

There are four ogham inscribed stone slabs on record for Kilmichael parish. That from Mount Music has a Greek Cross carved on the top of it. There is a reading of this stone by Sir Samuel Ferguson (1879, 192-5) but I have used that by Rev. Patrick Canon Power, Professor of Archaeology at University College Cork in the 1930s, who read the inscription on this stone (Power 1932, 22) as ANNACCANNI MAQI AILLUATTANN and noted that the scribe had an obsession with doubling his consonants. Inscriptions like this one can be difficult to read due to wear and tear overtime. They may also have errors made by the scribe or copyist of a scribe's letters. R.A.S. Macalister the compiler of the great corpus study on Ogham inscriptions (1945) suggested that errors could arise when someone, perhaps an illiterate monk/hermit, went to a scribe in a nearby monastery and had a dedication carved for the stone onto a wooden stick. This stick was then brought back to the grave site and the notches carved on to the stone. Perhaps no one was intended to read the inscription, its presence being enough to identify and sanctify the grave-spot? Would such explain why some inscriptions found on slabs built into the fabric souterrain structures cannot be read 'in situ'? Are they there because the inscribed stones have meaning beyond that of the letters inscribed on them i.e. they are relics? Does the bunching together of words in an inscription also indicate an illiterate and inaccurate carver? Or has it to do with a time when scribes did not use spaces between words when creating their manuscripts? The introduction of such spaces is said to have been an Irish innovation. And what about the use of double consonants? Was this just stylistics? Was it these types of difficulties, not just in Ireland but elsewhere within the Roman Empire, which lead Emperor Justinian to ban the use of ciphers and abbreviations?

Also, if the orientation of the Hibernian church was Greek and Byzantine then why does the ogham cipher translate to Latin rather than Greek? Was this because of Emperor Diocletian's division of the Roman Empire into East and West in 285 AD? Does Latin become the 'lingua franca' of the West while Greek that of the East from then on; East gradually becoming culturally distinct from West, psychologically drifting apart, as Rome governed the West and Byzantium (Constantinople) the East? The Diocletian persecution of Christians in 303 AD is known as the Great Persecution and was the last. Gradually, as time progressed did Latin become the predominant language of scriptoria in the West, while at the same time spiritual allegiance by some strands of Christianity there remained Byzantine for centuries to come? Did this gradually become something which was predominantly of the western half of Ireland, its promontories, its remote places, its bogs, its wilderness lands, its rough ground, its mountains, its hillock peaks and its sea islands from West Cork to Donegal: the Wild Atlantic Way? Did some of the 'persecuted' of Diocletian's actions go to the rough sheep lands of Ireland's west - a more Greek style of Christian landscape topography, and less so to the cattle lands of Ireland's eastern half becoming more Roman in its orientation?

It is not unusual for the beginning of an ogham inscription to have a word like ANM meaning the 'soul of' or 'body of'. Is the ANN of the above inscription meant to be ANM? The word MAQI means a 'son of' but can it also have implied 'a spiritual son of' ? AILLUATTANN sounds close to some form of latinisation of *Eiltín* or *Ultán*. Is this what it is? If so, does this inscription refer to a spiritual son, a follower of St. *Eiltín* who was therefore his Abba? *Ultán* appears to be another form/pronunciation of the name *Eiltín*. The landscape of the northern part of Kilmichael appears to me to have two areas of monastic activity, one being peripheral to the Mount Music area and the other being an area which stretches from Clonmoyle eastwards to Shanacashel. Whether or not they were all actually one ecclesiastical area in the distant past is not clear to me. The Clonmoyle / Shanacashel area also produced an ogham inscribed stone which came from Cooldorrihy townland which reads VEQOANAI MAQI EQOD. This stone was built in to a souterrain. What does this say? That someone named VEQOANAI was the son of someone who was known as EQOD? Was EQOD a personal name or had it something to do with Latin word eques...a horse rider/ a cavalry rider? Was this person associated with what would in time become an abandoned *cluain* i.e. Clonmoyle?

I also see two other areas which are located in the southern half of the parish. These are, one in the Crustera locality, and the other, in the Shanlaragh locality. Were they also just one ecclesiastical area at some time in the distant past? There is also an ogham inscribed stone from the Shanlaragh locality. It reads UBED ABO ALTASI. Is UBED a mis-carving of UBER meaning rich, fertile, (sacred or blessed?) soil i.e. blessed as on the grave of a saint whose miracles 'blossom in the dust'? Does the word ABO refer to ABBA i.e. the spiritual father, abbot, of a

hermitage/monastery community? If so was this person called ALTAS!? Was he abbot of a semi-cenobitic monastery at *sean laura*? Did he have his monastic foundation in the south of the parish distinct from that of *Eiltín* in the north of the parish? What would be the Gaelic version of the name from which the latin form was derived? Was it connected to the townland name Aultagh - in which the stone was found, lying fallen on the slope of a field. Or does the townland name mean something like *Ubhal Teach* i.e. apple house? There is also an ogham stone from Crushtera found upright in a rough piece of land. Its reading is unclear and it contains the letters AFM/M?OLA. Is it another 'son of' inscription? Crushtera appears to mean crossland or land of the crosses. Canon Power in his *Crichad an Chaoilli* (Power, 1932A) notes land areas with crosses in the Fermoy locality. Does a land of crosses refer to a calvary at a grotto?

It is interesting to consider the possibility of a single northern monastic settlement and a single southern one, rather than four areas as I have stated above. If so the, so far known, distribution of drystone and clay tunnelled souterrains in the parish is quite interesting if the majority of them were 'lodgings' e.g. as at Lisnacuddy townland translated as 'the lios of the night lodgings'. Due to standards of field recording in the past some of those sites which do not appear to me to have been lodgings may indicate, in one case an underground oratory i.e. a long drystone passage to a chamber, and in another case a T-shaped penitential cell. The souterrain distribution patterns for Kilmichael, as so far known - based on twenty eight or so souterrains - are dealt with in depth elsewhere; in a separate part of this website.

To return to the Mount Music ogham stone and its inscription, why would a spiritual son of Abba *Eiltín* named Accanni have an ogham inscribed pillar stone with a Greek cross carved in to it situated at Mount Music (Knockourane, Cnoc Abha Rann rather than *Cnoc Amhráin*?) overlooking Kilnarovenagh (cell /monastery of the Romans/Saxons) townland on its east side? The Irish National Folklore Archive, Schools Collection (Vol. 0339, 43-4) of the 1930s records a local story that monks from further north in Macloneigh (*Maige Cluain Aodh*, the plain of the hermitage/monastery of Aodh) parish which interlocks with the northern side of Kilmichael, arrived at Kilnarovenagh after a battle at Macloneigh which resulted in much slaughter. If Kilnarovenagh means Cell of the Romans (*Cill na Rómhánaigh*) then it was a group whose allegiance was to Rome which came from Cluain Aodh after the battle to found a new monastery at Kilnarovenagh. This therefore suggests that the cause of the battle was the divergence of those monks who favoured remaining with the Hibernian church away from those who wished to shift their loyalty to Rome and the Saxon church. It is probable that *Eiltín* was no longer alive at this time and so were his successors in charge of his monastic foundation, a monastic foundation which was Hibernian and Greek in outlook? Did it give way to the Romans / Saxons and to what extent did they change the local religious topography? According to Bolster (1972, xxxviii) *Eiltín* flourished in the middle of the 6th century AD. If true then it was his successors who faced the tensions of Romanising change within the Hibernian church and the outcome of the Whitby Synod up to a century later. Were they present at the Macloneigh battle and did they survive it, or were the members of their monastery depleted to such an extent that they could not resist the founding of the Kilnarovenagh monastery?

If *Eiltín's* immediate successors favoured Rome and changed their loyalty to Rome was the ogham stone with a Greek cross on it left standing at Mount Music or would the Roman church have had it knocked down; or did local people have it buried or placed in a souterrain chamber as a relic (to be secretly venerated?), as perhaps happened to the east in AGLISH parish at Roovesmore and Knockshanawee? It is unclear as to precisely where the Cork antiquarian John Windele found the stone. Did he recover it from a souterrain or was it lying in a field. He brought the stone to Cork intending to use it as a headstone for his grave; although instead it became part of the collections of the Royal Cork Institution and subsequently became part of the University College Cork ogham stones collection.

Interlocking with Kilnarovenagh and also overlooked by Mount Music lies Terelton (*Tír Eiltín* i.e. *Eiltín's* land or country) townland. If the Roman/Saxon group followed an old road from Macloneigh to Kilnarovenagh, as in the folk story, did they choose this locality because they were welcome there or did they do battle for it? Was the taking of this area a compromise after the Macloneigh battle? Did some do penance for the violence of the battle in the fashion of St. *Finnchú* of Brigown and his sickle blades? If the hermitage/monastery of *Eiltín's* country was

Greek in its orientation how did relations work out subsequently, or did the Romans force the Greek hermitage/monastery to succumb to the Roman church? Did the Synod at Whitby in Northumbria in 664 AD resolve these tensions or did it make them worse. Doyen of Irish archaeology R.A.S. Macalister described Whitby as a 'crushing blow' to the Hibernian church.

The northern and north western boundaries of Kilmichael parish are formed by the River Lee and by the drowned, ancient, oak forest known as the Gearagh (*Gaorthach*, 'the great bog of Muskerry'). A very short distance south of Kilmichael parish lies the Bandon River which flows to the sea at Kinsale Harbour. Kinsale's patron saint is St. Multose which is thought to be a corruption of the words *Mo Eiltín Óg* meaning our young *Eiltín*. Beneath the foundations of St. Multose church St. Eiltín and two of his followers i.e. Gobban and Seadna (see Bolster 1972, xxxviii and xxxix) are said, according to tradition, to be buried. Beside the land where the church is situated lies the small townland of Dunderrow and this bounded on its south side by Tisaxon (Saxon monastic house) townland.

What does Dunderrow mean? *Dún* refers to a ringfort or secular enclosure. Derrrow has been interpreted as *Darú* - and a suggested connection with oak trees. However, Dair/Deir/Dar are versions of a word from the Greek/Eastern church tradition meaning a hermitage or monastery; another example being Darinish island by Youghal on the Blackwater River. Does Dunderrow mean the monastery of the *dún*? Such associations, i.e. 'ecclesia de rath', are not uncommon e.g. Garranekinnefeake in East Cork. Was the Dunderrow souterrain of several chambers and cut in brittle rock, which Windele suggested was in a tri-vallate *rath*, a souterrain in a large rath which had a hermitage/monastery in it? Was this Eiltín's monastic foundation and if so was the earliest building at the site of St. Multose church connected with it? Blocking the creepway of the first chamber which Windele entered were two glazed tiles with the figure of a cock impressed on each of them. Another creepway was blocked with a quernstone. Where did these tiles come from? From the floor of a demolished church or monastery in the vicinity, its rubble? If so then why was it demolished? Did Tisaxon, located beside Dunderrow, have a part to play in such a demolition? Was Tisaxon a place of arrival for the monks of a Saxon monastic foundation to be built at Kinsale, giving inland access via the Bandon River and overseas access to Britain and beyond? If so, did this result in the demolition of an earlier monastery at the *rath*, of its church nearby, and the closure of its souterrain with some of the resulting rubble? Did Saxon monks from Kilnarovenagh visit there? Did monks from Berihert's Saxon monastery at Tullylease in north Cork visit there?

Should one imagine only monks doing battle against each other at Macloneigh? Or were *monaig* (*manaig*) involved also? To quote Bolster (1972, 41) 'monaig or monastic clients were married, their sons were educated in the monasteries, they managed the monastic flocks and land and paid tribute to the Church for lands held'. How many of their children joined the religious life? Was the metalworker father of St. Finbarr, at a ringfort, in a parish nearby, a *monaig* and a cell of Finbarr beside it?

#### References

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#### The Etymology of Dunderrow?

**Dún** (residence in an enclosure, that of a lord?), of the **Der** / Deir/ Dar/ Dair ( an early monastery in the eastern Mediterranean style and similarly at *Darinish* island i.e. monastery island on the Blackwater River by Youghal), Row from either **Rua** (Red) or **Abha** (River, pronounced 'owa') i.e.

Dunderrow ( *Dún Der Abha*) the *dún* with the Der monastery by the bank of the river (the north bank of the Bandon River)?