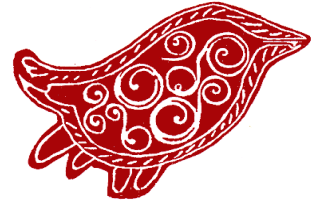


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Colonization and County Cork's Changing Cultural Landscape: the Evidence from Placenames

By PATRICK O'FLANAGAN

The notion of a cultural landscape is one which embraces the man made or man modified landscape differentiating it from the largely unmodified physical landscape. The cultural landscape consists of two major elements, firstly there are the visible elements, such as, cities, houses, byres, fields and ditches. There are also invisible elements which include language and a host of social institutions and symbols, place-names being a good example of the latter item. Like all other elements of the cultural landscape placenames live and die and in this process, just as do their creators and maintainers, they may exhibit change in their form, function and distribution, and in doing so they may also indicate broader changes taking place in the cultural landscape. Placenames thus serve as multifunctional signposts in a landscape devoid of written signs and they invariably thrive within societies where writing is overshadowed by a tradition of oral transmission of culture.¹ In this way placenames were of especial significance in Ireland during the major plantations as in the absence of maps recorded placenames were crucial for the registration of land for regranteeing.²

Taylor, author of 'Words and Places, or, of Ethymological Illustrations of History, Ethology and Geography,' proposed an interesting hypothesis highlighting the impress of placenames in colonial situations.³ It was, '... successive bands of immigrants may forget their mother tongue and abandon all distinctive national peculiarities, but the names which, on their first arrival they bestowed on the places of their abodes are sure to remain on the map as a permanent record of the nature and the extent of their colonization.'⁴ Thus, if certain categories of placenames were collected

¹ This is still the case in some parts of Ireland and other areas of Atlantic Europe. See, for example, S. Ó Catháin and P. O'Flanagan, 'The Living Landscape' Kilgalligan, Ennis, Co. Mayo. Comhairle Bhealoideas Éireann. Dublin 1976.

² Jones Hughes, T. Town and Baile in Irish Placenames: in, Irish Geographical Studies, Edited by R. Glasscock and N. Stephens. Belfast, 1970, pp. 244-258. This work covers the entire country and its main thrust is directed towards the identification and attempted interpretation of three kinds of placename regions.

³ Taylor, I., Words and Places, or, Etymological Illustrations of History, Ethnology and Geography. London, 1873, p. 29.

⁴ Ibid.

and analysed in Ireland, for example, those referring to land units and settlements, would we gain an insight into the manner in which each intrusive group assessed the areas they first settled? Would such names bequeathed by different groups be indicative of successive transformations of the landscape by each group? Furthermore, would the different types of names tell us about the nature and extent of each group's transformation? This paper seeks to clarify whether placenames can be utilised to establish the extent and implications of a colonisation process which includes not only consideration of the initial spread and consolidation but also subsequent acculturation, or fusion between native and colonizer and also perhaps the subsequent disappearance of the group who bestowed the names as well as, the names given by them.

The following are among the kind of questions which require to be resolved in an assessment of such colonization process. To what degree has each intrusive group left its imprint on the map? Does the density and intensity of naming in certain areas indicate core zones of settlement and penetration? How free have different intrusive groups been to leave their names on the map? What kinds of names have different groups bestowed? Are there regional differences both in time and space in the kinds of names bestowed? Do the type of names involved or their distribution indicate whether the process of colonization stemmed from a rural or an urban base?

Similarly, in terms of fusion between native and colonist such questions as follows need to be responded to. To what degree have intrusive names been accepted, modified or abandoned? Does the form of some of the placenames indicate that fusion has transpired between native and alien? Can zones where such mingling has occurred be located upon the map? Can areas be identified where placename displacement has taken place indicating either thorough alien penetration or, native resurgence? Furthermore there is also the question of whether the types of names bestowed by different immigrant groups indicate and record the responses of such peoples to the opportunities and the constraints of their new surroundings?

There remains the problem of finding a suitable body of placenames as well as a suitable scale to attempt to clarify some of these problems. Most placenames in Ireland belong to one of three major classes. A class of *official names* may be recognized, these are placenames whose existence is acknowledged by officialdom and they refer, for example, to all administrative divisions, ranging from townlands to counties. Many of these placenames are old, some are of pre-Celtic origin, and many of these are toponyms, that is, they refer to identifiable durable physical elements, though at least 40 per cent of them refer to 'cultural' items, ranging from settlements to land type or quality assessments. Then there are *corporate* placenames, such names are bestowed and used chiefly by geographically small and confined groups; townland or parish communities, for example. The names of local cultural elements, such as, fields, banks, ditches and houses, as well as, many toponyms are in this group: few of these names are recorded. There are also, *in-group* placenames, these are names bestowed by often intrusive minority groups; such names are also seldom recorded and may pass out of use after one generation or two, the names bestowed by the Pallatines in Ireland, for example.

Only the first class of names cover the entire country as they have been fossilized in the names given to Ireland's 62,000 townlands. As has been shown elsewhere the townland structure of the east and parts of south of the country had taken general

shape not long after the Norman conquest.⁵ A few other townlands were delineated much later, some even in the last century; their recent origins are often apparent in the names given to them: the names of small uninhabited islands in S.W. Cork. Most townland names were initially selected from the local *corporate* name bank and hence they refer both to physical as well as cultural elements. The network of townlands has survived because in the absence of any other reference system in a moderately well populated countryside they serve to designate location and land-ownership, and in some areas they have played this role for 800 years at least.

There are 5,478 townlands in Co. Cork, that is almost one-tenth of the total number in the country and because of its size and variety of environments and its colonial legacy it may serve as a suitable scale for the attempted resolution of some of the problems already mentioned. In Co. Cork, the vast majority of townland names are toponyms, they refer to a series of recurring physical features, such as, *slieve*, a hill, or *sruth*, a stream.⁶ At least fifty per cent of the townland names fall into this category and hence they echo the nature of the physique of the area in which they occur. Nearly thirty per cent of the townland names are biotic, they refer to such items as, *coill*, a wood, *portach*, a bog, and *doire*, an oak wood. The vast majority of townland names in these two categories are of native origin, many of which subsequently have become anglicized. The remaining twenty per cent of the townland names refer to cultural items, fifteen per cent of these are of native origin and the other five per cent are of post-Norman date. They may be divided up in the following manner for the purpose of analysis.

PLACE NAME ELEMENTS

<i>Type</i>	<i>Native</i> (Anglicized form in brackets) ⁷	<i>Intrusive</i>
Settlements, land-units, houses	<i>Baile</i> (Bally); <i>Buaile</i> (Booley); <i>Cathair</i> (Caher); <i>Dún</i> (Doon); <i>Lios</i> (Lis); <i>Rath</i> (Rath). <i>Garraí</i> or <i>Garadha</i> may also be a member of this group.	Abbey, Castle, Court, Gleebe, Lodge, Mill and Ville. Also, Ton/Town. The following anglicised toponyms invariably refer to settlements. Close, Dale, Grove, Hill, Lawn and Mount.
<i>Enclosures</i>	<i>Achadh</i> (Agha), <i>Bán</i> (Bawn) <i>Ceapach</i> (Cappa), <i>Claidhe</i> (Claish), <i>Chuain</i> (Cloon), <i>Nuadhcengbhail</i> (Nohaval), <i>Gairdín</i> (Garden), <i>Garraí</i> (Garry). <i>Garrán</i> (Garran), <i>Gort</i> (Gort), <i>Gortín</i> (Gorty), <i>Iomaire</i> (Ummerra) <i>Leathfhearran</i> (Laharan), <i>Tuair</i> (Toor).	Estate, Desmesne, Field, Garden, Grange, Land, Gleebeland.

⁵ Otway Ruthven, J., *Place-Names in Ireland*. Irish Geography, Vol. 2, 1950, pp. 45-51.

⁶ The English translation of terms has been confined in most cases to the most common meaning.

⁷ Only the leading anglicised forms are given and these have been restricted to forms which most frequently occur in Munster.

<i>Land Measures</i>	<i>Ceathramha</i> (Carhoo) <i>Gníomh</i> (Geneeve) <i>Trián</i> (Trien).	Acre, Carton, Let, League, Quarter, Stang.
<i>Tenures</i>		Leasehold, Tenement, Quit-rent, Brookland, Commons, Burgess-land
<i>Biotic</i>	<i>Doire</i> (Derry):	Forest, Wood, Heath, Moor, Bean, Barley, Oates, Peas.

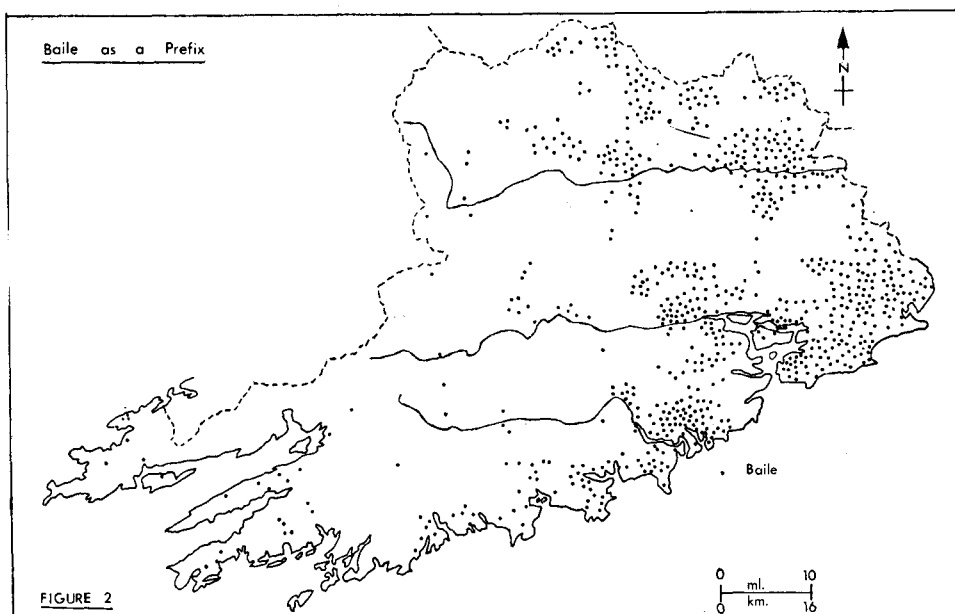
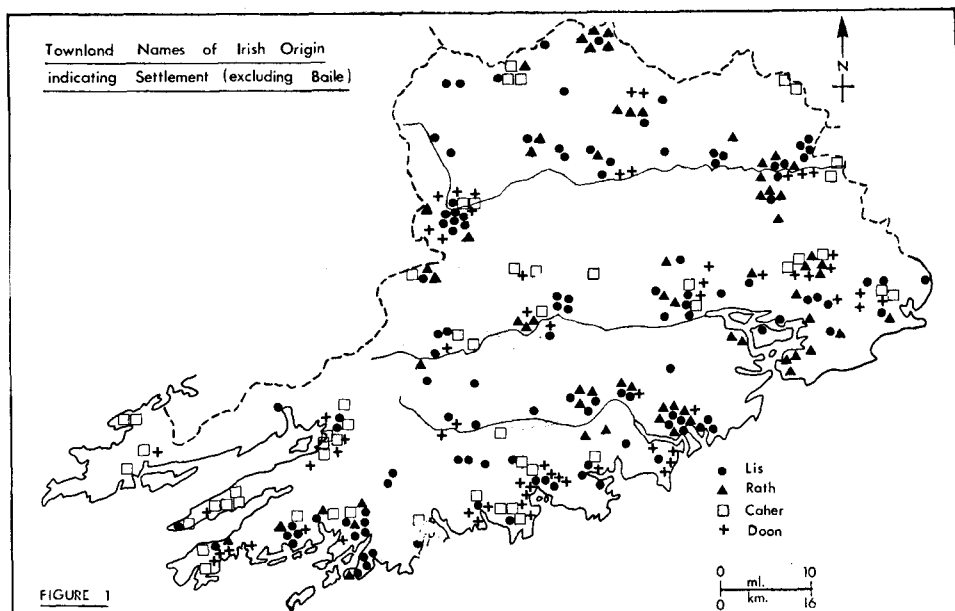
It is clear that most of the townland names have been anglicised at one time or another and most of the anglicised forms are easily recognisable, there are exceptions, i.e., Nuadhceingbail (a new settlement) has usually been anglicised to Nohaval. However, there are some serious limitations attached to the study of these kinds of names. The origin and dating of most of the names is by no means clear, some may be of pre-Norman date, others are much later. The dimensions of many of the townlands may have changed in the past.⁸ The names of some of the townlands may have changed more than once in the process of colonization or anglicization, this kind of transformation only seems to have occurred in a few examples. Further confusion may arise when native and alien nomenclature for the same townland are different. The problem is that different native and intrusive names may have been applied to one townland, but as the anglicized forms were accepted by officialdom the unrecorded Irish forms have vanished.⁹ Most of these names are simple translations from Irish into English, *Cnoc Amhrain* is Mountmusic in English, for instance. Furthermore several potentially significant placename elements have to be avoided because of possible confusion, such anglicized elements as *kil*, might refer to a church (Cill) or, a wood (coill), similarly, *cool*, might indicate, a wood, a corner, or a hollow. Thus, in absence of definite pedigree and date such names have been omitted from this work. These limitations, although important, do not blunt the central thrust of this study which is beamed upon the interpretation and analysis of general patterns and *not* particular instances.

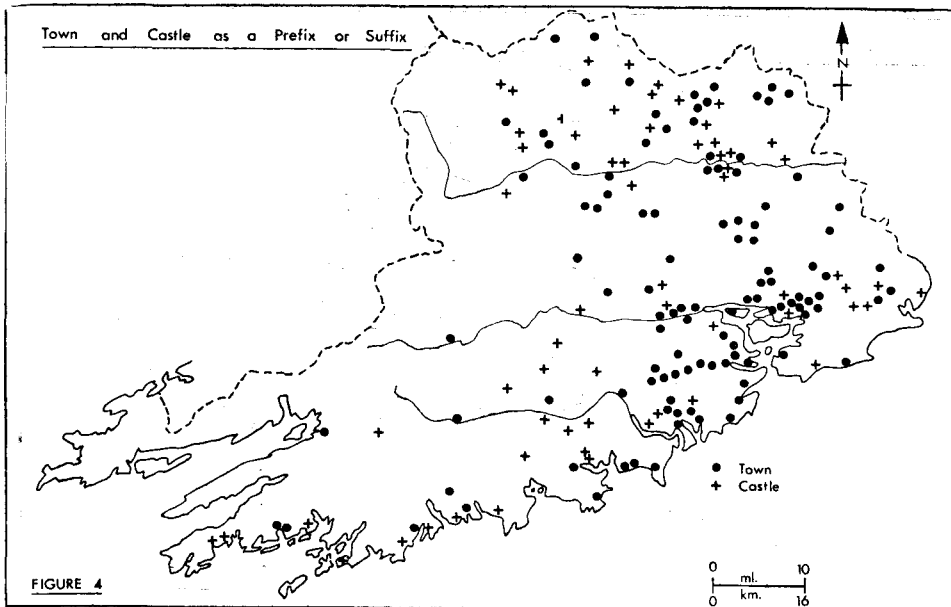
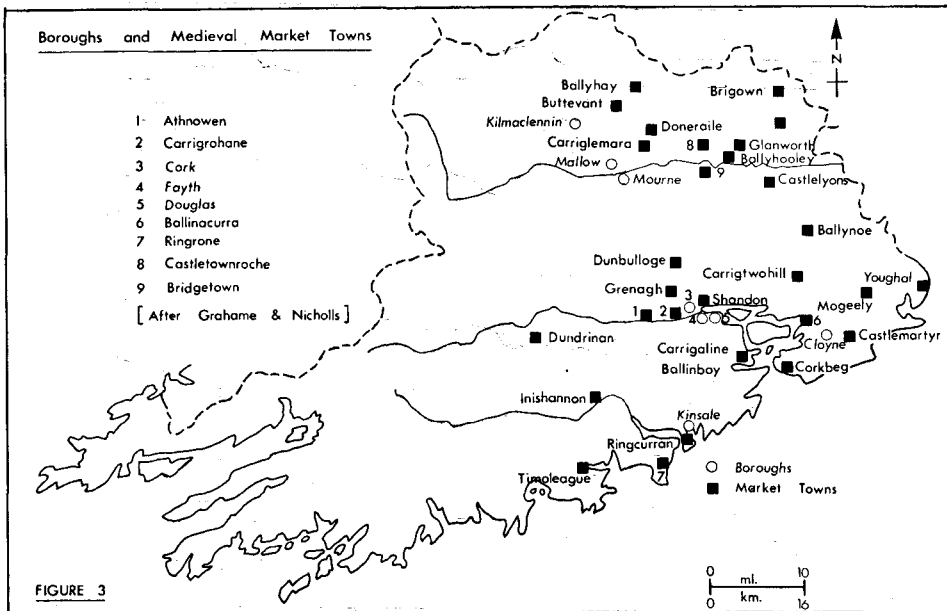
Most townland names as they have come down to us seem to be of post-Viking date and thus, a general impression of the extent of occupation in Co. Cork prior to Anglo-Norman intrusion ought to set the scene for this work. The distribution of the elements *caher*, *dún*, *lis* and *rath* ought to provide a general view of the spread of settlement in the early medieval period (Fig. 1).¹⁰ If this pattern represents the spread of settlement prior to the arrival of the Normans it is a highly discontinuous cover. Figure 1 highlights the existence of three core areas of concentration: they

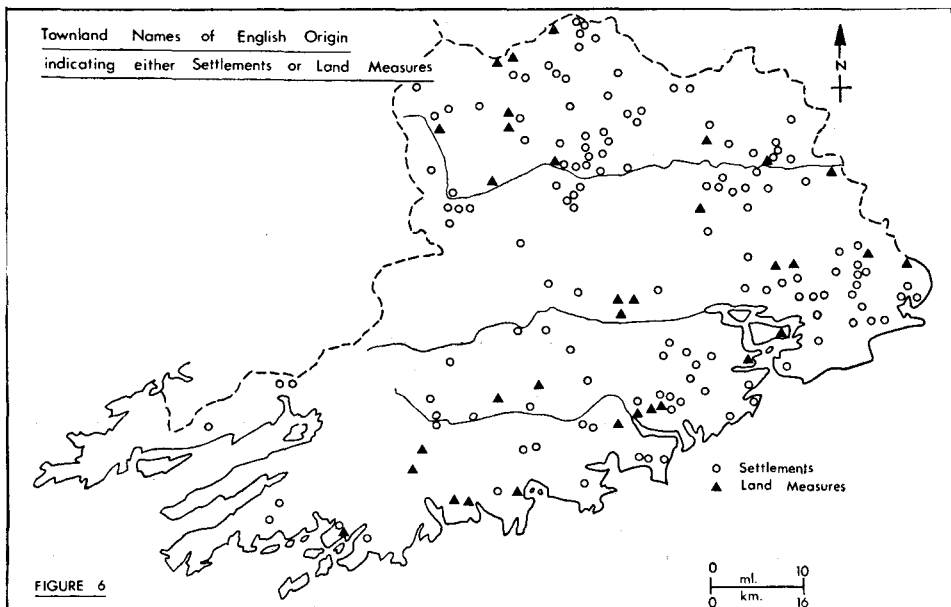
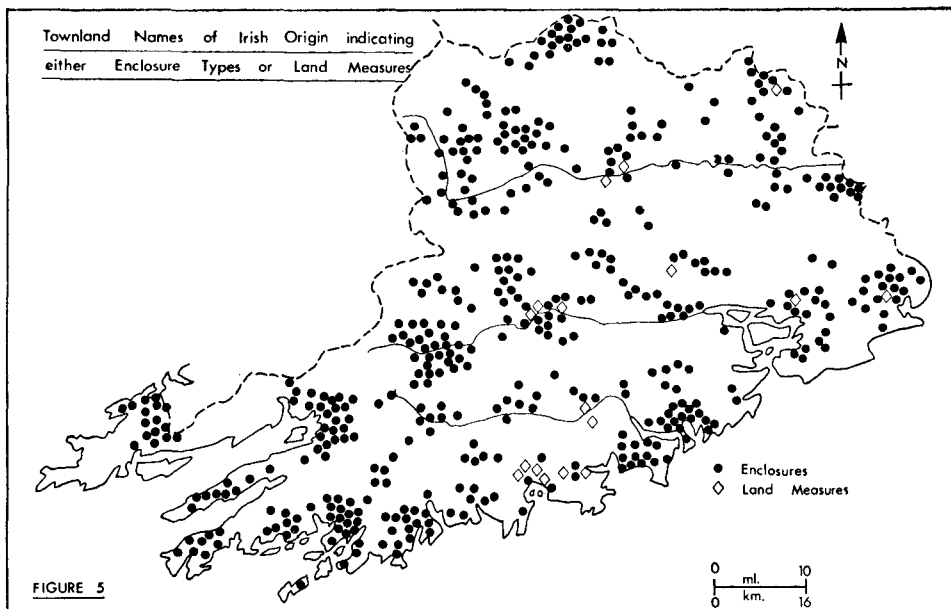
⁸ Otway Ruthven, J. *Supra*.

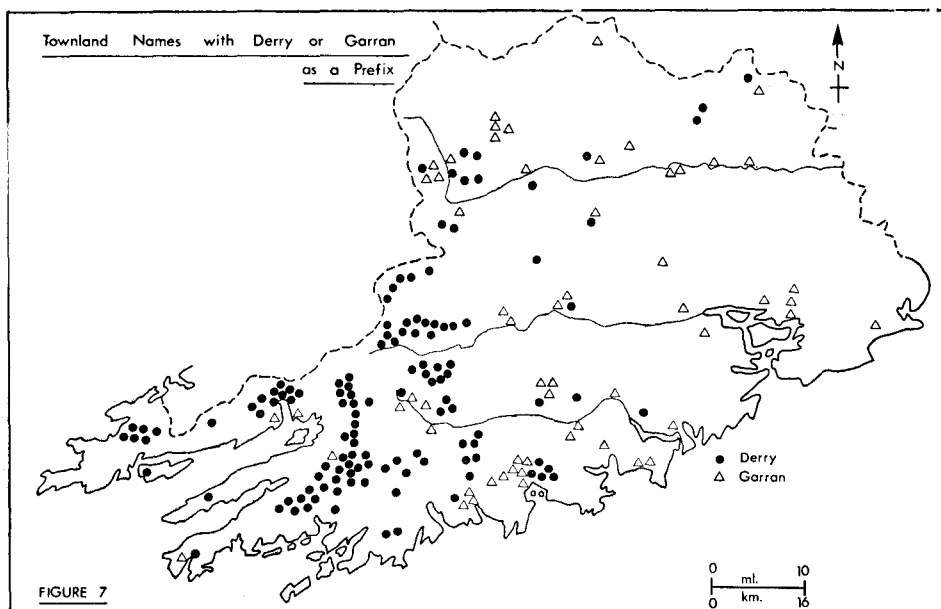
⁹ In some cases it is clear that the townland name may have changed several times. In this work the current townland names are utilized.

¹⁰ Not all of these settlements are of medieval date, some were of earlier origin, others, perhaps later.









are, the coasts and peninsulas of the south and south west with high intensity of settlement in the Kinsale-Ballyferrard area. Secondly, a discontinuous spread is visible in the river valleys of the Bandon, Lee and the Blackwater. Thirdly, there is also a core zone apparent in east Co. Cork in the area which extends between Walsh-town-Carricktwoghill-Youghal. Figure 1 emphasizes that, with the exception of the element *Rath*, the other settlement types indicate no significant spatial preference. How accurate a representation figure 1 is of the pre-Norman extent of settlement is by no means clear but it does undoubtedly pinpoint the major core zones of this kind of settlement. It is likely that other forms of settlement were contemporaneous and it is likely that *baile* was one such form. *Baile* as a term defies precise definition, primarily because it discharged different functions simultaneously and at different times. Price has shown that when the term was first recorded it designated the land of a sept in the twelfth century and before the end of the early fourteenth century it had come to indicate the site of a fortified manor.¹¹ Later in the same century the term *baile* came to embrace the same connotations as the Anglo-Norman term, *ton* or *town*, and Co. Cork is no exception with almost 700 *baile* elements, (*baile* is by far the most numerous non-toponymic prefix of townland names).

If an assumption is made that *baile* type settlement took place later than most of the other settlements depicted upon figure 1 it is clear that the distribution of *baile* type settlement in Co. Cork could be interpreted as making an expansion of settlement in the east matched by abandonment or at least stagnation in the west (fig. 2). *Baile* is more noteworthy by its absence in the west of the county, that is west of a line between Timoleague to Mallow to Millstreet and the Cork-Kerry border zone. East of

¹¹Price, L., A Note on the Use of the Word Baile in Placenames. *Celtica* VI, 1963, pp. 119-126.

this zone, *baile* names occur in extensive crescents around the core zones already mentioned (Fig. 2). In the area between Ballyhooly-Fermoy-Curraglass *baile* elements are particularly dense. At first sight, accepting the above assumption it seems to be a straight forward case of settlement expansion matched by contraction in another area. Such an interpretation omits the impact of the presence of the Normans who had already settled in the country.

The arrival of the Normans did not simply herald the presence of a new ethnic group, they brought with them new ideas concerning landworking, social organizations and settlement form, as well as, introducing a new language. They settled in areas of the country which were already occupied and a landscape covered with names. One of the innovations introduced by them was the town with its castle, church and sometimes a mill and a market place. Figure 3 indicates the relative strength of the urban colonization of Cork by depicting the sites of early Norman boroughs and market centres which exhibits a strong south easterly concentration, particularly to the east and to the south of the Cork harbour zone.¹² Today some of these settlements are ghosts of their former size, for example, Ballynoe and Kilmaclennie. They were formerly designed to act as central places in a landscape devoid of towns and the growth and subsequent development of some of them is ample proof of relative 'success.'

Besides these forms of settlements the Normans were also responsible for the establishment of a variety of rural footholds, their presence is most frequently designated by the placename element *ton* or *town* and sometimes by *castle* (Fig. 4).¹³ The former suffix however, is by no means as numerous as *baile*. *Ton/Town* is an old English term denoting a holding and/or, a settlement. In England it was at one time equivalent in significance to the Latin term *villa*. The terms *ton/town* is usually employed as a suffix most frequently with intrusive family name, Jordanstown, for example, and only occasionally with a toponym, such as, Riverstown. When the spread of the elements *ton/town* is compared with the cover of *baile* an overlap is especially visible in the east of the county and particularly so in the south east of the county (Figs. 2 and 4). Nowhere, however, is *town* settlement as dense as that of *baile*. The density of *town* type settlement decreases with increasing distance from the area where boroughs were thickest on the ground indicating the importance of an urban base for the consolidation of intrusive settlement. A line of castles on the edge of this core zone may, at one time, have represented a frontier area (Fig. 4).

It is clear that the spread of these intrusive elements mirrors reasonably accurately some of the main zones of Anglo-Norman occupation and in the process of colonization it is likely that broadly synonymous native terms were Normanized either by direct translation or, the total acceptance of the native terms. Nevertheless the overall impression yielded by figures 3 and 4 is the slightness of the alien penetration outside the core zones and even in the core zones an Irish presence is evident mirrored by the many native names. Such is the case along the coast, the western and central areas of

¹² Graham, B. J., *The Towns of Medieval Ireland*; in, *The Development of the Irish Town*, Edited by R. A. Butlin, London, 1977. This work contains a list of medieval Irish boroughs and market towns. I am grateful to Mr. K. W. Nicholls for providing me with the names of additional sites for Fig. 3.

¹³ Castle usually occurs as a prefix. The element castle was also bestowed in the post plantation period and became sometimes incorporated in townland nomenclature stressing that all castle elements are not necessarily early.

the county and along most of the upland ridges which separate the leading river valleys. Another indication of the weakness of the alien contribution is the extraordinary limited number of elements which were successfully bestowed, the most numerous of which refer only to settlement types, i.e., *town*. It is also worthy of note that no generic toponyms were successfully introduced, which might indicate a more thorough alien incursion.

The Normans unlike colonists in some other parts of the world were not fortunate in having *tabula rasa* conditions on their arrival in Ireland, they penetrated a countryside already often littered with settlement and placenames and the acceptance by the Normans of the names of the most of the major settlements which they expanded (Fig. 3) is evidence of the strength of the native tradition. Another indication of the limited spatial impact of the Normans is manifested by the townland nomenclature around the boroughs and markets (Fig. 3), such as Cloyne, Castlemartyr, Ballynoe, Wallstown and Walshstown. In the immediate vicinity of most of these settlements intrusive townland names tend to dominate but within a mile's radius of them, native names outnumber intrusive nomenclature by a ratio of almost ten to one emphasising these as the alien beacons being surrounded by Gaelic seas.¹⁴

Besides bestowing toponyms and *baile* names a variety of other cultural elements were also bequeathed by the Irish indicating occupation in the zones so named. Among the most common in Co. Cork are the following elements (Fig. 5).¹⁵

<i>Enclosures</i>	{	Achadh (a field) e.g. Aghamanister.
		Bán (dry pasture land, river bank pasture) e.g., Bawnmore.
		Ceapach (a tillage plot, a kitchen garden) e.g., Cappanacallee.
		Cluain (a meadow) e.g., Cloonteens.
		Fearann (a field, a ploughland) e.g., Farranavarra.
		Gairdín (a garden) e.g., Gardeen.
		Garraí/Garradha (a tilled field, a house enclosure) e.g., Garryduff.
		Garrán (a clearing, a woodland grove) e.g., Garianagoleen.
		Gort (a small field) e.g., Gortroche.
		Gortín (a small field) e.g., Gurteenroe.
		Iomaire (a ploughed ridge, a boundary furrow) e.g., Ummeraboy.
		Leathfhearan (a small field) e.g., Laharandota.
		Nuadhceinghbháil (a new settlement) e.g., Nohavaldaly.
<i>Land Measures</i>	{	Ceathramha (a quarter (land)) e.g., Carhoon.
		Gníomh (a twelfth part of a ploughland).
		Trián (a third, an aiea) e.g., Trieneens.
		Tuair (a lea, a bleaching green) e.g., Toorard.

These types of prefixes and suffixes were initially given to areas of permanently improved land, hence many of these areas must have been closely settled when the names were bestowed and also when recorded. Figure 5 shows that these elements are spread throughout the entire county with the exception of *garraí* which is less numerous in the west. A number of areas record a higher incidence of these names, however; among them are, the coastal zone between Leap to Ballydehob, the head of

¹⁴ Similar conditions are evident in other parts of the country. See T. Jones Hughes, 1970. Their limited extent was a consequence of re-Gaelicisation as the *town* zone was initially after colonization a much more extensive zone.

¹⁵ The most common translation is given.

Bantry Bay and in some inland zones, for example, the area extending between Inchigeela, Macroom, Ballyvourney, and northwards to Millstreet, perhaps indicating that these areas were more closely settled. In the east of the county, in the Kinsale, Castlemartyr and Rathcormac areas, native and intrusive elements are intermingled (Figs. 4 and 5). Effectively when first recorded these elements discharged the same function as *baile* or *town*, that is, they indicated land-ownership on a family or a kin basis.

The spread of the native elements raises more difficulties of interpretation (Fig. 5). It could be argued that zones with a high intensity of these kinds of elements may have been areas where settlement took place relatively late in more marginal conditions. Alternatively, it could be suggested that the cover represents, at least in some areas where the density of elements is high, core zones of native settlement prior and even subsequent to Anglo-Norman intrusion as some of the areas in question appear to be coincident with well known tribal territories, such as *Corca Laoi* in the south west of the county, which subsequently crystallised as the diocese of Ross. Finally, the pattern depicted by figure 5 could simply be held to represent the fortuitous juxtaposition of these elements in several areas. The final hypothesis can be rejected first as it is highly unlikely that such a varied mix of cultural terms would recur in close association. The first attempted interpretation cannot be totally dismissed because of the variety of environments in which the elements occur particularly in some western and northern sectors of the county. In some of them at least settlement was late and it took place in marginal conditions. Nevertheless the pattern shown by figure 5 does seem to indicate a series of core zones of native occupation, such as, south west Co. Cork, as well as, the other areas mentioned already. Such an interpretation is strengthened when a comparison is made between the spread of native terms for settlement and the other elements indicating occupation (Figs. 1 and 5). This kind of areal association is especially noteworthy in the south west of the county, the difference being as might be expected that the terms for settlement are less frequent than the other types of terms. In the south west of the county and possibly elsewhere many of these names are old, as for example, the Illen Valley was carved up even in Petty's time into many tiny townlands, the vast majority of them bearing native names.¹⁶

It has been possible to indicate in general terms from the map, evidence of the presence of a zone of alien intrusion closely associated with a number of small central places. Also a number of zones have been identified where native traditions were strong and which may have felt colonial influences, evidence of which nevertheless is not available in the names. There were undoubtedly other zones, as has been demonstrated on a national basis, where the two cultures mixed and mingled and where some form of acculturation or cultural mixing perhaps took place. In this context, to add to its complexities, the spatial expression of the so-called Gaelic resurgence must also be reckoned with in terms of how, if at all, such a process has exhibited its incidence in the placenames? Three basic indices of blending may be invoked, they are, firstly, place-name displacement by translation; secondly, cross borrowing and finally to cite a philological analogy, the process of syncretism, that is, the harmonization in meaning of two originally different terms.

In terms of displacement the fusion between two cultures may be evident either,

¹⁶ Petty, W., Barony maps of the Down Survey. 2 volumes. Ordnance Survey, Southampton, 1908.

by the direct translation of an Irish term into English, or, vice versa, depending upon the direction in which the process is working. The case of *Cnocamhráin* to Mountmusic is a good example of such in Co. Cork and there are many more examples of this, but when plotted on a map no meaningful interpretation is at once apparent. On a spatial basis, it has been demonstrated by Price that the Gaelic revival was manifested close to some major Anglo-Norman establishments, such as, monasteries and towns by the fact that intrusive elements took on an indigenous hue, as for example, beside the abbey at Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow where the townlands of Rhodetown and Hookstown came to be rendered as Ballinacrow and Ballyhook respectively.¹⁷ Further research is necessary to establish how widespread this process was.

Cross borrowing may also be a movement in either direction. It involves the fusion of native and intrusive nomenclature, but without solid evidence it is almost impossible to be certain of the direction of the process. Townland names such as *Rathbarry*, *Gortroche* and *Ardadam* may be instances of the process working in the direction of the native order, while *Castledonovan* and *Lislecourt* may indicate the opposite tendency at work. Areas where such a kind of fusion has taken place may be evident on a local basis if these kinds of names occur relatively frequently.

The firmest indication of mingling between native and colonizer may be manifested through the process of syncretization. It has been already suggested that by the 14th century *town* and *baile* shared the same significance and function and thus in some areas *baile* would in fact be an extension of the town zone. A re-examination of the spread of these elements points strongly in favour of such a view, and thus areas which show a high density of *baile* names have a significantly higher incidence on the edge of the *town* zone (Figs. 2 and 4). Such is the case, for example, in the area which extends between Fermoy and Mitchelstown, also in the coastal and southern sector of Imokilly and between Midleton and Youghal. Thus, in these and other areas where this pattern is repeated the *baile* area seems to be an extension of the *town* zone and it might not be unreasonable to suggest that in the perimeter of such areas the *baile* elements represent an extension of occupation, particularly in some eastern sectors of the county.¹⁸ Outside the core zones in the eastern half of the county in areas where the *town* element, where not evidently bestowed and where direct colonial intrusion seems to have been weaker, fusion is certainly not apparent in the townland names as few hybrid forms occur. From the welter of processes at work during the time since most of the townland names were bestowed it is extremely difficult to disentangle what some of the patterns indicate, whether resurgence and displacement, fusion, or simply an extension of the occupied area or various combinations of these processes. Thus, by the 15th century most of the areas presently occupied were both peopled and named, that is with the exception of some marginal peninsular and upland locations.

It now remains to briefly assess the mark bestowed by subsequent intruders. During and after the 16th century a new rash of names was spawned by the new colonists and their successors (Fig. 6). Among the most common prefixes and suffixes bequeathed were; firstly those referring to settlements: *brook*, *close*, *court*, *dale*,

¹⁷ The *baile* zone fringing the town zone in Co. Cork may be interpreted as the area where similar processes were in operation.

¹⁸ Also it seems that the *baile* zones which fringe the *town* core zone represents an area where the Gaelic resurgence took place as many elements now rendered as *baile* were originally *town* terms.

demesne, grove, hill, lawn, lodge, mount, park and ville; secondly elements referring to land measures: *acre, cartron, land, league and quarter*; thirdly, elements referring to tenures: *brookland, commons, leasehold, quitrent and tenement*; finally, a diverse group of elements, all with biotic implications: *barley, beans, forest, heath, moor, oats and peas*; few names are members of this final group. The first group above although it includes some toponyms, such as, *brook* or *hill* generally designates settlements and their land, while the final group generally indicate enclosures, *Peafield*, for example. Although the range of name type introduced is nearly as wide as the native stock this group of elements accounts for less than two per cent of all Co. Cork's townland names. Many of these kinds of names were given to the houses and holdings of the minor gentry and often ostentatious names were little more than a mask for modest dwellings. Sometimes some of these elements were often combined with the christian name of the landowners wife, *Bettyville* or *Maryspark* or less frequently with a family name, *Mount Vernon*, for example.¹⁹ However, only a handful of these kinds of names came to be accepted as townland names and in the process often replaced pre-existing names. Many first edition six inch maps show a half dozen or so of these kinds of houses on each sheet, the most recent editions frequently shows them now as anonymous ruins in a sea of townlands bearing native nomenclature. The generally limited range of these kinds of elements, their paltry incidence and the fact that many of them are found in the core zones of initial penetration stresses the restricted nature of the modification of townland nomenclature by this group of colonists (Fig. 6).²⁰ The fact that unlike earlier intruders they remained an exclusive group in an alien landscape is to a degree borne out by the fact that their presence did not bequeath a more thorough echo in the placenames associated with them.

Comparisons and contrasts of some of the leading cultural elements may shed light upon former processes of colonization, settlement and interaction between different cultural groups. An attempted interpretation of the spread of other elements raises problems that appear to defy clarification. Only a limited number of biotic elements in townland nomenclature recur with any frequency. *Doire* and *garrán* are cases in point and it could be argued that their cover might highlight the distribution of woodlands in the county. The reverse is the case in figure 7, as it indicates that most woods occur in the west of the county separating the closely settled zones (Fig. 5). Since no intrusive term referring to woodland per se gained currency it is most unlikely that figure 7 portrays accurately the distribution of woodland throughout the county.²¹ An example such as this serves to emphasise the dangers and constraints of placename evidence alone in the interpretation of past landscape changes and the reconstruction of the anatomy of historical landscapes.

Nevertheless an interpretation of the native and intrusive contribution to townland nomenclature in Co. Cork yields a general insight into the nature of early and subsequent interaction between both groups. The evidence stresses that unlike other parts of Ireland, the alien incursion into Co. Cork was not as all pervasive as in the eastern half of the country such as in east Co. Meath and Co. Louth. Even in east Co. Cork and in the lower reaches of the major river valleys a strong native presence is

¹⁹ Sometimes Irish landowners gave these kinds of intrusive names to their houses and lands.

²⁰ The vast majority of these kinds of names have been given to estate houses, demesnes and the houses of the minor gentry.

²¹ Without clear-cut dating for most of these placenames, it is impossible to indicate the period in question highlighting the dangers of placenames as a source.

clearly demonstrated by the incidence of many Irish elements. It is also clear that some western and central sectors of the county were relatively densely settled by native groups when the townland framework was laid out, judging by the variety of cultural elements which were selected as townland names. The influence of subsequent intrusive groups upon townland nomenclature was slight even in some of the main areas of earlier intrusive settlement indicating the resilience of the established pattern. The placename evidence, however, is inconclusive as it does not clearly demonstrate whether early colonization stemmed from an 'urban' base, though there is indeed a close areal association between areas where 'urban' settlements were established and the density of intrusive rural settlement. Neither does the confused evidence—relying on present forms—clarify the manner in which fusion between the two cultures transpired, nor, do we obtain a concise impression of the spatial extent of the Gaelic resurgence; except of course, the *baile* zone.

In the light of the evidence from Co. Cork it is clear that Taylor's hypothesis must be severely modified, especially since officialdom has at all times since served to fossilise the established pattern, that is, the townland framework. Taylor's thesis also fails to take cognisance of the impact of processes making for fusion between different groups in a colonial setting. A final major drawback to an initially attractive idea is the neglect of the potential impact of several successive incursions by different groups into the same area as has happened in Ireland which has resulted in pre-existing placenames being modified more than once besides leading to the spawning of a new crop of placenames. A further complication is added by the so-called Gaelic resurgence when Anglo-Norman names were gaelicized, such as, *town* to *baile* and subsequently these and other names were reanglicised mainly after the 17th century plantations. Each immigrant group certainly left its name on the map but in all cases it has been a highly selective and spatially variable surface and thus we are not the inheritors of a permanent record of the nature and the extent of each colonization. The pattern once established in Co. Cork as elsewhere in Ireland has remained resistant to revision and subsequent groups have successfully introduced only a few new placenames indicating the strength of the 15th century endowment. Even so it is especially difficult to identify cores and especially boundaries on the map. It is likely that between the 'colonial' south east of the county and the 'native' west, an area in which fusion occurred may have emerged, subsequent research may bear this contention out.

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