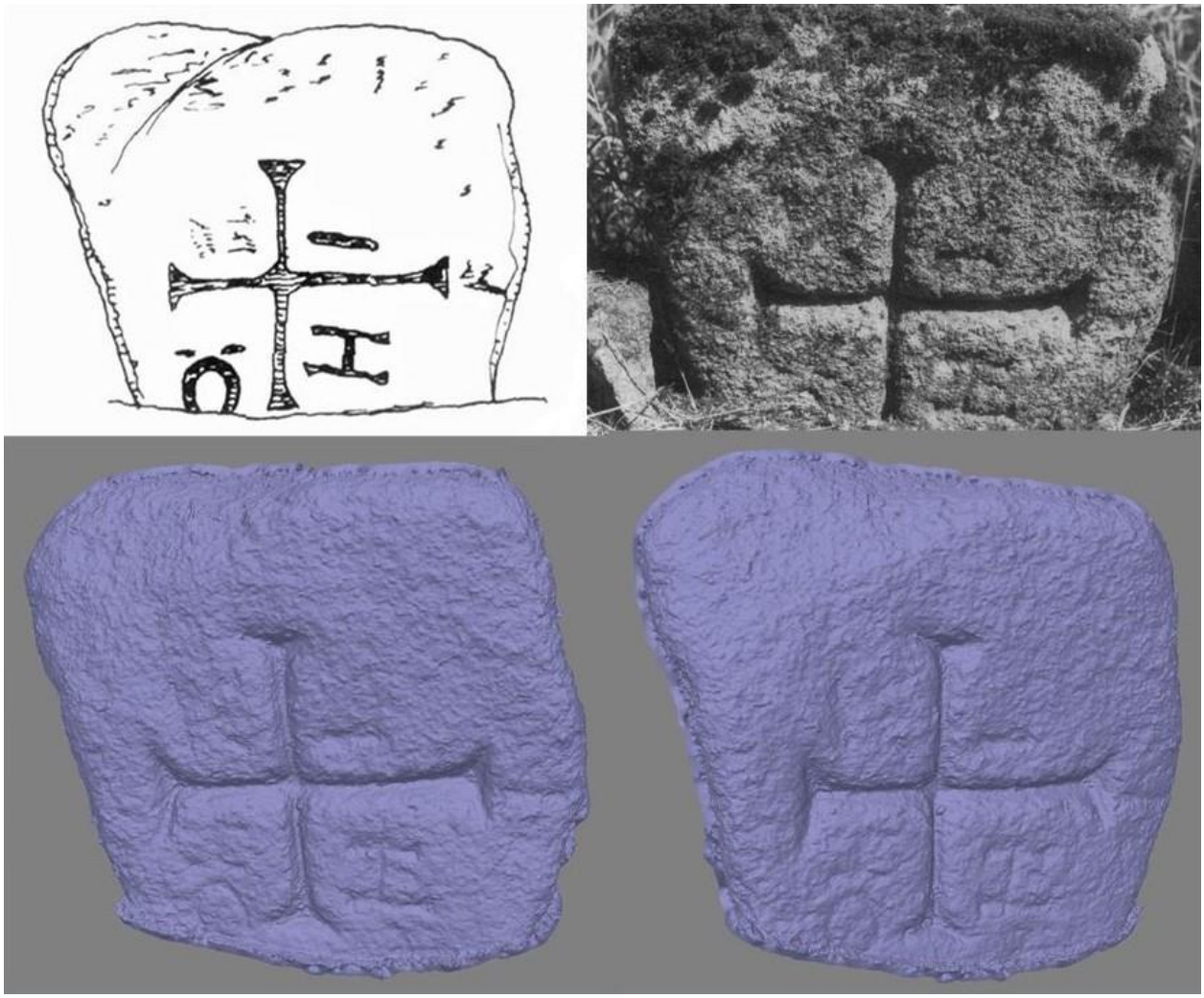


Fig. 8.32: Clockwise from top left – illustration and photo of CW-15 (after Harbison 1991); photogrammetry model, showing possible second 'H' on lower dexter quadrant, and, more significantly, the potentially skeuomorphic 'tip' of a reliquary cross on the sinister side

The orientation on the carvings for CW-20 and CW-29 suggest that these two were positioned upright, at least during the 19th century. This position can be confirmed by looking at the bottom portions of both stones – the faces are almost completely covered with sets of initials, but the inscriptions stop abruptly approximately 30 cm up from their bottom edges, suggesting that they had previously been inserted into the ground up to this point. Moreover, the cross on CW-20 has suffered heavy damage right at this point, just below the start of the initials (which makes one wonder how it was damaged). Damage has also occurred on the top dexter half of CW-29. The edge of the letter 'A' on the lower dexter portion of the cross-ring, which looks to form part of the 1828 inscription, is missing, along

with the rest of that corner of the monument, so the damage must have occurred sometime after that date. It should also be mentioned here that areas of discolouration cover roughly half the surfaces of two other stones, CW-23 and CW-25, indicating that these may have been partially buried, or else protected by moss, up until they were relocated to the patio.

The clustering of initials, similar hand, and the 'I.H.S.' monogram centred at the tops of the stones would suggest that most of the inscriptions on CW-20 and CW-29 were carved at around the same time, or in quick succession. If the letters on CW-20 are initials, then they commemorate at least six individuals, though very likely seven or eight, and possibly as many as nine (if there is indeed a 'K' inscribed at the end of the sinister arm). Several initials are squeezed into whatever space was still available on the stone, so at least some (if not all) of these initials were carved in succession, rather than at the same time; yet, despite this overcrowding, they all respect the cross-carving. Though speculative, it could also be suggested that this stone was reused multiple times by the same kin-group, as the frequent repetition of 'B' as the second initial could represent a shared surname between those commemorated on the stone (Fig. 8.33).

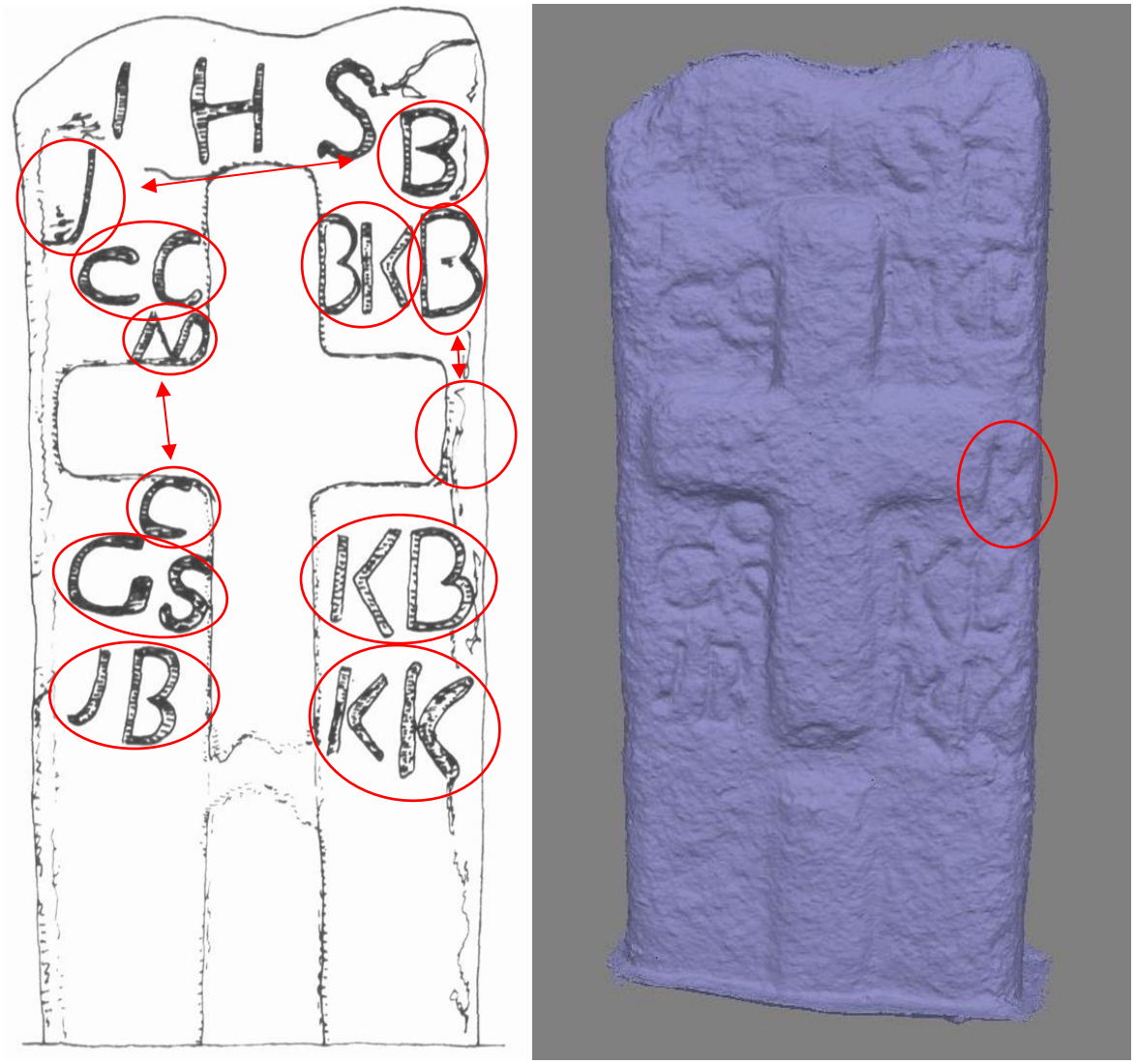


Fig. 8.33: Harbison's illustration of CW-20, and photogrammetry model of the stone, showing potential combinations of inscribed initials, including a possible 'K' at the end of the sinister cross arm

Many of the initials, and one of the 'IHS' monograms, on CW-29 likewise respect the cross-carving, which could suggest that these are the earliest inscriptions. Yet, it is clear that this stone was reused on multiple separate occasions, though possibly in quick succession (Fig. 8.34). Just as with CW-20, when the carver ran out of space, he began to fit inscriptions in wherever he could, though these inscriptions do impinge on the cross-carving. There are two 'IHS' monograms on this slab, the lower of which also has a small Latin cross extending upwards from the 'H', which is a fairly common feature. The presence of two such inscriptions would suggest they are the products of two separate commemorative events. The central arrangement of the lower monogram and 'April 1828' could suggest they form one single commemorative episode, perhaps with the top monogram occurring earlier, as it respects the cross. Curiously, the number '47' appears on the stone three times, each carved

in different hands. One can only speculate on its significance, but perhaps it represents a year – 1847, one of the worst years of the Famine, immediately springs to mind; however, this is pure conjecture. As with CW-20, there is a repetition of the same letter in the second initial, this time a 'K', which may perhaps represent a common surname and that it likewise had been reused by the same kin-group.



Fig. 8.34: CW-29

As previously mentioned, the slabs' original contexts have long since been lost. However, their present positions do make a statement about how these monuments still play an active role in the commemoration of the dead at Clonmore. Rather than being discarded, or reused elsewhere (excepting CW-31; see Chapter 5), the stones were set into upright and orderly rows, interspersed among the modern headstones. At least five of these have inscriptions which place their reuse as roughly contemporary with those same headstones. As some people are obviously choosing to reuse these stones, rather than erect new ones, this would indicate that they still held relevance and meaning within the local community. Moreover, a major clean-up of the graveyard took place in 1975, and a designated stone patio was built specifically to showcase some of the carved stones, suggesting that these particular stones were considered 'special'. This effort was largely undertaken by local volunteers, and according to a recent article in *Wicklow People* (2015), an open-air Mass was held in the cemetery on July 6th of that year, and has been held annually ever since. It is clear that its

early medieval heritage still holds value to the residents of Clonmore, though their continued care and maintenance of the site can do little to halt the passage of time. The cross-slabs at Clonmore are, overall, in a poor state of preservation – some are worn almost smooth. In light of these issues, it was clear that in addition to an updated analysis of the early medieval assemblage, photogrammetric recording for each stone was vitally necessary (though not all the data was processed for this study; see Chapter 2). This will not only to provide more accurate records of the sculpture, but will also serve as a mode of preservation for these monuments, albeit digital, ensuring that future analysis of these stones will still be possible (Chapter 9).

8.4 Discussion

It is clear from documentary sources that Clonmore's ecclesiastical identity was built around its collection of relics. The first references to this collection arguably come from the 9th-century *Martyrology of Tallaght*, but the bulk of sources date from the 11th and 12th centuries. The 11th-century *Bóroma* saga, in which Maedóc of Clonmore plays a pivotal role in the action, makes prophetic mention of a sprinkler – made from a 'relic' of Uí Néill king Áed mac Ainmerech – coming into the possession of the school of Clonmore which, while not the relic of an ecclesiastic, is nevertheless indicative of the high level of prestige achieved by Clonmore in the early medieval period (see below). Its collection of saints' relics is mentioned in another prophetic poem, preserved in the *Book of Leinster* (MS folio 44b 15, §54; also discussed below); however, by far the most detailed account of Clonmore's relics comes from the 12-century glosses of the *Martyrology of Oengus*. The prevalence of relic cults and enshrinement in early medieval Ireland, particularly from the late 7th century onward, as well as the use of corporeal relics as a means to increase a church's wealth, prestige, or authority, is well-documented (Thomas 1971; 1998; Ó Floinn 1997; Ó Carragáin 2003, 139; 2010, 67; McCarthy 2013, 341; Wycherley 2015). However, Clonmore appears to be a unique in that, unlike other sites that were actively engaging with the cult of relics in the early medieval period (e.g. Armagh, Kildare, Kells, Derry etc.), its power as an ecclesiastical centre seems to have been inextricably linked to its identity as the 'resting place of the saints of Ireland'.

Clonmore's 'claim to fame' was its unusually large and varied collection of corporeal relics. Textual evidence suggests that the relics themselves were probably small or

fragmentary, and that, barring the bodily remains of Onchú, Fínán, and Maedóc, they were stored together in one, portable reliquary (MS folio 44b 15, §54; Stokes 1905, 70-1, 168-9; Best and Lawlor 1931, 15). The most common of this type of reliquary in the early medieval period is usually referred to as a 'house-shaped shrine', so named for its resemblance to the early medieval architectural and spiritual conceptualization of the Christian Church (Ó Carragáin 2010, 24; Gerace 2017, 84), though others have suggested the form was derived from that of tombs or Roman sarcophagi (Ó Floinn 1990, 54; Crook 2011, 36; Gerace 2017, 90). Regardless, 'house-shaped', and the closely related 'purse-shaped', style of reliquaries had a pan-European distribution, and mostly date from between the 7th and 9th centuries, though the style continued through the 12th century (Thomas 1971, 163; Ó Floinn 1990, 54; Murray 2007, 261, 265; Crook 2011; Gerace 2017, 85). There has been ongoing debate as to the function of these shrines – whether they acted as transportable receptacles for relics (both corporeal and secondary), chrism (holy oil), or the Eucharist (for the most recent summary of this debate, see Gerace 2017). The evidence would suggest that house-shaped shrines may have served multiple functions (*ibid*), though it is its function as a reliquary which concerns us here.

Contrary to the Roman custom, which emphasised the creation of *brandea*, or relics created through contact with the bones of a saint, the fragmentation of saintly remains had become widespread throughout the rest of Western Christendom by the latter half of the 4th century (Crook 2011, 25). This allowed for a multitude of relics to be placed in relatively small shrines, making them transportable, and, thus, allowing for wider dispersion of a saint's cult (*ibid*; Ó Floinn 1990, 53–4; 1997, 147–8). We know from the 9th-century *Martyrology of Tallaght* that the relic collection at Clonmore was portable, as it was supposedly brought there by Onchú (Best and Lawlor 1931, 15). However, we can only speculate on what the shrine might have looked like, as very little detail is known about its physical appearance. The most obvious suggestion is that it was a house-shaped shrine, likely made of wood, metal, or a combination of the two, decorated in similar manner to other Insular house-shaped shrines across Ireland and Europe, such as the reliquaries of Monymusk, Clonmore (Co. Armagh), Emly, Bobbio, Bologna, Clonard, etc. (Fig. 8.35), and, notably, the *Brecc Máedóic*, though this is a late 11th-century example (more on this below). In the 17th-century *Acta sanctorum,* Colgan states the relics were 'placed in a large and magnificent casket' (1645). This could suggest that the shrine supposedly carried by Onchú was smaller, and that a new, larger shrine was constructed to house them at Clonmore, perhaps enshrining the original reliquary along with the relics, as may be the case with the Lough Erne shrines (e.g. Ó Floinn

1990, 54; Fig. 8.36). Moreover, the description of the shrine as a casket suggests the shrine was house-shaped (e.g. the Ennabeuren Casket). However, this is an admittedly late source, and these details are not found in the surviving early medieval texts. That being said, a 12th-century gloss of the *Martyrology of Oengus* does describe the reliquary as a *scrín mór* ('great/large shrine'). This would suggest that the reliquary was larger than most, as house-shaped shrines are relatively small (varying mostly between 8–17 cm, though the *Brecc Máedóic* is 22.5 cm in length). In light of this, perhaps the *scrín mór* more closely resembled the gable-shaped shrine of St Manchán of Lemanaghan, Co. Offaly (Fig. 8.37). Ó Carragáin has suggested that the Lemanaghan shrine is modelled after the Ark of the Covenant, and may be the closest indication of what the principle shrines in shrine-chapels may have looked like (2010, 75-6). This shrine is almost three times the size of the *Brecc Máedóic* (Fig. 8.38), and has rings above each of its feet (though one ring is now missing). This would have allowed poles to be inserted through the rings so that the shrine could be carried by two individuals during processions, or perhaps on circuit, i.e. *commotatio* (Murray 2007, 261; Ó Carragáin 2010, 76). It does not seem too far-fetched to suggest that the shrine at Clonmore, with its relics of all the Irish saints (see below), was likewise taken on *commutatio*, or carried in processionals. Moreover, the symbolic links between the Ark, Christ, and the multitude of saints evident on the form and iconography of the Lemanaghan shrine (*ibid* 76–7), would also be fitting in the context of Clonmore's cult of relics, which reputedly included a relic from every Irish saint (more below). The issue with this suggestion, however, is that such a large shrine would not be portable over long distances, and Onchú could hardly have carried a shrine of that size around Ireland by himself, as it is intimated. This would again suggest that the shrine at Clonmore, at least in its earlier incarnations, would have been more akin to the smaller house-shaped shrines of the 7th–9th centuries, and the *scrín mór* mentioned in the 12th-century gloss of the *Martyrology of Oengus* represents a newer, larger shrine – perhaps with the original shrine placed within it – possibly created around the same time as the *Brecc Máedóic* or Lemanaghan shrine, as many churches were led to re-enshrine their relics during this period (*ibid*, 263).



Fig. 8.35: Clockwise from top left, 'house-shaped' shrines – Bologna, Clonmore (Co. Armagh), Monymusk, and Emly reliquaries



Fig. 8.36: 'Nesting' reliquaries? The Lough Erne shrines; Ennabeuren Casket from Germany



Fig. 8.37: 12th-century shrine of St Manchán, Lemanagham, Co. Offaly



Fig. 8.38: The Brecc Máedóic

Relic cults across Europe, and throughout the early medieval period, predominantly place the strongest emphasis on the relics of a church's founding saint, or, barring that, relics brought back from Rome (Crook 2011, 25–40; Wycherley 2015). It is rare, possibly unique, to find an ecclesiastical site where possessing the relics of so many saints is key to its identity. Clonmore's three most important saints, Maedóc, Onchú, and Fínán Lobhar, are indeed enshrined, but their relics seem to be considered secondary to the main collection, and are kept separately (more below). What makes this collection stand out is the implication that it contained a corporeal relic from *every* saint in Ireland, and this is emphasised in at least three different sources from the 9th–12th centuries (MS folio 44b 15, §54; Stokes 1905, 70; Best and Lawlor 1931, 15). This is obviously an exaggeration; however, it stands as strong evidence that Clonmore was renowned for possessing a substantial collection of corporeal relics from at least the 9th–12th centuries, and it is possible that its collection originated earlier (see previous sections, 8.2 and 8.3.5). This evidence is corroborated by the archaeology, and will be discussed in more detail below.

We can begin to piece together a clearer picture of where these relics were housed, and how they were displayed (at least in the 12th century), through an analysis of the language used by the commentator in the glosses of the *Martyrology of Oengus* to describe Clonmore, its saints, and its collection of relics. Firstly, it states that Onchú is in the *derthaig* of *Relic na n-aingel*, and that he collected the *taisib* of Ireland's saints, which he kept in a *sgrín mór* (to which Maedóc was said to have donated his little finger). It then repeats this with the phrase, in Hiberno-Latin, 'it is he who collected the *reliquias sanctorum* in the *Derthaig* of *Relci Cluana Moir Maedóc*' (Stokes 1905, 70–1). Another passage states that Onchú and Fínán Lobar are 'in *uno sepulcro* … by the cross at the *memro* in the south', and again repeats that the '*membro*, i.e. *taisi*,' of Fínán and Onchú are in the same place in Cluain mór (*ibid*, 168–9). These passages provide a wealth of insight into how the sacred core of Clonmore may have been arranged, and tell us what type of relics were being housed there, and how they were housed, as well as how this site may have been perceived.

The word *derthaig*, literally 'oak house' (eDIL s.v. 'dairthech'), was the most common word for a church during the early medieval period (*ibid*; Ó Carragáin 2010, 15), which of course indicates that the building here was of timber construction. *Sgrín/scrín* is taken from the Latin *scrinium*, meaning a case or box for documents; later, it came to mean a box in which precious things were kept, including saints' relics, and was often decorated with gold or silver (Ó Floinn 1997, 139; Wycherly 2015, 212–3; eDIL s.v. 'scrín'). Three terms are used to describe the relics themselves, *reliquias sanctorum*, *membro*, and *taisib/taisi*.

Reliquias and *taisi* refer specifically to human remains (Wycherley 2015, 199–200, 205–7 eDIL s.v. 2 'taise'); the phrases 'con mbemro thes' ('at the *memro* in the south') and 'membro i. taisi' ('*memro* i.e. *taisi*'; Stokes 1905, 70–1, 168–9) implies that the word *memro*, meaning a tomb or shrine that often contained the relics of a (founding) saint (Wycherley 2015, 211; eDIL s.v. 'mem(m)ra'), was also used to refer to the relics therein. We can now infer from this that *Relic na nAingel* ('The Angels' Graveyard') at Clonmore contained a timber church, in which was housed a large shrine, probably portable and, perhaps, decorated with precious metals, that contained a sizable collection of corporeal relics. The words *sepulcro* and *mem(b)ro* also indicate that there was a separate shrine made of stone – for which we now have possible archaeological evidence – that contained the relics of Clonmore's core saints (i.e. Onchú, Fínán, and, perhaps, Maedóc), though some of their relics (i.e. Maedóc's little finger) may have also been contained in the *scrín*. From textual evidence, we know that the ideal place for a shrine containing corporeal remains was considered to be inside a church (Thomas 1971, 8–9; 1998, 87; Ó Floinn 1997, 139–40); a reference in the *Annals of Ulster* to 'heathens' (i.e. Vikings) destroying the *derthagi* ('wooden churches') of Bangor in 824, and shaking the relics of Comgall from their *scrín*, provides an apt parallel for the physical setting of Clonmore's relics, albeit in the 12th century.

Regarding the placement of the *sepulcro/mem(b)ro*, we may deduce that it was probably also in the *derthaig*. The glosses of the *Martyrology of Oengus* state Onchú and Fínán are *icon crois con mbemro thes* ('by the cross at the shrine in the south'), but also that Onchú (who is placed in *uno sepulcro* with Fínán) is *i nderthaig* (*in the derthaig*) – this also gives us an approximate idea of the position of the *derthaig* and shrines within the graveyard (Fig. 8.39). However, the three shrine posts in the graveyard are quite rudimentary in their craftsmanship, so it seems unlikely that they were part of the *sepulcro* in the *derthaig* with the *scrín mór* (see above, section 3.3.5). Rather, they may have been part of a shrine-tomb erected over a special grave (Ó Carragáin 2010, 66-7; Wycherley 2015), perhaps that of Clonmore's founding saint, Maedóc, and the stone *sepulcro* in the *derthaig* may be represented by the well-shaped rectangular slab with a fenestella (CW-3; see above, section 3.3.5). If this is the case, then there is evidence for three different shrines at Clonmore – the *scrín mór*, a well-dressed stone *sepulchro*, and a simple composite stone shrine, possibly marking a 'special' grave. It is also worth noting here that shrine-tombs at founders' graves are linked to pilgrimage activity (Herity 1993, 194; Crook 2011, 19–23; more below).

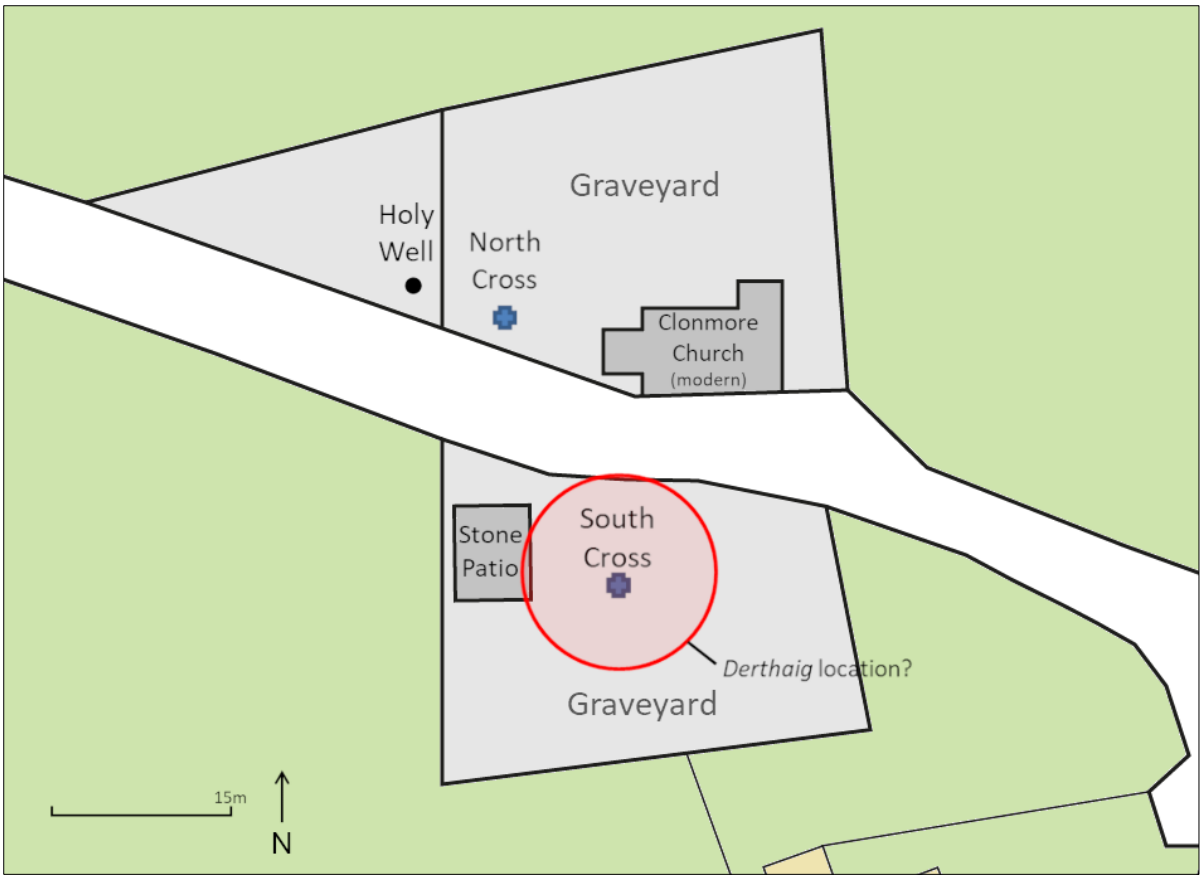


Fig. 8.39: Site map of Clonmore, showing approximate location of where the derthaig may have once stood according to the 12th-century glosses of the Martyrology of Oengus

The link between the veneration of relics and pilgrimage activity is indisputable (*cf.* Wycherley 2015). Considering how integral saints' relics were to Clonmore's ecclesiastical identity, it was undoubtedly a centre of pilgrimage during the early medieval period, and its large collection of relics would certainly have been a great source of wealth and prestige for the site. Harbison has theorised that the sizable collection of cross-carved sculpture at Clonmore was connected with this pilgrimage activity (1991, 195), and though there indeed seems to be evidence to support this suggestion (see below), it is certainly not for the reasons he put forth. Harbison could see no clear function for these cross-slabs (*ibid*), so he speculates that they were commissioned by pilgrims as tokens of veneration, or erected as monuments to their journey (*ibid*). He also states that there is 'no evidence' that they were grave markers, nor could they have functioned thusly, because large collections of cross-sculpture only seem to occur on sites connected with pilgrimage activity, and if they *were* grave markers, then there would be a more even distribution of cross-slabs across early medieval sites (*ibid*). The issues with this theory are immediately apparent. First, the morphology of these slabs clearly indicates that the majority of them were originally

recumbent, and the evidence put forth by other scholars regarding this monument-type overwhelmingly points to their function as grave markers (see Chapter 4). Moreover, considering that many of these slabs are quite large (often over a metre in length), they would make unwieldy and impractical tokens of veneration, even if commissioned on site. Furthermore, 'token' implies something small and modest, like the Roman and early medieval votive deposits that have been discovered at some Irish holy wells and shrines (e.g. Ó Carragáin 2010, 38). As to the connection between large collections of cross-slabs and ecclesiastical sites with documented pilgrimage activity, Ó Floinn (1995) has more accurately interpreted this phenomenon as relating to periods of increased production relating to elite patronage, not pilgrimage activity.

This is not to say, however, that there is no correlation between the prolificacy of funerary sculpture at Clonmore and pilgrimage activity. Indeed, Clonmore appears to have experienced a peak in sculpture production *after* its royal patrons, the Uí Dúnlainge, lost control of Leinster. Rather, the evidence suggests that Clonmore's cemetery developed in tandem with its relic cult (*cf.* Ó Carragáin 2010, 83), as well as reflecting the changes in burial practices that took place mostly in the 7th–9th centuries, by which 'burial near the bones of the saint became a substitute for burial near the bones of the ancestors' (O'Brien 1992, 136). While burial at ecclesiastical sites may not have been as ubiquitous in 9th-century Ireland as previously suggested (*cf.* O'Leary 2015), it seems to have developed relatively early at sites like Kildare and Glendalough, whose cemeteries were being described as 'multitudinous' by Oengus *celí dé* in the early 9th century (Stokes 1905, 25). The increase in burials *ad sanctos* – with the reliquary at the core of the cemetery, and burials radiating outwards from it – is indicative of the wide-spread popularity and appeal of relic veneration in Ireland by the 9th century, as well as a natural extension of the cult of relics in death (Wycherley 2015, 64–5). This reflects the belief that the presence of saints' relics, in turn, sanctified the entire space, and, by association, those buried within it (Ó Carragáin 2010, 83).

A prophecy attributed to Broccán *Craibdech* ('the pious/devout'), preserved in the *Book of Leinster*, describes Clonmore as the 'beloved place of resurrection' with the 'saints' relics of Ireland' (MS folio 44b 15, §54), and its graveyard as containing 'nine-score priests and five thousand exalted graves (*ferta*) near Maedóc hua Dúnlainge' (*ibid*, §55; translation mine). Broccán *Craibdech* is not otherwise identified, and the poem has not been dated apart from a 12th-century *terminus ante quem* for its inclusion in the *Book of Leinster*. However, the use of the term *ferta* in this poem may be significant. *Ferta* are a type of grave demarcated by a low earthen mound or tumulus (eDIL s.v. 1 'fert') and were a prevalent form

of burial in first few centuries of the early medieval period. They were recognized in the late 6th–8th-century Irish law tracks as territorial boundary markers, and a means by which a group or individual could claim hereditary rights to an area (Wycherley 2015, 132–3). The use of *fert* or *ferta* in reference to Christian graves would have been considered an archaic term that was occasionally used as a poetic device (eDIL s.v. 1 'fert'), and since at present this poem cannot be ascribed a date earlier than the 12th century, this is probably the case here. In light of this, the poem should not necessarily be taken as evidence that a pre-ecclesiastical burial ground of *ferta* existed at Clonmore, though it is worth noting that at least one (presumably) pre-existing ogham stone has been found at Clonmore (*cf.* Chapter 5). Instead, the author may be poetically describing the 'ancestral' or 'hereditary' legitimacy of Clonmore, by virtue of Maedóc and his five thousand 'exalted' *ferta*. In any case, the importance of Clonmore as a burial ground during the early medieval period cannot be overstated. This is, of course, not to suggest that it was on par with sites like Clonmacnoise, with its 'royal necropolis' and its cross-slabs commemorating hundreds of ecclesiastics – unless the claim of 'nine score priests and five thousand *ferta*' was not just poetic licence! (Bhreathnach 2003, 100–3; Swift 2003). Nevertheless, Clonmore had the illustrious reputation of housing 'the relics of the saints of Ireland'. The concurrence of written sources regarding this, and their detailed descriptions of the graveyard, as well as the existence of a sizable collection of funerary sculpture, all mark Clonmore out as a particularly revered, and, consequently, highly desired place of burial.

This desire for burial 'near the bones of the saints' often led to internments being crowded closely around saints' tombs or shrines. This practice is evident from excavations of early cemeteries at Illaunloughan Co. Kerry (White Marshall and Walsh 2005, 64-6), and Teach Molaise on Inishmurray (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008). Increased competition for burial within the more coveted areas of a cemetery, and a desire to protect the integrity of its 'sacred core' may have been one reason for creating internal divisions of burial space (Wycherley 2015, 64–5). Another reason for this 'zoning' was the creation of satellite cemeteries dedicated to particular groups (e.g. nuns, monks, kings, etc.) which was typical of the development of many major ecclesiastical complexes, such as Clonmacnoise, Armagh, Glendalough, Inishmurray, and Iniscealtra (O'Leary 2015, 131–3). The early 12th-century *Life* of Colmán of Lynn describes how the cemetery at Lynn was subdivided to facilitate veneration and burial associated with multiple saints, dispersed around the site (Meyer 1911, §42). While this was probably not the case at Clonmore, as the written evidence is fairly clear that its shrines and saints' relics were concentrated in one place, Ó Carragáin (2017a)

has cited this as an example of many saints being venerated at one site, which is certainly relevant here. Moreover, he emphasises how sharing the burial space of one site between the followers of several saints amplified its sanctity, and fostered a sense of fraternity between multiple ecclesiastical communities (*ibid*).

While this example does reflect the early medieval belief in a wider, cooperative community of saints, it differs from Clonmore in that it involves specific alliances between small groups of saints, whereas the collection at Clonmore is said to include corporeal relics from *all* the saints of Ireland. This would suggest that the relic cult at Clonmore was specifically intended to 'reinforce the sense of belonging to a single Christian community, stretching across the country and back to the time of the earliest Irish Christians' (Ó Carragain 2010, 152). Though its substantial collection of relics must also certainly be related to royal patronage, and Clonmore's strategic importance to the Uí Dúnlainge (see above, section 8.2), this would make Clonmore unique, as it seems to have chosen to focus on venerating the community of Irish saints as a whole, rather than just the relics of its founder, or relics brought from Rome, e.g. Armagh (Crook 2011; Wycherley 2015), and differs from other large collections of relics, like that contained within the *Breac Maodhóg* (more below; Plummer 1922 i, 201; ii, 195). This concept of Ireland's saints as cooperative community, who collectively Christianised the island, is also expressed in the earliest sources that mention Clonmore's collection – the martyrologies (Ó Carragain 2010, 152). Unfortunately, physical evidence for enclosures or subdivisions simply does not survive at Clonmore, and extensive tidying efforts and reuse in recent years have robbed the stones of their original context, so it is difficult to draw any conclusions for the layout of its graveyard in this regard. Yet, perhaps comparison with Iniscealtra and its main burial ground, similarly titled 'The Saints' Graveyard', may provide clues as to the layout of Clonmore's burial ground at the end of the early medieval period, and how its sculpture might have functioned within this space.

The Saints' Graveyard at Iniscealtra is unique in that it has Ireland's largest collection of early medieval grave markers still *in situ*. This may allow for some inferences about Clonmore's assemblage, many of which can be stylistically and morphologically paralleled with the Iniscealtra slabs. There was a marked increase in burials at major ecclesiastical sites during the end of the early medieval period, particularly by the 12th century (O'Leary 2015, 130). During this time, it was believed that certain areas of a graveyard, i.e. 'The Saints' Graveyard', were considered 'better' than others, and access to burial rites in this elite cemetery was tightly controlled (*ibid*). Judging by the numerous cross-slabs at Clonmore that typologically date from this period, burial space would undoubtedly have been at a premium

here as well. This supposition is supported by the textual sources, which indicate that Clonmore was a well-developed ecclesiastical complex by the end of the early medieval period (if not sooner). This would also suggest that, by the 11th or 12th century, burial in its 'sacred core', *Relic na nAingel*, would have been reserved for elites and the 'very special dead', like in The Saints' Graveyard at Iniscealtra (*cf. ibid*, 119, 131–3).

Finally, it stands to reason that relic-related activities would have been centred within the graveyard, and away from the main church. In this regard, Clonmore is typical of most Irish sites which separate reliquary foci from the principal church, thereby underscoring the distinction between veneration of relics and communal celebration of the Eucharist (Herity 1993, 194; Ó Carragáin 2010, 67; O'Leary 2015, 118; Wycherley 2015, 88). There are some exceptions to this of course, which follow the Continental practice of placing relics within the principal church (usually in or near the altar). The best known example is the tombs of St Brigit and Bishop Conláed in the church at Kildare as described by Cogitosus; another example is Muirchú's account of the translation and enshrinement of the virgin Monesan in a nearby chapel, twenty years after her death ('Cogitosus: Life of St Brigit', 32.1, 25; Muirchú, *Vita Sancti Patricii*, I.27.9, 101, in Bieler). This begs the question as to whether there was more than one church at Clonmore. As this chapter has already established, there was a timber church located in Clonmore's graveyard, *Relic na nAingel*, that housed its corporeal relic collection, though it is unclear if this is the same *derthaig* mentioned in the annalistic entry on Dairmait's attack in 1040 (*AFM*, M1040.10). Furthermore, as mentioned above, the remains of what was believed to be an early medieval stone church stood on the north side of the site prior to the 19th century (though this cannot be known for certain), and indeed, there are two architectural pieces still in the graveyard at Clonmore that could potentially be from an early medieval stone church (see section 8.3.2). This indicates that there was another church at Clonmore, presumably dedicated primarily to the communal celebration of the Eucharist, while the timber church in *Relic na nAingel* was used for relic veneration. However, there is also a possibility that the *derthaig* was replaced by a stone church in the 12th century, again perhaps represented by the aforementioned architectural pieces. To have accommodated both its reliquaries and visiting pilgrims, the *derthaig* described in the glosses of the *Martyrology of Oengus* would have needed to be considerably larger than most shrine chapels, i.e. diminutive churches (usually less than 12 m squared) used as repositories for the relics of a site's founder (Thomas 1971, 144–6; Ó Carragáin 2010, 66, *cf*. fig 6). One would imagine its size on par with other churches of the period, and the stone lintel in the graveyard at Clonmore would certainly have been in proportion with such a building. We know from

the glosses of the *Martyrology of Oengus* that the *derthaig* was still in use at Clonmore through at least the mid- to late 12th century, but it could have been replaced soon after; there is an example of a stone church replacing a *derthaig* at Clonmacnoise as late as 1167 (*AFM*, M1167.19). Regardless, the survival of a *derthaig* at Clonmore well into the 12th century would indicate that it was, like the *derthaig* at Clonmacnoise, of 'peculiar sanctity and prestige in the eyes of a community that had conservative tendencies and valued its traditions highly' (MacDonald 2003, 129).

8.4.1 Socio-political context

Clonmore was founded by the Uí Dúnlainge dynasty early in their rise to power in Leinster. This also coincided with the consolidation of Uí Dúnlainge control over the important ecclesiastical sites and royal centres of central Kildare in the first half of the 7th century, which subsequently created (at the expense of the earlier polities in the area) an Uí Dúnlainge 'royal heartland', from which its various segments would more or less dominate Leinster politics for the next three centuries (Chapter 3). Clonmore's location in what could be suggested as a 'buffer zone' between the Uí Dúnlainge and their long-time political rivals, the Uí Chennselaig, may have been an expedient way to gain a political foothold in that region. Moreover, a case could be made that the Uí Dúnlainge were investing in Clonmore's relic cult as early as the late 7th century, perhaps within a generation or less of Maedóc's death. The translated and enshrined relics of a church's (founding) saint were not only instruments of ecclesiastical authority and power – they were also used as a means of securing territorial rights (McCarthy 2013, 187, 342). Additionally, several textual sources of the early medieval period suggest Clonmore enjoyed a close relationship with Kildare. Regardless of whether or not this was artificially cultivated, such a relationship would have undoubtedly boosted Clonmore's ecclesiastical status, particularly within the first generation or so, when it was still establishing itself.

The obsequious praise for Maedóc in the 9th-century Martyrologies of Tallaght and Oengus (Best and Lawlor 1931; Stokes 1905) indicates both the continued strength of Uí Dúnlainge influence within the ecclesiastical spheres of Leinster, and that Clonmore was a seat of their ecclesiastical power. Interestingly, the description of Maedóc as the 'war-like kinsman…save that he has been hallowed' of Dunlaing 'the firm' (Stokes 1905, 106) may hint at a personality which we see more fully developed in the 11th-century *Bóroma* saga (see below). Moreover, the first documentary reference to Clonmore's extensive collection of relics comes from two entries in the *Martyrology of Tallaght*. However, from the three

roughly dressed composite stone shrine posts in its graveyard, it can be suggested that relics had possibly been present at Clonmore by the 8th century or, perhaps, by the late 7th century (see above, section 8.3.5). From annalistic records, it can be inferred that Clonmore was flourishing from the 8th through the mid-11th centuries despite several raids, one of which was particularly violent (i.e. 835/6, *AFM*; *Chron. Scot.*). Yet, despite its last annalistic record being in 1052 (*AFM* M1052.1), the documentary record for Clonmore continues to be rich through the 11th and 12th centuries.

Two passages from the *Bóroma*, which were only just touched upon earlier in this chapter, are worth further examination. As mentioned in section 8.2, Maedóc of Clonmore appears before the Uí Chennselaig king of Leinster, Brandub mac Eochu, and presents him with a gift of four magical objects. These objects – which aid Brandub in defeating Cummascach (†597, *AU* U597.1), and later his father, Áed mac Ainmerech, king of the Uí Néill, in the Battle of Dún Bolg (598, *AU* U598.2) – are a flesh-fork, a cauldron, a shield, and a sword (O'Grady 1892 vol. i, 370-1; Stokes 1892, 78–9). Maedóc reveals that the fork was made by Conláed, St Brigit's craftsman and first bishop of Kildare; the cauldron had been in the possession of Fíacc of Slébte (follower of Patrick), as well as Maedóc's own grandfather, Dúnlang (the eponymous ancestor of the Uí Dúnlainge); the shield and sword belonged to Énna Cennselach and his son, Crimthann, respectively (Brandub's own ancestors). The provenances of these objects are significant, and represent famous heroic and saintly figures from Leinster's 'legendary past' (Davies 1996, 55). More importantly, in bestowing these objects (…dare I say relics?) on Brandub, with all the power and weight of their history behind them, Maedóc, 'the war-like kinsman…of Dúnlang', is symbolically 'conferring upon him (Brandub) the united support of all of Leinster' in what is a thinly-veiled mandate to go to war (*ibid*). Of course, Maedóc was probably too young at the time of these events to have actually been involved (see section 8.2), but there are several points on which we can speculate in regard to this passage. Doherty has postulated that the passages from the *Bóroma* which include Maedóc of Clonmore and Bishop Áedán of Glendalough are 11th-century additions to the earlier 10th-century saga, added around the time of Diarmait mac Máel-na-mBó's ascendency to the kingship of Leinster (2002, 271). Diarmait's rise, of course, means the decline of Uí Dúnlainge hegemony across the province. If taken in context alongside the socio-political climate of its day, this passage seems to be reflecting the political realities of mid-11th-century Leinster. It features an Uí Dúnlainge cleric, from an important dynastic foundation, aiding an Uí Chennselaig king to defeat a foe. At a time when the balance of political power was shifting rapidly away from the Uí Dúnlainge, and into the

hands of the Uí Chennselaig, this passage can be interpreted as Maedóc metaphorically handing over to Brandub 'the keys to the kingdom'. Moreover, in the first half of the 11th century, the Uí Muiredaig were heavily invested in the affairs of the two key ecclesiastical players in this part of the saga – Clonmore and Glendalough. Indeed, Clonmore was sacked by Diarmait in 1040 as part of a larger effort to break Uí Muiredaig (i.e. Uí Dúnlainge) hegemony in north Leinster. Yet, even after Diarmait successfully took the kingship, the Uí Muiredaig still had their own men installed as abbots at Clonmore and Glendalough for another decade or more. So perhaps this passage, and the one discussed below, may be a subtle way of shifting their political alliances to reflect this new balance in power, by 'recalling' a glorious common past in which they were united together in defence of Leinster.

Later in this same tract, Áedán of Glendalough recites a rather dark prophecy (translation from Davies 1996, 59):

> Lussán Áeda meic Ainmerech
> faicebthair ic Laignib in líagmaire.
> Béraid fíach cíar ara úlind
> co Cill Culind siaramain.
>
> Tuitfid ónd fíach é for faidche Chille Culind ocus dogenat macrad Cilli Culind liathróit de. co cend .uii. mbliadan. Doroiset scol Cille Dara *7* gétaid fer díb in liathróitsin. Dogenaside sprédaire de *7* biaid aice co cend .uii. mbliadan aile. Doroset scol Cluana mór M'Áedóc co Cill Dara *7* getaid fer dibside in spredairesin ocus ní faccimse a díl o sein immach (LL 38586-95).

> Áed mac Ainmerech's little plant
> will be left with the Leinstermen
> ...a dark raven will bear it under its wing
> to Cell Chuilind in the west.
>
> It will fall from the raven on the green of Cell Chuilind, and the boys of Cell Chuilind will make a ball out of it for seven years. The school of Cell Dara will come, and one of them will take that ball; he will make a sprinkler for holy water out of it, and he will possess it for another seven years. [Then] the school of Cluain Mór Maedóc will come to Cell Dara, and one of them will take that sprinkler, and I don't see its fate beyond that.

This malediction certainly achieves a 'neat symmetry with the offence it is intended to punish' (*ibid*, 59). Over the course of fourteen years, Áed's 'little plant' is slowly transformed, going first to Kilcullen, then to Kildare, and then finally to Clonmore, his humiliation now forever 'enshrined' in a sprinkler, a liturgical tool. Its journey apparently ended at Clonmore, which could be a nod to its reputation for relics, though this would make a rather perverse addition to its collection. Wycherley has noted that the exchange of a particular relic, or group of relics, between its possessors created intangible but concrete internal bonds (2015, 38–9), and it is certainly not a coincidence that Áed's *lussán* is said to have dropped right into the heart of Uí Dúnlainge territory, before being passed between three of its most important churches (see section 8.2; also Gleeson and Ó Carragáin 2016). Setting aside the unorthodox subject matter for a moment, this passage is significant in that it demonstrates that Clonmore, while not physically in the heart of their territory, was nevertheless counted among the core ecclesiastical foundations of the Uí Dúnlainge, alongside Kildare and Kilcullen.

Turning again to the socio-political climate of the 11th century, Clonmore had come under the direct control of the ruling Uí Muiredaig, sometime in the early half of the century, with the installation of Artúr mac Muiredaig to the abbacy. Revenue generated from its sizable collection of relics would have undoubtedly made Clonmore a wealthy site, so it would stand to reason that maintaining control of its coffers could also ease the way in furthering Uí Muiredaig pretensions in other, more powerful ecclesiastical spheres, namely Glendalough (Mac Shamhráin 1996). If so, this might have been a pivotal time for the monastery. Uí Muiredaig political and ecclesiastical power peaked in the 1030s, and they succeeded in installing their own men, a set of brothers, as abbots of these respective monasteries. It is therefore tempting to equate this peak in their socio-political power to a peak in artistic patronage, i.e. sculpture production, at Clonmore, which could offer an explanation for its numerous large, recumbent cross-slabs. This output would have been short-lived, within one or two decades, yet Ó Floinn has shown that precedence for such brief spikes in production often coincide with periods of royal patronage, and this is borne out at other sites like Clonmacnoise and Iniscealtra (1995). However, typologically, a sizable proportion of the slabs here are probably more in line with a late-11th–12th century date (see Chapter 4), so that theory does not seem to fit here. A far more convincing suggestion, and certainly one in keeping with the evidence uncovered thus far, is that the spike in sculpture production at Clonmore was at least in part the result of a revival of relic cults in the 11th and 12th centuries (Ó Carragáin 2010, 67), perhaps spurred on by a rivalry with Ferns (more

below). A renewed interest in Clonmore's substantial collection of corporeal relics would undoubtedly precipitate a sudden increase in desire for burial in and around *Relic na nAingel*. The documentary evidence to support this is substantial, and has already been discussed in detail in the sections above. However, this interest also coincided with changing ideas about burial and commemoration, as well as ecclesiastical culture in general, brought about by the Gregorian Reforms of the 11th and 12th centuries, which emphasised the ecclesiastical cemetery as the 'natural burial ground for the whole Christian community' (O'Leary 2015, 130).

Competition between the ecclesiastical communities of Clonmore and Ferns could also have provided an impetus for an increase in sculpture production at Clonmore in the latter half of the 11th and 12th centuries, perhaps made all the more acute given that both churches were founded by a St Maedóc, but of rival dynastic polities. Moreover, it would not be surprising if enmity existed between the two churches even earlier, given the location of Clonmore (i.e. near the previous caput of the Uí Chennselaig), and the (potentially) socio-politically charged circumstances of its foundation. According to the earliest surviving version of the Latin *Life of Maedóc of Ferns*, which may have been composed in the second half of the 11th century, during the reign of Diarmait mac Máel-na-mBó (Doherty 2002, 269–70), the care of Clonmore and its people was entrusted to Maedóc of Ferns, while he single-handedly drove off the forces of Áed mac Ainmerech (Plummer 1910 ii, 302, §24). In a later passage, however, he merely aids Brandub mac Eochu in this same task (*ibid*, 309–10, §54). This is an alternate version of the events recounted in the *Bóroma* saga, in which Maedóc Ua Dúnlainge is a key player (see above). As Doherty points out (2002), the redactor of this *Life* addresses this by simply placing Maedóc of Ferns at Clonmore, and eliminating Maedóc Ua Dúnlainge entirely. Shortly thereafter, Maedóc is given the lands upon which he founded Ferns by Becc mac Eogan, a member of the Uí Felmeda line of the Uí Chennselaig, and later granted 'multam terram' by the Uí Chennselaig king, Brandub mac Eochu, also of the Uí Felmeda line (Plummer 1910 ii, 302, §26; 303, §29; Ó Riain 1985; 2011). This hardly seems coincidental, considering Clonmore was founded by their political rivals, the Uí Dúnlainge, upon Uí Felmeda lands around the time as the Uí Dúnlainge were wresting control of the region from the Uí Chennselaig (see section 8.2). Furthermore, near the end of the *Life*, Maedóc of Ferns is shown as companions of Sts Brigit and Fínán Lobhar (Plummer 1910 ii, 310, §56). This passage may be particularly significant, as it seems to indicate an attempt by Ferns to undermine Clonmore's affiliation with Kildare, as well as appropriate one of Clonmore's early saints – if not Maedóc Ua Dúnlainge's successor outright – Fínán Lobhar.

Certainly, the redactor intended to show Maedóc of Ferns as belonging to the top echelon of Leinster saints, on par with Brigit.

The rivalry between these two churches seems to intensify and become increasingly overt by the 12th century. In a 12th-century, longer version of the Latin *Life of Maedóc of Ferns*, which likely reflects the political affairs of Diarmait Mac Murchada (Doherty 2002, 271–2), the saint is now mostly referred to by his sobriquet, Maedóc, rather than by his full name of Aedán, as he was in the 11th-century *Life* (Plummer 1910 ii, 141-63, 295-311). This 12th-century Latin *Life* contains expanded accounts of the aforementioned episodes (*ibid*, §24, §26, §27, §57), but this time, with Brandub himself granting Maedóc the lands of Ferns (*ibid*, 151, §26). The episode in which Becc mac Eogan gives his lands to Maedóc is still included, albeit relegated to the subsequent section (*ibid*, §27). An Irish *Life of Maedóc of Ferns*, dating to the 16th or 17th century, but containing 12th-century material written by Gilla Mochuda Ó Caiside (Plummer 1922 i, xxxiii-iv; Doherty 2002, 274-5; Murray 2007, 265), elaborates on these accounts even further, both in prose and in verse (Plummer 1922 i, 215–7, 274–5, 277–8; ii, 209–11, 266–7, 269–70). Moreover, earlier in this *Life*, Ultán of Ardbreccan (at whose behest St Broccán Clóen reputedly composed *Ní car Brigit búadach bíth*) is listed as a close friend and comrade of Maedóc of Ferns, as well as the composer of a verse regarding the tribute due to Maedóc and his churches (*ibid* i, 200, 265; ii, 194, 257). Albeit speculative, this could possibly lend credence to the supposition that the *Ní car Brigit* may have indeed been composed while Broccán Clóen was in residence at Clonmore (see section 8.2). Ferns must have been successful in overshadowing Clonmore, at least to an extent, because the 12th-century commentator on the *Martyrology of Oengus* felt it necessary to specify that it was Maedóc of Clonmore, *not* Ferns, who obtained the relics of Ireland's saints from Onchú (Stokes 1905, 70–1).

While the evidence certainly indicates that there was a rivalry between Clonmore and Ferns which was, at least in part, politically motivated, it is unclear to what extent competition between respective relic cults played a role. The 11th-century Latin *Life* makes no mention of relics at Ferns; however, the 12th-century Latin *Life* states that Maedóc's relics (*reliquias*) continued to perform miracles after the saint's death (Plummer 1910 ii, 162, §59). A passage from an Irish translation of this 12th-century Latin *Life* goes further by stating that 'by the earth (of his sepulchre), by his clothing and by his relics (*thaisibh*)' Maedóc continued to perform miracles on earth (Plummer 1922 i, 189, ii, 183, §40). Additionally, this work changes §36 so that the thief in the episode swears his innocence upon the relics (*mionn*) within the church (*eglais*), rather than directly to Maedóc, as in previous versions

(*ibid*). These passages demonstrate that while a relic cult did exist at Ferns (at least by the 12th century), its emphasis is placed on the relics, both corporeal and secondary (*mionn* or *brandea*), of its founder, Maedóc. This would suggest that Ferns' relic cult was more in line with others across Europe in the early medieval period (e.g. Crook 2011, 25–40). So, perhaps Ferns did not (or could not?) necessarily compete with Clonmore directly in terms of the size or materiality of its relic collection, though this is not to say that the two churches would not have been in competition for pilgrimage revenues (Ó Carragáin 2003, 146). However, the much longer Irish *Life*, discussed in the previous paragraph, contains the first mention of the *Brecc Máedóic*, a house-shaped reliquary dating to the second half of the 11th century (Murray 2007, 265). Considered one of the seven relics (*mionn*) of Maedóc in itself (Plummer 1922 i, 201; ii, 195, §38), it is tempting to see the *Brecc Máedóic*, with its relics (*thaisibh*) of Roman saints Stephen, Lawrence, and Clement, as well as the ankle of St Martin of Tours, and 'some of the hair of the Virgin Mary, and many other relics (*thaisibh*) of saints and holy virgins' (*ibid* i, 266; ii, 258, §232), as Ferns' answer to the *scrín mór* at Clonmore. Possessing a collection of relics brought back from Rome may have been considered the only trump to possessing the relics of every Irish saint (*cf.* Crook 2011; Wycherley 2015), particularly as the language in this Irish *Life* indicates that the *Brecc Máedóic* once contained a sizable collection of relics, all corporeal. The caveat to this is that there is no evidence to indicate the *Brecc Máedóic* was ever associated with Ferns. Though another one of Maedóc's *mionn*, the *Bachall Bhrandaibh* ('Staff of Brandub'), was reputedly kept at Ferns (*ibid*, §231), all sources link the provenance of the *Brecc Máedóic* to his northern churches of Rossinver, Co. Leitrim and Drumlane, Co. Cavan (*ibid*, §232-3; Murray 2005, 136). While it is possible that the *Brecc Máedóic* may have been kept at Ferns at some point, there is no (surviving) evidence to suggest this, and, therefore, to connect the shrine with the socio-political machinations of 11th- and 12th-century Leinster. Yet, perhaps it is not coincidental that the *Brecc Máedóic* was crafted around the same time that the two centres of Maedóc's cult, Uí Ruairc in Briefne (Doherty 2002), and the Uí Chennselaig in Leinster, were contemporaneously rising to prominence.

While it remains unclear as to the degree to which the relic cults of Clonmore and Ferns competed against one another, it is certain that the rise of Uí Chennselaig power in Leinster, and with it that of Ferns, heralded a slow decline in Clonmore's ecclesiastical status. With its patrons, the Uí Dúnlainge, no longer the premiere power in Leinster, this may have led Clonmore, in conjunction with the other aforementioned factors, to place even more emphasis on its cult of relics in the mid-11th–12th centuries in an effort to maintain its status,

and the *ad sanctos* burial practices associated with this may account for the increased sculpture production during this period. Yet, in the face of Ferns' increasingly overt literary appropriations, it seems Clonmore struggled to maintain its relevance and, by the end of the early medieval period or shortly thereafter, it was ultimately eclipsed.

8.4.2 Summary and Conclusions

We know that relic veneration and enshrinement, often used as a means to increase a church's wealth, prestige or authority, was prevalent in Ireland from the late 7th century onward (Thomas 1971; 1998; Ó Floinn 1997; Ó Carragáin 2003, 139; 2010, 67; McCarthy 2013, 341; Wycherley 2015). In Ireland as elsewhere, Rome was the acknowledged head of the Western Church and centre of the cult of relics, so naturally, its apostles and martyrs were at the top of the hierarchy (Wycherley 2015, 38–9). However, the popularity of local saints' cults throughout much of Western Europe from the late 6th century onward seems to reflect the desire to have 'special local patrons', as well as satisfy the need of a community to prove that its church was 'the heir of its own martyrs' (Markus 1990, 144; Thacker 2002, 6). Indeed, the importance that churches placed on possessing the relics of their founder 'explains the efforts of the lawyers and hagiographers of Armagh to justify an abnormal situation' (Wycherley 2015, 168). Armagh did not have the remains of Patrick, so it used its possession of relics brought from Rome, including a cloth reputedly soaked with the blood of Jesus Christ, to support its claim as the pre-eminent church in Ireland (*Liber Angeli*, §18–9, 186, in Bieler). Yet unlike Armagh and other Irish church sites that were actively engaging with the cult of relics in the early medieval period, Clonmore's power as an ecclesiastical centre seems to have been connected, not to its founder or to foreign relics, but to its identity as the resting-place of the saints of Ireland.

The historical, hagiographical, and archaeological evidence for this site has turned out to be far more complex and nuanced than originally anticipated. Though Clonmore seems to have followed the typical Irish practice of housing its relics separately from its primary church, the expression of its relic cult differs markedly from most others across Ireland, and, to an extent, elsewhere in Western Europe, which predominantly placed the strongest emphasis on the relics of a church's founding saint, or, barring that, relics from Rome. It was not exceptional for a church to claim possession of a large collection of relics, but hagiographers almost invariably identified at least some of the saints to whom those relics belonged – e.g. the lists of relics at Armagh (*ibid*), as well as those housed in the shrine of Adomnán, and the *Brecc Máedóic* (Ó Floinn 1997, 147–8; *Betha Máedóc Ferna II*, 266, in

Plummer; *Life of Maedoc of Ferns II*, 258, in Plummer) – thus, designating these particular relics as being more important than the others. Yet, Clonmore's collection is always treated as a single entity in the written sources; hence, all of its relics are arguably considered equally important. Perhaps a parallel might be drawn with the Church of St Mary and the Martyrs in Rome (once the Pantheon), consecrated on 13 May 609, with its simple dedication to 'the holy virgin Mary and all the martyrs' (John the Deacon, cited in MacDonald 1976, 139). However, it is rare, and possibly unique (at least in the Irish context), to find an ecclesiastical site in which possessing the relics of a multitude of unnamed saints (let alone *all* the saints of a *natio*) is key to its identity. Clonmore's three most closely affiliated saints, Maedóc, Onchú, and Finán, are indeed enshrined, but their relics are kept separately and seem to be considered secondary to the main collection.

This may reflect a perception of Ireland's saints as a wider, cooperative community — a sentiment that is also expressed in the martyrologies of the day — and indicates that the relic cult at Clonmore was specifically intended to 'reinforce the sense of belonging to a single Christian community, stretching across the country and back to the time of the earliest Irish Christians' (Ó Riain 2006, xvii; Ó Carragain 2010, 152). Though the origin of Clonmore's collection of relics is certainly also related to Uí Dúnlainge patronage and the site's strategic importance to that polity's socio-political ambitions, it represents a departure from the typical manifestations of ecclesiastical power and authority within the cult of relics. It emphasised the veneration of Irish saints as a communal whole, rather than just the relics of its founder, or relics brought back from Rome — and without singling out any particular relics as more important than others. This is an entirely different approach to the hierarchy of Irish saints' relics than one sees elsewhere, and provides us with an alternative view of the materiality of corporeal relic cults in Ireland.

9
Summary and Conclusions

9.1 Summary of study results

Within the study region, 196 carved stones, distributed across 53 sites, were surveyed and catalogued. Including the 64 additional pieces from Toureen Peakaun that have already been catalogued by Okasha and Forsyth (2001), and Waddell and Holland (1990), 260 monuments were analysed and interpreted for this study. Combined with the 37 high crosses and 78 'plain' ogham stones recorded from this region, they bring the total of known early medieval sculpture in southeast Ireland to 375. Notably, two-thirds of the 260 carved stones that were analysed as part of this study come from only three sites – St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun, in Co. Tipperary, from which there are 73 and 72 carved stones respectively, and Clonmore, Co. Carlow, which has 30 carved stones (including the slab that was moved to Clonmore Castle). However, most monuments occurred singly or in pairs, though there were a few sites with small groups of sculpture, such as Lismore, Co. Waterford, and Becc-Ériu, Co. Wexford.

A wide variety of monument-types are represented, including a gable finial, which is one of only nine still extant in Ireland, two sundials, of which there are eleven surviving examples, and a tau cross, which is one of six. Yet, there is a striking disparity between the distribution of stone sculpture, and the relative importance of the ecclesiastical sites. Large collections of sculpture are notably absent at all of the major church sites in the southeast, particularly Emly, which, apart from one very simple high cross, does not appear to have had a tradition of stone working. Certainly, stone was not the only material from which sculpture was carved during the early medieval period, and undoubtedly, we are only seeing a partial picture because wood does not survive. However, there were 22 additional ecclesiastical sites, including Emly, which had erected at least one high cross, though otherwise, produced no stone sculpture (see Fig. 3.2). The quality and execution of these crosses vary widely; there are a handful of elaborately ornamented high crosses, namely, ones found at Ahenny, Kilkieran, Killamery, Kilree, and Tibberaghny, which form part of the Ossory group of high crosses, though most are the relatively plain, solid-ringed crosses typical of the southeast region (*cf.* Kelly 1986). Only six sites produced both high crosses and other forms of sculpture – Killamery, Ferns, Ullard, Clonmore, St Berrihert's Kyle, and Toureen Peakaun, and only the latter half of those six produced large collections of carved stones (more below). So, while

many sites did invest in stone sculpture (three quite heavily), the distribution indicates that, unlike some other major ecclesiastical sites, such as Clonmacnoise, Iniscealtra, and Glendalough, the major churches in this region (i.e. Emly, Lismore, Ardmore, and Ferns) were choosing to invest most of their resources elsewhere. While phases of increased sculpture production at ecclesiastical sites have been convincingly linked to periods of stability and wealth, under the patronage of powerful elites, such patronage – while undoubtedly important – was clearly not the primary factor driving the production of stone sculpture in this region.

9.2 Conclusions

Though there were a good variety of monument-types represented, the overwhelming majority of sculpture surveyed for this study were funerary monuments. Beyond signifying the Christian identity of the person commemorated (with or without an inscription), facilitating prayer was one of their key functions. Prayers were thought to influence the fate of the soul, and penitence – expressed through prayers and psalms – was believed to be effective in both atoning for sins committed in life, as well as procuring divine assistance, or intercession, for the dead. Yet, the act of offering prayers to aid the souls of the dead would have also benefited the prayer-givers as well, serving to reassure them in their own apprehensions regarding the afterlife.

Given the emphasis that the early liturgy placed on praying for the souls of the dead, and the perceived permanence of stone as an artistic medium, the paucity of stone grave-markers at most ecclesiastical sites seems counterintuitive. However, this 'quest for regular prayers' was satisfied in several ways, both as part of the liturgy, and in private prayer grave-side. One of these ways was the compilation of manuscript memorials such as necrologies, confraternity books, and *libri vitae* ('books of life'), which contained lists of the dead to be remembered, and were recited aloud, usually during the Mass. In this way, the dead were formally remembered by their community, as well as confraternal communities, through the regular liturgical recitation of their names. Cross-carved stones should be considered alongside these, as a complementary 'tool of remembrance', both in facilitating private grave-side prayer and contemplation, as well as communal prayer, through outdoor liturgies, processions, and circumambulatory rituals. Moreover, as the southern Irish churches largely followed the practices of Rome (Chapters 5 and 6), the prevalent use of *libri vitae*, and other manuscript memorials, especially in Munster, may offer one possible explanation for the relative lack of stone grave-markers at the major ecclesiastical sites in this region.

Sculpted stones are multivalent creations. Many commemorative monuments were the focus of devotional practices; termon or boundary markers may be carved with iconography that also served as mnemonic devices, in aid of contemplation and prayer. Furthermore, not all commemorative monuments were funerary sculpture. Crosses and carved stones were also erected in locations associated with important events, usually in the life of a founding saint, becoming a focus for prayers, penitence, and confession. Along with the high crosses at the six sites listed above, this may have been the case with the intricately carved, disk-headed cross-slabs from Becc-Ériu, as well as the smaller free-standing crosses at Clonmore and St Berrihert's Kyle, and, in particular, the stone cross at Patrick's Well. This cross is erected within the grounds of the spring itself, which was, at least by the 12th century, reputed to be dear to St Patrick. If the cross had not been originally erected here in the 9th or 10th century (which is entirely possible), then it was almost certainly moved to this location by the 12th century. It has been the focus of devotional practices since at least the 19th century, though there seems little reason to doubt that it fulfilled a similar function in the 12th century, if not earlier, considering the site's (reputed) connection to St Patrick and, to a lesser extent, St Declan. Boundary and routeway monuments were also engaged with in liturgical processions, both through, and around, an ecclesiastical estate. The use of these monuments in such processions may have been seen as a means of ritualistically purifying, redefining, or re-consecrating its territory. Moreover, pillars from Clonamery and Mothel have deep, rounded hollows, possibly made by repeated circular grinding. This could suggest that they may have served a ritual purpose as part of the aforementioned processions, or other devotional practices, similar to the 'stone-turning' rituals at sites like Iona, Inishmurray, and High Island. Similar devotional practices may have also occurred at St Berrihert's Kyle, but are likely secondary, perhaps associated with later pilgrimage activity (such later practices have also been noted at sites like Iona and Glendalough).

Though the preservation rate of *in situ* boundary markers is higher in the west of Ireland, several *in situ* termon and boundary markers were recorded in the study region, and, along with Boazman's work on ecclesiastical landholding in the Rathdown region of Co. Dublin (2016), the data indicates that sculpture was used far more often to mark the boundaries of ecclesiastical sites and their wider estates – without an accompanying enclosure – than was previously thought. Carved stones were used to claim ownership, and signify sacred space, by erecting monuments along parish or estate boundaries, as well as along routeways, e.g. the crosses at Kilmuckridge and Ardamine. Alternatively, they were placed at the entrance to an inner enclosure, such as with the Ballygarran pillar (and, perhaps, the Mothel pillar as well).

Additionally, several pre-existing monuments situated in prominent positions and/or along territorial boundaries have also been reworked with crosses during the early medieval period, perhaps as a declaration of new, ecclesiastical 'ownership', or else royal dominance of a particular piece of land, e.g. the ogham stones at Gowran and Knockboy, and the prehistoric Giant's Grave pillar.

Regarding the other five ogham stones, the cross-carvings may be original to the monuments (except for the upper cross on the Tooracurragh stone, which is definitely later; see Chapter 4), suggesting they may have marked the graves of Christians, as well as the boundaries of familial lands. Furthermore, the ogham stone from Ardmore, considering its reputed pre-Patrician foundation, might have been associated with the ecclesiastical site from the outset. Moreover, photogrammetry has shown that at least one, but probably both, of the crosses on the Kilmolash ogham stone were carved before the inscription. This, in itself, is significant, as there are few examples where the ogham can be conclusively shown to be later than, or at least contemporary with, the cross – e.g. Church Island (Valentia Harbour) and Emlagh East – and Kilmolash is the only known Irish example outside of Co. Kerry.

Twelve stones from the study region were also reused as *spolia*, both in ecclesiastical and secular contexts. Though one slab from Dysart, Co. Kilkenny was reused during the early medieval period, the remaining pieces were reused either during the later medieval, or modern periods. While the reuse of a small slab fragment from Coolcashin (KK-7) may have been purely practical – and the Knockmaon slab (WA-15) purely decorative – the reuse of the other stones as *spolia* likely held religious and/or socio-political meaning, both in the act of incorporating the stone, as well as in relation to their position and orientation within the new structure. This is most conspicuous in the case of CW-32, placed near the top of the west gable of Cloydagh Church, as well as with CW-31 and KK-9, which were reused as door lintels in Clonmore Castle, and the tower house at Dysart, respectively. This may be the case with the Legan ogham stone as well, as it was reputedly used as a cornerstone of a 15th-century tower house, and, according to local tradition, was left *in situ*, with the tower house built around it. The use of *spolia* can often be interpreted as a votive act, as well as a deliberate effort to preserve and incorporate the earlier material into the newer structure, and may have reflected a desire to maintain (or perhaps create) continuity with the 'age of saints', or with a site's (perceived?) early Christian past. As such, *spolia* may have been thought to be imbued with apotropaic qualities, regardless of whether a monument and/or its carving were 'hidden', e.g. the Gowran ogham stone.

Regarding the production of sculpture, most churches in the study region did not invest heavily in stone, and at many of these sites (allowing for some loss over time), it seems only a few pieces may have been commissioned. From the paucity of sculpture at major churches in the southeast (Chapter 3), we know that access to resources was not always a factor in this decision, though at some lesser ecclesiastical sites, this may indeed have been an issue. For example, at Kilmokea, Co. Wexford, there are three grave-markers – one elaborately ornamented and inscribed cross, and two carved stones that are relatively simple. At Hook Church, also in Wexford, there is just one large, recumbent slab, and Coolcashin, Co. Kilkenny has one or two well-executed, expansional cross-slabs of Clonmacnoise-type. Highly ornamented, or else very large pieces of sculpture required a significant investment of resources to produce – including the retainment of a skilled craftsman – and in most cases, it seems the privilege of a stone grave-marker was likely reserved for only a few select, high-ranking ecclesiastics, or important patrons. Moreover, in instances where there are annalistic references to a site, e.g. Becc Ériu, Kilmokea, Coolcashin, etc., the finest (or only) pieces of sculpture can usually be dated to within that time frame (Chapters 4 and 5), indicating that the production of stone sculpture typically occurs when an ecclesiastical site is flourishing, or at its peak, and has the extra resources to invest in stonework. Again, however, this point needs to be balanced with the fact that major ecclesiastical sites in the region, that flourished for centuries (like Emly), apparently did not bother to invest heavily in stone sculpture.

Yet, sculpture is also, arguably, the most enduring means of artistically expressing ties, affiliations, and social, political, or cultural identity through shared iconography. This is exemplified by four 'marigold' stones in Co. Wexford, which have striking stylistic correlations between each other, the large collection of 'marigold' stones at Gallen Priory, Co. Offaly, and several stones from southwest Wales, that all neatly mirror their shared hagiographic connections, as well as what little historical evidence we have regarding these affiliations. Furthermore, they present us with physical evidence for closer ties between specific religious foundations around and across the Irish Sea that have been hitherto difficult to identify.

There was evidence for spikes in sculpture production at three sites in this region – St Berrihert's Kyle, Toureen Peakaun, and Clonmore. All three would have benefited from royal patronage, from the kings of Cashel, in the case of St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun, and the ruling branch of the Uí Dúnlainge at Clonmore. However, unlike other sites that invested heavily in sculpture (i.e. Clonmacnoise), it seems that St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun were not intended to be major centres of socio-political or economic power. Rather,

they were primarily spiritual and intellectual centres. These sites were located in a relatively remote, mountainous, and wooded landscape, on the north-facing slopes of the Galtees, reinforcing a sense of asceticism. There was almost undoubtedly a link between the two sites – indeed, they may have been very closely connected. This is reflected in their sculpture, in particular, the inscription on the East Cross at Toureen Peakaun and the inscribed stone at St Berrihert's Kyle, both of which exhibit the influence of manuscript writing, and, though speculative, may suggest that the two sites might have worked in tandem on manuscript production (Chapter 6). Certainly, sculpture appears to have been a specialty of St Berrihert's Kyle, especially in the 8th century, when it was producing most of its relief-carved slabs, and, potentially, its skilfully executed figural high cross. However, the sculpture at these two sites also raises questions that have no easy answers. Toureen Peakaun and St Berrihert's Kyle, only 6 km apart, have among the highest concentrations of 7th–8th century grave-markers in Ireland, and yet, stylistically, are markedly different. This seems to suggest that 'house styles', as well as preferred monument forms, reflect the development of separate ecclesiastical identities, even between communities with close links.

Clonmore, on the other hand, *was* a socio-political and economic hub for most of the early medieval period. Certainly, it was an important and, undoubtedly, wealthy ecclesiastical site, albeit not on the same scale as the four major churches in the region, mentioned above. Clonmore was an Uí Dunlainge foundation, and one of their main seats of ecclesiastical power in Leinster. It may have been established as a border church of that polity, helping them to gain a socio-political foothold in the region, as they expanded into Uí Chennselaig territory during the mid-7th century. Furthermore, it is likely that a cult of relics developed early here, perhaps as early as the late 7th or 8th century. The possession of relics, especially of a site's founding saint, or else, those brought back from Rome, was considered a measure of an ecclesiastical site's power, and relics were frequently used as insignias of authority in Ireland from at least the 7th century. Thus, establishing a relic cult early in its foundation, particularly as it was situated within a rival polity's lands, would have been instrumental in securing and legitimising Clonmore's territorial rights. It is, therefore, significant that there is physical evidence for enshrinement at Clonmore, from at least two separate structures, that may date from this crucial period in its development. While Clonmore's cemetery, *Relic na nAingel* ('The Angels' Graveyard'), probably developed apace with its relic cult, Clonmore's increase in sculpture production occurred in the 11th–12th centuries, largely *after* its patrons, the Uí Dúnlainge, lost control of the kingship of Leinster. This increase can instead be linked to a renewed interest in relic cults that took place in the 11th and 12th centuries, as well as with

changing ideas, brought about by the reform movements of that time, regarding burial and commemoration, which emphasised the ecclesiastical cemetery as the natural burial ground for the whole Christian community. More importantly, it is rare, and possibly unique (at least in an Irish context), to find an ecclesiastical site in which possessing the relics of a multitude of unnamed saints (let alone *all* the saints of a *natio*) is key to its identity. This may reflect the early medieval perception of Ireland's saints as a wider, cooperative community. Though the origin of Clonmore's collection of relics is also related to Uí Dúnlainge patronage, as well as the site's strategic importance to that polity's socio-political ambitions, it represents a departure from the typical manifestations of ecclesiastical power and authority within the cult of relics. It emphasised the veneration of Irish saints as a communal whole, rather than just the relics of its founder, or relics brought back from Rome – and without singling out any particular relics as more important than others. This is an entirely different approach to the hierarchy of Irish saints' relics than one sees elsewhere, and provides us with an alternative view of the materiality of corporeal relic cults in Ireland.

9.3 Future work

Naturally, a project of this scope raises more questions than can be answered in the time allotted, and there is more work that needs to be done on this material. In particular, the Giant's Grave pillar may warrant deeper investigation. It is close to the southern border of the early medieval kingdom of Mag Femin, and ecclesiastical control of this area was contested by Ardmore and Lismore during the formation of parish boundaries in the 12th century (Power 1907). Moreover, this was a royal landscape (Gleeson 2014, 67, 284), and, though speculative, this stone may be the one referenced in the Latin *Life* of Declan of Ardmore, which, though the earliest surviving version of the text is dated to the late 12th century, may be based on a political code of the 8th or 9th century (Sharpe 1991, 34, 349). If so, it is possible that the Giant's Grave pillar was an assembly site, or, in particular, as Power suggests, a place of military assembly for the armies of the Deisi kings in the 8th and 9th centuries (Power 1907). If evidence could be found to support such a suggestion, the Giant's Grave pillar could potentially be compared (albeit on a smaller scale) with the Pillar of Eliseg, which Edwards has proposed may have been an assembly site, and, potentially, an inauguration place for the Kings of Powys (2009, 26–7). Moreover, Williams (2011, 16–8) suggests that the Pillar of Eliseg was not a boundary marker, but a purposely prominent route-marker 'geared to specific routes of movement into and out of the territories, serving to protect and commemorate the land given by the kings to

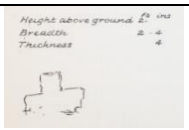
the church'. Additionally, the artistic and hagiographical links between Cill Mucrois and Gallen, the pre-eminent Irish church of the Welsh saint, Mochonóc, could be explored further. Also, the presence of a Clonmacnoise-type slab at a little-known site like Coolcashin, so far afield from Clonmacnoise, is notable, and it may be worth conducting a geochemical analysis of KK-6 to determine, if possible, the source of its raw material.

As stated in Chapter 2, photogrammetric recording was undertaken for a majority of the sculpture surveyed, though it was not feasible to process all of the data during this study. Referring back to considerations of the digital accessibility and the long-term sustainability of this project (discussed in Chapter 2), the raw photogrammetric data can be accessed and processed at any time, as it is being archived in CORA, as well as the DRI, along with the sculpture catalogue and 3D models that have already been generated. Applying digital recording methods, like photogrammetry, to the study of carved stones improves the accuracy of our data, and allows for more informed interpretations. Such methods are particularly significant considering the accelerated rate at which these monuments are deteriorating, creating an urgent need for permanent, accurate, and accessible records for future research. This issue was highlighted, in particular, by the stones at Clonmore. The collection was already in a poor state of preservation when first recorded by Peter Harbison in 1991, but through continued exposure to the elements, and, especially, the effects of modern industry (i.e. acid rain), their deterioration has greatly accelerated over the past twenty-five years. The creation of detailed digital records, and photogrammetric models, of major sculpture corpora, such as the one at Clonmore, and those at St Berrihert's Kyle and Toureen Peakaun, is not only important for comparative purposes, but could potentially serve as a means, albeit digital, of preserving and perpetuating some of Ireland's rapidly eroding early medieval heritage. Moreover, while the research potential of digital techniques such as photogrammetry and reflectance transformation imaging (RTI) is now fairly well-known among early medieval scholars, their value has been demonstrated to great effect in other recent projects. For example, Megan Kasten's work on the Govan stones in Scotland (2019) used RTI to reconstruct heavily worn and/or damaged carvings on these monuments, and to identify the potential use of templates for certain decorative motifs within stone workshops. Furthermore, a Swedish study used 3D scanning to analyse the microtopography of the carved grooves on eight rune stones on the island of Bornholm, identifying the provenances of the rune carvers, and Bornholm's links with other regions in and around the Baltic Sea (Kitzler Åhfeldt 2019).

Yet, while the need for its long-term sustainability has already been addressed, I hope to take this project still further, ultimately incorporating it into a national corpus of Irish early

medieval sculpture. Surveys of this sort already exist elsewhere in Europe – in Italy, France (albeit ongoing), and in parts of Britain, i.e. England and Wales. Moreover, in Scotland, a framework has recently been developed to help focus and direct new research on carved stones (Foster, Forsyth, Buckham, and Jeffrey 2016), and, perhaps, pave the way for a new, single Scottish corpus of early medieval sculpture sometime in the near future (*ibid*, 20–2). However, no such corpus or framework yet exists for Ireland, despite decades-long calls for one within the international academic community (e.g. Edwards 2007b). The lack of a systematic, island-wide study of Irish sculpture hampers our ability to draw comparisons between the Irish corpus, and those of other regions of early medieval Europe, and thus to fully understand the Irish material in its wider context. Such a project is long overdue, though, hopefully, this study has laid the foundations.

Appendix

Catalogue Number	Site Name	Monument Type	Date Range	Probable Function(s)	Image
County Carlow					
CW-1	Acaun	Cross	8th–12th century	Termon/ Boundary marker	
CW-2	Clonmore	Slab	9th–10th century	Termon/ Boundary marker	 
CW-3	Clonmore	Slab (Shrine Component)	8th–12th century	Funerary sculpture	
CW-4	Clonmore	Slab	7th–8th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-5	Clonmore	Carved Stone	7th–9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-6	Clonmore	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-7	Clonmore	Carved Stone	7th–9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	

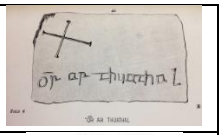
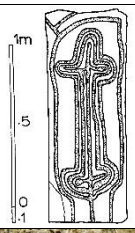
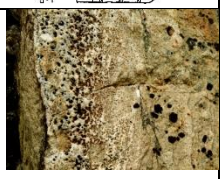
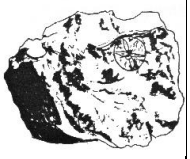
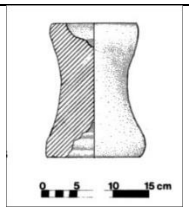
CW-8	Clonmore	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-9	Clonmore	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-10	Clonmore	Slab	9th–10th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-11	Clonmore	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-12	Clonmore	Cross	Late 9th–10th century	Termon marker/ Devotional focus	
CW-13	Clonmore	Slab	8th–9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-14	Clonmore	Slab	10th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-15	Clonmore	Slab	7th–9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	

CW-16	Clonmore	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-17	Clonmore	Shrine Post	late 7th–8th century	Funerary sculpture	
CW-18	Clonmore	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-19	Clonmore	Shrine Post	late 7th–8th century	Funerary sculpture	
CW-20	Clonmore	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-21	Clonmore	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-22	Clonmore	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-23	Clonmore	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	

CW-24	Clonmore	Carved Stone	7th–9th century	Upright grave-marker	
CW-25	Clonmore	Slab	10th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-26	Clonmore	Slab	9th–11th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-27	Clonmore	Slab	8th–9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-28	Clonmore	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-29	Clonmore	Slab	9th–11th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-30	Clonmore	Shrine Post	late 7th–8th century	Funerary sculpture	
CW-31	Clonmore Castle	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
CW-32	Cloydagh	Carved Stone	8th–9th century	Grave-marker – recumbent?	

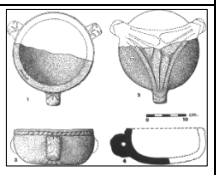
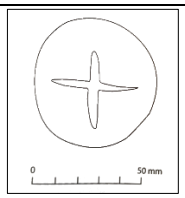
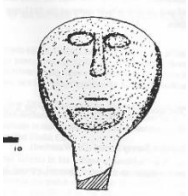
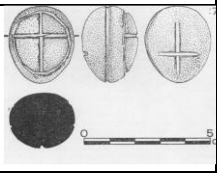
CW-33	Haroldstown	Pillar	Early Medieval	Termon/ Boundary marker	
CW-34	Kilbracken	Cross	8th–12th century	Upright grave-marker	
CW-35	Kilbracken	Cross	8th–12th century	Upright grave-marker	
County Kilkenny					
KK-1	Clonamery	Lintel	*c.* 900–1130	Lintel	
KK-2	Clonamery	Pillar	8th–10th century	Devotional focus/ Termon marker	
KK-3	Clonamery	Pillar	5th–9th century	Termon/ Boundary marker	
KK-4	Clonamery	Pillar	5th–9th century	Termon/ Boundary marker	
KK-5	Clontubbrid	Gable Finial	10th–12th century	Finial	

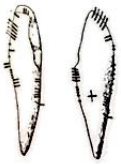
KK-6	Coolcashin	Slab	9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
KK-7	Coolcashin	Slab	9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	No image available
KK-8	Dysart	Slab	9th–10th century	Recumbent grave-marker? Termon marker?	
KK-9	Dysart	Slab	9th–11th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
KK-10	Glenballyvally	Carved Stone	Late 7th–9th century	Upright grave-marker	 
KK-11	Glenballyvally	Carved Stone	7th–9th century	Upright grave-marker	
KK-12	Gowran	Ogham Stone	8th–9th century	Grave-marker/ Boundary marker	
KK-13	Killamery	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	

KK-14	Killamery	Slab	9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
KK-15	Killamery	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
KK-16	Legan	Ogham Stone	5th–6th century	Grave-marker/ Boundary marker	
KK-17	Tullaherin	Carved Stone	6th–8th century	Upright grave-marker	
KK-18	Ullard	Slab	8th–9th century	Upright grave-marker	 
County Tipperary (South)					
TS-1	Ballybacon	Slab	7th–9th century	Upright grave-marker	
TS-2	Ballypatrick	Cross	8th–12th century	Devotional focus?	
TS-3	Ballypatrick	Lamp	Mid-10th–mid-12th century	Lamp	

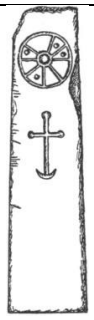
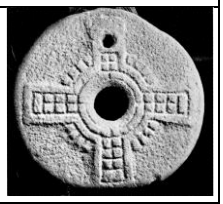
TS-4	Bansha	Slab	7th–9th century	Upright grave-marker	
TS-5	Bansha	Slab	7th–9th century	Upright grave-marker?	No image available
TS-6	Giantsgrave	Pillar	9th–12th century	Termon/ Boundary marker	 
TS-7	Kilsheelan	Pillar	8th–12th century	Upright grave-marker (or termon marker?)	
TS-8	Patrick's Well	Cross	Late 9th–10th century	Devotional focus	
TS-9 to TS-81	St Berrihert's Kyle	72 Slabs; 1 Cross	*c*. 670–900	72 grave-markers; 1 Termon marker/ Dev. focus	
TS-82	Tobar Íosa	Pillar	6th–7th century	Termon/ Boundary marker	

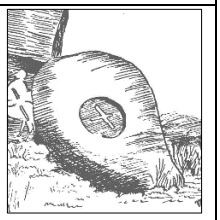
TS-83	Toureen Peakaun	Slab	7th–8th century	Funerary sculpture/ Recumbent grave-marker	
TS-84	Toureen Peakaun	Slab	7th–8th century	Funerary sculpture/ Recumbent grave-marker	
TS-85	Toureen Peakaun	Slab	7th–8th century	Quern stone	
TS-86	Toureen Peakaun	Slab	7th–8th century	Funerary sculpture/ Recumbent grave-marker	
TS-87	Toureen Peakaun	Slab	7th–8th century	Funerary sculpture/ Recumbent grave-marker	
TS-88	Toureen Peakaun	Slab	7th–8th century	Funerary sculpture/ Recumbent grave-marker	
TS-89	Toureen Peakaun	Slab	7th–8th century	Funerary sculpture/ Recumbent grave-marker	
TS-90	Toureen Peakaun	Sundial	8th–9th century	Sundial	
County Waterford					

WA-1	Ardmore	Ogham Stone	5th century	Grave-marker/ Boundary marker	 
WA-2	Ballygarran	Pillar	5th–9th century	Termon/ Boundary marker	
WA-3	Ballygarran	Slab	7th–9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	No image available
WA-4	Ballynacourty	Lamp	8th–9th century	Lamp	
WA-5	Ballynamintra Middle	Pebble	10th–12th century	Blessing/ Cursing stone	
WA-6	Clashmore	Slab	12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WA-7	Curraghmore	Figural Sculpture	8th–9th century	Composite monument fragment?	
WA-8	Graignagower	Pebble	8th–11th century	Blessing/ Cursing stone	
WA-9	Island	Carved Stone	7th–9th century	Upright grave-marker	No image available

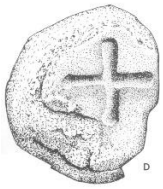
WA-10	Kilmolash	Ogham Stone	5th–7th century	Grave-marker/ Boundary marker	
WA-11	Kilmolash	Slab	Late 11th–12th century	Altar frontal	
WA-12	Knockboy	Ogham Stone	7th–12th century	Grave-marker/ Boundary marker	 
WA-13	Knockboy	Carved Stone	7th–9th century	Upright grave-marker	 
WA-14	Knockboy	Slab	7th–9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WA-15	Knockmaon	Slab	Late 11th–12th century	Altar frontal	
WA-16	Lisgenan	Ogham Stone	5th–6th century	Grave-marker/ Boundary marker	

					
WA-17	Lismore	Slab	9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WA-18	Lismore	Slab	9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WA-19	Lismore	Slab	9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WA-20	Lismore	Slab	9th–10th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WA-21	Lismore	Cross	9th–12th century	Upright grave-marker	 
WA-22	Lismore	Figural Sculpture	Early 12th century	Wall panel/ Architectural fragment	

WA-23	Lismore	Slab	7th–8th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WA-24	Middlequarter	Figural Sculpture	8th–11th century	Caryatid/ Architectural fragment?	
WA-25	Mothel	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WA-26	Mothel	Pillar	11th–12th century	Termon marker/ Devotional focus	 
WA-27	Shanakill	Slab	7th–8th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WA-28	Tooracurragh	Ogham Stone	8th–11th century (cross A) 5th–7th century (cross B)	Grave-marker/ Boundary marker	
WA-29	Unknown	Quern Stone	8th–9th century	Quern stone	
County Wexford					

WX-1	Ardamine	Cross	8th century	Termon/ Boundary marker	
WX-2	Ardcavan	Slab	8th–9th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WX-3	Becc-Ériu	Slab	9th–10th century	Devotional focus	 
WX-4	Becc-Ériu	Slab	Mid-9th–10th century	Devotional focus/ Termon marker?	
WX-5	Becc-Ériu	Carved Stone	5th–7th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WX-6	Becc-Ériu	Carved Stone	6th–7th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WX-7	Clone	Sundial	Late 12th century	Sundial	

WX-8	Clone	Carved Stone	8th–9th century	Upright grave-marker	
WX-9	Clone	Slab	8th–9th century	Upright grave-marker	
WX-10	Clone	Carved Stone	6th–8th century	Upright grave-marker	
WX-11	Ferns	Slab	Late 11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WX-12	Ferns	Slab	12th century	Devotional focus/ Termon marker?	 
WX-13	Ferns	Cross	Late 9th–10th century	Devotional focus?	
WX-14	Hook	Slab	11th–12th century	Recumbent grave-marker	

WX-15	Kildoran	Cross	8th–12th century	Upright grave-marker (or termon marker?)	
WX-16	Kildoran	Cross	8th–12th century	Upright grave-marker (or termon marker?)	
WX-17	Killell	Slab	6th–7th century	Funerary sculpture	
WX-18	Killesk	Carved Stone	8th–9th century	Devotional focus	
WX-19	Kilmokea	Cross	8th–10th century	Upright grave-marker	
WX-20	Kilmokea	Slab	9th–10th century	Recumbent grave-marker	
WX-21	Kilmokea	Cross	8th–12th century	Upright grave-marker	

WX-22	Kilmuckridge	Cross	Late 11th–12th century	Termon/ Boundary marker	 
WX-23	Kilmuckridge	Cross	Late 11th–12th century	Termon/ Boundary marker	
WX-24	Kilmuckridge	Cross	Late 11th–12th century	Termon/ Boundary marker	

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Early Medieval Sculpture in Southeast Ireland: Identities, Landscape and Memory

Volume 2 of 2

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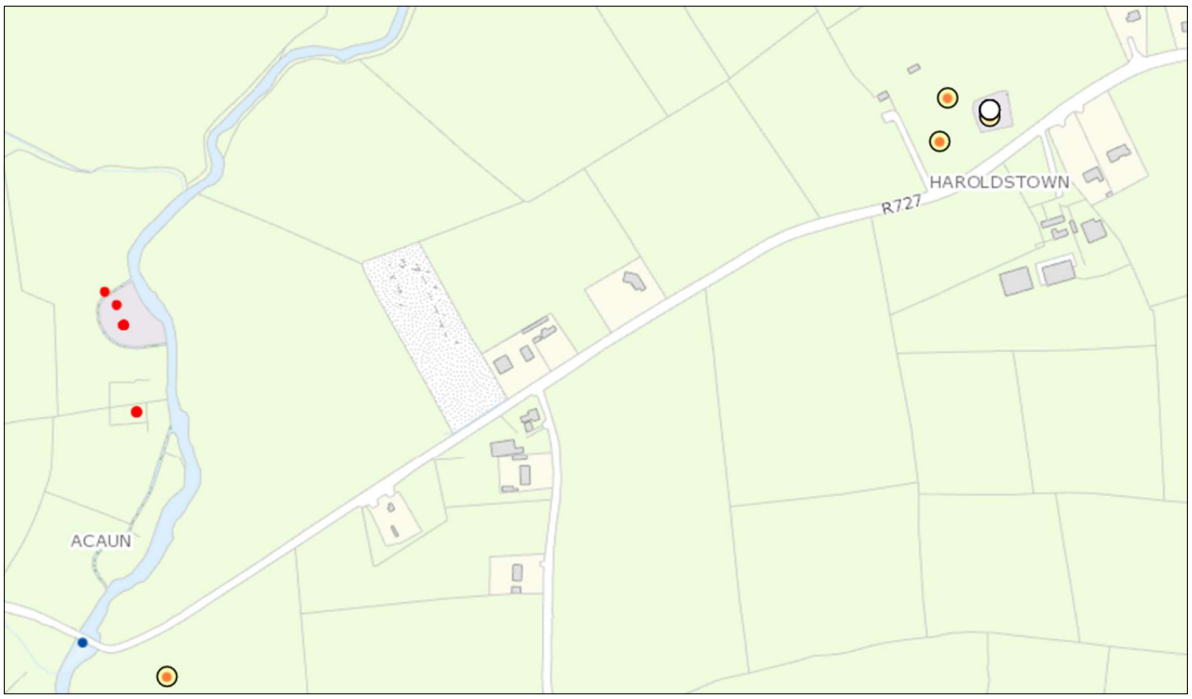
2020

County Carlow

Acaun

This site is situated just north of Tobinstown on the west bank of the Dereen River. It features a D-shaped enclosure in which both a monastery and a church once stood. The monastery is thought to have belonged to an Augustinian order, and some have suggested an overall medieval date for Acaun (O'Toole 1932, 73; Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 368). However a small cruciform stone of presumably early medieval date (see below) has been recorded in the graveyard, and it is possible that the stone church at Acaun may have likewise dated to the early medieval period. The site (as 'Nikan') is mentioned in records dating to 1200 that are preserved within the *Calendar of Ormond Deeds* (Curtis 1932, 24), which would suggest that an ecclesiastical site had likely existed here in the early medieval period. O'Keeffe posits that the Irish name of this site was either *Éacán* or *Íocán* in Irish (O'Flanagan 1934, §464); Comerford stated Acaun was derived from *athan*, meaning 'little ford' (1886, 352), and O'Toole claimed it was *Ath Cána*, 'ford of the tribute' (1938, 6). Logainm.ie gives the Irish placename as *Níocán* and the site is listed in *Monasticon Hibernicum* under its townland name of Lisnevagh.

According to O'Toole (1932, 73), the dimensions of the church are 56 ft (17.07 m) long and 20.5 ft (6.25 m) wide, surviving to a height of 4 ft (1.22 m), with traces of a nave and chancel. There was also a small building (6.40 m x 3.05 m) attached to the southwest corner, which he suggested was a (much later) priest's house (*ibid*). Unfortunately the site is now heavily overgrown, and the remains of the church and graveyard were no longer clearly visible when I visited the site in July 2016. However, as chancels were added to churches as early as the 11th century and had generally become standard in newly-built churches by the 12th century (Ní Ghabhláin 1995, 74), it is certainly feasible that the church (as described by O'Toole) dates to the early medieval period.



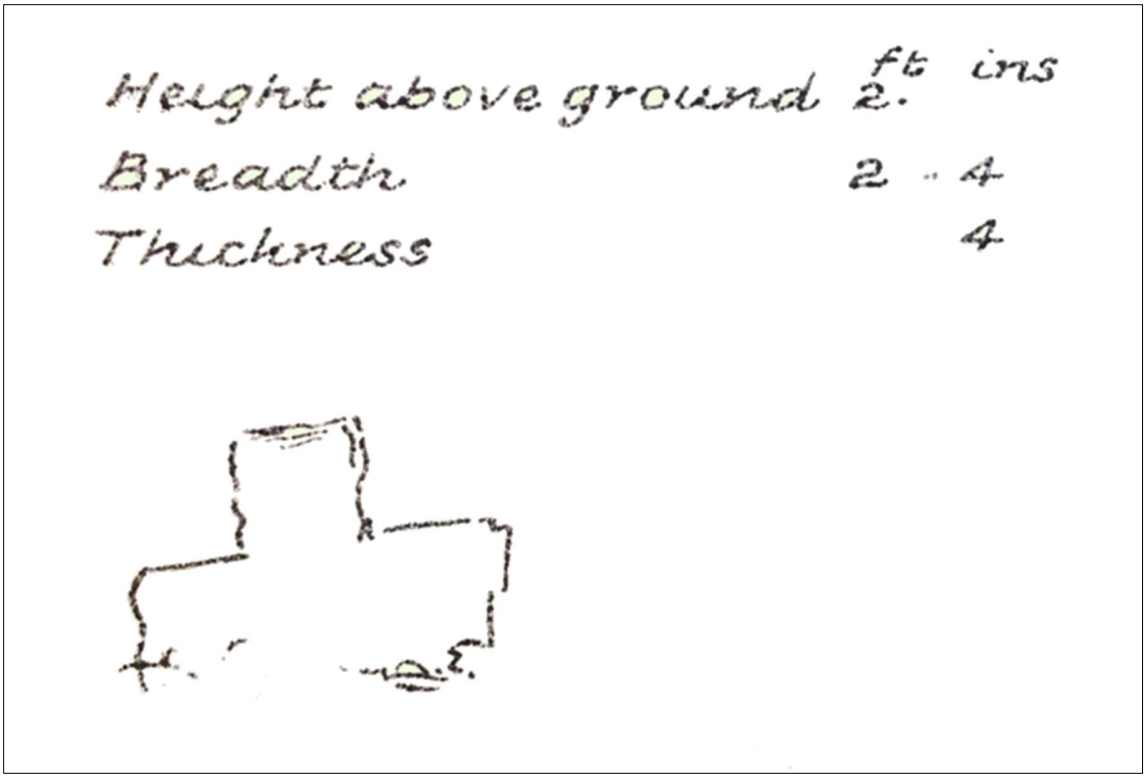
Map showing Acaun and its locality (Source: OSi)



Aerial view of Acaun church and graveyard (Source: OSi)

CW-1

Acaun



Sketch of CW-1 by Patrick O'Keeffe in 1839

COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Rathvilly

TOWNLAND: Lisnevagh

SITE NAME: Acaun Church

ITM: Unknown

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-006003

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Unknown

DIMENSIONS: Height 61cm; Width 71cm; Thickness 10 cm (O'Flanagan 1934)

FIRST RECORDED: By Patrick O'Keeffe during the ordnance survey in 1839, situated in the graveyard attached to Acaun church (*ibid*, §464).

PRESENT LOCATION: Unknown

CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: The head of an undecorated cruciform stone, half sunk in the ground (*ibid*). Presumably the cross was granite, which is the most geologically prevalent type of stone in Co. Carlow. However, the cross could not be located for examination during the course of this study.

DISCUSSION: Harbison suggested this stone may be early medieval (1992a vol. 1, 393), and given that it was found at a (possibly early) medieval site with no evidence of modern burials, this seems plausible. However, cruciform stones are difficult to date and without any other dating evidence, are often assigned more generally to the early medieval period (Chapter 4). Similarly undecorated cruciform stones include ones from Temple Brecan on Inishmore and Temple Jarlath at Tuam, both in in Co. Galway (Higgins 1987, nos. 104 and 105), Glendalough, Co. Wicklow (Leask 1974, fig. 22.21), Kilmokea, Co. Wexford (WX-21, this volume), as well as two from Kilbracken Church, Co. Carlow (see below, CW-34 and CW-35). Additionally, there are also several examples from Scotland and Wales (Fisher 2001, 56; Edwards 2013, AN17). The dimensions of this cross suggest it was somewhat larger than a few of the aforementioned examples, however, and may have originally been of a comparable size to free-standing crosses from Clonmore (see below, CW-12), Patrick's Well (TS-8, this volume), and St Berrihert's Kyle (*ibid*, TS-60). This might suggest that CW-1 could have been a boundary or termon marker (Chapter 5), though it is doubtful if the cross-head was in its original location when recorded by O'Keeffe.

Clonmore

Clonmore is located in the northeast tip of Co. Carlow, approximately 2.5 km from the border of County Wicklow. The site is divided in two by the local road that runs through it; the main graveyard, containing the majority of the early medieval remains, is a sub-rectilinear enclosure on the south side. A Church of Ireland built in 1809 (O'Neill 2008, 133) as well as one of the two high crosses, known as 'St Mogue's Cross', stand on the north side. The remains of early medieval structures are no longer extant at Clonmore, but according to Patrick O'Keeffe writing in 1839, the ruins of what may have been a small stone church, possibly early medieval, were noted on the north side of the site many years prior, near to where the modern church now stands (O'Flanagan 1934, §372–89). The graveyard at Clonmore is still an active burial ground and is regularly maintained by the local populace, though the most recent graves are on the north side. In 1975, the county engineer facilitated the construction of a stone patio in the northwest corner of the main graveyard to display nineteen carved stones which, presumably, had been hitherto lying loose around the site (Harbison 1991, 179; Wicklow People 2015). Typologically there is a variety of early medieval carved stones at Clonmore, generally ranging in date from the seventh to the twelfth century, though tidying efforts and reuse have removed them from their original context.

Clonmore was reputedly founded by Áed mac Éogan of the Uí Dúnlainge, more commonly known by the hypocoristic name, Maedóc (†656/60), sometime in the early to mid-7th century (Doherty 2002, 268; Mac Shamhráin 2009). Additionally, two other saints are also closely tied to Clonmore: Onchú *Mac ind Éicis* ('Son of the Poet') and Finán *Lobhar* ('Leper'), which, according to the 12th century glosses to the *Félire Óengusso*, are buried near the (now broken) South Cross in the main graveyard (Stokes 1905, 71, 169). The Irish annals attest to the level of prominence attained by the monastery during the early medieval period. Seven obituaries are recorded in connection with *Cluain Mór Maedhóg* in the *Annals of the Four Masters* (M771.3, M877.6, M886.3, M918.8, M920.4, M972.6 and M1052.1) and allowing for overlap, the monastery is cited as burned or plundered at least four times *(AFM* M774.9, M834.8, M835.10, M1040.10; *CS*836; *AU* U779.5, U835.5). There is also strong textual and archaeological evidence that the monastery invested heavily in reliquary foci and, if written sources from the period are to be believed, housed one of the largest collections of saints' relics in early medieval Ireland. From these written sources as well as the archaeological material, it is clear that Clonmore's ecclesiastical identity was built around its collection of relics, and that the monastery was an important (and wealthy) ecclesiastical

centre within early medieval Leinster. The first mention of this collection arguably comes from the 9th century *Martyrology of Tallaght* (Best and Lawlor 1931, 15), but the bulk of sources date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries (see Chapter 8). However, what makes Clonmore's collection particularly notable is the implication that it contained a corporeal relic from *every* saint in Ireland. This is emphasised in at least three different sources from the 9th to 12th centuries, and though this claim is undoubtedly an exaggeration, it nevertheless indicates that Clonmore was renowned during the early medieval period for possessing a substantial collection of corporeal relics. Indeed, this association with saintly relics is reflected in the moniker that, by 12th century at least, had come to be associated with the graveyard: *Relic na n-aingel*, or 'The Angels' Graveyard' (Stokes 1905, 70–1). The monastery of Clonmore slid into decline sometime after the 12th century, though it is not known precisely when this occurred; however taxation lists from the 14th and 16th centuries indicate that it did survive as a parish church under the jurisdiction of the diocese of Leighlin throughout the later medieval period (O'Neill 2008, 122, fig. 5.3), and it is again documented in the regal visitation records of 1615 (*ibid*, table 1).

The early medieval remains at Clonmore are extensive. In addition to 24 cross-carved stones, there are also three free-standing crosses, an ogham stone, lintel, three architectural fragments, two bullauns and four (possible) shrine components. Yet surprisingly, the site has not been the subject of much modern scholarly attention apart from Peter Harbison's work (1991), which has thus far stood as the principal record of the site**.** However, seven previously unrecorded carved stones were identified as part of this present study — most importantly, three probable shrine posts — and this necessitated a reassessment of not only Clonmore's archaeological remains but also its history, many aspects of which have been hitherto obscure. For ease of reference, I have used Harbison's method of organisation in this catalogue – the stones are listed in order from east to west by row, and when there is more than one stone in the same row, from south to north.



North side of Clonmore, looking east; Source: T. Ó Carragáin



Clonmore Graveyard, looking west



Stone patio, northwest corner of graveyard

CW-2

Clonmore 1



(East Face)



(West Face)

COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696383 676092

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028006

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Schist

DIMENSIONS: Height 85 cm; Width 55 cm; Thickness 13 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 181, fig. 1.1a, 1.1b)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 3

CONDITION: Heavy chipping and flaking along the top of the stone and on the dexter cross arm of the west face, though otherwise the carving is still easily visible.

DESCRIPTION: The first stone listed in Harbison's catalogue, this is an upright slab with unevenly rounded corners and top and two Latin crosses carved in relief on both faces. The east cross is less damaged than the west, with slightly rounded hollows at its intersection, whereas the west cross looks to be more squared. The crosses vary in relief between 1 cm and 2 cm.

DISCUSSION: Like all of the Clonmore stones, this slab has been removed from its original context at some point and incorporated into the neat rows of modern grave-markers, though it is unclear if it has actually been reused as a headstone or has just been placed in its current position during tidying efforts. Considering there is a cross carved on both sides, this stone may have originally served as an upright boundary or termon marker for the estate of Clonmore (see Chapter 5).

CW-3

Clonmore 2



CW-3, looking south

COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696381 676090

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028009

TYPE: Slab (shrine component?)

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 120 cm; Width 97 cm; Thickness 20 cm

FIRST RECORDED: By Walter Fitzgerald (1912/14, 138), who described the slab as 'sunk in the earth on its side' during his visit to Clonmore in 1912.

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – lying recumbently between Rows 3 and 4

CONDITION: Half of the sinister edge of the slab is broken off, though the edges are worn and moss-covered, indicating the break occurred long ago. There is also flaking or chipping on the north sinister corner of the central, raised portion of the slab. During my first visit to Clonmore on 5 July 2016, a small tree was growing out of the perforation in the slab which, after being brought to the attention of a local man, had been cut down prior to my second visit a few weeks later. Yet, when I revisited Clonmore in October 2019 to photogrammetrically record this stone, I found that the sapling had gown back quite robustly, and consequently, obtaining quality photographs of CW-3 was not possible at this time. However, the National Monuments Service and the Carlow County Museum have been notified, and measures are being undertaken to permanently remove the tree.

DESCRIPTION: This is a large, well-shaped but otherwise undecorated slab, 120 cm long and 97 cm wide, with a rectangular perforation at one end measuring 15 cm by 6 cm. The central area of the slab, 100 cm by 57 cm, rises above the periphery by a height of 5 cm.

DISCUSSION: In his catalogue entry on this slab (1991, no. 2, 181), Harbison states that the hole was 'too small to have held a large cross' and that 'its purpose…must remain a matter of conjecture', although later in his discussion he speculates that could have been a base for CW-12 (*ibid*, 191). However a mortice of 15 cm long seems a bit too small to have been functional for a cross 39 cm in width. Additionally, the dimensions of this slab are morphologically unlike other cross bases and, moreover, it is far too long (at 120 cm) to have been practical as a base for CW-12, even when it was whole (see above for cross dimensions). Rather, its rectangular perforation is the ideal size into which a human hand could be inserted and may have instead been a fenestella, a small opening through which relics can be viewed or accessed, and the slab a shrine component. Though speculative, it could be suggested that this slab may have been part of a stone sepulchre which, according to the 12th century glosses to the *Félire Óengusso*, was located near the South Cross and contained the bodily remains of two (possibly three) of Clonmore's key saints (Stokes 1905, 168–9). If such an interpretation is accepted, then CW-3 may represent archaeological evidence for a second stone shrine and reliquary at Clonmore, perhaps one of the two that were referenced in the aforementioned 12th-century glosses of the *Félire Óengusso* (for a detailed analysis and discussion, see Chapter 8).

CW-4

Clonmore 3



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696376 676091

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: None

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 32 cm; Width 37 cm; Thickness 10 cm

FIRST RECORDED: By the author during the course of fieldwork in July 2016.

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 7

CONDITION: The edges are weathered which has obscured the very top of the cross head, but the rest of the carving is in fairly good condition.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small pinkish-grey stone with an outline cross incised onto its east face and an undressed west face. The edges of the stone are greatly weathered and the corners are rounded. The dexter edge is more deteriorated than the rest of the stone, and has worn away the incised line of the cross head. The cross is otherwise clearly visible and centrally placed on the stone, with arms 23 cm long and 8 cm wide. The stem is 7 cm wide and extends the length of the stone and into the ground.

DISCUSSION: Given its unshaped edges and undressed west face, this stone was likely a recumbent grave-marker. The curve at the base of the lower sinister edge would suggest that it might be one of the corners of the stone, indicating that the slab is shallowly inserted into the ground; thus, though not all of the cross-carving is visible, it is likely to be an equal-armed outline cross. Its small size and cross-form are reminiscent of some of the 7th- to 8th-century cross-slabs found at Toureen Peakaun in Co. Tipperary, and its morphology suggests that this slab is probably among the earliest grave-markers at the site (see Chapter 4).

CW-5

Clonmore 4



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696376 676092

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: None

TYPE: Carved Stone

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 69 cm; Width 18–32 cm; Thickness 4.5–11.5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: By the author during the course of fieldwork in July 2016.

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore Graveyard – Row 7

CONDITION: Fairly good; this stone was discovered lying face down next to CW-4, which was probably protecting the carving from wear.

DESCRIPTION: This stone is irregularly shaped and undressed but for one face, which has a Greek cross with T-shaped terminals incised onto its upper half, 15 cm from the top. The cross is not perfectly equal-armed; it measures 18 cm by 16 cm.

DISCUSSION: The cross is of a simple type that is long-lived and thus not closely dateable, though like CW-4, its morphology is suggestive of relatively early date, probably between the 7th and 9th centuries (Chapter 4). It is a relatively small slab and its uncarved face is notably convex, indicating that this would have originally been a recumbent grave-marker.

CW-6

Clonmore 5



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696376 676094

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028013

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 115 cm; Width 40 cm wide; Thickness 10 cm

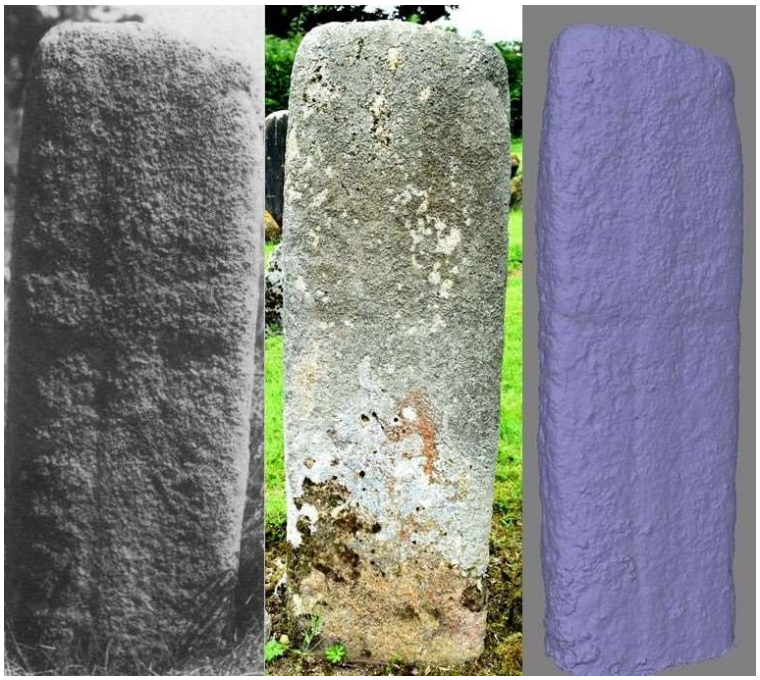
FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 181, fig. 1.3)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 7

CONDITION: Very heavily worn; the cross-carving is almost completely worn away and is only faintly visible in the right light.

DESCRIPTION: This is a tall, well-shaped slab with smoothly rounded edges and corners. A Latin cross stands out less than a centimetre in relief and spans the entirety of the west face, though it is so worn that the cross is only discernible at the correct angle and lighting. The stem is 8 cm wide and seems to fade out at the top and base.

DISCUSSION: This stone is heavily weathered, with heavy lichen cover (like the majority of the stones at Clonmore). Its large, well-shaped form indicates it was a recumbent grave-marker of the 11th or 12th century, though its slightly tapering sides might suggest it belongs to the latter (Chapter 4). Harbison (1991, 181) suggested the possibility of a human figure beneath each arm, though he also admitted that it could have been a trick of the light and indeed, the photogrammetry model of the stone conclusively demonstrates that no such figures are present.

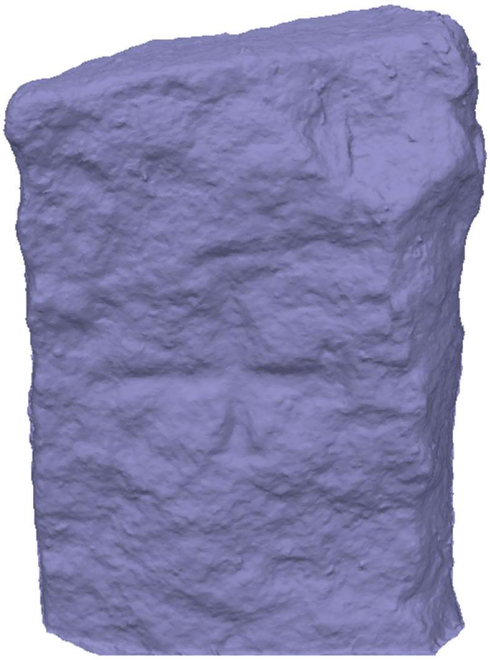


Clonmore 5 (CW-6) – Harbison's photograph in 1991; the slab in 2016; photogrammetric model, showing the cross

CW-7

Clonmore 6





COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696375 676101

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028015

TYPE: Carved Stone

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 50 cm; Width 36 cm; Thickness 10–18 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 181, fig. 1.5)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 7

CONDITION: Very worn, though cross is still visible.

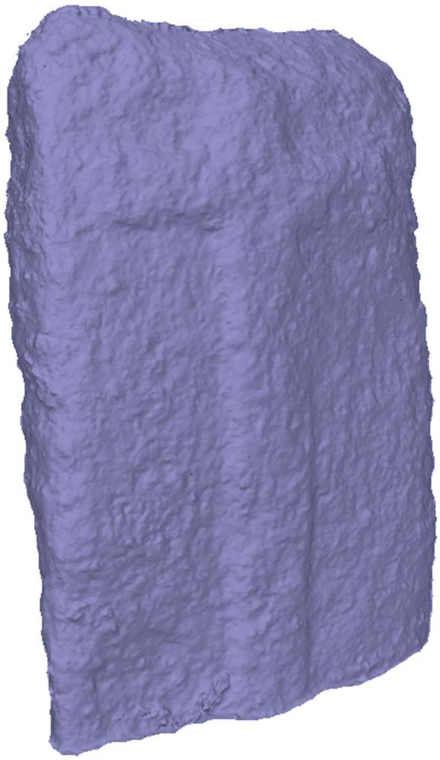
DESCRIPTION: This is a small sub-rectangular stone with a flat top and convex west face. A chunk of the top sinister corner had been broken off a long time ago, as it is likewise well-worn. The east face has an incised cross *c*. 1 cm in depth with wedge-shaped terminals, measuring 18 cm in height and 20 cm wide. It might be suggested that this was intended to be an equal-armed cross; however the intersection of the stem and arms is noticeably off-centre, with the stem skewed to the dexter side and the arms traversing its lower half.

DISCUSSION: The cross is not nearly as symmetrical as illustrated by Harbison (*ibid*, fig. 1) and indeed, its orientation seems to be at odds with its current position. The point of intersection between the stem and arms is sufficiently skewed so as to suggest that the cross may have been intended to be viewed from a different angle, and it is possible (though by no means certain) that perhaps what is now the dexter arm of the cross was originally its stem. This would mean that the stone would have originally been a recumbent grave-marker, as the stone is too narrow if intended to be viewed from this orientation to have functioned properly in an upright position. Moreover, this suggestion might be supported by its unshaped convex back, which is more indicative of recumbent, rather than upright, grave-markers. Alternately, given its sub-rectangular shape, it is also possible that it could have stood upright, albeit with a poorly executed cross. Regardless, its overall morphology and simple cross-form indicate that like CW-4 and CW-5, it is one of the earlier grave-markers at Clonmore, perhaps dating to sometime in the 7th–9th centuries (Chapter 4).

CW-8

Clonmore 7





COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696373 676096

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028016

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 74 cm; Width 47–54 cm; Thickness 20 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 181, fig. 1.6)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 8

CONDITION: Heavily weathered and covered in lichen, though carving can still be discerned.

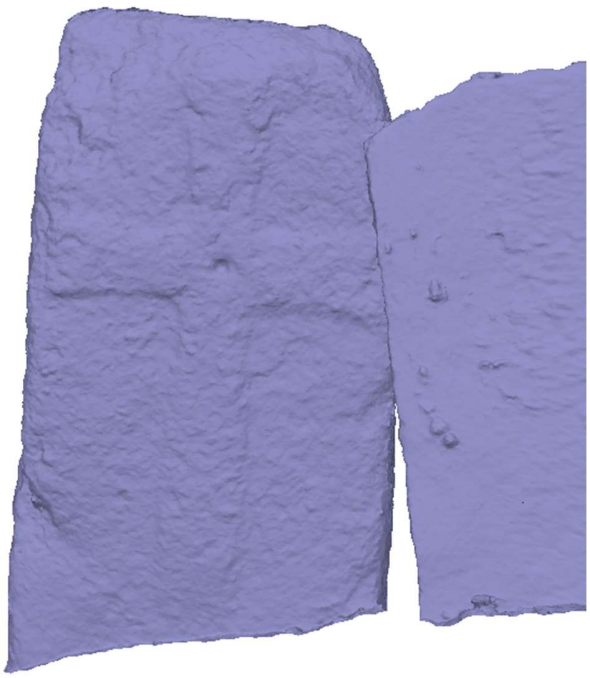
DESCRIPTION: This is a thick, rectangular cross-slab with a convex east face and a Latin cross carved in relief on the west face. The cross stands out from the rest of the stone about 1 cm, and measures 71 cm high (from the ground) and 39 cm wide. The stem is slightly thicker than the arms, extending 10 cm and 8 cm respectively, with terminals stopping short of the edges of the slab. The arms of the cross are carved particularly high on the stem.

DISCUSSION: Corlett posits that this stone could be a later medieval grave-slab that has been placed upside down, displaying the terminal cross of the shaft rather than the cross head (2003, 94–6). The arms are indeed carved unusually high on the stem, similar to the terminal cross on double-headed cross-slabs found at Templeogue, Co. Dublin (Healy 2009, no. 52), Gleann Cholm Cille, Co. Donegal (*ibid*, fig. 34h), Burgage, Co. Wicklow (Corlett 2003, fig. 5) and Castlemore, Co. Carlow (*ibid*, fig. 7a), so it is certainly possible that this could be an inverted terminal cross. However, the cross-head on CW-31 at Clonmore Castle is also very high, and so, on balance, CW-8 could just as easily be the cross-head as well. If the slab *were* inverted, it is unlikely that the slab would be intact, with the main cross buried under the surface, as Corlett (*ibid*, 96) suggested. The aforementioned comparanda vary in length between 1.70 m and 1.95 m long, and it seems highly unlikely that anyone would bury an intact monument of such size over a metre deep into the ground, let alone choose to display the terminal cross over the main one. Rather, if this stone is indeed carved with a terminal cross, it might instead be the lower half of a broken double-headed cross-slab, and its mate, if still extant, is likely to be one of the other slabs listed in this catalogue (perhaps CW-9?). Corlett suggests a tentative 13th–14th century date range for CW-8 (*ibid*, 104–5). However, based on a Northumbrian example that was dated from its inscription to 1063, Healy (2009, 61 fig. 34) has given a 10th–11th century date range for some of the same monuments as those suggested to be later medieval by Corlett (2003). Certainly, an early medieval date, perhaps between the 11th and 12th centuries, cannot be ruled out for this recumbent grave-marker.

CW-9

Clonmore 8





COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696373 676099

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028017

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 80 cm; Width 48 cm; Thickness 13 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 181, fig. 1.7)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 8

CONDITION: Though the slab is largely intact, its surface is worn almost smooth so that the carving is only visible from certain angles.

DESCRIPTION: This is a rectangular slab that is tilted slightly north, carved with a Latin cross standing *c*. 0.5 cm in relief on the east face. Additionally, there appears to be a small amount of damage to the bottom dexter edge of the stone, close to ground level, that presumably occurred long ago. The cross has slightly rounded angles, though perhaps not enough to be classified as a hollow-angled cross (see Chapter 4), and its arms expand outwards gently towards the terminals. The top of the stem likewise expands outward, though the stem seems to peter out *c*. 10 cm before the top of the stone; however, this may be due to weathering. Harbison described a 'roughly square hole' at the intersection of the stem and arms (1991, 181), but the photogrammetry model of the stone instead revealed a small circular hollow at the centre of the cross.

DISCUSSION: This was probably a recumbent grave-marker, likely of 11th- or 12th-century date. Given its close proximity, as well as their similar morphology and dimensions, this slab could possibly be the upper half of slab CW-8, if that slab did indeed display a terminal cross. This suggestion, however, is open to question (see above).

CW-10

Clonmore 9



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696373 676100

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028018

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 74 cm; Width 66 cm; Thickness 22 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 184, fig. 3.8)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 8, just east of a laurel tree

CONDITION: Heavily weathered and spotted with lichen and moss, but the design is still mostly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a wide slab with an unusual cross, carved in relief *c*. 1.5 cm out from its eastern face. It has an undressed west face and a gently rounded top. The cross is double-armed, with the top of the stem and arms composed of parallel ribs rounding out into U-shaped terminals; the bottom of the stem disappears below ground. The top arms extend 49.5 cm across, which is slightly wider than the lower arms. An arc curves behind the stem, from the top of one of the upper cross arms to the other, at a maximum width of 49 cm. A photogrammetric model of the stone shows that this arc does not, however, enclose any additional carving (*cf*. Harbison 1991, 184).

DISCUSSION: While the morphology of this stone suggests it was a recumbent grave-marker (like so many at Clonmore), its design is unique among the slabs here, and is altogether an unusual and distinct motif, displaying a type of double-armed cross which has few parallels. It is most closely reminiscent of a stone from Teach Molaise at Inishmurray in Co. Sligo, now on display at the island's schoolhouse (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, fig. 25, pl. 94), carved with a 'hammerhead' cross in false relief (*ibid*, no. 001.63). To a lesser extent, the parallel ribbing of the cross on CW-10 can also be compared to another slab at Inishmurray – an upright stone with both arms and stem each comprised of three incised parallel lines, forming a Latin cross that is attached to a horizontal base (*ibid*, fig. 23, no. 001.49). There is also a ribbed cross with U-shaped (albeit concave, rather than convex) terminals at Glendalough (Leask 1974, fig. 22.8), though this cross is not double-armed. Additionally, there is a similarly large slab with a double-armed cross from Duncrun, Co. Derry (Buick 1903, 43). Harbison points out that a double-armed cross was associated with relics of the True Cross in the later medieval period (1991, 194); however this association existed in the early medieval period as well, such as with the double-armed 12th-century metal reliquary Cross of St Euphrosyne which reputedly contained a relic of the True Cross (among others). Interestingly, a double-armed, or archiepiscopal cross, was also sometimes used to signify the rank of archbishop, and is displayed on the staff of St Patrick in a woodcutting from the *Monasticon Hibernicum* (Archdall 1873, 176–7). Though there is no written evidence to suggest that it possessed a relic of the True Cross, the presence of this particular and distinct motif on a recumbent grave-marker at Clonmore may perhaps still be of some symbolic significance, considering it was an important ecclesiastical site in early medieval Leinster, renowned for its collection of corporeal saints' relics (Chapter 8).

CW-11

Clonmore 10



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696372 676083

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028019

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 87 cm; Width 51 cm; Thickness 17 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 184, fig. 3.9)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 10

CONDITION: Very weathered, particularly around the edges of the carving, though the cross is still clearly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a well-shaped rectangular slab with rounded corners, carved with a hollow-angled Latin cross less than 1 cm in relief on its east face, while its west face is convex and unshaped. The terminals of the arms extend the width of slab, though the top of the cross stem seems to end *c*. 5 cm from of the edge of the face; its arms and stem are both 11 cm across.

DISCUSSION: This slab was undoubtedly a recumbent grave-marker, and is typologically very similar to the numerous 11th and 12th century cross-slabs found at Iniscealtra, Co. Clare (*cf*. Macalister 1916; Okashsa and Forsyth 2001; O'Leary 2015).

CW-12

Clonmore 11



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696372 676085

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028020

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 77 cm; Width 39 cm at the stem and 52 cm at the ring; Thickness 11 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 185, fig. 3.10)

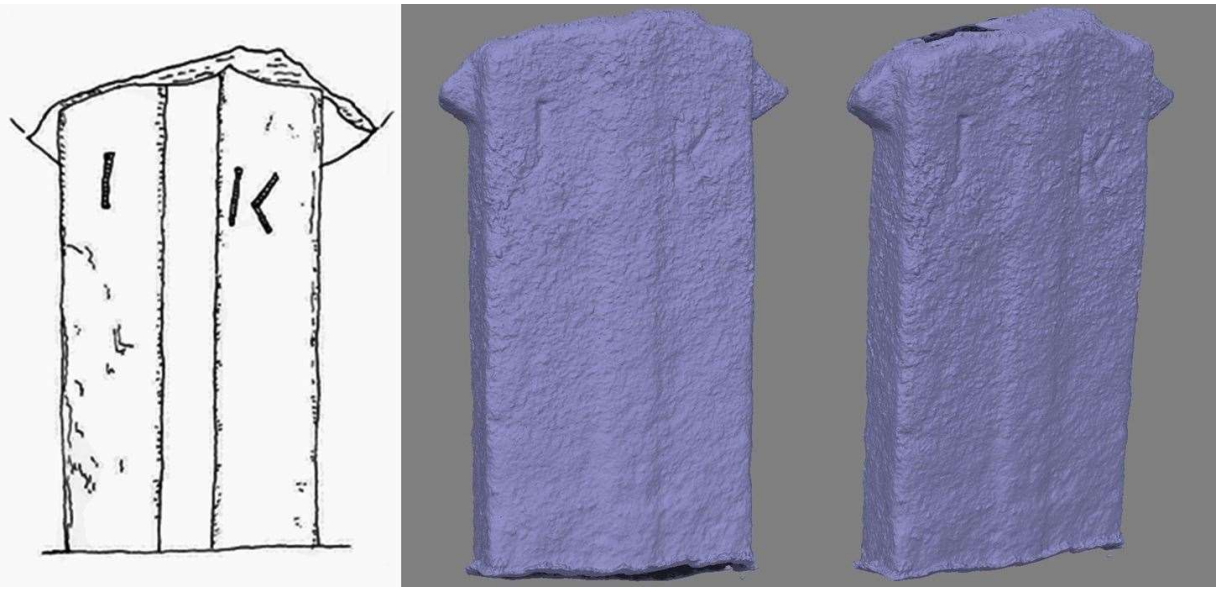
PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 10

CONDITION: Heavily worn and the head of the cross was broken off at some point long ago, but the traces of a cross stem in relief, as well as a set of much later inscribed initials, remain visible on the shaft.

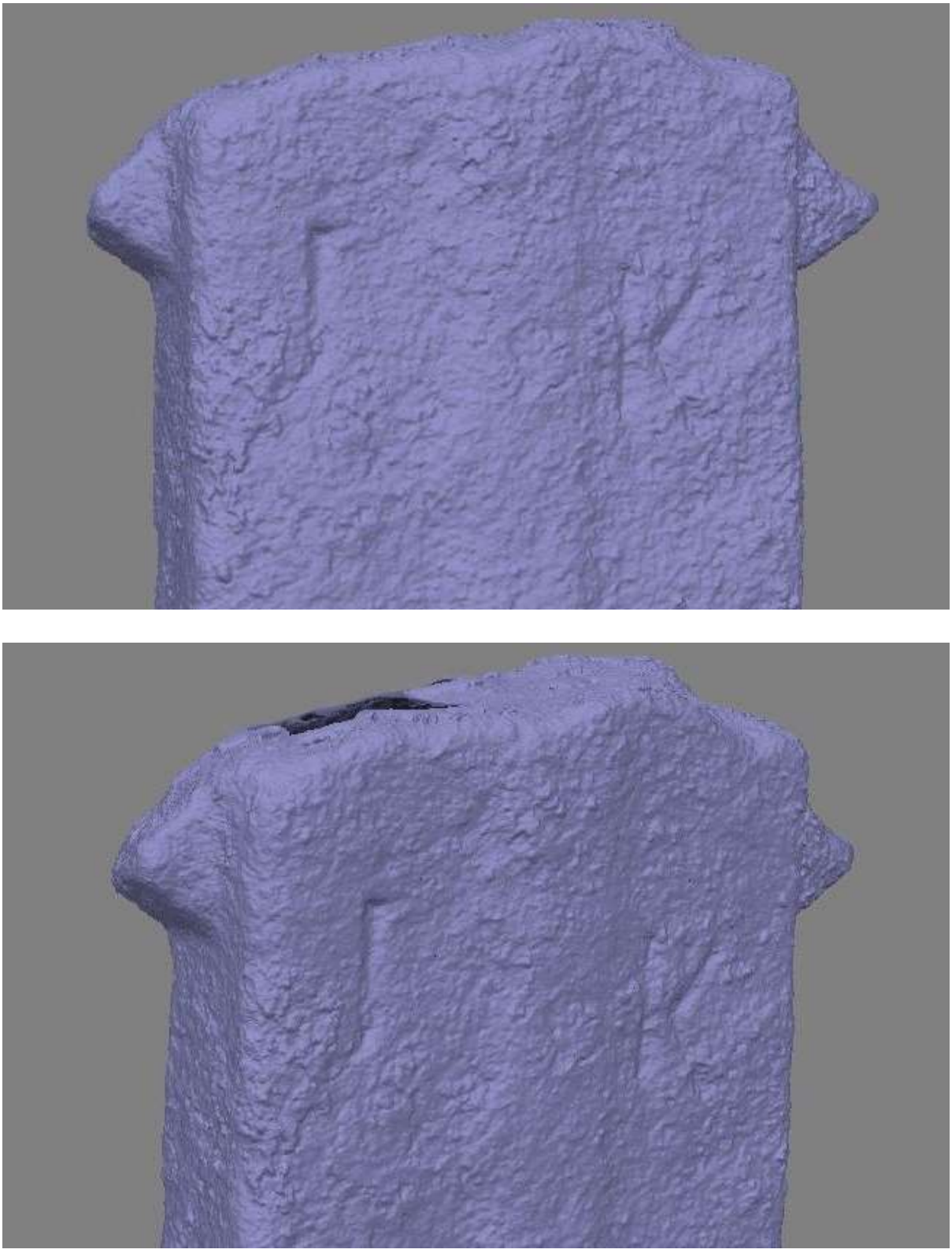
DESCRIPTION: A free-standing ringed cross, with only the shaft and the bottom of the ring remaining. Only the east face is carved, with was is presumably the stem of a Latin cross standing out *c*. 1 cm in relief from the cruciform stone. The stem is 10 cm at its widest, though there is some damage to its dexter side just parallel with the start of the ring, which is also shown in Harbison's photograph of the stone, though this is not represented in the illustration (1991, fig. 3.10, pl. IIa). The letters 'J' and 'K', presumably a set of initials, are carved onto the upper portion of the dexter and sinister sides of the east face respectively, though they are presumed to be much later than the creation of the cross.

DISCUSSION: Aside from one exception at Old Leighlin (also in Co. Carlow), solid-ringed crosses are the only type of ringed cross found in counties Wicklow, Wexford and Carlow (Kelly 1986, 66). The ring on CW-12 appears to have been a solid disc, albeit recessed from the east face so as not to obscure the cruciform shape of the stone. This would have been the face from which the cross was intended to be viewed, as there is additional relief carving on this side and the west face, while well-dressed, is solid and plain. Harbison speculated that CW-3 could have acted as a cross base for this stone (1991, fig. 2.2, 192); however the slab and its perforation (the presumed tenon) are too disproportionate in relation to the size of CW-12 to have functioned thusly (more below; see also Chapter 8). Moreover, Kelly points out that many solid-ringed crosses lacked a base (1986, 59), and as this cross is relatively small and thin, a base may indeed not have been necessary. While CW-12 is more skilfully executed by comparison, three solid-disked cruciform stones carved with an incised cross, and another with a cross in relief, are recorded in Co. Galway (Higgins 1987, figs. 47, 50, 106, pl. 46b). Two more examples with relief cross-carvings were found at Kilchenzie and Crois Bheinn in the Argyll region of Scotland (Fisher 2001, A1, A3, 280–1). Additionally, based on its relatively modest size and solid ring, CW-12 can also be compared

to a group of morphologically similar Carlow crosses at Killogan, Nurney, Orchard and Tullow, as well as crosses at Taghmon, Co. Wexford and Kilquiggin, Co. Wicklow, all of which Kelly dates to the late 9th–10th centuries (1986, pls. 6–8, 66). CW-12 could have erected for a variety of purposes; though it is presumably not *in situ*, it seems probable that it originally served as a focus for prayer and devotions (both private and ritualised), and perhaps may have been situated on a termon or boundary marker as well, given that it was only decorated on one side (Chapter 5). The initials, which epigraphically can be suggested to date to the 19th century (Harbison 1991), represent definitive modern reuse of the cross, presumably as a headstone, and probably long after the cross head was broken off (for more on its possible early medieval functions and later reuse, see Chapter 5).



Harbison's 1991 illustration of CW-12; photogrammetry model of CW-12, showing the letter 'J' on the dexter side of the stone



Angled close-ups of the photogrammetry model of CW-12, showing in more detail the slight 'hook' at the end of the dexter initial, indicating that it is indeed a 'J', not an 'I'.

CW-13

Clonmore 12



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696369 676089

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: None

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 38–41 cm; Width 22 cm; Thickness 5–8 cm

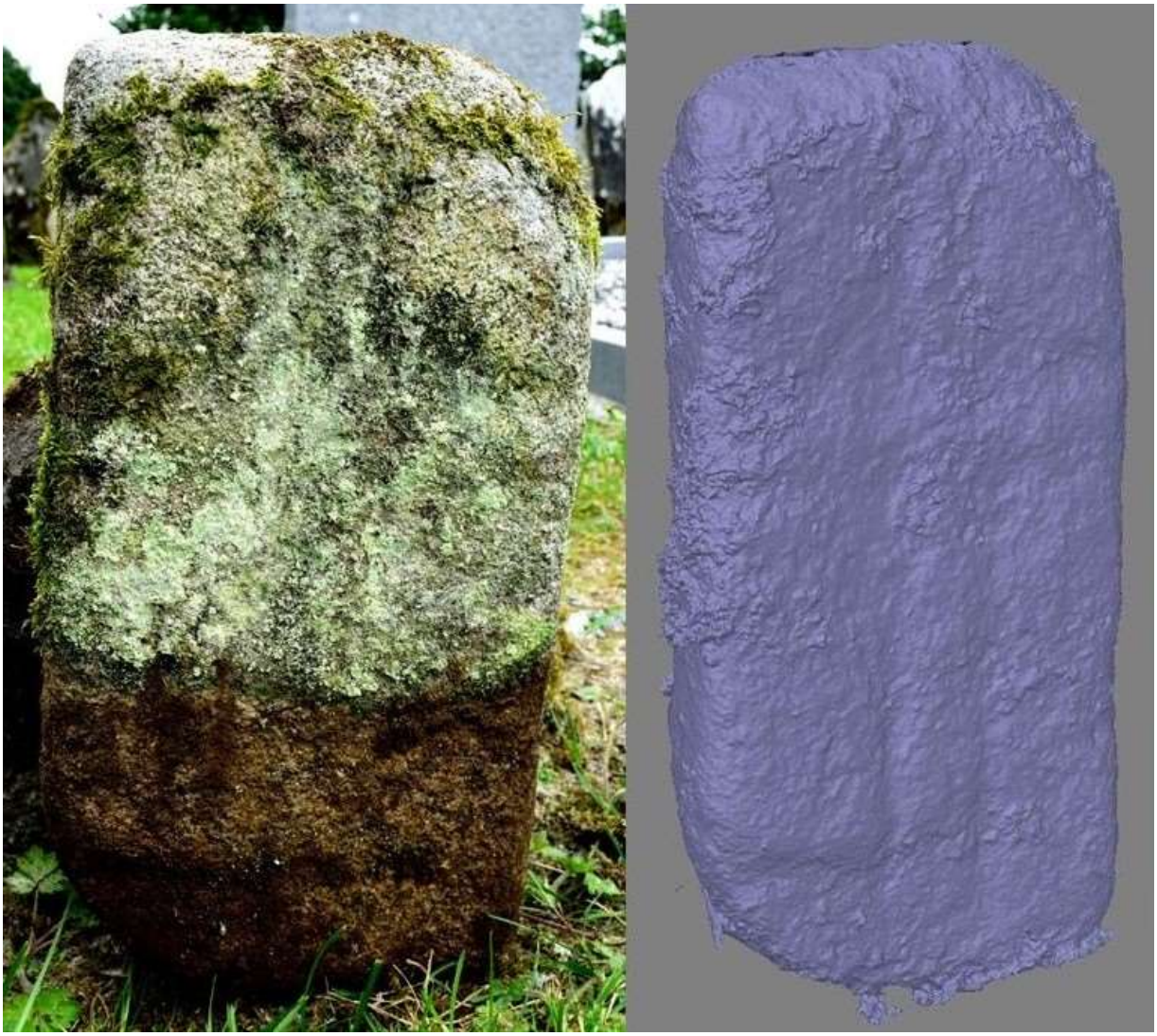
FIRST RECORDED: By the author during the course of fieldwork in July 2016.

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 11, *c*. 4.5 m south of ogham stone (CW009-028021)

CONDITION: Heavily weathered and covered in lichen, with the cross worn almost entirely away. Both the top sinister corner as well as the lower dexter may have suffered some damage long ago as they are much more rounded than their opposing corners, and portions appear to be missing.

DESCRIPTION: This small slab has a ringed Latin cross carved in very low or, more likely, false relief, spanning its east face; the west face has a thick ridge of stone *c*. 28–30 cm wide down its centre, though this feature is probably natural, rather than intentionally shaped. The stone is sub-rectangular with straight sides and fairly angular upper dexter and lower sinister corners, though the opposite corners are very rounded, probably due to damage sustained in the past. The cross is so badly eroded that it now looks more like a smeared impression on the stone than a carving, and the ring was only discovered when a strong LED light was shined on the stone at night from an oblique angle. Indeed, while the cross is clearly visible in the photogrammetry model, the ring is still just a faint impression, and only becomes clear with the application of oblique lighting.

DISCUSSION: I noticed this slab during the course of fieldwork; it was leaning heavily to the east, which would have obscured its carving from a casual observer. As the bottom third of the stone was only loosely placed in the ground, I was able to gently remove it for analysis and replace it again without disturbing the surrounding soil. This small slab would have most likely been a recumbent grave-marker, given its shape and that the cross spans the width and breath of the entire stone. Simple ringed crosses of this type are fairly common in Ireland and Britain, and CW-13 may date to the 8th–10th centuries (Chapter 4).



CW-13, showing the faintness of the cross design and ring

CW-14

Clonmore 13





COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696366 676096

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028023

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 78–87cm; Width 38 cm; Thickness 11cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 186, fig. 3.15)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 12

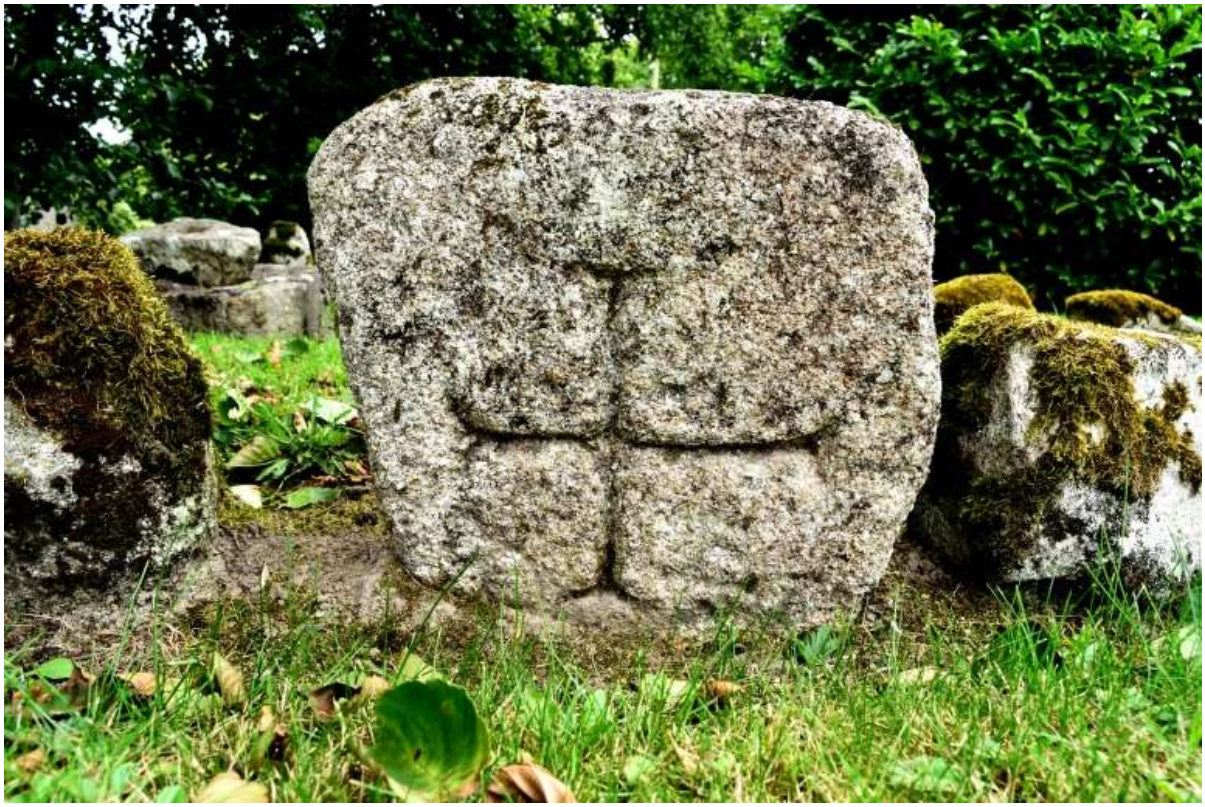
CONDITION: The slab is in fairly good condition albeit very worn. The cross is still mostly visible, though it is difficult to see some details, particularly on the lower half of the slab.

DESCRIPTION: This is a sub-rectangular slab, perhaps roughly shaped, with a ringed hollow-armed Latin cross carved *c*. 1–1.5 cm in relief on the west face. At the centre of the cross is a lozenge-shaped depression; the cross arms extend the width of the slab and its stem stops *c*. 10 cm short of the top of the stone, widening towards the base from 7 cm at the top and just below the ring, to 9.5cm at ground level.

DISCUSSION: Like the majority of cross-slabs at Clonmore, this grave-marker would have originally been recumbent. The addition of the lozenge motif, thought to represent Christ as Logos, or the Word of God incarnate (see Chapter 7), adds an extra layer of Christological symbolism to CW-14, though the photogrammetry model of the stone has shown that there is not a human figure under the right arm, as speculated by Harbison (1991, 186). Given its iconography and relatively large size, this slab probably dates from sometime in the 10th–12th centuries (Chapter 4).

CW-15

Clonmore 14



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696365 676100

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028024

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 35 cm; Width 44 cm; Thickness 15 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 186, fig. 3.16)

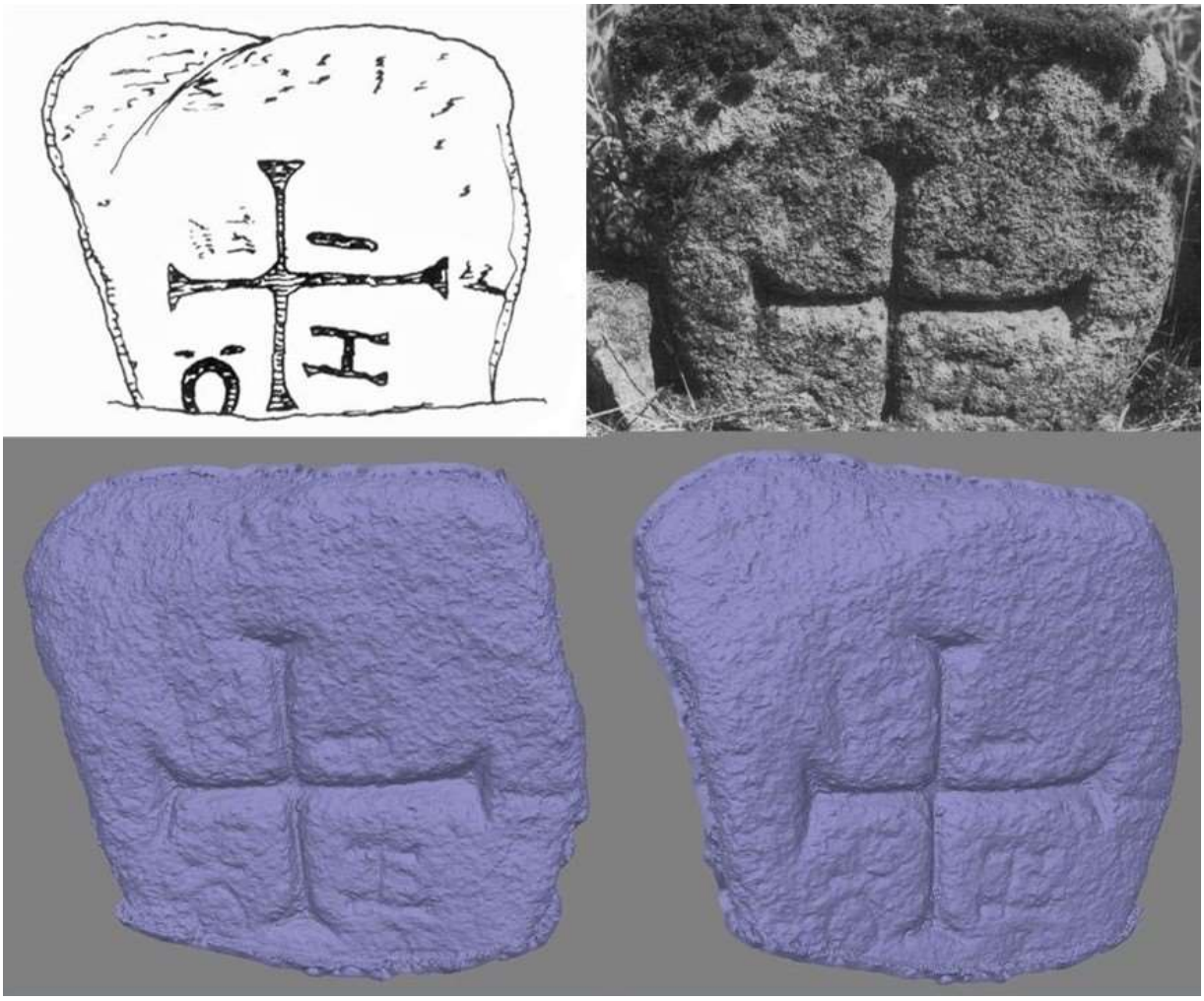
PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 12

CONDITION: Good; the cross is deeply carved and clearly visible, with no apparent damage to the stone itself.

DESCRIPTION: This slab bears a deeply incised linear cross with a lozenge-shaped hollow at its centre and markedly expanding, wedge-shaped terminals on the west face; the east face is uncarved. The cross is roughly equal-armed, with arms spanning 27 cm and stem 25 cm, incised with V-shaped cuts *c*. 1.5 cm deep. However the stem is skewed so that the right arm is 5 cm longer than the left. Additionally, a vertical line is shown on the photogrammetry model, running from the end of the sinister cross terminal to the edge of the stone, which is otherwise not clearly visible, and only vaguely represented on Harbison's illustration (*cf*. 1991, fig. 3.16; also see below). The letters 'H' and 'I' are inscribed horizontally below and above the right cross arm respectively, and what looks to be another initial (perhaps an 'O' or 'C') is inscribed below the left arm though a portion of the carving is obscured beneath the ground. Interestingly, what was illustrated in Harbison's catalogue (*ibid*) as two horizontal, parallel depressions below the dexter cross arm could possibly be another 'H'. Furthermore, there is an additional vertical score just above the dexter cross arm which may also be part of the inscription, though this suggestion is speculative as the mark is difficult to discern clearly.

DISCUSSION: Albeit much more subtle than the one on CW-14, this small recumbent grave-marker also features the Christological lozenge motif (see above), though like CW-7, the angle of this cross seems to be at odds with its current position. Moreover, from the orientation of the letters, the stone would have been recumbent at the time of its inscription as it could not have stood upright on either of what are now its dexter or sinister edges without obscuring both the inscription and the cross. Based on the extra length of the sinister cross arm, Harbison suggested that this was originally the stem of the cross, and that the stone was later inscribed with the initials 'H. I.', indicating both inscription and cross were intended to be viewed facing what is now its sinister edge (*ibid*, 186). This may certainly be true of the cross and indeed its design, with its 'spike' extending from the base of the cross stem, could be skeuomorphic of a metal reliquary cross, the pointed tip of which was meant to be inserted into a leather belt during processionals (Lionard 1961, 139). If such an interpretation is accepted, then significantly, both CW-10 and CW-15 display iconography associated with the possession of relics and reliquaries (see above). However, returning to the inscriptions, it seems more probable that the 'H' and 'I' are instead two of the

three letters that form the popular Christogram 'I. H. S.' and therefore, we could expect to see an 'S' on the slab were the rest of it unearthed. If so, this would mean that the inscription should be read from the opposite orientation to that of the cross, confirming that it is a later addition (Chapter 8). The carvings on the dexter side are a bit more enigmatic. The inscription appears to continue below ground level but, without unearthing the rest of the slab, we cannot be sure to what extent it continues, though it is likewise presumed to be commemorative in nature.

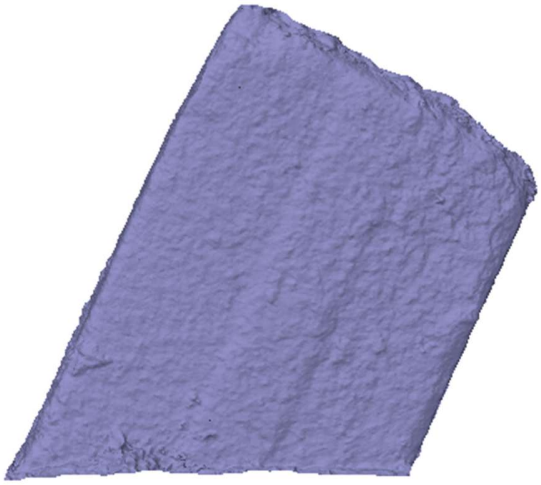


Clockwise from top left – Harbison's illustration of CW-15; Harbison's photograph from 1991; the photogrammetry model of CW-15, showing possible second 'H' on lower dexter quadrant and more importantly, the potentially skeuomorphic 'tip' of a reliquary cross on the sinister side.

CW-16

Clonmore 15





COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696362 676099

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028025

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 80 cm; Width 56 cm; Thickness 28 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 188, fig. 3.17)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 15

CONDITION: Heavily worn and covered with moss and lichen. Furthermore, though the carving is still visible, it is more difficult to discern on the top half of the stone.

DESCRIPTION: This is a very thick, well-shaped rectangular slab with a rib 14 cm wide and carved *c*. 0.5 cm in relief running up the centre of the east face. This is presumably the stem of a Latin cross, thus this stone is the lower fragment of a larger slab. The sides, top and east face of the stone are well dressed; the west face looks to be only roughly dressed but this could also be due to weathering.

DISCUSSION: This stone is significantly thicker than almost all the others at Clonmore, which raises the possibility that it could perhaps be the lower fragment of free-standing monument such as a cross. It is well-shaped with (presumably) the stem of a cross in relief carved at the centre of the east face, in a similar manner to cross CW-12 (see above). However, it is also more than twice as thick as CW-12 as well, so its notable thickness may not necessarily be an indicator that the stone was set upright. Furthermore, if the west side of this stone is only roughly dressed in comparison to the rest of the slab, this may instead suggest that the stone was intended to lie recumbent, and thus is probably a grave-marker. Thicker cross-slabs are usually typological of 13th and 14th century grave-markers (Maher 1992), so it is possible that this stone is late; however later medieval grave-markers are also usually much more narrow and taper towards the lower end of the stone, whereas CW-16 is straight-sided and its width in keeping with the large, recumbent slabs typical of the 11th and 12th centuries. Taken overall, its morphology would suggest that this is the lower fragment of an 11th or 12th century recumbent grave-marker, and given its well-shaped top face, inverted so that its broken end is below ground.

CW-17

Clonmore 16



CW-17 looking west; looking north

COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696363 676097

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: None

TYPE: Shrine post

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 87 cm; Width 41 cm; Thickness 22 cm

FIRST RECORDED: By the author during the course of fieldwork in July 2016.

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 15

CONDITION: Weathered and covered in lichen; there appears to have been a small amount of damage to the top of the stone on the south-west corner.

DESCRIPTION: This is an undecorated, minimally dressed slab with straight sides and a curved top. Its north and south sides are carved with U-shaped grooves, 4.5–7 cm wide and 2 cm deep.

DISCUSSION: The morphology of this slab indicates that was probably a shrine post (see Chapter 8), and is presumed to be a component of the same structure as CW-19 and CW-30. The orientation of its slots, on opposing rather than abutting sides, however, indicates that CW-17 was instead a central post of a composite stone shrine. Similar arrangements are known from Papil and St Ninians in the Shetlands (Thomas 1971; 1998), though these posts are well-shaped and ornamented. A more direct parallel comes from four shrine posts that have been built into the walls of the South Church at Monasterboice, Co. Louth (for figure, see Chapter 8). Though only one side is visible on three of the posts, both sides can be seen on the fourth, which definitely possesses two slots on opposing sides like this slab, CW-17, as well as CW-30 (see below).

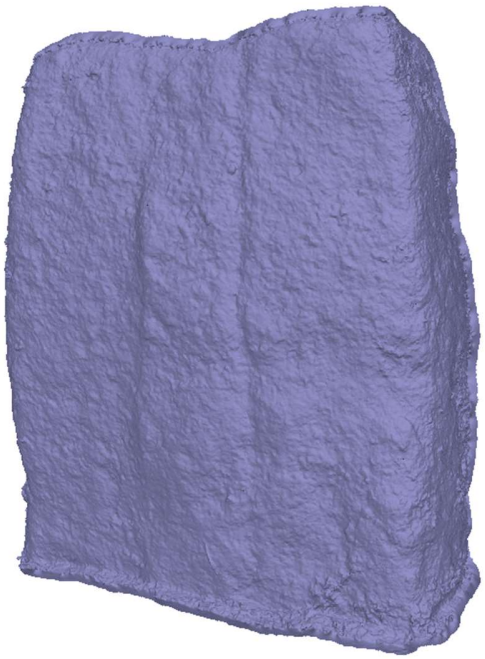


CW-17: Photographs of the shrine post, looking north and west respectively. Photogrammetry model showing deep slots on south and north sides respectively.

CW-18

Clonmore 17





COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696359 676095

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: None

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 67 cm; Width 51 cm; Thickness 13 cm

FIRST RECORDED: By the author during the course of fieldwork in July 2016.

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 16

CONDITION: Heavily weathered and spotted with lichen and moss. A dip in the surface of the stone on its top face may be natural or could possibly be due to damage, albeit occurring in antiquity. The carved east surface of the stone is worn almost smooth so that the cross stem is barely visible

DESCRIPTION: This stone is sub-rectangular (albeit its sides are still somewhat irregular), and seems to only be dressed on its east face. The shaft of what is presumably a Latin cross is carved on the east face in low relief, *c*. 0.5 cm, and tapers from 14 cm at its base to 11 cm at the top.

DISCUSSION: As with CW-16 and, most likely, CW-8 as well, this slab is probably the lower (probably upside down) portion of a large, recumbent 11th- or 12th-century grave-marker.

CW-19

Clonmore 18



Facing northeast and northwest respectively

COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696358 676100

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: None

TYPE: Shrine post

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 66 cm; Width 21–33 cm; Thickness 23 cm

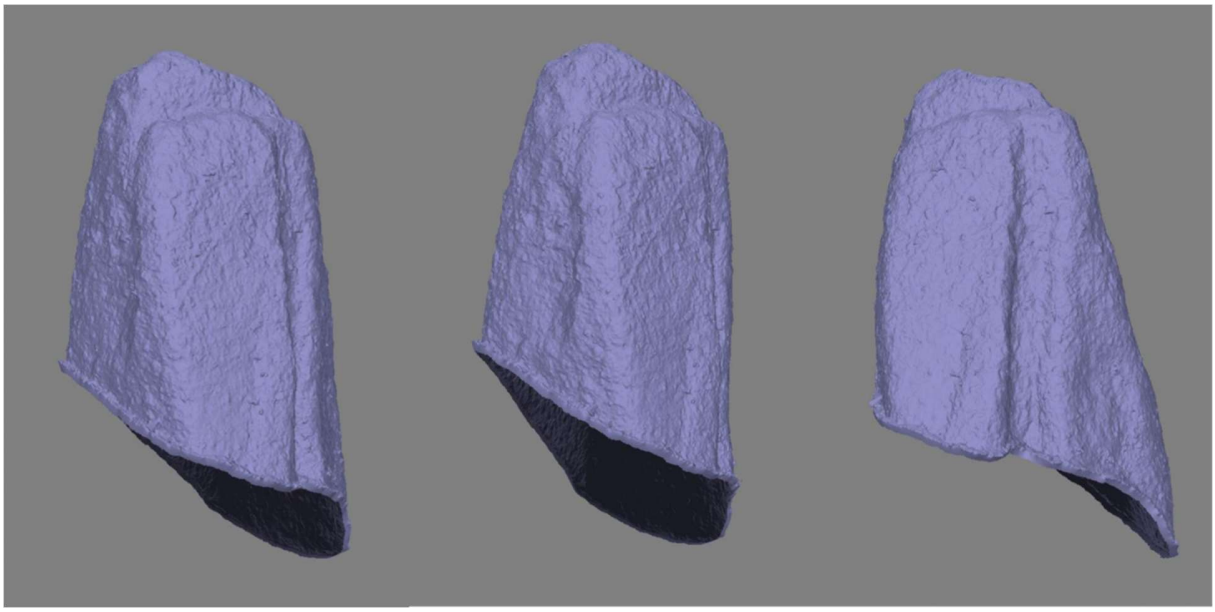
FIRST RECORDED: By the author during the course of fieldwork in July 2016.

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – 1.1 m south of the stone patio

CONDITION: Weathered and covered in moss and lichen, but otherwise in fairly good condition, though there appears to have been some chipping along its top northern edge.

DESCRIPTION: This is an undecorated pillar which tapers towards the top, and is dressed on all four sides so that it is roughly trapezoidal in shape at ground level. However, the east side retains a convex protrusion, and so may have been less carefully shaped than the other three sides. There is a U-shaped slot, running vertically for 43 cm from the ground, 7 cm wide, and 3.5 cm deep, on the south-eastern side. Additionally, an indentation, 22 cm high, 6 cm wide, and *c*. 1 cm deep, on the western face may be a very shallow second slot or, more likely, is the result of wear, presumably from an abutting stone panel.

DISCUSSION: The morphology of this stone indicates that it was the corner post of a composite stone shrine, and given its rudimentary execution, perhaps erected over the original location of an important (albeit now empty) grave, presumably that of Clonmore's founding saint (see above; also Chapter 8). Its form is comparable to several simple undecorated shrine corner posts found at Church Island (Valentia Harbour) and Kildreenagh, Co. Kerry, Kilnaruane, Co. Cork, Kiltartan, Co. Galway and Iona in Scotland (O'Kelly 1957–9, pl. XIVb; Herity 1993, fig. 23.5; Thomas 1971, 151–8; Ó Carragáin 2003, 143, n. 25; Fisher 2001, 59).



Various angles of CW-19, showing a distinct U-shaped slot as well as an indentation on the adjacent face

CW-20

Clonmore 19



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696355 676096

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028027

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 112–16 cm; Width 51 cm; Thickness 25 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 188, fig. 6.19)

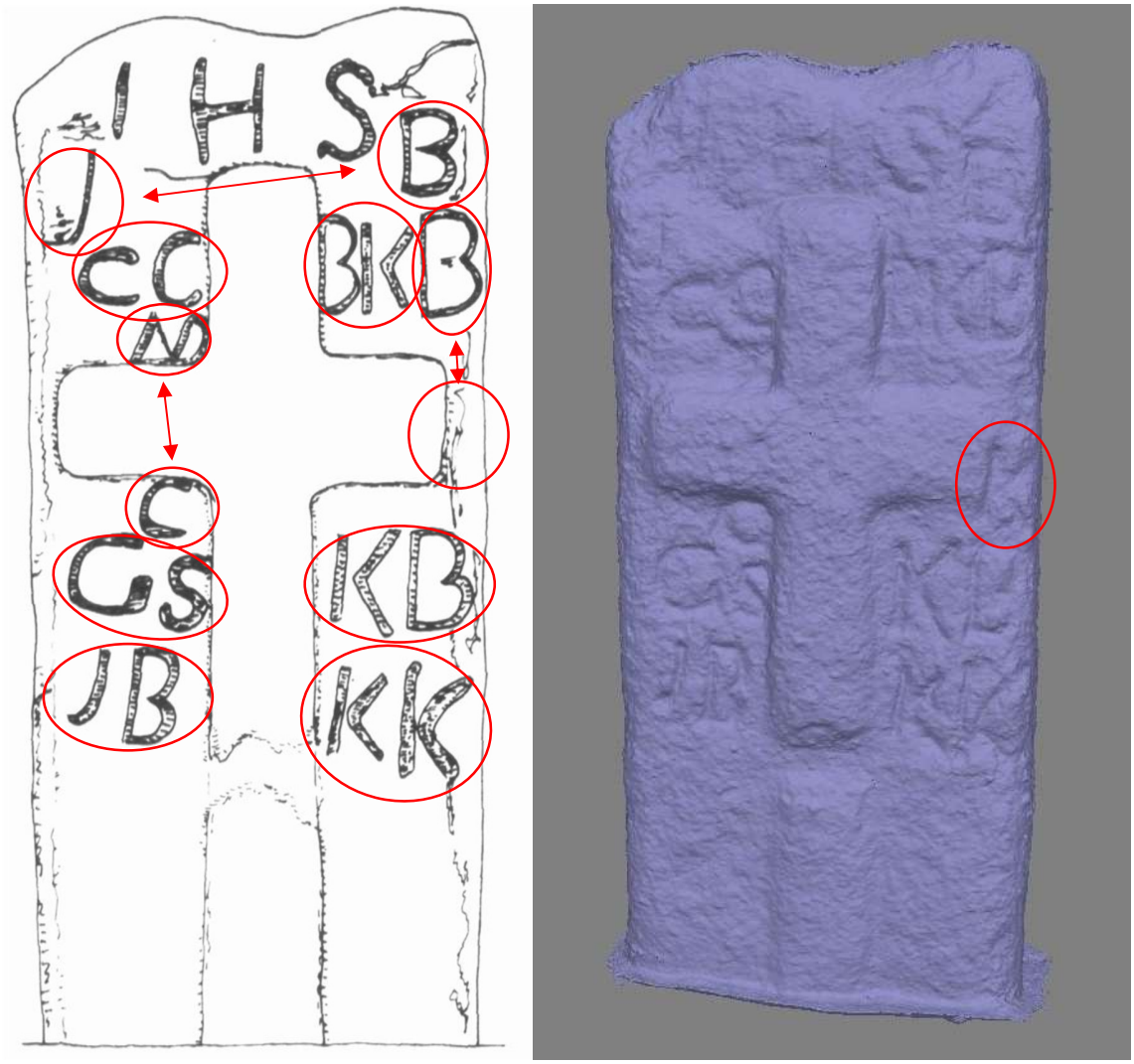
PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard, enclosed stone patio – Row 1

CONDITION: Very weathered with heavy lichen and moss cover. The cross is still visible, though there appears to be some damage to its stem. The incised letters are in varies stages of legibility, though most are in poor condition.

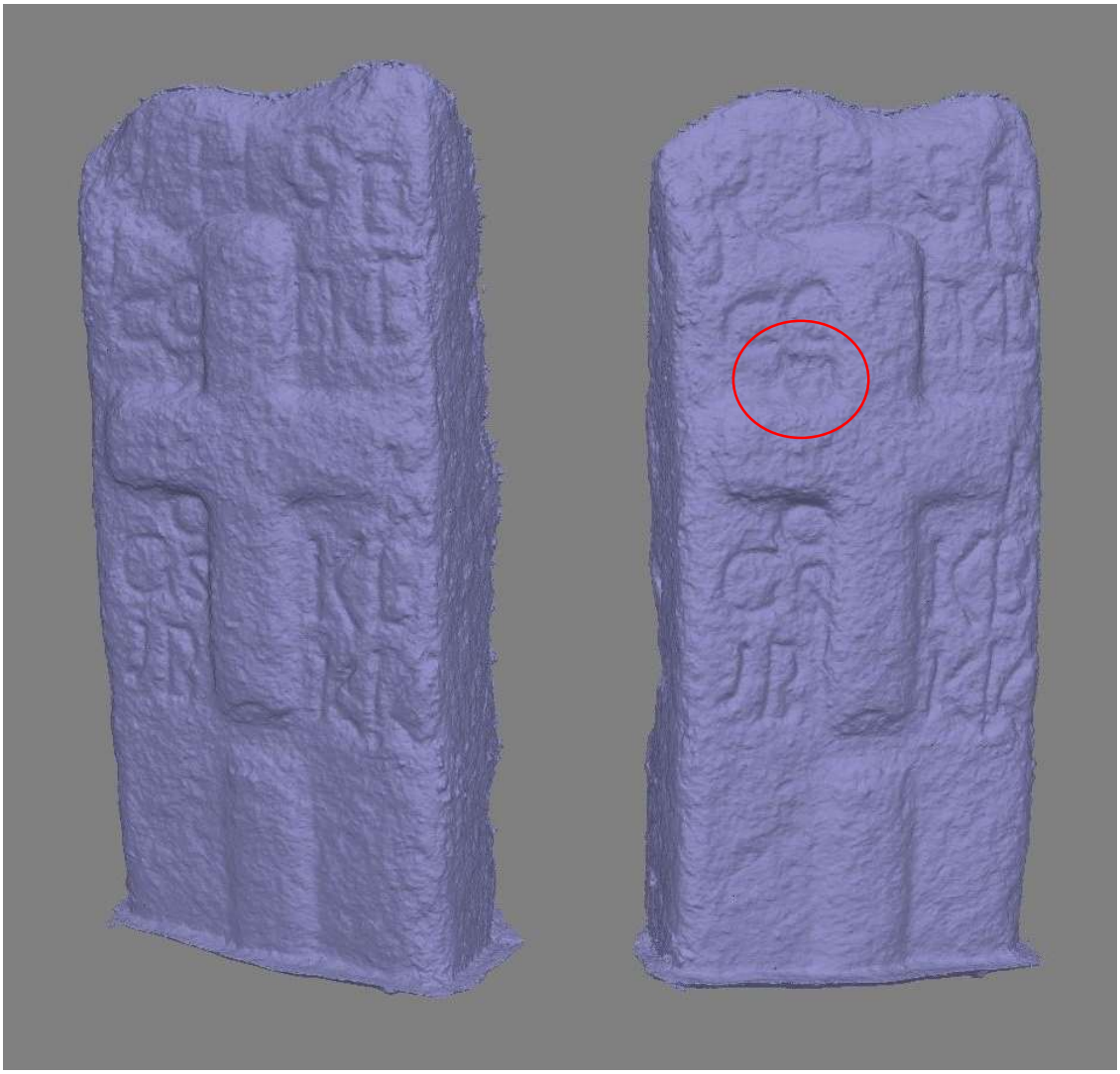
DESCRIPTION: This stone has straight sides and a dressed east face. The west face is rough and undressed; the top of the stone is thinner than the rest of the slab and significantly uneven, suggesting it may have suffered a break at some point long ago. A Latin cross is carved in *c*. 1–2 cm relief on the east face; its arms span 40 cm and the stem measures 98 cm from its top to where it is set into the stone patio, though there is damage to the stem beginning about 27 cm up from the ground that has removed the next 10 cm of the stem above. The arms and stem are 12 cm in width, and intersect at approximately right angles. Much of the rest of the eastern face is covered in 19th century inscriptions, presumably sets of initials, apart from the Christogram 'I. H. S.' which centred on the stone just above the cross. Tenacious moss growth obscures much of the lettering on CW-20, making accurate physical inspection and analysis of the carvings difficult. However photogrammetric recording of the stone greatly enhanced legibility, and of the inscriptions that can be read with relative certainty, from top to bottom and left to right on the dexter side of the stone, are the letters J, C, C, G, S, J and B. On the sinister side, B, B, K, B, K, B, K and K. There is also possibly another 'K' at the terminal of the sinister cross arm, and perhaps a 'C' (or 'O'?) just underneath the crux of the stem and dexter cross arm. The 'N' illustrated by Harbison just above this is not conclusively evident on the photogrammetry model; this portion of the stone looks like it could instead be an area pitting or damage. Alternately, this could also be due to the effects weathering (perhaps the letter was not inscribed as deeply?) because if the model is viewed from an oblique angle from the dexter side, marks appear on this section of the stone that may be indicative of an inscribed 'M' (or perhaps 'N'), though this is not clear enough to confirm.

DISCUSSION: Like most of the slabs at Clonmore, this was almost certainly an 11th–12th-century recumbent grave-marker, and is very similar in style to the ones found at Iniscealtra (see above; also Chapter 4). The prolific inscriptions on the face of the slabs are undoubtedly later, and like

CW-12, CW-15, CW-24 and CW-29, most likely date to the 19th century (Harbison 1991). If the letters are initials, then they commemorate at least six individuals, though very likely seven or eight, and possibly as many as nine (if there is indeed a 'K' inscribed at the end of the sinister arm). Interestingly, the inscriptions also indicate that this slab was previously buried much deeper than it is today – the letters stop abruptly *c*. 77 cm from the top of the stone, just at the start of the damaged portion of the stem (which makes one wonder how it was damaged). Moreover, several initials are squeezed into whatever space was still available on the stone, so at least some (if not all) of these initials were carved in succession rather than at the same time; yet despite this overcrowding, they all respect the cross-carving. Though speculative, it could also be suggested that this stone was reused multiple times by the same kin-group as the frequent repetition of 'B' as the second initial could represent a shared surname between those commemorated on the stone.



Harbison's illustration of CW-20, and photogrammetry model of the stone, showing potential combinations of inscribed initials, including a possible 'K' at the end of the sinister cross arm

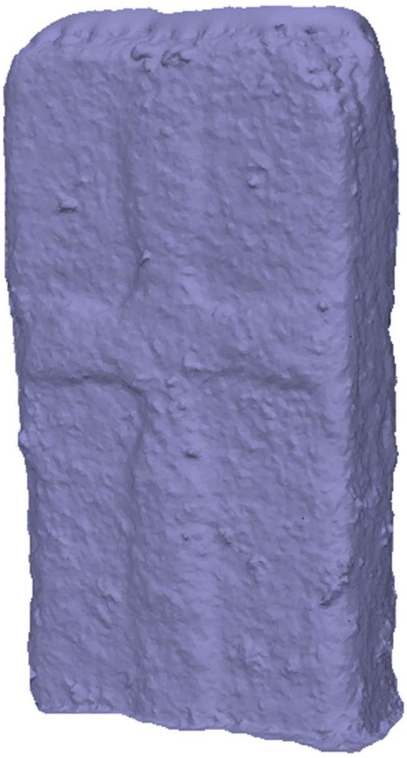


Oblique angles of CW-20; note marks in the right photograph at the crux of the upper dexter arm which might be indicative of a very weathered 'M' or 'N'

CW-21

Clonmore 20





COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696355 676097

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028028

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 64 cm; Width 38 cm; Thickness 13 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 188, fig. 6.20)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard, enclosed patio – Row 1

CONDITION: Heavily weathered and spotted with lichen and moss, though the cross is still faintly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a rectangular slab with a hollow-angled Latin cross, 59 cm high and 33 cm wide, standing out less than 1 cm in relief on the east face. Harbison speculated that the cross might have been ringed (1991, 188); however the photogrammetry model shows that it was not.

DISCUSSION: As with most of the cross-slabs at Clonmore, this was likely an 11th- or 12th-century recumbent grave-marker; its hollow-armed cross is likewise similar to many of the slabs typical of the Saints' Graveyard at Iniscealtra.

CW-22

Clonmore 21



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696355 676101

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028030

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 77 cm; Width 40 cm; Thickness 6–10 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 188, fig. 6.22)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard, enclosed patio – Row 1

CONDITION: The stone is heavily covered in lichen albeit intact and though the cross is still clearly visible, the stem is particularly weathered and becomes more difficult to discern lower down on the slab.

DESCRIPTION: The stone is sub-rectangular, though its edges are slightly curved to one side, which could suggest they were not shaped (or else only lightly so). The east face is carved with a simple Latin cross, 1 cm in relief. It measures 72 cm high and 37 cm wide, the terminals stopping just short of the edges of the stone. The arms are *c*. 6.5cm thick and the stem wides from 7 cm at the cross head to 9 cm at ground level.

DISCUSSION: As with most of the cross-slabs at Clonmore, this was likely an 11th- or 12th-century recumbent grave-marker.

CW-23

Clonmore 22



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696355 676102

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028031

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 124 cm; Width 46 cm; Thickness 13 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 188, fig. 6.23)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard, enclosed patio – Row 1

CONDITION: Very worn, but the cross is still visible. There appears to have been some damage to the top dexter corner of the stone, albeit occurring sometime in antiquity as it is well-weathered.

DESCRIPTION: This is a tall stone with well-shaped sides, a rounded top and undressed west face. The east face is carved with a hollow-armed Latin cross, raised *c*. 1 cm in relief. The cross is 1.20 m in height from patio level, and its arms span the width of the stone.

DISCUSSION: This, like the majority of the Clonmore slabs, was likely an 11th- or 12th-century recumbent grave-marker, though its slightly tapering form suggests it probably belonged to the latter (Chapter 4). There is some unusual colouring on the stone; the bottom two-thirds are much lighter than the rest. Perhaps, like CW-20, this may indicate that CW-23 was also more deeply buried in the ground prior to being set up in the stone patio.

CW-24

Clonmore 23



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696353 676102

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028032

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 43 cm; Width 25 cm; Thickness 15 cm

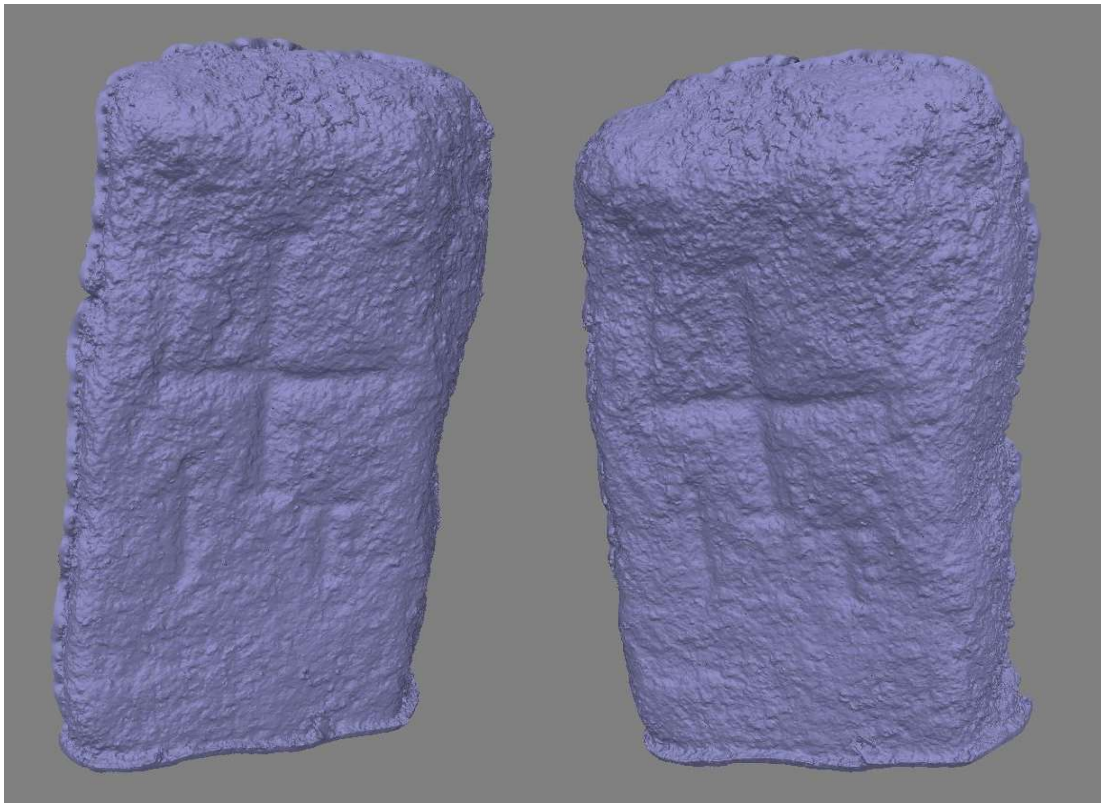
FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 188, fig. 6.24)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard, enclosed patio – Row 2

CONDITION: Very weathered, with heavy moss and lichen cover. Its cross and inscribed initials are very worn, and details difficult to make out, even on the photogrammetry model.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, unshaped stone albeit for its east face, which is also incised with a roughly equal-armed cross. It has T- or possibly wedge-shaped terminals and measures 17 cm high by 16 cm wide. A few centimetres below the cross arms, on either side, are probably the letters 'I' and 'T', though this cannot be conclusively stated as the stone is very heavily weathered.

DISCUSSION: The morphology of this stone is more that of a small pillar than a slab, which may indicate that it was originally an upright grave-marker (Chapter 4) and if so, then it is the only one extant at Clonmore. Along with CW-4, CW-5, CW-8 and CW-15, CW-24 is probably one of the earlier carved stones at Clonmore, most likely dating to the 7th–9th centuries (*ibid*). The presumed initials carved below the cross suggest that this stone, like CW-12, CW-15, CW-20, and CW-29, was later reused to commemorate an individual sometime in the 19th century. There is a small possibility that these could instead be a pair of smaller (thieves?) crosses, as when the model is viewed from certain angles there appears to be faint additional marks around the carvings that are suggestive of two crosses. However, such an interpretation is doubtful as this can probably be attributed to wear.

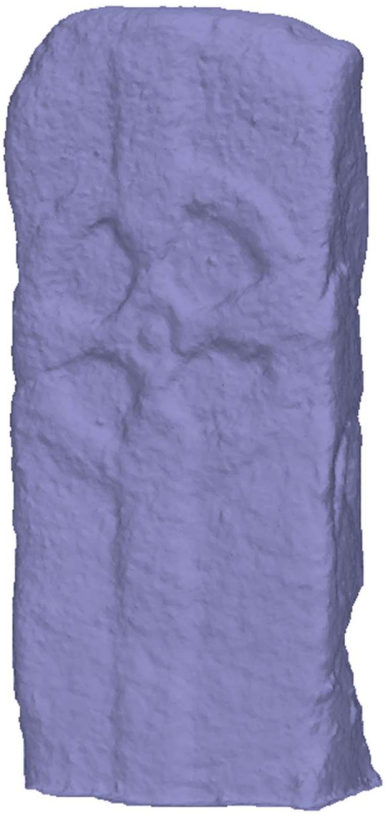


Photogrammetry model of CW-24, showing details of the cross and (presumed) inscribed initials

CW-25

Clonmore 24





COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696352 676096

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028033

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 88 cm; Width 40 cm; Thickness 13 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 189, fig. 6.25)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard, enclosed patio – Row 3

CONDITION: Heavily weathered, though the carving is still visible. There is noticeable chipping or flaking along the edges of the stone on its upper half, particularly on the dexter edge, though this damage is well-worn, indicating that it occurred long ago.

DESCRIPTION: This is a rectangular slab with well-shaped sides (the present unevenness on the upper half is due to damage) and an unshaped west face. The east face is carved with a ringed, hollow-armed Latin cross less than 1 cm in relief. The arms and stem span the width of the face and are *c*. 8 cm wide; the intersection of the cross is decorated with a boss carved in false relief, 10 cm in diameter.

DISCUSSION: This is one of the few slabs, along with CW-9, CW-14, (possibly) CW-15, and CW-27, to have a decorated centre. Circular bosses are thought to be derived from metal prototypes (Lionard 1961, 125; Edwards 1985, 404), and when placed at the intersection of a cross, may be skeuomorphic of the peg or pin used to fasten the cross together (Lionard 1961, 125). This would have been a recumbent grave-marker, and its morphology would suggest an 11th or 12th century date, though its cross-form might suggest that this range could perhaps be extended to include the 10th century (Chapter 4). It also displays the same two-toned colouration as CW-23, indicating that it was likewise once buried deeper in the ground than it is today.

CW-26

Clonmore 25



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696352 676103

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028034

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 79 cm; Width 63 cm; Thickness 17 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 189, fig. 7.27)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard, enclosed patio – Row 3

CONDITION: Very weathered, with heavy moss and lichen cover and possible damage to the top sinister edge of the stone.

DESCRIPTION: This is a very wide granite slab with a large ringed cross carved in relief on its east face. The sides of the stone may only be lightly shaped; its rounded corners and undulating top may be the result of weathering and damage. The cross stands out variously between 2 and 3 cm from the rest of the stone but the cantons are only hollowed out to a depth of 1 cm. The arms and top of the stem do not extend past the ring, which has a maximum diameter of 52 cm. The stem extends another 21 cm below the ring to the ground, on either side of which are two rounded protrusions which, including the stem, extend 42 cm wide. The stem is slightly thicker than the arms, 15 cm and 13 cm respectively, but the ring varies in width from 6 cm to 8 cm.

DISCUSSION: Considering that this is probably only the top fragment of a cross-slab (or else the remainder is deeply buried), CW-26 would have been quite large. The curved protrusions on the stem just below the ring are interesting; they appear to be beginning of vine ornamentation, like that on CW-29, and would suggest this slab may have been modelled after it, though the execution of the cross on CW-26 is not to the same quality. This slab was probably a recumbent grave-marker, dating to the 9th–11th centuries, like CW-29 (see below; also Chapter 4).

CW-27

Clonmore 26



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696352 676099

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028035

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 39–41 cm; Width 37–41cm; Thickness 16–20cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 189, fig. 6.28)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard, enclosed patio – Row 4

CONDITION: Weathered, with heavy moss and lichen cover, though the carving is still clearly visible. Its dexter edge is quite angular, indicating that the rest of the slab on this side has been broken off. Its top edge is also very irregular, though it is less clear whether this is natural or due to breakage. A small crack on the top of the stone extends down the stem *c*. 13 cm.

DESCRIPTION: The sides and west face of this cross-slab fragment are very irregular and unshaped; a ringed cross carved in false relief on the east face. The cross runs the length and breadth of the stone; however it should also be noted that the dexter edge (and possibly the top edge as well) has been broken off. This slab was almost certainly longer than it is now, most likely on its dexter side, with the cross stem extended along its face as well. The cross itself is 4 cm wide at the stem and 3.5 cm across on the arms and ring, with a circular depression at their intersection; the diameter of the ring is 23 cm.

DISCUSSION: The cross is similar to CW-14 and CW-25 in that it is ringed, and has a decorated intersection, though its rounded hollow is more akin to the one on CW-9. Like the majority of the monuments in the graveyard, this slab was probably a recumbent grave-marker. An 8th–10th century date range could be suggested for this stone based on its cross-type and morphology (Chapter 4).

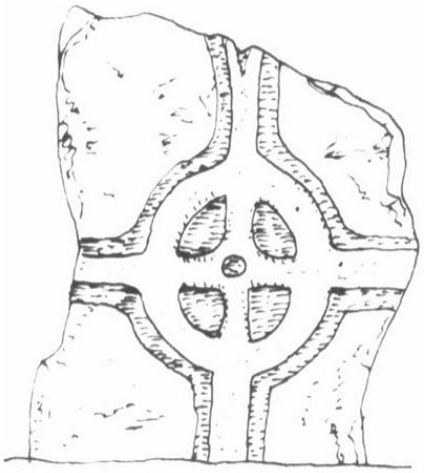


Illustration of CW-27 (after Harbison 1991)

CW-28

Clonmore 27



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696350 676099

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028037

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 77 cm; Width 54 cm; Thickness 13 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 191, fig. 7.29)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard, enclosed patio – Row 5

CONDITION: Very worn and spotted with lichen and moss. The top sinister corner is chipped, and the cross is only faintly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a sub-rectangular slab with rounded corners; The west face is undressed and the sides only lightly so, if at all. It has a Latin cross carved *c*. 1 cm in relief on the east face. The stem is 8 cm wide, extending for 35 cm until it peters out roughly halfway down the slab; the arms are 31 cm by 7 cm. Harbison illustrates the stone with what looks to be a small hole or depression where the stem and cross meet, but there is no hollow or depression on this stone. There is also a faint circular impression surrounding the cross head which could possibly be a ring, though this might instead be due to the way it was carved – the surface of the stone is only carved around the cross, with the rest of its face left unshaped. Additionally, the area around the cross head is more deeply carved, and is thus more well-defined, than the lower part of the cross stem.

DISCUSSION: As with most of the cross-slabs at Clonmore, this was likely an 11th- or 12th-century recumbent grave-marker.

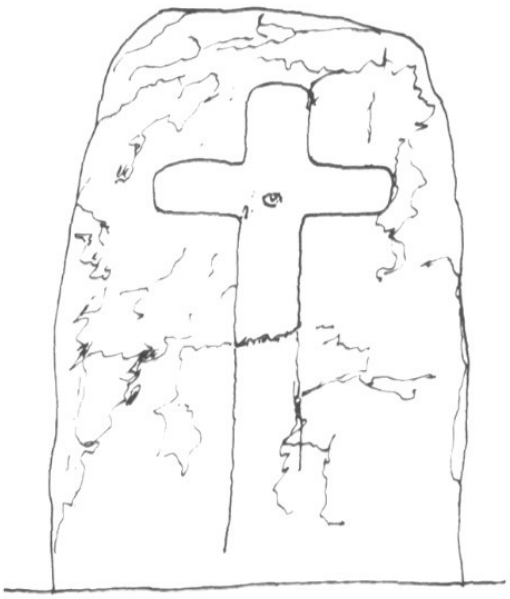


Illustration of CW-28 (after Harbison 1991)

CW-29

Clonmore 28



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696350 676103

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028038

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 118 cm; Width 35–54 cm; Thickness 20–27 cm

FIRST RECORDED: First published by Harbison in 1988.

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard, enclosed patio – Row 5

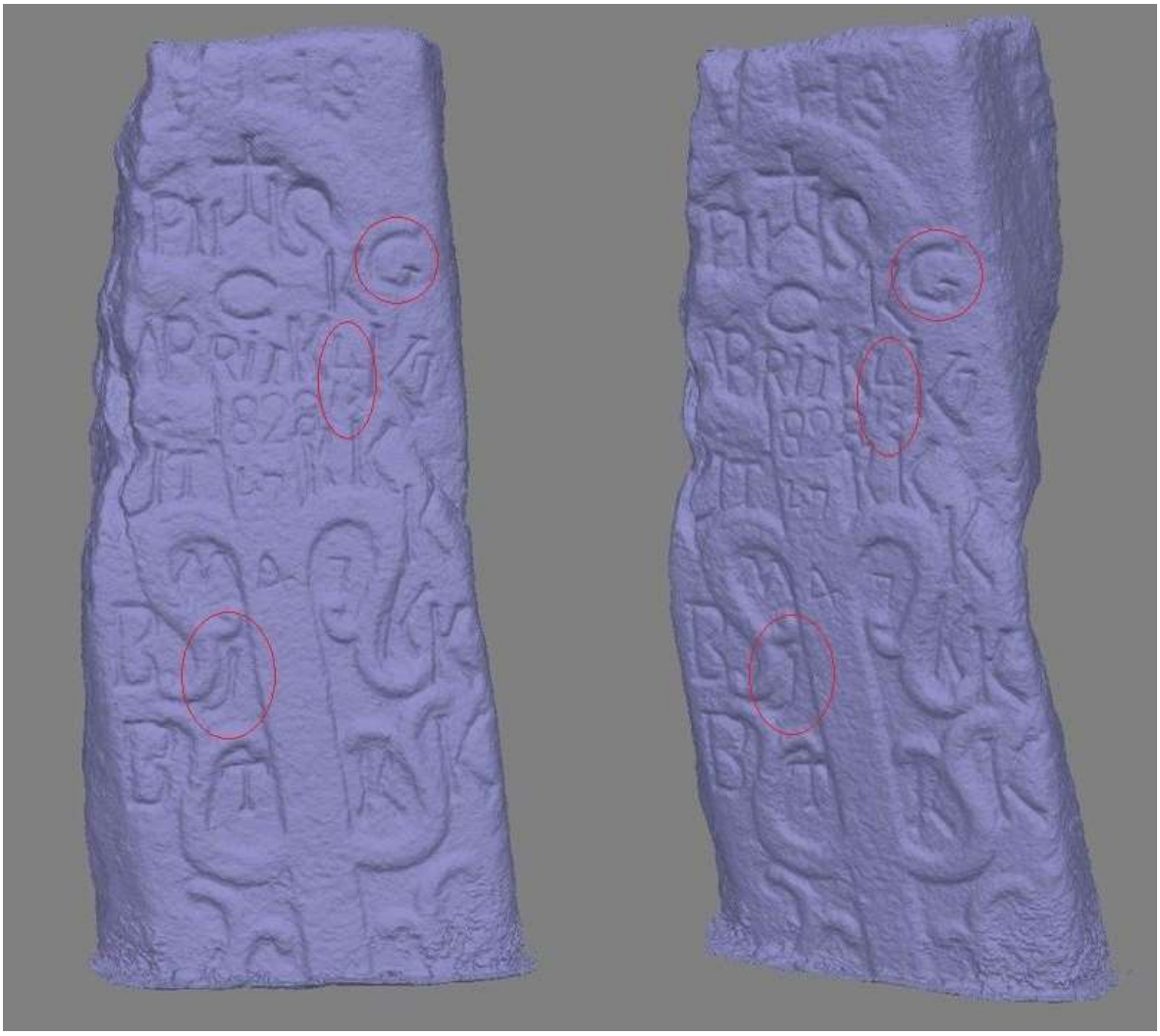
CONDITION: Heavily weathered and spotted with lichen and moss, with considerable chipping and flaking along the top two-thirds of the dexter edge. The cross is still visible on the east face, though some of the carving has been lost due to damage on the dexter side; it is also now partially obscured by prolific 19th century inscriptions.

DESCRIPTION: The stone is sub-rectangular; its sides, albeit damaged, appear to have been lightly shaped, though its west face is undressed. The east face is carved with a ringed cross *c*. 1 cm in relief, from the stem of which protrudes three sets of floriated vines. The tendrils extend to a maximum width of 16 cm and the two upper sets of vines curl towards each other, though the lowest set is partially obscured at ground level. The stem runs the length of the stone and measures 9 cm wide. The arms do not protrude from the ring, which is 6 cm wide and has a maximum diameter of 43 cm. Additionally, the face of the stone is almost entirely covered with 19th century inscriptions. The Christogram 'IHS' occurs twice at the top of the stone, and a small incised Latin cross is attached above the 'H' in the lower of the two. Near the bottom centre of the cross head is inscribed the date '1828', and much of the rest of the lettering seems to be the initials of people commemorated, though the numbers '4' and '7' appear in combination on the stone in three separate places. Though speculative, these could represent partial dates – i.e. '47 (presumably for 1847). There are some minor discrepancies between the illustration of this stone and what is shown on the photogrammetry model, such as the 'J' at the tip of the top dexter acanthus vine, which is depicted as two arched lines in the illustration. Furthermore, the 'G' on the sinister cross arm is drawn as a 'C'; the '4' on the lower sinister quadrant of the cross ring is missing from the illustration altogether, and the small '17', shown just on the sinister side of '1828', is instead '13' (see below). There are also some deeply scored marks on the lower sinister corner of the west face but, as Harbison already stated (1991, 191), they are unlikely to be part of an ogham inscription.

DISCUSSION: This is arguably the most ornately decorated monument at Clonmore and is considered stylistically unique in Ireland (Harbison 1988, 60), though its morphology suggests it functioned as a recumbent grave-marker, just like most of the carved stones at Clonmore. Its

closest artistic parallels are Anglo-Saxon, and Rosemary Cramp has dated similar acanthus-type vine ornament to the 10th century (2006, 48). Harbison has suggested a 9th century date for CW-29 based on metalwork and manuscript parallels (1988, 61); however, Cramp's evidence, as well as its large size and minimal shaping would suggest CW-29 may be later , and perhaps a 9th–11th century date should be suggested (Chapters 4 and 8). Regardless, its vine motif suggests some Anglo-Saxon artistic influences at Clonmore. It was also heavily inscribed in the modern period, and provides a firm date of 1828 for at least one commemorative episode of reuse, from which a 19th century date range can be inferred on epigraphic grounds for its other inscriptions, as well as for those on CW-12, CW-15, CW-20, and CW-24 (Harbison 1991; also, see above entries), though it is clear that this stone was reused on multiple separate occasions. The inscriptions are heavily crowded on the stone, yet end *c*. 30cm before the ground, indicating that this stone, like CW-20, was more deeply buried during the 19th century than it is today. Also as with CW-20, there is a repetition of the same letter in the second initial, this time a 'K', which may perhaps represent a common surname and that it likewise had been reused by the same kin-group.





Previous page: Illustration (after Harbison); photogrammetry model of CW-29, with some differences highlighted

CW-30

Clonmore 29



CW-30, looking west; looking south

COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696352 676090

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: None

TYPE: Shrine post

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 86 cm; Width 49–55 cm; Thickness 12 cm

FIRST RECORDED: By the author during the course of fieldwork in July 2016.

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Southwest sector of the graveyard, *c*. 2 m from the enclosing fence.

CONDITION: There is pervasive lichen cover over the stone. Portions of the lower dexter corner and upper sinister edge on the east face have been chipped off, the lower dexter corner more recently. The southern side of the stone is heavily chipped so that some of the carved slot has been removed, and the top of the stone slopes sharply to the south, suggesting it may have likewise suffered damage.

DESCRIPTION: This is an undecorated, minimally dressed slab with sides that taper towards the base and an angular top face that slopes noticeably to the south. Its north and south sides are carved with U-shaped grooves, 5–6 cm wide and 2–3 cm deep.

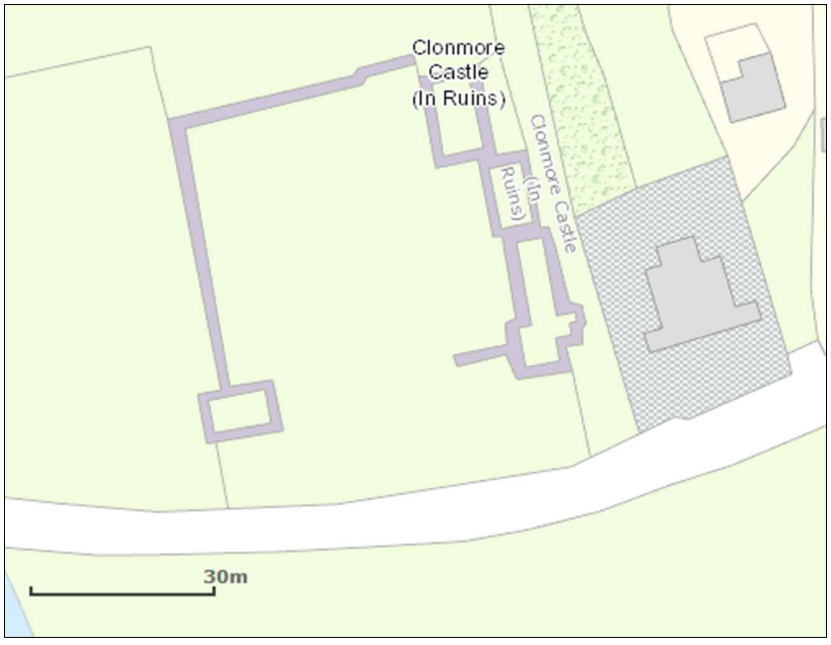
DISCUSSION: This slab was probably a shrine post, belonging to the same structure as CW-17 and CW-19. Like CW-17, it has slots on opposing sides, indicating it was also a central post to a composite stone shrine (see above; also Chapter 8). Additionally, it tapers noticeably, and becomes more regular in shape, towards the bottom of the stone. While some of the irregularity of the top face could have been caused by damage (the chipping and flaking on the south side of the stone is certainly the result of damage), it could also be suggested that it had been left largely undressed because it was originally the bottom of the post which was inserted into the ground, and thus did not need to be as carefully shaped. This may offer an explanation as to why the north slot does not extend to the top of the stone, like both slots on CW-17. While the south slot does extend all the way to the top, several centimetres of the stone have been broken off above this, so we cannot be entirely sure of the original length of this slot.



CW-30: looking south and west; photogrammetry model showing damaged slot on the south side of the stone, as well as a clearly defined slot on the north side.

Clonmore Castle

The castle, 0.4 km west of the early ecclesiastical site of Clonmore (see above), is a *c*. 13th century Norman fortress of roughly coursed granite rubble which has subsequently undergone extensive remodelling and several additions (Harbison 1991, 195; Brindley and Kilfeather, 1993, 84). The castle is generally square in plan; its interior dimensions are *c*. 46 m east-west by 46.5 m north-south. Rectangular towers still stand at all but the northeast corner. It is unknown who actually built Clonmore Castle; it is attributed by some to Hugh DeLacy *c*. 1180, though there was also a long-standing local tradition that the Hackets of Hackettstown were responsible for its construction (Comerford 1886, 183). The castle was seized by the English in 1332, and then changed hands three times before the end of the 14th century (*ibid*). By the early part of the 16th century it was in the possession of Gerald Fitzgerald, the 9th Earl of Kildare, who is credited with renovating, extending and enlarging the castle (Hadden 1994, 53). However in 1538 it was granted by the English crown to Sir Piers Butler, the 8th Earl of Ormond, for 'services rendered' in quelling the rebellion of FitzGerald's son, 'Silken' Thomas Fitzgerald (Curtis 1937, 178). Clonmore Castle was then taken from the Ormonds by an Inquisition dated 31 October 1636 (Comerford 1886, 184), and seized again five years later by the Confederate Irish and held by Piers FitzGerald of Ballyshannon until 1650 when Cromwell's men, Colonels Hewson and Reynolds, blew up the towers beyond repair (*ibid*).



Map showing layout of Clonmore Castle (source: OSi)



Southwest tower of Clonmore Castle; passage of same tower, showing a cross-slab (CW-31) being reused as a door lintel

CW-31

Clonmore Castle



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Clonmore

SITE NAME: Clonmore Castle

ITM: 696022 676170

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-026002

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 111 cm (minimum); Width 40 cm; Thickness 22 cm

FIRST RECORDED: This was first recorded during the 1987 archaeological survey of Carlow for inclusion in the county inventory. However, Harbison (1991, 191, fig. 7.31) was the first to publish the stone as the inventory was not published until two years later in 1993.

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore Castle, being reused as the door lintel of a passage leading to the southeast tower.

CONDITION: Very worn, especially the cross head, but largely intact.

DESCRIPTION: This slab is sub-rectangular, with minimally shaped sides and one dressed face carved with a simple Latin cross spanning most of its length, *c*. 0.5 cm in relief. As it is now being used as a door lintel, the ends of the stone are obscured and the top of the cross stem is only partially visible, though what can be seen is 7 cm wide and measures at least 75 cm long, until it peters off *c*. 28 cm from the base of the stone. The arms are 30.5 cm long by 6 cm wide and taper slightly where they connect with the stem.

DISCUSSION: This cross-slab, probably taken from Clonmore graveyard *c*. 400 m to the east, is being reused as a door lintel of the passage leading to the southwest tower (Harbison 1991, 195; Brindley and Kilfeather, 1993, 84). It is unlikely that the slab had been incorporated into the original fabric of the castle, as Clonmore was almost undoubtedly still functioning as a monastery at this time (see Chapter 8). Rather, it was probably added during the 16th century renovations by Gerald Fitzgerald, well after Clonmore had been relegated to a parish church (*ibid*). Like the majority of Clonmore's slabs, CW-31 would have originally been a recumbent grave-marker (see above); however its reuse as *spolia* provides us with information about how the stone may have been perceived in the later medieval period. There appears to be remnants of plaster on the upper portion of the dexter edge of the carved face, suggesting the cross may have been hidden while in use as a lintel, though this in no way would diminish its apotropaic properties and may have been considered a 'hidden symbol' of blessing and protection (see Chapter 5).

Cloydagh Church

The later medieval parish church that remains today was already in a state of ruin by the early 19th century (Ryan 1833, 334). It measures 19.30 m long and 7.10 m wide; much of the mortar has worn away, and the granite masonry is irregular in size and shape. Little is known of the church that stood at Cloydagh prior to this, however Farrelly (2009) suggests that a lintelled opening on the western side of the north wall (now blocked) may be from an earlier structure. There is little written evidence for an early church at Cloydagh, but a charter (*c*. 1200) in the record of knights' fees for County Carlow states that the Archbishop of Dublin, John Comyn, appointed a cleric named Thurstin to 'the church of St Brigid of Clodahc (Cloydagh)' during a vacancy of the See of Leighlin (Brooks 1950, 56–7). This would indicate that there probably was a church here before 1200, and also gives us the name of its patron saint. Cloydagh Church was mentioned again in a letter written by Innocent III in 1204, declaring it under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Leighlin (Hogan 1910, 690; O'Toole 1936, 20–2). Cloydagh became attached sometime later to the Augustinian Priory of Great Connall in Kildare (Comerford 1886, 27), and was still in its possession when King James granted the Rectory of Cloydagh to John Sinbarbe in 1603 as reward for his service (*ibid*).



Looking north from the graveyard of Cloydagh Church to Clogrenan House



Doorway in south wall

CW-32

Cloydagh



COUNTY: Carlow BARONY: Carlow

PARISH: Cloydagh TOWNLAND: Clogrenan

SITE NAME: Cloydagh Church ITM: 668674 672982

O.S. MAP: 7 RMP: CW007-039002

TYPE: Carved stone MATERIAL: Granite?

DIMENSIONS: Height 25 cm; Width 29–33cm

FIRST RECORDED: Comerford describes the stone in the third volume of his *Collections relating to the dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin* (1886).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the outer west gable wall, 2.22 m above the ground and 42 cm east of the northwest corner of the church.

CONDITION: Much of the stone is covered in patches of moss or lichen. The cross is clearly visible, though a horizontal crack extends from the base of the stem nearly to its top. The bottom left corner of the stone is heavily chipped and the top edge of the stone has flaked off from the left corner to just past the dexter arm as well.

DESCRIPTION: The stone is dark reddish brown, with an incised cross 22 cm long and 30 cm wide. The face of the stone is uneven, suggesting it has not been shaped (or else only minimally so). The cross is ringed, with T-shaped terminals and small round depressions roughly 2 cm in diameter in each of the four cantons. What is now the dexter arm is noticeably longer than the sinister arm, indicating that this is a Latin cross which is now lying on its side, and that the bottom portion of the stone was either broken off at some point before the stone was incorporated into the outer wall of the medieval church, or else was deliberately shortened to fit (see below; also Chapter 5).

DISCUSSION: Roundels in the cross cantons are not a particularly common feature, though examples have been found at Inchagoill, Lough Corrib in Co. Galway, Inishmurray, Co. Sligo and near Clonmacnoise (Higgins 1987, no. 6; O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, fig. 26, 001.68; Wakeman 1891, pl. III, fig. 1); however these crosses are ringless and equal-armed. Four stones from Wales offer the closest comparison to the one at Cloydagh (Redknap and Lewis 2007, B19 and B28; Edwards 2007a, CD1 and P31) – three of the four incised crosses are ringed (B19, B28 and P31); the stone from Llanfyrnach (P31) is the closest stylistic match, though the one at Llaneleu (B19) was likewise incorporated into the outer wall of a church and also looks to be missing the lower portion of its stem. The Welsh examples are variously dated to no later than the 9th century (*ibid*) and a similarly early date seems likely for the Cloydagh stone (Chapter 4). Consequently, this stone may be taken as evidence of an early medieval foundation for Cloydagh Church, and its reuse in the outer wall of the later parish church perhaps suggests a desire to maintain continuity and connection with that earlier foundation (see Chapter 5).

Haroldstown

According to the late 19th century inhabitants of Haroldstown, its original name was reputedly Ballinros and was only changed sometime after 1690, when the townland was awarded to a soldier of that name, after the Battle of the Boyne (Comerford 1886, 238). However, I have yet to find any written records of a Ballinros in Co. Carlow, and it is not listed as an alternative name for Haroldstown on Logainm.ie, so this 'collective folk memory' cannot at present be corroborated. The old Haroldstown graveyard contains the ruins of a late medieval church, and mostly 19th-century headstones. The church ruins are overgrown and no longer visible, but they were described by Patrick O'Keeffe in 1839 as roughly 51 ft (15.54 m) long and 18 ft (5.50 m) wide, standing at a maximum height of 3 ft (0.91 m) with the graves mostly to the north and east (O'Flanagan 1934, §469–72). O'Keeffe also mentions that the site of a ruined abbey, and castle, is just to the west of the church ruins, though he was unable to locate them to confirm their existence (*ibid*). However, the castle and abbey are recorded on OS maps as being *c*. 300 m west and northwest respectively of the old Haroldstown Church and graveyard (see below). Haroldstown Church is also *c*. 1 km east of the ecclesiastical ruins of Acaun, which is also believed to be early (Harbison 1992a vol. 1, 393; also, see above, CW-1), though beyond their close proximity, no evidence could be found of a connection between the two. Very little is known about the ecclesiastical history here and currently, the only potential evidence for early medieval activity at the site is the presence of a single cross pillar (CW-33).



Map showing location of Haroldstown Church, with the sites of a castle and abbey shown just to the west, and Acaun Church c. 1 km to the southwest (Source: OSi)

CW-33

Haroldstown



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Haroldstown

TOWNLAND: Haroldstown

SITE NAME: Haroldstown graveyard

ITM: 690842 678523

O.S. MAP: 4

RMP: CW004-038003

TYPE: Pillar

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 97 cm; Width 30 cm; Thickness 22 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Initially described as a 'crude and fairly modern looking' cross-incised pillar within a graveyard in the townland of Haroldstown (Breen 2011), its entry in the SMR database has been recently updated to reflect its reinterpretation as an early medieval monument (Farrelly 2017b).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same; on the east side of the site, *c*. 6 m from the ruined medieval church

CONDITION: Fairly good

DESCRIPTION: The stone is set in the ground at a roughly 30° angle, tilting east. The stone appear to be largely unshaped, with a cross deeply incised onto its east face. It begins *c*. 14 cm from the top of the stone and measures 36 cm long by 28 cm wide. The arms stop just short of spanning the width of the stone and intersect the stem in its lower half, making the upper portion 6 cm longer than the bottom.

DISCUSSION: Simple cross pillars like CW-33 are prolific across Ireland and Britain. Though its morphology could suggest the pillar might date to the 7th–9th centuries (*cf*. Hamlin 1987, 138; Edwards 2007a), its cross is a long-lived type that is not closely datable beyond a general assignment to the early medieval period (Chapter 4). Its height is atypical of individual upright grave-markers from the 7th–9th centuries (*ibid*), though it is possible that CW-33 acted as a funerary monument around which burials would have been clustered, which was more common in the 5th and 6th centuries (*cf*. Chapter 5). However its more likely function, particularly given the lack of evidence for such an early church foundation, is that of an ecclesiastical boundary marker (*ibid*).

Kilbracken/Kilnabritoge

Kilbracken is the more common name for this site (O'Flanagan 1934, §465; O'Toole 1932, 69), suggesting that the founding or patron saint's name was Breacán, though the alternate name of Kilnabritoge has persisted into the 20th century, and is listed before Kilbracken in the site's entry in the county's archaeological inventory (Brindley and Kilfeather, 1993, 58). However, presuming the church is dedicated to a Breacán, it is unclear which is the reputed founder or patron – there are twelve entries under the name in Ó Riain's *Dictionary of Irish Saints* (2011, 110–4). The geographically closest St Breacán is Breac (whose name is also rendered Breacán) of Bealach Féile, which Ó Riain places near Urglin or Kellerig (*ibid*, 110), 15–20 km west-southwest of Knocklishen Beg. Interestingly, he was attached to the Déise of Munster in a region that was mostly founded by northern Leinster saints, and his church of Bealach Féile was the scene of a battle between men of Munster and Leinster in either 735 or 730 (*ibid*; *AFM* M730.5).

O'Toole (1938, 42–3) cites the Irish form of Kilnabritoge as Cill *da* Bhriotóg, and translates it as St Davittoge's Church. Unsurprisingly, he was unable to find any reference to such a saint (1932, 71). The origin of the name Kilnabritoge is unknown; perhaps it may reflect some local folklore associated with the site, though this is just speculation. The word 'briotóg' is listed in *Foclóir Gaedhilge agus Béarla* (1904) as a 'British woman'; a similar word, 'briochtóg', means 'witch or sorceress' (*ibid*). *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* (1977) defines 'briotóg' as a 'lisping woman'.

Harbison lists Kilbracken as a possibly early medieval site (1992 vol. 1, 393). Though the site is now heavily overgrown and the full extent the ruins now longer visible, the *Archaeological inventory of county Carlow* describes the church as rectangular, measuring 13.5 m by 6.4 m, with a rubble core and 'large roughly-coursed granite boulder facing', with a gap in the west wall that was likely the doorway (Brindley and Kilfeather, 1993, 58). O'Toole also describes a narrow doorway 0.56 m wide in the south wall, which he compares to the doorway of the Priest's Church in Glendalough (1932, 71).



Kilbracken 'graveyard'



Visible remains of masonry, presumably the church



CW-34 and CW-35; note bullaun to the right, at the edge of the photograph

CW-34

Kilbracken 1



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Rathvilly

TOWNLAND: Knocklishen Beg

SITE NAME: Kilbracken/Kilnabritoge Church

ITM: 692021 683102

O.S. MAP: 4

RMP: CW004-005003 or CW004-005004

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 64 cm; Width 49 cm; Thickness 9.5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Sketched and described by O'Keeffe in 1839 during the course of fieldwork for the Ordnance Survey (O'Flanagan 1934, §144).

PRESENT LOCATION: Sitting upright amidst the roots of a tree, next to a smaller cross (CW-35).

CONDITION: The stone is covered in moss and has a small, shallow fissure at the top of the stem, though is in otherwise fairly good condition.

DESCRIPTION: One of two small free-standing crosses, this is an undecorated cruciform stone. Its stem is 22 cm wide and the arms taper slightly, from 16 cm at the intersection to 13 cm at the terminals. Packing stones found on the west and south sides indicate the stone, though probably not in its original location, had been deliberately erected in that position. The roots of a tree have since grown around the base of the stone, pushing it to a slightly southwest tilt. A small crack has appeared on the top of the stone, extending 6 cm down the west face and 4 cm down the eastern one.

DISCUSSION: Cruciform stones, both decorated and undecorated, were used widely throughout the early medieval period (Chapter 4), and a small cross such as this would have probably been a grave-marker. It is similar to ones from Temple Brecan on Inishmore and Temple Jarlath at Tuam, both in Co. Galway (Higgins 1987, nos. 104 and 105), and at Glendalough, Co. Wicklow (Leask 1974, fig. 22.21). There are also several similar examples from Scotland and Wales (Fisher 2001, 56, A, B, C, H, J and K; Edwards 2013, AN17). It is also interesting to note that there is a folk tale associated with CW-34 that was published in the June 1929 issue of *Béaloideas* – 'It is said that some person once took away the larger of the crosses secretly and erected it at Kilranelagh graveyard over the grave of a friend, but the next morning it was back at Kilbrackan again' (translation in O'Toole 1932, 71).

CW-35

Kilbracken 2



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Rathvilly

TOWNLAND: Knocklishen Beg

SITE NAME: Kilbracken/Kilnabritoge Church

ITM: 692021 683102

O.S. MAP: 4

RMP: CW004-005003 or CW004-005004

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 53 cm; Width 32 cm; Thickness 5–12 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Sketched and described by O'Keeffe in 1839 during the course of fieldwork for the Ordnance Survey (O'Flanagan 1934, §144).

PRESENT LOCATION: Lying loose against a tree, between a larger stone cross (CW-34) and a bullaun.

CONDITION: Very weathered and covered in moss.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small free-standing Latin cross; the arms and stem are both 17 cm in width at their intersection, tapering to 14 cm at the arm terminals and 8 cm at the top of the cross. The base of the stem is roughly ovoid in shape, though whether this is deliberate or due to wear is unclear. Additionally, it might be worth noting that the east face is very rough and uneven compared to the west face.

DISCUSSION: Like CW-34, this cross is no longer *in situ* and also probably functioned as a grave-marker (see above). Its roughly cruciform shape is achieved by notching and cutting away the stem, resulting in a cross with 'stubby' arms (Higgins 1987, 72). There is a small slate cross from Church Island (Valentia Harbour), Co. Kerry that looks to be of similar size and execution (O'Kelly 1957–9, Fig. 10J), and a concentration of 'notched' crosses is also found at High Island, Co. Galway (Maddern 2014).

Dubia

CW-36

Clonmore 30



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696380 676092

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028012

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Schist

DIMENSIONS: Height 90 cm; Width 26–43cm; Thickness 6–9cm

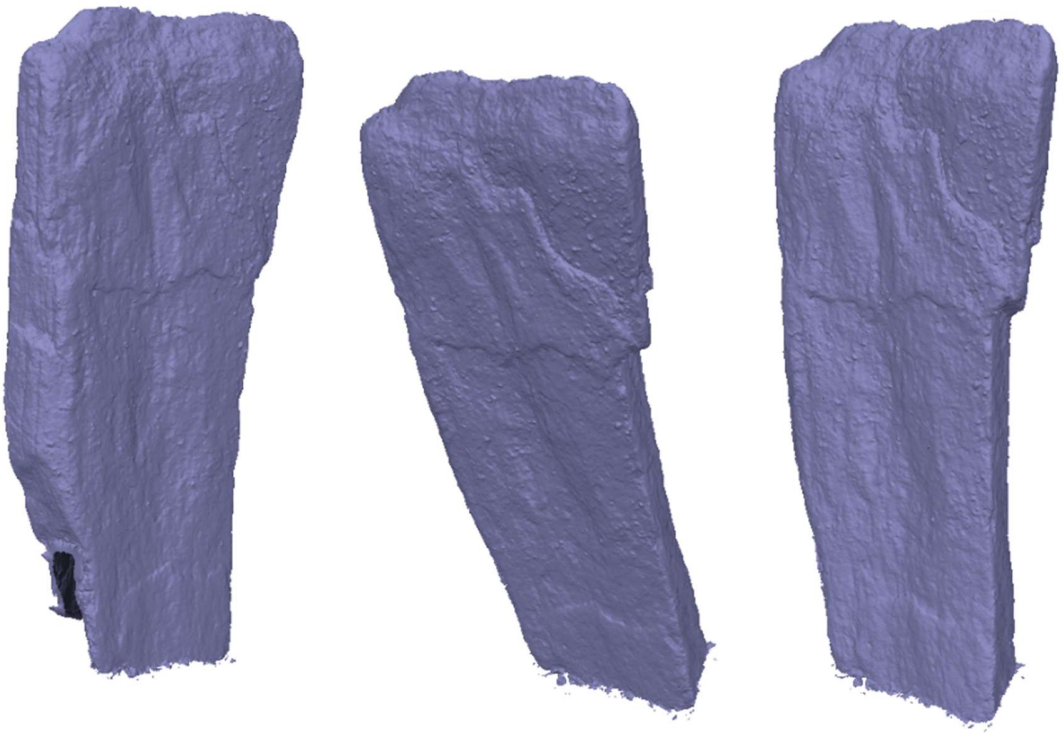
FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 181)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 6

CONDITION: Weathered and covered with lichen.

DESCRIPTION: A tall thin slab almost entirely covered in hard grey lichen, this stone may have the faint traces of a cross carved into the west face. The dimensions of the cross as well as its method of carving (i.e. sunken, outline, etc.) are at present undiscernible. The shape of the stone is jaggedly irregular, and its two faces are heavily flaked. This flaking has either accelerated the deterioration of the carving, or may have indeed led to the 'fortuitous shape' of a cross on its west face.

DISCUSSION: Incorrectly identified as Harbison's no. 2, and photographed as the east face of his no. 3 in the SMR inventory. Harbison did note this stone in his catalogue, but it was not numbered or illustrated, due to the uncertainty over the existence of sculpture on its face, and indeed, no evidence of carving was present on the photogrammetry model. It is clear why Harbison suggested there may have been a cross on this slab, because from certain angles, the surface of one face does appear to be carved. However, when the model is turned to an oblique angle, it is clear that what looked to be the 'arm' of a cross is part of the natural surface of the stone. Thus, the 'stem' is, likewise, probably a natural indentation. It is one of many thin schist slabs in the graveyard, most of which are either uncarved, or were inscribed in the 19th century. Given the presence of at least three remaining shrine posts discovered in the graveyard (see site description for Clonmore), it could be suggested that some of these thin, uncarved slabs could represent shrine panels. Interestingly, one of these 19th century slabs (in the same row, just a few stones to the south) also has a hole *c*. 5 cm in diameter worn into the upper portion of its face which could possibly be a fenestella.



'Carved' surface of CW-36, showing the 'arm' to be part of a natural variation on the surface of the stone

CW-37

Clonmore 31



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696359 676093

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028026

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 80cm; Width 73cm; Thickness 25cm (maximum)

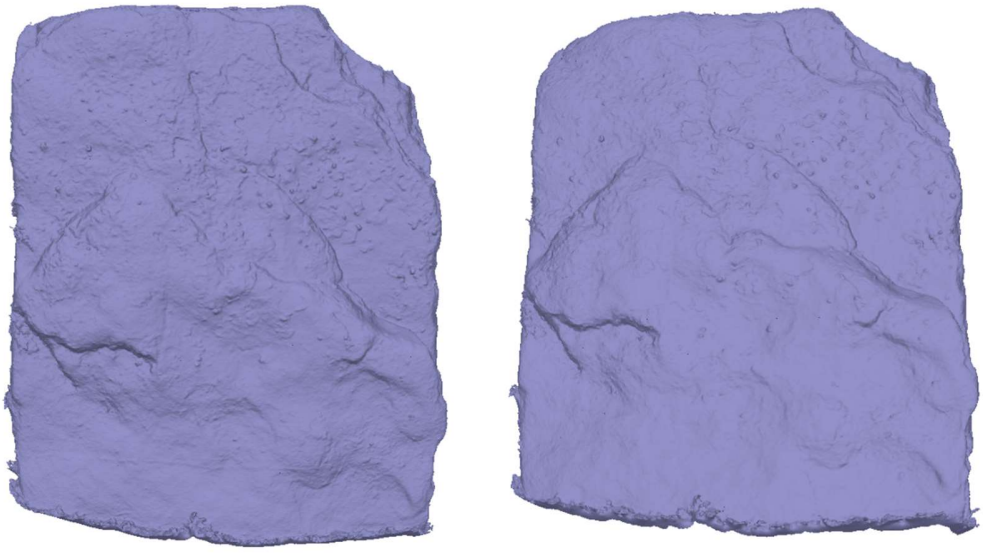
FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 188; Fig. 3.18)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard – Row 16

CONDITION: Very weathered

DESCRIPTION: This is a rough, sub-rectangular slab of granite that may have an unfinished cross on its east face. It has a heavily flaked and damaged sinister corner, and what looks to have been the start of a ringed cross head in relief roughly 40cm high and 53cm wide beginning just a few centimetres from the dexter edge.

DISCUSSION: While Harbison suggested that CW-37 was possibly an incomplete cross-slab, his illustration is not all that convincing, and in person, the shape of the stone looks entirely natural. Moreover, the photogrammetry model of this stone showed no conclusive evidence of carving. If there is indeed an incomplete carving on the east face, it is poorly centred and proportioned as the stone is currently set. It is more ideally situated if the stone were turned to rest on its sinister edge. However, it could be speculated that, while this was always a plain slab, it may have been used as a shrine panel.



Two angles of the 'carved' surface of CW-37, showing no conclusive evidence of a cross; the shape of its surface appears to be natural

CW–38

Clonmore 32



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696355 676100

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028029

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 43.5cm; Width 30cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 188; Fig. 6.21)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard, enclosed patio – Row 1

CONDITION: Fairly good but for a small bit of the top sinister corner that has been broken off.

DESCRIPTION: This is a very coarse-gravelled stone carved with a well-executed ringed, Latin cross standing c. 2 cm in relief on what looks to be a tiered base or pedestal. The thickness of the stone cannot be ascertained because it is set in an angled modern stone frame. From the base of the stone to the top of the cross-stem measures 41.5 cm; the arms are 26.5 cm in width, and the ring is 15.5 cm in diameter. The lower step of the cross-base spans 16.5 cm, and the upper step 9 cm. The stem, arms, and ring are consistently 4.5 cm thick; the arms and top of the stem extend well past the ring.

DISCUSSION: The carving covers almost the entire face of the stone and goes all the way to the bottom edge, so this slab was never meant to stand upright. However, this piece is so neatly carved and executed that its classification as an early medieval cross-slab is dubious.

CW–39

Clonmore 33



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696353 676097

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: None

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 49cm; Width 29cm; Thickness 17cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 188)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard, enclosed patio – Row 2

CONDITION: Fairly good

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, well-dressed rectangular stone with a Latin cross deeply sunk into the east face. The cross is precisely carved to a depth of 2 cm, with arms and stem at right angles. The arms span the width of the stone and measure 7 cm high. The stem is 9 cm wide and starts at the top of the stone, ending 2 cm before the bottom. At the top of the stone is a rectangle hollow that quickly rounds out into a hole of indeterminate depth.

DISCUSSION: The mortice at the top of this stone indicates that this piece was part a composite structure or monument, with something inserted into the top (metal cross or tenoned stone?), though it is unclear what sort of object or structure it may have been. It is included in this catalogue for the sake of completion; however, its morphology indicates it is most likely of a much later date.

CW–40

Clonmore 34



COUNTY: Carlow

BARONY: Rathvilly

PARISH: Clonmore

TOWNLAND: Glebe

SITE NAME: Clonmore

ITM: 696352 676100

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: CW009-028036

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 61cm; Width 33cm; Thickness 11–16cm

FIRST RECORDED: Harbison's catalogue (1991, 189)

PRESENT LOCATION: Clonmore graveyard, enclosed patio – Row 4

CONDITION: Very worn, with a damaged sinister corner

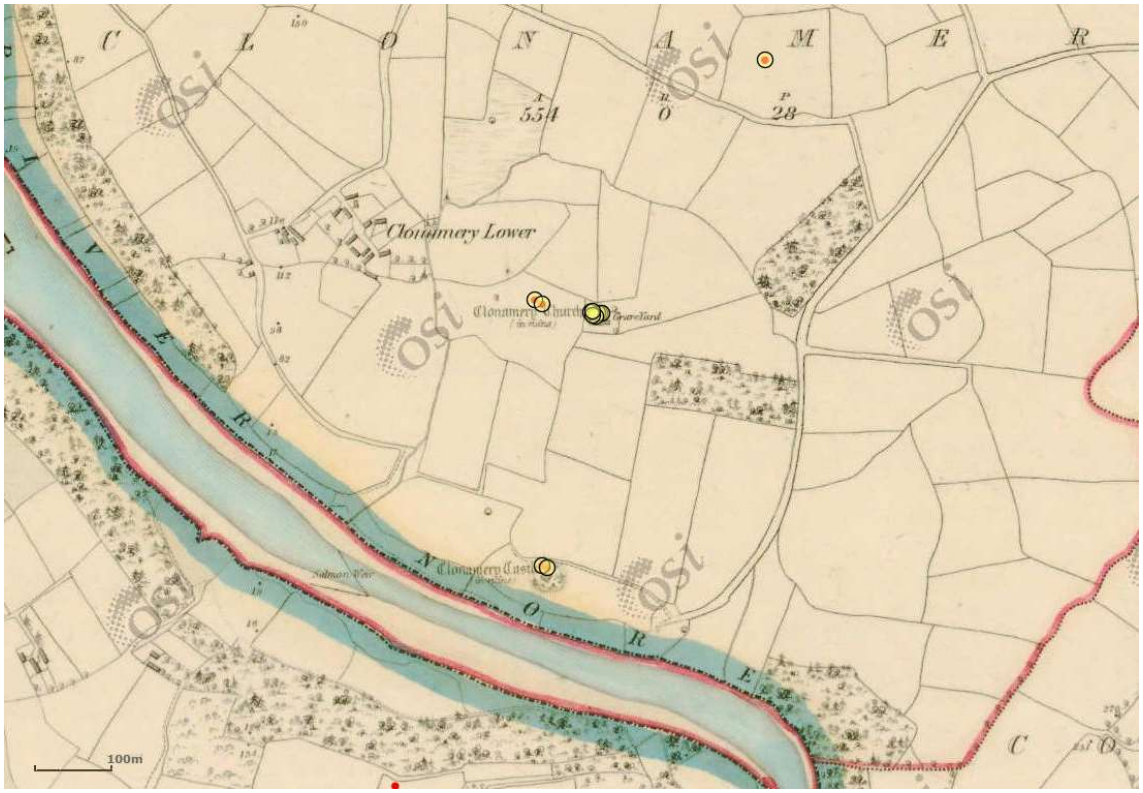
DESCRIPTION: This is a small, well-dressed stone with a Latin cross carved in high relief (*c*. 2–3 cm) on its east face. The dexter edge looks to have been deliberately rounded, and the eastern face is also convex. The cross extends the length of the stone, and spans 29 cm, with arms that narrow to points. The stem is 13 cm wide; the arms start at 8–12cm and narrow to 2–3cm at the terminals.

DISCUSSION: Harbison suggests this could be the base of a mullioned window of a type used in the 17th century, which would be evidence of post-medieval activity on the site prior to the building of the current Protestant church (*ibid*, 189). This may be the case, but as the stone's provenance is uncertain it has been included for the sake of completion

County Kilkenny

Clonamery

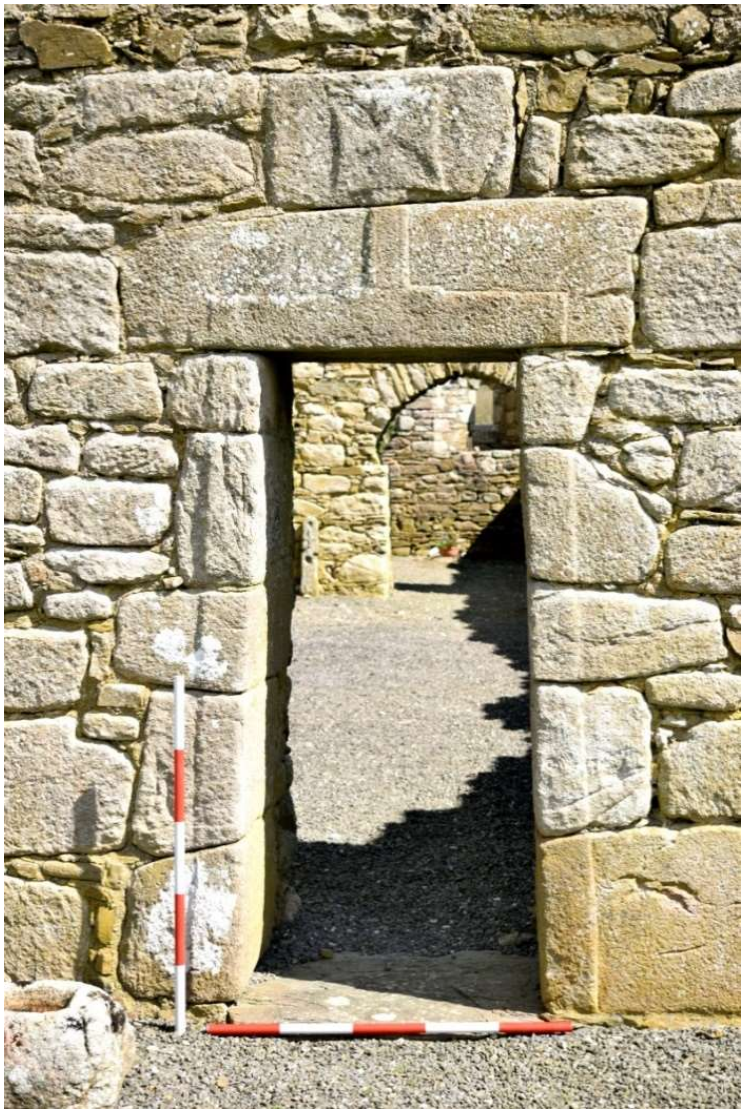
The site is situated in a rolling pasture on an east-west ridge, with the River Nore curving around it, *c*. 400 to the south-west. The village of Inistoge is c. 3 km to the northwest and the ruins of a castle stand *c*. 320 m south of Clonamery on the north bank of the river. It is unclear when Clonamery was founded; the Irish placename is *Cluain Iomaire* (logainm.ie), though the church is thought to be dedicated to St Brendan (Farrelly 2016). The site contains the remains of a pre-Romanesque church, *c*. 900-1130 (Ó Carragáin 2010, 87), though the nave was extended and a chancel and sacristy were added at later dates (Farrelly 2016). The doorway of Clonamery Church, on the west side, displays one of only a handful of pre-Romanesque doorways with cross-carved lintels, four of which are in combination with a relief architrave like Clonamery – Britway and Killeenemer, Co. Cork; Fore, Co. Westmeath and St Mary's, Glendalough (*cf*. Ó Carragáin 2010, 93). The site also houses three cross-carved pillars (see below), and the remains of two possible *clocháns*, or beehive huts, are located *c*. 64 m west of the church, though only one is still visible at ground level (Carrigan 1905 vol. 4, 118; Crawford 1925, 54; Farrelly 2016).



Map showing location of Clonamery church, north of the River Nore; note potential remnants of a circular enclosure to the north and east

KK-1

Clonamery 1



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Ida

PARISH: Clonamery

TOWNLAND: Clonamery

SITE NAME: Clonamery Church

ITM: 665786 635495

O.S. MAP: 33

RMP: KK033-021001 (Church)

TYPE: Lintel

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 32-40cm; Width 139-144cm (bottom stone); Height 37cm; Width 65cm (top stone)

FIRST RECORDED: While the church doorway was described by O'Donovan in the *Ordnance Survey Letters* of 1839, he does not mention any decoration (O'Flanagan 1930a). The doorway was first photographed, and the cross described, by Lord Dunraven in 1875 (vol. 1, 111, Pl. 59).

PRESENT LOCATION: Over the western doorway of the ruins of Clonamery church.

CONDITION: Weathered but still easily discernible, with some white lichen obscuring some of the top edge of the cross.

DESCRIPTION: The jambs of the western doorway of Clonamery church incline slightly, and the doorway is framed in plain-relief architrave, topped by an equal-armed cross carved onto the lintel and the stone above. The cross is entirely on the upper stone and measures 28 cm by 28 cm, with arms that narrow to 5 cm in the centre. From the base of the cross extends a stem attached to the architrave by a small step. The stem tapers ever so slightly toward the top, from 11 cm at the base to 9 cm just below the cross, and has a border created by two incised lines running vertically a few centimetres from the sides of the stem. Together the cross and stem measure 54 cm long, and the stepped base is 15–17 cm long. The cross looks to have been made by carving a square in relief first, with the areas between the arms subsequently hollowed out. The tips of the cross arms almost touch in some places which makes it look almost as if the cross is framed.

DISCUSSION: Inclining doorways are found on the majority of pre-Romanesque stone churches in Ireland, and plain-relief architrave is the most commonly featured decoration, if any (Ó Carragáin 2010, 89; 92). Plain-relief architrave is thought to be skeuomorphic of the door frames of wooden churches, and it occurs with another skeuomorphic feature at Clonamery, i.e. antae (*ibid*). Imitating the design features of earlier churches reflects a conservatism borne not of ignorance, but from a 'conscious social strategy' (*ibid*, 144). Additionally, only seven other pre-Romanesque doorways are carved with crosses, four of which are in combination with a relief architrave like Clonamery – Britway and Killeenemer, Co. Cork; Fore, Co. Westmeath and St Mary's, Glendalough (*ibid*, 93).

The square head of the Clonamery cross is similar to a cross at Knockane, Co. Kerry, and two from Raasay, Skye, Scotland (see below). The impression given by the carving is that of an altar cross or, perhaps, *labarum*. Depictions of *labara* on carved stone, like *flabella*, are usually interpreted as symbols of protection, and are thought to be associated with the Resurrection (see Chapter 7). Such iconography is undoubtedly appropriate for the door lintel of a church, and could certainly be a considered a 'conscious social strategy', and it is worth noting that the few instances of sculptural embellishment on Irish pre-Romanesque doorways take the form of crosses (Ó Carragáin 2010, 42). The symbolism carved on the doorway at Clonamery church could not have been lost on its congregation – Ó Carragáin made a particularly relevant point on this matter in quoting John 10:9: 'Jesus…said "I am the door. If anyone enter by me, he shall be saved"' (*ibid*).



Similar cross from Rasaay, Isle of Skye, Scotland (after Fisher 2001)

KK-2

Clonamery 2



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Ida

PARISH: Clonamery

TOWNLAND: Clonamery

SITE NAME: Clonamery Church

ITM: 665801 635494

O.S. MAP: 33

RMP: KK033-021003

TYPE: Pillar

MATERIAL: Slate

DIMENSIONS: Height 90 cm; Width 16–21 cm; Thickness 7–12 cm

FIRST RECORDED: The first mention of this stone was by Crawford in 1923; it was found half buried in the churchyard, broken off at ground level.

PRESENT LOCATION: Bracketed to the northeast wall of the nave, just to the left of the doorway.

CONDITION: Very worn and covered in lichen. As mentioned above, this is the top fragment of a pillar, the bottom of which is now missing. However what remains of the carving, though weathered, is still easily visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a narrow pillar with an unusual cup and cross pattern. It bears three crosses – one incised linear equal-armed cross with a ring, and two Latin crosses carved in high relief. The Latin crosses are unevenly carved and there is a particularly worn spot on the top cross, under the dexter arm. This cross is 20 cm high and 14 cm wide. The bottom cross is 15 cm high and 11 cm wide. The ringed equal-armed cross is located just above the bottom Latin cross and is roughly 6.5 cm in diameter, with terminals touching but not extending past the ring. The pillar also has two deep circular hollows, or cups, one at the top and one at centre of the stone. They are almost perfectly circular, evenly hollowed and bowl-like. The top cup is 6–7 cm in diameter and 2 cm deep; the lower cup is 9 cm in diameter and 5 cm deep.

DISCUSSION: This is a unique cross pillar; while the combination of cross and cup marks can be compared to the Rathdown group of slabs in County Dublin, there are no close parallels. The cup marks on the Clonamery pillar are deeper and wider than almost all of those on the Rathdown slabs, and the cups are bowl-shaped rather than flat-bottomed, suggesting they may have been created through a repeated circular grinding motion. Of the four Dublin comparanda that display a vertical cup and cross pattern (Healy 2009, nos. 21, 40, 43 and 47), the Kiltiernan slab (no. 47) is the only one in which the cup and cross alternates like on KK-2. There are also some early medieval slabs featuring cup-marks in Gleann Cholm Cille, Co. Donegal which mark a series of penitential stations (Healy 2009, figs. 26a–c; Lacy 1983, figs. 140c, 140d and 158a). However these cup-marks are significantly smaller than those on the Clonamery pillar, and the carvings on the slabs are otherwise stylistically different.

Though the pillar was first found in the graveyard, it was not *in situ* as this is only the top fragment of the pillar which had been re-erected at some point, presumably to be reused as a grave marker. However this pillar may have originally served as a devotional focus in the landscape, possibly as a termon marker as well. Moreover, its unusual design and in particular, the deeply ground circular hollows, indicate that ritual practices may have also been associated with this pillar (see Chapter 5).

KK-3

Clonamery 3



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Ida

PARISH: Clonamery

TOWNLAND: Clonamery

SITE NAME: Clonamery Church

ITM: 665788 635493

O.S. MAP: 33

RMP: KK033-021009

TYPE: Pillar

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 114 cm; Width 19–38 cm; Thickness 9–13 cm

FIRST RECORDED: When fieldwork was undertaken at Clonamery on 25 April 2016, this stone was not recorded in the SMR database nor in any publication of which I am aware, though it was presumed to already be known as it is prominently displayed within the nave of the church. It was subsequently added to the SMR database on 18 January 2017.

PRESENT LOCATION: Lying loose and leaning against the south-west corner of the nave.

CONDITION: Very weathered, with heavy lichen and moss cover obscuring the carved surface of the stone. The cross is heavily worn and difficult to see.

DESCRIPTION: This is an unshaped pillar with a linear Latin cross, 27 cm long by 22 cm wide, pocked onto the upper portion of one face. The right arm of the cross is particularly worn, may possibly have been damaged or chipped at some point.

DISCUSSION: Simple cross pillars like KK-3 are common across Ireland and Britain. Though its morphology suggests that it dates to the 9th century or earlier, its cross is a long-lived type that is not closely datable beyond a general assignment to the early medieval period (Chapter 4). Its height is atypical of individual upright grave markers dating from the 7th–9th centuries (*ibid*), though it is possible that KK-3 acted as a funerary monument around which burials would have been clustered, which was more common in the 5th and 6th centuries (Chapter 5). However its more likely function is that of an ecclesiastical boundary or termon marker (*ibid*).

KK-4

Clonamery 4



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Ida

PARISH: Clonamery

TOWNLAND: Clonamery

SITE NAME: Clonamery Church

ITM: 665788 635497

O.S. MAP: 33

RMP: KK033-021010

TYPE: Pillar

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 92 cm; Width 29–32 cm; Thickness 11–14 cm

FIRST RECORDED: When fieldwork was undertaken at Clonamery on 25 April 2016, this stone was not recorded in the SMR database nor in any publication of which I am aware, though it was presumed to already be known as it is prominently displayed within the nave of the church. It was subsequently added to the SMR database on 18 January 2017.

PRESENT LOCATION: Lying loose and leaning against the north-west corner of the nave.

CONDITION: Like KK-3, this pillar is very weathered, with heavy lichen and moss cover obscuring the carved surface of the stone, and the bottom sinister corner of the carved face has chipped or flaked off. The cross is heavily worn and difficult to see (particularly the dexter arm), though perhaps not as much as KK-3.

DESCRIPTION: A sub-rectangular albeit unshaped pillar stone with a linear Latin cross measuring 21 cm long by 18 cm wide pocked on the upper portion of one face.

DISCUSSION: This cross-carved pillar was probably contemporary with KK-3, and likewise probably served as a boundary or termon marker (see above).

Clontubrid/Freshford

On the grounds of the modern St Fiacre's Catholic Church stands the Clontubrid holy well, over which has been built a corbel-roofed cinder block structure with external dimensions of 3.05 m east-west by 2.4 m north-south. It has steps leading down to the well from its pointed doorway on the east side, above which is an early medieval gable finial, presumed to have been taken from the nearby church of Freshford (see below). The predecessor to the modern well-house was built no later than 1700, based on graffiti found inscribed onto the plaster inside (O'Flanagan 1930a vol. 1, §30–1). Locals claimed this earlier structure was occupied as a hermit's cell only 60 years prior to Curry's visit in 1839, at which time the aforementioned gable finial was recorded as leaning against the south wall of the well-house (*ibid*). Remnants of this structure were still standing in 1905 when visited by Carrigan; however this had been removed and the new well-house built by the mid-20th century, using some of the fabric of this earlier building, as Leask records the finial on top of the well-house where it is today (1955, 46). According to Carrigan, there was also an early medieval church at Clontubrid, presumably also dedicated to St Fiachra, which 'disappeared very long ago' (1905 vol. 2, 327). It supposedly stood at the south end of the modern churchyard, and Carrigan described the site as having 'the appearance of a half dismantled rath' (*ibid*); however there is no longer any physical trace of this feature at ground level (Farrelly 2018a).

The ecclesiastical site of *Achadh Úr* was established at Freshford by no later than the early 7th century, as an obituary for its presumed founder, St Lachtáin, is recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters in the year 622 (*AFM* M622.3). *Achadh Úr* is mentioned three more times in the annals (*AFM* M809.14, M899.6, M1018.4), indicating that it was a site of some (albeit local) importance. The stone church at Freshford dates to the 10th or 11th century, but has undergone significant renovations and extensions, the first of which was its richly ornamented 12th-century Romanesque porch (Quinlan and Foley 2004, 16, 22). Its nave was extended eastward *c*. 8 m and a chancel added sometime in the medieval period, possibly around the same time that the porch was added, as such extensions of earlier churches were common in the 12th century (*ibid*, 22–3). However the absence of certain 12th century diagnostic features, i.e. a chancel arch, and the presence of other, later features that are thought to be primary to these additions have led to the suggestion that they may instead date to the 15th century (*ibid*). The church was ruinous by 1622 according to the Visitation records of the time, and remained so until it was repaired in

1732 (*ibid*, 14, 23); subsequent reports stated the church was in good condition (*ibid*). The church changed denominations to Church of Ireland in 1730 (Carrigan 1905 vol. 2, 253), which may have been what prompted its restoration. Major repairs, renovations and additions were also undertaken several times in the 19th century, and again in 1949, though only minor repairs have been made since (Quinlan and Foley 2004, 25–6).



Clontubrid holy well; 12th-century Romanesque porch of Freshford Church

KK-5

Clontubrid



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Crannagh

PARISH: Sheffin

TOWNLAND: Clontubrid

SITE NAME: Clontubrid Holy Well

ITM: 640277 667593

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: KK009-044006

TYPE: Gable finial

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Finial – Height 58.4 cm; Width 61 cm Base – Height 19 cm; Width 13 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Described by Eugene Curry in the *Ordnance Survey Letters* during his survey of the parish in 1839 (O'Flanagan 1930a vol. 1, §30–1).

PRESENT LOCATION: Incorporated into the modern well-house at Clontubrid Church, just over the door.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered and spotted with lichen; the carving is badly eroded.

DESCRIPTION: A gable 'butterfly' finial with a recessed background and a thick border along the edges. The centre is dominated by a human figure in calf-length robes, on either side of which is additional carving, though the stone is now too worn to discern any details, even on the photogrammetry model. The sinister tip of the finial was broken off at some point prior to being photographed by Carrigan (1905, vol. 2, 329), though it must have been replaced sometime between its publication by Leask (1955, fig. 20e) when it was missing, and that of Hughes and Hamlin (1977, fig. 10) when it was shown intact.

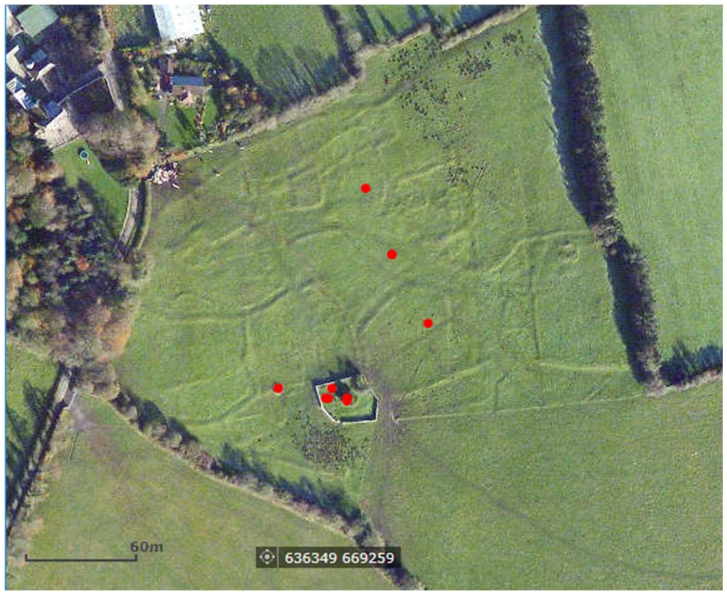
DISCUSSION: Though it has been suggested that KK-5 could have originated from an early medieval church that stood at Clontubrid (Farrelly 2018a), it seems more likely to have come from the nearby St Lachtáin's Church in Freshford, given the site's relative importance in the early medieval period and the scarcity of such finials. Stone gable finials are thought to be skeuomorphic of the intersecting terminals of wooden rafters in earlier churches. These would have been placed at the apex of the west gable, which was metaphorically associated with Christ in his role as the 'cornerstone' of the Church (Ó Carragáin 2010, 41–2), and provides an explanation as to why the iconography of gable finials is strongly associated with Christ. Of the other eight extant early medieval examples, the one at Church Island (Valentia Harbour) is the closest parallel. It is thought to date to the 11th century, and features a figure between two animal heads, with arms raised in the *orans* prayer position (O'Kelly 1957–9, fig. 7). This depiction of Christ between two animals has been likened metaphorically to the Old and New Testaments, with Christ as the primitive Church between them, unifying the two (Ó Carragáin, 1988, 11). Though the Clontubrid figure does not have its hands outstretched (see below), the indeterminate carvings on either side could suggest that it represents the same motif; thus the Clontubrid finial may potentially date from the earliest, 10th-11th century phase of St Lachtáin's

Church. However, because of its poor state of preservation, and particularly, as the arms of the Christ-figure are not raised, it is equally possible that the Clontubrid finial displays iconography similar to the Romanesque doorway of Roscrea Cathedral, with Christ flanked by rosettes (*cf.* Ó Carragáin 2010, 43). If so, then KK-5 may instead be contemporary with the 12th-century renovations to the church.

As previously stated, the gable finial must have made its way at some point from Freshford to Clontubrid. There was a resurgence of devotional practices at holy wells in the 17th century (Moss 2008, 75), and Rachel Moss later cites Clontubrid specifically when she states, 'deprived of the right to worship in their ancient churches, the Catholic community repaired or constructed new well-houses, sometimes incorporating stone from the medieval ruins of their former places of worship…' (2015b, 180). Considering that St Lachtáin's Church was in a ruinous state from at least the early 17th century until 1732 (see above), it would make sense if the finial was moved to Clontubrid within this time period. However it is unclear when (if ever) the gable finial topped this earlier well-house. In 1839, the finial was recorded as leaning against the south wall of the well-house (see above). It was photographed in this same position by Lord Dunraven in 1875 (9l. 64) and again by Carrigan in 1905 (vol. 2, 329). Interestingly, in what may have been a span of over a hundred years, the finial was never moved. It remained lying loose in the same position, despite most of the other stones from the well-house being taken away by local farmer in the earlier part of the 19th century (O'Flanagan 1930a vol. 1, §30–1). The few stones that remained, including the finial, were only kept in place by the 'veneration of the neighbouring peasants' (*ibid*).

Coolcashin Church

Cúil Chaisín is recorded twice in the *Annals of the Four Masters* – once in 844 as being plundered and burned 'by the foreigners', then burned again in 1156 (*AFM* M844.13, M1156.6). This would suggest that, at least in the 9th–12th centuries, the site was important enough (albeit locally) to be mentioned in the annals and wealthy enough (at least in 844) to attract the attention of raiders. Moreover, an extensive complex of banks and mounds suggest the presence of a medieval settlement at Coolcashin, possibly of early medieval date (Higgins 1989, 600; Farrelly 2018b). Coolcashin Church is situated on a low eastern slope *c*. 50 m northeast of a small stream which joins the River Goul *c*. 40 m south-east of the church. It was described by Eugene Curry in 1839 as in ruins, with only portions of the west gable and south wall remaining (O'Flanagan 1930a vol. 1, §34). The dimensions were 30 ft (c. 9 m) long by 20 ft (6 m) wide, with walls 3 ft (*c*. 0.9 m) thick, 'the stones large and set in a strong bed of lime and gravel' (*ibid*). Portions of the lower courses of the west gable, as well as the western side of the north wall are still extant to a height of *c*. 1 m (Farrelly 2018b). The graveyard contains numerous architectural fragments and two 13th-14th-century grave-slab fragments being reused as grave markers. They also previously contained two early medieval cross-slab fragments; however these have been removed as of 2016 (see below). Additionally, there is a holy well situated 18 m west of the north-west corner of the graveyard wall.



Aerial view of Coolcashin, showing the church surrounded by extensive earthworks (Source: OSi)

KK-6

Coolcashin 1



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Galmoy

PARISH: Coolcashin

TOWNLAND: Coolcashin

SITE NAME: Coolcashin Graveyard

ITM: 641135 670998 (current location)

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: KK009-019009 and KK009-122

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 48 cm; Width 28 cm; Thickness 17 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Lying loose on the north wall of the church in Coolcashin graveyard (Higgins 1989).

PRESENT LOCATION: The parochial house of Lisdowney, *c*. 5.5 km north-east of Coolcashin Church.

CONDITION: Several fragments of the stone have been broken off from the bottom and dexter edges (based on its orientation in the photograph), and the top as well as some of the sinister side of the slab is missing. There is moderate lichen cover on the face of the stone; however the design and inscription are still easily visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a fragment of a relatively small, (now) irregularly shaped cross-slab. One face is incised with a multi-line expansional cross within a single-line rectilinear frame which spans most of its surface. The centres of the three remaining expanded D-shaped terminals are undecorated, but the central area of the cross is ornamented with an incised circle carved with a triangular fret pattern. Running vertically in empty space between the cross and the frame on the sinister side is the inscription 'ÓR DO C…'; the rest of the inscription being lost along with the upper section of this stone.

DISCUSSION: This slab is of a type of recumbent grave marker that is particularly common at Clonmacnoise, as well as at High Island. Plain terminals with an ornamented centre are found on four slabs from Clonmacnoise (Macalister 1909, nos. 137, 143, 144 and 164), and multi-lined expansional crosses on four others (*ibid*, nos. 142, 143, 158 and 162). A slab at Clonfert Cathedral, Co. Galway features an expansional cross in a double-lined rectilinear frame (Higgins 1987, no. 64), and expansional crosses are 'the nearest thing to a house style' at High Island (Maddern 2014, 187). This cross-form has been dated at Clonmacnoise to the late 9th–10th centuries on stylistic grounds (Ó Floinn 1995, 254), though some of the slabs with expansional crosses at High Island have been found in context with burials variously radiocarbon dated to between late 10th and late 12th-early 13th centuries (see Chapter 4). However, it should also be noted that these examples were on large recumbent slabs, which are morphologically dated to the 11th and 12th centuries (*ibid*). Most of the slabs with expansional crosses on High Island, including one *in situ* slab from a burial that was radiocarbon dated to the late 9th-10th century (Scally 2014, 73), are of the smaller, more 'typical' size usually associated with this monument-type. Additionally, while the *oróit do* ('a prayer for…') formula dates from the 9th century onward, its shortened form *ór do* is thought to have been more commonly used in the 9th and 10th centuries (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 37; Higgins 1989, 602). Altogether, the evidence would suggest that KK-6 probably also dates to the 9th or 10th century, which coincides broadly with the site's floruit (see above). Moreover, like the slabs on High Island, the presence of this

slab at Coolcashin (and, possibly, the second slab fragment as well; see below), demonstrates that this cross-form certainly had a much wider distribution than previously suggested by Ó Floinn (1995, fig. 2), and was not a style exclusively associated with Clonmacnoise and its subsidiary churches (see Chapter 5).



Photogrammetry model of KK-6, showing inscription and decorative details

KK-7

Coolcashin 2

COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Galmoy

PARISH: Coolcashin

TOWNLAND: Coolcashin

SITE NAME: Coolcashin Graveyard

ITM: 641135 670998 (current location)

O.S. MAP: 9

RMP: KK009-019010 and KK009-123

TYPE: Slab `

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 21 cm; Width 20 cm; Thickness 5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: By Jean Farrelly, 20 July 2018

PRESENT LOCATION: The parochial house of Lisdowney, *c*. 5.5 km north-east of Coolcashin Church.

CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: 'A small fragment of a rectangular sandstone cross-slab with a straight-sided edge. The smooth flat surface is decorated with a number of straight incised lines indicating a border and within this frame there is the start of a double-lined curve, presumably the semi-circular terminal of one arm of a Latin cross. On the flat underside there are traces of mortar where the stone has been re-used in building a stone wall, presumably the graveyard wall at Coolcashin' (Farrelly 2018c).

DISCUSSION: This fragment was presumably found after KK-6 was examined in 2016, and has not yet been recorded for this study. From Farrelly's description, this may have been a piece of a slab carved with an expansional cross with D-shaped terminals, and would thus either be another example of the cross-type at Coolcashin, or else is second fragment of KK-6. The stone is very thin compared to KK-6, however, so it may have been the former. As suggested by Farrelly, the mortar on the slab's underside would indicate it had been reused as building material, presumably in the graveyard wall. It may tentatively be suggested, due to its highly fragmented

state, that this slab had originally been a recumbent grave marker of 9th or 10th century date, like KK-6 (see above).

Dysart

Dysart is located on a bend in the River Nore, *c*. 3 km south of Thomastown. The remains of a 12th–13th-century church and 15th-century tower house stand adjacent to one another, and the ruins of a late 17th-century dwelling extend south from the tower house for a distance of 17 m. The site was originally known as *Dísert Mo-Cholmóc*, and was thought to be associated with either a St Colmóc or, perhaps, Colmán (*Monasticon Hibernicum*; Ó Riain 2011, 189). Archaeological investigations were undertaken at Dysart in the summers of 1989 and 1991; excavations in 1989 revealed inhumations running underneath the earliest part of the foundations of the church (int. dim. 8.02 m x 5.35 m), which is thought to date to the 12th century, and extended east in the 13th century (Murtagh 1989; 1991). Built into the north wall of the 12th-century fabric was an early medieval cross-slab (*ibid*; see below). In the later medieval period, Dysart was under the jurisdiction of the Augustinian Priory of Kells (Murtagh 1989), when the tower house would have been constructed. Another early medieval cross-slab (see below) was reused as the door lintel over the entrance to this tower, which was not excavated. Though tower houses were sometimes built on the west end of churches in the later medieval period, excavation revealed that the church and tower at Dysart were not connected to each other until the 17th century, after both had fallen out of ecclesiastical use (Murtagh 1991). It was during this time that the aforementioned late 17th-century dwelling was constructed, and the now-connected tower and church may have functioned as out-buildings for this structure (*ibid*). This was built on top of another, slightly earlier 16th/17th-century dwelling; however the lowest levels of one of the excavation trenches also revealed the post holes of a (presumed) early medieval circular structure, within which was an oval pit filled with iron slag (*ibid*), indicating there was metalworking at *Dísert Mo-Cholmóc* in the early medieval period.

KK-8

Dysart 1



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Gowran

PARISH: Pleberstown

TOWNLAND: Dysart

SITE NAME: Dysart Church

ITM: 659604 639311 (original location)

O.S. MAP: 32

RMP: KK032-004005

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 95 cm; Width 50 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Found in the rubble of Dysart church by Murtagh and Hall during excavations in 1989.

PRESENT LOCATION: The National Museum of Ireland (E492:500)

CONDITION: The lower dexter corner of the slab's carved face is cracked. The top sinister corner and edge, including the end of the sinister cross arm and the very top sinister corner of the stem, are missing. This damage appears to have been relatively recent as the broken edges of the slab are not as worn as the rest of the stone. Additionally, the lower sinister corner appears to have been broken off, though this damage is much older.

DESCRIPTION: Large, sub-rectangular slab *c*. 95 cm in height with an outline Latin cross incised onto an uneven and probably unshaped face. The cross arms are thinner than the stem, and the dexter arm ends less than 10 cm from the edge of the stone (the sinister terminal is now missing). The stone's surface is heavily pitted, and it is difficult to say without further examination whether the bottom of the cross stem has been left open or if it extends further – there is a mark on the lowest dexter side of the face that may be a continuation of the stem, or could be natural.

DISCUSSION: This slab was recovered from a pile of masonry rubble from the collapsed north wall of the 12th-century fabric of the church (Murtagh 1991), into which it can reasonably be assumed the slab had been incorporated, and thus providing a *terminus ante quem* for KK-8. Plain outline crosses were in use throughout most of the early medieval period. While there are many examples dating to the 7th–8th centuries, they are carved onto smaller slabs and are often equal-armed (see Chapter 4). Plain outline Latin crosses are thought to mostly date from the 8th century onward, and when found on a slab of this size, usually to the 9th century or later (*ibid*). Considering KK-8 is mostly unshaped, or else only roughly so, a 9th–10th date range may be suggested. It is unclear how this slab would have functioned. Given its size and morphology, it may have been a recumbent grave marker. Alternatively, if the cross carving is actually open-ended at the bottom of the stem, it could also be suggested that KK-8 originally stood upright, especially since the surface of the lower portion of the stone is very uneven, and almost certainly unshaped, indicating that it may not have been intended to be seen. If this were the case, then it may instead have acted as a termon or boundary marker, perhaps marking the entrance to an enclosure, at it is only carved on one side (see Chapter 5). However, it is puzzling as to why this face of the slab was carved with a cross – it is very uneven compared to the relatively flat, opposite face. On plausible explanation is that both side were originally unshaped, and the

uncarved face was shaped in the 12th century to fit more readily into the church wall, while the opposite face was left untouched, so as not to deface the cross.

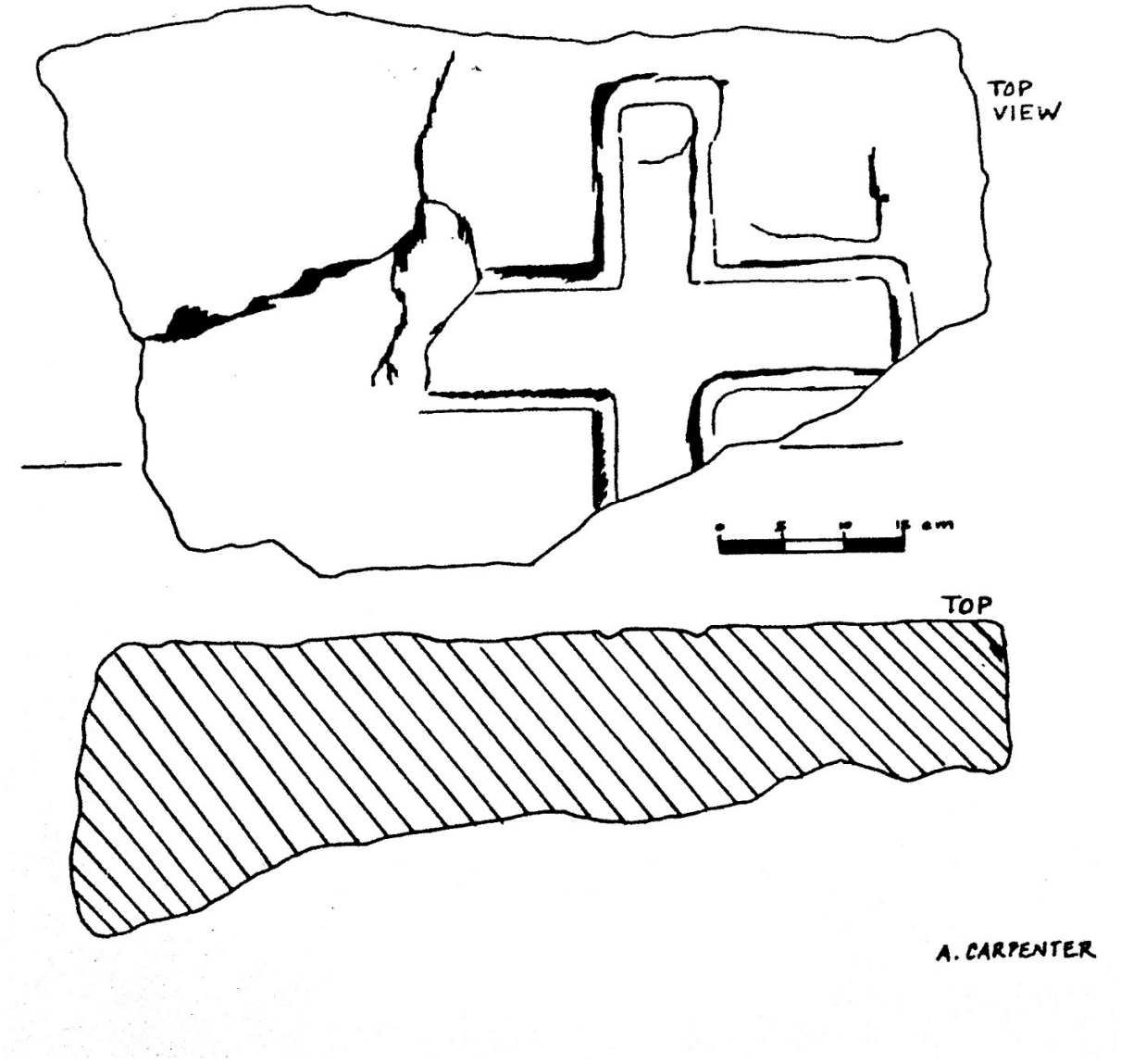


Illustration and section profile of KK-8 (after Hall 1991)

KK-9

Dysart 2



COUNTY: Kilkenny BARONY: Gowran

PARISH: Pleberstown TOWNLAND: Dysart

SITE NAME: Dysart Tower House ITM: 659586 639308

O.S. MAP: 32 RMP: KK032-004006

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 97 cm; Width 59 cm; Thickness 9 cm

FIRST RECORDED: In the doorway of Dysart tower house, noted during excavations in 1989.

PRESENT LOCATION: Same position

CONDITION: Weathered, flaked and covered in green lichen. The slab has several chips and flakes of stone missing along its dexter and sinister edges. The face of the stone is flaking, and the upper right quadrant of the cross has flaked or worn almost entirely away.

DESCRIPTION: This is a sub-rectangular slab with at least one dressed face and minimally dressed sides. It is oriented so that only one face can be seen, which is carved with a ringed Latin cross incised in outline, spanning the length and breadth of the stone. The arms extend past the ring slightly and are open-ended, though the sinister edge of the stone is chipped off at the terminal of the cross arm. The head of the cross seems to be open ended as well, but some of the stem is now obscured.

DISCUSSION: This cross-slab, presumed to have originally functioned as a recumbent grave marker, was reused as a lintel in the western entrance to the 15th-century tower house. Ringed outline crosses are fairly common; some examples similar to KK-9 are known from church sites in Galway (Higgins 1987 nos. 82, 83, 94 and 95) as well as one from Clonmacnoise (Macalister 1909, pl. XVI, no. 100). There are also two close parallels from St Cyngar's Church in Wales (Edwards 2013, F6 and F7), and one from Sgor nam Bàn-Naomha, Canna, Scotland (Fisher 2001, no. 29C). Some similar slabs have been dated to the 9th–11th centuries (see Chapter 4), and KK-9 probably does as well, which means that it may also be roughly contemporary with KK-8 (see above). Additionally, there are a few examples of cross-slabs being reused as door lintels in later churches at Clonmacnoise, Skellig Michael and High Island (Ó Carragáin 2010, 157). The only other example from a domestic context known to me at present is the one at Clonmore Castle (CW-31, this volume); however, unlike CW-31, KK-9 is still being reused in an ecclesiastical setting as the tower house is thought to have been built as a priestly residence (see above; also Murtagh 1989). The tower house was only in use as a residence for approximately 200 years, during which time there is no evidence for any major renovations or remodelling, so it is presumed to have been built into the structure during its initial construction (though this cannot be known for certain). It is also not known whether or not the cross-slab was plastered over, yet regardless, it may have been conceived of having apotropaic properties, as well as being a 'relic' of Dysart's early Christian past (see Chapter 5).

Glenballyvally

This site is listed on *Monasticon Hibernicum* under the name *Thompleakilleen*, as a possibly early medieval foundation. The only other mention I could find of this is in Carrigan's *History…of Ossory* (1905 vol. 4, 195). He describes the church ruins as quite small, perhaps 15 ft (*c*. 4.6 m) long at most, with only the foundations of the west gable, and traces of the east gable, remaining. The graveyard is east-southeast from where the church presumably stood, though only the barest traces of a circular enclosure, along with three upright stones, are still visible at ground level; the remains of the church described by Carrigan are no longer extant. One of the upright stones is uncarved but the other two are cross-carved (see below). Use of the word Temple (or *Teampall*) for a church is relatively late, usually 12th century or later, though there are some 11th century examples and some earlier sites that were renamed 'Temple', e.g. Temple Geal in Corcu Duibne (Hurley 1979; Ó Carragáin 2010, fig. 121). In this case, the 'Temple' name could have originated as a local tradition as it just means 'Church of the Burial Ground'; this could also suggest that the name may be relatively recent, as it is not recorded in any early sources as such, though the two cross-carved slabs clearly indicate that the site originates much earlier. There is a possible association with a St Grellán (or perhaps Grealan) though this is uncertain, and may date to the 13th century (Carrigan 1905 vol. 4, 195; Monasticon Hibernicum). Inquiries confirmed local belief that the site was a monk's graveyard, and while it is now within a cow pasture, it appears to be otherwise undisturbed. The church dimensions are very small, with no later expansions. Carrigan speculated that it continued to be used at least into the 13th century, perhaps as an annexed chapel to the Nunnery of Kilkilliheen (1905 vol. 4, 195), though I could find any evidence to support this. Instead, perhaps it may have been a proprietary church such as a chapel of ease, concerned with the pastoral care of only a few people (Ó Carragáin 2003, 130).



Glenballyvally, showing remnants of a circular enclosure and small graveyard to the south-east (Source: OSi)

KK-10

Glenballyvally 1



North face



South face

COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Ida

PARISH: Dysartmoon

TOWNLAND: Glenballyvally

SITE NAME: Glenballyvally

ITM: 666198 632108

O.S. MAP: 37

RMP: KK037-024004 or KK037-024005

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Slate

DIMENSIONS: Height 54 cm (from ground); Width 15 cm; Thickness 6–11 cm

FIRST RECORDED: While a cross-incised stone was mentioned at this site by Carrigan (1905 vol. 4, 195), it is unclear which, if either, of the two stones recorded here is the one noted by him.

This stone is included in the SMR database, though its description and exact location are not yet uploaded.

PRESENT LOCATION: The north-northeast quadrant of the graveyard

CONDITION: The surfaces are rough, there is a chip on the top dexter edge of the north face and the south face has heavy lichen cover; however the crosses are still easily visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small rectangular stone with straight sides and a fairly flat top, though the surface is now very weathered. The stone's thickness from base to top varies by 5 cm, giving it a thin wedge-like shape. Outline Latin crosses with open stems are incised on both faces in deep lines. The crosses occupy most of the surface, beginning at the very top of the stone and extending down most of its length, with arms spanning the width of the stone. They measure 38 cm long and 15 cm wide, with a thickness of 5–6 cm on the north face and 5–8 cm on the south. Both taper towards the top, though the difference is more pronounced on the south cross. The stem and arms of the south cross intersect at right angles, and the north cross is hollow-angled. While this was not as noticeable during fieldwork, it is clearly apparent in the photogrammetry model created of the stone. There is a natural stone against the sinister side of the north face, which may be a packing stone.

DISCUSSION: The morphology of this stone indicates it functioned as an upright grave marker and the cross-forms themselves are widespread during the early medieval period (Chapter 4). KK-10 can be closely paralleled with several small 8th–10th century upright grave markers from St Berrihert's Kyle (Ó hÉailidhe 1967, 3B, 6B, 8B, 22B, 34B, 35A and 35B), and an early monastic graveyard from A'Chill, Canna revealed five similar *in situ* grave markers (Fisher 2001, no. 28). Several similar small upright grave markers from Wales have been variously dated to the 9th–11th centuries (Edwards 2007a, CD25, P32, P37, P87, P129; 2013 AN 35, AN55, D5), though the small size of KK-10 would suggest it belongs in a date range similar to the collection from St Berrihert's Kyle.

KK-11

Glenballyvally 2



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Ida

PARISH: Dysartmoon

TOWNLAND: Glenballyvally

SITE NAME: Glenballyvally

ITM: 666198 632108

O.S. MAP: 37

RMP: KK037-024004 or KK037-024005

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 46 cm (from ground); Width 16 cm; Thickness 9 cm

FIRST RECORDED: While a cross-incised stone was mentioned at this site by Carrigan (1905 vol. 4, 195), it is unclear which, if either, of the two stones recorded here is the one noted by him. This stone is included in the SMR database, though its description and exact location are not yet uploaded.

PRESENT LOCATION: In the north-northeast quadrant of the graveyard.

CONDITION: The stone is mostly covered in white lichen but the cross is still clearly visible. The top sinister corner has been broken off through the entire thickness of the stone.

DESCRIPTION: The sides and faces of the stone are well dressed, though the top of the stone looks to have been left unshaped. The stone is incised on the south face with a linear Latin cross with rounded terminals. The cross begins 10 cm from the top of the face and measures 27 cm long by 16 cm wide. There is a small chip on the dexter edge of the face just at the terminal of the cross arm, but the cross appears to have been carved over it, so it may have been there previously. The bottom of the cross can just be seen at ground level. The stone is surrounded by brambles and loose stones, some of which could have been packing stones.

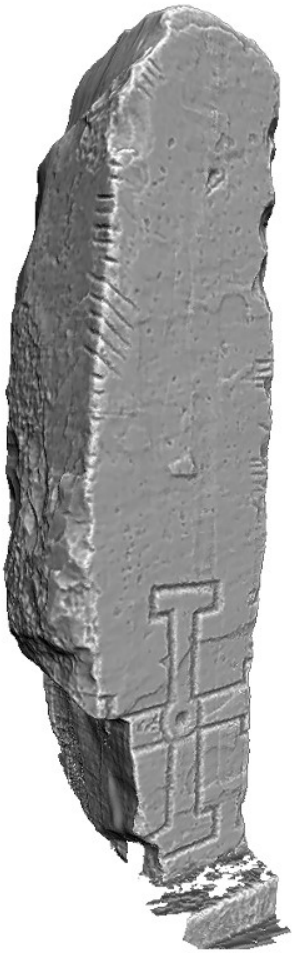
DISCUSSION: Like KK-10, this stone would have likely served as an upright grave marker, and their similar sizes would suggest they were probably roughly contemporary (see above). Rounded and oval terminals are less common than other forms of terminal decoration, though there are three parallels from St Berrihert's Kyle (Ó hÉailidhe 1967, 32B, 33B and 44A). Additionally, crosses with rounded terminals were found incised onto a pebble at Drumacoo, Co. Galway (Higgins 1987, no. 3), a pillar in Knockaunaman, Inis Mór, (*ibid*, no. 14) and a cross-incised stone from Church Island (Valentia Harbour; O'Kelly 1957–9, fig. 8.1).

Gowran

Gowran is situated *c*. 10 km south-east of Kilkenny city, on the bend of a stream, 200 m to the south, which eventually runs into the River Barrow. The church at Gowran, St Mary's Church, was built in the 13th century, and the only early medieval material from the site is an ogham stone (see below) which was incorporated into this church's foundations. However, it is thought to have been built on an earlier (albeit unrelated) ecclesiastical site ('CIIC 32. Gowran, Co. Kilkenny' 2019). Though this earlier site remains unidentified, *Monasticon Hibernicum* tentatively places *Belach Gabráin c*. 4.5 km north of St Mary's in the townland of Kilmacahill, though it might be suggested here that perhaps *Belach Gabráin* was actually at Gowran, considering that it is the only *Gabhrán* placename recorded in loganimn.ie. *Belat* translates to 'place where several roads meet', or sometimes 'frontier' (eDIL, sv 'belat'), suggesting that *Gabráin* was at a crossroads or junction, probably at the boundary between two or more territories. However, it is unclear as to whether or not *Belach Gabráin* was actually an ecclesiastical site; it may have instead been a (minor) royal residence. *Belat Gabráin*, or sometimes just *Gabráin*, is recorded in the annals eight times (*AU* U761.3, U858.4, U906.3l *AFM* M754.8, M756.4; *Chron Scot* CS857, CS869, CS906). Notably, an obituary for Bran mac Scannlán, a king of *Gabráin* is recorded in the year 857. The other seven entries all refer to battles or raids by various Irish kings or polities, including 'the battle of *Belat Gabráin*' in which the king of the Uí Chennselaig, along with other several kings, were slain (U761.3; AFM 756.4). *Gabráin* was also subjected to aggression from the high king Mael Sechnaill and later, his son Flann during their campaigns against the kings of Munster (U858.4, U906.3; CS906). While this certainly indicates that *Gabráin* was important, particularly in the mid-8th–early 10th centuries, no ecclesiastical terms (e.g. abbot, coarb, church, oratory, etc.) are used in any of the above annalistic entries. However, while *Gabráin* itself may not be an ecclesiastical site, it could be suggested that *Belat Gabráin* was – or at least, that some sort of (minor) church had been established in this approximate location. The annals would indicate that *Gabráin* itself was secular territory; however, Ó Carragáin has shown evidence that lesser ecclesiastical settlements were placed at the boundaries of *túatha*, as well as larger-scale regional kingdoms (e.g. the kingdom of Fir Maige) 'as an assertion of dominion in particular political circumstances' (2014, 288–93; forthcoming), and, perhaps, this was also the case regarding *Belat Gabráin*.

KK-12

Gowran



3D model of the Gowran ogham stone (Source: Ogham in 3D Project)

COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Gowran

PARISH: Gowran

TOWNLAND: Gowran

SITE NAME: St Mary's Church

ITM: 663307 653480

O.S. MAP: 20

RMP: KK020-060007

TYPE: Ogham stone

MATERIAL: Grit

DIMENSIONS: Height 150 cm; Width 38 cm; Thickness 30 cm

FIRST RECORDED: In the foundation of the chancel of the 13th-century St Mary's Church, discovered during renovations in the early 19th century (Macalister 1945, 38).

PRESENT LOCATION: The rebuilt chancel of St Mary's Church.

CONDITION: Fairly good, though much of the bottom dexter side of the stone has been broken off, including the end of the dexter cross terminal. The ogham inscription and cross are still visible, though several score marks of the inscription have been spalled off of the top sinister side.

DESCRIPTION: This is an unshaped pillar, albeit for one face, along the dexter, top and sinister edges of which in an ogham inscription. Macalister (*ibid*, no. 32) read the inscription as MAQI-ERAC[I]AS [MA]QI DIMAQ[A] MUC[OI--; McManus (1997, 66) read it as MAQI]-ERAC[IAS] [MAQI] D[I]M[A]Q[A] MUC[O-. However the stone has also been studied as part of the *Ogham in 3D* project, and a laser scan of KK-12, created as part of this project, facilitated a reading of [MAQ]Ị ERACỊAS [MA]QỊ/ DỊMẠQẠ MUCỌ[I] (Ogham in 3D 2019). On the lowest portion of this face is a 'cross potent' – an equal-armed cross with T-shaped terminals incised in outline, *c*. 50 cm by 50 cm. At the intersection of this cross is an incised circle with a shallow round depression at its centre.

DISCUSSION: It seems reasonable (albeit still speculative) to suggest *Belat Gabráin* as a possible place of origin for KK-12, considering ogham stones are traditionally associated with boundaries and *Belat* roughly translates as 'crossroads' (see above; also Chapter 5). This stone was protected from the elements for over 600 years, so it is unsurprising that it is in 'quite good condition' (Macalister 1945, 38); thus it may be significant that the only damage to the inscription is on the personal name of the individual commemorated, which has been spalled away. There is precedence to suggest that this may have been deliberate; in their original contexts, ogham stones were often erected on territorial boundaries and removing the name of the stone's owner, whose kin-group could claim territorial rights to that particular piece of land, was seen as a symbolic statement of new ownership (see Chapter 5). This may be supported by the fact that the cross is on the opposite side to the inscription, and the only way it would have been fully visible in the landscape is if the stone were inverted, thus burying the inscription. This is likewise suggestive of symbolic meaning, and it may be postulated that the damage to the

inscription is contemporary with the carving of the cross, which stylistically may date anywhere from the 7th to 10th century (Chapter 4), though perhaps an 8th–9th century date range may be suggested for the cross on KK-12 as a similar date is given to the majority of cross-carvings on ogham stones in Co. Kerry (*ibid*) and moreover, this coincides with the annalistic references to *Belat Gabráin* (*AU* U761.3, U858.4; *AFM* M756.4).

Killamery

Killamery (*Cill Lámhraighe*) is situated on a low rise, just north of a ridge of hills. It was reputedly founded by St Gobán Fionn of the Uí Liatháin sometime in the early 7th century, though the church is named after the Lámhraighe family (Carrigan 1905 vol. 4, 311; MacCotter 2008, 183; Ó Riain 2011). Gobán Fionn was said to have established a large monastic community here, home to 'a thousand monks' (Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 392), and an obituary for an abbot of *Cill Lámhraighe*, Domhnall mac Niall, is recorded in 1004 (*AFM* M1004.5). The remains of an earlier church are still extant, just north of the ruinous 19th-century church, as well as a ringed high cross, an undecorated free-standing cross, two early medieval cross-slabs (see below), two bullauns and several architectural fragments. A holy well dedicated to St Nicholas, who shares a feast day with Gobán Fionn (6 December; *Félire Óengusso*, 250, in Stokes), is located 13 m south of the high cross. Killamery is located along the southwestern border of the early medieval kingdom of Osraige near the River Lingaun, which was the traditional boundary between the Osraige and the Déisi (Power 1914, 157). It is one of several churches along this border, which also includes Ahenny and Kilkieran, that collectively possess a group of finely executed non-scriptural high crosses, referred to as the Ossory crosses (Ó Floinn 2001, 9–11). Ó Floinn has theorised that these churches had a wealthy patron or patrons which were responsible for their production, and in particular, that this patron may have been Cerball mac Dúnlainge (†888), considered to have been the strongest of the Osraige kings (*ibid*). He further suggests that the crosses may have been commissioned as a display of political power in response to the particular socio-political climate which characterised Cerball's reign (see Ó Floinn 2001).



The high cross at Killamery, with the ruined Church of Ireland in the background

KK-13

Killamery 1



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Kells

PARISH: Killamery

TOWNLAND: Killamery

SITE NAME: Killamery Graveyard

ITM: 637636 636144

O.S. MAP: 30

RMP: KK030-008005

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 150 cm; Width 53 cm; Thickness 9–15 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Recorded by Eugene Curry in 1839 as 'lying flat near the foot of the cross to the north' in Killamery graveyard (O'Flanagan 1930a vol. 2, 31).

PRESENT LOCATION: Cemented and bolted to a brick base, displayed on its lateral edge *c*. 2 m from the high cross.

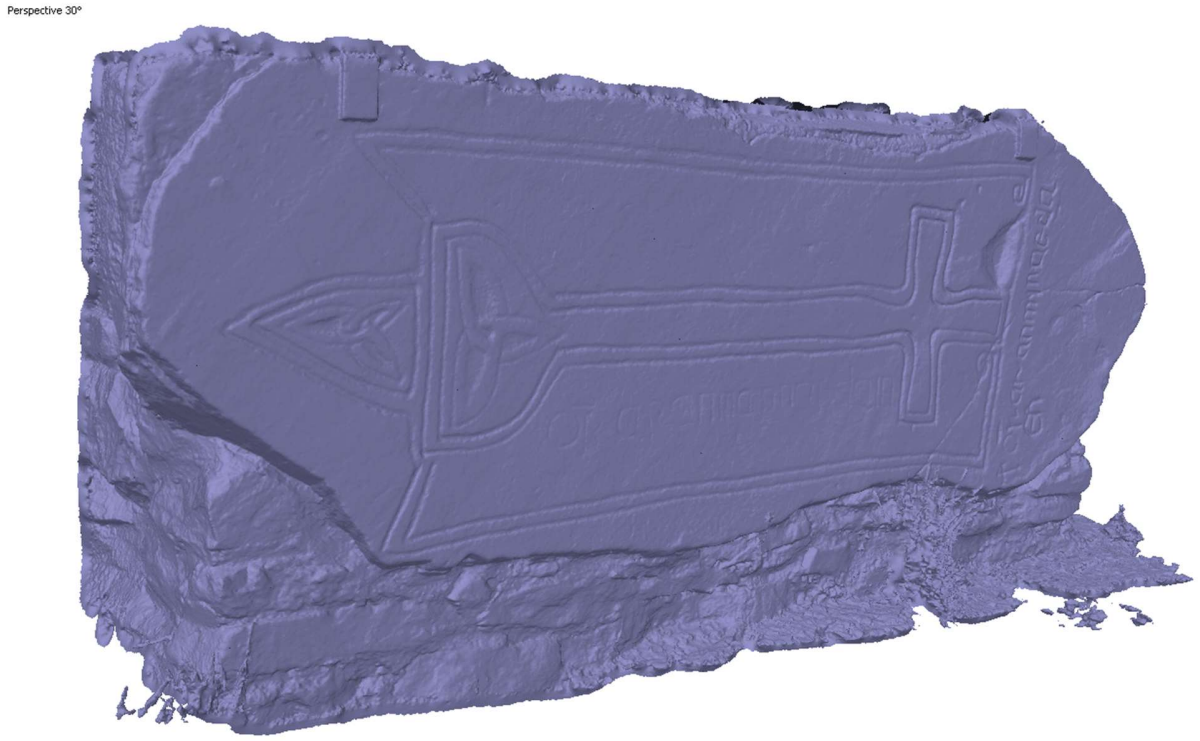
CONDITION: The lower corner of what is now the dexter side of the slab has been broken off and there is a crack on the upper half of the sinister side, running from the edge of the stone to the inscription. The stone is spotted with lichen but the design is still visible and in fairly good

condition, though the horizontal inscription is faint and the triquetra at the base of the cross is heavily weathered.

DESCRIPTION: This is a large sub-rectangular slab with one dressed face and minimally shaped sides. The ends of the slab may be unshaped, unless the angularity of the (now) sinister side is due to damage. The south face is dominated by an incised, double-lined hollow-armed Latin cross. The stem of the cross expands to form a base, within which is a triquetra. Two double-incised lines extend from either side of the cross base at obtuse angles to form a roughly rectilinear, open-ended frame around the cross. At the top of the cross, the inner lines of this frame end in spirals, one near the head of the cross and the other in the corner. There is a pit in the face of the stone here which must have been extant prior to carving, otherwise the sculpture would have presumably made the frame ornamentation symmetrical. Outside of this frame and extending from the cross base is a pointed spike, decorated with a second triquetra. Below the cross is the inscription *ÓR AR ANMIN AEDAEN* ('A prayer for the soul of Aedhán'); a variation of this, *ÓR AR ANMAINN AEDAIN*, is repeated vertically along the sinister side, along with the addition of a small linear Latin (initial) cross at the start of the inscription.

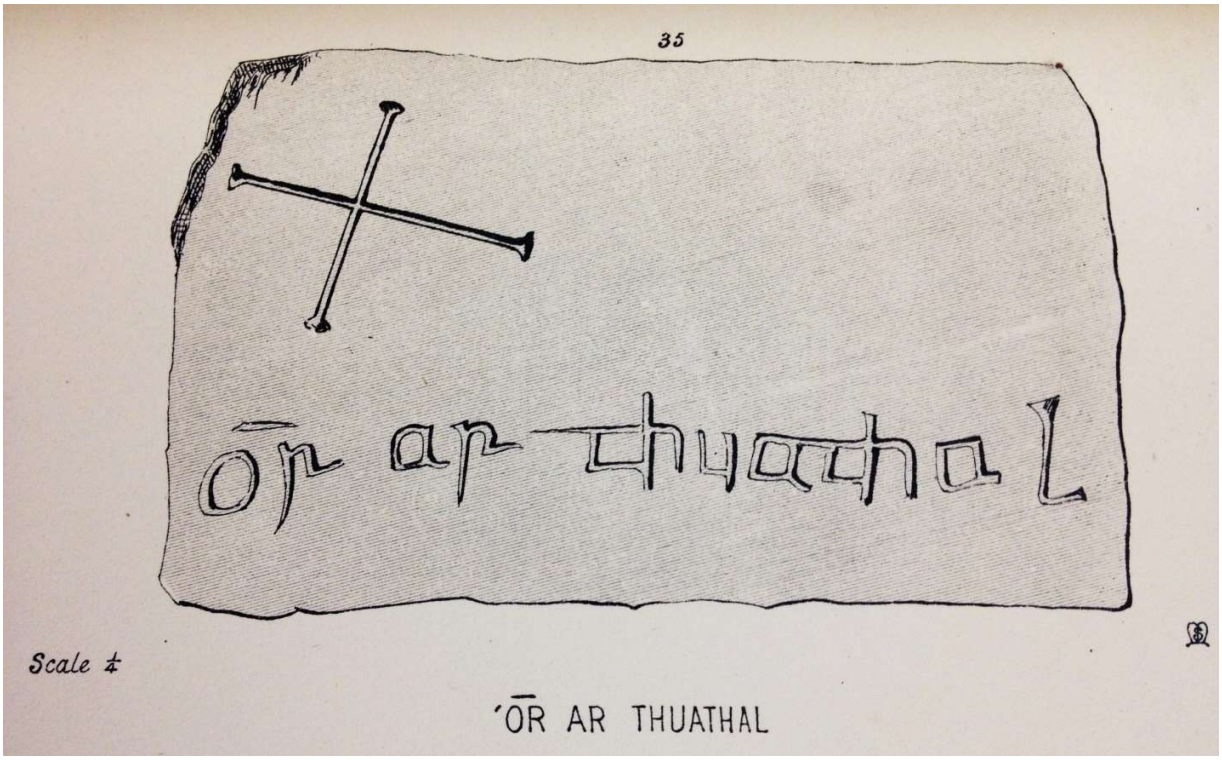
DISCUSSION: While this slab was first recorded lying prostrate near the high cross, Carrigan claimed 'on excellent authority' that this slab was moved to the graveyard from the ruins of the pre-Norman church, *c*. 60 m to the south, in 1814 (1905 vol. 4, 316). This would have originally been a recumbent grave marker, likely dating between the 11th and 12th centuries based on its morphology and inscription (Chapter 4), and is similar to the large slabs at Iniscealtra from which it draws some of its closest parallels (Macalister 1916, nos. 51–61, 63, 64, 66, 67, 72; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 103). Curled frame terminals are also found on the North Cross at Kilfenora, Co. Clare, a cross-slab from Inishmurray (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, fig. 29, no. 014.02A) and a cross-slab fragment from Clonmacnoise (Macalister 1909, pl. IV no. 29). The latter also features a spiked cross stem with a triquetra carved in the tip, as does slab no. 97, though this cross is ringed (*ibid*, pl. XV). Inscriptions with initial crosses have also been found in abundance at Clonmacnoise and Toureen Peakaun, and while these examples largely date to the 7th and 8th centuries (see Chapter 4), the use of initial crosses into the 12th century has been confirmed by datable examples on stone crosses and metalwork (Lionard 1961, 102). Interestingly, the short, blunted point below the base of the cross could be skeuomorphic of a

metal reliquary cross, the tip of which was meant to be inserted into a leather belt during processionals (*ibid*, 139).



KK-14

Killamery 2



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Kells

PARISH: Killamery

TOWNLAND: Killamery

SITE NAME: Killamery Graveyard

ITM: Unknown

O.S. MAP: 30

RMP: KK030-008013

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Unknown

DIMENSIONS: Height 38 cm; Width 23 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Margaret Stokes drew this stone from a rubbing by James Graves for inclusion in Petrie's *Christian Inscriptions in the Irish Language* (vol. 2 1878). At the time it was within the graveyard.

PRESENT LOCATION: Unknown

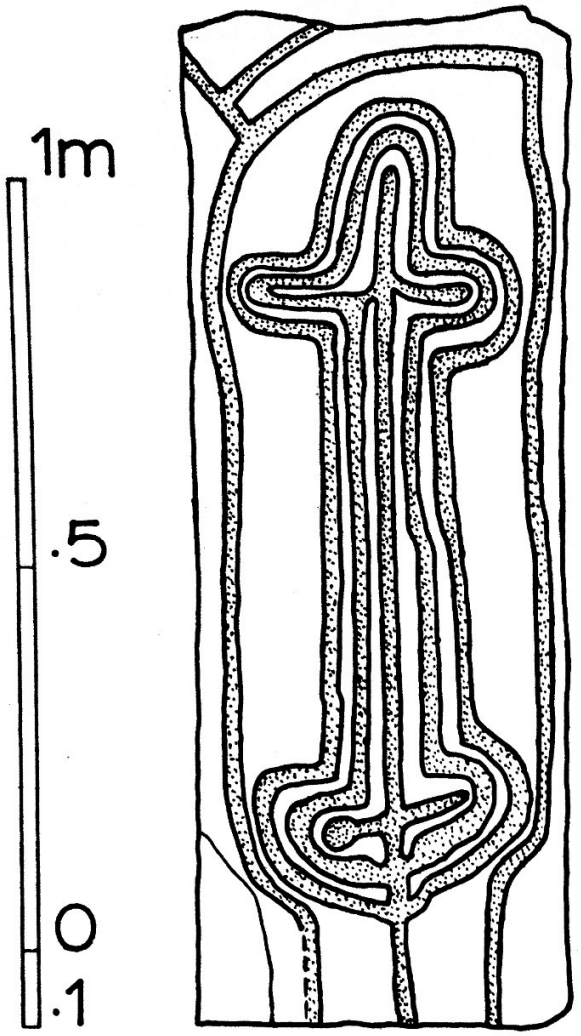
CONDITION: Lost

DESCRIPTION: This slab was described by Carrigan as ‘a very small freestone flag, thin and rough’ (1905 vol. 4, 315). In the top right corner is a single line Latin cross *c*. 13 cm long with slightly expanded, wedge-shaped terminals. Below the cross is inscribed *ÓR AR THUATHAL* (‘A prayer for Thuathal’).

DISCUSSION: Small recumbent grave markers are typically dated to the 7th–8th centuries; inscribed slabs with initial crosses similar to KK-14 are numerous at sites like Clonmacnoise (Petrie 1872 vol. 1, nos. 48, 52; Macalister 1909, nos. 15–17, 20–22, 25) and Toureen Peakaun (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, nos. 10, 15, 16, 18, 19), though another singular example was also found in this study area at Shanakill, Co. Waterford (WA-27, this volume).

KK-15

Killamery 3



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Kells

PARISH: Killamery

TOWNLAND: Killamery

SITE NAME: Killamery Graveyard

ITM: 637661 636107

O.S. MAP: 30

RMP: KK030-008011

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Unknown

DIMENSIONS: Height 128 cm; Width 49 cm; Thickness 14 cm

FIRST RECORDED: This may have been the slab Carrigan described it as 'hoary with age,' standing at the head of a modern grave (1905 vol. 4, 315–6), and was included in Crawford's *List of Cross-slabs and Pillars* a few years later (1913, 261, no. 2c).

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably still among the 19th-century headstones, *c*. 14 m north of the Church of Ireland belfry.

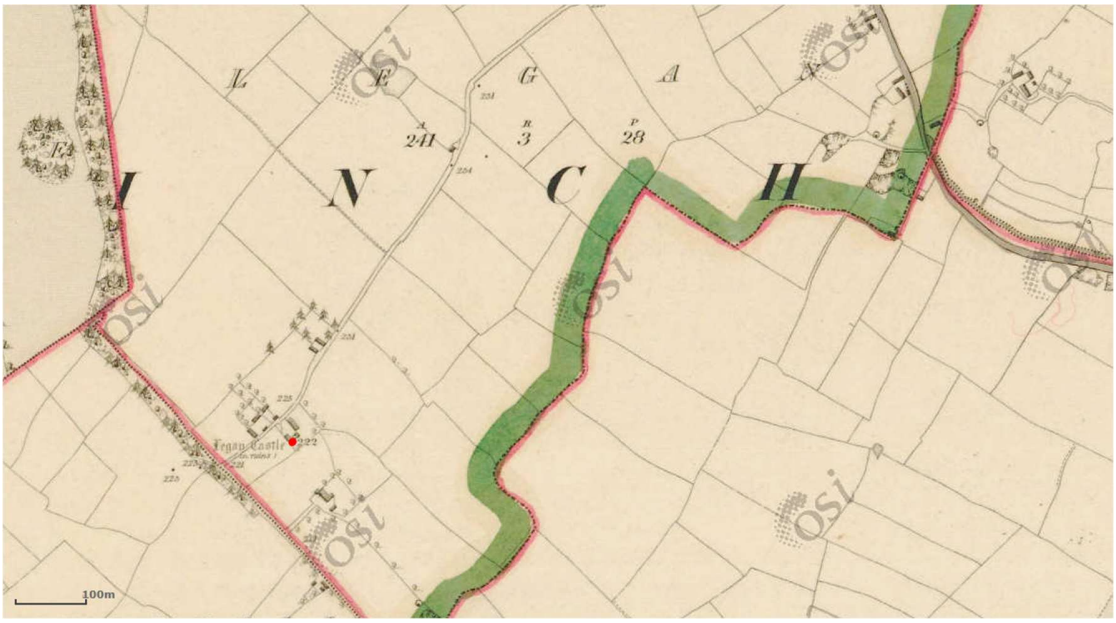
CONDITION: Two separate attempts were made to locate this stone in March 2016, and while it is presumed to still be in the position described by Manning (1982), it may now be completely overgrown. Its condition was described by Farrelly in 2017, though it is unknown when this most recent examination took place: 'The bottom left hand corner is broken and more recently the slab is completely broken into two, the break being roughly horizontal across the arms of the cross' (2017c).

DESCRIPTION: It consists of incised Latin cross with a crosslet at the base, the form of which is outlined by two additional incised lines. The cross is within a roughly rectilinear frame, which curves inward at the base of the cross before extending vertically to the edge of the stone.

DISCUSSION: The morphology of this slab indicates that it was a recumbent grave marker. Manning posits it may be modelled after the more finely executed 'Aedáin' slab (1982, 379), which would suggest it may likewise date between the 11th and 12th centuries (see above).

Legan

The Irish form of the placename, *An Liagán* (loganimn.ie), means ‘stone pillar’ or ‘obelisk’ (eDIL, s.v. ‘2 líagán’; s.v. ‘líacán’), and it is reasonable to presume that both the townland, and the castle therein, derive their name from the ogham stone found here (more below). The archaeological remains consist of the aforementioned castle and ogham stone, as well as the remnants of a bawn, 100 m from the southwestern border of the townland and *c*. 1.3 km from the River Nore, which flows south-west until it alters course at Jerpoint, *c*. 2.2 km south of Legan. The castle was built on land that was under the jurisdiction of Jerpoint Abbey until the suppression of the monasteries in 1541 (Carrigan 1905 vol. 4, 270). It is unclear as to whether Legan Castle was built in the 15th century, as suggested by Carrigan (*ibid*), and thus was originally in ecclesiastical hands, or if it was built later, after the land had passed into secular ownership. There are conflicting accounts regarding the history of the castle in the mid- to late 16th century, suggesting the castle’s construction could possibly be attributed to either Thomas, Earl of Ormonde, or Oliver Grace during this time, though there does seems to be a consensus that it was in existence by 1563. However these accounts also state that Legan Castle was abandoned by the Grace family to take up residence in their newly-built Ballylinch Castle sometime between 1563 and 1605 (Holden 2009, 251; Brewer 1826, 117–8), which would instead indicate that the castle was much older by this time, as suggested by Carrigan.



Map of Legan townland, with borders and Legan Castle ruins marked in red (Source: OSi)

KK-16

Legan



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Gowran

PARISH: Ballylinch

TOWNLAND: Legan

SITE NAME: Legan Castle

ITM: 656785 642926

O.S. MAP: 28

RMP: KK028-026002

TYPE: Ogham stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 162 cm; Width 46–56 cm; Thickness 40–43 cm

FIRST RECORDED: The stone projected from the corner of a wall at Legan Castle until the late 19th century. The wall collapsed during a storm *c*. 1880, though the stone was only discovered to have an ogham inscription several years later (*c*. 1887), and was not brought to public attention until 1891 (Hewson 1896, 26; Barry 1896, 126).

PRESENT LOCATION: Standing at the entrance to the castle ruins. It is cemented into place with the top of the stone leaning against a projection in the castle wall.

CONDITION: The stone and carvings are in a very poor state of preservation, at least in part from 'the heaping of farm appliances on it from time to time' (Macalister 1945, 38). The surface of the stone is pitted and pocked, with a rough, barnacle-like texture to the left portion of the face.

DESCRIPTION: The ogham inscription starts just above the base of the stone on the dexter side and runs across the top, ending on the top portion of the sinister side. It has not yet been analysed as part of the 'Ogham in 3D' project, but Macalister's reading was 'LOBB[I] K[OI] MAQQI MUC[COI] [RI]N[I]' (1945, 39); however McManus could only be certain of '[..]LL[..][…]MAQQ[..]M[..]C[…] (1997, 67). At the upper end of the face is a linear Latin cross measuring 36 cm long by 20 cm wide, pocked unevenly into its surface. There had been some question as to whether this was actually an incised cross or a just natural fissure (Swift 2001, 52), but the photogrammetry model of the stone shows evidence of pocking, at least on the vertical score, when the texture is removed. However it is possible that the horizontal score *is* natural, and the vertical line was pocked onto the stone to turn it into a cross.

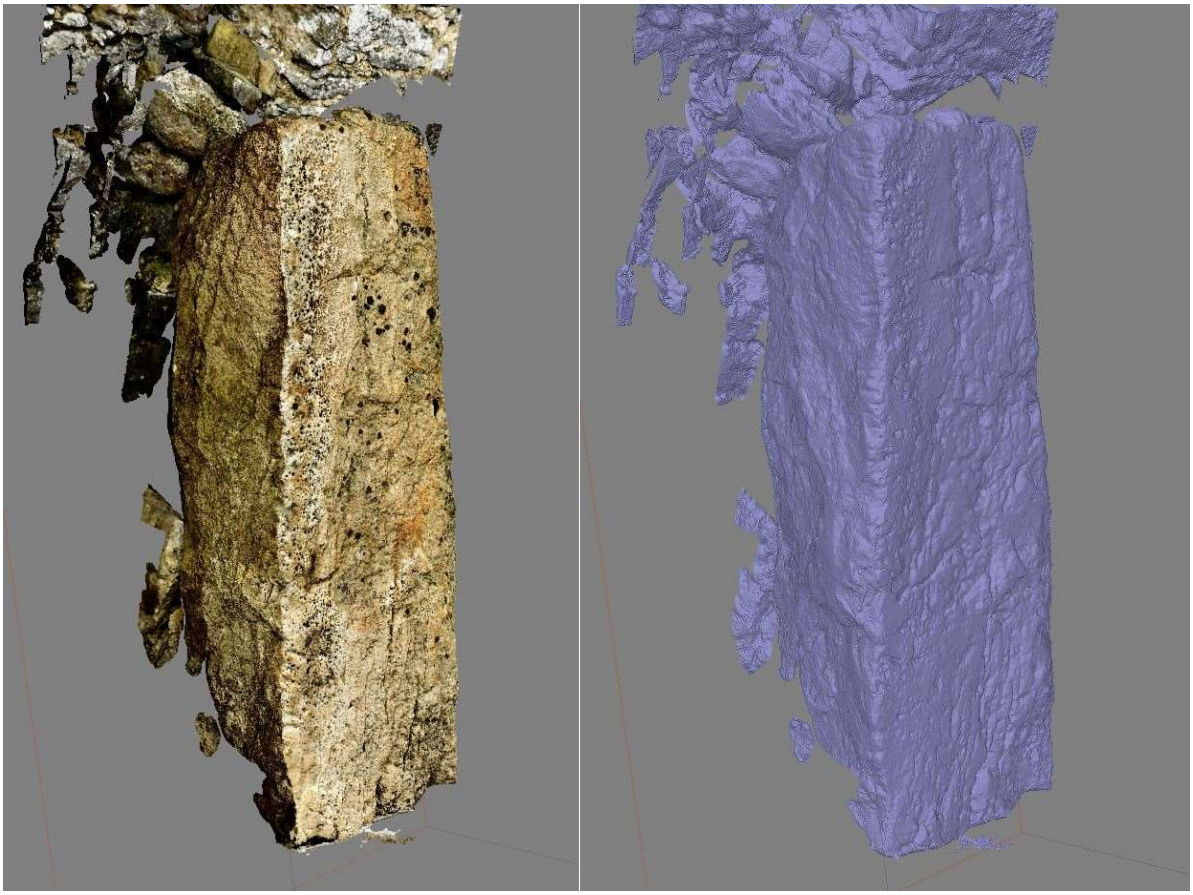
DISCUSSION: Going by Macalister's reading, the ogham inscription may date to the 5th century (see Chapter 4); however, both conservatism on the part of some later sculptures as well as the uncertainty of Macalister's reading – considering how illegible the inscription was by the time it was analysed by McManus – renders this suggestion tentative (*ibid*). It is impossible to determine the chronological relationship between the cross and inscription but the simplicity of the cross-form and its execution suggests that it could be early, perhaps 5th or 6th century, thus may have been carved contemporaneously with the inscription or else a relatively short time after (*ibid*). However, Macalister also states that the entire surface had been spalled, which he presumed was related to its adaptation as a building stone, and one remark in particular might be significant – 'a vicious series of spalls has completely carried off the name which followed MUCOI, and not a score of it is now recoverable' (1897, 222–3). This could be coincidence, or it could instead indicate that the damage to the personal name was deliberate and, if so, was perhaps done as a symbolic statement of new (ecclesiastical?) ownership in the area (see above, KK-12; also Chapter 5). It is open to question as to whether the cross carving is reflective of the Christian status of the person commemorated or an ecclesiastical presence in Legan sometime

later, after the ogham was inscribed, but if the spalls on the personal name were indeed deliberate, it would suggest the latter (*ibid*).

The castle is close to the current townland boundary (see above); perhaps the current townland is approximate to an older territorial boundary, which would support the suggestion that the ogham stone came from somewhere nearby (see Chapter 5). More importantly, both the castle, Legan, and the townland (which was presumably named after the castle) are probably named for the ogham stone (see above), which is a stronger indication that it originated somewhere in the area. There is also a possibility that the ogham stone was actually in its original context before 1880. From Hewson's account of the stone's discovery (above), we know that it was being used as a quoin in the castle wall. He describes it as having been 'sunk in the ground' with roughly 5 ft (*c*. 1.5 m) of the upper part of the stone exposed prior to the wall's collapse (Hewson 1896, 25). He then relates a tradition regarding the stone which he was 'told on the spot':

> 'When the castle was about to be built and its site was being chosen the stone stood in the way, fixed upright in the ground – a legan or pillar stone. An assistant said to the architect, ''It is a fine legan''; and the other said ''Let it stand, and we shall name the castle after it.'' The castle was accordingly so built, that without the removal of the stone it served as a quoin' (*ibid*).

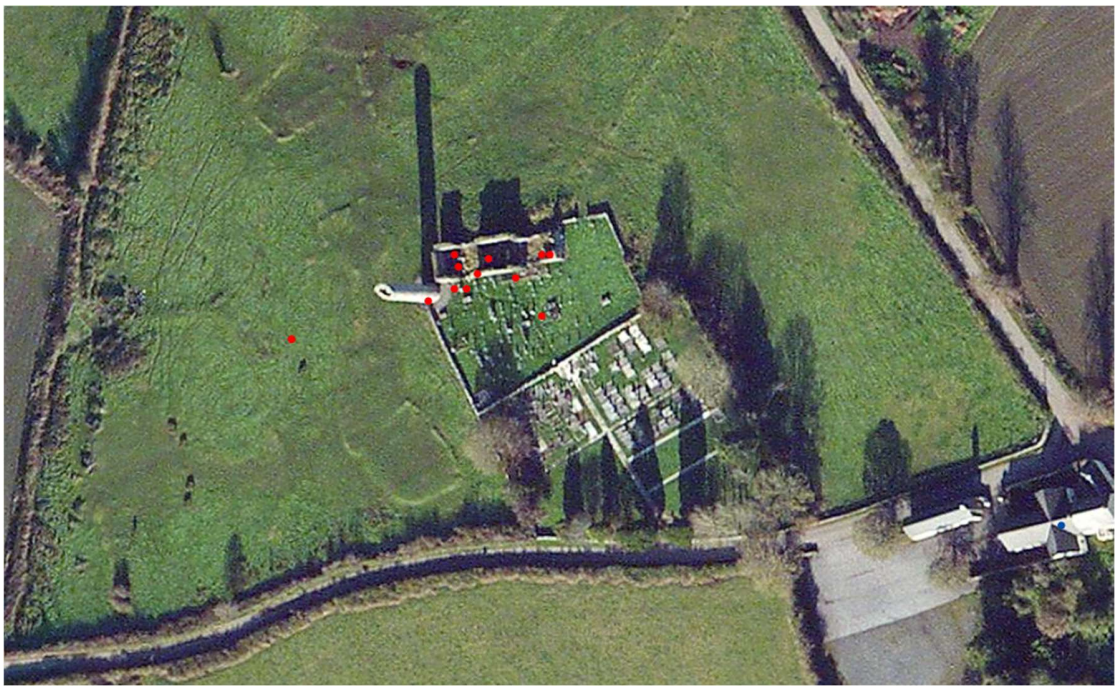
It may also be worth noting that Hewson states that the dialogue between the assistant and architect was preserved in Irish, and that it was the only Irish words he had heard spoken in the county 'during a residence of many years' (*ibid*, 26). While we must of course be cautious in ascribing too much weight to the historical accuracy of folklore and oral traditions, they can nevertheless provide us with valuable insights into the collective memory regarding a monument. In this case, they lend additional support to the suggestion that KK-16 was used as a cornerstone of the castle because it was perceived as 'special', perhaps a 'relic' of an earlier site or a mythologised past (see Chapter 5).



Photogrammetry model of KK-16, with and without its texture layer

Tullaherin

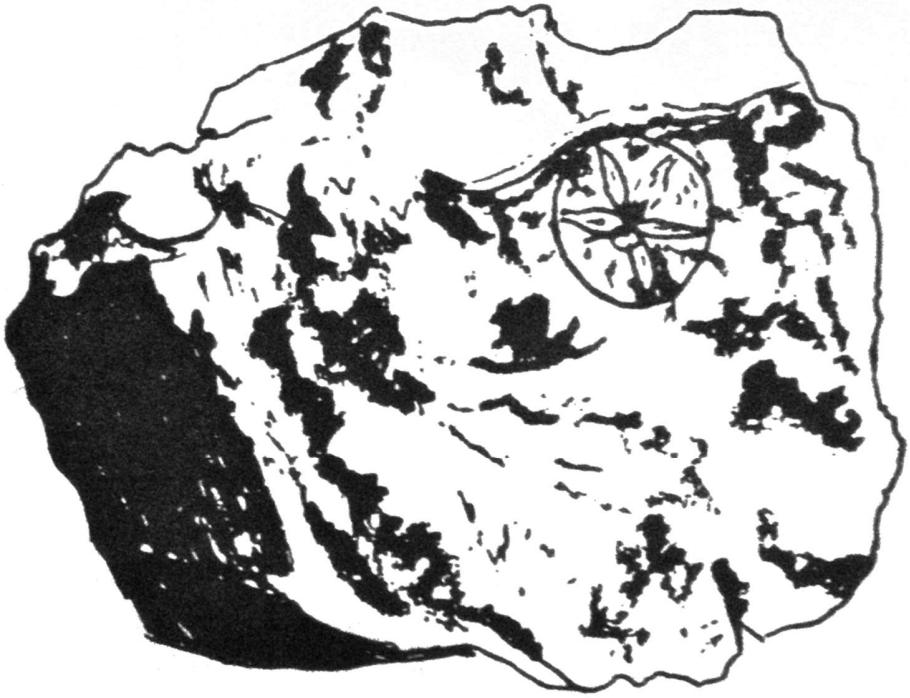
Logainm.ie lists the Irish placename as *An Tulaigh Thirim*, and Tullaherin has also been equated with the ecclesiastical site of *Telach Innmuinn*, which was mentioned in the annals in the year 1121, after lighting struck the round tower and a stone fell from it, killing a student (*AU* U1121.6; *AFM* M1121.11). Manning also suggests that an entry from 1026 in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, in which *Tealach-Dimainn* was plundered and its vice-abbot slain, is also a reference to Tullaherin (1998, 19–21; *AFM* M1026.8). The church is associated with St Ciarán of Saigir, and there is a folk tradition that he was buried here (*ibid*; *Monasticon Hibernicum*); a pattern was held at Tullaherin on the 5th of March in honour of his feast day until the early 19th century (O'Flanagan 1930a vol. 1, 87–8). The early medieval remains at Tullaherin consist of a multi-period church, the earliest phase of which may date to the first half of the 11th century (Ó Carragáin 2010, 110), as well as a round tower, cross base, two (otherwise unornamented) ogham stones and a small boulder carved with a marigold (see below). The Visitation of 1615 records the 'Church and Chancel well' (Manning 1998, 28), though by the early 18th century the chancel was still in use but the nave was in ruins and less than 100 years later, the church was completely ruinous (*ibid*).



Aerial view of Tullaherin, showing round tower and ruined church, as well as earthworks to the west that are remnants of medieval settlement activity (Source: OSi)

KK-17

Tullaherin



Marigold - Stone

(illustration published in Murphy and Cassin 1987)

COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Gowran

PARISH: Tullaherin

TOWNLAND: Tullaherin

SITE NAME: Tullaherin Church

ITM: Unknown

O.S. MAP: 24

RMP: None

TYPE: Carved stone MATERIAL: Limestone

DIMENSIONS: Unknown

FIRST RECORDED: Photographed on the site in 1946, but subsequently overgrown (Breen 1992, 49).

PRESENT LOCATION: Rediscovered in 1987, found in the ditch surrounding the cemetery. It is now in the folk museum at Tullaherin (*ibid*, 49–50).

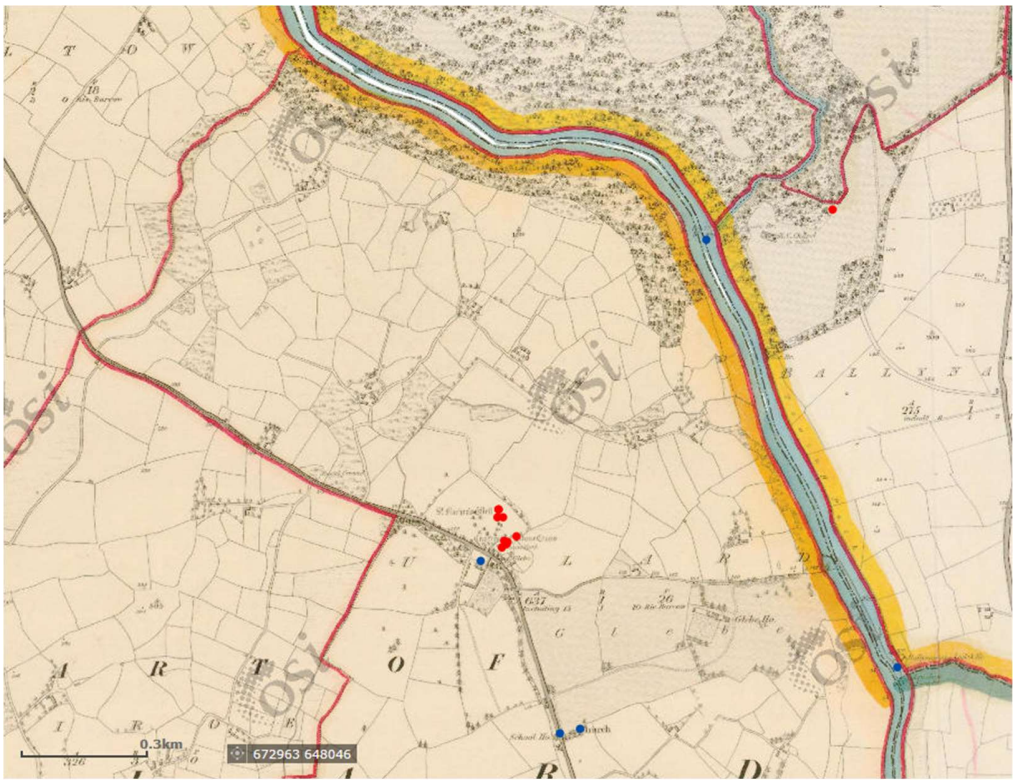
CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: A small unshaped boulder with a marigold, *c*. 10 cm in diameter, roughly inscribed near the top of the stone, without the aid of a compass.

DISCUSSION: Its morphology, coupled with the presence of a marigold incised onto its uneven surface, would suggest that this stone is fairly early, perhaps dating between the late 6th and early 8th century (Chapter 4). It is unlikely to have functioned effectively as a boundary marker or devotional foci as it is too small to have been easily visible; its size instead indicates that may have been used as a grave marker. Along with the two ogham stones (see above), KK-17 may be one of the earliest extant remains from Tullaherin.

Ullard

Ullard is situated on a local road which runs south-west from the regional road R705, *c*. 300 m east of where that road and townland border align (see below). The River Barrow, which forms part of the county border between Kilkenny and Carlow, is *c*. 700 m to the east. Ullard (*Iraird*) is thought to have been founded by St Fiachra of the Uí Méith, who were based in what is now Co. Monaghan (*Monasticon Hibernicum*; MacCotter 2008, 241). Fiachra supposedly had ties to Comgall of Bagor (†602; *AU* U602.1) and brought him communion (*Monasticon Hibernicum*), which would indicate Fiachra may have had a late 6th-/early 7th-century floruit. While only the church and a high cross were mentioned in the Ordnance Survey Letters of 1839 (O'Flanagan 1930a), Dunraven (1875 vol. 2, 87) mentions two other crosses in the graveyard, as well as a few early cross-slabs. Today, the extant remains at Ullard include a 12th century church, which supposedly has the figures of Sts Moling and Fiachra carved into the finely wrought Romanesque doorway (Harbison 1970, 206), the aforementioned high cross and a cross-slab (see below), as well as two bullauns and a holy well which are located in a field, *c*. 50 m and 70 m north of the church respectively.



Map showing outline of Ullard townland, and the church of Ullard off the local road, in red

KK-18

Ullard



KK-18, photographed by Corlett in 2013, after removing it from the graveyard; KK-18, photographed by the author in 2016, after it had been replaced

COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Gowran

PARISH: Ullard

TOWNLAND: Ullard

SITE NAME: Ullard Church

ITM: 672319 648172

O.S. MAP: 25

RMP: KK025-038011

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 65 cm (unburied), 26–28 cm (at current depth); Width 23–26 cm; Thickness 5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Found in the graveyard at Ullard by Christian Corlett in 2013, being reused as a modern headstone.

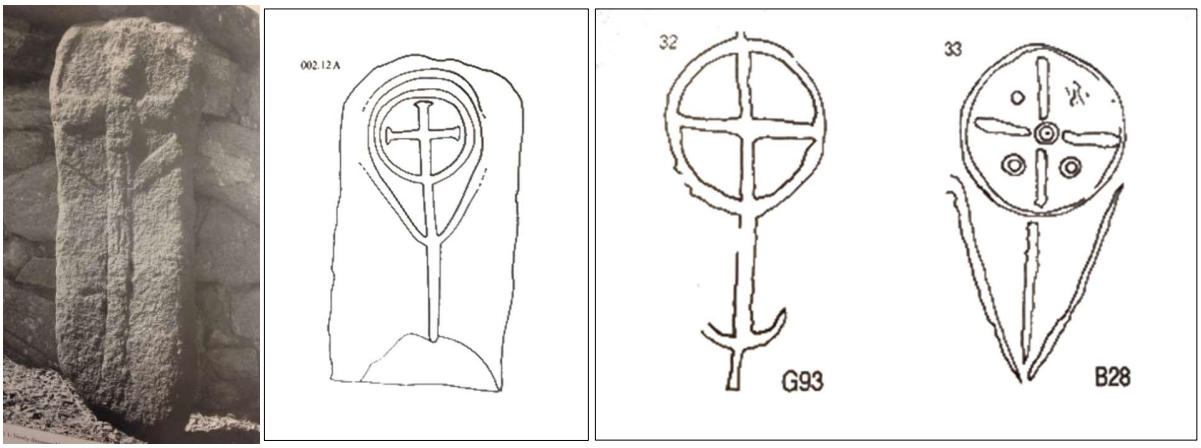
PRESENT LOCATION: Where Corlett found it, *c*. 10 m south of the west church gable.

CONDITION: Weathered and with heavy lichen cover; there is a small fragment of the upper sinister edge missing which has damaged the carving along that side, as well as some minor chipping along the top of the face that may have likewise removed some of the decoration.

DESCRIPTION: This is a sub-rectangular slab; three of the four sides have been shaped, though the bottom appears to have been left unshaped. One face is carved with a cross design that extends the width of the slab and most of its length. It is carved in relief on the upper two-thirds, below which the stem of the cross is merely incised onto the stone, and left open-ended. There is a border on the top dexter corner that must have originally spanned the entire top of the stone. The cross begins 7 cm from the top edge of the slab and is roughly 4 cm in width. Beginning at ground level, and extending diagonally across the face to connect with the aforementioned border just a few centimetres below the cross arms, are two bands emanating in a V-shape from the cross shaft. Corlett had tentatively suggested the possibility of a human figure on the stone, at the intersection of the cross (2014, 25); however the photogrammetry model of the stone shows that the shape here was probably due to weathering.

DISCUSSION: Though the design spans almost the entire surface of one face, a considerable amount of effort was expended to carve and shape only the upper two-thirds of this stone while the lower third was left only minimally incised, which would suggest that it was not intended to be seen. If so, then perhaps stone may have originally stood upright, though this suggestion is tenative. Its smaller size further indicates that it may have functioned as a grave marker and while its cross motif cannot be precisely paralleled here, its dimensions, (possibly) upright orientation and carving technique may be compared with the collection of 8th–10th century cross-slabs at St Berrihert's Kyle, Co. Tipperary (see Chapter 6). The V-shaped 'arms' is unusual; this feature is found on several 13th century slabs (*cf*. Hunt 1974, pls. 94, 98, 104 and 107, nos. 13a, 135, 159 and 260; Maher 1994, fig. 1); however that is the only similarity to these later specimens as they are more elaborate, and carved in the floriated post-Norman style. The cross motif on the Ullard slab is most closely paralleled by a slab from Inishmurray, Co. Sligo

(O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, fig. 28, no. 002.12A) as well as with two slabs from Glamorgan and Breconshire, Wales which have been dated to the 8th–9th centuries (Redknap and Lewis 2007, G93, B28), and may be a simplified variation of the 'Trophy of the Cross' motif, in which a Latin cross is connected to an encircled Greek cross (*cf*. Healy 2009, fig. 10).

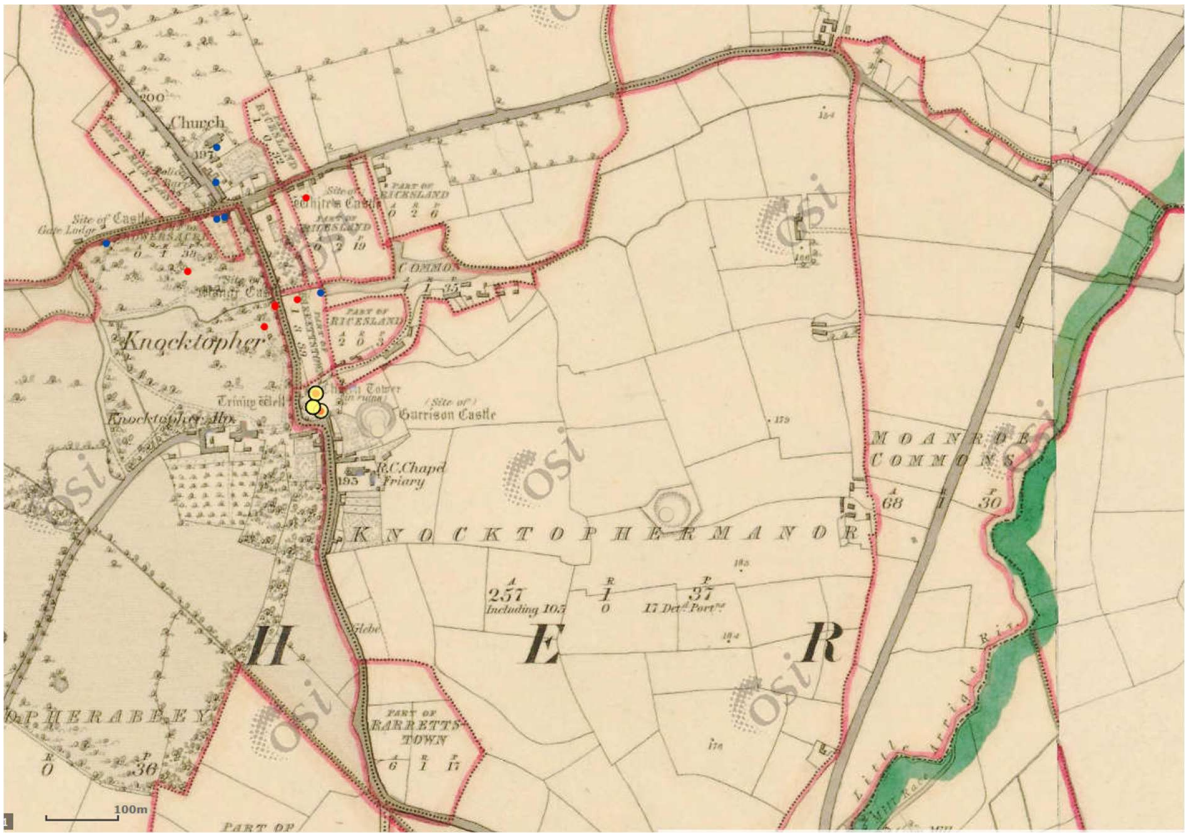


Left to right: KK-18; slabs from Inismurray, Co. Sligo and Glamorgan and Breconshire, Wales

Dubia

Knocktopher

Very little could be gleaned about the early medieval history of Knocktopher. Indeed, the only definitive early medieval remains in the area is a ringfort *c*. 500 m south-east of the church. Though there are two references to a *trícha cet* here in the *Topographical Poems*, its name does not survive; however what became the feudal barony of Knocktopher is thought to have once been part of the larger deanery of Kells Priory (MacCotter 2008, 184). The church at Knocktopher, dedicated to St David, is *c*. 145 m south of a small stream which eventually flows into the Little Arrigle River, which in turn is an offshoot of the River Nore. It is situated on the townland border of Knocktophermanor, but is over a kilometre west of the parish border of Knocktopher. The church ruins are mostly later medieval, but there is a transitional Romanesque doorway on the west side of the tower which dates to the late 12th century, or possibly early 13th century (Garton n.d.a). There are also two cross-slabs on display within the tower which may be broadly contemporary with the late 12th-/early 13th-century doorway (see below). According to Carrigan, St David's Church was given over to Kells Priory in the early 13th century by Matthew Fitz Griffin, seneschal of Munster and lord of Knocktopher (1905 vol. 4, 21–3). It came into possession of the Butlers in 1312, and was used for Protestant worship from the time of the Reformation to c. 1820 (*ibid*). The church was mostly demolished in 1870 (Garton n.d.a).



Map of Knocktopher, showing townland borders in red and the parish border in green. The remains at St David's Church are marked in yellow (Source: OSi)

KK-19

Knocktopher 1



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Knocktopher

PARISH: Knocktopher

TOWNLAND: Knocktophermanor

SITE NAME: St David's Church

ITM: 653296 637165

O.S. MAP: 31

RMP: KK031-017005 or KK031-017019

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Shale

DIMENSIONS: Height 195 cm; Width 35–37 cm; Thickness 12–21 cm

FIRST RECORDED: By Conleth Manning in 1983; however it was clamped to the ruined walls of St David's church, so it was presumably not an unknown slab (at least locally) prior to Manning's publication.

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: The top of the stone has been broken off at some point and slopes down toward the sinister side. The dexter corner of the slab is chipped, and a deep crack (25–30 cm long) has formed vertically up the slab on the same side. There is some lichen cover, though it is not heavy, and the design is clearly visible. There has been a partial repair to the design on the top dexter side; the linear border was re-incised sometime after a fragment of the slab's face had broken off, though the chevron pattern within the border was not.

DESCRIPTION: This is a long, narrow and well-dressed slab of purple shale. It has two lines running vertically up its face, *c*. 9 cm from the edges of the stone. Within the border created by these lines is a trellis pattern which devolves into a chevron in some places. In the central top segment of the stone is a linear Latin cross 39c m by 16 cm, with terminals ending in crosslets; the stem ends in a double crosslet, though the top arm is very short and barely extends past the width of the stem. In the lower portion of the stone, *c*. 65cm from the bottom, is an incised spiral. It turns upward from the edge of the sinister border into the open space in the centre of the slab, and curls into a circle at its centre.

DISCUSSION: Because the presence of an ecclesiastical site at Knocktopher prior to 1200 could not be conclusively established (see above), this slab, and KK-20, have been categorised as *dubia*. This slab features several design elements which are mostly found on earlier cross-slabs but its tall, slender form indicates that it dates to the 12th century at the earliest (Chapter 4). Chevrons are of course a common feature of the Romanesque architectural style, and can be seen decorating the ruins of St David's Church at Knocktopher. However the irregularly incised trellis and chevron pattern on KK-19 is more similar to the one on a slender upright slab from St Berrihert's Kyle that is dated to the 8th–10th centuries (TS-28, this volume), which is presumably why Manning (1983) suggested a broad 9th–12th century date range for KK-19, and KK-20 as well. However, TS-28 is significantly smaller than both of the Knocktopher slabs –

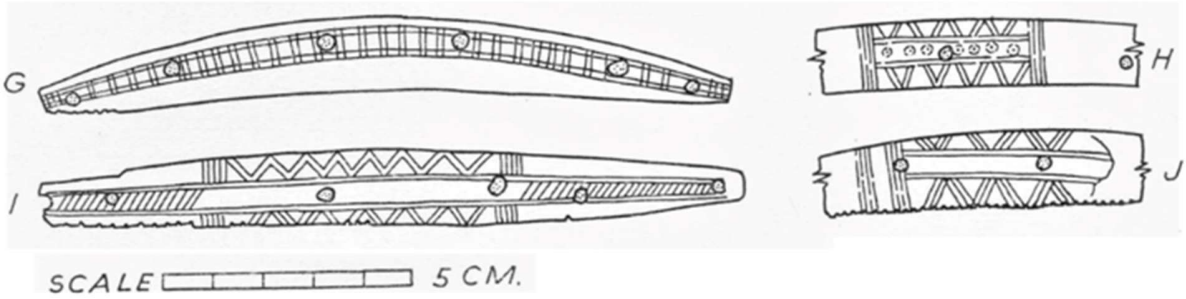
KK-19 is roughly 2.5 times the size, and KK-20 is almost twice the height of TS-28. Moreover, the Knocktopher slabs are only carved on one side, and are both ornamented and carefully shaped over the full length of the slab, all of which suggests that they are recumbent grave markers of later date (Chapter 4). Bands of chevron have also been found trimming the sides of a few of the mid-10th–12th-century bone antler combs that were recovered from excavations of Norse Dublin (Ó hÉailidhe 1973, fig. 4). Additionally, a trellis design decorates a free-standing cross at Glendalough (Leask 1974, fig. 22.8), as well as one side of the Castledermot hogback stone in Co. Kildare, also of Hiberno-Norse origin (Lang 1971).

Crosslet terminals are found on monuments from High Island Co. Galway, Inishmurray, Co. Sligo, Kilcashel, Co. Donegal, Inisclothrain, Co. Westmeath and Ballybacon, Co. Tipperary (Maddern 2014, Nos. 18 and 22C; O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, No. 001.12A; Herity, Kelly, and Mattenberger 1997, fig.27b; Higgins 1987 i, fig. 41g; TS-1, this volume). There are also several Welsh examples that have been dated to the 7th–9th centuries (Redknap and Lewis 2007, G57, G60 and G90; Edwards 2007a, CD13; 2013, CN27).

The spiral motif has its roots in Irish prehistory and was used on some of the earliest Christian monuments in combination with other imported Christian emblems (Healy 2009, 28). Spirals are particularly prolific on early cross pillars in the west, 'the most perfect of these monuments', according to Henry (1979, 29), being Reask 1 in County Kerry. What is strange about the Knocktopher example is that it sprouts from the border on its own, in isolation of any broader design scheme – an oddity first noted in Manning's original report. I found an example of an isolated spiral on a cross-slab from Wales (Edwards 2013, AN33) which, while rare on Welsh sculpture (*ibid*, 191), could represent a revival of the early motif in preference to Romanesque ornament (*ibid*, 192).

The design is wholly unlike the floriated slabs found just a few decades after the Norman invasion in places like St Canice's Cathedral (Hunt 1970; Maher 1992). Indeed, Maher identifies four medieval grave slabs of possible 12th century date in County Tipperary, Baptist Grange 1, Coolmundry 1 and Kiltinan 1 and 2, that could be contemporary with the Knocktopher slabs. She cites these slabs as a distinct group based on their early Christian design features as well as their similar material, size and shape. The two most cohesive traits of these slabs are their unusual thickness of 15-22cm (a close match for the thickness of the Knocktopher slabs) and material (sandstone) compared to other medieval grave slabs in County Tipperary (*ibid*, 31).

Maher goes on to say, '…given these pre-Norman, native factors, it is not surprising that there is an absence of parallels with other slabs of the same period especially in the initially colonized areas…' (*ibid*, 84). However based on these similarities, one could suggest the Knocktopher slabs may be part of this group as well.



Comparative lattice design from 11th/12th-century bone combs from Norse Dublin (after Ó hÉailidhe 1973)

KK-20

Knocktopher 2



COUNTY: Kilkenny

BARONY: Knocktopher

PARISH: Knocktopher

TOWNLAND: Knocktophermanor

SITE NAME: St David's Church

ITM: 653296 637165

O.S. MAP: 31

RMP: KK031-017005 or KK031-017019

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL:Shale

DIMENSIONS: Height 125cm; Width 32-27cm; Thickness 21-15cm

FIRST RECORDED: Conleth Manning published this stone in 1983

PRESENT LOCATION: Clamped to the ruined walls of St David's church, as Manning found it

CONDITION: While the top may have been broken off and there appears to be a few minor patches of flaking prior to carving, the stone is in fairly good condition and the carving is easily visible.

DESCRIPTION: The smaller of two slabs recorded by Manning in 1983, it is also the more elaborately decorated. It tapers 5cm from top to bottom and features an outline cross with slightly expanded terminals at the arms and top, and crossed lines forming a square at their intersection. In the centre of this square is an incised circle, and at the base are two incised diagonal lines on either side extending to the corners of the frame as in support of the cross stem. It is contained within a linear rectangular frame incised close to the edges of the stone apart from the lower portion, which has been left empty. Here the frame ends well before the edge of the stone, below which is a trapezoidal base extending from the stem of the cross. Below the cross arms on either side is a chevron pattern that is double-lined for just over half of the pattern, and continues in a single incised line for the rest of the slab. Just below the arms and contained within the chevron are two circles, one on either side. Just above the arms on either side are two small incised crosses with bases in mimic of the large one, though with downward-curling terminals. The top of the stone may have been broken off at some point, as the frame and large cross end abruptly and without completion.

DISCUSSION: This slab may display a representation of Christ's Crucifixion using Christian emblems derived from the 6th-century Rabula Gospels, from which Roe has said all later crucifixion scenes are modelled (1960, 200). It depicts Christ's cross occupying the majority of the slab, with the sun and moon below the cross arms, and (possibly) the thieves' crosses above. The sun and moon motif is well known in Eastern and Western churches, and was frequently featured in Byzantine art (Higgins 1987, 116). On the early Irish slabs they are usually simplified to roundels or discs, though on high crosses they are often more elaborate and anthropomorphized such as on the South Cross at Monasterboice (Roe 2003, 33) and by the end of the 13th century and beyond, they had developed into emblematic depictions of the Passion (Roe 1983; O'Farrell 1983). This motif is not often seen on early medieval sculpture in Ireland,

and Higgins remarks, '…its symbolic significance has often gone unnoticed' (1987, 117). However, there are a few examples from High Island and St Macdara's Island Co. Galway (*ibid*, Nos. 67, 71 and 72) as well as ones from Whitechurch and Tully, Co. Dublin and Kilbride, Co. Wicklow (Healy 2009, 43).

By contrast, thieves' crosses on Irish slabs, in which two smaller crosses flank a larger one, are much more common. There are many examples all over Ireland, such as those recorded at Inishmurray (Wakeman 1885, Fig. 78; O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, Fig. 24, No. 001.53A and Pl. 82, No. 004.08A), Iniscealtra (Macalister 1916, Pl. XVI), Kilbrecan, Aran Mór (Lionard 1961 Fig. 6, No. 6) and Tobernacroisseneve, Co. Galway (Higgins 1987, No. 39), Gallen Priory, Co. Offaly (Kendrick 1939, Pl. V fig. 1, and Fig. 8), Glendalough Co. Wicklow (Leask 1974, Fig. 19a) Inishkea North, Co. Mayo (Henry 1937, Pl. XXXIV, Fig. 1) and St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin (Ó hÉailidhe 1973, Fig. 5A), though this list is not exhaustive. There are two examples from Britain exhibiting thieves' crosses with the sun and moon together – one from Craignarget, Scotland and one from Alnmouth, Northumbria (Collingwood 1927; Healy 2009, fig. 15). St Dogmaels 9 in Wales (Edwards 2007a, P118) could possibly be interpreted as exhibiting this combination of motifs also. There are two incised circles below the arms of a Latin cross, with two small Greek crosses above it. As the aforementioned examples have demonstrated it is unusual, though not unheard of, to see the sun and moon below the cross arms, and the thieves' cross above – in this case it seems likely due to space considerations, or perhaps to make the thieves' crosses more prominent.

Both Healy (2009) and Manning (1983) have suggested a Viking influence for the Knocktopher slabs based on their similarity to antler combs found in excavations of Norse Dublin (for a detailed discussion, see Knocktopher 1). Seeing this motif incorporated with the central band/chevron pattern on the decoration of this stone certainly strengthens the argument for artistic exchange with Norse Dublin. One could offer further support of this argument based on the skeuomorphic qualities of the crosses on this slab. The stem of the main cross has two diagonal bars on either side as in support and is attached to a trapezoidal base, reminiscent of an upright wooden cross. Recumbent slabs whose cross stems end in a base or pointed spike are often pointed out as skeuomorphic of an upright wooden cross (Edwards 1985, 399-400). These representations of an upright cross either in the form of a cross base or spike are seen frequently on slabs from Iniscealtra (Macalister 1916, Pls. XIX-XXIII; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 105-6)

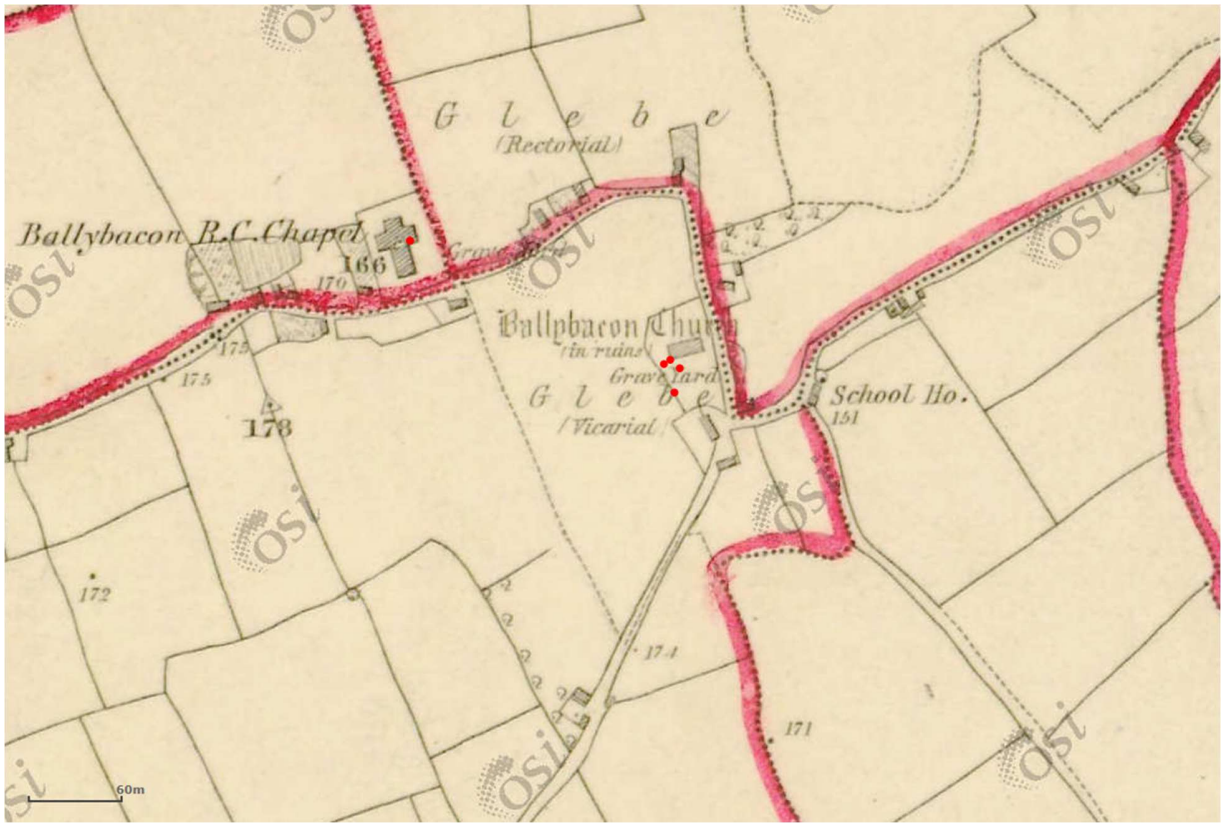
and Clonmacnoise (Macalister 1909, Figs. 25, 29, 87, 96, 97, 108, 112 and 118). An interesting Welsh example at St Ceinwen's Church (Edwards 2013, AN3) has a trapezoidal base and Viking Age patterns like Knocktohper 2, and is dated to the 11th or early 12th century (*ibid*, 148). Furthermore, the centre of the cross is incised with a circle that could be suggested to represent a boss hiding the nails that would have connected the two slats of the wooden cross together. Such a wooden boss, dated to the late 10th century, was found during the Wood Quay excavations, as well as a wooden cross arm from an 11th-century pit at Christchurch Place, suggesting wooden crosses were still being erected in Dublin during the Viking Age (O'Mahony 2013, 79).

The design on the stems of the two smaller crosses mimics that of the main cross, like that of many thieves' crosses, and is perhaps likewise skeuomorphic of a free-standing wooden cross; however, the arms of the crosses curl downward. While curled cross terminals are found in abundance in the west of Ireland, particularly Inishmurray (Wakeman 1885; O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008), and on the Dingle Peninsula (Okasha and Forsyth 2001), the 'crosses' on KK-20 are almost certainly fleur-de-lis, which indicates that, at the earliest, KK-20 is late 12th-century. Though KK-20 otherwise has stylistic features which points to an early medieval date, their presence on this slab, and particularly considering the lack of information on Knocktopher in the early medieval period, may argue for a slightly later, perhaps 13th century, date.

South
County Tipperary

Ballybacon

The Irish placename for Ballybacon is *Baile Uí Bhéacáin*, meaning 'the town of Ó Béacáin' (Logainm.ie, 'Baile Uí Bhéacáin'), and it has been suggested that this could indicate an association with nearby Toureen Peakaun, and its patron saint, Beccán (Power 1907, 300; Thounhurst 2007 vol. 2, 181). The old parish church of Ballybacon is situated on a gentle northeast rise in rolling pasture, and dates to the 13th century (Farrelly 2013). Additionally, a baptismal font was found at the church, which Cahill and Twohig likewise date to the 13th century (1976, 92–3), though this was moved to the present parish church of Ballybacon, *c*. 180 m to the northwest, for safe-keeping in 1975 (*ibid*). However, an early medieval cross-slab (below) in the graveyard *c*. 20 m south of the church ruins indicates that there was an ecclesiastical presence at Ballybacon, well before the construction of the stone church.



Map of Ballybacon

TS-1

Ballybacon



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Iffa and Offa West

PARISH: Ballybacon

TOWNLAND: Raheen

SITE NAME: Ballybacon Church

ITM: 608034 615393

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS088-018003

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 64 cm (above ground); Width 25 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: As part of the archaeological inventory for Co. Tipperary, in the graveyard of the ruinous medieval parish church of Ballybacon, *c*. 6 m south of the west gable (Farrelly and O'Brien 2002).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Fairly good, albeit weathered and with large patches of lichen cover.

DESCRIPTION: An unshaped, sub-rectangular slab with a linear Latin cross with crosslets at each terminal incised onto its east face.

DISCUSSION: Presumably functioned as an upright grave-marker; TS-1 may date to the 7th–9th centuries (Chapter 4), and indicates an early medieval presence at Ballybacon.

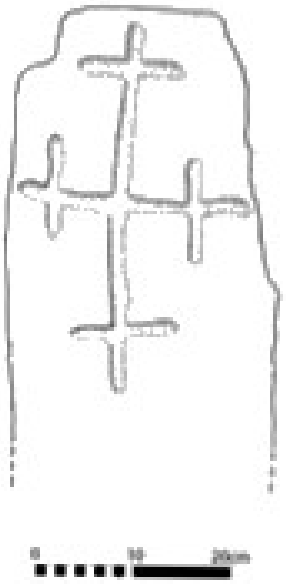
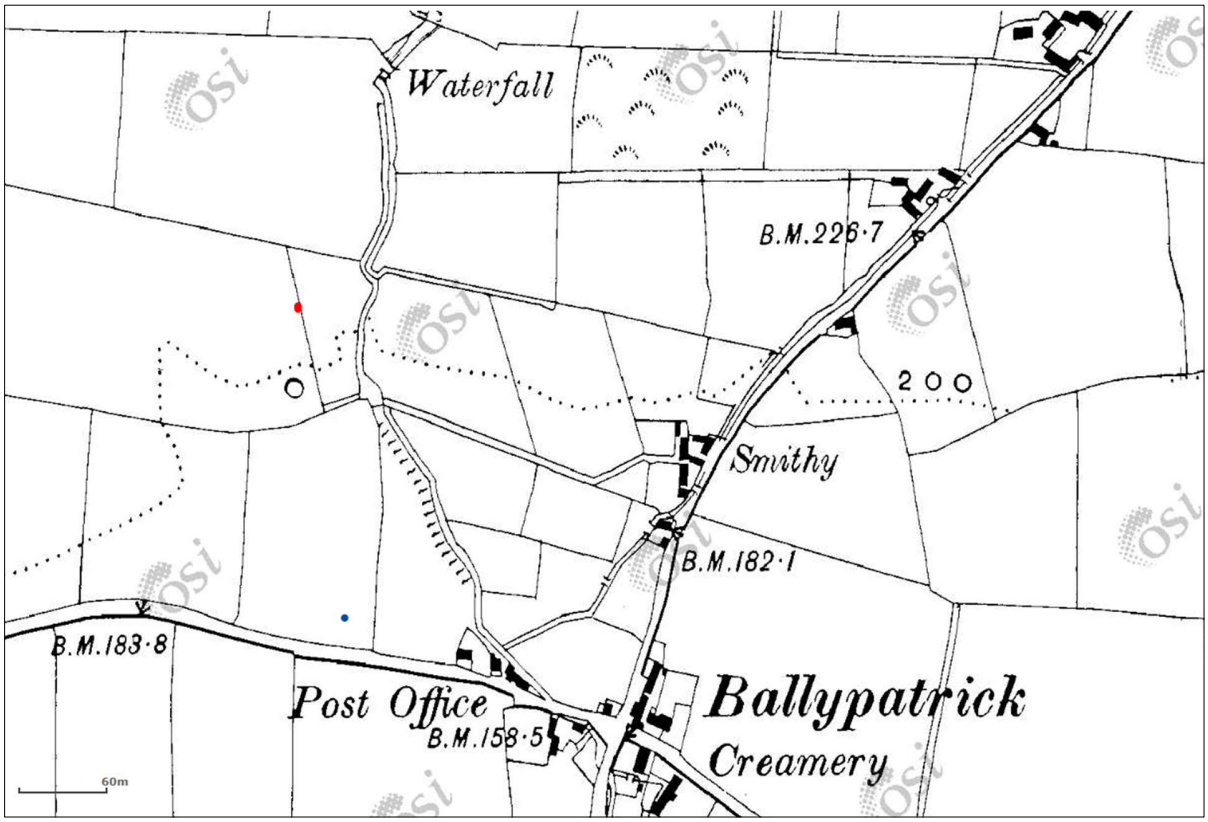


Illustration of TS-1 (after Thounhurst 2007)

Ballypatrick

According to local tradition, the townland of Ballypatrick (*Baile Phádraig*, 'the town/homestead of Patrick) is so named because it is believed that St Patrick stopped to pray at the church here while passing through (*The Schools' Collection* vol. 0568 1937–9, 228–9). However, one of the fields in Ballypatrick is known as *Páirc na Cille*, 'Field of the Church', which Power more specifically translated as 'Field of the Early Church Site' (1907, 294). This field is located on the west side of a small stream known as *Sruth Barracáin/Bhearcháin*, 'Bearchan's Stream', and Power also states that in local tradition the church was sacred to a St 'Bearchan' (perhaps the anglicised form of Bercháin?; *ibid*; *The Schools' Collection* vol. 0568 1937–9, 228–9). There are no traces of a church at ground level, and the precise location of any such church remains unknown (Farrelly 2011b); however it is thought to have been along the west bank of the stream (*The Schools' Collection* vol. 0568 1937–9, 228–9). Power (1907, 294) mentions that a few quern stones, Tau cross (TS-2) and a stone object 'resembling a chalice' (but which was probably a lamp, or cresset), were unearthed 'on the site of the primitive ecclesiastical buildings', suggesting that at least some remnant of this church site was extant at ground level until relatively recently. What remains at Ballypatrick today is what was referred to as a miniature stone altar in *The Schools' Collection* but is listed in the SMR database as a mass rock (vol. 0568 1937–9, 228–9; Farrelly 2011c), as well as a large double-basined bullaun, an undecorated slab and the Tau cross, the latter two of which are leaned up against the field boundary on top of the bullaun. The 'chalice' (TS-3) was taken to the Waterford Museum (Power 1907, 294) but was not examined during the course of fieldwork.



Map of Ballypatrick and location of ecclesiastical remains (in red) in Páirc na Cille



Bullan, uncarved slab of stone and Tau cross (TS-2), with 'altar' in the foreground, at Ballypatrick

TS-2

Ballypatrick 1



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Iffa and Offa East

PARISH: Templetenny

TOWNLAND: Ballypatrick

SITE NAME: Ballypatrick

ITM: 630657 627182

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS078-061002

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 28 cm; Width 39 cm; Thickness 9 cm

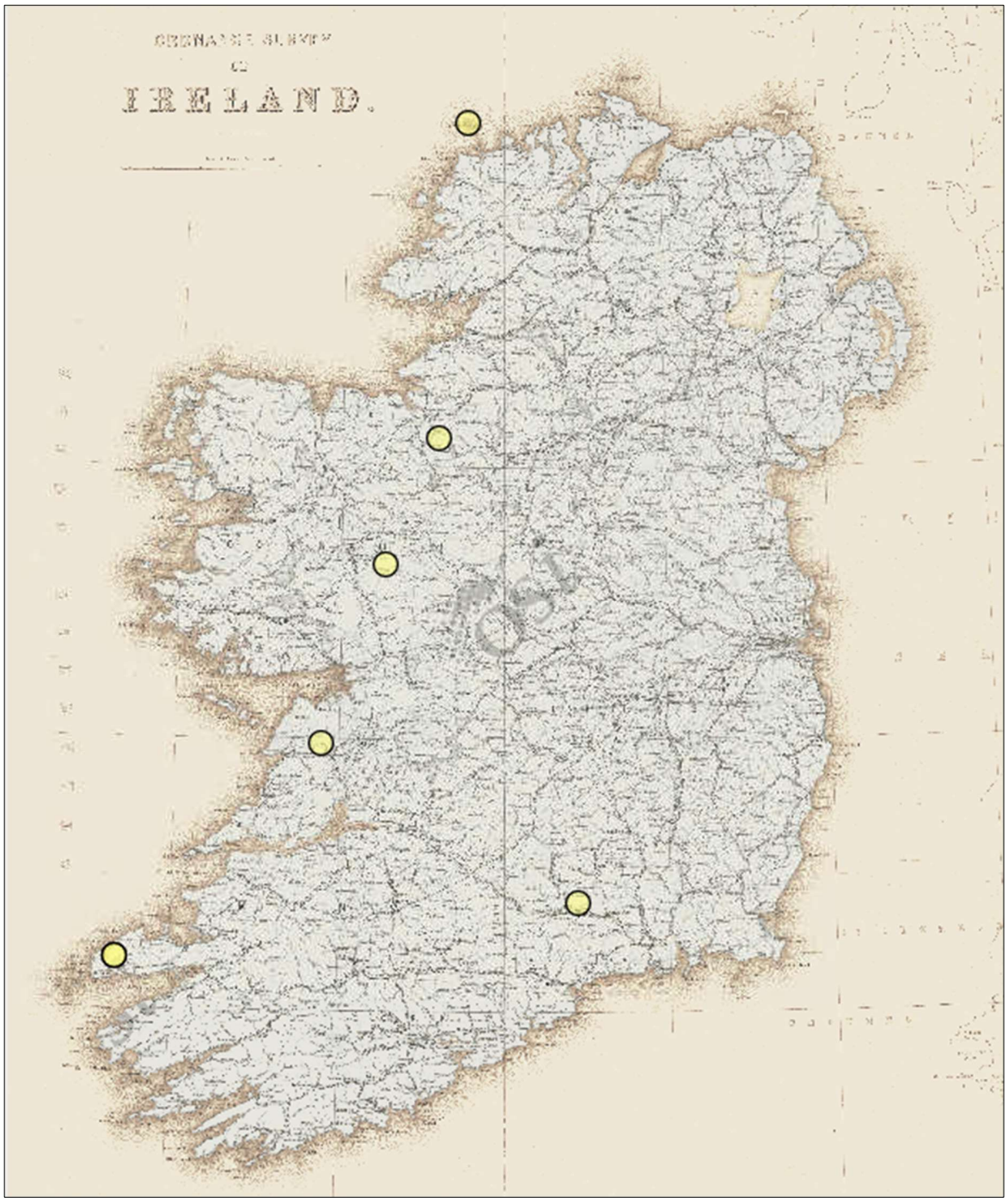
FIRST RECORDED: 'Dug up' during farm operations *c*. 1850 (Power 1906, 145).

PRESENT LOCATION: Sitting upside-down on top of a bullaun, abutting a field boundary *c*. 43 m west of 'Bearchan's stream' (see above).

CONDITION: Good; there are large patches of lichen cover and some minor flaking around the edges, but the cross is intact.

DESCRIPTION: Small cruciform stone in the shape of a tau cross, with both arms and stem 13 cm in width.

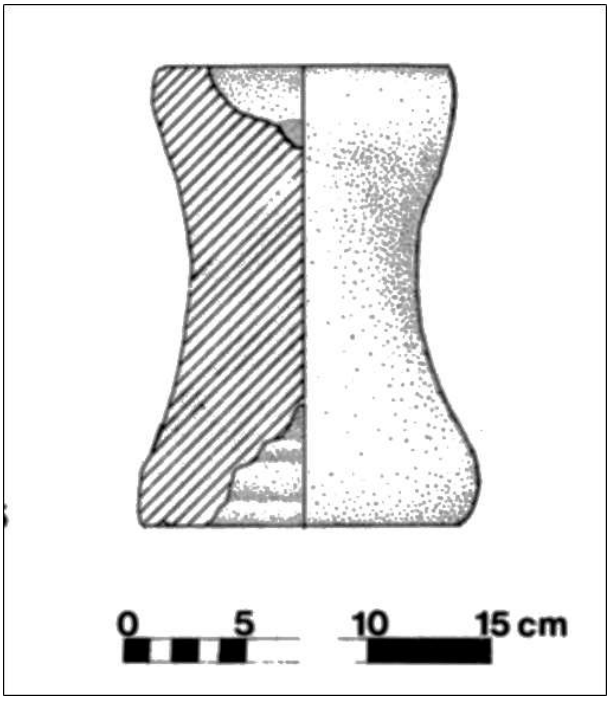
DISCUSSION: This was described by Power as a small 'mutilated' stone cross, but it is clearly a tau cross. Tau-form crosses are quite unusual; there are only seven recorded in the SMR database, and TS-2 is significantly smaller than the other six, all of which are likely to have been either boundary- or grave-markers. This is a small, portable stone cross of unknown function. It is possible that it may have been used in outdoor processionals or liturgies (Chapter 5), particularly considering the presence of a possible outdoor 'altar' at the site (see above). Alternately, though it is highly speculative, TS-2 could have been placed in a grave, similar to several small cross-slabs of the 6th–7th centuries (see Chapter 5; also WX-16). If this were indeed the case, then TX-2 might be paralleled with one of the covering slabs found at the head of a lintelled grave at Caherlehillan, Co. Kerry, which had been shaped into a cross (Sheehan 2009, 198). This grave was one of the oldest excavated in the cemetery at Caherlehillan, possibly dating to the 5th or 6th century, and may have that of the site's founder (*ibid*, 198–9). However, while TS-2 may likewise be relatively early, there is not enough evidence regarding the provenance and original context of TS-2 to be able to assign it anything more specific that a general early medieval date (see Chapter 4).



Distribution of Tau crosses in Ireland (Source: OSi)

TS-3

Ballypatrick 2



(Source: Moore 1984)

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Iffa and Offa East

PARISH: Templetenny

TOWNLAND: Ballypatrick

SITE NAME: Ballypatrick

ITM: 630657 627182

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: None

TYPE: Lamp

MATERIAL: Unknown – sandstone?

DIMENSIONS: (From Moore 1984, 111) Height 20.7 cm; Diameter 8.9 cm (top), 9.5 cm (base); Depth of cups 2.4 cm (top); 0.8 cm (bottom)

FIRST RECORDED: 'Dug up' during farm operations *c*. 1850 (Power 1906, 145).

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably the Waterford Museum (see Farrelly 2011b)

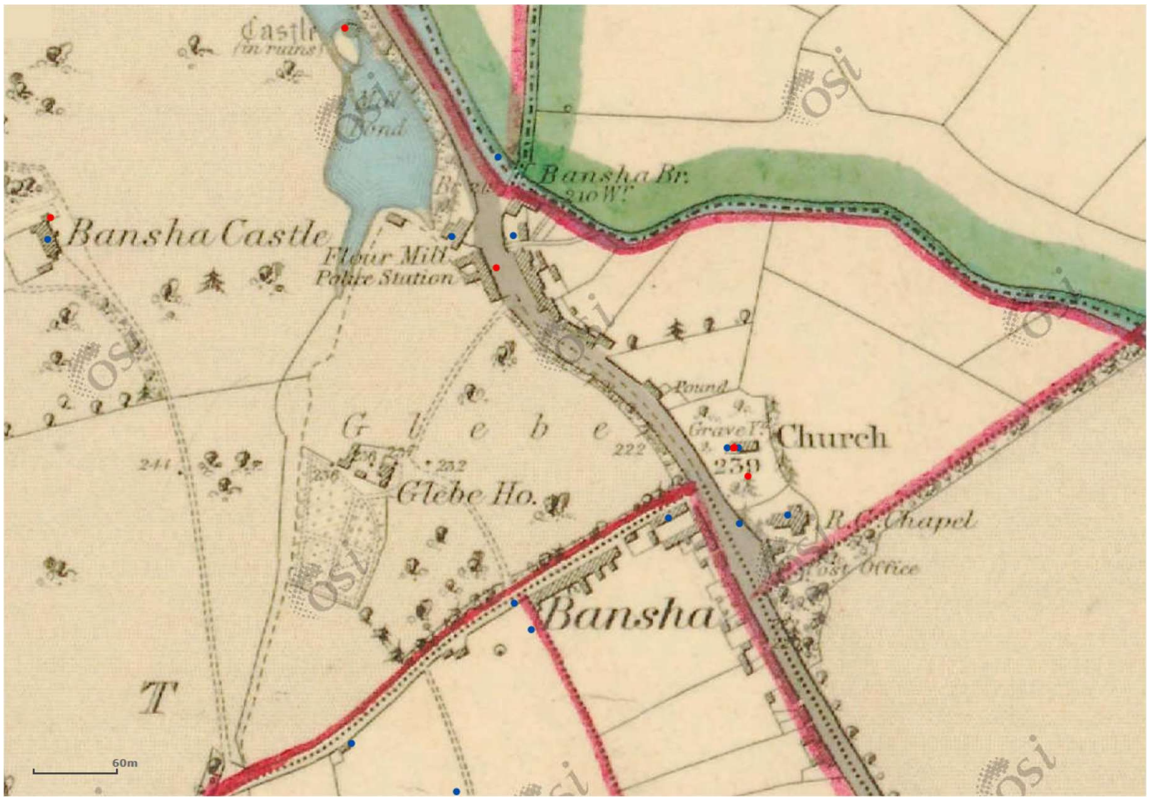
CONDITION: Unknown; this stone was not examined in person.

DESCRIPTION: Small cylindrical stone lamp or cresset with no distinguishable stem and two cups on opposing ends, though the basal cup is too small to have served as a reservoir for fuel and instead was likely to have been a means to steady the lamp on uneven surfaces (Moore 1984, 97, 101).

DISCUSSION: This stone lamp, of which Moore suggested a mid-10th- to mid-12th-century date range (1984, 109–10), most likely served a purely functional purpose in its original context. However, upon its discovery in the mid-19th century until it was removed to the Waterford Museum *c*. 1906, it was both venerated and used as a chalice, no doubt due to its resemblance to one: 'Since its discovery this vessel…has been used extensively in seasons of cattle disease as a charm, to place in running water where the cattle drank. For this and allied purposes our 'chalice' was in fact in much demand, and was sometimes carried miles away – even into the County of Waterford' (Power 1906, 145; 1907, 294).

Bansha

Bansha or *An Bháinseach*, means a 'greensward' or 'open space' (Foras na Gaeilge, 'báinseach'; eDIL s.v. 'báinsech'), though this placename appears to be relatively recent (see below). The old church at Bansha is situated on the east side of the main road through the village and *c*. 160 m south of the River Ara, which is also the parish border and flows northwest-southeast. The church was mentioned in Papal Taxation records of the 14th century, and again in the Civil Survey of 1654–6, though as the church of 'Tampleneyry' and its glebeland 'fenced about with a ditch' (Farrelly 2011f; Simington 1934 vol. 2, 366). The graveyard itself is sub-rectangular, though the area within it forms a raised, roughly circular mound (Farrelly 2011f). The present church was constructed in the 18th century; however it is undoubtedly built on the site of the medieval church, which may in turn have been on the site of early medieval foundation. The subcircular mound may, as Farrelly (*ibid*) suggests, represent the inner sanctum and the ditch, which surrounded the glebeland in the 17th century, the remnants of its outer enclosure. However the strongest evidence for an early medieval presence at Bansha are two cross-slabs (TS-4 and TS-5) in the graveyard of the old church.



Map of Bansha, showing position of the church in relation to the village, glebeland and River Ara (Soure: OSi)

TS-4

Bansha 1



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Bansha West

SITE NAME: Bansha Old Church

ITM: 595707 632923

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS067-064003

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 43 cm (above ground); Width 23–33 cm (top to base); Thickness 7–11 cm (top to base)

FIRST RECORDED: As part of the archaeological inventory for Co. Tipperary, on the south side of the Bansha Old Church graveyard (Farrelly and O'Brien 2002).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Fairly good; it is weathered but the carving is deeply incised and still visible.

DESCRIPTION: Small, irregularly shaped slab incised on its east face with a double-armed cross with plain terminals. The stem is 14 cm long; the top arm is 10 cm long and situated at the top of the cross stem; the lower arm is 19 cm intersects the stem approximately mid-way. Above the cross are two incised lines running diagonally up from the edges of the slab until they meet each other near the centre, forming a peak above the cross. Directly beneath these two lines is a short vertical line *c*. 3-4 cm long. Approximately 8 cm below the cross, a horizontal line runs the width of the cross face.

DISCUSSION: The double-armed cross motif, while not very common, is not rare (see Chapter 4); however the two lines above the cross are quite unusual. They form a peak over the cross and, particularly when considered alongside the horizontal line underneath cross, the design is reminiscent of a roof – presumably that of a church. The edges of the slab look to be unshaped but it is possible that they could have been broken or else roughly reshaped sometime after the design was carved, and that the sides of the 'church' have thus been lost. However this seems unlikely and the imagery would likely have been understood regardless. The morphology of the slab and its incised decoration would suggest a relatively early date, perhaps 7th–9th century.

TS-5

Bansha 2

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Bansha West

SITE NAME: Bansha Old Church

ITM: 595697 632944

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS067-064002

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 45 cm; Width 24–37 cm top to base; Thickness 11 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Reused as a footstone at the base of the Keating family plot on the north side of the graveyard, but since the addition of another burial at its foot in 1996, this slab is no longer visible (Farrelly and O'Brien 2002).

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably the same

CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: Fragment of a slab with an incised cross arm 29 cm long, with an expanded terminal 14 cm wide.

DISCUSSION: This fragment had been incorporated into the base of the Keating family plot but, according to Farrelly and O'Brien (*ibid*), has not been visible since 1996. An attempt to record the slab was made in July 2018, and indeed, it could not be located. What little is known about this cross-slab indicates it may have been a relatively early grave-marker; its dimensions and cross-type, albeit fragmented, would suggest it may have been roughly contemporary with TS-4 (see above).

Giantsgrave

The townland of Giantsgrave derives its name from a tall pillar (TS-6, below) which, along with a large recumbent (albeit uncarved) stone *c*. 100 m south, forms what is known as 'The Giant's Grave' (Killanin and Duignan 1967, 174). In Irish, the townland is *An Chloch Fhada* ('The Long Stone'; logainm.ie). One popular tradition is that the pillar landed in its current location after being flung from the peak of Slievenamon by the mythical Irish hero, Fionn mac Cumhaill, and in the *Ordnance Survey Letters*, the hill upon which the pillar is erected is referred to as '*An Cnoc Air a bhFuair Fionn Fios* i.e., the hill on which Finn (mac Cumhaill) received his (prophetic) knowledge' (O'Flanagan 1930b, vol. 1, 51–2). Other versions of this legend claim that it was a giant that flung the pillar from Slievenamon (Farrelly 2011a). There is no known ecclesiastical site in the townland, though the site of the parish church of Rathronan is *c*. 2.3 km to the east, and the only other monument in the townland is a possible circular earthwork, or cropmark (TS077-101), 0.5 km northwest of the pillar.



Map of Giantsgrave townland, showing proximity of TS-6, marked in red, to the parish boundary (Source: OSi)

TS-6

Giantsgrave



South face



North face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Iffa and Offa East

PARISH: Rathronan

TOWNLAND: Giantsgrave

SITE NAME: Giantsgrave

ITM: 618089 626029

O.S. MAP: 77

RMP: TS077-054

TYPE: Pillar

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 276 cm (above ground); Width 58 cm; Thickness 20 cm

FIRST RECORDED: May have possibly been referenced in the Civil Survey of 1654–6; there is mention of 'the stones standing, upon the…hill to the lands of Rathduffe' (Simington 1931, vol. 1, 297); Rathduffe is thought to have been comprised of what is now the townlands of Rathduff Upper and Lower, as well as Giantsgrave (Farrelly 2011a), and TS-6 is the only standing stone or pillar recorded in the SMR database for this area. However, the stone is first described in Lewis's topographical dictionary (1837, 508), then, in quick succession, in the *OS Letters* of 1840 (O'Flanagan 1930b, vol. 1, 51–2).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Leaning heavily to the east; there are some heavy patches of moss and lichen cover, which is particularly extensive on the top half of the north face. Additionally, the top third of the sinister corner of the north face may have suffered some damage, as well as the lower face of the south side just below the cross. However, this could also be natural variations of the stone's surface.

DESCRIPTION: This is a very tall pillar, the bottom third of which appears to be unshaped; the top 30 cm of the pillar tapers into a wedge-like shape, though this is probably natural. However the edges of the upper two-thirds of the south side have been straightened and its face smoothed into a flat surface, upon which a hollow-angled Latin cross has been carved in relief, beginning *c*. 50 cm below the top of the stone. The top 10 cm of the cross-stem tapers to a point, and is capped with a circular finial. The base of the cross peters out until it fades into the rest of the south face. The north face appears to have been shaped and smoothed as well, though perhaps not as extensively as the south face. A sunken Latin cross with a raised circular boss at its crux is carved into its surface, roughly at the centre-point of the stone.

DISCUSSION: This pillar is located in field locally known as *Liagán*, meaning 'pillar stone' (see also KK-16), on 'the summit of a hill, at the highest point in the vicinity', where it was 'visible in every direction for miles' (Farrelly 2011a; Power 1907, 290). It may have originally been a prehistoric monument of folkloric and perhaps ritual importance (see above), to which carved crosses may have been added during the early medieval period, perhaps to consecrate the stone or 'reactivate' its power in a Christian context (Chapter 5). The pointed top of the cross on the south face may be suggestive of the house- or (more specifically) church-shaped finials seen on many

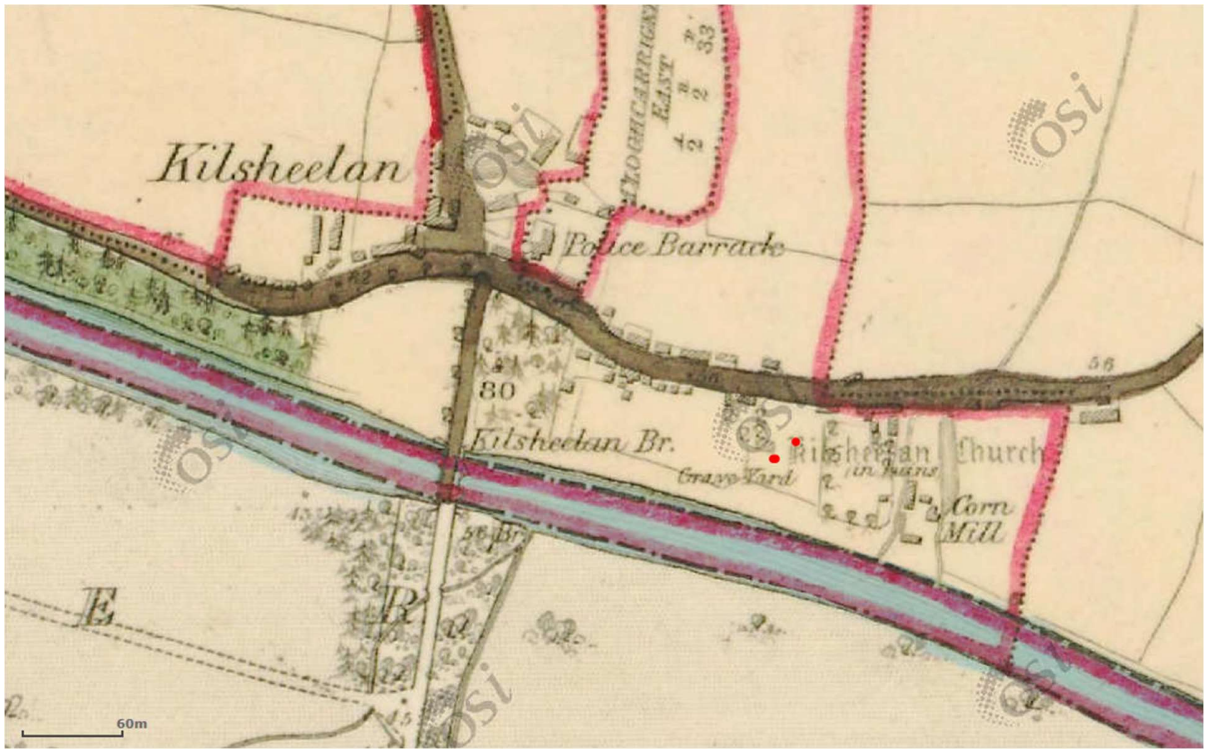
9th–10th century high crosses, and the roundel in particular may be modelled after the conical capstones found on the 8th- or 9th-century Ossory crosses (see Chapter 4). Alternately, Kim Thounhurst has suggested this could be a depiction of a bishop's mitre, the earliest known representations of which date to the 12th century (2007, 162), though she also dismisses this as unlikely (*ibid*). It is not insignificant that Giant's Grave pillar is positioned *c*. 46 m north of the road, which is also the parish boundary (see Chapter 5), and while it has yet to be conclusively connected to any particular ecclesiastical site, Thounhurst has suggested that it may have come to be associated with an early church at Rathronan, c. 2.3 km to the east (2007, 164–6; see also Chapter 5).



View looking south from the Giant's Grave pillar (TS-6)

Kilsheelan

Kilsheelan, or *Cell Silláin/Cill Sioláin*, meaning 'Church of Sillán' (*Monsasticon Hibernicum*) is situated on a rise or mound on the north bank of the River Suir, which also acts as the parish boundary. The identity of Sillán is uncertain; there is a Sillán of Bangor (Co. Down) and Sillán of Imlech Cassáin (Co. Louth) mentioned in the *Félire Óengusso* (63, 78–9, 193, 206–7, in Stokes), though it seems unlikely that either of these were the patrons of Kilsheelan. Power mentions a reference to a Silán on page 353 in the *Book of Leinster*, 'Silán icath na cell air bru aba moiri', whom he states is 'one of a group of seven bishops…whose church is on the Blackwater' (1907, 287, n. f). This Silán is reputedly a brother of St Lachtáin of Freshford (see catalogue entry, 'Clontubrid/Freshford'), though is not necessarily the Silán associated with Kilsheelan, as Ó Riain states it was a popular name in south Munster (2011, 565–7). The ruins of the church at Kilsheelan are Romanesque and likely date to *c*. 1200 (Garton n.d.b), and 'Kilsilan' appears in taxation records from 1260 for the diocese of Lismore (Monasticon Hibernicum). Additionally, a 16th-17th-century grave-slab is located in the graveyard; however an upright cross-slab, discovered by Kim Thounhurst in 2007 (TS-7, below), may be evidence of an early medieval date for the foundation of Kilsheelan.



Map of Kilsheelan with the church and graveyard marked in red (Source: OSi)



View of the River Suir from the north bank, next to Kilsheelan graveyard



The ruins of Kilsheelan church, looking north

TS-7

Kilsheelan



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Iffa and Offa East

PARISH: Kilsheelan

TOWNLAND: Kilsheelan

SITE NAME: Kilsheelan Church

ITM: 628761 623284

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: None

TYPE: Pillar

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 89 cm; Width 25 cm; Thickness 15 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Identified by Kim Thounhurst, resting against the exterior southern wall of the chancel of Kilsheelan Church (2007 vol. 2, 169), along with two architectural fragments.

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

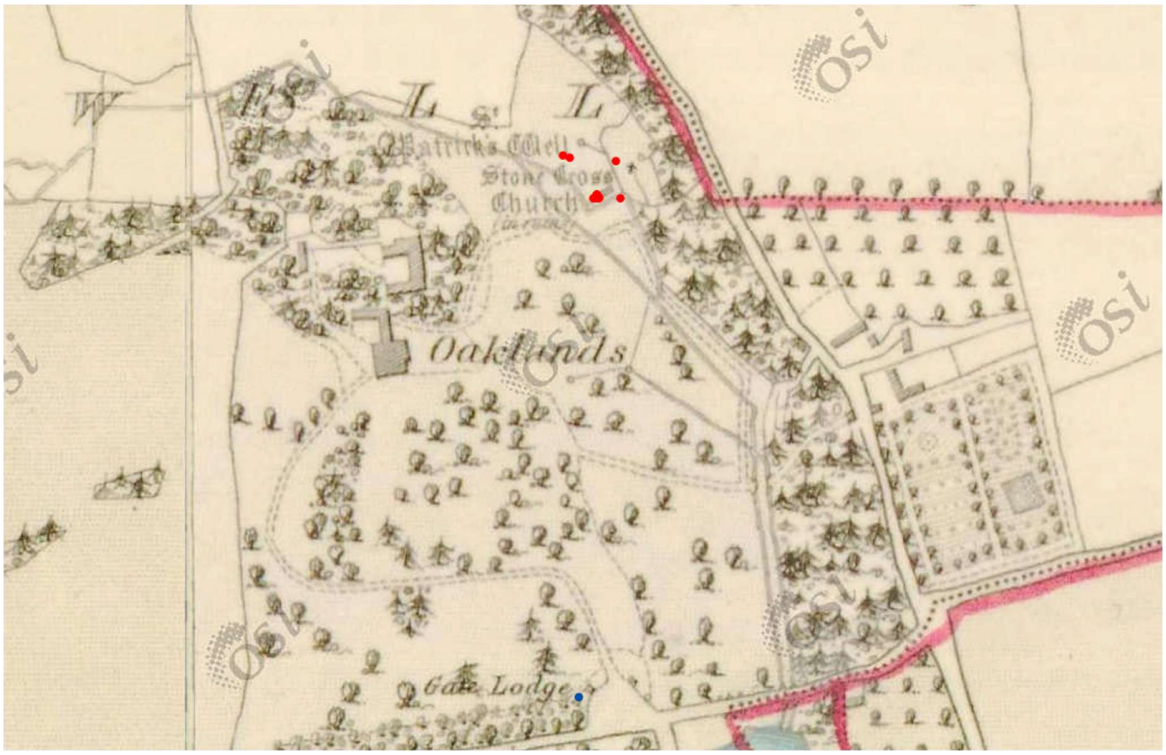
CONDITION: Fairly good; the cross is weathered but still visible, and the stone appears to be undamaged albeit spotted with white lichen.

DESCRIPTION: Small pillar with an incised linear Latin cross spanning the entirety of the surface of the upper two-thirds of one face, which is now turned to the southeast.

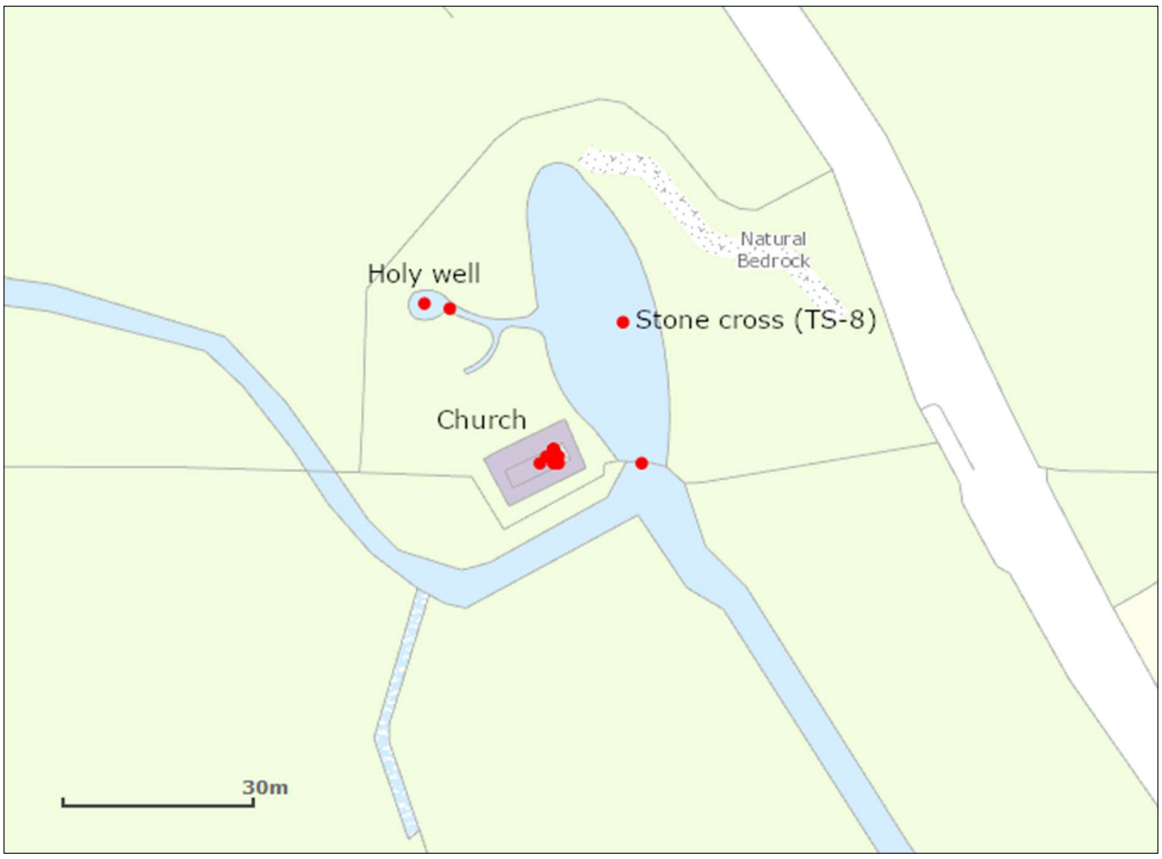
DISCUSSION: The morphology of this stone indicates that it was intended to sit upright (Chapter 4). When inserted the ground, it likely stood somewhere between 60 and 70 cm tall, which may suggest that it could have been used as a grave-marker (*ibid*). However, it is possible (albeit less likely) that it may have acted as a boundary or termon marker, perhaps in association with an enclosing element, considering its one-sided design, and relatively small stature compared to other boundary markers (*cf*. Chapter 5). Regardless, its simple execution does not necessarily rule out a later date, particularly as the stone itself appears to have been shaped; so perhaps an 8th–12th century date range might be suggested (see Chapter 4).

Patrick's Well

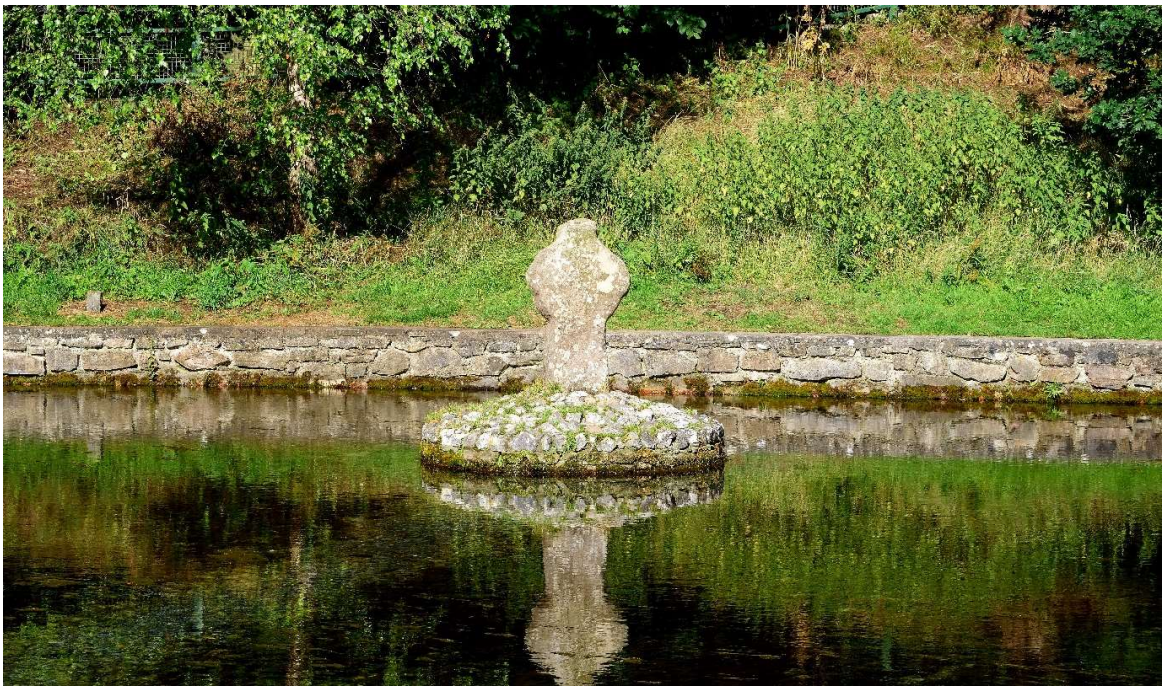
The site of Patrick's Well, so named for the holy well which, according to the *Life of St Declan*, was given to Patrick by St Declan and the Deisi king, Feargal mac Cormac and was 'dear' to him (41, in Power). It is situated in a marshy, wooded valley at the foot of a steep ridge immediately to the east. St Patrick's Church, which is *c*. 25 m south-southeast of Patrick's Well, was a subsidiary church of Inishlounaght (Garton n.d.c). It was heavily renovated in the late 1960s but dates to the 16th or 17th century; however it incorporates some of the fabric of an earlier church dating to the 12th century (*ibid*). A free-standing stone cross (TS-8, below) was originally in a patch of wet, marshy ground created by the water flowing from the holy well, but is now set up on an artificial island (albeit in roughly the same place) in the middle of a shallow, man-made pool or pond, presumably created during the aforementioned renovations. Both the holy well and cross were popular pilgrimage destinations in the 19th and early 20th century, with pilgrims approaching the cross 'on their knees…as an act of penance or devotion' (Bagwell 1909, 268). However a papal bull from 1619, granting an indulgence in connection to visiting this site, may suggest that devotional practices here may have originated much earlier (Morrissey 1909, 265).



Map of Patrick's Well in 1839 (marked in red; Source: OSi)



Site map of Patrick's Well, showing the holy well, church, man-made pool, and stone cross TS-8 (base map: OSi)



TS-8: originally set in marshy ground, which has now been turned in a shallow pool

TS-8

Patrick's Well



Southwest face



Northeast Face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Iffa and Offa East

PARISH: Inishlounaght

TOWNLAND: Patrickswell

SITE NAME: St Patrick's Well

ITM: 594740 628738

O.S. MAP: 67

RMP: TS067-064003

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 112 cm; Width 67 cm; Thickness 28 cm

FIRST RECORDED: In 1840, set in wet marshy ground adjacent to the ruined church (O'Flanagan 1930b, vol. 1, 50).

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably close to its original location, but now erected on a small island in an artificial pond that was created during major renovations to the site undertaken from 1967–9.

CONDITION: Very weathered, with heavy lichen cover. The top of the stem on the northeast face may have been damaged.

DESCRIPTION: An imperforate ringed cross, with arms and cross head extending a short distance past the ring. The cross-stem tapers from 38 cm at its base to 27 cm at the top. There are no traces of carving on either face, though this may be due to weathering and erosion.

DISCUSSION: This cross is not included in Dorothy Kelly's study of 'plainer' crosses (1986) or Peter Harbison's high cross corpus (1992a), and so is included here. Imperforate ringed crosses, which are mostly found in southeast Ireland, largely date to the 8th–10th centuries, though there are some 11th–12th century examples (Kelly 1986, 66). Kelly correlates the distribution of most solid-ringed crosses to the availability of materials – less tractable granite was being used to carve these crosses because sandstone could not be readily obtained (*ibid*, 64). In the few instances where sandstone was used in conjunction with the cross-form, she theorises that they date to the 10th century or later, after the form had become 'culturally acceptable' (*ibid*), and it is worth noting that TS-8 is made of sandstone. Considering the early medieval propensity to erect crosses in locations associated with the lives of saints (see Chapter 5), it seems likely that this was carved in commemoration of a reputed visit to this site by St Patrick. Moreover, its unusual location may have been chosen to mark his affection for the holy well in particular (see above). As mentioned above, TS-8 was the focus of local veneration and devotional practices from the 17th century until relatively recently; however, its inextricable connection with the holy well, one that was considered 'dear' to an important saint (i.e. Patrick) during the early medieval period, would strongly suggest that this cross had served as a devotional focus from the time of its erection, which may have been sometime between the 10th–12th centuries.

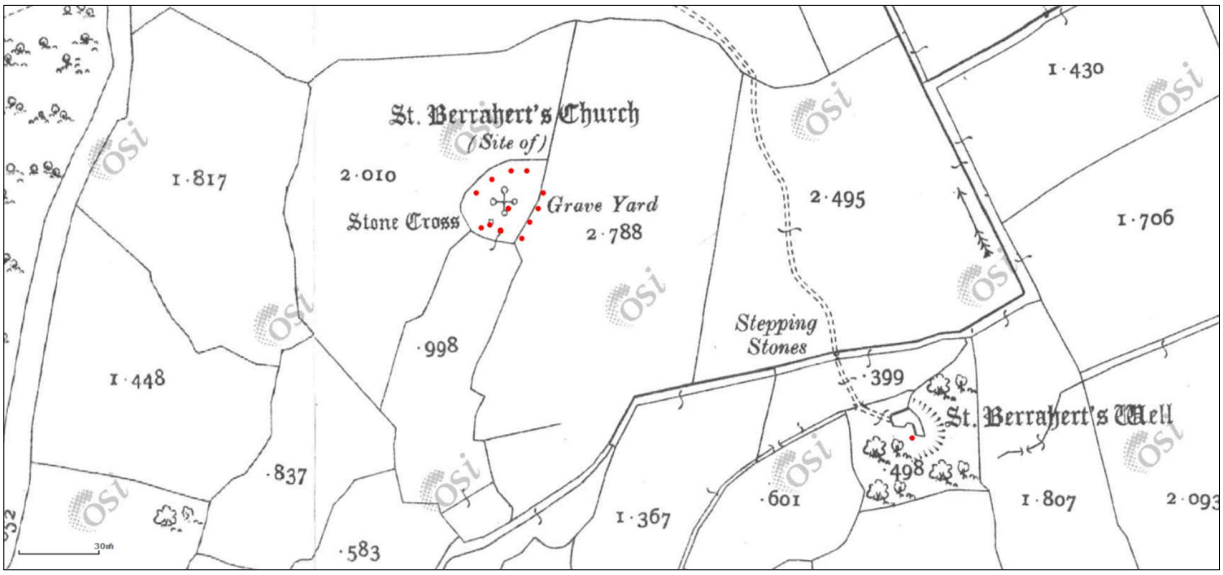
St Berrihert's Kyle

St Berrihert's Kyle is situated on the east side of the Glen of Aherlow, a valley between the Galtee Mountains and the Slievenamuck Hills. It is just south of the main road, and *c*. 6 km west of Toureen Peakaun (see below). The site consists of an ovoid earth and stone enclosure, *c*. 36 m N-S x 27 m E-W, within which is a smaller stone enclosure that was built by the OPW in 1946 (see Chapter 6). This enclosure was purpose-built to display and protect the majority of the early medieval carved stones, though eleven of the slabs (plus two others that are uncarved) are set up into 'stations' along the northern perimeter. In the centre of the earthen enclosure, within an area delimited by paving stones set on edge, is a modern burial ground for unbaptised infants, marked by small uncarved stones. The earth taken from the centre of the enclosure, after it was levelled to build the stone wall, was used to create a causeway through the adjacent marshy fields (*ibid*). A planked wooden walkway through these fields leads *c*. 170 m east from the main enclosure to a natural spring known as St Berrihert's Well.

While there are no extant refences to St Berrihert's Kyle in the early medieval sources, it was reputedly founded by (or is at least dedicated to) an Anglo-Saxon saint, Bercheirt. In scholarly literature, Bercheirt is generally thought to be the founder of the ecclesiastical site of Tullylease, Co. Cork, and is often identified as Berikertus, one of the brothers of Gerald of Mayo, all of whom left Northumbria for Ireland with Colmán of Lindisfarne after the synod of Whitby in 664 (*Vita Sancti Geraldi*, in Plummer 1910, 107 §ii). However, Bercheirt, as Berikertus, is not mentioned in the written sources until the later Latin *Life* of Gerald of Mayo, which Richard Sharpe has suggested to be a 13th-century composition (1991, 7). The site was recorded on the OS map of 1840 as 'St Berrahert's Church', and at least one of the stone crosses, presumably the larger cross head, is noted here as well. A pattern is still held every 18th of February, and some locals still visit the holy well for cures, as well as to collect drinking water.

In 1967, Padraig Ó hÉilidhe undertook the compilation of a sculpture catalogue for St Berrihert's Kyle, which has stood as the most comprehensive piece of work on this site to date. However, since the publication of his catalogue, twelve slabs that were lying loose around the enclosure were subsequently cemented to the wall (presumably by the OPW), and a few other stones that had either been set into the wall or into a 'station' in Ó hÉilidhe's time have been rearranged. Moreover, two of the slabs recorded by Ó hÉilidhe have since gone missing, and, altogether, this prompted the creation of a revised and updated sculpture catalogue to reflect these

changes. Additionally, photogrammetric recording was undertaken on all 72 extant carved stones (including both cross-heads) during fieldwork for this project, as many of the stones in this assemblage are heavily weathered. Yet, though it was recorded during fieldwork, the large cross-head at St Berrihert's Kyle is excluded from this catalogue on the basis that it is clearly a high cross, and thus, beyond the scope of this catalogue (Chapter 2); moreover, it has already been analysed and discussed in detail by Harbison (1992a). However, as it does provide key insight into the *floruit* and dating of sculpture at St Berrihert's Kyle, it is briefly discussed in Chapter 6. Additionally, as the vast majority of stones here are interpreted as upright grave-markers, discussions of individual stones were generally not made in this catalogue unless further discussion was warranted. The significance of this large collection of sculpture is the focus of Chapter 6, and is discussed in detail there.



Historic 25-inch map showing St Berrihert's Kyle and holy well (Source: OSi)



The interior of the enclosure

TS-9

St Berrihert's 1



West Face



East Face



Cross in relief with central boss on the top of the slab, now turned on its side facing south

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010011

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: (at present orientation) Height 28 cm; Width 24 cm; Thickness 8 cm

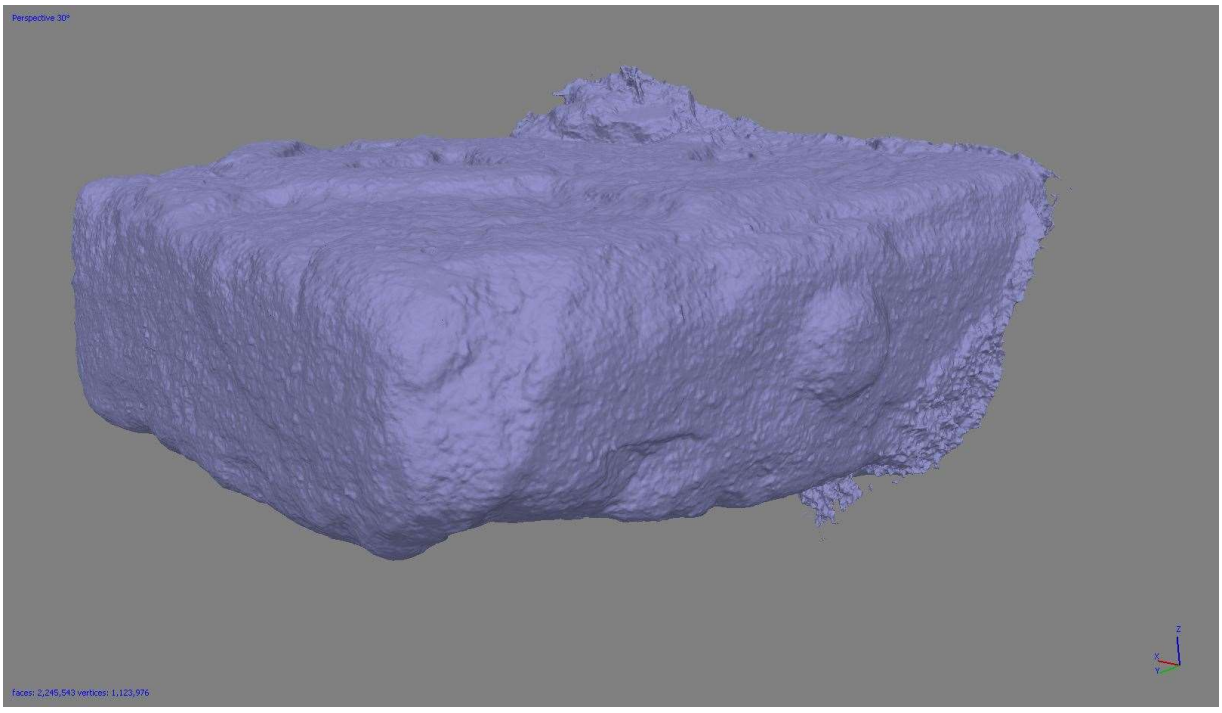
FIRST RECORDED: Lying loose within the enclosure. This is no. 5A/5B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 109-10, fig. 2).

PRESENT LOCATION: Cemented onto the top of the enclosing wall in the southwest sector, 17 cm from No. 2

CONDITION: Heavily weathered and fragmented

DESCRIPTION: Fragment of a heavily weathered cross-slab which has been cemented to the top of the enclosing wall on its side, with the top of the slab now facing south. The top edge is decorated with a bossed cross in relief. The cross itself is barely perceptible to the naked eye, but is clearly visible on the photogrammetric model. The west face of the slab is carved with a Latin cross in relief, the angles of which have squared hollows, rather than the rounded hollows depicted in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (*ibid*, 109-10, fig. 2). Additionally, there appears to be a raised border along the edge. The east face is carved with a ringed cross, also in relief, but with rounded hollows at the angles; this face does not have a raised border (or else it does not survive).

DISCUSSION: This slab, like the vast majority of carved stones at St Berrihert's Kyle, was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker (see above; also Chapter 6). The third cross was only discovered by means of photogrammetric analysis, and may have been incorporated into grave-side devotional practices (Chapter 6).



TS-10

St Berrihert's 2



West face; east face



Top of slab, showing raised sub-rectangular boss

COUNTY: Tipperary BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74 RMP: TS074-010024

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 47 cm; Width 21 cm; Thickness 8 cm

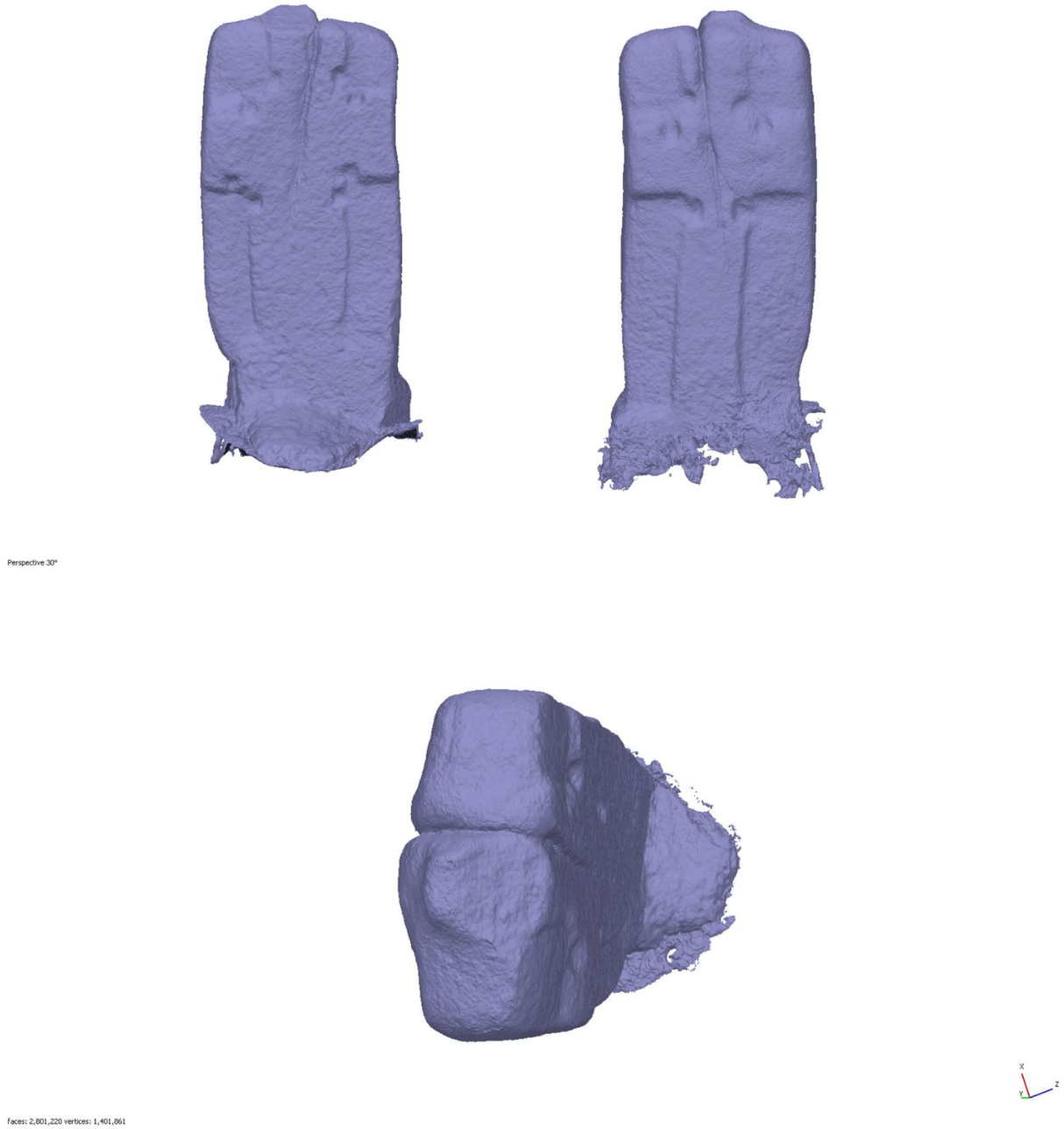
FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this is no. 18A/18B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 112-3, fig. 4).

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably in the same position as recorded by Ó hÉailidhe, on the top of the enclosing wall in the southwest sector, 17 cm from No. 1 and 55 cm from No. 3.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered, with a crack or fissure spanning the full thickness of the slab that extends from the top of the slab to approximately midway; the edges of the fissure are smooth and rounded, suggesting the crack formed in antiquity.

DESCRIPTION: Small, sub-rectangular slab; both faces are carved with Latin crosses in relief. The cross on the west face is irregularly carved, and has triple-rounded hollows on all but the bottom sinister angle, which is a double-rounded hollow angle. The centre hollow on the top sinister side is very faint, however. The east face cross has double-rounded hollowed angles on the top of the arms, and what looks to be an aborted attempt at double-hollows on the bottom. Like No. 1, the top of the slab is carved with a boss in relief, albeit sub-rectangular rather than round, though this is probably due to weathering and damage. The boss is slightly off centre and avoids the crack, which would suggest that the crack may have already been present (or perhaps occurred) when the slab was being carved, though, if so, it would undoubtedly have been much smaller than it is now. The surface is very weathered, so it cannot be confirmed, but there appears to be a carved line on the narrow top face, which may be the remnants of a cross, similar to No. 1 (top left side of model). The base of the slab is unshaped and uncarved, indicating it would have originally been inserted below ground level.

DISCUSSION: This slab was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker. Double- and triple-hollowed-angled crosses are quite unusual, and while not entirely unique to St Berrihert's Kyle, are a relatively frequent feature on the sculpture here, and may be suggestive of a 'house' style.



TS-11

St Berrihert's 3



West face; east face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010013

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 33 cm; Width 23 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this is no. 7A/7B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 109-10, fig. 2)

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably in the same position as recorded by Ó hÉailidhe, on the top of the enclosing wall in the west sector, 55 cm from No. 2 and 72 cm from No. 4.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered, with one top corner broken off some time in antiquity.

DESCRIPTION: Small stone which tapers slightly towards the top of the stone and has well-rounded corners. The west face features a Latin cross in relief with a ring attached its apex; the top two angles of the cross are square-hollowed, while the bottom two are round-hollowed angles. The cross on the eastern face is irregularly carved, with squared-hollow-angles.

DISCUSSION: This slab was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker. The ring which surmounts the top of the cross, however, is only found on a few other crosses scattered across Ireland, from Glendalough, Co. Wicklow, Caher Island and Knappaghmanagh, Co. Mayo, Kilbroney, Co. Down, Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry, and Clogher, Co. Tyrone (*ibid*, 123, n. 5). An example has also been recorded in Scotland, at Killoran, on the Isle of Mull, and one at Llangeinwen, Anglesey, Wale (*ibid*). Helen Roe has suggested that this motif may be derived from the *crux ansata*, as well as from Palestinian ampullae, which depict the cross surmounted by haloed head of Christ, and may have made its way into Ireland via pilgrimage souvenirs by the 7th century (1960, 201; see also Healy 2009).

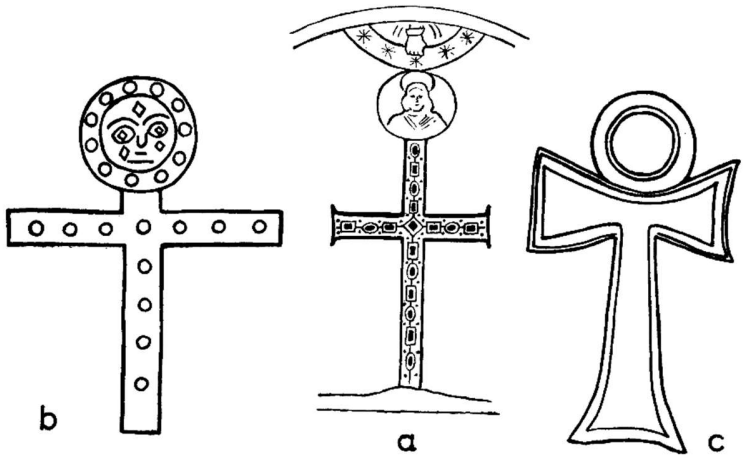


Fig. 6. a. Cross detail, mosaic, San Stephano, Rome.
b. Cross detail, textile, Akhmin, Egypt.
c. Crux ansata.
(Not to the same scale)

The haloed head of Christ surmounting the cross, and the crux ansata *(after Roe 1960)*

TS-12

St Berrihert's 4



West face; east face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010046

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 34 cm; Width 26.5 cm; Thickness 9 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this slab is no. 40A/40B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 114–5, fig. 5).

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably in the same position as recorded by Ó hÉailidhe, on the top of the enclosing wall in the west sector, 72 cm from No. 3 and 25 cm from the entrance to the enclosure.

CONDITION: Heavily worn

DESCRIPTION: Small cross-slab with well-rounded corners and pocked sides. The west face has an equal-armed outline cross pocked into its surface, the terminals of which have been left open. The arms span across the width of the stone, widening slightly towards the edges of the slab; the stem extends *c*. 10 cm from the intersection on both ends. The east face has a poorly-preserved equal-armed cross, carved in very low relief.

DISCUSSION: This slab was probably an upright late 7th- or early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-13

St Berrihert's 5



East face; west face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010077

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 38 (originally) cm; Width 23 cm; Thickness 6 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Lying loose in the enclosure; this slab is no. 71 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Cemented onto the top of the northwest sector of the enclosing wall, 95 cm north of the oak tree and 30 cm from No. 6.

CONDITION: Very poor; the entirely of the western face has been broken off somewhat recently, and the eastern face is worn almost entirely smooth. Additionally, the lower dexter corner (from the east face) has been broken off, though this occurred long ago.

DESCRIPTION: Small, angular slab of red sandstone which has suffered significant damage and erosion. Based on how little lichen growth there is on western face, its original surface may have been broken off some time in the relatively recent past. One of its corners is missing as well, though the edges are worn smooth, so this break occurred long ago. The east face is carved with the bottom portion of a cross shaft, in very low relief.

DISCUSSION: This is the lower half of what was most likely an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-14

St Berrihert's 6



East face; west face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010028

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 38 cm; Width 24 cm; Thickness 6.5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this slab is no. 22A/22B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 112-3, fig. 4).

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably in the same position as recorded by Ó hÉailidhe, on the top of the enclosing wall in the northwest sector, 30 cm from No. 5 and 66 cm from No. 7.

CONDITION: The carvings are well worn, with lichen growing within much of the incised lines of the east face. There are several sizable chips along the sinister edge of the west face, and its dexter corner is missing.

DESCRIPTION: A small cross-slab with uneven, heavily chipped edges and rounded corners. The east face is incised with an outline Latin cross with round-hollowed angles which spans the length and breadth of its (visible) surface. The west face has a smaller Latin cross pocked into its surface.

DISCUSSION: Like many of the cross-slabs, this stone was probably an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-15

St Berrihert's 7



North face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010072

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 25 cm; Width 26 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: This slab is no. 66 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7). Ó hÉailidhe described no. 66 as 'fixed in "station" on boundary bank' (*ibid*, 118), but by 2003, it was found 'lying loose on the west bank of the enclosure' (Farrelly 2014a). As of 2018, there are

no loose cross-slabs at St Berrihert's Kyle, and this slab had been cemented to the top of the enclosing wall.

PRESENT LOCATION: Cemented onto the top of the enclosing wall in the north sector, 66 cm from No. 6 and 28 cm from No. 8.

CONDITION: Heavily worn.

DESCRIPTION: Sub-rectangular cross-slab with a Latin cross carved in very low relief on its west face. The surface is worn almost smooth so that the cross is barely visible. The top of the stem and dexter cross arm expand slightly at the terminals. The south face may have been shaped to even out its surface, but there is no trace of any carving.

DISCUSSION: Like many of the cross-slabs, this stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-16

St Berrihert's 8



North face; south face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010041

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 32 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; This slab is no. 35A/35B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 114-5, fig. 5).

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably in the same position as recorded by Ó hÉailidhe, on the top of the enclosing wall in the north sector, 28 cm from No. 7 and 70 cm from No. 9.

CONDITION: The surface is heavily worn and approximately half of the dexter side of the south face has chipped off, including the dexter cross arm and dexter side of the cross stem.

DESCRIPTION: A thin, irregularly shaped cross-slab; there is an outline Latin cross pocked into its north face. Its south face likewise has an outline Latin cross pocked into its face, albeit deeper and with slightly round-hollowed angles.

DISCUSSION: Like many of the cross-slabs, this stone was probably an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-17

St Berrihert's 9



South face; north face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010027

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 48 cm; Width 16 cm; Thickness 10 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this is no. 21A/21B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 112-3, fig. 4).

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably in the same position as recorded by Ó hÉailidhe, on the top of the enclosing wall in the north sector, 70 cm from No. 8 and 21 cm from No. 10.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered. The top dexter corner of the north face of the stone was damaged sometime in antiquity.

DESCRIPTION: A thin stone with relatively straight sides and a rounded top. On both faces is carved a Latin cross in relief with double round-hollowed angles. However, the damage to the top dexter corner of the north face partially obscures the top of the stem of that cross.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-18

St Berrihert's 10



South Face



North Face (uncarved)

COUNTY: Tipperary BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74 RMP: TS074-010061

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 12.5 cm; Width 24 cm; Thickness 5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Lying loose within the enclosure; this slab is no. 55 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the north sector, 21 cm from No. 9 and 35 cm from No. 11.

CONDITION: Heavily worn

DESCRIPTION: Small fragment of a slab, presumably the top, with two parallel incised lines forming what was likely the top of the stem of an outline cross.

DISCUSSION: There is very little that can be gleaned from such a small fragment alone, but when taken in context with the other slabs at St Berrihert's Kyle, TS-18 is most likely the top of an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-19

St Berrihert's 11



Northeast face; southwest face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010037

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 36 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this slab is no. 31A/31B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 114-5, fig. 5).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the northeast sector, 35 cm from No. 10 and 21 cm from No. 12.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered with lichen cover on both faces, particularly the southwest face, which has been flaked or damaged at the intersection of the top of the cross arms and stem. There also appears to be some minor chipping along the sinister edge of the northeast face below the cross arm.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small sub-rectangular slab, carved in relief on both faces with a hollow-angled Latin cross which spans the entirety of each surface. The northeast cross is also incised with four small equal-armed crosses – one at each end of the cross arms, one at the top of the cross stem and another just below the crux.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-20

St Berrihert's 12



Southwest face



Northeast face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010047

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 23 cm (originally); Width 15 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Lying loose in the enclosure; this slab is no. 41A/41B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 116-7, fig. 6).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the northeast sector, 21 cm from No. 11 and 22 cm from No. 13.

CONDITION: This is only a fragment of a cross-slab; it is heavily weathered, with patches of moss and lichen cover on its surface. There is a small fissure running along the top sinister corner of the carved face, which appears to have already resulted in some minor flaking of that corner.

DESCRIPTION: This is the top fragment of a small rectangular slab, carved on its southwest face with a hollow-angled Latin cross in relief. The arms extend fully to the edges of the slab and though the stem does as well, its terminal is rounded so that only the very top of the cross stem reaches the edge of the stone.

DISCUSSION: This slab was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-21

St Berrihert's 13



Southwest face; northeast face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010048

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 38 cm; Width 29 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this slab is no. 42A/42B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 116-7, fig. 6).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the northeast sector, 22 cm from No. 12 and 27 cm from No. 14.

CONDITION: Weathered, with heavy lichen spotting. The top of the southwest face is uneven due to heavy chipping along its edge. There also may be some damage to the dexter edge of this face, roughly midway on the stone, though this could also be natural. Additionally, there is some slight chipping on the top sinister corner of the northeast face.

DESCRIPTION: This is a sub-rectangular stone with light to moderate shaping along its edges and a Latin cross with open terminals pocked in outline on both faces. The terminals of the cross arms and top of the stem end *c*. 5–8 cm from the edges of the slab, but the cross stems end *c*. 5–15 cm from the (visible) base of the stone on the southwest and northeast faces respectively.

DISCUSSION: This slab was presumably an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-22

St Berrihert's 14



Southwest face; northeast face

COUNTY: Tipperary BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74 RMP: TS074-010039

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 33 cm; Width 23 cm; Thickness 11 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this is no. 33A/33B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 114-5, fig. 5).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the northeast sector, 27 cm from No. 13 and 33 cm from No. 15.

CONDITION: The top of the stone has been broken off, albeit long ago, and there appears to be some chipping along the sinister edge of the southwest face; its surface is spotted with lichen.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small upright stone, the bottom quarter of which has been left uncarved and unshaped, presumably because it was to this level that the stone was inserted into the ground. The top three-quarters of the stone have been carved; however the edges of the stone may be unshaped (or else only minimally so). The aforementioned three-quarters of the southwest face is carved in relief with a hollow-angled Latin cross, though only the bottom two-thirds survives. Likewise, the top three-quarters of the northeast face is carved, though with a deeply incised linear Latin cross with rounded subcircular terminals; the top of the stem is missing, though it is presumed to have been similarly decorated.

DISCUSSION: This was presumably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-23

St Berrihert's 15



East face; west face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010019

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 30 cm; Width 23 cm; Thickness 5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this slab is no. 13A/13B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 110-1, fig. 3).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the eastern sector, 33 cm from No. 14 and 31 cm from No. 16.

CONDITION: The carvings are well-worn, but particularly so on the east face. There is heavy lichen cover across the stone and the dexter cross arm on the west face has almost entirely flaked off.

DESCRIPTION: This is a sub-rectangular slab, with minimal to moderate shaping along its sides and top. Both faces are carved in relief with squared-hollow-angled Latin crosses, though the cantons of the east cross each have one large squared hollow and the west cross cantons each have two smaller, perpendicular squared hollows.

DISCUSSION: This slab was presumably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-24

St Berrihert's 16



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010063

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 20 cm; Width 15 cm; Thickness 6.5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Lying loose within the enclosure; this slab is no. 57 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the east sector, 31 cm from No. 15 and 9 cm from No. 17.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered; the top of the slab has been broken off sometime in antiquity, as what is now the top of the stone is smooth and well-rounded.

DESCRIPTION: This is the lower half of a cross-slab with a Latin cross carved in low relief on one side. At the base of the cross, a horizontally incised line spans the width of the carved face, below which the stone is unworked, presumably as this part of the slab was inserted into the ground.

DISCUSSION: This slab was presumably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-25

St Berrihert's 17



West face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010060

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 15 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 4 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Lying loose in the enclosure; this slab is no. 54 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 116, 119, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the eastern sector, 9 cm from No. 16 and 16 cm from No. 18.

CONDITION: Fragmented, heavily eroded and covered in moss and lichen.

DESCRIPTION: This a fragment of a sub-rectangular slab with two wide, vertical parallel lines pocked onto its west face – presumably the open-ended terminal of a cross stem.

DISCUSSION: This fragment was presumably part of an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-26

St Berrihert's 18



East face; west face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010025

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 40 cm; Width 21.5 cm; Thickness 8 cm

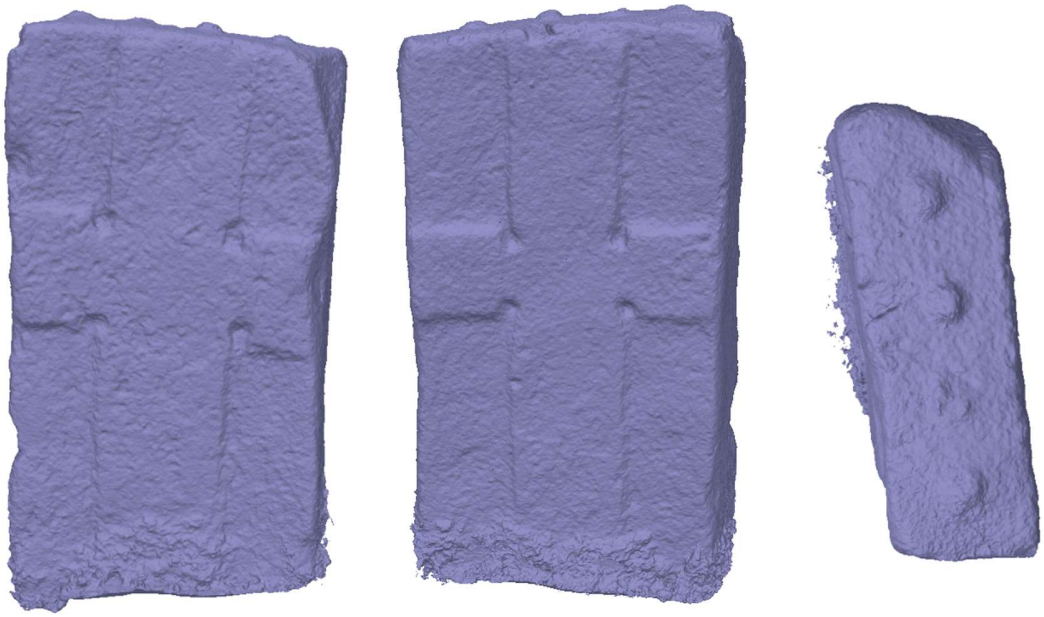
FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this is no. 19A/19B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 112-3, fig. 4).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the eastern sector, 16 cm from No. 17 and 39 cm from No. 19.

CONDITION: The carvings are well-worn, but particularly so on the east face, and its sinister corner has chipped off on this side. There is heavy lichen spotting across the stone and moss growth at its base.

DESCRIPTION: This is a sub-rectangular stone that has been shaped along the top and sides. It has been carved on both faces with a hollow-angled Latin cross in relief, spanning the length and breadth of each respective surface. In a row along the top of the slab are four raised bosses, spaced at roughly equal intervals.

DISCUSSION: This slab was presumably an upright 8th-century grave-marker. The four bosses on top do not appear to be accompanied by a cross-carving, though it is possible that any such cross could have worn away. It is unclear if there is a particular significance behind the four bosses, though they may have been included in ritual practices, such as private grave-side prayer, or liturgical/circumambulatory processionals (see Chapter 6).



TS-27

St Berrihert's 19



East face; west face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010021

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 60 cm; Width 22 cm; Thickness 9 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this slab is no. 15A/15B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 110-2, fig. 3).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the eastern sector, 39 cm from No. 18, and is immediately adjacent (and bolted) to No. 20.

CONDITION: Weathered, with light patches of lichen. There is an old crack *c*. 15 cm long, the edges of which are well-worn, running diagonally from the top of the east face on the sinister side down the centre of the cross stem. The bottom dexter corner of the slab (*c*. 10 cm high by 6 cm wide) is gone. A thin vertical crack (*c*. 10 cm long), more recent than the former, has appeared at the centre of the base of the slab on the west side.

DESCRIPTION: This is a tall sub-rectangular slab which may have been shaped, albeit minimally, across the top and on the upper two-thirds of its sides. Its east face is carved in relief with a hollow-angled Latin cross, the arms of which extend to the edges of the stone, though the top of the stem stops a few centimetres short of the top edge of the slab. The stem peters out towards the bottom, so that base terminal of the cross is instead defined only by a deeply incised line. The hollowed-angles of the cross are particularly deep, and each almost forms a complete circular depression. The west face is pocked with a cross in outline, of which the arms and top of the stem extend to the edges of the stone. However the stem of this outline cross ends abruptly, *c*. 5 cm below the crux. Below this, the carving continues as a single incised line, extending down the length of the slab from the bottom of the outline cross, and ending in a rounded terminal.

DISCUSSION: One of the (relatively) larger and more well-preserved slabs, this stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker. The cross on the west face is a bit more unusual, and may be intended to represent a metal processional cross, perhaps a *labarum* (cf. Chapter 7).

TS-28

St Berrihert's 20



East face; west face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010008

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 76 cm; Width 22–18 cm (top to base); Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Illustrated and described in Crawford's paper (1909, fig. 4); lying loose within the earthen enclosure, built into a 'station' with a several other cross-slabs. This slab is no. 2A/2B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 108, fig. 2).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the eastern sector, immediately adjacent (and bolted) to both Nos. 19 and 21.

CONDITION: Weathered and spotted with lichen. The bottom 20 cm of the slab had been broken off and then reattached to the rest of the slab with cement, sometime between Crawford's publication in 1909 and Ó hÉailidhe's in 1967 (though this was presumably done by the OPW during its clean-up and reorganisation of the site; see above). There are also two distinct layers of flaking on the top sinister corner of the west face: the first flake is quite broad but shallow and, at some point, an attempt had been made to restore or repair the carving. This may also be the work of the OPW, though not necessarily: Crawford's illustration of the stone only shows a small chip missing from that corner (1909, fig 4); however the photograph of the stone (*ibid*, fig. 1) suggests the aforementioned flaking may have already occurred, though this cannot be confirmed due to the vegetation and the age of the photograph. The second flake, though smaller, is much deeper, extending almost halfway through the stone, and remains uncarved.

DESCRIPTION: This is a narrow sub-rectangular slab which tapers slightly towards the base. The east face, or 'front' of the slab, features a Latin cross incised in outline which spans the width, as well as most of the length, of its surface. The stem of the cross is decorated with a double-stranded twist design in false relief, outlined by a thin linear border. The arms of the cross are each incised with a saltire cross, also framed by a thin double-lined border at the top and bottom. Just above the start of the cross stem, a similar double-lined rectilinear border emanates from either side. They each extend to the edge of the slab's face, runs up its edge, behind the cross arms and meet at the top to form a frame for the cross. The space between this rectilinear frame and the cross is decorated with a chevron pattern. A horizontal line runs across the base of the slab, a few centimetres below the cross stem, perhaps to demarcate to what depth the slab should be inserted into the ground. The west face, or 'back' of the slab, is likewise framed by a double-lined

rectilinear border, albeit wider than the one on the east face. Within this is an unevenly incised lattice pattern.

DISCUSSION: This is by far the most ornately decorated cross-slab at St Berrihert's Kyle, though it is not the tallest. There is a possibility that it may have instead acted as a commemorative/devotional focus in the ecclesiastical landscape, or perhaps as an elaborate termon or routeway marker within the ecclesiastical landscape, particularly as this slab was likely inserted into a base or stand. Yet on balance, it is still quite small to have functioned effectively in any of these roles (see Chapter 5), and is more likely to be an 8th-century upright grave-marker, like the majority of this assemblage. However, its ornate design indicates that TS-28 was created to mark the grave of someone important within the community of St Berrihert's Kyle, presumably a high-ranking ecclesiastic (see Chapters 5 and 6).



Photograph of TS-28, upside down (Crawford 1909)

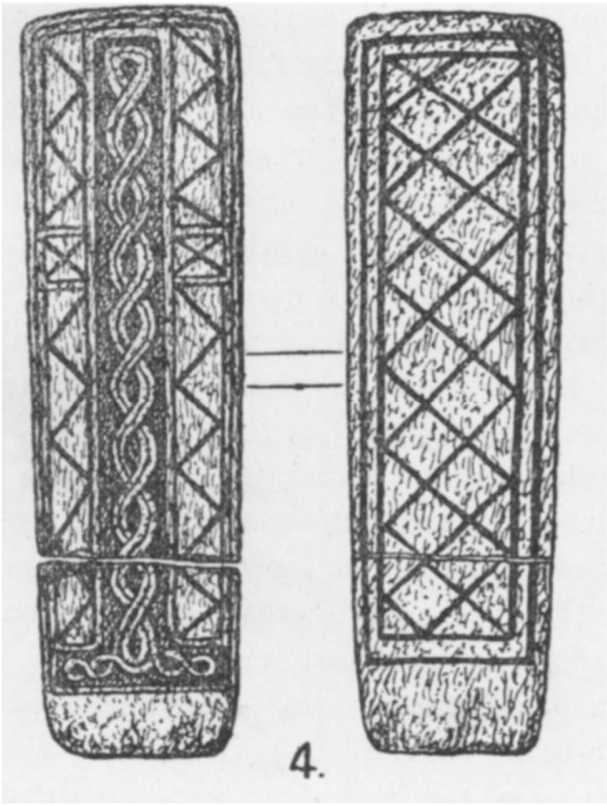


Illustration of TS-28 by Crawford, showing only minor flaking on the 'back' of the slab, as well as a twisted 'base' extending from the cross stem which never existed (ibid)

TS-29

St Berrihert's 21



East face; west face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010014

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 63 cm; Width 16.5 cm; Thickness 11 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this is no. 8A/8B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 110-1, fig. 3).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the eastern sector, immediately adjacent (and bolted) to No. 20, and 44 cm from No. 22.

CONDITION: Weathered and heavily spotted with lichen. There appears to be some minor chipping or flaking, now well-worn, along the top and sinister edges of the west face. However the bottom dexter corner (the one adjacent to No. 20) has been broken off to almost half the width of the stone. The edges of the break are still fairly crisp, indicating it occurred relatively recently.

DESCRIPTION: This is a sub-rectangular stone, perhaps with some minor shaping along its top and sides. The east face is carved in relief with a Latin cross decorated with double, perpendicular squared-hollow-angles. The cross arms extend to the edges of the face but the top of the stems ends *c*. 5 cm before the top of the stone. Like TS-27, the stem of the cross peters out towards the bottom, until the cross terminal is defined only by an incised line. The west face has an incised, or perhaps pocked, outline Latin cross, the arms and top of which extend to the edges of the stone. The bottom cross terminal is open-ended, and stops *c*. 20 cm above the visible base of the stone.

DISCUSSION: Though one of the more prominently displayed carved stones, this was still most likely (as with the majority of the stones here) an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-30

St Berrihert's 22



West face



East face

COUNTY: Tipperary BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74 RMP: TS074-010054/TS074-010079

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 15 cm; Width 23 cm; Thickness 6 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this slab is no. 48A/48B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 116-7, fig. 6).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the eastern sector, 44 cm from No. 21, and 46 cm from No. 23.

CONDITION: This is a fragment of a slab with some minor lichen and moss cover. The corners of the east face are more weathered than the rest of the surface; a sizable chuck is missing from the top of the west face which has obliterated the end of the cross terminal, and there is some flaking along the sinister edge which may have also obliterated some of the incised design.

DESCRIPTION: This is a sub-rectangular slab fragment that has been shaped along the top, perhaps with some minor shaping along the sides as well. Jean Farrelly (2014b) reports that this slab (i.e. no. 48A/48B in Ó hÉailidhe 1967) could not be located in 2003, and gave TS-30 a new RMP number, as a previously unrecorded slab. However, the carving on the opposing faces are identical to that of Ó hÉailidhe's no. 48, so it is far more likely that the slab is now inverted from its orientation in 1967. Moreover, this is not the only slab that has been repositioned on the wall since Ó hÉailidhe's publication. The top surface of the slab features a raised, boss-like protrusion, like Nos. 1 and 2, and though it seems likely that there may have been a cross here as well, if so, it has since been worn completely smooth. On the west face is the top of the arms and stem of an incised, linear (presumably Latin) cross; the dexter cross arm ends at a vertically incised line which extends along the edge of the stone. This is likely part of a frame, and though it does not appear to have extended across the top of the face, it probably did originally extend along the sinister edge before it was damaged. The west face may have originally been a mirror of the east face; it is

incised with the stem of a cross (probably Latin) in outline, framed along the edges of the stone on both sides with a vertical line, presumably the remnants of a rectilinear frame.

DISCUSSION: This slab fragment was presumably part of an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-31

St Berrihert's 23



West face; east face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010012

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 33 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 11.5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this is no. 6A/6B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 109-10, fig. 2).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the eastern sector, 46 cm from No. 22, and 47 cm from the large cross head.

CONDITION: Weathered, and with some minor chipping/flaking along the top of the stone, but in reasonably good condition. There is also heavy white lichen cover, especially on the west face.

DESCRIPTION: This is a thick, rectangular stone with moderate to well-shaped sides. The west face is carved in relief with a Latin cross with a solid-disked ring, which spans the length and breadth of its surface. At its crux is a round, sunken area with a raised circular boss at its centre. The east face is incised, or rather pocked, with an outline Latin cross which extends to the edges of the stone.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-32

St Berrihert's 24



Northwest face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010078

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 38 cm; Width 28 cm; Thickness 6 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Lying loose in the enclosure; this slab is no. 72 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the southeast sector, 80 cm from the large cross head and 10 cm from No. 25.

CONDITION: Heavily worn and coated in lichen. The top of the stone is very uneven and may have suffered damage at some point, though it is also equally possible that the slab is now upside down, and this edge was left unshaped as it was to be inserted into the ground. The cross-carving is eroded and barely visible.

DESCRIPTION: The sides of this sub-rectangular slab fragment have been moderately shaped. The southeast face was left unshaped and the northwest face is incised with what is presumably the stem of a Latin cross, spanning most of the length of the slab but petering off just short of the top.

DISCUSSION: Though it is only carved on side, its small size and moderate shaping would suggest that, like most of the St Berrihert's slabs, TS-32 was a late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker that was intended to be set upright.

TS-33

St Berrihert's 25



Northwest face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010036

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 22 cm (originally); Width 18 cm; Thickness 7 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 30 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 113-4, fig. 4).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the southeast sector, 10 cm from No. 24 and 8 cm from No. 26.

CONDITION: Weathered, fragmented and covered in lichen.

DESCRIPTION: This is the lower portion of an upright slab, the (now) top half of which has been left unshaped and uncarved, presumably because it was to this level that the slab was originally inserted into the ground. The lower half of the northwest face is carved in relief with what is probably the bottom of a Latin cross, which ends at the 'horizon' between the carved and uncarved portions of the slab.

DISCUSSION: TS-33 is the lower portion of what was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-34

St Berrihert's 26



Southeast face; Northwest face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010009

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 28 cm; Width 24 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Lying loose within the enclosure, as part of the single 'station' (Crawford 1909). This slab was still lying loose in 1967, and is no. 3A/3B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 109-10, fig. 2).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the southeast sector, 8 cm from No. 25 and 4 cm from No. 27.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered, though the carvings are still clearly visible. There is frequent lichen spotting and some minor chipping and flaking along the top and dexter edges of the northwest face. The bottom 12 cm have been broken off (or else embedded into the wall) since Ó hÉailidhe's publication, which is clear both when the stone is compared to his illustration and from his measurements, which records the stone as 40 cm long (1967, 110).

DESCRIPTION: This is a small sub-rectangular slab with moderately to well-shaped sides. The southeast face is carved in relief with a hollow-angled ringed cross-head, the arms and top stem of which extend all the way to the edge of the stone. The top corners of the stone are accented with a raised border, which frames the cross-head while still allowing its arms and stem to extend to the edge of the stone. The northwest face is pocked with an outline Latin cross, the terminals of which are open-ended and likewise extend to the edge of the stone.

DISCUSSION: This slab was presumably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-35

St Berrihert's 27



Northwest face; southeast face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010049

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 28 cm; Width 15 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this is no. 43A/43B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 116-7, fig. 6).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the southeast sector, 4 cm from No. 26 and 16 cm from No. 28.

CONDITION: Heavily damaged along all visible edges, though both cross-carving appear to be largely intact. Additionally, there is moderate (southeast face) to heavy (northeast face) lichen cover, as well as a thin vertical crack, *c*. 10 cm long, extending down from the top sinister side of the northwest face.

DESCRIPTION: It looks like there may have possibly been some minimal shaping along the sides of the slab, though they are too heavily damaged to know for certain. The shape of this slab is now quite irregular, though it may have originally been sub-rectangular. The northwest face is carved in relief with a Latin cross, the top stem of which stops a few centimetres short from the edge. The terminals of the cross arms appear to be undamaged, which may suggest that they likewise stopped short of their respective edges when the slab was whole. The base of the cross ends *c*. 8–10 cm above the visible base of the slab.

DISCUSSION: This slab was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-36

St Berrihert's 28



Northwest face; southeast face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010038

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 48 cm; Width 23 cm; Thickness 13 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this is no. 32A/32B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 114-5, fig. 5).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the southeast sector, 4 cm from No. 26 and 16 cm from No. 28.

CONDITION: Weathered, though largely intact, with heavy lichen cover.

DESCRIPTION: This is a sub-rectangular stone with minimally shaped sides on the upper three-quarters, while the bottom quarter, which would have been inserted into the ground, was left unshaped. The upper three-quarters of the northwest face is carved with a squared-hollow-angled Latin cross in relief, extending from a 'horizon', below which the stone is uncarved. The southeast face is carved with a smaller linear Latin cross (*c*. 20 cm by 13 cm) with rounded terminals, incised onto the upper half of its surface.

DISCUSSION: This stone was likely an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-37

St Berrihert's 29



Northwest face; southeast face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010026

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 23 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 6.5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this is no. 20A/20B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 112-3, fig. 4).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the southeast sector, 22 cm from No. 28 and 14 cm from No. 30.

CONDITION: The top of this stone has been broken off, so that only approximately three-quarters of the slab remains. The stone is heavily weathered and covered in lichen.

DESCRIPTION: This stone is unshaped, or else only minimally so on the top remaining two-thirds. It is carved only on the upper two-thirds of its northwest face (presumably the bottom third of the stone was underground), with a double-hollow-angled Latin cross in relief, the arms of which extend to the edges of the stone.

DISCUSSION: This slab was likely an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-38

St Berrihert's 30



Southeast face; northwest face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010015

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 43 cm; Width 19 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Cemented onto the enclosing wall; this is no. 9A/9B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 110-1, fig. 3).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the southeast sector, 14 cm from No. 29 and 61 cm from No. 31.

CONDITION: Weathered, with heavy patches of lichen cover. A deep, well-worn crack runs vertically up the sinister side of the northwest face next to the cross stem. A small chunk of the top sinister corner, as well as the last 5-8 cm of the bottom of the slab north of the crack has been broken off from this side since Ó hÉailidhe's publication. Additionally, the majority of both cross arms on the southeast face have flaked away.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small sub-rectangular slab with a double-squared-hollow-angled Latin cross carved on both faces.

DISCUSSION: This slab was likely an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-39

St Berrihert's 31



North Face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010007

TYPE: Inscribed slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 26 cm; Width (max) 23 cm; Thickness 6.5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Lying loose within the enclosure. This slab is no. 1 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 108-9, fig. 2).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the south sector, 61 cm from No. 30 and 10 cm from No. 32.

CONDITION: The surface is heavily worn and spotted with lichen, and the inscription is now largely illegible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a fragment of a small angular slab, inscribed on its north face with […]RGUSSAN, […]AIT DO (Ó hÉailidhe 1967, 108), though when more recently examined, the edge of the stone was obscured by concrete and, consequently, only […]GUSSAN, […] DO could be read (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 222). It has been interpreted as reading [FUR]GUSSAN, [OR]AIT DO, 'a prayer for Furgussán' (*ibid*). The south face is uncarved.

DISCUSSION: Ó hÉailidhe suggested that […]AIT was the tail end of *orait*, as part of the prayer formula *orait do*, which is considered both rare as well as chronologically late (Ó hÉailidhe 1967, 122). However, Okasha and Forsyth have suggested that the prayer formula may have been carved much later than the personal name, which could make the creation of TS-39 roughly contemporary with the collection of 7th–8th-century inscribed slabs at nearby Toureen Peakaun (2001, 222; see also Chapter 6). If so, then this slab may be one of the few slabs at St Berrihert's Kyle that did not mark a grave. Instead, it may have been part of the practice by which the dead were commemorated during the Mass with inscribed diptychs (for full discussion, see Chapter 5), though it cannot be ruled out that this was a grave-marker.

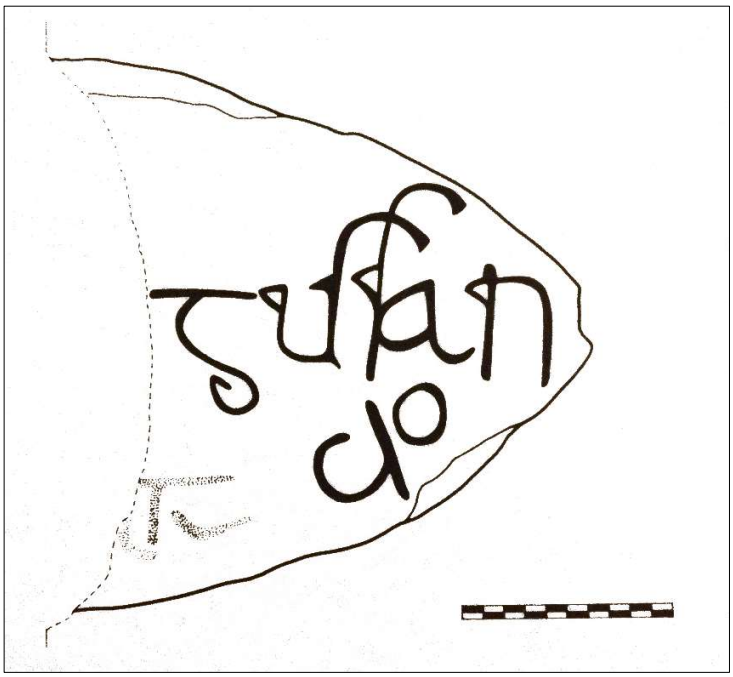
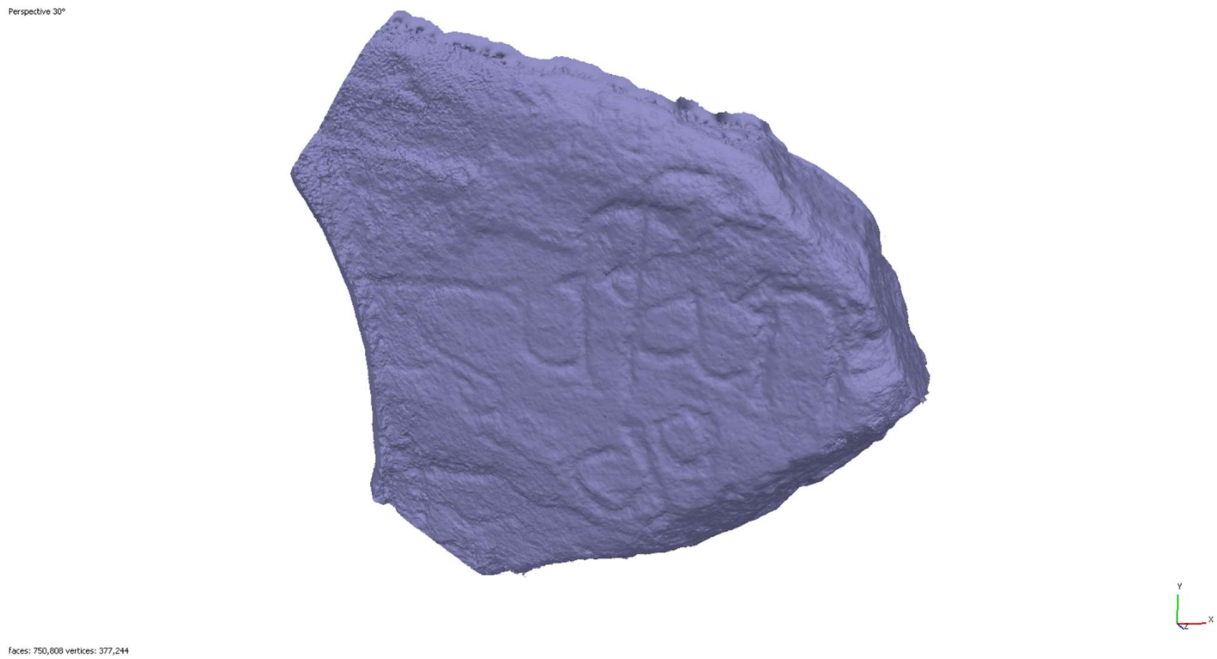


Illustration of TS-39 (Okasha and Forsyth 2001)



TS-40

St Berrihert's 32



South face



North face

COUNTY: Tipperary BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74 RMP: TS074-010052

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 20 cm; Width 21.5 cm; Thickness 6 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Lying loose within the enclosure. This slab is no. 46A/46B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 116-7, fig. 6).

PRESENT LOCATION: On the top of the enclosing wall in the southeast sector, 10 cm from No. 31.

CONDITION: This is a slab fragment with light to moderate lichen cover; the stone is weathered, and the carving and corners on the south face are well-worn. There are also two flakes missing from the north face, a thin one on the lower part of the carving itself and a thicker one on the sinister edge.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, well-shaped sub-rectangular slab fragment. On the south side is the top portion of the arms and stem of a Latin cross in relief, each extending to their respective edge of the slab. The north face has a thick vertical band carved in high relief running the length of the centre of the slab, which is presumably the stem of a cross.

DISCUSSION: This slab was likely an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-41

St Berrihert's 33



Southeast face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010042

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 49 cm; Width 25 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 36 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 114-5, fig. 5).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the northwest sector of the enclosing wall, 1.05 m north of the oak tree and 10 cm from No. 34.

CONDITION: Weathered, and spotted with lichen and moss. The carved face of the stone is intact but the rest of the stone is obscured by the enclosing wall.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, unshaped sub-rectangular stone carved on the upper three-quarters of one uneven face with a hollow-angled Latin cross in relief.

DISCUSSION: This slab was likely an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-42

St Berrihert's 34



Southeast face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010043

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 48 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 37 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 114-5, fig. 5).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the northwest sector of the enclosing wall, 10 cm from No. 33 and 26 cm from No. 35.

CONDITION: The surface is heavily eroded, and the carving is only faintly visible. The stone is quite angular along the top and sinister edge; it is possible that the shape of the top could be natural but significant chunk the top half of the sinister side is certainly missing.

DESCRIPTION: This is the bottom half of slab carved in low relief with a square-hollowed Latin cross. The bottom of the cross tapers to cusped, pointed terminal.

DISCUSSION: The pointed terminal at the end of the cross is suggestive of a skeuomorphic representation of a spiked wooden cross (Chapter 4). Usually, this would also indicate that a slab may have been intended to lie recumbently, so that the whole of the carving could be seen. While this may have been the case with TS-42, the stone is quite narrow and its morphology very similar to most of the stones at St Berrihert's Kyle, many of which were clearly intended to stand upright. So it is also possible that TS-42 was likewise upright, with the 'spike' of the cross inserted into the ground, perhaps in imitation of its (presumed) wooden predecessor.

TS-43

St Berrihert's 35



Southeast face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010044

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 48 cm; Width 16.5 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 38 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 113-4, fig. 4).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the northwest sector of the enclosing wall, 26 cm from No. 34 and 17 cm from No. 36.

CONDITION: Weathered and spotted with lichen.

DESCRIPTION: This is an unshaped stone with a Maltese cross incised into the upper half of one face, with a horizontal line running across the stem and merging into the bottom of each cross arm. The top of the cross is 6 cm below the top of the stone; the cross arms are open-ended, extending to the edges of the stone, which looks to have been deliberate (presuming the slab is indeed unshaped, and not just damaged).

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-44

St Berrihert's 36



Southeast face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010065

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 46 cm; Width 16.5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 59 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 114-5, fig. 5).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the northwest sector of the enclosing wall, 17 cm from No. 35 and 17 cm from No. 37.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered and spotted with lichen and moss; however what is still visible of the stone looks to be largely intact.

DESCRIPTION: This is an unshaped, sub-rectangular slab with a Latin cross carved in relief, spanning the length and breadth of the upper three-quarters of one face.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-45

St Berrihert's 37



South face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010064

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 48 cm; Width 19 cm; Thickness 6.5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 58 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the north sector of the enclosing wall, 17 cm from No. 36 and 31 cm from No. 38.

CONDITION: Very weathered and spotted with lichen; the carving is only faintly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a sub-rectangular slab with a Latin cross in relief spanning its visible face.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-46

St Berrihert's 38



South face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010055

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 33 cm; Width 19 cm; Thickness 6 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 49 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 116-7, fig. 6).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the north sector of the enclosing wall, 31 cm from No. 37 and 42 cm from No. 39.

CONDITION: Well worn, though the cross is still clearly visible, and spotted with lichen.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small unshaped slab deeply pocked on one face with an outline Latin cross. The top cross is 7 cm from the top of the stone and the base of the cross is 1.5 cm from what is now the base of the slab. The cross arms extend fully to the edges of the slab. The stone was loose in Ó hÉailidhe's time and he was able to confirm that the oppose face was blank (ibid, 116).

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-47

St Berrihert's 39



South face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010058

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 30 cm; Width 15 cm; Thickness 5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 52 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 116-7, fig. 6).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the north sector of the enclosing wall, 42 cm from No. 38 and 13 cm from No. 40.

CONDITION: This is the lower fragment of a cross-slab; it is heavily weathered and spotted with lichen.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small slab fragment, the bottom half of which is unshaped. The upper half might be minimally shaped, though it also may be unshaped as well. There are two deeply incised vertical lines, *c*. 5 cm apart, running down the centre of the slab from the top edge to roughly midway. This is almost certainly the lower half of a cross shaft in outline, below which the stone is uncarved, presumably because it was intended to be inserted into the ground.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably the bottom half of an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-48

St Berrihert's 40



South face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010070

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 30 cm; Width 21.5 cm; Thickness 5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 64 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the north sector of the enclosing wall, 13 cm from No. 39 and 28 cm from No. 41.

CONDITION: Well-worn, with spots of lichen and moss cover. The bottom of the slab has been broken off at some point.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small sub-rectangular slab with a sunken Latin cross, 5 cm thick, carved into one face. The arms and stem span the length and breadth of the surface.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably the upper fragment of an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-49

St Berrihert's 41



South face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010071

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 30 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 65 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the north sector of the enclosing wall, 28 cm from No. 40 and 20 cm from No. 42.

CONDITION: The stone has degraded somewhat, with porous holes dotting its surface. The carving is weathered, albeit still clearly visible, and the stone is spotted with moss and lichen.

DESCRIPTION: A small, unshaped slab with a Latin cross carved in relief on the upper three-quarters of one face, extending up from a 'horizon' below which the stone is uncarved.

DISCUSSION: This stone was likely an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-50

St Berrihert's 42



South face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010073

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 36 cm; Width 24 cm; Thickness 9 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 67 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the north sector of the enclosing wall, 20 cm from No. 41 and 21 cm from No. 43.

CONDITION: Weathered and heavily spotted with lichen. The stone is irregularly shaped, though this may be natural rather than due to damage. However, the base of the slab has been broken off at some point, and there is some additional chipping along the bottom edge on the dexter side.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, vaguely sub-rectangular slab that has been incised, or more likely pocked, on one face with a Latin cross in outline. The arms extend to the edges of the slab and the base of the stem extends down to the broken edge. The top of the stem is very weathered and peters out fairly quickly; it is unclear if this is due to erosion or if some of the surface has flaked off here.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-51

St Berrihert's 43



Southwest face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010062

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 46 cm; Width 10 cm; Thickness 5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 56 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the northeast sector of the enclosing wall, 21 cm from No. 42 and 24 cm from No. 44.

CONDITION: Very weathered and spotted with lichen, though otherwise intact.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, unshaped stone that is incised, or rather pocked, with a linear Latin cross on the upper half of one face. The stem of the cross starts *c*. 5 cm below the top edge and runs down the centre for *c*. 25 cm; the arms extend to the edges of the stone.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-52

St Berrihert's 44



Southwest face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010045

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 46 cm; Width 13 cm; Thickness 9 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 39 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 114-5, fig. 5).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the northeast sector of the enclosing wall, 24 cm from No. 43 and 19 cm from No. 45.

CONDITION: The stone has degraded somewhat, with porous holes dotting its surface. The carving is weathered, albeit still visible, and the surface is spotted with lichen.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small unshaped stone that is carved on the upper half of one face with a Latin cross in relief. The cross begins 4 cm below the top of the stone, and the arms extend to their respective edges; the base of the stem merges into a 'horizon', below which the stone is uncarved. The lower half of the stem tapers towards the crux.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-53

St Berrihert's 45



Southwest face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010033

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 50 cm; Width 25 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 27 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 112-3, fig. 4).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the northeast sector of the enclosing wall, 19 cm from No. 44 and 20 cm from No. 46.

CONDITION: This is the lower portion of a cross slab; judging by the carving, at least a third of the slab is missing from the top of the stone, and roughly the first 5-6 cm of the sinister edge of the stone has also been sheared off. There is also some pitting on the dexter side, just below the cross, and there is heavy lichen growth.

DESCRIPTION: The bottom half of this stone is uncarved but, though it is difficult to say for certain due to the fragmentary nature of the slab, the top half may have been shaped (at least minimally). The southwest face of the stone is carved with a Latin cross (12 cm wide at the base), pocked in outline, though only the lower stem and cross arms are still extant. There are two circular depression on either side of where the cross arms and stem meet (though the dexter one is now filled with cement), which may be an attempt to hollow the cross angles.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-54

St Berrihert's 46



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010067

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 43 cm; Width 15 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 61 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the northeast sector of the enclosing wall, 20 cm from No. 45 and 20 cm from No. 47.

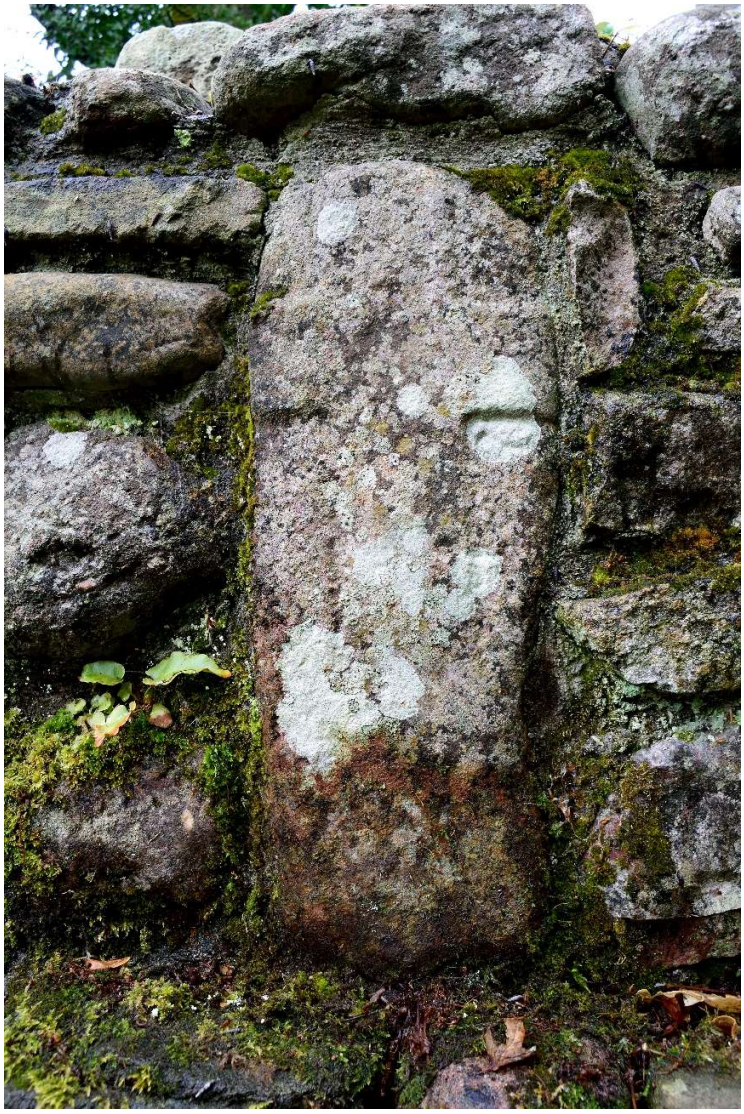
CONDITION: Weathered and spotted with lichen, but the cross is still clearly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, un- or minimally shaped stone with a plain Latin cross pocked onto its surface. The upper half of the cross stands out in low relief, while the lower half tapers off into a deeply pocked outline cross.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-55

St Berrihert's 47



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010066

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 48 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 60 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the northeast sector of the enclosing wall, 20 cm from No. 46 and 19 cm from No. 48.

CONDITION: Heavily worn and spotted with lichen, though otherwise intact, with the cross still visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, un- or minimally shaped stone with a plain Latin cross pocked onto its surface. Like TS-54, the cross-head stands out in low relief, though this tapers off until it is an outline cross on the lower stem.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-56

St Berrihert's 48



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010056

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 40 cm; Width 19 cm; Thickness 4 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 50 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 116-7, fig. 6).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the east sector of the enclosing wall, 19 cm from No. 47 and 27 cm from No. 49.

CONDITION: Very worn, with some damage to the top dexter, and bottom sinister corners. There is heavy lichen cover across its surface.

DESCRIPTION: Ó hÉailidhe illustrates this stone with a plain Latin cross with a very short shaft (*ibid*); however, this was undoubtedly due to the stone's relatively poor state of preservation. This is a small, un- or minimally shaped stone with a (slightly) hollow-angled Latin cross pocked onto its surface. The lower half of its stem expands outward towards its terminal.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-57

St Berrihert's 49



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010020

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 40 cm; Width 25 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 14 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 110-1, fig. 3).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the east sector of the enclosing wall, 27 cm from No. 48 and 20 cm from No. 50.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered and covered in lichen, though the cross is still clearly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, un- or minimally shaped stone with a Latin cross incised onto one face. The cross has squared-angle hollows, and the terminal of its cross-stem is short and open-ended.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-58

St Berrihert's 50



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010069

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 46 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 63 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the east sector of the enclosing wall, 20 cm from No. 49 and 25 cm from No. 51.

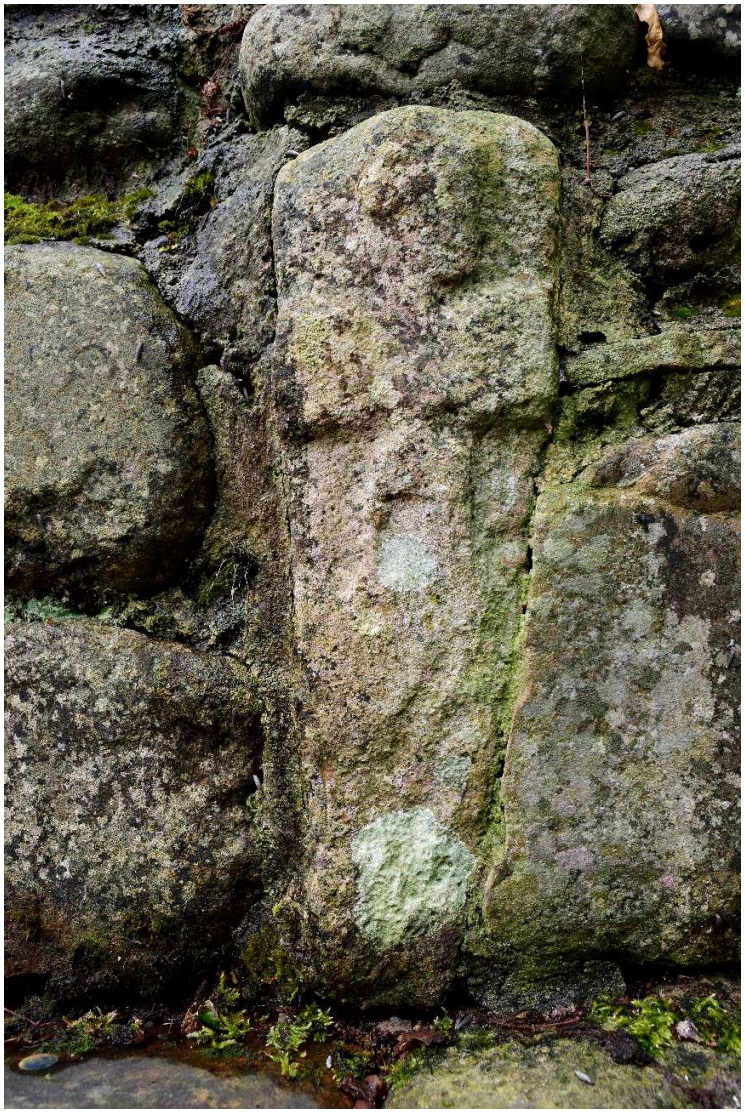
CONDITION: Very weathered and spotted with lichen, though otherwise intact. The cross is still visible, though its lower half is very faint.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, un- or minimally shaped stone with a plain Latin cross pocked onto its surface. The upper half of the cross stands out in low relief, while the lower half tapers off into a faint outline cross.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-59

St Berrihert's 51



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010017

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 46 cm; Width 14 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 11 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 110-1, fig. 3).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the east sector of the enclosing wall, 25 cm from No. 50 and 21 cm from No. 52.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered, and spotted with lichen. The cross is still visible, though the details of its angles are difficult to discern.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, un- or minimally shaped stone that tapers towards its base. It is carved with a hollow-angled Latin cross in relief on its upper half.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-60

St Berrihert's 52



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010003

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 62 cm; Width 56 cm; Thickness 6.5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: This was photographed by Crawford 1909, piled onto the top centre of the single 'station'; this is Cross B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 108-9, fig. 2).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the east sector of the enclosing wall, 21 cm from No. 51 and 40 cm from the large cross-head.

CONDITION: The stem of the cross has been broken off long ago, so that only the cross-head remains. The carving is still clearly visible, albeit covered in lichen.

DESCRIPTION: This is the head of a small, free-standing cross with a solid, circular disc at the centre, from which the arms and top of the stem protrude. It is carved on only one side (Ó ibid, 108, n. 19), with an incised, equal-armed cross with a sunken rectangular hollow at its centre, framed by two concentric circles. This decoration stands out in high relief.

DISCUSSION: One of two cross-heads at St Berrihert's Kyle, TS-60 was likely too small to have functioned as a high cross. Moreover, it is carved on only one side, which may suggest that it was instead a termon or boundary marker, perhaps situated at the entrance to an enclosure. Though free-standing ringed crosses are usually dated to the 9th–10th centuries (Chapter 4), based on the evidence for a steep decline at St Berrihert's Kyle, TS-60 may be 9th century in date (Chapter 6).

TS-61

St Berrihert's 53



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010075

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 30 cm; Width 18 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 69 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the southeast sector of the enclosing wall, 85 cm from the large cross-head and 30 cm from No. 54.

CONDITION: Weathered and spotted with lichen, though the cross is still clearly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, wedge-shaped stone that tapers towards its base. It is carved with a plain Latin cross in relief, spanning the width of the stone's face, though the top of the stem may stop several centimetres short of the edge of the stone. The base of the stem, while still carved in relief, peters out towards the bottom of the stone, so that it is not as well-defined as the cross-head.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an 8th-century grave-marker, though it is uncertain whether it stood upright. The stone, like so many others at St Berrihert's Kyle, could be fragmented; thus, the stone would have originally been longer than it is now. If so, then perhaps it was set upright; however, if the stone is intact, it was likely too small to have stood upright (as too much of the cross would have had to be buried), and it may have been a recumbent grave-marker.

TS-62

St Berrihert's 54



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010059

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 30 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 6 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Lying loose in the enclosure; this is no. 53 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 116, 119, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the southeast sector of the enclosing wall, 30 cm from No. 53 and 27 cm from No. 55.

CONDITION: Fragmented; this is the base of a slab. Its surface is heavily worn and spotted with lichen, though the carving is still visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is the bottom fragment of a slab (set in the wall upside down), which has been shaped, and has a tenon extending from its base. It is carved with what is probably an outline cross, with three incised lines radiating out from the base of its stem, presumably to represent a cross-base or -stand.

DISCUSSION: Due to its highly fragmented nature, the exact function of this stone cannot be determined. It may have been a grave-marker, albeit more elaborate than most others, or it may have had another commemorative, or devotional function, and probably dates from the late 7th or early 8th century. What is most notable about this stone is that its carving may be skeuomorphic of a free-standing monument (presumably a cross) set into a base or stand, and the slab itself was likewise set into a base or stand. This strongly indicates that TS-62 replaced whatever previous monument was carved onto its face.

TS-63

St Berrihert's 55



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010031

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 28 cm; Width 20 cm; Thickness 5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 25 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 111-2, fig. 3).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the southeast sector of the enclosing wall, 27 cm from No. 54 and 23 cm from No. 56.

CONDITION: Very heavily eroded, and spotted with lichen. The cross-carving is barely visible, and even then, only in the right light. The sinister side of the slab has flaked away in an undulating pattern, and the lower dexter edge appears to have been damaged.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, roughly sub-rectangular slab that may have originally been more uniform in shape, but is now damaged along its edges. It is carved in very low relief with a hollow-angled Latin cross, spanning the length and breadth of one face. Within its crux is an incised circle.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-64

St Berrihert's 56



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010032

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 23 cm; Width 19 cm; Thickness 6 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 26 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 112-3, fig. 4).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the southeast sector of the enclosing wall, 23 cm from No. 55 and 29 cm from No. 57.

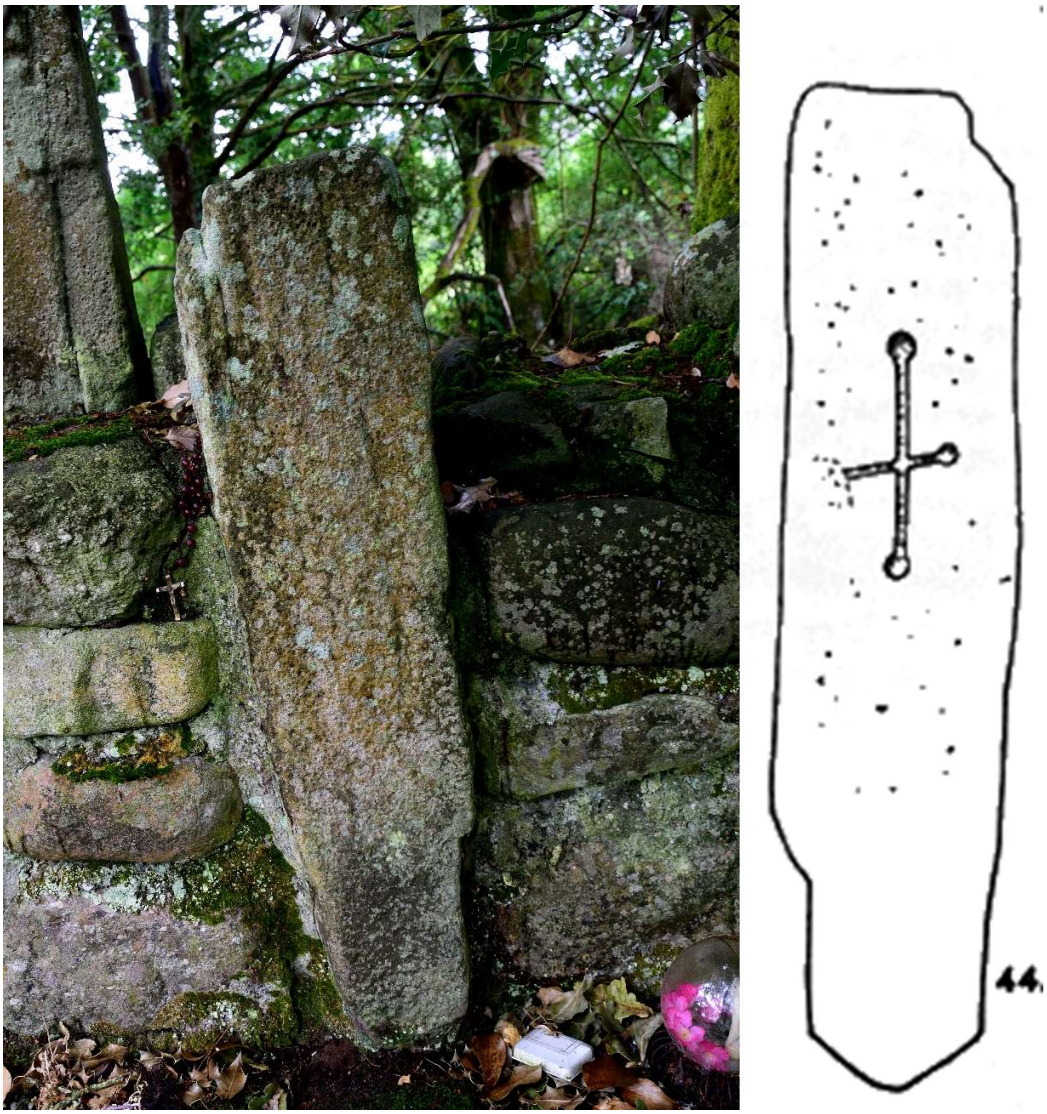
CONDITION: Weathered, with some moss and lichen cover, though the cross is still clearly visible. The base of the slab, however, was broken off at some point.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, rectangular slab carved with a hollow-angled Latin cross in low relief. The lower corners of the slab have been left uncarved, and also stand out in low relief. Though this was recorded by Ó hÉailidhe as being built into the wall, in 1967 it must have protruded enough for Ó hÉailidhe to record the top of the stone, as he states it is also carved with a cross in low relief (*ibid*, 112, fig. 4). However, the slab is now almost flush with the wall, which indicates that it has either been moved, or else reset deeper into the wall.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-65

St Berrihert's 57



TS-65, Ó hÉailidhe's side 44B and 44A (now obscured) respectively

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010050

TYPE: Pillar MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 81 cm; Width 19 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Standing upright inside the enclosure; this is no. 44A/44B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 116-7, fig. 6).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the southeast sector of the enclosing wall, 29 cm from No. 56 and 94 cm from No. 58.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered and spotted with lichen. There is a fissure on the top dexter corner of the stone that has led to some flaking on that side. The cross is poorly preserved, and is barely visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a minimally shaped stone with a plain Latin cross carved on the upper portion of one face (Ó hÉailidhe's 44B). The upper two-thirds of the cross stand out in very low relief, and the lower third peters out to an open-ended, incised cross. The opposite face is recorded by Ó hÉailidhe as having a linear cross with rounded terminals incised at its centre (ibid); however, this stone has since been built into the wall, and side 44A can no longer be seen.

DISCUSSION: This is the tallest stone at St Berrihert's Kyle, and when set into the ground, it may have been of a similar height to (or else, slightly taller than) TS-27, TS-28, and TS-29. Indeed, TS-65 would have stood out prominently among the smaller grave-markers, so it is possible that it was instead a boundary or way-marker, considering it is carved on both sides. However, from the cross-carving, roughly one-third of TS-65 was probably inserted into the ground, which would have made it considerably shorter than the other boundary markers found in the study region (see Chapter 5), so, on balance, it was still likely to have been an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-66

St Berrihert's 58



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010029

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 28 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 7 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into the face of the wall; this is no. 23 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 112-3, fig. 4).

PRESENT LOCATION: Built into the southeast sector of the enclosing wall, 94 cm from No. 57.

CONDITION: Weathered, and spotted with moss, particularly along the top of the stone. The bottom of the slab has been broken off at some point; however, the cross on its broad face is still clearly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, rectangular slab carved in relief on one side with a Latin cross with prominent hollowed-angles. Ó hÉailidhe records an incised cross on the top surface of the cross (*ibid*), though this feature is no longer visible.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-67

St Berrihert's 59



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010040

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 66 cm; Width 14 cm; Thickness 9 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Standing upright inside the enclosure; this is no. 34A/34B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 114-5, fig. 5).

PRESENT LOCATION: At the base of the northeast sector of the enclosing wall, under and between Nos. 43 and 44.

CONDITION: Heavily worn and spotted with lichen, though the cross, at least on one face, is still visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, minimally shaped stone with a hollow-angled Latin cross carved in relief on one face, and a plain Latin cross incised on the other. However, only the hollow-angled cross could be photographed (Ó hÉailidhe's 34A), as the stone is now set too close to the enclosing wall to photograph the other face.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave-marker.

TS-68

St Berrihert's 60



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010022

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 70 cm; Width 33 cm; Thickness 10 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Standing upright inside the enclosure; this is no. 16 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 111-2, fig. 3).

PRESENT LOCATION: At the base of the east sector of the enclosing wall, under and between Nos. 47 and 48.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered and pitted with small holes, presumably from erosion; there is also some moderate moss cover. The top sinister corner of the slab has been broken off, though the break is well rounded and worn, so it presumably occurred sometime in antiquity. The cross carving, though weathered, is intact and still easily visible.

DESCRIPTION: A medium-sized, minimally shaped slab with a double-hollowed-angle Latin cross, carved in relief, on one face.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave marker.

TS-69

St Berrihert's 61



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010016

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 50 cm; Width 23 cm; Thickness 9 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Lying loose inside the enclosure; this is no. 10 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 110-1, fig. 3).

PRESENT LOCATION: At the base of the east sector of the enclosing wall, under No. 50.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered and spotted with lichen. The lower dexter edge of the slab curves inward, probably due to damage, as it clips the edge of the cross terminal. The edge is well-worn, though, so this damage likely occurred in antiquity. The cross carving, though weathered, is otherwise intact and still easily visible.

DESCRIPTION: A medium-sized, minimally shaped slab with a double-squared-angle Latin cross, incised on one face.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright late 7th–early 8th-century grave marker.

TS-70

St Berrihert's 62



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010030

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 66 cm; Width 34 cm; Thickness 6.5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Standing upright inside the enclosure; this is no. 24 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 114-5, fig. 5).

PRESENT LOCATION: At the base of the east sector of the enclosing wall, under No. 52.

CONDITION: Very worn, particularly the top of the stone and edges, with heavy lichen cover.

DESCRIPTION: This is a medium-sized, unshaped slab that is carved in false relief with what is likely an equal-armed cross, with hollowed-angles.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave marker.

TS-71

St Berrihert's 63



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594743 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010023

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 66 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 10 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Standing upright inside the enclosure; this is no. 17 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 112-3, fig. 4).

PRESENT LOCATION: At the base of the east sector of the enclosing wall, under No. 55.

CONDITION: Weathered, and with some lichen cover near the top of the slab. Most of the sinister edge has been broken off, and the terminal of the sinister cross-arm is now missing.

DESCRIPTION: This is a tall, narrow stone that is un- or minimally shaped, incised on one face with a hollow-angled cross. The stem narrows abruptly at a right angle, *c*. 10-15 cm below the crux, before continuing down the length of the stone.

DISCUSSION: The design is reminiscent of an equal-armed cross affixed to the top of a pole or shaft, perhaps intended to represent a processional cross, or *labaraum* (see Chapter 7). The stone itself was probably functioned as an upright, 8th-century grave marker.

TS-72

St Berrihert's 64



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594731 628752

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010068

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 50 cm; Width 23 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into a ‘station’ in the northwest sector of the circular embankment; this is no. 62 in Ó hÉailidhe’s catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

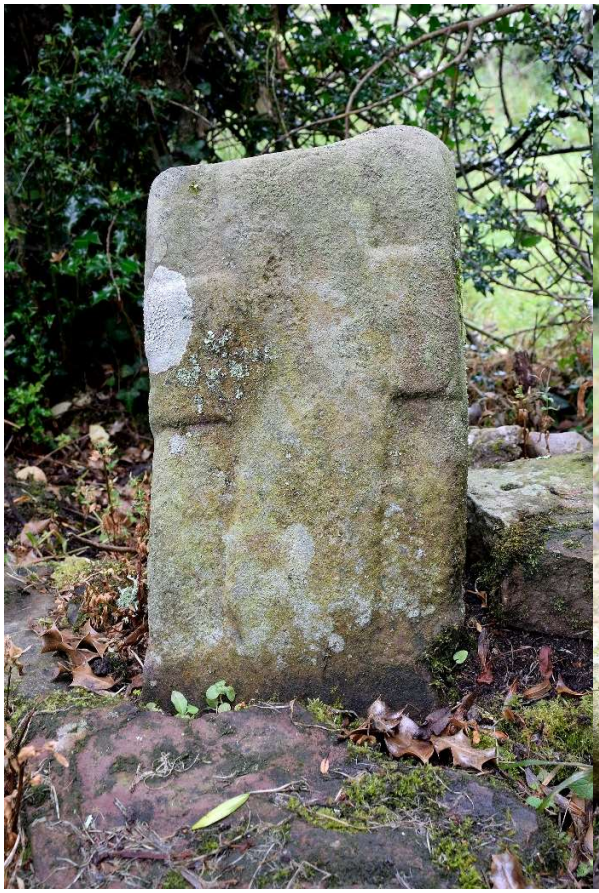
CONDITION: Very worn, with heavy lichen cover. A significant portion of the top sinister corner has broken off, damaging the cross. What is left of the carving is only faintly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a medium-sized, minimally shaped slab that is carved on one face with a plain Latin cross in low relief.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave marker.

TS-73

St Berrihert's 65



Southeast face



Northwest face

COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594737 628757

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010051

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 53 cm; Width 22 cm; Thickness 9 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into a 'station' in the northwest sector of the circular embankment; this is no. 45A/45B in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 116-7, fig. 6).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Weathered, and with heavy lichen cover in some places, albeit intact, with the crosses still clearly visible. However, a shallow crack runs diagonally from the sinister corner, down across the northwest surface of the stone, impinging upon the cross-carving on that face.

DESCRIPTION: This is a sub-rectangular slab, carved on both faces with a plain Latin cross in relief.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave marker.

TS-74

St Berrihert's 66



COUNTY: Tipperary BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle ITM: 594744 628760

O.S. MAP: 74 RMP: TS074-010057

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 40 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into a ‘station’ in the north sector of the circular embankment; this is no. 51 in Ó hÉailidhe’s catalogue (1967 116-7, fig. 6).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Worn, with several large patches of lichen cover. The cross is still clearly visible, though quite weathered, and there is a flake missing from the top sinister corner of the stone.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small rectangular slab, carved on one face with a Latin cross in relief. The angles of the cross are slightly hallowed, however, rather than straight, as illustrated by Ó hÉailidhe (*ibid*).

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave marker.

TS-75

St Berrihert's 67



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594750 628760

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010034

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 43 cm; Width 25 cm; Thickness 10 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into a ‘station’ in the northeast sector of the circular embankment; this is no. 28 in Ó hÉailidhe’s catalogue (1967 114-5, fig. 5).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Weathered, with heavy lichen cover, albeit intact; the cross is still clearly visible on its surface.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, un- or minimally shaped slab with a hollow-angled Latin cross, carved in relief, and occupying the upper two-thirds of the stone.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave marker.

TS-76

St Berrihert's 68



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594756 628752

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010035

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 38 cm; Width 18 cm; Thickness 9 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into a ‘station’ in the east sector of the circular embankment; this is no. 29 in Ó hÉailidhe’s catalogue (1967 114-5, fig. 5).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Weathered, with heavy lichen cover, albeit intact; the cross is still clearly visible on its surface.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, sub-rectangular stone, carved in relief on one face with a hollow-angled Latin cross.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave marker.

TS-77

St Berrihert's 69



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594754 628746

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010018

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 40 cm; Width 17 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into a ‘station’ in the east sector of the circular embankment; this is no. 12 in Ó hÉailidhe’s catalogue (1967 110-1, fig. 3).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Very weathered, with heavy moss cover, albeit intact; the cross is still clearly visible on its surface.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, sub-rectangular stone, carved in relief on one face with a hollow-angled Latin cross. The arms of the cross are notably high on the stem, and the background is roughly pocked, though the surface of the cross itself is considerably smoother.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave marker.

TS-78

St Berrihert's 70



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594751 628741

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010053

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 27 cm; Width 20 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into a ‘station’ in the east sector of the circular embankment; this is no. 47A/47B in Ó hÉailidhe’s catalogue (1967 116-7, fig. 6).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Very worn, covered in moss and lichen growth. This is a slab fragment; the top of the stone is missing, and, considering the well-worn top edge, this occurred some time ago.

DESCRIPTION: This is the lower portion of a slab, carved in relief with, what is presumably, the stem of a cross.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave marker.

TS-79

St Berrihert's 71



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: 594748 628735

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010076

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 66 cm; Width 35 cm; Thickness 18 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Built into a ‘station’ in the east sector of the circular embankment; this is no. 70 in Ó hÉailidhe’s catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: The stone is very weathered, with heavy lichen cover, though what is exposed appears to be intact. The carving is only faintly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a tall, narrow stone that is carved on one face with, what is presumably, the shaft of a cross in very low relief. The description of this stone by Ó hÉailidhe is corroborated by what was seen in the field; however, his illustration of TS-79 does not quite match up with the actual shape of the stone. Considering the high accuracy of Ó hÉailidhe’s other illustrations, one possible explanation for this is that the stone has since been inverted, as several other stones at this site have been (e.g. TS-30).

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave marker.

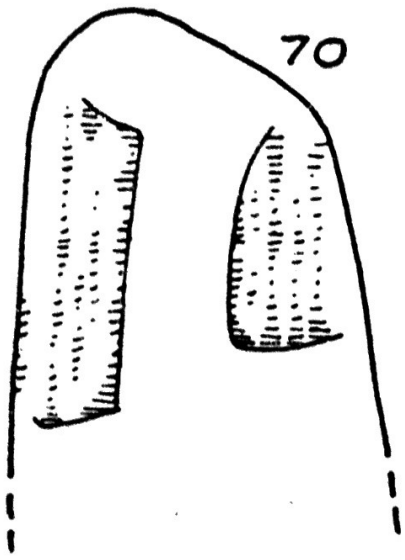
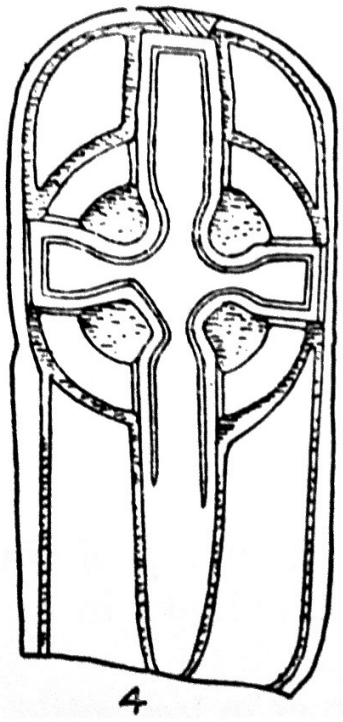


Illustration of TS-79 (Ó hÉailidhe 1967)

TS-80

St Berrihert's 72



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: Unknown

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010010

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 46 cm; Width 23 cm; Thickness 6 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Photographed by Crawford in 1909, just right of centre in the single 'station'; this is no. 4 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 109-10, fig. 2).

PRESENT LOCATION: Unknown; this slab was reported as missing at the last site inspection by the National Monuments Service (Farrelly 2014c), and could not be located on site in 2018 either.

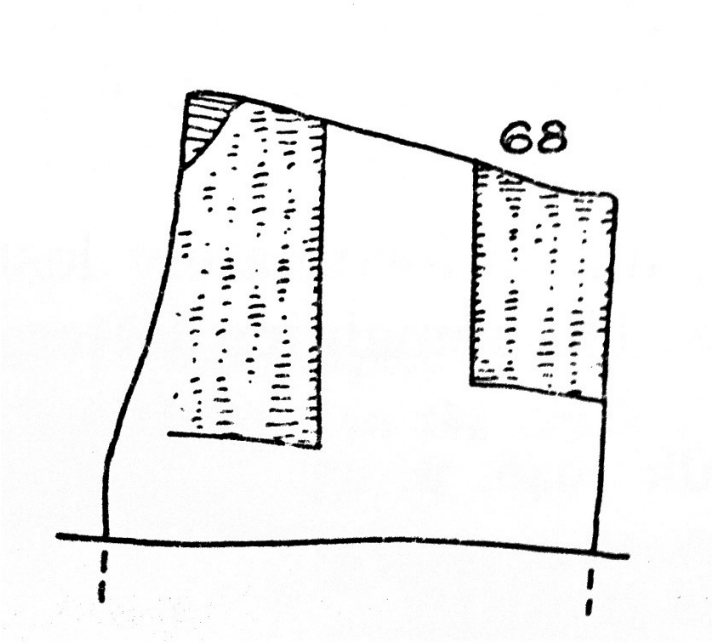
CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: From Ó hÉailidhe (1967, 110) – 'Rounded at the top, and at one side at the bottom (the other corner is broken, but does not seem to have been rounded). The slab is bordered and bears an outlined ringed cross with pointed shaft and irregular rounded hollows in the angles. The arms, head, and shaft of the cross, which is bordered, cut across the ring. The background within the ring is sunk 5 mm. The back of the stone cannot be seen.'

DISCUSSION: This stone is notable, as the border around the edge of the slab indicates it would have been a recumbent grave marker, perhaps the only one at St Berrihert's Kyle, though TS-61 could have been recumbent as well (see above). Moreover, its pointed cross-stem maybe skeuomorphic of a spiked wooden cross, suggesting this slab may have replaced an earlier monument (see Chapter 5). Additionally, it is possible that this is one of the later slabs to have been carved at St Berrihert's Kyle. Though some incised ringed crosses date to the 8th century, most are thought to date from the 9th century onward (see Chapter 4), so perhaps an 8th–9th century date range may be suggested for TS-80.

TS-81

St Berrihert's 73



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Templeneiry

TOWNLAND: Ardane

SITE NAME: St Berrihert's Kyle

ITM: Unknown

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS074-010074

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 24 cm; Width 27 cm; Thickness 10 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Attached to the top of the enclosing wall; this is no. 68 in Ó hÉailidhe's catalogue (1967 118-9, fig. 7).

PRESENT LOCATION: Unknown; this slab has gone missing, presumably sometime after 2003, when it was reported as present, during an inspection of the site by the National Monuments Service (Farrelly 2014d).

CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: From Ó hÉailidhe (1967, 118) – 'Lower portion of a cross in low relief. The back is blank'.

DISCUSSION: This stone was probably an upright 8th-century grave marker.

Tobar Íosa

Tobar Íosa ('Jesus' Well') is located *c*. 1.5 km northwest of the town of Caher and 0.3 km south-southwest of the N24/R639 roundabout, which is constructed over what used to be the old road to Bansha. Very little is known about the site, apart from Power's entry on Tobar Íosa in *Place-names of Decies*, first published in 1907. The holy well does not appear to be associated with any particular ecclesiastical site, though the old parish church of Caher is 1.5 km to the southeast. According to Power (1907, 308), the swamp surrounding the well had been drained *c*. 1842 but 'rounds' had been made here 'since time immemorial'. The well itself is key-shaped, with a circular wall enclosing the main part, and a rectangular pool immediately adjacent to the east. Just to the north of the well is a modern shrine, comprised of a thick horizontal slab of stone which is supported by several irregularly shaped stones that have been mortared together. On top of this 'altar' is the upper fragment of a cross-carved pillar (TS-82, below), flanked by two uncarved slabs of sandstone. In 1899, G. Nuttal Smith wrote that there was a 'modern covering roof erected over the ancient stones, and also…various figures, pictures and other objects standing on or near the flat horizontal slab' (1899, 258).



Modern OSi map showing location of Tobar Íosa (in red)



OS map of 1840 showing location of Tobar Íosa and its proximity to the parish border and 'Old Bansha Road'



Holy well and shrine at Tobar Íosa

TS-82

Tobar Íosa



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Iffa and Offa West

PARISH: Caher

TOWNLAND: Caherabbey Upper

SITE NAME: Tobar Íosa

ITM: 604183 625968

O.S. MAP: 74

RMP: TS075-044002

TYPE: Pillar

MATERIAL: Conglomerate

DIMENSIONS: Height 71 cm; Width 39 cm; Thickness 26 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Found by Roger Sheehy in a bog close to the Bansha road (see map above), roughly half a mile (0.8 km) from its present location, though its precise original location is unknown (Power 1907, 308). However it was first described and illustrated by Smith (1899, 258) 8 years prior to Power's publication.

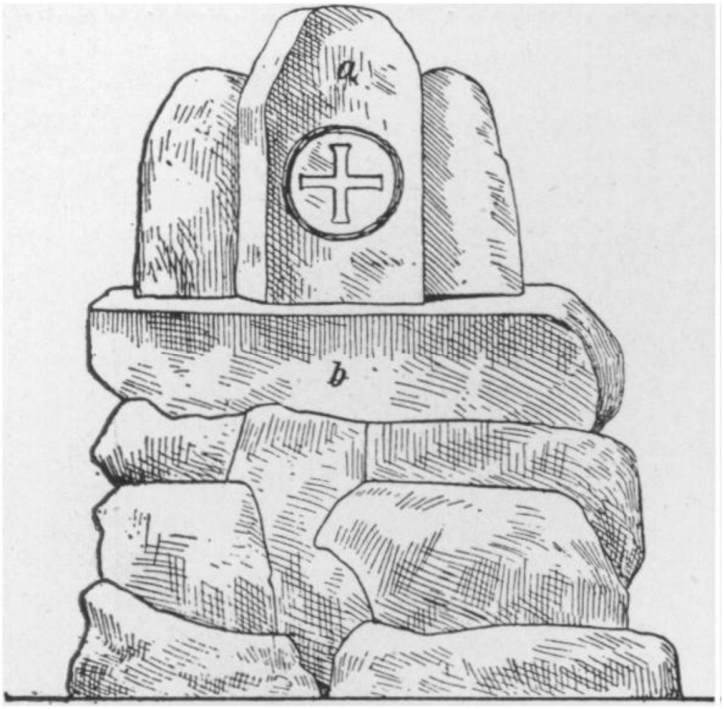
PRESENT LOCATION: Cemented into a modern shrine at Tobar Íosa.

CONDITION: This is only the uppermost fragment of a pillar stone; however it appears to be otherwise largely undamaged, albeit with some moss cover on the top of the stone as well as toward the bottom of south side. The cross-carving on the east face are clearly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is the topmost fragment of an unshaped cross-carved pillar, now facing east and cemented into a stone shrine at Tobar Íosa. It is incised with an equal-armed cross with slightly expanded, wedge-shaped terminals within a circular frame; above this is another equal-armed cross, albeit smaller, unframed and with plain terminals. Both crosses are deeply incised, or more likely pocked, into the stone. A metal cross was attached to the top of the pillar at some point during the 20th century but had been broken off sometime between 2002 and 2007 (*cf*. Farrelly and O'Brien 2002; Thounhurst 2007).

DISCUSSION: According to Power (writing in 1907), TS-82 'was found many years ago', and considering that the man who found it was 80 years old when interviewed by Power, perhaps it may be presumed that the pillar was discovered when the bogs around Tobar Íosa were drained, *c*. 1842 (see above), though it is unclear if the pillar was already broken. It was found together with a 'smaller rude cross' that, based on the phrasing used by Power (1907, 308), may have also been kept at Tobar Íosa, though it was not mentioned in Smith's description of the site (1899, 258), and no such cross has since been located. Notably, Smith's sketch of the pillar only illustrates the encircled lower cross – the area above appears to be uncarved. Indeed, neither Smith nor Power mention the upper cross, which could indicate that it is a relatively modern addition. However, on balance, antiquarian drawings do not always accurately depict sculpture (Chapter 1, section 1.2; e.g. WA-1, WX-16), so the possibility of an early medieval date for both crosses cannot be ruled out. Moreover, both morphologically and stylistically, TS-82, and its two crosses, appears to be

early; several similar pillars and cross-forms have been dated to between the 5th–7th centuries (see Chapter 4, section 4.2).



Sketch of TS-82 by Smith in 1899, showing only one cross



Top of TS-82 showing where a metal cross had been inserted sometime in the 20th century

Toureen Peakaun

Toureen Peakaun, originally known as *Cluain Ard Mo-Becóc*, is located on the southeast side of the Glen of Aherlow, and was named after St Beccán (Mo-Becóc) who died in 690 (*AU* U690.4). The biographer of the early 13th-century Life of Abán credits St Abán with founding the monastery, and giving it to Beccán (Ó Riain 2011, 93). This, however, seems doubtful; Beccán was probably the founder of Toureen Peakaun, particularly as his pedigree links him with the Éoganacht Caisil, who controlled Munster in the 7th and 8th centuries, and were probably patrons of Toureen Peakaun from its inception (Moloney 1964; Ó Carragáin 2017b). Toureen Peakaun, like St Berrihert's Kyle, had an early floruit, from the 7th–8th centuries, coinciding with its patronage by the kings of Cashel (Ó Carragáin 2017b). Toureen Peakuan, and its patron, St Beccán, may have been at the forefront of the Easter debate in Ireland, if Beccán of Toureen was indeed the 'Beccán eremita', addressed by Cummian in his *c*. 633 letter, urging Irish clerics to adopt the Roman calculation of Easter (*ibid*, 70). Regardless, its large collection of inscribed slabs indicate that Toureen Peakaun was aligned with Roman practices (*ibid*; see also Chapters 5 and 6). Rather than becoming an economic and socio-political centre of power, Toureen Peakaun was likely always intended to be an ascetic retreat, as well as an intellectal and spiritual centre, and the prolificacy of inscribed stones is reflective of a literate, well-educated ecclesastical community (Ó Carragáin 2017b, 75; see also Chapters 5 and 6). Toureen Peakaun was plundered by Vikings sometime between 824 and 834 (*Cogadh gaeghel re gallaibh*, 6–7, in Todd), which may indicated it was still a site of some wealth in the early to mid-9th century (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 327), though it was already well into its decline by this period (Ó Carragáin 2017b, 75).

Three separate archaeological excavations have been undertaken at Toureen Peakaun, by Micheal Duignan in 1944 (Waddell and Holland 1990), Conleth Manning in 1987 (1991), and Tomás Ó Carragáin from 2005–2008 (2017b). Most of the sculptural remains from the site were catalogued in 2001 by Oskasha and Forsyth, but seven new fragments of carved stone were discovered in the course of the most recent excavations (see below, TS-83–89), which also revealed significant site activity in the 7th–8th centuries, as well as 7th–9th-century pits that produced evidence of iron working, and eight burials assocated with 9th–10th-century phases of one or more wooden churches (Ó Carragáin 2017b, 71–5). The remains from Toureen Peakaun include a (mostly) Romanesque stone church (*ibid*), and a large collection of stone sculpture, including 66 slabs, a cross-carved quern stone, several composite stone crosses, including one of

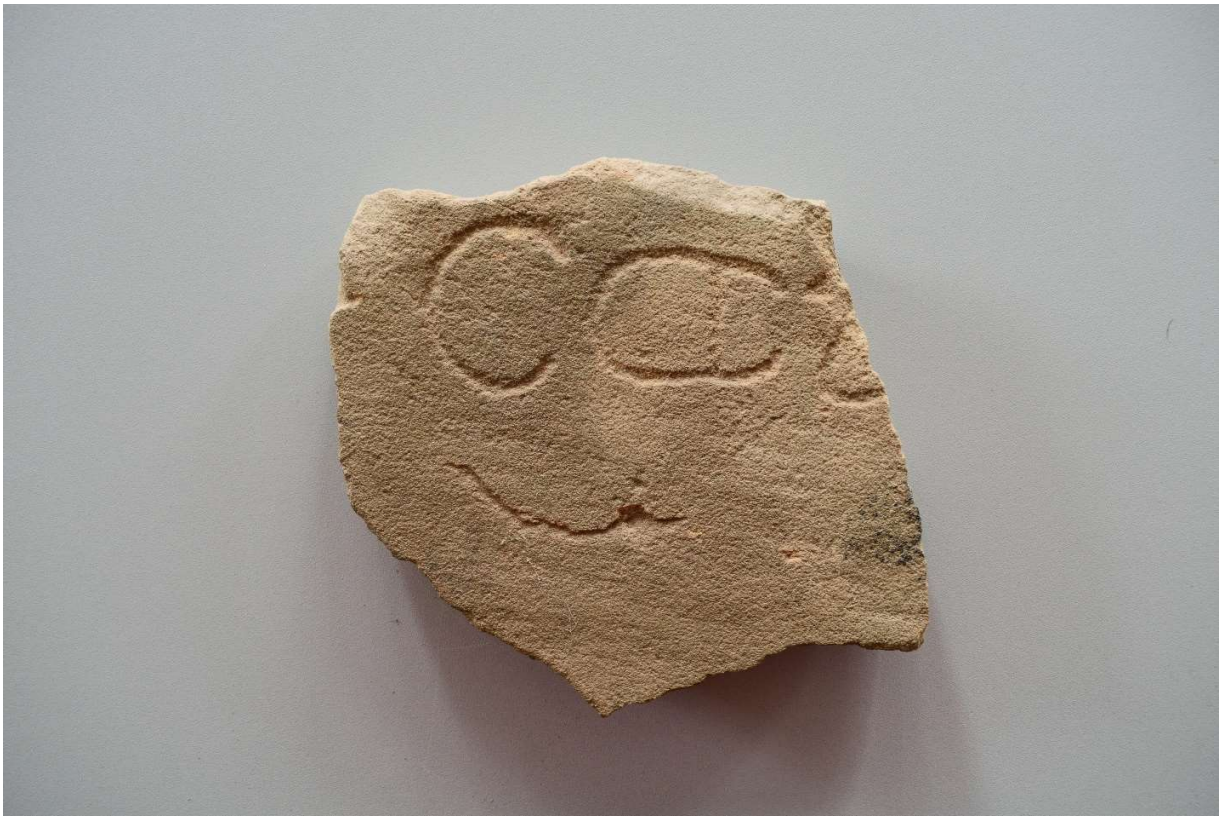
the earliest high crosses in Ireland or Britain (Chapter 6), the posts of a composite stone shrine, and a sundial, most of which dates to the 7th–8th centuries (Chapter 4).



Remains of the Romanesque church, and some of the sculptural remains at Toureen Peakaun, including the shaft of an inscribed, c. 700 high cross (photo: Tomás Ó Carragáin)

TS-83

Toureen Peakaun 1



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Killardry

TOWNLAND: Toureen

SITE NAME: Toureen Peakaun

ITM: 600290 628513

O.S. MAP: 75

RMP: None

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 15 cm; Width 16 cm; Thickness 3 cm

FIRST RECORDED: In a pre-12th-century grave, during excavations at Toureen Peakaun in 2007

PRESENT LOCATION: Archaeology Department, University College Cork

CONDITION: Very good; this fragment was found in a grave, and so was not subjected to heavy weathering. While the stone is broken, the inscription is very crisp, and the individual pock-marks of the carver's tool can be seen easily.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, angular slab fragment, that has been shaped on one face. It is inscribed with *ca*... and the beginnings of a third letter (perhaps a 't'?), pocked onto its surface. Below the inscription is a curved line, but does not have any relation to the inscription, and is probably either a mistake on the part of the carver, or later damage, done before the slab was interred.

DISCUSSION: This is a fragment of a 7th–8th century grave marker, typical of Toureen Peakaun, and inscribed in the same letter-style. TS-83 was found in one of the eight burials representing pre-Romanesque church activity from the 9th and 10th centuries (Ó Carragáin 2007b; 2017b, 71). It was found upright beside the skull (Ó Carragáin 2007b), in a similar fashion to many of the 'pillow' stones in Northumbria (see Chapter 5).

TS-84

Toureen Peakaun 2



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Killardry

TOWNLAND: Toureen

SITE NAME: Toureen Peakaun

ITM: 600290 628513

O.S. MAP: 75

RMP: None

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 7 cm; Width 15 cm; Thickness 3 cm

FIRST RECORDED: During excavations at Toureen Peakaun in 2007

PRESENT LOCATION: Archaeology Department, University College Cork

CONDITION: Very good; this fragment was found during excavations, and while it may have been exposed to the elements for longer than TS-83, it was not subjected to heavy weathering. While the stone is broken, the inscription is very crisp, and the individual pock-marks of the carver's tool can be seen easily.

DESCRIPTION: This fragment may be the lower sinister corner of a recumbent grave marker, or a name-stone (see Chapter 5). It is inscribed, but none of the letters are whole. However, while very speculative, perhaps the pocked letters are '*aed*'.

DISCUSSION: This is a fragment of a 7th–8th century grave marker, typical of Toureen Peakaun, found *ex situ* during excavations at the site in 2007 (Ó Carragáin 2007b).

TS-85

Toureen Peakaun 3



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Killardry

TOWNLAND: Toureen

SITE NAME: Toureen Peakaun

ITM: 600290 628513

O.S. MAP: 75

RMP: None

TYPE: Quern stone

MATERIAL: Conglomerate

DIMENSIONS: Height 18 cm; Width 35 cm; Thickness 6 cm

FIRST RECORDED: During excavations at Toureen Peakaun in 2007

PRESENT LOCATION: Archaeology Department, University College Cork

CONDITION: The quern is worn, probably from repeated use, but it may have also lain exposed for a time after it had been discarded, as the carving is quite weathered (albeit still visible).

DESCRIPTION: This is a fragment of a cross-carved quern stone. The dexter arm, and part of the sinister arm of a plain linear cross survive, pocked onto the stone. Additionally, the top of the stem rises above this and encircles the round perforation into which its operating handle would have been inserted.

DISCUSSION: This is one of two cross-inscribed quern stones from the study area, though not nearly as elaborately decorated as WA-29, found somewhere near the Cork/Waterford border (see WA-29, this volume). Apart from its utilitarian function, cross-carved quern stones could have been seen as protecting and blessing the grain that they milled (Chapter 5). Perhaps it may be speculated that cross-carved querns were used especially for milling the flour used to create Eucharistic bread, though not necessarily only for milling Eucharistic flour.

TS-86

Toureen Peakaun 4



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Killardry

TOWNLAND: Toureen

SITE NAME: Toureen Peakaun

ITM: 600290 628513

O.S. MAP: 75

RMP: None

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 5 cm; Width 3.5 cm; Thickness 2 cm

FIRST RECORDED: During excavations at Toureen Peakaun in 2007

PRESENT LOCATION: Archaeology Department, University College Cork

CONDITION: Good; this fragment was found during excavations, and so was not subjected to heavy weathering. The carving is still crisp and clear.

DESCRIPTION: This is a very small fragment of a slab, pocked with what is either the terminal of an equal-armed cross, or part of an inscription.

DISCUSSION: This is a fragment of a 7th–8th century grave marker, typical of Toureen Peakaun, found *ex situ* during excavations at the site in 2007 (Ó Carragáin 2007b).

TS-87

Toureen Peakaun 5



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Killardry

TOWNLAND: Toureen

SITE NAME: Toureen Peakaun

ITM: 600290 628513

O.S. MAP: 75

RMP: None

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 11 cm; Width 9 cm; Thickness 4 cm

FIRST RECORDED: During excavations at Toureen Peakaun in 2007

PRESENT LOCATION: Archaeology Department, University College Cork

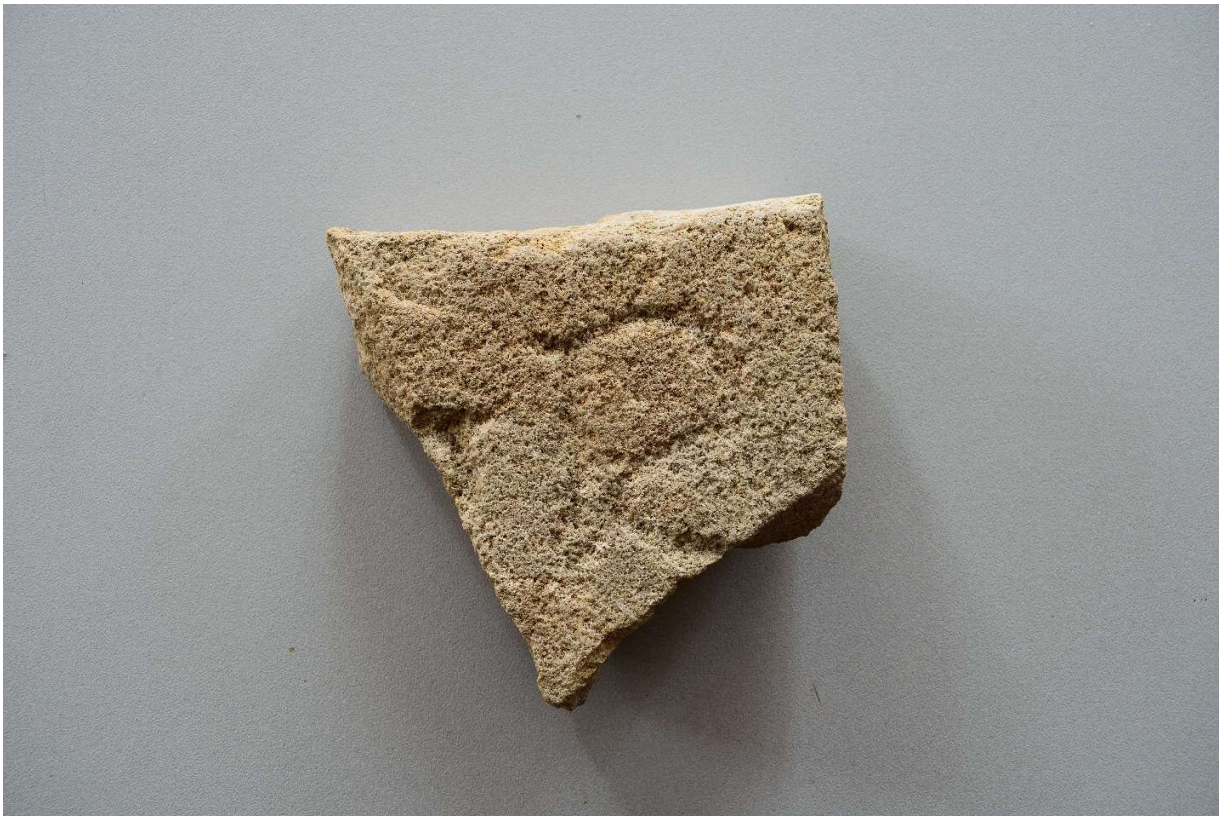
CONDITION: Very good; this fragment was clearly not subjected to heavy weathering, and the individual pock-marks of the carver's tool can be seen easily.

DESCRIPTION: This is a very small, triangular fragment of a slab, pocked with what is probably the terminal of an equal-armed cross.

DISCUSSION: This is a fragment of a 7th–8th century grave marker, typical of Toureen Peakaun, found *ex situ* during excavations at the site in 2007 (Ó Carragáin 2007b).

TS-88

Toureen Peakaun 6



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Killardry

TOWNLAND: Toureen

SITE NAME: Toureen Peakaun

ITM: 600290 628513

O.S. MAP: 75

RMP: None

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 7–10 cm; Width 10 cm; Thickness 3 cm

FIRST RECORDED: During excavations at Toureen Peakaun in 2007

PRESENT LOCATION: Archaeology Department, University College Cork

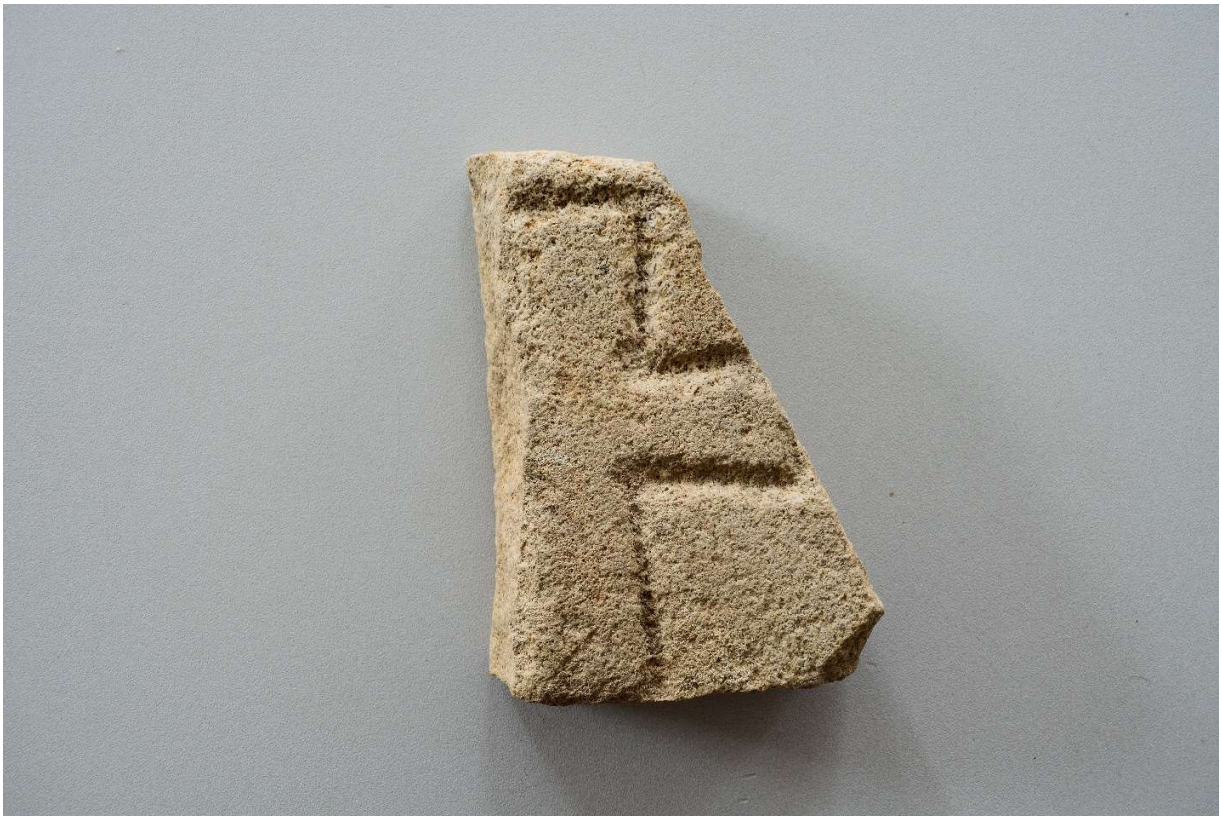
CONDITION: Very good; this fragment was found during excavations, and while it may have been exposed to the elements for a time, it was not subjected to heavy weathering. The individual pock-marks of the carver's tool can still be seen easily.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small, trapezoidal slab fragment, inscribed with the letter 'R'. The very edge of the previous letter is present as well, but not enough remains to even hazard a guess as to what it could be.

DISCUSSION: This is a fragment of a 7th–8th century grave marker, typical of Toureen Peakaun, found *ex situ* during excavations at the site in 2007 (Ó Carragáin 2007b).

TS-89

Toureen Peakaun 7



COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Killardry

TOWNLAND: Toureen

SITE NAME: Toureen Peakaun

ITM: 600290 628513

O.S. MAP: 75

RMP: None

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 12 cm; Width 5–9 cm; Thickness 3 cm

FIRST RECORDED: During excavations at Toureen Peakaun in 2007

PRESENT LOCATION: Archaeology Department, University College Cork

CONDITION: Very good; this fragment was found during excavations, and was clearly not subjected to heavy weathering. The individual pock-marks of the carver's tool can still be seen easily.

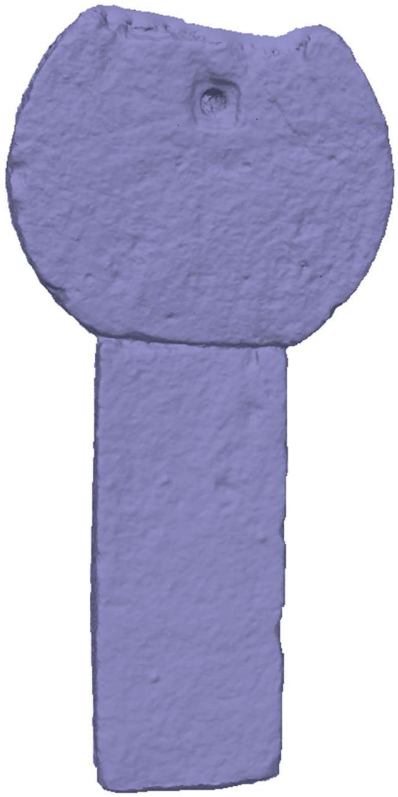
DESCRIPTION: This is a small fragment of a slab, pocked with part of an equal-armed cross. The top, and most of the bottom terminal survive, as well as most of the sinister arm. The dexter side of the cross, however, is missing.

DISCUSSION: This is a fragment of a 7th – 8th century grave marker, typical of Toureen Peakaun, found *ex situ* during excavations at the site in 2007 (Ó Carragáin 2007b).

TS-90

Toureen Peakaun 8





COUNTY: Tipperary

BARONY: Clanwilliam

PARISH: Killardry

TOWNLAND: Toureen

SITE NAME: Toureen Peakaun

ITM: 600290 628513

O.S. MAP: 75

RMP: None

TYPE: Sundial

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 43 cm; Width 52 cm (head); Height 63 cm; Width 27 cm (shaft)

FIRST RECORDED: The presence of the sundial was first noted by Michael Duignan, during his excavations at Toureen Peakaun in 1944. However, it was not photographed until 1955, and the

stone was not published until Waddell and Holland (1990, fig. 8, 176, 179), in their report on Duignan's excavations.

PRESENT LOCATION: Cemented into the wall of the Romanesque church at Toureen Peakaun.

CONDITION: Heavily weathered, and spotted with lichen. The divisions of the dial are no longer visible without photogrammetry.

DESCRIPTION: The head of the sundial is almost circular, though the radial divisions of the dial form the 'D'-shape typical of early Irish sundials. There is a square depression, *c*. 7 cm x 7 cm, within which is a round perforation for the gnomon, though this is long since missing. Waddell and Holland also noted the dial-head has a rectangular mortise at its base, and a 'recessed rectangular area with a circular peg-hold' at its top, into which rectangular slabs were inserted, though the top slab is missing (*ibid*, 179). The face of the dial is worn almost smooth, and, indeed, the divisions of the dial were difficult to confirm on the photogrammetry model, as well. However, seven (possibly eight) of the radially incised lines could be confirmed, and, based on their spacing, and the earlier photograph and sketch of the sundial (below), TS-90 is divided into the eight 'tides' into which the day was partitioned under the 'octaval' system, followed by Irish and Anglo-Saxon churches (Hamlin 1987b, 36).

DISCUSSION: Sundials were key tools (along with bells) in regulating the activities and rituals of monastic life, which centred around the canonical hours, and the observance of prayers. While sundials were undoubtedly used to keep time when the weather allowed, this was of course not always possible. Ann Hamlin has suggested that sundials may have also served as visual reminders to keep correct canonical hours, particularly during the reform periods of the mid-8th–10th centuries, and the 12th, century (*ibid*, 39). The presence of the sundial here is likewise a reminder of ascetic and monastic nature of Toureen Peakaun (see Chapter 6).

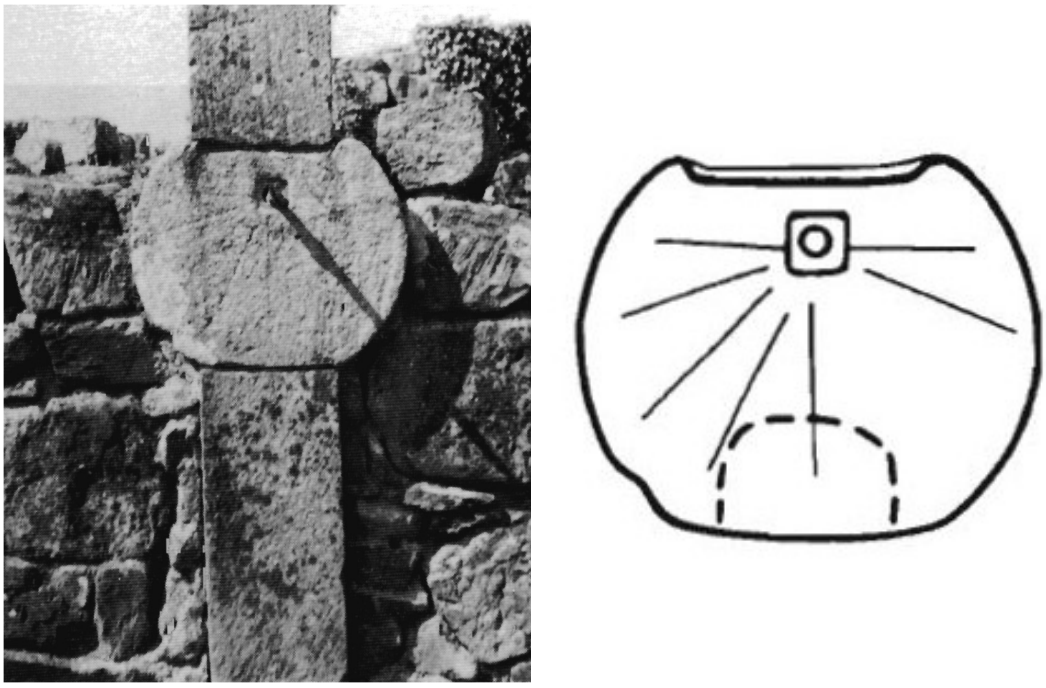
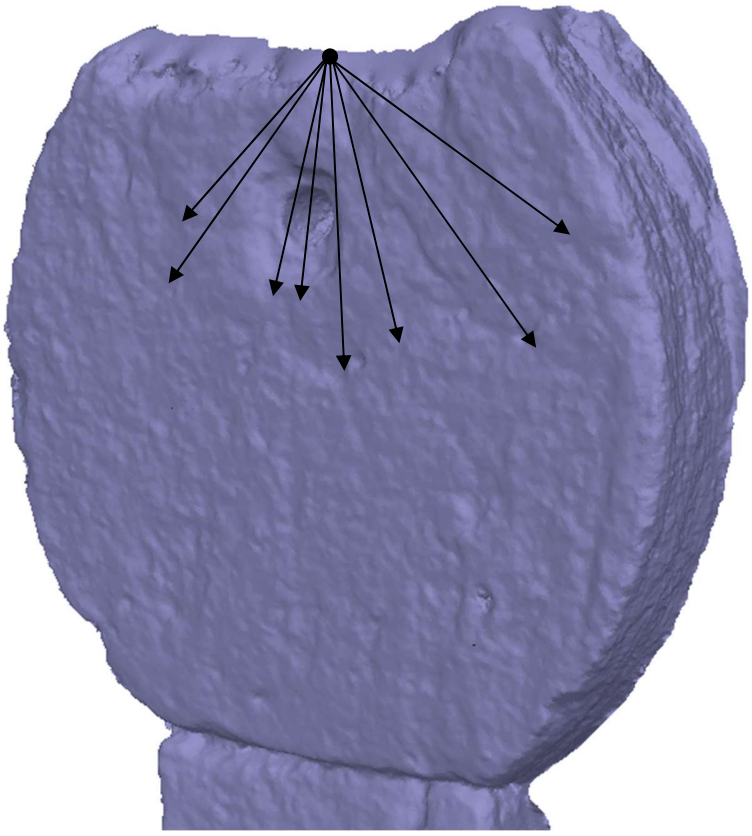


Plate 5, showing TS-90 in 1955; sketch of the sundial head (both after Waddell and Holland 1990)



Photogrammetry model of TS-90, showing the radial lines still extant on its face

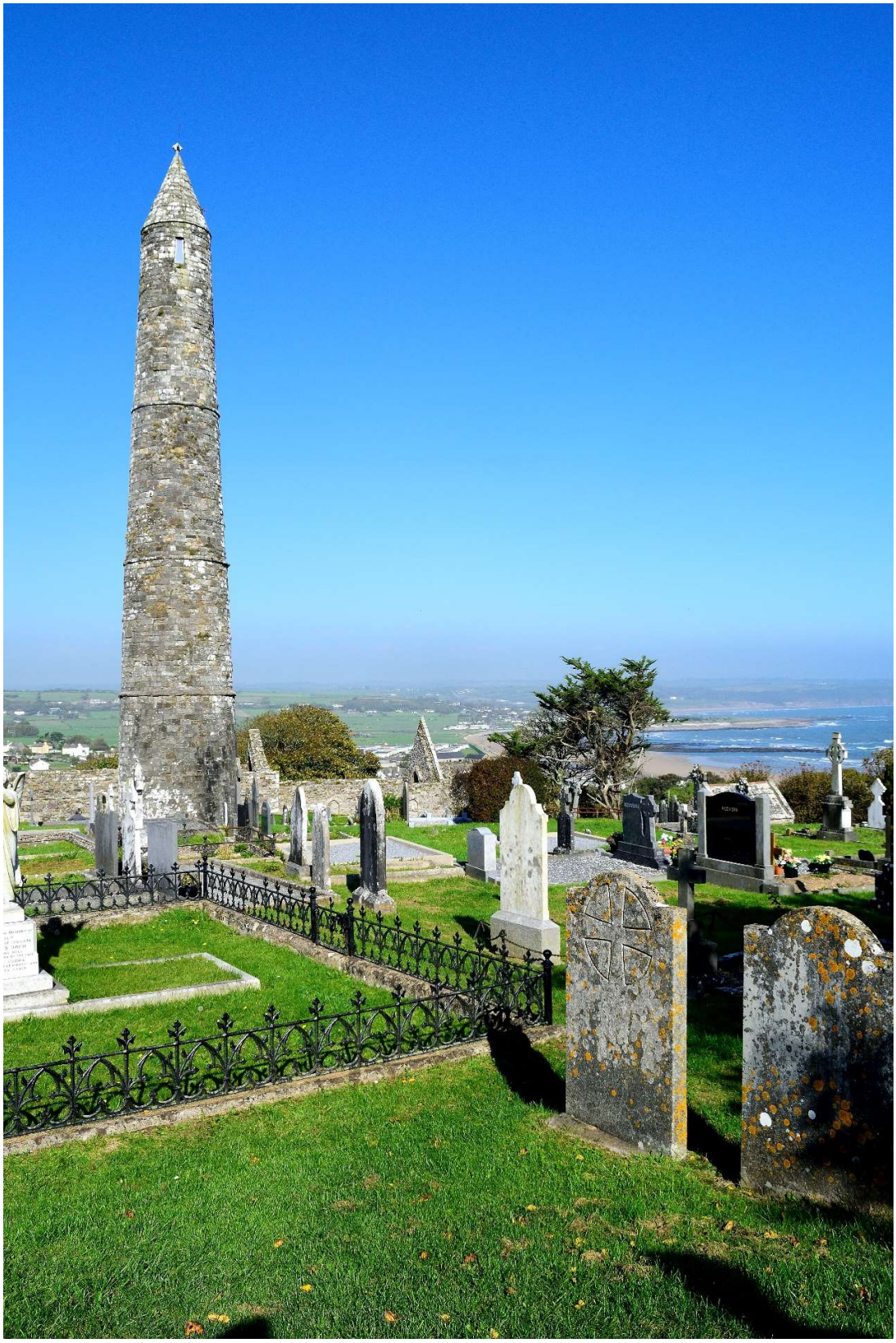
County Waterford

Ardmore

Ardmore (*Ard Mór*) was reputedly founded by another 'pre-Patrician' saint, Declan, whose floruit is thought to be the 5th–early 6th century (Breen 2009a). St Declan was supposedly a bishop, having travelled to Rome to receive episcopal orders from the Pope, according to his 12th-century Latin *Life* (Ó Riain 2011, 259). He is considered the patron saint of the Déisi, and a sincere devotion to St Declan still survives in Waterford, though the oldest version of his pedigree places him among the Fothairt, in Cos. Carlow and Wexford, along with Brigit of Kildare, and Fiontan of Clonenagh (*ibid*, 258). Ardmore itself does not feature prominently in the annals; however, Ó Riain has pointed out that the 12th-century *Life of Declan* was composed around the same time as the church was being rebuilt at Ardmore (*ibid*, 259). Significantly, he states that the biographer was 'setting out the case of his church for cathedral status at a time when it was actively seeking Diocesan standing' (*ibid*). Among the extant remains at Ardmore are St Declan's Cathedral, which includes the side walls of a pre-Romanesque church (Ó Carragáin 2010, 305), St Declan's House – an early shrine chapel that is thought to contain the saint's grave (*ibid*, 305–6), and a 12th-century round tower.



St Declan's House



Ardmore, looking northeast

WA-1

Ardmore 1



Ogham inscription (facing north)



Cross on upper face (facing west)

COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies within Drum

PARISH: Ardmore

TOWNLAND: Ardocheasty

SITE NAME: Ardmore

ITM: 618837 577451

O.S. MAP: 40

RMP: WA040-008007

TYPE: Ogham stone

MATERIAL: Greenstone

DIMENSIONS: Height (from ground) 102 cm; Width 30 cm; Thickness 25 cm

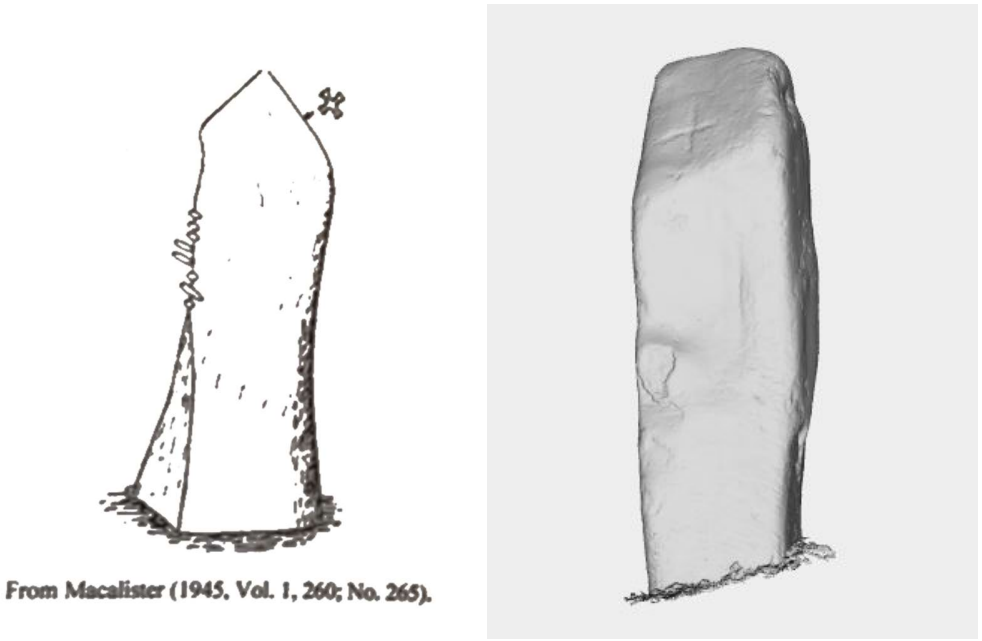
FIRST RECORDED: On a low stone wall near a grave in the graveyard at Ardmore (Fitzgerald 1856, 44).

PRESENT LOCATION: The northwest corner of the chancel of the ruined cathedral, where it was presumably placed shortly after its discovery *c*. 1854 ('Proceedings and Transactions' 1855, 419–20)

CONDITION: Heavily weathered but otherwise intact. However the incised cross is very difficult to discern without the aid of digital imaging tools (i.e. photogrammetry).

DESCRIPTION: This is a stone pillar with 'AMADU' inscribed in ogham on its south-facing edge and a plain equal-armed cross, *c*. 10 by 10 cm, incised on the topmost portion of its northeast face. The intersection of its cross arms is slightly off-centre.

DISCUSSION: This is one of three ogham stones from Ardmore but the only one that is also carved with a cross. Macalister illustrates the cross as having slightly expanded terminals (1945, 260), but a digital 3D model of the stone shows that it has plain terminals (Ogham in 3D Project, 2019). The inscription is thought to date to the 5th century (McManus 1997, 117; Swift 1997, 91) and though it cannot be determined whether or not the cross was carved contemporaneously, its simplicity would suggest that it is also early (see Chapter 4).



Macalister's drawing and digital 3D model of WA-1 (Ogham in 3D)

Ballygarran

This area was excavated in the summer of 1940 by Michael Bowman. The archaeological evidence, as reassessed by Curtin (2015), indicates a multiphase site with long-term occupation activity, and a geophysical survey in 2007 revealed that this enclosure is part of a larger, sub-circular trivallate enclosure (Bonsall and Gimson 2007; Moore and Walsh 2015). A series of postholes were discovered within the enclosure, representing the probable remains of a wooden structure; it may have been a church, though this interpretation is by no means certain (Power 1941, 64; Ó Carragáin 2010, 137). However there is also some evidence for burial as well. A cross-incised slab was also unearthed here (see WA-3), as well as two stone-lined graves, three cists, and some pits containing human remains (Curtin 2015, 1). Additionally, a bullaun was reputedly taken from the site *c*. 1900 (Power 1952, 215).



Aerial view of Ballygarran enclosure, with approximate location of WA-2 marked

WA-2

Ballygarran 1



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Gaultiere

PARISH: Kilmacleague

TOWNLAND: Ballygarran

SITE NAME: Killeenagh Burial Ground

ITM: 663260 604020

O.S. MAP: 27

RMP: WA027-003003

TYPE: Pillar

MATERIAL: Slate/Gritstone

DIMENSIONS (from Moore and Walsh 2015): Height 85 cm; Width 55 cm; Thickness 35 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Standing at the eastern entrance of what may be an ecclesiastical enclosure (Power 1938, 124).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: The area around the pillar is heavily overgrown with vegetation and the stone is, at present, inaccessible to the public, though the cross is still clearly visible.

DESCRIPTION: An unshaped stone pillar with a plain, equal-armed cross incised or, more likely, pocked on the top third of its southeast face.

DISCUSSION: The position of the cross pillar, if *in situ*, would clearly indicate it functioned as a boundary marker, and perhaps for a church or ecclesiastical site (see above; also Chapter 5).

WA-3

Ballygarran 2

COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Gaultiere

PARISH: Kilmacleague

TOWNLAND: Ballygarran

SITE NAME: Killeenagh Burial Ground

ITM: Unknown

O.S. MAP: 27

RMP: WA027-003006

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Unknown

DIMENSIONS: Unknown

FIRST RECORDED: Unearthed during excavations in 1940 by M.J. Bowman (Power 1941, 63–4).

PRESENT LOCATION: Unknown; last recorded location was 'at Canon Power's house' in 1941 (Curtin 2015, 137).

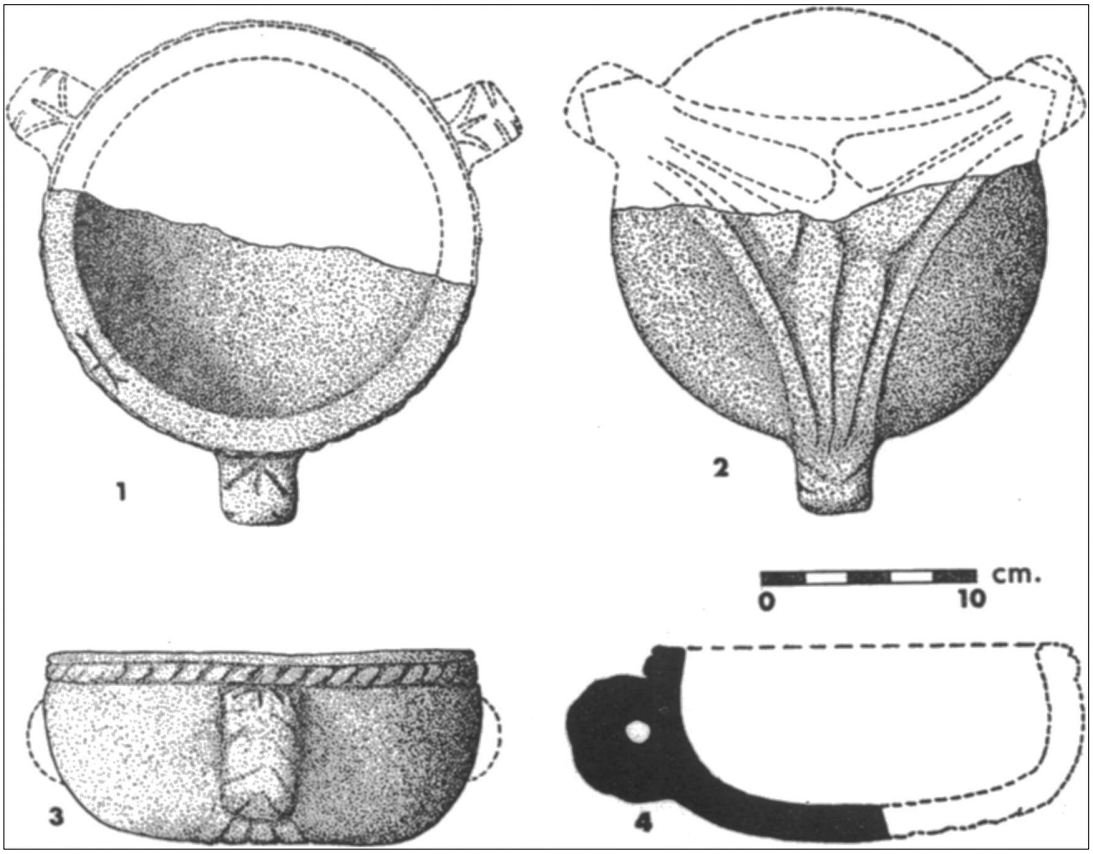
CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: A small, irregularly shaped slab incised with an equal-armed cross, *c*. 15.24 cm long, which apparently had later been lengthened into a Latin cross (Power 1941, 64).

DISCUSSION: This slab may have functioned as a grave-marker (though it is unclear if it would have been upright or recumbent), and seems to be typologically similar to the cross-slabs being produced in the 7th–9th centuries (see Chapter 4). Power has suggested that there were two episodes of carving, and that the slab was originally incised with an equal-armed cross which was later modified into a Latin cross (*ibid*). This may certainly be the case, though it is also possible that this 'rudely lengthened' portion of the cross is meant to be a base or a pole, and perhaps the carving represents a processional or altar cross. However, the suggestions made here are necessarily tentative without visual evidence. This slab, unearthed during excavations in 1940, may also support the suggestion that this was an ecclesiastical site (see above).

WA-4

Ballynacourty



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies without Drum

PARISH: Whitechurch

TOWNLAND: Ballynacourty

SITE NAME: Ballynacourty

ITM: None

O.S. MAP: 30

RMP: WA030-087 (now defunct record no.)

TYPE: Lamp/hanging-bowl

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS (from Raferty 1966, 35): Height 8.3–9.5 cm; External diameter 20.3 cm; Thickness 1.2 cm at the rim

FIRST RECORDED: Discovered in 1924 within what had been referred to as a 'cave' (but may also have been either a souterrain or natural hollow), along with some human and animal bone (*ibid*, 33–4).

PRESENT LOCATION: In the National Museum of Ireland – associated registration number is 1926:3 (*ibid*, 33).

CONDITION: Fragmented, but conserved at the NMI

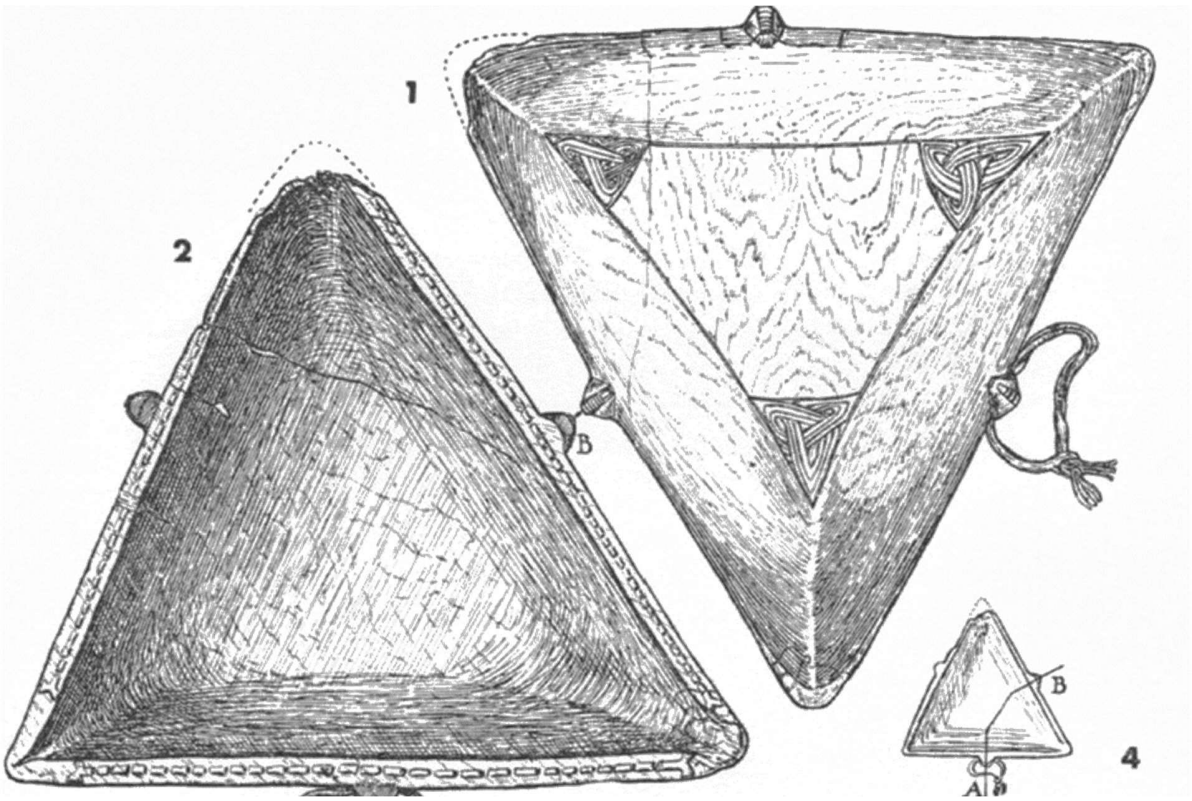
DESCRIPTION: This is a fragment of a highly decorated stone hanging bowl. The top of the rim is flat, and incised with a small Latin cross with bifurcating terminals on its stem. The outside of the bowl is decorated with rope-moulding just underneath the rim, which Raferty describes as deeply incised into the stone (*ibid*, 34). The bowl has a lug or handle, which was used to suspend it 'by means of brass or bronze' (*ibid*, 35). The lug is decorated with a herringbone pattern which flows into a slightly raised triangular platform carved with a design, perhaps a triquetra (*ibid*), on the underside of the bowl.

DISCUSSION: The 'cave' was destroyed during roadworks in 1924, so unfortunately its precise location and further details surrounding the bowl's provenance and the circumstances of its discovery have been lost (*ibid*, 33–4). The Ballynacourty hanging-bowl is an unusual piece, and thus far is the only stone hanging-bowl from Ireland that I have come across. The hanging-bowls found in Ireland, Britain and Scandinavia are almost ubiquitously made of bronze (Bruce-Mitford 2005), though the Cuillard bowl from Co. Roscommon is made of wood (Raferty 1966, 29–30). Bowl-shaped stone lamps, albeit neither hanging-bowls nor so skilfully carved as the Ballynacourty example, have been found from Co. Louth and at Skerries, Co. Dublin (see below), and perhaps the triangular design on the bottom of the Ballynacourty lamp may have also doubled as stand upon which the bowl could rest (*ibid*). This might suggest that it could function similarly to these lamps, as well as be suspended, though the style and high-quality decoration of the Ballynacourty bowl is more in keeping with that of other hanging-bowls. However, there is little evidence that most of the bronze hanging-bowls would have been used as lamps (Bruce-Mitford 2005, 31–2), as the Ballinacourty hanging-bowl seems to have been (*ibid*, 27; Raferty 1966, 35). Ó Floinn has suggested an 8th or 9th century date for this hanging-bowl (Dowd 2015), and though hanging-bowls and lamps were certainly not the exclusive prerogative

of churches and a cross-carved object does not necessarily imply an ecclesiastical context, the cross carved onto the rim is interesting given the proliferation of documentary and archaeological evidence indicating that caves were popular habitation sites for anchorites and hermits (*ibid*).



Stone lamp from Skerries, Co. Dublin (after Grundy 2011)



Wooden hanging-bowl from Cuillard (after Raferty 1966)

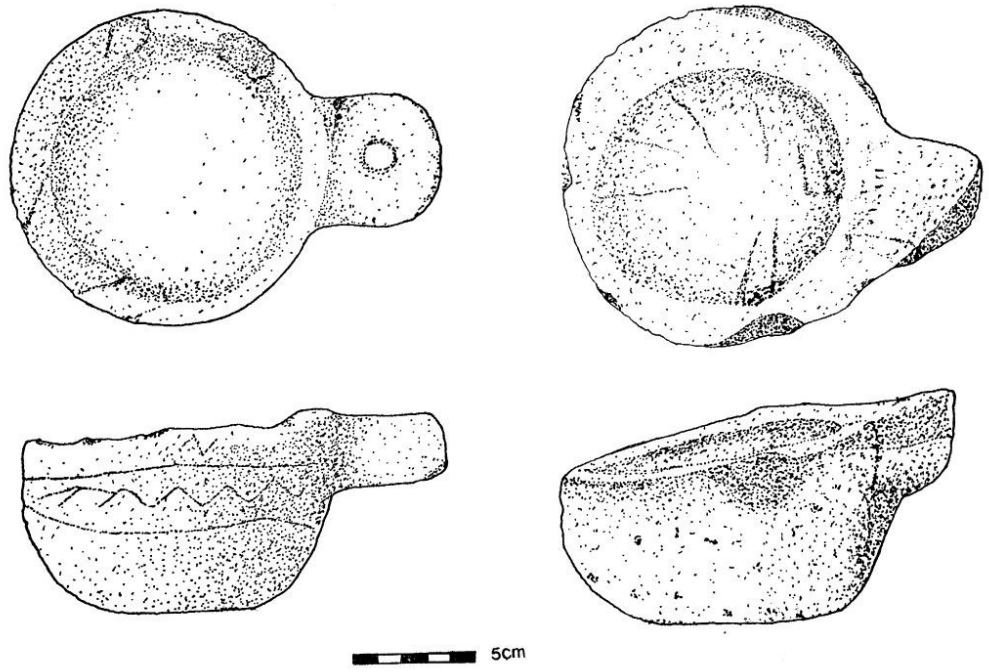


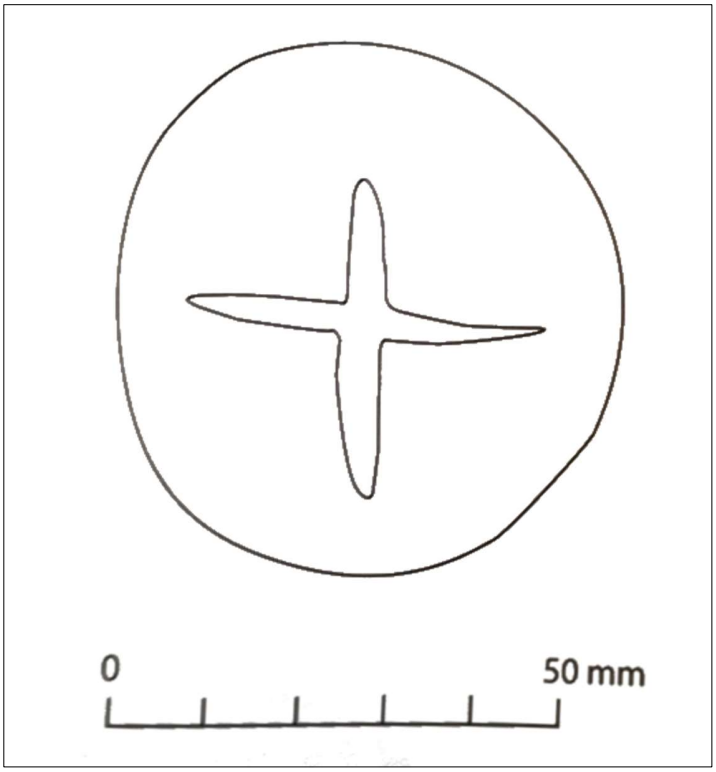
FIG. 1. Stone lamp from County Louth.

FIG. 2. Stone lamp from Kilpatrick, County Louth.

(after Moore 1979)

WA-5

Ballynamintra Middle



(after Thounhurst 2007, based on an NMI file sketch)

COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies without Drum

PARISH: Whitechurch

TOWNLAND: Ballynamintra Middle

SITE NAME: Carrigmurish

ITM: 616847 595719 (orig. location)

O.S. MAP: 30

RMP: None

TYPE: Pebble

MATERIAL: Unknown

DIMENSIONS: Diameter *c*. 5 cm

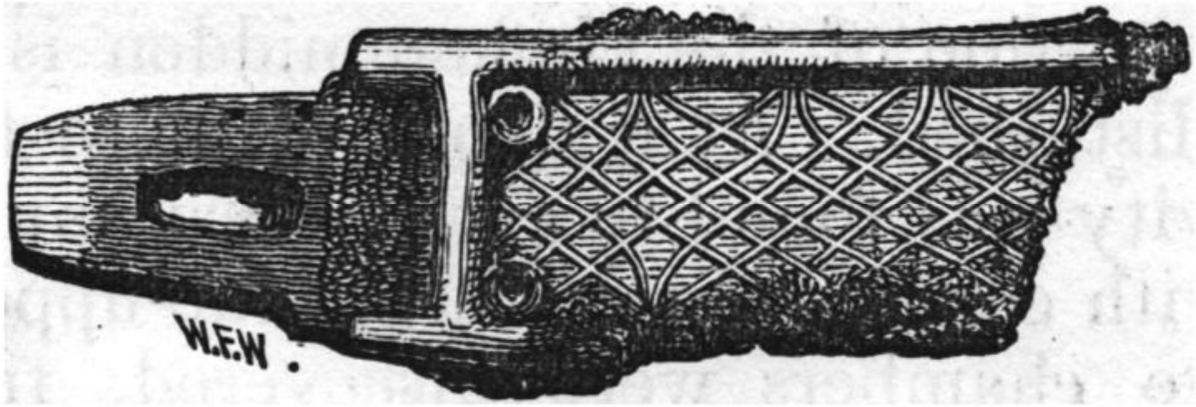
FIRST RECORDED: During excavations of a rath at Carrigmurish, the pebble was found in a limestone cave, presumably being used as a midden, within the rath (Ussher 1886, 362, 364).

PRESENT LOCATION: Unknown

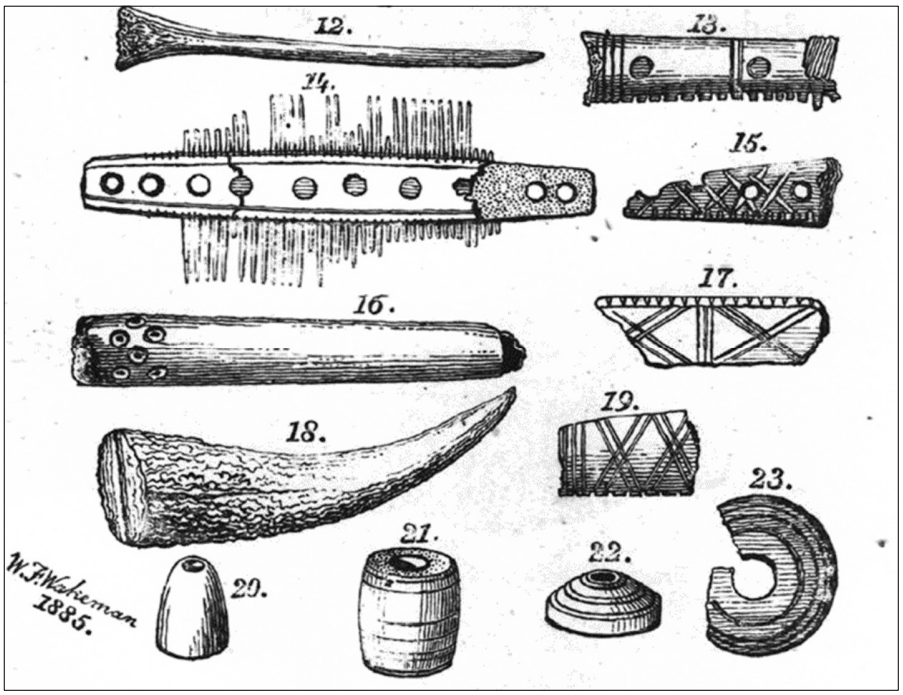
CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: Ussher only briefly mentions this stone in his report as a 'globular' or 'disc-shaped pebble…which has a cross cut on it' (*ibid*, 364). From the sketch provided by Thounhurst (above), we can determine that it was incised with a plain, roughly equal-armed cross, with arms slightly longer than the stem at *c*. 4 cm x 3.5 cm.

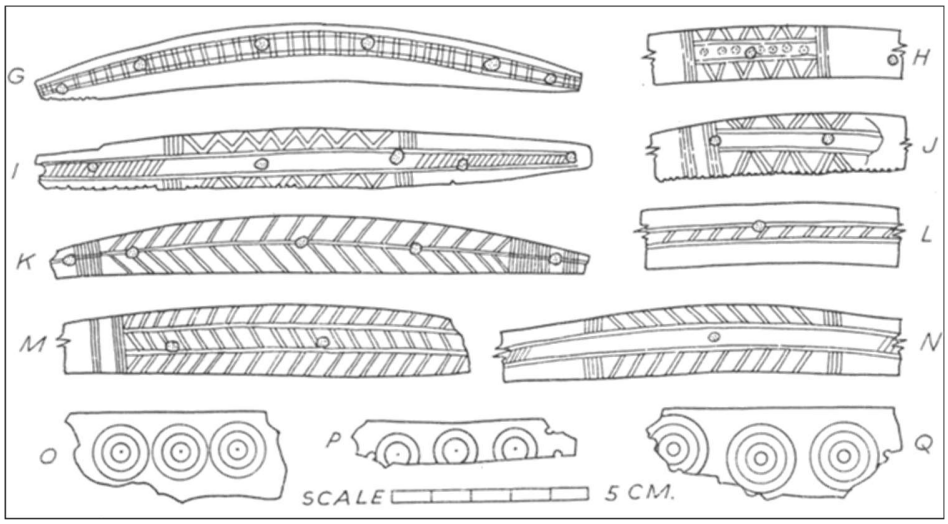
DISCUSSION: Cross-incised pebbles such as WA-5 may have functioned as portable blessings, protections or cures, or alternately, as ritualistic instruments for oath-taking or curses. Examples from High Island (Maddern 2014, nos. 24, 31 and 35) and Inishmurray (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, fig. 22, 001.13) may coincide with a formalisation of liturgical cursing in the 10th and 11th centuries (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 339; Maddern 2014, 198). Though this pebble could potentially be earlier, as there is 7th-century Irish hagiographic evidence for cursing (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, 338), a similar 10th- or 11th-century date seems more likely for WA-5, particularly as it would also make it roughly contemporaneous with many of the other finds from Carrigmurish (cf. Ussher 1886), including fragments of bone combs which are markedly similar to the 10th–12th century bone combs from Norse Dublin (Ó hÉailidhe 1973). However the function of this pebble is not immediately clear, particularly in light of the context from which it was recovered. It was found in the midden of a rath mixed in with domestic waste, though this does not preclude it from functioning as a token of protection, blessing or curse, it was found among a multitude of pebbles which Ussher interpreted as sling-stones (1886, 364).



Bronze trapping with clasp (after Ussher 1886)



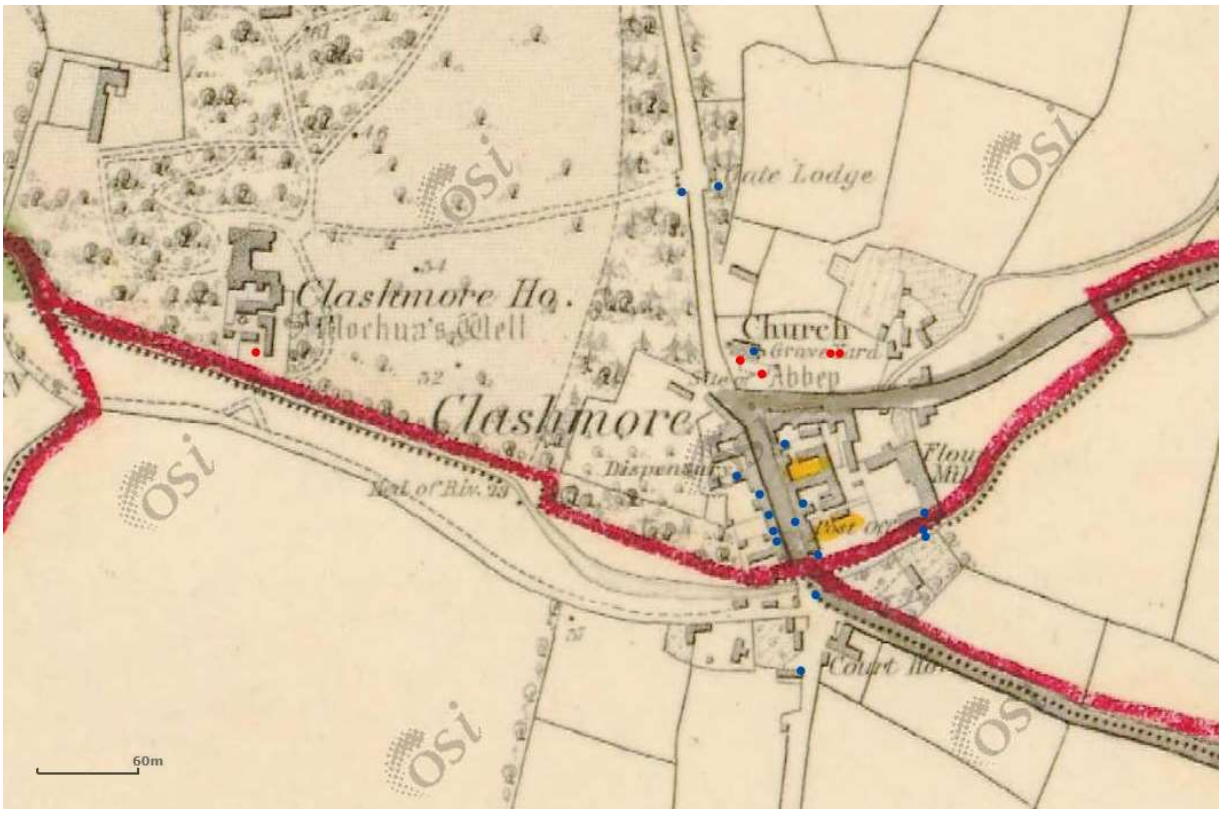
Some artefacts from Carrigmurish, including several bone combs similar to those found in Norse Dublin



Tenth to twelfth century Norse Dublin bone combs (after Ó hÉailidhe 1973)

Clashmore

Clashmore (Glais Mhór) was reputedly founded by St Crónán, also hypocoristically known as Mochua, whose floruit is usually thought to have been in the early 7th century (Stokes 1905, 59, 72–3; Power 1898, 201). However, details about this saint and his foundation of Glais Mhór are scant, and vague (Ó Riain 2011, 233). A geophysical survey undertaken in 2006, in an area to the west of the church, did reveal several features which may potentially be associated with early medieval activity (Lynch 2006), but this suggestion is by no means certain and subsequent test-trenching revealed predominantly post-medieval finds and features (*ibid*). Two sherds of medieval pottery were found in a deposit adjacent to the river, but none of the features investigated in 2006 could be definitively ascribed to the medieval period (*ibid*). Five window fragments from the medieval church of Clashmore have been noted in the graveyard (Power 1898, 201), though only two pieces are still present (Moore 2011a), as well as a bullaun stone on the southwest side of the church. St Mochua's Well is *c*. 0.3 km west of the church.



First edition OS map showing Clashmore Church c. 100 m north of the parish border and 300 m east of the holy well (source: OSi)

WA-6

Clashmore 1



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies within Drum

PARISH: Clashmore

TOWNLAND: Clashmore

SITE NAME: Clashmore Church

ITM: 612419 584187

O.S. MAP: 37

RMP: None

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Gritstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 117 cm; Width 30–36 cm; Thickness 14–16 cm

FIRST RECORDED: On 10 October 2018, during the course of fieldwork for this present study. It is being used as a headstone in the graveyard of Clashmore Church, *c*. 9 m southeast of the southeast corner of the church.

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

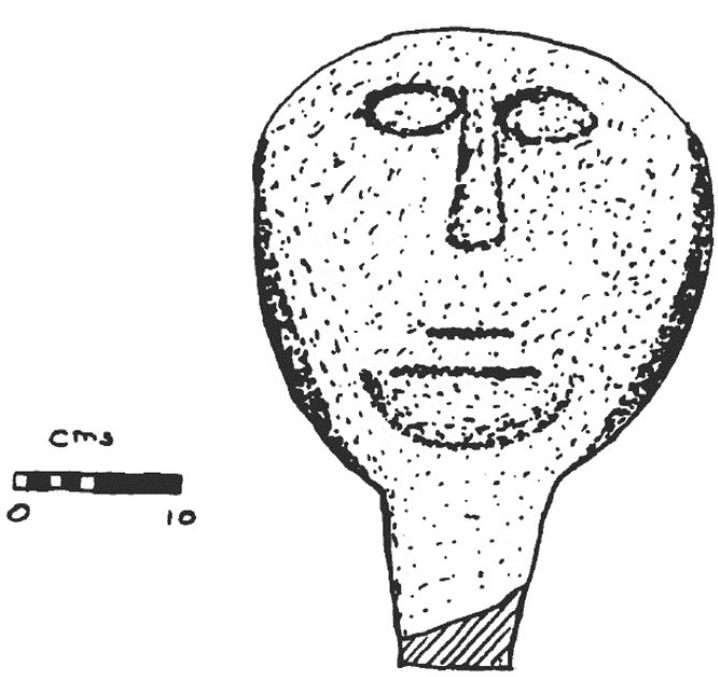
CONDITION: The surface of the stone is pitted and uneven from the effects of erosion; however the cross is still visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a long, dressed slab which tapers slightly from top to bottom, and has a Latin cross carved in low relief spanning the surface of one face. The arms of the cross are *c*.7-8 cm wide.

DISCUSSION: Typologically this cross-slab is consistent with the large, recumbent grave-markers of the 11th and 12th centuries, though the slight tapering towards the bottom of the stone would indicate a 12th-century date is more likely (see Chapter 4). Previously, the only physical evidence for early medieval activity at Clashmore was the bullaun stone next to the southwest side of the modern church, and though this slab dates to the very end of the early medieval period, it is nevertheless further archaeological evidence for early medieval activity at the site. Moreover, it may also be suggested that as there are very few early medieval carved stones at Clashmore, the use of stone in this instance, particularly as its size reflects a significant investment of resources, may indicate that WA-6 may have been created to mark the grave of an important member of the community, presumably a high-ranking ecclesiastic (see Chapter 5).

WA-7

Curraghmore



(after Veale 1992)

COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Upperthird

PARISH: Clonagam

TOWNLAND: Curraghmore

SITE NAME: Curraghmore House and Gardens

ITM: 644453 616259

O.S. MAP: 8

RMP: WA008-047

TYPE: Figural sculpture

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS (from Moore 1999): Height 43 cm; Width 38 cm; Thickness 30 cm

FIRST RECORDED: This stone was first recorded on the 1841 Ordnance Survey Map as 'Mother Brown'. It is in the far end of the field south of the parish church of Clonagam, *c*. 497 m to the southeast.

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Unknown; Curraghmore House and Gardens are closed to the public until May 2019.

DESCRIPTION: A carved sandstone head cemented into a conglomerate boulder with a flat, roughly oval face. It has almond-shaped eyes, wedge-shaped nose, a horizontal line for a mouth, and a rounded semi-circular area just below the mouth representing the chin or, perhaps as Moore suggested, a beard (1999). Additionally, Moore has suggested that there is a raised area around the skull which may either represent a cap or hairline (*ibid*), but this feature is not indicated on Veale's illustration (1992, fig. 1).

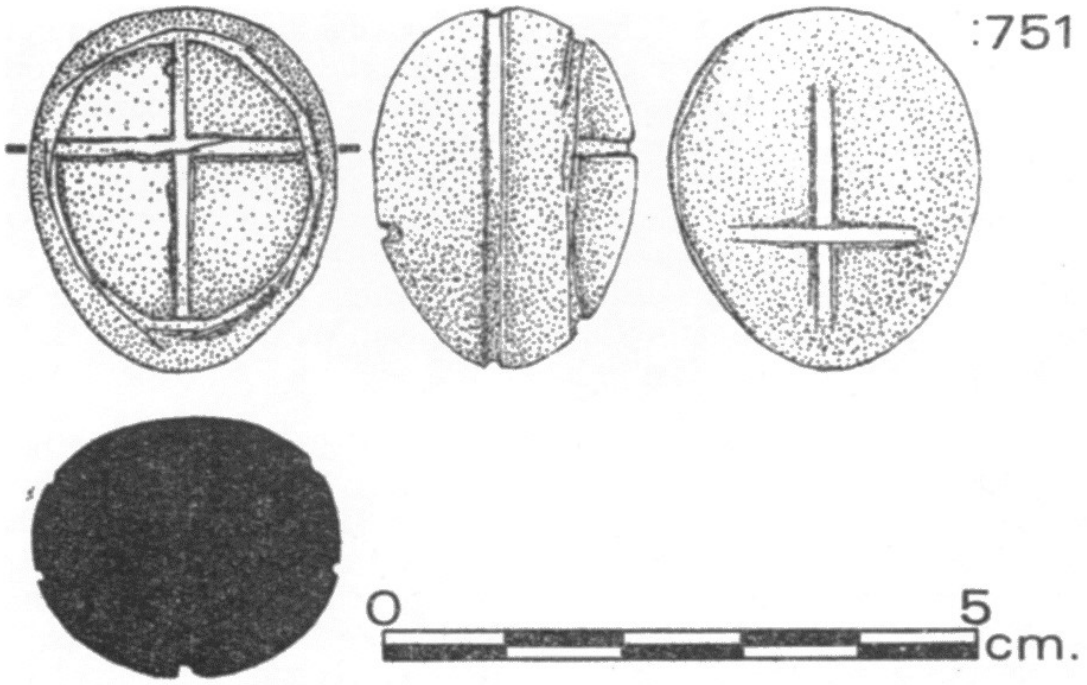
DISCUSSION: The origin of its moniker 'Mother Brown' undoubtedly stems from its resemblance, at a distance, of 'an old woman standing on the hillside wrapped in her shawl' (*ibid*, 2). As suggested by Veale, the head must have been in its present position well before its inclusion on the Ordnance Survey map of 1841 as it had already made its way into the collective folk memory by that time (*ibid*, 4), though strangely, it is not referenced in any of the contemporary scholarly literature (*ibid*, 2). It is very reminiscent of the carved stone head in Middlequarter (WA-24), which probably came from the nearby church of Cill Laserach, though that head is carved onto a large, solid slab of stone. Veale's suggestion that the stone head was put in its current place 'to add picturesque antiquity to the grounds' (*ibid*) of Curraghmore House certainly has merit; furthermore, her suggestion that it may have been created within the last 300 years cannot be ruled out, particularly as nothing from the early medieval period has been found from the neighbouring church of Clonagam (*ibid*). However, the face is small and highly portable, and could have easily been removed any number of early church ruins in the vicinity. Though there is some stylistic continuity between figural carvings of the Iron Age and the early medieval period (Ní Ghabhláin 1988, 137), 'passive' or 'peaceful' stone faces like the one at Curraghmore usually have an ecclesiastical association, and many have been dated to the 8th and 9th centuries (*ibid*).



Right to left: Durrow; Glencolumbkille, Co. Clare; Tully Lough Cross

WA-8

Graignagower



(after Lucas 1972)

COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Glenahiry

PARISH: Kilronan

TOWNLAND: Graignagower

SITE NAME: Bennett's Church

ITM: 619683 611553 (orig. location)

O.S. MAP: 5

RMP: WA005-026003 (redundant record)

TYPE: Pebble

MATERIAL: Limestone

DIMENSIONS (From Lucas 1972, 198): Height 3.1 cm; Width 2.7 cm; Thickness 2.3 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Found within a grave at Bennett's Church, approximately 1 m below ground surface (*ibid*)

PRESENT LOCATION: In the National Museum of Ireland (reference number 1969:751)

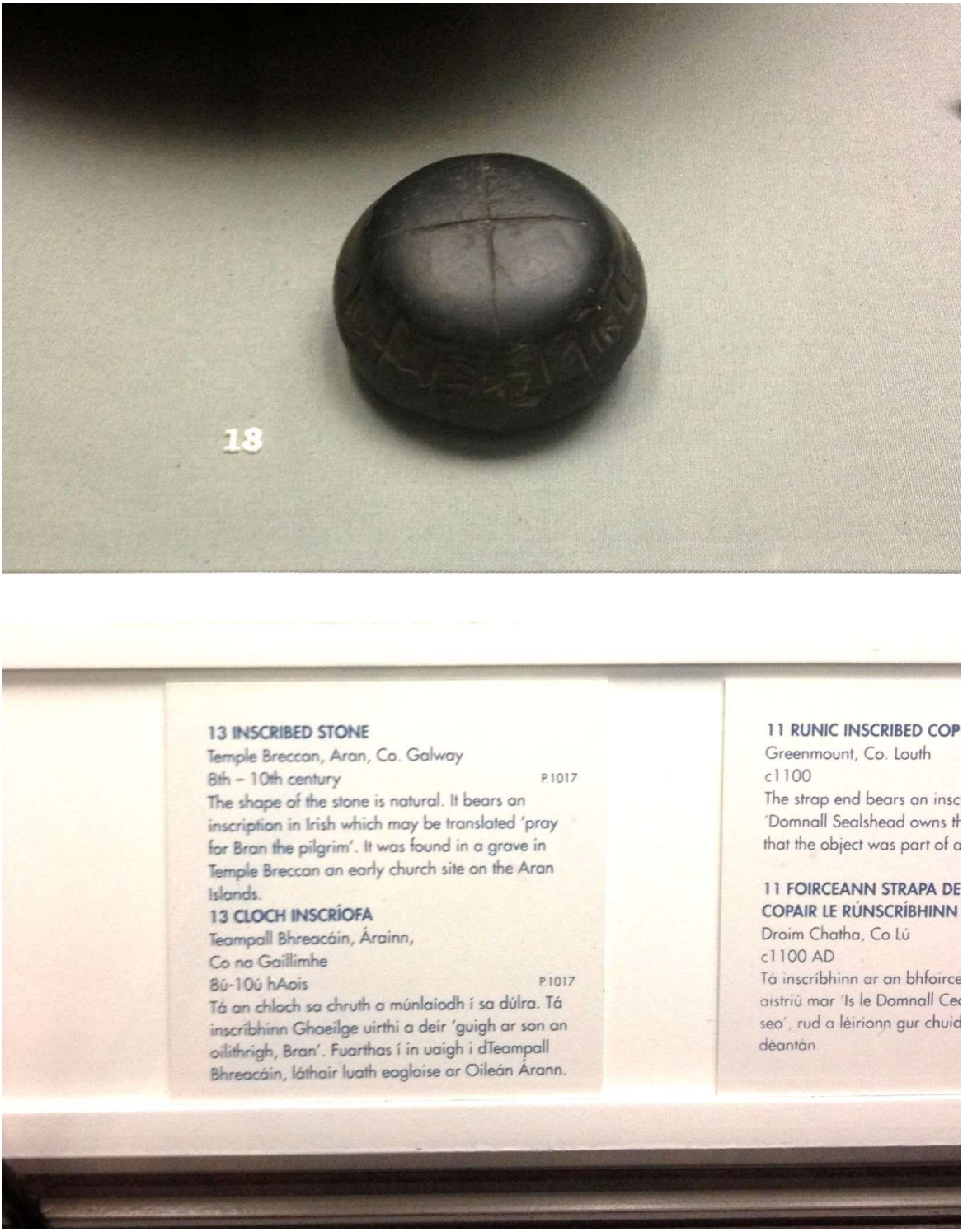
CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: A smooth, oval-shaped black pebble that is incised with two Latin crosses, one on each face. The cross on one face (*c*. 2.5 x 2.1 cm) is enclosed within an incised circular frame, with the ends of the cross touching the frame. On the opposite face is an inverted Latin cross (*c*. 2.1 x 1.7 cm). An incised band runs the circumference of the stone, dividing the pebble in two.

DISCUSSION: As already mentioned, cross-incised pebbles could have been used to facilitate blessings or curses (see WA-5). It is worth noting that the two crosses are inverse to each other – when one cross is facing right-side up, the other is upside down; might one side have been used to bless and the other to curse? The pebble may have placed in the grave as a blessing, and/or belonged to the deceased. A similar cross-incised pebble, now on display at the National Museum of Ireland, was found in a grave at Temple Breccan, Co. Galway. It has been dated to the 8th–10th centuries and its inscription translates to 'pray for Bran the pilgrim'. The prayer request on the pebble could indicate that it was inscribed later, perhaps at Bran's death. This could suggest that the cross-incised pebble may have belonged to the individual in question, and was then deposited with him in the grave after being inscribed with the prayer request (see also Chapter 5).



Sketch of 'Bran' stone from Temple Breccan (after Higgins 1987)



Photograph of 'Bran' stone, in the National Museum

WA-9

Island

COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies without Drum

PARISH: Stradbally

TOWNLAND: Island

SITE NAME: Island

ITM: 635501 595892

O.S. MAP: 32

RMP: WA032-029004

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Unknown

DIMENSIONS (from Moore 2011b): Height 50 cm; Width 7-10 cm; Thickness 5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Inside the western perimeter of a circular enclosure, next to an ogham stone (*ibid*).

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably the same

CONDITION: Unknown; this stone is on private land, and permission for access could not be obtained during the course of this project.

DESCRIPTION: A small stone, incised with a cross on one face.

DISCUSSION: The dimensions of this stone are similar to the small upright grave-markers found in Glenballyvally, Co. Kilkenny (KK-10 and KK-11) and, as already suggested by Moore (*ibid*), it probably functioned as a grave-marker. WA-9 was found next to an ogham stone, within a circular enclosure, 85.5 m east-west by 83.5 m north-south, suggesting it was probably ecclesiastical (Moore 2011c).



Two upright grave-markers from Glenballyvally, Co. Kilkenny (KK-10 and KK-11)

WA-10

Kilmolash 1





COUNTY: Waterford | BARONY: Decies without Drum

PARISH: Kilmolash | TOWNLAND: Kilmolash

SITE NAME: Kilmolash Church | ITM: 613064 594731

O.S. MAP: 29 | RMP: WA029-027006

TYPE: Ogham stone | MATERIAL: Shale/Slate?

DIMENSIONS: Height 179 cm; Width 51 cm; Thickness 20 cm

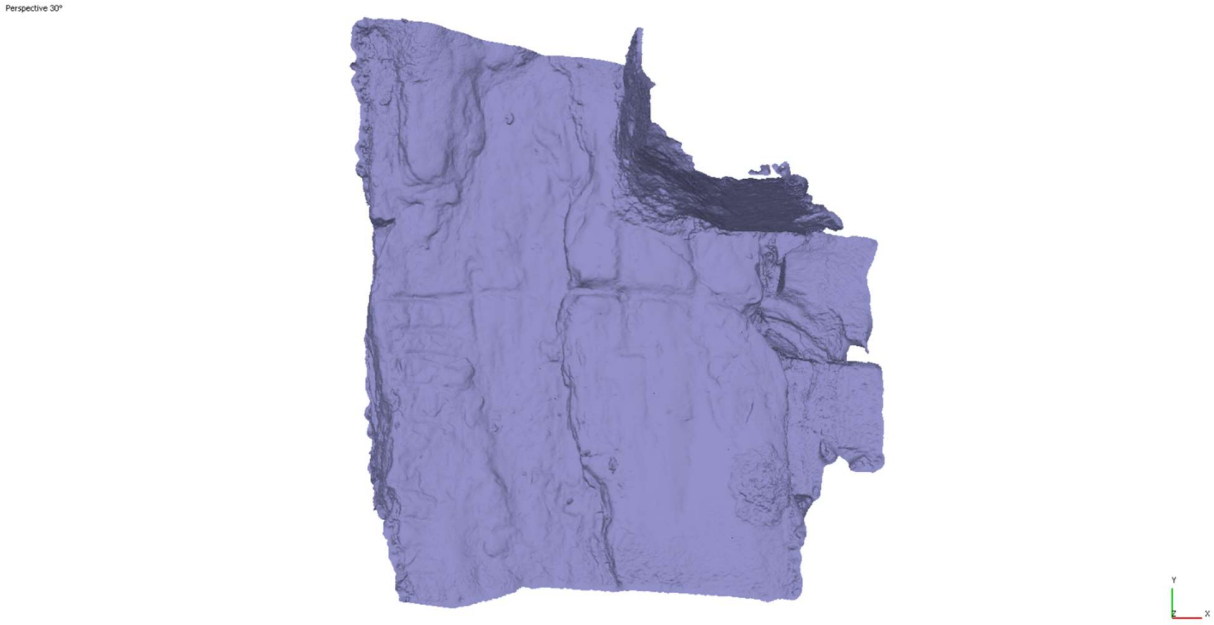
FIRST RECORDED: It was being reused as a threshold between the nave and chancel of Kilmolash Church (Buckley 1896, 215).

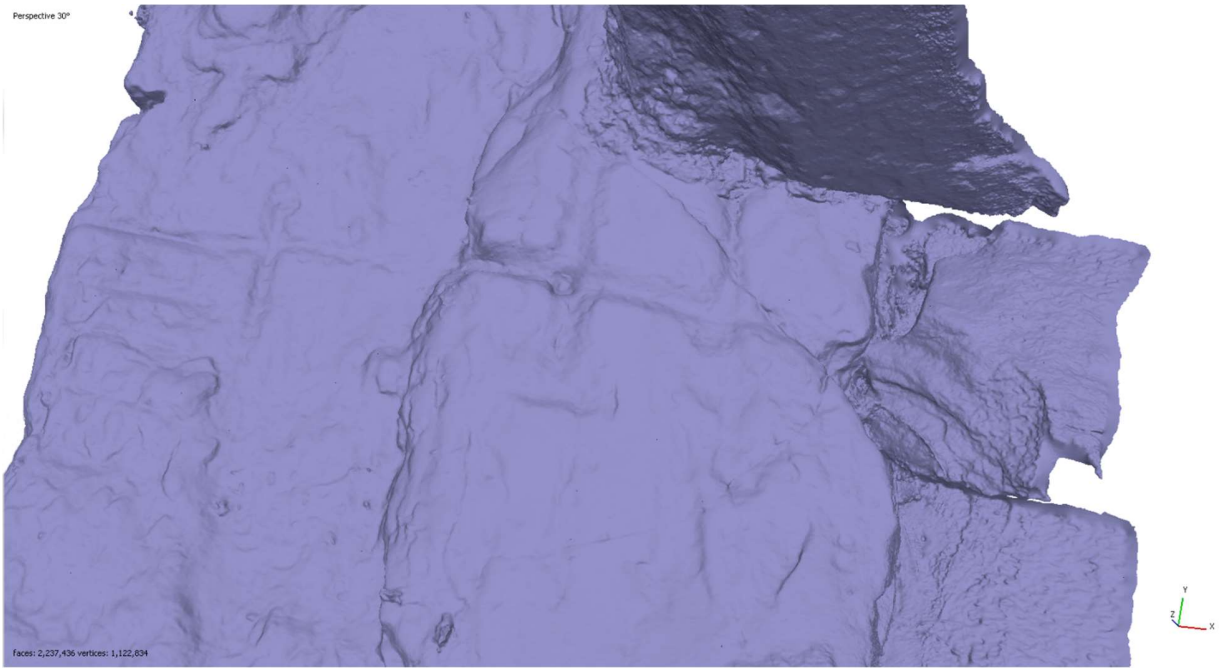
PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Very poor, with a broken base and a heavily fractured, cracked face.

DESCRIPTION: A large slab of stone with '..NN' inscribed in ogham on its upper dexter edge (Macalister 1945, No. 291). A plain, linear cross, *c*. 9 cm long by 10 cm wide, is incised on the dexter side. The terminal of one cross-arm is truncated by the top ogham score. A more heavily incised, equal-armed, cross-potent (19 cm wide; 18.5 cm high; 2-4 cm thick) is carved on the sinister side.

DISCUSSION: Thounhurst was correct in stating that there are two crosses on the Kilmolash ogham stone (2007 vol. ii, 237), rather than the three described by Macalister (1945, No. 291), but the central cross is not plain, as she suggests (Thounhurst 2007, 240) – it is a cross-potent. However, the carving is heavily worn, and the full detail of the carving is only visible in the right light, so the difficulty in discerning the cross-carvings is understandable. Thounhurst was also correct in suggesting that the ogham inscription may overlay part of the dexter cross (*ibid*), and photogrammetry has indeed confirmed that the cross pre-dates the inscription.


Perspective 30°
Y
Z
X
faces: 2,237,436 vertices: 1,122,834


Perspective 30°
Y
Z
X
faces: 2,237,436 vertices: 1,122,834

WA-11

Kilmolash 2



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies without Drum

PARISH: Kilmolash

TOWNLAND: Kilmolash

SITE NAME: Kilmolash Church

ITM: 613067 594733

O.S. MAP: 29

RMP: WA029-027012

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 127 cm; Width 43 cm; Thickness 17 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Being used as a lintel over the northern window of Kilmolash Church (Power 1898, 90).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: It is unclear if some of the stone has been cut away to fit into the embrasure, or if it was fitted into the fabric of the church in its entirety, but what can be seen is in fairly good condition.

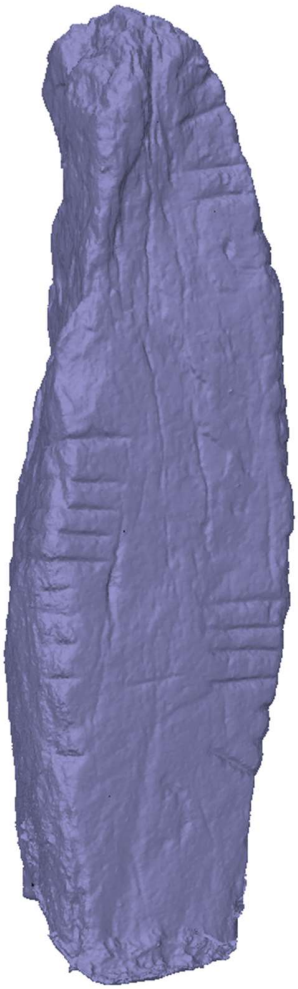
DESCRIPTION: This is a large, thick slab of well-dressed stone with a hollow-armed cross and wide, plain-banded border carved in deep relief (*c*. 2-3cm) on one face.

DISCUSSION: Though Buckley suggested this slab might have originally been a door lintel (1899, 47–8), it is more likely that this was a stone altar frontal (Power 1908, 5; Thounhurst 2007; Ó Carragáin 2010, 196–7). Kilmolash was under the jurisdiction of Lismore from at least the 10th century (O'Keeffe 1994, 129), though evidence for stone altars in Ireland date from the end of the 11th century onward (Ó Carragáin 2010, 196; Murray 2010). The creation of a stone altar for the church at Kilmolash may have been in response to both changes in liturgical practices (and thus church architecture) brought about by the Gregorian reforms, as well as the development of the Irish Romanesque in Munster, both of which Lismore was at the forefront, in the first half of the 12th century (*ibid*, 192, 197; O'Keeffe 1994).

WA-12

Knockboy 1





COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies without Drum

PARISH: Seskinan

TOWNLAND: Knockboy

SITE NAME: Seskinan Church

ITM: 621531 604820

O.S. MAP: 13

RMP: WA013-034005

TYPE: Ogham stone

MATERIAL: Conglomerate

DIMENSIONS (from ground level): Height 77 cm; Width 23 cm; Thickness 15 cm

FIRST RECORDED: It may have first been seen by Barry in 1895 (Macalister 1907, 210-11) and possibly first mentioned in publication by Power (1898, 86-7); however it was first described in detail by Macalister, who found it buried 'almost to its head marking a modern grave' (1907, 210-11).

PRESENT LOCATION: In the northwest corner of the church ruin, where it was moved at Macalister's behest (*ibid*).

CONDITION: There is some damage to the top of the east face where it appears the stone may have split, and several deep scratches abrade its incised face.

DESCRIPTION: A thin, unshaped pillar which tapers towards both ends. It has 'VEDABAR M[A]Q[…..]LSM (sic) MOCOI ODR[…..]REA' (Macalister 1945, No. 298) inscribed in ogham on both edges of its east face and a thin, lightly incised equal-armed cross (possibly two) on its lower portion.

DISCUSSION: This stone has already been recorded as part of the Ogham in 3D project (2019); however, as of writing this, a digital 3D model of this stone is not yet available, so photogrammetric recording was undertaken for this stone. The ogham may date to the 6th century, but the cross, though of a potentially early type, is inverted to the inscription, and is therefore most likely later (see Chapters 4 and 5).

WA-13

Knockboy 2



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies without Drum

PARISH: Seskinan

TOWNLAND: Knockboy

SITE NAME: Seskinan Church

ITM: 621524 604811

O.S. MAP: 13

RMP: WA013-034017

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Slatey Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 44 cm; Width 20-26 cm; Thickness 11.5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: In 1912, being used as a headstone within the graveyard of Seskinane Church (Forsayeth 1913, 341).

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably the same – in the northwest section of the graveyard, *c*. 6 m from the southwest corner of the church.

CONDITION: Worn, but the carving is still clearly visible

DESCRIPTION: This is a thick, irregularly shaped slab with a tau cross deeply incised midway on its east face. The cross arm spans the width of the surface, while the stem, which ends in a crosslet terminal, extends for 10 cm below the arm. On the top sinister side of the face is another, smaller tau cross 6.5 cm wide x 5.5 cm long, above which is an incised circle *c*. 5.5-6 cm in diameter. On the top dexter side are ten deeply carved score marks.

DISCUSSION: The score marks on this slab are a bit enigmatic as they are not an ogham inscription; however the simple linear crosses and morphology of the stone is typical of the small upright grave-markers of the 7th–9th centuries (Chapter 4).

WA-14

Knockboy 3



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies without Drum

PARISH: Seskinan

TOWNLAND: Knockboy

SITE NAME: Seskinan Church

ITM: 621524 604811

O.S. MAP: 13

RMP: WA013-034018

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Slatey Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 14–28 cm; Width 48 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Found by Kim Thounhurst in 2007, immediately to the northwest of WA-13.

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Heavily weathered; only the incised circle is still clearly legible

DESCRIPTION: A small stone slab with a highly irregular top edge. It has a circle, 6 cm by 7 cm, incised on its east face, and what may be some additional carving just below it on the sinister side, though this is speculative.

DISCUSSION: This may be an early medieval slab, perhaps roughly contemporaneous with WA-13, which also has an incised circle on its face. The surface of the uncarved face is very uneven, suggesting that the carved surface might have been shaped prior to being incised, and that WA-14 may have been recumbent.

WA-15

Knockmaon



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies without Drum

PARISH: Whitechurch

TOWNLAND: Knockmaon

SITE NAME: Knockmaon

ITM: 618812 593284/618087 596643

O.S. MAP: 30

RMP: WA030-042003/WA030-006003

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Gritstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 69 cm; Width 224 cm; Thickness 18 cm

FIRST RECORDED: This stone was marked on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1840 as a tombstone, *c*. 45 m north of the ruins of Knockmaon Church.

PRESENT LOCATION: On the outer east wall of the bawn of the ruinous Cappagh tower house; it was moved here sometime between 1840 and 1898, when it was mentioned by Power (1898, 94).

CONDITION: Very weathered and overgrown; some pitting and damage to the surface of the stone may have been caused by vegetation.

DESCRIPTION: This is a large, thick block of stone, carved in relief with a plain-banded border 13 cm wide at the top edge, and a ringed Latin cross below this. The ring is 36 cm in diameter, with cross arms that extend past the ring to a span of 52 cm. The stem extends from the base of the stone to the border at the top.

DISCUSSION: This slab is almost identical to the 12th-century altar front at Kilmolash Church (WA-11). Like Kilmolash, Knockmaon was under the jurisdiction of Lismore in the 12th century (Ó Carragáin 2010, 196), so the same influences driving the creation of the Kilmolash altar (see WA-11) were presumably at work here as well. Indeed, they are so similar that it may be suggested that they came from the same workshop.

WA-16

Lisgenan



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies within Drum

PARISH: Lisgenan

TOWNLAND: Mill and Churchquarter

SITE NAME: Lisgenan Church

ITM: 616905 580920

O.S. MAP: 38

RMP: WA038-026003

TYPE: Ogham stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone or Slate

DIMENSIONS (from present ground level): Height 89 cm; Width 34–38 cm; Thickness 28 cm

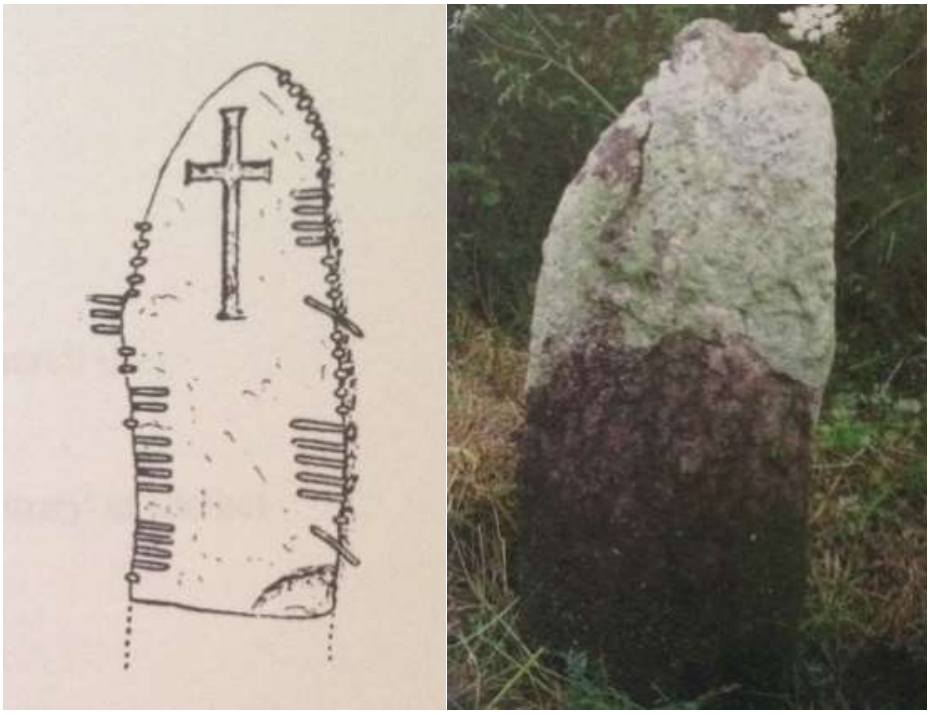
FIRST RECORDED: According to Atkinson (1884, 308), the earliest known publication of this stone is on page 414 of Brash's 1879 *The Ogam Inscribed Monuments of the Gaedhil in the British Isles*. It was found on the west end of the graveyard of Lisgenan Church, being reused as a modern headstone (*ibid*).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

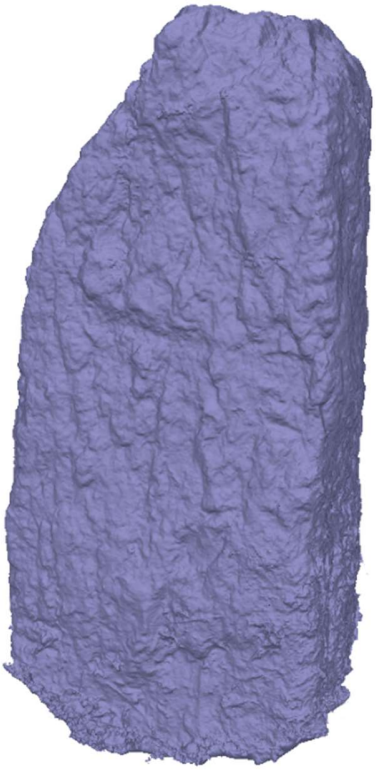
CONDITION: Heavily weathered. A portion of the top of the east face has flaked off, and a vertical fracture on the dexter side of the face indicates that further flaking of its surface is inevitable.

DESCRIPTION: This is an irregularly shaped pillar of stone with '…DI MAQI MUCOI IVODACCA' (Macalister 1945, No. 269) inscribed in ogham along both edges of its east face. A Latin cross is unevenly incised into the upper half of the east face, though it was not visible upon inspection of the stone in October 2018; photogrammetric analysis of the stone was required for confirmation.

DISCUSSION: Macalister illustrates this ogham stone as having a very distinct Latin cross with expanded terminals, deeply incised onto its east face (1945, no. 269). Thounhurst more accurately describes it as an irregularly carved linear cross with plain terminals (2007, 274). The ogham inscription likely dates to the 5th or 6th century (see Chapter 4), and though the chronological relationship between the inscription and cross cannot be conclusively established, there is no reason why they cannot be presumed to be contemporaneous (Chapter 4).



The Lisgenan ogham stone (Macalister 1945; Thounhurst 2007)



Photogrammetry model of WA-16

Lismore

Lismore (*Lis Mór*) was founded by St Carthach, or Mochuda (†636), sometime in the early 7th century, or, possibly, the late 6th. The first annalistic obituary for an abbot of Lis Mór is in 610, though a Lughaidh of Lis Mór died in 588 (*AFM* M588.3; M610.2). St Eochaidh, the second abbot recorded in the *Annals of the Four Masters* for Lismore, died in 634 (*AFM* M634.2). St Mochuda himself followed two years later, styled 'Bishop of Lis Mór and Abbot of Raithin (Rahen), though he is thought to have been expelled from the monastery of Rahan, in Co. Offaly, prior to founding Lismore (*AFM* M636.2; Byrne 1987a, 171). Lismore continued to be referenced frequently in the annals throughout the rest of the early medieval period, with a long list of obituaries for abbots and other ecclesiastics recorded (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 350). Lismore is also referenced as being plundered or burned three times (*AFM* M831.4: *AU* U1116.3; U1121.5). From an early date, Lismore was an important monastery, and housed a school and scriptorium (O'Keeffe 1994, 120; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 350). It produced seven early medieval carved stones, dating mostly to the 9th century. Six of these are finely inscribed and well-executed, and stand as testament to Lismore's 'high intellectual profile' (O'Keeffe 1994, 120). Lismore became the seat of a diocese after the Synod of Ráith Bressail in 1111, and was at the forefront church reforms and the development of a 'native Romanesque' style in early 12th-century Munster (*ibid*, 118–9).

WA-17

Lismore 1



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Coshmore and Coshbride

PARISH: Lismore

TOWNLAND: Lismore

SITE NAME: St Carthage's Cathedral

ITM: 604815 598667

O.S. MAP: 21

RMP: WA021-019005

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 104 cm; Width 42 cm

FIRST RECORDED: In one account, this stone was found when the foundations of the tower were being dug *c*. 1827 (Fitzgerald 1854, 201). In another, the stone was being used as a headstone in the graveyard *c*. 1834 before being moved into the cathedral for safe-keeping (Cotton 1855, 222-3). Regardless, this stone was recorded as being in the nave by 1849 and set into the west wall by 1912 (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 334).

PRESENT LOCATION: Attached to the west wall of the nave

CONDITION: Fairly good, though there may be some limewash dripping onto the stone, presumably from an unidentified leak in the building.

DESCRIPTION: A large unshaped slab incised on its lower end with a ringed equal-armed cross with expanded and bifurcating terminals. Just above is the inscription *BENDACHT FOR ANMAIN COLGEN*. The top half of the stone is undecorated.

DISCUSSION: This stone has already been thoroughly analysed by Oskasha and Forsyth (2001 333–5), who dated this stone by its cross form and inscription to the 9th century (*ibid*). Curiously, though the slab is large, the carving occupies only the lower half of the stone. It was probably intended to lie recumbent, oriented so that a person could read the inscription when knelt to pray, facing east (*ibid*).

WA-18

Lismore 2



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Coshmore and Coshbride

PARISH: Lismore

TOWNLAND: Lismore

SITE NAME: St Carthage's Cathedral

ITM: 604815 598667

O.S. MAP: 21

RMP: WA021-019011

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Limestone

DIMENSIONS: Height 54 cm; Width 18–35 cm;

FIRST RECORDED: See entry for WA-17

PRESENT LOCATION: Attached to the west wall of the nave

CONDITION: Good, though there may be some limewash dripping onto the stone, presumably from an unidentified leak in the building

DESCRIPTION: A smooth, naturally heart-shaped slab inscribed with *SUIBNE M̄ CONHUIDIR* in two lines across the top of one face, below which is an incised linear ringed Latin cross. It has greatly expanded terminals on the cross arms and top of the stem, and a pointed terminal at the bottom of the cross stem.

DISCUSSION: This stone has already been thoroughly analysed by Oskasha and Forsyth (2001 336–8), who cogently argue that this stone commemorates Suibne, Abbot of Lismore, who died *c*. 855 and was potentially related to another abbot, commemorated on WA-19 (see Chapter 4). Interestingly, the pointed base of the cross stem is suggestive of a skeuomorphic representation of a metal reliquary cross, intended to be inserted through a leather belt while carried in processions (Lionard 1961, 139).

WA-19

Lismore 3



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Coshmore and Coshbride

PARISH: Lismore

TOWNLAND: Lismore

SITE NAME: St Carthage's Cathedral

ITM: 604815 598667

O.S. MAP: 21

RMP: WA021-019012

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 43 cm; Width 35 cm

FIRST RECORDED: See entry for WA-17

PRESENT LOCATION: Attached to the west wall of the nave

CONDITION: Good

DESCRIPTION: A small unshaped slab incised with a well-executed cross with expanded terminals, resting on what may be intended to represent the stand or base of an altar, or perhaps processional cross (see Chapter 4). The *BENDACHT FOR AN̄ MARTAN* is inscribed in three lines, the first two of which are carved on either side of the cross.

DISCUSSION: This stone has already been thoroughly analysed by Oskasha and Forsyth (2001 339-40), who suggest that this stone commemorates Martan Ua Roichligh, Abbot of Lismore, who died *c*. 878. He was potentially related to Suibne, another abbot, who is commemorated on WA-18. The base of the incised cross may be skeuomorphic of an altar cross (see Chapter 4).

WA-20

Lismore 4



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Coshmore and Coshbride

PARISH: Lismore

TOWNLAND: Lismore

SITE NAME: St Carthage's Cathedral

ITM: 604815 598667

O.S. MAP: 21

RMP: WA021-019013

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 95 cm; Width 38 cm

FIRST RECORDED: See entry for WA-17

PRESENT LOCATION: Attached to the west wall of the nave

CONDITION: The inscription is in good condition, though there is some chipping along the edges of the stone.

DESCRIPTION: A large rectangular slab with a plain outline Latin cross set within a base incised across most of one surface. In the remaining blank space, and at the opposite orientation to the cross, is inscribed *ŌR DO DONNCHAD*. On either side of the top of the cross arms and at the same orientation are the initials 'D' and 'C', the latter of which is carved over the earlier inscription.

DISCUSSION: This stone has already been thoroughly analysed by Oskasha and Forsyth (2001 341–3). Typologically it is very similar to many of the recumbent slabs from Iniscealtra, and like WA-17, it was oriented so that a person could read the inscription when knelt to pray, facing east (*ibid*). The initials 'DC' are indicative of later reuse (*ibid*), similar to five cross-slabs from Clonmore, Co. Carlow which were inscribed in the 19th century (Chapter 8).

WA-21

Lismore 5





COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Coshmore and Coshbride

PARISH: Lismore

TOWNLAND: Lismore

SITE NAME: St Carthage's Cathedral

ITM: 604815 598667

O.S. MAP: 21

RMP: WA021-019014

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 16.5 cm; Width 18.5 cm; Thickness 5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Discovered when the foundations of the cathedral library were being dug in 1851 (Cotton 1855, 223), and was attached to the west wall of the nave along with the other inscribed stones, sometime before 1912 (Oskasha and Forsyth 2001, 344).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: The cross head is broken off just below the transom and there is some damage to the back of the cross at the top, and to the edges of the dexter cross arm.

DESCRIPTION: A small solid-ringed cross head carved in relief, with the inscription *'ŌR DO CORMAC P…'* in two lines on one side, which is otherwise undecorated. The opposite face has an incised edge moulding around the cross.

DISCUSSION: This stone has already been thoroughly analysed by Oskasha and Forsyth (2001 334, 344–6), and though its date is uncertain, a 9th–12th-century range might be suggested (*ibid*; Chapter 4). Like the previous four slabs discussed, this cross functioned as a commemorative funerary monument. However, unlike the others, it is carved on both sides and so was always intended to sit upright. The 'P' at the end of the inscription has a curved line on the left side of its stem, which is usually the abbreviation for *pro* (Oskasha and Forsyth 2001, 345). However, its meaning is uncertain; it could be the beginning of a personal name or a title, or, instead, it could be a continuation of the inscription, describing Cormac's status, albeit switching from Irish to Latin (*ibid*, 345–6).

WA-22

Lismore 6



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Coshmore and Coshbride

PARISH: Lismore

TOWNLAND: Lismore

SITE NAME: St Carthage's Cathedral

ITM: 604815 598667

O.S. MAP: 21

RMP: WA021-019015

TYPE: Figural sculpture

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 58 cm; Width 23 cm; Thickness 12 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Set in the west wall of the church (Westropp 1897, 357).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Fairly good, with many details still clearly visible, though the inscription on the stone is largely illegible.

DESCRIPTION: A seated figure carved in relief, holding an open book which is inscribed; however the only letters which can still be read are '.NN..RUSAU….UM…P NN…URN' (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 348). O'Keeffe describes the figure as having a head that 'is large relative to the body…Its forehead is short, its ears are high, and lines are gouged on the cheeks and around the mouth. Tendrils of hair are visible on the head's right-hand side' (1994 121–3).

DISCUSSION: This is a well-known sculpture, which has already been discussed in detail elsewhere (*ibid*, 121-4; Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 347-9). Its purpose is not entirely clear; it may have served a structural function as a corbel or caryatid, or else have been a decorative wall panel (*ibid*). Regardless, it is thought to date from the early 12th century (O'Keeffe 1994, 123).

WA-23

Lismore 7



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Coshmore and Coshbride

PARISH: Lismore

TOWNLAND: Lismore

SITE NAME: St Carthage's Cathedral

ITM: 604896 598644

O.S. MAP: 21

RMP: None

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 54 cm; Width 37 cm; Thickness 13 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Discovered in June 2017, during the course of fieldwork for this project on the eastern end of the graveyard at St Carthage's Cathedral, being used as a headstone.

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

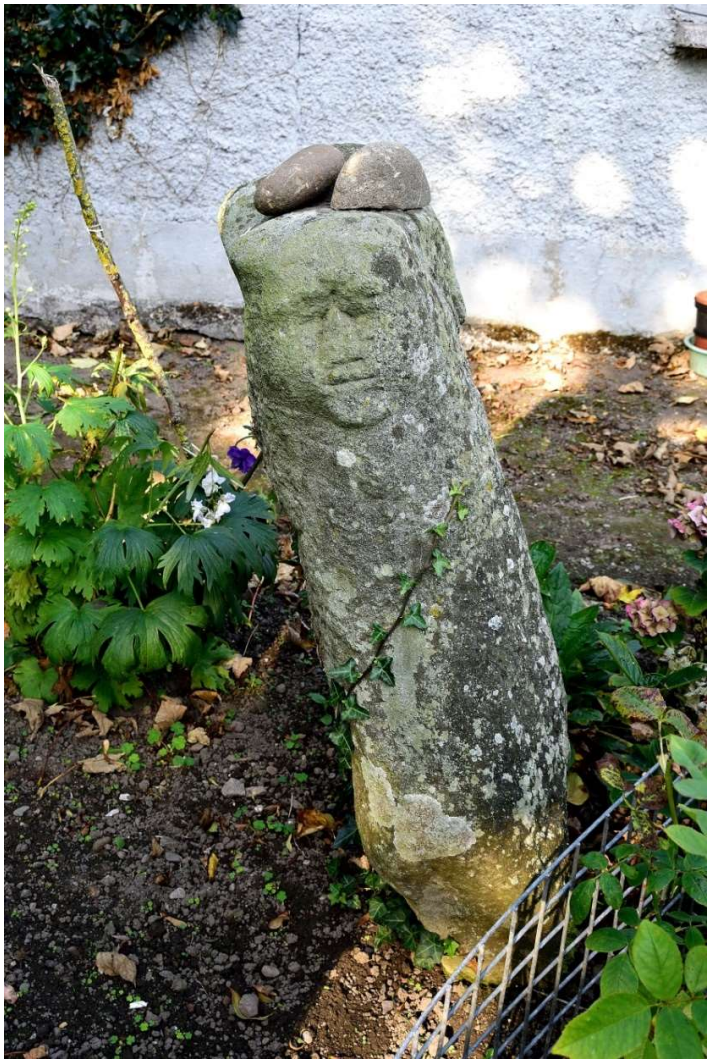
CONDITION: Fairly good; there is some flaking on the top dexter corner of the eastern face but this does not obscure the cross, which is still clearly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is an unshaped slab with a roughly executed outline Latin cross incised on one face. The terminals of the cross arms are plain, but the top of the cross stem ends in an expanded terminal. The opposite face is uncarved.

DISCUSSION: The execution of this cross-slab contrasts starkly with the others at Lismore. It is a moderately sized, unshaped stone with a simple cross design, suggesting it may be fairly early, perhaps 7th–8th century, particularly considering the quality of the carving that Lismore was producing by the 9th century (see Chapter 4).

WA-24

Middlequarter



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies without Drum

PARISH: Dungarvan

TOWNLAND: Middlequarter

SITE NAME: Middlequarter

ITM: 623950 590960

O.S. MAP: 36

RMP: WA036-033

TYPE: Figural sculpture

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 92 cm; Width 23 cm; Thickness 42–56 cm

FIRST RECORDED: In the flower bed on the southern side of a farmhouse, just east of the field containing the remnants of Cill Lasrach (Farrelly 2017a).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: The stone does not appear to have suffered any damage and face is still easily visible, though the 'body' is very faint.

DESCRIPTION: The stone is sub-rectangular, with a wedge- or heart-shaped head carved in false relief the top of its narrow south-facing side. The eyes appear to be closed, and it has a wedge-shaped nose, straight closed mouth, and rounded chin. There is an unevenness to the stone below the face which could indicate the body, but it is not definitive, and could easily be natural surface variations.

DISCUSSION: There are several examples of similarly carved stone and metal faces/figures at ecclesiastical sites in Ireland (see WA-7). In addition, this sculpture might also be paralleled with the six sculpted figures on White Island, though it is not nearly so detailed, and lacks the rectangular socket which may be suggestive of a function as part of a composite structure (Lanigan Wood 2004, 50; Ó Carragáin 2010, 338, n. 198). It is also similar to the Killedeas 'Bishop' Stone, also in Co. Fermanagh (see Chapter 4, Fig. 4.42). WA-24 may have served an architectural (and, perhaps, apotropaic?) function, though whether it was incorporated into the fabric of a building or wall, or could have instead been a caryatid, as Farrelly suggests (2017a).

WA-25

Mothel 1





COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Upperthird

PARISH: Mothel

TOWNLAND: Mothel

SITE NAME: Mothel Abbey

ITM: 639667 616451

O.S. MAP: 7

RMP: WA007-010012

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 120-128 cm; Width 68 cm; Thickness 16-18 cm

FIRST RECORDED: In the graveyard to the south of the ruined church, being reused as a modern headstone (Manning 1981).

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably in approximately the same location, though significantly more of the stone's surface has been exposed since it was first recorded. A very recent headstone has been erected directly in front of the slab, so it seems likely that it has been repositioned to accommodate this new burial. Alternately, *c*. 60 cm of topsoil had been removed from around the stone.

CONDITION: The top of the stone has suffered considerable damage since the slab was first recorded by Manning; the corners of the stone and some of its sinister edge having been broken off, including a small portion of the sinister cross arm. However, the cross is otherwise in good condition, and still clearly visible.

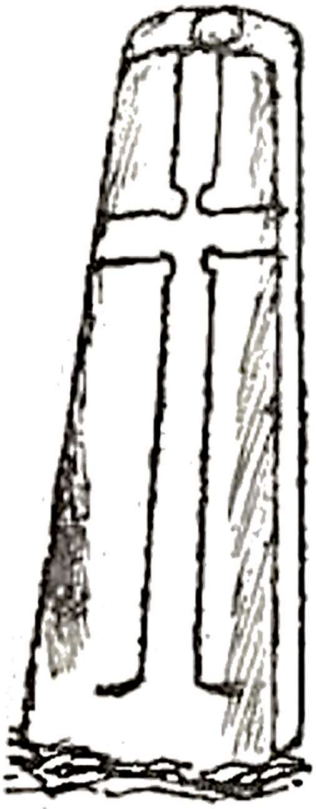
DESCRIPTION: A large slab with well-dressed sides, carved in relief with a hollow-angled Latin cross, *c*. 13-14 cm wide on its east face. The cross spans most of the length and breadth of the slab; the top of the stem tapers down from a relief carving into a flatly incised one, though it is not precisely clear where the stem terminates. However, the terminals of the cross arms are clearly defined, and span 59 cm, across the width of the slab.

DISCUSSION: As Manning has already suggested, this was likely to have originally been a recumbent grave-marker (*ibid*), probably 11th or 12th century in date (see Chapter 4). However, the position of the new burial immediately in front of this stone calls into question the suggestion that this slab was reused as a headstone for a modern grave. While it may certainly be true in some cases, the creation of an entirely new burial plot directly on top of the presumed earlier burial would be odd, particularly as they are located on the periphery of the graveyard, and ample space is still available at Mothel for new graves. The current position of this early medieval cross-slab may have instead been the result of 'tidying efforts', such as those carried out at Clonmore, Co Carlow (see Chapter 8), when that particular grave plot had not yet been allocated for a burial.

WA-26

Mothel 2





COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Upperthird

PARISH: Mothel

TOWNLAND: Mothel

SITE NAME: Mothel

ITM: 639711 616367

O.S. MAP: 7

RMP: WA007-011

TYPE: Pillar

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 116 cm; Width 25–42 cm (top and base); Thickness 21 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Standing at the entrance to a farmyard, *c*. 100 m southeast of Mothel Abbey (Power 1897, 117)

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: The stone itself is in good condition, but the cross is no longer visible

DESCRIPTION: A well-shaped stone pillar with a hollow-angled Latin cross incised in outline, spanning its west face. The cross was so worn when it was first recorded in 1897 that it was only visible in the right light (*ibid*); however it is now eroded away entirely. The top of the pillar has a circular hollow, 12–13 cm diameter and 10 cm deep.

DISCUSSION: This pillar may have functioned as a termon or boundary marker within the ecclesiastical estate of Mothel (see Chapter 5). The circular depression at the top of the pillar is bowl-shaped, and unlikely to have had an architectural function. It could instead be related to ritual practices (*ibid*); however, this is speculation.

WA-27

Shanakill



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies without Drum

PARISH: Dungarvan

TOWNLAND: Shanakill

SITE NAME: Shanakill

ITM: 622363 591012 (orig. location)

O.S. MAP: 35

RMP: WA035-016003

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS (from Okasha and Forsyth 2001): Height 26 cm; Width 34 cm; Thickness 7.5cm

FIRST RECORDED: This slab was found *c*. 1900 at what is thought to be an old church site in Shanakill. It had been in private hands for a few decades, but was lost by 1951 (Power 1910, 103; 1952, 130).

PRESENT LOCATION: Unknown

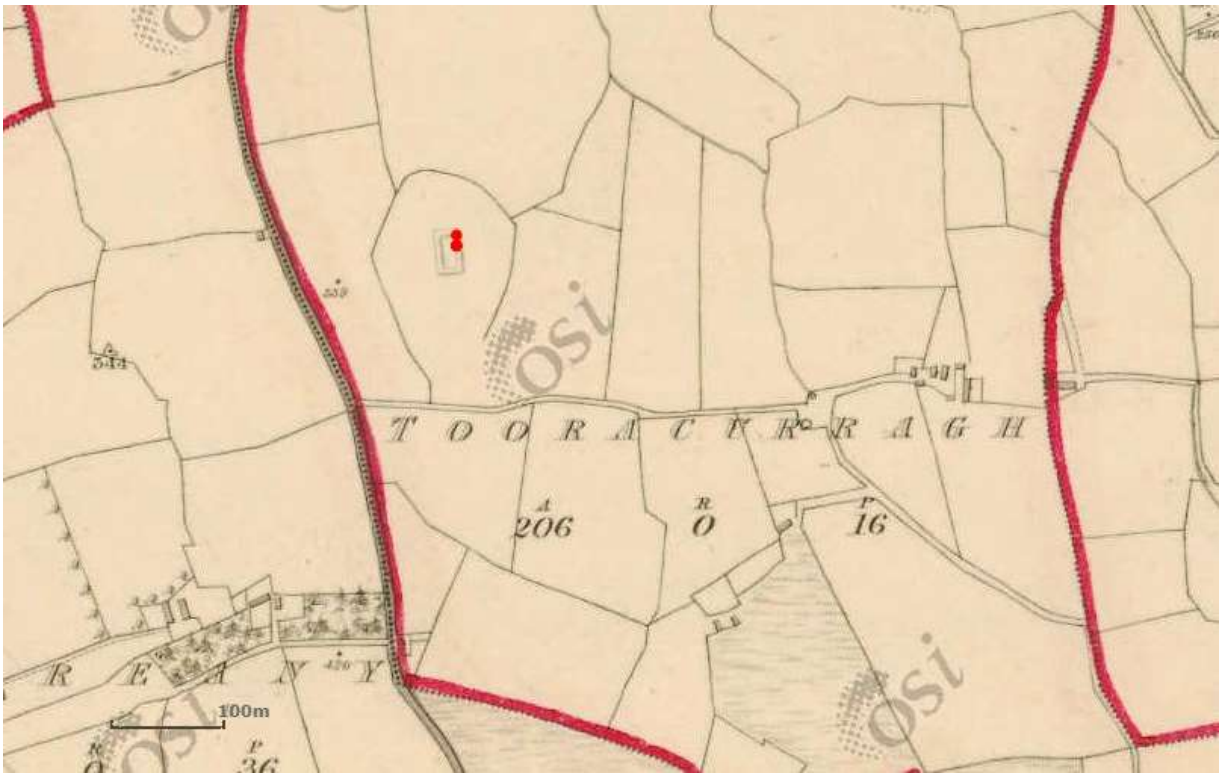
CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: A small sub-rectangular slab fragment, now lost, with 'AEDUIE' inscribed in Latin script across the bottom of its face. Above the inscription are two equal-armed crosses. One of these is roughly centred on the slab, and deeply pocked into its surface, possibly with rounded terminals. The other, which may be later than the aforementioned cross, and contemporaneous with the inscription (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 353), is more lightly incised on the dexter side of the slab. It is formed of a double-lined cross stem and single-lined arm with a T-bar terminal on its dexter side.

DISCUSSION: This slab has already been the subject of in-depth analysis by Okasha and Forsyth (*ibid*, 351–3). It seems to have been carved in two phases, with the cross in the centre being first, and the dexter cross and inscription being contemporaneously added later (*ibid*). The inscription is probably incomplete, and may have continued below the surviving portion (Power 1910, 103-6; Macalister 1949, 109-10). Power interpreted the inscription as *Áed Uí* (1910, 104), though some doubt has been cast on this interpretation (Okasha and Forsyth 2001, 354-5). Regardless, it is stylistically similar to many of the small 7th–8th century slabs from Toureen Peakaun and undoubtedly, was likewise commemorative in nature (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Tooracurragh

This stone was originally found in what was first described as a *lis/lios*, or rath (Power 1923, 197; Lyons 1946, 85-6), but its size (*c*. 165 m north-south by 115 m east-west) indicates that it was probably an ecclesiastical enclosure (Moore 2010). The enclosure is *c*. 700 m from the parish border of Kilronan, so perhaps it may be speculated that this may have represented a subsidiary border church, possibly to Cill Rónáin. This suggestion may be strengthened by the presence of an ogham stone (below), which was re-carved with a cross sometime later, possibly coinciding with the establishment of a church site here (see Chapter 5).



OS map showing possible ecclesiastical enclosure and church, within which a cross-carved ogham stone, WA-28, was first recorded

WA-28

Tooracurragh



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Glenahiry

PARISH: Kilronan

TOWNLAND: Tooracurragh

SITE NAME: Tooracurragh

ITM: 617014 612983/ 617021 613383

O.S. MAP: 5

RMP: WA005-014003/WA005-012

TYPE: Ogham stone

MATERIAL: Grit

DIMENSIONS: Height 132 cm; Width 38 cm; Thickness 28 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Lying near a passage between the road and a nearby farm, acting as a lintel across a gullet that channelled water overflow from the field in which it lay (Power 1923, 196–7). Its original location, however, is thought to have been within a nearby enclosure, from which it was taken *c*. 1886 (Lyons 1946, 85).

PRESENT LOCATION: It was moved to the back garden of a farmhouse at the request of Rev. Power *c*. 1923, which is *c*. 400 m north of its original location, where it still remains.

CONDITION: Entirely overgrown with vegetation and no longer visible.

DESCRIPTION: A tall, unshaped pillar of stone with 'DOMOKI' inscribed in ogham on the dexter edge of its east face (Macalister 1945, No. 301). The east face also features two crosses; one is a Latin cross c. 23 cm long, with rounded terminals and semi-circular base, resembling an anchor. Above this is a Maltese cross carved in false relief on its upper face, *c*. 25 cm in diameter, with raised pellets within its cantons.

DISCUSSION: The inscription may be 5th century, and the iconography of the incised cross is typically indicative of an early date as well. The two could possibly be contemporaneous, or else the cross may have been added a relatively short time later (see Chapter 4). Maltese crosses occur on ogham stones frequently enough that Swift has suggested they represent a distinct subgroup of the 6th and 7th centuries (1997, 77). However, the upper Tooracurragh cross is carved in false relief, which indicates it dates to the 8th century or later (see Chapter 4).

WA-29

Unlocated



COUNTY: Waterford or Cork

BARONY: Unknown

PARISH: Unknown

TOWNLAND: Unknown

SITE NAME: Unknown

ITM: None

O.S. MAP: None

RMP: None

TYPE: Quern stone

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS (from Power 1939-40, 25): Diameter 46 cm; Thickness 4 cm

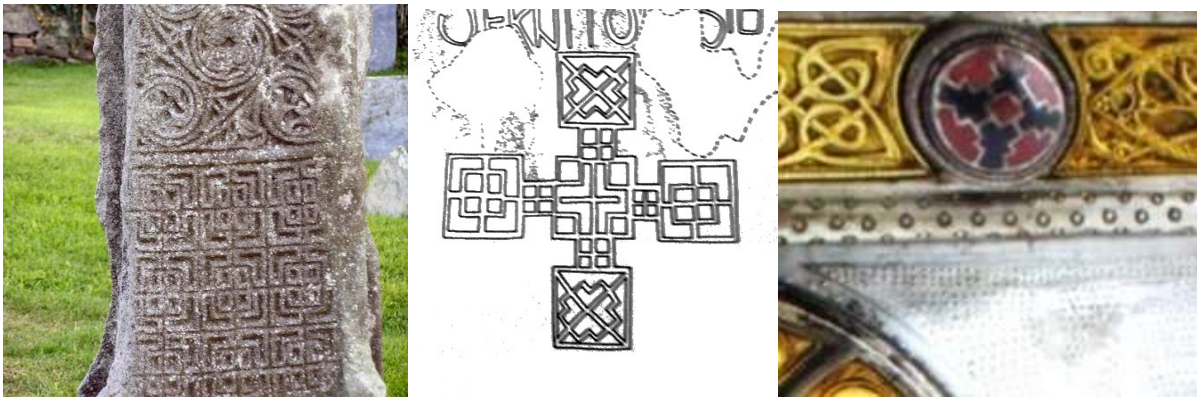
FIRST RECORDED: Purchased in 1915 by Rev. Patrick Power at a sale in Cork (*ibid*)

PRESENT LOCATION: Unknown

CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: This is the top half of a quern stone that has been carved with a ringed equal-armed cross in relief. Each of the arms, which are *c*. 9 cm in width, is decorated with two rows of small incised squares, though this pattern extends only halfway on one of the arms to accommodate a small hole for the quern's handle. At the centre of the cross is a well-worn hole through which grain was poured. This opening is encircled with a decorative incised ring from which small perpendicular lines radiate outward at each of the cross arms. The outer portion of the cross ring is also decorated with small squares.

DISCUSSION: This quern stone is of unknown provenance, though Power suggested Lismore as a possible location of origin (*ibid*). While this postulation cannot be substantiated, such a finely executed carving would have almost undoubtedly been commissioned by an ecclesiastical site of considerable means. The use of small squares in a geometric pattern is similarly paralleled in the design of the cross-potent incised onto the East Cross at Toureen Peakaun, and on a lower panel on the 8th- or 9th-century North Cross at Ahenny, as well well as in metalwork such as the Ardagh Chalice (see Chapter 4).



North Cross at Ahenny; East Cross at Toureen Peakaun; geometric detail on the Ardagh Chalice

Dubia

WA-30

Clashmore 2



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Decies within Drum

PARISH: Clashmore

TOWNLAND: Clashmore

SITE NAME: Clashmore Church

ITM: 612415 584184

O.S. MAP:

RMP: None

TYPE: Cross-slab

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 43 cm; Width 33-36 cm; Thickness 16 cm

FIRST RECORDED: On 10 October 2018, during the course of fieldwork for this present study. It is being used as a headstone in the graveyard of Clashmore Church, *c*. 10 m south of the southeast corner of the church.

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Only the bottom portion of the stone is above ground but what is visible is in fairly good condition, albeit well-worn around the edges.

DESCRIPTION: A well-dressed block of sandstone which tapers slightly from top to bottom, and with what is presumably the stem of a Latin cross *c*. 3 cm wide deeply incised in outline down the centre of its east face.

DISCUSSION: It seems unlikely that, if the stone were whole, the main body of the carving would be buried so that the design was no longer visible. This would indicate that this is probably a fragment of, rather than a complete, cross-slab that has been inserted into the ground upside down. Outline crosses in Ireland generally date from the 8th century onward, though some may be as early as the 7th century (see Chapter 4). However the morphology of this slab is more typical of the later part of the early medieval period and in particular, its slightly tapering shape would suggest that is roughly contemporary with the 12th century cross-slab found *c*. 5-6 m to the west (WA-6). Alternatively, its thickness may indicate that it could arguably be classified as a transitional monument (see Chapter 4), which would place it in the late 12th century, or even in the early part of the 13th century. Yet without unearthing the rest of the slab, these suggestions remain tentative.

WA-31

Lismore 8



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Coshmore and Coshbride

PARISH: Lismore

TOWNLAND: Lismore

SITE NAME: St Carthage's Cathedral

ITM: 604827 598636

O.S. MAP: 21

RMP: None

TYPE: Sundial

MATERIAL: Schist

DIMENSIONS: Height 98 cm; Width 43 cm; Thickness 9 cm

FIRST RECORDED: During the course of fieldwork for this project in June 2017. The sundial was found leaning against a large tree just south of the entrance to the cathedral.

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: The top fifth of the stone has flaked off, including half of the dial face. Additionally, the top dexter corner of the slab has broken off.

DESCRIPTION: This is a minimally shaped slab, carved with the bottom remnants of a sundial, incised onto the top third of one face. There is a plain, linear Latin cross attached to the bottom, and a small perforation at what would have been the centre of the dial face, into which the gnomon would have been inserted.

DISCUSSION: WA-31 is probably later medieval in date, as wholly circular 'mass-clocks' or 'mass-dials' are associated with later medieval buildings. The Lismore sundial is notable, though not unique, in that it appears to have been free-standing, whereas most mass-dials are scratched or cut into the south-facing walls of later medieval churches (Hamlin 1987b, 34–5).



WA-32

Mothel 3



COUNTY: Waterford

BARONY: Upperthird

PARISH: Mothel

TOWNLAND: Mothel

SITE NAME: Mothel Abbey

ITM: 639682 616469

O.S. MAP:

RMP: WA007-010007

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 62 cm; Width 21-40 cm; Thickness 8 cm

FIRST RECORDED: This may be the cross referred to by Blackett in 1851 as ‘in the church-yard, used as a head-stone to a grave’ (498).

PRESENT LOCATION: In the graveyard of Mothel Abbey *c*. 8.5 m east of the church ruins, presumably in the same location.

CONDITION: The top of the cross stem is heavily eroded, as are the arms, and the edges of the base are chipped in places.

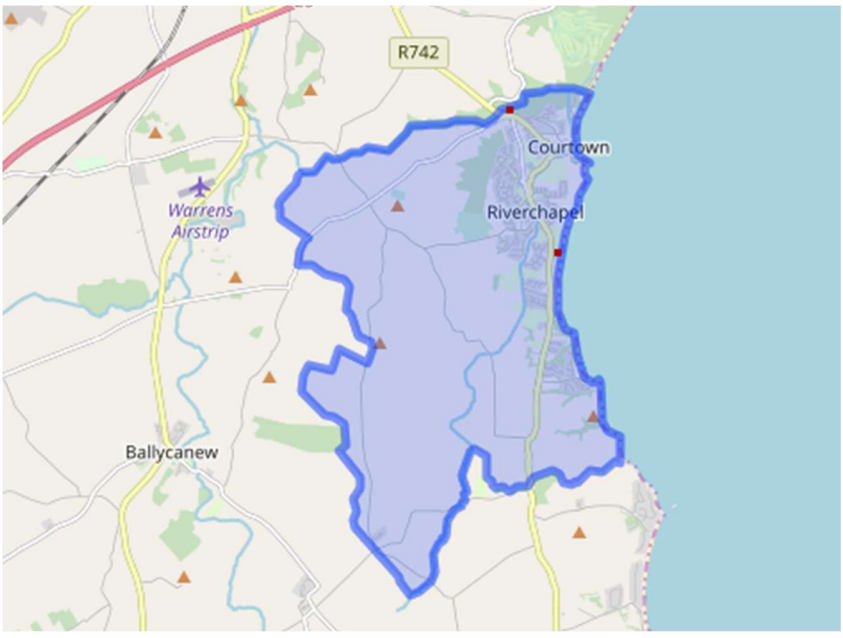
DESCRIPTION: A small cruciform stone with a trapezoidal base 40 cm across. The cross arms span 38 cm and taper towards their terminals. The intersections of the cross are softly rounded and the cross stem, which is 21 cm wide below the intersection, has been worn down to the point in which it only barely rises above the cross arms.

DISCUSSION: This stone seems likely to be the finial cross to the church described by Blackett (1851, 498), in which case the RMP number WA007-010007 should no longer be considered a redundant record. This would also indicate that this cross is later medieval in date. However, other early medieval carved stones have been found there (WA-27 and WA-28), given its advanced state of wear, an early medieval date for this cross should not be entirely ruled out.

County Wexford

Ardamine

The parish of Ardamine encompasses an area of 16.9 km^2 on the northeast coast of county Wexford. Its northern border follows the path of the Owenavorragh River, which separates it from the parish of Kiltennell. St Aidán, more often referred to as St Maedóc, of Ferns (†624/5) was said to have landed at *Ard Ladrann*, which has been identified with Ardamine, sometime in the late 6th century after studying under St David at his monastery of Menevia in Pembrokeshire, Wales (Plummer 1910 vol. 2, 315; Breen 2009b). According to 11th and 12th century versions of the *Life of St Maedóc*, he reputedly established his first church in the region of *Ard Ladrann* on lands granted him by a local chief, Dimma mac Finntan (*Vita sancti Maedoc I*, §xx, §xxx, 148, 152, in Plummer; *Vita sancti Maedoc II*, §xx–i, §xxx, 300, 303, in Plummer; *Life of Maedoc of Ferns II*, §xxix–x, §xli, 205–6, 215, in Plummer). Ardamine may have also been a seat of Uí Cheinnselaig kingship, at least during the first few decades of the 8th century. Colcu mac Bresail, of the Síl Chormaic branch of the Uí Cheinnselaig (Byrne 1987a, 148; Culleton 1999, 52), is referred to as the king of *Ard Ladrann* in the *Annals Ulster* (U722.2). However his son, Áed, is titled king of Leinster (*AU* U738.4). He fell in the battle of *Áth Senaig* against Áed Allán and the Uí Néill in 738 (*ibid*) and was the last Uí Chennselaig king of Leinster until the revival of their power in the 11th century (Byrne 1987a, 148).



Map outlining the parish of Ardamine; the parish church, presumably at or near the site of Ard Ladrann, as well as a large termon cross, WX-1 (below) are marked in red.

WX-1

Ardamine



South Face *North Face*

COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Ballaghkeen North

PARISH: Ardamine

TOWNLAND: Ballinatray Lower

SITE NAME: Ballinatray Lower

ITM: 719112 656737

O.S. MAP: 12

RMP: WX012-006

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Shale

DIMENSIONS: Height 211 cm; Width 102 cm; Thickness 10–21 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Published by Hore and accompanied by a sketch, as part of his 'Notes' at the end of volume 6 of his *History…of Wexford* (1911, 641–2).

PRESENT LOCATION: Situated on a ridge at the edge of a wooded area, *c*. 70m south of the Owenavorragh.

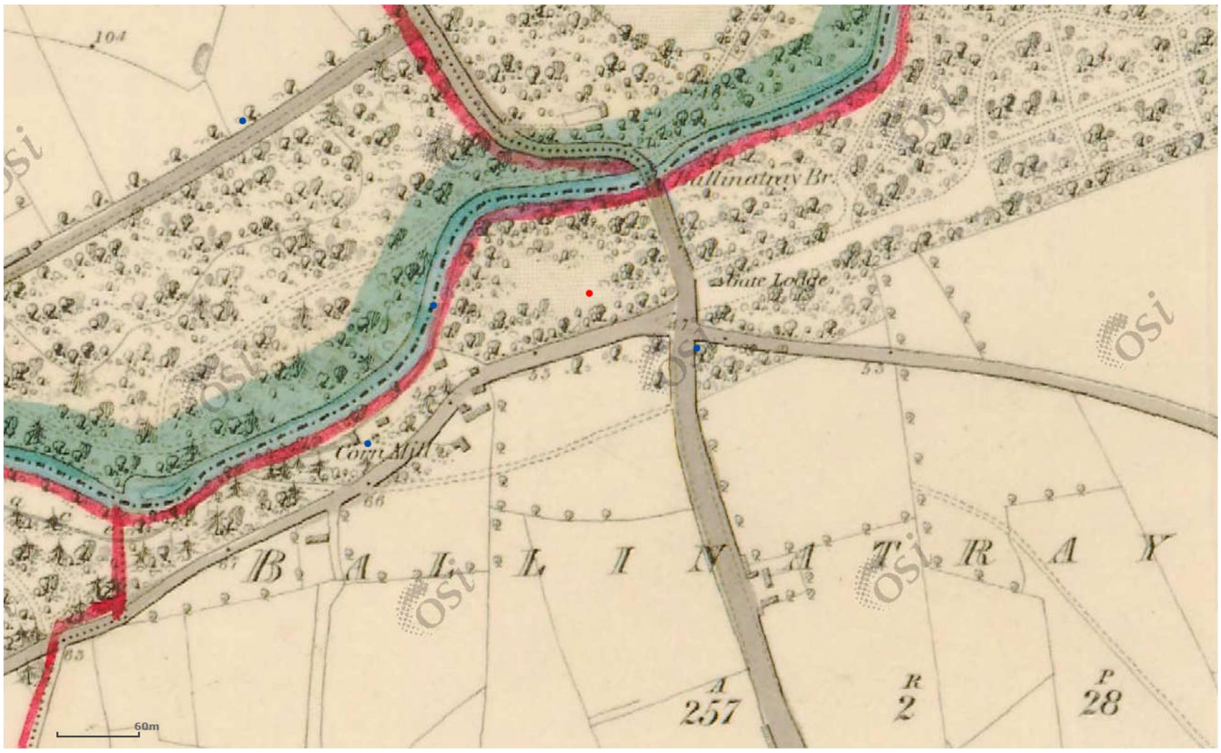
CONDITION: The top corner of one arm has been broken off and the shaft has suffered some minor chips and flaking. However the incised cross is in fairly good condition.

DESCRIPTION: This is a tall cruciform stone with an almost equal-armed ringed cross carved on each face. The incised crosses occupy almost the entire crux of the stone on each side, with the north cross measuring 45 cm high by 43 cm wide and the south cross measuring 48 cm high by 46 cm wide. The shaft of the monument is 46 cm and the arms span 37 cm.

DISCUSSION: While this stone has been classified as a high cross in the SMR database as well as by Harbison (1992a), the criteria of what constitutes a high cross is not always clearly defined (Kelly 1986). Most free-standing crosses which are considered 'high' crosses were skilfully and ornately carved, erected by a wealthy patron or patrons (e.g. the 'Cross of the Scriptures' at Clonmacnoise), and had various combinations of commemorative, didactic and devotional functions. Furthermore, they are usually situated within the core of the ecclesiastical site. However this is clearly not the case with WX-1, which is simply carved and stands in isolation, and fulfilled a different function to that of 'typical' high crosses. Moreover, as WX-1 has not been subject to the same rigorous level of study that most of the free-standing, iconographically complex 'high crosses' have been (see Chapter 1), it is included in this corpus. The stone for the cross was probably sourced locally, as Hore wrote that it was made of 'Bannoge stone', so named for the neighbouring quarry (1911, 641). It is currently known as the 'Kilbride Cross' though in the past it had also been referred to as the 'Courtown Cross' (*ibid*, 145). Kilbride townland, in the parish of Kiltennell, lies just northwest of Ballinatray Lower, and though there is no physical trace or memory of a church in the townland for at least the last two hundred years, its Irish placename, *Cill Bhríde* (logainmn.ie), suggests there must have once been one in the area. More importantly, WX-1 is *c*. 100 m south of the parish border between Ardamine and Kiltennell, strategically located on a high ridge overlooking the Owenavorragh where it could be easily seen by those on the river. Its position on the parish border, close to a navigable river and a possibly ancient route-

way (see Chapter 5) indicates that WX-1 acted as a boundary or termon marker, most likely for the ecclesiastical estate of Ardamine, considering its (local) importance in the early medieval period (see above).

Cruciform stones enjoyed a wide date range and distribution during the early medieval period (Chapter 4) so on its own, WX-1 would be difficult to place chronologically. Harbison proposed it was modelled on a wooden prototype, and suggested a 9th century date for this cross (1992a vol. 1, 345, 377). Joseph Ranson connects the creation of the Ardamine cross with that of a group of crosses along the Wexford seaboard, including three associated with the church of Kilmuckridge (see below), all of which he tentatively dates to the late 12th century (1948, 103). He bases this theory on their location within disputed diocesan boundaries between Ferns and Glendalough, laid down during the Synod of Ráith Breasail in 1111 (*ibid*). However, while he was most likely correct in suggesting that the Ardamine and Kilmuckridge crosses marked early medieval boundaries, the others – three small crosses clustered together in the parish of Ballyvalloo, and a fourth that is *c*. 120 m south of the ruins of the Ardamine parish church – have more recently been dated to the 18th and 17th centuries respectively (Moore 2012b; 2012c). Additionally, the Kilmuckridge crosses probably date to the 11th or early 12th century (Chapter 7), and stylistically, WX-1 dates from the 8th century onward (Chapter 4). However, perhaps an early 8th-century date might be suggested, taking into consideration that Ardamine was the seat of Uí Chennselaig kingship at this time (see above). Alternately, one could also argue that WX-1 could also have been erected under the patronage of the Uí Chennselaig after they regained the kingship of Leinster the 11th century. This seems less likely as their seat of kingship was at Ferns in the 11th and 12th centuries (see below), though should not be ruled out since Ardamine was thought to have been founded by Maedóc of Ferns (above).



1839 OS map showing northern boundary of Ardamine parish (marked in green), and WX-1 (in red), positioned overlooking the Owenavorragh as well as close to a crossroads.

Ardcavan

Ardcavan (*Airdne Chóemáin/Coemhain*) is situated on a rise in a low-lying landscape, *c*. 0.3 km from Wexford Harbour. The church was reputedly founded by *Caomhán Santleathan* (wide saint?), some time in the 7th century (Culleton 1999, 126–7; Ó Riain 2011, 157). In 819, *Dairinis Caomháin* ('The Oak Island of Caomháin') was plundered by foreigners (*AFM* M819.4); this may be a reference to Ardcavan, considering Becc-Ériu, an island in Wexford Harbour, *c*. 2.2 km to the northeast, was raided at this time as well (*ibid*). Moore (2018a) has also equated an annalistic obituary for Ciaran mac Maeldubh (†890) with Ardcavan, but Ciaran mac Maeldubh was named abbot of *Airdne Coluim* (*AFM* M890.3), *c*. 1.6 km to the north (*Monasticon Hibernicum*), not *Airdne Coemhain*. The death of Ua Ruarcain, *airchinneach* ('superior' or 'ecclesiastic administrator') of *Airdne Coemhain*, is, however, recorded in the year 1055 (*AFM* M1055.9). By 1615, Ardcavan was impropriated to Henry Wallop, though it is unclear if there was still a resident priest at Ardcavan, or what condition the church was in at that time (Hore 1911, 268). The remains at Ardcavan include the fragmentary ruins of a stone church at the west end of a raised, oval graveyard, as well as a font and a cross-slab (WX-2). St Cavan's Well is c. 200 m to the northeast.



Map showing Ardcavan to the southwest, Ardcolm to the north, and Begerin Island (Becc-Ériu) to the northeast

WX-2

Ardcavan



(image source: C. Corlett)

COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Shelmaliere East

PARISH: Ardcavan

TOWNLAND: Ardcavan

SITE NAME: Ardcavan

ITM: 706521 624189

O.S. MAP: 38

RMP: WX038-006004

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 50 cm (from ground); Width 61 cm; Thickness 12 cm

FIRST RECORDED: On the east side of the graveyard at Ardcavan, found by Christian Corlett in 2018.

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Very good, apart from two large chips missing from the top dexter corner; the top one looks to have occurred fairly recently. The lower chip, however, may have occurred before the stone was carved, as the cross-frame extends onto its surface. Alternately, the continuation of the frame onto its surface could be indicative of a later repair.

DESCRIPTION: This is a granite cross-slab incised in outline with either a hollow-angled Latin or equal-armed cross, *c*. 49 cm wide, within a rectilinear frame.

DISCUSSION: This cross-slab was probably a recumbent grave-marker; based on its dimensions above ground, it is very similar to similar to the 'Type A' group of slabs from Clonmacnoise, which are dated to the 8th–9th centuries (see Chapter 4). This slab could, then, be roughly contemporary with a possible annalistic reference to Ardcavan, in 819 (see above).



'Type A' slab from Clonmacnoise (after Macalister 1909)

Becc-Ériu (Begerin Island)

The monastic school of *Becc-Ériu* was said to have been founded by St Ibar (†500, *AU* U500.2; *AFM* M500.2), sometime in the 5th century, on what was originally an island on the north side of Wexford Harbour, now called Begerin Island. However the marsh-ways dividing it from the mainland have since been infilled as part of land reclamation projects during the 19th century. St Ibar is usually referred to in the written sources as Bishop Ibar, and in the 12th-century glosses of the *Félire Óengusso*, the commentator describes a conflict between Patrick and Ibar as an explanation for the origin of the name *Becc-Ériu*, or 'Little Ireland' (119, in Stokes). The two saints have a disagreement after which Patrick says 'Thou shalt not be in Ériu', and Ibar replies, 'Ériu shall be the name of the place in which I am wont to be' (*ibid*). The story is perhaps allegorical of the adversarial relationship between Armagh, which was trying to exert its claim as the pre-eminent church in Ireland, and some of the southern churches, which could claim to have been founded by pre-Patrician saints (Culleton 1999, 66–7, 81–96). *Becc-Ériu* was plundered by Vikings in 819, and the annals also record the deaths of two abbots in 884 and 964, the latter of which was also the bishop and lector of Tallaght (*AFM* M819.4, M884.6, 964.4). The monastic estate of *Becc-Ériu* may have extended to the larger islands south-east as well; the traces of a connecting causeway was found during groundworks in advance of land reclamation, and the pilings of a wharf were found on the north side of Begerin Island (Kinahan 1873, 435). The ruins of a nave and chancel survive on the site (Moore 2013a) and it was still in use as of 1682, though fell into disrepair sometime after (Macalister 1920, 13). Interestingly, there was documented pilgrimage activity at *Becc-Ériu* in the latter half of the 17th century. A wooden idol of St Iberius was located within the church and was as an object of veneration upon which people would swear oaths (*ibid*). The extant early medieval remains from *Becc-Ériu* are the aforementioned church ruins and a sub-circular graveyard to the south-east, in which a cross-pocked boulder (WX-5) was found, as well as two upright cross-slabs that have since been moved from the site (WX-3 and WX-4). A second cross-carved boulder (WX-6) was also extant here as of 1920, but has since been lost. Kinahan (1873, 436) also mentions the presence of a 'very rude cross, 18 inches (*c*. 46 cm) high by 11 inches (*c*. 28 cm) wide' which could possibly be of early medieval date (*cf*. Chapter 4, 'Plain cruciform stones). However, this stone is not recorded in the SMR database and could not be located during fieldwork. Given the brevity of its mention and that the graveyard was still

used into the 19th century, it could just as easily be modern, and thus, was not included in this corpus.



Ordnance survey map showing Begerin Island and the ecclesiastical site of Becc-Ériu (marked in red), as well as islands to the southwest before land reclamation.



Aerial view of the ruins Begerin Church and its sub-circular graveyard to the south-east

WX-3

Becc-Ériu 1



North Face



South Face

COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Shelmaliere East

PARISH: Ardcolm

TOWNLAND: Beggerin Island

SITE NAME: Beg-Erin

ITM: 701636 649875

O.S. MAP: 38

RMP: WX038-004004

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Schist

DIMENSIONS: Height 50 cm; Width 23 cm; Thickness 6 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Sketched by Wakeman in June 1840 (O'Flanagan 1933, inserted between pages 118 and 119) though no further description of the stone is offered in the *OS Letters*. A description of the stone and its approximate position in the graveyard was first published by George Kinahan in 1873.

PRESENT LOCATION: On display inside Ferns Visitor Centre

CONDITION: Most of the disked cross head is missing; only a small portion remains. There is heavy flaking along the sinister edge of what is now the north face and the carving on the south face is heavily worn, particularly the upper panel. The stone has now been erected in a permanent concrete base.

DESCRIPTION: This is a disc-headed cross slab, though most of the circular head was broken off at some point between when it was illustrated in a paper by Macalister in 1920, and when a stylistic analysis of the stone was published by Harbison (1988, 63–5). On its north face is the stem of a Latin cross with a hollowed triangular base carved *c*. 1 cm in relief, and ending 39 cm before the bottom of the slab. Additionally, there are the remnants of an incised circle framing the cross head and upper half of the stem, perhaps forming a ring, as well as two incised lines running vertically from this ring, close to the edges of the stone, to end at the outer tips of the triangular cross base. From Macalister's sketch, this formed part of a thick raised border around the stone, and the cross arms, top of the stem and corners of the triangular cross base extended to its edge (see below). There is no evidence of this raised border on the stone now and may just be the result of an inaccurate drawing, but if it had indeed existed, it has since chipped or flaked off (deliberate?). Earlier illustrations show the south face devoid of any design apart from the horse and rider in the lower panel, suggesting that the upper portion of the south face was already badly eroded by the early to mid-19th century (*cf*. O'Flanagan 133, 118–9; Macalister 1920, 7). Indeed, Harbison was the first to fully describe the decoration on this face (1988, 63–5). The photogrammetry model of the stone confirms the presence of a Maltese cross arm, decorated with an interlace pattern, on the south face of the disc-head. Just below the disc-head is a horizontal band in relief, separating the cross from the panel beneath, which contains three figures wearing calf-length robes. The central figure seems to be facing forward, with the other two turned towards it. The arms of the two outer figures, or perhaps all three figures, may be raised, but the panel is too worn to confirm this. The lower panel is separated from this one by another band in relief, upon which the three upper figures

are standing. In this bottom panel is a figure astride a horse, with one hoof raised as if prancing. Harbison describes the figure as disproportionately tall compared to his mount, and thus suggests he may be astride a pony (*ibid*, 64). However, his legs are actually quite short, as illustrated in Macalister's sketch (1920; see below). The figure appears to be carrying a long pole, or possibly a spear, with the top tilted forward. The bridle and reins are just barely visible, when the photogrammetry model is tilted at the right angle (see below). Additionally, the rider's torso is quite round, suggesting he may also be carrying a shield.

DISCUSSION: Kinahan described this stone, and WX-4, as standing in the graveyard to the south-east of the church ruins (1873, 436), though the exact locations are unknown. WX-3 is thus far the most elaborately carved example of a disc-headed cross-slab encountered during this study, though several others (of varying levels of intricacy) are known from Stroove, Donegal (Herity *et al*. 1997, fig. 30b), Kilmashogue, Co. Dublin (Healy 2009, No. 16), Islay and Iona in Scotland (Fisher 2001, fig. 17) and Llangan and St Edrins in Wales (Redknap and Lewis 2007, G43; Edwards 2007a, P122). Another disc-headed cross-slab occurs at Fassaroe, Co. Wicklow, but its chamfered edges and figural style indicate it probably dates to the end of the 12th century or later (Ó hÉailidhe 1958, fig. 1); the Welsh examples have generally been assigned a late 9th- to early 11th-century date range (Redknap and Lewis 2007, 338; Edwards 2007a, 476). Disc-headed cross-slabs are the dominant monument form in Cornwall and indeed, a disc-headed slab at Sennen (1988, pl. 9; Langdon 2014, 103), with a large Latin cross carved in relief on both faces, provides the closest parallel for the north face of WX-3. This led Harbison to suggest that the monument-form and cross design of WX-3 is based on a Cornish model (1988, 64); however, the Sennen stone has since been dated to the later medieval period as part of a revival of the disc-headed monument form (Langdon 2014, 101). Of course there are numerous examples of disc-headed cross-slabs in Cornwall which date to the early medieval period (*ibid*) but other than the shapes of the monument themselves, there are no other close parallels for the iconography on WX-3. Moreover, while Harbison's suggestion of potential Cornish links is interesting and certainly plausible, there are far closer comparanda for the iconography on WX-3 (and WX-4 as well) from other places around the Irish Sea region (see below). So perhaps at present, it may be left open to debate as to which direction artistic exchange may have been flowing between *Becc-Ériu* and the churches of Cornwall. Cross-carvings that end in a base, like on the north face of WX-3, are usually interpreted as skeuomorphic of an upright wooden cross, or sometimes a metal altar cross

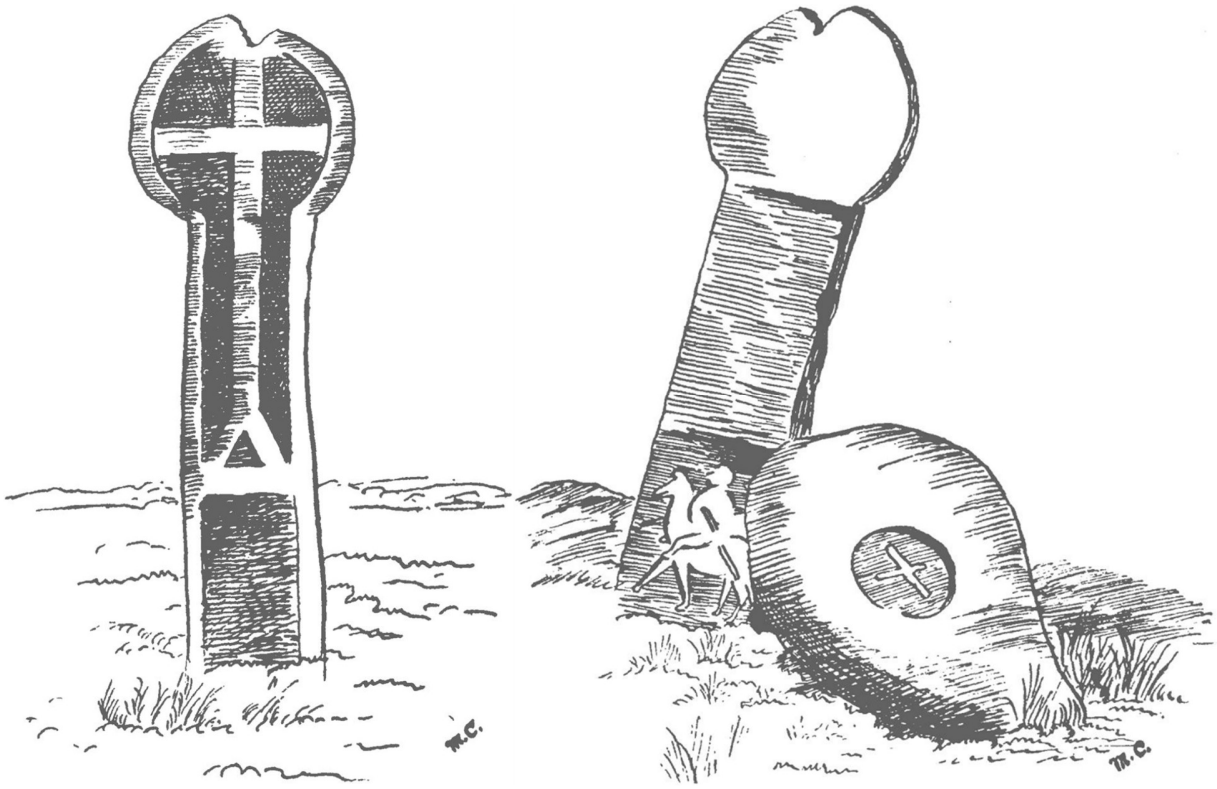
(Edwards 1985, 399–400; Ó Carragáin 2010, 175), though as WX-3 is associated with the grave of St Ibar in at least one tradition (*cf.* Kinehan 1873, 436 with Macalister 1920, 7), perhaps this design commemorates its predecessor, a free-standing wooden cross.

Turning now to the south face of WX-3, the single rider motif on stone sculpture differs from that of a group of riders. A group of mounted horsemen invokes the image of a hunting party or cavalry while a single rider was often intended to invoke one of permanence and authority (Alcock and Alcock 1992, 240; Redknap and Lewis 2007, 336), or as Hall puts it – a 'God-endorsed model of Christian kingship' (2011, 154). Parallels are primarily found in Scotland, Wales, northern England and the Isle of Man, though a solitary horse and rider does appear on the west cross shaft at Old Kilcullen, Co. Kildare (Harbison 1992a, 160, fig. 534). Similar examples in Scotland are found on two cross shaft fragments from St Blane's Church in Kingarth, Bute (Fisher 2001, 74, nos. 6 and 7), a Pictish stone from Rossie Priory which shows a rider underneath a cross decorated with knotwork (Harbison 1988, pl. 11), and on the 9th-century Dupplin Cross, which commemorates the Pictish king Causantín mac Fergusa (†820; Forsyth 1995, 237; Alcock and Alcock 1996; Hall 2011, 154). In Wales, Face 'C' of the base of Llandough cross in Glamorgan displays a single rider facing to the left, and has been dated late 10th–early 11th century (Redknap and Lewis 2007, G42h, 337). Pigment applied to the plaster cast of the monument (*ibid*, pl. 8) shows the figure sitting far forward with leg touching front of horse's chest, in what may be a similar position to that of the rider on WX-3. In England, a cross shaft from Chester-le-Street, County Durham (Cramp 1984 vol. 2, pl. 20.102) shows a horse with front hoof raised and its helmeted rider carrying a round shield. Though the horse and rider motif on WX-3 is more skilfully executed than the one on the Durham stone, the similarities are clear. Cramp dates the Chester-le-Street cross shaft to the late 9th century (*ibid* vol. 1, 53–4), and states this particular horse and rider motif is distinctively Anglo-Scandinavian, comparing it to a nearby cross shaft from Hart and a hogback stone from Sockburn (*ibid* vol. 2, pls. 79.394 and 139.745). Another Anglo-Scandinavian style cross shaft, albeit dated to the early 10th-century, is recorded at Baldersby in northern Yorkshire and displays a similar rider, though conclusively without a shield, and wearing a kirtle (Lang 2001, 58, ills. 4–7). Finally, a Manx example from Santon, on the Isle of Man, similarly features a combination of a horseman under a Maltese cross (Harbison 1988, pl. 12; Kermode 1907, 139, no. 68, fig. 50). Another interesting comparison, first highlighted by Harbison, is the similarities between the rider on this stone and a solitary, mounted monk illustrated

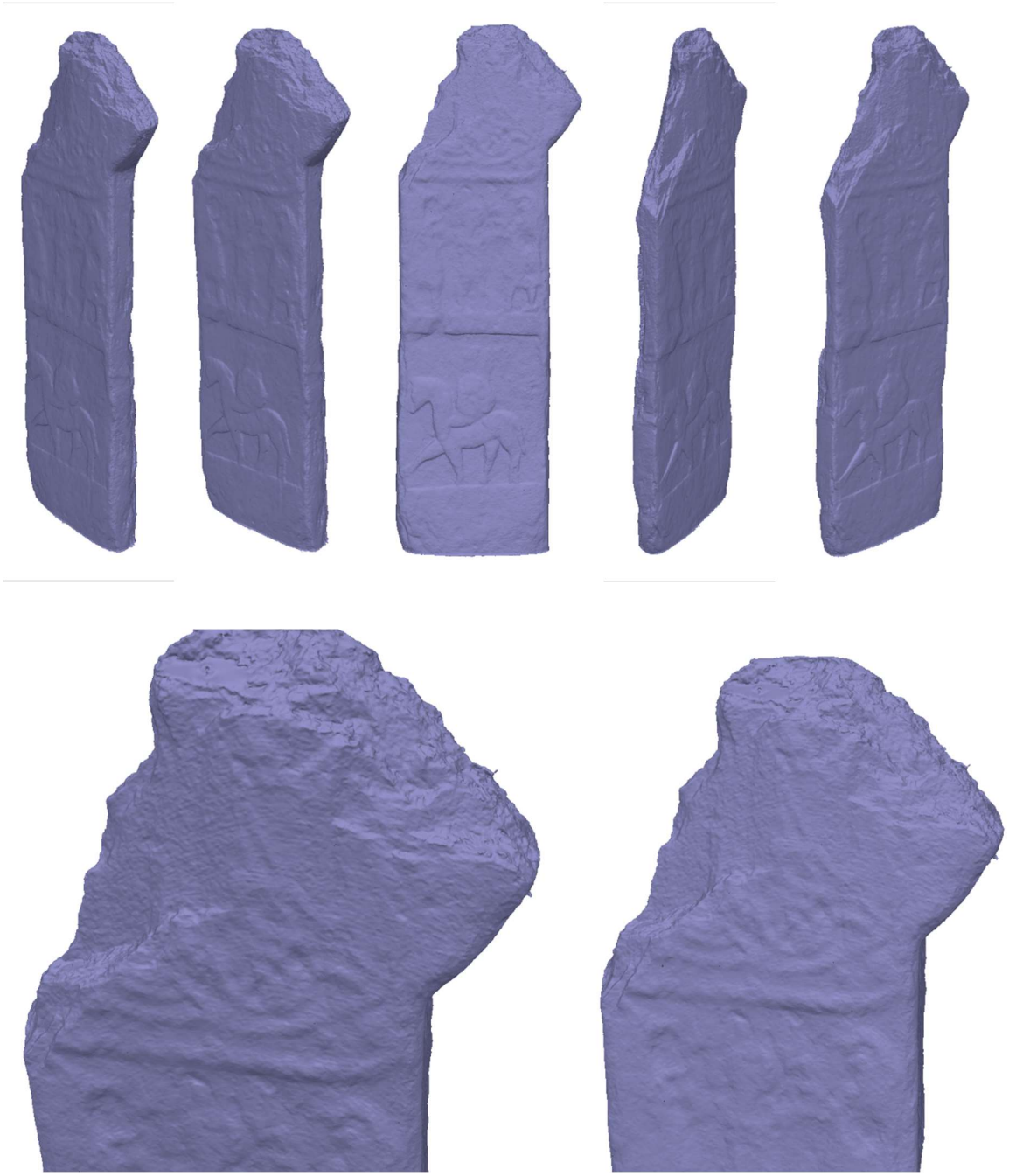
on folio 255v in the *Book of Kells*, which is a departure from the typical warrior-/king-like overtones of this motif. Though as the rider on WX-3 may be carrying a shield, this comparison might not fit here.

The three-figured panel above the rider is too heavily worn to draw anything more than general comparisons, and tentative interpretive suggestions. Harbison suggested the central figure might be facing forward, and the other two turned with hands outstretch towards him, likening the figural panel on this slab with iconography frequently found on Irish high crosses (1988, 65). Though the panel is too worn to pick up much detail, the photogrammetry model indicates that Harbison is probably correct regarding the orientation of the figures, and perhaps the outstretched hands as well, but this is less certain (see below). He theorised the central figure could represent Christ, or alternately, the panel could be a scene of the temptation of St Anthony in the Egyptian desert (*ibid*). There is a Pictish cross-slab from the Tarbat peninsula in Scotland (Meyer 2011, TR20, fig. 4.6) that shares some similarities to the upper panel on WX-3. The panel of the figural scene on the Tarbat slab is likewise separated from the one above it by a horizontal band in relief and features three robed figures, though it also contains a fragment of a fourth, albeit slightly larger in scale that the others. Kellie Meyer interprets this figure as Christ, and the three figures facing him as apostles or high-ranking ecclesiastics (*ibid*, 187). However, she also suggests an alternative interpretation that the carving could be depicting specific liturgical practices – either a priest and his attendants celebrating the Mass, or an anthropomorphised representation of the four Gospels, used in the *Apertio aurium* ceremony (*ibid*, 188–9). This symbolism is also an integral motif on the Ruthwell cross, and St John and his eagle sit in a place of prominence at the apex of the north face of the cross head, serving as a continual reminder of the ceremony to its congregation (Ó Carragáin 2005, 144). The 'hawk-like head' of the sinister figure led Harbison to speculate it could represent one of the animals in the Temptation of St Anthony (1988, 65). Alternately, perhaps the figure could instead be interpreted as that of an anthropomorphised eagle, symbolizing the Gospel of St John. This is doubtful, however; firstly, because there are only three figures on WX-3 – not four. Also, the shape of the sinister figure's head may very likely be the result of natural wear. Returning to Meyer's other conjecture regarding the Tarbat slab, the suggestion that WX-3 could likewise depict a priest and his attendants celebrating Mass is tempting. Though speculative, perhaps the two panels of the south face of this slab depict scenes from St Ibar's life, variously portraying him in the roles of teacher and/or bishop (see above, 'Becc-Ériu'). Such a

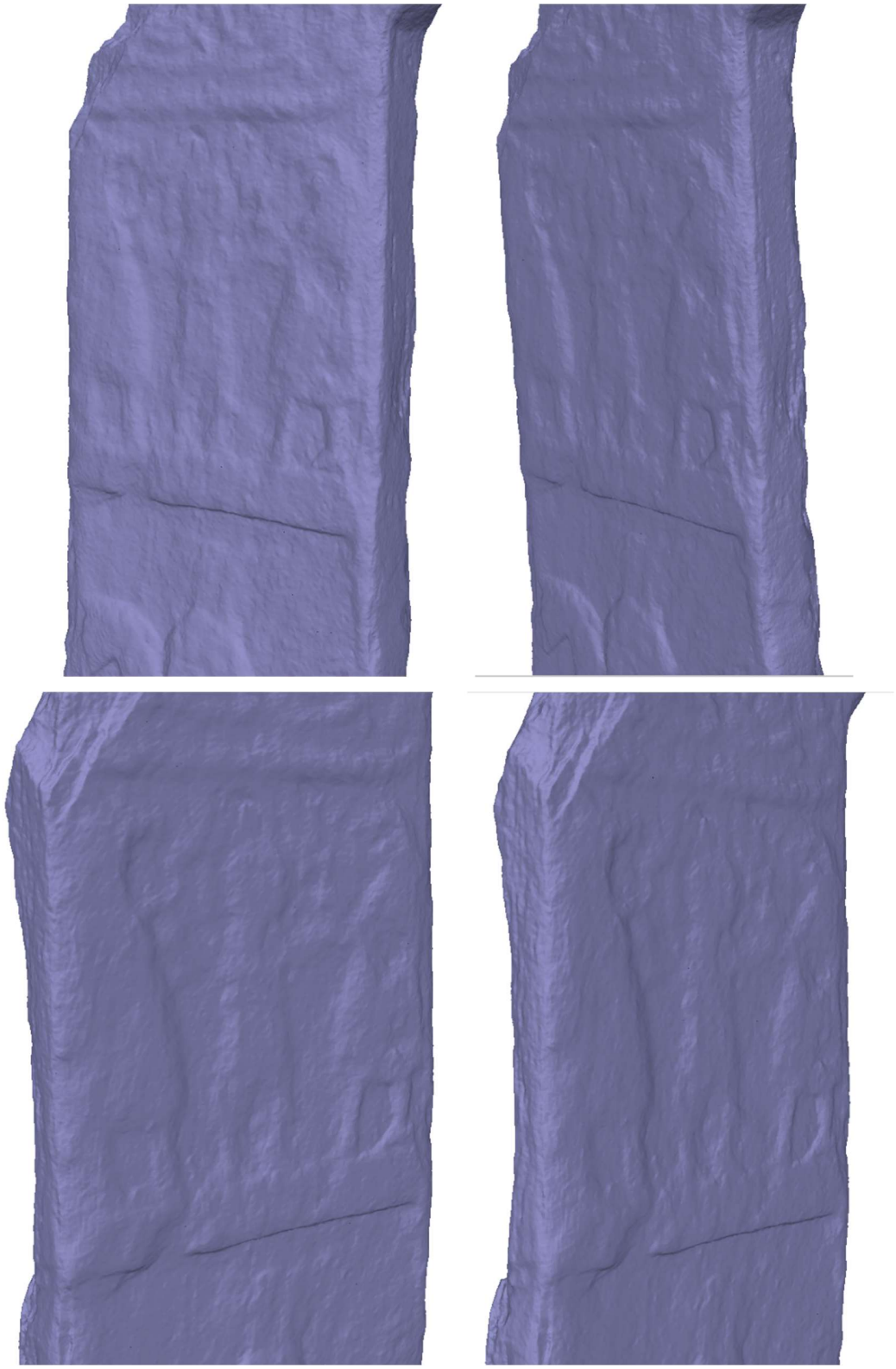
skilfully carved and detailed cross-slab would have undoubtedly been a focal point in the monastic landscape, and may have also served as a focus for devotional practices such prayer, penitence or pilgrimage, both private and public (see Chapter 5). The slab most likely dates to the 9th or 10th century on stylistic grounds, and might have replaced an upright wooden predecessor. It may have marked (or have been thought to mark) the original location of Ibar's grave, or it could have been erected in commemoration of the saint (albeit not as a grave marker). Alternately, perhaps WX-3 was commissioned by an important patron, rather than an ecclesiastic, considering the 'Rider' panel on the south face, which may depict a warrior or king.



Sketches of the north and south faces of WX-3 respectively, the latter also illustrated with WX-6 (now lost) resting against the south face



Full model of south face of WX-3; close-up of cross



Close-ups of figural panel, showing two larger figures turned towards the smaller, central figure



Close-ups of horse and rider motif; mounted monk on folio 255V in the Book of Kells

WX-4

Becc-Ériu 2



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Shelmaliere East

PARISH: Ardcolm

TOWNLAND: Beggerin Island

SITE NAME: Beg-Erin

ITM: Unknown

O.S. MAP: 39 RMP: WX038-004006

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Schist

DIMENSIONS: (from Harbison 1988) Height 77 cm; Width 20.5 (stem) 32.5 cm (cross head)

FIRST RECORDED: Along with WX-3, this stone was sketched by Wakeman in June 1840 (O'Flanagan 1933, insert between pages 118 and 119) though again, no further description is offered (*ibid*). A description of the stone and its approximate location in the graveyard was published in 1873 (Kinahan, 436).

PRESENT LOCATION: National Museum of Ireland; registered no. 1877:112.

CONDITION: The stone has been reassembled from three fragments and now has two fissures – one running diagonally from where the disc meets the shaft on the sinister side to the opposite edge of the slab, a few centimetres above the dexter cross arm. A second crack starts from where the disc meets the shaft on the dexter side and connects with the first on the sinister side of the cross stem just above the ring. The carving itself is worn away, or very nearly, in several places along the lower stem, arm terminals, and on the top dexter and lower sinister quadrants of the ring; the plait ornamentation on the top of the stem is still visible, but worn almost smooth. The stone is broken just below the bottom of the cross so that the entire lower portion of that face is missing.

DESCRIPTION: This is a disc-headed cross slab, carved on one face with a ringed Latin cross in low relief. The shape of the cross is defined in raised linear outline, the interior of which is decorated with interlace, though on the ring it has all but worn away except for a small section in the lower dexter quadrant where it meets the cross stem. At the intersection between the arms and stem are two concentric circular ornaments. The cross head occupies most of the circular disc, and its stem ends approximately halfway down the shaft of the stone. A large portion of the shaft is missing below this, so that the remaining fragment of the stone tapers in a thin wedge-shape down to an irregular base.

DISCUSSION: Its NMI registration number indicates that WX-4 was acquired by the National Museum in 1877, four years after it was recorded whole by Kinahan (1873, 436), which suggests that this slab had been broken into several pieces in the interim, though whether or not this was done deliberately is unknown. Like WX-3, this is a disc-headed cross-slab, a monument-form

which has been found at several sites across Ireland and Britain, but is particularly prevalent in Cornwall (see above). According to Nessa O'Connor, the interlace pattern on WX-4 is unusual in an Irish context but can be compared to examples from Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Man, and in particular, a Manx cross from Braddan (1983, 142–3, no. 60). The bifurcation of strands in the interlace pattern is suggestive of early Scandinavian influence, which would date the stone from the mid-9th to the 10th century (*ibid*; Harbison 1988, 63) and indeed, such influences are unsurprising, considering both Becc-Ériu's close proximity to the Viking town of Wexford, and its easily accessible location along the Irish seaboard (for further discussion of artistic exchange in Wexford across the Irish Sea, see Chapter 7). Like WX-3, the skilful execution of this slab would suggest that it was a focal point in the ecclesiastical landscape. However, since only one face is carved, WX-4 might have been positioned where only one face needed to be seen, such as up against an enclosing element, perhaps marking the entrance to an inner enclosure (see Chapter 5).

WX-5

Becc-Ériu 3



WX-5; Becc-Ériu in 2017, showing position of WX-5 with the overgrown remains of the church in the distance

COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Shelmaliere East

PARISH: Ardcolm

TOWNLAND: Beggerin Island

SITE NAME: Beg-Erin

ITM: 708373 625300

O.S. MAP: 39

RMP: WX038-004005

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Length 57 cm; Width 44 cm (maximum); Thickness 17 cm (minimum)

FIRST RECORDED: Along with WX-3 and WX-4, this stone was sketched by Wakeman in June 1840 (O'Flanagan 1933 vol. 1, insert between pages 118 and 119) though there is no further description in the *OS Letters*. The stone was first described by Kinahan in 1873.

PRESENT LOCATION: Lying in the tall grass, *c*. 30 to 40 m south-east of the church ruins.

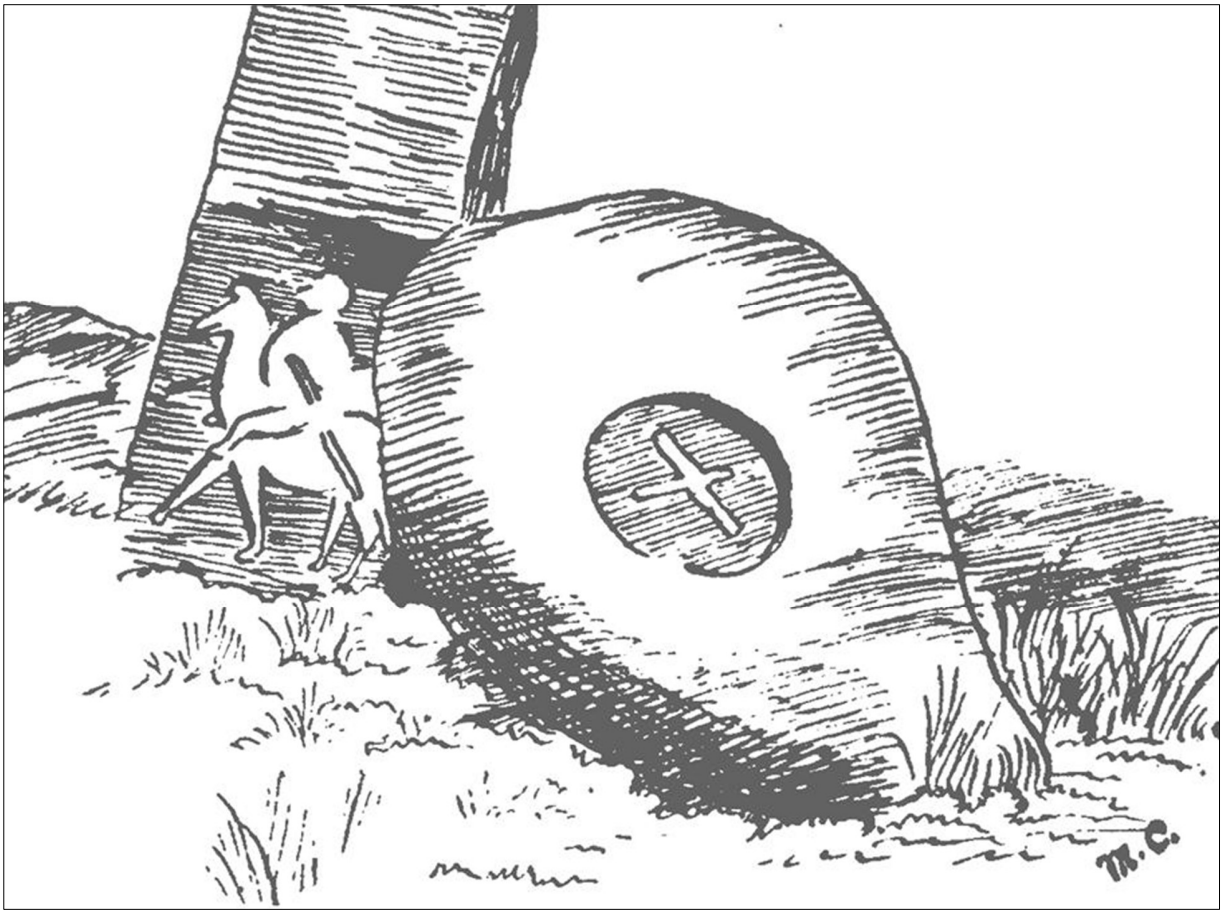
CONDITION: There are some spots of lichen and moss around the north side of the stone, and a thin crack *c*. 10 cm long on the southern end; however the stone is otherwise in very good condition.

DESCRIPTION: This is a roughly heart-shaped boulder, upon which a linear Latin cross within a rectilinear frame is deeply pocked. Some of the pocking is up to 2 cm deep, and a circular depression at the centre of the cross has been hollowed out to a depth of 2 cm as well, though Wakeman's sketch did not illustrated this. The cross measures 18 cm long by 14 cm wide, and the frame is 21 cm long by 18 cm wide. The cross arms and stem do not touch the frame; they end *c*. 0.5 cm to 1 cm before its edge.

DISCUSSION: This stone was clearly depicted next to WX-3 in 1840 (O'Flanagan 1933 vol. 1, 118–9); however Macalister sketched WA-6 next to WX-3 (see below). We know from Kinahan's account that both stones existed (1873, 436), so while either one or both of the conflicting illustrations are certainly inaccurate, they are not just poorly drawn sketches of the same stone. Yet this does raise confusion as to which (if either) of the stones was actually positioned adjacent to WX-3, or if they were merely drawn this way for illustrative purposes. However it might at least be safe to presume that they were located somewhere close by which, if WX-5 has not moved, gives us an approximate location for where WX-3 and WX-6 were first recorded. WX-5 presumably functioned as an early grave marker (Chapter 4); cross-pocked boulders from Ireland and Wales have been variously dated from the 5th to 9th centuries, though most of the Irish examples are fairly early, dating to between the 5th and 7th centuries (*ibid*). A 5th–7th-century date range is likewise suggested here for WX-5, especially as WX-3 and WX-4 may date to the 9th or 10th century, and it seems unlikely that WX-5 would be contemporaneous with such elaborate and skilfully carved cross-slabs (see above).

WX-6

Becc-Ériu 4



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Shelmaliere East

PARISH: Ardcolm

TOWNLAND: Beggerin Island

SITE NAME: Beg-Erin

ITM: None

O.S. MAP: 39

RMP: None

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Length *c*. 46 cm; Width *c*. 28 cm

FIRST RECORDED: A description of the stone was published by Kinahan in 1873, and sketched by Macalister in 1920.

PRESENT LOCATION: Unknown

CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: Kinahan describes WX-6 as ‘an oblong granite stone, on which is a plain cross; this stone is 18 inches by 11, perfectly flat on the back, and convex on the cross-inscribed face’ (1873, 436). Based on Macalister’s sketch (above), the cross appears to be equal-armed and within a sunken, circular area, though it is unclear whether the cross has been incised into this area, or stands out in false relief.

DISCUSSION: Though the stone is not described by Macalister, he provides a sketch of the stone, depicted as resting against the side of WX-3, though the accuracy of its position may be questionable (see above). This stone is an unshaped boulder of similar size to WX-5, and is likewise carved with a relatively simple cross-form, which suggests that it may have also served as a grave marker (Chapter 4). Its morphology suggests it may be roughly contemporary with WX-5, unless the cross is indeed carved in false relief, in which case the stone may date to the 8th century (*ibid*).

Clone Church

Clone, or *Cluain* (meaning 'meadow' or 'glade'), is situated on the gentle knoll of a low, north-facing slope which overlooks a small stream, *c*. 50 m to the north-east, originating from the River Bann 0.8 km to the west. Clone is dedicated to St Maedóc of Ferns, though the earliest source of this association is later medieval (*Monasticon Hibernicum*). The stone church is built in the Romanesque style, and probably dates to the 12th century. However, the presence of three cross-carved stones (WX-8–10) decorated with Maltese crosses indicate that an ecclesiastical site had probably been established at Clone well before the time of its construction, though there are no written references to the site from the early medieval period, and very little is known of its early history. Over the doorway in the west wall (which may have originally been round-headed) is a row of corbels, carved into the shape of heads, and a projecting architrave decorated with a chevron pattern on the outer moulding (Moore 2018b). According to Moore (*ibid*), there is local knowledge of lintelled graves found south of the graveyard during ploughing and a carved stone, believed to be prehistoric, is being reused as a headstone. Additionally, footage recorded by a drone camera operated by Dinny Kinsella and Barry Lacey in 2018 recorded part of the outer ecclesiastical enclosure (diameter *c*. 180 m NW-SE), which survives as two parallel crop marks beginning just south of the stream and to the east of the church and graveyard, extending south and south-west until reaching the road (*ibid*; see below). The curve of the road and a field boundary further north are most likely a continuation of this feature (*ibid*). Archaeological testing c. 100 m northeast of the church, on the opposite side of the stream, revealed evidence of a burnt mound (McLoughlin 2009). In addition to the church, the early medieval remains at Clone include two bullauns, a sundial (WX-7) and three cross-carved stones (WX-8–10).



Aerial view of Clone Church (photo: NMS)



Romanesque doorway at Clone (photo: NMS)

WX-7

Clone 1



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Scarawalsh

PARISH: Clone

TOWNLAND: Clone

SITE NAME: Clone Church

ITM: 701345 647390 (orig. location)

O.S. MAP: 15

RMP: WX015-023004

TYPE: Sundial

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 118 cm; Width of the head 50cm; Width of the shaft 29 cm; Thickness 11 cm (Moore 2019)

FIRST RECORDED: It was first recorded *c*. 1883, lying on a mound adjacent to the graveyard, along with a tenoned base, and an unidentified cross-carved stone, possibly WX-8 or WX-9 (Anon. 1883, 38). It had been re-erected at some point, but was moved to Tintern Abbey for safekeeping by the OPW in 2016 after the collapse of the south wall. In August 2019 it was moved to the Ferns Visitor Centre, where it is currently on display.

PRESENT LOCATION: Ferns Visitor Centre

CONDITION (from photograph): The face of the dial is worn, with some lichen spotting, though the carving is still visible. The top dexter corner of the sundial is more heavily weathered than the other corner; however the dial is otherwise whole and in good condition.

DESCRIPTION: This is a sundial with a semi-circular head attached to a long stem that is slightly recessed so as to emphasise the dial. There is another, smaller, raised semi-circle of stone above the dial with a small round perforation at its centre to accommodate a gnomon, which is now missing. There slightly larger round perforation below this for a second dial hand, which is also missing. The face of the dial is divided into twelve sections by thirteen compass-drawn incised lines, all radiating from the lower gnomon perforation.

DISCUSSION: The sundial, as well as an 'old cross' were described as 'pulled up' and 'tossed about' on a low mound by at least 1883 (*ibid*). However, it had been re-erected at some point, before being removed from the site in 2016 after the collapse of the south wall (see above). The twelve divisions on the dial of WX-7 are reflective of 12th-century reforms to the practice of keeping canonical hours (Moss 2015a), making it roughly contemporary with the construction of the Romanesque church. Moreover, Hamlin states that the duodecimal division of the day was probably brought into Ireland with the Anglo-Normans (Hamlin 1987b, 39), which would suggest a late 12th-century date for WX-7 (Chatper 4). The presence of a sundial at Clone suggests a monastic element to the community at Clone (Chapter 5).

WX-8

Clone 2



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Scarawalsh

PARISH: Clone

TOWNLAND: Clone

SITE NAME: Clone Church

ITM: 701345 647390

O.S. MAP: 15

RMP: WX015-023003

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 33 cm; Width 20 cm; Thickness 50 cm (Moore 2012d)

FIRST RECORDED: Found just south of the west doorway of the church, recorded as part of the archaeological inventory for Co. Wexford (Moore 1996).

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably the same; however access to the church has been restricted since 2016 while repairs are being undertaken to the collapsed south wall of the church, and the stone could not be examined in person.

CONDITION: Unknown; however Moore described the stone as having been 'cut back but had a Maltese cross' (2012d), suggesting that the top of the stone has been recently removed or broken.

DESCRIPTION: Without examining this stone, it is difficult to describe its form fully, but based on the dimensions given by Moore (see above) and the photograph provided by the National Monuments Service, WX-8 appears to be an un- or perhaps minimally shaped carved stone. It is carved on the upper half of its profile with a Maltese cross in false relief, albeit without smoothing out the irregularities in the stone's surface; at the crux is a circular hollow.

DISCUSSION: Based on the data available, the morphology of this stone suggests that it may have originally been an upright grave-marker (Chapter 4). Maltese crosses are found on several early monuments along the west coast of Ireland (*ibid*); however the execution of its cross in false relief indicates that WX-8 most likely dates from the 8th century or later (*ibid*). Yet, upright and small, un-shaped or minimally shaped grave markers usually tend to date to the 9th century or earlier (*ibid*), so this narrows the likely date range for the creation of WX-8 to the 8th–9th centuries. Of the three cross-carved stones still extant at Clone, WX-8 is the most 'pillar-like', and if it still exists, is the most likely of the three to have been the 'cross-pillar' found lying on a mount with the sundial in the late 19th century (Anon. 1883, 38). However this suggestion is speculative, and, on balance, unless WX-8 was originally much taller than it is now, its morphology would indicate that it is unlikely to have been described as a pillar (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.2). Moreover, the 'old cross' was reported as missing from the mound by 1895 (Ffrench 1895, 407), and without a sketch, photograph or more detailed description of it, it may perhaps be too speculative to equate one of the extant cross-carved stones with this monument.

WX-9

Clone 3



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Scarawalsh

PARISH: Clone

TOWNLAND: Clone

SITE NAME: Clone Church

ITM: 701345 647390 (orig. location)

O.S. MAP: 15

RMP: WX015-023006

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 58 cm; Width 50 cm; Thickness 10 cm

FIRST RECORDED: In the graveyard, near the southwest corner of the church, recorded as part of the archaeological inventory for Co. Wexford (Moore 1996). It was moved to Tintern Abbey for safekeeping by the OPW in 2016 after the collapse of the south wall.

PRESENT LOCATION: At Tintern Abbey

CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: This is an unshaped stone, or perhaps only minimally so, as unlike WX-8 the surface of WX-9 appears fairly smooth. The upper half of one face is carved with a Maltese cross in false relief, at the centre of which is a raised circular design with a rounded hollow at its centre.

DISCUSSION: The design of this stone is almost identical to WX-8, and while they may or may not have been carved around the same time or, indeed, by the same hand, it is likely that they are roughly contemporary (see above entry, WX-8, for more detail). Like WX-8, WX-9 was most likely an upright grave-marker (*ibid*).

WX-10

Clone 4



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Scarawalsh

PARISH: Clone

TOWNLAND: Clone

SITE NAME: Clone Church

ITM: 701396 647350 (orig. loc.)

O.S. MAP: 15

RMP: WX015-023012; WX015-024

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Granite?

DIMENSIONS: Height 60 cm; Width 40 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Briefly described by Crawford in his 'List of early cross-slabs and pillars' (1913, 330). In the archaeological inventory for Co. Wexford (Moore 1996), it was recorded in a field, *c*. 40 m south-east of the church graveyard, on the north edge of a plateau overlooking a stream to the north-east. It was kept in the graveyard at Clone in the 1990s, has since been lost (Moore 2018c).

PRESENT LOCATION: Unknown

CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: This is an unshaped boulder or stone with a compass-drawn cross-of-arcs within a linear circular frame, 29 cm in diameter, incised onto the upper surface of one face.

DISCUSSION: The original location of WX-10, a distance away from the church and overlooking the stream roughly halfway between the church and the outer enclosure (see below), would suggest it served as a termon marker for Clone, perhaps associated with an inner enclosing element. However, unless the stone has been broken or is otherwise partially buried, it was likely too short to have functioned effectively in such a role, and may have instead been a grave maker (Chapter 5). Moreover, burials at Clone do extend beyond the extant walls of the graveyard, as modern ploughing has revealed lintelled graves in the fields around it (Moore 2018b).



Arial photos of Clone Church (Source: Dinny Kinsella and Barry Lacey), showing traces of the outer enclosure and the approximate location where WX-10 was originally found

Ferns

Ferns (*Ferna*) was reputedly founded in the late 6th century by Aedán mac Sétna (more commonly referred to by the hypocoristic name, Maedóc), born on Inis Brechmaighe in Magh Slécht, now in Co. Cavan (Breen 2009b). Maedóc is also the patron saint of Drumlane, Co. Cavan and Rossinver, Co. Leitrim. According to the varying accounts in his 11th- and 12th-century *Lives*, Maedóc was granted the lands upon which he founded Ferns by Becc mac Eogan, a member of the Uí Felmeda line of the Uí Chennselaig, or Brandub mac Eochu (†605/8), king of the Uí Chennselaig and also of the Uí Felmeda line, respectively (Plummer 1910 ii, 151, §26; 302, §26; 303, §29; Ó Riain 2011, 432–6). Ferns was an important ecclesiastical site from its establishment, and the deaths of its abbots and bishops are regularly recorded in the annals from 624 onward, starting with St Maedóc (*AFM* M624.3; *AU* U625.3; *Chron. Scot.* CS625; *Ann. Tig.* T627.8); it was burned, raided or plundered at least 6 times (AU U835.5; U839.10, U1042.1; AFM M834.8, M838.11, M917.9, M919.18, M1041.14, M1166.14; *Chron. Scot*. CS834, CS839, CS1041; *Ann. Tig.* T1041.5, T1166.1). Ferns also had close affiliations with Kildare, Tech Moling and Tamhlacht – Lachtnán mac Mochtigern was bishop of Kildare as well as superior/abbot of Ferns (*AU* U875.1, *AFM* M873.3); Laighnen was *comharba* of Ferns and Tamhlacht (*AFM* M937.5); Cairbre mac Laidcnéin was abbot, and then (presumably) his descendant Cairpre/Conchobhar Ua Laidcnéin was *airchinneach,* of both Ferns and Tech Moling at the time of their deaths in 965 and 1043 respectively (*AFM* M965.5, M1043.2; *AU* U1043.4). Additionally, three battles or skirmishes were fought at Ferns, at least two of which were fought by the monastic community itself (*AFM* M764.6; *AU* U769.2, U783.6, U817.5). Interestingly, Cathal mac Dúnlang, who led the monastic community of Tech Munnu against Ferns in 817, is named king of Uí Chennselaig and prior of Ferns in his obituary two years later (*AU* U819.5).

Ferns was the seat of Uí Chennselaig ecclesiastical and political power for most of the early medieval period. Its power and influenced peaked in the mid-11th–12th centuries with the rise of Diarmait mac Máel-na-mBó and his restoration of Uí Chennselaig kingship over Leinster in 1042. During this time Ferns cultivated ties with St Davids, in Pembrokeshire, Wales. It is thought that the Welsh ecclesiastic, Sulien (later bishop of St Davids) took a copy of the *Life of St Maedóc of Ferns* back with him to Wales sometime in the late 11th century after studying in Ireland for ten years, possibly at the invitation of Diarmait mac Máel-na-mBó (Chapter 7). Sulien is credited with translating the *Life* into Latin, which is now the earliest surviving copy, as well as the passages

which place Maedóc in Wales as a student of St David (*ibid*). There is also evidence for an intense rivalry between the saints' cults at Ferns and Clonmore in the 11th and 12th centuries, which is reflected in hagiographical material of the period (see Chapter 8). The diocese of Ferns was established after the Synod of Ráth Breasail in 1111; Diarmait mac Murchadha (†1171) aspired to make Ferns the episcopal see of Leinster, though this did not come to fruition as it was given to Dublin (Doherty 2002).

Ferns is situated on a gentle slope *c*. 150 m south-west of a small stream, which according to his hagiographies, was miraculously created by St Maedóc (Plummer 1910 ii, 151, §27; 302, §26). Its archaeological remains include a cathedral which is thought to stand on the site of the early medieval church, originally built in the 13th century but heavily modified over the centuries (Moore 2012e), as well as four high crosses, a smaller granite cross (WX-13), two cross-slabs (WX-11 and WX12) and a holy well *c*. 110 m north-east of the cathedral. A geophysical survey conducted in 2015 revealed two parallel ditch features, *c*. 45-60 m apart, to the east and south of the graveyard, which could be the remnants of a concentric ecclesiastical enclosure, with the outer enclosure having an internal diameter of *c*. 200 m (Dowling 2015, 8–9). Additionally, at least two isolated enclosures, *c*. 30 m x 20 m, were recorded, which may have been animal pens associated with the early medieval monastery (*ibid*, 9–10).

WX-11

Ferns 1




WX-11 in 2016, half-buried in the graveyard at Ferns; WX-11 unearthed photographed by Christian Corlett in 2011

COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Scarawalsh

PARISH: Ferns

TOWNLAND: Ferns Upper

SITE NAME: Ferns

ITM: 702122 649765

O.S. MAP: 15

RMP: WX015-003030

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Schist

DIMENSIONS: Height 97 cm (52 cm above ground); Width 17–44 cm; Thickness 12 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Recently discovered in Ferns graveyard by Christian Corlett (2011); maximum height and minimum width taken from Corlett (*ibid*).

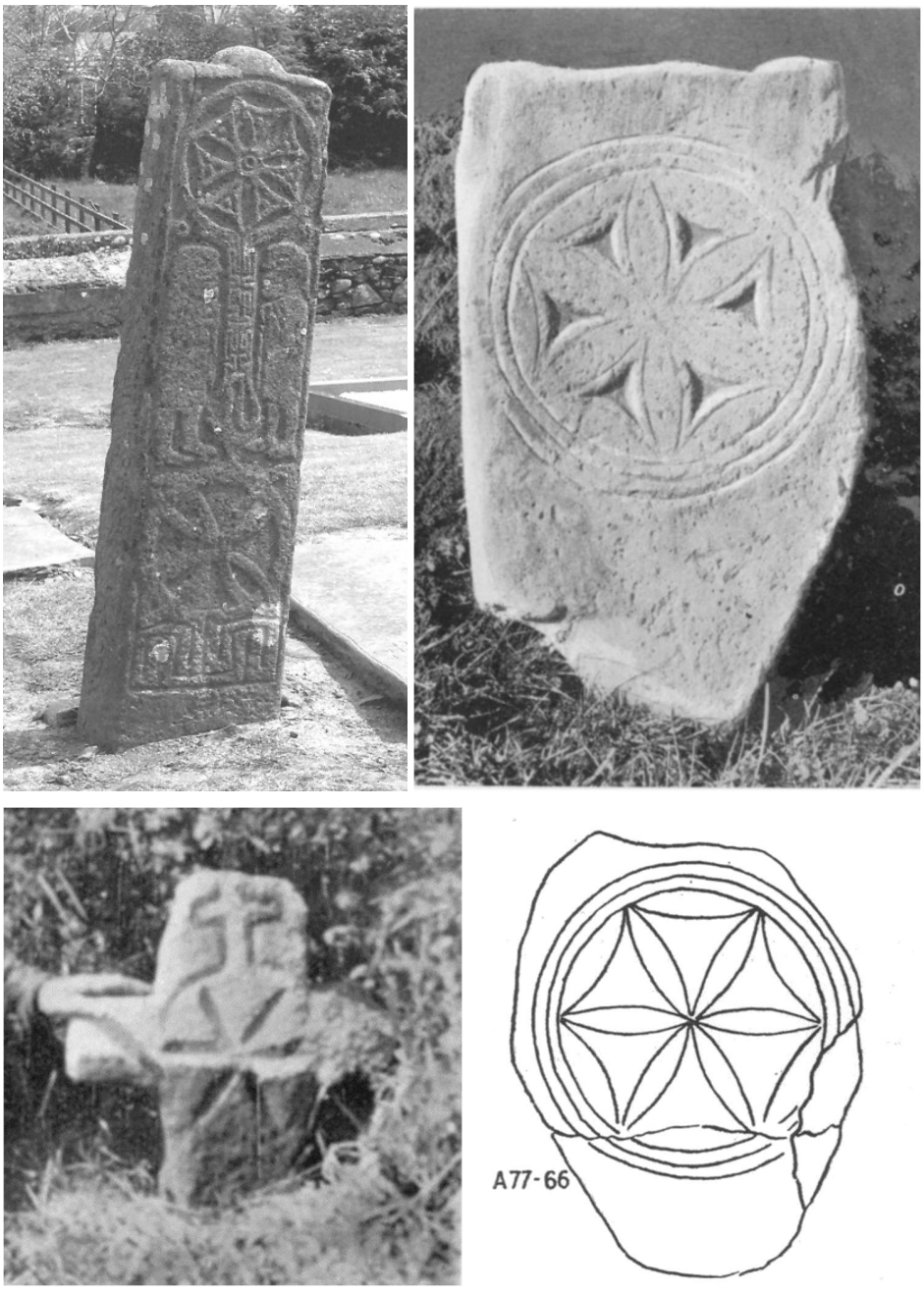
PRESENT LOCATION: Same location, deeply buried and leaning heavily to the east.

CONDITION: The top of the slab was broken off long ago and the dexter side of the carving is more worn than the sinister side; however the slab is in fairly good condition overall.

DESCRIPTION: The slab tapers sharply to its base, though the top c. 25 cm of the stone that has not been broken off appears to be less carefully shaped than the rest of the slab. Its east face features a marigold 31 cm in diameter carved in false relief inside an incised ring; above and attached to this ring is an incised Latin cross, which begins *c*. 5 cm below the top edge of the slab. Half of the stone is now buried under the ground; however Corlett's photograph shows an incised stem which extends the length of the slab and ends at its edge.

DISCUSSION: The design on this grave marker is well-executed and probably compass-drawn. While the marigold motif, as well as the related cross-of-arcs, were used throughout the early medieval period in a variety of media, i.e. manuscripts, metalwork, architecture and sculpture, they may have first arrived in Ireland and Britain via Christian contacts along the western seaways, probably by the late sixth century (Chapter 7). Marigolds are found at a number of ecclesiastical sites in Ireland and Britain, mainly concentrated in areas that are easily accessible by sea, and ecclesiastical sites along navigable waterways (*ibid*). The marigold motif is particularly prevalent at Gallen Priory, and a few ringed examples can be compared to the one at Ferns (Kendrick 1939, nos. A45, A77-66 and A173). The form of the marigold on WX-11 is similar to the one carved on the well-known 'Marigold Stone' from Carndonagh, Co. Donegal. Additionally, a slab from Kilberry, Argyll in Scotland is likewise carved with a marigold in false relief (Fisher 2001, fig. 2D). Corlett (2011, 200) posits the marigold on WX-11 was carved during the early medieval period while the stem, frame and Latin cross were added for reuse of the slab as a grave marker sometime during the later medieval period. However, all of the aforementioned examples likewise have rings that are lightly incised relative to the depth of the marigold carving in the centre, indicating that this does not necessarily mean that the ring of WX-11 was carved in a later, separate episode from the marigold as Corlett suggests. Moreover, the smaller Latin cross fixed atop the circular frame is an unusual motif that is also found on two crosses associated with the nearby ecclesiastical site of Kilmuckridge (*Cill Mucrois*), as well as on stones from Scotland and Wales, that have been variously dated to the 10th–12th centuries (Chapter 7; also see below, WX-22 and WX-23). Furthermore, while it could be suggested that the slab was reshaped at some point after

the design was carved (*ibid*), it tapers far more sharply than is typical of later medieval grave markers, and this wedge-like shape is also found on early medieval cross-slabs from Inishmurray (O'Sullivan and Ó Carragáin 2008, fig. 23), Gallen (Kendrick 1939, fig. 7, A186) and Burgage More, Co. Wicklow (Healy 2009, No. 5).



Clock-wise from top left: Marigold/hexafoil designs from Cardonagh and Gallen (A173 and A77-66); stylistically related cross from Kilmuckridge (WX-22)

WX-12

Ferns 2



COUNTY: Wexford BARONY: Scarawalsh

PARISH: Ferns TOWNLAND: Ferns Upper

SITE NAME: Ferns ITM: 702155 649815

O.S. MAP: 15 RMP: WX015-003014

TYPE: Slab MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 110 cm; Width 44 cm; Thickness 33 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Standing in the churchyard at Ferns in 1895; it was sketched by Wakeman, though only mentioned briefly as a cross of ‘late Celtic workmanship’ (Ffrench 1895, 404–5).

PRESENT LOCATION: Cemented into place and bolted to the wall of the chapter house at the east end of the cathedral.

CONDITION: Weathered, with large patches of lichen cover, though the cross-carving is still clearly visible. The bottom sinister corner of the east face may have broken off at some point and the back of the stone on the sinister side may have also suffered damage, considering that the dexter side of the stone is well-shaped on the front and back (see below).

DESCRIPTION: This is a thick, well-shaped and slightly tapering stone, carved on what is now its east face with a ringed hollow-angled Latin cross in relief. It has a thick moulding around the edges of this face, forming a rectilinear frame around the cross, the arms and stem of which extend to and merge into this border. The ring of the cross is formed by two connected, rounded bands of moulding. The cross arms, as well as the portion of the stem contained within the cross-ring, are distinctly outlined in a similar rounded moulding which serves to emphasize their intersection. This moulding extends along the cross arms to the rectilinear frame, and though it also extends down the length of the stem below the cross head as well, it is not as well-defined. The moulding does not appear to be present on the stem above the cross head, but this could be due to wear. There is a rectangular hollow, presumably a mortise, *c*. 30 cm long, 20 cm wide and 6 cm deep on the top of the stone. A small 'lip' of stone below the moulding at the base of WX-12 may be the remnants of a tenon, now broken off. This suggestion may be supported by the fact that the thickness of the stone begins to taper close to the base (see below).

DISCUSSION: But for the rectangular mortise at the top, its thickness and well-shaped, slightly tapering form would suggest that WX-12 was a later medieval grave-slab, perhaps dating to the 13th or 14th century (*cf*. Maher 1992; Hunt 1974), which would make it roughly contemporary with the construction of the cathedral and also beyond the scope of this project. However, the mortise indicates that WX-12 served a different function, though it is unclear what that function may have been. This slab may have been part of a composite monument, with something inserted into the top (a metal or wooden cross?). This could indicate that it may have had some sort of devotional purpose within the ecclesiastical landscape (Chapter 5). Though speculative, perhaps repeated touching or rubbing associated with ritual practices is responsible for the additional wear along the top of the cross stem. The rounded moulding, as well as its well-shaped morphology,

would suggest that if WX-12 is indeed early medieval, it was created at a late date, probably sometime in the 12th century (see Chapter 4).



WX-12, standing in the graveyard before it was moved to the chapter house (Source: National Monuments Service); sketched by William Wakeman in 1895



Sinister and dexter sides of WX-12, showing possible damage to back sinister side and bottom corner

WX-13

Ferns 3



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Scarawalsh

PARISH: Ferns

TOWNLAND: Ferns Upper

SITE NAME: Ferns

ITM: 702155 649815

O.S. MAP: 15

RMP: WX015-003012

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 110 cm; Width 44 cm; Thickness 33 cm

FIRST RECORDED: As part of Harbison's high cross corpus, standing at the east end of the chapter house of Ferns Cathedral (1992a vol. 1, 89).

PRESENT LOCATION:

CONDITION: Heavily weathered with patches of lichen cover. A chunk of the dexter arm has broken off, albeit long ago.

DESCRIPTION: This is a cruciform stone with an unpierced ring that has been recessed (at least on the side that is still visible) so as to more clearly define the shape of the hollow-angled cross. It has a tenon at its base and possibly a tenon at the top of the cross as well.

DISCUSSION: This cross is included in Harbison's corpus as a possible high cross (1992a vol. 1, 89); however as mentioned above, the criteria for what constitutes a high cross is not always clearly defined (WX-1). Moreover, like WX-12, WX-13 may have been a composite monument, possibly in conjunction with other materials such as wood or metal, and perhaps with a function different to that of high crosses; thus it is included here for the sake of completion. Its unpierced ring is typical of free-standing crosses in this region (*cf.* Kelly 1986) and the cross is similar enough in style and execution to three of the four high crosses at Ferns as to suggest that they are roughly contemporary, and perhaps carved by the same person. WX-13 can also be compared with the ringed cross fragment at Clonmore (CW-11), which is of similar dimensions and likewise has an unpierced ring recessed away from the cross head on its east side, though it features additional cross-carving on this face that WX-13 does not. The tenon at the bottom of WX-13 could indicate that it originally stood in a base, though not necessarily (*ibid*). The tenon is certainly too large to have been inserted into the mortise on top of WX-12, so the two were almost undoubtedly components of different monuments. While it could be argued that the rounded protrusion at the top of the cross is decorative, this seems highly unlikely, considering that circular bosses, which are generally thought to be skeuomorphic of the rivets and pegs used to hold together metal and wooden crosses, would usually be on the face of a stone cross. More likely, something was meant to be set on top of the cross, with the round, raised protrusion acting as a tenon for the upper component of this monument. Kelly has suggested it may have been the tenon for a capstone, and this seems like the most plausible explanation (1986, 59). Again, like WX-12, this could suggest

that WX-13 was intended to act as focal point in the ecclesiastical landscape. However, it is not *in situ* so there are no clues to be gleaned from its position in the landscape, and it is unclear precisely what sort of composite monument of which WX-13 was part, though it may be tentatively suggested that it served some sort of devotional function.



The west cross: WX-13 is stylistically very similar to the high crosses at Ferns, and may have been carved around the same time, perhaps by the same hand

Hook Church

Situated on the western tip of the Hook Peninsula, an ecclesiastical site was reputedly founded here in the 5th century by St Dubhán, after whom the peninsula is named. It was known as *Rinn Dubháin* until the 16th century, when it became more commonly referred to by its English translation of 'Hook Head' (Culleton 1999, 129; Colfer 2004, 25); the modern Irish placename is spelled *Rinn Duáin* (logainm.ie). Dubhán is listed in the 12th century glosses of the *Félire Óengusso* under 12 February, though is not mentioned in the 9th century text (74–5, in Stokes). He is listed under 11 February in the late 12th-century *Félire Uí Gormáin*, and glossed as 'a priest' (34–5, 354, in Stokes). However, Dubhán's pedigree is admittedly late; the 17th-century *Martyrology of Donegal* describes him as the son of Bracáin (Brecaun), for whom the kingdom of Brycheiniog in south Wales was named, and Dín(a), a Saxon princess (47, in Todd and Reeves). This would potentially make him a brother of St Cynog, or Mochonóc, who is credited with founding Kilmuckridge, also in Wexford, and Gallen in Co. Offaly (see below; also Chapter 7). Like Mochonóc, Dubhán is styled *ailither* ('pilgrim') in the Irish tradition (Ó Riain 1985, 331), which is certainly in keeping with the remote location of Hook Church. However, considering Mochonóc's own conflicting pedigrees (Chapter 7), this familial association is doubtful. Instead, perhaps it is reflective of links between the communities of *Rinn Dubháin* and other churches in the area dedicated to Welsh saints, including the nearby churches of Portersgate and Kilcloggan, which are reputedly founded by his father Brecaun and (another) brother Alloc respectively (Colfer 2004, 25). According to tradition, it was Dubhán who first kept a warning beacon lit for ships at the tip of the peninsula, and the monks of *Rinn Dubháin* continually maintained the beacon 'as an act of practical Christianity' well before the stone Tower of Hooke was built *c*. 1170, though by 1245 the (now Augustinian) monks were mandated to do so (Colfer 2004, 27; Hore 1904 vol. 4, 398, 400, 402; Moore 2014). St Dubhán's church was renamed St Saviour of Rendeuan around the beginning of the 13th century (Hore 1904 vol. 4, 400; Culleton 1999, 129). A spring called 'Duffin's Well', *c*. 850 m to the north-east of the church, is likely a corruption of the saint's name (Colfer 2004, 25). Additionally, Ó Riain suggests Dubhán of Hook Church is also to whom Kilduane (*Ceall Dubháin*) in the parish of Monksland, Co. Waterford is dedicated (2011, 274–5). The ruins of Hook Church incorporate the vestiges of an earlier pre-Romanesque church. The remains of what was originally the east wall of the building, now the wall between the chancel and nave, has the remnants of antae and part of its east window (Ó Carragáin 2010, 306–7).



Map of the Hook peninsula, with the location of Hook Church highlighted (Source: OSi)



Hook Church, looking west

WX-14

Hook Church



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Shelburne

PARISH: Hook

TOWNLAND: Churchtown

SITE NAME: Hook Church

ITM: 673438 598590

O.S. MAP: 54

RMP: WX054-009003

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Greenstone

DIMENSIONS: Length 155 cm; Width 67 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Recorded sometime after the publication of the *Archaeological Inventory of County Wexford,* just outside the north wall of the nave of Hook Church (Moore 2014).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Fairly good, though the sinister arm terminal is quite worn, as is the lower third of the cross stem. There is a thin crack running north northwest from the dexter edge of the eastern end of the slab to *c*. 5 cm past the cross stem.

DESCRIPTION: This is a rectangular slab which lies recumbent, *c*. 20-25 cm north of the wall of the nave and just east of the doorway. A plain outline Latin cross is incised on its surface; the ends of the stem are open to the edges of the stone, but the arms extend 56 cm across the face.

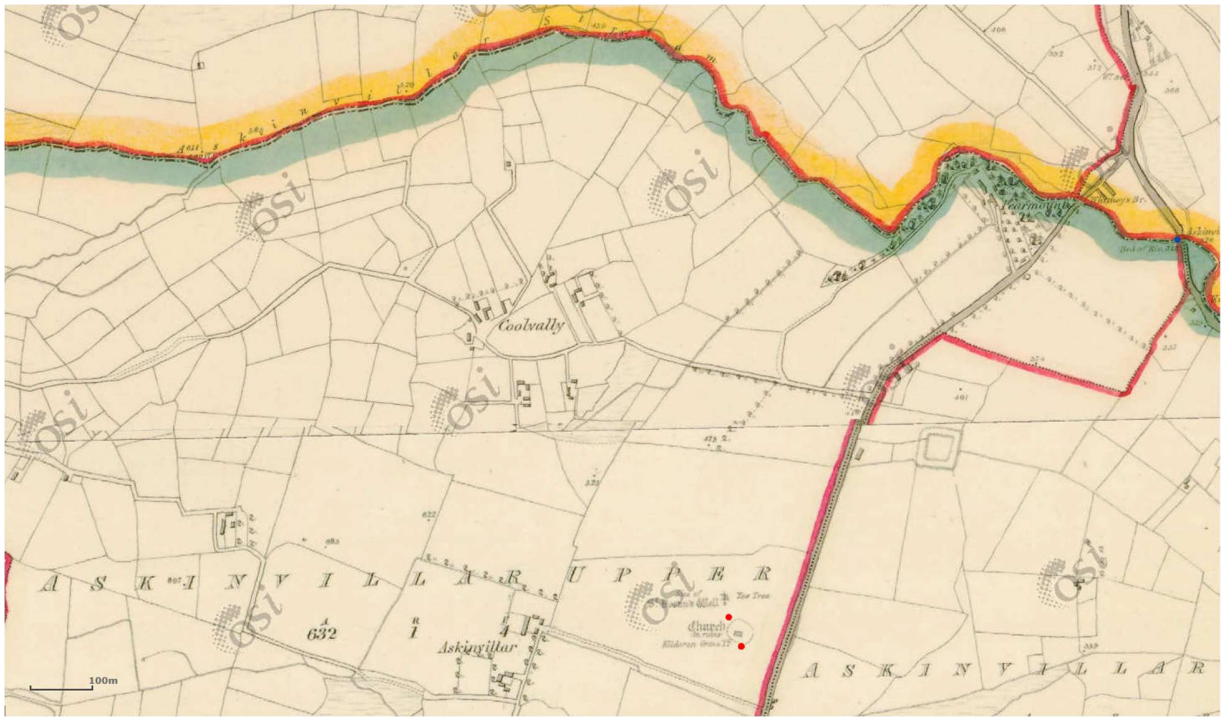
DISCUSSION: This is a grave marker dating to the 11th or 12th century (Chapter 4), and the only example of this monument-form still *in situ* in the study area. It is comparable to a number of large recumbent cross-slabs found at Clonmore, Co. Carlow (this volume), as well as those from the Saints' Graveyard at Iniscealtra, Co. Clare (*cf*. O'Leary 2015) which are likewise *in situ*. Considering its position close to the church and a lack of any other early medieval grave markers, WX-14 presumably marks the grave of an important member of the ecclesiastical community (see also Chapter 5).



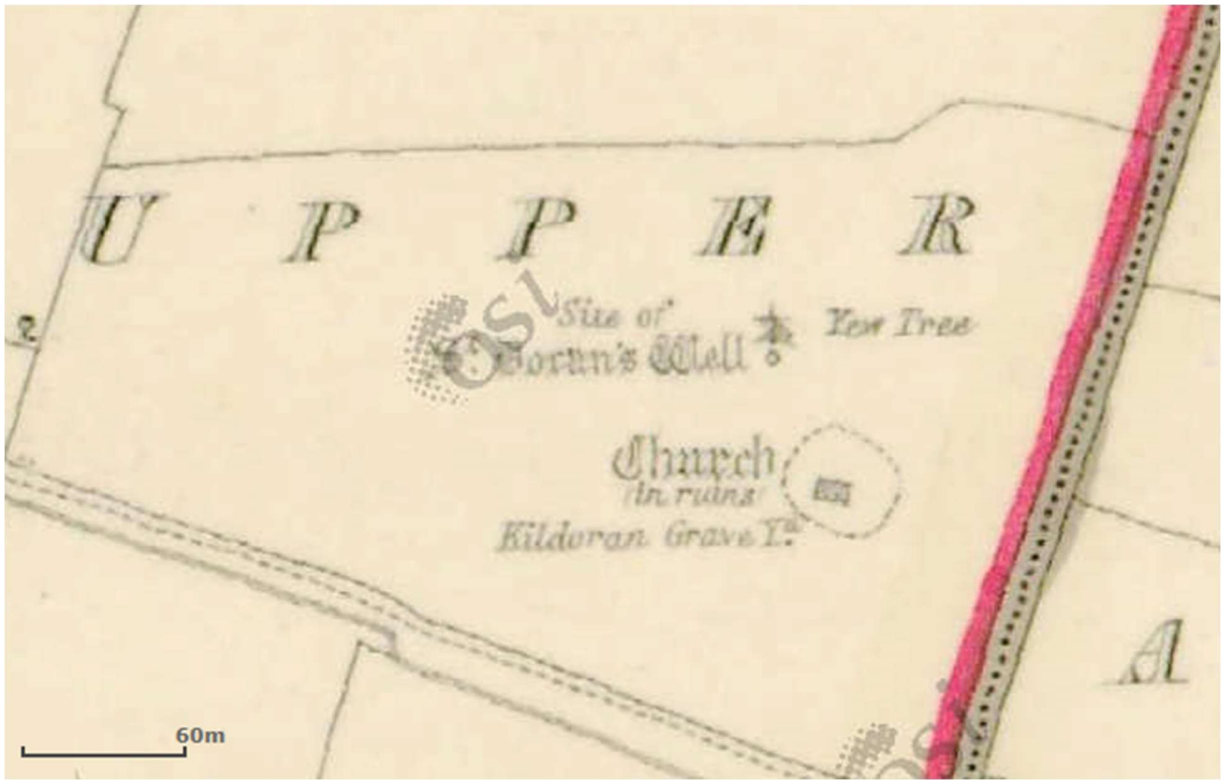
WX-14, next to the entrance on the north side of the church

Kildoran

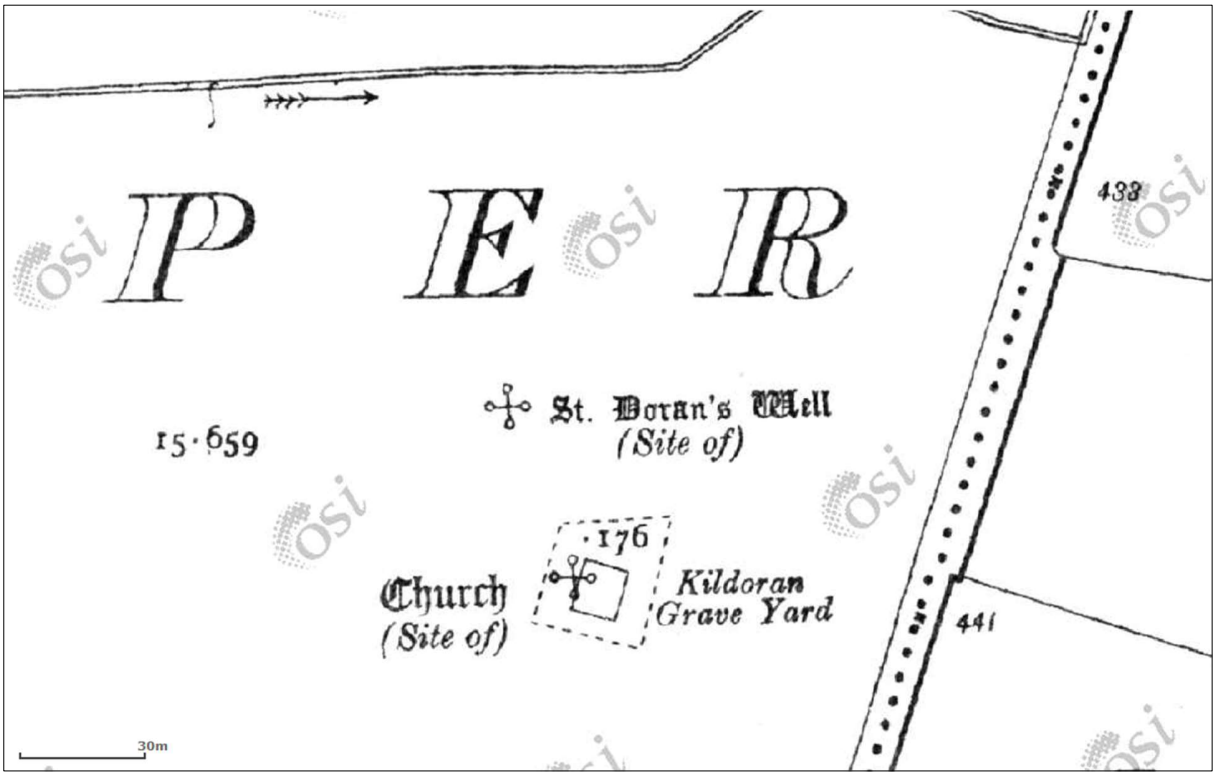
The church of Kildoran (*Cell Duráin/Cill Doráin*) is situated on a gentle east-facing slope *c*. 700 meters south of Askinvillar Stream, which is also the parish border, and *c*. 2 km south of a natural routeway between the Blackstairs Mountains (through which the regional road, R702, runs). While a small remnant of a stone church was still standing at Kildoran in 1840 (O'Flanagan 1933 vol. 1, 103), there is no trace of it today; a bullaun and holy well, found *c*. 30 m northwest of the northwest corner of the graveyard are also no longer visible. The 1839 OS map shows a circular enclosure, *c*. 40 m east-west by 38 m north-south surrounding the church site, though this was gone by the time the second edition OS map was published in 1924. This was within a larger circular enclosure *c*. 70 m in diameter, first noticed during an inspection of the site by National Monuments Service in 1987 as a band of subsoil which had been revealed by ploughing (McLoughlin 2005, 3; Moore 2012f). The site currently consists of a modern sub-rectangular wall surrounding the graveyard, within which were two small, decorated granite crosses (below). However, I was informed by the landowner, Nicholas Breen, that they were removed from the site – one was taken by the local priest and one by the local vicar – for safekeeping after archaeological testing was undertaken of a proposed domestic development *c*. 35 m south-west of the church in 2005; nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered during these works (McLoughlin 2005). The church may have been owned by the Ó Doráin family, who were hereditary lawyers for the Uí Chennselaig (*Monasticon Hibernicum*; Culleton 1999, 150, 159, 207).



OS map of 1839, showing church and holy well of Kildoran (red dots) in relation to parish border of Killann (in green; Source: OSi)



OS map of 1839, showing the inner circular enclosure around the church (Source: OSi)



OS map of 1924 with circular enclosure gone, showing the modern subrectangular wall (Source: OSi)

WX-15

Kildoran 1



(Source: McLoughlin 2005)

COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Bantry

PARISH: Killann

TOWNLAND: Askinvillar Upper

SITE NAME: Kildoran

ITM: 684153 645210 (orig. location)

O.S. MAP: 18

RMP: WX018-001006

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: (from Moore 2012g) Height 70 cm; Width 35 cm; Thickness 14 cm

FIRST RECORDED: As part of the archaeological inventory of Co. Wexford, located within the graveyard of Kildoran Church (Moore 1996).

PRESENT LOCATION: Unknown

CONDITION: Unknown; the Kildoran crosses could not be located, and thus could not be examined in person.

DESCRIPTION: This is a cruciform stone with short arms; the top of the stem and arms taper slightly towards their terminals. It is carved on one face with what appears to be a thickly incised linear equal-armed cross spanning the full extent of the cross head, though Moore describes it as 'elaborately incised' (2012g). At the base of the cross stem is what appears to be a tenon.

DISCUSSION: The size of this cross indicates that it was most likely a grave marker (Chapter 4). The addition of a base, as suggested by the presence of a tenon, would add some height to the monument; however it would still likely be too short to have functioned effectively as a termon marker or other ecclesiastical focus in the landscape. The use of cruciform stones in the early medieval period spanned the 7th–12th centuries (*ibid*), but perhaps a slightly narrower 8th–12th-century date range might be suggested for WX-15 and WX-16 (below), given that this is the time period in which Uí Chennselaig power was concentrated in this region (see above; also WX-1 and Chapter 8).

WX-16

Kildoran 2



(Source: McLoughlin 2005)

COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Bantry

PARISH: Killann

TOWNLAND: Askinvillar Upper

SITE NAME: Kildoran

ITM: 684153 645210 (orig. location)

O.S. MAP: 18

RMP: WX018-001005

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: (from Moore 2012h) Height 76 cm; Width 38 cm; Thickness 7 cm

FIRST RECORDED: As part of the archaeological inventory of Co. Wexford, located within the graveyard of Kildoran Church (Moore 1996).

PRESENT LOCATION: Unknown

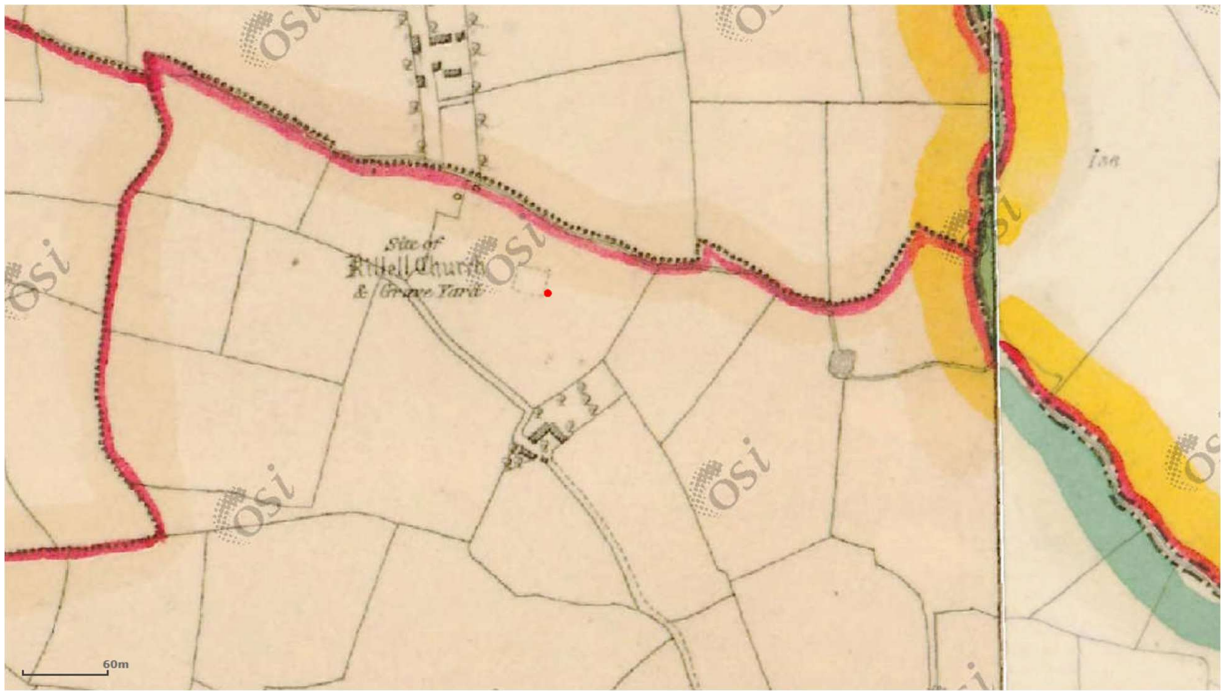
CONDITION: Unknown; the Kildoran crosses could not be located, and thus could not be examined in person.

DESCRIPTION: This is a cruciform stone with short arms; the top of the stem and arms taper slightly towards their terminals. It is carved on one face with what appears to be a thickly incised double-line/open-ended outline cross spanning the full extent of the cross head. According to Moore (2012h), a raised boss is on the opposite face.

DISCUSSION: Like WX-15, the size of this cross indicates that it was most likely a grave marker, as it would have probably been too short to have functioned effectively as a termon marker or other ecclesiastical focus in the landscape (see Chapter 4). It is quite similar to WX-15 in style and execution, suggesting they may have been roughly contemporary, though a wide 8th–12th-century date range is suggested for the pair (see above).

Killell Church

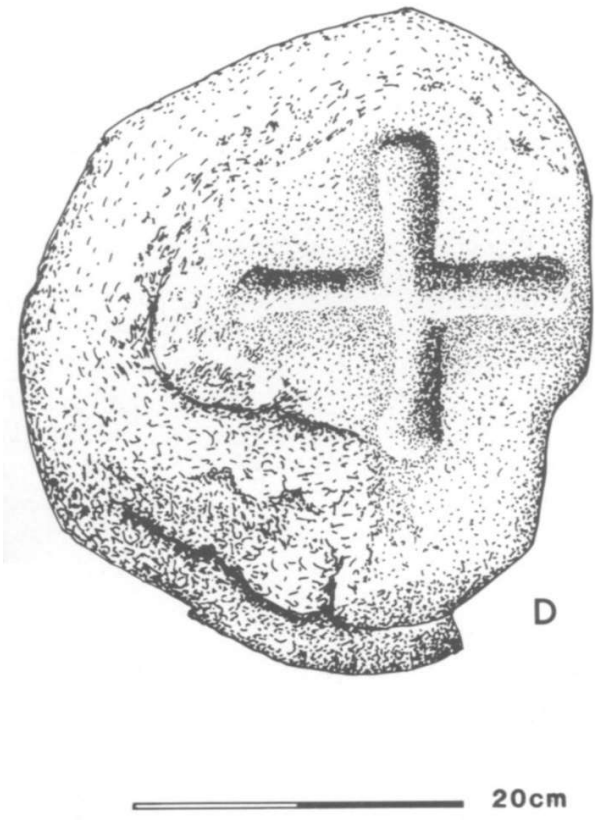
The Irish placename for Killell is not listed on *Monasticon Hibernicum* or Loganim.ie, though perhaps it may be related to a similar placename, Killellery, or *Cill Oilithre* – oilithre meaning 'pilgrim'. It is situated on a northeast slope between c. 64 m south of a small stream, and c. 293 m west of a slightly larger stream, which is also the parish border of Whitechurchglynn. The site is marked as a rectangular enclosure (presumably modern) in the OS maps, but the church and graveyard are not visible at ground level. This is within a larger, slightly raised but heavily overgrown, ecclesiastical enclosure c. 40 m in diameter, defined by a scarp to the north and southeast, with traces of a fosse c. 2.7 m wide and 0.4 m deep (Moore 2012i). It is known locally as the 'church on the rath', though the area is now planted with forest (Kelly 1988, 93); a small cross-slab (below) was found here, and was given to the Wexford County Museum by Mícheál Kehoe, who had removed the slab from the site for safe-keeping (Kelly 1988, 93).



1839 OS Map, showing Killell Church (marked in red) as a rectangular enclosure, c. 293 m from the parish border (Source: OSi)

WX-17

Killell



(Source: Kelly 1988)

COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Bantry

PARISH: Whitechurchglynn

TOWNLAND: Bulgan

SITE NAME: Killell Church

ITM: 695677 626047 (orig. location)

O.S. MAP: 36

RMP: WX036-012003

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: (from Moore 2012j) Height 40 cm; Width 33 cm; Thickness 5 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Published in by Dorothy Kelly (1988, 93, 96, fig. 31d), as a parallel for a stylistically similar group of cross-slabs from Latteragh, Co. Tipperary.

PRESENT LOCATION: Presumably in off-site storage under the care of the Wexford County Council.

CONDITION: Unknown; the Killell slab could not be located after it was removed from the Wexford County Museum in Enniscorthy during refurbishments in 2006, though it is presumed to be in off-site storage (Gráinne Doran, Wexford County Archivist, pers. comm. 30/08/16).

DESCRIPTION: 'An irregularly curvilinear slab…with [a] weathered convex upper surface on which is carved an equal-armed cross. The spatulate arms of the cross are very broad, up to 3cm across and 20cm long with slightly curvilinear terminals' (Kelly 1988, 96).

DISCUSSION: WX-17 is considered part of a sub-group of small recumbent cross-slabs carved with equal-armed crosses distributed across Ireland in several locations, mostly in the midlands, but with a few along the coasts (Kelly 1988, fig. 32). It has been suggested that these slabs, including WX-17, likely date to the 6th or 7th century, and were originally placed within graves, similar to the name-stones found in Northumbria (Kelly 1988, 98–9; see also Chapter 5)

Killesk

Hervey de Montmorency donated the lands of Killesk to Dunbrody Abbey in its foundation charter of 1175 (Hore 1901 vol. 3, 38; Brooks 1950, 40). A parish of Killesk was first mentioned in the knights' fees *c*. 1200–1 (*ibid*, 20), and a church of Killesk was referenced *c*. 1371–2 (*ibid*, 103). In 1840 O'Donovan wrote that the placename Killesk is derived from *Cill Uisce*, meaning 'church of (at or near) the water' (O'Flannagan 1933 vol. 2, 362). However logainm.ie lists the placename as *Coill Eisce*, coill meaning 'wood'. O'Donovan also notes that by 1840, 'not a vestige of the old church of this parish remains at present; a spot near the castle of Killesk is pointed out as its site…a considerable breach was made to one wall, according to tradition, in the Cromwellian Wars' (*ibid*). According to Hore, this castle was built by Hervey, or his nephew Geoffrey, de Montmorency to 'defend the new Anglo-Norman colony on the Irish border' (1901 vol. 3, 238). However Moore states that Killesk Castle was actually a fortified church that had been laicised by 1568 (1996; 2013b). Regardless, considering the presence of a boulder carved with an early cross-form situated on the parish border (see below), it is probable that an ecclesiastical site existed here during the medieval period.



Map showing townland (pink) and northern parish (blue) boundaries of Killesk, with WX-18 at the top and the late medieval fortified church at the bottom, marked in red.

WX-18

Killesk



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Shelburne

PARISH: Killesk

TOWNLAND: Killesk

SITE NAME: Killesk

ITM: 674097 617001

O.S. MAP: 40

RMP: WX039-026

TYPE: Carved stone

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 175 cm; Diameter *c*. 520 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Marked on the 1940 edition of the 6-inch OS map.

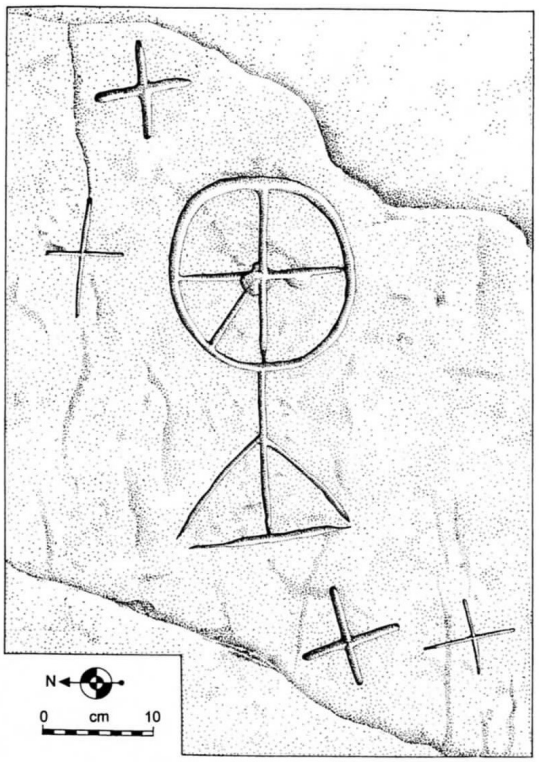
PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: The boulder is heavily spotted with lichen and though the cross is weathered, it is still visible. A crack runs through the centre of the cross arms, aligned with the central score mark, and could have been extant before the cross was carved.

DESCRIPTION: This is a large granite boulder sitting on an exposed rock outcrop. It has a flat, sub-triangular shelf on one side with maximum dimensions of 130cm wide and 70cm long. At the point of this shelf is an incised linear cross with three bifurcating terminals and a triangular base, the form of which is then outlined by another incised line, to the maximum dimensions of 32 cm by 21cm. A smaller triangle, within the centre of which is a hollow depression, is incised within the triangular base of the cross stem.

DISCUSSION: While a parish of Killesk was in existence by the end of the early medieval period, the presence of this cross-carved boulder demonstrates that an ecclesiastical presence at Killesk originated much earlier. It is located approximately 1.06 km north of the fortified church or castle, and is situated on an eastern slope overlooking a small stream *c*. 25 m to the north and east, which notably is also the parish border between Killesk and Ballykeerogemore. Local tradition traces this monument's history to Penal times, but the cross-form on this stone is a very early type, and many of its parallels (mostly from peninsular Kerry) have been variously dated between the 6th and 8th centuries (Chapter 4). Higgins documented several crosses with splayed terminals in Galway (1987, nos. 24, 31, 33–5 and 124), two of which (nos. 28 and 32) also feature a 'cross base', though one was D-shaped and the other teardrop-shaped (*ibid*). A cross-pillar with bifurcating terminals and a crescent-shaped base in found at Ballyloskey, Co. Donegal (Herity *et al*. 1997, fig. 24a); a slab from Kilcummin, Co. Mayo (*ibid*, fig. 31) is carved with a plain outline cross within which is a linear cross with bifurcating terminals. In Scotland, crosses with splayed terminals are known from Iona and A'Chill Canna (Fisher 2001, Fig. 6), though none are also in outline, or with a triangular base. A closer parallel, albeit without a triangular cross base, comes from Llanhamlach in southeast Wales (Redknap and Lewis 2007, 210). Though it also exhibits several other motifs that date it as 10th–11th century (*ibid*, 213), this stone is incised with an outline cross with bifurcating terminals within which is a linear cross of the same style. Another example which is very reminiscent of the one at Killesk was found on a farm in Pembrokeshire, Wales but has since been moved to St David's Cathedral (Edwards 2007a, P106). A cross incised onto a local boulder outcrop from Llys-Y-Frân, also in Pembrokeshire (*ibid*, P57), has a similar

triangular base to that on WX-18; these two latter examples have been dated to the 7th–9th centuries (*ibid*, 457). The image of a cross on a triangular base may be skeuomorphic of an altar cross set in a stand. Altar crosses had become common by the 8th or 9th century and a flat-topped boulder from Drom West, Co. Kerry, which is thought to have functioned as an outdoor altar, is carved with a ringed altar cross that may date to this period (Ó Carragáin 2010, 175). Another example from Ballydarrig, also in Co. Kerry, features an altar cross on a triangular stand. This would suggest that the Killesk boulder may have likewise functioned as an outdoor altar, perhaps during processionals, re-consecration and/or foundation rituals involving the boundaries of the ecclesiastical estate, considering the close proximity of WX-18 to the parish border, and may have been similar to what has been suggested occurred at sites such as Inishmurray, Co. Sligo, High Island, Co. Galway, Inis Úasal, Co. Kerry and Brigown, Co. Cork (Chapter 5). Local tradition states that WX-18 was a mass rock that had been rolled into the nearby river by British soldiers in the 18th century but was replaced to its original position by the local people in 1973 ('Killesk Mass Rock'; Moore 2013c). Mass is celebrated at the Killesk rock annually on the feast of St James on the 25th of July (*ibid*).



Cross-carved boulder from Ballydarrig, Co. Kerry which has been interpreted as an outdoor altar and may be associated with pilgrimage rituals (Source: Ó Carragáin 2003)

Kilmokea

The ecclesiastical site of Kilmokea (*Cell mac Áeda/Cill Mac Aodh*), situated in the townland of Great Island, Co. Wexford, has been identified by Ní Dhonnchadha (2002) as the well-documented *Inis Doimle/Teimle*. *Inis Teimle* is described in the *Martyrology of Donegal* as 'between Uí Ceinnsealaigh and the Deisí' (Todd and Reeves 1864, 187), and Great Island (though no longer an island) is situated at the confluence of the rivers Suir and Barrow, just a few kilometres north of the ferry crossing between Passage East, Co. Waterford and Ballyhack, Co. Wexford; its location can certainly be described as between what was once the border separating the Uí Chennselaig and Deisí, as well as the provincial kingdoms of Munster and Leinster.

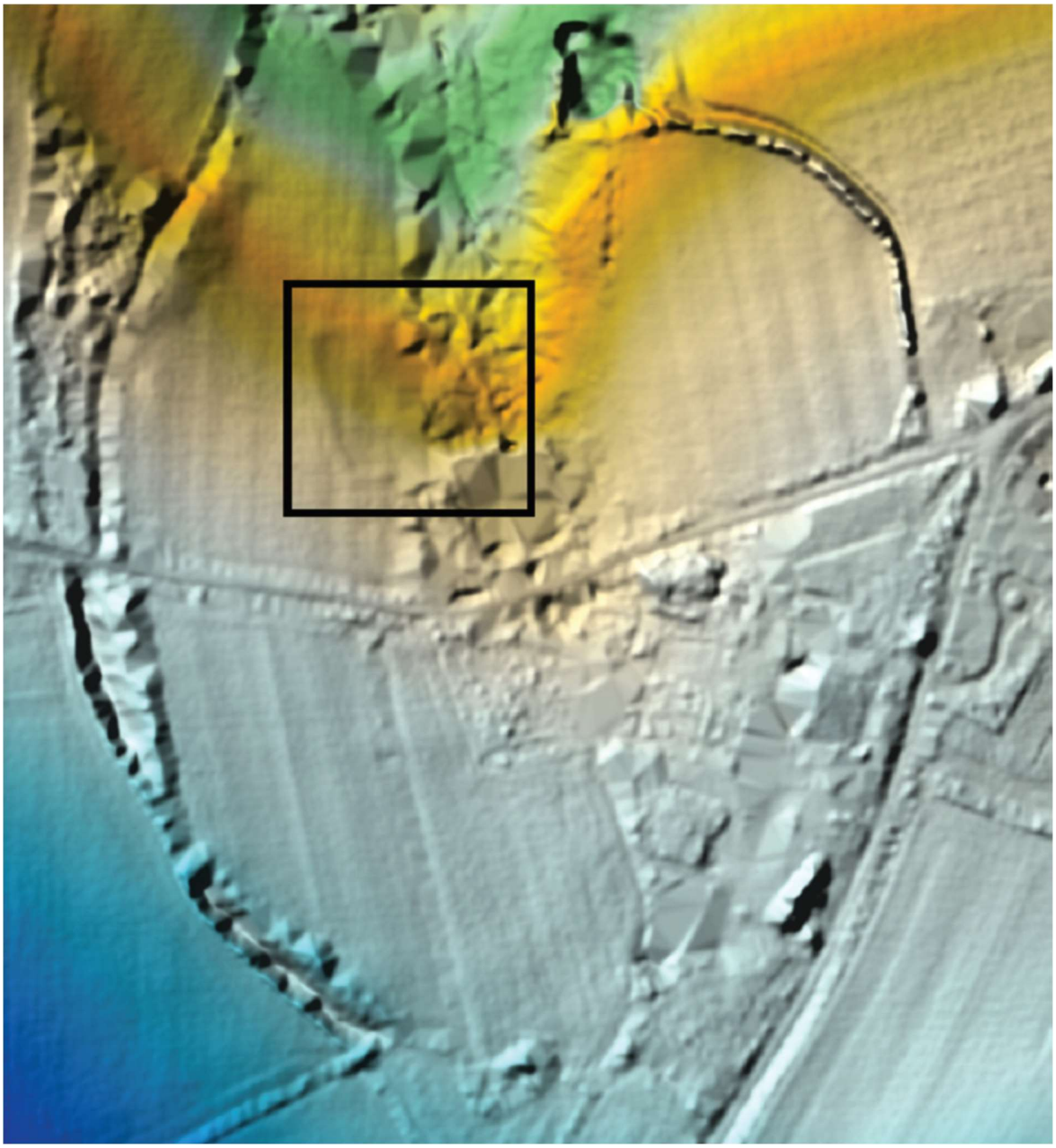
Ní Dhonnchadha identifies the earliest mention of *Inis Teimle* in a reference to Suadbar of *Inis Teimle* on the guarantor list of the *Law of Adomnán*, which dates to 697 (*ibid*, 452). She has also found a reference to Suadbar in the Leinster genealogies: 'It was Soadbar ua Finain, abbot of Inis Teimle, who deprived those seven sons of Colcu mac Bresail of the kingship' (*ibid*, 452–3). The kingship referred to in this passage is the kingship of Leinster, which was held by three Uí Chennselaig kings in the 7th century (*ibid*). Colcu's death is recorded in the *Annals of Ulster* in the year 722 and his son, Áed, is referred to as the king Leinster in his obituary (†738), which states he was slain in battle against the Uí Neill (*AU* U722.2, U738.4; see also WX-1). Considering that Áed did indeed hold the kingship until he was killed, and the Uí Chennselaig lost control of Leinster as a consequence, the passage referring to Suadbar 'depriving Colcu's sons of the kingship' is interesting; perhaps Suadbar did so by supporting the Uí Neill against the Uí Chennselaig in some way. Regardless, both this passage and his inclusion in the guarantor list in the *Law of Adomnán* implies that Suadbar was of notable power and influence, at least in Leinster, though it is unclear if this was due to other socio-political connections or his position as abbot of *Inis Teimle*.

Moore (2013d) states that Suadbar founded *Inis Teimle* in the 8th century; however I could find no supporting evidence for this and moreover, the monastery was already in existence by 697 (see above), so it could not have been founded any later than the 7th century. Its documented association is with Sts Finbarr and his brother, Barrfin, whom are generally credited as the reputed founders of the site (*Monasticon Hibernicum*; Ní Dhonnchadha 2002, 454). Both the *Félire Óengusso* and *Martyrology of Gorman* commemorate Finnbarr of *Inis Teimle* on July 4 (160, in Stokes 1905; 131, in Stokes 1895), and the *Martyrology of Gorman* styles him 'abbot' (131, in

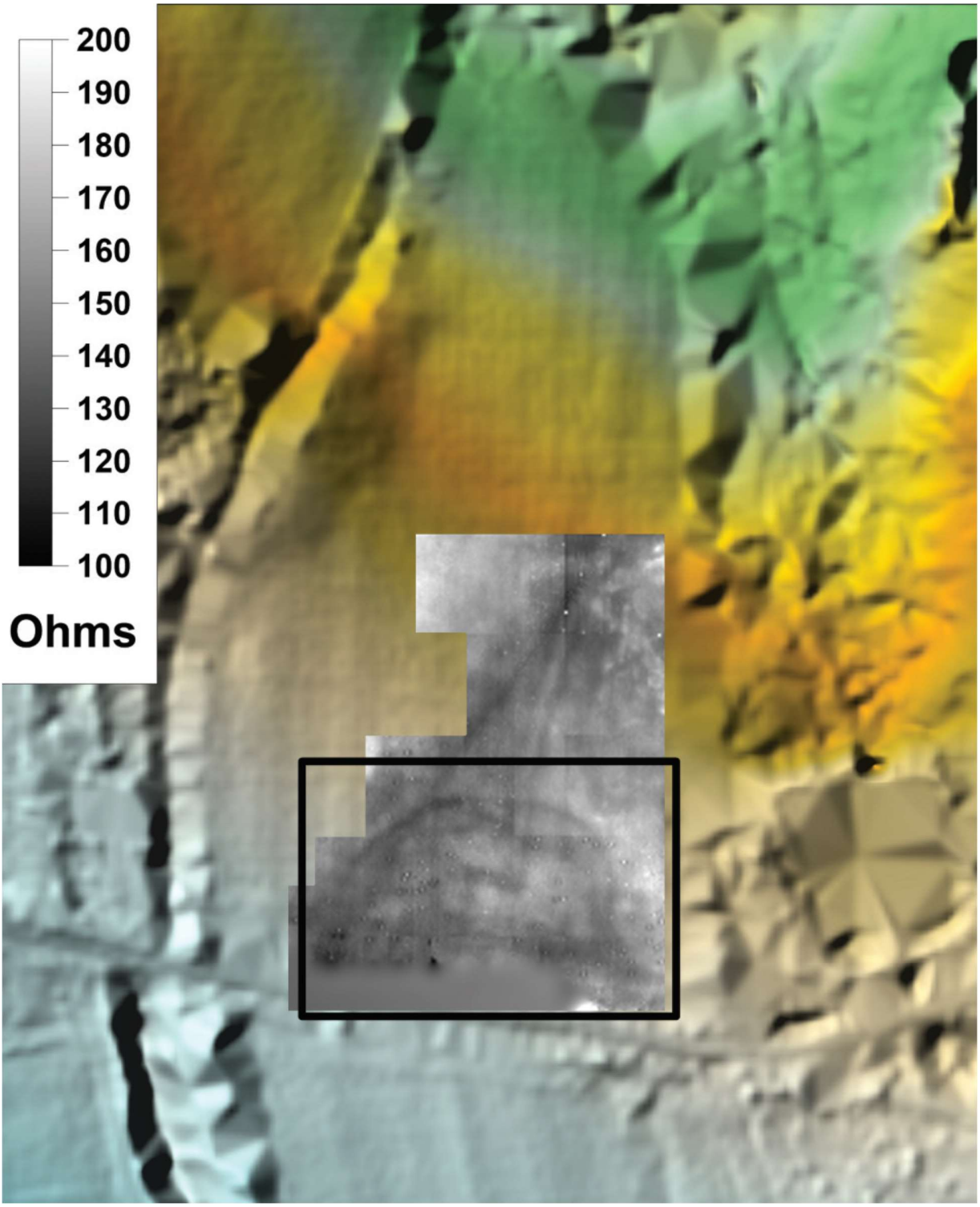
Stokes 1895). Barrfin is remembered in the martyrologies on November 8 (215, in Stokes 1895; 233, in Stokes 1905) and in the 12th-century glosses of the *Félire Óengusso* he is said to be from Achad Cailltéin, though he was referred to as 'of Inis Teimle' (240, in Stokes 1905). The glosses also describe how the island of *Inis Teimle* was 'in darkness' until the arrival of Finbarr and his brother Barrfin (*ibid*, 167). They are said to be the sons of Áed (*ibid*, 241; 131, in Stokes 1895), from which the name by which it is now referred, *Cell mac Áeda*/Kilmokea ('Church of the Son(s) of Áed'), is derived.

Inis Teimle was of some significance throughout most of the early medieval period. The deaths of two abbots are recorded in the annals in 776/781 and 953, the latter of which was also abbot of *Tech Munnu* (*AFM* M776.4, M953.3; *AU* U781.3). It was plundered at least 4 times, in 820 823/25, 951 and 960 (*AFM* M820.12, M823.16, M951.22, M960.14; *AU* U825.15; *Chron. Scot*. CS825). Additionally, the defeat of a group of Leinstermen at *Inis Teimle* in 1088, after failing to take Waterford, was recorded in the *Annals of Innisfallen* (AI1088.3). By the end of the 12th century, the church may have fallen out of use, and the island had come under Norman control (Moore 2013d; Hore 1901 vol. 3, 198; Brooks 1950, 16). There are no extant remains of a church but according to O'Donovan, it was thought to have stood within Kilmokea graveyard (O'Flannagan 1933 vol. 2, 188). The remains of an ecclesiastical enclosure, *c*. 280 m NE-SW by 320 m NW-SE in diameter, surround Kilmokea, though it is best preserved in the west and south-west where it survives as an earthen bank, separated from the outer fosse by a berm (Moore 2013d). Archaeological testing revealed more of the enclosure to the east; the ditch uncovered here measured 6.1 m wide and the bank was 4.2 m wide, surviving to a height of 0.6 m above the subsoil (Stafford 2002). The existence of a rectangular enclosure or platform within the north-northwest quadrant of the enclosure, the eastern half of which was first described by Westropp (1918, 9), was recently confirmed by LiDAR (Curley, Flynn and Barton 2018, 28–9). A resistivity survey also shows a D-shaped enclosure, *c*. 70 m east-west by 40 m north-south, immediately abutting the southwest corner of the rectangular enclosure and just north of the modern road (*ibid*). It contains one or two L-shaped anomalies which could be associated with structures, and a possible pathway leading north-northeast (*ibid*). There is also a subcircular annex attached to the outer part of the enclosure at the north, which may have contained either houses or quarry holes (Westropp 1918, 11–2; Moore 2013d). The among the carved stone remains at Kilmokea are two bullauns, a font, an uncarved cross base, a small ornately decorated 'high' cross (WX-19), a fragmented cross-slab

(WX-20), a small cruciform stone (WX-21) and a cross-carved architectural fragment (see below, 'Dubia').



LiDAR image showing rectangular enclosure within the larger ecclesiastical enclosure (Source: Curley et al. *2018)*



Resistivity results superimposed over LiDAR, showing possible D-shaped enclosure near the west bank of the larger ecclesiastical enclosure (Source: Curley et al. 2018)

WX-19

Kilmokea 1



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Shelburne

PARISH: Kilmokea

TOWNLAND: Great Island

SITE NAME: Kilmokea

ITM: 668674 616575

O.S. MAP: 39

RMP: WX039-018004

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Sandstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 56 cm; Width 30 cm; Thickness 14–16 cm

FIRST RECORDED: A photograph of the cross in its cement base was published by Dorothy Kelly, though only referenced in the text once apart from the caption (1986 56, pl. 8b). WX-19 was first described in detail by Harbison (1992a vol. 1, 131), with undated photographs of the stone taken prior to its re-erection in the aforementioned concrete, which Harbison described as recent (*ibid*).

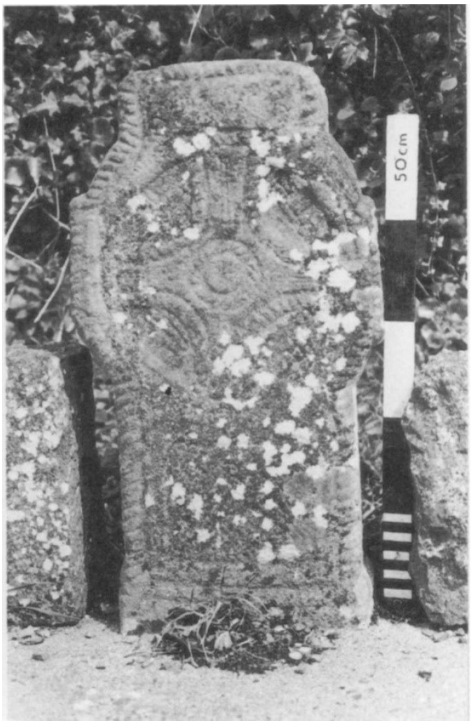
PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Fairly good albeit weathered, with large patches of green and white lichen cover; however a small section of the rope moulding has broken off from the top sinister quadrant of the cross ring on the south face. Most of the carved design is still visible apart from the inscription, which is now illegible.

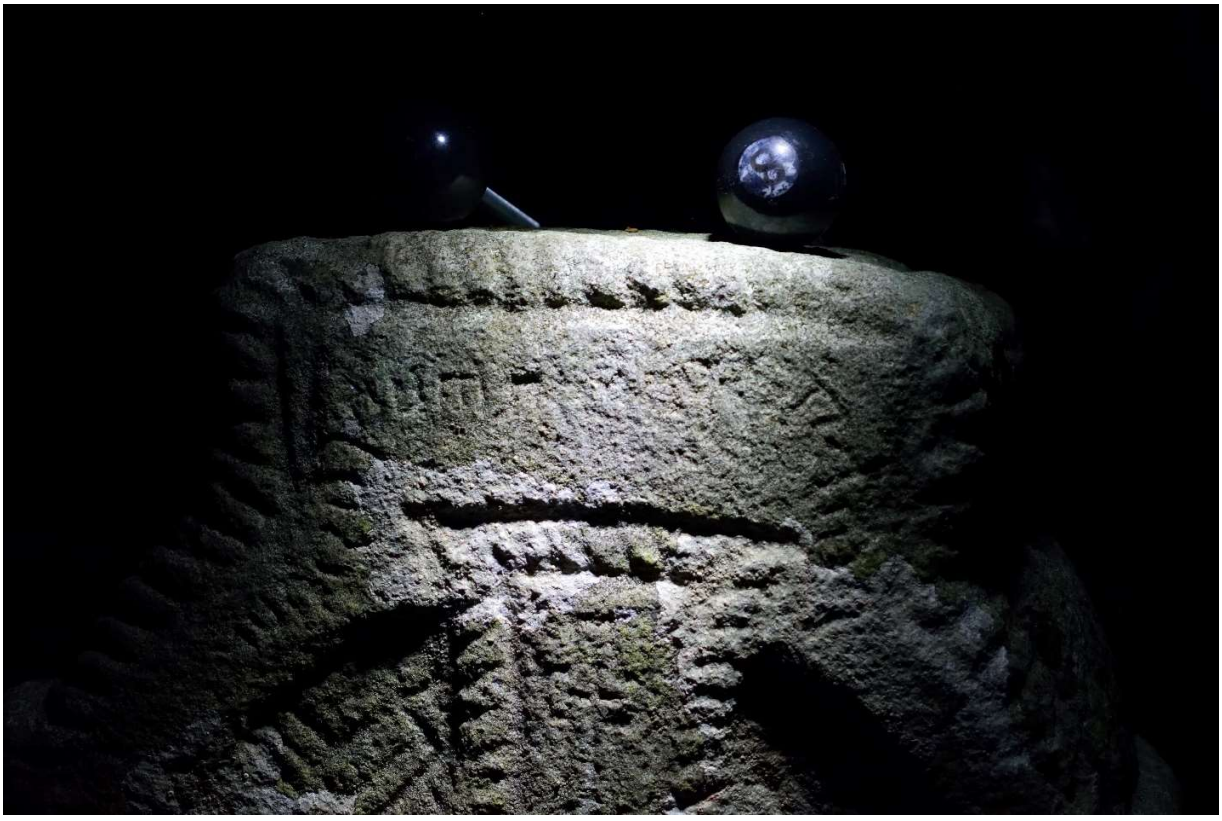
DESCRIPTION: This is a small, inscribed and highly decorated cruciform stone. It has been cemented into place close to the wall of the graveyard, which made recording the decoration on the back of the cross difficult. It is solid-ringed, with very short arms which barely extend past the ring. Every edge of the cross is carved in relief with rope moulding, framing the decoration on all four sides. The south face, which is clearly intended to be the 'front' of the cross, is carved with an equal-armed cross, also outlined in rope moulding, spanning most of the diameter of the circular cross-head. Within each of its sunken cantons is an incised linear T-shape, which is then incised around it in outline. These are presumably Tau crosses, the heads of which are facing towards the centre of the stone. The terminals of the stem and arms of the main cross are likewise carved, albeit each with a linear Latin cross, which is then outlined by another Latin cross. At the centre is another circular frame of rope moulding, within which is an incised linear equal-armed cross. On the stem of the south face is a sunken rectilinear panel decorated with a ring and pointed-loop interlace pattern in false relief. At the very top of the south face is an inscription, now illegible, for which Peter Harbison suggested a possible partial reading of 'NDMNA' (1992a vol. 1, 131, 363). RTI analysis undertaken during this project revealed that the inscription, while still illegible, is longer than previously thought, extending down on either side of the main cross-carving. Both the east and west sides of the cross are carved on the arms with equal-armed crosses incised in outline, at the centre of which is a linear equal-armed cross. This is then double-framed in raised

plain- and rope-moulding respectively. Below this, on the stem of both east and west sides, is a saltire cross incised in outline and decorated with horizontal hatch-marks spaced every few centimetres. The 'back' (north face) of the cross is arguably more simply decorated than the 'front', yet the decoration is executed with skill and precision. The outer edge of the face is again trimmed in rope moulding, and spanning most of the surface of the face is a Latin cross incised in outline, with exaggerated hollow-angles that are possibly compass-drawn. At the centre of this cross is a small equal-armed cross in outline within a double-lined incised circular frame; the cross arms and stem each have a small linear saltire cross incised on them. The top of the stone is carved in relief with double-lined pointed-loop interlace, framed in rope moulding.

DISCUSSION: Sometimes categorised as a high cross based on the quality and detail of its ornamentation, this small cruciform stone was probably a grave maker, undoubtedly carved for an important member of the Kilmokea community. The (illegible) inscription across the top is too long to be a single personal name; however it could be a prayer formula, or perhaps an additional patronym, which was usually reserved for high-ranking ecclesiastics such as scholars or heads of household (Swift 1999, 113–4, 117; see also Chapter 4). Such an ornately carved grave-marker would certainly have been seen as fitting for such an individual, and the resources and skilled craftsmanship necessary for its creation indicates that Kilmokea was a wealthy site, particularly in the 8th–10th centuries (see above). Its geometric ornament is reminiscent of the Ossory group of crosses, particularly the rope moulding decorating the north cross at Ahenny, Co. Tipperary. Perhaps it may be suggested that they could have been a source of inspiration for WX-19, and that it may date to the 8th century, or 9th century (see Chapter 4).



Kilmokea 'high' cross (Kelly 1986)



WX-19 lit from an oblique angle at night, showing the inscription running down both sides of the cross



North cross at Ahenny, trimmed in rope moulding like WX-19

WX-20

Kilmokea 2



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Shelburne

PARISH: Kilmokea

TOWNLAND: Great Island

SITE NAME: Kilmokea

ITM: 668676 616570

O.S. MAP: 39

RMP: None

TYPE: Slab

MATERIAL: Greenstone

DIMENSIONS: Height 73 cm; Width 36 cm; Thickness 7 cm

FIRST RECORDED: By the author on 15 October 2016; it was found half buried in rubbish and leaves, lying face-up next to the wall in the north-eastern corner of the graveyard, less than one metre south of WX-19.

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: The slab is broken off cleanly just along what appears to be the bottom of the cross arms, though the edges of the break are worn smooth, indicating it occurred long ago. The other end of the slab is also broken off; this break is more angular, though it does not appear to be recent. What is left of the cross-carving is still distinctly visible.

DESCRIPTION: This is a narrow cross-slab with edges and one face roughly dressed; the other face is undressed. What is probably a hollow-armed Latin cross, incised in outline with rounded arm-pits is incised on the dressed face. The arm-pits are still extant, but the slab is broken in such a way that the extent of the cross arms can no longer be determined. The cross stem narrows slightly from base to just below the arms, from 8 cm to 7 cm, and the very bottom few centimetres of the sinister line of the stem has been worn away.

DISCUSSION: Hollow-angled crosses are usually dated to the 8th century or later, though some could date to the late 7th century (Chapter 4). WX-20 was most likely a grave marker; it is only carved on side, which often indicates that a slab was intended to lie recumbently (*ibid*). However this is not always the case, as demonstrated with several of the upright grave markers found at St Berrihert's Kyle (this volume, Tipperary catalogue; see also Chapter 6), and like many of the St Berrihert's slabs, WX-20 looks to have been shaped. Alternately, as WX-20 is a fragment and was obviously longer than it now (perhaps by at least 30 cm based on the presumed proportions of the cross-carving), if it *had* stood upright, it would have been considerably taller than the St Berrihert's slabs (*ibid*). If so, then its function may have instead been as a boundary, termon or roadside marker, perhaps erected close to or up against an enclosing element as only one side of the slab was intended to be seen (see Chapter 5).



WX-19 and WX-20, showing scale and proximity to each other

WX-21

Kilmokea 3



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Shelburne

PARISH: Kilmokea

TOWNLAND: Great Island

SITE NAME: Kilmokea

ITM: 668661 616561

O.S. MAP: 39

RMP: None

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Conglomerate limestone

DIMENSIONS: Height 40 cm; Width 39 cm; Thickness 4–8cm

FIRST RECORDED: By the author on 15 October 2016; the stone is slightly south of the centre of the graveyard.

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: The surface is heavily weathered and pocked; some of the top of the stem may have chipped off at some point on the dexter side.

DESCRIPTION: This is a small cruciform stone which lists slightly to the north and is being reused as a modern headstone. Its arms and the top of the stem taper towards their terminals, partly from design but exacerbated by erosion, particularly on the top and sinister ends. The cross stem has a maximum width of 19 cm, and the arms 15 cm. The east face is inscribed with the monogram 'IHS', above which and attached to the 'H' is an incised Latin cross. Below the monogram is another inscription, most likely a date as the last part looks to be the number '8'; however it is heavily weathered and illegible.

DISCUSSION: While inscription is modern, the cross itself could possibly be of early medieval date. Its uneven form and tapering terminals are similar to several other small, undecorated cruciform grave-markers from peninsular Kerry, High Island, Co. Galway and, within the study region, Acaun and Kilbracken, Co. Carlow (Chapter 4; see also CW-1, CW-34 and CW-35) Small cruciform stones were in use over a long period of time across Ireland and Britain, so if this is indeed an early monument, it cannot be dated beyond a general assignment to the early medieval period (*ibid*). The stone itself is quite striking; it contains pockets of stone populated with tiny fossils of ancient sea life, so perhaps it may be presumed to have been sourced locally.

Kilmuckridge

The church of Kilmuckridge (*Cill Mucrois*) is dedicated to the Welsh saint, Mochonóc, alternately known as Canóc/Conóc (Cynog in Welsh) or Colmán, as is the nearby church of Killincooly. His maternal pedigree varies between the Irish and Welsh traditions, but he is almost invariably recorded as the son of the Briton king Brychan, for which the kingdom of Brycheiniog in south Wales was named (Chapter 7). He is also considered the founder of *Gailinne na mBretan* ('Gallen of the Britons') in Co. Offaly, and in British hagiographies he is a relation of St David of Wales (*ibid*). Mochonóc's *floruit* has often been dated to the end of the 5th century (Ranson 1945, 53; 1948, 101); however on genealogical grounds, he was more likely to have been active in the mid- to late 6th century (Chapter 7).

Cill Mucrois roughly translates to 'Church of the Pig's (wooded) Height/Promontory' – 'ros', or its variant 'rois', refers to 'a wooded height, or a promontory on the shore of a lake or a river' (*eDIL*, s.v. 'muc(c)' and s.v. '1 ros'). Though we cannot ascertain if the site was once wooded, it is indeed situated on a low rise of land which is skirted by a small river to its west and south. References to Cill Mucrois in written sources of the early medieval period are scant and the only extant early medieval remains are three carved crosses, which likely functioned as boundary makers for the ecclesiastical estate (see below; also Chapter 7). However, 'Kilmucres' was recorded in the Knights' Fees in 1247 and again as 'Kilmerys (Kilmacrys)' in 1307 (Brooks 1950, 42). The rectory of Kilmuckridge had come under the control of the Priory of Glasscarrig, in the neighbouring parish of Donaghmore, from at least the late 14th century until the priory's dissolution in 1560 (Hore 1911, 145). It might be interesting to note that, considering Kilmuckridge was itself considered a Welsh foundation, one of the stipulations in the charter of Glascarrig was that the Prior would be elected by St Dogmaels (in Pembrokeshire, Wales) from among their own monks, ensuring that the monastery would remain essentially Welsh (Flood 1905, 166; Hore 1911 vol. 6, 141). The medieval church of Kilmuckridge was demolished and replaced with a newly built Church of Ireland on the same site *c*. 1820 (O'Flanagan 1933 vol. 2, 224). The only physical remnant of the previous church is a fragment of a late medieval mullioned window, now being reused as a grave-marker in the cemetery (Moore 2012/13). Kilmuckridge is within the diocese of Ferns and the Catholic parish of Litter, which was formed in 1789 from the old parishes of Kilmuckridge, Killincooly and Monamoling (Flood 1905).

WX-22

Kilmuckridge 1



North Face



South Face

COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Ballaghkeen North

PARISH: Donaghmore

TOWNLAND: Raheenlusk

SITE NAME: Raheenlusk

ITM: 717908 643834 (orig. location)

O.S. MAP: 22

RMP: WX022-008 and WX020-031011

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Grey Silurian

DIMENSIONS: Height 92 cm; Width 36 cm; Thickness 11 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Found buried by the foot of a fence by Ranson in 1945, after which he re-erected the cross by that fence (Ranson 1948, 102).

PRESENT LOCATION: On display inside Ferns Visitor Centre.

CONDITION: The carving is in fairly good condition, though the lower half of one of the cross arms is broken off and there is heavy chipping along the edges of the arms and top of the stem on the north face. The bottom of the stem on the north side is also broken off, but this is hidden by the concrete base in which the cross now stands.

DESCRIPTION: The north face of the cross is carved with an incised six-petalled marigold in a circular frame, 25-26 cm in diameter. Two incised lines spaced *c*. 7 cm apart emanate from the bottom of the circle and extend down the shaft. Ribbing carved in relief runs diagonally down the shaft on either side of these lines, beginning just below the incised circle. The area above the marigold design is heavily damaged, and it is unclear if it was carved as well. On the south face there is a similarly incised circle on top of two lines forming a stem 10 cm apart, extending down the shaft. Within the circle on this face is a cross-of-arcs 25 cm high and 24 cm wide carved in false relief, with a shallowly hollowed lozenge in the centre. Directly above this and attached to the cross-of-arcs is a Latin cross, 15 cm by 13 cm, carved in relief. The width of the cross arms and stem are 17 cm and 21 cm respectively.

DISCUSSION: There are many slabs of various styles across Ireland which feature two crosses with one atop, or nearly touching, the other. However as Nancy Edwards has already pointed out, this particular motif – with one smaller cross linked to the top of the circular frame of another – is difficult to parallel (2007a, 441). However, it can be compared with three other stones – one from Wales, and two from Scotland. The closest, both geographically and stylistically, is a cross-slab from St David's Cathedral in Pembrokeshire, Wales that is carved in relief with an encircled equal-armed cross decorated with interlace; attached to the top of the circular frame is a small Latin cross (Edwards 2007a, P97). Its inscription gives it a *terminus post quem* of 1078, and stylistically it has been dated late 11th–early 12th century (*ibid*, 441). This motif is also found on two stones from the west of Scotland, from Kilmory on the Isle of Rum and Clenamacrie in Argyll (Fisher 2001, W27 and A2, no. 238), both of which feature a cross or disc atop a stem, and a smaller Latin

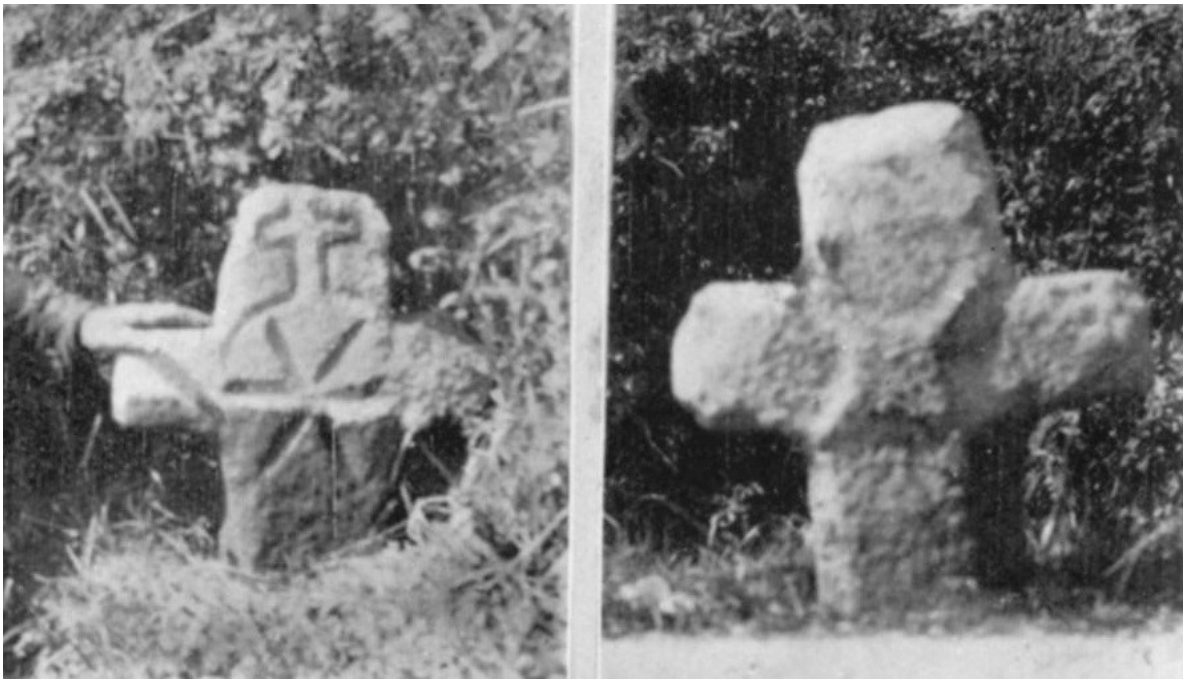
cross just above. Fisher infers a general 7th–8th-century date range for these monuments on art historical grounds, based mostly on comparanda from the west of Ireland (*ibid*, 12).

The iconography of WX-22, and indeed all the Kilmuckridge crosses as well as the Ferns cross-slab, is reminiscent of a *flabellum* or *labarum* (see Chapter 7). *Flabella* are not as common in Wales, though the motif is characteristic of a group of carvings found at St Dogmaels (Edwards 2007a, 466). However several *flabella/labara* are found on carved on stones in Ireland, particularly in the west and north, most notably on the 'Marigold Stone' in Carndonagh, Co. Donegal and on a cross-slab from Caherlehillan, Co. Kerry. Marigolds and crosses-of-arcs are frequently found on Irish cross-slabs and pillars; however they are particularly prevalent on the carved stones at Gallen Priory, Mochonóc's other main Irish foundation (see above; also Chapter 7). Four of the fourteen examples of the marigold designs from Gallen (Kendrick 1939, 18) are of the six-petalled, looped style like on the north face of WX-22, but slab A195 (*ibid*, fig. 11) is the closest match. Close comparanda for the cross-of-arcs on the south face are a little more difficult to find. The 'lozenge crosses' from Gallen feature ringed crosses carved in low relief, the centre of which is formed by a cross-of-arcs, similar to the one on WX-22, with a hollowed lozenged-shaped centre (Kendrick 1939, fig. 4, A189 and R3). A 'lozenge cross' is also found on several small slab from Clonmacnoise (Macalister 1909, pl. VIII-X, nos. 58–9, 61, 65, 68, 70 and 72). Another slab from Gallen features two small crosses-of-arcs within double-lined circular frames, one on either side of ringed Latin cross (Kendrick 1938, fig. 5, R1) which, though they do not have a hollowed lozenge in the centre, are otherwise very akin to the cross on the south face of WX-22. Two other parallels for this cross type are also found at Kildreelig, Co. Kerry (O'Sullivan and Sheehan 1996, no. 951, 292–5), and on a disc-headed grave marker from Kirkton, Great Cumbrae, Scotland (Fisher 2001, W5, no. 11b). The diagonal ribbing on the north side of the cross suggests elements of Hiberno-Norse influence. It is paralleled on several of the Rathdown-type slabs in the Dublin region, some of which have been recently linked to Scandinavian settlers of the 11th–12th centuries (Corlett 2015, 445). A slab from Laughanstown, Co. Dublin (Healy 2009, No. 42) features a cross stem with the same pattern of diagonal lines on both sides, and several bone antler combs from excavations of Norse Dublin dated between the mid-10th–12th centuries (Ó hÉailidhe 1973, fig.4) feature the same motif. For comparative figures of the aforementioned parallels and a full discussion of the iconography on WX-22–24 and WX-11, see Chapter 7.

This cross was originally located on the border of Raheenlusk and Killannaduff townlands, *c*. 200 m from the parish border of Kilmuckridge. WX-23 was found 200 m away, just over the townland border in Killannaduff. Stylistically, the two monuments are almost mirror images of each other so they could have been intended to be a pair. Alternately, perhaps WX-23 was carved later, possibly in imitation of WX-22. It is not as ornately carved, nor is the craftsmanship of equal quality. Moreover, the crosses are made of different types of stone – WX-22 is a grey Silurian, commonly found in north Wexford (Ranson 1945, 53), while WX-23 is granite. Though this cross, as well as WX-23, were found in what is now the civil parish of Donaghmore, it seems likely that, given their close stylistic associations with WX-24 (see below) and their positions close to the parish border and the regional road, that the land on which they were erected once belonged to Cill Mucrois (Chapter 7). Their locations indicate that WX-22 and WX-23 probably served as termon or boundary markers for the ecclesiastical estate. Stylistically, a 10th–12th-century date range is likely for this cross, and thus for WX-22 and WX-23 as well, so perhaps their erection was associated with the creation of diocesan boundaries after the Synod of Ráth Breasail in 1111 (*ibid*).

WX-23

Kilmuckridge 2



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Ballaghkeen North

PARISH: Donaghmore

TOWNLAND: Killannaduff

SITE NAME: Killannaduff

ITM: 718093 643728 (orig. location)

O.S. MAP: 22

RMP: WX022-009 and WX020-031012

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: (From Ranson 1945) Height 58.5 cm; Width 52 cm

FIRST RECORDED: In the fence on the west side of the R742 between the towns of Kilmuckridge and Ballygarret (Ranson 1945, 53). It was moved at some point after 1999 (*cf*. Culleton 1999, pl. 15) to the Wexford County Museum, along with WX-21, but was lost sometime after the redistribution of a large portion of the museum's collection in 2006.

PRESENT LOCATION: Unknown

CONDITION: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: Based on Ranson's photographs (1945, pl. V, fig. 1; 1948, no. IV), this cross is incised on one side with a simple six-petalled marigold design, around which is a linear circular frame with a Latin cross in outline at its apex. Moore (2012a) suggested that a *chi-rho* may be carved within the circular frame as well, but this does not appear to be the case from the photographs (above; see also Chapter 7), and the stone cannot be located for examination. The opposite side has a lozenge-shape, or perhaps saltire cross, carved in relief at the centre of the cross-head. The stem of the cross was broken off at some point long ago and likewise, the top corner of the sinister arm of Face 1.

DISCUSSION: The design of this cross is almost a mirror of WX-22, *c*. 200m away in the townland of Raheenlusk, suggesting that they may have been intended to be a complementary or matching pair. However, the stem of the cross is uncarved and the lozenge-shape/saltire cross on Side 2 has the appearance of being unfinished in the photograph, particularly when compared to the carving on its opposite side. So on the balance, this side could just be heavily worn or else carved with a relatively simple, less elaborate design. If so, this could instead suggest that WX-23 may have been carved later (see above). The six-petalled marigold is a relatively simple execution of the motif, though it does have a few Scottish parallels (Fisher 2001, fig. 2-C). For a full analysis of the iconography on this cross, see above and Chapter 7. Like WX-22, this cross was likely a termon or boundary marker for the ecclesiastical estate of Cill Mucrois.

WX-24

Kilmuckridge



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Ballaghkeen North

PARISH: Kilmuckridge

TOWNLAND: Kilmuckridge

SITE NAME: Kilmuckridge

ITM: 715950 640515

O.S. MAP: 22

RMP: WX022-022

TYPE: Cross

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 94 cm; Width 54 cm; Thickness 8–13 cm

FIRST RECORDED: Standing on the west side of the R742, *c*. 120 m south of Kilmuckridge Church (Ranson 1945, 53).

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: The design is very weathered, and difficult to make out in some places. The carving on the lower third of the cross stem has worn almost entirely away. A portion of the lower corner of the dexter arm has flaked off, and the dexter corner of the cross head appears to have been broken long ago, as it has been worn smooth.

DESCRIPTION: This is a cruciform stone carved only on one side with a wheeled cross, 18 cm in diameter, incised at the centre of the east face and attached to a stem 8 cm wide, extending down the length of the cross shaft. A set of similarly spaced parallel lines extend horizontally across the arms from either side of the circular cross-carving. Short vertical lines emanate from these – four on either cross arm, with two extending above and two below the main horizontal lines. The whole of the design is 28 cm wide and at least 80 cm long.

DISCUSSION: Stylistically, this cross is a close match to the pair of crosses *c*. 3.85 km to the north, just across the parish border in Donaghmore (WX-22 and WX-23) and all three may have been termon or boundary markers associated with the early church site of Cill Mucrois (see WX-22). Apart from these crosses, only one other close parallel could be found for WX-24, at the church of Killevin, Argyll in Scotland (Fisher fig. 32A; 148 63.2) This is a short-armed cruciform stone incised with a linear double-ringed equal-armed cross attached to a stem which runs the length of the stone, both above and below the equal-armed cross. The arms to not appear to be carved, but it is possible that any traces of a design have been chipped off or worn away (see Chapter 7). The execution of the wheeled cross on WX-24 could perhaps be compared to the one on the ogham stone at Tooracurragh, Co. Waterford (this volume, WA-28). The vertical lines on the arms of this cross are unusual, and have no close parallels. There are two cross-incised stones from Annaghdown and Tober na Croisseneeve, Co. Galway (Higgins 1987, nos. 38 and 39) with vertical lines running opposite of the incised arms, albeit running between the arms instead of outside them, which Higgins interpreted as variations on the thieves' crosses motif (*ibid*, 125). Furthermore, he suggests that a similar decoration found in combination with an encircled marigold from Kirk Maughold on the Isle of Man may also represent a more obscure form of this motif (*ibid* 124, 126). Another parallel, which could also be a version of the theives' crosses motif, is found on a stone at Chapel Colman, Pembrokeshire in Wales which is dated to the late 7th–8th centuries (Edwards 2007a, P8, 303). On the opposite face is a compass-drawn cross-of-arcs within an incised double-lined circular frame (see Chapter 7 for comparative figures).

Ranson's photograph and sketch of the stone are not entirely accurate, though he admitted that the design was not clearly visible because the cross was kept continually whitewashed by the local community (1945, 53). The photogrammetry model has shown that the vertical lines running parallel to the central cross-carving do not intersect as Ranson depicted. Rather, they emanate on either side of the two incised lines that run across the length of the arms. There is also a very faint third line running the length of the cross stem that is only visible when the texture is removed from the photogrammetry model of the stone, which perhaps represents a mistake on the part of the carver. However these suggestion is speculative. From the photogrammetry model, it appears unlikely that there was any carving at the top of the stem above the wheeled cross. Though no longer whitewashed, it is clear that the cross is still valued by the local community. The area around the cross is well maintained, with small white flowers planted at the foot of the cross, and a 'fairy door' on the tree next to it.



Ranson's photograph of a white-washed WX-24 in 1945 and photogrammetry model; note the vestigial third line running the length of the cross stem in the model, as well as the discrepancies in how the decoration on the cross arms is represented in the photograph

Dubia

WX–25

Kilmokea 4



COUNTY: Wexford

BARONY: Shelburne

PARISH: Kilmokea

TOWNLAND: Great Island

SITE NAME: Kilmokea

ITM: 668654 616568

O.S. MAP: 39

RMP: None

TYPE: Cross-carved stone

MATERIAL: Granite

DIMENSIONS: Height 30 cm; Width 20 cm; Thickness 4–9 cm

FIRST RECORDED: By the author on 15 October 2016, in the northwestern part of the graveyard

PRESENT LOCATION: Same

CONDITION: Very weathered; the top of the east face is also heavily damaged

DESCRIPTION: This is a small dressed stone with a Latin cross standing out *c*. 4 cm in high relief on its eastern face. The dexter arm is significantly thicker than the other, though it does not appear to be due to weathering. The cross stem is a maximum width of 10 cm, and the sides of the stone look to be deliberately rounded.

DISCUSSION: This stone is currently being used as a grave marker, but it bears a strong resemblance to a cross-carved stone from Clonmore, Co. Carlow (*dubia*, CW–40), which Harbison suggested was an architectural fragment from a 17th-century mullioned window (1991, 189). While this interpretation would place the stone well out of the scope of this study, it would represent the only surviving architectural fragment of Kilmokea Church. However, as its provenance is uncertain, it is included for the sake of completion.