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**Onomastic Luggage:
 Variability in the Onomastic Landscape**

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The subject of this paper is aspects of movement within the place-nomenclature, including commemorative and connotative names, name transference, semantic extension, and the onomastic tale—with particular reference to Gaelic Scotland.

Commentators on place-names have often linked the naming patterns of new-found colonies with those of their country of origin; the settlers bearing onomastic luggage as it were. Distribution maps show us the gradual proliferation of elements borne by incomers, fanning out from one or more points. In this way, a particular item from the onomasticon (the body of names and elements which are the constituent parts of the place-nomenclature of a group of people) can be reused or regenerated elsewhere.

One of the observations which has been made from consideration of settling populations is that the New World is littered with the onomastic luggage of its immigrants, as in the English language name-forms *Perth* and *Aberdeen*; and then there are the dependent name-forms such as *New York* and Gaelic *Alba Nuadh* (English *Nova Scotia*). This has promoted the idea that earlier peoples, groups, tribes etc. may have responded to their new surroundings in a similar way.

Needless to say the process of name-formation is multi-faceted and it would be foolhardy to state absolutely that there cannot be variations in the process. However, perhaps sometimes the notion of commemorative naming needs to take into account a different pattern of settlement than one which we would plot with reference to the New World. Realistically, the likes of Gaelic or Norse settlement of Scotland must have been painfully slow by comparison. And in consequence, beyond the very first incursions, the pace of settlement to a greater or lesser degree will have permitted a level of differentiation within settlement areas; and this would have brought about potential for innovation and change in the naming process. Perhaps this explains why we do not have a string of

Oslos, or at least of *Bergens* and *Stavangers* leading through the Northern Isles to the west of Scotland and on to Ireland and the Isle of Man.

This would also seem to explain why there are in fact differences in the naming patterns of Norse domiciles in say Norway, Scotland and Iceland, as in the example of the absence from Iceland of the elements *sætr* and *setr* 'shieling, later also farmstead';¹ or the use of the Gaelic loan-word *ærgi* 'milking place; later shieling' in Scotland,² in the Faroes, and indeed in England;³ and the gradual change in the generic terms used by Norse for naming farmsteads in Scotland, for example from *bólstaðr*, less commonly *bústaðr*, to *ból* and to an Islay form, **bólshagi*, which is unattested elsewhere.⁴

It has also been thought likely that settlers would choose areas for their new domicile which were geographically similar to their former homeland. Thus name-forms current in the motherland could be reused for similar features in the new land.

Although there is this possibility, we have to admit that we are being overly optimistic in many cases. To take the case of migrants from Norway: while the south-west of their country of origin might amply

¹ For an analysis of these elements in Gaelic Scotland, see R. A. V. Cox, 'The origin and relative chronology of *shader*-names in the Hebrides', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 16 (1990), 95-113.

² R. A. V. Cox, 'The Norse element in Scottish Gaelic', *Études Celtiques*, 29 (1992), 137-45 (p. 139), cites this along with other examples of Gaelic loan-words in Old Norse place-names.

³ See G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Viking settlement in the Northern and Western Isles—the place-name evidence as seen from Denmark and the Danelaw', in *The Northern and Western Isles in the Viking World*, edited by A. Fenton and H. Pálsson (Edinburgh, 1984), pp. 148-68 (pp. 163-64).

⁴ For an overview of Norse settlement-generic distribution in Scotland, see W. F. H. Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place-Names. Their Study and Significance* (London, 1976), pp. 84-120. For more detailed accounts of settlement-generic history, see Cox, 'The origin and relative chronology of *shader*-names in the Hebrides', and R. A. V. Cox, 'Descendants of Norse *Bólstaðr*? A re-examination of the lineage of *Bost & Co.*', in *Peoples and Settlement in North-West Ross*, edited by J. R. Baldwin (Edinburgh, 1994), pp. 43-67.

correspond to the terrain of the west of Scotland, we should remember that the Norse settled various lands right down to Sicily and beyond, so that the notion of forward planning in these terms becomes less credible. Although this does not of course exclude the possibility that elements or even whole name-forms were reused at times in this way.

Beyond the question of place of origin, there are other potential influences on the naming process which we might take into account. For example, recently someone told me that he was thinking of giving his planned house a 'Gaelic name for a wood'—at which point I steadfastly withheld mention of any interest I might have had! As elsewhere, there is a great deal of cultural tokenism of one kind or another afoot in Scotland, and this is one instance of a fairly common trend, the bestowing of Gaelic names, on houses, children, boats, and so on. I must admit that I have been guilty of the same myself in the past. For example I would religiously call any black cat I had by the name of *Dubhaidh*, i.e. 'blackie'; however now my young son's interest has prevailed as far as our current black cat is concerned, and as he is a *Postman Pat* fan she is well-named *Jess*.

It is difficult to imagine, however, Gaels going up to Norsemen at a time when their language had declined in Scotland and asking what might make a good Norse farm-name. Or Gaels asking such a question of Picts because Pictish was culturally fashionable, though perhaps linguistically irrelevant, at the time? ('No wonder there are so many *pit*-names,' you say!⁵)

It seems very unlikely that in the past cultural trends bore an influence on the naming process in the global terms we can envisage for our own day. The same is true of political trends. The complete politicisation of the naming process as seen in the renaming of many German streets after the defeat of Hitler,⁶ or in the renaming (or

⁵ *Pit*, as in English *Pitlochry*, is a common element in place-names in the North-East of Scotland. See K. T. Jackson, 'The Pictish Language', in *The Problem of the Picts*, edited by F. T. Wainwright (Perth, 1980; first published 1955), pp. 129-66 (pp. 146-49); Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place-Names*, pp. 151-58, and R. A. V. Cox, 'Modern Scottish Gaelic reflexes of two Pictish words: *pett* and *lanerc*', *Nomina*, 20 (1997), 47-58 (pp. 47-53).

⁶ For examples, see W. P. Ahrens, 'Street names and street name changes in the

reclarification) process currently under way in South Africa,⁷ takes place at a level of sophistication for which we are unlikely to find a parallel in previous ages in Scotland. This of course is not to rule out the fact that names were created for cultural or political reasons.

One example from the early modern period is *Cromwell Street* in Stornoway, which was formerly known as *Dempster Street*. This was not a political change though, for in spite of Cromwell's interest in Stornoway with regard to potential invasion by the Dutch, it was not made until the 1820s.⁸ The basis for the renaming is implied in W.C. Mackenzie's comment that 'the City Fathers... were able to consider the propriety of their memorial philosophically, without national bias, and without the feeling that they were perpetuating the memory of a shameful subjection. Pride in the association of Stornoway with the name of the greatest Englishman of his time swallowed up resentment of the nature of the association'.⁹

Another name in Lewis has an apparent association with Cromwell. I quote from the Rev. Murdo Macaulay's 'The Burning Bush in Carloway':

There is an interesting spot in the Aird Mhòr [the name of a headland NB1945], northwest of the village of Garenin [on the west of the island], called by the locals Buaille nan Covenanters [i.e. 'the enclosure or field of the covenanters']. It is not marked on the 1850 Ordnance Map, but it is marked on the 1898 one as a round circle of standing stones, after the fashion of Stonehenge, but no name is attached to it. It could have been a haven used by Covenanters to escape punishment by the soldiers of

German Democratic Republic', *Onomastica Canadiana*, 69 (1987), 1-14.

⁷ L. Möller, 'Scope and method of toponymic research in Southern Africa', and P. E. Raper, 'Standardising geographical names in a changed society', in *Proceedings of the XIXth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Aberdeen, August 4-11, 1996*, 3 vols, edited by W. F. H. Nicolaisen (Department of English, University of Aberdeen, 1998), I, 214-21 and 264-74 respectively.

⁸ See F. Thomson, *Harris and Lewis-Outer Hebrides* (Newton Abbot, 1968), p. 44, and A. A. MacGregor, *Behold the Hebrides!* (London and Edinburgh, 1925), pp. 221-26.

⁹ Quoted in MacGregor *ibid.*

Cromwell who were stationed in Stornoway in 1653.¹⁰

It is not clear, however, why Cromwellian soldiers should have been after Covenanters, nor how the exposed headland in question (the apparent stone circle consists of glacial deposits) might have offered the escapees anything like a haven. A more likely explanation is that the name came about some time after the restoration of episcopacy in 1661, and that the congregations of deprived ministers then met in the open in such places 'unlawfully', i.e. without a preacher licensed by a bishop.

Less remarkable commemorative names such as *Cnoc Màiri* 'Mary's hill', or *Beinn Iomhair* 'Ivor's Mountain' are much commoner; where *Màiri* and *Iomhair* are likely to have been commemorated because here were the places where they sat while watching their stock. These might only be termed cultural or political namings given a very small initial. A larger one would need to be accorded the likes of *Nelson Mandela Place*, formerly *St George's Place*, in Glasgow. And of course some names can constitute more of a statement of political colour than of political intent or achievement: for example Gaelic *Sràid a' Phrionnsa* in Edinburgh, English *Princes Street*, which is the result of language politics (if only with a small p) and which in consequence belongs to the nomenclature of a relatively small user-group.

At this stage I should like to turn to look at the commemorative name from the point of view of structure. Professor W. F. H. Nicolaisen in an article in *Onoma* 20 suggests that a number of apparently commemorative names may be accounted for because of their connotative value. For example, a salmon river named *Laxá* by Norsemen might be so named, not because of the applicability of the lexical meaning of the constituent elements 'river of salmon, or (strictly) salmon river', but because that was what salmon rivers were called. As Nicolaisen says: 'they are names fit for the felicitous naming of "salmon rivers".'¹¹ I do

¹⁰ M. Macaulay, *The Burning Bush in Carloway* (Carloway Lewis, 1984), p. 9.

¹¹ W. F. H. Nicolaisen, 'Words as names', *Onoma*, 20 (1976), 142-63 (pp. 156-57). The analysis here and the use of the terms CONNOTATIVE, ASSOCIATIVE and ONOMASTIC do not precisely mirror Nicolaisen's. (In discussion, Professor Nicolaisen pointed out that his thinking had moved on in the last twenty years.)

not doubt the validity of the concept of the connotative name for one moment, but I should like to use this example as a springboard for discussion and wonder whether it is so easy to draw a distinction between lexical and connotative or associative meaning in this instance.

In order to clarify what is happening here, we can examine the structure of the name. Syntactically, it is transparently noun + noun, with the stem form of neuter *lax* 'salmon' and probably an oblique case-form of feminine *q̇* 'river'. It is when we come to an onomastic and semantic analysis that we run into problems: it is difficult to justify an onomastic analysis of specific + generic, if we are claiming an associative meaning for *Laxq̇* as a unit. A lexical meaning 'salmon river' corresponds to the syntactical analysis of noun + noun. That being the case, an onomastic meaning 'this particular river we're talking about between points A and B' should simply co-exist with the paraphrasis of the lexical meaning, though only the onomastic meaning has continuing functional value in the name once created.

If, however, we assume an associative meaning, we have to ask ourselves where this lies in relation to other levels of meaning. In fact associative meaning is a form of lexical meaning, but one shaped by semantic fields and associations within the onomasticon. It replaces any basic lexical meaning and, like lexical meaning, is functionally active as part of the name creating process. Thereafter the value of the associative meaning has the same limitation that was inherent in the original lexical meaning; indeed, it may only survive within the spheres of cultural reminiscence and academic research.

To illustrate some of these points further we could take the Gaelic name-forms *An Cnoc Gorm* and *An Cnoc Glas*. The syntactical structure here is article + noun + adjective, with the masculine noun *cnoc* 'hill'; while onomastically the structure is apparently generic + specific. Onomastically these names refer to hills we can abstract for present purposes as eminences A and B; and lexically they can be rendered in English as 'the blue hill' and 'the green hill', respectively. However, the adjective *glas* can also have the lexical meaning 'blue' or 'grey'—it is often a question of dialect, or usage—and *gorm* too can have various senses including 'green'. In fact these adjectives also have a usage which has developed by association within the onomasticon: *gorm* can mean 'dark green as in the dark hue of heather-covered hills' while *glas* can

mean 'light green as in the light hue of grass-covered hills'.

At this point it still seems appropriate to structure the names generic + specific; the semantic development of *gorm* and *glas* does not seem to have impinged on other levels of structure in the names. We are simply talking about the associative meaning of the two specific elements.

What, however, if we take *cnoc gorm* and *cnoc glas* as units, as connotative formations, names fit for the felicitous naming of heather and grass-covered hills, as it were? If so, I would argue that we no longer have an onomastic structure generic + specific, but a structure where a generic, or more precisely a generic unit, is co-extensive with the name. This would be the case also with a name-form *Laxq̇*, assuming it had associative meaning. It is difficult, however, to change the interpretation of the structure of *Laxq̇*, in onomastic terms, beyond that of specific + generic. At least there seems to be no justification to do so.

Another area of difficulty here is exemplified by the Old Norse name-form *Þingvallr*, lexically 'assembly-field', and in modern English reflexes found for example as *Dingwall*, near Inverness, and *Tynwald*, in the Isle of Man. On the one hand, the onomastic structure here could be specific + generic 'the field, or place of the council', where the specific might have had onomastic quality in its own right, i.e. it might have referred back to a name (*Þingit* 'the assembly or parliament') and in effect be an erstwhile name or ex nomine unit. Of course, such a scenario is possible but to my mind unlikely. It seems more likely that the name-form was applied frequently, if not always, with an onomastic structure of generic, i.e. *þingvallr* was a generic term. Yet it is hard not to draw the conclusion that we are simply looking at a lexical compound, albeit one in which the constituent lexemes are clearly discernible, as in English 'courtyard'.¹²

An almost certain candidate though for the connotative name, must surely be the ON name-form *Kalføy*, lexically 'calf-island', associatively 'the small island beside the mother island', and of which there are

¹² In discussion, Dr Margaret Gelling suggested that the term COMPOUND APPELLATIVE suited the example of *þingvallr*—in a syntactical analysis, yes, but not in an analysis of onomastic structure.

several instances, and the Gaelic reflex *Calbhaigh* ['kʰaLà, vaj], vej] is found for example between Eriskay and South Uist NF8112, in Loch Eynort (South Uist) NF7728, and between Benbecula and Grimsay NF8654.¹³

With the onomastic strata that so many waves of settlement have washed over Scotland: the Pictish, the British, the Gaelic, the Norse, mixed with Danish in the south, the Anglian, Scots and English, not to mention pre-Celtic, or the less significant contributions of Flemish and Anglo-Norman—during the development of this rich tapestry, no doubt there have been many examples of commemorative and connotative names. Our challenge is to answer this question more fully and more systematically.

Diachronically the types of names we have been talking about represent movement within the nomenclature—though a two-dimensional view might regard it simply as a duplication of names—and the vehicle for this process is the level of associative meaning. Of course names can also move at the level of onomastic meaning: this is name transference.

Transference is a term for the common phenomenon whereby the onomastic meaning of a name is transferred from one feature to another. For example, *Strathclyde*, once referring to the carse or lea of the River Clyde can now denote an area from south of Glasgow up to Tiree; and *Hillhead* in the west end of Glasgow is an areal-name and no longer denotes the head of a particular hill. What has happened? What is the metonymic process involved here?

Fig. 1 gives a number of name-forms from Lewis, and whether or not the original features to which the names applied still exist, and whether or not their lexical meaning is now transparent is indicated. The onomastic meaning of the names is also given.

¹³ Compare usage in *The Calf of Man*. A Gaelic reflex */kaLàva/ also occurs, e.g. in Iona: English *Calva*, Gaelic gen. *Eilean Cailbhe* (H. C. Gillies, *The Place-Names of Argyll* [London, 1906], p. 131).

Fig.1

Name	Feature	Lexical?	Onomastic Meaning
<u>Group A</u>			
An Airigh Ard 'the high shieling'	N	Y	a hill (NB1939)
Am Both 'the bothy'	N	Y	a hill (NB2243)
Sgaid 'trestle'	N	Y	area above coast (NB1944)
<u>Group B</u>			
An Daireag 'the copse'	Y	N	stretch of hillside (NB1842)
Balabhair ON '...cairn'	Y	N	a pass (NB2045)
Càrlabhair ON '...bay'	Y	N	village and township (NB2042)
<u>Group C</u>			
Caolas an Eilein 'the narrows of the island'	Y	Y	ground facing island (NB2346)
Am Màs Ard 'the high backend/ bottom'	Y	Y	a hill (NB2239)
An Dùn 'the fort'	Y	Y	village and township (NB1941)

N=not in existence/not lexically transparent Y=in existence/lexically transparent

In group A, the features have long since gone but the names are perfectly accessible lexically; so the movement of the names from shieling to hill, from bothy to hill, etc. cannot have taken place on the level of lexical meaning. In group B, while the lexical meanings are obscure, the features do still exist, which demonstrates that a change in topography is not the root cause. Group C, where the features exist and where the names are also lexically transparent, persuades us finally that we have to look elsewhere for the answer to the way in which transference works.

What has changed is the onomastic meaning of the names. At any one time we may consider a feature to be a fixed point within its location. Transference seems to involve the feature as a notion with temporarily free distribution within its area. Onomastic meaning may then be redefined as including more or less than it originally did, or something different from this, though often the new meaning coincides with an area broadly coterminous with the original location. While this model implies a temporary loss of onomastic meaning, it probably does not occur as an absolute state.

Beyond the workings of the phenomenon itself, it is interesting to ask why it should take place at all. Obviously names can become redundant as it were, as in the examples of *An Airigh Ard* and *Am Both*, once the features to which they applied cease to exist, and so become available for redeployment. On the other hand, it seems that changes in practices and in the use to which features are put bring about the right climate in which transference can take place.

Transference also explains the way in which tautologous names can be created in situations where lexical transparency is not in doubt, for example *Allt a' Ghlas Allt* NB2235, literally 'the stream of the green stream'. The onomastic structure of the name is generic (*allt*) + specific (*a' Ghlas Allt*) and where the specific is an ex nomine unit. That is, *Allt a' Ghlas Allt* was dependent for its creation upon the independent name *An Glas Allt*, literally 'the green stream', whose onomastic meaning must have been transferred before the name *Allt a' Ghlas Allt* (lexically 'the stream of the green stream', onomastically 'the stream of *An Glas Allt*') could be created.

There is an interesting case of transference in the ON loan-name **Reusa* [Re:sa] which survives in the island-names *Garbh Reusa* ('Rugged *Reusa*') NR 7598, *Reusa MhicPhaidein* ('MacFadyen's *Reusa*')

NM7501 and *Reusa an t-Sruith* ('*Reusa* of the current') NR7399 which lie south-east of the northern tip of Jura and the Gulf of Corryvreckan. Heading north-west from Crinan there is a passage south of the Craignish Peninsula called *An Doras Mòr* 'the great doorway' NR7598; and because of the strength of the cross-currents here it is advisable to pass through it on the flood tide which runs east to west out towards Corryvreckan.

**Reusa* derives from ON **Rásøy*, a by-form of **Råsøy* 'the island of the sea current', which was most probably the Norse name for what is now called *Reusa an t-Sruith* since that is the island which is in the path of the current.¹⁴ Thereafter the Old Norse name was borrowed into Gaelic; and at some stage the loan-name was transferred to allow for the creation of the names *Reusa MhicPhaidein* and *Garbh Reusa* and later, if not at the same time, *Reusa an t-Sruith*.

A process of transference also takes place with name elements, although this is usually and probably better termed semantic extension. Thus G. *allt*, originally 'bank', now means 'stream'; *cladh*, nominally the 'ditch, or trench (you dug)', is also found in the sense of 'dyke, or earthen rampart'. There is of course a parallel in the English doublet *ditch—dyke*, where a phonemic distinction now underpins a semantic one.

Other Gaelic examples include *dùn* which probably had an original sense 'hill' (*Dumgoyne* and *Dumfoyne* at the west end of the Campsies, north of Glasgow, are good examples), later 'fort' (and this is paralleled in the extension of ON *borg* from 'hill' to 'fort' etc.). G. *corran*, nominally 'sickle', is found both in the sense of 'rounded headland' and of 'rounded bay', although this is something that the Gaelic lexicographer Edward Dwelly resists: 'The meanings given in some dictionaries,' he states, 'as "Narrow passage through which the tide runs swiftly," "semi-circular bay," and "bend" are not the equivalents of corra[n] which signifies the promontory which contracts the passage, or

¹⁴ ON *rás* is found in a similar sense along the western coast of Norway ('sterkt straumbelte' P. Hovda, *Norske Fiskeméd* [Oslo and Bergen, 1961], p. 150).

which bounds the bay.¹⁵ Finally the familiar element *càrn* is found in the sense of a 'cairn of stones', a 'small hill', and even a 'mountain' of Munro proportions, as in *An Càrn Gorm* from which the English name *The Cairngorms* derives.

That this phenomenon is fairly commonplace would seem to undermine any attempt at generalisation about the significance of name elements; or would at the least call for caution. It would be useful to have more detailed study carried out in this area. How flawed for example may our generalisations be about the elements *baile* and *achadh*, Gaelic settlement elements which blanket the greater part of the country?¹⁶

Another aspect of names and their development which involves movement is the onomastic tale. Recently I have been looking at the form *Clach an Truiseil* NB3753, the name of a very tall monolith in the north of Lewis. Without going into greater detail here, I suggest that the specific, *truiseal*, is a Norse loan-word with the sense of 'tramping, or trudging' and that the lexical meaning of *Clach an Truiseil* is 'the tramping stone', i.e. 'the stone that walks'. The monolith features in a few fragments of traditions involving magic or elements from the heroic sagas. There is an element of the onomastic tale about them (at the least someone is turned into stone!) and I wonder in such instances which came first, name or onomastic tale.¹⁷

There is another example in the case of the name *Corryvreckan*, in Gaelic *Coire Bhreacain* which is usually rendered in English as 'the cauldron (referring to the cross-currents or whirlpool) of *Breacan*'. *Breacan* according to one tradition was the grandson of *Niall of the Nine Hostages*, King of Ireland at the end of the fourth century.¹⁸

According to another he was a Norwegian prince who fell in love with a princess of the isles. Her father consented to the marriage on the

¹⁵ E. Dwelly, *The Illustrated English-Gaelic Dictionary* (Glasgow, 1977; first published 1901-11), p. 255.

¹⁶ For distribution maps, see Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place-Names*, pp. 137 and 140.

¹⁷ See R. A. V. Cox, 'Clach an Truiseil', *Journal of Celtic Linguistics*, (forthcoming).

¹⁸ From the Book of Ballymote (W. J. Watson, *The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland* [Edinburgh and London, 1926], pp. 94-95).

condition that *Breacan* showed his courage by anchoring his boat in the whirlpool for three days and nights. *Breacan* accepted the challenge and returned to Norway where he had three cables made—one of hemp, one of wool, and one of maiden's hair. The maidens of Norway willingly cut off their long hair to make the rope for their prince. It was believed that their purity and innocence would give the rope strength to stand the strain.

Breacan returned and anchored in the whirlpool. On the first day the rope of hemp broke; on the second day the woollen rope parted; on the third day all went well until the evening when the rope of hair finally gave way having been weakened because one of the maidens who had given her hair had been unfaithful. And the boat was sucked under by the currents...¹⁹

Meanwhile, the form *Coire Bhreacain* was also once the name of the whirlpool between Rathlin and the coast of Antrim (now *Sloc na Mara*) according to the Book of Ballymote which records the drowning of *Breacan* there and the loss of his company of fifty ships.²⁰ W. J. Watson notes that by Fordun's time in the fourteenth century the 'term'

¹⁹ This version is taken from *The Isles of Islay and Jura: Visitors' Handbook—Leabhar Fiosrachaidh 1992/3*, Islay and Jura Marketing Group, pp. 67 and 71.

²⁰ I am grateful to Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig who informed me of the names *Leaca Breacáin* 'the flagstones of *Breacan*' and *Uamh Breacáin* 'the cave of *Breacan*' on the north end of the east coast of Rathlin (D. Mac Giolla Easpaig, 'The place-names of Rathlin Island', *Ainm*, 4 [1989-90], 3-89, p. 64) which no doubt featured in an associated onomastic tale; also of *Allt an Choire* 'the cliff of the cauldron' on the east end of the north coast of the island, which was thought by an Ordnance Survey Revision Namebook compiler to have given rise to the name of the bay here—though this is not cited—and Mac Giolla Easpaig suggests the name is probably derived from *Coire Breacáin* (op. cit. 66), although the location of *Coire Breacáin—Sloc na Mara* is to the south, in the channel between Rathlin and Antrim (Watson, *The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*; N. M. Holmer, *The Irish Language in Rathlin Island, Co. Antrim*, Royal Irish Academy Todd Lecture Series, 18, [Dublin and London, 1942], p. 234, see *Sloc na Moran*; compare Lhuyd's *Sloch na Moran*, J. L. Campbell, 'The tour of Edward Lhuyd in Ireland in 1699 and 1700', *Celtica*, 5 [1960], 218-28 [p. 222]).

was applied to the whirlpool between Jura and Scarba.²¹ Was the Irish name transferred to Scotland then, or is there a more straightforward solution?

One possible alternative is that the specific is not a personal name but an appellative, albeit of restricted use, with the sense of 'cross-current, or whirlpool', from the adjective *breac* 'spotted, speckled' etc. + suffix of place *-an*. Although at the moment there seems to be nothing to corroborate it, this solution allows for the appearance of *Coire Bhreacain* in these two different places and is a more fitting description for the natural phenomenon found there than the fanciful *coire*.

No transference then? Well, yes—hence the *Coire Bhreacain* name-forms... But there is another instance: the prince's body was dragged ashore by his faithful dog, and carried to a nearby cave—*Uamh Bhreacain* 'the cave of *Breacan*' NM6800—where he was buried.²² A case of transference by onomastic tale!

Acknowledgements

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Note on Transcriptions

[L] is a velarised dental; [R] a velarised trill.

²¹ Watson, *The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*.

²² *The Isles of Islay and Jura*.

Penda's Footprint? Place-Names Containing Personal Names Associated with those of Early Mercian Kings

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Professor Nicholas Brooks, in his contribution to *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* in 1989, drew attention to 'one potential clue to the early activity of the [*Iclingas*] dynasty ... strangely neglected in recent years'.¹ This is the West Midland distribution of place-names 'which

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ASC = *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, edited by D. Whitelock (London, 1961) (for MS A [*ASC* 'A'], see now *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, 3, edited by J. M. Bately [Cambridge, 1986], and for MS B [*ASC* 'B'], *ibid*, 4, edited by S. Taylor [Cambridge, 1983]); *DB* = Domesday Book (entry numbers [e.g. 15, 6] refer to the relevant county volumes in the Phillimore edition: *Domesday Book*, History from the Sources, general editor J. Morris [Chichester, 1975-86]); *ECWM* = H. P. R. Finberg, *The Early Charters of the West Midlands* (Leicester, 1961); *F* + number = charter listed by Finberg in *ECWM*; *FW* + number = charter listed in H. P. R. Finberg, *The Early Charters of Wessex* (Leicester, 1964); *G* + number = charter listed in M. Gelling, *The Early Charters of the Thames Valley* (Leicester, 1979); *GC* = Genealogies in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 183, fol. 59 ff, printed in the *Descriptive Catalogue* of the MSS in that library, III (Cambridge, 1910), pp. 427 ff.; Grundy = G. B. Grundy, 'The Saxon land charters of Wiltshire', *Archaeological Journal*, 76 (1919), 143-301;