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Old Irish

Introduction – Part 2: Writing in Ireland



ERC Consolidator Grant 2015
H2020 #647351

Roadmap

- Writing
 - Ogam
 - Latin alphabet
- Manuscripts

Ogam (Ogham)

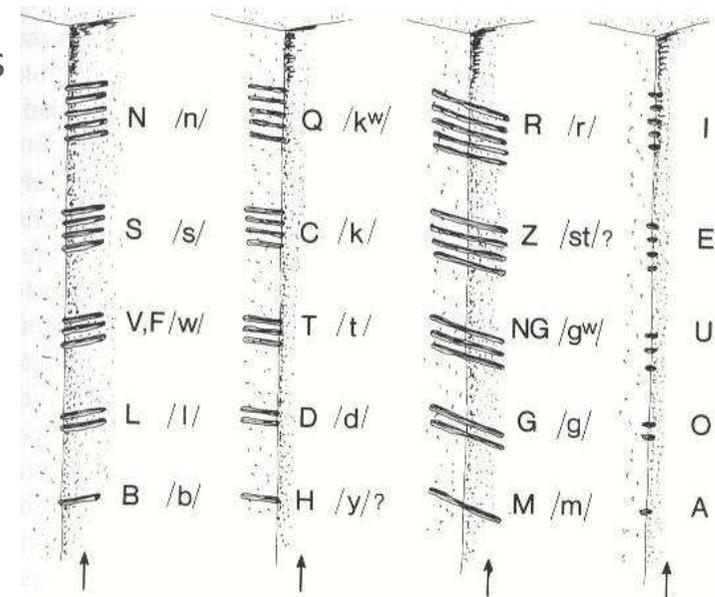
- Standing stones with incision on the edge
- Main corpus 4th–6th centuries A.D.



© Nora White 2018

Ogam (Ogham)

- Lapidary script consisting of 1–5 grooves or notches
- *Ogam* < PC **ogmos*, cf. Gr. ὄγμος ‘furrow, course of heavenly bodies, swathe’, Ved. *ájma-* ‘course, track’ < PIE **h₂oǵmo-* ‘track, furrow’



An Ogam inscription

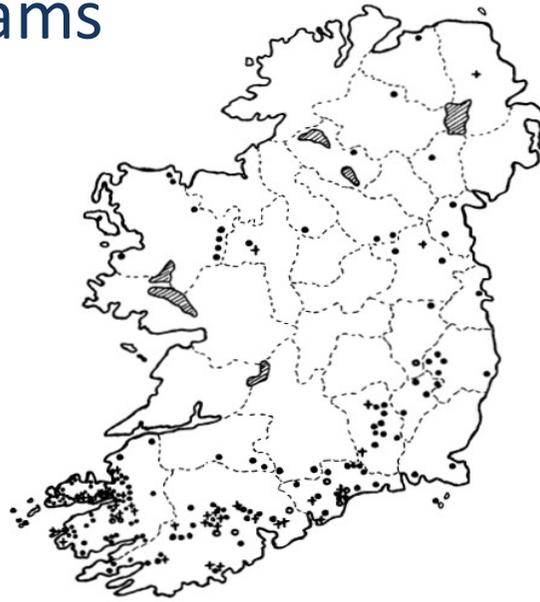
DUMELI MAQI GLASICONAS NIOTTA COBRANOR[IGAS]
[duβeli: βak^wi: γlasəxonah ni.oθah koβranəri:γah]
‘[Stone] of Dumal, the son of Glaisiucc, nephew of Cobranrai’
(CIIC 252 Gurrane, Co. Kerry)

© National Museum of Ireland
Ogham in 3D: https://ogham.celt.dias.ie/stone.php?lang=en&site=National_Museum&stone=252.Gurrane&stoneinfo=inscription



Distribution of Ogams

- Ireland: c. 330
- Wales: 40
- Scotland: 34
- Man: 8
- Cornwall & Devon: 6
- England: 1



Distribution of Ogam inscriptions in Ireland.
● Single stone.
+ Group of 2-4 stones.
○ Group of 5 or more stones.



Distribution of Ogam inscriptions in Wales.
● Stone with Latin and Ogam inscriptions.
+ Stone with Ogam inscription.

Source: D. McManus, *Guide to Ogam*, 1991, 46, 48

The ‘Great Upheaval of the Phonological System’ (GUPS)

- Ca. 5th–6th century A.D.
- Evidenced by Ogam inscriptions, e.g.
 - 1. Proto-Celtic **Lugudikos* ‘pointing out Lug (?)’
 - 2. *LUGUDECCAS* (Ardmore, Wd.; CIIC 263) [vowel changes, e.g. lowering]
 - 3. *LUGUDECA* (Kilgrovane, Wd.; CIIC 286) [loss of final -s]
 - 4. *LUGUDEC* (Kilmannia, Mo.; CIIC 4) [loss of final short syllables]
 - 5. *LUGUDUC* (Kilcullen, Ck.; CIIC 108) [loss of unstressed vowel quality]
 - 6. *Luigdech* (Olr., 8th c.; genitive of *Lugaid*) [syncope]

Timeline of Latin writing

- Arrival of Latin writing in Ireland 5th c. A.D.
- Irish names in Latin writing 6th c.
- Beginning of writing Irish 7th c.
- Dominance of Irish writing 9th c.



Springmount wax tablet, c. 600 AD
© National Museum Ireland, An Post

Places of writing

- Arrival of Latin writing in Ireland 5th c. A.D.
- Irish names in Latin writing 6th c.
- Beginning of writing Irish 7th c.
- Dominance of Irish writing 9th c.

map of Ireland, use map
of session 1.1.

Insular half uncial script

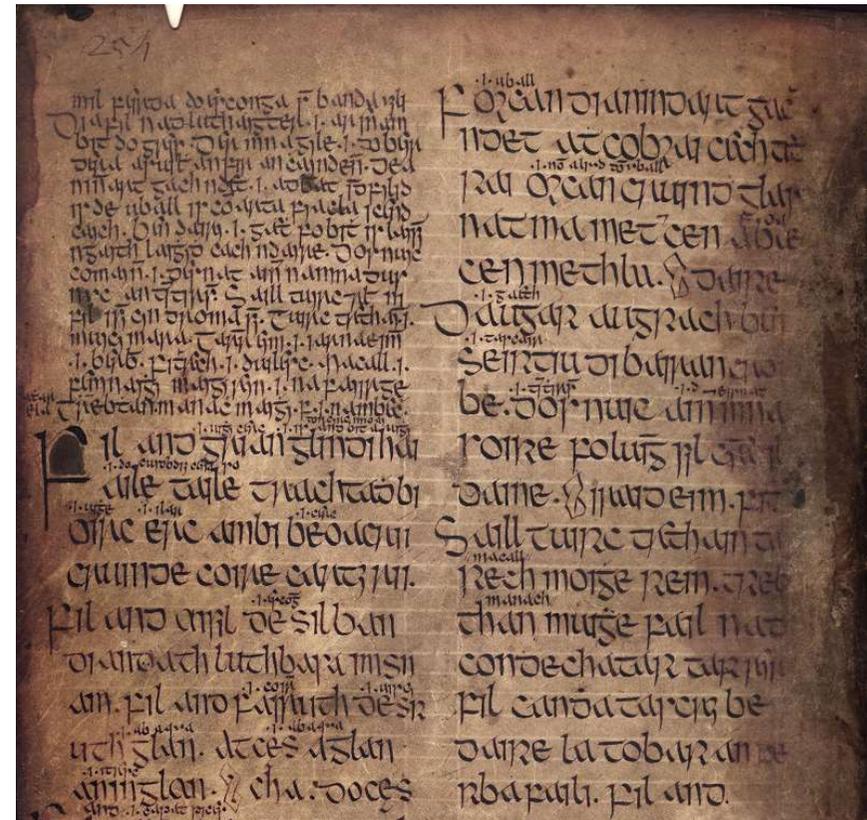
A B C D E F G H I L M N O P R S T U
 a b c d e f g h i l m n o p r r t c u

(K Q X Y Z
 k q x y z)

ā ē ī ō ū ǿ ǿ
 ā ē ī ō ū ǿ ǿ

7 7 4 .
 ocus acht ar id est

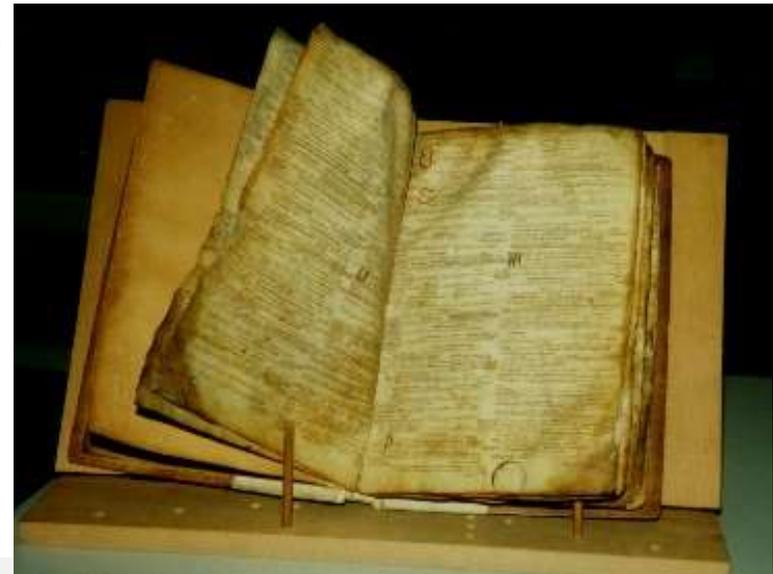
Rawlinson B 512 f. 52v,
 © Bodleian Lib. Oxford



Font 'Seanchló na nod' © Vincent Morley
<http://www.gaelchlo.com/>
www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Project:Tionscadal_na_Nod

Old Irish texts in contemporary manuscripts (8th–9th c.)

- Würzburg Glosses (Wb., Pauline Epistles, early 8th c.)
- Milan Glosses (Ml., Commentary on the Psalms, late 8th c.)
- St Gall Glosses (Sg., Priscian's Latin Grammar, 850–1)
- Cambrai Homily (Camb., 7th c.)
- 'Minor Glosses' (8th–9th c.)



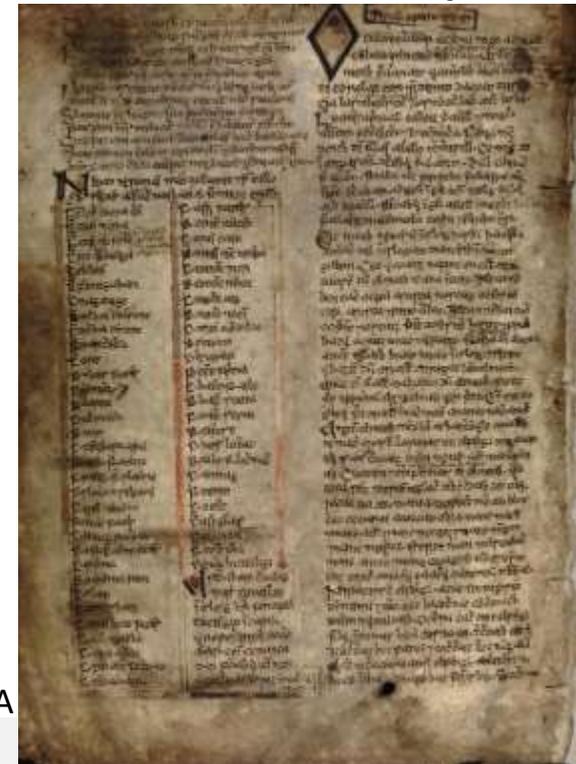
© Hildegard Tristram
Würzburg Universitätsbibliothek, MS M. p. th. f. 12 =
Codex Paulinus Wirziburgensis

Old Irish texts in Middle and Modern Irish manuscripts

- *Lebor na hUidre* ‘The Book of the Dun Cow’
(LU, Royal Irish Academy MS 23 E 25, c. 1100)
- Book of Leinster
(LL, Trinity College Dublin MS H 2.18 (cat. 1339), c. 1160)
- Rawlinson B 502
(Bodleian Library Oxford, c. 1100)
- ...
- *Cín Dromma Snechtai* ‘The Quire of Drumsnat’
(c. 720?, lost)

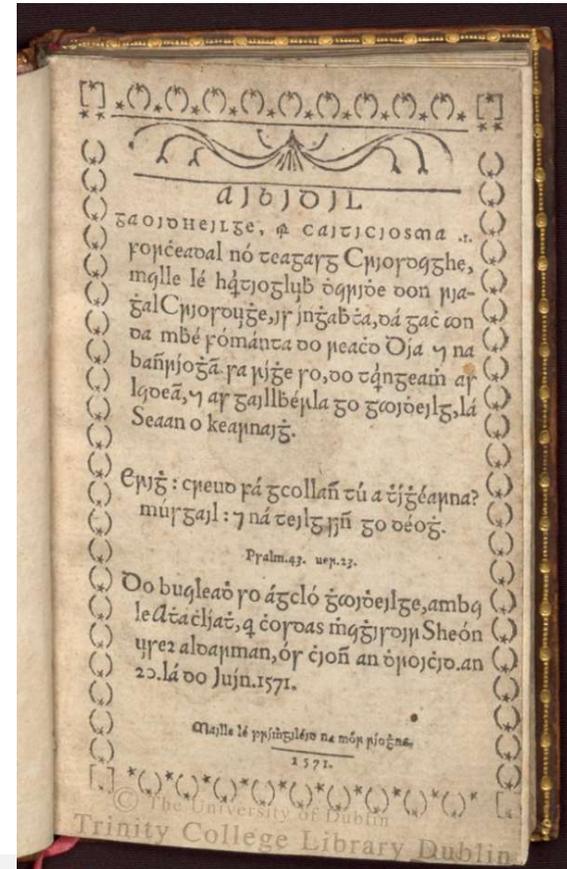
Lebor na hUidre p. 55 © RIA

Old Irish – Introduction, Part 2



The first printed book in Irish

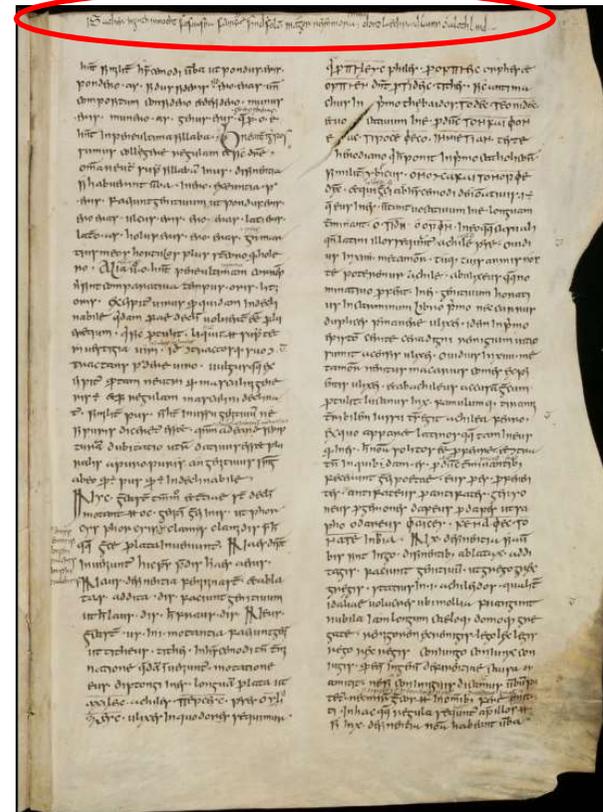
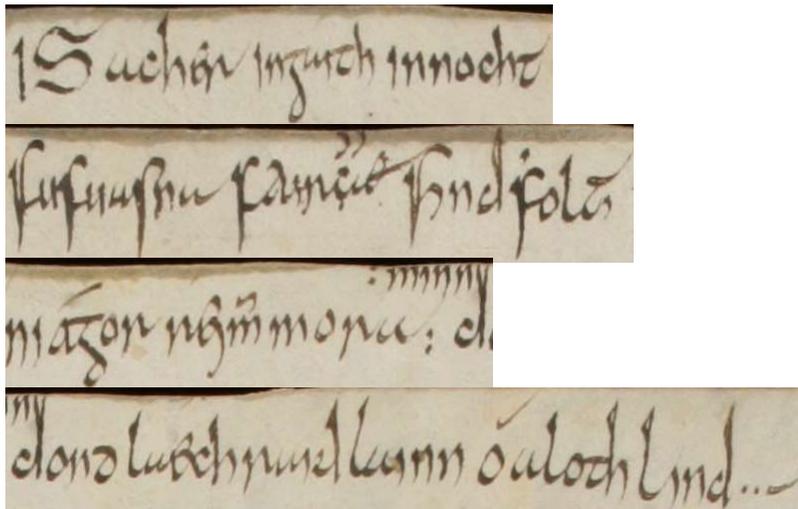
- *Abidil Gaidheilge & Caiticiosma*
'Irish Alphabet and Catechism', 1571



© Trinity College Dublin

A stormy night

- St Gall Stiftsbibliothek MS 904, f. 112a



© e-codices

A stormy night

IS acher ingáith innocht · fufuasna fairggæ findfolt
ni ágor réimm mora minn · dondláechraid lainn ua lothlind^a.

Wh. Stokes & J. Strachan, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, vol. ii, 1903, 290

IS acher ingáith innocht

fufuasna fairggæ findfolt

ni ágor réimm mora minn

dondláechraid lainn óa lothlind...

*Is acher in gáith innocht,
fu·fūasna fairggæ findfolt;
nī-ágor rēimm mora minn
dond lāechraid lainn óa Lothlind.*

The wind is sharp tonight,
it disturbs the ocean's white hair;
I do not fear the coursing of the clear sea
by the keen warrior-band from Lothlind.

Ad·tlochomar indithim dúib!



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