

Early Medieval Archaeology Project (EMAP) 2013

Grant No: AR03743

The Economy of Early Medieval Ireland

Summary:

This is the third year of the second phase of the Early Medieval Archaeology Project (EMAP 2). EMAP 2 was established primarily to synthesise the information on productive activity in early medieval Ireland, and the early medieval Irish economy. In Year 1 EMAP 2 looked at the farming economy, dealing with both pastoral and arable farming; and in Year 2 EMAP 2 examined the archaeological evidence for industrial activity and craft-working, with a focus on domestic ornament. Year 3 of EMAP 2 constituted the sixth year of INSTAR funding. There were three main aims for this year and these have all been achieved.

The primary piece of substantive research from Year 3 of EMAP 2 involved the production of a monograph entitled '*The Economy of Early Medieval Ireland*'. This monograph attempts to fully integrate the two main spheres of production in early medieval Ireland – i.e. farming and craft-working – by pulling together evidence for productive activity in early medieval Ireland from documentary sources and the archaeological record. The results were interrogated within a theoretical framework, and the various arguments were pulled together in the final chapter in an attempt to reconcile them into a coherent economic model. This work highlighted the importance of a degree of 'exchange' within contemporary Ireland, especially in regards to procuring raw materials for industrial activity. It also questioned the continuing validity of the traditional socio-economic model based almost entirely on self-sufficient farming communities.

The second large-scale product of EMAP 2013 has been the creation of four British Archaeological Reports (BARs), based on updated versions of existing EMAP reports – *The Archaeology of Industry in early medieval Ireland*; *Early Medieval Dwellings and Settlements in Ireland, A.D. 400-1100*; *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Farming in Ireland*; and *A Bibliography of Early Medieval Ireland*. This has created a permanent copy of

these reports which may be used in conjunction with the online versions, but which has the added benefit of being easily referable.

The third major outcome of EMAP 2013 has been the completion to publication of the main EMAP book – O’Sullivan, A., McCormick, F., Kerr, T. R. & Harney, L. 2013. *Early Medieval Ireland, A.D. 400-1100: The evidence from archaeological excavations*. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin – available as a Kindle/digital book, with the hard copy due out around the start of February 2014. This book represents the total results of the six years of INSTAR funding, and should prove to be an invaluable resource for academics, students and interested lay-people alike.

Public Interaction:

Alongside the usual list of conference papers and attendance, EMAP was also involved with the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland in hosting a one day conference on the project in Merrion Square in September 2013. This conference was accredited by IAI as a Continuing Professional development (CPD) seminar for their members.

Publications:

The various researchers associated with this project have also submitted academic papers. INSTAR is acknowledged in all cases.

Kerr, T. R. & McCormick, F. 2014. Statistics, Sunspots and Settlement: Influences on Sum of Probability Curves. *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 41, 493-501.

Menotti, F. and O’Sullivan, A.; (2013) 'General Introduction to the Handbook' In: F. Menotti and A. O’Sullivan (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Wetland Archaeology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

O’Sullivan, A. 2013. 'Europe's wetlands from the Migration Period to the Middle Ages: Settlement, exploitation and transformation, AD 400-1500' In: F. Menotti and A. O’Sullivan

(eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Wetland Archaeology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. , pp.41-84.

O'Sullivan, A. 2012. 'Physical landscape and environment in Westmeath' In: P. Stevens & J. Channing (eds.) *Settlement and Community in the Fir Tulach Kingdom: Archaeological Excavation on the M6 & N52 Road Schemes*. Dublin: National Roads Authority/Westmeath Co. Council. , pp.7-12

O'Sullivan, A. 2012. 'The archaeology of early medieval settlement and landscape in Westmeath' In: P. Stevens & J. Channing (eds.) *Settlement and Community in the Fir Tulach Kingdom: Archaeological Excavation on the M6 & N52 Road Schemes*. Dublin: National Roads Authority/Westmeath Co. Council. , pp.13-24

O'Sullivan, A., and Kinsella, J. 2013. 'Living by a sacred landscape: interpreting the early medieval archaeology of the Hill of Tara and its environs, AD 400-1100' In: M. O'Sullivan, K. Rice and M. Doyle (eds.) *Tara: from the past to the future*. Bray: Wordwell. pp.321-344

McCormick, F. Agriculture, Settlement and Society in Early Medieval Ireland. Submitted to *Quaternary International*

Kerr, T. R. A Comparative Overview of Warfare in Early Medieval Ireland – A.D. 600-800. Submitted to *Journal of Conflict Archaeology*.

McClatchie, M., McCormick, F., Kerr, T. R., & O'Sullivan, A. Farming and food in early medieval Ireland: a review of the archaeobotanical evidence. Submitted to *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany*.