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# *TRÓWE*

VOLUME IX



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The Journal of the  
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## Editors'Foreward

This year's Trowel has its first all-undergraduate editorial team. The new blood intends to bring Trowel into the 21st century with style. Archaeology, after all, does change with the times, and in an effort to nudge Trowel into the next millennium, we're going on-line. You can surf the archaeological wave at <http://www.ucd.ie/tilde-trowel> soon, and e-mail us at [trowelucd@hotmail.com](mailto:trowelucd@hotmail.com).

We hope our leap to the forefront of communications technology will keep us in touch with Dublin University's new Archaeological Society across town in Trinity. We wish to extend a warm welcome to them.

Unfortunately Trowel was not published last year. Volume IX, therefore, is the 1998/9 edition and there is no way we can take full credit for its production. We would like to thanks past editors Connor Brady, Teresa Bolger, Richard Clutterbuck and Dave O'Connor, and last year's contributors. We owe many thanks to the Department of Archaeology for their continued support and encouragement. We also wish to thank Dr. Muiris O'Sullivan, senior Treasurer, and Dave McGuinness and Madeleine Murray for proof reading. Finally, we are very grateful to Richard Clutterbuck for his guidance, time and effort in the production of this publication.

Unfortunately, not many complimentary copies can be given out. We tried to pay the printers with our friendship but they were having none of it. We think you'll find Trowel IX worth the money, though. As a parting word, Trowel always welcomes contributions of articles or drawings. Volume X will be the biggest and best to kickstart the new millennium. Why not be a part of it?

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# The Role of Women in Roman Britain: The Evidence of Tombstones

Renate Kurzmann\*

## Introduction

Nowadays one often tends to look at the role of women in ancient societies from a modern point of view, thinking women had a “better”, more independent life outside Roman society and in, for example, a Celtic one. This seems to derive from a certain urge within ourselves to testify that the present century’s movement towards the equalisation of women must have been foreshadowed in previous times. It is certainly true that there was a difference in the status of Celtic women in general (although this differs naturally between different areas inhabited by the Celts) and Roman ones. It is impossible, though, to understand the differences in modern terms. The Romans changed the rules in Britain and many of the Celtic people quickly adopted Roman ways. However, although Romanised, some kept their traditions. Classical authors are the primary source, but one has to keep in mind that they did not necessarily know Celtic customs at all, let alone in full. The evidence of tombstones, as well as other inscriptions with which I will not deal here, are therefore more revealing because they tend to represent single individuals, their lives and status, and in the way they themselves and their heirs wanted.

In any case, there was obviously a change in British society when the Romans took over. Just as anywhere else, locals started to adapt the customs of the invaders. However, while women in Rome had no political status and were under the sanction of their fathers, husbands, or some other male guardian, there are features in the representations of British women in tombstones which must date back to the previous times as they are not found in Roman life. I will now try to work out these features by looking at a few examples of tombstones that belong to Roman British women.

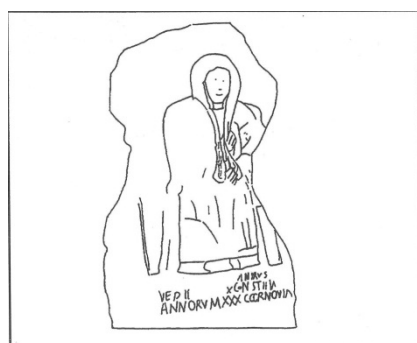


fig. 1: The tombstone of Ved. (Not to scale) (after Collingwood & Wright 1956)



fig. 2: The tombstone Julia Vella (Not to scale)(after Collingwood & Wright 1956)

## Description

1. The tombstone of Ved...ic., no. 630, at likely, fig. 1(Collingwood & Wright 1956).

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The only idea about this woman's status is that she was "a tribes woman of the Cornovii". Tribal identity was definitely of great importance for Celtic women (Allason-Jones 1989). However, this seems to change in the environment of the city where birth and the tribe, as well as perhaps contemporary residence became less important. VolusiaFaustina, on another tombstone from Lincoln (no. 250), is mentioned only as a "citizen of Lindum" (Collingwood & Wright 1956). On no. 630, though, not only is Ved...ic..'s tribe specifically mentioned, but the hairstyle she wears is also Celtic. She has thick hair, falling forward on both sides of her face that reaches her lap. She wears a tunic and a cloak that falls, tapering, to below her knees. She faces the spectator in a high-backed chair. Women seated on chairs or lying at a banquet is a phenomenon which does not necessarily derive from the Roman world, but very often seems to come from local traditions. Perhaps this woman's Celtic background has something to do with her central position, as on other stones.

2. The tombstone of Julia Velva, no. 688, at York, fig. 2(Collingwood & Wright 1956).

This tombstone carries a group of four in a banquet scene and seems closely related to two other stones with similar scenes from York, perhaps from one and the same workshop(Toynbee 1964, 208; Allason-Jones 1989, 23). Julia Velva is shown reclining on the left, holding a wine-jar in her hand, on a very large mattress. An heir, possibly her son in law, Aurelius Mercurialis, is standing at the head of the couch (Toynbee 1964). A woman, perhaps Julia Velva's daughter, is seated in a basket chair at the foot of the couch (Toynbee 1964). She holds something in her hand, perhaps a bird or some other small pet. A boy is in the centre, in front of the couch and next to a three legged table, holding a jug. Toynbee sees a family scene; mother, daughter, son-in-law, and grandchild (1964). The cloaks are typically Celtic, and Toynbee goes on to suggest a date of the first half of the third century based on the hairstyles (1964). Aurelius Mercurialis calls himself Julia's heir, erecting the tombstone "in his lifetime for himself and his family" (Allason-Jones 1989, 22). Under Roman law it was possible for a woman to pass on wealth to her children or children-in-law. Judging by the splendid tombstone and the rich setting it depicts it is obvious that Julia Velva's estate was worth inheriting, and that she was certainly not a woman of little importance in her family (Allason-Jones 1989, 23). It is worth noting that the second woman is also seated, while both males, man and child, are standing. This could indicate certain ranks within the family structure. Yet the wealth is passed on to and administrated by Mercurialis, the likely son-in-law.



fig. 3: The tombstone of Regina. (Not to scale) (after Collingwood & Wright 1956)



fig. 4: The tombstone of Aurelia Aureliana (Not to scale) (after Collingwood & Wright 1956)

3: Tombstone of Regina, no. 1065, at South Shields, fig. 3 (Collingwood & Wright 1956).

The inscription reads: “To the spirits of the departed and to Regina, his freedwoman and wife, a Catuvellaunian by race, aged 30, Barate of Palmyra [set this up].” The stone obviously comes from a Palmyrene sculptor’s workshop (Toynbee 1964, 206). Regina is enthroned facing the spectator in a high-backed chair, dressed in a long-sleeved tunic (only visible by the fastening brooch), a heavy mantle, and Roman footwear. She also wears a necklace and two bracelets, some signs of her possessions as jewellery has always been a way for women to display wealth and status. Behind her are the remains of what was possibly a shell canopy. On the ground to her right is a metal box or casket, on which her hand lies, again some sort of symbol of her possessions. On her left is a wicker basket filled with wool. This could be seen to represent her former status as a slave but more likely signifies her role as the lady and administrator of a large house. The stone dates to the second century AD (Allason-Jones 1989, 24). Barate is obviously a Palmyrene who came to Britain with the Roman army. He married his former slave (thus making her a freedwoman), the British Regina. It is likely that she was sold into slavery by poor parents, a practice prohibited by law but commonly practised (Allason-Jones 1989, 24). Sexual relations and marriage between master and slave were common at the time. A man marrying a slave made her a freedwoman; in contrast, a Roman law from 52 AD states that a woman who had sexual relations with a slave might herself become a slave (Allason-Jones 1989, 24). A Palmyrene married to a British freedwoman under Roman executive is a good example for the great mix of cultures and races and variations of status found in the empire at that time.

4. Tombstone of Aurelia Aureliana, no. 959, at Carlisle, fig. 3 (Collingwood & Wright 1956).

This stone’s inscription reads: “To the spirits of the departed; Aurelia Aureliana lived 41 years. Ulpus Apolinaris set this up to his very beloved wife.” Aurelia Aureliana clutches a fringed scarf in her right hand and holds a bunch of poppies in her left hand, symbolising the sleep of death (Phillips 1976). She is dressed in a long sleeved Gallic coat. These cloaks are the only outer garment for women in Romano-British sculpture, and the Celtic influence is obvious.

## Discussion

Romano-British women are often, though not always presented in a very Roman way. However, there are some native features. Their native tribes are very often mentioned and, therefore, were probably still influential when marriage with a Roman was initiated. Their difference in status is obvious. Tacitus, in book III of his *Histories*, informs us that Cartimandua had more power than her husband, though, as Allason-Jones points out, it’s unknown if the Romans handed this power to her in the first place (1989, 16). We do have proof, though, that British women could be leaders of tribes in the Roman empire. Boudicca’s husband left his kingdom to their two daughters. Boudicca ruled on their behalf and led her tribe in revolt against the Romans (Allason-Jones 1989, 16). We also know of a large number of women who erected tombstones, showing a certain amount of money and authority of their own (Allason-Jones 1989).

At the time of Augustus, the minimum age for a girl to marry was twelve. Many Roman women would have actually married at that age, or not long after. The evidence from Romano-British tombstones shows that most women there married in their early twenties. Perhaps there was an original Celtic law or custom that provided a later age for marriage. Tacitus, in his *Germania*, and Caesar both wrote that Germanic women married much later



than Roman ones (De Bello Gallico VI). The Romans also seemed to have the idea that British women could have more than one man. Caesar, again in De Bello Gallico VI, states that British men could share one wife and that the women could have intercourse with all their male relatives. This could be a simple misunderstanding since we know that in the Celtic tradition a widow became the wife of the new pater familias, probably only symbolically, though (Allason-Jones 1989). Still, Cassius Dio tells us that the Roman empress Julia Domna asked the wife of the British Argentocoxus how it was to have intercourse with more than one man and was answered that the native women's desires were much more fulfilled than that of the Roman ladies (Roman History, LXXVIII). If such customs did really exist we certainly have no evidence for them in inscriptions. We cannot even be sure if all those couples mentioned were really married by Roman law as a Celtic family may have considered a woman married even if Roman law did not approve (Allason-Jones 1989, 33). We know that Roman soldiers were only allowed to marry after the second century BC, but there are "wives" mentioned before that on inscriptions.

## Conclusion

In general, the presentation of Romano-British women on tombstone is not hugely different than that of other women elsewhere in the empire. Yet there are some slight, but noticeable, differences. We have seen that while some women are presented with typically Roman hairstyles others have native ones, like Ved...ic... Many of the women wear clothes of Celtic origin, like a Gallic cloak. Some are pictured with their husbands and families, while others are presented on their own, seated on high chairs or lying at a banquet, displaying their wealth in a very dominant way. Some obviously had great wealth to pass on to their heirs, like Julia Velva. Crucially, most have the name of their native tribe inscribed on their stones.

As I have pointed out, tribal identity seems to have been very important for native women, even after they married. On the contrary, a Roman woman gave up all connection with her family and birthplace once she got married. This tribal back-ground must have given the Romano-British woman a certain additional security in her marriage. She obviously had a tribe and family to fall back on. More than likely, it depended on the individual and her family to what degree the Roman laws and way of life were integrated into her lifestyle, and to what degree native customs remained. It simply cannot be said that the British laws and customs were "better" or "worse" than Roman ones for the status of women, but it may, certainly be said that they, and therefore the status, were different.

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## The conical headed pin in Irish Neolithic burial contexts.

Madeleine Murray\*

### Abstract

*A recent study conducted by the author has resulted in the classification and cataloguing of 798 bone pin fragments from Irish Neolithic contexts. One specific group identified is the conical headed bone pin, an element of the Linkardstown burial tradition (Raftery 1974; Manning 1985) otherwise known as the Individual burial or Single burial tradition (Herity 1982). This site type is considered to be a moiety of the late to final Neolithic phase in Ireland (Hunt 1967; FitzG. Ryan 1973; Raftery 1974; Herity 1982; Manning 1985; Cooney and Grogan 1994; Waddell 1998).*

### Introduction

There are four bone pin fragments from Irish Neolithic Individual burial contexts that have hitherto been paralleled to the Central European Unetician barbell pin tradition which dates to the eighteenth century BC (Herity 1982). Two are from Cahirguillamore, Co. Limerick, one from Jerpoint West, Co. Kilkenny and one associated with the burial cist at Knockmaree, Co. Dublin. This hypothesis is based on morphological similarities between the two cultures and “the fact that similar fibulae have not yet been found in the area between Central Europe and Ireland” (ibid, 1982), a statement that presumes this void strengthens the link and closeness in date of the objects. More recent work on the chronological contexts of megalithic tombs (Apsimon 1985/6) and the radiocarbon dates for Neolithic Single burials (Brindley and Lanting 1989/90) has thrown this theory into disrepute.

### Discussion

A barbell pin (as known from classic Unetician contexts) consists of a slender circular sectioned shank no wider than 5mm and capped at either end by a neat conical shaped head (Fig. 1). Given that the single conical head on each of the three fragments found in Ireland is morphologically similar to those of the foreign objects, this comparison would appear sound. None of the Irish examples appear to taper to a point and more importantly, no small circular sectioned point has ever been recovered from a single burial context, implying that a second head may have indeed existed but is now lost from the archaeological record. However, this anomaly is not easily remedied.

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\*Madeleine Murray is a recent archaeology MA graduate of U.C.D.

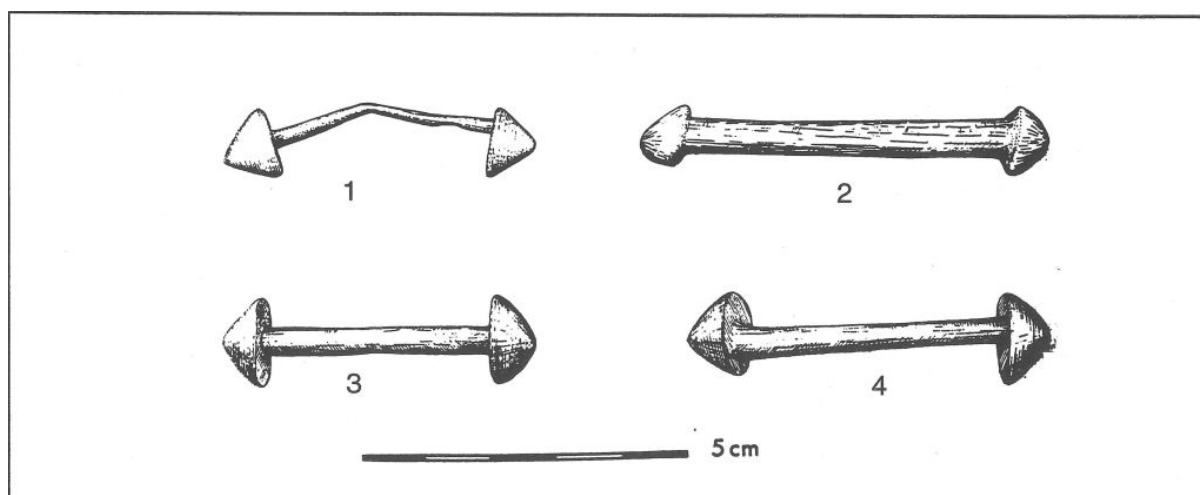


Fig. 1 Foreign barbell pins. 1 Sobecheby (Czechoslovakia); 2 Wilczkowice (Poland); 3 Uherce (Czechoslovakia); 4 Dolgelin (Germany) after Herity 1982.

There are numerous reasons why the Irish examples are not linked to the Central European fibulae. The two conical fragments from Cahirguillamore are the only items associated together. The width of each shaft varies, disqualifying attempts to suggest they belong to the same pin/fibulae. On a basic note, the foreign examples are all double-headed, a factor that automatically differentiates them from the Irish objects (Fig. 2). There is one Irish bone pin that does morphologically resemble the Central European items. It is from the single burial cist of Knockmaree, Co. Dublin (Fig. 3). This item is the exception to the rule and although some believe it is part of the Early Bronze Age tradition in Ireland the radiocarbon dates proposed for the site suggest otherwise.

Brindley and Lanting (1989/90) have suggested that the bone object which accompanied this burial is “clearly not related to the Central European types” owing to its radiocarbon date of  $4650 \pm 70$  BP, a date which places the site very definitely in the late to final Neolithic.

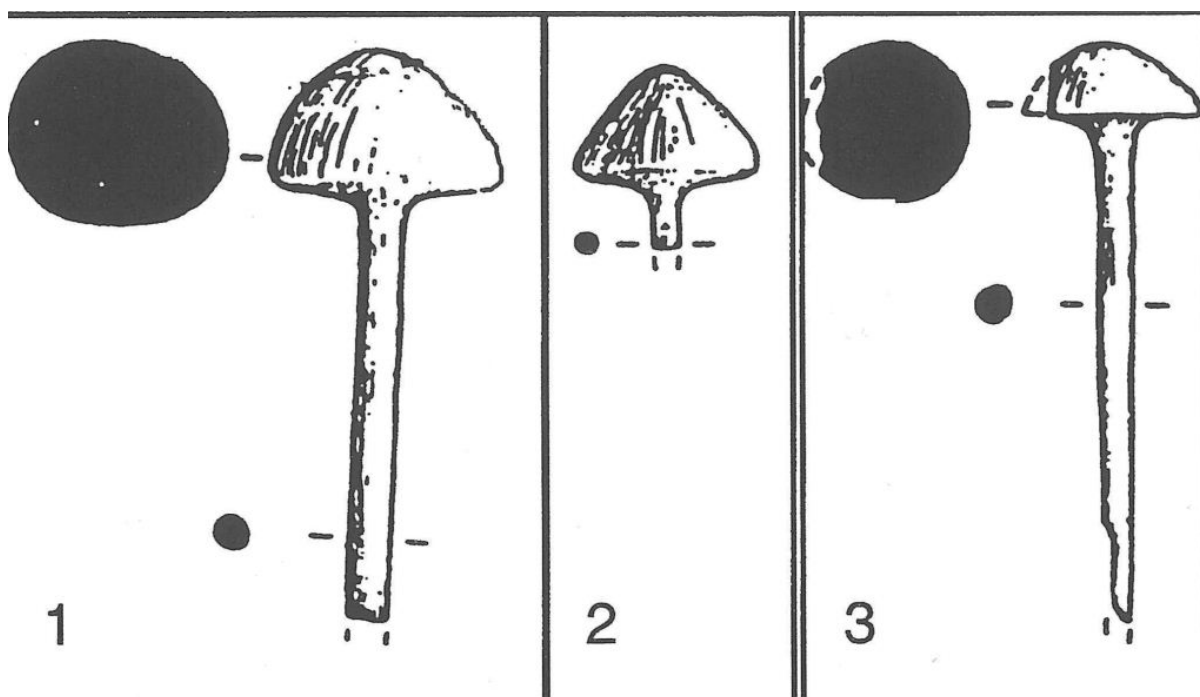


Fig. 2.1 and 2 conical fragments from Cahirguillamore; 3 from Jerpoint West. Scale 1:1

Equally, radiocarbon dates produced for the burial at Jerpoint West revealed a much earlier phase of activity than originally anticipated. A total of two conflicting dates were derived from the same inhumation but the calibrated age ranges do not overlap. One date range places the burial “too early” in the time sequence and the second is an accelerated date of  $4770 \pm 80$  BP (Brindley and Lanting 1989/90). The latter is considered most reliable. Other radiocarbon dates for similar Linkardstown cists including Ballintruer More and Ashleypark help reaffirm the Neolithic date for this burial tradition (see Brindley and Lanting 1989/90 for further information).

Unfortunately bone samples suitable for dating purposes could not be located for the burial at Cahirguillamore but archaeological literature has assigned it to the Neolithic phase of prehistory (Manning 1985; Cooney and Grogan 1994; Waddell 1998).

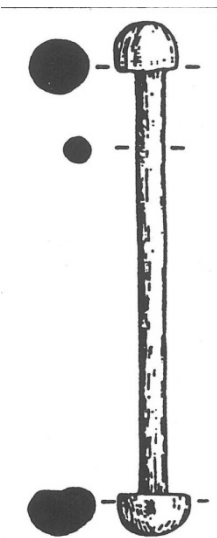


Fig. 3 Barbed pin from Knockmaree Scale 1:1

Finally, there is a fifth conical headed bone pin fragment that has come to light since Herity's 1982 publication. It was discovered at the Portal Tomb of Poul nabrone, Co. Clare (Fig. 4). It would appear that the tomb was used sporadically for a period of six hundred years (Lynch and ÓDonnabháin 1994). Ten radio-carbon dates obtained from the human bone indicate a date range of approximately 3800 BC to 3200 BC.

“The builders of the tomb were therefore amongst the first County Clare farmers” (ibid.). It is unusual that this element of the single burial grave good assemblage should be associated with the Portal Tomb tradition. However Herity (1982) has mentioned the strong links between the two traditions and the presence of this conical headed bone pin fragment may reinforce this theory.



Fig. 4 Conical headed pin from Poul nabrone Portal Tomb Scale 1:1

## Conclusion

Of the six single burial sites containing bone pin fragments from Neolithic contexts in Ireland, only Jerpoint West and Cahirguillamore repeat the same pin type. It can only be presumed that the single burial tradition of this era, though practising broadly similar monumental construction techniques, lent and borrowed from the grave good assemblage as they saw fit. The evidence from the radio-carbon dates suggests that some of these burials are in fact earlier than many of the Passage Tombs (see Apsimon 1989/90 for a more detailed discussion).

Parallels drawn between the conical headed bone pins and mushroom headed ones (ÓRíordáin 1954; Hunt 1967) appear redundant. Conical headed pins are for the most part much smaller in scale, always more highly polished and most obviously of all, are never associated with the Passage Tomb tradition. Therefore the conical headed pin, although not represented in as many numbers as its mushroom headed peers, signifies an exclusive and alternate mode of ritual existing in the Irish Neolithic landscape.

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Richard Clutterbuck\*

## Introduction

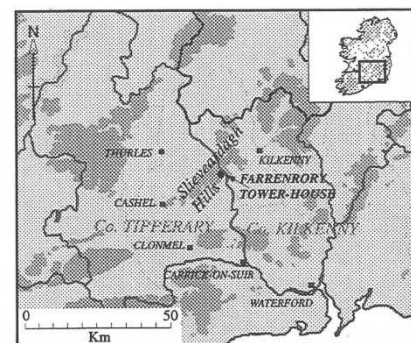
The modern Irish countryside can be seen as a collage of landscapes with the past never being far from the surface. This past is no foreign country, but survives as relict features; faint traces in the shape of roads or field boundaries. The monuments of the past can also project clear of the ground as megalithic tombs or multi-storey buildings. Monuments may be seen as projections from the past into the present because they still. Tower-houses are one of the more visually arresting monuments from the past. There are approximately three thousand tower-houses in Ireland (McNeill 1997, 210). In the majority of cases tower-houses were late medieval (1350-1600) private residential castles, found predominantly in rural contexts but were also built in towns. At their most simple tower-houses consisted of a stone building with an internal stack of rooms (O'Keeffe 1997). They were not designed to withstand full scale military attacks, but nevertheless exhibit clearly castle features such as thick walls, base batters, narrow windows, defended doors, machicolations, murder-holes and elaborately designed crenulations (Leask 1941; ÓDanachair 1979; Craig 1982; Cairns 1987; McNeill 1997). Although tower-houses are usually rectangular in their basic plan a number of circular tower houses were built (Leask 1941, 108; Craig 1982, 103). Maurice Craig (1982, 103) even went so far as to make a list of circular tower houses. Farrenrory tower-house, encountered during the course of field-work for an M.Litt. (Clutterbuck 1998) is an example of a cylindrical tower-house which is not included in Craig's list. The purpose of this article is to describe the architecture of Farrenrory tower house, and express some of the ideas as to the function tower-houses were seen to fulfil in later medieval Ireland.

## Location and History

The townland of Farrenrory is situated in the east of county Tipperary in the Slieveardagh hills (Nat. Grid. 23321511) (fig.1). The tower house is sited at an altitude of 210 meters on an outcrop of shale overlooking a small stream. The site is sheltered by the hills, with an south-easterly aspect. A modern farmyard surrounds the remains of the tower house, which is connected by a modern path to a road forty meters to the south-west.

Fig. 1: Map of the South East of Ireland.

Farrenrory townland was owned by a branch of the Fanning family in the later medieval and early modern periods (1350-1650). The Fannings were a wealthy land owning family in the barony of Slieveardagh and Compsy, with various different branches owning most of the parish of Ballingarry during this period, each often with their own tower-house. One event from 1555 illustrates the necessities for the home-protection provided by tower-houses, when the kerns (private foot-soldiers) of Geoffry Fanyng from Ballingarry, (4.2 kilometres south-west of Farrenrory) were accused of burning a house belonging to William Fanyng of Farrenrory, killing forty cows and a servant girl called SaweIny in what was probably a cattle raid (Curtis 1941, 74). It is unclear how



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Geoffrey Fanyng was related to William Fanyng, however this incident illustrates both the dangers of later medieval Ireland and the need for protection for both body and property. In 1651 the tower house of Farrenrory, owned by another William Fanninge, was described as “a good little castle with a good thatcht house & some cabbins” (Simington 1931, 115).

## Description

Farrenrory tower house is a free-standing circular tower house. Constructed of roughly coursed limestone, the building no longer survives above the second floor. The tower has a maximum external diameter of 10.4 meters and an internal diameter of 5.2 meters and survives to an approximate height of 8 meters. The ground and first floor walls are approximately 2.6 meters thick. Farrenrory’s interior is divided between mural chambers and main chambers, with a vice (circular stairs) giving access to the first floor (Fig. 2). A vault still survives over the first floor main chamber. None of the interior woodwork survives. Sometime after the tower house fell out of residential use, probably in the later seventeenth or eighteenth century, a house was constructed against its western side partially obscuring the original entrance. The interior of the tower house is now accessed through a destroyed window embrasure.

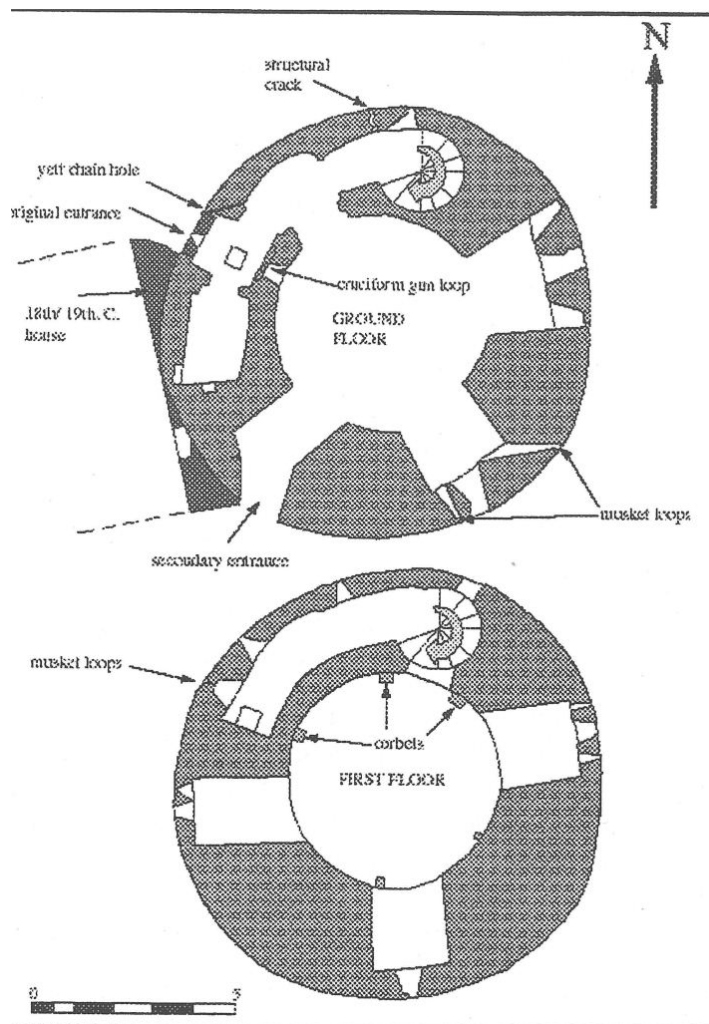


Fig. 2: Farrenrory Tower-House Plan

The entrance to Farrenrory tower-house consisted of a pointed-arch cut limestone door-frame in its western quadrant. A rebate in the door frame originally accommodated a yett (iron gate) which was held in place by chains through apertures in the left jamb and apex of the door frame. The door has subsequently been blocked up with stone, with only a small splayed window to light the interior. A framed stone plaque is recessed into the wall above the entrance presumably with a dedication which unfortunately is now illegible. Immediately inside the entrance is a small square lobby. From the lobby access can be gained to a secondary lobby to the left and a mural chamber to the right. The entrance lobby is guarded by a cruciform musket loop with expanded terminals. This feature faces the entrance and was accessed from the main ground floor chamber and is similar to a feature in Cahir

Castle, County Tipperary. The entrance lobby also has a murder hole in its ceiling which is standard in Irish later medieval tower houses. From the secondary chamber one can enter the stairs or the main ground floor chamber. As an added security measure each successive door from the entrance opens inward and was held in place by stone pivots, hanging-eyes and

cross bolts, evidence for which survive in the pointed arch door frames. The main ground floor is circular in plan and was lit by narrow windows set in three deep vaulted embrasures with the impression of the wicker centring. The south-western embrasure has been broken out to provide a secondary entrance. The surviving windows consist of round-headed lights constructed of cut limestone with splayed apertures for muskets on either side. The exterior spandrel of the south-eastern window is decorated with a triple-leaf motif.

The circular stairs or vice is accessed from the secondary lobby through a segmented pointed-arch door frame which originally had an inward opening door. The vice was lit by a single narrow window. The first floor also consists of mural chambers and a main chamber. The mural chamber is accessed off the vice and consists of a curving passage lit by two narrow square-headed windows. The murder hole is situated at the end of this passage. The murder hole is set in a small raised platform above the floor and consists of a square aperture to the entrance lobby below. A western facing gun-loop is set in the wall above the murder hole. The main first floor chamber is accessed directly off the vice stairs and consists of a circular chamber of the same diameter as the ground floor lit by three windows set in deep embrasures. The chamber originally had a wooden floor which was supported on five corbels and a stone vaulted ceiling. The ogee-headed windows are executed in cut lime stone and are flanked by have splayed musket apertures.

The second floor appears to have been larger in area than the lower floors unfortunately the remains of the vice and the tower house vault are in such a state as to make it unsafe for inspection. In fact, the whole building is being compromised by a large crack in the north-western quadrant and an ash tree growing on the second floor which is slowly but surely destroying the vault below it.

## **Discussion**

Unfortunately an exact date for the construction of Farrenrory tower house cannot be ascertained, although a date may have been provided in the plaque over the door. Farrenrory tower-house can be dated to the sixteenth century by the presence of the gun-loops. Hand-held fire arms such as muskets did not come into wide spread use in Ireland until the sixteenth century (Kerrigan 1995). Presumably Farrenrory was laid out using a rope attached to a stick which was simply folded in two to produce the diameter of the ground floor main chamber. Its dimensions show that the diameter of the ground-floor (5.2 metres) is half the total diameter of the tower (10.4 meters) and the thickness of the ground floor wall (2.6 meters) is quarter the length of the diameter. Cylindrical tower-houses are relatively rare and their distribution appears to be concentrated in the east Tipperary /West Kilkenny area, with some examples in counties Cork and Clare (Craig 1982, 103). The nearest example of a cylindrical tower-house to Farrenrory survives at Crohane, also in the Slieveardagh hills, but now mostly destroyed (Clutterbuck 1998 vol. II, 27). Farrenrory tower-house can be compared to Cranagh Castle, Synon, and Ballynahow, all of which are in county Tipperary (see Leask 1941, 108; Craig 1982, 103; Stout 1984, 132-33). Besides their basic circular outlines these tower-houses share similar ground-floor plans. Ballynahow also has similar splayed musket apertures on its ground-floor window. The division of space within Farrenrory's ground and first floor appears to have been fairly simple, consisting of a main chamber and secondary mural chambers. Unfortunately the upper floor or floors do not remain from which a full analysis of its internal arrangement could be determined. Farrenrory's thin second floor walls suggests it may only have had a single floor above the vault, thus making it smaller than examples such as Ballynahow, Newtown Castle or Synon tower-house. Another interesting aspect of Farrenrory is the apparent lack of a fire-place or a garderobe. These may be



obscured by the thick vegetation growth on the remains of the second floor or may have been destroyed when the upper storeys collapsed.

Unfortunately because Farrenrory does not survive to its full height, its visual impact on the landscape cannot be fully ascertained. This impact would have been considerably enhanced by the elaborate crenulations capping many Irish tower houses (Leask 1941, 88; Craig 1982, 99). Farrenrory was the residence of a landed gentleman of a branch of the Fanning family in the later medieval period. It fulfilled part of its function as a castle by incorporating defensive features such as a *yett*, murder hole and presumably a castellated parapet. However its other function was as a lordly residence whose prestige was enhanced by been seen to possessing his own castle. One of the most notable features of the tower-houses are that they were built by all sections of Irish society; the Irish, Old English and New English planters. This indicates not only the almost universal fashion of the tower-house, it also shows that the tower-house was instantly recognised for what it was by all sections of the community; a lordly residence. For those areas where tower houses are not built in the later medieval period such as much of Ulster (ÓDanachair 1979, 161) there remains the possibility that some other aspect of their settlement was recognised as indicative of nobility.

## **Conclusion**

Farrenrory tower-house was no different from any other tower house in function, other than the fact that it was cylindrical. Surviving to two storeys, its architectural features such as the door and window frames or even its internal arrangement of rooms and its defensive features can be found in other tower-houses both cylindrical and rectilinear. Farrenrory's dimensions are laid out using rudimentary geometry and proportions, analogous to the proportions employed to lay out some tower houses (see O'Keeffe 1997, 19-20). Although never fulfilled a role as a military fortification, it combined the convenience of the latest in home security with the prestige of a lordly residence. A castle in the medieval period was as instantly recognisable in the medieval period as it is today. The success of tower-houses as the favoured image of nobility by the later medieval gentlemen still manages to impress. In this sense every gentleman's home was his castle. Like any dedicated follower of fashion, if you could afford it, you wouldn't be caught dead without one.

It only remains to be said that the current bad state of repair of Farrenrory tower-house suggests it may not survive for much longer without proper conservation. If this were to happen we would not only be losing an important piece of our built heritage, but we would also lose part of the surviving image of the later medieval society.

## **Glossary**

<b>Crenulations</b>	stepped parapet.
<b>Embrasure</b>	a recess in the interior wall for a window.
<b>Ogee-head</b>	a double-curving window or doorhead.
<b>Spandrel</b>	triangular area on either side of the exterior of a window head.
<b>Wicker centring</b>	wicker-work support for the construction of masonry vaults
<b>Yett</b>	an iron gate covering the exterior of a window or door.

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## A recent find of possible rock art on Bray Head, Co. Wicklow.

**Daire Leahy\***

### Introduction

The rock in question is a boulder of granite about 2ft in length and 1.5ft in height and depth and is roughly ovoid in shape. It was found on a grass verge at the edge of a ploughed field on the north-western slope of Bray Head and it appears that it has not been in this location for very long (fig. 1). The carving (Fig.2) consists of a number of straight lines, the main motif being formed by the joining of some of these lines to form a rectangle with projecting sides. There is also a smooth area on the stone, beside the main motif, containing a line. As the natural rock in the area is quartzite it is likely that the boulder is a glacial erratic but it is doubtful that any of these features were as a result of abrasion whilst being transported by a glacier.

### Description

The ornament on the stone is that referred to by Macwhite (1946) as “map” design and by Herity and Eogan (1977) as “field pattern”. It consists of transecting parallel and perpendicular channels, which often, but not in this case, are linked to cup marks and circles. The closest parallels for this kind of ornament are to be found in Ireland’s main rock art cluster in Kerry, accounting for 19% of the total number of stones known from the country at the time of Macwhite’s paper. Although Wicklow is one of the few other counties to show a concentration of rock art, none of the known stones (five according to the Wicklow inventory) show the motif which occurs on the Bray Head stone.

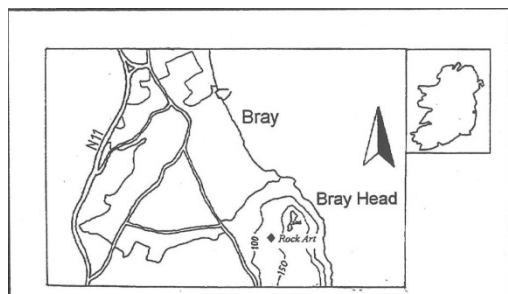


fig. 1 ;Bray Head (Sketch map)

### Discussion

The exact function of this art is not known but it has been suggested that decorated stones have been could be boundary markers or markers of a significant point along a route way (Bradley, 1995).

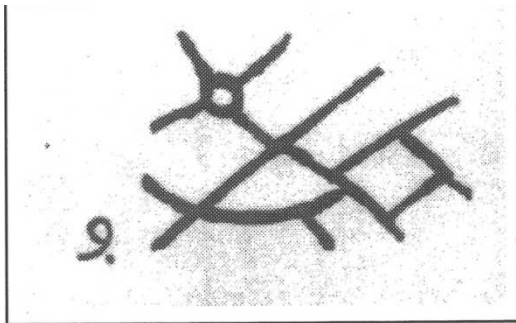
Intervisibility of monuments seems to have been an important element during the Neolithic and Bronze Ages and it should be noted that the two cairns on the Great Sugar Loaf are visible from the site. The importance of this observation is obviously somewhat diminished by the fact that the stone is most likely not in its primary position although the original site is probably not too far from where it lies today. Occasionally, decorated stones were used in the walls or as the capstone of burial cists. Decorated stones from cists are rare but they are known from sites like Moylough, Co. Sligo and Ballinvalley, Co. Meath (Macwhite, 1946). Because these decorated stones often occur on natural stones in the landscape they are difficult to date but they were most likely carved in a period spanning the end of the Neolithic and the beginning of the Bronze Ages.

Rock art is generally seen as not being directly related to megalithic art although there are some motifs which the two groups have in common. However, as shown by Lewis-Williams

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\*Daire Leahy is a graduate of archaeology from U.C.D.

and Dowson (1993), these motifs, such as cup marks and concentric circles, occur during altered states of consciousness i.e. in a state of trance induced either by meditation or by the use of hallucinogenic drugs. They do not necessarily share the same function. So, with this in mind, it is hard to suggest a link between the two.



### Conclusion

If this is rock art, then, in the current state of knowledge, it appears to be quite out of place in terms of motif distribution. This highlights the need for a full survey of Irish rock art to be undertaken in order to attempt to solve the many problems which

one is faced with when studying these phenomena.

fig. 2: motif on the Bray head stone (not to scale)

### Acknowledgements

Many thanks to my mother, Ellen Leahy, who pointed out the stone to me, Dr Dorothy Kelly who provided me with materials for the rubbing and Brian Quinn who helped me with the rubbing of the stone.

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Julia Crimmins and Claire Kealy\*.

### Introduction

Between 1880 and 1911 Henry Brown donated to University College Dublin Classical Museum a number of artefacts. Among these was an interesting brooch (UCD 1166). Unfortunately we do not know the exact location in which it was found. What we do know is that Brown collected artefacts from Chester, York, London and Bonn during the period 1880-1911. Essentially it is a fibula brooch, but since fibulae occur in such a wide spectrum throughout much of Europe (Alexander et al 1982) we must be more precise.

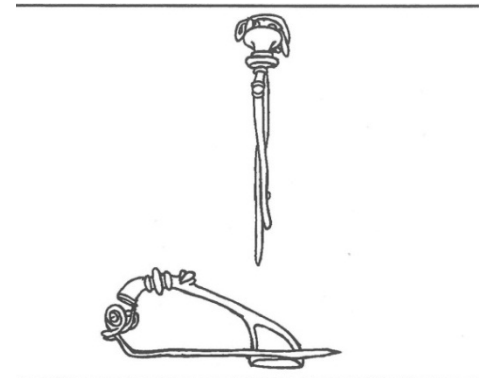


fig. 1: Bronze fibula. Scale 1:2

### Description

The fibula in question is bronze and is 9cm in length, and 3.2cm in height. Although the fibula was found intact, it shows signs of being lightly corroded and repaired. Its spring is heavy and elaborately moulded by forking joins on either end of the receiver. Its main features are those of a Roman trumpet brooch. Such brooches had a trumpet, a button on the bow and were normally worn in pairs by Roman women with a chain attaching them in front. In this case however, the second of the pair was is not in the collection.

### Discussion

Despite the fact that the fibula's main feature is that of a trumpet brooch, it is highly unlikely that it fits into this category for two reasons. Firstly, trumpet brooches have a striking tendency to be uniform. The head generally has a flanged edge, and has a head loop which is prevented from springing forward by a small triangular spike. If the fibula has mouldings around the waist, they may be in the form of single, double or triple and are sometimes milled. The root is usually a patterned cylinder, but occasionally it takes the form of a hemisphere with acanthus leaves above. The root, rather than being fat, is usually sunken. Enamelling and champlevé were both used in decoration and the catch-plate is generally solid (Snape 1993, 16). Secondly, the fibula in question also appears to have some of the characteristics of a La Tène III type fibula. Such La Tène III brooches belong to the first century BC. Nearly all of the examples found in Britain came from the south of England, with a few in the midlands and only two or three in southern Scotland and south Wales. All are forged and mainly derivatives of the Neuheim type. Generally they have four coils to the spring with an internal chord. But as we have seen, any number of coils between two and six is possible, as is an external chord. The bow is usually flat and the catch-plate can be plain or perforated (Hattatt 1985, 20-25). The fibula in question has six coils above the trumpet which are part of the spring and its chord is external. The six coils may have been intended to give extra force to the pin so that it would be secured tightly in the catch-plate. But seeing that the catch-plate is open it would be too weak to hold such force and therefore the possibility of a decorative rather than a mechanical function must be considered in regard to the six coils.

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\*Julia Crimmins and Claire Kealy are, respectively, second and third year archaeology students in U.C.D

A similar fibula of La Tène III type was found in Norfolk (Hattett 1985, 248). This is an elongated example of the usual form with the chord externally positioned. Enough of the catch-plate remains to show that it was perforated. The button is a moulded sphere with two fine ribs above and below, all of which encircle the bow. The upper part of the bow is rectangular in section with a low facial ridge which widens to a shoulder at the top before taking on a rod form for the spring. The bow below the button is square in section, also with a facial ridge. Its spring is of only two coils, which is rare.

### **Conclusion**

It must therefore be said that although Henry Brown's find (UCD 1166) is neither a definite La Tène fibula, nor a definite Roman trumpet brooch. It appears likely to fall into a category between the two. One possibility is that it was manufactured in Britain or Gaul and that the smith, who, whilst trying to manufacture a copy of a Roman trumpet brooch also incorporated native motifs.

### **Acknowledgements:**

Dr Brigita Hoffmann and Dr Christina Haywood.

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## Report from the U.C.D. Archaeological society 1998/1999

The main aim of the Archaeological Society is to help provide a social context for the archaeology course offered by U.C.D. With the advice of the Department we organise trips and special lectures to complement and enhance the course, making life easier for those who get involved. We offer an opportunity to members to get to know other students of archaeology, both undergraduate and post-graduate, and hopefully have a little fun in the process. The U.C.D. Archaeological Society is currently enjoying one of its most active years. Since September there have been two day trips, two weekend trips, five evening lectures and coffee mornings every Wednesday at 1.00pm. We look forward to continuing this until the end of the academic year.

The Boyne Valley, Co. Meath and the bogs of Co. Offaly were the destinations of our day trips. The Boyne Valley trip was the first of the year and attracted over forty members, many of whom were Erasmus students who enjoy the society as a great way to see the Irish countryside and its archaeological sites. We took part in guided tours around the passage tomb sites of Newgrange and Knowth and Brian Shanahan guided us through the twelfth century Bective Abbey and the royal site of Tara Hill. The second day trip was to the bogs in Co. Offaly with Connor McDermot from the Wetland Archaeological Unit in U.C.D. The bogs lured thirty-seven enthusiastic students. We learned about the formation of bogs and how the people of the time would have crossed them. Along the way we visited Clara Bog, St. Manchan's Well, Ferbane and, finally, Clonmacnois.

October 24th was the date of our first weekend trip, to Co. Mayo. On the way to Westport we stopped at the royal site of Rathcroghan, Co. Longford where Dave McGuinness filled us in on some of the history of the site. Early the next day Prof Séamus Caulfield kindly offered to show us around his homeland. We saw the field system at Glenultra, a court tomb at Behy and the famous Céide Fields which is a complex system of fields which has been buried under the bogs for centuries. Prof Caulfield himself excavated and surveyed the area and was able to provide a valuable insight into the agricultural system for all who attended. The following day we visited the Early Christian site of Downpatrick Head, the Romanesque church of Kilcummin, and the Franciscan friaries of Moyne before we returned to Dublin.

To end the Michaelmas term on a high note we organised the second of our weekend trips to Kilkenny. On our way there we stopped at the Early Christian site at Kilcullen, Carlow Castle and Kells Priory where the post graduate students were good enough to share their knowledge of the sites with over fifty students. Dr Muiris O'Sullivan joined the group the following day and took us on a guided tour of the high crosses of Ossory. Knockroe passage tomb was our next stop and Dr O'Sullivan, who excavated the site, told us of his finds and thoughts on the tomb and area as well. The final stop was the site of the massive portal dolmen of Brownshill, Co. Carlow. While the trips are informative and obviously relative to the course, it's not all archaeology. Both regulars and newcomers to the society can't help but enjoy themselves over a pint or two!

In the last term the Society has hosted a series of five lectures, given by various archaeologists from both England and Ireland. Topics include excavations on the Orkney Islands, Early Christian excavations and megalithic tombs. There is another series of lectures organised for the remainder of the year. The guest speakers include contract archaeologist Linzi Simpson talking on her excavations in Temple Bar. The Head of the U.C.D Archaeology Department, Prof Barry Raftery, has already given a delightful talk on the

Romans' military relationship with Ireland and Prof Vitar Jorge of the University of Porto will give the Society's Inaugural lecture on the 16th of February. Nessa O'Connor from the National Museum of Ireland will lecture on archaeology and the law and other lectures remain to be finalised.

Many trips are arranged for the coming months which include the Association of Young Irish Archaeologists, hosted by U.C.D. in Kilkenny and the highlight of the year: our trip to England from the 6th to the 10th of March. Dr Tadhg O'Keefe and Dr Andrew Jones have kindly offered to show the group around the sites of Hen Dolmen, Leominster, Tewkesbury, Glastonbury, Wells, Stonehenge and Caerphilly. It will undoubtedly be a trip to remember.



## THESES

### THESES HELD IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN

kindly supplied by Prof. B. Raftery

#### MA. Theses

##### 1997 - Old Regulations (2 years)

BRADY, Karl	A survey of the prehistoric and the early medieval archaeology of the Mullet Peninsula, County Mayo
COLLINS, Kirsten	Prehistoric land use at Bremore, North County Dublin: the evidence from fieldwalking and lithic analysis
DESMOND, Sylvia	The ritual landscape of the Neolithic to the early Bronze Age in south Armagh and east Monaghan
HINEY, Nuala	Nutrition in the early historic period: a study of human skeletal remains from Omey Island, County Galway
McEVOY, Julianne	A late Bronze Age collar & similar elements of ornament from Ireland
SEAVER, Matthew	Medieval boroughs in County Meath

##### 1997 - New Regulations (1 year)

HARDY, Colum	Ringfort and church settlement during the early Christian period in the barony of Clane, County Kildare
KAVANAGH, John	A Group of ringforts at Dumbell
LYTTLETON, James	Reassessment of the excavation of Loughpark crannog near Tuam, County Glaway
MCCARTHY, Darina	Stone axes in the south-east of Ireland: Counties Waterford and Wexford
O'CONNOR, David	Saintonge polychrome pottery from Drogheda
O'DONOVAN, Agnes	Early Christian settlement in the parish of Rathkeale, County Limerick
VICKERS, Louise	Irish Neolithic houses - architecture, activity, space.

##### 1998- 1-year MA

GREENE, Sharon	A reappraisal of Irish serpentine lachets
LOVE, Vickie	Medieval settlement in the centre of Offa, County Tipperary (1185-1550)
MAUNG, Stacey	The archaeology of the house cluster: the case study of the Irish "Clachan"
MULHALL, Isabella	Irish early Christian metal finger rings
MURRAY, Madeline	Bone pins of the Irish Neolithic

O'TOOLE, Ciara

Gothic capitals with head and foliage motifs in  
Ireland (1170-1280)

**M.Litt. Theses 1998**

CLUTTERBUCK, Richard

The settlement and Architecture of Later medieval  
Sleiveardagh, County Tipperary

MURPHY, Deirdre

Medieval Drogheda

**THESES HELD IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS, UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE, DUBLIN (relevant to Archaeology)**

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**M.Litt. Theses**

**1997**

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**THESES HELD IN THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDIEVAL HISTORY, DUBLIN  
UNIVERSITY**

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HENRY LONG, William	Medieval Glendalough: an inter-disciplinary study
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**M.Litt Thesis 1997**

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**Ph.D. Thesis 1998**

JOHNSON, Ruth	An archaeological and art-historical investigation of the tenth century hiatus in Irish art
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**M.Phil Thesis 1998**

KUWAYAMA, David McEVOY, Elizabeth	Anglo-Norman impact on Irish population health From Strongbow to Piers and Margaret Butler: Kilkenny Castle in the Middle Ages
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PALAEOECOLOGY, QUEENS UNIVERSITY, BELFAST**

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McCLEARY, Stuart	The history and archaeology of Adare Castle, County Limerick
McILROY, Darren	A socio-economic approach to the understanding of “Iron Age” developments within Ulster from the introduction of iron as a material, c700 BC through to the fourth century AD

## **1998**

NELIS, Eimear	Donegore lithics
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## **MPhil Theses 1997**

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BUNTING, Lynda	A tephra-dated palynological and documentary study of the medieval landscape for
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two sites in the north of Ireland

## **PhD Theses 1997**

MANNION, Susan	An architectural appraisal of the friary remains in Connacht
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## **1998**

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| RONAN, Julia          | Irish nunneries: spatial dimensions and gender implications                              |
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Irish medieval sites