Hey, Mac! The Name Maccus,
Tenth to Fifteenth Centuries

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The personal name Maccus occurs irregularly in English and other sources from the tenth century onwards and, while it has been the subject of a certain amount of passing discussion, the etymology of the name has not been satisfactorily established. Essentially, two explanations have been posited (one Scandinavian, the other Celtic) but neither has been pursued in any great detail. In this paper it is proposed to re-examine this rare but interesting name in the light of a survey of recorded forms, firstly as a personal name and subsequently as a surname. While the various lists of forms given below as Appendix I most certainly do not contain every possible instance of the name, they represent a greater sample than has hitherto been offered and should therefore form a suitable basis for some general comments.¹

Maccus as Personal Name and Surname

The pre-Conquest instances of the personal name Maccus—and those which occur in post-Conquest sources referring to pre-Conquest persons—indicate that the earliest forms were Maccus and Maccus. The variant form form Macbus is also found from the late eleventh and the twelfth centuries, where the orthographic cb must presumably represent medial velar [k] rather than palatal [tʃ] or spirant [x]; and in the thirteenth century we find Mackus. The most obvious explanation of the final -us is that it represents the Latin second declension masculine nominative ending; but, as the forms given in List 1 (pp. 85–88) demonstrate, it was not usually treated as such in the sources. Thus, not only is the -us retained in the handful of vernacular examples, but in Latin texts the nominative -us is given where other

¹ This paper has grown out of work on one of the tenth-century bearers of the name Maccus. I am grateful to Oliver Padel, both for his extensive editorial input and for his help and comments at a much earlier stage in the research. However, all mistakes remain my own.
cases should be used, either without the use of the expected ending *as* in *filio Maccus* (genitive), *Maccus prepositio* and *a Maccus* (both ablative), or with the suffixing of the appropriate ending after the *-as* as, for example, in *Maccus*, *Maccusus*, *Maccusitum*, *Maccosi*, and Old English (OE) dative *Maccose*. These examples suggest that the whole name (including the *-as*) was treated as the stem. This would probably explain the forms from Cornwall ending in *-os* if, as seems likely, the *Maccus* of the Bodmin Manuissions is the same man as the tenant of St Petrock’s called *Machus*, *Maccus* (written *Mac*) and *Maccos* in Domesday Book and the Exeter Domesday then the *-os* can be equated with *-as.* However, there are some possible exceptions to this pattern: either the change of the *-os* to an appropriate case as in *Macbo pincerna* (ablative), suggesting nominative *Machus*, or the loss of the ending altogether as in *Agnete relicta Mak* and *Rogerus filius Maceke* (with non-etymological final *-e*). Further variant forms of the name may be reflected in *Maccus* (1202) and ‘Makky’ (1296) but I am not certain in either case. It should also be stressed that the name is occasionally confused with *Matheus* and its variant forms by modern editors.3

The earliest examples of the personal name *Maccus* which I have been able to find occur in the second half of the tenth century and the latest date from c.1300 though, as we shall see, it seems to have had a longer life as a surname. The geographical distribution of the earlier examples is mostly associated with northern England (especially Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Northumbria) and southern Scotland, with outliers in the Irish Sea region and Cornwall. The one apparent Continental example of *Machus* which I have encountered is to be found in a confiraternity book of St Gall, but it was cited by Searle in his *Onomasticon*, which presumably implies an Anglo-Saxon context.4 There is also a small number of place-names which contain the personal name *Maccus* and these exhibit a similar distribution in northern England and southern Scotland (especially Berwickshire and Roxburghshire).5

6. *Macuscroft* (Theddlethorpe All Saints, Lincs), + croft.8
7. *Macushu* (Threshfield, Yorks), + (?) ON *huagr*, ‘hill’.8
8. *Maccus Butts Close* (Horsforth, Yorks).9

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3 It has been suggested that some early forms of Makerfield (Ashton, Wigan, Lancs) contain *Maccus*, but Ekwall alternatively favoured Welsh *maskwyd* (‘wall, ruin’); H. C. K. Wyld and T. O. Hirst, *The Place Names of Lancashire. Their Origin and History* (London, 1911), pp. 185–86; E. Ekwall, *The Place Names of Lancashire* (Manchester, 1922), pp. 93–94. A number of English place-names are thought to contain the otherwise unattested OE personal name *Mac(a)*, which should not be confused with *Maccus*. For the medieval Cornish place-name *Talkarm* *Mackus*, see below, pp. 89 and 95–98.
6 ibid., pp. 192–93.
7 ibid., pp. 192–93.
Maxton ( Roxburghshire) : Mackiston (1187-99), Mackestan (1189-93), Mackenzie, Maxton (c. 1200), Mackustin (c. 1226), + tun, 'town'.
Maxwell ( Roxburghshire) : Maxim'swell', Maccuswell (1213 [1322]), Macchuswel, + well; cf. Maxwellheugh ( Roxburghshire), Maxwelltown ( Dumfriesshire), Maxwellton Braes ( Sanquhar, Dumfriesshire).
Maxpoffle ( Roxburghshire) : Makispoffil (13th), Maxpofiel (1296), Makispofiel (n. d.), Maxpofe, Maxpoffil (1306-29), Makkipofiel (1320): + poffil 'a small parcel of land, a pendicle'.
Machnaland ( Hume, Berwickshire), + land. 

Other Scottish place-names perhaps worthy of further consideration in this light include Macksmill and Mackside both in Berwickshire.

My appended Lists 2A–C contain examples of medieval surnames possibly derived from the personal name Maccus. In 2A are listed instances where the final -as is retained, as in Maccus, Mackus and Makus,


14 Register of the Great Seal of Scotland, edited by Thomson and others, I, 44; cf. Machabland in Duns ( Berwickshire), ibid., p. 44.


and in these cases the derivation from the personal name seems relatively certain. Here the forms suggest that the personal name has been adopted either directly as an uninflected surname (without a patronymic filius or gen. -ei) or as a genitival surname in which -es has been assimilated to the final -as of the stem (as seems probable in the place-names cited above). However, the vast majority of the surnames (those given in List 2B) lack the -as and involve varying degrees of ambiguity: for example, we have abbreviated forms such as Mack and Mack (possibly for Mackay); the omission of the final -as altogether (Mac, Mack, Macche, Make, Mak and Makke); and forms in -ch of uncertain orthographic value (Mache, Macche, Mach). In these cases, other etymologies are therefore possible: the orthographic -ch may sometimes represent [f] or [x], and the abbreviated forms may reflect other names. In addition, forms such as Make may derive from a byname from Middle English make ('mate, companion; spouse') < OE (ge)mace. Other surnames of interest here include the forms le Mak', le Make, and le Macho'. Finally, some medieval Scottish instances of the surname Make and Makke could be variants of Makken, Makeyer, etc., which became modern Mackay and Mackie (< Mac Aodha).

The medieval surnames of the type(s) Makke, Mache, etc., may have developed either from Maccus with the loss of the final -as, or from the less common, shortened personal name Makke, Mak, etc. Furthermore, it is possible that the modern surname Mack may in part be a development from these medieval forms. The individual medieval instances probably reflect a polygenetic origin since there is a relatively wide geographical distribution of the various surname forms, more so than that of the personal name. Thus, for example, the Berwickshire family-name Mack is probably a development from the southern Scottish instances of Maccus in the twelfth century and later, whereas those in England could similarly be derived from the English instances of the personal name rather than a migration of the Scottish surname. It is also worth stressing here that not all modern instances of the surname Mack need be derived from medieval Maccus or Makke. For example, it is known that certain Irish cases of the surname

16 On these two types of surname see P. H. Reaney, The Origin of English Surnames ( London, 1967), pp. 91-98.
Mack represent a shortening of specific Irish patronymic surnames in Mac- or Mc- from MacEnroe in Co. Tyrone and MacNamara in Co. Clare. This is a relevant parallel to which I shall return below (pp. 82-83).

Maccus also seems to have occurred as part of other, more conventional types of patronymic surname (List 2C). For example, it is possible that surnames such as Maksen and Masson combine the shortened form Mack- (etc.) with -son, or again the final -us may have been assimilated to the sibilant of -son. However, Scottish examples such as Makkeysoun, Makkison, Makysoun, and so forth became modern Mackieson and probably have a separate origin. Perhaps more interesting are examples of Irish patronymic surnames based on Maccus to be found in Anglo-Irish administrative documents from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Here—in addition to one example of the surname Maccus, 1299 (List 1)—the personal name is combined with the Irish patronymic words Mac- and O-. At least three separate family groups can be distinguished. Firstly, we have a number of records of the surname Omaccus or Omackus (i.e. O'Maccus) in Dublin; secondly there are three individuals with the same surname living around Wexford; and finally we have reference to the surname Macmackus (i.e. MacMaccus) in Limerick in 1295. This last example is slightly different from the others in that the person in question, called William O'Mullane, defended his position in a legal case on the grounds that he was not Irish (Hibernicus) but an Ostman (that is, of Hiberno-Scandinavian ancestry) and the text qualified his claim by adding 'óis., Macmackus' (see List 2C, p. 93).

The origin of Maccus

The name Maccus has attracted a certain amount of discussion, normally directed at one of the earlier instances, with possible reference to one or more of the others. One scholar, we might note in passing, stated that 'the history of the name Maccus is fraught with interest!' In seeking to trace the origin of this personal name, it is important to note at the outset its strong Scandinavian associations. We have seen that in thirteenth-century Ireland the surname

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18 See E. MacLysaght, The Surnames of Ireland, 6th edn (Blackrock, 1985), p. 203.
20 Thus see J. Inlsey, 'Some Scandinavian personal names from south-west England', Namn och Bygg, 70 (1982), 77-93.
Maccus is indeed tempting, but we should also recall the late Cecily Clark’s more cautious statement that Maccus is now recognized as common among Irish Vikings. Indeed, there are problems with this interpretation. On the one hand, we would have the difficulty of explaining the phonological development Magnus > Maccus; and perhaps a better Scandinavian parallel for Maccus would be the very rare ON name Mákr (Makki). Furthermore, we do not find the name Magnus used by continental Scandinavian dynasties until the eleventh century: this is not surprising as the origin of the name presupposes some knowledge of Latin and thereby implies the sort of cultural context which might not have arisen before the adoption of Christianity. The eleventh-century Norwegian king Magnus inn Göði is often regarded as the first Scandinavian dynast to bear the name. Thus, according to Icelandic tradition, when the (Christian) Icelandic skýld Sighvatr Bóðarson christened the infant Magnus, the child’s father king Óláfr asked why he had chosen that name, as ‘that is not a family-name of ours’ (Ekki er fatt vært ættunað), and Sighvatr explained that he had taken it from Karla Magnús, that is Carolus Magnus or Charlemagne. Of course, the Scandinavians active in the British Isles were in closer contact with Latin and Christian culture at an early stage, many being of mixed blood and Christianized before their cousins at home, so the name Magnus could conceivably have developed earlier within such a mixed community as on Man, for example. If so, however, it would be odd that the Latin scribes

23 On this personal name see: E. H. Lind, Norsk-Islandska Døppnamn oke Fingeraud Nams fra Medeltiden (Uppsala and Leipzig, 1905–15), col. 757. It is sometimes regarded as a hypocoristic of Magnus and has been connected to the surname Mack (hence to Maccus); see P. Hanks and F. Hodges, A Dictionary of Surnames (Oxford, 1988), p. 339.
24 Snorri Sturluson, Heimskringla, edited by Bjarni Æðbjarnarson, 3 vols, Íslensk Forriti, 26–28 (Reykjavik, 1941), II, 210. It is tempting to render ættunað as ‘a name of our people’ (i.e. Scandinavian) as opposed to the more restricted ‘family-name’, but this translation might stretch the meaning of ætt.
25 Although the Latin epithet magnus represents a posthumous coinage and presupposes a literary transmission, it is worth noting that it was used with reference to Charlemagne rather early (before 850): Alfred the Great, Asse’s Life of King Alfred and other Contemporary Sources, translated by S. Keynes.
witnessed in the Irish chronicles in the ninth century and is probably derived directly from the (cognate) Scandinavian name *Karl* (itself from ON ‘man, churl’).30

Perhaps the strongest evidence favouring the derivation of the personal name *Maccus* from ON *Magnús* is the fact that the Irish chronicle known as the Annals of the Four Masters (most readily accessible in the nineteenth-century edition by John O’Donovan) refers to Maccus son of Harald, king of the Isles, as *Mághnus mac Airlait*.31 Here therefore we have a well-attested figure otherwise known as *Maccus* being called *Magnus*, and this constitutes the only instance, to my knowledge, where the two names appear to be equated in a primary source with reference to a single person. Obviously one might question the reliability of these Annals, written in the 1630s, as a ‘primary’ source for the 970s but, despite their clearly late date, AFM were compiled from earlier material and can often be seen to be reliable. In fact, the solution to this problem is supplied by the text itself. The earlier edition of these Annals, by the Rev. Charles O’Conor in his *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*, refers to this *Magnus* using the intriguing form *Maccus* (though *Magnus* is given in the accompanying Latin translation).32 It is possible that this form has no value since O’Conor’s edition is, according to O’Donovan, full of errors.33 However, the issue does seem worth pursuing because we also know that O’Donovan himself did not have access to either of the original ‘autograph’ manuscripts of the first portion of the Annals (to 1171), now preserved as Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS Stowe C.i.3 (1220) and Killiney, Franciscaan Library, MS A.13. He was

30 For example, Carlus was son of Amlaib, king of Dublin 853–73, who may be the eponym of *Claidbe Carlua*, ‘Sword of Carlus’, noticed in the annals for the years 995, 1029 and 1058: for his obit see *Annala Rìghbhaict Earainn*, *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland*, by the Four Masters, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616, edited by John O’Donovan (= AFM), 7 vols, revised impression (Dublin, 1990), I, s.a. 1866 (= A.D. 868).

31 AFM, s.a. 972 (= A.D. 974). On this particular Maccus see my forthcoming paper, ‘Edgar and the Eight Kings (A.D. 973)’.


34 T. F. O’Rahilly et al., *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, 28 fascicules (Dublin, 1926–70), fasc. XXVI, 3276–82; M. Dillon, therefore compelled to use ‘a number of more or less faulty transcripts . . . in conjunction with the text issued by Dr. O’Conor’ and as a result this ‘was the cause of some mistakes’ in his edition.35 On the other hand, O’Conor would have most certainly used the ‘Stowe’ original for his edition. Indeed, consultation of the two original copies demonstrates that O’Donovan’s reading *Magnus* must be considered as one of the ‘mistakes’ in his edition.36 In these manuscripts the equivalent name is rendered by the abbreviated form ‘macc5’, which should be expanded as ‘Maccus’ rather than as O’Conor’s *Maccus* and certainly not as O’Donovan’s *Magnus*. It would appear that a later抄ist did not recognize this rare personal name and rendered it as a different (but not dissimilar) form with which they were more familiar. Lacking access to the originals, O’Donovan subsequently reproduced the resulting erroneous reading. The exemplar of the Four Masters’ form *Maccus* is not apparent because the surviving medieval Irish chronicles only refer to this man by his patronymic *mac Airílait*; that the form was derived from some lost medieval annalistic source is perfectly possible though it is impossible to be sure of this. However, it is clear that Maccus, the tenth-century king of the Isles, is not called *Magnus* in any surviving primary source. Of course, this does not in itself refute the possible derivation of the name *Maccus* from *Magnus* (though it must surely weaken the case considerably) but it does indicate that statements to the effect that *Maccus* is the ‘Old Irish’ form of *Magnus* lack documentary proof: our only instances of the name *Maccus* in Irish sources—representing a small proportion of List 1 below—are considerably later than the linguistic Old Irish period and, as already demonstrated, the vast majority of notices of the name and its variant forms occur in *English* sources relating to parts of England.


35 For these comments see P. Walsh, *The Four Masters and their Work*, edited by C. Ó Lochlann (Dublin, 1944), p. 38; and idem, *Gleanings from Irish MSS*, 2nd edn (Dublin, 1933), p. 69.

36 Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS Stowe C.i.3 (1220), fo. 479r; Killiney, Franciscan Library, MS A.13, fo. 392v. I am extremely grateful to both Prof. Pádraig de Brún of the School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, and Dr Anthony Harvey of the Dictionary of Medieval Latin from Celtic Sources, Royal Irish Academy, for consulting these two manuscripts on my behalf.
That being said, it seems probable that we must remain in Ireland if we determine the ultimate origin of this personal name.

A number of scholars have rejected the etymology of Maccus from ON Magnus, and the foregoing discussion would suggest there are strong grounds for doing so. The name has alternatively been explained according to an ultimately Celtic rather than Scandinavian etymology. For example, in some cases we find it being described as an 'Irish' or 'Old Irish' name (without any necessary reference to Magnus), and more specifically some scholars (mostly in the last century) specifically derive it from the Old Irish noun mac(e), 'son, boy', suffixed with the Latin case-ending -us. Occasionally attention has also been drawn to the supposedly 'Old Cornish' form Maccus, although I have already suggested that we should regard the latter as a variant of the forms ending in -us rather than a specifically Cornish name in its own right. The possible Irish derivation is certainly worthy of pursuit, though some basic facts ought to be stated at the outset. The extant name Maccus (and the variant forms) is not an 'Old Irish' name in the strict sense of belonging to the Old Irish (or even later Irish) anthroponymic corpus: as it stands, it cannot be etymologized as exclusively Old Irish and no such name in any of the variant forms can be found in the medieval Irish genealogical or annalistic texts which constitute our main sources for onomastic evidence. As we have seen, the name is to be found in a handful of later Irish and Anglo-Irish sources referring to the medieval period, though in these cases the bearers of the name in question were associated with areas of Scandinavian settlement; and in one case the surname Macnacius was specifically equated with Scandinavian as opposed to native Irish descent.

As discussed above, while the English documents of the tenth century and later treated the name Maccus and its variants as the stem, the final -us does look suspiciously like the Latin second declension masculine nominative ending. When this termination is removed, we are left with Mac(-) which in turn does indeed look suspiciously like the Old Irish noun mac(e). This noun was employed in a number of different capacities in medieval Irish anthroponymy and constituted what M. A. Ó Brien termed a 'most troublesome' name-element. However, while we do find instances of the diminutive form Macín, it should be stressed that there does not seem to have been a corresponding monothematic personal name *Mac(e)*. Therefore, it is not immediately clear how the noun could have given rise to the name Maccus. A brief survey of the various uses of mac(e) in early Irish onomastics may help to throw some light on the problem. Firstly, the noun occurred as the deuterotherme in various common dithematic compound names such as Cormac (Cormacmac), Blathmac, and Ciarnac, or, more rarely, as the prototHEME in a few other compounds including Maclaech, Maccotig and (in the genitive) Macinna. Mac was also employed as the first element in the characteristically Insular Celtic (and especially Gaelic) type of personal name combining a noun or substantival adjective with a following noun (common or proper) in the genitive case: Mac Bethad (Macbeth), Mac Cairthinn, Mac Raith, etc.


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₄₁ On the onomastic value of the genealogies see N. Ó Muraile, ‘The Irish genealogies as an onomastic source’, *Nomina*, 16 (1992–93), 23–47.


₄₃ For example, O’Brien, *Corpus*, I, 370.


In addition, the word *mac* formed the middle element in the patronymic construction *X mac Y* ('*X son of Y*') by which individuals are most often distinguished in the annalistic sources before the eleventh and twelfth centuries: in some instances three generations may be given (*X mac Y mac Z*), while in others the bearer's own 'font name' (the *X* element) could be omitted leaving only the patronym proper (which we have encountered already with some references to Maccus king of the Isles as simply *mac Araili*). Finally, the patronymic in *mac* developed into surnames in *Mac*, such as *Mac Carthaig* (McCarthy), *Mac Lochlainn* (McLaughlin), and so forth, just as the patronymic *X ua Z* ('*X grandson of Z*') gave way to the surnames in *Ua*, later *Ó*, anglicized as *O*.

The most conspicuous use of *mac(e)* in early medieval Irish anthroponymy is undoubtedly as part of the patronymic, at least until the development of surnames in the eleventh century and later. The patronymic—which serves to distinguish between namesakes by naming their respective fathers—would make perfect sense in the appropriate linguistic community of the namesakes, but would be less functionally understood in other linguistic contexts. The precise linguistic character of the mixed Hiberno-Scandinavian communities settled in England in the tenth and eleventh centuries is by no means certain. However, while the occurrence of Gaelic personal names (in their own right or in place-names) indicates connections with Ireland or the Gaelic-speaking parts of Scotland, the predominance of the Old Norse element in the toponymic evidence must reinforce the essentially Scandinavian and linguistically Norse character of these communities. It is not impossible therefore that the Irish patronymic construction encountered by the Scandinavians and perhaps used by a minority of the Hiberno-Scandinavian settlers could over time have lost its functionality. This would mean that the noun *mac*—the non-onomastic and functionally genealogical element in the construction—was subsequently regarded by the predominantly non-Gaelic speaking population simply as part of the overall personal names', *Celtica*, 18 (1986), 151–84 (pp. 158–59). This type of name is sometimes hyphenated in modern works: for example, *Mac-betbad* and *Mac-Cairthinn*.

46 Ó Cív, 'Aspects of Irish personal names', pp. 179–84; also Thornton, 'Kings, chronicles and genealogies', pp. 29–30.
examples in Domesday Book of the surname Mapsone or Mappson in Worcestershire and Herefordshire respectively possibly imply that Map could be employed as a personal name in the Welsh Marches, which would be directly comparable with the suggested development of the name Moccus from patronymic mac(e). A slightly different process underlies such surnames as Fitz and Fitts from French Fitz- (fils) or Son, Sonne and Soane from Middle English son (OE -suna) which initially served as epithets for sons who bore the same name as their father (literally ‘the younger or junior’). Furthermore, the shortened word Mac(k) has been employed as a designation for Scots and Irish (that is, people whose surnames begin with Mac- or Mc-) or more colloquially in the North American usage as a general form of address when greeting strangers (‘Hey, Mac!’). Here it is the common character of the surname-element rather than its etymology which must underlie this practise. In a similar manner, I suggest, in the tenth century it was the common character of the patronymic-element mac which led to the coining, among Hiberno-Scandinavians who had lost close contact with the Gaelic language, of the name Moccus.

The difficulty with this hypothesis is the function of the final -us. While the suffixing of -us when writing the personal name *Mac(e)- in a Latin text would pose no problem, the fact remains that, even in the earliest instances of the name, the -us seems to have been treated as part possible derivation: G. Tengvik, Old English Bynames (Uppsala, 1938), p. 378; C. W. E. Bardsley, English Surnames (London, 1873), pp. 512–13; Hanks and Hodges, Dictionary, p. 339; Reaney and Wilson, Dictionary of English Surnames, pp. 290 and 298.

51 Domesday Book seu liber cenonis Wilhelmi Primi Regis Angliae, edited by A. Farley, 2 vols (London, 1873), I, fols 176c and 181a. Later instances of Mab (as in Mab Teu in Caernarfon in the 1360s) probably represent nicknames rather than a ‘font name’ proper: see Caernarvon Court Rolls 1361–1402, translated by G. P. Jones and H. Owen, Caernarvonshire Historical Society, Record Series, I (1951), pp. 18, 24–25, etc.

52 For example, see Reaney and Wilson, Dictionary of English Surnames, pp. 170 and 417; Reaney, Origin of English Surnames, p. 81; Hanks and Hodges, Dictionary of Surnames, p. 499.


Scandinavian settlers in the British Isles and was at variance with Irish onomastic practice. This shortening of Gilla- names to Gilli is further illustrated in the case of the Norwegian king (1130–36) Haraldr Gilli, who is said to have first arrived from Ireland known as Gillikristr (i.e. Gilla Crist) claiming to be the son of Magnus Barefoot but was subsequently known by the Norse name Haraldr with the byname Gilli. That the structure of names of the type Gilla Pátratc was not always understood outside Ireland and Scotland is perhaps not surprising since they belong to a category of Celtic personal names (including names such as Mac Bethad, etc., mentioned above) which does not conform to established Indo-European onomastic patterns and which even modern scholars have failed to classify satisfactorily. I would suggest that Moccus arose from a similar unfamiliarity with the finer conventions of Gaelic anthropony, in this case patronymic practices.

In addition, this hypothetical origin of Moccus would not be the only instance of the shortening of Gaelic names containing the word mac(e). I have mentioned already how some Irish Mac- surnames can be shortened to form the new surname Mack (above, pp. 71–72). A Brittonic parallel is represented by the patronymic noun map (‘son’; later ap), which must underlie some (if not all) instances of the medieval Welsh and Cornish surname Map or Mab—whose most famous bearer was of course Walter Map—as well as the modern Breton surnames Le Mab, Le Malby, Le Map and Le Mapp. Indeed,
of the stem rather than an inflectional ending. If, on the other hand, the later personal names Mak and Macke are derived from Maccus—as the surnames Macke, Mac, etc., might be—then the -us was sometimes dropped. For my suggested origin of Maccus to hold, it is necessary to argue either that the final -us was indeed the Latin case-ending which lost its grammatical function and subsequently by some means became an integral part of the name, or that the -us had an altogether different origin. There is one possible precedent for the pattern posited here and, while it is highly unlikely to have had any influence upon the material under discussion, it is worth mentioning as a post scriptum. A fifth-century (?) memorial inscription of an Irish mercenary (foederarius) at Wroxeter reads (in Roman capitals; CLINORIX MACVS MAQVI-COLINE, Conri son of Mac-Cuilinn [lies here]). This inscription is significant for present purposes since the word MACVS represents an interesting and (we are told) unique Latinization of the Ogamic MAQ(Q)| or *MAQ|Q|OS (Primitive Irish 'son') by means of the suffixing of -us, in place of the expected filius or the Primitive Irish termination *us. If nothing else, this parallel demonstrates that it was possible for the Irish noun to be latinized as maccus in a non-Gaelic speaking context, though in this instance it retained its patronymic function.


APPENDIX I: LISTS OF FORMS

In the following lists, the exact forms of the name are given as found in the source: consequently, Latin case-endings have been retained and where the inflection is not obvious from the form itself the appropriate preposition is also included. All such original forms are listed in italics. In those cases where the name has been found in modern translations of sources (calendars of documents, etc.), so that it is by no means certain whether the translated form given accurately reflects that in the original, the forms are listed untilalized within double quotation marks. Chronological and geographical associations are supplied in the lists—where possible—in order to facilitate analysis of the relevant form (dates are supplied as floruit unless otherwise stated). A number of interesting but uncertain name-forms have also been included in the lists and are indicated by a question-mark.

LIST 1

EXAMPLES OF THE PERSONAL NAME MACCUS

MACVS (moneyer): reign of Edgar, 959-75. 57
Maccus filius Onlai, Maco consul (Yorks?): 954. 58
Maccus king of the Isles: Maccus plurimarum rex insularum, archipratae Mascuism, Macone regis Moniae et plurimarum insularum: 973. 59 Maccus rex insularum, Mascus archipratae; 60 filio Haraldi, Marc

60 P. H. Sawyer, Anglo-Saxon Charters. An Annotated List and Bibliography
Macchus [abl.] (Selkirk): c.1120.69

Macbus, Macus (Belton, Lincs): 1148–66.70

Liofio filio Machus, Liofio filio Maccus, Liofpho filio Maccus, Lioflo filio Machus, Liofio filio Maccus, Liofio filio Machus, Liofio filio Macb, Liofio filio Ma', Liofio filio Macchus (Scotland): 1153–78.71

Roberto filio Maias [sic], Roberto filio Maccus, Roberto filio Maccus (Scotland): 1165–2124.72

Maccus marshald (Scotland): 1165–2124.73

Macho preposito (Scotland): 1165–2124.74

Petro filio Maccus; Macus preposito (Yorks): both 1163–c.1170.75

Macho pincerna [abl.] (Northants): 1174–95.76

de Maccus (Maccusus) de Leum (Leam, Northumberland): 1176.77

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**Notes:**


65 The *Annals of Inisfallen* (MS. Rawlinson B.503), ed. by S. Mac Air: (Dublin, 1951), s.a. 974.2; A.F.M., s.a. 972 [= A.D. 974].

66 Battle of Maldon, ed. by Gordon, p. 60.

67 Brut y Tysuygogor (Peniarth), s.a. 1044; Brenhined y Saeson, s.a. 1044.

68 Domesday Book, I, fol. 325a, 330d and 358b–h.

69 *ibid.*, I, fol. 121a. Libri cessualis, vocati Domescy Daye, additamenta, ed. by H. Ellis (London, 1816), fol. 204b; 'Freilassungsurkunden', nos XXX–XXXI.

70 *English Episcopal Acts*, vol. 10, Bath and Wells 1061–1203, ed. by F. M. R. Ramsey (Oxford, 1995), pp. 33–34. The editor translates the name as 'William son of Macus', but for the ambiguity of the genitive Maci see above, p. 6, n. 3. This 'Macus' is here named retrospectively as grandfather of Philip of Wellington, fl. c.1151–56.

71 *Regisfrum* Episcopatus Glasguensis, ed. by C. N. Innes, Maitland Club, 61, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1843), I, 5; *Regesta Regum Scotorum*, I, 158; Early

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Hubertus filius Mach, Hubertii filii Machus, Hubertus filius Machus; Willelmum filium Mach (Lincs): 1196–1224.78
Machus de Nonus, Machus de Neubus [abl.] (Newsholme, Yorks): c.1155.79
Henricus filius Machus (East Halton, Lincs): before late 12th.80
Macus pater Matillidis et Winarce (Hardwick, Lincs): 1202 or before.81
(?) Micus de Lenerton (Leverton, Lincs): 1202.82
pro morte Makus (Yorks): 1218–19.83
Roberto filio Machus (Kello, Roxburghshire): 1221.84
(?) Mac (Oxford): 1236.85
(?) "Makky of Bustom" (Bustom, Northumberland): 1296.86
Rogers filius Macke (Guisborough, Yorks): c.1300.87
de Agneite relicta Mak (Wearmouth, Northumberland): 1340–41.88

80 ibid., p. 211.
82 ibid., p. 159.
85 Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III preserved in the Public Record Office ... 1227–[1272], 14 vols (London, 1902–38); and Calendar of the Close Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office ... 1272–[1309], 47 vols (London, 1892–1963), for years 1234–37, p. 513.

LIST 2
EXAMPLES OF SURNAMES DERIVED FROM MACCUS
2A: FORMS WITH THE FINAL -US

(?) Ricardus Makkus' (Gloucs): before 1189–97.89
"Dobbe Macus" (Lincs): 1246.90
"Osmund Talkarn Mackus" (Cornwall): 1286.91
"John Maccus" (Dublin): 1299.92
(?) cum Agnete Makkes (Sussex): 1347.93
"John Makhous of Wyulyngham" ("Wyllingham", unidentified): 1364.94
"William Mackus of Kyslyngbury" (Kislingbury, Northants): 1398.95
"William Makus and Maud his wife" (? Compton, Wilts): 1399.96
(?) "Thomas Makkys" (Wilton, Wilts): 1490.97
2B: FORMS WITHOUT FINAL -US AND ABBREVIATED FORMS


“Richard Mac” (Yorks): undated. 99

Radulfo et Petro Mac (Shropshire): c.1180–86. 100

Hugo Mac, Hugonem Mac, de Hugone Mac (Worcs): 1188–92, ob. c.1221. 101

Hugo Macke (Beds): 1210. 102

Raud Mak’ (French text; Bristol): 1229–1301. 103

Robertum Macke (Durham): 1242. 104

“Nicholas son of Adam Make” (Bucks): 1244–45. 105

Alanum Mak (Sussex): 1249 (?). 106


106 An Abstract of Feet of Fines relating to the County of Sussex, edited by L. F. Salzman, 2 vols, Sussex Record Society, 2 and 7 (1902–07), I, 131.


“William Macke” and his sons Stephen and Walter: 1310; “Stephen Macke” and “Roger son of William Macke” both (Knaresborough, Yorks): 1323; (J) “William Mack” (York): 1348.10

“William Macke of Stratford, clerk” (Stratford, Warwicks): 1313.18

“Roger Mak the younger” (Suffolk): 1316.19

Johannes Mack’ (abl.) (Somerset): 1327.20

“Henry Make” (Leicestershire): 1341.21

“Alice Mak of Baudeseye” (Bawdsey, Suffolk): 1346.121

“Robert Mach of Briggford” (Bridgeford, Notts): 1376.123

“John Makk” (Notts): 1388-89; Johannis Mak (Newark on Trent, Notts): 1393-96.131

“William Make chaplain, Chicheley” (Chicheley, Bucks): 1396, 1399.25

Roberto Mak’ (unlocated): 1400.126

“John Makke” (Scotland): 1424.127

“Hugh Makke of Wilton, mercer” (Wilton, Wilts): 1425.128


119 Patent Rolls 1313-17, p. 581.

120 Exchequer Lay Subsidies 169/5 [Somerset Lay Subsidy, 1327], edited by F. H. Dickinson, in Kirby’s Quest for Somerset, Nomina Villarum for Somerset, etc., Somerset Record Society, 3 (1889), pp. 79-284 (p. 110).


125 Patent Rolls 1396-99, pp. 27 and 531.


127 Bain, Documents Relating to Scotland (see n. 13, above), IV, 196.

128 Feet of Fines ... Wiltshire, edited by Kirby, p. 87.
O Mackus, and John O Mackus" (Dublin): 1305–07.139

"James O Mackus" (Wexford, Ireland): 1302; “William O Mackus” (Ballyscallan (unid.), Co. Wexford): 1307; "Walter O Mackus" (Kylscallan (unid.), Co. Wexford): 1306–07.140

"Adam Makson" (Newcastle): 1341; “Hugh Makson” (Newcastle): 1387.141

(?) "Nicole Makkesson", "Nicol Makysone" (Scotland): 1424–25.142

Wilhelm Maxson (South Charlton, Northumberland): 1495–96.143

"John Maxsoune" (Ayton, Berwickehire): 1465;144 cf. "John Mak" (1470), above.

APPENDIX II: Talkarn Mackus

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A person called ‘Osmund Talkarn Mackus’ is cited by Thornton (above, p. 89), from the Close Roll for 1286. The entry in which he appears is not identified by county in the roll, but internal evidence shows that it refers to Cornwall. The printed entry itself reads as follows:

Osmund Talkarn Mackus came before the king on Sunday after St Mark [= Sunday 28 April, 1286] and sought to reply his land in Kelinreguar, which was taken into the king’s hands for his default before the king against Joan, late the wife of Richard de Trewbyla.145

As a surname, the words Talkarn Mackus are evidently derived from a place-name, presumably Osmund’s residence. Although the place-name Talkarn could theoretically belong in either Cornwall or Wales, Trewbyla is characteristically Cornish.

The place from which Osmund took his surname, Talkarn Mackus, is reasonably well known in medieval Cornish sources. Its earliest known occurrence is as the surname of the same Osmund in 1281, Osmund’ de Talcarnackos; later records give the place-name as Talcarn Vacas 1316, Talkarnuacos 1333, Talcarn Vaceas 1528, and Talcarn Vacas alias Higher Talcarn 1694.146 The last form provides the identification. Higher Talcarn is in the parish of St Mawgan in Pyder, and is one of two places in that parish named Talcarn (apparently independently, and not as subdivisions of a single Talcarn, since they lie

143 Durham Cathedral Priory Rental, edited by Lomm and Piper, p. 197.
144 Manuscripts of Colonel Home, p. 182.
145 Calendar of Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Edward I, vol. 1279–1328, p. 414. Trewbyla is Trewbla in the parish of St Enoder; the place-name transcribed as Kelinreguar should actually be read as Keliregwar, referring to Coldvread in the nearby parish of Roche.
146 These five forms come, respectively, from: Public Record Office (London), assize roll, Just1/1249, m. 11; C. Henderson, in G. H. Doble, Saint Mawgan, Cornish Saints Series, no. 39 [Pyder edition] (Shipston-on-Stour, 1936), p. 18; PRO, hundredal court roll; Cornwall Record Office (Truro), manorial account roll, AR2/952, m. 1; and PRO, recovery roll, CP43/443, m. 42r.
two miles apart, with other places in between, including the churchtown of St Mawgan itself; the other is now called Tocarne Merock, found earlier as Talcarnmorep 1331 and Talcarn Moreb 1376, ‘Tocarne by the sea-shore’ (Cornish *morrep ‘sea-shore’). The suffixes *Maccus and *Morep served to distinguish the two separate places of the same name within one parish.

The distinguishing suffix *Maccus is evidently the personal name *Maccus discussed by Thornton. As he points out (above, pp. 68 and 86), this name appears in eleventh-century Cornwall, both in the Bodmin Manumissions and in Domesday Book. In the latter source *Maccus is a tenant of the monastery of St Petrok’s, holding the manor of Fursnewth (parish of St Cleer) in both 1066 and 1086; in the Manumissions *Maccus appears as a person of some substance, a *hundredes mann or centurio. The dates of the manumission-entries in which Maccus appears (later eleventh century), and also the context, would be compatible with the suggestion that he was the same person as the tenant recorded in Domesday Book.

It is possible that Higher Tocarne (alias Talcarn *Maccus) is the modern identification of a manor called Talcarn which, Domesday Book tells us, had been taken away from St Petrok’s monastery between 1066 and 1086 by the Count of Mortain, though the identification cannot be certain as there are other possible candidates. If correct, the identification would mean that the place later known as Talcarn *Maccus had once been a property of St Petrock’s monastery. If that is so, then it is tempting to suggest that the presumed *Maccus from whom this former property of St Petrok’s monastery derived its manorial suffix was the recorded tenant of St Petrok’s called *Macos or Maccos. He would have held St Petrok’s manor of Talcarn in addition to its manor of Fursnewth, which he held for at least 20 years. However, Maccos is not mentioned in connection with the manor of Talcarn: in 1066, when it belonged to St Petrok’s, it was held by one *Aluwardus. In order to have given his name as the manorial suffix, Maccos would therefore need to have held Tocarne either before this Alward in 1066, or briefly at some time between 1066 and 1086, after Alward’s tenure but before the manor was usurped by the Count of Mortain. (He is not likely to have held it any later, since it then ceased to have any association with St Petrok’s monastery, so the argument would no longer apply that, as a known tenant of the monastery, he would be a likely candidate to have held this one of its manors.)

The alternative is that the manorial suffix is derived from another, unrecorded, person of the same name; but that seems unlikely in view of the scarcity of the name in southern England, as shown in Thornton’s lists, above. As a personal name (List 1, pp. 85–88), *Maccus is unattested south of Lincolnshire, except for the Cornish instance; and even as a surname (List 2A, p. 89) it is found no closer than Wiltshire. Indeed, it may be felt that the rarity of *Maccos as a personal name in southern England makes it likely that Higher Tocarne (alias Talcarn *Maccus) was indeed named from this known individual, whether or not the place is also to be identified with St Petrok’s manor of Talcarn; and thus that the name in itself makes the equation with Talcarn more likely. (This argument stems from Maccos’s own association with the monastery, as a tenant and as witness to manumissions performed under its aegis; if he was in fact a greater lord within late eleventh-century Cornwall, then his known tenure of one manor of St Petrok’s could have been only part of his wider interests, and he could have given his name to Talcarn *Maccus without its having any association with St Petrok’s. But there is no hint in the record that he had wider interests.) If these suggested arguments are accepted, then the preceding study of the personal name, showing its known currency, may assist with the identification of the difficult Talcarn of Domesday Book.

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144 Cornwall Record Office, deeds, AR3/5 and AR4/2130; for Cornish *morrep, see O. J. Padel, Cornish Place-Name Elements, English Place-Name Society, 56/57 (Nottingham, 1985), p. 169.
147 Domesday Book (general editor J. Morris), vol. 10, Cornwall, edited by C. F. and T. T. Actor, 4.17 (fol. 121a); his name is spelt Macos and Mac ‘in the corresponding entry in the Exeter Domesday: Domesday Book, additamenta, edited by Ellis, p. 186 (fol. 204b).
149 For the date see N. R. Ker, Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon (Oxford, 1957), p. 159.
150 Domesday Book, Cornwall, 4.22 (fol. 121b); Domesday Book, additamenta, p. 187 (fol. 205); for the identification, see Victoria History of the County of Cornwall, edited by W. Page, part 8: L. F. Salzman and Thomas Taylor, The Domesday Survey for Cornwall (London, 1924), p. 72a.
151 Domesday Book, additamenta, p. 187 (fol. 205); in 1086 it was held of the Count of Mortain by one Alinus (ibid.).
If the suggestion is correct that the suffix in the place-name Talkarn Mackus is derived from the known tenant of St Petrock’s of that name, then this constitutes a valuable instance of a Cornish manorial suffix originating with a tenant who lived in the eleventh century. That is rather earlier than the currency of most personal names found as manorial suffixes in Cornwall, and is of particular interest since the bearer of the name is known from two separate sources, a rare circumstance for Cornwall in the eleventh century. If this man’s name was of Hiberno-Scandinavian derivation, as Thornton’s discussion makes probable, then he was a man, presumably of Hiberno-Scandinavian ancestry, who (or his forebears) had settled in Cornwall, perhaps under the patronage of St Petrock’s monastery. (Compare Leland’s comment, 500 years later, that the saint’s town of Padstow was ‘ful of Irish men’.) He rose well up the social scale, becoming the holder of one or two manors and occupying an important position of social and fiscal responsibility—a useful demonstration of the possibility of flexibility and receptiveness towards overseas immigrants in Cornish society in the eleventh century.

10 The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1533–1543, edited by Lucy Toulmin Smith, 5 vols (London, 1906–10), I, 179.

Reviews


Kenneth Cameron’s English Place Names requires no introduction to readers of Nomina. Long established as the leading book in its field, it has been essential reading for both students and specialists since publication of the first edition in 1961. A new edition has been needed for some years, for despite being, as Margaret Gelling has commented, ‘unlikely to be replaced or surpassed’, the text had undeniably become outdated.1 The pace of change in place-name research has meant that many of the views held in the 1960s are no longer considered valid; and this new edition not only presents a reliable and authoritative account of the current position, but outlines some of the most important work in place-name studies over the last thirty years in order to show how this position has been arrived at. Unlike previous revisions, where addenda to individual chapters were printed towards the end of the volume, the book has now been extensively rewritten to incorporate the most up-to-date scholarly thinking within the main body of the text. Certain sections are, of course, affected more than others, and this review will focus on the major changes that have been made.

Of the twenty chapters contained in the previous edition, one—‘Place-Names and Archaeology’—has now been omitted. It is replaced by a chapter on ‘Modern Place-Names’, which discusses names formed during the last two and a half centuries and is partly based on the work of Adrian Room. Otherwise, the overall layout of the book remains much the same. The opening chapter on ‘The Technique of Place-Name Study’ has some new material, notably on topographical vocabulary and on the debate concerning Anglo-Norman influence on spelling and phonology; and the treatment of these topics later in the book has also been revised. Thus the chapters on ‘Rivers, River-Crossings, and Marshland’, ‘Hills and Valleys’, and ‘Woods, Clearings and Open Land’ now draw heavily on recent work by Margaret Gelling and Ann Cole, as, to a lesser extent, does the chapter on ‘Roads and Ways’. This allows much more precise definitions of individual terms to be given than was previously possible. Old English Æg, ford, and dun, for instance, are now understood to have had a quasi-habitative significance (pp. 172, 175 and 181–82), while OE hop has been shown to refer to a hill-spar of a particular shape (p. 184), OE *wære to land that floods and drains quickly (p. 15), and OE hop to a valley characterised by a secluded location (p. 193).