

Making Christian Landscapes in Atlantic Europe

CONVERSION AND CONSOLIDATION
IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

Edited by
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Early ecclesiastical precincts and landscapes of Inishowen, County Donegal

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Fieldwork to examine the cultural and landscape settings of the early medieval era on the Inishowen peninsula of County Donegal has revealed new evidence from magnetometry and test excavation for double-ditched circular ecclesiastical enclosures at Carrowmore and Clonca. These are assessed in relation to royal sites, other ecclesiastical centres, and high-status enclosures of the homeland territory of the kingdom of Cenél nÉogain. The landscape setting of the two sites is established as that of Magh Tóchuir, a unit which can be understood as a 'cultural coreland', that is, land used and warmed by cultivation again and again over long periods and which, in the early medieval era, emerged as a small economic and political unit in its own right. Ecclesiastical and high-status secular enclosures are positioned around an area of low-lying sedimentary deposits fringing Trawbreaga Bay and facing Doagh Island whose prehistoric features invite the suggestion that it was marked out as the religious or ceremonial focus for the wider landscape unit. It is suggested that the liminal positioning of the ecclesiastical enclosures between cultivable land and the wetland of the bay could be influenced by ideas of spirituality or diversity of resources at an ecological zone boundary, or both.

Inishowen and Cenél nÉogain

THE FIRST STAGES OF FIELDWORK in a project to examine the cultural and landscape setting of the early medieval era on the Inishowen peninsula of County Donegal have revealed new evidence from magnetometry for ecclesiastical enclosures at Carrowmore and Clonca. This chapter provides the context for the project and summarises the results from the fieldwork conducted under the authors' direction in 2012 and 2013, that is, geophysical surveys at both sites and evaluative excavation at Carrowmore.

The Inishowen peninsula forms the extreme north-east unit of the geography of County Donegal, with an area of a little under 3,000 km² between the sea-loughs of Foyle on the east and Swilly on the west, and connected along its south edge to the main land mass by an isthmus of low-lying land between the two loughs on a line from just north of Derry to Inch Island. Malin Head, the northern tip of the peninsula, is the most northerly point on the mainland of Ireland. Hills in the centre of the peninsula,

with a peak of 615 m above sea level at the summit of Sliabh Sneacht, break up the land into smaller, discrete units of cultivable land: a narrow strip, the Brétach, alongside Lough Foyle; a basin around Buncrana on the west side, where two rivers flow from the hill massif; Urris in the north-west; and, in particular, a large basin north of the hills, around the north-west facing Trawbreaga Bay (Figure 6.1).

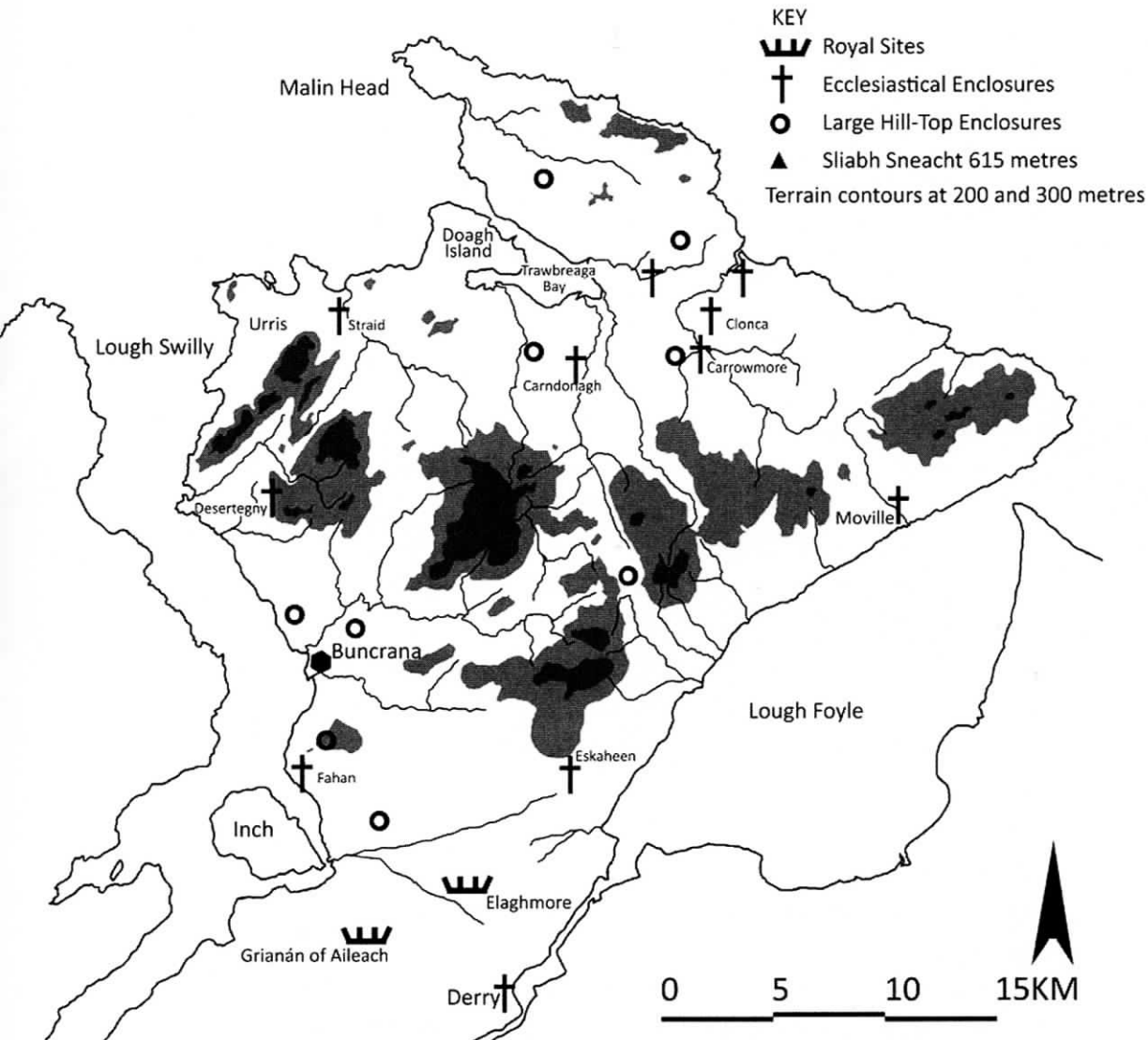


Figure 6.1 Inishowen outline, with rivers, hill massifs and key archaeological sites.

In the early medieval period, Inishowen was the locus of a small kingdom, the homeland territory of Cenél nÉogain and its ruling dynasty which emerged in the fifth and sixth centuries, and the centre from which this polity expanded its influence beyond the peninsula in the seventh and eighth centuries to become the dominant entity in the region.¹ Inishowen thus offers a testbed within which to examine the dynamics of an emerging and augmenting polity in interplay between geographical space and organisational structures.

The archaeological record for the peninsula rests to a great extent on field observations in the mid-twentieth century by Mabel Colhoun, published posthumously,² and the report of a systematic reconnaissance survey conducted under the direction of Brian Lacey.³ Historical records show a cluster of notable early ecclesiastical centres on Inishowen, among them Domnach Mór Magh Tóchuir at Carndonagh and Domnach Bile at Moville, both of which claimed allegiance to the Patrician church, and Fathain Mura (Othan Mór) at Fahan and Straid, by Clonmaney, which claimed Columban affinities⁴ (Figure 6.2). The status of St Comhgall, who features in genealogies in the lineage of Eógan, the eponymous head of the ruling dynasty, as founder of Both Chonais (Carrowmore)⁵ suggests that patronage of the church was, among other things, part of a strategy to augment Cenél nÉogain power. The positions of these ecclesiastical centres are known in the landscape from the presence of high crosses, cross-marked grave slabs, and later cemeteries and chapels in varying combinations, but until the 2012 and 2013 geophysical surveys, no early precinct boundaries had been identified.

Evidence for the conversion of the Cenél nÉogain from the fifth to seventh centuries is currently based on genealogical association, the Tripartite Life of St Patrick and traditions relating to the life of St Colmcille extant in the time of Manus O'Donnell (d. 1564). The surviving monumental sculpture, along with traditions of Columban and Patrician affiliation noted above, are likely to belong to two centuries after the conversion when the Cenél nÉogain were consolidating their political supremacy over their neighbours. The association with a learned Northumbrian king, Aldfrith or Flann Fina (d. 705), with Iona and Jarrow, and the retirement of Niall Frossach (King of Aileach, d. 778) on Iona, suggests a powerful and embedded dynastic royal church by the eighth century.

There is also, however, a layer of tradition beneath the well-known retrospective appropriations of Ireland's two great paruchia. St Comghall aside, the names of local saints, probably collateral members of the ruling dynasty, survive attached to sites at Desertegny, Clonmany, the Wee House of Malin, Fahan and Culdaff. Furthermore,

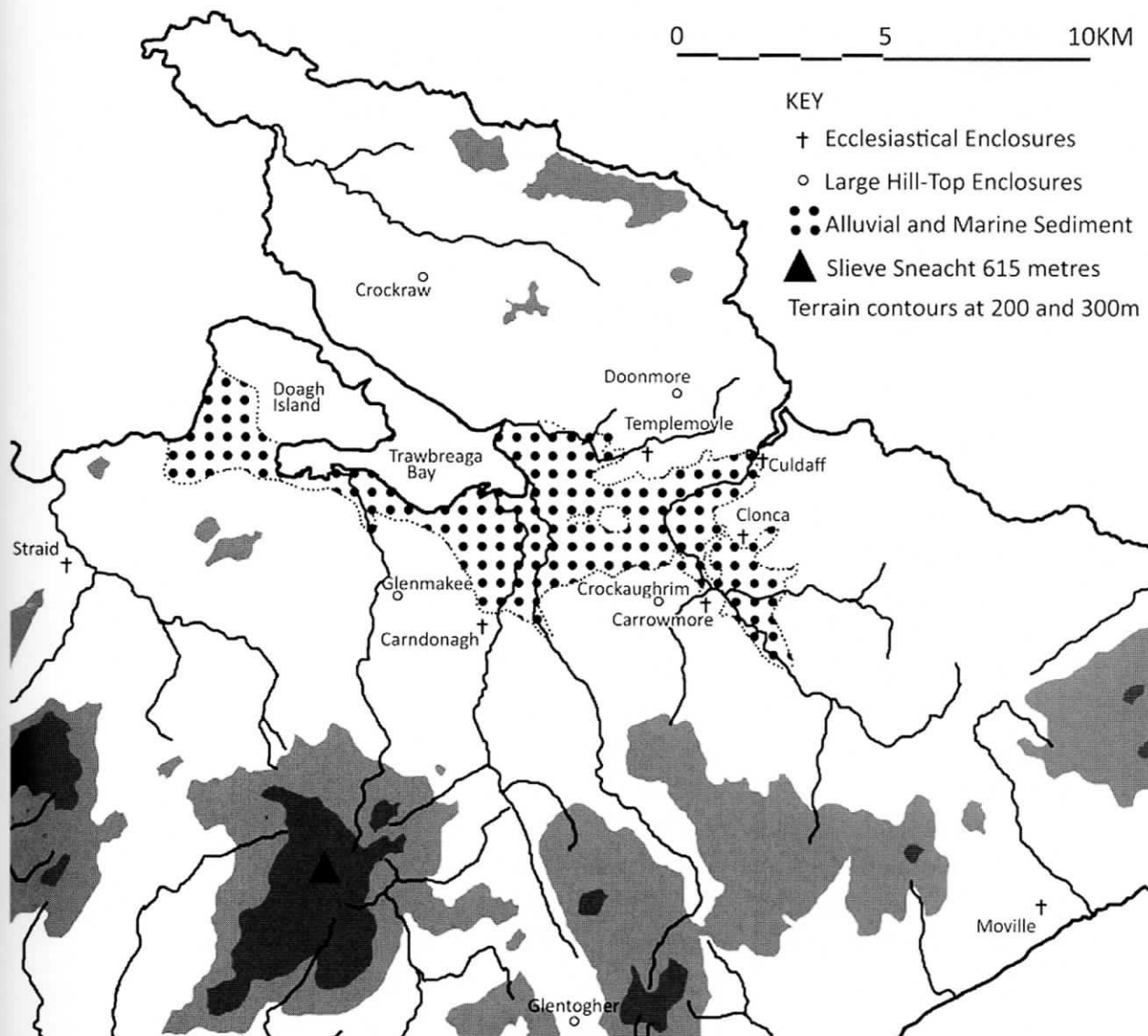


Figure 6.2 *Magh Tóchuir* and Trawbreaga Bay: topographical context of the early ecclesiastical centres.

there are at least three, and possibly four, churches on Inishowen with ‘domnach’ elements in their names (Carndonagh, Glentogher, Clonca and Cooley). Domnach names, deriving ultimately from Latin *dominicum* ‘the house of the lord’ are first mentioned in the seventh-century *Liber Angeli* contained in the Book of Armagh. Particularly when paired with *mór* (great) and *magh* (plain, fertile plain) names, Breathnach⁶ and others argue that these represent the earliest phase of ecclesiastical

hierarchy in Ireland and that such names were not applied to new foundations after the sixth century. The Cenél nÉogain may, therefore, have been exposed to Christianising influences from the fifth century onwards. Only archaeology will be able to tease out the detailed chronology.

The landscape of *Magh Tóchuir*

The land in the north of Inishowen, around Trawbreaga Bay and with Carndonagh now as its principal town, is the sort of land unit – fertile, productive and to some extent self-contained – which the historical geographer, Brian Roberts, from studies in Northumbria, has characterised as a ‘cultural coreland’.⁷ These are lands used and warmed by cultivation again and again over long periods which, in the early medieval era, emerged as small economic and political units in their own right. In the north-east of England the river basins of the Tweed, Tyne and Tees are examples; in the south-west the Severn basin is cited as the core of the Hwicce and so on. These are the cores of emerging Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, corresponding in some cases in Britain with the *civitates* that Roman commanders and administrators encountered in the first and second centuries AD. In Ireland, the topographic term for such corelands is the *magh*, or fertile plain. The Trawbreaga Bay area of Inishowen is identified as Magh Tóchuir, a coherent territorial unit or sub-kingdom in the early medieval period.

The name translates as the ‘Plain of the Causeway’ (Figure 6.2). It is not known where this causeway lay, nor indeed whether there was one single causeway or many across this landscape of Holocene sedimentary deposits and peat bogs fringing the bay. Mabel Colhoun reported unconfirmed accounts of a causeway across the valley of the Gleneely River between Carrowmore and Clonca, discovered during turf-cutting.⁸ While allowing the possibility of numerous such features in this terrain, we suggest that there was a particular, eponymous causeway leading to Doagh Island in the middle of the bay (now connected to the land on the south side by sand deposits). Here, concentrations of prehistoric features in the form of standing stones, panels of rock art and a megalithic tomb allow us to think of this island as long having been a special place, set apart from everyday settlement. On the south side of the bay, facing Doagh Island, the terrace edge above the alluvial and marine sediments is also marked by standing stones. If this suggestion concerning the island is correct, it hints that this *magh* may have had a cultural identity at least as far back in time as the second millennium BC, with Doagh Island as a religious or ceremonial focus.

For an Early Christian imprint on the landscape of Magh Tóchair, attention focuses on five ecclesiastical centres set in a ring around the eastern, inland edge of Trawbreaga Bay: Templemoyle, at the base of the Malin sub-peninsula, and working clockwise, Culdaff at the estuary of the Culdaff River, Clonca, Carrowmore, and finally Carndonagh at the foot of the valley and the roadway leading down through Glen Tochair. High crosses stand at Carndonagh, Carrowmore and Clonca, in topographical settings similar to those of many of the prehistoric stone features, that is, at boundaries between contoured land and the flat terrain fringing the bay.⁹ All five are, in landscape terms, edge places, though some are close to high-status secular sites, as we shall see. Whether the movement to edges was driven by ideas of spirituality or whether it was about the diversity of resources available at a boundary between two or more ecological zones is not clear; the motivations are not mutually incompatible.

A set of large stone enclosures on hilltop or hill-slope settings suggests something of the context of elite secular centres existing alongside the ecclesiastical. Lacey¹⁰ has identified this site type with nine examples on Inishowen which, while allowing for scant firm information on chronology, might be understood as defensive or monitoring structures operating within the political and military geography of the early medieval period. If so, then a ring of four around Trawbreaga Bay, adds further evidence to the status of Magh Tóchair. These are Crockraw and Doonmore Hills on the Malin peninsula, with Crockaughrim and Glenmakee overlooking the bay from the south. Associated with these, some way south, is Glentogher, sited on the watershed at the head of the valley leading down to Carndonagh, the gateway into Magh Tóchair. This site had been a location for fairs into the early twentieth century and Lacey observes that it is appropriate as a community assembly place where routeways into the interior converge from the fertile area of Bunrana and from the Brétach by Lough Foyle as well as from Magh Tóchair.¹¹ The close geographical proximity of Doonmore to Templemoyle, Crockaughrim to Carrowmore, and Glenmakee to Carndonagh reflects the dynastic status of Carrowmore in suggesting integration between secular and ecclesiastical power. By contrast, Crockraw, in the middle of the Malin peninsula, appears isolated, with no known ecclesiastical centre nearby. But the townland of Drong, which occupies a spur of the hill south-west of the enclosure and reaches down to the edge of Trawbreaga Bay, has been identified as a place of assembly¹² and this may be the reason for the enclosure on Crockraw Hill.

The principal centre for Cenél nÉogain kingship was not in the sub-unit of Magh Tóchair, but in the benign terrain of the south-east corner of the peninsula (now



Above: **Figure 6.3** Carrowmore, the west cross in Field 1 looking south-west towards Crockaughrim Hill and, in the foreground, part of the east-side embankment of the rectangular enclosure.

PHOTO: DEB HAYCOCK

Below: **Figure 6.4** Carrowmore, the east cross in Field 2 looking north-east across the valley of the River Gleneeley. PHOTO: DEB HAYCOCK



hinterland of the city of Derry). Lacey has elucidated the difficult problem of the geography of Aileach by identifying Elaghmore as the original location of the royal site, which was then moved across southwards and off the peninsula to the hilltop of Grianán of Aileach, as the Cenél nÉogain dominance became more extensive.¹³ If there was a particular centre for the sub-kingship of Magh Tóchair, the modern placename of Tullanree, which may incorporate the element 'rí' (king), is suggestive. This townland, with two known cashel-type enclosures, in between Carrowmore and Carndonagh, looks out northwards across Trawbreaga Bay and into the interior to the south.

Field investigations

The first stages of site-specific investigations have focused on the two ecclesiastical sites of Carrowmore and Clonca, about 2 kms apart, immediately above the valley floor of the Gleneely River, just at the point where it emerges from hilly terrain to the east out on to the plain and curves in a wide loop (and now called Culdaff River) away from Trawbreaga Bay to the peninsula's north-east coast by Culdaff. Carrowmore, on the south side of the valley occupies a position on the lower slope of a hill with a peak at 90 m above sea level, immediately above the alluvial deposits by the confluence of the Carrowmore and Gleneely Rivers. A minor road runs through the former complex, represented in the landscape now by a high cross on each side of the road, to the west (Figure 6.3) and east (Figure 6.4), that is, Fields 1 and 2 respectively in the survey plan, Figure 6.6.¹⁴ In Field 1 there is also a cross base with a slot cut to take the shaft within a rectangular enclosure defined by visible earthworks.¹⁵ A holy well reported by Colhoun in the east field boundary of Field 2, has been filled in and is no longer visible.¹⁶

Clonca, on the north side, occupies the edge of a plateau of level ground above peat deposits of the valley floor. A ruined seventeenth-century chapel stands within a stone-walled graveyard and close by in a field immediately west stands a partly restored high cross (Figure 6.5, colour section) and, some 70 m north-west of this is a boulder in which a slot has been cut to take the base of a cross and, lying close to it on the ground, part of the ringed head of a second large cross.¹⁷

Carrowmore

Magnetometry survey at Carrowmore (Figure 6.6) has now revealed for the first time clear evidence of a double-ditched sub-circular enclosure. If complete, it would have a

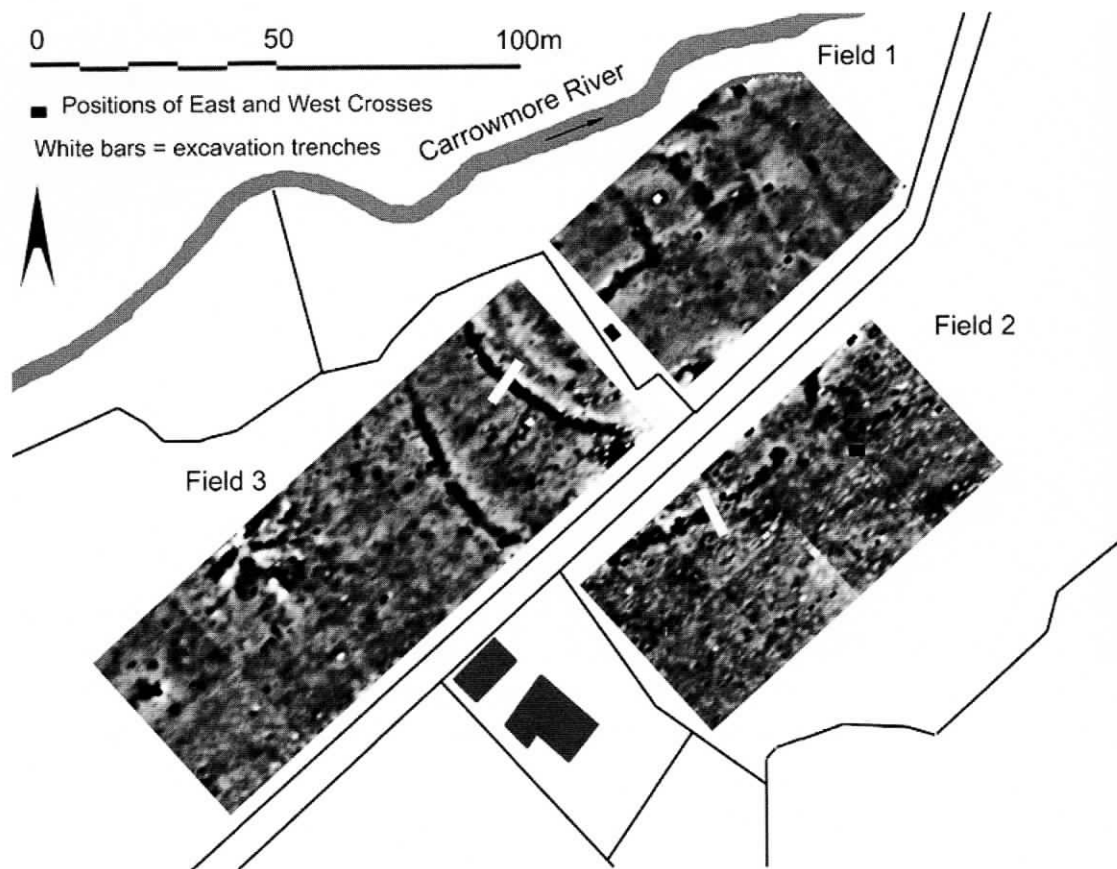


Figure 6.6 Carrowmore magnetometry survey, marking the positions of the west cross in Field 1 and the east cross in Field 2 and the positions of two evaluation trenches across the outer precinct boundary in Field 2 and the inner boundary in Field 3.

diameter of some 115 m for the outer ditch and 60 m for the inner. The outer ring, defined by a negative anomaly, forms a strong arc in the south-west in Field 3, but is truncated by the eroding river cliff. Inside and outside the 'ditch' a low magnetic response (lighter in tone in Figure 6.6) suggests the partial survival of a bank or banks. A faint broad linear anomaly running south-west to north-east may be interpreted as a trackway. The line of the outer ring picks up again east of the road in Field 2, where the ditch anomaly is weaker and where there is no indication of a bank. A gap of some 10–11 m in the north-east appears to mark an entrance. The south arc here provided a strong magnetic response, which may be interpreted as an enlarged terminal. The other 'terminal' was not quite so marked. Other small anomalies occur just outside of the putative entrance, indicating possible post-hole structures. A faint arc visible as a very

weak anomaly immediately south-east of the high cross might reflect a prehistoric or early medieval enclosure. In Field 1, near the north-west limit of the survey, the alignment of the outer ring appears to be displaced to the north. This is a distortion of the result attributable to a steep slope down on the alluvium. It is also fainter than in Fields 2 and 3 and this is likely to be caused by down-slope movement of soil. Two sets of anomalies occur in Field 3 beyond the outer ditch. In the west corner a cluster of negative features seems to represent a series of small pits surrounding a large pit. There are striking similarities with post settings at early medieval sites such as Yeavinger,¹⁸ though there could be other agricultural causes for such anomalies. Some 25–30 m north-east of these pits, an enigmatic series of cigar-shaped negative and positive responses can be seen, each of about 7–8 m in length, radiating from a central point. The responses are not of such intensity as to suggest burning, so a metal-working or kiln feature seems unlikely.

A trench of 2 m x 10 m was opened across each of the two precinct boundaries. The outer boundary was tested east of the road in Field 2. Here, the impression from magnetometry that the feature was much eroded proved to be misleading. Its width at the top is 3.6 m, it has a 'U' profile and depth greater than 1.6 m below the present ground surface. The primary fills suggest natural silting of an open cut, but large boulders occupied the middle reaches of the fills. A thin turfy layer above the primary fills has yielded a calibrated radiocarbon date of cal. AD 670–870 at 95.4% probability (UBA-26934, 1258 +/- 32 BP). Revetting stones were in position alongside the inner edge of the ditch and it is likely that the stone in the fill came from collapse or slighting of a retaining wall or revetting for an earthen embankment. On the top of the ditch fills was a stone-lined hearth with laminations of ash, burnt soil and charcoal, and containing ferrous slag derived from small-scale iron working. This feature provided a calibrated radiocarbon date of cal. AD 1030–1160 at 95.4% probability (UBA-26935, 930 +/- 27 BP), effectively a *terminus ante quem* for the whole ditch sequence.

The inner ring is strongly defined in Field 3, though again truncated by the cliff, with further arcs of low magnetic response on the inner side reflecting perhaps more than one phase of bank. The curve of this inner enclosure does not project into Field 2, but its line is obscured by the field boundary and the road surface. Its continuation into Field 1 is evidenced by three arcs, two of them apparently disrupted (and therefore probably overlain) by a rectilinear enclosure which seems to partially mirror the stone and earthwork banks of the upstanding monument just visible as a faint, pale line. The archaeology in this field is complex and likely to be stratigraphically rich, with

evidence of the relationship between cemetery and sub-circular enclosure being key to understanding the long-term development of the site.

The inner boundary line was tested by excavation in Field 3. This had an ankle-breaking 'V' profile, some 2 m wide at the top and cut to a depth of 1.55 m below modern ground surface. Primary fills were again from natural silting, with organic matter in the middle zones. The ditch was then re-cut; the first subsequent fill yielded a calibrated radiocarbon date of cal. AD 590–660 at 95.4% probability (UBA-26936, 1418 +/- 27 BP) and the next zone of fills included stone rubble, metalworking debris and a set of small, round pebbles, probably gaming counters, in what seems to be deliberate deposition. A revetment was set back from its inner edge, with linear cut-features and stakeholes in between. When the ditch was fully filled, it was covered over as part of a more extensive cobbled surface.

The rectilinear enclosure evinced by standing earthworks in Field 1 is, by analogy with other early cemetery sites such as those at nearby Merville (Cooley), Clonca and Desertegny on the west side of the peninsula, to be expected to yield not only burials and memorials, but the remains of a church or shrine. Stone walls which appear to form the bounds of this enclosure are shown in 'ghost' form on the gradiometer survey, where the north-west section of wall seems to coincide with an overlying negative feature. A number of strong negative, but isolated, anomalies might reflect the presence of memorial stones or crosses beneath the turf. No very evident entrance is shown on the gradiometer plot; conceivably it lies in the south-east corner where a strong negative anomaly might indicate a terminal of the inner arc of the sub-circular enclosure.

This survey plan offers a convincing context for the two high crosses whose positions, in the open area of Field 2 and alongside the south boundary of Field 1, have until now made no evident sense, one in relation to the other, or for either in relation to any other features of the landscape. The east cross (Field 2), as we can now see it, stands some 15 m directly outside what we interpret as the main entrance through the outer precinct boundary, and the west cross (Field 1) is sited more or less in the centre of the inner precinct. This has profound implications for interpreting the site as a whole: that the enclosures and crosses are contemporary and connected as elements of a coherent complex; that the crosses have stood on their present sites since the period of use of this complex; and that the location of Both Chonais is now confirmed and its form precisely defined. Evidence for structures and arrangement of space within the precincts is limited on account of the rectangular graveyard and its associated features, which occupy a large proportion of the inner precinct and on account of the limitations imposed on the

magnetometry survey by metal-fenced field boundaries and the road; but the test excavations have shown that both earth-cut and laid-stone features survive on the site beneath old ploughsoils, and they have demonstrated two stages of use of the inner precinct ditch, evidence for revetments or retaining walls in association with both ditches, evidence of their collapse, and evidence of metal-working at the site. The potential for a more detailed understanding of this site from excavation is good.

The absolute dates provided for key components of the sequence place the Carrowmore site in a firm early medieval context. They support the possibility that it was founded during the floruit of St Colmcille's Iona foundation in the last quarter of the sixth century (well within the dates provided by the life of the historical St Comhgall) and suggest that it remained a focus of activity until at least the eleventh century.

Clonca

At Clonca, magnetometry survey covered the fields on all sides of the graveyard and ruined chapel, revealing a dramatic and complex palimpsest of features (Figure 6.7), including possible prehistoric cattle-management enclosures, stone walls and droveways. South and east of the graveyard were traces of two linear boundary features meeting at a right angle in a way that suggests that the present limits of the graveyard might be drawn in from an earlier, more extensive area. In an arc around the graveyard, from north to the west and south-west sides are the outlines of a double circle (these could be ditches or embanked features), clearly defined north and west and fainter at the south-west, at the edge of the plateau of land, where the downslope to the valley floor begins. The diameter of the outer is about 95 m and the inner 80 m. It looks as though there is here another circular precinct similar to that at Carrowmore. But if so, this one sits in a much more complex landscape setting, for it seems that another double-ditched feature merges with this north-west of the graveyard. This extends in a wider arc west and south-west until its traces are lost on the downslope. From around the point at which it merges with the circular ring, a double linear feature runs north-west, parallel to the field boundary. One might suggest that these features are from droveways to manage the movement of livestock between the valley floor and the plateau land. North of the graveyard, and intersecting with the outer ring in a way that cannot be defined from the geophysics alone, are somewhat irregular linear features, one seeming to lead north to a tear-shaped enclosure. Areas of high magnetic anomaly could indicate metal-working.

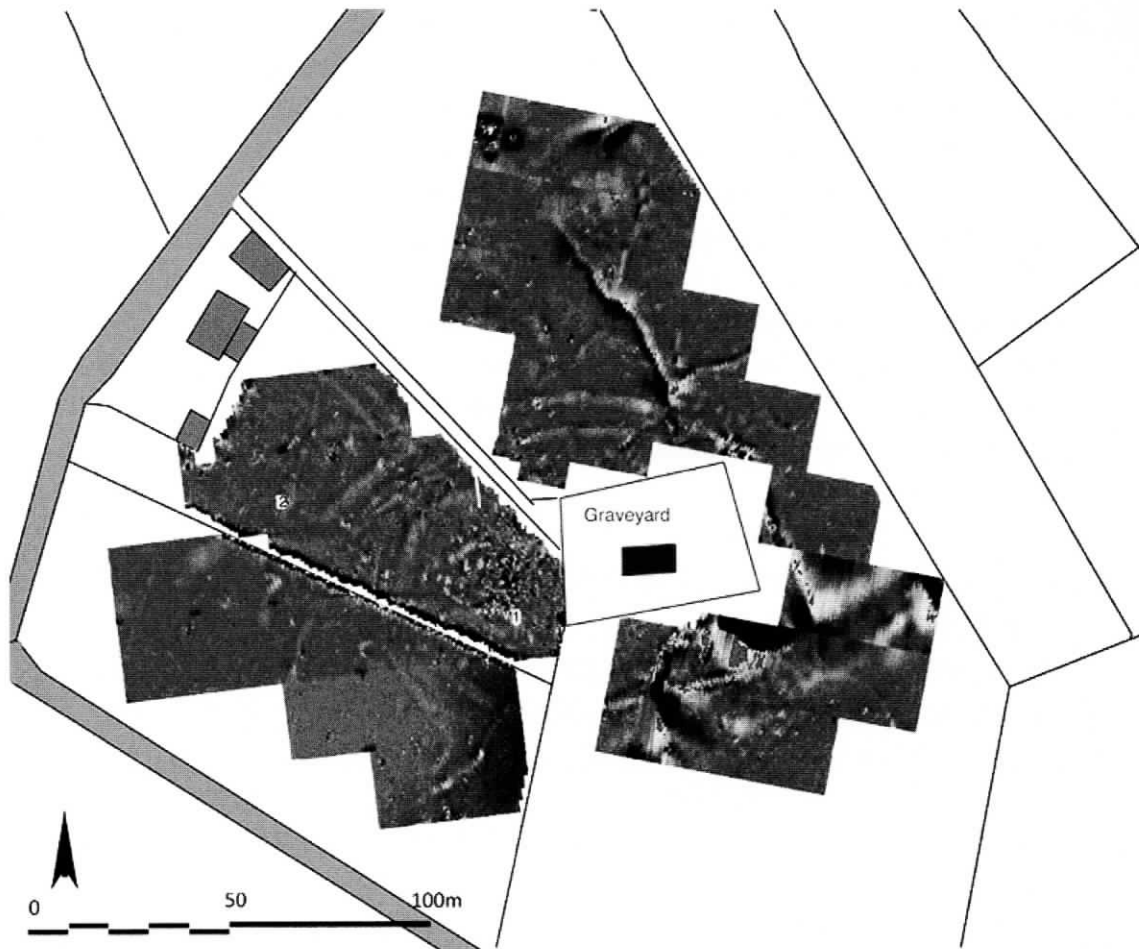


Figure 6.7 Clonca magnetometry survey around the graveyard and ruined chapel, marking the positions of the high cross, which stands south-west of the graveyard (1) and the cross fragments (2) west of this.

The standing cross and the fragment on the ground are both in the wedge-shaped field west of the graveyard. The cross-head fragment lying on the ground (No. 2 on Figure 6.7) is to the west, beyond both of the double-ditched arcs; the standing cross (No. 1 on Figure 6.7) is well within the inner circle and in an area with a great density of small features. To attempt an interpretation of this cluster from this evidence alone is to offer hostages to fortune: but why not? The small features might be graves; they group within, and spill over the edges of, what seems to be a small single-ditched enclosure with an entrance facing west: in some circumstances, one might think of a small hengiform feature. Do we here have an early cemetery clustering around the

grave-shrine of a founder-saint, according to a model identified by Charles Thomas¹⁹ in northern Britain and Ireland; and was the high cross then set up to mark and preserve the memory of the predecessors at a later, more developed stage in the history of the institution?

There is sufficient complexity here to warrant further more detailed and more extensive survey. Equally, there is scope for evaluative excavation to determine the nature, date and vulnerability of the sub-surface features identified. However, the picture here is not as straightforward as it seems to be at Carrowmore; and it begs the question whether any excavation on a small scale would not merely serve to confuse interpretation. Whatever we are to make of these features, the richness and complexity of detail revealed in the geophysics warn against single-phase and mono-functional interpretations.

Conclusion

The history of research excavations of early ecclesiastical sites in Ireland, combined with the phase of development-led archaeology, has led to a position in which knowledge of their physical composition and layout is biased in favour of small establishments in the west of the country and the large institutions of the midlands,²⁰ with the re-assessment of Nendrum in County Down by McErlean and Crothers as a marker in the Ulster province.²¹ This Inishowen project provides the first opportunity to consider a study area in the north-west of the country in the light of the present state of knowledge. The bounded concentric double-circle precincts observed here fit the generally observed model of a structured space which allows for both functional zoning, with industrial workings towards the outer edges, and the idea derived from early writings of sacred hierarchies of space. The Inishowen cases do not match the scale of the largest triple-ring precincts of Nendrum or the more recently investigated Clonard, Westmeath,²² but come within the Irish norm of 90–120 m diameter.

They are comparable in scale with, for example, the combined inner and middle enclosures of Nendrum surviving in their visible stone-walled form or, to take a Scottish case, the putative inner precinct of Whithorn of Periods 1/3 and 1/4 of the developed *monasterium*.²³ There is as yet no dating evidence from buildings at Carrowmore, but the radiocarbon date of AD 590–660 from the immediate post-recut fill of the inner precinct ditch is compatible with an origin for the complex in the fifth–seventh centuries, as Ó Carragáin suggests is normal for such concentric-circle sites.²⁴

These precincts suggest investment of resources on a large scale and carried through with purpose in an emerging polity that is seeking to develop underpinning infrastructures. It remains as a project aim to investigate the physical resources of the landscape in which these establishments were founded and to assess whether, and if so, in what ways, the capacities of the land were developed under ecclesiastical management.

Within Inishowen, this study concentrates on the sub-unit of *Magh Tóchuir* in which ecclesiastical centres form a prominent component of the archaeological record, having in some cases close geographical proximity to secular elite centres. *Magh Tóchuir* expresses a landscape unity as a basin around watercourses flowing north out of the central hill massif of Inishowen into Trewbrea Bay. A hill top enclosure commands the point of entry into this terrain on a prominence beside the pass of Glentogher. From here, the eye perceives at a glance the extent of the coreland of this territory, right down to the waters of the bay, and a road leads directly downslope to Carndonagh, the place where the principal church of Domnach Mór was set up at the edge of the terrain. In the distant prehistoric past, communities had marked as a special place the island, Doagh Island, in the middle of the bay; and they marked also with standing stones the edges of the land immediately above the low-lying marine and alluvial sediments which created a liminal landscape around the tidal reaches. Early Christian church founders too marked this landscape setting, with a cluster of five churches all addressing the low land around the bay and with their own monumental sculptures standing sentinel. This landscape is constantly under change, with active processes of sedimentation and peat formation. Research has yet to be completed on the detail of its physical form and ecological character at the time of Cenél nÉogain dominance but walk this terrain and, even now, one can see how Clonca occupies a small tongue of land, almost isolated as it projects into the low land, its high cross visible from a long way westwards and how Carrowmore, with its two monumental crosses, marks out the point where the Gleneely River, flowing down from the south-east, breaks out on to the wide space. The church founders sought out the edges.

- 112 Sperber, 'Life of St Ciarán', p. 135; Ó Riain, 'The Lives of Saint Ciarán', p. 41.
- 113 Sperber, 'Life of St Ciarán', p. 134.
- 114 Ó Riain, 'The Lives of Saint Ciarán', p. 41.
- 115 AU 744.1; Sperber, 'Life of St Ciarán', p. 154.
- 116 Since Feradach dies in 586, such a relationship would, though, call into question the late fifth-century floruit ascribed to Conchraid and make it more likely that he was an early to mid sixth-century ruler.
- 117 Best, *Book of Leinster*, vol. 1, p. 189; AU 583.1, 384.3; ATig 584; AI 585.1; AFM 582.

CHAPTER 6

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- 3 B. Lacey, *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal* (Lifford: Donegal County Council, 1983).
- 4 A. Gwynn and R. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: Ireland* (Harlow: Longmans, 1970).
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- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 502.
- 12 P. Gleeson, 'Kingdoms, Communities and Óenaig: Irish assembly practices in a northwest European context', *Journal of the North Atlantic*, vol. 8, 2015, pp. 33–51.
- 13 B. Lacey, 'The Grianán of Aileach: a note on its identification', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 131, 2001, pp. 143–9.
- 14 The Field 1 cross is listed as the North Cross and the Field 2 cross the South Cross by Harbison, *High Crosses of Ireland*, vol. I, p. 33.
- 15 Lacey, *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal*, p. 248.
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- 17 Lacey, *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal*, p. 261.
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CHAPTER 7

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