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DESCRIPTION OF AN OGAM STONE AT MOUNTRUSSELL,  
COUNTY LIMERICK.

BY HENRY S. CRAWFORD, B.E.

WITH A READING OF THE INSCRIPTION BY PROFESSOR SIR JOHN  
RHYS, D. Litt. ; AND NOTE BY R. A. S. MACALISTER, M.A., F.S.A.

[Read FEBRUARY 25, 1908.]

Two years ago I brought under the Society's notice an ogam at Ballingarry, in the county Limerick; and I now have to record the discovery of a second in the same district, at a place called Mountrussell. This is a mountain farm belonging to Robert Sanders, Esq., of Charleville, situated about four miles due south of Kilmallock, eighteen miles from the Ballingarry ogam, and not more than one and a half from the well-known church and round tower of Ardpatrick. Mountrussell is marked on sheet 55 of the six-inch ordnance map, and on sheet 164 of the one-inch map; fig. 1 also gives a general idea of its position.

The site of an ancient church and graveyard is still pointed out at Mountrussell, and goes by the name of "The Bishop's Field," though every trace is now obliterated, and even its name appears to be forgotten. From this, no doubt, the ogam originally came. Of late years it has been set up as a rubbing-post for cattle, in the same field and close to the south wall of the farmyard.

As the inscribed end was sunk in the ground, with only a letter or two showing above the grass, and the stone rough and tapering, I at first thought that the remainder of the inscription had been hacked away; but on getting the herd, Patrick Carroll, to dig round it, the lettering was seen extending to the bottom. We then took up the stone entirely, and I found that the inscription covered two angles enclosing one of the broad faces, and extended 3 feet 7 inches on the first, and 3 feet 3 inches on the second angle.

The stone is a rough pillar of coarse red sandstone, 6 feet 4 inches long, and 17 by 12 inches near the centre; it tapers slightly towards the inscribed end, and more decidedly towards the other, which is wedge-shaped. It does not appear to have been much damaged, except perhaps at the top; but as the stone is friable and has a rough surface, some of the scores are rather indistinct, and others confused with natural grooves.

I had not looked very long at the markings when I noticed the usual combination MAQUI, which occupies the upper part of the right aris

of the stone, and shows that the inscription is to be read upwards in the ordinary way.

The first marks to be seen on the lower part of this angle are five dots on the edge, which is here a double one with a groove along it; next are three scores below the stem, followed by a single dot. I do not think there is any doubt as to these; but the next part of the stone

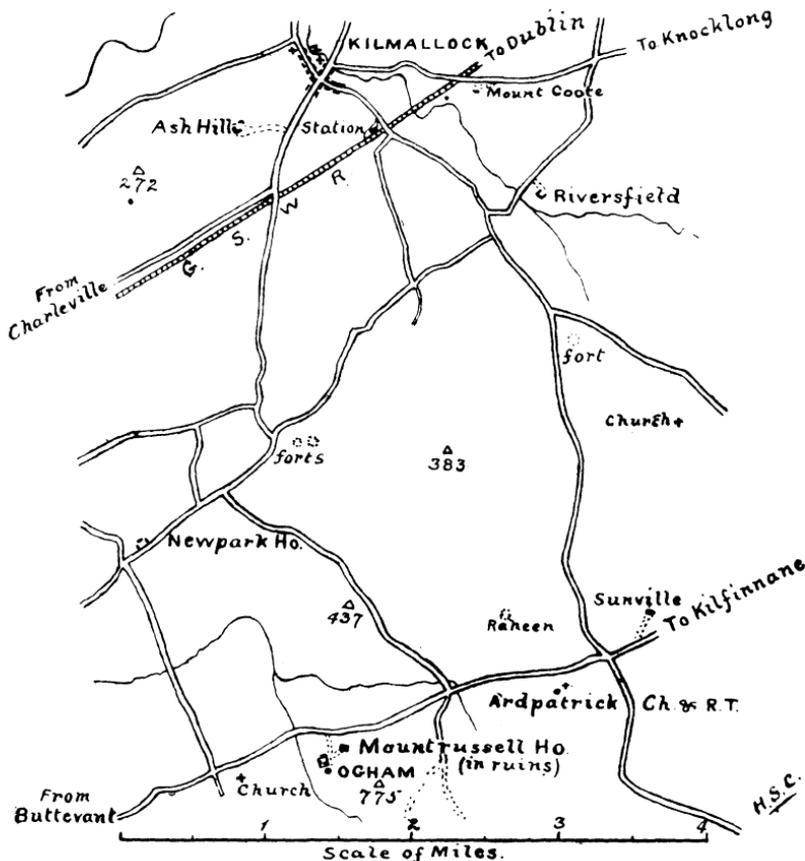


FIG. 1.—POSITION OF MOUNTRUSSELL OGAM STONE.

is rather worn and chipped. I can, however, make out two scores crossing the stem, after which there is a blank space wide enough for two scores, followed by two vowel points. The missing scores must also have been points, as otherwise they would show on the faces of the stone. The scores which follow are quite clear, consisting of five below the line and five vowel points. After this comes the MAQUI, which is

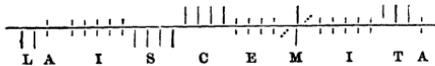
also clear; the dots forming the  $\Gamma$  being traceable, though slightly worn. I represent the whole thus:—



The last-mentioned character finishes exactly at the top angle of the stone; there are no traces of any scores across the top, and there never can have been any unless a piece four or five inches wide has been broken off, which I do not think is the case. A small piece, however, may be missing from the left corner of the top, and have carried away one or two scores.

After this break the scores are easily made out; two on the broad face, that is below the stem reading down the angle; six small notches on the edge, the first separated from the others by an extra wide space. Then four below the line and four above. The next score is a little uncertain; it is the first of four vowel points, and has a slight hollow almost in line with it above the stem; this hollow is irregular and undefined, and I take it to be a natural depression.

Following these four points is a character which at first sight looks like  $x$ . It is a curious coincidence that there should have been a similar mark on the Ballingarry stone; but in each case I think that one of the crossed strokes is a natural flaw. On this stone the stroke in question is irregular and curved, and makes rather too small an angle with the aris. The spacing on each side of this score is of extra width, which certainly looks as if the character was  $x$ , but which may be due to a desire to avoid the flaw. The remaining scores are easily read, being five vowel points, three strokes above the stem, and one vowel point. I saw no sign of any further points, though the spacing is wider towards the end. If there were any, they could not have been nearly as deep as the remaining one. The whole is like this:



On page 55 are three views of the inscribed angles from different directions: a 12-inch rule is inserted as a scale.

As the writing on the second angle is not directly connected with that on the first, it may of course be intended to read from the bottom; but I do not see that this would give a better reading, except that it would begin with the word  $\Delta VI$ . The fact that the spacing is wider on the lower part of this angle should, I presume, tell in favour of one or the other way of reading.

Neither of these readings seems to me altogether satisfactory; but

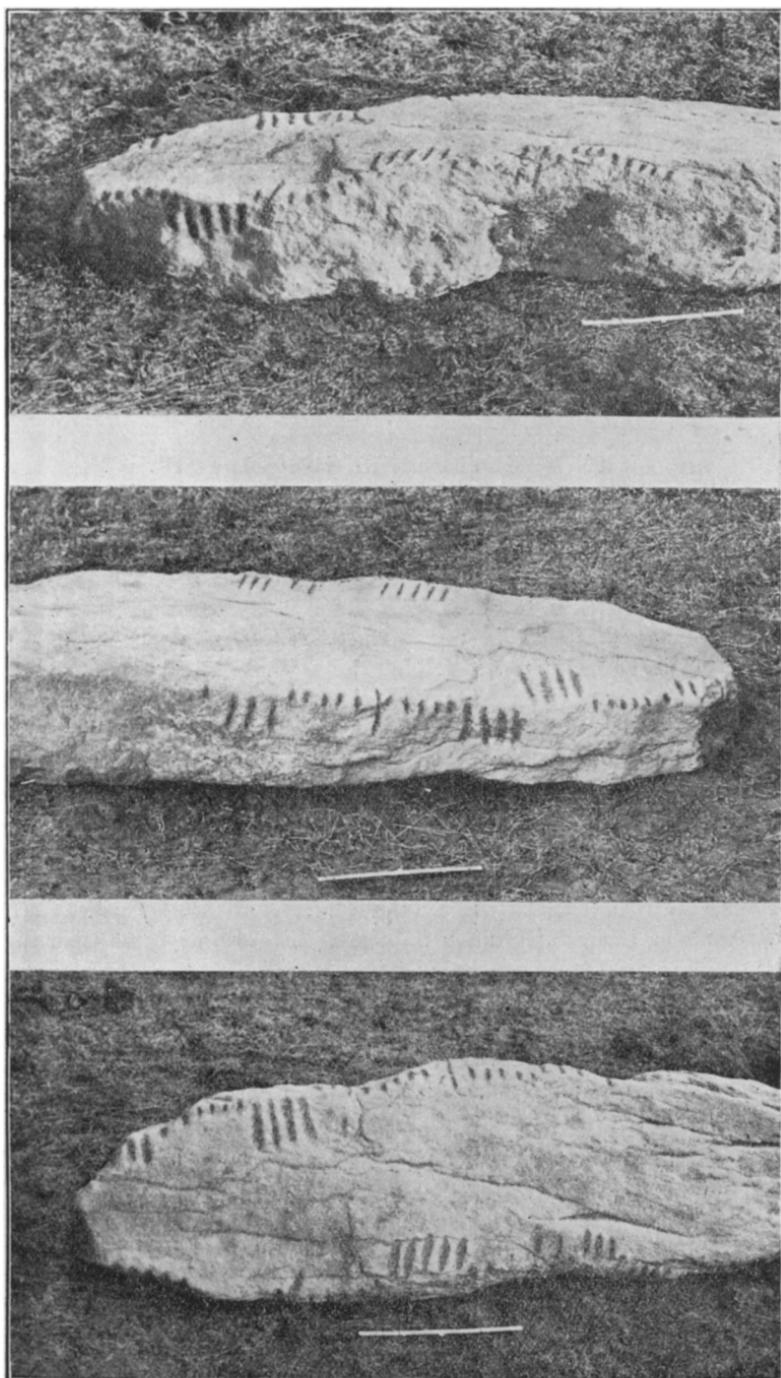


FIG. 2.—MOUNTRUSSELL OGAM STONE.

as I am not qualified to criticize them, I must leave the matter to others who have a better knowledge of such inscriptions, and of the names found in them.

NOTE.—Professor Sir John Rhys has since kindly examined the rubbing and photographs, and supplied the following criticism of the inscription; while Mr. Macalister, though at present abroad, has been good enough to write the note given below.

Of course their readings must be considered more or less provisional till they can examine the stone for themselves.

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### THE MOUNTRUSSELL INSCRIPTION.

BY PROFESSOR SIR JOHN RHYS, D.LITT.

THE first name in this inscription begins with the element *iva*, which one also meets with in the *Iva-cattos* of the Killeen Cormac inscription, which I have discussed in my British Academy paper, "Studies in Early Irish History," pp. 2-4. We have it also perhaps as *eva* in a doubtful *Evalengi*, elsewhere *Evolengi* and *Evolenggi*: see the *Arch. Cambrensis* Journal, 1897, pp. 128, 329, Westwood's *Lapidarium*, p. 113, pl. 53. In the Silchester ogam *Ivacattos* is spelt *Ebicatos*: see "The Academy," Aug. 19th, 1893, p. 153. The prefix which has been mentioned as *iva*, *eva*, *evo*, and *ebi* took in Continental Celtic the form *evo*, as in *Evotalis* (Holder, s. v.), which appears in Irish as *Eothail*. Similarly *Evolengi* occurs as *Eolaing*, genitive *Eulaing*; and so one cannot hesitate in regarding *Ivageni* as the genitive of *Ivagen*, which latter represents an earlier and fuller form *Eva-gena-s*, which is no other than the familiar Irish name *Eogan*, genitive *Eogain*, later spelling *Eoghan*, *Eoghain*, sometimes translated into the Welsh *Owen*, or the French *Eugène*. Adamnan has the valuable intermediate spellings *Iogen*, and *Iogenan*, pp. 117, 197, 198, 238, 246.

The other name, whether one read *Laiscepita* or *Laiscemita*, should be a genitive of the consonantal declension and represent an older *Laiscepitas* or *Laiscemitas*. Strange as this name looks, I have come across it in a pedigree in the Books of Leinster and Ballymote. In the former it occurs as a genitive feminine spelt *Loscibet*, which is more correctly given in the latter as *Loiscibet*, that is to say *Lóiscibet*; for though the diphthong which is written *ae* and *ao* in later Irish appears in ogam mostly as *oi*, we have occasionally *ai*, as in the present instance, as, for example, in the Rathcroghan *Vraicci*, genitive of what was written later *Fraech*, *Fraoch*. The etymology of the name, it is needless to say, is obscure; but the nominative corresponding to the

genitive *Laisce-pita*,<sup>1</sup> *Lo[i]sci-bet*, should match the latter as *Loisci-bē*, *bē* being possibly the *bé* of *Bé find* or *Bé bind*, which has come down as the Irish name *Bébhind*, and appears to have meant either the white woman or the sweet(-voiced) lady. What *laisce* or *lóisci* may have meant is not certain; but it may possibly be referred to the same origin as the Welsh *llŷg*, *llusg-o*, "the act of drawing or dragging after one."<sup>2</sup> In that case *Loisci-pit-* should perhaps mean a winning or attractive lady.

Putting together *Bé* and the genitive *Laisce-pit-a(s)*, later *Loiscibet*, one can hardly avoid seeing that we have here the exact equivalents of the corresponding cases of the second element in the Latin *hospes*, 'a host or one who entertains a stranger': for *\*hosti-pes*, genitive *hospit-is* for *\*hosti-pit-is* = *\*hósti-pótes*,<sup>3</sup> see Brugmann's *Grundriss*, I. §§ 81, 633. The second element is of the same origin as Latin *potis*, 'powerful,' *potēre*, 'to be able,' Greek *δεσπότης*, 'a lord,' *πόσις*, 'a married woman,' Sanskrit *páti-s*, 'lord, owner, husband,' and the congeners of these vocables. The Irish form *Bé*, if one is right in introducing it here, shows a way, not hitherto demonstrated, in which Irish got rid of the consonant *p*, namely by making it into *b*.

With regard to the gender of these words, the Latin *hospes* originally perhaps meant either 'host' or 'hostess,' at any rate till the language provided itself with the feminine *hospita*; but in Irish it is remarkable that the name here in question is feminine. Possibly the word was originally associated mostly with the hostess or mistress of the house, on whom the duty of hospitality practically devolved. This suggests a certain analogy with Irish *tigern*, which is formed from a neuter, *\*tegos*, 'house, *domus*,' and might mean either *dominus* or *domina*; but often in ancient Irish names like *Caeltigern* and *Faeltigern* it is feminine, and the masculine *tigerna*, 'dominus, prince or king,' is a derivative, somewhat as if Latin had been disposed to continue the use of the word *domina*, but to form a *dominius* for use instead of *dominus*. The early Irish tendency would seem to have been to emphasize the rôle of the mistress of the house as contrasted with that of her husband.

If one considers the inscription complete as reading *Ivageni maqui Laiscepita*, one is struck by the fact that Ireland has, so far, supplied

<sup>1</sup> In Mr. Crawford's rubbing and photograph in point, the score to make *m* is too far from the proper inclination required for that letter, and it seems to me that the better reading is *X*, that is to say *p*.

<sup>2</sup> This would seem to imply a very early instance of confounding the diphthongs *ái* and *ói*; but it is more probable that the spelling *ai* represented two diphthongs, one of which became *ói*, while the other remained *ái* or *ái* until the period of the confusion touched upon in the *Grammatica Celtica*, p. 31<sup>b</sup>; also Vendryes, § 66.

<sup>3</sup> *\*Hósti-potes* is supposed to have yielded *\*hósti-pítis*, *hóspítis*, under the influence of the prehistoric Latin accent on the first syllable (Sommer's *Laut- und Formenlehre*, § 75). The Goidelic accent also was, and mostly still is, on the first syllable; but it is, perhaps, preferable, in spite of a Pelignian *hospus*, to suppose early Latin and Goidelic to have had in common, besides such a form as Latin *pótiis*, a kindred noun, *pēs*, genitive *pētes*.

no certain parallel in naming the mother: remoter ancestresses are sometimes given. On the whole, I am inclined to suppose that the broken top of the stone had on it the word *mucoi*. There is another reason against supposing that there was a part of the edge at the top left uninscribed, namely, that in such a case one would have expected both sides to have read upwards, commencing about the same level on the stone. So I would read, *Ivageni maqui (mucoi) Laiscepita*, and translate: "The place or the monument of Eoghan son of Loiscibe's kin." Should one, however, prefer to read the right-hand side upwards, it would be *Avi Pesciad*—the full noun being the genitive of the early antecedent of some such Irish noun as *iasgadór*, 'fisherman.' The whole would then be *Ivageni maqui avi Pesciad . . .*; but there is no evidence for the combination *maqui avi*,<sup>1</sup> and we should have to suppose some personal name intervening between the two words *maqui* and *avi*. The other way of filling the lacuna, namely, by means of *mucoi*, has the whole weight of analogy in its favour.

The pedigree, with the name *Loiscibet*, will be found in the Book of Leinster, fo. 329 a, b, and in the Book of Ballymote, fo. 194 a, b. I follow the latter, in spite of the spelling being the more modern of the two, because it requires fewer corrections of careless mistakes. The pedigrees in question are those of the Cianacht and their congeners. The former were so named from Cian son of Ailill Ulam = Oilill Oloim. A branch of the Cianacht was settled in Glenn n-Geimin, "Glengiven," in Ulster, which means the valley of the river Roe. O'Donovan, in his edition of the Book of Rights (p. 123), speaks of these northern Cianacht in the following terms:—"It is curious to observe the great amount of the tribute paid to the King of Aileach by this *exotic* tribe of the race of Eibhear, from Munster." The first of them to settle there is stated to have been a "Findchad (also called *Findchán* or *Findan*) *mc Feig mc Findchada Uallaig mc Condla mc Taidg mc Cen mc Aililla Ulaim*." The Findchad here mentioned first is stated to have had a son Coartach, and the latter is further described thus: *Coartach mc loiscibet banchainti do cianachta glenna géimin do cenél Fergusa mc lemna*, that is to say, "Coartach was son of Loiscibe, a female satirist of the Cianacht of Glenn Geimin." Then there are added the following words: *Mac Caelbaid dobert tir do conid de adbertar cuardraigi*, "Mac Caelbaid gave him land, and it is thence the *Cuardraigi* are called." In the Book of Leinster they are called *Cuartaiqe*, but I cannot fix them unless they were the *Crotraighi* mentioned under A.D. 1166 in the Ulster Annals, and identified, in the Index, with the barony of *Carey*, in the north of Antrim. Fergus, the son of a mother bearing the same name as St. Patrick's sister, Liamain, also eludes me.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Macalister, vol. iii., p. 109, cites a Ballintaggart inscription, *Cuna maggi avi Corbbi*, but when I saw the stone, I took it to be *Cunamaggi avi Corbbi*, and I still think that is how it should be treated.

It is very conceivable that a son of Loiscibe, by the same father as Coartach, ended his days among his father's people in Munster, and that the Loiscibe of the inscription is no other than the female satirist. Even if not, the pedigree should help us to fix, approximately, the period when that name was in use. Cormac mac Airt, with the personal help of Tadg son of Cian, won the battle of Crinna, over the forces of Ulster, in A.D. 226: that is, according to the Four Masters, who date Cormac's death in A.D. 266. Now, the Findchad who had a son by Loiscibe, was fourth in descent from Tadg, so the time of Findchad and Loiscibe might be guessed to have been about the middle of the fourth century, at any rate anterior, let us say, to A.D. 400. But I have another guess which is at variance with that conclusion, and it is this: I remember no reference in the Book of Leinster to any woman called Liamain, genitive Lémna, except Patrick's sister: see the allusions to St. Nechtan = mac Lémna, fo. 372<sup>c</sup>, also 360<sup>a, c</sup>, and Stokes' "Martyrology of Oengus," May 2 (pages 122, 128). So I am inclined to suppose<sup>1</sup> that the Fergus alluded to was son of Patrick's sister, or of another Liamain who was named after her; but for the genealogist to speak of Loiscibe as being of the race of Fergus mac Lémna, would bring Loiscibe down, not to A.D. 400, but probably nearer A.D. 550, that is to say, if one may assume, with Professor Bury, that St. Patrick was consecrated in A.D. 432, and that he soon after went on his mission to Ireland. The difficulty in which my conjectures land me may be of my own making; but I should be glad to have it examined by some one who is familiar with Irish pedigrees and Irish chronology.

The length of the foregoing notes will serve, among other things, to emphasize the unusual interest which attaches to this remarkable inscription. I have to thank Mr. Crawford, most cordially, for the excellent rubbings and photographs which he has kindly sent me, with his business-like account of the stone.

NOTE BY R. A. S. MACALISTER, M.A., F.S.A.

To judge by the very clear photographs that Mr. Crawford has kindly sent me, the two angles of this inscription read upwards, and are as follows:—

I V A G U N I M A Q I A V I M I S C I A T [I]

every score of which appears to be perfect, except that the vowel

<sup>1</sup> The Rennes Dindsenchas has a *Liamoin* associated, perhaps, with *Dunlavin*: see Stokes in the *Revue Celtique*, xv., 321; and O'Grady's *Silva Gadelica*, vol. ii., pp. 479, 526.

following G might possibly be E. The formula is interesting; only two other stones—at Ballintaggart and Ballyknock, respectively—express the relationship by *maqi avi*, “great-grandson.” Neither of the names occurs on other ogam stones. *Ivagunos* or *Ivagenos* is evidently an old form of the common name *Eoghan*, and is cognate with other ogam names, as *Ivodacca*, *Ivacattos*. I am writing away from all books, so can, at the moment, make no suggestion with regard to *Misciatos*.