

Cascar : skeletons and the cool place name

Cascar Cuile (Cuile) meaning
a penitential place or ~~at~~ a place
/ place for doing penance such

as a corner patch of land (Cuile
- anglicised as the place-name
element cool e.g. Coolcloony
i.e. the corner land patch of the
chain land area. Or,

Cool Tomás i.e. the corner patch
of Tomás (a personal name). Or,

the land patch known as Cool
on the southern side of

Clondulane (Chain dá Lann i.e.
hermitage of two chapels) toward,
Ferry.

An A2 souterrain i.e. two
drystone built gallery chambers
joined at right angles by a →

creepway as at Kilclogh in
Malahy parish and Ballyanly at
Inniscara parish, both medieval periods,
being to the south of Donoughmore
Monastery in Muskerry (Co. Cork).

The Ballyanly souterrain had the
skeletal remains of a young
woman and a teenage girl in it
when discovered. There are a few
references in the older Co. Cork souterrain
literature to human skeletal remains
being found at or near souterrain
'entrances' (original or collapse places?).

I think the Ballyanly remains were
not those of anchorites, but who can say.
But consider Todd's translation from the
story in the Book of Fermoy about
Cesar and Eithne (her claim,
her cell, her burial place).

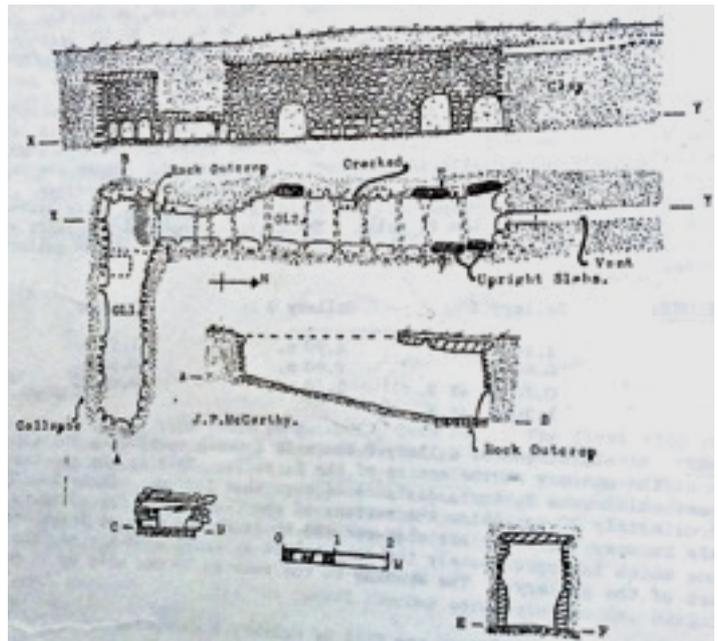
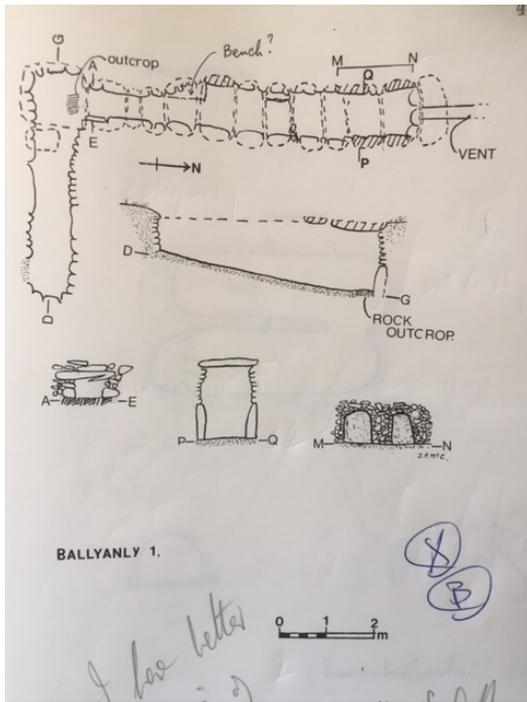
Also consider the case of the ringfort souterrain
at Glenawillin (Cork) where ogham inscribed
roof slabs, one per gallery, were found in an 192
(?) type souterrain.

Ballyanly (Baile an Laoí, home-place or hamlet by the River Lee?) souterrain:

Fragments of two human skeletons were found (young woman and teenage girl) in the D-G gallery below when the site was first discovered during modern local construction work. At Kilclogh it was reported that a Cill once existed in a nearby field. Neither Ballyanly nor Kilclogh were discovered in a ringfort and no traces of a 'ploughed out' ringfort were noticed at either site; though a ringfort does exist in an adjacent field to Ballyanly. No ogham inscriptions were noted on any of the capstones or elsewhere in these souterrains. Without excavation of the capstones it cannot be said for certain however that none exist.

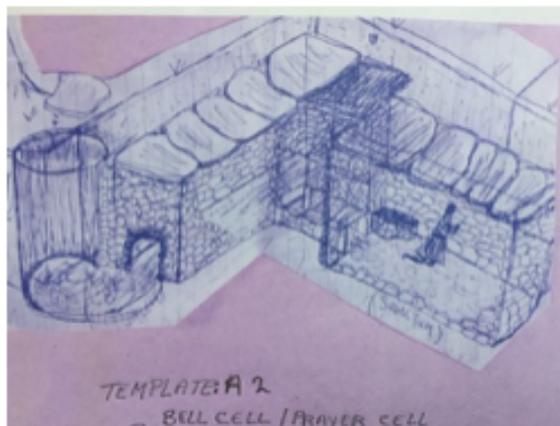
Ballyanly (Inniscarra)

Kilclogh (Matehy, Blarney)



Kilclogh

Ballyanly



Conjectural reconstruction of how an A2 type site might have looked during daily use. [Do its individual 'galleries' /chambers fit the eastern European concept of a 'four yard' monastic 'cave'?]

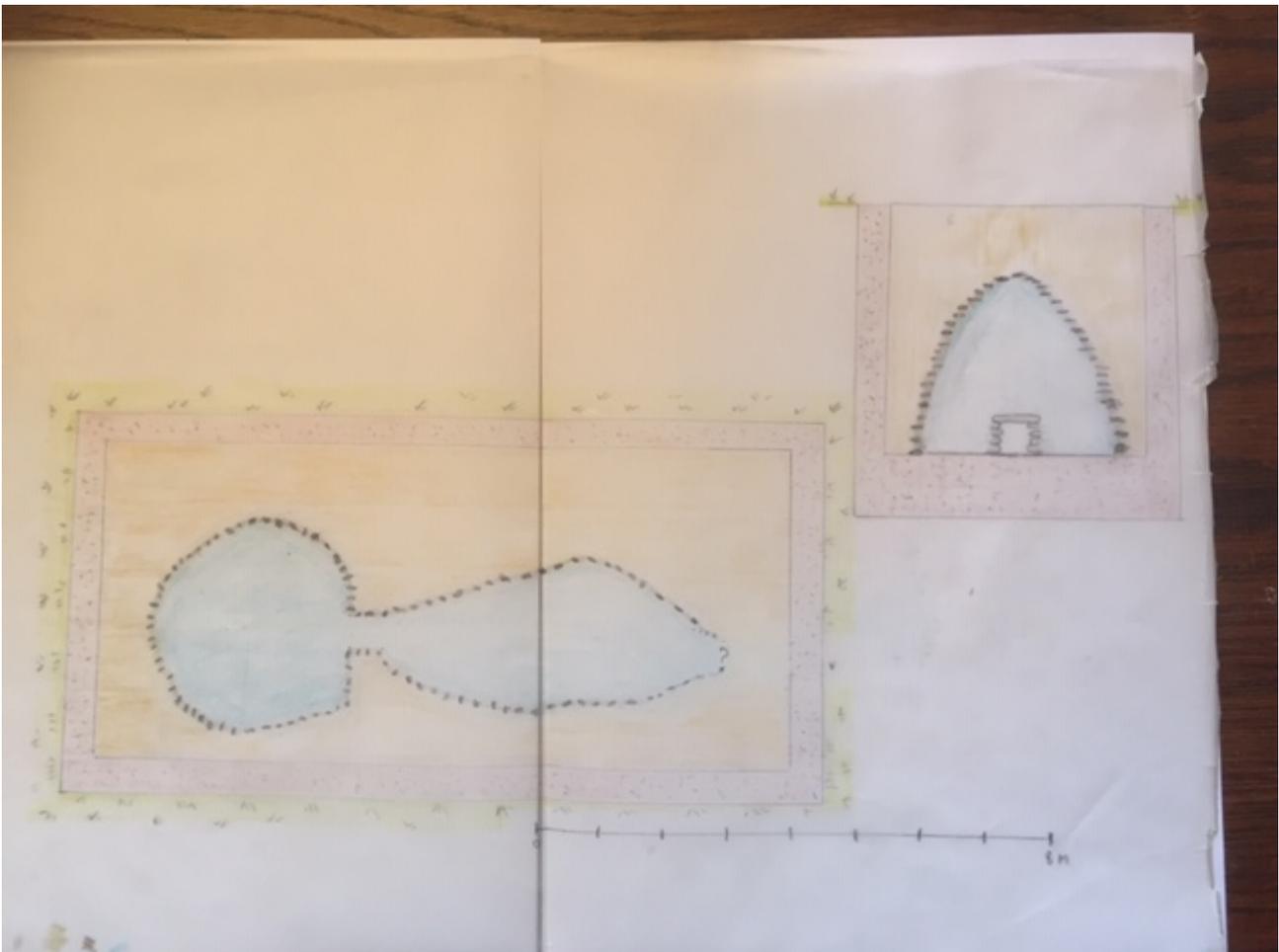


Interior of the inner gallery chamber of the Kilclogh souterrain.

Ecclesiastical architectural comparisons across Cork tribe-lands and their monastic demesnes:

The Carrignagroghera Souterrain situated at the western tail-end of the very commanding and prominent eminence where the great hillfort of **Fir Maighe** lands known as Carn Hill to the south of Fermoy town, County Cork. Why situate this drystone built souterrain beside the great hillfort - at a place with an easier incline than the other side....beside an access route to the hillfort??

Why is this type of souterrain so common in the **Fir Maighe** tribe land area especially along the banks of the Blackwater River and its junction with the Funchion River i.e. with their early ecclesiastical / episcopal / presbyter / '**Crumper**', settlements / demesne lands? In what way was its use / function different from the A2 type architecture of the Ballyanly and Kilclogh souterrain which were within the Donoghmore (**Domhnach Mór**) monastic estate of the Muscraighe tribe?



Site ground plan and elevated cross-section of the circular cell chamber of the Carrignagroghers (rock of the crosses?) souterrain, Fermoy. Based on M.J. O’Kelly and E. Shee’s site drawing published in Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society, 1968, LXXIII, 45-46. [search corkhist.ie]

The Carrignagroghera souterrain is what I would classify as a B1 architectural type site. They are largely a phenomenon of the Fermoy locality and that part of the Blackwater River and its northern tributary the Funchion which passes by Brigown (place of the metal smiths) the locality where Saint **Finchú** (aka **Fanahan**) had his monastic estate.

How might such a souterrain structure have been used? The following is a suggestion:

An **Abba** (an Abbot) and his Disciples (which entity might include an initially small number such as his attendant and any companions - up to 5 or 6 'heads' (persons i.e. **seisúir ceann / cinn**) he brought with him to the locality to found a hermitage. Added to these there may have been a few initial converts. Did these represent his nascent **paruchia** i.e. those to whom he directed his parochial care? Apart from certain times of day for personal private prayer in their own individual cells (cubicles) did they gather for their community's daily 'Hours' according to his Rule or that which he followed? Did his followers in single file kneel and knee walk the **nartex** (passage-way ...but in later times the central aisle of a church or chapel) of this souterrain toward to the creepway to the beehive chamber, the domed holy of holies, where the abbot or a hermit saint recited in murmurs and sang the psalms, his one or two attendants squatting in niches in the nartex walls, or in slightly enlarged curves of the passage, their 'lies' immediately outside the creep-way entrance to the beehive? Did they give responses as his handbell rang out, as its dapper struck resonating the bell? Were they in darkness or candle light? Do aspects of this scenario resonate with the early accounts of pilgrims within the 'purgatory cave' at Station Island Lough Derg County Donegal...an account of it contained in Latin text of the 17th century with the word **Lyra** in its title....**Lyra** [*Carve, Thomas (1666) Lyra Seu Anacephalaeosis Hibernica. Sulzbach.*] as a place of singing psalms, as a hermitage from a time before the later Medieval concept of 'purgatory', instead referencing a very early form of monastic oratory, one prior to the concept of a rectangular oratory (e.g. Gallarus, Dingle, Co. Kerry) with internal altar place. Instead just the domed space as the private 'cell' where the hermit spoke directly with God while his followers remained outside its entrance listening?

If the abbot and his 'disciples' began their local mission say in the east of this land area, as time progressed and as converts came initially from the eastern side of this evolving 'paruchia', did the nartex become full to capacity at a certain point in time? Did the community continue to grow as more converts came to join in this process of worship, coming from the west side of the surrounding locality (both sides later to become a civil parish)? As a consequence did the need arise for an extension of the nartex to accommodate them? And consequently did a souterrain architectural form such as that at Coolgarrif in Aghinagh parish (between the two southern projections of Aghabullogue parish (Muskerry)) i.e. with a second passage added, come into being? [**Search corkhist.ie for J.C. Coleman's site survey of this souterrain**]. If so at what point in time was this type of oratory abandoned, this echo of an older tradition of hiding, of underground / cave Christian worship, in favour of a surface built wooden, or later masonry constructed, chapel / oratory in which an earlier outdoor wooden altar was replaced by an interior one before which a larger community and its leaders were led in their worship by a priest? Or was it the case that the more ascetic Celtic monasticism continued its use for monks while in parallel or in later times the chapel became the norm for other i.e. the laity?

