

The Maps of Robert Lythe as a Source for Irish Place-Names

J. H. Andrews
Chepstow, Gwent

Acknowledgement

The printing of the article by Gillian Fellows-Jensen in *Nomina* 15 was made possible by a gift to the University of Cambridge in memory of Dorothea Coke, Skjæret, 1951.

I'm afraid I shall be making history with this paper.¹ Never in the field of human conferencing will so many participants have listened to a speaker so much more ignorant than themselves. My subject requires knowledge of a language which after many years in its homeland I neither speak, write nor read. Why come so far to make such a dreadful confession? A one-word answer might be: 'vanity'. With two words I can do a little better: missionary zeal.

The gospel I'm here to preach is that maps are especially important in place-name studies for an interesting philosophical reason. Most normal sentences containing place-names are concerned not with words but with things. The sentence 'Dublin has the world's best bus service', for example, is about Dublin as a place. It is not about 'Dublin' as the name of a place. Place-names on maps have a quite different function. If maps can be logically analysed into the cartographic equivalents of sentences, as I believe perhaps they can, then a common type of cartographic sentence may have the form: "'Dublin" is the name of the place at latitude x , longitude y .' The subject-matter of that cartographic sentence is not a thing but a word; and indeed every name on every map comes to us similarly as a word, enclosed between invisible inverted commas. It was written not unthinkingly as a means to an end, but deliberately as an end in itself. The author had to focus his mind on it. He felt in some way responsible towards it. And for a historian of names, this surely gives the cartographer's testimony a special interest.

¹ This paper is the slightly edited script of a lecture given at the 24th Annual Name Study Conference in Belfast on 11 April 1992. Apart from the addition of references no attempt has been made to moderate the colloquial tone of the original. The appendix is based on part of a handout distributed at the lecture. Abbreviations refer to the British Library; the National Library of Ireland; the Public Record Office, London; and the library of Trinity College, Dublin.

In many European countries including Ireland, the second half of the sixteenth century saw a great increase in map-making. Up to the year 1567, about eleven hundred place-names are known to have appeared on maps of this country. My task is to describe how one man increased that stock to nearly four thousand. You may know many of his new names from some of the decorative maps of Ireland published in Elizabethan and Jacobean times. Facsimiles of these maps are easy to come by—dangerously easy. Dangerously because their message never reaches us directly but only through the medium of a contemporary engraver. At this period engravers were specialists who lived their entire working lives indoors and never got closer to Ireland than London or more probably Amsterdam. These artists could and did make serious mistakes in converting manuscript to print. For instance they could copy names wrongly, and—what is perhaps worse—they could also put them in the wrong places. And in this case what was true of the engravers was almost equally true of the eminent cartographers whose work they helped to immortalise. Of course the actual compiler of a map would know more geography than the craftsman who simply translated that map from paper to copper, but in the cartography of Ireland this additional knowledge probably didn't amount to much. No author of any early printed map of Ireland was himself an Irishman. None of them, we may be confident, knew any more of the Irish language than I do; none of them had ever travelled extensively in Ireland; in fact if we had nothing but purely cartographic evidence to go on, we would judge that none of them had ever even set foot here. So they too were copying other men's work, and sometimes getting it wrong.

How much easier life would be if we could reach across these barriers of error and misinterpretation and recover original manuscript maps drawn by a surveyor who had actually visited this country and looked at its landscapes and listened to its names! Well, we can. The original surveyor I've chosen to make this point is Robert Lythe. Several map-historians have tried to publicise him. My own first attempt was in 1965 in the international map-historical journal *Imago Mundi* and it was singularly unsuccessful.² In fact to the best of my knowledge this article has never been listed in any Irish bibliography.

² J. H. Andrews, 'The Irish Surveys of Robert Lythe', *Imago Mundi*, 19 (1965), 22–31.

More important, Lythe himself has remained almost completely neglected. I won't speak for Northern Ireland, but in the Irish Republic the only other living scholar I know to have mentioned his work in print is Kenneth Nicholls.³ Otherwise, students of sixteenth-century Ireland, when they have used maps at all, have preferred the incomplete and erroneous derivative maps I mentioned earlier.⁴

Here then are the basic facts. Lythe was an English cartographer and military engineer employed in Ireland by the queen's deputy, Sir Henry Sidney, between the years 1567 and 1571. Ulster and north Connaught were too disturbed for him to map more than a few small parts of this region near the east coast. But he did manage to cover almost all the rest of the country south of a line from Killary Harbour to Dundalk—or as physical geographers would say, south of the drumlin belt.

The only surviving map to bear Lythe's name is a small fort plan, but his activities are fairly well documented in contemporary financial accounts and correspondence, including one long letter which he wrote and signed himself. Like most early cartographers, he does not tell us how he collected his names. We do know, however, that he worked extremely fast, most of his surveys being concentrated into the two summer seasons of 1569 and 1570; we also know that he used a mixture of direct observation and what he called the 'information of the country'. As in Christopher Saxton's survey of Wales, the information of the country included local guides, each guide apparently taking responsibility for some recognised territorial unit like a county, barony or lordship. Unfortunately we have names for only seven of the people who guided or otherwise assisted Lythe in his travels, but it's probably no coincidence that every one of those seven names is English.

The same documentary sources make clear that much of Lythe's output has failed to survive, but a number of extant maps (a hard core, as I shall call them from now on) can unhesitatingly be identified as

³ Kenneth Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 1972), p. 6.

⁴ See for example Eileen McCracken, *The Irish Woods since Tudor Times: Distribution and Exploitation* (Newton Abbot, 1971), p. 174, with review by J. H. Andrews in *Irish Historical Studies*, 18 (1973), 629–30.

his, partly from their handwriting and partly because they match his own or other people's descriptions of them, and these surviving maps contain a total of about 3200 names. The subjects of his minor works are Carrickfergus town (1567: TCD MS 1209, no. 26), Belfast Lough (1567: PRO MPF 77), the lordships of Mourne, Lecale, Omeath and Cooley (1568: PRO MPF 89), Newry town (1568: PRO MPF 82), Newry Castle (1568: PRO MPF 84) and, at the other end of the country, Corkbeg fort (1569: PRO MPF 85). To these we may add, as number seven, a map of the barony of Idrone in Co. Carlow (1569: PRO MPF 70), which is not in Lythe's own hand but which appears to be a fairly close copy of his work. So much for Lythe's less important maps. His major works are three in number. One is a complete map of Munster (1571: PRO MPF 73). The second is the so-called Cotton map, a badly damaged and partly illegible representation of all Ireland (1571?: BL MS Cotton Ch. xiii, 42). Although the Cotton map is in Lythe's hand, his data for most of northern Ireland must have been copied from some earlier source of unknown authorship and unknown date. This northern component obviously has its own importance, but today it lies outside our immediate sphere of interest. Third and last is an unfinished drawing, generally known as the Petworth map (West Sussex Record Office, PHA 9581), which includes only those parts of Ireland that Lythe is known to have surveyed himself. The writing and general style of the Petworth map (Fig. 1) look like his, but it includes a number of gross scribal errors suggesting that it may be just a copyist's imitation. Nevertheless this map clearly stands very close to the original survey; it is totally free from the kind of creative editing that occurs in other Lythe derivatives; and its errors seem to arise not from any general lack of care or respect but mainly from the copyist's ignorance of Ireland. After much heart-searching I have decided to treat the Petworth map as a genuine Lythe item. These three major works—the map of Munster, the Cotton map, and the Petworth map—are all on roughly comparable scales, around seven miles to an inch, but even where they overlap they are far from identical. For some areas they give different information, including place-names; for other areas they give different versions of the same information, also including place-names.

Archivally and textually, then, Lythe is something of a muddle. But that's not all. He is also a muddle in a genetic or stemmatic sense.

Published maps based wholly or largely on his surveys include Jodocus Hondius's *Hyberniae novissima descriptio*, 1591; Hondius's *Angliae et Hiberniae nova descriptio*, 1592; the maps of northern and southern Ireland in Gerard Mercator's *Atlas* of 1595; Baptista Boazio's *Irelande*, 1599; and John Speed's *The Kingdome of Irland* of 1610 together with Speed's provincial maps of Leinster, Munster and Connaught.

There are also at least four decorative manuscript representations of Ireland, apparently from the 1580s, that seem to be based on Lythe without being copied from any of the published derivatives.⁵ The styles of all these secondary maps are quite unlike Lythe's style, but their content allows them to be easily identified. Despite their strong general resemblance to his work, many of the derived maps contain individual features that are nowhere to be found in Lythe's own hand. Was this additional detail collected by his successors from other sources, or did it come from maps by Lythe himself that have since been lost? The answer seems to be both. Mercator followed different authorities in eastern Ulster; Speed followed different authorities in almost the whole of Ulster. Otherwise nearly all this apparently adventitious material—amounting to at least seven hundred names—can confidently be attributed to Lythe. It is too abundant and frankly too unimportant to have come from anywhere else. For example, among the places shown by Mercator and no other sixteenth-century cartographer are Ardsallogh and Bally Postock in Co. Meath and Blackhall and Kilbride in Co. Kildare. If a different surveyor had gone to the trouble of collecting names as unfamiliar as those, that other surveyor would surely have wanted to be paid, and by being paid or seeking payment he would have forced himself into the documentary record. And if this anonymous character was too obscure for us to have heard of him, historical commonsense suggests that he was also too obscure for his work to have reached Mercator in faraway Duisburg.

But although these secondary names almost certainly originated with Lythe, they are less satisfactory than those written in his own hand or even that of his Petworth amanuensis (if such a person existed), because they are more liable to multiple errors of

⁵ Maps of Leinster, Munster, Connaught, Ulster and Meath of c. 1586–87 in Alnwick Castle MS 476 (with a separate map of Ireland), NLI MS 669 and TCD MS 743; a general map of Ireland in TCD MS 1209, no. 2.

transcription. The derivative maps that contain the additional names were not necessarily taken directly from Lythe's own drafts. They may well have been copied from the work of other copyists; in fact there may well have been a whole succession of links, missing links as they now are, between the extant derivatives and their ultimate source. To avoid these complications I shall draw most of my illustrations from Lythe himself. The hard core of his output yields data that seem statistically quite acceptable. In fact, when I quote random samples without specifying absolute numbers the size of the sample will be somewhere between one hundred and three hundred hard-core specimens. It must be emphasised, however, that if you want to plumb Lythe to his depths you must be prepared to study every one of the maps I've mentioned, secondary as well as primary.

A large proportion of Lythe's names have subsequently fallen into disuse. In one sample, only 47 per cent could be found on the Ordnance map. To apply a more searching test with much the same results, consider the 77 names known to have been recorded by Lythe in the present area of Co. Wicklow. In Liam Price's famous study of that county, only 32 of those 77 names appear.⁶ All place-name scholars will presumably welcome a hitherto unknown collection containing so many hitherto unknown early specimens. However, I can hardly just stand here and read you out a list of names, let alone spell them out. (In any case I haven't yet made a complete list, though I hope to do so eventually.) All I can offer are a few comments on the collection as a whole. Unfortunately, as a linguistic ignoramus I have no idea what general characteristics of Lythe's work an expert audience like this might want to hear about. My solution is a drastic one. It is to say the first thing that comes into my head and hope that if I go on long enough some of you may, by accident, hear something to your advantage.

Of course place-names form only a small part of the map historian's subject-matter but they are an especially interesting part of it for anyone who happens to have studied the Ordnance Survey in

⁶ Liam Price, 'The Place-Names of the Barony of Newcastle, County of Wicklow', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 44 (1938), C, 139-79; 'The Place-Names of the Barony of Arklow, County of Wicklow', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 46 (1941), C, 237-86; *The Place-Names of Co. Wicklow*, 7 vols (Dublin, 1945-67).

Ireland. For me this interest was sharpened when the Ordnance Survey came under criticism for what one map-historian has called 'the destruction of a language',⁷ that is for allegedly inventing new anglicised place-names and allegedly imposing these on a reluctant nation. Implicitly or explicitly, these criticisms of official nineteenth-century map-makers have sometimes been extended to include all other English map-makers in Ireland. So the first thing that came into my head was to defend Robert Lythe against this charge of destroying a language.

Many cartographers have belittled the individuality of a country unfamiliar to them by forcing its geographical features into some pre-determined classification. The Greek geographer Ptolemy, for example, insisted on categorising certain places in Ireland as cities. In the same spirit, sixteenth-century map-makers often mistook Irish personal names for the names of towns. Lythe managed to avoid these conceptual errors. He accepted the distinctive thematic and geographical character of Irish nomenclature. For instance he differs from contemporary maps of England in laying great emphasis on names of territories smaller than a county. Nine per cent of his names are in this category, some being genuine place-names, others names of the dominant families within the various regions. The territories in question were lordships, countries, and baronies, and you'll see just a handful of them listed in my handout (below, Appendix). By no means all Lythe's regional names were to reappear as barony names in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. So in some areas his maps may well be our only cartographic record of a pre-modern territorial pattern on the eve of its extinction. He deserves special credit for this achievement, because apart from having few counterparts of equal importance in England, such regional names were on the whole less linguistically congenial to English-speakers than any other class of Irish name. It is a common habit of cartographers simply to omit a name that they find difficult to speak or difficult to remember—even when they are not expected to speak or remember it

⁷ J. B. Harley, 'What Happens When We've Made a Map' (typescript of a lecture given at Penn State University, Pennsylvania, in 1991), pp. 6-8, 11 and 16; J. B. Harley, 'Victims of a Map: New England Cartography and the Native Americans' (typescript, September 1990), pp. 10-11 and 16.

but only to write it. This was another temptation that Lythe succeeded in resisting.

Seventy-one per cent of Lythe's names refer to settlements. In much of England an acceptable topographical map could be made by concentrating almost exclusively on parish names. In post-reformation Ireland Lythe does show many names of parishes, though without identifying them as such and without giving them any particular prominence, but the vast majority of his settlement names refer to what are now townlands. Of course it was impossible to show every townland at Lythe's chosen scales, and on the whole he prefers those that included either a castle or a church. And it was probably the presence of buildings, even if only ruined buildings, that led him to identify so many former monastic sites, usually distinguishing them by the initial letter *M*. All the same, many of his townlands seem to have been devoid of prominent buildings. So just how did he locate these units on the ground, and does his record of a particular townland name imply the existence of a clustered or nucleated rural settlement within that townland? These are questions I shall leave unanswered, except to say that similar names on Timothy Pont's maps of late sixteenth-century Scotland have been unquestioningly accepted by Dr Jeffery Stone as referring to clustered farmhouses and not just to tracts of farmland.⁸

Lythe also saw Ireland as a repository of physical names, denoting hills, lakes, rivers, islands, promontories and bays. Sometimes he admits defeat, writing on the Petworth map for example that 'All the mountains on the north side of the White Knight's country is called Slew Grotte although every hill has his particular name', but not actually giving those particular names. Nevertheless he does give plenty of others. For instance Professor MacAodha in his study of the hill names on Mercator's map of all Ireland mentions forty-four examples within the area surveyed by Lythe.⁹ On the whole Lythe corpus as I have defined it, the same area yields a total of two hundred hill names. Altogether about nineteen per cent of Lythe's names are physical. Here he differs from later cartographers of Ireland, who up to

⁸ Jeffery C. Stone, *The Pont Manuscript Maps of Scotland: Sixteenth Century Origins of a Blaeu Atlas* (Tring, 1989), p. 10.

⁹ B. S. MacAodha, 'Mercator's Map of Ireland as a Source for Mountain-Names', *Nomina*, 11 (1987), pp. 123-30.

and including the time of the six-inch Ordnance Survey map were much more concerned with the naming of actual or potential property units, in other words tracts of territory large or small. A sample from William Petty's maps of 1685, for instance, shows only five per cent of physical names even in the unusually physical county of Kerry. This means that Lythe is more likely to surprise us in the physical realm. In my sample, 61 per cent of his settlement names can be identified on the Ordnance maps, but only 38 per cent of his physical names.

Next we come to Lythe's rendering of the names. Perhaps there did exist, in the sixteenth century, Irish-language documents so easily accessible that it would be an act of insultingly gross and culpable negligence for any cartographer to ignore them. But would someone like Lythe ever have seen any Irish names actually written down in what literate Irishmen would have regarded as their correct Irish spelling? I challenge you to show me any scholarly book or paper that answers this simple question in plain English. Or even plain Irish if you'll give me a translation. For what little it's worth, my own opinion is that a map-maker in Lythe's situation may never have seen a written specimen of the Irish language. Which makes it highly improbable that he or for that matter any other pre-eighteenth-century English cartographer could be expected to write down correct Irish spellings from dictation. And the residents who guided him through the country may well have been similarly ignorant. But this is a question that the maps themselves should be able to help us with, or rather should be able to help you with.

What strikes a modern Englishman about written Irish is a number of letter-sequences or graphemes which without instruction he would find quite impossible to translate into sounds, or, conversely, to infer from the sounds uttered by Irish-speakers. Examples are the 'aspirated' *b*, *d* and *m*, as shown either by dotting the letters in question or by the addition of an *h*. Lythe never used these forms except in freakishly rare cases and probably by accident. Instead his spelling in general looks phonetic, as can also be said of most other cartographers in Ireland, and indeed of most non-cartographic writers. Of course the phonetic spelling of the sixteenth century is different from what we would now write from dictation. Lythe followed contemporary English practice for instance by often preferring *y* to the modern *i* and in many cases by writing *o* rather than *u*. Less familiar examples of what was

permissible under Queen Elizabeth are his use of *oe* in *Ballygoelen*, and *gu* in *Pollagerry*. Another case, to which I shall return in a moment, is his medial or initial *gh*, such as survives in the English word *ghost*.

The problem in all this is to separate Lythe's personal idiosyncrasies from their sixteenth-century context, and then to distinguish his idiosyncrasies from those of other individuals such as the people who acted as his guides. Consider for instance how often he varies the spelling of the same name. In my sample of names occurring on two or more of his hard-core maps, such variations occur in 44 per cent of cases. Some of these differences were normal practice at the time, for example the doubling or non-doubling of consonants and the addition or omission of a terminal *e*. Others may be more interesting. A possible example is *dubh*, now generally rendered in anglicised place-names as *duff*. On one map Lythe spells this *doffe*, and on another map, in another version of the same name, *dove*. Or consider the prefix that is now generally spelt *dun*. There are six cases where this syllable is spelt *don* on the Munster map and *down* on the Petworth map. These inconsistencies may point to some process of revision on Lythe's part, or perhaps just a spirit of experimentation. What they do not suggest is the kind of orthographic bullying implied by phrases like 'destruction of a language'.

These variations also raise the question of how many people were involved in the making of Lythe's maps. Did his guides write down the names for him, with the *f* spelling of *dubh* supplied by one contributor and the *v* spelling by another? The maps show one unusual quirk that counts against this hypothesis and that is a fondness for the initial *b* which seems to be one of Lythe's purely personal characteristics. He applies it to three ordinary English words: *other*, *arable* and *oak*. He also uses it to start at least 36 Irish names which in other sources normally begin with a vowel. Examples are *Hesker*, *Haghra*, *Haghado*, *Haghrem* and *Helphyn*. Since these *b*-names occur in thirteen counties, they can hardly arise from the orthographic peculiarities of any particular guide. They must represent what Lythe thought he heard.

Other characteristics are worth mentioning as proof not so much of Lythe's individuality as of his regard for Ireland's individuality. And here we must distinguish between what Englishmen would find totally unpronounceable on the one hand, like the *bh* and *mh* already referred to, and on the other hand what is unfamiliar and uncongenial but

capable of being tackled after a fashion if the worse comes to the worst. Thus Lythe expected his readers to tolerate the unfamiliar grapheme *ae*, especially in the word *caer* which later cartographers sought to make more acceptable by inserting an *b* between the *a* and the *e*. Then there is the combination *gh* already mentioned. Although common in sixteenth-century England it was surely not quite as common as Lythe makes it in his maps of Ireland, where my sample finds a *gh* in one out of every nine names. Some of these names are not normally associated with a *g* sound. For instance Killygray in Co. Cork Lythe spells once with an initial *K* and once with a *Gh*. More startling is his repeated spelling of Kildare with a *Gh*. Presumably this was another attempt to convey what Lythe conceived to be an Irish sound.¹⁰

Phonetic spellings may be noteworthy for what they omit as well as for what they include. Lythe shows sixteen places which can be matched on the Ordnance Survey map with names that begin with *Rath*. In every case but two, he includes the *Ra* and omits the *th*, occasionally and characteristically replacing it by *gh*. The same omission is seen in names now prefixed with *ath* like *Athlone*, *Athgoe*, and *Athboy*. On the other hand he does not hesitate to include a terminal *th* in *Pottlerath*, *Myrath* and elsewhere. Does this mean that the *th* was actually sounded in such cases? Or are these non-phonetic spellings which actually reflect the influence of the written language—perhaps on Lythe's sources rather than on Lythe himself?

Finally, a reference to the regional geography of spelling. I have already mentioned the prefix *dun* and Lythe's uncertainty between *don* and *down*. Overall, he writes *o* in 74 per cent of cases and *ow* in 26 per cent. But two counties defy this national trend with a majority of *ow* names: they are Wexford with four out of five, and Clare with twelve out of twenty. How far regional pronunciation matched regional spelling in such cases is another question for the experts.

¹⁰ Dr O. J. Padel points out to me that Lythe was evidently using the spelling *gh* for at least three different sounds in Irish: (1) for Irish [g], including cases where he curiously heard Irish initial [k] as 'g'; here the purpose of the *b* is to show that it means [g], and not [dʒ]—compare sixteenth-century English *ghest*, for 'guest'; (2) for Irish [χ] (e.g. in *Mollogh*, see Appendix), as still in Anglo-Irish *lough*; (3) for the sounds spelt in Irish with *gh*.

In general Lythe had enough respect for Irish to record what he thought it sounded like. Now we turn from sound to sense. An interest in the connotations of place-names is not to be taken for granted in a visitor from England, where names had already become largely meaningless in a connotative sense. But Lythe did pick up at least a few meanings. And at this point the question arises whether any of his lost maps included an explanatory table of Irish place-name elements. Such tables occur in two Lythe derivatives, one by Jodocus Hondius in 1591, the other by Baptista Boazio in 1599. Their contents are not identical and indeed they disagree as to whether *Carrick* should be translated as 'castle' or 'rock'. Apart from this disagreement, Hondius's and Boazio's tables have one interesting common feature, namely that they translate *kill* as 'parish town' or 'parish, town', even though *kill* does not really mean 'town', and even though many places with *Kill*-names seem never to have ranked as parishes. Could these tables by Hondius and Boazio descend from an ancestral table by Lythe himself now lost, a table that might for instance have given two alternative meanings for *Carrick*? On his maps Lythe evades this last issue by nearly always abbreviating whichever word he had in mind to the initial letter C., but in at least one case, at Lea near the modern Portarlinton, his Petworth map does use *Carrick* to mean 'castle'.

On his maps Lythe's knowledge of Irish appears, admittedly not very often, in doublets or equivalents formed either by pairing aliases on the same map or by using different forms on different maps. Most of these are translations, for instance *Castimore* and *Great Castle* or *Slew Muskerey* and *the great hyll called Muskere*. Some translations occur several times, for instance the *Can* in *Can Michael* or *Michael's Point*; the *Enysh* in *Enysh Fermor* or *Iland Fermore*; and the *Bally* in *B[ally] Monks* or *Monkstown*. Outside the hard core we can find a few more examples: Mercator's *Doffe flu[vius]* for Lythe's *Blackwater*; Boazio's *Esker Beg* for Lythe's *Little Esker*; Speed's *Castle Ruddery* for Lythe's *Knight's Castle* (Irish *ridire*, 'rider, knight'). It is most unlikely that the last three translations were made by Mercator and Boazio and Speed; much more probable that they came from Lythe maps that no longer survive. Sometimes, either deliberately or by mistake, the equivalence is incomplete, as in *Kingstown* for *Castle Ree*. There may also be a similar relationship between *Oldchurch* and *Shancastelan*. In at least one case the equivalent is not a translation but an Irish synonym or

supposed synonym, *Knoc Shelbren* on one of Lythe's maps, *Mollogh Shelbren* on another.

Where he does not translate a place-name element, Lythe may at least acknowledge its integrity by spelling it consistently. Perhaps the best example is the word for a mountain, which is spelt in at least eight different ways on Elizabethan maps of Ireland but which Lythe spells almost always as *Slew*. *Baile* is standardised as the initial *B.*, Lythe apparently being the first of many cartographers to adopt this obvious abbreviation. In fact the oddest example of his sympathy with Irish is his overuse of *B.* The case of *Monkstown* that I mentioned earlier is actually rather misleading because names ending in *town* are extremely rare on all Lythe's maps, even in the heart of the English Pale where he writes *B. Jeffery* not *Jefferystown*, *B. Martyn* not *Martinstown*, *B. Russell* not *Russellstown*, *B. Stokes* not *Stokestown* and so on. We almost get the impression that Lythe hoped to start reversing the course of anglicisation by restoring at least one Irish form. This theory is supported by the only exception to it: the name on his maps that does usually bear the suffix *town* is *Newtown*, as if a word with *new* in it was entitled to appear in the language of the future.

To summarise, the overall proportion of English names on Lythe's maps of Ireland is just eight per cent. So anyone wanting scapegoats to blame for the destruction of the Irish language should please forget about this particular cartographer. In fact you can forget about cartography altogether.

APPENDIX¹¹

(1) Some unusual Lythe names

TERRITORIAL: Cauerough (CRK), Corkumwaskeneragh (CLR), EoGONoght (TPY), Ephaghe (TPY), Evagh (CRK), Funchyon (TPY), Ghemadona (TPY), Glanghebone (CRK), Kencleroke (CLR), Kennedonell (CLR), Muskerye Gaghnoh (LMK), Tradore (CRK), Tromayne (WFD), Vakene (WFD).

PHYSICAL: Hills—Hogges hyll (Seefin CRK), Knock Annafulla (Killakee (DBN), Knock hasta (Mount Gabriel CRK), Magher Ladone

¹¹ County abbreviations as in *Dictionary of Land Surveyors and Local Cartographers of Great Britain and Ireland, 1550-1850*, edited by Peter Eden (Folkestone, 1975-76).

(Twelve Pins GLW), Mollogh Dedde (Caha Mountains KRY), Plogh more (Great Sugarloaf WKL), Slew Arbree (Corn Hill LNG), Wolfse hill (Knocknamaddree CRK).

Lakes—Kelly (Dan WKL), Leaver (Guitane KRY), Tene (Whitewood MTH), Monynge (Glen LNG), Kayne (Gowna LNG) Sedye (Sunderlin WTM).

Rivers—Defe (Avonmore WKL), Dowake (Araglin CRK), Fox (Tay WFD), Gormogge (Shallow CLR), Lome (Coomhola CRK), Redwater (Killary Harbour MAO), Vectogh (Potters River WKL).

(2) Some Lythe spelling variations

B. Gryve or B. Gryffe, B. Gella or B. Guela, Cadoffe or Cadoue, Caercloghan or Kaercloghan, Derghet or Derg, Downesaven or Donesavan, Ghildare or Ghyldare, Golen or B. Goelen, Gormog or Gormok, Kylgray or Ghylygray, Kyllegh or Kellegh, Lough Lyth or Lough Legh, Lystoule or Lystoll.

(3) Some Lythe names with initial or medial *b*

B. Hedde (KLD), Clonhard (MTH), Haghdeu (KRY), Haghdeu (CLW), Haghmort (CRK), Haghra (MTH), Haghvally (KRY), Hagem (GLW), Hahaddo (CRK), Harrow (TPY), Helphyn (RSC), Heneroley (WKL), Heney (WTM), Herekan (CLR), Herynogh (CLR), Hesker (OFY), M. Hores (OFY), Porthomy (GLW).

(4) Some Lythe names in *ra*, *rath* or related forms

Raberde (KLD), Racarbo (KLK), Racarvan (KLK), Racoynne (LNG), Radowne (WKL), Rahesker (LTH), Raptryk (KLK), Ramakney (WXF), Ramore (KLD), Ratron (MTH), Rasalough (KLD), Rasspok (WXF), Renygherye (CLW), Rowyre (WMT). Balrath (MTH), Donerath (LTH), Ladarath (MTH), Myrath (MTH), Potellrath (KLK).

(5) Early lists of Irish name-elements

J. HONDIUS, 1591: "Nomina haec quae passim reperiuntur ita Anglice intellige. *Hybernice*, Anglice: *Can*, Head lant; *Enie*, Iland; *Knok*, hyll, Rok; *C.*, *Carick*, Castel; *B.*, *Bali*, Towne; *L.*, *Logh*, Lake; *Kil*, Parishe. town [sic]; *Slagho*, Montains; *Glin*, *Can*, Valley; *Bog*, Bog morish."

B. BOAZIO, 1599: "An interpretation in English of some proper Irish names contained in this description of Irelande for the better understanding of the reader. *Glyn*, a woode; *Can*, a Promontorie or hed Land; *Carick*, a rock; *Knock*, a hill; *Slew*, a Mountaine; *B.* or *Bale*, a Smal towne; *Kill*, a Village or Parishe towne; *Lough*, a Lake or great Poole; *Enis*, an Ilande; *Mo*, a Monasterie."

(6) Some Lythe translations, synonyms and transpositions

C. More = Gret Castell (CLR), Enysh Fermore = Iland Fermore (CRK), Great hyll called Muskere = Slew Muskerey (CRK), Iland Wedar = Enys Weday (CRK), Michaels Poynt = Can Mychell (CRK), Monkestowne = B[ally] Monks (CRK), Mollogh Shelbren = Knocshelbren (CRK), Newcastell = C. New (CRK).

(7) Some names with *B.*— in Lythe and *—town* in other sixteenth-century sources

B. Bacon (MTH), B. Casyn (MTH), B. Dollor (MTH), B. Dorde (WMT), B. Garard (MTH), B. Greck (MTH), B. Pers (LNG), B. Roche (KLK), B. Ryvers (MTH), B. Skorloke (MTH), B. Stephen (MTH), B. Talbet (WKL), B. Thomas (KLK), B. William (LMK).

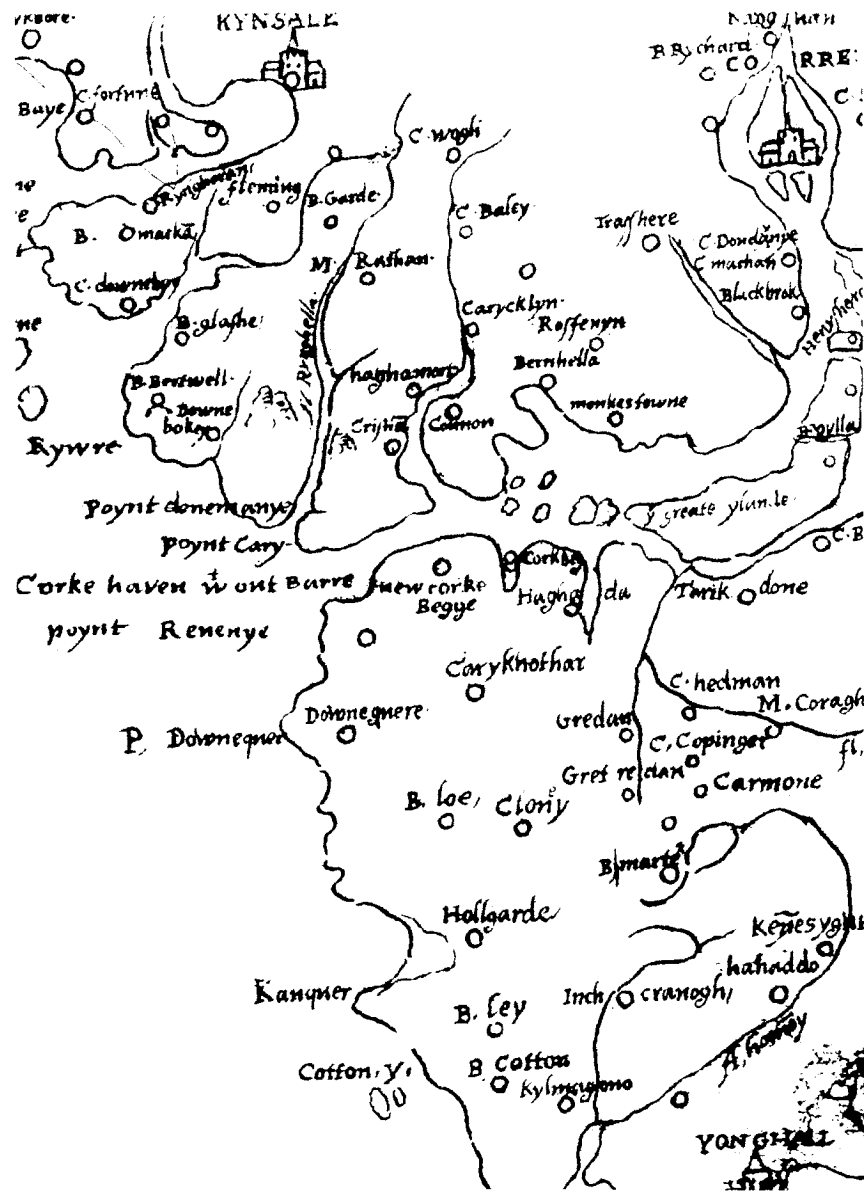


Figure 1. Part of Robert Lythe's map of central and southern Ireland (West Sussex Record Office, PHA 9581).

The Irish Genealogies as an Onomastic Source

Nollaig Ó Muraíle

The Queen's University, Belfast

Up to thirty years ago, if one wished to consult a collection of what may be termed 'non-contemporary' Irish personal names, the largest such collection available was to be found in the *Index Nominum* to John O Donovan's great seven-volume edition of the Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland (popularly known as the Annals of the Four Masters—FM for short).¹ These annals, compiled in the 1630s, are the most voluminous, though not the most authoritative, collection of Irish annals covering the ancient, medieval and early modern periods of Irish history. The other annalistic compilations include the Annals of Ulster, of Inisfallen (in Munster), of Loch Cé and Connacht, and, from the midland monastery of Clonmacnoise, the Annals of Tigernach and the *Chronicum Scotorum*. All of these are largely in Irish with a good deal of Latin for the early Christian period. (There are also some smaller collections, as well as later medieval collections of Anglo-Irish annals which need not concern us here.) The personal names index to each of these compilations contains much interesting onomastic material, but none of them matches in scope the index to O Donovan's great edition which appeared as long ago as 1851.

The *Index Nominum* to FM (which includes both personal names and surnames) runs to just over 280 pages. At a rough estimate, it contains about 14,000 separate names, mainly but not exclusively Gaelic, purporting to cover a period of about 3,500 years. (Note that these annals claim to begin forty days before the Flood, *anno mundi* 2242, and continue down to the early seventeenth century.) Not

This article is a revised and slightly expanded form of a paper which was delivered to the Annual Conference of the Society for Name Studies in Britain and Ireland, held in The Queen's University, Belfast, 11 April 1992.

¹ The following are the most common abbreviations employed in this paper: BL, British Library; MS(S), manuscript(s); NLI, National Library of Ireland; RIA, Royal Irish Academy; TCD, Trinity College, Dublin.