

MAKING CHRISTIAN LANDSCAPES

Conversion *and* Consolidation *in* Early Medieval Europe

Society for Church Archaeology
-Annual Conference -

Archaeology Department, University College Cork

21–23 September, 2012

Programme

Landscapes across Europe were transformed, both physically and conceptually, as a result of the conversion to Christianity and the development of ecclesiastical structures during the early medieval period. This interdisciplinary conference will seek to illuminate this process through case studies of particular landscapes. Speakers will consider a range of settlement and ritual/burial sites as well as territorial divisions and routeways in order to explore where and how people chose, or were obliged, to live, worship and be buried and how this changed over time. Some papers will focus on the initial process of conversion while others will also consider changes in the nature of people's relationships with ecclesiastical sites and structures over the course of the period.

Conference

For further details & online registration,
Google search "UCC Making Christian Landscapes"

The conference forms part of the Making Christian Landscapes Project (funded by the Heritage Council through the INSTAR programme) and is the 2012 annual conference of the Society for Church Archaeology. It is organised by the Archaeology Department, University College Cork, the School of Historical Studies, University of Newcastle, and the Society for Church Archaeology.

The organisers gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance provided by the Heritage Council and by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, under the Built Heritage element of the Environment Fund, towards the conference.

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



An Roinn
Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta
Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht



Day 1

FRIDAY (21 SEPTEMBER)

Fieldtrip to the Ring of Kerry

08:00 Bus departs Gaol Cross, University College Cork

Day 2

SATURDAY (22 SEPTEMBER)

8:45-9:15 Registration (outside Boole 1 — see map at end of programme)

SESSION 1
Saturday

PLENARY

Chair: **Tomás Ó Carragáin**, University College Cork

9:15-9:20 Welcome

9:20-10:05 **Elisabeth Zadaro-Rio** CNRS-University of Tours

The fabric of parish boundaries: evidence from Touraine

10:05-10:20 Questions / Discussion

10:20-10:45 Tea/Coffee

SESSION 2
Saturday

IRELAND

Chair: **Sæbjørg Walaker Nordeide**, University of Bergen

10:45-11:15 **Tomás Ó Carragáin**, University College Cork

Landscape change and Christianisation in early medieval Ireland

11:15-11:45 **Gill Boazman**, University College Cork

Christianity and the formation of territorial identities: regional landscapes studies from Ireland

11:45-12:15 **Paul MacCotter**, University College Cork

Reconstructing early Irish ecclesiastical estates: methodology and case studies

12:15-12:45 **Edel Bhreathnach**, University College Dublin

Guardians of the holy landscape in early Ireland - druids, bishops and the dead

12:45-13:00 Questions/Discussion

13:00-14:00 Lunch

SESSION 3
Saturday

SPAIN AND CRETE

Chair: **Richard Morris**, University of Huddersfield

14:00-14:30 **Julio Escalona**, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid

Local churches and church location in early medieval Castile: a debate

14:30-15:00 **José Carlos Sánchez Pardo**, University of Santiago de Compostela

Varying dynamics of Christianisation in the early medieval landscapes of Galicia (5th-9th centuries)

15:00-15:30 **Amanda Kelly**, Department of Classics, NUI Galway

Christian landscapes of Crete

15:30-15:45 Questions/Discussion

15:45-16:15 Tea/Coffee

SESSION 4
Saturday

WALES AND SCOTLAND

Chair: **Thomas Pickles**, University of York

16:15-16:45 **Nancy Edwards**, University of Wales, Bangor

Christian landscapes in early medieval Wales

16:45-17:15 **Adrián Maldonado**, University of Glasgow

Death and the formation of Early Christian Scotland

17:15-17:45 **Derek Alexander**, National Trust for Scotland, Glasgow

Across Christian seascapes: Early Christian landscapes along the west coast of Scotland

17:45-18:00 Questions / Discussion

20:00 Conference Dinner – The River Lee Hotel, Western Road

Day 3

SUNDAY (23 SEPTEMBER)

SESSION 5
Sunday

PLENARY

Chair: **Nancy Edwards**, University of Wales, Bangor

9:00-9:45 **Richard Morris**, University of Huddersfield

Calvary by Rosedale Chimney? Lastingham and its context in the 7th and 8th century

9:45-10:00 Questions / Discussion

10:00-10:30 Tea/Coffee

SESSION 6
Sunday

ENGLAND AND FRANCE

Chair: **Julio Escalona**, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid

10:30-11:00 **Thomas Pickles**, University of York

Straenaeshalh (Whitby), its satellite churches and estates

11:00-11:30 **Sam Turner** and **Chris Fowler**, Newcastle University

Parcels and possession, petrification and permanence: the conversion of social relations through the technologies of Christianity in 7th-century England

11:30-12:00 **Elisabeth Lorans**, University of Rouen

Funerary patterns in towns in France and England between the 4th and the 10th century: a comparative approach

12:00-12:15 Discussion

12:15-13:15 Lunch

SESSION 7
Sunday

GERMANY AND SCANDANAVIA

Chair: **Sam Turner**, Newcastle University

13:15-13:45 **John Henry Clay**, University of Durham

From conversion to consolidation in eighth-century Hessa

13:45-14:15 **Sæbjørg Walaker Nordeide**, University of Bergen

Introducing Christianity to a challenging environment: the example of Norway

14:15-14:45 **Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir**, University of Reykjavík

The Early Christian landscapes of Iceland

14:45-15:00 Questions / Final Discussion

ABSTRACTS

Derek Alexander, National Trust for Scotland, Glasgow
(DAlexander@nts.org.uk)

Across Christian seascapes: Early Christian landscapes along the west coast of Scotland

Abstract: This paper will examine a range of early Christian sites and their landscape settings along the western seaboard of Atlantic Scotland. In particular it will evaluate the results of work (past and present) on sites managed by the National Trust for Scotland. While quite a lot of excavation work has been carried out around the central Abbey of Iona, less has been undertaken on the wider landscape. Recent results of geophysical survey over the monastic vallum will be presented and the range of satellite sites (burial grounds and placenames) across the rest of the island discussed. In addition, the island of Canna with its monastic settlement and spectacular hermitage site will be explored. The recent discovery of a ditched early church site at Killevin at Crarae Gardens in Mid-Argyll, adjacent to a Neolithic chambered cairn, is the first major investigation of a site with a 'kil-' placename in Argyll. (Saturday 22nd, 17:15)

Edel Bhreathnach, University College Dublin
(edel.bhreathnach@ucd.ie)

Guardians of the holy landscape in early Ireland - druids, bishops and the dead

Early Irish literature and classical literature abound in allusions to druids and other practitioners of 'magic'. This class has confounded scholars and has also been absorbed colourfully and fancifully into modern literature and culture. But who were the guardians of religious belief and customs when Christianity came to Ireland? How did they deal with the spread of Christianity? This paper attempts to tease out these questions from different perspectives - anthropological, archaeological, historic and literary. (Saturday 22nd, 12:15)

Gill Boazman, University College Cork
(gillboazman@eircom.net)

Christianity and the formation of territorial identities: regional landscape studies from Ireland

Early medieval society in Ireland was characterised throughout the period by a genealogical cohesion between ecclesiastic and secular, a cohesion manifested in the landscape by groups of enclosed settlements. The location of the saint within kin-group lands, materialised by ecclesiastical monuments, became crucial to the psychological security of local elites, whose control over territory was often fragile. Drawing on two small area case studies from the Making Christian Landscapes project – North Louth and Rathdown – this paper will utilise documentary material, analysis of settlement patterns and evidence from recent development-led excavations to illustrate different levels of secular and ecclesiastical relationship. These range from the family church of a discrete area to settlement on an ecclesiastical estate. It will also demonstrate how, through a strategy of integration with the ecclesiastical sphere, local elites created identities of place that strengthened the illusion that their association with their territory was unassailable. (Saturday 22nd, 11:15)

John Henry Clay, University of Durham
(j.w.clay@durham.ac.uk)

From conversion to consolidation in eighth-century Hessa

The Anglo-Saxon mission to eighth-century Hessa, as well as leaving us with a rich historical corpus in the form of St Boniface's correspondence, also had a decisive impact on the physical and toponymic landscape. Through the combined interpretation of standing monuments, archaeological excavations, boundaries, communication routes, place-names and historical sources, it is possible to reconstruct a spiritual biography of the Hessian landscape from the prehistoric period up to the period of conversion. A particular contention of this paper will be that we can also detect two distinct phases in the conversion strategy of the missionaries: first, the direct

confrontation and supplantation of important sites in the pagan landscape; second, the consolidation of Christianity through the rapid establishment of a coherent and enduring network of pastoral churches. (Sunday 23rd, 13:15)

Nancy Edwards, University of Wales, Bangor
(n.edwards@bangor.ac.uk)

Christian landscapes in early medieval Wales

There have been several recent advances in our understanding of the development of Christian landscapes in early medieval Wales. These include the survey of early medieval ecclesiastical sites carried out for Cadw by the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts and publication of A Corpus of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones and Stone Sculpture in Wales. There have also been several important excavations of early medieval cemeteries. However, there has been surprisingly little more detailed research on the Christianising of specific landscapes and secular settlements remain very difficult to locate. Using case-studies, this paper will consider these advances and how they might be brought together to increase our understanding of the Christianisation of Wales. (Saturday 22nd, 16:15)

Julio Escalona, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid (julio.escalona@cchs.csic.es)

Local churches and church location in early medieval Castile: a debate

The origins of local churches in early medieval Castile is a much debated issue, and one in which historical and archaeological approaches largely seem to disagree. While ninth- and tenth-century charters contain numerous references to churches and monasteries, their archeological recognition is still a problem. When considering the local scale, the subject complicates further with the pivotal role that historians often assign local churches in the emergence of proper village landscapes and territories. Fresh archaeological evidence strongly contradicts those views. This paper aims to present the current debate, as well as suggest some hints on how we can expect to bridge the gap in the future. (Saturday 22nd, 14:00)

Amanda Kelly (amanda.kelly@nuigalway.ie)

Roman architectural legacies within the Early Christian landscape of Crete

On Crete a notable decline in the use of the communal bathhouse corresponded with the introduction of ecclesiastical architecture, heralding a significant shift in the island's architectural landscape. It will be argued here that the Church effectively used the Roman bathing landscape as a palimpsest for its own devices whereby the stamp of ecclesiastical architecture over bathhouse foundations served to obfuscate the older traditional presence in that exact location. This manifest supersession, inherently preserving a spatial continuum, is clearly significant in terms of public meaning. The notable architectural adaptation of Roman bathhouse foundations for ecclesiastical purposes served to effectively enshrine the preceding monument while also bearing witness to its complete transformation. Such architectural recycling clearly builds on the pivotal position of bathing within Roman society and exposes a purposeful pattern in the choice of architectural conversions for the establishment of the new order. In this respect it is most evidently the early ecclesiastical landscape of Crete which represents the potent afterlife of Empire as envisaged by Susan Alcock. (Saturday 22nd, 15:00)

Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir, University of Reykjavík
(sjk@hi.is)

The Early Christian landscapes of Iceland

Movements of people promote a process of hybridization, arising from the cross-cultural encounters they bring about. Such encounters are not about the assimilation of different cultural traits but about constant fusion and re-creation resulting from sustained contact. One mode or life or ideology does not necessarily overtake the other: they can each struggle to survive or blend into something new. The integration of the different branches of Christianity into medieval societies must have involved such processes in a similar way as, for example, the encounter between Roman and Scandinavian cultures provoked the features that gradually characterized the pagan Norse religion. Iceland was colonized by the pagan Norse Vikings during a period of increased mobility of

the European population in the late 9th century. Roughly a century afterwards, Icelanders formally converted to Christianity, but the process of Christianisation was complex. In this lecture this process will be considered as a case study in hybridization, mobility and interaction. This theme will be explored with reference to archaeological sites in their landscape context, with a special emphasis on the church sites of Pórarinsstaðir in Seyðisfjörður and Stöng in Þjórsárdalur, and the pagan burial site at Þórisá in Skriðdalur. (Sunday 23rd, 14:15)

Elisabeth Lorans, University of Rouen
(elisabeth.lorans@univ-tours.fr)

Funerary patterns in towns in France and England between the 4th and the 10th century: a comparative approach

In recent years, in France as well as in England, the proliferation of archaeological work carried out in urban and rural contexts alike has revealed the varied nature of burial sites in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Isolated graves, small groups of graves, and communal burial spaces all coexisted for several centuries before burial of the dead together around the local church established itself as the norm. Based on a body of evidence mainly concerning central places of Antique origin, this paper seeks to tease out the similarities and differences in the forms and patterns of change of the religious and funerary landscape on either side of the Channel. (Sunday 23rd, 11:30)

Paul MacCotter, University College Cork
(mac.cotter@hotmail.co.uk)

Reconstructing early Irish ecclesiastical estates: methodology and case studies

This paper presents a methodology and case studies of Irish medieval estate reconstruction based on work carried out for the Making Christian Landscapes project. The unique twelfth-century topographical gazetteer, Críchad an Chaoilli, is used to illustrate a complete secular and ecclesiastical estate reconstruction of an early medieval Irish kingdom. While the primary reconstruction reflects the position circa the middle of the twelfth century this is then used

as the basis for a history of the estates in question as far back as sources allow (the sixth century). The presentation concludes with consideration of the pattern of church distribution in the kingdom and some thoughts on the provision of pastoral care. (Saturday 22nd, 11:45)

Adrián Maldonado, University of Glasgow
(c.track@gmail.com)

Death and the formation of Early Christian Scotland

This paper will summarise the evidence for the development of ‘Christian’ burial rites in Scotland from AD 400-1100, both within and outside of ecclesiastical sites. A body of radiocarbon dates now allows us to track changes in unprecedented chronological detail. The archaeology of early Christianity in Scotland has long been under the shadow of the more abundant evidence from Ireland and Northumbria, and it is argued here that the data which has emerged over the last two decades can now begin to challenge old assumptions. Scotland’s burial evidence comes mainly from field cemeteries not associated with churches, and these can now be compared with burials from recently-published excavations on early monastic sites. Rather than asking whether inhumation was an inherently Christian practice, a more useful approach is in the way both field cemeteries and ecclesiastical cemeteries worked to create and maintain places. The material culture of death, burial and Christian worship were integrated and interacted with existing physical and mental landscapes. Only by tracing the processes of creating, maintaining and often forgetting burial places across the early medieval period can we shed new light on conversion and the eventual consolidation of Christendom in the post-Roman west. (Saturday 22nd, 16:45)

Richard Morris, University of Huddersfield
(r.k.morris@btinternet.com)

Calvary by Rosedale Chimney? Lastingham and its context in the 7th and 8th century

The parish church of St Mary Lastingham is successor to a former religious house in northern England. Founded in the 650s and ‘rediscovered’ after the Norman Conquest, the original community had links

with Lindisfarne, Lichfield East Anglia and Ireland, and was a significant source of information for Bede in writing his Ecclesiastical History. Study over the last seven years has shed new light on Lastingham's site, fabric, landscape and political context, with results that include signs of pre-Christian sacral use, a newly-identified Anglo-Saxon shrine, and implications for the function of the 11th-century crypt. The talk will concentrate on three further aspects: liturgical processions that apparently travelled for miles through the surrounding landscape; a dynastic milieu which in the 7th century generated a large number of monastic foundations in close proximity; and a sub-regional tradition of rituality that appears to have extended from prehistory to the late Middle Ages. (Sunday 23rd, 09:00)

Tomás Ó Carragáin, University College Cork
(t.ocarragáin@ucc.ie)

Landscape Change and Christianisation in Early Medieval Ireland

Drawing primarily on two case studies from the Making Christian Landscapes project, this paper considers the ways in which the process of Christianisation is expressed in the Irish landscape. It traces the initial establishment of ecclesiastical power structures in the conversion period (c.400-600), their maturation in the following two centuries (c.600-800) and the evidence suggesting some rationalisation of the ecclesiastical network during the Viking Age (c.800-1100). Modest regional variations are also highlighted. These developments are considered from the perspectives of the royal aristocracies and local elites that were instrumental in shaping them, and especially from the perspectives of the ordinary people whose lives they affected so profoundly. (Saturday 22nd, 10:45)

Thomas Pickles, University of York
(thomas.pickles@york.ac.uk)

Straenaeshalh (Whitby), its satellite churches and estates

The conversion and Christianization of England in the seventh and eighth centuries resulted in the foundation of a network of religious communities. Historians and archaeologists have argued persuasively that the

political utility of religious communities was an important factor governing patronage; they have also suggested that religious communities comprised a network of stable central places, which played key roles in promoting royal and warrior-aristocratic power as well as acting as socio-economic foci in the local landscape. However, there remain (at least) two areas deserving further attention. The first is the relationship between power and concepts of sacred place in the topography of religious patronage, recently highlighted by the work of Ian Wood and Richard Morris in Yorkshire. The second is the identification of religious communities and their satellite churches and estates on the ground, recently highlighted by John Blair's study of religious communities across England. This paper will consider these two issues through a case study of the religious community at Straenaeshalh (Whitby). It will briefly set the foundation in the well-known context of power-politics in the kingdom of Northumbria. It will then consider how its location as a central place was compatible with its role as a sacred place. It will suggest that Straenaeshalh was the focus for a series of satellite churches and estates, dominating the north east coastline and reflecting the complimentary connections between central and sacred places. (Sunday 23rd, 10:30)

José Carlos Sánchez Pardo, University of Santiago de Compostela (j.pardo@ucl.ac.uk)

Varying dynamics of Christianization in the early medieval landscapes of Galicia (5th-9th centuries)

The dynamics of Christianisation in early medieval Northwest Spain were not unique or uniform but varied depending of the social and spatial context of each area. This paper aims to move towards a more complete and complex understanding of these processes of conversion and consolidation in Galicia, and their relation with the social, economical and political structures of this period, by comparing "core" areas which seem to follow an earlier and "Mediterranean" pattern, and "peripheral" zones, that developed a specific and well-adapted organization until the homogenization of 10th-12th centuries. We will consider a range of archaeological and documentary data in order to consider the development of ecclesiastical power structures in the changing landscapes of 5th- to 9th-century Galicia. This broad but heterogeneous panorama will allow us to compare

Northwest Spain with other regions considered at this conference. (Saturday 22nd, 14:30)

Sam Turner and **Chris Fowler**, Newcastle University
(sam.turner@newcastle.ac.uk)

Parcels and possession, petrification and permanence: the conversion of social relations through the technologies of Christianity in 7th-century England

Previous accounts of seventh-century England focus on religious conversion as a primary agent of change founded in a transformation of beliefs. By contrast this paper places the emphasis on the technologies of the conversion period and their role in the radical social changes of the sixth-seventh centuries in England. It explores the social relations that pre-existed this religious change and also endured throughout the conversion process. We argue that factors such as the trajectory of emergent kingship and increasing investment of power in fixed places can be placed alongside the adoption of Christianity in explaining what changed, why it changed and how that change was effected. We focus on technologies such as parcelling land, relics and beatification, building in stone, burial, and writing, and their relationships in early medieval landscapes. In the emergence of these technologies we trace the crystallisation and petrification of key concepts foundational to later periods, such as possession, kingship, saintliness, and the enduring community of the dead. In supporting this transformation we argue that the material properties of objects, substance, places, persons and landscapes changed. (Sunday 23rd, 11:00)

Sæbjørg Walaker Nordeide, University of Bergen
(Sabjorg.Nordeide@cms.uib.no)

Introducing Christianity to a challenging environment: the example of Norway

Norway is characterised by a rough coast, mountains and fjords, little cultivated land and a tough and cold climate. The landscape is difficult to control, providing perhaps more natural borders than places to gather. How and where was Christianity introduced to this landscape? In this paper we will look at the general picture, besides looking into details in a specific region in western Norway. In this particular region we find

early Christians implanted in a region dominated by non-Christians, and we will look at where the various religious groups are found, based on ritual, archaeological evidence. (Sunday 23rd, 13:45)

Elisabeth Zadaro-Rio, CNRS-University of Tours
(elisabeth.zadara-rio@univ-tours.fr)

The fabric of parish boundaries: evidence from Touraine

The parochial network in its final form was a uniform and continuous division of the landscape, which was unprecedented in Antiquity. Its fabric involved a long-term transformation in Christian attitudes to space, both in ecclesiological conceptions and in social practices, from the 4th to the 11th and 12th centuries. The historiography of rural parishes in Gaul relies mainly on the evidence of Gregory of Tours, and Touraine is by far the best documented region in his work. My aim, in this paper, is to use it as a starting point to look at the process of parochialization in the long run and to challenge the idea that parish boundaries originated in a remote past. (Saturday 22nd, 09:20)

Making Christian Landscapes Conference

21–23 September, 2012

see www.ucc.ie/visitors for more details on access, accomodation, parking, dining, etc.



-  Access to Boole 1 (downstairs)
 -  Goal Cross (Bus, Fri 21st 08:00)
 -  Campus pedestrain routes to Boole Lecture Theatres
-
- ① Staff Restaurant (Conference Lunches)
 - ② River Lee Hotel (Conference Dinner)
 - ③ Áras na Mac Leinn (Sat: 10am-4pm) tea/coffee/snacks/lunch
 - ④ Fresco at the Glucksman (Sat: 10am-5pm, Sun: 12-5pm) tea/coffee/snacks/lunch
 - ⑤ Coffee Station (Sat: 9am-5pm) tea/coffee/snacks/lunch
 - ⑥ Serendipity (Sat: 8am-5.30pm) tea/coffee/snacks/lunch
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-  Bus Route (5&8)
 -  Visitor Parking (Pay & Display)
- On-street disc parking (Fri/Sat: 8.30am - 6.30pm) (2hr=2 euro)