

Mochuda, better known as St Carthage, Abbot of Rahon (c. 564 - 636). A noteworthy early medieval religious figure in Ireland. Born in the vicinity of Castleknock, Co. Kildare. Expelled with followers from Rahon after 48 years at Easter-Isle in 635. Died on the 19th May 636 as the Bishop of Lismore. Saint's Day is celebrated on the 19th May. Source: Rahon Monastic Site A Conservation Plan.



Rahon Monastic Enclosure. Aerial photograph of Rahon monastery showing monastic boundary with church & graveyard in the centre. Characteristic of large early monastic settlements in the midlands region. It sits within a river pastured, with the Clodagh River forming the southern boundary. The monastery sits within a D-shaped enclosure with a possible small late medieval church ruin at the top right-hand corner. Source: Rahon Monastic Site A Conservation Plan. Photograph - Loughras Hooper.



The Ancient Church and Graveyard of St Carthage Rahan

St. Carthage Church, located within the Rahon Monastic enclosure, is one of Ireland's oldest churches and still a place of Christian worship.



The Romanesque Chancel Arch Capital Stone Carvings. The quality & condition of the capitals of the chancel arch are some of the finest Romanesque stone carvings in Ireland. Freeman Henry, the eminent specialist in early Irish art described the human faces on the capitals of the chancel arch of the larger church as 'PWA as beautiful pieces of carving with strong, healthy faces and swirling ivy-leaf and bead. This is native art at its best.' Source: Rahon Monastic Site A Conservation Plan.



The Small Church. To the east of the Church of St Carthage are the remains of a small single-cell church, possibly dating from the later medieval period. This single-cell church has a well-preserved Romanesque west doorway that seems to have been added later to the gable. It now survives as a single-arched round-headed doorway but originally was a doorway of three orders, of which the middle order survives. Of the outer orders only the decorated bases survive. Source: Rahon Conservation Plan A Monastic Site.

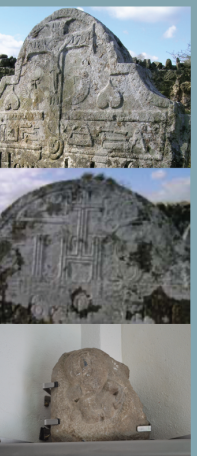


The Circular Romanesque Window (I). The circular Romanesque window with its vivid carvings is unique in Ireland and of international importance in the corpus of European Romanesque circular windows.

A. M'Innes' bear's head. B. Aquatic animal head. C. Ram-like animal head. D. Exhibition figure. E. Possible bishop's head. F. Possible bear's head. G. M'Innes' bear's head. H. Mochuda's head. I. Side view of lower face of window surround. Showing chevrons, beading and profile of possible bishop's head. J. Inner face of lower massive showing chevrons, beading and floral motif. K. External face of upper massive showing chevrons, beading and chevron-headed pinnacles. Source: Rahon Monastic Site A Conservation Plan.



The Circular Romanesque Window (II). The window measures approximately 2.2m in diameter and is constructed from sixteen pieces of tapered stone, almost all identically decorated. A, B, C, D. Line drawing of the animal solution carved on the exterior of quadrifoliate opening in the centre of the Romanesque round window. Done by the Architect Uilleann Murray in 1981, who was responsible for a significant programme of repair and alteration works at St. Carthage Church. Source: Rahon Monastic Site A Conservation Plan.



18th & 19th Century Memorials. The graveyard at Rahon contains some of the finest 18th & 19th-century memorials in County Offaly. These depict important folk art and religious symbolism that are distinctive to the region. Two important memorials from the 18th century depict the heads of a blacksmith (inside right) and a carpenter (top right). This symbolism is rare in County Offaly and throughout the midland region.

Sheela-na-Gig. In 1971 archaeologists discovered a Sheela-na-Gig that may have fallen from the wall of the medieval nave located in the Catholic cemetery. This carving appears to have been made at the same time as the building and possibly dates from the 10th or 11th century. A Sheela-na-Gig is a figurative carving of a naked woman displaying an exaggerated vulva. The Sheela-na-Gig is the property of the National Museum of Ireland and is on permanent display in St. Carthage Church. Source: Rahon Monastic Site A Conservation Plan.