

COUNCIL FOR NAME STUDIES IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

ESSAY PRIZE

1. A prize of £50 will be awarded annually for the best essay on any topic relating to the place-names and/or personal names of England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Man and the Channel Islands.
2. Submissions are invited from all students and young researchers. The prize will normally be awarded to those who have not hitherto had work in onomastics published.
3. Entries should be about 5000 words in length.
4. Entries should in some way make an original contribution to the subject.
5. One copy of the essay should be submitted to the Secretary of the Council in clear typescript, double-spaced, and should include a bibliography of sources of material used and of books and authors cited.
6. Entries will be judged by a panel appointed by the Chairman of the Council, and may be considered for publication in NOMINA, the Journal of Name Studies relating to Great Britain and Ireland.
7. Entries must be submitted by December 31st and, provided an essay of sufficient merit is forthcoming, the winner will be announced at the Annual Name Study Conference in the spring of the following year.

Entries should be sent to:-

The Secretary,
Council for Name Studies in Great Britain & Ireland,
School of Scottish Studies,
27 George Square,
EDINBURGH EH8 9LD.

SOME LESS FREQUENTLY ATTESTED IRISH PLACE-NAME ELEMENTS
OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST*

There are positive onomastic indicators that the secular habitative elements that most strongly characterise the Later Iron Age in Ireland, mainly dún, ráth, and lios, also cathair and caiseal (all of which may be translated 'fort'), continued to be used to some extent in place-name coinage well into the Anglo-Norman period. Nevertheless, the impression gained from both onomastic and annalistic evidence is that as standard elements on a national scale they were, in general, losing currency from about the thirteenth century onwards. Other native habitative elements were emerging (notably baile 'homestead') alongside the range of newly-introduced Anglo-Norman terms. It is noticeable that the annalistic usage of the term dún, hitherto the standard 'blanket' term for the defended dwelling of substance, was on the wane from the twelfth century onwards and may be seen as virtually outmoded by the late fourteenth century. Of the less commonly attested elements associated with native settlement longphort and daingean are among the more obvious instances; they are frequently interpreted 'fortress' although both elements are open to other interpretations. This paper attempts to establish a terminus a quo for the deployment of the elements longphort and daingean with apparent habitative association.

Longphort as a lexical item is translated in RIA Contríbb as '(a) camp, encampment, temporary stronghold; (b) mansion, princely dwelling; stronghold, fortress'. The appellative longphort in the sense of 'encampment' or 'temporary stronghold' is attested in annalistic usage from the mid ninth century onwards,¹ gradually supplanting the early annalistic usage of dúnadh; it is also well attested in this same sense in literary and historical texts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The annalistic usage of longphort with reference to an 'established residence' does not begin to feature until the thirteenth century (Conn. 1224; MIA 1274; L.Cé, Conn. 1261; AI 1280, 1311; AU 1306, 1336, 1342, etc.) and becomes increasingly more frequent in the fourteenth and succeeding centuries, although longphort in the sense of encampment also continues to be employed. The annalistic evidence indicates that by the thirteenth century longphort had the meaning of an 'established residence', applied, as in the observed instances, to the dwelling of an Irish chieftain. It may be assumed that the popular usage of longphort in this sense predates the annalistic usage, although perhaps not by any considerable span. The writer has not observed any instance of its use in non-annalistic Irish sources prior to the thirteenth century. Onomastic documentation of longphort in Irish-language sources is comparatively late² and relatively sparse: AFM 1348 Longphort Mhic Dhiarmada, equated by the editor with a fort on Longford Hill, Co. Roscommon; AU 1430 An Senlongphort ('the old longphort') equated with Longphort Uí Ferghail (AFM 1448), now Longford, Co. Longford; AFM 1595 An Longphort identified with Longphort Uí Mhadadháin, Longford Castle, Co. Galway. To these may be added Longphort Uí Dhubhda, identified with Longford Demesne, Co. Sligo (O'Donovan, J., Genealogies, tribes and customs of Hy-Fiachrach, Dublin, 1844, 122-3). The surname specific in the above instances is that of the local ruling family. In all, the writer has encountered no positive evidence either from lexical or onomastic sources for the deployment or potential deployment of longphort in the sense of 'established residence' before the twelfth-/thirteenth-century period. The indications are that the element longphort in the habitative context is later than the main dún, ráth, lios phase.

In the O.S. townland-name coverage Longford is the standard anglicisation of longphort (although variant forms also occur). Longford most frequently appears as a

simplex name; sixteen instances are listed in the Topographical Index. In view of the case summarised above and in particular the Irish notices of four O.S. Longford names, one might reasonably expect some further instances of Longford names to have derived from an 'established residence'. This remains to be determined from documentary research on individual instances; seventeenth-century sources may in some cases reveal an earlier surname qualification or family association. There is no certainty that all instances of 'longford' (*et var.*) have an 'established' habitative reference. The possibility of longphort in the sense of 'temporary encampment' cannot be entirely discounted, although the alternative term dúnadh does not seem to feature significantly as a place-name element.³

Daingean (earlier daingen), adj. means 'firm, fast, strong, solid'; daingean subst. means 'a stronghold, fastness, fortress, defence; a strong thing' (RIA Contribb). Both adjective and substantive feature as place-name elements, the substantive as a generic element (commonly anglicised 'dangan', with some regional variants) and sometimes as a specific. While the element daingean (subst.) may in many instances denote a natural fastness or 'a strong thing' (such as a boulder or a large rock), this enquiry confines itself to daingean in the sense of 'stronghold, fortress' for which there is sufficient evidence to merit consideration. In the annalistic terminology daingean has but a sporadic usage; the earliest significant instance is in AI 1012: Daingne imda . . . doronta la Brian 'many fortifications were made by Brian', of which four are listed, the cathir ('fort') of Cenn Corad, Inis Gaill Duib, Inis Locha Sainglenn and the cathir of Cnoc Fochuir. It would seem that by the eleventh century daingean in the sense of 'fortress' or 'fortification' was being employed as a definitive term of general coverage.⁴ There are occasional instances of the appellative daingean apparently in the sense of 'fortress' in eleventh- and twelfth-century texts. The earliest annalistic reference to a daingean name is AFM 1145, Daingen Bona Cuilinn, equated with Dangan Castle, Co. Roscommon, followed in 1221 (L. Cé) by Daingen hI Cuinn (in Co. Longford) and in 1316 (AI) by Daingen I Cubais (Dingle, Co. Kerry). To these instances may be added the entry Daingen Uf Dhonnabháin in Onomasticon Goedelicum: 'curious fort in p. of Dangandonovan, c. Cork'; the name is documented in the Papal Taxation c. 1306. The sum total of the evidence is sparse; the impression gained is that daingean in the definitive sense of 'fortress' is unlikely to have been a creative element in place-names much before the eleventh century.

One might expect some further instances of the O.S. 'dangan' (*et var.*) names to represent daingean 'fortress'. As with the element longphort, research on the earlier documentation and associations of individual instances of its occurrence, in conjunction with observation in the field, may indicate whether or not daingean was employed in the habitative sense. Ballydyan td, Co. Down, appears from seventeenth-century documentation to be Ir. Baile an Daingin ('homestead of the daingean'); the presence of a prominent ring-fort called Roughfort within the townland is surely more than a coincidence, Roughfort being almost certainly a loose translation of the element daingean.

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NOTES

* This is a summary of the paper given on March 26th, 1983 at the XVth Annual Conference of the Council for Name Studies held at Ennismore, Montenotte, Cork.

1. The earliest use of the term longphort in AU (s.a. 841, 866, 902) is with reference to Viking naval encampments or possibly beach-heads. Here longphort does not appear to mean 'permanent residence'. The etymology and semantic evolution of the term longphort require further investigation and were not intended as part of the subject-matter of the present narrow line of enquiry.
2. AFM 860 records the destruction of 'longphort Rothlaibh' which the editor identifies with 'Dun-Rathlaigh, anglicé Dunrally' in Co. Laois. The dún element in the surviving name would indicate that longphort here is more likely to mean 'encampment'. AI 1280 has a reference to 'longphort in ríge' which the editor thinks may not be a place-name but simply 'the king's dwelling'.
3. In discussion of this paper Professor Ó Máille suggested as a possible early meaning of the element longphort 'a wet place alongside a bank'. A number of the Longford townlands are located alongside or near a water-course. I have not had the opportunity, as yet, to follow up this suggestion.
4. The use of the adjective daingean to denote a fortified site is suggested by two early annalistic entries: AU 703 Ailen daingen ('strong island') aedificatur; AU 714 Alen daingen dstruitur.

ABBREVIATIONS

<u>AFM</u>	<u>Annals of the Four Masters</u> , ed. J. O'Donovan, Dublin, 1856.
<u>AI</u>	<u>Annals of Inisfallen</u> , ed. Seán Mac Airt, Dublin, 1951.
<u>AU</u>	<u>Annals of Ulster</u> , ed. W. M. Hennessy and B. MacCarthy, Dublin, 1886-1901.
<u>Conn.</u>	<u>Annals of Connacht</u> , ed. A. M. Freeman, Dublin, 1944.
<u>L. Cé</u>	<u>Annals of Loch Cé</u> , ed. W. M. Hennessy, Dublin, 1939.
<u>MIA</u>	<u>Miscellaneous Irish Annals</u> , ed. Séamus Ó hInnse, Dublin, 1947.
<u>RIA Contribb</u>	<u>Contributions to a dictionary of the Irish language</u> , published by the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.