



TENTATIVE LIST SUBMISSION FORMAT



STATE PARTY: Ireland

Submission prepared by:

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Name: Brian Lucas

E-mail: brian.lucas@environ.ie

Address: Built Heritage and Architectural
Policy Section,
Department of the Environment, Heritage &
Local Government,
Newtown Road, Wexford

Fax: 053 91 17603

Telephone: 053 91 17500

NAME OF PROPERTY: The Monastic City of Clonmacnoise and its Cultural Landscape

State, Province or Region: Counties, Offaly, Roscommon and Westmeath

Latitude and Longitude, or UTM coordinates: The centre of the site is Lat 53 deg 19min 40sec North / Long 7 deg 58min 43 sec West

DESCRIPTION:

The Monastic City of Clonmacnoise and its Cultural Landscape is located in Counties Offaly, Roscommon and Westmeath in the centre of Ireland. It is an unparalleled and outstanding example of a relict early medieval Insular monastic city unobscured by modern building development. It is set within a superlative semi-natural landscape that deepens its spiritual qualities, adding greatly to its authenticity and integrity. The interaction between man and the natural environment in Clonmacnoise is of unique universal value. The architectural ensemble at Clonmacnoise represents an outstanding example of an early medieval Insular monastic city. It represents a significant stage in the development of early medieval Christianity in the North Atlantic. Archaeological excavation coupled with exceptional documentary sources has demonstrated that Clonmacnoise was a *civitas* in reality as well as in name, unlike many other Irish sites, and, moreover, its dates are relatively early in the chronology of urban development outside the boundaries of the old Roman Empire. It is therefore highly significant to our understanding of the development of urbanism generally in Atlantic Europe, as well as clarifying non-Viking urbanisation in an Irish context.

Justification of Outstanding Universal Value:

(Preliminary identification of the values of the property which merit inscription on the World Heritage List)

Clonmacnoise is an unparalleled and outstanding example of a relict early medieval Insular monastic city unobscured by modern building development. It is set within a superlative semi-natural landscape that deepens its spiritual qualities, adding greatly to its authenticity and integrity. The interaction between man and the natural environment in Clonmacnoise is of unique universal value.

Criteria met [see Paragraph 77 of the *Operational Guidelines*]:

(Please tick the box corresponding to the proposed criteria and justify the use of each below)

Criterion (iv.): *The Site should be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

The architectural ensemble at Clonmacnoise represents an outstanding example of an early medieval Insular monastic city. It represents a significant stage in the development of early medieval Christianity in the North Atlantic. Archaeological excavation coupled with exceptional documentary sources has demonstrated that Clonmacnoise was a *civitas* in reality as well as in name, unlike many other Irish sites, and, moreover, its dates are relatively early in the chronology of urban development outside the boundaries of the old Roman Empire. It is therefore highly significant to our understanding of the development of urbanism generally in Atlantic Europe, as well as clarifying non-Viking urbanisation in an Irish context.

Criterion (v.): *The Site should be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;*

Clonmacnoise developed in the midst of extensive peatlands at the point where the Slí Mhór, (Great Road) esker crosses the River Shannon. These two great route ways facilitated trade, commerce and pilgrimage in Medieval Ireland. The remains of the monastic city display an outstanding response to the constraints and opportunities provided by an environment shaped by glacial, fluvial and climatic actions. This extremely diverse semi-natural and sacral landscape is the product of human creativity and interaction over many centuries. Sustainable land-use has helped to maintain this diversity of habitats considered to be some of the most endangered worldwide.

The landscape at Clonmacnoise falls into category (ii) of cultural landscapes: an organically evolved landscape which results from an initial social, economic, administrative, and/or religious imperative and has developed its present form by association with and in response to its natural environment. Such landscapes reflect that process of evolution in their form and component features. Clonmacnoise combines elements of a relict or fossil landscape in which the evolutionary process of urbanisation associated with an initial ceremonial complex came to an end, leaving significant distinguishing features visible in material form, and a continuing landscape with significant evidence of evolution over time.

Statements of authenticity and/or integrity [see Paragraphs 78-95 of the *Operational Guidelines*]:

Authenticity:

The nominated Site is well documented, has a long and continuous recorded history, and has been the subject of in-depth research, aerial mapping, measured survey, photography, written records and archaeological excavation. Overall, the Site has a high level of integrity as a relict monastic landscape and a continuing cultural landscape. In conformity with the Nara Declaration on Authenticity (1994), recent conservation and reconstruction has been limited to the minimum required to achieve structural integrity and public safety.

Integrity:

The physical integrity of the built heritage of the nominated Site is safeguarded through a broad range of existing protective measures under central and local government legislation and planning policies. The integrity of the natural heritage is protected by the highest national and international nature conservation designations.

Comparison with other similar properties:

(The comparison should outline similarities with other properties on the World Heritage List or not, and the reasons that make the property stand out)

Skellig Michael: Ireland

An isolated monastic complex, perched on an island in the Atlantic, difficult to ascend, and at times cut off from all human contact for weeks on end by weather conditions, this site embodies the most extreme characteristics of early Christian eremitical asceticism.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:

- It demonstrates eremitic monasticism
- It is non-congregational
- It had no national symbolic value in the medieval period
- It is situated on an island
- It is nominated as a group of buildings rather than as a cultural landscape
- It lacks the architectural and artistic wealth evidenced at Clonmacnoise

Saint Catherine, Sinai: Egypt

This site is inscribed for its landscape setting, sacred to three religions, and for the significance of the buildings, and their collections, to the study of Byzantine art and architecture. It is one of the earliest examples of an ascetic monastic site to survive in a state of preservation to the current day.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:

- The chronological time frame is different
- Its societal role as an enclosed community difficult to access depicts ascetic monasticism
- It has an Eastern architectural tradition

Early Christian Necropolis of Pécs: Hungary

This is a remarkable complex of early Christian tombs, dating to the 4th century. Originally the cemetery of the provincial Roman town of Sopianae, the modern town of Pécs developed not around the ancient city, but around its cemetery. This is indicative of the importance of the cult of the dead in early Christian Europe. The architecture and ornament of these tombs make them a significant example of commemorative art of the early Christian period.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:

- Its chronology is 4th century.
- There is a uniformity of purpose: confined to burial and commemoration.
- It depicts part of a mutating tradition of architecture and art which nevertheless was still uniformly based on Roman precedents.

Natural Heritage Sites

Cairngorm Mountains, Scotland: UK; Saima-Pielinen Lake System: Finland

Placed onto the WHS Tentative List in 1999, the Cairngorm Mountains is one of the only other areas in Europe that contains such a diverse assemblage of habitats within a relatively small area. Despite the difference in altitude, the Cairngorm Mountains contain a similar diversity of habitats centred on glacial peatlands, eskers and lochs. Eskers are currently not represented in the WHS List and apart from that on the Tentative List, Saima-Pielinen Lake System, Finland (entered in 2004) and the Cairngorm Mountains, Clonmacnoise represents the only other site with this relict glacial feature on the WHS Tentative List.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:

- Both the Cairngorm Mountains and Saima-Pielinen Lake System are nominated as natural sites and do not show the symbiosis of how man has interacted with the natural environment.

The Lake District: UK

The Lake District added to the Tentative List in 1996 is a heavily glaciated geological dome, significant for its abundant habitats including mires, limestone pavement, upland heath, screes, arctic-alpine communities, lakeshore wetlands, estuary, coastal heath and dunes.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:

- Although it is an example of man's harmonious interaction with his natural environment, it does not demonstrate the symbiosis of man with a sacral landscape as Clonmacnoise does.
- The landscape around Clonmacnoise shows greater diversity of habitats within a relatively small area compared to the Lake District.

Hortobágy National Park - the Puszta: Hungary

The cultural landscape of the Hortobágy Puszta consists of a vast area of plains and wetlands in eastern Hungary. Traditional forms of land use, such as the grazing of domestic animals, have been present in this pastoral society for more than two millennia. The Puszta is similar in being an exceptional semi-natural landscape formed by interaction between the landscape and agricultural use by man. It contains grasslands and wetland habitats similar to Clonmacnoise.

Principal differences to Clonmacnoise:

- Clonmacnoise has a monastic site associated with its semi-natural landscape whereas the Puszta does not.

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- The Tentative List submission format is available from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and at the following Web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists>
 - Further guidance on the preparation of Tentative Lists can be found in Paragraphs 62-67 of the *Operational Guidelines*.
 - An example of a completed Tentative List submission format can be found at the following Web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists>
 - All Tentative Lists submitted by States Parties are available at the following Web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists>
 - The original signed version of the completed Tentative List submission format should be sent in English or French to: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France
 - States Parties are encouraged to also submit this information in electronic format (diskette or CD-Rom) or by e-mail to wh-tentativelists@unesco.org