

## **Souterrains Distributions, Area Densities, Old Monastic Centres and Early Bishopricks [ In Progress ]**

What percentage of the earliest known Irish saints were born and /or had foundations in South Munster? How many had ancestry in South Munster? What was the social status of those families in Gaelic society at that time? If the answers to these questions revealed a high percentage of South Munster connection for the earliest centuries of Christianity in Ireland then would that strengthen a case for South Munster being the place of origin for the spread of early Irish Christianity?

Since beginning this enquiry into the souterrain legacy of South Munster, and having concluded that at least, for some, of the architectural structures of this nature there was a religious purpose, the question arises how do the distribution patterns of known souterrains across the South Munster landscape reflect the ancient, pre-Norman, pre-12th century, bishopricks; some of which may have been of a very early period, others the outcome of 7th century reforms and new practices?

Perhaps the way to begin this enquiry is to try to get a sense of how many such bishopricks there were in South Munster and of how contiguous they were? Would the zoning of the lands of such bishopricks explain for example why town-land names replicate across the parishes of Cork, names such as those for agriculture e.g. *farran, garrane, gort, garraí* , or landscape feature names, or names of religious structures / enclosures / spaces such as *cluain, cill, lyra, desert, drishane etc?*

The impact of land divisioning across time, long periods of time, can greatly affect the ability to understand the layout of a landscape area at any particular period in time. But, landscape areas are also concepts. As such perhaps one way of seeing them without the complexities of changing boundary configurations due to human behaviour over many centuries is to see them as 'bubble' concepts.

Old Monastic Settlements and Bishopricks e.g. Kinneigh, as 'Bubble' concepts:

