

As part of ongoing survey of seventeenth-century and a collection of similar eighteenth-century funerary monuments in Clonfert Diocese by the author it has become very evident that there is quite a large corpus of extant monuments from this period. The survival of these particular monuments provides an important insight into aspects of Post-Medieval and Early Modern Catholicism and Church patronage in the Diocese. They range in date from the early seventeenth-century, to the latter quarter of the eighteenth century, forming a distinct type of monument that requires further study in areas outside of the diocese. Many examples bear elaborate Coats of Arms, and nearly all examples carry important genealogical material, and often provide the only means of taking personal family histories back to the seventeenth century. When matched to the surviving documentary evidence they form an extra historical layer to assist the genealogist. In addition to the monument types discussed in this paper, there are also a number of wall tombs of seventeenth-century date and a collection of seventeenth-century graveyard crosses - this latter monument type has not been well studied or published in a Galway context. A number of fragmentary crosses of this period have also come to light during fieldwork.

The O' Treacys of East Galway are one of a number of septs that combine to form the tribal group referred to as the Uí Maine (O'Donovan 1843, 39-41). They are a distinct group, not to be confused with Treacys from elsewhere in Ireland. In this short paper the focus is on two clusters of Treacy funerary monuments of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century date. There are two monument-types represented in this group, comprising of three recumbent slabs (both rectangular and tapered slabs) and one framed mural plaque. This latter monument is quite common in Co. Galway and used specifically for display within the body of its associated church. None of the four examples discussed here bears a Coat of Arms or any other form of heraldic device.

To date three recumbent graveslabs and one mural plaque have been recorded for at least two different Treacy families in East Galway. A pair of large recumbent slabs can be clearly assigned to one particular family centred on the Killimorbulloge (Killimor) area. This pair of large rectangular slabs are situated on the floor of the chancel of Killimor medieval parish church and on the choir floor of Portumna Dominican Priory. The other two monuments are located in the sanctuary area of Kilconieran medieval parish church, a parish to the west of Loughrea. These are dedicated to a separate Treacy family that lived in that parish. One of these latter examples is a framed wall mounted plaque the other is a tapered slab. This paper will focus on these four Treacy memorials, starting with the example in the ruined medieval parish church at Killimor (Fig. 1). It comprises of a tapered limestone recumbent graveslab. Unfortunately it was broken into three irregular parts by grave-diggers to accommodate later burial at sometime in the twentieth century. This particular graveslab is typical of what one expects to find in the Clonfert region. It bears a large cross with a stepped calvary base and an elaborate cross-head with Fleur de Lis terminals. The inscription, which is in English, is carved in false relief on three vertical panels, one on the left margin, the other on the right and the third forming the lower section of the cross shaft. The inscription is read from the bottom up, starting with the left margin and moving across the slab.

- (1) THIS STONE WAS MADE FOR / THOMAS OGE TRESSY / FOR HIS SON WILLIAM O TRESSY / 1649



Drawing by Rory O'Shaughnessy (2012)

This well fashioned grave-slab has suffered considerable damage at the hands of grave-diggers. O'Donovan notes it in the Ordnance Survey letters but gives the incorrect date of 16-4. Other writers have followed O'Donovan's lead and interpreted this date as 1604. In fact close scrutiny of the stone by the author shows that it actually dates to 1649. It has a large central cross with Fleur de Lis terminals and a four-stepped calvary base. The inscription is carved in false relief on the wide borders along the sides of the slab and also on the cross shaft. The date is shown in the upper section of the cross, with the 16 on the left, 4 on the right and the 9 on the upper section of the cross shaft. A sacred IHS monogram with its small cross fills the lozenge forming the centre piece of the cross head. The use of the IHS monogram similar to the use of the calvary base, is a recurrent characteristic on gravestones of this period.



(2) THIS STONE WAS MADE / BY WILILAMNA (sic) & THO / MAS OGE TRESSIE OF MA / GHERINLIS NAD GANYD TRE / SSYE HIS WIFE

A not too dissimilar graveslab dedicated to Ganyd Tressy occurs in the choir of Portumna Priory erected by Thomas Oge and William Tressy (Fig. 2). Gany appears to be the wife of Thos and mother of William. The Portumna priory example consists of a large rectangular slab bearing a cross with a triple-stepped calvary base and an elaborate cross-head with Fleur de Lis terminals. Both the cross and inscription are inscribed into the stone. While there is no date present, it can be assumed that it predates 1649, the date at which Thomas Oge Tressy erected a stone for his son William buried in Killimor parish church. The ornament used is an elaborate form of Fleur De Lis with baluster shaped stems. The shaft exhibits an expansion form which the cross head springs that imitates a collar or knop. Inscribed collars generally bearing a dedication to the patrons or those commemorated are common on free standing crosses of this period, while ornamental knops are a characteristic of seventeenth-century chalices.



(3) THIS IS ERECTED / BY MARTIN TRESSY / TO PRAY FOR HIS / WIFE HONORA / ALIAS O BRYAN / & DA—TER MARY / DECEASED & THE / REST OF HIS FAMILY / 1755

This framed mural plaque is mounted on the east gable to the right of where the high altar was positioned in Killconieran medieval parish church (Fig. 3). It is dedicated to a member of the Treacy family. The inscription is in English and comprises of raised lettering. The name Treacy is presented in the form "Tressy" which is common enough, in fact the name is frequently recited in spoken English as "Trassy". While this slab dates to no earlier than 1755, it is a fine example of the type of plaque generally found in the region. The majority of mural plaques generally consist of five separate pieces, the inscribed plaque and four moulded frames set around the plaque. Sometimes the lower frame is chamfered rather than moulded. Some mural plaques are unframed. Of course such examples could easily have been framed originally.

(4) PRAY FOR THE / WIFE OF / PATRICK TRESSY / MARGO ALIAS / MAUGHAN & HER / POSTERTITY WHO / DYED THE 14th / JULY 1760

This rectangular graveslab lying in the chancel area of the ruined medieval parish church is dedicated to members of the Treacy family (Fig. 4). It too dates to the eighteenth century, but is executed in a seventeenth-century style. The Roman lettering is executed in false relief and is similar in ways to the lettering on the associated mural plaque. However, the band between the lines of the inscription is much broader, and the Sacred IHS monogram and cross carved on the top panel of the slab is clearly of the form that we find on later ledgers and headstones.

Burial in this part of the church along with the use of an elaborate recumbent graveslab and associated mural plaque, suggests that the Treacy's were a family of some importance. In a previous body of work I have highlighted their involvement in local church affairs in various parishes in East Galway (Cunniffe 2013, 10-14).



#### References

- Cunniffe, C. 2013 'An Assessment of the Archaeological and Historical Background to Killimor Medieval Parish Church'. In A. Geoghegan and N. Mc Gann (eds), *Killimor: Our Parish and Our People*.
- Cunniffe, C. (forthcoming) *Early-Modern Mural Plaques, Graveslabs and Related Monuments in Clonfert Diocese*.
- O'Donovan, J. 1843 *The Tribes and Customs of Hy-Many, commonly called O Kelly's Country*. Irish Archaeological Society, Dublin.
- O'Donovan, J. 1839 *Letters containing information relative to the Antiquities of the County of Galway collected during the progress of the Ordnance Survey 1839*. Vol. 2.