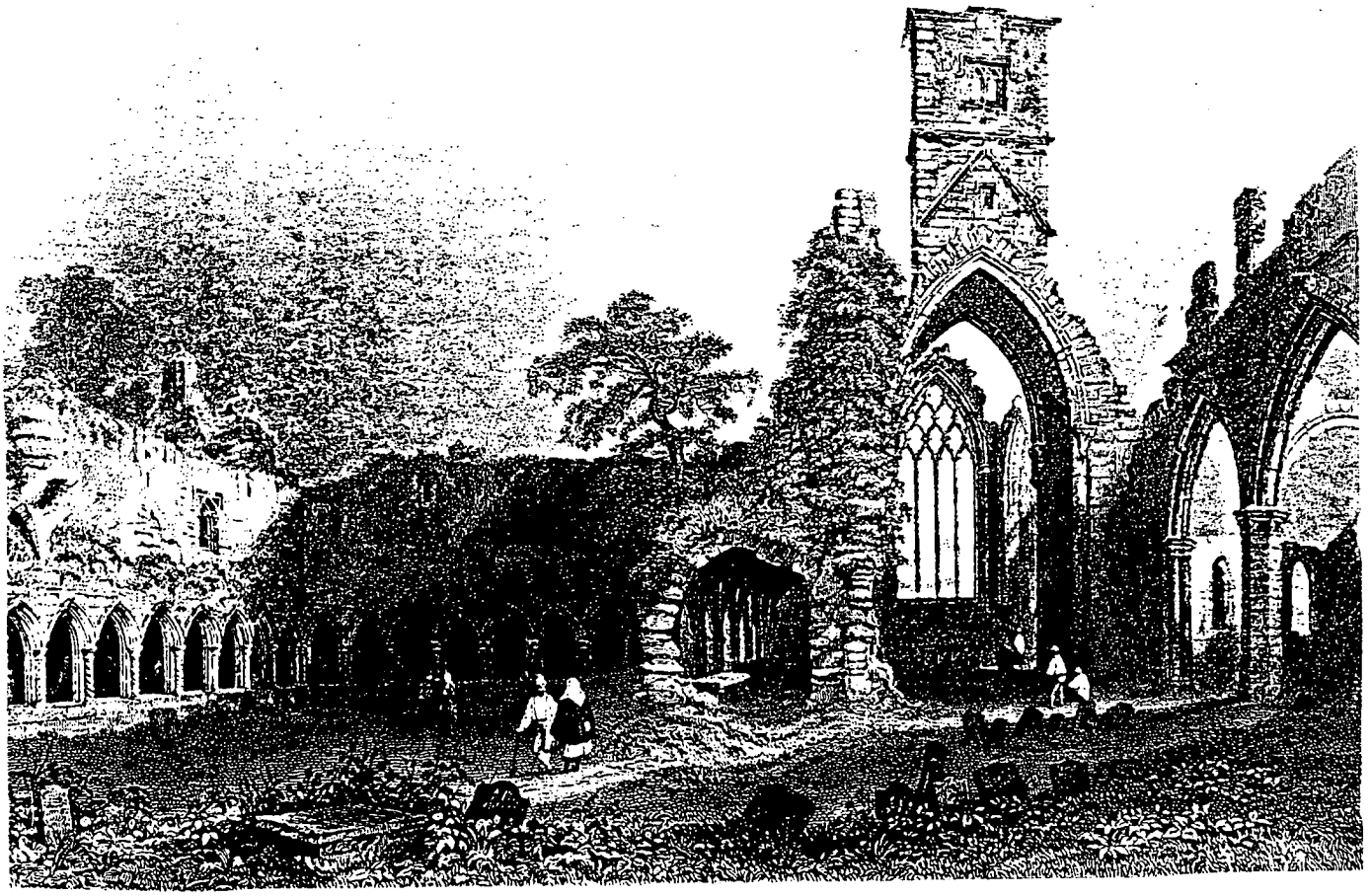
COUNTY SLIGO



THE URBAN ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY

URBAN ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY

PART XXI

COUNTY
SLIGO

JOHN BRADLEY

NOEL DUNNE

A REPORT COMMISSIONED BY THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS

LIST OF CONTENTS

Figures and Plates follow p.

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a pleasure to thank all who helped in the course of this work. The survey was financed by the National Parks and Monuments Branch of the Office of Public Works and I am delighted to thank the staff of that branch for their constant help. In particular thanks are due to the Director, Mr Noel Lynch, his predecessor, Mr. John Barkery? Mr. John Mahony, Miss June Thompson, and Mr. Michael Conroy. I would also like to thank the staff of the Architectural Division and of the Archaeological Survey who provided much information and help.

Special thanks are due to Professor George Eogan, Dept. of Archaeology, University College Dublin for his constant support and advice in the course of the survey.

I wish to Mr Edward Bourke, B.A., for his help in preparing the historical introduction. The figures and maps have been prepared for publication by Mr John Wallace.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Towns pose one of the most formidable problems faced by archaeology today. Lived in and occupied over long periods of time, and often covering quite large areas, they are the most complex form of human settlement that we know of. Deep archaeological deposits have accumulated in most towns as a result of the long period of occupation and, accordingly, towns are among the most important areas of our heritage. However, towns are also the homes of modern communities, and are the centres of present-day business, industry and cultural life. The requirements of modern life has brought considerable change to many towns with extensive road widening, building schemes, housing estates and industrial development. The demolition of buildings and the digging of deep foundations has brought about irrevocable change in the appearance of towns, and change, in this century, means more thorough destruction than anything that has gone before. The problem for archaeology is not one of preservation, although this may be desireable, but of recording standing buildings and archaeological levels before they are destroyed. The unfortunate truth is that what is not recorded now has little chance of ever being recorded later.

By its nature archaeology is concerned with the past of ordinary people. The fragmentary building remains, pottery sherds and scraps of worked stone or wood which the archaeologist discovers cannot be used to reconstruct

political movements or great administrative changes. These parts of our past can only be glimpsed from documents, from what people who were alive at the time have observed themselves or heard related. Archaeological data, however, can tell us a great deal about the everyday life of ordinary people and the quality of that life in terms of the technological and economic resources of the particular time and place in question.

Urban archaeology may be defined as the study of the evolution and changing character of urban communities from their earliest origins until modern times; more especially it is concerned with the reconstruction of the natural and human environment within which and as part of which human actions take place. A methodical definition such as this, however, should not obscure the fact that urban archaeology is fundamentally concerned with the past of ordinary citizens, of the form of their houses and streets, of the business of their markets and workshops, of the style and arrangement of their churches, of health and disease, of the variety of cultural, religous and economic activity; in short, it is concerned with the life and death of communities ancestral to our own.

Development of Urban Archaeology

For long the study of the urban past has largely been the preserve of historians, sociologists and geographers and it is only recently that the potential of archaeology to uncover

the past has been realised. Part of the reason for this is the general lack of awareness that almost all towns have archaeological deposits. This stems in part from the incomprehension of the ordinary man-in-the-street that a town which is lived-in can have archaeological deposts at all: purely because it is lived in, one tends to think that everything of past ages, unless it is visibly standing has been swept away. In part it also stems from the fact that the construction on a vast scale of buildings requiring deep foundations has only occurred recently, and it is only as a consequence that archaeological deposits have come to light. It is also due to the fact that, in previous centuries, archaeological methods and techniques were not advanced enough to take advantage of opportunities even if they did arise. Until relatively modern times the buildings of one generation have been constructed upon the foundations of the last. As structure replaced structure the ground level rose slightly and over the centuries, in cities such as Dublin, considerable depths of archaeological deposits have accumulated.

It was at Novgorod in Russia that the potential of urban archaeology was first revealed. There, organic remains were found in large quantities and it became possible to reconstruct entire streetscapes and to chronicle the changes which happened in them as one generation succeeded the next (Thompson 1967). Gradually as excavation took place in England and Germany it became apparent that the rich archaeological material in towns was not just a side-light on

urban life but it could contribute greatly to our understanding of the archaeology of entire periods and regions. In Ireland the first scientific excavations were commenced at Dublin Castle in 1961 and excavations were to continue in Dublin for the next twenty years. The interest aroused by the High Street and, later, the Wood Quay excavations was widespread and it created an interest in the archaeology of other towns. To date, excavations have taken place in about twenty Irish towns.

Urban sites are important to the archaeologist for a number of reasons. Firstly, in all towns archaeological deposits form the earliest archive. Only a handful of Irish towns are referred to prior to 1200 AD and it is only during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that references become anyway common. Yet the urban life of many towns has continued unbroken since the twelfth or early thirteenth century, while the origins of others lie in the Viking, Early Christian and Prehistoric periods. Even when references occur they rarely throw much light on daily life and tend to be more concerned with political and administrative events. Indeed, most individual properties within towns have no documentation relating directly to them until the late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth century. To all intents and purposes, then, individual sites within towns may have remained completely prehistoric, in so far as they have no documentation, until the seventeenth century or later. Accordingly, archaeological excavation is important if one is to gain any knowledge of the initial period of a town's

foundation or of how a particular area evolved and was used.

Secondly, towns usually possess a much greater depth of stratigraphy than any other type of archaeological site. Stratified deposits are important because they preserve the sequence of developments on a particular site and the wealth of finds associated with urban sites means that it is usually possible to date both structures and layers quite closely. This is particularly important because it makes it possible to establish tight chronologies for artefacts.

Thirdly, the archaeology of a region cannot be understood without knowing what happened to the towns within it. Each town is a unique expression of the history of its area and the destruction of its archaeology would leave an irreplaceable gap in knowledge of the evolution of the region.

The recovery of this information is threatened, however, by the increasing redevelopment and gradual expansion of our cities and towns. It is very difficult to foresee the effects of this redevelopment when the extent of archaeological deposits is generally not known to the Planning Authority and it has happened in the past that the archaeological significance of a site has only become apparent when building work was about to commence. It is important then that the areas containing archaeological deposits should be identified if the potential of this important part of our heritage is to be realised.

Purpose and Aim of the Present Survey

The Urban Archaeology Survey was established with monies allocated for the purpose by the Minister for Finance in 1982. Its purpose was to compile a corpus of archaeological information on Ireland's towns and to present it in such a way that it could be used effectively by the archaeologist, urban planner, property developer, or interested layman. In this regard the survey has been guided by a submission prepared by the Royal Irish Academy on Urban Archaeology which recommended that the report should have four aims:

1. "To evaluate critically the archaeological potential, both above and below ground of the listed towns".

2. "To emphasise areas where the archaeological deposits could be preserved by the judicious use of new building techniques and the presentation of open spaces, etc."

3. "To assess the level of destruction of the original townscape".

4. "To measure the effects of urban expansion on originally rural archaeological sites".

The chronological cut-off point beyond which material would not be included was 1700 AD.

The identification of sites which were urban centres before 1700 AD is not without difficulties. In many cases such an identification is dependent on the survival of documentary evidence. However, it was felt that it was better

to follow the existing work of Graham (1977) and Martin (1981) rather than impose new criteria. Accordingly the sites which are included here are those for which there is evidence of their status as boroughs prior to 1700 AD.

In the reports the material is presented as follows: the situation of the site is outlined and a brief account of its archaeological and historical background is provided. This is followed by an archaeological inventory which endeavours to catalogue both extant sites and those which are known from documentary sources. Although the amount of information on each town may vary the catalogue follows the same format for each entry, firstly detailing the information on streets and street pattern, and following this with an account of the domestic buildings, market places and economic features such as quays and industrial areas. The seigneurial castle and town defences are described next together with the religious buildings of the town. The evidence for suburbs and activity outside the walls is then outlined and the inventory concludes with a summary of the archaeological excavations and a list of the stray finds. The inventory is followed by an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site.

INTRODUCTION TO CO. SLIGO

Sligo is the only large town within the county and it is also the only one of importance to urban archaeology. Its strategic location between Lough Gill and the sea made it important from early times. There was a bridge here from before 1188 and a settlement that had formed around it was burned by the Anglo-Normans on their arrival in 1236. The Anglo-Normans were responsible for founding the present town, however, and they seem to have established it in 1236 or shortly thereafter. Like other Anglo-Norman towns in Ireland its importance was economic rather than defensive. It was the principal market-place for the produce of the newly conquered lands of Carbury and its early prosperity is indicated in surviving accounts of the 1290s. The Anglo-Norman colony declined during the fourteenth century but the town survived and prospered under the rival patronage of O'Connor Sligo and O'Donnell. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries its prosperity owed much to the proximity of the herring shoals. A verse of the time celebrated how:

Herring of Sligo
And salmon of Bann
Have made in Bristol
Many a rich man

The wars of the later sixteenth century devastated the town, however, and it was only after the conclusion of the Nine

Years War in 1603 that the settlement began to prosper again. The town was incorporated in 1612 and it has continued to prosper ever since.

It is surprising that there is only one town of archaeological importance in the county (Fig. 1). There is clear evidence at Ballymote for a substantial Anglo-Norman castle and it may have been the site of a borough. This was a settlement which had the legal privileges of a town but the functions of a village. In the case of Ballymote, however, the historical documentation is lacking and we simply do not know if it had an urban status in the Middle Ages or not.

This report provides an account of the archaeological remains in Sligo and an assessment of its importance to archaeological research. It outlines the areas where archaeological deposits are likely to survive and highlights the town's potential to increase our knowledge of the development of urban life in Ireland. Finally, recommendations are made as to how this potential can be best realised. In the map outlining the zone of archaeological potential the following colour code is used:

Pink: the zone of archaeological potential.

Red: extant archaeological monuments.

Purple: sites of known monuments.

Uncontrolled redevelopment will destroy Sligo's fragile archaeological heritage and it is the hope of this report that the recommended steps will be taken in order to ensure

that urban development and archaeological research may go forward together.

SLIGO

The town is strategically located at an important fording point of the Garvoge river, between Lough Gill and the sea. Throughout the Middle Ages this ford was important as the means of communicating between the west and north of Ireland. Its position explains the long struggle between O'Connor and O'Donnell for control of the town, and why in the later sixteenth century the government forces placed so much emphasis on holding onto Sligo. This strategic position is still evident today because the main road routes from Galway, Castlebar, and Roscommon to the north pass through the town. The town itself is located on low ground overlooked by hills on the north, south and west. The Green Fort is located on the crest of the northern hill, Rathvritoge, and, as one would expect, it affords a commanding view of the town. On the south side of the Garvoge the ground is fairly level as far as Castle Street-Grattan Street but from there it rises fairly steeply to West Gardens and Church Street, and it was largely along the crest of this southern ridge that the defences of the town were sited.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Little is known of Sligo prior to the twelfth century and attempts by various writers to identify it with Ptolemy's Nagtata have not met with any general support. It is evident,

nonetheless, that the site of the future town was known to early man in Ireland. The megalithic tomb in Abbeyquarter North is similar to those at Carrowmore and it indicates the presence of people at Sligo in the late fourth and early third millenium B.C. The so-called "Sligo Stones", on the top of the ridge at the junction of Church Street and The Lungy, appear from old descriptions to have been another and probably similar, megalithic tomb. The discovery of stray finds of bronze axeheads shows the continued presence of people here into the Bronze Age. From c.1000 B.C. until the twelfth century A.D., however, evidence is lacking for the activity of man within the urban area.

A bridge was established before 1188 (AU) and a settlement developed beside it. It was burned by the Anglo-Normans on their arrival in 1236 and the annalistic entry notes that many women were captured (AU). The conquerer of Connacht, Richard de Burgh, gave the area around Sligo to Hugh de Lacy but he made it over to Maurice FitzGerald, a member of the Kildare Geraldines. The town became the centre of an important FitzGerald manor in Carbury and a number of references concerning it at this time fortunately survive in the Red Book of Kildare (MacNiocaill 1964). It is evident that the FitzGeralds took an active interest in Sligo for the remainder of the thirteenth century. A hospital was built in 1242 (A Conn), the castle was constructed in 1245 and there were town defences by 1246 when the settlement was attacked by O'Donnell who succeeded in burning the "bawn" of the town, but failed to take the castle (AFM; A Conn.). In 1252/3 the

Dominican friary was founded. The expansion of the Anglo-Norman colony in Sligo was brought to a halt in 1257, however, by their defeat at Credan Cille, about seven miles north-east of the town. The subsequent insecurity of the settlement is evident from the assaults on the castle which are recorded in 1265, 1270 and particularly 1271, when it was captured by Aed O Conchobhair (AFM; A. Conn; AU).

In the Geraldine extent of 1288 the castle is described as broken but Sligo is styled a borough and had 180 burgages for which the burgesses rendered £8 (MacNiocaill 1964, 113-14). There is no sign here of abandonment and in the ensuing division of lands between the Geraldine sisters Juliana and Amabilia, each received the rent of ninety burgages. In 1293 the land was handed over to John FitzThomas, later 1st earl of Kildare, and he rebuilt the castle (AFM). The 1290s saw an intensification of the quarrel betwen the Geraldines and the de Burghs over control of this area and it was eventually settled by an exchange of lands. The Geraldines moved out of Sligo and the de Burghs took over. In 1310, as part of the encastellation of his lands, Richard de Burgh, the Red Earl of Ulster, built a castle at Sligo (AFM; AU). The castle was captured and the town burnt by Aed O Domhnaill during the Bruce invasion (AI; AU). It is probable that the decline of the Anglo-Norman colony which occurred after the murder of the Brown Earl of Ulster in 1333 was reflected at Sligo but there is no clear evidence. The town, now under the control of O'Connor Sligo, continued to survive. It was burnt in 1360 (A Conn; AU) and suffered a

plague in 1362 (A Conn; AFM). In 1396 the town was burnt by O'Donnell and it gave the annalist occasion to remark:

> "It was grevious that the town should have been burned as its buildings both stone and wood were splendid" (AFM)

Subsequent raids on the town and burnings occurred in 1398, 1422, 1423, 1445 (AFM; A. Conn). Many of these resulted from the O'Donnell desire to expand southwards into Sligo which succeeded in 1470 when O'Connor Sligo recognised the overlordship of O'Donnell (AFM). In 1471 the town was attacked by the combination of MacWilliam Burke and O'Conor Don (AU). In 1478 McWilliam succeeded in expelling the O'Donnell warders from the castle (AFM). In 1495 O'Donnell beseiged the castle but he failed to capture it (AU). Similar failure followed in 1512 and 1513 (A Conn) but the use of ship's guns in 1516 led to the capture of the town in three days (AU). The town remained in O'Donnell hands until 1533 despite abortive attempts to wrest it from his control in 1522 and 1526 (AFM). The town was held by O'Connor Sligo from 1533-8 when Manus O'Donnell took it and forced O'Connor Sligo to acknowledge him as his overlord (A Conn.; AFM). This agreement meant that the O'Connors were only his warders at Sligo and in 1561 when the justiciar, the earl of Sussex, visited Sligo, O'Donnell was able to claim the town as his own and "the Keys of the town were delivered up to him" (AFM).

Sir Henry Sidney's description of the town in 1566 states

that "the castle is fair and is the greatest of any that we have seen in an Irishman's possession . It standeth upon a good haven and hath been a great town full of merchant's houses, all of which are now disinhabited and in ruins. Therein is a large monastery of white friars and a bishop's palace" (J. Roy. Soc. Antiqs. Ireland II. (1870-1, 22-3). In 1574 the town was listed as destroyed by the Burkes (Brewer and Bullen 1870, 476) and in 1577 the merchants of the town sought permission to wall the town (Hamilton 1867, 124).

The town was burned by the Scots in 1582 (Hamilton 1867, 384, 386) but it was back in government hands in 1586 (Hamilton 1877, 242). In 1587 Bingham offered to wall the town at no expense to the crown if the queen would grant it a corporation (Hamilton 1871, 395). Bingham was loth to let the town back into the hands of O'Connor Sligo and rents for the years 1587-91 yielded almost £356 (Hamilton 1885, 389). In 1595, however, both the castle and the town reverted to O'Donnels's control when Ulick Burke murdered George Bingham there and gave it up to O'Donnell (AFM). Richard Bingham subsequently beseiged the castle unsuccessfully from the abbey (AFM).

With the arrival of Sir Oliver Lambert in June 1602 Sligo eventually settled into government hands. The town had been burned the day before by Donnell O'Connor and Lambert fortified himself in the abbey. He said that the town would be of importance to the province if walled but it could not be made strong because it was overlooked by hills and could

not defend ships in the harbour (Atkinson 1903, 419-20). During the efforts of James I to promote boroughs so that protestants would be elected to parliament Sligo was recommended but doubts were expressed as to whether the elected members would be protestants or not (Russel and Prendergast 1877, 161; Brewer and Bullen 1873, 136). The borough was eventually created in 1612 and it appears on a list of new boroughs dated 1613 (Russell and Prendergast 1877, 293, 334).

In 1641 Sligo was taken by MacDonagh but O'Crean's castle and Lady Jones' castle held out. The royalists billeted themselves in the houses adjoining St. John's Church and the siege lasted eight or ten days. Following the siege protestant prisoners brought to the gaol were killed. In the same year Sir Frederick Hamilton stormed part of the town, burnt the friary and killed some of the monks, but he retreated without capturing the town. In 1645 the town was captured by a parliamentary army under Sir Charles Coote. O'Crean's castle held out for terms but on its surrender the garrison was murdered (Wood-Martin 1889). The Irish failed to retake the town in October 1645 and it was held by the parliamentarians until May 1649 when it was captured for the Confederates by the Marquis of Clanricarde. A description of the town in 1652 says that "it was totally ruined by the late wars" and that there was nothing left but bare walls and cabins (Wood-Martin 1889, 99). In 1663, however, the town had 144 heaths paying tax.

The town lacked a garrison at the beginning of the Williamite wars but an impromtu one was formed by the local Protestant Association. This retreated to EnniskIllen leaving the town under its Jacobite commander Henry Lutterell. Believing a false report that 20,000 men were bearing doen on Sligo Lutterell abandoned the town and it was taken without opposition by the Williamites. In 1690, however, Sarsfield attacked the town and succeeded in capturing it. The town held out for the Jacobite cause until September 1691. The destruction was great, however, and a description of 1693 says that "most of the houses were broken down and not habitable; the customs house, excise office and all public buildings were destroyed (Reddington 1868, 555).

SLIGO

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVENTORY

1. STREETS & STREET PATTERN
2. MARKET PLACE
3. BRIDGES
4. INDUSTRIAL AREAS
   - DISTILLERY
   - IRONWORKS
   - LIMEKILN
   - MILLS
   - QUAYS
5. DOMESTIC HOUSES
   - LADY JONES' CASTLE
   - O'CREAN'S CASTLE
6. CIVIC BUILDINGS
   - CUSTOM HOUSE
   - GAOL
7. TOWN DEFENCES
8. CASTLE
9. STONE FORT
10. GREEN FORT
11. ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
12. DOMINICAN FRIARY
13. HOSPITAL
14. LIST OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

1. STREETS & STREET PATTERN

The oldest surviving map of Sligo town, dated 1689, provides the earliest evidence for its street plan. On the south side of the river the map shows two streets running east-west: Wine Street, and the long street formed by John Street, Castle Street and Abbey Street. The town was entered, to the south, along a short street which bifurcated to form High Street and Market Street on the west, and Old Market and Teeling streets on the east. Further west was another street running north-south, formed today by O'Connell Street, Harmony Hill, and Walker's Row. On the north side of the river the street plan was linear with one main thoroughfare, Stephen's Street, running east-west; north of this was Holborn Street and south of it was Bridge Street.

This plan lacks the regularity associated with plantation towns and it suggests that the medieval street pattern was incoporated into post-1603 Sligo. It is difficult, nonetheless, to extract information from the layout regarding the street pattern of the pre-seventeenth century town. Castle Street probably derived its name from the presence of fortified town houses, such as Crean's Castle and Lady Jones' Castle. Abbey Street led to the Dominican friary but it probably stopped at the boundary wall and simply permitted entry to the monastic precinct. It certainly did not continue as it does today because it would have cut through the south aisle and transept. The friary itself may have been outside the bounds of the medieval town, a situation which frequently

occurs in Anglo-Norman towns. The market cross, known as Leachtaspik, was situated in the market place, and this indicates that Market Street and High Street almost certainly retain their old alignments. It is unclear whether St. John's church was within the medieval town or not. Originally founded as a hospital it is likely to have been outside the town boundary. On the other hand it functioned as a parish church during the later Middle Ages and it is unusual to have a parish church outside of the town. In either event John Street probably follows an old alignment. Wine Street and O'Connell Street, with its unusually long burgage plots on the west side, lack a medieval appearance and they may have been laid out in the seventeenth century. Nonetheless, it is likely that there was settlement in the vicinity of the old bridge and close to the castle but its extent and layout are unclear from the street pattern.

2. MARKET PLACE

This was located in Market Street where there is a triangular expansion at the northern end of the street to accomodate it. In 1604 James Fullerton was granted a Saturday market and two fairs, on 24 July and 29 September. In 1607 James Craigie was granted a Tuesday market and two fairs, on 17 March and 1 August (Liber Munerum I, pt. 1, 35-6). The latter grant refers to the existence of a market cross known as Bishop O'Crean's cross or "Leachtaspik", which stood on the site now occupied by the 1798 Memorial (Kilgannon 1926,

113). The name Old Market Street is puzzling in this regard.

3. BRIDGES

The locational importance of Sligo derives from its suitability as a bridging point and a bridge has been in existence here from before 1188 when Rory O Canannain, lord of Tirconnel, was killed on it (AU). It is mentioned again in 1236 (A Conn, AFM) and in 1245 when the castle was built to protect it (AFM). Its continued existence throughout the Middle Ages is evident from further mentions in 1413 (A Conn, AFM), 1533 (AFM) and 1595 (AFM). The position of this bridge was almost certainly that occupied by "old bridge".

From 1427 the vicarage of Sligo is referred to as Munbrisg or "inter duos pontes", implying the existence of a second bridge (Twamlow 1906, 545), but its exact site is unknown. In 1652 the town is recorded as being divided into two parts by one bridge (Wood-Martin 1889, 99), probably the "old bridge". The "new bridge" was built between 1673 and 1687 (Kilgannon 1926, 102).

4. INDUSTRIAL AREAS

DISTILLERY

In 1618 a grant was made to make and sell aqua vitae at Sligo (Russell and Prendergast 1880, 262).

IRONWORKS

Sir James Caldwell complained that his ironworks had been pulled down by soldiers during the Williamite war (Reddington 1868, 175). Their site is unknown.

LIMEKILN

In 1662 the limekiln under Sligo fort was described as one of three places in county Sligo where it was legal to import and export from (Mahaffy 1905, 593). This suggests that it was located near the quay.

MILLS

The foundations of a watermill and a watercourse are mentioned in a grant of 1607-8 (Erck 1852, 375-6). The mill may have occupied the site marked distillery on the 1837 O.S. map (Went 1969, 58). The mill is mentioned again in 1674 (Liber Munerum I, pt. 1, 35-6).

QUAYS

In 1602 Sir Oliver Lambert described Sligo as having a large sheltered bay within which two hundred ships could ride at anchor (Mahaffy 1912, 420). He added that the harbour was two miles from the town and this suggests that, as in the case of Dublin, cargoes were transferred on to barges and smaller vessels for carriage to the town. Quays are not shown on the seventeenth century maps but in view of the clear

references to the town as a port it is to be assumed that some form of quayside was present. The earliest specific reference to a quay is in 1641 (Wood-Martin 1889, 113).

The first reference to the existence of a port at Sligo occurs in 1392 when John Symcock was licenced to carry eight tuns of wine to Sligo (Graves 1877, 8). By 1423 customs were being collected from the port and the appointments of collectors of customs and cockets for the towns of Galway and Sligo are recorded for 1448-51 and 1451-2 (Hatchell 1839, 223b, 265b, 267). The cocket continued to be an important source of revenue throughout the sixteenth century. The State Papers reveal that the use of the port by enemies and rebels was a constant source of worry. In 1588, for instance, three Spanish armada ships called into the port but they sank soon afterwards (Hamilton 1885, 520; Brewer and Bullen 1870, 472). Shortly after Sligo fell to O'Donnell in 1595 it was noted in official reports as the most suitable place for the landing of Spanish forces (Hamilton 1890, 410). During the early seventeenth century plans were repeatedly discussed for the construction of a fort on Coney Island to protect the harbour (Mahaffy 1912, 420; Brewer and Bullen 1873, 297).

5. DOMESTIC HOUSES

The first reference to domestic properties in Sligo is in 1289 when its 180 burgages were valued at £9 (MacNiocaill 1964, 113). When the town was burned in 1396 its buildings, both of wood and stone, were described as splendid (AFM). In

1566 Henry Sidney described the town as formerly "full of merchants houses, all of which are disinhabited and in ruins" (J. Roy. Soc. Antiqs. Ireland II (1870-71), 22-3). In 1633 the town had 130 houses and cabins (Wood-Martin "EnnisKillens", 191-208). In 1652, at the end of the Cromwellian wars, however, Sligo was described as "totally ruined, and nothing left of it but some few bare walls and a company of poor Irish Cabins to distinguish where it stood" (Wood-Martin 1889, 99).

LADY JONES' CASTLE

This is mentioned in the 1641 attack by MacDonagh. Its site is unclear but it was probably in the vicinity of O'Crean's castle. Castle Street is probably so-called because of the number of fortified town house or "castles" which stood on it.

O'CREAN'S CASTLE

This is mentioned in a letter from Captain Gerald Dillon to Sir Ulick Bourke in 1645, as a building which held out against the parliamentarians (Wood-Martin 1889, 76). Although frequently confused with the castle of Sligo it is likely from its name that it was a merchant's dwelling, probably a fortified town house similar to those which survive in Carlingford and Ardee. According to Wood-Martin (1889, 38) it stood a little back from the road at the corner between Abbey Street and Teeling Street. Wood-Martin adds that traces of

the foundations were observed when a drain was opened nearby. He also adds that the 1689 map indicates that it was protected by outworks.

6. CIVIC BUILDINGS

CUSTOM HOUSE

A petition of 1693 notes that the customs house, excise offices and all public buildings had been destroyed during the Williamite war (Wood-Martin 1889, 140). The site of the Custom House is unknown.

GAOL

The first reference to a purpose-built gaol is in 1633-6 (Wood-Martin 1889, 165). It was said to have been the scene of a massacre of protestants in 1641 (Wood-Martin 1889, 40). Its site is unknown.

7. TOWN DEFENCES

Sligo seems to have been only ever defended by defences of earth and timber. In 1246 O'Donnell burned the bawn of the town, a reference which would suggest that it was already defended by a ditch and palisade (A Conn; AFM). The town withstood sieges by O'Donnell in 1512 and 1513 which suggests that defences were then present (AFM; A. Conn). A further indication of the presence of defences at this time is the

fact that although O'Donnell used artillery in his attack in 1516, the town still held out for three days (AFM; AU).

During the later sixteenth century its defences were in poor repair. In 1577 the merchants of Sligo sought permission to wall the town (Hamilton 1887, 124). In 1584 Bingham reported that it was necessary to wall Sligo and in 1587 he offered to enclose the town without expense to the crown (Hamilton 1887, 542; 1877, 335). In 1602 Sir Oliver Lambert reported that Sligo would be important to the province if it was walled (Mahaffy 1912, 420) but little if anything seems to have happened until the Williamite War when earthen fortifications were constructed by Colonel henry between 1689 and 1691 (Wood-Martin 1889, 105-6 and 98). The course of the town defences is based entirely on a map prepared at this time and it is not known whether they followed the line of earlier defences or not.

Outside the defences, on the north, was a redoubt, probably to be equated with the third fort built by Lutterell in 1691 (Simms 1965, 125).

Outline of the Town Defences

There is no evidence for the course of the medieval defences. It may be noted, however, that these were probably confined to the south side of the river, enclosed a smaller area than the seventeenth century defences, and the Dominican friary was probably outside them. Evidence for the layout of the seventeenth century defences is based entirely on a map

of 1689 published in outline by Wood-Martin.

On the north side of the Garvoge this shows a stretch of wall with three projecting bastions on the hillslope west of the Green Fort. The defences continued east of the fort for a distance of about 150 m, into the grounds of the present County Hospital, where there was another bastion. From here they turned south and continued downslope to the river.

On the south side of the Garvoge, the eastern end of the defences seems to have been near the east end of Corkran's Mall. From here they ran in a southerly direction as far as St. Patrick's Convent (Convent of Mercy) grounds, where the convent graveyard may preserve part of the south-east angle bastion. This eastern defence was protected by three smaller bastions. From the Convent of Mercy grounds the wall ran south-west towards High Street, where presumably there was a gatehouse. West of High Street the wall ran towards St. John's Church but its exact course is unclear. On the west side of the town the defences seem to have continued along the east side of Adelaide and Union streets before turning eastwards to link up with the Stone Fort. John Street and Wine Street were protected by bastions and there was a single projecting bastion on the north wall in the vicinity of Emmet Place.

8. CASTLE

Sligo was the centre of an Anglo-Norman manor established

by Maurice FitzGerald in 1245. The castle was constructed in that year with stones taken from the nearby Trinity hospital (AU; AFM). In 1255 the castle was captured by Aed O Conchobair (A Conn; AFM). Refortified by Fitzgerald in 1269 (A Conn; cf. Orpen 1911-20, iii, 247), it was again captured by Aed in his campaign of 1271 (AFM; AU). In 1289 it was described as 'broken' (MacNiocaill 1964, 33-4) but it was rebuilt in 1293 by John FitzThomas (AFM; AU), FitzGerald's successor, at a time when the rivalry between him and Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, for control of Connacht was coming to a head. In 1294 the castle by levelled by Aed macOwen O Conchobair at the instigation of de Burgh. When peace was agreed between the two Anglo-Norman barons, the manor of Sligo became part of the de Burgh property. In 1310 de Burgh built a new castle which survived until the late sixteenth century and may be the ruined structure shown on Phillips' prospect of 1685 (NLI Ms. 3137 (35)).

In 1315, during the Bruce invasion, it was captured by Aed O Domnall, and later in the same year it was captured by Rory O'Conor who plundered the town (Orpen 1911-20, iv, 172). It remained in O'Conor hands after this date. Donal O Conchobair was killed after being imprisoned here in 1371/2 (A Conn; AFM; AU), Murtough O Conchobair died here in 1402 (AFM), and Donnchad O Conchobair died after a fall on flagstones outside the castle in 1419 (A Conn, AFM). In 1470 the sons of Owen O'Conor surrendered the castle to O'Donnell and recognised his overlordship (AFM). In 1471 and again in 1478 it was captured by MacWilliam Burke (AU; AFM) who

returned it to the O'Conors. In 1494 and 1495, and again in 1512 and 1513, it was besieged unsuccessfully by O'Donnell (A Conn; AFM; AU). In 1516, however, the castle surrendered to O'Donnell after he had battered the town with the aid of a ship full of ordnance (AFM). Except for a brief period in the 1530s the castle remained in O'Donnell hands until 1569. In 1566 it was described by Sir Henry Sidney as "the greatest of any that we have seen in an Irishman's possession" (JRSAI 00, 22-3).

In 1586 Bingham took control of Sligo for the queen and for the next two years he wrote constantly of the inadvisability of restoring it to O'Conor Sligo (Hamilton 1877, 242, 395, 472, 481, 500, 518). In 1590 it was described as a refuge without which the inhabitants would be forced to flee the area (Hamilton 1885, 363, 378). In 1595 George Bingham was murdered in the castle by Ulick mac Redmond na Scuaib Burke and it was surrendered to O'Donnell (Hamilton 1890, 326; AFM). Later in the year it was besieged by Richard Bingham wh wished to avenge the death of his brother. He attacked it with a siege tower, partly constructed from the rood screen of the friary, but was unable to capture it. Nonetheless O'Donnell decided to abandon the castle after slighting it (AFM).

In 1596 Donough O'Conor Sligo was given custody of the castle and he attempted to re-edify it although he was reported to have had no food, no masons and no carpenters (Atkinson 1893, 71). In 1597 he held it with a garrison

supplied by Sir Conyers Clifford who used it as a base before his defeat at Assaroe (Atkinson 1893, 284). It was recaptured in 1598, however, and supplies were landed here by the earl of Essex in 1599 to support O'Conor Sligo. The supplies came too late, however, and were captured by O'Donnell to whom O'Conor had surrendered. In 1602 the castle was described as in ruins and the extent of this damage is reflected in the fact that Sir Oliver Lambart took up his defensive position at the friary rather than the castle (Mahaffy 1912, 419). The subsequent history of the castle is unclear. Constables and warders are listed until 1611 and it was in the possession of O'Conor Sligo in 1615 (Russell and Prendergast 1880, 82). It is probably the structure shown on Phillips' map of 1685 and it may be the "crazie" castle referred to in 1689 (Simms 1965).

Nothing survives today of the castle and even its site has been a matter of dispute. O'Donovan recorded, however, that the Stone Fort was built on the site of the castle and perhaps it even incorporated parts of it. This is the most likely situation for a medieval castle where it controlled the strategically important ford and bridge.

9. STONE FORT

This fort was probably constructed in 1646 when £270 was allotted for the fortification of Sligo and Roscommon (Mahaffy 1901, 523). In 1655 the trustees for the Barracks were recorded in the Down Survey (Wood-Martin 1889, 91). In

1659 it was described as the new fort and it had a garrison of 60 men. Repairs were effected in 1665 (Mahaffy 1907, 707). At the start of the Williamite war the fort lacked a garrison but it was taken over by the Protestant Association who armed it with seventeen cannon (Simms 1965). During the ensuing siege the fort held out for five days before surrendering to the Jacobites.

According to O'Donovan the fort was constructed on the site of the mediaval castle. The site is now occupied by the Town Hall. No, the stone fort and the castle were both standing, in separate locations, in October 1689 (see Wauchope 1992, Patrick Sarsfield and the Williamite War. Irish Academic Press.)

10. GREEN FORT

Part of the money allocated in 1646 for the fortification of Sligo may well have been expended on this fort as Kerrigan (1981) suggests. In 1656 it is described as an earthwork in poor condition (Kerrigan 1981, 148) and it appears on the Down Survey map of the barony of Carbury made about this time. The fort formed an outwork of the defences during the Williamite wars when it was defended by Teige O'Regan for the Jacobites (Simms 1965, 125). Wood-Martin describes the outworks as enclosing nearly an acre, having a large bastion and platform at each corner, two gates defended by a half-moon, the whole surrounded by a deep fosse. At each angle within a half musket shot stood a small spur fortified on two sides but open at the gorge to shelter the advance posts. Wood-Martin (1889, 98) suggests that these outworks were constructed by the Jacobites.

Full description pending completion of Mr. Dunne's report.

11. ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

This seems to occupy the site of a hospital founded in 1242 (see below), which subsequently became a rectory attached to the Knights Hospitallers at Kilmainham. In 1427 plans were afoot to build a new hospital but it is unclear if this was ever completed or not. The rectory continued to function, however, and in 1490 the rector of Minbryse alias Seligech was absolved for a murder (Haren 1978, 320). In 1609 it was granted to the earl of Thomond (Erck 1852, 733). In the Royal Visitation of c.1615 the church is described as "recently repaired" (Tyndal 1962, 8). O'Rourke (1890, 301) states that the church was rebuilt in 1637 by Sir Roger Jones but it seems more likely that this was just a mortuary chapel (Tyndal 1962, 19). The present building was rebuilt by Richard Cassels c.1730.

Monument

Roger Jones. 1637.
West wall. Efigial tomb depicting Sir Roger Jones of Banada and his wife.

12. DOMINICAN FRIARY

Established in 1253 by Maurice fitzGerald (AFM) it was burned in 1360 and again in 1414. In the latter year an

indulgence was granted by the pope to aid its restoration (Twemlow 1904, 484). In 1418 the monastery is recorded as having been rebuilt by Brian MacDermot mac Donnchadha (AFM; A. Conn). The friars remained in possession after the Reformation and in 1568 Elizabeth allowed the friary to be preserved if the friars converted to secular clergy (Hamilton 1860, 361). The friars did not convert, however, and remained in occupation until it was captured by Richard Bingham in 1595 and used by him in his siege of the castle. He used much of the timberwork including the roodscreen and wood from the bedchambers of the Culdees to construct a siege engine (AFM). In 1602 it was fortified by Sir Oliver Lambert (Mahafy 1912, 419, 435).

Description

The friary is located on the east side of Sligo town and was probably set within its own precinct originally. The discovery of burials during the construction of Corkran's Kennedy Parade Mall indicates that the monastic complex extended as far as the river on the north side. Coarsed limestone masonry with limestone jambs and quoins except in the choir where the jambs are of sandstone. The remains consist of the church, cloister and parts of the domestic buildings. In terms of dating, the north and south walls of the choir, the north wall of the nave, and parts of the sacristy and chapter house are of thirteenth century date. The east window of the choir was probably inserted after the fire of 1414, while the rood-screen and tower were probably constructed shortly

threafter. The south aisle was built in the late fifteenth/ early sixteenth century but it seems to have replaced an earlier structure. The profiles of the bases and capitals of the cloister arcade indicate that it is unlikely to be earlier than c.1470; and the domestic buildings are probably of the same date. The transept was added after the construction of the south aisle and it can be ascribed to the early sixteenth century.

The CHURCH consists of the nave with side aisle and transept, and the chancel separated from the nave by the rood screen and tower. The east gable of the CHANCEL rises to its full height and is lit by a four-light reticulated window with an external label terminating in human heads and having another head in the centre. It has a pointed rear-arch with a moulded internal arch. Slender banded pilasters with moulded bases and foliate capitals decorate the angle of splay. This window replaced the original thirteenth century lancets. The stone altar was re-erected from its original stones in the nineteenth century and it stands to a height of 1 m. The front is highly carved anddis divided into nine cusped ogee panels with pilasters and crockets characteristic of the fifteenth century. The altar table is formed of five slabs, one of which is an insertion. The others depict a cross and carry the Lombardic inscription: IOHAN ..... ME FIERI FECIT (John ..... caused me to be made). The cross is set within a square frame, both of which are formed of two bands of interlace. The only features of the north wall are small plain doorways leading to the sacristy and cloister, and a

large recess, perhaps the founder's tomb, from which the dressings have been removed. The south wall was lit by eight large lancets with sandstone jambs, two of which are now blocked, the easternmost by the O'Connor Sligo monument, the second from the western end by one of the piers of the tower. The recesses which contained the piscina and sedilia are also in the south wall but they lack cut stone.

The TOWER, which is almost square i plan, is an insertion into the chancel. It is supported on pointed arches resting on four piers of cut stone and has a groined vault. It is entered by a small doorway in the north side wall above the level of the church roof. The upper portion is divided into two stages. In the lower stage rectangular lintelled windows in the east and west walls opened into the roof of the church near the ridge; a cusped ogee-headed window provided light on the south side. The upper floor (the belfry stage) has a twin-light cusped ogee-headed window in each wall. The parapet level is destroyed but its external drainage course survives.

The ROOD SCREEN occupied the eastern end of the nave and cut off the laity from the chancel. It is an insertion and may belong to the rebuilding of 1414. The space over the screen formed a gallery 2.15m wide across the church and was supported on two parallel arcades of pointed arches on octagonal columns, the soffit being a ribbed vaulted. Above this would have been the actual rood, a large crucifixion, perhaps the timberwork cut up by Bingham to make a siege

engine in 1595. The mouldings of the east side were partly cut away when the piers of the tower were built, indicating that the tower was inserted after the construction of the rood screen.

The NAVE is of the same width as the chancel and the roof over was originally continuous. Owing to the destruction of the western wall its exact length is uncertain. The north wall is pierced by three windows, each of two pointed lights with chamfered jambs and mullions. Immediately under the windows, externally, are traces of a string course which protected the roof of the original cloister. A later string course under which the roof of the present cloister terminated abuts against the windows at one-third of their height. The south wall of the nave has an arcade of three pointed arches opening into the side AISLE and transept. These have outer and inner ribs chamfered on both sides. The piers are rectangular with chamfered corners and moulded capitals. The eastern half-pier is rounded and looks like thirteenth century work but the capital is of fifteenth century style. It suggests that the present aisle and transept replaced an earlier aisle. The walls of the nave and chancel had stepped parapets, rising from a drainage course below.

Only the east wall of the TRANSEPT and the arch which connected it to the aisle remain. The east wall has two recessed windows which lighted the altars of two side chapels. An aumbry and piscina exist in the wall space

between the windows and there is a second piscina at the south-east angle of the transept. The form of the flattened arch opening from the aisle into the transept indicates that it is not earlier than the sixteenth century.

The CLOISTER GARTH was almost rectangular. The cloister arcade is formed of double shafted pillars and plain chamfered arches. It is of fifteenth century style but it does not appear to be as early as the restoration ater the burning of the church in 1414. The east side and most of the north and south sides survive. The arcades and the ambulatories or vaulted walks behind them are an integral part of the claustral buildings, i.e. the arcade supports one wall of the upper storey, the rooms of which were the combined width of the ambulatory and ground floor rooms.

Slightly more than half of the vaulted SACRISTY survive on the north side of the chancel. Beside it is a passage which originally contained the stairway leading to the domestic quarters of the prior overhead. West of the sacristy is the vaulted VESTRY, lit by a single light in the east wall and having a wall-cupboard in the west wall.

The CHAPTER ROOM is covered by a plain slightly pointed vault across the centre of which is a cut stone arch.This arch is in line with the outer wall of the adjoining buildings and indicates the size of the original thirteenth century chapter room. The eastern extension contains the lower portion of a three-light window, the dressings of which are of sandstone.

Enough survives of the buildings north of the chapter room to indicate that it consisted of a range of small vaulted chambers, each with a separate entrance. At the north-eastern angle is a square tower containing a spiral stair which gave access to the dormitories above. The total extent of this wing is uncertain because the northern end was pulled down in the nineteenth century and the foundations removed in making graves. It is possible that there was a second yard such as survives at Ross Errilly, Co. Galway.

The REFECTORY was situated on the upper floor and the place for the reader's pulpit may be seen over the northern cloister arcade. It was placed in the thickness of the wall and opens into the room by three small arches with octagonal columns. Light was provided by an oriel window supported on a projecting bracket

Monuments

Cross-slab 1. ?13th/14th cents.

Nave. Limestone. Trapezoidal with concave bevel. The edge is defined by a flat-roll moulding and the sinister top is broken away. Much of the original false relief design is obliterated by an eighteenth century inscription: PRAY ... SOVL OF ... FERRALL ALI[AS] McDONOGH WHO DYED THE 22 OF MARCH ANNO DOM 1721. The original design appears to have consisted of an incised cross but only the shaft and an eroded panel of curving foliage survive. The foliage is on the sinister side and there is a possible quatruped on the dexter.

L. 122. W. at base 43. Est. W. at top: . T. 15.5 cm

Cross-slab 2. ?13th/14th cents.

Nave. Limestone. Trapezoidal with concave bevel. In two pieces. The outline of the top is defined by an incised line. The surface is worn but there are traces of an incised foliate cross-head.

L. 193. W. at head 61.5 tapering to 52 cm at base. T. 16 cm.

Cross-slab 3. 13th/14th cents.

Sacristy. Upper half of an incised limestone cross-slab. Badly eroded. The shape of the cross-head cannot now be determined. Bevelled at top with concave bevel at sides. L. 83. W. at base. 55. T. 10 cm.

Cross-slab 4. ?13th/14th cents.

Nave. Limestone, in two pieces. Trapezoidal with concave bevel. The outline is defined by a line. The surface is badly eroded but there are traces of a highly decoratd cross-head. The shaft is incised and its dexter side is decorated with a leafy scroll.

L. 175. W. at top 56 tapering to 42 cm at base. T. 12.5 cm.

Cross-slab 5. 13th/14th cents.

Nave. Limestone. Trapezoidal with convex bevel, outlined by a line on either side. Otherwise the slab is plain. The form suggests a pre-1400 date but the convex bevel is unusual at such a date.

L. 192. W. at top 71.5 tapering to 62 at base. T. 15 cm.

Cross-slab 6. 13th/14th cents.

Against N. wall of chancel. Limestone, trapezoidal, in two pieces. The surface is covered with incised lines but these do not appear to form a pattern. It is plain except for a band of nailhead around the edge.
L. 177. W. at top 48 tapering to 37 at base. T. 13 cm.

Cross-slab 7. ?13th/14th cent.
In chancel recess. Limestone. Upper fragment of cross-head. Relief decoration showing a cross in circle but the top part and lower corners are broken away. Within the circle are smaller arcs enclosing oval and ogival shapes.
L. 64. W. at head 68 tapering to 60 at base. T. 11 cm.

Cross-slab 8. 13th/14th cents.
Sacristy. Bevelled limestone slab, in two pieces. Cross-slab in relief. Both the cross-head and the base are missing.
Surv. L. 143. W. at surv. heaad. 59 tapering to 43 at base.

Cross-slab 9. 14th/15th cents.
Nave. Limestone. Trapezoidal with beveled edges. The dexter top corner is broken as is a small section of the sinister top. The decoration consists of a cross-head formed with four cusped bracelets. The cusps continue along the slab edge forming four quatrefoils. The cusps are emphasised with internal sunken triangles. The lower quatrefoils are completely out of shape, however. The cross-shaft is missing but the base terminates in three cusped legs.
L. 175. Est. W. at top: tapering to 40 cm at base. T. 12 cm.

Graveslab 1. ?13th/14th cents.

In chancel recess. Fragment of a trapezoidal limestone slab with concave bevel and flat roll-moulding. An incised band is all that survives of the cross-shaft; at its top is part of an elaborate foliage pattern. On the dexter side is the hilt-portion of a sword.
L. 47. Surviving W. at top 54 tapering to 51 at base. T. 12.5 cm.

Graveslab 2. ?13th/14th cents.
Sacristy. Broken limestone fragment of a tapering slab. Plain. Surviving L. 54. W. at head 58 tapering to 57 at the foot. T. 12 cm.

Grave-slab 3. ?13th/14th cents.
Sacristy. Trapezoidal limestone slab bearing a faded eighteenth century inscription. The base is incomplete. L. 139. W. at head 55 tapering to 49 at base. T. 12 cm.

Grave-slab 4. ?13th/14th cents.
Sacristy. Lower part of a limestone trapezoidal slab. Plain. L. 111. W. at surv. top 41 tapering to 31 at the base. T. 14 cm.

Grave-slab 5. ?13th/14th cents.
Vestry. Upper part of a bevelled trapezoidal slab. Limestone. W. at top 48 tapering to 43 at the surviving base. H. 69. T. 16 cm.

Grave-slab 6. ?13th/14th cents.
North cloister arcade. Base of a trapezoidal limestone slab with concave bevel. Plain. Surv. L. 80. W. at surv. top 45

tapering to 39 at base. T. 17 cm.

Graveslab 7. ?15th cent.

In transept. Limestone. Trapezoidal. The outline is defined by a flat roll-moulding delimited by an incised line. The relief decoration consists of two quatrupeds, probably lions, now somewhat worn. Lombardic inscription placed between the animals:

HIC IACET GIG..'KELLIC ET ..A:FI'LIA JOHANAS DIA'LES ORDINIS' AMICI.

L. 188. W. at top 60 tapering to 42 cm at base. T. 11 cm.

Grave-slab 8. 15th cent.

Chancel. Limestone. Trapezoidal with concave bevel. It is now so worn that the detail of the decoration and inscription are lost. It was drawn by Cochrane, however, in the nineteenth century. It is unusual in having the narrow end functions as the head and it may have been re-used. Below the Lombardic inscription is a crucifixion with Mary and St. John. Below this is a quadruped, and below that a pattern of rosettes. Hunt (1974, 218) read the inscription as:

HIC IACET UORDE MCCATUELY QUI ME FIE FECIT

L. 175. W. at top 44 expanding to 56 at base. T. 13 cm.

Tomb fragment. 15th/16th cents.

Against chancel's N wall. Limestone. Broken side-panel ornamented with three cusped ogee-headed niches.

L. 109. H. 89. T. 12.

Cormac O'Craian. 1506.

Nave. Mensa tomb with decorated front panel and canopy above. The mensa top is in three parts and is plain except for a convex moulding on its front face. The mensa top bears traces of a late inscription and was obviously re-used. The tomb front is outlined by an outer chamfered moulding and it is decorated with nine figures, all of which (except for the central crucifixion) stand in cusped ogee-headed niches. The niches are topped with plaited vine finials and have leafy crockets. The crucifixion is in an ogee niche. The figures are (l. to r.) St. Francis; St. Catherine of Antioch; a female saint holding a ?sword; Our Lady; Crucifixion; St. John; St. Michael; St. Peter; an archbishop with the right hand raised in blessing. Gothic inscription immediately below the mensa:

[HIC IAC]ET [C]ORMACUS OCRAIAN ET [G]EHON[NA] [A]ENOASA [UXO]R [EIUS] ANo DOI M CCCCC VI.

Here lies Cormac O Craian and Johanna Ennis his wife, A.D. 1506.

The canopy is formed from cusped flamboyant tracery byt only the upper part survives and it shows an ogee above two mouchettes, with two cusped mouchettes below. The masonry behind the tracery has been rebuilt and a Crean heraldic plaque inserted. (Hunt 1974, 218).

L. of tomb chest 233. H. 99. W. of mensa 69 cm.

Donat O Suibne. 1577.

In chancel recess. Rectangular limestone slab with concave bevel. The upper half portrays two armed standing figures one carrying a pole-arm the other a sparth and both having swords. the decoration on the lower half shows a quadruped with a long tail, knotwork and an IHS. Below this again is a representation of St. Peter, between two panels of flamboyant fenestration. Hunt (1974, 219) gives the inscription as:

HIC IACET DONAT O SUIBNE CU SUA UXORE ELIA NIGRA IN HARCE [15]77. EUGENI ....AIN CARPENTARIUS FECIT.

L. 175. W. 55. T. 13 cm.

Crean heraldic plaque. 1606.
Limestone, rectangular. Behind canopy of O'Crean tomb in nave. Achievement showing the Crean and French coats impaled. Roman inscriptiom:

COR MVNDVM CREAIN ME DEVS
ET SPIRITV RECTVM IN NOVA
..... IN VIS TRIBVS MEIS

H. 71. W. 68 cm.

O'Connor Sligo. 1624.
This monument has been fully described by Cochrane in the Appendix to the 82nd Report of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland (1913-14), 14-15.

Crean and Jones heraldic plaque. 1625.
Rectangular limestone achievement. The crest is lacking and the date 1625 is inserted in its place. Inscription:

WEE TWO ARE ONE BY HIS DECREE

THAT RAIFNETH FROM ETERNITY

WHO FIRST ERECTED HAVE THESE STONES

WEE ROBVCRE CREAN ELICA JONES

85x80. T. 16 cm.

Tomb fragment. 17th cent.

Underneath E window. Limestone. Decorated bearded figure, probably a saint. 27x25x12 cm.

Jones heraldic plaque. 17th cent.

Under tower. Rectangular limestone achievement.

65x54. T. 11 cm.

Crean heraldic plaque. 17th cent.

Under tower. Rectangular limestone plaque. Fragmentary inscription: .....VNDVM CREAN ME DEVS'.....M RECTVM IN NOVA IN VIS CER...

65x65. T. 16 cm.

Crean heraldic plaque. 17th cent.

Under tower. Rectangular limestone coat.Small projection at base with the initials . C.

30x30. Projection: 16x10. T. 16 cm.

Font.

Chancel recess. Rectangular. Broken. One side is straight and the other chamfered. 32x34. H. 29. Depth of bowl. 19. Diam. at mouth 25 cm.

13. HOSPITAL

Founded in honour of the Trinity in 1242 (A Conn), much of its building stone was requisitioned in 1245 for the construction of the castle (AFM), after which it seems to have been abandoned. The property remained as a vicarage, however, and in 1427 Bernard Y Flannagain asked permission to found a hospital and a contiguous chapel of St. Mary the Virgin and St. John the Baptist in place of Minbrisq "alias inter duos pontes sive de castro Sligenc" (Twemlow 1904, 545). This was to be a hospital and chapel with a bell, bell-tower and other offices. It is not clear if it was ever built, however. In 1428 the "parochial rectory" in the rural lands between the two bridges is reported as void because the rector MacDonagh had joined the Dominicans at Sligo and the fruits were being usurped (Twemlow 1909, 52). Enquiries were conducted into this situation in 1430 and 1440 but their outcome is not recorded (Twemlow 1909, 178; 1912, 121).

14. LIST OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

1. Flat copper axehead of Lough Ravel type. From Sligo, county Sligo. Chadwick Museum, Bolton. Harbison 1969a, 14: no. 143.

2. Flat copper axehead. From Sligo, county Sligo. NMI 1959:65. Harbison 1969a, 14: no. 144; JRSAI 91 (1961), 72: no. 65.

3. Flanged bronze axehead of Ballyvalley type. From Sligo,

county Sligo. NMI 1959:92. Harbison 1969a, 47: no. 1349.

4. Bronze "spur-shaped" bridle pendant. Found at Sligo, county Sligo. NMI 1880:53.

5. Hoard of forty-six silver coins, Anglo-Irish and English, the latest being of Henry VIII (1509-47). Found at Sligo Abbey, county Sligo, in 1948. NMI and Sligo Public Library.

6. Human bones. According to Wood-Martin 1882, 194-6) cartloads of human bones were removed in 1880 during streetworks along the roadway between the Imperial Hotel and the upper weir.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL

The Problems

Sligo is important to archaeological research for two reasons. Firstly, it was the site of the most important Anglo-Norman town in north Connacht. Secondly it was the only Anglo-Norman town which prospered under Gaelic control in the later Middle Ages. Excavation here could reveal significant information about the economy and layout of the thirteenth cenruty town and, in particular, about how life in the town changed or accomodated to Gaelic control in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Much of Sligo's street pattern seems to retain its late medieval layout but it is difficult to be certain about the town's exact form prior to 1603. Was O'Connell Street added

in the seventeenth century? Do Castle Street and High Street follow their original medieval courses as suggested or were they redesigned in the early seventeenth century? What was the nature of the road surface at various times? Streets should be examined archaeologically if at all possible because they permit not only an examination of their surfaces but also allow the results of excavations on one side of a street to be linked with those on the other. This enables the reconstruction of entire streetscapes in the manner which has proved so successful at Novgorod in Russia.

Nothing is known of the form of the first bridges but it is likely that as at many towns the foundation piles survive in the waterlogged deposits beside the reiverbank and in the river itself.

Historically, the castle was one of the most important in north Connacht. It was a substantial stone structure and almost although no traces survive above ground today its foundations almost certainly survive below ground in the vicinity of the Town Hall.

Next to nothing is known of the form or size housing in Sligo prior to 1700. The surviving accounts of O'Crean's castle and Lady Jones' castle indicate that there were fortified town houses within the town probably similar to those which still survive at Carlingford and Ardee. But stone houses of this form were probably always few in numberand the majority of structures would have been of wood. Nonetheless, with correct excavation, the form and layout of wooden

buildings can be discovered. It is important to know what sort of buildings the medieval inhabitants of Sligo lived in and how these changed through time. Only when such houses have been found can assessments be made of the impact of native Irish, British and continental building techniques on Sligo's craftsmen. A great deal of information about changes in building methods and fashions can also be derived from stratified sites in which the remains of successive houses are preserved. A great deal remains to be learned about Sligo's seventeenth century houses also.

The course of the town defences outlined above needs to be checked by excavation to determine whether it is correct or not. The town seems to have been protected only by earthen defences at all tomes and while these have left no surface traces, the external fosse should still be detectable archaeologically. It is important to remember that the medieval defences of Sligo almost certainly enclosed a smaller area than those of the seventeenth century and since we know nothing about their extent evidence will only conme to light accidentally.

St. John's Church (C. of I.) is almost certainly on the site of the medieval parish church but it is likely that the archaeological deposits have sufferred much from the interment of burials. The structure of the Dominican friary survives in very good condition. Again it should be remembered, however, that this building stood within a larger precinct and the houses which adjoin the graveyard on the

north and east probably cover archaeological deposits.

Archaeological Potential

Archaeology does not consist solely of excavation nor does it stop at ground level. The archaeological evidence for Sligo's past comprises all the physical remains of man's activities on the site of the town, from its first use as a ford to the present day. The surviving street pattern, property boundaries and standing buildings constitute the uppermost levels of the archaeological stratigraphy, and all are relevant to the study of the town's past. Documentary evidence also plays a role in reconstructing the history of early Sligo, but for the wide range of human activity omitted from the written accounts and for the early periods without documentation archaeology is our only source of information. The evidence of archaeology and topography, of architecture and of documents, is complementary; each gains from the existence of the others and the unrecorded destruction of one form of evidence not only removes part of a town's archive but also diminishes the usefullness of those which are preserved.

The survey of its archaeology indicates that the site of the town has been the scene of human activity in Prehistoric, Early Historic, Medieval and post-Medieval times. Both documentary sources and the known archaeological remains indicate that the town was occupied continuously from c.1180 into the post-medieval period. With the exception of the Dominican friary and the Green Fort, all other standing

archaeological remains have been removed. Although the destruction of buildings above ground has been substantial, the street pattern of the seventeenth-century town is largely intact and archaeological deposits are likely to exist over a wide area of the town. Accordingly there is the strong likelihood of recovering house foundations, refuse pits, industrial areas, and workshops.

ARCHAEOLOGY, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

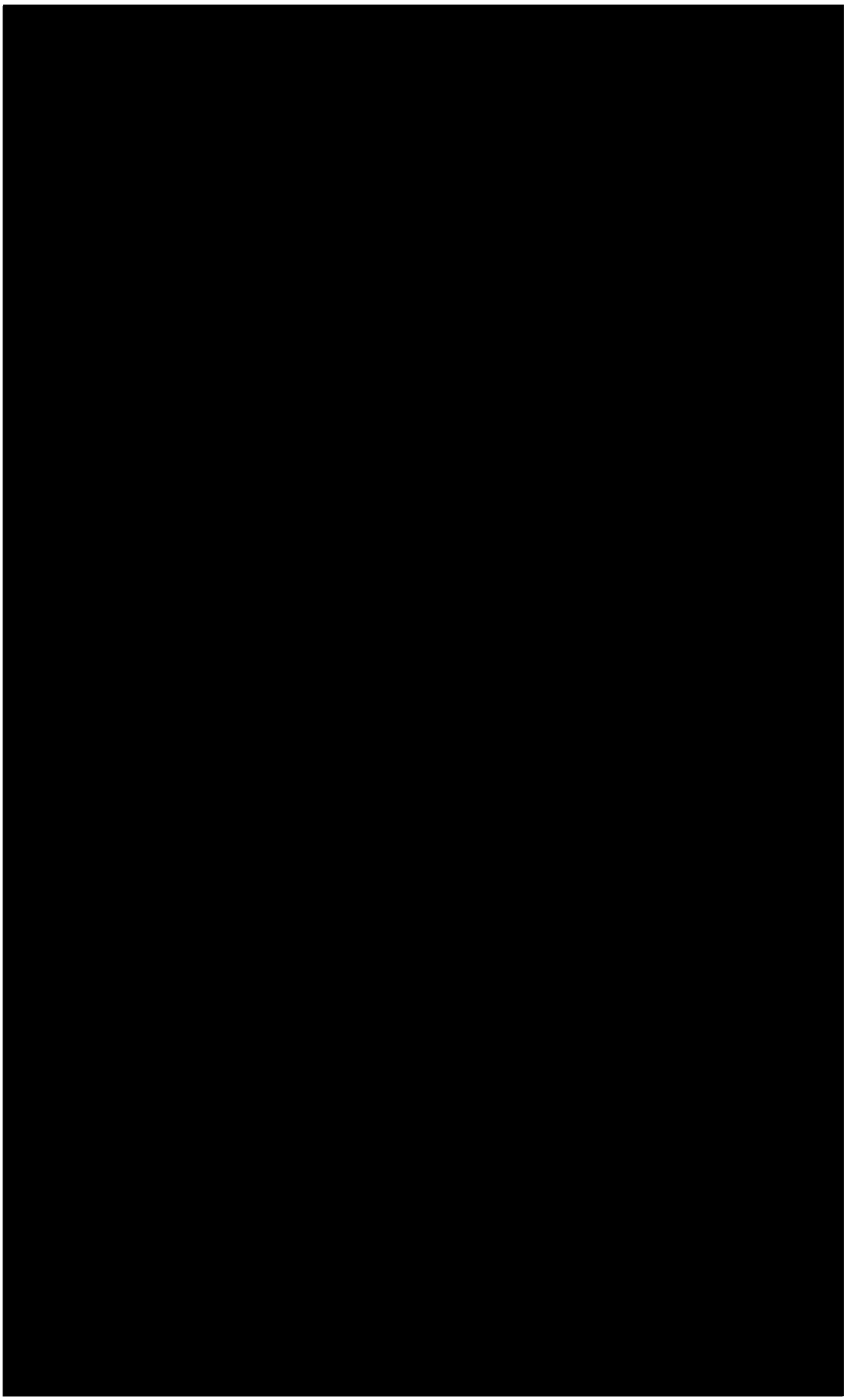
It is evident from the foregoing that archaeology is an important means of learning about Sligo's past and of understanding the character and detailed form of the town today. This is more than just an academic pursuit because without an appreciation of the factors which have shaped Sligo's present character, steps taken to conserve that character will not be wholly effective, or worse, features basic to its unique identity may be unwittingly destroyed.

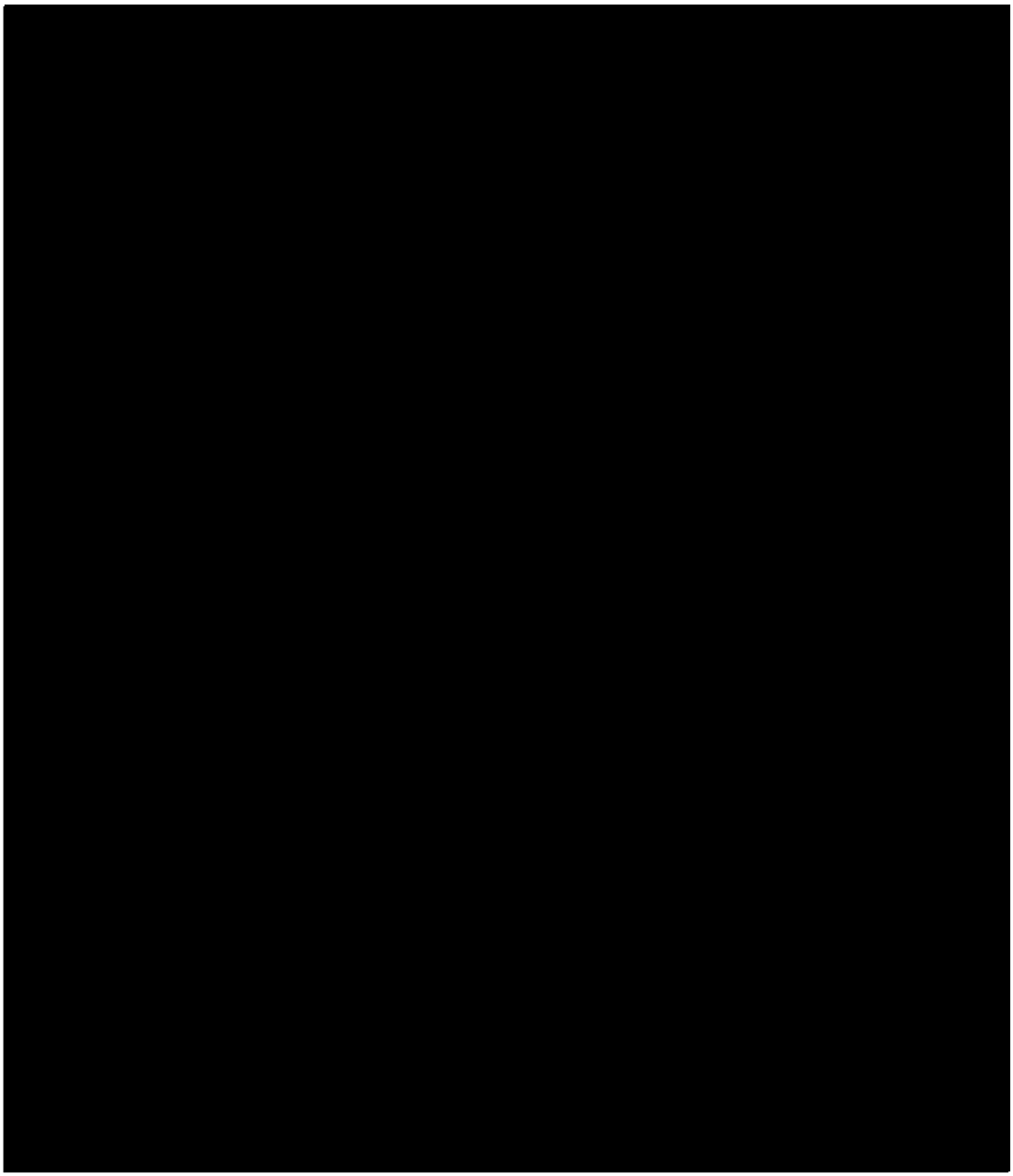
The protection of buried archaeological evidence presents serious problems for not only is there the pressure of redevelopment and the high value of urban properties with which to contend, but the sites themselves are often difficult to define or evaluate; their full archaeological potential may only become apparent when an excavation is undertaken in advance of development or by observations make while development is in progress. The friary alone enjoys statutory protection as a scheduled National Monument but because of the difficulties of scheduling urban properties,

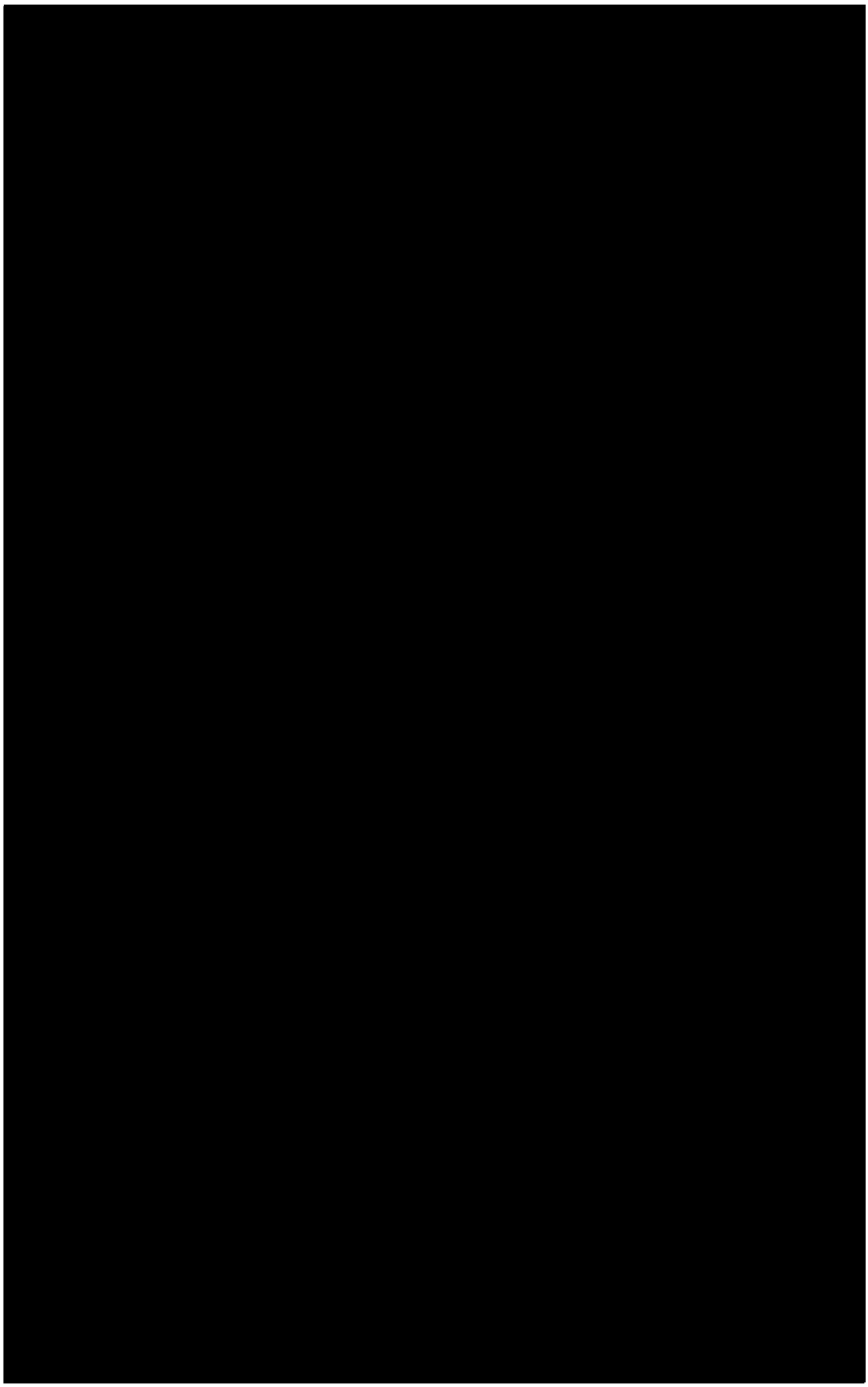
other sites within Sligo are unlikely to be given this protection. It is crucial, therefore, that a concerted effort should be made to safeguard its archaeological heritage and that adequate provision is made for investigation in advance of any redevelopment. This is best achieved by making the realisation of Sligo's archaeological potential one of the objectives of its development plan. The objective may then be achieved by judicious use of planning constraints and by conditions attached to planning consents.

Area of Archaeological Potential

The shaded portion of the accompanying map delimits the area of archaeological potential within modern Sligo. In the absence of archaeological excavations within this area, however, little can be said of their extent and depth. This area shaded area is based on the size of the town in 1689 and the extent has been continued outside the walls slightly in order to allow for a possible fosse. On the north side of the town the area around Holborn Hill has been included because the 'redoubt' shown on the 1689 map may still survive in the green of the housing estate. On the east of the town the area around the megalithic tomb in Abbeyquarter North has been shaded, and on the west the area in the vicinity of the fine ringfort at Rathedmond.







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JRSAI Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland.

PRIA Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy.

UJA Ulster Journal of Archaeology.

Other Abbreviations

NLI National Library of Ireland

NMI National Museum of Ireland

PROI Public Record Office of Ireland

RIA Royal Irish Academy

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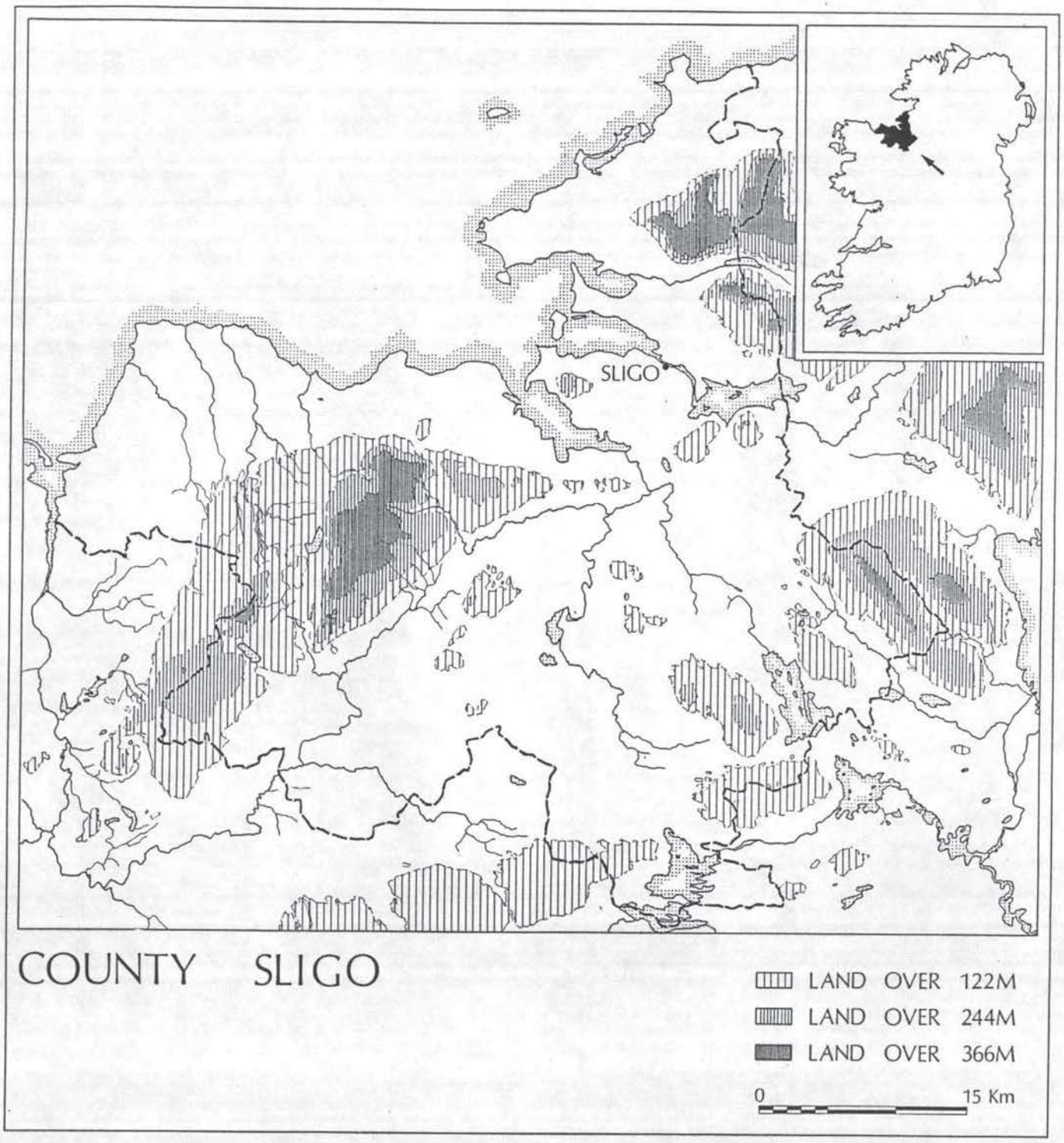

Fig. 1. County Sligo: Location map.

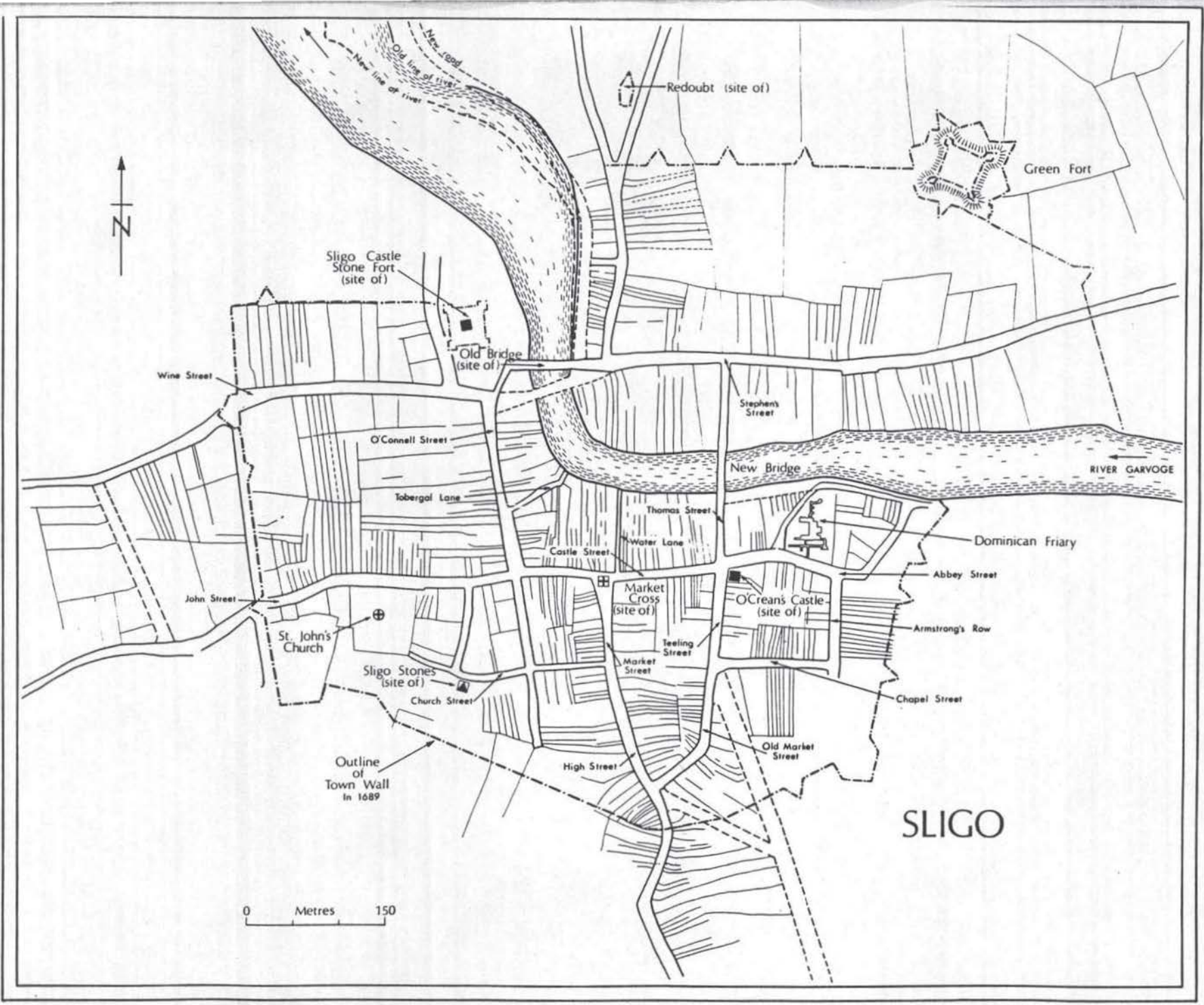

Fig. 2. Sligo: Outline map showing the major archaeological features.

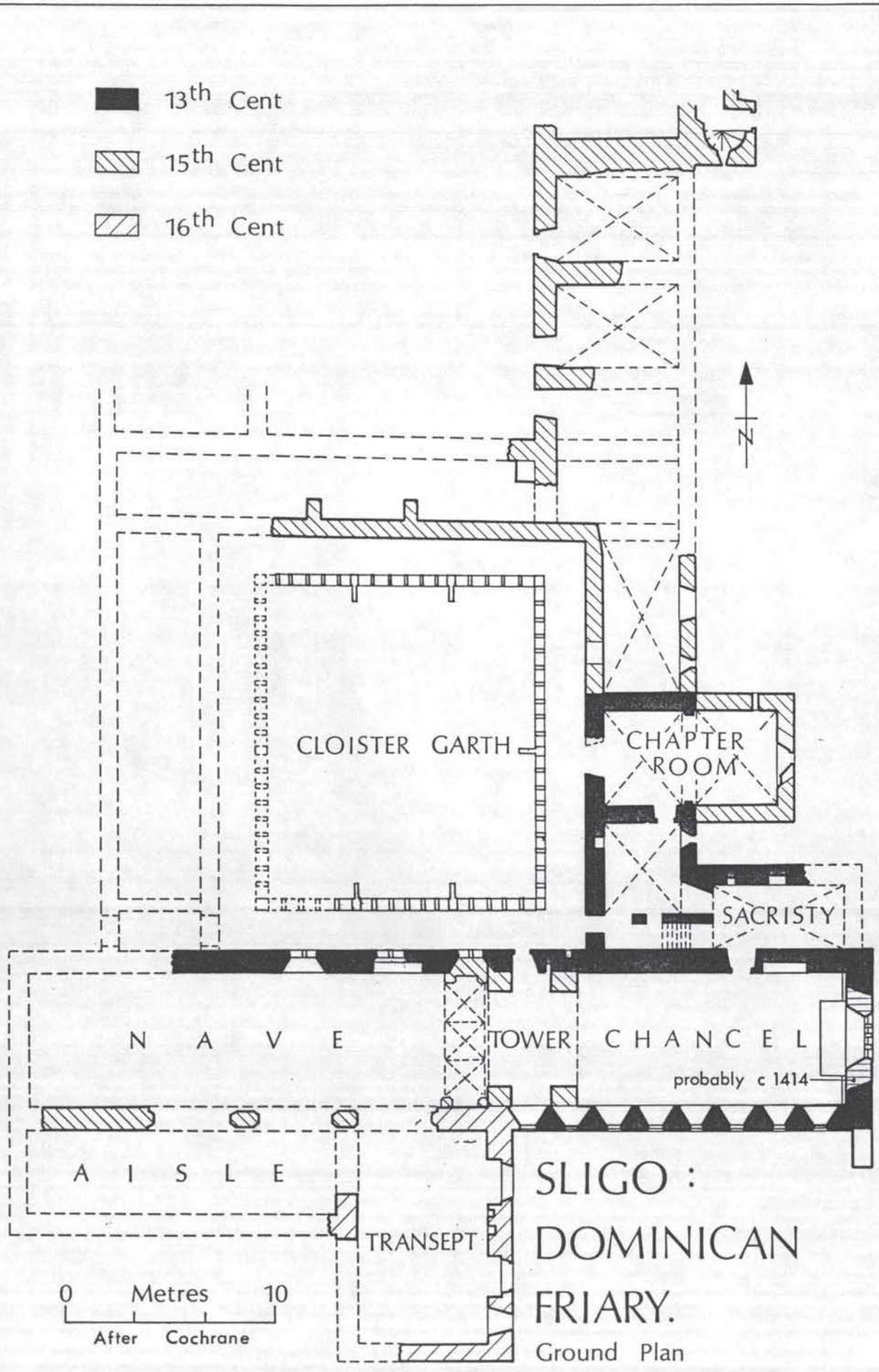

Fig. 3. Dominican friary: ground plan (after Cochrane).

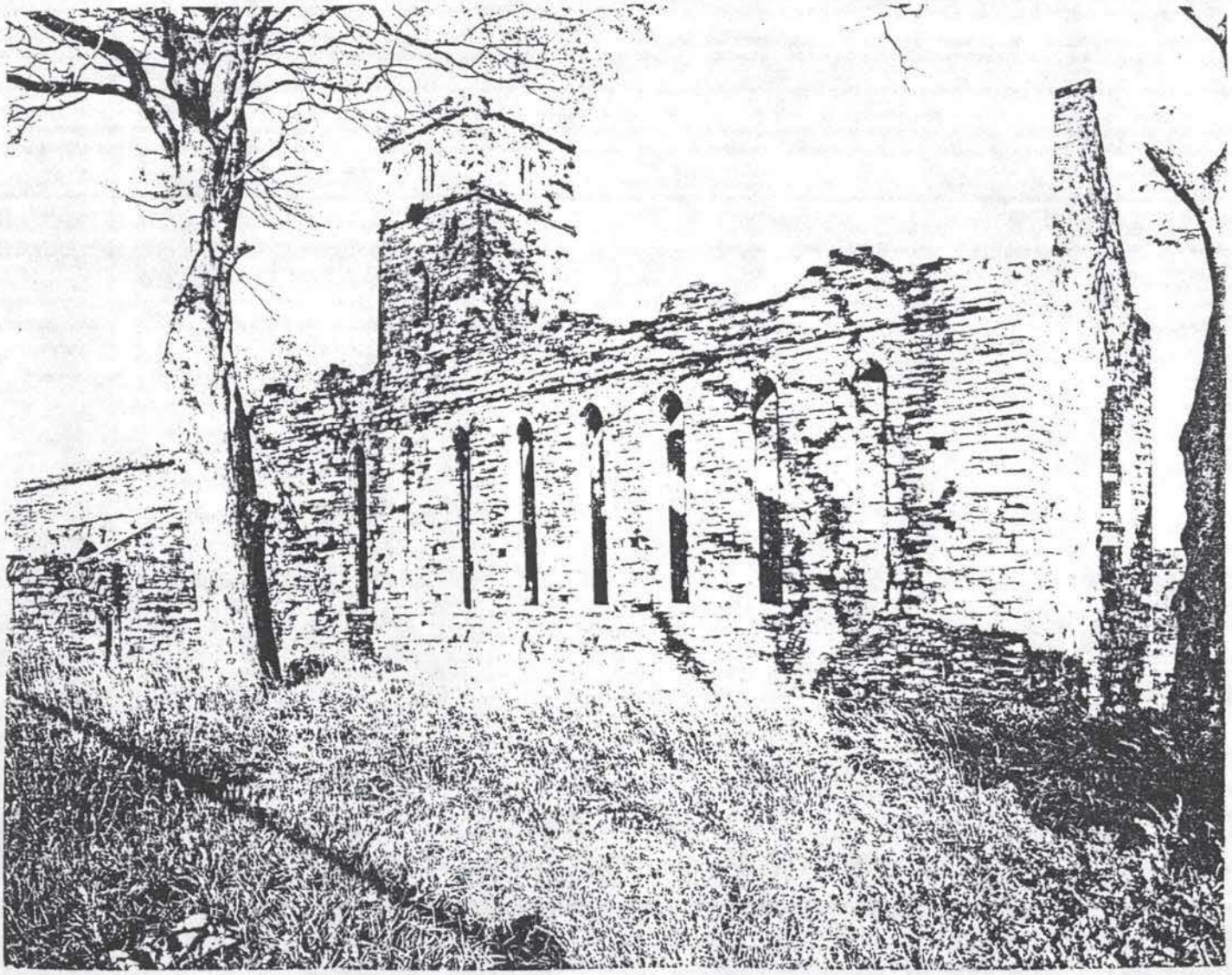

Fig. 4. Dominican friary from south-east.

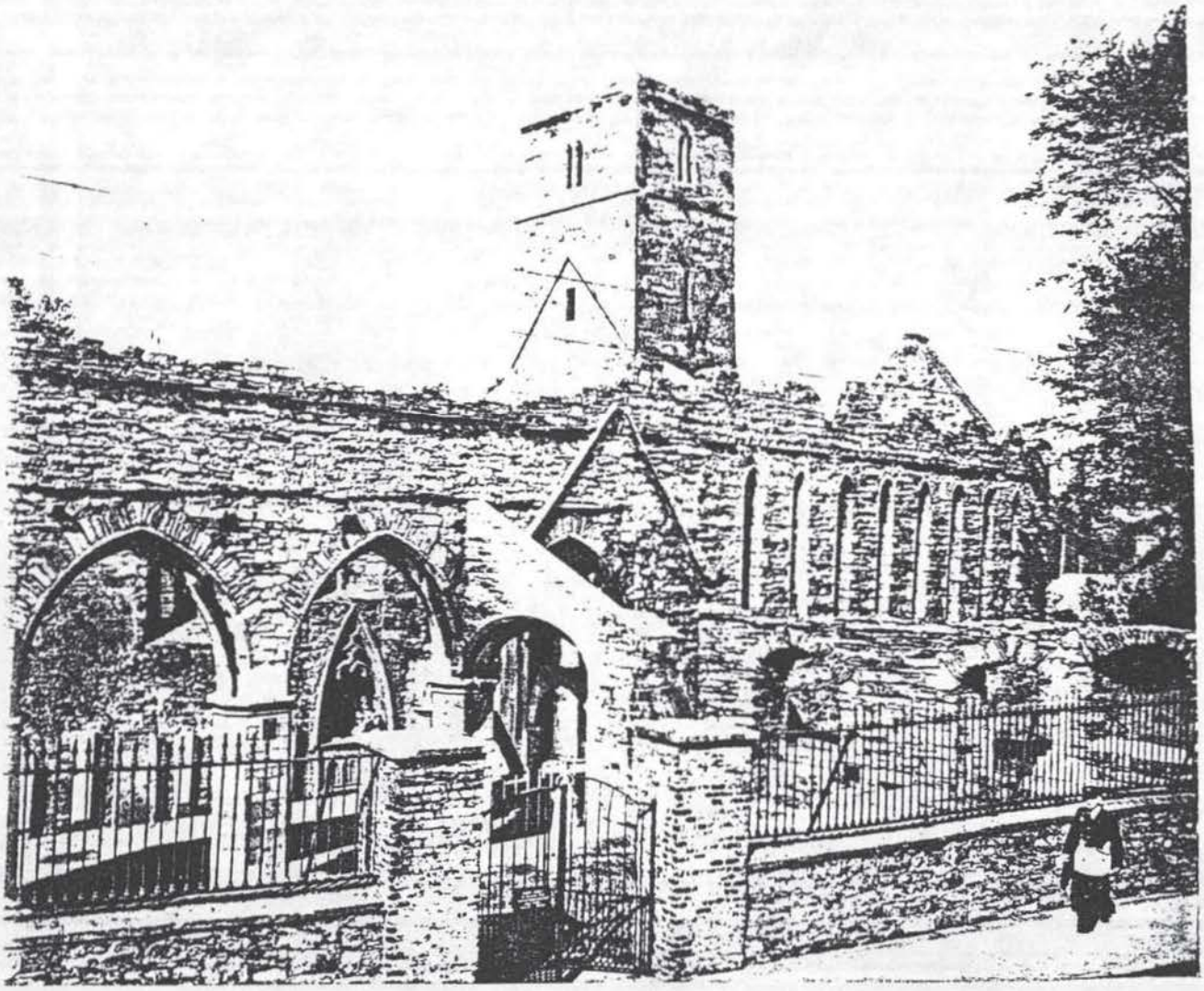

Fig. 5. Dominican friary from south-west.

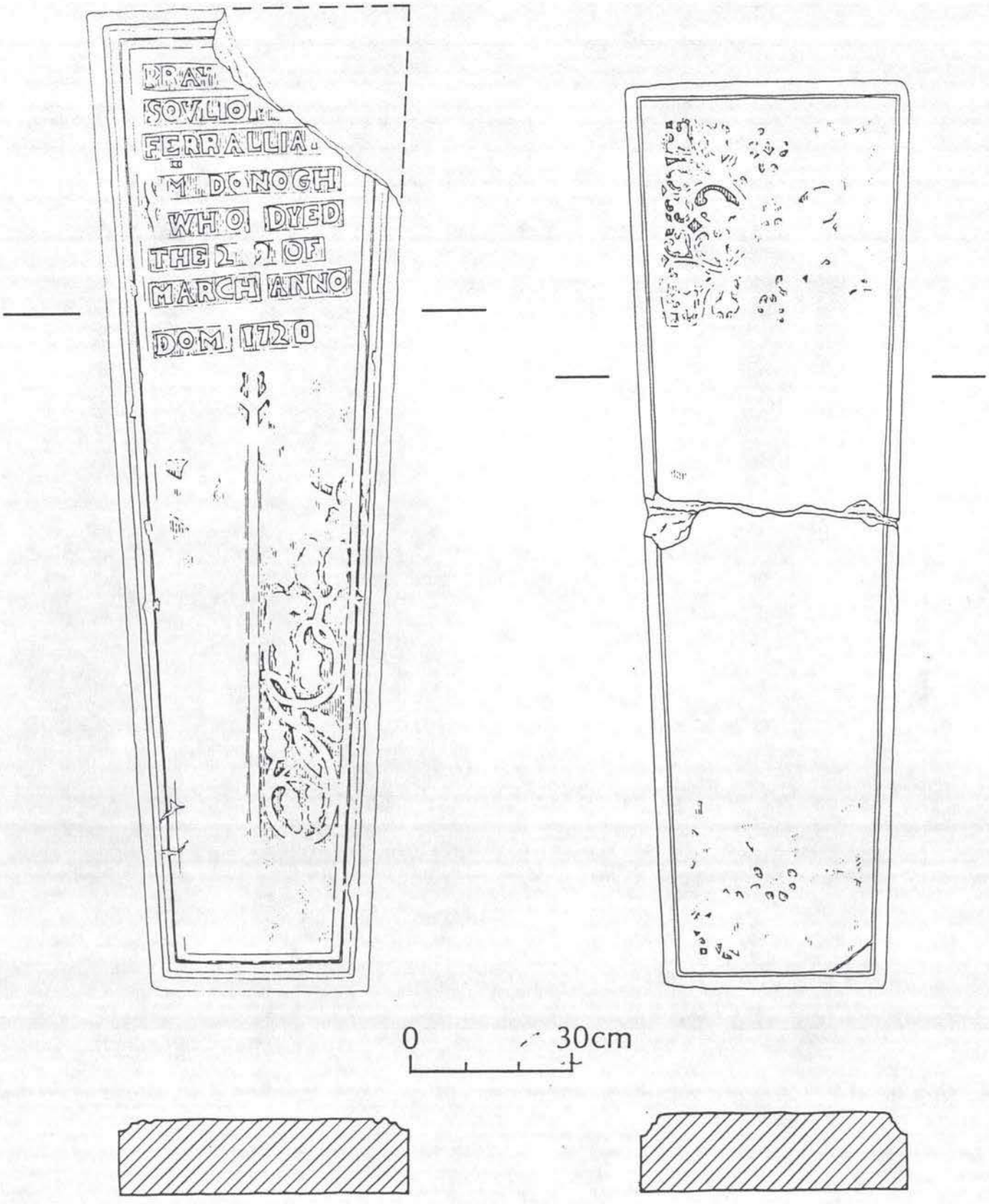

Fig. 6. Dominican friary: cross-slabs 1 and 2.

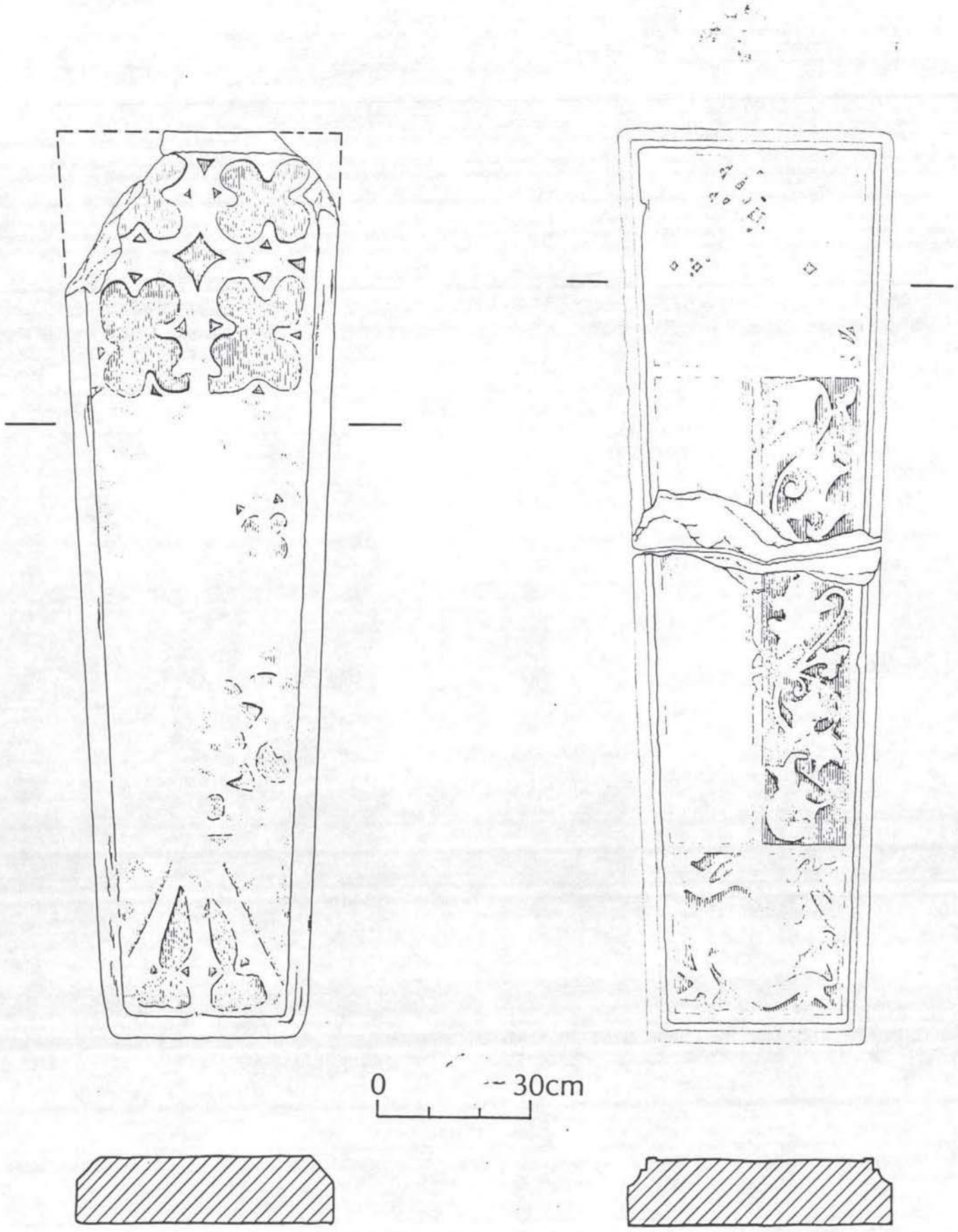

Fig. 7. Dominican friary: cross-slabs 9 and 4.

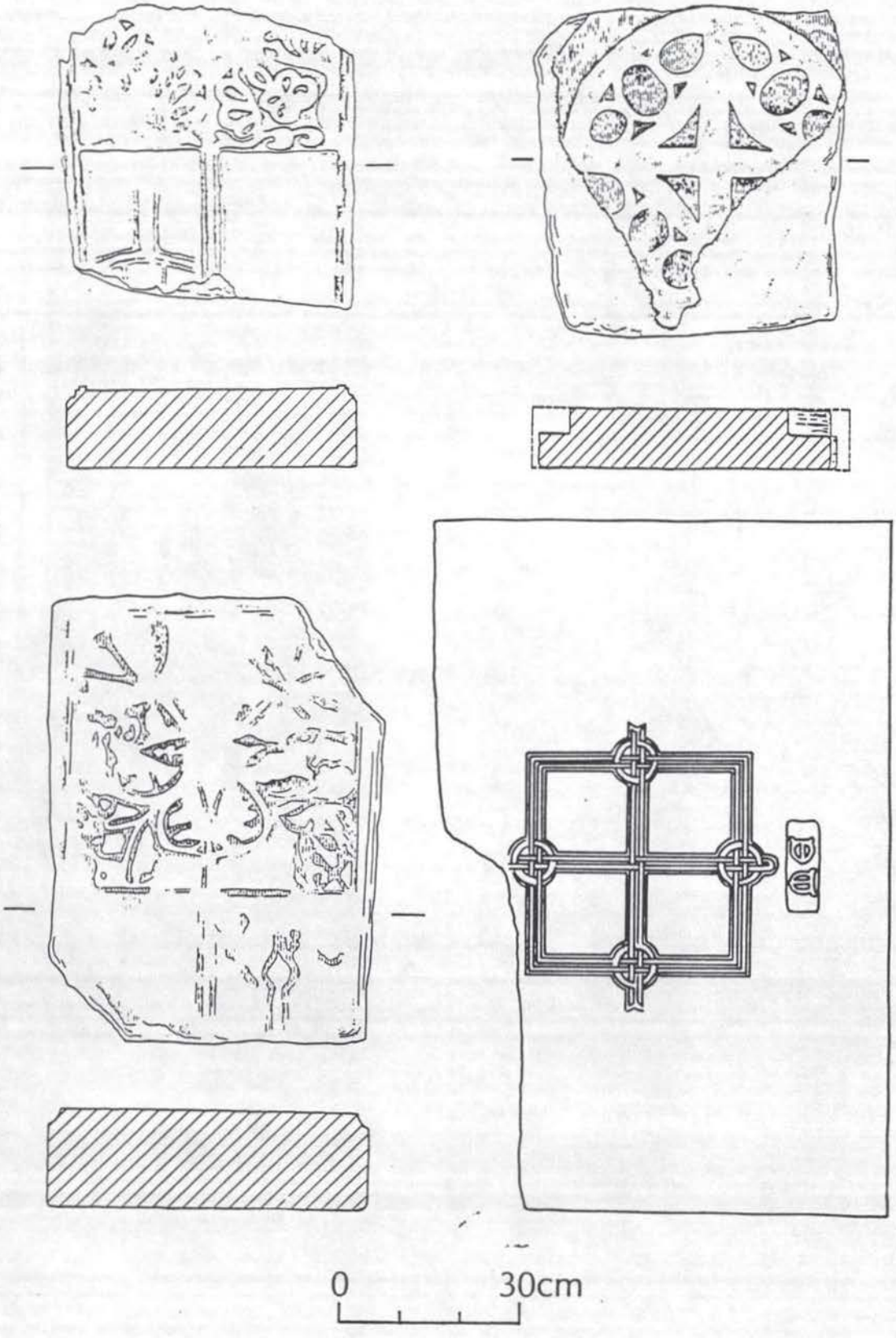

Fig. 8. Dominican friary: (top) graveslab 1 and cross-slab 7 (bottom) cross-slab and altar tmensa.

Fig. 9. Dominican friary: chancel recess. Graveslab 1; Donat O Suibne slab (1577); cross-slab 7.

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Fig. 10. Dominican friary cross-slab 6.

Fig. 11. Dominican friary: graveslab 7.

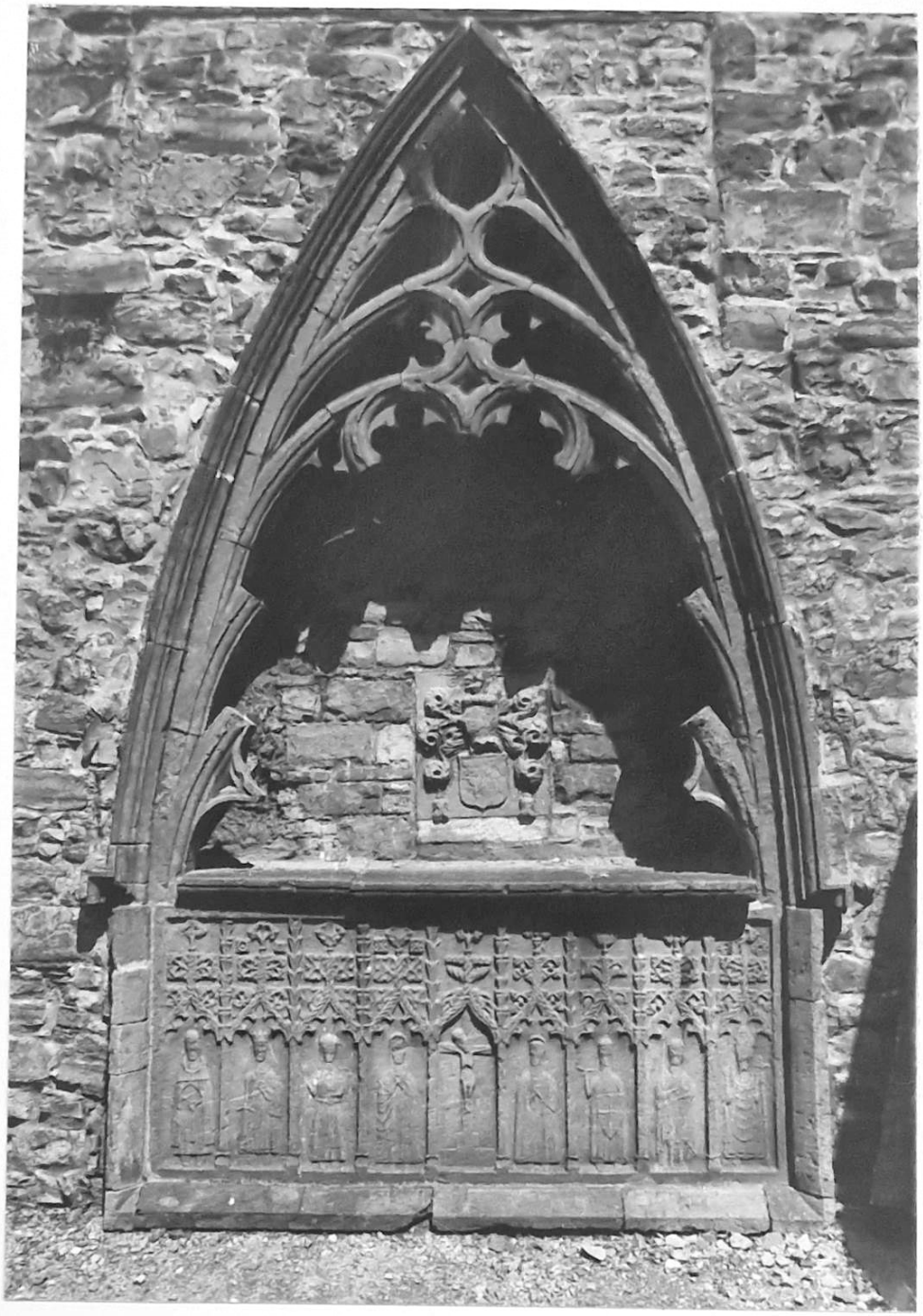

Fig. 12. Dominican friary: O'Crean canopy tomb (1506).

Fig. 13. Dominican friary: O'Connor Sligo monument 1624.

Fig. 14. Dominican friary: heraldic plaques. (l to r) Jones; Crean (top and bottom); Crean and Jones, 1625.

Fig. 15. Dominican friary: 17th cent. tomb fragment.

SLIGO; Zone of Archaeological Potential

FIG. 16

1500m

1 mile

The zone of archaeological potential covers the area enclosed by the town walls and an additional of 10m. outside of that.