INCHYDONEY IN THE EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIOD

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This paper examines how the changing political context of Corcu Loígde in the early medieval period impacted on Inis Dúine, the ecclesiastical site of Inchydoney Island, Co. Cork. Several categories of documentary evidence are used to interpret the territorial structure of the area, as well as to evidence changes of overlordship in the tenth to eleventh centuries, with a further group challenging in probably the early twelfth century. The concept of ecclesiastical landowning by Inis Dúine and settlement on that land is explored, and a political background to the takeover of the estate by the major ecclesiastical site of Ross is suggested.

Introduction

The ecclesiastical site of *Inis Dúine* on Inchydoney Island lay within the kingdom of *Corcu Loígde* in the early medieval period (c. AD 430–1169). *Corcu Loígde*, around AD 900, probably covered an area west to east from the Beara to Timoleague, or maybe even further east towards Cork. To the north the limits seem to have been the Rivers Saivnose and Bandon. These extents were eroded during the eleventh and twelfth centuries by the predations of the *Uí Echach Muman* (*Eóganacht Raithlind*), whose territories bordered on *Corcu Loígde* to the north and east (see Fig. 1).

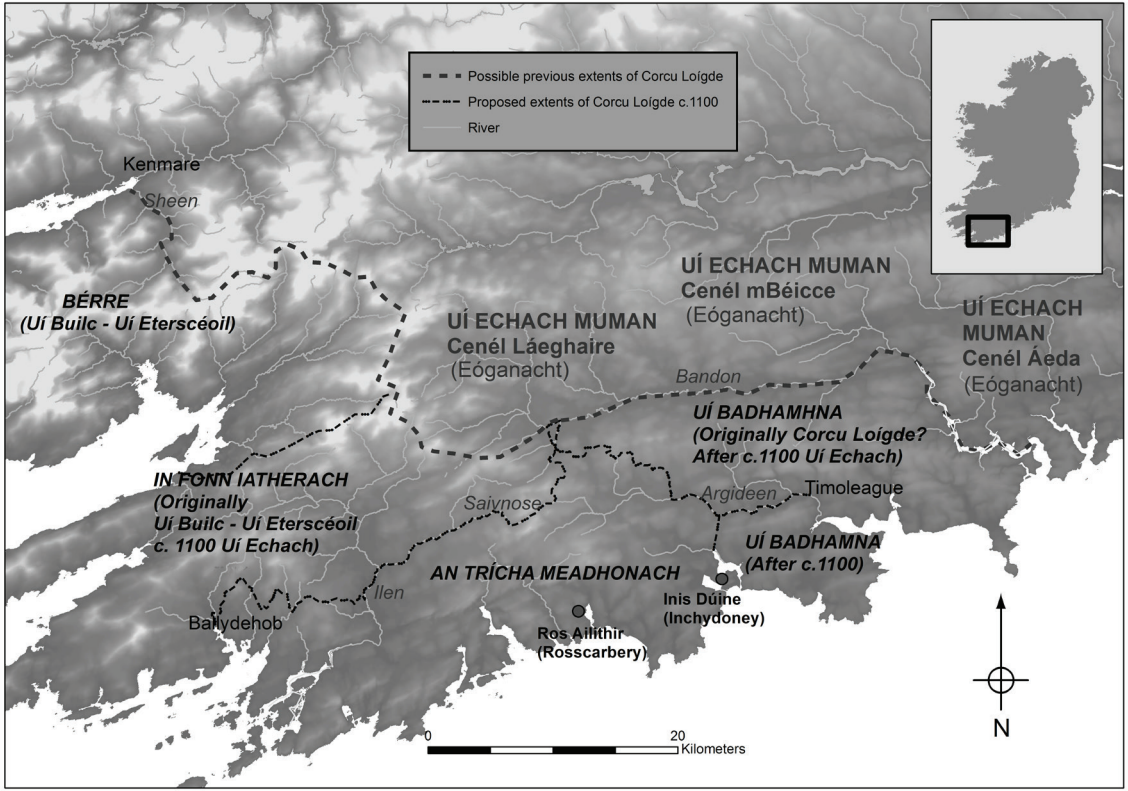

Fig. 1: Territories associated from antiquity with *Corcu Loígde* and an approximation of the territory in the early twelfth century showing the three *trícha cét* (Map: author).

Early Medieval Territorial Boundaries of *Corcu Loígde*

The major land division of early medieval Ireland around the eleventh century was the *trícha cét*, often representing a small local kingdom. These were sub-divided into *túatha* although many of these boundaries were probably extant from antiquity.[1] There were three *trícha cét* in *Corcu Loígde* around the eleventh century (Bugge 1905, 29). To the west were the peninsulas of the Mizen and Beara, known as *Berre*; centrally, as named, was *An Trícha Meadhonach* (O'Donovan 1849, 58) and from the east of Clonakilty Bay to Timoleague, *Uí Badamna. Inis Dúine* (Inchydoney) lay at the border of *An Trícha Meadhonach* and *Uí Badamna* (Fig. 1). The genealogies of the *Corcu Loígde* are quite confused but certain themes emerge from them. There are two main progenitors: *Conall Claen* and *Aengus Bolg*. The *Uí Builc* from *Berre* descended from *Aengus Bolg* and one of their later principal groups was the *Uí Eterscéoil* (O'Donovan 1849, 11). Commentators have suggested that the first kings of *Corcu Loígde* were the *Uí Chonaill* (from *Conall Claen*) and that the *Uí Builc* took over the kingship around 900 (Ó Riain 1994, 251; MacCotter 2008, 162). However, the reference to the defeat of *Uí Echach Muman* (Fig. 1) by *Breislén* of *Béirre* (*Berre* above) in 779 (AU) may indicate that the kings of the western peninsulas were always independently powerful but perhaps only started to extend their influence east in the tenth century.

The central *trícha* of the *Corcu Loígde* kingdom, *An Trícha Meadhonach*, stretched from Clonakilty, in the east, to Ballydehob, in the west (Fig. 1). A pre-Norman document, *Duchasaich Corco Laidi*, 'the hereditary landowners of *Corcu Loígde*' (O'Donovan 1849, 50-5), dated by Donnchadh Ó Corráin (1979, 171; 1993, 68) to the first quarter of the twelfth century,[2] describes the extents and sub-divisions (*túatha*, see note 1) of this central *trícha* of *Corcu Loígde*. Leaders and landowners of these *túatha* are also listed. Each sub-division is outlined by references to physical features in the landscape or toponyms which can still be identified in most cases. These references are based on the four compass points, in each case, north to south and east to west extents are given. The permanence of these landscape features means, almost certainly, that the boundaries derived from a period earlier than the date of the text. For the purposes of this study, the four eastern *túatha* will be briefly outlined.[3]

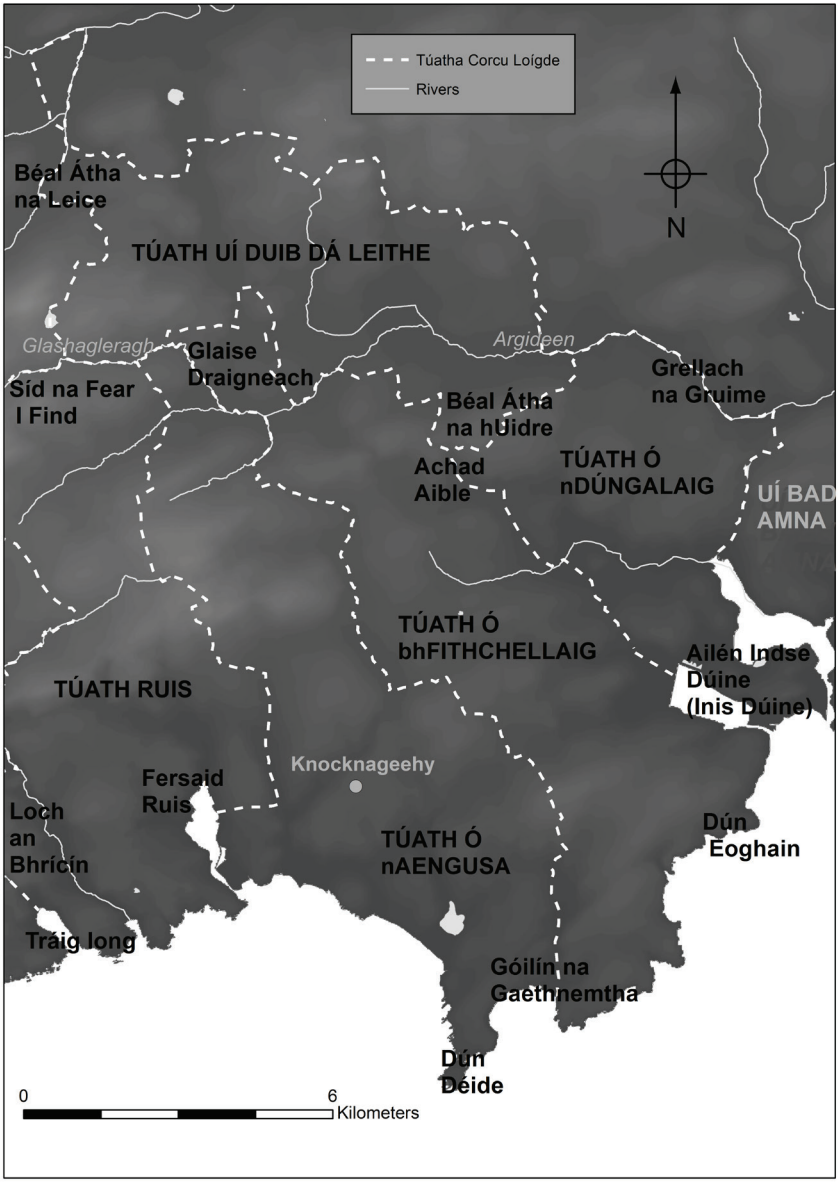

Fig. 2: *Túatha* of the *Corcu Loígde* in the vicinity of Inchydoney (Map: author).

Ailen Indsi Dúine (Inchydoney) is mentioned in the text as a boundary marker for two *túatha*: the eastern boundary of *Túath Ó bhFithchellaig* and the southern boundary of *Túath Ó nDúngalaig* (Fig. 2). *Túath Ó nDúngalaig* is the easternmost *túath* of *An Trícha Meadhonach*, described in the document. It covered an area from Inchydoney in the south to *Béal Átha na hUidri*, a ford on the Argideen, to the north. This is identified as the ford just west of the Argideen Bridge where the modern parish boundary divides Kilmeen and Kilkerranmore (Ó Niatháin 1964, 14). The western boundary is *Achad Aible,* the townland of Ahagilla, in the nineteenth-century parish of east Castleventry; Ahagilla translates as *Achadh Gaibhle* (www.logainm.ie). The eastern boundary is *Grellach na Gruime* (Grillagh), 500m down the Argideen River from Shannonvale.

Túath Ó bhFithchellaig, adjacent to *Túath Ó nDúngalaig* on the west, extended west to *Góilín na Gaethnemtha*, the townland of Ganniv at Red Strand and from *Dún Eoghain* (Dunowen) in the south, to *Glaise Draigneach*, possibly the Glashagleragh River bordering the townland of Inchanattin, in the north.

The neighbouring *túath* to the west was *Túath nAengusa*, running from Ganniv to *Fersaid Ruis*, a low-water sandbar crossing in Rosscarbery Bay and from *Dún Déide* (Dundeedy) on the Galley Head in the south, probably as far as *Béal Átha Na Leice* (the mouth of Curraghalicky Lake) in the north.[4]

Finally *Túath Ruis* extended from the *Fersaid* to *Loch an Bhrichín* (the lake of the small trout), a stream from which exits into Tralong Bay. Its southern marker was *Tráig long* (Tralong) and its northern marker was *Síd na Fear I Find* (probably Carrigfadda).

Some of these land divisions are referenced in the genealogies of the *Corcu Loígde. Coinchinne* is the mother of three sons: *Mac Eirc*, *Aengus* and *Conall Claen* who represent three of the *túatha* described above (O'Donovan 1849, 33; O'Brien 1962, 261). *Mac Eirc* is a forebear of Fachtna of Ross, referencing *Túath Ruis* (O'Donovan 1849, 47). Aengus is probably the patronym of *Túath Ó nAengusa. Conall Claen*, as mentioned above, was the progenitor of the early *Uí Conaill* kings associated with the Inchydoney area, later known as *Túath Ó nDúngalaig.* The only missing reference is *Túath na bhFithchellaig,* but perhaps in the period of the *Uí Chonaill* kings, c. 900 and before, this was part of their kingdom.

Hagiography and Archaeology of *Inis Dúine*

In the Martyrology of Tallaght, the saint associated with *Inis Dúine* is *Clothrainne* (Best and Lawlor 1931, 76). In the Martyrologies of Gorman and Donegal, she is *Clothrann* and *Clothra* but in both cases her father is named as *Conall* (Stokes 1895, 189; O'Donovan 1864, 265). In *Beatha Bharra*, '*Crothru*, daughter of *Conall*' attends Finbarr's school at Gougane Barra (Ó Riain 1994, 69). Despite the slight difference in spelling, Ó Riain considers this to be the same saint, 'daughter of *Conall*' referring to *Conall Claen* (*ibid*., 251). Given the close correlation between ruling family and ecclesiastical foundation in early medieval Ireland (Ó Corráin 1981; Boazman 2014, 727) these references would support *Uí Chonaill* control of both the ecclesiastical site of *Inis Dúine* and the surrounding *túatha*.

Fachtna of *Ros Ailithir* (Rosscarbery) and *Clothra* of *Inis Dúine* (Inchydoney) were related, through their forebears, *Mac Eirc* and *Conall Claen* (see above). It is likely that at the period of their foundation, almost certainly by these related early *Uí Chonaill* kings and ecclesiastics, Ross and Inchydoney were equally important sites, and it could be assumed that *Clothra's* site was a nunnery. The mention in the genealogies of a '*Lebar Oilen Insi Duin*' (O'Brien 1962, 256) indicates book production on *Inis Dúine* and suggests that *Clothra's* foundation there was well patronised. Book production was expensive, requiring calf skins, pigment and probably a dedicated space in the ecclesiastical site for writing. It also indicates a reputation for learning which, again, was characteristic of major sites (McCarthy 2013, 330).

There is little archaeological evidence for the early medieval ecclesiastical site of *Inis Dúine* but it is very likely that the later churches were built on the footprint of the original, probably wooden, church. This continuity was part of the social memory connecting the present congregation to the ground sanctified by the initial construction of the founding saint (Ó Carragáin 2010, 149-52). As 'Island' (the Anglo-Norman and later name for Inchydoney church and parish) is mentioned in the 1291 and 1302 taxations, it can be assumed that a medieval church existed. The church was recorded in an Elizabethan taxation list of 1584 and it was in repair in 1615 but Bishop Dive Downes reported it as ruinous in 1699 (Lunham 1908, 145). The extant church is probably post-medieval.

An earth-cut souterrain to the south of the church was uncovered in 1989. In the majority, scientifically-excavated souterrains are dated between the eighth and twelfth centuries (Clinton 2001, 210). Featuring six chambers linked by creeps, the souterrain at Inchydoney appears to be one of the more complex examples in the territory of *Corcu Loígde* (Cleary 1989, 30-1). However, due to the context of the discovery of most souterrains (i.e. by accident), further passages and chambers are often recorded as blocked and,

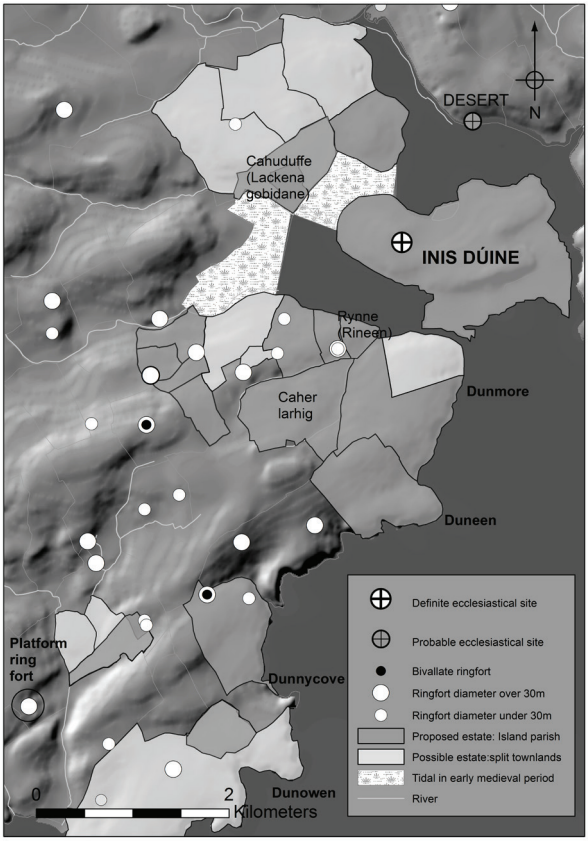

Fig. 3: The proposed ecclesiastical estate of Inis *Dúine* and early medieval settlement.[6] The toponym *Caher* in Caherlarhig would indicate a ringfort now non-extant. The darker grey townlands form part of the nineteenth-century parish of Island and the lighter grey areas are all portions of the same townlands belonging now to the parish of Ardfield (Map: author).

therefore, it is difficult to make an accurate comparison. Even so, the souterrain at Inchydoney appears to be extensive.

There are two antiquarian references to early medieval archaeology at *Inis Dúine*. Joseph Raftery discussed a slab-lined grave; although he considered these to be Iron Age, radiocarbon dating of bone from such graves shows them to be fifth to eighth century, thus early medieval (Raftery 1941, 303; O'Brien 2009, 145). John Windele found evidence in 1847 of a horizontal mill: an oak chute and two 'querns' or millstones (Rynne 1988, 329).[5] Unfortunately, there is no location provided for either antiquarian reference; although, it can be assumed that the grave was close to the church. As Inchydoney has no streams large enough to power a mill it is possible that the mill was tidal, similar to Nendrum in Co. Down (McErlean and Crothers 2007). If this was the case, it may have been on the eastern side of the island where the main tidal flow exits Clonakilty Harbour.

An Ecclesiastical Estate at *Inis Dúine*

As late as 1664, the date of the Down Survey, Island (Inchydoney) – along with two small townlands: 'Cahuduffe' and 'Rynne' – was recorded as a possession of the Bishop of Ross. 'Rynne' is now Rineen, which may have been a crossing between the mainland and the island. 'Cahuduffe' appears to be now the townland of Lackenagobidane, which situation may have allowed access to the island across the marshland at low tide (Fig. 3). It is possible that the scattered nature of the nineteenth-century parish of Island may bear witness to a previous ecclesiastical estate of *Inis Dúine* outside the confines of the island. Dispersed parishes associated with an ecclesiastical site often contain the ghost of previous landholding as Sinéad Ní Ghabhláin (1996, 44) indicated in Corcomroe, Co. Clare. Similarly townlands split between two parishes (Fig. 3) may hint at an earlier territorial situation. It will be noted that ringforts occur in the townlands within the proposed ecclesiastical estate of *Inis Dúine*. The construction dates of the majority of ringforts lie in the period AD 600–900, although their use-life may extend beyond these dates (see Harte, this volume). It is usually assumed that ringforts were secular habitations but recent research has shown them to occur also on ecclesiastical land (Ó Carragáin 2013–14, 288, 295). It is possible that these were the dwellings of clients of the

estate; the social organisation of an ecclesiastical estate in the early medieval period was similar to that of a secular estate in that high-status 'tenants' living in ringforts could have retained control of their own land but given render to their ecclesiastical lord (Etchingham 1999, 417; Boazman 2014, 697-9; Ó Carragáin 2013–14, 267). However, there are no ringforts on the island of Inchydoney. This would not be an unusual arrangement for ecclesiastical landholding: at *Ros Ailithir* (Rosscarbery) and Faughart Upper (Co. Louth) a major group of ringforts occur on documented ecclesiastical land at a distance of 500m to 2km removed from the ecclesiastical site (Boazman 2014, 193, 361-2). This is connected, almost certainly, to the concept of the central ritual monuments of an ecclesiastical site being protected by decreasing circles of sanctity (Picard 2009, 60).

In the case of Inchydoney, there could have been a further explanation for the lack of ringforts on the island. As indicated above the initial ecclesiastical foundation on the island was that of *Clothra*, the daughter of an *Uí Chonaill* king, and would at that point have been a female establishment. As the *Uí Chonaill* kings flourished before c. 900 this would correspond with the ringfort construction period and would suggest that the lack of ringforts on the island was by design. It could indicate ascetic isolation for the holy virgin and her community. The question arises then as to whether the female community worked the land and operated the horizontal mill. Indeed manual labour was perceived as an integral part of asceticism in the early medieval period (Etchingham 1999, 415). However, while there is evidence for its contribution to spiritual life in female establishments, the redoubtable Moninne of Killeavy, Armagh, being an example (Boazman 2014, 261),[7] it was not always considered appropriate for high-status virgins (Ó Carragáin 2013–14, 294-5). Perhaps the land was worked by unfree subjects of the *Uí Chonaill* kings. The unfree would not have had the status to command the building of ringforts and were perhaps either domiciled in unenclosed settlement on the island or accessed the island from the proposed estate on the mainland.

Rise of the *Uí Eterscéoil*

It has been mentioned that from around 900 the *Uí Eterscéoil* branch of the *Uí Builc* from the westernmost *trícha* of *Berre* slowly assumed overlordship

of *Corcu Loígde*. That they then made *Ros Ailithir* the central place and major ecclesiastical site of their kingdom is inferred by a later note in their genealogy. This states that Macraith, a member of the 'Clann Find of Garrda' 'of the race of Cathra, son of Eiderscoil' was the patron of 'Temple-mor-Fachtna' at Rosscarbery (O'Donovan 1849, 13). This may be an example of the great increase in the building of mortared stone churches at prominent sites in the mid-eleventh century and in the use of the word *teampall* to describe them (Manning 2000, 41; Ó Carragáin 2010, 110-11). It illustrates the movement of the *Uí Eterscéoil* influence east as *Garrda* represents the parish of Myross (Nicholls 1969, 69) and the patronage of a major construction project at Ross would indicate that this powerful group wished to promote Ross over other ecclesiastical sites that existed from antiquity in the area.

Hagiography may suggest that this power shift from *Uí Chonaill* to *Uí Eterscéoil* overlordship may have had repercussions at *Inis Dúine*. There is a second saint connected with *Inis Dúine*: *Eiltín*[8] of Kinsale (Ó Riain 2011, 290). *Eiltín* attended the school of *Bharra* in Cork as 'Eiltín, son of Cobthach of Cell na hInse' (Ó Riain 1994, 77). Padraig Ó Riain identifies *Cell na hInse* with Inchydoney church. In the *Corcu Loígde* genealogies, *Eiltín* occurs in the *Uí Builc* list with the *Uí Eterscéoil* from the western peninsulas (O'Brien 1962, 262; O'Donovan 1849, 20). It seems, therefore, that the ecclesiastical site at *Inis Dúine*, gained a saintly connection to the ascendant overlords of the region. It was noted above that in later documentation Inchydoney was part of the possessions of the Bishop of Ross. It is possible that the amalgamation of the ecclesiastical lands of Ross and Inchydoney was initiated in this early period. The fertile lands of the island and its mainland estates as well as a horizontal mill, an attestation to arable production, would have been an enticement. A further point is that the original foundation of *Clothra* may have undergone a sea change of gender and spiritual practice. *Eiltín* was obviously male but as well as this he is recorded as having two sons (O'Brien 1962, 252); therefore, although an ascetic stratum may have continued at the site, the emphasis was now on hereditary abbacy. This would have suited the *Uí Eterscéoil*.

The genealogies also provide a clue as to why the twelfth-century *túath* name is *Ó nDúngalaig* (Fig. 2) rather than having an *Uí Chonaill* association. A direct descendant of *Eiltín*, *Flannán,* two generations down, had two sons: *Dub-*

Dúine and *Folachtach*. One of *Folachtach's* sons is *Dungalaig* (O'Donovan 1849, 20). Perhaps this is a reference to the *Dungalaig* celebrated both in the *túath* name and in the quatrain concerning the purported bishops[9] of Ross: 'From the time of Fachtna the melodius, the renowned, to the well-ordered reign of Dungalach' (*ibid*., 48). Maybe also in *Dub-Dúine* we have a reference to *Inis Dúine*.

The *Uí Chobthaigh*

As noted above the island ecclesiastical site of *Inis Dúine* lay between the territories of *An Trícha Meadhonach* and *Uí Badamna* (Fig. 1). The only reference to a king of *Uí Badamna* is dated to around 900: '*Chobthach, rí Ua Badamna*' (Best 1954, line 6624). In the genealogies, the *Uí Badamna* descend from *Eochaidh* who is connected to the *Uí Chonaill* kings (O'Donovan 1849, 45). In the early twelfth century a group, the *Uí Chobthaigh*, appears in documentary evidence concerning *Corcu Loígde*. These are almost certainly of the *Uí Badamna* line emanating from the above *Chobthach* (Ó Corráin 1974, 37).

They are mentioned in *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil* as one of the three premier families of *Corcu Loígde*, the other two being the *Uí Eterscéoil* and the *Uí Flann Arda*. The context of this is the raising of a fleet to release Cellacháin, king of Munster, from the Scandinavians of Dublin (Bugge 1905, 41). *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil* is a MacCarthy propaganda document dated by Ó Corráin (1974, 57) to the 1127–34 period and, therefore, participants and politics can be assumed to be contemporary with the period of writing, even though they are apparently functioning in an earlier period as Cellacháin died in 954 (AU). What is interesting for this study is that the *Uí Chobthaigh* contributed to the fleet, ten ships being mentioned as the usual levy. This concords with references of 1132 and 1134 (MIA) whereby the *Corcu Loígde* are part of the naval division of an attack by Cormac MacCarthy on Toirdelbach Ua Conchobar's Connacht. It is possible that by this point in the twelfth century the *Uí Chobthaigh* had moved into parts of the eastern *túatha* of *Corcu Loígde* and were perhaps utilising the harbour of Clonakilty.

In the early medieval period it was common for groups who had recently acquired power to amend genealogies in an effort to legitimise territorial gains. This was often achieved by attaching their name to an existing genealogy and

thus giving their pedigree the stamp of antiquity. There are two examples that show the *Uí Chobthaigh* to have been adept at this practice. The genealogy entitled '*Uí Chobthaigh*' in *Duchasaich Corcu Loígde* has fabrications which are then spliced onto an early *Corcu Loígde* genealogy (O'Donovan 1849, 59; Ó Corráin 1979). Similarly the order of the list of *túatha* in a later version of *Duchasaich Corcu Loígde* is amended to run from east to west rather than west to east. This emphasises *Túath Dúb da Leithe* – north of *Túath Ó nDungalaig* (Fig. 2) – by placing it at the beginning of the list. It may be no surprise that the leader of the túath in this later version is *Chobthaigh* rather than *Dúb da Leithe* (Ó Corráin 1993, 63).

Further evidence of the *Uí Chobthaigh* (O'Cowhig) rise to power is a reference to their fame as 'castle builders' listing their constructions as: 'Dundeedy, Dunowen, Dunore, Duneen, Dunocowhig [Dunnycove], Dunworley, Dungorley' (Smith 1774, 31). In the early twelfth-century context of the *Uí Chobthaigh*, the word 'castle' may be misleading but the area outlined could be relevant. The first five cluster around the headlands between Kilkerran Lake and Clonakilty Harbour (Fig. 3). Dunworley is to the east of Clonakilty, thus lying in *Uí Badamna*, the original territory of the *Uí Chobthaig*. 'Dungorley' is unidentified but may refer to Donaghmore, to the west of Dunworley, where a castle and two promontory forts are recorded. What is interesting about these seven promontories listed is that each has evidence of primary defences, usually a deep ditch cutting off the promontory. These earlier defences are then followed, and partially masked, by a later medieval fortification, in three cases connected to the Barrys of Ibane and Barryroe. Promontory forts were assumed to be Iron Age but excavations have yielded little dating evidence and it appears that these defensive positions were utilised at different periods. Perhaps the *Uí Chobthaigh* utilised these forts in the twelfth century. The toponym: 'Dunocowhig' (Dunnycove) certainly suggests this. Dundeedy is mentioned in the *Metrical Dindshenchas*, compiled in the twelfth century, as 'Dun Teite of the chiefs' (Gwynn 1913, 208). This may refer to an assembly place of earlier kings of *Corcu Loígde*, but the *Uí Chobthaigh*, as serial self-promoters, were no doubt aware of its illustrious past when situating their defensive structure there.

The platform enclosure (Fig. 3) in the townland of Dunowen, just above Red Strand, may also provide archaeological evidence for defences of the *Uí*

Chobthaigh. Being c. 53m by 59m, its dimensions are very large for a ringfort; it is also raised above ground level by about 2.36m. It is possible that this is a platform ringfort; this category tends to be dated late in the ringfort corpus (Kerr 2007, 98-9). Platform ringforts are uncommon in West Cork. In Ulster and the borderlands, they were often heightened by the Anglo-Normans to form mottes, but excavation has shown that the lower levels were pre-Norman (Lynn *et al.* 1981–82); they may represent a feature of the centralisation of power in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland (Lyttelton and Monk 2007). Perhaps this unusual structure was a fortification of the *Uí Chobthaigh*, marking, with the promontory fort defences, their precarious conquests west of Clonakilty Bay.

To sum-up the changes of territorial ownership, a scenario has been sketched out whereby the original *Uí Chonaill* patronage of the site at *Inis Dúine* was probably replaced by *Uí Eterscéoil* influence as the western kings promoted *Ros Ailithir* which became the major ecclesiastical site of *Corcu Loígde*. This is borne out by an annalistic reference of 1102 (AI) whereby *Conchobar Ua Eterscéoil*, king of *Corcu Loígde*, died in *Ros Ailithir*. This was almost certainly not an accident; no doubt he chose to die imbued with the sanctity of the holy power centre of his kingdom. It was suggested above that the ecclesiastical lands of *Inis Dúine* were merged with the extensive estates of Ross.[10] However, as discussed above, altering of documentary evidence indicates that a further group, the *Uí Chobthaigh* from the east, may have infiltrated *Túath Dúb da Leithe*, north of the Argideen (Fig. 2), as well as perhaps continuing to hold part of their original territory of *Uí Badamna* to the east of modern Clonakilty and coastal sites in *Túath bhFithchellaig* (Fig. 2).[11] Between the land north of the Argideen and the coast lay the buffer of *Inis Dúine* under Ross, and therefore *Uí Eterscéoil*, influence.

Inis Dúine and the Diocesan Status of Ross in the Twelfth Century

There was one piece of archaeological evidence for the ecclesiastical site of *Inis Dúine* that was not mentioned above. At the summit of the high ground, about 100m north-west of the church at Inchydoney a pile of stones can be found, all but three with no distinguishing features (Fig. 4). One of the three is

a damaged stone with a hole through the centre. It is 0.8m long and c. 0.5m wide with central perforation 0.24m wide and 0.1m deep, which could represent the base or socket-stone for a cross. Lying near the possible cross base, is a worked stone measuring 1.3m long and 0.26m wide, with a tenon narrowing to 0.2m; this may be the (featureless) shaft of a cross. The tenon fits the perforation in the possible base described and would gain extra security by protruding into the earth beneath. There is also a worked block of stone: 0.6m wide, 0.8m long and 0.25–0.3m deep with a shallow rectangular depression, 0.33m by 0.14m, slightly off-centre. The RMP describes this as a second mortice, but at 0.07m deep, it would not support a stone cross. It may have been unfinished. If the cross – or crosses – were originally sited on this high ground above the site, they would have been visible from some distance.

These fragments cannot be assigned to a period but high crosses in *Corcu Loígde* are unusual. There are two main periods of high cross production: the eighth to tenth century, whence the panelled crosses of the midlands with

Fig. 4: High cross remnants at *Inis Dúine*: possible mortices (left), tenon/cross-shaft (right) (Photos: author).

interlace and biblical iconography, and the twelfth century where often large, high-relief figures of Christ and ecclesiastics, extending onto the cross-shaft, were featured. There are two examples of the earlier group in West Cork, at Kilruane, Bantry and Coosheen, Skull. There is only one possible example of the latter group in the area and that is a cross base at Knocknageehy (Figs 2 and 5), in the nineteenth-century parish of Ross. The roll-moulding on the angles and base could place it in the twelfth-century group. It has been suggested that many of the twelfth-century crosses were part of a promotional campaign by ecclesiastics on behalf of foundations that had not gained diocesan status at the Synod of Rathbreasil in 1111 (Cronin 1998, 145). This would include Ross. Although the lack of detail on the fragments at *Inis Dúine* makes them undateable, the presence of a cross base at the minor site of Knocknageehy (Fig 5), just 9km to the west and probably also a late addition to the ecclesiastical lands of Ross (Boazman 2014, 229-31) provides a possible context for the cross remnants at *Inis Dúine*.

Fig. 5: Knocknageehy cross base (Photo: author).

Conclusion

Inis Dúine, despite its liminal insular position, demonstrates close integration with contemporary politics in the early medieval period. Throughout this period, the patronage of churches was seen to enhance the prestige of kingship and the early *Uí Chonaill* kings gained cachet from founding a major, perhaps female and ascetic, ecclesiastical site and estate but retained benefit and control through the ties of kin. The prominence of *Inis Dúine* meant that its takeover became a necessary part of later *Uí Eterscéoil* aggrandisement and promotion of *Ros Ailithir*. As an *Uí Eterscéoil* possession in the twelfth century, its holy presence and physical position may have divided and thus halted the territorial advance of the *Uí Chobthaigh* from the east. Finally, it may have played its part in a diocesan power struggle. This fusion of the secular and the ecclesiastical, the spiritual and the material, shows *Inis Dúine* to characterise, in microcosm, the distinctive social organisation of early medieval Ireland.

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Abbreviations

AFM	Annals of the Four Masters
AU	Annals of Ulster
MIA	Miscellaneous Irish Annals

All the above can be found at http://www.ucc.ie/celt/publishd.html

RMP	Record of Monuments and Places
INSTAR	Irish National Strategic Archaeological Research

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(Endnotes)

1 It is probably best not to give the word *túath* too specific a spatial or political meaning but instead to see it as a more general term for kingroup territory. It is likely that around the eleventh century, in tune with a growing concentration of power in the hands of great kings, a political re-organisation took place, in which larger land units became known as *trícha cét*. These were further subdivided into constituent *túatha*. This re-organisation may have been concerned with raising tribute and a military levy (MacCotter 2008, 52).

2 I have used Donnchadh Ó Corráin's spellings of the placenames throughout.

3 For a detailed discussion of these territorial markers see Boazman 2014, 105-22.

4 As is evident from Fig. 2, this marker would extend *Túath nAengusa* into the area of the next *túath* to the north and in fact into the *Uí Echach Muman* territory of modern Drinagh parish. This would signify boundary changes in the extents of *Túath nAengusa* related to incursions of the *Uí Echach*, extension of the ecclesiastical estate of Ross and probably to the rise of the *Uí Chobthaig*, from *Uí Badamna*, in the twelfth century. This is discussed at length in Boazman 2014, 117-22.

5 Around 130 early water-powered mills have been located in Ireland and of these approximately 48 have been scientifically dated to the period between AD 619 and the early thirteenth century. The vast majority are pre-tenth century in date and use horizontal mill wheels. Just five are vertical undershot wheels. A considerable

number occur on or adjacent to ecclesiastical sites (Rynne 2009, 85-6, 91-3).

6 The ecclesiastical site of Desert, on the mainland, is categorised 'probable' according to a classification scheme for estimating early medieval ecclesiastical site density in a given area. This scheme was devised by the 'Making Christian Landscapes' INSTAR project of the Archaeology Department, University College Cork, funded by the Heritage Council (Ó Carragáin and Sheehan, 2008). Desert has an early medieval toponym but no pre-Norman documentary or material evidence. For an overview of the criteria see Boazman 2014, 32-4.

7 The relics of Moninne included a hoe and a spade.

8 *Eiltín* was also known as 'Multose'.

9 'Purported' because there is no bishop of Ross mentioned in the annals until Nechtáin in 1160 (AFM; Ó Riain 2008, 60). Previous ecclesiastical high-office holders were categorised as abbot or '*airchinnech*', a form of secular abbot and a key part of the complex and diverse organisation of the early medieval Irish church (see Etchingham 1999, 47-104). This was often kin-based so ecclesiastics could have sons who succeeded them as was the case at Ross (824.4 AFM; 1016.2 LC).

10 See Boazman 2014, 143-55.

11 It is possible that the *Uí Chobthaigh* also held land in *Túath Ó nDúngalaig* (Fig. 2). Kenneth Nicholls (pers. comm.) has suggested that the beginnings of Clonakilty were in Kilgarriff parish which area he connects with '*Coill Uí Chobthaigh*' (see Tuipéar, this volume).