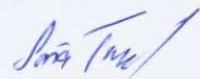


Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci na téma „Místní jména v severozápadním Skotsku“ vypracovala samostatně, pod odborným dohledem své vedoucí DP, PhDr. Marii Ernestové, a veškeré použité materiály jsou uvedeny v závěru práce.



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Děkuji vedoucí mé diplomové práce Dr. Marii Ernestové za její přístup, trpělivost a pomoc při orientaci v této oblasti.

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ANOTACE

Tématem této diplomové práce jsou pomístní a místní jména v převážně bilingvní oblasti severozápadního Skotska. Je poskytnut úvod do problematiky studia (po)místních jmen obecně. Dále je pozornost věnována faktorům, které se na vzniku (po)místních jmen v konkrétní oblasti přímo či nepřímo podílejí (jazykové prostředí, ráz krajiny, obyvatelstvo a historický vývoj).

Druhá (praktická) část je nabízí semantický rozbor jednotlivých prvků (druhových jmen a určujících slov), které se v (po)místních jménech dané oblasti objevují. Jednotlivé prvky jsou řazeny abecedně podle toho, který krajinný útvar označují. Specifika pak podle toho, jaké pojmenovávací motivy odrážejí. Kromě příkladů k jednotlivým prvkům je uvedena i výslovnost, pokud bylo možné ji zjistit.

ANNOTATION

The topic of this diploma thesis is the topographical and partly settlement place-names of the area of the north-west of Scotland which is mostly bilingual. A brief introduction into the study of place-names is given at the beginning. Then the prime focus of attention is on aspects which, directly or indirectly, have a part in the creation of place-names in this area (language background, landscape features, inhabitants and history).

The second, more practical part, is a semantic analysis of individual place-name elements. The generics are ranked alphabetically in groups according to what landscape feature they refer to. The specifics are grouped according to the naming motives they reflect. Examples are given for each element and their pronunciation, where it was possible to find out.

ABBREVIATIONS, SYMBOLS and PRONUNCIATION

angl.	anglicised
cf	compare
dat.	dative
e.g.	exempli gratia, 'for example'
Eng.	English
F	feminine
fem.	feminine
G.	(Scottish) Gaelic
gen.	genitive
ibid.	ibidem, 'in the same place'
i.e.	id est, 'that is'
OE	Old English
ON	Old Norse
OS	Ordnance Survey
Osw	Old Swedish
M	masculine
mas.	masculine
NE	north-east
NW	north-west
NNR	National Nature Reserve
SE	south-east
SW	south-west
p	page
pp	pages
TGSI	Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness
UK	the United Kingdom
<	developed from
>	developed into

Pronunciation will be given in square brackets and in inverted commas as it is only an approximate guidance for pronouncing it in „English way“. I have not attempted to give a proper phonological transcription for two reasons: the phonological system of the Gaelic language (which I cannot speak) is different to the English, and the phonts in the computer used for writing this work do not include necessary symbols.

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„... a každé údolí se jmenuje Glen
a každá hora Ben...” (K. Čapek)

I. INTRODUCTION

The core issue of this paper is place-names in the area of the north-west of Scotland, their naming background, application and present usage and importance. The main reason for choosing this topic was to find out more about this bilingual area in the north of the British Isles. The current situation will be considered and possible reasons for it. The languages which have been spoken here will be covered, including how they can determine the origin and usage of place-names. Finally, the role of English language in influencing the place-names and creating the new ones will be discussed.

The variety of approaches possible in place-names study is great because place-names are not just a result of one language. They come into being through the interaction of languages, landscape and historical events. And here place-names study, or toponymy, reflects these aspects. Without at least some of the knowledge of these aspects it would be difficult to understand the origin, application and distribution of the place-names in the full extent. Therefore, chapter II. 'General part' and the first part of chapter III. 'Place-names in the north-west of Scotland' (i.e. the 'Research areas') are theoretical and the aim is to provide the background information necessary for place-names study in the north-west.

'Linguistic points of view', the second part of chapter III., will be focused on the linguistic aspects: the origin of place-names, the processes in individual languages (spoken in this area) when adopting the place-names of different origins. To discover more about the naming motives in the area of the north-west, there will be included sections on the place-name elements (generics and specifics) discussed from the semantic point of view, with examples and, where it was possible to find out, also with pronunciation.

The analyzed material includes the place-names of several counties in north-western Scotland; mainly from Ross-shire (parishes Gairloch, Lochbroom), Sutherland (parish Assynt) and Isle of Lewis and Isle of Harris in the Outer Hebrides.

II. GENERAL PART

1. Importance of place-names

The process of naming began at the dawn of human history and is not over yet. It belongs to the mankind as much as the ability to speak and it expresses the mastery over the world surrounding us.¹

The process of naming is not only a linguistic matter. There is a great number of stimulants which make these processes possible and which seem to be, almost exclusively, extra-linguistic associations and psychological and sociological factors such as:

„imitation, analogy, aesthetics, group attraction, [...] fashion, incident, cultural transfer, religious affiliation, nostalgia, patriotism, family tradition, social pressure or custom, folk belief, alliteration... all of them culture-bound.“²

There is one thing all place-names have in common, no matter what area or language they are bound with. That is the necessity for orientation in the country and for setting the individual objects clearly. Consequently, this is closely related to the increasing human activity in the countryside. Our ancestors seemed to be really „down to earth“ when observing their surroundings. They were able to point out the most specific feature of a particular place in the countryside and named the individual objects in the country according to either natural or cultural conditions. The designation was always very accurate.³

When we have a look at the 1'' OS maps or the OS Object Names Books we find place-names referring to countless minor geographical features of local importance. Their repetitiveness (and the seeming lack of imagination) is surprising: there are dozens of *Loch Mòr* ('big lake'), *Loch Beag* ('small lake'), *Loch Dubh* ('small lake') , *Allt an*

¹ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance, p 47

² Nicolaisen, W. F. H., Early Scandinavian naming in the Western and Northern Isles, in: *Northern Scotland*, Vol 3, No 2, 1979-1980, p 106

³ Olivová-Nezbedová, L., 1995, Pomístní jména v Čechách, jejich charakteristika a jejich význam pro vědní obory, in: *Pomístní jména v Čechách: O čem vypovídají jména polí, luk, lesů, hor, vod a cest*, Libuše Olivová-Nezbedová et al.; ACADEMIA, p 16

Loch Dubh ('stream of the black lake'), *Beinn Dearg* ('red hill'), *Loch Beinn Dearg* ('lake of the red hill'), *Allt Beinn Dearg* ('stream of the red hill')... However, when we consider the conditions and life-style then, we realise there was no need for great diversification because people were bound with the area they lived in and had no reason to „stray far from their native glens and loch-sides...“⁴. That is why the place-names seem to be repetitive. All the names mentioned served as orientation points in the countryside and reflected the observing skills of the speakers.

We can say the **significance** of place-names consists in the information they can provide on so many subjects and the fact that so many scientific disciplines can benefit from them, such as history, archeology, geography, ethnography, biology.

Ekwall⁵ gives a more a detailed account of these values. This account have been adjusted and extended with the information gained in the research.

1. great value for linguistic study:

- a) place-names contain many old words otherwise not recorded or often afford far earlier references for words than those in literature. Some of the words used in or as place-names somehow get out of the natural development of the language itself and become very archaic, though still used⁶; (as the oldest place-names surviving up to this day are considered the names of watercourses).
- b) often help in the dating and localisation of sound-changes, fixing of dialect boundaries and indication of how long the language had been spoken in the area and the like

⁴ Dorward, D., 1998, *Scotland's Place-names*, p 8

⁵ Ekwall, E., 1960, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, pp xxix – xxxiv

⁶ Olivovová-Nezbedová, L., 1995, *Pomístní jména v Čechách, jejich charakteristika a jejich význam pro vědní obory*, in: *Pomístní jména v Čechách: O čem vypovídají...*, p 24

2. an important material for the historical and archeological studies:
 - a) changes in population and settlements; e.g. the ON place-names (especially those including the generic *bólstaðr*) in the whole north-Atlantic area document the development of Scandinavian settlement; and provide an insight into the type of colonisation
 - b) it is possible to use place-names to specify the site of a former, now non-existent, human settlement; (the starting point is the assumption the settlement name has passed on to the grounds, as fields, woods or lakes which are to be found on the site of the former settlement⁷, i.e. back-formation – see more in the section on word-forming processes in place-names)
3. provide documentation on belief(s), (both paganism and Christian religion)
4. place-names can give information on early architecture or building material or they indicate early systems of defence, look out places, etc.
5. information on social conditions, early institutions, meeting places; what was typical of which population and why
6. some of them contain personal names and such as can be used as a source of information in personal nomenclature

⁷ Olivová – Nezbedová, L., 1995, Zaniklé osady v Čechách a pomístní jména, in: *Pomístní jména v Čechách: O čem vypovídají jména polí, luk ...*, p 333

2. Basic terminology

Some terms will be used in the course of the work which either apply to specifically Scottish background, history, landscape, traditions and are known less, or are closely connected with the topic of place-names study, again, particularly in Great Britain. To avoid any possible confusion and to make the understanding easier, explanation to some of these terms is provided, others will be explained where necessary.

blanket peat: land covered with a layer of peat or bog several metres thick

peat is a dark and fibrous soil made of dead plant matter

clearances: activities of the landowners in the Scottish Highlands (but also Islands, e.g. Lewis) in the 18th and 19th centuries, who decided to „clear their land off“ and remove the tenants (crofters) in order to make space for sheep or deer which were more profitable; the act of clearing or removing the tenants was often violent and connected with **evictions**

croft: a small farm, or rather a small house, with a piece of land

crofter: a person living in the **croft**, poor people rented their crofts from the factors, both terms, 'croft' and 'crofter', are almost entirely connected with Scotland

factor: a person charged with managing properties and estates, the job included finding, checking, evicting, and generally dealing with tenants (crofters), collecting the rents and also building and repairing the crofts...⁸

gillie: anglicisation of Gaelic *gille* 'boy', 'lad' another meaning is 'devotee' and subsequently 'servant', i.e. a man who attend to someone on a hunting or fishing expedition in Scotland⁹

⁸ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Factor_\(Scotland\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Factor_(Scotland))

kelp: seaweed which gathered on the shores (especially on bigger boulders) of the Hebrides, particularly in Lewis, dried and burnt to get the ash which was then sold as fertilizer; **kelping** was hard and exhausting work and the people were forced by the factors to do it

national grid reference: 'The National Grid' is the map reference system used on all OS maps to record the position of any feature.¹⁰ Grid references are made up of: two letters followed by an even number of digits (eastings and northings), optionally followed by a quadrant name: "NW", "NE", "SW" or "SE", standing for north-west, south-west, etc.¹¹, which can be further specified according to the map scale. For instance when Roy Wentworth refers in his work *Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR* to a place called *Ash Island*, he gives the national grid reference NG97SW/9073/1¹². On the OS maps there are given blue letters and blue figures (eastings) on the sides of map to enable the reference.

				HP	
			HT	HU	
	HW	HX	HY	HZ	
NA	NB	NC	ND		
NF	NG	NH	NJ	NK	
NL	NM	NN	NO		
	NR	NS	NT	NU	
	NW	NX	NY	NZ	
		SC	SD	SE	TA
		SH	SJ	SK	TF
	SM	SN	SO	SP	TL
	SR	SS	ST	SU	TQ
SV	SW	SX	SY	SZ	TV

A	B	C	D	E
F	G	H	J	K
L	M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T	U
V	W	X	Y	Z

nomenclature: a system of naming things and names used in such system¹³

⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gillie> and Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 132

¹⁰ <http://www.gps.gov.uk/natgrid/introduction.asp>

¹¹ <http://edina.ac.uk/digimap/support/gridreference.shtml>

¹² Wentworth, R., 1998, Place-names of Loch Maree Islands National Nature Reserve, p xxiii

¹³ Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 1998, OUP, p 786

parish: a basic level of church administration (area of one church served by one minister) and formerly also a unit of civil government within the county

shieling: (in older documents also **shealing**) 1. a summer pasture in the mountains or just further away from the village; 2. a hut for shepherds there, i.e. a shelter used seasonally; it is a feature typical of Scotland and Scottish Highlands and Hebrides (Lewis) are scattered with these summer shelters

statistical accounts: a part of national archives, they consist of reports from 1791-1799 and 1834-1845 on different topics: agriculture, education, population, social life; these reports are based on information supplied by each parish church minister¹⁴

tack: a 'piece of land', or a 'lease'¹⁵, i.e. a part of land that was rented together with the crofts for a set period of time

tacksman: a person who was in charge of a piece of land ('tack') directly from the landowner, or, originally, from the clan chieftain, and subsequently let it to tenant farmers and/or crofters¹⁶

toponyms place-names, both topographical (denoting geographical features) and habitative (relating to some form of human activity in the landscape, or to the settlement itself)

toponymy: study of **toponyms**, their origins and meanings; it is a part of **onomastics**, i.e. study of names of all kinds¹⁷

¹⁴ www.jisc.ac.uk/coll_statofscot.html or www.electricscotland.com/webclans/statistical_accounts.htm

¹⁵ www.petestack.com/tacksman.html, and www.garthbeg.com/tacksman.htm

¹⁶ www.petestack.com/tacksman.html, and www.garthbeg.com/tacksman.htm

¹⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toponym>

3. Place-names study background

This section provides a brief survey of the present situation of Scottish place-names research, their sources and possible approaches to their interpretation.

3.1. Sources of place-names research

The scholastic background of toponymic research in Scotland seems to be very productive. In February 1996 *Scottish Place-Name Society* was launched and „exists for the support of all aspects of toponymic studies in Scotland, and in particular the work of the Scottish Place-Name Database at the [University of St. Andrews](#) and the [University of Edinburgh](#)“¹⁸. (At the University of Edinburgh it is the department 'School of Scottish Studies'.) Among the most prominent Scottish toponymists belong, above all, W.J. Watson (his work '*The Celtic Place-names of Scotland*', 1926, is still much respected). W.F.H. Nicolaisen is the author of another „bible“ of Scottish toponymy, '*Scottish place-names, their study and significance*', first published in 1976. Ian Fraser or Samuel Taylor are others of the many whose works have been the chief source of theoretical information for this paper (see the bibliography). The membership in Scottish Place-Name Society is available to anybody who subscribes and there are many laymen (or „place-names freaks“) contributing to the place-names database.

When collecting place-names, the results and the number of collected names depend on the fact whether these names are generally known to the whole public or whether they are used only by a few individuals in the particular area. Without knowledge and cooperation of local people, many toponymic researches and surveys would not have been realized; e.g. Place-names of Scarp collected by J. MacLennan (resident to this area); or R. Wentworth and his work on place-names in Beinn Eighe and Loch Maree. Roy Wentworth had, apart from historical sources, several local informants (he gives their names at the beginning of his surveys). It seems to be necessary to have someone well acquainted with the local conditions, someone who knows the landscape, language (or its local dialect, this is particularly important in the Gaelic speaking areas) and recent local history.

¹⁸ more information on: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/institutes/sassi/spns

Historical sources of place-names can be various. Unfortunately, in Scotland there is nothing to compare with English '*Domesday Book*' which would provide both the early spellings and the early place-names.¹⁹ On contrary, the written evidence of the Scottish place-names before the 12th century is very rare and the pre-Norman spellings are largely lacking. Moreover, due to the fairly rapid succession of languages, the linguistic mixture of nomenclature is rather various and there is hardly any documentation left; which is the case of some of the gaelicised versions of Norse names in the Hebrides.²⁰ However, other precious and more detailed information of earlier spellings and meanings of the place-names can be taken from the statistical accounts and charts, archives and museums (both national or regional), or estate papers (usually private).

Maps are another important source of place-names and their research. From the 16th century onwards there have been many maps of Scotland, mostly of larger areas, i.e. of smaller scale. The 19th century meant a breakthrough because Ordnance Survey engineers started mapping all British Isles. They consulted local people and they observed the landscape themselves. In the *Original Object Name Books* they gave a brief description of these features (even of the minor ones), their spellings and authorities on these spellings, and where possible the meaning of the name in English, as most of the topographical place-names (in the area of the north-west), are Gaelic. Topographical maps of 1" (1:50 000) and larger scale (1:10 000) are extremely useful not only for place-name study but also for research into population growth and settlement or countryside changes. OS maps are regularly revised and those place-names which have become obsolete and not used any more (mainly due to the old residents dying out) are left out. However, the comparison of modern maps with those published in the 19th century (or the *Original object name books*) can provide a view on the density of place-names in the landscape, their development and usage.

The exact position of a landscape (or a settlement) feature and its name can be specified by the *national grid reference*. Even though this can be extremely useful for orientation, it can also result in place-names being used less, the grid reference

¹⁹ In England there are also available the Anglo-Saxon Charters and Rolls of pre-Norman date (used in Ekwall's Dictionary of the English place-names - there are places dated as early as the 8th century), see Nicolaisen, 1979, p 19.

²⁰ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 32

specifications taking their position, (e.g. in walking-guides the grid reference is often used to specify a particular place more than its actual name).

In spite of the availability of all the sources mentioned above, the importance of personal acquaintance with the particular spot, or at least the landscape type, should not be neglected as it often helps to understand the naming motives and the place-name meaning.

3.2. Place-names awareness and their interpretations

Popular approaches

The awareness of place-names varies and depends on the region and population. One of the problems of today's Scotland are young people leaving the remote areas of Scottish Highlands and Islands to study or to find jobs in big cities. Many traditions and place-names have been lost because there was no one to pass it on to. To prevent the economic and social break these regions try to attract people to come and settle down. Nevertheless, these are often from other parts of the United Kingdom and although they try and help to create the local community and even learn Gaelic, this will never be the same as it used to be, because the conditions and lifestyle have changed so much in the last 50 years. The interest and the knowledge of place-names can be thus supposed only at the old residents, and, surprisingly but scarcely, at some of the newcomers as well. Previous generations could have been expected to have a knowledge and interest in place-names but it is rare for the newcomers from other parts of the United Kingdom to possess this enthusiasm.

For some reason, the tourists and visitors to the area are those who are most interested in the place-names. There are lists of the popular and famous places and their names explained in the most of the Scottish guide-books, walking-guides and books on the particular regions, no matter how old they are:

„A difficulty the visitor to Gairloch always experiences is due to the Gaelic names. The Glossary should help to overcome this obstacle. Not only does it include the meanings of the Gaelic words, but it attempts to indicate their pronunciations“²¹

²¹ Dixon, J.H., 1886, reprint 1980, Gairloch and Guide to Loch Maree, p xlvi

This was written in 1886. It seems, in this respect, that neither the human curiosity nor the effort to attract tourists have changed much. However interesting these lists and place-names might seem, they are not a very reliable source of place-names study as they are mostly of fanciful (also false) etymology.

This 'folk' etymology also occurs in many local fairy tales with the purpose to provide an explanation of a particular place-name. Sometimes, such etymologies and conclusions are more interesting than the results of 'a proper place-name study' and, without any doubt, they have their own value.

Scholastic approaches and reconstructions of place-names

The research of the place-names has been dominated over the centuries, first and foremost, by the question „what does this name mean?“ There is a common belief that the names created in the distant past had to always mean something specific or meaningful, which could be re-discovered by application of special methods. What can be recovered after a detailed analysis is primarily the word meaning - describing the place as it was. Nicolaisen (1979, pp 3-4) gives us the example of „Hawick“, 'a hedge farm' (from OE *haga* and *wīc*), meaning just exactly what it is - 'an enclosure with a hedge'. The same could be said about most place-names in the north-west as they are of a very descriptive character (which is typical particularly of Gaelic). Their name expressing just what the feature actually is.

„It is the existence of a word as a name „which has given it a 'power of survival' which ordinary words do not have [...] As a result of this power of survival they form very important raw material in the investigation of the history of the language to which they can be ascribed, especially the earlier phases of the history of the vocabulary of that language.“²²

Names are built up from words. But trying to re-discover the „real or original meaning“ of the names only, we do not find out everything. Naturally, such research is necessary and helps the investigation of the historical development, not only of the language but also of the settlement in the area or country. However, names are not a mere result of the meaning of individual words. There is something more about them. They should be treated in their context: cultural, historical, geographical and social.

„In the place-name research there is necessary to use not only the historical evidence of the social and economical situation of that time but also the findings and observations of the natural sciences.“²³

When reconstructing the older forms of place-names, some toponymists prefer the approach of moving backwards from the already known towards the unknown; as in a genealogical research or archeological excavations. According to W.F.H. Nicolaisen, this seems to be more practicable than to follow it through the history as it happened and only then turn round and in the chronological order „reconstruct the reconstructable“. We should not succumb to the temptation of chasing and digging only the oldest layers as the most important and most interesting ones for „each stratum matters for its own sake“.²⁴ This work concentrates on the present, and more recent, situation of place-names and therefore only a brief chronological survey of language development will be given.

To sum it up, the study of place-names is based on both linguistic and non-linguistic evidence and three following aspects²⁵ should be borne in mind when examining and explaining place-names:

1. historical aspect – the place-names come into existence in a specific period and they may reflect the social, cultural or linguistic conditions of that time
2. geographical aspect – the place-name is always connected with a specific place or object
3. linguistic aspect – place-names can and do express cognitive skills of the humans (they are the lingual expression of human cognitive skills)

²² Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 32

²³ Malenínská, Jitka: 1995 K zaniklým apelativům v toponymii Čech, in: *Pomístní jména v Čechách: O čem vypovídají jména polí, luk*, p 201

²⁴ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, pp 47-48

²⁵ Olivovová-Nezbedová, L., 1995, Pomístní jména v Čechách, jejich charakteristika a jejich význam pro vědní obory, in: *Pomístní jména v Čechách: O čem vypovídají...*, p 34

III. PLACE-NAMES IN NW SCOTLAND

1. Research areas

1.1. Setting the areas

The main concern of this paper are place-names of the north-west of Scotland. I have decided for this locality for two reasons:

1. it provides an exciting mixture of languages
2. this region does not provide only different language groups but also different terrain formations

I was particularly interested in the processes of naming of specific landscape features in different languages and different areas; i.e. whether and how much they influence each other.

Scotland consists of several counties. I concentrated on three of them in the north-west: Inverness-shire, Ross-shire and Sutherland. The counties comprise of parishes units for church administrative purposes. These are usually areas with their own church building and a clergyman. Some parishes may be really small and some of them very large, depending on the density of population. It is not possible to research in detail all the place-name of a (larger) parish, at least not within a short time period. Therefore, I decided to choose several parishes of each county and within them to have a look at even smaller areas to get samples (from islands and adjacent mainland) of place-names of the north-west of Scotland. Furthermore, I would like to point out that the parish division is sometimes only approximate as I was not able to get a more detailed map of the parish division in Scotland and the parish boundaries are not set in the modern maps. However, I have decided to use this sub-division because it is still helpful to pinpoint the area and location more clearly. The map of parishes in Scotland available is a part of the appendix at the back of this work.

The main focus has been put on parishes:

Inverness-shire:	Harris (Isle of Harris)
Ross-shire:	Gairloch and Lochbroom (mainland), Barvas, Stornoway, Uig, Lochs (Isle of Lewis)
Sutherland:	Assynt

In the parish of Gairloch the main areas of interest were, thanks to R. Wentworth's excellent works *Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe* and *Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree*, published by Scottish Natural Heritage, two National Nature Reserves.

It is necessary to highlight two things. Firstly, it is sometimes difficult to specify, particularly in the bordering areas, which parish the place-name belongs to. The OS Object Name Books refer to parishes only for better orientation and the modern maps do not include the parish boundaries at all. Secondly, even though the main focus is on the area given above, I will also mention place-names from the „neighbouring“ parishes of the north-west and also from other parts of Scotland for a better illustration where necessary.

The chief place-names sources were:

1. OS Landranger Maps with scale 1'': 1 mile , (2 cm to 1 km), published in 2002

islands

North Skye (map No 23)
Tarbert and Loch Seaforth (14)
West Lewis and North Harris (13)
Stornoway and North Lewis (8)

mainland

Gairloch and Ullapool (19)
Beinn Dearg and Loch Broom (20)
Loch Assynt (15)

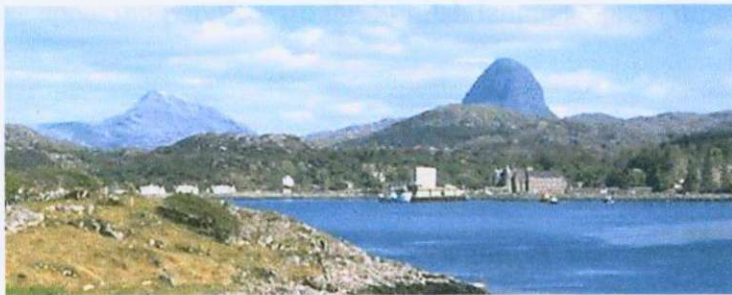
2.OS Original Object Name Books of the Highlands Council Archives in Inverness

These books provide a list of place-names as collected by the OS engineers at the end of the 19th century, with various modes of spelling of the same name, the position of these objects, descriptive remarks, English meaning of the Gaelic names (when intelligible), and other general observation which may be considered of interest (e.g history of the place), including the the authority on spelling. These books are photocopied on microfiche and are to be read on the projecting machines. These OS Object Name Books refer to OS maps of Scotland, first edition revised to 1896; scale 'one inch', i.e.

1'' (inch) on the map is 1 mile; or 1:50 000; i.e. 2 cm to 1 km. The arrangement of one page in the Object Name Books is approximately following:

The List of Names as written on the Plan – Various Modes of Spelling – Situation – Descriptive Remarks and other General Observation – English meaning (Significance)

Even though these Object Name Books seem to very detailed, R. Wentworth, when doing his research in Gairloch (Beinn Eighe NNR), discovered place-names which had not been included in the OS object name books. The OS maps seem to have been revised and some (less used or known) place-names left out.



Assynt: *Canisp* and *Suilven* above Lochinver

1.2. Landscape features of the areas and their influence on place-names

The different landscape types provide a great variety of features which are then reflected in the pattern place-names, afflicting both specifics and generics. The climate in the north-west of Scotland and in the Islands is mild as it is influenced by the Gulf Stream, and with high rainfalls it is much wetter than the east coast of Scotland. Terrain and climate, with the inevitable impact on the soils character, have always had an immense influence on the human settlement and subsequently, on the application of place-names. Furthermore, the terrain in the north-west of Scotland is really varied, with the Highland hills on the mainland (the Isle of Skye is also very mountainous) and low and flat landscape in the Islands (Outer Hebrides). This fact provides an interesting viewpoint on the use of place-names within (nearly) the same group of people, i.e. Gaelic and Norse speaking people with the English language prevailing only later.

1.2.1. NW HIGHLANDS – Gairloch, Loch Broom, Assynt

The landscape of the north-west Highlands can be more than appropriately be termed as 'dramatic': with mountains (Torridons) in the south of this area, undulating land of knocks (hillocks), lochans (little lochs), and with sudden massive peaks north of Ullapool. The geological processes²⁶ and later glaciations carved the mountains into extraordinary shapes; Suilven, Stac Pollaidh ('Stack Polly'), Quinag and Canisp being of particular note²⁷. The name *Assynt* itself is thought to have been derived either from „G. *as-agus-int*, 'outs and ins', referring to the terrain either vertically (humps and hollows) or horizontally (headlands and recesses)²⁸; or from ON *áss-endi* 'rock-end'²⁹.

Farming and travelling in such landscape is difficult and the population is only sparse with the settlements being concentrated in the flatter coastal areas and around the sheltered harbours; e.g. Gairloch, Ullapool and Lochinver; or at the confluence of rivers and lochs in major glens (see Kinlochewe).

²⁶ „The north of Scotland was once separate from the rest of the British Isles, forming a part of a supercontinent with Greenland, the USA and Canada, but as the Atlantic Ocean opened up, Scotland and England collided, forcing up the land which later gave rise to the Grampian Mountains.“ (Scotland's Highlands and Islands, Lonely Planet, 2002, p 20)

²⁷ <http://www.es.ucl.ac.uk/undergrad/fieldwork/image/assynt/assynt/intro.htm>

²⁸ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 22

The north-west coast is rugged, with many islands scattered offshore and place-names of Norse and Gaelic origin can be spotted both in these islands as well as on the shore. With much of the settlement within an easy reach from the sea it is not difficult to understand why many of the place-names, both settlement and topographical, were created, or at least influenced, by the Norsemen

Small woodland areas are to be found in the hollows in the mountain areas (e.g. *Doirean Domhnuill* in Assynt is by the OS engineers described as 'a hollow' meaning 'Donald's small grove'³⁰); or on the coast if these are sheltered enough from the wind and salt. There is a very good example in Gairloch, not far from the beach. Behind the dunes there is a wood consisting mostly of deciduous trees which gives way as the terrain rises up and turns into high hills. This place is called '*Flowerdale*'.

1.2.2. THE HEBRIDES



Lewis – the west coast (ragged shores near Garenin)

The geology of the north-west continues in the Outer Hebrides.³¹ The Hebridean Islands consist of two main groups: the Inner and the Outer Hebrides. As the main concern of this work is the area of the north-west of Scotland we will focus more on the northern part of the Outer Hebrides, i.e. Lewis and Harris. Another reason why to leave out a more detailed description of the Inner Hebrides terrain (northern part of the Isle of Skye) is that it is very similar to the mountainous landscape in the mainland.

The Outer Hebrides are also known as the Western Isles, or 'the Long Island'³². The landscape of the islands is usually flatter than the mainland. The name '*Hebrides*' is supposed to be of Norse origin, *havbredey* meaning 'islands at the edge of earth'³³ The reliability of this etymology could be argued because of the source.

²⁹ Watson, W. J., 2002, Scottish Place-Names Papers, p 74

³⁰ OS Object Name Book 220, 74

³¹ Gammeltoft, P., 2001, The Place-name element *bólstaðr* in the North Atlantic area, p 77

³² Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 15

³³ Scotland's Highlands and Islands, Lonely Planet, 2002, p 248

Lewis and Harris are actually only one island divided by a ridge of hills. This island boundary between Harris and Lewis was originally a clan division. The territory to the north belonged to the MacLeods of Lewis, and Harris belonged to the MacLeods of Harris and Skye. Harris in the south is the highest area of all the Western Isles and it might have been the difficult access from Lewis (probably the only transport possible was by sea) that it was considered as a separate island.

The Gaelic name **Harris**, '*Na Hearadh*' meaning „the rugged southern tip of Lewis“, was derived, or taken over and misspelt, from the Norse word 'high island'³⁴. According to Haswell-Smith's survey of the Scottish Islands, the name Harris comes either from ON *hearri*, hills, or Gaelic *na h-àirdibh*, the heights³⁵ (notice that *aird*, 'a hill, promontory', a Gaelic word, is a common element used in place-names). The same book, 'The Scottish Islands', provides a reference to the derivation of the name of **Lewis**. It originates from a Gaelic word „*leogach* ['loo-ach'] 'marshy'. The entire area with its offshore islands, once MacLeod territory, is referred to as 'The Lews'. (G. *Eilean Leodhais* ['loo-is'] - Leod's Island). Leod or 'Ljod' is Norse for 'clan'. The Norse occasionally referred to the whole island as *Ljoduserad* ON 'Lewis province'.³⁶ However, I have come across an explanation given by a local resident, according to which the name 'Lewis' is thought to have been derived from an Old Norse word meaning 'lowlands', probably in contrast to hilly Harris in the south.

Lewis, lying in the north of the Outer Hebrides, is mostly low, undulating and boggy. The development of peaty soils is caused and supported by the „hard and impermeable consolidated horizon“³⁷, poor drainage and high rainfall. These conditions are met in the Hebrides and peat covers much of the islands. Lewis has one of the biggest areas of uninterrupted **blanket peat** in Britain. Blanket bog has a unique drainage system with areas of small, shallow pools interspersed with drier hummocks of vegetation.³⁸ The peat has played an important role in the life of the inhabitants, and in some places it is

³⁴ Scotland's Highlands and Islands, Lonely Planet, 2002, p 259

³⁵ Haswell-Smith, H., 2004, The Scottish Islands, p 287

³⁶ Haswell-Smith, H., 2004, The Scottish Islands, p 287

³⁷ Boyd, J.M. and Boyd, I.L., 1996, The Hebrides: A Natural Tapestry, p 54

³⁸ <http://www.wildlifehebrides.com/environment/peatland/>

still used as fuel. In late summer the moors are covered with heather, displaying the colours of purple, pink and blue.

There are two features most typical of the Hebrides, especially of the more exposed Lewis and Harris western coast. The sand dunes and the lack of trees. If there are any trees they usually grow in more sheltered hollows or on leeward slopes and do not reach the size they would on the mainland due to the effect of the weather.

Trees are present on all the major islands in the Outer Hebrides, „native woodland is confined to islands in [freshwater] lochs“³⁹ The smaller islands as Berneray, Scarp, Scalpay, Great Bernera remain treeless.⁴⁰ However, the inhabitants have tried to support the woodland growth.

„‘Policy’ woodlands have been planted around most of the large houses, and have made a great contribution to the natural history of islands which would otherwise possess little or no woodland. [...] The only, more sheltered, well-grown woods are to be found around Stornoway Castle (Lewis).“⁴¹

The Stornoway forest is the only example of the „high trees“ woodland in the Outer Hebrides, planted about 1850 by J. Matheson. There have also been attempts to grow trees for commercial purposes, with a conifer plantation in the Inner Hebrides, and spruce and pine planted experimentally on Lewis.

However, the numerous excavations in Lewis provide good evidence of the island being once covered with trees. There have been found many tree stumps now embedded in the peat. This fact suggests that the surface of the island used to be completely different from its present condition. „It is difficult to picture Lewis forested, with alder, birch, ash, rowan and hazel, where now lies only bogland.“⁴² According to the tradition, the Norsemen are to be blamed for cutting down the trees or burning the forests. The main cause, however, were the change in climate (after the warmer period around 1,000 –1,200 AD to cooler conditions) and peat. The Norse devastation thus only accelerated the whole process.⁴³

³⁹ Boyd, J.M. and Boyd, I.L., 1996, *The Hebrides: A Natural Tapestry* p 133

⁴⁰ Boyd, J.M. and Boyd, I.L., 1996, *The Hebrides: A Natural Tapestry* p 123

⁴¹ Boyd, J.M. and Boyd, I.L., 1996, *The Hebrides: A Natural Tapestry* p 124

⁴² Macdonald, D., 2004, *Lewis: A history of the Island*, p 15

⁴³ Macdonald, D., 2004, *Lewis: A history of the Island*, p 15

Machair, an extensive low-lying fertile plain, is a type of coastal grassland with a high content of sand (blown inland from the beaches and dunes). Occuring only in the north west of Britain and Ireland, it belongs to one of the rarest habitat types in Europe. 'Machair' is a word of Gaelic origin and it is the only name describing this landscape type⁴⁴.



machair

What is really interesting about the Hebrides, apart from their place-names, is the geological history. The islands „were formed over 3,000 million years ago [...] on the oldest exposed rock in the world, Lewisian Gneiss, mostly a grey coloured rock with coarse bands of white and dark minerals“⁴⁵ These rocks were later shaped by the glaciers into „U shaped valleys of Harris and the **upland** parts of Lewis and Uist“⁴⁶ In many places in Harris the underlying rock has been exposed and „is scattered with erractic boulders, forming a lunar landscape, which is often referred to as 'Moonscape'“⁴⁷

Hebridean **shores** are dominated by the contrast of the rocks and cliff on the east coast, and smooth beaches, shallow bays and offshore islands on the west coast, providing two completely different types of landscape and coastal scenery.

„[...] there are miles of steep cliffs and the sea floor drops away sharply to give very deep water close to shore. Here we get our fjordic inlets and see the highest sea cliffs⁴⁸ in the UK.“⁴⁹

⁴⁴ <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/UKPlans.aspx?ID=30> (Physical and biological status)

⁴⁵ <http://www.wildlifehebrides.com/environment/upland/>

⁴⁶ <http://www.wildlifehebrides.com/environment/upland/>

⁴⁷ <http://www.wildlifehebrides.com/environment/upland/>

⁴⁸ „A major geological event, the sinking of the sea floor, was what helped to form the Minch. From the air in particular, you get the impression that the Hebrides is a drowned landscape, and the islands are in fact the tops of hills, flooded by the meltwaters from the last ice age.“

([wildlifehebrides.com/environment/coastal/](http://www.wildlifehebrides.com/environment/coastal/))

⁴⁹ <http://www.wildlifehebrides.com/environment/coastal/>

The surf is enormously strong particularly on the west coast, moving boulders and turning them into pebbles, shingle and finally sand. White colour of so called shellsand is caused by the high content of ground-up remains of seaweed and sea invertebrates.

The **watercourses** of Lewis, Harris, Skye [...] are short, often torrential in character and usually with no vegetation and the beds being usually devoid of the sediment⁵⁰. The same applies for streams and rivers in the mainland. In summer droughts the hill streams may dry up, with bare pebble beds connecting the deeper pools. „Streams and drains in all parts are often stained red by the oxides of iron leached from the neighbouring podzolic soil...“⁵¹ which can influence the name (the specific conveying the colour) given to the particular stream.

The different landscape types provide a great variety of features which are then reflected in the pattern place-names, afflicting both specifics and generics.

Loch Gairloch



Loch Gairloch (from the hills above)

⁵⁰ Boyd, J.M. and Boyd, I.L., 1996, *The Hebrides: A Natural Tapestry* p 176

⁵¹ Boyd, J.M. and Boyd, I.L., 1996, *The Hebrides: A Natural Tapestry* pp 176-177

1.3. Historical background

1.3.1. THE PREHISTORIC TIMES

The historical aspects of the north-west of Scotland will be mentioned here only briefly for two reasons. Firstly, this paper is to deal with linguistic and toponymic matters and not history. This account should provide only a rough idea of the place-names context. Secondly, the most important landmarks of Scottish history are well-known and can be easily obtained from any historical book. Finally, the north-west area of Scotland was somehow apart from the main events, partly because it was not of much interest for the ruling nobles.

The area of north-western Scotland (including the Hebrides) was inhabited a long time ago. The first to be named were the Neolithic Britons (as in the rest of Britain), from the Mediterranean, who are supposed to have erected the standing stones at Callanish in Isle of Lewis. Brochs, duns or crannogs are to be found all over the island and in 1977 a Stone Age settlement was discovered as far as the Butt of Lewis, (in Eoropie).

The Picts are believed to be another wave of incomers. Their main area is considered to be the north-east of Scotland (Perthshire and further up north); more or less because of the archeological finds and some references in the place-names. Due to the scanty evidence and non-native sources (the most information was written down by the Romans who came up as far as the Highlands), it is difficult to find more. However, this race is supposed to have been once spread all over Scotland, including the Islands. Neither their origin nor language seem to be clear and this topic has been much discussed until present days.

Some of the presumptions about the Picts:

- they were of non-Aryan race
- they were speaking two languages, one Celtic and the non-Celtic; this has been deduced from the distribution of the „Pictish“ inscriptions and their opacity⁵²
- the term „Picts“ denotes all tribes in the north of Britain, the unromanized Britons behind the Antonine Wall, (probably ruling pre-Celtic people but themselves speaking a Celtic language); an old Gaelic term for a native of

Britain was „Cruthen“ (this term was allegedly of Irish origin and denoted a Pict), the partly romanized Britons in the south were known as *Breatan* (W.J. Watson, 1926).

According to Nicolaisen, there is no evidence that they called themselves by that name (i.e. „Pict“). The classical Roman writers who provide the most reliable information on Scotland of that time (i.e. Tacitus, Ptolemy, Cassius) refer to them as *Caledonii*; the theory of the name Picts originating from the habit of tattooing is pseudo-learned and „not acceptable from the linguistic point of view“. However, by their neighbours (starting with the Romans and later the Norsemen and Anglo-Saxons) they were known under this name which must have originated in some similar native name. It is at least interesting that „the Roman *Picti* corresponds to the ON *Péttar* or *Péttir* [...] and to the OE *Pehtas*, *Pihtas*, *Pyhtas*. *Peohtas* and *Piohtas* of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle“⁵³

The question of pre-Celtic inhabitants in Scotland is rather complicated and there is no reason to give this topic more space than necessary. The Pictish tribes were replaced by the coming groups of the Scots (the 4th century, in the south-west of Scotland) and later, in the northern parts of Scotland, by the Norse.

1.3.2. THE SCOTS

The two (most) important events in the history of Scotland were the arrival of the Scots, and the introduction of Christianity (by Columba into the north and west).⁵⁴

The tribes of Scots, or *Scotti*, arrived from the northern part of Ireland, particularly Ulster and gradually mingled with the previous group of inhabitants (mostly the Picts). At the end of the 5th century they established their own dynasty in Dal Riada (present-day Argyll, i.e. south-west of Scotland) and in the 6th century they started to move up north to the Hebrides. This time was connected with the proselyts and their missionary activities. The chapels of pre-Norse times are to be found all over the island and the names of the saints are reflected in many place-names. During the time as they grew more and more independent, they spread over other parts of Scotland and in the 9th century their ruler became the King of Picts and by the 11th century Gaelic was used throughout Scotland. The exceptions to this were the northern parts and the islands, dominated in that time by the Scandinavians. And south-east territories, the domain of the Angles.

⁵² Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 150

⁵³ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 151

⁵⁴ Watson, W. J., 2004, *The Celtic Place-names of Scotland*, pp 224-225

1.3.3. THE NORSE

These people are often referred to as „Norsemen“ (and Vikings) and their language as „Norse“, a western Scandinavian dialect common and intelligible to other Scandinavian nations. It is considered to be the „predecessor“ of Norwegian and Icelandic and this language was spoken by the Scandinavian settlers of the Western Isles and some near parts of the mainland. However appropriate this term „Norse“ seems to be in connection with the north-west of Scotland, it is not sufficient with other parts of the country, primarily the south-west and south-east. The reason for it is following: the south-west had connections with Ireland and the south-east with the north of England. Both England and Ireland were also influenced by the Scandinavians; but not only the Norse, from Norway, but by the East Scandinavians mainly from Denmark. That is why Nicolaisen has decided to apply the common term „Scandinavians“, to allow for all possibilities.⁵⁵ The subject of this paper is however, the north-west, so the term „Norse“ can be used here.

The first Norse arrived in Scotland in the 8th century. This time was, as in the other parts of the British Isles and Europe, connected mostly with violence and marauding.

For the period between the 9th and 12th centuries the Northern and Western Isles and the north-west of Scottish mainland were settled with more permanent Norse population and ruled from Norway, as a property of some of the Norwegian kings and/or their jarls, i.e. earls. Lewis also belonged to the Earldom of Orkney; but in this time of unsecurity (or rather anarchy) and constant disputes and changes, it was sometimes ruled from the Isle of Man, or Ireland as well.

To sum it up, the main reasons for the Scandinavians to come to the British Isles were:

1. raids
2. settlement (the population growth in Scandinavia, particularly in Norway)
3. trade, not only with Britain but with western Europe as well

⁵⁵ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 85

1.3.4. FROM THE MIDDLE AGES UNTIL THE 19th CENTURY

In the 13th century the Norwegian king was not able to keep control over the Hebrides and the adjacent mainland any more. Lochbroom and Assynt remained under the Norse until the battle of Largs in 1263 that transferred it to the Scottish kingdom.⁵⁶ Lewis also became part of the Kingdom of Scotland (Earldom of Ross). However, among the Norse descendants this union with Scotland was not very popular and some of the inhabitants returned back to Norway.⁵⁷

Since the Hebrides became a part of Scotland, Lewis has undergone many changes: national, the Norse had left, and linguistic, the Norse language ceased to be spoken (obviously after the necessary period of bilingualism). There came many immigrants from the mainland who brought their own language (Gaelic and later English) and customs. Different ethnic backgrounds of the Lewismen can still be seen, but the greatest influence is considered to have been caused by the Norse occupation which has left its mark on the topography, as well as the people⁵⁸.

Even though it might seem the violent times were gone with the Vikings it was not so. The 13th and 14th centuries were non the less turbulent; especially as for the higher social classes fighting for power and land. In Lewis and Skye it was the clan of **the Macleods** of Lewis and Skye of the Norse origin. The clan of Macleods split at the end of the 13th century when Leod married a daughter of a chieftain of Skye. They had two sons: Torquil, the forefather of the Macleods of Lewis, and Norman, „the progenitor of the Macleods of Harris and Dunvegan [Skye]“⁵⁹ This seems to be complicated and overshadowed by the history of Scotland of that time but it keeps its importance until present days because it helps to understand why Lewis and Harris, both being one island geographically, belong each to a different county; Lewis to Ross-shire and Harris to Inverness-shire.

⁵⁶ Dagg, Cathy, Prehistoric Lochbroom and Assynt, p 29, unpublished, Ullapool Library

⁵⁷ Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, pp 28-29

⁵⁸ „Many Lewis people have the fair hair and blue eyes of their Norse ancestors, while their sailorly qualities and roving instincts have carried them to every corner of the world.“ (Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 29)

⁵⁹ Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 31

The Mackenzies took over at the very beginning of the 17th century when they „received official possession of Lewis in 1610“⁶⁰. In Lewis they settled in Seaforth. In the years to follow the Lords and Ladies Seaforth did much wrong as well as much good to the people of Lewis. It was the time of the kelp industry, famines, increasing population, clearances, unemployment and emigration. These problems continued under **the Mathesons** who purchased the island in 1844. It was in this year when the first proprietor, Sir James, „offered to pay the passage to all destitute people to any place in Upper or Lower Canada, Ontario or Quebec, where they might wish to settle“⁶¹ as the poverty and population increased steadily. He also improved the communication with the mainland – a packet boat to Poolewe (south of Ullapool) twice a week. The emigration and „Scottish place-names abroad“ are described more in detail in the section on the origin of Scottish place-names.

In the Highlands and the Western Islands the native and the most frequent language was naturally, Gaelic. Though being on retreat since the 14th century in the rest of the country, the language kept its positions in the north-west. Since the 17th century there were educational efforts provided mostly by the clergymen. The Gaelic language was forbidden till 1767 and those schoolmasters who broke this ban were punished by dismissal.⁶² It meant that the children were taught in English although they could not speak it. However, many people seemed to be very keen on being educated or they became so when Gaelic became part of the curriculum at the end of the 18th century. There were established new (but rather provisional) schools which the grandfathers attended alongside their grandchildren and wives. Education enabled the people to read the Bible in their mother tongue, Gaelic. This ability brought a remarkable change in the mode of life of the people; prayer meetings became common, with family worship held in every home⁶³, marking a change in the community life.

⁶⁰ Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 45

⁶¹ Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 57

⁶² Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 204

⁶³ Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, pp 160-161

1.3.5. THE RECENT DECADES

In the 20th century life-style changed, mainly due to the changes in economy and also because many Highlanders and Islanders were called to fight in the wars with many not coming back. Young people usually leave for the sake of education and rarely come back for employment reasons. Many occupations connected with the land (animal husbandry or fishing near the shore) were abandoned and many place-names, used and necessary in these activities, were forgotten. There have been attempts to support the population and attract new people (who usually sell their houses in other more affluent parts of England or Scotland and buy new ones in the Highlands and Islands for less money). English is the official language. However, there are efforts to keep Scottish Gaelic alive and it is used in some schools as a medium again.



Alltan na Bradhan remains of a mill (quern) near Clachtoll (Assynt)

1.4. Language background of place-names in the north-west

The term "language background" denotes all languages spoken in the area given. This includes languages not known or long forgotten, which however left their traces in the place-names and languages still used and spoken until the present-day. The linguistic situation in Scotland is not so simple for there were several languages of different language groups, spoken by different groups of inhabitants in different historical periods and geographical areas. In the area of the north-west (i.e. Lewis, Harris, and parishes of Gairloch, Loch Broom and Assynt) in the past two millenia Pictish, Gaelic, Norse and English languages were spoken.

The survey of all languages spoken or once spoken in Scotland will be given for better understanding and orientation, however the main focus will remain on the area of the north-west of Scotland.

As the population changed (anywhere, not only in Scotland), the full „switch“ from one language into another was, inevitably, preceded by a period of bilingualism, shorter or longer, depending on the social, economic and geographical situation. These periods tend in general to preserve some of the older names or words from the previous linguistic layers and also to take over some of the most important and most common, names (or words), or those for which there are usually no equivalents in the incoming language. After this new language has become „established“, many of the old names or words become obsolete and unintelligible and therefore used less, and eventually forgotten.

„Thus we have successive strata of nomenclature, the oldest stratum being represented by comparatively few names, and these hard or impossible to understand now, while the later strata are richer and easier to understand.“⁶⁴

As a rule, the older the languages or toponymic strata, the wider and greater is the area where we can search for similarities and further elucidation of these words. For the better interpretation of the Scandinavian language in Scotland, population and place-names respectively, Norway and Iceland can offer many hints. The research of Gaelic

⁶⁴ Watson, W. J., 2002, Scottish Place-Names Papers, p 211

names can benefit from the Irish linguistic and toponymic evidence. And when examining the Pictish, or even pre-Celtic (Indo-European) place-names, it is necessary to look into the toponymic material of the Continent for the wider context.⁶⁵

1.4.1. PRE-CELTIC NAMES

The oldest stratum of place-names was created by names based on words of which there is no evidence in the present languages, but there might be found links in the Indo-European language. The greatest number of place-names surviving from the pre-historical times are those denoting topographical features; particularly the rivers were extremely important.⁶⁶

The names of the water-courses are considered to be very ancient, the main reason being the importance of water for human life. Many human activities depended on them as they provided fresh water, fish, fertile soil, transport, communication, natural boundaries, or places of worship. That is why many of the European rivers and streams are thought to be even of pre-Celtic origin. Some of these names underwent name changes which can be documented. However, many of the small streams in the more remote, mountainous or hilly areas were not named until recently, for the larger and more fertile valleys of these rivers were to be settled first (these valleys were often named after the river-course). This is the case of the north-west area of Scotland where 95% of streams are of Gaelic origin (the last settlers).

It is rather difficult to find a method and criteria that would enable us to distinguish between the pre-Celtic and the earliest Celtic strata of place-names. However, the morphological point of view could be of some help because place-names of other linguistic strata, Pictish, Cumbric, Gaelic, Norse or English (Anglian or Scots), i.e. either the Celtic or the Germanic language group, are mostly compounds (i.e. formed of two or more simple words which take the role of generics and specifics); whereas the early river-names were formed not by compounding but adding a suffix to the stem, which is for the language groups mentioned above unusual.

⁶⁵ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 39

The distinction is rather impossible even if the methods and criteria are found and applied because both strata, pre-Celtic and early Celtic, still seemed to be involved and productive in the later layers. In fact, when scrutinising the creation of place-names in later linguistic strata and we often find a mixture loanwords, gaelicisation, anglicisation, scandinavianisation and the like processes composing the whole system of the place-nomenclature.⁶⁷

1.4.2. CELTIC NAMES

Celtic languages can be divided into two sub-groups, not only according to their geographical distribution but also according to certain consonant changes taking place in these groups. The main difference which has given the name these sub-groups is that the Indo-Germanic *qu* sound becomes *c* (pronounced *k*) in Gaelic (e.g. Gaelic *ceann*, 'top') whereas in Brythonic, or Kymric, languages it changes into *p* (*penn*, 'head', in Welsh).

The **p-Celtic** (i.e. *Kymric* or *Brythonic*) languages are older. To this group belong:

Welsh, Breton, Cornish, and, versions spoken in Scotland between the fifth and the thirteenth centuries: **Pictish, Cumbric** (which is also called **Brittonic**)

The **q-Celtic** (or *Goidelic*) group is „younger“ and consists of:

Irish Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic and **Manx** (Gaelic spoken on the Isle of Man)

In the oldest stage of Celtic in Britain and Scotland, the language tended to put the qualifying parts of the compound first, however this „has come out of fashion“ and it is typical of modern Gaelic to put the generic first.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, for some reasons (maybe the influence of English word order) and in some place-names, the specifying element can come first; e.g. *Na Fionnalltan* 'the white streams' in Beinn Eighe NNR, *Glas Eilean* ('grey island') and *Fraoch-eilean* ('heathery island' in Loch Gairloch (all of them in Gairloch parish).

⁶⁶ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 173

⁶⁷ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 190

⁶⁸ Watson, W. J., 2002, *Scottish Place-Names Papers*, pp 129-130

1.4.2.1. PICTISH

There have been discussions of the origin of the Picts (see the historical background section). However, the linguistic tests (the changes of the sound *qu* into *p* or *c*) and also the toponymic evidence proved them to be Brythonic, i.e. Celtic.

The evidence of their language(s) is rather skimpy and main sources are inscriptions (provided by the archeological evidence of the sculptured stones), personal names (kings, leaders) and place-names.

„The inscriptions, although generally decipherable and transcribable letter by letter, are in many instances unintelligible. [...] Both their geographical distribution and their linguistic opacity seem to indicate [...] the existence of two Pictish languages, one Celtic and the other not.“⁶⁹

The toponymic evidence of these people depends on a few generics, of which the most important is *pit* (other forms *pet* or *pett*), which is cognate with Welsh *peth*, Cornish *peth* 'thing' and Breton *pez* 'piece' (thus proving the connection with the p-Celtic languages). Other elements considered to be of Pictish origin are: *carden*, *pert* (wood, copse), *lanerc* (clear space, glade), *pevr* (radiant, beautiful). All of them are to be found mostly in the north-east of Scotland, in Perthshire and Aberdeenshire.

1.4.2.2. CUMBRIC

Cumbric is another p-Celtic language in Scotland. Between the 5th and 11th centuries it was spoken in the south of the country (the kingdom of Strathclyde), area which was connected more with the north of England and Northumbria than the rest of Scotland. Place-name elements which help us to distinguish the area of the Cumbrians (as *pit* for the Picts) are: *cair* 'fort' and *tref* 'homestead, village, house', found mostly in the south and east of Scotland and in northern England. The generics *penn* (end, head, cf. Gaelic *ceann*), *pren* (tree). These are considered to be Pictish but they are more frequent found in Cumbria than in „Pictland“.

⁶⁹ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 150

1.4.2.3. GAELIC

As Gaelic was the main language spoken in the north-west of Scotland and played a great role in the place-names creation, the space dedicated to it will be greater than that given to the languages previously mentioned. Moreover, it still is a living language and as such gives „welcome opportunities for the observation of name behaviour [...] It also provides an opportunity for the study of the Gaelic treatment of non-Gaelic names, both past and present...“⁷⁰, and treatment of Gaelic names by the other languages. Therefore the possibility to follow the processes connected with the languages and place-names is great.

1.4.2.3.1. History and development of Gaelic (in) place-names

Gaelic has been used in Scotland from the fifth century onwards and the same applies for the use of Gaelic place-names. However, the language has been on retreat since the Middle Ages, mainly due to the growing influence and importance of English. In spite of the limited number of speakers and geographical extension (now, more or less, only the north-western parts of Scotland and the Western Islands), this language is still spoken and one might suppose it is productive in place-names as well. Gaelic place-names „form a stratum which directly underlies English place-nomenclature in most parts of Scotland“⁷¹ having been created for more than 1,400 years... and anglicised about half of that time⁷².

Scottish Gaelic and Irish Gaelic (preceded by the stage that could be called Common Gaelic), as well as Manx (Gaelic spoken on the Isle of Man, now extinct) are of Goidelic origin, i.e. a branch of Insular Celtic languages. After coming to Scotland the „Common Gaelic“ of the Irish Scots continued to develop (therefore, phonology, morphology and other parts of the language differ from Irish Gaelic) and the development continues until today.

⁷⁰ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 136

⁷¹ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 121

⁷² *ibid.*

Gaelic place-names in the north and in the north-west of Scotland (Hebrides, particularly Lewis) were for a few centuries overshadowed by the Scandinavians. The uniqueness of the Lewisian Gaelic dialects consists in the fact that the Norse actually both adopted and spoke Gaelic⁷³.

Some of the words used in toponymy have been coined and employed since the „Scottish arrival“ and are still in use up to the present. The number of Gaelic elements in Scottish place-names is considerable; especially of those denoting hills and mountains (e.g. *barr, beinn, carn, cnoc, creag, druim, maol, meall, stack, stuc, tom, torr, tulach*). Others are for instance: *baile, achadh, cill (kil), allt, loch(an)*,.... On the maps some of them may occur in two forms: original Gaelic spelling or the anglicised version: *barr – bar, beinn – ben, cnoc – knock, druim – drum/drim, torr – tor, tulach – tully*.⁷⁴

1.4.2.3.2. A brief introduction into Gaelic

It is somehow inevitable to describe at least the Gaelic sound system for it will be of much help when working with Gaelic place-names and, above all, when explaining some of the factors influencing the „anglicisation“ of the place-names.

Most of the following information has been taken from **Guide to Gaelic origins of place names in Britain**, written by Samuel Taylor; available on the Ordnance Survey websites www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk.

According to S. Taylor,

„Gaelic spelling is more regular than English spelling, which means that it reflects more accurately the actual sounds of the language. Gaelic sound system is completely different from English, the only exception being the so-called West Highland accent“, which has been heavily influenced by Gaelic; naturally, there are more similarities with Scottish Standard English than Standard English.“⁷⁵

⁷³ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 138

⁷⁴ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 145

⁷⁵ www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk - *Guide to Gaelic origins of place names in Britain*, by S. Taylor

The alphabet consists of 18 letters: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, L, M, N, O, P, R, S, T, U. There is no sign for „V“ – this one is written as „BH“ or „MH“, „C“ is pronounced as [k], there are no sounds nor signs for Q, X, Y, and Z.

The **vowels** can be either broad (back): A, O, U; or slender (front) E, I; and as for their quantity they are either short or long, the length being marked by (˘) – e.g. à.

single vowels:

- a** like a in ‘hat’, often like u in ‘but’; before nn it is like ow in ‘cow’
- à** like a in ‘half’
- e** short closed e like a in ‘rate’ and short open e like e in ‘fetch’
- è** long closed e like ay in ‘bay’ (formerly é) and long open e like e in ‘cortege’ (formerly è)
- i** like ee as in ‘keep’
- ì** like ee in ‘keep’ but longer
- o** short closed o like oa in ‘boat’, and short open o like o in ‘lot’
- ò** long closed o like ‘owe’ (formerly ó), and long open o like ‘awe’ (formerly ò)
- u** like oo in ‘book’
- ù** like oo in ‘book’, but longer

Vowel groups

„Most groups of two or three vowels are pronounced much as would be expected, that is as separate sounds rapidly following one another. However, often one of the vowels is there simply to indicate whether a consonant is broad or slender, for example, in fearann the a following the e indicates that the r is broad, so that ea is pronounced simply as e (as in ‘get’).“⁷⁶

- ao** a long sound with no equivalent in English. Try saying Gaelic ù (like oo in ‘book’, but longer) without rounding your lips.
- eu** like ia in ‘Maria’ or like ay in ‘bay’.

⁷⁶ Taylor, S. in: www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/freefun/didyouknow/placenames/gealicintro.html

The pronunciation of the **consonants** depends on their position - whether beside a broad or a slender vowel. Consonants can be, therefore, rather roughly divided into two groups: slender and broad.

bh	[v] at the beginning of words, otherwise [w] or silent
c	[k]
ch	[x]
cn	[kr]
d slender	[dj] – as in „jam“
dh / gh broad	i.e. as very back, almost „r-like“ ch [x], when at the beginning of words, otherwise very light or silent
dh / gh slender	not pronounced at the beginning of words, or only lightly, otherwise as „y“ in yet
fh	silent
l broad	„dark l“
l slender	as in „million“ – „lj“
mh	[v] at the beginning of words, otherwise [w] or silent
ph	[f]
r	Scottish [r] and in many Gaelic dialects as „th“ in „the“, [ð]
rd, rt	[r + sh + d/t], something very close to Czech „ř“
s slender	„sh“ as in „she“
sr	pronounced as 'str', e.g. <i>srath, sròine</i>
t slender	„ch“ as in „church“
th	[h] when at the beginning of words, otherwise silent

There are two **genders** in Gaelic: feminine and masculine; the number of the nouns is either singular or plural and the nouns can occur in three cases (or forms): nominative, genitive and dative. Gaelic uses the definite article which changes its forms according to the gender, number, case and initial letters of the words.

singular

a'	F, nom.	+ b(h), c(h), g(h), m(h), p(h)
	M, gen.	+ b(h), c(h), g(h), m(h), p(h)
am	M, nom.	+ b, f, m, p
an	M, nom.	– not before (b, f, m, p)
	F, nom.	+ vowels, f(h)

an-t	M, nom.	+ vowels
	M, gen.	+ (s + vowel), l, n, r
	F, nom.	+ (s + vowel), l, n, r
		/ „s“ is not pronounced/
na	F, gen.	+ consonants
na-h	F, gen.	+ vowels

plural

na	F,M, nom.	+ consonants
na-h	F, M, nom.	+ vowels
nam	F, M, gen.	+ b, f, m, p
nan	F, M, gen.	+ consonants except of b, f, m, p

The definite articles are an important part of the Gaelic place-names and they have often been adopted together with the name itself and made into an „English“ name (anglicised), or just translated into English as „the“.

The **plural** form of nouns is often formed by the suffix **-an**, however, this is identical with the diminutive form and unless there is the definitive article given, it might be difficult to distinguish; e.g. '*loch***an**' can mean both lochs, or a **little** loch.

When words are declined and change their forms according to the case, there occurs so called '**lenition**', or softening, when letter „h“ is added in the written form and the pronunciation alternates (e.g. *beinn* 'ben', 'mountain' is in gen. *bheinn* [v] 'of the mountain').

As for the **accent** in Gaelic place-names, it falls on the first syllable in the uncompound names and on the first part in the compounds, providing this first part is an adjective, a preposition or a noun used as an adjective. „In compounds formed on the ordinary model the adjectival part comes after the generic part, and therefore the principal stress accent is on the second part of the compound...“⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Watson, W. J., 2002, Scottish Place-Names Papers, p 37

1.4.3. SCANDINAVIAN NAMES

The place-names formed by the Scandinavians in Scotland are not homogenous. There are differences in time and space distribution and also the origin of the Scandinavian settlers (some of them came from Norway or Iceland, others from Denmark, or they were of Danish origin but influenced by the north of England). Norse, as well as English or Cumbric place-names, follow upon the Gaelic names; translate them, adopt them or oust them.

Three major Scottish areas influenced by the Scandinavians:

1. the Northern and Western Isles (here is the strongest historical documentation of the Scandinavian overlordship)
2. the Scottish south-west
3. the Scottish south-east

We will concentrate on the first area, on the north-west of Scotland, where the Scandinavian inhabitants were mostly of Norwegian or Icelandic origin and therefore the use of the term „Norse“ seems to be appropriate here.

Because the Norse were a seafaring nation, the place-names, or place-name elements, of Norse origin, occur first and foremost in the coastal areas, describing shores, islands, rocks, cliffs, but also hills and mountains (as orientation points from the sea) and other natural features which were connected with the activities near the coast. However, many freshwater lochs and rivers kept their Gaelic names. The Hebrides, particularly Lewis, can be an exception. The distribution of ON place-names here is very dense and includes the inland lochs and rivers, denoting them with Norse elements, e.g. *vatn* for an inland loch (in Gaelic spelt 'bhatn' - which covers the Norse origin) and the rivers often ending in *-á*.

Other Norse place-name elements for geographical features are for instance: *bakki* (bank); *dalr*; *ey* (island); *ffall* (hill); *ffjörör* (bay, sea loch); *gil* (a ravine, gully); *gjá* (creek), *hlíð* (a slope); *nes* (a headland, cape). And for human settlements: *ból*; *bólstaðr*; *setr*; *kví*; *erg* (shieling) borrowed from OG *áirge*, now *àrigh* („in Sutherland it

is rather common terminally as *-ary*⁷⁸). About 75% of villages in Lewis are of Norse origin. It might have been caused by their better social status and also the number of the incomers being higher than the number of previous inhabitants. It is a question then, how long and how strong the period of bilingualism here was.

When the Norsemen arrived to settle here, they had to face unknown and for them nameless landscape. Due to the fact that their (as anyone else's of that time) life-style was connected with the countryside (fishing, farming, animal husbandry...), they were in need of something that would enable them identification and better orientation. The place-names had to be produced „from scratch and instantly.“⁷⁹ The place-names nomenclature in the Hebrides (and the adjacent mainland, e.i. the north-west of Scotland), as well as in the Orkneys and Shetlands, can be, therefore, described as 'colonial' because it is „intimately linked with the Norwegian homeland, deriving directly or indirectly from it.“⁸⁰ This did not happen only in Scotland but in other areas of Scandinavian influence: Iceland, Greenland and western Europe. (For instance, the element *bólstaðr* and its distribution; or *Hecla* „a hill on Mingulay Island“ and *Hecla Point* „headland“⁸¹ and correspond with the name *Hecla* - a volcano in Iceland.) Other nations colonising new countries did that too. Actually, it seems to be a custom, and maybe a need as well, to name the landscape using terms of the home-country (see the „the exported Scottish place-names“). Moreover, according to Peder Gammeltoft, „there has been no indication in topographical evidence that the denotation in the colonial environment [Scotland] was any different from that in the homeland“⁸².

The Norsemen seemed to have been in touch with Gaelic-speakers during their activities „otherwise the names concerned would not have come down to us because of a break of communication.“⁸³ Most of the place-names or place-name elements of ON origin survived more or less as loan-words (gaelicised) in Gaelic place-names.

⁷⁸ Watson, W. J., 2002, *Scottish Place-Names Papers*, p 69

⁷⁹ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979-1980, *Early Scandinavian naming in the Western and Northern Isles*, in: *Northern Scotland*, Vol 3, No 2, p 110

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p 107

⁸¹ both names are given in OS Object Name Book 2 (describing Barra, island on the southern tip of Outer Hebrides), p 127

⁸² Gammeltoft, P., 2001, *The Place-name element bólstaðr in the North Atlantic area*, p 271

⁸³ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 96

1.4.4. ENGLISH NAMES

English has been spoken in Scotland for more than 13 centuries; in the 7th century there came the Anglians from the north of England (Northumbria), they reached the south of Scotland and brought their own, early English dialect, which subsequently developed in its own way into something independent and unique – the Scots language.

The area of Anglian settlement in the south of Scotland (the Border Counties) can be mapped by the elements usually applied to folk-names (or habitative names):

–*ingahām*, –*ingtūn*, –*hām*, –*ing*, *wick* (OE *wīc*)⁸⁴. Other „English“ elements found on the Scottish ground are: OE *word* (‘enclosure’), *bōd*, *bōt* and *bold* (‘a dwelling place’)⁸⁵. The number of them occurring in the north-west of Scotland is rather non-existent.

The place-names in southern Scotland should not be examined separately or with the rest of Scotland but due to the occurrence of the English place-name elements rather together with the English material.⁸⁶

1.4.4.1. **SCOTS (A brief introduction)**

(The chief source for the following information has been **The Pocket Scots Dictionary, The Scottish National Dictionary Association Ltd 1988, Aberdeen University Press, pp iv - xxiii**)

Even though it might seem the Scots has no connection with the area of the north-west, a very brief description of the establishment and its further historical development may elucidate some of the history of Scotland and, above all, the fate of other languages spoken here.

In Scotland, or what is now Scotland, there were various Celtic languages spoken, including (Scottish) Gaelic. In the 7th century the Anglians came from north-east England (Northumbria) and spread in the south-east of Scotland. Their name for the

⁸⁴ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 81

⁸⁵ Nevertheless, none of these elements appear in the north-west of Scotland and according to Nicolaisen, 1979, even some of the maps and charts of the west coast, as old as the 16th century, do not contain any place-names of English origin.

⁸⁶ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 106

early English tongue was *Englisc*, *Inglis* and later „*Scots*“, i.e. English (dialect) spoken, mostly, in south-east Scotland.

„The English brought to Scotland from the northern parts of England had already been affected by the Norse language so heavily that some controversialists have gone so far as to call it an English-Norse creole. It has been rightly argued that the contribution of this Scandinavianised Northern English to the development of Scots is probably even greater than that of the original Old [Northumbrian] English of south-eastern and southern Scotland.”⁸⁷

There might be a connection between place-names of the north-west, influenced by the Norse language, and the place-names in parts of Scotland based on Scots. However, the similarity would probably not be great due to the geographical differences.

By the 11th century the most of the Scottish mainland was ruled by the Kings of the Scots (speaking Gaelic!) and the Gaelic language was on the best way to become the chief language in Scotland. However, in the 12th century there happened what is now called „peaceful“ Norman-conquest. It means very close contacts and relation(ship)s between the kings of medieval Scotland and the Normans in England which resulted in English spreading from its south-eastern Scottish base westwards and northwards and in the 14th century being spoken throughout most of Scotland, even in the south and east of the Highlands, as far as Dingwall (near Inverness). Since then Gaelic has been in retreat.

The character of the northern English in medieval Scotland was modified from the 'Englisc' into something what was very similar to modern Scots. It was much influenced by the French language used by the Norman aristocracy and clergy and also it accepted some of the Scandinavian speech habits of the newcomers from the Danelaw, in England, and the Viking settlers. In the 14th century instead of French the language of the Lowlands, Scots, started to be used. It spread as far as Caithness, Orkney and Shetland (where it slowly replaced the Norse and Norn dialect). By the 15th century Scots became the language of written communication and in Britain of that time were actually two official languages: English in England and Scots in Scotland, both very similar because of their Anglo-Saxon origin, but not identical; (Scots

⁸⁷ Smith, J. J., 1994, Norse in Scotland, in: *Scottish Language*, No 13, p20

contained much more Scandinavian elements – eg *bair*, *brae*, *kirk*, *lass*, and, naturally, many Gaelic words as *cairn*, *loch*, *strath*, *gillie*, *oe* - grandchild).

In the 15th century the 'anglicisation' of Scots started. It began with occasional use of southern spellings instead of the normal Scots ones. The result was the replacement of Scots by English as the official language and the chief literary language. In the 17th century the changes of the written language started to appear and prevail in the spoken language and slowly the 'scotticisms' were regarded as something inferior, provincial and vulgar. In the 19th century Scots started to be used again as it became popular (and fashionable) to value the rural dialect.

Scots, or Scottish English, consists of many dialects. The four main dialects are: **Insular** (Shetland, Orkney), **Northern**, **Central** and **Southern**, with further sub-division. Scots is much less spoken in the Gaelic speaking parts of Scotland (i.e. Highlands, North-West and the Western Isles – Hebrides)

Nowadays, the Standard English of Scottish speakers can be described as „English with Scottish accent“ (e.g. pronunciation of *wh* as *hw*, *ch* as *ch* rather than English *k*) and, naturally, it still contains and uses many scotticisms⁸⁸. This is the main reason why, in spite of the influence of other languages, Scots has been ranked here alongside the English language.

⁸⁸ Some more examples: Scots *stane*, *gae*, *buit*, *muin* - Eng. *stone*, *go*, *boot*, *moon*

1.4.5. RECENT NAMES AND ENGLISH

As an official language, English has been used for about three hundred years in Scotland. It has been slowly taking place of Gaelic (after a longer or shorter period of bilingualism), even in the creation of place-names.

„Apart from the Hebrides and the adjacent mainland, every single new and meaningful place-name coined in Scotland today is linguistically of English origin, is created in the linguistic medium practically everybody uses as a means of communication“⁸⁹

Among the youngest place-names belong new towns, housing estates, and „the greatest recent impact in naming has been in the area of street and house naming“⁹⁰ using the most frequent elements, or generics, denoting the part of the town, e.g. garden, avenue or crescent. The youngest place-names also include the names of bed and breakfast services. However, it might seem more proper to put it another way: the names of bed and breakfast places, and other catering services or places of accommodation offer enormous number of place-names: Gaelic, Scots, Scandinavian, English. In Inverness you can come across a 'Tayside', or a 'Ben More' (this one is the anglicised form of Gaelic *'Beinn Mòr, or Mhor*) in one street. The explanation might seem to be the need of attracting the attention of a possible customer.

1.4.5.1. ENGLISH PLACE-NAMES IN THE NORTH-WEST

Let us get back to the above statement of W.F.H. Nicolaisen. („Apart from the Hebrides and the adjacent mainland ...“). It used to be Gaelic speaking and it still is the last stronghold of the Gaelic language. To prevent the language from dying out with the old speakers, it has been decided to use it as a medium at some schools (in the north-west). However, there are only few people still using Gaelic as their mother tongue nowadays and in addition, know the country and its place-names. Therefore, one could suppose there are not many, if any, new place-names (particularly for geographical features) being created in Gaelic.

To preserve at least some of the Gaelic names, Roy Wentworth underwent a meticulous research into Gaelic place-names in the National Nature Reserves of Beinn Eighe and of Loch Maree Islands. The reserves are situated in the north-west of Scotland, not far

⁸⁹ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 53

from Gairloch (parish Gairloch, county Ross-shire), a well-known tourist centre. The place-names found in Beinn Eighe NNR „are Gaelic both in their present form and in their etymology“ but there is „a relatively small number of English names that are in common use“.⁹¹ These „English names“ are more or less only elements denoting particular natural-features and their occurrence is higher in Loch Maree Islands NNR (out of 112 found place-names 51 are of English origin⁹²). The obvious reason is that there have been more English speaking people coming for „recreation“ (or fishing) purposes and their guides (or gillies) might have provided them with the appropriate English equivalents of the Gaelic meanings.

„There are now however a considerable number of English names current, either along with or in place of the original Gaelic names; these are mainly used and were doubtless coined by the non-Gaelic speaking anglers that for many years have fished Loch Maree during the summer season.“⁹³

The **English place-names**, i.e. the most recent ones to this area, can, according to Roy Wentworth⁹⁴, originate in three ways:

1. a translation of a Gaelic name (i.e. a calque)

examples: *'Fool's Rock' – Sgeir an Amadain*

'Pigs' Bay' – Òb nam Muic

'The Yellow Stones' – Na Leacan Buidhe

2. a Gaelic (but also ON) place-name is anglicised, i.e. accepted into English according to its Gaelic pronunciation or spelling

examples: *'Loch Maree' < G. Loch Ma-Ruibhe*⁹⁵

'Corrie Island' < G. Eilean a'Choir Uidhe

3. the name is partly English, partly Gaelic; this also includes tautological formations

⁹⁰ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 49

⁹¹ Wentworth, R., 1998, *Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR*, p xviii

⁹² Wentworth, R., 1998, *Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR*, p viii

⁹³ Wentworth, R., 1998, *Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR*, p vii

⁹⁴ Wentworth, R., 1998, *Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR*, p xv

+ Wentworth, R., 1998, *Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR*, p xviii

4. the name is of „pure“ English coinage

examples: 'Bankes Bay', 'Salmon Point', 'Sandy Bay' ... in Loch Maree

„Names of fishing pools on the Garry and Kinlochewe rivers. These, almost uniquely for the area covered by this survey, have developed their own English names that are neither translations nor anglicisations of the older Gaelic names they bore. Doubtless it was due to the seasonal angling that has taken place on these rivers for many years, the vast majority of anglers being non-Gaelic speakers.“⁹⁶



Gairloch: Loch Maree

⁹⁵ Maol Rubha was a Celtic saint

⁹⁶ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, p xviii

2. Linguistic points of view

2.1. The origin of place-names in the north-west

This section will concentrate on the origin of place-names - imported and exported to and from Scotland, particularly those of the north-west; and the adopting processes which have contributed to the creation of „Scottish“ place-names.

2.1.1. THE ADOPTING PROCESSES

(The imported place-names and what made them "Scottish")

Imported names are those of „foreign origin“, i.e. other than Scottish. They might have been brought by immigrants, or soldiers and travellers visiting other countries. They were influenced by historical events, or just by reading books, above all the Bible, and applying those „exotic“ names to local landscape or settlements; (e.g. *Canaan*, *Goshen*, *Jordan* (a burn) were applied mostly as farm-names in the 18th and 19th centuries, see Nicolaisen, 1979).

An **imported name** is, according to W.F.H. Nicolaisen⁹⁷, rather a cultural than a linguistic matter. It can be a result of anything from a personal whim to a fashionable trend. These „cultural imported names“ are of non-Scottish origin and were usually brought by soldiers or officers once serving abroad; for instance, there are several *Egypt*s in Scotland. The officer, General Johnston, who served in Egypt at that time, gave his houses and estates the name *Egypt*. Nicolaisen also gives another example: *Waterloo* (it occurs in about ten Scottish counties, from Shetland to the Borders), which is without any doubt connected with the military event. This name was usually applied to name buildings (pubs, or houses built for veterans returning from Waterloo). There is one *Waterloo* in Skye and M. Darton puts it, these places were named in euphoria after Napoleon's defeat by the soldiers returning home.⁹⁸

What happened with the „imported names“ in Scotland can be also claimed about „Scottish“ place-names used abroad.

⁹⁷ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, pp 64-67

⁹⁸ Darton, M., 1990, *The Dictionary of Scottish place-names*, p 279

What made Scottish names „Scottish“ (language processes and development)

In previous parts of the historical and language background we have learned that neither the history nor the language development is a matter of one nation and one language. It is the other way round. What is considered to be „Scottish“ is actually of Gaelic, Scandinavian or English origin. The thing that makes it „Scottish“ is the common area, or country, and sufficient time to enable the individual „elements“ to develop, or rather influence each other, into something unique and therefore, rightly denoted as „Scottish“.

So, what is it, that makes up the „nomenclature of places in Scotland“. All so far known languages once spoken in Scotland were brought in one way or another from the Continent. For that reason we might consider them as „imported“. They left their marks mostly in the place-names, and were absorbed or ousted by the following languages; and in smaller and greater deal they did contribute to the creation of the „Scottishness“.

„Bilingualism is no new thing in Scotland. It existed when Celtic began to displace some older tongue before the Christian era; that older tongue had probably displaced one still older. [...] The circumstances under which those changes took place can never be known in the way we know how Gaelic is now being displaced by English. Two points, however, are to be noted; the first is that change of language does not necessarily mean change of race: the second is the somewhat remarkable readiness with which languages do change.“⁹⁹

Watson also adds that „the change from one language to another is greatly helped when the two languages are closely akin and have a certain amount of common vocabulary“¹⁰⁰. The translation period seems to be inevitable in the time of bilingualism, no matter what language or country it is. If there are any terms surviving it is usually because they are more apt or fit for certain facts than the equivalents (if there are any) in the „new“ language.

⁹⁹ Watson, W. J., 2004, *The Celtic Place-names of Scotland*, p 234

¹⁰⁰ Watson, W. J., 2004, *The Celtic Place-names of Scotland*, p 346

Another way of „adopting“ the language, or place-names, is to change it according to the sound or morphological system of the aim language, or to translate it „literally“ which results into so called „calques“. These processes are quite common not only in Scotland but anywhere else where there are at least two languages in closer contact spoken in the same area. In Scotland we can distinguish the „adopting“ processes according to the incoming (aim) languages: gaelicisation, scandinavianisation or anglicisation.

2.1.1.1. GAELICISATION

The first known group to come were the p-Celtic languages (also called Brythonic), i.e. Pictish, or Cumbric language in the south of Scotland. These were displaced by the Gaels after a period of bilingualism when the place-names were translated or adopted by the process of gaelicisation, e.g. adding „the Gealic suffix *-ach*, *-ech*, to the name itself or to a shortened form of it.“¹⁰¹ In some places the Pictish element **pit** (or **pet**) was substituted by the Gaelic equivalent **baile**, meaning a 'place', 'settlement', 'piece of land'; (for instance Pitlochry in Perthshire is in Gaelic called *Baile Chloichrigh*, and as such it was used on the maps; however, it has become obsolete by now).

The arrival of the Scandinavians, or Norsemen in the north and north-west of Scotland, brought a change in the place-names as they started to use, first and foremost, their own „home-made“ place-names and place-name elements. There are only few Gaelic elements which were scandinavianised; e.g. **erg** (shieling) was borrowed from OG *áirge*, now *àridh(e)* or *àrigh*. This word was also anglicised into „**ary**“. More often we come across Norse place-names which have been gaelicised, particularly those describing coastal features:

ort, art	< gaelicised	< ON	fjörör
cleit, clet(t)	< gaelicised	< ON	kletter 'rock-face', 'cliff':
sgeir	< gaelicised	< ON	sker
			= Eng. „skerry“, i.e. a rock surrounded by sea
geodha	< gaelicised	< ON	gjá, gjó (chasm, rift, gully)
uig	< gaelicised	< ON	vík (e.g. <i>Uig</i> , settlement in the north of Skye)
bhal	< gaelicised	< ON	fjall
(bhal	> <u>anglicised</u>	> val)	

¹⁰¹ Watson, W. J., 2004, *The Celtic Place-names of Scotland*, pp 210-211

Another ON element occurring mostly in the Hebrides (Lewis) is **vatn** ('water', 'loch'), in the older maps spelt with „v“. However, these „v“ names have been recently re-gaelicised back into **bhat(n)**. The gaelicisation applies to both generics and specifics of ON origin.

Lewis: *Lochan Sanndabhat* (Barvas parish)

Even though the place-names were formed from these „Norse“ words, they are not considered to be Norse but Gaelic because they were created in the Gaelic way. That means the word order is: a noun (a generic) followed by an adjective or another noun (as a specific), with the definite article at the beginning. A good example is given by Anke-Beate Stahl in **Guide to Scandinavian origins of place names in Britain**, (see www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk). This example, *Geodha nan Sgarbh*, comes from ON *gjá* (ravine, chasm) and *sgarbh* is the gaelicised form of ON *skarfr* (cormorant). Many Norse place-names or place-name elements were gaelicised in a similar way. The explanation to it might be the Norse overlordship itself reflected in the usage of the Norse language in the daily life and in place-names. There are some suggestions that the Norse themselves later started to speak Gaelic (after all, it is supposed there were Gaelic-Norse intermarriages). However, this language must have lacked words that would be equivalent to what they knew from Norse. That might have been why the ON elements were used more often, accepted by the Gaelic speakers and thus gaelicised...

Since the Gaelic language has been on retreat with English taking over, there has also occurred gaelicisation of some of the English words; usually those for which there was no equivalent in Gaelic.

„When the Gaelic speakers began to take to speaking English, they made up their deficiencies in that language by using Gaelic words freely instead of the English terms with which they were not yet familiar.“¹⁰²

After the long period of anglicisation, particularly in the north-west, there has been a tendency since about the 1970s to put the Gaelic place-names back into their proper Gaelic form. This is a fact which is to be noticed on the maps. For instance, on the map

¹⁰² Watson, W. J., 2004, *The Celtic Place-names of Scotland*, p 389

of Lewis from the 1960s¹⁰³, the names of more important and better-known places are „anglicised“ (i.e. with English spelling) but on the latest maps, e.g. OS 1'' of 2002, these names are given with their proper Gaelic equivalents: *Stornoway* – *Steornabhagh*, *Tolsta* – *Tolstadh*, *Vatisker* – *Bhatasgeir*, *Back* – *Bac*, *Bernera* – *Beàrnaraigh*, *Eoropie* – *Eòropaidh*...

2.1.1.2. ANGLICISATION

Anglicisation of Gaelic place-names consists in several factors:

1. First of all it is the importance of English as an official language which has taken over the Gaelic language. As it has been mentioned several times, there are efforts to revive Gaelic in the north-west and it is used at schools as a medium (*Stornoway*, *Ullapool*) and also on the radio (e.g. on BBC Scotland – Highlands and Islands it is possible to listen to programmes in Gaelic) and television. Even though this might prevent the language from dying out, Gaelic will probably never reach its previous condition.
2. Secondly, when the English speaking OS engineers were undertaking the research for the Ordnance Survey maps not many of them could speak Gaelic...
3. ... although it seems to be very probable that their informants could speak English and they also consulted the orthography with native speakers, see the Object Name Books) and when noting down the names they might have used the English spelling or just an English equivalent given by their informants. However, many of these anglicised Gaelic names have been recently re-gaelicised.
4. The boom of tourism since the end of the 18th century (attitude to nature and countryside changed in Romanticism). The Scottish Highlands became very popular and the tourists flocking here since then have been mostly English speaking.

¹⁰³ Bartholomew's Half-Inch Series - Great Britain, Sheet 57 HARRIS AND THE LEWS; unfortunately, there is no date given, but according to the information provided by the owner it might be about 40 years old.

Roy Wentworth did his survey in National Nature Reserve Beinn Eighe and Loch Maree Islands (situated near Gairloch, Ross-shire; it is the oldest NNR in Britain, established in 1951). The loch has been more frequented by the tourists and anglers, and English was used more there. That is why nearly half of the local place-names found and examined by Roy Wentworth are English, or containing „pure English elements“ as **bay**, **island** etc. Watson gives another example from this area - the 'River Garry', flowing into Loch Maree. The name comes from Gaelic *a' Gharbhe*¹⁰⁴ which has been obviously „turned into English“ not according to its meaning but according its pronunciation.

5. Anglicisation has been afflicted by the Gaelic language itself: the sound system, orthography and geographical distribution - local dialects, contacts with English... Because of the differences between English and Gaelic, „the anglicised forms fail to show the quantity of vowels even in accented syllables...“¹⁰⁵ Therefore, knowledge of Gaelic, and/or a Gaelic speaking local person and historical evidence proving the earlier spelling are necessary, and so is sometimes a visit to the actual place.
6. Anglicisation (of both Gaelic and ON place-names) seems to affect above all the generics, which were the most common and used ones in the English speaking area or those for which there was simply no equivalent in English.

Anglicisation of Gaelic place-names:

1. Adaptation on the phonological level

According to W.F.H. Nicolaisen, the phonological adaptation is the most common toponymic phenomenon in linguistic contact with abundant documentation¹⁰⁶ and most of Gaelic place-names were anglicised in this way. The phonological adaptation consists in the original Gaelic spelling being changed into English spelling according to the Gaelic pronunciation.

¹⁰⁴ Watson, W. J., 2002, Scottish Place-Names Papers, p 46

¹⁰⁵ Watson, W. J., 2002, Scottish Place-Names Papers, p 46

¹⁰⁶ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance, pp 53-56

Gairloch:

'Loch Maree'

< *Mael Rubha*, a Celtic saint

It was originally called *Loch Ewe* (after the River Ewe ensuing from it). On Island Maree, approximately in the centre of the loch there is a cemetery (used until the end of the 19th century) with a chapel. This chapel was believed to be dedicated to Virgin Mary (and the folk etymology explained the name as „Loch of (Virgin) Mary“, but in fact was *Mael Rubha*; (the name itself might have originated from *mael rudha*, 'the boy of the point' which seems to indicate the place of his birth¹⁰⁷). The name *Loch Ewe* was then gradually substituted by *Loch Maree*.¹⁰⁸ This change might have been supported by the fact there is one more *Loch Ewe*, on the coast. „The sea-loch of the same name was distinguished from the fresh water loch by being referred to as „salt-water *Loch Ewe*“.¹⁰⁹

'River Garry'

< G. *a' Gharbhe*

'Loch Ewe' (earlier 'Loch Ew'¹¹⁰)

< G. *Loch Iù*

'Kinlochewe'

< G. *Ceann Loch Iù*

'River Grudie'

< G. *Ghrùididh*¹¹¹

('Grudie Island', 'Grudie Bay' in Loch Maree)

'Lonemore' (a part of Gairloch settlements)

< G. *Lòin Mhòir* 'big marsh'¹¹²

Assynt:

'Torbreck'

< G. *tòrr breac* 'speckled hill'

(a group of small crofters near Lochinver¹¹³)

'Ardvreck (Castle)'

< G. *Airde Bhreac* 'speckled point'

(„a promontory running into Loch Assynt, onto which the ruin of the castle stands“¹¹⁴)

¹⁰⁷ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR, name 35, page 4

¹⁰⁸ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR, name 36 page 3

¹⁰⁹ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, name 114, page 1

¹¹⁰ OS Object Name Book 12, p 51

¹¹¹ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR, claims the name refers to the „gravelly nature of the river“ (*grùid* means 'dregs', 'sediment'), name 4, page 2

¹¹² OS Object Name Book 13, p 22

¹¹³ OS Object Name Book 1, p 34

¹¹⁴ OS Object Name Book 220, p 133

The phonological adaptation was often brought about regardless of the morphological rules of the donor language and sometimes the preceding definite article became, for the pronunciation sake, the part of the noun; e.g. Gaelic – *eag*, 'notch', anglicised it carries the Gaelic article and becomes Nigg (Sutherland)¹¹⁵.

2. Adaptation on the morphological level

Place-names which were translated and have (or keep) the definite article are of Gaelic origin (Gaelic place-names are in most cases formed in the following pattern: the definite article + noun + adjective). Some of the place-names, or other words in the donor language, may be translated „word for word“ (literally), transferring the particular word (or words) from one, donor or outcoming, language into the other, i.e. aim or incoming, language, keeping the parts of speech the same. These translations are called „calques“.

Nouns in Gaelic are either feminina or masculina, e.g. *beinn*, or *ben* (anglicised) is a femininum. The process of anglicisation sometimes includes adopting the gender, if nothing else, and so, when talking for example about Ben Nevis, this mountain is being referred to as „she“.

3. Adaptation on the lexicological level

The phonological adaptation of Gaelic place-names by the English speakers often resulted in the loss of the original meaning and in many cases there were English elements added to make the name and its meaning clearer, creating thus tautological compounds; (i.e. the repetition of the same element, or of words with the same meaning).

There are examples of the anglicised Gaelic elements (generics) in Scotland on the whole¹¹⁶ given below. Those with asterisk appear in the north-west. Mostly they are less known elements and we may suppose it is due to the general knowledge of Gaelic in this area that these term do not need translation.

¹¹⁵ Watson, W. J., 2002, Scottish Place-Names Papers, p 96

¹¹⁶ www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk, Guide to Gaelic origins of place names in Britain, by Samuel Taylor, *creag*, *kill* (church), *slew* have been added

*ari	anglicised form of	<i>àrigh</i>	shieling
auch, auchen		<i>achadh</i>	field
auchter, ochter		<i>uachdar</i>	top, upper part, summit
*bal, balla, bally		<i>baile</i>	farm, hamlet, homestead
bane		<i>bàn</i>	fair, white, pale, light
*beg		<i>beag</i>	small, little
*ben		<i>beinn</i>	mountain, peak, horn
blair		<i>blàr</i>	cleared space
*breck		<i>breac</i>	trout, speckled, spotted
cambus		<i>camas</i>	bay, harbour
carrick		<i>carraig</i>	rock, fishing rock, cliff
claddach		<i>cladach</i>	promontory
*corrie		<i>coire</i>	shore, beach, coast
			hollow on the side of a hill, or between hills
*creag		<i>craig</i>	
*dal		<i>dail</i>	haugh, level field by a river
*darroch		<i>darach</i>	oak
derry		<i>doire</i>	grave, thicket
drim		<i>druim</i>	ridge
eldrick, eldrig, elrick		<i>èileag</i>	deer-trap
ellan		<i>eilean</i>	island (rivers, lochs)
fern		<i>feàrna</i>	alder tree
fin		<i>fionn</i>	white, fair, blessed, holy
*geo		<i>geodha</i>	chasm, ravine
		(< gaelicised from ON <i>gjá</i>)	
glack		<i>glac</i>	hollow, small valley
glen		<i>gleann</i>	valley
gower		<i>gobhar</i>	goat
*inver		<i>inbhir</i>	mouth of a river, estuary
*kil, ken, kin		<i>ceann</i>	head, point, top, headland
*kil		<i>cill</i>	church, burial place
		< Latin	<i>cella</i> ('cell, church')
kil, killie		<i>coille</i>	wood, grove, forest
knab		<i>cnap</i>	hillock, lump, little hill
*knock		<i>cnoc</i>	round hill, hillock, knoll
*kyles		<i>caolas</i>	narrow, strait
*leck		<i>leac</i>	ledge of a rock, flat stone
*letter		<i>leitir</i>	slope, side of a hill
mona		<i>mòine</i>	peat, moor
*more		<i>mòr</i>	big, large, great
muck		<i>muic</i>	pig
ochter		<i>uachdar</i>	top, upper part, summit
reoch		<i>riabhach</i>	brindled, greyish, brown
slew		<i>sliabh</i>	hill, mountain, moor
*strath		<i>srath</i>	valley, riverside land
*tarbert		<i>tairheart</i>	crossing, isthmus, portage
tibber, tiber		<i>tiobar</i>	well
tilly, tullich, tulloch		<i>tulach</i>	knoll, hillock
ty		<i>taigh, tigh</i>	house

Anglicised versions of some Norse place-name elements:

firth	< anglicised	<	ON	fjörðr
way	< anglicised	<	ON	vágr
wick	< anglicised	<	ON	vík

The anglicisation occurs much more often in Gaelic terms than among those of other origins. Obviously, it depends on the frequency of the term distribution and usage.

2.1.2. PLACE-NAMES OF „SCOTTISH“ ORIGIN ABROAD

The main reason the Scottish place-names occur elsewhere in the world is simple: emigration. However, the motives for emigration were various and in the 18th and 19th centuries it was first and foremost the appalling situation of many crofters caused by clearances and evictions. But these were not the only ones. To sum them up, the most frequent were: - clearances and evictions

- unemployment and bad economic situation; (the collapse of the kelp industry particularly in Lewis)
- population growth (many families living in poverty) and crops failures (resulting in famine as the population exceeded the natural food resources)
- dissatisfaction with the state of church, with the Government...

(reasons very similar to those of the Norse settlers nearly one thousand years ago)

The proprietors of Lewis (but also of estates throughout the Highlands and Islands) rented their land to tacksmen who hired it to further subtenants. The tenure was usually only for a year, on verbal lease.¹¹⁷ The subtenants, called crofters, were usually poor people, fully depending on the land and their crofts, small farms. The people were rather anxious to get the rent prolonged or to get it somewhere else, especially as the number of people increased and due to the clearances the amount of land available decreased. Moreover, the factors were usually far from being kind and there were many reasons for the eviction (such as „disobedience“ or delayed rents...).

¹¹⁷ Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 97

In the 18th and 19th centuries the landowners found out the sheep were more profitable than the labour of their tenant farmers and for these „economical“ reasons they started to „clear“ the land to make ground for the new, sheep-based, economy.¹¹⁸ This, rather a shameful episode in the history of Scotland, was called Highland Clearances. Many people were evicted from their crofts and were not treated any better than the sheep. Clearances were practised throughout the whole Highlands. In Sutherland the situation was the most severe. Even in Lewis whole townships were cleared in order to give space to sheep or deer, and the people were transferred to other villages, already overcrowded. This also resulted in the crofts being subdivided into smaller parts to satisfy everyone, and but this only increased the poverty. The government tried to help but eventually **emigration** seemed to be the best solution.

destinations: North America, both the United States and Canada

South America

Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand

These destinations depended on what part of Scotland the emigrants came from. A few first emigrants usually influenced the rest of the community or at least their own families; as for example in Coigach (Lochbroom parish, NW Scotland) where „very few local Coigach families remain untouched by this western experience...“¹¹⁹ The main destination of the Coigach men was North America - Montana, Idaho, Wyoming – where they worked as shepherds, cattlemen or ranchers and even prospectors, following the gold rush in the early 20th century.¹²⁰

Many people of Lewis decided to go to Canada. One of the main reasons was that „Stornoway was a port of call for many ships trading with North America so the Islanders were not entirely ignorant of conditions on the other side of the Atlantic.“¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Bryan, T., April 1992, In the shadow of Ben Mor – Montana's Highland heart, in: *Montana Magazine*

¹¹⁹ Bryan, T., 1994, Tracking the Rocky Mountain men of Coigach, in: *West Highland Free Press*

¹²⁰ Bryan, T., 1994, Tracking the Rocky Mountain men of Coigach, in: *West Highland Free Press*

¹²¹ Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 237

But the mere act of decision to emigrate was not enough. Many were willing to go but they lacked the finance, had insufficient English and were unwilling to leave their aged dependants.¹²² In the 1850s, the years of famine, Sir James Matheson (owner of Lewis at that time) offered to pay the passage to Canada for all the destitute...

„From 1851-55, 1,772 people took advantage of this offer. Many of them settled in Quebec province, round the town of Sherbooke, south of the St Lawrence River, a district which later became known as '**Scotch County**'. It was here that small villages came into existence with familiar names like Stornoway, Balallan, Galson, Tolsta, Bosta and Gisle. Here also were found Gaelic names like A' Bheinn Ruadh, An Abhainn Ruadh, Druim a' Bhac and Leinn Nis.“¹²³ (emphasize added)

Emigrants to North America named the part of the east coast 'Nova Scotia'. (Were there any similar tendencies among the Scots coming from Ireland in the 4th century thinking they were in "New Ireland" on the west coast of Scotland...?)

However, these first settlements in „the *Coille Ghruamach*, Gloomy Forests, in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Ontario“¹²⁴ were only temporary and the Gaelic settlers moved steadily westwards or southwards.

The countries of South America, „the *Ceann a' Deas*, South End, as it was called“¹²⁵, turned to be another favourite destination for those who went out to Chile or Patagonia to work as shepherds in the late 19th and early 20th century. For „the men with knowledge of sheep and knowledge of bad weather were needed and work in Scotland scarce“¹²⁶. According to Macdonald, there are many Chileans, Peruvians and Argentinians with Gaelic names like Macleod, Maciver, Martin, and Smith (of Lewis extraction).¹²⁷

¹²² Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 238

¹²³ Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 241

¹²⁴ Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, pp 241-242

¹²⁵ Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 244

¹²⁶ Mansfield, S., February 4, 1999, The forgotten emigration, in: *Press and Journal*

¹²⁷ Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 244

The emigration started at the end of the 18th century and did not cease until the mid-20th century (even when the social conditions improved) as many young men were searching for jobs and working abroad was a good option for them. However, many of them just made money and went back home (mostly for the sake of their children's education).

Despite the immense distance from their home all of the settlers kept their traditions and „Scottishness“ alive: music, recipes, Gaelic place-names in the in order to feel more at home and to picture it to those back home in Scotland.

„It is especially typical of Gaelic that it was the language of story and song, and the Montana Scottish experience is thus mainly a story culled from anecdote and remembrance, rather than written sources. However, in researching the correspondence to Scotland, from Hardin, Billings, Lame Deer, Musselshell, Miles City and other locales, I found many terms used to describe the western terrain as men sought to portray their new setting for those back home“¹²⁸

In the case of emigration to New Zealand there were apparently not many difficulties for the Scots as the countryside was very much like their home country „not only is the juxtaposition of rivers, lochs, mountains, and sea highly reminiscent of Scotland, as many of the place-names, but New Zealand is also a small, proud and independent nation“¹²⁹

John Ferguson, a Lewisian who also spent some time in New Zealand, writes:

„The place-names in NW Scotland are mostly of Gaelic origin but were spelt to sound anglicised. Same with Lewis but they have changed to the original spelling these last 20-30 years. 95% of Western Isles place-names are original Viking names. Like my own village name was Vatisker – now Bhatesgeir. Gress – Grias. Gaelic has only 18 letters in the alphabet – like V – BH /pronounced/. New Zealand Maori language also has only 18 letters!!! Only Gaelic names I can think of in N.Z. is Dunedin – Gaelic for Edinburgh, Invercargil. I would think the rest 90% of names are Maori names, The South Island is similar to the Highlands of Scotland, whereas North Island similar to South Scotland (Perthshire southward).“

¹²⁸ Bryan, T., April 1992, In the shadow of Ben Mor – Montana's Highland heart, *Montana Magazine*

The resemblance of the countryside to Scotland obviously made things easier to use the „home-made place-names“ as well. Moreover, the fact of naming the places in the countryside they did not know after similar places in their home country only expressed their love and need to feel „at home“ in the new country. (Ontario in Canada is said to contain „more Scottish place names than Scotland itself“, e.g. Scotland, Culloden, Ayr, Melrose, Nairn; (none of them is of north-western origin)).¹³⁰

In pursuit of the emigrants and their further fate it is probably better to search for their surnames (i.e. use the genealogical approach) rather than for place-names. The „Gaelic settlement“ on the east coast of North America was later swept by other waves of coming immigrants and the place names, once applied and used by the Gaelic speakers, were forgotten or changed by „misspelling“ (thing that happened to many Gaelic names in Scotland after the „invasion“ of English). Alternatively they have been substituted by the names more suitable (as to the language) and better known to the newcomers (e.g. in Quebec, Canada, there are many place-names of French origin). However, some of the Gaelic place-names may have been preserved.



Loch Broom – reaching deep into the mainland

¹²⁹ Brander, M., 1982, *The Emigrant Scots*, p 170

¹³⁰ Macaskill, G., 1 April 1988, *The Discovery of a Lost People*, *West Highland Press*

2.2. Place-names – generics

This section will focus on generic place-name elements occurring in the place-names of the north-west, their distribution, usage and eventually the grade of their anglicisation and pronunciation. They will be classified according to their semantic content (i.e. habitative and topographical - hydronyms, oronyms...).

Introduction

Place-names, or toponyms, can be applied either to topographical (or natural) features or to settlements. They usually consist of „basic“ elements denoting the individual characteristics of each feature; e.g. if the name contains the element *loch*, we know it is first of all connected with water (a freshwater lake, or a sea arm), i.e. a hydronym; when there is *beinn* or *ben* in the name, it renders the notion of hill or mountain, i.e. an oronym. These „basic“ elements are called **generics**. Most of the names occurring in the north-west of Scotland, especially those of geographical features, appear as compounds. This means they consist of two parts: a generic (a noun) and a specifying part (an adjective or a noun) – **specific**, which further increases the discriminating capability of the generic.¹³¹ The function of the word in the language differs from its function as a place-name element¹³²; generics retain the normal classifying function and the specifics indicate the characteristic of the location or the naming motives.

The structure of **compounds** depends on their origin, i.e. the Gaelic place-names follow the pattern: definite article + noun (=generic) + an adjective or a noun with the definite article (= specific). In Scandinavian place-names the specific comes first, preceding the generic. However, it is necessary to be careful here as many of the ON elements (both specifics and generics) were gaelicised and these elements used in the Gaelic way, the result of which is not considered to be Scandinavian. Moreover, it remains questionable where to rank the „English names“ results either of anglicised Gaelic names or created by an English element added to an opaque Gaelic name (i.e. tautological place-names).

¹³¹ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., Early Scandinavian naming in the Western and Northern Isles, in: *Northern Scotland*, Vol 3, No 2, 1979-1980, p 112

¹³² Gammeltoft, P., 2001, The Place-name element *bólstaðr* in the North Atlantic area, p 215

Even though the majority of topographical place-names are compounds, there also appear simple (or **simplex**) names, i.e. names which were created with the aid of an affix. These morphologically simple names can refer to man-made structures or secondarily to settlements. They are mostly of Scandinavian origin, e.g. *Uig* in Skye (comes from ON *vík* - bay), or some more examples from Lewis: '*Coll*' (*kollr* 'round hill-top'), '*Ness*' (*nes* 'headland'), '*Tong*' (*tunga* -, tongue" – 'a long promontory').¹³³

The categorisation of generics

The place-names of the research area will be classified according to their semantic content, e.i. according to what they refer to (stream, bay, hill, islet...). This grouping is preferred to the etymological one as it provides a better insight into the nature of place-names in the north-west, the naming processes, including different languages and the uniqueness of the landscape. The geographical conditions in the north-west are different to other parts of Scotland and so is the population (various groups of settlers with different ethnological background and ways of settling), therefore, we may suppose that these facts will be reflected in the local nomenclature.

2.2.1. TOPOGRAPHICAL NAMES

There are always more geographical place-names than settlement place-names. According to the evidence, there is a great variety in the nomenclature considering nature and landscape. This results mainly from the diversity of the objects which need to be provided with a name.¹³⁴

In the following section different generics of particular landscape features will be discussed. It is necessary to point out the fact that place-names in the north-west of Scotland are numerous. Not all of them have been included on the OS 1:50 000 (1'') maps (not even on the 1:10 000, i.e. 6'' map) because the features they apply to are too small and unknown and have been passed only by in oral tradition. The stress will be put on the more significant and frequent ones.

¹³³ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., Early Scandinavian naming in the Western and Northern Isles, in: *Northern Scotland*, Vol 3, No 2, 1979-1980, p 111

¹³⁴ Štěpán, P., 2004, Označení barev a jejich užití v toponymii Čech, p 34

2.2.2.1. TERRAIN FORMS /vertical and horizontal formations/

Place-names applying to terrain formations are called oronyms. Oronymics deals with the names of hills, mountains, valleys and other vertical or horizontal landscape features.

Although hills and mountains seem to be an important part of the landscape, they are usually named after the glens and these glens after the rivers running through them as water and water courses have always been of greater importance than the hills¹³⁵. On the other hand, the distinctive hills and mountains have played an important role in orientation.

“hill names [...] were never very important in human terms (compared with valleys and plains); so it is not too surprising that some of the most spectacular mountains are named after insignificant streams which rise in them”¹³⁶

The attitude to hills and mountains being observed only as navigation points changed particularly in the period of Romanticism when touring and hiking became popular.

Some of the common features which motivated the names of places originated from their similarity to different parts of human body (in horizontal or vertical position), e.g. eye, forehead, back, shoulder, heel, neck, head.... This is a universal phenomenon which occurs not only in languages of the same family but also in the languages belonging to completely different groups; (cf. place-names in Scotland and in the Czech Republic).¹³⁷

Gaelic generic place-names elements in hill- and mountain names are especially abounding (*ard, beinn, carn, cnoc, creag, druim, maol, meall, sgorr, sliabh, stuc, tom, torr, tulach...*). The coastal features, on the other hand, bear more or less place-names and elements of Scandinavian origin (mostly gaelicised).

¹³⁵ e.g. in the Czech Republic Jizerské hory were named after the river Jizera

¹³⁶ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 27

¹³⁷ Malenínská, Jitka: 1995 K zaniklým apelativům v toponymii Čech, in: *Pomístní jména v Čechách: O čem vypovídají jména polí, luk ...* pp 169-201

2.2.2.1.1. Vertical features

a) hills and slopes

ard anglicised form of G. *aird* 'high place'
This element is distributed mainly in regions that were Gaelic-speaking more recently. In the area Gairloch-Lochbroom-Assynt, in Lewis and Harris it comes up more often in the horizontal meaning as 'promontory', and in settlement names.

bad G. 'knoll', 'prominent place' or 'shrubby bush'¹³⁸

Lochbroom: *Cnoc Bad na Cuileag*

Lewis: *Bad an Fithich*

bealach [b-yal-ugh] G. 'pass, 'gap between the hills,' or a 'stream-crossing'
This term is found from Sutherland to Galloway, and in anglicized form as *Balloch*¹³⁹ (anglicisation is based on the phonological adaptation).

Lochbroom: *Bealach nan Sac, Bealach Mhèinnidh*

Assynt: *Bealach a'Chornaidh*

ben anglicised form of Gaelic *beinn* 'a hill', a secondary meaning is 'a horn'

Lochbroom: *Beinn Dearg, Beinn an Eoin*

Gairloch: *Beinn an Edin, Beinn Eighe*

Assynt: *Ben More Assynt (!), Beinn a'Fhurainn, Beinn Uidhe*

Lewis: *Beinn Bhragair, Beinn Thùlagabhal*

bidean G. 'pinnacle'

Lochbroom: *Bidein a' Ghlas Thuill*

brae a Scots dialect-word, 'hill-slope', *braighe* is the gaelicised form

Gairloch: *Brae* (a settlement on the shores of Loch Ewe)

Lochbroom: *The Braes of Ullapool* (there are steep hills above Ullapool and these houses are situated just under them)

cadha G. 'pass', 'steep place'

Lochbroom: *Cadha Buidhe*

¹³⁸ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 31

- ceann** G. 'top of', 'head', both in horizontal and vertical meaning
Harris: *Ceann Reamhar*
Gairloch: *Ceann Beag*
- cairn** G. 'a heap of stones, a rocky hill', another form is '*carn*'
Lewis: *Càrn Bàn*
Lochbroom: *Càrn Breac Beag, Cairn Comheall*
- caisteal** G. 'fort', 'castle', but also a 'hill'
Gairloch: *Caisteal na Cloinne* 'rock of the children'¹⁴⁰
Caisteal Mòr
- cathair** G. 'stronghold', 'fort'
 The word "derives from an earlier form *cadair* that was applied also to significant mountains (as in Cader Idris in Wales)"¹⁴¹. In Gairloch (Beinn Eighe NNR) it refers to a 'fairy-hill':
Gairloch: *A' Chathair Ruadh* 'the reddish-brown fairy knoll'¹⁴²
Cathair Bhreac 'spotty hill'
- cleit, clet(t)** gaelicisation of ON **kletter** 'rock-face', 'cliff'
 This element occurs in Lewis and Harris only, not in the mainland.
Lewis: *Cleite na Beiste* ('rock of the beast')
Cleit Duastal
Harris: *Cleit an Ruisg*
Torsacleit
- cnoc** G. 'hill, hillock, eminence', anglicised into **knock**
 It is a very common element in Scottish hill-nomenclature. This generic is frequently described by a specific originating from the features of the surrounding countryside.
Lochbroom: *Cnoc a' Chaisteil*
Assynt: *Cnoc Breac, Cnoc nan Caorach Beag, Cnoc a' Leothaid*

¹³⁹ Watson, W. J., 2004, *The Celtic Place-names of Scotland*, p 482

¹⁴⁰ OS Object Name Book 13, p 48

¹⁴¹ Darton, M., 1990, *The Dictionary of Scottish place-names*, p 70

¹⁴² Wentworth, R., 1998, *Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR*, name 130, page 1

Sometimes it also appears in settlement - names of various size which were derived from the names of nearby hills (i.e. through the process of back-formation):

Lochbroom: *Knockdamph*

Assynt: *Knockan* there is a burn flowing past which is called *Allt a'Chnocain* - indicating the hill nearby)

Lewis: *Knock, Knockaird*

crag G. *creag*, 'rock'

Lochbroom: *Creag Ruadh, Creag Dubh Fannich, Creagan nan Laoch,*

drum, drim anglicisation of G. *druim* [drem] 'spine, back, ridge'

This term is used in place-names of hills and mountain ranges. It seems that not only the Gaels tended to see landscape in anatomical terms"¹⁴³ because elements concerning parts of human body are to be found in the Czech hill-nomenclature as well.

Other anatomical parts used as generics in hill-nomenclature are for instance G. *ceann* (anglicised into **kin**) 'head', or *sron* 'nose' (i.e. 'promontory'), both applied to „horizontal“ landscape features. Among the vertical belong *mam* 'a rounded hill of mamillary shape, giving the notion of 'breast(s)', G. *cioch* 'pap', or **pap** itself (*The Paps of Jura*); „examples are many since Gaelic is not a squeamish language“¹⁴⁴

Assynt: *Drumbeg* 'small ridge' primarily a nature name which passed on to a settlement

Druim Dhonn (a hill)

Sròn a'Bhuic

Gairloch: *Druim Grudaiddh*

Lochbroom: *Cioch Beinn an Eoin, Sròn a'Choire*

Lewis: *Druim Ghinneabhal*

¹⁴³ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 51

- dun** G. *dùn* for 'hill', 'mound', 'fortress', 'castle'
- Gairloch: *An Dùn* 'the castle' "a rocky promontory at the SW end [of Gairloch Beach] supposed to have been the site of an old castle of which traces can be seen"¹⁴⁵
- fell, fjall** is an ON term 'a mountain, mount'
- It appears in Scotland and also in north-western England. „Very often the first element is the name of another geographical feature in the vicinity, in many cases of English or Gaelic origin“¹⁴⁶ (as in the case of **cnoc/knock**). In the Hebrides it appears as **-val** or **-al**, or in the gaelicised form of **-bhal**.
- Lewis: *Liaval, Roishal*,
Harris: *Bleaval, Oirebhal*,
Assynt: *Suilven* (a significant mountain, the name might originate either from ON *fjall* or G. *beinn*, gen. *bheinn* pronounced [v]; *suil* is Gaelic for 'pillar', hence 'the pillar hill')
- fetter** anglicised version of an obsolete Gaelic word *fathair* or *fothair* 'terraced slope', 'declivity' On the coast of Gairloch and Lochbroom there are beaches forming a series of shelving declivities called individually *am Fathair, na Faithrichean* (pl.).¹⁴⁷
- hill** Eng. element which is rarely applied due to the extensive number of G. or ON generics
- Gairloch: *Cliff Hill* („a large and very rocky hill“¹⁴⁸)
Lochbroom: *Cromalt Hills*
Harris: *Sand Hill*¹⁴⁹
- led** anglicised form of modern Gaelic for 'slope' *leathad* ['l-ya-ud']
- Gairloch: *Leathad Buidhe*
Assynt: *Ledmore* and *Ledbeg* 'big slope' and 'small slope'
Harris(Scarp) *Leathad nam Fuaran* 'slope of the springs'

¹⁴⁴ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 53

¹⁴⁵ OS Object Name Book 13, p 48

¹⁴⁶ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance, p 107

¹⁴⁷ Watson, W. J., 2004, The Celtic Place-names of Scotland, p 509

¹⁴⁸ OS Object Name Book 13, p 58

¹⁴⁹ OS Object Name Book 3, p 16

- letter** comes from G. *leitir*, 'a hillside, long slope'
- This name seems to be very appropriate when looking at the places rendering this element, however, for English speakers it somehow lacks the meaning and is often anglicised. Examples from the north-west are abounding due to the terrain:
- Gairloch: *Letterewe* is the slope above Loch Maree (the loch was formerly called Loch Ewe), means 'the slope of (loch) Ewe'
- Lochbroom: *Letters*, i.e. 'slopes'; this was through the back-formation transferred to the settlement on the steep west shore of Loch Broom
- maol** G. 'bare summit'
- Lochbroom: *Maol Calasceig*
- mullach** G. 'a top, summit' ("the word is said to be an elided form of *maol*, 'bare summit' and *achadh* 'place'"¹⁵⁰)
- Lochbroom: *Mullach a'Bhreun Leitir*
- Assynt: *Mullach an Leathaid Riabhaich*
- meall** ['mial'] G. 'lump'
- It is a very common name in the Highlands and Islands. This word indicates a featureless and not very high hill (when compared to the others in the surroundings). It is usually specified by adjectives of colour and size, for instance *odhar* (dun-coloured) or *reamhar* (fat).¹⁵¹
- Lochbroom: *Meallan Odhar, Meall nan Uan, Meall Mhèinnidh*
- Gairloch: *Meallan Odhar*
- palla** gaelicised form of ON *pallr*, 'a steep slope'
- This generic seems to be frequent in the areas with strong Scandinavian influence.
- Harris: (Scarp) *Am Palla Fraoich* 'heathery ledge'
- sàil** G. 'heel'¹⁵², or 'shoulder of the mountain'¹⁵³
- It is distributed mostly in the area of Lochbroom where it applies to higher mountains.
- Lochbroom: *Sàil Beag, Sàil Mhòr, Sàil Chruaidh*

¹⁵⁰ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 207

¹⁵¹ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 94

¹⁵² Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 238

¹⁵³ Maclean, R., 2002, Gaelic in the Mountains, unpublished, a lecture on Gaelic place-names, Ullapool

sgorr, sgurr G. 'ragged or sharp mountain', 'peak', 'rock'

The anglicised form **scour** does not appear in the north-west very often (but in Eddrachillis parish north of Assynt there is a village called *Scourie*. Its name might have originated from *sgoreach* (sgorr + achadh), i.e. 'rocky place).

Lochbroom: *Sgùrr Ruadh*

Gairloch: *Sgùrr Bàn, Sgùrr Dhubh*

sithean G. 'conical hill', mostly small and round, eventually a 'burial mound'

In the Hebrides it can occur as **sidhean**. These hills are usually associated with supernatural beings, fairies. The anglicised version **shee** does not appear in the north-west.

Gairloch: *Sithean Biorach*

Harris: (Scarp) *An Sithean*

Lewis: *Sithean nan Creagan Gorm*
Sidhean an Airgid

slew anglicisation of G. *sliabh* 'hill', 'mountain' or 'moor' (or even 'rough grass growing among heather on these moors'¹⁵⁴)

Gairloch: *Slioch* by Loch Maree

spidean G. 'peak', 'pinnacle'

It is a "strengthened form of *bidean*;

Assynt: *Spidean Còinich*

stack anglicisation of G. *stac*

This generic was adapted from ON *stakkr* 'steep-sided conical hill'¹⁵⁵

Lochbroom: *Stack Polly*,

Assynt: *Stack of Glencoul*

tom G., 'knoll' or 'rounded eminence'

In the west of Scotland also comes out as 'copse' (keeping the origin meaning which is to be seen in Irish *tom* 'bush, thicket')¹⁵⁶; however, in the Western Isles it seems to be extremely frequent as a 'knoll'.

¹⁵⁴ Taylor, S. 2002, The Element *sliabh* and the Rhinns and Galloway or Place-names and History: A Case Study, in: *History Scotland*, November/December 2002, p 52

¹⁵⁵ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 252

<u>Gairloch</u> :	<i>Tom an Fhiodha</i>
<u>Harris</u> :	<i>An Tom (Scarp), Tomnabhal</i>
<u>Lewis</u> :	<i>Tom a' Mhile, Seann Tom</i>

torr	G. 'small hill'
<u>Lochbroom</u> :	<i>Tòrr Garbh, Tòrr Mòr</i>

Another „hill terminology“ may depend on the attitude to the hills. Among the mountain climbers and hikers have cropped up expressions like: a munro, a corbett, or a graham, which actually apply to the qualities of the hill: shape, size and maybe a difficulty of climbing as well: **munros** are peaks over 914m (i.e. 3000ft), named after Sir Hugh Munro; **corbetts** peaks between 763m and 914m; and **grahams** are peaks from 610m to 763m.¹⁵⁷

„Munro bagging is a slightly masochistic sport ... most ascents follow *burns* (streams), through *coires* (glacial valleys), to *bealachs* (mountain passes) or *colls* (ridges between the peaks)“¹⁵⁸

b) valleys and ground depressions

cave	G. <i>uamh</i> appears frequently in names of minor coastal features
<u>Gairloch</u> :	<i>Uamh na Pollachar</i>

corrie	(or corry) is an adapted (or anglicised) version of G. <i>coire</i> , 'hollow in the slope of the hill', 'gorge'
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This element it is bound with the terrain of the Highlands and not found anywhere else.

<u>Gairloch</u> :	<i>Coire na Loagh, An Coire Dubh, Coire nan Clach</i> ¹⁵⁹
<u>Lochbroom</u> :	<i>Coire Mòr</i>
<u>Assynt</u>	<i>Glas Choire Mòr</i>

¹⁵⁶ Watson, W. J., 2004, The Celtic Place-names of Scotland, pp 422-423

¹⁵⁷ Scotland's Highlands and Islands, Lonely Planet, 2002, London, p 47

¹⁵⁸ ibid.

dale

‘valley’

This English word is cognate with ON *dalr*, Brittonic *dol* (fem., ‘meadow’, ‘dale’, ‘valley’; it appears in place-names of Wales, Cornwall and Brittany¹⁶⁰), and Gaelic *dail*. It can be found in different guises all over Scotland. The two main features to distinguish the origin of this generic is its position in place-names:

1. in Germanic languages (ON and English) this term comes at the end of the name whereas the Celtic languages (Gaelic) put it usually at the beginning and the specific comes at the end (*dail beag* – *Dalbeg* in *Lewis*, means ‘small valley’)
2. when of Germanic origin, it appears without the definite article and is not declined¹⁶¹, see below:

dalr

ON ‘valey’ (masculine!)

This is a very productive ON topographical element. Primarily, it was used for natural features but very often it was also transferred to the settlement in this place:

Lewis: *Dibadale, Breinadale, Grundale*

Harris: *Laxadale, Rodel,*
Reinigeadal(ang. version: ‘*Rhenigidale*’)

feadanG. a ‘narrow little glen with a streamlet’¹⁶²

Gairloch: *Feadan Grúididh* (Beinn Eighe NNR)

gilON. ‘narrow gully’¹⁶³; the other meaning is a ‘burn’

Harris: (Scarp) *Gil an Amadain* ‘narrow glen of the fool’¹⁶⁴

Harris: *Red Gill, Deep Gill* (*Deep Gill* is described as „a very narrow ravine having precipitious rocks on both sides“, ‘deep ravine’¹⁶⁵)

glac

G. ‘hollow’

Gairloch: *Glac nan Capull* ‘hollow of the mares’

Lochbroom: *Glac Chaol*

¹⁵⁹ all in Beinn Eighe NNR

¹⁶⁰ Watson, W. J., 2004, *The Celtic Place-names of Scotland*, p 414

¹⁶¹ Watson, W. J., 2004, *The Celtic Place-names of Scotland*, p 415

¹⁶² Darton, M., 1990, *The Dictionary of Scottish place-names*, p 118

¹⁶³ MacLennan, J., 2001, *The Place-names of Scarp*, p 41

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*

glen

G. *gleann* 'valley'

"has been so thoroughly internationalized that there are now 'glens' in Canada and Australia - indeed wherever the Scots have settled. [...] However, there are no genuine glens outside the Scottish Highlands..."¹⁶⁶

Dorward's opinion suggests the uniqueness of the landscape producing its own elements to be applied for the individual features. The great majority of the Highlands glens and valleys are named after the streams and rivers that drain them.¹⁶⁷

Gairloch: *Gleann Grúididh, Gleann na Gairbhe*¹⁶⁸
Assynt: *Gleann Leireag*
Lewis: *Gleann Shiadair*

strath

G. *srath* ['stra'] is another term for a 'valley' - denotes a valley which is broader and less steeper than a glen¹⁶⁹

Lochbroom: *Strath na Lòn*
Lewis: *Srath Bàn*

toll

G. 'hole', 'hollow'

Gairloch: *An Tolla Bàn* 'the white hollow' (in Beinn Eighe):
Lochbroom: *Toll Beag*

2.2.2.1.2. Horizontal features

a) shore features (beaches, rocks and reefs)

bódhi

ON 'submerged rock', Gaelic borrowing of this ON term is *bogha*

This feature is very common in the Hebrides and although these submerged rocks are not „visible“ they „frequently appear on Ordnance Survey maps because of their importance to fishermen and sailors“¹⁷⁰

Harris: *Bogha Ruadh* (at the entrance of Loch Sealg)

¹⁶⁵ OS Object Name Book 4, p 43

¹⁶⁶ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 70

¹⁶⁷ ibid.

¹⁶⁸ all in Beinn Eighe NNR

¹⁶⁹ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 125

¹⁷⁰ Fraser, I., 1978, Gaelic and Norse elements in coastal place names in the Western Isles, in: *TGSI*, Vol LI, p 250

- cladach** G. 'shore' ('place of stones' *clad* + *ach*)
Lewis: *Cladach Chuidhsiadair*
- coast** Eng. element
Gairloch: *Coast* - on the west side of Loch Ewe there is a settlement area, apparently the name originates from the position
- creag** G. 'fell', 'crag', 'cliff', 'rock'
 It is used for both vertical features and coastal rocks; however, on the coast it appears mostly as a diminutive *creagan*.
 „this word is in fact a diminutive of a proto-Goidelic word now found only in place names, *carr*.... Another diminutive of *carr* is *carn*, 'cairn'...“¹⁷¹
Lewis: *Creag Neill, Creag Mhòr, Creag Fraoch*
- eyrar** ON 'gravel beach'
 It appears in minor landscape features and, surprisingly, also in settlement names, mostly in the Outer Hebrides.
Lewis: *Eoropie (Eòropaidh)* (from ON *eyrar-boe* 'beach village'¹⁷²)
*Earavaig (Earrabhaig)*¹⁷³ 'bay of the beach'
Gairloch: *Erradale* 'beach dale'
- isthmus** ON *aith* or *eith* is a term for an 'isthmus', a 'tidal island'
 G. *tairbeart* is anglicised as **tarbert**; a 'strip of land' usually denoting an 'isthmus' (this Gaelic word originates from *tairm-beart*, literally 'over-bringing'¹⁷⁴)
Harris: *Tairbeart* (anglicised into *Tarbert*) is "the main village" of Harris situated on the isthmus (*tairbeart*) between North and South Harris.

¹⁷¹ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 82

¹⁷² Haswell-Smith, H., 2004, The Scottish Islands, p 298

¹⁷³ Fraser, I., 1978, Gaelic and Norse elements in coastal place names in the Western Isles, in: *TGSI*, Vol LI, p 245

¹⁷⁴ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 126

- leac** G. 'flat stone', 'flagstone', 'stepping-stone'¹⁷⁵
It appears not only on the coast, but in the anglicised form *leck* further inland:
Lochbroom: *Leckmelm* (between Ullapool and Breamore junction)
„possibly 'Stone of Mealdubh (personal name)... The second element is less likely to be ON *malm*, 'ore', or G. *muillin*, 'mill'¹⁷⁶
Gairloch: *Leac Dubh*
- mal** (also **mol**, **mul**) ON *möl*, *melr*
'beach covered with boulders or shingle', i.e. 'of rough surface'
Lewis: *Mol an Eich*
- rif** ON 'reef' (i.e. rocks or cliffs very near the sea surface)
This word passed into Gaelic as *riof*, it appears as a simplex settlement name:
Lewis: *Reef (Riof)*
Lochbroom: *Reiff*
- rock** Eng. element used for rocks both under or above water
Gairloch: *the Black Rock, the Sunken Rock* (Loch Maree)
Boor Rocks (Loch Ewe)
- sandr** ON for 'sand (beach)' or 'sand-dunes'
- sgeir** gaelicisation of Old Norse *sker* 'skerry, 'rock'
It is applied to any types of minor features of rock formations, usually those visible at high tide; they are extremely frequent on the Hebridean shores and on the coast of the adjacent mainland.
Gairloch: *Sgeirean Dubha, Sgeir an Araig, Sgeir Ghlas*
Lewis: *Sgeir Dhail*
- tràigh** ['tray'], is a Gaelic word and means 'shore' or 'sandy beach' (i.e. ON sandr); it is a very common element:
Lewis: *Tràigh Sandaig, Tràigh Mhòr*
Harris: *Tràigh Rosamol*¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 171

¹⁷⁶ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 172

b) promontories, points and horizontal parts of land

ard anglicised form of G. *aird*, bearing the vertical meaning it can mean a 'high point', but it can also occur with the horizontal meaning 'more extensive promontory'

Lewis *Àird Tholstaidh* (on the OS maps also given as *Rubha Tholstaidh* or in the English version 'Tolsta Head')
Àird Bharabhais

blair anglicised form of G. *blàr*, 'open area with no trees', i.e. a moor; locally (in the north-west) it also means 'boggy, peaty, area':

Gairloch: *Am Blàr Buidhe* (Beinn Eighe NNR)
Lewis: *Blar nam Faoileag* 'gulls' marsh' „a small portion of moor, which is very soft and wet, containing several small pools“¹⁷⁸

gòb G. 'beak, point' appears mainly in minor place-names,

Lewis (in Ness) *Gòb an Eich* ('horse-point')
Gòb an Eòin ('bird's-point')

kin originates of Gaelic *ceann* 'head', 'top of', or 'end'
It can be applied both for horizontal and vertical features.

Gairloch: *Kinlochewe* 'at the head (top) of Loch Maree (Ewe)'

ness ON *nes* means 'point', 'promontory'; in some place-names it was gaelicised into *-nish, nes, neis*

It appears both in topographical and settlement names and according to D. Dorward, this element is of German origin and it came to Scotland via two routes: from OE *neas* and ON *nes*¹⁷⁹; both of them mean 'point', 'cape' or 'headland'. The 'ON' route seems to be for the area of the north-west more probable.

Lewis: *(Port of) Ness*
The northernmost tip of the island is called a 'ness' and there is also a township called *Ness* (*Nis* in Gaelic), i.e. the name was transferred via back-forming.

¹⁷⁷ Fraser, I., 1978, Gaelic and Norse elements in coastal place names in the Western Isles, in: *TGSI*, Vol LI, p 244

¹⁷⁸ OS Object Name Book 17, p 6

¹⁷⁹ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 101

point Eng. element 'promontory'

Gairloch: *Red Point*

rubha or *rudha* ['roo-a'] G. 'turn' or 'point'

"In place-names (where for some reason it is spelt *rubha*), it means a point of land in the sea – presumably something to be 'turned' by a navigator."¹⁸⁰ (emphasis added)

On the coast of the north-west Highlands this place-name element seems to be extremely plentiful but it has not become so widely known in English as other 'Scottish' place-name elements (glen, loch, corrie...). Dorward gives us several reasons:

1. the tricky pronunciation,
2. the fact it was applied to a minor geographical feature that is of less importance,
3. it appears in the area that is very thinly populated.¹⁸¹

Lochbroom: *Rubha Buidhe, Rubha Dùnan*

Harris: *Rubha Buidhe*

Lewis: *Rubha na Creige Mòire*

sròn ['stro:n'] G. 'nose', term for a part of human body which is subsequently used in place-names as 'point'

Gairloch: *Sròn na Carra*

c) islands

Among the terms denoting „islands“, i.e. 'pieces of land in lochs or in the sea' also appear terms for „stones“, such as (all examples are from Loch Broom):

carn *Carn Deas, Càrn nan Sgeir*

meall *Meall nan Caorach*

sgeir *Sgeir Revan*

stac *Stac Mhic Aionghais*

These terms are apparently applied to mere rocks which have never been inhabited; though they might have been used for summer grazing (*Meall nan Caorach* 'lump of the sheep')

¹⁸⁰ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 115

¹⁸¹ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 116

„Proper islands“ are denoted with the following generics:

eilean ['ellan'] G. 'island'

This word was borrowed (or gaelicised) from ON *ey-land*¹⁸². As the ON element for 'island' - *ey* - prevailed and is used mostly in the names of the larger offshore islands. The Gaelic **eilean** appears rather in the inland freshwater lochs, or in the sea loch close to the shore, it denotes bigger rocks or islands much smaller than those named in *ey*; sometimes it can be elided into *elan* or *ellan*.¹⁸³

Gairloch: *Eilean Horrisdale, Glas Eilean*

ey ON 'island'

Scottish offshore islands only very rarely do not end in 'y' or 'a', "for Norsemen made them their own"¹⁸⁴

Harris: *Scalpay, Fladday* – G. *Flad(d)aigh*
Scarp (west coast of Harris) does not include any island denoting element but originates from ON *skarpoe* 'sharp, stony, mountain terrain'.¹⁸⁵

Lochbroom: *Tanera* in the Summer Isles (one explanation of this names is the ON origin *hafar-ey* 'harbour isle' or G. *tav-ri-rath* „wait for the tide“¹⁸⁶)

holm ON *holmr* means 1. 'islet'; 2. 'river meadow' (this usage is more common in the Lowlands)

Lewis: this element might be signified by endings - *em*, *um*, *am*
T(h)olm – Holm, *Linngeam* - 'heather island'
However, *T(h)olm* in Lewis (parish of Barvas) was by the OS engineers described as a „small portion of elevated rocky and land marshy“¹⁸⁷

Harris: *Holm Beag*

innis ['inish'] G. 'small island, islet'

This element is rather rare (compared to G. **eilean** or ON *ey*) and applied mostly for small isles in freshwater lakes, islands formed by flooding, by

¹⁸² Watson, W. J., 2002, Scottish Place-Names Papers, p 76

¹⁸³ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 114

¹⁸⁴ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 58

¹⁸⁵ MacLennan, J, 2001, The Place-names of Scarp, p 20

¹⁸⁶ Ullapool Museum Trust: Wester Ross – Place-names derivations; display only

¹⁸⁷ OS Object Name Book 16, p 8

forking in the rivers... But as ON *holmr*, it bears a variety of meanings apart from 'island': 'sheltered valley', 'grazing place', 'meadow', 'haugh'¹⁸⁸ (i.e. a meadow on the river bank, by the river); *innis* might appear anglicised as '*inch*' or *-ish, nis* (nish).¹⁸⁹

Assynt: *Inchnadamph* in can mean both 'island of the stag' or 'field of the ox'
Cnoc Innis nan Each 'knoll of the resting place of the horses'¹⁹⁰

Gairloch: *Innis Theth* even applies to a 'hollow' (according to an OS engineers) and means "little warm resting place"¹⁹¹

island, isle This English element is found mostly in the place-names of the mainland areas. These names usually have their Gaelic equivalent:

Lochbroom: *Isle Martin – Eilean Màrtainn*

Horse Island – Eilean an Each

Isle Ristol (G. *Eilean Ruisteil* comes from ON *hryss-dalr* 'mare dale')

The Summer Isles (at the mouth of Loch Broom):

"There is no common derivation known. In 1715 the islands were used as a boundary line between the Hebrides and the Mainland, The Norse word for boundary is *Simmer Skit* [?]. In the early 18th century the islands were known as the *Simmer Isles* or *Boundary Isles* which later took the anglicised form of *Summer Isles*..."¹⁹²

However, another explanation to this name could be their usage for summer grazing¹⁹³ because

„There is splendid grazing on the north side of Tanera Beag and a bay with a very good landing place which made it very suitable for loading and unloading cattle. It was in this way that these islands were called the Summer Isles having been occupied during the summer months for this purpose."¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ Watson, W. J., 2002, Scottish Place-Names Papers, p 76

¹⁸⁹ Watson, W. J., 2002, Scottish Place-Names Papers, p 77

¹⁹⁰ OS Object Name Book 220, p 56

¹⁹¹ OS Object Name Book 13, 1891, p 38

¹⁹² Ullapool Museum Trust: Wester Ross – Place-names derivations; display only

¹⁹³ Haswell-Smith, H. 2004, The Scottish Islands, p 182

¹⁹⁴ Macleod, A., Tanera Island, Ullapool Museum Trust

Alexander Macleod (1897-1974) was a local resident.

2.2.2.2. WATER NAMES (hydronyms)

Water names, or hydronyms, tend to be very ancient. The main reason was, explains W.F.H. Nicolaisen, human life and many of the human activities depended on them. Watercourses provided fresh water, fish, fertile soil, transport, communication etc. That is why many names of the European rivers and streams are thought to be even of pre-Celtic origin. Nevertheless, this seems to apply only to watercourses of greater importance. The streams and rivers in the sparsely populated and rather inhospitable area of the north-west bear mostly names of Gaelic origin. (To which, in the case of semantic opacity, an English generic might have been added, i.e. the place-name was created by tautological word-formation.)

Hydronyms are primarily topographical names but they may be secondarily applied to settlements, usually to those situated on the watercourses. On the other hand, there is also tendency to name streams and rivers after the settlements that are situated nearby or right on the stream or river; i.e. a settlement name is secondarily used as a topographical one. This might seem to be a transparent and an easy way of creating place-names but, according to J. Malenínská, it is not so. These secondarily established place-names are considered to be a sign of a certain naming sterility or impotence...¹⁹⁵

The grouping of the the following generics used in water-names will be based on their semantic content, i.e. to what landscape feature they refer to (whether a bay, strait, lake, waterfall etc.).

a) bays and inlets

bàgh gaelicised form of ON *vágr* (i.e. 'bay'), or loan-word from English¹⁹⁶

Both *vágr* and **bay** are probably cognate.

Assynt: *Bàgh an t-Srathain* near Lochinver 'bay of the small stream'¹⁹⁷

Lewis: *Bàgh Phabail*

¹⁹⁵ Malenínská, Jitka, 1995, K hydronymii Čech. O jménech tekoucích vod, in: *Pomístní jména v Čechách: O čem vypovídají jména polí, luk ...*, p 291

¹⁹⁶ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place names, p 32

¹⁹⁷ OS Object Name Nook 220, p 55

bay It might seem surprising but this English element appears quite often in the north-west Gaelic speaking areas. There might be two explanations: either the OS engineers noted down only the English translation, or the name had been forgotten (if there was any) and they might have supplied the place with another, most convenient one (most likely English).

Gairloch: *Sandy Bay* (Loch Maree) the original name was forgotten and the English one is „used for it even when speaking Gaelic“¹⁹⁸

Gruinard Bay

Lochbroom: *Badentarbat Bay*

Assynt: *Achmelvich Bay*, *Bay of Clachtol*

'*beidhe*' is the gaelicised version (a loan word) of English 'bay'

Gairloch: *Beidhe Shlèiteadal* - '*Slattadale Bay*'¹⁹⁹ (in Loch Maree)

camas G. 'bay', 'creek' or 'bend' or 'broader bay'

The anglicised form Gaelic *cambus* is not very often here, probably because of the obvious meaning of this Gaelic term.

Gairloch: *Camas an Eilean*, *Camas Dearga*

Harris: *Camas Thomascro*

fjörör ON 'sea loch' (!) or 'bay'; it appears in Gaelic *-ard*, *-ord* or *-ort*²⁰⁰ (in G. „f“ gets aspirated and disappears²⁰¹)

Gairloch: *Gruinard* (*grunn-fjördr* 'green bay')

Lewis: *Loch Risord*

ford anglicised version of ON *fjörör*

1. 'firth', 'bay' appears in the north-west of Scotland in place-names

Lewis: *Loch Seaforth* a tautological compound referring to a sea arm

Eddrachillis: *Laxford* 'salmon loch' (north of Assynt)

2. 'crossing point on the river' and being significant for human activities it often appears in settlement place-names

¹⁹⁸ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR, name 27, page 1

¹⁹⁹ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR, p xvi

²⁰⁰ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place names, p 22 and p 218

²⁰¹ Newton, N., 2001, North-West Highlands, p 108

gjá

ON 'bay'

It was gaelicised into *geodha* and on the OS maps it is used as 'geo'. Both forms (Gaelic and Norse) are frequent not only in Lewis but also on the coast of mainland. However, they mostly refer to geographical features too small to be put on 1'' maps and therefore can be found on the 6'' maps or in the OS Object Name Books (which provide the background information for these maps).

Lewis: *Geòdha Ruadh, Ramargeo, Geodha an Creag Uire*
Assynt: *Geodha an Leth-roinn*

hope

'bay'

The ON term *hop* was anglicised into **hope** (an ubiquitous term found all over Scotland), and gaelicised into *òb* (or *tòb* when the definite article is preceding). diminutive *oban*. The Gaelic term kept the original notion of a 'sheltered bay' or a 'refuge' and both generics are used not only for sea coastal features but also for fresh-water lochs inland: (in Loch Maree *òb* is applied to 'narrow bays' or 'inlets'²⁰²).

There is also OE term *hop* in the southern parts of Scotland, which is sometimes spelt '*hope*' but means a 'valley'.²⁰³

Gairloch: *Opinan* (a settlement on the shores of Loch Gairloch) originates from G. *Obanan* ('little bays')²⁰⁴; another corrupted form is *Openham* (and partly anglicised: *-ham*) whic appears on the 1'' maps as a topographical name close to *Opinan: Gaineamh an Openham*)

Harris: *Tòb Stiomrabhaig*

loch

G. term for 1. 'lake', 2. large 'bay', or 'inlet'; both in a freshwater lake (loch) and on the seashore

Gairloch: *Loch Gairloch* is anglicised version of *Gearrloch* 'short loch', it is a broad sea arm which does not reach deep into the mainland. The settlements of Gairloch run along the bay and take the name from the sea loch.

Lochbroom: *Loch Broom*
 Lochbroom parish takes its names from a river that runs through a considerable part of this parish, and also of the loch Loch Broom, into which this river flows. „In Gaelic the river is called Braon, and the country around it

²⁰² Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR, p xvi

²⁰³ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 77

²⁰⁴ Dixon, J.H., 1886, Gairloch and Guide to Loch Maree, p xxxviii

Lochbraon. But as this would not sound so well in English, it was thought proper to change it into Lochbroom."²⁰⁵ „*Abhainn Braon* rises in *Loch Bhraoin*, flows through *Gleann Braoin* into the salt water *Loch Bhraoin* (Englished Broom)"²⁰⁶ G. *braon* means 'drop', 'rain', 'wet'

poll G. 'pool'; however, this generic also appears in names of 'bays' in
Assynt: *Poll Losgain, Polly Bay* (a tautology)

sloc G. 'bay' (but it also means 'pit', 'hole' or 'den'²⁰⁷)

It is countless on the coast of Lewis, but as it refers to features too small to be put even on 1:10 000 maps it was passed only in oral tradition²⁰⁸ (and many of these names probably got lost).

vágr ON 'broad inlet'

It is an equivalent to English 'bay'. Both '**vágr**' and 'bay' seem to be of the same origin and Gaelic '**bàgh**' may be the result of both of them.

Lewis: *Stornoway – Steornabhagh, Carloway – Càrlabhagh*

vík ON 'bay'

„*Vík* names are usually applied to inlets which are appreciably smaller than those bearing the name *loch*, *fjordr* or *bàgh*. *Bàgh* can, in fact, apply to quite small bays, but with a more open aspect than those in *-vík*."²⁰⁹

Ian Fraser suggests that the Norsemen distinguished the coastal features by applying different generics, usually according to the location of such place, conditions for landing, shelter and farming...²¹⁰ The locations termed as **vík** attracted the settlers most. The term **vík** came into Gaelic as *s-(v)aig*, i.e. as a suffix in the end position, and it also frequently occurs in the settlement names (the settlements received their names secondarily from their locations).

Lochbroom: *Scoraig* (a settlement on the shores of Little Loch Broom)

²⁰⁵ Parish of Lochbroom, 1st Statistical Account of Lochbroom c. 1790s by the Reverend Mr Roderick Macrae, provided by Ullapool Museum

²⁰⁶ Watson, W. J., 2002, Scottish Place-Names Papers, p 127

²⁰⁷ Fraser, I., 1978, Gaelic and Norse elements in coastal place names in the Western Isles, *TSGI*, Vol LI, p 243

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p 240

²¹⁰ Fraser, I., 1978, Gaelic and Norse elements in coastal places-names ..., *TSGI*, Vol LI, pp 237-255

<u>Gairloch:</u>	<i>Melvaig</i> (G. <i>Mealabhaig</i> , derived from ON <i>melar-vik</i> 'bent grass bay')
	<i>Shieldaig</i> (from ON <i>skjöldr</i> – <i>vágr</i> 'shelter bay' ²¹¹)
<u>Assynt:</u>	<i>Inverkirkaig</i>

b) lakes and pools

linn G. *linne* means 'pool'

It is cognate with the Brittonic and Modern Welsh *llyn* 'lake'; this generic term does not seem to be very frequent (overshadowed by the ubiquitous *loch*)

loch G. (1.) a 'freshwater lake'; (2.) sea (saline) 'bays' and 'inlets'

In the first meaning it has been "internationalised" and accepted and used by Lowland Scots and English as a common noun: "one of the relatively few loan-words from Gaelic to English"²¹². Examples are many because nearly every inland freshwater lake bears the generic **loch**, no matter what size it is.

Gairloch: *Loch Maree, Lochan Fada* 'long loch'

Lochbroom: *Loch Achall*

Lewis: *Loch Geal, Loch na Craoibhe* 'loch of the trees'

lòn G. 'standing water', 'pool'

This word is "presumably cognate with *linn*"²¹³; however, on the maps it is applied mostly to streams (mainly Skye), according to W.F.H. Nicolaisen, **lòn** is a Gaelic loan-word from Norse *lōn* 'quiet water'.²¹⁴

òb G. for 'bay', but it can also denote a 'pond'

Gairloch: *Òb Bobaidh* (Beinn Eighe NNR)

It is a boggy pool called 'Bobbie's pond' as a horse called Bobbie was lost in it²¹⁵

²¹¹ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 245

²¹² Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 90

²¹³ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place names, p 177

²¹⁴ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance, pp 138-139

²¹⁵ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, name 119, page 1

poll G. 'pool', 'bay', other meanings are 'hollow' or 'pit' referring to vertical landscape features

Assynt: *Poll Losgain, Polly Bay* (a tautological compound)

Lochbroom: *Stac Polly* ('a peak of little pool'), *polly* is the anglicised form of the G. diminutive *pollaidh*

Gairloch: *Poll na Bruiche Duibhe* 'pool of the black bank'²¹⁶
(in Beinn Eighe NNR)

pool Eng. element

Lochbroom: *Inverbroom Bridge Pool, March Pool, Kennet Pool* are described as "fishing ponds"²¹⁷

Assynt: *Carpenter's Pool, Rocky Pool, Mill Pool...*²¹⁸

c) watercourses

-a/á a suffix of ON origin meaning 'river'

In many cases in the north-west, the meaning of the suffix had been long forgotten and another, more intelligible element, usually **river**, was added (many hybrids originated in this way, being tautological compounds at the same time).

Lewis: *Greeta River*

Assynt: *Calda Beag, Calda Mòr* - two streams flowing into Loch
Assynt they are supposed to be of ON origin *kald-á* 'cold stream'

abh G. 'stream', 'river'

Nicolaisen puts it this word originates from ide. **ab** ('water, river'). It comes up in the form of **avon** which appears in names of more significant rivers (mostly in England). In the north-west of Scotland it occurs as the diminutive of **abh** - **abhainn** ['ah-von'] in countless names of rivers in Lewis, Harris, Skye and on the mainland in Assynt. In Gairloch and Loch Broom the terms **river** or **water** are more frequent (but they also appear in Assynt).

²¹⁶ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, name 135, page 1

²¹⁷ OS Object Name Book 23, p 22

²¹⁸ OS Object Name Book 1, p 29

- allt** ['ault'], G. 'stream'
- This word „originally meant rocky valley but was later applied to the watercourse which invariably was present“²¹⁹. ' This place-name element was never adopted into the English language (on contrary to **ben** or **loch**) But it was, sometimes and mostly in the south of Scotland, translated into **burn** (Anglo-Saxon), preserving the Gaelic word-order; in many cases it has been anglicised (not in the north-west) into **ald**, **auld** or **ault** (based on the Gaelic pronunciation).
- burn** English or Scots for 'stream'
- This element does not seem to be very frequent in the north-west, apparently because of the dense distribution of Gaelic **allt**; however several rare cases might appear:
- Gairloch: *Cliff Burn*²²⁰
Harris: *East Tarbert Burn*²²¹
- feith** G. 'vein', a 'slow-moving stream' or a channel in a marsh²²²
Assynt: *Féith an Leòthaid*
- gill (or gil)** ON 'watercourse', 'burn'
- It seems to be more frequent further up north, i.e. Assynt parish or in the Western Isles.
Assynt: *Loch Urigill*
Harris: *Gillaval* ('stream of the hill', also a settlement name)
- sruth** ['sroo'] G. 'stream', 'current'
- This term is applied both to sea currents or inland streams.
Lewis: *Sruth Thoma Duibhe, Sruth nam Fear Gorm* 'the current of the Blue Man' between Lewis and the Shiant Isles²²³

²¹⁹ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 17

²²⁰ OS Object Name Book 13, p 56

²²¹ OS Object Name Book 3, p 11

²²² Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 118

²²³ Watson, W.J., 2002, The Celtic Place-names of Scotland, p 503

river This English element is applied to more significant watercourses in the mainland:

Gairloch: *River Sand* „a large stream described as *Allt Mòr*“²²⁴, it is joined by two more streams and shortly before it enters the sea, it becomes *River Sand*
River Ewe (flowing from Loch Maree into Loch Ewe)
River Kerry (flowing into Loch Gairloch)
Kinlochewe River, Talladale River
(both flowing into Loch Maree)
Lochbroom: *Gruinard River, Ullapool River, River Broom, Garvie River*

uisge G. 'water', 'stream'

In the names of the north-west it seems to be very rare.

Lochbroom: *Uisge Tol a'Mhadhaidh*

water Eng., applied to bigger and more significant streams

Lochbroom: *Rappach Water* (anglicisation of G. *rapag* 'noisy')

d) straits and narrows

channel This English element is used for minor features even in Gaelic speaking areas:

Gairloch: *the Narrow Channel*²²⁵ (Loch Maree)

kyle anglicisation of G. *caol(as)* 'channel', 'narrow', 'straits'

In the north-west it seems to be productive, both in freshwater lochs (see e.g. Loch Maree) and in the sea features:

Eddrachilles, just north of Assynt: *Kylesku, Kylestrom* ('strait of the point' - *srón*), both apply to settlements

Lochbroom: *Caolas Eilean Ristol* ('narrow of Isle Ristol')

Gairloch: *Caolas Beag* 'small narrow' in Loch Gairloch
An Caol Giuthais, An Caol Cumhang in Loch Maree

Isle of Skye: *Kyleakin, Kyle of Lochalsh* (settlements)

Lewis: *Caolas Valasaigh, Caolas Fuaigh, Caolas Phabaigh, An Caolas*

sound Lochbroom: *Horse Sound* (between the mainland and the *Horse Island*)

²²⁴ OS Object Name Book 13, p 12

²²⁵ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR, p xvii

e) **waterfalls**

English term 'waterfall' is in the north-west place-names rather rare, though it appears on the (OS) maps when pointing out a geographical feature of interest. The main terms denoting a waterfall are:

eas [ess], G. 'waterfall', pronounced, anglicised form is **-essie**

Lochbroom: *Eas Fionn* (on the River Lael)

fors ON 'waterfall'

Harris (Scarp): *Geodha Foirs*

Isle of Skye: *Forse Burn*

f) **springs and wells**

There are two chief expressions which can denote a spring or a well. They are both Gaelic and used as generics and specifics as well.

fuaran G. 'well', 'spring'

Gairloch *Allt an Fhuarain Mhóir* 'stream of the great spring'
In this name it has got the function of a specific.(Beinn Eighe NNR).

tobar, tiobar G. 'spring'

This element seems to be less frequent than **fuaran** and appears rather as a specific than a generic.

Gairloch: *Glac nan Tobraichean* 'hollow of the wells',
Allt nan Tobraichean 'stream of the wells'²²⁶

g) **elements denoting confluence**

aber It is an old Brittonic word with the basic meaning of 'meeting of the waters' on the coast and 'confluence' inland; it never passed into Gaelic but it was largely replaced by G. **inver**. This element seldom occurs at the end of a name (on contrary to **inver**).

²²⁶ OS Object Name Book 12, pp 61-62

inver

anglicised form of G. *inbhir* which is the equivalent to Brittonic **aber**

This term can stand on its own but more often it is followed by the name of the river, it does not seem to appear in Lewis or Harris.

Assynt: *Inverkirkaig* (the mouth of the *River Kirkaig*)
Inverpolly in the south of Assynt applies to a large area, including the Inverpolly NNR, Inverpolly Forest, or Inverpolly Lodge

Lochbroom: *Inverlael* (the *River Lael* entering Loch Broom)

Gairloch: *Inverewe* (the *River Ewe* entering Loch Ewe)

Occasionally, it comes at the end of the place-name:

Assynt: *Lochinver* 'at the loch mouth', or 'mouth of the loch'

2.2.2.3. AREAS CHARACTERISED BY VEGETATION

Areas characterised by plants are various. It can be only an orientation point (one or two significant trees, usually outstanding in an area which is (or was) otherwise treeless. It can be a whole forest or parts of landscape covered with specific plants - depending on the terrain (peat, moors, machair, etc.). And it can be the lack of vegetation which makes it rather a remarkable feature. The more significant and recent English speaking the area is, the more likely it is to be bearing an English generic (forest, wood...).

coille

[ˈcull-yeˈ]G. 'wood', 'forest'

„a strange word because the -ll- seems to be an attempt at a sound between l and d: the Welsh equivalent is *coed*, and commentators are unable to say whether the root meaning therefore is 'trees' or 'shelter/concealment' [...] In parts of Ireland and Scotland the word has become the surname Kelly.”²²⁷

Gairloch: *Coille na Glas-leitire* (Beinn Eighe NNR)

Lochbroom: *Coille a' Bhreun Leitir*

craobh

G. 'tree'

It is less likely to appear as a generic because of the lack of tree in general in this part of Scotland, and therefore, it is rather applied as a generic.

Lewis: *Loch na Craoibhe* ('loch of the trees')

doire G. 'copse', 'grove', 'clump of trees', 'low area', 'hollow'
Gairloch: *An Doire Dharaich* 'the oak grove' or 'the hollow of the oak', in Beinn Eighe area

forest This English element is frequent in significant names of recent origin.
Lochbroom: *Braemore Forest* „an extensive track of heathy, rocky hills and glens used for the purpose of breeding deer“²²⁸,
Inverlael Forest, Rhidorroch Forest
Gairloch: *Shieldaig Forest, Flowerdale Forest*
Assynt: *Glencanisp Forest*

The term **forest** does not imply an 'area covered entirely with trees' but in the area of the north-west (on the mainland only as in the islands this term is absent) it also refers to areas where there are small forests, tree scrubs, or only moors, covered more or less only with heather.

machair G. 'plain – with special soil'

mòine Gaelic term for 'peat moss'; it is also used as a specific
Lochbroom: *Mòine Mhòr*

this generic can also appear as **mòineteach** - 'mossy place'
Lewis: *Mòineteach Àirinis* (south of Stornoway)

2.2.2.4. OTHERS (features reflecting human activity in landscape)

This part will concentrate on features denoting human activity in the landscape, such as shielings, pastures boundaries, bridges, churches, roads... Although they are man-made and refer to human activity they do not, primarily, denote a settlement. It depends on the significance of the particular place whether the place-name is transferred (i.e. used secondarily) to a settlement.

²²⁷ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 77

a) farming purposes - fields and pastures

achadh G. 'open space', 'field', 'place'

This term appears in both topographical (agricultural) and, secondarily, in settlement names (i.e. settlement established in this location, field...); sometimes only the elided forms **ach-**, **-ach** or **achie-** are used (as a prefix or suffix).

Lochbroom: *Coigach* 'five achs'

„Division of lands in fifths is a common and ancient Gaelic practice. Tradition makes the five fifths of Coigach: - *Achnahaird*, *Achlochan*, *Achininver*, *Achbhraighe*, and *Achduart*. Hence five Achs.“²²⁹

blair anglicised form of G. *blàr*, 'open area with no trees', 'piece of cleared land'

This term is common in the whole Scotland and in the Western Isles it is usually applied to areas where peats were cut.²³⁰

Lewis: *Blàr Shinndanais*

buaile G. term relating to animal husbandry, applied to walled enclosures lying close to the township

Lewis: *Buaile a' Bhac*, *Buaile a' Bhlair*...²³¹ (near Tolsta)

Lochbroom: *Buaile Ghlas*

Gairloch: *Bualnaluib* 'fold of the loop or bend', near Aultbea²³²

cro G. 'sheep-pen', 'circular enclosure'

Lewis: *Cro nan Laogh* (near Habost), 'enclosure of the calf'

garòr ON 'enclosure'

It was anglicised into **garth** or **garry**, **gary**, **charry**²³³ and often occurs as a loan-word in Gaelic place-names in Hebrides, or in bilingual Norse-

²²⁸ OS Object Name Book 23, p 38

²²⁹ Ullapool Museum Trust: Wester Ross – Place-names derivations; display only

²³⁰ Fraser, I., 1992, The agricultural elements in Gaelic place-names, in: *TGSI*, Vol. LVII, p 216

²³¹ Fraser, I., 1994, The agricultural elements in Gaelic place-names, part II, in: *TGSI*, Vol., LVIII, p 226

²³² *ibid.*, p 228

²³³ Watson, W. J., 2002, Scottish Place-Names Paper, p 71

Gaelic names. It is cognate with G. *garradh* 'enclosure', 'garden', 'wall'. „The ultimately basic meaning is probably 'somewhere to allow things to grow' „²³⁴

Lewis: *Garradh Chastat Mhor (Gearraidh a Chàstail Mhoir)* 'a group of shealings' (in Barvas parish) ²³⁵

kví ON 'cattle fold'

It has also been adopted into Gaelic as *cuidhe* keeping the same meaning²³⁶

Lewis: *Quishader* ('cattle-fold farm')
This place-name is a compound made up of two generics; one (**kví**) took up the function of a specific. This example suggests that the term **kví** was secondarily applied to settlements of smaller size (probably those that had developed nearby such cattle folds).

b) farming purposes - buildings

ary anglicised form of G. *áiridh* or *áirigh(e)* ['ery'], 'a hill pasture', later applied to '(upland) shielings' (i.e. huts built for summer season in these pastures)²³⁷

This element also appear as ON *erg*. **Ary** and *erg* are distributed in the ending position. As for their origin, I have come across two different opinions. The first claims *áiridh* to be a gaelicisation of ON *erg*, and the second conception suggests that it is the other way round, i.e. *erg* being the scandinavianisation of the Gaelic word *áiridh*. Examples are many:

Gairloch *Airigh na Caillich* 'old woman's shieling' (Kinlochewe)
Kernsary (Cearnsair < carn + airigh)
*Aundrary, or Airigh na Carra*²³⁸

Lochbroom: *Airigh Ailein*
Assynt: *Airigh nan Griasaich* 'shieling of the shoemakers'
Airidh Fraoich 'heathery shealing'²³⁹

Lewis: *Airigh Dhuighaill, Airigh na Gaoithe* 'windy shieling'
Airigh Fad As 'far-away-shieling'
Airigh na h-Aon Oidhche 'the one night shieling'²⁴⁰
Arivruaich 'shieling of the bank' (anglicised)²⁴¹

²³⁴ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 128

²³⁵ OS Object Name Book 16, p 38

²³⁶ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 85

²³⁷ The tradition of summer grazing died out during and after World War I.

²³⁸ Fraser, I., 1994, The agricultural elements in Gaelic place-names, part II, in: *TGSI*, Vol., LVIII, p 235

²³⁹ OS Object Name Book 220, p 109

²⁴⁰ Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 117

²⁴¹ Fraser, I., 1994, The agricultural elements in Gaelic place-names, part II, in: *TGSI*, Vol., LVIII, p 243

both G. 'hut', 'cottage', 'tent' (diminutive *bothan*)

This word „is an adaptation of ON *buth* or OE *bothl* (and is cognate with English *bothy* and *booth*)“²⁴² These buildings were not erected for shieling purposes but rather as provisional shelters, e.g. for secret distilling or as on the coasts in the time of kelping.

c) (once) inhabited places

It is possible to find on the maps other elements (or words) than those given below; e.g. hotel, lodge, farm, ... They are not a part of the place-name but only refer to its function.

croit G. 'croft'

Gairloch: *Croit Rob Donn* 'Rob Donn's croft'²⁴³ (Beinn Eighe NNR)

dùn G. term for 'fortification' (usually abandoned), 'heap' or 'mound' (obviously of the remains of the fortification)

Gairloch: *An Dùn* on the shores of Loch Gairloch

house G. *tigh*, sometimes adopted (anglicised) into *tay*

Gairloch: *Taigh a'Ghille Bhrìc* 'the house of the pock-marked lad', now in ruins²⁴⁴ (near Kinlochewe)

d) religious purposes (churches, chapels, cemeteries...)

church G. *annaid*

G. *cil-*, (*kil-*)

G. *eaglais*

English adaptation *annat* of Gaelic *annaid* (an old word for 'mother church') usually signifies the vicinity of an ancient church or burial place; this term seems to be rather rare.

Lochbroom: *Annait* at Kildonan on Little Loch Broom
Annait Bay

²⁴² Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 48

²⁴³ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, name116, page 1

G. term **cill-** (**kil-**) for 'church', 'chapel' represents religious background (commemoration of particular saints) and Christian proselyting activities of Gaelic missionaries. As for the distribution of these names it is often difficult to distinguish in this anglicised form whether the original generic was **cill-**, or **coille** ('wood'), **cinn** (dat. of G. *ceann* 'head, promontory') or **cuil** ('nook'). The main criteria to decide whether the original generic was or was not Gaelic **cill** (church) is the presence of a saint's name.

chapel G. *seipeil*, gaelicisation of English 'chapel'²⁴⁵
G. *teampull* 'church

cemetery G. *reilig* or *roilig*, but the most frequent way how to express the presence of a cemetery, is to denote it (on the map) as such, or with the abbreviated form „cemy“

e) erected objects

cross This English term, it is reflected in place-names as (1.) a symbol of Christianity; or as (2.) a term of crossings (of water) or crossroads. It seems to be cognate with Gaelic **crois** (Christian symbol) or **crasg** ('crossing') and ON **kross**.

stone Lewis *Crossbost*
English term applied either to an erected stones or „natural“ stones, the usage of this generic depends on the importance of the place. G. term for a 'standing stone' or a 'standing stone circle' is **coirthe**; i.e. a result of human activity; (a stone occurring naturally is in Gaelic **clach**), more significant standing stones occurring on the maps may bear the English generic **stone** (however, it might have been translated from the original Gaelic name):

Harris: 'Macleod's Stone'

²⁴⁴ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, name 156, page 1

²⁴⁵ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 243

f) transport

acairseid (**acarsaid**) ON *akkar-sæti* 'anchor-setting', i.e. anchorage²⁴⁶

Gairloch: *Acairseid Mhór, Acairseid Bheag*²⁴⁷

Lewis: *Acairsaid na Beinne, An Acarsaid*²⁴⁸ (Stornoway parish)

àth G. 'ford' (but it can also apply to stream names)

Harris: *Loidse Ath Linne*

Lewis: *Ath Amhuinn Thorraidh* is described as „stepping stones and a foot plank where the river crosses the road leading to Ness“²⁴⁹. (in Barvas parish)

bridge The English term is apparently used because of its importance for the human settlement(s) nearby; and it also appears as in settlement names:

Lewis: *Brue* 'bridge'

Lochbroom: *Ullapool Bridge*²⁵⁰, *Corry Bridge*

Assynt: *Skiag Bridge*

port G. 'harbour' but also 'ferry'²⁵¹

This well-known English element of Latin origin passed into Gaelic and appears in place-names denoting an anchoring place, both in inland lochs and in the sea.

Gairloch: *Port Henderson* (a settlement name)

Harris: *Port (a) Tuath* 'north port' (topographical name within a settlement – Hushinish, west coast of Harris)

road G. *rathaid*, G. *sràid*

Gairloch in Kinlochewe there is a part called *An t-Sràid* 'the street', it refers to a row of houses and in English it is called the Street²⁵²

Lewis: *Rathad a' Phentland*

²⁴⁶ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 10

²⁴⁷ OS Object Name Book 12, p 43

²⁴⁸ OS Object Name Book 25, pp 8 and 11

²⁴⁹ OS Object Name Book 16, p 40

²⁵⁰ mentioned in OS Object Name Book 21, p 12

²⁵¹ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 223

²⁵² Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, name 138, page 1

2.2.2. SETTLEMENT NAMES

Even though the main point of this paper are the topographical names, a few „pure“ settlement generics are going to be mentioned. The reason for providing the settlement names used primarily is simple: in the same way as the topographical generics may denote the settlement, the settlement generics can be often transferred to topographical features in their surroundings.

In the area of the north-west of Scotland the population is very scarce, compared to other parts of the country, and concentrated mostly on the coast (both on the mainland and in the Hebrides) and so are for this area the most significant settlements. The most frequent settlement generics are either of Gaelic or Scandinavian origin. The English elements are rather rare:

Lochbroom: *Morefield*, a village north-west of Ullapool

the name seems to be a hybrid of a Gaelic (*more* –big) and an English element (*field*) which also carries the function of a generic, the meaning is ‘big field’

Gairloch: *Charlestown*, a part of Gairloch townships

Other English (or rather OE) generic elements as *-bōdl*, *-bōtl* and *-bold* (‘dwelling place’); *-hām* (‘home’, ‘homestead’), *-tun*, *-ing* (denoting a group of people in some way depending on their leader whose name created the first element of the place-name, and later expressed a personal or geographical association), and *-word* (‘enclosure’) referring primarily to human settlements appear more or less only in the „Border Counties“ where the contacts with the Anglian settlers coming from Northumberland used to be most intensive. Another OE term is *wīc* ‘farm’, a settlement generic which occurs in Scotland (rather in the southern parts and is not likely to appear in the northern parts of the country, (e.g. *Hawick*, *Fenwick* in Roxburghshire). In England this element can be palatalised into (w)*ich*. The OE *wīc* may be a little confusing with ON *vīk* ‘bay, inlet’, e.g. *Lerwick* in the Shetlands, *Wick* in Caithness. Naturally, both appear in settlement names as generics but the difference is to be spotted in their geographical distribution.

achadh G., ‘field’

The primary meaning of this word denotes agricultural activity (arable and grazing land, relates to enclosures, non-agricultural features – mills, timber resources, farms) but it has started to be used secondarily in settlement names. This element can also appear in the anglicised form as

Auchen-, ***Auchin-*** which includes the Gaelic definite article (a', an, nan) usually preceding the second noun element (i.e. the specific) of the place-name. However, '**achadh**' can also occur before a personal name or an adjective.²⁵³ In the north-west place-names in this element appears rather in the mainland:

<u>Assynt</u>	<i>Achmelvich</i>
<u>Lochbroom</u>	<i>Achiltibui</i>

It seems to be less frequent in the Outer Hebrides it seems which might have been caused by:

1. strong scandinavianisation
2. the terrain and landscape not enabling farming activities in such extent as in the mainland

baile

G. settlement term for 'village', 'hamlet', 'home', town' or 'farm'; anglicised forms: ***bal***, ***balla***, ***balla***

This element is the most frequent one in habitative place-names of Scotland and always refers to the permanent type of human settlement²⁵⁴ Which means it can occur in topographical place-names only secondarily. Settlements in **baile** appear wherever Gaelic has been, or still is, spoken in Scotland, with the exceptions of the areas of the Borders (Anglians), the Northern Islands and east Caithness which used to be thoroughly Scandinavian²⁵⁵. In the north-west parts of Scotland this generic seems to be rather rare due to the Scandinavian influence (and frequent usage of Scandinavian settlement generics) and also because of the scarce population. It can be therefore claimed the distribution also depends on the terrain conditions and in some areas the more permanent settlements were not possible.

<u>Lewis:</u>	<i>Baile Ailean</i> (anglicised as <i>Balallan</i>)
	<i>Baile Àrd Bhuirgh</i>

²⁵³ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance, p 125

²⁵⁴ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance, p 123

bólstaðr ON 'farm'

This term is distributed all over the northern parts of Scotland, with smaller or greater variations. In the Western (and Northern) Isles this generic used to be very creative and it was applied to more permanent settlements formed by the Norsemen. According to S. Taylor, it can be therefore considered to be „a key piece of evidence for the Scandinavian settlement of the Northern and Western Isles“²⁵⁶ (But, when compared to the north of Scotland and the Northern Isles, the dissemination of this element is more sparse in the Western Islands and the adjacent mainland)

Variations of the element **bólstaðr** as a suffix and their distribution:

- *bister*, - *bust*, - *buster* in the Shetlands and Orkneys
- *bster*, - *pster* in Caithness
- *bost bus*, - *bolts* in the Hebrides (e.g. *Habost*, *Shawbost* in Lewis)
- absence of *-st* in Sutherland (Assynt) and Wester Ross (Gairloch, Lochbroom), e.g. *Unapool*, *Ullapool*

This element was carried by the Scandinavians and applied everywhere they settled. It is, therefore, possible to find it not only in Norway (its homeland) but also in: Iceland, the Faeroes, and Scotland, and its form - OSw cognate *bolstaper* in Sweden and Finland „...as a place-name element has been far more productive in Scotland than in its Norwegian homeland.“²⁵⁷ It usually occurs in compounds (*Habost* - *Hábólstaðir* 'high farm' in Lewis) and as a simplex rather rarely (e.g. *Bosta* in Lewis). Nevertheless, **bólstaðr** is a compound itself, consisting of:

ON **ból** = 1. settled and cultivated land, 2. dwelling, 3. sleeping place,...
ON **staðr** = 1. the act of stopping, 2. strenght, resistance, 3. end, outcome, 4. a place, 5. a place where something stands, 6. a place of permanent residence, 7. a village, town, 8. a lot, a part, 9. a holy place or site...²⁵⁸

burgh Germanic origin, probably OE, meaning a 'fort'

One would not expect this generic to appear in the scarcely populated and Gaelic speaking area of the north-west. However, there is a village on southern tip of Harris, named which was once called *Obbe*, or in

²⁵⁵ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance, p 138

²⁵⁶ Taylor, S., What's in a Name? Norse in the Islands, in: *History Scotland*, April-March, 2002, p 42

²⁵⁷ Gammeltoft, P., 2001, The Place-name element *bólstaðr* in the North Atlantic area, p 80

²⁵⁸ Gammeltoft, P., 2001, The Place-name element *bólstaðr* in the North Atlantic area, p 31

Gaelic *An t-Ob*²⁵⁹, 'bay' but now it is *Leverburgh* in commemoration of W. Lever, Viscount Leverhulme, who bought Lewis and Harris in 1918.²⁶⁰

býr (bie, by) ON 'farm, hamlet'

Although this term occurs in the Western Isles, it has never been that important here as when compared to other parts of Scotland, particularly the Northern Isles. Moreover, the creation of place-names with element **-by** in southern Scotland (and England) cannot be ascribed to the same group of settlers that created the few names in the Hebrides.²⁶¹ In southern parts of Scotland it was probably a group of Danish settlers whereas in the north-west Scotland the Scandinavians were mainly of Norwegian origin.

kirkja the ON 'church'

This element was adopted into English (or rather Scots) as **kirk**. It occurs as both specific and generic and can take the following forms:

1. specific + generic (kirk)
2. specific (kirk) + generic (e.g. hill, bay...)
3. as an „inversion compound“; i.e. a Germanic compound (consisting of elements of German origin) with Celtic word-order: generic followed by a specific. The linguistic background is considered Gaelic and most of the *Kirk*-names seem to have a Gaelic predecessor or a counter- part in *kil*.²⁶² However, these inversion compounds are rather an exception than a rule and are little likely to appear in the north-west.

setr, sætr ON, 'setr' developed the meaning 'dwelling' in general, whereas a **sætr** is a 'shieling'

Both elements are cognate and originally referring to a pastoral dwelling and herding activities but it is not possible to distinguish in the

²⁵⁹ Scotland's Highlands and Islands, 2002, Lonely Planet, p 263

²⁶⁰ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 173

²⁶¹ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance, p 103

²⁶² Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance, p 110

pronunciation nowadays. However, some more distinctions can be made according to:

- a) the subtle differences in Lewisian (Gaelic) pronunciation
- b) the meaning of the first element (if there is a name concerning any domestic animal, it can be for sure interpreted as the *sætr* – name
- c) the geographical position and present status of the name²⁶³

In the modern times the names usually appear in the form of:

-**setter**, -**ster** in the Northern Islands: (*Setter*, *Dalsetter* in the Shetlands, *Snelsetter* in the Orkneys)

- **shader** in Hebridian place-nomenclature; '**shader**' is the evidence here that the Norse word undergone the process of palatisation in Gaelic before being used by English speakers²⁶⁴

Lewis: *Shader*, *Grimshader*, *Linshader* (from – *Línsetr* 'flax farm')

According to Fellows-Jensen the element **setr** in Norway:

„originally denoted shielings or outfields „since the farms that now bear names –*setr* tend to lie on the outskirts of areas of cultivation and give the impression of being comparatively young secondary settlements, representing a stage in the development of the exploitation of mountain areas. It is very likely that they have developed from shielings“²⁶⁵

staðir

ON 'dwelling place', 'farm'

Names bearing this element are according to W.F.H. Nicolaisen somewhat older than those of the Viking Age. In the Northern Isles they are older than in the Hebrides, thus showing the progressive spreading of the Scandinavian settlement. The first element (in the compound settlement place-names) was usually a personal name (expressing ownership).

Lewis: *Tolsta* (*Pölfstaðir*), *Mealista*

Harris: *Unasta*, *Bearasta*

Isle of Skye: *Connista*, *Lusta*

²⁶³ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 91

²⁶⁴ Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, *Scottish Place-Names, their study and significance*, p 92

²⁶⁵ Fellows-Jensen, G., 1984, *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*, eds. Fenton, A. and Pálsson, H., Edinburgh, p 161

town

This modern English word is rather rare in the place-names of the north-west and appears only in the most recent settlement founded after English started taking over in these areas.

Gairloch: *Midtown* (little township on the shores of Loch Ewe)

Charlestown (a part of Gairloch townships)

Lochbroom: *Croftown*, probably a farm, at the top of Loch Broom



2.3. Place-names – specifics

A specific gives the generic (which is denoting a landscape feature) a special and individual meaning. It specifies and distinguishes. Depending on the language, specifics can be grouped from the morphological point of view:

1. nouns with prepositions and/or definite articles; in Gaelic these nouns can be in genitive or dative
2. personal (proper) names
 - first names
 - surnames or family names which also refer to a whole group of people
3. adjectives

All of them express different qualities of the individual features. Even though there might appear generics not being specified at all. These are termed simplex names.

The semantic point of view is much more interesting for it may reveal some of the naming motives „behind the name“. According to Peder Gammeltoft, **specifics** relate: relationship, quality or usage of the generic.²⁶⁶ This grouping seems to apply to all place-names (both topographical and habitative), regardless of their origin. The three groups suggested by P. Gammeltoft also include several sub-groups which have been extended according to:

- a) information given in works:

P. Štěpán, 2004, Označení barev a jejich užití v toponymii Čech
Pomístní jména v Čechách: O čem vypovídají jména polí,..., 1995
M. Darton, 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish Place-names

- b) personal experience with the place-names in the north-west of Scotland

The usage of information on Bohemian place-names in terms of the Scottish ones might seem strange and it should be highlighted that in spite of the geographical and linguistic differences, there is one factor which is common to all place-names. It is always human beings who give the names and we tend to concentrate on the most prominent and distinguishing features of the subjectes which are most likely to be noticed. This is called **psychology of naming**. Naturally, the circumstances differ (e.g. 'brown colour' is, not likely to appear in place-names in regions where it is a typical colour, i.e. not worth noticing)²⁶⁷ but the basic principle remains.

²⁶⁶ Gammeltoft, P., 2001, The Place-name element bólstaðr in the North Atlantic area, , pp 217-218

²⁶⁷ Štěpán, P., 2004, Označení barev a jejich užití v toponymii Čech, p 61 and p 134

2.3.1. RELATIONSHIP

2.3.1.1. LOCATION

It means the position of the feature relating to another one, (e.g. cardinal points...)

examples: Habost–*Hábólstaðir* 'high farm' in Lewis

top, upper, high There are at least two G. words denoting this location: *uachdar* anglicised into *auchter* or *ochter*, and G. *bhràghad* 'of the upper part', into English sometimes adopted as *vrackie*²⁶⁸; however these do not seem to occur much in the area of NW. More often is ON *há* and the English terms.

Lewis: *Habost*
Assynt: *Upper Grassy Pool*²⁶⁹

lower Other options for this location are Eng. *nether* and G. *fo* 'subject to', 'secondary', 'under' or 'lesser'²⁷⁰
Gairloch: *Lower Diabaig* (a settlement)

back or G. *cul* 'the back of anything'²⁷¹

between or G. *eadar* or anglicised into *eder* or *idri*

middle or G. *meodhon*
Gairloch: *Beinn Dearg Mheadhonach*
(in the middle between *Beinn Dearg Mhór* and *Beinn Dearg Beag*)

north or G. *tuath*

Lewis: *Loch a' Tuath* (Lewis) 'the north lake'

south or G. *deas*

east or G. *ear*

west or G. *iar*

Harris(Scarp) *A' Geodha Shiar* 'the west bay'

²⁶⁸ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 277

²⁶⁹ OS Object Name Book 220, p 85

²⁷⁰ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 122

²⁷¹ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 47

2.3.1.2. RELATION TO PEOPLE

This relationship is most often given by **personal names**. These may express:

2.3.1.2.1. Founder, ownership, tenancy

(an individual person, church, king, count, teacher...)²⁷²

2.3.1.2.2. Administrative or social relation

Assynt: *Minister's Pool*²⁷³; *Sitheanna a'Chleirich* 'fairy hill of a clerk'²⁷⁴

Lewis: *Tom a' Mhinisteir* 'minister's hillock' „a small round hill or knoll, it produces very indifferent mossy pasture“²⁷⁵ (Barvas parish)

Both groups are very close and sometimes they can express the same, i.e. it is not clear whether the relationship is of „ownership“ or „administration“.

2.3.1.2.3. Respect or commemoration

This aspect is reflected particularly in the Gaelic names of churches, chapels, wells and other religious places which are bearing names of Celtic saints: such as St **Martin** - *Moluadh*, *Muluy* or *Mulvay*; St **Ronan**²⁷⁶, St **Donan**, or St **Columba** (in place-names as *Colm*). Examples²⁷⁷:

Lewis: *Teampull Mo-Luigh* 'the Church of Saint Martin' (Eoropie)
Eilean Mhuire ('**Mary**'s Island' there used to be a chapel dedicated to Virgin Mary) belongs to the Shiant Islands, south-east of Lewis
St Columba's Island in Loch Erisort, „there are the ruins of a chapel and what was once supposed to be a monastery...“²⁷⁸

Lochbroom: *Kildonan* 'church of St. Donan' on Little Loch Broom

²⁷² Knappová, Miloslava, 1995, Odras majetkových a právních poměrů v pomístních jménech, in *Pomístní jména v Čechách: O čem vypovídají jména polí, luk*, pp 351-376

²⁷³ OS Object Name Book 220, p 84

²⁷⁴ OS Object Name Book 220, p 116; (G. *cléireach* = 'priest'?)

²⁷⁵ OS Object Name Book 17, p 3

²⁷⁶ *North Rona*, an island about 8 miles north-west of the Butt of Lewis might have been named nor after St Ronan but more probably after the seals (G. *ron*) living here

²⁷⁷ Watson, W. J., 2004, The Celtic Place-names of Scotland, p 293

Dedication or commemoration can be made to saints who had never lived or are bound rather with Celtic mythology, e.g. Bridget (*Kilbride*). The names of saints are almost entirely connected with the generic *kil(l)* or *cil(l)*, as *Kilmarie* 'church of St Maelrubha' in Skye.

Gaelic place-names do not render only saints' names but other personal names as well. These are mostly connected with topographical features and refer to the ownership or an event in the local history.

Gairloch: *Loch Maree* comes from *Ma-Ruibha*, a Celtic saint (7th century) also called St. Ruffus

Big Rorie Island (G. *Eilean Ruaridh Mór*), *Small Rorie Island* (G. *Eilean Ruaridh Beag*) – these islands in Loch Maree were called after Roderick Macleod, who apparently lived here²⁷⁹

In Loch Maree there are also place-names referring either to the anglers or estate owners, e.g. *Bank's Bay* called after M. Bank).²⁸⁰

Gairloch: *Cnoc Iseabail, Loch Iseabail*

Loch Christina, Meall Loch Christina (a hill feature above the loch)

Lochbroom: *Lord Berkley's Seat*

Assynt: *Lady Constance Bay* (near Lochinver)

Lewis: *Clach Airidh Aingha(i)s* 'the stone of Angus' shealing' „a small knoll on which are number of small enclosures“²⁸¹ (Barvas parish)

Lèig Càrn Nighean Villeam 'rock or marsh of William's daughter', „a prominent point on the coast“²⁸² (Stornoway parish)

Harris: *Loch Finsbay* meaning „presumably Finn's (personal name) bay ...“²⁸³

²⁷⁸ Macdonald, D., 2004, *Lewis: A history of the Island*, p 278

²⁷⁹ Wentworth, R., 1998, *Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR*, p xvi

²⁸⁰ Wentworth, R., 1998, *Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR*, p xviii

²⁸¹ OS Object Name Book 16, p 20

²⁸² OS Object Name Book 24, p 64

On the other hand, the ON names do not contain saints' names at all, unless the name was adopted from Gaelic. The ON personal names tend to appear in the farm- and settlement-names, expressing the ownership. The common pattern of such dwellings is a personal name followed by a habitative element **bólstaðr**, or **–setr** ...:

Lewis: *Swanibost* (Sveini's farm), *Tolsta* (*Þolfsstaðir* Tholf's farm)
Grimshader (Grim's farm), *Callanish* (Calf's Ness, either a personal name or a nickname)²⁸⁴

ON personal names do not appear only in settlement - but also in topographical names:

Lewis: *Loch Suainavat*
Lochbroom: *Calascaig* in Lochbroom, 'Kali's strip'; *skiki* ('strip')
Maol Calasceig (a hill above Ullapool)

2.3.1.3. EVENTS

These events are usually of local character and they bear the aspect of commemoration as well (murder, suicide, accidental death, battle). Examples: *Cnoc na Mi-Chomhairle* 'the hillock of evil counsel' in Lewis, near Kirkibost, on the Island of Bernera, reminds of a place of execution²⁸⁵.



Lochbroom: a view to *Strath More* to *Loch Broom*

²⁸³ Darton, M., 1990, *The Dictionary of Scottish place-names*, p 185

²⁸⁴ Darton, M., 1990, *The Dictionary of Scottish place-names*, p 64

2.3.2. QUALITY

2.3.2.1. SIZE

big G. *mór* 'great', 'big', or 'large' is often anglicised into **more**. It is extremely frequent as a specific in Scottish place-names; e.g. the name *Achmore* (from *Achadh mór*) are countless in the north-west.

Eileanan Mòra 'large islands', a local name for the group of The Shiant Islands between Lewis and Skye (now regarded as a part of Lewis)

ON *stórr*, elided into *stor* or *stour*²⁸⁶

small or G. *beag* 'small', 'little', pronounced as ['bake']; the anglicised version is **beg**: (*Dailbeag* in Lewis anglicised into *Dalbeg*)

long or G. *fada* 'long', the mutated form *fhada* (pronounced as ['ada']) has been anglicised into **attow**²⁸⁷

If there appears **long** in a place-name with meaning 'long' it is either of ON or OE origin, e.g. *Loch Langavat* in Lewis, otherwise G. **long** means a 'ship' (allegedly „a Gaelic misunderstanding of ON for 'ship'“²⁸⁸).

short or G. *gearr*, e.g. *Gearrloch* (or in anglicised version *Gairloch*) which really is only a wide inlet not running too deep into the mainland

wide G. *reamhar* 'wide', 'thick', 'fat'

G. *leathann* 'wide'

(Harris)Scarp: *Am Palla Leathann* 'the wide (grassy) ledge'

narrow or G. *cumhang*

Gairloch: *An Caol Cumhang* (in Loch Maree)

It seems that '*caol*' itself means 'narrow' - as in the place-name in

Harris (Scarp): *Am Palla Caol* 'the narrow (grassy) ledge'²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ Macdonald, D., 1990, *Lewis: A history of the Island*, p 18

²⁸⁶ Darton, M., 1990, *The Dictionary of Scottish place-names*, p 254

²⁸⁷ Darton, M., 1990, *The Dictionary of Scottish place-names*, p 119

2.3.2.2. SHAPE

The shape of an individual, usually geographical, feature can be expressed in adjectives or in nouns referring to things this specific feature reminds of (e.g. tools or buildings...) used as a specific:

For instance, Gaelic *ord*, 'hammer', refers in place-names to the round shape of a throwing-hammer, nevertheless, it is more probable to appear as a generic denoting a 'rounded hill'. G. *eighe* means 'file': *Beinn Eighe* ('file peak') in *Gairloch* „is named from its serrated outline.”²⁹⁰ In Loch Maree (*Gairloch*) there is a bay a shape of which seems to enclose one like 'a pot'²⁹¹ and it is called *A'Phoit*, [foht]. G. *phoit* means the same as Eng. 'pot'.

As for the shape denoting adjectives 'curved' seems to be frequent:

G. *carach* 'bending', 'winding', 'sinuous'²⁹²

G. *cam* 'crooked'

Gairloch: *Allt na Caime* 'the small stream of the sharp bend'²⁹³

Assynt: *Cam Alltan*

2.3.2.3. COLOUR

P. Štěpán gives, according to the American linguists B. Berlin and P. Kay, the basic colour terms: **black, white, red, green, blue, yellow, grey, brown, pink, violet/purple, orange**. In the Czech nomenclature **brown** colour is absent which might seem surprising when compared with other languages where it occurs very often.²⁹⁴ This is caused by the *psychology of the naming*: the feature of the subject must be the most prominent one to be noticed and used as a naming motive and discriminating element.

²⁸⁸ Darton, M., 1990, *The Dictionary of Scottish place-names*, p 177

²⁸⁹ MacIannan, J., 2001, *The Place-names of Scarp*, p 40

²⁹⁰ Watson, W. J., 2004, *The Celtic Place-names of Scotland*, p 512

²⁹¹ Wentworth, R., 1998, *Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR*, name 31 page 1

²⁹² Darton, M., 1990, *The Dictionary of Scottish place-names*, p 67

²⁹³ Wentworth, R., 1998, *Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR*, name 78, page 1

²⁹⁴ Štěpán, P., 2004, *Označení barev a jejich užití v toponymii Čech*, p 59

Thus the brown colour is left out of naming in the region where it is a typical colour and as such is not worth noticing.²⁹⁵

„The name *an Cnoc Donn* occurs not infrequently in local place-names, referring to knolls on the hill but situated just above the arable or improved fields. Doubtless these knolls are called *donn* „brown“ because of their contrast in colour with the green of the fields.“²⁹⁶

Semantic criterion of colours in place-names

- I. primary meaning (non-motivated, direct)
- II. secondary meaning (motivated, figurative)

The colour name, originally related to the colour of the object, has started to be understood as a name of a different quality; the colours **black** and **white** are most often to appear in this secondary meaning:

‘**black**’: ‘in the shadow’ (dark, in woods, surrounded by trees or hills), ‘coniferous’, ‘dangerous’ or ‘wild’, ‘secret’ or ‘forbidden’, ‘unfortunate’.²⁹⁷
‘**white**’: ‘deciduous’, ‘made of stones’ or ‘covered with plaster’, ‘clean’, ‘clear’, ‘good’, ‘innocent’, ‘unfortunate’.²⁹⁸
‘**green**’: ‘overgrown with grass’
‘**red**’: ‘made of sandstone or bricks’ (in settlements), containing iron

Nevertheless, most of the place-names in the north-west bearing the specifics ‘black’ or ‘white’ rather seem to have the primary meaning, i.e. they refer to the colour of the particular feature, but the secondary, connotative, meaning is not excluded.

black

“‘Black’ in place names is much commoner than other adjectives of colour, this is because it is very often just a differential than a description...”²⁹⁹

This colour can occur in hybrid names: an element of Gealic origin with an English adjective (Black Lochs, Black Burns ...). However, in many particularly minor place-names of the north west it appears in Gaelic as *dubh* [du:], ‘black’, ‘dark’. According to Roderick Maclean, *dubh* can also have the function of an intensifier or connotations of sinister.

²⁹⁵ Štěpán, P., 2004, Označení barev a jejich užití v toponymii Čech, p 61, p 134

²⁹⁶ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, name 147, page 1

²⁹⁷ Štěpán, P., 2004, Označení barev a jejich užití v toponymii Čech, pp 78-81

²⁹⁸ Štěpán, P., 2004, Označení barev a jejich užití v toponymii Čech, pp 82-84

²⁹⁹ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, pp 28-29

white

G. *bàn* 'white', 'fair', 'beautiful'³⁰⁰, but also 'waste', 'empty'³⁰¹
(Harris) Scarp: *Am Bodha Bàn*

G. *fionn* ['f-yunn'] 'white', 'fair'; usually precedes noun:
Gairloch: *Fionn Loch* (near Loch Maree)

G. *geal* ['gyal'] 'white', 'clear', 'bright', not so often as '*bàn*' and '*fionn*'
Lochbroom: *Eididh nan Clach Geala* 'the nest or web of the white stones'; it refers to a group of querzite stones SE of Ullapool³⁰²

green - grey - blue

green *Green Island* in Enard Bay (Lochbroom)

G. *uaine* ['oon-ye'] anglicised due to the pronunciation into *weem* (which appears rather rarely)³⁰³, '*green*', '*yellow-green*'

G. *gorm* ['gorom'] which is another ambiguous case giving the notion of '*bluish green*'; or '*emerald green*'³⁰⁴

G. *liath* 'silver-grey', 'grey-blue', 'light-blue'
Assynt: *Caisteal Liath* (a part of *Suilven*)

G. *glas* 'dull grey', 'ashen', 'pale green'³⁰⁵
Assynt: *Glas Bheinn, Fuarain Ghlasa*

red

G. *ruadh* ['roo-a'] '*reddish-brown*'

G. *dearg* ['jearg'], ['jarrak'] '*bright red*', '*red of blood*', and an intensifier³⁰⁶
Lochbroom: *Beinn Dearg* (this name is numerous in the whole NW)

³⁰⁰ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 35

³⁰¹ Maclean, R., 2002, Gaelic in the Mountains, unpublished, a lecture on Gaelic place-names, Ullapool

³⁰² *ibid.*

³⁰³ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 279

³⁰⁴ Maclean, R., 2002, Gaelic in the Mountains, unpublished, a lecture on Gaelic place-names, Ullapool

³⁰⁵ *ibid.*

³⁰⁶ Maclean, R., 2002, Gaelic in the Mountains, unpublished, a lecture on Gaelic place-names, Ullapool

brown

G. *odha(i)r* ['our'] 'dun', 'yellow-brown'
Lewis *Loch Odhairn*
Gairloch: *An t-Alltan Odhar* ('the small dun burn')

G. *donn* 'dark brown'
Gairloch: *An Cnoc Donn* 'brown hillock'
Leacann Donna 'brown flags'

yellow

G. *buidhe* ['bui'] 'golden yellow', usually refers to grasses³⁰⁷
Lochbroom: *Achiltibui* - in the name of this village the colour appears to have been anglicised

Due to its frequent occurrence particularly in topographical names two more words connected with colours should be mentioned. G. **breac** meaning 'speckled' (or a 'trout'), even though it does not primarily refer to any colour, it is connected with the prominent colours of the individual places. The form **bhreac** was often anglicised into **vrackie**. And also G. **riabhach** or **-riach/rioch** 'grey', 'streaked'.

The colour of water in hydronyms is almost entirely related to the colour of the bottom (bed): **black** (mud or dark rocks); **red** (high contents of iron, - this way of naming is common in many languages); **white** (denotes the quality of water – clean, clear). In other languages there are hydronyms including other colours as well, very often brown, blue or yellow - e.g. in Germanic or Roman languages, which do not occur in Czech hydronyms at all.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ *ibid.*

³⁰⁸ Štěpán, P., 2004, *Označení barev a jejich užití v toponymii Čech*, pp 40-41

2.3.2.4. MATERIAL

The material of the individual geographical or man-made features is reflected either in the nouns or in the adjectives, applied as specifics. Colours in their secondary meaning can also refer to material; (e.g **green** 'overgrown with grass, **red** 'made of red-bricks', **yellow** 'sandy' or 'grassy', but it seems to be rather rare in this area). Others adjectives occurring in place-names are for instance:

boggy G. *bog* means 'soft', 'damp'
 "The English word *bog* is thought to have been loaned from Gaelic."³⁰⁹

marshy G. *lonneach* anglicised into *lonaig*

mossy G. *còinneach* 'mossy (place)'

muddy in Gaelic *moid* which has been adopted from ON *moda*
 G. *musgach*

pebbly G. *dornach*

sandy ON *sanda*
Lewis: *Loch Mór Sandavat* or *Loch Shandabhat*

ON *melr* ('sandbank', 'sand-dune')

Lewis: *Melbost*

Assynt: *Achmelvich*

G. *gainemhaich* 'sandy'

shell G. *sligeach* 'of shells', elided into *-sligo*³¹⁰

stony G. *aileach* 'stony', 'rocky',
 G. *clachan* 'place of stones' thus 'a beach'
 G. *leacach*
Gairloch: *Alltan Leacach*

³⁰⁹ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 46

³¹⁰ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 248

2.3.2.5. AGE

new G. *ur* 'new'

Gairloch: *Abhuinn Ur* 'new river' „a large lead, constructed for the purpose of conveying water of *Allt Mór*³¹¹ (near Melvaig)

Lewis *Creag Úr* „a narrow and conspicuous point of cliff³¹² (Stornoway, near Tolsta)

old G. *seann* 'old', 'disused'

Gairloch: *An Seann Rathad*³¹³ 'old road' between Kinlochewe and Gairloch

2.3.2.6. LIVING THINGS OR OBJECTS FOUND NEARBY

2.3.2.6.1. Vegetation

tree Eng. **tree**

Gairloch: *One Tree Bay* (in Loch Maree)

G. *craobh*

Lewis *Loch na Craoibhe*
Druim na Craoibhe 'tree eminence', „a portion of deep peat mop, producing [...] mossy pasture, it is low, flat and quite soft"³¹⁴ (Barvas parish)

ash G. *uinnseann*

Gairloch *Ash Island (Eilean Innseann; ['eeshon'])*

alder G. *fearn* ['fee-arn'], a very common tree in the Highlands

Gairloch: *Am Meall Feàrne* 'the alder hill' Beinn Eighe NNR

elm G. *leamhan* ['levan']

hazel G. *calltuin*

oak G. *darach*

Lochbroom: *Rhidorroch* (a farm in Glen Achall near Ullapool); the name originates, according to D. Dorward, from *rubha darach* 'oak point'

³¹¹ OS Object Name Book 12, 1891

³¹² OS Object Name Book 24, p 60

³¹³ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, p xxii

³¹⁴ OS Object Name Book 17, p 19

Gairloch: *Allt na Doire-daraich* 'stre

pine

is the commonest tree-word in place-name nomenclature of the north-west: in G. *guithas* or *giubhas* ['g-yoo-as'] / [g'u.ush]

Gairloch: *An Caol Guithais* 'the fir narrows'³¹⁵ Loch Maree
Toll a'Ghuithais ('hollow of the fir')³¹⁶ Beinn Eighe NNR

rowan

G. *caorann*

Gairloch *Loch a' Chaorainn*

yew

G. *iubhar* ['yoo-ur']

plants:

grass, herbs *lussa* elided (anglicised) from G. *luss achadh* 'place of herbs'³¹⁷

Gairloch *Loch Feur* 'grassy loch'³¹⁸

heather

G. *fraoch* ['free-ugh']

Harris *Am Palla Fraoich* 'the heathery ledge' (Scarp)

Gairloch *Aird-fraoch* 'heathy promontory'³¹⁹ (Loch Ewe)

ON for 'heather' is *lyng*, hence English *ling*; there are several islands in the Hebrides called *Linga* (e.g. *Garbh Lingay* a small island near Barra)

³¹⁵ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR, name 24, page 1

³¹⁶ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, name 67, page 1

³¹⁷ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 179

³¹⁸ OS Object Name Book 13, p 26

³¹⁹ OS Object Name Book 12, p 48

2.3.2.6.2 Animals

Focus will be on animals living wild, domestic animals see in the section on farming-activities.

- birds:** G. *eun* 'bird' ['en']; plural form *eoin* ['yoin']
ON '*fugla*' is found mostly in the Western Isles but it is not so frequent here as in the Northern Isles
Gairloch: *Tòrr an Eoin*
- cormorant** G. *sgarbh* was rended from ON *scarfr* (phonological adaptation); it appears in names like: *Scarpa*, *Scarp* (west of Harris), both meaning 'cormorant isle' *Scarp* (Dorward, D., 1998)
However, according to another explanation, *Scarp* originates from ON *skarpoe* 'sharp, stony, mountain terrain'.³²⁰
- eagle:** G. *iolair* ['yoolur'] is numerous in hill-names; ON equivalent is *örn*, Scots *erne*; these specifics are numerous in the north-west
Assynt: *Cnoc na h-Iolaire* 'knoll of the eagle'
- gull** G. *faoileag*
Gairloch *Sgeir nam Faoileag* (in Loch Maree)
- hawk:** G. *seabhag* ['shevig'] allegedly an adaptation of OE *heafoc*³²¹
- raven** G. *fhitheach* ['ee-uch'] another frequent specific in minor names of Gaelic origin
Gairloch *Creag an Fhithich Mór*, *Creag an Fhithich Beag* 'rock of the raven the greater' and 'rock of the raven the less'
- swan** G. *eala*
ON *svannr* (which might be confused with a personal name Sven)
Lewis *Eala Sgeir Beag*, *Eala Sgeir Mhor*
'small and big swan rock', „a large low water rock“³²²
(Stornoway parish)

³²⁰ MacIennan, J, 2001, The Place-names of Scarp, p 20

³²¹ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 242

³²² OS Object Name Book 24, p 65

fish:

salmon

G. *bradan*

Assynt: *Port of Alltan na Bradhan*, ('bay of the little stream of salmon')

ON *lax*

Lewis: *Laxay* (river), *Laxdale* (settlement)

Harris: *Laxadale*

And *Laxford Bridge* with *Loch Laxford*, situated north of ssynt, in the parish of Eddrachillis, northern part of Sutherland.

wild animals:

beast

G. *biast*, probably gaelicised from ME³²³; however, it can also mean a 'monster'

Gairloch: *Carn na Béiste*³²⁴

boar

G. *torc*

Gairloch: *Alltan an Tuirc* 'little stream of the boar'

seal

G. *ròn*

North Rona, an island about 8 miles north-west of the Butt of Lewis might have been named after St Ronan or more probably it means 'island of seals', due to a great number of these animals here³²⁵.

Harris *Leac an Roin* 'rock of the seal' (Scarp)

2.3.2.6.3. Objects

These specifics might be derived from mostly topographical generics of landscape features nearby (it means via back-forming). This is probably the most common way of creating names in Gaelic.

Lewis: *Eilean an Tighe* 'island of the house' the only one permanently inhabited in the group of the Shiant Islands (SE of Lewis)

Gairloch: *Loch Beinn Dearg Bheag*

³²³ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 44

³²⁴ OS Object Name Book, 13, 21

³²⁵ Macdonald, D., 2004, Lewis: A history of the Island, p 270

2.3.2.7. OTHER QUALITIES

hydronyms:

- noise, speed

G. **garbh** ['garav'] 'rough', 'coarse', 'harsh', (anglicised into **garve**)

Gairloch: A'Ghairbhe [gara.i]– anglicised into 'the Garry'³²⁶

Lochbroom: Garvie River

G. **rapag** 'noisy place' Allt Rapag

Lochbroom: Allt Rapag 'noisy burn' near Ullapool

Rappach Water (anglicised)

Gairloch: River Ewe < River **Iu**, G. for 'cry', 'echo', anglicised

- temperature

cold

ON **kald**, G. **fuair**

Assynt: Calda Beag, Calda Mor (gaelicised into Allt a' Chalda)
flowing into Loch Assynt

warm

G. **teth**

Gairloch: Loch Teth³²⁷

oronyms (quality of the terrain)

smooth

G. **mìn** 'smooth' (used less than **garbh**)

G. **liobh** 'smooth' but also 'slippery'

ON **sletter** 'smooth'

Skye: Sleat - the least mountainous part of the island

Gairloch: Slattadale (a settlement)

rough

G. **garbh** ['garav'] 'rough', 'coarse', 'harsh', (anglicised into **garve**)

Lochbroom: Garve (a settlement) in north-west of Ullapool

Gairloch: An Garbh Eilean, called so because of the ragged shoreline³²⁸

Lewis: Garbh Eilean ('rough island') in the Shiant Islands, south-west of Lewis

³²⁶ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, name 106, page 1

³²⁷ OS Object Name Book 13, p 27

³²⁸ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR, name 28, page 1

2.3.3. USAGE (or funtion)

2.3.3.1. FARMING

2.3.3.1.1. Planting

Specifics of this area refer to plants: plants, fields, soils, ways of farming...

Lewis: *Linshader* (ON *Línsetr* 'flax farm')

2.3.3.1.2. Buildings connected with farming (and other) activities

The words denoting buildings or enclosures can be applied either as generics (see the section 2.2.2.4. features reflecting human activity) or specifics.

cro G. 'sheep-pen', 'circular enclosure'
Harris: *Loch na Cro* 'loch of the sheep-enclosure'
Gairloch: *Badachro* (bad a' cro = 'the clump or place of fold')

2.3.3.1.3. Animal husbandry, pasturing³²⁹

cow G. *bó* 'cow', *laogh* 'calf'
Gairloch: *Loch na Bó* 'loch of the cow'
Lochbroom: *Creagan nan Laoch*

goat G. *gabhar* (*gobhar*) anglicised into **gower**
Lewis: *Geshader* 'goat-farm' (a settlement name)
Gairloch: *Camas nan Gobhar* (a topographical name)

horse ON '*ros*' or '*hest*'
Lewis: *Hestatval* ('horse-hill')
North Uist: *Roisnish* ('horse-headland') (south of Harris)
G. *capall* ('horse', 'mare'), *each* ['ech'] or *marc*, *searrach* 'foal', 'colt'
Harris (Scarp): *Sgeir nan Each* 'horse skerry'
„there have been no horses on Scarp in living memory but this placename [...] tell[s] us there were horses on hte island at one time”³³⁰

pig G. *muc* ('boar' is in G. *torc*) Gaelic names including this specific are quite common in the Gaelic speaking areas
Assynt: *Doire nam Muc* 'grove of the pigs', „a small hollow”³³¹

lamb ON *lamba* (lamb)
Skye: *Lampay* 'lamb-island';

³²⁹ examples given in: Nicolaisen, W. F. H., 1979, Scottish Place-Names, their study ..., p 97

³³⁰ Maclellann, J., 2001, The Place-names on Scarp, p 25

³³¹ OS Object Name Book 1, p 40

sheep *G. caora*
Assynt: *Loch nan Coarach*
Lewis: *Beinn nan Coarach* (Barvas parish)

2.3.3.2. RELIGION (and spiritual life)

Most Gaelic place-names referring to religion are connected with Christianity (see the name of saints as a commemoration). After all Christianity has been here since the 6th century. Even though the naming motives of Old Norse place-names in Norway tend to include evidence of paganism which had a strong influence in Scandinavia by the 12th century, in Scotland Christianity was of greater importance and the naming processes were motivated by this religion.³³² There seem to be many ON place-names in the north-west consisting of a specific term *pap* ('priest') and a generic *ey* ('island'); e.g. *Papa*, *Pabbay* (meaning 'priest isle'). There was a tendency, to call everyone who was somehow "in touch with God" (no matter if a hermit, a proselyt) 'a priest'.³³³ Gaelic word for a 'priest' or a 'pastor' is *cléireach*. The place-names with the element 'priest' seem to express more of the ownership than the religion.

church *G. eaglais*, anglicised form is *egles*
Lochbroom: *Coire na h-Eaglaise* 'hollow of the Church'³³⁴

priest *G. cléireach*, *G. sagart*
 ON *pap*
Lewis: *Isle of Pabbay* ('island of the priest's island')
Gairloch *An Sagart* (a point or cliff running into Loch Ewe)
Lochbroom: *Priest Island* (an islet in the group of the Summer Isles)

There does not seem to be any possible connection with church nor religion and seems to rather an incorrect translation of *Eilean a' Chleinch*.³³⁵

However, according to another etymology the G. equivalent is *Eilean an Cleireach*, (i.e. 'priest island') with „ruins of a monastery to be found there (1511)”³³⁶

holy *G. siant* (gaelicisation of Eng. 'saint')
Lewis: *na h-Eileanan Sianta*, 'the holy isles' this name has been anglicised into 'the Shiant Isles' and they are locally known as *Eileanan Mòra*, 'the Large Isles'

³³² Gammeltoft, P., 2001, The Place-name element *bólstaðr* in the North Atlantic area, Copenhagen

³³³ Dorward, D., 1998, Scotland's Place-names, p 111

³³⁴ OS Object Name Book 23, p 16

³³⁵ Dagg, Cathy, *Prehistoric Lochbroom and Assynt*, unpublished, Ullapool Library

³³⁶ Ullapool Museum Trust: Wester Ross – Place-names derivations; display only

2.3.3.3. OTHER SPECIFIC HUMAN ACTIVITIES AND OCCUPATIONS

mill G. *muilleann*

“The word has many cognates in European languages, most of the deriving form Latin *molina*, ‘mill’, itself a derivative of *mola*, ‘millstone’, ‘grinder’.”³³⁷

Mills powered by water and used for grinding corn were abundant in the Middle Ages and, because of their importance, they still appear in place-names. Every parish had at least one mill, although in the Highlands it was less frequent, depending on the arable land and its fertility. Querns, **mills** (with a horizontal water-wheel) were at one time very common in the Hebrides and mainland. Their presence (usually on streams along the coast) was often reflected in place-names (*Loch na Muilne*, *Allt na Muilne*...). Later they were replaced by the district water mills but in some places we can spot the ruins of the old mills, e.g. the mill Alltanabradhan, near Clachtoll; in parish Assynt.

Harris (Scarp): *Abhainn na Muil(n)e* (or *Allt a' Mhuilinn*)³³⁸

Lewis: *Loch na Muilne* (Barvas, Stornoway)

Gairloch: *Linne a' Mhuilinn* ‘pond of the mill’³³⁹

Place-names containing the specific **mill** do not apply only to mill itself but to other features in the surroundings connected with the “grinding activities”. For instance a hydronym *Allt na Muillin* (gen.) is very frequent in the north-west (both in the mainland and in the islands). The genitive *mhuilinn* was sometimes adopted into English as *youlin* or *yu(i)llin* (initial *mh* being in Gaelic pronounced as *v*).

hunting G. *sealg* ‘the hunt’, ‘hunting’

Assynt *Aird na Seilge* “a knoll, height of the hunt”³⁴⁰

Harris *Loch Sealg*

The Gaelic word for a **blacksmith**, *gobhainn* (anglicised into ‘gowan’) is in the Gaelic hill-nomenclature rather frequent as a specific. There might be two reasons for it: the land was a property of a local blacksmith or it might have been a personal whim of those who were giving names (the OS engineers and their guides?).

³³⁷ Darton, M., 1990, *The Dictionary of Scottish place-names*, p 206

³³⁸ MacIannan, J., 2001, *The Place-names of Scarp*, p 27

³³⁹ OS Object Name Book 13, p 25

³⁴⁰ OS Object Name Book 220, p 106

Fishing was always popular with people living in coastal areas. They did not catch only in the sea but especially on the rivers' estuaries, collected shellfish etc. Fishing at sea was very risky not only because there were no ports and launching and hauling the ship on the rugged shore, particularly in Lewis, was extremely difficult in strong surf. Moreover, the sea is in the area of the Hebrides and between the Hebrides and the mainland quite rough, the strait is called the Minch. However, the place-names are usually connected not with the activity of fishing but rather with the animals (fish, birds...) living there (see section 2.3.2.6. – landscape features characterised by things living nearby, „fish“).

If there any place-names suggesting illegal activities such **smuggling** (whiskey distilling, frequent particularly in Lewis) is not sure for two reasons. In the time of this secret activity they would not attract attention by using it for naming the place. Secondly, it was possible such activity appeared in the place-name later, when it was long over, but if it was kept secret no one could now and therefore apply it in the names.

2.3.3.4. BOUNDARIES

airbhe (or *eirbhe*), ['ervy']; G. term for a 'dividing wall' or 'boundary'; it can also appear in anglicised forms: - *arra, arrie, errie*)³⁴¹, *harra, naharra*

„In certain parts of Ross and Sutherland there are walls, some of which run for many miles, made of turf and stone, which give rise to a number of names involving this term.“³⁴²

Assynt: *Altnaharra* (near Lochinver) - *allt na-h airbhe* ('stream of the boundary')

Lewis: *Arivruaich* 'boundary (*airbhe*) bank (*bhruaich*)'³⁴³

Gairloch: *Meall na h-Airbhe* 'the hill of the wall'³⁴⁴, *Allt na h-Airbhe*

crioch G. 'boundary', 'region', 'destination'³⁴⁵

Gairloch: *Allt na Crìch* 'the stream of the boundary'³⁴⁶

³⁴¹ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 22

³⁴² Watson, W. J., 2004, The Celtic Place-names of Scotland, p 479

³⁴³ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 21

³⁴⁴ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, name 80, page 1

³⁴⁵ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 83

³⁴⁶ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, name 151, page 1

2.4. Word-forming processes in place-names

Names are formed from words. Words (and vocabulary) are the part of a language most liable to changes. Words may become obsolete, lose their meaning and are not used any longer. But the lexical meaning of place-names does not have to be understood completely. „Names [...] function perfectly well as names, even when they are lexically opaque...”³⁴⁷

Place-names, both topographical and habitative, come into being via the same processes as words, they must be formed. However, the extra-linguistic factors play an important role too. The word-forming processes are common for all languages but individual languages use different ways of forming, according to their character. Moreover, one place-name might have been created through more than one word-forming process.

From the morphological point of view, the great majority of place-names in the north-west of Scotland are compounds, i.e. they consist of two or more elements. The simplex words (one element, rarely with an affix) create only a small number of place-names.

1. BACK-FORMATION

The name of a geographical feature is passed on to another geographical feature (or a settlement) in its vicinity, or becomes a settlement name itself, (i.e. usage of topographical features for settlements). The back-forming processes are applied the other way round, i.e. a settlement name is subsequently applied to geographical features. (e.g. *Ullapool River* flowing through Ullapool, Lochbroom parish).

If an object with a particular place-name ceases to exist, the place-name is then sometimes secondarily used for another object nearby, or for the object that comes into existence on the very same place. For instance, where a forest is cut down or a pond is dried out, the name may pass on to the field that appears afterwards.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ Fellows-Jensen, G., 1984, 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*, eds. Fenton, A. and Pálsson, H., Edinburgh, p 152

³⁴⁸ Olivovová-Nezbedová, L., 1995, Pomístní jména v Čechách, jejich charakteristika a jejich význam pro vědní obory, in: *Pomístní jména v Čechách: O čem vypovídají...*, pp 20-21

Transforming a place-name from one geographical feature to another is the most frequent process of forming place-names. As it has been mentioned here several times, the watercourses are usually of the greatest importance for human life and their names are passed on the valleys they are flowing through, or on the hills where they have their springs.

Gairloch:

On the west side of Loch Ewe there is a small settlement consisting of a few houses, all of them are situated a steep hill (*brae*) and this name has been accepted even for the settlement: *Brae*.

Grudie (< G. *Ghrùididh*³⁴⁹) was originally a river name but now it is used as a name for the area around the river³⁵⁰. '*Grudie Island*' and '*Grudie Bay*' are in Loch Maree near the place where the Grudie River enters the loch.

2. TAUTOLOGY

Tautology is a compound creating process: elements (mostly generics) with the same meaning but sometimes of different origin occur in one place-name. This can happen within one language or it can be a result of interaction of two or more languages, then we speak about 'hybrids'. The reason is frequent and simple: the meaning of the original names was forgotten and as the speakers of a new language took over, they tried to make these place-names less obscure and added an element of their own language. Such compounds follow the pattern of the „original“, or stronger, language (see also 'inversion compounds').

Gairloch:

Camastrolvaig (in Loch Ewe), a tautological hybrid compound, the generic „bay“ is repeated twice here (in G. *camas* and ON *vík*).

³⁴⁹ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Loch Maree Islands NNR, claims the name refers to the „gravelly nature of the river“ (*grùid* means 'dregs', 'sediment'), name 4 page 2

³⁵⁰ Wentworth, R., 1998, Gaelic Place-names of Beinn Eighe NNR, name 95, page 2

Aird Point (jutting into Loch Ewe)³⁵¹ G. *aird* meaning the same as Eng. *point*

Lochbroom:

Corrieshalloch Gorge - G. *corrie* means the same as Eng. *gorge*

3. HYBRIDS

Hybrid names are result of the **bilingual contact**. It means they are most likely to appear in areas where two or more languages have been spoken in succession.³⁵² They can be either compounded place-names or, rather exceptionally in the north-west, simplex names with affixes of different origin. Many of these hybrid compounds are result of unconscious tautology. *Black Loch, Black Burn...* are „hybridised“ (or partly anglicised) versions of Gaelic *Allt Dubh* or *Loch Dub*, supposing they occur in a Gaelic speaking area.

Harris (Scarp)

Geodha Fors(s) This hybrid consists of a gaelicised ON element *geodha* ‘ravine’ and a genuine ON element *fors* ‘waterfalls’. In OS maps this name can appear gaelicised as *Geòdha Foirse*³⁵³. Another „hybridised“ place-name of the same form and in the same locality would be *Abhainn Forss*.

Mol an t-Aib Both parts of the name (generic *mol* and specific *an t-Aib*) are gaelicised forms of ON elements: *möl* (*melr*) + *hóp*. This is an example of creating a place-name using elements of from language background (ON) and rules of another one (Gaelic), the result of which is considered to be Gaelic.

Am Palla Leathann ‘the wide (grassy) ledge’; it is a combination of ON *pallr* ‘steep hill (covered with grass)’ and G. *leathann* ‘wide’

³⁵¹ OS Object Name Book 12, p 48

³⁵² Watson, W. J., 2002, Scottish Place-Names Papers, p 51

³⁵³ MacIennan, J., 2001, The Place-names of Scarp, p 38

Assynt

Achmelvich G. *achadh*, ON *melr*, ON *vik* ('place of the sandbank in the bay')³⁵⁴

Lewis (Stornoway parish)

Loch Lingabhat Mhor the anglicised form *Loch Lingavat More*³⁵⁵

It is a tautological hybrid, repeating twice the element for 'lake': G. *loch* and ON *vat*; *ling* might be either of ON origin (*lyng*) or comes from Eng. *ling*, both meaning 'heather'

4. INVERSION COMPOUNDS

The inversion compounds are result of the adopting processed (mostly anglicisation and gaelicisation). Compounded place-names of Germanic origin (English or Scandinavian) follow the Celtic word-order: the noun (generic) precedes the adjective (specific); e.g. those names starting with ***Kirk-***. The inversion compounds provide the evidence of the linguistic contact between the Scandinavians and Gaelic speaking people. However, according to W.F.H. Nicolaisen, there is not a slightest evidence of these compounds in the Hebrides.

5. CALQUES

A literal translation of a word (or a place-name) from one language into another. Due to the linguistic contacts in the north-west, there are many examples.

Broadford in Skye is a translation of the Gaelic – *an Ath Leathan* (i.e. 'the ford broad')

³⁵⁴ Darton, M., 1990, The Dictionary of Scottish place-names, p 11

³⁵⁵ OS Object Name Book 24, p 5

IV. CONCLUSION

The main aim of this work was an introduction into the issue of place-names study, particularly the topographical place-names in the area of northwestern Scotland, both in the mainland (parishes Gairloch, Lochbroom and Assynt) and in the islands (Lewis and Harris).

Different factors taking part in place-names creations were discussed in the first section of chapter III. When compared with the collected place-names and their semantic background, i.e. the naming motives, it is possible to state that the place-names in the north-west are inevitably connected with the people who use them: their language, history, customs; and with the landscape itself: the vegetation and terrain. As they were applied to describe individual features, they also reflect these facts back long after these might have changed. Therefore, the study of place-names not only provides a great opportunity for studying linguistic material but, it also requires at least some rudimentary knowledge of this background information which helps interpretation of them.

Three main languages have been spoken in this area and left their traces in place-names: Gaelic, Old Norse and English. Scandinavian place-names are frequent mainly in generics denoting coastal features and many of them appear in the gaelicised forms. As for their number Gaelic place-names are of the greatest importance. Even though the language has been on retreat many of the Gaelic names still survive (at least on the maps and in the memory of the local Gaelic speakers). The density of place-names in the area of the north-west of Scotland is astonishing. Not only because of the small number of population but also because of the language conditions in this area, i.e. English is the official language and recently it has also become the first language of many people, Gaelic is dying out and although there are efforts to revive it, remains secondary to English.

New place-names, mostly English, occur rarely when compared to the Gaelic place-names forming the majority. The most likely way the English place-names come into existence is anglicisation, the process of adopting the Gaelic (or other) place-names and changing them according to rules (phonological, morphological or lexicological) of the

(incoming) English language. The phonological adaptation is the most frequent way of anglicisation Gaelic place-names: the Gaelic spelling is changed into English spelling keeping the approximate original Gaelic pronunciation. Creating place-names through the processes of adopting (anglicisation, gaelicisation or scandinavianisation) seems to be very common in this area.

Topographical place-names are used primarily to denote geographical features and they may be secondarily applied to settlements. It means that through the process of back-formation they become settlement-names. Because this process works the other way round as well, a few primarily habitative generics have been also mentioned here. Back-formation and hybrids (most often tautological, i.e. the lexicological level of adopting place-names) are the most frequent and productive word-forming processes in the place-names of the north-west. As for the anglicisation of individual Gaelic place-name elements: in the area of the north-west there are usually anglicised the less known Gaelic generics, the most frequent ones are usually generally understood and do not need any way of adopting (see *camas* 'bay').

The Gaelic, Scandinavian and English topographical place-names in the north-west occur more as compounds (consisting of a generic and a specific) than simplex names.

Gaelic place-names tend to be very straightforward and descriptive and the language has produced many terms to distinguish particular landscape features in the slightest details, see the generics of Gaelic origin denoting different hill-shapes in the Highlands and Islands. The usage of generics seems to be a highly individual and relative matter depending the locality. There are terms used with the same meaning in the whole area (e.g. the ubiquitous *loch*, *sgeir* 'rock', *rubha* 'point', *aird* 'promontory' ...). There are terms used everywhere but the meaning can be changed (e.g. G. *poll* 'pool' can come up in Assynt as 'bay'). Finally, there are terms typical of one area only (e.g. *cleit*, gaelicisation of ON *kletter* 'cliff', appears in the Lewis and Harris but not in the mainland). There is one more interesting point to be mentioned, *beinn* in the mainland refers usually to a mountain - *Beinn Dearg* is 1084m, *Beinn Eilideach* is 558m, both are in Lochbroom parish. In Lewis *beinn* is applied to hillocks which would be denoted as *creag* or *meall* in the mainland (if noticed at all), e.g. *Beinn nan Càorach* 92m.

Even if the generic seems to be applied to two completely different landscape features, there is one thing common in both naming processes: both 'beinns' are outstanding landscape features, *beinn* – the highest mountains in the north-west Highlands, and *beinn* - the highest places in the rather flat landscape of Lewis.

From observing place-names and people using them it is possible to conclude that the transition of place-names from one language into another is „largely responsible for the degree of the name loss“³⁵⁶. However, the life-style of speakers using the place-names plays a more important role. The twentieth century brought many changes in life-styles and even the most remote parts of the north-west have been affected by it. There are not so many farmers and fishermen as there used to be. People do not live in so close to nature any more. This has resulted into a great number of (mostly minor) place-names being forgotten as they are not needed any more... A person working for the Heritage Museum in the Port of Ness (Lewis) told me about the effort of several local people trying to rescue the minor coastal place-names of this area before the old people who still know them die. He pointed out this has been caused by the changing life-style of the whole community. However, the more prominent and important the place is, the more likely is the name to be used and remembered, regardless of whether it is understood or not.

A brief analysis of adopting processes and a concise survey of semantic background in generic and specific elements and their anglicised forms has been attempted. The research could not go any deeper because the great majority of place-names in the north-west are Gaelic and a good knowledge of Gaelic language is necessary. From the material available we can conclude that the naming processes and naming principles are common to all people, relying not only on the language itself but on the non-linguistical aspects as well.

Depending on many factors, there is still much to be discovered and explained about the place-names. The place-name study is a long-term matter and the information provided in this work is only an introduction into this issue.

³⁵⁶ Waugh, D., 1986, The transition from Gaelic to Scots or Scottish English in Caithness place-names, in: *Scottish Language*, No 4, 1985, p 149

V. SUMMARY - SHRNUTÍ

Tématem této diplomové práce jsou pomístní (a částečně místní) jména v severozápadním Skotsku: jak a proč vznikají, jaké faktory při tom mají vliv a jaký je současný stav, použití a význam.

Jedná se o oblasti pevniny - farnosti Gairloch a Lochbroom (hrabství Ross-shire), farnost Assynt (hrabství Sutherland); a ostrovů Vnějších Hebrid - Lewis a Harris.

Materiál byl čerpán z map Ordnance Survey, měřítko 1:50 000 a 1:10 000, a záznamů pořízených v 2. pol. 19. stol. jako podklady pro vznik prvních OS map.

Faktory podílejícími se na vzniku zdejších pomístních a místních jmen byly hlavně různé skupiny obyvatel, z nichž nejvýznamější stopy přetrvávající až do současnosti (ve formě pomístních a místních jmen) zanechali především Gaelové a Skandinávci. V dnešní době se tato oblast považuje za bilingvní. Hlavním jazykem je angličtina a gaelštinou hovoří spíše starší obyvatelé a lze říci, že je na ústupu od té doby, co se zde angličtina začala používat ve větší míře, tedy od 18. stol. V posledních letech jsou zde snahy o obnovení gaelštiny a její zpětné začlenění do každodenního života. Překvapivé je, že i když angličtina jasně převažuje, většina pomístních (a částečně i místních) jmen je galská. Dále je nutné poznamenat, že vzhledem k nízkému počtu obyvatel a jazykovým podmínkám dané oblasti je hustota pomístních jmen udivující. Dost možná to vyplývá z dřívějšího způsobu života, kdy zde lidé žili ve velmi těsném kontaktu s přírodou (zemědělství a rybářství) a na krajině byli závislí a potřebovali se v ní orientovat. Obzvláště oronyma nabízejí mnoho galských výrazů, které detailně odlišují jednotlivé (i nepatrné) krajinné prvky. Na pobřeží pak převažují jména skandinávského původu, která však byla často Gaily přijata „za vlastní“ prostřednictvím gaelicizace. Tato jména se vztahují ke krajinným útvarům, které jsou často velmi malé a mají pouze lokální význam. Vzhledem ke změnám v jazykovém prostředí a životního stylu jsou právě tato jména nejvíce ohrožena a upadají v zapomnění.

Anglická jména se ve srovnání s galskými a skandinávskými vyskytují poměrně zřídka. Může se jednat o „primárně“ anglická jména tvořená prvky anglického původu, nebo o jména (či jen jejich prvky), které byly angličtinou přijaty, anglicizovány, buď na úrovni fonologické, morfologické nebo lexikologické. K anglicizaci většinou nedochází

u termínů, které jsou v dané oblasti dostatečně srozumitelné, často se vyskytující a používané (*sgeir, camas...*).

Pomístní jména se v severozápadních Skotsku vyskytují především jako jména složená, skládající se z „obecné části“ (*geric* - jméno druhové) odkazující k jednotlivým přírodním útvarům a z „určující části“ (*specfic* – určující část jména). Výskyt jednoduchých pomístních a místních jmen je malý, ale není vyloučen. K tvoření (po)místních jmen prostřednictvím afixů zde nedochází pro charakter jazyků podílejících se na jejich vzniku.

Struktura jmen vzniklých skládáním je u jmen anglického a skandinávského původu následující: specifikum předchází a určuje obecný termín (*generic*). U jmen gaelského původu je to obráceně: první je obecné jméno a pak následuje určující část, ale existují výjimky.

Nejčastějším slovotvorným procesem při vzniku (po)místních jmen v severozápadním Skotsku je zpětné tvoření (*back-formation*), např. jméno hory *Beinn Dearg* ('červená hora') je přeneseno na loch v její těsné blízkosti: *Loch Beinn Dearg*, tedy z jednoho krajinného prvku na jiný. Při pohledu na mapu většího měřítka se to může zdát poněkud nudné a nenápadité, ale pro orientaci v krajině to zřejmě naprosto stačilo a plnilo svůj účel. Gaelská jména se vůbec vyznačují přímočarostí a popisností a konotativní významy se v nich objevují málo. Další možností při zpětném tvoření je přenesení pomístního jména na osadu v jejím okolí, např. *Dail Beag* 'malé údolí' na Lewis bylo použito pro osadu v této oblasti. Platí to i naopak: místní jméno je použito jako pomístní: *Ullapool River* protékající městečkem Ullapool. Prolínání se místních a pomístních jmen skrze proces zpětného tvoření byl důvod, proč je v práci věnován určitý prostor i místním jménům a prvkům, které je primárně tvoří.

Častým jevem je také tautologie, kdy se ve jméně opakuje prvek se stejným významem. Většinou se jedná o hybridy, jména skládající se z prvků různého jazykového původu. Důvodem vzniku hybridů bývá zapomenutí či neznalost původního významu jména a jeho „osvětlení“ přidáním dalšího prvku (většinou se jedná o druhové jméno). Příkladem může být *Corrieshalloch Gorge* (ve farnosti Lochbroom): *corrie* je anglicizací gaelského *coire* a nese stejný význam jako anglické 'gorge' (rokle, strž).

Další možností vzniku (po)místních jmen je jejich doslovný překlad: převod z jednoho jazyka do druhého se zachováním morfologické struktury a lexikologického významu, jehož výsledkem jsou tzv. kalky. Tento proces není tak častý jako výše uvedené. Nejčastějším způsobem přejmutí cizích (po)místních jmen (gaelských do angličtiny) je jejich přizpůsobení na fonologické rovině: pravopis jména se změní podle pravidel cílového jazyka tak, aby zůstala zachována (alespoň přibližně) původní výslovnost (např. *Loch Ìu* > *Loch Ewe*)

Pomístní a místní jména byla analyzována ze sémantického hlediska: jaký obsah nesou jejich jednotlivé prvky (druhová jména a specifika), jestli je v jejich použití rozdíl v závislosti na geografickém výskytu, zda byly nějakým způsobem anglicizovány, či se pro danou skutečnost používá „primárně“ anglický termín. Především použití druhových jmen (generic) se zdá být velmi individuální a relativní v závislosti na jednotlivých lokalitách:

1. některé termíny se vyskytují všude se stejným významem, např. *river*, *forest*, *loch*, *sgeir* (kámen na pobřeží), *rubha – point* (výběžek)...
2. další termíny se opět vyskytují v celé zkoumané oblasti, ale jejich význam se může měnit: př. *poll* (rybník, jezírko, tůň) může být v oblasti Assyntu použito i pro 'zátoku'
3. jiné se mohou objevovat v závislosti na jazykovém prostředí a krajinném typu pouze v některých oblastech: *cleit* (gaelicizace skandinávského *klettr*) se používá pouze v pomístních jménech ostrova Lewis a Harris

I když se použití *beinn* na pevnině vztahuje k vrcholům okolo 500m (a více), na Lewisu se toto druhové jméno může objevit ve jméně kopce, který měří 92m (*Beinn nan Caorach*) a na pevnině by byl v oblasti severozápadních Highlands označen buď jako *creag* nebo *meall* (menší kopce, vyvýšeniny), nebo by zůstal bez povšimnutí. Oba dva termíny však byly použity na stejném principu psychologie pojmenování: obě jména odkazují ke krajinnému prvku dostatečně výraznému a vynikajícímu nad prvky okolní. Není tedy důvod, proč by nemohl být použit i pro vyšší místa jinak rovinatého ostrova Lewis.

Hlubší jazykový rozbor pomístních a místních jmen dané oblasti nemohl být proveden pro nedostatečnou znalost gaelštiny a také pro časovou a informační náročnost nutnou pro podrobný výzkum.

Tato práce je pokusem o všestranný pohled na jazykovou situaci v pomístních a částečně i v místních jménech konkrétní oblasti. Tato problematika je velice zajímavá a lepší pochopení vyžaduje přístupy, které překračují jazykovědné hledisko. Sama ale může i jednotlivé obory participující na výzkumu místních jmen významně obohatit.

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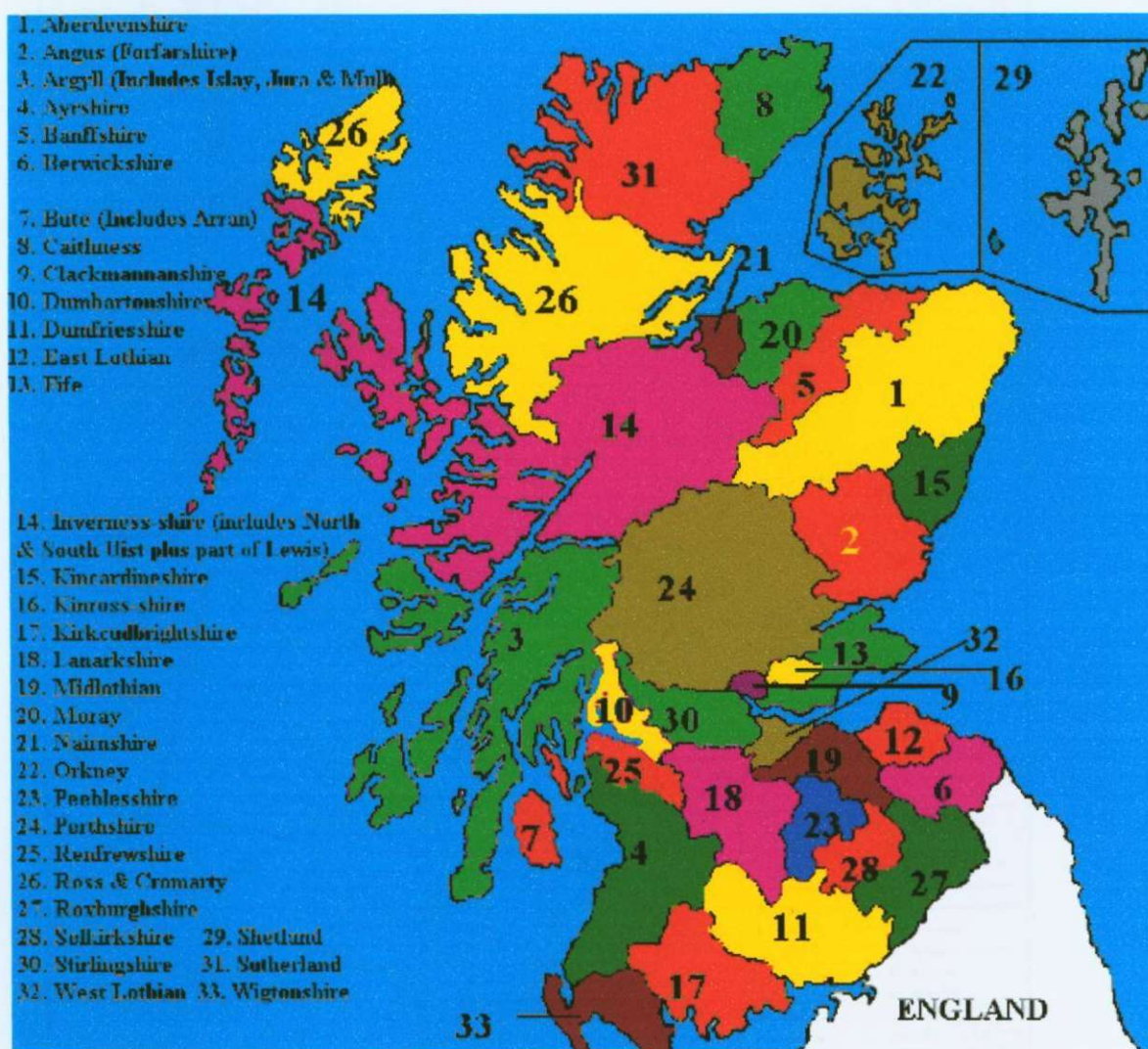
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VII. APPENDICES

I. SCOTLAND – counties



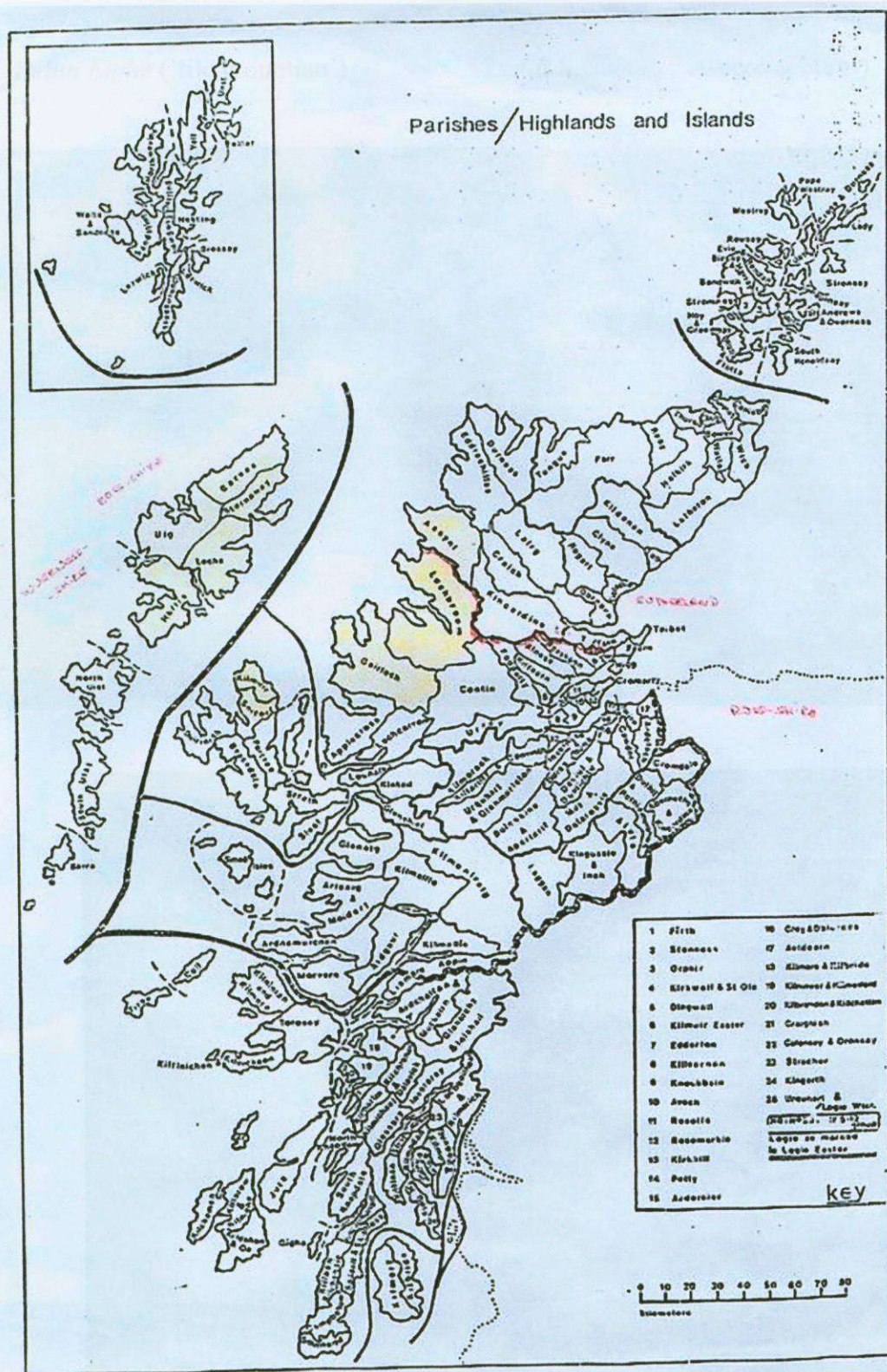
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counties consist of parishes

the counties studied in this work are following:

1. Inverness-shire (the north-western parts and islands – Harris, Lewis)
2. Ross and Cromarty (the north-western part, including the islands, i.e. Isle of Lewis)
3. Sutherland (the south-western coast)

II. HIGHLANDS and ISLANDS – parishes

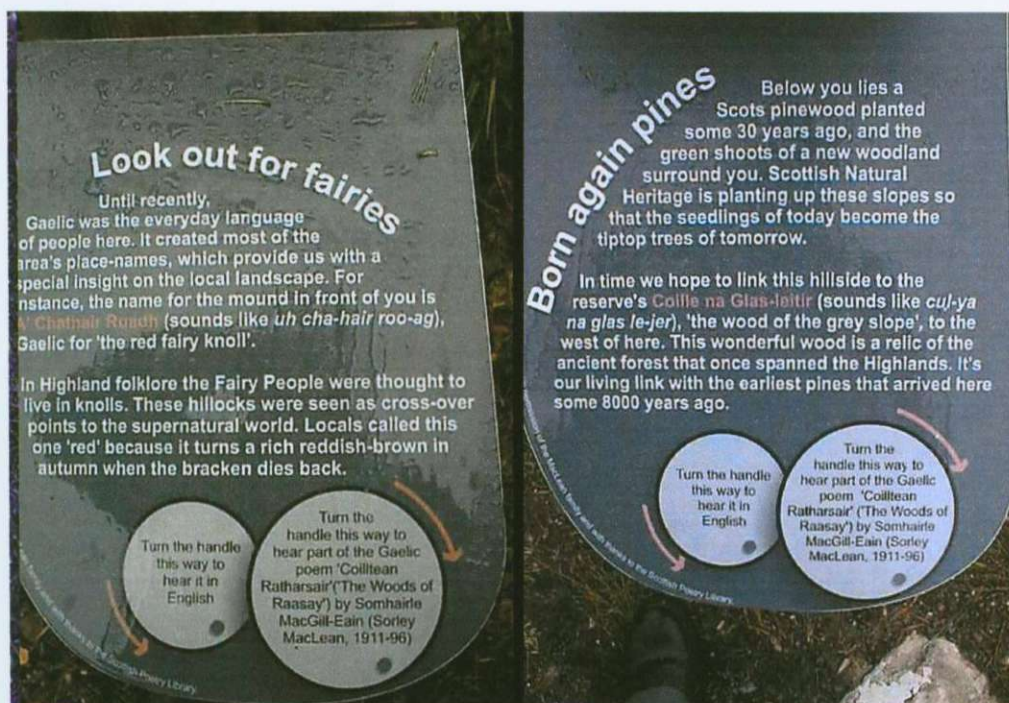
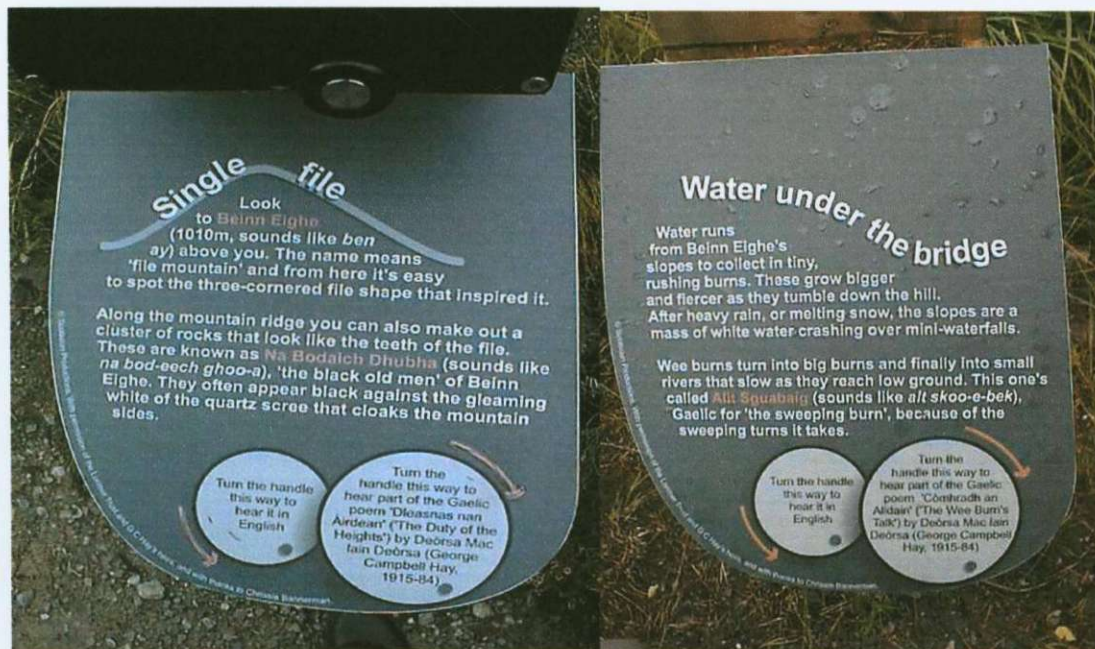


III. Beinn Eighe NNR

Place-names interpretation as a part of the heritage trail in the NNR

1. Beinn Eighe ('file mountain')

2. Allt Sguabaig ('sweeping burn')



3. A' Chathair Ruadh (‘the red fairy knoll’)

4. Coille na Glas-leitir (‘the wood of the grey slope’)