



## Manx Place-Names: an Ulster View

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In this chapter I will discuss place-name connections between Ulster and Man, beginning with the early appearances of Man in Irish tradition and its association with the mythological realm of *Emain Ablach*, from the 6th to the 13th century.<sup>1</sup>

A good introduction to the link between Ulster and Manx place-names is to look at Speed's map of Man published in 1605.<sup>2</sup> Although the map is much later than the beginning of place-names in the Isle of Man, it does reflect those place-names already well-established 400 years before our time. Moreover the gloriously exaggerated Manx-centric view, showing the island almost filling the Irish sea between Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales, also allows the map to illustrate place-names from the coasts of these lands around. As an island visible from these coasts Man has been influenced by all of them.

In Ireland there are Gaelic, Norse and English names - the latter now the dominant language in new place-names, though it was not so in the past. The Gaelic names include the port towns of *Knok* (now Carrick-) fergus, "Fergus' hill" or "rock", the rock clearly referring to the site of the medieval castle. In 13th-century Scotland Fergus was understood as the king whose migration introduced the Gaelic language. Further south, Dundalk "fort of the small sword" includes the element *dún* "hill-fort", one of three fortification names common in early Irish place-names, the others being *ráth* "ring-fort" and *lios* "enclosure". In between are Belfast, now more important than Carrickfergus, meaning "approach to the sandbank ford", and Newry, another natural history name meaning "place of yew trees"- tree names also being a common feature of Irish placenames. The importance of saints in ecclesiastical names is shown by the saint's name Patri[c]k at Down (also *dún*), and Island Patri[c]k further south. It was probably this *Inis Patraic* "Patrick's Island" which was attacked by the Vikings in AD 798, but it has sometimes been understood as Peel i.e. St Patrick's Island of the Isle of Man.

Viking influence in the Irish Sea gathered in strength from the late 8th century. The east coast of Ireland also shows, between Rathlin and Dublin, three sea loughs which bear Norse or Norse influenced names: Olderfleet (now the entrance to Larne Lough),

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<sup>1</sup>According to the conventions of name studies, Manx place-names in current use are not italicised, only word-elements in Manx (and other languages) and earlier spellings of names.

<sup>2</sup>Illus. (See page 36) John Speed's map of Man 1605, from Thomas Durham's survey 1595 (Cubbon 1974)

Strangford and Carlingford. The first name was understood by them as *Ulfrekr's fjorðr*, though "Ulfrekr" was probably a re-interpretation of the Irish river name *Ollarbha*, now the Larne Water which enters the lough at this point<sup>3</sup>. The others are *strang fjorðr* "strongcurrent fjord" and *kerlinga fjorðr* "hag's fjord" (PNI ii 6 - 8, PNI i 83). Scotland shows the district name Galloway, the "place of the foreign/Viking Gaels" colonised by the mixed Gaelic and Norse-speaking people of the Hebrides (Watson 1926 101, 173 - 4). Ulster however has apparently no Viking settlement names.

On the Isle of Man also the Vikings settled the land as well as using the harbours. Names on Man include the Norse names now spelled as Fleshwick, "green-spot creek" ON *flesvík* (Kneen 34); Jurby, "deer settlement, animal farm", ON *djúra-by* (PNIM ii 245); Point of Ayre, "gravel bank" from ON *eyrr* (PNIM iii 176); Ramsey, "wild garlic river" from ON *hrams-á* (PNIM iv 167); Laxey, "salmon river" from ON *laks-á*, the river noted for salmon fishing in 1668. As with Ramsey, and the Gaelic name Douglas, the name has been transferred to the settlement from the river (PNIM iv 326).

The parish names are shown beginning with *Kirk* "church", of Norse origin, but the spelling of the rest indicates a more authentic Gaelic pronunciation of the saints' names than the current English versions: *Kirk Mighhill* (Michael), *Kirk Bridge* (Bride), *Kirk Maghaul* (Maughold) - where the final -d from the Latinised form *Machaldus* does not appear. Similar names from Ulster (none unfortunately on the map) would be in Gaelic *Cill Mhichil*, *Cill Bhríde* "Michael's church, Brigid's church". The element *cill* / *keill* was still used for church sites by Manx speakers (PNIM ii 77, iv 120). St Patrick appears in *Kirk Patrik of the peel* and again in *Kirk Patrack* at Jurby.

From the Isle of Man as mapped by Englishmen at the beginning of the 17th century we return to the Ulster view, as old as written literature in Irish.

### ***Emain (Ablach) "Emain of the appletrees"***

An Old Irish story in prose and verse describes a sea-voyage to the Otherworld by a legendary hero called *Bran* "raven" son of *Febal* (Meyer 1895). Bran's name links him with the north coast, since his father's name is that of the river Foyle (*Febal*) which passes *Srub Brain* "Bran's promontory" now Sroove at the most northern point of its estuary. However on the voyage Bran meets the Irish sea god Manannán who claims to be the real father of a historical royal prince of the *Dál nAraide* kindred of east Ulster, Mongán son of Fiachna (d.625) (AU 112 - 113).

The story begins dramatically with the appearance of a woman from "unknown lands" bearing a branch of apples. She offers it to Bran and in verse invites him to follow her:

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <i>Crób dind abaill a hEmain</i> | 'A branch of the apple-tree from Emain                    |
| <i>do-fet samail do gnáthaib</i> | I bring like those well-known' ( <i>Immram Brain</i> §3). |

The name *Emain* appears to belong to the land from which she comes, and yet it was well-known as the name of the traditional capital of prehistoric Ulster *Emain Macha*,

<sup>3</sup>Mac Giolla Easpaig, D. 2000. Unpublished article: "Scandinavian influence on the toponymy of Ireland," 39-43.

Emain "of the cultivated land", now Navan Fort west of Armagh. By the time this tale was written, that Emain, famous as the king's dwelling in the Ulster Cycle epic tales, was no longer held by the original *Ulaid* or Ulstermen. Relocating it in less circumscribed territory might be a way of salvaging their lost pride. The wonderful *Emain* (sometimes *Emnae*) of Bran's adventures in this tale is out at sea. The sea-god Manannán takes his name from the Isle of Man and it seems that *Emain/Emnae* can also be identified with his kingdom. Displaced (and Christian) Ulstermen, the story asserts, can still be sons of the gods, as the chief Ulster Cycle warrior Cú Chulainn was fathered by Lugh (Muhr 1996 55 - 6).

Bran's voyage is a story of wonders, but 6th-century history also asserts that the peoples of east Ulster were taking to the sea in search of new territory. The *Dál Riata* group of the north-east took themselves and the Gaelic language to north-western Scotland. Late in the century the Annals of Ulster record in Latin that the *Ulaid* (probably meaning *Dál nAraide* of the mid-east with *Dál Fiatach* of the south-east, or *Dál Fiatach* alone) attempted to claim Man. Since the annals were being written in Latin at this date the names are Latinised: (AU 88-90.)

AD 577 *Primum periculum Uloth in Eufania* "First expedition of the Ulaid to Man"

AD 578 *Reversio Uloth de Eumania* "Expulsion of the Ulaid from Man" (?)

The spelling of the genitive plural *Uloth* (later *Uladh*) shows this is a near-contemporary record, while the spellings *Eumania/Eufania* (the latter presumably recognising the lenition of *m* to *v*) represent the name *Emain* rather than *Man*. However a record four years later of the Scottish *Dál Riata* king *Aedán mac Gabrán's* victory in the battle of *Manu* (declined as a nasal stem, *Bellum Manonn*) reminds one that neither place-name is unique (AU 582), and that this time *Man[u]* refers to *Manaw Gododdin*, a British district name preserved in Clackmannan or Slamannan "stone, mountain of Manann" on the Firth of Forth in Scotland (Watson 1926, 103).

A century later an Ulster-Man connection is recorded in Muirchú's Life of Saint Patrick, (Bieler 1979 102 - 6 = Muirchú I 23) which includes the story of Patrick's meeting, in Ulaid territory (*in regionibus Ulothorum*), the wicked tyrant *Mac Cuill moccu Greccae*, who held court from a wild place in the hills called *Droim Moccu Echach*. Since it also appears to be near Lecale (*Mag Inis*) and the sea, *Droim Moccu Echach* "ridge of the descendants of Echu" is unlikely to be Dromore inland<sup>4</sup> and *Moccu Echach* are probably the descendants of Echu Gunnat, *Dál Fiatach* ruler of the Ards peninsula, who were overthrown by the Vikings in the 9th century. The Life tells how Mac Cuill attempted to discredit and kill Patrick, but was converted by his power and baptised, and told for penance to shackle his feet and throw the key in the sea, then set himself afloat in a small boat without rudder or oar and accept his fate from the wind and the sea. The wind blew him to an island called *Evonia*,<sup>5</sup> where he was taken in by the first two bishops to baptise and preach there. He learned the practice of his faith from them until he became (editor Bieler's translation and brackets):

<sup>4</sup>Pace Bieler index 257. Dromore inland is the cathedral town for the *Dál nAraide* group called *Uí Echach* "descendants of Echu" later Iveagh, see Muhr 1996b, *PNI* vi: *North-West Down / Iveagh*, pp.1,5,6; 104,106,108. Little is known of Mac Cuill's own group, the "descendants of Gréc".

<sup>5</sup>*in insulam Euoniam nomine* "at an island called Euonia"; *baptismum in Euonia* "baptism in Euonia".

*Maccuill de Mane episcopus et antestes Arddae Huimnonn*

"Maccuill bishop of Mane and prelate of Arde Huimnonn (the Isle of Man)".

Since it was stated explicitly in Jocelin's 12th century Life of Patrick (Colgan 1647 98), Maccuill has been identified with the Manx saint Maughold, Latin Machaldus, the eponym of Kirk Maughold parish in the east of the Isle of Man.<sup>6</sup> This tradition was also known in Ireland: *Mac Cuill a Manainn* "Mac Cuill from Man" (Ó Riain 1995, 59 §387). Maccuill's description here may consist stylistically of two parallel phrases meaning the same thing, *antestes* being a regular medieval Latin term for bishop (Latham 1965). Muirchu's Life does not use the name Man as an n-stem, but rather appears to adopt it as if it were declined like Latin *urbs*.

Bieler (text & index) and George Broderick (Broderick 1980-1) have identified the second part of *Arddae Huimnonn* with Man: without comment by Bieler, Broderick as a "scribal misreading of Manann", explaining that "the profusion of minims in this name, e.g. in *u, i, m, n*, in the Latin texts could in ms. very well be confused". To me it appears more like the *Emain/Emnae (Emonia)* name with the nasal declension usually found in Gaelic with Man. At any rate Muirchu's Life of Patrick appears to contain three different forms of the island's name: *Evonia* and Man with Latin declension, and one of these in a confused Irish form.

Early Irish *Ard* genitive *Aird* means "height" but *Aird* genitive *Ardae* is a feminine noun meaning "promontory", as in the Ards peninsula in Ulster (*PNI* ii, Hughes & Hannan 1992, 3). Muirchu's *Arddae* seems to be this genitive, and it is suggested that if *Man[e]* is Man then *Ard[dae] hUimnonn* is Maughold's particular part of it, "promontory of Man", designating Maughold Head, near the saint's church and burial place on the east of the island and in his parish. This headland was known by recent Manx speakers as *Kione Vaghal*<sup>7</sup> and *kione* was the regular word for headland. There is no evidence for *aird* "promontory" in modern Manx, but Broderick adduces the nearby place-names *Kerroo ny hArd* "quarter of the Ard", *The Ards/Ny Ardjyn QL*, and *Cashtal yn Ard* "castle of the Ard"<sup>8</sup> further inland as evidence for a wider area south of Ramsey once having been thought of as Maughold's promontory (Irish *aird*) as no great height (*ard*) is involved. *Cashtal yn Ard* is a chambered tomb spectacular enough to be associated in later tradition with the famous 11th-century king Godred Crovan of Man and the Isles.<sup>9</sup>

One other suggestion to avoid the apparent doubling of the place-name is that *di Mane* here might be a misreading of *de mare* "from the sea",<sup>10</sup> referring to the way the saint "bishop and prelate of Man" reached the island, his actual sea voyage paralleling conversion and baptism (Muhr 1999a, 201 - 2).

<sup>6</sup> *Mac Cuill* is an Irish name meaning literally "son of hazel", but recent research by E. Fitzaimons has shown that it may be used as a variant of Cailín or Mo Chae, the saint of Nendrum on Strangford Lough (pers comm).

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Christian of Ramsey, the authority for most of these names: *BUPNS* 2.3 15 n.12.

<sup>8</sup> *BUPNS* 2.3, 13, 15 n.15; *PNIM* iv 23-5; grid-refs SC 4689, one-inch sheet 87.

<sup>9</sup> *Cashtal Ree Gorree* "King Gorry's castle", Thomas Christian: *BUPNS* 2.3, 15 n.18.

<sup>10</sup> The reading in the Brussels ms, explained by Bieler 23 as "suggestive of an exemplar in insular script". *BUPNS* 2.3, 14 n.5 implies that *de mare* was either in the Book of Armagh or Broderick's own interpretation.

In more recent oral tradition, Patrick himself visited Man from Ulster by leaping the sea on his horse, which left its footprints at a well<sup>11</sup> and on *Sleau Innyd ny Cassan* "mountain of the place of the feet" at Peel,<sup>12</sup> and the horseshoe-shaped well at Maughold Head (Gill 1963, p.327). According to Gill, this well was dedicated to both St Patrick and the saint of the area, Maughold.<sup>13</sup>

The late 12th century bardic poem in praise of Ragnall, King of Man<sup>14</sup> also uses both names, and makes the mythological context of Emain clear: this place (or part) of Man is also compared to Tara, (Bhreathnach 1995) legendary seat of the high-kings of Ireland, descendants of Sadb:

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Emain na n-aball cumra</i>        | Eamhain of the fragrant apple-trees        |
| <i>Teamair Mhanann cin mbebbla,</i>  | [is?] the Tara of Man without deceit,      |
| <i>as siat cuaine saer Sadbha</i>    | The noble progeny of Sadhbh are            |
| <i>abhla craebh n-uaine nEambna.</i> | the green-branched apple-trees of Eamhain. |

The etymology of *Emain* is undecided. Wagner suggested a meaning connected with water, "a stream",<sup>15</sup> while O'Rahilly suggested *isamonis*, which can be translated "holy mound", or Otherworld hill (O'Rahilly 1946 13; Toner 1988 34). As well as the prehistoric legendary capital of Ulster, a few other names in Ireland contain the element; and another island, the monastic settlement of Inchcolm in the Firth of Forth in Scotland, was once known as *Emonia* (Watson 1926, 104,131.) There the embarkation place of Porthaven (earlier *Portevin*) may preserve a version of the name, which is entirely lost in the Isle of Man.<sup>16</sup> The element Man has been given similar meanings, it has generally been connected with Latin *mons* "mountain", but the places in Ireland and Scotland so named are near water, like the hilly Isle of Man and its deity Manannán.

## Land division on the Isle of Man

*The Manx Traditionary Ballad* edited by R.L. Thomson<sup>17</sup> gives a local history of the settlement of the island which was presumably preserved by oral tradition from the late 15th or early 16th century before being written down in the 18th.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Mananan beg va Mac y Leirr</i>       | Young Mannanan who was son of Ler (Sea) |
| <i>Shen yn chield er ec row rieu ee</i> | was the first who ever owned her,       |
| <i>Agh myr share oddyms cur-my-ner</i>  | but as I can best observe               |
| <i>Cha row eh hene agh Anchreestee.</i> | he was nothing but a heathen. (v.3)     |

At length Patrick came and blessed the island and set up as bishop St German, who built chapels (*cabballyn*), one in every *treen balley*.

<sup>11</sup>Kneen 362, St Patrick's Well / Silver Well; PNIM 1, Sheading of Glenfaba (1994) 67: *Chibbyr Noo Pharick / Chibbyr Sheeant / Chibbyr yn Argid*

<sup>12</sup>Kneen 53 (in Kirk Christ Rushen, not yet published GB).

<sup>13</sup>*Chibbyr Vaghal*, PNIM iv Sheading of Garff (1999) 75. The story of Patrick's horse appears with another well, *Chibbyr Pharick* iv 266.

<sup>14</sup>"A poem in praise of Ragnall king of Man" *Baile Suthach Sídh nEamhna* ed. B. Ó Cuív, *Éigse viii* (1957) 283-301, p.289 §8.

<sup>15</sup>*Ériu* 28 (1977) 13; ZCP 38 (1981) 19 n.55.

<sup>16</sup>i.e. Gaelic *Port Eamhain/Eamhna*, Simon Taylor from Geoffrey Barrow pers. comm.

<sup>17</sup>*Études Celtiques* 9 vol IX fasc 2 pp 521-548, vv3,17.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><i>Eisht haink Maughold Noo aynjee</i><br/> <i>As gheqv eh thalloo ec y Chione</i><br/> <i>As hrog eh keeill as rollick mygeayrt</i><br/> <i>Yn ynnyd by-vian lesh beaghey ayn.</i></p> | <p>Then came St Maughold to the island<br/> and took land at Maughold Head<br/> &amp; built a church &amp; a graveyard round it<br/> the place where he wanted to live. (v.17)</p> |
|--|--|

As well as his own church foundation, Maughold is credited with establishing the Manx parishes or *skeeraghyn*, a term borrowed from Norse, the equivalent of English *shire*, also used as *sgìre* in Gaelic Scotland. The terms *keeill* and *rollick* parallel Irish *cill* "church", also often used in parish names, and *reilig* "graveyard". Early churches became the centres of parishes and the rest of the settlement pattern shows affinities with Ireland.

*Keeill* "church" plus the name of the saint to whom it was dedicated was the usual form in Manx of the church names, while the form *Kirk* + saint's name was used for the parish in English. Of course *kirk*, the Scandinavian equivalent of English church, means the same thing as *keeill* in this sense. The alternation of *kirk* and *cill*, anglicised *kill*[1], followed by a saint's name occurs in Scotland, where it may arise from Gaelic-Norse bilingualism in possibly the 10th century (MacQueen 1956; Nicolaisen 1976, 108 - 11) and occasionally in the north of Ireland<sup>18</sup> where it is probably a borrowing from Scotland. The name of the six sheadings into which the island is divided seems to be entirely Norse: *settungr* "a sixth part". The sheadings are then divided into *skeerey*/parishes as mentioned above, usually three to a sheading. The next division is the treen, 4 - 6 to a parish, and the quarterland, 3-4 to a treen. Marstrander has suggested that treen (the same spelling in Manx) derived from the Gaelic phrase *tír uinge* "ounce land, land paying the rent of an ounce", a term also known in Scotland, but it seems more likely that it is simply Gaelic *trian* "third" (*PNIM* iv, §3 p.xiv). Quarterland is a translation of Manx *kerroo*, *carrow* "quarter", equivalent to Irish *ceathramh*.

Land division and settlement are closely linked, and Broderick (1978) noted the high proportion of treen and quarterland names which contain the Manx element *balley* (Irish *baile*) "homestead, settlement": 20 of the 93 treens and 217 of the 362 quarterlands. In the north and especially north-east of Ireland *Bally* is often prefixed to place-names in official documents in the early 17th-century to indicate that a particular name is a townland, the unit most equivalent to the Manx quarterland.<sup>19</sup>

In comparison northern Irish parishes are much more variable in size, from 6 to more than 200 townlands, not easily related to the secular division, known from evidence c.1600, of a *ballybetagh* "land of a food-provider". The *ballybetagh* was divided into 12-16 *ballyboes* (Irish *baile bó* "settlement of a cow", probably at one time "land paying the rent of a cow"), the land unit which most often underlies the English term townland. Townlands may also be grouped by 3s and 4s into quarters of a *ballybetagh*, and *ceathramh* "quarter" anglicised *carrow* also appears in townland names as quarters of these quarters.<sup>20</sup> The *trian* or third exists in names but is not

<sup>18</sup>Kirkinriola for Kilconriola "church of *Cú Riaghla*" McKay 1995, *PNi* iv *The Baronies of Toome*, 216; Kilmoyle "roofless church" Upper or Kirkmoyle townland, Ballymoney parish.

<sup>19</sup>Flanagan, D. 1978, "British" *BUPNS* 2.1 p.52. "bally is often prefixed indiscriminately to placenames in early 17th-century inquisitions, grants etc to indicate that the name represents a townland unit".

<sup>20</sup>Four-townland groups are common in church lands: Reeves, W. 1847. *The ecclesiastical antiquities*

usually a recognisable part of this system, while townlands may also be divided into *sessiaghs*, or "sixths", but which are usually three to a townland. The fact that, in both places, fractional subdivisions are used which are no longer etymologically exact argues for a long-established system of land division which has evolved through time – apparently within the Gaelic-speaking tradition, apart from the name given the sheadings. In Ulster terms, the townland is the equivalent of the Manx quarterland, while the (obsolete) Manx *treen* is the equivalent of the (obsolete) quarter of a *ballybetagh*.

### Name-links between Ulster and Man

Carl Marstrander's map of Manx sheadings and parishes (Marstrander 1937, 404) illustrates this system and also the similar-if-not-the-same system of naming Manx parishes. Most of them derive from churches dedicated to a patron saint, often Gaelic. In Manx the names begin with *keill* "church", Irish *cill*, regularly Englished as Kirk. Church names appear in Ireland alongside secular Gaelic names, like the parishes of Ballaugh, Jurby and Rushen on Man. Some of the saints may be peculiar to Man, but more work needs to be done on the saints mentioned in Ireland and Scotland, including their place-names, before we can be sure. For Manx place-names we have George Broderick's very full and ongoing series, and from North to South the sheadings and parishes are:

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Ayre     | Kirk Andreas, Bride, Christ Lezayre ( <i>PNIM</i> vol. iii) |
| Michael  | Kirk Michael, Ballaugh, Jurby ( <i>PNIM</i> vol. ii)        |
| Garff    | Kirk Conchan, Lonan, Maughold ( <i>PNIM</i> vol. iv)        |
| Glenfaba | Kirk German, Patrick ( <i>PNIM</i> vol. i)                  |
| Middle   | Kirk Braddan, Marown, Santan ( <i>PNIM</i> vol. v)          |
| Rushen   | Kirk Christ Rushen, Arbory, Malew.                          |

Although Bowen (1977, 147f) says there is no pre-12th-century evidence for most of these dedications, he divides the saints into four types: (1) Man only (2) found in the rest of the Celtic world (3) familiar Celtic saints (4) international saints. Dedications to the first two types are the most likely to be early, and these include *Conchenn* "doghead" (Megaw 1962-3) a name used as the Gaelic equivalent of St Christopher, "Lonan", probably Adamnán via *Cill Adhomhnáin*, Maughold who has been documented above; Braddan, Marown, and Santan, who seem most likely to be local Manx saints (*PNIM* iv 20-1n, v 21-2). Arbory is *Cairbre*, Malew is from Irish *Mo Lua*, a 6th century saint also commemorated in Gaelic Scotland, as a monastic founder on the island of Lismore (*PNIM* iv 21; Watson 1926, 292-3). There was formerly a pattern on the 4th of August at Laa Lau (*Lann [Mo] Lua*) (Flanagan 1969, 8), the ancient church of Ballinderry beside Portmore Lough in Co. Antrim, efficaceous for the cure of warts and "other diseases also". In current local tradition the cure was for insanity<sup>21</sup> and this was also the case at one of the saint's Scottish sites in Europe at the Butt of Lewis (Forbes 1872, 411). One wonders if a reverse Manx superstition were connected: Insanity in the parish of Kirk Malew was supposedly caused by drinking from a particular communion cup in Kirk Malew, until the use of the cup was discontinued (Gill 1963, p.287).

of Down, Connor and Dromore, pp.259-60; the quarters of Bangor *PNI* ii 145.

<sup>21</sup>Ordnance Survey Memoirs Ballinderry, eds A Day and P McWilliams vol 21 pp.54-5 (Belfast); local tradition from Kieran Clendinning of Lurgan pers. comm.

Ulster Irish influence can be traced in the personal names on the inscribed stones of Man. If the reading is correct, one written in ogam provides a direct link with the Conaille of Louth:

BIVAIDONA MAQI MUCOI CUNAVA[LI]: "Bivaidu of the Conaille" (Ogam, small broken stone, Rushen; the reading "Conaille" is from Marstrander p.425).

The Conaille apparently derived their name from the hero Conall Cernach of the Ulster Cycle tales. Christian inscriptions show the mixing of Gaels and Scandinavians through the names of the people involved:

MAIL BRIKTI SUNR ATHAKANS SMITH RAIST KRUS THANO... GAUT KIRTHI THANO AUK ALA I MAUN "Mael Brigte son of Athakan the smith erected this cross. Gaut made it and all in Man" (cross-slab, Michael)

*Mael Brigte* (later Maol Bríde) means "devotee of St Brigid". Brigid, born in Faughart in Co. Louth, was one of the best known Irish saints (Bowen's class 3), alongside Patrick and Columba/Colum Cille.

MAL LUMKUN RAISTI KRUS THENA EFTER MAL MURU FUSTRA SINE... "Mael Lomchon erected this cross for Mael Muru his foster-mother..." (cross-slab, Michael) (Kermode 1907, 74, 150, 198).

*Maol Lomchon* is "devotee of St Lomchú" and *Lomchú* "bare hound" appears to have been an east Ulster saint, from the reference to him on Jan 9th in several Irish martyrologies: *ó Cill Lomchoin i nUlltoibh* "from Lomchú's church among the Ulaid".<sup>22</sup> St Muru is associated with the church of Faughan in North Donegal, although a family descended from a *Maol Mura* "devotee of Mura" were associated with the church in Armagh (Muhr 2001).

The Norse influence on Man is a contrast with Ulster, which has no mixed inscriptions and as well as the names of the three eastern sea-loughs (each with a surviving Irish name, see above) has only the Copeland Islands or *Kaupmanneyar* "merchant islands", not named on the Speed/Durham map.<sup>23</sup>

The thoroughness of the Norse colonisation of Man can be shown by a wider range of elements than those already mentioned in discussing the map. Some of these are: *by* as in Grenaby QL "green farm" (*PNIM* iii 342); *dalr* "valley", Dalby TR (i 95) "dale farm", Cardle QL (TR *Cardall*) "mill river dale" (iv 70). Some of the hills are called *ƒjall*, Snaefell "snow mountain" (*PNIM* iii 464), Sartfell "black mountain" (ii 95), Barrule Malew "lookout mountain" and Barrule Maughold which is "stone-heap mountain" (iv 62,404); Lambell QL (TR *Lambefell*) "lambs' hill". Other elements are *garthr* Amogary QL (TR *Amogary*) *Ámundar -gaðr*, "Ámund's enclosure" (*PNIM* iv 218); *hofuð* Howstrake QL (TR *Haustrake*) "headland path" (iv 398); *nes* "nose, promontory", Agneash QL (TR *Hegnes*) "edge promontory" (iv 217); *staðir* "farm" Clype QL "rock farm" (iv 384).

The progression of languages through time can be seen in names which are translations. Ramsey "wild garlic river" from Old Norse *hrams-á*, seems to be connected with the name *Strooan ne Crawe*, Manx for "stream of the garlic", for the stream which forms part of the parish boundary (*PNIM* iv 158, 167). In other cases a

<sup>22</sup>Best & Lawlor 6, Stokes 12, Todd & Reeves 11.

<sup>23</sup>Mac Giolla Easpaig, D. Scandinavian influence Unpublished p.20-1

translation has been added to a name which was no longer understood: Rheaneash QL (TR *Rennesse*) "nose division" where the nose/promontory marked out by the name to Norse speakers needed clarification in Gaelic; Cronkaberry QL "hill of the *berg*"; Stronabeck "stream of the beck" (*PNIM* iii 261; iv 390 *recte* 389; iv 157). The same thing has happened between Gaelic and Gaelic in Cronk Crock, where the later pronunciation of "hill" has been used to explain the earlier (*PNIM* iii 363). A pronunciation similar to *Cronk*, the Manx form of Gaelic *cnoc*, has also been recorded in minor place-names derived from the lost Gaelic of south Co Down (*PNIM* iii 363; *BUPNS* ser.1 iii pt 3 (1955) pp.43, 47.) Finally there is translation between Gaelic and English, where the local word *flatt* from ON or N.English *flat* "flat piece of ground" has been used to translate Gaelic *faiche* "green": *Faai Veg Flatt* "little flatt flatt"; *Naie Flatt* "flatt flatt" (*PNIM* iv 106, 249).

The age of the Gaelic place-names has been much discussed. As we have seen, the island was referred to in Gaelic from the 6th century, and its supernatural guardian Manannán was still remembered in recent local tradition. Some church sites dedicated to unusual Gaelic saints may have borne these names from the same early period, which sent Irish saints like Colum Cille and Mo Lua to Scotland. However the Manx dedications to Patrick and Brigid seem likely to be the result of 11th century migration from Dublin and Meath, and Broderick agrees that most of the island's Gaelic place names were "formed since the end of the Scandinavian period", which makes them 13th-century and later (*PNIM* i 18; Introduction §6 p.xxiii.)

In Ireland it seems now to be accepted, from the names listed in the charters of Norman church foundations, that the land units and their Gaelic names were clearly a system before the Normans arrived in the late 12th century, and recorded some of them in grants to churches (e.g. Newry abbey, *PNI* i 1). Some people accept them as much older: "The enduring townland system did originate late in the early Christian period".<sup>24</sup> In the Isle of Man this has been said of the system but not of the names, the one earlier, the other later than the Norse settlement. Marstrander (1937) linked the early Christian *keeill* sites with the *treens*, and Broderick reports how Megaw (1978) has shown from the distribution of 9th-century Norse burial mounds in separate quarterlands that "the holdings which came to be known as quarterlands represent in general elements in a very early (ie pre-Scandinavian) land system".

It is appropriate then to explore how the Gaelic place-names of Man compare with those in Ireland, including how Manx quarterland names are different from townland names in Ireland. Differences may be due to age, or to language changes due to different conditions on the Isle of Man. The heritage of Gaelic place-name forms may include early linguistic features, or reference to aspects of the environment which no longer exist. Where not stated, references are to George Broderick's ongoing *Place-Names of the Isle of Man* (*PNIM*).

Compounds of noun plus noun or noun plus prefixed adjective are generally considered to be old - Mooragh in Ramsey from *muir-mhagh* "sea-plain" (*PNIM* iv 196) can be compared with the parallel Welsh formation *morfa*; or Ulster *muirbholg* "sea-bag,

<sup>24</sup>Aalen, F.H.A., Whelan, K. and Stout, M. 1997 *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape*, p 22, although the caption to the Armagh townland map dates the system from "since at least the medieval period" p 21. One feels it is only place-name scholars, with their concern to collect all the earliest references to a name, who can answer the question about land-unit and name continuity - where the sources exist. Broderick lists 2 sources before 1200, and another 7 before 1600 (*PNIM* intro §4.1).

enclosed bay" (Muhr 1999b 8; *PNI* vii (Mac Gabhann) 198 - 200). Doolough, Dollagh "black lough" with initial stress is "a close compound of some antiquity" (*PNIM* ii 171, 239; Intro §7.8). Preposed adjectives where the noun following bears the stress are "a later development" (Intro §7.8). Arderry (*PNIM* iii 271, iv 362) is from "high wood, thicket", an etymology suggested for the house called the Argory in Co. Armagh. Manx *Breckbooilley* "speckled fold" occurs several times (*PNIM* iv 258, FN 421) but I have not met it in Ireland. Corvalley QL "conical hill farm, isolated farm" is not a current term in Manx but, as in Ireland, is "quite common in Manx placenames" (*PNIM* i 225, Introduction i §7.8.1). It appears in Ulster as Corbally, where the translation is also a puzzle: "the prominent townland /farmstead" "odd, noticeable townland" (*PNI* iv (McKay) 176; *PNI* vi (Muhr) 196.)

Typical Irish Gaelic place-name elements may be used similarly or differently in other parts of the Gaelic speaking world. The names of a number of Manx hills begin with *Slieau*, Gaelic *sliabh*, which is the common word for mountain in Ireland, as in Slieve Donard and many other of the Mourne mountains visible from the Isle of Man (*PNI* iii (Ó Mainnín) 151-170.) However this is not a common place-name element in Gaelic Scotland, occurring only in the south west nearest to Ireland, especially the Rhinns of Galloway, but also Islay, Jura and Arran which are also the area of earliest settlement by Dal Riada in the 6th century. In both these areas Nicolaisen considers that the names "may well be assignable to a pre-Norse stratum of Gaelic speakers" (Nicolaisen 1976, 39-45 esp. p.45); The distribution of *Sliabh* is currently being re-examined by Simon Taylor.

*Inis*, the Gaelic word for "island", appears in *Purt- or Bally ny Hinshey* "port/settlement of the island", the Manx name for Peel, where the original church and castle were built on the small island off shore (*PNIM* i 298). An alternative historical name was *Holmetoun*, the Norse equivalent or probable translation, *holmr* "islet" + *toun*, of *Bally ny Hinshey*. Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig points out a parallel instance on the east coast of Ireland where Holmpatrick, a Norse translation compound influenced by Irish word order, is the name of the parish containing St Patrick's Island, which was called *Inis Pátraic* in 798.<sup>25</sup> However the antiquity of the Manx name may also be demonstrated by the meaning "island" for *inis*. As with the meaning of *holme* generally, (Mawer 1930, 38) *inis* (and its diminutive *injeig*, Scottish Gaelic *innseag*) in Man almost always now has the meaning "river meadow". Other words for field are not quite like Ireland: the regular one is *magher*, the original meaning of which was "plain", while others have been borrowed. Here Scottish Gaelic has kept the original word *achadh*, common in Irish place-names but replaced in speech by *páirc*.

The Manx equivalent of Irish *cabhán*, apparently only used in minor names, is translated not as in northern Ulster a "round dry hill" (*pace* Kneen 184), but by Broderick as "hollow, small valley", as in Coan Argid "hollow of silver", Coanmooar "big hollow" (*PNIM* ii 58), Con Shellagh, a beach, "willow hollow" (i 73); Conrhennie "bracken hollow" (iv 275, 386). This meaning is known further south in Ireland. Broderick lists *coan* and its variant *quane* under "Common elements in Manx place-names" (intro. §6) comparing Scottish Gaelic *cabhan*, *camhan*, Irish *cabhán*, but the element seems to be more common in Ireland than in Scotland.

<sup>25</sup>AU, "Scandinavian influence on the toponymy of Ireland" p.20. See Speed's map.

Another important Gaelic element found in Man is *ros*, "wood" or "promontory", found as the diminutive *roiseán* in the name of the parish of Rushen. Names like this, a single element qualified by no other, are usually early (*PNIM* Intro §7.1). *Ros* appears in Ulster in the names Roslea, Rostrevor, Portrush (McKay 1999), while *roiseán* is found alone as a townland name in Fermanagh, at either end of the parish of Cleenish. I have given *ros* its meaning as in Ó Donaill's modern Irish dictionary, but in fact the earlier Dinneen defines it more loosely: "a wood or copse, often the site of an old cemetery, ...a promontory ...; a level tract of arable land ...common in place-names". Broderick translates Glen Rushen QL (TR *Glenrushen*) as "glen of the level tract of land" (*PNIM* i 111).

Man is a windswept island which lost its tree-cover early. Norse names like Gob Ago "headland of oak" from Gaelic *gob* + ON *eik*, and Eschedala "ash tree valley" ON *eski-dalr* (*PNIM* iv 114, 105) are evidence for trees in early times. However on Man the word *bile*, which in Irish signified a noteworthy or sacred tree (Joyce 1869, 409-500), became the ordinary word: *billey*. Some of its earlier significance may survive in place-names, as in Ballamiljyn QL meaning "farm of/by the ancient trees", and Ballaville QL "farm of the [single] tree" which refers to Glion ny Billey Gorrym "glen of the blue tree" "believed to have referred to a venerated tree" (*PNIM* iv 243; iii 301, 397-8). *Cronk y Villey*, "hill of the single tree" was the name of a tumulus on Ballacree, now demolished and the hill levelled. Given the location, the tree may have held some religious significance (*PNIM* iii 228). Crowgreen "withered bush" QL must have been named from a significant landmark (*PNIM* iv 93).

The element derry (*doire* "oakgrove"), which in Ulster may signify "a dry spot in a bog (suitable for trees)" in Man has connotations of steepness, as in FN Drumdeary "ridge of the oakgrove/ wood/ thicket on a steep incline - the latter is the case here" (*PNIM* iii 298). Glen Darragh, "oaken glen" is described as "a narrow bushy ravine", while The Darragh "oakwood area" is "a little copse of stunted trees on the steep seabrow to the north of Laxey head" "believed to be some of the few oakwood relics in Man" (*PNIM* iv 304, 295).

Like Ireland, places are named from plant and tree species: Baldrine QL "blackthorn farm", Ballure QL "yew-tree farm" (*PNIM* iv 25, 59). Rhencullen QL "holly division" (*PNIM* iv 150) was known in 1286, the only Gaelic name in a set of monastic bounds (iv 426 also ii 94). These three names do not contain the article, a feature which becomes more prevalent in later names. A few names have adjectival or locative endings, familiar in Ireland, although Broderick wonders if initial *balla* has been lost in Leaghynney QL "rushy area" and the Guilcagh, QL (TR *Gilcagh*) "place of broom" (*PNIM* iv 125; iii 124) which preserves the older form of the word, Irish *giolcach*, Manx *giucklagh*. Other quarterland names are Glentramman QL "glen of the elder trees" (*PNIM* iii 296); Ballajucklee QL "broom farm", Ballarhennie QL "bracken farm" (ii 28, 39); Ballasalla QL "willow farm" (ii 218), Shoughlaig QL "little willow grove" (ii 96); Ballashaughlaig QL "farm of the willow grove" (iv 49); Ballaskeig QL "hawthorn farm" (iv 50). Not all the trees named in Irish place-names (alder, birch) are mentioned in the Manx names.

Some names commemorate animals and birds that are now extinct. Kneen (p 44) noted of the place-name Leim y Chynnee "fox's leap" that foxes no longer existed on Man while place-names showed they were once common. Cronk y Chayt (*PNIM* iv 91) is translated "hill of the (wild) cat" but Kneen was puzzled that "our historians do not

mention wild cats" (Kneen 44; 438, 530). Labbee yn Turk is 'lair of the wild boar" (*PNIM* iv 321), although Broderick notes that *torc* is otherwise unattested in Manx. One name commemorates the eagle FN: *Cronk Urleigh* (*PNIM* i 118).

References to horses are often not what they seem. Broderick's list of common elements (*PNIM* Introduction §6), includes *cabbyl*, Irish *capall* "horse" and *sharragh*, Irish *searrach* "foal", but these denote a coastal or inland rock respectively. *Cabbyl ny Lord*, *Cabbyl Vedn*, *Cabbyl Veg*, *Cabbyl Vooar* "Lord's horse, white horse, little horse, big horse" (*PNIM* i 63) are all rock features and the last is a reef. *Sharragh Bane* denotes a "white rock" (*PNIM* ii 199; iv 348.) An Irish parallel, the Co. Antrim subtownland name of Capplecarry in Ramoan parish, was explained last century as referring to a cliff, "from the fanciful comparison of some of the projecting rocks to a mangy horse" (*Ordnance Survey Revision Name-book in PNI* vii 266 (Mac Gabhann sh.4), and a 17th-century Strabane example is a stone marking the barony boundary called *gerane bane* "white horse".<sup>26</sup> In Man, the Gownies "heifers" are two rocks by Dhoon bay (*PNIM* iv 116). The same metaphor is attested in the Old Irish story *Fingal Rónáin*, (Greene 1955 5, 11, 84 - 5) where the uselessness of a tryst at which the loved one never appeared is likened to herding two white stones on the hillside known as *Ba Aoife* "Aoife's cows": "That is the vain herding, without cows, without the one you love".

The words for early Irish secular buildings *dún*, *ráth*, *lios*, common in townland names, are not present in Manx, although there are 617 names in *dún*, 53 in *ráth* and 13 including *lios* in Scotland.<sup>27</sup> Sacred sites fare better. Appyn, translated "abbeyland", not exactly located, and two places called Nappin, one a quarterland, contain an old (pre-Scandinavian) Gaelic ecclesiastical element seen in Scottish Appin, which "would refer to the Early Christian period" (Watson 1926, 124; *PNIM* i 19; ii 257; iv 339). It is possible that the site and quarterland in Kirk Andreas called *Knock y Doonee* preserves the word *domhnach* "early church", not found in Scotland or elsewhere in Manx, and means "hill of the church", because of the ruined *keeill* with a bilingual Latin/Ogam cross-slab of c.500 AD (*PNIM* iii 136).

*Keeill*, Gaelic *cill* is the normal word for a church site, and some of these have given name to quarterlands: Ballakilmartin QL with a ruined *keeill*, "farm of Martin's church"; Ballakilmurray QL "farm of Mary's church"; Ballakillingan QL "farm by St Finghein's church" (*PNIM* iv 369; i 190; iii 290). There are many celebrated or holy wells, with names beginning *chibber*, Irish *tiobra*: Chibber Feeyney "well of wine", Chibber y Vashtee "well of baptising", Chibber Vaghal "Maughold's well" on Maughold Head, Chibber Me Leah which both Kneen and Broderick attribute to an unknown saint, but could it be a variant spelling of *Mo Lua*, as in Kirk Malew? (*PNIM* iv 264, 75, 73). There are also typical Gaelic occupation names: Ballaseyr QL "farm of the craftsmen", Glencrutchery QL "harper's glen", and a recurring Ballalheih which may mean "doctor's farm" (*PNIM* iii 54; iv 394; ii 31).

In the combined preliminary study of the element *baile* in place names organised by Deirdre Flanagan in 1978, she made the following comments: the first examples appear

<sup>26</sup>Simington Civil Survey iii 389, c.1655.

<sup>27</sup>MacDonald, A. 1987. "Caiseal, cathair, dún, lios and ráth in Scotland": part 1 *dún* BUPNS 2.3, 30- 39; part 2 *ráth* BUPNS 2.4, 32-57; part 3 *Lios, Ainm* i 37-54.

in a charter relating the monastery of Kells c. 1150 and consist of *baile* plus surname "homestead of X" (Price 1963). Other earlier examples of the word in Irish texts confirm the meaning homestead or settlement. It is now "by far the commonest settlement term in Irish townland names" with the highest incidence in areas of extensive Anglo-Norman settlement, influenced by their use of Latin *villa* or English *tun* (town) with the name of the feudal tenant. Although ownership names remained common, many of the present examples are descriptive, and clearly refer to the townland area as much as to a focal farm within it (Flanagan 1978).

Ian Fiaser said that in Scotland "*baile* is one of the most common Gaelic place name elements ... perhaps farms ... established from the 10th century onwards". The spread of Gaelic into Pictland resulted in *baile* replacing *pit* "share, portion" in many place names. East Central Scotland north of the Forth is where *baile* became commonest, since the Hebrides were still in the control of Norse-speakers. Most of the names are descriptive, but a good number of the *baile*-names in the Hebrides and Galloway, 12th century and later, contain personal names (Fraser 1978).

George Broderick documented the earliest example of Manx *baile* names in the survey of the lands owned by Rushen Abbey c. 1280. *Balla-* seems to occur as an equivalent to *villa*, which is recorded with the names of holders in the mid 12th century. He goes on to say that *Balla-* appears in 20 of the 93 treen names, but 217 of the 362 quarterland names (Broderick 1978, 17). This is a very high proportion, considering that the names of many of the treens and quarterlands are not Gaelic at all but Scandinavian. In the Anglo-Norman settled Ards peninsula in Ireland, where almost all of the townlands appear in Gaelic dress, 103 out of 210 townland names begin with *baile*. The Ulster percentage is 49% the Manx percentage 59%.

Some of these quarterlands are called quarter: Kerroodhoo QL "black quarter"; Kerrooglass QL "green quarterland"; Lheahkerroo QL "half-quarterland" (*PNIM* iii 246, iv 402; ii 78; iii 144). Others, like the tree and church names quoted above, are descriptive, and this is the case with many *baile/balla* names. Place names can be very basic, but these are both simple and recurrent: Ballachrink QL "hill farm" (*PNIM* ii 208, iii 181, 278, iv 31, 364); Ballachurry QL "marsh farm" (iii 29, iv 366); Baldromma QL "ridge farm" (iii 274, iv 26 - on the TR called *Rigg*, iv 347); Ballalheaney QL "farm of the meadow" (iv 240); Ballalhergey QL "farm of the slope" (iii 196, 293, iv 373); Ballig QL "farm of the hollow" (i 202, ii 44, 221, iv 252, 374) of which Broderick says "this name is common in Man". There is far more linguistic variety in the names of non-quarterland features, to which some of these names seem to refer. The general impression is that administrative officialdom has influenced the creation of Manx *baile* names.

In many cases *baile/balla* is followed by personal and family names, as in the earliest and many current Irish examples. Some include Scandinavian personal names, but a sure indication of lateness is that some include English surnames: Ballacleator QL, Ballaoates, Ballaradcliffe QL (iii 31, i 194, iii 53). Most of the Gaelic surnames are formed with *mac* "son" and show the reduced form '*ic* rather than *mhic*, so that the anglicised form begins with C or K. The anglicised form is spelled as the surname would be in Man today, so that these names must have been transparent in either language: Ballacain QL originally from *Baile 'ic Catháin*, (*PNIM* iv 363); Ballacannall QL from '*ic Dhomhnaill*; (iv 228); Ballacojean QL from '*ic Phaidin*, (iv 230);

Ballacollister QL from 'ic *Alasdair*, (iv 231); Ballacorteen QL from 'ic *Mháirtín* (iv 33); Ballacowin QL from 'ic *Comhghain*, (iv 232); Ballacowle QL from 'ic *Comhgaill* (iv 232); Ballakaighin QL from 'ic *Eachainn* (iv 368); Ballakelly QL from 'ic *Ceallaigh* (iii 43); Ballakey QL from 'ic *Aodha*, (iv 239). Balyfayle, "Paul's farm" or "farm of the hedge", a treen name, is divided up like a post-Plantation Ulster townland into holdings by three families, whose surname follows Ballafayle: Ballafayle Y Callow from 'ic *Amblaibh*, Ballafayle Y Cannell from 'ic *Dhomhnaill*, Ballafayle Y Kerruish from 'ic *Fhearghuis* (*PNIM* iv 35-37). Similarly-formed surnames, but preserving Mac or Mc, exist in Ulster and Scotland.

A reminder of continuing contact between Ulster and Man is provided by names apparently imported from the north-east of Ireland: Belfast QL, Coolerraine, probably named by "settlers from Coleraine in Ireland"; Cushington which according to tradition must have been named after Cushendun; Dundalk; the Irish Cottages/Houses: built for Irish slate labourers and 19th-century seasonal workers; and the Strongford (*PNIM* iii 73, 92; iv 295; ii 174; iii 406,170).

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### Abbreviations

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <i>AU</i>    | <i>Annals of Ulster</i> , Mac Airt S, 1983, ed., (Dublin).                  |
| <i>BUPNS</i> | <i>Bulletin of the Ulster Place-name Society</i> .                          |
| <i>PNI</i>   | <i>Place-Names of Northern Ireland</i> , Stockman G, ed., 1992 - 7, 7 vols. |
| <i>PNIM</i>  | <i>Place-Names of the Isle of Man</i> , Broderick G, 1994- 2000, 5 vols.    |
| <i>QL</i>    | Quarterland (Manx place-name types as used in <i>PNIM</i> )                 |
| <i>TR</i>    | Treen   |
| <i>FN</i>    | Field name  |

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