

## Noun + noun compounds in Irish placenames

Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig

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# NOUN + NOUN COMPOUNDS IN IRISH PLACENAMES\*

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DÓNALL MAC GIOLLA EASPAIG

One of the most common placename formations found in British and Continental Celtic is that of the nominal compound of the structure NOUN + NOUN in which the first noun qualifies or defines the second, for example: Gaul. Gabromagos 'goat-plain', O. Brit. \*Rigodunon (Ptol. Rigodounon) 'the fort of the king(s)'. Compound names are also found in Irish toponymy though not nearly as frequently as they are in British or Gaulish, e.g. Darmhagh < \*darumagus 'oak-plain'. My purpose in this paper is to present an analysis of the NOUN + NOUN compound in Irish placenames to show the most common elements occurring in such names, and to compare these elements with those found in earlier Continental and British placenames.

This analysis is based on the results of an extensive search for NOUN + NOUN compounds in all sources for Irish placenames from the earliest extant texts of Old Irish to fieldwork carried out by the Placenames Office of the Ordnance Survey. This search yielded a total of just over six-hundred and fifty names and I am confident that I have accounted for the majority of compound names in all the sources. Not included in the analysis, however, are those compounds which, though they occur frequently as placenames appear to be primarily ordinary appellatives with specialised meaning, e.g. *long-phort* 'a fortification', *sráid-bhaile* 'a village' *durthach* < \*daru-tegos lit. 'oak-house'.

A figure of just over six-hundred and fifty compound names might not at first appear exceptional when it is realised that there are some sixty thousand individual townland names in the country, as well as numerous minor feature names within each townland. Compared however with the number of NOUN + NOUN compounds found in the language in general this figure is quite substantial and compares well with M. A. O'Brien's findings for compound personal names (cf. *Celtica* IX 218).

In Irish as in insular Celtic in general there was a tendency to abandon the NOUN + NOUN compound structure in favour of the parallel structure of NOUN + Defining GENITIVE. The explanation of this phenomenon

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need not concern us in this paper. However, internal evidence suggests that this shift away from compounds had begun at an early stage, since comparatively few occur even in the earliest literature, disregarding the obvious learned calques on Latin words. Indeed a striking feature of the NOUN+NOUN formations that do occur, is the number of them that have exact cognates in Welsh, an indication, perhaps, that many such compounds are survivals from the common Celtic period.

Onomastic evidence would tend to support the view that the nominal compound had more or less ceased to be productive by the early Old Irish period. O'Brien in his study of Old Irish personal names found that all new personal names appearing in the annals and genealogies from the seventh century on are of the later non-compound NOUN+GEN. structure. My own research reveals a similar picture for placenames. Most of the names which occur in texts of the earliest Old Irish period are of the non-compound type, e.g. *Inis Orc* which appears in the archaic Leinster poems going back to the early seventh century. As placenames take some time to become established we may postulate a date of some two centuries earlier for the introduction of non-compound names, that is, around 400 A.D. Given this early date for the introduction of non-compound formations, new compound names must have been few, even from this early date. Consequently many of the surviving compound names must belong to the pre-Christian era, allowing for analogy and linguistic variations throughout the country. The names themselves reflect this antiquity as we shall see when we come to examine the elements. Let us now turn to the names themselves.

The vast majority of compound names occur alone, unqualified by either a following adjective or noun phrase in the genitive case. In only one instance was a compound name preceded by an adjective, i.e. *Garbh-Eochail* 'rough-yew-wood'. Compound names are not generally accompanied by the definite article even in Irish speaking areas where this is normal with most non-compound names; compare: *An Spidéal*, g. *An Spidéil*, but, *Leamhchail*, g. *Leamhchaille*. A small proportion of compounds do occur in the genitive case after a limited number of other placename elements especially *droim* 'a ridge' *cluain* 'a meadow', *achadh* 'a field', all of which occur as elements in the compound names as well. Examples: *Cluain Ciochmhaighe*, *Achadh Eochaille*. These names are of course secondary, the original name consisting of the simple compound, for example, *Ciochmhagh*.

The great majority of the compounds are of the Indo-European tatpuruṣa type such as *Durmhagh* lit. 'oak-plain', that is 'the plain of the oak(s)'. However, several examples of the bahuvrihi type occur also, e.g. *Mucáis* lit. 'pig-back', i.e. 'possessing a pig's back'. A number of other names may be interpreted as either tatpuruṣas or bahuvrihis, e.g. *Eachdhroim* lit. 'horse-back' which could mean 'possessing a horse's back' as well as the more likely 'ridge of the horses'.

## ELEMENTS

I shall examine the compound names according to their second or principal elements, and then according to their first or qualifying members. As shall be seen below, all of the elements in compound names are familiar from non-compound Irish placenames. The number of elements in the compound type, especially those occupying second position is limited, and we do not find the same wide range of elements which we do in non-compound names.

## ELEMENTS IN SECOND POSITION

In the total collection of over six-hundred and fifty names, only ten elements occur frequently in second position. Any one of these ten elements can occupy this position in ninety-five per cent of the compounds. In the remaining five per cent of names another sixteen elements are found in second position but few of these are found compounded with more than one other element. In this paper I shall only examine those elements which occur most frequently.

*Magh.*

This is one of the most common elements in Irish placenames, in both compound and non-compound types, although it had ceased to be productive as a name element at an early stage. *Magh* has cognates in all the other branches of Celtic, all of which are also common in placenames. Compare: *W. Gwynfa*, Gaul. *Noviomagos*. It has no known cognates outside the Celtic languages. The normal meaning of Irish *magh* is 'plain' generally referring to quite an extensive area, for example, *Maonmhagh*, which covered a large area of East Galway. It does not appear to have the restricted meaning of 'field' or 'green' which it often has in early literature, nor does it have any of the settlement connotations of Gaulish *magos*.

Of all the elements found in second position in the compounds, *magh* occurs with the greatest number of qualifying elements, notably names of trees, types of vegetation and words denoting inanimate features of landscape. Names of animals with two exceptions are not found with *magh*, in contrast with other second elements. The exceptions are *cú* 'a hound or wolf' and *bréach* an obscure word which is also explained as 'wolf'.

Examples:

Durmhagh 'oak-plain'    Fearnmhagh 'alder-plain'  
 Leamhmhagh 'elm-plain'    Biothmhagh 'birch-plain'.

Collmhagh 'hazel-plain' Lusmhagh 'herb-plain'.  
 Lóchmhagh 'rush (?) -plain' Fraochmhagh 'heather plain'.  
 Fíodhmhagh 'wood-plain' Lochmhagh 'lake-plain'.  
 Gabhalmhagh 'fork-plain' Liagmhagh 'stone-plain'.  
 Gallmhagh 'stone-plain' Aolmhagh 'limestone-plain'.  
 Ceannmhagh 'head-plain' Cíochmhagh 'pap-plain'.  
 Conmhagh 'wolf-plain' Bréachmhagh 'wolf-plain'.

In several compounds in which *magh* is in second position the first element appears to refer to the fertility of the plain:

Maonmhagh 'wealth-plain' (?).  
 Uachtmhagh 'inheritance-plain' Lachtmhagh 'milk-plain'.

### *Inis.*

*Inis* 'island' is a very common element in Irish placenames. It occurs in compound names almost with the same frequency as the previous element *magh*. Similarly it is found with a wide range of qualifying first elements, particularly names of animals and trees. *Inis* is cognate with Welsh *ynys* which also occurs frequently as a placename element. It has no definite cognates outside the Celtic languages although it may be related to Latin, *Insula*.

Examples:

Mucinis 'pig island' Eachinis 'horse island'.  
 Damhínis 'ox or stag island' Branínis 'raven-island'.  
 Rónínis 'seal island' Conínis 'wolf-island'.  
 Éánínis 'bird-island' Dairínis 'oak-island'.  
 Beithínis 'birch-island' Eoinínis 'yew-island'.  
 Deilgínis 'thorn-island' Craobhínis 'branch island'.  
 Brighínis 'hill-island' Taobhínis 'side-island'.  
 Bléánínis 'creek-island' Fídhínis 'wood-island'.  
 Cacinínis 'dung-island'.

*Inis* was superseded at an early stage by *oileán* (diminutive of *ail* 'rock'), as the normal word for 'island' in Irish. *Oileán*, however, is found in comparatively few compound names. All of these occur in the same geographical area, namely West Connacht, and it is most likely that *oileán* is not original in these names, but that it has replaced *inis* as second element.

Examples:

Damhoileán 'ox island' Eachoileán 'horse island'.  
 Braghadoileán 'creek island' Fraochoileán 'heather-island'.

### *Ros.*

This word is usually explained as 'wood' or '(wooded) promontory'. These meanings however are secondary. The original meaning of *ros* was

any kind of elevated area of land such as a hill or plateau, which is the usual meaning of its cognates. Compare: Bret. *ross* 'a hill', Welsh *rhos-fa* (< \**rhos-ma*) 'mountain-pasture', Skt. *pr̥-stha* 'plateau'. Judging from its distribution pattern, the most frequent meaning of *ros* in placenames appears to be 'promontory'. In a number of the compound names, however, *ros* may have the meaning 'hill' or 'plateau', for example, *Airgeadros* which is still known as Silverhill.

*Ros* is found with a variety of first elements notably names of animals. I have not come across any examples of *ros* compounded with names of trees which are so often found with other names elements, e.g. *coill* 'wood' as in *Eochaille*, *Leamhchaille*. This would support my suggestion that the original meaning of *ros* was not 'wood'.

Examples:

Eachros 'horse-promontory'    Mucros 'pig-promontory'.  
 Damhros 'stag-promontory'    Torcros 'hog-promontory'.  
 Brocros 'badger-promontory'    Luachros 'rush-promontory' (?).  
 Dealgros 'thorn-promontory'    Maghros 'plain-promontory'.  
 Gallros 'stone-promontory'    Airgeadros 'silver-promontory'.  
 Cnámhros 'bone-promontory'    Breaghros 'hill-promontory'.

*Droim*: The primary meaning of this word is 'back' but in place-names it has developed the meaning 'ridge'. Compare W. *drum/trum* 'ridge' which also occurs frequently as a placename element e.g. *Trum Y Gwr*, *Y Drumau*. In compounds *Droim* is usually found with names of animals particularly *each* 'horse' and *muc* 'pig'. The other most notable qualifying element found with it is *síodh* 'fairy mound'.

Examples:

Eachdhroim 'horse-ridge'    Mucdhroim 'pig-ridge'.  
 Faoldroim 'wolf-ridge'    Leamhdhroim 'elm-ridge'.  
 Colldromainn 'hazel-ridge'    Féardroim 'grass-ridge'.  
 Síodhdhroim 'fairy-mound-ridge'.

*Coill*: 'wood' as one might expect is most often found with names of trees especially the yew and the elm. I have found approximately fifty instances each of *Eochaille* 'yew-wood', and *Leamhchaille* 'elm-wood', in the compound names but only one example of *Darchaille* 'oak-wood' occurs.

Examples:

Eochaille 'yew-wood'    Leamhchaille 'elm-wood'.  
 Collchaille 'hazel-wood'    Creamhchaille 'garlic-wood'.  
 Darchaille 'oak-wood'    Cnámhchaille 'tone-wood'.

*Lann*: This word is usually connected with Indo-European root \**lendh-* 'open land' which has derivatives in many languages: Gallo-Latin \**landā* >

Fr. *lande* 'heath', Goth. *land* 'land', Russ. *ljádá* 'untilled land', Czech. *lado* 'fallow land'. As Welsh *llan* it is found in a large number of placenames but with the later meaning of 'church' or 'churchyard'. A similar semantic development appears to have taken place in Irish *lann* which, as well as retaining the original meaning of 'land' or 'open space' often occurs in the early literature with the meaning 'building' or 'church'. It is with this secondary meaning that it is most commonly found in non-compound placenames, e.g. *Lann Elo*. In the compounds, however, *lann* appears to have retained the original meaning of '(open) land' or perhaps 'cleared land'.

*Lann* occurs most often in the placename *Ineasclann* of which there are about twenty in the country, the most illustrious being *Droim Ineasclainn* or Drumiskin in Co. Louth. *Ineasclann* probably derives from earlier \*Eni-Sesko-Landa 'land in the sedges'. Compare O. Ir *seisc* 'sedge, rushes'.

Examples:

Muclann 'pig-land' Eachlann 'horse-land' Damhlann 'oxland' Biothlann 'birch-land' Raithlann 'fern-land' Ineasclann 'sedge-land' Cruachlann 'hill-land'.

*Cluain* 'meadow', 'pasture' is one of the most common elements in Irish placenames although it appears to have become obsolete as a productive element at an early period. It is cognate with W. *clun* 'meadow, moor' found in many placenames e.g. Clunderwen. This word is the same as *clun* 'hip, thigh', which was probably the original meaning. Compare Latin *clūnis* 'thigh'. *Cluain* is therefore yet another example of the use of words referring to parts of the human body as placename elements.

In non-compounded names *cluain* very often has settlement connotations especially where it is followed by a personal name, e.g. *Cluain Bheirn*. In compounds *cluain* is only found with names of animals which may point to some type of settlement probably of a fairly simple nature.

Examples:

Bóchluain 'cow-pasture' Damhchluain 'ox-pasture'.  
Muc-chluain 'pig-pasture'.

*Gort*: This word probably originally signified any type of enclosure the same as that of its Welsh cognate *garth*. In the compounds, where it is most often found with names of plants, it denotes an enclosed cultivated field or garden.

Examples:

Creamhghort 'garlic-field' Lubhghord 'herb-field'.  
Abhallghord 'apple-field' Fiodhghort 'wood-field'.  
Muc-Ghort 'pig-field' Gallghort 'stone-(enclosed) field'.

*Buaile* 'enclosure, cattle-pen'. This word is most often found compounded with *gall* or *cloch* both meaning 'stone', which probably refers to the stone enclosing wall. Compare *Gallghort* above, which means 'a stone-enclosed field' rather than 'a stony field'. I have located over twenty examples each of *Gallbhuaile* and *Clochbhuaile* throughout the country. The only other element found with *buaile* is *damh* 'ox'. Like *cluain* and *gort*, *buaile* probably indicates some kind of simple settlement.

Examples:

Gallbhuaile 'stone-field'    Clochbhuaile 'stone-field'    Damhbhuaile 'ox-field'.

#### OTHER ELEMENTS IN SECOND POSITION

Each of the other elements found in second position in the compounds occurs for the most part only once or twice and at most three or four times. Like most of the frequently occurring elements discussed above all of the elements below refer to various topographical features of the landscape and do not have any settlement connotations.

Móin 'heath': Aolmhóin 'lime-heath'    Crannmhóin 'tree-heath'    Gallmhóin 'stone-heath'.

Gleann 'valley': Airgeadhgleann 'silver-valley'    Iubharghleann 'yew-valley'.  
Achadh 'field': Collachadh 'hazel-field'    Leamhachadh 'elm-field'    Conachadh 'hound-field'.

Muine 'thicket': Cliathmhuine 'wattle-thicket'    Breaghmhuine 'hill-thicket'.  
Loch 'lake': Conloch 'hound-lake'    Éanloch 'bird-lake'    MuirLoch 'sea-lake'    Clasloch 'ditch-lake'.

Liag 'flagstone': Bualiaig 'cow-flag'    Conliag 'hound-flag'.

Eanach 'marsh': Muceanach 'pig-marsh'    Torceanach 'hog-marsh'    Eacheanach 'horse-marsh'.

Riasc 'marsh': Muirriasc 'sea-marsh'.

Luachair 'rushland' 'marsh': Mucluachair 'pig-marsh'.

Clais 'ditch': Muc-Chlais 'pig-ditch'    Each-Chlais 'horse-ditch'    Broc-Chlais 'badger-ditch'.

Réidhe 'plain': Conréidhe 'hound-plain'.

Maoil 'hillock': Creachmhaoil 'plunder-hillock'.

Ais 'back, ridge': Mucais 'pig-back'.

Sliabh 'Mountain': Trosc-Shliabh 'cod-mountain'??    Braidshliabh 'plunder-mountain'?

Achail?: Conachail 'hound-?'.



Snámh v.n. 'to swim': Mucshnámh 'pig-swim'.

Léim vn. 'to leap': Eachléim 'horse-leap' Easléim 'cataract-leap'.

#### ELEMENTS IN COMPOUND FIRST POSITION

Qualifying first elements outnumber second elements in the proportion of approximately two to one. Once again, however, it is the same small number of elements that keep recurring, notably names of animals and trees.

#### *Animals.*

The presence of names of animals in the compounds is not surprising when we consider how often they appear in Early Irish compound personal and tribal names, e.g. *Bibraige* 'beaver-people', *Osraige* 'deer-people'. As may be seen below *each* 'horse', *muc* 'pig', and *damh* 'stag or ox', occur the most frequently. Of the other animals *cú g. con* 'a hound or wolf' qualifies the greatest number of second elements of which *magh* 'a plain' is the most frequent. With *cú* we might include the other word for 'wolf' *faol* as in *Faoldroim*, and perhaps *breach* or *bréach*, an obscure word which is explained in a Middle Irish gloss as *cú allaid* 'wolf'. This latter word is found only in the placename *Breachmhagh* or *Bréachmhagh* of which I have found some twenty examples. I am still unsure of the length of the first syllable in this name as the evidence is conflicting. In Irish sources, it is always written short, e.g. *i m Brechmig* Thes II 270 (Ard m.), but evidence from seventeenth century documents in English as well as local pronunciation point to a long vowel. Whether long or short, the origin of this element remains obscure as it was even by the Early Irish period. If the meaning is 'wolf' it fits neatly the name structure of ANIMAL+SECOND ELEMENT, especially when we consider that the only other animal found in composition with *magh* is *cú* which also means 'wolf'.

#### Examples:

Each 'horse': Eachdhroim 'horse ridge' Eachinis 'horse-island' Eachfhoradh 'horse-mound' Each-Chlais 'horse-ditch' Eachléim 'horse-leap' Eacheanach 'horse-marsh' Eachlann 'horse-land'.

Muc 'pig': Mucinis 'pig-island' Mucros 'pig-promontary' Mucdhroim 'pig-ridge' Muc-Chluain 'pig-pasture'. Muc-ghort 'pigfield' Muclann 'pig-land' Mucluachair 'pig-marsh' Muceanach 'pig-marsh' Mucshnámh 'pig-swimming place' Mucais 'pig-ridge, back' Mucuchtach 'pig-hill'.

Torc 'hog': Torcros 'hog-promontory' Torceanach 'hog-marsh'.

Damh 'ox, stag': Damhinis 'ox-island' Damhoileán 'ox-island' Damhros 'ox-promontory' Damhbhuaile 'ox-enclosure' Damhchluain 'ox-

pasture' Damh-mhagh 'ox-plain' Damhchail 'ox-wood' Damh-dhearc 'ox-cave'.

Cú 'hound wolf': Conmhagh 'hound-plain' Coninis 'hound-island' Con-réidhe 'wolf-plain' Conloch 'hound-lake' Conliag 'hound-flagstone' Conachail 'hound-?' Conachadh 'hound-field'.

Bréach 'wolf?': Bréachmhagh 'wolf-plain'?

Faol 'wolf': Faoldroim 'wolf-ridge'.

Bó 'cow': Bóchluain 'cow-pasture' Bóliag 'cow-flagstone' Bóchail 'cow-wood'.

Éan 'bird': Éaninis 'bird-island' Éanloch 'bird-lake' Éanbhoth 'bird hut'.

Bran 'raven': Braninis 'raven-island'.

Broc 'badger': Brocros 'badger-promontory' Broc-Chlais 'badger-ditch'.

Rón 'seal': Róninis 'seal-island'.

Graigh 'stud of horses': Graighinis 'stud-island'.

#### *Trees.*

Names of trees constitute the other major group of qualifying elements. It is interesting to note that trees are also commonly found in Gaulish compound names: e.g. \*Vernoialon 'alder-plain'. Most of the commoner trees are found in the Irish compound names particularly the yew, oak, elm and hazel. The usual word for 'yew' is *iubhar* which is cognate with Gaulish \**eburos* as in the placename *Eburomagos* 'yew-plain'. It is significant that this word *iubhar* so commonly found in non-compound placenames such as *Magh nIubhair* only occurs once as the first member in a compound name, i.e. *Iubharghleann*. In contrast the older word for yew *eo*, which was superseded by *iubhar* at an early stage, is well attested. *Eo* is cognate with W. *gwen*, OHG *iwa* and of course, Eng. *yew*. It is found most often in composition with *coill* 'wood' as are *leamh* 'elm' and *coll* 'hazel'. The other tree names occurring most often is *daur* 'oak' which is usually found compounded with *magh* 'plain' and *inis* 'island'. The following are those trees or other types of vegetation attested in first position in the compounds in order of frequency:

Eo 'yew': Eochail 'yew-wood' Eoinis 'yew-island' Eoghabhal 'yew-fork'.

Leamh 'elm': Leamhchail 'elm-wood' Leamhdhroim 'elm-ridge' Leamh-mhagh 'elm-plain' Leamhachadh 'elm-field'.

Coll 'hazel': Collchail 'hazel-wood' Collmhagh 'hazel-plain' Colldro-mainn 'hazel-ridge' Collachadh 'hazel-field'.

Daur 'oak': Darmhagh 'oak-plain' Dairinis 'oak-island' Darchail 'oak-wood'.

- Creamh 'garlic': Creamhchail 'garlic-wood'    Creamhghort 'garlic-field'.  
 Iubhar 'yew': Iubharghleann 'yew-valley'.  
 Fearn 'alder': Fearnmhagh 'alder': Fearnmhagh 'alder-plain'.  
 Abhall 'apple tree': Abhallghort 'apple-field'.  
 Lóch (luach) 'rush'? : Luachros 'rush-promontory'    Luach-mhagh 'rush-plain'.  
 Lus 'herb': Lusmhagh 'herb-plain'.  
 Luibh 'herb': Lubhghort 'herb-field'.  
 Fraoch 'heather': Fraochmhagh 'heather-plain'    Fraoch-oileán 'heather-island'.  
 Seisc 'sedge': Ineasclann 'sedge-land'?  
 Féar 'grass': Féardroim 'grass-ridge'    Féarinis 'grass-island'.  
 Crann 'tree': Crannmhóin 'tree-heath'.  
 Cliath 'wattle': Cliathmhuine 'wattle-thicket'    Cliathchail 'wattle-wood'.  
 Craobh 'branch': Craoibhinis 'branch-island'    Craobhchail 'branch-wood'.

#### OTHER ELEMENTS IN FIRST POSITION

The elements contained in this group are less homogenous than those of the first two groups of qualifying elements. Generally most of them denote certain topographical features of the landscape such as *magh* 'plain', *loch* 'lake', while others describe the feature denoted by the second member of the compound, e.g. *gall* and *liag* which refer to different types of rock. It is important to distinguish between *gall* meaning 'a pillar stone' which, apart from placenames, is only found in Early Law tracts and glossaries, and the very productive adjectival prefix *gall*—'foreign, foreigner' which is also found in small number of compounded placenames such as *Gallbhaile* 'foreign-town'.

One interesting subcategory is that containing words which normally denote different parts of the human body. Here, as in placenames generally, they denote various topographical features, such as hills, or creeks.

- Gall 'pillar-stone': Gallros 'stone-promontory'    Gallmhagh 'stone-plain'  
                                  Gallmhóin 'stone-heath'    Gallbhuaile 'stone-cattle enclosure'    Gall-  
                                  mhuine 'stone-thicket'.  
 Liag 'flag-stone': Liagmhagh 'stone-plain'.  
 Cloch 'stone': Clochbhuaile 'stone-cattle-enclosure'.  
 Aol 'limestone': Aolmhagh 'limestone-plain'    Aolmhóin 'limestone-heath'.  
 Airgead 'silver': Airgeadros 'silver-promontory'    Airgeadghleann 'silver-valley'.  
 Carn 'cairn', 'hillock': Carnmhagh 'cairn-plain'.

Breagh 'hill': Breaghmhagh 'hill-plain' Breaghinis 'hill-island' Breagh-mhuine 'hill-thicket' Breaghlann 'hill-land' Breaghros 'hill-promontory'.

Magh 'plain': Maghros 'plain-promontory' Maghinis 'plain-island'.

Cruach 'hill': Cruachlann 'hill-land'.

Loch 'lake': Lochmhagh 'lake-plain'.

Fíodh 'wood': Fíodhghort 'wood-field' Fíodhmhagh 'wood-plain' Fídhinis 'wood-island'.

Trágh 'beach': Tráighinis 'beach island'.

Ceann 'head': Ceannmhagh 'head-plain'.

Cíoch 'breast': Cíochmhagh 'breast-plain'.

Gabhal 'fork': Gabhalmhagh 'fort-plain'.

Cnámh 'bone': Cnámhros 'bone-promontory' Cnámh-chail 'bone-wood'.

Brágha g. Braghad 'throat, creek': Brághadoileán 'creek-island'.

Bleán 'groin', 'creek': Bléaninis 'creek-island'.

Leis 'buttock, thigh': Leisoileán 'buttock-island'.

Crobh 'claw': Crobhinis 'claw-island'.

Taobh 'side': Taobhinis 'side-island'.

Apart from the three major groups of qualifying first elements there are a small number of names in which the first elements are not so easily categorised. Most of these are found in composition with *magh* and as already stated they appear to refer to the fertility of the land.

#### Examples:

Uachtmhagh 'inheritance-plain' Lachtmhagh 'milk-plain' Maonmhagh 'treasure-plain' (< *maoin* 'riches, possessions'. Cf. the form *Magh Maoin* (g. pl.) 'plain of the treasures' which alternates with *Maonmhagh* in literature).

These then are the elements found in the compound names. As I have shown, practically all of them refer to one or other aspect of nature, animate or inanimate. The second member of the compound normally denotes some topographical feature such as plain, island or hill, while the first or qualifying member may be the name of a tree or animal or a word denoting another topographical feature. The occurrence of such elements need not surprise us as they also feature so largely in non-compounded placenames, e.g. *Mag nEo* 'the plain of the yew', *Ros Muc* « promontory of the pigs'. Many are also found in Continental Celtic names such as Gaul. *Argentomagus* 'silver-plain', Brit. *Eburacam* 'place of yews'.

What is surprising is the number of name elements which are not found in the compounds. Most striking is the complete absence of the well-known settlement terms such as *dún*, *ráth* and *lios* all meaning 'fort', which occur so frequently as elements in the non-compound names, e.g. *Dún Bó* 'fort of

the cows'. A number of these terms are also found in the other Celtic languages e.g. Gaul. *Branodunum*, W. *Dinbrain*.

It is quite possible that name elements signifying settlement such as those referred to, never featured in compound names as the NOUN+NOUN name structure may have been already obsolescent by the time these terms became widespread in placenames. The Archaeological evidence would tend to support this view. The terms *dún*, *ráth*, *lios* and *cathair* generally refer to the same type of settlement unit, the ringfort. The majority of ringforts date from the early Christian era, that is, from around 500 AD onwards. As I have shown however, the NOUN+NOUN compound was no longer productive as a naming structure by this period. This would explain the absence of settlement terms such as *dún* and *ráth* as elements in the compound names.

One other compound name pattern commonly found in Continental Celtic toponymy is that containing a personal name in first position. With one exception I have found no instances of compound names containing a personal name. Personal names when they occur in place-names are usually, but not always, associated with settlement sites and often refer to the owner of such a site e.g. *Dún Laoghaire* 'Laoghaire's fort'. As I have shown however, settlement terms are completely absent from the compound names. The absence of such terms probably explains the absence of personal names as qualifying elements in the compounds.

The one exception referred to is the name *Lugmad* which still survives in its anglicised form as the name of county, parish and village of Louth. The first element in this name is undoubtedly the Irish Personal Name *Lugh*. Here the name probably refers to *Lugh Lámhfhada* of Irish mythology. *Lugh* corresponds to the Celtic God *Lugus* who is commemorated in so many placenames on the continent, notably *Lugudūnon* of which Holder (*Alt-Keltischer Sprachschatz* II, pp. 308-344) lists no less than fourteen examples. The modern county of Louth contains that area known as *Conaille Muirtheimhne*, so closely associated in *Táin Bó Cuailge* with *Cú Chulainn* and thus ultimately, with the god *Lugh*.

The second element in *Lughmhadh* is not so obvious as the first. It can hardly be *magh* 'plain', as sometimes suggested, since *Lughmhadh* is always inflected as an o-stem, *g. Lugmaid d. Lugmud*, while *magh* is an s-stem. There is an o-stem noun which could possibly suit the context here. This is *moth* (*mater mod*) which was used by the native grammarians to denote the masculine gender but which originally referred to the male member: *moth .i. gach ferda, gach ferindsce et nomen virili membro .i. ball ferda* *Corm. Y 865*. *Moth* is normally found opposed to *toth* < \**tuto-* which refers to the feminine gender and ultimately to the female sexual organ. *Moth* and *toth* have been compared with the Latin priapic deities *Mūtūnus* and *Tutūnus*. There is some evidence to suggest that *moth* is the

word in question here as in *Táin Bó Cuailnge Lugmad* is referred to in one place as *Moda Logha*:

Dointaí iarom Óengus mac Óenláma Gáibe, óclach dána di Ultaib in slóg n-ule oc Modaib Loga—is inund ón dano 7 Lugmod—co tici Áth Da Ferta “Óengus mac Óenláime Gaibe, a bold warrior of the Ulstermen, turned back the whole army at *Moda Loga* (which is the same as *Lugmad*) as far as Áth Da Ferta” TBC 2489.

The name *Lugmad* probably referred originally to a mound or standing stone at which Lugh was commemorated. This could possibly have been the great standing stone known as *Cloghafarmore* (recte *Cloch an Fhir Mhóir* ‘the great man’s stone’) which stands over three metres in height in the townland of Rathiddy in the parish of Louth approximately four kilometres North-East of Louth village. This standing stone like many other such stones was probably invested with sacred character. Indeed it is of note that this stone was still associated in local tradition at the beginning of the present century with a nameless giant, who could possibly have been Lugh. This explanation of *Lughmhadh* appears less improbable when it is realised that the *Lia Fáil* at Tara is said to have been known by local Irish speakers in the last century as *Bod Fhearghasa*. The Irish placename *Lughmhadh* (<\*Lugu-mutos) is thus not only a parallel with Gaulish placename *Lugudunon* but also shows an interesting variation on the Continental *Lugus* cult.

Dónall MAC GIOLLA EASPAIG  
Placenames Office,  
Dublin.  
(Ireland).