

CELTIC LANGUAGE ELEMENTS IN THE PLACE NAMES OF IRELAND

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The article deals with the culture and heritage of ancient Celts by analyzing the toponyms of Celtic origin in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, as well as in the places where the Irish diaspora is present. In accordance with the set goal, the article considers the cultural component in the meaning of linguistic units and the classification of toponyms and their use in different parts of the island. By the example of the analysis of the meaning of Celtic toponyms functioning in modern Ireland and Northern Ireland, it is shown that Celtic national heritage has not been lost. The study of toponyms allows us to penetrate into the worldview of the ancient people whose culture influenced and shaped the descendants of Celts.

Key words: Celtic languages, place name, toponymy, Ireland, the Irish language, semantics.

Introduction. Language, history, geography, ethnography, and the ways of life of people over the centuries are reflected in geographical names, i.e., toponymy. Toponymy was formed at the intersection of linguistics, history and geography. Titles and names, which existed long before the advent of the letter, are free from the stamps of later times. This explains their imagery and liveliness. Not only do place names provide us with some old words which are no longer found or are rarely used in a modern language, but they also enable us to study their unusual word forms and combinations. The study of toponymy is the study of connections between language and culture, since culture is clearly reflected in place names. It should be noted that there is always a speaker between a geographic name and a geographic feature, who performs a crucial role of interpreting images in the consciousness. In accordance with this, any toponym carries not only linguistic information, but also cultural knowledge.

Previous research in the area. Prior research has thoroughly investigated the history of place names of Celtic origin in England, Scotland and Wales. The study of toponyms is presented in the works of an outstanding Irish scholar P. W. Joyce. The first series of his studies are called *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places*. It is difficult to overestimate this work, since it influenced all further research in the field. Other notable Celtic toponymists include D. Mackinnon, G. B. Adams, W. J. Watson, K. Cameron, A. V. Superanskaya, S. V. Perkas and others. However, little research has been conducted to show the Celtic component in the toponyms of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to analyze the use of toponyms of Celtic origin in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland as well as in the places where the Irish diaspora

is present. Our further goal is to draw a classification of toponyms and to analyze cultural components in the meaning of these linguistic units.

Methodology (Methods and Materials). We applied the qualitative research analysis to develop an in-depth understanding of the etymology, use and semantics of place names in Ireland which come from the Irish language. Based on this method, we revealed who named certain places (Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Celts, etc.), when they were named (pre-Christian times or Christian times), why they were given this particular name (geographical features, legendary heroes, deities, man-made objects located there, etc.), what these names mean, what kind of a feature they reflect, where these names come from, i.e., their etymology (referring to either a language or region of origin) and where they are located. In many cases, answers to some of the questions could not be found, since much time has passed since the naming and/or the necessary documentation (if it ever existed) has disappeared.

More extensive scrutiny of the data has revealed further telling facts that could not have been discovered without a quantitative analysis. Referring to *The Placenames Database of Ireland*, we have provided statistical data of Irish place names in various parts of Ireland. We have analyzed the percentage of established Irish place names in different parts of the island, interpreted the investigated data and provided reasons for such results. All the relevant materials were taken from *The Placenames Database of Ireland*.

Results and Discussion. The Celtic languages are a group of related languages that are part of the Indo-European language family. Once the Celtic languages were spoken in large areas of Western and Central Europe; now they are preserved mostly in Ireland, Wales, Brittany and Scotland and are spoken by around a million speakers in total [4, p. 45].

The ancestral home of the Celts is known to be localized in Central Europe. We know relatively little about the ancient stages of development of the Celtic languages, since the monuments of that era are very scanty and not always easy to interpret. However, the data of the Celtic languages, especially Old Irish, play a crucial role in the reconstruction of the Indo-European proto-language.

The Celtic languages are divided into ancient and modern. The ancient ones cannot be restored anymore, while the modern Celtic languages are the ones that are either still used or have only recently become extinct (for instance Cornish or Manx).

In terms of the internal genealogical classification, the Celtic languages are divided into Continental and Insular. The Continental Celtic languages are all extinct, primarily due to the assimilation into the Roman culture, while the insular Celtic languages are still alive. Within the latter, two groups are differentiated: Goedelic languages (Irish, Scottish and Manx) and Brythonic languages (Breton, Cornish, and Welsh). These two groups of Insular Celtic languages are not intelligible with each other. However, there is some degree of intelligibility, since they evolved from a common ancestor [7].

In view of the fact that the Celtic languages were once spread up to the Balkans and Western Ukraine, needless to say that the Celtic substrate played a certain role in the development of many languages across Europe. The Celts were among the first in Europe to process iron. For example, the Germans borrowed the word “iron” from the Celts (Irish *iarrann*). Traces of Celtic influence can be tracked down in the Basque language.

There is also the hypothesis supported by W. Keller, I. Dal, G. Visser, W. Preusler, P. Poussa and other scholars that the Celtic substrate was of greater importance for the development of the English language than it had been previously thought, namely up to the beginning of 20th century. For example, the Celtic influence is attributed to the appearance of extended tenses in English, such as *I am reading*. A number of words from the Celtic languages denoting specific realities (e.g., *druid, kayla, clan*) have entered many other languages. There are numerous celticisms used in English all over the world which have a Celtic origin. Among them, such lexical items as *bog, clan, glen, gob, loch, whiskey, hooligan, boycott, shamrock* that derived from Irish.

The Celtic element is still prominent in Ireland today, especially in proper names places, i.e., toponyms. As known, toponymy is a branch of onomastics which studies origins and meanings of place names, their use and typology [2].

Toponyms can be divided into geonyms, that is, proper names of all geographical objects on the Earth, and cosmonyms, or proper names of cosmographical objects outside the Earth. In this article, we will not address the cosmonyms, which will be analyzed in our further research.

Within the geographical toponyms of Ireland, we will consider the following subgroups:

1) agronyms – proper names of fields and plains (e.g., *Moycullen* from *moy* meaning “plain”; *Gortnahoe* from *gort* meaning “field”);

2) choronyms – proper names of regions or countries (e.g., *Fingal*, which derived from the Irish *Fine Gall*, meaning “foreign tribe”);

3) dromonyms – proper names of roads or any other transport routes by land, water or air (e.g., *Ballymurphy Road* derives its name from the townland of Ballymurphy, which itself is derived from the Irish *Baile O Muircháin*, meaning “homestead of O’Murphy”);

4) drymonyms – proper names of woods and forests (e.g., *Bonny Glen Wood* from *gleann* in Irish and Scottish Gaelic meaning “mountain valley”);

5) eonyms – proper names of inhabited location, such as houses, villages, towns or cities, including:

a) comonyms – proper names of villages (e.g. *Carrickbeg* from *beag* meaning “small”),

b) astonyms – proper names of towns and cities (e.g., *Derry* from *doire* meaning “grove”, “oak-grove”);

6) hydronyms – proper names of various bodies of water, including:

a) helonyms – proper names of swamps, marshes and bogs. (e.g., *Sheskin* from *seascann* meaning “marsh”),

b) limnonyms – proper names of lakes and ponds (e.g., *Loughgall* from *loch* meaning “lake”),

c) potamonyms – proper names of rivers and streams (e.g., the river *Erne* from a mythical princess named *Éirne*);

7) insulonyms – proper names of islands (e.g., *Ireland* from *Éire* – an Irish goddess of the land);

8) oronyms – proper names of relief features, such mountains, hills and valleys (*Gap of Dunloe* from Irish *Dún Lóich*, meaning “Lóich’s stronghold”, otherwise known as *Bearna an Choimín* meaning “gap of the common-land”);

9) urbanonyms – proper names of urban elements (streets, squares, etc.) in the settlements, including:

a) agoronyms – proper names of squares and marketplaces (e.g., *Glasheensururb* from *An Glaisín* meaning “small stream”);

b) hodonyms – proper names of streets and roads (*Ballynamony Road* from *Bailena Mónadh* meaning “townland of the bog”).

Toponyms are considered to be the most stable layer of the language vocabulary. Place names are valuable historical sources containing important information about the history of a certain area as well as about the people inhabiting it and, obviously, about their culture.

Language contact in Ireland. Toponyms of any linguaculture have developed in the process of natural historical development and always unite sources of several languages. Irish place names are not exceptions as they trace their ancestry to several languages. This can be explained by the fact that Ireland has always been an extremely culturally and linguistically diverse place. Some of its languages were used only by small groups and some only existed during a limited time. The two languages which have the longest history and still exist today are, certainly, Irish and English. However, it is important to examine how other languages are manifested in the Irish toponyms.

Along with the Celtic elements in the Irish toponymic structure, there is a significant layer of Scandinavian borrowings, a layer of French elements and other minor borrowings which we will further consider.

Norse names in Ireland. The Scandinavians founded most Irish towns which are situated at the estuaries of major rivers. Dublin and Belfast are two exceptions; the former city predates the coming of the Vikings and the latter is a new settlement from the beginning of the 17th century. In some instances, the English names of towns are derived from the Norse names and are not related to the Irish form: *Loch Garman* – “Wexford”, *Port Láirge* – “Waterford”, *Ant Inbhear Mhór* – “Arklow”. Three of the four provinces of Ireland have a second syllable from Norse *staðr* – “place” (or possibly from a combination of genitival *s* + Irish *tír* – “country”): Munster, Leinster, Ulster. The first syllable is derived from a name for the tribe which lived in the area designated as is the entire form of the fourth province, Connacht [12].

Anglo-Norman names. The number of Norman place names is remarkably small, especially considering the large amount of Norman surnames, which became established in Ireland, and numerous loanwords in Irish from the Norman invaders. One reason might be that the Normans did not establish towns. Instead, they built keeps in the countryside and ruled from fortified castles. But even there few Norman names can be found. Possibly, it is due to the acceptance by the Normans of the names which went with the territories occupied by the Irish. Since the Normans were concentrated in the south of Ireland, there are names which derive from the province of Munster and a point of the compass: Ormond <*Iarmumhan* – “east Munster”, *Thomond* <*Thiarmumhan* – “north Munster” and *Desmond* <*Deasmumhan* – “south Munster,” the latter later forming a common first name in Ireland [12].

Statistics on the use of Irish today. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) published the Census 2016 report, Profile 10 – Education, Skills and the Irish Language. It shows that

1.76 million people (aged 3 and over) indicated that they could speak Irish. This constitutes nearly 39.8 % of the population. There was a slight decline (-0.7 %) in 2011.

It should be noted that Gaeltacht, i.e., Irish speaking areas, are more likely to use Irish in their daily conversation. It should also be noted that Gaeltacht areas have a much higher percentage of established Irish forms of place names. These regions are historically continuous areas on the western seaboard of Ireland, where the oldest form of the Irish language can be heard till present. As it is clearly shown from Fig. 1 below, such counties as Sligo, Kilkenny, Galway, Waterford, Mayo, Kerry, Longford, Wexford, Limerick and others have a very high percentage of established Irish forms of place names. The Gaeltacht of these counties consists of numerous native Irish speaking communities.

On the contrary, the counties of Londonderry, Armagh, Antrim and Cavan, which are located in Northern Ireland, report to have only 24–38 % of established Irish forms of place names. We used a database of administrative place names, including town lands, parishes, names of urban centres, etc., taken from the *The Placenames Database of Ireland* (<https://www.logainm.ie/en/>) project. It was created by Fiontar & Scoilna Gaeilge in collaboration with The Placenames Branch (Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht). This is a comprehensive management system for the data, archival records and place names research conducted by the State [14].

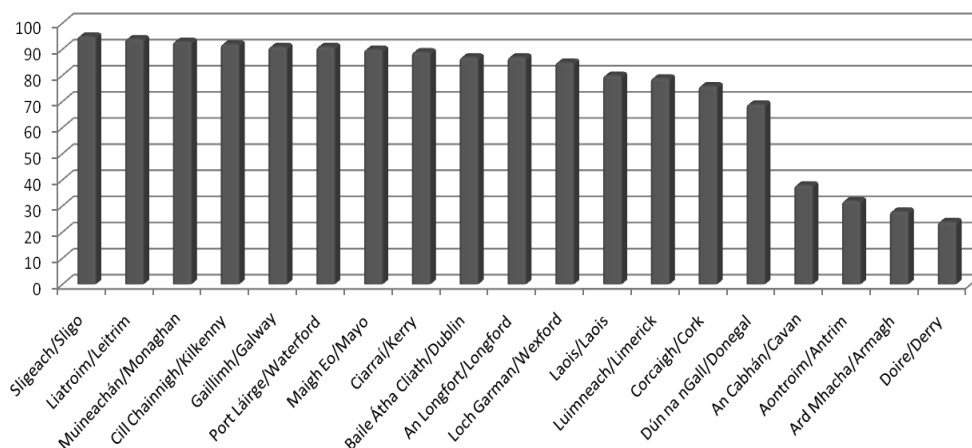


Fig. 1. Irish forms of place names in different counties of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The data is taken from
The Placenames Database of Ireland [14].

We have studied a fairly detailed map of Ireland and noticed that there are certain lexemes and morphemes that appear over and over again in many places names throughout the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It is not uncommon in other cultures. For instance, English suffixes *-borough*, *-pool*, *-ham*, *-cester*, *-town*, French – *-ville* and German – *-burg* can be still seen today.

Until the early 17th century there were very few towns or big settlements in Ireland. The situation was not peculiar solely to Ireland – it was so almost everywhere else at that time. Thus, notable features of the landscape, such as cliffs, hills, rocks, fields, meadows, valleys, lakes, islands, and rivers gave rise to place names. For instance, the name of the capital city of Dublin derives from the Irish word *Dubhlinn* from *dubh* meaning “black, dark”, and *lind* – “pool”, referring to a dark tidal pool. This tidal pool was indeed located in Dublin where the River Poddle entered the Liffey. *Baile Átha Cliath* meaning “town of the hurdled ford”, is the common name for Dublin in modern Irish. *Áth Cliath* is a place name referring to a fording point of the River Liffey. By the Dublin example, it is clearly seen how geographical features gave rise to place names.

In the later years, the historical and technical development had led to the construction of numerous bridges, castles and churches which was manifested in new place names with the corresponding affixes appearing. We have compiled a list of some of the most common place name elements in Ireland. They are to a great extent anglicized Irish language names. The anglicized spellings of the Irish words are provided below together with the words’ etymologies [11].

1. *Agha, aghy, aghey, aughta* – the word *achadh* means “field” in Irish. The place names bearing this prefix are villages of Aghalee (Northern Ireland) and Aughagower (a rural county of Mayo, Western Ireland). The geographical features of these sites totally reflect their names.

2. *Ath* – the word *áth* meaning “ford”. The name of the city of Athlone in Irish is *Baile Átha Luain* meaning “The town of Luan’s ford”. It is a town in Westmeath County, Ireland, which is located on the River Shannon. Since a ford is a shallow place with good footing where a river or stream may be crossed by wading, or inside a vehicle getting its wheels wet.

3. *Ard* meaning “high” or “height” in Irish. This usually means a physically high place, but it can also be referred to a place of importance and high status. A bright example is the High King of Ireland who was addressed as the *Ard Rí*. Some notable places having this lexeme or prefix are found in the following place names: the *Ards Peninsula* (county Down), *Ardstraw* (county Tyrone), *Ardfert* (county Kerry) from *Ard Fhearta* meaning “High Burial Place”. It is worth noting that the word *Fhearta* is often used for a burial place in reference to a site of pre-Christian burials. Some other examples might include *Ardagh* or *Ardach* meaning “high field” and Ardmore (*Aird Mhór*).

4. *Mor* or *mhor* means “big or great”; in a word combination with *Ard* it means “great height”. This may seem odd if you are in Ardmore in Waterford, which is a seaside town. But there are high cliffs and hills around it with the monastery and cathedral which gave the town its name.

5. *Bally, Ballyna, Ballina Bally* is an extremely common prefix in town names in Ireland, which is derived from the Gaelic phrase *Bailena*, meaning “place of”. It is not quite right to translate it as “a town of”, as there were few, if any, towns in Ireland at the time when these names were formed. An example of a town with this prefix is Ballinasloe from *Béal Átha Shuaighe* meaning “ford mouth of the crowds”. Indeed, there is a river to be forded here, which explains this particular name. *Bealach* is an Irish word for “pass”

or “passage” and can be come across in small towns Ballyclare (Northern Ireland) and Ballaghmore (County Laois).

6. *Beg* means “small” in Irish and is used at the end of a name. It often implies that a certain geographic feature is a smaller one out of two adjacent features, for example, Killybegs (county Donegal), Lambeg (county Antrim). North of Lough Neagh is the Ireland’s largest lake, while there is a much smaller lake called Lough Beg.

7. *Bel, bell*. The name Belfast derives from the Irish *Béal Feirsde*, later spelt *Béal Feirste*. The word *béal* means a “mouth” or “river-mouth” while *feirsde/feirste* is the genitive singular of *fearsaid* and refers to a sandbar or tidal ford across a river’s mouth.

8. *Ben, bin*. Irish *binn/bean* meaning “peak”. *Binn* occurs in Binn Ghulbain (*Benbulbin*) in Co. Sligo, Benbaun (*Binn Bhán*), Beenoskee (*Binnos Gaoith*) and Binevenagh (*Binn Fhoibhne*). Its equivalent in Scottish Gaelic is *beinn*, which appears in many Scottish mountain names, such as Beinn Nibheis (Ben Nevis) and Beinn Macduibh (Ben Macdui).

9. *Bawn*. It is the anglicized version of the Irish word *badhún* meaning “cattle-stronghold” or “cattle-enclosure.” Its original purpose was to protect cattle during an attack. The remains of a late medieval bawn and the defensive wall surrounding an Irish tower house can be seen at Bawnboy House, which is the origin of the village name.

10. *Bun* means river’s bottom/foot/mouth and can be seen in Bundoran.

11. *-bridge*. When found at the end of a name, it implies that the town developed beside a bridge or became famous as a bridging point. These town names are usually of English language origin. For example, Banbridge (county Down) which grew up around a bridge over the river Bann. Newbridge (county Kildare) grew up when a bridge over the Liffey was built at that point (Newbridge is increasingly being called *Droichead Nua*, which is a Gallicized version of the original English name.) Such names illustrate the importance of bridges to trade.

12. *Cappa(gh)* from Irish *ceapach* meaning “plot/tillage.” e.g.: Cappamore, Cappagh.

13. *Carn* meaning “cairn”. e.g., Carnmoney.

14. *Cahir, caher* from *cathair* meaning “stone ring-fort”. e.g.: Cahircon, Caherdaniel.

15. *Clare* from *cláir* meaning “(of) level land,” e.g., Cooraclare.

16. *Clough, clogh* from *cloch* meaning “rock,” e.g., Cloughjordan, Clogheen.

17. *Coom* from *com* meaning “hollow,” e.g., Coomkeen.

18. *Cor* from *corr* meaning “small round hill,” e.g., Corblonog.

19. *Corry, curry* from *coire* meaning “corrie,” e.g., Rockcorry, Tubbercurry.

20. *Croagh* from *cruach* meaning “stack,” e.g., Croaghgorm.

21. *Cul, cool* from *cúl* meaning “back,” e.g., Coolmine, Cultra.

22. *Cul, cool* from *cúil* meaning “nook/corner,” e.g., Coolock.

23. *Carrick, Carrig*. *Carrick* means “rock” in Irish, and Carricks are abundant across Ireland, for example, *Carrick fergus* – “Rock of Fergus” (Antrim county), *Carrick macross* – “Rock of MacRoss” (Monaghan county), *Carrick-on-Suir* (Tipperary county).

24. *Carrow, carry* from Irish *ceathrú* for quarter, e.g., Carrowdore, Carryduff.

25. *Cashel* from *caiseal* meaning “stone ring-fort, a circular defensive fort” (Cashel, Tipperary; Cashel, Galway). *An Caiseal* (anglicized as Cashel) is a small Gaeltacht village on the east side of Achill Island in County Mayo, Republic of Ireland. As this is a Gaeltacht

village, the Irish *AnCaiseal* is the only official name. The anglicized spelling *Cashel* has no official standing.

26. *Clon, Cloon*. A Gaelic word meaning “dry place”. This name is much more common in Connaught than elsewhere in Ireland. This is because Connaught is wetter, and, therefore, a dry and well-drained site was more valuable and well regarded. The examples are Clonmel (county Tipperary), Clonmacnois (county Offaly), and Clonfert (county Galway).

27. *Dona(gh)* from *domhnach* meaning “church,” e.g., Donaghadee, Donabate.

28. *Duff, duv* from *dubh* meaning “black,” e.g., Claddaghduff, Cloughduv.

29. *Derry*. This term evolved from the Irish name for “a place of oak trees” *doire*, or sometimes a grove or clearing of the same. Oak trees are found in many places in Ireland, and because of this there are many examples of the name Derry. The most famous place to have this name is Derry city (county Londonderry). Other examples include Derryagh (county Antrim), a former village which is now part of Belfast city, as well as Edenderry (county Offaly).

30. *Down, dun, don*. These prefixes all evolved from the Gaelic word *Dun*, meaning a fortified place [10]. As Ireland has always had wars, there are many examples of fortified places: Donegal – “Fortress of the Foreigners” (county Donegal), Dungannon (county Tyrone), Portadown – “Port of the fortress” (county Armagh), Dungarvan (county Waterford), Downpatrick – “Fortress of Patrick” (county Down).

31. *Droichead*. An Irish word meaning “a bridge”. The prime example is Drogheda (county Meath), which is an evolved spelling derived from the Gaelic word. There is also a town of Droichead Nua – “New bridge” in Kildare county.

32. *Drum, drom*. A Gaelic word meaning “a ridge”. Examples include Dromore – “The greater ridge” (county Down & Tyrone), Drumquin – “Quinn’s ridge” (county Tyrone), and Drum – “the ridge” (county Monaghan).

33. *Ennis (inish, innish, innis)* from *inis* meaning “island,” e.g., Enniskillen, Inniskeen, Inishmaan.

34. *Esk, eish* from *eiscir* meaning “esker,” e.g., Eskra.

35. *Fin, finn* from *fionn* meaning “clear, white, fair,” e.g., Finglas.

36. *Freagh, frack* from *fraoch* meaning “heather,” e.g., Letterfrack.

37. *Garv* from *garbh* meaning “rough,” e.g. Garvaghey.

38. *Glas, glass* from *glas* meaning “stream,” e.g., Glasnevin.

39. *Gorm* from *gorm* meaning “blue,” e.g., Glengormley.

40. *Gort* from *gort* meaning “field,” e.g., Gortnahoe.

41. *Gal, gael*. A Gaelic word meaning “strangers” or “foreigners”. For example, *Donegal* meaning “Fortess of the foreigners”. Note that Galway is not an example of this word. It translates to something like “a port at some small islands”. The word “Gaelic” itself means “foreigners”, because it originates from the language of pre-Celtic people who referred to the Celts as foreigners or “Gaels”.

42. *Glen*. A Gaelic word meaning “a valley between mountains,” for example, Glenariff (county Antrim), Crossmaglen (county Armagh).

43. *Illan, illaun* from *oileán* meaning “island,” e.g., Illaunmaistir.

44. *Kil, killy*. A Gaelic word *cill* meaning “a church or graveyard”. Famous examples include Kildare (Cill Dara) meaning “the second church”, Kilkenny. The Shankill area of Belfast is Gaelic for an “old church”. It is also possibly derived from *coil* meaning woodland, as in Kilcogy.

45. *Knock*. A Gaelic word meaning “hill”. There are many examples including Knock (county Mayo), Knock (Belfast, county Down) and Knockmore meaning “the great hill” (county Antrim). Several centuries ago, Carrickfergus (county Antrim) was known as Knockfergus.

46. *Kin, ken* from *cionn/ceann* meaning “head,” e.g., Kinallen, Kenmare.

47. *Lea* from *liath* meaning “grey,” e.g., Killylea.

48. *Letter* from *leitir* meaning “hillside,” e.g., Letterkenny.

49. *Lis* from *lios* meaning “earthen ring-fort,” e.g., Liscannor.

50. *Lough* from *loch* meaning “lake,” e.g., Loughgall.

51. *Lurgan* from *lorga(n)* meaning “long ridge,” e.g., Lurgan.

52. *Maum, maam* from *mám* meaning “mountain pass,” e.g., Maum, Maam Cross.

53. *Magh, may, moy, moi(gh)* from *maigh/machaire* meaning “plain,” e.g., Magherafelt, Maynooth, Moycullen.

54. *Mona, money* from *móna/monaidh* meaning “peatland or turf,” e.g., Cornamona, Ballymoney.

55. *Mulla(gh)* from *mullach* meaning “summit,” e.g., Mullaghbawn.

56. *Mullin* from *muileann* meaning “mill,” e.g., Mullingar.

57. *More* from *mór* meaning “big or great,” e.g., Tullamore.

58. *Noe* from *nua* meaning “new,” e.g., Ballynoe.

59. *Owen* from *abhainn* meaning “river,” e.g., Owenbeg.

60. *Poll, poul* from *poll* meaning “hole,” e.g., Pollagh, Poulaphouca.

61. *Port* from *port* meaning “stronghold/fort,” e.g., Portlaoise.

62. *Port* from *port* meaning “landing place,” e.g., Portadown.

63. *Rath, rah* from *ráth* meaning “earthen ring-fort,” e.g., Rathfarnham, Raheny.

64. *Rea(gh), reva(gh)* from *riabhach* meaning “brindled/speckled,” e.g., Moneyreagh, Cloonsheerevagh.

65. *Roe* from *rua* meaning “red,” e.g., Carraroe.

66. *Ros, rosh, rus, rush* from *ros* meaning “wooded promontory,” e.g., Roscrea, Kilrush.

67. *Sall, salla, sally* from *sail (each)* meaning “willow(s),” e.g., Ballysally, Sallins.

68. *Shan* from *sean* meaning “old,” e.g., Shandon.

69. *Sheskin* from *seascann* meaning “marsh/quagmire,” e.g., Sheskin.

70. *Ske, skey, skay, skea(gh)* from *sceach* meaning “hawthorn,” e.g., Skeheenarinky, Ballyskeagh.

71. *Sragh, stra* from *srath* meaning “floodplain,” e.g., Stranorlar, Sragh.

72. *Slieve* from *sliabh* meaning “mountain,” e.g., Slieve Donard.

73. *Termon* from *tearmann* meaning “refuge/sanctuary,” e.g., Termonfeckin.

74. *Tieve* from *taobh* meaning “hillside,” e.g., Tievebulliagh.

75. *Tyr, tir* from *tír* meaning “territory,” e.g., Tyrone, Tirconnell.

76. *Tober, tuber* from *tobar* meaning “water well,” e.g., Tobermore, Tubberclare.

77. *Tra* from *trá* meaning “beach/strand,” e.g., Tramore.

78. *Tuam, toom* from *tuaim* meaning “burial mound,” e.g., Tuam, Toomevara.

79. *Tully, tulla(gh)* from *tulach* meaning “hillock/mound/heap,” e.g., Tullyhogue, Tullamore.

80. *Orla, urlar* from *urlár* meaning “floor/flat land,” e.g., Stranorlar, Urlar.

81. *Vea(gh), vei(gh)* from *bheithe* meaning “of birch,” e.g., Ballyveagh.

Mythological figures, legendary heroes and deities in place names. Mythology has always played a crucial role in the worldview of the ancient Celts. It is the whole cultural layer which influenced their life, household, mindset and perception of the world. Mythological elements aim at reflecting the universal concerns of people throughout history. Both language and mythology link the mythical world with the real one and enable the direct connections between them.

A substantial amount of modern Irish place names are rooted in Celtic mythology: these are numerous names of gods and goddesses, mythical tribes and legendary heroes. Place and personal names together with ancient places of worship, statues, engravings and cult objects are valuable sources of information about Celtic deities.

Many Irish place names include the names of the gods and goddesses. The name of the country itself is derived from *Éire (Ériu)* – the Irish supreme goddess, one of the supreme goddesses of the Celtic pantheon. The very name *Ériu* translates as “abundant, fertile land” [10]. *Eriu* is also the goddess of fertility, prosperity and abundance.

“Land of Ana” is one more notable name for Ireland. In Celtic languages, the name *Ana* means “wealth, prosperity, abundance” [2, p. 16]. Later the name *Ana (Anu)* was transformed into *Dana / Danu*. She was considered to be the mother of the *Tuatha De Danann* tribes (“the tribes of the goddess Anu”), the legendary founders and rulers of the Kingdom of Ireland. Modern Ireland is often described with the epithets “prosperous, fertile”, which confirms these connections.

Irish *Banba* and *Fódhla* are sometimes used as literary names for Ireland. In Irish mythology, *Fódlá* or *Fótlá* (modern spelling is *Fódhla* or *Fóla*), daughter of *Delbáeth* and *Ernmas* of the *Tuatha Dé Danann*, was one of the tutelary giantesses of Ireland. *Banba*, a daughter of *Delbáeth* and *Ernmas* of the *Tuatha Dé Danann*, is also a patron goddess of Ireland. They could have been goddesses of war as well as fertility goddesses, thus reflecting the pride of the Irish for their fertile lands.

A number of goddesses were deified rivers, notably *Boann* (of the River Boyne) and *Sinann* (the River Shannon). *Boann (Boínd, Boínn)* is the goddess of water, fertility, inspiration and knowledge [2, p. 45]. Her name is interpreted as “white cow” (*bófhionn*) in the *Dindsenchas*, which is a class of onomastic texts in early Irish literature, recounting the origins of place names and traditions. The longest river on the island – the River Shannon – bears the name of the goddess *Sinann*, the granddaughter of *Lir*, god of the sea. She is associated with *Connla’s Well*, a mythical spring which is a source of inspiration and deep wisdom.

There are toponyms derived from Irish mythology which are associated with the names of legendary heroes, for example, *Echtge*, a mountain chain named after a noble lady from the mythical *Tuat* tribe. According to the legend, mountain ranges served as a dowry of this

lady. Hill of Allen is named after Allen – a daughter of the commander from the mythical Tuat tribe. Other place names consist of a common Celtic element and a proper name, related to mythology, for example, *cnoc* meaning “hill, mountain” – Cnoc Fírinne, Cnoc Meadha, Cnoc Sídhe Úna; *inber* meaning “mouth” – Tuag Inber.

The etymology of Irish counties. There are 32 traditional counties of Ireland, both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland. They are named after Irish gods and goddesses, geographical features like rivers, plains and swamps, and man-made objects, like churches or castles.

The counties named after Celtic deities are Armagh and Louth. Armagh comes from *Ard Mhacha*, meaning “Macha’s height.” Macha was an Irish goddess associated with Ulster and Armagh, where she is said to have given birth to twins after racing a horse. Louth was named after the Irish god *Lugh* (modern spelling *Lú*). He is one of the most prominent gods in Irish mythology and is portrayed as a warrior, a king, a master craftsman and a savior [1].

Not only pagan gods and goddesses are present in Irish place names, but also Christian saints and martyrs. The name of County Wicklow comes from Old Norse meaning “meadow of the Vikings” [3]. The Irish name *Cill Mhantáin* means “Church of Mantan” and is named after a contemporary of Saint Patrick. A disciple of Saint Patrick, Mantan or Manton, is said to have assisted St. Patrick in his various labors. He had his teeth knocked out by Irish pagans. Hence he was renamed Mantan, which means “toothless one” in Irish. *Cill Mhantáin* was historically anglicized as Kilmantan.

Similarly, the name of County Roscommon comes from *Ros Comáin*, meaning “Cománs wood.” It was named after Saint Coman, who founded the monastery of Roscommon around 550. The name of County Kilkenny derives from *Cill Chainnigh*, meaning “church of Cainnech.” Saint Cainnech allegedly converted the county to Christianity in 597.

Geographical features of landscape form the foundations of the names of counties Sligo, Monaghan, Cork and Mayo. The Sligo county is named after the town of Sligo, which comes from *Sligeach*, meaning a “shelly place,” a reference to the large amounts of shellfish to be found in the river and its estuary. The name of County Monaghan comes from *Muineachán*. “Muine” means “brake” (a thickly overgrown area) or “hillock,” justifying the county council’s interpretation of the name as a “land of the little hills.” It could also derive from “Muine Acháin,” “Acháin” meaning “field,” thus making up a “bushy field” or a “hilly field”.

Both the city and county Cork’s name come from *corcach*, meaning a “swamp” and providing us with the information about the geography of this place. County Mayo’s name has its origin in *Maigh Eo*, meaning a “plain of the yew,” i.e., “various species of trees.”

Centuries later, when a number of churches and cathedrals were erected, numerous cities, towns and counties report to have the component “church” in their names. County Kildare, for instance, comes from *Cill Dara*, meaning a “church of the oak”. One possible explanation is that the material churches were mostly built starting with the 13th century, when the name of the county was established.

Place names of Irish origin outside Ireland: North America and Australia. The 19th century featured massive emigration of the Irish due to the greatest loss of life in 19th-century Europe – the Great Famine (1845–1849). About one million people died and a

million more emigrated from Ireland, causing the island's population to fall by 23 %. Thus, the Irish communities were established in many towns and regions of the USA and Canada primarily, as well as in Australia and New Zealand to a lesser extent. The Irish named or renamed the places they lived in after places in Ireland. Since most severely affected areas by the famine were in the west and south of Ireland, where the Irish language was dominant, the people named new places in Irish. There are numerous cities and towns across the USA and Canada of quite obvious Celtic origin. The majority of place names trace their origin in Irish surnames as well as lexemes denoting geographical landscape. They are always anglicized versions of the Irish words. A town name that appears most often is Erin, anglicized from *Éire* (*Erie*) – the Irish supreme goddess, one of the supreme goddesses of the Celtic pantheon. A town name Dunmore (sometimes Dunmore) is often to be seen in different American states, Canada, Australia and the Bahamas. The place name comes from the Irish *Dun Moor* meaning “great fort”. Ardmore comes from the Irish *Arid Moor* meaning “great height” and is a name of 10 cities and towns in the USA, 3 towns in Canada and one in New Zealand

Irish surnames in place names outside Ireland. A town named Foley is derived from a surname which originated in Ireland, in the southeast Munster region. The name comes from the original modern Irish *Ó Foggily* meaning “plunderer.”

McMullen is a name for several American cities and a surname with predominantly Irish origins together with some Scottish history. It derives from root forenames such as *Mao lain*, *Malan* and *Meal lain*. All of these forenames have evolved over time to the collateral “Son of Mao lain”, anglicized McMullen.

Killen is a name for several American towns and an ancient Irish surname of two possible origins. It may be an anglicized form of the Irish personal name *Collin*, a diminutive of *Calash* which means “bright-headed”. The second possibility is that it can be an anglicized form of the Irish *Mac Coiling*, which is composed of *Mac* meaning “son of” and the personal name Colin, derived from the Celtic *Chilean* meaning a “young hound.”

The United Kingdom. There are many place names in the UK associated with legendary characters, for example, Edinburgh (*Dùn Èideann*, *Èideann* is the legendary founder of the city), Brega plain (in honor of a mythical prince), Mount Cúchulainn's leap (in honor of the hero of the epic – Cuchulainn [2, p. 117]), the coast of Baile's Strand (in honor of the mythical prince), the Beare peninsula (in honor of the mythical princess), Erne Waterway (in honor of the mythical princess), etc. Ath Fodhla (the anglicized version is Atholl or Athole) is a large historical division in the Scottish Highlands. As mentioned above, *Fódhla* is a traditional name for Ireland and *ath* is an Irish prefix meaning “second”, “later”. Thus, the name, originally *Ath-fhotla*, literally means “New Ireland” and appears in the Annal of Ulster, indicating that the Gaels or their language had arrived in the Pictish heartland by 739 A.D., and Atholl became a Celtic earldom [5].

The usage of Irish and Irish place names today. Starting from the 19th and 20th centuries till present, there has been a renewed interest in Celtic culture. This variety of movements and trends is often referred to as The Celtic Revival. There are cultural studies' programs at schools aiming to expose students to the rich cultural heritage of Irish folk and traditional music and song. Apart from that, there are numerous Celtic festivals

throughout the country, television channels, radio programs, magazines and newspapers in Irish, poetry evenings and traditional Irish dances workshops. The Irish language is a compulsory subject in government-funded schools in the Republic of Ireland and there are up to 50 Irish-language summer colleges in the Gaeltacht every summer. There is a certain interest in Irish across the Atlantic, mainly within the Irish diaspora which is quite numerous there.

Currently, most Celtic speakers live in the outskirts of Europe. There are also small colonies in America: Welsh speakers live in Argentina, whereas Scottish – in Canada. Native speakers of Irish are mostly concentrated in rural areas, living compactly (areas of Irish and Scottish languages are called Gaeltacht) [8].

Gaeltacht. Gaeltacht is an Irish-language word for any primarily Irish-speaking region. In Ireland the term *Gaeltacht* refers individually to any, or collectively to all, of the districts where the government recognizes that the Irish language is the predominant vernacular, or language of the home [16].

The majority of Irish speakers live in Gaeltachtaí, areas that are located mainly along the west coast of Ireland and number 82,715, of whom 76.3 % speak Irish. Living Irish called *Gaeilge* is spoken in Gaeltachtaí, areas in the far west of Ireland (Donegal, Erris, Connemara, Dingle, and Arran Islands).

The Gaeltachts are mainly coastal areas of Ireland where people lead a rural life. One third of all those who use the Irish language for everyday communication come from these rural areas. Authorities support the remaining Irish-speaking enclaves. Thus, at the initiative of the government, all English-language signs on the west coast of the country were replaced by Irish ones. In these areas, rivers, lakes and valleys can only be marked in Irish [8].

In March 2005, it was announced that the government of Ireland would begin listing only the Irish language versions of place names in the Gaeltachtaí as the official names, stripping the official Ordnance Survey of their English equivalents, to bring them up to date with road signs in the Gaeltacht, which have been in Irish only since 1970. This was done under a Placenames Order made under the Official Languages Act.

The Official Languages Act 2003 sets out rules regarding use of the Irish language by public bodies; it established the office of An Coimisinéir Teanga to monitor and enforce compliance by public bodies with the provisions of the Official Languages Act; and made provision for the designation of official Irish-language versions of place names and the removal of the official status of English place names in the Gaeltacht. The Act is being implemented on a phased basis [13].

The principal legal effects of a Placename Order are one or other of the following:

- in respect of any place name outside the Gaeltacht, the Irish and the English versions of the place name have the same status and the same legal force and effect; and
- in respect of a place name in the Gaeltacht, the Irish version of the place name has legal force and effect while the English version of the place name has none.

Any Placenames Order is without prejudice to private use of the Irish or English-language versions of a place name. In many cases, it is also without prejudice to public use of a place name.

Conclusions. Following the main objective of our paper – to analyze the use of toponyms of Celtic origin, we have studied a detailed map of Ireland and noticed that there are certain lexemes and morphemes that appear over and over again in many place names throughout the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Referring to *The Placenames Database of Ireland*, we have accumulated statistical data concerning Irish place names in various parts of Ireland. We have tried to make inferences based on the investigated data, i.e. to interpret them and provide reasons. The quantitative analysis therefore helped us to make a claim that Irish place names in Gaeltacht substantially outnumber toponyms of Irish origin in other parts of the island.

In accordance with the next objective, we have analyzed the use of toponyms of Celtic origin in the places where the Irish diaspora is present, namely in North America, Canada, Australia and the UK. The majority of place names in these places trace their origin in Irish surnames as well as in the lexemes denoting geographical landscape. Our finding was that they are always anglicized equivalents of the Irish words.

Our further objective was to draw a typology of toponyms and analyze cultural components in the meaning of linguistic units. Thus, we have grouped them into the following thematic groups:

- 1) place names containing linguistic elements associated with geographical features;
- 2) place names containing surnames;
- 3) place names containing linguistic elements associated with mythological figures, legendary heroes and deities;
- 4) place names containing names of Christian saints and martyrs;
- 5) place names containing linguistic elements associated with man-made objects.

In addition, cultural components in the meaning of linguistic units denoting geographical objects, both natural and man-made, were analyzed. The obtained findings convincingly demonstrate that a substantial number of toponyms used today carry information about the Celtic cultural and national heritage, proving that it still thrives and that the Irish are conscious of their legacy.

Implications for Further Research. Taking into account the complexity of the analyzed issues, our article falls short of addressing the functions of place names bearing Celtic language components, which can be addressed in our further research. Additionally, we wish to pursue the comparative study of the Irish, Scottish and Welsh place names, which remain underinvestigated.

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Стаття надійшла до редколегії 09.11.2020

Прийнята до друку 26.11.2020

ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПОХОДЖЕННЯ ТА СЕМАНТИКИ ТОПОНІМІВ ІРЛАНДІЇ

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У статті розглянуто проблему вивчення культури та спадщини давніх кельтів шляхом аналізу топонімів кельтського походження в Республіці Ірландія, Північній Ірландії, а також у місцях, де присутня ірландська діаспора. Відповідно до поставленої мети розглянуто проблему наявності культурного компонента у семантиці мовних одиниць, класифікації топонімів та їхнього використання в різних частинах острова. Застосовано якісний метод емпіричного аналізу з метою простежити етимологію топонімів Ірландії, їхнє вживання та семантику. За допомогою цього методу виявлено, хто та коли давав назви окремим місцям (англосакси, вікінги, кельти та ін./ дохристиянські часи, християнські часи), причини виникнення окремих назв (географічні особливості ландшафту, на честь легендарних героїв, божеств, відомих об'єктів, як-от замків чи храмів, які поблизу розташовані, тощо), що означають ці назви, яку особливість вони відображають, звідки походять, тобто їхню етимологію (стосується мови або регіону походження) та де вони знаходяться. У деяких випадках відповіді на питання не було знайдено, оскільки минуло занадто багато часу та / або немає необхідної документації. Використано кількісний аналіз за допомогою матеріалів бази даних Placenames Database of Ireland. Виявлено відсоток офіційно вживаних топонімів ірландського походження у різних частинах острова. Дані, представлені у вигляді діаграми, підтверджують нашу гіпотезу. На прикладі аналізу значень кельтських топонімів, що використовуються в сучасній Ірландії та Північній Ірландії, доведено, що кельтська національна спадщина не втрачена. Вивчення дає змогу проникнути у світогляд кельтів, культура яких вплинула і сформувала нащадків кельтського народу – ірландців. Зважаючи на складність проблеми вживання топонімів ірландського походження в Ірландії, не було ще розглянуто їхніх функцій, що може бути предметом наших наступних досліджень.

Ключові слова: кельтські мови, топоніміка, топонімія, Ірландія, ірландська мова, семантика.