

## Shanacloon, Seemochuda and Knockboy Ogham Stones

**Shanacloon (Ballyvourney) County Cork Ogham Stones:** 3 stones which are beside a small mound said to be the site of St. *Abbán*'s grave, with a holy well in proximity to it. It was once a subsequent part of the pattern day / penitential stations at St. *Gobnait*'s well. The townland name is *seana cluain* i.e. the old meadow ( i.e. spiritual meadow or hermitage). It lies to the east side of St. *Gobnait*'s well with the medieval parish church beside it and in the graveyard her reputed burial site. They are still a place of pilgrimage. The monastic settlement of St. *Gobnait* (or was it *Abbán* who founded the settlement) stretched from the site of her well and reputed burial place close by, across the river and along the north side of it to a place known as the cells (*cilliní*). Shanacloon lies on the south side of the river roughly opposite. The river is a tributary of the River Lee. In the remnants of one of the *cilliní* is a carved slab which shows a figure, with a staff, walking upon a wheel whom some suggest represents *Abbán*.

What was this the wheel of his journey? In Fir Maige territory at another Shanacloon (by Manning townland beside the Funcheon River, Fermoy) did *Abbán* found a *cluain* beside the king's residence in Manning before heading to Ballyvourney? Was the *cluain* by Manning where Mochuda found *Flanait* at some other point in time?

As at Kilcrumper (Fermoy) - where *Abbán* was reputed to have founded the monastic settlement before moving on and giving charge of it to Presbyter *Fraoch* (and where also St. *Flanaid* (*Flanait*) princess of the *Fir Maige* founded her nunnery in Clondalane (*Cluain dá Lann*) on the opposite side of the Blackwater River), did *Gobnait* (a blood relative or religious) sister of *Abbán*, in a similar fashion to *Flanaid* at Clondalane, establish a small nunnery at Ballyvourney beside where *Abbán* had founded his final settlement, a place where he was to end his days? If so, who were Litubiri, Vaitevia and Lacavagni and was there a reason why their ogham monuments were placed beside his grave and well at the old *cluain* hermitage or place of his cell? Does this townland represent his cell area i.e. his *cluain*, his *cill*?

Did the 3 ogham stones at Shanacloon come from elsewhere before being placed beside his reputed grave and well e.g. as part of a pilgrimage round in later medieval times? Were they found built into the structure of a souterrain elsewhere and removed to Shanacloon. Ogham stones from souterrains is not uncommon in Muskerry and in Carbery, as well as in Déise lands? Was there a souterrain with them in Shanacloon, a cluain with a souterrain being known on the north side of the Blackwater River at Cloonkirgeen (Cullen / Drishane district) though this one did not have ogham stones?

If ogham stones were incorporated in souterrains - both before Whitby, e.g. as local relics of sanctity, as well as after it, as a response to incoming reforms - did this happen at every monastery, hermitage or cell? Did some refuse to abandon souterrains and bury ogham stones or destroy them due to local secular conservatism, protection, remoteness or politics, doing so regardless of dictums from their mother-houses? In such a case the outcome would be a scenario where some places had ogham stones buried underground while in others they remained standing or simply fallen.

Of those stones placed in underground structures were some such souterrains discovered after 12th century reforms, as medieval parish churches and their graveyard were created? In certain places was there still an awareness of the local religious significance of such stones in the folk culture? Did some of the new religious orders and secular parish clergy seek to establish a connection with such relics and the early monastic / church heritage they reflected? In doing so, did some incorporate such stones into their church buildings? How many new parish church style buildings were deliberately constructed on sites which already had long standing associations within the local folk Christianity? Was this the case at Ballyoughtera (Castlemartyr), with its termon ditch still in place, in East Cork? How many early religious sites were abandoned as new dynamics of pastoral care, and land utilisation, came into effect on post 12th century church / monastic demesne lands / diocesan lands? Did an uneasy acceptance exist between remnants of the older Irish church and the reformed / europeanising one which began in the 12th century? Did trends which created, in some individuals, a desire to return to early Christian hermit / anchorite practices, during the 13th to 15th centuries, lead to a rediscovery and re-use of some souterrains known to still exist on monastic lands? Did an inclusus (or inclusi i.e. Latin for a grade of anchorite, a reclusus, ) hermit seek a place below ground, a

living tomb ritually enclosed by a bishop, in the demesne lands (*Cill Cluaisi* ? *Cluasi* being a gaelicisation of the Latin word *Inclusi*? ) of a monastery in North Cork? Were such places sought out as places of retreat, penance or religious retirement? Did this practice which originated in Egypt/ Syria/ Palestine travel to Western Europe at the time of John Cassian during the later years of the Western Roman Empire? Did it continue as a religious life-choice option, not just in the world of pre-12th century Ireland i.e. 4th to 12th centuries, but also - perhaps with modifications - subsequent to the reforms of that time, lasting as an extreme part of the 'third order' until the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century?

Personal Name	Possible Name Elements	Father	Possible Name Elements	Grandfather / Ancestor	Possible Name Elements	Community / Group / Origin	Profession / Craft
Litubiri		Qecia					
Vaitevia							
Lacavagni	Lacav, Magni?						

**Seemochuda Ogham Stones at the Knockmaeldown Mountains:** One stone plus others mentioned by Power as being at this Saint's Seat (*Suí*) hermitage i.e. St. Mochuda (Carthage) of Lismore.

Personal Name	Possible Name Elements	Father	Possible Name Elements	Grandfather / Ancestor	Possible Name Elements	Community / Group / Origin	Profession / Craft
Ercagni	Erc, Magni or Agni? A religious son of Erc, the magnus?, the magus?, the sweet tongued brehon? the early bishop?	Ercias	Erc, las ?				

There were other oghams stones at this site ....**check** Canon Power's Imokilly paper and other work. Only one stone noted in the Waterford Archaeol. Survey record.

## Knockboy (Seskinane) County Waterford Ogham Stones: 8 stones

Personal Name	Possible Name Elements	Father	Possible Name Elements	Grandfather / Ancestor	Possible Name Elements	Community / Group / Origin	Profession / Craft
...erati				Netasegamonas			
...rgbrcen							
Corb							
Qeccias				Broenionas			
...cir							
Vortigurn							
Vedabar		Q...lsm		Odr...rea			
Omong Edias	Anm? Edias			Bite			

Six of these stones were used as lintels in the later medieval church at Knockboy, another lies within the church floor area and a further stone was removed from the site and is now lost. Who were these people and were they part of a monastic group which lived at the site in early Christian times? It is interesting to note that one of the great monastery of Ardmore ogham stones (several kilometers) to the south of Knockboy) was said to have been found built into the wall of the oratory of St. Declan situated there, when conservation work was being done to it during the 19th century. What early monastic settlement would they have been a cell of? St. Declan's by the sea at Ardmore? How close to Knockboy was the *Rian Bó Phadraig*, an ancient

ecclesiastical road - possibly in imitation of Roman roads in Britain and mainland Europe - running from Ardmore to Cashel?