Nationality Names in the Irish Annals

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past century and a half, many distinguished scholars have laboured to determine how and when these islands first became inhabited, and, in particular, how they acquired their Celtic populations. Instead of attempting the task of summarizing their findings, perhaps I may quote from a recent (1988) assessment by Professor Donnchadh Ó Corrín, who quite honestly stated, ‘Scholars are not at all sure when Ireland was conquered by the Celts’. Apart from Brittonic and Goidelic, he adds, ‘we do not know what other languages were spoken in prehistoric Ireland’.1

Obviously, a name-study based solely on the annals is not a complete survey, but it does provide some semblance of continuity. And, as T. F. O’Rahilly pointed out in regard to the annals, ‘When there is no evidence of later interpolation they are the safest and most trustworthy guide that we possess’.2 He traces the origin of annals in Ireland to the practice of making brief marginal entries on Paschal tables with a view to commemorating notable events, especially those which concerned the church.3 The keeping of records of yearly happenings evolved into collections of annals as we know them, and should, accordingly, provide continuous contemporary evidence as to nomenclature in medieval times. However, our present collections, after centuries of copying and re-copying, abbreviating and interpolating, in many cases bear little resemblance to the originals.

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All the compilations of Irish annals are related in one way or another. Their origins and inter-relationships have been investigated in detail, and a convenient summary is provided by Kathleen Hughes, who traces the beginnings to an Ó Néill chronicle, probably contemporary from the late seventh century, and a Bangor chronicle.4 These were incorporated into an Ó Néill chronicle, begun between 740 and 775, and certainly contemporary by the end of the eighth century. Local annals were kept at Lismore from the latest 700, while Clonmacnoise probably had contemporary annals from the mid-eighth century. All of these were then incorporated into what she calls a 'Chronicle of Ireland', possibly around 850, and it is from this source that our annalistic compilations, directly or indirectly, drew most of their early entries. Dr Hughes adds a word of caution regarding the material prior to 585, which she believes to have been added after 913, while Professor D. A. Binchy did not believe that there was a single genuine entry in the annals for the whole of the fifth century.5

It is generally agreed that the Annals of Ulster (AU) furnish the most complete and trustworthy source for early Irish history.6 Professor F. J. Byrne regards the bulk of its entries as contemporary from the middle of the sixth century.7 Despite the fact that AU survive mainly in a late fifteenth-century copy made for Cathal Mac Maghnsa (Maguire)—now Trinity College, Dublin, MS 1282—the main scribe, Ruaidhrí Ó Luinín, copied so faithfully from his exemplar that practically all the older language-forms are retained in a more or less contemporary fashion.

The next most useful for my purpose are the Annals of Inisfallen (AI), named after the beautifully-sited monastery in Loch Léin, but originally compiled in east Munster monasteries—Lismore, Emly, Killaloe.8 These are the only major annals of which the original transcript survives (now Bodleian MS Rawlinson B. 503), the first part of which was completed in 1092, so that all entries thereafter are more or less contemporary—and perhaps for some decades previously too. We know that the first scribe laid down his pen in mid-1092, but he may have been making annual entries for many years prior to that, perhaps from 1066, when, as Grabowski and Dunville noted, AI suddenly became independent of their Clonmacnoise-group exemplar.9 Despite the rather abbreviated style of the early entries, AI, particularly in later annals, supply a necessary counterbalance to the Ulster and Midland bias of the other compilations.

The 'Clonmacnoise group' comprises a number of sets of annals derived from what Gearóid Mac Niocaill terms the 'Clonmacnoise Chronicle' which he dates to c.960.10 The compilation known as the Annals of Clonmacnoise is of no use for my purpose, as it survives only in an English translation.11 A more useful one is Chronicon Scotorum (CS).12 The most reliable—if worst-titled—of the group are the so-called Annals of Tigernach.13

I have not had much occasion to quote from the Annals of Connacht,14 as they do not commence until 1224; just a little from the related Annals of Loch Cé (ALC), which begin at 1014.15 The same applies to Mac Carthaigh’s Book, which begins at 1114.16 I have drawn only very sparingly from the eleventh- and twelfth-century propagandist chronicles compiled in an annalistic style—such as

5 Studia Hibernica, 2 (1962), 71.
7 The Ireland of St Columba in Historical Studies, 5, edited by J. L. McCracken (London, 1965), 37–58 (pp. 37–38). He disagrees with the assessment of Professor J. V. Kelleher (Studia Hibernica, 3 [1963], 113–27), who considered all the collections of annals to be selective versions of a text very likely composed in 910.
9 K. Grabowski and D. Dunville, Chronicles and Annals of Medieval Ireland and Wales (Woodbridge, 1984), pp. 66 and 81.
12 Chronicon Scotorum, edited by W. M. Hennessy (London, 1866). An unfortunate error in binding led to the frequent mistitling of this work as 'Chronicon Scotorum'.
13 The Annals of Tigernach', edited by W. Stokes, in Recueil celtique, 16–18 (1895–97); cited here as Tig.1, Tig.2, etc., according to the section.
16 In Miscellaneous Irish Annals (~ MIA), ed. S. Ó hInnse (Dublin, 1947).
Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh (CGG), 'the war of the Gaels against the Galls' of the Dál Cairn, Caithréim Ceallachain Caisil of the Éoganacht Chaisil, and the Fragmentary Annals (FA), which glorifies the Osraige. The Annals of the Four Masters (AFM), the best-known and most wide-ranging of all the collections, are invaluable for many purposes, but in regard to names they give only seventeenth-century literary forms, of little use for this survey.

The most noticeable feature of nationality-names, as used by the Gaelic-speaking people of Ireland in post-Patrician times, is that they almost invariably related to people rather than places. Whereas a modern speaker of Irish would think of France as 'an Fhrainc', and derive from that the description of its inhabitants as 'Francaigh', in early Christian times the exact opposite obtained. It was the people who were known as 'Fhrainc' (nominative plural) and their king as 'ri Frangc' (genitive plural), and it was only later that a singular place-name developed—'an Fhrainc'. To judge from the early annals, the only country recognized as a definite entity by the Irish was Ireland itself.

ÉRIU or ÉIRE, 'IRELAND'

There has been much scholarly debate on this name, which Pokorny and O’Rahilly regarded as wholly Celt in origin, while Bergin believed its roots to be pre-Celtic.

As the early annals in AU are almost all in Latin, apart from an obvious interpolation at 434, they use Hibernia up until 779, when we first get for Érinn huile, 'over all Ireland'. From the ninth century onwards, examples become numerous. All have some in the pre-Patrician section, with varying inflexions: §257, Ro nannad Heriu, 'Ireland was divided'; §127, for Erin, for Heriu, 'over Ireland'; §35, do gabail Herenn, 'took Ireland'. I do not know what era these entries represent, but the initial b (as found in Hibernia) is noticeable, as it is in the first post-Patrician occurrence (in a quatrains) at 607: for rígraid Herend, 'on the kings of Ireland'.

The island of Ireland is a phrasal phrase which has become popular among politicians in recent years. Interestingly, this occurs in AU at 921: eccn enna imse Erenn, 'chief master of erudition of the island of Ireland', and even earlier, in Latin, at 721: super insulam Hibernie.

Fir Éireann, 'the men of Ireland', appears in AI in 838: Mordal fer nErenn, and on a number of occasions up to 1280. AU also use it sparingly, first at 858, then at 1005, 1102, 1106, 1167, 1168. Ó Corráin has pointed out that fir Érenn is used by the followers of Mael Sechnaill, of Muirchertach Ua Briain and of Ruaidri Ua Conchobhair, all famous kings in their time, so that it implied, not only a concept of Ireland as a whole, but an identification of the affairs of Ireland as a whole with the fortunes of the dominant king of the day.

Regrettably, there is no reference in the annals to Mná na hÉireann, 'the women of Ireland'. Incidentally, while such a phrase is normal in modern times, no one would say 'an Eire' or 'don Eirinn', yet there are examples of such usage of the article in Old Irish: ind Herus, don Érinn. In the annals, as in modern Irish, it is only in the genitive that the article appears, and then only in late compilations such as FA (615 and 704) and Tig.4 (1067). The adjectival substantive, Éireannach, also makes a late appearance (AU 1487; MIA 1395; FA 854 and 859).

INHABITANTS OF IRELAND

Irish people in general, perhaps because of their insularity, do not appear to have applied a collective name to themselves until contacts with other races forced on them an appreciation of their language distinctiveness. Nor were they conscious of racial kinship. 'Throughout all their early history and tradition', Eoin MacNeill tells

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18 Caithréim Ceallachain Caisil, edited by A. Bugge (Christiania, 1905).
20 Annála Riogachta Éireann ('Annals of the Four Masters'), edited by J. O'Donovan (Dublin, 1848-51).
21 Quoted by M. Ó Bráin, 'Hibernica', Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie [- ZCP], 14 (1923), 309-34 (p. 327).
22 EIHM, p. 297.
26 W. Stokes and J. Strachan, Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1901-03), II, 312.5.
us, 'the Irish and the Britons alike show not the slightest atom of recognition that they were Celtic peoples. We do not find them acknowledging any kinship with the Gauls, or even with each other.' 37

In fact, ‘Celt’, a name borrowed from classical writers, is one designation which you will not find in the annals—nor in any other Old or Middle Irish source.

Máel Mura of Fahan, who died in 887 (AU), famed as ‘chief poet of Ireland’ and ‘keeper of tradition’, composed a long poem on the origins of the Goidels, probably under the aegis of Máel Sechnaill of the Uí Néill (described as ri Hevern uile, ‘king of all Ireland’, in his obit in AU 862). Máel Mura’s triad of names for the Irish people provides a convenient starting point:

Féni o Fhaenius asambartr | clú cen dochat
Gaéil ó Gaedel Glas garta | Scuít o Scotia. 38
‘Féni are so called from Faenius, a name without reserve;
Gaels from grey Goidel, the generous; Scots from Scotia.’

FÉNI

‘The earliest name by which the Goidels are known to have called themselves in Irish was Féni’, according to T. F. O’Rahilly, 39 who was the following the lead of Meyer 40 and MacNeill. 41 Yet the name always appears to have had legal rather than racial connotations. Any reference to them usually comes from one of the law-tracts, and as F. J. Byrne remarks, represents the viewpoint of a jurist working in the Uí Néill sphere of influence. 42 The word finechas occurs frequently in the laws in the sense of the traditional body of native custom. In Crith Gablac, as its editor, D. A. Binchy, tells us, the word Féni is consistently used to describe all freemen who possess legal status and capacity. 43 At any rate, as the name does not appear at all in the annals, I do not need to pursue it further.

37 Phases of Irish History (Dublin, 1919), p. 4.

Ó MURCHADHA

SCOTTI, ‘SCOTS’

The origins of the name Scotti do not appear to have been adequately treated. Eoin MacNeill believed it to be a Gallo-Latin word meaning ‘raiders’, given as a kind of nickname to the Irish. 44 St Patrick made frequent use of the name in his writings, 45 usually in the genitive plural (Scotorum), but once as an adjective (Scota), 46 and we find an apostolic-cum-literary context adhering to its usage in the annals. AU have (Latin) Patrician references at 431 ad Scottos, 492 Scotti and 493 ad baptizandos Scottos, the latter phrase recurring prior to the account of the Battle of Clontarf in 1014. From the ninth century the name is associated with scholarship: AU 847 optimus Scotorum... scriba 7 ancerta; 871 perissimum historiarum Scotticarum; 1027 sapientissimus Scotorum; 1098 scriba philosophie... omnium Scotorum. Only at 861 is there a slight divergence, for Gormlaith... regina Scotorum.

All have an early section (§§ 389–91) dealing with the coming of Palladius/Patricius, with (ad) Scottos mentioned four times. Cú Chulainn is also mentioned there, and he appears as (genitive) fortissimi heral(2) Scotorum in §206. We also find Ab ingressa Scotorum de Aegipto in §179 (following Máel Mura’s lead). The only other early occurrence is in the very first post-Patrician annal (433): Conversio Scotorum. When the word re-appears in the (Latin) account of the Bruce wars (AI 1315–18), Scotti is used for the inhabitants of Scotland, replacing Albanii of 1296 and 1307.

FA alone attempt an Irish version, Scuit, at 856 (§247), where they are equated with ‘Gall-Ghaedhil’.

GÓIDIL or GAEDHIL, ‘GAELS’

Most scholars would accept that Goidel (and Goidel) are loanwords from a Brittonic dialect; M. A. O’Brien considered Goidel to be a straight borrowing from Welsh Gwryddel (which can have a pejorative meaning of ‘backwoodsman’). 47 There is general agreement in regard to

44 See note 31.
45 James Carney, The Problem of St Patrick (Dublin, 1973), p. 50, maintains that Patrick uses the term Scotti in the restricted sense of ‘the Gaelic colonists in North Britain’, distinguishing them from the Hiberniaci.
the comparative lateness of the borrowing, as evidenced by the absence of syncope in the accusative and dative plural: Goidel, Goidelaib (as contrasted with Bretn, Bretnaeb).

This is borne out by its occurrence in the annals. The earliest in AU is at 772: Aeniss Goidhil da tredan, ‘the Irish fasted two periods of three days’. There is an indication that the usage was not introduced before the mid-eighth century in AU 776, which records the death of a monk, Goidel of Clonard. Born presumably early in the eighth century, he would hardly have been so named had the word been then in common use meaning ‘Irishman’.

It was the ninth-century incursions from Scandinavia which accelerated the use of Goidil to distinguish natives from foreigners, e.g. AU 842, o geruithth 7 Goidbelathb; AU 853, Amblaio m. righ Laitblinde do taidecht a nEiriin corro gailisn Gaill Erenn dó, 7 ci a Goidbelathb, ‘Amblaio, son of the king of Lochlann, came to Ireland, and the foreigners of Ireland submitted to him, and he took tribute from the Irish’. It is noteworthy that AI do not find use for the word until 1005, Comthnol fer nErend eter Goidel, ‘a muster of the men of Ireland, both foreigners and Gaedhil’, but use it with reasonable frequency thereafter.

The earliest use of the article in AU is in 917, in Goidil; AI (1033) have smuthsenair na nGóedel, ‘venerable senior of the Gaedhil’, and AU (1042) cenn mhanach na nGoidel in Colonia, ‘the chief monk of the Gaedhil in Cologne’.

The phrase ardá Gaidbel Erenn, ‘high-king of the Gaedhil of Ireland’, appears in AU in 1014, and after the 1169 invasion the presence of an Anglo-Norman element in most areas gave rise to many such couplings: Gaedhil Éireann (ALC 1224; 1240; 1248); Gaedhil Léighean 7 Madhe (AI 1283); Gaedhil Comnaich (AI 1296; MIA 1169). 

It did not go unrecorded that the Dál Riata of Scotland were of the Gaelic race. When Máel Coluim, described as ardá Alban, ‘high-king of Scotland’, died in 1165, he was acclaimed in AU as in cristiadhe as ferr do bai do Gaidelaibb re muir anair (‘the most Christian of the Gaedhil by the eastern sea’). The name Airear Gaidbeal (Argyll), which means ‘the shore of the Gaedhil’, raises an interesting question, namely, whether it was first bestowed by the people of Argyll themselves or by their kin in north Antrim, to whom the shores of the

37 ‘Hibernica’ (see note 21), p. 333.

Mull of Kintyre would be clearly visible. I cannot find it in AU earlier than 1164 (ár fer Aver Ghaedhel, ‘a slaughter of the men of Argyll’). MIA (Rawl. B 488), AC and ALC record Mac Soinairle, ri Aírrir Gaedel, ‘Mac Sorley, the king of Argyll’, in 1247.

CRUTHIN or CRUITHNE

T. F. O’Rahilly has classified several early ‘tribal’ designations in Ireland as remnants of earlier immigrations—e.g. Érann; Fir Bolg or Buig, cognate with Belgae (whence Belgium); and the Lagen and their kindred, the Domnaën, a branch of the Dumnonii who gave their name to Devon.38 Prominent among this group were the Cruthin or Cruithne, a Q-Celtic version of the *Pritani or *Priteni after whom the Greeks named Britain and Ireland the Preti(ian)ak tēcui (Pretanic islands).39 In historical times they were represented by scattered tribes in various parts of Ireland, the best-known being Dál nAraide who ruled over the southern half of Co. Antrim. Muirchú, in his life of St Patrick (compiled before 700) has St Patrick travelling in regions Cruithneorum to revisit Slemish (ad montem Miss).40

They are first noticed in AU in 446, in a mixture of Latin and Irish: Alí dicunt du Cruithnibh fuissae, ‘others say that he was of the Cruthin’. In 563, the name is used in the accusative (frí Cruithníu), genitive and dative in an account of a disastrous defeat inflicted on them by the Uí Néill, who were then extending their sway in the north. The name recurs frequently between then and the end of the eighth century.

Although Dál nAraide appears in AU as early as 698, Cruithin lingers on until 808 (o Cruithnibh). The change (to Dál nAraide) reflects an acceptance by the Cruthin of the genealogists’ fiction that they were descended from Ir, son of Míl, and were part of the great Gaelic world countrywide.

PICTI, 'PICTS'

One tenet about which O’Rahilly was most vehement was that the Cruthin of Ulster should never be termed ‘Picts’, as Picti was the name

39 Ibid., pp. 84 and 450.
applied by the Romans to all those north of Hadrian’s Wall.43 In a single instance only, in 866, AU use Cruithentuath, ‘the Cruithin-race’, to denote the Pictish territory in Scotland. Otherwise, the Scottish Picts are Picti, from 580 to 875, with variants Picture at 676 and Picture at 750. Tig.3 attempt an Irish version, Picardáig, at 727 and 733, but have Picti elsewhere. AI do not use the name at all. Incidentally, it frequently occurs in the writings of the Venerable Bede, and MacNeill has pointed out that, in a 1565 translation of Bede, Picti is invariably translated as ‘Redshanks’, showing, he says, how names given in this way can come to be used as proper appellatives.44 His theory was that Scotti and Gaelil also became proper names in this manner.

ALBU, ‘SCOTLAND’

Despite frequent contacts between Ireland and Britain, there is no Irish name in the early annals for our neighbouring island as a whole. O’Rahilly held that the Irish equivalent of the Latin Brit(i)anna was Albu, cognate with the classical Albion, and that Albu lingered on as the Irish name for Britain until the ninth century, when it contracted to being applied to the Gaelic part of Scotland (as opposed to the Pictish and British parts).45 He supplies very few examples of this early use of Albu, but he was undoubtedly correct in pointing out that Albu came into use as a name for Scotland (or part thereof) in the ninth century, and that it was then projected backwards by various scribes and annalists. For example, the eleventh-century scribe of AI refers to Colum Cille’s first night i nAlbain in 563, whereas in AU (574), Colum Cille is associated with la (Iona). In 633, AI record the death of Cináed, rig Alban, ‘king of Alba’; in AU he is more correctly titled rex Pictorum.

FA §197) have Drust, righ Alban, whom AU (729) terms Drust regem Pictorum. Tig.3 have similar anachronistic occurrences at 504 and 559. AU, apart from an obvious interpolation (at AM 4330), do not use Alba until 798, when Viking raids affected eiter Erin 7 Albaín, ‘both Ériu and Alba’. From then on, its use in both AU and AI becomes increasingly frequent. The use of sir Alban, ‘men of Scotland’, first appears in AU in 918 and for the last time in 1130. Eiter siru Alban, ‘among the men of Alba’, in 965 is followed two years later by la hAlbanchu, ‘by the men of Alba’, while both forms are used in one sentence in 1006. Albanaiagh gradually replaced sir Alban. We find it as an epithet in AU 1065: Dubhthach Albanach primhannmcarra Erin 7 Alban, ‘Dublthach the Scot, chief confessor of Ireland and Scotland’. But even here we have to bear in mind that to the eleventh- or twelfth-century annalist, Alba signified not present-day Scotland, but the Gaelic-dominated western part of it. This is evident from such entries as AU 1130: Bellum iir siru Alban 7 feru Moreb, ‘a battle between the men of Alba and the men of Moray’.

AI do not use sir Alban at all, and Albanaiagh only in 1296 and 1307, when Scotland was an entity ruled over by John de Baliol and Robert Bruce. MacCarthaigh’s Book (MIA) at 1307 has a comraig Alban 7 Saxan, ‘in a battle of Scots and English’, as if *Albain, like Saxain, was a plural name for a people. Similarly, we find in FA 871: brad mor Breatan 7 Alban 7 Saxon, ‘a great plunder of Britons, Scots and English’. Use of the article is not noticeable before 1473, when ALC mention mac mheic Domhnull na hAlban, ‘MacDonald’s son of Alba’.

BREITAIN, ‘BRITONS’

We have seen how the *Pritani or *Priteni of the earlier period were equivalent to Cruithin or Cruithne in Irish, but a different formation arose later through acquaintance with Roman versions of the name. T. F. O’Rahilly summarized the origins of these versions as follows:46 Britanni and Brittones were both borrowed from Gaulish into Insular Celtic at different times. Britannia was invented by the Romans to describe the land of the Britanni (Julius Caesar’s word); the earlier *Pritani were pushed northwards by Gaulish and Belgic newcomers, who borrowed the name Brittones from the Romans (as used by Juvenal and Martial).

St. Patrick, in his Confessio, used a plural form, in Britanniis, perhaps he was influenced by the Irish i nBrethnath, ‘among the Britons’, or it could be a reference to the provinces into which Roman

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43 EIHM, pp. 342 and 533.
44 ‘The Pretanic Background’, Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 63 (1933), 1-28 (p. 4).
45 EIHM, pp. 385-87.
46 EIHM, pp. 444-54.
47 Bieler, op. cit. (note 36), pp. 70, 75 and 82.
Britain was administratively divided. In the early Irish annals, *Britannia* occurs fairly frequently in Latin entries, but not always in the Roman sense of the whole island. AU’s earliest reference (632) concerns Bangor in Wales, and AL’s (614) relates to Chester. Tig,3, in a reference to St Augustine at 583, specifies the Brittonic area: *do senmoeir tiun Britannia 7 a Saxain 7 isan probhinds*, ‘to preach in Britain and England and in the province’ (the last-named being the Roman province). But by 794, AU appears to denote the whole island when recording *Uaistatii omnium insularum Britannie a gentibus*, ‘devastation of all the islands of Britain by the heathens’.

*Britann(n)i* and *Brittones* in the annals always signify the Brittonic population: e.g. AU 613, *rex Britannorum* (in an account of the battle of Chester); AL 614, *inter Sax 7 Britta(n)nos*; AU 872, *rex Britannorum Satha Claude*, ‘king of the Strathclyde Britons’. *Brit(t)ones* is not found in AL, but quite often in the Latin section of AU between 473 and 871. Cecile O’Rahilly believed that there were settlements of Britons, probably from Strathclyde, in Ireland before the Norse invasions. They took part in Irish battles, e.g. in Leinster in 709 (AU), when two sons of Cellach of Cuala were killed *cum Brittonibus Celsius*, ‘with Cellach’s Britons’. AU also has an interesting reference in 836 to a place called *Dermagh Brittonum*, and it is noticeable that several holy men bore the epithet Brit—Colmán Brit and Mo-Shenóc Brit, and Aedgen Brit, named in AU 864 as bishop of Kildare. According to T. F. O’Rahilly,* this comes from a singular form, *Brito* (of which we have an example in the Book of Armagh, *Ego sum Lommannus Britto*), treated as *Brittu* on the model of native *

Despite the early adaptation of *Bretain* into Irish, AU was slow to change from the Latin form, the earliest I can find being *Colman na mbrethan*, ‘Colman of the Britons’, abbot of Slane, who died in 751, and

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46 Ireland and Wales (London, 1924), p. 66.
47 Corpus Genealogarum Sanctorum Hiberniae, edited by P. Ó Ríain (Dublin, 1985), pp. 143 and 150.
48 EIHM, p. 445.

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even here the use of the article makes one suspect an interpolation; he was probably the ‘Colmán Britt’ of the genealogies. *Righ mbrethan* ‘king of the Britons’ at 856 looks contemporary, as does a reference to *Bretain* being driven out by Saxons in 865, but it is not until the tenth century that the name gains frequency in AU. The Munster AL do not record the Irish form until the late eleventh century—1080 *hi mbrethain* ‘among the Britons’, 1093 *ri Bretan* ‘king of the Britons’—and by then, in both AU and AL, the name obviously denoted the inhabitants of Wales. The Britons of Strathclyde and other parts no longer had a political profile.

We find the adjectival use in AU 1029, *ui. xx. ech mbretneb*, ‘six score Welsh horses’, and the noun *Brethain* ‘Welshmen’ is used in AL from 1257 onwards, although the old phrase *ri Bretian* is found in 1307 beside the newer *Bretneb*.

**ANGLI, ‘ANGLES’**

Before passing on to the Saxons, a word about the Angles, the race who, according to Bede, occupied East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria. For some reason, they never impinged on the Irish consciousness, despite the many Irish contacts with Northumbria. When AL chronicled the death of Oswald, *rex Anglicorum*, in 644, they glossed *Anglica* as ‘Sax’, and thereafter (apart from an interpolation at 1174) found no further occasion to use the name until the Bruce wars in 1316. *Anglia* for England is used only in Latin entries at 1307 and 1314. AU (639) title Oswald as *rex Saxorum*, and only Ofa, in 796, is called *rex bonus Anglorum*. Following a similar entry at 871, no further mention is made until after the Norman invasions, when Henry II became *rex Angliae*. There was no native version. Even to the present day, there is no trace in the Irish language of the people who gave their name to England.

**SAXAIN, ‘SAXONS’**

The Saxons, by contrast, are regularly mentioned in Latin entries in AU from 600 (*Bellum Saxorum*) to 937 (*inter Saxones atque Nordmannnus*). Earlier occurrences at 471 and 434 are almost certainly interpolations; as the editors point out, the Saxons had not even invaded England by 434. In AU 732 and 738 we find references to a west of Ireland monastic settlement called *Magh Eu Saxorum* (later
Magh Ei na Saxan). Al, however, use a different Latin form; the entries of 434 and 471 are given as Prima (secunda) praed Saxanorum, 'first (second) plunder of the English', and the only other Latin example is at 705, rex Saxorum.

The normal plural form in Irish was Saxain, an -o stem like Britain, though without syncope. It is found fairly frequently in Al from the seventh century, somewhat later in AU. Rí(g) (or rex) Saxan is featured in Al at 633, 670 and 1068, and in AU at 731 and 858, with dative do Saxanaíb at 865 and accusative Saxana at 1006.

In the 1170s, the name was used to describe the new invaders from Britain. The people often referred to today as 'Normans' were a blend of Norman-French, Flemings, Welsh, etc., with but a small admixture of Saxon. Yet in 1176, AU term them Saxain, do na Saxaíbh, larla Saxanach 'a Saxon earl'—the latter being their first use of the derived adjective. But when the annalist recovered from the initial shock, Gall or Gaill became the usual appellation for the newcomers, and Saxain was applied only to people in England, the most common usage being rí Saxan.

Ó'Rahilly held that Sax (< Latin Saxo) was the earliest form in Irish. But the plural Saxa, dative Saxaíbh, is not found in AU until 1176 (beside Saxain), and occurs in Al only between the years 1257 and 1307.

While Saxanach, as an adjective, is used in AU at 1176 and in Al at 1269 and 1305, neither make it a plural noun until AU do so in 1415: Saxanach do theacht a n-Eirinn 'Englishmen came to Ireland'. It is found in later compilations, however; Tg.2 gives a feminine singular form, mac na Sax[an]ghaíb 'son of the Saxon woman'. Only in ALC do we find Sasanaíd (1256: go Magh nEá na Saxanach)—a somewhat anachronistic form which did not evolve until modern times. When Elizabeth I had an Irish primer prepared for her instruction (by Christopher Nugent, baron of Delvin) in semi-phonetic spelling, one of the phrases featured was: Dia le riuinean Saxona 'God save the Queene off Englande'. Saxana or Sasana as a place-name is not found in the annals.

At 1038, AU records a battle between Cuana rí Allsaxan 7 Otta, rí Frangaí, 'Conrad, king of the farther Saxons, and Otto, king of the Franks'. Conrad II reigned over the Holy Roman Empire, and this was one of the few occasions when an annalist concerned himself with Continental Europe.

FRAINC, 'FRANKS'

Apart from the Scandinavians, the Franks were about the only Continentals to attract the annalists' attention. The earliest references in AU, as usual in Latin, are: 659 and 813, rex Francorum; 840, imperator Francorum. This again gave a plural -o stem in Irish. Ri Frangaí, as noted above, appears first in 1038 in AU, with the nominative Frainc in 1072, and dative Francaíb in 1093 and 1174. The 1093 occurrence relates to the Norman-French who conquered Britain in 1066, while i Francaíb 7 i Saxanach in 1174 translates simply as 'in France and in England'.

The original scribe of Al, who finished his work in 1092, never had occasion to use the name. The new scribe in 1092 must have been unsure as to the spelling; twice in 1093 he wrote do Rancaíb, omitting the silent lened F. The 1102 scribe wrote instead re Francaíb, and there are five examples in the thirteenth century, mainly of rí Franc, the last being in 1296. In the following year, the derivative, Francaigh, is used for the first time in Al: Ar mor le Francaighabh, 'a great slaughter by the French'. Coincidentally, 1297 is also the year when, for the first time in AU, the plural tribe-name is exchanged for the feminine place-name, with article (le righ Saxan, isin Francaíb, 'by the king of the English, in France'), previously found in AU only in Latin, Francia at 779 and 825.

GEINTI, 'HEATHENS'

The most resounding impact on the compilers of annals was made by marauders from Scandinavia who appeared off the coasts of these islands at the end of the eighth century. Because the monasteries were the targets of so many raids and burnings, the records of the Vikings' misdeeds fill many pages of the annals. Incidentally, in view of the
debate among historians as to the relative import of the battle of Clontarf, it may be of significance that the number of entries relating to the Northmen for the fifty years after 1014, when compared with the fifty preceding years, shows a drop from thirty-two to nineteen in AU, and in the case of AI, an even more drastic fall from twenty-two to seven.

The Latin word gens, plural gentes ('race(s) of people'), and its derivative, gentilis, were both used in monastic circles in the Hebrew sense of 'gentile'. St Patrick himself, in his Confessio, uses the phrase quae gentes erant, 'because they were heathens'. He came to preach the gospel ad Hibernas gentes, 'to the heathen Irish'. 54 The first Viking raids on the north of Britain were noted in AU (794) as Vastatio omnium insolam Britannia a gentilibus, but in the following year, they have Loscudd Rebrainne o ginnittib, 'the burning of Rathlin [Island] by the geinti' (ovative plural)—derived from gentes rather than gentiles. From then onwards, both geinte and gentiles indicated Norse heathens. AU use geinte over twenty times during the next century, and a half, including do gennititb Atba Cliaib, 'by the heathens of Dublin', in 942 and a final one at 943. Gentiles is also found in Latin entries of the ninth century, with an outlying final example at 975.

There are no Latin forms of the word in AI, which first notice the heathens briefly in 790, Geinte i nHerind, 'the heathens in Ireland', and, like AU, use geinti for the last time in 943 to record the killing of Muircertaach mac Neill.

In 851 (AU), dubgenniti or 'dark (dark-haired?) heathens' took over Dublin and drove out the Finngail, 'fair foreigners'. In 852 at Snáthn Aigneach, and again in 877 at Loch Cuan, AU (but not AI) record sea-battles between Dubgenniti and Finngenti. The dark-haired ones are generally thought of as coming from Denmark, and the fair heathens from Norway. There are frequent references to two distinct races thereafter.

**GAILL, 'FOREIGNERS'**

We know that Caesar's Gallia was divided into three parts, and St Patrick also spoke of it in the plural, ad Gallias (compare his in Britanniis, above). 55 But AI refer to it in the singular in 619, terremotus magnum in Gallia. Yet none of the Gallic race is mentioned in the annals—except perhaps in AU 730, in Gall o Lilach (Lullymore, Co. Kildare), who is called 'Prudens' in FA (§124). By then, it had probably come to mean 'foreigner', since, as Cecile O'Rahilly comments, 'Gaulish merchants were for a long period the commonest foreigners on Irish soil'.

Its application to Scandinavian foreigners first occurs in AU at 828. It displaced geinti only gradually at first, but totally by the mid-twelfth century, until the coming of the Anglo-Normans, to whom its application was then transferred. Examples: 828 o Gaillibh 'by the foreigners'; 833 for Gallu 'upon the foreigners' (beside o g(b)ennitibh, 'by the heathens', twice in that year); 837 toisb na nGall 'of the leaders of the foreigners' (earliest example with article); 947 Gaill 7 Goideil 'foreigners and Gaels'. AI introduce the word at 848 (for Gallu 'upon the foreigners') and follows much the same pattern.

Because the Northmen were concentrated in scattered enclaves around the coastline, it became necessary to distinguish one group from another. Gaill Atba Cliaib, 'the foreigners of Dublin', are first noticed in AU in 845, and come under frequent notice in all the annals, especially in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Gaill Locha da Chaoich ('of Waterford') come next, with four references in AU in 916-18. By 1170, their title had changed in both AU and AI to Gaill Punt Laithe ('of Port Lairge [= Waterford]'). Gaill Luimnigh ('of Limerick'), while not recorded in AU prior to the Norman period, merit frequent mention in AI between 927 and 1125. Gaill Orcaigh ('of Cork') are not noticed in any of the pre-Norman annals, which may account for the scarcity of Viking remains noted in recent excavations in Cork—though there certainly was, in the twelfth century, a cantredum Ostmannarum near Cork, 57 corresponding to Waterford's Gaultier (Gaill-Tir) and Dublin's Fingall (Fine Gall) in AI 1013.

As mentioned earlier, the connotation of Gaill altered suddenly and dramatically with the arrival of the Anglo-Normans. Ar for Gallaibbh Atba Cliaib 7 Punt Lairgie, 'a slaughter upon the foreigners of Dublin and Waterford', according to AU (1170), was carried out do

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54 Bieler, op. cit., pp. 67 and 77.
55 Ibid., pp. 82 and 98.
56 Ireland and Wales, p. 24.
57 See K. W. Nicholls, "Inquisitions of 1224 from the Miscellanea of the Exchequer", in Analecta Hibernica, 27 (1972), 103-12 (p. 111).
Allmurchadha, 'by overseas men'. The very next year, however, Hasculf mac Thorkil, ex-king of Dublin, was slain do na Galltaibh cetha, 'by the same foreigners', the Gaill here being the Allmurchadha of the previous year. From then on, Gaill was universally applied to the Anglo-Normans and their descendants in Ireland. It often had appended to it names of provinces or towns, while a common expression was Gaill Éireann, denoting a combination of all the Anglo-Normans in Ireland.

An unusual appellation, found only in AI, where it occurs twelve times between 1171 and 1211, is Gaill Ghlasa. One of the meanings of glas is a metallic colour, as in taitnem . . . na glaslaireach, 'shining of grey-blue breastplates'.64 It was probably a term to describe the armoured Anglo-Normans, adopted by the scribe of 1171 and continued by his successors for the next forty years. It has no connexion with English galloglas, which comes from the Irish word gállaibh or 'foreign soldier'.

GALL-GHAEDHIL

This term, meaning 'foreign Irish', occurs in two separate contexts, the first being in Viking times, in the mid-ninth century. AU refer to them three times in 856–57; firstly, the high-king, Mael Sechlainn, co nGallGhaedhile leis, 'along with Gaill-ghaedhil', fought the heathens, and later Aed son of Niail slaughtered a great number of them. In the following year, they were involved in an inter-Viking affray in Munster, and then they disappear as suddenly as they appeared. FA (856) describe them as Irish (Scuit), but foster-children of the Northmen; the editor of FA, Dr Radner, suggests that they were adult camp-followers, impressed by Viking tactics.

The name re-appears in AU in 1034, with the death of Suibne, son of Cinaed, and brother of Malcolm II, king of Scotland. Suibne is titled ri Gallaibhel, 'king of the Gall-Ghaedhil', which is taken to mean the Norse-Gaelic population of what is now Galloway. In Norse sources, the inhabitants of Galloway were known as Víkinga-Skotar, a direct translation of Gállaibhil.65 It was from that part of Scotland and from the Hebrides (Inse Gall, 'islands of the foreigners', in the annals) that the later Gallóghla, or Gallogla, came, family groups highly valued for their military prowess—Mac Sweeney, Mac Donnells, Mac Cabe, Mac Sheehys, Mac Alisters, and Mac Rorys.60

Finngall and Dubgall, 'dark' and 'fair foreigners', are found in AU (but not in AI) as alternatives to Finnghencil and Dubghencil (e.g. 851 år mór du Finnghailla, 'a great slaughter upon the fair-foreigners', and 867 re nDubghahail, 'by the dark-foreigners'), until 927, when they were united under Sitric son of Ivar, ri Dubgall 7 Finnghaill, 'king of the dark and fair foreigners'. Dubhghail (Dougal) became popular as a personal name in the north of Ireland, where its first bearer was Dubgall son of Aed, king of Ulaid, killed in 925 (AU) by his own people. From it we derive the surnames Ó Dubhghaill (Doyle) and Mac Dubhghaill (Mac Dowell).

NORDMAINN, 'NORWEAGIANS'

The relative distribution of Scandinavian settlement in the British Isles, as between Nordmenn (Norwegians) and Danir (Danes), has been the subject of a recent study by Fellows-Jensen.61 In the Irish annals, Danir are not mentioned until the late tenth century, but Nordmenn make a sudden appearance in the mid-ninth.62 The earliest example in AU—and the only one in Irish—is di Nordmannaibh in 837. But from 842 and up to 937, quite a spate of examples in AU display Latin inflexions: Nordmannis, Nordmannos, Nordmannorum. CS and FA similarly began to use Nordmanni in the 850s, with the latter on two occasions using the modern derivative Nordmanniag.

There must surely be a connexion between the arrival of the Dubghenst in Dublin in 851 and the appearance of a new name in the annals. Nordmanni was not a Latin translation of Gaill, but a name used to distinguish the Norwegians from genesti, dubghenti or gentiles. Perhaps it was the adoption by the Northmen of the Christian religion

which made the Latin gentiles inappropriate from the mid-ninth century on. A fragment of Latin annals preserved in St Mary’s Abbey, Dublin, contains an intriguing comment, under 1095: *Notandum vero quod Norwagenses seu Osumani qui tunc civitates Hibernie et maritima occupabant, Normanni, in Christo, sunt vocati.* ‘It is to be noted that the Norwegians or Eastmen who then occupied the towns and shores of Ireland are called “Normans” in Christ’.63

The modern use of Normannah in to denote the late twelfth-century Anglo-Norman invaders is never found in the annals, but Dux Normannie (Duke of Normandy) occurs in AU 1171, Gaelicized as Dīsic na hOrmonninti/Normointi in MIA 1165 and 1172.

**LOCHLAINN, ‘SCANDINAVIANS’**

For Irish literary people from the seventeenth century on, almost the only word for the Scandinavians was *na Lochlannaigh*, and their country of origin *an Lochlan*. This was a late development, however. In some of the old sagas, a faraway country is named (in dative) Loðblind or Latinblínd. Its position was never clearly defined, but when the Northerners appeared, it came to be associated with them—as in the well-known quatrain written on the margin of a ninth-century MS in St Gall, Switzerland.64

AU in 848 tells of the fall of Tomhair, tanais riogha Laithlínne, ‘heir apparent of the king of Lochlan’, and in 853 announces the coming of *Amhlainn m. riogha Laithlíde*. Marstrander believed that the name developed from that of Rögaland, a part of west Norway, and that *Irnuait* (a similar name found in sagas) derived from the Hórdar, a tribe immediately to the north of Rögaland.65 Whatever its origins, by the early twelfth century (AU 1102–03) we find a change from *th* to *ch*, in *ri Lochnaigh*, and I believe that this came about because *loch*, as well as meaning a lake, also signified a harbour or fiord (as in Loch Cuan = Strangford Lough) and ‘Fiordland’ provided a good description of Norway.

Frequent use of the dative *Lochlainn* induced a tendency to treat the word as a plural -o stem: population-name, e.g. AU 1263 *ri Lochnaigh*,66 Tig.4 1058 mac *riog Lochnaldh*; CGG 812 Ó *Lochnaith*; CS

848 Tanaisi Righ Lochnaith; MIA 1171 do Lochnannaith (beside *dona* Lochnannahieth), and 1394 o tangadar loingsi Lochnaith, ‘since the Norse ships came’.

Like Dubhghall, Lochnaith (indeclinable) was adopted as a personal name, making its first appearance among the habitants of the rocky Burren country of Co. Clare. Lochlann mac Miall Shechnaill, royal heir of Corcu Mruadh, was killed while assisting Brian Boru in an attack on Connacht in 983 (AI), so he was christened probably in the mid-tenth century. After another Lochlann of the Corcu Mruadh was slain in 1015 (AI), the leading family there for many centuries afterwards were the Uí Lochlann. In Ulster, another Lochlann mac Miall Shechnaill was killed in 1023 (AU). His grandson, Domhnall, claimed the kingship of Ireland, and so Ó Lochlainn and Mac Lochlainn became the leading families of the kinglyn Uí Néill.

**DANAIR, ‘DANES’**

This brings us to the final name, *Danair*, another borrowing (from Old Norse *Dariu*) also used as a plural -o stem. It made only the briefest of appearances in the older annals, AI showing no examples at all and AU a total of five, all occurring within a span of five years: *na Danair* in 986 and (na) *Danarait* four times between then and 990. However, later compilations took it up enthusiastically, FA for instance, and CGG, which also uses an adjective formed from it, as in *Dubgenn Danardla*, in the sense of ‘fierce’ or ‘merciless’. CGG also makes much use of the term *Danacrach* (derived from *Danmark*) in phrases such as *do Dhanmarcach aibh* ocis d’almarchoibb. Perhaps the popularity of *Danair* arose from its resemblance to the Irish word *dána*, meaning ‘daring’ or ‘fearless’; ALC uses the two words together: *mile líchb do dhubh Danaroirb dána*, ‘a thousand warriors of bold black Danes’.

As is well-known, ‘Danes’ became the popular name in English for all the Scandinavian invaders who came to Ireland. Even our ringforts, mostly of the early Christian era, became ‘Danish forts’. Apparently, an old tradition lingered on that the Danes would one day return and conquer Ireland. At the time of the battle of the Boyne in 1690, King

63 Chartularies of St Mary’s Abbey, II, 251.
64 Stokes and Strachan, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, II, 290.
66 Also in AU 1014, where the phrase expanded by the editors as *do Ghallaib Lochnaith*, ‘of the foreigners of Scandinavia’, probably should read *do Ghallaib Lochnaith*. 
William's army had been augmented by a body of Danish troops under the Duke of Württemberg. An Irish Jacobite appeal deplored William's conduct in summoning 'the old invaders of our country, the Danes, who held our ancestors in a war of 300 years.'

Some Commemorative British Place-Names in Dublin City

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A surprisingly large number of place-names derived from Britain have been incorporated into the toponymy of Ireland's capital city. This has happened in a circuitous fashion, as most of the names in question formed parts of titles of individuals who were honoured by Dublin Corporation in times gone by. In many cases, those to whom the streets or other features of the urban landscape were dedicated have long since been forgotten, but the toponymic elements in their titles have survived to become a familiar part of the urban scene. The titles in question were usually held by major landowners on whose goodwill the Corporation was dependent, or by senior figures in the former British administration in Ireland, or by past or present members of the Corporation itself. A selection of such names follows.

Aberdeen Street was named after the Earl of Aberdeen, who was the English Lord Lieutenant (or Governor) in 1886 and again in 1905.\(^1\) Aldborough Court and Aldborough Place, both built around the year 1800, were so called from their proximity to Aldborough House (1796), the home of Viscount Aldborough, whose family came from Alderburgh in Norfolk.\(^2\) Anglesea Street incorporates a corrupt form of Anglesey, and is so called from a local land-owner, Arthur Annesley, first Earl of Anglesey.\(^3\) Arran Quay (1728) was called after Charles Butler, the Earl of Arran. He was Lord Lieutenant for two

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\(^2\) McCreedy, *op. cit.*, p. 2.