

SURVEY
OF THE
MEGALITHIC TOMBS
OF IRELAND

Seán Ó Nualláin

VOLUME V

COUNTY SLIGO

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110. Moytirra East. OS 35:13:4 (6·7 5·7). "Giant's Grave" (1914). OD 500-600.
G 814 141. Fig. 52. Plate 31.

Court-tomb

This monument was first shown on the 1837 edition of the OS 6-inch map. It lies little more than 2km to the E of the ruins of Ballindoon castle, on the shores of Lough Arrow, and is situated on rocky pasture littered, to the W and S, by erratic boulders. The site commands an extensive outlook S across a drumlin landscape.

The monument consists of the remains of a deep U-shaped court at the NNE leading to a well preserved gallery of four chambers. The front of the gallery is of unusual design with two stones set at right angles to narrow the entrance to half the width of the gallery. The divisions between the first three chambers are marked by single jambs, in each case at the W, while the third and fourth chambers are separated by a long sill. Wood-Martin thought that there was a circle of stones adjoining the back of the gallery and shows a ring of eight blocks there on his plan. Three blocks stood there when our plan was made in 1963 but we were unable to accept these as the remnants of a court. There are some traces of mound around the structure but because of the uneven nature of the ground these were too indefinite to show on the plan. A stone wall runs NE-SW across the W arm of the court.

The W arm of the court is represented by two stones. That to the N measures 1·95m by 30cm by 55cm and the stone beside it 1·50m by 35cm by 80cm high. There are three orthostats on the opposite side of the court and beyond these to the N are two low moss-covered stones perhaps representing the junction of the court with a facade. A low bank runs E from the presumed facade stone and 10m along this is a small spring. The courtstone adjoining the gallery at this side measures 1·20m by 30cm by 1m high and the stone next to it 2·05m by 35cm by 80cm high. The third orthostat here is 1·30m by at least 25cm by 35cm high. The court may have been about 7m deep but its width cannot be determined.

The gallery is 13m long and narrows from 2·50m wide near the front to 1·85m at the back.

One of the stones narrowing the entrance is set more or less along the main axis of the structure. This measures 95cm by 35cm by 85cm high and the stone linking it to the courtstone at the N is 50cm by 10cm by 30cm high. The front chamber is about 3·20m long and 2·50m high. The sides are each of two stones. That next the entrance at the W measures 1·60m by 35cm by 50cm high and the stone next to it is 1·25m by 30cm by 60cm high. At the opposite side, the first stone measures 1·40m by 30cm by 55cm high and the other 1·50m by 35cm by 65cm high.

The jamb marking the division between the first and second chambers is set transversely between the side-stones. It measures 90cm by 25cm by 75cm high. Opposite this is a gap in the gallery wall which may have contained another jamb. The second chamber is about 3m long and 2·10m wide. The single stone forming the E side measures 2·55m by 30cm by 30cm high while the stone opposite it is 2·15m by 35cm by 45cm high.

The jamb marking the entrance to the third chamber measures 30cm by 30cm by 20cm high. This chamber is 2·60m long and 2·10m wide. The sides are each of two stones. That next to the jamb measures 1·35m by 30cm by 40cm high and the stone next to it, 1·65m by 30cm by 70cm high. The first stone at the opposite side is 95cm by 30cm by 65cm high and the other is 1·35m by 40cm by 45cm high.

The sill between the third and fourth chambers is a flat topped stone measuring 1·80m by 40cm by 30cm high. There are gaps in the gallery walls at either end of the sill and it is possible that these were occupied by inset jambs. The fourth chamber is almost 3m long and narrows from 2·20m wide at the sill to 1·85m at the back. Here again the sides are each of two slabs. That next to the sill on the E side measures 1·30m by 30cm by 40cm high and the stone beside it, 1·50m by 30cm by 50cm high. The first stone at the opposite side is 1·40m by 30cm by 45cm high and the other, 1·25m by 30cm by 45cm high. The stone closing the back of the gallery is flat-topped and measures 1·80m by 30cm by 85cm high. It rises about 40cm above the general level of the sidestones and is matched in height by the jamb between the first two chambers.

OS Letters, Co. Sligo, 172; Wood-Martin 1883-4, 458-9, No. 19; Wood-Martin, 1888, 180-1, No. 19; Borlase 1897, 191, Tirerril No. 23 (b) (incorrectly placed in Highwood townland); Piggott and Powell 1947, 142-3; de Valera 1951, 196; Corcoran 1960, 146, No. 10; de Valera 1960, 93 (SL. 35).



1. Moytirra East (Sl. 110). The front of the gallery, from South-West.



2. Moytirra East (Sl. 110). The back of the gallery, from North-East.

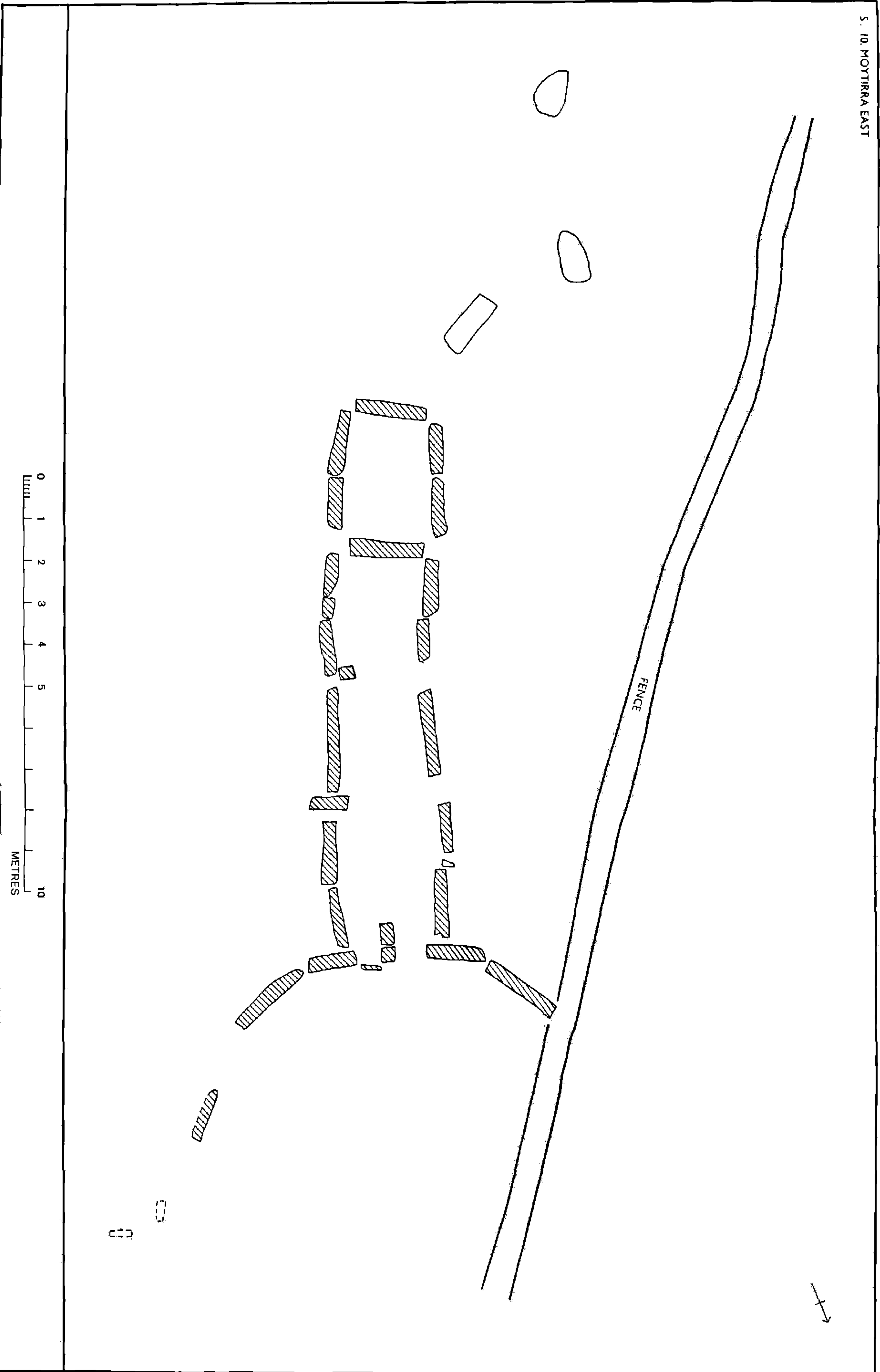


Fig. 52. Court-tomb, Co. Sligo.