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# TROWEL

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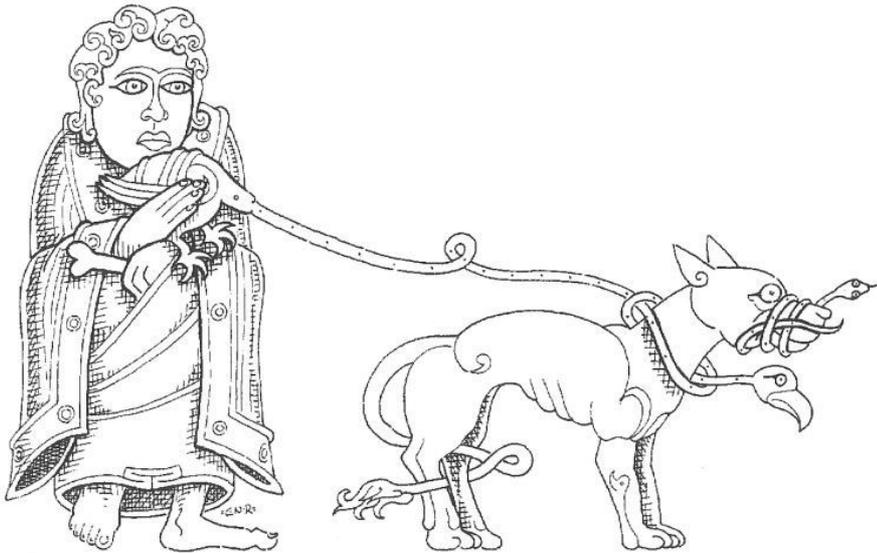
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# TROWEL

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## Editors' Foreword

We have great pleasure in presenting this, the seventh, volume of *Trowel*. We hope that this publication is now well established and taken for what it is, an annual journal produced by students but with a standard of content that places it alongside the more established archaeological journals.

We would like to thank the following whose help ensured that *Trowel* VII appeared. The Director and staff of the Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit, the Department of Archaeology and the Archaeological Society, University College Dublin have shown a continued interest in and support of *Trowel*.

The current editors wish to acknowledge the contributions of Chris Corlett, Doreen Keating and Séamas Taafe as previous editors of *Trowel*. Again, the help and advice of Conor McDermott is much appreciated.

*Trowel* has been a vehicle for publication by U.C.D. students. However, the editors have decided that it would be a positive move to accept papers from students outside of U.C.D. For instance, it is hoped that contributors to this year's conference of the Association of Young Irish Archaeologists might consider submitting their papers to the next volume of *Trowel*. We hope that this might lead to greater communication and collaboration between the different universities in this small island.

## CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN FIFTH AND SIXTH CENTURY IRELAND

Cathy Swift\*

It has often been assumed that, following Palladius' mission of AD 431, Ireland became entirely or at the very least predominantly, Christian in the course of the remainder of the 5th and 6th centuries (see amongst others Hughes 1966, 39-56, Ó Corrain 1994, 3). Other historians have abandoned the 6th century altogether, taking the view that we simply do not have enough sources to discuss the period (Sharpe 1984, 239-43; Etchingham 1994, 38). The purpose of this paper is to examine some of the archaeological evidence for the existence of Christianity in Ireland during this two hundred year period and to discover whether the material remains can add to our knowledge of this era.

### Christian cult objects in the 6th century

Christian cult objects from 6th century Ireland are rare. The six wooden wax-coated tablets, held together with a leather thong and attached to a shoulder strap, which were found in a bog in Springmount Co. Antrim are dated to the late 6th or early 7th centuries (Armstrong and Macalister 1920). Psalms XXX to XXXII were inscribed in the wax with a stylus, the dating is dependent on palaeographical analysis of the script (Brown 1984). There are no other tablets known from Ireland but similar tablets, bearing secular texts, are known from late Roman Britain (Bowman and Thomas 1983, 34-5). The relatively widespread existence of such tablets in early Ireland is indicated by their Irish name, *polire*. This word has been interpreted as a borrowing of Latin *pugillares* with a postulated Vulgar Latin form *\*pugllaria* which has gone through the grammatical development in Irish known as syncope. On current thinking, this occurred around the middle of the 6th century (McManus 1983, 37-8, 66; 1991, 89). One can thus assume that there were a number of such writing tablets in existence in 6th century Ireland and that at least a percentage were used for Christian purposes as in the Springmount example. In an early 8th century text, a *polire* is given to a newly-consecrated bishop as part of the equipment necessary for his ministry (Bieler 1979, 176-7, 246), it is reasonable to assume that tools such as these would have been essential from the advent of Christianity in Ireland.

Cormac Bourke has recently suggested that "either an import or a close imitation" of a 6th to 7th century relic box from the Mediterranean was found at Dromiskin in Co. Louth in the 1940s (Bourke 1993, 14). This was a stone box with a sliding lid, covered with thin strips of decorative leather, enclosing a similar box of wood (Raftery and Tempest 1942). It was found beside the skull of a male extended inhumation in a cist-grave, with his head to the east, in a churchyard at a site well-documented as an ecclesiastical centre in the 8th century. In the box was found a small ring-headed pin of unknown date, together with some charcoal, it is impossible to tell whether the box was being used as a relic container or was simply viewed by its owner as a small ornamental casket at the time of its deposition.

A Christian cleric is commemorated on an ogham stone from Arraglen in Co. Kerry: *Qrimittir Ronann maq Comogann* or "— of the priest Ronan son of Comgan". The language used in this inscription has been described as belonging to one of the latest groups of ogham inscriptions which are dated roughly to the second half of the 6th century (McManus 1991,

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96-7). Together with the Springmount tablets, this stone provides good evidence for the presence of Christian clerics in Ireland during the 6th century. Other remains, like the Dromiskin box, are less clear-cut sources of information and their precise value for the study of early Irish Christianity is a matter for interpretation and debate.

### **Linguistic analysis and the dating of ogam stones**

Ogam stones are probably the most abundant artefact type known from this era and McManus's (1991) recent study of their inscriptions has the potential to revolutionize the archaeological study of these monuments. Memorial stones bearing inscriptions in the ogam alphabet are found in most counties of Ireland, in Wales, Devon, Cornwall and the Isle of Man. The inscriptions record the name of an individual with or without an indication of parentage and/or community affiliation, the stones may have served either as tombstones or as charters of land ownership; or both (McManus 1991, 44, 154-5, 163-5). The script in which the memorials are written is generally described today as a cipher, possibly deriving from the use of tally-sticks, it was based on the Latin alphabet (*ibid.*, 6-39). McManus believes that the ogam cipher was probably invented in or before the 4th century with the specific purpose of recording the Irish language (*ibid.*, 40-1) but that the stones on which it is first recorded belong in the main to the 5th and the first half of the 6th centuries, with the latest types continuing up to the 7th century (*ibid.*, 96-100).

Absolute dates for individual stones are, however, difficult to isolate. Ogam stones have no palaeographical styles which can be used to provide a relative chronology, the only direct evidence for the evolution of language in this period comes from the inscriptions themselves (*ibid.*, 78-81). Unfortunately, the inscriptions do not present us with this evidence in a consistent fashion; we are dealing with statistical trends rather than absolutes. The possibility exists that the changes which occurred in the Irish language may have developed in different areas at different times, that individual craftsmen may have been more or less conservative than their fellows and that what we identify as consecutive changes may have overlapped to an unknown degree (*ibid.*, 80-1, 92-3).

Moreover, the absolute dates which linguists have provided and which have, to a certain extent, become sacrosanct through time, often stem originally from assumptions made about the historical or archaeological evidence. Thus Jackson's chronology of sound changes (which underpins much of McManus' work) assumes that a bilingual stone with a memorial in Latin letters (*memoria Voteporigis Protectictoris*) and an ogam inscription (*Votecorigas*) can be identified with the Welsh king Guortepir of Dyfed, who is mentioned as a man with whitening hair in a work by Gildas (Jackson 1953, 169-70; McManus 1991, 52-3), which itself is only very roughly dated to the middle third of the 6th century (Dumville 1984).

Again, one of the diagnostic sound changes which provides the relative chronology of Ogam stones, is dated through analysis of an inscription found on a stone in ploughed topsoil inside the defences of the Roman town of Wroxeter (Wright and Jackson 1968). This stone was dated epigraphically to sometime in the 5th or first half of the 6th century but a more precise dating to the second half of the 5th century was put forward on the basis of the historical argument that an Irish warrior could only have been active in Wroxeter after the withdrawal of the Roman legions in AD 408 and prior to the disappearance of Roman Wroxeter sometime in the 5th century. Both premises are suspect. We have references to Irish raids on Britain from the 3rd century (Salway 1981, 241), while Philip Barker's excavations at Wroxeter have shown a substantial post-Roman settlement in the town in the mid-5th century, while such evidence as exists for its abandonment has led the excavator to infer that it

continued to be inhabited until some point between AD 500 and the mid-7th century (Webster and Barker 1991, 28-9). These two absolute dates (of mid-6th century for the Votecorigas stone and mid-5th century for that at Wroxeter) are thus highly questionable and an absolute, as opposed to a relative, linguistic chronology which is based on them seems unconvincing. Archaeologists, searching in the Stygian gloom of our 6th century past, should note that they are quite likely to meet linguists stumbling along in the opposite direction.

On the other hand, even if one cannot always accept the specific dating ranges postulated for various language developments, there is a broad terminus ante quem for the relative chronology. By the later 7th century texts with early Old Irish forms survive in some numbers; we can, at the very least, say that the language of the ogam stones appears to predate that found in 7th century documents. Thus the relative linguistic chronology has a peg at one end of the chronological spectrum from which to hang. At the other end, the chronological argument remains basically a historical one, it is from the late 4th and early 5th century that we have the most information for Irish contacts with the Roman empire, this provides the most likely context for the development of a cipher based on the Latin alphabet (McManus 1991, 41). The archaeological picture appears comparable: Roman finds in Ireland tend to belong either to a 1st and 2nd century AD horizon (which, on evidence of contemporary Gaulish inscriptions is likely to predate the development of the “ogam language”), or to the 4th and 5th centuries (Bateson 1973). I would argue, therefore, that the series of linguistic parameters provided in McManus’ work can be used by archaeologists to break up the vast corpus of ogam stones into more manageable units which can then be matched against art-historical or other forms of information. Furthermore, while accepting that linguistic analysis cannot provide us with absolute dates, it seems to me that an acceptable shorthand for those linguistic groups which in the relative chronology are “early” is “probably 5th century”, while the groups which are “late” can be termed “probably late 6th or early 7th century”.

### **Pillar stones with Maltese crosses**

While attempting to isolate evidence for Christianity in early Ireland, two subsets of the ogam stone corpus can be put forward. The first is dependent on the Arraglen stone, mentioned above. In addition to its “late” inscription (second half of 6th century on McManus’ absolute chronology), the stone is ornamented with two crosses. One of these is a Maltese cross with a hook-like expansion at the right side of the upper arm, interpreted as a monogram form of the *chi-rho* symbol (Hamlin 1972, 1982, fig. 17.1, Cuppage 1986, 248-50). On the opposite face is another Maltese cross, this time within a circle and without the *chi-rho* “hook”. Macalister argued that crosses on ogam stones could not be assumed to be contemporary with the ogam inscription but this was because he was working within the MacNeill model which viewed all ogam writings as essentially pagan (Macalister 1945, passim; MacNeill 1909, 301). McManus has convincingly refuted such arguments (1991, 55-61), Macalister indicates that MacNeill himself had ceased to believe in them by the time of the publication of *Corpus Inscriptionum Celticarum* (Macalister 1945, xvii).

Moreover, a Maltese cross of similar style was found at Church Island which is cut by an ogam inscription dated by McManus to the very last phase of ogam production, probably in the 7th century (1991, 100; see O’Kelly and Kavanagh 1954). This means that at Church Island, the carving of a Maltese cross must have predated the “late” ogam inscription. Following Lionard’s (1960/61) synthesis McManus minimizes the importance of this, arguing that early cross-types continued in use alongside later forms so that no chronological importance can be attached to this early dating for a Maltese cross (McManus 1991, 80). I would argue that Lionard’s dating scheme is not relevant to pillar stones as it was developed

to date recumbent cross-slabs only (Lionard 1960/61, 96) and that his scheme is dependent to an excessive degree on dates drawn from the Irish annals (Swift 1996b)., Therefore, the Church Island stone as provides crucial evidence for the production of this cross-form in the late 6th and early 7th century as well as providing support for the conclusion that the Arraglen crosses are probably also contemporaneous with the *Qrimitir Ronann maq Comogann* inscription.

A third stone with a Maltese cross, also with a *chi-rho* “hook” is found on the island of Iona, where a Christian community was founded by Columba circa AD 563. The stone on which this cross is inscribed has an inscription written in Latin and carved in Latin characters, lapis Echodi or “the stone of Echuid/Echoid”. Epigraphically, this inscription is dated to the 7th century (RCAHMS 1982, 182-3). A date in the earlier part of the 7th century is perhaps suggested by the only other early inscription which includes the word “stone”. This is from Inchagoill in Co. Galway, it is written in Irish but in Latin characters: *Lie Lugaedon macci Menueh* or “the stone of \*Lugaedon son of Menueh” and has been dated by McManus to the penultimate phase in ogam production, possibly the late 6th or early 7th century (1991, 96-7). This stone has seven cross forms inscribed on its various faces, including two at one end of the stone above the inscription. In this case the crosses are plain with forked terminals (Macalister 1945,1-3).

The lapis Echodi stone is of rather different shape from the other two stones, being a small grave-marker, 0.36m x 0.27m while the others are narrow pillars, between 1 and 2m in height. The Maltese crosses on all three stones are similar without being replicas of one another. It seems plausible to assume that the Iona stone post-dates the foundation of Columba’s community there which gives the monument a terminus post quem of AD 563, this means that dating evidence for all three stones, the one historical, the others based on linguistic analysis of their inscriptions, points to the later 6th century as the earliest possible date for their creation. Furthermore, all three stones appear to belong to the functional contexts identified for ogam stones, being either pillars which marked land boundaries or monuments associated with burial; this, in turn, makes it likely that their production did not long post-date the practice of raising ogam stones. Together with the Inchagoill monument, they indicate that the original practice of raising memorial pillars in honour of the dead was probably being modified in its latest stages in the late 6th and early 7th century, by the use of the Latin alphabet and by the carving of crosses on the monuments. It may be that it was overtly “Christianised” ogam stones such as these that Tirechán had in mind when he wrote in the second half of the 7th century that Patrick had inscribed letters on stones with his own hand (Bieler 1979,146-7).

Other pillar stones with similar inscriptions and Maltese cross forms carved on them may provide us with evidence of the wide distribution of Christian communities in this period. One from AGLISH, Co. Kerry has a Maltese cross within a circle and an ogam inscription which includes the 6th century form MAQI (Cuppige 1986, 258-9) although McManus is careful to stress that this is a formulaic word and as such, could be resistant to change (1991, 96). There is also the small boulder with a Maltese cross at Maumanorig Co. Kerry with an ogam inscription including the form Anm which McManus would see as a relatively late development, characteristic of the last phases of ogam, at some point after the middle of the 6th century (1991, 73, 95; Cuppige 1986, 332-4). A pillar stone with a Maltese cross and a *chi-rho* “hook” at Whithorn is inscribed in Latin letters with the words *hoc Sti Petri apvstoli* “The place of St Peter, the apostle” (Allen and Anderson 1903, iv 496-7). This may be connected with the establishment of the first Anglian bishopric before AD732.

Finally, there are also pillar stones and boulders with Maltese crosses which have no dating evidence but where the cross is similar in shape and is inscribed in roughly the same position as in the preceding examples e.g. Knockane and Coumduff, Co. Kerry, both with chi-rho “hook” (Henry 1937, pl.XXVII; Cuppage 1986, 280), St Gobnet’s stone, Ballyvourney, Co. Cork (Henry 1937, pl.XXX), Caherlehillan Co. Kerry, with what appear to be corrupt Alpha and Omega symbols (Crawford 1980 pl.XII); Caher Island, Dooghmakeon, Inishkea North and Duvillaun More, Co. Mayo (Henry 1947, 29-32; 1937, pl.XXIX, XXXI; Macalister 1945, 11), Cloghan and Dunlewy Far, Co. Donegal (Lacy 1983, 253, 265), Faha, Co. Kerry (Cuppage 1986, 283-4) and possibly Drumnacur, Co. Antrim (Hamlin 1982, pi. 17.2c). If one included Maltese crosses with stem elements attached, one could add still further examples, including the Reask pillar stone A which stood on the north-eastern boundary of the lintel-grave cemetery found on that site (Fanning 1981, 86, 139-141; Cuppage 1986, 336-45).

In short, we appear to have a group of monuments with a current distribution in Kerry, Cork, Donegal, Mayo, Galloway and the southern Hebrides. There may be many more: historically, stones such as these have been studied far more extensively in the western parts of Ireland, there is obvious potential for new finds in the eastern half of the country (see Fenwick 1996 for a possible example in Co. Meath). They are characteristically pillar shaped, with a Maltese cross being found on one of the wider faces, either centrally-placed or at the upper end of the stone. A number are inscribed with ogam inscriptions of the normal memorial type. The two Scottish examples have inscriptions in the Latin alphabet; they appear to parallel the ogam stones in function, one being a grave-marker while the other proclaims the patron of the area. In date these monuments with Maltese crosses may belong to the later 6th, 7th or even early 8th centuries. They would appear to provide good evidence for the relatively widespread existence of Christianity at this period, at least in western Ireland, a more detailed analysis of these crosses and their parallels could prove to be a rewarding postgraduate research topic.

### **Pillar stones with KOI-form inscriptions**

Another small sub-grouping within the corpus of ogam stones also appears to portray strong ecclesiastical influence. These are the stones with inscriptions which incorporate the element KOI. McManus, following previous scholars, identifies this as a word defining locality, “here”, from which the later Old Irish *cé* is developed, he suggests the KOI inscriptions correspond to the use of HIC IACIT on memorial stones in Britain (1991, 51, 119). This formula was developed by 4th century Christians in the Roman empire in substitution for the earlier pagan formulae such as DIS MANIBUS “to the spirits of the departed” (Nash-Williams 1950, 8). In contrast to the Maltese-cross memorials, the two KOI inscriptions for which McManus provides linguistic dating belong to the earliest phase identifiable in the ogam stone corpus, probably sometime in the 5th century (1991, 94, 97).

The Irish stones are found in Killeen Cormac, Co. Kildare; Legan and Ballyboodan, Co. Kilkenny; Donard, Co. Wicklow; Monataggart, Co. Cork; and Ballintaggart, Co. Kerry (Macalister 1945, 26-7, 38-9, 42-4, 52, 119, 152, 156-7). Readings of KOI inscriptions which McManus would classify as doubtful are also given by Macalister for the stones at Donaghmore, Co. Kildare and Ballyhank, Co. Cork (1945, 30-1, 94-6; McManus 1991, 79, 96). Of these, Killeen Cormac, Monataggart, Ballintaggart and Ballyhank have all provided more than one ogam stone but only at Ballintaggart do two stones with KOI inscriptions survive from the same site. Three pillar stones are ornamented with small simple cross forms in the central position (Macalister 1945, 39, 152, 157; Cuppage 1986, 264-6) again, the probability that these are contemporary with the inscriptions is strengthened by an inscription

from Dingle, where an ogam inscription from this earliest linguistic horizon (but without the KOI element) cuts a similarly plain cross (McManus 1991, 94; Cuppage 1986, 255). The presence of such crosses can be seen both as supporting McManus' interpretation of KOI and as strengthening the case that they reflect the existence of Christian communities in 5th century Ireland. The stone at Killeen Cormac is found on the site traditionally associated with Cell Fine, which the 9th or 10th century *Vita Tripartita* links to mission by Palladius. However, Nicholls has argued persuasively that a more plausible etymology for the English name is Cell ingen Cormaic or "the church of the daughters of Cormac" and that no direct association between Palladius and this Kildare site can be made (Mulchrone 1939,19; Hogan 1910,192; Nicholls 1984, 547-8).

Though McManus has postulated that KOI inscriptions represent a parallel for the HIC IACIT formulae in the Latin alphabet on monuments from south-west Britain, the KOI formula does not occur on the ogam stones in Britain. On the other hand, many of the HIC IACIT stones in south-west Wales commemorate Irishmen who had settled there and intermarried with the Romano-British inhabitants (Richards 1960, 141-3). This would appear to imply that Irishmen resident in Wales were content to adopt the HIC IACIT formulae without translating it into Irish although they did, in many cases, modify the Roman style by using the personal name in the genitive case, as was the normal (though not invariable) custom in Ireland (Nash-Williams 1950, 9-10). This may, in turn, mean that we should see the KOI formulae as representing an adoption of the HIC IACIT style from its Continental home-land.

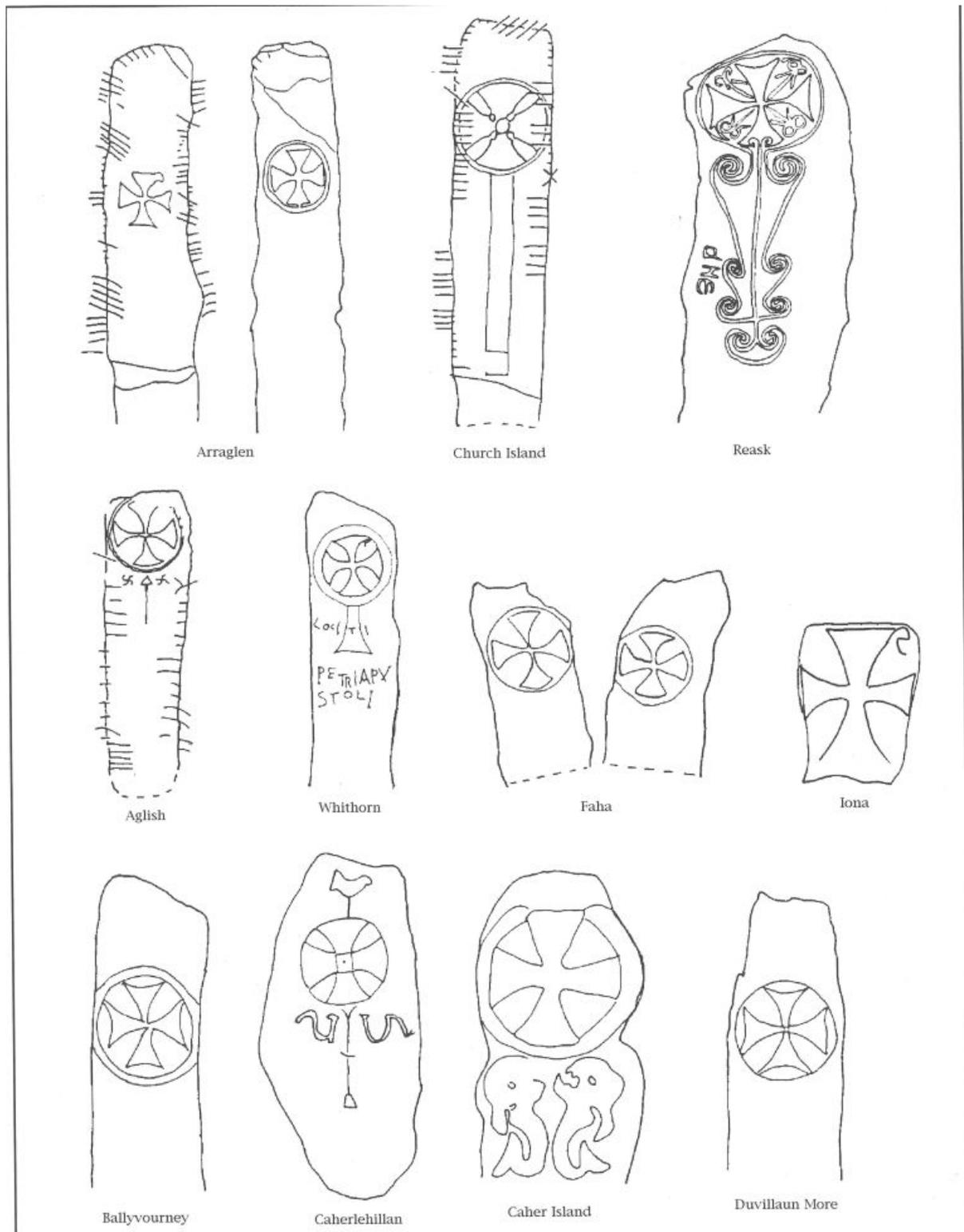


Fig. 1 Illustration is based on drawings in Allen & Anderson 1903, O'Kelly & Kavanagh 1954, Henry 1936,1937, Crawford 1980, RCAHMS 1982, Cuppage 1986. Figures not to scale.

Nash-Williams pointed out that the HIC IACIT formula had begun in 4th century Italy. It had a restricted vogue in Gaul in the first half of the 5th century, centred on the two foci: in the Rhone valley, around Lyon and Vienne; and in the Rhineland (1950, 55). In a recent paper, Jeremy Knight has pointed to scattered examples of HIC IACIT stones in Bordeaux, the

Gironde, the Vendee and Haute Garonne (1992, 48). Accepting that these Gallic stones may have provided the initial inspiration for the Irish KOI stones, they would be but one of a number of varied indications for sub-Roman Gaulish influences reaching Ireland in the 5th century. Palladius, sent as the first bishop of the Irish, is normally identified with the deacon of Auxerre, who encouraged the Pope to send missions to combat Pelagianism in Britain (Charles-Edwards 1993, 1). Palladius's own mission to the Irish is recorded in the works of Prosper of Aquitaine. In his *Confessio*, Patrick refers to his wish to visit brethren in Gaul while in the Letter to Coroticus, he shows a knowledge of Gallic Christians who ransom captives (Conneely 1993, 44, 72, 54, 79). The 7th century writer Muirchu gives a garbled account of Patrick's conversion at the hands of a bishop, *Amathorege nomine*. This has been taken to be a Celticised version of "Amator", bishop of Auxerre, to whom the 5th century basilica of Auxerre was dedicated (Bieler 1979, 74; Binchy 1962, 86). Southern Gaul was a hive of political and intellectual activity in the early 5th century (Collins 1991, 64-90). It has been shown that the papal mission to the Irish remained a matter of concern at the highest political level within the Church for ten years or more (Charles-Edwards 1993). It seems likely that one of the Christianising influences on 5th century Ireland stemmed from Gaul and that, as archaeologists, we should be looking to the material culture of that area in our quest to recognise the earliest stratum of ecclesiastical material in Ireland.

### **The nature of the 6th century church in Ireland**

What then do these stones indicate about the nature of the 6th century church in Ireland? The Springmount tablets and the Arraglen ogam stone, the one inscribed with verses from the Psalms and the other the memorial of a priest, both provide conclusive evidence of Christian communities at either end of the country in this period. If the linguistic dating of ogam stones provided by McManus is seen as having archaeological validity (there seems little reason not to accept it as an approximate guide), a group of sites marked by pillars ornamented with Maltese crosses can be identified in the western half of the country and tentatively dated to the late 6th and 7th century. At an earlier date, probably in the 5th century, there are sites with ogam stones bearing KOI inscriptions scattered over the southern half of the country; it is suggested here that these may reflect 5th century influence from Roman Gaul in Ireland although influence from south-west Britain is also possible.

Despite the claims of a recent authority, there is no reason to assume that late Roman influence on Ireland is inextricably inter-twined with the fate of the Church in the same period (De Paor 1993, 38-9). Neither the burial of gold coins and jewellery, at what seems likely to be a site of contemporary pagan veneration at Newgrange (Swift 1996a, 1-3); nor the large, 5th century hoards of Roman silver from Balline Co. Limerick and Ballinrees Co. Derry; nor the scattered finds from high-status hill-top sites (Raftery 1994, 210-7), show signs of being anything other than non-ecclesiastical deposits. Like the ecclesiastical evidence, they are scattered across the island, while no one area appears to have had exclusive control of foreign goods the bulk is found in the eastern half of the country. In a summary of the evidence for secular contacts between Ireland and the Roman world in the 4th and 5th centuries (Swift 1996a, 3-7), I concur with Harold Mytum's opinion that the best parallels for this material occur in Britain (Mytum 1992, 23-43). The meagre documentary sources are clear that Irish raiding took place primarily in the western half of Britain while ecclesiastical activity in Ireland stemmed from both Britain (Patrick) and the Continent (Palladius).

The sites on which 5th and 6th century Christian memorial stones are found appear to vary widely in status. On the one hand there are sites such as Iona which has a good historical

record as a royal ecclesiastical settlement of high status. The site of Killeen Cormaic in Co. Kildare, produced only one stone with a KOI inscription but it has a variety of other ogam stones, it is likely that it represents an important local cemetery of approximately 5th century date. Church Island, which produced a Maltese cross predating an ogam inscription, has been interpreted as a local church serving the community in the nearby settlement site at Beginish, which may even have housed some of the church tenantry (O'Kelly 1957-9, 55; 6 Corrain 1980, 327). The status of other church sites with Maltese crosses is even less clear while the Arraglen pillar currently stands in an isolated position in the centre of a high pass over Mount Brandon [See note below].

The over-riding impression left by the sources for 5th century Irish Christianity is one in which Christian communities were in relatively close contact with their local pagan counterparts but were isolated from each other. Palladius was sent as first bishop of the Irish and, given the Church administrative structure of the day (Jones 1964, 874-9), this probably means that he was being sent to a single community. Patrick makes no mention of Palladius' mission and states that he was the first to bring Christianity to certain areas within Ireland (Conneely 1993, 40-7, 70-4). Again this would lead one to infer that he was probably working in communities which had not been visited by the Auxerre deacon. The KOI stones are widely scattered, though few in number their current distribution covers the southern half of the island, from Wicklow to Kerry. Only with the chronological horizon represented by the Maltese crosses do we begin to see a number of sites in relatively close proximity to one another and it is only at this stage, I would argue, that one may, perhaps, begin to think of institutional links connecting individual Christian communities. This has implications for the ongoing debate about the nature of island-wide organisations in the early Irish church, be they monastic or diocesan (Hughes 1966, 57-90; 6 Croinin 1995, 145-54 v. Sharpe 1984; Etchingham 1993,1994).

Note: The western face of the Arraglen pillar stone, with its chi-rho symbol, is currently facing directly into the prevailing winds and is now almost impossible to see, as is much of the ogam inscription itself. A local suggestion that the stone should be moved to Cloghan has not, as yet, garnered much support. If this important monument is to be preserved for posterity, it behoves all interested parties to argue for its removal from its current position as soon as possible.

## Acknowledgements

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